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Analysing Institutional Arrangements for Agri-Environmental Schemes in Europe: Final-Report

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Executive summary and recommendations for policy makers

Both environmental effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of agri-environmental measures (AEMs) show great variations and are often considered unsatisfactory from the scientific point of view. In spite of extensive environmental knowledge, the design and implementation of AEMs seem very often to be rather driven by farmers income objectives than environmental objectives. This indicates that the main problem of AEMs is an institutional one or, more precisely a problem of decision making structures. In this context, the institutional arrangements for agri-environmental measures in Europe have been analysed in the context of the European research project called ITAES – Integrated Tools to Design and Implement Agri-Environmental Schemes. On the basis of results from ten case studies in nine EU Member States several results and recommendations can be presented.

1. The results show that decision-making and implementation procedures do affect the objectives of AEMs. In the case that agricultural administrations and farmers associations exert a strong influence the income objectives of AEMs come to the fore.
Decision-making and implementation procedures have an impact on the environmental effectiveness of AEMs as well. A stronger influence of lower administrative levels and of environmental associations is perceived to be connected with higher environmental effectiveness. However, it is assumed that the higher the influence of environmental associations is the greater are the transaction costs of decision making.

2. Several changes in the decision-making procedures are proposed which could improve the effectiveness, efficiency and acceptance of AEMs.
First, actors believe that more decentralisation[2] could improve the effectiveness, efficiency and acceptance of AEMs. All actors postulate more influence for NUTS3 and LAU levels, a demand which is especially raised by local actors. In this context, two perceptions are of significant influence: 1) the perception of the heterogeneity of the natural environment and 2) the perception of transaction costs. Actors perceiving the natural environment as heterogeneous have an increased demand for decentralisation. Actors considering transaction costs of decentralisation express a reduced demand for decentralisation.
Second, there is a demand of increased participation of other actor groups in the design process of agri-environmental measures. In all case study areas, the agricultural administration currently dominates decision-making and is less likely to allow for an increased influence of other actors. Likewise, the farmer associations exert a strong influence and do strongly oppose an increased influence of other actors.
Third, local action groups (LAGs) could improve the acceptance, effectiveness and, to a certain extent, also the efficiency[3] of AEMs. Actors assume that measures designed in local action groups are not necessarily more efficient than current measures. However, they acknowledge the potential of a higher ecological effectiveness and higher acceptance of measures, which are designed in an LAG approach. Contrary to LAGs the opinion on auctions is comparatively critical.
Generally, the assessment of LAGs and auctions varies significantly among the actor groups. Actors from environmental administrations and associations as well as researches and others

[2] The degree of centralisation or decentralisation is determined by the NUTS level at which design and implementation takes place. Design and implementation at NUTS 0 or 1 is regarded as centralised, design and implementation at NUTS 3 or beyond is regarded as decentralised.
[3] The new Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005 contains two important innovations: First, it allows Member States to design a part of the AEM in local action groups (LAGs) defined in Article 61 of the regulation. Second, in particular for AEMs, the new regulation introduces auctions as an additional option for contracting farmers. In an ex-ante assessment actors were asked about the potential of LAGs.

attribute a high potential to LAGs and are indifferent to criticism concerning the implementation of auctions. Conversely, actors from the agricultural administrations and farmer associations tend to neglect or disagree with the fact that LAGs increase economic efficiency, environmental effectiveness and acceptance and attach little or no potential to auctions. LAGs and auctions are evaluated more positively by the lower administrative levels and by regions of Flanders (BE), Fryslân (NL) and Basse-Normandie (F). Lower administrative levels may expect a growing influence due to the institutional innovations inherent in LAGs. The positive attitude towards LAGs of Basse-Normandie and especially Fryslân can be explained by the fact that they already have more experience with bottom-up approaches. The more seriously actors perceive environmental problems and the less satisfied they are with current AEMs, the more positive they assess auctions and LAGs as institutional alternatives.
Nevertheless, for such bottom-up approaches the budget, in particular, is regarded as an obstacle. Problems also arise from the risk-averse behaviour of civil servants in charge and from the general unfitness of administrative structures. For most countries it can be concluded that as long as agricultural administrations and farmers associations are by far the most influential groups on the design process of AEMs, bottom up approaches, which are considered in the new regulation, will remain an exception. Furthermore, actors fear the effort which might be connected with the control of the work of LAGs.

3. With the view to the diversity of political and administrative structures as well as agricultural and environmental conditions in the Member States, we have to be cautious when giving policy recommendations to the European Union. On the one hand, there is the principle of subsidiarity. Relating to this, the EU provides a frame and the Member States define actual measures according to their demands. On the other hand, the EU is obliged to respond if its objectives expressed in the regulations are not fulfilled. Since the effectiveness, efficiency and acceptance of the AEMs are unsatisfying, there is a need to act. On the basis of the results of the ITAES research work, for the EU this would mean to significantly encourage environmental administrations, associations and local actors to increase their participation in the design and implementation process of AEMs. Strengthening the formal influence of these groups could yield promising results. This, in turn, could be achieved by implementing a kind of veto right for the environmental administration for the design and implementation process. The result should be that funds for agri-environmental measures could not be spent without the agreement of environmental administrations.
A further step, which could avoid a logjam, would be to shift the responsibility for the design process of AEMs to the environmental administrations. Both options could reduce the risk that AEMs focus too much on income objectives of farmers and less on environmental objectives. The authors underline that farms need a sound economic basis to fulfil environmental requirements of AEMs. Therefore, AEMs should also contain an economic incentive. However, the major income objectives should remain part of the first pillar of the CAP.
Following the results of the 276 interviews, a great potential to improve effectiveness, efficiency and acceptance of AEMs is assigned to the participation of other actor groups, in general, and of local people in local action groups, in particular. However, without the proposed shift of competencies, participation will not be likely to improve.
Thus, further research is urgently needed to analyse in etail the effects of a “shift of competencies” from the agricultural administrations to the environmental administrations in the different Member States.

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List of Abbreviations

AA/AgAd	Agricultural administration
AEM	Agro-environmental measure
AES	Agro-environmental scheme
BE	Belgium
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CSS	Countryside Stewardship Scheme
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
EAFRD	Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EA/EnAd	Environmental administration
EC	European Commission
EEC	European economic community
EnAs	Environmental associations
EO	Environmental organization
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Areas
EU	European Union
FA/FaAs	Farmers association
FL	Flanders
FR	France
GMO	Genetically modified organisms
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
ITAES	Integrated Tools to design and implement Agro Environmental Schemes
LAG	Local action groups
LAU	Local administrative unit
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Environment
NGO_A	Non-government organizations (Agriculture)
NGO_E	Non-government organizations (Environment)
NL	Netherlands
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
REPS	Rural Environment Protection Scheme
R/Res	Researchers
TC	Transaction costs
UK	United Kingdom
WP	Work package
WTO	World Trade Organization

1 Introduction

Agri-environmental measures (AEMs) as one important part of the European Agri-Environmental Policy have been continuously discussed and evaluated since their broader introduction in the European Union (EU) in 1992. Several amendments during the last years have caused an iterative process of institutional change of the EU`s rural development policy, which is the legal framework of AEMs.
However, AEMs are criticized for their low economic efficiency and environmental effectiveness and partly low acceptance (Lowe und Baldock 2000; Osterburg 2002). According to the EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS (2005), neither the objectives nor the effects of the measures are clear and transparent. Summarising several evaluations which have been done, the environmental effectiveness and the cost-effectiveness of AEMs within the former Regulation (EEC) No. 2078/1992 and the Regulation (EC) No. 1257/1999 vary widely and are very often unsatisfactory (Marggraf 2003). As this was not in line with the original objectives of the Regulations, the European Commission argued that most Member States simply did not fully exploit the scopes and opportunities offered by the EU (Fischler 2000).
Ahrens et al. (2000) suggest an unwillingness of regional politicians to demand considerable efforts from farmers to fulfil the objectives of the AEMs. Research from the perspective of political economy supports the viewpoint that agricultural lobbies have maintained a strong influence upon the design of agricultural policies, in general, and on AEMs, in particular (Hagedorn 1993; Eggers 2005, 2006). A differentiated analysis of the role of the regional administration in the case of the German federal state of Brandenburg was carried out by Eggers et al. (2004). The authors concluded that "since decentral approaches beyond the Laender level are not explicitly provided by the relevant EU Regulations, there is no necessity for federal (or Laender) governments to support or implement any kind of local organisations, such as an Agri-Environmental Forum.
Considering the above findings and the proven fact that it is possible to design effective and efficient AEMs, it becomes obvious that the main problem concerning the design and implementation of AEMs is an institutional problem.

Following the above-mentioned criticism on AEMs, the ITAES Work Package 4 (WP4) "Analysis of Institutional Arrangements of AEMs" focussed on institutional aspects and defined three main analytical research questions. First, it was asked whether differences in the decision-making and implementation procedures significantly affect the design of agri-environmental measures and their effectiveness. The second research question was which changes in the decision-making procedures could improve the effectiveness, efficiency and acceptance of AEMs. In this context, an analysis was made of the potential of the two innovations within the new Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005[4]: Local actions groups and call for tenders (auctions). Third, the role of the EU was investigated against the background of the diverse political and administrative structures as well as various agricultural and environmental situations in the Member States. Policy recommendations are given how the EU could improve the effectiveness, efficiency and acceptance of AEMs.
To answer the research questions, 276 interviews were conducted within ten case studies in nine countries. The answers to these analytical questions shall be of use for actors at different levels of AEMs decision-making. In particular, information shall be provided to the European Union as a central actor deciding about important regulations for AEMs. The EU influences many subsequent decisions of other actors and finally affect the design of AEMs significantly

[4] Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

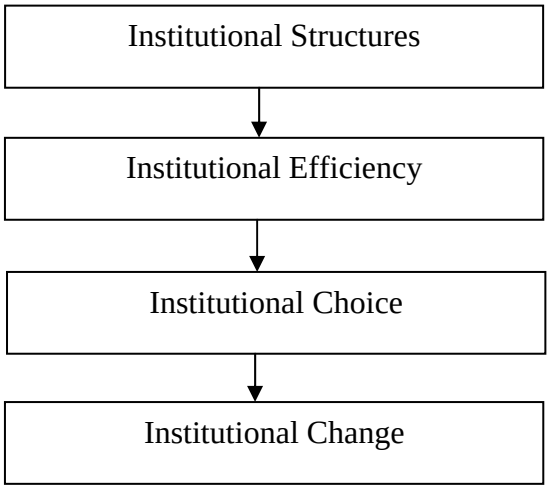
and sometimes in unexpected ways. Thus, the research sheds light on how the European Union is able to manage the diverse institutional settings in its Member States to achieve common policy objectives (Beckmann et al 2006).

This document shall serve as a comprehensive source book for several publications, which are currently in process or planned for the near future. The main findings and policy recommendations are summarised in the executive summary. In section 2, the theories and the analytical framework are described. The different aspects of the methodology are presented in chapter 3. Chapter 4 gives an overview about all descriptive results and the final chapter 5 details all qualitative and quantitative results comprising 168 tables and figures.

2 Theories and analytical framework

The theories behind the following analysis of institutional arrangements of AES, which will not be discussed in detail in this paper, are the Political Economy of Public Administration (e.g. Horn 1995), Transaction Cost Economics and Politics (e.g. North 1996, Dixit 2000, Williamson 1999 and Challen 2000) and the Institutional Analysis of Public Policy (e.g. Scharpf 2000, Ostrom 1990, Hagedorn 2002 and Sabatier 1999). The basic aspects covered in these theoretical approaches are the determinants for the choice of institutional arrangements and the reasons for institutional change as well as the benefit and cost structures that result from specific institutional arrangements and for whom costs and benefits accrue.

Figure 1: Analytical steps for analysing institutional arrangements for AES



Source: based on Herrera, Van Huylenbroeck and Espinel 2005

The analysis will follow the four analytical steps of institutional analysis as proposed by Herrera, Van Huylenbroeck and Espinel (2005) shown in Figure 1. First, the institutional structure is identified and described in detail. Second, the efficiency of the institutional structure is assessed by asking whether the institutional structures produce socially and economic preferable outcomes from the perspective of actors involved. If this is not the case there is a room for improvement and for gains from institutional change. Third, institutional alternatives may be developed and analysed that could possibly lead to an improvement of the

status quo. Finally, it is analysed if potentially beneficial institutional alternatives could be implemented with net social gains.

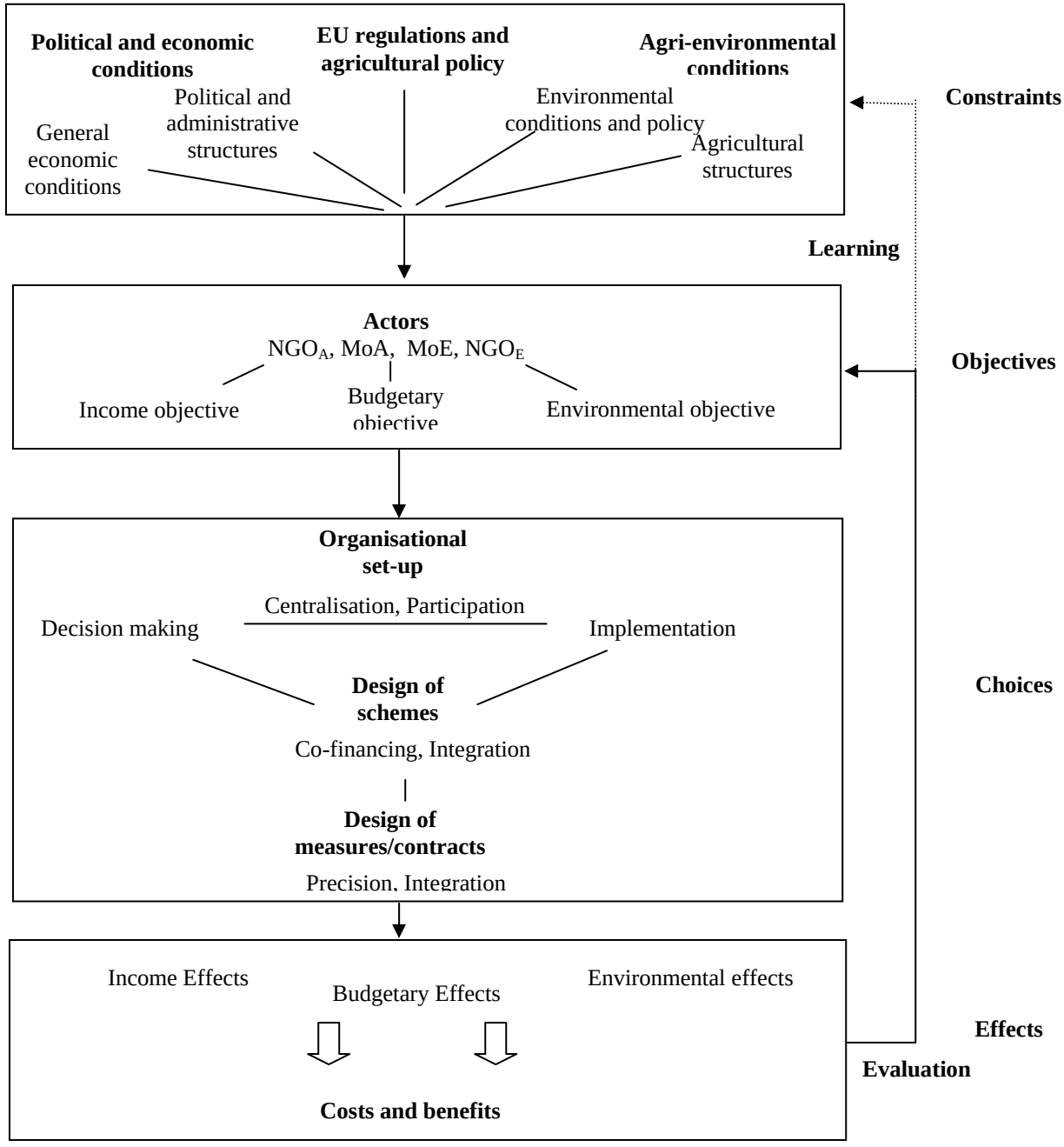
The institutional analysis should allow to assess the institutional arrangements in one country as well as to make a cross-country comparison. It is assumed that although institutional arrangements are unlikely to be successfully transplanted, countries can learn from the experiences of others.

In order to establish a link between theoretical considerations and the methodological approach and several assumptions outlined in the methodological approach of the German case study (Beckmann et al. 2006), an analytical framework is drawn up in Figure 2, illustrating that choices about the organisational set-up of AES, the design of schemes and the design of measures are influenced by external constraints as well as the objectives of actors. The effect of these choices determines the costs and benefits of AES.

Three types of *constraints* may occur: The political and economic conditions of the country or region, the content of EU regulations about AES and its agricultural policy and the agri environmental conditions of the country/region. One major constraint is the distribution of property rights. Since AES rely on voluntary contracting and payments to farmers for environmental services, the definition of farmers' property rights on agricultural production and the use of the environment is of central importance.

Actors involved in AES comprise mainly four groups, namely governmental organisations concerned with agriculture (such as the MoA), governmental organisations concerned with the environment (such as MoE), civil society organisations concerned with the agriculture (NGO_A) and civil society organisations concerned with the environment (NGO_E). These groups articulate and try to bring in their objectives, which may address budgetary, environmental or farmers' income issues. Whose objectives matter depends on the policy process and of the relative strengths of the different parties (Beckmann et al. 2006).

Figure 2: Analytical framework for the analysis of institutional arrangements for AES



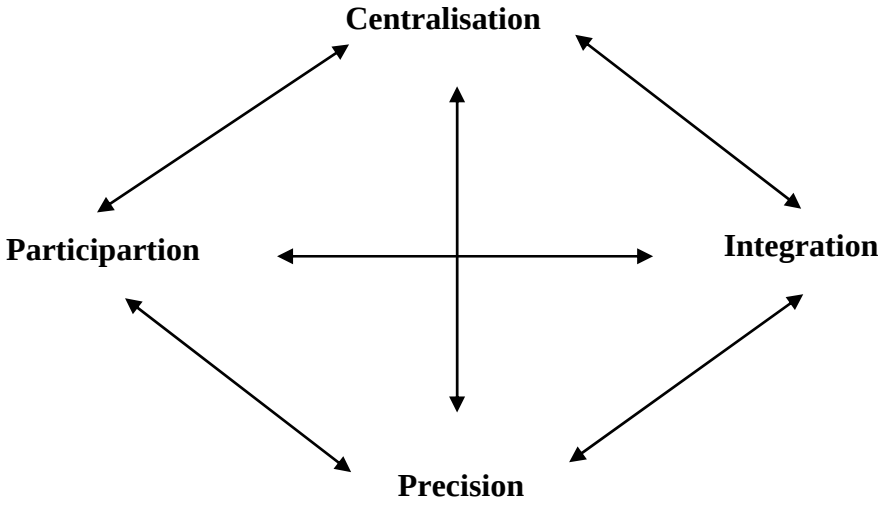
MoA = Ministry of Agriculture
MoE = Ministry of the Environment
NGO$_A$ = Non-governmental organisation promoting agriculture
NGO$_E$ = Non-governmental organisation promoting the protection of the environment

Choices about Agro-Environmental Schemes are made at three levels which are interlinked with each other.
The first level is the organisational set-up, indicating which groups are involved in the decision-making and implementation process of AES and the way in which they can exert influence. Thus, the issues of centralisation and participation play a role here.

The second level is the design of schemes. A decision to be made here is how many schemes and measures per scheme are offered. Furthermore, it has to be decided whether EU induced and co-financed schemes are supplemented by schemes financed by the country or region alone.
At the third level, the design of measures and contracts, it needs to be decided whether measures are designed as specific, individual measures (one measure targeting one objective) or as integrative measures (one measure targeting many objectives). The design of measures can serve either income objectives or environmental objectives to different degrees. If it is the aim of AES to fulfil environmental targets, measures can be expected to have high precision in the way that they are adjusted to concrete environmental problems and the specific characteristics of the environment. Where the objective is rather a general income support, neither environmental precision nor the adjustment of compensation payments to the specific agricultural conditions of a site (e.g. yield potential) are likely. As for contracts, it needs to be decided whether the contracts are standardised, medium or long-term and contracted individually or with a group of farmers. However, the EU regulations set minimum requirements for the design of contracts, e.g. the minimum duration of 5 years.

The decisions that need to be taken at the different levels, thus, address mainly four different issues: centralisation, participation, integration and precision as represented in Figure 3. These are interrelated. For instance, the degree of centralisation may effect the level of participation. Some actors that are organised at NUTS 1 level are not organised at NUTS 3 level. Participation, furthermore, may affect the design of measures, e.g. its precision. If some actors provide valuable site-specific information the precision of measures may be increased. Furthermore, measures and schemes that are integrated tend to be less precise.

Figure 3: Central issues in agro-environmental policy



The *effects* of AES are of three kinds: there are environmental results, consequences with respect to the income of farmers and budgetary effects. These effects and the relevance that is attributed to them determine the resulting costs and benefits connected with AES. Of course, costs and benefits can be evaluated not only for the existing administration and design structures of AES but also for possible institutional alternatives that are not actually realised.

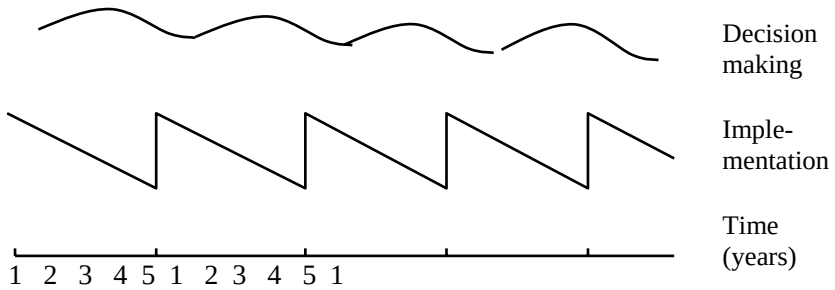
Furthermore, it should be considered that the observable results of AES actually initiate a feedback process in which actors learn and over time possibly will change some elements of the political and regulatory environment. This learning process is partially formalised in the required evaluation procedure. (Beckmann et al. 2006).

3 Methodology

3.1 The design of the questionnaire

The stakeholder survey for AES has been carried out in 2006 in the ten ITAES case study areas over nine EU countries. Quantitative and qualitative data have been collected mainly relying on standardized questions using five-point Likert scale variables to measure actors perceptions and preferences (Likert 1932). In most countries, members of the respective ITAES teams conducted face to face interviews supplemented by some telephone interviews. Only in Finland, in addition to the face to face interviews, a web based survey was carried out as actors were already used to this methodology. The data analysis includes descriptive analysis as well as ordered and simple logit regressions.
The questionnaire with six main parts included also open questions and room for additional comments. The interviews are standardised to a large extent. Standardisation is necessary due to the fact that comparability needs to be ensured between all nine case study countries and problems of translation need to be minimised. Nevertheless, each part of the questionnaire ends with an open question which should help to make transparent “hidden knowledge”. This information is the basis for the qualitative part, mentioned before, to which the Guidelines will be provided soon. We recommend writing down a half page summary of each interview.
It starts with Part A by recording relevant information on the interview partner, his organisation and its involvement in the AES design and implementation process.[5]
One aspect of this part is the attempt to calculate the human resources spent on the design and administration of programmes and measures.

Figure 4: Development of different cost components over 5-year programme periods



[5] The interview questions are oriented directly on the research hypotheses which have been discussed in the Berlin-Summer-Meeting.

In this task, it is important to be aware of the fact that the different transaction cost components connected to AESs are not uniformly spread throughout the entire programme period. Figure 4 shows the expected development of decision making costs as well as implementation costs throughout the usual 5-year running period for AESs. In order to accurately capture these cost variations, the transaction cost measurement should be done for a whole programme period, in our case from 2001 to 2005, for Part A of the questionnaire. As we do not ask the data for each year, it is important at least to survey the time that is spent in average for the different tasks.
With the requested data on the number of personnel, dedicated to the design and implementation of agri-environmental programmes in different organisations, the overall working time for the design and administration of AESs can be calculated.
The questionnaire continues with the **Assessment of the natural environment (Part B).** This short part is an amendment to the questions of WP 5, but of course not that specific. Interview partners are questioned about their perception of natural and agricultural conditions. **Part C** is the **Assessment of the Agro Environmental Measures (AEM).** Questions concern the efficient targeting of measures, the importance actors assign to various components of efficiency (ecological, economic…) and the assessment of the precision of the measures.
The **Assessment of participation, organisation/administration structure and exchange of information (Part D)** tries to explore the opinion of the actors about the bottom approach concerning the costs and benefits and the importance they ascribe to different parties in the design and implementation process. This part ends with the perception of institutional quality by the actors. Some questions relevant for WP4 have been introduced into the questionnaire for the ITAES farmer survey of 200-300 farmers in each case study country (ITAES WP8 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2005d). These are standardised questions, concerning the perception of institutional quality by farmers. In particular the areas transparency, reliability, legitimacy, responsibility and complexity are addressed. In this way, institutional quality aspects are evaluated from two sides, by the farmers and by the members of administration/NGOs.
The questions regarding the **Assessment of institutional alternatives (Part E)** concern mainly the decision-making and implementation process of AESs and ideas on institutional alternatives for AESs. In this section we have a special view on the options offered by the new Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005.
In **Part F, Public transaction costs,** the main question aims at providing supplementary information to the evaluation of the private transaction costs of farmers carried out in WP6 of the ITAES project. This is done by collecting information on the public transaction costs connected with the same four measures that are regarded in the farmer transaction cost assessment. The objective is to compare the administrative effort spent on the four measures for design, administration, advice/support, control and evaluation among each other and with the average effort of all measures in the respective case study area.

3.2 Selection of the relevant actors

The expert interviews have been conducted with members of the public administration, science and other association and NGOs relevant for agri-environmental policy in the case study regions and the respective countries. For the expert interviews, the first step was to identify relevant organisations, e.g. governmental and non governmental organisations involved somehow in AESs. The second step was to identify those actors within the different organisations which are personally responsible for or at least involved in the design, administration and control of AES. The selection of the respondents has been done by the ITAES partners for the respective countries. An overview of the selected actors is given in the result description of part A of the questionnaire .

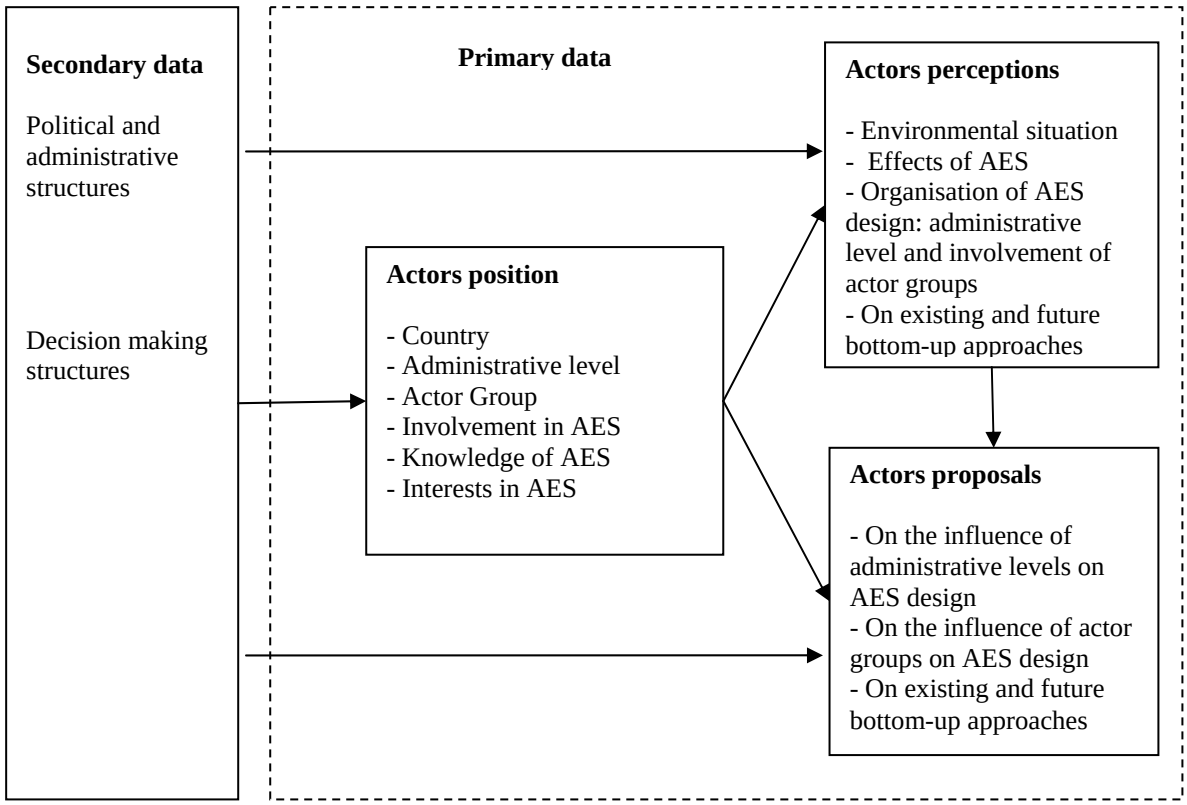
3.3 The data analysis

Institutional analysis often lacks sufficient data to link institutional structures to performance, or examine institutional choice and change. International comparable time-series or cross-section data on the decision making in agri-environmental policy and the environmental performance simply does not exist. Although precise data on decision making structures, public transaction costs and environmental utility losses probably could be collected it would be costly in terms of time and resources (Saleth and Dinar 2004: 124). Moreover, even if this data would exist, it allows only for ex-post rather than ex-ante analysis. Any empirical analysis from observed data carried out in 2006 could only evaluate the ex-post effects of the Council Regulation (EC) No. 1257/1999 but not the ex-ante effects of the already enacted Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005.

To overcome these limitations, this study uses stakeholder's perceptions and preferences as the data basis for the empirical analysis of the models of institutional choice, institutional performance and institutional change. Using such data is quite common in institutional analysis (see the detailed discussion in Saleth and Dinar 2004: 125-153) and has the principle advantage that the institutional and performance indicators are derived within the same analytical context. Stakeholders do not only assess the institutional structures but also the performance. Such kind of data is subjective, but theoretically consistent with the concept of bounded rationality which refers to human behavior that is intentionally rational but only limitedly so.

Figure 5 schematically presents the methodology used, the data resulting from it, and how they are used to obtain results. First of all, next to the survey or primary data, secondary data were available on the political, administrative and decision making structures in each of the case-study areas. These were used as inputs for a better understanding of the survey data. The survey first assessed the position of the actor interviewed: to which country, administrative level and actor group he belongs, how he is involved in AES, and finally what his knowledge is of and interest in AES. The next step was to assess actors' perceptions on the environmental situation in the case study area and the ecological, economic and social effects of AES. Actors were also asked to describe how AES are designed in their opinion: which administrative levels are involved to which extent and which influence is attributed to the different stakeholders involved. Their perception on existing and future bottom-up approaches was also assessed. After giving their perception on how the situation regarding AES is at this moment, the respondents were asked to propose changes, provided that the current situation is regarded as unsatisfactory, in the level of AES design and the involvement of the stakeholders. Finally they could also give proposals for specific bottom-up approaches like LAG and the approach in general. All these data will be linked with each other as is depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Methodology to assess the perception on bottom-up approaches



Source: Beckmann et al (2008)

4 Summary of the main results of all questions

In this chapter, a summary of all results of all questions is given. The number at the beginning of each paragraph indicates the number of the question. For additional information, please have a look on the complete description of the questions. In the table of contents the numbering of questions is indicated.

1. For Work Package 4, the main aim was to interview every actor group which is directly or indirectly involved in the design or in the implementation of AEMs. The agricultural administration turned out to be mostly represented in the sample, followed by the environmental administration and farmers' associations. Environmental associations and researchers are represented to a smaller extent. The distribution of the respondents over the different categories deviates fractionally from country to country, which reflects somehow the structure of relevant actors in the field of AEMs in the countries. From the administrative levels, the NUTS 3 level is represented most, followed by the NUTS 1 level. The lowest administrative level is least represented. The majority of the interviewees were staff members with seven years of experience in their job.

2. The percentage of the working time spent on AESs in the departments or organisations of the respondents averages 23.57 percent with a median of 12.5 percent. The average percentage of the interviewee's personal working time spent on AESs is 24.26 percent, with a median of 10 percent, The largest percentage of the personal and departmental working times spent on AESs was found in North England. From the different administrative levels, the NUTS 1 level spends most time on AESs. The agricultural administration is the group that devotes the largest percentage of their time to AESs, and farmers' organisations are least occupied with AESs.

3. Most interviewees are engaged in giving advice or support in the design of AESs, and the number of people involved in the AES activities depends mostly on the type of organisation. The category "other activities" consists of tasks, like research related to AESs, coordination with other policies and communication or promotion. It is the category on which most time is spent. On contracting of AESs and advice or support activities there is also spent more time, especially by Flanders and the Czech Republic and by the lower administrative levels. For most tasks, the highest share of the working time is spent on AESs by the agricultural administrations, except for advice and support which is mostly done by the farmers' associations and for evaluation which is mostly done by the group of the researchers.

4. The respondents exchange most information about AESs with the agricultural administrations and the farmers. The environmental organisations and "farmers' wives" are least consulted. Finland and North England are the countries that exchange information on AESs most frequently with different actor groups. At the higher institutional levels, researchers and environmental organisations are more frequently consulted, whereas at the lower institutional levels more information is exchanged with the local governments and the farmers. Information is exchanged mostly within the own organisation or across organisations of the same type (e.g. farmers' organisations who exchange most information with other farmers' organisations).

5. Summarising the first points, there is a diversity of comments on the time spent on design and implementation of AESs. At large, the comments depend on the tasks of individual respondents. Thus, lobbying is rather undertaken by environmental and farmers' associations and monitoring rather by the administrations, particularly the agricultural administrations. It is

also mentioned across actor groups that increased complexity of schemes increases workloads. However, not all respondents are involved to great extents in AESs and respondents may well perceive their time spend differently in terms of quantity and quality.

6. Generally, the natural environment is regarded as fairly heterogeneous across the case studies and administrative levels. All actor groups too perceive the natural environment as heterogeneous, though the group of “others” to a lesser extent. The highest variances can be observed between the case studies Brandenburg (DE) and Ireland have the lowest and Czech Republic, Friesland and North England have the highest perception of heterogeneity of their natural environment.

7. Water quality and biodiversity are seen as the more serious environmental problems. However, the problem perception varies among case studies. For example, Flanders and the Italian case indicate water quality as a rather serious problem, whereas biodiversity seems to be an issue of greater concern in Flanders, North England and the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, there are also stronger variations between other problems, especially water quantity, which is particularly serious in Brandenburg and almost no problem in the English case study. Yet, water quantity problems can relate to both, scarcity and oversupply of water. The perception of environmental problems is fairly similar between administrative levels, although for the NUTS 3 level all problems are rather consistently less serious than for the other levels. Among the actor groups, clear distinctions can be made between the farmer associations and the remaining actor groups, which do not consistently rate the seriousness of environmental problems as low. Water quantity is rated as rather low problem across both NUTS levels and in actor groups comprising the environmental administration and environmental associations.

8. On average, the environmental problems are seen neither heterogeneously nor homogenously. Also among case studies a rather unified pattern emerges. However, Finland considers its environmental problems as comparatively homogenously. Greater differences can be found among administrative levels, e.g. NUTS 3 considers environmental problems as rather consistently homogenously in contrast to the higher administrative levels as well as to LAU. Exceptions may be soil quality and landscape, which are regarded to be more heterogeneous at LAU levels. Also the actor groups have rather similar perceptions of the heterogeneity of environmental problems, though researchers rate heterogeneity rather high.

9. Agricultural productivities across the case studies are assessed from indifferent to heterogeneous. In Flanders and Ireland, heterogeneity is comparatively low but not reaching homogeneity. The administrative levels higher than NUTS 1 tend to rate heterogeneity of production comparatively higher than lower levels. The actor groups have a rather consistent perception of the heterogeneity of agricultural production, though the environmental administration and the group of others rate heterogeneity slightly lower.

10. A diversity of environmental problems in the case studies is looked at in further detail by a variety of actor groups. In parts, the problems predominantly mentioned differ significantly between the case studies and are sometimes also environmentally heterogeneous within the case studies. The latter is especially the case in the French, Italian and North England case studies. Soil protection is mentioned as a core problem in the Czech Republic, but is also of concern in other regions. Water issues prevail particularly in the French case study and North England. In the latter case study, biodiversity seems to be a major issue in terms of wildlife and is mentioned by all actor groups. Other case studies put much less emphasis on the issue. Implications of encroaching peri-urban areas are an issue in Ireland and Flanders, while

landscape is a topic of special importance in Flanders, but also to some extent in Friesland, the Czech Republic and North-England. Knowledge on agri-environmental problems is lacking in Ireland, although there are sometimes complaints about insufficient knowledge in the other countries. Generally, at least some respondents of all actor groups acknowledge the major environmental problems. However, especially the environmental associations and to some extent environmental administrations and researchers emphasise environmental issues. Farmer associations and to a lesser extent agricultural administrations are in some case studies rather ignorant about environmental impacts. In the French case study, it seems that lower administrative levels have a much better understanding of environmental issues. In summary, the comments suggest that the perception of the environment can vary significantly among case studies, actor groups and administrative levels.

11. Overall it seems that AEMs tackle the environmental problems to an average extent with the exception of water quantity, which is inadequately addressed. The problems that are perceived as most important in question 7 are perceived as less adequately tackled by AEMs, again with the exception of water quantity. In Finland and France, the problems seem best tackled, and in Flanders and the Netherlands the situation seems worst or they are partly not addressed by the measures. The administrative levels most often responsible for the design of AEMs seem to be more convinced that soil problems are adequately tackled by AEMs than the other categories. The farmer organisations and agricultural administrations are more enthusiastic about the effectiveness of the measures than the environmental organisations and administrations. The opinion of the researchers is somewhere in between.

12. There is a difference in the evaluation of AEMs between the administrative levels: Lower levels give a higher evaluation of the effect of AEMs on soil quality, while higher levels better evaluate the effect of AEMs on water quantity. There seems to be only a small number of measures that are really targeted, but there are differences between the countries with Flanders, Basse-Normandie, Friesland and North England considerably outnumbering the other regions for targeted measures. The success of the measures is assessed as comparatively high in Finland and the Czech Republic, while in Northern England, Friesland, Basse-Normandie and Flanders the respondents overall assessed them as less successful. Yet, the effectiveness of AEMs depents also on the target levels they are to achieve and which well may vary between case studies and the perceptions of actors.

13. The respondents tend to agree that different agri-environmental problems are interlinked and that they should thus be addressed simultaneously by integrated measures. Only the representatives from the farmer organisations do not agree with these statements. There is not that much support from the NUTS 1 level to make the premiums more flexible by adapting them to the agricultural production potential or the seriousness of the environmental problems in a specific region. Regarding the last point, some actors are worried that those farmers having caused serious environmental problems in the past would be rewarded with higher premiums. The LAU level is more in favour of this. In Flanders, the Czech Republic, Ireland and North England the current measures show a slight improvement as compared with the previous ones, which indicates a small learning effect. For the other regions, the current measures are evaluated to be even less effective than the original ones.

14. There seems to be an overall agreement that the main objectives of AEMs are, and should continuously be, to reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture and support the positive ones. With the view to the current situation, the environmental administration favours reducing the negative environmental impacts of agriculture, while the farmer organisations more than the other groups emphasise the farm-income support effect of AEMs and

researchers support more strongly the objective of better integrating the farm sector in a local economic development scheme. Most actors – even the environmental associations – prefer the general support of farm incomes stronger than the support of farms in certain disfavoured zones.

15. The state of existing agri-environmental schemes and measures is particularly extensively commented upon by Flemish and French respondents. There is a great diversity of comments. Major topics are the effectiveness of measures and the precision of measures in targeting problems which both are often considered insufficient. The local production potential approach is mostly seen as impracticable to determine payment levels. Some suggest that it would be better to pay according to benefits of measures, though there is also some criticism that such approaches may reward those who caused environmental problems. Many respondents mention implementation problems, which are also in parts related to the lack of broader strategies.

16a. The influence of administrative levels on the design of agri-environmental measures is considered rather high at the higher administrative levels and rather low at levels from NUTS 2 downwards. This pattern can also be found in individual case studies, although with some variations due to missing administrative levels in some case studies. Between the case studies, there appears, however, a rather large variation in the assessment of the influence of the national level, which for example is particularly low for Flanders. Also the rating of influence of NUTS 2 is varying rather significantly between the case studies. The influence of administrative levels assessed by administrative levels follows rather consistently the overall average pattern. However, the NUTS 1 level is being considered as highly influential by all administrative levels with the exception of NUTS 2. Also actor groups tend to consistently perceive the influence of higher levels to be greater than that of lower levels with a rather clearly decreasing influence from NUTS 2 to LAU.

16b. There is a general request for a change in the influence of administrative levels in the design of AEMs. From all actor groups at all administrative levels and in all countries, a strong demand towards decentralisation is expressed. Consequently, the higher levels should loose influence and the lower levels from NUTS 2 downwards will gain influence. Thereby the highest level should loose most influence and the two lowest levels, NUTS 3 and LAU, will gain most influence. Overall, a change of influence of NUTS 1 is not demanded. Notwithstanding this general statement, NUTS 1 levels in some case studies, like Ireland and North England, are demanded to gain influence and in Finland to loose influence. Across the case studies, the higher levels are requested to loose influence and the lower levels to gain influence. However, these changes are not equally explicitly proposed, for example, the request is comparatively vigorous for Ireland and rather modest for Flanders. Also the different administrative levels would like to see the influence to change in this pattern. NUTS 3 and LAU demand, however, rather large changes. Similarly the actor groups insist on such a pattern of change in influence on measure design, whereas the environmental administrations express this in slightly less extreme way. Farmer associations demand a comparatively large reduction in influence of NUTS 1.

16c. A shift in power to lower administrative levels seems to be largely agreed to contribute to better-adapted schemes, which often are also considered more effective, flexible and reflecting local needs. However, there is a great variety of arguments in favour of only a limited increase in power for the lower levels. These arguments relate to issues, such as increased complexity, diversity of schemes and thus less harmonisation between areas. Furthermore, important arguments seem to be the lack of control and focus and the inability to

comply with higher-level rules. Knowledge and expertise are also arguments for lower or higher level involvement. Overall, many argue for at least some involvement of higher levels especially in terms of funding, general frameworks and control. Among others, particular benefits of higher-level influence mentioned as well are clear goals, guidelines and strategies. Differences can be assumed between case studies concerning advantages and disadvantages of lower level empowerment. However, these differences are difficult to pin down especially when comparing individual actor groups and administrative levels across the case studies,.

17. The objectives between the different actor groups tend to vary according to their expertise and membership. However, differences within an actor group can still be large and objectives vary between administrative levels. For example higher administrative levels sometimes also consider compliance with EU rules as objectives, which is normally not the case with lower levels. In addition, some objectives of agricultural administrations, farmer associations and environmental associations can be rather similar, while the environmental administration has rarely such objectives as fair payment for farmers. Also the farmer associations and environmental associations may share common objectives, which are not considered by the administration, as it is sometimes the case with financing and emphasis on lower levels. Researchers in many countries seem particularly focusing on evaluation and often add policy support to it, whilst evaluation is also often an objective of the administration. In general, individual actors were found to have a very specific pattern of objectives, making general conclusions difficult.

18. To certain extents, the actors regard their objectives as achieved. There is some achievement seen at the intermediate administrative levels, particularly NUTS 1. However, this level does only exist in five out of nine case study areas and of these Flanders, North-England and Brandenburg rated achievement particularly high. With some exception at NUTS 2, the satisfaction about achievement of objectives varies strongly among the case studies. The perception of the achievement of own objectives strongly depends on the actor's administrative level. However, actors at national and NUTS 1 levels including LAU at NUTS 1 demonstrate great satisfaction about objective achievement. The individual actor groups, in turn, assess the achievement of their objectives at the particular administrative levels in a rather similar pattern, although the farmer associations show a comparatively low satisfaction with the achievement of their objectives at the NUTS 1 level.

19. The agricultural administration is seen to have the highest influence on the design of AEMs. Also the environmental administration and farmer associations are suggested to have some influence, while environmental associations, environmental co-operations and researchers have rather low influence. This pattern can be more or less found in all case studies, although the influence of the environmental administration shows rather high variations being quite low in Basse-Normandie and in the Italian and the Friesland case studies. Environmental co-operations are only assessed in some case studies. Across administrative levels the influence of the agricultural administration is rated consistently high, while there is larger variation in the rated influence of environmental administration and farmer associations. The actors themselves assessed the influence of different actors with rather large variations, although their assessments were greatly consistent for the high influence of the agricultural administration and the rather low influence of researchers.

20. Overall it can be concluded, that the agricultural administration should loose some of its influence on AEMs design, but should remain the most important actor. In turn, both environmental administration and environmental associations should gain some influence. While the influence of farmer associations should remain constant, particularly researchers

should have significantly increased influence. With the exception of a loss in influence of the agricultural administration, the demanded changes in influence of actor groups tend to differ between case studies. However, in all case studies except Friesland a rather distinct increase in the influence of researchers is demanded. Changes in the requested influence of individual actor groups vary between administrative levels, though the influence of researchers should increase according to all levels. While actors more or less agree to changes in influence, the farmer associations wish their influence to increase strongly and the influence of the environmental administration to significantly decrease.

21. The evaluation of changing influence of actors by actors is not always clear-cut. Sometimes actors' suggestions imply a strong focus on specific administrative levels and sometimes only a vague improvement of the balance of influence among actors groups. Such an improved balance is often related to greater acceptance of schemes, which encompass more efficient measures, while complexity is anticipated to increase and decision-making to get difficult. It is also being argued for increased influence of under-represented stakeholders like environmentalists. The latter is especially emphasised by the environmental administration and by associations and researchers. Benefits of such arrangements are often seen a greater environmental impact of measures, while the downside may be more complicated decision-making. In some cases, lower influence of farmer associations and the agricultural administrations is suggested to improve environmental outcomes. Nevertheless, often arguments are raised in favour of preserving the influence of farmer associations and of the agricultural administration, because they have the necessary knowledge. Further, some argue that the latter are important for the allocation of funds.

22. The respondents were, in general, rather unsure about the conflict-reducing potential of a merger of the agricultural and the environmental ministries. Hence, the opinions on that question vary strongly among case studies, reflecting in parts past experiences with mergers. For instance in Ireland, such merger did not seem to have resulted in reduced conflicts. Between administrative levels, there is little variation in terms of the assessment of conflict reduction due to a merger. However, the NUTS 2 level rates conflict reduction rather low, while NUTS 1 rates this rather high. At the LAU level, the potential to reduce conflicts is tentatively assessed rather high which had not opinion on the impacts of past mergers. Actor groups tend to be consistently indifferent about conflict reduction due to mergers of agricultural and environmental ministries, except researchers who are confident that mergers can reduce conflicts.

23. For most characteristics of agri-environmental schemes, respondents tend to be generally indifferent. However, they would appreciate farmers to be more involved in designing AESs and tend to think that only overcompensated measures are attractive to the farmers. There is also some overall agreement that rules, requirements and application procedures are rather difficult to understand. Across the case studies, these patterns appear to be rather similar, although there can be strong variations for single aspects, like timeliness of payment and constancy of rules. Ireland shows a comparatively high overall agreement with the suggested AESs features. The patterns of agreement on the various aspects of the measures are quite similar between the administrative levels. An exception is, however, the timeliness of payments which is being considered particularly low by the LAU and the national levels. In addition, the LAU level rather unlike other levels tended to disagree that treatment of farmers is fair. The pattern of the evaluation of the different aspects of AESs by actor groups varies rather strongly between actor groups.

24. In their comments on institutional aspects of AESs, many respondents focus on specific national or case study region issues. Examples are the Flemish AESs, which are administered by at least two different agencies or the Czech payment agency, which badly co-operates with other actors. This is partly reflected in the assessment of mergers of environmental and agricultural ministries. In this context, the performance of the agricultural and environmental ministries in North England is criticised. There are fears of under-representation of farming issues and of the relating knowledge. A common theme, however, are complaints about bureaucratic structures and complicated design of rules, making the application of schemes and their management difficult. Opinions about appropriate efforts in terms of sanctioning are, however, mixed. In addition, many suggestions are made to improve the downstream information flow between agencies and farmers. Further, there are complaints that practical considerations are not sufficiently taken into account focussing too much on correct implementation according to administrative and legal regulations.

25. Almost half of the respondents answered that there are Non-EU cofinanced measures in their regions or countries, while nearly one third of the respondents did not have any knowledge about this. As a tendency there is overall agreement that non-cofinanced agri-environmental schemes are more flexible. Although there is no disagreement, a greater effectiveness in terms of environmental outcomes is not suggested to such an extent. In terms of increased flexibility of such AESs, there is rather agreement in all case studies, although for countries like Ireland and Italy rather low. In terms of greater environmental effectiveness of such schemes, Flanders, Basse-Normandie and the Italian case study are rather unsure, whereas the other case studies tend to agree. On both aspects of non-cofinanced measures, the administrative levels have rather similar opinions, although NUTS 2 gives a rather low rating. It even ranges around indifference in terms of environmental effectiveness. The pattern of the assessment of these two aspects of cofinanced schemes is rather similar among actor groups. However, the agricultural administration considers increased environmental effectiveness as rather low.

26. Generally, local action groups are not seen to greatly contribute to higher economic efficiency, but most actor groups highlight the potential of increased environmental effectiveness and greater acceptance of AEMs due to local action groups. Nevertheless, comparing the individual case studies, large variations can be observed: While most case studies show partly large agreement with positive effects of local action groups, in the Finnish case study there is rather clear disagreement concerning all aspects. With the exception of NUTS 3 and NUTS 1 all administrative levels agree at least to a certain extent that local action groups contribute to increased environmental effectiveness and greater acceptance. Only LAUs suggest that local action groups facilitate economic efficiency as well. The obvious result is that the assessment of local action groups is very much dependent on the actor group. The agricultural administration and farmer associations have little faith in local action groups, while the remaining actors are rather optimistic as far as higher economic efficiency, increased environmental effectiveness and greater acceptance are concerned.

27. Overall, major obstacles to bottom-up approaches are considered to be the EU budget and risk aversion of civil servants. The general administrative structure as well is rather seen as an obstacle, whereas the Council Regulation 1698/2005 and the corresponding Commission Regulation concerning the implementation rules are regarded as smaller obstacles. However, many actors do not comment on the new regulations, as their details are not well known by some actors inside and most actors outside the administration. When comparing the individual case studies a rather scattered pattern emerges. From among the EU Regulations, the Council Regulation is seen as an obstacle only in Friesland and North-England, whereas the

Commission Regulation too is considered an obstacle in Finland. The assessment patterns of severity of obstacles are rather similar among the different administrative levels. However, LAUs label the Council Regulation as a comparatively high obstacle and NUTS 1 rate the EU budget as an exceptionally important obstacle. The assessment of obstacles by actor groups is rather unified. An exception may be the high rating of risk aversion of civil servants by researchers.

28. The respondents mention a diversity of problems and obstacles regarding bottom-up approaches to AEMs. Among others, funding of schemes, fit into administrative structure and AESs requirements are recurrent themes across the case studies. In addition, Czech and Brandenburg officers of the agricultural administrations mention problems of control of bottom-up activities. Also respondents of Finnish farmer associations and Irish environmental associations point to this issue. Several respondents of all actor groups and administrative levels see funding of bottom-up approaches as a major problem. Among others, there are fears that funding will not be lasting or will be taken away from other measures, that support for farmers may also be reduced and, a suspicion especially raised by the environmental domain, that the farming community will be unwilling to release funds. Several respondents across actor groups argue that the general administrative structure is rather set up for top-down approaches and may lack the necessary capacity to administer bottom-up approaches. Moreover, the legal requirements for bottom-up approaches may pose difficulties on administrative procedures. Accordingly, a few respondents, for example from North England, suggest that learning processes are necessary for bottom-up approaches.

29. There is a slight tendency among the respondents to agree that higher costs of bottom-up approaches would be justified by higher benefits. However, this statement shows a great variation, becoming apparent when comparing individual case studies. The case studies of the Netherlands and France, for example, largely agree with such a justification, whereas Finland clearly tends to disagree. In addition, rather large differences can be found between administrative levels, although less distinct than between the case studies. Here a rather indifferent attitude of the NUTS 1 level is contrasted by large support for the justification by the national and the NUTS 2 levels. The lower levels, which would be very much involved in bottom-up approaches, are rather indifferent about this issue. There is also a significant variation between the actor groups. Environmental administrations, environmental associations and researchers tend to agree that higher costs of bottom-up approaches would be justified by higher benefits. The agricultural administrations and farmer associations are, however, fairly indifferent about the matter.

30. As an average tendency, calls for tenders or auctions as an institutional alternative to AEMs are not considered to produce less transaction costs, greater acceptance and higher environmental effectiveness. However, the differences between the case studies regarding this question are rather great. While there are large variations considering the different criteria, only the case study of Flanders has a rather optimistic view on the potential of auctions. In North England and the Netherlands the issue produced consistent indifference, while in Finland consistent disagreement. The administrative levels too have rather diverse opinions, though NUTS 3 with a consistent tendency of disapproval may not fall in this pattern. There is also obvious disagreement by the agricultural administrations and farmer associations with the hypothesis that calls for tenders or auctions lead to less transaction costs, greater acceptance and higher environmental effectiveness, while the remaining actors do not show such consistent disapproval.

31. A slight agreement was generally observed for the statement that higher administration cost, lack of acceptance in the administration and missing acceptance by farmers will be obstacles to the introduction of auctions in the context of AEMs. The assessment, however, varies between the case studies. Flanders and Friesland tend to rate the obstacles consistently rather indifferent, whereas Finland consistently tends to rate them high. For Ireland, lack of acceptance in the administration is a particularly clear obstacle. With the exception of NUTS 2, administrative levels tend to similarly assess the obstacles as comparatively severe. Especially the national level tends to consider the obstacles as important. The actor groups were all at least indifferent about the mentioned obstacles to auctions. However, there is some variation in the assessment.

32. Overall, respondents were indifferent to the statements that “equal national cofinancing of both pillars of the CAP could strengthen AEMs” and that “equal national cofinancing of the pillars should be undertaken”. Among the case studies both issues are assessed rather coherently within the case studies. Finland and Flanders rather clearly disagree with the statements, while the remaining participants generally tend to be indifferent North England is an exception, however, as it tends to agree rather clearly. Less variation can be found among administrative levels. These range comparatively closely around indifference, while LAU is on the brink to disagree with the statements. Among the actor groups, the farmer associations show rather clear disagreement to both statements. A slight tendency to agree could be observed by the environmental actor groups and researchers, whereas the group of the “others” tends to suggest the opposite.

33. Many respondents made suggestions for various needs for improvement of institutional aspects of AESs. Considering the great diversity of remarks it is difficult to summarise them. Communication and information channelling seems to be a major institutional issue for the Czech case study, while this is not an explicit concern for the other case studies. Some of respondents across the case studies and actor groups point to the evaluation of benefits of measures, which they mostly like to be objectively quantified and part of cost-benefit analysis. Tendered or auctioned AEMs are a recurring topic. Respondents from Brandenburg point to lack of targeting and increased efforts due to such approaches. The latter are also mentioned in the Italian case study. The French case study also points to the unequal treatment of farmers due to such approaches. However, the equal national co-financing of the first and the second pillars of the CAP is a major issue in the French case study where it is mainly considered useful but rather unrealistic. Also researchers of the Friesland case study refer to co-financing and here particularly to distributional issues and conformity with WTO negotiations. In particular, respondents from North England have various conflicting opinions about co-financing.

34. Most respondents have no clear opinion on the knowledge of the national agricultural administration regarding public transaction costs and utility losses, but the majority of people that have an opinion assess this knowledge to be rather low. The lower administrative levels, researchers and environmental associations seem to have less faith in the knowledge of the agricultural administrations. Most interviewees see differences in this knowledge between the administrative levels. These differences are more strongly perceived by the members of the administration. As the respondents suggest there are differences between administrative levels regarding knowledge of public transaction costs and utility losses caused by imprecise agri-environmental measures. Respondents from all case point to this with the exception of North England, which did not comment. However, there is disagreement at which administrative level the knowledge of transaction costs and utilities is greatest. All possible suggestions are made, though it appears that utilities losses due to imprecision are rather noticed at lower

levels. This is mainly suggested because persons at such levels are closer to the issue of concern. Respondents often consider, though not necessarily, transaction costs to be known better at higher levels. Several respondents, however, point out that knowledge on transaction costs is generally scarce.

35. The complexity of the AEMs is considered as the most important factor influencing AESs design costs, followed by the number of measures and the precision of the measures. According to the interviewees, the public transaction costs are thus mostly affected by the nature of the measures or the object of the transaction (the asset) and less by the institutional environment, as for example EU regulations, the national administrative structure, the natural environment or the stakeholders involved. In the Czech Republic, the type of participation (consultation, right to vote, veto…) of different actors in the design processes is considered significantly more important, while the EU regulations are significantly more important in Flanders. The most centralised (national) and decentralized (LAU) levels assessed the influence of 'centrality/decentrality of the administration' on design costs more highly. The agricultural administration and the farmer associations believe that 'the heterogeneity of the natural environment' is significantly less important than researchers do. There are, however, high numbers of "no opinion" answers for these statements.

36. The trust among the different national government levels is rather high. This is different for the EU level, since they are perceived to have lower trust in the national administration and especially in the lower institutional levels. According to the interviewees, the trust in farmers by the administration is generally low, except for the national agricultural administration. Generally low levels of trust were found in the UK. In addition, comparatively high trust levels are reported for the environmental administrations and associations.

37. Drawing general conclusions on the administrative efforts connected with AEMs is impossible on the basis of the ITAES data, since the respondents evaluated this for each AEM relatively in relation to the other AEMs. However, on country basis, a positive relationship between the administrative effort and the ecological effectiveness of AEMs was stated. The only statistically significant correlation was found for the Brandenburg measure 'Extensive grassland and late mowing'. In Flanders, the Czech Republic, Basse-Normandie and the Italian regions, a positive relationship between the administrative effort and the ecological efficiency of the measures can also be observed, although it is not statistically significant. In Finland and Germany, the situation seems reversed. Due to the small number of observations however, it is difficult to substantiate these statements.

38. Especially French and Flemish respondents were concerned with transaction costs. The comments on transaction costs are diverse and lack an overall structure. However, recurring topics are the relationship of transaction costs to benefits of measures and to regulation. The latter is mainly suggested to increase transaction costs, while some question the appropriateness of the proportions of transaction costs in relation to benefits. In terms of the costs components of AEMs there are suggestions that particularly implementation and design are expensive. Several respondents, however, complain that information and knowledge on transaction costs is poor. Trust is a particular issue among Flemish respondents, which question, for example, that farmers trust the government. An additional remark from the German case study was that trust is rather between persons involved and not so much between actor groups.

5 General description of the results

5.1 The interview partner, his/her organisation and its involvement in the AESs design and implementation process (Part A)

5.1.1 The Organisation and the respondent (Question 1)

The first question in the questionnaire gives an overview of the group of actors interviewed. Figure 6 provides the percentage of respondents per type of organization, Table 1 gives this by case study areas and shows that in general the agricultural administration is represented most in the sample, followed by the environmental administration and farmers' associations. Environmental associations and researchers are represented to a smaller extent. Because of the purpose to interview everybody who is directly or indirectly involved or should be should be involved in AESs, representatives from hunting, tourism, consumer or any other associations were also contacted. However, the number of respondents in these groups is far from sufficient to be able to conduct reliable statistical tests. Therefore, all groups, which have less than ten members, are summarized in a newly created group called 'Others'. Although it was originally planned to have about the same distribution of respondents over the different categories in all countries, this seemed to be practically impossible. Not only there were difficulties in persuading people from certain groups to cooperate, the distribution of respondents over the different categories also reflects to some extent the structure of relevant actors in the field of AESs in that country. Nevertheless two countries can be considered as quite critical. First, researchers dominated the sample of the Netherlands, and second there is Ireland with only nine interviews, which can pose problems in statistical analyses. It was, however, decided to keep those countries in the sample because they do provide some useful information.

Figure 6: Percentage of respondents per type of organization

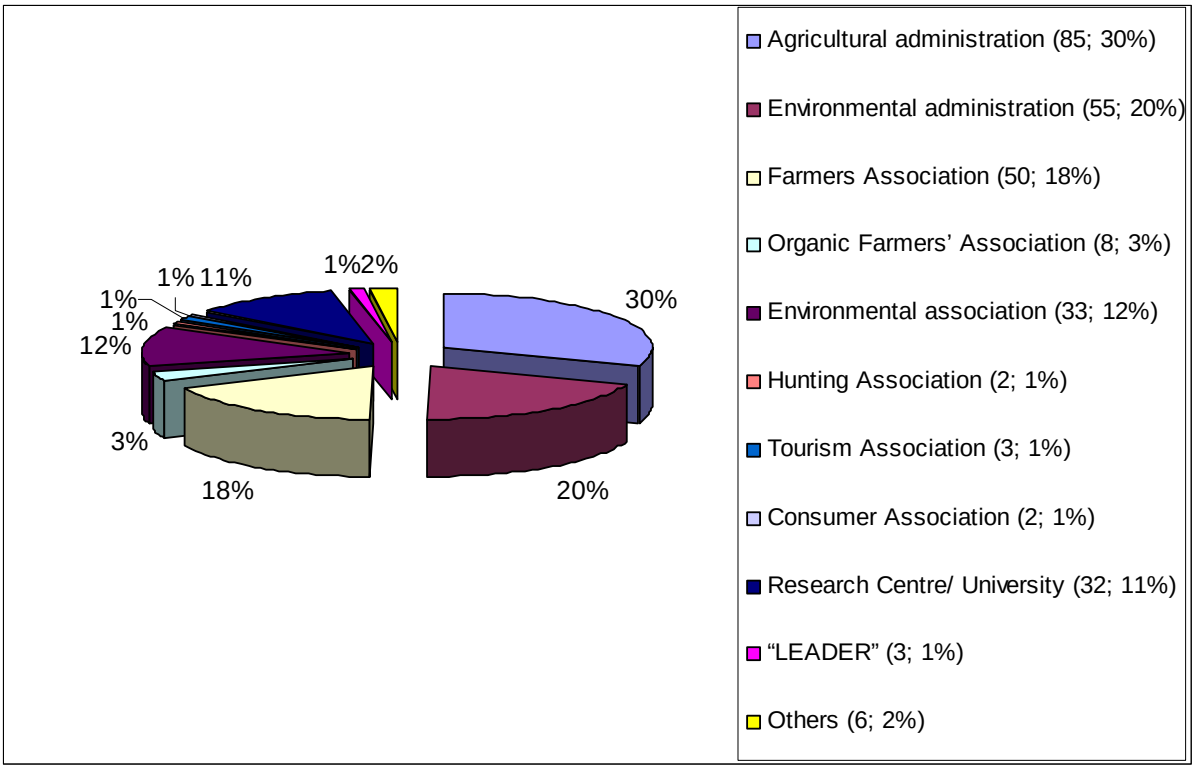


Table 1: Number and percentage of respondents per type of organization by case study areas

Type of organization	BE	CZ	FI	FR	DE	IE	IT	NL	UK	Total
Agricultural administration	7	12	22	18	7	1	8	4	6	85
	23.33	33.33	46.81	43.9	18.42	11.11	26.67	21.05	20.69	30.47
Environmental administration	11	8	6	8	10	0	3	2	7	55
	36.67	22.22	12.77	19.51	26.32	0	10	10.53	24.14	19.71
Farmers Association	3	5	14	10	4	1	9	2	2	50
	10	13.89	29.79	24.39	10.53	11.11	30	10.53	6.9	17.92
Organic Farmers' Association	1	1	0	0	2	0	3	0	1	8
	3.33	2.78	0	0	5.26	0	10	0	3.45	2.87
Environmental association	4	5	3	1	5	2	2	2	9	33
	13.33	13.89	6.38	2.44	13.16	22.22	6.67	10.53	31.03	11.83
Hunting Association	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
	3.33	0	0	0	2.63	0	0	0	0	0.72
Tourism Association	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
	3.33	2.78	0	0	2.63	0	0	0	0	1.08
Consumer Association	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
	0	2.78	0	0	2.63	0	0	0	0	0.72
Research Centre/ University	2	3	2	3	5	3	5	7	2	32
	6.67	8.33	4.26	7.32	13.16	33.33	16.67	36.84	6.9	11.47
"LEADER"	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3
	0	0	0	0	2.63	0	0	0	6.9	1.08
Others	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	2	0	6
	0	0	0	2.44	2.63	22.22	0	10.53	0	2.15
Total	30	36	47	41	38	9	30	19	29	279
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 2 shows how the respondents are distributed over the different administrative levels. The NUTS 3 level is with 94, which equals 34 per cent, of the respondents the largest group, followed by the NUTS 1 level. The lowest administrative level is least represented, which is due to the difficulties in finding people on that level with sufficient knowledge on the subject. It is important to note that not every NUTS level corresponds to an important or even existent administrative structure, hence the lacking of respondents for some levels in some countries.

Figure 7: Percentage of respondents per administrative level

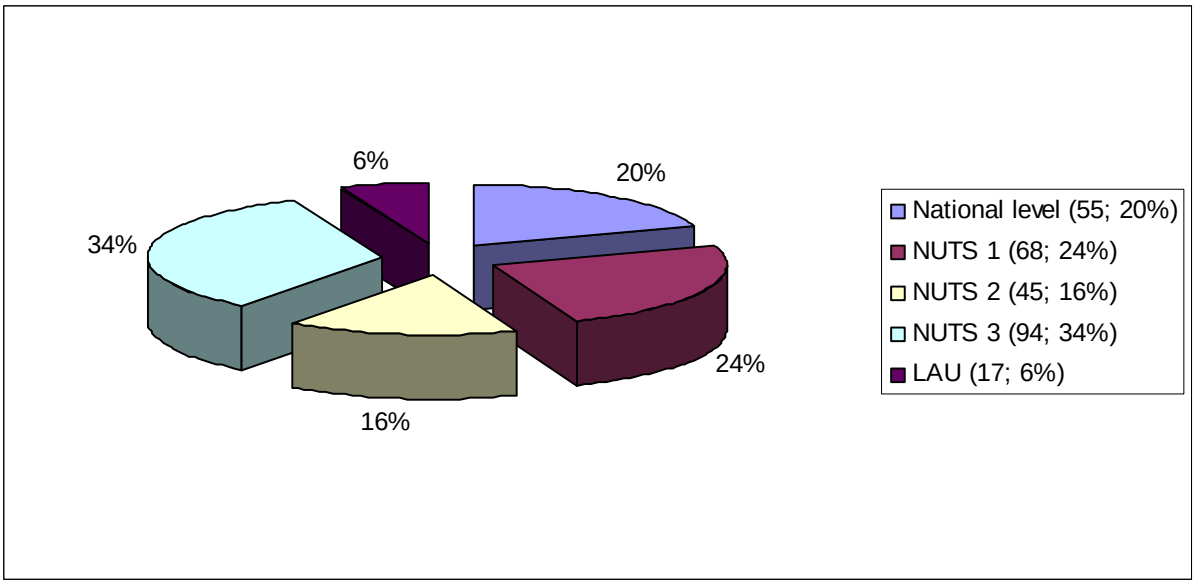


Table 2: Number and percentage of respondents per administrative level by case study areas

NUTS level	BE	CZ	FI	FR	DE	IE	IT	NL	UK	Total
National level	0	21	0	15	2	0	2	14	1	55
	0	58.33	0	36.59	5.26	0	6.67	73.68	3.45	19.71
NUTS 1	19	0	6	1	24	0	0	1	17	68
	63.33	0	12.77	2.44	63.16	0	0	5.26	58.62	24.37
NUTS 2	5	3	0	10	0	9	18	0	0	45
	16.67	8.33	0	24.39	0	100	60	0	0	16.13
NUTS 3	2	2	41	13	12	0	10	3	11	94
	6.67	5.56	87.23	31.71	31.58	0	33.33	15.79	37.93	33.69
LAU	4	10	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	17
	13.33	27.78	0	4.88	0	0	0	5.26	0	6.09
Total	30	36	47	41	38	9	30	19	29	279
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 3 then gives the number and percentage of respondents per position for every country, and shows that the majority (44 per cent) of the respondents are normal staff members. In Ireland and Italy however, the majority of the interviewees had a higher position. The mean respondent has held this position for 6.813 ± 6.037 years (minimum 0 and maximum 40 years).

Table 3: Number and percentage of respondents per position by case study areas

Position	BE	CZ	FI	FR	DE	IE	IT	NL	UK	Total
Staff Member	21	15	32	15	14	1	5	11	9	123
	70	41.67	68.09	36.59	36.84	11.11	16.67	57.89	31.03	44.09
Head of Unit	3	11	12	4	7	1	14	2	5	59
	10	30.56	25.53	9.76	18.42	11.11	46.67	10.53	17.24	21.15
Head of Division	5	8	2	19	3	5	6	4	11	63
	16.67	22.22	4.26	46.34	7.89	55.56	20	21.05	37.93	22.58
Chairmen	1	0	1	3	14	1	3	0	4	27
	3.33	0	2.13	7.32	36.84	11.11	10	0	13.79	9.68
Others	0	2	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	7
	0	5.56	0	0	0	11.11	6.67	10.53	0	2.51
Total	30	36	47	41	38	9	30	19	29	279
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Conclusion:
For Work Package 4, the main aim was to interview every actor group which is directly or indirectly involved in the design or in the implementation of AEMs. The agricultural administration turned out to be mostly represented in the sample, followed by the environmental administration and farmers' associations. Environmental associations and researchers are represented to a smaller extent. The distribution of the respondents over the different categories deviates fractionally from country to country, which reflects somehow the structure of relevant actors in the field of AEMs in the countries. From the administrative levels, the NUTS 3 level is represented most, followed by the NUTS 1 level. The lowest administrative level is least represented. The majority of the interviewees were staff members with seven years of experience in their job.

5.1.2 The total working time spent on AESs (Question 2)

In question 2, the respondents were asked what share of the total working time of those people involved in AESs is assigned to tasks related to AESs (average per year in the period from 2000-2006) in the department or unit. The mean time spent on AESs over all the departments interviewed is 23.57 per cent. When looking at the distribution of the variable, it looks like a log normal distribution, which is quite skewed. The median, which is 12.5 per cent, is therefore a better indicator for central tendency. The minimum value of 0 can be

explained due to the fact that also actors have been interviews, which should or could be involved in the design process of AESs, but are not at the moment.
Question 2 also asked the respondents which share of their personal working time is spent on tasks related to AESs. The mean time spent on AESs by the people interviewed is 24.26 per cent. Also here, the distribution resembles the log normal distribution. The median is 10 per cent. For the same reason as with variable 2a, the median is a better indicator for central tendency here.

Figure 8: Percentage of the working time spent on AESs

% of working time spent on AESs	Nr. Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Median	Min	Max
in department/unit	276	23.571	26.926	12.250	0	100
of personal working time	276	24.260	28.338	10.000	0	100

The country does not seem to have a significant effect on the time spent on AESs in the department (p= 0.466), nor on the personal working time (p= 0.619). However, when looking at
Figure 9, which gives the mean percentage of the working time, some differences can be observed. The share of the working time spent on AESs in the department seems to be significantly lower in Basse-Normandie than in North England. The same can be said from the share of the personal working time spent on AESs. Figure 10 gives the median percentage of the working time, which according to the statistical tests is also not different among the countries for the department (p= 0.406) and the personal working time (p= 0.816). The figure however shows that in North England, Brandenburg and the Italian regions, the median working time spent on AESs in the department is considerably higher than in the other regions. For the median personal working time the Italian regions again show a peak, together with Finland.

Figure 9: Percentage of the working time spent on AESs by case study areas (mean)

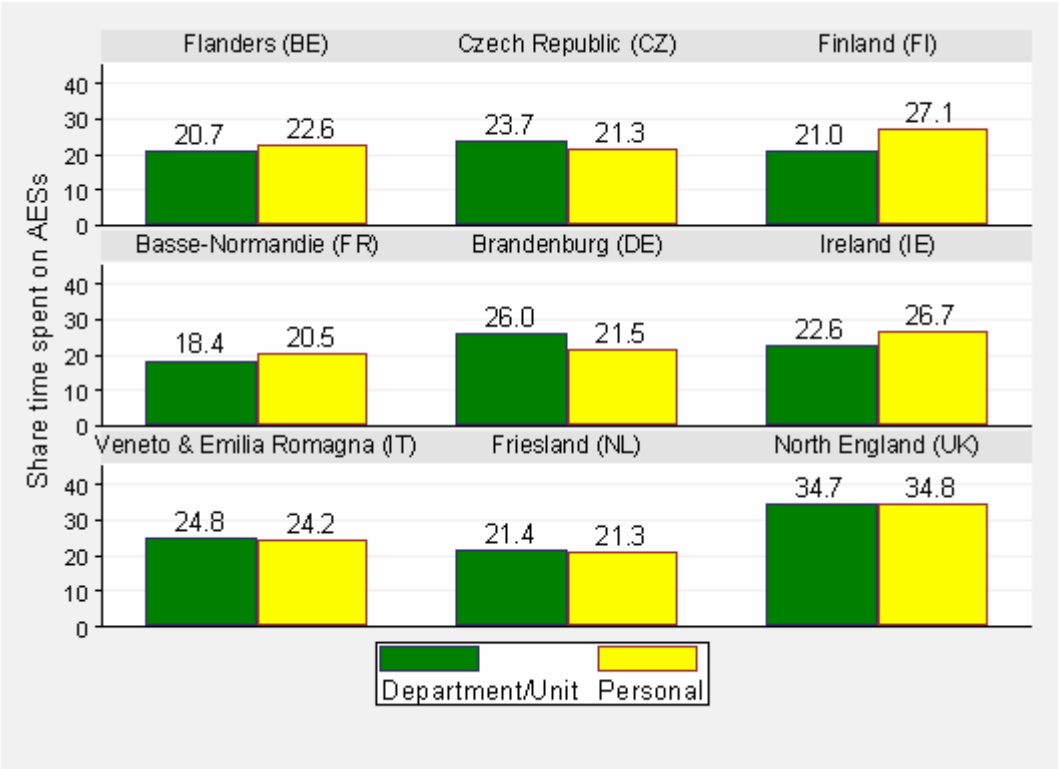
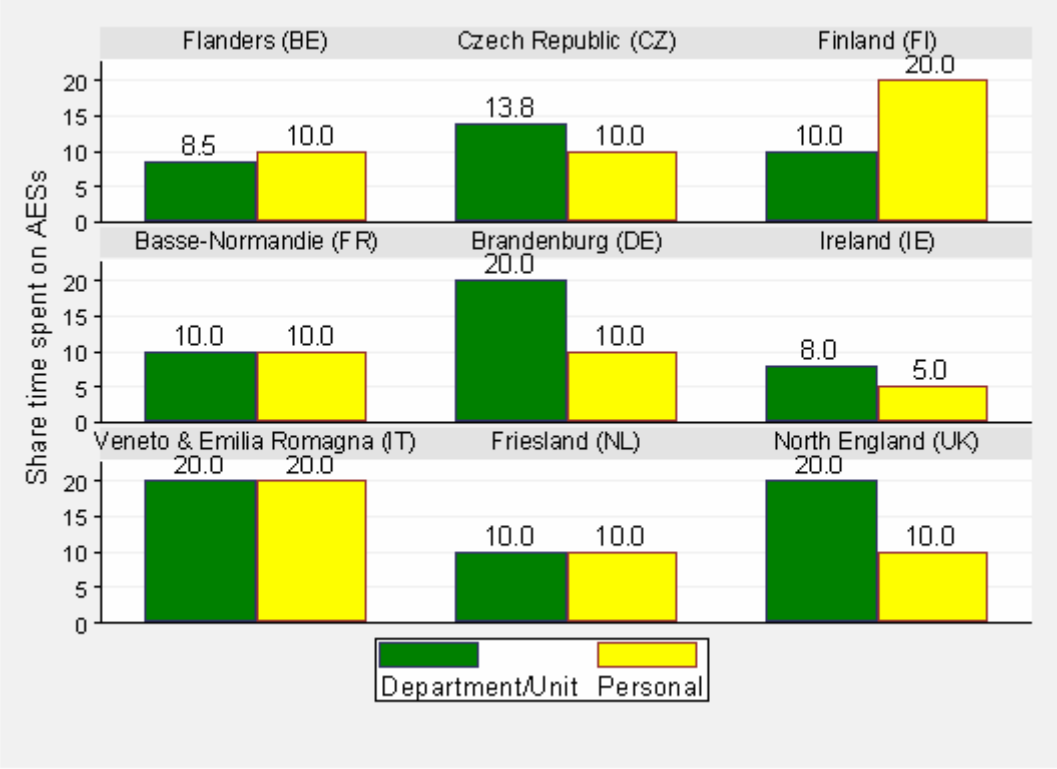


Figure 10: Percentage of the working time spent on AESs by case study areas (median)



Between the NUTS level there also does not seem to be a significant difference for the mean percentage of the working time spent on AESs in the department (p= 0.605), the mean percentage of the personal working time (p= 0.100), the median percentage of the working time spent on AESs in the department (p= 0.667) and the median percentage of the personal working time (p= 0.491).

However, Figure 11 shows that the departmental percentage of the working time is considerably lower at the national and NUTS 2 levels compared to the other levels, and that the personal percentage of the working time is peaking on the NUTS 1 level and gradually decreasing when going to lower levels and the national level. The medians in

Figure 12 show the same thing for the departmental percentage of the working time. The median percentage of the personal working time seems to peak at NUTS 1 and the national level, and is lower for the other levels. The mean can be considered here as the most reliable indicator of central tendency.

Figure 11: Percentage of the working time spent on AESs by administrative levels (mean)

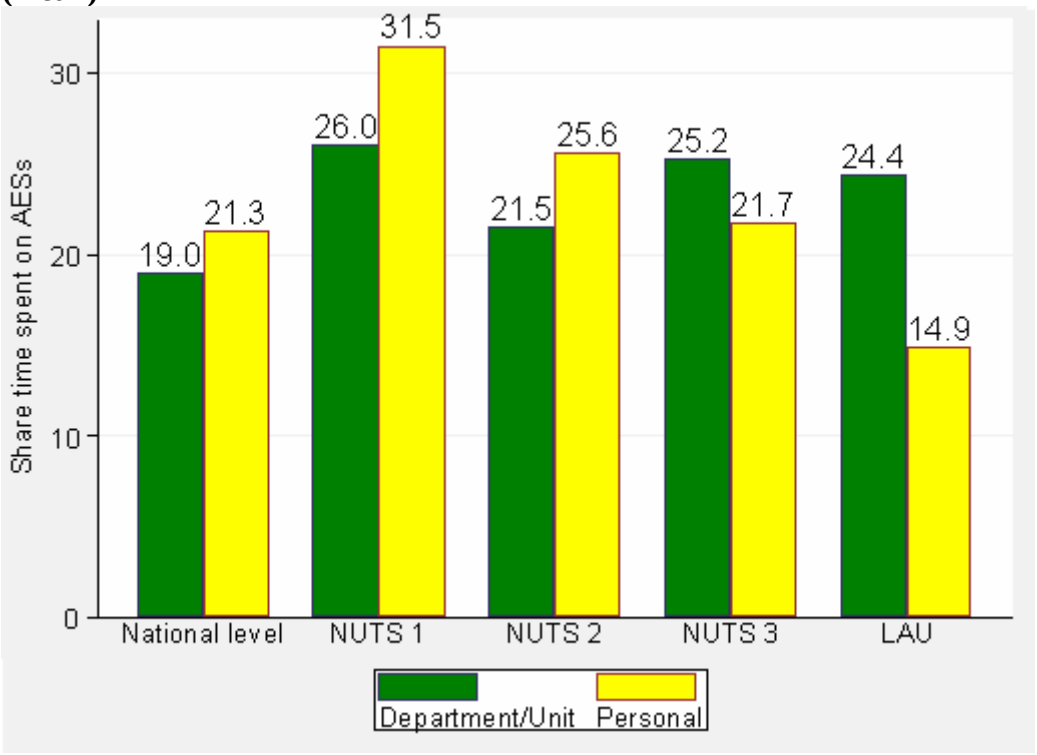
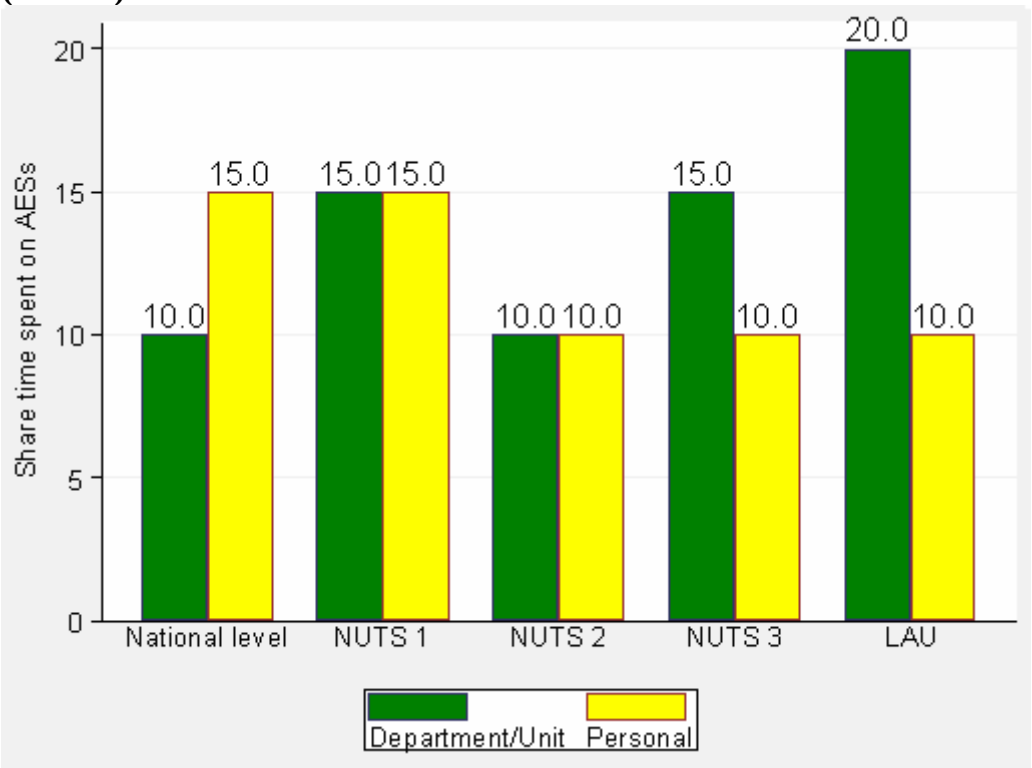


Figure 12: Percentage of the working time spent on AESs by administrative levels (median)



There is a significant difference between the mean percentage of the working time spent on AESs in the departments of the different types of organisations (p= 0.000), and also for the percentage of the personal working time (p= 0.044). Also for the median percentages of the departmental and personal working time there are significant differences between the actor groups (p-values respectively 0.000 and 0.001). Figure 13 and Figure 14 both show that in the agricultural administration, significantly more time is spent on AESs than in the other organisations. The percentage of the personal working time spent on AESs peaks in the group of the researchers. Farmers' associations seem to spend least time on the AESs.

Figure 13: Percentage of the working time spent on AESs by actor groups (mean)

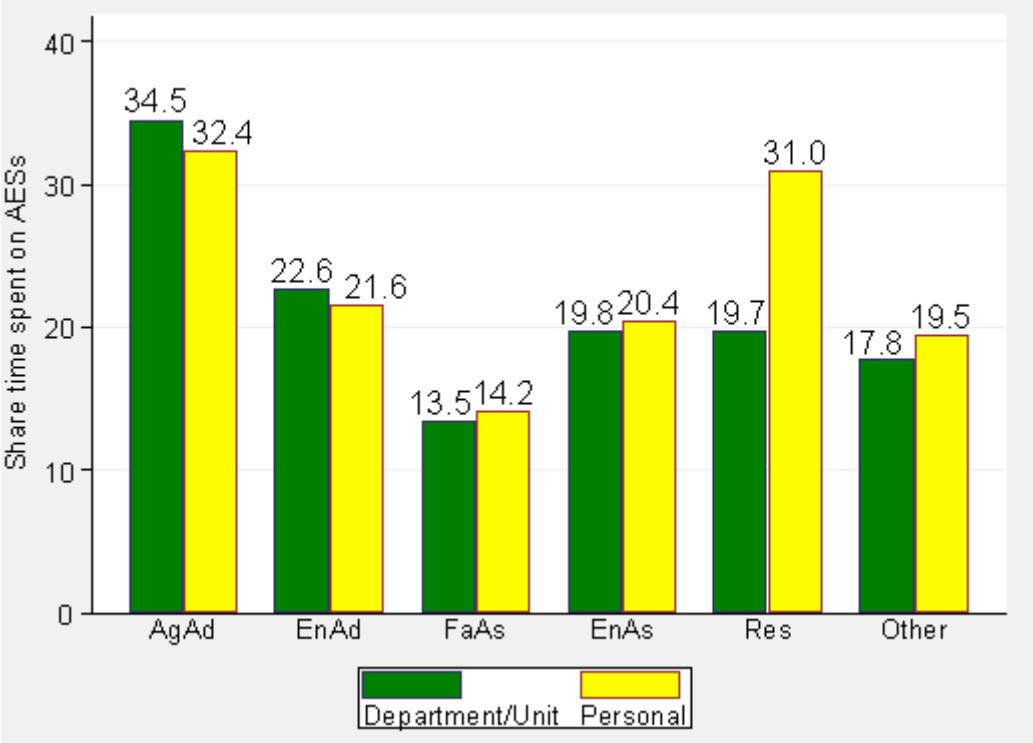
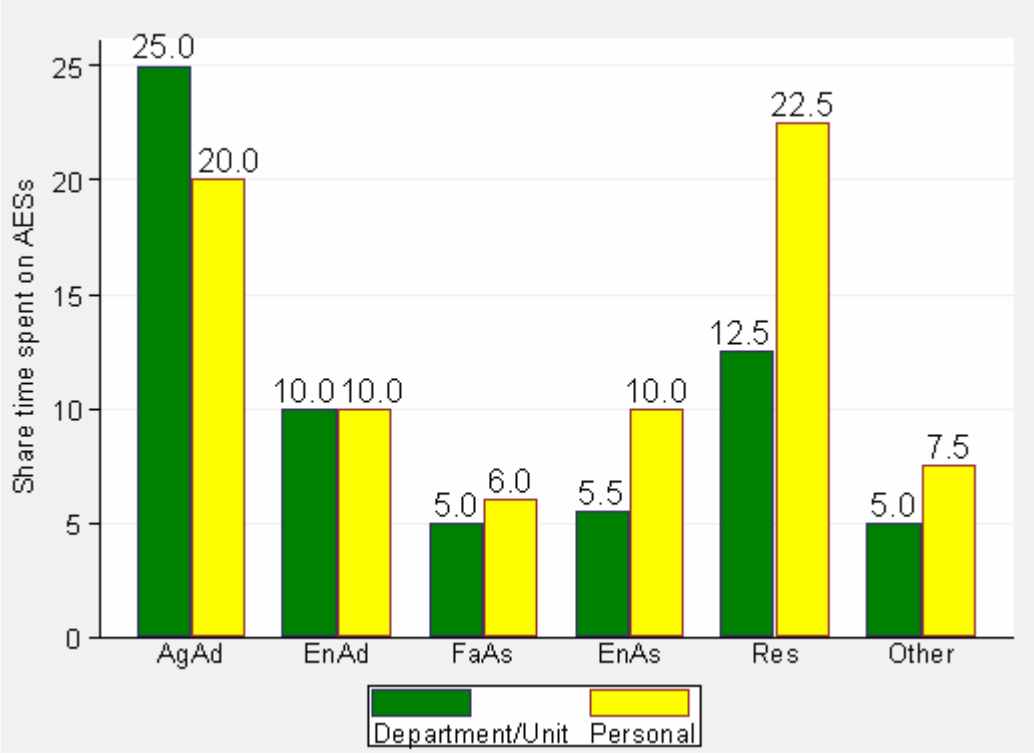


Figure 14: Percentage of the working time spent on AESs by actor groups (median)

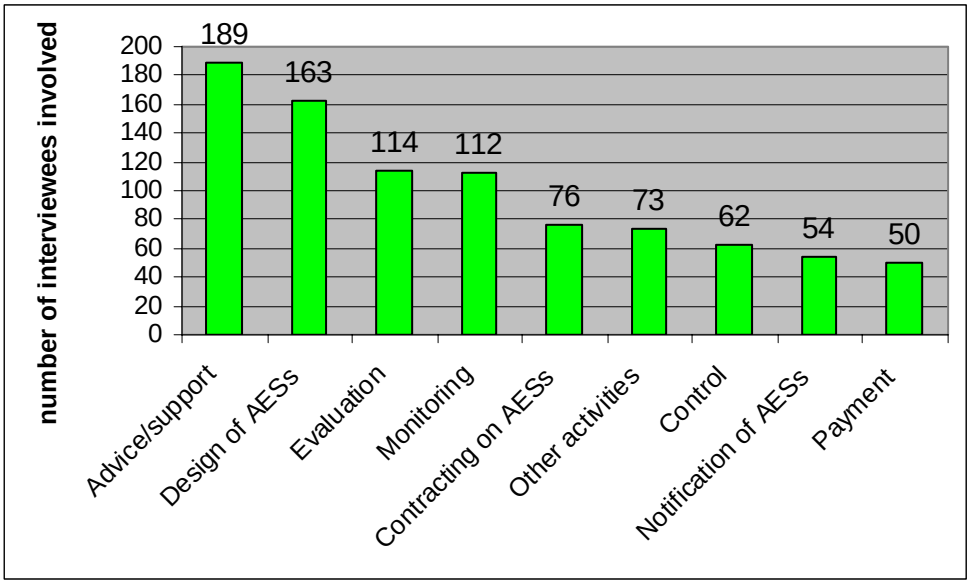


Conclusion:
The percentage of the working time spent on AESs in the departments or organisations of the respondents averages 23.57 percent with a median of 12.5 percent. The average percentage of the interviewee's personal working time spent on AESs is 24.26 percent, with a median of 10 percent. The largest percentage of the personal and departmental working times spent on AESs was found in North England. From the different administrative levels, the NUTS 1 level spends most time on AESs. The agricultural administration is the group that devotes the largest percentage of their time to AESs, and farmers' organisations are least occupied with AESs.

5.1.3 The share of time spent on different task related to AESs (Question 3)

In question 3 more attention is spent on the specific tasks related to AESs and the share of the AESs working time in the department spent on them (again an average per year in the period from 2000-2006, and 100 per cent is all time assigned to AESs for those people who are involved in AESs). As can be seen in Figure 15, most interviewees are engaged in giving advice or support and in the design of AESs. The number of people involved in these activities depends of course mostly on the type of organisation: tasks like design of AESs (p= 0.001), notification (p= 0.000), contracting (p= 0.000), payment (p= 0.000) and control (p= 0.000) are mostly done by the agricultural and to a lesser extent by the environmental administration. For the monitoring task there is no real difference between the types of organisations (0.130), while researchers are most involved in evaluation (p= 0.001). The activity of giving advice and support is especially done by the farmers and the environmental associations, but also by the agricultural administration (p= 0.008).

Figure 15: Number of interviewees involved in AESs related tasks

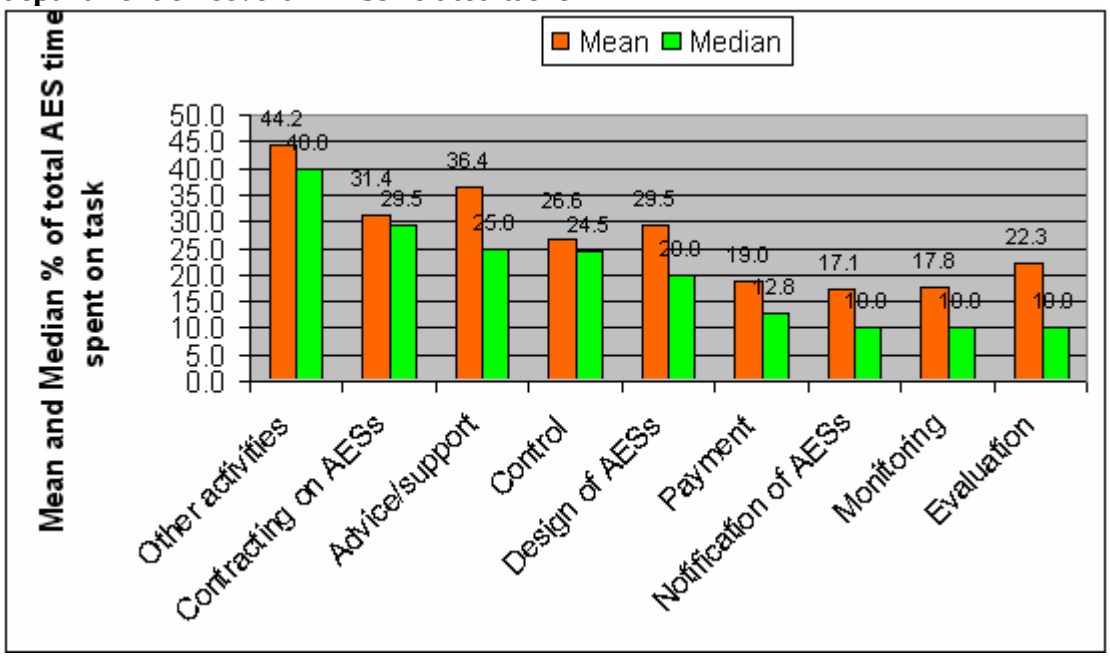


When looking at the time spent on the tasks, it is important to note that the distributions of these variables are all quite skewed, with a fat left tail. Therefore, the median is probably a better indicator of central tendency. The category "other activities" consists of tasks like research related to AESs, coordination with other policies and communication or promotion, and is the category on which most time is spent (Table 4 and Figure 16). When looking at the median, the second most important category is the contracting of AESs and the third is advice/support. According to the mean, the second most important task is supplying advice and support, followed by the contracting of AESs.

Table 4: Mean and median of the percentage of the AESs working time spent in the department on several AESs related tasks

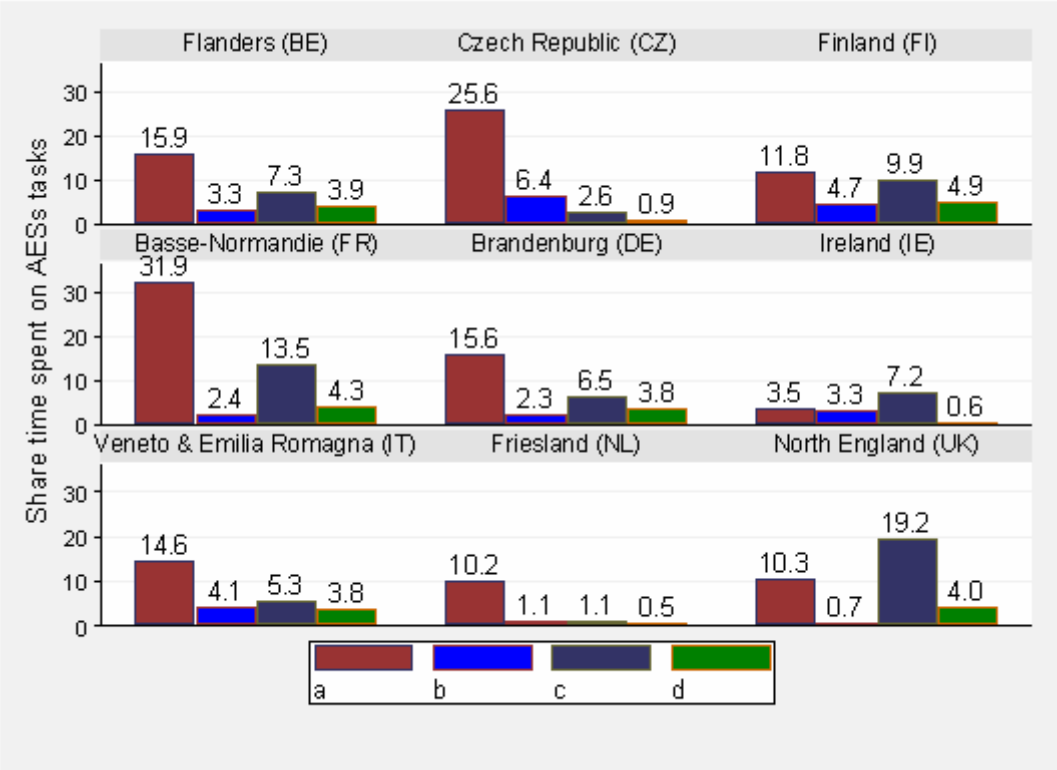
Task	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Median	Min	Max
Design of AESs	163	29.488	28.945	20.000	0.5	100
Notification of AESs	54	17.148	17.900	10.000	1	100
Contracting of AESs	76	31.360	20.022	29.500	5	80
Payment	50	18.970	19.136	12.750	0.5	100
Monitoring	112	17.786	18.688	10.000	1	100
Control	62	26.570	19.899	24.500	1	95
Evaluation	114	22.263	25.652	10.000	1	100
Advice/support	189	36.369	29.483	25.000	4	100
Other activities	73	44.199	34.944	40.000	1	100

Figure 16: Mean and Median of the percentage of the AESs working time spent in the department on several AESs related tasks



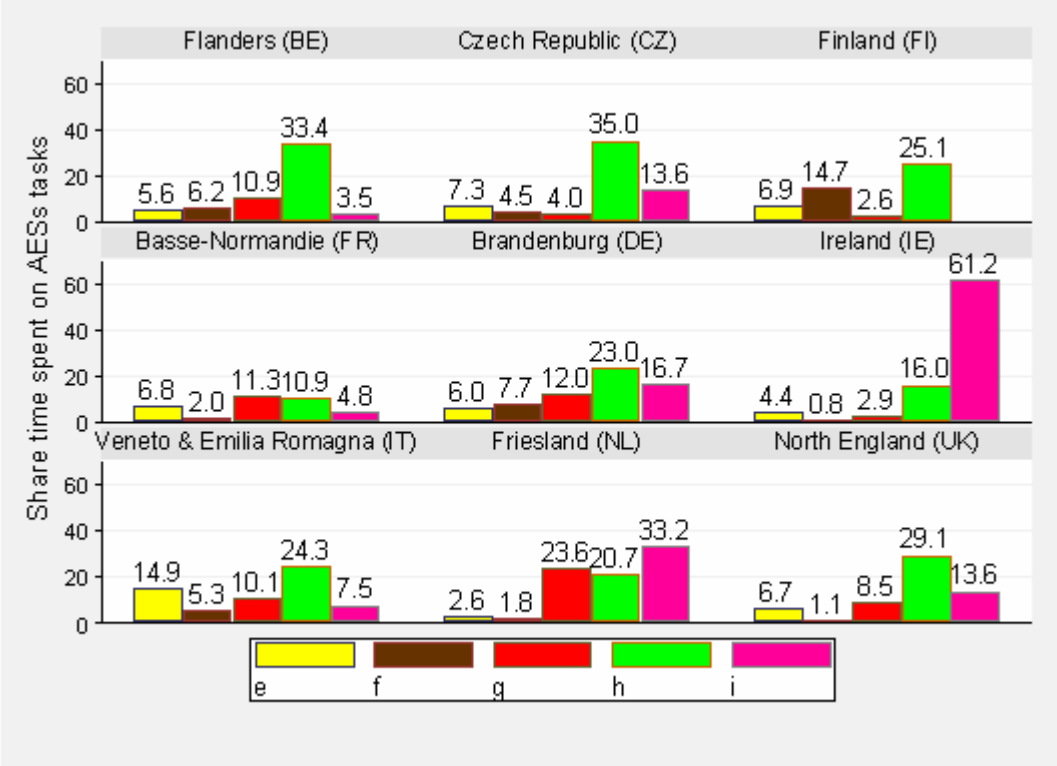
Except for the payment (p= 0.730), monitoring (p= 0.195) and notification task (p= 0.477) there is a significant difference in the mean percentage of the AESs working time spent on several AESs tasks between the countries. Figure 17 shows that in the Czech Republic and France, significantly more time is spent on the design of AESs than in other countries, especially Ireland (p= 0.002). In North England considerately more time is spent on contracting of AESs (p= 0.002). Figure 18 shows that more time is spent on control in Finland, compared to other countries (p= 0.000), evaluation is considerately more done in Friesland (p= 0.001), Flanders and the Czech Republic spend more AESs time on giving advice and support (p= 0.022) and the other tasks require lots of time in Ireland compared to the other countries (p= 0.000).

Figure 17: Mean percentage of the working time at the department spent on several AESs related tasks (a-d) by case study areas



Legend **a: Design of AESs** **b: Notification of AESs (Admin)**
c: Contracting of AESs **d: Payment (Admin)**

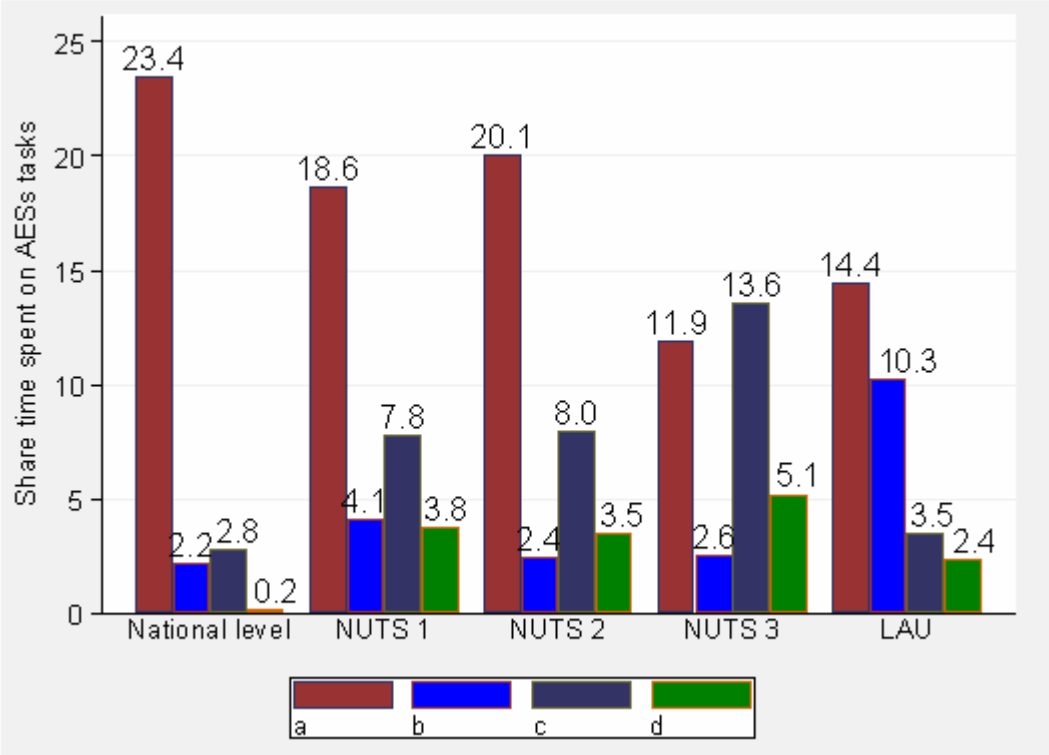
Figure 18: Mean percentage of the working time at the department spent on several AESs related tasks (e-i) by case study areas



Legend **e: Monitoring** **f: Control (Admin)** **g: Evaluation**
h: Advice/support **i: Other activities connected with AESs**

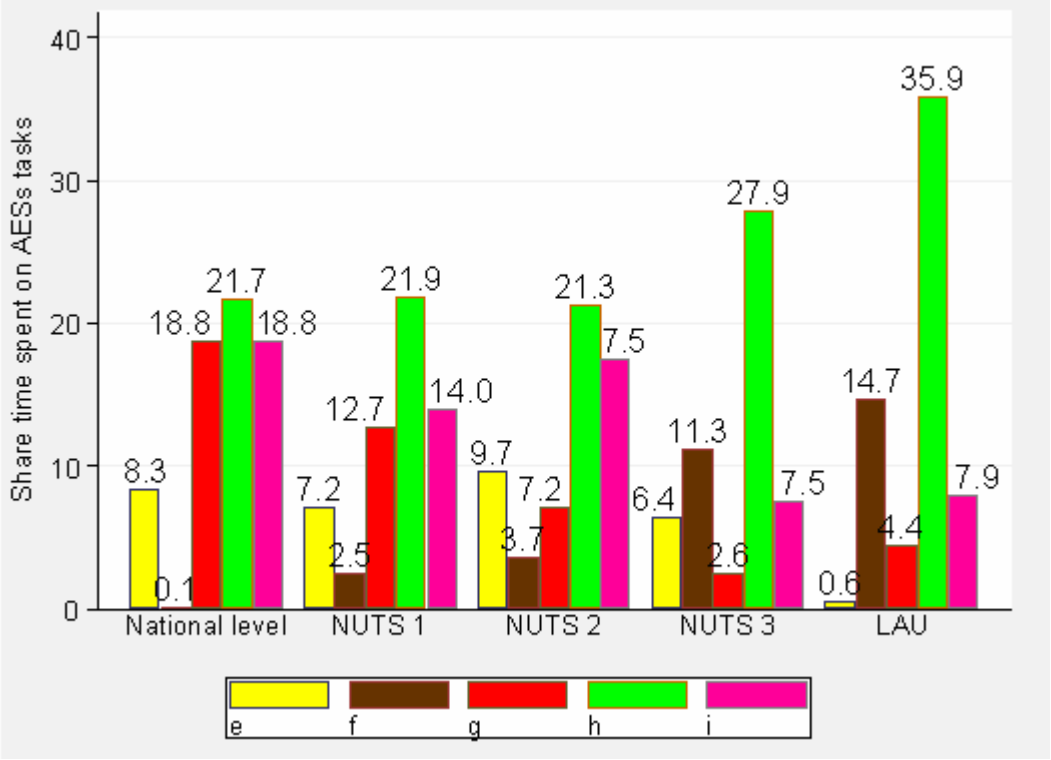
The statistical test does not show any significant difference between the administrative levels for the percentage of the AESs working time spent on the design of the measures (p= 0.102), the payment (p= 0.112), the monitoring (p= 0.251), the advice/support (p= 0.258) and the other activities connected with AESs (p= 0.216). However Figure 19 and Figure 20 show that more AESs time is spent on design on the national level than on the other levels, especially NUTS 3. For the payment task, the opposite is true. Monitoring takes about the same percentage of the working time at all levels, except for the LAU level where it seems considerably less. The lower the institutional level, the higher the percentage of the time spent on the advice and support task is, and for the other tasks the opposite is true. Figure 19 shows that on the lowest institutional level, a significantly higher percentage of the AESs time is spent on notification (p= 0.048). Despite the definitions given, some respondents must have been interpreted the term notification must have been interpreted in a wrong way, because normally notification is something that happens on NUTS 1 level or the national level. Except for the LAU level, it seems that the lower the administrative level, the higher the percentage of the AESs time spent on contracting (p= 0.004). For the control of the AESs, Figure 20 shows the same: lower administrative levels spend more time on control. For advice and support, the same holds (p= 0.000).

Figure 19: Mean percentage of the working time at the department spent on several AESs related tasks (a-d) by administrative levels



Legend **a: Design of AESs** **b: Notification of AESs (Admin)**
c: Contracting of AES **d: Payment (Admin)**

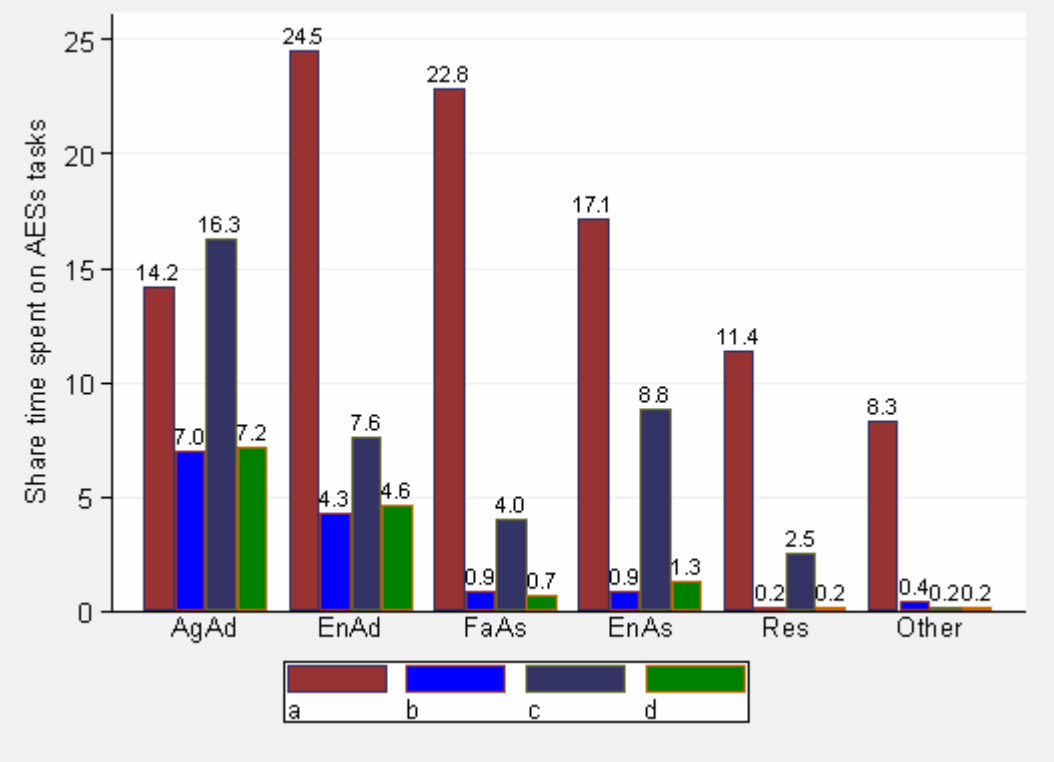
Figure 20: Mean percentage of the working time at the department spent on several AESs related tasks (e-i) by administrative levels



Legend **e: Monitoring** **f: Control (Admin)** **g: Evaluation** **h: Advice/support** **i: Other activities connected with AESs**

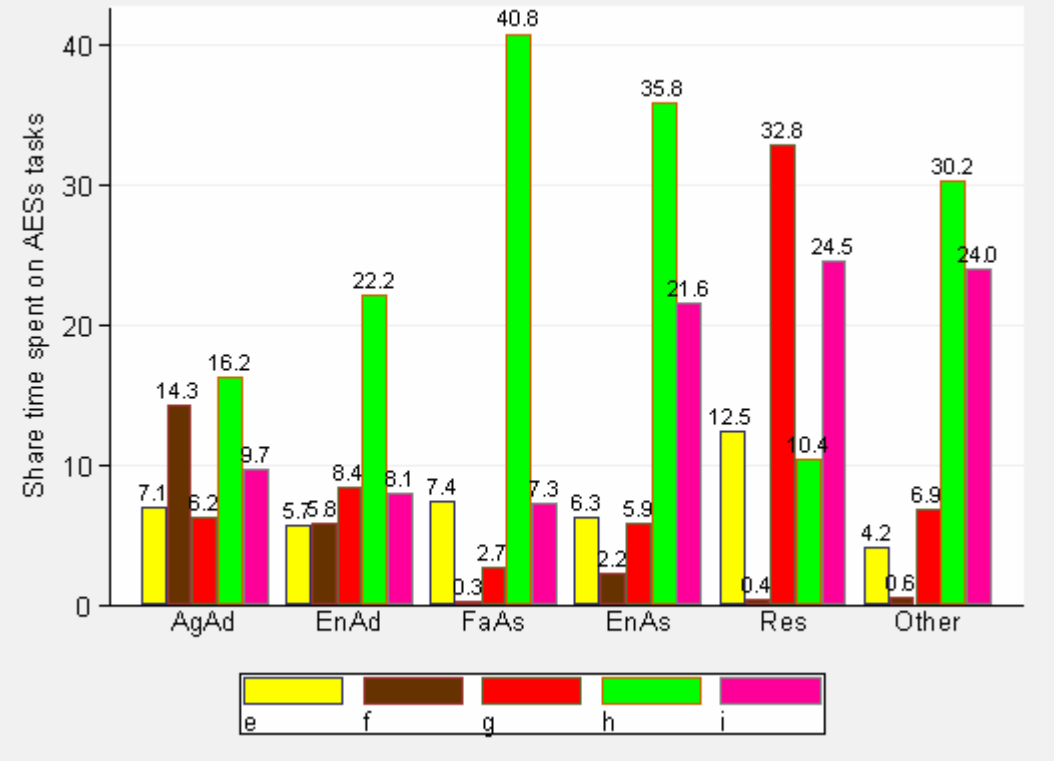
When looking at the differences between the actor groups, only for monitoring this is not significant (p= 0.319). Figure 21 shows that a significantly higher percentage of the AESs working time is spent on design in the environmental administration and farmers' associations (p= 0.036), notification is done significantly more by the agricultural administration (p= 0.000), the same for the contracting (p= 0.000) and the payment (p= 0.001). Figure 22 shows that the same is true for control (p= 0.000), evaluation is significantly more done by researchers (p= 0.000), farmers' associations spend a significantly higher percentage of their AESs time on advice and support and the other activities are mostly done by researchers and other groups (p= 0.010).

Figure 21: Mean percentage of the working time at the department spent on several AESs related tasks



Legend **a: Design of AESs** **b: Notification of AESs (Admin)**
c: Contracting of AESs **d: Payment (Admin)**

Figure 22: Mean percentage of the working time at the department spent on several AESs related tasks



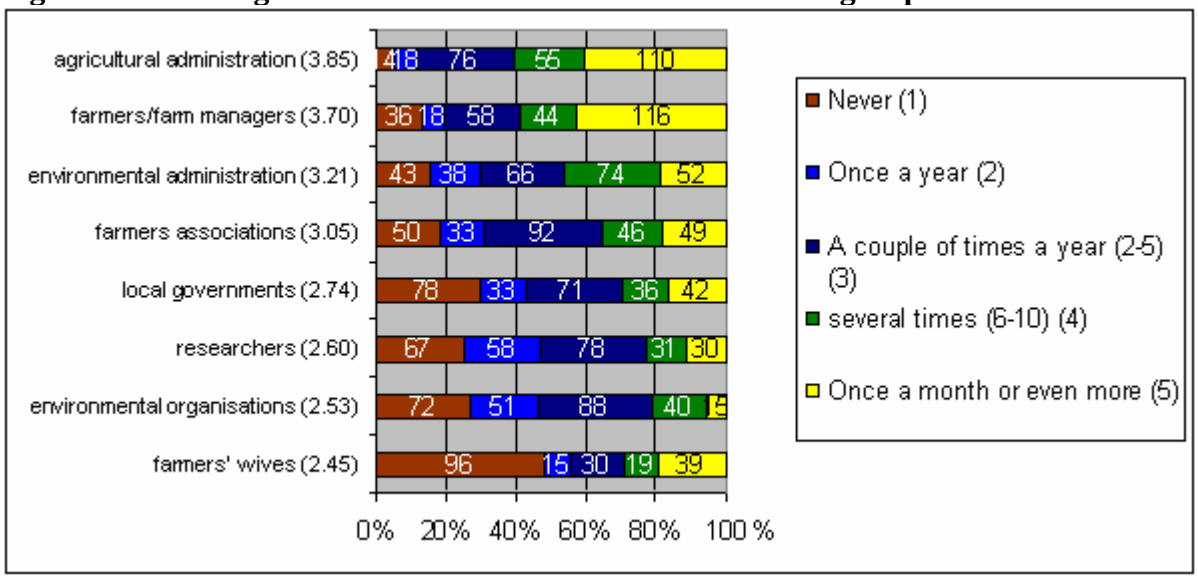
Legend **e: Monitoring f: Control (Admin)** **g: Evaluation**
h: Advice/support **i: Other activities connected with AESs**

Conclusion:
Most interviewees are engaged in giving advice or support in the design of AESs, and the number of people involved in the AES activities depends mostly on the type of organisation. The category "other activities" consists of tasks, like research related to AESs, coordination with other policies and communication or promotion. It is the category on which most time is spent. On contracting of AESs and advice or support activities there is also spent more time, especially by Flanders and the Czech Republic and by the lower administrative levels. For most tasks, the highest share of the working time is spent on AESs by the agricultural administrations, except for advice and support, which is mostly done by the farmers' associations and for evaluation which is mostly done by the group of the researchers.

5.1.4 Exchange information about AESs with other organisations (Question 4)

Question 4 asks how often (average per year in the period from 2000-2006) the department, unit or organisation exchanges information about AESs with a couple of pre-defined organisations. The answering categories are never (1), once a year (2), a couple of times per year (3), several times per year (4) and once a month or constantly (5). For the whole sample, Figure 23 shows that the respondents exchange most information about AESs with the agricultural administration and the farmers. The environmental organisations and farmers' wives are least consulted.

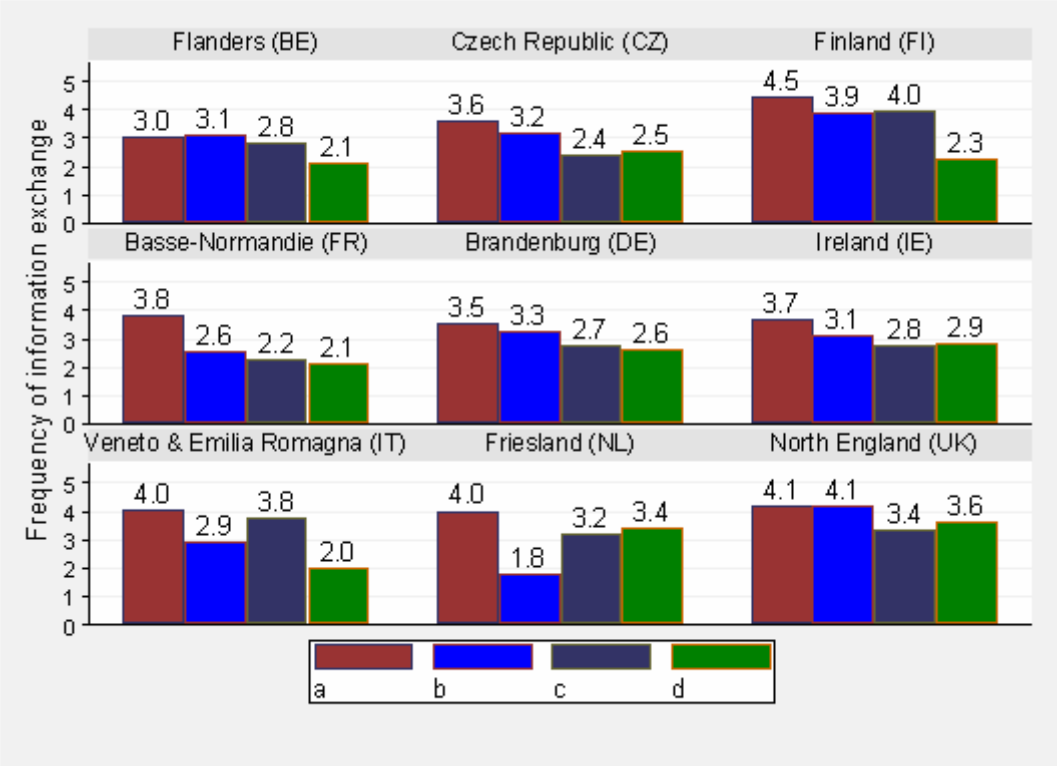
Figure 23: Exchange of information about AESs with several groups



For every group in question 4, there is a significant difference between the countries. Figure 24 and Figure 25 show that in general, Finland and North England exchange a lot of information with different actor groups concerning AESs. Besides Finland and North England, the Italian regions and Friesland exchange significantly more information with the agricultural administration (p= 0.000). For the exchange of information with the environmental administration, only Finland and North England show again the peaks (p= 0.000). In Finnish and Italian regions exchange of information with farmers' associations is more frequently done (p= 0.000). Friesland and North England exchange most frequently information with environmental organisations and NGO's (p= 0.000). Finland and the Italian regions are again the countries exchanging most often information with local governments (p= 0.000). Ireland and Friesland exchange more information about AESs with researchers than the other countries (p= 0.002), which could be due to the large number of researchers in

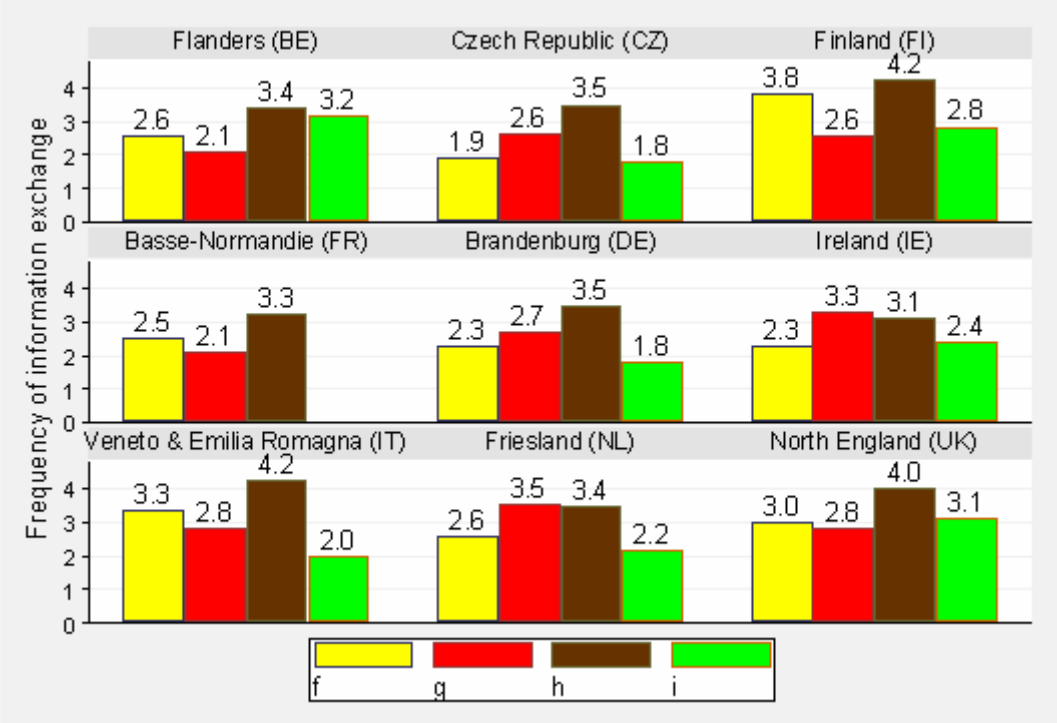
the Dutch sample. Finland and Italy seem to exchange significantly more frequently information with farmers (p= 0.008), and Flanders and North England exchange information more frequently with farmers' wives than the other countries (p= 0.001).

Figure 24: Exchange of information about AESs with several groups (a-d) by case study areas



Legend: **1: never** **2: once a year** **3: a couple of times per year**
4: several times per year **5: once a month or constantly**
a: the agricultural administration **b: the environmental administration**
c: farmers' associations **d: environmental organisations/NGOs**

Figure 25: Exchange of information about AESs with several groups (f-i) by case study areas



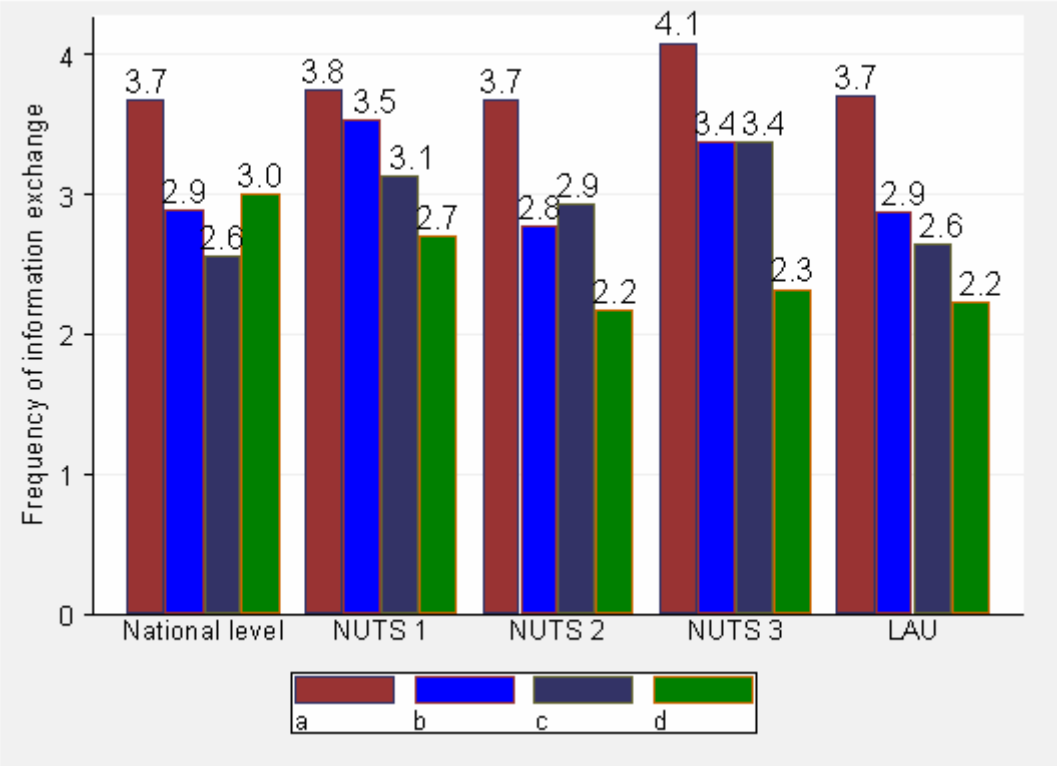
Legend: **1: never** **2: once a year** **3: a couple of times per year**
4: several times per year **5: once a month or constantly**
f: farmers/farm-managers **g: local governments**
h: researchers **i: farmers' wives**

The exchange of information also differs with the NUTS level. There is no difference in exchange of information with the agricultural administration, as the frequency is almost the same for every NUTS level (p= 0.176). The same is true for the exchange of information with the farmers' wives (p= 0.128). Table 5 shows that researchers and environmental organisations are significantly more consulted on the higher institutional levels, whereas more information is exchanged with the local governments and the farmers on the lower institutional level. Figure 26 and Figure 27 provide the same information in graph format.

Table 5: Exchange of information about AESs with several groups by administrative level

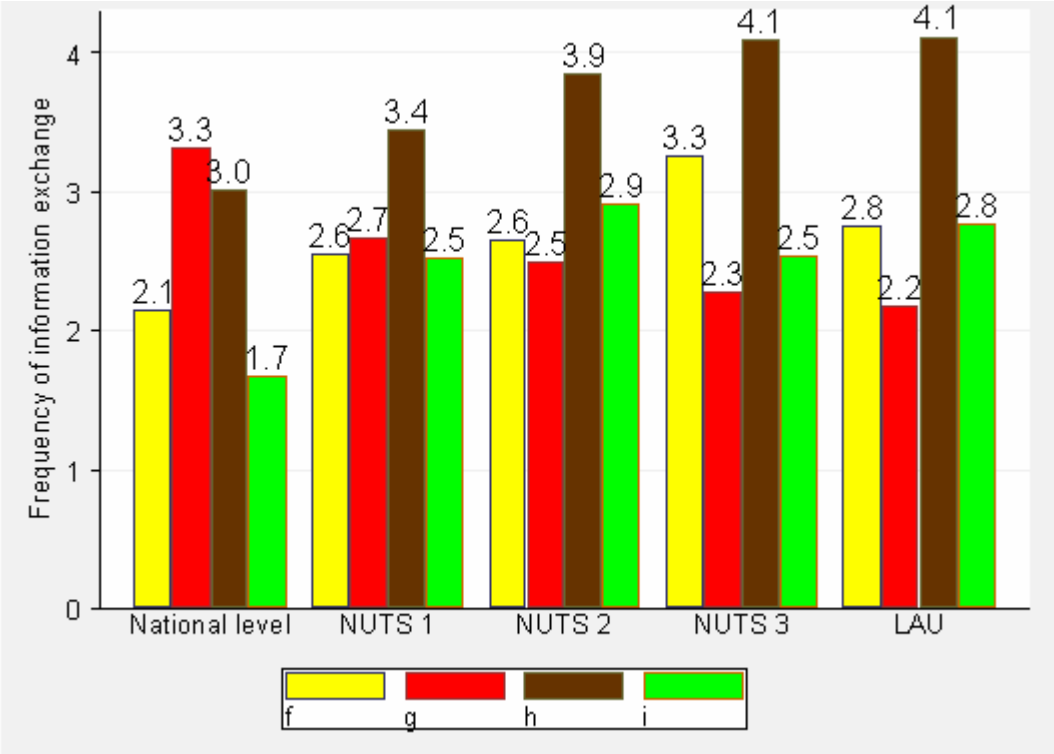
Type of organisation	Most exchange of information with	p
environmental administration (EA)	NUTS 1, NUTS 3	0.007
farmers associations (FA)	NUTS 3, NUTS 1	0.005
environmental organisations (EO)	National, NUTS 1	0.002
local governments	NUTS 3, LAU	0.000
researchers (R)	National, NUTS 1	0.000
farmers/farm managers	LAU, NUTS 3	0.000

Figure 26: Exchange of information about AESs with several groups (a-d) by administrative level



Legend: **1: never** **2: once a year** **3: a couple of times per year**
4: several times per year **5: once a month or constantly**
a: the agricultural administration **b: the environmental administration**
c: farmers' associations **d: environmental organisations/NGOs**

Figure 27: Exchange of information about AESs with several groups (f-i) by administrative level



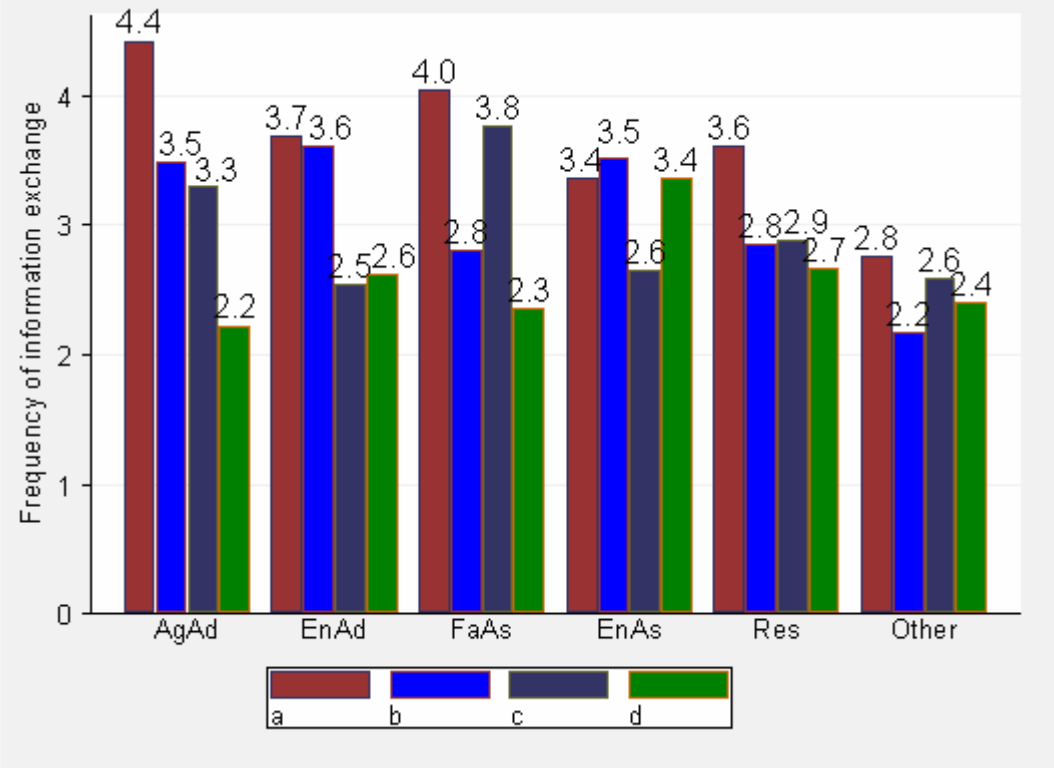
Legend: **1: never** **2: once a year** **3: a couple of times per year**
4: several times per year **5: once a month or constantly**
f: farmers/farm-managers **g: local governments**
h: researchers **i: farmers' wives**

For every type of organisation with which information can be exchanged, there is a significant relationship between the frequency of information exchange and the type of organisation. Table 6 gives, for each type of organisation with who they exchange most information. It shows that information exchange is mostly done with members of the own organisation or with different organisations that have the same task (e.g. farmers organisations who exchange most information with other farmers organisations). The same information can be found in graph format in Figure 28 and Figure 29.

Table 6: Exchange of information about AESs with several groups by actor groups

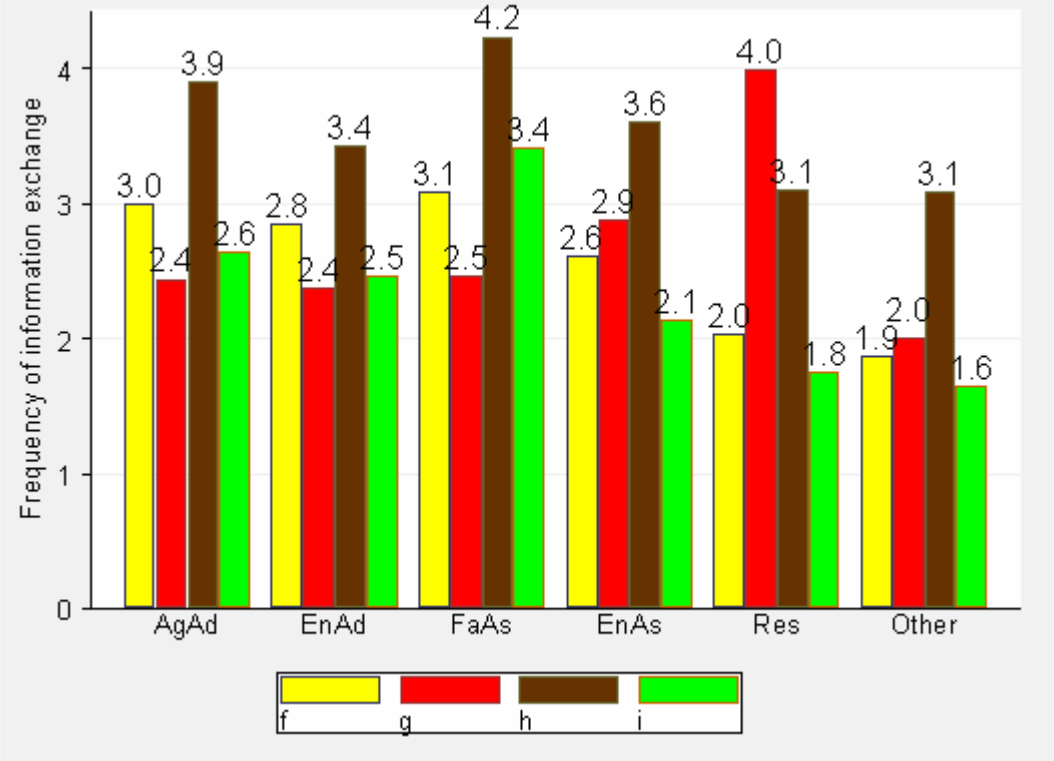
Type of organisation	Most exchange of information with	p
agricultural administration (AA)	AA, FA	0.000
environmental administration (EA)	EA, EO	0.000
farmers associations (FA)	FO, AA	0.000
environmental organisations (EO)	EO, R	0.000
local governments	FA, AA	0.001
researchers (R)	R, EO	0.000
farmers/farm managers	FA, AA	0.000
farmers' wives	FA, AA	0.000

Figure 28: Exchange of information about AESs with several groups (a-d) by actor groups



Legend: **1: never** **2: once a year** **3: a couple of times per year**
4: several times per year **5: once a month or constantly**
a: the agricultural administration **b: the environmental administration**
c: farmers' associations **d: environmental organisations/NGOs**

Figure 29: Exchange of information about AESs with several groups (f-i) by actor groups



Legend: **1: never** **2: once a year** **3: a couple of times per year**
4: several times per year **5: once a month or constantly**
f: farmers/farm-managers **g: local governments**
h: researchers **i: farmers' wives**

Conclusion:
The respondents exchange most information about AESs with the agricultural administrations and the farmers. The environmental organisations and "farmers' wives" are least consulted. Finland and North England are the countries that exchange information on AESs most frequently with different actor groups. At the higher institutional levels, researchers and environmental organisations are more frequently consulted, whereas at the lower institutional levels more information is exchanged with the local governments and the farmers. Information is exchanged mostly within the own organisation or across organisations of the same type (e.g. farmers' organisations who exchange most information with other farmers' organisations).

5.1.5 Additional Comments on part A (Question 5)

Overall the respondents have diverse comments on time spend on design and implementation in their organisations. A detailed account can be found in Appendix A 1. From the majority of case the studies only few indicative remarks are available. Reporting is extremely scarce for Ireland. However, in particular the French case study and to some extents also the Flanders case studies provide a more solid account. The respondents in general relate their efforts to the specific tasks they have, but rarely provide clear indication of the time involved. This may be related to lacking bookkeeping of time spend, as Finnish respondents suggest. In particular, the respondents point at the kind of work they do. Often also peak workloads and reasons for their tasks and their outcomes are stated. In addition to time spend on design, influencing the

design process and implementation tasks several respondents of all actor groups also act as facilitators and advisors.
Monitoring efforts and control and assessment tasks seem to have increased for several respondents or are prospected to increase. Especially the agricultural administration, but sometimes also the environmental administration is involved in these tasks. Researchers are often concerned with assessment activities, to which in some cases also environmental associations contribute. Some respondents of predominantly the farmers' and environmental associations explicitly mention time spend on lobbying. However, also environmental administrations and lower administrative levels feel inclined on pressuring for change. Lower levels of the administration are often particularly involved in administering payments and contracts.
A recurring point made by respondents of all levels and groups is that more complex schemes also imply greater workload. Changes in responsibilities and to a lesser extent policies are often felt as shifts in workload. Moreover, institutional arrangements are seen sometimes as barriers to information exchange or efficient communication. Thus, among other reasons, they can increase workloads as it is particularly emphasised in the Flemish and English case study.
In this context repetition of tasks related to AESs is mentioned by British and Flemish respondents. In the UK this depends on administrative procedures while in Flanders the involvement of several agencies seems to be the reason.
However, there are certain actor groups and levels, which are not much involved in AESs. In the French case study for example environmental administration and associations, but also most NUTS 3 farmers' associations seem to be involved to very limited extents and thus spend little time on AESs.

Conclusion:
Summarising the first points, there is a diversity of comments on the time spent on design and implementation of AESs. At large, the comments depend on the tasks of individual respondents. Thus, lobbying is rather undertaken by environmental and farmers' associations and monitoring rather by the administrations, particularly the agricultural administrations. It is also mentioned across actor groups that increased complexity of schemes increases workloads. However, not all respondents are involved to great extents in AESs and respondents may well perceive their time spend differently in terms of quantity and quality.

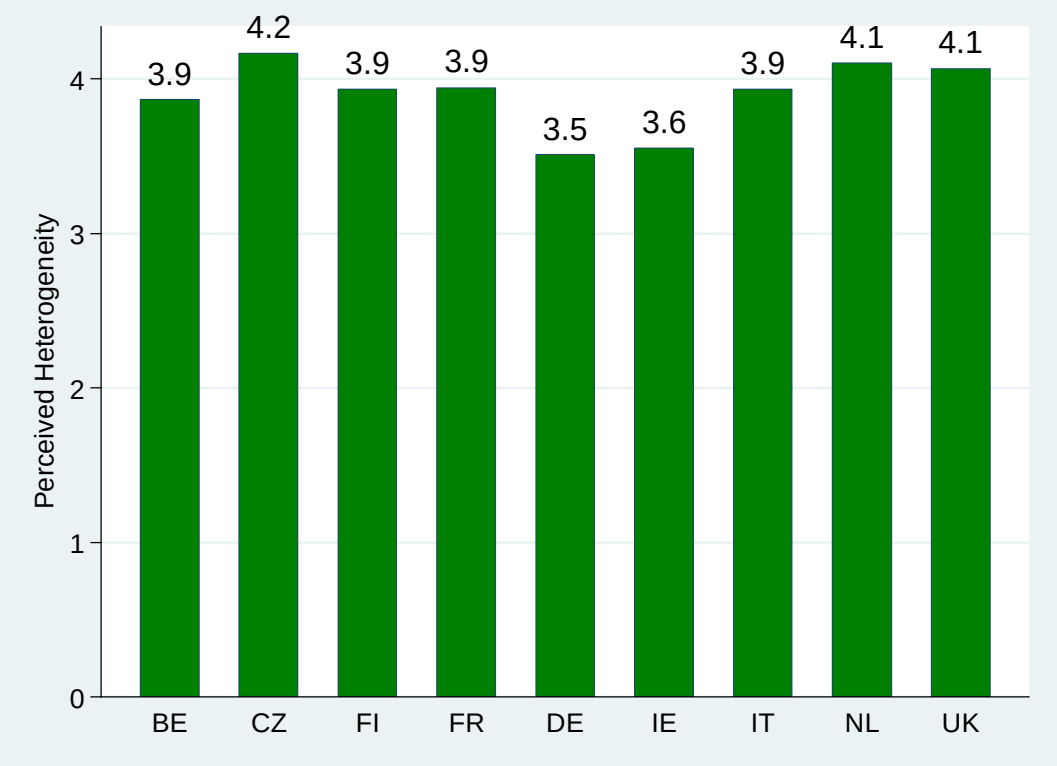
5.2 Assessment of the natural environment (Part B)

In part B of the questionnaire the actors were asked to assess the natural environment in their region. The term “region” is defined as the case study area in the different countries. For example in Germany this is Brandenburg. In part B four standardized and one open question are defined.

5.2.1 Heterogeneity of the natural environment (Question 6)

The actors were asked to what extent they consider the natural environment in their region as spatially heterogeneous?[6] They had to assess the heterogeneity form 1 (very homogeneous) to 5 (very heterogeneous). “Spatially heterogeneous” means that the natural environment differs within a region. For reasons of coherence, natural environment means soil quality, water quality, water quantity, protection of landscape and biodiversity for all following questions.
Considering the first question for all countries the mean is 3.9. This value expresses that most countries assess their environment as heterogeneous.
Figure 30 shows the differences between the case study areas. The variations between the regions are comparatively small. Actors from the case study areas in Czech Republic, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom perceive the highest heterogeneity, whereas those in Germany and Ireland the lowest.

Figure 30: Perceived heterogeneity of the natural environment by case study areas

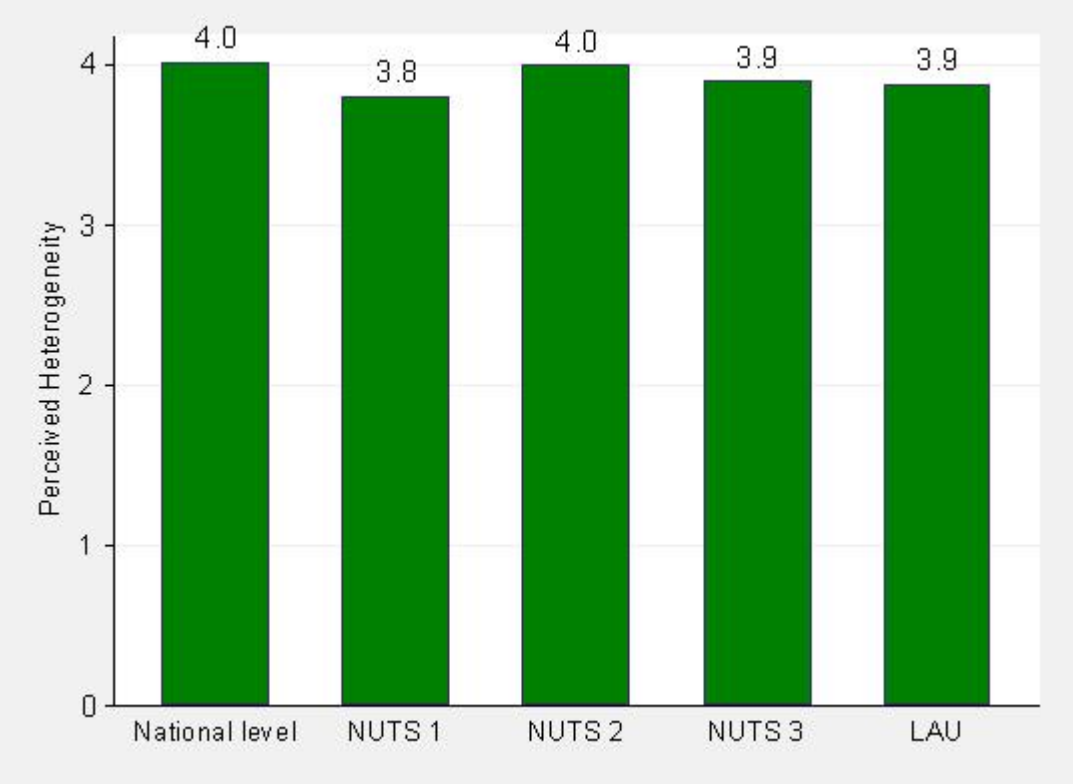


Legend: **1: very homogeneous** **2: homogeneous** **3: indifferent** **4: heterogeneous** **5: very heterogeneous**

[6] Question number 6 in the questionnaire

A comparison between the different administrative levels shows even less variation. Actors from the national and NUTS 2 level assess the heterogeneity slightly higher as the NUTS 3 and LAU level (3.9) and the NUTS 1 level (3.8).

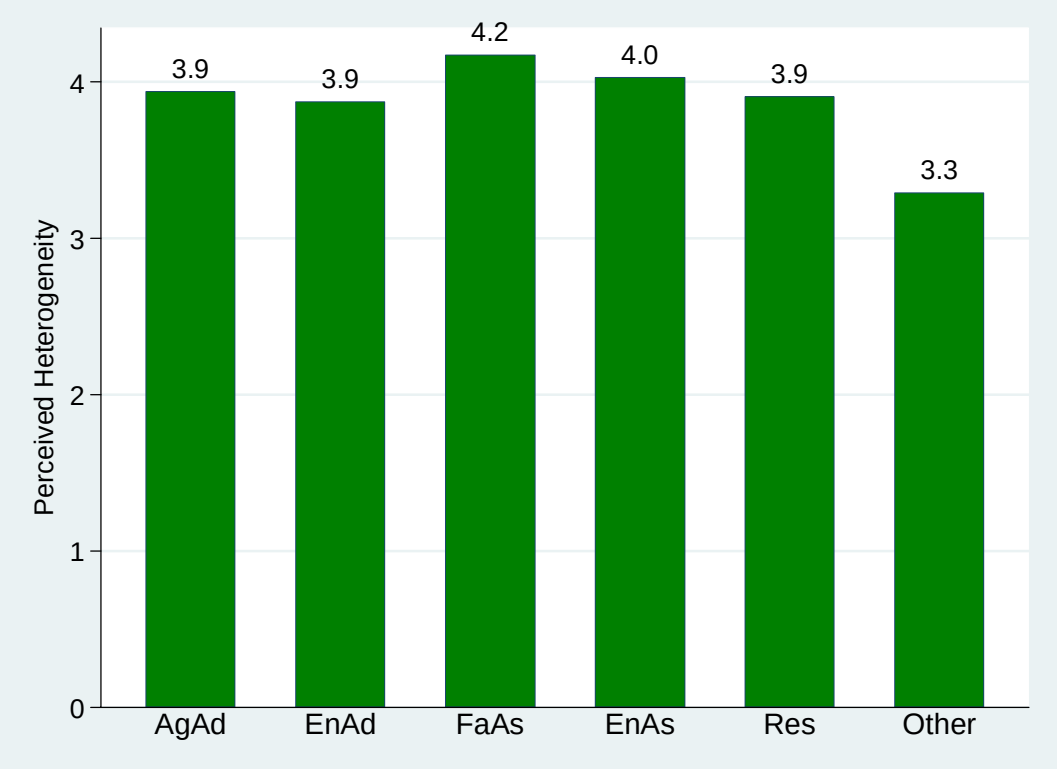
Figure 31: Perceived heterogeneity of the natural environment by administrative levels



Legend: **1: very homogeneous** **2: homogeneous** **3: indifferent** **4: heterogeneous** **5: very heterogeneous**

The variations between different actor groups tend to be small as well. Farmers' associations assess the environment more heterogeneous than the other relevant actor groups. Only the actors from the group "others" differ from the average as shown in Figure 32. This group represents mainly hunting, consumer and tourist organisations as well as organic farmers. The differences remain difficult to explain at this stage.

Figure 32: Perceived heterogeneity of the natural environment by actor groups



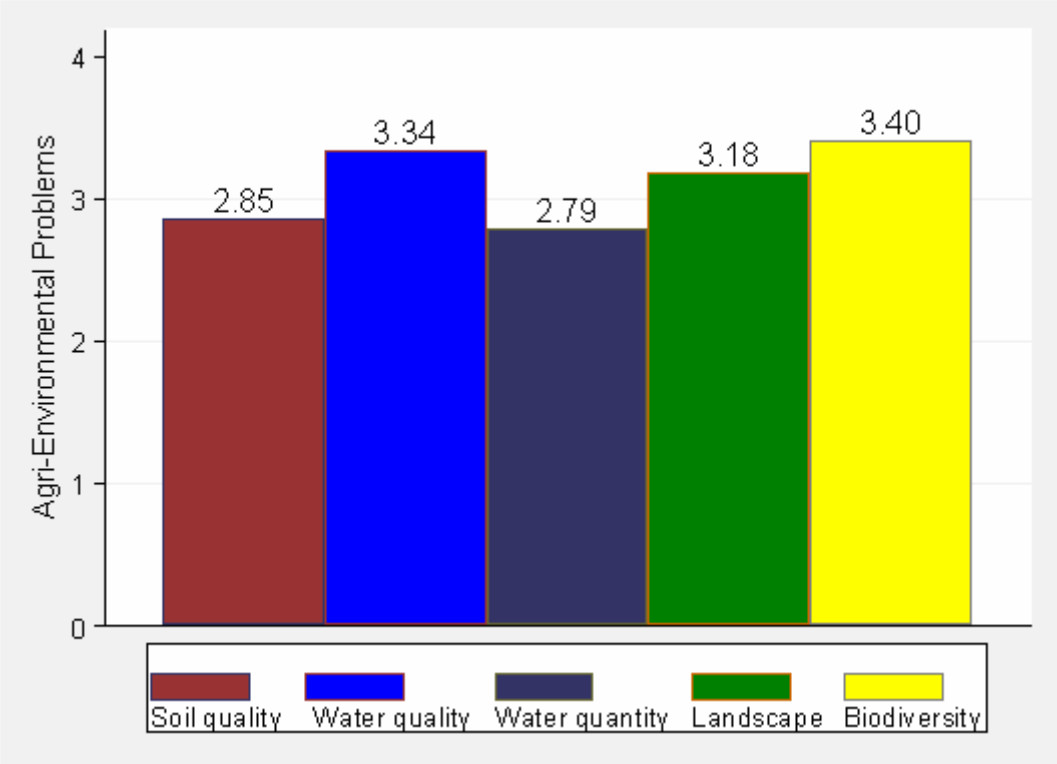
Legend: **1: very homogeneous** **2: homogeneous** **3: indifferent** **4: heterogeneous** **5: very heterogeneous**

Conclusion:
Generally, the natural environment is regarded as fairly heterogeneous across the case studies and administrative levels. All actor groups too perceive the natural environment as heterogeneous, though the group of "others" to a lesser extent. The highest variances can be observed between the case studies Brandenburg (DE) and Ireland have the lowest and Czech Republic, Friesland and North England have the highest perception of heterogeneity of their natural environment.

5.2.2 Seriousness of agri-environmental problems (Question 7)

The second question in part B was defined as follows: In your opinion, in which of the following do you have serious agri-environmental problems in your region?
The actors assessed different subjects of protection. These were soil quality[7], water quality, water quantity and the protection of landscape and biodiversity. The options for assessment have been from 1 (no problem at all) to 5 (very serious problem).
Figure 33 depicts the values for all categories and case studies. On an average the actors perceived problems in all categories. The values range around 3, while soil quality and water quantity are slightly below and the rest above 3. Biodiversity is perceived as the greatest problem but still not as a serious problem.

Figure 33: Assessment of agri-environmental problems



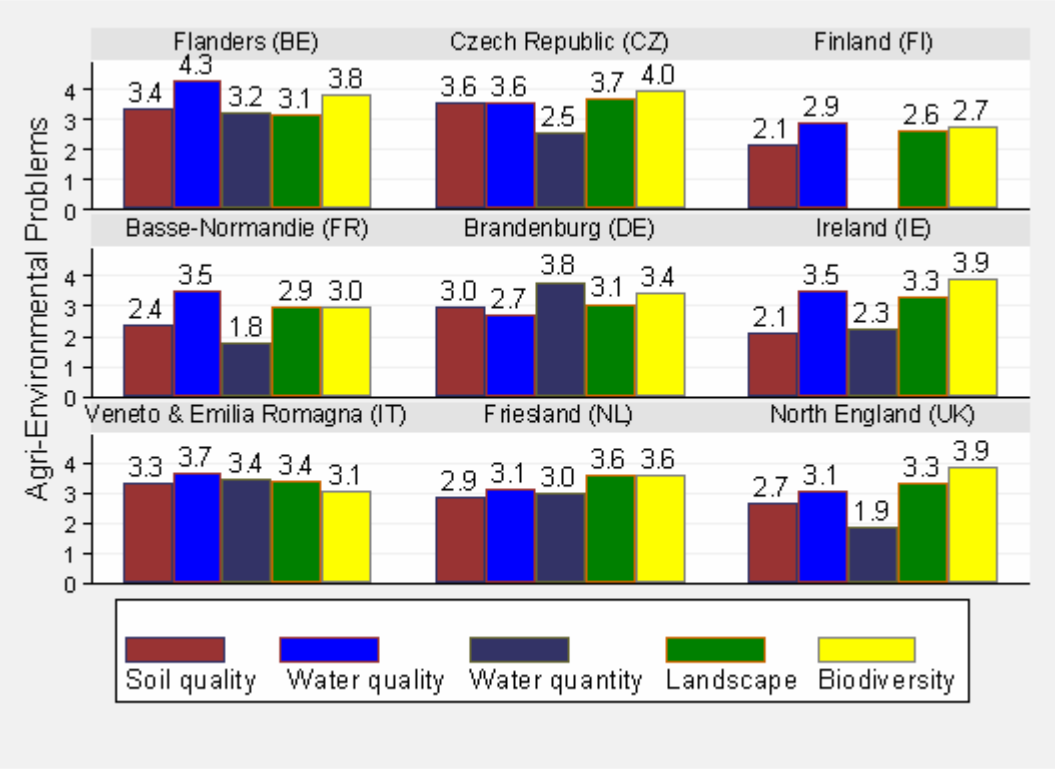
Legend: **1: no problem at all** **2: small problem** **3: problem** **4: serious problem** **5: very serious problem**

Having a look on the case study areas, as they are depicted in Figure 34, we see a more differentiated picture. Starting with Flanders, the problem perception in all categories is above the average. In particular water quality (4.5) and biodiversity (3.8) are seen as rather serious problems in Flanders.
Czech Republic has in 3 categories the highest level of problem perception. These are protection of biodiversity and landscape and soil quality. But also water quality is a serious problem in Czech Republic.
On the contrary, Finland has the lowest perception of agri-environmental problems. Since Finland has the highest number of interviewees (47 actors) it influences the average result to a large degree.

[7] Soil quality means also the soils erosion potential

In Base-Normandy only water quality seems to be a serious problem, while the protection of biodiversity and landscape are seen a lesser problem compared to most other case study regions.
In Brandenburg only water quantity is a serious problem. All other categories are seen as an average problem, although partly biodiversity is considered more serious. Large variances between the seriousness of protection needs are assessed in Ireland. Protection of biodiversity and water quality is perceived as a serious problem, whereas soil quality and water quantity problems are negligible. A similar picture can be observed in North England. Here the largest variances occur. However, in North England soil quality is assessed as a problem.
In Veneto and Emilia Romagna water quality is a serious problem. Only in Flanders the issue is assessed as a more serious problem. Except biodiversity (3.1) all aspects are assed superior to the average. In Friesland all aspects are assessed at least as a problem; protection of biodiversity and landscape are even serious problems with 3.6.

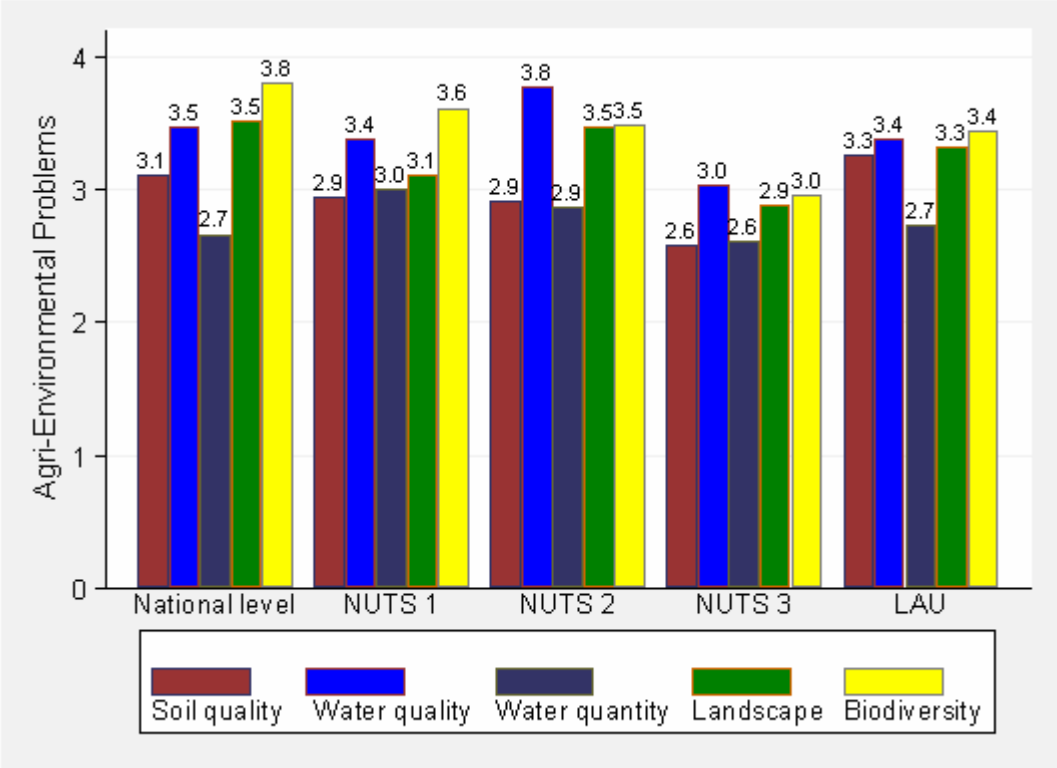
Figure 34: Assessment of agri-environmental problems by case study areas



Legend: **1: no problem at all** **2: small problem** **3: problem** **4: serious problem** **5: very serious problem**

In Figure 35 the differences between the administrative levels have been depicted. Most striking is that actors from the lower administrative level assess the agri-environmental problems lower than the higher levels on National-, NUTS 1 – and NUTS 2 level. This may be caused by the fact that lower administrative levels are not in charge of this kind of policies.

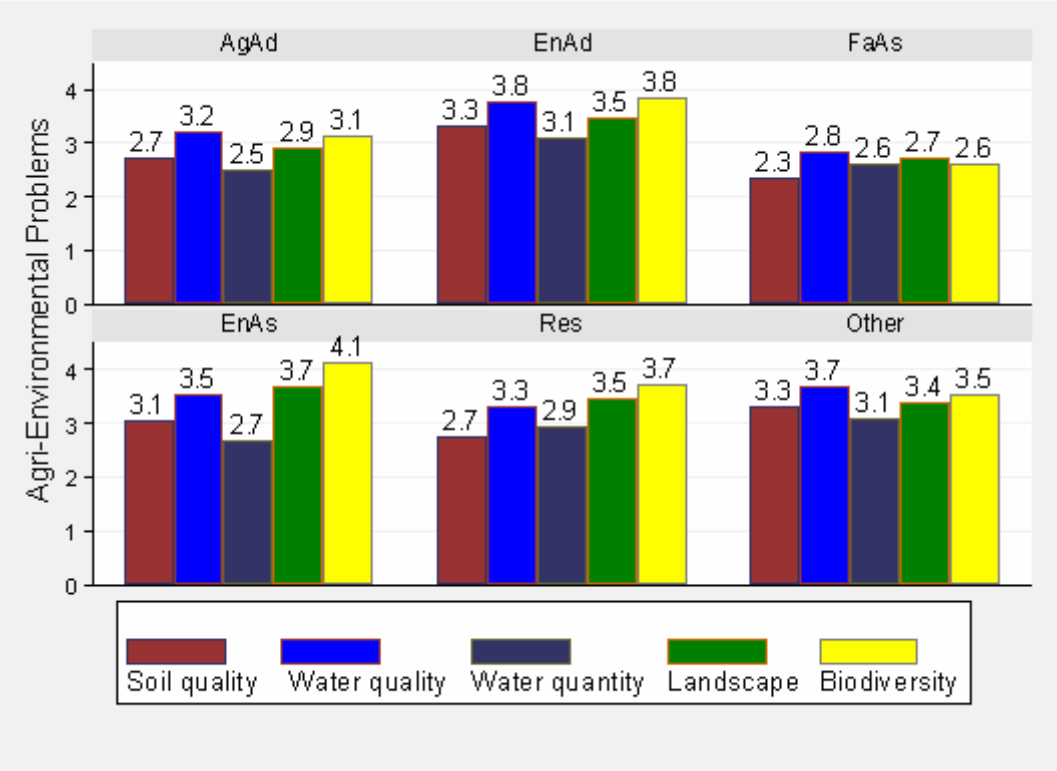
Figure 35: Assessment of agri-environmental problems by administrative levels



Legend: **1: no problem at all** **2: small problem** **3: problem** **4: serious problem** **5: very serious problem**

Figure 36 represents the same question sorted by actor groups. The order of the assessment between the actor groups is rather similar but there are large differences concerning the level: Agricultural administration and farmers' associations assess the agri-environmental problems as small whereas environmental administration and environmental associations perceive the problems considerably higher. Researchers are somewhat between these two groups.

Figure 36: Assessment of agri-environmental problems by actors groups



Legend: **1: no problem at all** **2: small problem** **3: problem** **4: serious problem** **5: very serious problem**

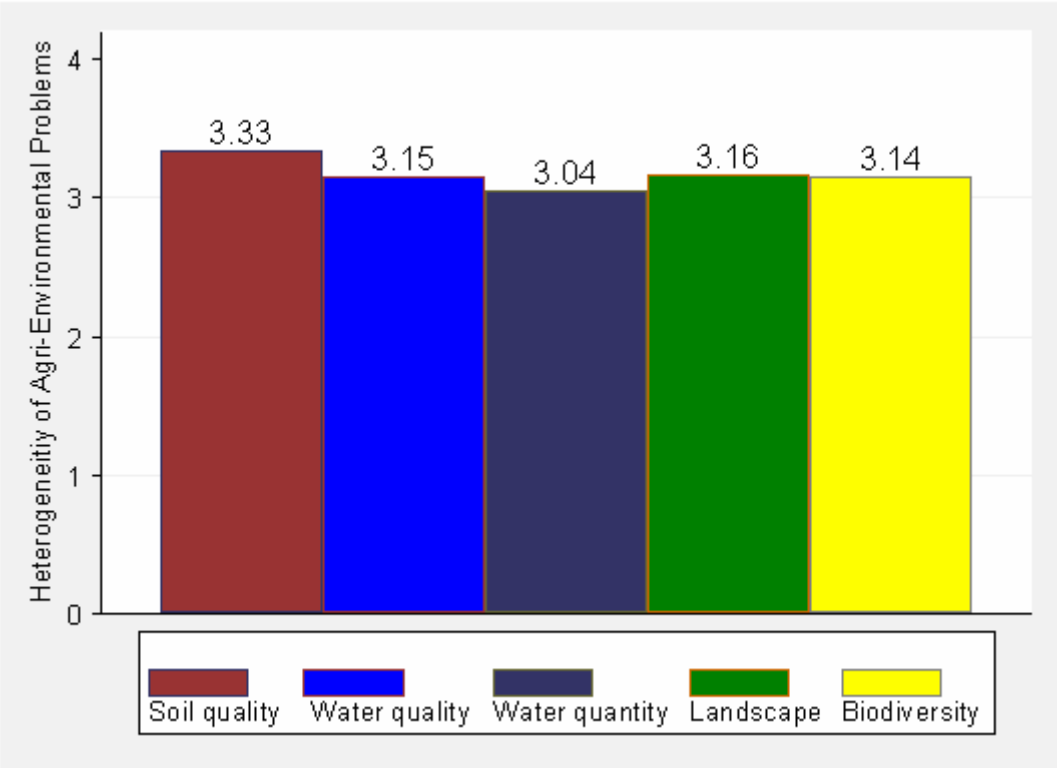
Conclusion:

Water quality and biodiversity are seen as the more serious environmental problems. However, the problem perception varies among case studies. For example, Flanders and the Italian case indicate water quality as a rather serious problem, whereas biodiversity seems to be an issue of greater concern in Flanders, North England and the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, there are also stronger variations between other problems, especially water quantity, which is particularly serious in Brandenburg and almost no problem in the English case study. Yet, water quantity problems can relate to both, scarcity and oversupply of water. The perception of environmental problems is fairly similar between administrative levels, although for the NUTS 3 level all problems are rather consistently less serious than for the other levels. Among the actor groups, clear distinctions can be made between the farmer associations and the remaining actor groups, which do not consistently rate the seriousness of environmental problems as low. Water quantity is rated as rather low problem across both NUTS levels and in actor groups comprising the environmental administration and environmental associations.

5.2.3 Spatial heterogeneity of agri-environmental problems (Question 8)

In the next question actors where asked to what extent they considered the agri-environmental problems and pressures within their region spatially heterogeneous. As already mentioned, "spatially heterogeneous" means that the agri-environmental problems within a region differ. For example, if actors noticed the same problem with soil erosion across a case study area and only one specific measure would be needed to solve all soil problems, soil quality would be very homogenous.
The actors have been asked to assess the same subjects of protections from 1 (very homogeneous) to 5 (very heterogeneous) whereby the differences in average are rather small as illustrated in Figure 37.
Comparing the assessment of the heterogeneity with the assessment of the agri-environmental problems in Figure 33 we notice that soil quality has the highest value for heterogeneity but is only seen as a relatively small agri-environmental problem. Also for the other aspects it cannot be observed that the subjects of protection with higher perceived environmental problems have a higher heterogeneity or the other way around.

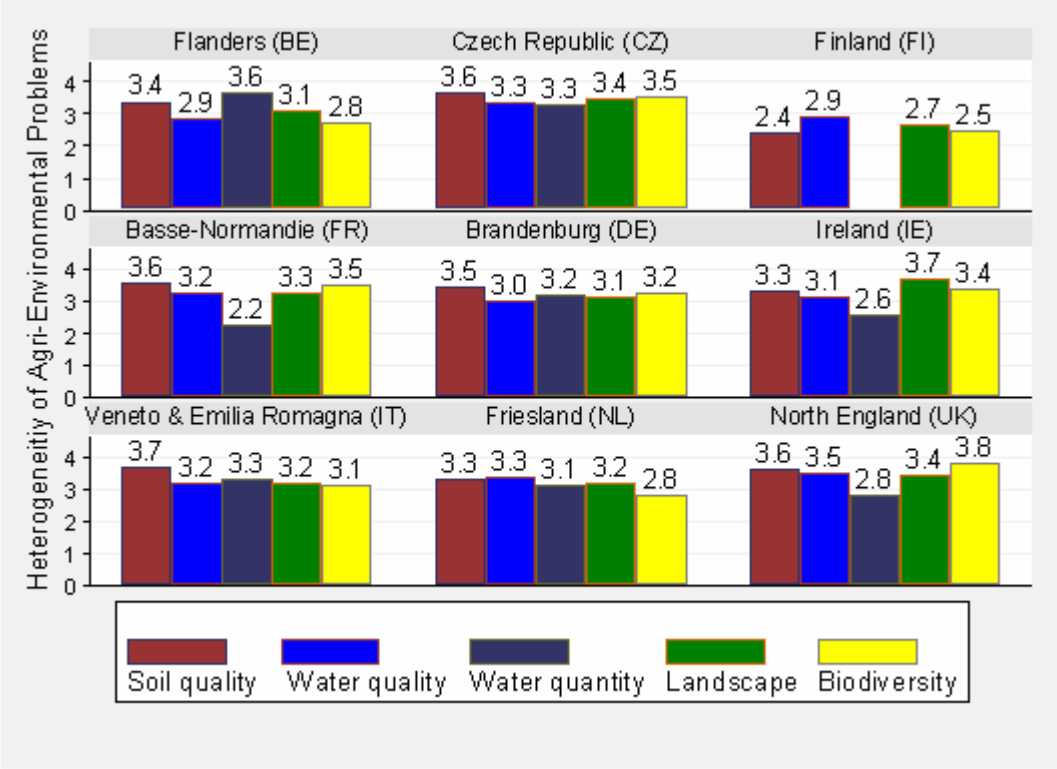
Figure 37: Assessment of the spatial heterogeneity of agri-environmental problems



Legend: **1: very homogeneous** **2: homogeneous** **3: indifferent** **4: heterogeneous** **5: very heterogeneous**

In general no great differences concerning the heterogeneity within the case study areas can be found. Only water quantity is above the average in Flanders and below the average in Base-Normandie, Ireland and North England. However, there are variations between the regions: Finland has by far the lowest heterogeneity of agri-environmental problems, whereas regions like North England and Czech Republic represent the highest values on average. The Czech Republic has also relatively high agri-environmental problems according the results of this questionnaire. This is generally not true for North England. However, here the protection of biodiversity is a clear exception.
When comparing the results of Figure 38 with those of Figure 30: Perceived heterogeneity of the natural environment by case study areas, there seems to be a correlation between some countries like Czech Republic and North England. However, for e.g. Finland or Brandenburg on the first view such a correlation is not obvious.

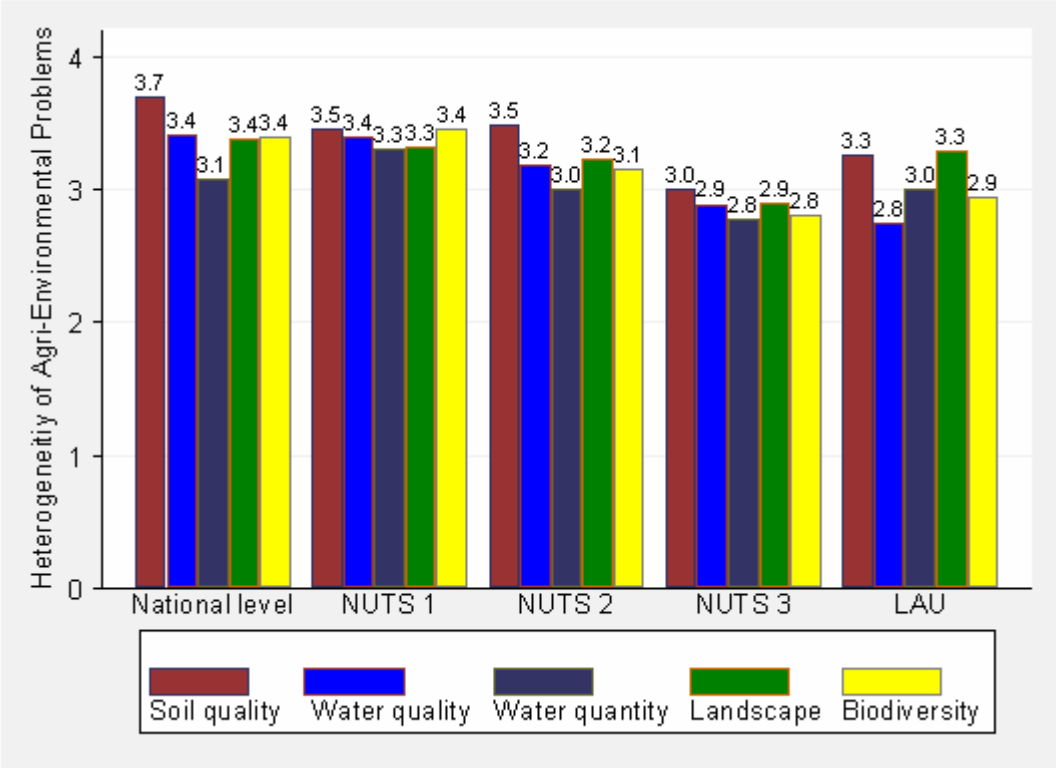
Figure 38: Assessment of the spatial heterogeneity of agri-environmental problems by case study areas



Legend: **1: very homogeneous** **2: homogeneous** **3: indifferent** **4: heterogeneous** **5: very heterogeneous**

Looking to the different administrative levels in Figure 39, there seems to be a correlation between the assessment of the heterogeneity and the agri-environmental problems, since more local and regional levels assess both aspects lower.

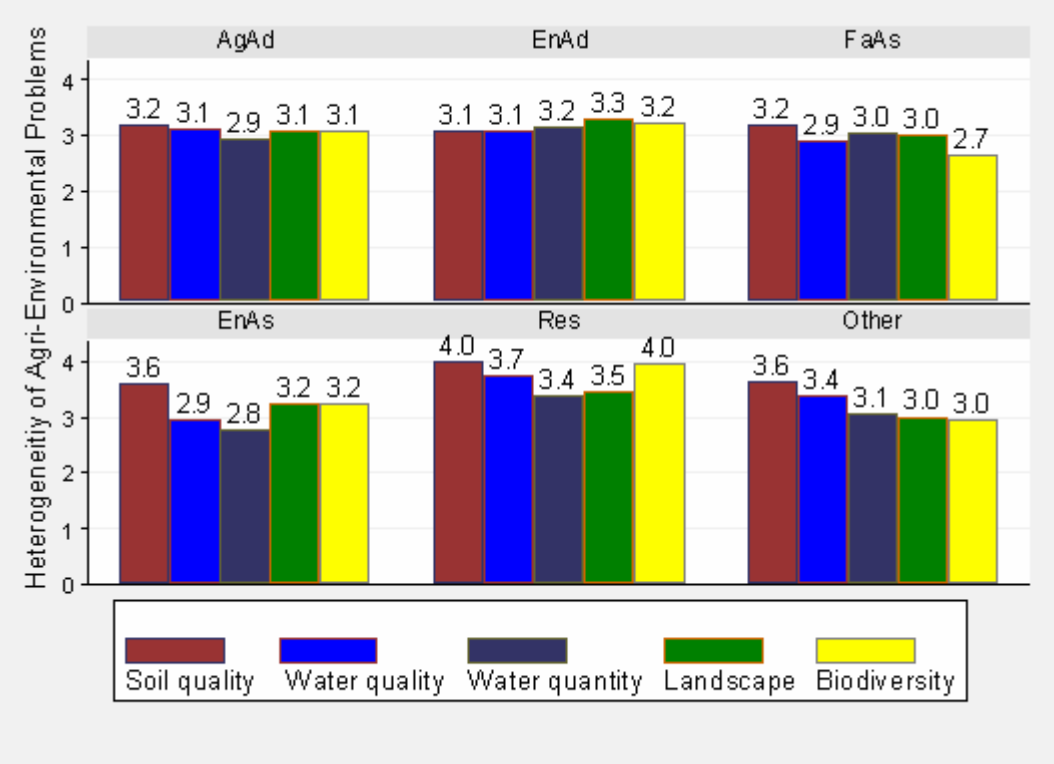
Figure 39: Assessment of the spatial heterogeneity of agri-environmental problems by administrative level



Legend: **1: very homogeneous** **2: homogeneous** **3: indifferent** **4: heterogeneous** **5: very heterogeneous**

Considering the different actor groups in Figure 40, no significant differences between them can be observed. Contrary to the assessment of the agri-environmental problems in Figure 36, researchers assess higher values than the other groups.

Figure 40: Assessment of the spatial heterogeneity of agri-environmental problems by actor groups



Legend: **1: very homogeneous** **2: homogeneous** **3: indifferent** **4: heterogeneous** **5: very heterogeneous**

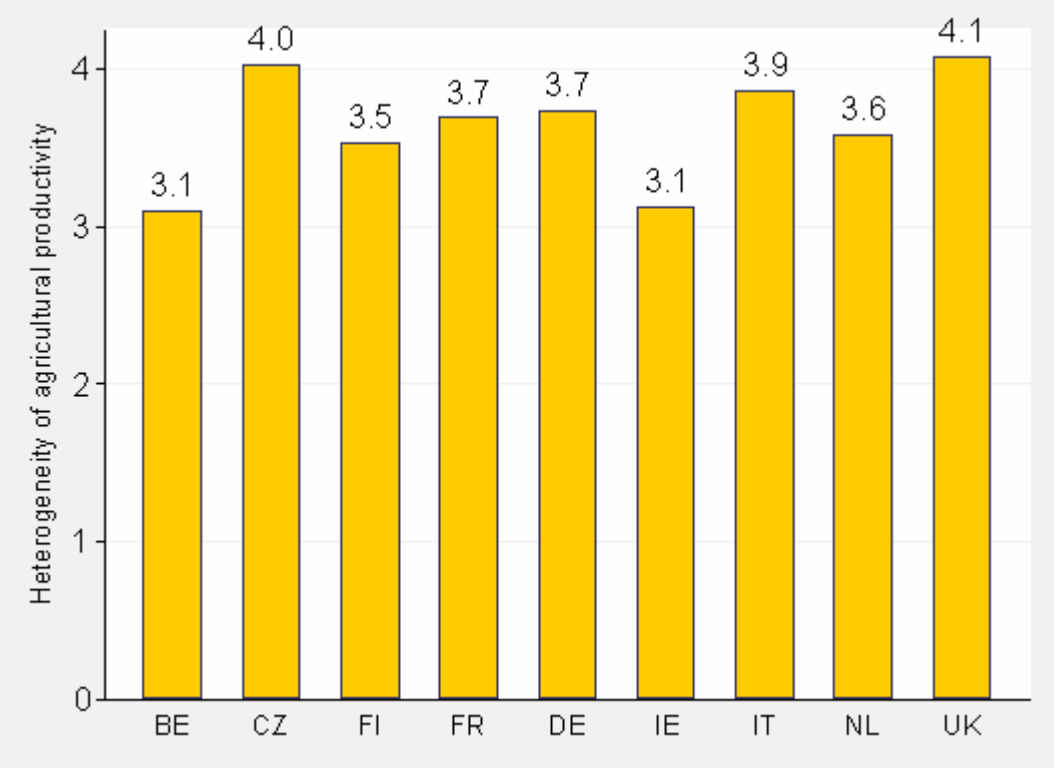
Conclusion:
On average, the environmental problems are seen neither heterogeneously nor homogenously. Also among case studies a rather unified pattern emerges. However, Finland considers its environmental problems as comparatively homogenously. Greater differences can be found among administrative levels, e.g. NUTS 3 considers environmental problems as rather consistently homogenously in contrast to the higher administrative levels as well as to LAU. Exceptions may be soil quality and landscape, which are regarded to be more heterogeneous at LAU levels. Also the actor groups have rather similar perceptions of the heterogeneity of environmental problems, though researchers rate heterogeneity rather high.

5.2.4 Heterogeneity of agricultural productivity (Question 9)

The last standardized question on the natural environment actors have been asked, to what extent they considered the agricultural productivity in terms of production potential (t per ha) within their region as spatially heterogeneous. The legend was the same as used in the question before. On average actors perceived the agricultural productivity with a value of 3.7 as heterogeneous, though slightly less heterogeneous than the natural environment (3.9).
In Figure 41 relatively high differences between case study areas in the countries can be observed. Flanders (BE) and Ireland assess the productivity indifferent and especially Czech Republic and North England (UK) perceive higher values. All other regions are somehow in

between. The picture is generally similar as seen already for the heterogeneity of the natural environment.

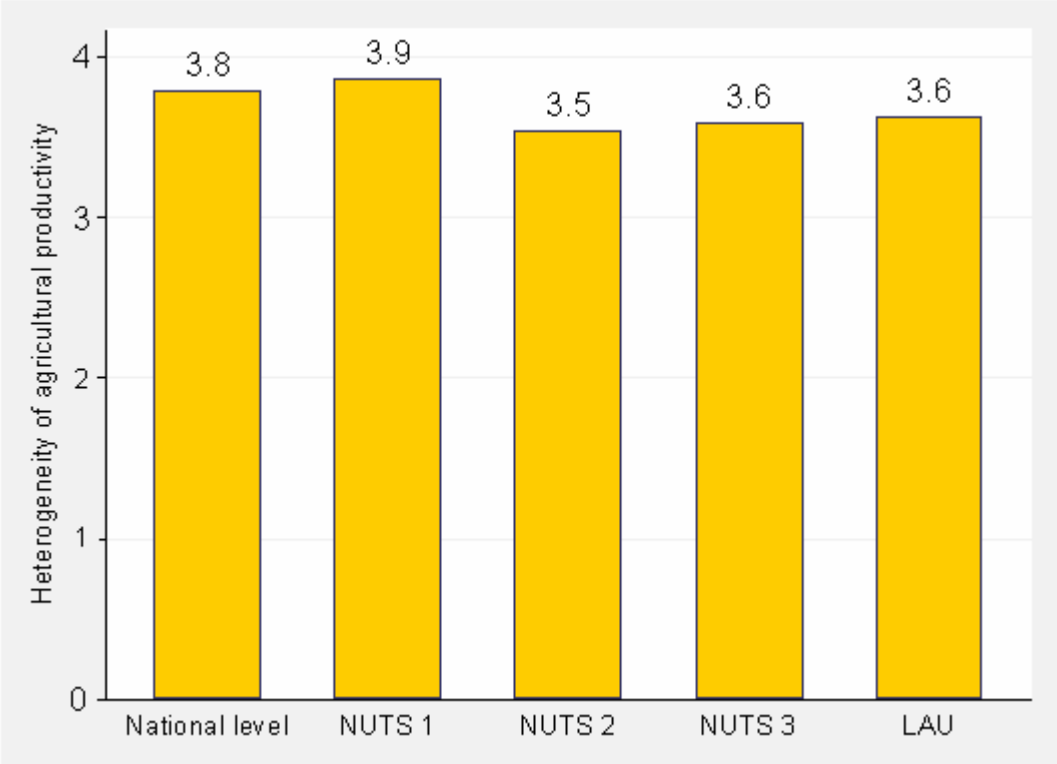
Figure 41: Heterogeneity of agricultural productivity in terms of production potential by case study areas



Legend: **1: very homogeneous** **2: homogeneous** **3: indifferent** **4: heterogeneous** **5: very heterogeneous**

For the administrative levels shown in Figure 42 holds what we have seen for all questions before: the lower administrative levels have also a lower perception of heterogeneity.

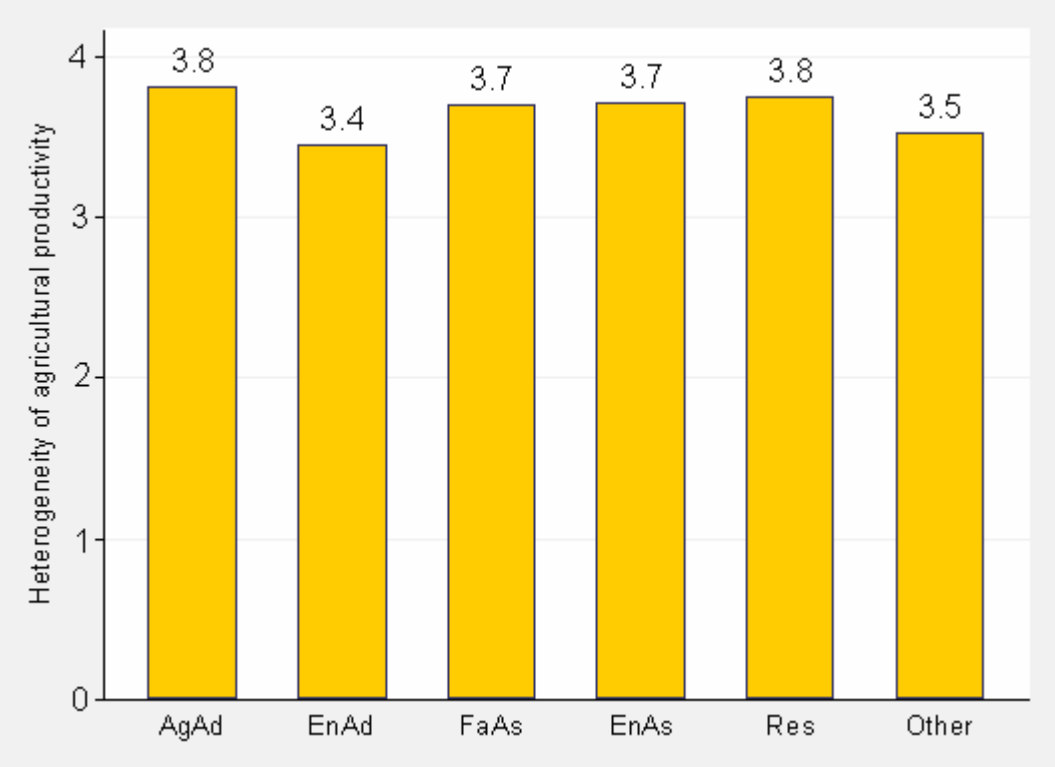
Figure 42: Heterogeneity of agricultural productivity in terms of production potential by administrative levels



Legend: **1: very homogeneous** **2: homogeneous** **3: indifferent** **4: heterogeneous** **5: very heterogeneous**

For the different actor groups in Figure 43 no systematic differences can be observed between the agricultural and environmental or administrative and association representatives, although the environmental administration and the category “others” evaluates the heterogeneity of productions potentials lower

Figure 43: Heterogeneity of agricultural productivity in terms of production potential by actor groups



Legend: **1: very homogeneous** **2: homogeneous** **3: indifferent** **4: heterogeneous** **5: very heterogeneous**

Conclusions:
Agricultural productivities across the case studies are assessed from indifferent to heterogeneous. In Flanders and Ireland, heterogeneity is comparatively low but not reaching homogeneity. The administrative levels higher than NUTS 1 tend to rate heterogeneity of production comparatively higher than lower levels. The actor groups have a rather consistent perception of the heterogeneity of agricultural production, though the environmental administration and the group of others rate heterogeneity slightly lower.

5.2.5 Additional comments on the natural environment and environmental problems in the regions (Question 10)

According to the respondents environmental problems in their regions differ in parts significantly from each other. A detailed description is provided in Appendix A 2. However, especially in the French, Italian and North England case studies it is pointed at large heterogeneities of particular natural environment and environmental problems. Actors have a varying perception of the severity of environment problems relating to agriculture. These rang from clear ignorance to urgent demands for mitigation. Overall, knowledge on agri-environmental problems and definition their baseline is lacking in Ireland. Complaints about insufficient knowledge are much less in the other countries. However, reporting from the different case studies varied in quantity. Rather extensive accounts of comments on the

natural environment and environmental problems exist of Flanders and the Basse-Normandy case study of France, while there are limited comments from the Czech Republic and Finland.
The environmental features of soil resources are issues of particular concern in some case studies. Soil protection in terms of erosion, compaction and contamination is seen a major problem for officers of the Czech NUTS 1 agricultural and environmental administrations. From the French case study a NUTS 2 officer of the agricultural administration also points at soil erosion. A further issue receiving insufficient attention is soil organic matter as a respondent from the Flemish environmental associations suggests. In Ireland a researcher reports concerns about the protection of traditionally acidic soils. Carbon sinks are another important environmental feature of soils as respondent from the North England agricultural administration suggests.
Water quality received little further comments. Flemish environmental associations and "others" point at nutrient losses. So do officers of the French case study's agricultural and environmental administration, whereas the latter also includes pesticides as a threat to water quality. In the Friesland case study respondents from the agricultural administration suggest that water quality problems have largely being solved and that measures reach their limits due to structural and management change in agriculture.
Different water quantity problems are mentioned in some case studies. In the German case study of Brandenburg a respondent from a NUTS 3 farmers' association is relating water quantity problems to insufficient maintenance of drainage systems, whereas the NUTS 3 environmental administration emphasises the operation of flood protection. A French farmers' association also mentions drainage problems. In North England environmental administration and associations mention drainage and flooding.
Biodiversity is emphasised as an environmental problem in several case studies. According to a Czech environmental association biodiversity is a general issue needing more attention. In Basse-Normandie farmers' associations and environmental administration and others mention biodiversity alike. Respondents of the Flemish LAU agricultural administration and organic farmers' association are both concerned about biodiversity. The latter, though, suggests explicitly that genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are a threat to biodiversity. More generally, a NUTS 3 farmers' association of the Italian case study argues that agriculture impacts on biodiversity but also depends on biodiversity. In North-England biodiversity is a major issue for many actors, mostly in terms of wildlife and habitat. Also "others" of the Flemish case study mention wildlife conservation.
Some respondents point at urban sprawl and land use implications as environmental problems. Urban sprawl is an environmental problem according to Flemish respondents of farmers' association and environmental associations alike. Also a respondent of the Irish NUTS 2 agricultural administration is very critical of the environmental impacts of urbanisation. In the Italian case study a respondent relates construction activities explicitly to soil protection and demands better control.
Landscape protection is a concern for respondents from the Czech agricultural and environmental administration, but also from environmental associations. In Ireland a respondent from an environmental association considers the protection of "Burren landscapes" as important. However, landscape features are also to be protected according to French respondents of "others" and farmers' associations. Agricultural and environmental administration and "others" of North-England are of similar opinion.
Heterogeneity of environmental problems comes along with heterogeneity of cropping systems as a respondent of the Brandenburg agricultural administration remarks. This is also suggested from a national respondent of the French agricultural administration, as distinctions have to be made between grassland and cereal cropping. Respondents of the "others" add the vegetable areas and different soil structures as further reasons for heterogeneity. From the Friesland case study researchers consider heterogeneity as something that differs among many

areas and management strategies. Thus soil quality and farming intensity matter. A great diversity of the Finnish environment is emphasised by respondents of the corresponding case study. In Italian case study a respondents mentions large differences in environmental problems between mountain, hill and plain areas. This is similar to the North-England case study where it is pointed at distinct differences between upland and lowland areas. Many respondents of the North England case study seem especially concerned about upland problems.

In general the respondents of North England are particularly concerned with wildlife conservation and up-land farming. These are issues much less emphasised in the other case studies, which may be rather similar to each other.

Among actor groups at least some respondents of all actor groups acknowledge the major environmental problems. However, especially the environmental associations and to some extents environmental administrations and researchers emphasise particular implications of environmental issues more strongly. Farmers' associations and to a lesser extent agricultural administrations are in some case studies like those of Flanders and Ireland rather ignorant about environmental impacts. In Flanders officers of the agricultural administration for example argue that farming is not necessarily the main cause of environmental problems and can also be a victim of environmental problems. In addition respondents from the Flemish farmers' association point is this direction when they e.g. suggest that the farming sector has the best environmental progress and environmental problems solve themselves or that the also the positive environmental impacts of agriculture should be taken into account. However, also respondents of the Italian case study, in particular relating to the Veneto area suggest that farming is not the main cause of problems. On the contrary, in North England there is a rather harmonious attitude as all actor groups emphasise uplands and wildlife conservation.

Differences in terms of environmental concern among administrative levels seem less obvious. In the French case study, however, it appears that lower administrative levels have a much better understanding and more detailed opinion about environmental issues. Some national level respondents from environmental and farmers' associations as well as from the "others" group in France felt unable to identify environmental problems of the French case study. This pattern is also of some visibility in other regions, though not in Ireland and only to a very limited extent in the Netherlands.

Conclusion:

A diversity of environmental problems in the case studies is looked at in further detail by a variety of actor groups. In parts, the problems predominantly mentioned differ significantly between the case studies and are sometimes also environmentally heterogeneous within the case studies. The latter is especially the case in the French, Italian and North England case studies. Soil protection is mentioned as a core problem in the Czech Republic, but is also of concern in other regions. Water issues prevail particularly in the French case study and North England. In the latter case study, biodiversity seems to be a major issue in terms of wildlife and is mentioned by all actor groups. Other case studies put much less emphasis on the issue. Implications of encroaching peri-urban areas are an issue in Ireland and Flanders, while landscape is a topic of special importance in Flanders, but also to some extent in Friesland, the Czech Republic and North-England. Knowledge on agri-environmental problems is lacking in Ireland, although there are sometimes complaints about insufficient knowledge in the other countries. Generally, at least some respondents of all actor groups acknowledge the major environmental problems. However, especially the environmental associations and to some extent environmental administrations and researchers emphasise environmental issues. Farmer associations and to a lesser extent agricultural administrations are in some case studies rather ignorant about environmental impacts. In the French case study, it seems that lower administrative levels have a much better understanding of environmental issues. In summary,

the comments suggest that the perception of the environment can vary significantly among case studies, actor groups and administrative levels.

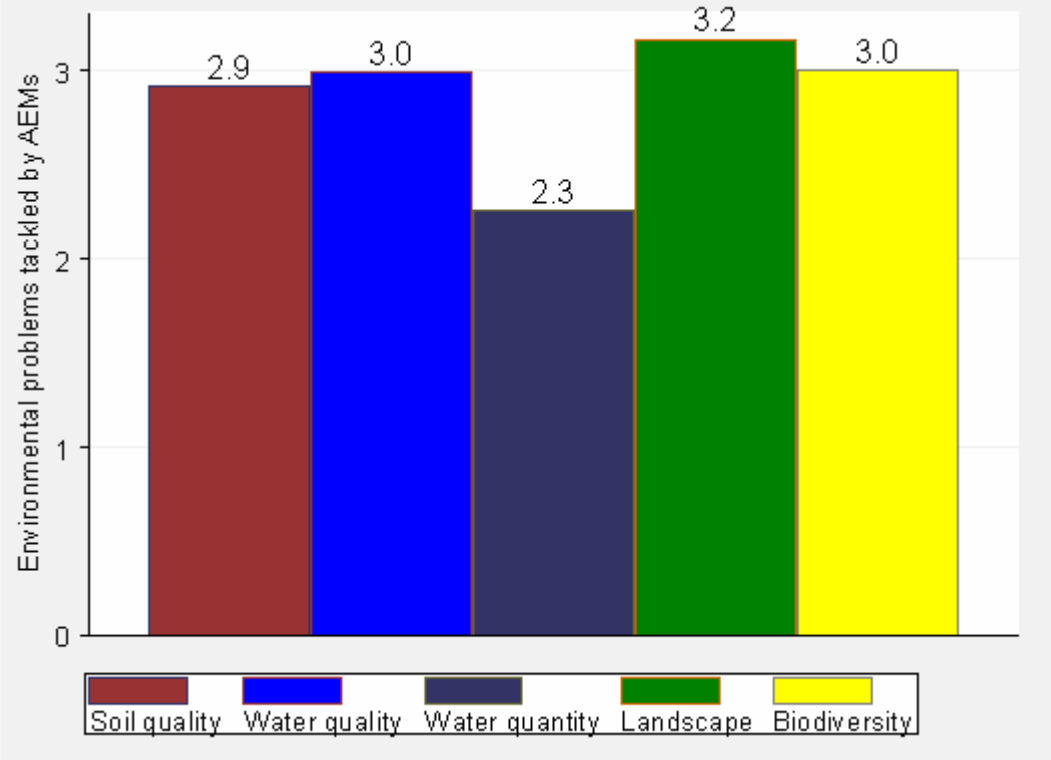
5.3 Assessment of the agri-environmental measures (Part C)

In part C of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to assess the agri-environmental measures (AEMs) the way they were organized as part of AESs at the time the interviews were held. This corresponds to the way AEMs are described in the Council Regulation (EC) 1257/1999.

5.3.1 Effectiveness of agri-environmental measures in general (Question 11)

In question 11 it is asked to which level can be agreed with the statement that AEMs tackle adequately the actual environmental problems regarding soil quality, water quality and quantity, landscape and biodiversity. The actors could again respond with strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). It is important to note that actors had also the option to answer "not applicable" meaning that there is no problem to tackle in this specific field. For all the countries together the mean answering category is 2.92 (± 1.22) for soil quality, 2.99 (± 1.15) for water quality, 2.26 (± 1.16) for water quantity, 3.17 (± 1.09) for landscape and 3.01 (± 1.15) for biodiversity (Figure 44). From these results can be concluded that, in the actors' opinion, the problem water quantity is least tackled by the current AEMs, while landscape is mostly tackled. Probably water quantity comes out as the problem least tackled, because it is not considered to be an important problem (see question 7). All these values are close to the middle answer category. Consequently no extreme scores are visible. Due to the large variety in combinations of actors, countries and NUTS levels, more obvious answers can be obtained when looking at the differences within those three variables.

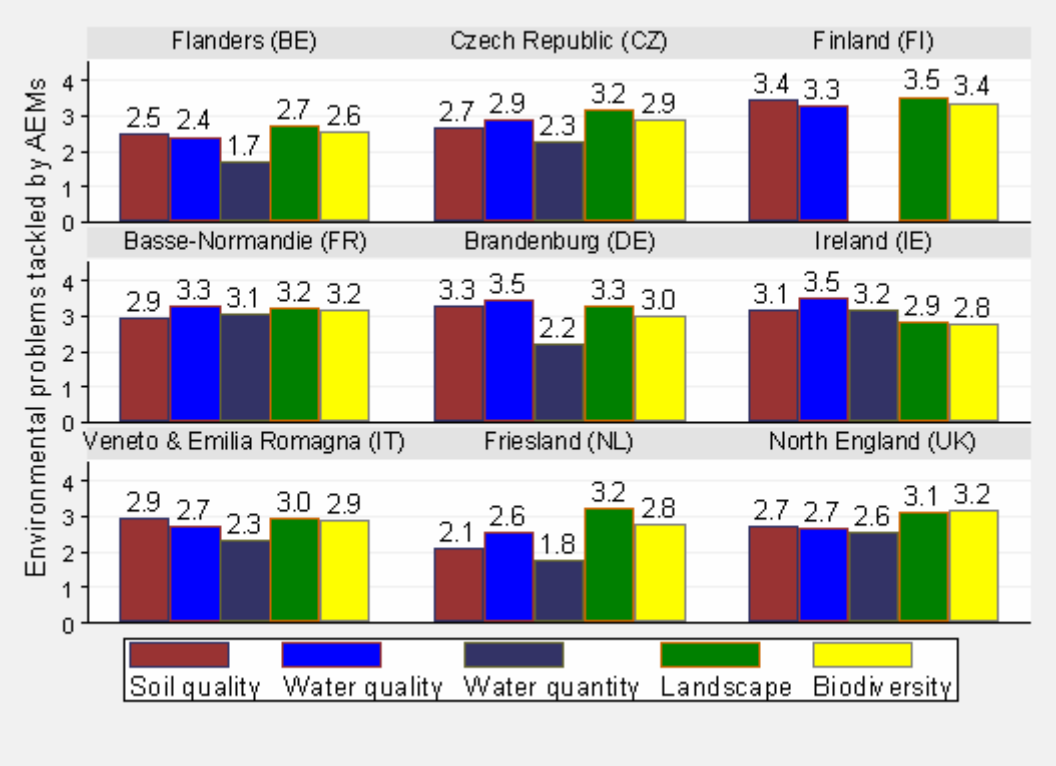
Figure 44: Degree to which the actual environmental problems are tackled by AEMs



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

There are no significant differences between the countries in the evaluation of landscape (p= 0.104) and biodiversity (p= 0.131) as problems tackled, but the perception is significantly different for the other categories soil quality (p= 0.002), water quality (p= 0.001) and water quantity (p= 0.003) (Figure 45). It can be expected that problems, that are perceived as serious in question 7 are being evaluated as less tackled by AEMs. If they would be sufficiently tackled by AEMs, they would be no problem anymore. Looking at the correlations between the corresponding categories in question 7 and question 11 confirms this hypothesis, with negative correlation coefficients between -0.3 and -0.5 indicating that the bigger the perceived environmental problems, the less the respondents agree that they are well tackled by AEMs. In general can be concluded that in Finland, respondents believe that the environmental problems are best tackled, followed by the French and German case studies. In these countries, question 7 suggests that the problems are perceived to be less severe. If problems are perceived well tackled, this could not only be attributed to good AEMs but also to the fact that the problems are less severe as such, apart from the AEMs. In Flanders, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic respondents are least satisfied. Water quantity seems to be an exception to the rule, since it is perceived in most of the countries as a less important problem, but they all believe it is least tackled by AEMs. The reason here is probably that there are no or not enough measures addressing water quantity. In Finland, this category is missing because the problem of water quantity does not exist. Of all the countries, the effectiveness of the AEMs concerning water quantity is evaluated best in France, and especially in Ireland.

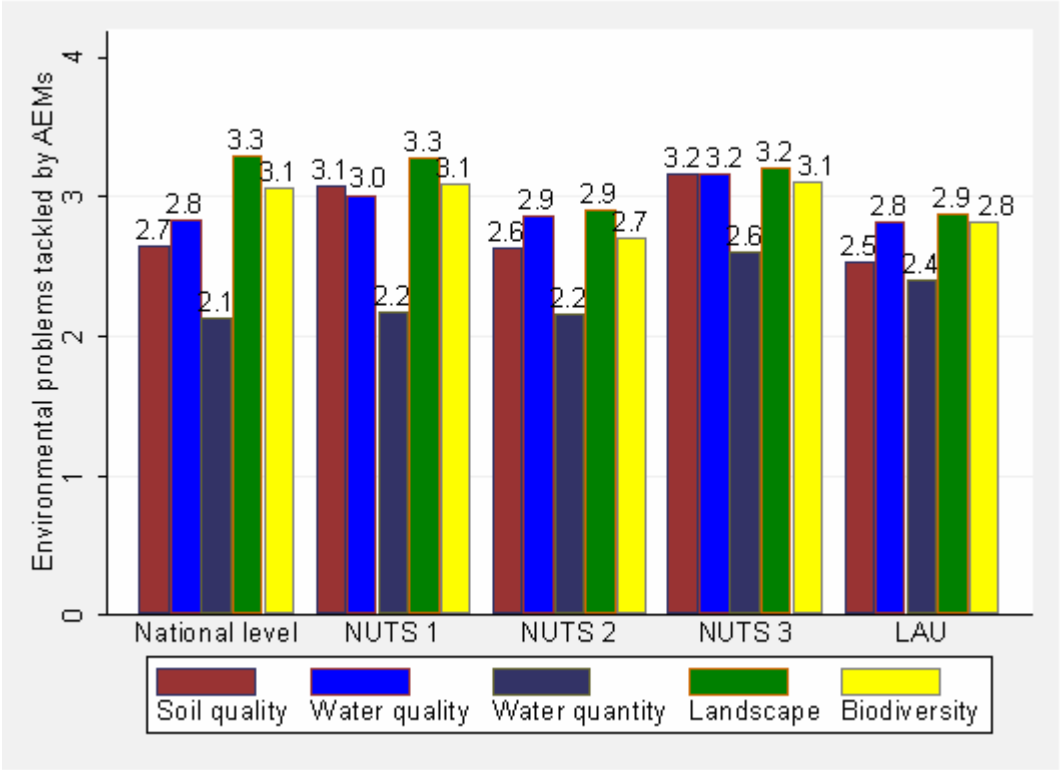
Figure 45: Degree to which the actual environmental problems are tackled by AEMs by case study areas



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Between the NUTS levels, there is only a significant difference in perception for the environmental category of soil quality (p= 0.029) (Figure 46). At NUTS 1 and NUTS 3 level, the effectiveness is evaluated as better than at the other levels. Here the explanation could be that the responsibility for AEM design is most often situated at these levels. Acknowledging that the problem is not tackled adequately by AEMs, would then be a criticism to ones own work. Yet, this is only one of several explanations.

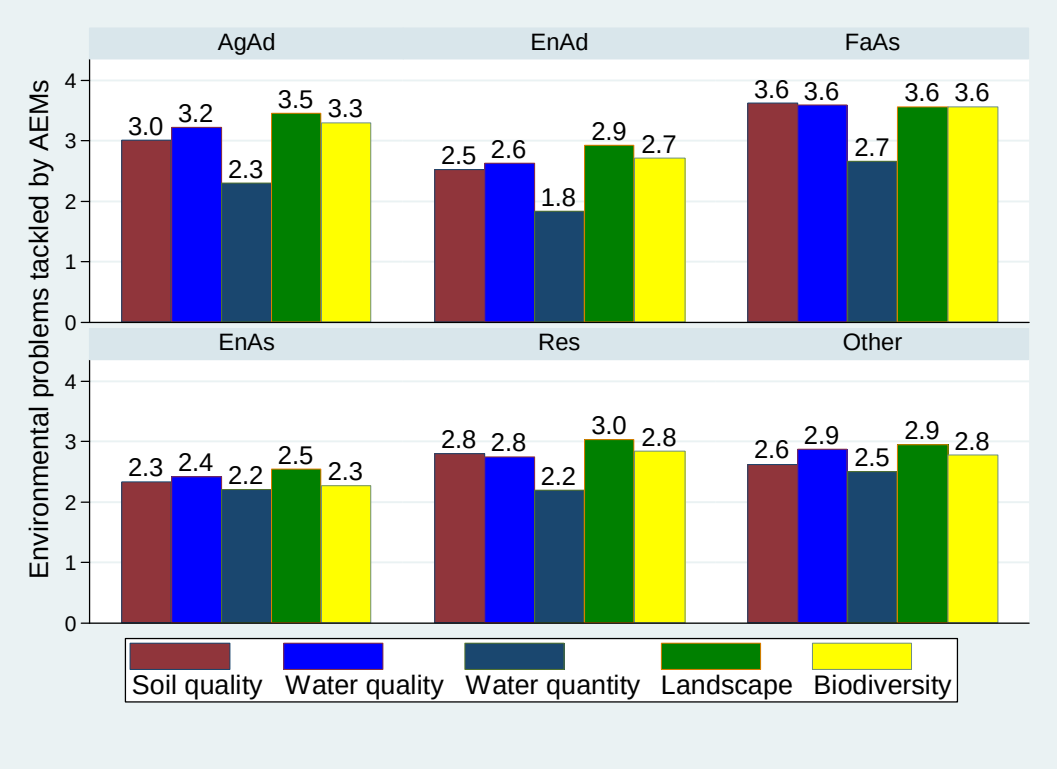
Figure 46: Degree to which the actual environmental problems are tackled by AEMs by administrative levels



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

In terms of differences between the actor groups, there seems to be a general agreement over the category water quantity: every actor group believes this problem is rather inadequately tackled by AEMs (p= 0.143) (Figure 48). For the other environmental categories there are significant differences between the actor groups. Soil quality (p= 0.000) is perceived as being better tackled by members of the agricultural administration and farmers organisations than by environmental organisations and the environmental administration. Also for the other environmental categories, water quality (p= 0.000), landscape (p= 0.000) and biodiversity (p= 0.000), farmers' associations and agricultural administration believe the problems are better tackled by AEMs than the environmental organisations and environmental administration. Researchers are in between. The answers are probably strategic: farmers and their representatives in the administration and the farmers' organisations say that the problems are adequately tackled out of fear for more stringent and thus production threatening measures.

Figure 47: Degree to which the actual environmental problems are tackled by AEMs by actor groups



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

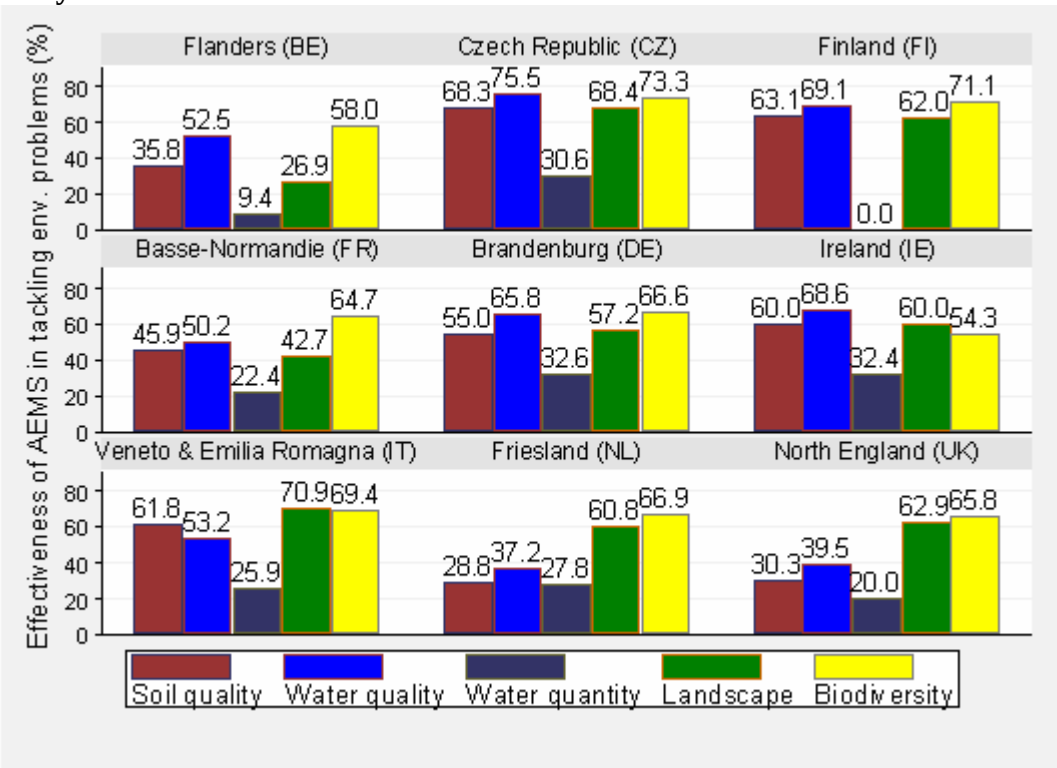
Conclusion:
Overall it seems that AEMs tackle the environmental problems to an average extent with the exception of water quantity, which is inadequately addressed. The problems that are perceived as most important in question 7 are perceived as less adequately tackled by AEMs, again with the exception of water quantity. In Finland and France, the problems seem best tackled, and in Flanders and the Netherlands the situation seems worst or they are partly not addressed by the measures. The administrative levels most often responsible for the design of AEMs seem to be more convinced that soil problems are adequately tackled by AEMs than the other categories. The farmer organisations and agricultural administrations are more enthusiastic about the effectiveness of the measures than the environmental organisations and administrations. The opinion of the researchers is somewhere in between.

5.3.2 Effectiveness of specific agri-environmental measures in general (Question 12)

In question 12, the respondents were asked to judge four (three in UK and Ireland) different AEMs, per case study area, on their ability to address the same environmental problems as mentioned in the other questions. To be able to give a general answer to this question, and evaluate how well the problems are tackled by the AEMs in the different countries, five new variables were created. This was done by adding the scores of the four (or three) measures for each problem and then dividing by 20 (or 15) and multiplying by 100 to obtain a percentage. The result is given in Figure 48. It only takes into account four (three) measures for each country, so it is system immanent that the outcome is different than in question 11 where all AESs are taken into account. However, here it is also the case that Flanders scores low and Finland scores high, and that water quantity is less addressed by the AEMs. For all five

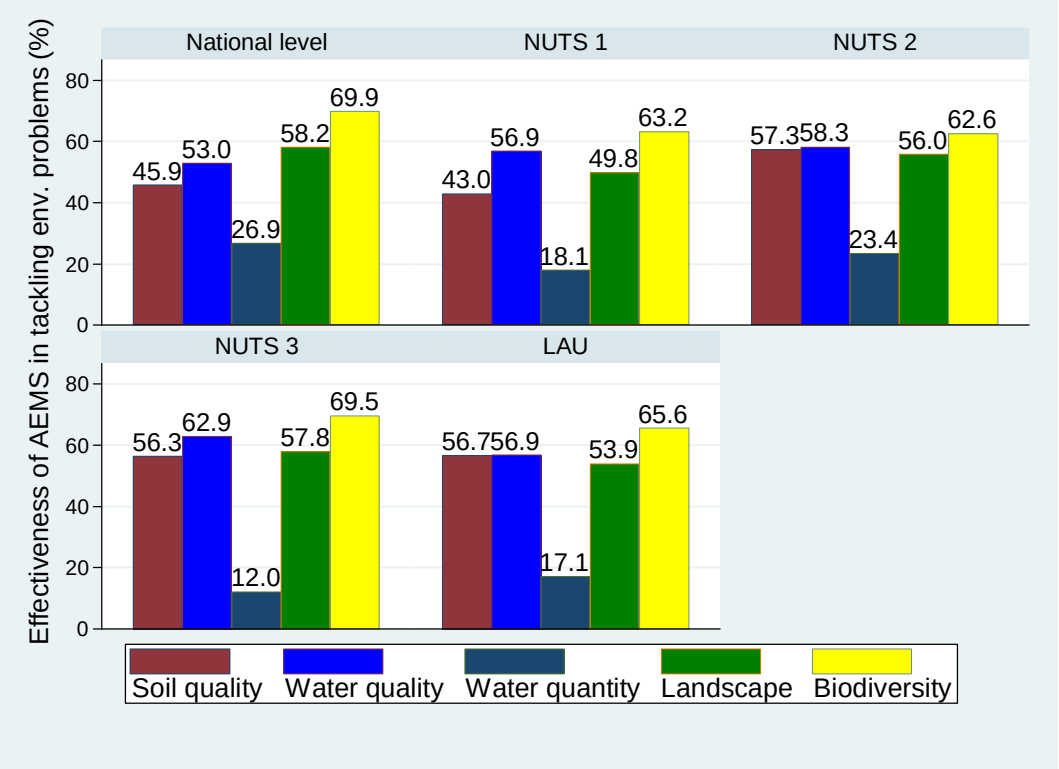
environmental categories, there is a significant difference between the countries (p-values for the five environmental categories are respectively 0.000, 0.000, 0.000, 0.000 and 0.011).

Figure 48: Effectiveness of AEMs in tackling the agri-environmental problems by case study areas



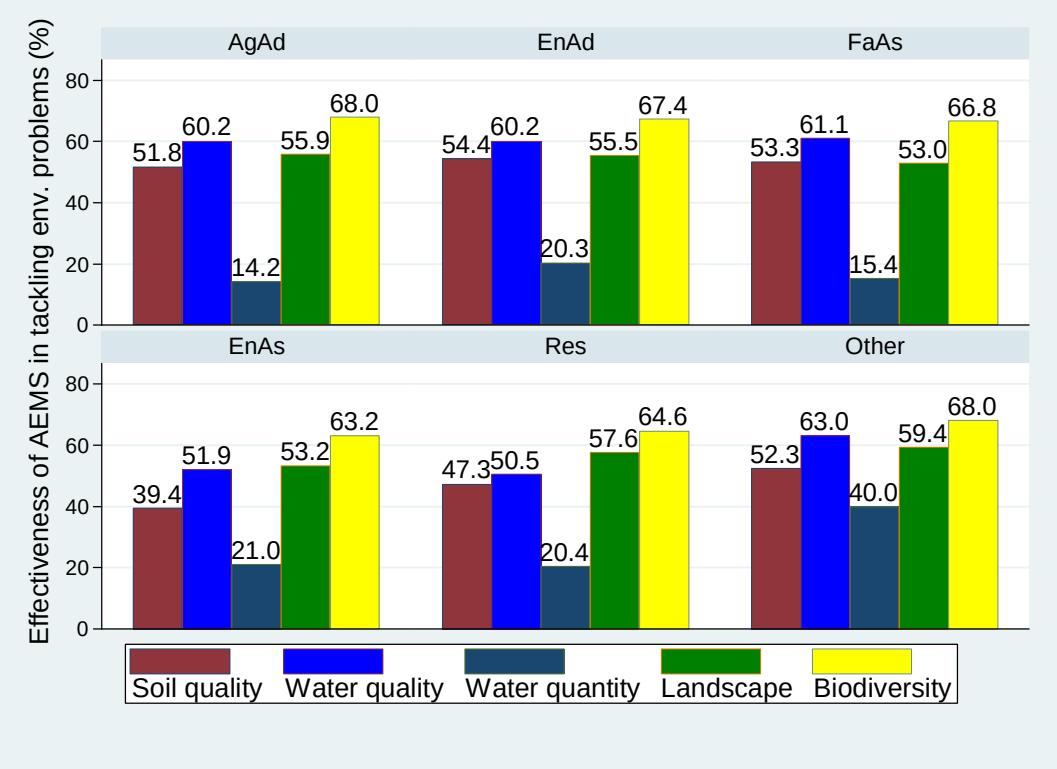
When looking at the differences between the administrative levels, there is only a significant difference for soil quality (p= 0.003) and water quantity (p= 0.017) (for water quality, landscape and biodiversity p-values are respectively 0.165, 0.269 and 0.071) (Figure 49). It seems that the lower administrative levels rather have the opinion that soil problems are effectively tackled, but on the higher levels they are more pessimistic. This may be caused by the fact that soil problems such as erosion can be very heterogeneously spread over a country, so that in some lower administrative areas the problem seems less severe or better tackled than in others. However, all actors have been asked for the effect in the same case study area and not on the effects on the actor specific administrative level.
It could be assumed that actors on the higher administrative levels people have a more general overview or systematically overestimate the problem. This could also explain the differences in the perception of water quantity, although here the situation is reversed. Here, the higher administrative levels believe the problem is adequately tackled by the AEMs, while the lower levels are more pessimistic.

Figure 49: Effectiveness of AEMs in tackling the agri-environmental problems by administrative levels



No significant differences were found between the different actor groups for soil, water quality, landscape and biodiversity (p-values are respectively p= 0.184, p= 0.161, p= 0.923 and p= 0.851) (Figure 50). Water quantity is again an exception (p= 0.028), with the group of the others perceiving the AEMs much more effective in dealing with this problem than the other actor groups. The group of others consists of tourism associations, consumer associations etc., and can thus be expected as the group with least knowledge on AEMs.

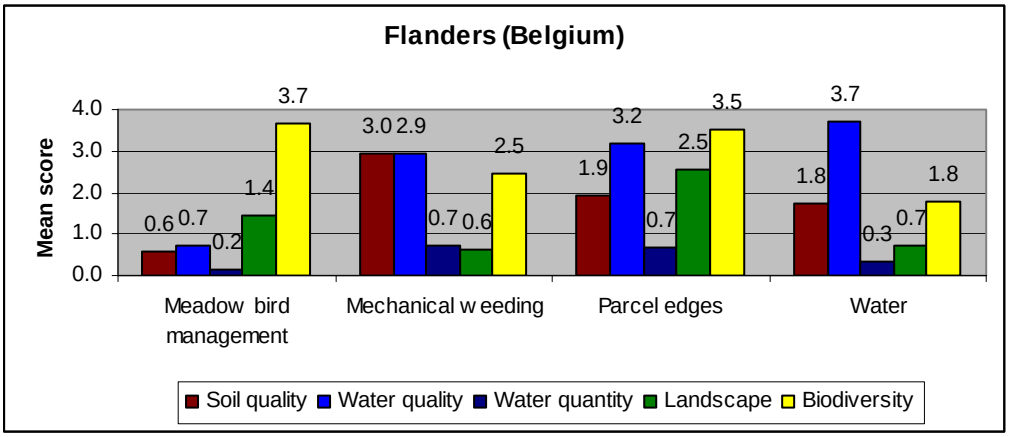
Figure 50: Effectiveness of AEMs in tackling the agri-environmental problems by actor groups



It can be questionable to add four different measures together and then assess how the measures tackle the environmental problems, as was done in the figures above. Thus, in the next figures the situation will be assessed per measure and per country. For all the questions, the legend is as follows: 1 means not effective at all and 5 means very effective. In the Figure 51, Figure 52, Figure 53, Figure 54,
Figure 55, Figure 56, Figure 57,
Figure 58, Figure 59 and Figure 60 the mean scores are given over all observations.

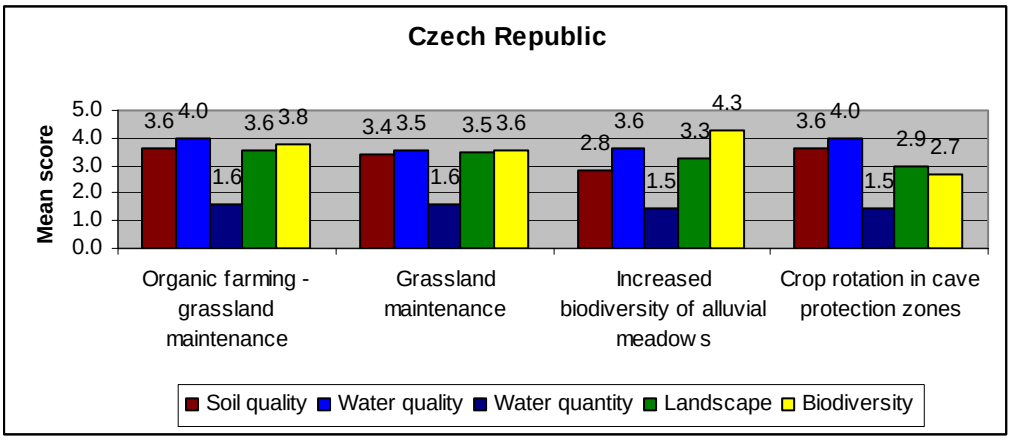
A general conclusion that can be drawn for all of the following figures: there are few measures tackling only one environmental problem. This is probably more due to the fact that the different problems are interlinked than to the fact that the measure's prescriptions are very broad. Overall it can also be concluded that landscape and biodiversity are mostly, and water quantity is least tackled by the selected measures. In Flanders, Basse-Normandie, Friesland and Northern England, the measures seem to be more targeted than in the Czech Republic, Brandenburg, Ireland and the Italian regions. The success of the measures is assessed as rather high in Finland and the Czech Republic, while in Northern England, Friesland, Basse-Normandie and Flanders the AEMs are assessed as less successful.

Figure 51: Effectiveness of AEMs in tackling the agri-environmental problems in Flanders



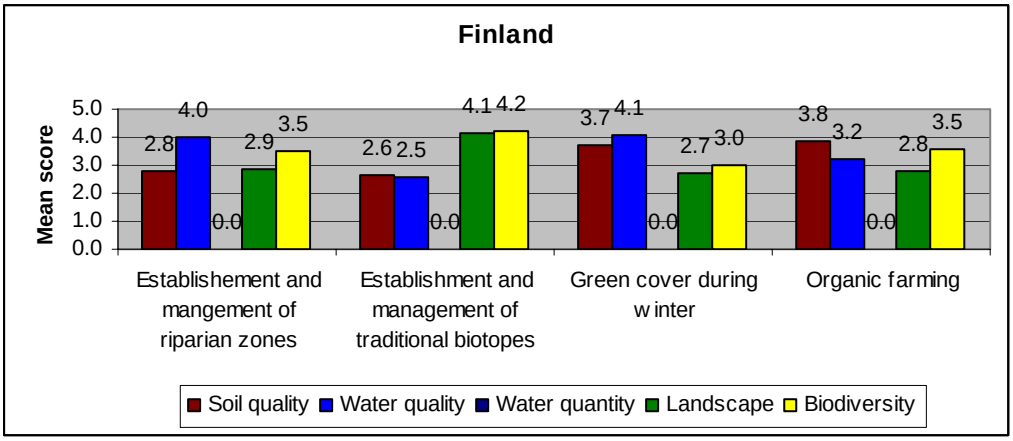
Legend: **1: not effective al all** **2: not effective** **3: partly effective** **4: effective** **5: very effective**

Figure 52: Effectiveness of AEMs in tackling the agri-environmental problems in the Czech Republic



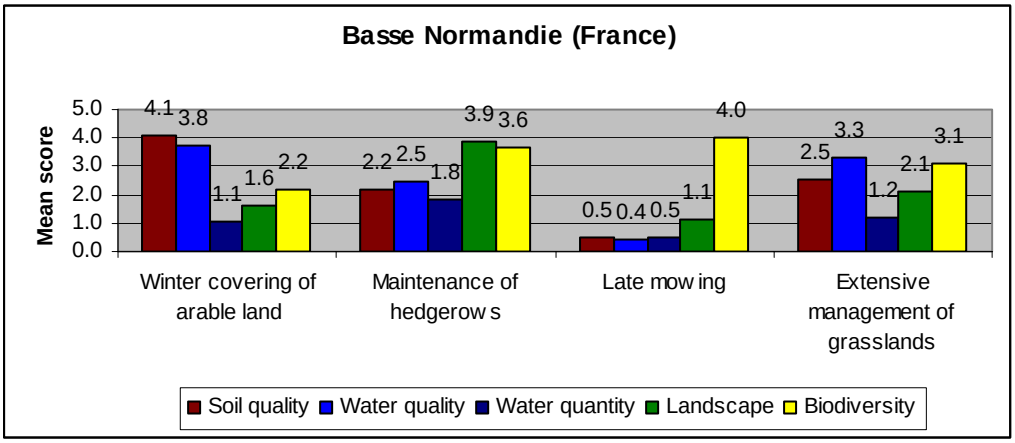
Legend: **1: not effective al all** **2: not effective** **3: partly effective** **4: effective** **5: very effective**

Figure 53: Effectiveness of AEMs in tackling the agri-environmental problems in Finland



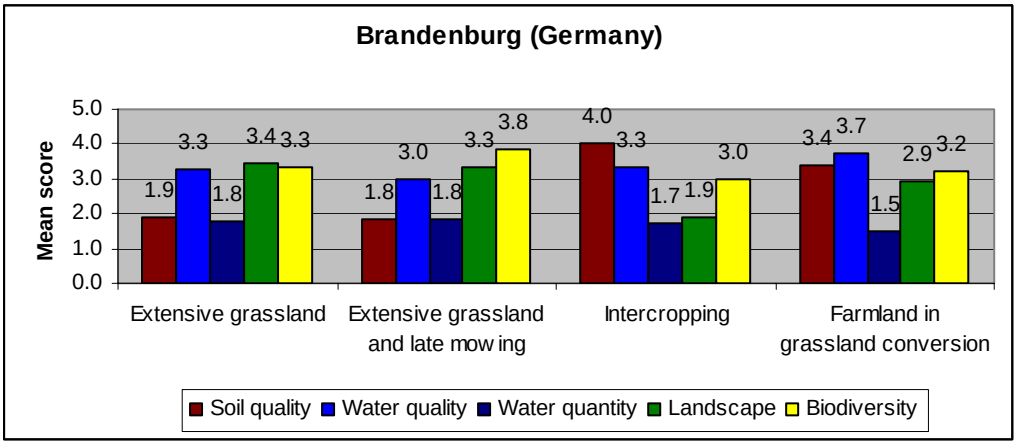
Legend: **1: not effective al all** **2: not effective** **3: partly effective** **4: effective** **5: very effective**

Figure 54: Effectiveness of AEMs in tackling the agri-environmental problems in Basse Normandie



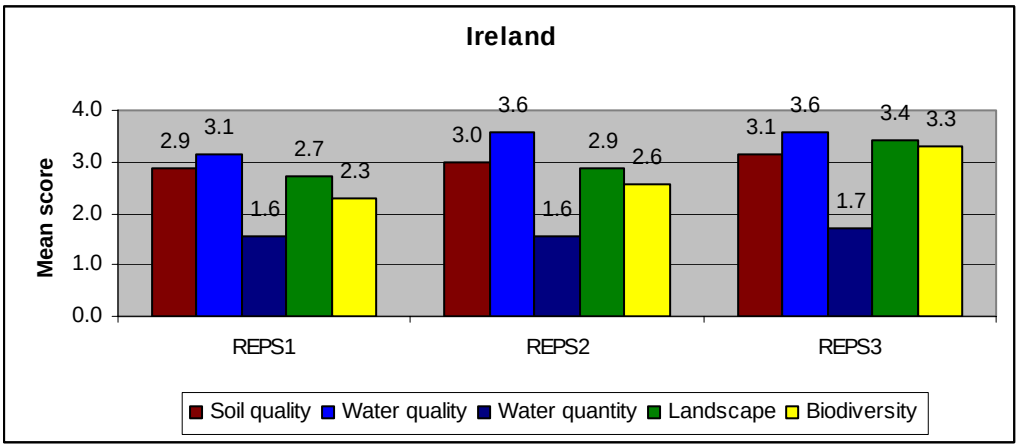
Legend: **1: not effective al all** **2: not effective** **3: partly effective** **4: effective** **5: very effective**

Figure 55: Effectiveness of AEMs in tackling the agri-environmental problems in Brandenburg



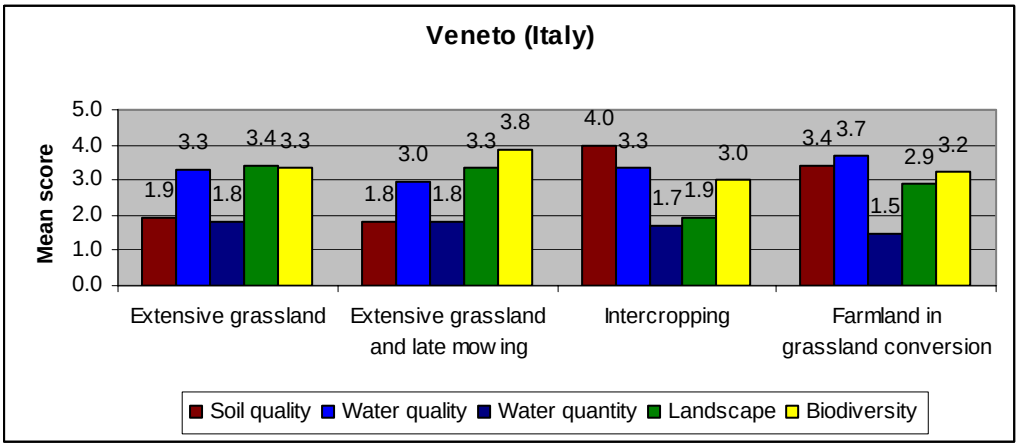
Legend: **1: not effective al all** **2: not effective** **3: partly effective** **4: effective** **5: very effective**

Figure 56: Effectiveness of AEMs in tackling the agri-environmental problems in Ireland



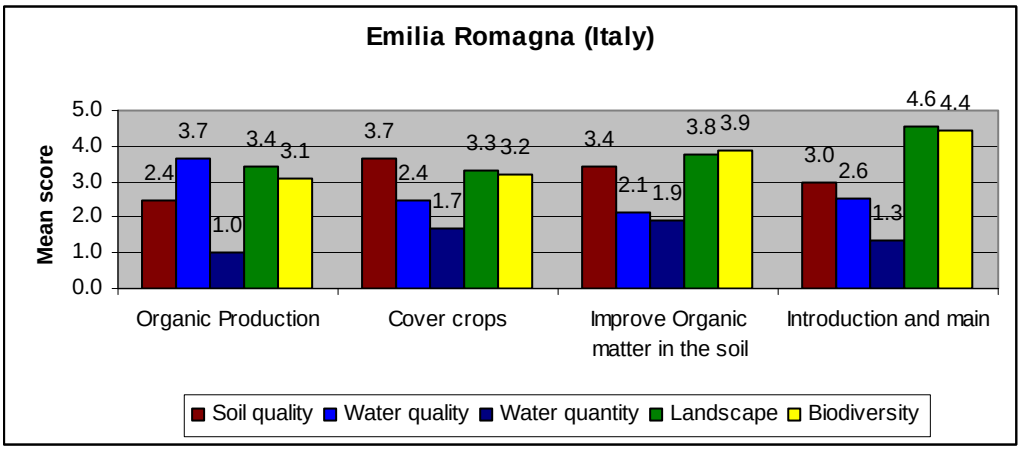
Legend: **1: not effective al all** **2: not effective** **3: partly effective** **4: effective** **5: very effective**

Figure 57: Effectiveness of AEMs in tackling the agri-environmental problems in Veneto



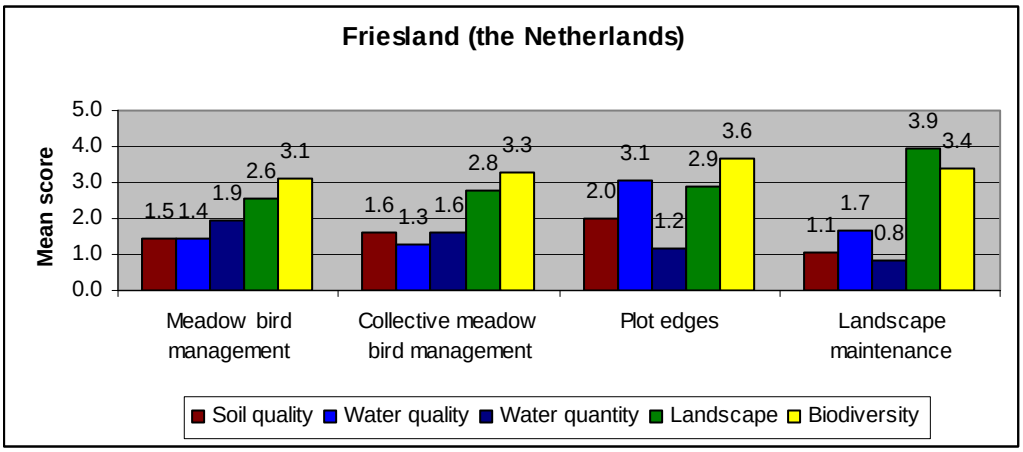
Legend: **1: not effective al all** **2: not effective** **3: partly effective** **4: effective** **5: very effective**

Figure 58: Effectiveness of AEMs in tackling the agri-environmental problems in Emilia Romagna



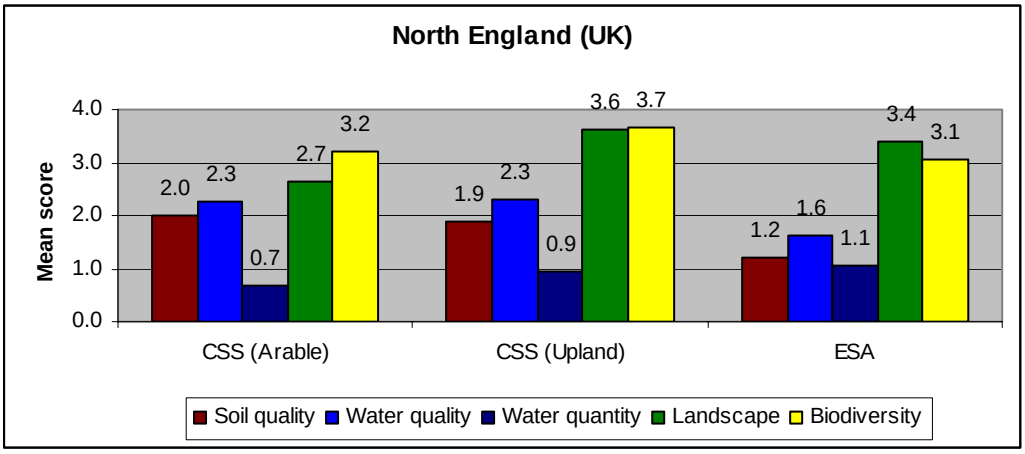
Legend: **1: not effective al all** **2: not effective** **3: partly effective** **4: effective** **5: very effective**

Figure 59: Effectiveness of AEMs in tackling the agri-environmental problems in Friesland



Legend: **1: not effective al all** **2: not effective** **3: partly effective** **4: effective** **5: very effective**

Figure 60: Effectiveness of AEMs in tackling the agri-environmental problems in North England



Legend: **1: not effective al all** **2: not effective** **3: partly effective** **4: effective** **5: very effective**

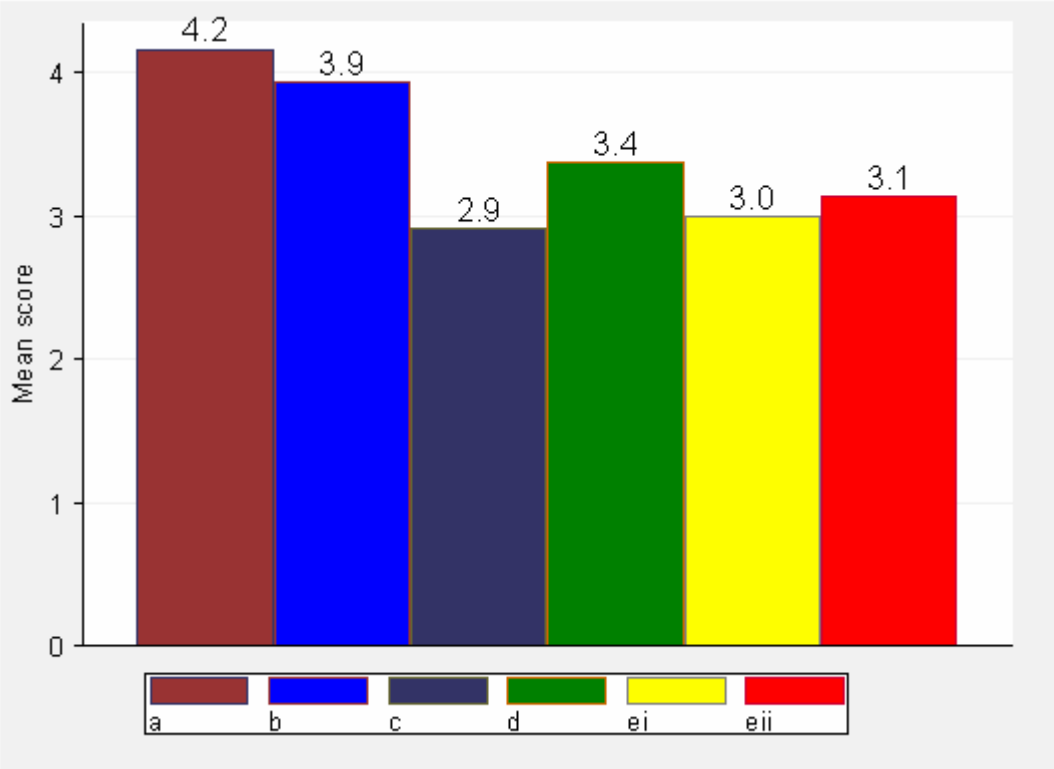
Conclusion:

There is a difference in the evaluation of AEMs between the administrative levels: Lower levels give a higher evaluation of the effect of AEMs on soil quality, while higher levels better evaluate the effect of AEMs on water quantity. There seems to be only a small number of measures that are really targeted, but there are differences between the countries with Flanders, Basse-Normandie, Friesland and North England considerably outnumbering the other regions for targeted measures. The success of the measures is assessed as comparatively high in Finland and the Czech Republic, while in Northern England, Friesland, Basse-Normandie and Flanders the respondents overall assessed them as less successful. Yet, the effectiveness of AEMs depents also on the target levels they are to achieve and which well may vary between case studies and the perceptions of actors.

5.3.3 General statements on AESs (Question 13)

In this question the respondents had to evaluate a selection of statements related to AEMs. The answering possibilities were from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The first statement is whether different agri-environmental problems are interlinked (a), the second is whether they should be addressed simultaneously in integrated measures (b), the third is whether the premium should be calculated on the basis of the agricultural production potential (depending on soil types) for different local areas (e.g. NUTS 3) (c), and the fourth one is whether the premium should be based on the seriousness of environmental problems in a specific region (e.g. NUTS 3) (d). The last two statements compare the existing AEMs to the original ones at the time of their introduction and state that they have more beneficial outcomes in economic terms (efficiency) (e-i) and in terms of environmental outcome (e-ii). In general, Figure 61 shows that for the first two statements, the agreement is comparatively strong, for the others, the respondents are more neutral. One should add that however the first statement is rather neutral and easy to agree on. The agreement on point c is remarkable low. It could have been expected that actors in a heterogeneous natural environment and agricultural production potential propose a spatially differentiated approach.

Figure 61: Agreement with several statements regarding AEMs

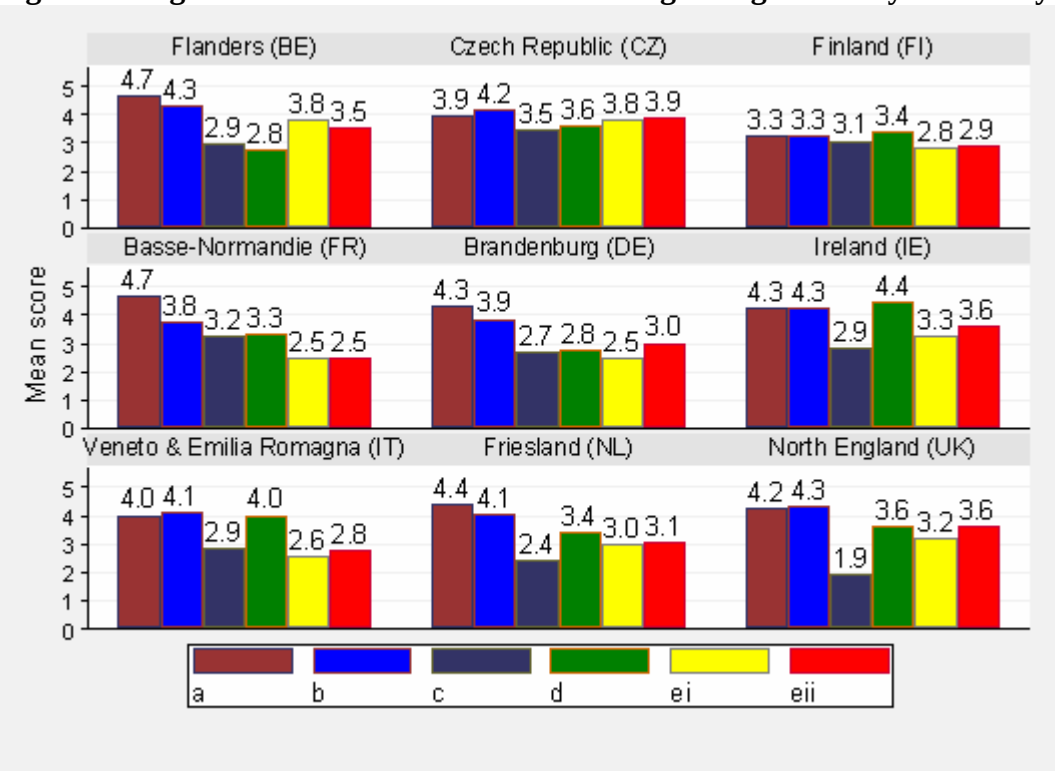


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree**
4: agree **5: strongly agree**
a: different agri-environmental problems are interlinked
b: agri-environmental problems should be addressed simultaneously in integrated measures
c: the premium should be calculated on the basis of the agricultural production potential (depending on soil types) for different local areas (e.g. NUTS 3)
d: the premium should be based on the seriousness of environmental problems in a specific region (e.g. NUTS 3)
e-i: existing AEMs compared to the original ones at the time of their introduction have more beneficial outcomes in economic terms (efficiency)
e-ii: existing AEMs compared to the original ones at the time of their introduction have more beneficial outcomes in terms of environmental outcome

In Figure 62 the differences between the case study areas are shown. For all of the statements there is a significant difference in the mean answering category between the countries (p-values for statements a to e-ii are respectively 0.000, 0.001, 0.002, 0.002, 0.000 and 0.000) In Finland and the Czech Republic, the respondents tend to agree less that the different agri-environmental problems are interlinked. This seems surprisingly because question 12 shows that these countries have more integrated measures than other countries. Finland again, together with Basse-Normandie and Brandenburg agrees less than the other regions that different agri-environmental problems should be addressed simultaneously in integrated measures. With the third statement, that the premium should be based on the local agricultural production potential, North England and Friesland do not seem to agree, whereas the other countries are quite neutral to positive for the Czech Republic. In Flanders and Brandenburg the respondents are not in favour of basing the premium on the seriousness of the environmental problems, while in Ireland and Italy there is more support for this statement. For the last two statements, the mean answer is more or less the same, so they will be discussed together. In Flanders, the Czech Republic, Ireland and North England the current

measures show a slight improvement compared to the previous ones, which indicates a small learning effect. For the other regions, the current measures are evaluated to be even worse than the original ones what is hard to explain.

Figure 62: Agreement with several statements regarding AEMs by case study areas

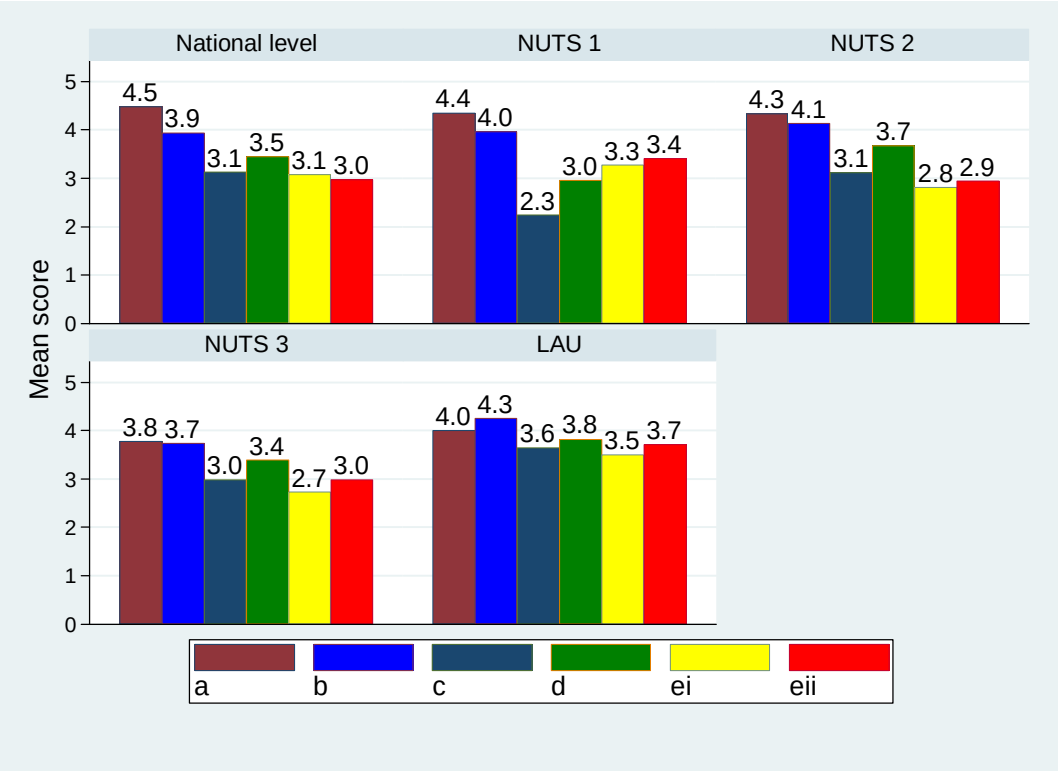


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree**
4: agree **5: strongly agree**

a: different agri-environmental problems are interlinked
b: agri-environmental problems should be addressed simultaneously in integrated measures
c: the premium should be calculated on the basis of the agricultural production potential (depending on soil types) for different local areas (e.g. NUTS 3)
d: the premium should be based on the seriousness of environmental problems in a specific region (e.g. NUTS 3)
e-i: existing AEMs compared to the original ones at the time of their introduction have more beneficial outcomes in economic terms (efficiency)
e-ii: existing AEMs compared to the original ones at the time of their introduction have more beneficial outcomes in terms of environmental outcome

Between the administrative levels shown in Figure 63 only for statement b there is no significant difference (p= 0.223). The lower administrative levels agree significantly less that the different agri-environmental problems are interlinked (p= 0.000). The NUTS 1 level clearly does not support a more flexible and locally adapted premium, whereas representatives on the LAU level do (p-values for statements c and d are respectively 0.000 and 0.047). Actors on NUTS 1 and LAU significantly believe more that the current AESs are an improvement compared to the original ones (p-values for statements e-i and e-ii are respectively 0.032 and 0.027).

Figure 63: Agreement with several statements regarding AEMs by administrative levels

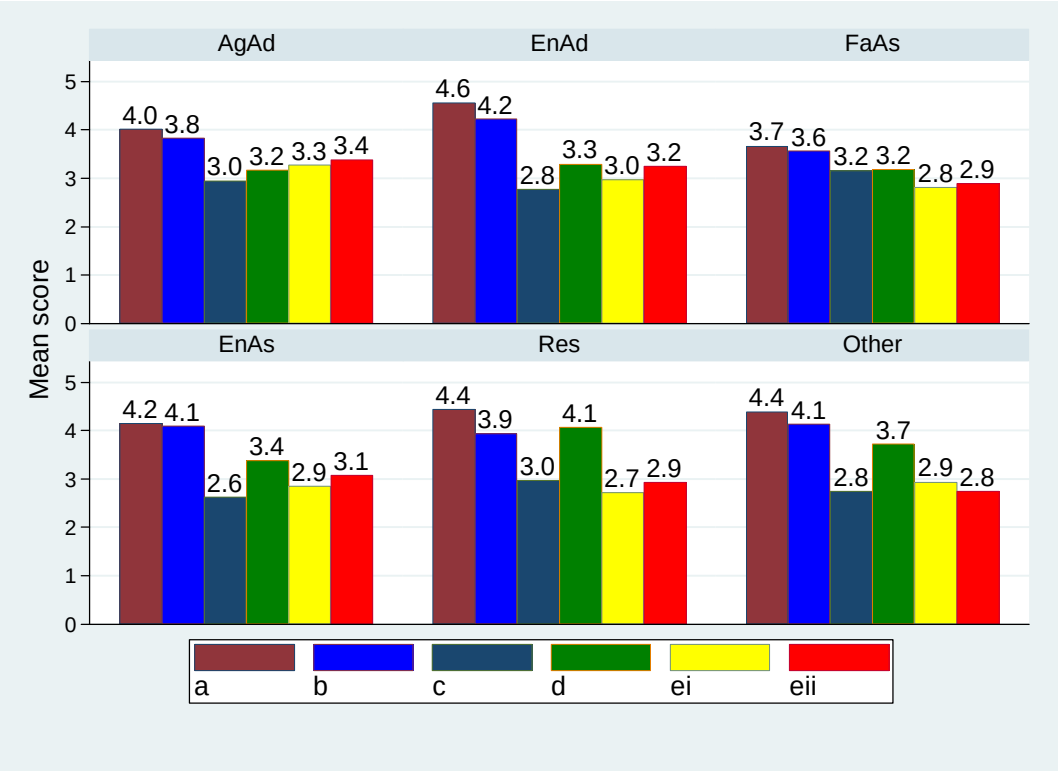


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree**
4: agree **5: strongly agree**

a: different agri-environmental problems are interlinked
b: agri-environmental problems should be addressed simultaneously in integrated measures
c: the premium should be calculated on the basis of the agricultural production potential (depending on soil types) for different local areas (e.g. NUTS 3)
d: the premium should be based on the seriousness of environmental problems in a specific region (e.g. NUTS 3)
e-i: existing AEMs compared to the original ones at the time of their introduction have more beneficial outcomes in economic terms (efficiency)
e-ii: existing AEMs compared to the original ones at the time of their introduction have more beneficial outcomes in terms of environmental outcome

Between the actor groups presented in Figure 64 for sub-questions a, b and d there is a significant difference. Representatives from farmer organisations agree less with the statements that different agri-environmental problems are interlinked and that they should be addressed simultaneously in integrated measures. Researchers, more than other actors, believe that the AEMs premium should be adjusted to the seriousness of the environmental problems in a specific region

Figure 64: Agreement with several statements regarding AEMs by actor groups



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree**
4: agree **5: strongly agree**

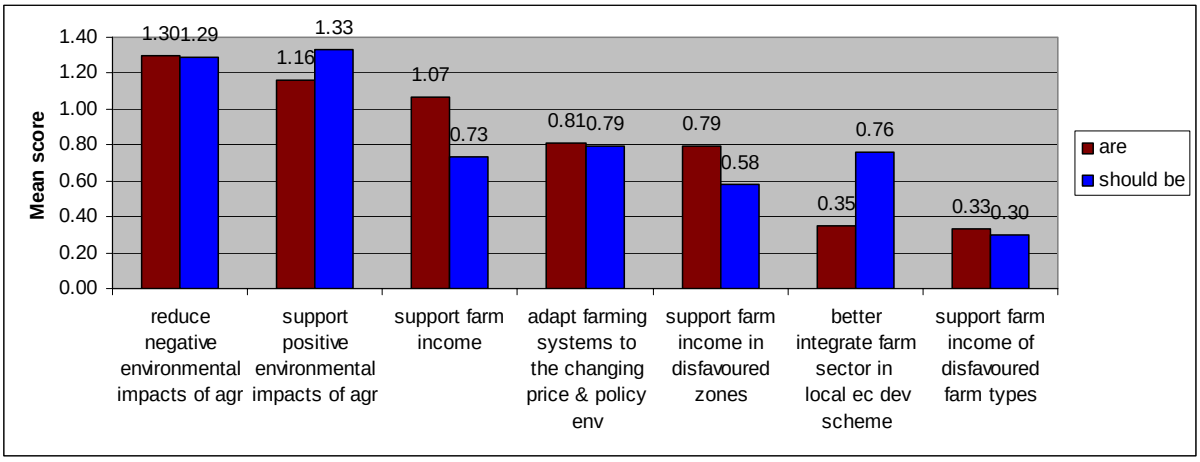
a: different agri-environmental problems are interlinked
b: agri-environmental problems should be addressed simultaneously in integrated measures
c: the premium should be calculated on the basis of the agricultural production potential (depending on soil types) for different local areas (e.g. NUTS 3)
d: the premium should be based on the seriousness of environmental problems in a specific region (e.g. NUTS 3)
e-i: existing AEMs compared to the original ones at the time of their introduction have more beneficial outcomes in economic terms (efficiency)
e-ii: existing AEMs compared to the original ones at the time of their introduction have more beneficial outcomes in terms of environmental outcome

Conclusion:
The respondents tend to agree that different agri-environmental problems are interlinked and that they should thus be addressed simultaneously by integrated measures. Only the representatives from the farmer organisations do not agree with these statements. There is not that much support from the NUTS 1 level to make the premiums more flexible by adapting them to the agricultural production potential or the seriousness of the environmental problems in a specific region. Regarding the last point, some actors are worried that those farmers having caused serious environmental problems in the past would be rewarded with higher premiums. The LAU level is more in favour of this. In Flanders, the Czech Republic, Ireland and North England the current measures show a slight improvement as compared with the previous ones, which indicates a small learning effect. For the other regions, the current measures are evaluated to be even less effective than the original ones.

5.3.4 The main objectives of AEMs (Question 14)

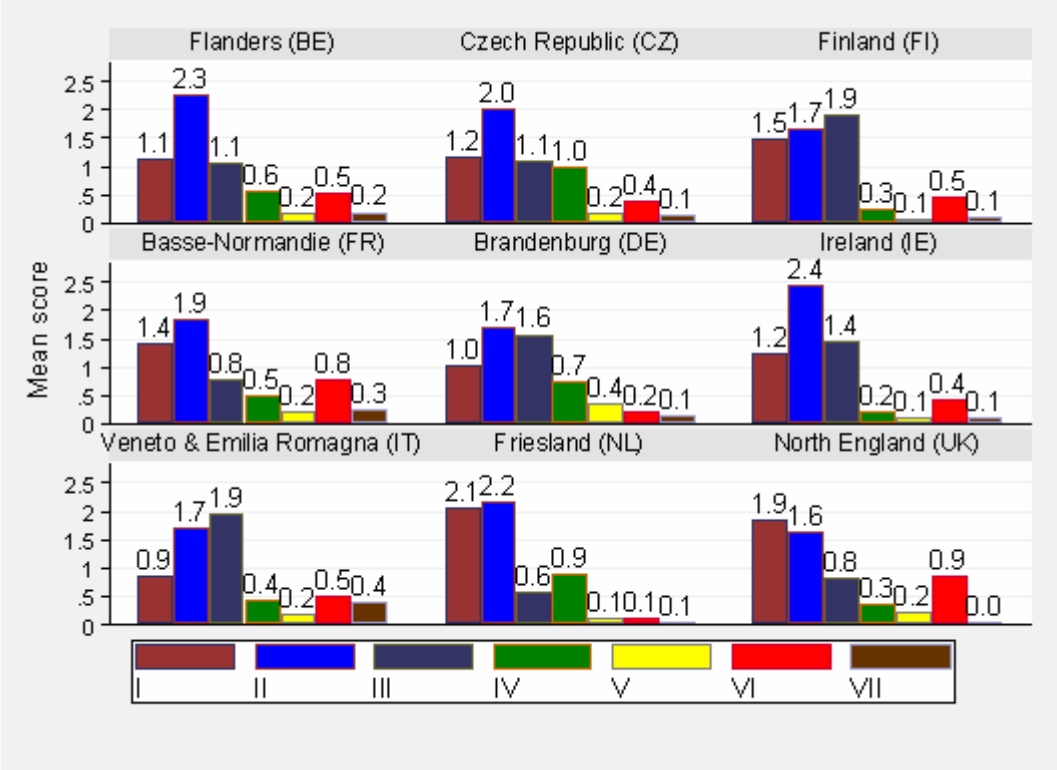
In the next question, the respondents were asked to select the three main objectives of AEMs and to indicate what should be the main objectives. Finally they had to rank them in order of importance. In Figure 65 the different objectives are represented and ranked from most important to least important. According to the respondents, the three most important objectives of AEMs are to reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture, to support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture and to support the farm income. What should be the three most important objectives does not differ so much from what is appraised as most important currently. The most important objective should be to support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture, followed by reducing the negative environmental impacts of agriculture and to adapt the farming systems to the changing price and policy environment. Only for the objective 'better integrating the farm sector in a local economic development scheme', there is a large difference between the current estimation and what should be the case. According to the respondents, this objective should be much more important than it is now.

Figure 65: What are and should be the main objectives of AEMs



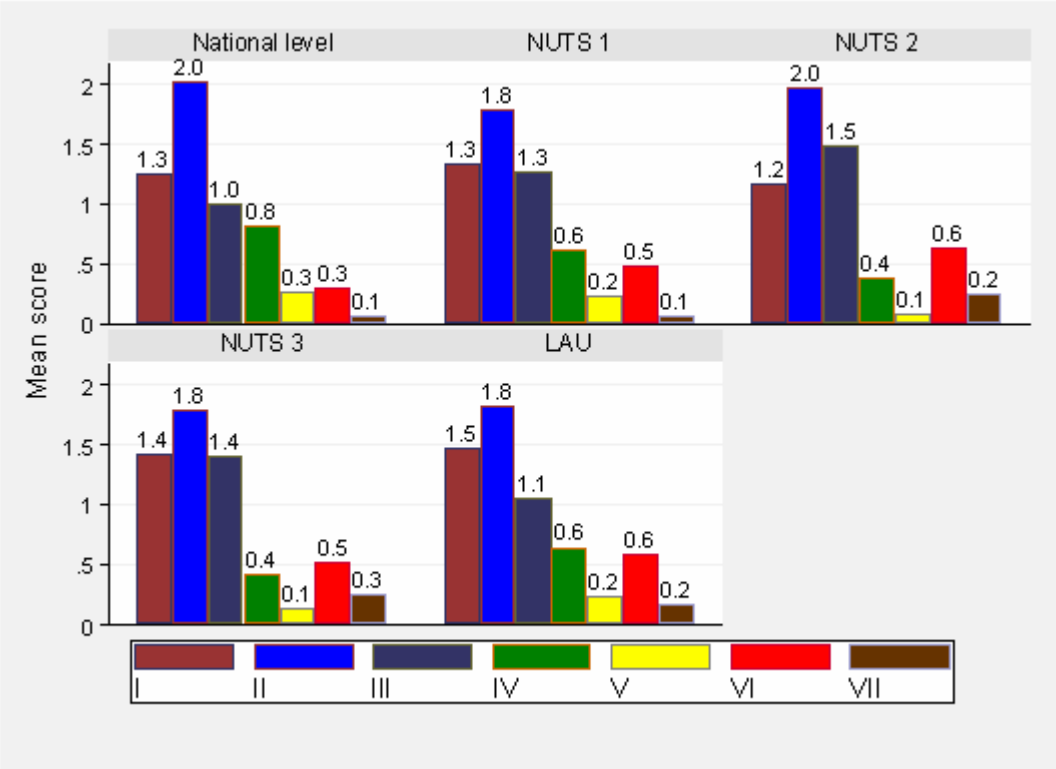
When looking at the differences between the case studies in Figure 66, they are significant for the objectives 'to support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture' (p= 0.004), 'to support the farm income' (p= 0.000), 'to support the farm income in certain disfavoured zones' (p= 0.003), 'to adapt farming systems to the changing price and policy environment' (p= 0.008). In Friesland and North England, the respondents believe that supporting the positive environmental impacts of agriculture is more important than in other countries. 'Supporting the farm income' is more important in Finland, Brandenburg and Ireland, and 'supporting the farm income in certain disfavoured zones' is believed to be more important in the Czech Republic and Friesland. 'To adapt the farming systems to the price changing and policy environment' is more important as a current objective of AEMs in Basse-Normandie and England than in other countries.

Figure 66: What ARE the main objectives of AEMs by case study areas



Legend:
I: reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture
II: support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture
III: support the farm income
IV: support the farm income in certain disfavoured zones
V: support the farm income of certain disfavoured farm types
VI: better integrate the farm sector in a local economic development scheme
VII: to adapt farming systems to the changing price and policy environment

Figure 67: What ARE the main objectives of AEMs by administrative levels

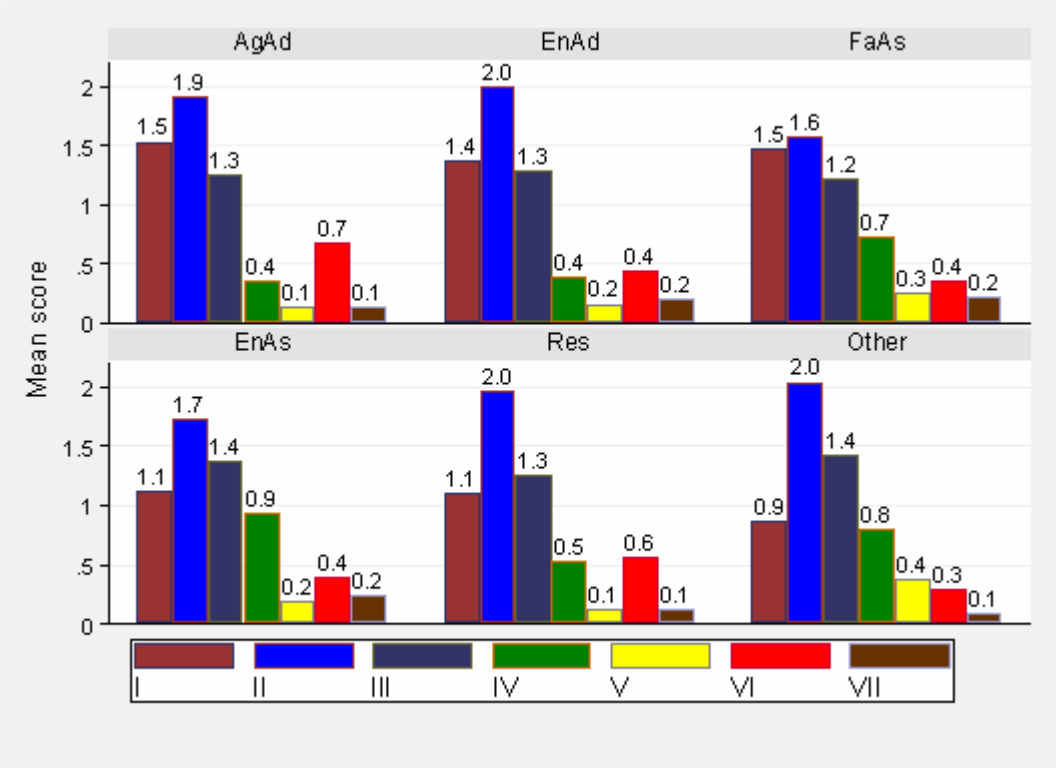


Legend:
I: reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture
II: support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture
III: support the farm income
IV: support the farm income in certain disfavoured zones
V: support the farm income of certain disfavoured farm types
VI: better integrate the farm sector in a local economic development scheme
VII: to adapt farming systems to the changing price and policy environment

Between the actor groups shown in Figure 68 only for the objective 'to support the farm income in certain disfavoured zones' there is a significant difference in opinion ($p= 0.006$)[8]. Both administrations and the researchers believe this is less important than the farmer organisations, environmental organisations and other actor groups.

[8] The p-values for objectives I, II, III, V, VI and VII are respectively 0.110, 0.389, 0.988, 0.374, 0.148 and 0.684.

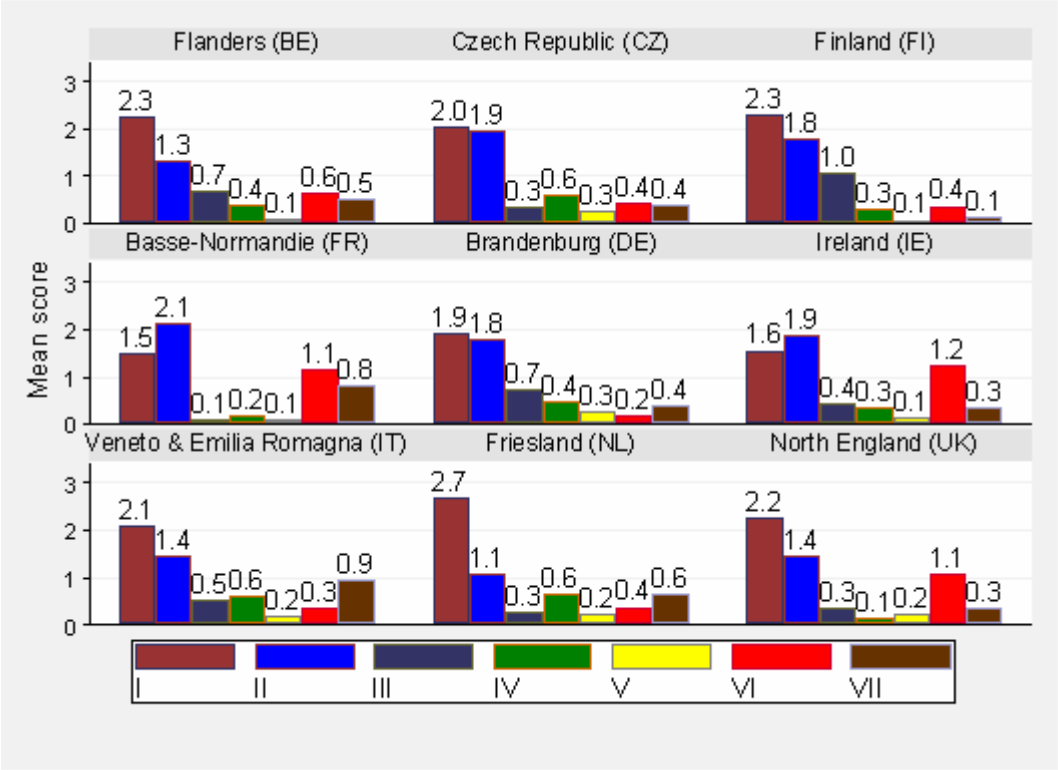
Figure 68: What ARE the main objectives of AEMs by actor groups



Legend:
I: reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture
II: support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture
III: support the farm income
IV: support the farm income in certain disfavoured zones
V: support the farm income of certain disfavoured farm types
VI: better integrate the farm sector in a local economic development scheme
VII: to adapt farming systems to the changing price and policy environment

Concerning the second part of the question asking what should be the main objectives of AEMs, there is a significant difference in opinion between the countries for practically all objectives but two, which are 'to support the farm income in certain disfavoured zones' (p= 0.094) and 'to support the farm income of certain disfavoured farm types' (p= 0.497). The respondents in Friesland are significantly more in favour of the objective 'to support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture' than in the other countries, especially in France this objective is not that popular (p= 0.001). 'To reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture' should be an important objective according to the respondents in the Czech Republic, Finland, Basse-Normandie, Brandenburg and Ireland and is considered to be less important in Flanders, the Italian regions, Friesland and North England (p= 0.010). 'To support the farm income' is considered to deserve more importance in Finland, Flanders and Brandenburg (p=0.000), 'to adapt farming systems to the changing price and policy environment' is considerately more important in Basse-Normandie, Ireland and North England (p= 0.000) and 'to better integrate the farm sector in a local economic development scheme' gets more support in Basse-Normandie and the Italian Regions (p= 0.000).

Figure 69: What SHOULD BE the main objectives of AEMs by case study areas

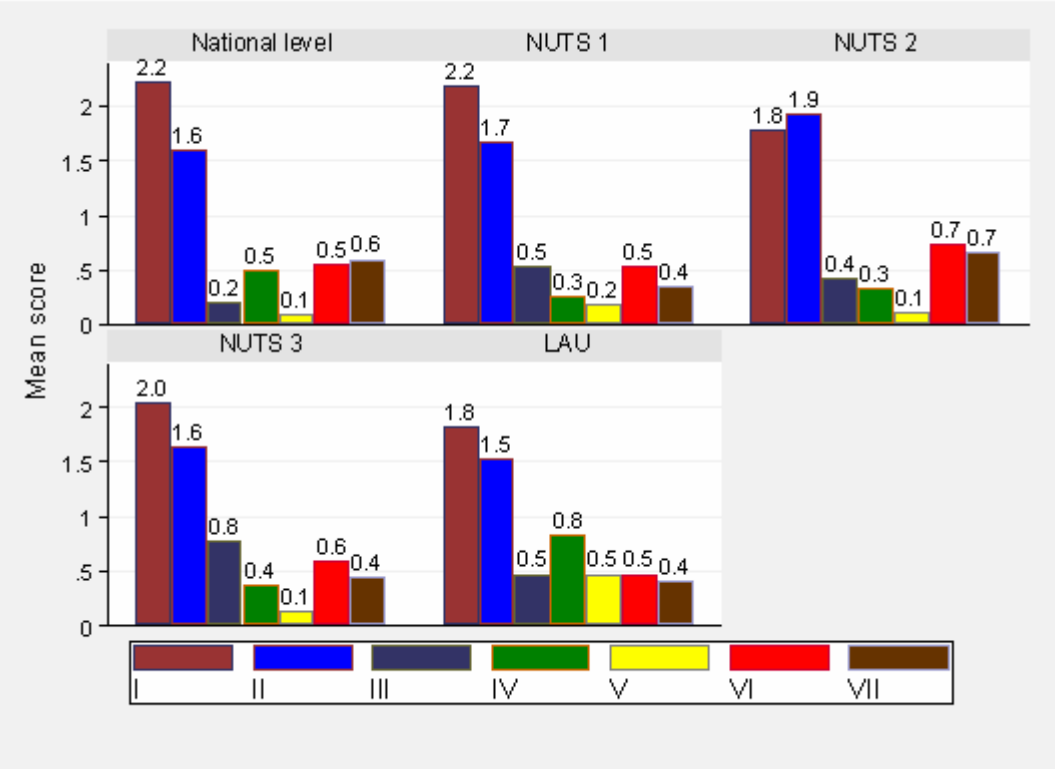


Legend:
I: reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture
II: support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture
III: support the farm income
IV: support the farm income in certain disfavoured zones
V: support the farm income of certain disfavoured farm types
VI: better integrate the farm sector in a local economic development scheme
VII: to adapt farming systems to the changing price and policy environment

The different administrative levels presented in Figure 70 only evaluate the objective 'to support the farm income' differently (p=0.004).[9] On NUTS 3 level, supporting the farm in income is considered to be much more important as an objective for AEMs than on the National level.

[9] The p-values for objectives I, II, IV, V, VI and VII are respectively 0.204, 0.598, 0.082, 0.052, 0.779 and 0.263.

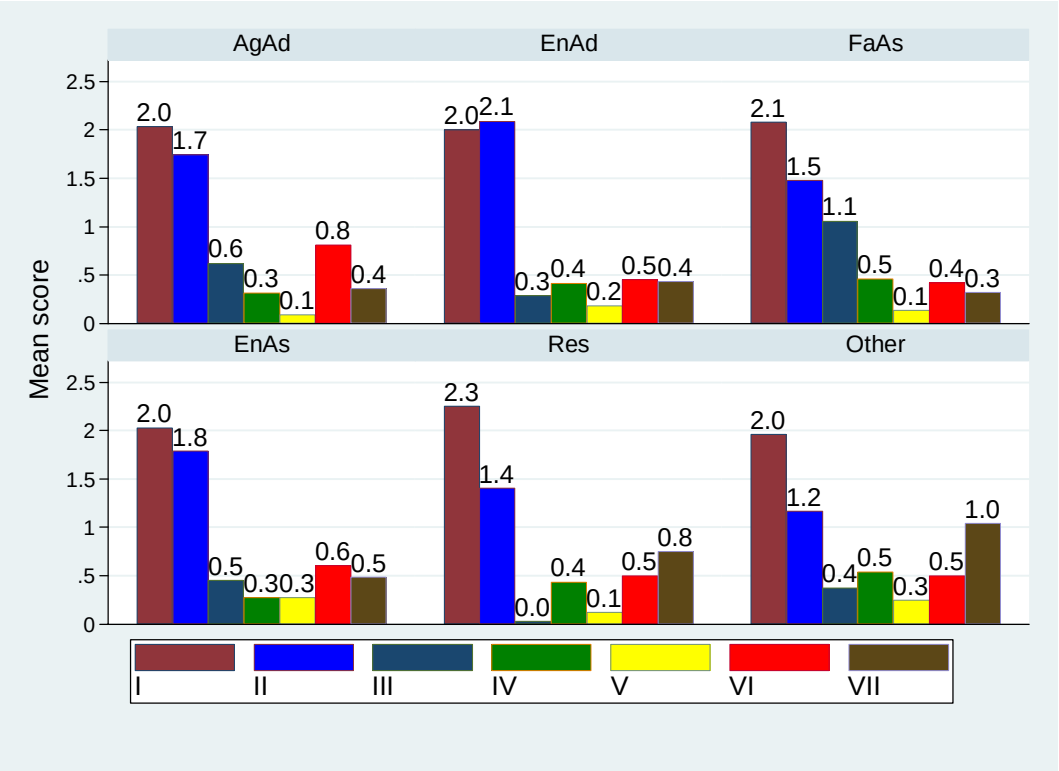
Figure 70: What SHOULD BE the main objectives of AEMs by administrative level



Legend:
I: reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture
II: support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture
III: support the farm income
IV: support the farm income in certain disfavoured zones
V: support the farm income of certain disfavoured farm types
VI: better integrate the farm sector in a local economic development scheme
VII: to adapt farming systems to the changing price and policy environment

As can be concluded from Figure 71 there are significant differences in opinion between the actor groups for the objectives ‘to reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture’ (p= 0.009), ‘to support the farm income’ (p=0.000) and ‘to better integrate the farm sector in a local economic development scheme’ (p=0.003). To reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture should be an important objective for the environmental administration, whereas the farmer organisations and researchers believe it should be less important. To support the farm income should be a significantly more important objective of AEMs for farmer organisations. Researchers and the group others propose more than the other actor groups that better integrating the farm sector in a local economic development scheme should be an important objective of AEMs.

Figure 71: What SHOULD BE the main objectives of AEMs by actor groups



Legend:
I: reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture
II: support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture
III: support the farm income
IV: support the farm income in certain disfavoured zones
V: support the farm income of certain disfavoured farm types
VI: better integrate the farm sector in a local economic development scheme
VII: to adapt farming systems to the changing price and policy environment

Conclusion:
There seems to be an overall agreement that the main objectives of AEMs are, and should continuously be, to reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture and support the positive ones. With the view to the current situation, the environmental administration favours reducing the negative environmental impacts of agriculture, while the farmer organisations more than the other groups emphasise the farm-income support effect of AEMs and researchers support more strongly the objective of better integrating the farm sector in a local economic development scheme. Most actors – even the environmental associations – prefer the general support of farm incomes stronger than the support of farms in certain disfavoured zones.

5.3.5 Additional open comments on assessment of the agri-environmental schemes (Question 15)

Respondents had manifold comments on the agri-environmental schemes in their regions. In parts they are very detailed. Especially in Flanders there was rich commenting, but also in the French case study. Some respondents from different countries ask what is finally being achieved with their AESs. In other words, they wonder at, what the outcomes of the measures are and whether those outcomes are desirable. In Friesland this is a concern of a researcher and in the Czech Republic of the agricultural administration. In the French case study

environmental administration and others are pointing at this problem, whereas in Finland environmental associations and administration are concerned.
Nevertheless, there are complaints that measures could be more targeted by the German and Finnish environmental administration, by an Irish researcher and also French agricultural administration and respondents of the group "others". Relating to this the Czech case study is a special case. Czech respondents of all actor groups mainly mention the broad brushed horizontal approach as a problematic aspect of the existing schemes. However, not all Czech respondents are against such approaches, because environmental problems are ill defined and the measures fulfil their income transfer function. AESs as means for income support are being criticised in other case studies. The environmental administration in North England, a respondent of organic farmers in Italy and Finnish environmental administration and associations point in particular at this issue.
Several respondents suggest that a local area production potential approach to AEMs payment determination is of limited use. In the German case officers of the agricultural and environmental administration are of such an opinion. An officer of the latter remarks that this approach lacks consideration of varying costs structures and the fact that the CAP caused environmental problems, particularly in agriculturally weak areas. Such a production potential approach would be difficult to organise suggests an officer of the agricultural administration in Flanders. Also respondents of the group of others suggest that it would be difficult to put in practice. A Flemish respondent of the farmers' associations agrees and adds that there are even differences between production potentials of farms in a single area. AESs would be made unnecessary complex with such approaches as an officer of the agricultural administration in the Netherlands case study argues.
However, a researcher in Friesland thinks, though the local production potential approach is a reasonable solution, payment according to benefits would be better. The latter is also the opinion of Finnish respondents of the environmental associations and administration. In North England next to the environmental administration, the environmental associations are in particular in favour of reward systems according to benefits. However, respondents of the environmental administration, the group of "others" and a tourism association in Flanders warn that payment based on benefits may in fact reward the former causers of environmental problems.
Pointing in a different direction, officers of the agricultural administration in Friesland and North England would like to increase the notion of farmers as suppliers of public goods. A Flemish environmental association also suggests this. In addition, respondents in Italy and France would like to link AEMs to marketing of quality farm products.
Implementation problems with AESs are raised in many case studies. In particular, respondents from all actor groups and levels in North England, the Czech Republic, Flanders, Basse-Normandie and Friesland are concerned with implementation obstacles. However, a respondent from Friesland argues that the situation has now improved due the new schemes.
AES management suggestions to increase adoption of measures and implementation are particularly made in North England and Basse-Normandie. In this context a major complaint of respondents of the Italian case study is that AESs policies lack broader planned approaches. This is also emphasised by "others" of North England, Basse-Normandie and the Netherlands case study and environmental associations in Flanders. Claims for simpler AESs are particularly apparent in Flanders, where the agricultural administration considers this important. Also French respondents of the "others" group and especially lower levels of the "others" in Flanders would like to see more simplification of AESs.
Insufficient financial means for AESs are a problem emphasised by French "others" and respondents of the Italian case study.
These are some of the major remarks of respondents on current AESs. More detailed accounts with additional aspects of AESs can be found in Appendix A 3.

Conclusion:
The state of existing agri-environmental schemes and measures is particularly extensively commented upon by Flemish and French respondents. There is a great diversity of comments. Major topics are the effectiveness of measures and the precision of measures in targeting problems which both are often considered insufficient. The local production potential approach is mostly seen as impracticable to determine payment levels. Some suggest that it would be better to pay according to benefits of measures, though there is also some criticism that such approaches may reward those who caused environmental problems. Many respondents mention implementation problems, which are also in parts related to the lack of broader strategies.

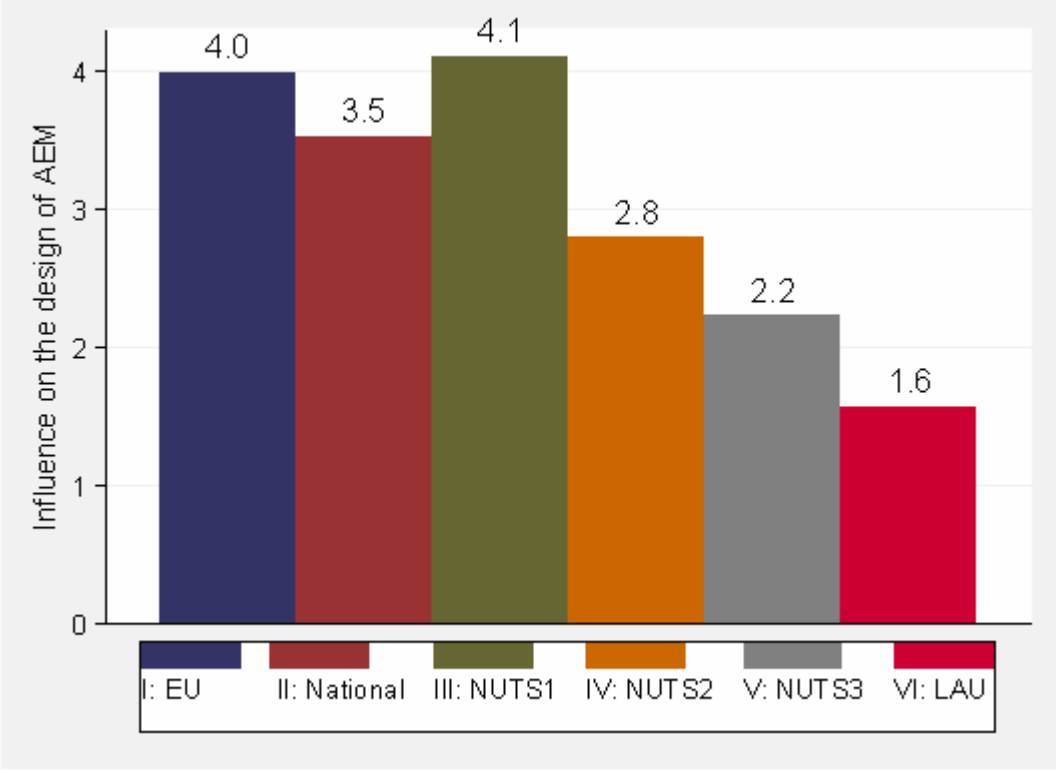
5.4 Assessment of participation, organisation/administration structure and exchange of information (Part D)

5.4.1 The influence of political levels on the design of AEMs (Question 16a,b)

In the first question of question 16 actors have been asked, to what degree actors from which political levels do influence the design of AEM according to their knowledge (16a). In the second part same actors should give their meaning which political levels should influence the design of AEM (16b). In the following first we present the current assessment of influence and add than the proposed change of influence[10]. The focus has been on EU co-financed measures, only. The interviewees had to assess the influence of the different levels from 1 (no influence) to 5 (serious influence).

Actors perceived that actors have the highest influence on NUTS 1-, EU- and National level, as Figure 72 suggests. Important to note is that the influence at NUTS 1 level has been assessed highest and is remarkably greater than at the national level. Also of interest may be the stepwise decrease of influence from NUTS 2 level downwards.

Figure 72: Influence on the design of AEM



Legend: **1: no influence** **2: little influence** **3: influence** **4: high influence** **5: very high influence**

Figure 73 illustrates the proposed change of influence on the design of AEM. These values a generated by subtracting the results of question 16a from those of question 16b.
Overall the results presented in Figure 73 are pointing in a single direction. The lower administrative levels should, according to the actors, gain more influence in the design of AEMs, while the higher administrative levels should loose influence. However, it appears that

[10] The change is calculated out of the difference from question 16b and 16a

the lower administrative level should gain more than the higher administrative level loose. If the influence of NUTS 2 and 3 would be changed both levels would have more or less the same degree of influence. Also of interest is that NUTS 1 and LAU should gain influence to a more or less similar degree. The NUTS 1 level, which has been considered as generally highly to very influential, is being proposed to reduce influence only by a minor degree.

Figure 73: Proposed change of influence on the design of AEM

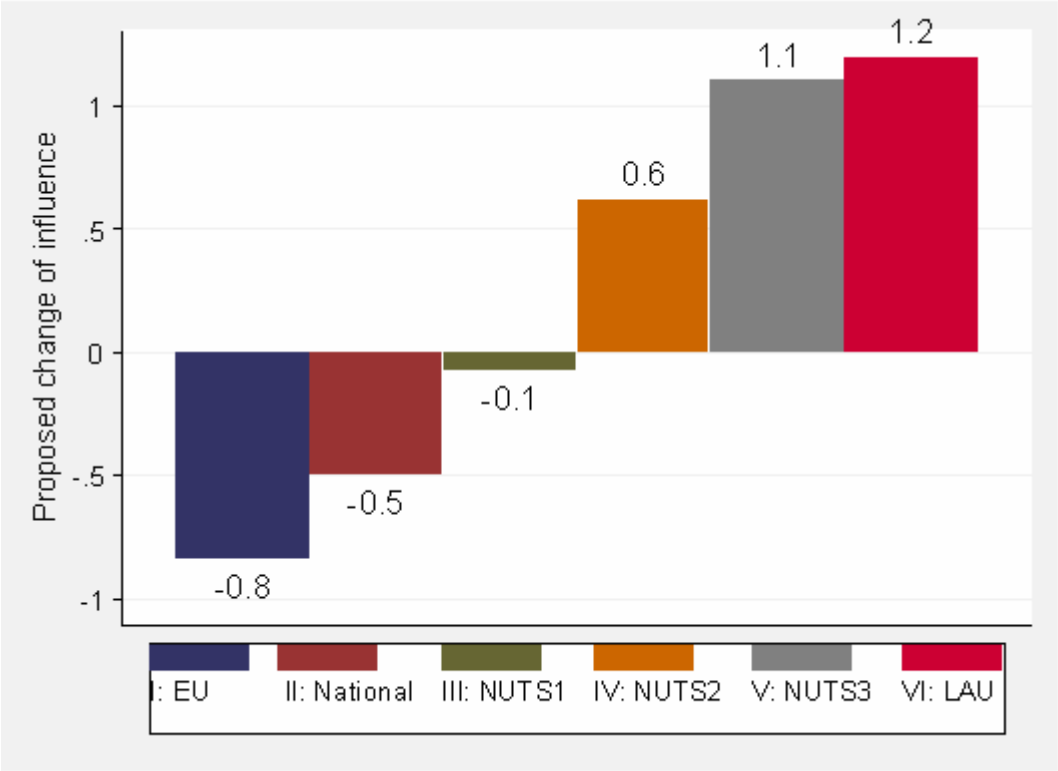
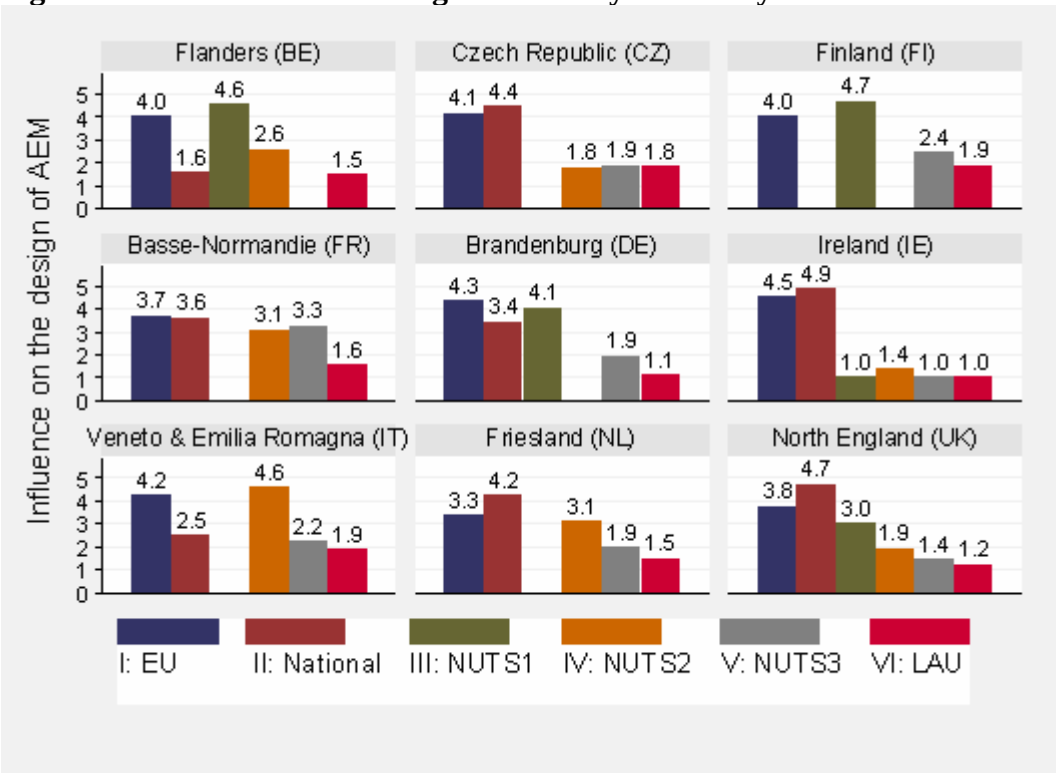


Figure 74 shows again that actors in most case study areas perceive the highest influence on EU, National and NUTS 1 level. However, there are two exceptions: France, where NUTS 2 and 3 have also a relevant influence and Italy, which is dominated by NUTS 2. Influence of actors at NUTS 3 and LAU level is generally considered lowest, with NUTS 3 commonly being more influential than LAU. The influence at NUTS 1 and NUTS 2 levels is particularly mixed between countries. In many case studies, encompassing the Czech Republic, Basse-Normandie, the Italian case study and Friesland, the NUTS 1 provides no influence for actors while it has been considered to have large impacts in the remaining countries, except Ireland. Ireland stands out of the pattern for another reason, since here the national is the most dominant level, while at all levels below only minor influence can be exerted. The influence at the EU level seems to be assessed among actors as comparatively similar between countries.

Figure 74: Influence on the design of AEM by case study areas

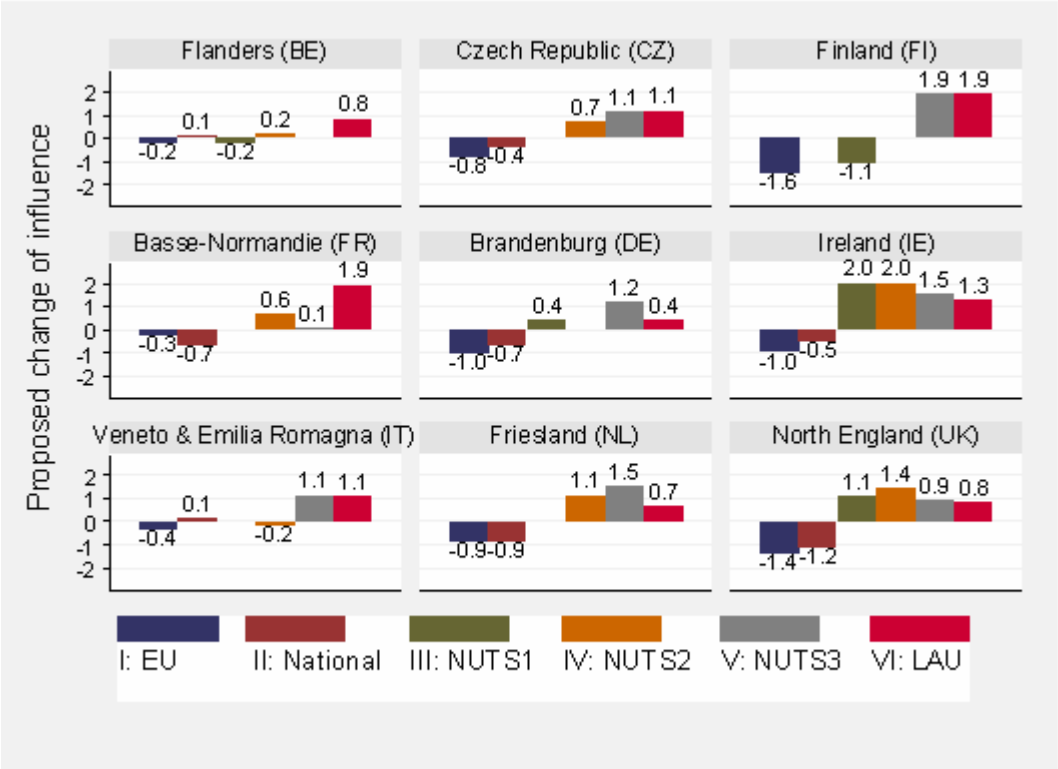


Legend: **1: no influence** **2: little influence** **3: influence** **4: high influence** **5: very high influence**

According to the results depicted in Figure 75 the actors in Flanders are more or less satisfied with the degree of influence of the administrative levels, except the LAU level, where an increase is desired. Actors of all other countries propose larger changes although at different levels. Generally, however, actors of all countries demand an increase of influence of the lower administrative levels. For NUTS 1 and LAU there are generally increases proposed, although degrees of difference between the levels vary between countries. Influence of NUTS 2 is proposed to increase in all cases except the Italian case study, Brandenburg and Finland. Especially Ireland and to a lesser degree also North England and Friesland should according to actors increase the influence of NUTS 2.

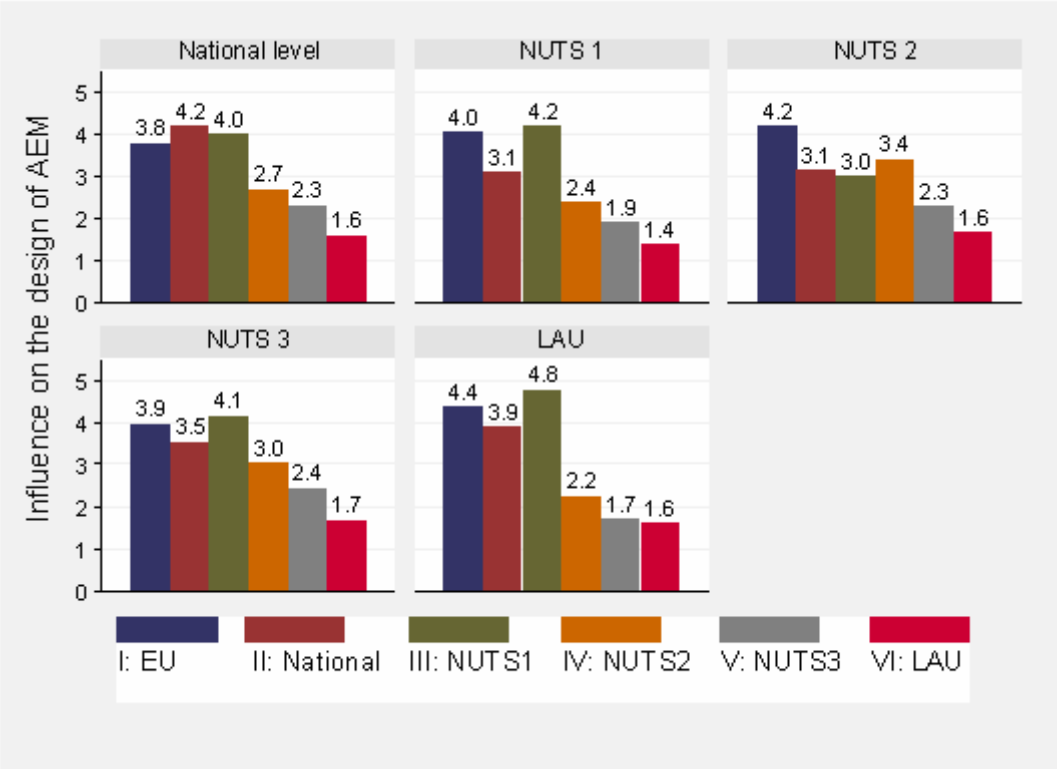
Actors in all countries demand a decreasing influence of the EU, although degrees differ here. Particularly actors in Flanders, Basse-Normandie and the Italian case study demand a comparatively low decrease of EU influence. Generally actors of all countries agree that the national level should have less influence on AEM design. However, actors in the Italian case study and Flanders demand a slight increase of national influence.

Figure 75: Proposed change of influence on the design of AEM by case study areas



The pattern of influence on the design of AEM by administrative levels shown in Figure 76 resembles broadly the aggregated country pattern of actors' influence depicted in Figure 74. In general all administrative levels observe a downward trend of influence on the design of measures from NUTS 2 to LAU. Between EU and NUTS 1 the pattern is more scattered. While the influence of the EU is perceived within a narrow range from 3.8 to 4.4, the ranges of the other levels are larger. The NUTS 1 level is being considered as highly influential by all administrative levels with the exception of NUTS 2. Also to note is that the LAU considers the NUTS 3 as having a comparatively similar influence as itself. This assessment differs from the other levels. All administrative levels see themselves generally as more influential as actors from other level do. Either actors systematically overestimate the influence of their own level or underestimate the influence of other levels.

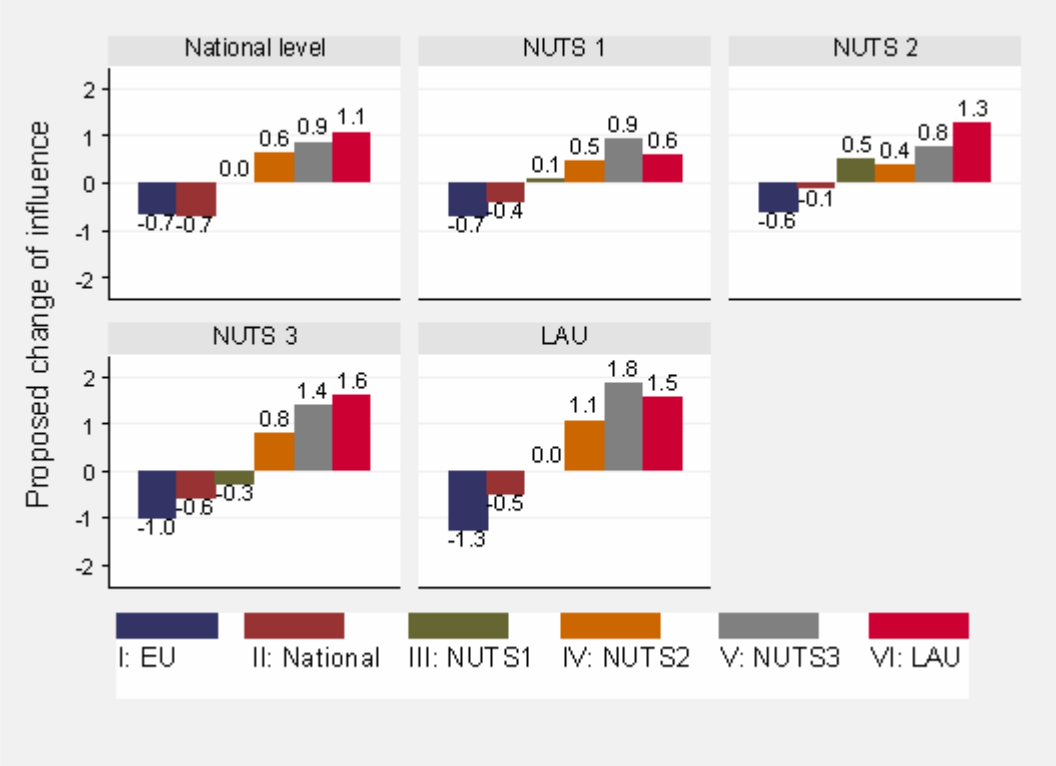
Figure 76: Influence on the design of AEM by administrative levels



Legend: **1: no influence** **2: little influence** **3: influence** **4: high influence** **5: very high influence**

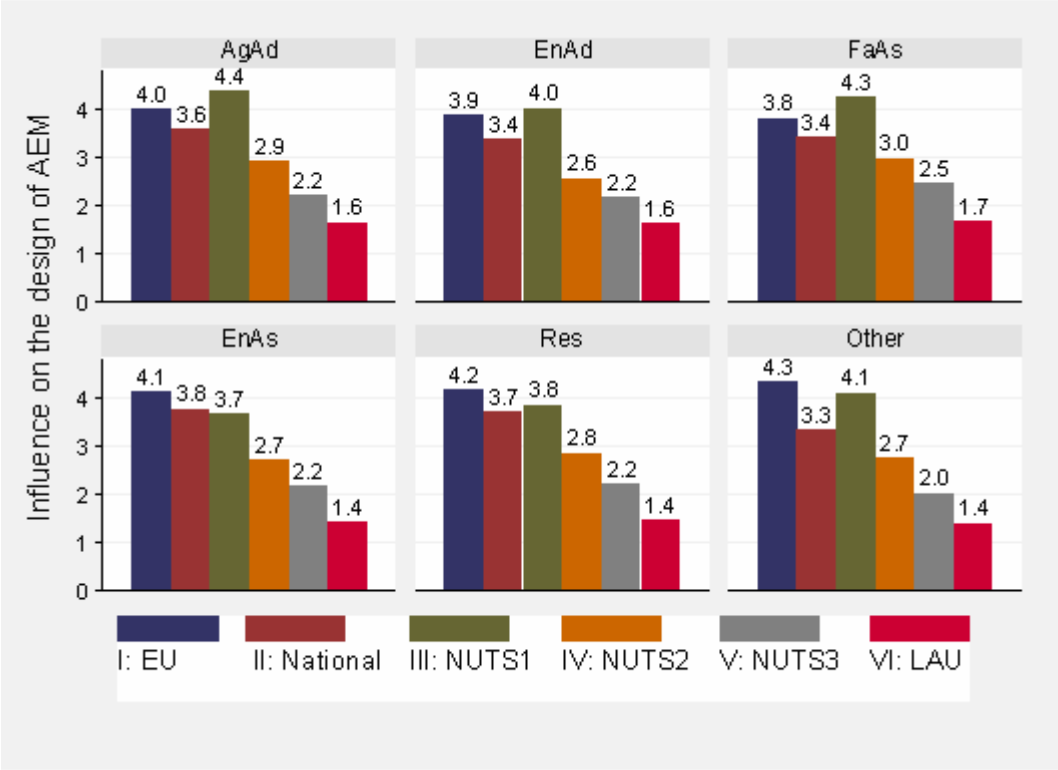
Figure 77 depicts the proposed change in influence AEMs design of administrative levels demanded by administrative levels. The patterns of proposed change in influence are rather similar for all administrative levels. With the exception of the national level administration, all administration levels like the influence of their administrative level to be increased. However, degrees vary and tend to follow the overall pattern of demanded change of influence. All administrative levels proposed a lower influence of the national level, although the NUTS 2 level administration only by a minor degree. In addition, a lower influence of the EU is being proposed across the board. The lower levels of administration tend to favour an increase of their influence stronger than the higher levels. The NUTS 2 level favours a particularly high increase of influence of the NUTS 1 level. This is a comparable pattern to the desire of the LAU level to increase the influence of NUTS 3 to extents larger than its own and as other levels demand. Also the NUTS 3 level demands a comparably high increase of influence of the LAU level. Yet, in particular, it stands out as the only administrative level demanding a decrease of NUTS 1 influence.

Figure 77: Proposed change of influence on the design of AEM by administrative level



The actor groups presented in Figure 78 consider the influence on the design of AEM comparatively similar to the administrative levels. The downward pattern of influence from NUTS 2 to LAU as assessed by the actor groups is rather clear. Also the assigned values compare well with the exception of the farmers' associations, which evaluate the influence of the levels from NUTS 2 downwards slightly higher than the other actor groups. Similar to Figure 76 the influence of the EU to NUTS 1 level is assessed somewhat scattered. Unlike in Figure 76 all actors assessed the influence of the EU higher than the National level. The main difference can be found in the assessment of the importance of the NUTS 1 level, which, although always seen as much more important than NUTS 2, is considered less influential by researchers and environmental associations. Especially the agricultural administration and the farmers' association consider NUTS 1 as influential.

Figure 78: Influence on the design of AEM by actor groups

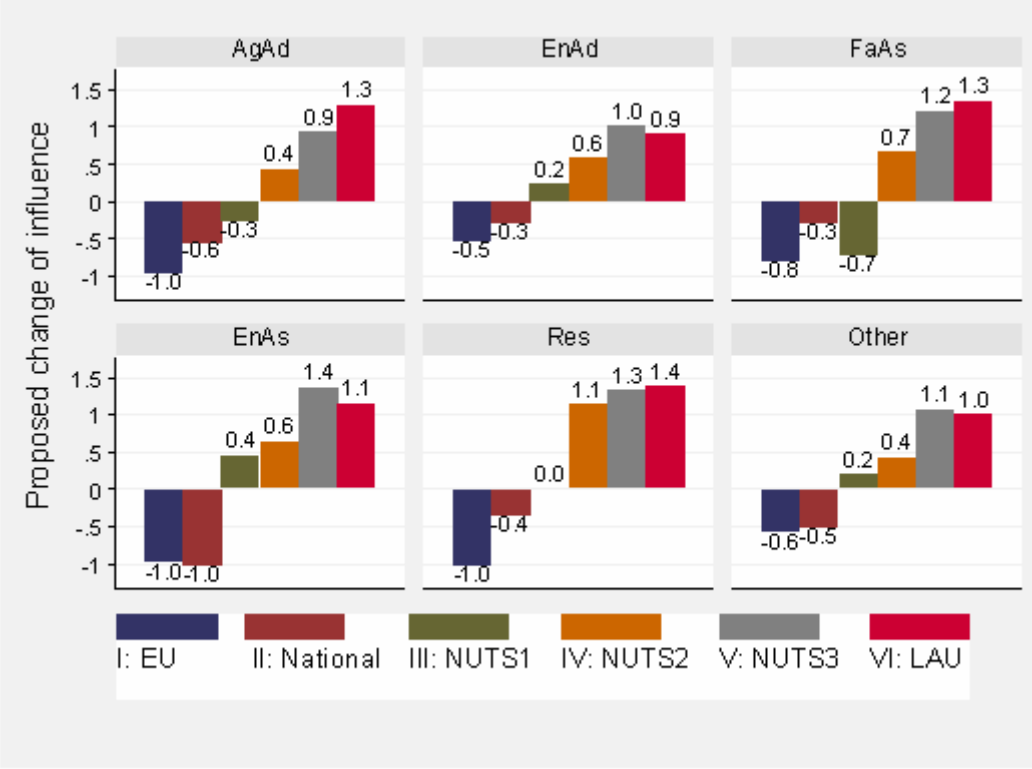


Legend: **1: no influence** **2: little influence** **3: influence** **4: high influence** **5: very high influence**

The actor groups demand significant changes in influence of administrative levels as shown in Figure 79. All like to decrease the influence of the EU and national level and to increase the influence of all levels from NUTS 2 downwards. However, most actor groups like to decrease the influence of national levels to a lesser extent than the EU level, with the exception of environmental associations, which propose a change in influence of EU and national levels to similar degrees.

The results for NUTS 1 are mixed. While the agricultural administration and particularly farmers' associations like the influence of NUTS 1 to decrease, the environmental administration and environmental associations in particular like to increase the influence of NUTS 1. Researchers would like the NUTS 1 level to remain as influential as it is. For NUTS 2 it is interesting to notice that researchers in particular like its influence to increase. Researchers also propose the highest increase of influence of LAUs on AEM design. However, farmers' associations and agricultural administrations propose a change almost as high. Environmental administrations and associations both desire a larger increase in influence of the NUTS 3 compared to LAU. The general preferences of environmental administrations and associations for NUTS 1 in comparison to LAU and the opposite for the agricultural administration and associations are obvious. Generally it has to be said that the perceived level of influence at LAU is rather low as shown in Figure 78. Overall, the category "others" follows the environmental administration most closely.

Figure 79: Proposed change of influence on the design of AEM by actor groups



Conclusion:
The influence of administrative levels on the design of agri-environmental measures is considered rather high at the higher administrative levels and rather low at levels from NUTS 2 downwards. This pattern can also be found in individual case studies, although with some variations due to missing administrative levels in some case studies. Between the case studies, there appears, however, a rather large variation in the assessment of the influence of the national level, which for example is particularly low for Flanders. Also the rating of influence of NUTS 2 is varying rather significantly between the case studies. The influence of administrative levels assessed by administrative levels follows rather consistently the overall average pattern. However, the NUTS 1 level is being considered as highly influential by all administrative levels with the exception of NUTS 2. Also actor groups tend to consistently perceive the influence of higher levels to be greater than that of lower levels with a rather clearly decreasing influence from NUTS 2 to LAU.

There is a general request for a change in the influence of administrative levels in the design of AEMs. From all actor groups at all administrative levels and in all countries, a strong demand towards decentralisation is expressed. Consequently, the higher levels should loose influence and the lower levels from NUTS 2 downwards will gain influence. Thereby the highest level should loose most influence and the two lowest levels, NUTS 3 and LAU, will gain most influence. Overall, a change of influence of NUTS 1 is not demanded. Notwithstanding this general statement, NUTS 1 levels in some case studies, like Ireland and North England, are demanded to gain influence and in Finland to loose influence. Across the case studies, the higher levels are requested to loose influence and the lower levels to gain influence. However, these changes are not equally explicitly proposed, for example, the request is comparatively vigorous for Ireland and rather modest for Flanders. Also the different administrative levels would like to see the influence to change in this pattern. NUTS 3 and LAU demand, however, rather large changes. Similarly the actor groups insist on such a

pattern of change in influence on measure design, whereas the environmental administrations express this in slightly less extreme way. Farmer associations demand a comparatively large reduction in influence of NUTS 1.

5.4.2 The advantage/disadvantage of a change of influence on the design of AEM (Question 16c)

A loss of some power of administrative levels currently in power has clear advantages for many respondents. However, also disadvantages are mentioned. Predominantly implications of an increase in influence of lower levels are being reflected upon. Among the case studies the extents of comments on these issues vary strongly. While there are particularly rich accounts from Flanders and the French case study of Basse-Normandie, the case studies of Ireland and Czech Republic provide rather little information (see also Appendix A 4).
According to a large share of respondents across the case studies increased influence of lower administrative levels contributes to better-adapted schemes. These are considered by many to be more effective, flexible and better reflecting local needs. More participation and increased acceptance of AEMs are other benefits mentioned by several respondents. A major reason for this often mentioned is a reduced distance to the agri-environmental problems at stake and the people involved. The main disadvantages of increased lower level power are according to several respondents increased complexity, diversity of schemes and thus less harmonisation between areas. Some also mention risks of corruption, lack of control and inability to comply with higher-level rules. Additionally some respondents are unsure whether lower levels have sufficient knowledge. Thus many argue for at least some involvement of higher levels especially in terms of final design, implementation and control. Further, often a general framework for AESs from EU levels and sometimes also national levels is seen a prerequisite. The role of the EU as a financer of the schemes is widely acknowledged and some argue that therefore the EU should have at least some influence. Some benefits of higher-level influence are also mentioned. These range mostly around clear goals, guidelines and strategies. Also more just distribution is being mentioned. Taking such advantages and disadvantages into account some respondents call for increased competencies of medium administrative levels. These are all rather broad lines of arguments. More details can be found in Appendix A 4. Some specific remarks should, however, also be mentioned here.
There is some concern that increased power at lower levels leads to administrative problems. A respondent from the Czech NUTS 1 agricultural administration for example wonders whether the relating approaches to AESs can still meet higher-level administrative requirements including EU levels. In this direction hints also a respondent of the Flemish environmental administration. In turn, an officer from the Brandenburg agricultural administration suggests that administrative efforts would increase with such decentralised approaches, especially if the EU looses influence. Consequently, a NUTS 3 officer of the environmental administration points out that too much pluralism cannot be handled. Similarly some NUTS 1 respondents of the Flemish environmental administration and associations suggest the regional level is needed to ensure coordination. In this context several Flemish respondents suggests that the EU contributes to transparency, which cannot be ensured if local levels have too much power. Thus, the EU is needed for monitoring to keep the policy under control as a French respondent from a farmers association remarks. This would be especially important for subsidy distribution as a further French respondent from the farmers' association points out. A further aspect mentioned in this context is that complexity and transaction costs may be reduced if overall less administrative levels are involved in AESs. Such and comparable aspects of higher and lower level power distribution are also a concern of Finnish respondents.

Concerning arguments for more power of lower levels there is not such diversity. However, the positive attributes of lower level involvement are mentioned very often across case studies and actor groups. Compared to other case studies actors of the North-England case study seem to emphasise the full array of benefits of lower level involvement rather strongly.
In the Brandenburg case study there seems to be a particularly mixed opinion about increased lower level influence. This comes along with a diverse set of arguments. Flemish respondents extensively emphasise the role of the EU as the most important source of funds and as an actor ensuring a general framework for AESs decision-making and transparency. Actors of the French case study also extensively mention the financial importance of the EU. In addition, distributional issues are comparatively high on the agenda of several actors of the Basse-Normandie. Across Flemish actor groups, substantial criticism on lower level empowerment can be found. Several respondents of the Friesland case study are particularly critical of the EU as it imposes to strong administrative requirements and thus constraints, though some also emphasise the importance of its financial resources.
Among the different actor groups, the environmental associations and the group of "others" tend to be in favour of lower level involvement, while the attitude of the environmental ministry is rather case study specific. For the farmers' associations and the agricultural administration the picture is less clear. The strongest opposing arguments tend to come from the farmers' associations, which, however, particularly at lower levels are often also in favour of decentralisation. In general the differences between actor groups are not very clear. This is also the case with the administrative levels. However, often, lower administrative levels tend to a more positive attitude to lower level involvement, whereas medium level respondents seemed to be most critical.

Conclusion:
A shift in power to lower administrative levels seems to be largely agreed to contribute to better-adapted schemes, which often are also considered more effective, flexible and reflecting local needs. However, there exist a great variety of arguments in favour of only a limited increase in power for the lower levels. These arguments relate to issues, such as increased complexity, diversity of schemes and thus less harmonisation between areas. Furthermore, important arguments seem to be the lack of control and focus and the inability to comply with higher-level rules. Knowledge and expertise are also arguments for lower or higher level involvement. Overall, many argue for at least some involvement of higher levels especially in terms of funding, general frameworks and control. Among others, particular benefits of higher-level influence mentioned as well are clear goals, guidelines and strategies. Differences can be assumed between case studies concerning advantages and disadvantages of lower level empowerment. However, these differences are difficult to pin down especially when comparing individual actor groups and administrative levels across the case studies.

5.4.3 The objectives of different departments, units and organisation in connection with AEMs (Question 17)

With question number 17 actors have been asked how they would describe the objectives of their department/unit/organisation in connection with AEMs. Objectives in relation to AESs pursued by the departments, units or organisations of the responding actors are manifold. There are reasonable accounts from all case studies, although from the Czech Republic and Ireland rather limited. Despite the great detail in individual actors' objectives some common patterns may be identified. They should, however be interpreted with caution. Thus in most cases it may be necessary to refer back to the individual case study accounts in Appendix A 5. In general the objectives vary according to expertise, responsibility and membership base of

actor groups. There may also be variations between administrative levels. All this can differ to some extents between case studies.
Objectives among respondents of an actor group are seldom clearly unified. Popular objectives of agricultural administrations are improving administrative procedures, income support for farmers, income compensation in relation to AES, payment calculation, adequate financing, monitoring and evaluation, compliance with (EU) laws, environmental protection, creating environmental awareness, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of AEMs, advising farmers and influencing scheme design.
Farmers' associations have overall rather similar objectives encompassing among others the promotion of farmers' interest, defending farmers, helping farmers with AES, sufficient payment and income for farmers, increasing the competitiveness of farms, schemes fitting into farm management, influencing scheme design, transparent processes, more involvement of farmers in scheme design, maintenance of schemes, promoting sustainable agriculture, keeping land in production, increasing the efficacy of bureaucratic structures, simple measures, informing government, informing the public, environmentally effective schemes, environmental protection, ensuring fit to other rural policies and monitoring delivery of AESs. Overall, however, objectives of farmers' associations seem comparatively diverse and can be very specific, like supporting AEMs related to animal husbandry in Brandenburg. Income objectives are rather widely mentioned among respondents of the farmers' associations.
The objectives of environmental administrations are such like conservation of the environment (and landscape), protecting biodiversity, protecting water resources, raising awareness among farmers, mitigating negative effects of farming on the environment, promoting AES, contracting AES, creating more innovative AES, efficient use of financial resources, fast AESs applications, increased flexibility of measures, implementing EU law, monitoring environmental quality, controlling AES, better targeting of measures, identifying priority territories, improving rural livelihoods, reducing diffuse pollution, securing retention of skilled workforces in rural communities for appropriate land management, integrative catchment approaches to flood management, lobbying for AESs design, enhancing landscape, access, recreation and sustainable land management, improving conditions for wildlife, integrating social, environmental and economic benefits, conserving the historic environment, enhance habitats and enhancement of public enjoyment opportunities. In summary, the objectives of environmental administrations can be considered rather diverse. Emphasis on particular objective can differ strongly between case studies.
Environmental associations have mostly objectives similar to the environmental administration. They include adjusting measure design, consultancy, education, support of endangered species and biodiversity, improving spending priorities of financial means, improving the financing of measures, adapting agriculture to more environmentally friendly practices, increasing the efficacy of measures, better control of AES, effective AESs in terms of biodiversity, to contribute with expertise and assessments, assisting farms in identifying opportunities of AES, promoting more environmentally sustainable farming, providing expertise to farmers, provision of more objective evaluation tools, assisting in the zoning of environmental problems to optimise scheme design, sustainable rural development, informing potential participants of appropriateness of measures, ensuring that AESs achieved desired outcomes, to work with farmers and partners on the ground for effective delivery and implementing as much schemes as possible. In relation to the objectives of the environmental administrations the objectives of environmental associations tend to have broader perspectives and are also more concerned about financing and advise to farmers.
Respondents of the group of "others" have a large diversity of objectives. They encompass among other such objectives as improvement of environmental effectiveness of measures, contribution to rural development, lowering thresholds between farmers and administrations, giving advise regarding AESs policies, promoting AES, ensuring uptake of AES, ensuring

that AESs fit into farm operations, helping farmers with AESs applications, improve environmental impact of farming, making AESs more stimulating, fair payment for farmers, supporting farmers, increasing cooperation between farmers and environmental organisations, influencing implementation processes, ensuring that AESs contribute to local issues, evaluation and proper assessment of AES, fair payments for farmers, linking AESs to product marketing, decentralisation of AEMs, maintain wetland biodiversity, landscape protection, maintenance of agriculture in particular areas, adapted measures, bringing in technical expertise, better environmental adaptation of agriculture, ensuring economic sustainability of farms, emphasising the importance of continuity of AES, design of AESs in relation to nature areas, working in conformity with EU rules, area based policies, cooperation, more bottom-up approaches, better adjustment of schemes to regions and problems, social and society change, encouraging greater integration of the farming sector with the rest of the rural economy, sustainable tourism and a sense of place for local communities. Overall, there tends to be a stronger emphasis on the integration of environmental and social objectives among respondents of the "others". However, the Basse-Normandie case study contributed a particular large share to this account.

Researchers have a strong focus on evaluation and advising different stakeholders. They do, however, also have further objectives. Accordingly among researchers we can find objectives such as evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness, advising administration, policy makers and participants, using research results for increasing clarity of AES, support of scheme and measure design, biodiversity enhancement, compensation for disadvantaged, promoting AESs for positive heritage management, AESs reasonable in terms of money allocation and environment, retaining a maximum balance between farming and the environment, research to evaluate environmental performance of AES, assisting in the provision of reliable advise to farmers, taking part in local planning, building awareness in the sector and general public, involvement in AESs definition, best consideration of facts and consequences of AES, improve AESs as means for rural development, adjusting institutional arrangements at the regional level, better division of implementation tasks, less bureaucracy, minimising costs of measures and informing local and regional practice.

Some objectives of agricultural administrations, farmers' associations and environmental associations can be rather similar while the environmental administration has rarely such objectives as fair payment for farmers. Also the farmers' associations and environmental associations may share objectives in common, which are not considered by the administration, as it is for example sometimes the case with financing. Researchers seem particularly to focus on evaluation in many countries and often add policy support to it, whilst evaluation is also often a popular objective of the administration

Concerning differences of objectives of administrative levels clear cluster are difficult to be made out. However, in the Flemish case study officers at lower levels emphasise informing higher levels as objectives. In addition, a LAU officer of the environmental administration is aiming at contacting farmers and to cooperate with them. Objectives of NUTS 3 and below respondents in Basse-Normandie tend to be much more detailed, than objectives of higher levels. This pattern can also be found in other case studies, though to a lesser degree. An example is a stronger emphasis on compliance with EU rules at higher-level administrations.

Objectives vary between case studies. In particular larger differences between farmers' associations of case studies prevail. French farmers' associations very specific here, Finnish farmers' associations tend to give recommendations, while Italian farmers' associations are also concerned with rural development at large. Also important to note may be that the Flemish environmental administration has a diversity of very specific objectives like ensuring that right measures on soil erosion are used. Concerning the emphasis of particular objectives in certain case studies a few aspects are worth mentioning. Respondents of the case study of Basse-Normandie often mention fair payments as objectives. In Friesland the importance of

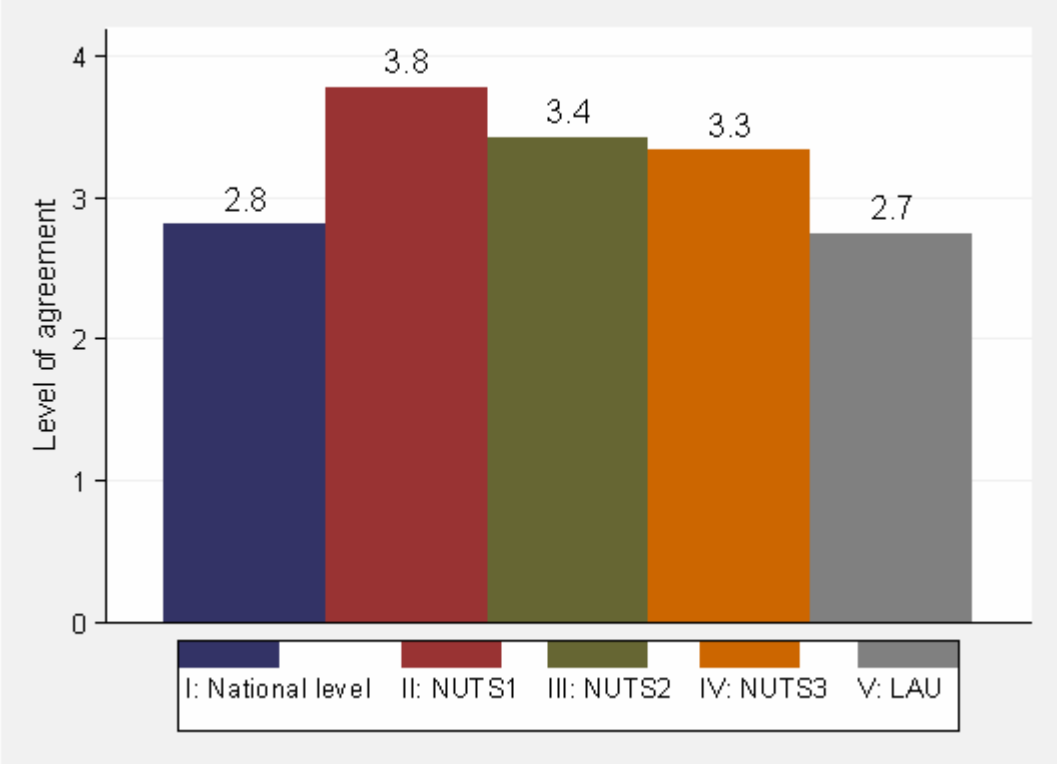
rules, especially relating to the EU, is often considered. In addition, adjustment of AESs to local areas seems to be an important objective in the case study. North-England particularly emphasises objectives relating to wildlife, landscape and recreation, but also to integration and partnership.

Conclusion:
The objectives between the different actor groups tend to vary according to their expertise and membership. However, differences within an actor group can still be large and objectives vary between administrative levels. For example higher administrative levels sometimes also consider compliance with EU rules as objectives, which is normally not the case with lower levels. In addition, some objectives of agricultural administrations, farmer associations and environmental associations can be rather similar, while the environmental administration has rarely such objectives as fair payment for farmers. Also the farmer associations and environmental associations may share common objectives, which are not considered by the administration, as it is sometimes the case with financing and emphasis on lower levels. Researchers in many countries seem particularly focusing on evaluation and often add policy support to it, whilst evaluation is also often an objective of the administration. In general, individual actors were found to have a very specific pattern of objectives, making general conclusions difficult.

5.4.4 The achievement of the objectives of different department, units and organisations (Question 18)

Question 18 asked the actors at which administrative level AEMs could be (better) designed to achieve the objectives of their individual department/unit/organisation (see question 17).
In Figure 80 the perception of the actors of the achievement of the objectives of their department, unit or organization are depicted according to administrative levels.
While most actors are not satisfied with the achievement of their objectives at the national and LAU level, they agreed to some extent that the middle range of administrative levels contributed to the achievement of objectives. From all administrative levels the NUTS 1 level performed on average best.

Figure 80: Actors perception on the achievement of the objectives of their department/unit/organisation

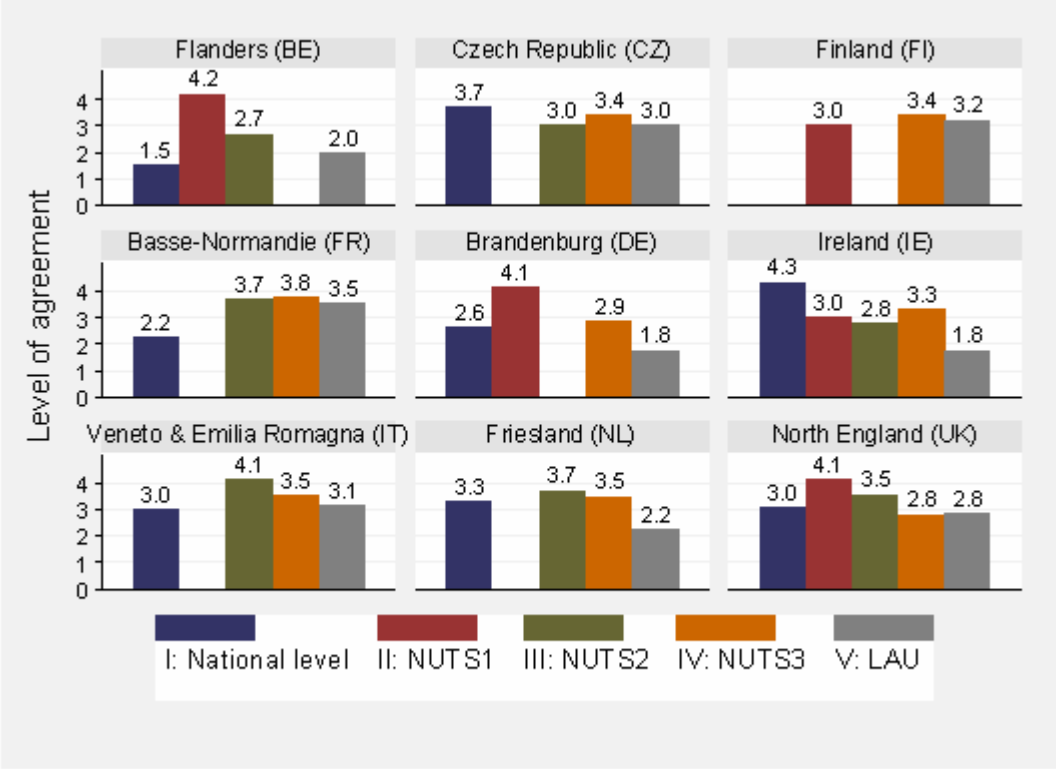


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

When looking at Figure 81, however, it becomes clear that according to the actors' perception on NUTS 1 level "own objectives" are being achieved particularly well in some case studies. These are Flanders, Brandenburg and North Finland. Actors in Finland and Ireland were indifferent about NUTS 1, while in the remaining countries NUTS 1 is not a relevant administrative level. In seven from nine countries/regions at least one administrative level is not represented or relevant. Yet, in the Czech Republic, actors agreed that the national level performed best in relation to all other levels.

NUTS 2 levels had a particularly well performance in Italy and comparatively well performances in North England, Basse-Normandie and Friesland. The variation of perceived objective achievement of NUTS 3 is comparatively low between countries. In the countries where its performance was assessed highest, it was closely followed by either the LAU (Finland) or NUTS 2 and LAU (Basse-Normandie). However, in six out of nine countries actors agreed at least to some extent that NUTS 3 achieved its objectives. The LAU in turn had generally a low performance and was only considered to have achieved its objectives to some extent in Basse-Normandie, Finland and the Italian case study. The Irish result is somewhat surprising as all interviewees are located on the NUTS 2 level.

Figure 81: Actors perception on the achievement of the objectives of their department/unit/organisation by case study areas

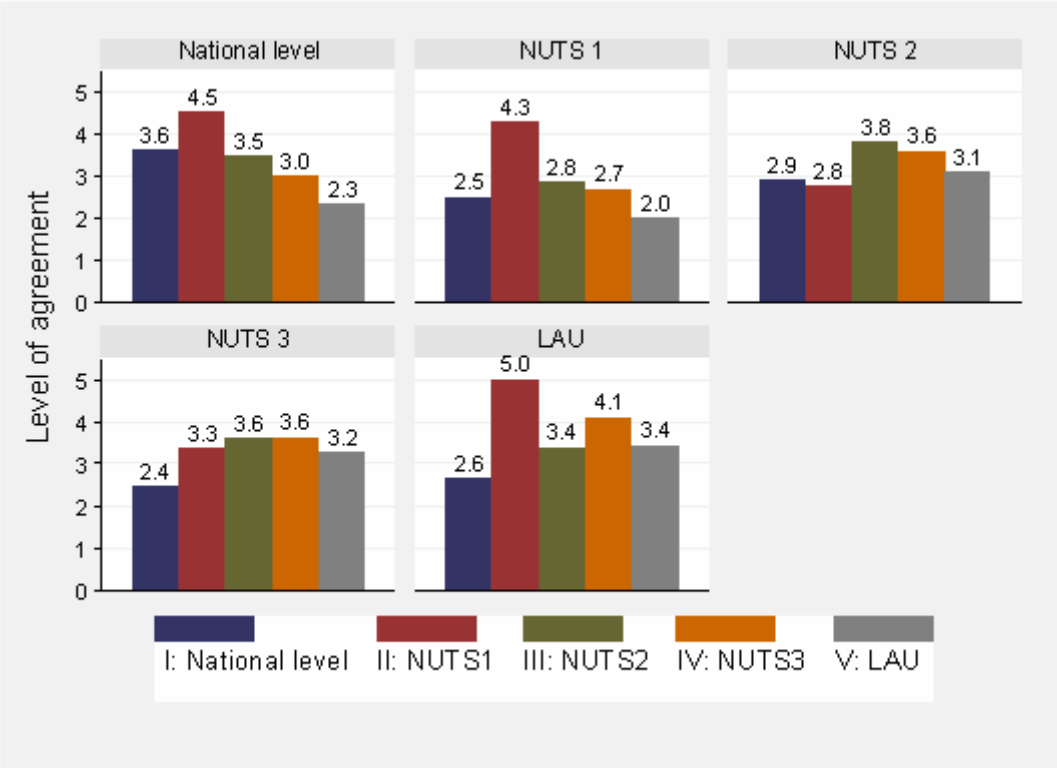


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

As can be concluded from Figure 82, the national level, LAU and the NUTS 2 level actors believe that their own objectives can be better achieved on other administrative levels. This is particularly evident with at the national level. However, at NUTS 1 and NUTS 3 levels a different picture emerges. LAU actors attach the highest achievement of their objectives in comparison to the assessment by the remaining actors to both NUTS 1 and NUTS 3, whereas NUTS 1 actors are less confident in the attainment of their objectives than the national and particularly the LAU level consider their achievements. Nevertheless, NUTS 1 level actors consider the achievements of all other administrative particularly low.

On the contrary, the NUTS 2 and 3 level actors assessed the performance of the administrative levels relating to their own objectives rather evenly well and agreed to at least some extent that objectives have been achieved. Still, NUTS 2 level actors rate the performance of NUTS 1 particularly low. While NUTS 1 level actors assessed the achievement objectives of LAU as low, LAU actors strongly agree that NUTS 1 achieved its objectives. Concerning the achievement of their objectives on the NUTS 3 levels only NUTS 1 actors tend to disagree.

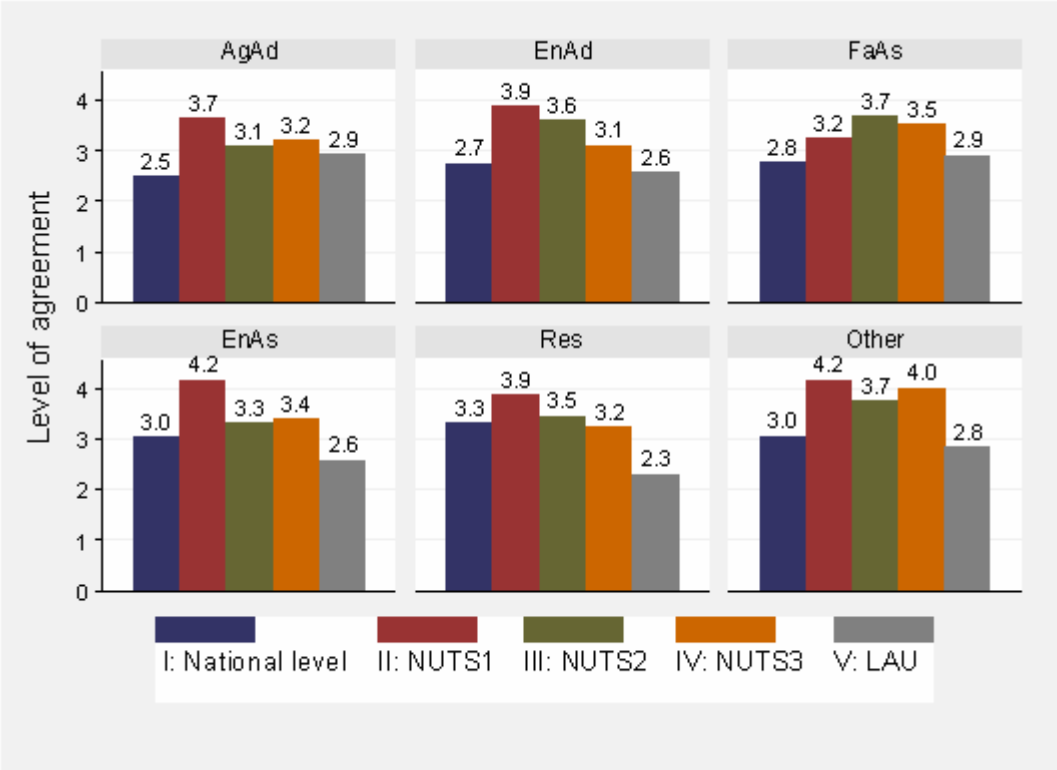
Figure 82: Actors perception on the achievement of the objectives of their department/unit/organisation by administrative level



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

When ordering the actors' perception of their own objective achievement at administrative levels according to actor groups a comparatively evenly distributed pattern emerges. As can be seen in Figure 83, all actors tend to agree that their objectives could be achieved better or best at the NUTS 1 to NUTS 3 levels, although with some variations. The NUTS 1 level is considered as having obtained its objectives to a comparatively high extent by all actor groups, although less so by farmers' associations. With the objective achievements on national level's only researchers tend to be slightly satisfied whereas most other groups with the exception of environmental associations and "others" tend to be unsatisfied with the national level. Actors tend to agree that their objectives could be met least at the LAU level. An exception are the agricultural administrations and the farmer associations. Both assume that they might achieve their objectives worst on the national level.

Figure 83: Actors perception on the achievement of the objectives of their department/unit/organisation by actor groups



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

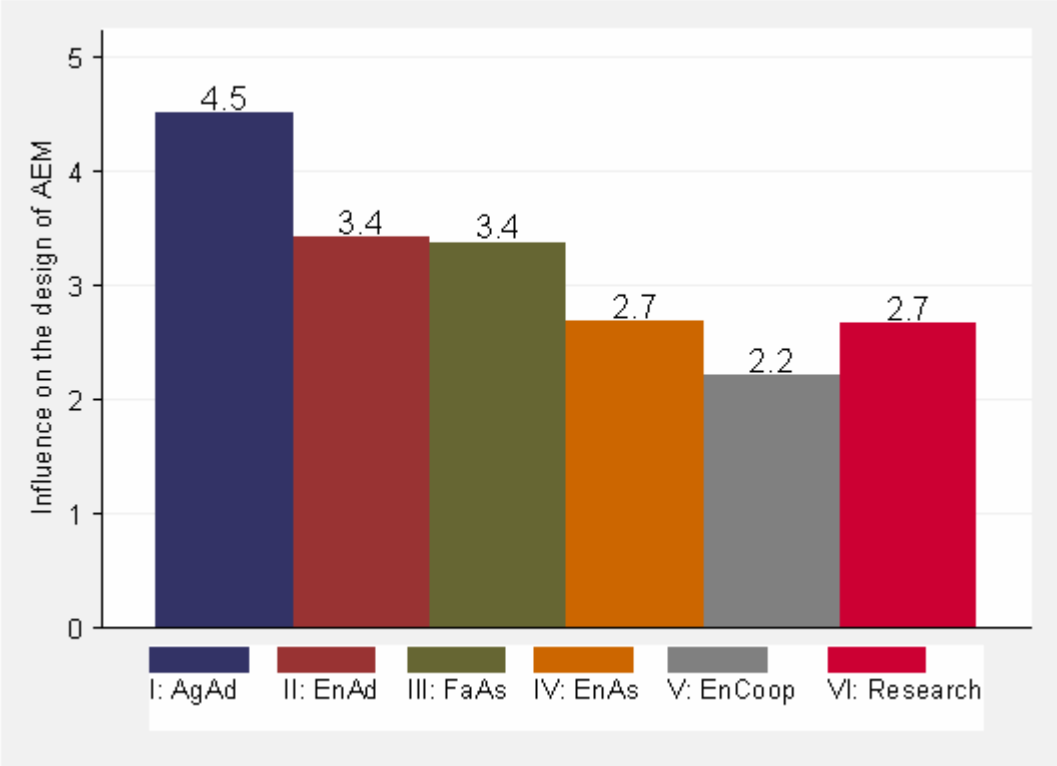
Conclusion:
To certain extents, the actors regard their objectives as achieved. There is some achievement seen at the intermediate administrative levels, particularly NUTS 1. However, this level does only exist in five out of nine case study areas and of these Flanders, North-England and Brandenburg rated achievement particularly high. With some exception at NUTS 2, the satisfaction about achievement of objectives varies strongly among the case studies. The perception of the achievement of own objectives strongly depends on the actor's administrative level. However, actors at national and NUTS 1 levels including LAU at NUTS 1 demonstrate great satisfaction about objective achievement. The individual actor groups, in turn, assess the achievement of their objectives at the particular administrative levels in a rather similar pattern, although the farmer associations show a comparatively low satisfaction with the achievement of their objectives at the NUTS 1 level.

5.4.5 The perceived and proposed influence of different actor groups on the design process of AESs (Question 19/20)

In the first question presented in this section respondents had to assess, according to their knowledge, to what extents individual actor groups do influence the design of AESs (Question 19). In the second part the same actors had to state their opinion in terms of which actor groups should influence the design process of AESs (Question 20). In the following we first present the current assessment of influence and then continue with the proposed change of influence. The focus has been on EU co-financed measures, only. Respondents had to assess the influence of the different actor groups from 1 (no influence) to 5 (serious influence).

According to Figure 84 we can observe that all actors on average impute most influence on the agricultural administration. Farmers' associations and environmental administrations are seen on the same level whereas actors believe that environmental associations and researchers have only little influence.

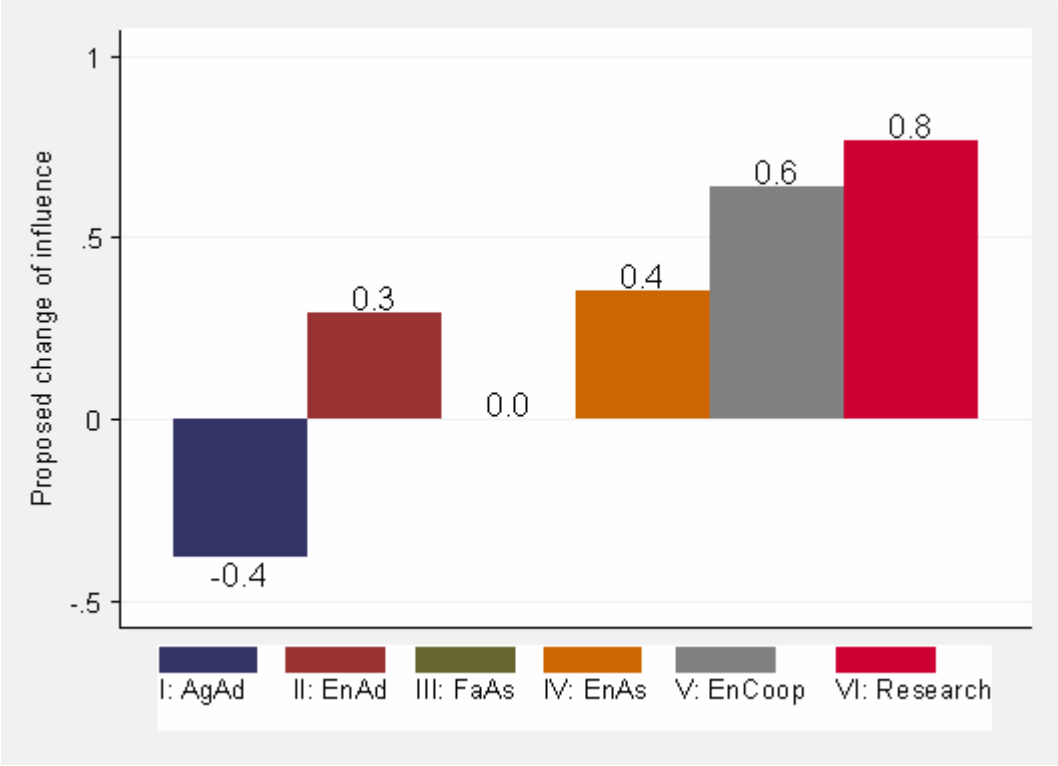
Figure 84: Actors influence on the design of AEM



Legend: **1: no influence** **2: little influence** **3: influence** **4: high influence** **5: very high influence**

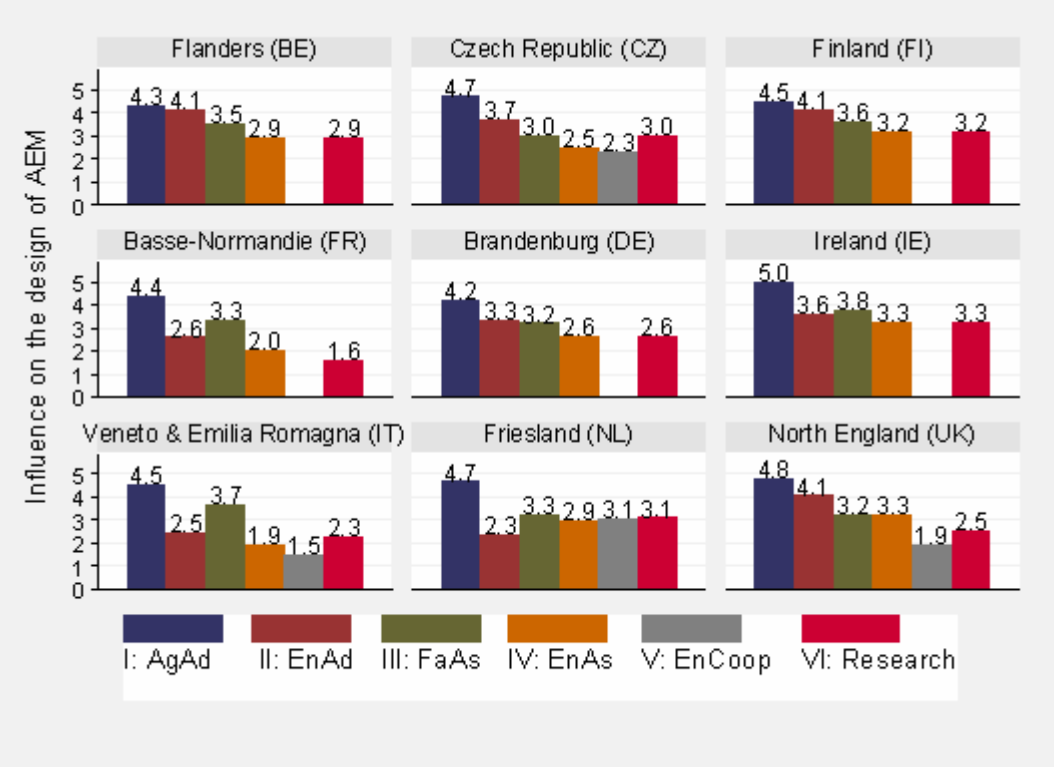
With question 20 actors have been asked how strong the influence of the actor groups should be on the design process of AEM. Based on the results of question 19 the proposed change of influence has been calculated similar to question 16.
From Figure 85 it can be concluded, that the agricultural administration on average should loose some of its influence on AEMs design, but remain the most important actor. In turn, both environmental administration and environmental associations should gain some influence. While the influence of farmers' associations should remain as it is particularly researcher should have significantly increased influence.

Figure 85: Proposed change of actors influence on the design of AEM



Concerning the perceived influence of the agricultural administration we cannot observe large differences between the countries. This is shown in Figure 86. When looking at the environmental administration we see a different picture. With a value higher than 4 the perceived influence in Flanders, Finland and North England is rather high whereas in Basse-Normandie, Italy and Friesland the perceived influence is very low. The researchers are generally considered to have an average influence on scheme design. In Basse-Normandie, though, researchers are considered to have very low influence, while in Italy and North England they have at least some influence. Farmers' association seem to be influential to highly influential all across the countries, whereas environmental associations are seen only in Finland, Ireland and North England to exert influence of at least some importance.

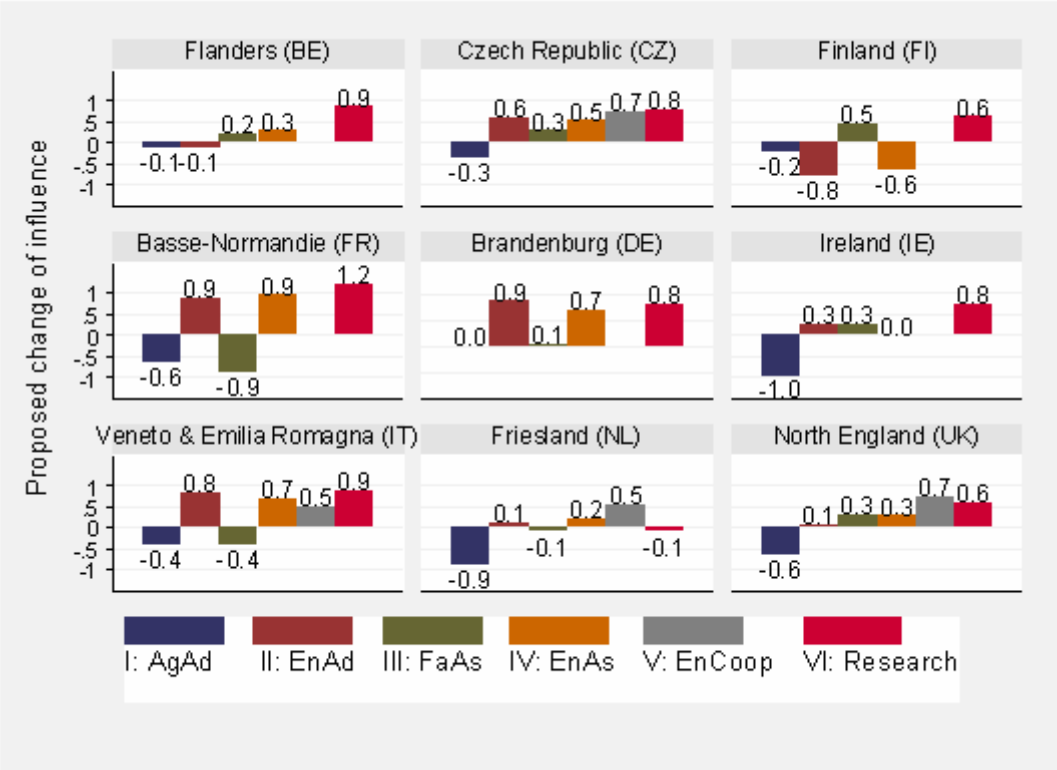
Figure 86: Actors influence on the design of AEM by case study areas



Legend: **1: no influence** **2: little influence** **3: influence** **4: high influence** **5: very high influence**

When looking at Figure 87 it becomes clear that most countries desire a change in influence of actor groups comparable to the average as depicted in Figure 85, with a major exception being, however, Finland. Finnish actors desire an increase of influence by farmers' associations, whilst both environmental associations and administration should loose influence. This could be explained that agricultural administration and farmers associations are rather overrepresented with a share of 79 percent of the actors. But in France the share is nearly the same but the recommendations of the French actors a contrary to the Finish. Above all, in France, there is a clear demand for reduced influence of farmers' associations, while environmental actors and particularly researchers should gain influence.
Overall there seems to be a tendency among the countries of increased influence of actor groups, while only the agricultural administration in most countries should loose influence.

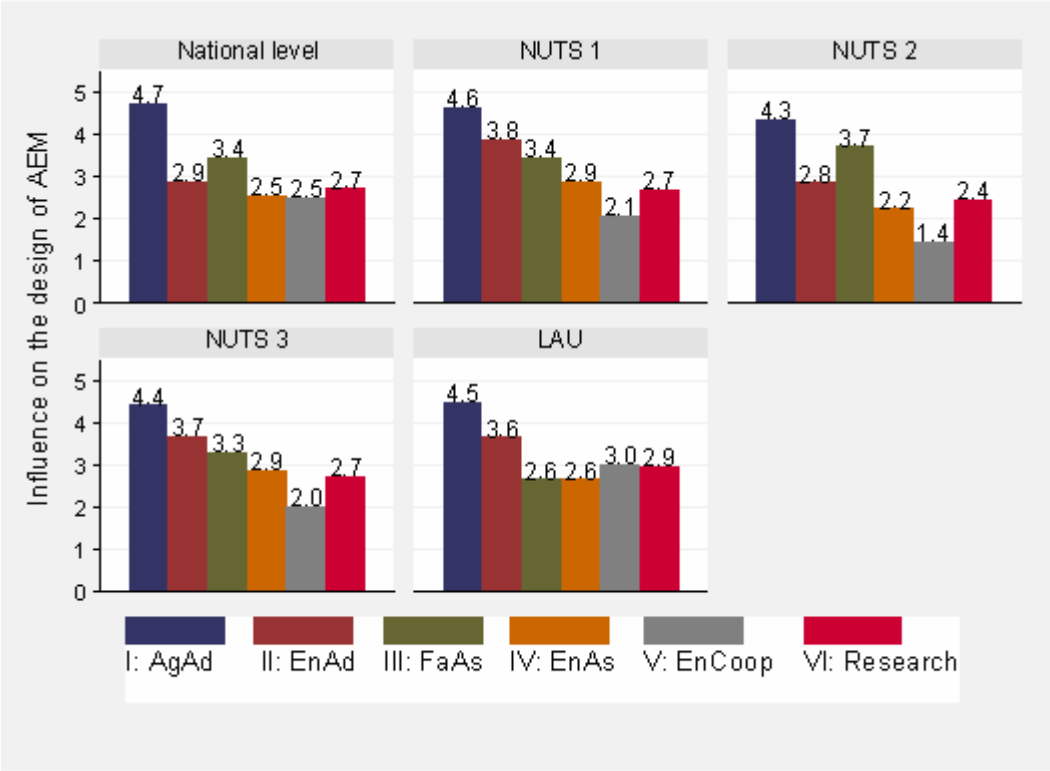
Figure 87: Proposed change of actors influence on the design of AEM by case study areas



When comparing the actors' influence on AEM design by administrative levels some common patterns emerge, as can be seen in Figure 88. First, the agricultural administration is seen as very influential by all levels, while environmental associations and researchers are both seen to have only small influence. The influence of farmers' associations is tending towards a high influence in the opinion of all administrative levels except for the LAU, which assessed them as being of rather small influence and equally influential as environmental associations.

The assessment of the influence of the environmental administrations is rather scattered. NUTS 1, NUTS 3 and LAU levels see them as rather influential, while the national level and the NUTS 2 level as rather of little influence.

Figure 88: Actors influence on the design of AEM by administrative levels



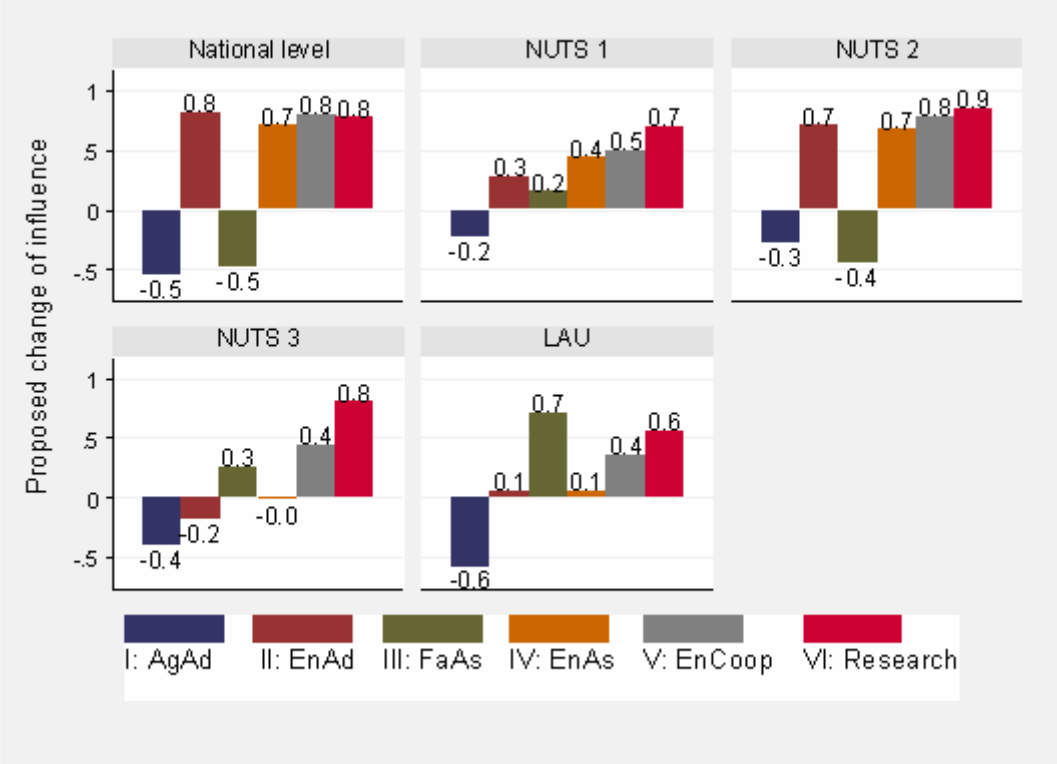
Legend: **1: no influence** **2: little influence** **3: influence** **4: high influence** **5: very high influence**

There seems to be a general consensus among administrative levels that researchers should gain influence and that the agricultural administration should loose influence albeit to more varied degrees (Figure 89). The higher administrative levels from national to NUTS 2 share in common that environmental associations should gain influence, while the lower levels seem satisfied with the current state.

In terms of changed influence of the environmental administration the results are somewhat mixed. Only the national and the NUTS 2 level would prefer a significant increase in the influence of environmental administrators, whereas NUTS 3 tends to desire a slight reduction of its influence.

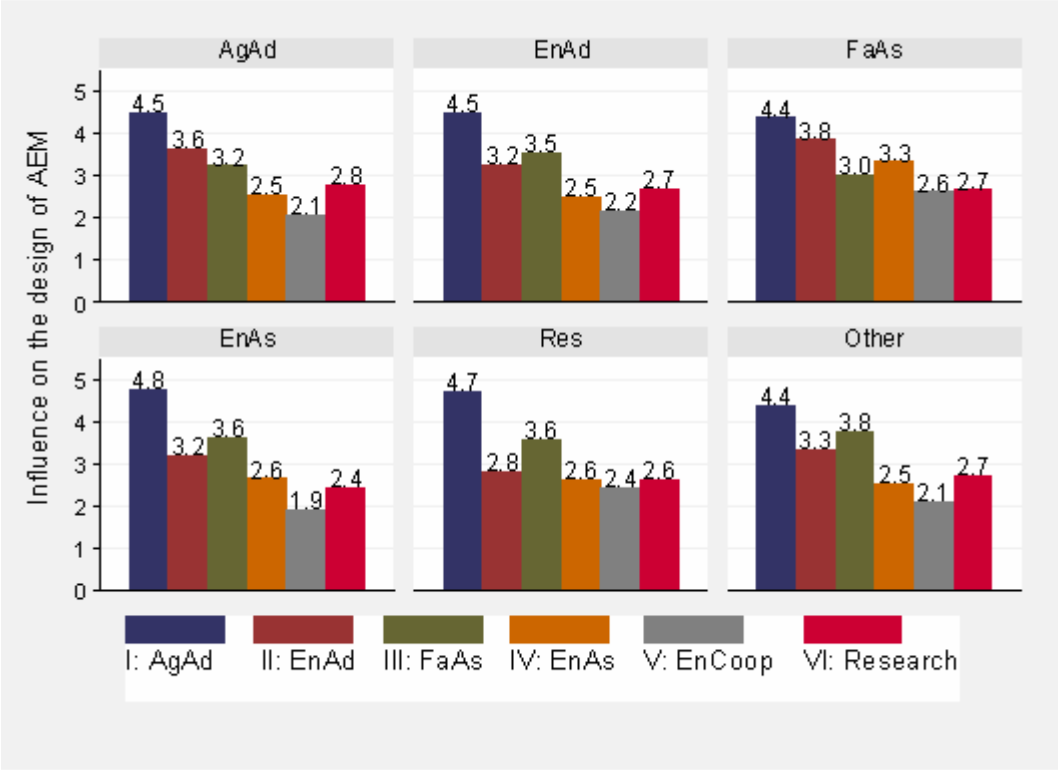
However, administrative levels disagree about a change of influence of the farmers' association to large extent. Especially the LAU would like to see a significant increase of influence of the farmers' associations, while the national level and NUTS 2 prefer a decrease of farmers' influence. Contrarily, NUTS 1 and 3 would rather prefer a slight increase of influence of farmers' associations. Rather significant inverse correlates among environmental actors and agricultural actors can only be found at the national and NUTS 2 level.

Figure 89: Proposed change of actors influence on the design of AEM by administrative levels



Similar to the assessment by administrative levels, according to all actors, the agricultural administration is very influential while researchers are seen to have only little influence. Figure 90 provides a graphical representation. Environmental associations are also seen to have only little influence on AEM design, with the exception of farmers' associations, which think, that they are more influential. By actors, generally also farmers' associations are seen influential, although to a lesser extent by the agricultural administration and in particular farmers' associations themselves. The environmental administrations in turn, are rated less influential by both environmental associations and administrations than by farmers' associations, in particular, and the agricultural administrations which assess them close to highly influential.

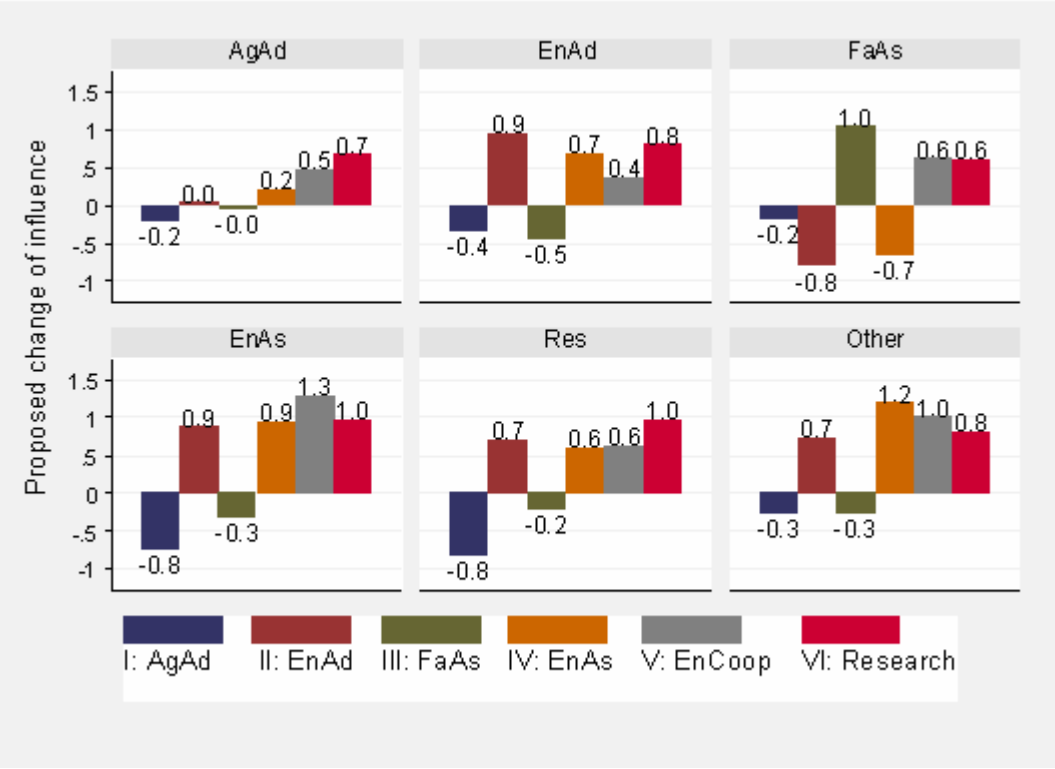
Figure 90: Actors influence on the design of AEM by actor groups



Legend: **1: no influence** **2: little influence** **3: influence** **4: high influence** **5: very high influence**

All actors, except the agricultural administration would like to increase their influence in designing AEMs, as it is being suggested in Figure 91. The actors also rate their individual gain of influence higher in comparison to the other actors. The agricultural administration prefers a large increase of researchers' influence and is otherwise rather indifferent. However, it might look surprising that they propose albeit a small reduction but a reduction of their own influence and an increase of environmental associations influence. But nevertheless they would remain by far the most powerful actor group (compare Figure 90).
All actors, except the farmers' associations, which desire a large drop in the administration's influence, favour a mostly significant increase of the environmental administration. In turn all actors, except the farmers' associations themselves and the agricultural administration would prefer a slight drop in the farmers' associations' influence.

Figure 91: Proposed change of actors influence on the design of AEM by actor groups



Conclusion:
The agricultural administration is seen to have the highest influence on the design of AEMs. Also the environmental administration and farmer associations are suggested to have some influence, while environmental associations, environmental co-operations and researchers have rather low influence. This pattern can be more or less found in all case studies, although the influence of the environmental administration shows rather high variations being quite low in Basse-Normandie and in the Italian and the Friesland case studies. Environmental co-operations are only assessed in some case studies. Across administrative levels the influence of the agricultural administration is rated consistently high, while there is larger variation in the rated influence of environmental administration and farmer associations. The actors themselves assessed the influence of different actors with rather large variations, although their assessments were greatly consistent for the high influence of the agricultural administration and the rather low influence of researchers.

Overall it can be concluded, that the agricultural administration should loose some of its influence on AEMs design, but should remain the most important actor. In turn, both environmental administration and environmental associations should gain some influence. While the influence of farmer associations should remain constant, particularly researchers should have significantly increased influence. With the exception of a loss in influence of the agricultural administration, the demanded changes in influence of actor groups tend to differ between case studies. However, in all case studies except Friesland a rather distinct increase in the influence of researchers is demanded. Changes in the requested influence of individual actor groups vary between administrative levels, though the influence of researchers should increase according to all levels. While actors more or less agree to changes in influence, the farmer associations wish their influence to increase strongly and the influence of the environmental administration to significantly decrease

5.4.6 The advantage and disadvantage of an increased influence of certain actor groups (Question 21)

Most respondents see clear advantages and disadvantages of an increased influence of certain actor groups on the design process of AESs. Many suggest an improved balance of influence and consider its advantages and in some case potential disadvantages. However, some respondents do not desire to change the current situation. Arguments of respondents can be similar to those of Question 16c) taking administrative levels into account, but commonly they maintain a strong actor focus. A particular extensive account on advantages and disadvantages of increased influence actor groups is provided by the French case study.
Overall there is a diversity of arguments across case studies, which can be very specific. For more detailed accounts it is thus necessary to refer to Appendix A 6. However, different tendencies between statements of actor groups can be made out.
Agricultural administrations have often mixed opinions about changes in influence of actors. Some would like the influence of farmers' associations to increase to improve the reflection of local conditions and farming enterprises. Others in turn are concerned that farmers' associations do not take the environment sufficiently into account. Similarly respondents from the agricultural administration may fear that the environmental administration does not consider the interests of farmers.
Respondent of the agricultural administration thus argue the following. A balanced influence of actors would prevent biased fulfilment of aims and thus improve objective evaluation and increase effectiveness and acceptance of AESs. In addition it would put AESs on a broader social basis. Changing the balance of influence would mean that more information is exchanged. Accordingly an improved balance of influence gives more understanding and backing to schemes and possibly more effective measures, though disadvantages are complex schemes and too expensive schemes. It is also argued that a general change of influences would lead to better recognition of the environment and local context. Further, the influence of the agricultural administration is desired, because it has the necessary expertise. It is also argued that increased influence of farmers' associations would increase the number of applications. In general greater influence of agricultural actors leads to AESs better adapted to farms. However, with lower influence of farmers' associations, discussions about environmental objectives would be much easier. In turn, increasing the influence of both farmer and environment organisations will prevent optimal solutions. Increased influence of environmental actors leads to more recognition of environmental stakes and to AEMs focusing more on environmental issues. In addition increased influence of researchers, increase the value of AESs and their usefulness. However, a larger influence of researchers bears the risk of inequalities and imbalances. Further it is argued that less involvement of researchers and NGOs decreases the dependency of limited knowledge about biodiversity.
Farmers' associations suggest that increased influence of certain actors would bring the systems out of balance. However, it is also argued that a change of influence would create a more realistic view. In addition, influence shifts could increase adaptation to local contexts, improve funding, appreciation of measures by all actors, improve the involvement of disadvantaged, lead to common perspectives with rural policies, better targeting and improved balance between agriculture and the environment. Moreover shifts in influence cause a greater awareness of choices. Problems of shifting influence are difficulties to reach consensus, managing the system and under-representation of farmers in the long run. Thus a shift in influence of actors may lead to pursue of particular interests and slow decisions processes. Accordingly decision-making should rest with agricultural actors because it creates problems if people make decisions without knowledge about agriculture. More influence of agricultural actors in turn improves the user-friendliness of schemes. In addition, increased influence of farmers will increase the quality of measures, make applications easier, should improve

results and pride in relation to achievements. Farmers also tend also to see what can be achieved at the production level. Moreover, farmers should have more influence because they appreciate the practicalities of farming for living. However it is also argued that increased influence of environmental organisations could improve the assessment of AEMs, especially if researchers contribute their knowledge. An increased influence of researchers can help to justify certain AEMs and improve the scientific foundations of AESs.

Officers of the environmental administration argue that shifts in influence in general would lead to a more balanced design of AESs and improve their social basis, but also lead to more differentiated AESs and easier introduction of novel approaches. Further it should support clearer defined goals. An equal share of power would also increase the environmental perspective and improve fairness in the design of AESs as it leads to equal relevance of economic and environmental aspects. However, it is also stated that a change of influence could decrease the effectiveness of measures. Further it is argued that farmers have to have more influence because they are the key link to delivering the proposed benefits of AESs. Nevertheless, decreased influence of farmers' associations would lead to more objective discussions. Accordingly a stronger influence of environmental authorities could improve the functioning of AESs and more influence of environmental administration facilitates the obtainment of its objectives. In addition, it would improve concerted action among all actors. However it also suggested that similar influence of farmers and environmentalists would maintain the role of farmers and help to prevent a decrease of environmental effectiveness of AESs. An increased influence of researchers could lead to more objective evaluation or increased effectiveness of some measures.

Environmental associations suggest that shifts in influence would make measures more practical, but disadvantages may be obscured objectives. A disadvantage of agricultural ministries is that they do not put sufficient effort in obtainment of environmental objectives of AESs. However, the large influence of agricultural actors increases the practicability of AESs. On the contrary to improve the natural environment and landscape, those with the relating knowledge, i.e. environmental Ministries and researchers should gain influence. Also increased influence of conservation NGOs can improve delivery of wildlife benefits, though may bias against other objectives. In general a greater influence of environmental organisations and research would improve effectiveness of AESs. Moreover, too much influence of many actors would make schemes complicated and costly, whereas a concentration of power would make measures more punctual and effective.

As suggested by respondents of the group of "others" shifts in influence would make measures more objective and free them from lobbying. However, it also argued that better balance between actors could increase risk of lobbying. Relating to advantages a general change in influence would result in a larger social basis for measures and better acceptance. In addition, it would lead to better readability, appropriateness, effectiveness and simplification of AESs. Moreover, a better balance of influence would lead to positive effects on the environment and local communities. However a changed influence of actors may also result in a diverse plan difficult to deliver and bears the risk of a multiplication of measures due to lacking definition of priorities. It is then also argued that the agricultural administration should have more influence to create better-adapted schemes and to benefit the socio-economic situation of farms. More involvement of farmers leads to more realistic measures. An increased influence of environmental actors leads to a more open debate about AESs. If researchers have highest influence measures would be more effective. This may be because researchers contribute to better assessment and thus design of measures. In addition researchers are important for proving environmental impacts of farming practices. Other suggestions are that the engagement of all rural actors would increase the awareness of the efforts farmers already make. Involvement of all local actors would lead to better-adapted

AEMs, but may also increase complexity and difficulties in settling conflicts. Furthermore, more involvement of users would lead to more customer-oriented design.
Researchers argue that a change in influence of actors more generally would lead to more custom-made, more efficient AESs with a broader social basis. In addition, it may lead to a stronger focus on the environment and to more public benefits. However, it may also support less homogeneous interventions. Moreover, a more balanced division of influence enables the consideration of everybody's concern in AESs. A reduced influence of the agricultural administration would lead to policies easier to implement and better adjusted to landscapes and the natural environment. Furthermore an increased influence of farmer and landscape organisations supports their expertise in estimating effects of measures, but the disadvantage is rent seeking. Relating to this, involvement of farmers increases their motivation and leads to higher acceptance of AESs. In turn, increased involvement of researchers leads to more effective and efficient AESs. It is also argued that decreased influence of the administration in general would increase transparency.
However, conflicting opinions exist within actor groups like the agricultural administration where some argue for increased influence of farmers' associations to include practical considerations and others like the influence of environmental actors and researchers to increase to support environmental effectiveness.
Differences between administrative levels of the evaluation of impacts of changed influences of actors are difficult to assess, though it seems that lower levels are more pragmatic in their considerations. In addition, they tend to have more detailed opinions.
Respondents are also pointing at particular problems in case studies or have rather unique perspectives. For example Czech farmers' associations suggests that an increased influence of certain actor groups would bring the system out of balance, whereas a lower level respondent of the environmental administration fears that increased influence of single actors narrows perspectives. Somewhat pragmatic Brandenburg farmers' associations suggest that there are useful experts in the environmental administration. In addition, respondents of the "others" from Basse-Normandie suggest that concerted action of all actors and collective approaches to AESs will be beneficial. Environmental associations of the Italian case study argue that environmental policies should be designed for social and environmental benefits and not to cover fractional interests. In Friesland, according to a NUTS 3 respondent, farmer organisations, environmental organisations and environmental cooperatives should all have more influence, since they are the managers of nature. Advantages of such an arrangement would be more efficiency and less bureaucracy, while the disadvantages are approaches less driven by demand. Respondents from Friesland in general have a lot of unique suggestions, though there are also many arguments relating to administrative levels. In North-England a respondent from a NUTS 3 environmental administration thinks that NGOs with wide first hand experience of AEMs should have a strong influence, while those with a smaller focus should have lower influence as their recommendations are likely to be less suitable to mainstream agriculture. In addition, as the respondent points out, often not the organisation is most critical, but who within that organisation is influencing the process.

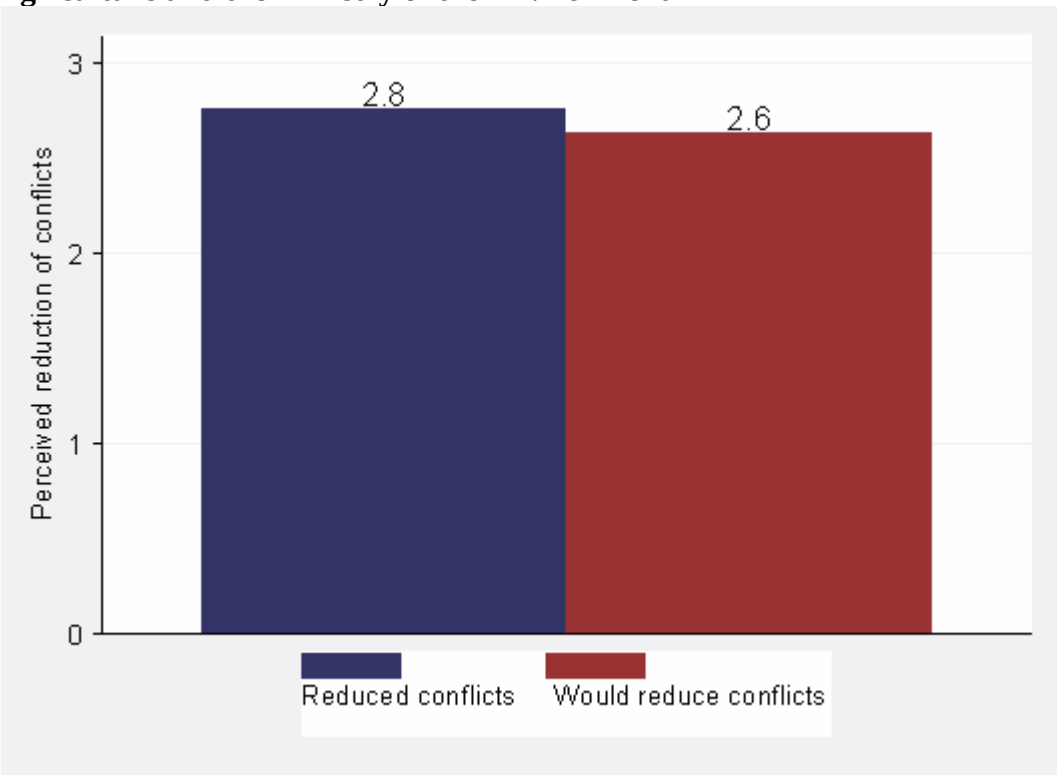
Conclusion:
The evaluation of changing influence of actors by actors is not always clear-cut. Sometimes actors' suggestions imply a strong focus on specific administrative levels and sometimes only a vague improvement of the balance of influence among actors groups. Such an improved balance is often related to greater acceptance of schemes, which encompass more efficient measures, while complexity is anticipated to increase and decision-making to get difficult. It is also being argued for increased influence of under-represented stakeholders like environmentalists. The latter is especially emphasised by the environmental administration and by associations and researchers. Benefits of such arrangements are often seen a greater

environmental impact of measures, while the downside may be more complicated decision-making. In some cases, lower influence of farmer associations and the agricultural administrations is suggested to improve environmental outcomes. Nevertheless, often arguments are raised in favour of preserving the influence of farmer associations and of the agricultural administration, because they have the necessary knowledge. Further, some argue that the latter are important for the allocation of funds.

5.4.7 The merging of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment (Question 22)

In question 22 the interviewees had to asses to what extent the merging of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment to one Ministry has reduced or would reduce conflicts of interest between environmental protection and support of farmers in the respondents' regions.
According to Figure 92 the respondents were overall rather unconvinced that a merger of the agricultural and the environmental ministry would reduce conflicts or has reduced conflicts.

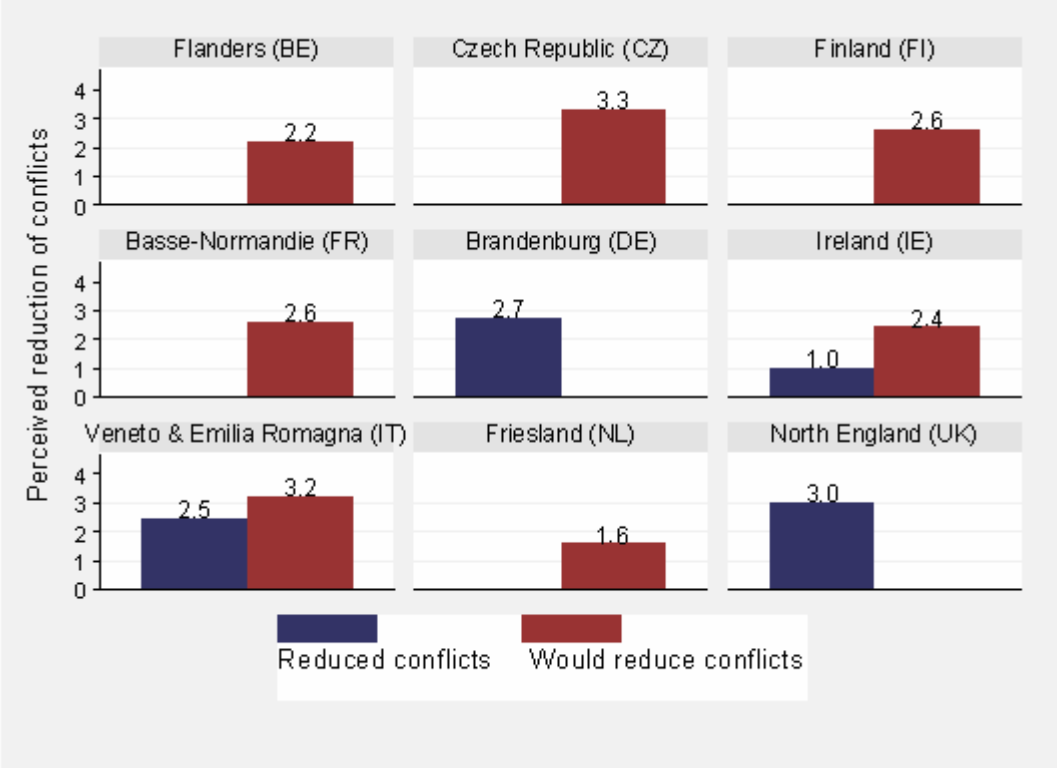
Figure 92: Perceived reduction of conflicts due to the merging of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment



Legend: **1: not at all** **2: not really** **3: indifferent** **4: partly yes** **5: yes absolutely**

When looking at the individual case studies as depicted in Figure 93 it seems that across the regions there was a tendency among respondents in claiming that a merger of the agricultural and environmental ministries would or did not greatly reduce conflicts of interest. However, in the Czech and the Italian regions the respondents were slightly more optimistic about reduction in conflicts of interests due to a merger. In terms of past experiences with mergers especially Irish respondents consider the merger of ministries leading not to conflict mitigation.

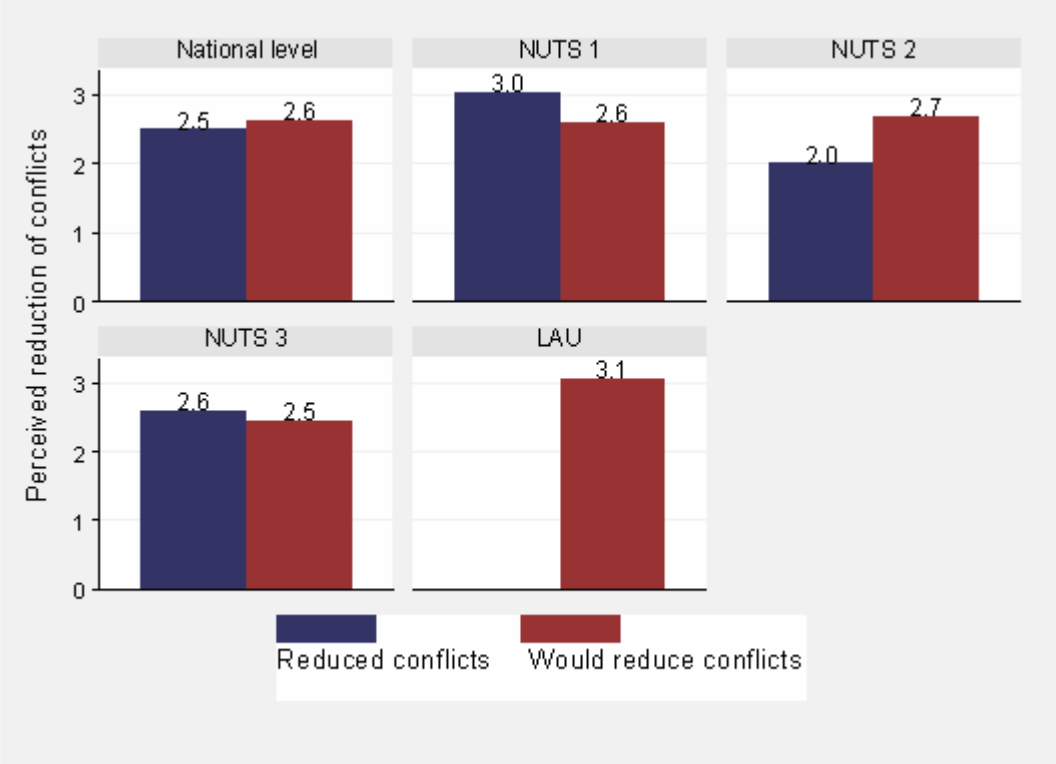
Figure 93: Perceived reduction due to the merging of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment by case study areas



Legend: **1: not at all** **2: not really** **3: indifferent** **4: partly yes** **5: yes absolutely**

There a no marked differences between the perceived decrease of conflicts due to a merger of the ministries, besides a few minor exceptions, as Figure 94 suggests. NUTS 2 actors consider the reduction of conflicts due to past mergers particularly low, while NUTS 1 actors are on average indifferent. LAU actors in turn think that a merger could rather reduce conflicts, although on average only to a minor extent.

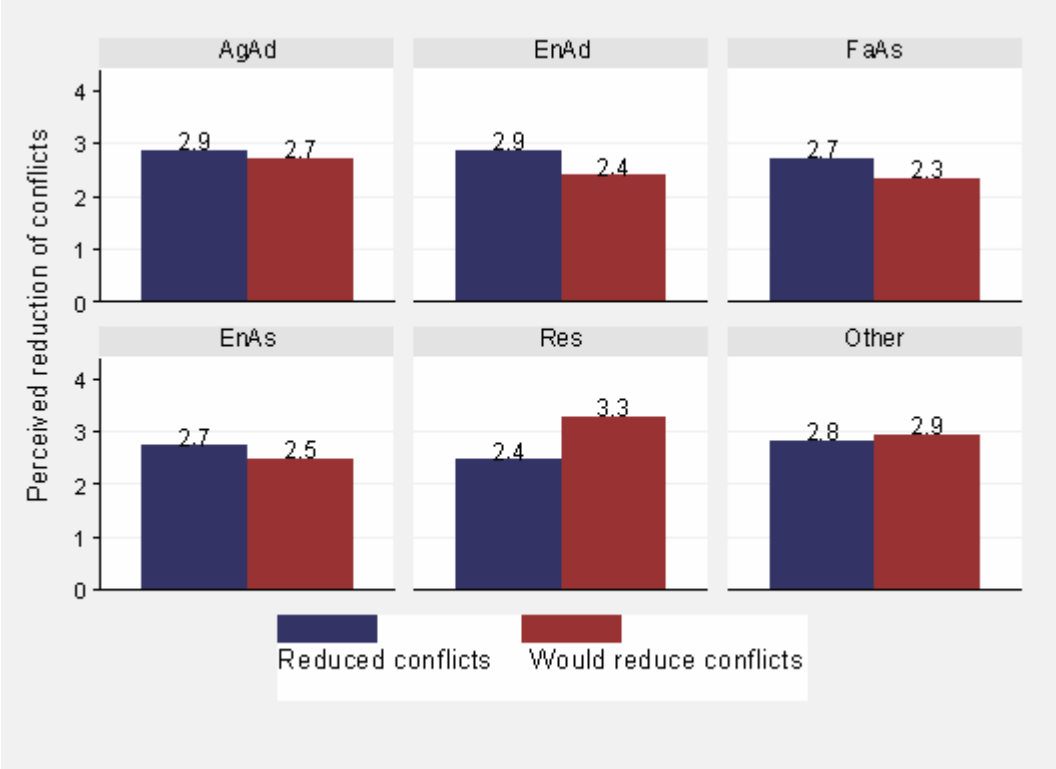
Figure 94: Perceived reduction of due to the merging of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment by administrative levels



Legend: **1: not at all** **2: not really** **3: indifferent** **4: partly yes** **5: yes absolutely**

Among actor groups there seems to be consensus that the merger of agricultural and environmental ministries has not to a significant extent reduced conflicts. As may be derived from the results depicted in Figure 95, researchers in particular perceived no great reduction in conflicts. In turn, however, they are the actor group which is most optimistic about conflict reduction due to mergers, whereas farmers' associations are particularly unconvinced.

Figure 95: Perceived reduction of due to the merging of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment by actor groups



Legend: **1: not at all** **2: not really** **3: indifferent** **4: partly yes** **5: yes absolutely**

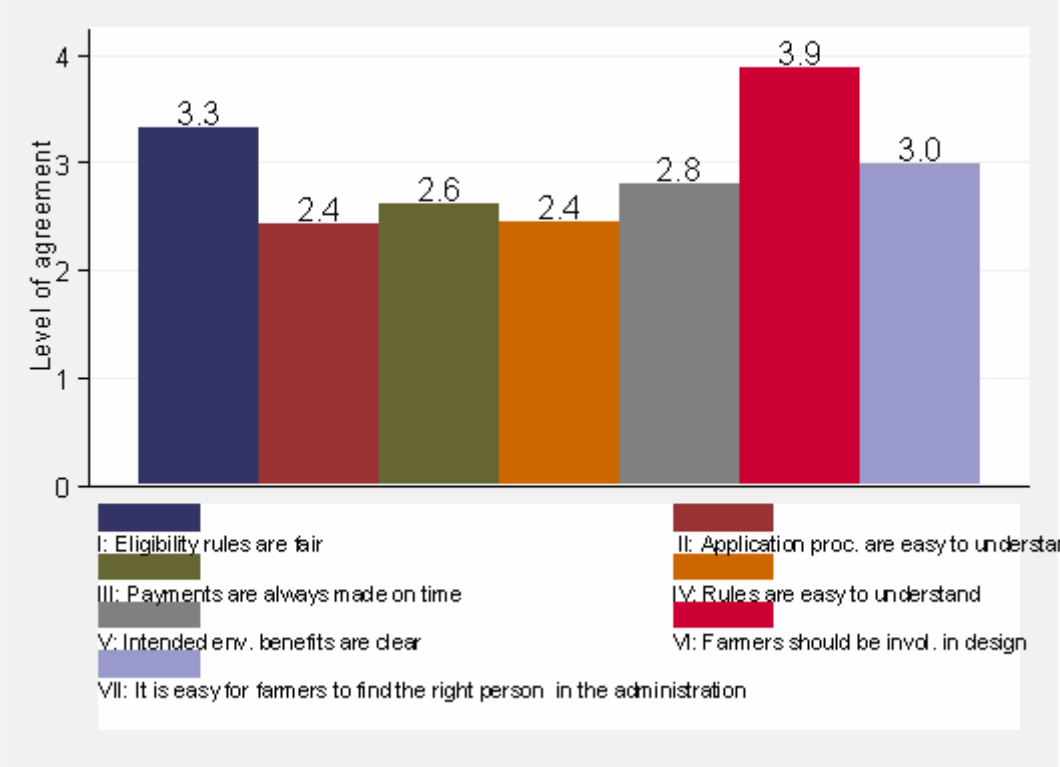
Conclusion:

The respondents were, in general, rather unsure about the conflict-reducing potential of a merger of the agricultural and the environmental ministries. Hence, the opinions on that question vary strongly among case studies, reflecting in parts past experiences with mergers. For instance in Ireland, such merger did not seem to have resulted in reduced conflicts. Between administrative levels, there is little variation in terms of the assessment of conflict reduction due to a merger. However, the NUTS 2 level rates conflict reduction rather low, while NUTS 1 rates this rather high. At the LAU level, the potential to reduce conflicts is tentatively assessed rather high which had not opinion on the impacts of past mergers. Actor groups tend to be consistently indifferent about conflict reduction due to mergers of agricultural and environmental ministries, except researchers who are confident that mergers can reduce conflicts.

5.4.8 The characteristics of AESs (Question 23)

AESs have many attributes, which may be of importance to the different actors. Question 23 confronted respondents with thirteen statements concerning such attributes of AESs. The respondents were asked to evaluate these statements in a range from “strongly agree” (5 scores) to “strongly disagree” (1 score).
When being asked on various aspects of agri-environmental measures the respondents on average particularly agreed that farmers should be involved in the design of AESs. Otherwise they are overall rather indifferent about the statements, as Figure 96 suggests. However, the respondents overall have some slight tendencies to agree that the eligibility rules of measures are fair. In turn, there is a tendency towards disagreement that both, the rules of measures and the application procedures are easy to understand.

Figure 96: Assessment of various aspects of agri-environmental measures (I)

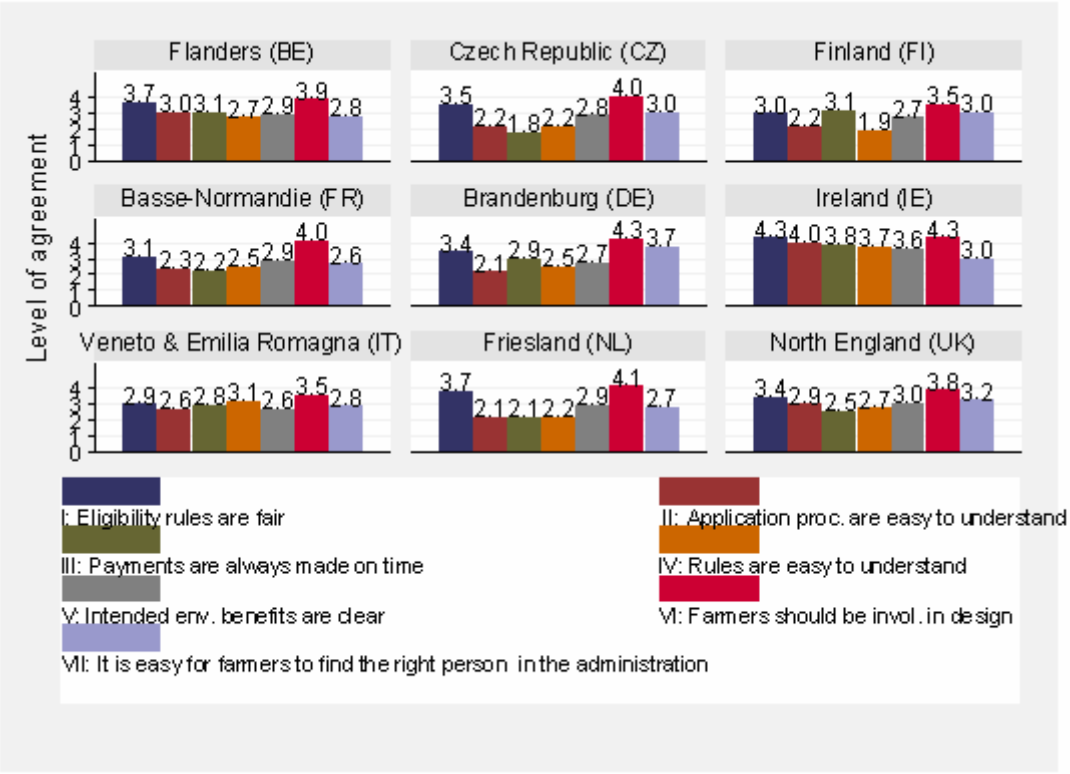


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

From Figure 97 it can be concluded that all countries evaluated the aspects of measures in rather similar patterns. However, Ireland shows rather consistently the highest agreement with all aspects of the measures. Only Brandenburg and North England respondents consider it easier to find the right person in the administration.
All case studies agree rather strongly that farmers should be involved in design, though both Italy and Finland agree to a comparatively low extent. With the exception of Ireland, which is agreeing in particular, all countries consider the intended benefits of environmental measures slightly unclear. The fairness of rules is being considered rather high in all countries, though there is a slight disagreement in Italy and a tendency towards indifference in Finland and Basse-Normandie. Application procedures are not easy to understand in every country. Here only Ireland finds them easy to understand while Friesland, Brandenburg, Finland, the Czech Republic, Basse-Normandie, and to some extents also Italy finds them rather difficult to

understand. With the exception of Finland, Flanders and Ireland, payments tend not to be on time. This is particularly severe in the Czech Republic and to some degree also in Friesland and Basse-Normandie. Rules of the measures seem only to be easy to understand in Ireland and to some degree also in the Italian case study.

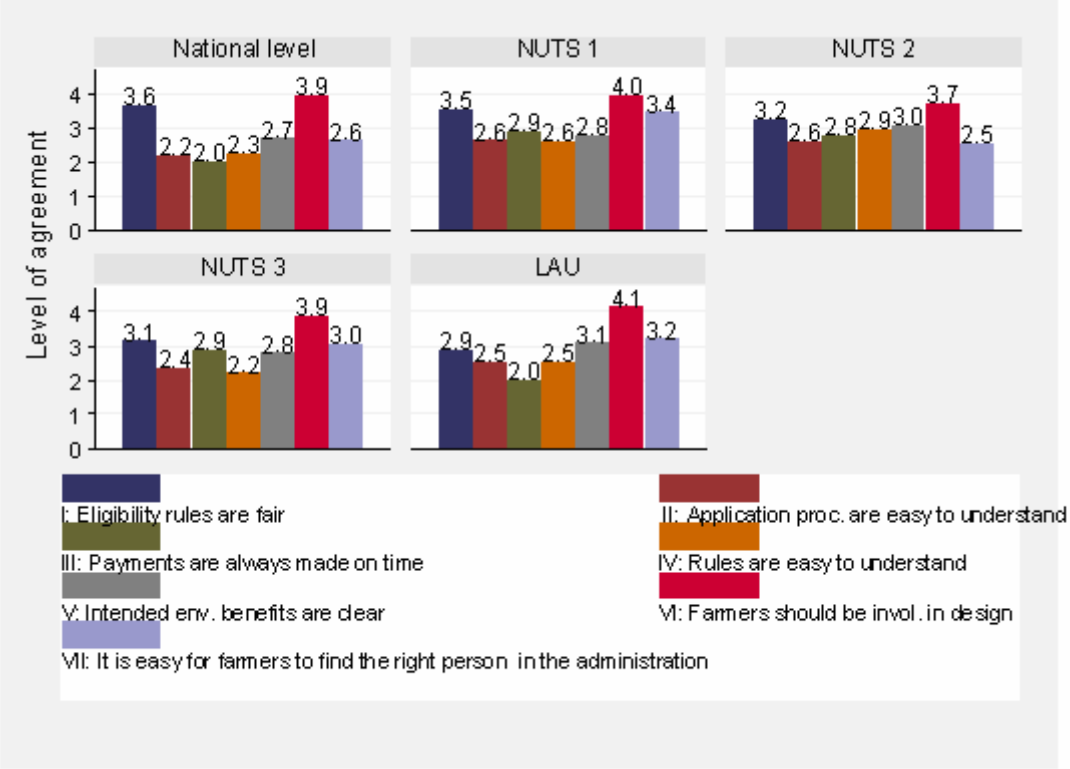
Figure 97: Assessment of various aspects of agri-environmental measures by case study areas (I)



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

The patterns of agreement on the various aspects of the measures depicted in Figure 98 are quite similar between administrative levels. An exception is, however, the timeliness of payments, which is being considered particularly low by the LAU and the national level.
There is generally a consensus that farmers should be involved in design and that application procedures tend to be rather difficult to understand. In addition, there is an overall tendency to indifference concerning the clarity of intended benefits of measures. Particularly the NUTS 2 and the national level agree to some extent that it is not always easy for farmers to find the right person in the administration. Similar to NUTS 3, the national level is also agreeing to large extents that rules of the measures are difficult to understand.
One may also notice, that agreement with the fairness of eligibility rules decreases from the national to the LAU level.

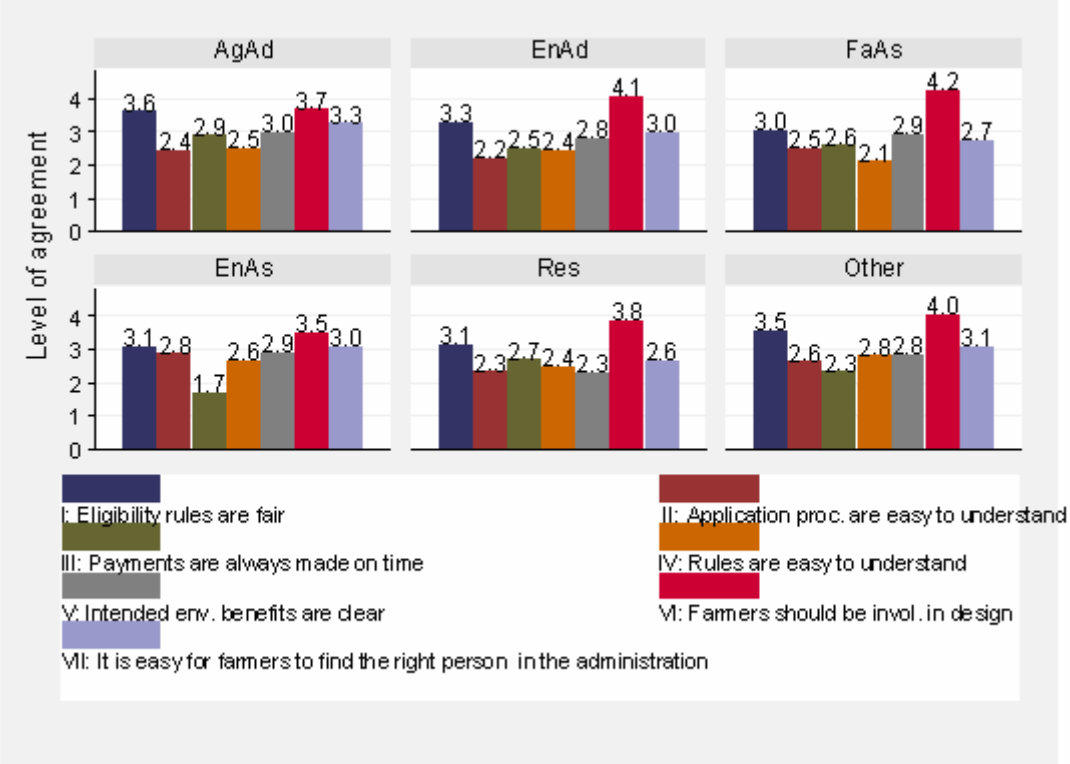
Figure 98: Assessment of various aspects of agri-environmental measures by administrative level (I)



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

As can be seen in Figure 99 all actors tend to agree that farmers should be involved in AEM design and that eligibility rules are fair. Especially the farmers' associations, but also environmental administrators think that farmers should be involved in AEM design.
All actors tend to disagree that the application procedures are easy to understand, though the environmental associations to a lesser extent. The latter, however, are disagreeing to a comparatively large extent that payments are always made on time. The actors in general tend to disagree that the rules of the AEM are easy to understand. This is particularly the case with the farmers' associations. Most actors are not very much concerned whether the intended benefits of measures are clear, with the exception of researchers, which disagree. Timeliness of payments is generally considered of being rather poor, although not severely in the eyes of the agricultural administration. What may be difficult to explain is, that environmental associations see timeliness of payments considerably poorer than the other actor groups.

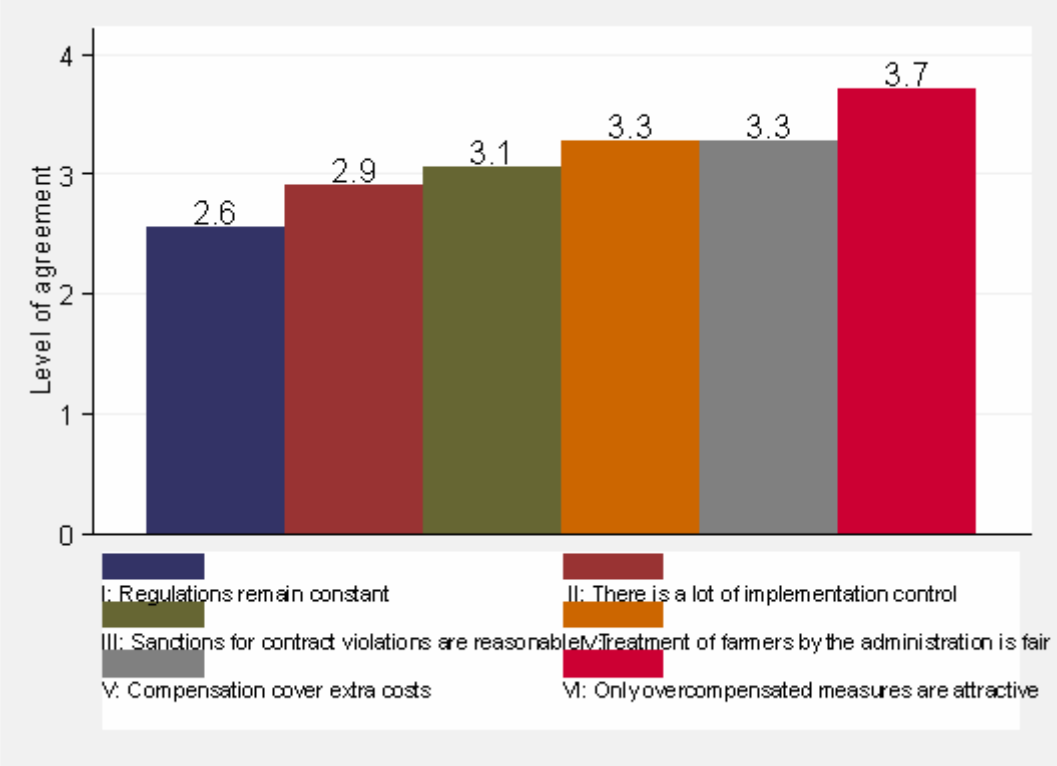
Figure 99: Assessment of various aspects of agri-environmental measures by actors groups (I)



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

As can be seen in Figure 100 overall the actors agree that only overcompensated measures are attractive to farmers. However, they also tend to agree that the compensation paid covers the extra cost of measure uptake. On the downside of AEMs actors are to some degree concerned, that the policy rules and regulations for AEM will not remain constant. While there is a slight disagreement that there is a lot of implementation control there is also some agreement that farmers are being treated fair by the administration. In addition, the assessment of sanctions for contract violation as being slightly reasonable fits into this pattern.

Figure 100: Assessment of various aspects of agri-environmental measures (II)



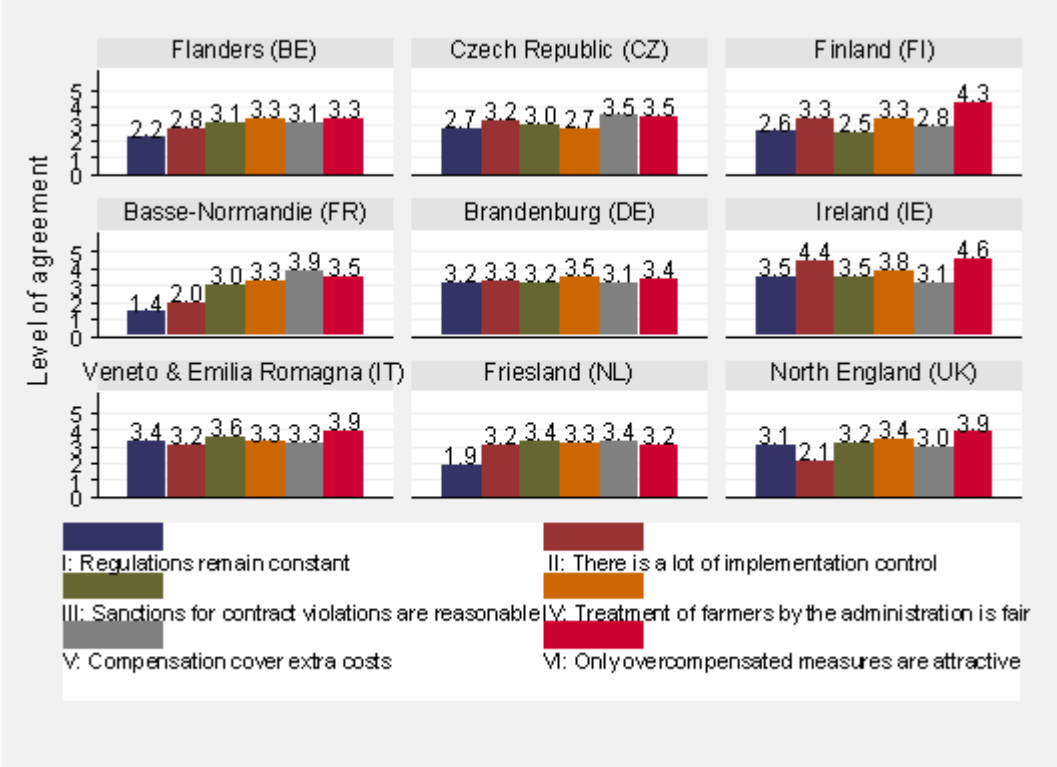
Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

When comparing the nine case study regions one can see that there is a particular large discrepancy in agreement that regulations of measures remain constant and large variations on that there is a lot of implementation control. However, as can also be seen in Figure 101, there is generally lower variation among the remaining aspects, except that overcompensation for uptake of measures makes measures more attractive. The latter has been agreed to rather large extents in all countries. Turning back to the question whether regulations remain constant the majority of the regions rather agreed, while particularly in the French region was strong disagreement and also Friesland and Flanders disagreed. Six out of nine regions tended to agree that there is a there is a lot of implementation control. However, there was a clear disagreement on this statement in the French region and in North England.

Sanctions in general tended to be considered reasonable. Only Finland tended to disagree that they were reasonable. Also, the fair treatment of farmers by administrations was generally agreed upon, although in the Czech region to a lesser extent.

That compensations cover extra costs, was particularly agreed in France while in the Finnish region there was some minor disagreement. There was also generally more agreement on that only overcompensated measures are attractive when agreement that compensations cover extra costs was comparatively low.

Figure 101: Assessment of various aspects of agri-environmental measures by case study areas (II)

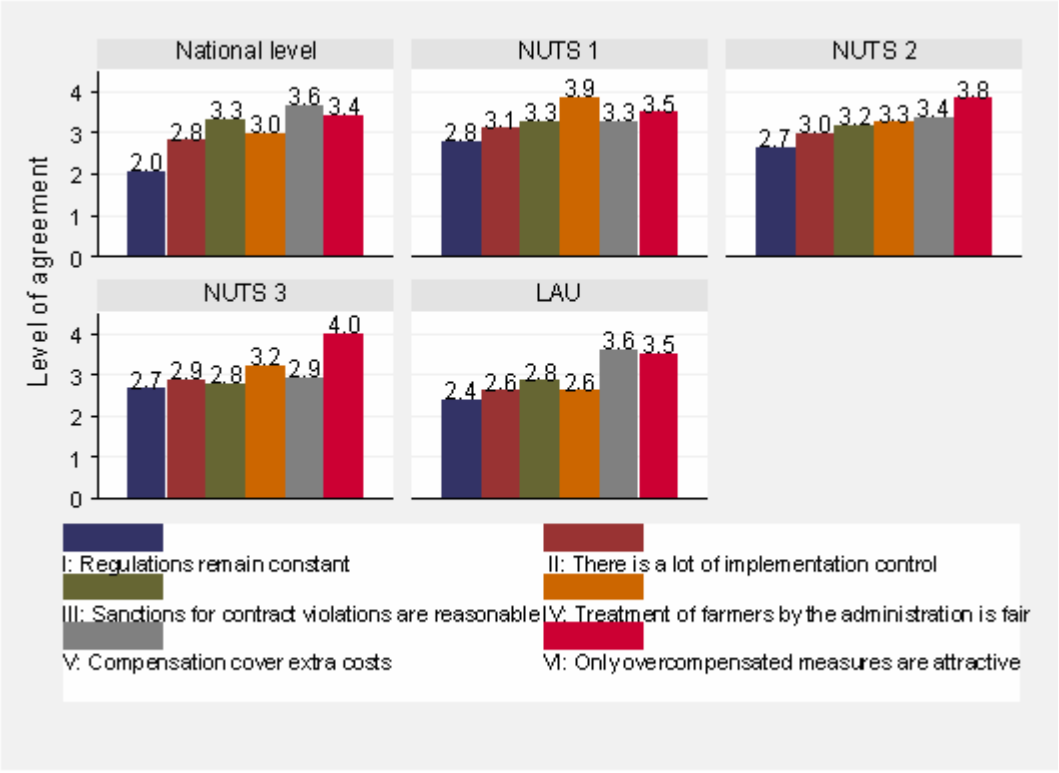


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

All administrative levels agreed that only overcompensated measures are attractive, as Figure 102 shows. This opinion is particularly held at NUTS 2 and 3 levels. Overall the administrative levels tended to disagree that the rules and regulations will remain constant over the financing period. This was particularly the case for the national level, which clearly disagreed, but to a smaller extent also for the LAUs. All administrative levels tended to be indifferent on the question, whether there is a lot of implementation control involved with the adoption of measures, although the LAU had also a tendency to disagree.

Concerning the question whether sanctions for contract violation are reasonable, the lower administrative levels were slightly unconvinced, while the levels from NUTS 2 upwards tended to agree. The NUTS 1 level considered the treatment of farmers as particularly fair. On the contrary however, the LAU tended rather to disagree that treatment was fair. That compensations cover extra costs, was particularly felt at the national and the LAU level. With the exception of a less obvious pattern at NUTS 1 levels, lower assessment that compensation covers extra costs correlated with a higher agreement that only overcompensated measures are attractive and vice versa, although less significantly.

Figure 102: Assessment of various aspects of agri-environmental measures by administrative level (II)



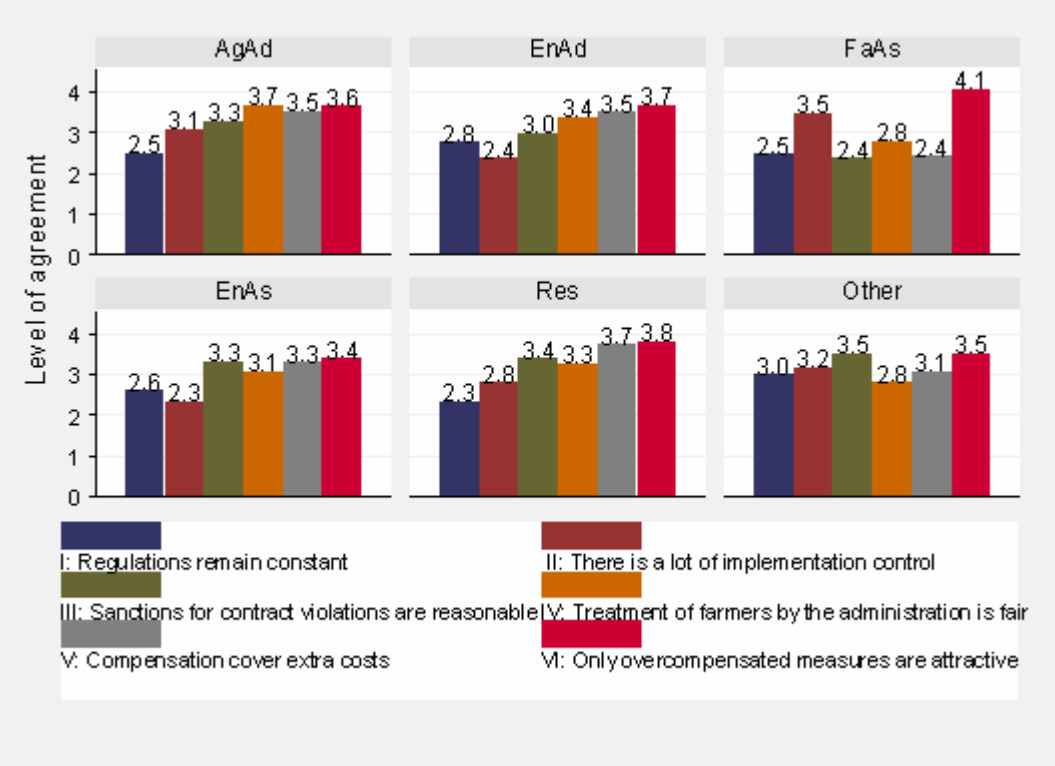
Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

All actors tended to be indifferent or to disagree, that regulations of AEMs will remain constant, as it may be derived from Figure 103. However, researchers were comparatively pessimistic about this issue. On the question whether there is a lot implementation control of measures the actors tend to be split into two parties. The agricultural administration, "others" and particularly farmers' associations tended to agree, while researchers and particularly environmental associations and administrations tended to disagree on this question.

Only farmers' associations tended to disagree that sanctions for contract violation of AEMs are reasonable, while all other actors considered tended to consider them fair. The agricultural administration considered the treatment of farmers as particularly fair, but farmers' associations and "others" in turn tended to disagree.

All actors and among them particularly the researchers thought that compensation covers extra costs, whilst farmers' associations considered compensation as rather insufficient. At the same time the latter more than clearly agreed that only overcompensated measures are attractive. This is also the opinion of the other actors, albeit to a lesser extent.

Figure 103: Assessment of various aspects of agri-environmental measures by actor groups (II)



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Conclusion:
For most characteristics of agri-environmental schemes, respondents tend to be generally indifferent. However, they would appreciate farmers to be more involved in designing AESs and tend to think that only overcompensated measures are attractive to the farmers. There is also some overall agreement that rules, requirements and application procedures are rather difficult to understand. Across the case studies, these patterns appear to be rather similar, although there can be strong variations for single aspects, like timeliness of payment and constancy of rules. Ireland shows a comparatively high overall agreement with the suggested AESs features. The patterns of agreement on the various aspects of the measures are quite similar between the administrative levels. An exception is, however, the timeliness of payments, which is being considered particularly low by the LAU and the national levels. In addition, the LAU level rather unlike other levels tended to disagree that treatment of farmers is fair. The pattern of the evaluation of the different aspects of AESs by actor groups varies rather strongly between actor groups.

5.4.9 Additional comments on part B of the questionnaire (Question 24).

Respondents have several additional comments on levels of participation, organisational and administration structure and information flows in their regions. However, while the other case studies have limited comments, Flanders, Basse-Normandie and Friesland provide rather large accounts. For most parts it has to be referred back to Appendix A 7, as comments often tend be rather country specific. Nevertheless some broader themes emerge across the case studies, though only few comments directly related to participation

There are several comments on administrative structures. The involvement of two administrations on Flemish AESs leaves farmers often confused, as they do not know where their measures come from. Thus cooperation and coordination between the two administrations should be improved, while it should appear in unity to the outside. Accordingly the responsibility of just one administration would be better, as a respondent suggests. This would also mean that funds only derive from one source. Nevertheless, a LAU respondent of the farmers' associations suggests that administrative structures are too complex. According to respondent so of the "others" group from the case study of Basse-Normandie, there needs to be better coordination and concerted action between NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 levels or one of the levels has simply to be abolished. In general the highly bureaucratic structure of schemes lead to little understanding of schemes of administrative staff and thus leaves farmers alone as an environmentalist from North-England suggests.
The merger of the agricultural ministry and the environmental ministry had according to respondents of the Brandenburg case study little impact. Conflicts about national parks might be reduced, but in general conflicts remained as before.
Pointing at complications with rules, an officer of the Flemish agricultural administration suggests that the link of AESs to the CAPs Mid-Term-Review is not useful, as it limits total payments per hectare and thus decoupled payment can be lost. Contracting periods of AESs are too short, as a Flemish researcher suggests, farmers thus have incentives to plough areas again after five years. Respondents from the French case study suggest that AESs are very complex. They also constitute further constraints on farming which enable administrations to increase monitoring. According to an officer of the Frisian agricultural administration sanctions are sometimes reasonable and sometimes not. However, respondents of the Brandenburg case study suggest that sanctions should be increased, to ensure effective results of controls, which should also be increased. This is also the opinion of some respondents from Basse-Normandie and of an environmentalist from North-England. Respondents of the "others" of the region further complain that practical considerations are not sufficiently taken into account as administrations only focus on correct implementation according to administrative and legal rules. Also researchers from Friesland suggest that control is too much focused on rules and not on impacts of schemes. A LAU respondent of the Friesland farmers' associations thinks that the consequences of measuring sizes of application areas are too serious. Rules of AESs should be made clear from the start on, as a respondent of the Basse-Normandie "others" suggests. A researcher thinks that application procedures change continuously which leads to confusion, complexity and frustration among farmers. According to a higher-level respondent of the "others" that all involved in AESs construct themselves very difficult rules. It would be useful, argues an Italian respondent of the farmers' associations, if the application process for AESs is compensated.
Information flows between agencies and down to farmers has often to be improved as several respondents suggest. In the Czech Republic this issue is mainly related to the State Agricultural Intervention Fund. It communicates badly and does not cooperate with other agencies and actors. In addition it does not adhere to decisions of the Ministry of Agriculture. Information problems are also related to the involvement of two administrations in the Flemish agri-environmental schemes. First, information exchange between the two branches has to be improved. Second, they should better consider the communication requirements of farmers. In addition, as a French official of the farmers' associations suggests, networking of farmers and local actors should be improved to facilitate dissemination of information. An Irish respondent suggests that there is a great need for more information exchange between researchers and environmental actors at the design stage of measures. Social cohesion is needed for information exchange and mutual control as a respondent of the "others" group in Friesland suggests. Further, according to a researcher, it is not always clear where to find the right information.

Another issue are knowledge levels of staff and others involved. A LAU respondent of the Flemish farmers' associations points out that there is a lack of competent officials in the administration. Respondents of the Basse-Normandie "others" group suggest skills of all organisations involved in AESs should be clarified. The merger of the agricultural and environmental ministries in the UK might lead to an erosion of agricultural knowledge, because environmental experts take over fears a respondent of the agricultural administration in North-England. Even a respondent of the environmental associations suggests a lack of knowledge, care and management of government departments and agencies.
More participation of different stakeholders the design process is demanded from several Flemish respondents. A respondent of the French "others" argues that environmental and local actors have been insufficiently involved in AESs. According to an officer of the agricultural administration in North-England participation should be based on the contribution made to environmental maintenance and improvement.
General differences between administrative levels concerning these issues are difficult to make out. However it seems that both upper levels and lower level tend to be more critical about existing structures, rules and exchange of information.
Also differences between actor groups are in general small. It may, however, be that farmers' associations have more complains about rules, structures and information flows, while administrations and environmental associations focus more on control, sanctioning and participation.

Conclusion:
In their comments on institutional aspects of AESs, many respondents focus on specific national or case study region issues. Examples are the Flemish AESs, which are administered by at least two different agencies or the Czech payment agency, which badly co-operates with other actors. This is partly reflected in the assessment of mergers of environmental and agricultural ministries. In this context, the performance of the agricultural and environmental ministries in North England is criticised. There are fears of under-representation of farming issues and of the relating knowledge. A common theme, however, are complaints about bureaucratic structures and complicated design of rules, making the application of schemes and their management difficult. Opinions about appropriate efforts in terms of sanctioning are, however, mixed. In addition, many suggestions are made to improve the downstream information flow between agencies and farmers. Further, there are complaints that practical considerations are not sufficiently taken into account focussing too much on correct implementation according to administrative and legal regulations.

5.5 Local Action Groups – Efficiency, effectiveness and acceptance (Part E)

5.5.1 Non-EU co-financed agri-environmental schemes (Question 25a)

Question 25a) asked whether there are any agri-environmental schemes (AESs) in the respondents' regions or countries that are not co-financed by the EU.
As can be concluded from Table 7 that 40 percent of respondents answered that there are agri-environmental measures in their region or country that are not co-financed by the EU. Only a fifth of the respondents stated that all measures are EU co-financed. However, a large group of respondents, which made up about nearly a third of the interviewees, were not able to answer the question. Thus, it seems that in the majority of regions there are measures available, which are not co-financed by the EU.

Table 7: Results of Question 25a) - Are there any Agro Environmental Schemes (AESs) in your country/region that are not co-financed by the EU?

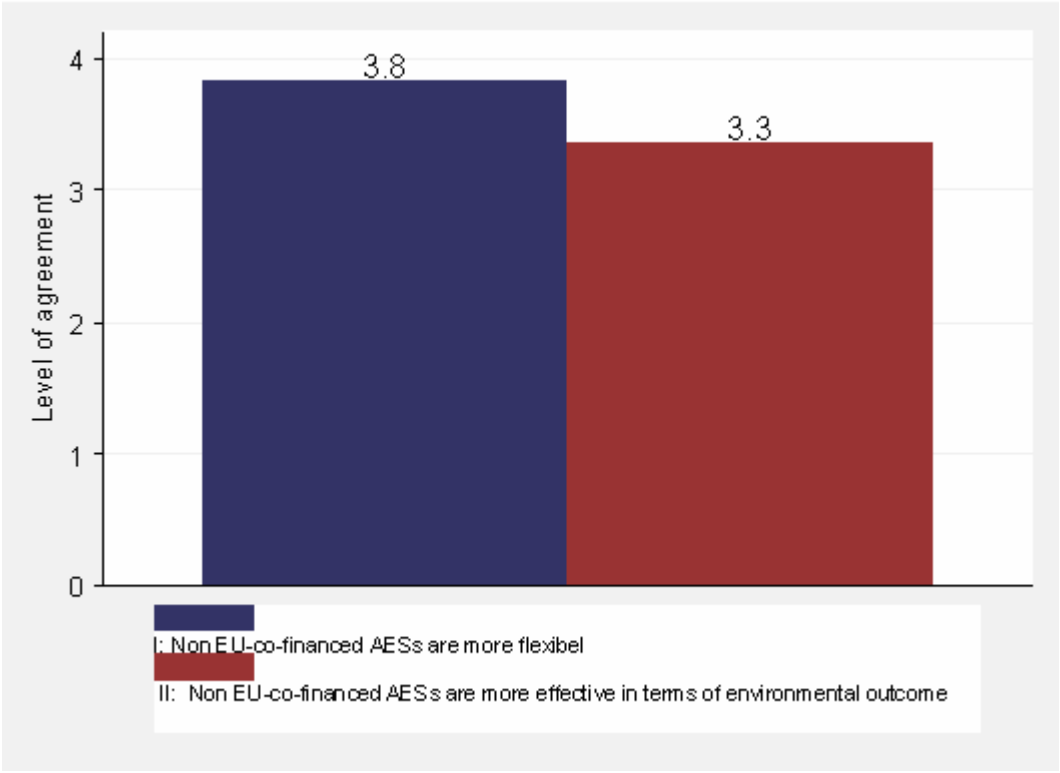
Statement	Frequency of observation	Per cent
Yes	112	40.58
No	53	19.20
At the moment yes, but not in the future	11	3.99
No, but there should be those kind of measures	12	4.35
No, but there will be those kind of measures	1	0.36
I do not know	87	31.52
Total	276	100

5.5.2 Flexibility and environmental effectiveness of non-EU co-financed measures (Question 25b)

Question 25b) asked respondents to determine the flexibility and the environmental effectiveness of non-EU co-financed measures compared to co-financed measures within a range from “strongly agree” (5 scores) to “strongly disagree” (1 score). If the respondents had no non-EU co-financed measures in their regions, their assessments have been included as hypothetical considerations.

It is generally held among the respondents that agri-environmental schemes that are not co-financed by the EU are more flexible. In addition, such non-EU-co-financed measures are generally also to some, albeit lesser, degree considered more effective in terms of environmental outcome, as it is also shown in Figure 104.

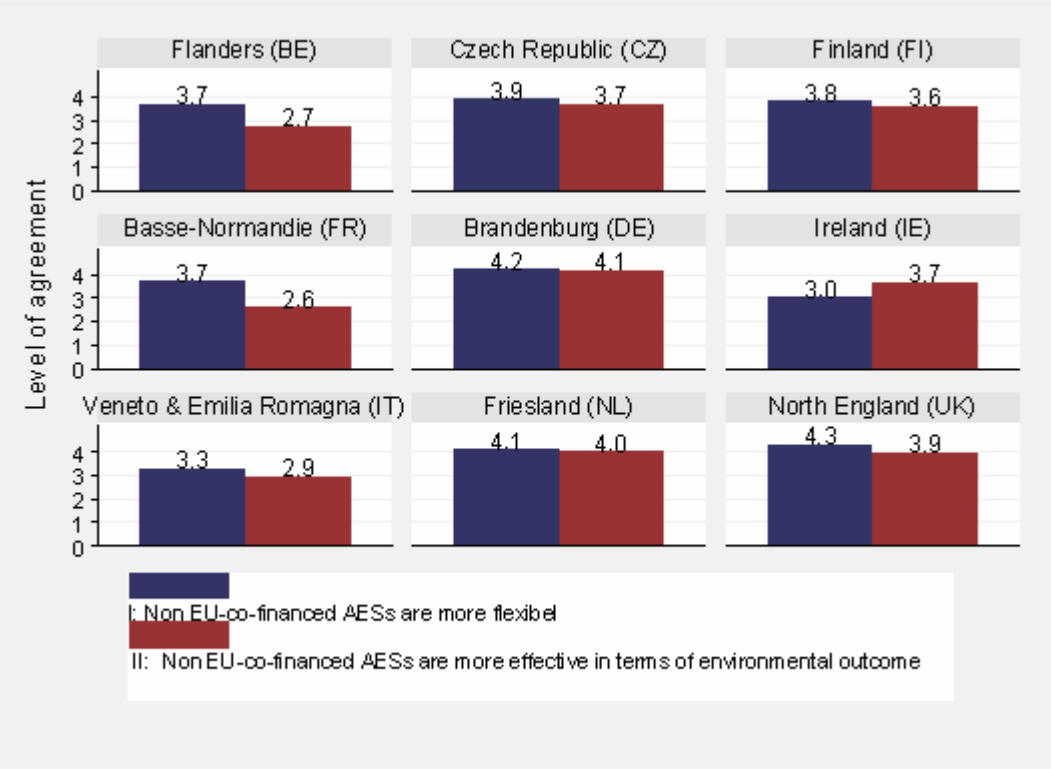
Figure 104: Assessment of non-EU co-financed AESs in comparison to EU co-financed measures



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

A greater flexibility of non-EU-co-financed measures is overall agreed upon by the regions, as being suggested in Figure 105. However, the Irish are indifferent and respondents from North England, Brandenburg and Friesland are agreeing with particularly clarity.
In terms of environmental effectiveness results point at the formation of two groups, one being the French, Belgium and Italian regions were there is a tendency to disagree that non-EU-co-financed measures are more environmentally effective and the other being the remaining regions were respondent almost clearly agreed. Ireland was the only region where there was stronger agreement that non-EU-co-financed measures are more effective in terms of environmental outcome than agreement on a higher flexibility.

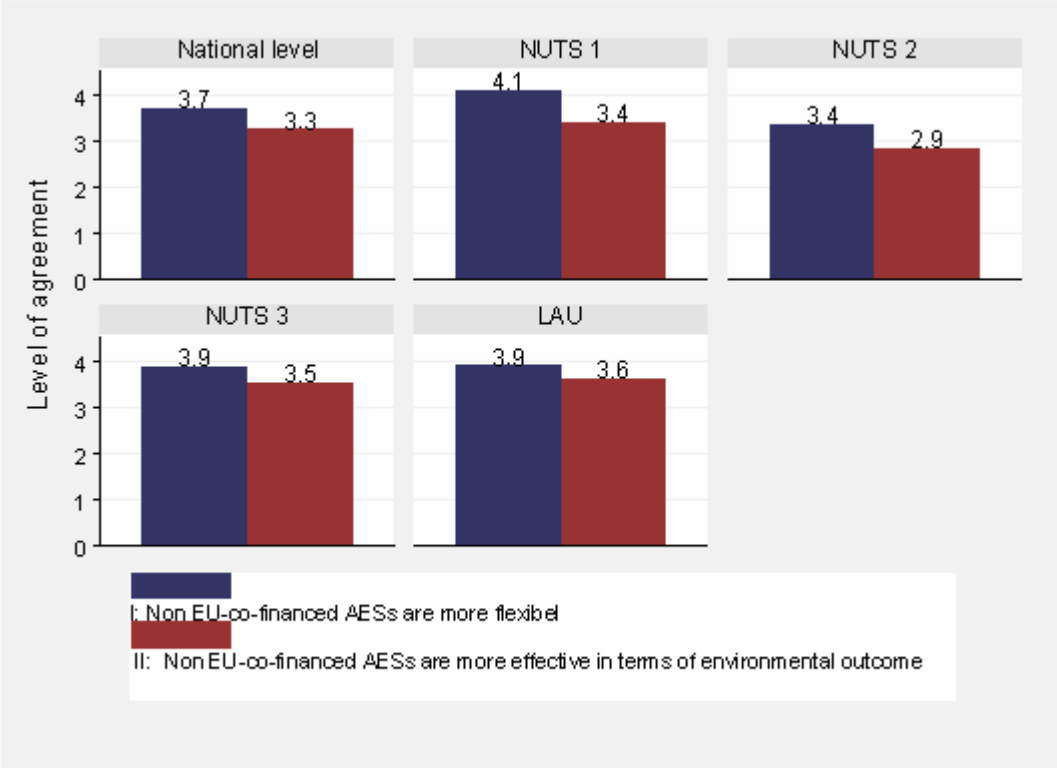
Figure 105: Assessment of non-EU co-financed AESs in comparison to EU co-financed measures by case study areas



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

The assessment of non-EU-co-financed measures is not markedly different between administrative levels. This is graphically presented in Figure 106. At NUTS 2 level, though, there is comparatively less confidence in benefits of non-EU co-financed measures. This is especially true for a increased environmental effectiveness.

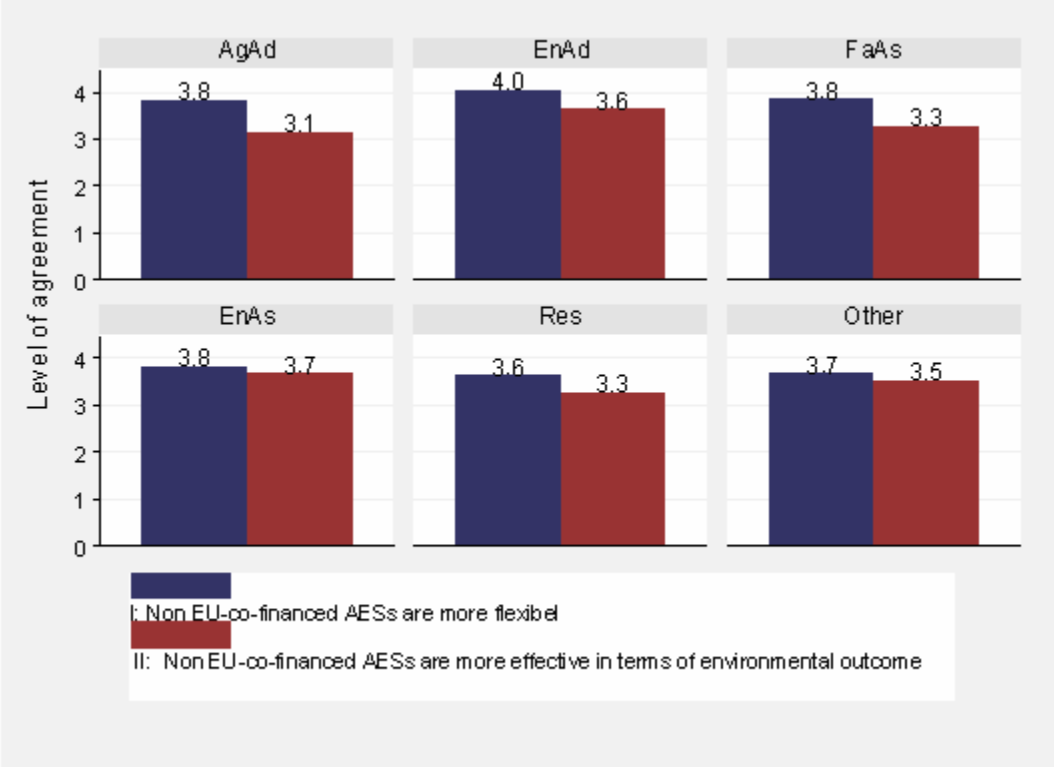
Figure 106: Assessment of non-EU co-financed AESs in comparison to EU co-financed measures by administrative levels



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Actors assess non-EU co-financed measures rather similarly, like it is also shown in Figure 107. However, the environmental administration considers the flexibility of non-EU-co-financed measures particularly high. In terms of effectiveness of environmental outcome one could suggest a common pattern among the environmental associations and administration, which considers the effectiveness rather high, while the farmers' associations and particularly the agricultural administration do agree less that non-EU-co-financed measures have a higher environmental effectiveness.

Figure 107: Assessment of non-EU co-financed AESs in comparison to EU co-financed measures by actor groups



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Conclusion:
Almost half of the respondents answered that there are Non-EU cofinanced measures in their regions or countries, while nearly one third of the respondents did not have any knowledge about this. As a tendency there is overall agreement that non-cofinanced agri-environmental schemes are more flexible. Although there is no disagreement, a greater effectiveness in terms of environmental outcomes is not suggested to such an extent. In terms of increased flexibility of such AESs, there is rather agreement in all case studies, although for countries like Ireland and Italy rather low. In terms of greater environmental effectiveness of such schemes, Flanders, Basse-Normandie and the Italian case study are rather unsure, whereas the other case studies tend to agree. On both aspects of non-cofinanced measures, the administrative levels have rather similar opinions, although NUTS 2 gives a rather low rating. It even ranges around indifference in terms of environmental effectiveness. The pattern of the assessment of these two aspects of cofinanced schemes is rather similar among actor groups. However, the agricultural administration considers increased environmental effectiveness as rather low.

5.5.3 Assessment of local action groups (Question 26)

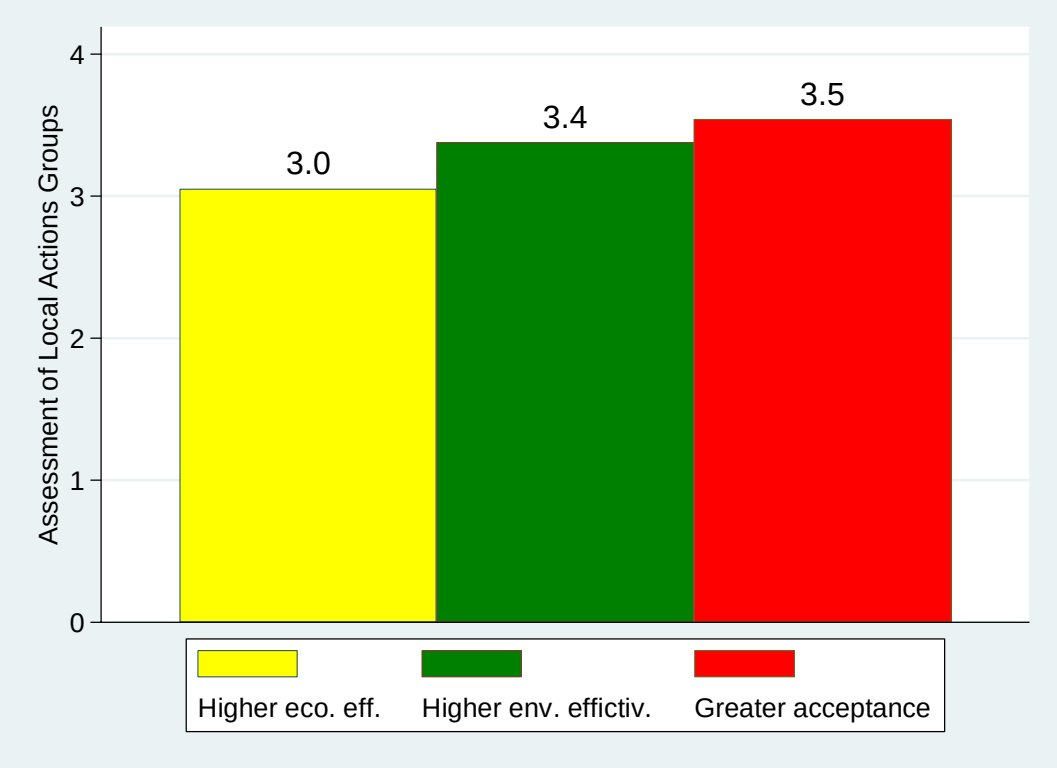
The following assessment is based on the results presented in the preceding sections where we noticed a strong demand for decentralisation. Here we investigate whether local action groups could be an institutional alternative to the current system. The following question considers the fact, that local action groups (LAG), in the sense of the LEADER approach, are mentioned in the new Council Regulation on support for rural development (EC) No. 1698/2005.

Respondents were asked whether “Local action groups, as mentioned in the new Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005, could lead to …

… higher economic efficiency of AES;
… higher environmental effectiveness;
… greater acceptance of AESs.”

As shown in Figure 108 concerning a higher economic efficiency on average actors are indifferent. However, they believe in a higher environmental efficiency and a higher acceptance of the AEM due to LAG to some extent.

Figure 108: Assessment of local actions groups

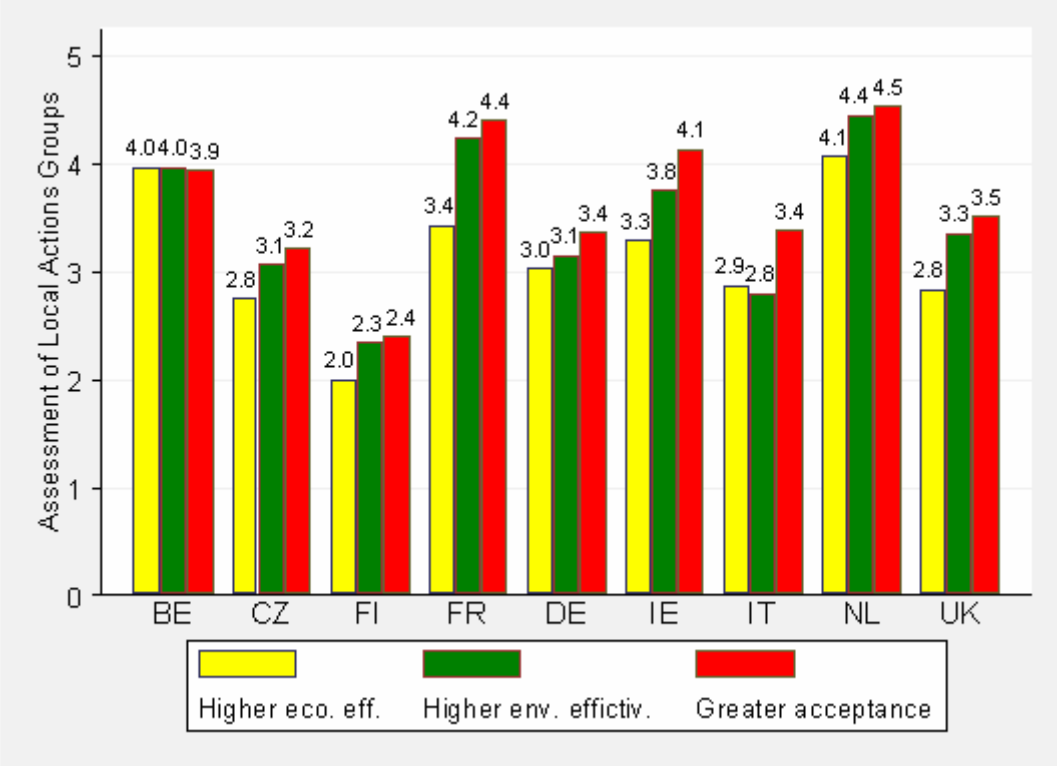


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

In Figure 109 the regions are considered in detail. However, they believe in a higher environmental efficiency and a higher acceptance of the AEM due to LAG to some extent. Concerning the regions, Flanders, Friesland und Basse-Normadie have relatively high expectations on local actions groups whereas Friesland has a more critical view on it. The other countries are more or less indifferent about LAGs. For F it is important to highlight that actors have already experiences with LAG in form of environmental cooperatives.
There seems to be no correlation with the heterogeneity of the natural environment shown in Figure 30.
Particularly actors in Basse-Normandie, Ireland and North England assess the increase of economic efficiency much lower than greater acceptance of AEM organised by local action groups. Only actors in Flanders agree that LAGs increase economic efficiency, environmental effectiveness and acceptance to rather similar extents. Figures on agreement of higher environmental effectiveness of LAGs tend to range between the assessment of economic

efficiency and greater acceptance with the exception of the Italian case study, where it is seen as comparatively low.

Figure 109: Assessment of local actions groups by case study areas

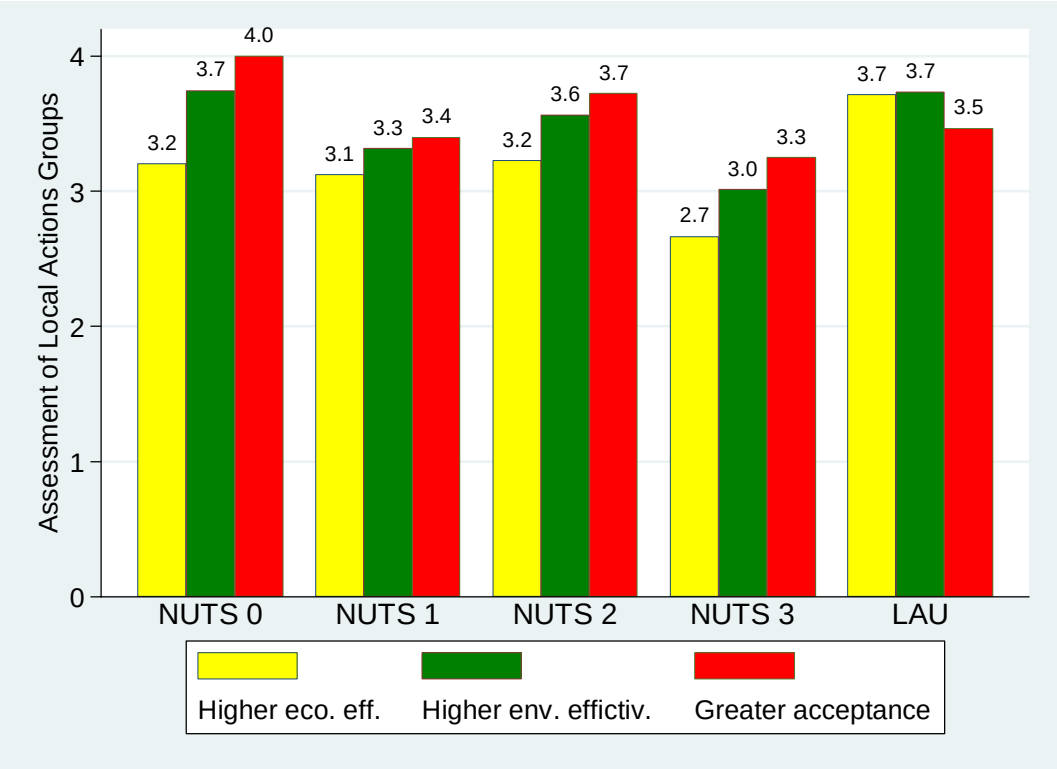


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Figure 110 suggests that all administrative levels are indifferent or agree at least to a minor extent that LAGs contribute to higher economic efficiency. Only the LAU level believe in a higher economic efficiency. With regard to higher environmental effectiveness and greater acceptance actors from al levels believe that LAG could cause an improvement in comparison to the current system.

Actors on NUTS 3 have the most critical view on LAG. All administrative levels except LAU agree in similar patterns ranging from lower agreement with economic efficiency over environmental effectiveness to highest agreement with greater acceptance through LAGs. At the LAU level there is the highest agreement with higher economic efficiency of LAGs. The National level in turn agrees with greater acceptance to the largest degree.

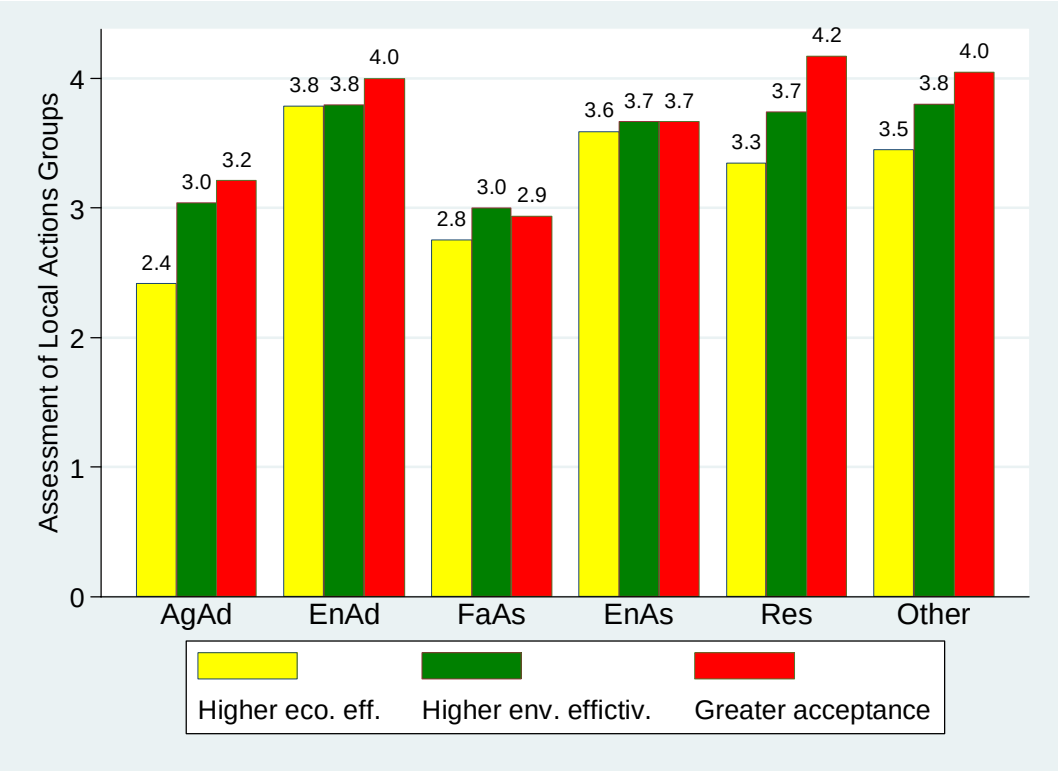
Figure 110: Assessment of local actions groups by administrative level



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

It can be concluded from Figure 111 that two main groups exist concerning the assessment of the potential of LAG. Actors from environmental administration and association as well as researchers and other see a high potential in LAG. In contrary, actors from the agricultural administration and farmers' associations tend to be indifferent or disagree that LAGs increase economic efficiency, environmental effectiveness and acceptance.
While there is comparatively low variation among the assessment of the criteria by farmers' associations, the agricultural administration disagrees to the largest extent to an increase of economic efficiency through LAGs. Researchers agree strongest among the actor groups that LAGs lead to greater acceptance. Also the "other" actors and the environmental administration agree to an increased acceptance. However, the environmental administration places the highest agreement on increased economic efficiency among actor groups while it agrees similarly to researchers and environmental associations on higher environmental effectiveness through LAGs.

Figure 111: Assessment of local actions groups by actor groups



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Conclusion:
Generally, local action groups are not seen to greatly contribute to higher economic efficiency, but most actor groups highlight the potential of increased environmental effectiveness and greater acceptance of AEMs due to local action groups. Nevertheless, comparing the individual case studies, large variations can be observed: While most case studies show partly large agreement with positive effects of local action groups, in the Finnish case study there is rather clear disagreement concerning all aspects. With the exception of NUTS 3 and NUTS 1 all administrative levels agree at least to a certain extent that local action groups contribute to increased environmental effectiveness and greater acceptance. Only LAUs suggest that local action groups facilitate economic efficiency as well. The obvious result is that the assessment of local action groups is very much dependent on the actor group. The agricultural administration and farmer associations have little faith in local action groups, while the remaining actors are rather optimistic as far as higher economic efficiency, increased environmental effectiveness and greater acceptance are concerned.

5.5.4 Obstacles and problems of designing AEMs in a bottom-up approach (Question 27)

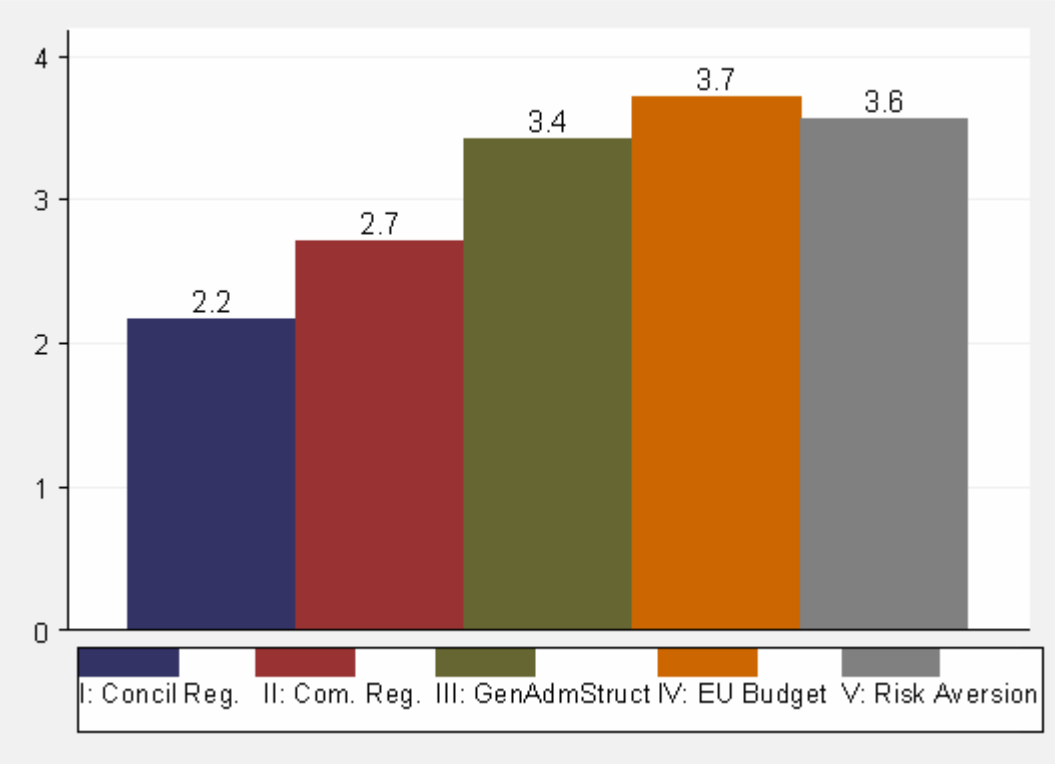
In this section it is focused on the main obstacles/problems in designing specific AEMs in a bottom-up approach. Respondents were asked the following question: "The main obstacle/problem in designing some specific[11] AEMs in a bottom-up approach (e.g. Nuts 3 level or below) in the context of the LEADER axis within the new Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 is …

[11] We presume that not all AEM can or should be designed in a bottom-up approach.

I) … the new Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005."
II) … the corresponding Commission Regulation (implementation Regulation)."
III) … the general administrative structure in your country."
IV) … the EU budget available for the second pillar of the CAP."
V) … the risk aversion of the responsible civil servants (administrators)."
VI) … others, e.g. ….

As shown in Figure 112, the EU Budget is considered as the greatest obstacle followed by the general administrative structure and risk aversion of civil servants.
The new Council and Commission Regulation is not seen as an obstacle to implement a bottom-up approach per se. This is a change in comparison to the forerunner Commission Regulation, which was considered an obstacle in the assessment of several actors involved in AEMs (Eggers 2005: 217). However, many actors did not comment on the new regulations. The details of the new regulations are not well known by some actors inside and most actors outside of the administration.

Figure 112: Assessment of the main obstacles in designing some specific AEM in a bottom-up approach

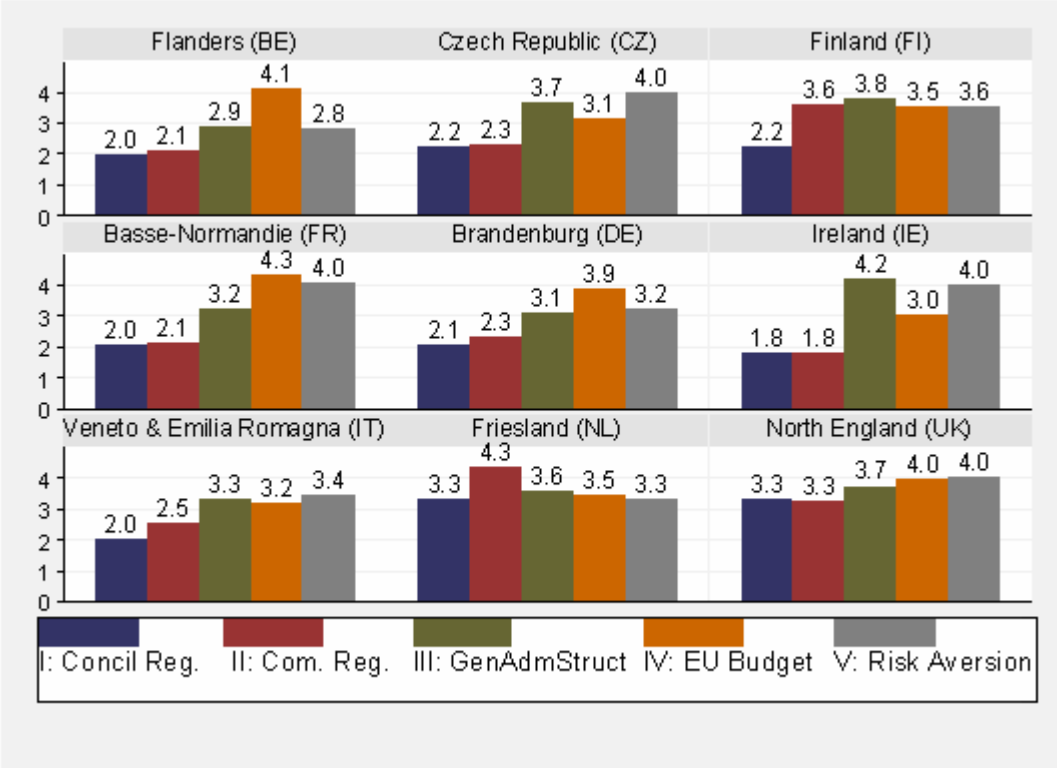


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Figure 113 illustrates the assessment of the main obstacles sorted by case study areas. Flanders, Basse-Normandie, Brandenburg and North England consider the EU budget as the main obstacle in designing AEMs. Friesland is the only region, which sees the EU Commission Regulation as a major obstacle to bottom up approaches, although also Finland considers the Regulation to be of an obstacle to some degree. For Firesland it could be related to the context of Friesland in which bottom up is much more than LAG only: groups of farmers managing wildlife and landscape. With the exception of the North England and Friesland, in general, both the Council and the Commission regulation are seen as being no obstacle. Risk aversion seems to be an obstacle of some importance in all case studies except

Flanders, where the EU Budget singles out as the main obstacle. Particularly Ireland and North England, but also the Czech Republic rated risk aversion comparatively high.

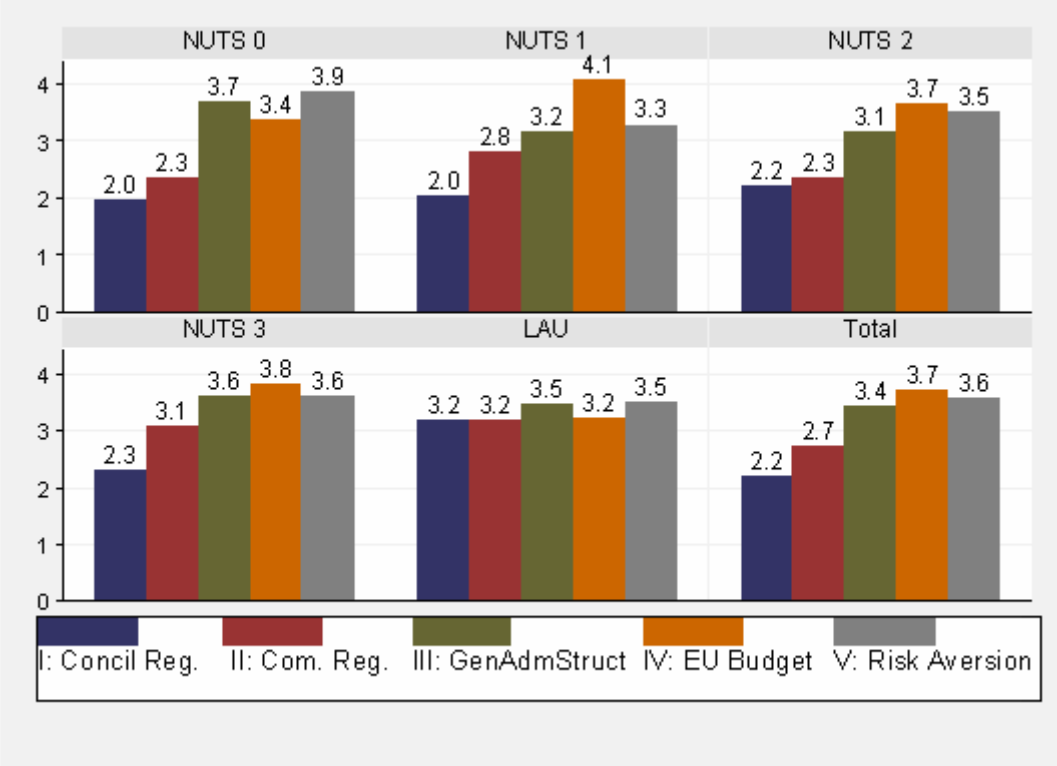
Figure 113: Assessment of the main obstacles in designing some specific AEMs in a bottom-up approach by case study areas



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

The pattern of agreement of the NUTS 1 to NUTS 3 levels on the different components being obstacles to bottom-up approaches are quite similar to the average pattern as depicted in Figure 112. However, at NUTS 1 level the EU budget is being rated a particular high obstacle. In addition, NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 evaluate the Commission Regulation differently. While NUTS 2 does not consider it being an obstacle, NUTS 3 regards it on average a minor obstacle. Patters for the national and LAU levels differ. The latter considers all components including the Council Regulation as being obstacles to a more or less equally minor degree. The former in turn places a comparatively high importance on risk aversion as an obstacle and also considers the general administrative structure as being a rather important obstacle.

Figure 114: Assessment of the main obstacles in designing some specific AEMs in a bottom-up approach by administrative levels

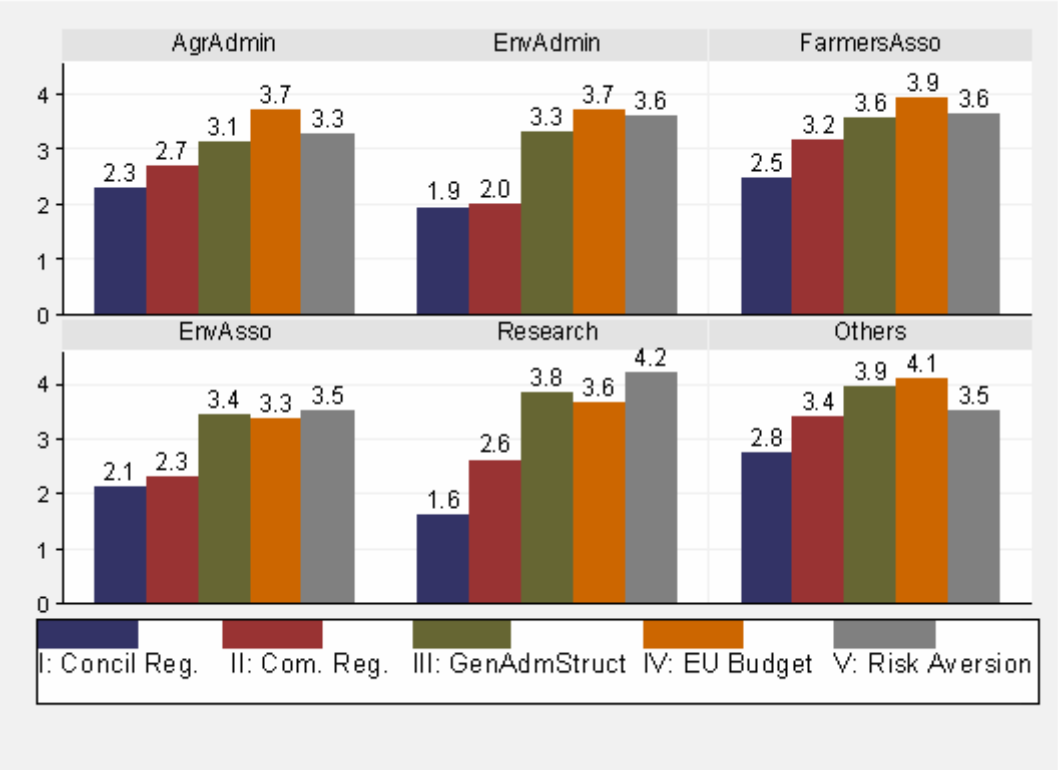


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

When ordering the agreement on obstacles of bottom up approaches according to actor groups, especially the high agreement of researchers, that risk aversion is a major obstacle may come into ones mind when looking at Figure 115. All other actor groups consider risk aversion to be an obstacle to a lesser and comparatively similar extent. Environmental associations and administration disagree stronger than other actors that the Commission Regulation poses an obstacle. In turn particularly farmers' associations and "others" consider the Regulation to be on average at least a minor obstacle.

The pattern of agreement of the agricultural administration resembles rather closely the average pattern of the actors in total. It can also be observed that, farmers' associations and particularly researchers consider the general administrative structure as an obstacle, while the agricultural and also the environmental administration consider it as an obstacle to a lower extent. Compared to the other actors the environmental associations consider the EU budget as minor constraint to bottom-up approaches.

Figure 115: Assessment of the main obstacles in designing some specific AEMs in a bottom-up approach by actor groups



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Conclusion:
Overall, major obstacles to bottom-up approaches are considered to be the EU budget and risk aversion of civil servants. The general administrative structure as well is rather seen as an obstacle, whereas the Council Regulation 1698/2005 and the corresponding Commission Regulation concerning the implementation rules are regarded as smaller obstacles. However, many actors do not comment on the new regulations, as their details are not well known by some actors inside and most actors outside the administration. When comparing the individual case studies a rather scattered pattern emerges. From among the EU Regulations, the Council Regulation is seen as an obstacle only in Friesland and North-England, whereas the Commission Regulation too is considered an obstacle in Finland. The assessment patterns of severity of obstacles are rather similar among the different administrative levels. However, LAUs label the Council Regulation as a comparatively high obstacle and NUTS 1 rate the EU budget as an exceptionally important obstacle. The assessment of obstacles by actor groups is rather unified. An exception may be the high rating of risk aversion of civil servants by researchers.

5.5.5 Individual opinions on main problems and obstacles of bottom-up approaches (Question 28)

A larger selection of obstacles and problems of bottom-up approaches to agri-environmental schemes emerges when asking respondents on their individual opinion. Ireland, Flanders and Czech Republic are, however, case studies with limited comments on these issues. Funding of AESs and relating measures, the fit of bottom-up approaches into existing administrative structures and AESs rules are seen as major difficulties. However also appropriate control of

bottom-up approaches is a concern for some. In the following some of the major arguments will be sketched out. Further details can be found in Appendix A 8.

Funding of bottom-up schemes seems to be an important issue. Several respondents from the Czech case study are thus concerned that lack of finance may be an obstacle to bottom-up approaches. This is also a concern of respondents from Flanders, Basse-Normandie and the Italian case study. In addition, misuse of financial resources is a threat at lower levels, suggests an officer of the agricultural administration in Brandenburg. The farmers' association of the region fears that funds will be taken away from traditional measures and a respondent from the environmental administration suggests that such approaches require more resources. This is also expected by the Finnish agricultural administration. In turn a respondent from the farmers' associations suspects that money allocation will be a problem in bottom-up approaches. An officer of the North-England environmental administration suggests specifically the allocation of the single-farm payment and the modulated amounts of it will be problematic. Further as there is not sufficient funding, not all local needs will be satisfied.

Fit into administrative structures and appropriate skills of administrative staff in relation to bottom-up approaches are major concerns for several respondents. Bottom-up approaches are simply difficult to administer as respondents from the Czech Republic suggest. In particular, administrations lack information and skills. There is also lacking manpower. Thus administrative efforts will increase with bottom-up approaches a respondent from Brandenburg argues. Further, the administrative structure will make it difficult to relocate competencies and bottom-up approaches need entirely different partners. There are also concerns that upper levels do not like to give influences away. Problematic will be that all municipalities will have to address the payment office individually as an officer of the Flemish agricultural administration points out. A Finnish officer suggests that a complicated administrative system with multiple statement procedures in addition to unclear responsibilities concerning implementation and outputs will prevail. According to an Irish respondent of an environmental association inadequate information and knowledge transfer may pose problems to bottom-up approaches. Thus greater inter-agency co-ordination and cooperation will be required. The administrative structure will not be able to incorporate bottom-up approaches, as these need more room for manoeuvre suggests a respondent from the "others" of Basse-Normandie. In addition, it will be difficult to create sufficient representation of local levels at higher levels suspects a respondent of the farmers' associations in Basse-Normandie. According to an officer of the agricultural administration of Basse-Normandie, the lack of skills implies that learning processes are required. Nevertheless, the insufficient capacity of the administration will according to researchers of the Italian case study lead poor applications of AEMs based on bottom-up approaches. Similar arguments come from respondents of the North England case study.

Bottom-up approaches will be time consuming as respondents from Flanders and Brandenburg point out. According to a Finnish respondent of the agricultural administration, there will be problems with responsibility. Another Finnish respondent suggests that inequalities between regions and farmers increase.

There will be too many requirements in the regulation, which results in long application processes suggests a Flemish respondent from the environmental administration. According to a respondent of the National level of the agricultural administration of the Frisian case study the Directive 1698/2005 links its objectives and rules to AEMs. Therefore bottom-up approaches may not fit in and accordingly no money will be provided. Further, an administrative obstacle to bottom-up approaches is that they are rather complex and require specific rules. Similarly a respondent of the farmers' associations is pointing at the regulation and suggests that it is difficult to comply with everything in a bottom-up process, where the EU plays a large role in determining requirements. Consequently an officer of the North-

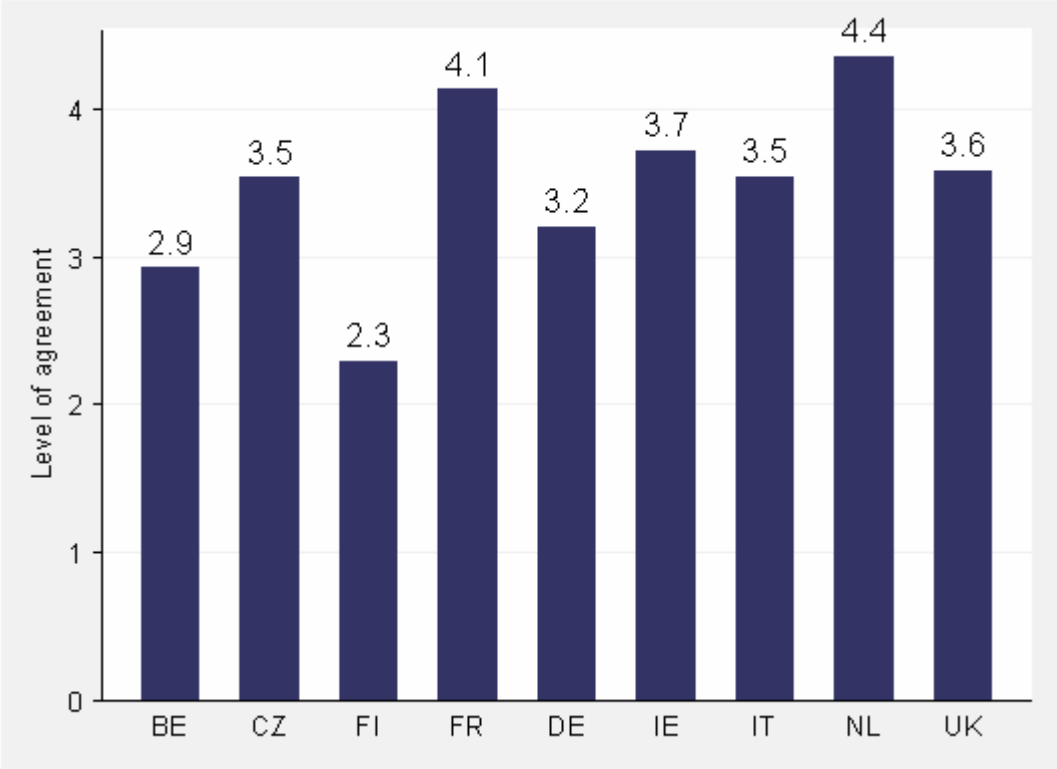
England agricultural administration remarks that scheme complexity will increase along with administrative costs. Hence, a respondent of the NUTS 1 level researchers simply thinks that the centralised administrative structure will pose problems. Moreover, according to a Czech respondent control of bottom-up activities may be difficult to carry out. This is even more difficult with the new regulation, suggests an officer of the agricultural administration in Brandenburg.
Interests of local stakeholders in general and according to a respondent of the "others" in Basse-Normandie the need for cooperation between farmers and environmental actors may pose obstacles. An Irish respondents suspects that because the agricultural lobby is particularly strong at the national level, it will try to prevent such bottom-up approaches there. According to NUTS 1 respondents from the North England agricultural administration main problems with bottom–up approaches are to decide who will contribute and the need to force the government to train its staff adequately for making assessments and giving advise. However, a respondent of the environmental administration is concerned that bottom-up approaches risk increases in environmental fragmentation and increase administrative burdens. Thus good planning and communication for bottom-up approaches is needed to be effective.
A NUTS 2 member of the Italian agricultural administration is more optimistic about bottom-up approaches. The presence of a high number of intermediate actors could make bottom-up approaches in the LEADER fashion less cost-effective. However, the respondent also suggests that the design, monitoring and evaluation of bottom-up measures should be supported by a permanent interregional and interdisciplinary group of experts
Overall there are no clear differences of these comments between both, administrative levels and actor groups. However, there is a tendency among agricultural actors to point at funding implications in particular.

Conclusion:
The respondents mention a diversity of problems and obstacles regarding bottom-up approaches to AEMs. Among others, funding of schemes, fit into administrative structure and AESs requirements are recurrent themes across the case studies. In addition, Czech and Brandenburg officers of the agricultural administrations mention problems of control of bottom-up activities. Also respondents of Finnish farmer associations and Irish environmental associations point to this issue. Several respondents of all actor groups and administrative levels see funding of bottom-up approaches as a major problem. Among others, there are fears that funding will not be lasting or will be taken away from other measures, that support for farmers may also be reduced and, a suspicion especially raised by the environmental domain, that the farming community will be unwilling to release funds. Several respondents across actor groups argue that the general administrative structure is rather set up for top-down approaches and may lack the necessary capacity to administer bottom-up approaches. Moreover, the legal requirements for bottom-up approaches may pose difficulties on administrative procedures. Accordingly, a few respondents, for example from North England, suggest that learning processes are necessary for bottom-up approaches.

5.5.6 Justification of potentially higher costs of bottom-up AEM design by higher benefits (Questions 29)

In Question 29 actors had to assess whether potentially higher costs due to the design of AEMs in a bottom-up approach (e.g. NUTS 3 level or below) would be justified by higher benefits due to less utility losses.
Overall the respondents were indifferent about this question. However, it may also be suggested that they had a slight tendency to agree that higher design costs of bottom-up approaches would be justified by increased benefits (statistical mean: 3.39). Yet, one has to be cautious about such a statement since variations of the assessment of this question were comparatively large (SD 1.31), despite a high number of observations.
Respondents of most regions agreed at least to some extent, that higher costs of a bottom-up approach would be justified by higher benefits, as depicted in Figure 116. However, the Finnish respondents tended to disagree. In France there was a clear agreement while in Friesland respondents found bottom-up approaches particularly justified.

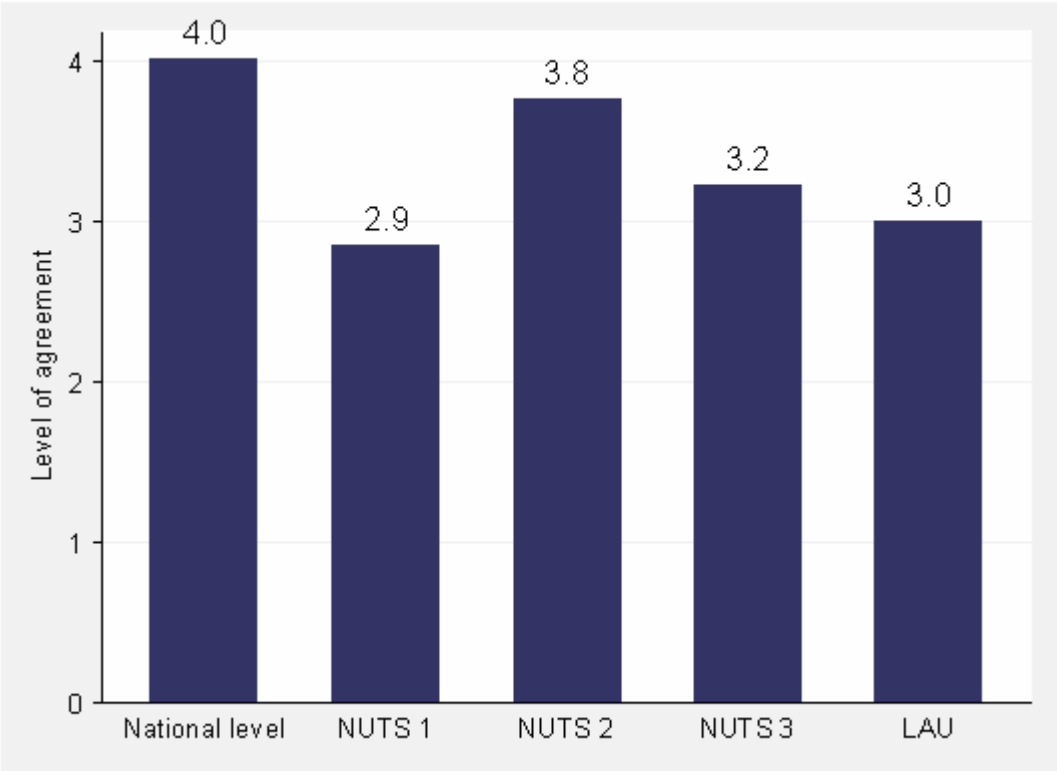
Figure 116: Higher costs due to the design in a bottom-up approach of AEM would be justified by higher benefits – Assessment by regions



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Considering the results shown in Figure 117, only the national level clearly agreed that a bottom-up approach would be justified by higher benefits. Close to it is, however, the NUTS2 level, while the other levels are indifferent concerning the question whether higher costs of such an approach would be justified by higher benefits.

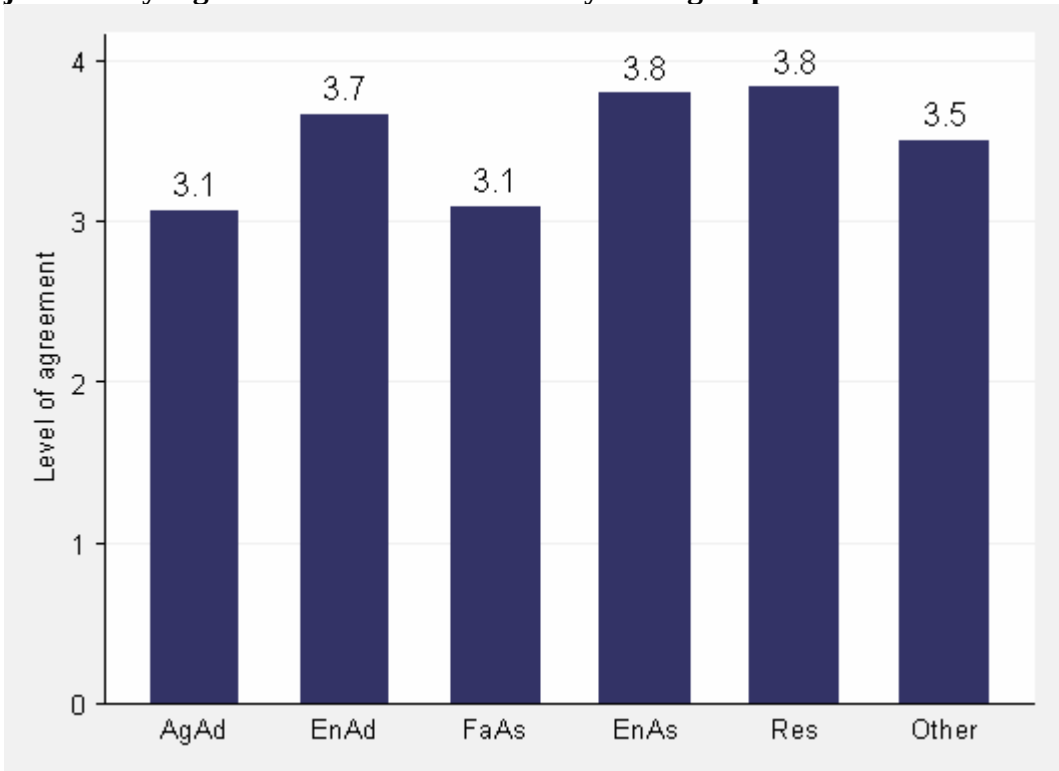
Figure 117: Higher costs due to the design in a bottom-up approach of AEM would be justified by higher benefits – Assessment by administrative levels



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Overall actor groups tended to agree that higher costs of such a bottom-up approach would be justified by higher benefits. This would be an immediate conclusion of Figure 117. However, both the agricultural administrations and the farmers' associations expressed an indifferent attitude towards this issue.

Figure 118: Higher costs due to the design in a bottom-up approach of AEM would be justified by higher benefits – Assessment by actor groups



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Conclusion:
There is a slight tendency among the respondents to agree that higher costs of bottom-up approaches would be justified by higher benefits. However, this statement shows a great variation, becoming apparent when comparing individual case studies. The case studies of the Netherlands and France, for example, largely agree with such a justification, whereas Finland clearly tends to disagree. In addition, rather large differences can be found between administrative levels, although less distinct than between the case studies. Here a rather indifferent attitude of the NUTS 1 level is contrasted by large support for the justification by the national and the NUTS 2 levels. The lower levels, which would be very much involved in bottom-up approaches, are rather indifferent about this issue. There is also a significant variation between the actor groups. Environmental administrations, environmental associations and researchers tend to agree that higher costs of bottom-up approaches would be justified by higher benefits. The agricultural administrations and farmer associations are, however, fairly indifferent about the matter.

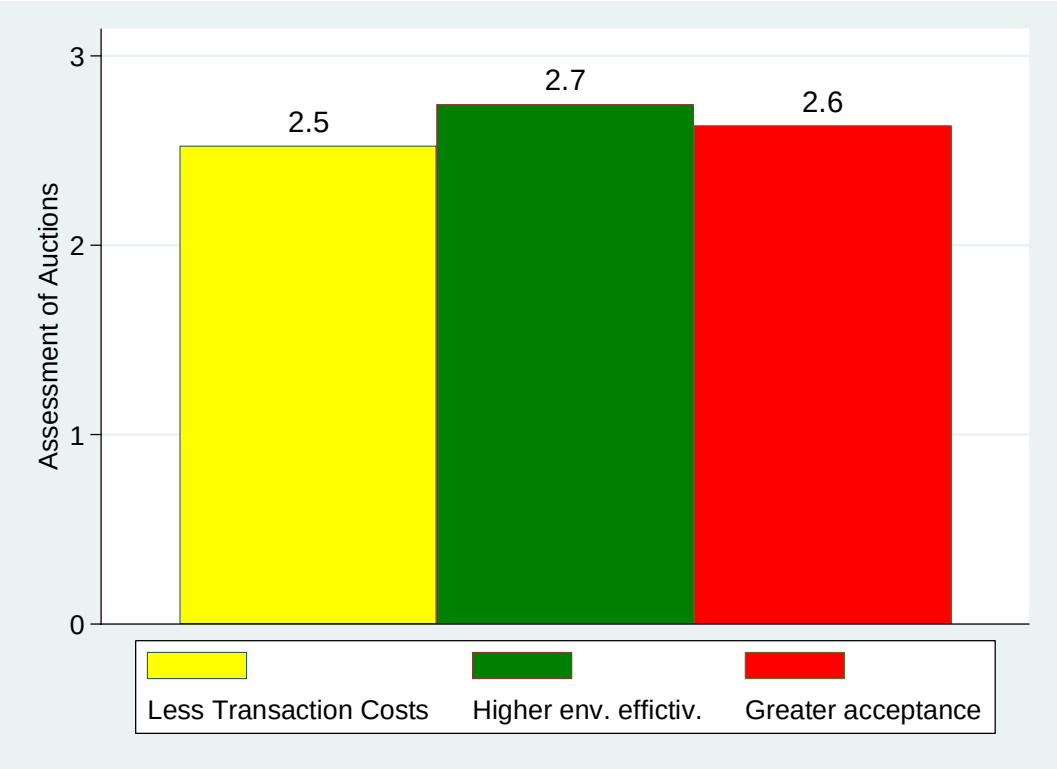
5.5.7 Assessment of auctions or calls for tenders (Question 30)

In this question respondents were asked to assess to what extent "Auctions or call for tenders, as mentioned in the new Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005 (article 39), could lead to

…savings in transaction costs at the implementation stage of AESs,
…higher environmental outcomes of AESs, and
…greater acceptance of AESs."

On average calls for tenders or auctions as an institutional alternative for AEMs tended not to be considered among the respondents as leading to less transaction costs, greater acceptance and higher environmental effectiveness. This assessment is graphically represented in Figure 119. The disagreement to the latter was, however, less marked compared to the transaction costs reduction. In comparison to LAG actors are much more sceptical concerning optional benefits resulting from the implementation of auctions.

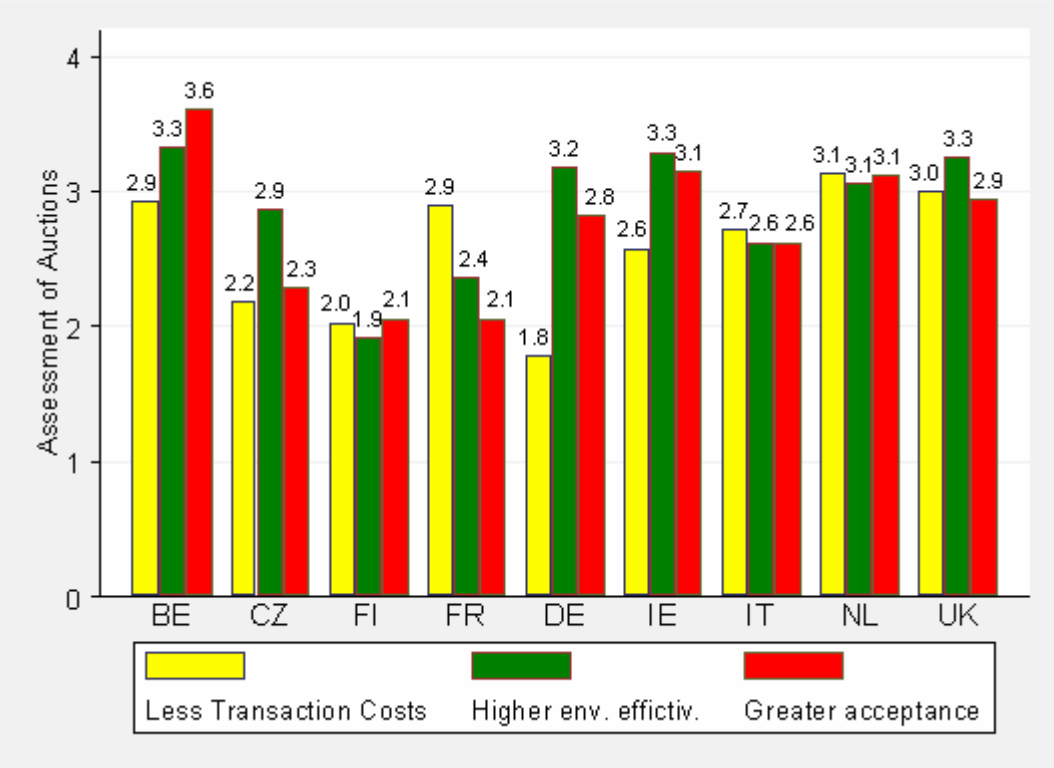
Figure 119: Assessment of auctions as an institutional alternative



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Despite the overall tendency to disagree on possible benefits of auctions, there was an incoherent pattern among the regions of the assessment of auctions for AEMs, as shown in Figure 120. Friesland is the only region where respondents are at least clearly indifferent that auctions would cause less transaction costs.
That auctions would contribute to greater acceptance was only agreed to some extents by Flanders. Concerning an increased environmental effectiveness North England, Ireland Flanders and to a lesser extent Brandenburg showed at least a slight tendency of agreement. North England showed generally no strong disagreement, which is also the case for Flanders. Brandenburg, however, disagreed to the strongest degree that auctions would incur less transaction costs. Finland was overall most pessimistic about auctions and generally disagreed in the criteria – particularly concerning an increased environmental effectiveness. The Czech Republic had in turn a low disagreement in higher environmental effectiveness, whilst at the same time showed almost clear disagreement in the two other criteria. Basse-Normandie's assessment pattern is distinct concerning the low disagreement in lesser transaction costs, while rating the remaining criteria comparatively low.

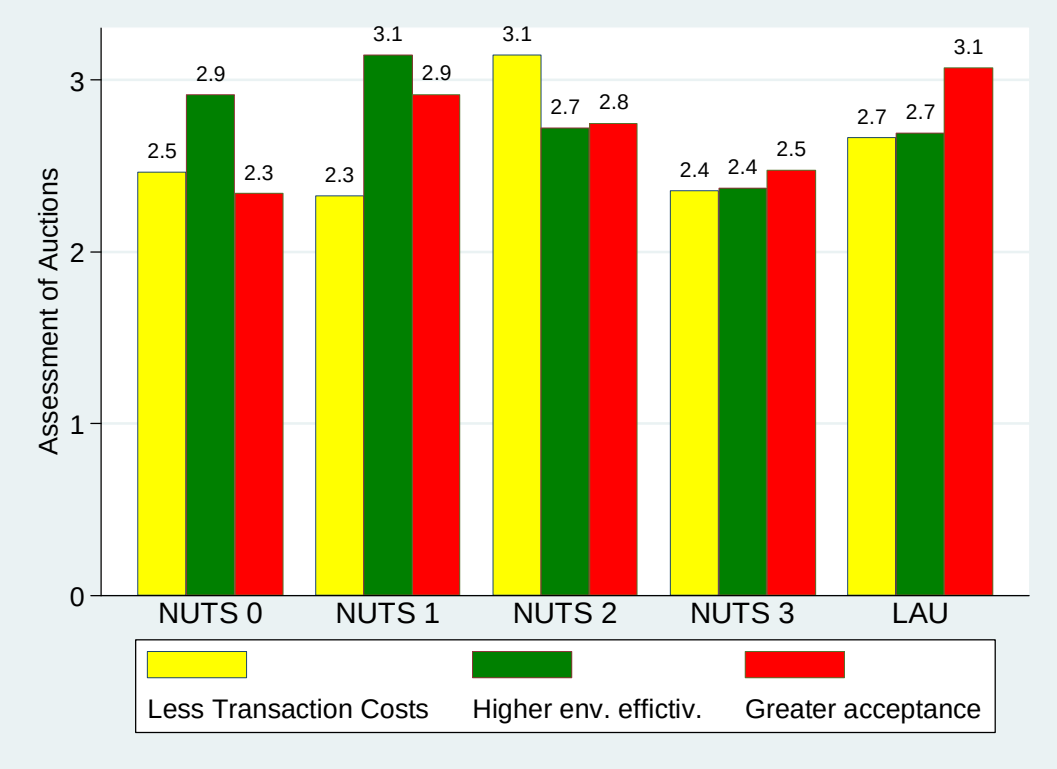
Figure 120: Assessment of auctions as an institutional alternative by regions



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

All administrative levels tended to disagree that there will be less transaction costs due to auctions. As being depicted in Figure 121 an exception is the NUTS 2 level since an indifferent assessment with a very slight tendency on agreement. The administrative levels neighbouring NUTS 2, however, showed the largest disagreement on lower transaction costs.
NUTS 1 is the only administrative level agreeing that auctions contribute to higher environmental efficiency of measures. While the other levels showed no large disagreement with this issue, NUTS 3 was rather disagreeing. This administrative level tended to have the strongest disagreement in all criteria. LAU in turn, which showed the highest assessment in greater acceptance also rated the other criteria not very low. Also NUTS 2 showed no disagreement in all criteria.

Figure 121: Assessment of auctions as an institutional alternative by administrative levels

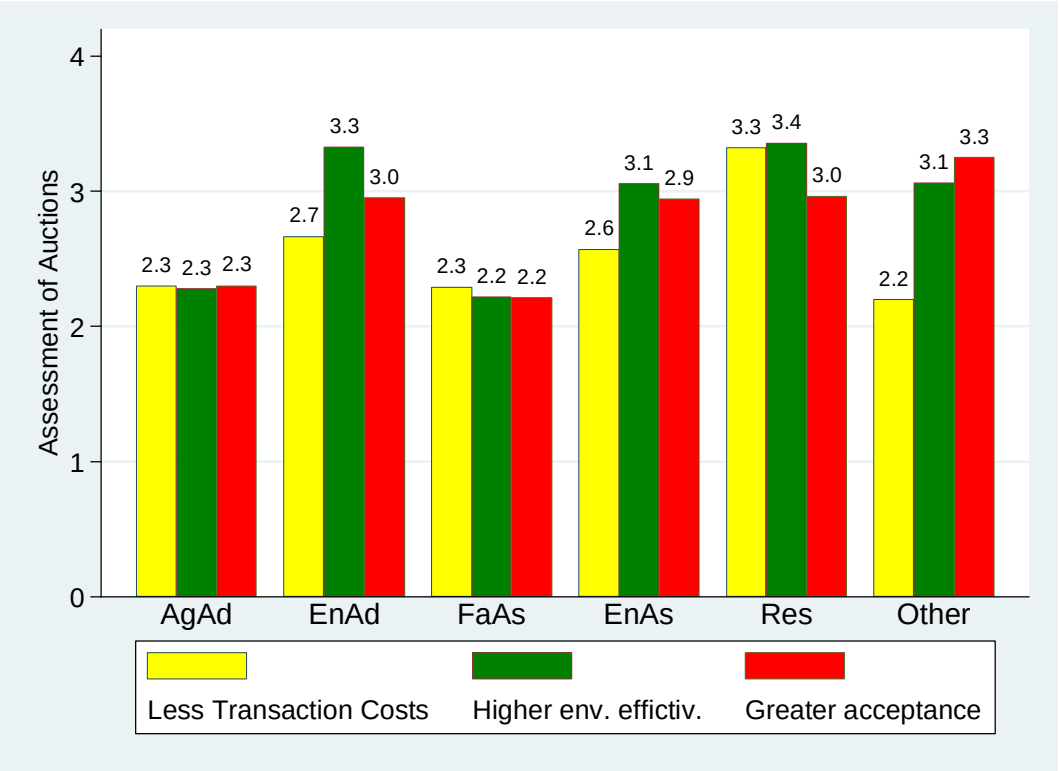


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

When comparing the evaluation of auctions by actor groups in Figure 122, we notice a similar pattern as we have seen for LAGs, only on a lower level of agreement: The agricultural domain assess auctions rather critical whereas the other actor groups tend be indifferent. The most optimistic groups concerning the overall potential of auctions are researchers.

The group of “other” actors thought to some extents that auctions cause greater acceptance. However, it was most pessimistic about lower transaction costs of measures with an assessment rather in line with the agricultural administration and farmers’ associations. The environmental administration and associations were both largely disagreeing on lower cost of auctions. In addition, both, the agricultural administration and farmers were disagreeing similarly strong with greater acceptance through auctions, while both, the environmental administration and associations were rather indifferent about the matter.

Figure 122: Assessment of auctions as an institutional alternative by actor groups



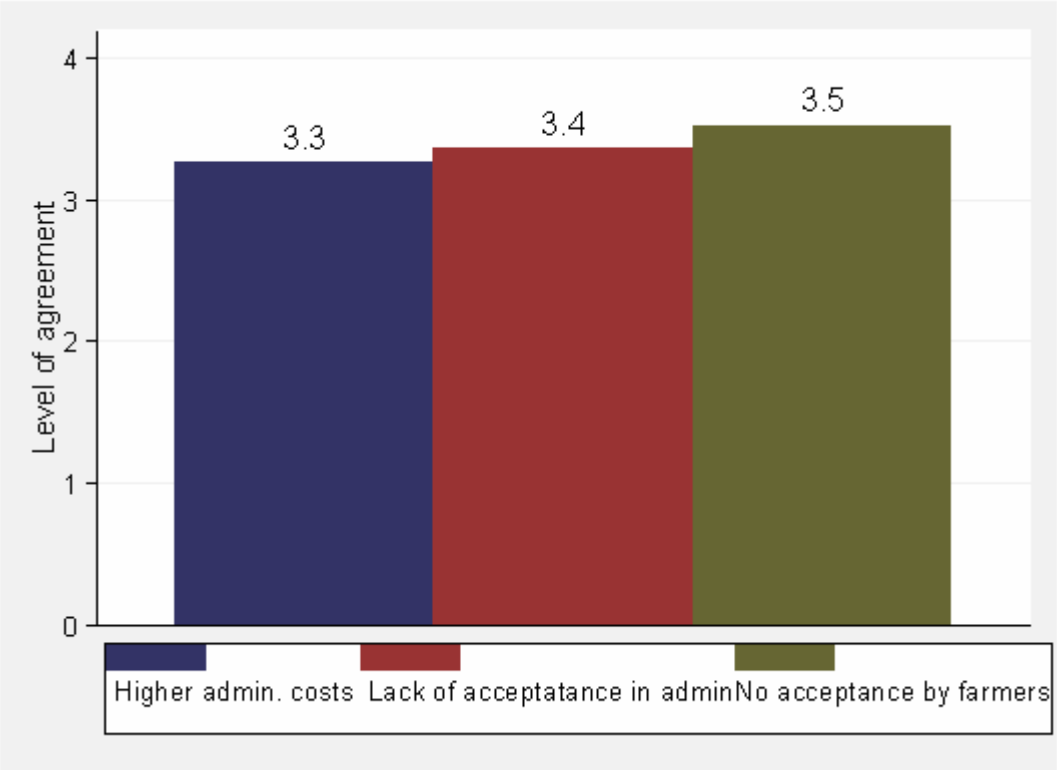
Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Conclusion:
As an average tendency, calls for tenders or auctions as an institutional alternative to AEMs are not considered to produce less transaction costs, greater acceptance and higher environmental effectiveness. However, the differences between the case studies regarding this question are rather great. While there are large variations considering the different criteria, only the case study of Flanders has a rather optimistic view on the potential of auctions. In North England and the Netherlands the issue produced consistent indifference, while in Finland consistent disagreement. The administrative levels too have rather diverse opinions, though NUTS 3 with a consistent tendency of disapproval may not fall in this pattern. There is also obvious disagreement by the agricultural administrations and farmer associations with the hypothesis that calls for tenders or auctions lead to less transaction costs, greater acceptance and higher environmental effectiveness, while the remaining actors do not show such consistent disapproval.

5.5.8 Obstacles to AESs based on calls for tenders (Question 31)

Question 31 asked respondents to what extents, in comparison to the current system, higher administrative costs, lack of acceptance by members of the administration and no acceptance by farmers are obstacles for organising AESs through call for tenders.
Overall the respondents tended to agree that higher administration costs, lack of acceptance in the administration and missing acceptance by farmers will prove to be obstacles to the introduction of auctions for contracting AEMs. As shown in Figure 123, however, administrative costs were seen a lower obstacle than acceptance by farmers.

Figure 123: Obstacles for organising AESs through auctions in comparison to the current system

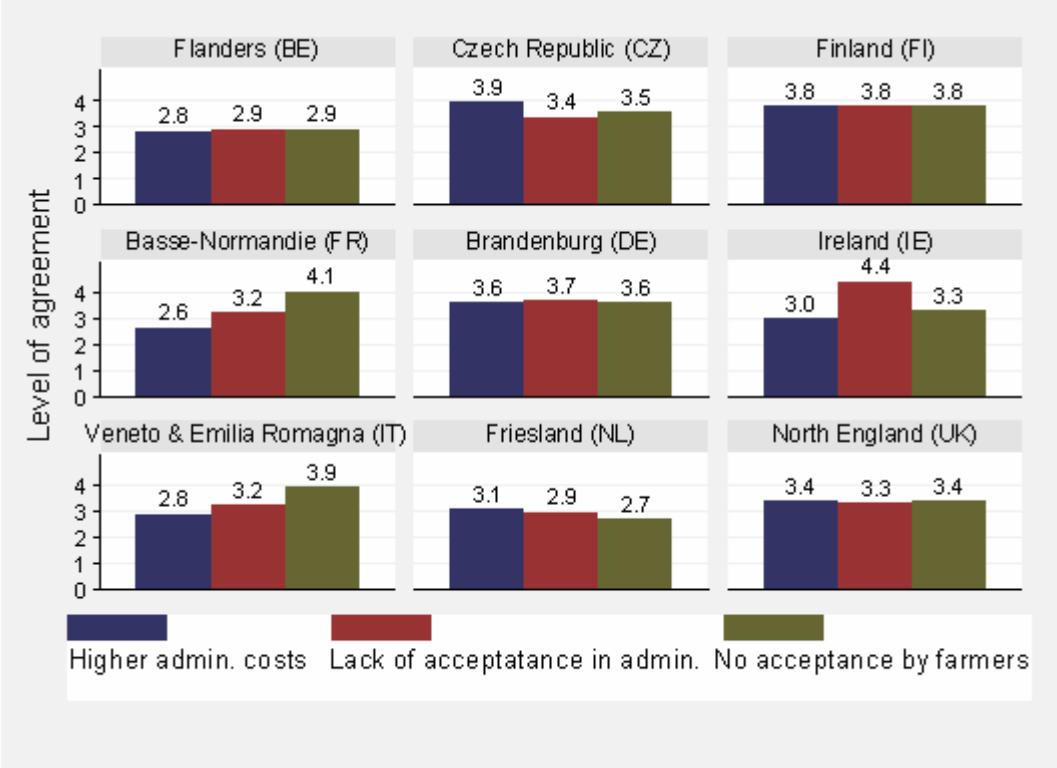


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Friesland and Flanders showed overall an indifferent opinion concerning the potential obstacles to auctions, as depicted in Figure 124. Both regions were also indifferent related to the acceptance of auctions by farmers. Farmers' acceptance in turn was seen as a rather large obstacle in Basse-Normandie, the Italian case study and Finland. The latter country agreed consistently with all three obstacles, whereas the former, together with Flanders, tended to disagree to a minor, but comparatively large extent that higher administrative costs of auctions will pose an obstacle. Potentially higher administrative costs in turn where seen as a rather clear obstacle in the Czech Republic and Finland, and to some extent also in Brandenburg. Brandenburg, however, saw the lack of acceptance in administrations as the major obstacle, though the assessment by the respondents differed not markedly from other obstacles.

Lack of acceptance in the administration was seen as an obstacle by almost all countries, although Flanders and Friesland are rather indifferent on this issue. Ireland saw the lacking of acceptance by the administration as a severe obstacle and rated it much larger than any other countries. However, also Brandenburg and Finland tended to find the lacking acceptance of the administration a larger obstacle, though they also gave missing acceptance of farmers a high rating.

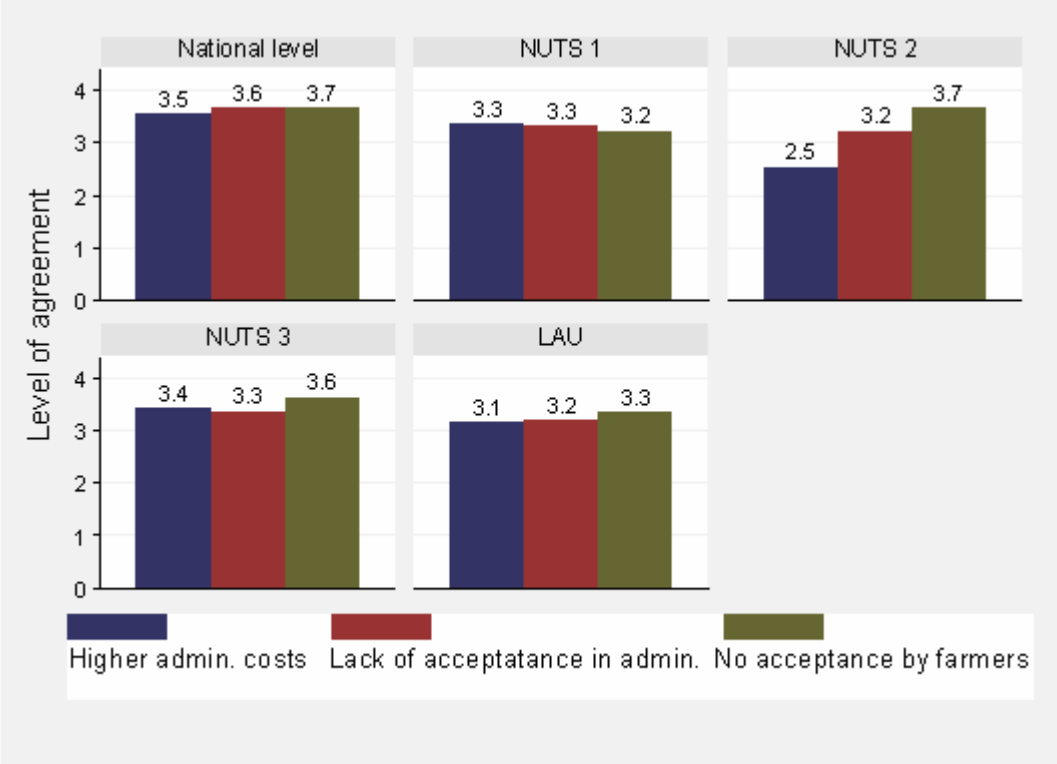
Figure 124: Obstacles for organising AESs through auctions in comparison to the current system by regions



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

When ordering the perception of obstacles to auctions by administrative levels as in Figure 125 only NUTS 2 tends to disagree to a comparatively large extent with higher administrative costs being an obstacle. This administrative level considers missing acceptance of auctions by farmers as a much larger obstacle and assesses it similar to the national and the NUTS 3 level, while NUTS 1 and LAU are less convinced that farmers are not going to accept auctions. Considering the lack of acceptance in administrations the national level seems to be particularly convinced about this, while the other levels only agree to a minor extent to this obstacle. When comparing the overall assessment of the obstacles by LAU and the national level one can notice that the national level rates obstacles much higher than LAU which overall is ranging close to indifference on all aspects.

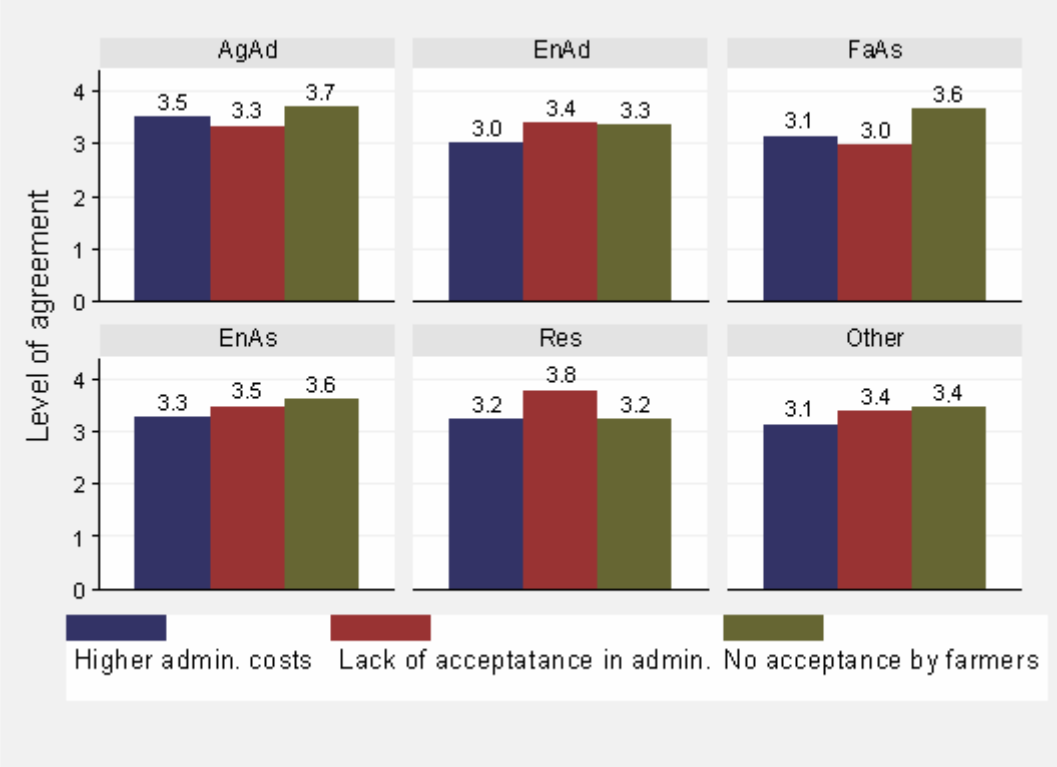
Figure 125: Obstacles for organising AESs through auctions in comparison to the current system by administrative levels



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

As shown in Figure 126 all actor groups considered higher administrative costs, lack of acceptance by the administration and missing acceptance by farmers as obstacles to auctions, though some also felt indifferent on either administrative costs (environmental administration) or acceptance (farmers' associations). Lacking acceptance by the administration was seen the major obstacle by researchers. All other actors rated the obstacle lower, though not to a large extent with the exception of farmers' associations. The latter found, in line with the agricultural administration, but also similar to environmental associations, that missing acceptance by farmers will be large and the major obstacle. However, the agricultural administration considers higher administrative costs as a rather great obstacle, which is seen much less so by the environmental administration.

Figure 126: Obstacles for organising AESs through auctions in comparison to the current system by actor groups



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Conclusion:
A slight agreement was generally observed for the statement that higher administration cost, lack of acceptance in the administration and missing acceptance by farmers will be obstacles to the introduction of auctions in the context of AEMs. The assessment, however, varies between the case studies. Flanders and Friesland tend to rate the obstacles consistently rather indifferent, whereas Finland consistently tends to rate them high. For Ireland, lack of acceptance in the administration is a particularly clear obstacle. With the exception of NUTS 2, administrative levels tend to similarly assess the obstacles as comparatively severe. Especially the national level tends to consider the obstacles as important. The actor groups were all at least indifferent about the mentioned obstacles to auctions. However, there is some variation in the assessment.

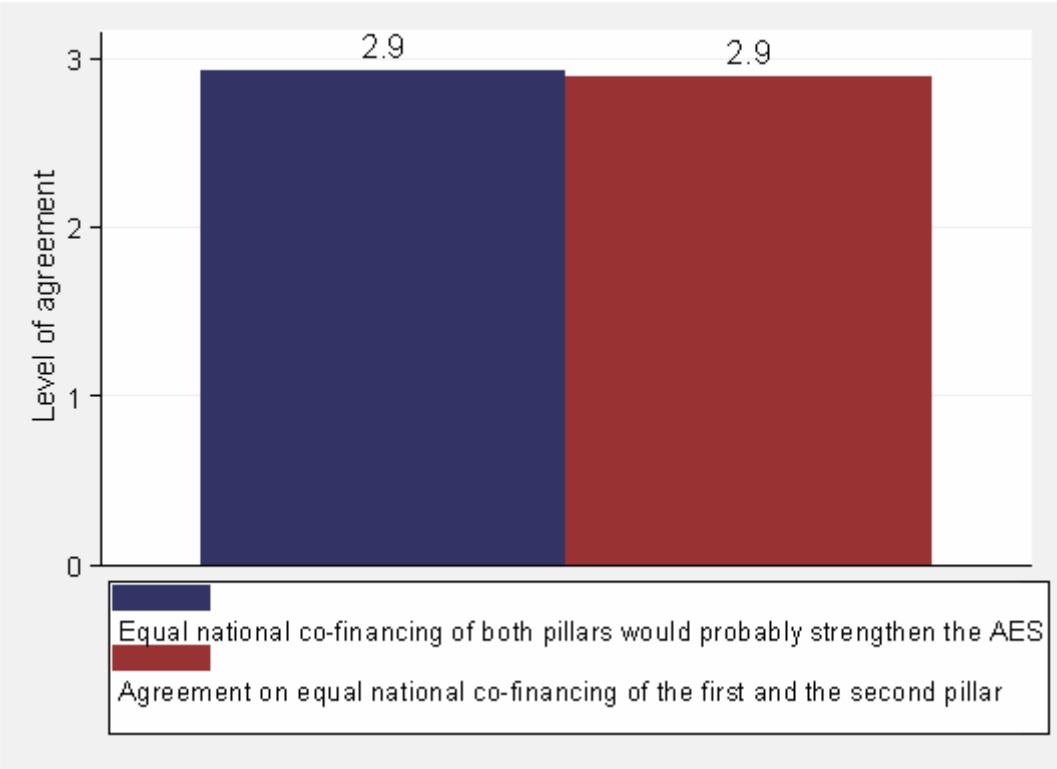
5.5.9 Equal national co-financing of the first and second pillar of the CAP and its impacts on AESs (Question 32)

Concerning the EU budget provided for the CAP, currently only a relatively small part is invested in the second pillar. This may be due to the fact that the first pillar requires no national co-financing. In this context, question 32 asked, whether the respondents agree with the following statement and the subsequent question:

I “An equal national co-financing of the first and the second pillar of the CAP would strengthen the second pillar and probably the AESs.”
II “Would you, in principle, agree on an equal national co-financing of the first and the second pillar of the CAP?”

Overall respondents were indifferent that equal national co-financing of both pillars of the CAP could strengthen AEMs, as shown in Figure 127. They were similarly cautious to state that they would agree on equal national co-financing of the pillars. However, there was no disagreement on both propositions.

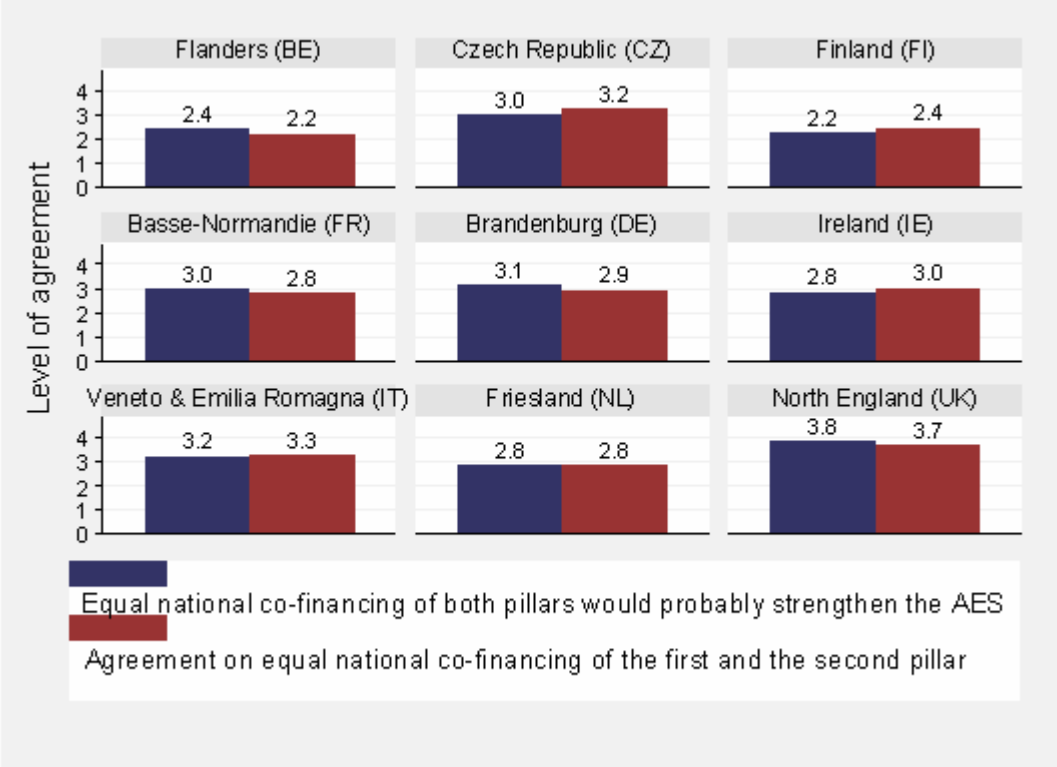
Figure 127: National Co-financing of the first and the second pillar of the Common Agriculture Policy



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

When comparing the assessment of national co-financing of the first and the second pillar of the CAP by the regions as depicted in Figure 128, a mixed picture emerges. North England is by far the strongest proponent of national co-financing on equal terms and for both pillars to strengthen AEMs, while Finland and Flanders are most reluctant. Only the Italian case study does support the co-financing to some extent and the Czech Republic shows some agreement to an equal national co-financing of the two pillars. To a minor extent Brandenburg would agree that equal national co-financing of both pillars of the CAP could strengthen AEMs. This region, however, tends to disagree on equal national co-financing of the pillars in general.

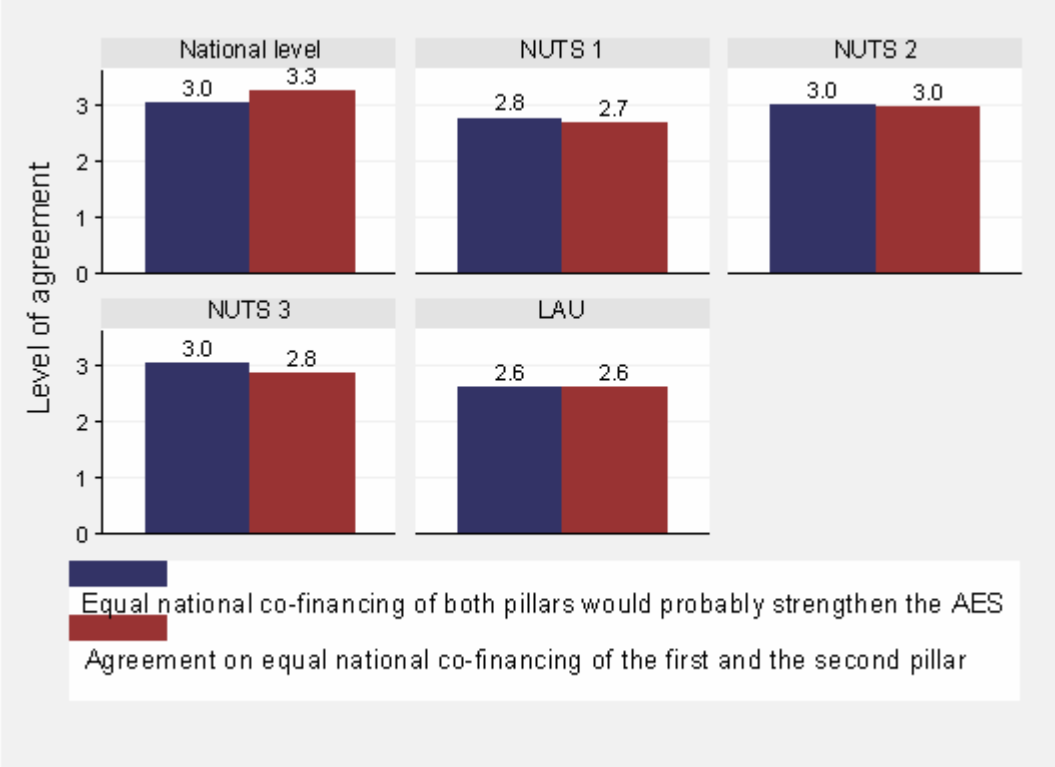
Figure 128: National Co-financing of the first and the second pillar of the Common Agriculture Policy by regions



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

As shown in Figure 129, compared to the other administrative levels, the LAU showed the smallest support to the propositions that equal national co-financing of both pillars of the CAP could strengthen AEMs and to equal national co-financing of the pillars in general. However, also NUTS 1 was slightly disagreeing with both propositions.
Like NUTS 2 and NUTS 3, the national level had an indifferent attitude towards the strengthening of AESs through equal national co-financing, while it supported the general idea of equal national co-financing of the first and second pillar of the CAP like no other administrative level.

Figure 129: National Co-financing of the first and the second pillar of the Common Agriculture Policy by administrative levels



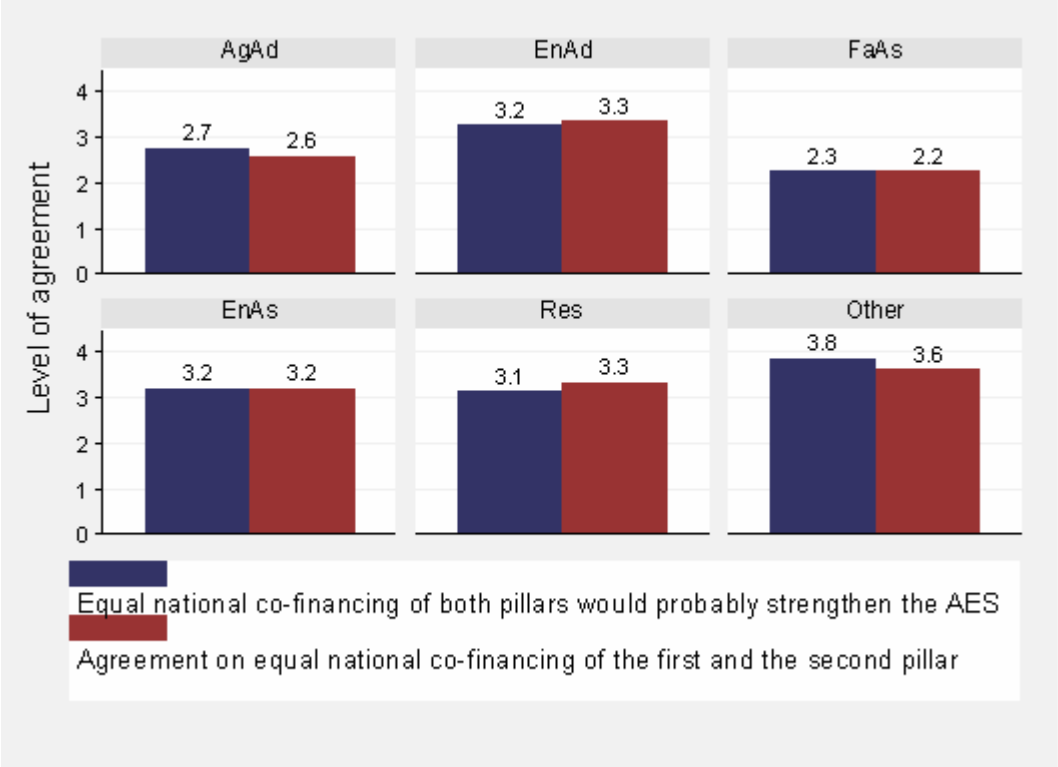
Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

When comparing the attitude towards national co-financing by actor groups as presented in Figure 130, it becomes clear that particularly the farmers' associations do not tend to support the idea that equal national co-financing of both pillars of the CAP could strengthen AEMs and that equal national co-financing of the pillars in general would be useful. Also the agricultural administration had a tendency towards rejection of the two propositions. All other actor groups agreed at least to a minor extent to the two statements on co-financing.

The group of "other" actors showed particular support to both, that equal national co-financing of both pillars of the CAP could strengthen AEMs and that equal national co-financing of the pillars in general would be beneficial.

The average results of the attitudes towards "national co-financing of both pillars of the CAP strengthening AEMs" and "equal national co-financing of the pillars in general" where thus rejected by the agricultural actor group and slightly favoured by the environmental actor groups and researcher.

Figure 130: National Co-financing of the first and the second pillar of the Common Agriculture Policy by actor groups



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: indifferent** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Conclusion:
Overall, respondents were indifferent to the statements that "equal national cofinancing of both pillars of the CAP could strengthen AEMs" and that "equal national cofinancing of the pillars should be undertaken". Among the case studies both issues are assessed rather coherently within the case studies. Finland and Flanders rather clearly disagree with the statements, while the remaining participants generally tend to be indifferent North England is an exception, however, as it tends to agree rather clearly. Less variation can be found among administrative levels. These range comparatively closely around indifference, while LAU is on the brink to disagree with the statements. Among the actor groups, the farmer associations show rather clear disagreement to both statements. A slight tendency to agree could be observed by the environmental actor groups and researchers, whereas the group of the "others" tends to suggest the opposite.

5.5.10 Additional comments on the improvement of institutional aspects concerning AESs (Question 33)

Many respondents have comments on various needs for improvement of institutional aspects of agri-environmental schemes. As there is a great diversity of remarks, the interested reader is thus referred back to Appendix A 9. Nevertheless, some larger topics of concern can be made out.
Communication and information channelling seems to be a major institutional issue for the Czech case study, while this is not an explicit concern in the other case studies. For example an officer of the Czech environmental administration suggests that communication should be improved to increase understanding and trust by farmers. In addition, an organised learning

and consultancy process has to be set in place, to develop expertise for improvement of measures.

Pointing at evaluation of benefits an officer of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration in Brandenburg claims that benefits have to be quantified and the problem is an objective quantification. Nevertheless, a respondent from the Flemish environmental administrations suggests that more cost-benefit analysis should be undertaken. Also according to a respondent of the NUTS 2 environmental administration in Basse-Normandie a core problem of AEMs is that effectiveness is not being assessed and that AEMs today may tend not to be effective. The environmental administration at NUTS 1 in North England claims that outcomes of measures should rather be measured with performance indicators instead of measuring activity. However, a respondent from NUTS 3 environmental associations simply wishes to increase monitoring in order to ensure benefits.

Tendered AEMs are benefiting larger farms and increase risks of corruption, but are otherwise positive, as one respondent from the NUTS 1 environmental associations of the Czech Republic remarks. In the case of Brandenburg an officer of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration suggests that tendered AEMs would lead to higher acceptance, because people deal with them. However, in the long run calls for tender have no future because they cost too much time and effort. In general, as a NUTS 3 officer of the agricultural administration suspects, tendered AEMs will lead to chaos, because farmers are being asked for too much and do not know the objectives. Also respondents of the environmental administration think that tendered AESs are an administrative problem. In addition they will be less targeted. On the contrary, however, an officer of the Flemish agricultural administration suggests that tendered AEMs are a useful alternative because current AEMs do not consider local particularities. However, at the LAU level one respondent from Basse-Normandie suggests that the competition concept underlying auctions is misleading, because everybody is concerned about the environment and the cost of preserving it cannot be negotiated. Thus the society has to deal with the costs and not farmers. In a similar line of argument a respondent of the NUTS 3 level states that auctions would lead to unequal treatment of farmers and put more emphasis on financial issues than on the environment. A respondent of the Italian case study holds that auctions would be too resource and time consuming concerning the application process and would not change the quantity of contributions towards the environment. Thus a member of a NUTS 3 environmental association of the same case study suspects that there will be low acceptance among farmers. However, according to one researcher of the Frisian case study the obstacles of auctions depend on what the auctions guarantee for. Rather as a solution to such problems, another researcher remarks that farmers should not go to auctions and nature co-operations at the local level should do this for them.

Concerning non-co-financed AEMs one respondent of the NUTS 3 environmental administration in Brandenburg points out that they would be even more effective if they were paid according to results. Relating to this a researcher argues that the first pillar of the CAP should run out. With a similar opinion a respondent from the NUTS 1 agricultural administration in North England argues that the money of pillar one should be shifted to pillar two over the coming five years and then pillar one be abolished. Of the case study of Basse-Normandie a respondent of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration suggests that equal national co-financing would strengthen the second pillar and AEMs. Another however, holds that a strengthening of the second pillar could only be undertaken by the EC. From the farmers' associations a national official argues, however, that that national co-financing the first pillar would destroy the CAP, while a NUTS 3 respondent remarks that co-financing could be a good idea if subsidies are more adjusted according to environmental and regional issues. An officer of the agricultural administration in Friesland suggests that the national agricultural ministry can only agree to cofinancing, if it is in line with WTO-negotiations. Nevertheless, a member of the farmers' association suspects that if co-financing of the first

and second pillar will be equal, there will be not more money allocated to the second pillar and more money should be available for the consumption function of the second pillar instead of production. In addition, re-allocation of funds to the second pillar would according to one researcher also imply that parts of the money currently allocated for food security and quality and farm income support, is made available to landowners like the State Forestry Service or the Nature Monuments section for land acquisition. However, a NUTS 1 member of the farming associations in North England holds that the possible results of co-financing both CAP pillars are complex and subject to many variables. Thus, it cannot be addressed in a tick-box format. Moreover, a respondent of NUTS 1 environmental associations sees national co-financing of pillar one as a creeping re-nationalisation of the CAP, which they are against. Yet, the respondent argues also for a rapid re-allocation of funds towards pillar two, since it is important to make clear that money is paid in turn for public goods created through well-designed and targeted AEMs.
There are some other topics of importance. A NUTS 3 respondent of the French case study suggests that more influence and responsibility should be given to practitioners and councillors who have democratic legitimacy, while the administration should only control and not design measures. In addition, several respondents of the case study argue that there is a need for continuity of AESs. There are also several respondents in the French case study who think integrated local strategies are useful or it is questioned whether bottom-up approaches are really more costly or that higher environmental benefits do not have to be more costly. Accordingly one national officer of the agricultural administration belonging to the Frisian case study suggests that the right balance has to be found. A further officer argues that bottom-up does not mean higher costs and endless deliberation by definition, and that investment leads to something.

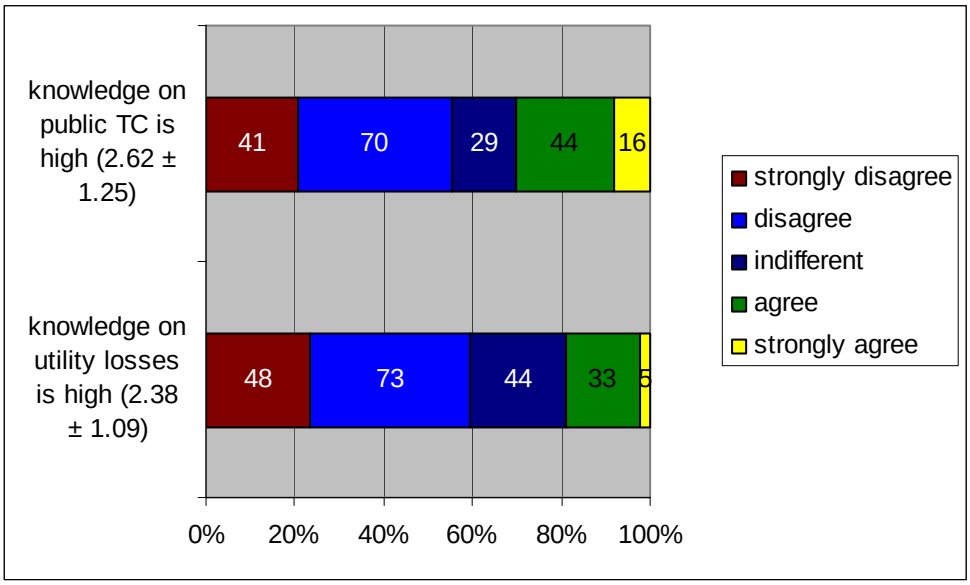
Conclusion:
Many respondents made suggestions for various needs for improvement of institutional aspects of AESs. Considering the great diversity of remarks it is difficult to summarise them. Communication and information channelling seems to be a major institutional issue for the Czech case study, while this is not an explicit concern for the other case studies. Some of respondents across the case studies and actor groups point to the evaluation of benefits of measures, which they mostly like to be objectively quantified and part of cost-benefit analysis. Tendered or auctioned AEMs are a recurring topic. Respondents from Brandenburg point to lack of targeting and increased efforts due to such approaches. The latter are also mentioned in the Italian case study. The French case study also points to the unequal treatment of farmers due to such approaches. However, the equal national cofinancing of the first and the second pillars of the CAP is a major issue in the French case study where it is mainly considered useful but rather unrealistic. Also researchers from Friesland refer to co-financing and here particularly to distributional issues and conformity with WTO negotiations. In particular, respondents from North England have various conflicting opinions about cofinancing.

5.6 Public transaction costs in relation to AESs (Part F)

5.6.1 The national agricultural administrations' knowledge of costs (Question 34)

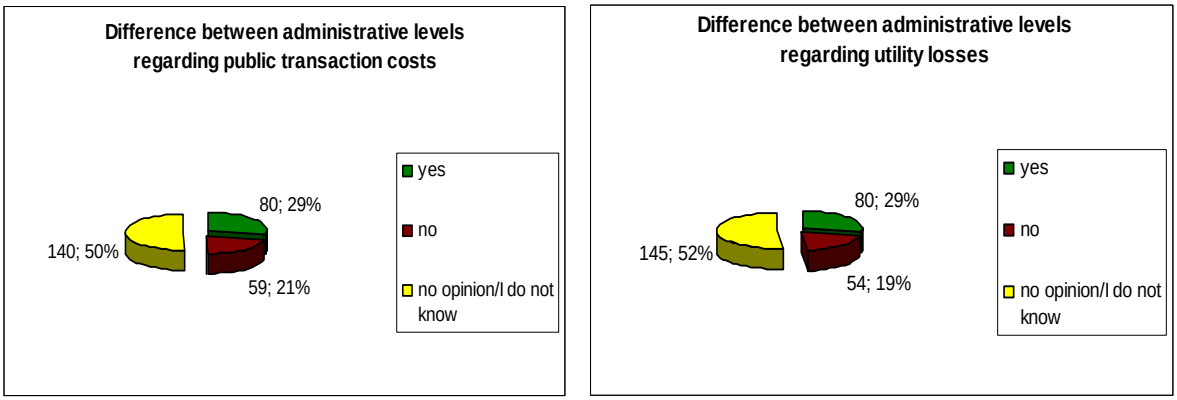
Question number 34 asks the respondents to assess the knowledge of the national agricultural administration regarding public transaction costs (TC) and utility losses. Figure 131 shows, that several interviewees don't have an opinion on the knowledge level of the agricultural administration regarding transaction costs or utility losses (respectively 28 and 27 per cent of interviewees). If they do have an opinion, they tend to disagree more: the knowledge of the administration on these two topics is rather limited.

Figure 131: Knowledge of the national agricultural administration regarding public TC and utility losses



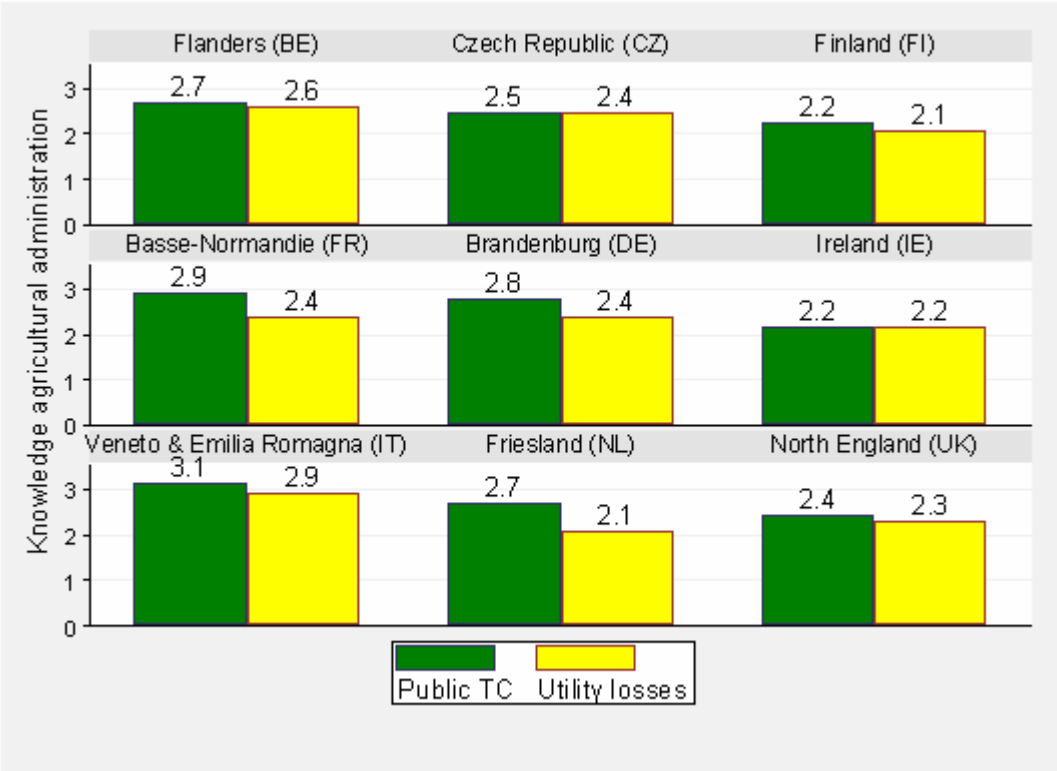
However, 29 percent of the interviewees see a difference between the different institutional levels, as shown in Figure 132. Around 50 percent of the actors had no opinion on this question. Basse-Normandie, the Czech Republic and the Italian case study share the opinion that the local levels have more knowledge on transaction costs and utility losses because they are "out in the field", while in Flanders and Brandenburg most interviewees claim that the higher institutional levels are better informed. The majority of interviewees in Friesland perceive a difference between transaction costs and utility losses: according to actors perception, the higher institutional levels know more about the public transaction costs, while the lower levels are more familiar with the utility losses. Some interviewees, mainly in Basse-Normandie and the Czech Republic, also claim that the knowledge on transaction costs and utility losses depends more on the personal motivation of the civil servant than on the institutional level on which he or she is employed.

Figure 132: Difference in knowledge between the administrative levels regarding public TC and utility losses



There is no significant difference in opinion on this knowledge between the different case studies for public TC (p= 0.279) and for utility losses (p= 0.210). Figure 133 provides an overview. Some small differences can however be noticed, for instance the Italian regions and Flanders seem to have slightly more confidence in the knowledge of their national agricultural administration than Ireland and Finland.

Figure 133: Knowledge of the national agricultural administration regarding public TC and utility losses by case study areas

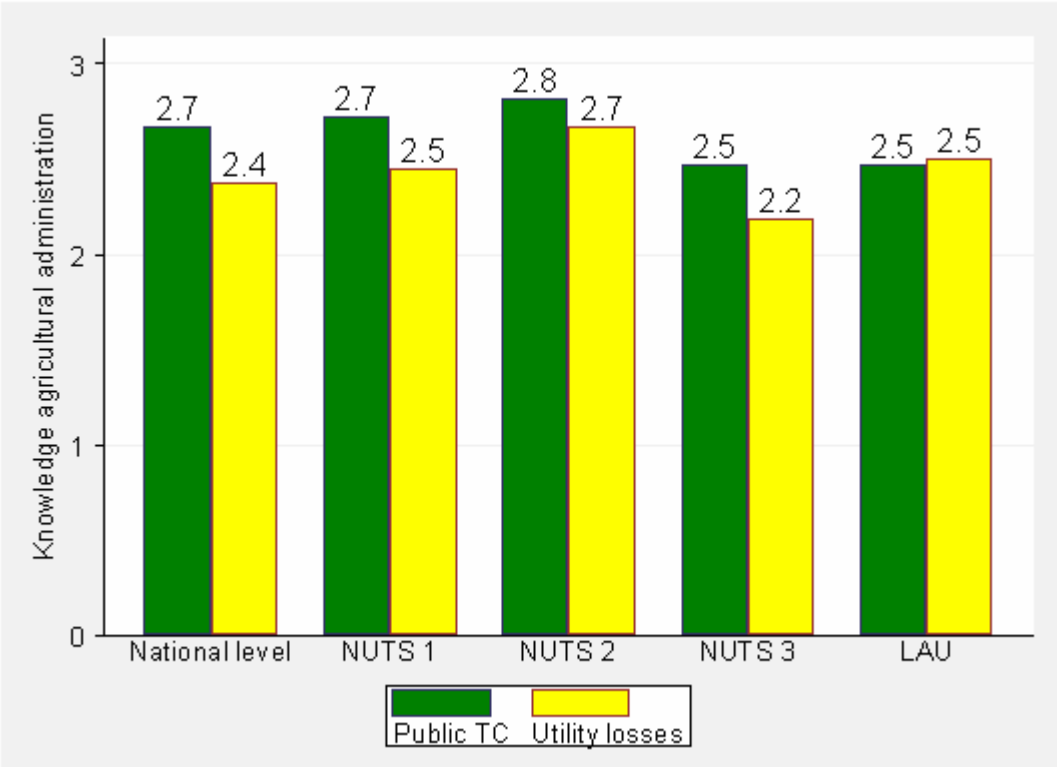


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Figure 134 orders the assessment of knowledge of the agricultural administration according to administrative levels. There is no significant difference between the NUTS levels in the

opinion on the knowledge of the national agricultural administration on public TC (p= 0.705) and utility losses (p= 0.317). However, the knowledge is assessed to be slightly smaller by the lower administrative levels.

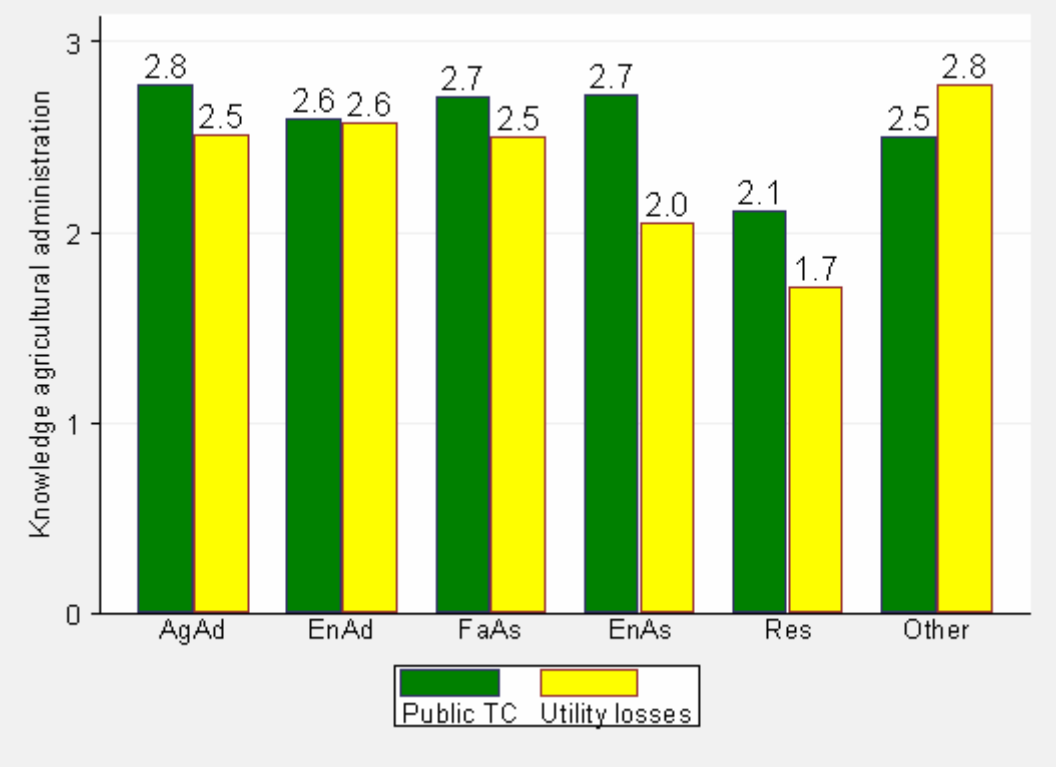
Figure 134: Knowledge of the national agricultural administration regarding public TC and utility losses by administrative levels



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

The opinion on the knowledge on public transaction costs does not differ significantly between the different types of organisations (p= 0.290) although the graph in Figure 135 shows that researchers are slightly more sceptical regarding the knowledge levels of the administration. With respect to utility losses, the different types of organisations seem to have a significantly different opinion (p= 0.005). The agricultural administration significantly estimates their knowledge on utility losses higher than researchers do. Environmental associations also evaluate this knowledge lower.

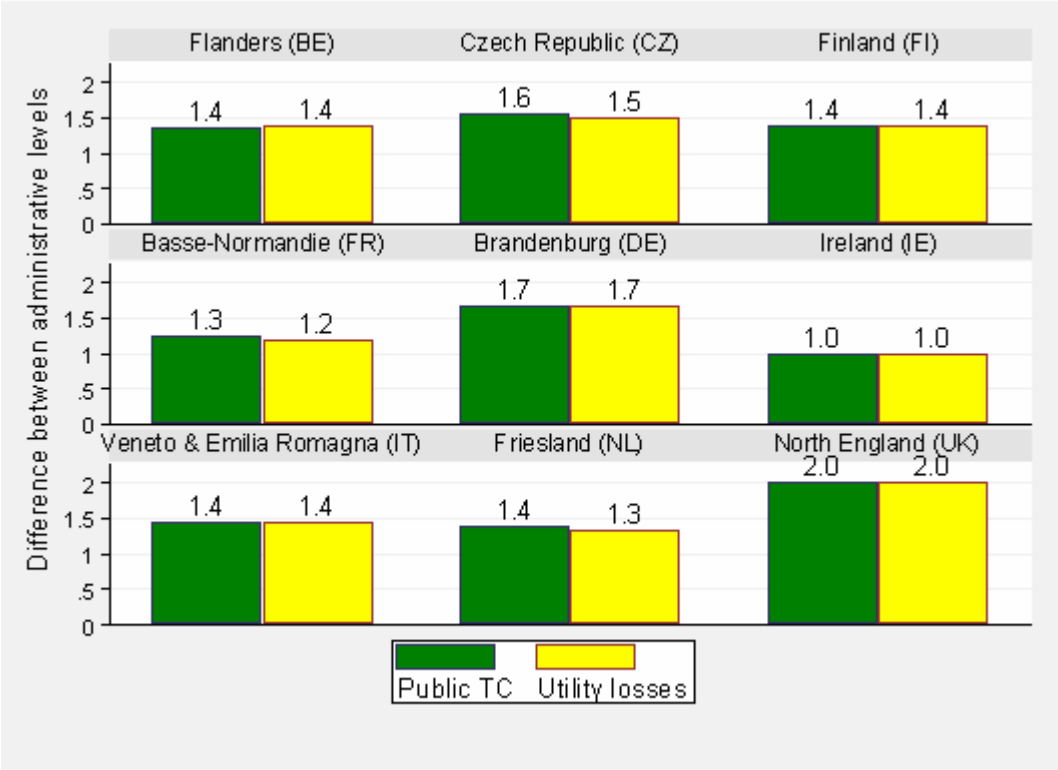
Figure 135: Knowledge of the national agricultural administration regarding public TC and utility losses by actor groups



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

The different case studies do not seem to have a significantly different opinion on the question whether there are differences in the knowledge on public TC (p= 0.141) and utility losses (p= 0.100) between the different administrative levels, as it is also shown in Figure 136. The large difference between Ireland and North England is not reliable because of the small number of respondents answering this question in these countries (1 and 4 respondents respectively).

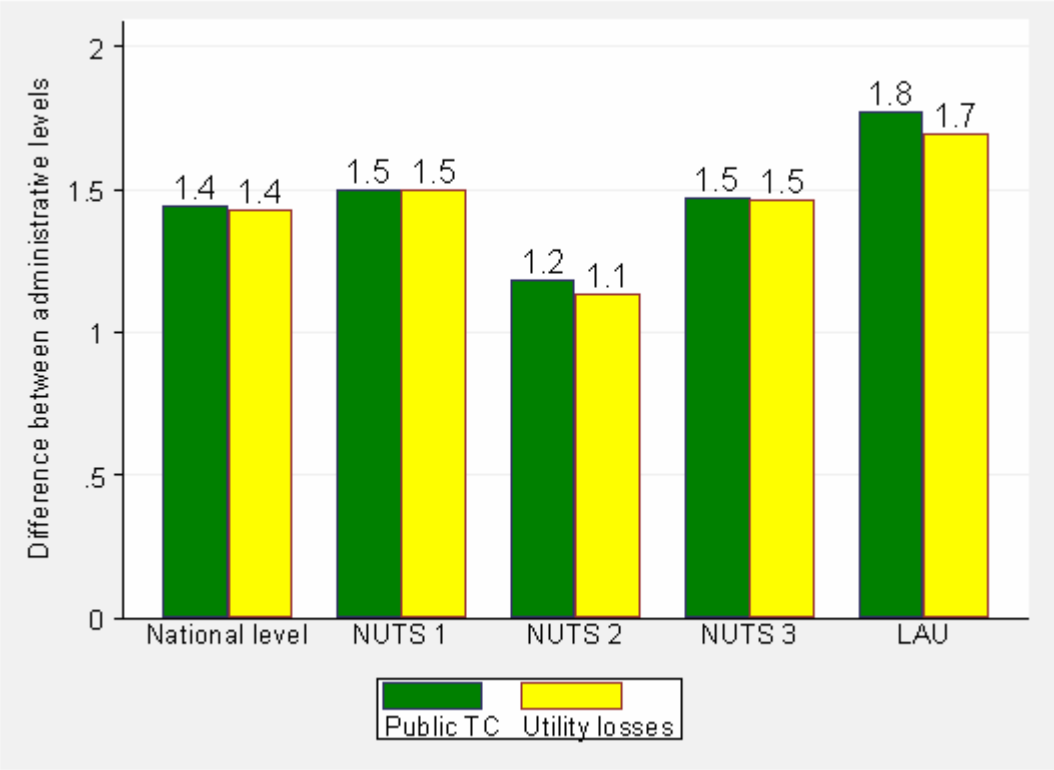
Figure 136: Difference in knowledge between the administrative levels regarding public TC and utility losses by case study areas



Legend: **1: yes** **2: no**

Between the different administrative levels depicted in Figure 136 there is also no significant difference in opinion whether the knowledge on public TC (p= 0.060) and utility losses (p= 0.063) is different between the different administrative levels. Looking at Figure 137 however, it is clear that the lowest institutional level, LAU, is less convinced of a difference in knowledge than the other levels, especially NUTS 2.

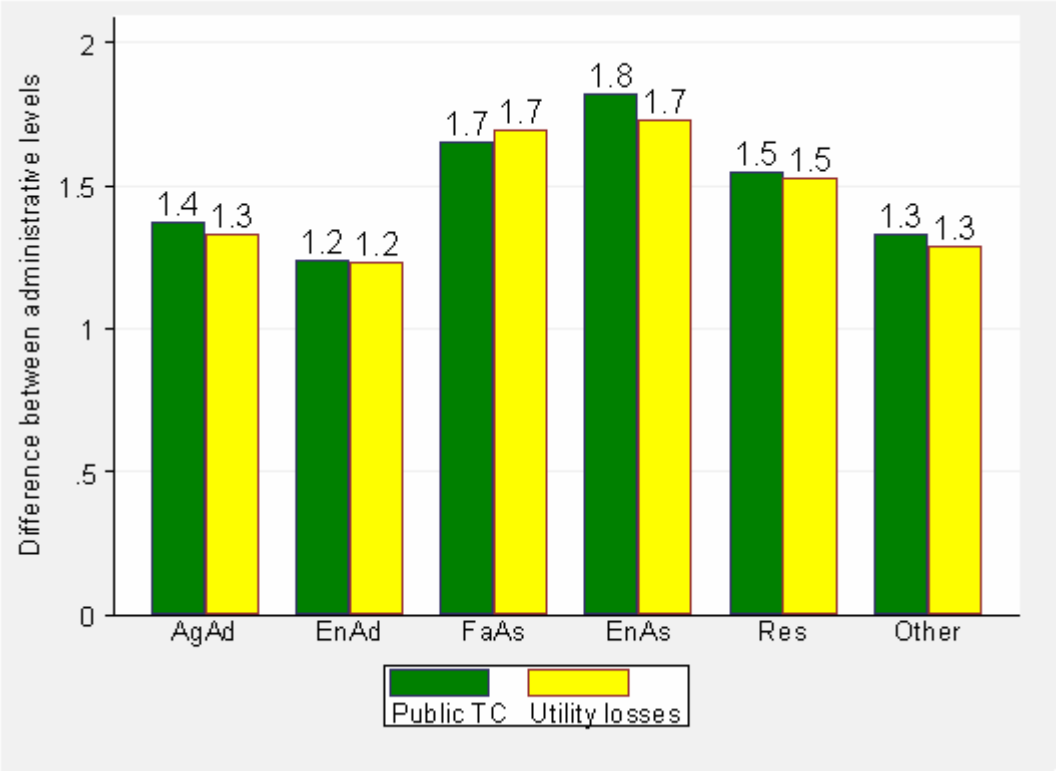
Figure 137: Difference in knowledge between the administrative levels regarding public TC and utility losses by administrative level



Legend: **1: yes** **2: no**

As can be seen in Figure 138, among the actor groups there is a significant difference in opinion on the difference in knowledge on public TC (p= 0.023) and utility losses (p= 0.018) of the administrative levels. Members of the agricultural and environmental administrations and others more often believe that there is a difference than the other actor groups.

Figure 138: Difference in knowledge between the administrative levels regarding public TC and utility losses by actor groups



Legend: **1: yes** **2: no**

Conclusion:
Most respondents have no clear opinion on the knowledge of the national agricultural administration regarding public transaction costs and utility losses, but the majority of people that have an opinion assess this knowledge to be rather low. The lower administrative levels, researchers and environmental associations seem to have less faith in the knowledge of the agricultural administrations. Most interviewees see differences in this knowledge between the administrative levels. These differences are more strongly perceived by the members of the administration.

5.6.2 Differences between administrative levels in terms of costs knowledge (Question 34c)

Differences between administrative levels regarding knowledge of public transaction costs and utility losses caused by imprecise agri-environmental measures do overall exist as respondents from all case studies suggest. The case studies of the Czech Republic, Flanders, Basse-Normandie and Friesland provided most extensive information. Please see Appendix A 10 for a more detailed account.
There are conflicting opinions on which administrative levels have the best knowledge on costs and utilities. A general tendency across case studies is, however, that higher NUTS levels have better knowledge on public transaction costs and lower levels are more aware of utility losses caused by imprecise measures. For utility losses this tendency is fairly consistent, whereas transaction costs knowledge is also seen better at lower levels by several respondents. There are, however, differences in terms of homogeneity of opinions between the individual case studies. In the Czech case study the agricultural administration has a rather homogenous opinion according to the general tendency that knowledge of transaction costs is

greater at higher levels and of utility losses greater at lower levels, though the environmental administration does not follow this pattern. Brandenburg respondents follow the general tendency with the exception of an organic farming association. So do also respondents of the French case study with exception of some respondents of farmers' associations and "others" who think knowledge on both transaction costs and utility is better on lower levels. Also the Irish respondent and Italian respondents suggest that lower levels have better appreciation on both, costs and utility components of AESs. From the responses of the Finnish case study an unclear pattern emerges. Some Finnish respondents point at a general diversity in costs structures of administrations. In the Friesland case study researchers tend to follow the general trend, whereas remaining actor groups have diverging opinions. However, of these there are comparatively many who think knowledge on both transaction costs and utility losses is greater at higher levels. There is a large diversity of opinion in the Flanders case study, though the officers of the Flemish environmental administration mostly suggest that knowledge, especially on utility losses is greater on lower levels.
Of the Czech lower level administration several think they know costs and utility better. Nearness of actors to the issues working with should increase cost and utility awareness as several respondents in the Flemish case study, especially concerning utility losses, suggest. Such opinions are also held in Basse-Normandie across actor groups and in Italy. Basse-Normandie farmers' associations and a respondent of "others" point further out that there are information losses from lower to upper administrative levels.
Knowledge may, however, also differ between administrative branches. Accordingly a Czech farmers' association says that more knowledge on both, transaction costs and utility losses rests with the environmental administration. Moreover, respondents from the Flemish agricultural administration argue that knowledge at NUTS levels depends also on the type of measure.
Several respondents from different case studies and actor groups suggest that, differences in knowledge are rather found between persons instead of administrative levels. Such remarks came from the Czech agricultural administration, a Flemish researcher and from the Basse-Normandie NUTS 2 environmental administration and LAU "others".
Nevertheless, several respondents argue that there is no awareness in general on transaction costs and utility losses. A respondent from a Flemish farmers' association suggests that administration knows that costs are high but does care about it. From the Finnish agricultural administration a respondent claims that no one has full knowledge. Respondents from the case study of the Netherlands also often suggest this.

Conclusion:
As the respondents suggest there are differences between administrative levels regarding knowledge of public transaction costs and utility losses caused by imprecise agri-environmental measures. Respondents from all case point to this with the exception of North England, which did not comment. However, there is disagreement at which administrative level the knowledge of transaction costs and utilities is greatest. All possible suggestions are made, though it appears that utilities losses due to imprecision are rather noticed at lower levels. This is mainly suggested because persons at such levels are closer to the issue of concern. Respondents often consider, though not necessarily, transaction costs to be known better at higher levels. Several respondents, however, point out that knowledge on transaction costs is generally scarce.

5.6.3 Factors influencing the costs of AESs design (Question 35)

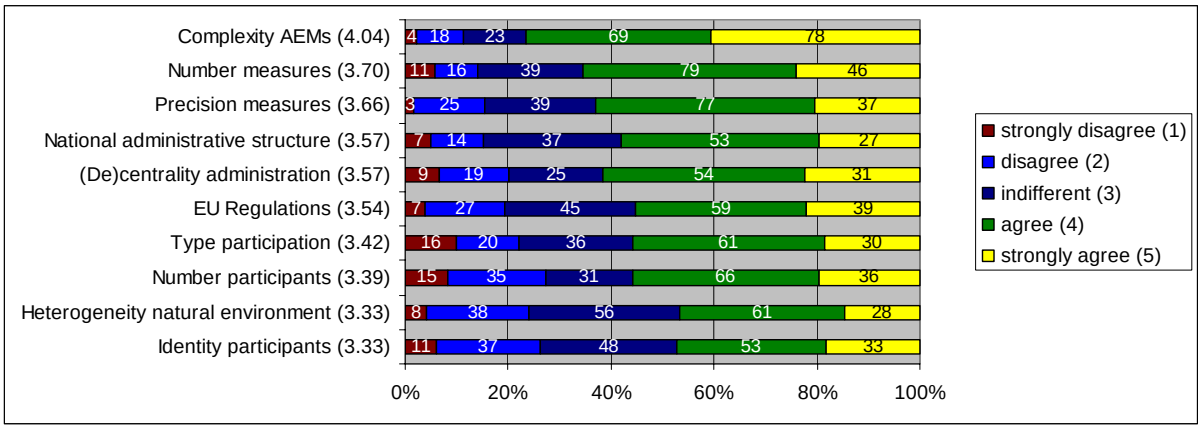
In question 35 the respondents were asked to assess a selection of statements about factors influencing AESs design costs. Table 8 and Figure 139 give the results for all the respondents together (between brackets is the mean degree of agreement) and show that the complexity of the AEMs is considered as the most important factor influencing AESs design costs. The number of measures and the precision of the measures are of almost the same significance. Thus, according to the interviewees, public transaction costs are most strongly affected by the nature of the measures and the object of the transaction (the asset). Of lower importance is the institutional environment, e.g. the EU regulations, the institutional structure, the natural environment and the stakeholders involved. The heterogeneity of the environment or the identity of the participants in the design process is considered as the least important factor influencing public transaction costs. Overall, however, the difference in perceived importance between the influencing factors is not that big.

Table 8: Factors influencing AESs design costs

Factors influencing design costs	Nr. Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Number participants	183	3.399	1.231	1	5
Number measures	191	3.696	1.101	1	5
Complexity AEMs	192	4.036	1.045	1	5
Identity participants	182	3.330	1.166	1	5
Heterogeneity natural environment	191	3.330	1.081	1	5
Type participation	163	3.423	1.206	1	5
(De)centrality administration	138	3.572	1.171	1	5
Precision measures	181	3.663	1.007	1	5
EU Regulations	177	3.542	1.113	1	5
National administrative structure	138	3.572	1.073	1	5

Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

Figure 139: Factors influencing AESs design costs



When looking at the difference between the countries, Table 9 shows that most countries believe the complexity of the measures is the most important factor influencing design costs of AESs. The second most important factor influencing design costs is in the majority of the countries also somehow related to the measures. Flanders deviates slightly from this trend, since there the EU regulations are considered as most important influencing factor and in second place there is the national administrative structure.

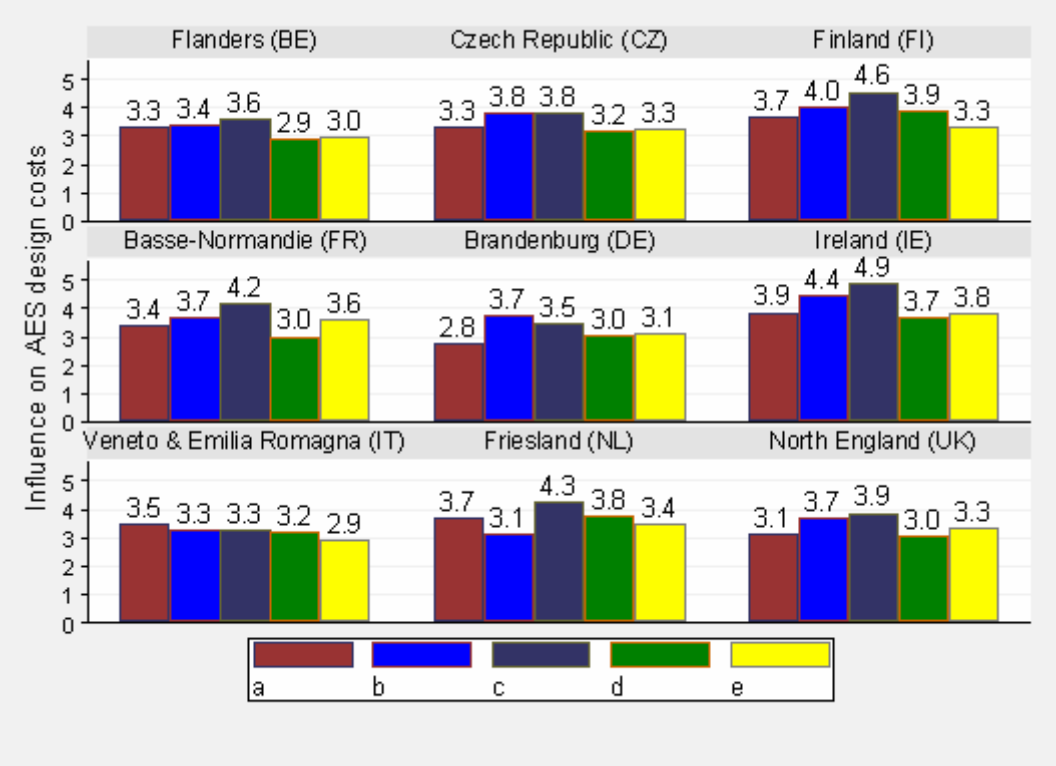
Table 9: Three most important factors influencing AESs design costs per country

	1	2	3
BE	EU regulations	National administrative structures	Complexity AEM
	4.077	3.615	3.615
CZ	Type participation	Complexity AEM	Complexity AEM + (De)Centrality administration
	3.824	3.810	3.800
FI	Complexity AEM	EU regulations	Number measures
	4.550	4.077	4.000
FR	Complexity AEM	Precision measures	Number measures
	4.189	3.781	3.676
IE	Complexity AEM	Number measures	EU regulations + (De)Centrality administration
	4.857	4.429	4.167
DE	Complexity AEM	Number measures	National administrative structures + (De)Centrality administration
	4.857	4.429	4.167
IT	Precision measures	Number participants	Number measures + Complexity AEM
	3.909	3.500	3.250
NL	Precision measures	Complexity AEM	(De)Centrality administration
	4.333	4.278	4.000
UK	Complexity AEM	National administrative structures	Number measures
	3.864	3.762	3.714

Legend: 1: strongly disagree 2: disagree 3: partly agree 4: agree 5: strongly agree

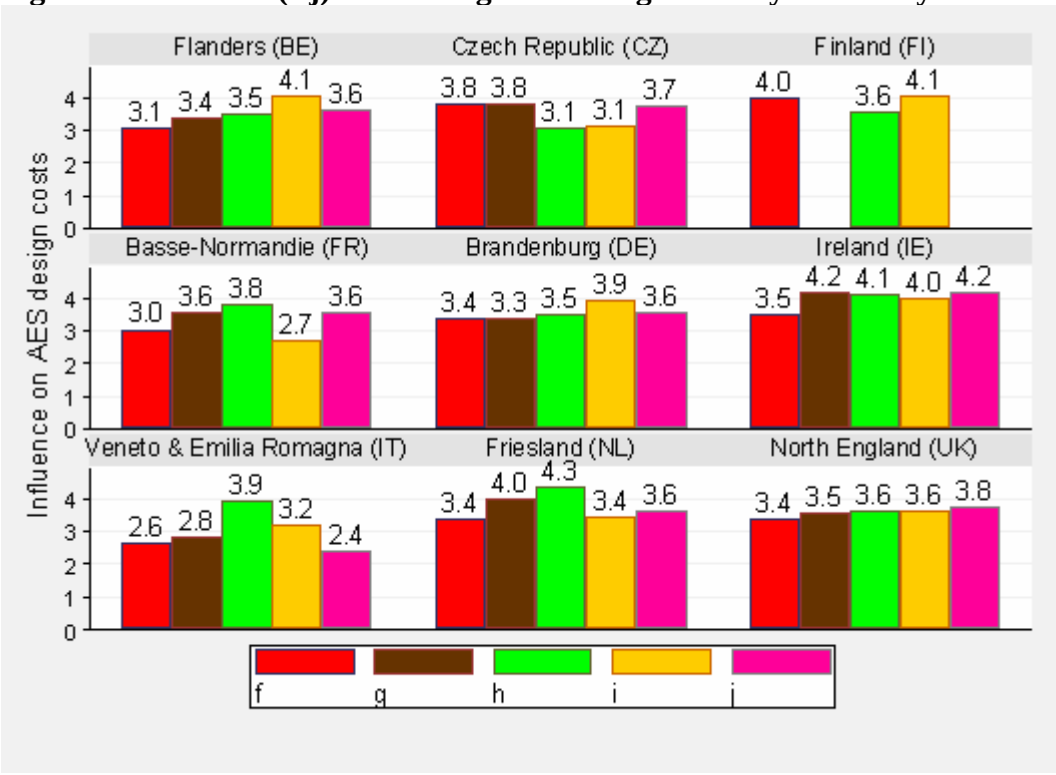
When approaching this question per factor, there are significant differences in opinion between the countries for the factors ‘the complexity of AEMs’ (c) (p= 0.000), ‘the identity/heterogeneity of participants in the design process’ (d) (p= 0.013), ‘the type of participation (consultation, right to vote, veto…) of different actors in the design process’ (f) (p= 0.024), ‘the precision of measures’ (h) (p= 0.016) ‘the EU regulations’ (i) (p= 0.000) and ‘the national administrative structures’ (j) (p= 0.033) (p-values for factors a, b, e and g are respectively 0.277, 0.065, 0.486, 0.166). First of all, it is important to notice that Figure 140 and Figure 141 show that all the factors receive a higher rating of importance in Finland, Ireland and to a lesser extent in Friesland. Hence, whenever a factor obtains a higher score in these countries, less importance should be attributed to this because all factors score high. The factors that stand out in certain countries are the type of participation (consultation, right to vote, veto…) of different actors in the design processes, which is considered significantly more important in the Czech Republic. In addition, the EU regulations are considered significantly more important in Flanders.

Figure 140: Factors (a-e) influencing AESs design costs by case study areas



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree**
4: agree **5: strongly agree**
a: the number of participants/participating parties in the design process
b: the number of measures offered
c: the complexity of AEM
d: the identity/heterogeneity of participants in the design process
e: the heterogeneity of the natural environment

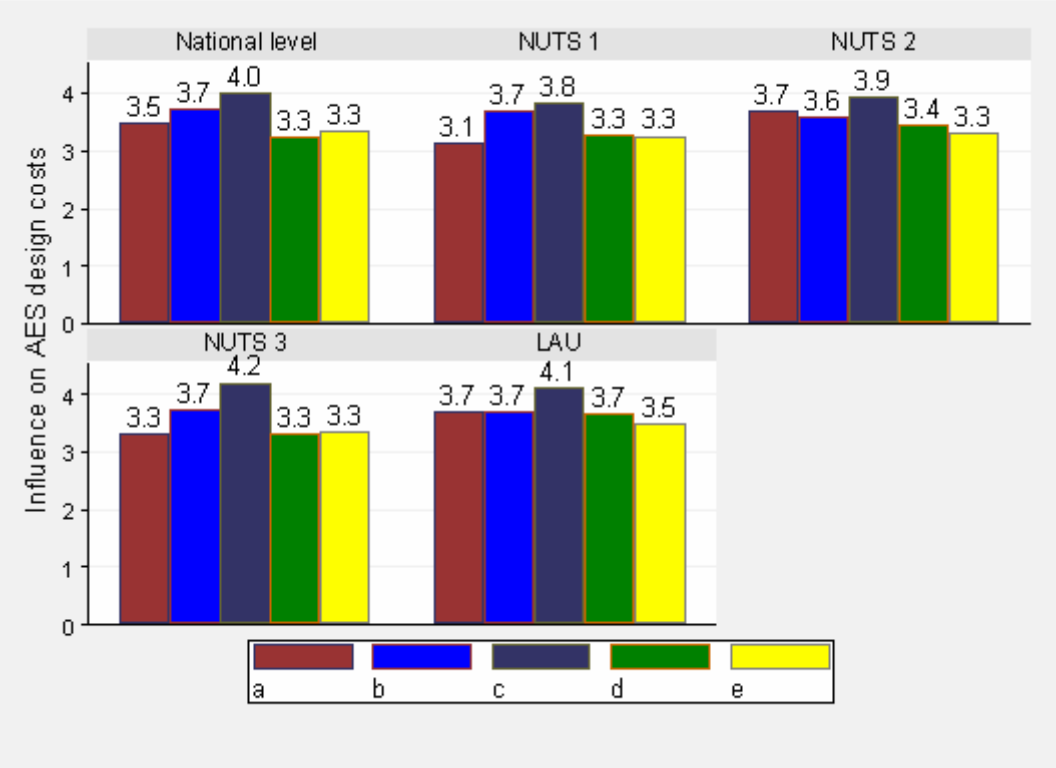
Figure 141: Factors (f-j) influencing AESs design costs by case study areas



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree**
4: agree **5: strongly agree**
f: the type of participation (consultation, right to vote, veto…) of different actors in the design process
g: centrality/decentrality of the administration
h: the precision of measures
i: the EU regulations
j: the national administrative structures

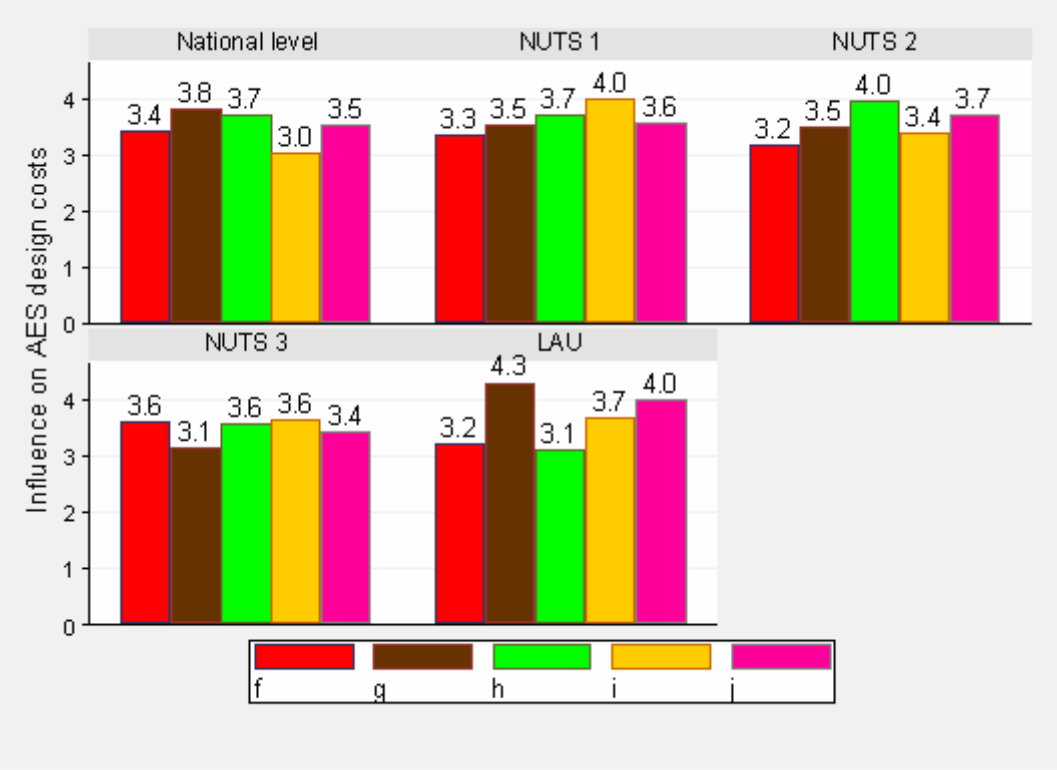
The influence of the NUTS level on the opinion on factors influencing public TCs is rather weak, as can be seen in Figure 142 and Figure 143. The only significant difference in opinion between the NUTS levels was found with the variable 'EU regulations' (p= 0.002). NUTS 1 and LAU levels believe this to be more important than the other levels. In addition 'centrality/decentrality of the administration (p= 0.035) shows significant differences. The most centralised (National) and decentralized (LAU) levels believe this is more important than the other levels (p-values for the factors a, b, c, d, e, f, h and j are respectively 0.345, 0.984, 0.450, 0.867, 0.980, 0.617, 0.199 and 0.629).

Figure 142: Factors (a-e) influencing AESs design costs by administrative level



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree**
4: agree **5: strongly agree**
a: the number of participants/participating parties in the design process
b: the number of measures offered
c: the complexity of AEM
d: the identity/heterogeneity of participants in the design process
e: the heterogeneity of the natural environment

Figure 143: Factors (f-j) influencing AESs design costs by administrative level

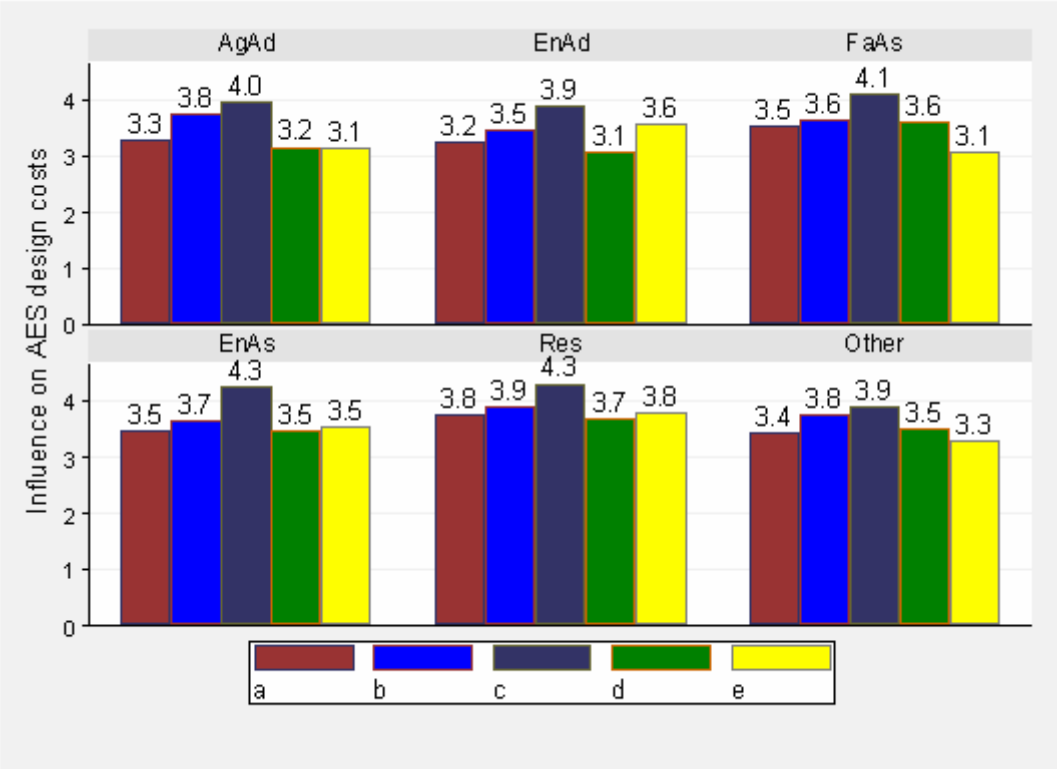


Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree**
4: agree **5: strongly agree**
f: the type of participation (con-sultation, right to vote, veto…) of different actors in the design process
g: centrality/decentrality of the administration
h: the precision of measures
i: the EU regulations
j: the national administrative structures

When looking at the differences between the actor groups as shown in Figure 144 and Figure 145, the only significant difference was observed for the factor 'the heterogeneity of the natural environment' (p= 0.050). The agricultural administration and the farmers' associations believe that they are significantly less important for design costs than researchers do.[12]

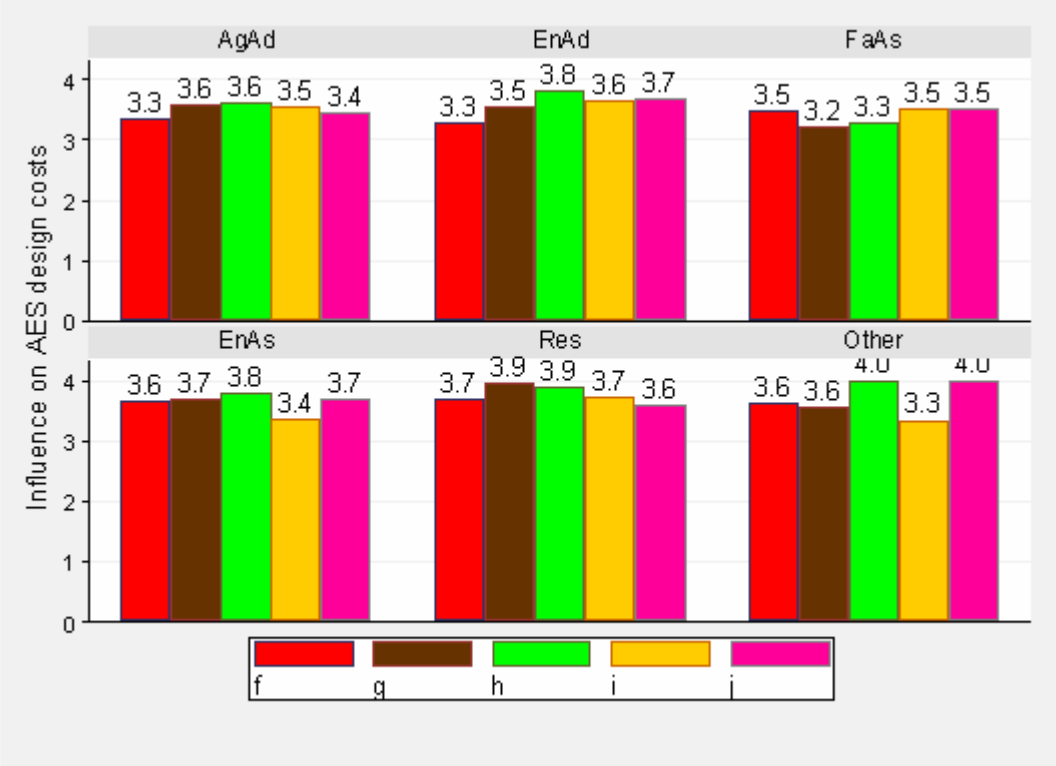
[12] p-values for factors a, b, c, d, f, g, h, i, j are respectively 0.580, 0.743, 0.588, 0.212, 0.805, 0.647, 0.215, 0.913 and 0.783

Figure 144: Factors (a-e) influencing AESs design costs by actor groups



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree**
4: agree **5: strongly agree**
a: the number of participants/participating parties in the design process
b: the number of measures offered
c: the complexity of AEM
d: the identity/heterogeneity of participants in the design process
e: the heterogeneity of the natural environment

Figure 145: Factors (f-j) influencing AESs design costs by actor groups



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree**
4: agree **5: strongly agree**
f: the type of participation (con-sultation, right to vote, veto…) of different actors in the design process
g: centrality/decentrality of the administration
h: the precision of measures
i: the EU regulations
j: the national administrative structures

Very important to note concerning the perceived influence of factors on the costs of AESs design is the high number of interviewees who have no opinion on the matter. For every factor taken into consideration, between 30 and 60 per cent of the interviewees had no opinion. Especially the influence of the institutional structure on design costs was difficult to assess with 50.54 per cent of the interviewees having no idea on the influence of the national administrative structures and the centrality/decentrality of the administration. This, however, is due to the fact that the Finnish respondents did not assess these two factors. The effect of the number of measures, their complexity and the heterogeneity of the natural environment was the easiest to evaluate with approximately 31 percent of no opinion answers. When analysing this more closely it is being revealed that especially the country and the type of organisation are determining factors for having an opinion on factors influencing design costs or not. Officers from the agricultural administration have significantly more often an opinion on the factors influencing design costs of AESs (p= 0.000). However, when comparing the actor groups as depicted in Figure 146, there is no significant difference to the number of opinions in research organisations (p= 0.855). As may be expected from the fact that they are directly responsible for AESs design, the agricultural administration claims to have more knowledge on the factors influencing AESs design costs. However, the knowledge in the environmental administration is perceived lower than that of the research organisations, while the former is also partly responsible for the design process in the majority of the countries. For the influence of the case study (p= 0.000), Friesland and Basse-Normandie clearly more

often have an opinion on the factors influencing AESs design costs, while the knowledge is rather low in Brandenburg, Flanders and the Italian case study, as also shown in Figure 147.

Figure 146: Mean number of opinions on factors influencing AESs design costs by actor groups

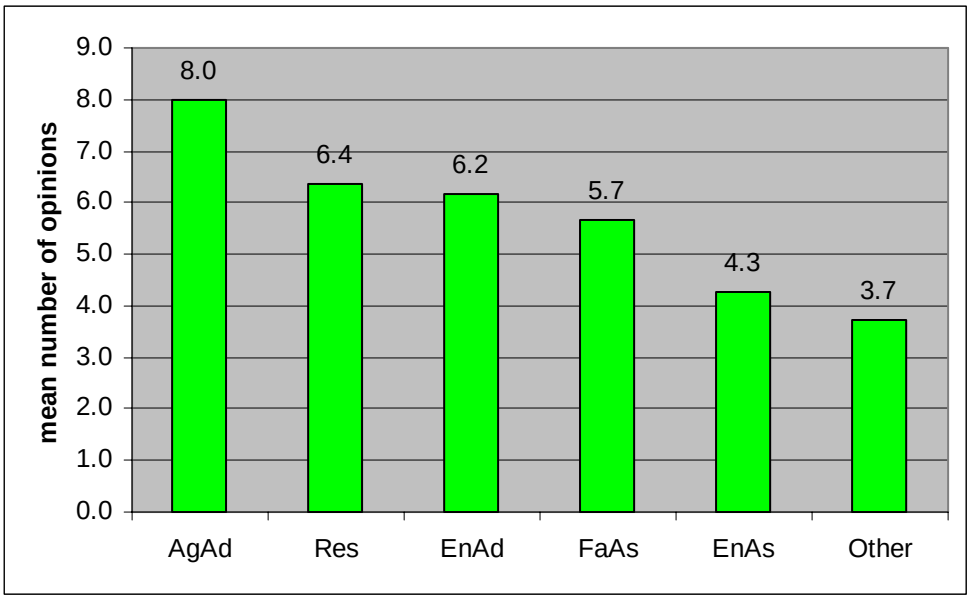
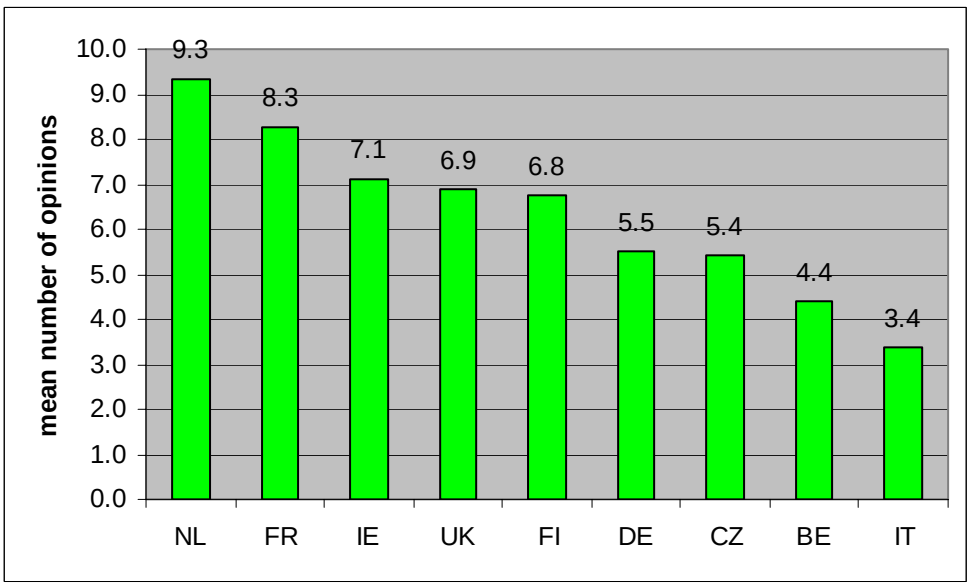


Figure 147: Mean number of opinions on factors influencing AESs design costs by case study areas



Conclusion:

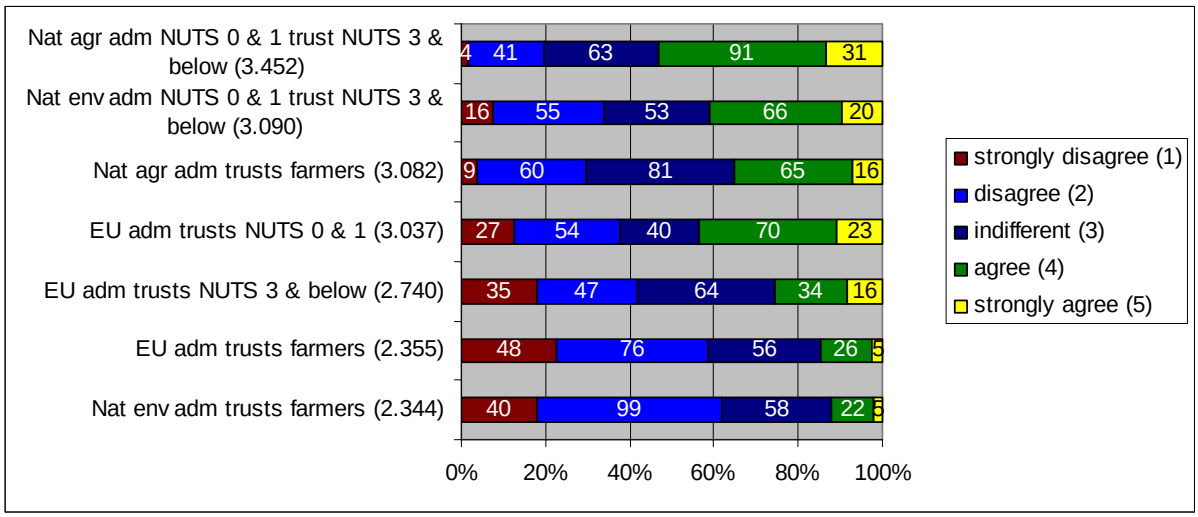
The complexity of the AEMs is considered as the most important factor influencing AESs design costs, followed by the number of measures and the precision of the measures. According to the interviewees, the public transaction costs are thus mostly affected by the nature of the measures or the object of the transaction (the asset) and less by the institutional environment, as for example EU regulations, the national administrative structure, the natural environment or the stakeholders involved. In the Czech Republic, the type of participation (consultation, right to vote, veto…) of different actors in the design processes is considered significantly more important, while the EU regulations are significantly more important in

Flanders. The most centralised (national) and decentralized (LAU) levels assess the influence of 'centrality/decentrality of the administration' on design costs as more highly. The agricultural administration and the farmer associations believe that 'the heterogeneity of the natural environment' is significantly less important than researchers do. There are, however, high numbers of "no opinion" answers for these statements.

5.6.4 Assessment of trust among administrative levels and actor groups (Question 36)

In question 36 the respondents have been asked to assess a selection of statements related to trust. Trust in this context means the expectation that regulations and rules are respected and power is not used to pursue objectives, which are not in line with the objectives of the rules and regulations. Following Williamson, trust is an important influencing factor on transaction costs. According to his theory, the lower the level of trust, the higher transaction costs will be to protect oneself from actors acting with guile. For example, if the national administration in charge trusts the farmers, it can be expected that they will spend less resources on monitoring activities. The same is true for trust among different administrative levels. Figure 148 shows the different statements about trust of question 36 and ranks them according to a decreasing degree of agreement of the respondents. According to the interviewees, trust among the different national government levels is rather high. This is different for the EU level, since they are perceived to have lower trust in the national administration and this especially on the lower institutional levels. According to the interviewees farmers are generally not trusted to great extents by the administration, except for the national agricultural administration.

Figure 148: Trust between different administrative levels and actors

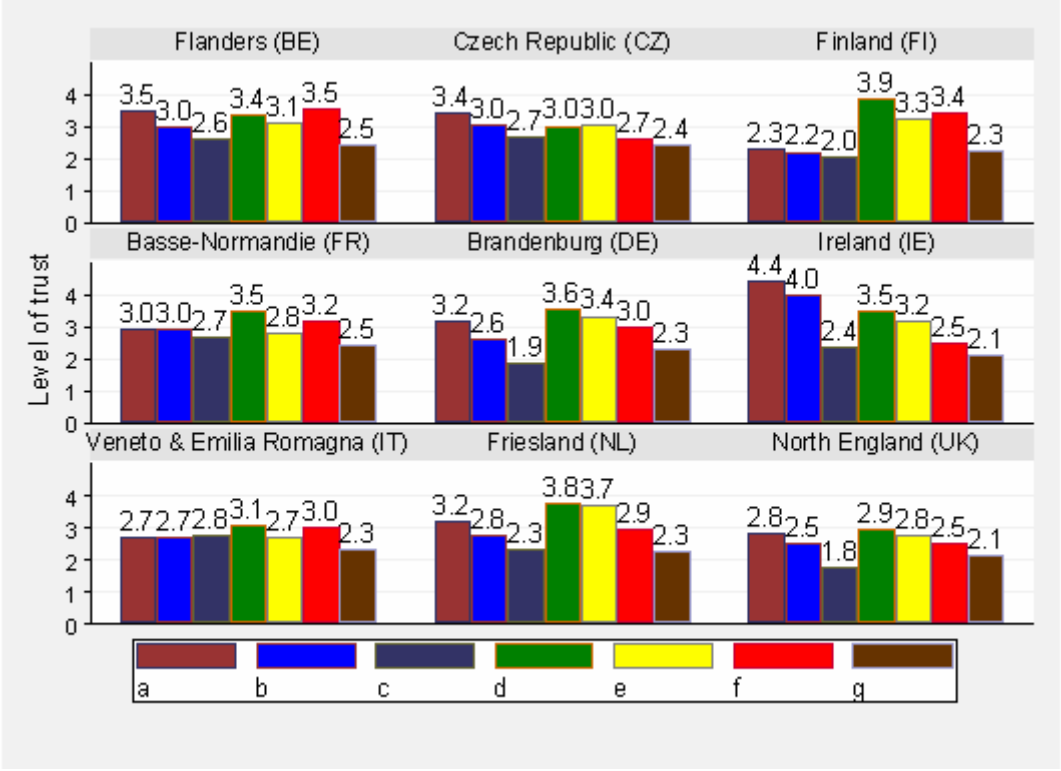


The case study may be the most important factor influencing the perceived level of trust. The case studies seem to share their opinion on the trust of the national environmental administration in the administration at NUTS 3 level and below (p= 0.169), and also on the trust the national environmental administration has in farmers (p= 0.933). The following Table 10 gives for each of the trust categories the three countries with the highest and the three with the lowest perceived levels of trust. The p-values in the last column show that there is a significant difference between the countries. The table also shows that in North England the general level of trust is quite low. Figure 149 shows similar results in a different format.

Table 10: Trust between different administrative levels and actors by case study areas

Trust category	Highest trust	Lowest trust	p
EU adm trusts National&NUTS1	IE, BE, CZ	FI, IT, UK	0,000
EU adm trusts NUTS 3 & below	IE, FR, CZ	FI, UK, DE	0,017
EU adm trusts farmers	IT, FR, CZ	UK, DE, FI	0,001
Nat agr adm National &NUTS1 trust NUTS 3 & below	FI, NL, DE	UK, CZ, IT	0,001
Nat agr adm trusts farmers	BE, FI, FR	IE, UK, CZ	0,001

Figure 149: Trust between different administrative levels and actors by case study areas



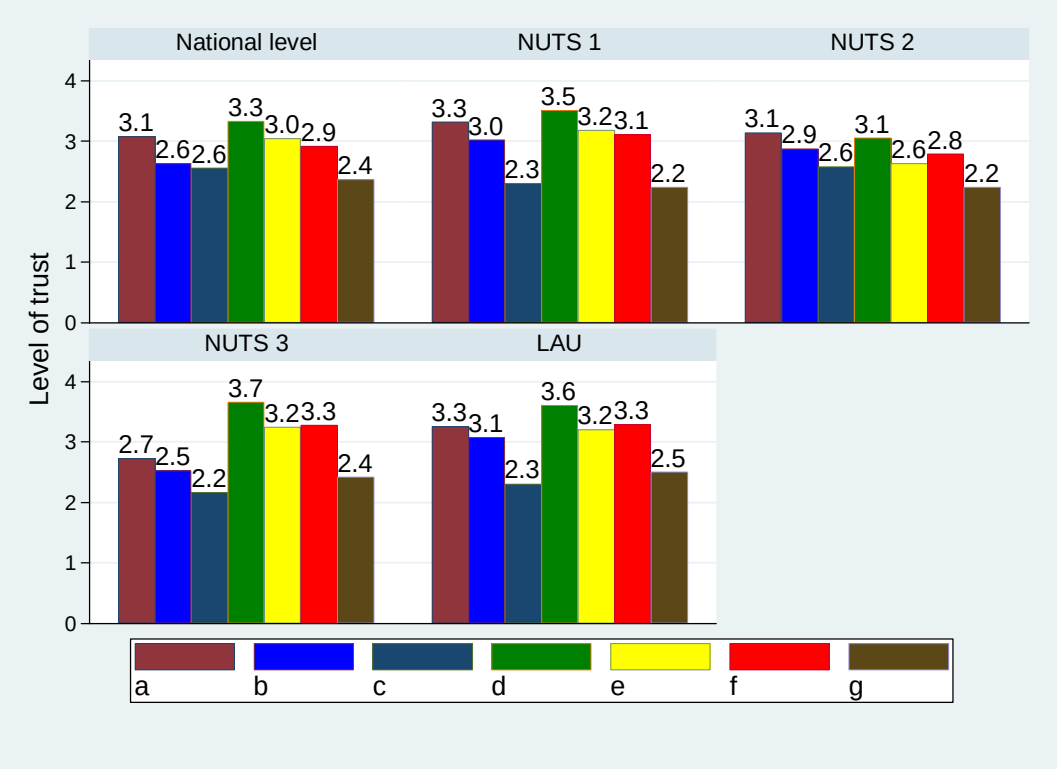
Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree**
4: agree **5: strongly agree**

a: the EU Administration (DG AGRI) trusts the national administration at National and NUTS 1 level
b: the EU Administration (DG AGRI) trusts the national administration at NUTS 3 level and below
c: the EU Administration (DG AGRI) trusts farmers
d: the national agricultural administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts the administration at NUTS 3 level and below
e: the national environmental administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts the administration at NUTS 3 level and below
f: the national environmental administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts farmers
g: the national agricultural administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts farmers

Figure 150 shows that for the perceived level of trust of the national agricultural administration in the administration at NUTS 3 level or below there is also a significant difference in opinion between the interviewees on different NUTS levels (p= 0.029). On NUTS 2 level the interviewees disagree more on this statement than on the NUTS 3 level (bonferroni p= 0.022). For all the other statements, the differences between the administrative

levels are non-significant (for the statements a, b, c, e, f and g the p-values are 0.110, 0.183, 0.222, 0.120, 0.079 and 0.765, respectively).

Figure 150: Trust between different administrative levels and actors by administrative level



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

a: the EU Administration (DG AGRI) trusts the national administration at National and NUTS 1 level

b: the EU Administration (DG AGRI) trusts the national administration at NUTS 3 level and below

c: the EU Administration (DG AGRI) trusts farmers

d: the national agricultural administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts the administration at NUTS 3 level and below

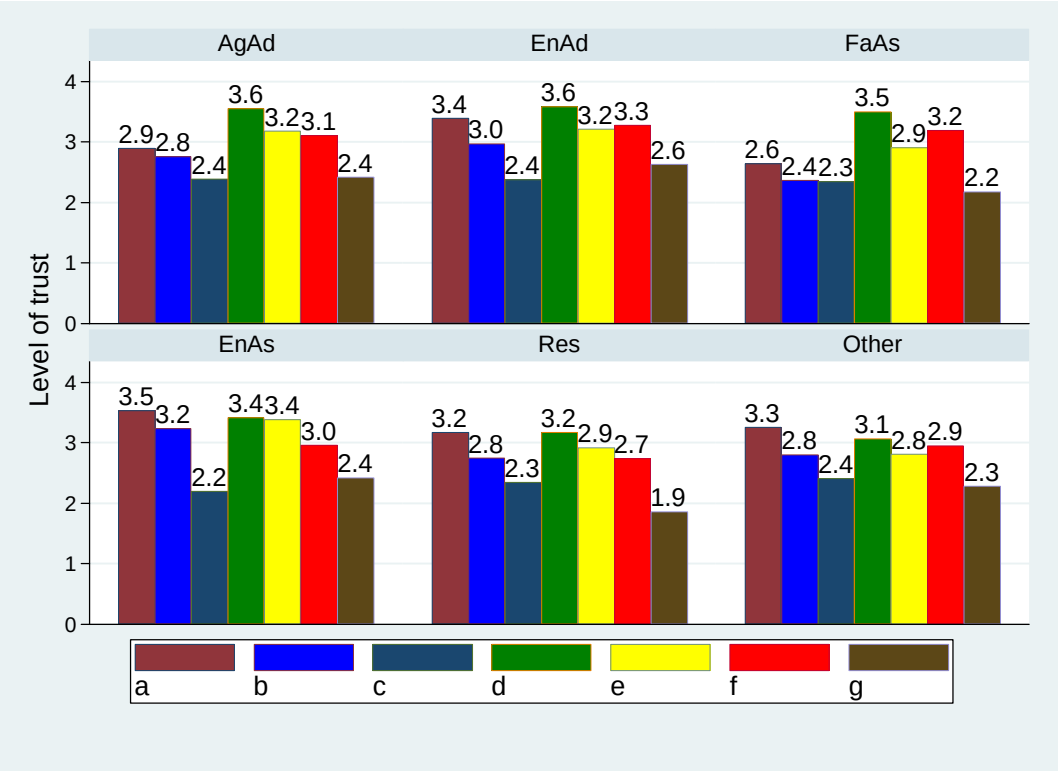
e: the national environmental administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts the administration at NUTS 3 level and below

f: the national environmental administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts farmers

g: the national agricultural administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts farmers

Regarding the perceived levels of trust, there is also an influence of the type of organisation. This is, however, only for two statements as can be concluded from Figure 152 (the p-values of the other statements b, c, d, e, and f are respectively 0.187, 0.990, 0.265, 0.423 and 0.294). The environmental administration and organisations assess the trust between the EU Administration (DG AGRI) and the national administration at national and NUTS 1 level to be higher than the other groups (p= 0.040). The environmental administration also agrees more with the statement that the national environmental administration (national or NUTS 1) trusts farmers (p= 0.044).

Figure 151: Trust between different administrative levels and actors by actor groups[2]



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree**
4: agree **5: strongly agree**

a: the EU Administration (DG AGRI) trusts the national administration at National and NUTS 1 level
b: the EU Administration (DG AGRI) trusts the national administration at NUTS 3 level and below
c: the EU Administration (DG AGRI) trusts farmers
d: the national agricultural administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts the administration at NUTS 3 level and below
e: the national environmental administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts the administration at NUTS 3 level and below
f: the national environmental administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts farmers
g: the national agricultural administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts farmers

Conclusion:
The trust among the different national government levels is rather high. This is different for the EU level, since they are perceived to have lower trust in the national administration and especially in the lower institutional levels. According to the interviewees, the trust in farmers by the administration is generally low, except for the national agricultural administration. Generally low levels of trust were found in the UK. In addition, comparatively high trust levels are reported for the environmental administrations and associations.

5.6.5 Administrative efforts associated with selected agri-environmental measures (Question 37)

In question 37, respondents, particularly those from the administration, are asked to assess the administrative effort connected with four particular measures from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). The measures chosen in each case study are the same as those chosen for question 12.

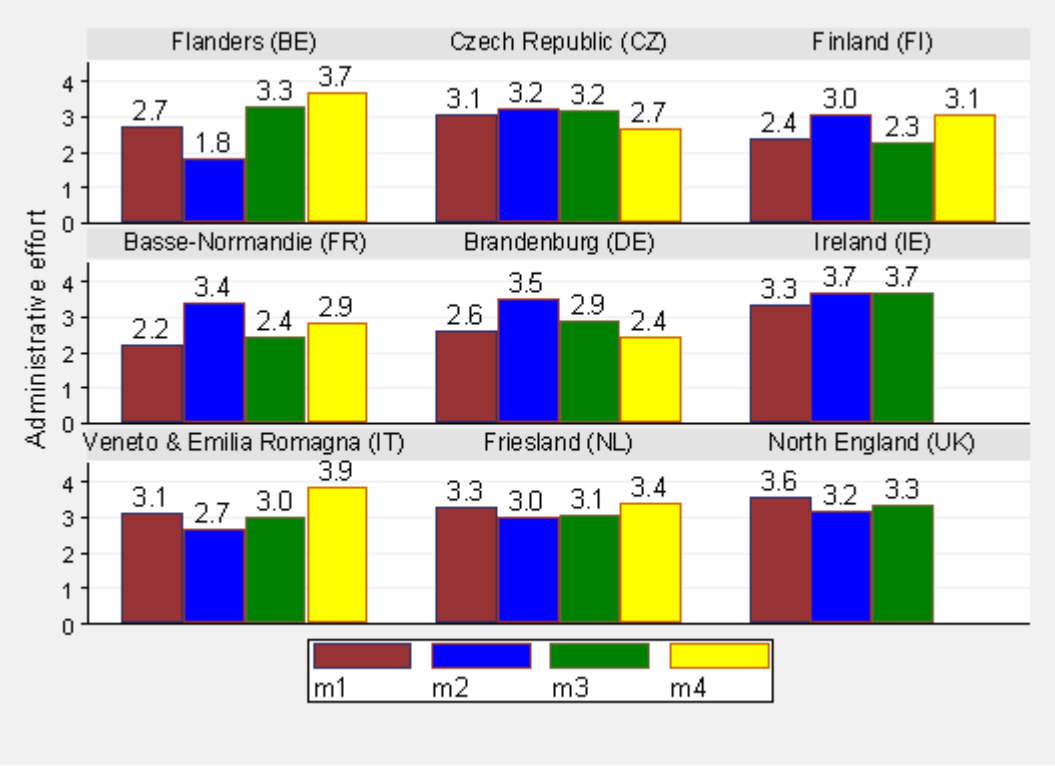
Table 11 gives for every measure the mean administrative effort connected to them and also includes the standard deviation as well as minimum and maximum levels. Figure 152 presents the same, but in graph format. The measures are arranged in similar order as in the table.

Table 11: Administrative effort connected to particular AEMs by case study areas

Country	Measure	Nr. obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
BE	Meadow bird management	7	2.714	1.380	1	5
	Mechanical weeding	5	1.800	0.837	1	3
	Parcel edges	7	3.286	1.113	2	5
	Water	6	3.667	1.211	2	5
CZ	Organic farming - grassland maintenance	13	3.077	1.188	1	5
	Grassland maintenance	13	3.231	1.235	1	5
	Increased biodiversity of alluvial meadows	11	3.182	0.874	2	4
	Crop rotation in cave protection zones	9	2.667	1.000	1	4
FI	Establishement and mangement of riparian zones	43	2.372	1.155	1	5
	Establishment and management of traditional biotopes	42	3.048	1.343	1	5
	Green cover during winter	42	2.286	1.088	1	5
	Organic farming	42	3.071	1.314	1	5
FR	Winter covering of arable land	25	2.240	1.234	1	5
	Maintenance of hedgerows	25	3.400	1.080	1	5
	Late mowing	22	2.591	1.221	1	5
	Extensive management of grasslands	25	3.000	0.957	1	5
DE	Extensive grassland	18	2.611	0.916	1	4
	Extensive grassland and late mowing	18	3.500	0.786	2	5
	Intercropping	18	2.889	1.132	1	5
	Farmland in grassland conversion	18	2.444	0.984	1	4
IE	REPS1	3	3.333	1.155	2	4
	REPS2	3	3.667	0.577	3	4
	REPS3	3	3.667	0.577	3	4
IT-VE	Buffer strips	9	2.444	1.130	1	4
	Conservation of permanent meadows in the plain	9	3.222	1.563	1	5
	Conservation of meadows and pastures in mountains	9	3.000	1.581	1	5
	Hedgerows and little woods	9	3.333	0.866	2	4
IT-ER	Organic Production	6	4.167	1.602	1	5
	Cover crops	6	1.833	1.169	1	4
	Improve Organic matter in the soil	6	3.000	1.549	1	5
	Introduction and main	6	4.667	0.516	4	5
NL	Meadow bird management	17	3.294	0.772	2	5
	Collective meadow bird management	17	3.000	1.118	1	5
	Plot edges	17	3.059	0.899	2	5
	Landscape maintenance	17	3.412	1.004	2	5
UK	CSS (Arable)	12	3.583	0.900	2	5
	CSS (Upland)	12	3.167	0.835	2	5
	ESA	12	3.333	0.888	2	5

Legend: 1: strongly disagree 2: disagree 3: partly agree 4: agree 5: strongly agree

Figure 152: Administrative effort connected to particular AEMs by case study areas



Legend: **1: strongly disagree** **2: disagree** **3: partly agree** **4: agree** **5: strongly agree**

In Figures Figure 153 to Figure 162, the administrative effort for every measure in every country is compared to the ecological efficiency of the measures, calculated from question 12 in the questionnaire. In addition, a comparison is made with the results from work package (WP) 5 of the ITAES project on the environmental effectiveness of AEMs. WP 5 also allowed to calculate the perceived ecological effectiveness for a couple of AESs[13]. The ecological score from WP 5 is calculated with a specific formula[14] on the basis of the outcomes of the expert workshops and is dependent on how the measure scores on scientific causality between the measure and objective, the quality of implementation of the measure by the government and by the farmer, the quality of the targeting of the measure and its participation rate. When only statistically significant correlations are taken into account, there would be a significant positive relationship between the administrative effort and the environmental effectiveness of the measures only for the Brandenburg measure 'Extensive grassland and late mowing' (coefficient= 0.5787, p= 0.019). Looking at the graphs below, however, in Flanders, the Czech Republic, Basse-Normandie and the Italian regions, there is also a positive relationship between the administrative effort and the ecological efficiency of the measures. In Finland

[13] Perceived environmental effectiveness from the WP 4 questionnaire is calculated as follows: the effectiveness of a measure is added over the different environmental categories, but only those environmental categories are included for which the degree of effectiveness of the measure is 3 or higher. To receive the measure in percentage terms, the number is divided by 25 (the maximum score) and then multiplied by 100. To obtain the perceived administrative effort from WP 4 in percentage, the number is divided by 5 (the maximum score) and multiplied by 100.

[14] For every measure-objective pair connected to a specific measure, the formula is: score {causality * implementation-institutional * implementation-farmer * targeting * participation}/ max score {causality * implementation-institutional * implementation-farmer * targeting * participation}. To get the score per measure, a mean is calculated from the scores of every measure-objective pair connected to that measure.

and Germany, the situation seems reversed. However, it is difficult to substantiate statements based on such a small number of observations.

Figure 153: Administrative effort and ecological efficiency of AEMs in Flanders

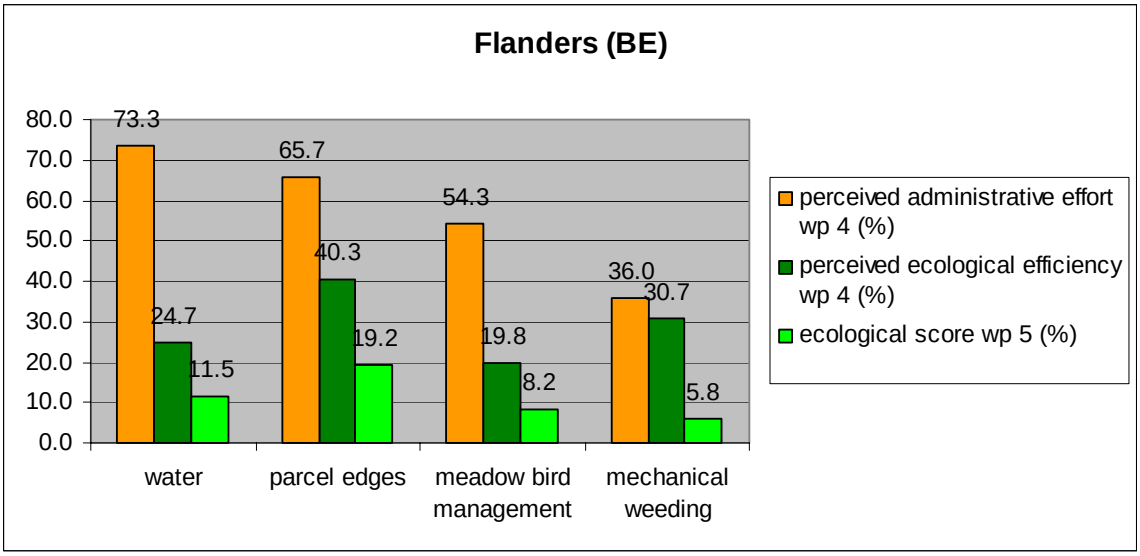


Figure 154: Administrative effort and ecological efficiency of AEMs in the Czech Republic

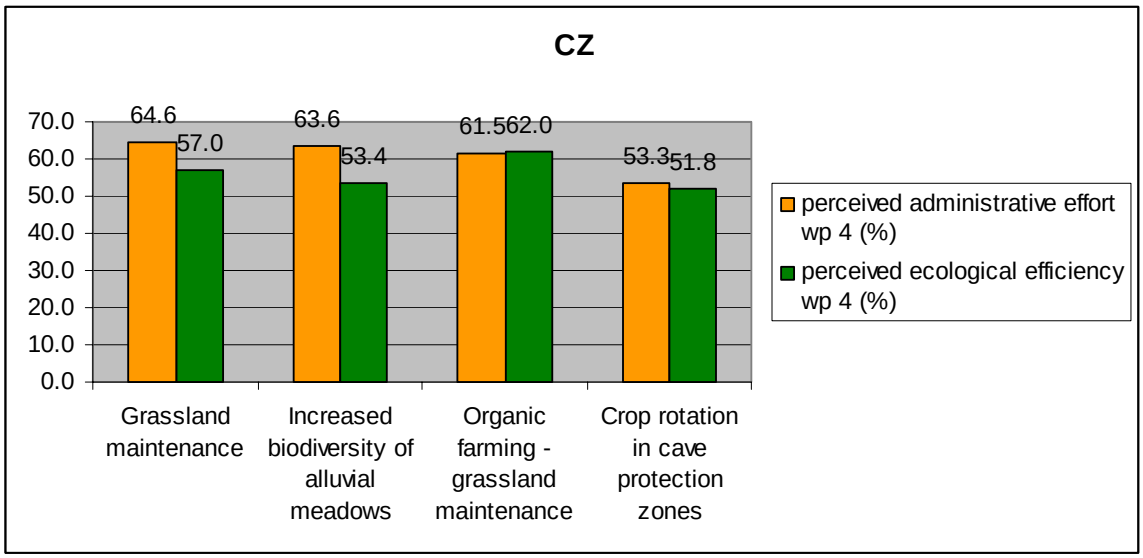


Figure 155: Administrative effort and ecological efficiency of AEMs in Finland

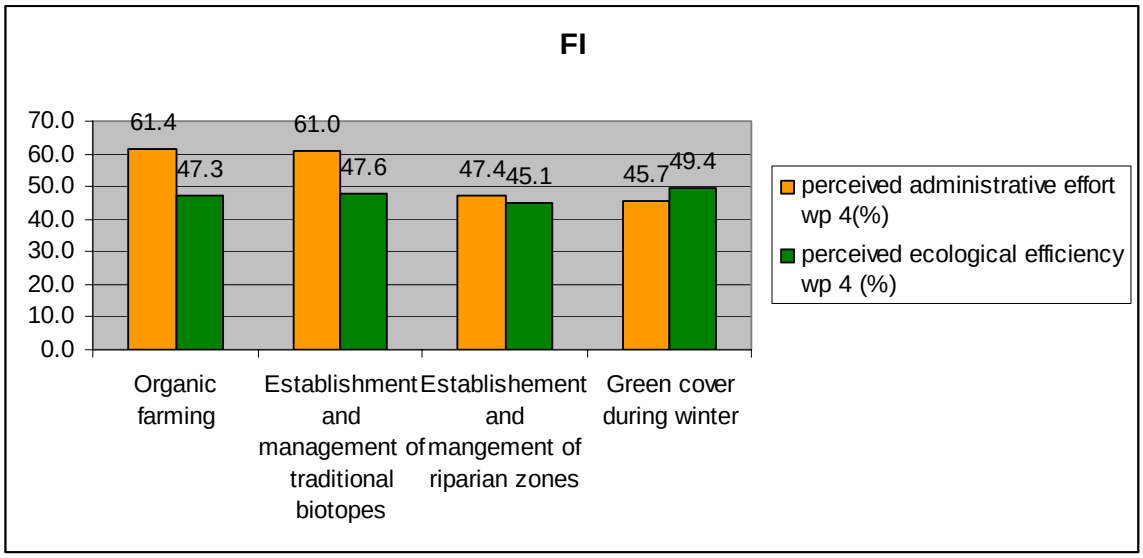


Figure 156: Administrative effort and ecological efficiency of AEMs in Basse-Normandie

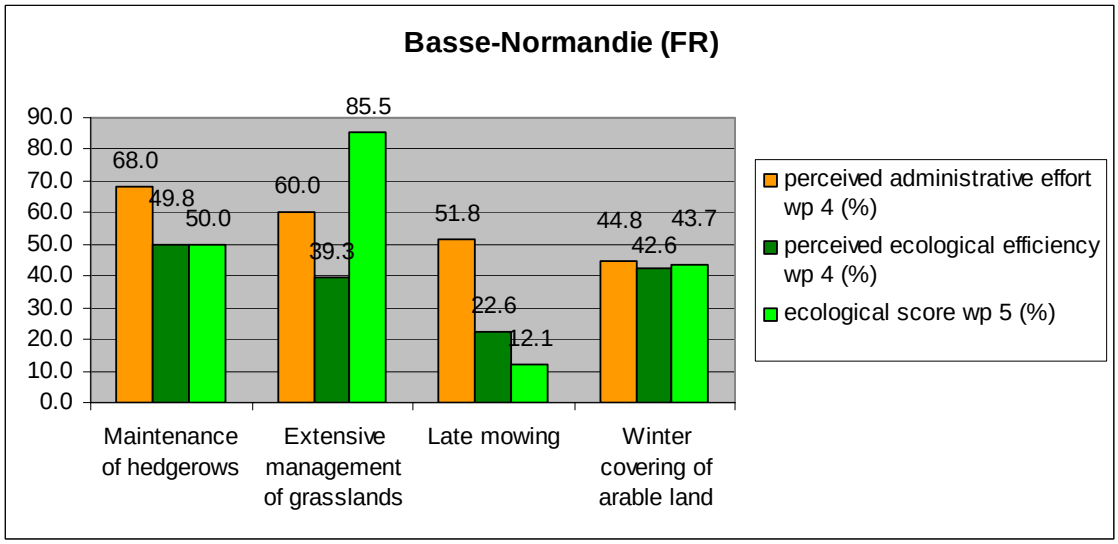


Figure 157: Administrative effort and ecological efficiency of AEMs in Brandenburg

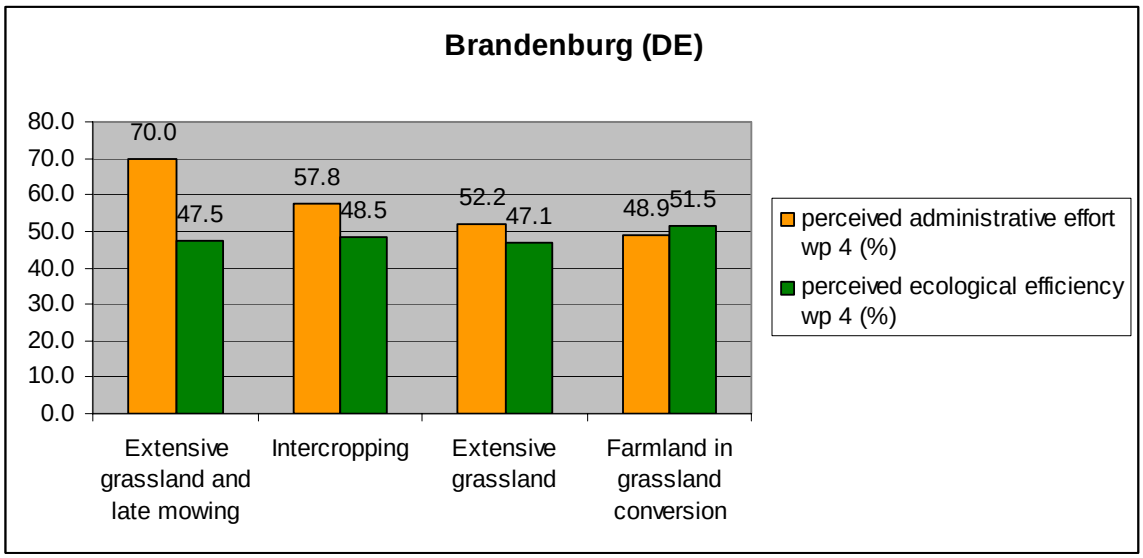


Figure 158: Administrative effort and ecological efficiency of AEMs in Ireland

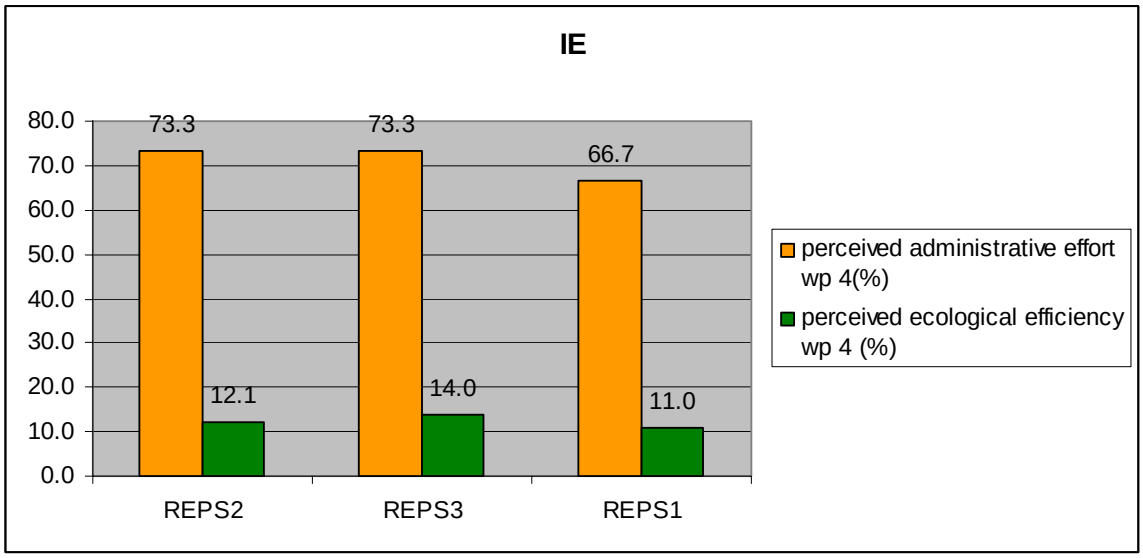


Figure 159: Administrative effort and ecological efficiency of AEMs in Emilia Romagna

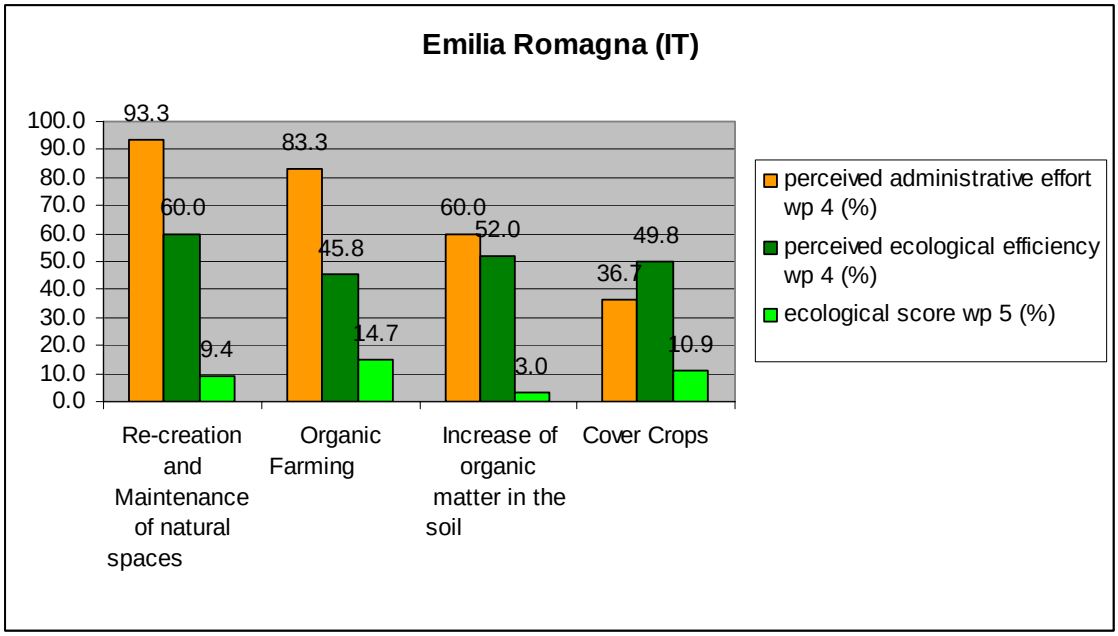


Figure 160: Administrative effort and ecological efficiency of AEMs in Veneto

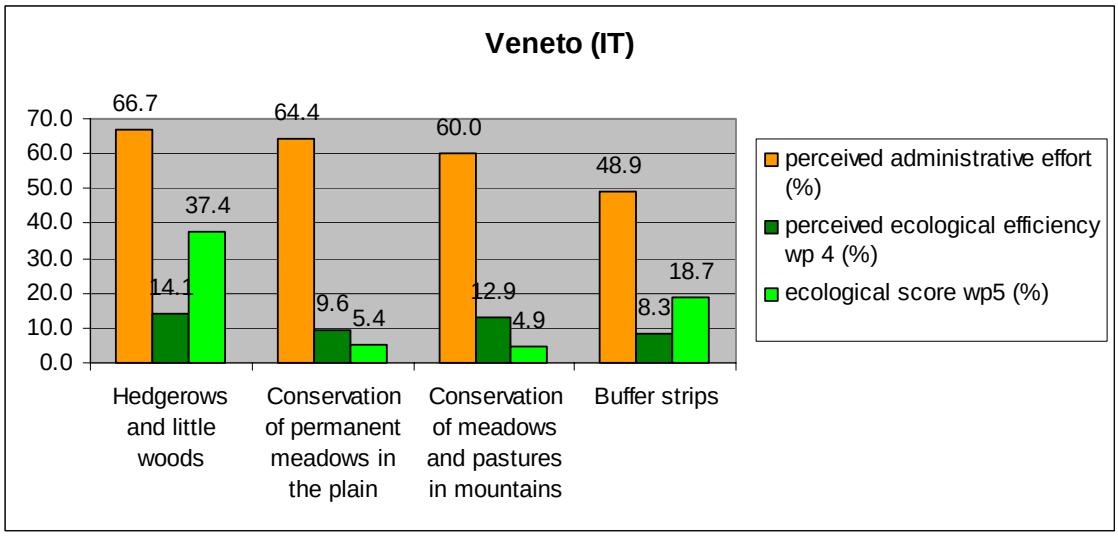


Figure 161: Administrative effort and ecological efficiency of AEMs in Friesland

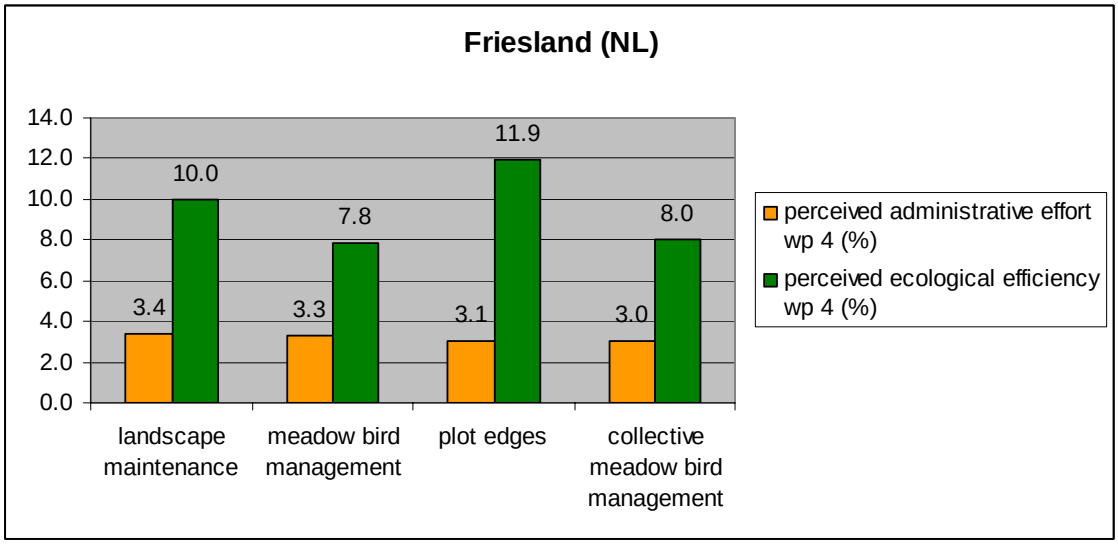
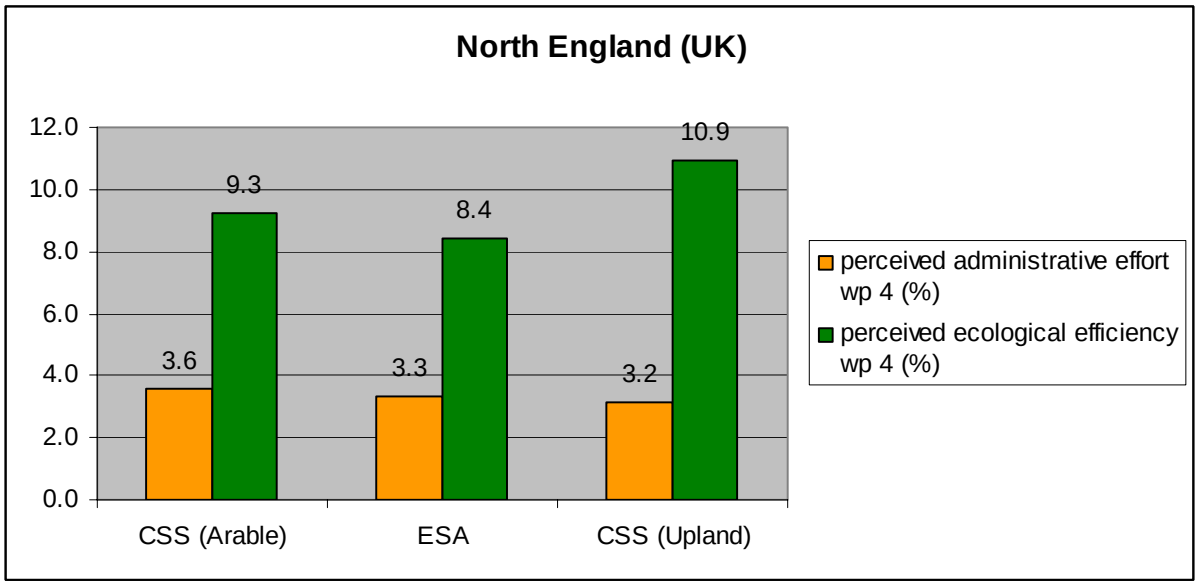


Figure 162: Administrative effort and ecological efficiency of AEMs in North England



Conclusion:
Drawing general conclusions on the administrative efforts connected with AEMs is impossible on the basis of the ITAES data, since the respondents evaluated this for each AEM relatively in relation to the other AEMs. However, on country basis, a positive relationship between the administrative effort and the ecological effectiveness of AEMs was stated. The only statistically significant correlation was found for the Brandenburg measure 'Extensive grassland and late mowing'. In Flanders, the Czech Republic, Basse-Normandie and the Italian regions, a positive relationship between the administrative effort and the ecological efficiency of the measures can also be observed, although it is not statistically significant. In Finland and Germany, the situation seems reversed. Due to the small number of observations however, it is difficult to substantiate these statements.

5.6.6 Additional comments on public transaction costs (Question 38)

There is a great diversity of additional comments on public transaction costs. Especially French and Flemish respondents were concerned with transaction costs. Despite that many respondents seem to find transaction costs an interesting issue there seem to have been little reflection on this. Accordingly, the comments on transaction costs are diverse and lack an overall structure. Readers who are more interested in details are referred back to Appendix A 11. However, issues that gained particular attention were transaction costs in relation to regulations, effectiveness and costs of measures, continuity of AES, distribution of cost components of AESs and knowledge and measurement of transaction costs. Some respondents also commented on the question of trust between actors.
Concerning the impact of regulation on transaction costs, there were complaints that EU regulations contribute to increased transaction costs. Czech officers of the agricultural administration complain that EU regulation and reporting requirements incur large transaction costs. A Flemish officer of the agricultural administration and a respondent of a Flemish tourism association suggest that abandonment of national co-financing would reduce transaction costs. Others point at the impact of administrative procedures in the application process on transaction costs. A Flemish officer from the agricultural administration suggests the administrative pathway to be shortened to reduce transaction costs. According to a Czech respondent from the agricultural administration the application procedures of AEMs could be make cheaper with IT-solutions.
Effectiveness and costs relationships in relation to transaction costs are a major issue in most case studies. According to a respondent of the Czech environmental administration the preparation of AESs is necessary and it is thus difficult to determine whether the costs involved are appropriate in relation to outcomes. More complex measures will thus be more costly. A Flemish officer of the agricultural administration, transaction costs may be high as long they are compensated by a high effectiveness. Therefore, AESs should be evaluated also on the basis of transaction costs involved. In the opinion of several respondents increased complexity of measures also increases their transaction costs, but will bring greater benefits. Such remarks came from the French agricultural administration, French "others" and the English environmental administration. Participation may thus be rectified, although it contributes to costs. As French "others" point out, cost increases due to participation do not necessarily occur. A Finnish respondent from the agricultural administration suggests that low costs and good quality seldom come together. However, a Flemish respondent from the "others" group suggests that transaction costs are not in proportion to the minor effects of measures. Also respondents from the Italian case study point out that there is a lot of effort being spent on AES, which have only minor effects. In this context a Flemish researcher suggests transaction costs to decrease in order to increase money for utility functions of

measures. According to an officer of the Netherlands' agricultural administration this is possible, as transaction costs can be further reduced due to the existing scope for improvement in AESs. Relating to this a researcher from the same case study suggests that if more would be spent on AESs design results of AEMs would be better.
Continuity of AESs policies decreases transaction costs as respondents from the French "others" group and from Finland claim. However, according to a respondent of a French AESs environmental association are not a serous issue.
In relation to the distribution of cost components of AESs a respondent from the Flemish "others" claims that costs for design and implementation are very high. Also respondents from the French agricultural administration find implementation most costly, whereby some particularly suggest that control is most costly and too costly. However, a respondent of a French farmers' association thinks that much money is spent on communication. According to officers of the Italian agricultural administration simplification would decrease costs of administration to the benefit of real users, which are the farmers.
There is a lack of information on transaction costs in the Czech Republic according to agricultural administration. Also respondents of the German environmental administration complain about scattered knowledge. In this context Finnish respondents point out that administrative work is difficult to value. According to an officer of the agricultural administration not all activities related to AESs should be confused with transaction costs, because a large proportion of efforts are on advice and education, which contributes directly to outcomes. Nevertheless a researcher from the Netherlands is convinced that there is a lot to gain from more knowledge of transaction costs.
Trust in general is higher in DG Agriculture than in DG Environment as a respondent from the Flemish agricultural administration suggests. Respondents from Flemish environmental administration and a respondent of NUTS 1 "others" suspect that lesser control of farmers through VLM agencies indicates higher levels of trust in farmers. An "others" respondent, however, suggests that an important question is whether farmers trust the government of which the answer is certainly no. In relation to this a further Flemish respondent of the "others" argues that trust also depends on which party is in charge. More trust in decentralised units would make AESs management better according to a Basse-Normandie farmers' association representative. According to a North England environmental association a lack of trust in farmers and land mangers increases control costs. Nevertheless, an officer from the German case study's agricultural administration thinks that trust is rather between persons involved and not between actor groups.
As can be concluded from this account, opinions on transaction costs are diverse and rather detailed. This might be due to lacking discussions on transactions costs between and within all NUTS levels and actor groups. Some of the other comments in Appendix A 11 may therefore be of rather similar value to those summarised here.

Conclusion:
Especially French and Flemish respondents were concerned with transaction costs. The comments on transaction costs are diverse and lack an overall structure. However, recurring topics are the relationship of transaction costs to benefits of measures and to regulation. The latter is mainly suggested to increase transaction costs, while some question the appropriateness of the proportions of transaction costs in relation to benefits. In terms of the costs components of AEMs there are suggestions that particularly implementation and design are expensive. Several respondents, however, complain that information and knowledge on transaction costs is poor. Trust is a particular issue among Flemish respondents, which question, for example, that farmers trust the government. An additional remark from the German case study was that trust is rather between persons involved and not so much between actor groups.

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7 APPENDICES

Appendix A - Accounts of qualitative questions

Appendix A 1 - Question 5

CZECH REPUBLIC (CZ): Respondents of the agricultural administration at NUTS 1 remark that the ministries of agriculture and environment have different opinions on AEMs, that proposal making on measure design on the basis of monitoring are has recently started, that they work fulltime on administering AEMs and try to assess their controllability.
An officer of the LAU level is concerned with making proposals on changes of AEMs and participates in regional meetings focusing on evaluation of priorities and fund allocation
Of the farmer associations a LAU respondent focuses on cooperation with the association of integrated fruit and vine producers on system improvement and effectiveness increasing.
A LAU member of staff of the environmental administration complains that restricted and incomplete access to LPIS makes their work difficult.
An interviewee of a NUTS 1 environmental association states that they consider their role as a middleman and a facilitator.

BRANDENBURG (D): A respondent of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration remarks that they communicate with the farmer associations within group meetings.
From the NUTS 1 farmer associations a respondent mentions that they have little time, since working voluntarily.
An officer of the NUTS 1 environmental administration points out, that they also deal with the preparation of farming permits in FFH areas. Another officer thinks that communication cannot be separated from the farmer in terms of his wife, because of joint decision-making although the latter is often doing administrative tasks.
A respondent of the NUTS 3 environmental associations points out, that they also work with the lower nature conservation agency.
Of the organic farmer associations a NUTS 1 respondent thinks that AEMs are very confusing.
A respondent from the national consumer association consults the Länder (NUTS 1) consumer associations, lobbies for the legitimisation of payments, local provisioning structures and rural areas and their actors.

FLANDERS (B): There a lot of peak times in the design and implementation of AEMs, an officer of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration remarks, since design was mainly in the beginning of the period 2000-2006, but also contracting is not the same every year.
As a NUTS 1 respondent of the farmer association reports they spend much time on handling complaints of farmers and presenting these complaints to the administration.
Of the NUTS 1 environmental administration one respondent points out that a lot of time is spend on payment and control of payments. Another officer remarks that there have been a lot of short-term changes in the AEMs themselves, but also in responsibilities for AEMs. The environmental administration obtained more responsibilities and thus workload increased in some divisions. A positive effect of changes is the increased simplicity of AEMs and increased payments for farmers.
A member of a NUTS 1 environmental association remarks that they currently spend not so much time on the measure, but will do so in the future. Another NUTS 1 respondent reports that they have to contact the administration regularly because for their specific situation (cooperation with farmers in the nature reserves) the regular legislation is not applicable. There are a lot of legal obstacles for a good cooperation with farmers, which sometimes

necessitates a creative interpretation of the law. These legal obstacles result from the fact that a lot of AESs are not designed according to agro-environmental management, but in relation to the manure policy.
Of the “others” group a NUTS 1 respondent reports that the period before setting up the contract is most labour intensive, because the farm planner has to build up a relationship based on trust. This takes a while, since it is not easy to convince farmers to take up AESs. The more farmers that are convinced, the easier it gets to convince others, because the mouth-to-mouth publicity among farmers is very important. According to a NUTS 2 respondent of this group, everything they do for the AESs is done again by the environmental administration (VLM). The administration does not meet the four months deadline. Another cause of this problem is the lack of personnel.

BASSE-NORMANDIE (F): Respondents of the national agricultural administration have different tasks, concentrating on either assessment of AES, design or implementation of AESs. An officer involved in design thinks that too much time is spent on asking for flexibility. An implementation officer is also in charge of the integration of environmental issues in agricultural policies. A further respondent is responsible for the relationship of France with the EU with respect to the Rural Development Regulation. Officers of the NUTS 2 level have mainly responsibilities such as payment and control of AEMs. Further, they coordinate and support NUTS 3 level activities. Concerning the design of AEMs, some respondents were already involved, whereas others demanded more involvement to improve AEMs definition and support easier control. An officer from the NUTS 3 level reports that they are primarily in charge of distributing subsidies to farmers.
National farmer associations are involved in AESs to different degrees. The FNSEA coordinates mainly its local (NUTS 3) federations. TRAME work mainly in agricultural networking and development and only provide some advices concerning AESs to farmers, despite having little information about its use. A respondent of the second French farmer association Confederation Paysanne states that they were hardly consulted on AESs. FR CIVAM are part of the Sustainable Farming Network and mainly promote extensive grassland farming and hence their limited influence on AESs focused at national and NUTS 2 on a specific grassland measure, which never was applied.
Farmer associations at the NUTS 3 are often not much involved in AESs. Some were involved in designing a grassland measure, which was never used, though. The more important unions, especially FDSEA are more involved and mainly support farmers.
Officers of both NUTS 1 and NUTS 2 environmental administration argue that they have not been involved in AESs. The NUTS 1 administration tried to introduce water issues and the NUTS 2 considers itself only to be there to provide a green image for the state.
Environmental associations are to different extents concerned with AESs. One national organisation with branches at lower levels participates actively in AESs meetings and focuses on bird protection.
Of the respondent of the “others” group a respondent who works at the national level on evaluation of AES, considers them useless. NUTS 2 respondents of this group consist predominantly of Chambers of Agriculture and RNPs. The former deal mainly with information exchange with its NUTS 3 branches, whereas the latter are involved in designing AESs. Time spend on AESs is seen by some as cyclical and not in relation to the poor outcomes. Some of the “others” group took part in the design of specific contracts for pear trees and vegetable producers. The former measure has now stopped and in the latter also the NUTS 2 council was involved, which otherwise is not concerned with AESs.
Respondents of the “others” at NUTS 3 mainly consist of Chambers of Agriculture and of the ADASEA. The former spent time on AESs in cyclical patterns, which sometimes was large due to lobbyism, rejection of the policy, their high level of expertise and skills and because of

complex measures. The ADASEA is a major partner in implementing AESs together with the administration, but also provides advise to farmers. Also Departmental Councils are included in the "others" group, though they are not really involved, since they have no agricultural tasks. At the LAU level a dairy cooperative designed a specific contract for its members together with the Chamber of Agriculture and the Regional Natural Park. Also at this level an association of municipalities designed a framework together with rural actor and delegated the implementation of the AESs concerned to the Chamber of Agriculture.

FINLAND (FI): According to an officer of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration the exchange of information between MAF and research has greatly improved since inception of AESs.
A respondent of each, NUT3 agricultural and environmental administration thinks more personal contact time with farmers to market schemes is useful.
Many representatives of regional farmer associations suggest that AESs are too complicated as too much time is required for design, implementation and monitoring.
Several respondents of all actor groups remarked that they do not keep records on time spend and that the shares of time spend on AESs are difficult to separate from time spend on other issues. For example, when monitoring they would also include non-AES matters.

IRELAND (IE): Irish respondents had mainly no further comments on design and implementation of AESs. However, a NUTS 2 officer of the agricultural administration remarks that they have to do the proofing of environmental measures in relation to LEADER initiatives, which are obliged to liaise with local authorities and both agricultural and environmental administration. The work of a responding environmental association is rather indirectly linked to AESs.

VENETO AND EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT): (Maschera) In terms of design and implementation of AESs regional environmental and agricultural government are cooperating, as a NUTS 2 officer of the agricultural administration suggest. At the NUTS 3 level, however, one respondent thinks that the agricultural administration should remain the most important implementer of AESs. Another respondent remarks, that they organise technical meetings with the farmer associations.
According to a respondent of a NUTS 3 environmental association there is discrimination between young and old farmers. In addition there should be a better definition of farm consultancy services for the 2007-2013 programming period.
(Veneto) Of the NUTS 2 agricultural administration a respondent points out that some of the activities in relation to AESs are seasonal (e.g. Questions 3 a, e, g), while others are not. A further officer argues that his administration interacts with the regional departments regarding financial programming and designing regional arrangements. A respondent of a NUTS 2 farmer association complains, however, that the regional administration is too focused on drafting the RDP and making public announcements.
Unlike for conventional farmer associations, for the organic farmers association AESs are not specific task.

FRIESLAND (NL): Officers of the national agricultural administration are not directly involved in AES, despite financing them and developing new financing and working methods. Some of them have more frequent contact with researchers. Of the "others" group one national respondent mentions that some persons have frequent and mostly informal contact with farmers concerning AESs. Another respondent from the NUTS 3 level is pointing at the role of provincial area plans and policy development and monitoring area planning for AESs.

A national researcher remarks that due to their research they have currently a lot of contact with environmental organisations. Also another researcher has increased activities related to AESs and environmental organisations, since they have to evaluate a conservation programme.

NORTH ENGLAND (UK): Respondents of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration focus particularly on implementation of AESs. One of them, however, suggests that the design should focus more on information and data collected in applications to improve information handling. A further officer complains that time constraints are determined on a political level and unrealistic, thus leading to inefficient schemes with practical constraints.
Officers of the NUTS 1 environmental administration suggest that time spend on AESs is highest in terms of design and the early implementation stages. A NUTS 3 respondent claims that they have an important role in delivering the AESs in the region and are increasing staff resources related to AESs. They also contribute to national and regional consultations on AESs design.
A respondent of the NUTS 1 environmental associations points out that they design projects, which are either funded through AESs or influence AESs to improve their function. A NUTS 3 respondent complains that regional advice was not heard and thus the scheme focused on government sustainability targets instead on biodiversity. Another respondent suggests that more effort should have been spent on design and implementation of AES, as there are a number of conflicts. Consequently another association is involved in preparing cases where implementation problems caused application failure.

Appendix A 2 - Question 10

CZECH REPUBLIC (CZ): The agricultural and environmental administrations at NUTS 1 in the Czech Republic are particularly concerned about soil protection (soil erosion and compaction, soil contamination) and landscape protection. Czech farmer associations think that there is not enough support for these measures. Also environmental associations at NUTS 1 think that there should be more emphasis on landscape structure, though they are more concerned with animal and plant biodiversity issues.

BRANDENBURG (D): A respondent of the NUTS 3 agricultural administration says that they are particularly concerned with the local area and have otherwise not such a good overview. The farmer association at the same level points at water quantity problems due to insufficient maintenance of draining systems. In terms of heterogeneity of environmental problems the respondent points at heterogeneity of cropping systems and the example of impoverished soils in asparagus growing areas. The environmental administration at NUTS 1 mentions decreasing animal stock as a problem in terms of nitrate and phosphorus flows, while one respondent from NUTS 3 suggests that high shares of nature protection areas decrease levels of environmental problems. However, another respondent from the NUTS 3 level mentions the operation of flood protection as a serious problem.
Open cast coal mining areas are considered a further environmental problem by a researcher.

FLANDERS (B): Officers of the agricultural administration have diverse opinions on agri-environmental problems. As one respondent of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration argues, there is need to create environmental consciousness among farmers and citizens. However, another officer argues that not all environmental problems are related to farming and other sector like household have worse impacts. Further, as one officer points out, agriculture is often a victim of environmental problems, such as cadmium.
In a similar fashion a NUTS 1 respondent of the farmer associations suggests that industrialisation and urbanisation are a greater environmental threat than agriculture, which according to the respondent is the sector with the best environmental progress. Further, the respondent suggests many environmental problems solve themselves and the situation is not as bad as some claim, hence, AESs are completely useless. A LAU respondent argues there is insufficient attention to positive environmental impacts of farming and thus to keep nature the development of agriculture is important. However, some agricultural practices are intolerable.
An officer of the LAU environmental administration suggests that biodiversity decrease due to agricultural uniformity and that important landscape elements disappear.
Environmental associations at the NUTS 1 level argue, that despite efforts environmental impacts are still large. Water quality impacts of farming have still to be mitigated in line with the Nitrate Directive and soil fertility in terms of soil organic matter receives little attention as one respondent points out. A core problem is intensive production, which is more profitable and thus land bound, rather environmental friendly, farms are bought up by more intensive holdings. A respondent from the LAU level agrees that water quality is difficult to control, though also mentions that pressures on the landscape derive from the real estate sector and not from farming.
The potential future use of GMOs in Flemish agriculture is the main concern of a NUTS 1 respondent of the organic farmer associations, as it will have negative effects on the environment, particularly on biodiversity.
According to a NUTS 1 respondent of the tourism associations, air pollution does not receive enough attention, despite its serious impacts on cancer. Agriculture could help here through manure injection and further measures.

Respondents of the “others” group mention several aspects of the Flemish environment. One NUTS 1 respondent suggests that the understanding of the combination of agriculture and the environment has to be clarified among stakeholders, while for another it is clear that basic environmental standards are not met in many places in Flanders. Other respondents point at spatial problems. One respondent thinks that an expansion of nature reserves poses a threat on agriculture, while others complain about land fragmentation, which puts pressure on the environment in terms of emission of chemicals or in terms of wildlife conservation. In context of the latter, a wildlife manager complaints about inappropriate policies on species protection.
A LAU respondent suggests that despite restrictions, there is still a lot of pressure on water quality due to manuring.
While one researcher thinks that there is not enough research on the subject, another holds that agriculture makes a very positive contribution to landscape and open space in Flanders, which would be even more build over with less agriculture.

BASSE-NORMANDIE (F): Respondents of the national agricultural administration made two points. First, the link between Protected Designation of Origin and environmental protection is not strong enough and second that grassland and cereal cropping areas have to be distinguished. A respondent of the NUTS 2 level suggests that nitrogen and pesticides impact on the main problem of water quality and that soil erosion poses few problems.
Of the farmer associations, three national actors felt unable to identify environmental problems because they do not know the case study area of Basse-Normandie. One actor of this group, however, mentioned that water shortage is not a problem and indeed there is oversupply of water leading to leaching and thus drainage is needed. As a NUTS 2 respondent suggests, there is a habitat problem in the marshlands. One NUTS 3 respondent of the farmer associations has doubts about the sustainability of the farming systems developed, as there is an increased tendency towards mono cropping. Another NUTS 3 respondent thinks that there are not many environmental problems except nuclear technology and that there is a will among farmers and the population to preserve landscapes and the environment in the region.
This is to some extent reflected by the statement of a NUTS 1 respondent of the environmental administration, that actors in the NUTS 2 region are concerned about the environment and water quality in particular, because it was the first region to test water policies. Indeed, a NUTS 2 respondent of the environmental administration suggests that water quality and biodiversity are the main problems.
The respondent of the national environmental association does not know the region as well. The same applies to two respondents of the national “others” group, though one respondent of this level remarks that the region has important environmental potential, because it is one of the few extensive lowland grassland areas.
Respondents of the group “others” at the NUTS 2 level raise several points concerning the environment in the case study region. One respondent claims that the area has a rich and diversified environment, but maintenance of environmental assets is lacking. According to another respondent there is new problem today with vegetables, because the use of pesticides impacts on biodiversity. Moreover the soil and water qualities differ between marshland areas and coastal vegetable areas as one respondent points out. However, a further respondent of the NUTS 2 level claims that although there are some environmental problems in the region, they are not severe and additionally the region is one of the best French regions for contracting AEMs and encouraging farmers to join environmental programmes.
Further down, “others” at the NUTS 3 level point at more detailed environmental problems, which vary extremely between areas in the region as one respondent suggests. There are two important issues, according to a respondent of this level, which are the preservation of grassland areas and of hedgerows. The latter is also mentioned by another respondent, who is, however, concerned about impacts which are mainly linked to pesticide usage. All these

problems are summarised by a further respondent, who claims that the main problems relate to the different subsoil structures and production types in the region. River water problems are thus linked to organic nitrogen losses in the west, while groundwater problems occur in the east due to nitrogen leaching. Biodiversity is only preserved, where there is nothing produced. Finally one respondent suggests that the time for farmers to become aware of environmental problems is long.
Of the "others" group at the LAU one respondent suggests, that preserving woodland areas is important to prevent erosion and preserve water, though, another respondent claims that there are no environmental problems at all in the La Hague area.

FINLAND (FI): The Finish respondents were overall able to provide very detailed descriptions on regional and even local environmental issues emphasising the specialities of the area, like reindeer management, groundwater areas, certain landscapes etc.

IRELAND (IE): The Irish respondents are all from the NUTS 2 level. From the perspective of the respondent of the agricultural administration the main difference in terms of environmental pressures is rather between rural and peri-urban areas and more specifically challenging due to present demographic and social changes in living areas.
In the opinion of a respondent from the farmer associations, greater importance should be given to archaeological sites and the farm build heritage.
From the environmental associations one respondent points out that currently there appears to be low levels of public awareness and little information being offered for informed decision-making. However, a further respondent remarks that the Burren landscape is particularly vulnerable to environmental problems.
Yet, one researcher suggest that a large proportion of soils of Ireland is acidic and thus soil water dissolves metals which are to varying degrees harmful to plants and also restrict availability of essential plant nutrients important for agriculture. In addition, as another researcher points out, there is a serious lack of baseline knowledge on levels of heterogeneity, special variation in severity and incidence of environmental pressures and the status of the countryside. Such knowledge would be necessary for evidence-based decision-making about agri-environmental problems and priorities.

VENETO AND EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT): (Maschera) According to a NUTS 3 officer of the agricultural administration there are large differences in environmental problems between mountain, hill and plain areas. Another respondent from the NUTS 3 agricultural administration remarks that biodiversity matters for agriculture and agricultural production in turn for biodiversity. According to a respondent of the NUTS 2 associations of farmers environmental problems concern only a small area.
(Veneto) As a respondent of the farmers associations at NUTS 3 suggests agriculture has not the main responsibility for pollution. Pointing at soil protection a respondent of the environmental administration at NUTS 2 argues that it also depends on controlled construction and planning, which have to account for areas to be preserved. In addition garbage management should aim at lowest production and highest retrieval rates. Further, renewable energies should be further promoted and stimulated. A respondent of the organic farmers' association argues that there was a model of unsustainable economic growth that has lost its trust.

FRIESLAND (NL): The largest water quality problems have been solved, as a respondent of the national level "others" group claims. However, another respondent of this level thinks that in the future the number of agricultural companies will decline and those which stay will have a changed company management in which AEMs are difficult to fit in, because of less

outdoor grazing and fertilisation. Consequently measures fitting into companies will make up only small scales. According to a further respondent of the "others" from the NUTS 3 level there is a good approach to the tension between agricultural policy and nature and landscape policy needed.
Researchers point out that the heterogeneity is found between areas, within areas and between management strategies. To certain extents another researcher, who claims that heterogeneity depends on soil quality and farming intensities, agrees this. A further researcher suggests that the same potential productivity is possible everywhere if the right conditions are created.

NORTH ENGLAND (UK): Officers of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration point out that there are distinct differences in environmental problems between the uplands and lowlands in the region. According to one officer, in the uplands there are major overgrazing problems, bad management and inappropriate burning of heath by shooting estates and the sharp increase of wind farm applications could have major landscape effects. In addition there is the imminent extinction of red squirrels. Another officer is concerned with the need to raise awareness of the importance of the natural environment in terms of economic and social wellbeing and its role in climate change, as for example as carbon sinks. Further the impact and implications of access and recreation have to be considered.
Also a respondent of the NUTS 1 farmer associations thinks that the threatened Red Squirrel should be better protected. In order to maximise environmental benefits, upland farmers should not be prejudiced against and environmental agreements be transferable into new schemes.
According to a NUTS 1 officer of the environmental administration the link between land management and flood risk has to be more fully considered. Another officer suggest that conservation and enhancement of the region's upland habitats and landscapes is a major priority. As two further officers sum up, major environmental issues relate to uplands, rivers and coast.
Environmental associations at NUTS 1 go more into the details of environmental problems. One respondent suggests that the area is very rich in environmental features such as breeding waders, hay meadows, heather moorland, blanked bog and rough pasture, which are threatened by increased intensity of agriculture, encompassing more drainage and fertilisation in addition to poor husbandry like overgrazing of river banks and heather moorland or poaching. In addition illegal killing of birds of prey is a further significant issue. A further NUTS 1 respondent mentions that old schemes allowed harmful activities, like harrowing and rolling during the breeding season of birds, which leads to losses of nests and chicks. At the NUTS 3 level respondents of the environmental associations point out that advisers have insufficient training to identify important biodiversity features on farms and that managing coastal habitats and sea defences is a major issue in the region.
According to a respondent of the NUTS 3 "others" group the main environmental problems are associated with a decline in traditional upland economies resulting in pressure to intensify threatening landscape and biodiversity.

Appendix A 3 - Question 15

CZECH REPUBLIC (CZ): At the NUTS 1 level officers of the agricultural administration ask who determines the seriousness of environmental problems, as farmers will argue that they are just in an area with general environmental problems. For the design of effective AEMs it is necessary to know how they solve regional problems. In addition, subsidies are paid in all regions, despite the varying seriousness of environmental problems. However, one respondent supports the horizontal approach to AESs as these decrease inputs with negative impacts and provide landscape benefits. Another officer searches for a compromise between zoned and horizontal AEMs. The officer adds that some AEMs are not implemented because of misfits with land markets. There also is little experience with evaluation. An officer of the LAU level complains that some procedures underlying AEMs are illogical as it is necessary to aim at farmers. A different officer is concerned with early grass cutting dates, which are opposed by hunting associations and critical of insufficient manuring in organic farming.
LAU level officers of the environmental administration are complaining that measures are broad brushed and that the SAIF, although being privileged, is not controlling sufficiently, communicates badly, does not cooperate and puts absurd pressure on regional agencies including recommendation of reasonless measures.
Environmental associations at the NUTS 1 level complain that the “catch crop” measures do not support the environment and mainly focus on income support. Further it is pointed out that AEMs are complex and that subsidies should enable diversification. A researcher, however, argues that there should not be overlap with other subsidies.

BRANDENBURG (D): According to an officer of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration the achievement of payments reflecting agricultural production potentials is only possible in some areas (Question 13c). In addition, instead of improved schemes, continuity is desired.
A respondent of the NUTS 1 farmer association suggests that integrated measures would depend on farm types. Consequently AEMs relating to suckler cows or organic farming measures should be specific.
In relation to payments reflecting production potentials (Question 13c) a respondent of the NUTS 1 environmental administration suggests that production potentials are not a good basis since cost structures also differ between areas. Especially in weaker regions the CAP created environmental problems. Further, farmers receive lesser payments with newer AEMs. With regard to effective targeting of environmental problems an officer of the NUTS 1 environmental administration argues that measures are too inflexible in terms of attached control instructions and insufficiently targeted at the environment. A NUTS 3 officer suggests that measures focusing on landscape protection should also consider operational flood protection (Question 11d).

FLANDERS (B): Officers of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration have many comments on the status of schemes and measures in the region. Some suggest that an increased uptake of AESs would increase environmental benefits at the same time and that thresholds must be lower for measures. Additionally one respondent argues for AESs that pursue multiple environmental objectives, though priority should be given to most important problems. AESs should also be simple and better communicated. Moreover, one officer argues that policies should be stimulating rather than punishing, as the latter make farmers afraid. Thus, AESs should have low constraints and involve low bureaucracy. This could be achieved if administrations are confident in farmers’ taking over of responsibility, despite some farmers trying to exploit the schemes. Payments reflecting production potentials accurately would be difficult to organise as some officers suggest. In addition, measures should be of some well-excepted use and not target particular minor problems. In general, as one officer points out

there are too many AESs and farmers loose their overview, which is logical since AESs are flexible, easy to design and politically rewarding. However, some requirements of AESs are now obligatory by law and still farmers are paid for obeying the law. Actually, the measures should go beyond law, as an officer suggests. A NUTS 2 officer thinks that payments are too low and better be calculated according to soil type. Further, the respondent complains that AESs require too much paper work, lack flexibility and should be better incorporated in farm operations.

According to a NUTS 1 respondent of the farmer association payment according to production potential would make AESs even more complicated. Simplification is even decreasing with newer measures although the opposite was promised. Nevertheless, the respondent suggests that AESs are a good way to combine farming with nature and landscape management, when they are practically workable. The latter would be increased with more flexible requirements and controls, which are not too strict and also take positive results into account, despite contracts being followed with precision. A LAU respondent of the farmer associations points out that production potentials are not a good basis for payments, because there are differences even between farms within a region.

Environmental administration officers point at several aspects of AESs. One officer complains that a control rate of five per cent is too small and that farmers are confronted with two administrations. A further officer thinks that farmers often do not carry out environmental tasks sufficiently well and should thus not be provided extra income, despite this being their reason for taking up measures. In relation to simplification of measures an officer points out that changes in 2006 reduced administrative effort and the number of measures. According to a respondent of the NUTS 2 environmental administration payments reflecting the seriousness of environmental problems bear a risk of rewarding those who caused the problems. Officers of this level also think that AESs are not sufficiently adapted to farm situations and environmental problems. One officer has two remarks to the voluntary approaches, as payments must be higher than costs to be real incentives and also reflect the results of measures. Another officer also asks what happens to environmental effects if farmers step out of contracts after five years. An answer suggested here is that government buys the related environmental assets and farmers are then responsible for their management. At the LAU level an officer thinks that contract lengths of five years are too short for significant environmental effects. In addition, the respondent argues that too many authorities are involved in AESs and that farmers would have more trust in municipalities than regional agencies.

Of the environmental associations at the NUTS 1 level one respondent argues that AESs should not be an income support tool for farmers. They should rather be paid for environmental improvements above basic levels. A further respondent is mainly concerned with linkage of several environmental problems, which could be solved with single measures. Such cases exist for soil erosion and particularly for excess manure where measures can solve additional problems at the same time. In addition, the respondent argues that the additional costs of more differentiated measures have to be taken into account and that some measures should be integrated into broader frameworks. This would be the case bird protection, which would have to cover larger areas. A LAU member of an environmental association suggests farmers being paid for the results of their AESs. This can even have negative effects in terms of changing farmers' mentalities, because farmers are paid for tasks, which they did without payment in the past.

Respondents of the "others" group have several different comments on existing AESs. Two NUTS 1 respondents think that integrated measures targeting different problems are difficult to put into practice (Question 13b) and some suggest that payments reflecting the severity of environmental problems reward farmers for past mistakes (Question 13d). One respondent adds that farmers should only be paid for surplus environmental benefits exceeding Good

Agricultural Practice. Also payment according to production potentials of different local areas is seen critical, as it may be difficult to implement, not accepted by farmers, providing wrong signals not reflecting environmental utility and is generally a complex task for the administrative levels concerned (Question 13c). One respondent suggests that before developing new types of measures current measures should be improved. This is because it is better to have a limited number of functioning measures than an array of AEMs with a lot of problems. A further respondent recommends that payments should be high to convince more farmers. In addition, Flanders introduced AESs too late and created some AESs without considering scientific research and experiences abroad. Moreover, funds are too small and control insufficient. A different respondent claims that AESs are insufficiently innovative, insufficiently aiming at environmental benefits, insufficiently linked with linked to the CAP and the Code of Good Agricultural Practice and insufficiently area specific. At the NUTS 2 level a respondent points at specific measures. Of these the AESs Water requires little effort compared to payment and the AESs Meadow Birds has a questionable scientific basis. As a NUTS 3 game consultant suggests, there are AESs with a negative influence on species (e.g. partridges). Furthermore, payments should be high enough and adapted to the situation e.g. more money for a parcel edge along a watercourse. According to a LAU respondent payment reflecting local productivities is very difficult to put into practice (Question 13c).
A respondent of a NUTS 1 tourism association remarks that payments according to severity of problems risk rewarding farmers who caused the problems.
Of a NUTS 1 organic farmer association one respondent thinks that integrated measures, although ideal, would be difficult to design and implement in practice (Question 13b). In addition, AESs increasing soil organic matter should be more focused on.
Another respondent argues that payments are insufficient to pull farmers into AESs without being looked at badly by colleagues. Relating to this a further respondent would like the government to help improving the image of AESs. Also less paper work would be beneficial.
A NUTS 1 researcher thinks that integrated measures are ideal in theory but difficult to put into practice (Question 13b). In addition, the researcher complains that current AESs are inefficient, especially conservation measures which do not show effects on e.g. meadow birds. Also AESs is useless. Moreover, the AESs should not be spread over two administrations. A further researcher argues that farmers should be rewarded according to their efforts in a fashion uniform across the EU. The researcher also argues that AESs change constantly. However, e.g. the AESs Parcel Edges is a positive development, as it is important to integrate agriculture and environmental management instead of concentrating both farming and nature protection in separate areas.

BASSE-NORMANDIE (F): In the French case study particularly respondents of the “others” group had diverse comments on existing agri-environmental schemes. However, the comments of the remaining respondents should not be neglected. A NUTS 2 agricultural administration officer finds the idea of a targeting of AESs rather fairly interesting.
According to a national respondent of the farmer associations AESs insufficiently promote positive impacts farming can provide. This results in farmers’ feeling lack of recognition. An objective assessment of AESs is needed, argues another respondent, who thinks that there is no real measurement of environmental effects of measures. Also important to consider are AESs taking whole farming systems into account instead of single plots. In the opinion of a NUTS 2 respondent the national administration acts irresponsible towards farmers with its stop and go implementation of policies. At the NUTS 3 level one respondent would like AESs to take more into account specific context. Another finds that there is great need for experimenting with AEMs before validating them.
For an officer of the NUTS 1 environmental administration current AESs just serve as financial compensation for changing farm practices for only five years without continuity and

no real change in the farming system. AESs should thus better support farmers turning their practices towards sustainability without having economic goals. At the NUTS 2 level an officer argues that AESs are a wasteful activity, although initially they allowed shifts towards sustainable farming systems. Moreover, agriculture's contribution to disfavoured areas has to be acknowledged through support of its positive impacts.
Respondents of the "others" groups have several further comments on current AESs. At the national level one respondent would like to link AESs to quality farm products so that farmers are being paid for their efforts directly through selling the products. Another respondent complains that AESs have not been used to preserve extensive grassland. Further comments come from the NUTS 2 level. One respondent suggests that in the end the policy has not been implemented ambitiously enough. However, a positive effect is that farmers become more environmentally aware. In addition, a real assessment of environmental impacts of measures and the whole agri-environmental policy is missing. A further respondent suggests that income support should not be an objective of AESs anymore. For example, a vegetable measure improved soil quality and reduced nitrogen pollution. Yet, pesticide pollution and biodiversity preservation have still to be targeted. In the opinion of another respondent AESs are also a means to adapt farming systems to specific areas and should permit farmers to be paid. Moreover, AESs have positive impacts in some places and more environmental improvements can be expected in the future due to slow reaction times. Nevertheless, there is a need for real assessment of AESs as also another respondent suggests. At the NUTS 3 level a respondent complains that the AESs policy was too complicated. However, another would like more localised concerted action with more involvement of local government. Insufficient adaptation of measures to local contexts is also a complaint of a different respondent. The respondent also suggests that there were not enough financial means regarding environmental objectives and that coordination between the first and second CAP pillar is lacking. According to a further respondent, AESs were simply an income support for 90 per cent of the contracting farmers. In addition, there are not enough assessments of AESs available and insufficient use of NATURA 2000 for design and implementation of AESs at local levels. For an additional respondent AESs could have had stronger impacts if it had not been possible to contract measures with similar objectives at the same time. A LAU respondent points out that nowadays AESs are much better accepted among farmers and thus provide more environmental outcomes. Moreover, in the La Hague region AESs are not used to support incomes, since the main objective is to fight abandonment of farming, which should not always be seen as a negative activity.

FINLAND (FI): Regarding the status of AESs most of the farmer associations suggest that without agri-environmental support there would be hardly any agriculture in the region that requirements of present schemes are strict enough and that Finnish agriculture is already environmentally sound. However, environmental administration and associations complain that the current schemes are not sufficiently effective and involve too much income support. Thus measures should be more targeted and environmentally demanding, while payments should be based on environmental benefits and not on costs.

IRELAND (IE): As stated by an officer of the NUTS 2 environmental administration the payment rate should relate to labour inputs of farmers. Thus, they may for example reflect off-farm salaries. However, material expenditure should be fully compensated.
A NUTS 2 researcher suggests that the original schemes focused strongly on payment distribution. This attitude is maintained, even if the aims of the new schemes attempt to be more environmental. In addition, this distributional approach hampers special targeting. Only on larger holdings the AESs should apply to specified areas as another researcher suggests. A

different researcher argues that there is a need for much greater input from ecologists in terms of design and implementation of AESs in Ireland.

VENETO AND EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT): (Maschera) According to a NUTS 3 officer of the agricultural administration there is only limited funding for AESs. In addition, AESs have no territorial focus. Another researcher points at the importance of AESs for value chains, as they force farmers to keep some key trading standards. Moreover, AESs relate to increase of biodiversity and fauna in the whole territory.
As stated by a NUTS 3 respondent of the farmer associations, to keep mountain areas alive, people have to remain there and receive income support backed by involvement of the whole regional economy. This aspect, though already considered, needs more attention. Nevertheless, as a researcher points out AESs are often applied on singular spots.
(Veneto) A NUTS 2 officer of the agricultural administration remarks that the financial resources have been completely absorbed with the first calls for AESs of the 2000 to 2006 period. Thus it was impossible to redistribute them between measures. Consequently another officer argues that a new and better planning of schemes is indispensable. Also a respondent of the NUTS 2 farmer association points out that the measures of 2000 are somewhat identical to former ones. AESs should thus be more coordinated in a general plan as a NUTS 3 respondent suggests.
An officer of the NUTS 2 environmental administration complains about the restricted access to AESs. This favours particular farm typologies like integrated fruit and vine producers unsuitable to mitigate the most important environmental impacts of farming. A NUTS 2 respondent of the organic farmer associations argues that schemes have been used to support incomes without inducing real change in farming.

FRIESLAND (NL): Relating to AEMs payment levels reflecting local production potentials an officer of the national agricultural administration suggests that issues would become unnecessary complex.
According to a national respondent of the farmer associations farmers and horticulturists are in fact the most important conservationists of nature and landscape. The respondent would like to see this function to be seen more like a productions function of something, which is catering for the high values society places on nature rather in a business manner.
However, a NUTS 3 respondent of the “others” group suggests that current AESs are not sufficiently part of a rural policy strategy. Hence they are not always sustainable. Accordingly they need to gain more relevance for society and be less dependent on farmers.
As stated by a national level researcher it is not carefully being evaluated what is actually being achieved with AESs. This is because there is a discrepancy between actual objectives (income support) and what is being formally argued. Another researcher complains that AESs should have more tailor-made design to unlock regional potentials, overcome bottlenecks and implementation problems.
According to one researcher payments reflecting local production potentials are a reasonable solution, though compensation based on performance would be better (Question 13c). The researcher further points out, that with the existing measures a few early mistakes have been removed and implementation units are now better coordinated in terms of workload. Yet, meadow bird management has still a poor performance. However, the relating schemes are now being improved as another researcher informs, who is also critical of the effectiveness of the collective meadow bird scheme. A further researcher remarks that income support is often mentioned in relation to AES, but for the sectors as a whole related funds would be insufficient. Therefore in general different approaches are needed for whole sector support. Soil quality could be tackled with AESs as a researcher suggests. The researcher also argues that there have been committed efforts to improve schemes and the circumstances for actors.

NORTH ENGLAND (UK): At the NUTS 1 level officers of the agricultural administration have different comments on AESs. One officer suggests that technically competent staff should manage the schemes. Another thinks that AESs should also be used to encourage sustainable integrated land management. According to a further officer the Environmentally Sensitive Area scheme of the Pennine Dales achieved all its objectives successfully. Nevertheless it has been criticised by environmentalists for not having improved biodiversity, which was not part of the objectives and scheme rules, though. The Countryside Stewardship scheme was more flexible, but also very complex. AESs are important to change the role of farmers and the contribution they make to society, as further officer suggest. This is because farmers should be seen as suppliers of environmental goods.
Of the NUTS 1 environmental administration an officer suspects that payments based on income foregone can be seen as a barrier to uptake and delivering public benefits. Thus, payment for delivered environmental benefits should be considered. A further officer argues that schemes delivering benefits to flood risk management need greater priority. In addition, a whole farm approach to the Entry Level Scheme needs to be adopted and Countryside Stewardship applicants be able to convert to the Higher Level Scheme. However, a further officer suggests that schemes are seen, at least by land managers, as means to secure additional income.
A NUTS 1 respondent of the environmental associations argues that payments should reward the benefits farming produces for which the market does not provide rewards. Schemes need therefore to contain a measure of value to ensure the appropriate management in the future. The survival of marginal farming in the North Pennines region is considered as valuable by a further respondent, who points out that particular AESs like late cutting of hay are critical to this. At the NUTS 3 level a respondent suggests that schemes are too rigid and penalise those who cannot upgrade from old schemes to new schemes. In addition, it is difficult for intensive arable farmers to enter. Another respondent suggests that the new schemes are currently not operating as 15 per cent of applications cannot be processed by DEFRA and payments are not offered or restricted. Hence, important AEMs cannot be achieved. Further, AESs have disadvantages to upland farmers because they imply higher restrictions for lower payments.
Of the “others” group one NUTS 3 respondent argues that the AESs are not joined up as random applications are being accepted and there does not seem to be any development plan on a regional or sub regional level.

Appendix A 4 - Question 16c)

CZECH REPUBLIC (CZ): The agricultural administration at LAU in the Czech Republic thinks that lower administrative levels have better knowledge about environmental situations and could design measures more appropriately. This is agreed in parts by the NUTS 1 agricultural administrations, which, however, have some concerns whether such approaches could be administered satisfactorily for higher levels including the EU. Also the environmental administration at NUTS 1 points at the importance of lower level experiences and decision –making. The environmental associations from LAU to NUTS 1 seem to put an even stronger emphasis on such issues. While the farmer associations at LAU also support lower level influence on similar arguments, the farmer associations at NUTS 1 are concerned about increased corruption, budget issues and the availability of experts at lower levels.

BRANDENBURG (D): NUTS 3 agricultural administrations often think that shifts in power among administrative levels would make design and implementation of measures more specific to regions and localities. However, one respondent of this level cannot imagine another power distribution, as this depends on money. Devolution of power in terms of administering and designing AEMs to lower administrative levels would also in the opinion of NUTS 1 levels contribute to more specific targeting. One respondent mentions, though, that it would increase administrative efforts, if especially the EU looses influence.
Most farmer associations at NUTS 1 also think that accuracy of AEMs will be enhanced with devolution.
Respondents from the environmental administrations at NUTS 3 and NUTS 1 mainly support the idea of power shifts to lower levels to improve targeting of measures, but one NUTS 3 respondent also points out that too much pluralism cannot be handled. In addition a respondent at NUTS 1 suggest that the power problem does rather relate to horizontal distributions between agriculture, environment and economy and finance. Further, one respondent from the NUTS 1 level holds that the Lander have to set the framework, as the system would otherwise be too unjust.
The environmental associations have mixed opinion about power shifts. One respondent of NUTS 3 would like the NUTS 3 level to have the major competencies as other levels are incompetent, while another NUTS 3 respondent would like support to be generally reduced. However, a NUTS 1 level association thinks that regional problems will be better considered if NUTS 1 looses influence.
Of the “Others” actor group one NUTS 1 respondent suggests that at NUTS 3 direct contact to the problem is given. Another actor of this level however fears that NUTS 3 should not be too important as this level is politically influenced. In addition at LAU there are competencies lacking and only particular interests represented. The NUTS 3 respondents of the “others” group, however, think that lower level power increase contributes to flexibility and higher effectiveness. Yet, one respondent is concerned about the competencies of lower levels.
Researchers have mixed opinion on power shifts. One national level researcher thinks that the EU contributes to competition and transparency, while at NUTS 3 there is a danger of watering out AESs. A NUTS 1 researcher is only concerned about efficient inputs of financial means, while another thinks that NUTS 1 has a good overview. However, a further researcher suggest that if the influence of the EU decreases and measures are locally enforceable, the NUTS 1 level could be abolished, while the federal level could be responsible for financing.

FLANDERS (B): One respondent of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration claims that the environmental effects will be lower if the regional level looses power in favour of NUTS 2 and LAU. In addition, devolution down to LAU is not logical because environmental problems do not stop at the boundaries of municipalities. However, another officer sees also

benefits of lower level influence, as it will put AESs on a broader social basis and make them more effective, though downsides would be more diverse AESs and loss of coherence. Since the EU provides the financial means it should according to further officer have a lot of influence. In addition provinces and municipalities have neither enough financial means nor goodwill to have a large influence on measure design, though they should be heard. Nevertheless, as another officer remarks, some provinces could make valuable contribution, while others could not. Still a NUTS 2 officer suggests that AESs would be better adapted to the local situation and the farmers' needs, when the provinces and the municipalities have more power.

A respondent of the NUTS 1 farmer associations agrees such positive aspects of local influence, though there is a possibility of too much diversity. Another NUTS 1 respondent fears, that the balance of influence between agriculture and environment may be changed in favour of environmental organisations due to an increase of EU power. Yet, a respondent from the LAU level suggests without the EU financial means would be lacking and without the provinces and municipalities there would be low adaptation to local problems.

Several officers of the environmental administration emphasise that increased influence of lower levels delivers better-adapted measures. One NUTS 1 officer also argues that lower influence of the EU would have such effects. However, as two respondents suggest, a reduction of regional influence would lead to a lack of coordination making AEMs unworkable. In addition, municipalities' influence on AEMs may lead to capture away from environmental issues towards income support for farmers. Moreover municipalities are not sufficiently competent to design measures as the respondent points out. The EU in turn should have only influence on the design of the general framework and guiding the process with minimal influence on the content of measures. In this context one officer points out that lower level influence will make compliance with European guidelines difficult. While the NUTS 2 level seems to agree with most of these arguments one officer of the level argues that lower influence of both EU and regional levels would make AESs more workable. Finally an environmental officer of the LAU level suspects that for farmers it would be even more difficult if all political levels have an influence on the design of AESs.

Rather in the contrary to the administration, respondents of environmental associations at NUTS 1 argue when the EU level has most of the power, AESs would be more effective and financial means will improve. In addition it is only the EU who can react on growing globalisation and increased power of provinces and municipalities would mean too much differentiation. A respondent of the NUTS 1 organic farmer organisation, who thinks, that the provincial level is superfluous and that a creation of a general framework for AESs by the EU is necessary, mainly agrees these comments. Further, contributions from the local level are useful, but a coordinating government is needed.

In the opinion of a respondent from the NUTS 1 tourism association the EU is important, because otherwise the AESs would have never be realised due to too many conflicts. In addition, municipalities may have more power, but then more expertise on that level is needed.

Respondents of the group "others" tend to agree that lower level influence contributes to AESs better adapted to local situations. One respondent from the NUTS 1 level thinks that this would also increase environmental effectiveness of AEMs. Although municipalities and the provinces should be more involved, according to a respondent, it would be wrong to let them design AESs. As another respondent points out, the regional and provincial level should interact well. The EU in turn should loose power because it is too strict. However, though one respondent suggest that the EU also causes a lot of transaction costs, two respondents argue for a strong EU position. One of them claims that without the EU environmental conditions would be even worse, while the other suggest that more influence of the EU would sent unambiguous signals to farmers, though its policy may be too general. Further one respondent

argues that increased responsibilities of local governments pose risks to the transparency of AESs. However, if there is enough expertise in municipalities, they should be allowed to develop environmental plans contributing to better adaptation of measures. A NUTS 2 respondent thus suggests, that municipalities should be more involved in the design, but not do it themselves. More farmers would be encouraged to join AESs if there was less involvement of the EU, as a LAU respondent suggests. In addition, provinces should only contribute extra finance and guidance, without any further influence.
The two responding NUTS 1 researchers argue for more influence of higher and lower levels. One researcher suggest that increased influence of the federal level, there would be greater harmony between the two regions of Flanders and Walloon, though for more local environmental problems, local levels should be more involved. The other researcher argues that greater influence of the EU and federal level means less administration and more transparency. In addition, there is a need for a good structure on a large scale. Yet, since AESs should be close to the citizens, municipalities should also have a large amount of power.

BASSE-NORMANDIE (F): A shift in influence towards lower levels would according to a national officer of the agricultural administration increase subsidiary definition of measures, but NUTS 2 and lower levels would need guidelines and assessment and monitoring from upper levels. Three other officers of the national level agree that devolution would increase the effectiveness and precision of measures. In addition according to one them it would increase the contracting rate. The downside of decreasing power of higher levels according to one officer would be lacking coherence of the policy since there is a need for coordination. Another officer, claiming that this would lead to a general loss of effectiveness, also mentions the loss of coordination. Another respondent of the level remarks that decentralisation would make the policy too complex and difficult to implement. An actor from the NUTS 3 agricultural administration thinks that each NUTS level should have some power, but also suspects that too many powerful levels could lead to higher complexity and indeed there may be too many levels in France.
Of the farmer associations a national respondent thinks that a shift in influence towards lower levels will create pluralism in the design process and result in AEMs better adapted to local circumstances. This is generally agreed by another national level member and by a further respondent who thinks that measures are easier to design at the local level, though the disadvantage would be, according to the latter, that lower NUTS levels also mean lower budgets. In addition, the National level should maintain leadership in determining guidelines. This is also emphasised by a further national respondent, who claims that national should care for harmonisation and that at national levels farmers' interests are best considered.
A NUTS 2 respondent also agrees that stronger NUTS 3 involvement would lead to more adapted and precise measures, though there would be a risk of unequal treatment. Yet, there will be a need for monitoring at the EU level to keep the policy under control. The improved targeting of decentralised measures is also agreed by a NUTS 3 member of a farmer association, though again the respondent claims that there will be a need at for supervision at the EU level especially concerning subsidy distribution. Another NUTS 3 respondent thinks that a shift in influence will lead to more coherence and better coordination, whereby the NUTS 3 level should also coordinate and levels below design the measures, which are then approved and financed by the upper levels of NUTS 2 and EU.
A respondent of the NUTS 2 environmental administration also suggests better adaptation of AEMs due to decentralisation. However, a respondent of the NUTS 1 environmental administration goes more into detail and suggest that water management is best done at the river basin level and all associated actors down to NUTS5 should have influence. According to the respondent AEMs should be led at the local level.

A respondent of the environmental associations from the National level suggest that the EU, national and NUTS 2 should take the lead, as the EU then could provide the general frame and the national level guarantees interregional equity.
Among the "others" group the national respondents agree that decentralisation will lead to better locally adapted AEMs. In addition, one respondent claims that environmental actors operate better at the NUTS 2 level. However, two respondents fear a risk of territorial inequalities, while the other points at open questions about financial means and allocation of skills. At the NUTS 2 level most respondents suggest that shifts in influence would lead to AEMs better adapted to local contexts, though one respondent claims that only a real political will at levels would lead to progress. Two respondents, however, suggest that the EU and national levels have to be influential to maintain equity among regions. One respondent goes even further and argues that the EU should be of great influence to guarantee the collective will between member states, while other levels should rather be involved in implementation. In addition another respondent remarks that EU, national levels and NUTS 2 should finance AEMs because they have the means. At the downside of power shifts the respondents mention risks of blaming other levels or increased competition among levels or that extreme degrees of influence can be dangerous.
At the NUTS 3 level the group "others" widely agrees that decentralised measures better reflect local circumstances and environmental issues. One respondent claims that it is easier to have changes if the actors concerned are involved. However, some respondents also argue that there is a need for coordination at the upper, (NUTS 2, national and EU level). This is as one actor suggests because there is a need for a global vision, while other see the demand for a general frame or power at higher levels to prevent unfair competition between regions and actors. One actor also suggest that a decentralisation will lead to a greater complexity of the policy, while another claims that France should have more weight on the EU level. Yet, two respondents demanded concerted action and coordination among all levels.
The respondents of the "others" group at LAU made additional points concerning power shifts. One respondent sees risks of local demagogy below NUTS 3, while the other points out that decisions should be made at either NUTS 3 or NUTS 2 to maintain coherence with a territorial development scheme.

FINLAND (FI): As an officer of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration suggests, if influence was decentralized to local levels, different areas would implement measures very differently and risk of failure and inequality would increase. In the opinion of a NUTS 3 officer decentralised policy preparation would not be cost efficient and certain political and economical interests can only be handled at the central level. However, the needs of the regions can be taken into account by inviting regional representatives to policy preparation committees. Another NUTS 3 officer of the agricultural administration thinks that it would ideal to combine local knowledge and more general expertise, whilst integrating the regional level into the national level. Then visibility of regional levels would be increased also at the EU level policy preparation. Further, the best regional experts in addition to the national experts would be involved and special conditions of regions considered. Yet, a NUTS 3 respondent of the farmer associations holds that decentralization would bring common sense into agri-environmental policy.
Regional authorities repeatedly suggested that benefits of more decentralised influence would be well-targeted measures and efficient allocation of subsidies. However, disadvantages would be a very incoherent system and problems of allocation of money. In addition, local conditions could and should be taken into account.
Emphasising also the advantages of decentralisation mentioned by regional authorities on respondent from the NUTS 3 environmental administration additionally argues that a

requirement for successful process is good cooperation between different actors and enough resources for the process, which to date is not the case.
According to a researcher, however, there is no need for decentralisation. Preparation would demand too many resources and farmers in different parts of country would be in different positions. Therefore the policy preparation should be at the central level, and if some regional or even local circumstances should be tackled, it should be done by selection of single measures.

IRELAND (IE): According to a respondent from the NUTS 2 farmer associations a transfer of power down to NUTS 2 or 3 would result in poorer implementation of the scheme and less consistency of measures across the country.
More local decision-making would, according to a respondent from the environmental associations, lead to a design of more appropriate measures for the diversity of rural areas in the EU and would also lead to more effective actions and outcomes. This is agreed by another respondent of the environmental associations who suggests advantages of local area ownership of the desire or need to protect the environment. However, one respondent feels that the key actors at higher levels are acting to provide generic policy measures that allow all scenarios to be catered for at sub-national levels.
One researcher suggests that AESs would be more spatially targeted and result in more local involvement and commitment, though also entail a loss of experience in implementation and administration. As priorities in Ireland are different to other member states, another researcher would like the programmes to be designed in Ireland for Ireland.

VENETO AND EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT): (Maschera) The agricultural administration has mixed opinions about the loss of power of certain administrative levels. While one respondent from NUTS 2 suggests that there will be better coordination among regions a respondent from the NUTS 3 level suggests there will be less coordination, less homogeneity of targets and increased importance of the favourite. However, another NUTS 3 respondent argues that AEMs would better target territorial need if provinces have more power. In addition, AEMs would remain stronger after 2013, if the EU has less power. Yet, one NUTS 3 respondent thinks that nobody will/should loose power.
According to the respondents of the NUTS 2 level farmer associations there would be a better response to territorial needs. One respondent of the NUTS 3 level who, however, points out agrees this, that budgets would be insufficient. A further respondent of the NUTS 3 level remarks however, that the national level would not be much involved and heard, while another respondent suggests that fewer bodies would lead to faster decision processes and more homogeneity.
In turn the respondent from the environmental associations suggests that there will be less homogeneous action with decentralisation, but better problem perception and effectiveness.
Of the researchers one respondent thinks that decentralisation leads to lower incongruence among regions and better targeting, though would involve higher administration costs. However, the other researcher suggests that the disadvantage would be the possibility of loosing common strategic objectives. According to the respondent the advantages then would be better knowledge of real farm needs and problems of the territory.
(Veneta) A loss of power of lower levels would bring better-timed technical and administrative tasks, a design of AEMs taking into account local environmental problems and a more responsible and participatory conduct of AEMs, as the respondents of the agricultural administrations point out. However, according to them a disadvantage would be a lack of a global view and rewards of too peculiar stakes and less consistence of the policies towards some specific needs. One respondents of the NUTS 2 farmer associations in turn points out that shifts in influence towards lower levels lead to higher correspondence between

environmental targets and AEMs. This is also emphasised by a respondent of NUTS 3 who argues that areas not well known at higher levels will be taken into consideration. In addition, according to another respondent of NUTS 2 a benefit is the application of the LEADER approach. However, the NUTS 3 member of the farmer associations fears also a lack of co-ordination, which entails the risk of several measures being commendable but ineffective.
Of the environmental administration one NUTS 2 officer is in favour of decentralisation, which would have great advantages in terms of design and coordination, if the actors involved are well qualified. Also a respondent from the organic farmers' associations argues that decentralisation of assessment and negotiation at NUTS 3 levels would be beneficial. As a NUTS 2 respondent of the "others" fraction suspects, stakes of local communities could bear stronger than those of the major decision makers. A researcher sees also the advantage of decentralisation, the prospect of bottom-up knowledge of the real needs of farms and better awareness of problems by those who live in the environments and could return benefits to them. However, a disadvantage would be loosing the prospect on the overall strategy.

FRIESLAND (NL): According to a national level officer of the agricultural administration the advantage of a less powerful EU would be less administrative requirements regarding control and the implications around it. Another officer, who claims that lower influence of the EU prevents an overkill of requirements, which are not effective and thus difficult, also suggests this. However, a further NUTS 2 officer suggests that both the EU and the national level should stay strong regarding a balanced division of priorities and areas, whilst both also should be involved in the crafting of frameworks. Yet, AEMs should also be more tailor-made to areas and support and influence on levels where knowledge is available and necessary. The advantage of increased influence of provincial levels would be more tailor-made schemes but higher administrative costs as one officer points out. This would according to another respondent be a general advantage of lower national influence, which, however, also entails lower possibilities to steer national priorities in terms of high and lower level changes.
Decentralisation would lead to more attention to the actors who have an interest in AEMs, because AEMs would be better adjusted to the practice as a national level respondent of the farmer associations points out. For farmers then the work related to the environment would gain a higher value and if they would be seriously rewarded, the measures would be more effective. A NUTS 3 respondent suggests that more regional approaches lead to more adapted measures, though lower national power also leads to more fragmentation. Yet, a respondent from the LAU is in favour of decentralisation, because it speeds up processes, is more area focused and participants show more commitment.
Of the "others" group at the National level one respondent suggests that less influence of local government leads to lower interference, though large influence of the provincial level is very important. The EU should interfere less, but make more money available. A further national level respondent suggest, however, that lower influence of the EU causes more tailor-made AEMs and packages fitting to the needs of programme, though a disadvantage would be less well steered global and national objectives. Yet, a NUTS 1 respondent thinks that decentralisation contributes to an area based policy efficiently adjusted to problems, while there would be too much politics to be shared by few entrepreneurs. One respondent from the NUTS 3 level points out that there will be less attention for long-term objectives in such cases, while existing objectives will be better met. In general, as further respondent of the NUTS 3 suggest the province can better differentiate because it has more contacts with the region and municipalities.
Researchers emphasise that measures will be better adapted if lower levels gain influence. In addition according to one researcher participation will be increased as well as the economic impact. Another researcher thinks that also less explanation will be required with decentralised measures. While one researcher thinks that decentralised measures will be less

bureaucratic and below NUTS 3 also enable environmental co-operations, another points at disadvantages in terms of difficult control and opportunities for fraud. In addition a further researcher suspects that more influence of NUTS 2 to LAU levels increase the complexity of measures. Also, according to another researcher there has not yet been agreement on the NUTS 2 level on results on nature and landscape quality.
One researcher points out, that lower influence of the EU will lead to fewer limiting rules, though EU finance is important. However, another researcher suggests that new financing constructions need to be developed without support from EU or national level.

NORTH ENGLAND (UK): NUTS 1 officers of the agricultural administration in general think that greater influence of lower levels has the advantage to better address regional environmental problems. Reasons mentioned are better fit of schemes, more flexibility, increased involvement from landowners and better knowledge of real issues. The downsides are according to some of the officers the risk of a less consistent and fair AESs systems, too many stakeholders with conflicting views leading to lengthy consultation and less action, complex scheme rules and an increase of differential payment rate increase. One officer thus suggest larger influence of medium levels in order to have a clear view on a reasonable strategic level which is close enough to know the real issues.
In creased influence of lower levels is also seen by a NUTS 1 respondent of the farmer associations as increasing flexibility and the regional focus. Further, the schemes would not be hamstrung by EU rules. Another NUTS 1 respondent suggest that a transfer of decisions to a lower level ensures decisions based on best practice instead of political decisions.
However, to a NUTS 1 officer of the environmental administration national frameworks are important in achieving value for money and evidence based decisions. Yet, the advantage of lower level empowerment would according to the officer be more local input and flexibility, which bears the risk ill informed decisions based on polarised views. Consequently another NUTS 1 officer finds regional and national specification more appropriate. Nevertheless, other NUTS 1 officers are pointing at better acceptance and understanding through higher influence of lower levels, which also would permit a more flexible approach to apply prescriptions. The advantage of input from sub-regional levels taking into account local differences is also seen by a NUTS 3 officer, who, however thinks that a balance is needed between local and wider knowledge and experience.
Environmental associations in general believe that lower level influence contributes to schemes better targeted at regional priorities and practical problems. As a NUTS 1 respondent points out higher knowledge is very likely at lower levels. A further respondent suggests that better communication at grassroots levels is contributing to better design. However, NUTS 1 respondents also suggest that disadvantages of lower level influence exist due to the ability of higher levels to ensure that schemes can meet the policy need and because care is needed that local priorities also meet national priorities.
Also environmental associations at NUTS 3 see advantages of increased influence of lower levels such as improved use of local knowledge and priorities, AEMs suitable for local needs and environment and at the regional level a better integration of prescriptions designed at local levels. However one respondent fears a fragmentation of positive outcomes of AESs.
A respondent of the “others” group from the NUTS 3 level suspects that a plan may be obtained which enables development and delivery at all levels.
Researchers however think that increased lower level influence allows better-tailored schemes to meet specific local conditions and greater local specification of outcomes.

Appendix A 5 - Question 17

CZECH REPUBLIC (CZ): LAU and NUTS 2 level agricultural administrations seem especially concerned about speeding up administrative processes and making the payment system running smoothly. However, one LAU mentions also objectives of changing terms of specific measures.
NUTS 1 level agricultural administrations seem particularly to focus on monitoring and evaluation and the adaptation of measure design. In addition, many of them are concerned about payment calculation according to EU requirements and advice for farmers.
Farmer associations have rather scattered objectives ranging from promotion of integrated vine production to information supply about measures, though some share in common the promotion of farmers interest and influencing measure design.
All environmental administrations have the conservation of the environment and often also landscape as their main objectives. LAU levels are often additionally focusing on zonal stratification of measures. Many respondents at this level are also concerned about the enhancement of rural livelihoods.
Environmental associations seem to have the contribution to the adjustment of measure design as a major objective. In addition some mention consultancy and education. Further individual associations have particular topics like the maintenance of NATURA 2000 sites and support of endangered species.

BRANDENBURG (D): Agricultural administrations at NUTS 3 have environmental protection as first objective and income support for farmers as second objective. At NUTS 1 the agricultural administration see income compensation of farmers as a major objective, but single respondents also mention simplification of administrative procedures, taking into account specificities of farming enterprises, evaluation of outcomes, compliance with laws, reduction of influence of environmental groups and shifts away from grassland.
Farmer associations have a diversity of objectives encompassing at NUTS 3 the regular coordination with different administrative levels and at NUTS 1 the maintenance of schemes and specific measures, like extensive grassland, promoting sustainable agriculture, keeping land in production, supporting AEMs related to animal husbandry and creating less bureaucratic and effective measures.
Environmental administrations at NUTS 3 levels have a diversity of objectives of which an increased focus of AEMs on the environment, protection of biodiversity and natural assets seem the most important while also water supply and extensification of production are mentioned. One respondent of this level has consensus building and raising awareness among farmers as objectives. At the NUTS 1 level a large diversity of objectives concerned biodiversity protection and NATURA 2000, sustainable rural development, efficient use of financial resources, open up new financial resources, improving the flexibility of measures, fast application, implementation of EU law, keeping agriculture in disadvantaged areas, reduction of diffuse pollution and improving hydrology of watercourses.
Environmental associations have predominantly objectives relating to improve financing of AEMs and other protection measures, but also focus often on adapting agriculture to more environmentally friendly practices. Organic farmers associations are particularly concerned with the maintenance of subsidies for organic farming.
The group of “others” is especially focusing on the contribution of AEMs to rural development, but also improvement of environmental effectiveness is being mentioned.
Researchers are particularly concerned with evaluation of measures according to efficiency and effectiveness criteria and advising administrations, policy makers and participants. They also mention biodiversity enhancement and compensation for disadvantaged farm types.

FLANDERS (B): First objectives of officers of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration are to contribute to the protection of the environment within an active agriculture, monitoring and evaluation, to influence the design of AESs according to acceptance by the European Commission, to stimulate the protection of the environment in agricultural circles, while second objectives are to cover the costs of AESs and to make sure that the AESs can be part of economically viable farms and further objectives are to contribute to the social acceptance of agriculture in rural areas. A NUTS 2 officer has to obtain a positive contribution of agriculture to the environment and striving for fair payments as objectives.
Farmer associations of the NUTS 1 level mention good contracts and sufficient payment, more involvement of farmers in the design of AESs and more flexibility of AESs that can be better incorporated in farming businesses as their objectives. At the LAU level a respondent aims to help creating a better policy by informing the government about practical implications of agriculture.
At the NUTS 1 environmental administration officers have ensuring that right measures on soil erosion are in place, promotion of AESs and monitoring environmental quality in areas with AESs as their first objectives, to reduce the negative impact of farming on the environment, contracting AESs and reporting environmental effects of AESs as their second objectives and controlling AESs as a further objective. The NUTS 2 officers have objectives as more innovative AESs focusing more on nature and implementation of measures, while the LAU officer aims at implementing own AES, contacting farmers and cooperation in the evaluation of AESs and giving feedback to higher levels.
The first objectives of the NUTS 1 respondents of environmental associations making AESs more effective and making the farming sector greener through AES, while their further objectives are better control of AES, integrating the contributions of agriculture with those of others, like environmental organisations and better spending priorities of financial means.
A first objectives of the NUTS 1 respondent of the organic farmer associations is a situation in Flanders, where farmers produce in a sustainable way without governmental support, so that AESs are no longer necessary and as second objective working for more sustainable AESs.
The respondent of the NUTS 1 tourism association has better cooperation between farmers, tourism and environmental organisations in the rural area as objectives.
Respondents of the “others” group have diverse objectives, partly similar to those already mentioned. At the NUTS 1 level first objectives mentioned are lowering the threshold between farmers and the agricultural and environmental administration, stimulating environmentally friendly production methods, giving advise on the policy regarding AESs, ensuring that as many farmers as possible start AESs, promoting AESs because they are the most suitable instrument to link agriculture to the environment, ensuring that AESs fit into the operational management of farms. Second objectives of the NUTS 1 “others” group are helping farmers with the application, giving information about legislation, cooperation in design of AESs, putting pressure on policy makers to adapt the AESs to positive impacts on game and fair payment for the farmers, whilst further objectives mentioned are to improve the environmental quality of farms, promoting attention paid to the environment and the landscape. A NUTS 2 respondent has making AESs more stimulating as a first objective and striving for a fair payment to farmers and incorporating farmers’ desires into AESs design as further objectives. Finally the LAU respondent aims at more beneficial effects of farming on the environment, stimulating positive cooperation between farmers and environmental organisations and at compensation for income foregone due to AESs adoption.
One researcher claims observation to be his objective, while the other has giving support to policy as a first objective, using research results for clarifying AESs as a second objective and offering expertise as a further objective.

BASSE-NORMANDIE (F): National level respondents of the agricultural administration have objectives such as assessing measures as good as possible, improving the effectiveness of AEMs, making sure that AEMs are a useful tool to introduce environmentally friendly farming practices, ensuring conformity with EU requirements as fist objectives and better use of assessments for policy design, improving the efficiency of AEMs, having high contracting rates and ensuring conformity with national strategies as second objectives. At the NUTS 2 level one officer has managing paying and controlling as objectives, while the other has making best use of financial means, giving priority to more effective AEMs and ensuring the greatest efficiency of AEMs as objectives. The respondent from the NUTS 3 level has information delivery to farmers and controlling implementation by farmers as main objectives.
Of the farmer associations the national level respondents have the monitoring of AEMs policies, helping farmers who are unsatisfied with AEMs, providing answers on environmental issues to farmers as first objectives and spreading the association's position, anticipating new issues and alternatives, providing balance between farmers' expectations and measure requirements as second objectives. The NUTS 2 respondent aims to make the steps easier for farmers, to turn the AEMs to sustainable farming practices and to promote sustainable farming practices. At the NUTS 3 level the respondents are concerned with thinking about prescriptions, explaining and generalizing prescriptions, defending farmers, receiving recognition on territorial issues and preventing AEMs to become a support measure of farm incomes.
The environmental administration at NUTS 1 has water as a priority issue and aims at identifying territories as priorities in terms of water issues, while better defining water stakes in the territories. Providing the best match between AEMs and the administrative objectives of biodiversity is the major aim of the NUTS 2 environmental administration.
The respondent of national environmental associations aims at effective and useful AEMs for biodiversity, contribution of biodiversity expertise and assessment to AEMs and communicating the role of AEMs in biodiversity preservation.
Of the "others" group the national level respondents ensuring that AEMs contribute as good as possible to local issues, increasing effectiveness of AEMs through evaluation, influencing strategic orientations of AEMs as first objectives ensuring farmers fair compensation, increasing environmental awareness in agricultural policies, influencing the way AEMs are implemented as second objectives and to have real assessment of AEMs and exchange of information on AEMs as third objectives. The NUTS 2 respondents of this group mention using AEMs to maintain wetland biodiversity, linking AEMs to marketing of products, reducing negative environmental impacts of vegetable cropping, decentralising agri-environmental actions and linking up social expectations with economic requirements as first objectives, maintenance of agriculture in marsh areas, giving an orientation frame on AEMs, increasing number of pear trees and landscape protection, being able to explain policy choices as second objective and managing particular areas and bringing in technical expertise as third objectives. At the NUTS 3 level respondents of the "others" group have inviting the greatest number of farmers to contract, adapting agriculture to take the environment into account, decreasing impacts of chemicals, supporting farmers, implementing larger action, increasing number of AEMs adapted localities and farmers' needs, ensuring that farmers contract for most effective and adapted measures, aiding farmers in fertilizer management and being able to answer farmer' requests as first objectives, decreasing nitrogen inputs, smoothening communication between farmers and the administration, getting farmers more involved in water protection, ensuring that contracting farmers understand the implications, ensuring the economic sustainability of farms, obtaining processes adapted to local needs as second objectives and emphasizing the importance of continuity of AEMs, using the best farmers networks and being able to deal with the applications as third objective.

One LAU respondent of the “others” group has the development of quality production and the promotion of production that respects the environment as main objectives, while the other respondent has preserving water and extensive grassland and staying in contact with the farming community as main objectives.

FINLAND (FI): The two first objectives of a respondent of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration are to support a system that has equally environmental objectives and objectives on profitability of production. As a third objective the respondent considers rural development, though all the objectives should be pursued with levels of administration as sensible as possible. Officers of the NUTS 3 level mention objectives, such as doing what the higher levels tell them to do, cost efficient implementation of programmes, taking care of the allocation of money and compliance with rules, informing about the content of the programme, change farmers’ attitudes towards more environmentally positive thinking, information exchange to improve implementation processes, close cooperation with other regional actors and municipalities. However, one NUTS 3 officer also remarks that they are only able to do the required tasks at the moment because of shortage of funds, whereas they hope that the future system will be simpler and thus they can concentrate on quality of work and environmental issues.
As repeated several times by respondents of the farmer associations, the main objective of the programme should be farmers’ interests and income. However, a NUTS 3 respondent of the farmer associations suggests that the scheme should be practical and easy to implement and flexible from the perspective of farmers since it is better to have more farmers applying flexible programme than less farmers applying an inflexible system. A further respondent form a NUTS 3 farmer associations argues that measures should be more environmentally targeted, efficient measures should be done more tempting for farmers with higher incentives while the less environmentally efficient measures could be left out. As a result the programme would be much more cost efficient also the environmental benefits would be at higher levels.
The first objective of an officer of the NUTS 3 environmental administration is on water protection and the second on biodiversity. This is to some extents reflected in the slogan of another NUTS 3 administration, which states that with the help of the agri-environmental scheme all actors together in the region should promote biodiversity and prevent the negative environmental effects caused by agriculture in a way that is sustainable also for rural enterprises and farmers.
Much more emphasis on biodiversity, than currently is also demanded by a respondent of a NUTS 1 environmental association.
Further, a researcher aims at a system that is reasonable in terms of money allocation and environment.
Objectives such as flexibility, supportive, equality, targeted, efficient, simply i.e. not bureaucratic, etc have been repeated by many respondents.

IRELAND (IE): The first objective of an officer of the agricultural administration is a synergy of actions under the DCRGA programme and those under the DAF and hence AESs concerning local natural amenities vis a vis REPS, while the second objective is complementarity of DCRGA off-farm environmental actions with DAF on-farm environmental actions.
The objectives of the respondent of the farmer association are environmentally effective schemes, working towards achieving and positively influencing farm incomes and to achieve just rewards for environmental outcomes.
Respondents from the environmental associations have assisting farm families in identifying opportunities AEMs may offer and promoting more environmentally sustainable farming practices through a variety of supports as first objectives, providing additional information

and knowledge to farmers and supporting farm incomes through initiatives or projects which are sustainable and which are in compliance with the aims of AESs as second objectives and further objectives of promoting environmentally friendly initiatives in addition to those under AEMs.
Researchers have the promotion of the benefits of AEMs in positive heritage management, to improve water quality, to qualify, to maximise participation in AESs and research to assist with the scientific design of AEMs as first objectives and to comply, to maximise environmental enhancement and research to evaluate the environmental performance of AEMs as second objectives, whilst further objectives are assisting diversification, retaining a maximum balance between farming and the environment and assisting the provision of reliable advise by farm advisors.

VENETO AND EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT): (Maschera) The objectives of the NUTS 2 officer of the environmental administration are to lower environmental impacts and to support incomes of less favoured farms to improve environmental impacts. At the NUTS 3 level the respondents came up predominantly with objectives concerning helping farmers in terms of income support, especially in disadvantaged areas and in relation to environmental protection activities. In addition respondents mention protection of biodiversity water and soil, introduction of bioenergy, maintaining environmental quality and management of AEMs as further objectives.
Also one respondent of a NUTS 2 farmer association focuses on income support and environmental protection, while a further respondent does focus on the former, though also aims at improvement of positive impacts of agriculture and increasing the competitiveness of farms. Another NUTS 2 respondent however aims at administrative simplification, processing transparency and simple and clear objectives of measures. At the NUTS 3 level respondents of the farmer associations are concerned with the innovativeness of AEMs, sustaining farm incomes and maintaining the territory as first objectives and ensuring complementarity with other rural policies, sustaining local economic development, whilst reducing negative environmental impacts and giving technical assistance.
The respondent of the NUTS 3 environmental associations aims to promote low environmental impacts of agriculture, to advise farmers and to promote the introduction of energy crops.
The researchers have diverse objectives ranging from involvement in AEM definition over interpretation of AEMs as part of rural policies with specific projects to policy evaluation as first objectives and taking part in local planning, providing technical support to policy makers and administrations, co-operation in the design of AEMs and building awareness in the sector and the general population.
(Veneto) Of the agricultural administration all three respondents are from the NUTS 2 level and their first objectives are reacting to EU guidelines and duties, the effectiveness of scheme design and granting payments to farms applying AEMs. Further objectives encompass meeting the demand of farmers and other agricultural actors, efficient execution of AEMs and obtaining funds through the screening processes discussed in the EU Regulations. Third level objectives are adjusting AEMs according to the monitoring and evaluation of measures and promoting the development of more environmentally friendly farming practices.
Respondents from NUTS 2 level farmer associations had informing farmers and maintaining a living environment with a productive agriculture as first objectives, increasing farmers' incomes and solving environmental emergencies as second objectives and planning and coordination and establishing an important role of agricultural activities as further objectives. A NUTS 3 respondent of the farmer associations in turn had the promotion of agriculture as an economic activity that can deliver environmental benefits to the community as a first

objective and the pursuit of suitable farming procedures and economic development of products obtained with environmentally friendly procedures as further objectives.
The NUTS 2 respondents of the environmental associations had the provision of more objective tools to evaluate environmental effectiveness, the evaluation of the effectiveness of measures and the protection of biodiversity as first objectives. Further objectives mentioned were the provision of cartographic tools for the zoning of the territory with respect to environmental problems to optimise scheme design in different areas, to suggest improvement strategies for the application of AEMs and sustainable rural development and monitoring.
The objectives of the respondent of the NUTS 3 environmental associations are to steer the content of AEMs towards application in favour of biodiversity and to inform the potential participants in AEMs of the appropriate use of measures.
Respondents of the organic farmer association at NUTS 2 levels had favouring biodiversity, rewarding and revaluating the work of organic farmers and reducing negative impacts of agriculture on main environmental resources as their objectives.
The respondent of the NUTS 2 “other” group had controlling the fulfilment of prescriptions of the regulation on organic agriculture and promoting organic agriculture among farmers and consumers as objectives.
Finally the National level researcher was concerned with the evaluation of policies and the support on scheme and measure design.

FRIESLAND (NL): National officers of the agricultural administration have supporting the maintenance of the AESs system, to ensure that AESs are instruments to maintain and enhance biodiversity of nature and landscape, to be a co-thinking partner advising the government with adjustments of arrangements and law as first objectives and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of AESs and make good arrangements so that the work of regions is executable as well as taking care of adequate financing as further objectives.
Respondents of farmer associations have informing the public about the importance of good AESs contributing to conservation of nature and landscape as national level objective. At the NUTS 3 level the respondent aims at user friendly AES, AESs efficient for nature management and sufficient payment levels. The objectives of the respondent at LAU are AESs being area focused, fitting into farm management and economically correct.
Of the “others” group national respondents have objectives such as a design of AESs in relation to nature areas and working in conformity with EU rules as first objectives and efficiency and customer orientation as further objectives. The NUTS 1 respondent has active participation in nature management, area based policies and cooperation as objectives, while one NUTS 3 respondents is concerned with better adjustments to regions, quality improvement of management and adjusting measures to problems and the other focuses on more bottom-up, precise area contracts, clear objectives and commitment on results as well as social and society change.
Researchers mention a variety of objectives such as evaluation of AESs in term of governmental objectives, contribute to the best consideration of facts and consequences concerning the effectiveness of AES, to provide policy makers with the right information at the right time, enhancing nature and landscape values of rural areas, to realise effective and efficient schemes, whilst minimising costs, to create support, to support policy to achieve AESs reflecting research findings, to improve AESs as means for rural development, adjusting institutional arrangements at the regional level and contributing through research to AESs better adjusted to local contexts, involving less bureaucracy and better division of implementation tasks.

NORTH ENGLAND (UK): Officers of the agricultural administration at NUTS 1 levels have the delivery of AES, designing and negotiating higher quality AEMs to achieve maximum

environmental/public benefits and value for money, the objectives defined by DEFRA as first objectives and as further objectives advice, monitoring and evaluation of AEMs for compliance and environmental effectiveness, inputs into future scheme design, altering prescriptions and delivery of policy.
Farmer associations mention at the NUTS 1 level a profitable, modern, competitive environmentally farming industry, efficient delivery for the benefit of recipients and the environment as first objectives, an environmental policy based on a partnership across government and NGO sectors at all levels, influence change to address many deficiencies within the system as second objectives and to ensure that farmers are well placed to provide environmental goods for society, monitoring delivery for ensuring proper conduct as third objectives.
Officers of the environmental administration at the NUTS 1 level have first objectives such as an appropriate overall agenda, reducing diffuse pollution in terms of pesticides, nutrients, soil and bacteria, securing sustainable land management practices, influencing the development and implementation of AEMs to deliver sustainable development and securing retention of skilled workforces in rural communities to deliver appropriate land management, whilst having managing flood risk in an integrative catchment approach lobbying for the the design of AEMs integrating social, environmental and economic benefits, with particular focus on enhancing landscape character, access, recreation and sustainable land management as their second objectives and delivering positive environmental gains in particular biodiversity and government targets, improving conditions for wildlife in and around water as further objectives.
At the NUTS 3 level officers of the environmental administration ensuring that conserving and enhancing landscape and biodiversity fit with aims of AEMs, conserving and enhancing the landscape and historic environment as their first objectives, ensuring that enhancing public enjoyment fits with aims of AEMs, conserve and enhance the wildlife and habitats as second objectives and ensuring that having regard to social and economic circumstances is also helped by AEMs, promoting opportunities for access, enjoyment and understanding as further objectives.
Respondents of the environmental associations from the NUTS 1 level have contributing to the design of AEMs in practical and policy terms to ensure that they deliver outcomes supporting biodiversity objectives, ensuring that conservation needs are accurately reflected by AEMs as their first objectives, to work with partners and farmers to deliver effective AEM agreements on the ground as their second objectives and as further objectives the provision of advise and support to AEM agreement holders to ensure that agreements achieve their potential. NUTS 3 level respondents have first objectives such as protection and enhancement of biodiversity, implementing as much schemes as possible, submit and negotiate applications on behalf of farmers, increasing biodiversity, to steer AESs design and implementation to benefit the landscape in the North Pennines, to protect wildlife and natural features and promote nature conservation in the region, advisory and for second objectives advising agencies and landowners on priorities, monitoring the health of schemes, professional ecology knowledge to provide support to applications, managing nature reserves for the benefit of biodiversity and quiet enjoyment, delivery of schemes whilst as further objectives to apply pressure on DEFRA to deliver sensible AEMs, influence land management (surrounding DWT sites) to benefit biodiversity.
Of the group “others” NUTS 3 respondents claim encouraging greater integration of the farming sector with the rest of the rural economy and especially with sustainable tourism, ensuring strategic linkages at a local level disseminate best practice as their first objectives, to promote the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and landscape quality, enabling partnership working as second objectives whilst promotion of the integration of farming with a sense of place of local communities is mentioned as a further objective.

Researchers mention academic research and conducting research relevant to rural economy and land use as first objectives, applied policy research as second objectives and informing policy debates and local and regional practice as further objectives.

Appendix A 6 - Question 21

CZECH REPUBLIC (CZ): LAU agricultural administrations state that more influence for farmer associations and in one instance also the Agrarian Chamber would better reflect local conditions and special agricultural enterprises. NUTS 1 agricultural administrations mention that environmental NGOs exist to support the environmental ministry. Many state that a disadvantage of the environmental ministry is that it does not consider the needs of farmers and the administration at its whole. Some respondents would like to have more influence of farmer associations, although others are concerned that they do not have the environment on their agenda. One respondent mentions that zoned measures have a better chance if the environmental administration has more influence.
Farmer associations suggest that an increase of influence of certain actor groups would bring the system out of balance and thus the influence of actors should be balanced.
The environmental administration at lower levels fears that increased influence of single actor groups would lead to narrow perspectives. According to one respondent a stronger influence of nature conservation authorities would improve the functioning of AEMs. A respondent from the environmental administration at NUTS 1 suggests that influence of actors should differ at different parts of the process of AEM because feedback is required from all stakeholders, but final decision-making should be more unified.
Environmental associations state, that as the aim of AEMs is to improve the environment and landscapes, those who know about the topics, i.e. the Ministry of the Environment and researchers, but also environmental cooperatives should gain influence accordingly. However, administrations is mainly through agricultural branches, which have better resources and are better organised than the environmental NGOs and administrations. One respondent mentions that the influence of the Ministry of Agriculture leads to under-fulfilment of the potentials of AEMs. This is related to wrong usage of financial means according to another respondent of an environmental association.

BRANDENBURG (D): NUTS 3 level respondents of the agricultural administration have a mixed perspective on changing the influence of actors. One respondent argues that researchers should support the environmental and agricultural objectives of AEMs with assistance of other associations, while the other respondent argues that there should be a balance of influence, so that special groups cannot realise their aims. However, the agricultural administration should gain influence because it has the better expertise. A further NUTS 3 respondent remarks that a shift in influence would create a diversity of opinions and thus make measures more effective and accepted, though there is a danger of disputes about financing. The NUTS 1 representatives of the agricultural administration mention that power shifts would balance interests and lead to more objective evaluation, including practical aspects. A decreased influence of the ministry of finance would, according to one respondent, increase the number of measures.
Farmer associations at NUTS 1 across the board suggest that an increased influence of lower levels would result in measures designed more according to local particularities. One respondent also mentions that researchers could justify measures. The NUTS 3 level respondent thinks that there are useful experts in the agricultural administration and some common ground with environmental administration. In addition findings of scientific research are important.
The environmental administration at the NUTS 3 level has diverse opinions about redistribution of influence. One respondent suggests that is leads to a balance of interest and technical expertise. Another respondent also mentions an improved balance of interests, while a further respondent argues that an increase of influence of the environmental administration makes it easier to achieve objectives. Two NUTS 1 respondents are agreeing the latter, while

another is concerned that influence shifts could decrease the effectiveness of measures. Two NUTS 1 respondents mention that researchers could contribute to more objective evaluation, though one respondent argues that the involvement of researchers should be goal-orientated. The discussion would also be more objective according to one respondent, if the influence of farmer associations is being reduced. Some NUTS 1 environmental administrators suggest shifting influence in general would result in more balanced design.
A representative of an environmental association at NUTS 3 would like to see more influence of environmentalists, but fears that this would not be feasible, as it is also the case with scientists.
Of the "others" group one respondent mentions that shifts in influence would make measures more objective and disconnect them from lobbying, though at risk that less practical knowledge will be involved. One respondent of the researchers suggest that researchers should not have too much influence and that decrease of influence of administration would increase transparency. The other researcher remarks that the involvement of farmers would lead to higher acceptance of AEMs and farming systems, which are environmentally friendly in the long-term.

FLANDERS (B): If the influence of actors would be better balanced, according to several NUTS 1 respondent of the agricultural administration, there would be a broader social basis of AESs. In addition some suggest that the AEMs will be better elaborated and more effective. However, as one respondent suggests, the diversity and complexity of AESs would increase. If researchers would have more influence, the value of AESs would increase, as another officer points out. Would farmer associations have more power, according to an officer, the number of applications would increase. However, a further officer claims, that increased influence of both farmer and environmental organisations is hampering an optimal solution, as they will defend own members and views. Moreover, as a NUTS 2 officer argues the environmental sector has not enough insight into to the farming sector and hence should not set up the rules. A comparatively greater influence of the agricultural actors would lead to AESs better adapted to the needs of the farming sector.
In a similar stance NUTS 1 respondents of the farmer associations suggest that more influence of agricultural actors would result in more user friendly schemes, with more flexibility and better payments, as one of them figures. This is held as well by a LAU respondent. In addition, one NUTS 1 respondent argues that more influence of researchers would improve the scientific foundations of AESs.
Of the NUTS 1 environmental administration an officer suggests that AESs would be better founded, the social basis of the AESs improved, if actors' influence change. According to a further officer increased involvement of researchers would mean greater effectiveness of some measures. A changed distribution of influence would imply to one officer of the NUTS 2 level, that AESs would be more differentiated and new approaches or measures easier to introduce. According to another NUTS 2 officer, goals will be clearer defined. A similar influence of farmer organisations and environmental NGO's would prevent a decrease of environmental effects of AESs and maintain the role of farmers as managers of nature and the countryside, as a LAU officer suggests.
According to a respondent of the NUTS 1 environmental associations, while the large influence of agricultural actors increases the practicability of AES, increased involvement of environmental organisations and researchers would improve their effectiveness.
As a respondent of the NUTS 1 organic farmer association suggests problems would be tackled in a more balanced way, if farmer organisations, environmental NGO's and researchers had very high influence and form an integrated entity.
Of the „others" at NUTS 1 levels, one respondent has the rather similar suggestion, that AESs should be designed representatives from farmer organisations, environmental NGO's, local

people and researchers all together and the administration then implements the AESs. However, other respondents argue that if researchers have highest influence, AESs would be more effective. Yet, another respondent claims more involvement of farmer organisations leads to more realistic measures. Changes in influence would lead to a larger social basis for AES, a LAU respondent of the "others" suggests, who has doubts that more involvement of additional actors would have an effect, because politicians make the decisions.
Increased involvement of researchers would deliver more effective and efficient AESs a researcher points out, who also argues for more involvement of rural stakeholders, who can contribute in non-technical matters like AESs targeting the countryside. A change in actor influence would lead to more custom-made, more efficient AESs with a greater social basis another researcher suggests. Farmer involvement would also increase their motivation.

BASSE-NORMANDIE (F): According to respondents from the national level of the agricultural administration there are advantages if several actors get more influence. One respondent stresses that if environmental actors have more influence there will be more emphasis on environmental stakes and an increased influence of the National Agency of Farm Structure Improvement should make measures easier to control. A change of influence of actors would according to another respondent lead to better recognition of the environment and local context, but there should be a balance between all actors. A further respondent suggests that an increased influence of researchers could lead to higher usefulness of measures. However, an officer points out, that is has to be taken care of risks of inequalities and imbalances.
At the NUTS 2 level one officer of the agricultural administration suggest that opening the decision process would enable farmers to engage farming practices beyond current ones promoted by the agricultural lobby. Another respondent argues that more influence of environmental actors would lead to a better recognition of the environment and that farmers should have less influence, because they already have a voice through the agricultural chambers. According to the respondent the involvement of local governments would lead to the inclusion of their ideas on environmental issues. A further respondent from the NUTS 3 administration agrees, that increased influence of environmental actors would lead to AEMs focusing more on environmental issues. In addition, the balance between the wider rural society and farmers, which tend use AEMs as income support, should be restored.
One respondent of the national farmer associations argues changed influence of actors would create a more realistic view. Increased influence of environmental associations could improve the assessment of AEMs according to two national respondents, especially if researchers could contribute with knowledge. In general links between all actors are useful as the respondent suggests. At the NUTS 2 level one member of the farmers associations thinks that a shift in influences could restore the balance between environmental and agricultural actors. Of the NUTS 3 actors of the agricultural associations one respondent suggests a better balance between all actors and a better acceptance of farming practices by other actors could be achieved, though the farmers' should be predominant, because they have to implement the policy. Another actor of the level considers an improved coordination and appreciation of measures by all actors in addition to better adaptation to local contexts and better funding as advantages of influence shifts, while disadvantages would be difficulties in reaching consensus and managing the system, while there is also the danger that farmer become under-represented in the long run.
According to a NUTS 1 officer of the environmental administration environmentalists should have more influence, because the AEMs deal with environmental issues. Another officer from the NUTS 2 level suggests that a better voice for environmentalists would increase concerted action among all actors, which is much needed. In addition, it would create a balance between agricultural and environmental actor, since the latter are currently not consulted.

However, a respondent of the environmental associations suggest greater involvement of all local actors, because then the AEMs would be better adapted and targeting specific local problems.

Of the group of "other" actors one NATIONAL respondent suggests greater consensus and acceptance of AEMs by all actors as advantages due to influence shifts. Another respondent suggests a better readability, appropriateness, effectiveness and simplification of the policy, while pointing at risks of multiplication of measures, since definition of priorities will be difficult. However, a further respondent argues that more influence of environmental actors would lead to better definition of environmental stakes. Moreover, territorial stake would be better recognised of local governments have more influence. Researchers in turn could contribute to better assessment of AEMs and thus to better design of measures. In addition, if farmers' organisations have less influence, design and implementation of AEMs would be less politicised.

At the NUTS 2 level respondents of the "others" group mention that environmental actors should gain more influence to improve the balance between environmental and agricultural stakes, as agricultural actors are currently the more powerful. This increased influence of environmental actors would, according to one respondent, lead to a more open debate on agri-environmental issues, because farmers are not the only ones concerned. However, as another respondent points out all rural actors, including hunters, fishermen and consumers should engage. This would also make the latter aware of the efforts farmers make regarding the environment, if those actors would be realistic instead of being dogmatic and idealistic, as they tend to be. Yet, a further respondent also suggests the involvement of all local actors to achieved better adapted AEMs and thus viable subsidies, though the disadvantage is a risk of increased complexity. This disadvantage is also recognised by another actor who thinks that it will increase the difficulties of settling problems, though more concerted action is also advantageous. Thus, as a further actor puts it, one should move from an agricultural policy to a rural policy, which is agreed by all actors and thus will be understood.

The arguments of NUTS 3 respondents follow partly the same pattern. One respondent mentions again that increased influence of environmental actors may lead to measures better adapted to the environment. The disadvantage would be that decision-making would be more difficult, if more people are involved. However, several respondents consider concerted action of all actors in a collective approach and a better balance between actors beneficial. Relating to rural actors only, this is necessary according to one respondent for having good negotiations and hence, good decisions. Yet, as the respondent also points out, environmentalists have to consider that farmers make a living from agriculture and thus environmentalists have to take into account farmers' constraints. Further, researchers are important to prove the environmental impact of farming practices and national administrations should have less influence because they are uninformed about local issues. Local governments and other actors at this level should have more influence to ensure acceptance and effectiveness of AEMs as mentioned by some respondents. The disadvantage of better balance among actors could be a risk of increased lobbying as one respondent argues. Yet, another actor suggests that agricultural administrations and chambers should have more influence to the benefit of better-adapted AEMs and socio-economic situations of farms.

Also a respondent from the "others" at the LAU level argues for more influence of Chambers of agriculture, because they best represent farmers and should integrate the agricultural position on AEMs. According to the respondent it is to consider farmers and their constraints, even if the environmental issues have to taken into account. A further respondent of the "others" group at the LAU level simply thinks that "everybody is on the right place".

FINLAND (FI): According to an officer of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration discussions on environmental objectives would be much easier, if the influence of farmers' associations decreases, whereas the expertise of NGOs could be used much more. The environmental effectiveness of the program would be increased if environmental administration and researchers had more influence, as an officer from the NUTS 3 agricultural administration suggest.
Respondents of the farmer associations repeatedly argued that the views of farmers are important and consequently their influence should increase if a programme is desired in which farmers participate also in the future. In addition, they suggest that more stakeholders are not needed. Furthermore the decision-making concerning agriculture should rest with agricultural actors, since it creates problems if people who do not understand agriculture make decisions concerning it.
An increased influence of the environmental administration and researchers would in the opinion of a NUTS 3 environmental administrator also lead to more environmental benefits. As a respondent from the environmental associations argues an equal amount of power of all actors would bring an environmental perspective into the programme.
Overall, there seems to be a very clear division on comments on influence depending on the background of the informant.

IRELAND (IE): According to a respondent of the farmer associations and imbalance of influence would be reached, if there is no balance between agricultural and environmental agendas. However, a respondent from the environmental associations suggests that the participation of environmental NGOs may prove advantageous in providing additional information and different viewpoints.
More balanced influence of actors, would according to one researcher lead to greater balance in scheme design, while another researcher suggests more ownership of the scheme and better communication. However, a further researcher suggests that a change in influence of actors bears the potential to alienate the farming organisations and lead in the short term to lower numbers of farmers participating in the AEMs. Yet, this is partly reflected in the statement of a further researcher, who suspects that a change in influence would lead to increased difficulty in achieving consensus at least in the short term. More influence of researchers and the environmental administration would, according to the researcher, more effective schemes as changes by policy makers to measures often have serious unintended effects on effectiveness.

VENETO AND EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT): (Maschera) At the NUTS 2 level one respondent of the agricultural administration thinks the advantage of certain actors to have more influence would be a stronger capacity to achieve environmental objectives and designing AEMs. NUTS 3 respondents mention a strong risk of particularism and slow decision processes as disadvantages, while pointing at an increase of environmental awareness and stronger involvement of farmers and disadvantaged as advantages of power shifts among actors.
NUTS 2 level respondents of the agricultural administration suggest an improved balance between agriculture and environment, better correspondence to competitiveness of farms, better information on farm needs by administrations, common perspectives with rural policies (PSR), better evaluation and targeting territorial aspects and relevant problems and better connectedness of innovation and production systems as advantages of power shifts. One respondent, however, mentions that there are problems in the implementation and that bottom-up approaches are still insufficient. From the perspective of the NUTS 3 environmental association more concentration of power will make AEMs more punctual and increase their effectiveness.
According to the researchers a stronger focus on environmental dimensions would be an advantage of power shifts. One researcher also suggests an improved compatibility between

environmental problems and policy objectives, while the disadvantage would be a lower homogeneity of interventions. A disadvantage would, according to the other researcher also be a weaker agricultural sector.
(Veneto) If certain actors had more influence, according to a NUTS 2 officer of the agricultural administration the influence of different groups would be balanced, more information would be exchanged and the programming and operation of AEMs better consider their effectiveness. Thus, as another respondent suggests a more earnest environmental approach would prevail. Overall, according to a further officer of the NUTS 2 agricultural administration there would be a more global view and better fulfilment of general stakes at local scales regarding territorial demands.
As a respondent of the NUTS 2 association of farmers points out, more attention would be given to farmer demands, while a NUTS 3 respondent of the farmers unions thinks that shifts in influence cause higher awareness of choices, better identification of targets, more precise localisation of interventions, whilst improvements are always possible.
Officers of the environmental administration at NUTS 2 levels suggest a better environmental protection and achievement of substantial sustainable development even in the primary sector. In detail, as another respondent suggests, schemes would be more consistent with targets and the effectiveness of AEMs increased. The advantage would also be increased fairness in the design of more environmentally effective measures and equal relevance of economic and environmental aspects.
The respondent of the environmental associations at NUTS 3 argues that environmental policies should be designed for social and environmental benefits and not to cover fractional interests. However, according to a respondent of the NUTS 2 organic farming organisations the advantage of power shifts would be lesser conflicts among different categories. Yet, as a respondent of the "others" group (NUTS 2) suggests it would be possible to achieve more positive effects on both, the environment and local communities. According to a researcher an improved focus on environmental problems and better solutions in terms of new policies with an increasing correspondence between environmental problems and policy objectives, would be advantages of power shifts.

FRIESLAND (NL): Two officers of the agricultural administration at National levels tended to relate actors to administrative levels. Thus, one respondent argues that AESs should be a national responsibility, because otherwise the administration and implementation would be technically very complex. However, despite considering higher administration costs another respondent thinks that influence of provincial actors contributes to tailor-made schemes.
Other officers of the national agricultural administration look closer at specific actors, although they come to different conclusions. One officer suggests that less involvement of researchers and NGOs has the advantage of lower dependency on limited knowledge about biodiversity. Instead farmers' knowledge which is not scientifically grounded should be acknowledged since it is often more effective. A further officer, however, argues that nature and landscape organisations have local knowledge and expertise as advisors and are also able to take historical and cultural factors into account.
Of the farmer associations a national respondent argues for more regional and farmer influence, which would contribute to more quality, better and easier application, improved results and pride relating to achievements. In addition farmer organisations tend to see what can be achieved on the production level and focus on effects on nature as also nature organisations do. According to a NUTS 3 respondent, farmer organisations, environmental organisations and environmental cooperatives should all have more influence, since they are the managers of nature. Advantages of such an arrangement would be more efficiency and less bureaucracy, while the disadvantages are approaches less driven by demand and more driven by supply and thus less market orientated. A respondent of the LAU level thinks that

shifts to lower level actors imply more area based measures, more commitment and nearness to participants.
As a national level respondent of the “others” group suggests more interference from researchers in particular would increase the effectiveness of schemes in terms of their contribution to nature and landscape. A further respondent favours larger involvement of users, which will lead to more customer-oriented implementation. “Others” respondents from the NUTS 3 level point out that measures would be more adjusted to problems leading to better quality results and that the province has better insights into regional opportunities in relation to agriculture, nature and landscape and thus are more effective and efficient. In addition, policies would be more objective-oriented instead of measure oriented.
Researchers have several perspectives on changed influences of actors. However, one respondent simply favours a more balanced division among actors’ influences, so that the concerns of everyone will be reflected in the design of AESs. Another researcher, however, suggests a reduced influence of the agricultural administration, which would result in policies easier to implement and better adjusted to landscapes and natural environments. An advantages, if farmers and landscape organisations as potential managers have more influence would, as one researcher points out, be their better ability to estimate effects of measures, though the disadvantage would be their rent seeking. Environmental administrations, however, should have little influence according to another researcher, because the consideration of environmental conditions is not yet integrated in AES, since they are still in their first phase. Yet, the influence of the Ministry of Finances is necessary to ensure efficiency. Other researchers put more emphasis on governmental levels. One of them argues that lower level involvement leads to AESs better designed in relation to local conditions and hopefully better compensation. A tender system could be an opportunity for this, as the respondent points out. At the provincial level co-operations between farmer organisations, environmental co-operatives and social actors are possible, as one researcher suggest. Higher-level institutions should then facilitate and not be directing. Finally, a further researcher claims more generally that lower influence of national levels will direct the design closer to implementation levels, resulting in more tailor-made AESs and decreased needs for explanation.

NORTH ENGLAND (UK): One officer of the agricultural administration at the NUTS 1 level suggests that the advantages of a more balanced distribution of influence creates more understanding and backing for schemes and possibly more effective measures, though the decision-making may be spread between too many groups making schemes too complex. A further officer points out that this may make schemes too expensive, though it is advantageous when addressing serious problems like water quality.
A NUTS 1 respondent of the farmer associations suggests that the farmers, as they are the actual deliverers, should have more influence because they, unlike other groups, appreciate the practicalities of farming for a living.
NUTS 1 officers of the environmental administration have several remarks to influence change of actors. One respondent suggests that farmers are the key link in delivering the benefits proposed by AESs and thus have to be more engaged in scheme development. Similarly another officer suggests greater input by land managers, who then contribute their aims and objectives and assist in agreeing what they have to deliver. Yet, other officers of this level argue that changes in influence simply highlights different agendas and that the impact of influences depends on how the process is managed. A NUTS 3 respondent thinks that NGOs with wide first hand experience of AEMs should have a strong influence, while those with a smaller focus should have lower influence as their recommendations are likely to be less suitable to mainstream agriculture. In addition, as the respondent points out, often not the organisation is most critical, but who within that organisation is influencing the process.

One respondent of the environmental associations at NUTS 1 suspects that measures may be more practical due to influence shifts, though a disadvantage may be that scheme objectives are being obscured and schemes are hijacked for inappropriate purposes. However, a further respondent thinks that schemes would reflect environmental priorities more accurately.
As a NUTS 3 respondent of the environmental associations suggest a greater influence of farming organisations might reduce the environmental effectiveness of measures, which has benefited over the years from a strong influence of environmental actors. Accordingly a stronger influence of historic environment actors would benefit the relating objectives.
Corresponding to this, another respondent argues that English Nature and conservation NGOs could provide more effective delivery of wildlife benefits without economic criteria being overriding. In this context specialist knowledge would be better utilised and decisions made without political influences the main focus. On the downside, there can be a bias in AEMs towards i.e. farmland bird options, which are not very beneficial for other species. A further respondent points out that a reduced influence of government will result in schemes delivering for wildlife and community and not to meet government targets. Another advantage of influence changes mentioned is the tailoring to issues and priorities. One respondent of the environmental associations at NUTS 3 also argues that farmer organisations would know whether a scheme is suitable for a farm and too many actors would make schemes complicated and costly.
Of the group of “others” at the NUTS 3 level one respondent suggests that a greater influence of AONBs (Area of Outstanding National Beauty), National Parks and LEADER local action groups would ensure better integration of farming with the rural economy as a whole and communities and sustainable tourism. However, a further respondent argues that a change of influence of actors may end up in a very diverse plan, which may be more difficult to deliver.
A researcher suggests that there would be more public benefits, if the pattern of actors’ influence changes.

Appendix A 7 - Question 24

CZECH REPUBLIC (CZ): Most LAU and NUTS 2 level respondents of the agricultural administration complaint about the State Agricultural Interventional Fund (SAIF), which communicates badly, especially at the regional level and does what it wants, for example in terms of timing of payments. According to them it generally has little interest in participation and slow down the administration. Also NUTS 1 agricultural administrations complain about the SAIF in terms of cooperation and communication, especially with the Ministry of Agriculture, whose decisions are often not adhered to by the SAIF. In addition NUTS 1 level respondents complaint about difficult administration processes of applications, poor interest in cooperation on measures design by farmers.
Furthermore, one respondent of the LAU environmental administration complains about the communication behaviour of SAIF and its staff.

BRANDENBURG (D): A respondent of the agricultural administration mentions the case of agreeing to a national park where conflicts might be reduced due to mergers of agricultural and environmental ministries. Another respondent from the NUTS 3 environmental associations thinks that conflict reduction due to merger is nonsense, which is to certain extents agreed by a respondent from the environmental administration at NUITS1 who is on the opinion that each ministry pushes its own fields of interest. However, a NUTS 3 environmental administrator asks whether conflicts are covered up with mergers.
Concerning sanctions on contract violation one researcher thinks they should be aggravated, simply because measures are based on contracts. In addition, the researchers suggest that control is needed for the measures to be carried out. A member of the NUTS 3 environmental administration thinks that sanctions are probably too weak.

FLANDERS (B): According to a respondent of the NUTS 1 environmental administration the information exchange between the two administrations involved in AEMs should be better organised and also take into account the communication requirements of farmers. The respondent, however, suggests that it is not useful to have two different administrations for AEMs. Farmers are even confused were their AEMs come from. Relating to the administrations a further officer thinks that internally there is a need for a better cooperation, while externally more uniformity and clearness is needed. Further, a NUTS 2 officer suggests, that just one administration responsible for the AESs would make things easier. The officer also considers the link to the Mid Term Review (MTR) as not good, since decoupled payment can be lost from the first pillar when farmers have AESs, because the total payment per ha may not exceed a certain value.
One respondent of the NUTS 1 farmer associations acknowledges recent efforts to simplify administration. A further respondent suggest that farmers should be more involved in the design process, though they need guidance on AESs from people they can trust. According to the respondent farm planners of the Regional Landscapes are good in this. However, a LAU respondent complains that the administrative structure is too complex and there is a lack of competent officials.
Also an officer of the NUTS 1 environmental administration complains about the organisation of the different services, where information exchange has to be improved, also in relation to communication with farmers. The officer is not pleased that there are two different administrations dealing with AES, especially as it confuses farmers. An officer of the NUTS 2 level broadly agrees with the above, but also points out that creating awareness among farmers is needed. However, a further officer suggest that financing is insufficient in relation to goals, more influence of the recreation sector needed and rules should be handled more creatively like in other Member States.

A NUTS 1 respondent of the environmental associations suggests, that environmental organisations are being consulted too late in the design process, leading to low influence and probably violating participation requirements. Another respondent demands more coordination between the different parties involved in AESs.
Also a respondent of the organic farmer associations thinks that it is not useful that AESs are spread over different administrations and hence suggest them all to be dealt with by the agricultural administration.
In the light of the tourism industry being currently the largest industry, a NUTS 1 respondent of the tourism association argues that all stakeholders, including the tourism sector should be involved.
The involvement of both the agricultural and the environmental administrations is a common complaint of NUTS 1 respondents of the "others" group. One of them remarks that farmers do not exactly know the difference between the environmental and the agricultural administration and several suggest AESs to be in one administration or organisation. A respondent also remarks that the approach of AESs is too sectoral and that they are spread over three the different policy domains of agriculture, environment and landscape. This means too much financial difference between measures. The respondent also suspects whether financial means could be better spend on the environment than through AESs. Further, only one policy domain should be responsible, though it has the disadvantage of funds deriving from one source only. Another respondent suggests that also private individuals like landowners should be able to implement AESs and stakeholders in general should be more involved. Also a LAU respondent of the "others" suggests, that the distribution of the AESs over different administrations is too complex. Further the information given to farmers is too complex and thus demonstrations and local information meetings be better.
One researcher also points at the communication between the administrations, which is not that good, as the two administrations do not know what the other administration is doing. A further researcher argues that AESs should be binding for a longer period than five years and the farmer should be rewarded when he does a good job with a payment not too high. This prevents areas under contract from being ploughed again. Further, there is a need for clear goals and AESs sending signals to the public so that it can see the results of farmers' efforts, like a field with poppies.

BASSE-NORMANDIE (F): According to a national level respondent of the agricultural administration the design of AEMs is met with farmers' disapproval, because it does not enable better management of farms and rather AEMs are supplementary constraints that permit the administration to monitor farmers. However, the respondent also thinks that sanctions are not sufficiently high. Another national officer points out that the AEMs policies are very complex. This is also mentioned by a NUTS 2 officer, who points from the perspective of farmers at the complicated organisational structure of the AEMs, whereby the controlling agencies are often confused.
A respondent from the NUTS 3 level is somewhat in favour of decentralised approaches, especially in terms of design.
According to a national level respondent of the farmer associations there is a lack of networking farmers and local actors, which leads to poor dissemination of information, experience and skills. For a respondent from the environmental associations at the National level it would be important to show the link between AEMs, environmental protection and the quality of agricultural products.
Of the NATIONAL "others" group one respondent reports that RNPs and similar structures face difficulties with forwarding files, which are only examined from an administrative viewpoint. Further, the environmental impacts of AEMs are not taken into account, as it was the case before 1999. However, as another respondent points out, the AEMs policy improved

in the second part of the period (CAD period) and was thus simpler, more effective and cheaper than during the CTE period in the beginning. Yet, according to a further respondent of the "others" at NATIONAL local and environmental actors have been insufficiently involved in AEMs and the whole process of AEMs has been too complicated in terms of implementation and monitoring. The actions would have been more coherent if lead at NUTS 2, though territorial inequalities have to be prevented.
A NUTS 2 respondent then points out that in the Manche region there has been good collaboration among territorial actors, while the department of Calvados suffered from fluctuation of actors and lower interest. In general, as a further respondent suggests, the administrative implementation is too complicated and not really functional, as it is rather preoccupied with administrative consideration and insufficiently considers the problems in the field. In addition there are organisational problems in the administration and disagreement between departments occurs concerning measures and control. Another respondent mentions a lack of communication between actors, especially between the administration and local governments and actors. Though the RNP suffers from the lack of communication, it can make itself heard. Finally a respondent of the NUTS 2 level argues that it took along time before the policy really started.
At the NUTS 3 level a respondent of the "others" group suggest that AEMs should be well defined from the start on in terms of rules. In addition, local governments should be involved in the design and financing the measures. However, as the respondent points out, coordination and concerted action between NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 is lacking. Another respondent who is especially critical with the agricultural administration also mentions this. According to the respondent the skills of all organisations involved have to be clarified. A further respondent thinks that the administration in general lacks socio-economic and management skills in relation to AEMs. Other respondents put more emphasis on the involvement of local actors. Two respondents thus argue for decision-making below NUTS 3, though one of them suggests coordination to be at an upper level and stronger inclusion of environmentalists. The other respondent adds, that AEMs are not only about money, as these are only attractive and effective, if farmers are aware of the environmental issues behind them.
At the LAU level one respondent argues that only either NUTS 3 or NUTS 2 levels should have influence on AEMs.

FINLAND (FI): No remarks.

IRELAND (IE): As a respondent of the farmer associations suspects, repeat contracts of AESs are not taken up if farmer run into problems, e.g. due to unhelpful inspections.
According to a respondent of the environmental associations each local area has to tailor the broad environmental protection measures coming from EU and national levels to local circumstances. This would also lead to greater acceptance by farmers of the changes they have to undertake.
In addition, one of the researchers argues, that there is a need for much greater exchange of information among environmental organisations and researchers at the design stage of schemes. Moreover there is a need for more meaningful consultation.

VENETO AND EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT): (Maschera) Of the agricultural administration one NUTS 3 officer suggest that the agricultural administration can be closer to productive activities with now two different councillors. Another respondent from the agricultural administration at NUTS 3 thinks that there is low participation and contacts with provinces at the NUTS 3 level. One NUTS 2 respondent of the farmer associations thinks that the application process should be compensated.

(Veneto) According to an officer from the NUTS 2 agricultural administration, farmers do not seem very sensitive of indirect environmental benefits. In this context increased compensation would contribute to a dual mechanism, where the subsidy becomes an income support measure and in turn also a vested interest. The structures in the region fulfil on average on sufficient levels as a respondent from the NUTS 2 farmer associations suggest. However, according to the environmental administration there are farmer associations that operate in fragmentary and uncoordinated ways. Further, as a NUTS 2 respondent of the organic farming associations suggests there is no connection between farm size and efficiency and the role of farmer unions in scheming the subsidies is excessive.

FRIESLAND (NL): An officer of the national agricultural administration thinks that an increased attractiveness of measures due to higher compensation paid depends on the involvement of farmers, whereby organic farmers are easier convinced. In addition the officer points out, that sanctions for contract violations are sometimes reasonable and sometimes not. Moreover, the lower the administrative level the more diverse the number of arrangements will be. In general, as both officers argue, things will change with the 2007 policy ILG which delegates the design relating to rural areas to the provincial level.
A respondent of the national farmer associations claims that attractiveness of measures is not only dependent on costs since if the nature has a high value significant rewards should be paid which justify the value and show respect. According to a LAU respondent the consequences of measuring sizes and lengths of application areas are too serious and no sanction should be included.
As a respondent of the “others” group at national levels argues that all involved construct themselves very difficult AESs with too many rules and complications and from the new set-up from 2007 onwards the provinces will integrate their own objectives. At the NUTS 3 level respondents of the “others” suggest that distance monitoring needs to have an opportunity and that co-operation on area levels is important, which includes responsibilities like meeting objectives. The latter would, according to the respondent, also be a responsibility for the government, but more self-regulation and accountability for results is needed. In addition, social cohesion is important for exchanging knowledge and mutual control on implementation.
A researcher claims that monetary incomes are always attractive to farmers, though work for nature and landscape is also attractive to farmers and surrounding people, since they are emotionally involved with nature conservation. A further researcher agrees on this, as in practice insufficient compensation is not experienced like this since every farmer has different arguments to choose AESs and costs are not the same everywhere. However, another researcher suggests that cost compensation is minimal and that for real results farmers should get real financial stimulants. Further the researcher argues that AESs are not business-like enough, neither on the level of protection and of income support. The money spent is according to both criteria not efficiently spent and should be allocated more efficiently and selectively. A researcher also suggests that there is a lot of control with AEMs, but not professional and instead of focusing on nature and landscape quality, rules are the major concern. This also mentioned by another researcher, who thinks that there is more than enough control, but not of the right things. Moreover, as another researcher suggests application procedures change continuously which leads to confusion, complexity and frustration among farmers.
In relation to contacts of farmers with the administration one researcher points out that it is not always clear where to obtain the right information and once found out, officers are difficult to contact. Finally, as one researcher is complaining, the questions have been suggestive.

NORTH ENGLAND (UK): One officer from the NUTS 1 level agricultural administration points out that the partial budget calculation of profit underlying compensation payments does for some not take account of change in capital required. A further officer thinks that participation should be based on the contribution made to environmental maintenance and improvement.
A NUTS 1 respondent of the farmer associations believes that question 22 is out of date as agriculture and environment are part of the same ministry, DEFRA, whose rump appears to have been taken over by English Nature, leaving no government body or agency looking after farmers. It is thus likely that the staff will have a greater knowledge and interest in environmental matters than agricultural and overtime the existing agricultural knowledge will decline and may well not be replaced.
From the officers of the NUTS 1 environmental administration one respondent asks whether AESs can become too complex as they try to integrate a number of outcomes in relation of more farmer engagement. According to a NUTS 3 officer the consultation with other DEFRA offices works good, though there have been some problems with the new scheme.
A respondent from the NUTS 1 environmental organisations suspects that enforcement of AEMs is too weak and farmers appear to be able to break agreement conditions, while not being prevented from doing so. In relation to this a respondent from the NUTS 3 level point out that participation rates in some areas are low due to low rates of compensation and high restrictions. This is because schemes are highly bureaucratic and DEFRA staff has little understanding of the scheme and leaves farmers alone. A further respondent agrees and suggests that the government departments and agencies involved show a lack of knowledge, care and management.

Appendix A 8 - Question 28

CZECH REPUBLIC (CZ): A respondent of the researchers group suggests, that officials' fear to lose jobs, administrations' lack information and skills and interests of local stakeholders pose obstacles to bottom-up approaches. A member of the environmental associations (NUTS 2) claims that the financial and moral support of the "industrial type of agriculture" is a problem. According to a respondent from the NUTS 1 environmental administration local action groups lack individual approaches, which better reflect conditions of single farms.
Farmer associations at NUTS 1 level mention administrative and financial difficulties as major obstacles.
Possible lack of finance as a barrier to bottom-up approaches is also mentioned by LAU and 1 level respondents of the agricultural administration. Further, administrative problems are mentioned. One respondent wonders how control can be effective at the local level.

BRANDENBURG (D): NUTS 1 agricultural administrations point out that bottom-up approaches would increase administrative efforts. One respondent of this group says that misuse of financial resources might be a danger, which typically increases the lower the administrative level. Another respondent thinks, that control will be more difficult with the new regulation.
From the farmer associations one NUTS 1 respondent fears that bottom-up approaches leave less financial resources for normal measures and distort competition. In addition there would be no adequate manpower in the region and farmers would not receive sufficient money. Hence, the respondent is against such measures. A NUTS 3 representative of the farmers associations points out that there are lower chances for such measures, when the financial resources shrink. Relating to this a member of the NUTS 3 environmental administration suggest that bottom-up approaches require more resources. In addition, one respondent from the NUTS 1 level fears that, as provincial governments do subsidise rural areas insufficiently, there will be money diverted to the maintenance of the status quo. A member of an environmental association further suspects that agricultural administrations will want to keep on serving their clientele.
Of the group of "others" one NUTS 1 respondent claims that administrations dislike small programmes and thus those involved in bottom-up approaches would need entirely different partners. Another respondent points at the general administrative structure (Landesdurchführungsverordnung), within which it would be difficult to relocate the necessary competencies. In addition it is suggested by a NUTS 1 respondent, that at NUTS 3 levels and below expertise is lacking and decisions are lacking logic. Further, NUTS 1 levels do not like to loose influence.
One researcher points out that bottom-up approaches are time consuming and have high transaction costs, while the other researcher is concerned that administrations may not like to give influences away.

FLANDERS (B): Concerning the main problems of bottom-up approaches a respondent of the agricultural administration at NUTS 1 remarks there would be administrative problems as all municipalities would have to address the payment office individually. In addition, as a respondent from the NUTS 1 environmental administration suggests, there are too many requirements in the Regulation and the approval of there would take too much time due to the diversity of the proposals. A further respondent of the NUTS 1 environmental mentions that the limited budget would be a constraint to bottom-up approaches.

BASSE-NORMANDIE (F): Several respondents of the national agricultural administration, but also those of the NUTS 2 level suggest that budget limitations would be a major obstacle

to bottom-up approaches. In addition, respondents of the national level point out that there is insufficient experience with such measures and thus learning processes required. One NUTS 2 officer suspects that the new Regulation will lead to the removal of many AEMs.
Farmer associations at the NUTS 3 level also suggest that budgets would be a limiting factor for bottom-up approaches. However, one respondent points out that the agricultural administration at the NUTS 2 level, which is responsible for dividing up financial means between NUTS 3 levels may be too rigid. Related to that another respondent remarks that there would be difficulties to represent the locals at the higher levels. Further, as another NUTS 3 respondent remarks, coherence will be lacking between the first and second pillar, if bottom-up approaches will be employed. In addition, as one national farmer association official remarks, the influence of economic actors in France will leave economic issues at the forefront instead of the environment and sustainable development.
Also one member of a national level environmental association suggests the approaches taken depend on the people who have the decision power. A main problem would be, according to a respondent of the NUTS 1 environmental administration that the agricultural lobby pressurises for similar measures for the whole national territory.
The group of “others” has several remarks relating to bottom-up approaches, though many respondents of the group, especially at lower levels, mention budget limitations (of the second pillar, mainly) as an obstacle to bottom-up approaches. In addition, some members of this group suggest that the administrative structure is not capable of incorporating bottom-up approaches, which would need more room for manoeuvre. Also mentioned by two respondents are the need of cooperation between farmers and the environmental actors, especially at local levels.

FINLAND (FI): Concerning bottom-up approaches an officer of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration points out that there is a very strong resistance to give “agricultural” money to non-farmers.
Another officer suggests that a complicated administrative system with multiple statement procedures in addition to unclear responsibilities concerning implementation and outputs will prevail. In addition it is unclear what happens when contracts finish. Similarly a NUTS 3 respondent does not believe in collective ways of managing environmental measures, as there is a problem of responsibility. Two other officers from the NUTS 3 argue that the present administrative practices (data systems) would not be suitable for governing such projects and a new database needs to be established. As the projects are likely to be rather small, it means loads of work for very little environmental benefit. If expected environmental outcomes are not clear, an officer suggests that local non-agricultural actors are not likely to participate. In addition, attitudes at the local level are not right for this of approach, as there is no agreement on the ‘common good’ between farmers and environmentalists at the local level. Thus a further officer claims that bottom-up approaches lead to more bureaucracy, while another thinks that such decentralisation would demand lots of extra resources and could lead to inequality between regions and also between farmers. However, there is also one respondent who thinks that small teams could be innovative and effective, though the question is who has the power to decide what to do.
Rather on the contrary a respondent from the NUTS 1 farmer associations argues that bottom-up approaches would be impossible to manage and control and a respondent from the NUTS 3 farmer associations suggests that the problem is how to allocate the money. Many respondents from the farmer associations suspect that the LEADER model would rather create problems than solving them.
However, the most common response to the question was that there is not enough information, that it is difficult to assess etc.

IRELAND (IE): A NUTS 2 member of a farmer association claims that LEADER is unlikely to be involved in Irish AEMs. In turn, a respondent of the NUTS 2 environmental associations argues that agricultural organisations are likely to oppose local AEMs, since they have most power at the national level. Therefore localised negotiations of measures will not be favoured. In addition the respondent claims that the national administration does like local approaches, since they are messy and less controllable. Another respondent suspects that inadequate information and transfer of knowledge would pose problems to bottom-up approaches. Thus greater inter-agency co-ordination and cooperation will be required, but also possible to solve problems.
One researcher complains about lack of knowledge and discussion in Ireland about Regulation 1698/2005 while another remarks that income limits applied to larger farms will disqualify them.

VENETO AND EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT): (Maschara) Respondents of the agricultural administration at NUTS 3 are critical about the GAL. One thinks that AEMs should not be managed by the GAL, while the other goes more into detail and suggests that the GAL is inadequately prepared, does not encourage the territory and only likes to establish dialogue with others than farmers. Of the farmer associations one NUTS 3 respondent complains that bottom-up approaches only in the mountains is insufficient and that agricultural organisations should be more involved. Concerning bottom-up approaches a NATIONAL researcher points out that the administrative structure has insufficient capacity and thus there will be no good application of AEMs.
(Veneto) According to a NUTS 2 member of the agricultural administration the presence of a high number of intermediate actors could make bottom-up approaches in the LEADER fashion less cost-effective. However, the respondent also suggests that the design, monitoring and evaluation of bottom-up measures should be supported by a permanent interregional and interdisciplinary group of experts. In addition, there should be certainty of the programming in terms of finance and coherence of old and new measures. Another respondent from the NUTS 2 agricultural administration complains about incompleteness of the normative set up of bottom-up approaches in accordance with the Regulation. In the design phase of AEMs there should be strong participation of the public, farmers and environmentalist according to a NUTS 2 officer of the agricultural administration, but not so much interference in the management phase.
A member of a NUTS 3 farmer association holds that in order to reach specific targets, comparable financial resources are needed. The NUTS 2 environmental administrations are concerned about the administrative fragmentation and insufficient dialogue about environmental topics among the actors. In addition another respondent complaints that Regulations usually have valid principle but their implementation difficult and financing is insufficient. Also, a NATIONAL researcher suggests that the administrative structure is unsuitable for beneficial implementation of bottom-up policies.

FRIESLAND (NL): According to a respondent of the National level of the agricultural administration the Directive 1698/2005 links its objectives and rules to AEMs. Therefore bottom-up approaches may not fit in and accordingly no money will be provided. Further, an administrative obstacle to bottom-up approaches is that they are rather complex and require specific rules. Another respondent from the same level remarks that currently the LEADER pathway is not being used and that there is no budget for the second pillar of the CAP. Concerning the length of contracts, 5 year periods may be insufficient for crop rotation schemes. In addition, as a further national level respondent points out, each link and layer will have influence on the efficiency of bottom-up approaches.

Of the farmer associations one national level respondent complains that due to the behaviour of politicians financial resources are not being allocated to measures that really contribute to rural development, nature and landscape. In addition, a NUTS 3 respondent suggests that the government claims a to strong responsibility for nature and landscape, while regulating too much and leaving little responsibility to the society.
From the “others” group one national level respondent complains that many civil servants do not take notice of scheme contents and that too much is regulated by law. Pointing also at regulation, another national level respondent suggests that it is difficult to comply with everything in a bottom-up process, where the EU plays a large role in determining requirements. A NUTS 3 representative of the “others” claims that the money in the second pillar is needed for AEMs and thus there would be no financial possibilities for new projects.
Some researchers complain that governmental administrations of all level in the Netherlands are not ready for bottom-up initiatives and do not further elaborate them. One researcher thinks that this is structural problem and not one of persons, though ministers sometimes just want results by any means.
Others think that the current system is easily implemented by farmers and reflects the society’s wants. And another researcher points out that the CAP budget will be mainly in pillar one.

NORTH ENGLAND (UK): According to the NUTS 1 respondents from the agricultural administration main problems with bottom–up approaches are to decide who will contribute and the need to force the government to train its staff adequately for making assessments and giving advise. In addition one respondent remarks that scheme complexity will increase along with administrative costs. Further, there can be a lack of expertise and capacity at the targeted levels, insufficient targeting. The local may according to the respondent, however, already exist through stakeholders and local advisors.
An officer from the NUTS 1 environmental administration points out that the EU budget may pose problems, while another suggest that specifically the allocation of the single-farm payment and the modulated amounts of it will be problematic. Also other officers of the environmental administration suggest that funding has to be sufficient to meet local needs and that limitations of funding imply that not all local needs will be satisfied.
Of the environmental associations from the NUTS 3 level one respondent is concerned that bottom-up approaches risk increases in environmental fragmentation and increase administrative burdens. Another member of a NUTS 3 environmental association fears that the capacity within the sector and data access may pose problems, while a further member thinks that there is a lack into effectiveness prior to implementation. At the NUTS 1 level the respondent emphasises the need for good planning and communication for bottom-up approaches to be effective.
Of the “others” group insufficient finance and a lack of flexible track records of AEMs management at local levels are thought to cause difficulties.
The respondent of the NUTS 1 level researchers simply thinks that the centralised administrative structure will pose problems.

Appendix A 9 - Question 33

There was no response on this issue from the Finnish and the Irish case study and only few remarks from the Italian case study and Flanders.
CZECH REPUBLIC (CZ): A respondent from the agricultural administration at NUTS 1 level points out that the general structure of AESs is suitable, but communication and running of the system has to be improved. According to another respondent of this level the SAIF has to enlarge its capacity and improve its management. Further, a respondent thinks that an organised learning and consultancy process has to be set in place to make, to develop expertise for improvement of measures.
At the NUTS 1 level one respondent suggests that local measures are more effective, but also more administration intensive. Thus, there is a question, how far they are finally able to reach.
One respondent of the farmer associations points out, that economically strong businesses are a precondition for successful implementation of AEMs under the second pillar.
A representative of the environmental administration at NUTS 1suggests that communication should be improved to increase understanding and trust by farmers. In addition, environmental effects would be improved, if the Ministry of the Environment gains responsibilities of AEMs.
Tendered AEMs are seen to benefit larger farms and increasing risk of corruption, but are otherwise positive, as one respondent from the NUTS 1 environmental associations remarks.

BRANDENBURG (D): Concerning non-co-financed AEMs one respondent of the NUTS 3 environmental administration points out that they would be even more effective if they were paid according to results, while an officer of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration claims that benefits have to be quantified and the problem is an objective quantification.
At the NUTS 1 agricultural administration one respondent suggests that tendered AEMs would lead to higher acceptance, because people deal with them. However, according to the respondent in the long run calls for tender have no future because they cost too much time and effort. A NUTS 3 agricultural administrator suspects that tendered AEMs will lead to chaos, because farmers are being asked for too much and do not know the objectives.
Also a NUTS 1 officer of the environmental administration claims that tender systems are an administrative problem.
Of the environmental administration a NUTS 3 respondent objects tenders because then AEMs will be less targeted.
A NATIONAL researcher is on the opinion that the first pillar of the CAP should run out. Also a respondent of the “others” group thinks it should be cut back.

FLANDERS (B): According to a respondent of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration tendered AEMs are a useful alternative because current AEM do not consider local particularities. However, a respondent of the NUTS 1 environmental administration thinks that environmental cooperatives should be encouraged, whereby regional farm planners should play an important role. The strengths of cooperatives should be proven through more investment into pilot projects. Another respondent from the NUTS 1 environmental administration suggests that the EU should be more flexible with institutional alternatives and look not only at the costs, but also at the benefits. Thus, as the respondent puts it, more cost-benefit analysis is needed.

BASSE-NORMANDIE (F): Respondents of the agricultural administrations have a variety remarks on institutional aspects. One NUTS 3 respondent suggest that more influence and responsibility should be given to practitioners and councillors who have democratic legitimacy, while the administration should only control and not design measures.

On the question whether equal national co-financing would strengthen the second pillar and AEMs one officer of the national agricultural administration agreed, although this is not the official position of his organisation. On the contrary the other administrator suggest that a strengthening of the second pillar could only be undertaken by the EC. A respondent from the NUTS 2 level also suspects that equal co-financing of AEMs would increase environmental benefits.
Farmer associations in have mixed opinions about national co-financing of measures. A national level respondent thinks that national co-financing the first pillar would destroy the CAP, while a NUTS 3 respondent remarks that co-financing could be a good idea if subsidies are more adjusted according to environmental and regional issues. Another NUTS 3 respondent emphasises the need for continuity of AEMs and that all levels should involved voluntarily. In addition a national level representative stresses the importance of assessing the effects of AEMs.
Also according to a respondent of the NUTS 2 environmental administration a core problem of AEMs is that effectiveness is not being assessed and that AEMs today may tend not to be effective. Another environmental administrator of the NUTS 1 level reports that the Water Agency wants to use national moneys with the backing of the Ministry of Environment to support AEMs.
Of the environmental associations a NATIONAL respondent is also in favour of larger CAP sources for the second pillar, but no further comments were made from this group.
An array of comments on institutional aspects came from the group of “others”.
At the LAU level one respondent suggests that the competition concept underlying auctions is misleading, because everybody is concerned about the environment and the cost of preserving it cannot be negotiated. Thus the society has to deal with the costs and not farmers.
Further, respondents of NUTS 3 levels suggest that integrated local strategies are good solutions, that local actors should be more involved, that it is not necessarily costly to design and implement policies at the local level, that there is a need for continuity in applying AEMs and the critical question are financial means. One respondent also suggests that the NUTS 2 level should be the starting point of bottom-up approaches rather than NUTS 3, and another suggest that bottom-up approaches could also be justified by higher benefits instead of lower costs. Other respondents of the NUTS 3 level state that auctions would lead to unequal treatment of farmers and put more emphasis on financial issues than on the environment or that Cross Compliance is a good instrument to solve environmental issues. Of the NUTS 2 some similar comments are made, as integrated local strategies are found useful or it is questioned whether bottom-up approaches are really more costly or that higher environmental benefits do not have to be more costly. Further points, which have been raised, are that AEMs should be focusing on specific areas where there are high stakes and their implementation has to be improved. One NATIONAL proponent of the “others” group additionally suggest that AEMs should be distinct from other regulations like Cross Compliance and more restrictive. Another NATIONAL respondent argues that national co-financing of the first pillar would be useful but currently unrealistic in France.

FINLAND (FI): No remarks.

IRELAND (IE): No remarks.

VENETO AND EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT): (Maschara) A respondent from the farmer associations holds that auctions are not applicable, while a further respondent holds that auctions would be too resource and time consuming concerning the application process and would not change the quantity of contributions towards the environment. Accordingly a

member of a NUTS 3 environmental association suspects that there will be low acceptance among farmers.
In terms of national co-financing a NUTS 2 agricultural administrator would agree to have co-financing of pillar one and two, but then pillar two should only be for AEMs.
(Veneto) according to member of an organic association AEMs should support the marketing of products of farming practices with low environmental impact.

FRIESLAND (NL): Relating to local action groups one respondent of the national agricultural administration points out that they would be more efficient because co-operations will be more involved and control through their intermediates where the knowledge is present. However, as one researcher points out, there are not necessarily local action groups needed as long as actors have the relevant knowledge. According to a NUTS 3 respondent of the "others" group an INTERREG project has been launched in Friesland to derive policy recommendations on the issue.
In terms of cost-benefit relations of bottom-up approaches one national level officer of the agricultural administration suggests that the right balance has to be found. In addition a further officer argues that bottom-up does not mean higher costs and endless deliberation by definition, and that investment leads to something. One researcher suggests that the costs also depend on who is paying, while another thinks that bottom-up approaches are not so creative yet and that nature conservation should become a real objective instead of hidden income support.
According to one researcher the obstacles of auctions depend on what the auctions guarantee for. Another researcher remarks that farmers should not go to auctions and nature co-operations at the local level should do this for them
Concerning the co-financing of the first pillar one respondent of NUTS agricultural administration suggest that this depends on direction of the CAP in terms of the nature of the subsidies, like export restitution, area payments or company premiums. Another officer suggest that the national agricultural ministry can only agree to co-financing, if this is in line with WTO-negotiations. A member of a NATIONAL farmer association suspects that if co-financing of the first and second pillar will be equal, there will be not more money allocated to the second pillar and more money should be available for the consumption function of the second pillar instead of production. A re-allocation of funds to the second pillar would according to one researcher also imply that parts of the money currently allocated for food security and quality and farm income support, is made available to landowners like the State Forestry Service or the Nature Monuments section for land acquisition.

NORTH ENGLAND (UK): Referring to national co-financing of the CAP pillars one respondent from the NUTS 1 agricultural administration argues that the money of pillar one should be shifted to pillar two over the coming five years and then pillar one be abolished. A NUTS 1 member of the farming associations holds that the possible results of co-financing both CAP pillars are complex and subject to many variables. Thus, it cannot be addressed in a tick-box format. One respondent of NUTS 1 environmental associations sees national co-financing of pillar one as a creeping re-nationalisation of the CAP, which they are against. Yet, the respondent argues for a rapid re-allocation of funds towards pillar two, since it is important to make clear that money is paid in turn for public goods created through well-designed and targeted AEMs.
The environmental administration at NUTS 1 claims that outcomes of measures should rather be measured with performance indicators instead of measuring activity. A respondent from NUTS 3 environmental associations simply wishes to increase monitoring in order to ensure benefits.

Appendix A 10 - Question 34d)

CZECH REPUBLIC (CZ): Respondents of the agricultural administration have diverse opinions regarding the knowledge at different levels on transaction costs and utility losses. At the NUTS 1 level one officer thinks regional agricultural agencies know more about the utility and effects of measures because they have closer contact with farmers and the environment. Another officer suggests that there is only high awareness at levels that work with AES, as it would be the case with the central organisations, whereas NUTS 3 and LAU have no idea about process costs as they only administer. However, according to a further officer, knowledge on costs depends on the type of organisation. Thus NUTS 1 has information and LAU less information but more experience. Another officer suggests, however, that knowledge on costs varies according to persons and not to organisations. According to an additional respondent knowledge about utility losses does not exist. Thus, any AEMs are better than none. Rather in the contrary a NUTS 2 officer suggests that there is higher cost awareness in the lower administration. Respondents of the LAU level, who think, that knowledge is higher at the regional level and that at the local level awareness is better than at the state level, agree this.
However, according to a NUTS 1 respondent of the farmer associations there is better awareness on costs and utilities of AEMs in the environmental administration than in the agricultural.
An officer of the environmental administration agrees that the environmental administration is aware of utility losses due to imprecise AESs and suggests that at lower levels each change in relation to transaction costs is noticed. On the contrary, though, another officer suggests that lower levels have less knowledge on transactions costs and higher levels have better knowledge concerning utility losses. At the LAU level officers agree that lower level knowledge of transaction costs and utility losses due to imprecision is greater, though one of them points out that there are large horizontal differences.
Of the NUTS 1 environmental associations one respondent thinks that especially the NUTS 3 level has better knowledge of costs, while another suggests that the agricultural administration aims at work simplification and the environmental administration emphasises results.

BRANDENBURG (D): For Brandenburg a rather clear picture emerges. An officer from the NUTS 1 agricultural administration suggests that the Lander are better informed on transaction costs an utility losses of measures, while districts have better knowledge about person related problems. Substantiating this, a NUTS 3 officer remarks that effects of measures are judged at NUTS 1.
A respondent of the farmer associations at NUTS 1 simply states that each level should know its costs.
Also the officers of the NUTS 1 environmental administration suggest that the NUTS 1 officers have better knowledge of costs. One of them points out that even NATIONAL is better informed than NUTS 3.
The respondent of the NUTS 1 organic farmer association thinks that districts have better knowledge of the farms.
One NATIONAL researcher sees a growing awareness of the transaction cost and imprecision losses, while a NUTS 1 researcher points out that districts have no knowledge about transaction costs.

FLANDERS (B): Concerning knowledge on transaction costs and utility losses of AEMs Flemish respondent have diverging opinions. Costs and utility depend according to a NUTS 1 officer of the agricultural administration on the type of AESs as sometimes the municipalities have more knowledge than the regional level.

A respondent of the farmer associations claims that the national administration knows that the costs are high, but they seem not to do anything about it.
In the environmental administration diverse perspectives are held. At the NUTS 1 level an officer holds that at local levels there is more knowledge of specific local aspects. Another claims that the federal agricultural administration has no competence as it only does some administrative coordination. An officer from the NUTS 2 level suspects that the province has most knowledge. However, a LAU officer suggests that at regional levels there is insufficient knowledge about local specificities since there is a lot of diversity.
On the contrary a respondent of the NUTS 1 environmental associations suggests that knowledge will be higher at the regional level as provincial and municipal levels have no imagination.
This is somewhat agreed by a NUTS 1 respondent of an organic farmer association who claims that the lower the NUTS level the less knowledge actors have on public transaction costs and utility losses. On the contrary a NUTS 1 respondent of the “others” group thinks that people are better informed at lower levels. However, another respondent suggests that knowledge at the regional level is greater than on provincial and municipal levels.
Two respondent of the NUTS 2 level also suggest that knowledge on costs will be best at regional levels. This is agreed by two respondents of the LAU level and a NUTS 1 researcher. A further researcher, however, points out that officers have too much work and lack time to know the costs involved. The differences of costs would rather be between persons instead of institutional levels.

BASSE-NORMANDIE (F): In the French case study a rather clear perspective on utility losses and transaction costs of AESs emerges. Knowledge of public transaction costs is higher at national levels because the national level is most sensitive to cost reduction, as a national level officer of the agricultural administration suggests. However, knowledge of utility losses is greater at local levels because people are "out in the field". Another national level officer, however, thinks that departments at NUTS 2 or 3 are better informed. Yet, dissemination of such information takes time suggests a further officer. Two officers of the NUTS 2 level agree that knowledge on utility losses is better on local levels, because they are closer in tough with the issues concerned.
Several national level and NUTS 3 respondents of the farmer associations agree that local levels are more aware of both transaction costs and utility losses, because they are more involved with AES, also in practical terms. According to a national level respondent there are information losses from local levels up to the national level. However, a NUTS 3 respondent adds that knowledge of such costs is also a matter of persons and not just administrative levels.
Hence, a NUTS 2 officer of the environmental administration thinks that knowledge on costs depends on people.
Also the national level respondent of the environmental associations suggests that knowledge at local levels is better, because people are “out in the field” and have more relationships with local actors.
From the “others” group respondents of all administrative levels from national levels to NUTS 3 tend to agree that the administration at local levels has better knowledge of transaction costs and utility losses because it is closer to the issues concerned. A NUTS 3 respondent suggests that better knowledge on utility losses is due to the fact that local agents appreciate it better when objectives are not reached. According to another NUTS 3 respondent there is either not enough information transferred from the local to the upper levels or the Ministry of Agriculture does not take it into account. Moreover, as a further respondent suggests, regulations lead to various interpretations from one NUTS 3 level to another. In the opinion of a different NUTS 3 respondent NUTS 2 and 3 levels should be more aware of

utility losses. However, a LAU respondent claims that knowledge of costs is more a question of person than of administrative level.

FINLAND (FI): Pointing at transaction costs an officer of the NUTS 3 agricultural administration suspects that the environmental administration is not aware of those relating to AESs since only the agricultural administration implements them. However, the respondent also suggests that the environmental administration and other levels in general have costs not known to the NUTS 3 agricultural administration. Thus, in fact, nobody knows the total costs. A further officer points out that, although the administrative requirements are similar in every region, there are large differences between regions in how tasks are carried out, which does not necessary correlate with number of staff, size of the area or geographical location. A reason for this could be the high turnover of workers, especially in some areas. Nevertheless an officer of the NUTS 3 level argues that the ministry should know the costs.
Rather in contrast to the vague statements of the agricultural administration an officer of the NUTS 3 environmental administration suggests that the cost of implementation is clearly very high because of complex regulations.

IRELAND (IE): According to a respondent of a NUTS 2 environmental association those involved at county level and interacting on a daily basis with the farming community have greater appreciation of where cost inefficiencies arise.

VENETO AND EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT): (Maschera). The provincial level has a stronger perception of utility losses and public transaction costs than the national administration as an officer of the NUTS 3 agricultural administration suggests. Also a NUTS 2 respondent of the farmer association thinks that the knowledge on costs and utility is greater at the provincial level. This is because this level is closer to the territory. In addition, a NUTS 3 respondent of an environmental association suggests that the regulations are too far away from a bottom-up approach.
(Veneto). According to an NUTS 2 officer of the agricultural administration at the operative level there is a better perception of transaction and monitoring costs.
Pointing at utility losses a NUTS 2 officer of the environmental administration suggests that there is local knowledge of effectiveness and heterogeneity of farming systems in terms of the environment.
According to a NUTS 2 respondent of an organic farming association, the political level of the public administration has only a superficial knowledge on AESs. This is because it is too much oriented towards financial aspects of schemes.

FRIESLAND (NL): In the Frisian case study respondents have some contradicting opinions on public transaction costs and utility losses of AESs. A national level officer of the agricultural administration thinks, that there is no knowledge on costs and utility losses at the provincial level. This is to some extent agreed by a further officer who claims that the EU has insufficient knowledge on the Dutch situation and that there is no local knowledge at all, whereas most knowledge is on the national level. Another officer, however, suggests that at the agricultural administration there is less knowledge than at lower levels.
From the group of “others” a national level respondent claims that all actors have no idea in what the schemes in terms of nature and landscape will result in. Another national level respondent however argues that there is knowledge present at state level, whereas it is too complex for provinces and below. According to a NUTS 3 respondent there is not much attention for transaction costs and utility losses. However, a different respondent suggests that much information on public transaction costs rests with the ministry of agriculture, though at provincial level failures with national regulation are better to observe.

A national level researcher points out that within government there is little notion of the costs of social organisations to create support for AESs and costs for administration to solve certain situations. Also costs for farmers on an individual level are not known well enough. Utility losses are mostly better known at lower levels and public transaction costs are easier to found out at the state level as a further researcher suggest. Another researcher, who adds, that the EU has little awareness of utility losses, agrees this. In particular, NUTS 2 and lower levels have little knowledge on transaction costs, but more on utility losses caused by imprecision a further researcher remarks. However, a different researcher claims that there is no difference in knowledge, though in general a lack of knowledge about efficiency of (financial) means of the EU and state. In addition, there is a lack of knowledge requirements. Looking into the future, a researcher suspects that provinces do not have a lot of knowledge yet, because it was not their responsibility. In the future it cannot be expected that they will do everything themselves either, as they will probably leave a lot of tasks with the DLG (Service Rural Area).

NORTH ENGLAND (UK): No remarks.

Appendix A 11 - Question 38

CZECH REPUBLIC (CZ): Transaction costs of AESs are generally high suggests a NUTS 1 officer of the agricultural administration. This is because they involve much reporting for the EU. Further, EU requirements do not reduce transaction costs. Another officer thinks that is necessary to take into account the interest in a measure and the horizontal limits of AEMs in minimal extent as they may otherwise more expensive than environmental gains. A further officer would like to reduce transaction costs with electronic information handling and elimination of redundant data rewriting, which would also speed up the application process. Farmers would be ready for this if having a PC. According to another respondent there is a general lack of transaction cost information in the Czech Republic.
A NUTS 1 respondent of the farmer association suspects that transaction costs would be lower if the Ministries of Agriculture, Environment and Local Development merged.
Of the environmental associations at the NUTS 1 level a respondent points out that the preparation of AEMs is necessary, though the appropriateness of transactions costs incurred cannot be assessed. It is assumed that transaction costs rise with increased complexity of AEMs. A further environmentalist considers it most important to minimise these costs at all levels.

BRANDENBURG (D): In the opinion of a NUTS 1 officer of the agricultural administration the creation of different measures did not change utility losses because of imprecision. A further officer at this level thinks that trust relationships depend on the people involved.
According to an officer of the NUTS 1 environmental administration confidence in transaction costs is scattered and intensification of control is needed, as the whole administration is a transparency jungle. As another respondent points out there are clear differences between administrative efforts of existing measures.

FLANDERS (B): It should be considered to create AESs without European co-financing, just to reduce the amount of public transaction costs suggests a NUTS 1 officer of the agricultural administration. Another suggests that the costs may be high when compensated by a higher effectiveness, though high costs for little effective AESs are a waste of money. According to a further officer the general trust of DG ENV is not as high as that of DG AGRI. At the NUTS 2 level an officer argues that costs would decrease when there is only one administration responsible for the AESs. In addition, AESs should be evaluated on the basis of the public transaction costs they cause. A further officer suggests when AESs policies would be more continuous costs would be less due to more routine. Also the administrative pathway has to be shortened and possible way to decrease costs is to delegate more to the provincial divisions of the administration.
According to a NUTS 1 officer of the environmental administration the fact that the VLM controls the farmers less than the ALT may indicate a larger trust of the environmental administration in farmers. A further respondent points out that the legislation concerning the AEMs parcel edges is now very broad and thus officers have increase evaluation efforts concerning the environment of individual parcels. The AESs parcel edges makes up 75 per cent of all applications. Overall, control costs are too low as the respondent suggests. A NUTS 2 officer argues that less transaction and control costs would be involved, if the installation and the management would be separated.
It is not clear how much money is invested in consultation with the stakeholders as a NUTS 1 respondent of an environmental association points out, who thinks that there are not enough stakeholders involved.
Pointing at trust a respondent of a NUTS 1 tourism association argues that it is understandable that the EU distrusts the national administration. This leads to paperwork to prove outcomes

from which sometimes creativity suffers as some do not want to set up projects co-financed by the EU, because they fear all the paperwork.
According to a respondent of the "others" group at NUTS 1 the EU administration has no interest in national levels and farmers, whereas the national agricultural administration has no interest in lower levels. However, the VLM branch of the national environmental administration trusts farmers to a certain extent. In terms of public transaction costs the money spent is not in proportion to the minor results achieved. A further respondent suggests that another important question would be whether farmers trust the government, of which the answer is certainly no. The respondent also points out that a good ex-ante analysis of AESs is useful, because the costs for design and implementation are very high. According to a LAU respondent the trust of the regional administration in the municipal administration depends to large extents on the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Environment. The fact that they are currently from a different political party has increased the trust in the local administration.
For the ex-ante evaluation of the next AESs programmes, it would be best to involve more economists as a NUTS 1 researcher suggest. A further researcher holds that public transaction costs have to decrease to have more money for utility functions, but also control should increase.

BASSE-NORMANDIE (F): The respondents from the French case study have diverse comments on AESs and transaction costs. A national level officer of the agricultural administration thinks that the most costly part of AESs is the implementation process. Control costs in particular are most costly and too costly for another officer. A further officer seems to think that involving many people and many organisations that are heterogeneous makes AESs more complex, more difficult to implement and hence more costly. For a NUTS 2 officer financial means have to be consistent if results are expected. In turn a NUTS 3 officer points out that an effectiveness policy requires great financial means as too many simplifications could lead to a loss of effectiveness. This, however, implies also high public transaction costs.
In the opinion of a national level respondent of the farmer associations the state did not provide all the financial means needed into AESs. Moreover, much money was spent on communication but not enough on supporting farmers. However, multifunctionality is now integrated thanks to AESs. If the Ministry of agriculture would place more trust in its decentralised units, i.e. agricultural administration at NUTS 2 or 3 level, management would be better, as a further respondent suggests. AESs are not efficient because they are too expensive, argues a further respondent, who thinks that it is time to stop the dual agricultural policy, i.e. one for environmental sanctuaries and another to support intensive farming practices. A NUTS 2 level respondent remarks, that the FR CIVAM is suffering from a lack of information on transaction costs of AESs. In the opinion of a NUTS 3 respondent transaction costs have to be cut. If AESs were less complex to implement, it would lead to lower costs and to a better effectiveness. A further NUTS 3 respondent has no knowledge about evaluations of transaction costs as they are not the main issue and less important than issues like remuneration, continuity and readability of AEMs.
For a national level respondent of an environmental association policy changes for AESs in France are not serious.
Of the group of "others" a national level respondent thinks it is a mistake to consider it as costly to have an important participation of different stakeholders in the decision-making and in the implement process. This is because participation could lead to a better precision of AESs and, hence, lower utility losses and then to lower ex-post transaction costs. Moreover, there is a need for continuity in the policy. In simple terms suggested by a further respondent a better and effective process will be more expensive. A NUTS 2 respondent argues that savings can be made with more training from the beginning and more involvement of all the

institutional levels, as there is a lack of a global view of transaction costs. Also a NUTS 3 respondent suggests, that involving many and heterogeneous people in the design process, is not necessarily costly. There is thus a need for coordination at the right level (below NUTS 3), which is not ensured by the agricultural body. Finally, a further respondent calls for a real assessment of the policy.

FINLAND (FI): A respondent of the NUTS 1 agricultural administration wishes someone gave clear information on what transaction costs all include. However, a respondent from the NUTS 3 level argues that not everything can be measured in monetary terms and that low costs and good quality seldom come together. Thus price-quality relationships should be considered, though the respondent also argues that administrative work is difficult to value due to the human factor and rules involved. Yet, changing the system all the time increases transactions costs as the respondent suggests.

IRELAND (IE): No remarks.

VENETO AND EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT): (Maschera) According to a NUTS 3 officer of the agricultural administration the transaction costs of AESs are high. In relation to this another officer points out that there is a strong commitment with all measures, but the results are nor very significant. A further officer suggests that there is low consultation. However, a NUTS 3 respondent of the farmer associations argues that transaction costs should also include the costs for training, consultancy and dissemination in favour of farmers.
(Veneto) Regarding agro-environmental payments, an officer of the NUTS 2 agricultural administration suggests that the introduction of a payment organisation has neither improved the efficiency of payments themselves nor the relation between administration and farmers - at least not enough to justify the public expenditures. A further officer argues that transaction costs include also the high expenditures that farmer associations and/or private accountancy services load on farmers, who should be more conscious and autonomous. The public administration should simplify the procedures to the benefit of the real user (i.e. the farmer) and not intermediary actors, who are often responsible for distortions and inefficiencies.

FRIESLAND (NL): On the administrative effort required by individual AEMs a natioal level officer of the agricultural administration suggests no opinion or knowledge. As the process of AESs is still in development, another officer points out, that each factor that has influence on transaction costs can still be done a lot better.
A NUTS 3 respondent of the “others” group argues that provinces have no insights into subsidies for environmental coop. Thus, there is a need for more area-based responsibilities and cost appraisal after the project, though this is only interesting when there is room to delegate responsibilities to the areas.
According to a national level researcher there is a lot to gain regarding transaction costs, though the problem is that there is very little insight in who carries most of those costs, i.e. the government or the farmer? There should be a shift in costs between design, legislation and implementation, since if the design would cost more the results would perhaps be larger.
Pointing at trust a researcher remarks that the role of the environmental administration is not relevant in the Netherlands. A different researcher points out that heterogeneous participants can be accommodated with diversity in possible schemes, though there is a balance somewhere between heterogeneity and diversity.

NORTH ENGLAND (UK): According to an officer of the NUTS agricultural administration not all activities related to AESs should be confused with transaction costs, because a large proportion of efforts is on advice and education, which contributes directly to outcomes.

However, a further officer suggests that the costs of running any scheme should fall on the government. This forces them to justify the administrative costs to their electorate. EU funds would then all be transferred to those they are intended to benefit.
At the NUTS 3 level an officer of the environmental administration remarks that complex schemes are costly to administer. In turn, however, they deliver far more benefits. To ensure delivery, the necessary resources have to spend on monitoring and amending schemes. In addition, experienced and competent staff with more freedom and flexibility is required to work with the farmers.
Rather on the contrary a NUTS 3 respondent of an environmental association suggests that transaction costs are high due to an overcomplicated system and delivery. A lack of trust on farmers and land managers spurts excessive crosschecking and forms. In particular, Higher Level Scheme applications require farmers to duplicate details many times.

Appendix B: Distribution of the answers in total

A: The interview partner, his/her organisation and its involvement in the AESs design and implementation process

1. Questions about the organisation and the respondent:
Organisation
a) Name of ministry and department/organisation/NGO: .....

Type of organization	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Agricultural Administration	85	30.47	30.47
Environmental Administration	55	19.71	50.18
Association of Farmer	50	17.92	68.10
Environmental Association	33	11.83	79.93
Research Centre/ University	32	11.47	91.40
Organic Farmers' Association	8	2.87	94.27
Others	6	2.15	96.42
Tourism Association	3	1.08	97.49
"LEADER"	3	1.08	98.57
Hunting Association	2	0.72	99.28
Consumer Association	2	0.72	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

b) NUTS Level: ……...

NUTS level	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
NUTS 3	94	33.69	33.69
NUTS 1	68	24.37	58.06
National	55	19.71	77.78
NUTS 2	45	16.13	93.91
LAU	17	6.09	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

c) Number of staff in your department/unit……..

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Number of staff in department	274	31.81022	69.56419	0	600

d) Number of staff in your department/unit involved in AES: …….

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Number of staff in department involved in AESs	276	6.913043	19.9382	0	300

Interviewed Person

e) What is your position? ……..

Position	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Staff Member	123	44.09	44.09
Head of Division	63	22.58	66.67
Head of Unit	59	21.15	87.81
Chairmen	27	9.68	97.49
Others	7	2.51	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

f) How long have you held this position?: ……..years

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Number of years in department	277	6.813141	6.036602	0	40

2. In your opinion, what share of the total working time of those people involved in AESs is assigned to tasks related to AESs *(average per year in the period from 2000-2006)?*

a) In your Department /Unit? ……. %

Share working time spent on AESs in department

Percentiles		Smallest		
1%	0	0		
5%	0	0		
10%	0	0	Obs	276
25%	5	0	Sum of Wgt.	276
50%	12.25		Mean	23.57065
		Largest	Std. Dev.	26.92591
75%	30	100		
90%	70	100	Variance	725.0047
95%	90	100	Skewness	1.386734
99%	100	100	Kurtosis	4.001938

b) The share of your personal working time……. %

Share personal working time spent on AES

Percentiles		Smallest		
1%	0	0		
5%	0	0		
10%	1	0	Obs	276
25%	5	0	Sum of Wgt.	276
50%	10		Mean	24.2596
		Largest	Std. Dev.	28.33841
75%	33	100		
90%	75	100	Variance	803.0653
95%	90	100	Skewness	1.394537
99%	100	100	Kurtosis	3.855291

3. From all the tasks related to AESs which are the most time consuming tasks (average per year in the period from 2000-2006)? Please, assess the share of the working time in your department/unit/organisation spent on the following tasks? *(100% = all time assigned to AESs for those people who are involved in AESs – see question 2a)*

Share working time in department spent on design of AESs

	Percentiles	Smallest		
1%	1	.5		
5%	2	1		
10%	3	1	Obs	163
25%	10	1	Sum of Wgt.	163
50%	20		Mean	29.48773
		Largest	Std. Dev.	28.94476
75%	40	100		
90%	80	100	Variance	837.7992
95%	100	100	Skewness	1.156403
99%	100	100	Kurtosis	3.256792

Share working time in department spent on notification of AESs (Admin)

	Percentiles	Smallest		
1%	1	1		
5%	2	1		
10%	3	2	Obs	54
25%	5	3	Sum of Wgt.	54
50%	10		Mean	17.14815
		Largest	Std. Dev.	17.89952
75%	23	47		
90%	40	50	Variance	320.3927
95%	50	50	Skewness	2.261221
99%	100	100	Kurtosis	9.770323

Share working time in department spent on contracting of AESs

	Percentiles	Smallest		
1%	5	5		
5%	5	5		
10%	10	5	Obs	76
25%	20	5	Sum of Wgt.	76
50%	29.5		Mean	31.35974
		Largest	Std. Dev.	20.0222
75%	40	70		
90%	65	80	Variance	400.8885
95%	70	80	Skewness	.8996857
99%	80	80	Kurtosis	2.990425

Share working time in department spent on payment (Admin)

Percentiles		Smallest		
1%	.5	.5		
5%	2.5	2		
10%	5	2.5	Obs	50
25%	5	4	Sum of Wgt.	50
50%	12.75		Mean	18.97
		Largest	Std. Dev.	19.13577
75%	20	60		
90%	40	60	Variance	366.1777
95%	60	67	Skewness	2.244931
99%	100	100	Kurtosis	8.67982

Share working time in department spent on monitoring

Percentiles		Smallest		
1%	1	1		
5%	2	1		
10%	2.5	1	Obs	112
25%	5	1	Sum of Wgt.	112
50%	10		Mean	17.78571
		Largest	Std. Dev.	18.68765
75%	20	70		
90%	40	70	Variance	349.2284
95%	50	98	Skewness	2.093815
99%	98	100	Kurtosis	8.333305

Share working time in department spent on control (Admin)

Percentiles		Smallest		
1%	1	1		
5%	3	2		
10%	5	2.5	Obs	62
25%	10	3	Sum of Wgt.	62
50%	24.5		Mean	26.56984
		Largest	Std. Dev.	19.89938
75%	35	60		
90%	50	65	Variance	395.9852
95%	60	65	Skewness	.9251233
99%	95	95	Kurtosis	3.745979

Share working time in department spent on evaluation

Percentiles		Smallest		
1%	1	1		
5%	2	1		
10%	3	1	Obs	114
25%	5	1	Sum of Wgt.	114
50%	10		Mean	22.26316
		Largest	Std. Dev.	25.65196
75%	30	100		
90%	60	100	Variance	658.0231
95%	100	100	Skewness	1.762997
99%	100	100	Kurtosis	5.428181

Share working time in department spent on advice/support

Percentiles		Smallest		
1%	4	4		
5%	5	4		
10%	5	5	Obs	189
25%	10	5	Sum of Wgt.	189
50%	25		Mean	36.36947
		Largest	Std. Dev.	29.48283
75%	50	100		
90%	90	100	Variance	869.2371
95%	100	100	Skewness	.8969827
99%	100	100	Kurtosis	2.634253

Share working time in department spent on other activities with AESs

Percentiles		Smallest		
1%	1	1		
5%	4	2		
10%	5	2.5	Obs	73
25%	10	4	Sum of Wgt.	73
50%	40		Mean	44.19863
		Largest	Std. Dev.	34.94388
75%	70	100		
90%	100	100	Variance	1221.075
95%	100	100	Skewness	.4289465
99%	100	100	Kurtosis	1.727459

4. How often (average per year in the period from 2000-2006) does your department/unit/organisation exchange information about AESs with …

The agricultural administration	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Never	14	5.13	5.13
Once a year	18	6.59	11.72
A couple of times a year (2-5)	76	27.84	39.56
several times (6-10)	55	20.15	59.71
Once a month or even more	110	40.29	100.00
Total	273	100.00	

The environmental administration	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Never	43	15.75	15.75
Once a year	38	13.92	29.67
A couple of times a year (2-5)	66	24.18	53.85
several times (6-10)	74	27.11	80.95
Once a month or even more	52	19.05	100.00
Total	273	100.00	

Farmers associations	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Never	50	18.52	18.52
Once a year	33	12.22	30.74
A couple of times a year (2-5)	92	34.07	64.81
several times (6-10)	46	17.04	81.85
Once a month or even more	49	18.15	100.00
Total	270	100.00	

Environmental organisations/NGOs	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Never	72	27.07	27.07
Once a year	51	19.17	46.24
A couple of times a year (2-5)	88	33.08	79.32
several times (6-10)	40	15.04	94.36
Once a month or even more	15	5.64	100.00
Total	266	100.00	

Local governments	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Never	78	30.00	30.00
Once a year	33	12.69	42.69
A couple of times a year (2-5)	71	27.31	70.00
several times (6-10)	36	13.85	83.85
Once a month or even more	42	16.15	100.00
Total	260	100.00	

Researchers	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Never	67	25.38	25.38
Once a year	58	21.97	47.35
A couple of times a year (2-5)	78	29.55	76.89
several times (6-10)	31	11.74	88.64
Once a month or even more	30	11.36	100.00
Total	264	100.00	

Farmers/farm-managers	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Never	36	13.24	13.24
Once a year	18	6.62	19.85
A couple of times a year (2-5)	58	21.32	41.18
several times (6-10)	44	16.18	57.35
Once a month or even more	116	42.65	100.00
Total	272	100.00	

Farmers' wives	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Never	96	48.24	48.24
Once a year	15	7.54	55.78
A couple of times a year (2-5)	30	15.08	70.85
several times (6-10)	19	9.55	80.40
Once a month or even more	39	19.60	100.00
Total	199	100.00	

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
The agricultural administration	273	3.838828	1.177155	1	5
The environmental administration	273	3.197802	1.330246	1	5
Farmers associations	270	3.040741	1.328207	1	5
Environmental organisations/NGOs	266	2.530075	1.19789	1	5
Local governments	260	2.734615	1.431429	1	5
Researchers	264	2.617424	1.291033	1	5
Farmers/farm-managers	272	3.683824	1.415268	1	5
Farmers' wives	199	2.447236	1.609938	1	5

B: Assessment of the natural environment

6. To what extent do you consider the **natural environment** within your region spatially heterogeneous?

Heterogeneity environment	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
very homogeneous	4	1.48	1.48
homogeneous	20	7.38	8.86
indifferent	57	21.03	29.89
heterogeneous	104	38.38	68.27
very heterogeneous	86	31.73	100.00
Total	271	100.00	

7. In your opinion, in which of the following do you have serious agri- environmental problems in your region?

Soil quality	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no problem at all	24	9.20	9.20
small problem	86	32.95	42.15
problem	77	29.50	71.65
serious problem	52	19.92	91.57
very serious problem	22	8.43	100.00
Total	261	100.00	

Water quality	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no problem at all	11	4.14	4.14
small problem	49	18.42	22.56
problem	82	30.83	53.38
serious problem	87	32.71	86.09
very serious problem	37	13.91	100.00
Total	266	100.00	

Water quantity	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no problem at all	42	19.81	19.81
small problem	53	25.00	44.81
problem	45	21.23	66.04
serious problem	52	24.53	90.57
very serious problem	20	9.43	100.00
Total	212	100.00	

Protection of landscape	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no problem at all	13	4.85	4.85
small problem	57	21.27	26.12
problem	101	37.69	63.81
serious problem	63	23.51	87.31
very serious problem	34	12.69	100.00
Total	268	100.00	

Protection of biodiversity	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no problem at all	9	3.38	3.38
small problem	56	21.05	24.44
problem	62	23.31	47.74
serious problem	98	36.84	84.59
very serious problem	41	15.41	100.00
Total	266	100.00	

8. To what extent do you consider the **agri-environmental problems** and pressures within your region spatially heterogeneous?

Soil quality	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
very homogeneous	18	7.17	7.17
homogeneous	52	20.72	27.89
indifferent	55	21.91	49.80
heterogeneous	80	31.87	81.67
very heterogeneous	46	18.33	100.00
Total	251	100.00	

Water quality	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
very homogeneous	16	6.27	6.27
homogeneous	65	25.49	31.76
indifferent	68	26.67	58.43
heterogeneous	78	30.59	89.02
very heterogeneous	28	10.98	100.00
Total	255	100.00	

Water quantity	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
very homogeneous	22	11.34	11.34
homogeneous	46	23.71	35.05
indifferent	53	27.32	62.37
heterogeneous	48	24.74	87.11
very heterogeneous	25	12.89	100.00
Total	194	100.00	

Protection of landscape	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
very homogeneous	19	7.36	7.36
homogeneous	58	22.48	29.84
indifferent	70	27.13	56.98
heterogeneous	84	32.56	89.53
very heterogeneous	27	10.47	100.00
Total	258	100.00	

Protection of biodiversity	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
very homogeneous	26	10.28	10.28
homogeneous	56	22.13	32.41
indifferent	64	25.30	57.71
heterogeneous	70	27.67	85.38
very heterogeneous	37	14.62	100.00
Total	253	100.00	

9. To what extent do you consider the **agricultural productivity** in terms of production potential (t per ha) **within your** region spatially heterogeneous?

Heterogeneity agricultural production	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
very homogeneous	8	3.13	3.13
homogeneous	29	11.33	14.45
indifferent	54	21.09	35.55
heterogeneous	110	42.97	78.52
very heterogeneous	55	21.48	100.00
Total	256	100.00	

C: Assessment of the Agro Environmental Measures (AEMs)

11. Do you agree with the following statements? “The AEMs (Reg. No. 1257/1999) in your region tackle adequately the actual environmental problems regarding ...

Soil quality	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	33	13.36	13.36
disagree	67	27.13	40.49
partly disagree	62	25.10	65.59
agree	58	23.48	89.07
strongly agree	27	10.93	100.00
Total	247	100.00	

Water quality	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	28	10.98	10.98
disagree	62	24.31	35.29
partly disagree	71	27.84	63.14
agree	72	28.24	91.37
strongly agree	22	8.63	100.00
Total	255	100.00	

Water quantity	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	50	32.05	32.05
disagree	46	29.49	61.54
partly disagree	37	23.72	85.26
agree	15	9.62	94.87
strongly agree	8	5.13	100.00
Total	156	100.00	

Protection of landscape	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	19	7.25	7.25
disagree	49	18.70	25.95
partly disagree	91	34.73	60.69
agree	74	28.24	88.93
strongly agree	29	11.07	100.00
Total	262	100.00	

Protection of biodiversity	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	26	9.92	9.92
disagree	67	25.57	35.50
partly disagree	75	28.63	64.12
agree	67	25.57	89.69
strongly agree	27	10.31	100.00
Total	262	100.00	

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Soil quality	247	2.91498	1.215106	1	5
Water quality	255	2.992157	1.14669	1	5
Water quantity	156	2.262821	1.159044	1	5
Protection of landscape	262	3.171756	1.085027	1	5
Protection of biodiversity	262	3.007634	1.151352	1	5

13. Do you agree with the following statements?

a)“Different agri-environmental problems are interlinked.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	6	2.18	2.18
disagree	13	4.73	6.91
partly disagree	45	16.36	23.27
agree	78	28.36	51.64
strongly agree	133	48.36	100.00
Total	275	100.00	

b) “Different agri-environmental problems should generally be addressed simultaneously in integrated measures.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	10	3.76	3.76
disagree	20	7.52	11.28
partly disagree	49	18.42	29.70
agree	86	32.33	62.03
strongly agree	101	37.97	100.00
Total	266	100.00	

c) “The level (amount) of premiums for AEMs should be calculated on the basis of the agricultural production potential (depending on soil types) for different local areas, e.g. at NUTS 3 level.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	64	23.70	23.70
disagree	54	20.00	43.70
partly disagree	38	14.07	57.78
agree	72	26.67	84.44
strongly agree	42	15.56	100.00
Total	270	100.00	

d) “The amount of premiums for AEMs should be adjusted to the seriousness of environmental problems in a specific region, e.g. at NUTS 3 level.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	46	16.91	16.91
disagree	35	12.87	29.78
partly disagree	32	11.76	41.54
agree	90	33.09	74.63
strongly agree	69	25.37	100.00
Total	272	100.00	

e) “Existing AEMs have more beneficial outcomes than the original AEMs at the time of their introduction (1992 or later).”

in economic terms (efficiency)	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	23	11.11	11.11
disagree	47	22.71	33.82
partly disagree	62	29.95	63.77
agree	59	28.50	92.27
strongly agree	16	7.73	100.00
Total	207	100.00	

in terms of environmental outcome	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	23	9.62	9.62
disagree	47	19.67	29.29
partly disagree	69	28.87	58.16
agree	76	31.80	89.96
strongly agree	24	10.04	100.00

14. a) According to your opinion, <u>what are</u> the main objectives of the implemented Agro Environmental Measures? Please choose the 3 most important and rank them from 1 (most important) to 3.

to support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	105	37.63	37.63
3=third most important	38	13.62	51.25
2=second most important	74	26.52	77.78
1=most important	62	22.22	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

to reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	58	20.79	20.79
3=third most important	33	11.83	32.62
2=second most important	76	27.24	59.86
1=most important	112	40.14	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

to support the farm income

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	115	41.22	41.22
3=third most important	44	15.77	56.99
2=second most important	46	16.49	73.48
1=most important	74	26.52	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

to support the farm income in certain disfavoured zones

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	185	66.31	66.31
3=third most important	45	16.13	82.44
2=second most important	37	13.26	95.70
1=most important	12	4.30	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

to support the farm income of certain disfavoured farm types

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	243	87.10	87.10
3=third most important	23	8.24	95.34
2=second most important	10	3.58	98.92
1=most important	3	1.08	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

to adapt farming systems to the changing price and policy environment

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	188	67.38	67.38
3=third most important	57	20.43	87.81
2=second most important	21	7.53	95.34
1=most important	13	4.66	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

to better integrate the farm sector in a local economic development scheme

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	243	87.10	87.10
3=third most important	27	9.68	96.77
2=second most important	7	2.51	99.28
1=most important	2	0.72	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
to support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture	279	1.333333	1.193508	0	3
to reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture	279	1.867384	1.15692	0	3
to support the farm income	279	1.283154	1.250368	0	3
to support the farm income in certain disfavoured zones	279	.5555556	.8791937	0	3
to support the farm income of certain disfavoured farm types	279	.1863799	.5374743	0	3
to adapt farming systems to the changing price and policy environment	279	.4946237	.8261507	0	3
to better integrate the farm sector in local economic development scheme	279	.1684588	.4838486	0	3

b) According to your opinion, <u>what should be</u> the main objectives of Agro Environmental Measures? Please choose the 3 most important and rank them from 1 (most important) to 3.

to support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	43	15.41	15.41
3=third most important	31	11.11	26.52
2=second most important	73	26.16	52.69
1=most important	132	47.31	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

to reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	72	25.81	25.81
3=third most important	32	11.47	37.28
2=second most important	88	31.54	68.82
1=most important	87	31.18	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

to support the farm income

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	191	68.46	68.46
3=third most important	48	17.20	85.66
2=second most important	21	7.53	93.19
1=most important	19	6.81	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

to support the farm income in certain disfavoured zones

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	211	75.63	75.63
3=third most important	37	13.26	88.89
2=second most important	21	7.53	96.42
1=most important	10	3.58	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

to support the farm income of certain disfavoured farm types

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	247	88.53	88.53
3=third most important	21	7.53	96.06
2=second most important	10	3.58	99.64
1=most important	1	0.36	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

to adapt farming systems to the changing price and policy environment

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	183	65.59	65.59
3=third most important	47	16.85	82.44
2=second most important	31	11.11	93.55
1=most important	18	6.45	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

to better integrate the farm sector in a local economic development scheme

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0=not important	192	68.82	68.82
3=third most important	50	17.92	86.74
2=second most important	25	8.96	95.70
1=most important	12	4.30	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
to support the positive environmental impacts of agriculture	279	2.053763	1.096419	0	3
to reduce the negative environmental impacts of agriculture	279	1.681004	1.167006	0	3
to support the farm income	279	.5268817	.9007359	0	3
to support the farm income in certain disfavoured zones	279	.390681	.7783393	0	3
to support the farm income of certain disfavoured farm types	279	.1577061	.476275	0	3
to adapt farming systems to the changing price and policy environment	279	.5842294	.9248189	0	3
to better integrate the farm sector in local economic development scheme	279	.4874552	.8304157	0	3

D: Assessment of participation, organisation/administration structure and exchange of information

16. a) According to your knowledge, actors from which political levels do influence the design of AEM (only EU co-financed measures)? Please assess the influence of the different levels from 1 (no influence) to 5 (serious influence).

EU	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	10	3.73	3.73
little influence	26	9.70	13.43
influence	44	16.42	29.85
high influence	64	23.88	53.73
very high influence	124	46.27	100.00
Total	268	100.00	

NUTSO	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	33	14.86	14.86
little influence	25	11.26	26.13
influence	34	15.32	41.44
high influence	52	23.42	64.86
very high influence	78	35.14	100.00
Total	222	100.00	

NUTS1	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	4	2.88	2.88
little influence	9	6.47	9.35
influence	20	14.39	23.74
high influence	41	29.50	53.24
very high influence	65	46.76	100.00
Total	139	100.00	

NUTS2	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	42	22.70	22.70
little influence	44	23.78	46.49
influence	42	22.70	69.19
high influence	23	12.43	81.62
very high influence	34	18.38	100.00
Total	185	100.00	

NUTS3	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	75	32.19	32.19
little influence	74	31.76	63.95
influence	51	21.89	85.84
high influence	22	9.44	95.28
very high influence	11	4.72	100.00
Total	233	100.00	

LAU	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	163	62.21	62.21
little influence	66	25.19	87.40
influence	21	8.02	95.42
high influence	6	2.29	97.71
very high influence	6	2.29	100.00
Total	262	100.00	

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
EU	268	3.992537	1.164366	1	5
NUTS0	222	3.527027	1.441684	1	5
NUTS1	139	4.107914	1.061109	1	5
NUTS2	185	2.8	1.405734	1	5
NUTS3	233	2.227468	1.138935	1	5
LAU	262	1.572519	.9057546	1	5

b) Actors from which political levels should influence the design of AEM? Please assess the levels from 1 (no influence) to 5 (serious influence).

EU	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	26	9.63	9.63
little influence	64	23.70	33.33
influence	78	28.89	62.22
high influence	46	17.04	79.26
very high influence	56	20.74	100.00
Total	270	100.00	

NUTSO	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	40	17.86	17.86
little influence	42	18.75	36.61
influence	62	27.68	64.29
high influence	34	15.18	79.46
very high influence	46	20.54	100.00
Total	224	100.00	

NUTS1	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	3	2.13	2.13
little influence	12	8.51	10.64
influence	21	14.89	25.53
high influence	45	31.91	57.45
very high influence	60	42.55	100.00
Total	141	100.00	

NUTS2	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	22	11.89	11.89
little influence	22	11.89	23.78
influence	41	22.16	45.95
high influence	58	31.35	77.30
very high influence	42	22.70	100.00
Total	185	100.00	

NUTS3	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	30	12.55	12.55
little influence	38	15.90	28.45
influence	42	17.57	46.03
high influence	76	31.80	77.82
very high influence	53	22.18	100.00
Total	239	100.00	

LAU	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	79	29.92	29.92
little influence	35	13.26	43.18
influence	53	20.08	63.26
high influence	61	23.11	86.36
very high influence	36	13.64	100.00
Total	264	100.00	

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
EU	270	3.155556	1.266478	1	5
NUTS0	224	3.017857	1.372256	1	5
NUTS1	141	4.042553	1.054733	1	5
NUTS2	185	3.410811	1.287014	1	5
NUTS3	239	3.351464	1.322839	1	5
LAU	264	2.772727	1.436043	1	5

18. The objectives of your department/unit/organisation (see question 17) could be (better) achieved through the design of AEMs at …

NUTS 0	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	52	24.88	24.88
disagree	44	21.05	45.93
partly disagree	41	19.62	65.55
agree	36	17.22	82.78
strongly agree	36	17.22	100.00
Total	209	100.00	

NUTS 1	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	7	5.22	5.22
disagree	17	12.69	17.91
partly disagree	22	16.42	34.33
agree	41	30.60	64.93
strongly agree	47	35.07	100.00
Total	134	100.00	

NUTS 2	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	17	9.83	9.83
disagree	24	13.87	23.70
partly disagree	39	22.54	46.24
agree	53	30.64	76.88
strongly agree	40	23.12	100.00
Total	173	100.00	

NUTS 3	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	30	13.51	13.51
disagree	41	18.47	31.98
partly disagree	39	17.57	49.55
agree	50	22.52	72.07
strongly agree	62	27.93	100.00
Total	222	100.00	

LAU	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	68	28.10	28.10
disagree	57	23.55	51.65
partly disagree	32	13.22	64.88
agree	39	16.12	80.99
strongly agree	46	19.01	100.00
Total	242	100.00	

19. How strong do you consider the influence of the following groups on the design process of AESs?

Agricultural administration	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	4	1.47	1.47
little influence	4	1.47	2.93
influence	20	7.33	10.26
high influence	66	24.18	34.43
very high influence	179	65.57	100.00
Total	273	100.00	

Environmental administration	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	15	5.49	5.49
little influence	59	21.61	27.11
influence	59	21.61	48.72
high influence	77	28.21	76.92
very high influence	63	23.08	100.00
Total	273	100.00	

Farmers organisations	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	11	4.07	4.07
little influence	50	18.52	22.59
influence	81	30.00	52.59
high influence	83	30.74	83.33
very high influence	45	16.67	100.00
Total	270	100.00	

Environmental NGOs	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	28	10.45	10.45
little influence	105	39.18	49.63
influence	80	29.85	79.48
high influence	35	13.06	92.54
very high influence	20	7.46	100.00
Total	268	100.00	

Environmental co-operatives	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
not applicable	109	45.61	45.61
no influence	26	10.88	56.49
little influence	43	17.99	74.48
influence	18	7.53	82.01
high influence	13	5.44	87.45
very high influence	1	0.42	87.87
no opinion	29	12.13	100.00
Total	239	100.00	

Researchers	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	30	11.67	11.67
little influence	79	30.74	42.41
influence	102	39.69	82.10
high influence	38	14.79	96.89
very high influence	8	3.11	100.00
Total	257	100.00	

20. How strong <u>should be</u> the influence of the following actors on the design process of AESs in your opinion?

Agricultural administration	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	1	0.36	0.36
little influence	11	4.01	4.38
influence	50	18.25	22.63
high influence	107	39.05	61.68
very high influence	105	38.32	100.00
Total	274	100.00	

Environmental administration	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	8	2.92	2.92
little influence	25	9.12	12.04
influence	70	25.55	37.59
high influence	106	38.69	76.28
very high influence	65	23.72	100.00
Total	274	100.00	

Farmers organisations	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	10	3.66	3.66
little influence	38	13.92	17.58
influence	104	38.10	55.68
high influence	84	30.77	86.45
very high influence	37	13.55	100.00
Total	273	100.00	

Environmental NGOs	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	15	5.49	5.49
little influence	60	21.98	27.47
influence	118	43.22	70.70
high influence	64	23.44	94.14
very high influence	16	5.86	100.00
Total	273	100.00	

Environmental co-operatives	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	10	9.52	9.52
little influence	24	22.86	32.38
influence	41	39.05	71.43
high influence	25	23.81	95.24
very high influence	5	4.76	100.00
Total	105	100.00	

Researchers	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
no influence	8	2.97	2.97
little influence	28	10.41	13.38
influence	103	38.29	51.67
high influence	95	35.32	86.99
very high influence	35	13.01	100.00
Total	269	100.00	

22. Do you think that the merging of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment to one Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment has reduced/would reduce conflicts between environmental protection and support of farmers in your country/region?

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
not at all	14	15.38	15.38
not really	21	23.08	38.46
partly	13	14.29	52.75
yes	19	20.88	73.63
yes absolutely	6	6.59	80.22
no opinion	18	19.78	100.00
Total	91	100.00	

23. Please evaluate the following statements:

a) The eligibility rules for AESs are fair.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	21	7.53	7.53
disagree	46	16.49	24.01
partly disagree	53	19.00	43.01
agree	77	27.60	70.61
strongly agree	44	15.77	86.38
no opinion/I do not know	38	13.62	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

b) The procedures for contract applications for AESs are easy to understand.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	45	16.13	16.13
disagree	104	37.28	53.41
partly disagree	57	20.43	73.84
agree	31	11.11	84.95
strongly agree	11	3.94	88.89
no opinion/I do not know	31	11.11	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

c) Compensation payments for contracts in AESs are always made on time.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	51	18.35	18.35
disagree	54	19.42	37.77
partly disagree	39	14.03	51.80
agree	55	19.78	71.58
strongly agree	10	3.60	75.18
no opinion/I do not know	69	24.82	100.00
Total	278	100.00	

d) The rules and requirements for AESs are easy to understand.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	50	17.92	17.92
disagree	94	33.69	51.61
partly disagree	76	27.24	78.85
agree	26	9.32	88.17
strongly agree	12	4.30	92.47
no opinion/I do not know	21	7.53	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

e) The intended environmental benefits of AESs are clear and easy to understand.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	23	8.24	8.24
disagree	90	32.26	40.50
partly disagree	75	26.88	67.38
agree	61	21.86	89.25
strongly agree	13	4.66	93.91
no opinion/I do not know	17	6.09	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

f) Farmers should be involved in designing AESs.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	13	4.66	4.66
disagree	26	9.32	13.98
partly disagree	41	14.70	28.67
agree	87	31.18	59.86
strongly agree	102	36.56	96.42
no opinion/I do not know	10	3.58	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

g) It is easy for farmers to find the right person to contact in the administration when there are problems with AESs.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	26	9.39	9.39
disagree	60	21.66	31.05
partly disagree	57	20.58	51.62
agree	61	22.02	73.65
strongly agree	25	9.03	82.67
no opinion/I do not know	48	17.33	100.00
Total	277	100.00	

h) Policy rules and regulations for AESs remain constant over one financial period (e.g. 2000-2006).

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
not applicable	1	0.36	0.36
strongly disagree	68	24.37	24.73
disagree	61	21.86	46.59
partly disagree	42	15.05	61.65
agree	46	16.49	78.14
strongly agree	22	7.89	86.02
no opinion/I do not know	39	13.98	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

i) There is a lot of control when implementing AESs.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	40	14.34	14.34
disagree	56	20.07	34.41
partly disagree	70	25.09	59.50
agree	45	16.13	75.63
strongly agree	34	12.19	87.81
no opinion/I do not know	34	12.19	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

j) The sanctions for contract violations for AESs are reasonable.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	34	12.19	12.19
disagree	43	15.41	27.60
partly disagree	53	19.00	46.59
agree	68	24.37	70.97
strongly agree	29	10.39	81.36
no opinion/I do not know	52	18.64	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

k) Regarding AESs, the treatment of farmers by the administration is fair and responsible.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	24	8.63	8.63
disagree	34	12.23	20.86
partly disagree	49	17.63	38.49
agree	82	29.50	67.99
strongly agree	30	10.79	78.78
no opinion/I do not know	59	21.22	100.00
Total	278	100.00	

l) The financial compensation is sufficient to cover the extra costs of the farmer (caused by AEM).

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	25	8.96	8.96
disagree	47	16.85	25.81
partly disagree	52	18.64	44.44
agree	78	27.96	72.40
strongly agree	43	15.41	87.81
no opinion/I do not know	34	12.19	100.00
Total	279	100.00	

m) Measures are only attractive if they offer more than the compensation of the costs' (caused by AEM).

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	19	6.83	6.83
disagree	35	12.59	19.42
partly disagree	36	12.95	32.37
agree	81	29.14	61.51
strongly agree	87	31.29	92.81
no opinion/I do not know	20	7.19	100.00
Total	278	100.00	

E: Assessment of institutional alternatives concerning the new Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 (article 39)

25. a) Are there any Agro Environmental Schemes (AESs) in your country/region that are not co-financed by the EU?

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
yes	112	40.58	40.58
no	53	19.20	59.78
at the moment yes, not in the future	11	3.99	63.77
no, but there should be in the future	12	4.35	68.12
no, but there will be in the future	1	0.36	68.48
I do not know	87	31.52	100.00
Total	276	100.00	

b) In comparison to co-financed measures, non co-financed AESs are (if the question "a" is no: could be) …

More flexible	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	15	7.81	7.81
disagree	16	8.33	16.15
partly disagree	20	10.42	26.56
agree	76	39.58	66.15
strongly agree	65	33.85	100.00
Total	192	100.00	

More effective in terms of environmental outcome	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	21	11.67	11.67
disagree	28	15.56	27.22
partly disagree	40	22.22	49.44
agree	49	27.22	76.67
strongly agree	42	23.33	100.00
Total	180	100.00	

26. Local action groups, as mentioned in the **new Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005,** could lead to …

… higher economic efficiency of AESs	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	31	13.66	13.66
disagree	54	23.79	37.44
partly disagree	47	20.70	58.15
agree	63	27.75	85.90
strongly agree	32	14.10	100.00
Total	227	100.00	

… higher environmental effectiveness of AESs	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	23	9.66	9.66
disagree	39	16.39	26.05
partly disagree	50	21.01	47.06
agree	77	32.35	79.41
strongly agree	49	20.59	100.00
Total	238	100.00	

… greater acceptance of AESs	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	23	9.43	9.43
disagree	35	14.34	23.77
partly disagree	38	15.57	39.34
agree	83	34.02	73.36
strongly agree	65	26.64	100.00
Total	244	100.00	

27. *Do you agree with the following statements:* "The main obstacle/problem in designing some specific[15] AEMs in a bottom-up approach (e.g. Nuts 3 level or below) in the context of the LEADER axis within the new Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 is …

… the new Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	40	36.36	36.36
disagree	30	27.27	63.64
partly disagree	24	21.82	85.45
agree	13	11.82	97.27
strongly agree	3	2.73	100.00
Total	110	100.00	

… the corresponding Commission Regulation (implementation Regulation)

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	20	22.47	22.47
disagree	24	26.97	49.44
partly disagree	15	16.85	66.29
agree	21	23.60	89.89
strongly agree	9	10.11	100.00
Total	89	100.00	

… the general administrative structure in your country

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	15	7.81	7.81
disagree	32	16.67	24.48
partly disagree	41	21.35	45.83
agree	65	33.85	79.69
strongly agree	39	20.31	100.00
Total	192	100.00	

… the EU budget available for the second pillar of the CAP

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	13	7.07	7.07
disagree	19	10.33	17.39
partly disagree	29	15.76	33.15
agree	70	38.04	71.20
strongly agree	53	28.80	100.00
Total	184	100.00	

[15] We presume that not all AEMs can or should be designed in a bottom-up approach.

… the risk aversion of the responsible civil servants (administrators)

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	15	7.94	7.94
disagree	24	12.70	20.63
partly disagree	41	21.69	42.33
agree	58	30.69	73.02
strongly agree	51	26.98	100.00
Total	189	100.00	

29. "Potentially" higher costs due to the design of AEMs in a bottom-up approach (e.g. Nuts 3 level or below) would be justified by higher benefits due to less utility losses.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	28	10.07	10.07
disagree	38	13.67	23.74
partly disagree	42	15.11	38.85
agree	77	27.70	66.55
strongly agree	55	19.78	86.33
no opinion/I do not know	38	13.67	100.00
Total	278	100.00	

30. Auctions or call for tenders, as mentioned in the **new Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005 (article 39),** could lead to …

… savings in transactions costs at the implementation of AESs

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	60	28.99	28.99
disagree	56	27.05	56.04
partly disagree	33	15.94	71.98
agree	39	18.84	90.82
strongly agree	19	9.18	100.00
Total	207	100.00	

… higher environmental outcomes by AESs

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	49	22.90	22.90
disagree	51	23.83	46.73
partly disagree	38	17.76	64.49
agree	58	27.10	91.59
strongly agree	18	8.41	100.00
Total	214	100.00	

… greater acceptance of AESs

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	57	27.40	27.40
disagree	41	19.71	47.12
partly disagree	49	23.56	70.67
agree	44	21.15	91.83
strongly agree	17	8.17	100.00
Total	208	100.00	

31. Obstacles in your country/regions for organising AESs through call for tenders in comparison to the current system are …

… higher administration costs

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	25	12.76	12.76
disagree	40	20.41	33.16
partly disagree	34	17.35	50.51
agree	54	27.55	78.06
strongly agree	43	21.94	100.00
Total	196	100.00	

… lack of acceptance by members of the administration

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	18	9.84	9.84
disagree	25	13.66	23.50
partly disagree	43	23.50	46.99
agree	67	36.61	83.61
strongly agree	30	16.39	100.00
Total	183	100.00	

… no acceptance by farmers

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	11	5.56	5.56
disagree	30	15.15	20.71
partly disagree	47	23.74	44.44
agree	65	32.83	77.27
strongly agree	45	22.73	100.00
Total	198	100.00	

32. Concerning the EU budget for the CAP, currently only a relatively small part is invested in the second pillar. This may be due to the fact that the first pillar requires no national co-financing. In this context, do you agree with the following statements?

a) "An equal national co-financing of the first and the second pillar of the CAP would strengthen the second pillar and probably the AESs."

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	47	21.86	21.86
disagree	44	20.47	42.33
partly disagree	32	14.88	57.21
agree	62	28.84	86.05
strongly agree	30	13.95	100.00
Total	215	100.00	

b) "Would you, in principle, agree on an equal national co-financing of the first and the second pillar of the CAP?"

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	61	29.33	29.33
disagree	28	13.46	42.79
partly disagree	28	13.46	56.25
agree	55	26.44	82.69
strongly agree	36	17.31	100.00
Total	208	100.00	

F: Public transaction costs

34. Please assess the knowledge of the national agricultural administration regarding different types of costs which are connected with AEMs.

The knowledge concerning public transaction costs of the administration is high.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	41	20.50	20.50
disagree	70	35.00	55.50
partly disagree	29	14.50	70.00
agree	44	22.00	92.00
strongly agree	16	8.00	100.00
Total	200	100.00	

The knowledge concerning utility losses caused by imprecise AEMs is high.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	48	23.65	23.65
disagree	73	35.96	59.61
partly disagree	44	21.67	81.28
agree	33	16.26	97.54
strongly agree	5	2.46	100.00
Total	203	100.00	

Do you see any differences between the different administrative levels regarding knowledge concerning public transaction costs?

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	80	57.55	57.55
disagree	59	42.45	100.00
Total	139	100.00	

Do you see any differences between the different administrative levels regarding knowledge concerning utility losses?

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	80	59.70	59.70
disagree	54	40.30	100.00
Total	134	100.00	

35. Especially for the administration: Please assess the following statements. “The costs of AESs **design** are mostly influenced by ….

… the number of participants/participating parties in the design process.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	15	8.20	8.20
disagree	35	19.13	27.32
partly disagree	31	16.94	44.26
agree	66	36.07	80.33
strongly agree	36	19.67	100.00
Total	183	100.00	

… the number of measures offered.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	11	5.76	5.76
disagree	16	8.38	14.14
partly disagree	39	20.42	34.55
agree	79	41.36	75.92
strongly agree	46	24.08	100.00
Total	191	100.00	

… the complexity of AEM.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	4	2.08	2.08
disagree	18	9.38	11.46
partly disagree	23	11.98	23.44
agree	69	35.94	59.38
strongly agree	78	40.63	100.00
Total	192	100.00	

… the identity/heterogeneity of participants in the design process.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	11	6.04	6.04
disagree	37	20.33	26.37
partly disagree	48	26.37	52.75
agree	53	29.12	81.87
strongly agree	33	18.13	100.00
Total	182	100.00	

…the heterogeneity of the natural environment.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	8	4.19	4.19
disagree	38	19.90	24.08
partly disagree	56	29.32	53.40
agree	61	31.94	85.34
strongly agree	28	14.66	100.00
Total	191	100.00	

… the type of participation (con-sultation, right to vote, veto…) of different actors in the design process.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	16	9.82	9.82
disagree	20	12.27	22.09
partly disagree	36	22.09	44.17
agree	61	37.42	81.60
strongly agree	30	18.40	100.00
Total	163	100.00	

… centrality/decentrality of the administration.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	9	6.52	6.52
disagree	19	13.77	20.29
partly disagree	25	18.12	38.41
agree	54	39.13	77.54
strongly agree	31	22.46	100.00
Total	138	100.00	

… the precision of measures.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	3	1.66	1.66
disagree	25	13.81	15.47
partly disagree	39	21.55	37.02
agree	77	42.54	79.56
strongly agree	37	20.44	100.00
Total	181	100.00	

… the EU regulations.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	7	3.95	3.95
disagree	27	15.25	19.21
partly disagree	45	25.42	44.63
agree	59	33.33	77.97
strongly agree	39	22.03	100.00
Total	177	100.00	

… the national administrative structures.”

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	7	5.07	5.07
disagree	14	10.14	15.22
partly disagree	37	26.81	42.03
agree	53	38.41	80.43
strongly agree	27	19.57	100.00
Total	138	100.00	

36. Please assess the following statements *(Trust means the expectation that regulations and rules are respected and power is not used to realise objectives which are not in line with the objectives of the rules and regulations) (strongly agree-strongly disagree).*

The EU Administration (DG AGRI) trusts the national administration at National and NUTS 1 level.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	27	12.62	12.62
disagree	54	25.23	37.85
partly disagree	40	18.69	56.54
agree	70	32.71	89.25
strongly agree	23	10.75	100.00
Total	214	100.00	

The EU Administration (DG AGRI) trusts the national administration at NUTS 3 level and below.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	35	17.86	17.86
disagree	47	23.98	41.84
partly disagree	64	32.65	74.49
agree	34	17.35	91.84
strongly agree	16	8.16	100.00
Total	196	100.00	

The EU Administration (DG AGRI) trusts farmers.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	48	22.75	22.75
disagree	76	36.02	58.77
partly disagree	56	26.54	85.31
agree	26	12.32	97.63
strongly agree	5	2.37	100.00
Total	211	100.00	

The national agricultural administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts the administration at NUTS 3 level and below.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	4	1.74	1.74
disagree	41	17.83	19.57
partly disagree	63	27.39	46.96
agree	91	39.57	86.52
strongly agree	31	13.48	100.00
Total	230	100.00	

The national environmental administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts the administration at NUTS 3 level and below.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	16	7.62	7.62
disagree	55	26.19	33.81
partly disagree	53	25.24	59.05
agree	66	31.43	90.48
strongly agree	20	9.52	100.00
Total	210	100.00	

The national agricultural administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts farmers.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	9	3.90	3.90
disagree	60	25.97	29.87
partly disagree	81	35.06	64.94
agree	65	28.14	93.07
strongly agree	16	6.93	100.00
Total	231	100.00	

The national environmental administration (National or NUTS 1) trusts farmers.

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
strongly disagree	40	17.86	17.86
disagree	99	44.20	62.05
partly disagree	58	25.89	87.95
agree	22	9.82	97.77
strongly agree	5	2.23	100.00
Total	224	100.00	