

RDP analysis: Measure 16 ‘Cooperation’

M16.9

Diversification & social farming

In 2015, the Contact Point of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD CP) carried out a broad analysis of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). The following text forms part of a series of summaries outlining the information gathered on specific Measures (M) and sub-Measures. The summaries aim to provide an overview of the common trends and main differences in the programming decisions taken across the range of RDPs. If you believe that any of the information presented does not accurately reflect the content of one of the RDPs, please communicate your concerns to info@enrd.eu.

Where specific RDPs are referenced in the analysis, they are indicated with the official EU country codes (e.g. EE for Estonia). In the case of regional RDPs, the name of the region is given after the country code (e.g. IT-Lazio).

1. Introduction

1.1 Measure 16 cooperation¹

Supported actions under Measure 16 (M16) and its sub-Measures are implemented by groups of at least two cooperating entities (except in very specific cases of pilot projects). In this report we will refer to these cooperating entities, which includes networks, clusters, EIP Operational Groups and others, using the term ‘cooperation group’.

According to the Rural Development regulation (EC 1305/2013), cooperation groups supported by M16 are expected to implement projects fostering, *“cooperation approaches among different actors in the Union agriculture sector, forestry sector and food chain and other actors that contribute to achieving the objectives and priorities of rural development policy...”*

M16 sub-Measures offer potential support for:

- the establishment and running of cooperation activities, covering the cooperation groups’ and the projects’ coordination and organisation costs, and
- the carrying out of projects, covering the direct costs that arise from the activities of the project.

However, RDP Managing Authorities may decide to support only the creation and running cost of the cooperation group under Measure 16 and fund the direct project costs (such as investments) under other RDP Measures.²

¹ Reg. 1305/2013 Art.35

² *“Where support is paid as a global amount and the project implemented is of a type covered under another measure of this Regulation, the relevant maximum amount or rate of support shall apply.”* Reg. 1305/2013 Art.35.6

1.2 Sub-Measure 16.9³

Sub-Measure 16.9 provides for:

Support for diversification of farming activities into activities concerning health care, social integration, community-supported agriculture and education about the environment and food.⁴

This sub-Measure can be understood as aiming to support ‘social agriculture’ projects. It can thus be considered complementary to Measure 7 ‘Basic services and village renewal in rural areas’. It is, nevertheless, more specific, providing for the use of agriculture and farming to provide social benefits, as well as offering new income opportunities to farm households.

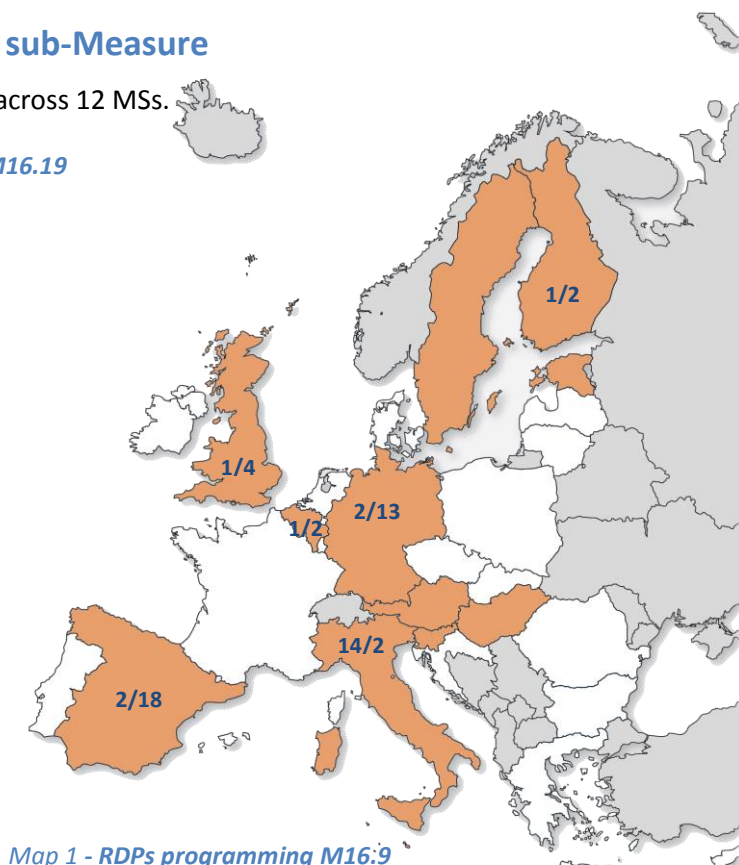
As with the other M16 sub-Measures, farming diversification into social agriculture should be implemented through joint activities among a number of different stakeholders including actors not belonging to the agriculture sectors. Eligible costs include feasibility studies, facilitation services, project management and costs related to the implementation of cooperation activities.

2. RDPs programming the sub-Measure

M16.9 is programmed in 27 RDPs across 12 MSs.

Table 1 - List of RDPs programming M16.19

N	RDPs ⁵
1	Austria (AT)
2	BE-Wallonia
3	DE-Lower Saxony / Bremen
4	DE-Thuringen
5	Estonia (EE)
6	ES-Extremadura
7	ES-Pais Vasco
8	FI-Mainland
9	Hungary (HU)
10	IT-Emilia Romagna
11	IT-Basilicata
12	IT-Calabria
13	IT-Lazio
14	IT-Campania
15	IT-Liguria
16	IT-Lombardia
17	IT-Marche
18	IT-Piemonte
19	IT-Sardegna
20	IT-Sicilia
21	IT-Toscana
22	IT-Umbria
23	IT-Veneto
24	Malta (MT)
25	Sweden (SE)
26	Slovenia (SI)
27	UK-Wales



Map 1 - RDPs programming M16:9

For MS having regional RDPs, the map indicates the number of RDPs that programmed M16.9 out of the national total.

³ EU Commission, November 2014, Guidance document: “Co-operation” Measure - Art. 35 of Reg.1305/2013

⁴ Defined as sub-Measure 16.9 in the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2014, with reference to Art.35.2.(k) of the EAFRD Regulation: Reg. 1305/2013

⁵ Belgium (BE); Germany (DE); Spain (ES); Finland (FI); Italy (IT); United Kingdom (UK).

3. Scope of RDP programmed activities

One Measure, two impacts

In the great majority of the RDPs that programmed it, sub-Measure 16.9 will support **joint actions among two categories of stakeholder:**

1. **Farmers; and**
2. **Organisations active in the social sector**

Overall, the interventions funded under M16.9 for the diversification of agricultural activities into social agriculture have **objectives** which fall into two main types:

1. **Social objectives in support of rural areas** – in terms of fostering social inclusion, fighting depopulation etc.; and
2. **Economic objectives in support of rural holdings** – in terms of diversification processes in farms that will create new jobs and opportunities

In the RDPs ‘diversification to social farming’ was defined as the creation of services for health care, the organisation of agricultural activities supported by the community and the organisation of education services mainly in the in the fields of food and environment.

Social inclusion

M16.9 projects will mostly target categories of disadvantaged members of the local society. Two types of approach emerge within the various ways of promoting social inclusion under M16.9:

- Focus on **specific target groups** at risk of being marginalised (e.g. people with disabilities, drug addicts, prisoners and low-wage workers in IT-Toscana).
- Focus on **community cohesion** (e.g. creation of social assets to help retain young people in UK-Wales)

Some RDPs specifically identify that the **agricultural environment is particularly suitable for social integration projects** aiming to improve the quality of life of marginalised groups (e.g. IT-Toscana).

There is potential for M16.9 to be complemented with the parallel work on social inclusion in LEADER/CLLD. At least one RDP makes explicit links with the CLLD Measure (IT-Basilicata).

Job creation

Several RDPs highlight the use of M16.9 for creating **new business opportunities and sources of income for agricultural holdings** (e.g. IT-Emilia Romagna; IT-Liguria).

Links are also made with the possibility of **creating new employment opportunities in the provision of social agriculture** (e.g. ES-Pais Vasco).

In at least one case, job creation is named as an official criterion for selection of M16.9 projects (e.g. IT-Marche).

Education and training

Several RDPs specify education and training activities under M16.9. Notably, two distinct types of activity can be identified within the range of approaches:

- **Training and education services/activities aimed at a wider rural population** (e.g. focus on environment protection and food education in IT-Sardinia; focus on reindeer hunting in SE; focus on environment, agriculture and nutrition in DE-Lower Saxony Bremen)
- **Training activities for farms** willing to diversify their activities into social agriculture (e.g. FI)

Case 1: Educational institutes in DE-Lower Saxony Bremen (1)

M16.9 will support the creation of **regional educational institutes** to educate young people in particular on the topics of environment, agriculture and nutrition.

The institutes are required to involve actors of the whole supply chain including the food industry and will represent not only a tool for awareness raising but also a means for networking and fighting the isolation of rural economic actors.

Innovation

Some RDPs clearly state that cooperation projects funded under 16.9 will need to have an **'innovative character'** – thus supporting the EU policy's crosscutting priority of innovation. Various types of innovation are highlighted, including:

- creation and animation of **new services** (e.g. IT-Calabria, IT-Emilia Romagna)
- provision of services making use of **innovative technologies** (e.g. IT-Calabria)
- **innovative solutions to social challenges** in rural areas (e.g. SI)

Several RDPs, such as ES-Extremadura, ES-Pais Vasco and BE-Wallonia, specify that support under 16.9 will in specific go to **'pilot projects'**. Pilot projects have often a strong experimental character and therefore in the context of sub-Measure 16.9 are expected to bring innovative solutions in the way farming activates can bring social benefit.

In this context, there are clear potential links with sub-Measure 16.1 on the creation of Operational Groups which some RDPs made explicit (see Section 5 below).

Marketing

Beyond the creation of new services, M16.9 can be used to support **communication, branding and marketing actions** (e.g. IT-Emilia Romagna and FI).

Although this is often not specified, beneficiaries eligible for support can be farms that have already diversified their activities into the social sector as well as farms setting up new services.

4. Contribution to Priorities and Focus Areas

M16.9 will contribute to **Priority 1** diversifying farming towards innovative activities and knowledge transfer services.

Also **Priority 2** will deeply benefit from sub-Measure 16.9. By supporting diversification, in fact, 16.9 will also facilitate the **restructuring of farming activities**.

Sub-Measure 16.9 by supporting farms integration, creation of new services, marketing activities and networking will contribute in specific to **Focus Area 3A**.

Educational services very often will focus on the **themes of environment and climate change** therefore also contributing to **Priority 4 and 5**.

16.9 will greatly contribute to **Focus Areas 6A and 6B**. Given the two main aspects of this sub-Measure, being these **'social inclusion'** and **'diversification'**, 6A and 6B are the Focus Area getting most of sub-Measure 16.9 benefits.

5. Links with other Measures

Where education and training activities will be supported M1 and M02 might be used together with M16.9.

To sustain farming diversification projects, 16.9 will often be combined with investment Measures M04 and M06. This option was in particularly presented in several Italian RDPs (e.g. IT-Lazio, IT-Liguria, IT-Marche and IT-Sardinia).

Other RDPs, instead, clearly states that sub-Measure **16.9 is linked to 16.1** and can be implemented by **EIP operational groups** (e.g. UK-Wales and Slovenia). These groups in specific will work on new innovative forms of non-agricultural activities implementation. Because linked to EIP work, findings from these Operational Groups will be disseminated through the EIP network.

Case 2: CLLD and 16.9 in IT-Basilicata

In IT-Basilicata 16.9 aims at improving the supply of social services and assistance to the population. These aims are particularly close to the objective of CLLD (M19) and for this reason the LAGs only will be the initiators of the partnerships that will create and implement M16.9 projects.

Case 3: Mix of M16 sub-Measure in EE

In Estonia, M16.9 will be implemented together with sub-Measures 16.2, 16.3, 16.5, 16.0. The support will be granted for the creation and the operation of a partnership with the objectives of promoting innovation and job creation. These partnerships will be operating in a very similar way than the EIP operational groups but won't be recognised as such. Similarly to the EIP Operational Groups, in fact, in Estonia partnerships created under the mix of Measures upon indicated will have to spread the finding of their work.

6. Eligibility criteria and selection process

Eligible costs	M16.9 will mainly fund the creation and the operation of a partnership, and the implementation of its projects.
Outcome	<p>The objectives of diversifying farming activities and bring innovation both in farming and social services are reflected in many of the eligibility criteria which specify that planned projects have to create new economic activities and / or new social opportunities in rural areas (e.g. ES-Extremadura, ES-Pais Vasco, IT-Basilicata and IT-Liguria).</p> <p>At least one RDP specifies that cooperation projects must create new jobs (e.g. IT-Marche).</p>
Cooperation group	<p>The great majority of RDPs include requirements for the partnership under the eligibility criteria. In most of the cases, requirements concern the kind and number of participants in the partnership. Most of the RDPs establish that the partnership must made of at least two members out of which one must be a farmer or operators in the agriculture sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some RDPs will privilege partnership with a high number of members (e.g. IT-Sicilia, IT-Piemonte). • Some specify the size of the enterprises involved (e.g. micro entrepreneurs in HU). • Many specify the involvement of specific social groups within the

- partnership (e.g. **woman and young** people in IT-Piemonte and UK-Wales).
- Some restrict the access to the support only to farms officially recognised as working in the social field (e.g. in IT-Veneto and IT-Emilia Romagna the farms taking part to the partnerships must already be registered to the regional list of 'social farms').

Partnership will be composed of a variety of actors including representatives of the agriculture, forestry and food sector and NGOs or associations providing social services. The representatives active in the social sector were defines as:

- associations and foundations (e.g. in Finland),
- authorized local and regional service centres in the field of health, social care and social inclusions (e.g. in BE-Wallonia),
- psychologists, therapists and social animators (e.g. in IT-Sicilia).

Less frequently the partnerships are offered to involve **public/local authorities** (e.g. FI, AT, IT-Umbria and SE), and representatives of the education and research world (e.g. FI and IT-Liguria).

Finally, some RDPs establish that the partnership shall develop **internal procedures** laying down roles and responsibilities, ensuring transparency in the management and decision making process, and avoiding conflicts of interest (e.g. ES-Pais Vasco, IT-Piemonte).

Case 4: Educational institutes in DE-Lower Saxony Bremen (2)

In DE-Lower Saxony Bremen, where the sub-Measure will fund the creation of regional educational institutes focused among others also on environmental topics, the **regional department of nature protection** has to deliver a positive statement before the approval of the projects.

Duration

Information on the maximum duration of the projects is not always provided in the RDPs. From a number of examples, however, we can see that the maximum duration of 16.9 projects may vary of a great degree, going from a maximum of 2 years to a maximum of 7 years.

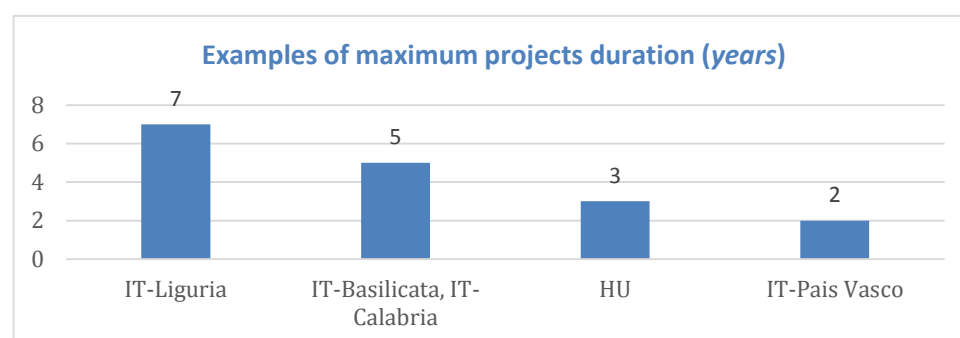


Figure 1 - Examples of maximum project duration

Location

Several RDPs ensure that M16.9 is **limited to disadvantaged areas** as defined by their own national territorial classification – this aims to maximise the impact in terms of fighting depopulation and fostering social inclusion (e.g. HU; IT-Umbria, IT-Calabria, IT-Piemonte, IT-Sicilia). Some RDPs include also **mountainous areas** specifically (e.g. IT-Lombardia, IT-Piemonte).

7. Financial aspects

Budget

Information available about the budget allocation per project are scarce. Examples of budget allocation are:

- IT-Emilia Romagna Programme sets a budget range of €15,000 to €100,000.
- In IT-Calabria, the maximum support provided is 200,000€.
- The Hungary programme instead make a distinction among the maximum amount granted for coordination activities such as creating the partnership set at €25,000, and the maximum amount granted for the implementation of cooperation activities set at €80,000.

Support rates

The great majority of RDPs established a **support rate of 100% of the eligible costs** (e.g. DE-Lower Saxony-Bremen, IT-Basilicata, IT-Lazio, IT-Liguria, IT-Sicilia and IT-Sardegna).

Some RDPs link the support rate to specific conditions. For example:

- In FI the subsidy level depends on the project content and type: in case of **inter-territorial projects** at a national level, in case of **cooperating projects with abroad** and in case the projects are implemented by an **'innovation group'** support rate goes up to 100% of eligible costs.
- IT-Umbria makes the distinction between projects implemented by **private beneficiaries**, funded for the 80%, and projects implemented by a mix of **private and public actors**, funded for 100% of eligible costs.
- UK-Wales, finally, will fund 100% of the costs for the **initial study** and 50% of the **delivery costs of the project**.

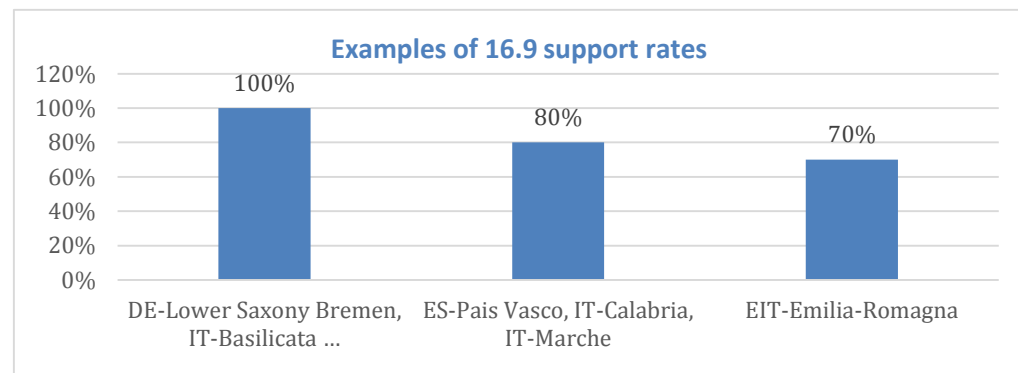


Figure 2 - Examples of 16.9 support rates