Organisational structures and functioning models of NN Support Units

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Survey overview

› Online survey conducted in January 2025

› Questions about
   › Organisational structures
   › Regional structures
   › Support to AKIS
   › Support to evaluation
   › NN Membership
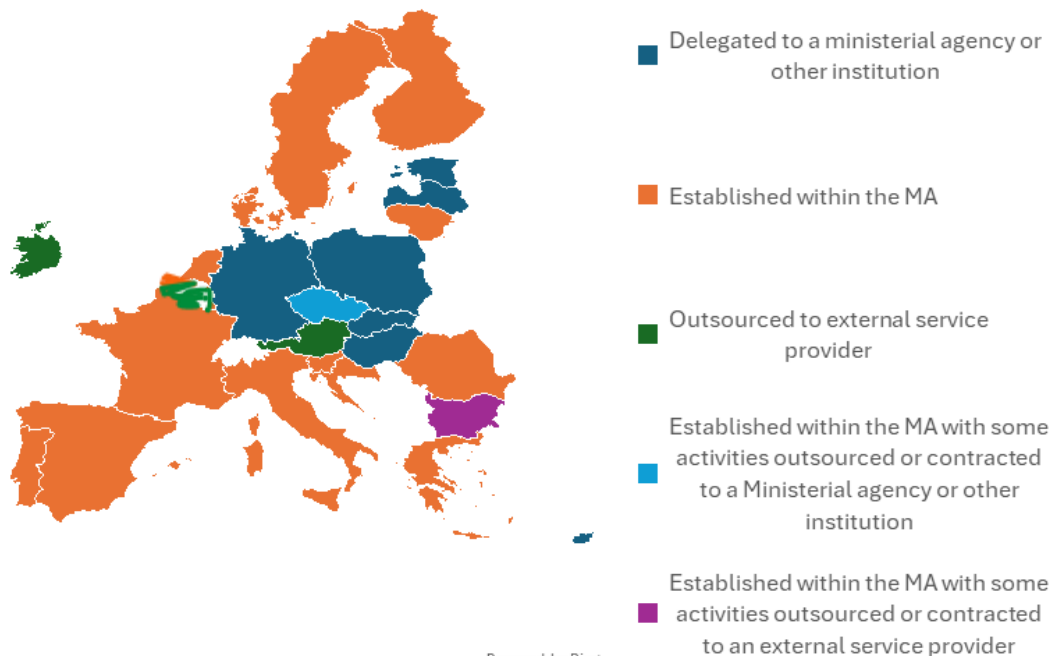
› 28 Network Support Units (NSUs) responded

Objectives

› Understanding and collecting information about new structures and functioning models

› Identifying the institutions involved

› Gaining insights into the new roles and responsibilities (full time employees, etc)

› Learning about regional structures and how they function

› Taking stock of any advantages that occurred from the changes

› Finding more about the NN memberships and how stakeholders can be involved

1. Organisational structures
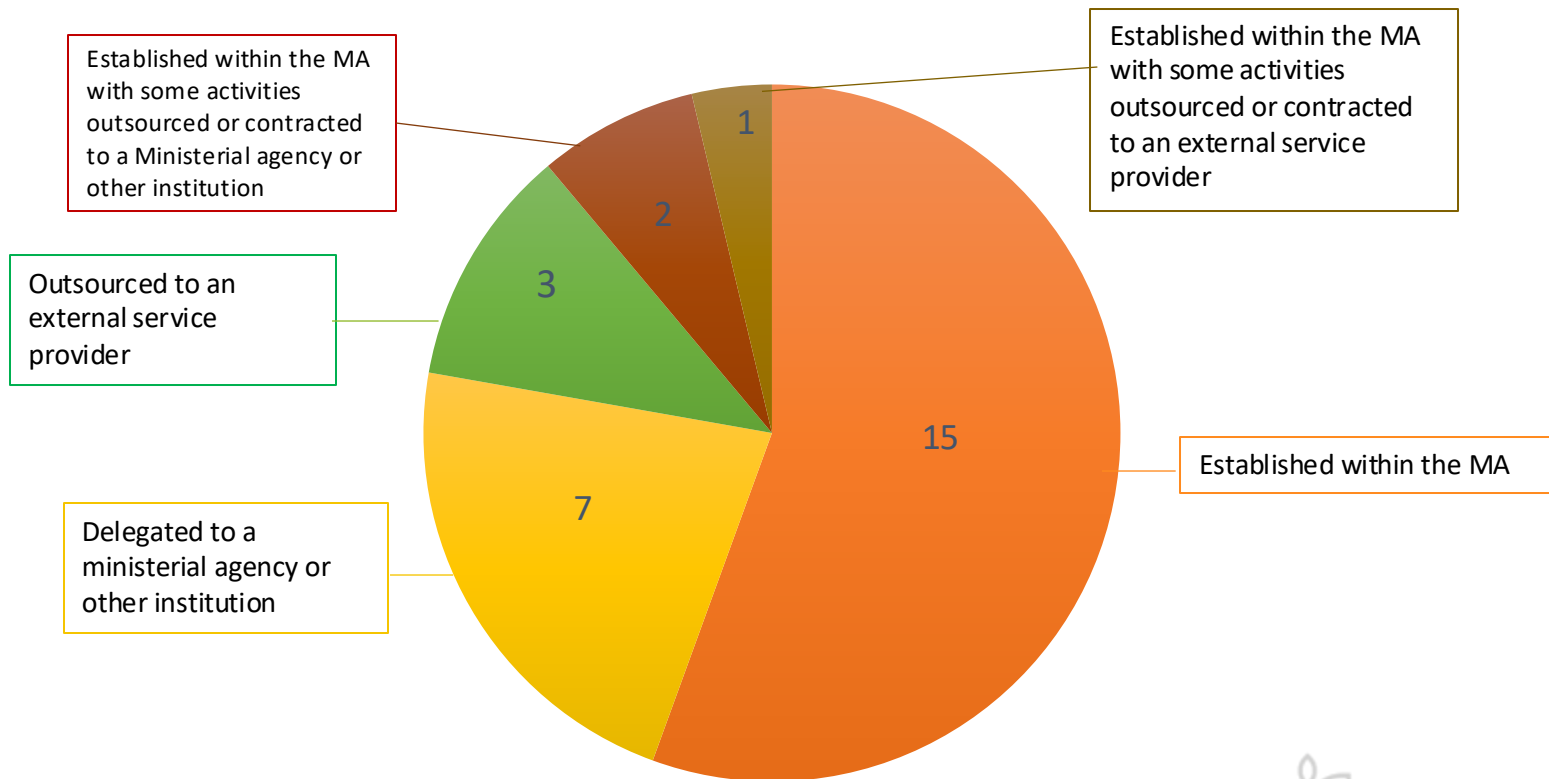
How are the NSUs set up?

Delegated to a ministerial agency or other institution

Established within the MA

Outsourced to external service provider

Established within the MA with some activities outsourced or contracted to a Ministerial agency or other institution

Established within the MA with some activities outsourced or contracted to an external service provider

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Outsourced to an external service provider

Established within the MA

Delegated to a ministerial agency or other institution

1

2

3

15

7

NSU within the Managing Authority

- Greece
- France
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- Portugal
- Croatia
- Italy
- Denmark

- Slovenia
- Romania
- Spain
- Belgium (Flanders)
- Finland
- Sweden
- Lithuania
- **Total: 15 countries**

A. NSU established within the MA

NL: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature and the 12 provinces are the principals, implementation is done by a program directorate (Regieorganisatie GLB) of the ministry

SE: The NN is located within the Swedish board of agriculture, but has a steering group that consists of 16 of the over 110 national member organisations. The Steering group decides the activity plan.

GR: NSU operates within the Managing Authority is supported, both by its Programming and Networking Unit, regarding the programmatic level, as well as by the Administrative and Technical Support and Publicity Unit, regarding the implementation of the "action plan".

LU: The network is established within the directorate for rural development of the Ministry of Agriculture. For some activities, it refers to other service branches and institutions (e.g. communication department, technical administrations, LAGs, etc.)
The Monitoring Committee of the CAP strategic plan functions as coordination committee of the national CAP network.

FR: At the national level, we are 3 employees in the unit working on the national strategic plan.
We don't have our own Network structure but are integrated into the CAP aid management department.

B. NSU Delegated to a ministerial agency or other institution

- › Cyprus
- › Latvia
- › Hungary
- › Poland
- › Estonia
- › Slovakia
- › Germany
- › **Total: 7 countries**

Examples of NSUs delegated to a ministerial agency or other institution

LV: The NSU task is delegated to the Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre (LRATC).
•Employees at both the LRATC headquarters and regional branches are responsible for implementing tasks delegated by the Ministry of Agriculture to the NSU.

PL: NSU divided into MA and beneficiary sections, coordinating with other ministerial departments.
• The central unit, managed by the Agricultural Advisory Centre (CDR), includes a Warsaw branch dedicated to the Polish Rural Network. It manages 2 thematic networks.
• The Warsaw branch handles network coordination, innovation support, LEADER, rural women's associations, and Operational Groups.

EE:
Centre of Estonian Rural Research and Knowledge (METK):
• A government agency under the Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture.
• Divided into three major thematic areas:
  •Research Activities Laboratory and Field Testing Activities
  •Entrepreneurship and
  •Innovation
• Estonian NSU is located under "Entrepreneurship and Innovation," as part of the Department of Knowledge and Innovation Service.

C. Established within the MA with some activities outsourced or contracted to a Ministerial agency or other institution

> Malta

> Czechia

> **Total: 2 NSUs**

CZ: The National Network is an organisational part of the Managing Authority. Regional activities are operated by the Paying Agency.

Established within the MA with some activities outsourced or contracted to **an external service provider**

› Bulgaria

BG:
Part of the "Programming and Technical Assistance" Unit in the "Rural Development" Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.
•The Unit employs 10 people, with 3 full-time dedicated to the CAP Network.

Outsourced to external service provider

> Ireland

> Austria

> Belgium (Wallonia)

BE (Wallonia): 3 organisations build the NN
Société coopérative Tr@me:
- Coordinates mission and implementation
- Main contact for the Consortium with the contracting authority
- Specialises in networking, stakeholder mobilisation, and strategy development
- Focus on collective intelligence and co-construction

Natagriwal:
- Leads discussions on rural biodiversity and sustainable agricultural and forestry practices
- Focus on eco-schemes and second pillar interventions (e.g., MAEC, Natura 2000)

Socopro:
- Manages the Producers' College
- Provides expertise and facilitates networks on agricultural development and sustainable food systems
- Focus on the role of producers within value chains

Outsourced to external service provider

IE: 3 Organisations built the NN:

Irish Rural Link (IRL)
- Lead Contractor: Network management and implementation
- Develop strategy for consortium operation
- Disseminate expert knowledge on environmental legislation
- Manage networking, communication, and dissemination

Munster Technological University (MTU)
- Develop, accredit, and facilitate CAP upskilling programmes
- Share expert knowledge on environmental legislation and impacts
- Support agricultural research at national and international levels

ERINN Innovation
- Oversee research activities and knowledge implementation
- Manage the Innovation Hub for knowledge brokerage
- Provide expertise on European funding landscape and communication

AT: 4 Organisations built as a consortium the NN:

Austrian Chamber of Agriculture
- Responsible for the "securing the food supply" action field
- Lead partner in the consortium
- Manages communication, bookkeeping, and controlling activities

Environmental Umbrella Organisation
- Responsible for the "sustainable use of resources" action field

ÖAR Regional Consulting
- Responsible for the "shaping the quality of life" action field

Innovation Consulting
- Responsible for the "strengthening innovation and knowledge transfer" action field

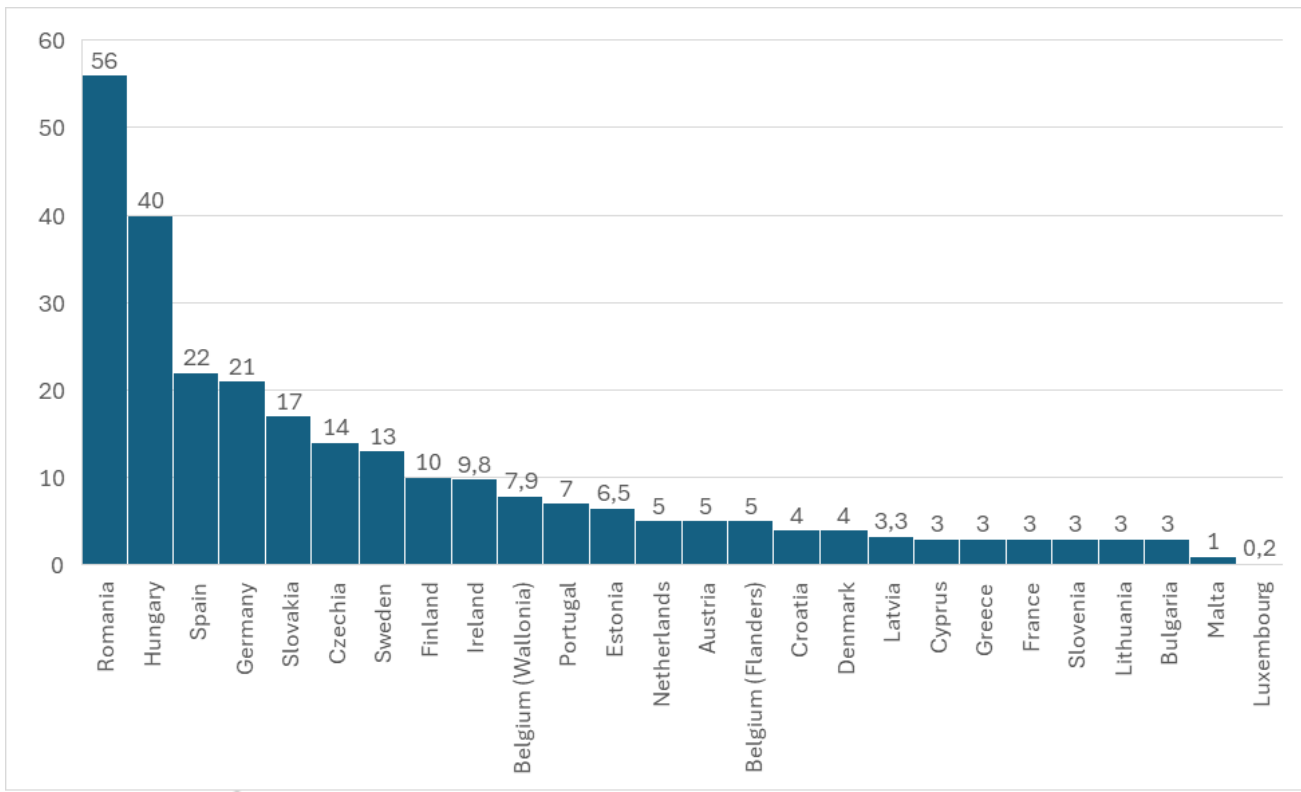# Example of NSU with more than 3 institutions involved

PL: NSU divided into MA and beneficiary sections, coordinating with other ministerial departments.
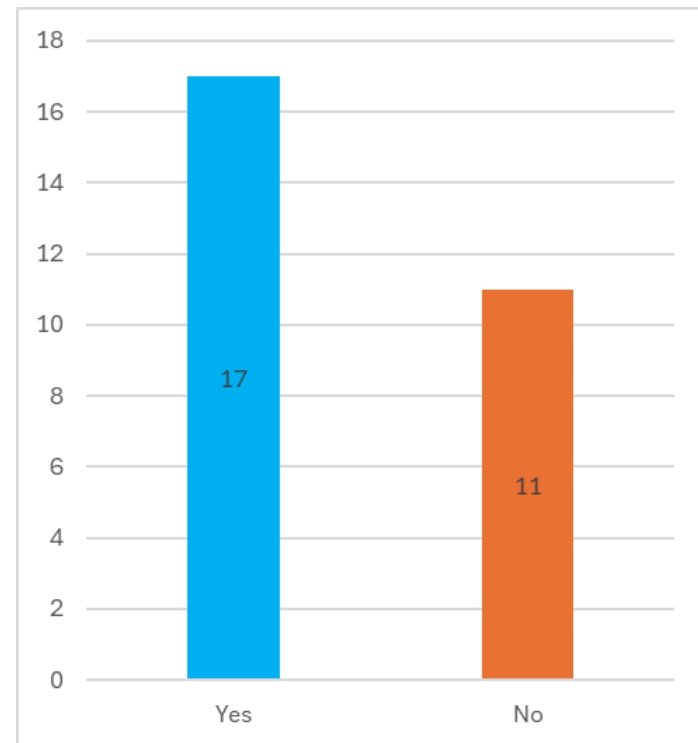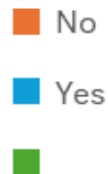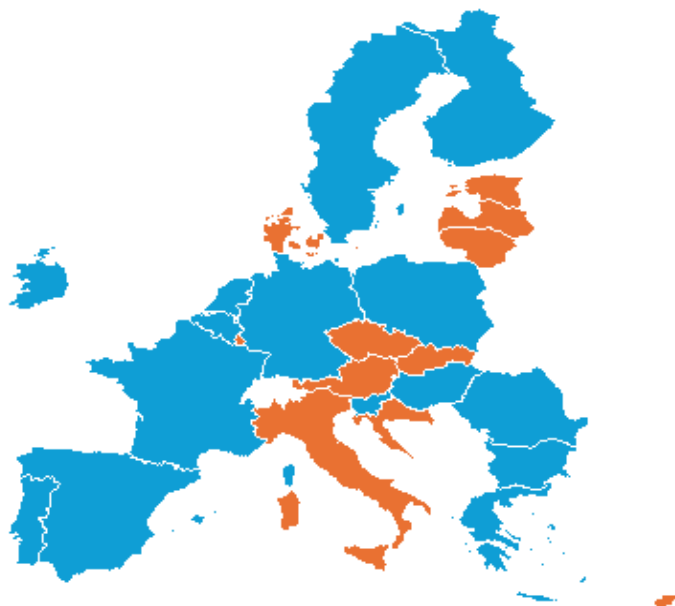
- The central unit, managed by the Agricultural Advisory Centre (CDR), includes a Warsaw branch dedicated to the Polish Rural Network. It manages 2 thematic networks.
- The Warsaw branch handles network coordination, innovation support, LEADER, rural women's associations, and Operational Groups.

What is the number of employees in full-time equivalent?

Have there been any significant changes in the setup of the NSU or the operation of the NSU compared to the previous programming period?

Changes in the NSU set up - Examples

HU: New organisational structure.
New focus areas on green transition and digitalisation.

FR: Previously supported by a service provider, a national animation unit, but this service was not renewed.
- The network is now managed directly by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Scope of the Network:
- In the previous program, the network focused solely on rural issues.
- It now also covers agricultural issues.

Please highlight any changes in structure, funding, or strategic direction and if you already see advantages.

NL: CAP Network Ambition:
- Shift towards creating more ownership within the network.
- Focus on actively collecting signals, discussing the goals and impact of the CAP, and connecting people to concrete tasks (e.g., Cop's).

Organisational Structure Changes:
- The entire organisation now contributes to the networking function.
- External parties are more actively involved and play a role in networking activities.
- **Strategic Partnership** with **Groenkennisnet** for the dissemination of knowledge and project results.

MT: During the 2014-2020 the MA worked mostly alone. During this programming period MA will be collaborating closely with the Directorate of Agriculture (DOA). This will allow the MA to utilise the expertise and the resources which are available to the DOA.

SI: The team saw **a concrete change in personnel.**
The new team leader has now started to move the NSU in a different direction, compared to the previous programming period.
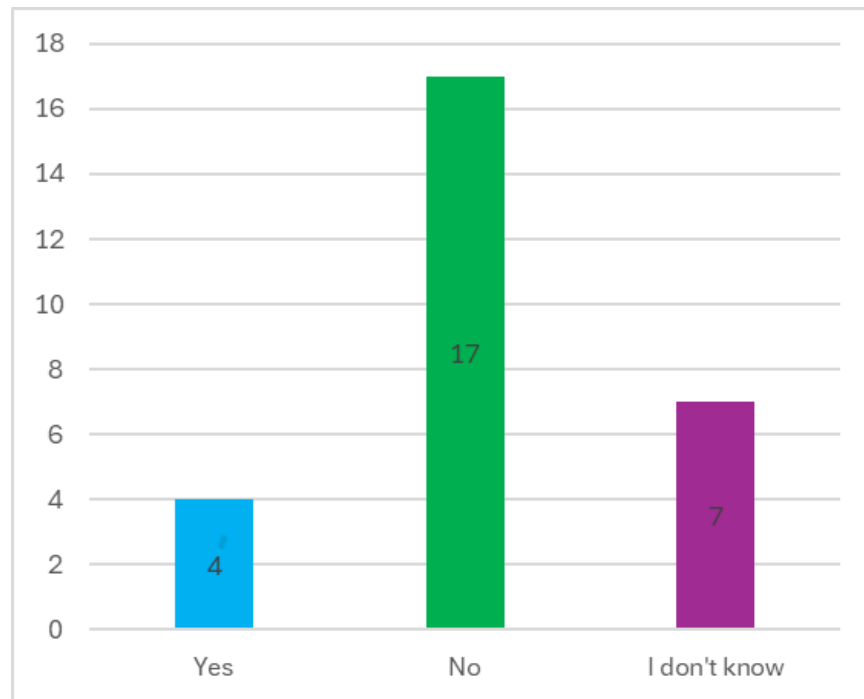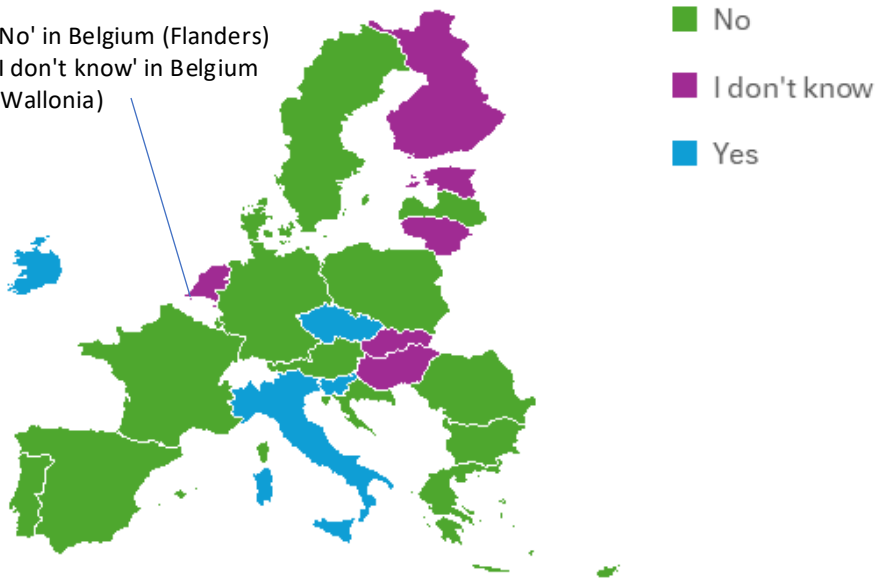So far we have seen a positive change related to the new direction.

BE (FL): We work thematically within the network and within the team.
The advantages are that **team members can deepen their knowledge** on their topics, and it's also good to have a network 'face/contact' for specific topics, both internal and external.

NSU inspired by the Study on the ENRD and the NRNs' contribution to the implementation of EU rural development policy (2022)
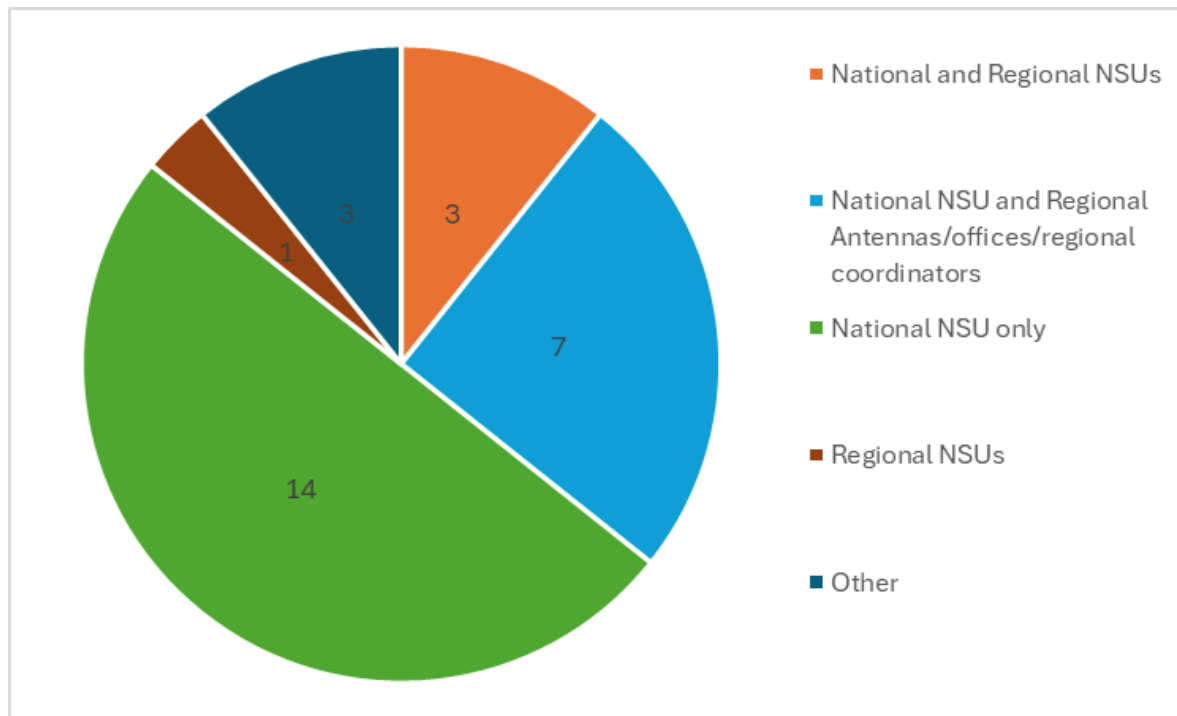

'No' in Belgium (Flanders)
'I don't know' in Belgium (Wallonia)

Legend:
- No (green)
- I don't know (purple)
- Yes (blue)

Bar chart:
- Yes: 4
- No: 17
- I don't know: 7

2. Regional structures

How is your network organised in terms of regionalised structures?

Pie chart legend:
- National and Regional NSUs — 3
- National NSU and Regional Antennas/offices/regional coordinators — 7
- National NSU only — 14
- Regional NSUs — 1
- Other — 3

In case your NSU has regional structures, please provide more information about the number and how they are organised (e.g.offices/units/coordinators, number of employees, roles and responsibilities).

PT: 7 regional structures (1 per region)

- The team is made up two members but not fully dedicated at the regional NSU.

- At the end of 2024, the five regions of mainland Portugal were integrated into the Regional Coordination and Development Commission, which is independent from the Ministry of Agriculture.

- This situation has caused some setbacks in the work to be carried out.
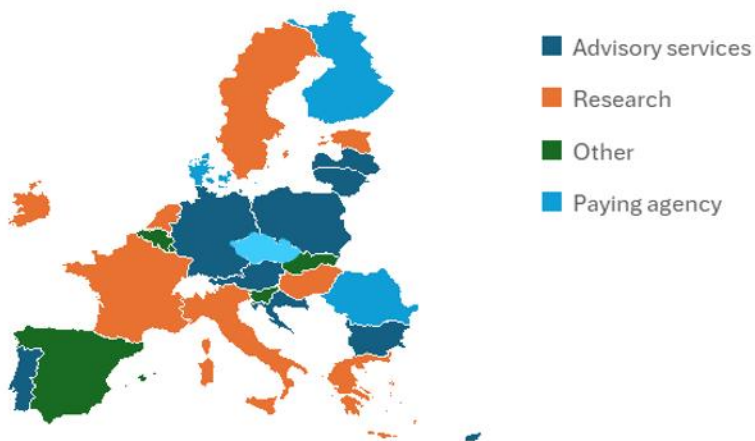
•**RO:**16 regional antennas, with 56 experts, each led by a Coordinator per region.
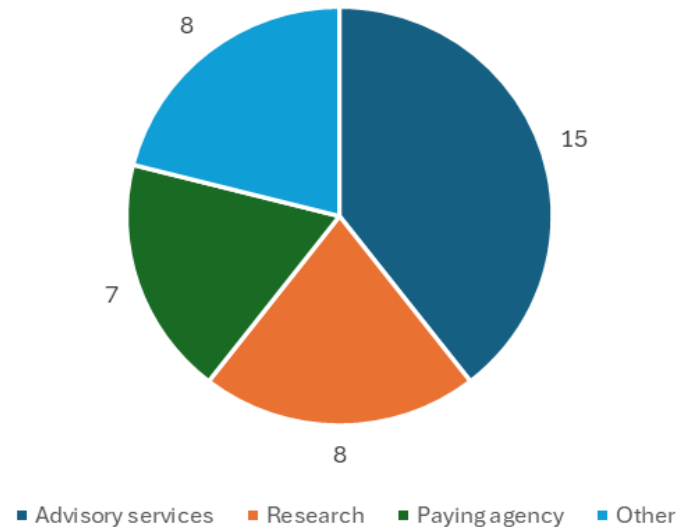•**Regional Unit Tasks:**
- •Inform the public about funding opportunities provided by the Strategic Plan.
- •Facilitate connections between stakeholders.
- •Identify regional needs and collect information.
- •Collect topics of interest and examples of good practices in each region.
- •Represent the National Rural Network (NRN) at events organised by the network and other entities.

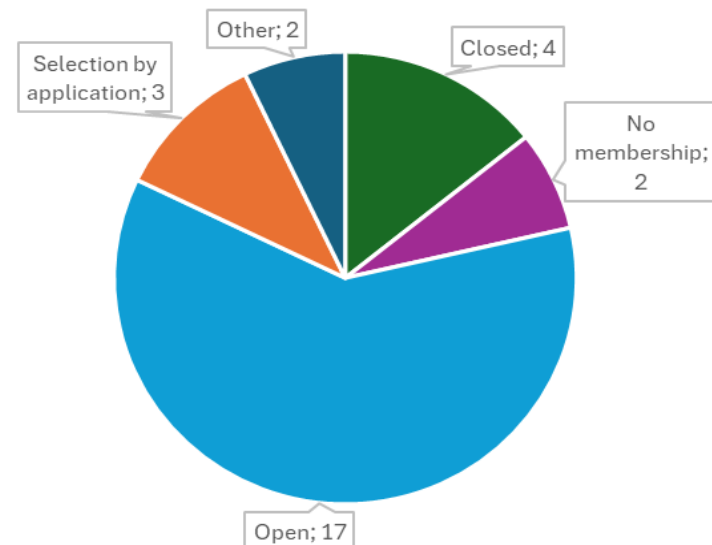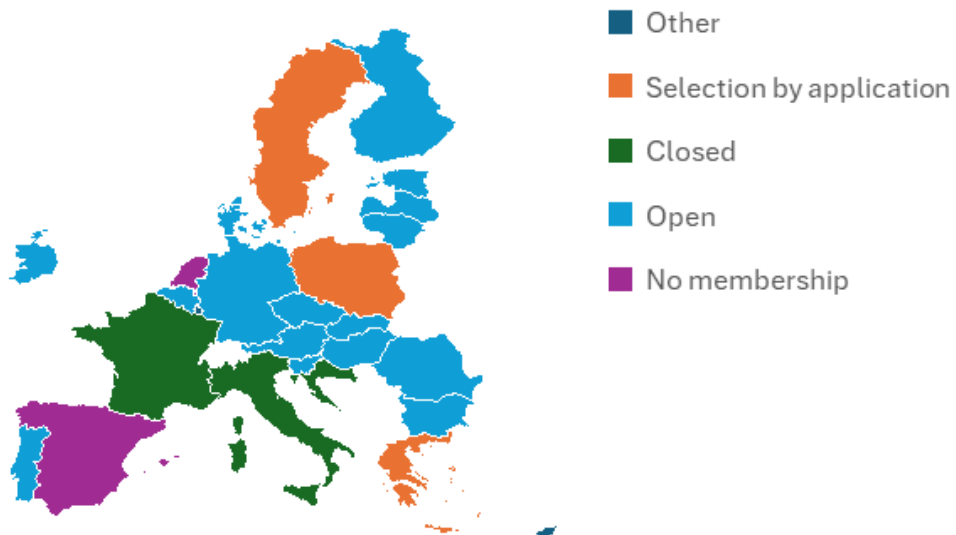# NSUs links to other bodies or services

3. NN Membership

3. Membership

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Legend:
- Other
- Selection by application
- Closed
- Open
- No membership

Pie chart:
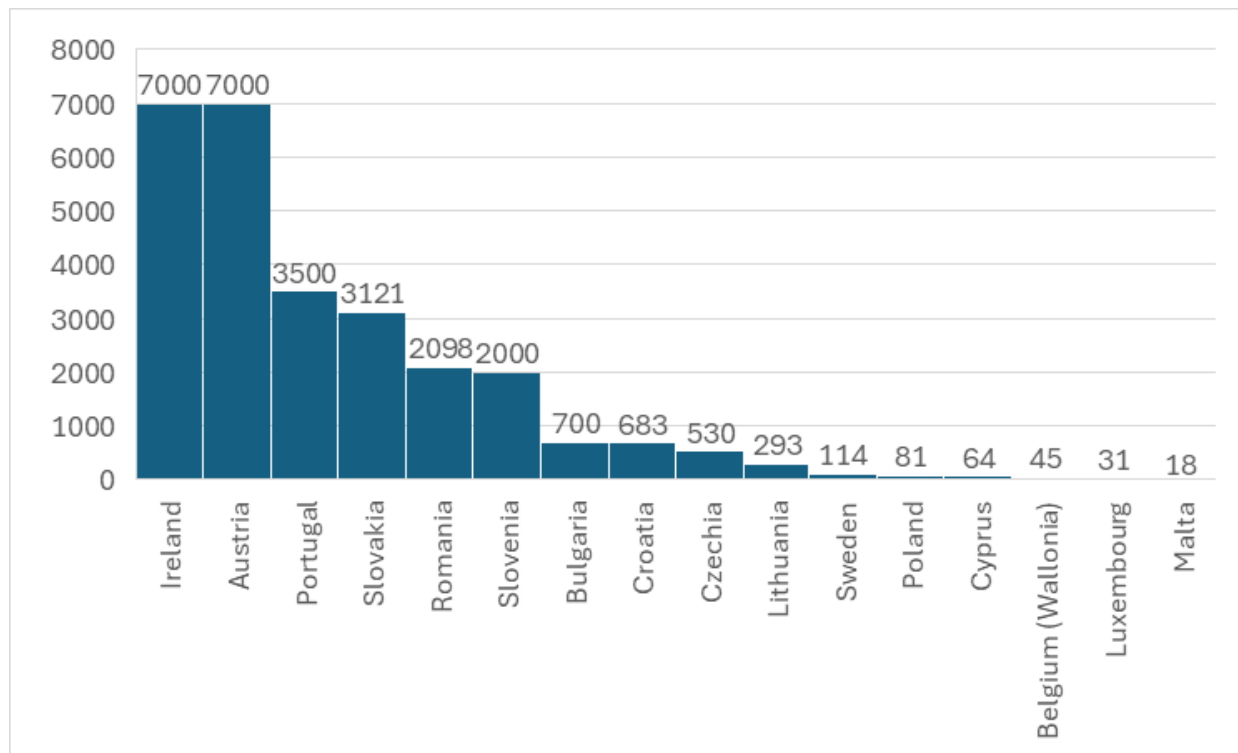- Other; 2
- Selection by application; 3
- Closed; 4
- No membership; 2
- Open; 17

3. Membership

Thank you & coming next

- New structures and advantages, *Attila Nagy, Ministry of Agriculture, (HU)*

- NN role in the AKIS, *Svit Mal, Ministry of Agriculture, (SI)*

- Regional structures, *David Argibay, National Network (ES)*

- Responsibilities related to capacity building and evaluation, *Blanca Ojosnegros Gozalo, Ministry of Agriculture (ES)*

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