M16.8

Forest management plans

In 2015, the Contact Point of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD CP) carried out a broad analysis of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). The following text forms part of a series of summaries outlining the information gathered on specific Measures (M) and sub-Measures. The summaries aim to provide an overview of the common trends and main differences in the programming decisions taken across the range of RDPs. If you believe that any of the information presented does not accurately reflect the content of one of the RDPs, please communicate your concerns to info@enrd.eu.

Where specific RDPs are referenced in the analysis, they are indicated with the official EU country codes (e.g. EE for Estonia). In the case of regional RDPs, the name of the region is given after the country code (e.g. IT-Lazio).

1. Regulation background

1.1 Measure 16 cooperation[1]

Supported actions under Measure 16 (M16) and its sub-Measures are implemented by groups of at least two cooperating entities (except in very specific cases of pilot projects). In this report we will refer to these cooperating entities, which includes networks, clusters, EIP Operational Groups and others, using the term 'cooperation group'.

According to the Rural Development regulation (EC 1305/2013), cooperation groups supported by M16 are expected to implement projects fostering, "*cooperation approaches among different actors in the Union agriculture sector, forestry sector and food chain and other actors that contribute to achieving the objectives and priorities of rural development policy…*"

M16 sub-Measures offer potential support for:

- the establishment and running of cooperation activities, covering the cooperation groups' and the projects' coordination and organisation costs, and
- the carrying out of projects, covering the direct costs that arise from the activities of the project.

However, RDP Managing Authorities may decide to support only the creation and running cost of the cooperation group under Measure 16 and fund the direct project costs (such as investments) under other RDP Measures.[2]

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[1] Reg. 1305/2013 Art.35

[2] "*Where support is paid as a global amount and the project implemented is of a type covered under another measure of this Regulation, the relevant maximum amount or rate of support shall apply*." Reg. 1305/2013 Art.35.6

1.2 Sub-Measure 16.8

Sub-Measure 16.8 (M16.8) provides support for the, **"…drawing-up of forest management plans or equivalent instruments…".**[3]

M16.8 provides support for beneficiaries to work together to draw up forest management plans contributing to more sustainable forest production.
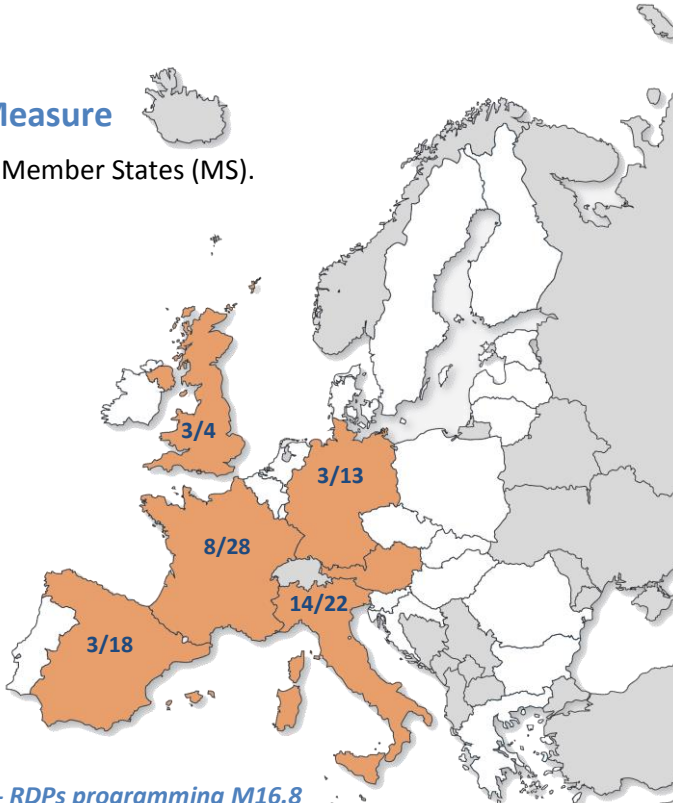
Forest management plans (FMPs) in Europe are often mandatory for forests with a relatively big extension and/or for publicly-owned forests[4]. Small forest owners often do not have enough interest to draw up FMPs for their holding alone. For this reason, M16.8 is expected to be particularly useful in incentivising managers of small forest holdings to cooperate with other forest owners to draw up common FMPs[5].

2. RDPs programming the sub-Measure

M16.8 is programmed in 32 RDPs across 6 Member States (MS).

*Table 1 - **List of RDPs programming M16.8***

N	RDPs[6]
1	Austria (AT)
2	DE-Baden-Wurttemberg
3	DE-Sachsen
4	DE-Sachsen-Anhalt
5	ES-Galicia
6	ES-Madrid
7	ES-Navarra
8	FR-Alsace
9	FR-Auvergne
10	FR-Basse-Normandie
11	FR-Franche-Comte
12	FR-Guyane
13	FR-Haute-Normandie
14	FR-Nord-Pas-De-Calais
15	FR-Pays De La Loire
16	IT-Abruzzo
17	IT-Basilicata

*Map 1 - **RDPs programming M16.8***
For MS having regional RDPs, the map indicates the number of RDPs that programmed M16.8 out of the national total.

N	RDPs	N	RDPs	N	RDPs
18	IT-Calabria	23	IT-Piemonte	28	IT-Umbria
19	IT-Campania	24	IT-Puglia	29	IT-Valle D'Aosta
20	IT-Lazio	25	IT-Sardegna	30	UK-England
21	IT-Liguria	26	IT-Sicilia	31	UK-Northern Ireland
22	IT-Marche	27	IT-Toscana	32	UK-Wales

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[3] Reg. 1305/2013 Art.35(2)(i)

[4] European Commission – DG Environment, July 2014, '*Forest Management Plans or equivalent instruments - Summary of Member States' replies to the DG ENV questionnaire'.* Retrievable at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/pdf/fmp_table.pdf

[5] European Commission, November 2014, *Guidance document "Co-operation"*

[6] Belgium (BE); Germany (DE); Spain (ES); Finland (FI); Italy (IT); United Kingdom (UK).

3. Scope of RDP programmed activities

Impact
Across Europe M16.8 supports the creation of FMPs with the aim of **improving forest management from an environmental, economic and social perspective**. The three perspectives are often taken into consideration at the same time in horizontal **multi-functional management plans[7]**.

M16.8 is mostly expected to encourage a **more sustainable forestry sector**, one that better manages forest resources and is more aware of its environmental and climate change impact (e.g. in FR-Nord Pas de Calais, FR-Pays de la Loire, IT-Puglia, IT-Sardegna, FR-Franche Comte). The FMPs supported under M16.8 are expected to introduce management practices that use the forest as a **'tool' to improve the environment and biodiversity, to fight against climate change and to strengthen the bio-energy sector**.

RDPs state that M16.8 is expected more generally **to strengthen the forestry sector**. More specifically M16.8 support is expected to reach a great variety of associations and cooperation groups involving **small forest owners**[8] and is expected to fight problems arising from forest fragmentation (e.g. IT-Basilicata, IT-Campania).

Some RDPs clearly state that FMPs supported under M16.8 take into consideration the **role of the forest for social purposes** (e.g. FR-Alsace, FR-Haute Normandie, IT-Basilicata, IT-Toscana, FR-Nord Pas de Calais). In FR-Nord Pas de Calais, for example, FMPs try to strengthen forests' **socio-cultural services for urban communities.**

Case 1: FMPs and water management in IT-Lazio

In IT Lazio M16.8 provides support for cooperation actions leading to the creation of FMPs and also provide support for the implementation of the **Water Framework Directive** and the **Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks**.

Cross-border cooperation
In only one case was information on the possibility of implementing cross-border cooperation identified: in FR-Auvergne cooperation groups with entities outside the region are allowed when justified by the nature of the project.

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[7] Only few RDPs use the term 'multi-functional' (e.g. FR-Alsace, IT-Umbria) but in their measure's description it is possible to notice the broad consideration of the different perspectives.
[8] See section 5.

4. Contribution to Focus Areas and linkages to other Measures

M16.8 is mostly expected to contribute to **Priority 5** and more specifically to **FA 5E - Carbon conservation & sequestration** (e.g. FR-Guyane, IT-Puglia, IT-Sicilia, IT-Umbria, FR-Pays de la Loire, IT-Lazio, IT-Liguria, IT-Piemonte).

Some RDPs, however, also state that M16.8 contributes to:

Figure 1 - *M16.8 contribution to FAs and Priorities*

- **5A - Water use efficiency** (e.g. DE-Baden Wurttemberg);
- **5C - Renewable sources & waste management** (e.g. FR-Guyane, IT-Valle D'Aosta); and
- **5D - Greenhouse gas & ammonia emissions** (e.g. IT-Puglia).

Slightly less frequently, some RDPs state that M16.8 contributes to:

- **Priority 4** and more specifically to **FA 4C - Soil erosion & soil management** (e.g. IT-Valle D'Aosta, IT-Puglia, IT-Sicilia); and
- **Priority 2** and more specifically to **2A - Farm performance, restructuring & modernisation** (e.g. IT-Piemonte, IT-Abruzzo, IT-Calabria, UK-England) and **2C - Economic performance of forestry holdings**, for those RDPs that activated this optional Focus Areas (e.g. FR-Guyane).

Most of the RDPs state that M16.8 implementation is linked to **M08 - Investments in forest areas** (e.g. FR-Auvergne, FR-Nord Pas de Calais, FR-Pays de la Loire, IT-Basilicata, IT-Liguria, IT-Valle D'Aosta, UK-Wales, IT-Sicilia, IT-Umbria). In some cases, RDPs also establish linkages with:

- M01 - Knowledge transfer & information actions (e.g. DE-Baden Wurttemberg, IT-Basilicata, IT-Liguria),
- M02 - Advisory Services (e.g. IT-Basilicata, IT-Liguria), and
- M04 - Investments in physical assets (e.g. FR-Auvergne, IT-Basilicata, IT-Liguria).

In some cases, M16.8 is also implemented in coordination with **M16.1 – EIP**. In these cases, M16.8's eligible cooperation groups might include **Operational Groups** (e.g. FR-Guyane) and M16.8 project outcomes must be **disseminated through the EIP network** (e.g. SE-Sachsen, UK-Wales).
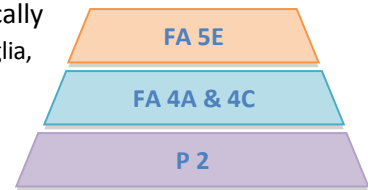
5. Eligibility criteria and selection process

Eligible costs

Eligible costs under M16.8 includes:

- cooperation and animation costs;
- feasibility study and research;
- creation of management plans;
- implementation of the management plan;
- specific investment related to the implementation of the project;
- evaluation activities; and
- communication activities.

Duration

Where specified, RDPs define that the cooperation action must last for **a minimum number of years ranging from three to seven.**
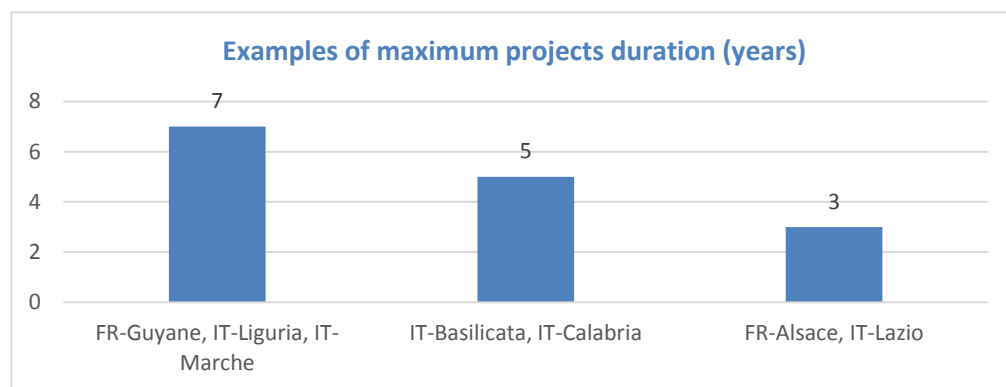

Figure 2 - *Examples of maximum projects duration*

Cooperation group

The cooperation groups supported by M16.8 are composed of **all kinds of actors working in the forestry sector** from forest owners to the timber industry. In some cases, the RDPs clearly state that stakeholders from the **agriculture sector** can also be involved in M16.8 supported activities (e.g. AT, ES-Madrid, FR-Auvergne, IT-Calabria).

As suggested by the EC guidance document[9], for the majority of the RDPs, M16.8 focuses on **small forestry holdings** (e.g. DE-Baden Wurttemberg, FR-Haute Normandie, ES-Madrid, ES-Galicia, IT-Sicilia, IT-Umbria, IT-Basilicata, IT-Calabria).

In nearly all RDPs M16.8 cooperation groups are open to **public institutions with specific competence on forestry management.** Some RDPs target the sub-Measure use to **public forests** and therefore stress the importance of the presence of public institutions in the cooperation group (e.g. ES-Navatta, FR-France Comte). In other cases, on the contrary, M16.8 in specific targets cooperation groups made of **private forest holders** (e.g. FR-Alsace), and in some cases it e**xcludes forest properties belonging to the state** (e.g. DE-Baden Wurttemberg, UK-Wales).

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[9] European Commission, November 2014, *Guidance document "Co-operation" measure*

In several MS cooperation groups also involve:

- **associations, cooperatives and professional unions** (e.g. ES-Madrid, FR-Nord Pas de Calais, FR-Franche Comte) ;
- **research and development bodies** (e.g. ES-Galicia, FR-Auvergne, IT-Sicilia), as well as **advisory service providers and trainers** (e.g. IT-Liguria); and
- **natural parks'** representatives (e.g. FR-Pays de la Loire, IT-Sicilia).

Criteria   Many RDPs require the forest management plan to cover **a minimum number of forest hectares**. The size of the areas covered by the management plan greatly varies, going from 10 ha in FR-Franche Comte to 100 ha in several Italian Regions.
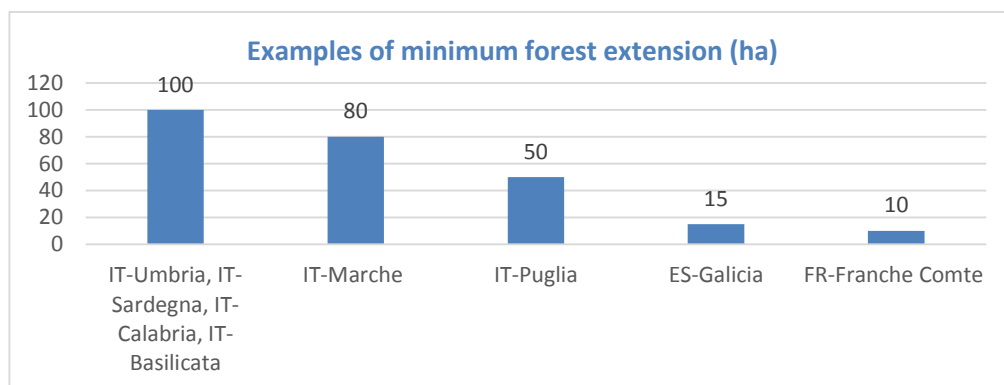
Examples of minimum forest extension (ha)

IT-Umbria, IT-Sardegna, IT-Calabria, IT-Basilicata	100
IT-Marche	80
IT-Puglia	50
ES-Galicia	15
FR-Franche Comte	10

*Figure 3 - **Examples of minimum forest extension***

Several Italian regions prioritise cooperation groups aiming to implement management plans on comparatively **bigger forest areas** (e.g. IT-Lazio, IT-Marche, IT-Sicilia, IT-Umbria, IT-Valle D'Aosta).

Many Managing Authorities decided to privilege the **bigger cooperation groups** (e.g. ES-Galicia, IT-Lazio, IT-Umbria, IT-Basilicata, IT-Calabria, FR-Guyane), and the management plans involving **Natura 2000 and/or protected areas** (e.g. ES-Madrid, IT-Lazio, IT-Sicilia, IT-Umbria, IT-Valle D'Aosta, IT-Basilicata, IT-Calabria, IT-Puglia, UK-Wales).

6. Financial aspects

Support rates

Support rates vary from around 40% to 100% of eligible costs.

Table 2 – Examples of support rates

Examples of RDPs	Support rate
IT-Abruzzo, IT-Calabria, IT-Lazio, IT-Liguria, IT-Marche, IT-Puglia, IT-Sardegna, IT-Sicilia, IT-Valle D'Aosta, UK-England	100%
FR-Alsace, FR-Franche Comte, IT-Umbria	80%
FR-Basse Normandie	75%
FR-Guyane	55%
ES-Navarra (subject to conditions – see below)	40%

Some RDPs don't set a unique support rate but establish specific conditions:

- In FR-Guyane the total public support for M16.8 is 55% of eligible costs, of which 10% goes to **actions aiming to identify the forest areas** and the resources available and 45% goes to **studies, research and animation actions.**
- In IT-Basilicata M16.8 costs related to the **establishment of the cooperation group** are supported up to 100%. Support rates for writing the management plan **vary according to the kind of beneficiary**: private owners are supported for 50% of eligible costs, while public owners are supported for 70% of eligible costs.
- In ES-Galicia the support rate is set by the MA **depending on the score received** by the cooperation group in the selection process.
- In ES-Navarra forest owners with a **forest area below 50 ha** are supported for 40% of eligible costs, while forest owners with a **forest area above 50 ha** are supported for 50% of eligible costs. In both cases if the **forest owners formally constitute a registered partnership** the support is increased by 5%.

Simplified Cost Options

Use of SCOs was identified in FR-Normandie and UK-Wales.