



REPORT ON THE APPLICATION OF LEADER APPROACH IN TURKEY

2021



18 DECEMBER 2021

REPORT ON THE APPLICATION OF LEADER APPROACH IN TURKEY-2021¹

Local Action Group Associations (LAG), by receiving grants from Agricultural and Rural Development Support Institution (ARDSI) within the scope of EU LEADER Approach and by implementing the local development strategies (LDS) which they prepared, have started the development activities of their regions since September of 2020. In order for LEADER Approach program to be implemented in a better way and to be managed more efficiently-productively, this study was conducted so that the challenges encountered in practice and the proposals of solutions can be detected and so that the detected facts can be presented to the Managing Authority of Rural Development Program of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry as Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance Rural Development-IPARD and to the ARDSI and competent authorities.

In order to detect the problems LAG Associations met and their needs, This study was carried out in February of 2021 with face-to-face interviews with the LAG representatives within the process and via an online survey sent over WhatsApp program to the phone numbers of those of contacted LAG managers and LDS specialists and members of the board of directors which 50 LAG Associations established in 64 districts an in 12 provinces gave to the competent authorities for contact within the scope of EU LEADER program.

1. FACTS OF STUDY

The associations the poll was conducted in is shown in Table-1. Participation in the poll has shown a homogenous distribution as per the region, province, district and associations.

Table-1: Participation in The Poll

Participation in The Poll	Participation in The Poll					
	LAG Associations	%	Provinces Where LAG Associations Were Located	%	Districts Where LAG Associations Were Located	%
Those participated in	34	68	12	100	46	72
Those not participated	16	32	0	0	18	28
Total	50	100	12	100	64	100

There are 50 LAG Associations established in 64 districts an in 12 provinces within the scope of EU LEADER Program in Turkey. 68% of LAG Associations participated in the poll. It was seen that 100 % out of 12 provinces; approximately 72% out of 64 districts provided participation in the poll.

Some Association managers not participated in the poll was reached on the phone. A

¹ The study was carried out by LEADER Expert and Assistant Professor at Istanbul Ayyansaray University Orhan Polat on behalf of LEADER Community (AYKIK-DER). It was published in Turkish on 01 March 2021 and in English on 18 December 2021.

member of the board of directors of an Association which a phone call was made with stated that LAG Association was established and managed by a Consulting Company, and that he wouldn't participate in the poll without having the consent of the consulting company. LAG Association is a non-governmental organization established as non-profit and for providing social support for the region. LAG Association's being managed by a manager and an employee of a consulting company aiming to sustain its life by making profit is an antipodal behaviour to the goals and founding philosophy of LAG Association. It is an unexpected thing for a LAG Association to participate in such a study with a social goal in terms of protecting the interests of a company

It can be drawn a conclusion from this that the contact details which some associations not-participants in the poll declared for national-rural network was the only data, that the information on the board of directors and managers of LAG was absent, so they failed to present a management adopting a participative, transparent, cooperating and network creating mentality, but that instead of a participative managing mentality from bottom-to-top, they adopted a managing mentality which is closed to innovations and self-enclosed and which are known by few people, and which all the partners in the regions didn't participate in, and which is cited as "a univoclic group" where thoughts aren't welcomed. However, within the scope of LEADER Approach, in the LAG Associations which is a way of creating a partnership where the public institutions, private sector and non-governmental organizations in the rural sections and the women and young individuals had a part in, a democratic managing style where the public had a percentage not exceeding 49%, where each member has an equal right to represent and vote, and where the decisions are made in the light of these principles, is applied. Such a managing style of LAG Association has been practiced successfully in EU countries for over 30 years.

The mentioned negativity and no holistic implementation of seven principles of EU LEADER Approach will be able to cause the failure of the development which will be carried out in our country's rural area. As known, the management is a process where the activities are planned to achieve the defined goals, where the proper organization are made, fulfilled (materialized) and where the coordination and control are available. In the management process, it is a necessary step to be taken in order to determine the questions encountered in implementation and the solutions proposed by those who experienced these questions with the conducted controls and such methods as brainstorming and the cite surveys, and to solve the problems and to carry out a good management. Looking closely into the questions and proposals



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of solution and in the conclusion of review, improving proposals for solution of questions and implementing the realizable proposals by the managers in a short time will increase the motivation and productivity in LAG Associations and enable the defined goals to be reached in a short term.

Table-2: Data on LAG Associations and Participation Status in The Poll

District Seq. No	Name of Association	Participation Status in The Poll and Number of Participants	District It Was Located	Province It Was Located
1	Göynücek LAG Association	Participated (1)	Göynücek	Amasya
2	Gümüşhacıköy LAG Association	Participated (1)	Gümüşhacıköy	Amasya
3	Taşova LAG Association	Participated (1)	Taşova	Amasya
4	Ayaş LAG Association	Participated (1)	Ayaş	Ankara
5	Bala LAG Association	Participated (2)	Bala	Ankara
6	Güdül LAG Association	Participated (1)	Güdül	Ankara
7	Nallıhan LAG Association	Participated (1)	Nallıhan	Ankara
8	Gökçeada-Eceabat-Bozcaada LAG Association	Participated (2)	Bozcaada	Çanakkale
9			Eceabat	Çanakkale
10			Gökçeada	Çanakkale
11	Şapınova Kadeş LAG Association	Participated (1)	Ortaköy	Çorum
12	Doku LAG Association	Participated (1)	Buldan	Denizli
13	Çameli LAG Association	Participated (2)	Çameli	Denizli
14	KaleBey LAG Association	Participated (1)	Beyağaç	Denizli
15		Participated (1)	Kale	Denizli
16	Çermik-Çüngüş LAG Association	Participated (1)	Çermik	Diyarbakır
17			Çüngüş	Diyarbakır
18	Dicle LAG Association	Participated (1)	Dicle	Diyarbakır
19	İspir-Pazaryolu LAG Association	Participated (1)	İspir	Erzurum
20		Participated (1)	Pazaryolu	Erzurum
21	Narman LAG Association	Participated (1)	Narman	Erzurum
22	Tortum-Uzundere LAG Association	Participated (1)	Tortum	Erzurum
23		Participated (1)	Uzundere	Erzurum
24	Araç LAG Association	Participated (1)	Araç	Kastamonu
25	Cide LAG Association (Cide-Pınarbaşı-Şenpazar)	Participated (1)	Cide	Kastamonu
26			Pınarbaşı	Kastamonu
27			Şenpazar	Kastamonu
28	Devrekani LAG Association	Participated (2)	Devrekani	Kastamonu
29	Taşköprü LAG Association (Taşköprü-Hanönü)	Participated (1)	Hanönü	Kastamonu
30			Taşköprü	Kastamonu
31	Gördes Kalkınma LAG Association	Participated (1)	Gördes	Manisa
32	Selendi LAG Association	Participated (1)	Selendi	Manisa
33	Argan LAG Association	Participated (1)	Akkuş	Ordu
34	Aybastı and Its Environment Development Association	Participated (1)	Aybastı	Ordu
35	Çatalpınar Local Action Association	Participated (2)	Çatalpınar	Ordu
36	Laleli LAG Association	Participated (4)	İkizce	Ordu
37	Yeşil Doğa LAG Association (Kabadüz-Mesudiye-Ulubey)	Participated (1)	Kabadüz	Ordu
38			Mesudiye	Ordu
39			Ulubey	Ordu
40	Ayvacık LAG Association	Participated (1)	Ayvacık	Samsun
41	Ladik LAG Association	Participated (1)	Ladik	Samsun
42	Ondokuzmayıs LAG Association	Participated (2)	Ondokuzmayıs	Samsun
43	Alaçam-Yakakent LAG Association	Participated (2)	Alaçam	Samsun
44			Yakakent	Samsun



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District Seq. No	Name of Association	Participation Status in the Poll and Number of Participants	District It Was Located	Province It Was located
45	Birecik LAG Association	Participated (1)	Birecik	Şanlıurfa
46	Hilvan LAG Association	Participated (1)	Hilvan	Şanlıurfa
47	Çamlıdere LAG Association	Not Participated	Çamlıdere	Ankara
48	Kızılcahamam LAG Association	Not Participated	Kızılcahamam	Ankara
49	Ayvacık Assos LAG Association	Not Participated	Ayvacık	Çanakkale
50	İskilip LAG Association	Not Participated	İskilip	Çorum
51	Kayı Pazarı LAG Association	Not Participated	Çal	Denizli
52	Kızılhisar LAG Association	Not Participated	Serinhisar	Denizli
53	Çınar Zerzevan Kalesi LAG Association	Not Participated	Çınar	Diyarbakır
54	Oksijen LAG Association (Perşembe-Gürgentepe-Camaş)	Not Participated	Camaş	Ordu
55			Gürgentepe	Ordu
56			Perşembe	Ordu
57	Kabataş LAG Association	Not Participated	Kabataş	Ordu
58	Kumru LAG Association	Not Participated	Kumru	Ordu
59	Karaca LAG Association	Not Participated	Çaybaşı	Ordu
60	Asarcık LAG Association	Not Participated	Asarcık	Samsun
61	Havza LAG Association	Not Participated	Havza	Samsun
62	Kavak LAG Association	Not Participated	Kavak	Samsun
63	Salıpazarı LAG Association	Not Participated	Salıpazarı	Samsun
64	Halfeti LAG Association	Not Participated	Halfeti	Şanlıurfa

The questionnaire form has been prepared based on the literature search and the data obtained from the interviews made for application on site and the questionnaire form is composed of 26 questions. The questions asked in the questionnaire form have been explained in the statistical information where the frequency distribution is given in this study. The limitations of this study can be defined as implementing the convenience sampling method which is designed for the members of the board of directors of LAG associations, managers of LAG and specialists of LDS. Participation in the poll has been provided from all provinces. Depending on the activities which ARDSI and its provincial coordinators and IPARD managing authority carried out by planning, which is relevant to the on-site activities of LAG associations, the full participation has been provided in order to determine the problems LAG Associations encountered. Thus, much as the provincial coordination units of ARDSI function as linked to the central office, the different applications as per the provinces can be performed and the different managing styles can be realized. These differences may also identify whether LAG associations are successful, therefore, that there are no different applications and for the development of the region designated by LEADER Approach, a managing method where all activities are observed by using the infrastructure of information technologies such as instant automation system from the central office and IPARD management authority should be enforced. With this managing modal, the managers and implementers of this program on site will be notified soon of the encountered problems and they will be able to provide solutions.

Table-3: Activity Status of Association's Building

Activity Status	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	23	69,6
No	10	30,4
Total	33	100,0

When the activity status of the participating associations is reviewed; it has been determined that 70% of them are active and that 30% are inactive. LAG Associations must complete their organization in the shortest time so as to achieve their goals. It is quite important to choose and rent the site of establishment, one of the first steps of Organization, in other words an association building where all activities of the association can be carried out. LAG Associations should find their place of activity and start their activities. Associations should activate an easily accessible place, where meetings and events can be held, as an association building, in order to provide rural development and gain the trust of the people. It is due to reasons such as the inability of the LAG association building to be inactive, the lack of full determination of the relationship of interest in cases such as renting the LAG association building or giving it voluntarily, the inability to find a suitable place to rent, and the demand for a deposit for rent. The rules on this subject should be determined clearly and openly by the ARDSI and IPARD management authority. The inactivity of the association building may cause negative thoughts and distrust among the local people. This situation will negatively affect the participation of the people in LAG activities to be held in the region.

Table-4: Purchase of Fixtures/furniture of Association Building

Purchasing Status	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	16	47,0
No	18	53,0
Total	34	100,0

When the purchasing status of the association building fixtures/furniture of the participating associations is examined; approximately 53 % hasn't purchased fixtures/furniture, 47 % has purchased. In the material purchasing procedures of ARDSI, As it was asked from the businesses from which the low-priced materials will be bought and also from the businesses from which the high-priced materials will be bought, the circular of signatory, while the insurance certificate and other documents are asked, this will cause the businesses not to want to sell, this also caused LAG associations not to want to purchase the materials. Furthermore, Inability to buy the materials/furniture for the building is linked to the excessive increase in the exchange rates. In order to eliminate these negativities, it is necessary to remove the signature



circular in the purchase of low-priced materials by ARDSI, to reduce the required documents/procedures and to make updates according to the increase in exchange rates.

Table-5: Purchase of vehicle for Association

Purchasing Status	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	4	11,7
No	30	88,3
Total	34	100,0

When the vehicle purchasing status of the participating associations is examined; approximately 12% bought a vehicle, 88% did not buy a vehicle. The reasons why LAG associations do not buy vehicles are the excessive increase in exchange rates and the global epidemic. In order to eliminate these negativities, ARDSI is required to make periodic updates as soon as possible according to the increase in exchange rates.

Table-6: Employing a LAG manager of the Association

Employment Status	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	28	82
No	6	18
Total	34	100,0

When the employment status of the LAG manager of the participating associations is examined; approximately 82% recruited and 18% did not. The fact that the principles of voluntary work and paid full-time work are not fully determined in the recruitment procedures for the LAG manager, and that people with the desired training and qualifications cannot be found in the region, negatively affect the recruitment of the LAG manager. Voluntary working principles and full-time working principles should be clearly stated by ARDSI. LAG manager is the authorized person responsible to the board of directors for executing and managing the activities specified in the local development strategy. The LAG manager needs to find fast, effective and efficient solutions to the social, economic and cultural problems she encounters as a manager, with the equipment she has, and manage the process. The LEADER Approach does not aim to realize rural development only with the title of agriculture, on the contrary, it aims at a development that covers many tourism areas such as multi-sectoral rural, cultural, gastronomy and health tourism and many social areas from migration to education, from economic and social needs to physical infrastructure needs. It is very important for the LAG association to ensure regional development that the LAG manager who will manage this process has sufficient qualifications. It is very important that everyone who is interested in the subject in the region can take the certified LEADER Approach training, which will be given by academicians who are experts in their fields, in order to select the people who can be most



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beneficial for the region. In this study, which was carried out for this purpose, the LEADER approach training program is also examined and the required trainings are determined.

Table-7: Employment Status for Association LDS Specialist

Employment Status	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	25	73,5
No	4	11,8
No Position for LDS	5	14,7
Total	34	100,0

When the participant associations' employment status of LDS experts is examined; approximately 73% of them recruited, 12% did not recruit, and 15% did not allocate staff to LDS specialists. The fact that the principles of voluntary work and paid full-time work are not fully determined in the recruitment procedures of LDS specialists and that people with the desired training and qualifications cannot be found in the region affect the recruitment of LDS specialists negatively. Voluntary working principles and full-time working principles should be clearly stated by ARDSI. While the qualifications that the LDS specialist should have and the trainings he/she should receive are in line with the features specified in the LAG manager, he/she should also have the qualifications to carry out administrative activities in the association building.

Table-8: Annual Application Plan for 2021 Addendum Approval Status

Approval Status	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	1	3,1
No	32	96,9
Total	33	100,0

When the annual implementation plan of the participating associations for 2021 and the approval status of the addendum are examined; approximately 97% disapproved, 3% approved. Annual implementation plans could not be implemented due to the global epidemic and the excessive increase in the exchange rate, and it became necessary to make changes. For these reasons, LAG associations submitted annual implementation plans and addendums containing changes in the program to the IPARD management authority and ARDSI. Annual implementation plan and addendums were not approved in February when the survey was conducted. It is very important to approve the annual implementation plans for the realization of the planned activities and studies. If these plans and addendums are not approved, the expenditures are included in the inappropriate expenditure group and the association loses. It loses its reputation in the region and cannot realize rural development.



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Tablo-9: The Situation of Increasing Efficiency and Effectiveness of Approving the Annual Implementation Plan for 2021 and Addendums in a Week

Increasing Efficiency and Effectiveness	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	33	97,0
No	1	3,0
Total	34	100,0

When the situation of increasing efficiency and effectiveness of approving the annual implementation plan for 2021 and addendums in a week is examined; approximately 97% think that it will increase effectiveness and efficiency, and 3% think that it will not increase effectiveness and efficiency. LAG associations aim to develop their region by carrying out the activities specified in the LDS. In order to achieve this goal, it is essential to carry out the planned activities at the planned time. For this reason, in order to ensure rural development in LAG regions, annual implementation plans and addendums should be approved by the competent authorities as soon as possible without disrupting the planned activities.

Table-10: Status of Payment According to the 2020 Payment Request Package

Status of Payment	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	3	8,8
No	31	91,2
Total	34	100,0

When the payment status of the participating associations according to the payment package request is examined; approximately 91% were not paid, 9% were paid. LAG associations need financial resources to carry out activities in their regions. The financial resource is provided in the form of a 100% grant within the scope of the EU LEADER Approach. However, due to the principle that payments can be made after the activities are completed, an advance of 10% of the budget is given to LAG associations by ARDSI in return for the specified guarantee. LAG associations carry out the activities specified in the annual implementation calendar by making payments from this advance and account for the transactions and payments made with the quarterly payment request package in line with the documents they receive. Payments that cannot be recognized or that are not specified in the eligible expenditure item cannot be paid even if they are specified in the payment request package. It is very important to make payments according to the payment request package so that the planned activities can be carried out without interruption.

Table-11: The Efficiency and Effectiveness of Making Payments in Two Weeks According to the Payment Request Package

Making Payments	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	33	97
No	1	3
Total	34	100,0

When the efficiency and effectiveness of making payments within two weeks according to the payment request package of the participating associations are examined; approximately 97% think that it will increase effectiveness and efficiency, and 3% think that it will not increase effectiveness and efficiency. It is very important that the payment is made in a short time according to the payment request package so that the LAG associations can carry out the activities they have planned. Otherwise, LAG associations cannot carry out the activities specified in the LDS and cannot achieve the development they aim for in their regions.

Table-12: State of Bureaucracy Reducing the Automation Program for the Common Use of LAG Associations by ARDSI

State of Bureaucracy Reducing	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	29	85,3
No	5	14,7
Total	34	100,0

For the purpose of sending, receiving, keeping the documents within the scope of the payment request package, annual implementation plan and correspondence submitted to ARDSI by the participating associations, planning, executing and monitoring LAG activities, and communicating and coordinating LAGs with provincial ARDSIs and central ARDSI. When the situation of switching to an automation program for the common use of all LAGs by the company facilitates the work and reduces bureaucracy is examined; Approximately 85% of the associations think that they will reduce bureaucracy and 15% think that they will not reduce bureaucracy. The procedures applied by the ARDSI, which were mentioned in detail in the previous chapters, are quite numerous and complex. This situation causes LAG associations to suffocate in paperwork and bureaucracy rather than intensive development activities. In order to eliminate this negativity and for the development of the targeted regions, the transition to an automation system that will respond to the needs of LAG associations and be used jointly by the central ARDSI is of vital importance.

Tablo-13: Need for Authorized Personnel for Effective Communication and Management with LAGs in Provincial ARDSI, Central ARDSI, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Management Authority

Need for Authorized Personnel	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	34	100
No	0	0
Total	34	100,0

When the participant associations' need for authorized personnel for effective communication and management with LAGs in Provincial ARDSI, Central ARDSI, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Management Authority is examined; 100% think there is a need for authorized personnel. LAG associations face various problems while implementing the



LEADER Approach in their regions. In order to overcome these problems as soon as possible, they need authorized experts who are knowledgeable about the LEADER Approach and can consult. In the aforementioned issue, there are no appointed and authorized personnel that can always be easily reached in the provincial ARDSI, the central ARDSI and the IPARD Management Authority. In order for the LEADER Approach to be implemented better and more effectively in our country, there is a need to assign and authorize the personnel responsible for the LEADER Approach, who can always be easily reached, and to share the information of these personnel with the LAG associations.

Table-14: Small Project Realization Status of LAG Associations

Small Project Realization Status	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
0	29	85,3
1	4	11,7
2	1	3
3	0	0
Total	34	100,0

When the small project realization status of the participating associations is examined; It is seen that approximately 85% of them did not realize small projects, 12% realized one project and 3% realized two projects. Small projects are the most important elements of LAG associations that will create a multiplier effect to ensure development in the field. It is very important to implement these projects at the specified time and in the specified places. LAG associations were able to realize a small number of small projects due to the above-mentioned negativities. In order for small projects to be implemented, all the negativities mentioned in this study should be eliminated.

Tabloe-15: LAG Associations' Institutional Capacity Building Training Realization Status

Training Realization Status	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
0	28	82,5
1	2	5,8
2	0	0
3	4	11,7
Total	34	100,0

When the institutional capacity strengthening training status of the participating associations is examined; it is seen that approximately 83% of them did not receive training, 6% of them had one training and 12% had three trainings. The main reason why LAG associations are not able to carry out institutional capacity strengthening training is the global epidemic. LAG associations will strengthen their organizational capacities with institutional capacity strengthening trainings and gain regional skills by developing human resources in the LDS region. The people living in the region will take an active part in solving problems by

bringing different perspectives to events and problems with the skills they have acquired. In this way, the problems experienced will be solved as soon as possible before they become chronic.

Table-16: Status of Willing to Become a Member of Eurasia Local and Rural Development Association

Status of Willing to Become a Member	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	24	70,6
No	10	29,4
Total	34	100,0

When the participant associations' willingness to become a member of the Eurasian Local and Rural Development Association is examined; It is seen that approximately 71% of them want to be a member, 29% of them do not want to be a member. When the reason for wanting to become a member is examined, It was determined that some associations do not want to become a member because they have not fully established their own establishments, and that some associations do not want to become a member because they do not need to, and that some associations do not want to become members because they have not been sufficiently informed, and that an association is waiting for a letter of eligibility for membership, and that one association wanted a structure in the form of a union or federation to be established. In order to realize rural development in their regions, LAG associations can find new markets and seize new opportunities by collaborating with LAGs that have strengths like them, both in our country and in the EU. In addition, they can contribute to the development of their regions by sharing experience and innovation by networking with approximately 2500 LAG associations in the EU or LAG associations in our country. The Eurasian Local and Rural Development Association was established in September 2019 in order to network and cooperate in our country and the EU.

Table-17: Association Status in Need of Certified LEADER Training in the Association or Region

Need of Certified LEADER Training	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	29	90,6
No	3	9,4
Total	32	100,0

When the situation of the participating associations, which needs comprehensive and certified LEADER Approach training, to be given by expert and experienced academicians in the fields related to the basic competencies required by the LEADER Approach in their associations or regions, the situation of the association is examined; It has been determined that approximately 91% of them need education and 9% do not need education. Those who state that there is no need for LEADER Approach training may be in an approach that no one other



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than themselves is knowledgeable about this issue. However, training of the LEADER Approach, which aims at multi-sectoral development, mostly involving social issues, by the members of the association's board of directors, LAG managers and LDS experts will indirectly contribute to the development of the LAG region, to create well-equipped human resources in the region and to solve the problems in place and urgently. As it is known, the most important resource for the development of a region is human resources trained with qualified training.

Table-18: The Need to Add Certified LEADER Training to the ARDSI Eligible Expenditure List

Being Added to The ARDSI Eligible Expenditure List	(Association) Participated in The Poll	%
Yes	33	97
No	1	3
Total	34	100,0

When the participant associations need to add the comprehensive and certified LEADER Approach training to the ARDSI eligible expenditure list, which will be given by expert and experienced academicians in the fields related to the basic competencies required by the LEADER Approach in their associations or regions; It has been determined that approximately 97% of them need to be added to the eligible expenditure list, and 3% do not need to be added to the eligible expenditure list. Those who state that there is no need for LEADER Approach training may be in an approach that no one other than themselves is knowledgeable about this issue. Since the LEADER Approach training is a training program that will develop the skills of the people living in the region, adding the training of LAG associations' board members, LAG managers and LDS experts to the ARDSI eligible expenditure list will contribute to the development of human resources in the LAG region. In addition, those who want certified LEADER training request a serious training of several weeks within a program that can solve the problems they encounter in the field and provide qualification for them, not a one or two-day program where successful and unsuccessful ones are separated.

Majority of the representatives of LAG Associations participating in the survey wanted to receive comprehensive and certified LEADER Approach training, which will be given by expert and experienced academicians in the fields related to the basic competences required by the LEADER Approach in their associations or regions, in order to have sufficient information about LDS practices and the LEADER Approach, and that this training should be included in the ARDSI eligible expenditure list and indicated that they would like to be added.

Eurasia Local and Rural Development Association held meetings with Sivas Cumhuriyet University, a well-established state university, in order to establish the LEADER Approach training program according to the requests from the field and the results of the study. Sivas Cumhuriyet University examined the content of the training program, supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the European Union with a budget of 300,000 Euros within the scope of the technical support project, for the first time in our country to implement the EU LEADER Approach, and for the first and last time in our country by EU LEADER Experts in three months in January, February and March “Developing Institutional Capacity LEADER Measure Coordinator Training, which was held in four weeks in a monthly period and they have prepared a draft program in line with the opinions of representatives of LAG associations and LEADER experts who have received the aforementioned LEADER training and work in the field. Draft training subjects determined in the prepared program were shared in the form of a questionnaire in February to receive the opinions of the relevant LAG associations. Participation status in the training program questionnaire is presented in Table-19.

Tablo-19: Participation Status in The Training Program Questionnaire

Participation Status in the Questionnaire	(Association) Participated in The Poll					
	LAG Associations	%	Province LAG Associations Located	%	Districts LAG Associations Located	%
Those participated in	41	82	12	100	53	83
Those not participated in	9	18	0	0	11	17
Total	50	100	12	100	64	100

There are 50 LAG Associations established in 12 provinces and 64 districts within the scope of the EU LEADER Program in Turkey. 82% of the LAG associations participated in the survey. It was seen that 100% of 12 provinces at the provincial level, and approximately 83% of 64 districts at district level participated in the survey. The situation of those who did not participate in the survey is as indicated in Table-1. It is understood from the survey participation rates that there is a high demand for LEADER training from LAG associations.

Table-20: Information on NGOs and Institutions and Participation Status in The Questionnaire

District Seq. No	Name of Association	Participation Status in The Questionnaire and Number (Figure)	District it is Located	Province it is Located
1	Göynücek LAG Association	Participated (2)	Göynücek	Amasya
2	Gümüşhacıköy LAG Association	Participated (4)	Gümüşhacıköy	Amasya
3	Taşova LAG Association	Participated (1)	Taşova	Amasya
4	Ayaş LAG Association	Participated (1)	Ayaş	Ankara
5	Bala LAG Association	Participated (1)	Bala	Ankara
6	Güdül LAG Association	Participated (2)	Güdül	Ankara
7	Nallıhan LAG Association	Participated (1)	Nallıhan	Ankara



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District Seq. No	Name of Association	Participation Status in The Questionnaire and Number (Figure)	District it is Located	Province it is Located
8	Gökçeada-Eceabat-Bozcaada LAG Association	Participated (1)	Bozcaada	Çanakkale
9			Eceabat	Çanakkale
10			Gökçeada	Çanakkale
11	İskilip LAG Association	Participated (1)	İskilip	Çorum
12	Şapınova KadeşLAG Association	Participated (1)	Ortaköy	Çorum
13	Çameli LAG Association	Participated (1)	Çameli	Denizli
14	Doku LAG Association	Participated (4)	Buldan	Denizli
15	KaleBey LAG Association	Participated (1)	Beyağaç	Denizli
16			Kale	Denizli
17	Kayı Pazarı LAG Association	Participated (1)	Çal	Denizli
18	Çermik-Çüngüş LAG Association	Participated (1)	Çermik	Diyarbakır
19			Çüngüş	Diyarbakır
20	Dicle LAG Association	Participated (1)	Dicle	Diyarbakır
21	İspir-Pazaryolu LAG Association	Participated (2)	İspir	Erzurum
22			Pazaryolu	Erzurum
23	Narman LAG Association	Participated (1)	Narman	Erzurum
24	Tortum-Uzundere LAG Association	Participated (1)	Tortum	Erzurum
25			Uzundere	Erzurum
26	Araç LAG Association	Participated (1)	Araç	Kastamonu
27	Cide LAG Association (Cide-Pınarbaşı-Şenpazar)	Participated (2)	Cide	Kastamonu
28			Pınarbaşı	Kastamonu
29			Şenpazar	Kastamonu
30	Devrekani LAG Association	Participated (1)	Devrekani	Kastamonu
31	Taşköprü LAG Association (Taşköprü-Hanönü)	Participated (2)	Hanönü	Kastamonu
32			Taşköprü	Kastamonu
33	Gördes Kalkınma LAG Association	Participated (2)	Gördes	Manisa
34	Selendi LAG Association	Participated (1)	Selendi	Manisa
35	Argan LAG Association	Participated (1)	Akkuş	Ordu
36	Çatalpınar Local Action Association	Participated (2)	Çatalpınar	Ordu
37	Kabataş LAG Association	Participated (1)	Kabataş	Ordu
38	Laleli LAG Association	Participated (3)	İkizce	Ordu
39	Yeşil Doğa LAG Association (Kabadüz-Mesudiye-Ulubey)	Participated (1)	Kabadüz	Ordu
40			Mesudiye	Ordu
41			Ulubey	Ordu
42	Alaçam-Yakakent LAG Association	Participated (1)	Alaçam	Samsun
43			Yakakent	Samsun
44	Asarcık LAG Association	Participated (2)	Asarcık	Samsun
45	Ayvacık LAG Association	Participated (1)	Ayvacık	Samsun
46	Havza LAG Association	Participated (1)	Havza	Samsun
47	Kavak LAG Association	Participated (2)	Kavak	Samsun
48	Ladik LAG Association	Participated (2)	Ladik	Samsun
49	Ondokuzmayıs LAG Association	Participated (1)	Ondokuzmayıs	Samsun
50	Salıpazarı LAG Association	Participated (1)	Salıpazarı	Samsun
51	Birecik LAG Association	Participated (1)	Birecik	Şanlıurfa
52	Halfeti LAG Association	Participated (1)	Halfeti	Şanlıurfa
53	Hilvan LAG Association	Participated (2)	Hilvan	Şanlıurfa
54	Çamlıdere LAG Association	Not Participated	Çamlıdere	Ankara
55	Kızılcahamam LAG Association	Not Participated	Kızılcahamam	Ankara
56	Ayvacık Assos LAG Association	Not Participated	Ayvacık	Çanakkale
57	Kızılhisar LAG Association	Not Participated	Serinhisar	Denizli
58	Çınar Zerzevan Kalesi LAG Association	Not Participated	Çınar	Diyarbakır
59	Aybastı ve Çevresi Kalkınma Association	Not Participated	Aybastı	Ordu
60	Karaca LAG Association	Not Participated	Çaybaşı	Ordu



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District Seq. No	Name of Association	Participation Status in The Questionnaire and Number (Figure)	District it is Located	Province it is Located
61	Kumru LAG Association	Not Participated	Kumru	Ordu
62	Oksijen LAG Association (Perşembe-Gürgentepe-Camaş)	Not Participated	Camaş	Ordu
63			Gürgentepe	Ordu
64			Perşembe	Ordu

41 associations participated in the draft education subjects survey determined in the program prepared in line with the opinions of the stakeholders, at a rate of 82%. LEADER Approach training aims to strengthen human resources in rural areas with trainings, by being formed in a way to cover the needed issues in line with the opinions of the representatives of LAG associations. The level of participation in the survey is at a level that will fulfill the purpose.

Table-21: Opinion on Comprehensive and Certified LEADER Education Draft Program Education Topics

LEADER Education Draft Program Education Topics	Participation Status		Total (%)
	Yes (%)	No (%)	
1. LEADER Approach Basic Education	93,5	6,5	100
2. Project Cycle Management	96,8	3,2	100
3. LEADER Approach practice	96,8	3,2	100
4. General Operational Management	96,8	3,2	100
5. Improving Local Development Strategies (Preparing)	91,9	8,1	100
6. General Marketing	83,9	16,1	100
7. NGO and Management	100	0	100
8. Communication Skills	90,3	9,7	100
9. Social Entrepreneurship	93,5	6,5	100
10. Conflict Management	88,7	11,3	100
11. Leadership	90,3	9,7	100
12. Motivation	93,5	6,5	100
13. Discussion and Meeting Management	96,8	3,2	100
14. Cooperative system	96,8	3,2	100
15. Rural Sociology	87,1	12,9	100
16. Innovation Management	91,9	8,1	100
17. Risk Management	85,5	14,5	100
18. Crisis Management	82,3	17,7	100
19. Tourism Management	91,1	8,9	100
20. Local Government	87,1	12,9	100
21. Basic Law	71,0	29,0	100
TOTAL		100,0	100

In the face-to-face or distance trainings to be held by Sivas Cumhuriyet University by experts and academics in their fields, participants must attend at least 80% of the training in order to take the certification exam. Participants will prepare a local development strategy for their region as a final homework at the end of the training, this prepared local development



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strategy will be evaluated by the committee. The University will give a Local Development Education Certificate of Achievement to those who successfully complete the trainings and graduation homework specified in Table-21, and a Local Development Education Participation Certificate to those who cannot successfully complete the education. Participants who successfully complete the specified trainings will analyze the problems they encounter while applying the LEADER Approach in the field with the perspective of social sciences and will have the qualification to produce solutions suitable for the realities of the region in a short time. Having this qualification, LAG representatives will play an active role in the development of the LAG region by strengthening the institutional capacities of LAG associations, and in solving the problems before they become chronic with a bottom-up participatory approach.

2. PROBLEMS DETECTED ACCORDING TO THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR SOLUTIONS

When the survey results are examined in general; The members of the board of directors of the association, LAG managers and LDS experts, who are responsible for implementing the LEADER Program in the field, participated in the survey. The main factors showing the field implementation of the LEADER Approach are that the association building is open and operational during working hours, purchasing the materials and furniture of the association, purchasing vehicles for field visits and carrying out the association's works, hiring the LAG manager and LDS expert specified in the staff in LDS. These main activities have been carried out by all LAG s at a maximum of 75%, at least 9%, even though it has been five months since the implementation of the program. Factors that delay the implementation of the LEADER Program in the field; First of all, there is an epidemic at the global level and the excessive increase in the exchange rate, then there are intense bureaucratic processes and the absence of a central automation system, late approval of annual implementation plans and late payments to payment request packages, especially the voluntary working principles of LAG personnel are not fully determined, The lack of definitions for the rental or voluntary use of the association building, the fact that the procedures are quite high and the cost is higher than the purchase price or insurance is requested in the purchase of materials at very low price levels, it is the fact that the members of the board of directors, LAG managers and LDS experts don't have sufficient knowledge about LDS applications and the LEADER Approach.

When the findings obtained from the practices, literature review, surveys and interviews related to the LEADER Approach are evaluated; Problems that reduce effectiveness and

efficiency in the LEADER Approach program, and solutions that can increase effectiveness and efficiency against problems are listed in the following articles.

Detected Problems and Solution Suggestions

Seq. No	Problem	Solution Suggestions
1.	Too much bureaucracy	Switching to a central automation system for all LAGs by ARDSI, reducing the required documents, increasing the upper limit of spending from 60 Euros and expanding the scope of spending ,
2.	Failure to make the payment quickly according to the payment request package	According to the payment request package, the payment must be made no later than two or three weeks after the payment request package is delivered.
3.	Very late approval of the annual implementation plan	Approval of the annual application package no later than one or two weeks after the delivery date ,
4.	Need for Certified and qualified LEADER Approach training	Providing certified and qualified LEADER Approach training at a university by experts and experienced academicians within a program covering the above-mentioned training subjects,
5.	Confusing in informing and lack of competent personnel to consult	In Provincial ARDSI coordinators, central ARDSI and IPARD Management Authority under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, assigning a responsible unit that can be reached at any time and authorized personnel to provide information,
6.	The lack of knowledge and indifference of the board of directors of the association and the people in the region	Increasing institutional capacity, knowledge and interest in the region with qualified LEADER Approach trainings and other necessary trainings, In order to gain the trust of the people of the region and to reduce the indifference of the people of the region, all expenditures and activities of LAG associations will be published on the website in a transparent and accountable manner within one week.,



Seq. No	Problem	Solution Suggestions
7.	Employer SGK (SSI) contribution paid by associations for employees	SSI employer contribution should be included in the scope of incentives by the relevant ministry under the name of strengthening civil society in rural areas for rural development, provided that they reside and live in rural areas.,
8.	Wrong and defective practices	In order to avoid wrong or erroneous practices, at most once a month, on the spot checks should be performed by Provincial Coordination Units of ARDSI, monthly business plan realising compliance control and audit for the implementation process. ARDSI Headquarters or IPARD Management Authority under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, focusing on conflict of interest, reference letter issuance status.
9.	Small scope of projects	Updating the scope of small projects in a way that supports innovative approaches according to the annual implementation plan, In the implementation of the next local development strategies, small projects should not predetermined with a project logic and the LAG associations should realise calls for grant support to NGOs or communities in the region, and the best and innovative projects for the region should be selected and supported within the scope of small projects.,
10.	Limited eligible expenditure items	Updating eligible expenditure items, at most quarterly, according to requests from LAG associations.
11.	Need for an Advisor on LEADER	Obtaining consultancy services from experts in their fields, one permanent SAPARD experienced LAEDER expert for MA and ARDSI and regional LAEDER experts under NRN should be recruited.
12.	Advance amount being 10% and decreasing by deduction in each payment	The advance amount should be allocated up to the annual budget amount and added to the advance account in line with the payment request packages and the advance deductions should be delayed to the last year.



Seq. No	Problem	Solution Suggestions
13.	LAG boards of directors, civil servants being members as natural persons and not fully defining members	While the legal entities representing the public in LAGs are clearly determined, public employees (especially civil servants) should be members of the public rather than real persons, and the members to be elected to the board of directors should be chosen from those who will contribute to the process, not from those who can be easily accessed, in order to manage by taking decisions with a participatory approach. For increased representing of the community, only legal entities should be selected to the managing boards of LAGs.
14.	The general budget is not updated according to the current exchange rate.	While the contracts were signed, contracts were signed for 6.2 TRY, updating the total general budget according to the increase in the Euro. At the beginning of every fiscal year, the remaining budget should be recalculated adding the average of inflation rate and euro currency rate.
15.	Failure to cooperate with European LAG associations	LAGS should be encouraged to be a member of Eurasia Local and Rural Development Association (Türkiye LEADER Community since October 2021) as a solution tool for cooperation and networking with LAGs in Europe. Membership fees for regional, national and international networks should be eligible.
16.	Failure to determine the principles for the volunteer LAG manager and LDS experts	The full specification of the working principles of the LAG manager and LDS expert working voluntarily in LAG associations (full-time work assignment letter from the relevant institutions, SSI payments of volunteer employees, etc. only for LDS experts) were presented by LAG associations as suggestions for solving the problems. LAG managers should be hired by LAG Associations.

