

RDP analysis: Measure 16 ‘Cooperation’

M16.5

Environment & climate change

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. Regulation background

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 16.5³

Sub-Measure 16.5 (M16.5) provides support for:

- **Joint action undertaken with a view to mitigating or adapting to climate change;**
- **Joint approaches to environmental projects and ongoing environmental practices, including efficient water management, the use of renewable energy and the preservation of agricultural landscapes⁴.**

M16.5 aims at supporting cooperation among rural actors within the frame of activities in favor of environment/climate that could otherwise be funded under the Measures Agri-environment-climate (M10), Organic farming (M11) or Forest-environmental, climate services and forest conservation (M15).

More in specific, this sub-Measure gives the possibility to implement cooperation projects of particular complexity for the variety of activities, participants and investments foreseen.

Joint projects involving activities funded by M10, M11 and M15, as well as other Measures, could use M16.5 to cover their costs of organisation, co-ordination and animation of the cooperation group implementing the project.

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

⁴ Reg. 1305/2013 Art.35(2)(f) and (g)

2. RDPs programming the sub-Measure

M16.5 is programmed in 56 RDPs across 15 MSs.

Table 1 - List of RDPs programming M16.5

N	RDPs ⁵
1	Austria (AT)
2	Czech Republic (CZ)
3	DE-Brandenburg/Berlin
4	DE-Hessen
5	DE-Sachsen
6	DE-Schleswig-Holstein
7	DE-Thuringen
8	Estonia (EE)
9	ES-Aragon
10	ES-Asturias
11	ES-Cataluna
12	ES-National
13	ES-Galicia
14	ES-I Canarias
15	ES-La Rioja
16	ES-Pais Vasco
17	FI-Mainland
18	FR-Auvergne
19	FR-Basse-Normandie
20	FR-Franche-Comte
21	FR-Guyane
22	FR-Ile-De-France
23	FR-Limousin
24	FR-Lorraine
25	FR-Mayotte
26	FR-Paca
27	FR-Reunion
28	FR-Rhone-Alpes
29	Greece (GR)
30	Hungary (HU)
31	IT-Abruzzo
32	IT-Basilicata
33	IT-Campania
34	IT-Emilia Romagna
35	IT-Friuli Venezia Giulia
36	IT-Lazio
37	IT-Liguria
38	IT-Lombardia
39	IT-Marche
40	IT-Molise
41	IT-Piemonte
42	IT-Trento
43	IT-Puglia
44	IT-Sardegna
45	IT-Toscana
46	IT-Umbria
47	IT-Veneto
48	Malta (MT)
49	PT-Acores
50	PT-Madeira
51	Sweden (SE)
52	Slovenia (SI)
53	UK-England
54	UK-Northern Ireland
55	UK-Scotland
56	UK-Wales



Map 1 - RDPs programming M16.5

For MS having regional RDPs, the map indicates the number of RDPs that programmed M16.5 out of the national total.

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

3. Scope of the RDP programmed activities

Impact

M16.5 supports projects that promote the **adoption of production systems and land management practices** which have a positive effect on:

- Biodiversity conservation,
- Mitigation and adaptation to climate change,
- Protection of agricultural landscape,
- Sustainable use of resources,
- Shift to renewable energy.

Biodiversity

RDPs state that the **protection of biodiversity** and ecosystems is one of the main priorities tackled by M16.5. In some cases, RDPs specify that projects under M16.5 must focus on improving the management and state of conservation of the areas **Natura 2000, national parks, nature reserves and other areas of high natural value** (e.g. in AT, DE-Schleswig Holstein, IT-Abruzzo, IT-Basilicata, IT-Campania, IT-Emilia Romagna, IT-Puglia, MT, SI).

FA 4A

With these objectives M16.5 is strongly expected to contribute to Focus Area 'Biodiversity's restoration, preservation & enhancement' (4A).

Land management

Many RDPs state that M16.5 support joint actions aiming at implementing **land management plans** in respect of the sub-Measure objectives (e.g. DE-Brandenbourg-Berlin, DE-Thuringen, ES-Galicia, FR-Guyane, IT-Basilicata, IT-Basilicata, IT-Friuli Venezia Giulia).

Land management practices supported will concern:

- **sustainable soil uses** able to maintain and improve the soil quality (e.g. IT-Campania and IT-Liguria),
- the promotion of **resource-efficient agriculture production methods** such as organic agriculture (e.g. in ES-La Rioja and IT-Lazio),
- the conservation of the **traditional rural landscapes** (e.g. FR-Basse Normandie, IT-Lazio, IT-Puglia).

Case 1: Land management in IT-Liguria

In IT-Liguria M16.5 will help to recuperate abandoned areas, limit erosion processes, protect agricultural landscape and the environment, strengthen local networks of farms and rural entrepreneurs involved in landscape and environment protection.

Forest management

RDPs will use M16.5 also as a tool for land management in the forestry sector where it supports horizontal and vertical cooperation between actors in the field of **sustainable forest management** (e.g. AT, DE-Thuringen, ES-Canarias, ES-Pais Vasco, IT-Umbria, SE).

Case 2: Forest management in IT-Umbria

In IT-Umbria M16.5 supports: i) the definition of territorial strategies to face fire risks and to improve water management; ii) the preparation of local emergency plans to be used in case of forests fires; iii) the implementation of joint actions and investments to increase forests resilience.

FA 4C & 5E

By intervening in the land management and in the forest management fields, M16.5 is strongly expected to contribute to Focus Area 'Soil erosion & soil management' (4C) and 'Carbon conservation & sequestration' (5E).

Water management

A high number of RDPs use 16.5 with the aim of **improving water management, protecting water basin, and adapting existing water networks and systems to climate change challenges** (e.g. AT, ES-La Rioja, FR-Guyane, FR-Rhone Alps, FR-PACA, HU, IT-Basilicata, IT-Friuli Venezia Giulia, MT).

FA 4B & 5A

With this aim M16.5 is strongly expected to contribute to Focus Area 'Water management' (4B) and 'Water use efficiency' (5A).

Energy use

Many RDPs explained that cooperation will seek the use of new land and water management system in specific having a more **resource-saving and site-adapted energy use** (e.g. ES-National, ES-Asturias, ES-La Rioja, FI, HU, FR-Basse-Normandie, FR-Rhone Alps). The sub-Measure also aim at **improving the agro-food sector by introducing more resource-efficient and sustainable practices**.

Where M16.5 will be implemented in the energy field, in some cases it also aims at promoting the use of **renewable energy and cleaner energy technologies** (e.g. ES-La Rioja, FR-Basse Normandie, FR-Rhone Alps, ES-Canarias), or at promoting shifting to **greener infrastructures** (e.g. DE-Thuringen).

FA 5B & 5A

With these objectives M16.5 is strongly expected to contribute to Focus Area 'Energy use efficiency' (5B) and 'Renewable sources & wastes management' (5C).

Greenhouse gas & biomass

M16.5 is expected to have an impact in specific on climate change by supporting the **reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from livestock and agricultural practices** (e.g. DE-Thuringen, FR-Guyane, IT-Basilicata, IT-Emilia Romagna).

In at least 4 RDPs (CZ, ES-Canarias, IT-Friuli Venezia Giulia, FR-Reunion) M16.5 is used to facilitate the production of biomass. Cooperation actions will be able to support the different actors involved in the whole biomass production and distribution chain.

FA 5B & 5A

With these objectives M16.5 is strongly expected to contribute to Focus Area 'Renewable sources & wastes management' (5C) and 'Greenhouse gas & ammonia emissions' (5D).

Case 3: Fertilizers production in FR-Reunion

In FR-Reunion M16.5 supports the agriculture sector by reducing the island's import dependency on fuel-base fertilizers. M16.5 in fact will valorise residual organic matter available on the territory (often agricultural wastes) to produce fertilizers locally.

Cases

A number of cases were identified:

- M16.5 supports **knowledge transfer, information and awareness raising actions** (e.g. AT, DE- Brandenburg Berlin).
- M16.5 acts in the frame of already **existing national and regional strategies for environment and climate actions** (e.g. In DE-Schleswig Holstein supporting the Federal Biodiversity Strategy, in FR-PACA supporting the Territorial Climate-Energy Plans⁶).
- M16.5 is expected to intervene to face natural and biodiversity conservation challenges emerging from climate change such as the **fight against exotic species** (e.g. in ES-Catalunia).

Case 4: Knowledge transfer in DE-Brandenburg Berlin

In DE-Brandenburg Berlin M16.5 focus on knowledge transfer actions on the topics of resource-saving land use and cultivation methods. Cooperation actions and networks between farmers, environmentalists and researchers will aim at:

- training and information transfer modules involving targeted groups, research institutions and experts;
- organising of events, conferences, regional information events,
- establishing coordination structures,
- running studies and surveys.

Cross-border cooperation

A number of RDPs including EE, FI, FR-Mayotte, PT-Azores, SE and UK-Wales will allow 16.5 supported projects to engage in cross-border cooperation with other MSs/regions in EU.

⁶ In French: Plans Climat-Energie Territoriaux (PCET)

4. Contribution to Focus Areas and linkages to other Measures

In a very high number of RDPs M16.5 is expected to be implemented together with other Measures:

Table 2 - M16.5 linkages with other Measures

Measure	Examples of RDPs
Knowledge transfer (M01) & Advisory services (M02)	IT-Abruzzo, IT-Basilicata, IT-Liguria, IT-Marche
Investments in physical assets (M04)	ES-Aragon, FR-Auvergne, IT-Abruzzo, IT-Emilia Romagna, IT-Lazio, IT-Liguria, IT-Marche, IT-Trento, MT, UK-Northern Ireland
Damage/restoration/prevention actions (M05)	IT-Lazio, IT-Marche
Farm & business development (M06)	FR-Auvergne
Basic services & village renewal (M07)	FR-Auvergne
Investments in forest areas (M08)	FR-Auvergne, FR-Lorraine, IT-Basilicata, MT
Agri-environment-climate (M10)	UK-Northern Ireland, ES-Pais Vasco, FR-Lorraine, IT-Abruzzo, IT-Basilicata, IT-Emilia Romagna, IT-Lazio, IT-Marche, IT-Molise, MT, UK-Wales, UK-Northern Ireland, IT-Trento
Organic farming (M11)	ES-Pais Vasco, FR-Lorraine, IT-Abruzzo, IT-Basilicata, IT-Lazio, IT-Molise
Forest-environmental-climate (M15)	ES-Pais Vasco, IT-Marche

As proposed by the regulations, in these cases M16.5 might be used only to fund the costs incurred to create and run the cooperation group and to plan the project while the Measures above indicated would fund the costs incurred for the project implementation.

The Measures mostly expected to be used together with M16.5 are **Agri-environment-climate (M10)**, **Organic farming (M11)** and **Investments in physical assets (M04)**.

Among the MSs that implement M16.5 within a complex combination of other M16 sub-Measures we can find:

- EE combining 16.2 'Innovation and pilot projects', 16.3 'Small operators and tourism', 16.5 'Environment and climate change', and 16.9 'Diversification and social farming'.
- FR-Ile de France combining 16.1 'EIP operational groups', 16.3 'Small operators and tourism', and 16.5 'Environment and climate change'.
- ES-Aragon and ES-Asturias combining 16.2 'Innovation and pilot projects', 16.6 'Biomass provision, and 16.5 'Environment and climate change'.

Case 5: 16.2 + 16.6 + 16.5 in ES-Asturias

16.5 supports pilot projects for the creation of innovative and sustainable products, practices, processes and technologies in agriculture and agro-food sectors. Pilot projects might also aim at the establishment of short food chains and might take place in the field of energy efficiency. The selection criteria include: benefits to environment, support to social inclusion, use of cooperative action, qualifications of beneficiaries, innovativeness, costs, and relevance of expected results to identified priority needs.

M16.5 is clearly identified contributing mostly to **Priority 4 and 5**. The actions described in the RDPs, in fact, very often coincide with the exact description of P4 and P5 objectives⁷.

M16.5, however, by including knowledge transfer actions and by aiming at supporting innovative solution to environmental and climate change problems, will also contribute to P1.

Finally, RDPs identify that M16.5 actions will bring benefits to diversification and job creation as well as to local development, contributing in this way also to FAs 6A and 6B.

⁷ For more details, see section 3. Scope of the activities.

5. Eligibility criteria and selection process

Eligible costs

The majority of the RDPs defines that the eligible costs will concern only:

- the establishment, organization, animation and coordination of the cooperation group;
- the preparation of feasibility studies and business plans;

Where the projects will be involved also in knowledge transfer activities or where selection criteria establish provisions on the dissemination of the projects results, eligible costs include also 'awareness-raising', communication and dissemination activities (e.g. AT, DE- Brandenburg Berlin, FR-France Comte, FR-Guyane).

As introduced under section 2, in many cases **M16.5 does not fund the actual implementation of the projects that instead will be supported by other Measures**. Only few RDPs are very clear in establishing whether the sub-Measure also covers the project costs (e.g. FR-Guyane that supports only specific investments needed to implement the projects not supported by other Measures; IT-Trento where M16.5 supports both the cooperation group and the project implementation).

Duration

Where specified, RDPs define that the cooperation action must last for a **minimum number of years going from 2 to 7**.

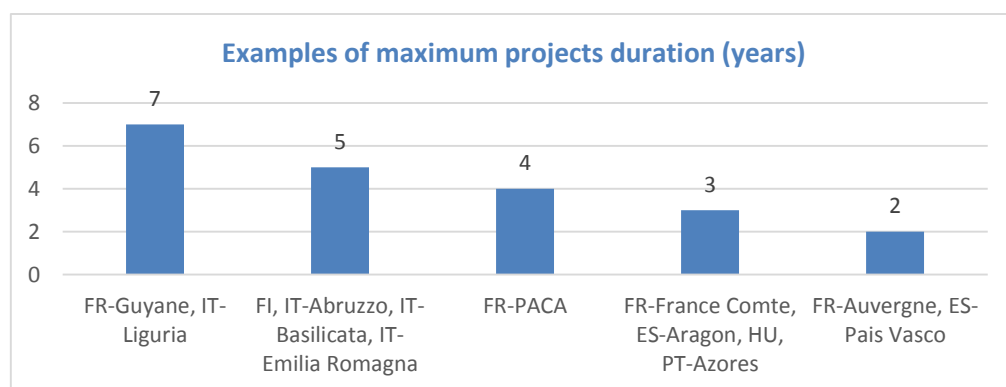


Figure 1 - Examples of maximum projects duration

Cooperation group

M16.5 is expected to be implemented by a very **wide variety of stakeholders**. RDPs define that among beneficiaries eligible there are land and wood managers, farmers, agents from the forestry sector, NGOs, local authorities, environmental regulatory bodies, as well as government agencies concerned with water, energy, and environmental protection. As set by the regulation⁸, the cooperation group will be composed of at least 2 two entities.

Rarely RDPs require the presence of a lead partner or clearly request a formal agreement among the actors of the cooperation group (e.g. IT-Marche, IT-Trento).

⁸See section 1.

Case 6: The AAA in IT-Marche

M16.5 supports the implementation of Area-based Agri-environmental Agreements (AAA) signed by the participants. The AAA must have a lead-partner identified by the cooperation group members and having the responsibility to implement and coordinate the projects.

Criteria

Projects are selected mainly on the base of their **impact on environmental and climate change**. Selection criteria concern also **the number, the composition and the professional preparation of the applicants**. Cooperation groups having a high number of participants and a high number of farms are privileged (e.g. IT-Abruzzo, IT-Lazio, ES-Galicia, FR-Guyane, FR-Lorraine, IT-Basilicata, IT-Lombardia).

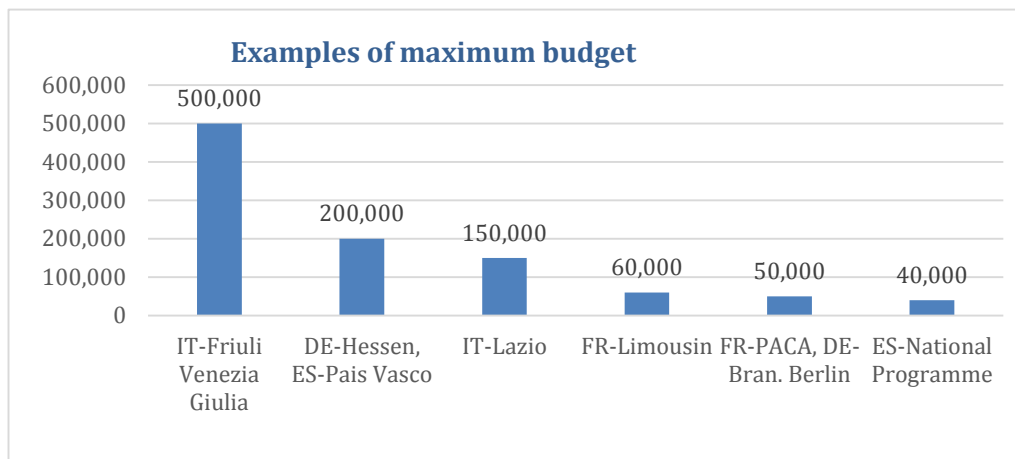
Further selection criteria highlighted were:

- Impact on **employment** (e.g. HU) in specific for woman and youth (e.g. ES-Galicia),
- **Innovativity** of the project (e.g. FR-Ile de France, HU),
- The **extension of the area** involved in the project (e.g. IT-Marche, IT-Liguria, IT-Piemonte),
- The location of the project in **Natura 2000 areas** (e.g. IT-Abruzzo, IT-Piemonte, IT-Puglia).

6. Financial aspects

Budget

Maximum budget allocated to the projects may vary from € 40.000 in ES-National Programme to € 500.000 in IT-Friuli Venezia Giulia.



Minimum budget allocation was provided by very few RDPs: € 50.000 in IT-Friuli Venezia Giulia and € 2.000 in DE-Sachsen.

Some RDPs set their budget according to some specific conditions:

- IT-Trento and HU set a different maximum budget for the set-up of the cooperation groups and for the implementation of their projects.

Table 3 - Examples of budget allocation

Max. budget	Set-up of the cooperation group	Project implementation
IT-Trento	€ 40.000	€ 100.000
HU	€ 25.000	€ 80.000

- IT-Lazio sets that the contribution per partner will not exceed €2.000.

Support rates

Support rates will vary from 70% to 100%.

Table 4 – Examples of support rates

Examples of RDPs	Support rate
IT-Abruzzo, DE-Brandbourg Berlin, DE-Hessen, ES-National Programme, FR-Guyane, IT-Basilicata, IT-Liguria, IT-Marche, IT-Piemonte, IT-Puglia, IT-Sardegna, IT-Umbria, UK-England, UK-Scotlnd, UK-Northern Ireland	100%
FR-PACA, FR-Ile de France, FR-Lorraine	80%

FR-Reunion	75%
PT-Azores	70%

Some RDPs didn't set a unique support rate but establish specific conditions:

- FR-Basse Normandie set a maximum support rate of 100% of eligible costs for projects on water & soil and of 80% for projects on energy transition.
- IT-Lombardia, 100% for projects in agriculture dealing with local species/varieties of fruit/horticultural plants and 50% for projects in the forestry sector and supporting diversification of farming activities.
- ES-Asturias, 50% for projects involving profit businesses and 100% for projects involving non-profit organisations.
- In FI the subsidy level depends on the project content and type. Support rate is set at 100% of eligible costs in case of inter-territorial or trans-national cooperation projects or projects implemented together with an EIP Operational Group.
- In EE the RDP presents the possibility to use of flat-rates in case of indirect costs, use of flat-rate for up to 25% of eligible direct costs and use of lump sum of up to € 100.000 per project.
- Use of SCOs in UK-Norther Ireland, UK-Scotland and UK-Wales.

**Simplified
cost
options:
cases**