

Common Network Statistics

Y7 SUMMARY REPORT

June 2021

The summary report has been prepared by the ENRD Contact Point and its content does not reflect the official position of the European Commission.

The report covers 2020 data and therefore refers to the EU-27 without the United Kingdom.

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Context

In 2016 Network Support Units (NSUs) agreed to submit Common Network Statistics (CNS) each calendar year. The purpose of collecting the data is:

- collecting and raising awareness of the achievements of NRNs;
- benchmarking;
- identification of useful NRN activities/examples across Europe; and
- regular and systematic tracking of progress within each individual NRN.

The first data were collected in 2016 for Y1 (2014 data) and Y2 (2015 data). In the process of collecting and analysing the CNS Y3 (2016 data), several issues became apparent. The ENRD Contact Point (CP) together with the NSUs therefore simplified and shortened the survey for Y4 (2017 data).

The CNS Y5 (2018 data), Y6 (2019 data) and Y7 responses (2020 data) were collected in same format as the Y4 responses. However, it became evident that more clarity was required in terms of which data should be included. This issue was addressed through direct consultations with the NSUs. In addition, further instructions were inserted in the guidance note accompanying the data collection template.

Process and Submissions

The CNS survey for Y7 (2020 data) was distributed to NSUs on 24 February 2021, with responses requested by 16 April 2021.

Using direct contact, reminders and consultations, resulted in all 28 NSUs submissions being collected and finalised by 11 May 2021. This is a notable improvement on previous years (24 November in Y3; 13 November in Y4; 11 September in Y5; 3 August in Y6).

The survey was prepared in both excel format and online survey formats (using Survey Monkey). Each NSU could choose which format they preferred to use for reporting. Of the 28 responses, 21 surveys were completed using the excel table and seven were submitted via Survey Monkey.

Analysis of Y7 results

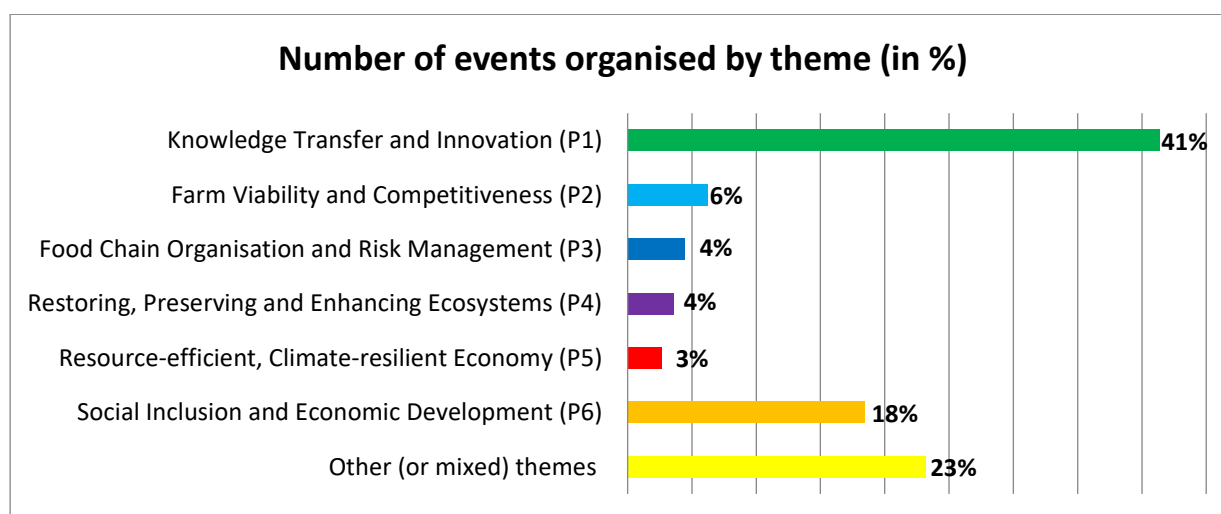
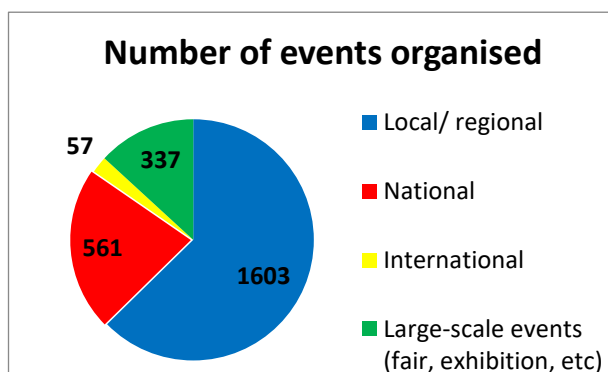
From the submissions received in 2021, the analysis across all the categories gave an overview of networks' activities throughout the EU. Where possible the data from Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6 and Y7 were compared. In some cases, a comparison of all five years was not possible due to incomplete data, different numbers of NSU responses or a different formulation of question from the original Y3 collection process. Due to some technical differences in the classification of events, the consistency of data between countries has a degree of variability, in particular in relation to the large-scale events category, Question 1. In addition, it is important to note that Y7 data collection does not cover the data from four UK NSUs and due to the COVID-19 pandemic some NSU activities were impaired or moved to online format. All these effects and the pandemic effects led to some variation in the performance and the reported data of the NSUs.

Q1 Events and participations

In 2020, in total 2 548 NSU-organised events were reported by 28 NSUs¹, less than in 2019 (3 467, 32 NSUs) or in 2018 (3 020, 31 NSUs). The decrease in events is notable mainly for large-scale (776 events in 2019 down to 337 in 2020) and international events (103 events in 2019 down to 57 in 2020). This seems to be the result of the COVID-pandemic measures and travelling restrictions.

The highest number of events, 900, was reported by Poland². This number includes 678 local/regional events, 128 national, 4 international and 90 large-scale events³. Other countries reported the following events in total: Latvia 529, Hungary 271, Sweden 143, Luxembourg 100 and other countries fewer than 100.

NSUs were asked to group events under a specific priority only if it had a strong focus on that thematic category (RDP Priority) or it was targeted at a specific group. P1 related events were the most popular grouping in 2020, reflecting an increase from 25% in 2019 to 41% in 2020 and surpassing the 'Other' category which was the most popular grouping in 2019. In the 'Other' category, responses included RDP and ESI project days, future CAP, transition period, monitoring and evaluation, communication, Smart Villages, rural cinema, Mediterranean diet, bioregions, administration, MAs capacity building, regional antennae, NRN management and other type of technical meetings.



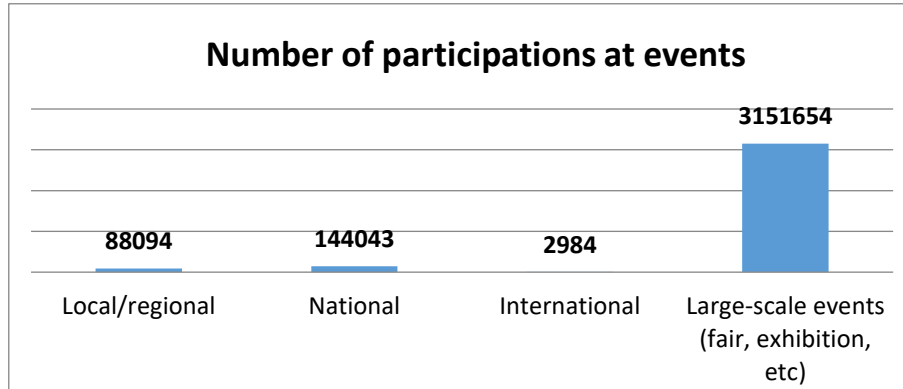
In total, 235 121 participations were reported for local/regional, national and international events, excluding the large-scale events, a significant drop from 738 789 in 2019. This may be assumed to be an effect of the restrictions on actual participation during the pandemic. The most significant reduction was in national events in Poland.

¹ The total number of NSUs for 2020 data collection is 28. The data from 4 UK NSUs are not included unlike previous years.

² The comparably higher number of events reported by the Polish NRN each year arises from the inclusion of further events organised by the regional offices.

³ Large-scale events include fairs or exhibitions, regardless of their geographic scope. As the guidance provided for reporting this indicator was not followed on a standardised basis, the participation figures for large events reflect some degree of variation.

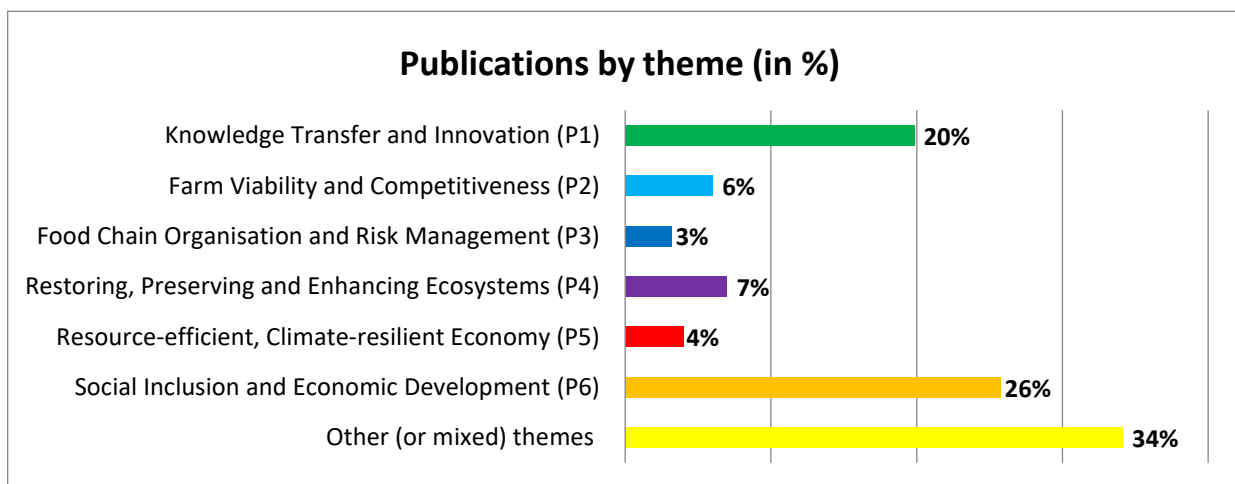
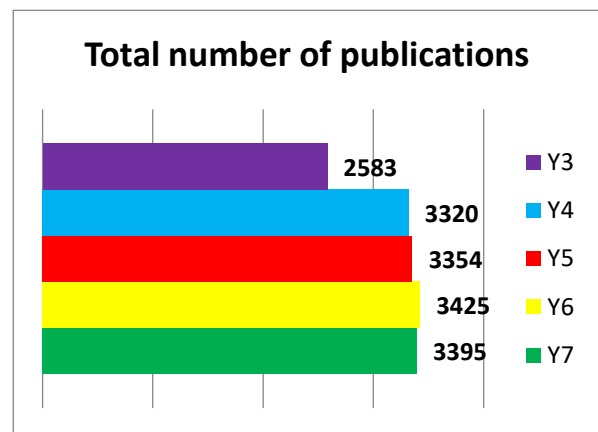
The highest number of event participations in 2020 was reported by Poland (3 078 426) with 65 880 local or regional, 104 696 national, 566 international and 2 907 284 large-scale event participations⁴. Estonia reported the second highest number of participations (231 974) of which 230 000 were recorded under the large-scale event category.



Q2 Publications

NSUs reported that they produced 3 395 publications during 2020. It can be concluded that the reported number has been sustained in consecutive years following Year 3 despite pandemic and notwithstanding the UK's withdrawal.

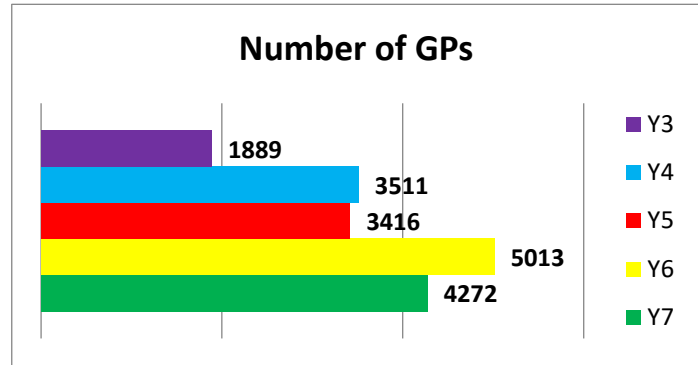
The largest category of reported cases (34%) 'Other or mixed themes' were followed by publications on 'Social Inclusion and Economic Development (P6)' with 26%, up from 10% in 2019. The lowest number of publications produced was again recorded in relation to 'Food Chain Organisation and Risk Management (P3)' as in Y6. Under the 'Other' category, themes reported included women & youth, migration & integration, Mediterranean diet, calendar, and good practices from other funds.



⁴ The comparably higher number of event participations reported by the Polish NRN each year arises from the inclusion of further events organised by the regional offices.

Q3 Good Practices

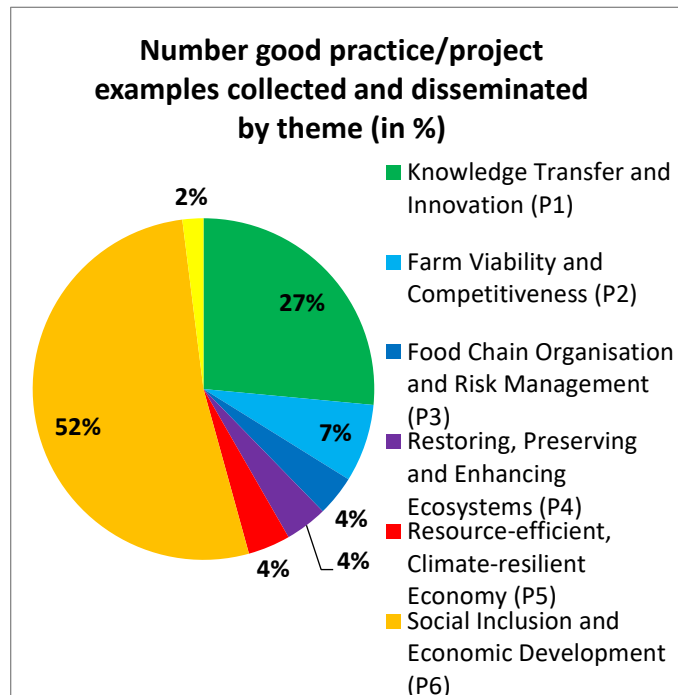
In total, 4 272 good practices (GPs) were collected and disseminated in 2020 (on average 153 per NSU). This is a negligible difference from Y6 (157 per NSU) and still a significant increase compared to Y3 when 22 NSUs reported 1 889 GPs (85 per NSU), Y4 when 25 NSUs reported 3511 GPs (140 per NSU), and Y5 when 30 NSUs reported 3 416 GPs (114 per NSU). The reduction in the number of GPs from Y6 to Y7 broadly reflects the effects of UK withdrawal from the EU.



NSU	No. of GPs
Finland	780
Germany	435
Czech Republic	386
France	370
Belgium - Flanders	330
Austria	304
Estonia	165
Hungary	150
Spain	150
Poland	142
Latvia	130
Slovakia	109
Lithuania	101
Bulgaria	97
Sweden	96
Portugal	74
The Netherlands	74
Ireland	56
Slovenia	43
Italy	36
Belgium - Wallonia	17
Malta	7
Romania	6
Croatia	5
Greece	2
Cyprus	1
Luxembourg	1

The NRNs reporting the highest numbers of GPs were Finland (780), followed by Germany (435), Czech Republic (386), France (370), Belgium-Flanders (330) and Austria (304). Finland and Germany seem to have the strongest ongoing focus on GPs, as they also recorded highest numbers in Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 CNS.

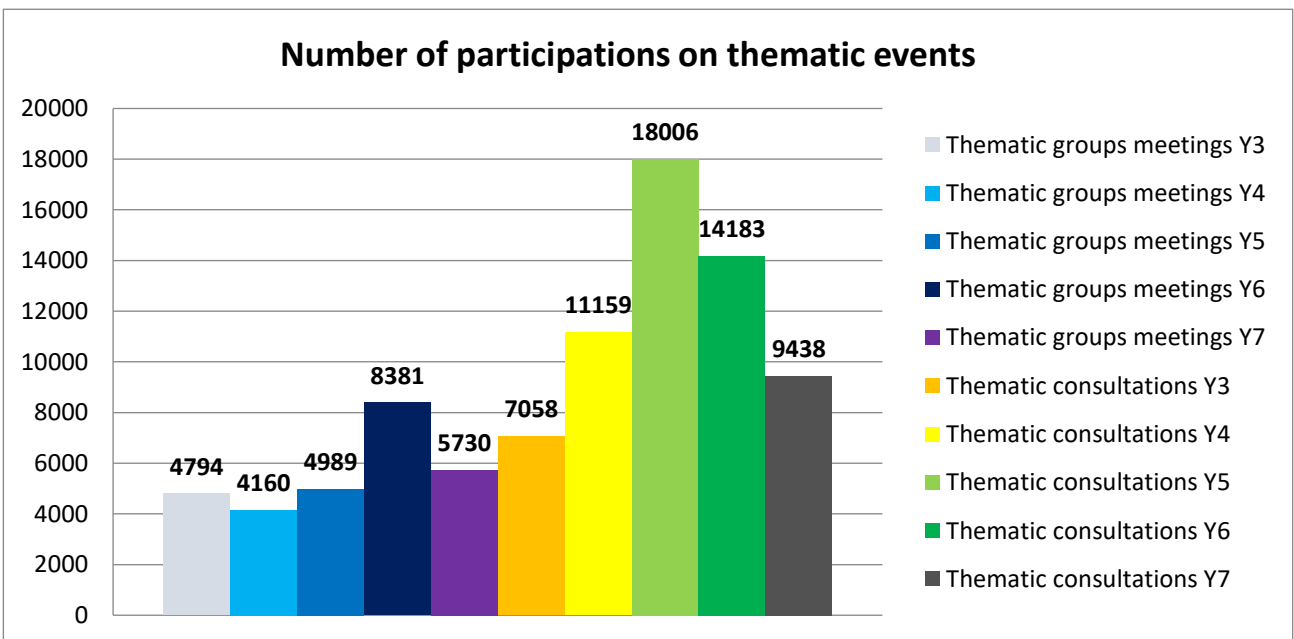
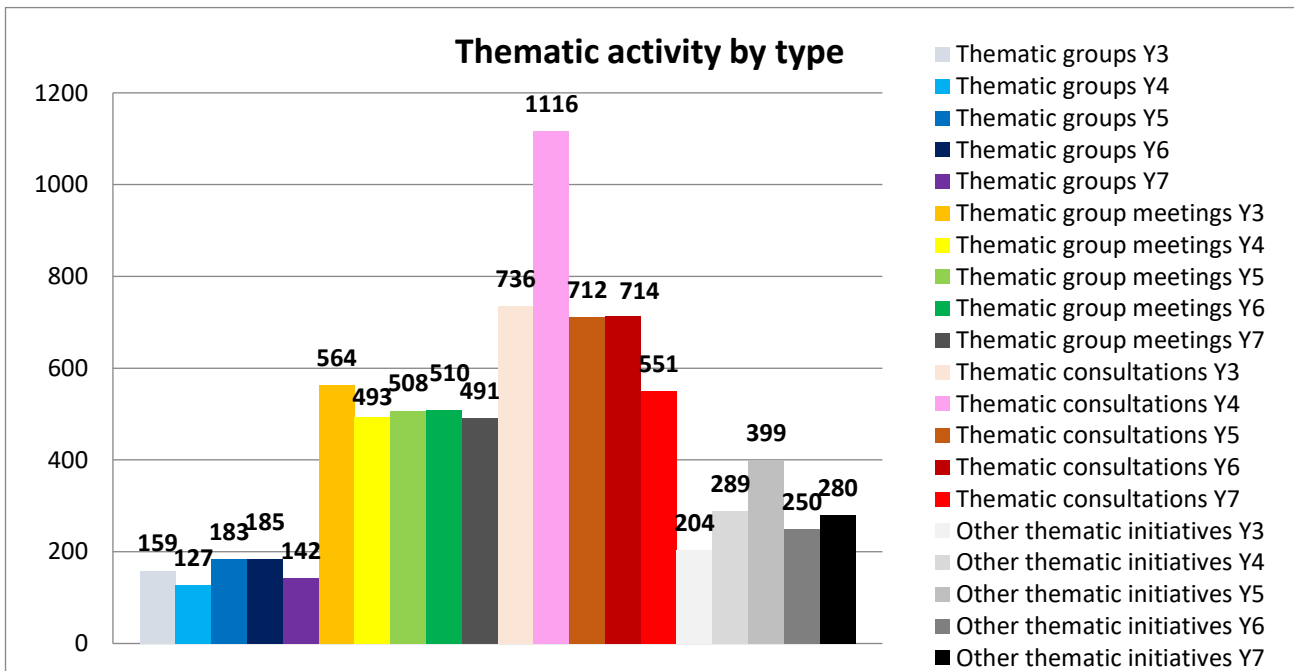
Priority 6 'Social Inclusion and Economic Development', provided the largest proportion of GPs by a substantial margin, a total of 1 554, of which 370 were in France, 263 in Czech Republic and 218 in Germany.



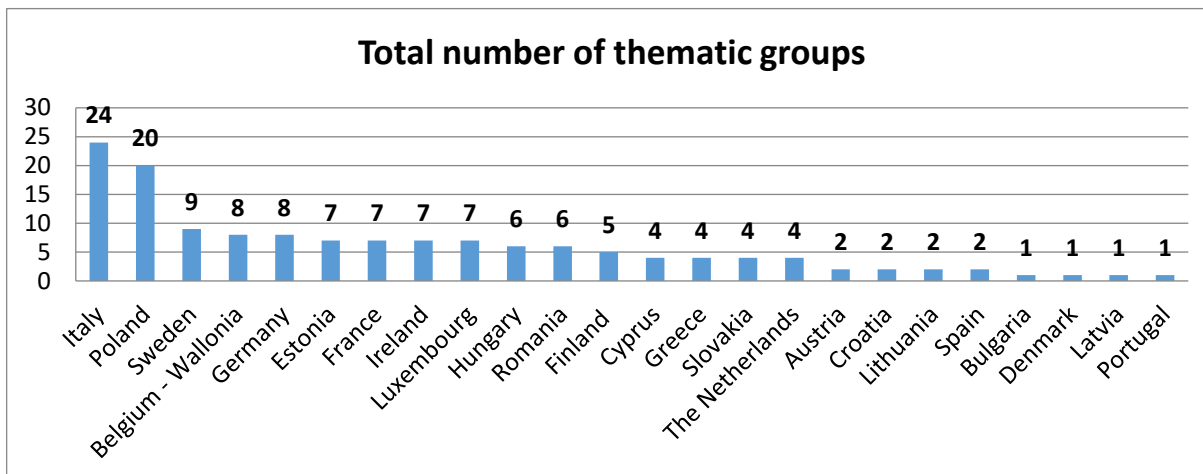
Q4 Thematic initiatives

Twenty-five NSUs provided information on the number of participations under various thematic activities. The most frequently recorded Y7 activity was thematic consultations (493), which is consistently the most recorded type of activity (714 in Y6 and 712 in Y5). This was followed by thematic group meetings (and 491 in Y7, 510 in Y6 and 508 in Y5) and then other thematic initiatives (274 in Y7, 250 in Y6 and 399 in Y5).

In terms of the number of participations, 'Other thematic initiatives' had the highest attendance during 2020 (14 448 participations). This was followed by 'Thematic consultations' category (9 438 participations) and 'Thematic group meetings' (5 730 participations).



In Y7 in total there were 142 thematic groups (TGs), which is a decrease compared to the previous years (185 in Y6 and 183 in Y5), possibly reflecting the pandemic effects. In 2020 – just as during the whole programming period - the highest numbers of TGs were in Italy (24) and Poland (20).



For the distribution of thematic groups by thematic focus, data was provided by 16 NRNs. ‘Other (or mixed) themes’ (39 TGs, 10 NSUs) is the largest thematic category of recorded activity, followed by P6 ‘Social Inclusion and Economic Development’ (27 TGs, 12 NSUs). In the ‘Other’ category, responses included Smart Villages, regional antennae, communication, monitoring and evaluation, double funding, CAP Strategic Plans and COVID-19. The most marked drop in thematic group involvement from 2019 was for ‘Knowledge Transfer and Innovation’ (P1).

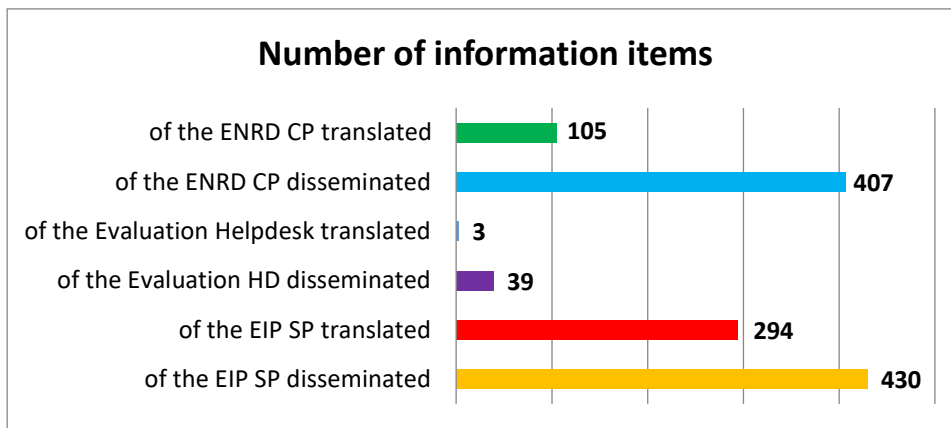
Number of thematic groups by thematic focus							
	Knowledge Transfer and Innovation (P1)	Farm Viability and Competitiveness (P2)	Food Chain Organisation and Risk Management (P3)	Restoring, Preserving and Enhancing Ecosystems (P4)	Resource-efficient, Climate-resilient Economy (P5)	Social Inclusion and Economic Development (P6)	Other (or mixed) themes
Denmark						1	
Estonia						1	1
Finland	1	1				2	1
France	1		1			4	1
Hungary							6
Ireland	1			1	1	3	1
Italy	3	4	1	2	2	5	7
Latvia			1				
Lithuania							2
Luxembourg	1	1	1	1	1	2	
Poland	1		1			1	17
Portugal	1						
Romania		1	2		1	2	
Slovakia	1	1				2	
Sweden	2	2		1		3	1
The Netherlands		1				1	2
TOTAL	12	11	7	5	5	27	39

Q5 Cooperation and contribution to ENRD and EIP-AGRI activities

A total of 22 NRNs responded to the question about how many communication products (presentations, publications and case studies) they had provided to the ENRD CP, ENRD Evaluation Helpdesk and the EIP-AGRI Service Point in 2020. Reporting indicates that a total of 258 items were provided (182 to ENRD CP, 23 to ENRD Evaluation Helpdesk and 53 to EIP AGRI Service Point), which is a considerable decrease compared to the previous two years (662 in Y6 and 492 in Y5). The major drop in submissions is in relation to the EIP AGRI Service Point, down to 53 from 436 in 2019. Sweden (33 items), Estonia (24), Portugal (22) and Slovakia (21) were the top contributors.

21 NSUs contributed with 141 'Good practice examples/case studies', 12 NSUs contributed with 63 'Information items/articles for publications' and 11 NSUs contributed with 54 'Other information items'.

Information items published by the ENRD Contact Point, the ENRD Evaluation Helpdesk and the EIP-AGRI Service Point were mainly disseminated by NSUs and were most frequently translated for the ENRD CP and EIP AGRI Service Point.



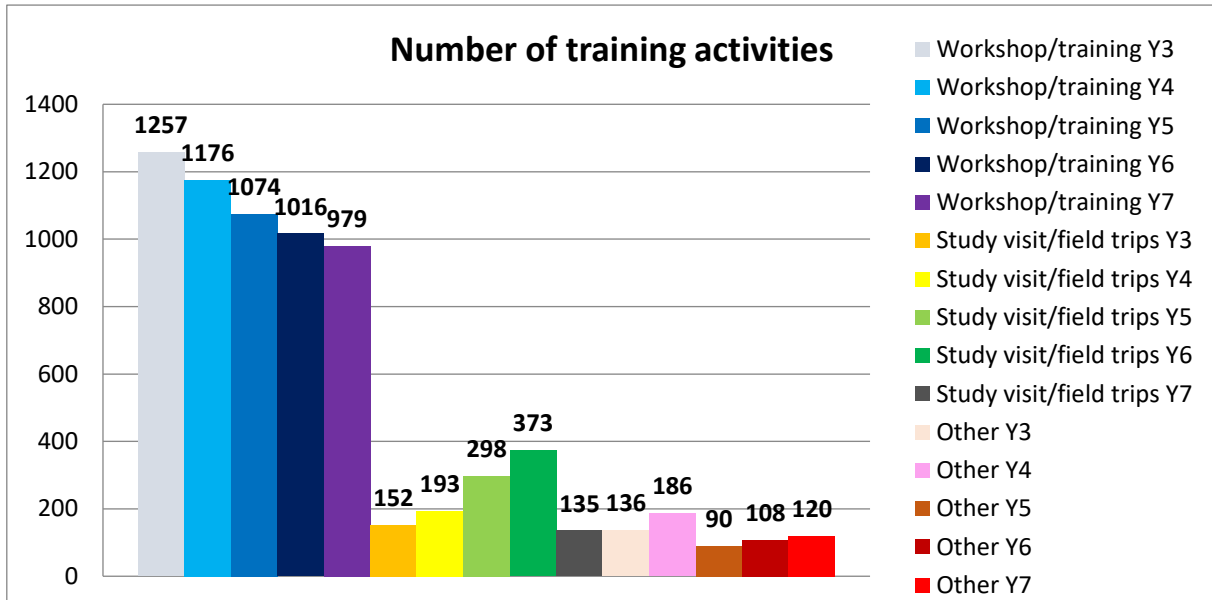
Q6 Training activities

Y7 data for workshops / training sessions reflected the decreasing trend from the previous years, possibly matching a change in need and demand as programmes mature. A sudden decrease can be observed by the number of study visits and field trips organised in Y7 which was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In contrast, other training activities continued to increase.

Of the 24 NSUs that responded to the question, Poland recorded the highest number of training activities as in previous years. They delivered Y7 (608), Y6 (991), Y5 (812), Y4 (955) and Y3 (776). Poland was followed by Latvia (141), Sweden (116) and Italy (72).

Ten NSUs reported the thematic focus of the training activities that they organised. The 'top three' identified across countries were: P1 'Knowledge Transfer and Innovation' with 346 training activities (mainly for Poland and Slovakia); P6 'Social Inclusion and Economic Development' with 233 training activities (mainly for Poland, Slovakia and Italy) and P2 'Farm Viability and Competitiveness' with 72 activities (mainly for Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia). This matches the main focus of the training activities in 2019.

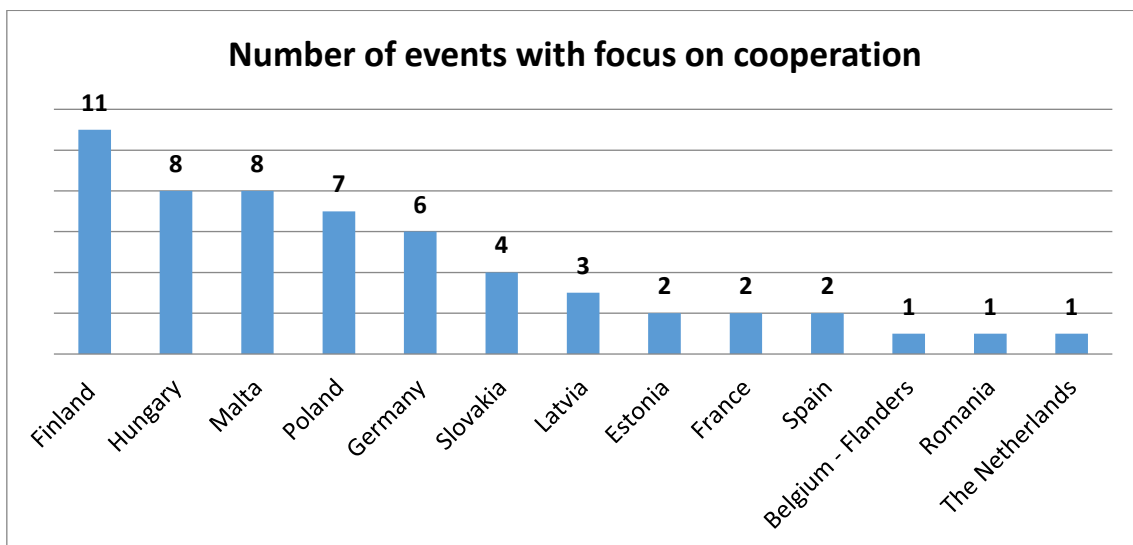
In Y7, in total 59 184 participations were reported by 24 NRNs. Workshops / training sessions were the most attended activity type (46 979 participations), representing almost 80% of all participation activities, followed by other training activities (8 072) and study visits/ field trips (4 133).



Q7 Cooperation events

A significant decrease in the number of cooperation events and participants in 2020 can be observed, which thought to be largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In total 13 NRNs reported organising cooperation events in 2020. There were 56 events organised EU-wide with 2 977 participants (5 787 in Y6), of which 199 participants (848 in Y6) were from other MSs, a further 184 (368 in Y6) were identified as coming from autonomous regions within larger MS. Finland reported the highest number of Y7 cooperation events (11) followed by Hungary (8) Malta (8) and Poland (7).



Proposals for a future CNS collection

The data collection process has become smoother each year as the NSUs are now more familiar with the questions posed and increasingly recognise the added value of this exercise. In addition, due to the simplification of the CNS format, the NSUs have shown greater willingness to complete the CNS survey year by year which was confirmed by the Y7 data collection being finalised unprecedentedly early.

The data collection in Y7 was accompanied by a survey on the CNS exercise. In general, the CNS was regarded as predominantly beneficial activity. Out of 18 NSUs that responded, five NSUs found the CNS qualitative outputs 'very useful for their work', five found it 'rather useful' and eight reported 'not very useful'. Several NSUs used the CNS reports available online, they did so for annual reporting for the Managing Authority and to get to know the key focus and activities of other NSUs. Information being provided regularly at ENRD's NRN meetings was considered useful too.

Improvement suggestions included:

- adding an indicator for reporting various communication activities such as video films, radio broadcasts, TV emissions etc., not only publications;
- reviewing the thematic focus of the activities which are currently aligned with six RDP Priorities that sometimes don't entirely match the scope of the NSU activities (e.g. preparation of the next programming period);
- making the CNS reports more prominent on the ENRD webpage;
- aligning the CNS data collection and its timeline with obligatory RDP monitoring exercises.

Conclusion

The analysis of CNS information provides a good overview of NSU activities and thematic priorities. Each year the ENRD CP improves this process, comparative analysis over time enables the CP to identify trends and to track progress.

Considering that in 2020 the NSU activities were significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the sustained or even in some cases an increasing trend in the majority of activities except for training and cooperation events is a very positive sign and shows the flexibility of NSUs in switching to a virtual format for their work.

The thematic focus of the NSU activities in 2020 was often linked to other (or mixed) themes which illustrates a tendency of NSUs to concentrate on crosscutting and specific themes including future programming period, communication, COVID-related actions or country-specific topics. This shows a different trend compared to previous years when the highest numbers were most frequently reported under Priority 1 'Knowledge Transfer and Innovation' or Priority 6: 'Social Inclusion and Economic Development'.

These results demonstrate the added value of the CNS, which could be communicated at networking events such as NRN meetings and/or relevant workshops.