



# Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived

Meeting Report

**11<sup>th</sup> FEAD Network Meeting: 'BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR  
EFFECTIVE FEAD DELIVERY'**

19 June 2018, Thon EU Hotel, Brussels

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# 11th FEAD Network Meeting on building partnerships for effective FEAD delivery

Hotel Thon EU, Brussels, 19 June, 2018

On 19 June 2018, the European Commission hosted the 11th FEAD Network Meeting in Brussels. The meeting brought together the EU-wide network of stakeholders to discuss the importance of building partnerships to deliver FEAD effectively. The meeting was organised by Ecorys on behalf of the European Commission and welcomed 94 delegates from 24 Member States<sup>1</sup>, representing a range of stakeholders, including Managing Authorities; partner organisations; other local, regional and national actors; European Commission representatives; EU-level partner organisations; and the wider EU community.

## Session 1 – Introduction and update on FEAD activities



**Jan Aulehle, Director, Programme Management and Communications at Ecorys** opened the meeting by stressing that building partnerships has always been a key element in FEAD's work. He welcomed the participants and announced the programme of the day. Over the course of the meeting, participants had the opportunity to hear about the new ESF+ regulation and its implications for FEAD (Session 2), and the application of the partnership principles in ESF and FEAD delivery (Session 3). Participants also had the opportunity to take part in two interactive workshops (Session 4, Workshop A and B).

Jan concluded this brief introduction by presenting the latest updates from the Network.

## Session 2 – Welcome words and a presentation from the Commission on the proposal for the new ESF+ Regulation and its implications for FEAD

Following the introductory words, **Loris Di Pietrantonio, Head of Unit F1, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission** greeted the participants, and reminded them that, the new ESF+ regulation is anchored to the Multiannual Financial Framework under which the European Commission has proposed its budget for the period 2021-2027. He explained that the budget is around 1.1% of the EU GDP, which is small, but enough to add value to the actions of the Member States.

Loris stressed the distinction between shared management and direct management of European funds. The ESF+ fund will combine these two management mode as it is the result of a merger of 5 funds/programmes: ESF, YEI and FEAD (shared management) and EaSI, EU Health programme (direct management). To deliver ESF+ on the ground, it is crucial to collaborate with civil society and

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<sup>1</sup> Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden

partner organisations. The general objective of ESF+ is to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The budget for ESF+ is €101.2 billion in total, of which 100 billion is to be used under shared management. At least 25% of the ESF+ allocation will be dedicated to fostering social inclusion and at least 2% of the ESF allocation at national level will be dedicated to tackling material deprivation. This latter amount is meant to replace ex-FEAD measures. Furthermore, 2 out of the 11 specific objectives of ESF+ will cover ex-FEAD measures.

The new ESF+ regulation explicitly provides resources for the capacity building of stakeholders including civil society organisations (CSOs) (Article 8). Partners will now be taken into consideration as part of the selection criteria for ESF+ funding. In terms of reporting requirements, the new regulation reduces the number of indicators from 44 to 23. The regulation also introduces more flexibility: data does not have to be obtained directly from the final beneficiaries as values can now be based on informed estimates from beneficiaries. This aims to maintain a lighter touch for ESF+ reporting.

With regards to the ex-FEAD measures, the regulation ensures the continuation of OP1, namely the provision of food and basic material assistance to the most deprived, which can be accompanied by social integration measures. The regulation maintains the flat rate of 1% on purchase costs to cover transport and/or storage, as well as the flat rate of 5% on purchase costs for accompanying measures and administrative, transport and storage costs borne by beneficiaries. The main novelty of the ESF+ is the possibility to provide electronic vouchers for food distribution.

To conclude, Loris highlighted that the new regulation maintains the FEAD measures as much as possible while making them more flexible, as repeatedly demanded by FEAD stakeholders. Following this presentation, the floor was open to questions for an exchange with the audience.



### Session 3 – Panel discussion on the application of the partnership principle in ESF and FEAD delivery

**Marie-Anne Paraskevas, Senior Policy Officer, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission**, presented the European Code of Conduct on Partnerships (ECCP) and the application of the partnership principle in current ESF programming. Marie-Anne explained that the Code of Conduct came about for the 2014-2020 programming period with an aim to solidify what the partnership principle entails across European Structural and Investment Funds.

Marie-Anne stressed that the Code takes the form of a legally binding Commission regulation. She added, however, that the Code in practice is a tool to help Member States organise partnerships at national, regional and local levels. In particular, the European Code of Conduct on Partnership, requires Member States to:

- be transparent in the selection of partners;
- provide sufficient information to partners and give them sufficient time to make their voice heard in the consultation process;
- ensure that partners are involved in all stages of the process, from planning to evaluation;
- support capacity building of partners;
- create platforms for mutual learning and exchange of good practice.

For the current programming period, Marie-Anne further highlighted that the European Commission has set up an ESF Transnational Cooperation Platform to support stakeholders' willingness to

cooperate beyond frontiers. The Platform runs nine thematic networks (e.g. youth employment, migrants etc.) one of which focuses exclusively on strengthening the partnership principle. Within this network, a review was conducted to examine how the ECCP has been applied in practice, and to better understand what is happening on the ground. The hope was to enhance active and meaningful participation throughout the entire project cycle. A number of challenges were identified in the process, including a general lack of awareness of the ECCP, a 'box-ticking' approach to compliance and practical difficulties including an absence of adequate participation channels for stakeholders.

A key recommendation was that Member States should make a more conscious effort to include partners, particularly end beneficiaries, to be able to respond better to their needs, as well as academic institutions, private enterprises and environmental organisations. Other recommendations resulting from the report included greater transparency and guidance concerning partner input as well as a need for deeper and more continuous participation in the programme cycle, especially during implementation. Marie-Anne adds that FEAD has been an excellent example of good practice due to its strong partnership-based operations, which she suggests needs to be taken even further to get stakeholders better involved. She also urged Member States to make use of the technical assistance available to them in order to enhance capacity building of the stakeholders with a view to ensure their meaningful participation throughout all the programming and implementation stages of the ESF+.



**"Partnerships should be based on common objectives.** When it comes to the attainment of this objective, sometimes partners need to forget their own hats and look ahead towards attaining the common goal. Organisations need to work collaboratively."

*Marie-Anne Paraskevas, highlighting feedback from the ECCP review*

Following this presentation, representatives from the French organisation **Les Restaurants du Cœur** **Stéphanie Haloco, (Coordinator of Inclusion and Accompanying Measures)** and **Louis Cantuel, (Manager of Public Relations)** provided an insight into the importance of partnerships and the collaboration between FEAD and the ESF from the point of view of an implementing agency. Approximately 882,000 people are welcomed in the winter by **Les Restos du Cœur**. During their 32nd campaign, 135.8 million meals were distributed. Stéphanie stressed that by linking FEAD and ESF funding through their food aid and integration project workshops, the organisation is able to target a wider range of beneficiaries, particularly marginalised people who are not reached by ESF measures. She emphasised the complementarity between their food aid and the promotion of social integration initiatives. Louis emphasised the importance of volunteers, describing them as the link between end recipients and the organisation.



**“A crucial link between FEAD and ESF is the presence and importance of volunteers. I believe FEAD to be one of the most efficient resources at European level due to the force of the volunteers. Studies show that with their help, our organisation can turn 1 euro of public funds into 6 euros of social action. We need to encourage and preserve volunteering.”**

*Louis Cantuel*

## Session 4 – Parallel Workshops

### Workshop A – Building partnerships between FEAD and ESF initiatives

**Charlotte Ruitinga, Senior Research Manager, Ecorys**, facilitated a participatory “World Café” session for participants to discuss in more depth existing or potential partnerships between FEAD and ESF projects. The sessions centred around four questions: How to identify potential (ESF-funded) partners for collaboration? How to build a partnership with an (ESF-funded) initiative? How to manage a partnership with an (ESF-funded) initiative? and How to maintain a partnership and ensure it is sustainable?

The session started with the presentation of two examples of successful FEAD-ESF partnerships. First, **Katriina Lehtovaara & Juuka Haapakoski** presented the project **“Cheers for Health”**, which combines FEAD-funded food distribution with health support. In addition to the distribution of FEAD-funded food items, the project offers a free elementary health check-up for unemployed people (which has been made a legal requirement in Finland). Cheers for Health has hired a nurse thanks to ESF funding. The project also provides personal assistance and guidance to FEAD beneficiaries for filling in health forms, and helps refer them to the relevant mainstream health services.

Next, **David Ursa** presented the project **HORESOL** as well as the social grocery store that his organisation is running. Thanks to ESF funding, HORESOL provides cooking vocational training to up to 12 trainees at a time for a period of 6 months. HORESOL trainees use FEAD-funded products to cook for host tables, and transform FEAD-funded products that can then be distributed in the social grocery store. FEAD beneficiaries can eat at the host tables at a reduced cost, and are encouraged to become HORESOL trainees. Finally, the project creates and distributes recipe sheets for FEAD commodities that FEAD beneficiaries can follow easily.





Key elements **to identify potential partners** that were discussed include:

- To map the need of your recipients and identify the gap in the support you provide.
- From there, to set out the criteria your partner should meet.
- To identify potential partners, one can contact their Managing Authority or go through the network of umbrella organisations, do peer-to-peer networking, conduct internet research, etc.

Steps to be taken **for building partnerships** were identified as follows:

- To clearly define the role and responsibilities of each partner.
- To identify the needs of both partners and the kind of support they can bring each other.
- To institute clear communication and dialogue between partners.
- Because it is more challenging for smaller NGOs to build an ESF-FEAD partnership, they should not hesitate to ask for guidance from their Managing Authority or from the EU.

Key elements that were found to be important to **manage a partnership** include:

- To clearly assign a coordinating role to one of the entities of the partnership, and clearly define roles more generally.
- Where possible, to set up contractual arrangements.
- To maintain regular and clear communication between all actors involved.
- To trust your partner and value their expertise.

To ensure the **partnership is sustainable**, participants highlighted the following components:

- Regular meetings with your partner, online if need be.
- Investment in the capacity of the partner (e.g. by going beyond the scope of the original project if there is room to do so).
- Securing funding for the future, while the project is still ongoing.
- Remaining flexible and adaptable over the course of the project.
- Innovation.

## **Workshop B – Building partnerships with the local community**

This session, led by **facilitator Magda Tancau, Development Officer at the European Anti-Poverty Network**, aimed to explore the manner in which partnerships can be built with local community actors. The session was divided in two parts.

### **Part 1 - Presentation of FEAD-funded initiatives**

Three FEAD-funded initiatives in which partnerships have played an essential role in the success of the initiative were highlighted.

## 1. OPERATING A SOCIAL SHOP

**Matilde Bellomi, Project Management, Caritas Diocesana Veronese** spoke about a project run by Caritas Verona in Italy, which links food distribution with accompanying measures. During the presentation, she highlighted the importance of coordination between different partner organisations which offer accompanying measures in order to overcome fragmentation and reduce overlaps between services related to food assistance.



## 2. CHEFS WITHOUT BORDERS

**Stanislav Mrožek, Head of the Centre for Social Services for Homeless People in Třinec** presented a project bringing together FEAD end recipients from local asylum houses in the town of Třinec in Czech Republic, to cook three-course lunches using FEAD end products. The participants subsequently go into the local community and share the meals they've cooked with locals. Stanislav highlighted the value of being creative in thinking about how to create client-to-client initiatives where the recipients themselves are active. He stressed that participation ensures a partnership between the organisation and the marginalised groups themselves, ultimately ensuring active participation and dignity on the part of the end recipients.

## 3. ANIMA

**Liudmila Hahn, City Coordinator and Yanitsa Treja, Migrant Advisor** integrated the perspective of both the local authority and the partner organisation in presenting how the FEAD-funded ANIMA project is run. Their goal is to promote the social integration of migrants by facilitating access to established social support structures. The project features cooperation with several municipal departments, and is one of few in Germany coordinated by the city administration. This is a part of the action plan of the City of Mannheim's integration policies to support socially deprived mobile citizens from southeast Europe.



The session ended with an interactive Q&A with the presenters, encompassing enquiries about the sustainability of the projects, the viability of electronic vouchers and effective methods of outreach.

## Part 2 - Interactive exercise

Part two of the interactive exercise featured an activity that gave the delegates the opportunity to explore the complexities of building partnerships. Participants were given 50 minutes to discuss and present their ideas in a 3-minute presentation. Final ideas included:

### 1. Support to homeless people:

Participants decided to focus on how to target a very specific group, namely homeless people with addiction and substance abuse. The proposition involved setting up a self-help group. The participants concluded that this did not require a wide range of partners – however it was crucial that the municipality was involved. The participants incorporated recommendations from previous presentations and underlined the need to set up a structure with a clear delegation of tasks, roles and timeframes. They also stressed the need to remember their common goal (the end recipients) across the different partners involved.

### 2. Language training for migrant children:

The participants envisioned a partnership between volunteer teachers (individual partners) and educational institutions and local authorities (institutional partners) to finance small-scale integration projects like language training for migrant children. The initiative would involve planning cultural activities for the children, with occasional partners like local libraries and universities involved in providing teaching materials and organising excursions.



## Session 5 - Closing plenary session

The closing plenary session brought all participants together for a wrap up of the day, and to reflect on the presentations and discussions that took place during the day. The facilitators of workshops A and B presented the main elements of learning from their respective sessions. Representatives from workshop B then presented the fictive projects and partnerships they had conceptualised during the session to the rest of the participants.

Following these presentations, Jan invited the **Food Bank Federation** to present the results from a survey they conducted among their members. The main added value of FEAD, according to the respondents, is the concrete possibility of working together with different organisations to the benefits of the most deprived. This flexibility for partnerships enables the EU to get closer to its beneficiaries and address their basic needs more efficiently, by working through charities. **Marie-Anne Paraskevas, Senior Policy Officer, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission** reiterated the European Commission's commitment to maintain the specificity of FEAD collaboration under the new financing period, including the continuation of the FEAD network.

Jan Aulehle concluded the meeting by reminding participants about the next two Network Meetings of the year:

- Network Meeting 12 about **accompanying measures** will take place on 4 and 5 October in Malta.
- Network Meeting 13 about **homelessness**, organised jointly with the FEANTSA Ending Homelessness Awards 2018, will take place on 6 and 7 November in Brussels.

# Keep in touch! – Join the FEAD Network

The FEAD Network is an active community of practice with lively exchange of experiences and shared learning. It allows the sharing of tools, ideas and resources that can help deliver the fund successfully.

The Network discusses all aspects of planning, managing and delivering activities across Europe. Conversations within the FEAD Network can cover any theme related to the role of the FEAD in the fight against poverty, for example food aid, child poverty, issues relating to migration, access to social services or assistance for older people.

By joining the Network, you'll be able to interact with people who do similar work to you in different European countries – wherever you are. You will also have the opportunity to continue the discussions arising in the Network Meetings online.

## Ways to keep in touch

The FEAD Network has moved to a new online community on Facebook. The new Group is ideal for sharing content and referring colleagues to the group. Keep an eye out for new content including Facebook Live, vlogs and prizes.

[Facebook.com/groups/FEADNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/groups/FEADNetwork)

Stay up to date with news, sign up by visiting and signing up to: [uk.ecorys.com/feadnetwork](http://uk.ecorys.com/feadnetwork)

Email us: [Fead.Network@ecorys.com](mailto:Fead.Network@ecorys.com)



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**We look forward to hearing from you!**

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