

“Capacity Building Activities 2015- EvaluationWORKS!”

The [European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development](#) is one of the two support units of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) and is responsible for the evaluation function within the ENRD. The Evaluation Helpdesk **works under the guidance of DG AGRI, Unit E.4.**

A new feature of the Evaluation Helpdesk in the current programming period is the **increased focus on capacity building in the Member States.**

“**EvaluationWORKS!**” is the yearly capacity building event of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, which is organised in each Member State of the EU in order to provide a platform for strengthening the evaluation capacity among rural development evaluation stakeholders.

The events in the first year of the new Evaluation Helpdesk were

- organized as one-day events or as **training-sessions** within other event.
- based on **training material and methods** developed by the Evaluation Helpdesk and approved by DG AGRI, Unit E.4.
- focused on **3 possible topics** (the CMES, answering evaluation questions, and evaluation of Leader/CLLD/LDS) to be chosen by Member States and flexibly combined.
- **facilitated by the Geographic Experts** of the Evaluation Helpdesk in the Member States.



Invitations to trainings were sent out in most cases by the responsible Managing Authorities or ministries in the Member States. In some cases, they chose also to invite EC Desk Officers (optional). Detailed training reports have been prepared and are shared with the responsible Geographic Desks for internal use.

1. Training topics chosen by the Member States

Between October 2015 and May 2016, 28¹ trainings in 27 Member States have been concluded (Germany will conduct it still in June 2016). Below is the distribution between topics of the trainings conducted so far:

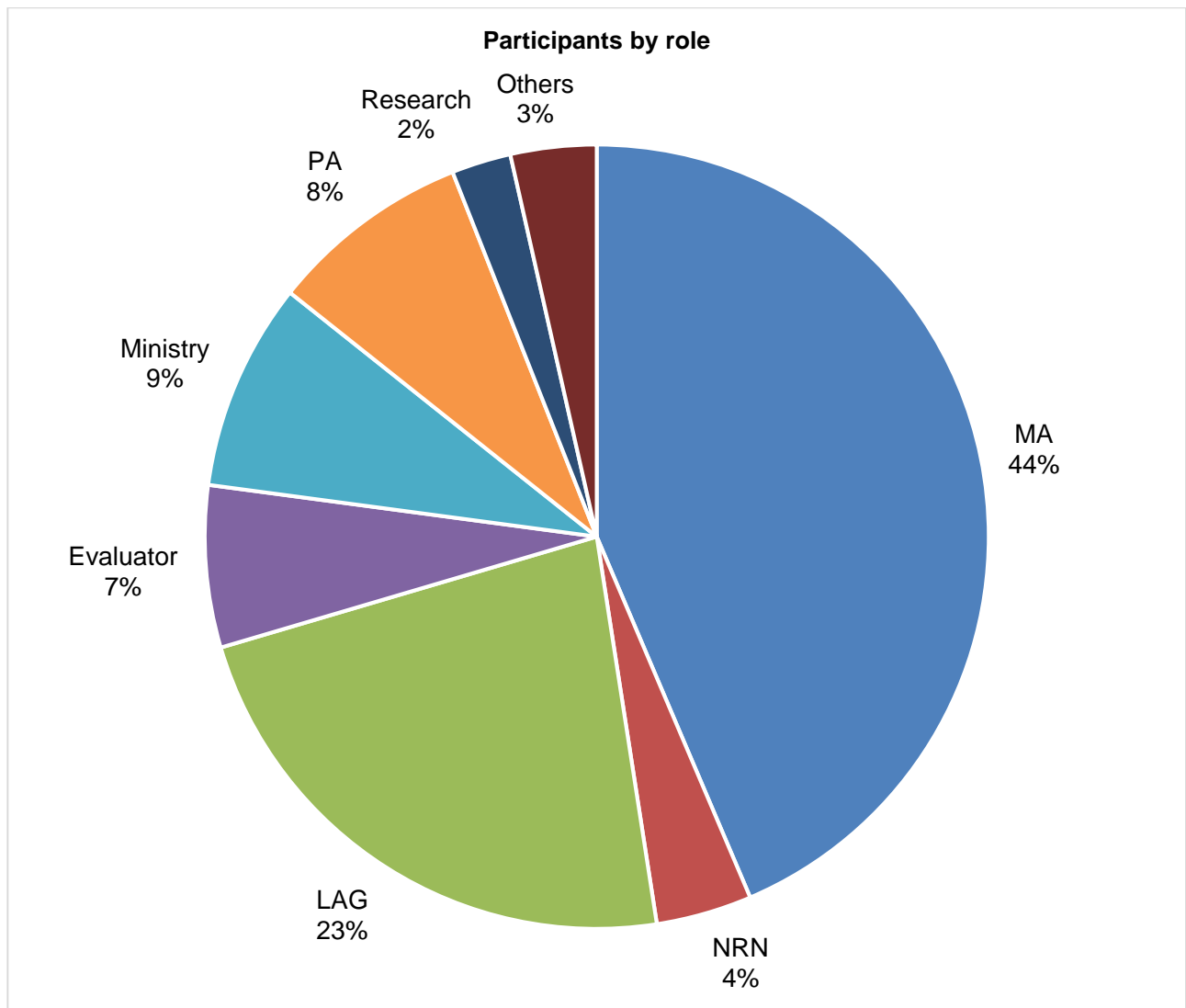
Module chosen	Member States	Nbr MS
Module A: CMES	BE (WL), CY, EE (1), EL, PT, RO	6
Module B: Setting up the system to answer EQs	BG, CZ, FI, PL, SK	5
Module C: Evaluation of LEADER/CLLD/LDS	BE (VL), ES, LU, LV, NL, SE, SI	7
Module A + Module B	AT, DK, HU, LT, MT, IE+UK	6
Module A + Module C	HR, EE (2)	2
Module A + Module B + Module C	FR, IT	2

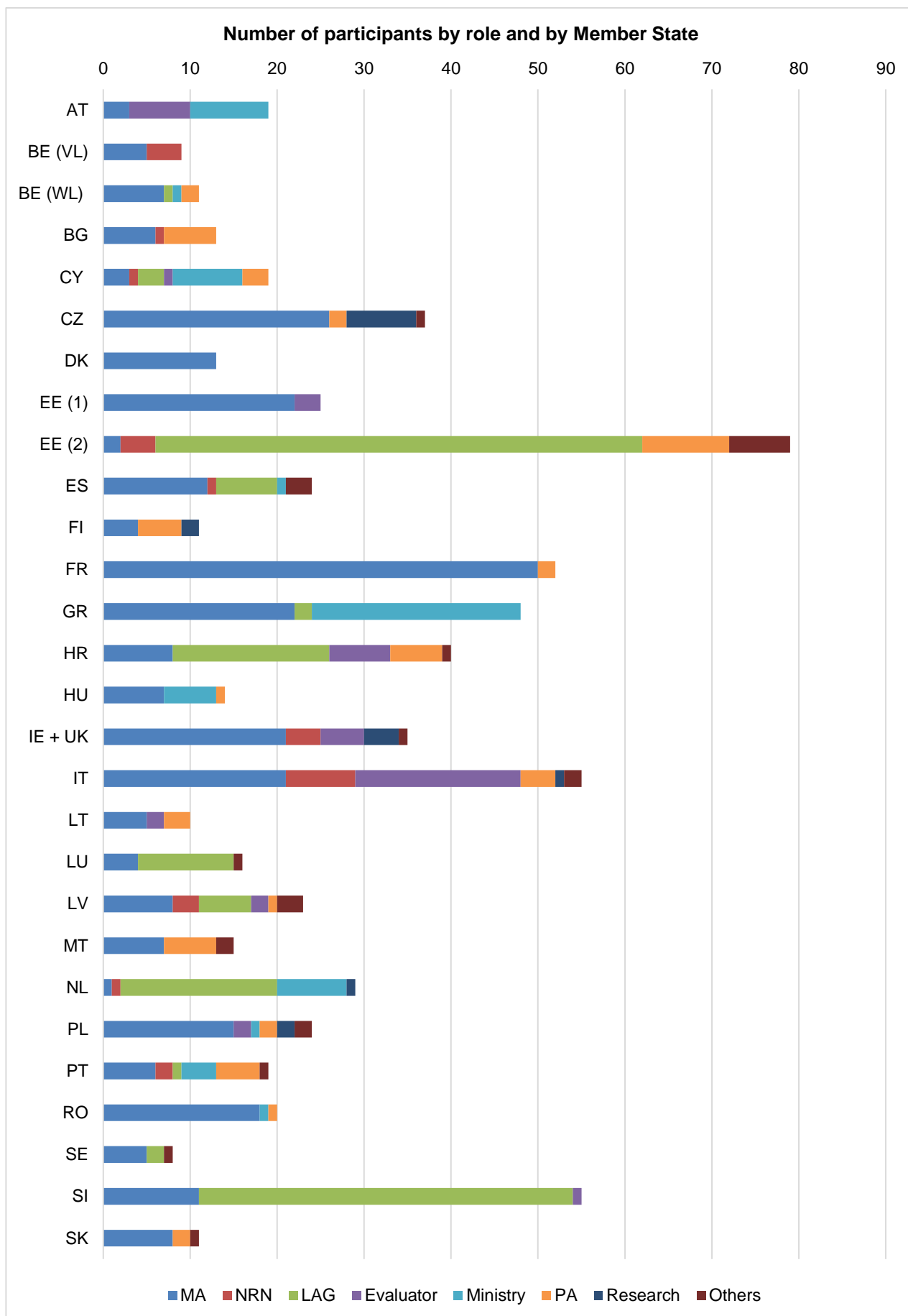
¹ Estonia carried out a follow up event.
The United Kingdom and Ireland had their events together.

2. Participants of the yearly capacity building events

- The trainings were attended by a total of 734 participants
- The majority of the participants were from Managing Authorities
- A large proportion of participants were from LAGs
- Evaluators are still underrepresented

The distribution by role and by Member State are represented in the following graphs:





3. Overall outcomes of the events

EXAMPLES OF ISSUES CLARIFIED DURING THE TRAININGS

The training reports of the Member States reported the following issues which were particularly discussed and successfully clarified in the single events:

Module A: COMMON MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM

- Purpose and use of the CMES (AT, BE (VL), BE (WL), FR, HR, LU, NL, PL, PT) e.g.: double purpose of accountability and learning (BE (WL), LU, NL), the CMES as a frame for the evaluation objectives (BE (VL), LU); etc.
- The difference between CMES and CMEF (HR, HU, PL)
- Main changes in the CMES compared with the previous programming period (HR, IE+UK)
- CMES elements and their linkages (e.g. global overview of the CMES and its elements (BE (VL), BE (WL), HR, LU); evaluation plan (EP) (BE (WL), DK); indicators (BE(VL), BE (WL), FR, GR, LU, NL, PT); evaluation questions (EQs) (BE (WL), EE, FR))
- Responsibilities of the parties involved (CY, GR)
- Milestones of the evaluation process (BE (WL), CY, ES, GR, HR, PT)
- Support provided by the EC/Helpdesk to the Member States (BE (WL), FR)

Module B: SETTING UP THE SYSTEM TO ANSWER EQS

- Purpose of the evaluation questions (EQs) and the related evaluation requirements (AT, HU, LT, PL, SK). Legal requirements on the evaluation of RDPs and Annual Implementation Reports (AT, HU); consistency checks among evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators (SK), etc.
- The content of the Working Document “Common evaluation questions for RDP 2014-2020” (SK)
- Evaluation questions to be answered in 2017/2019 (ES, FR, IT, LT)
- Necessary steps to answer evaluation questions (EQs) (AT, CZ, FI, FR, IT, LT, PL, SK) emphasizing additional judgment criteria (CZ, FR, IT) and additional indicators (CZ, IT)
- Data collection systems (LT, MT) and the possibility of using the FADN (LT)
- Methods (CZ, DK, IE+UK, LT, MT, PL) (e.g. counterfactual analyses (DK, IE+UK, LT, PL), Propensity Score Matching (PSM)/ Difference in differences (DiD) (CZ); spatial analysis, analytical studies, qualitative monitoring, qualitative research, etc. (CZ); dead weight (DK); etc.)
- Challenges caused by the flexibility in programming (AT, IE+UK)
- The activities and support provided by the Evaluation Helpdesk (HU, MT)
- Changes in the indicator plan (IP) (DK)

Module C: EVALUATION OF LEADER/CLLD

- New EC requirements on the evaluation of LEADER (at RDP and LAG level) (ES, FR, HR, NL)
- The roles of the stakeholders (HR, LV, NL) with special emphasis on the link between MA and PA (HR), MA, NRN and LAGs (LV, NL)
- Specificities of LEADER evaluation at LAG level (BE (VL), ES, FR, HR, LU, LV, SI) highlighting that the LDS intervention logic is the core issue to better prepare for the evaluation of LEADER (ES) and the development of LDS specific EQ and indicators (FR)
- Data collection, storage, transmission and quality (HR, MT)
- Support of MAs and NRNs to LAGs in the evaluation process (BE (VL), FR, HR)
- Development of LEADER-related CMES elements (judgment criteria and indicators) (IT, NL, SI) and to fit the IL and the hierarchy of objectives to the LDS (SI)
- Evaluation of impacts (MT, NL)
- Added value of LEADER (BE (VL), ES, NL)
- Links between monitoring tables and information required for LEADER evaluation (ES)
- Experiences exchange on LEADER evaluation and best practices. Dissemination of findings (BE (VL), HR, LU)
- Support and influence of previous RDPs and other funds (MT, SI)
- Influence of RDP measures on quality of life in rural areas (LV)
- LAGs self-assessment (LV)
- The activities and support provided by the Evaluation Helpdesk (NL, SE)

OPEN QUESTIONS

On evaluation topics and activities

- Ex post evaluation
- Evaluation questions
- Annual Implementation Report (AIR)
- Indicators
- Data collection, storage and transmission
- Evaluation of impacts
- Efficiency
- LEADER, LDS, CLLD evaluation
- LAGs involvement and self-assessment
- NRN evaluation and its role
- Cross cutting objectives and horizontal priorities
- ESI Funds

On governance and management of evaluation

- Coordination of the evaluation among stakeholders
- Evaluation Plan
- Control systems and quality

On support expected from the Evaluation Helpdesk

- Guidance, methodological publications
- Exchange of good practices
- Dissemination of evaluation findings and knowledges

FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Most Member States mentioned that they have **already planned follow-up actions** or they are in the **planning phase** (AT, BE (VL), BE (WL), BG, CY, CZ, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, HU, IE+UK, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK)

- **Develop methodological support as well as the dissemination of instructions and information by the MA** (BE (VL), CY, CZ, FI, FR, GR, LU, NL, SI)
- **Meetings and further communication between stakeholders** (CZ, GR, IT, LU, LV, NL)
- **Events** such as trainings, workshops, conferences, etc. (AT, BE (VL), BE (WL), BG, CY, CZ, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, HU, IE, LU, LV, NL, PL, SI, SK, UK)
- **Exchange and transfer of experiences with other Member States, as well as a compendium of good practices** (BE (VL), BE (WL), ES, LU, LV, MT, NL)
- **Possible changes and revision of the EP** (DK, NL), **revision of the IP** (DK)
- **Involvement and support of the NRNs** (BE (VL), CY, DK, EE, ES, IE+UK, IT, LV, SI) and **involvement of all the measure managers in the evaluation process** (BE (WL))

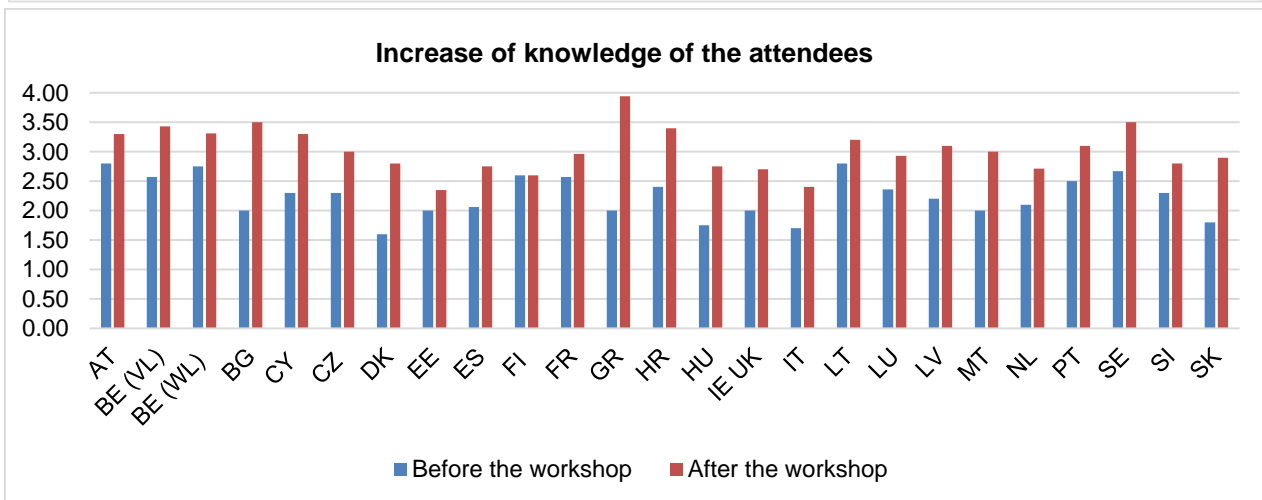
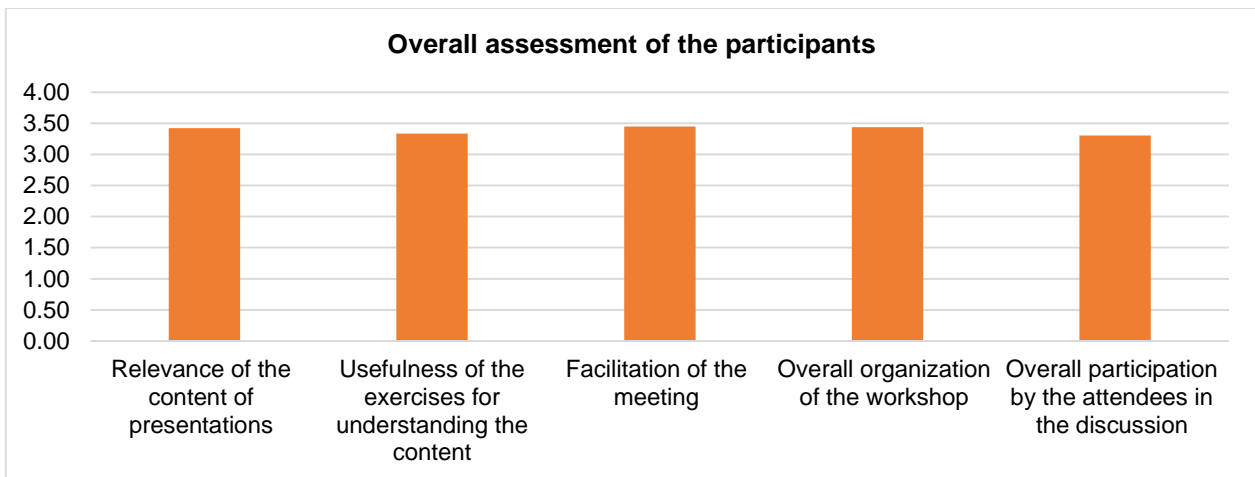
FUTURE PRIORITIES FOR HELPDESK CAPACITY BUILDING

- To keep and raise **direct contact with rural development evaluation stakeholders** and to continually increase the number of participants
- To **address the knowledge gaps** of the Member States (operation database, ex post evaluation, evaluation plan, annual implementation report, LEADER evaluation, NRN's role, coordination of stakeholders, exchange among Member States, etc.)
- **Greater participation by Evaluators** will be a **focus** of next years as well as more **communication and dissemination**

4. Participants' feedback from the capacity building events

Feedback forms were filled by 67% of the participants and included closed and open questions:

- Open questions explored strengths and weaknesses of the capacity building event as well as the most relevant comments, suggestions and expectations.
- Closed questions focused on the overall assessment of the meeting. These questions were appraised using a scale (very good-4; good-3; fair-2 and poor-1) as a rating tool. The average score of the overall assessment of the meetings, for each of the closed questions, are summarized in the following graph:



Participants highlighted:

- An increase in the know-how on evaluation (all Member States)
- Composition and representation of a wide variety of evaluation stakeholders (BE (VL), CY, DK, ES, FR, GR, HR, IE+UK, LT, LV, NL, SE)
- Practical exercises and working groups (AT, BE (WL), EE, ES, HR, HU, LT, LV, MT, PT)
- The exchange and transfer of experience (BE (VL), BE (WL), BG, ES, LU, NL, SI)

For any question:

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