

# *Common Network Statistics*

## *2022 SUMMARY REPORT (Y7+2)*

**September 2023**

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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). All the subsequent CNS collections - Y5 (2018 data), Y6 (2019 data), Y7 responses (2020 data), Y7+1 (2021 data), as well as current Y7+2 (2022 data) - were collected in same format as the Y4 responses.

To provide more clarity on which data should be included and on the reporting methodology, detailed instructions were inserted in the guidance note accompanying the data collection template.

## Process and Submissions

The CNS survey for Y7+2 (2022 data) was distributed to NSUs on 17 February 2023, with responses requested by 31 May 2023.

Using direct contact, reminders, and consultations, resulted in all 28 NSUs submissions being collected and finalised by beginning of July 2023. This is a notable improvement compared to some previous years (3 August in Y6; 11 September in Y5; 13 November in Y4; 24 November in Y3).

The survey was prepared in both excel format and online survey formats (using Survey Monkey). Each NSU could choose which format they preferred to use for reporting. Out of the 28 responses, 17 surveys were completed using the excel table and 11 were submitted via Survey Monkey.

## Analysis of Y7+2 (2022) results

From the submissions received in 2023 about the CNS 2022, the analysis across all the categories gave an overview of networks' activities throughout the EU. Where possible the data from Y6, Y7, Y7+1 and Y7+2, were compared to identify the overall trend taking into account pre-COVID-19 year, the year of the COVID-19 outbreak, and also when the pandemic period has finished.



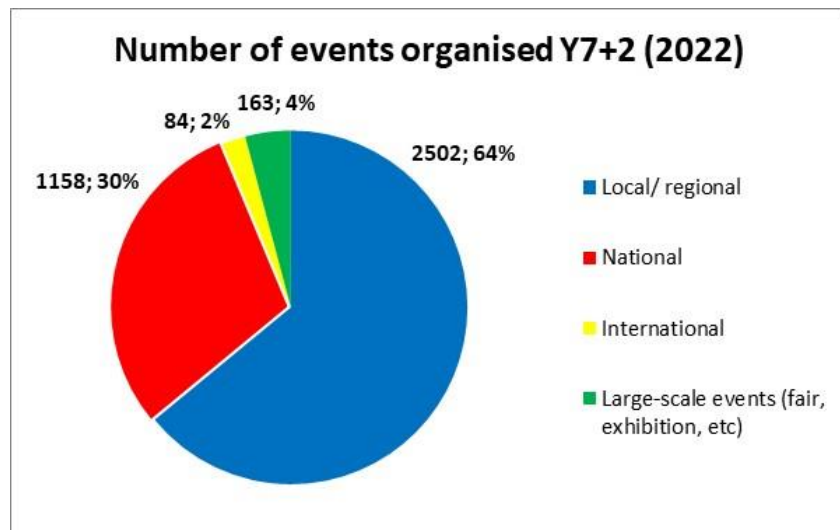
Due to some technical differences in the classification of events, the consistency of data between countries has a degree of variability, in particular in relation to the large-scale events category (Question 1). In addition, it is important to note that similarly to the last two previous years, Y7+2 data collection does not cover the data from four UK NSUs.

## 1. Q1 Events and participations

In 2022, in total 3 907 NSU-organised events were reported by 28 NSUs, more than in previous years, even before the COVID-19: 2021 (3 769, 28 NSUs), 2020 (2 558, 28 NSUs), 2019<sup>1</sup> (3 467, 32 NSUs) or in 2018<sup>1</sup> (3 020, 31 NSUs). The increase in events is notable mainly for local / regional (1 603 events in 2020 up to 2 203 in 2021, and again up to 2 502 in 2022) and national events (561 events in 2020, up to 1 209 events in 2021, down to 1 158 in 2022). This seems to be the result of the COVID-pandemic measures and travelling restrictions, leading to the increase of virtual events during 2021, but with a decrease of 51 events in 2022, possibly because of the end of the travel restrictions.

Similar to 2020 and 2021, the highest number of events in 2022, 1 371, was reported by Poland<sup>2</sup>. Other countries reported the following total number of events: Latvia 555 (529 in 2020 and 634 in 2021), Hungary

436 (271 in 2020 and 414 in 2021), Sweden 257 (having 143 in 2020 and 192 in 2021), and Romania 215 (38 in 2020, and 191 in 2021). Czech Republic reported 118 events in 2022 (24 in 2020 and 85 in 2021). The rest of the countries reported a number of events organised lower than 100.



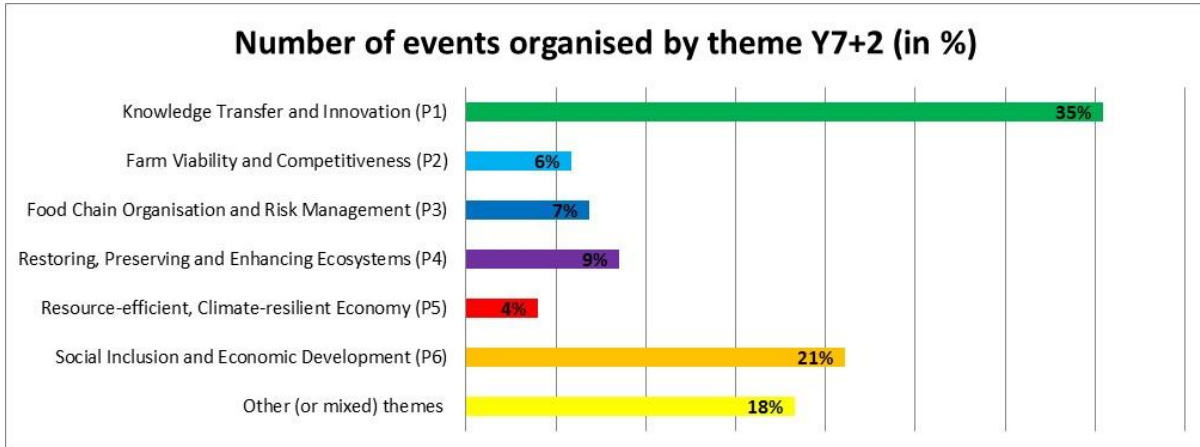
NSUs were asked to group events under a specific priority only if it had a strong focus on that thematic category (RDP Priority) or it was targeted at a specific group.

<sup>1</sup> The total number of NSUs for 2021 and 2020 data collection is 28. For the previous years the data from 4 UK NSUs were included.

<sup>2</sup> 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.



Same as in 2020 and 2021, P1 related events were the most popular category in 2022, even when it reflected a decrease from 43% in 2021 to 35% in 2022. P6 related events was the second most popular, increasing from 19% in 2021 to 21% in 2022.



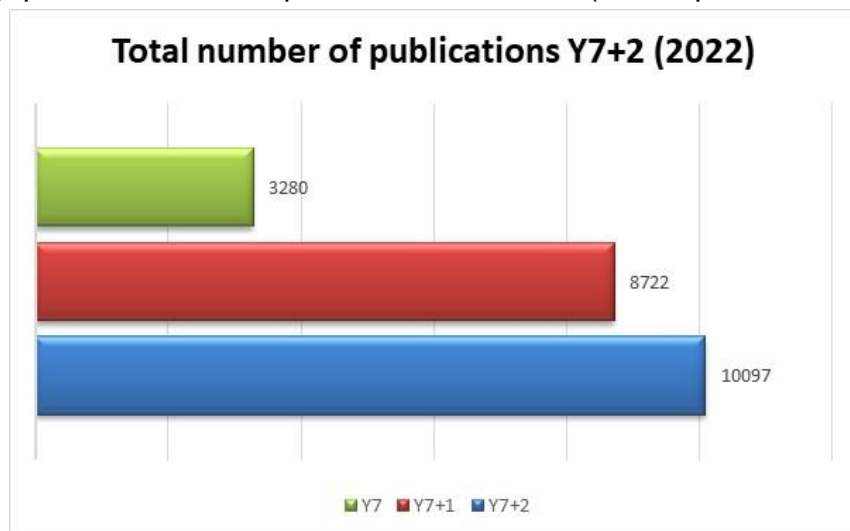
In the 'Other' category, responses included RDP and ESI project days, future CAP, transition period, monitoring and evaluation, communication, LEADER events, administration, MAs capacity building, regional antennae, NRN management and other types of technical meetings. After the decrease of the 'Other' category from 23% in 2020 to 12% in 2021, it has increased again up to 18% in 2022.

In total, 948 960 participations were reported for local/regional, national, and international events, excluding the large-scale events, a significant increase from 359 141 participations in 2021, 235 121 participations in 2020, even up to the pre-COVID19 data of 738 789 in 2019. This may be assumed to be an effect of the restrictions on participation during the pandemic, and the end of the travel restrictions.

## 2. Q2 Publications

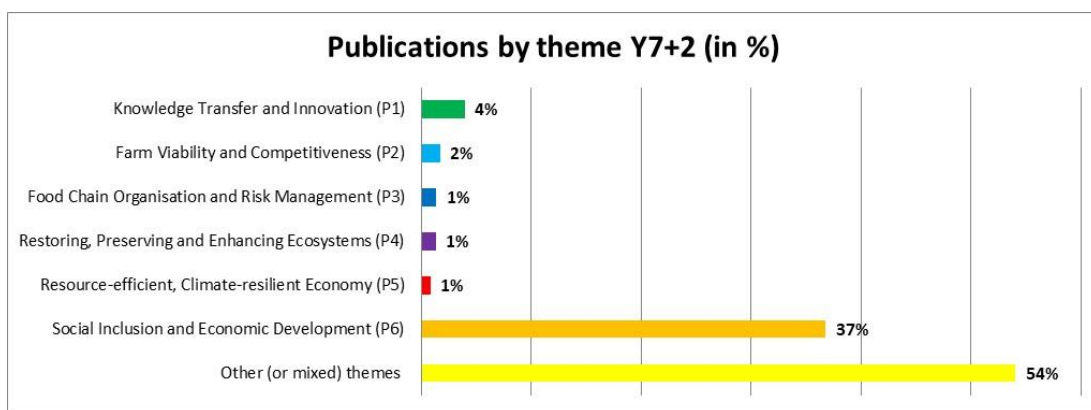
NSUs reported that they produced 10 097 publications in 2022 (8 722 publications during 2021). For second year, it can be concluded that the reported number has increased significantly compared to previous years, notwithstanding the UK's withdrawal (3 280 in 2020 and 3 425 in 2019).

The largest category of reported cases was



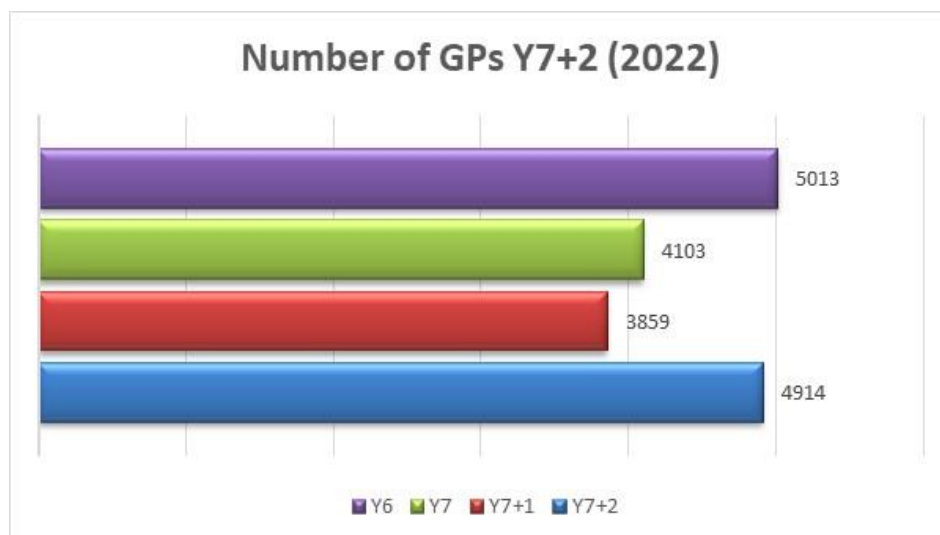
‘Other or mixed themes’ with 54% (34% in 2020 and 58% in 2021) and with the topics such as farming for children in schools, food and health, LEADER, AKIS, evaluation, new CAP planning, synergies with other funds, lessons learned of the National Rural Network from the previous period. As in the previous year, this category was followed by publications on ‘Social Inclusion and Economic Development (P6)’ with an increase of 30% in 2021 up to 37% in 2022 (26% in 2020).

The lowest number of publications produced was recorded in relation to ‘Resource-efficient, Climate-resilient Economy (P5)’ (78 publications), ‘Restoring, Preserving and Enhancing Ecosystems (P4)’ (124 publications), and ‘Food Chain Organisation and Risk Management (P3)’ (130 publications).



### 3. Q3 Good Practices

In total, 4 914 good practices (GPs) were collected and disseminated in 2022 (on average 175 per NSU). This is a significant increase compared to the previous year 2021, reporting 3 859 GPs; and being comparable to the data of the pre-COVID-19 period (5 013 GPs in 2019). Also, the reduction in the number of GPs from Y6 (2019) compared to Y7 (2020) and Y7+1 (2021) broadly reflects the effects of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU. But with a recovering of the number of good practices collected in 2022 (up to 4 914).

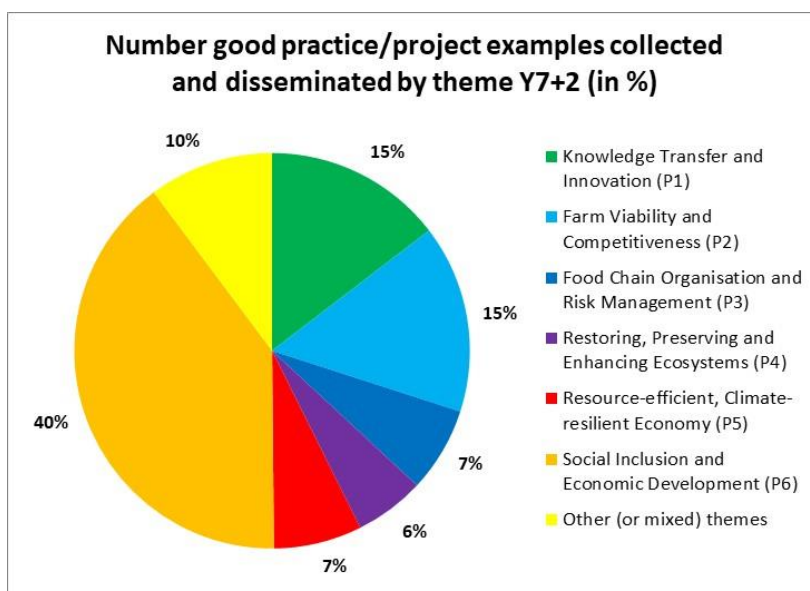


The NRNs reporting the highest numbers of GPs were Spain with 686 (204 in 2021), followed by Czech Republic with 639 (419 in 2021), Finland with 610 (730 in 2021), Slovakia with 516 (250 in 2021), Germany with 486 (380 in 2021) and Latvia with 300 (306 in 2021).

NSU	No. of GPs Y7+2	NSU (cont.)	No. of GPs Y7+2
Spain	686	Portugal	64
Czech Republic	639	Ireland	63
Finland	610	Lithuania	54
Slovakia	516	The Netherlands	38
Germany	486	Belgium - Wallonia	32
Latvia	300	Romania	26
Poland	293	Slovenia	24
Austria	249	Croatia	21
Belgium - Flanders	239	Bulgaria	17
Hungary	180	Malta	9
Estonia	144	France	8
Sweden	127	Luxembourg	2
Italy	87		

Czech Republic and Finland seem to have the strongest ongoing focus on GPs, as they also recorded highest numbers of GPs in previous years. In the case of Slovakia and Spain, the number of GPs has increased significantly from 250 in 2021 to 516 in 2022 in Slovakia, and from 204 in 2021 up to 686 in 2022 in Spain. A significant decrease of the number of GPs are reported by France, having 455 GPs in 2019, 370 GPs in 2020 and 8 GPs in 2021 and 8 GPs in 2022, which seems to be caused by the fact that the Network was undergoing transformation.

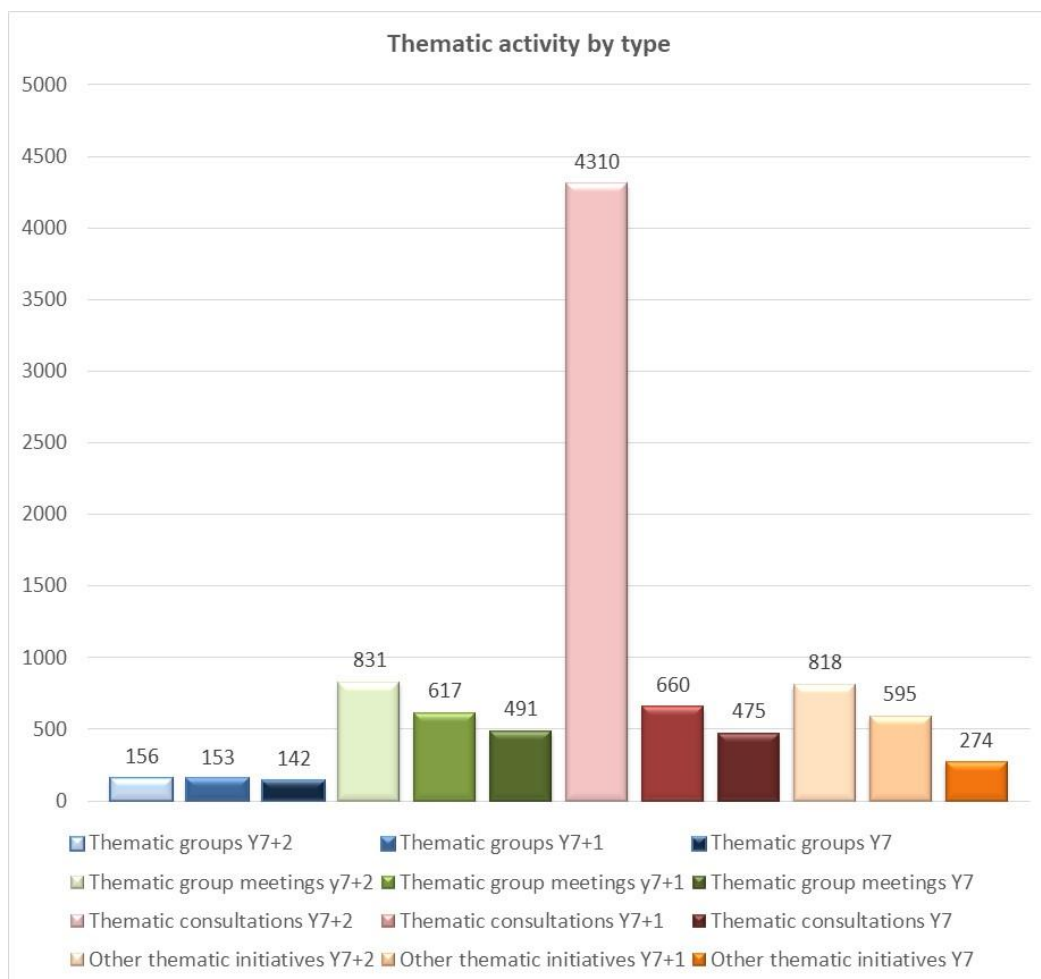
Priority 6 ‘Social Inclusion and Economic Development’, continues to provide the largest proportion of GPs by a substantial margin of 40% (52% in 2020 and 32% in 2021) with a total number of 1 795 (1 554 in 2020 and 1 006 in 2021). The number of GPs related to Priority 2 ‘Farm Viability and Competitiveness’ increased from 10% in 2021 up to 15% in 2022, with 691 GPs.



#### 4. Q4 Thematic initiatives

Twenty-eight NSUs provided information on the number of various thematic activities. The most frequently recorded 2022 activity (Y7+2) was thematic consultations<sup>3</sup> (4 310), which is consistently the most recorded type of activity (714 in Y6, 475 in Y7 and 660 in Y7+1). It is important to highlight that Latvia reported 3 307 thematic consultations in Y7+2.

This thematic activity was followed by thematic group meetings<sup>4</sup>, with 831 (510 in Y6, 491 in Y7 and 617 in Y7+1) and then other thematic initiatives<sup>5</sup>, with 818 (250 in Y6, 274 in Y7 and 595 in Y7+1).



3 Thematic consultations are organised exchanges between various stakeholder organisations / their representatives to facilitate exchange of views, ideas and experience on a specific theme (e.g. LEADER coordination groups), most often with the aim of improving RDP implementation.

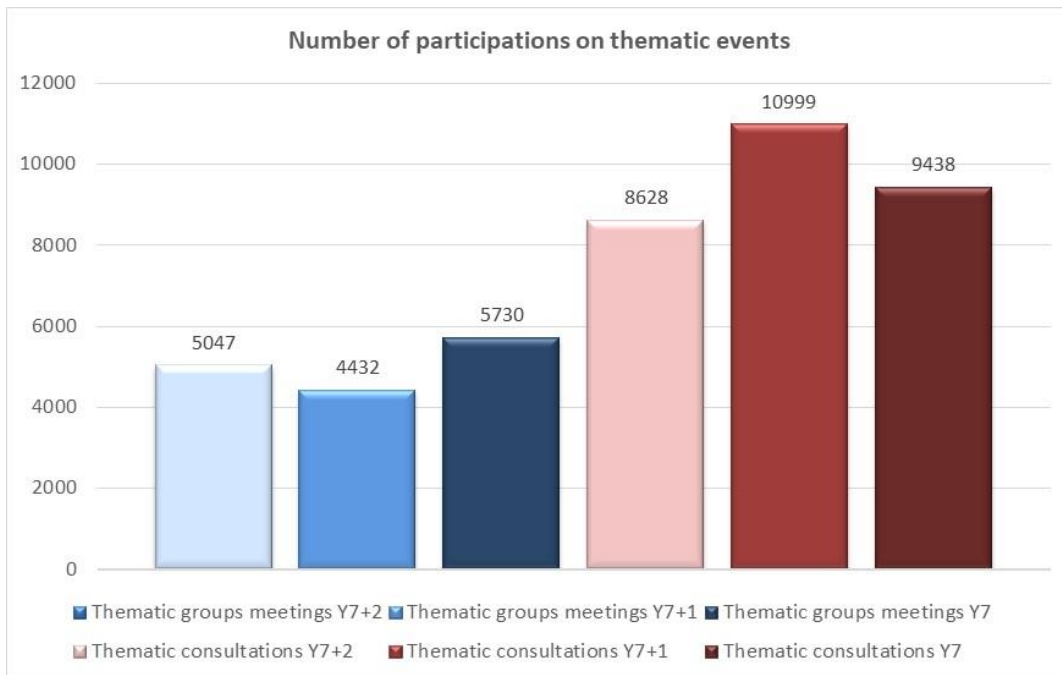
4 Official thematic groups and the thematic group meetings (organised within these) are those that have a membership list and these members work on a specific topic.

5 Other thematic initiatives include any other thematic or analytical exchanges.

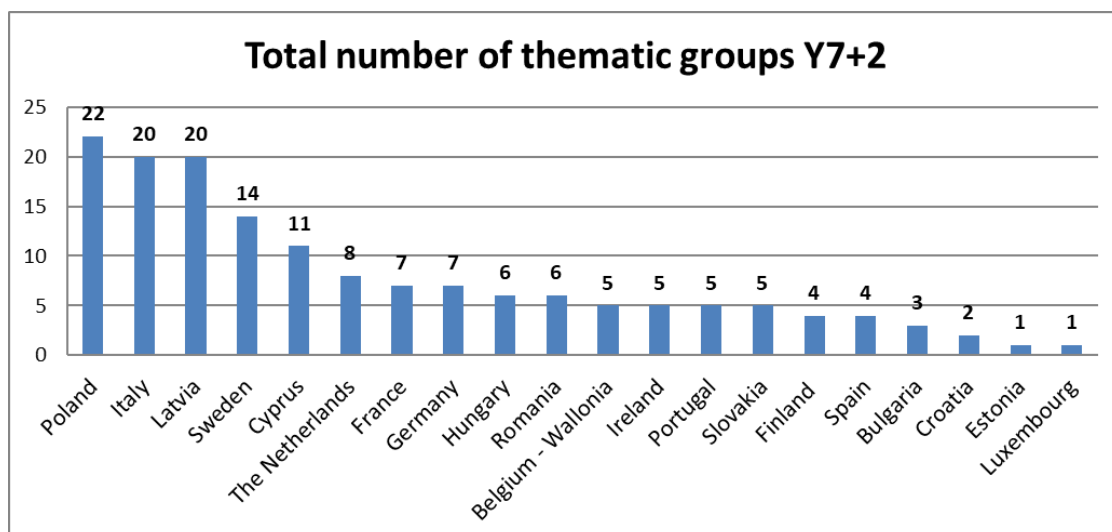




In terms of the number of participations on thematic events, ‘Thematic consultations’ had the highest attendance during 2022 (8 628 participations), as well as in 2021 (10 999 participations) and in 2020 (9 438 participants). This was followed by ‘Thematic group meeting’ category, with 5 047 participations in 2022, 4 432 participations in 2021 and 5 730 in 2020.



In 2022 (Y7+2) there were in total 156 thematic groups (TGs) organised by 20 NSUs, which pose a slight increase compared to the previous years (142 in 2020 and 153 in 2021), but still a decrease in comparison with Y6 (185) and Y5 (183), possibly reflecting the pandemic effects. In 2022 – just as during the whole programming period - the highest numbers of TGs were in Poland (22), Italy (20) and Latvia (20).



For the distribution of thematic groups by thematic focus in 2022, data was provided by 15 NRNs. ‘Other themes’ (22 TGs, 9 NSUs) is the largest thematic category of recorded activity, having a significant increase from the year 2021, with 33 TGs from 6 NSUs. The main themes of these TGs were communication, EIP-AGRI innovation operational groups, biodiversity, LEADER, Smart Villages, Rural Proofing and Rural Revitalization, advisory Sub-committees, NRN working groups, innovation in agriculture and rural development, innovation in food quality, CLLD implementation, and other technical matters.

The second category is ‘Knowledge Transfer and Innovation’ with 36 TGs from 14 NSUs (27 TGs from 12 NSUs in 2020, and 38 TGs from 10 NSUs in 2021).

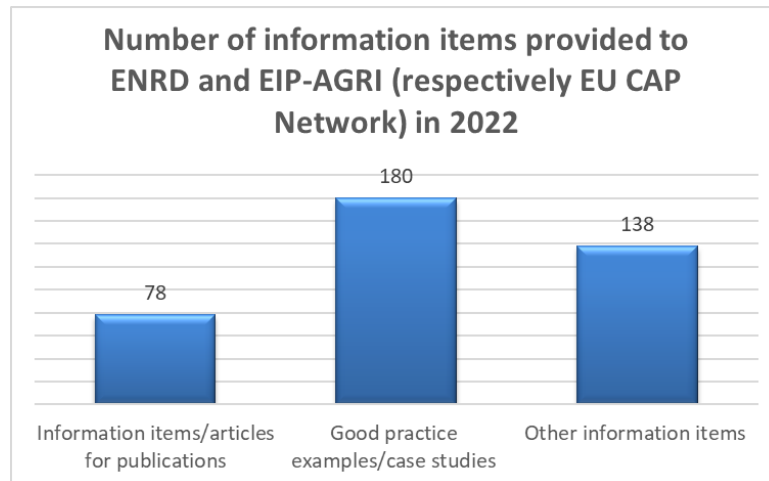
Number of thematic groups by thematic focus							
	Knowledge Transfer and Innovation (P1)	Farm Viability and Competitiveness (P2)	Food Chain Organisation and Risk Management (P3)	Restoring, Preserving and Enhancing Ecosystems (P4)	Resource-efficient, Climate-resilient Economy (P5)	Social Inclusion and Economic Development (P6)	Other (or mixed) themes
Belgium - Wallonia	1				1	2	1
Bulgaria	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Cyprus	11	0	0	0	0	3	0
Czech Republic	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Hungary	6						
Ireland	1	0	0	0	0	2	2
Latvia	1	0	0	0	15	3	1
Lithuania	6			1		1	3
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Poland	2	0	1	0	0	2	17
Portugal	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Romania	2	3	6	3	3	12	186
Slovakia							5
Sweden	3	5	1	0	1	3	1
The Netherlands	1					1	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>222</b>

## 5. Q5 Cooperation and contribution to the ENRD and EIP-AGRI activities (respectively EU CAP Network activities since October 2022)

A total of 23 NRNs responded to the question about how many communication products (presentations, publications, and case studies) they had provided to ENRD CP, ENRD Evaluation Helpdesk and EIP-AGRI Service Point in 2022 (respectively EU CAP Network since October 2022).

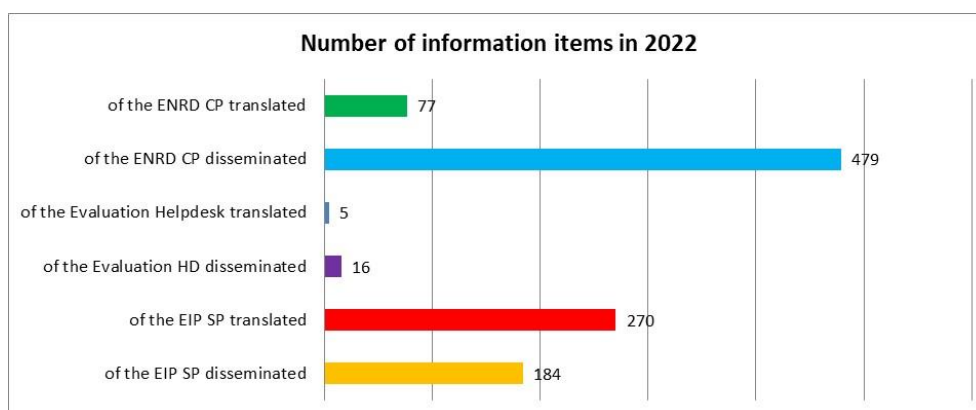


Reporting indicates that a total of 351 items were provided (208 to ENRD Contact Point, 8 to Evaluation Helpdesk and 135 to EIP AGRI Service Point), which has increased compared to the previous two years (258 in Y7 and 198 in Y7+1), but still remains lower than Y6 (662).



22 NSUs contributed with 180 ‘Good practice examples/case studies’ (21 NSUs, 141 GP in 2020; 17 NSUs, 110 GP in 2021). 7 NSUs contributed with 138 ‘Other information items’ (11 NSUs, 54 other information items in 2020; 6 NSUs, 35 GP in 2021). The topics in the ‘Other information items’ were feedback to new cap-network website, feedback to policy tool or the TG rural revitalisation, RIA awards application, newsletter, and articles, EIP projects support. Finally, 14 NSUs contributed with 78 ‘Information items/articles for publications’ (12 NSUs, 63 information items in 2020; 13 NSUs, 77 information items in 2021).

The biggest number of information items disseminated by the NSUs was published by the ENRD Contact Point (later in 2022 renamed to CAP Implementation Contact Point). The most frequently translated information items were originally produced by the EIP AGRI Service Point (later in 2022 renamed to EIP AGRI Support Facility) also given that these information items are often available only in English.

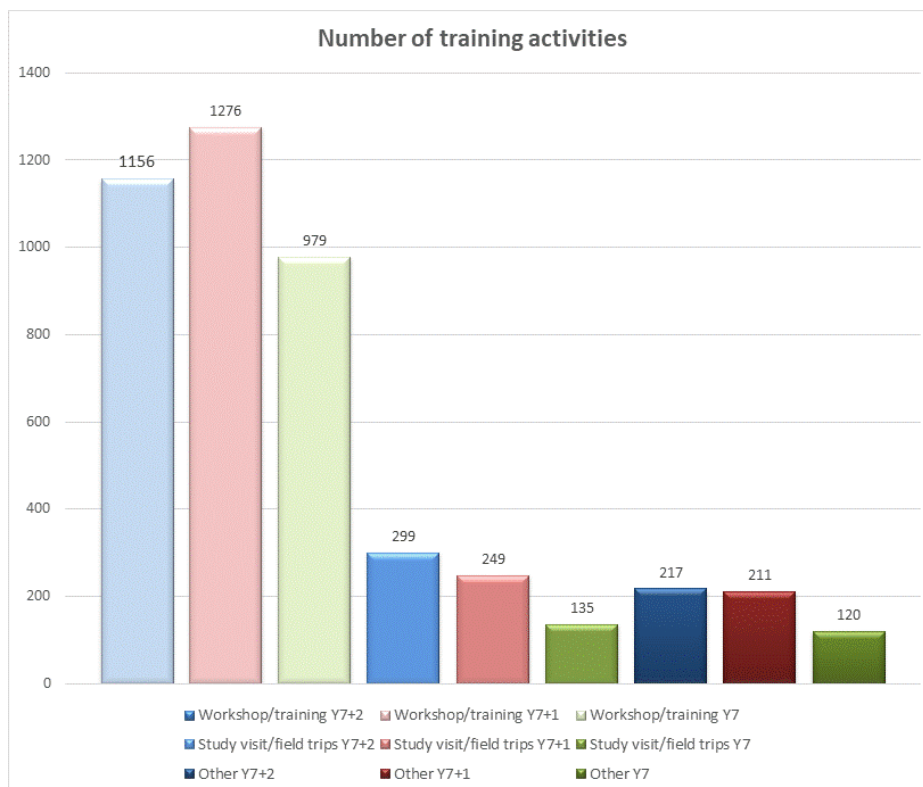


## 6. Q6 Training activities

Y7+2 (2022) data for workshops / training sessions reflected an increase in the number of workshops / trainings of 1 649 (1 276 in 2021), after the decreasing trend from the previous years. A sudden increase can be observed by the number of study visits and field trips organised in 2022 up to 299 (249 in 2021), and after the decrease observed in Y7 (135) which seems to have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Other training activities continued to increase in 2022 up to 217 (108 in Y6, 120 in Y7 and 211 in Y7+1).

From the 26 NSUs that responded to this question (24 in 2020 and 27 in 2021), Poland recorded the highest number of training activities as in previous years. In 2022, they delivered 934 training activities, plus 216 other training activities. They reported 1 258 in Y7+1, 608 in Y7 and 991 in Y6. Poland was followed by Latvia (85 in Y7+2, 78 in Y7+1, 141 in Y7, 96 in Y6).

16 NSUs (10 in 2020 and 19 in 2021) reported the thematic focus of the training activities that they organised. The ‘top three’ identified across countries were: P1 ‘Knowledge Transfer and Innovation’ with 766 training activities (927 in 2021), mainly for Poland and France; P6 ‘Social Inclusion and Economic Development’ with 349 training activities (350 in 2021), mainly for Poland; and P4 ‘Restoring, Preserving and Enhancing Ecosystems’ with 154 activities (159 in 2021), mainly for Poland and Ireland.



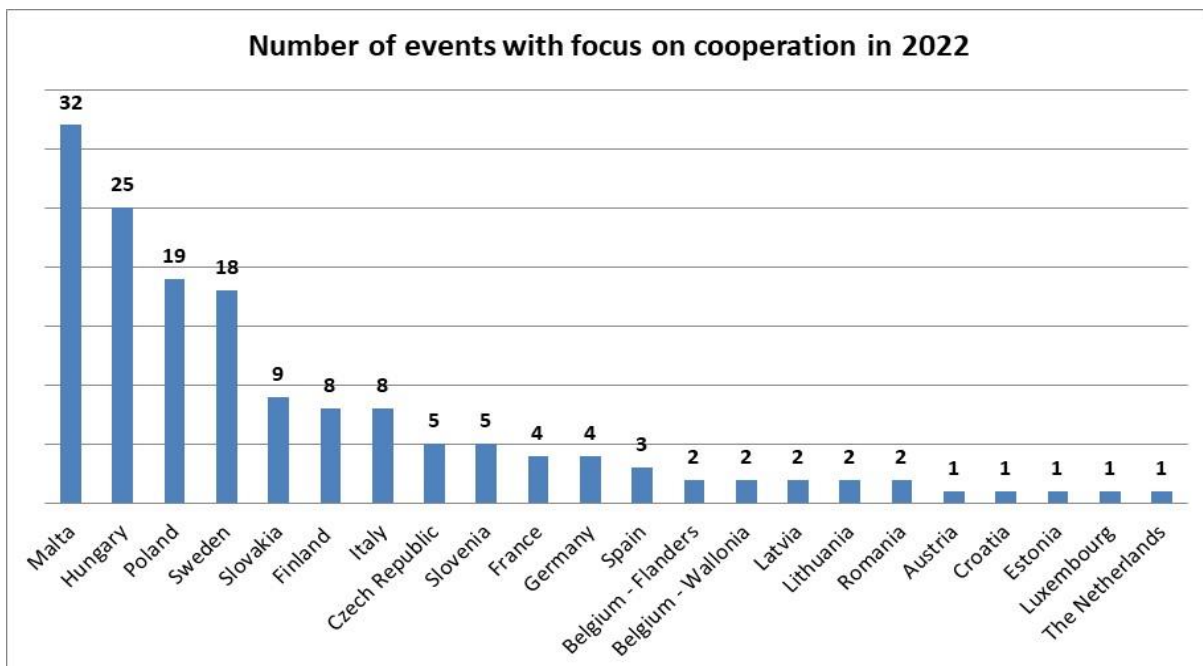
In 2022 (Y7+2), 79 526 participations in total were reported by 25 NSUs (59 184 participations, 24 NSUs in 2021). Workshops / training sessions were the most attended activity type (60 912 participations in 2022 and 46 979 participations in 2021), representing almost 77% of all participation activities, followed by study visits/ field trips activities (12 288 in 2022, and 4 133 in 2021), and other training activities (6 326 participants in 2022, and 8 072 in 2021).

## 7. Q7 Cooperation events

After the significant decrease in the number of cooperation events and participants in 2020, which is thought to be largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the increase up to 114 cooperation events in 2021, the number of these events increased in 2022 up to 155 cooperation events. In total 22 NRNs reported organising cooperation events in 2021 (13 in 2020 and 19 in 2021).

The total number of 155 cooperation events was attended by 7 634 participants in Y7+2 (5 787 in Y6, 2 977 in Y7, 4 951 in Y7+1), of which 265 participants (848 in Y6, 199 in Y7, 112 in Y7+1) were from other MS.

Malta reported the highest number of cooperation events in 2022 (32 events, from the 5 cooperation events in 2021), followed by Hungary (25), Poland (19) and Sweden (18).



## Conclusion

The analysis of Common Network Statistics (CNS) information provides a good overview of ongoing trends in NSU activities and thematic priorities.

As the data illustrate, the second year of the transition period which was still covered by the 2014-2020 RDPs is marked by an increasing trend in the majority of NRN activities. Taking into account the COVID-19 pandemic which started in March 2020, this could be a sign of the ability of NSUs to adapt to the existing restrictions and a new way of working in a mostly virtual environment during the period 2019 to 2021, and moving back to physical events in 2022 while maintaining virtual and hybrid environment for some networking activities.

The trend for the **number of organised events in 2022 is still increasing**, as in the previous year, and even before the COVID-19 period. **The increase in events** continues to be notable mainly for local/regional and national events, predictably because of the end of the travel restrictions.

A **considerable increase in publications** for the second year – 1 375 publications more publications than in 2021, and around the triple the number of publications than in 2020 or 2019 - might be still related to the reporting on the RDP outcomes or informing about the upcoming programming period.

A significant **increase in the reporting of Good Practices (GPs)** by the Network Support Units has been identified, being comparable to the data of the pre-COVID-19 period, and even after the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

**An increasing trend** could be identified also for **various thematic initiatives, workshops / training activities and cooperation events**.

The most frequent **thematic initiative** activity recorded in 2022 was **thematic consultations**, which is consistently the most recorded type of activity, with a considerable increase compared to previous years.

The number of **thematic groups (TGs)** poses a slight increase compared to the previous years, but still a decrease in comparison with Y6 and Y5, feasibly reflecting the pandemic effects. The most prominent topics of the thematic groups was **Priority 1 'Knowledge Transfer and Innovation'** (top for events), followed by **Priority 6: 'Social Inclusion and Economic Development'** (top for Good Practices and Publications). More prominent Priority 2 recorded for both Good Practices and Publications could be linked to the smooth transition towards CAP Strategic Plans and the gradual inclusion of Pillar 1 Stakeholders. This continues illustrating the diversity and broad scope of NSU activities.



After the significant decrease in the number of **cooperation events** and participants in 2020, which is thought to be largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of these events increased in 2021 and 2022, and also the number of participants to these events.

These results demonstrate the added value of the CNS, which could be communicated at networking events such as NNs meetings and/or relevant workshops. At the same time, they can encourage exchanges between NNs working on the same topics.

This CNS summary report is the last one for the Programming Period 2014-2020 (n+2). For the new Programming Period 2023-2027, the format as well as the structure of the indicators will differ reflecting the need to simplify the collection and NN requests to make the CNS more user-friendly and intuitive. The new structure will be also adapted to the new CAP Strategic Plans and will continue demonstrating the added value of the networking.

