

Danish Local Action Groups in Rural and Fishing Areas 2008

- composition, activities,
and cooperation in the
start-up phase

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1. Introduction

In 2008, The National Network Unit in the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries asked the Danish Institute for Rural Research and Development to do a study on Local Action Groups in Denmark. The study was to include a survey of the composition of the LAGs and the activities that they had been engaged in during the initial phase of the programming period 2007-2013. The final report, which was published in November 2008, presents results from two questionnaire surveys, which were sent in electronic form to the voluntary board members and professional coordinators of the LAGs in Denmark. What you are now holding in your hands is an abbreviated English version of the report, originally written in Danish. Both reports represent a first step towards gaining an understanding of, and making visible, the active persons of the LAG boards. Hitherto, it has not been possible to find investigations of this kind in the scientific literature on LEADER. Neither has it been possible to get an overall grasp of the subject by addressing the National Network Units.

In Denmark, 56 LAGs have been formed to carry out parts of the rural development programme and the fisheries programme 2007-2013. There have been two noteworthy shifts concerning LAGs in Denmark in the new programming period 2007-2013. First, the number of LAGs in Denmark has risen considerably (from 12 LAGs during the LEADER+ period to 56 LAGs today) and the use of the LAG method has expanded, so that LAGs are now also implementing parts of the fisheries programme. Second, a huge shift has taken place in securing the input legitimacy of the Danish LAGs. During the LEADER+ period the members of the LAGs were appointed not elected, and there were no clear entry standards that applied to the Danish LAGs. This meant that for an outsider it could be hard to obtain influence on the decision-making processes in the LAGs.

In the programming period 2007-2013, it is now compulsory for LAGs to be organised as associations with open and free membership. All people over 15 years old and living in the LAG area can become members of the LAG association as well as participate in the annual election of the board, so formally Danish LAGs can be characterised as open networks. The board members – who must be over 18 years old – are elected for two years at annual general assembly meetings in the spring. They are to represent the four groups: 1) local citizens, 2) local enterprises and trade organisations, 3) local nature, environmental, cultural, citizen, and leisure associations, and 4) public authorities (DFIA 2007a; DFIA 2007b). The Danish LAGs mainly work on area-based development within axis three of the rural development programme concerning diversification of the rural economy

and improvement of living conditions in rural areas. LAGs active in the fisheries programme seek to create area-based sustainable development of coastal areas. Because of the recent local government reform and the amalgamation of the Danish municipalities, most Danish LAGs only cover one municipality.

The concrete activities of the Danish LAGs are:

- To promote local development through cooperation with voluntary players in the local community, local and regional authorities, organisations etc, including recommendation of projects for support
- To show active participation in the overall development efforts in the area
- To initiate independent projects and processes (MFAF 2007a; MFAF 2007b)

After this short introduction, a description of the methods related to the survey will follow in part 2. Then in parts 3 to 6, the empirical survey results follow, with special focus on background information of board members and coordinators, composition of the LAG boards, their activities and cooperation. In part 7, the empirical survey results are briefly discussed, and finally, part 8 concludes the report.

We hope that you will find it interesting to read this report and look forward to receiving any comments you may have.

2. Reader guidance and methods

This report presents survey data collected in the period from June 13 to August 1 2008. At that time, the main part of the Danish LAGs had been working for almost one year, although a minority of the Danish LAGs had only just started working.

In the report you will meet the concepts: LAG type and municipality type. The first concept is related to whether the LAG is working on the rural development programme or the fisheries programme. A distinction is made between LAGs of fisheries, LAGs of rural development and LAGs of both fisheries and rural development (LAGs working with both programmes). The second concept is related to how the governing authority in Denmark has divided the country before the allocation of funds for the programming period 2007-2013. A distinction is made between outskirts municipalities, rural municipalities and intermediate municipalities, with LAGs in intermediate municipalities receiving less money than the others do.

The report will also introduce two administrative units: municipality and region. In relation to this, it is necessary to mention that a local government reform was introduced in Denmark on January 1 2007. The reform meant that the former 271 municipalities were replaced by 98 new municipalities. At the same time, the former 14 councils were replaced by five new regions. The municipalities are to undertake most of the citizen-related tasks, whereas the regions are to be responsible for health care, some areas of social service, prepare regional development plans etc. In terms of expenditure, the municipalities' share of public expenditure was to increase from 46% to 48% after the local government reform. The regions' share of public expenditure was to drop from 14% to 9%. State expenditure was to increase from 40% to 43% (going to the police, defence, the legal system, higher education and research etc.) (ISM, 22-34). The figures indicate that both before and after the local government reform, the Danish municipalities were big providers of public service and had large financial responsibilities compared to municipalities in many other countries.

Two electronic questionnaires were sent by e-mail to the whole population of 704 LAG board members and 51 coordinators using a web-based questionnaire program called Quest. 454 board members responded, which constituted a response rate of 65 percent. The response rate differed between LAGs related to rural development (68 percent), LAGs of fisheries (50 percent) and integrated LAGs related to both fisheries and rural development (60 percent). It also differed between regions and different types of rural

municipalities (those on the outskirts or areas more centrally placed). Coordinators had a response rate of 90%. When we use the categories board members and coordinators in this report, we are referring to the respondents from these two groups.

The board member material was tested in order to find out to what degree it was biased. Nothing indicated that this was the case regarding the variables gender, role on the board, LAG type, municipality type and region. Even so, it is not possible to ignore the fact that non-respondents might have had a less positive view of the role of the LAGs and maybe a lower attendance at the board meetings etc. The data collected was cleared of errors using Excel and all changes were registered in a logbook. Subsequently, the data was transferred to SPSS, where frequencies and cross tabulations were made. A more thorough description of the methods used is provided in the Danish report.

Table 1: Test for bias between estimation and population (board members)

		Estimation (N=454)	Population (N=704)
		%	%
Gender	Men	71	73
	Women	29	27
Role	Chairmen	9	8
	Deputy chairmen	10	8
	Treasurers	6	8
	Secretaries	4	8
	Ordinary board members	70	69
LAG type	LAGs of fisheries	7	9
	LAGs of rural development	73	69
	LAGs of fisheries and rural dev.	21	22
Municipality type	Outskirt municipalities	23	22
	Rural municipalities	50	45
	Intermediate municipalities	15	17
	LAGs crossing municipality types	13	16
Region	Zealand	18	17
	The capital region	4	4
	South Denmark	36	35
	Middle Jutland	23	26
	Northern Jutland	13	11
	Cross-region LAGs	6	7

3. Who are the members of the Danish LAG boards and their coordinators?

Local action groups have been assigned a major role in the implementation of the Danish rural development programme. So it is interesting to determine just who the LAG board members are, since this is expected to affect what is going to happen in the LAGs. This will be looked at in this part of the report.

Experience from LEADER+ and other board work

A minority of the new LAG board members (7%) have experience from a LAG in the LEADER+ period. This is due to two things: Firstly, the Danish structural reform in 2007 considerably reduced the number of municipalities and regions. This means that a very small number of the former 12 LEADER+ LAGs have continued directly into the new programme period. Secondly, the number of LAGs has risen from 12 to 56, with far more people therefore being active in present-day LAG boards. The number of board members has risen from about 180 in the LEADER+ period to over 700 today.

A very high proportion of both board members and coordinators (94% and 96% respectively) have experience from other board work. This experience comes from many different types of associations and organisations – everything from local village hall associations, civic associations or sports clubs to school boards, municipal authorities and regional councils. So there is a great amount of experience that can be built on in the LAG boards. As far as the coordinators are concerned, it is interesting to note that some of them also have experience from local association activities in the areas from which they come.

There have not been many replacements among board members, as the maximum number of people to retire from one LAG is three, and the majority of board members joined the boards in connection with the start-up in 2007.

Gender and age distribution

There is a skewed gender distribution in the LAGs, with only about 1/3 being women. The smallest percentage of women is registered within the LAGs of fisheries. The age distribution is also skewed, the average age being 53, with about 2/3 of board members over 50. Furthermore, the survey shows that the average age rises when one goes from the LAGs of rural areas via the integrated LAGs of fisheries and rural development to the LAGs of fisheries. The gender distribution among the coordinators is almost equal.

Table 2: Gender distribution of LAG board members (N=454) and coordinators (N=46)

	Board members	Coordinators
	%	%
Men	71	52
Women	29	48
Total	100	100

Table 3: Gender distribution of LAG board members, calculated by LAG type (N=454)

	Gender		
	Men	Women	Total
	%	%	%
LAGs of fisheries	87	13	100
LAGs of rural areas	69	31	100
LAGs of fisheries and rural dev.	70	30	100

Table 4: Age distribution of LAG board members (N=452) and coordinators (N=45)

	Board members	Coordinators
	%	%
18-29	2	4
30-39	9	20
40-49	20	36
50-59	38	31
60-69	28	9
70 or more	3	0
Total	100	100

Country of birth

Practically all board members and coordinators were born in Denmark. This applies to 99% of the board members and 98% of the coordinators.

Table 5: Country of birth of LAG board members (N=454) and coordinators (N=46)

	Board members	Coordinators
	%	%
Denmark	98.9	98.0
The other Nordic countries	0.2	0
Outside the Nordic countries, but from a European country	0.7	0
From a non-European country	0.2	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Place of residence

There are differences as regards place of residence between board members and coordinators, with almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of board members residing in the country or in villages of up to 1000 inhabitants. This only applies to 46% of the coordinators, with just under half of them living in towns of over 5000 inhabitants. So board members can absolutely be characterised as a rural district population. In terms of LAG type, it can be seen that a large proportion, 45%, of the board members from LAGs of fisheries live in towns of over 5000 inhabitants. Here, the proportion of board members from the LAGs of rural areas and the integrated LAGs is very small, 11% and 10% respectively of the board members within each LAG type.

Educational background

The level of education is extremely high for both the board members and coordinators, with 27% of the board members and 72% of the coordinators having completed long-cycle higher education, compared to about 6% of the total Danish population of roughly the same age group. It is worth noting that the educational background is highest among LAGs in the outskirts municipalities. The integrated LAGs also have the highest proportion of board members with a medium-cycle or long-cycle higher education, 68%, followed by the LAGs of rural areas with 59%. The LAGs of fisheries, on the other hand, have the highest proportion of respondents of the three LAG types with primary and lower secondary school, 19%, or business/apprentice/office education, 23%. However, a high proportion of respondents from the LAGs of fisheries also have a medium-cycle or long-cycle higher education.

Table 6: Educational background of LAG board members (N=454) and coordinators (N=46)

	Board members %	Coordinators %
Primary and lower secondary school	7	0
Upper secondary school	4	0
Vocational training	17	2
Short-cycle higher education	12	4
Medium-cycle higher education	33	22
Long-cycle higher education	27	72
Total	100	100

Table 7: Educational background of LAG board members , calculated by LAGs belonging to different types of rural municipalities (N=454)

	LAGs in outskirts municipalities (N=102)	LAGs in rural municipalities (N=227)	LAGs in middle municipalities (N=68)	Cross-municipality LAGs (N=57)
	%	%	%	%
Primary and lower secondary school	11	5	7	11
Upper secondary school	6	3	3	4
Vocational training	10	20	18	14
Short-cycle higher education	9	14	15	7
Medium-cycle higher education	33	35	32	26
Long-cycle higher education	31	23	25	39
Total	100	100	100	100

Main occupation

The main occupation of the largest single group of board members is self-employed, i.e. one third, which is very high compared to the rest of the Danish population. In 2007, for people over 19 only 4.6% were self-employed; for the age group 20–66 this figure was 4.9%. About ¼ of the board members are public sector wage earners and another ¼ are private sector wage earners. Furthermore, just over 1 in 10 board members are senior citizens. 74% of the coordinators were wage earners prior to being appointed coordinators, with 46% of these in the public sector.

Table 8: Main occupation of LAG board members (N=454) and coordinators (N=46)

	Board members	Co-ordinators
	%	%
Wage earner (public sector)	26	46
Wage earner (private sector)	22	28
Self-employed	34	9
Unemployed	0	2
Senior citizen	13	2
Working at home	0	0
Under education	1	7
Other	4	7
Total	100	100

4. A closer look at the composition of the LAG boards

It is a requirement in Denmark that the LAG boards are to be made up of an odd number of members (at least seven) and that they must be able to take care of the interests of the four socio-economic groups: 1) local citizens, 2) local enterprises and trade organisations, 3) local nature, environmental, cultural, civic and leisure associations, and 4) public authorities. The last-named group may not comprise more than 30% of the board's members (MFAF 2007, § 7). This is more restrictive than the regulation of the Council, which operates with a maximum of 50% public representation (CEC, 2006).

Number of board members

The Danish LAGs have between 7 and 21 board members, with an average size of 12. The LAG groups in the former LEADER+ period ranged from 8 to 31. It was in particular the presence of representatives from all the participating municipalities that was a contributory factor to LAG boards becoming so large under LEADER+ 2000-2006.

Posts on the board

The chairman of a LAG board in Denmark is elected at the general meeting, with the board subsequently deciding on a vice-chairman, treasurer and secretary (DFIA 2007a). As can be seen from table 9, 30% of the board members have a post on the board, while the remaining 70% are ordinary board members.

Table 9: Role on the board (N=454)

	%
Chairman	9
Vice-chairman	10
Treasurer	6
Secretary	4
Ordinary member of the board	70
Total	100

Groups represented on the board

Regarding the requirement that the four above-mentioned socio-economic groups must be catered for, 35% of the board members reply that they have been elected to the board for the group local associations, 27% for the group local citizens, 24% answer enterprises and trade organisations, while only 14% reply public authorities, cf. table 10. So the boards would not appear to be authorities dominated, and the 14% figure is far short of the Danish requirement of max. 30%

public representation and the regulation of the Council that max. 50% may be representatives of public authorities. It is difficult to know, however, if there are a number of board representatives who have one foot within public authorities via their work or via politics, but who have chosen to be a candidate for a company or a business organisation, local associations or local citizens. Likewise, it is difficult to know if the representatives of public authorities could also have represented the other groups because of their business career or leisure interests.

Table 10: Group for which one has been elected to the board (N=454)

	%
Public authorities	14
Enterprises and trade organisations	24
Local associations	35
Local citizens	27
Total	100

Calculated by LAG type, it can be seen that the proportion of board members elected for public authorities is clearly largest for the LAGs of fisheries, while the proportion of board members elected for local citizens is clearly lowest. The group 'Local associations' has the largest proportion of replies for all three LAG types. All LAG types seem to have one group that is clearly more weakly represented than the other three groups. For LAGs of fisheries it is, as mentioned, local citizens, while for the LAGs of rural areas and the integrated LAGs it is the group public authorities that is most weakly represented.

Table 11: Group for which one has been elected to the board calculated by LAG type (N=454)

	For which group have you been/were you elected to the board?				
	Public authorities	Enterprises and trade organisations	Local associations	Local citizens	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
LAGs of fisheries	26	32	35	6	100
LAGs of rural areas	14	22	36	29	100
Integrated LAGs	10	30	32	29	100

Background for representation on the board

There is a roughly equal distribution of the background for board members' representation on the LAG board. The largest proportion, 30%, state that they were chosen by their organisation/association to be a candidate. The next-largest, 28%, state that it was their own decision. The third-largest, 26%, have indicated that they were proposed by others as a

candidate prior to the general meeting. 13% of the board members ended up on the board because they were proposed as candidates at the general meeting itself. And a large percentage of the board members under the category 'Other background' are members of LAG boards nominated by an authority.

Table 12: Background for representation on the board (N=454)

	%
It was my own decision to be a candidate	28
I was chosen by my organisation/association to be a candidate	30
Others proposed me as a candidate prior to the general meeting	26
Others proposed me as a candidate at the general meeting itself	13
Other background	2
Total	100

Calculated by LAG type, it is LAGs of fisheries in particular that stand out, as no less than 35% of the board members of this group have been chosen by their organisation/association to be a candidate, and no less than 26% have been proposed at the general meeting itself. At the same time, only 19% have indicated that it was their own choice to be a candidate, and only 16% have indicated that they were proposed by others prior to the general meeting. A far less proportion of board members from the LAGs of rural areas and the integrated LAGs have been proposed as candidates at the general meeting itself. At the same time, a far larger proportion of these board members have themselves chosen to be a candidate.

Table 13: Background for representation on the board, calculated by LAG type (N=454)

	It was my own decision to be a candidate	I was chosen by my organisation/association to be a candidate	Others proposed me as a candidate prior to the general meeting	Others proposed me as a candidate at the general meeting itself	Other background	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
LAGs of fisheries	19	35	16	26	3	100
LAGs of rural areas	28	30	26	13	2	100
Integrated LAGs	30	30	31	7	2	100

Representation of a specific organisation

61 % of the board members have been able to indicate one particular organisation/association/enterprise/ authority they believe they represent. Some of the board members of this 61%, however, are less clear in what they indicate, stating that they represent various different ones within the same

group, e.g. within the category associations. One board member, for example, writes that (s)he represents: *"A number of local associations, e.g. the local support association, the local council, the football club, etc."*

Some, however, indicate various different affiliations in different groups and do not confine themselves to a single group. *"I feel I fit into all four categories: as a local council chairman, a farmer, as chairman of the tourist association, and as former deputy mayor of a municipality, and at present as a member of the municipal executive committee,"* one board member writes. Another writes: *"I am a whole human being, so I have several interests in rural life. I was asked to put myself forward as a candidate by the farmers' association and the local area I come from. So two sources."*

Other board members indicate that they represent one group, but also feel they have links to one or more of the other groups. *"I put myself forward as a citizen, but at the time of my election I was chairman of a local council and wanted for that same reason to be a member as well,"* one board member writes. Another writes: *"On paper I was put forward by a sports association, but feel that generally speaking I represent the rural districts, with of course best knowledge of my own home area."* A third person writes: *"I was chosen to represent the local farmers' association, but I naturally have the same ambition as most of the other active members – to create well-being in the local community."*

In conclusion, those should be mentioned who feel they do not represent anybody. *"I do not consider myself as representing any association or the like,"* one board member notes. Another person writes: *"It was indicated that I came from the trade council, but via my work on the board I did not as such represent any particular organisation."* A third person states that it is the strategy that he represents: *"I do not feel that we represent a particular island. But that we ought to look after the interests of the islands and, in the best and most loyal manner possible, take care of and work for the strategy we have chosen/reached agreement on."*

Motivation for joining the board

72 % of the board members indicate that to a great extent they have joined the board in order to be able to work with the development of their local areas. The second most frequently stated reason is that they have joined to work with issues to do with the rural districts and/or coastal areas in general. In this instance, 52% have stated that this was very much the case. The third most frequent reason given for joining the board is a wish to have an influence at a structural level. Here, 35% have indicated 'To a great extent'. No less

than 37% have marked 'Not at all' in connection with 'To work on developing my line of business'.

The most prominent reason indicated by those who have taken the job of coordinator has been in order to create contacts, to learn something or to work with issues related to the rural districts and/or coastal areas. 35% and 33% respectively have marked 'Not at all' in connection with 'to work on developing my local area' and 'To work on developing my line of business'.

Table 14: Reasons for joining the LAG board (N=454) and for taking the job of coordinator (N=46)

		To a great extent	To a certain extent	To a lesser extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
		%	%	%	%	%	%
To be able to work on developing my local area	B	72	20	6	1	1	100
	C	37	24	4	35	0	
To be able to work on developing my line of business	B	12	22	26	37	3	100
	C	30	24	9	33	4	
To make contacts	B	22	40	27	9	2	100
	C	35	52	4	7	2	
To learn something	B	18	37	36	7	2	100
	C	46	41	9	4	0	
To work with issues relating to the rural districts and/or coastal areas in general	B	52	34	11	2	1	100
	C	46	37	11	7	0	
To influence at a structural level (e.g. changing the system of regulations changing cooperation with the authorities)	B	35	31	23	9	2	100
	C	26	37	15	17	4	

B=Board respondents, C=Coordinator respondents

If one looks at divergences between the three types of LAGs, differences can especially be seen within the areas 'To work on developing my line of business' and 'To influence at a structural level (e.g. changing the system of regulations or changing cooperation with the authorities)'. Here it can be seen that the members of the LAGs of fisheries differ from the board members of the two other types of LAG, as a larger proportion state that they have joined the LAG to a great extent in order to work on developing their line of business. At the same time, a larger proportion of the board members of the LAGs of fisheries state that they have joined the LAG in order to influence at a structural level.

Table 15: Proportion that indicate they have joined the LAG in order to work on developing their line of business, calculated by LAG type (N=454)

	To be able to work on developing my line of business					Total
	To a great extent	To a certain extent	To a lesser extent	Not at all	Don't know	
	%	%	%	%	%	
LAGs of fisheries	26	23	19	29	3	100
LAGs of rural areas	9	20	27	41	3	100
Integrated LAGs	17	29	22	28	4	100

Table 16: Proportion that indicate they have joined the LAG in order to influence at a structural level, calculated by LAG type (N=454)

	To influence at a structural level (e.g. changing the system of regulations changing cooperation with the authorities)					Total
	To a great extent	To a certain extent	To a lesser extent	Not at all	Don't know	
	%	%	%	%	%	
LAGs of fisheries	45	35	13	0	6	100
LAGs of rural areas	36	31	22	9	2	100
Integrated LAGs	27	33	29	10	2	100

Knowledge of other board members when joining

12% of the board members did not know any of the others when they joined the LAG board, while 67% knew between one and five persons. 30% of the coordinators knew none of the board members when joining as a coordinator, while 44% knew between one and five persons. This might indicate that the coordinators lived to a certain extent outside the LAG areas, which is the case for about 40% of the coordinators.

Table 17: Knowledge of board members when joining as board members (N=454) and as coordinators (N=46)

	Board members	Co-ordinators
	%	%
No one	12	30
1-2 persons	32	22
3-5 persons	35	22
6-10 persons	18	17
More than 10 persons	4	9
Total	100	100

Proportion of the LAGs that have appointed a coordinator

In the Danish rural development programme, up to € 40,000 have been earmarked for the appointment of a coordinator in the outskirts and rural municipalities, and up to € 20,000 for the appointment of a coordinator in the intermediate

municipalities. These amounts, however, must not in total exceed 20% of the budget of the action groups (MFAF 2007, § 15). In the fisheries areas, a maximum of 10% of the total budget may be earmarked for administration, including a coordinator (MFAF 2007a, § 15). According to the guidelines, the tasks of a coordinator are:

- to head the secretariat for the local action group
- to function as a counsellor in connection with the initiation and implementation of projects to realise the local development strategy
- to monitor the implementation of the projects regarding project application and approval
- to be responsible for the day-to-day coordination of the tasks of the local action group regarding regional and local activities (MFAF 2007a and 2007b)

92 % of the board members reply that a coordinator has been appointed. As can be seen, it is mainly the intermediate municipalities that have not appointed a coordinator. The main reason for this is that they cannot afford to, and that the LAG buys assistance at individual case level when required. The same reasons can be deduced from the more detailed comments on the question. Here the respondents state that this is because they have not reached the stage of appointing one yet, or that they will try to solve the tasks on a voluntary, unpaid basis. Some also write that they use consultancy assistance paid for on an hourly basis.

Table 18: Has a coordinator been appointed? (N=454)

	%
Yes	92
No	8
Total	100

Table 19: Has a coordinator been appointed, calculated by municipality type (N=454)

	%		
	Yes	No	Total
Outskirt municipalities	98	2	100
Rural municipalities	98	2	100
Middle municipalities	56	44	100
LAGs crossing municipality types	100	0	100

Worth noting is that no less than 46% of the coordinators have been appointed less than half time and that 28% have been appointed approx. half time. Only 10 coordinators (22%) have been appointed full time.

Table 20: Level of employment of the coordinator? (N=46)

	%
Full time	22
Approx. ¾ time	4
Approx. ½ time	28
Less than ½ time	46
Total	100

The reason why the coordinator has not been employed full time is, in most cases, also an economic one, as an even larger proportion state that they cannot afford it.

The concrete work assignments of the coordinator

According to the board members and the coordinators, the concrete work assignments of the coordinator mainly comprise dealing with administrative tasks in relation to the Danish Food Industry Agency/Network Unit¹ (MA/NU). No less than 82% of the board members and 91% of the coordinators state that this is to a great extent the work assignment of the coordinator. This is followed by being secretary for the LAG board, with 72% of the board members and 83% of the coordinators indicating that this to a great extent is one of the concrete work assignments of the coordinators. The two areas 'To provide project makers with assistance' and 'To prepare project recommendations' then follow, with the third-highest levels of 'To a great extent'. The replies also show that neither among board members nor coordinators is there any expectation that the coordinator is to activate the local population, even though the coordinators indicate to a slightly higher extent than the board members imply that this is viewed as a concrete work assignment. A lesser proportion of the respondents see international network activities as being central.

¹ The Danish Food Industry Agency is part of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries. It works as the managing authority as well as the network unit for the rural development programme in Denmark – hereafter in short: MA/NU (Managing Authority/Network Unit).

5. The activities of the LAG boards

The local action groups are associations, and in the draft standard regulations it is laid down that no remuneration or any other form of compensation is to be paid to board members (MFAF 2007 and 2007a). So we are dealing with voluntary work in the LAG boards, where the majority of the board members cannot get financial compensation for their time elsewhere.

Number of hours spent and attendance percentage

The largest proportion of the board members, 22%, indicate that they have spent between 51 and 100 hours on LAG board work. A further 17% have spent more than 100 hours on such work.

Table 21: Number of hours spent on LAG board work (N=454)

	%
1-10 hours	5
11-20 hours	9
21-30 hours	17
31-40 hours	14
41-50 hours	16
51-100 hours	22
More than 100 hours	17
Total	100

Overall, there has been a very high level of attendance among board members.

Table 22: LAG board members' level of attendance (N=447)

	%
0-49 %	2
50-75 %	18
76-99 %	40
100 %	40
Total	100

Social events

Social events are held in just over 1/3 of the LAGs, and there does not seem to be any explicit wish among board members for an increase in this type of activity. The need is, however, slightly greater according to the coordinators.

Activities in which board members have taken part

Formulating the development strategy and deciding on projects are the activities most board members have indicated they have taken part in to a great extent. Once

again, the LAGs of fisheries stand out, since a minority of them had gotten to the stage of participating in such activities when the questionnaire was to be replied to. The same applies to the respondents from the middle municipalities.

Table 23: In which of the following activities have you taken part as an LAG board member? (N=454)

	To a great extent	To a certain extent	To a lesser extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Formulated the development strategy	59	27	6	7	1	100
Appointed a coordinator	33	21	19	25	2	100
Deciding on projects	59	13	8	18	2	100
Requested new board members to put themselves forward	9	18	26	44	3	100
Taken part in open events organised by the LAG board	32	28	13	25	2	100
Taken knowledge of possibilities home to my local area	37	41	14	7	2	100
Taken part in national network activities	10	16	17	54	3	100
Taken part in international network activities	2	2	7	87	3	100

Table 24: Proportion of respondents that have decided on projects, calculated by LAG type (N=454)

	To a great extent	To a certain extent	To a lesser extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
LAGs of fisheries	16	13	16	48	6	100
LAGs of rural areas	61	13	8	16	2	100
Integrated LAGs	69	10	7	13	1	100

Calculated by municipality type, it is also natural that a smaller proportion of the board members in the intermediate municipalities have been involved in appointing a coordinator, since, as mentioned, fewer such municipalities actually have a coordinator. Apart from that, the differences between the types of municipality are largest for the activity 'Decided on projects', where a far lesser proportion of the board members in the intermediate municipalities have been involved. No less than 44% indicate that they have not yet decided on projects.

Table 25: Proportion of respondents that have decided on projects, calculated by municipality type (N=454)

	To a great extent	To a certain extent	To a lesser extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Outskirt municipalities	62	14	6	17	2	100
Rural municipalities	74	12	6	7	1	100
Middle municipalities	18	16	19	44	3	100
LAGs crossing municipality types	47	9	11	30	4	100

The process of preparing the development strategy is described by many of the board members and slightly fewer coordinators as to a great extent or to some extent being a good process. There is a tendency for the board members to feel to a greater extent than the coordinators that it is the board members who have spearheaded the process of preparing the development strategy. At the same time, more coordinators than board members feel that the coordinator has spearheaded the process of formulating the strategy.

Table 26: How the process of preparing the development strategy has gone for board members (N=454) and for coordinators (N=46)

		To a great extent	To a certain extent	To a lesser extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
		%	%	%	%	%	%
It has been a good process	B	46	36	8	2	8	100
	C	39	46	9	0	7	
The other members of the LAG association have been involved in the formulation of our strategy	B	37	34	12	7	9	100
	C	37	28	30	2	2	
As board members we have spearheaded the process in formulating our strategy	B	57	27	7	0	8	100
	C	28	33	26	9	4	
The coordinator was appointed sufficiently in advance to be able to help us develop our strategy	B	46	21	11	15	8	100
	C	54	20	11	13	2	
The coordinator has spearheaded the process of formulating our strategy	B	21	33	16	20	9	100
	C	33	26	17	20	4	
The board/the coordinator ² has/have had sufficient knowledge to be able to formulate our strategy	B	30	44	13	4	9	100
	C	46	37	4	4	9	

B=Board respondents, C=Coordinator respondents

² The formulations were not completely identical here. For the board respondents: "We on the board have had sufficient knowledge to be able to formulate the strategy." For the coordinator respondents: "I have had sufficient knowledge to be able to contribute to formulating the strategy."

The LAG boards' working method

The LAG boards' working method would seem only to a very small extent to be innovative. The chairmen contribute actively to creating a good atmosphere on the board. The board members take part to a certain extent in activities over and above the board meetings. Coordinators indicate this to a lesser extent than board members.

Table 27: What the board's working method is characterised by for the board members (N=454) and for coordinators (N=46)

		To a great extent	To a certain extent	To a lesser extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
		%	%	%	%	%	%
The chairman has too much of a say	B	3	17	36	37	7	100
	C	2	17	41	39	0	
The chairman actively ensures a good atmosphere on the board	B	51	35	8	1	6	100
	K	37	43	11	7	2	
Everybody has an equal say	B	9	39	34	12	6	100
	C	13	30	24	30	2	
The working method is innovative	B	7	30	42	15	7	100
	C	4	22	37	33	4	
There is a high level of agreement on the board	B	26	55	11	3	5	100
	C	28	52	11	4	4	
The initial input of the coordinator stimulates the work	B	31	43	13	6	6	100
	C	33	59	2	0	7	
Board members are also active outside board meetings	B	22	51	16	2	9	100
	K	11	54	33	2	0	
We are working for a common objective	B	50	37	6	1	6	100
	C	48	43	9	0	0	
We talk a great deal about the overall strategy	B	29	50	15	2	5	100
	C	20	46	22	9	4	

B=Board respondents, C=Coordinator respondents

Inclusion of the association members

There does not seem to be much inclusion of the members of the LAG associations, and large sections of both the board members and the coordinators indicate that they are included to a lesser extent or not at all. Calculated by municipality types, it is the intermediate municipalities who have indicated to the lowest degree that they have included association members. Information provided to the rest of the population about the possibilities of the LAG mainly takes place via the LAG website or the press.

Table 28: Degree of inclusion of association members for board members (N= 454) and coordinators (N=46)

	Board members	Coordinators
	%	%
To a great extent	9	4
To a certain extent	39	50
To a lesser extent	30	33
Not at all	10	9
Don't know	12	4
Total	100	100

In the reply to the questionnaire there are detailed replies as to how members have been included. This has taken place in connection with such formal occasions as the approval of the development strategy, by holding meetings (including citizen meetings/public meetings) and via the general meetings, where attempts have been made to make them extra-interesting. Within the more informal area, a number of respondents state that they ask members who have specialist knowledge within a particular area. Otherwise, members are orientated via websites (which include the debate forum), newsletters, e-mails with requests for a response, brochures and via the press. In some cases, members' meetings are also held before application deadlines and excursions to successful projects are organised. It is also mentioned that members are included in various hearings. A few respondents indicate that work group meetings and project meetings are established in which members participate.

The objectives of the LAG board's work

Settlement and trade development are the objectives given top priority in board work, while the development of nature and the environment is given slightly lower priority. 'Softer' values such as creating increased awareness of the issues related to rural and coastal areas, improvement of cooperation between players, etc. are seen as objectives by many people. With regard to the way in which the boards gets to work on issues there are low indications that the board should support many but small projects. The same applies to supporting few but large projects and that the board itself should formulate and initiate framework projects. This could possibly indicate that the boards have not yet decided on a real strategy as to what projects they wish to support. There are also low indications of insight into rural and/or coastal area development in other countries being an objective. Calculated by LAG type, it can be seen that a larger proportion of the LAGs of fisheries see trade development rather than settlement being an objective. Calculated by type of municipality, settlement is given top priority in outskirts municipalities, followed by rural municipalities, LAGs crossing municipality types and finally intermediate municipalities. The

same tendency is found for trade development. When nature and the environment are in focus, however, the picture changes – here it is the intermediate municipalities that have the highest level of 'To a great extent'.

The target group for the work

The target group for the LAG association's work is mainly indicated as being local business life and the rural population. These are followed by independent enterprises and single individuals.

Results

Taking the results until the time of the implementation of the questionnaire into account, many board members feel that they have prepared a good strategy; the indications for the coordinators is slightly lower in 'To a great extent', but if combined with 'To a certain extent', the proportions are equally large for the two groups. About 2/3 of board members indicate that to a high or certain extent they have supported some good projects, while 1/4 of the board members and 1/5 of the coordinators state that they have not supported projects at all. Relatively high proportions of both board members and coordinators feel that to a high or certain extent a good atmosphere has been established on the board. Regarding the building up of the relationship to members and of good external cooperation relations, fewer see this result as having been achieved. The LAGs of fisheries have lower indications in their description of results within the building up of cooperation on the board, a good, well-developed website, information in the press and external cooperation relations.

Table 29: How you would describe results until now for board members (N=453) and coordinator (N=44)

		To a great extent	To a certain extent	To a lesser extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
		%	%	%	%	%	%
We have developed a good strategy	B	66	28	2	0	3	100
	C	47	47	5	0	2	
We have gained a good understanding of subsidy regulations and our own strategy in practice.	B	26	51	13	3	6	100
	C	18	68	11	0	2	
We have supported some good projects	B	36	26	8	25	5	100
	C	32	30	14	20	5	
We have established good internal cooperation on the board	B	49	36	9	2	5	100
	C	39	45	14	0	2	
We have established a good relationship to members of the LAG association.	B	17	42	27	6	9	100
	C	5	50	41	0	5	
We have established a good, well-developed website.	B	32	43	15	4	6	100
	C	32	57	5	5	2	

We have provided good information about our work to the press	B	29	48	17	1	4	100
	C	39	43	11	5	2	
We have established good external cooperation relations	B	11	45	26	4	14	100
	C	20	45	27	2	5	

B=Board respondents, C=Coordinator respondents

6. LAG boards working together with public authorities...

The cooperation relations of the LAG boards have differed according to whether we are dealing with the municipality, the region or the MA/NU.

Cooperation with the municipality

Replies concerning cooperation with the municipalities show that coordinators have higher indications that cooperation has taken place 'To a great extent' than is the case for board members. This is only natural, as it is the coordinators who have had to do the concrete work in connection with the cooperation. Cooperation has mainly taken the form of meetings held with the municipality, and the municipalities have offered secretariat assistance. It is far less widespread for the municipalities to have given subsidies for remunerating coordinators and for projects. Despite high indications of a dearth of concrete cooperation areas, there is nevertheless a positive view of the role of the municipality towards the LAG from a large section of both board members and coordinators.

Among board members, there are slightly over 150 persons who have provided additional comments as to how cooperation with the municipality has taken place and how this cooperation could be described. These more detailed comments show that a majority of these respondents are positive in what they say. It is obvious that cooperation has been strongest during the start-up phase, when municipalities in many areas have taken the initiative in convening people to information meetings and general meetings about the formation of the LAGs.

One board member writes about this cooperation that it has been: *"Exemplary. Perhaps to a great extent because of a committed municipal employee who supported the initial phase."* There are, however, clear differences as to how this cooperation has taken place. Another board member writes as an example of a minimalist way of defining cooperation: *"Since there are municipal officials in the LAG group, it is obvious that there is a cooperation."* A third board member expresses the importance of political backing, writing: *"We have received plenty of backing from the municipality and the town council, and it means a lot to have political backing."* A fourth person talks about the necessity of cooperation, stating that there has been *"Highly constructive cooperation which has been quite indispensable."* Furthermore, a respondent writes that *"The municipality has been extremely active in the establishment of the LAG and for 2008 has given a subsidy of € 53,500, placed at the free disposal of the LAG. Their attitude is generally speaking extremely positive – this also*

applies to the two board members designated by the town council."

More negative comments about cooperation with the municipality include such statements as: *"You lose the desire and the interest to get involved in voluntary work."* *"The municipality hasn't realised at all what opportunities there are for cooperating with the LAG, e.g. supplementing operating costs/coordinator and co-financing."* A third respondent writes: *"The municipality is not at all flexible when it comes to small services such as lending us premises. A certain readiness to help would not be out of place, seeing what work the LAG does (free of charge!) for the municipality."* One board member also stresses that it all depends on what part of the administration one approaches, writing: *"The municipality is not one single entity. You get treated differently, according to who you are speaking to. It has taken some time to get key persons in the municipal administration to understand that the LAG is an independent player in relation to the municipality."*

There are also statements that make it clear that some board members do not wish to have cooperation with the municipality. Here are two examples: *"The chairman and individual members do not view the objective as being a cooperation between the public (the municipality) and other associations. The municipality should preferably not participate is directly expressed"* *"The board has emphasised that the LAG is not municipal."*

From an economic point of view, the board members' more detailed replies reveal that the cooperation has resulted in anything from no municipal subsidy to the LAG, more than € 3,500 in subsidy, and up to € 265,000 in subsidy for one LAG.

About 40 coordinators have elaborated their replies regarding cooperation. These replies also point in various directions, even though most of them are positive in their description of the cooperation with the municipality. One coordinator describes the situation of physically sitting in the municipal administration: *"There are both advantages and disadvantages, but in this case, so far, I feel that the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. The municipality has not in any way tried to 'lay down the law' for the LAG - there is fine cooperation and a willingness to cooperate on both sides. It works really well, and we gain far better synergy in local development by having such close, coordinated cooperation. Definitely."* Another person describes things less positively, but as having developmental potential: *"You can easily get the impression that the development of rural areas has been outsourced from the municipality to the LAG. When the coordinator spends half his or her time by the municipality, and it proves difficult to*

resolve the LAG assignments in the time assigned to them, it is very much a personality matter whether the coordinator's boss accepts this or not. If it is not accepted, you can get the feeling that the development of rural areas is not given all that high a priority. Personally, I feel that LAG work is a particularly attractive asset for the work of the municipality. The municipality ought to be able to see and recognise this and be supportive – for example, by granting the other half-time job as a municipal rural area coordinator.” A third person points to the ambiguity of both cooperating and keeping a certain distance at one and the same time: *“It is always a balancing act to ask the municipality for money for co-funding and at the same time ask them to ‘keep their noses out’ of what the money is going to be spent on.”*

Cooperation with the region

Cooperation with the region has not been all that widespread. If calculated by region, cooperation has been greatest in the regions of Zealand, Central Jutland and South Denmark. The commonest description of the cooperation is that the region is represented on the board. There are, however, examples of region representatives not having taken part in board meetings at the time of the implementation of the questionnaire.

About 120 board members have replied in detail as to what cooperation with the region has consisted of and how it could be described. Most of these detailed replies describe cooperation with the region by saying that the region has a representative on the board: *“We have a proficient representative in the LAG from the region,”* one board member states.

There are, however, a number of replies which make it clear that in several areas the region representatives do not take part in the board meetings: *“In practice, we have not noticed their existence,”* one respondent writes. Another writes that *“The region has been conspicuous by its absence from the meetings. Not even the general meeting led to attendance or an expression of regret at not being able to come.”* Another board member remarks more acidly: *“The region is non-existent.”* While another one writes: *“The region is too preoccupied with its new hospital, unfortunately.”*

There are though detailed replies which indicate that in certain areas there is a positive cooperation with the region: *“The region has provided a subsidy for the preparation of the development strategy and for information concerning the strategy,”* one board member writes. Another emphasises that *“The region deserves great praise for its backing and support. We have not held any meetings, but that is because we have not felt the need to do so.”* A third person describes a relatively well-developed cooperation with the region in the

following way: *"The region holds regular meetings for LAG chairmen. At slightly longer intervals meetings are also held in which the board members designated by the regions participate. A conference has also been held."* Another illustration of a well-developed cooperation with the region is the following: *"The LAG has been/is represented in committee work in the region. There is an active region representative in the LAG. Assistance and advice are available. Regular meetings are held throughout the region with other LAG representatives."* A final example shows that the LAG and the region's growth forum have pitted their strength against each other: *"There have been border skirmishes between the growth forum and LAG regarding coordination and responsibility for rural area development,"* one board member writes. Another board member also underlines that the coordinator and chairman possibly have greater cooperation with the region than is the case for the rest of the board members. The detailed replies of several coordinators indicates that this is the case. *"The region has formed a network for coordinators that we make use of. In addition, there has been positive cooperation with the administration in connection with the development strategy. The representative of the region on the board is extremely active,"* writes one coordinator. Another states: *"The region has been very active in connection with this establishing of the LAGs in the region. They have taken the initiative for meetings and send out material that the LAGs also get from other sources – a bit of a double effort."*

Some of the coordinators, however, describe that the cooperation has not been all that well established in concrete terms. *"The region has a very positive attitude and offers support, though mainly moral support,"* one coordinator writes. Another one points out that *"The region has not designated a representative, and seven months have now passed since the general meetings."*

Cooperation with MA/NU

The relation to the MA/NU differs between the coordinators and board members. The coordinators have a more established relation than is the case for the board members, where awareness is not all that marked. A very small proportion of the board members make use of counselling from the FI/Network Centre. A relatively large proportion of the coordinators feel that the FI/Network Centre is to a great extent available for counselling and support. The lowest indication of coordinator satisfaction is to be found in relation to the website, which only a small proportion of the coordinators find to a great extent functions well and is informative.

About 75 board members have elaborated on their replies concerning the relation to the MA/NU. Several state that it is

mainly the chairman and coordinator who have contact with the MA/NU. Apart from that, a relatively large proportion of the replies seem to be relatively negative concerning the system of regulations and administration behind the scheme, which is described as bureaucratic. One board member writes about the MA/NU: *"The directorate is too restrictive and controlling. Gets hung up in far too many minor matters and paragraphs. It ought also to be more clear about itself when we set out."* Another board member points out: *"I feel that the MA/NU tries to dominate the LAG too much, and this stifles initiatives and work – we aren't do anything without having asked the MA/NU first. This doesn't create the dynamics and independent liberty of action we would like to create. The LAG has become an extension of the MA/NU."* Some respondents fear that people will refrain from applying since it seems to be so complicated. One writes: *"The applications seem to be too complicated. This perhaps prevents 'the right people' from applying."* Another respondent asks for greater freedom to experiment. *"How about giving people a bit more latitude and allowing free initiative to flourish. Let people deeply interested in a certain subject be allowed to experiment without insisting on results. Maybe this will lead nowhere in many cases, but just a few projects that are truly innovative can change the whole way we are and think,"* this person writes.

There are, however, also positive statements about the relation to the MA/NU. One person writes that *"It has been instructive to have them there on the sideline when we started and were formulating our development strategy."* Another stresses that there has been *"Quick, efficient procedure when the need was there. But some of the regulations are (even for experienced legalists like me) pretty difficult to work out."* A third person writes: *"I have the impression that they want to help us with everything we ask them about within the limited economic possibilities we share."* Lastly, one person writes that *"The Network Unit has drawn attention to their being at our disposal – and they try to live up to this aim – I think they are successful. They openly state that that they are trying things out – that form and content are also new to them – and that we are welcome to come with our input – which they also accept, and this enhances their credibility."*

One board member makes the suggestion that the MA/NU should take part in board meetings from time to time, so that issues can be clarified on an on-going basis. Others indicate, though, that this has already occurred.

The coordinators have given about 20 detailed replies connected with this subject. Here too there would seem to be both negative and positive perceptions of the relation to the MA/NU, although a large proportion does express frustration

at the many regulations. One writes: *"It is not a network unit but an administrative authority. For that reason, I cannot use them for support/counselling either, only to clarify administrative issues."* Another coordinator writes: *"I have a feeling that most of the regulations come from the EU and not from the directorate. No matter which, the result is that the independence of the boards – which is the whole point of establishing a LAG – is not always respected. In this connection, I am for example thinking of details of writing in their regulations."* A third stresses very positively: *"The LAG has had especially good cooperation with the MA/NU. The rural development programme is new – also for the MA/NU – and they are carrying out a serious, competent piece of work in offering counsel and advice."*

7. Discussing the survey results

In this concluding section we take a slightly closer look at the commitment of the board members to the LAG partnerships, the representation of specific organisations/associations as opposed to individual representation on the LAG boards and leadership of the LAG partnerships.

The commitment to the partnerships

It is interesting to assess to what extent the individual groupings have committed themselves to the LAG partnership. The commitment to the LAG boards is, among other things, relevant when trying to assess LAG partnerships' strength and ability to survive. As mentioned, the proportional distribution of the board members over the four socio-economic groups on the LAG boards is as follows:

- Authorities: 14%
- Enterprises and trade organisations: 24%
- Local associations: 35%
- Local citizens: 27%

Members from the desired sides/partners on the LAG boards are thereby allocated. Since there have been limitations on how many may be represented on the board from the four groups, the figures cannot immediately be used to assess the commitment of the groups to the LAG partnerships. According to the executive order, there may not be more than 30% public representation on the boards.

If one measures the commitment in terms of work performance/working hours, the public instances have also here had the least commitment. We can see, for example, that a strikingly larger proportion of the respondents from this group have spent less than 50 hours on work on the LAG board during the period they have participated. Apart from the public representative constituting the smallest of the four socio-economic groups in terms of numbers, the representatives of this group would not seem either to dominate work on the board in terms of time.

It is also interesting that the respondents from the enterprises group spend roughly the same proportion of the time on board work as is the case for the associations group and the local citizens group.

Table 30: Hours spent on work on the LAG board for the present board respondents, who joined in 2007, calculated by group.

	How many hours have you spent so far on work on the LAG board?							Total
	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-100	> 100	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Public authorities(N=53)	6	8	21	17	19	21	9	100
Enterprises and trade organisations(N=90)	0	2	14	13	24	28	18	100
Local associations (N=125)	0	6	10	16	15	28	24	100
Local citizens (N=90)	1	1	21	13	14	23	26	100
Total (N=358)	1	4	16	15	18	26	21	100

Apart from the time consumption, the commitment can be measured in terms of the attendance level of the individual groups. The attendance level is lowest for the group of public respondents, and highest for the group of local associations and local citizens. The group of enterprises and trade organisations also has a high level of attendance. This explains the lower time consumption for the authorities group but is also further documentation that the authorities group does not dominate the partnership in relation to attendance and time spent.

Table 31: Attendance among present members, calculated by group.

	Attendance levels				Total
	0-49 %	50-75 %	76-99 %	100 %	
	%	%	%	%	%
Public authorities(N=59)	8	32	42	17	100
Enterprises and trade organisations(N=103)	0	16	48	37	100
Local associations (N=148)	3	11	36	49	100
Local citizens (N=113)	0	18	35	48	100
Total (N=423)	2	17	39	41	100

Another way of testing commitment can be to look at what groups have been chosen to fill the various posts on the board – especially the post of chairman. The below table shows extremely clearly, that the post of chairman is not filled by board members from the public group. It is mainly the group of local associations and local citizens that hold the post of chairman on the boards. When it comes to the post of vice-chairman, this is equally divided between the enterprises groups, the group of local associations and the group of local citizens. The post of treasurer is mainly held by the enterprises group and the group of local citizens, while the post of secretary is found within the enterprises group, the associations group and the citizens group.

Table 32: Number of respondents within each group holding the various board posts, for present members (N=429)

	What is your present role on the board?					Total
	Chairman	Vice-chairman	Treasurer	Secretary	Ordinary member	
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Public authorities	1	1	0	0	60	62
Enterprises and trade organisations	7	15	11	5	65	103
Local associations	20	15	7	8	98	148
Local citizens	15	13	11	7	70	116
Total	43	44	29	20	293	429

Representation of specific organisations/associations as opposed to individual representation

It is also interesting to examine the representation of the interests and underlying legitimacy of specific organisations as opposed to more individual representation. In this connection it is first and foremost relevant to determine whether the board members actually see themselves as being present on the LAG board as single individuals or as representatives of organisations and the like. This can mainly be seen on the basis of how many who indicate that they represent a specific organisation/associations/enterprise/authority on the LAG board. The below table shows that this, as previously mentioned, applies to 61% of board members.

Table 33: Number of members who represent a specific organisation/association/enterprise/authority (N=454)

	%
Do not feel they represent a specific organisation...	39
Feel they represent a specific organisation ...	61
Total	100

There are, however, among this 61%, respondents who are less clear in indicating whether they represent one specific organisation. In their more detailed replies they state that they represent various different organisations within the same category, or that they could in fact fit all of the four socio-economic groups, e.g. as a local council chairman, a farmer, the chairman of a tourist association and a municipal executive committee member, which is what one board member states.

That the picture regarding representation or not of specific organisations is muddy can also be seen from how large a proportion of the socio-economic group 'Local citizens' indicate that they feel they represent a specific organisation. This applies to about ¼ of the board members involved. The more detailed replies reveal that most of these people feel a

connection with local association life, although there are a few examples of respondents feeling they represent a town council, a trade organisation, etc.

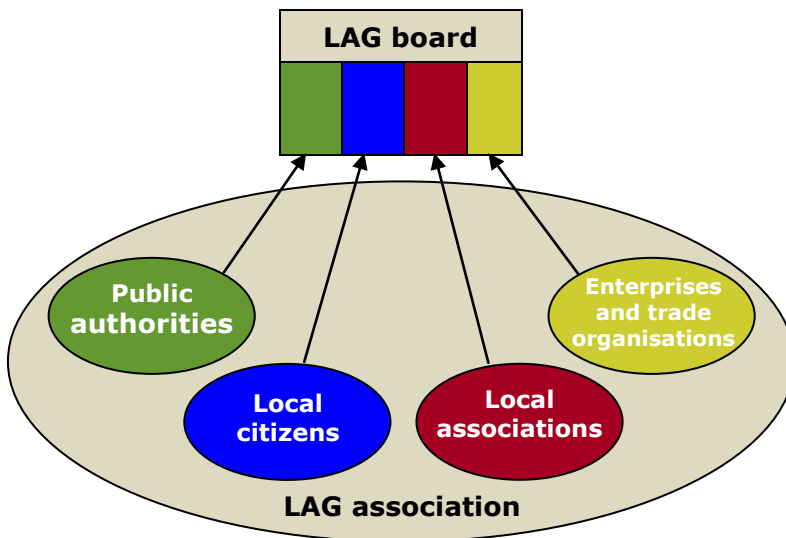
Table 34: Proportion of the socio-economic group 'local citizens' that feel they represent a specific organisation/ association/enterprise/authority

	Yes	No	Total
Number	32	91	123
%	26	74	100

For representatives of public authorities who indicate that they represent a specific organisation, this is far less contradicted by the free-text replies.

The below figure shows how the ministry has chosen to illustrate the composition of the LAG partnerships. The four socio-economic groups are represented in the partnership and, according to the illustration, they maintain so to speak their 'colour' when entering into the partnership. The muddled picture that emerged above, however, suggests that the illustration does not reflect reality, since even though a great proportion of the board members indicate that they represent particular underlying organisations, they qualify this slightly when they are to name one specific organisation.

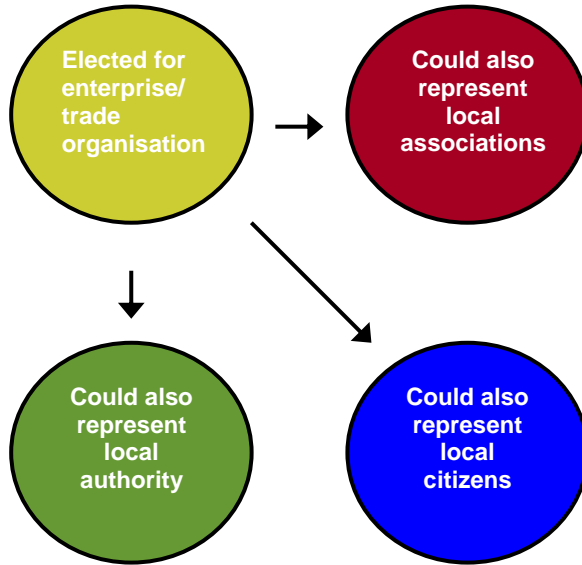
Figure A: The ministry's illustration of the composition of the partnership in the local action groups



There are then several examples of an LAG board member being elected for one group (one colour in the above illustration), but in fact just as well being able to represent

one or more of the other colours, as can be seen from the below illustration.

Figure B: Representation that allows for more than one interpretation



It is difficult to assess what the best way is of indicating the presence of the socio-economic groups. On the one hand, a strict control of the regulations maybe guarantees a greater degree of inclusion in the LAGs, since weak socio-economic groups would possibly not be kept outside. On the other hand, it can be argued that one is maintaining certain dividing lines that are artificial, since many – as whole human beings – actually belong to more than one camp.

One way of examining if the board members are sitting on the boards in order to take care of the interests of their base of support can be to check whom the various groups see as being 'to a great extent' the target group for their work. It can be seen from the below table that it is predominantly the local association activities that to a great extent is considered to be the target group, followed by independent enterprises. However, it is interesting – even though it is not all that clear – that public authorities are the group with the highest indications that the municipality is to a great extent a target group.

At the same time, the group of enterprises and trade organisations is the one that has the highest indications that independent enterprises are to a great extent a target group. The local associations group is high (though not highest) in indicating that local association activities are to a great extent

a target group. And the local citizens group has the highest indications that individuals are to a great extent a target group. It is also interesting that within the group of local associations only a few see enterprises as being to a great extent a target group. This could be due to the fact that the respondents from the local associations group competes with this group for funding.

Table 35: Whom the board respondents see as 'to a great extent' being the target group for the LAG association, calculated by the group for which one was elected (N=453)

	Who do you view as the target group for the work of the LAG association?			
	The municipality	Independent enterprises	Local association activities	Single individuals
	%	%	%	%
Public authorities	16	26	55	7
Enterprises and trade organisations	15	50	67	21
Local associations	13	19	67	21
Local citizens	10	31	69	24

Generally speaking, the detailed replies of what has motivated board members to get involved in the board seem to reveal a broad wish to help create local development and to be involved in the development of society, i.e. a tendency that points towards a holistic orientation. One person states that he *owed it*, another talks about the importance of *being actively involved* in one's local area. A third writes that it is to *raise the view of rural areas* up onto a level that thinks more globally. A fourth person writes that it is out of a sense of *duty*, while a fifth mentions *active responsibility* for development at a local level. Another example of the holistic orientation was, as formerly mentioned, the board member who, from identity considerations, stated: *"I do not feel that we represent a particular island. But that we ought to look after the interests of the islands and, in the best and most loyal manner possible, take care of and work for the strategy we have chosen/reached agreement on."*

Collaborative leadership

Partnerships are characterised by a form of collaborative leadership, where the challenge is to get various groupings, each with their specific aims, to agree on common objectives. To assess whether or not this has been successful, it is relevant to look at what the various groupings feel are the aims of the collaboration, and how the working method of the LAG boards can thus be assessed. As regards the former, there are indications in the results from the questionnaire that there is general agreement on aims but differences to be found between board respondents and coordinators and

between the various types of LAGs and types of municipalities.

Difference between board respondents and coordinators has to do with their being motivated by different things in relation to their joining and appointment in the LAG. The board respondents are motivated by being able to work on developing their local areas, and being able to work with issues related to the rural areas and/or coastal areas in general and being able to make their influence felt at a structural level. If one looks at the coordinators, on the other hand, the reason for their having chosen to take the job of coordinator has more been in order to create contacts, to learn something or to work on issues relating to the rural areas and/or coastal areas in general.

Furthermore, it is typical of the various LAG types that the respondents for LAGs of fisheries stand out, since a greater proportion of these indicate that they have to a great extent joined the LAG in order to work on developing their own line of business and influencing at a structural level. To a greater extent than the other LAG types, they also view trade development as being an objective.

Calculated by types of municipality, it is the respondents from the outskirts municipalities that to the greatest extent see settlement and trade development as being objectives, followed by the rural municipalities, the cross-municipality type LAGs (which mainly comprise rural and outskirts municipalities) and finally the middle municipalities. Regarding the improvement of nature and the environment, it is the middle municipalities that to the greatest extent see this as being an objective.

No calculations have been made of diverging aims within the individual LAGs. The above would seem to indicate that it is rather between various LAG types and types of municipality that the differences are largest. It could be interesting to pursue the replies right down to the individual LAG level to test whether there are diverging reasons for involvement and diverging aims for work on the individual LAG boards despite a common development strategy.

Apart from generating agreement on common objectives, a challenge of cooperative leadership in partnerships can also be the creation of mutual trust between parties. In the questionnaire there was therefore a question as to what extent social events have been held with the aim of creating a good cooperation on the board. An affirmative answer has been given by about a third of both board and coordinator respondents. A slightly larger proportion of coordinator respondents than board respondents feel that there is a need of further social events where such have been held, while an

only slightly larger proportion of coordinator and board respondents feel there is such a need when social events have not been held.

Those answering the questionnaire were also directly asked about the board's working method, which appears to be highly traditional. So there is only a very small proportion of both board and coordinator respondents, who feel, that the working method is innovative. No less than 57% of the board respondents and 70% of the coordinator respondents state that the working method is either to a less extent or not at all innovative.

8. Conclusion/summary

- The Danish LAG boards are organised as associations, with open and free membership. All those over 15 are eligible to become members of the LAG association in the area in which they live, and they can also take part in the annual election to the board. The board members, who must be at least 18 years old, are chosen for two years at a time at the general meeting of the LAG association in the spring. Board members are elected for one of the groups: 1) Local citizens, 2) Local enterprises and trade organisations, 3) Local associations and 4) Public authorities.
- There is a skewed gender and age distribution on the Danish LAG boards, which predominately consist of elder men. The distribution between the coordinators is more equal. Almost exclusively, it is people born in Denmark who are involved as board member or coordinator. The educational background for both board members and coordinators is remarkably high compared with the rest of the Danish population. At the same time, there are a very high number of self-employed people among the board members.
- Only 14% of the board members represent public authorities, so there is still a long way to go to the Danish requirement of maximum 30% public representation and the Council regulation of maximum 50% public representation. Even though about two thirds of the board members initially state that they represent one specific organisation/association/enterprise/authority, no clear picture emerges when they are to name a specific organisation. This is because many of the board members could actually have put themselves forward for more than one of the listed four groups.
- If the motivation for getting involved in the LAG boards is compared for the board members and the coordinators, the latter group mainly talk of a professional or work-related motivation, while the former group has mainly got involved in order to stimulate local development or influence at a structural level.
- Most of the LAGs have appointed a coordinator, but it is striking that about half of the coordinators have been employed for less than half time, and about ¼ have been employed for about ½ time. The reason mainly given for this is a financial one – nothing more can be afforded.

- The LAG board members have had a very high level of attendance at board meetings during the start-up phase, with no less than 80% of the board members taking part in over $\frac{3}{4}$ of the meetings and no less than 98% taking part in over half of the meetings. Representatives of the public authorities group are those who have spent least time on board work and have the lowest level of attendance. This may have to do with the fact that public representatives almost exclusively sit on the boards as ordinary members.
- Most time is spent on formulating the development strategy and deciding on projects, which are also seen as the most important results during the start-up period. The LAGs of fisheries differ from the other LAG types, as a minority of them have decided on projects, since they started up later than the other types of LAG. Nor have the middle municipality LAGs decided on projects to any great extent as yet, which is partly because they receive less funding than the other Danish LAGs.
- During the start-up period the association's members have not been included to any great extent. The rest of the population in the area is mainly informed about the activities of the LAG via its website or via the press.
- The objective with the highest priority for the work of the LAGs is settlement and trade development, while the development of nature and the environment has a slightly lower priority. The target group for the work of the LAG association is mainly local association activities and the rural population. This is followed by independent enterprises and single individuals.
- The cooperation relations of the LAG boards have varied, depending on whether one is dealing with municipality, the region or the MA/NU. Cooperation has been closest with the municipalities, which in most instances have initiated the establishment of a LAG, and a majority of the board members and coordinators also describe it as positive. Cooperation with the regions has not been all that widespread, although certain regions differ in this respect. Cooperation with the MA/NU has mainly taken place via the coordinators. Both coordinators and board members find the set of regulations relating to LAGs extremely comprehensive.

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