

GR

# Ideas for a future CMEF

## Evaluation milestones

**Ex-ante evaluation** could be replaced by a “programme development report” which would be a chapter of the RDP document and would reflect the interaction between the Managing Authority and the evaluator during the programming process. Perhaps, minimum requirements about this report should be defined at EU level.

Regarding **Mid-term evaluation** (MTE), if this is conducted timely, it may be used as a means for justification and proof of effectiveness both at the EU and the MS level. But when it comes to its usefulness in shaping policy-making then it may function well for reviewing and appropriately amending RDPs at the MS level, but it cannot be used as input for the discussion about the new programming period at the EU level. Since MTE cannot be related to the preparation of the new programming period, the timing for conducting MTE should be defined according to the progress of each RDP. To this end, the level of progress, which could be considered significant, should be defined at the EU level. By carefully selecting this level, a significant number of RDPs would be at the stage of substantial implementation and their MTE reports would provide useful information both at the MS and the EU level.

Minimum requirements on the content of the MTE should be defined at the EU level and could refer mainly to the “obligatory” measures i.e. these measures that must represent a minimum percentage of the RDP budget. This would ensure a certain degree of comparability between the outcomes of the MTE reports. Moreover, it would contribute to the convergence of the evaluation capacity of the MS and the accumulation of knowledge and experience that would lead to a constantly increasing quality of future evaluations. In any case, flexibility should be allowed to MS so they can steer their evaluation strategy according to the focus of their programmes. This means that although MS should report on all “obligatory” measures, they may place more weight to these measures they consider more important for each RDP.

**Ex-post evaluation** will become a voluntary element or will be conducted early enough for the results of funding period “t” to be available, so that they can be used for the programming of funding period “t+2”.

All the above mentioned should remain part of the **ongoing evaluation**, which should be further developed and strengthened as it ensures the overall quality of the evaluation process.

# Indicators

## ***Baseline indicators***

A minimum number of baseline indicators should be defined at EU level to describe the status of the rural areas at the beginning of the funding period. These indicators are centrally provided by the European Commission corresponding to the most appropriate NUTS level. MS should be encouraged to use more specific and updated data in order to better describe the starting point of their programmes, especially as regards the “obligatory” measures and taking account of the specific focus of each RDP.

## ***Output indicators***

Although output indicators are more or less easily collected, since the required information is usually part of (or can easily get integrated to) the relevant application forms, there is sufficient scope for a review and optimization of the current framework. A central repository could be envisaged for the collection and storage of these data. This could also include a publicly accessible report generation tool, which could, among other things, contribute to the improvement of the visibility of the Rural Development policy.

## ***Result indicators***

Result indicators may fall out of the Managing Authorities’ core work but they should remain under the responsibility of the latter mainly for two reasons:

- First because MAs are thus encouraged to move beyond mere administrative and auditing tasks towards a more clear and evidence based picture of what is actually achieved by the programme and how these achievements evolve during the programme implementation.
- Second because the sense of ownership by MAs for the whole evaluation process is enhanced. Moreover, since MAs are part of the whole management and monitoring system, in close cooperation with other bodies that participate in the implementation of the RDP, they may communicate better the necessity for the collection of more reliable data and enhance the sense of ownership for these data by the corresponding implementing bodies.

Result indicators should be defined at the EU level, at least for the “obligatory” measures. Their number should be kept as minimum as possible so as MS are encouraged to use additional indicators to better reflect the intervention logic of the corresponding measures. The possibility to use data already collected for other possible reasons (e.g. in the context of a regular report that has to be submitted by MS as part of their legal obligations under the environmental policy) should be thoroughly investigated before the definition of the final set of indicators.

### ***Impact indicators***

The set of impact indicators should be reviewed and amended to better reflect the general objectives of the Rural Development policy. These indicators should be defined at the EU level, but MS should be allowed to place different weight in their assessment according to the focus of their programmes.

### **Common Evaluation Questions**

A minimum set of evaluation questions should be defined at the EU level to act as a guide for steering the evaluation strategy. They should not be regarded as obligatory and MS should choose which CEQs to answer according to the focus of their programmes.

### **Guiding documents**

All documents should be available in all EU languages before the beginning of the funding period. For the EU-wide defined M&E requirements binding methodologies, or a mix of methodologies should be prescribed (analogous to the indicators and evaluation questions) in order to ensure an EU-wide comparability and aggregatability and to improve convergence of MS evaluation capacity.

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