European Network for Rural Development

Common Network Statistics

Y6 SUMMARY REPORT

October 2020

The summary report has been prepared by the ENRD Contact Point and its content does not reflect the official position of the European Commission.

The report covers 2019 data and therefore refers to the EU-28 with the United Kingdom as a Member State.

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Context

In 2016 Network Support Units (NSUs) agreed to submit Common Network Statistics (CNS) each calendar year. The purpose of collecting the data is:

- collecting and raising awareness of the achievements of NRNs;
- benchmarking;
- identification of useful NRN activities/examples across Europe; and
- regular and systematic tracking of progress within each individual NRN.

The first data were collected in 2016 for Y1 (2014 data) and Y2 (2015 data). In the process of collecting and analysing the CNS Y3 (2016 data), several issues became apparent. The ENRD Contact Point (CP) together with the NSUs therefore simplified and shortened the survey for Y4 (2017 data).

The CNS Y5 (2018 data) and Y6 responses (2019 data) were collected in same format as the Y4 responses. However, it became evident that more clarity was required in terms of which data should be included. This issue was addressed in both years through direct consultations with the NSUs. In addition, further instructions were inserted in the guidance note accompanying the data collection template.

The deadline for Y6 CNS reporting was in June in order to align it with the deadline for the Annual Implementation Reports of the Member States (MSs). Surprisingly, despite the Covid-19 pandemic situation and lockdowns in many European countries, the data collection process was smoother. The reason behind this is not known, but it may be due to the fact that many workshops, trainings and other events were cancelled, leaving more time for the NRN staff to collect and complete the CNS.

Process and Submissions

The CNS survey for Y6 (2019 data) was distributed to NSUs on 17 March 2020, with responses requested by 15 June 2020. A total of 28 submissions were received during this period.

Using direct contact, reminders and consultations all 32 NSUs submissions were collected and finalised by 3 August 2020, which is an improvement on previous years (24 November in Y3; 13 November in Y4; 11 September in Y5).

The survey was prepared in an excel and in an online survey format (using Survey Monkey). Each NSU could choose which format they preferred to use for reporting. Of the 32 responses, 25 surveys were completed using the excel table and seven were submitted via Survey Monkey.

Analysis of Y6 results

From the submissions received in 2020, the analysis across all the categories gave an overview of networks' activities throughout the EU. Where possible the data from Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 were compared. In some cases, a comparison of all four years was not possible due to incomplete data, different numbers of NSU responses or a different formulation of question from the original Y3 collection process. Due to some technical differences in the classification of events, the consistency of data between countries has a degree of variability, in particular in relation to the large-scale events category, Question 1.

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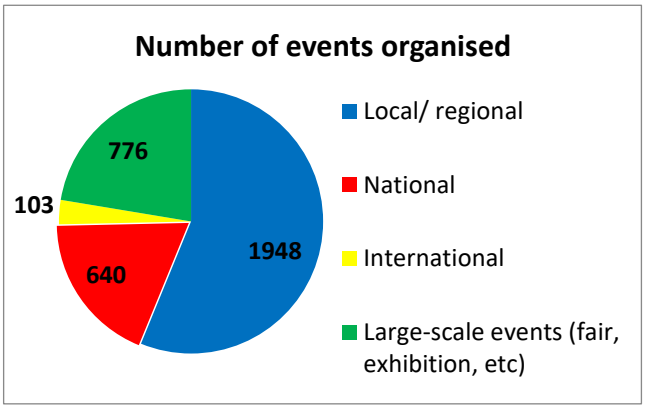
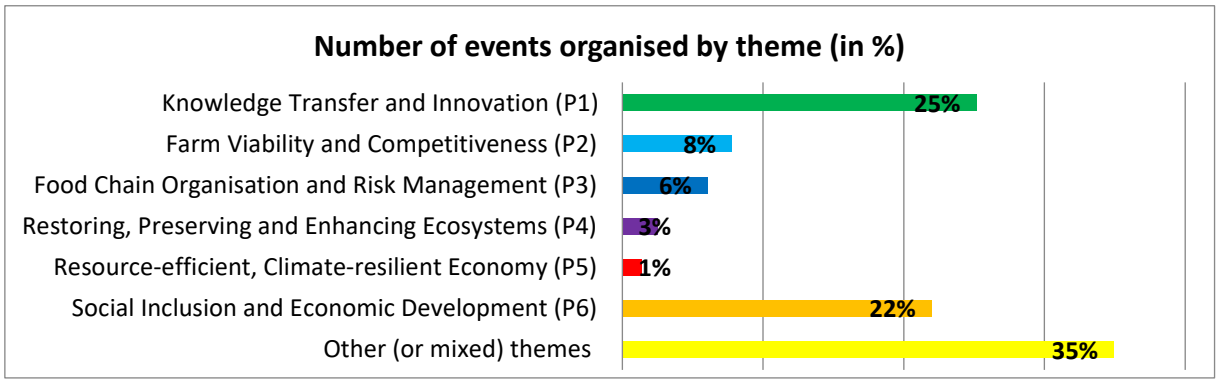
Q1 Events and participations

In 2019, in total 3 467 NSU organised events were reported by 32 NSUs, up from 2018 when 3 020 events were reported by 31 NSUs.

The highest number of events, 1 392, was reported by Poland[1]. This number includes 966 local/regional events, 135 national, 24 international and 267 large-scale events[2]. Other countries reported the following events in total: Latvia 517, Hungary 477, the Czech Republic 135, Slovakia 109, Sweden 105, and other countries fewer than 75.

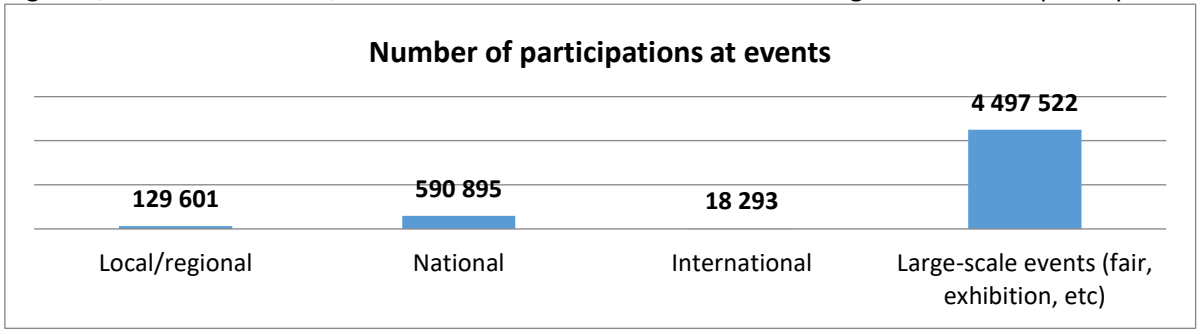


NSUs were asked to group events under a specific priority only if it had a strong focus on that thematic category (RDP Priority) or it was targeted at a specific group. Other (or mixed) themes, P6 and P1 related events were the most popular as reported in 2019, 2018 and 2017. In the 'Other' category, responses included RDP and ESI project days, future CAP, CAP network, monitoring and evaluation, communication, administration, agricultural fairs, Water Framework Directive, EIP, MAs capacity building, regional antennae and NRN management.



In total, 738 789 participations were reported for local/regional, national and international events, excluding the large-scale events.

The highest number of event participations was reported by Poland (3 684 196) with 89 915 local or regional, 556 373 national, 11 129 international and 3 026 779 large-scale event participations.



[1] The comparably higher number of events reported by the Polish NRN each year arises from the inclusion of further events organised by the regional offices.

[2] Large-scale events include fairs or exhibitions, regardless of their geographic scope. As the guidance provided for reporting this indicator was not followed on a standardised basis, the participation figures for large events reflect some degree of variation.

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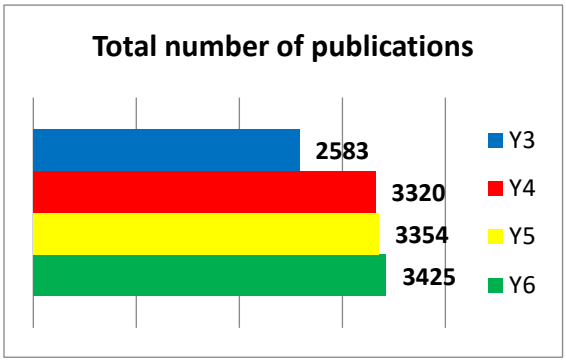
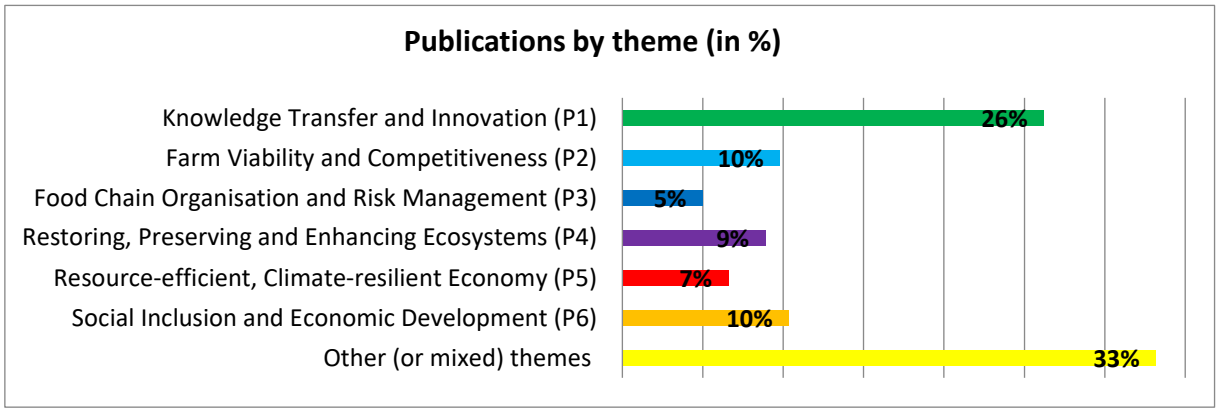
Hungary reported the second highest number of participations (1 229 930) of which 1 218 650 were recorded under the large-scale event category.

Q2 Publications

NSUs reported that they produced 3 425 publications during 2019, the reported number has increased in consecutive years from Year 3 to Year 6 of this programming period.

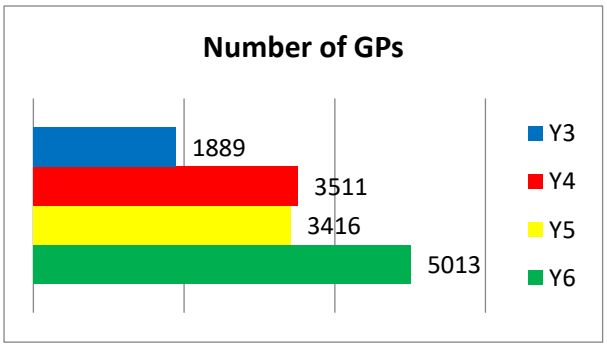


The largest category of reported publications (33%) on the 'Other or mixed themes' were followed by publications on 'Knowledge Transfer and Innovation (P1)' with 26%. The lowest number of publications produced was recorded in relation to 'Food Chain Organisation and Risk Management (P3)'. Under the 'Other' category, responses included monitoring and evaluation, planning, RDP legislative changes, Rural Inspiration Award, regional antennae, communication, NRN management, MA capacity building, circular and green economy, smart villages and LAG photo brochure.



Q3 Good Practices

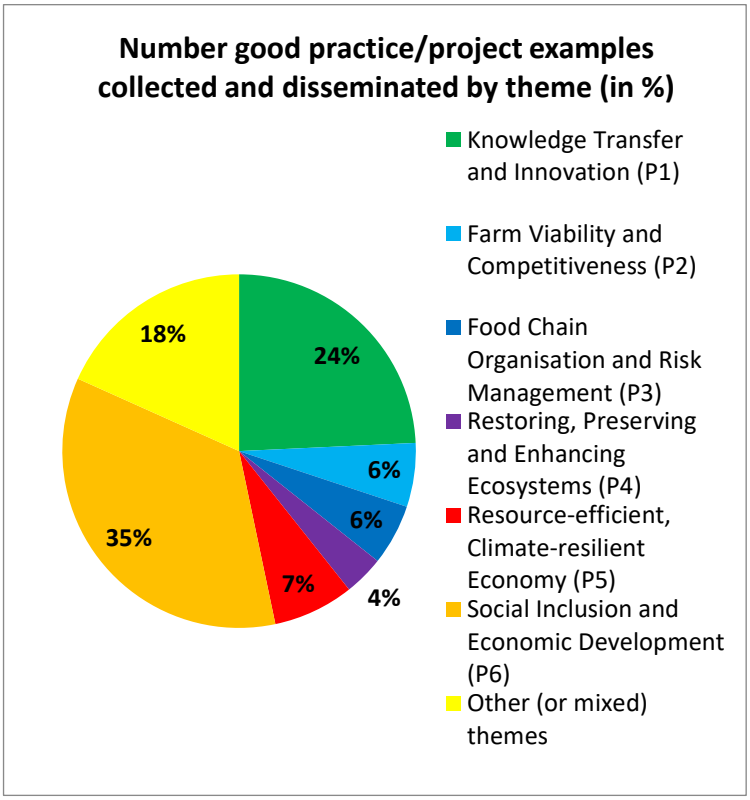
In total, 5 013 good practices (GPs) were collected and disseminated in 2019, as reported by 32 NRNs (157 per NSU). This represents a significant increase compared to Y3 when 22 NSUs reported 1 889 GPs (85 per NSU), Y4 when 25 NSUs reported 3511 GPs (140 per NSU), and Y5 when 30 NSUs reported 3 416 GPs (114 per NSU).



The NRNs reporting the highest numbers of GPs were UK-Wales (974), followed by Finland (780), Germany (561), France (455), Czech Republic (382), Latvia (322) and Hungary (250). Finland and Germany seem to have the strongest ongoing focus on GPs, as they also recorded highest numbers in Y3, Y4 and Y5 CNS. UK-Wales reported on their interactive project map where beneficiaries are encouraged to provide information to identify lessons learned.

NSU	No. of GPs
UK - Wales	974
Finland	780
Germany	561
France	455
Czech Republic	382
Latvia	322
Hungary	250
Belgium - Flanders	234
Estonia	158
Poland	142
Austria	132
Sweden	132
Italy	94
Ireland	90
Spain	54
Bulgaria	47
Slovakia	46
Slovenia	40
UK - Scotland	27
Romania	21
Greece	11
The Netherlands	11
Cyprus	10
BE - Wallonia	8
UK - Northern Ireland	8
Portugal	7
Denmark	5
UK - England	4
Lithuania	3
Luxembourg	3
Croatia	1
Malta	1

Priority 6 'Social Inclusion and Economic Development', provided the largest proportion[3] of GPs by a substantial margin, a total of 1 482, of which 311 were in France, 252 in Germany and 243 in UK-Wales. The highest numbers of GPs recorded under Priority 1 'Knowledge Transfer and Innovation' were provided by Latvia (322) and Hungary (228). The other priorities all recorded much lower proportions of GPs.

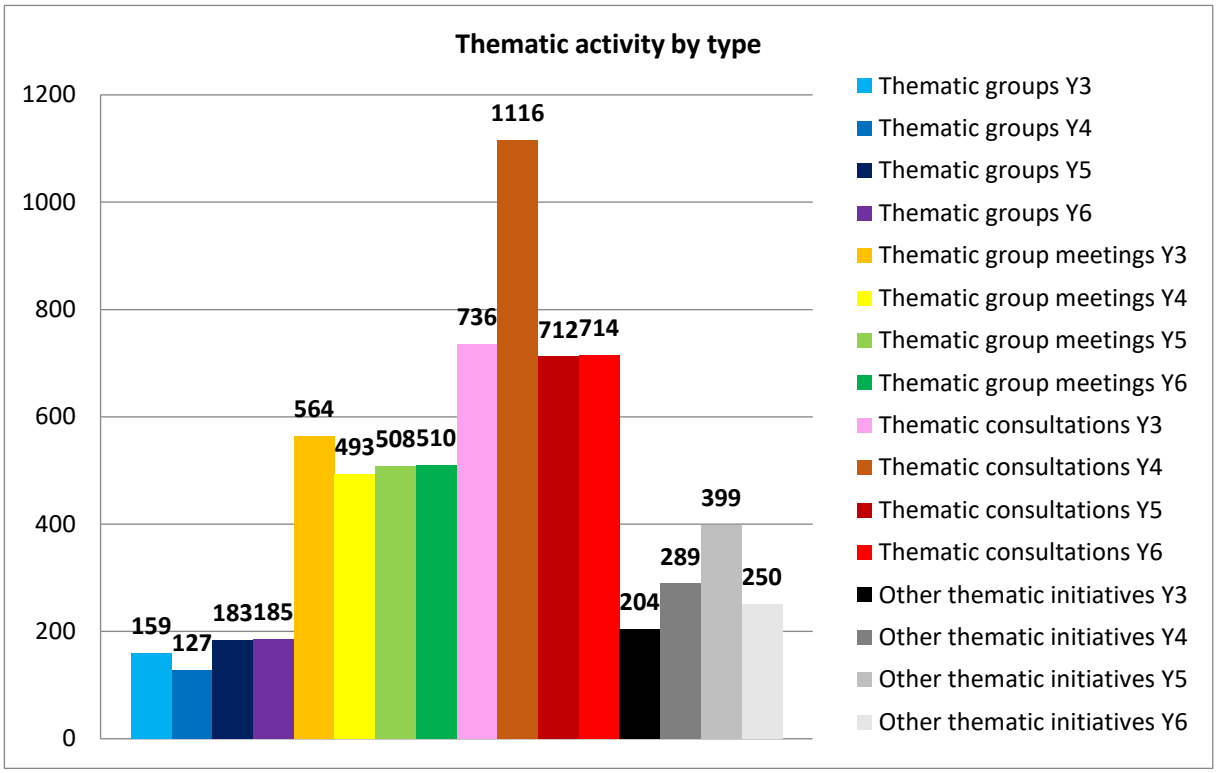


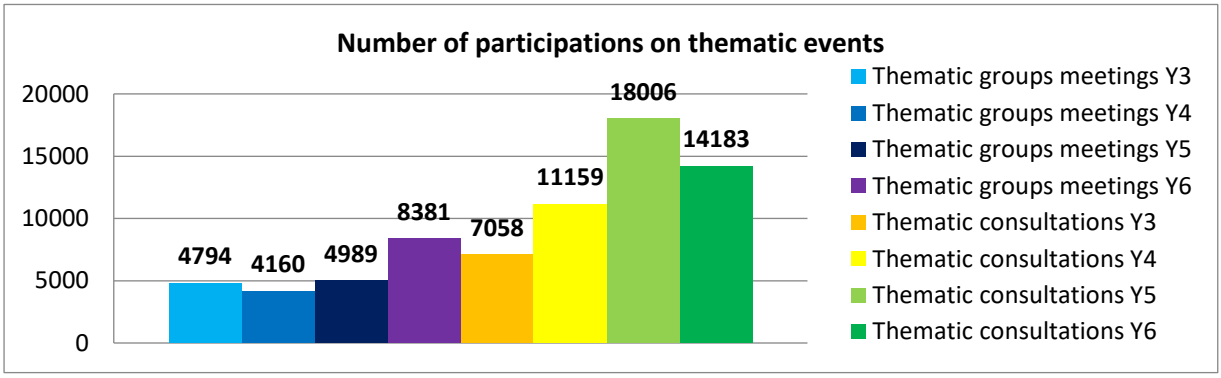
Q4 Thematic initiatives

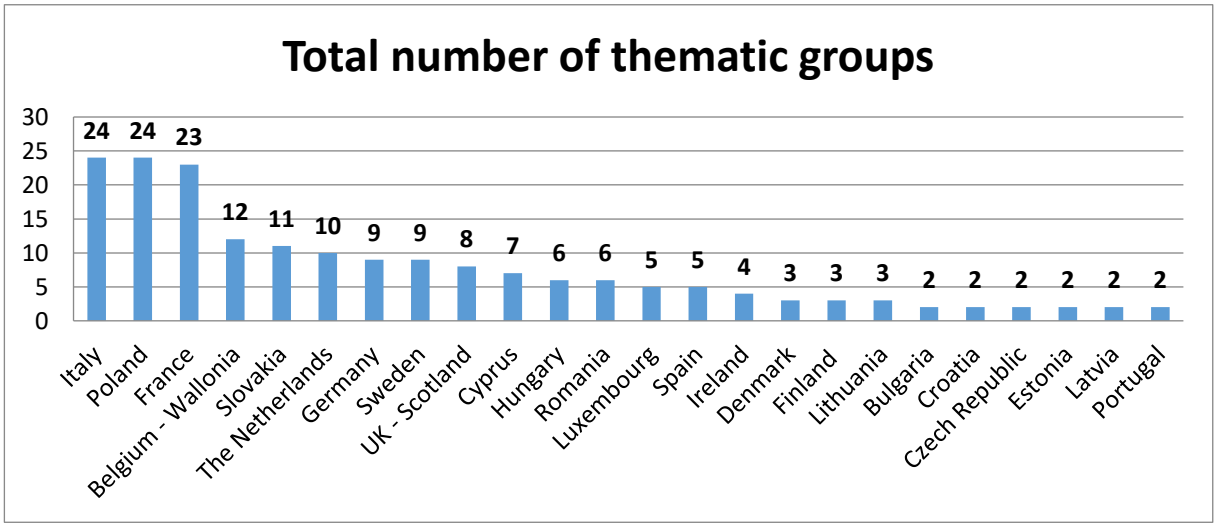
Twenty-six NSUs provided information on the number of participations under various thematic activities. The most frequently recorded Y6 activity was thematic consultations (714), which is consistently the most recorded type of activity (712 in Y5). This was followed by thematic group meetings (510 in Y6 and 508 in Y5) and then other thematic initiatives (250 in Y6, down from 399 in Y5).

In terms of the number of participations, 'thematic consultations' continued to have the highest attendance during 2019 (14 183 participations). This was followed by 'Other thematic initiatives' category (9 262 participations) and 'Thematic group meetings' (8 381 participations).

[3] Finland supplied no data for the breakdown by theme.







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In Y6 in total there were 185 thematic groups (TGs), similar to Y5 when there were 183 TGs. In 2019 the highest numbers of 2019 TGs were in Italy (24), Poland (24) and France (23). Italy and Poland were also among the most active ones in 2018.

For the distribution of thematic groups by thematic focus, data was provided by 22 NRNs.

P1 'Knowledge Transfer and Innovation' (37 TGs and 14 NSUs) is the largest thematic category of recorded activity, followed by P4 'Restoring, Preserving and Enhancing Ecosystems (14 TGs and 12 NSUs). The largest recorded category of thematic activity is 'Other (or mixed) themes' (52 TGs covered by 14 NSUs). In the 'Other' Category, responses included Smart Villages, regional antennae, communication, monitoring and evaluation.

Number of thematic groups by thematic focus							
	Knowledge Transfer and Innovation (P1)	Farm Viability and Competitiveness (P2)	Food Chain Organisation and Risk Management (P3)	Restoring, Preserving and Enhancing Ecosystems (P4)	Resource-efficient, Climate-resilient Economy (P5)	Social Inclusion and Economic Development (P6)	Other (or mixed) themes
Be - Flanders				1			
Be - Wallonia	5			2	1	2	2
Bulgaria	1		1				
Croatia				1			1
Cyprus	5	1		1			
Czech Republic			1				1
Estonia						1	1
France	5	4	2	1	1	8	2
Hungary	2	1	1				2
Ireland				1	1	1	1
Italy	3	4	1	2	2	5	7
Latvia					2		
Lithuania							3
Luxembourg		3	1	1	2	2	
Poland	2		2	1		2	17
Portugal	1						1
Romania	1	1	2	1		1	
Slovakia	1	1					9
Spain	3					2	
Sweden	2	2		1		3	1
The Netherlands	1	1		1		3	4
UK - Scotland	5				3		
TOTAL	**37**	**18**	**11**	**14**	**12**	**30**	**52**

Q5 Cooperation and contribution to ENRD and EIP-AGRI activities

A total of 28 NRNs responded to the question about how many communication products (presentations, publications and case studies) they had provided to the ENRD CP, ENRD Evaluation Helpdesk and the EIP-AGRI Service Point in 2019. Reporting indicates that a total of 662 items were provided- 65 were articles for publications, 541 good practices and 56 other information items. Specific

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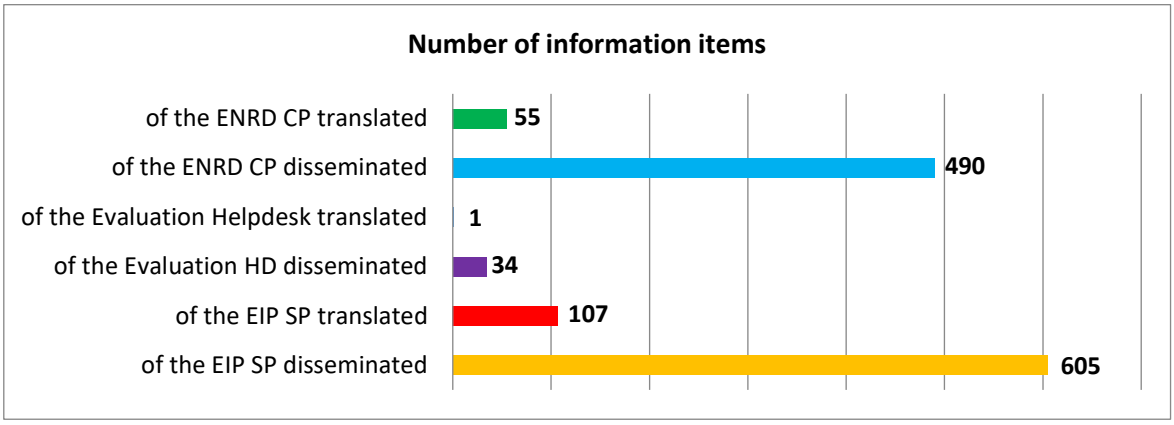
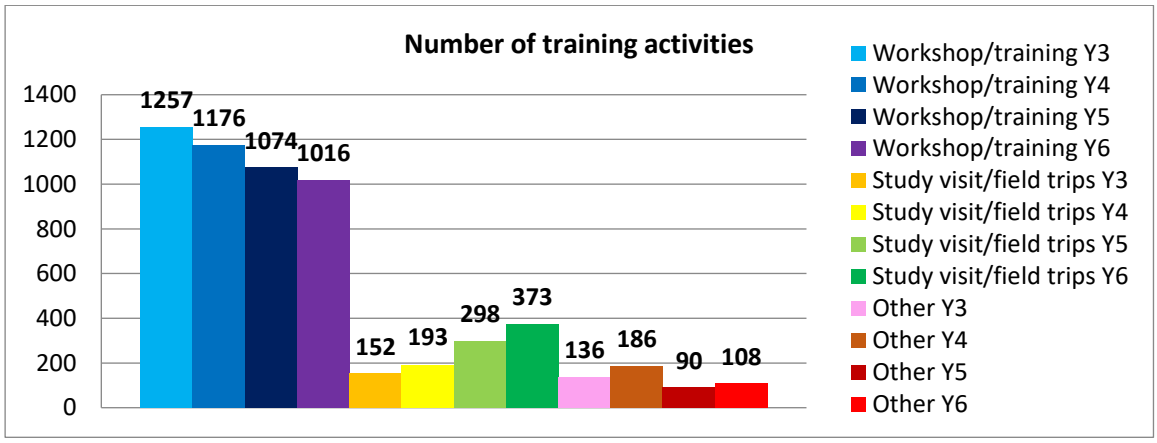
numbers by organisation are as follows: EIP-AGRI Service Point received 436, the ENRD Contact Point received 214 information items and the Evaluation Helpdesk received 11. Considering the total number of 662 information items, there is an increasing trend compared to the 492 items in Y5, 200 items in Y4 and 113 items in Y3. The top contributors were Italy (352)[4], Spain (55), Poland (24) and Estonia (23 items).

Information items published by the ENRD Contact Point, the ENRD Evaluation Helpdesk and the EIP-AGRI Service Point were mainly disseminated by NSUs and were frequently translated.



Q6 Training activities

Y6 data shows fewer workshops / training sessions and other activities where there was a training component than in Y5, Y4 and Y3, in contrast there has been an increasing number of study visits and field trips organised year by year.



Of the 29 NSUs that responded to the question, Poland recorded the highest number of training activities as in previous years: Y6 (991), Y5 (812), Y4 (955) and Y3 (776). In Y6 Latvia (96) and Italy (59) followed Poland as main contributors similarly to previous years.

The 'top three' training related activities by theme identified across countries were: P1 'Knowledge Transfer and Innovation' with 490 training activities (mainly for Poland, Hungary and Slovakia); the P6 'Social Inclusion and Economic Development' with 380 training activities (mainly for Poland and Italy)

[4] The outstanding number reflects the increase in good practice examples communicated.

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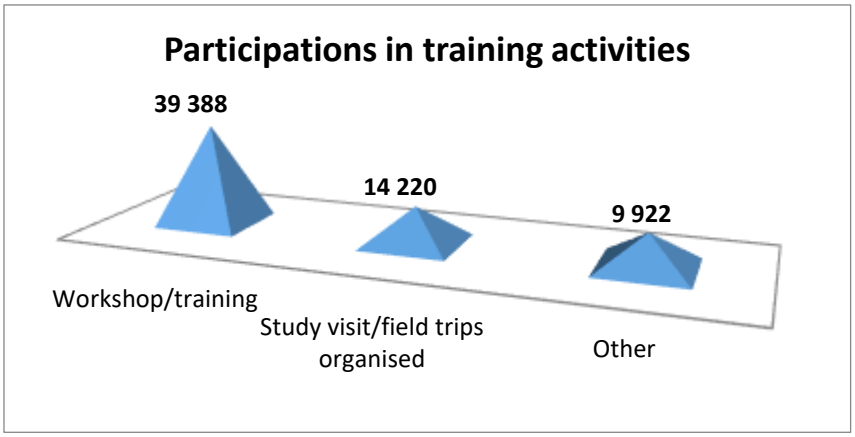
and P3 'Food Chain Organisation and Risk Management' with 116 activities (mainly for Poland and Czech Republic).



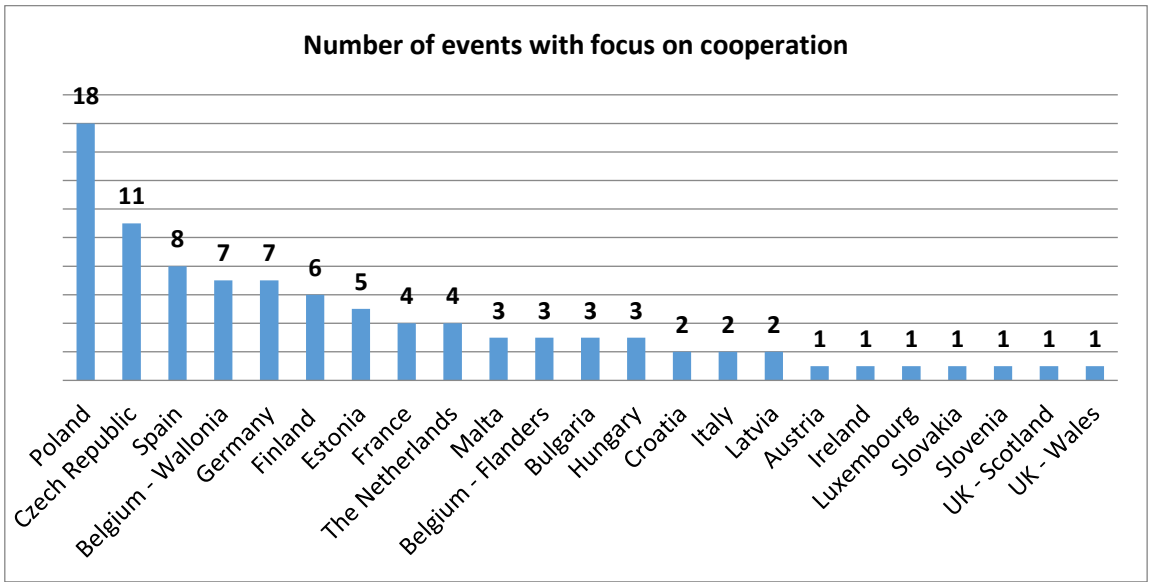
In total 63 530 participations were reported by 28 NRNs. Workshops / training were the most highly attended activity type (39 388 participations), representing almost two thirds of all participation activities. Comparing to the previous years the trend seems to be decreasing. A possible explanation could be that training activities were needed mainly in the early stages of the programming period.

Q7 Cooperation events

In total 22 NRNs reported organising cooperation events in 2019. There were 92 events organised EU-wide with 5 787 participants, of which 848 participants were from other MSs, a further 368 were identified as coming from autonomous regions within larger MS.

The number of events in Y5 (210) remains considerably higher than the other years (80 events in Y3, 82 events in Y4) and well above the 92 events recorded in Y6. Possible explanation could be related to the dynamics of the programming period and implementation of the cooperation projects mainly towards its end. The numbers of participants in both Y5 (5 853) and Y6 (5 787) are higher than the earlier years (Y3 - 2 500, Y4 - 3 227).

Poland reported the highest number of Y6 cooperation events organised (18) followed by Czechia (11).



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Proposal for Y7 data collection

The data collection process is becoming smoother each year as the NSUs become more familiar with the questions posed and increasingly recognise the added value of this exercise. In addition, due to the simplification of the CNS format, the NSUs have shown greater willingness to complete the CNS survey year by year.

On the other hand, during data collection for 2019 it was evident that in some cases the data providers did not fully understand the type and content of the data. This might have been caused by staff fluctuations or lack of continuity in data reporting. Based on these experiences, for the next collection the attention will be paid to individual consultations and more guidance if needed, e.g. to those responsible for the CNS data collection process who are not experienced with this activity.

The revised timeline for Y5 and Y6 responses (starting in mid-March with a deadline in mid-June) proved to be more effective and led to an increased input from NSUs. However, given that in Y7 all ENRD CP contractual commitments need to be finalised by 15 July 2021, the same timeline cannot be followed for the 2020 data collection. It is therefore recommended to launch the data collection in mid-January 2021 with the deadline for inputs three months from that date i.e. by mid-April 2021. This should provide sufficient time to collect any missing responses and prepare the CNS Y7 report.

Conclusion

The analysis of CNS information provides a good overview of NSU activities and thematic priorities. Each year the CP improves this process, comparative analysis over time enables the CP to identify trends and to track progress.

Each year there is an identifiable increase in general in NSU activity; only training activity has seen importance decline year to year. It may therefore be possible to conclude that more capacity building was needed at the beginning of the programming period.

The thematic tendency to focus on Priority 6: 'Social Inclusion and Economic Development' observed during the past years seems to have changed towards Priority 1 'Knowledge Transfer and Innovation'. The numbers reported under this priority were highest regarding most of the outputs (events, publications, thematic activities, training). This may reflect a real need for innovation, which is also communicated by the EU institutions, and is evident in the activities reported by the NSUs in 2019. Moreover, there is more and more discussion about the future CAP Network, which will need to have a wider focus including different topics. The shift from National Rural Networks towards CAP networks will be smoother if knowledge transfer and innovation related activities are already included.

These results should demonstrate the added value of the CNS which should be communicated at networking events such as NRN meetings and/or relevant workshops.

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