

Capacity Building Needs Assessment

for CSOs, LAGs and Local Institutions involved in Regional Development
Project: Applied Research for Sustainable Development” (ARSD)



Capacity Building Needs Assessment for LAGs, CSOs and Local Institutions participating in Regional Development

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Introduction

The “Capacity Building Needs Assessment for CSOs LAGs and Local institutions participating in Regional Development” was conducted by People in Need (PIN) under the framework of the project “Advancing Regions for Sustainable Development” (ARSD), a 2-year project funded by the European in 2017, implemented by the Center for Training and Consultancy (CTC) in partnership with People in Need (PIN) and the Institute of Democracy (IOD).

While the overall goal object of the project is to promote sustainable development of the regions in Georgia in accordance with the best European practices by encouraging development and implementation of effective regional development policies, its specific objective is to improve strategic planning and implementation capacities of Georgian authorities in the field of regional development and develop a model of partnership between regional, municipal and rural development stakeholders for a sustainable and inclusive development of regions.

Strategic focuses of the project are identified in:

- **Evidence-based and informed policy making:** enhancing the quality of regional development policy-making through promoting applied research as well as building capacity of local research institutions and academia in the regional universities
- **Getting inspired from the European experiences:** inspiring local stakeholders and decision-makers through sharing European best practices in rural and regional development
- **Strong social capital and cross-sectorial cohesion:** strengthening social capital, partnerships and networks, and coordination between different actors across different levels and sectors
- **Good management:** increasing the capacities of institutions through training and consultancy to optimize and upgrade their systems, processes and practices for enhanced result-driven performance

Given these premises and among other intermediary outcomes, the necessity of developing the capacities of the actors of regional development falls under the **Intermediary Outcome 3:**

the regional development state and non-state stakeholders expand capacity in the field of regional/territorial development policies based on European experience

Within the framework of the project, on the 21th of June 2018, a Regional Development Forum that was held in Batumi with the participation of the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, the Government of Autonomous Republic of Adjara, Non-Governmental Organizations and Local Action Groups from different regions of Georgia.

Based on the recommendations outlined after the Forum, we conducted an assessment addressing capacity-building needs of LAGs, CSOs and municipal authorities for them to be equipped with the knowledge required for a meaningful participation in region development strategy planning, implementation and evaluation.

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1. Capacity Building Needs Assessment

1.1 Pre-Assessment

During the pre-assessment, we identified the actors of Regional Development in the three regions on which capacity-building efforts will be concentrated operating a stakeholder analysis and a mapping of relevant active grass-roots CSOs with a mandate in rural development and engaged them in the capacity building activities. This assessment will lead to set up a capacity building plan highlighting the content, scope and means for capacity building that is best suited to build the LAGs, CSOs and municipal authorities' capacity to participate in regional development to a broader extend.

Based on PIN's experience building the capacity of LAG Kazbegi, we pre-assessed that the actors will require training on the following topics: strategic planning, needs assessment and sectoral analysis, Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (PME), communication and PR and advocacy.

Other info requested in the questionnaire are relevant info about the scope of the organization and the background in terms of trainings already received.

[The Questionnaire: Annex 1](#)

The Survey was held in June 2018 and the activity was conducted from PIN ARSD Project Team in the four involved regions.

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1.2 The Sample

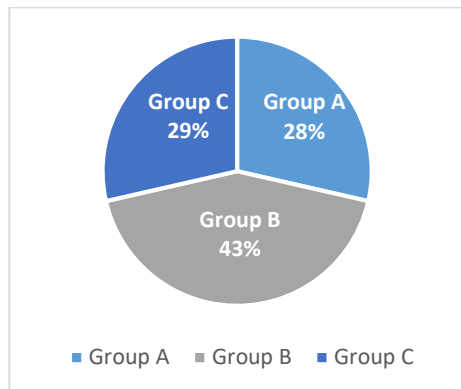


Chart 1 – Role/ position within the organization

The sample of 35 people participating in the survey was very representative of the organizations that will be engaged in the capacity building activities. As we approach the main characteristics of the participants (*Chart 1*), grouped by role/ position that they have within the organization, we notice that the largest component (**Group B**) are people with a leading role and managers of their departments rather than mayors, in the case of local institutions. This ensures us a strong input of opinions from leaders who tend to have a strategic overview of the future of the organization and, therefore, we can suppose they will provide us with relevant info about the Capacity building

Needs. On the other hand, the opinions of the people actually working within departments or attending the meetings as simple members, can give us insights on the specific needs on capacity building, as they will be the ones actually dealing with everyday tasks. Accordingly, we have a well-balanced component of Employed and Civil Servants (**Group A**) and Members of the assembly (**Group C**).

Concerning the nature of the organizations selected to participate in the interview (*Chart 2*), we can notice a balanced representation of the 3 main targets. LAGs and CSOs are both represented in a percentage of 34 % whereas Local Institution are represented in a

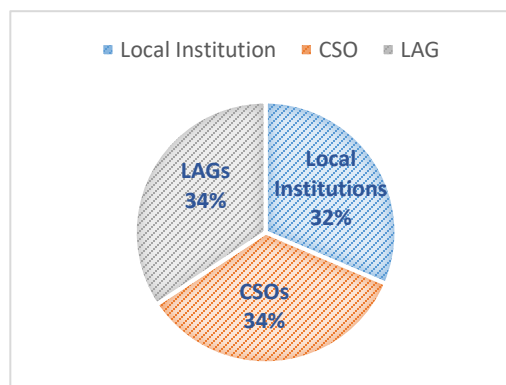


Chart 2 – Kind of organization represented

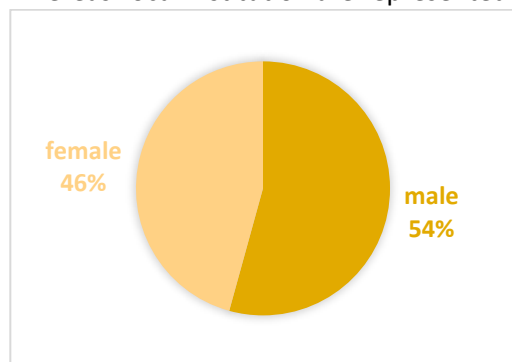


Chart 3 – Gender Ratio

slightly lower percentage (32%) but the sample is still relevant.

Concerning gender ratio (*Chart 3*), we have a 46 % of female against a 54 % of male participating in the survey meaning that participation in Regional Development is a topic that generally involves both genders. Female representation is inferior to the male one but the scissor is compatible with a balanced gender ratio as it is approximately 8%.



2. Data Analysis: Understanding Priorities

2.1 General Trends

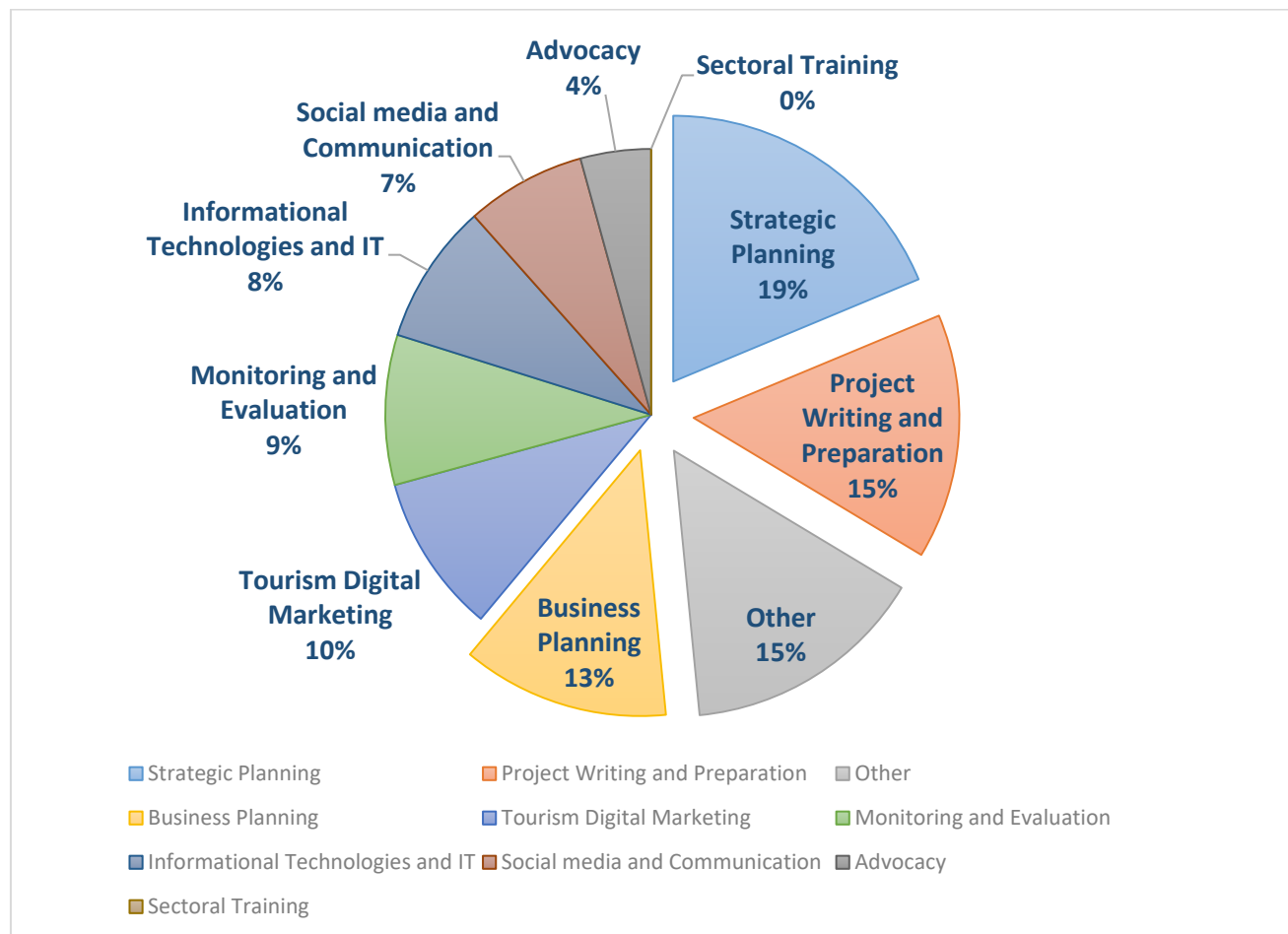


Chart 4 – Capacity Building Priorities: General Trends

As we are approaching data before further sub-division by type of organization, we suddenly realize that priorities can be sorted into three main groups on the base of the grade of priority that participants assigned. Above all (*Chart 5*), as *top priorities*, we find *Strategic Planning*. This makes us understand that the sample correctly associates Regional Development with the concepts of *Strategy and Planning* and that participants express the need to increase their capacities in that field to be sure to perform a positive role within this context. *Project Writing* and *Other* are equal with 15 % telling us that, beyond strategic and technical skills, there is some other priority that the questionnaire did not specifically tackled but is perceived as relevant from the interviewed people. We will analyze in detail the Capacity Building Priorities that were included in this category further in this document as we will breakdown data according to the type of organization. *Sectoral Training* is 0% for all groups, this specific data might be a statistical bias,

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probably the sample didn't have a clear idea of what *Sectoral Training* is and how this competence could add a value in the field of Regional Development. *Advocacy* is also very low, only 4% of the groups considered it relevant. We can explain this result if we consider *Advocacy* as not structurally necessary when we deal with a set of actors that already have the chance to discuss ideas with institutions: where direct communication is on, most probably indirect communication is not relevant.

TOP PRIORITIES	Strategic Planning	19%
	Project Writing and Preparation	15%
	Other	15%
	Business Planning	13%
MEDIUM PRIORITIES	Tourism Digital Marketing	10%
	Monitoring and Evaluation	9%
	Informational Technologies and IT	8%
	Social media and Communication	7%
LOW PRIORITIES	Advocacy	4%
	Sectoral Training	0%

Chart 5 – Rank of Capacity Building Priorities

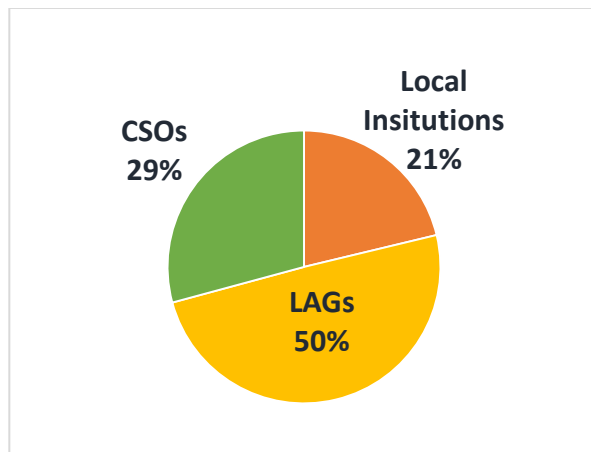


Chart 6 – Previous Trainings

To make our analysis more functional, it is also important to underline the background of the organizations engaged in Capacity Building activities. It is important to understand whether these organizations do have a background in the specific topics or if trainers will need to approach these topics in a comprehensive and radical way. As we can see from *Chart 6*, LAGs members are the ones that received the highest number of training on the topics that we assessed as appropriate for the Capacity Building Plan. This involves two main considerations. The first one is that there is a disparity among the background of

the organizations as LAGs had the chance to build a strong knowledge while CSOs and Local Institutions present a less structured background. Our efforts in terms of capacity building will be directed mainly on Local Institutions and on CSOs as our aim is not only to give capacities but also to bring all actors of regional development to an arena in which they can discuss and cooperate smoothly given equal tools and using a common language.

A second important consideration concerns Local Institutions as these actors appear to have less background in the field of regional development. It seems clear that we will have to draw a capacity building plan that covers the mentioned topic from in a comprehensive and radical way. Local Institutions, in this case, are key actors for Regional Development and will support the work of the other two main actors. What is indeed clear is that Local Institutions and CSOs need to be accompanied in gaining

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capacities from a poor-background start-line whereas LAGs will probably need only to strengthen their knowledge and practical tools for cooperation with the other 2 actors.

Given these premises, we will now concentrate our efforts in disaggregating the data on the base of the type of the organization, as the structure on our trainings will be divided by kind of organization.

2.2 CSOs Capacity Building Needs

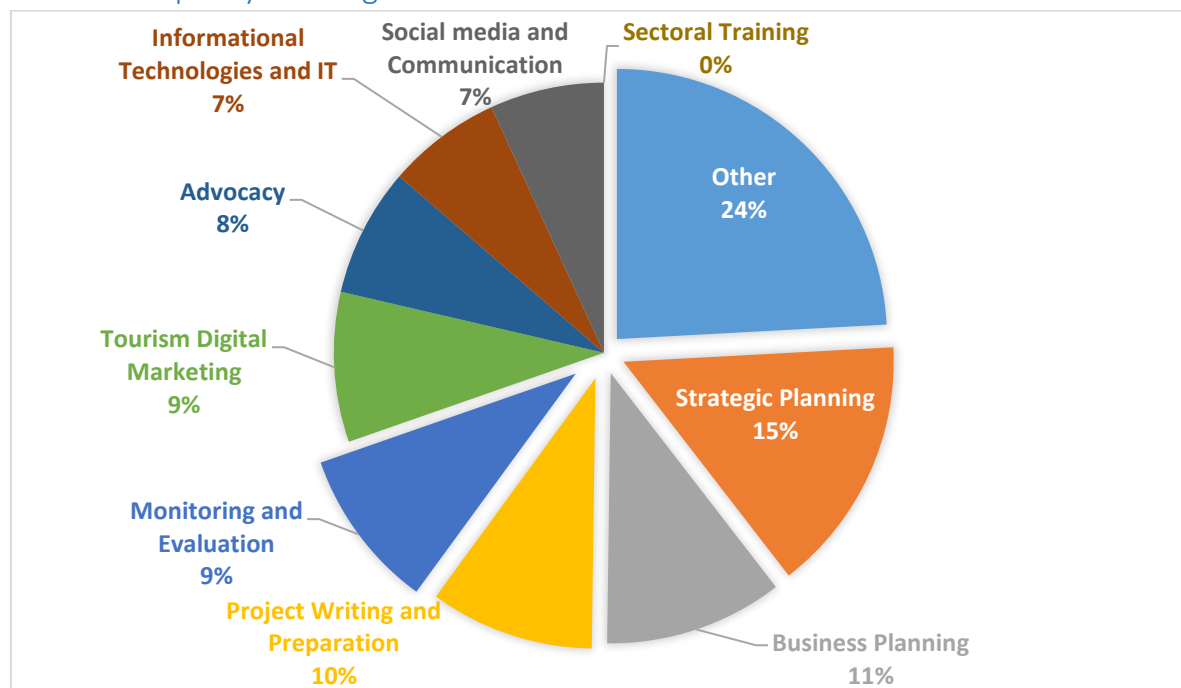


Chart 7 – CSOs Capacity Building Priorities

TOP PRIORITIES	Other	24%
	Strategic Planning	15%
	Business Planning	11%
MEDIUM PRIORITIES	Project Writing and Preparation	10%
	Monitoring and Evaluation	9%
	Tourism Digital Marketing	9%
	Advocacy	8%
	Informational Technologies and IT	7%
	Social media and Communication	7%
LOW PRIORITIES	Sectoral Training	0%

Chart 8 – CSOs Rank of Capacity Building Priorities

* Training plan will follow the High and Medium Priorities according to their ratio.

Above all topics, with an outstanding percentage of 24%, we find *Other*. The first consideration that we can take out of this data is primarily that, according to the CSOs we interviewed, the topics selected for

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the multiple choice of the questionnaire were not sufficient to contain the needs of Capacity Building of the CSOs in terms of regional development. We can explain this trend with a series of reasons, starting from the most evident one: among all actors of Regional Development, CSOs are the ones that deal with a multiplicity of subjects not strictly connected with policies and regional development. Another consideration that we can extract is that the concept of Regional Development is not well mastered from CSOs as many (but not all) of the topics selected (requested) in this category are not relevant in order to develop CSOs capacities in terms of Regional Development and cooperation with Local Institutions and LAGs.

Very Relevant	Coordination
	Open governance and democratic management
	Regional policy elaboration
	EU association agreement (DCFTA)
Specific	DRR
	Tourism Development Strategy
	Waste Management
Not Relevant	TOT
	fundraising
	Climate change
	Social enterprise
	Nepotism
	Awareness Raising about Bullying,

Chart 9 – CSOs Other (Trainings requested)

Among the relevant topics mentioned from the CSOs members that we interviewed, *Coordination, Open Governance and Democratic Management, Regional Policy Elaboration and EU Association Agreement* are the ones that are very relevant and should be included in the Capacity Building Plan for these kind of Organizations.

Topics such as *DRR, Tourism Development Strategy and Waste Management* are connected with regional development but, rather than representing theoretical tools, useful to approach Regional Development in coordination with LAGs and Local Institutions, they represent specific issues that can be tackled from the Regional Development Meetings. This leads to the conclusion that instead of opening full courses on these topics, we can use these topics as concrete examples/practices on how to carry on coordination with other actors in order to achieve a shared strategy on these issues. For example, as a training will be held on *Strategic Planning*, some insight, clarifications and good practices on *DRR, Tourism Development Strategies and Waste Management* from other experiences in EU countries can be shared with participants.

Apart from *Others*, *Strategic Planning* leads the trend followed by *Business Planning, Project Writing and Preparation and M&E*.

To achieve a better understanding of the shape, the methodology and the content that the future trainings will need to have, we can compare the data about prioritized Capacity Building Needs with the data about previous trainings. *Project Writing and Preparation, Monitoring and Evaluation and Business Planning* among the highest ones. This can lead us to the conclusions that these topics were approached but not sufficiently and, therefore, a new and strong wave of trainings is needed to support and increase the pre-

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existing (probably superficial) knowledge. Please see the following chart and take into special consideration the areas in which the blue line overcomes the orange one as these will be the areas in which we should concentrate our capacity building work. Trainers will use these data in order not to waste time and energy on pre-existent knowledge but, in the other hand, ensure solid development of these capacities.



Chart 10 – Comparing Background with New Priorities (CSOs)

Please note that the content of the category “*Other*” in Background does not match with the content of the category “*Other*” in New Priorities. In terms of Background, “*Other*” identified competences are: LEADER Approach, Establishing the organization, TOT, Effective Presentation and Transparency, DCFTA, Agriculture programs.

Suggestions for the training methodology

Members of CSOs are people with a very developed sense of community, environment and human rights that distinguish them as a very precious source of inputs for regional development. On the other hand, among all the other groups, they are the ones with a lower institutional background and a less clear idea of regional and local development as a general topic. Trainings should be characterized by a very simple wording and informal education methodology. Also, Regional Development should be addressed as a topic, to make sure that all participants to Regional Development Meetings will have similar understanding in terms of scope and potentiality of the sessions with other actors. We shall not forget that what we are trying to facilitate is a dialogue that can be better performed when everyone shares similar views on goals and potential.

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2.3 LAGs Capacity Building Needs

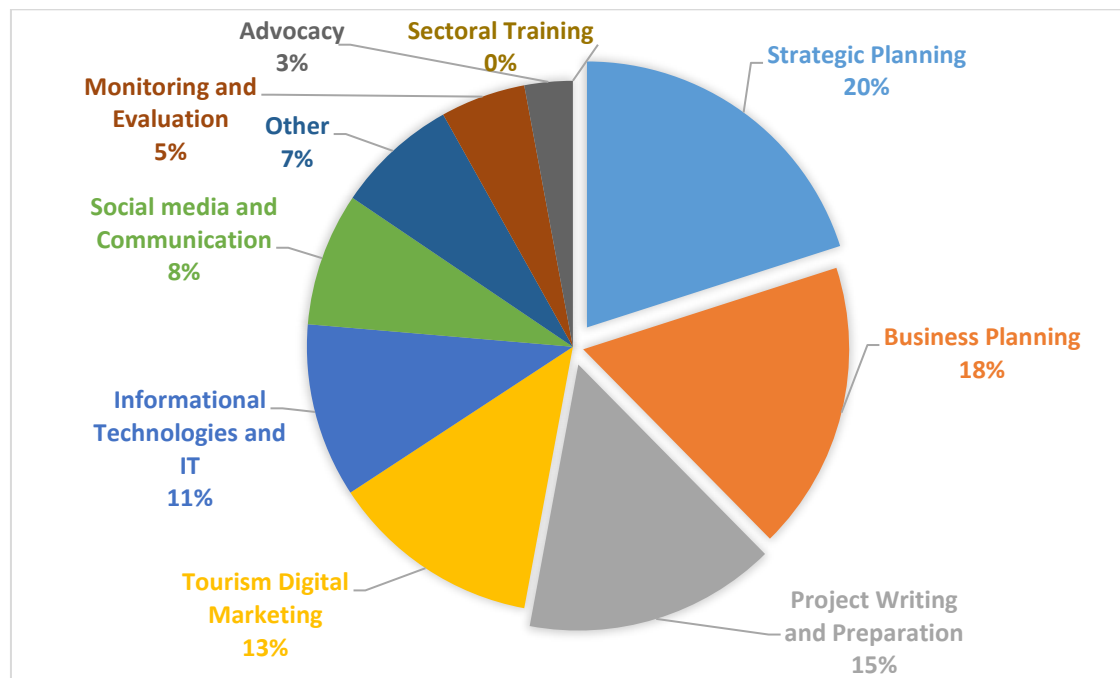


Chart 11 – LAGs Capacity Building Priorities

In the case of LAGs we notice a predominance of *Strategic Planning*, *Business Planning* and *Project Writing and Preparation* in line with the CSOs one (if we don't take *Other* into account).

HIGH PRIORITY	Strategic Planning	20%
	Business Planning	18%
	Project Writing and Preparation	15%
	Tourism Digital Marketing	13%
	Informational Technologies and IT	11%
	MEDIUM PRIORITY	Social media and Communication
	Other	7%
	Monitoring and Evaluation	5%
LOW PRIORITY	Advocacy	3%
	Sectoral Training	0%

Chart 12 – Rank of LAGs Capacity Building Priorities

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**Training plan will follow the High and Medium Priorities according to their ratio.*

In the section "Other", the mentioned (requested) topics are: Accounting, Institutional Development, Indicators for measuring the economic progress (RBM); Tender Documentation preparation; Management of Funds, Better interaction with population, Presentation of projects, Proper planning of any project. The percentage assigned to this category (7%) and the kind of topics requested leads us to the conclusion that this category can be considered as not particularly relevant although trainers are encouraged in mentioning or providing tools for individual study about these topics.



Chart 13 – Comparing Background with New Priorities (LAGs)

Please note that the content of the category "Other" in Background does not match with the content of the category "Other" in New Priorities. In terms of Background, "Other" identified competences are: *civic engagement, food safety, project evaluation, LEADER approach*.

Previous trainings of LAGs and assessed New Priorities basically match, this leads us to the conclusions that LAGs need further knowledges on these topics, probably more practical tools and clear examples that they will be using on the reality rather than theoretical introductory courses on the general approach to the subject.

Suggestions for the training methodology

LAG members belong to rural areas and are people with a very developed sense of community, local development and local economy that distinguish them as a very precious source of inputs for regional development. Among all the other actors, they are have a medium background and a more clear idea of regional and local development as a general topic. Trainings should be characterized by medium wording and informal education but also taking into consideration that they already received trainings on similar

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topics and they probably have a good background on wording and terminology. Also, Regional Development shouldn't, in this case, be addressed as a general topic but, at the same time, we need to make sure that all participants are on the same page in terms of scope and potentiality of the regional development sessions with other actors. Also in this case, we shall not forget that what we are trying to facilitate is a dialogue that can be better performed when everyone shares similar views on the goals and potential.

2.4 Local Institutions Capacity Building Needs

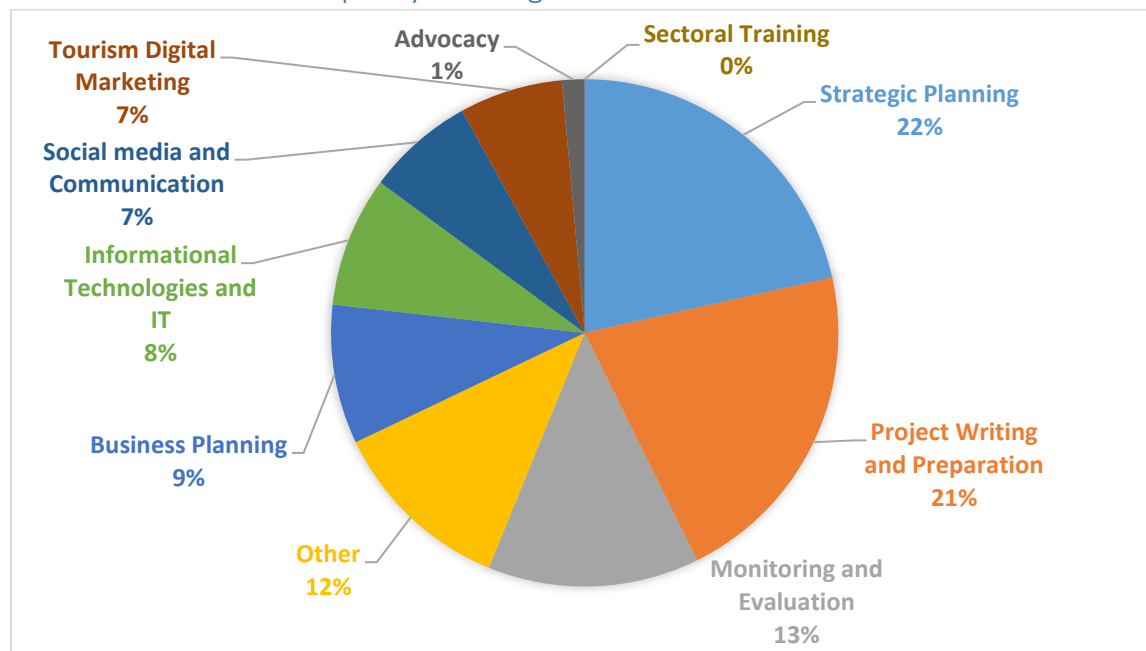


Chart 14 – Local Institutions Capacity Building Priorities

HIGH PRIORITY	Strategic Planning	22%
	Project Writing and Preparation	21%
	Monitoring and Evaluation	13%
	Other	12%
MEDIUM PRIORITY	Business Planning	9%
	Informational Technologies and IT	8%
	Social media and Communication	7%
	Tourism Digital Marketing	7%
LOW PRIORITY	Advocacy	1%
	Sectoral Training	0%

Chart 15 – Local Institutions Rank of Capacity Building Priorities

* Training plan will follow the High and Medium Priorities according to their ratio.

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In the case of Local Institutions, *Strategic Planning and Project Writing and Preparation* are followed, differently from the previous groups, by *Monitoring and Evaluation* meaning that Local Institutions are more prone to discover Project Cycle Management as a practice. This may lead us to the supposition that, as an institution, they probably are not very aware of the PCM as a general topic as they work with institutional funds and they have other approaches to management. In the case of Local Institution, a more radical intervention in terms of capacity building must be done both in terms of approach to strategy and in terms of managing issues from preliminary analysis (problem Tree) until the implementation and M&E. As it will not be possible to provide a full PCS training to Local Institutions, it will be very important not to waste precious time in giving too theoretical classes but, instead, invest time in giving some practical tools and best practices making sure to help them understanding the approach rather than the details.



Chart 16 – Comparing Background with New Priorities (Local Institutions)

Please note that the content of the category “Other” in Background does not match with the content of the category “Other” in New Priorities. In terms of Background, “Other” identified competences are: commands management, milk program, team work and child violence.

As we can see from the chart, it is unnecessary to focus particularly on *Business Planning and IT* areas, whereas *Strategic Planning* really stands out from the Background line underlining a strong need of capacity building in this area.

Suggestions for the training methodology

Civil Servants and Mayors of Local Institutions are key actors of regional development and have the potential of representing a support to the other actors. As they are the only actor that belongs to

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institutions, they will be the ones “making the difference” and their ability in prioritizing issues and operate a strong strategic planning will be the fundamental input for regional development. Unfortunately, among all other actors, they are have a less developed background in this field although they probably have a more clear idea of regional and local development as a general topic. Trainings should be characterized by a mix of formal and informal education. Topics should be addressed in a radical and comprehensive way. Also, Regional Development shouldn’t, in this case, be addressed as a general topic but, at the same time, we need to make sure that all participants are on the same page in terms of scope and potentiality of the regional development sessions with other actors. In particular, Local Institutions will be the ones in charge of taking advices from LAGs and CSOs therefore we need to ensure that Local Institutions will be given special tools for identifying good ideas and setting priorities out of the inputs that will come from the other two actors. Anyways we shall never forget that what we are trying to facilitate is a dialogue that is better performed when everyone shares similar views on the goals and potential.

3. Capacity Building Activities

A minimum of three workshops of three days for up to 25 participants from LAGs, CSOs and LSGs will be organized for each target region over the course of the project. The Action will offer to all target regions LSGs and CSOs/LAGs ongoing support after workshops in the form of coaching to facilitate inter-regional communication between target groups, as well as assist them in practical steps to participate in regional development planning and engaging through various mechanisms.

The trainings will be agreed with the contracted trainers following the recommendations listed in this document.

4.5 Monitoring

PIN will carry out regular visits to each stakeholder and offer two days of individual consultation per stakeholder after each workshop. As well distance support (through phone and email) will be proposed. Two experience-sharing meetings of a duration of two days each gathering target stakeholders from all three regions will be organized to exchange on successes and challenges encountered in influencing regional development strategies.



Annex 1 - Questionnaire

Questionnaire

First section:	
General INFO	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Name of Organization2. Kind of Organization3. Name4. Gender5. Position / Role in Organization6. Geographical Location
Second Section:	
The organization and its participation in Regional Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Date since when participates in Regional Dev.8. Do you belong to an organization or platform (higher) and8.1 Which one9. Does the Org. cooperates with state institutions or private sectors etc / funds or joint projects10. Main source of funding11. Main directions/sectors area in which they operate12. Number of projects13. In which form you participate in regional development strategy in terms of planning implementation and evaluation14. At which stage15. Are you attending regional strategy planning meetings were above things were discussed
Third Section:	
Training Needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none">16. Tick trainings received over years (Multiple Choice)17. Knowledge and skills organization needs to participate better in regional development (Multiple Choice)
Multiple Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic Planning• Project Writing and Preparation• Tourism Digital Marketing• Business Planning• Informational Technologies and IT• Social media and Communication• Monitoring and Evaluation• Advocacy• Sectoral Training