



European
Commission



Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived

Background information on 'Celebrating Five Years of FEAD'

17th FEAD Network Meeting

20 September 2019, Brussels, Belgium

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Introduction

The European Union has always been dedicated to alleviating poverty and improving the lives of its citizens. This ambition is clearly defined in the Europe 2020 strategy target of reducing poverty by 2 million in Europe until 2020, compared to the baseline year of 2008.¹ The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) is one of the key tools Member States can use, offering material and non-material assistance to the most vulnerable individuals across Europe.

The 2019 mid-term evaluation, which looked at FEAD activities implemented between 2014 and 2017, concludes that the fund successfully fulfilled its objectives.² One of the main strengths of FEAD is the large number of end recipients it has reached, exceeding the estimations laid out in its impact assessment. Additionally, FEAD actors have been demonstrating a high level of flexibility in adapting their FEAD interventions to better meet the needs of end recipients. These include adjustments to the design following the observed target groups' needs, and improvements in the FEAD implementation process. The FEAD Network has also been very active, gathering almost 1,000 members in its database, and holding Network Meetings attended by 88 delegates, on average.

The upcoming **17th FEAD Network Meeting on 20 September 2019** will celebrate five years of FEAD existence. It is an ideal opportunity for the FEAD Network to look back, take stock and reflect on the achievements of the fund, as well as on the lessons that can be drawn from five years of implementation, which can feed into the new European Social Fund +.

The meeting aims to provide a platform for a variety of stakeholders to exchange best practices, and discuss the common challenges they have faced in tackling poverty through FEAD. In supporting these objectives, this background paper seeks to provide insight into the legal basis of FEAD and its predecessor programme. It also highlights the key achievements and good practice examples across the five years of FEAD implementation. Lastly, it explores the role and advantages of the FEAD network in delivering the FEAD objectives. Despite its ambitious coverage, this paper primarily serves as a reference paper. For a more detailed review, please consult the additional studies quoted in this paper.

¹ Eurostat. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, EU-27 and EU-28, 2005-2016 \(million persons\).png](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:People_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion,_EU-27_and_EU-28,_2005-2016_(million_persons).png)

² SWD(2019) 148 final

From MDP to FEAD, and from FEAD to ESF+

The FEAD – Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived – is one of the main instruments for **alleviating severe poverty in the EU**. Its main objectives are promotion and improvement of the social cohesion and inclusion of EU citizens. The Fund shall contribute to achieving the specific objective of alleviating the worst forms of poverty, by providing non-financial assistance to the most deprived persons by food and/or basic material assistance, and social inclusion activities aiming at the social integration of the most deprived persons (Article 3 of the FEAD Regulation)³. The rationale behind FEAD is built around the idea of **providing immediate material support** to the most deprived as an essential means of relieving their poverty. In addition, the fund also has a strong focus on social inclusion of the most deprived, aiming to deliver on the principles outlined in the European Pillar of Social Rights.⁴ However, FEAD support does not, and should not be understood to, aim to replace social protection measures that could lift people out of poverty.

In a wider socio-economic context, FEAD aims to support the attainment of the Europe 2020 Strategy target. The set target concerns the reduction of the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by **20 million by 2020**, compared to the baseline year of 2008. The achievement of this target does not have a linear trajectory. In 2016, there were more people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU than in 2008.⁵ However, the number of people experiencing material deprivation has been continuously decreasing.

Prior to FEAD, a European programme for the most deprived persons (MDP) was set up in 1987, and was based on the redistribution of agriculture surpluses that Member States could use as food aid. Nineteen countries participated in MDP, while according to some estimations, around **18 million people per year** benefited from its support.⁶ MDP was seen as an important source of food aid which achieved positive results. However, due to reforms of the common agriculture policy, MDP needed to be restructured. An impact assessment conducted in 2012 suggested a need for the creation of a new fund, strongly supported by the European Parliament. Compared to MDP, FEAD introduces more flexibility by broadening the scope of the type of aid that can be provided, and by giving the Member States the opportunity to **tailor it based on the needs of target groups**. Besides food aid, which was the only aid available under MDP, Member States can also provide basic material assistance (e.g. personal hygiene products, clothes, school supplies, etc.) that could be accompanied by measures focused on **social inclusion**.⁷ In terms of management within the Commission, MDP was led by the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, while the Directorate-General of Employment and Social Affairs is in charge of FEAD. This managerial change towards **social policy governance** was also reflected at national level, where Member States followed the

³ FEAD Regulation, consolidated version: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:02014R0223-20180802>

⁴ For more information: FEAD's contribution to the delivery of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1089&newsId=9106&furtherNews=yes>

⁵ Eurostat. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:People_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion,_EU-27_and_EU-28,_2005-2016_\(million_persons\).png](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:People_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion,_EU-27_and_EU-28,_2005-2016_(million_persons).png)

⁶ SWD(2019) 148 final

⁷Article 2 of the regulation defines basic material assistance.

same approach and appointed their Ministries of Labour or Social Affairs as managing authorities.⁸

To meet the objectives of social cohesion and inclusion, FEAD implements two types of operational programmes. The Operational Programme I is focused on the provision of **food and material assistance** to the most deprived, through chosen partner organisations in Member States. The Operational Programme II aims to implement measures to **complement and strengthen national poverty alleviation and social inclusion policies**, through the provision of accompanying measures. EU allocation to the operational programmes is **€3.8 billion** for the programme period 2014-2020.⁹

A mid-term evaluation conducted in 2019 explored the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value of FEAD activities for the 2014-2017 period.¹⁰ The evaluation concludes that FEAD **successfully fulfilled** its objectives. One of the key achievements of the fund is the **large number of end recipients it has reached** (exceeding estimations laid out in the impact assessment). Moreover, FEAD managed to help those who might be omitted by mainstream social services, such as migrants and those in need of immediate assistance. It should not be forgotten, however, that FEAD support relies on limited resources (0.013% of Member States' allocation to social protection), which are not enough to lift people out of poverty sustainably. This is not its primary objective.

The implementation of FEAD-funded activities was found to be **cost effective**, although implementing bodies consider the administrative costs for monitoring, distribution and delivery to be high. FEAD rules make the service delivery swifter in case of social emergencies, compared to the European Social Fund. FEAD was also seen as **coherent and complementary** with national schemes and EU initiatives, including the Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Pillar of Social Rights. FEAD end recipients find the programme relevant for their needs. The overall conclusion was that any possible disruption of FEAD activities would produce negative impacts in many Member States where FEAD is the main source of this type of support.¹¹

Other challenges identified include the interpretation of the EU regulatory framework and the introduction of national requirements that may hinder the implementation of the fund. Consequently, these challenges, along with administrative requirements linked to data monitoring and recording, and obstacles related to national public procurement, negatively influence the programme's start-up phase, making it slower and delayed.¹²

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) published a special report on FEAD in 2019.¹³ The report which is published together with the Commission's replies, includes **recommendations** for the next programming period: (1) Aid should be better targeted; (2) Safeguarding social inclusion measures should systematically be introduced for recipients of basic material assistance; (3) The impact of FEAD support on improving the social inclusion of end recipients should be assessed.

⁸ See: https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR19_05/SR_FEAD_EN.pdf

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ SWD(2019) 148 final

¹¹ SWD(2019) 148 final

¹² COM(2018) 382 final. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1530189516904&uri=CELEX:52018PC0382>

¹³ See: https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR19_05/SR_FEAD_EN.pdf

A proposal for a regulation on the **European Social Fund +** adopted in 2018 outlines the intention to merge previously separated funding instruments into one fund. These instruments include FEAD, the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme, the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), the Health Programme and the European Social Fund. The new ESF+ should act as the EU's main instrument when it comes to **investing in people and their needs** and translating the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights into practice. The new fund also aims to strengthen synergies and avoid overlaps between previously separated instruments. Around 25% of national ESF+ resources should be allocated to measures on social inclusion and the fight against poverty, and at least 2% of national ESF+ resources should be allocated to measures targeting the most deprived, with a EU level target of 4%.¹⁴ The new ESF+ would therefore recognise the need to further fight poverty and social exclusion. Recently, the European Council agreed a partial mandate for negotiations¹⁵, and the European Parliament adopted a legislative resolution on the proposal.¹⁶ Negotiations on the proposal are due to resume in September.

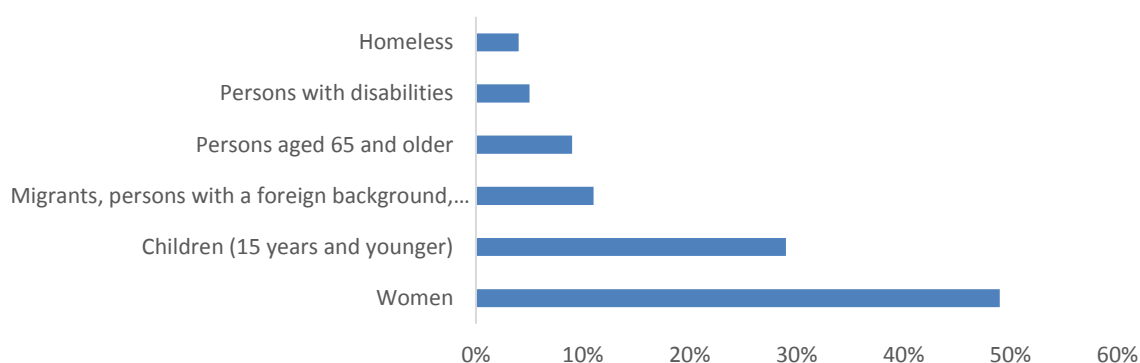
FEAD key achievements

The achievements of FEAD implementation, organised by type of operational programme, are presented below.

Operational programme I

According to the FEAD mid-term evaluation and an open public consultation with key stakeholders, FEAD food and material assistance (OPI), together with its accompanying measures to reduce social exclusion, made **a positive change** for the most deprived, particularly for those who required immediate assistance or were excluded from other types of social support measures. On average, FEAD supported almost 13 million persons per year over the 2014-2017 period. Overall, more than **1.3 million tons of food aid** were distributed to the most deprived in 22 EU Member States, including women (49%), children (29%), persons with a migrant background (11%) and other target groups (see Figure 1).¹⁷

Figure 1. Share of specific target groups supported



Source: FEAD mid-term evaluation, SFC data for period 2014-2017

¹⁴ Ibid.

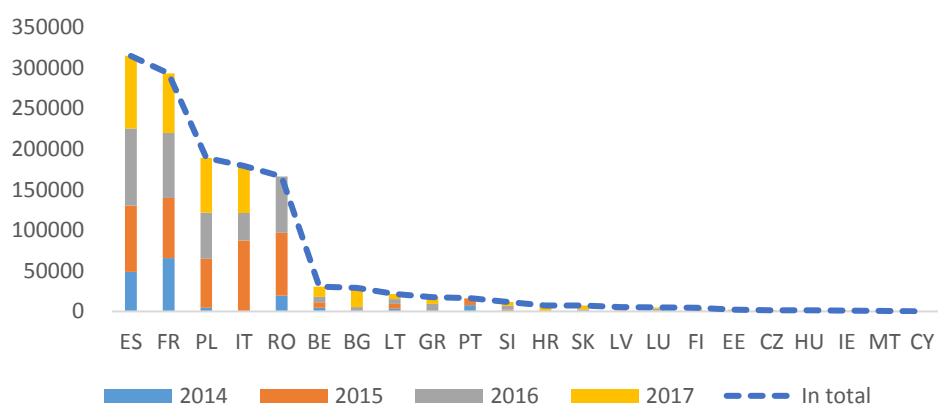
¹⁵ See: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8211-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

¹⁶ See: <https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/summary.do?id=1581197&t=e&l=en>

¹⁷ Report on the open public consultation for the FEAD mid-term evaluation (January 2018) <https://publications.europa.eu/s/fo2y>

The biggest food distributors during 2014-2017 were **Spain, France, Poland, Italy** and **Romania** (see Figure 2). In some countries, food support accounted for up to **70% of overall FEAD assistance**. Despite a slow start to public expenditure in 2014, all eligible member states (except **Romania**¹⁸) provided FEAD food support to the most deprived in 2017.

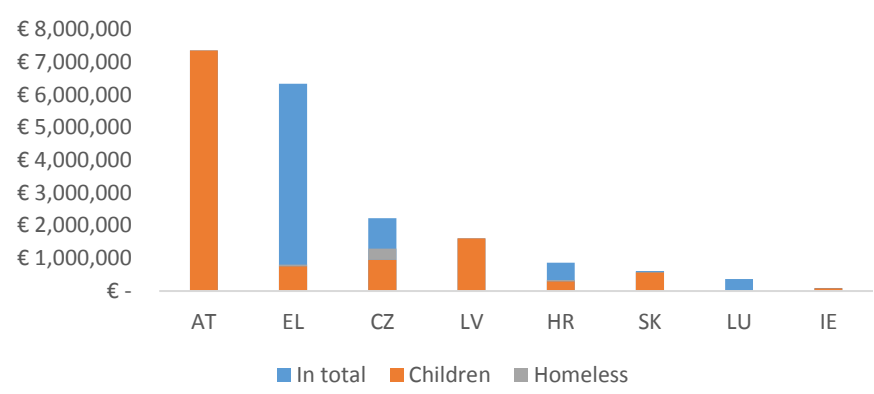
Figure 2. Amount of food distributed (in tons) by year



Source: FEAD mid-term evaluation, SFC2014 (Indicator 11: Total quantity of food support distributed)

Regarding FEAD material assistance, **Austria and Greece** are the main material support providers among EU member states (see Figure 3), accounting for more than 70% of all FEAD EU expenditure on material support (EUR 13.7 million out of a total of EUR 19.5 million). In some countries such as **Austria, Latvia and Ireland**, most of the **material assistance is distributed to children**. The overall amount of goods distributed accounts to only 3.18% of all basic material assistance, since only 8 countries are involved in material goods distribution.

Figure 3. Total monetary value of goods distributed (EUR) in 2014-2017



Source: FEAD mid-term evaluation, SFC2014 (Input indicators 15, 15a, 15b: Total monetary value of goods distributed (EUR))

The **accompanying measures** provided by **partner organisations** were introduced with FEAD in 2014 have proved to be an innovative element securing the social inclusion approach of FEAD in complementing food and material assistance. Measures vary country by country in their design, aim, scope and target group, with the provision of information about social services and guidance being the most common type of support. They require relevant experience and training to be implemented.

¹⁸ There was no FEAD delivery in 2017 in Romania.

Operational programme II

Four countries (**Germany, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands**) have chosen to implement OPII. Compared to OPI, OPII supports less end recipients, which is most likely linked to the smaller budget allocated. As shown in Table 1, **Germany, Denmark and Sweden** have provided most of their FEAD-funded social assistance support to migrants, people with a foreign background and minorities. Whilst **Sweden and Denmark** focus on homeless people in particular, **the Netherlands** concentrates their resources on helping the elderly and women.

Table 1. Total number of persons receiving social inclusion assistance per target group

Country	Total	Children	Elderly (65 years and older)	Women	Migrants, with a foreign background, minorities	Persons with disabilities	Homeless
DE	61858	6686	912	29492	45286	1729	15000
SE	1602	50	3	1102	1545	0	1546
NL	1498	0	1498	1130	445	133	0
DK	958	0	33	128	958	51	958

Source: FEAD mid-term evaluation, SFC2014 (Input indicators 20a-f: Total number of persons receiving social inclusion assistance)

Overall, based on public consultation conducted during the mid-term evaluation, more than 90% of respondents agree that **'FEAD makes a difference for the lives of the most deprived'**¹⁹. The relevance of all horizontal principles, including reduction of food waste, balanced diet, gender equality, equal opportunities, and respect to dignity and partnership, were confirmed by stakeholders. Thus, they are all included in the proposal for the new ESF+ regulation.

Lessons learned from 5 years of implementation

Over time, FEAD actors have adapted their FEAD interventions to better meet the needs of end recipients, including emerging needs. The mid-term evaluation shows that nine Member States have adapted their operational programmes.²⁰ These include adjustments in the design of the FEAD intervention, based on target groups' needs. This could include revising the targeting of end recipients or the eligibility criteria, or adjusting the composition of food and/or basic material packages. Improvements were also made in the FEAD implementation process in areas such as procurement and delivery methods, and management (administrative processes, complementary financing sources, building partnerships, allocation of responsibilities between stakeholders, monitoring and evaluation processes, etc). The following sections include examples of improvements in each of these areas.

Improvements in FEAD implementation and management process

The implementation of FEAD relies on support from partner organisations. Every country has different mechanisms in place. Over the years, several countries have improved their collaboration with partners, focusing on a more decentralised approach with regards to FEAD

¹⁹ European Commission. 2019. Mid-Term Evaluation of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. Accompanying the document, Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), p. 45.

²⁰ Impact Assessment, Accompanying the document, Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), p. 45

distribution, end recipient targeting or delivering accompanying measures. In **Hungary**, the roles of partner organisations were redefined, whilst **Romania** and **Slovakia** employed local actors to help identify recipients.

Several countries improved their distribution and delivery mechanisms. In **Belgium**, delivery points were decreased and centralised, whilst **Bulgaria** and **Lithuania** expanded the frequency of food distribution over the year. **France** reduced its transport and storage costs, whilst **Estonia** and **Croatia** adopted their delivery modes to suit the needs of the end recipients, providing home delivery where needed. Other improvements in the implementation process were achieved in **Belgium, Germany, Greece, Hungary**, and **Sweden**, including changes in procurement, monitoring and evaluation.²¹

Adjusting the composition of food and/or basic material packages

Regarding food composition, many countries improved the variety of food products they distribute, often based on the needs of target groups. **France** conducted food tastings to guarantee the quality of food aid, and **Malta** adopted food packages after visiting end recipients in their homes. To cater for a healthier diet, most countries increased the amount of fruit and vegetables provided from one year to the next, and **Lithuania** changed their food package to provide healthier products, including meat and fish as well as fruits and vegetables. In 2017, the **Czech Republic, Spain** and **Latvia** introduced baby food items. **Romania** introduced hot meals, whilst **Bulgaria** has increased the amount of hot lunches distributed per year to 8 million in 2017. Some countries have updated their food and material assistance packages every year (**Belgium**, for example).

Revision of targeting of end recipients or eligibility criteria

More countries are providing basic material assistance every year. **Cyprus, Slovakia** and **Latvia** have expanded their operational programmes to support families with infants or multiple children by providing hygiene packages. The **Czech Republic** increased their material assistance offer to homeless people, including kitchenware, clothing and linen.²² **Ireland** provides welcome packs for newly arrived migrants, and school and hygiene packages to low income families.

Many countries, such as **Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Poland** and **Romania**, expanded their target group definitions and scope to be able to provide FEAD food and material assistance to a more diverse group of individuals. **Bulgaria**, for example, now additionally supports people with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities and single mothers. **Poland** includes the elderly, whilst **Cyprus** targets families with newborns. **Estonia** updates the scope of its target group on an annual basis.

Adjusting accompanying measures to combat social exclusion

Partner organisations have adapted the delivery of accompanying measures to achieve greater social inclusion of different target groups. Throughout the years, accompanying measures were improved based on the feedback received from participants. Changes are

²¹ Ibid.

²² Coffey & Ramboll, 2019. *Detailed implementation report of the operational programmes co-financed by the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived in 2017*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

mostly motivated by a desire to be more inclusive of target groups, improve procurement and delivery methods, strengthen the skills/capacities of partner organisations and reduce administrative burden.

Accompanying measures are delivered individually or in groups, which allow participants to engage with other people, share their experiences and combat social isolation. Partner organisations in **Finland** stated that food events encouraged social interactions and mutual help. In **Slovenia**, two FEAD end recipients initiated a cooking workshop and opened a library for other FEAD beneficiaries after participating in FEAD-related accompanying measures.

Most of the accompanying measures include counselling and information sessions regarding psychological, financial and social support, providing advice on a healthy diet and nutrition and/or social services. This type of support was provided in almost all member states. In **Spain**, more than 1 million brochures about social services were distributed in person and online. Additional activities were organised in **Malta**, including a scheme to help low-income individuals to access housing. **Hungary** focused their psychological support on people with mental health issues and the homeless.

Participants could also improve their skills in cooking, budget management and recycling, or learn a language. In **Bulgaria**, 30% of participants who attended counselling agreed that they were more informed about the management of their family budget. Workshops on household skills received more than 170 000 participants in 2017, of whom 70% were women. Additionally, FEAD beneficiaries could attend cultural and social events, or participate in educational or leisure activities. In **Lithuania**, summer camps were organised for children. In **Luxemburg**, leisure activities such as festivals, Christmas celebrations or picnics were organised.

The positive effects of accompanying measures are even more visible among marginalised groups of society. Moreover, many FEAD beneficiaries would otherwise have limited information about social services, the local job market or other activities provided through different funds. However, the lack of trained professionals within partner organisations hinders the achievements of accompanying measures in combatting social exclusion of the most deprived.

Social support measures delivered in **Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands** and **Sweden** were mostly targeted at disadvantaged groups, such as newly arrived migrants, the homeless or the elderly. Counselling and support measures were provided to newly arrived migrants in **Germany**, exceeding targets for the 2014-2020 period in 2017 already. **Denmark** and **Germany** implement projects focused on improving the conditions of homeless people. In **Denmark**, almost 1,000 people were provided with access to shelters and social services, despite challenges in registration and identification. The **Netherlands** intensified their efforts to engage the elderly in social inclusion activities offered by various NGOs and communities. Despite the positive outcomes of the projects, further efforts are needed to engage older people with migrant backgrounds, which has proved difficult.

The role of the Network in learning exchange

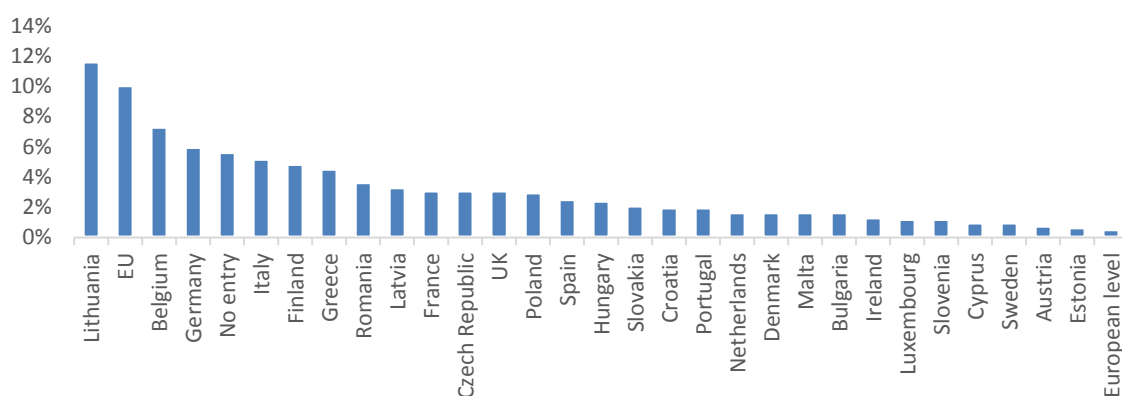
Of the FEAD budget over the 2014-2020 period, 0.35 % is allocated to technical assistance under the direct management of the Commission. This technical assistance is focused on the

promotion and exchange of good practices. Article 10 of the FEAD Regulation mandates that the Commission facilitates, including by means of a website, the following:

- exchange of experience;
- capacity building;
- networking;
- dissemination of relevant outcomes in the area of non-financial assistance to the most deprived persons;
- dissemination of relevant outcomes, reports and information related to the Fund.

The FEAD Network was created in 2016 to facilitate the exchange of experience, capacity building and networking between key stakeholders related to the implementation of FEAD, as mandated by Article 10 of the FEAD Regulation. Since then, the FEAD Network has become an open membership community for people providing assistance to the most deprived in Europe. This has proved particularly valuable for partner organisations that do not have the opportunity to exchange at European level otherwise.²³ Over time, the FEAD network has significantly contributed to the exchange of good practice and mutual learning, increasing FEAD's added value in the process.²⁴

The FEAD network database includes almost **1,000 members** with the highest number of members from **Lithuania, Belgium and Germany** in 2018.



Source: Ecorys, 2018. Support for establishment of the FEAD platform for exchange of experience and dissemination of outcomes. Final report.

Up until September 2019, 16 FEAD Network Meetings have taken place across Europe, averaging 88 participants per meeting. Participants are encouraged to engage in **in-depth discussions and exchanges of experiences** to gain a deeper understanding of a wide range of issues associated with FEAD implementation, as illustrated in Figure 4. As some of the network meetings take place in different member states, **project visits** continue to be a valuable source of information and first-hand learning. Due to the interactive nature of the meetings a variety of **case studies** from across the EU are presented, which are very popular amongst FEAD Network members. The Network Meetings are also a privileged opportunity to

²³ European Commission. 2019. Mid-Term Evaluation of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. Accompanying the document, Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), p. 42.

²⁴ European Commission. 2019. Commission Staff Working Document, Mid-term Evaluation of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. SWD(2019) 149 final.

discuss the future of the fund in the new programming period, as well as implementation ideas for the future.

Some remarkable network meetings include the 12th FEAD network meeting held in October 2018, where seven Member States' authorities or partner organisations presented and shared their respective approaches to implementing accompanying measures. Participants also got the opportunity to take part in project visits. Also in 2018, for the first time, a network meeting was combined with the award ceremony for the FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless) 'Ending Homelessness Awards 2018'.

Figure 4. Word cloud based on topics from previous FEAD network meetings



Source: Ecorys²⁵

The feedback received throughout the years from participants shows that network members have been continuously learning about **new methods and approaches** for delivering FEAD in other countries, have gained information on issues concerning particular target groups and access to EU funding, and have exchanged information with other organisations (see Figure 5).

Over the years, FEAD delegates have also had the opportunity to communicate online, in between face-to-face events. **Online exchange** remained an activity that involved a smaller group of members. After transitioning from Yammer to Facebook in 2018, the FEAD's Facebook Group has now reached **500 members**, acting as an additional platform for discussion and learning exchange. In addition, the network is kept informed about its activities through the **FEAD Network webpage** and **newsletters**. The FEAD web pages are continuously updated creating a library of FEAD Network activities. Moreover, the FEAD Network is kept informed of the most relevant outcomes, latest reports and information in relation to the Fund.

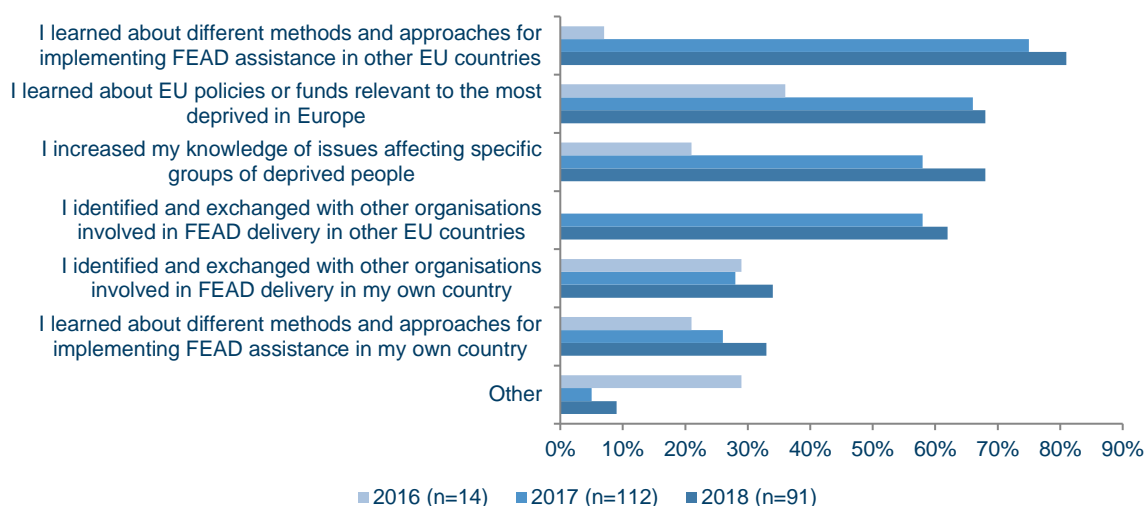
The Network further facilitates the dissemination of information and relevant outcomes through a number of **policy outputs**. Prior to each FEAD Network Meeting, **background papers** are distributed to allow delegates to learn about the thematic focus of the meetings and to prepare for the discussions. In addition, the Network produces **thematic dossiers** that contain relevant

²⁵ Data from Network Meetings Satisfaction Surveys (2016-2018)

practical examples and lessons on a given theme to illustrate the key learnings emerging from the Network discussions. As well as providing further inspiration to FEAD Network members, they help reach a wider audience of policymakers, practitioners and researchers. Lastly, the **FEAD Case Study Catalogue** published on an annual basis, includes a selection of 28 inspiring practices from the ground. This allows FEAD Network members to showcase good practice from their operational programmes and/or projects; to promote them at European level, and to contribute to knowledge-exchange in the process.

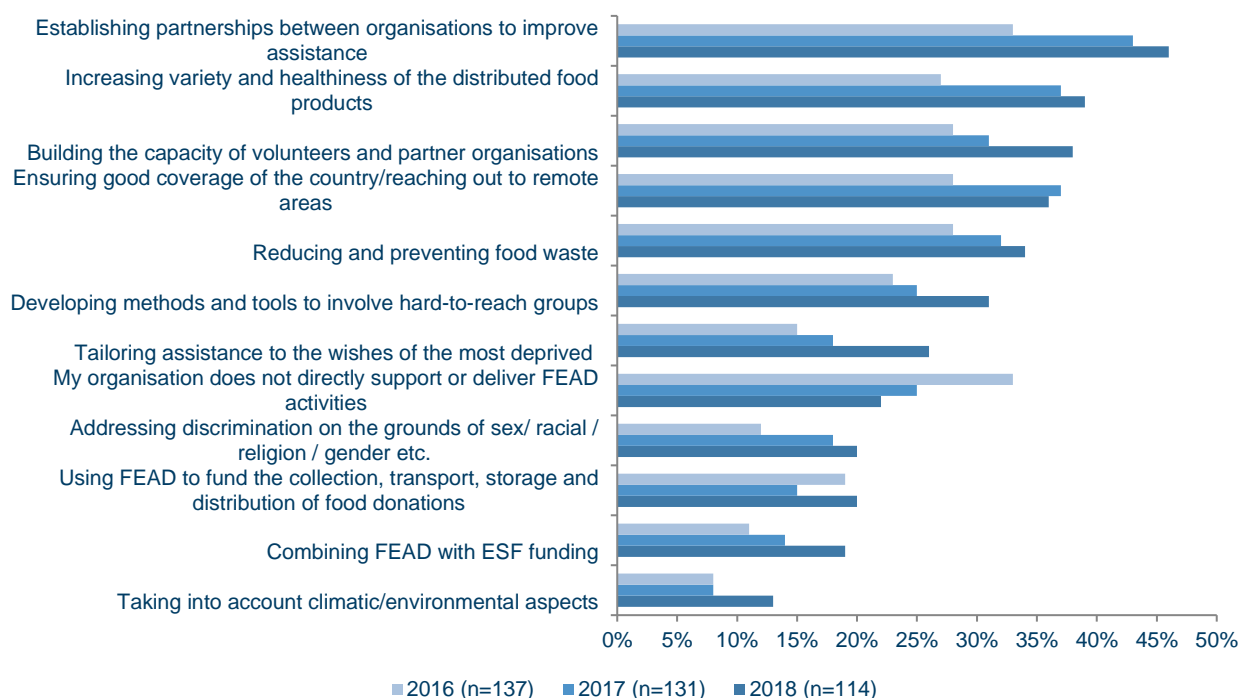
Findings from the **FEAD Network annual survey** demonstrate the learning process that has taken place since 2016. Over the last few years, FEAD members have increasingly supported or delivered activities aimed at **improving the quality of FEAD assistance** (see Figure 6). As indicated in Figure 6 below, network members have increased the quality and healthiness of food products, improved the capacity of volunteers and partner organisations, and ensured a good coverage reaching out to those in remote areas.

Figure 5. Results achieved by participating in FEAD Network activities in 2016-2018 (multiple response, %)



Source: FEAD Network survey reports 2017, 2018, 2019

Figure 6. Activities supported or delivered aimed at improving the quality of FEAD assistance in 2016, 2017 and 2018 (multiple response, %)



Source: FEAD Network survey reports 2017, 2018, 2019

Conclusions

The 17th FEAD Network Meeting provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on the results achieved by five years of FEAD implementation. The meeting will allow members to look at the learning generated, and at examples of how FEAD operational programmes and projects have been adapted over time to better meet the needs of end recipients. As the current programming period is coming to an end, there is a strong interest in the future of FEAD, its place in the context of ESF+ regulation, and the sustainability of FEAD results in general.

Some of the lessons learned have already informed the design of ESF+. In particular, the proposal for a regulation on ESF+:

- maintains the provision that Member States and beneficiaries shall define objective criteria related to the needs of the most deprived persons, to continue focusing on those who are most in need;
- preserves the flexibility to implement “FEAD” programmes by leaving the definition of the ‘most deprived’ and the content of the support to Member States; by maintaining flat rates; and by introducing the new possibility to use electronic vouchers;
- maintains proportionate monitoring provisions and deletes some of the current indicators. Furthermore, the proposal for a Common Provision Regulation foresees provisions regarding single audit arrangements;
- foresees better information and capacity-building of programme authorities and partners;
- maintains the horizontal principles of FEAD.

Within this context, a number of questions may be discussed by the stakeholders:

- What are the key achievements and lessons learned from five years of FEAD implementation?
- How can ESF+ best capitalise on the lessons learned through FEAD, in terms of support to the most deprived against poverty and social exclusion?

References for consultation:

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European Commission: Summary of the annual implementation reports for the operational programmes cofinanced by the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived in 2017
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1089&newsId=9383&furtherNews=yes>

Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. Diverse approaches to supporting Europe's most deprived. Case study catalogues in 2016, 2017 and 2018

FEAD Network survey reports 2017, 2018, 2019



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