



## **FEAD Community**

### **Thematic Seminar on 'Monitoring and outreach of FEAD-funded measures for the most deprived people'**

Online, 6-7 September 2021

#### **Executive Summary**

The Thematic Seminar was the third mutual learning event of a cycle of capacity-building activities planned during the transition period (2020-2021), and aiming at improving the delivery of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) at national, regional and local level.

The event, hosted by the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs, brought together local, regional and national stakeholders involved in the implementation of the FEAD, including managing authorities, intermediate bodies, beneficiaries and partner organisations providing support, members of advisory or monitoring committees, independent experts, civil society organisations and representatives from the European Commission.

The Thematic Seminar focused on monitoring and outreach of FEAD-funded measures for the most deprived people, two aspects that can play an important role to enable the FEAD to meet its ambition to assist the most deprived people.

Monitoring and evaluation rely on consistent, comparable, and good quality data collected by the national authorities. The requirements for monitoring and evaluation of FEAD-funded activities are set out in the [FEAD Regulation](#) and the European Commission provides guidance to assist the Member States in meeting their responsibilities in this regard<sup>1</sup>. Monitoring practices and tools, in particular IT tools, are being developed within Member States to improve the efficiency of the delivery of food aid, while capturing the information required to compare and monitor the FEAD-funded activities.

Outreach is key to ensure those at the greatest risk of experiencing deprivation and poverty are reached and engaged in FEAD-funded programmes. Various outreach practices have been developed to secure the inclusion of people experiencing severe deprivation and poverty; a range of different practices and skills are needed to meet the various challenges that outreach activities seek to address.

During the Seminar, particular attention was paid to the monitoring system used by the Estonian Ministry of Finance and to the outreach practices of the Estonian Food Bank. Moreover, the European Commission presented the [Open Data Portal for](#)

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, 2015 *Guidance note on monitoring and indicators under FEAD*. Available at: [2015\\_05\\_12\\_FEAD\\_06\\_Guidance\\_note\\_on\\_monitoring\\_and\\_indicators\\_under\\_FEAD-final1.pdf](#) (europa.eu) (Accessed 14/09/2021).

[European Structural and Investment Funds](#), which gives access to data on financing and achievements under the ESI Funds 2014-2020.

The Seminar's agenda included also an overview of the thematic background paper aimed at identifying practices related to monitoring and outreach across the EU, discussing possible challenges and suggesting a way forward. Participants also looked ahead towards the new programming period and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and discussed the importance to maintain the clear focus on people and communities experiencing poverty and deprivation while widening the scope of the measures that could be provided to assist with their social inclusion.

The key messages from the Seminar can be summarised as follows:

#### ***Monitoring and evaluation of FEAD-funded measures in the Member States***

- It is crucial to identify clear objectives for the monitoring and evaluation in order to choose relevant indicators. The use of qualitative indicators can allow a deeper monitoring (e.g. the length of stay of families in a programme, the reasons for leaving a programme). However, qualitative data on the end recipients are generally more difficult to gather than quantitative data.
- The most common ways to gather data on the impact of FEAD-funded measures are the conducting of surveys with the end recipients, which should be simple and 'easy to read' for respondents; the organisation of focus groups and the use of participative methodologies engaging the end recipients; the exchanges between different registers and databases used for other social inclusion services/programmes.

#### ***Involvement of the relevant actors in monitoring and evaluation***

- Partner organisations can play a crucial role in monitoring and evaluation. For instance, they can contribute to the preparation of surveys, or help the managing authorities to approach the target group or to find relevant information. Building evaluation and monitoring capacities in partner organisations by developing appropriate tools and delivering training sessions for volunteers can be seen as useful investments.
- People working with end recipients on the ground (e.g. volunteers, social workers) and who have built a trust-based relationship with them, can provide an important source of information on the impact of FEAD-funded measures. Therefore, including them systematically in the process can enrich monitoring and evaluation.
- Involving people that have been part of the target groups or that speak the same language as the end recipients can provide useful insights to develop the monitoring activity and help overcoming language barriers.

#### ***Main challenges of monitoring and evaluation of FEAD-funded measures***

- It might be difficult to engage with some groups of the end recipients in the monitoring and evaluation process (i.e. those who do not speak the language, those who live in remote areas or have health issues or disabilities). Moreover, it is challenging to make the end recipients aware of the importance of their participation in monitoring and evaluation activities and to convey that their feedback has an impact on FEAD-funded activities and will be followed up..
- While the cooperation between different organisations and agencies and creating links between available databases can provide a more complete overview of the situation of the beneficiaries, strict data protection requirements might make the exchange of information between different agencies/organisations quite challenging.

- The shortage of resources for comprehensive and high-quality monitoring and evaluations is a common problem across the EU. The internal staff might not have the critical skills or might not have enough capacity in terms of time for carrying out monitoring activities. On the other hand, contracting an external specialised company can be expensive and exceed the budget available.
- As end recipients might participate in different schemes at the same time, it is not always simple and straightforward to isolate the impact of FEAD-funded measures on the end recipients from the impact of other interventions in place in the Member States.

### ***Reaching out to the most deprived people***

- Outreach work is important to get in contact with those who are most vulnerable, which are usually also the most difficult to reach (e.g. with no phone, internet connection or fixed residence) and provide them with FEAD-funded aid. In some cases, potential end recipients do not have the necessary information on the services that are available or are reluctant to ask for help for fear of stigmatisation or for lack of trust towards FEAD support.
- As there is no one-size fits all model, it is necessary to tailor the outreach strategy to the needs of the target group. In particular, it is important be aware of the needs of new beneficiaries (e.g. those who became beneficiaries as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic).
- The use of mobile units can allow for a better outreach to people in need where they live or spend their time (e.g. streets, public transport, day centres), as well as in rural and remote areas. The presence of relevant language and cultural skills among these mobile units are important assets to get in contact with the target groups. Online platforms and IT tools can also be used to map the services available in a region, providing an information on which areas are less 'covered' and identify needs.
- Information can be made accessible via different channels (e.g. social media, telephone calls, radio, in the street) depending on the target group. Informative material should be translated to the language of the target group and adapted to their level of literacy.

### ***Cooperation with key actors and volunteers***

- Building and strengthening partnerships with relevant actors can open opportunities for a better support to those in need. Key partners can include all the actors that are in contact with the target group, such as healthcare workers, charities, food banks, police and social services. In particular, local actors that are closer to the target group (e.g. social workers, volunteers, municipalities, local partner organisations, schools) can play an important role in the outreach, acting as a bridge between the end recipients and those delivering the food aid and accompanying measures. They can also disseminate information to the local community and carry out awareness-raising activities.
- Volunteers can play an important role but relying on them could create discontinuity in the services provided, as their involvement might be limited in time. When volunteers are involved, it is necessary to provide them with an appropriate training to ensure consistency and professionalism in the activities, but also an understanding of confidentiality and financial rules. Moreover, volunteers need to be able to use relevant equipment and facilities (e.g. office space, phone, vehicles to go to rural areas).