European Commission

Fund for
European Aid
to the Most Deprived

Meeting report

'Different Approaches to FEAD Delivery'

15th FEAD Network Meeting

5 April 2019, Brussels

Social Europe

Acknowledgements

Contents

15th FEAD Network Meeting – 'Different Approaches to FEAD Delivery'

Pentahotel, Brussels

5 April 2019

On 5 April 2019, the European Commission hosted the 15th FEAD Network Meeting in Brussels where participants discussed different approaches to FEAD delivery. The meeting brought together the EU-wide network of FEAD stakeholders, including: FEAD Managing Authorities; partner organisations; other local, regional and national actors; European Commission representatives; EU-level partner organisations; and the wider EU community. The meeting was organised by Ecorys on behalf of the European Commission and welcomed 90 delegates from 23 countries across Europe. All speaker presentations can be found here.

Welcome from the European Commission

The meeting was moderated by **Nigel Meager, Principal Associate Fellow of the Institute for Employment Studies (IES),** who warmly welcomed participants, outlining the agenda and aims of the meeting.

Next, **Marie-Anne Paraskevas, Senior Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion**, extended a warm welcome to participants and thanked them for the continuous support shown by the FEAD Network. She announced that the European Commission's proposal for a regulation on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)[1] was provisionally agreed with minor changes from both the Council and European Parliament, and trilogue negotiations are expected to start in October. Ms Paraskevas mentioned possible changes in the context of the new funding period, including a change in the Network's name. Lastly, she encouraged the Network to share their views and feedback regarding future FEAD activities in advance of the new terms of reference for the upcoming contract, which will be published at the end of 2019.

Next, **Jan Behrens, Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion,** presented the findings of two recently published reports on FEAD. Firstly, he presented the European Commission staff working document on the mid-term evaluation of FEAD.[2] The evaluation confirms that FEAD is effectively providing assistance to the most deprived and is able to adapt to emerging needs. In the context of the preparation of the ESF+ proposal, the report recommends further simplification and reducing administrative burden.

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[1] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2018)625154
[2] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=9331&langId=en

Secondly, Mr Behrens presented the European Court of Auditors' (ECA) special report on FEAD, published on 3 April 2019 on the findings of which feedback is very welcome.. The report notes that compared to the previous programme, FEAD has developed a social inclusion approach. The ECA report highlights that social inclusion measures and accompanying measures are not sufficiently measurable, and notes that only four Member States adopted OP II measures. The report issues three recommendations addressed to Member States and the Commission: to better target aid distribution to specific groups; to better safeguard social inclusion measures for recipients of basic material assistance; and, to improve the assessment of social inclusion of FEAD end recipients through monitoring.[3]

FEAD 'Network News'

Jitka Dolezalova, FEAD Network Coordinator, Ecorys, provided a brief update on the upcoming FEAD events and activities. She invited participants to get in touch with the FEAD Network team to provide input related to the different activities, including contributions to the Case Study Catalogue 2019. She also reminded participants to refer to the FEAD website for the latest information and resources, and to join the FEAD Facebook group to actively engage in the online conversation through dedicated activities such as the #ProfileOfTheMonth or #FacesOfFEAD. The Facebook group is composed of over 430 members, and has become the go-to source for up-to-date news and information, exchange of ideas and sharing of best practices.

Calendar of upcoming FEAD Network Meetings 2019:
- 16th Meeting: 4-5 June, Vilnius, Lithuania – 'Helping older people in poverty: FEAD initiatives'
- 17th Meeting: end of September/early October, Brussels – '4 years of FEAD' (tbc)
- 18th Meeting: 7-8 November, Brussels – 'Monitoring and evaluation' (tbc)

Panel 1: Identification of eligible end recipients: good practices and challenges

The first panel presented different Managing Authorities' approaches to the definition and identification of eligible end recipients of FEAD funding. Under the FEAD Regulation, Member States have the flexibility to define the most deprived persons according to objective criteria and after consultation with relevant stakeholders.

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[3] https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=%7bDAEB93F5-2B71-45D0-B787-47919710EF63%7d

The first speaker, **Tom Anthuenis, Head of the Belgian Managing Authority, Federal Public Planning Service for Social Integration (PPS SI),** outlined Belgium's approach, using a wide reaching targeting method for the identification of end recipients which is not specified at the Operational Programme level. The end recipients are identified in collaboration with Local Public Centres for Social Welfare (PCSW) and NGOs, taking into account all sources of real income and regular expenses to determine the status of people living under the poverty threshold against this metric.

Presenting a contrasting approach, **Zenonas Klerides, Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, Managing Authority, Cyprus,** outlined the case of Cyprus opting to target aid at the Operational Programme level to deprived public school students in all levels of education. Having only a small operational programme (EUR 4.6 million) at their disposal, the Managing Authority decided to set up projects directly targeted at this specific group, designed in collaboration with the Social Welfare Services.
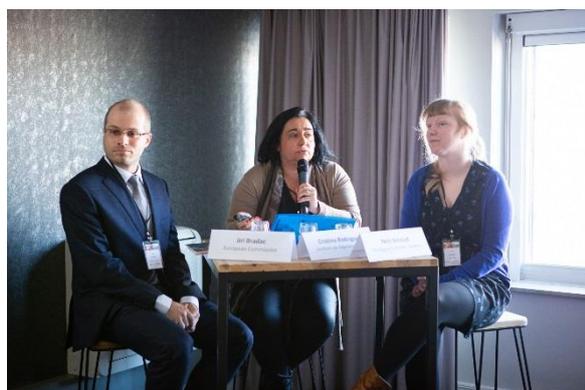
George Pittalis, Ministry of Education and Culture, FEAD Partner Organisation, Cyprus, further outlined how Cyprus' two programmes "Free Daily Breakfast in Public Schools" and "Baby's dowry" are being implemented on the ground. Similar to Belgium, Cyprus uses the eligibility criteria of the guaranteed minimum income measure to identify and select recipients. The selection of recipients is conducted through interviews with school headmasters and parents, making it possible to identify the specific needs of recipients in order to tailor assistance. The administrative burden was highlighted as a challenge, which in some cases might discourage recipients who are in need of assistance to apply.

Panel 2: Different types of delivery chains with a focus on procurement

The second panel was led by **Alessandra Cancedda, Senior Policy Expert, Ecorys**, and focused on different designs of FEAD delivery chains as well as different practices in relation to procurement. Four cases were presented highlighting the various types of actors involved and their respective roles, the challenges of accessing remote areas, and procurement practices involving socially and environmentally responsible measures.

Cristina Rodrigues, Director of the Programme Support Unit of the Social Security Institute (ISS IP), FEAD Intermediary Body, presented the delivery chain in Portugal and the related procurement practices. Portugal has devised a territorial planning strategy based on a study of municipalities to identify people in need. Based on the study, food package contents are determined by the National Directorate of Health in consultation with relevant civil society organisations. In addition, the Operational Programme aims to support the end recipients to live a healthier lifestyle by providing high nutritional value foods. The case study highlighted the collaboration between the social security information system and FEAD management to efficiently target recipients.

Sari Niemi, Senior Officer, Finnish Food Authority, FEAD Managing Authority, Finland, described the delivery chain system in Finland, implemented by 20 partner organisations. Representing one of these partners, **Noora Limnell, a volunteer at Kainuu's Citizen Centre,** outlined the implementation and delivery process of the programme on the ground. She highlighted the obstacles encountered in delivery in remote areas of the region due to long distances by road, a lack of public transportation and bad weather. She acknowledged the important role of the volunteers.

The next speaker, **Nele Bossuyt, Federal Public Planning Service for Social Integration (PPS SI), FEAD Managing Authority, Belgium,** presented a type of procurement practice that aims to embed social and environmentally responsible practices. The food programme in Belgium has been designed to include different criteria, for example: avoiding the procurement of food products from certain endangered species; prohibiting the use of palm oil, additives, or GMOs; including at least two fair trade and organic products; or taking into account CO_2 emissions in the transportation of goods. The implementation of these practices has identified related challenges including the higher prices associated with these products, the cost of environmental experts, as well as the existence of criteria in public procurement administrative procedures which increase the time needed for monitoring and might delay the delivery of products. In conclusion, Ms Bossuyt stated the most difficult challenge is to strike the right balance between sustainability of programmes and providing adequate quantities for the most deprived, delivered on time.

The last speaker, **Jiří Bradáč, Project Officer, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic,** outlined the procurement process in Czech Republic where projects are designed in close collaboration with NGOs and food banks. The programme runs with suppliers covering four groups of products (food, hygiene, basic household items and textiles). In addition, the Ministry adopted a socially responsible public procurement approach. In the case of FEAD, the principle is applied in the public procurement of clothing where one of the requirements is membership of the Fair Wear Foundation.

A Q&A session concluded the panel. The moderator invited **Anna Lupi, Legal and Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission** to join the stage as the Commission representative expert on public procurement. Anna Lupi explained that the Directorate-General for Environment has devised tools and support initiatives aimed at helping National Authorities set green, social and innovative public procurements policies and practices[4] and has developed a series of 'EU Green Public Procurement criteria'. Procuring authorities may choose, according to their needs and ambition level, to include all or only some of these requirements in their tender documentation, including in relation to food.[5] The European Commission has also developed a handbook on Green Public Procurement to help public authorities buy goods and services with a lower environmental impact.[6]

In addition, Ms Lupi referenced the Swedish criteria guidelines on sustainability of public procurement and invited the Network to refer to it as guidance.[7]

Workshop on electronic vouchers: good practices and challenges

The workshop on electronic vouchers was moderated by **Florence Tornincasa, Information and Events Officer, European Anti-Poverty Network,** and gave participants the opportunity to ask questions throughout the session via an online tool (Mentimeter). Under the current programming period, FEAD delivery through vouchers is not supported, however, these are likely to be eligible under the new ESF+ Regulation, as proposed by the Commission. Therefore, the aim of the session was:
- To introduce voucher measures (including e-cards) to FEAD actors who might not be familiar with this delivery mode, by providing examples of existing good practice in three countries.
- To provide an opportunity for reflection and exchange of views about the benefits and challenges of this delivery mode.

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[4] https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/25984
[5] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/eu_gpp_criteria_en.htm
[6] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/buying_handbook_en.htm
[7] https://www.upphandlingsmyndigheten.se/en/sustainable-public-procurement/sustainable-procurement-criteria/

The first voucher-related initiative was presented by **Susana Gende Feely and Maria Jesús Gil Meneses, Spanish Red Cross,** who outlined the Red Cross initiative launched in 2012 as an additional measure to FEAD in response to the increasing influx of people in need during the economic crisis. The initiative allows recipients to use electronic cards to purchase products in Carrefour supermarkets in Spain, and its design includes a personalised plan to support beneficiaries (i.e. monitoring and guidance on how to use cards). A similar initiative by Caritas Barcelona was also highlighted during the session. This initiative started in November 2013 using pre-paid visa electron bank cards to allow beneficiaries purchase goods in multiple locations.

The following speaker, **Kärt Mere, European Anti-Poverty Network Estonia**, presented a voucher system implemented by a local government in a municipality in Estonia. The region is home to 8 000 people spread across 100 villages where food packages are only delivered twice a year, making the storage of fresh or perishable products challenging. As an additional measure to FEAD, the voucher system was designed to deliver products in emergency situations. Through a guarantee letter issued by the local government, beneficiaries receive an allowance to purchase food products and goods in local shops and pharmacies. In addition, assistance is available to offer additional support and guidance of beneficiaries at these locations. So far, 46 people have benefited from this system in 2019.

The last case was presented by **Olivia Geymond, Ecorys**, who gave a brief overview of the long-established American electronic voucher system, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Managed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), since 2014 it has allowed e-benefit transfers in all states whereby recipients receive a "credit card" with allowance which can be used in authorised shops. The spending is

deducted from their social benefits account and retailers are credited directly, reducing the administrative burden.

Following the presentations, the lead facilitator opened the Q&A supported by an online interactive tool to facilitate the debate. Some of the questions raised generated through the on line tool, included issues around investing in local shops vs. big supermarket chains, the inclusion of social inclusion measures within voucher systems, trust vs. control of beneficiaries, how to cover rural areas, and the challenges of meeting monitoring requirements by Managing Authorities. The live online survey responses showed that only 23% of delegates were aware of voucher practices being used in their countries (France, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania and Portugal were mentioned as examples).

'At the end of the session, delegates were asked if they would consider introducing vouchers as a part of FEAD in the future. 39% said 'yes' and 35% said 'maybe', which shows that the interest in this alternative delivery mode is high.

Case study market place

The case study market place session explored interesting approaches surrounding the effective delivery of food and material assistance in FEAD. Four market "stalls" were set up where different case studies were presented. Participants had the opportunity to attend two out of the four presentations and participate in small sub-group discussions. Each market stall focused on a distinct aspect of food and material assistance delivery practices. Facilitators noted down the key learning points of the discussions.

Case study 1: Solidarity supermarkets for dignified food distribution

José Luis Diez del Corral, Spanish Federation of Food Banks (FESBAL), Spain, presented the Food Distribution Centre (CDA) initiative created in the Spanish region of Girona in 2009. CDAs are set up in premises of town councils, arranged like small supermarkets, and aim to dignify the situation of deprivation and delivery of food. Through a credit system and allocation of points managed by the Social Services, people at risk of social exclusion can have access to a variety of products. Food products are mostly supplied by the FEAD programme, together with donations from the agri-food industry, surplus supermarket food, and additional products that are difficult to obtain by other means are purchased by the CDA.

The CDAs are run by a group of volunteers who offer additional support to families by providing advice on how to make the most out of their shopping cart. The initiative offers workshops to show beneficiaries how to make the most out of the food products and to help beneficiaries manage their income and expenses. In addition, the initiative has been a platform for individuals at risk of social exclusion to find employment, as thanks to the CDAs they can receive income and training over two years through insertion contracts. Overall, the initiative has had a positive impact, demonstrating the potential of collaboration between companies, third sector and public authorities, dignified delivery, improving logistics and distribution control. The group highlighted a similar practice of solidarity supermarkets implemented by the Secours Populaire Français.

Case study 2: Provision of fresh food

Eleni Fotopoulou, National Institute of Labour and Human Resources, Greek Managing Authority, presented a project allowing the delivery of fresh food such as meat, fruit, vegetables or dairy products, in addition to long-life products and basic material assistance. The project started in 2016, using 5% FEAD allocation to fund a distribution system that uses refrigerators both in transport and in the warehouses. The delivery is supported by an IT stock management system, which allows quick access to up-to-date information on recipients and the delivery of products.

Participants discussed the best practice example which allows the distribution of fresh food under FEAD, a challenging practice in most countries due to the lack of storage facilities and management of public health related risks. Participants highlighted the benefits of re-distributing fresh food leftovers as well as the targeted approach to food delivery, made possible through IT software which allows profiles of recipients to be created, meaning that packages can be tailored to suit different groups of recipients.

Case study 3: Soup made with unsold vegetables

The third case study was presented by **Barbara Cerrato, Federal Public Service for Social Integration, Anti-Poverty and Social Economy, Belgium**. The pilot project of distribution of soup aims to combat food waste, social exclusion, unemployment, health issues and poverty. The project is run a by a consortium of 11 organisations (social economy enterprises) producing soup from unsold vegetables.

Participants highlighted that the project requires a lot of flexibility from partner organisations due to production and logistical reasons. Production can be challenging for social economy enterprises compared to big supermarkets. Logistical issues related to storage were highlighted related to the need for refrigeration due to limited durability (6 weeks) and seasonal availability of some products. Overall, the pilot project was welcomed as a good initiative contributing to the fight against food waste, social exclusion, poverty and unemployment. In addition, participants gained insight into social economy enterprises and their potential to improve cooperation between social enterprises, supermarkets, private and public stakeholders and other NGOs.

Case study 4: 'Ulysses' software – data collection and monitoring through digitalisation

Catherine El Arouni, Restos du Coeur, France, presented 'Ulysses', an IT software tool designed to identify the characteristics of beneficiaries to help fight social exclusion by adapting specific services to their needs. The subgroup discussion highlighted issues related to "digitalising" beneficiaries including data security and privacy (e.g. new GDPR rules), together with administrative and monitoring burdens of the system. Similar systems were shared among the group such as the Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS) in Dublin focusing on the homeless, and a practice in Hungary where the government collects data at the national level for all people in poverty who are beneficiaries.

Closing of the meeting

Moderator **Nigel Meager** closed the meeting by highlighting the main points of the day's discussions and thanking participants for their active participation. To conclude the event, participants' feedback was collected and shared through the online tool. The moderator reminded participants that the satisfaction survey would remain open after the session, through which further feedback would be collected to improve future FEAD Network meetings.

Keep in touch! Join the FEAD Network

The FEAD Network is an active community of practice, with a 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 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 will be able to interact with people who do similar work to you in different European countries – wherever you are.

To join the online network and stay up to date with news, sign up here!

Visit the European Commission webpage to learn more about the FEAD Network and find related articles and documents.

Join the FEAD Network Facebook group!

The FEAD Network has a Facebook group! The FEAD Network online community is ideal for sharing content and referring colleagues to the group. Keep an eye out for new content including Facebook Live, vlogs and prizes. We will be using Facebook as an interactive tool in future events, so sign up now to take part!

facebook.com/groups/FEADNetwork

Contact us

Visit our website: **http://ec.europa.eu/feadnetwork**

Or email us with your questions: **FEAD.Network@ecorys.com**

We look forward to hearing from you!

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