

Study supporting the monitoring of FEAD – data collection systems implemented by Member States

Workshop with FEAD stakeholders

2022-01-11

1. Objective and tasks of the study



The main purpose of the study

The purpose of this assignment is to **assess the monitoring systems of the FEAD programmes** and to **identify good practices**, both for OP I and OP II types implemented in the period 2014-2020 in all participating Member States.

The study will:

- enhance understanding of the functioning of the monitoring systems of FEAD programmes;
 - provide an assessment about the monitoring data reliability;
 - serve as the basis for the Commission's ex-post evaluation of FEAD programmes in the 2014-2020 programming period;
 - provide a useful input to Member States for the improvement of their monitoring systems for the 2021-2027 period.
-

The main tasks and research methods

Task 1: Mapping of data collection methodologies



Task 2: Assessment of monitoring systems' data collection and data processing arrangements



Task 3: Organisation of the workshop with FEAD stakeholders



Task 4: Final report

- Extensive desk research (OPs, AIRs, audit report, national legal framework, guidelines and manuals)
- Interviews at EU and national level
- 2 focus groups with FEAD stakeholders
- Assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- Identification of good practice examples
- Delineation of recommendations for the programming period 2021-2027

The main aim of the workshop

- To **present the key findings** of the study in a structured manner and validate them with FEAD stakeholders;
- To **gather new information and views** of different FEAD stakeholders;
- To **reflect upon possible recommendations and improvements** for the design and implementation of monitoring systems for the 2021-2027 programming period;
- The **outcomes of the workshop** will be considered **for the drafting of the final report**.

The agenda of the workshop

TIME	SESSION
09:40 – 10:50 CET	Session I: Data collection methodologies and monitoring systems of OP I type programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation by the study team• Structured discussion with participants.
10:50 – 11:00 CET	Coffee break
11:00 – 12.30 CET	Session II: Good practices of data collection and reporting on the implementation of OP I type programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentations by the MAs/POs on the monitoring of FEAD OPI type programmes• Open discussion with participants.• Concluding remarks and wrap-up.
12.30 – 14.00 CET	Lunch break
14:00 – 16:00 CET	Session III: Data collection methodologies and monitoring systems of OP II type programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation by the study team• Structured discussion with participants.• Presentations by the MAs on the monitoring of FEAD OPII type programmes• Open discussion with participants.• Concluding remarks and wrap-up.

Session I: Data collection methodologies and monitoring systems of OP I type programmes

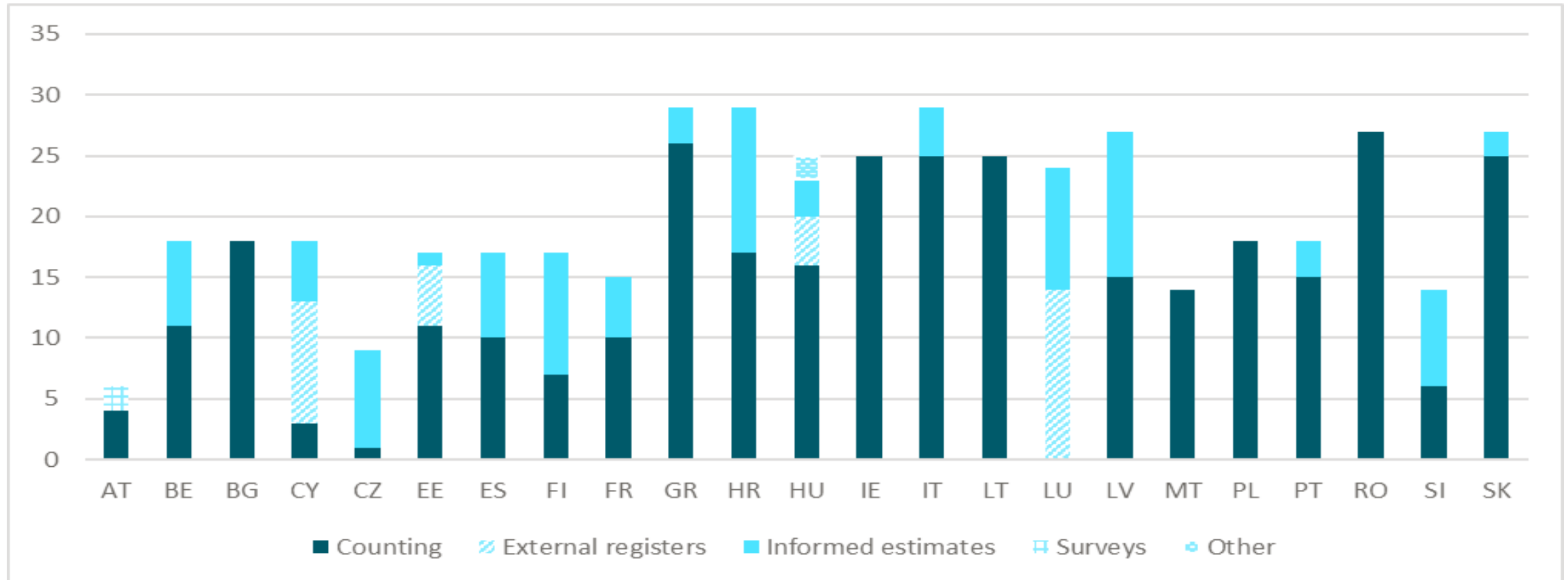
Different approaches to FEAD implementation and monitoring

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 532/2014 setting minimum requirements for audit trail requires a **reliable (and documented) system for collecting, recording and storing data for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification and audit purposes**. Further, “the audit trail shall allow data in relation to output indicators for the operation to be reconciled with reported data and result and, where appropriate, targets for the programme” (Article 3(i)).

!FEAD operational programmes can be clustered based on the approach to decide on the eligibility for FEAD support (**top-down/bottom-up**), **number of partner organisations (POs) and beneficiaries** involved in the delivery of FEAD assistance and **IT systems and tool used for the data collection, reporting and monitoring of implementation**.

Data collection methods (OP I)

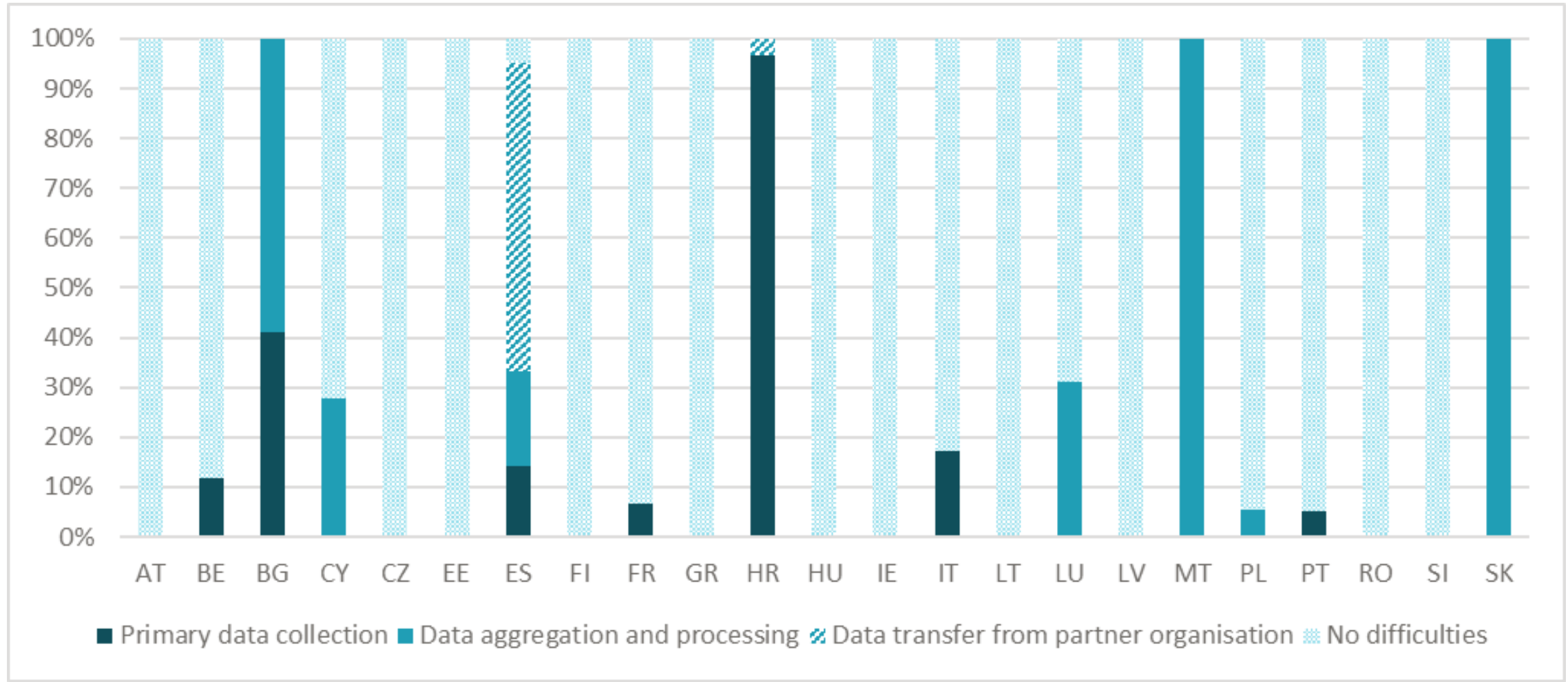
Counting is the most common method (at monitoring indicator level) of data collection across the OP I type programmes, but usually MSs apply an approach based on a **mix of data collection methods**.



Source: based on the information collection forms, completed by country experts and cross-checked with the MAs

Challenges related to the data collection and reporting (OPI)

In most cases reporting on FEAD OP I type programmes does not cause difficulties to the MAs.



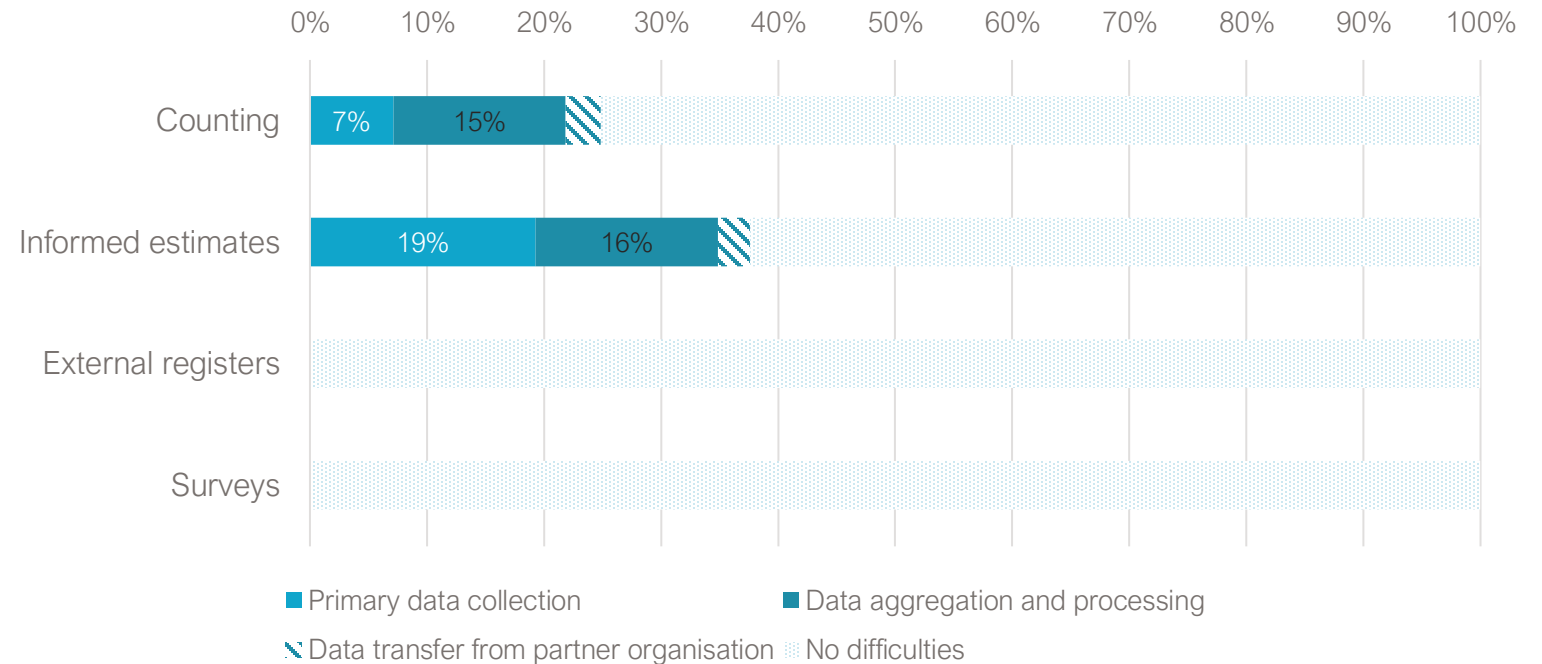
Source: based on the information collection forms, completed by country experts and cross-checked with the MAs

Challenges related to the data collection and reporting (OPI)

Informed estimates: estimation of the amount of the different types of food distributed and number of end recipients belonging to sensitive target groups

Counting: format of data reported, lack of IT tools accessible to partner organisations, timeliness of data collection and reporting, administrative burden to partner organisations.

DIFFICULTIES OF REPORTING ON FEAD OUTPUT AND RESULT INDICATORS BY DATA COLLECTION METHOD



Source: based on the information collection forms, completed by country experts and cross-checked with the MAs

! As an additional tool to crosscheck the data reported by POs (LV), surveys pose additional costs to FEAD implementation.

Bodies responsible for data collection

The **partner organisations** and **beneficiaries** provide most of the data on the common output and result indicators across OP I programmes.

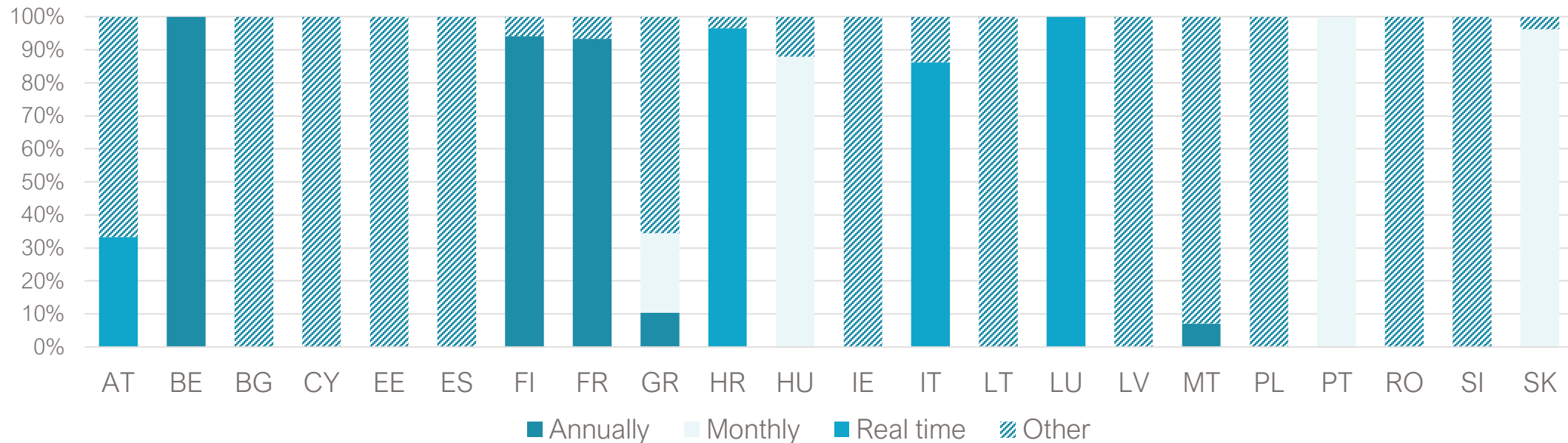
The **quality and reliability** of data reported by partner organisations and beneficiaries strongly depend on **the administrative capacity** of these actors, **the human resources** available to these organisations and **experience** both in delivering assistance to FEAD end recipients and meeting the requirements related to distribution and monitoring FEAD-funded support.

Data collection, aggregation and reporting can also be expected to be more complex where **numerous and diverse organisations** are involved.

! Across all OP I type programmes, [programme guidelines or instructions](#) on how the indicator data should be collected and calculated are available for **61 % of common output and result indicators**.

Frequency of reporting on FEAD indicators

Most of the reporting on the common output and result indicators of OP I type programmes is being linked to claims for reimbursement submitted by POs and beneficiaries to the Managing Authorities rather than conducted on a regular time periods.



Source: compiled by the authors, based on the information collected by country experts and cross-checked with FEAD MAs.



Reporting errors and data quality control

The common reporting errors detected by the MAs include:

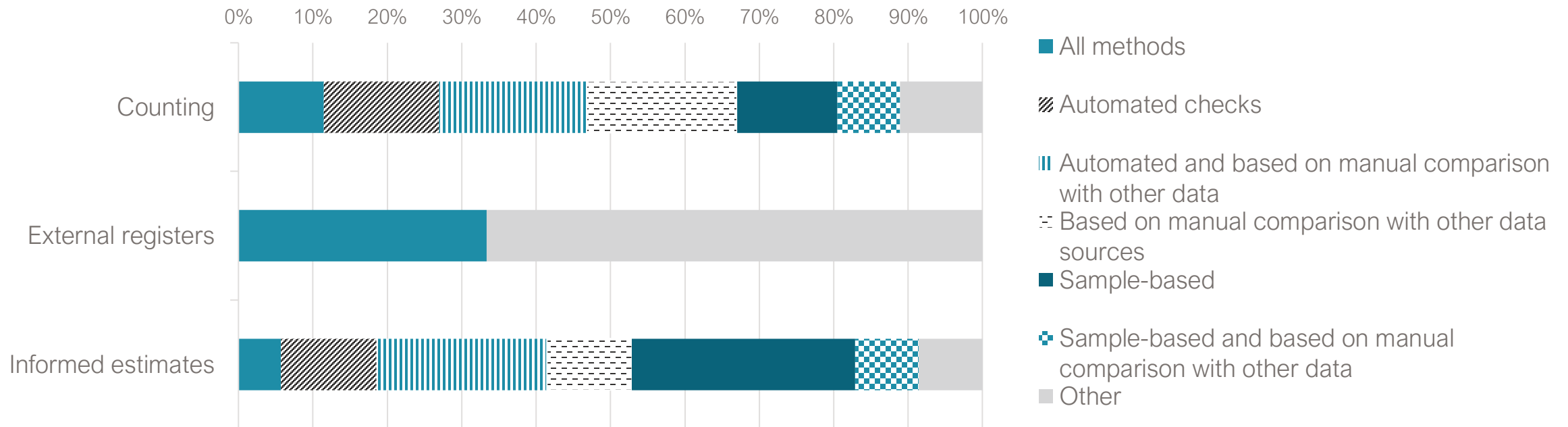
- use of wrong measurement units;
- reporting regular instead of cumulative values (or opposite);
- duplication, double counting of end recipients, over-reporting;
- wrong use of decimal separator;
- other miscalculations and misinterpretations,
- technical and clerical errors.

! Only two MAs informed the study team on the errors which were not detected at national level and wrong values have been reported to the EC

Data quality control and plausibility checks

The most common type of data quality checks applied by the FEAD Managing Authorities were **automated checks** which were **based on comparison or complementarity with other data**.

THE PERCENTAGE OF COMMON OUTPUT AND RESULT INDICATORS VERIFIED USING DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUALITY CHECKS



Source: compiled by the authors based on information collected by country experts and cross-checked with the MAs.

Structured surveys

In 2017 structured surveys were conducted for all OP I programmes, following the provisions of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/594 and Guidance note on FEAD structured survey.

- Most MAs contracted external providers (e.g. private survey companies) to conduct the structured surveys;
- In Malta, the survey was implemented by the National Statistics Office;
- In Belgium the structured survey was conducted by the POs, and no trained interviewers were involved;
- In France the survey was mostly conducted by volunteers of the POs consulted by the polling companies and institutes.

Only in four MS (Austria, France, Lithuania and Slovakia) **children** receiving FEAD food and/or material support **were interviewed**.

Challenges identified by interviewers were **questions** of the structured surveys that **were difficult to understand or irrelevant to the end recipients**, need for additional explanations or clarification, asking additional sub-questions, time of survey implementation.

Key strengths of OP I type data collection systems

- **Integration or interoperability of IT systems** and tools for the monitoring of FEAD implementation developed by the MA with IT systems and tools used by PO for support distribution (e.g. interface based connection) or **direct access to the IT systems** for FEAD monitoring granted to all or main POs;
 - **Linkages or integration** of the FEAD monitoring systems and tools with **external (social assistance) registers** which allows to directly obtain details on FEAD end recipients and cross-check the data on FEAD end recipients;
 - Simple reporting rules and **streamlined data collection and reporting** to meet the minimum requirement of FEAD legal framework when FEAD implementation is based on bottom-up approach and relies on close cooperation of the MA and POs, and involvement of frontline organisation;
 - **Systemic and ad-hoc data quality checks** in place allows to timely identification of reporting errors and contribute to the robustness of data reported to the EC.
 - MA's **guidance and templates for the collection and reporting the data** on FEAD monitoring indicators ensuring the unified format of data collected, training and ad hoc methodological support provided to POs.
-

Identified weaknesses of OP I type data collection systems

- The **administrative burden** for POs that are directly involved in the distribution of support caused by the national reporting rules and lack of simple and user-friendly IT solutions for the collection and reporting the data;
 - **Limited administrative and human resources** capacities of POs to collect and report the data using sophisticated IT systems, lack of knowledge and skills on how to meet the monitoring requirements of FEAD support.
-

Discussion with FEAD stakeholders

slido



Join at slido.com
#518171

① Start presenting to display the joining instructions on this slide.



Participants can join at slido.com with #518171



Which group of FEAD stakeholders do you represent at this workshop?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido

Participants can join at slido.com with #518171



What are the main advantages of data collection and reporting on FEAD-funded activities?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



Participants can join at slido.com with #518171



What are the main challenges related to data collection and reporting on FEAD-funded activities?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



What is the role of volunteers in FEAD monitoring?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



Participants can join at slido.com with #518171



What are the main opportunities and challenges related to the involvement of volunteers in FEAD monitoring?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.




Participants can join at slido.com with #518171



What are the main strengths and weaknesses related to administrative/human capacity at both PO and MA level?

How administrative/human capacity affected the monitoring of FEAD programme?

 Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



What are the main challenges and opportunities of using external registers for the purpose of FEAD monitoring (data collection, informed estimation, data validation)?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido

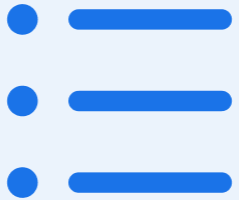


Use of surveys to collect data on FEAD implementation:

What are the main obstacles to interview children and other vulnerable groups?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



What is the risk of non-response and biased answers when surveys are used for reporting on output and especially result indicators?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Coffee break

**Session II: Good practices
of data collection and
reporting on the
implementation of OP I
type programmes**

Good practice examples

- **Comprehensive monitoring and data collection system** that ensures high transparency level and audit trail for the complete process of FEAD OP implementation and monitoring (BG, GR, PT).
 - **User-friendly electronic platforms and other e-cohesion solutions** that allow real-time monitoring and reporting for all parties involved and ensure consistent and quality data.
 - Generation and reporting of **monitoring data based on counting** exclusively (BG, LT, MT) without any estimates.
 - **Methodology and guidance** on how the indicator data should be collected, aggregated and reported to the partner organisations for easing their reporting process.
 - Consistent and unified methodology to calculate values of FEAD funded meals based on informed estimations.
 - **Delegation of data collection**, aggregation and reporting functions to POs and local partners which are directly involved in the distribution of support. Application of informed estimates as the main way to generate monitoring data.
 - **Use of data from national registers** to retrieve the sociodemographic data on FEAD end recipients.
-

Presentations by the MAs:

Finland

Greece

Lithuania

slido



How will the monitoring of the accompanying measures change?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



How the requirement to conduct evaluation in 2021-2027 will affect the monitoring of FEAD?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



Which are the main expected changes of FEAD data collection systems in 2021-2027 programming period?

How the FEAD monitoring IT systems will integrate into ESF+?

What are the main challenges and opportunities related to this integration?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Draft recommendations for 2021-2027 programming period (1)

- When eligibility of end recipients for FEAD support is decided based on national social assistance/minimum income schemes, ensure **the linkages and interoperability of IT systems used for FEAD data collection with national social assistance register** to retrieve the details required to report on the number of end recipients and sociodemographic characteristics.
- To **streamline the reporting on monitoring indicators, ensure the direct access or interface connection to FEAD IT system** developed by the MA for POs, provide sufficient user guidance and training for efficient use of developed IT solutions; consult POs on ad hoc issues related to the use of IT tools.
- Consider **simple cloud-based solutions** (e.g., Google Forms) when the bottom-up approach is applied to the implementation of FEAD funded activities or the POs lack administrative capacities to use sophisticated IT tools; ensure protection of sensitive and confidential data and the back-up of stored data.
- To ensure the **consistency of estimated values** (e.g. the number of hot meals prepared using FEAD purchased food), develop **the unified methodology for estimation** to be applied by POs or MAs to calculate and report the values of common indicator.

Draft recommendations for 2021-2027 programming period (2)

- Provide **unified templates for the collection and reporting the monitoring data** both under OP I and OP II type programmes to ensure the quality and comparability of data collected by different POs.
- **Automate the quality checks** of data reported by IT system's in-built checks to avoid wrong use of measurement and decimals, and where available automate the comparison against other data sources through interlinkages to financial data of programme and to national social assistance registers.
- Consider the **reformulation of the questions** provided in the template of **structured survey** to make them easy to understand and adjusted to the specific context of support provided at national/regional level; envisage the robust methodology for aggregation and analysis of responses to ensure the comparability of data at EU level.
- To keep the light administrative system for the monitoring of FEAD support, **avoid the 'gold-plating'** by introducing national rules that go beyond the minimum requirement of FEAD legal framework, e.g., signature-proved receipt of support, submission of primary data on end recipients, collection of data based on counting exclusively.

Thank you!

PPMi

Gedimino pr. 50, LT-01110 Vilnius,
Lietuva
www.ppmi.lt

Lunch break

**Session III: Data
collection methodologies
and monitoring systems
of OP II type programmes**

1. Objective and tasks of the study



The main purpose of the study

The purpose of this assignment is to **assess the monitoring systems of the FEAD programmes** and to **identify good practices**, both for OP I and OP II types implemented in the period 2014-2020 in all participating Member States.

The study will:

- enhance understanding of the functioning of the monitoring systems of FEAD programmes;
 - provide an assessment about the monitoring data reliability;
 - serve as the basis for the Commission's ex-post evaluation of FEAD programmes in the 2014-2020 programming period;
 - provide a useful input to Member States for the improvement of their monitoring systems for the 2021-2027 period.
-

The main tasks and research methods

Task 1: Mapping of data collection methodologies



Task 2: Assessment of monitoring systems' data collection and data processing arrangements



Task 3: Organisation of the workshop with FEAD stakeholders



Task 4: Final report

- Extensive desk research (OPs, AIRs, audit report, national legal framework, guidelines and manuals)
- Interviews at EU and national level
- 2 focus groups with FEAD stakeholders
- Assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- Identification of good practice examples
- Delineation of recommendations for the programming period 2021-2027

The main aim of the workshop

- To **present the key findings** of the study in a structured manner and validate them with FEAD stakeholders;
- To **gather new information and views** of different FEAD stakeholders;
- To **reflect upon possible recommendations and improvements** for the design and implementation of monitoring systems for the 2021-2027 programming period;
- The **outcomes of the workshop** will be considered **for the drafting of the final report**.

The agenda of the workshop

TIME

14:00 – 16:00 CET

SESSION

Session III: Data collection methodologies and monitoring systems of OP II type programmes

- Presentation by the study team
- Structured discussion with participants.
- Presentations by the MAs on the monitoring of FEAD OP II type programmes
- Open discussion with participants.
- Concluding remarks and wrap-up.

OP II type FEAD programmes

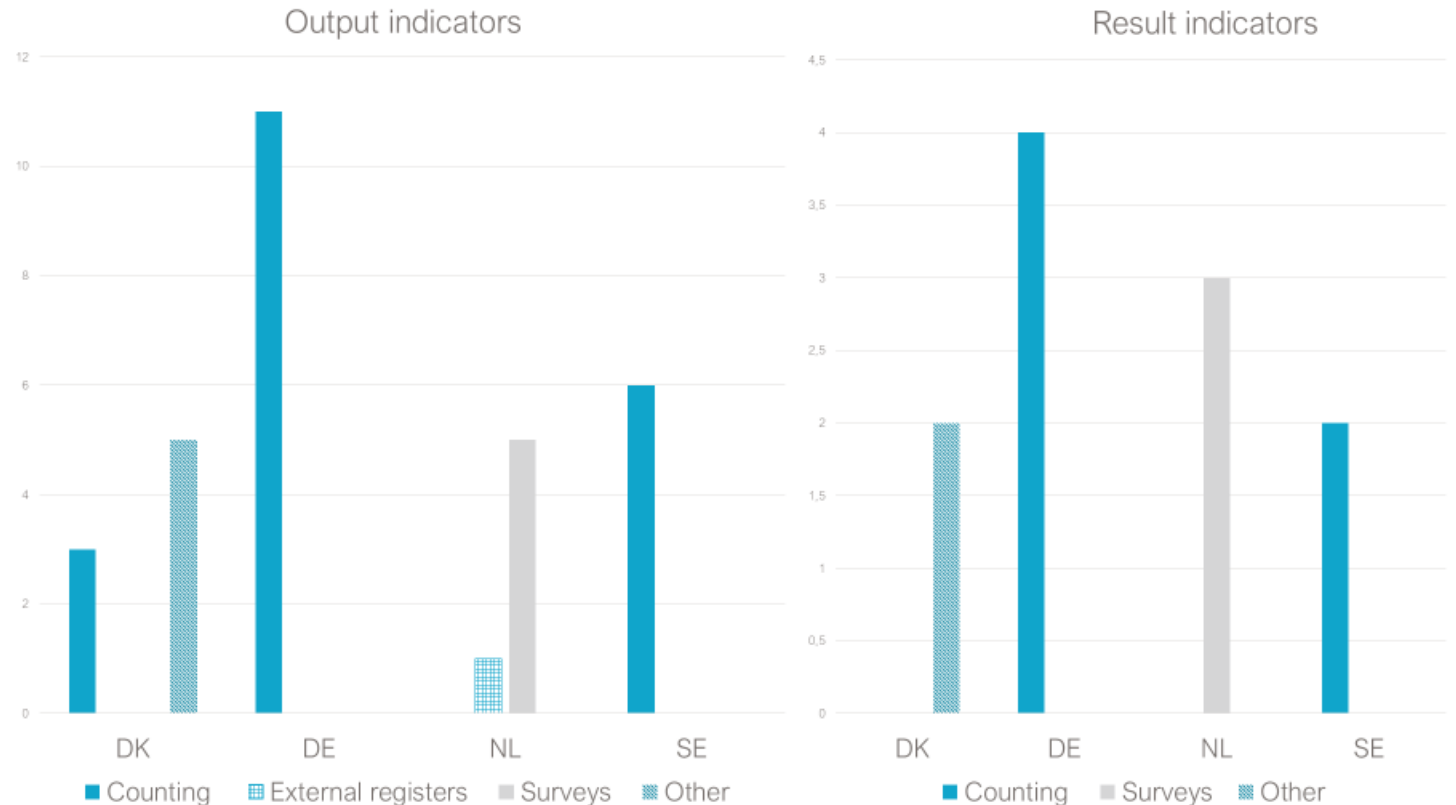
Type II operational programmes (OP II) aim to facilitate **the social inclusion of the most deprived people**. OP II supports various activities that are provided outside of active labour market measures. Four countries implement OP II programmes:

- Denmark aims to deliver social inclusion services to persons suffering from homelessness, unclear residence status, abuse, mental illness, disabilities;
- Germany aims to improve the social inclusion of immigrants and homeless people;
- the Netherlands focuses on elderly people with low incomes;
- Sweden supports the integration of vulnerable EU/EEA citizens into Swedish society.

Data collection methods (OP II)

Data collection methods may differ for output and result indicators.

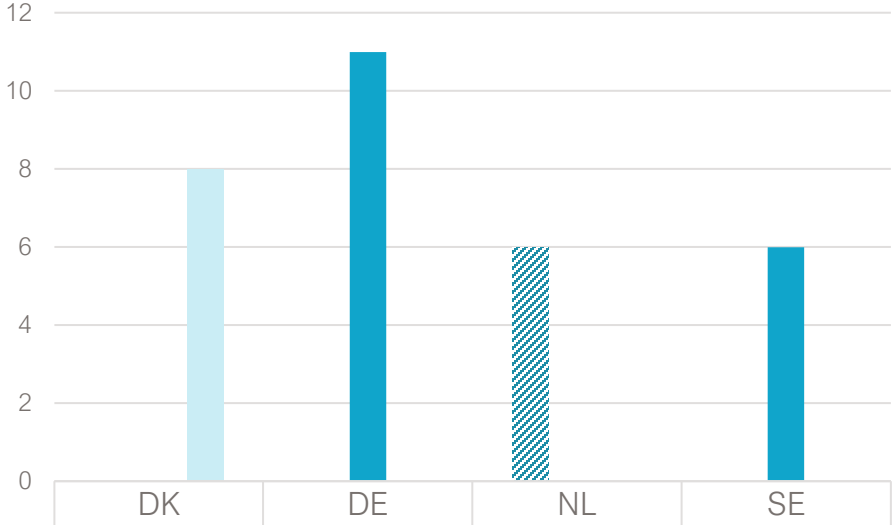
- Germany and Sweden depend exclusively on counting to gather data on output and result indicators.
- The Netherlands uses external registers and surveys.
- Denmark uses counting and other data collecting methods, such as self-reporting from projects.



Source: based on the information collection forms, completed by country experts and cross-checked with the MAs

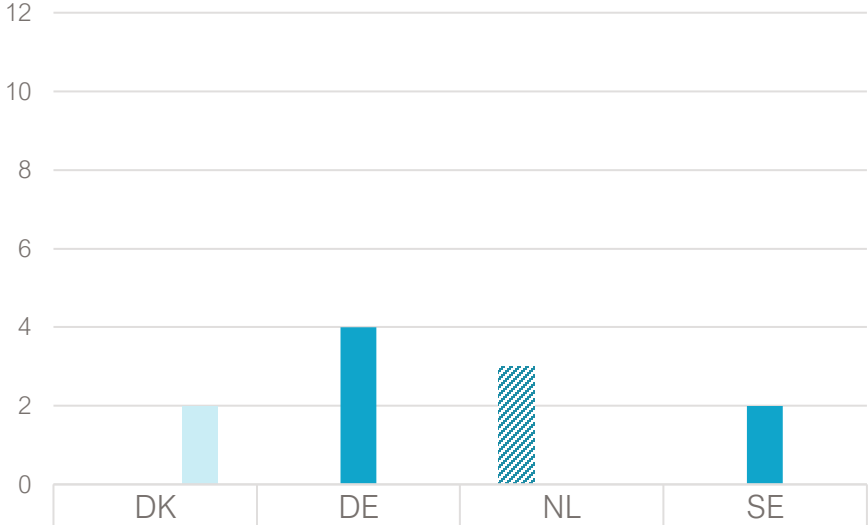
Bodies responsible for data collection

Output indicators



Beneficiaries			6	
Managing Authority		11		6
Partner organisations	8			

Result indicators



Beneficiaries			3	
Managing Authority		4		2
Partner organisations	2			

Source: compiled by the authors based on information collected by country experts and cross-checked with the MAs.

Data collection arrangements and frequency of reporting

The Managing Authorities of each OP II type programme identified **the frequency of reporting as sufficient**, although it varies significantly by country. To ensure standardized reporting that covers all required indicators and provides for the necessary data, the Member States have used various IT software (Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark), as well as standardised reporting forms.

- In **Denmark**, partner organisations report data to MA every six months.
- In **Germany**, project managers, and counsellors report data in real time by entering it into IT system ZUWES.
- In the **Netherlands**, data is reported by the administration of the beneficiary (most of the data supported by documentary evidence) at least once a year.
- **Sweden** does not use any specific IT software for data entry and transfer. The data is reported monthly through written reports, submitted to the MA via email.

Protection of sensitive data

All Member States implementing OP II programmes have undertaken measures to ensure adequate protection of such collected data.

- FEAD data collection arrangements allow for sufficient privacy and protection of sensitive data. If collected, these data are stored in the national registers or internal systems of POs with restricted access.
 - All Member States implementing OP II programmes have undertaken measures to ensure adequate protection of such collected data, using encrypted data transfer and access based on predefined rights (Germany, the Netherlands), regular data back and log of changes made up (the Netherlands, Denmark), anonymisation of data reported to the MA (Sweden).
-

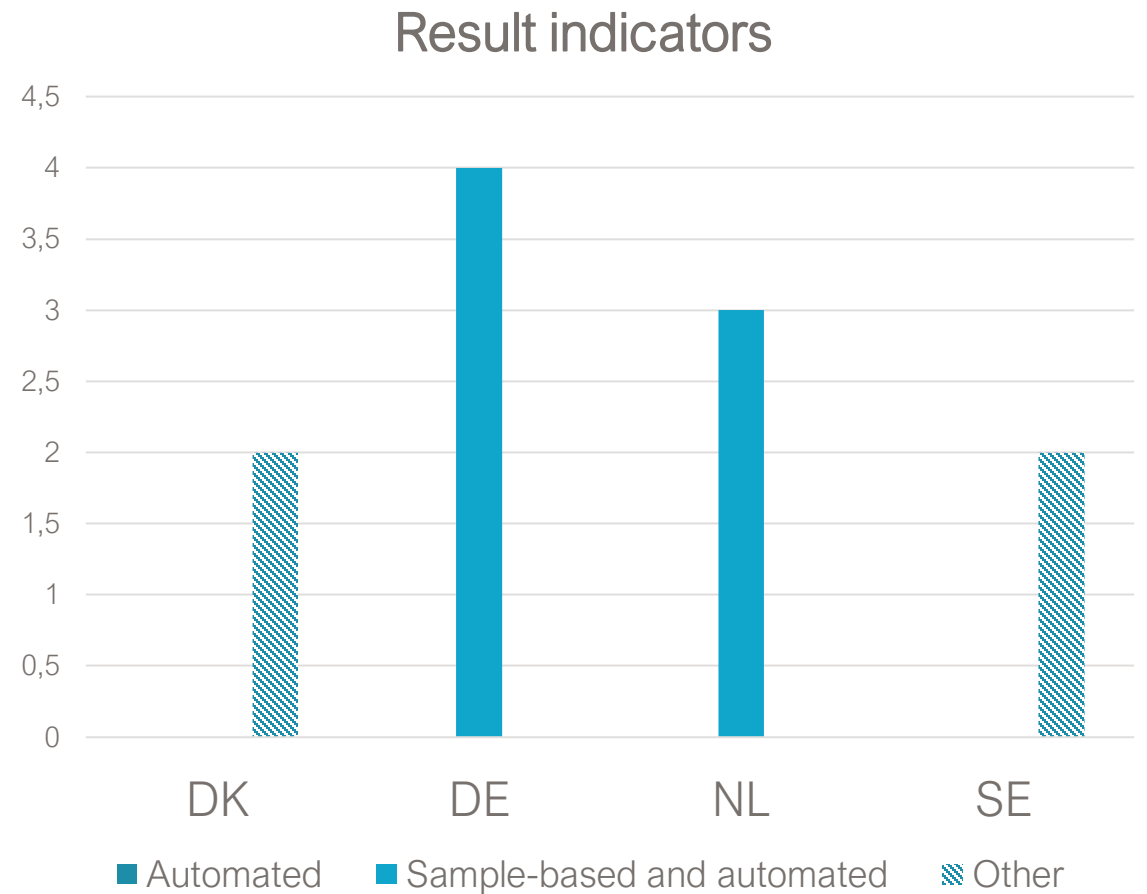
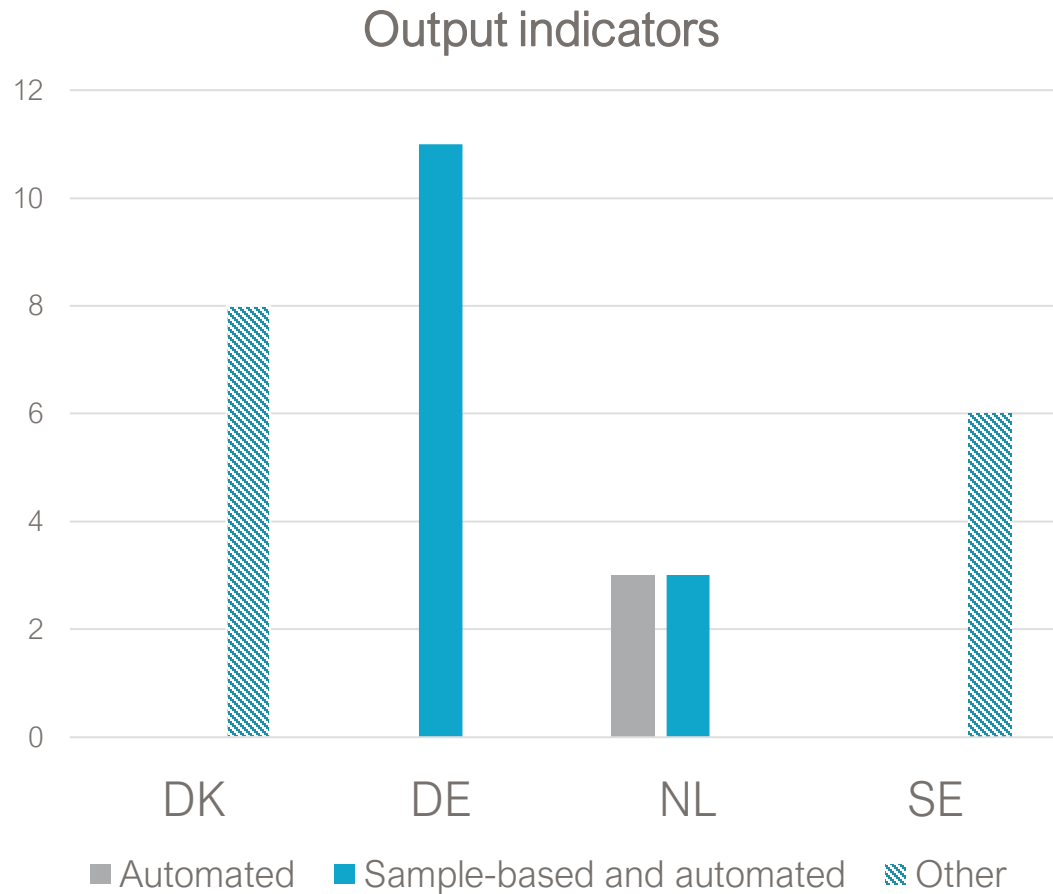
Data quality and reporting errors

Overall, the MAs in the Member States implementing OP II programmes view the existing data collection and monitoring system positively, with their ratings ranging from 7 to 10 (with 1 being weak and 10 being very good).

The information gathered and analysed by the study team revealed several sources of potential errors in data. The sources of errors include:

- misinterpretation of programme specific indicators.
- miscalculation of participants when applying counting methodology to collect data.
- duplications of entries, and
- administrative mistakes due to human error.

Data quality control and plausibility checks (OP II)



Source: compiled by the authors based on information collected by country experts and cross-checked with the MAs.

Strengths and weaknesses of data collection systems for OP II type programmes

Our study identified the following **main strengths of data collection systems** supporting the monitoring of FEAD OP II type programmes:

- simple and streamlined data collection and reporting on programme's progress and achievement when FEAD implementation arrangements results in a small number of projects and close cooperation of bodies in charge of data collection and reporting;
 - sufficient IT system with in-built data quality checks when multiple organisations collect and report the data in real time;
 - clear responsibilities of different actors involved in the data collection and reporting, limited manual follow-ups on monitoring data, availability to log all the changes made to data reported by partners and beneficiaries;
 - guidance and templates provided for the data collection and reporting.
-

The **main weaknesses** identified by the analysis include:

- lack of uniformity in collected data when multiple methods (surveys, self-reporting, phone calls, etc.) are applied to assess the number of end recipients who actually used the services referred to by FEAD funded project in Germany;
- the ambiguity of indicator definitions, and misinterpretation of them by partner organisations (Germany, Denmark);
- need to comply with the GDPR requirements raises additional administrative, human resource, and time costs of monitoring the programme for partner organisations;
- the risk of participant non-response and skewed data on monitoring indicators (the Netherlands).

Discussion with FEAD stakeholders

slido



What are the main advantages of data collection and reporting on FEAD-funded social inclusion activities?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



What are the main difficulties related to data collection and reporting on OP II type programmes?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



What is the risk of non-response and biased answers when surveys are used for reporting on output and especially result indicators?

How are these risks mitigated?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

**Monitoring of OP II type
programmes: good
practices at national level**

Identified good practice examples

Good practice	Transferability conditions
Straightforward OP II data collection system in the Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited number of projects with the focus on particular target group; - Standardised questionnaires to gather unified and comparable data;
Monthly data reporting (monthly) allowing for the timely identification of mistakes and reporting errors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simple and standardised templates for reporting only essential data or reporting on selected indicators only; - Close cooperation between the MAs and limited number of POs and beneficiaries;
Standardised forms for the interviews, surveys in Sweden and the Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standardisation of various forms for data collection makes easier the data collection and reporting and lower the administrative burden to POs. - Standardised forms are likely to provide less errors and more reliable data, however they should be clear and simple not to pose additional administrative burden on POs
Comprehensive IT system for data collection and reporting in Germany.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium to large number of projects and/or beneficiaries involved. - Interoperability of IT system with systems and tools used by POs (if any) or direct access to the centralised IT system granted to POs; - Sufficient guidance and training provided to POs on how to collect and report the data in a unified manner.

Presentations by the MAs:
The Netherlands
Sweden

slido



Which are the success factors and necessary conditions to monitoring of FEAD OP II type programmes?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



Which are the main changes of FEAD data collection systems in 2021-2027 programming period?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Thank you!

PPMi

Gedimino pr. 50, LT-01110 Vilnius,
Lietuva
www.ppmi.lt