



FEAD Network

Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived

Meeting report

**THIRD FEAD NETWORK
MEETING: Synergies between ESF
and FEAD**

07 November 2016

Pentahotel, Chaussée de Charleroi
38, 1060, Brussels



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The third FEAD Network Meeting

On 7 October 2016, the European Commission hosted the third Network meeting in which the EU-wide network of actors involved in the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) came together to discuss issues related to the creation of synergies between FEAD and the European Social Fund (ESF). The meeting was organised by Ecorys on behalf of the European Commission. A hundred delegates from across the European Union attended the event held at the Pentahotel in Brussels, representing a range of stakeholders, including: Managing Authorities (MAs); partner organisations; other local, regional and national actors; European Commission representatives; EU-level partner organisations; the wider EU community, as well as academic and research organisations.

Session 1 – Welcome

The plenary sessions throughout the conference were moderated by **Nigel Meager, Director of the Institute for Employment Studies**. He opened the meeting with an introduction of the different components of the agenda and subsequently introduced the first speaker of the day.

Session 2 – Opening address

The opening address was given by **Zoltán Kazatsay, Deputy Director-General at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL)**. He recounted the successes of the previous Network meetings as well as noting the success of FEAD on the ground, as Member State data shows that approximately 10 million individuals annually have been reached through FEAD initiatives to date. While these results are encouraging, it was emphasised that more needs to be done to help Europe's most deprived out of poverty and that synergy between FEAD and other European funds was crucial in order to make a lasting difference. It was subsequently highlighted that ESF-funded initiatives could readily complement FEAD initiatives in order to sustainably help individuals out of poverty, and that every possible link between these specific funds would be beneficial. The FEAD regulation clearly addresses the fact that complementarity should be sought with other European funds to encourage social inclusion, and thus help individuals, beyond their basic needs for food and material assistance. The address was concluded by reaffirming the importance of building strong partnerships between actors. The European Union has offered Europeans FEAD as a tool, but partners at local level need to use it to reach individuals on the ground. Recognising that FEAD is still a relatively new tool, the Network was encouraged to discuss challenges and solutions in using FEAD funds to overcome initial teething issues and work together for a better implementation practice.



Session 3 – Network update

An overview of the latest developments in the FEAD Network was given by **Vicki Donlevy, Director at the Policy and Research Division of Ecorys UK**. She reminded the delegates of the main objectives of the Network as well as the various strategies employed in order to make the Network effective and sustainable. She noted that the Network has been growing steadily, currently counting over 800 stakeholders, and emphasised the importance of all members sharing what they learn with their national and local networks.

Network meetings

Following a successful two-day Network launch conference in June 2016, participants were asked to contribute suggestions for shaping the three subsequent Network meetings for 2016. Under the overarching theme of 'sustainable integration' these meetings cover the following thematic areas: accompanying measures under OP I (26 September), social inclusion measures under OP II (18 October) and the potential synergy between FEAD and ESF (7 November). From 2017 onwards there will be five annual Network meetings in which participants will have the opportunity to discuss operational and thematic issues, identify challenges, share good practices, and network with other FEAD stakeholders. For those Network members unable to attend a particular event, live chats on Yammer will be organised through which they can pose questions to the guest speakers and discuss issues related to the thematic area of the respective Network meeting.

Case study and good practice catalogue

To complement the various face-to-face events, case studies and good practices of FEAD implementation are being gathered to create a bank of examples of FEAD initiatives. Each year a catalogue of 28 case studies will be published online and disseminated. The case studies will be wide-ranging and can include different fields, such as the selection procedure of food products, partnerships between organisations, volunteer engagement, accompanying measures, outreach activities, food waste, gender issues and more.

The online FEAD Network platform

The latest developments with regard to the online FEAD Network were presented by **Mary-Clare O'Connor, Chief Editor, Programme Management and Communications, Ecorys**. In creating an online platform, the Commission aims to engage the FEAD Network as well as reaching out to those not yet involved through online communication tools. The online tools consist of several pages (including country profiles) on the Europa website, a quarterly newsletter, Facebook and Twitter postings as well as a dedicated [Yammer network](#). These channels allow stakeholders to exchange experiences, learn from the successes and challenges of other stakeholders, as well as maintain the relationships and connections made at face-to-face events. To date, nearly 250 FEAD stakeholders have become members of the Yammer group. A 'live chat' will furthermore be hosted on the platform following each Network meeting where speakers from the event will be on hand to answer questions and continue the conversation on the topics highlighted in the meeting.

Session 4 – The ESF Active Inclusion Learning Network: lessons learnt

In the previous programming period, the Commission funded a network to enhance cooperation and increase learning and innovation between Member States in order to improve the delivery of ESF programmes. The Active Inclusion Network sought to answer the question: *“What approaches contribute to improving employability and employment outcomes amongst socially excluded groups?”* Several findings of the ESF Learning Network were presented by **Anna Tengqvist, Head of Unit and Senior Advisor, Kontigo, Sweden**. The findings are based on a [research report](#) and peer review of 290 ESF projects across the EU.

Highlighting two projects, namely the ‘Choices Programme’ in Portugal and ‘Unga In’ from Sweden, principles for working with a range of vulnerable people were presented. Firstly, it was noted that a ‘whole person’ approach should be adopted in which social workers consider the multiple factors and different dimensions affecting beneficiaries’ lives. For instance, in the Unga In project, it was established that approximately 70% of beneficiaries have cognitive disabilities which may contribute to their non-functioning in the regular social system. An ‘individual first’ approach subsequently needs to be employed, as there is no one-size-fits-all support system for beneficiaries. A thorough analysis needs to be conducted to establish what support an individual precisely needs. In order to implement these two approaches, strong coordination and networking between organisations is essential. As the needs of beneficiaries are varied, strong inter-agency collaboration allows one organisation to smoothly redirect a beneficiary to another more suitable organisation that can address that particular beneficiary’s specific need. The empowerment of beneficiaries as well as stakeholders (notably employers) was considered important in order to successfully stimulate the social inclusion of vulnerable individuals. The Choices Programme, for instance, set up youth councils that had the right to veto prospective policy choices of the organisation. Lastly, it was noted that organisations needed to be flexible, undertake high quality evaluations, and work with motivated and professional staff.

Session 5 – Maximising impact: ESF and FEAD programming in Italy

A presentation of the new ESF and FEAD programme design in Italy was delivered by **Silvia Sorbelli, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Unit II – Policies for eradicating poverty and social exclusion**. She introduced the Italian constitutional framework for social policy and explained that in Italy social policy is governed through a multilevel governance model in which the national and regional government work together with municipalities to implement social initiatives. Following a brief overview of the current situation of homelessness in Italy, the goals of the joint ESF and FEAD programming were outlined.

Since the definition of the Partnership Agreement in 2014, the Ministry of Labour and Social policies has shaped its national policy towards homelessness and the most deprived through the complementary use of EU and national funds. Italy is seeking to change the approach from providing emergency aid to long-term, sustainable governance and in doing so, improve the effectiveness of public services as well as the interventions provided. They are looking to improve the governance of policies which aim to combat severe material deprivation and homelessness, as well as improve cooperation among public and private institutions.

Within a budgetary envelope of €100 million (shared equally between ESF and FEAD), Italy launched a first call for proposals on 3 October 2016. Covering the period 2016-2019, the call allows financing projects from municipalities for an overall amount of €50 million. Each project should have a budget of at least €1,648,000. Project proposals should aim at integrating services (social, health, education, employment, etc.), fostering cooperation among services or implementing social intervention plans at local level. Social inclusion initiatives and the provision of basic material assistance should be implemented in complementarity with other initiatives financed under ESF or FEAD.

Marco Iazzolino, Director of the Housing First Network, and Strategic Advisor Fio.PSD, Italian Federation of Organisations for Homeless People

The National Guidelines of 2015 regarding adult exclusion were formulated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in order to fight homelessness in a strategic, systematic and integrated way. These guidelines are binding for regional governments and stakeholders using public funding from their own budgets as well as from EU budgets (including FEAD and ESF funds). The guidelines provide a common definition of homelessness (based on the European Typology of Housing Exclusion – ETHOS). They also emphasise that the Housing First approach should be a main and uniform feature of public policies tackling homelessness.

The Italian Federation of Organisations Working with Homeless People (Fio.PSD) is an organisation representing over 120 members including large cities, regional governments and NGOs. It was asked to consult with the national government in order to formulate the guidelines, as well as inform the specifications for the calls for tender. The 'Housing First' approach is being implemented in ten regions and twenty municipalities across Italy in cooperation with the Network for Implementing Housing First (coordinated by the Fio.PSD). By January 2016, there were 187 users of the service and 90 accommodation spaces were available. The new structured approach to the integration of homeless people is deemed successful, and the Fio.PSD continues to promote the Housing First initiative (notably through campaigns including famous national and international stars such as Richard Gere).



Session 6 – Good practice examples from Malta and France

‘LEAP Project – Helping Malta’s most deprived out of poverty’ (Malta)

Representing the ESF and FEAD Managing Authority of Malta, **Stephanie Sultana, EU Funding Officer, Planning and Priorities Coordination Division**, described the context of FEAD in Malta and how the ESF OP for 2007-13 focused on the integration, retention and progression of disadvantaged groups in the labour market. In contrast, in 2014-20 the ESF OP strove to create a more inclusive society while also focusing on health needs of individuals. Originally funded through ESF, the LEAP project now provides accompanying measures to FEAD food distribution. The adjustment of LEAP services to the needs of the FEAD shows how a (former) ESF project can successfully be readapted to carry out and complement FEAD activities.



Following the contextualisation of FEAD in Malta, **Stephen Christopher Vella, Senior Manager Corporate Services, Foundation for Social Welfare Services**, described the LEAP project in further detail. When the co-funding from the ESF ended in November 2015, the Maltese government dedicated national funds for the continuation of the project. These allowed the project to adapt its service provision to fit the needs of the FEAD programme. A mapping exercise was carried out across Malta to determine which social services were available. This information allowed choosing the most suitable localities for food delivery and provision of social services. In total, the LEAP centres have forty employees and have already reached 4000 families with food packages.

In order to determine which accompanying measures are suitable, social workers carry out home visits to FEAD end recipients. The social workers then carry out a SWOT analysis and determine the needs of the vulnerable families. The accompanying measures are predominantly related to nutrition and health information, healthy eating, cooking on a budget, household budgeting and positive parenting. Notably however, over 160 individuals have found employment through referrals to different schemes. They also offer childcare services or breakfast/homework clubs so mothers can enter into employment. Additionally, the assembly and dissemination of a specific directory of social services and NGOs active in this field helped to better coordinate social inclusion efforts across Malta.



‘A warehouse for social and professional inclusion’ (France)

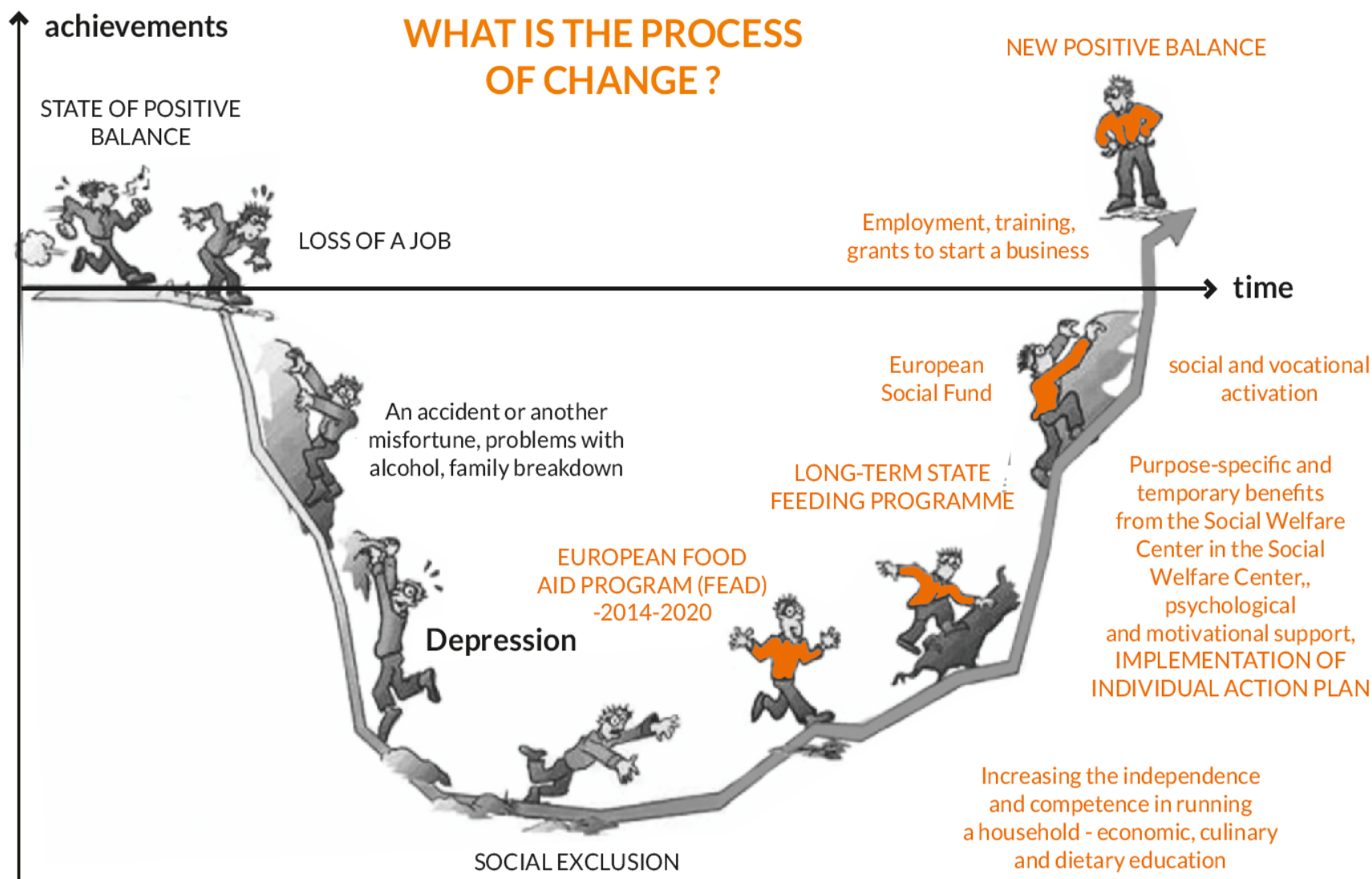
The French Red Cross sees the distribution of food parcels as an opportunity to redirect end recipients to further support services. **Madeleine de la Servette, Project Manager, French Red Cross**, described the manner in which FEAD end recipients can be included in FEAD food distribution through work at the logistical warehouse. Managing the large amounts of food that are acquired through FEAD requires a well-organised logistics team as well as effective coordination of all the teams involved. The warehouses are managed by volunteers and financed by local units. The Red Cross recruits long-term unemployed individuals and subsequently trains them in logistics jobs related to warehouse management systems, cold chain management, norms of hygiene and food security and driver safety for handling vehicles. Participants can have contracts for up to 24 months and then receive help in finding employment through partnerships with private enterprises.

Session 7 – Good practice examples from Poland, Finland and Croatia

‘A chance for tomorrow’ Project (Poland)

Introducing the project, **Paweł Szablowski, Chairman, Lublin Self-Help Centre**, stated that the project is part of the Regional OP for the Lublin province 2014-20, and will run from June 2016 to August 2017. With a total budget of €360,000 the project seeks to support 120 disabled individuals. Half of these must be FEAD end recipients, 40 individuals must be registered as unemployed and another 20 need to be low-qualified individuals. The support received through the project includes psychological counselling, career counselling, professional workshops and the drafting of an individual action plan. The project also offers specialised training opportunities to develop participants' professional skills in a range of fields and scholarships of up to €300 a month. The ultimate aim is to find employment for at least 60 beneficiaries, 30 of them lasting for a minimum of three months, and at least 10 people should gain new qualifications.

Marzena Pieńkosz-Sapieha, Director, Food Bank in the Lublin region built on the previous presentation and reiterated the importance of creating synergies between FEAD and ESF initiatives. She described social exclusion situations as a process of change (as can be seen in the illustration on the next page) as well as the manner in which FEAD food aid can be used as a stepping stone to integrating beneficiaries in further initiatives such as those of the Lublin Self-Help Centre or ESF-funded activities. Consequently, an important aspect of all measures is the provision of information on additional support initiatives such as those falling under the ESF. Marzena Pieńkosz-Sapieha stated that accompanying measures existing under FEAD in Poland, such as culinary workshops, budgetary support and dietary workshops, are useful first step activation measures. However, it was emphasised that in order to sustainably help vulnerable individuals in their transition out of poverty, synergy with additional social inclusion measures, such as those under the ESF focused on more complex social support and professional activation, need to be sought.



Source: Marzena Pieńkosz-Sapieha, Director, Food Bank in the Lublin region, www.pomoc2020.org

‘Project for Promotion of Social Inclusion – SOKRA’ (Finland)

Falling under the priority axis for promotion of social inclusion and combating poverty of the Finnish Structural Funds programme, SOKRA is a project that collates, summarises and disseminates information on social inclusion. **Veera Laurila, Senior Planning Officer, National Institute for Health and Welfare**, said that SOKRA seeks to enable the local, regional and national ESF projects to have broader networks and enhance the impact of their initiatives through better coordination and networking. SOKRA works with managers and employees of ESF social inclusion projects, project promoters and developers, the ESF Managing Authority, ministerial officials, municipal staff, other NGO representatives of projects working on social inclusion, as well as other stakeholders and European networks.

By October 2016, the project linked up 161 different projects, of which 13 were nationwide. There was definite potential for synergies between ESF projects on social inclusion and FEAD initiatives. FEAD can be used to meet the most immediate needs such as food shortages, and ESF can be subsequently used for strengthening social inclusion and helping individuals find employment, as both funds work with similar target groups. As a result, ESF project participants could be sourced through FEAD, and FEAD initiatives could make use of ESF project resources. Four projects that could readily build a bridge between FEAD and ESF are the ESF projects: [Cheers for Health](#), the [Varikko Centres](#), the [A Home that Fits](#) project and the [Strategy Work for Preventing Homelessness in Cities](#).

‘The Social Basket’ project (Croatia)

The last case study of the day was presented by **Adela Sočev, Director, Red Cross Koprivnica** and **Antonija Habajec, Volunteer, Red Cross Koprivnica**. They jointly presented the ‘Social Basket’ project which uses ESF funding to open a so-called ‘social shop’ (similar to a food bank) allowing distributing food packages and basic provisions to those most in need. The project also provided new social services in the town of Koprivnica. The initial ESF grant was €59,000 and the project lasted fourteen months.

As a first step, criteria for assessing who was eligible for the food packages were established, showing that in the area, there were 235 individuals eligible for the food aid. The project subsequently employed a volunteer coordinator, and in collaboration with the NGO “Rad na Dar” established a network of volunteers. After purchase of the necessary IT equipment and development of the software for the administration of the social shop, operation commenced in June 2015. The project ultimately had a volunteer base of 50 individuals who cumulatively reached 900 hours of volunteering through activities in supermarkets and the social shop. The shop was open for nine months and 4,600kg of goods were collected and disseminated in 33 distribution rounds. As a result, each end-recipient received at least two packages during the project.

Seven months after the official end of the project, volunteers are steadfastly attempting to collect and distribute food packages, but the reduced number of volunteers and donations has led to stagnation in the amount of support offered. The Red Cross is consequently looking to revitalise the project by building on the foundation laid through ESF funding, and

using FEAD funding to ensure a continuation of the support to the local area's most deprived individuals.

Session 8 – Participatory session: synergies between FEAD and ESF

A participatory “World Café” session was organised to allow participants to actively discuss existing or potential links between FEAD and ESF initiatives. The sessions centred around three questions: What are success criteria for the links between FEAD and the ESF?; What are limiting factors for synergies between the two funds?; and What could be done to improve such links?



The key **success criteria** highlighted were:

- Effective cooperation between Managing Authorities of the two funds (or even having the same Managing Authority).
- Information of all actors regarding the two funds.
- A common national strategy (to avoid the potential overlap of initiatives)
- A focus on long-term rather than short-term planning
- A clear definition of objectives and target groups of the two funds (using FEAD as a stepping stone for further support through ESF)
- Carrying out an elaborate needs assessment prior to the development of guidelines for the funding programmes.
- The involvement of the local community and regular consultation with local actors to create trusting and collaborative partnerships
- The sharing of resources such as storage facilities or premises.

The main factors **limiting** potential synergy between the two funds were identified as:

- A lack of cooperation and coordination of actors at all levels
- A lack of harmonisation of the FEAD and ESF regulations
- The concern of double funding due to a lack of an effective monitoring system
- Lack of knowledge at political level about the real life of people

- The different bureaucratic and administrative expectations related to the two funds
- A lack of technical assistance for capacity building
- Differences in timing, as FEAD is on an annual basis while the ESF is on a multi-annual basis
- Financial limiting factors; 5% is regarded not enough in terms of scope and amount to link to ESF
- The different managing styles (national vs. regional level)
- Rigid national legislation vs. synergies at EU level
- The tendency to work in closed shops, thus leading to a lack of cooperation between the FEAD and ESF experts.

In order to **improve the links** between FEAD and ESF, participants suggested:

- Creating a common strategy definition so that they are integrated
- Ensuring a coherent link to public national funds as well as EU funds
- Creating a common guidelines and monitoring system
- Regular dialogue between stakeholders at all levels (including end recipients)
- Linking the funds at a regulatory level, e.g. by enforcing that a certain percentage of ESF beneficiaries should be FEAD end recipients
- Initiating awareness-raising activities to discuss the two programmes and their commonalities
- Training the staff in the two Managing Authorities in order to make them aware of the two funds
- Sharing more information at regional level about FEAD with ESF stakeholders.
- Support development of capacities of partner organisations with technical assistance

Session 9 – Closing session

Following a brief summary of the main findings from the world café sessions, a final concluding session was led by the moderator who opened the floor to participants and invited the speakers to share their last reflections as well as their thoughts on themes and topics for future Network meetings. It was concluded that it remains imperative that there is a strong dialogue between actors at all levels of the support chain, in order to ensure that support reaches the most vulnerable groups of European society. Better mechanisms should be developed to ensure that knowledge is shared across networks. It was highlighted by a food bank representative that the FEAD meetings have proven that there is a clear shift in thinking. FEAD is not simply about the distribution of food aid, but social inclusion measures (whether through accompanying measures under OP I, initiatives under OP II or synergies with ESF) which are becoming increasingly important.

In terms of future meetings, one participant suggested that a technical meeting to discuss the rules and regulations related to FEAD would be useful. Two other participants recommended a meeting on the future of FEAD, so that organisations can look beyond 2020. Lastly, it was stated that good practice examples (both under OP I and OP II) are particularly useful and should continue to dominate the Network meetings as they provide concrete insight and knowledge on FEAD implementation on the ground.

Keep in touch! – Join the FEAD Network

The FEAD Network is an animated community of practice with lively exchange of experience and shared learning. It allows the sharing of tools, ideas and resources that can help with delivering 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 such as the 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 as you in different European countries – wherever you are. You will also have the opportunity to continue the discussions arising in the Network Meetings in the subsequent 'live chats' on Yammer whereby a number of speakers from the events are available to answer questions.

To join the online network and stay up to date with news, sign up at:

<http://uk.ecorys.com/feadnetwork>

Join the FEAD Network on Yammer:

<https://www.yammer.com/feadnetwork/>

Email us: Fead.Network@ecorys.com



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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