



## LEADER/CLLD EVALUATION AT A GLANCE

FACTSHEET OF THE EUROPEAN EVALUATION HELPSDESK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT - DECEMBER 2016



### EVALUATION OF LEADER/CLLD IN 2014-2020

In the programming period 2014-2020 LEADER is implemented as part of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD). The CLLD strategies prepared and implemented through the LEADER method include the description of specific monitoring and evaluation arrangements. These arrangements are the basis for Local Action Groups (LAGs) to carry out the CLLD strategy's monitoring and evaluation activities<sup>1</sup>.

Evaluation is often used as a catch-all term to convey a broad spectrum of systematic inquiries. The diversity of its interpretations often varies with the specificities of the multi-dimensional system in which it takes place (e.g. legal, social, political and technical). The EU's Common Monitoring and Evaluation System (CMES) for rural development<sup>2</sup> defines evaluation as the tool to demonstrate the progress and achievements of rural development policy, to contribute to better targeted support, and encourage a common learning<sup>3</sup>.

How can these evaluation objectives be linked to LEADER/CLLD?

- **Demonstrating the progress, achievements , and contributions of LEADER/CLLD<sup>4</sup>** to the accomplishment of rural development objectives and expected targets facilitates **enhanced accountability** of the rural policy implemented through LEADER/CLLD (e.g. to what extent are targets being achieved due to LEADER/CLLD?)
- **Better targeted support** means addressing the aid delivered through LEADER/CLLD to the right stakeholders and areas, and in the best possible way to satisfy the most urgent needs and opportunities of rural areas (e.g. through which beneficiaries (private or public) is support addressing rural areas needs more effectively and efficiently?)
- **Common learning** means understanding how LEADER/CLLD works, for whom, under what circumstances, and how it can be implemented better (e.g. how does the delivery system of LEADER/CLLD affect its results?)

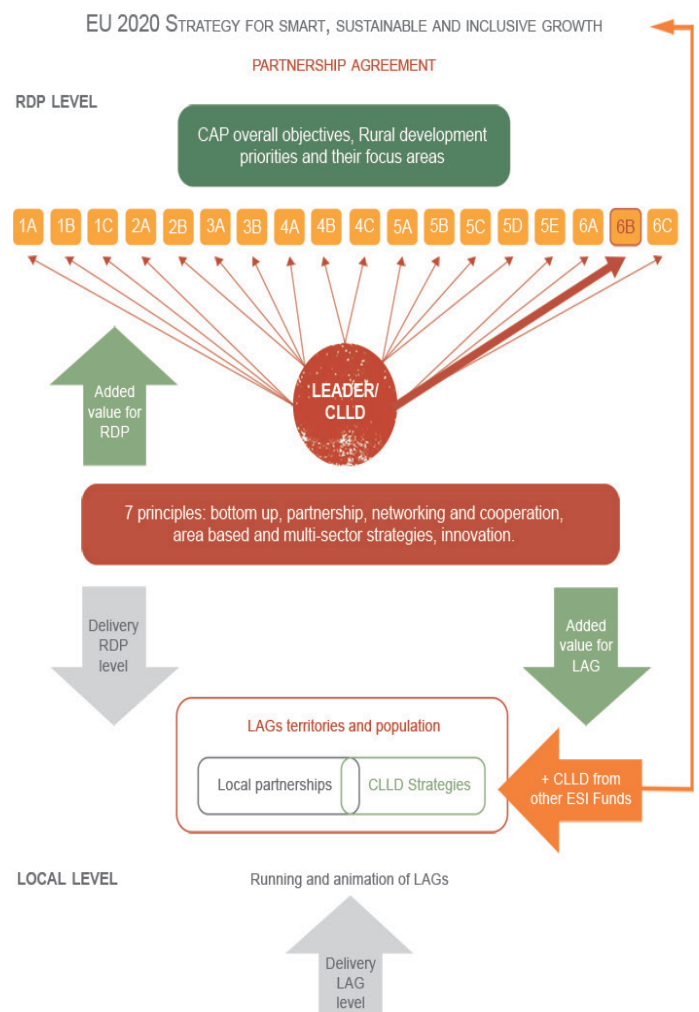
These three evaluation objectives are interconnected and often accompanied by numerous challenges, which must be addressed through careful planning, management and conduction of the evaluation. An orchestrated coordination of procedures, requirements, roles, and resources needs to be arranged in order to meet the needs and responsibilities of the European Union, Managing Authorities (MA) of rural development programmes, Local Action Groups (LAGs), evaluators and other informed stakeholders involved in LEADER/CLLD (e.g. Paying Agencies and National Rural Networks).



### FURTHER GUIDANCE ON THE EVALUATION OF LEADER/CLLD CAN ALSO BE FOUND IN

- [Guidelines - "The Ex Ante Evaluation 2014-2020 RDPs"](#)
- [Guidelines - "Establishing and Implementing the Evaluation Plan of 2014-2020 RDPs"](#)
- [Guidelines - "Assessment of RDP Results: How to Prepare for the Reporting on Evaluation in 2017"](#)

Figure 1: Concept of LEADER/CLLD Evaluation



## CONCEPTUALISING THE EVALUATION OF LEADER/CLLD

The EU's legal framework foresees the carrying out of evaluation activities for LEADER/CLLD at both the programme and local levels (figure 1).

At the RDP level, LEADER/CLLD is evaluated as a **measure** programmed in the rural development programmes under the focus area (FA) 6B "fostering local development in rural areas"<sup>5</sup>. Operations that are carried out at the LAG level with the support of the EAFRD may also have secondary contributions to other focus areas. Consequently, LEADER/CLLD can contribute to the achievement of several/all rural development objectives and even the Europe 2020 Strategy.

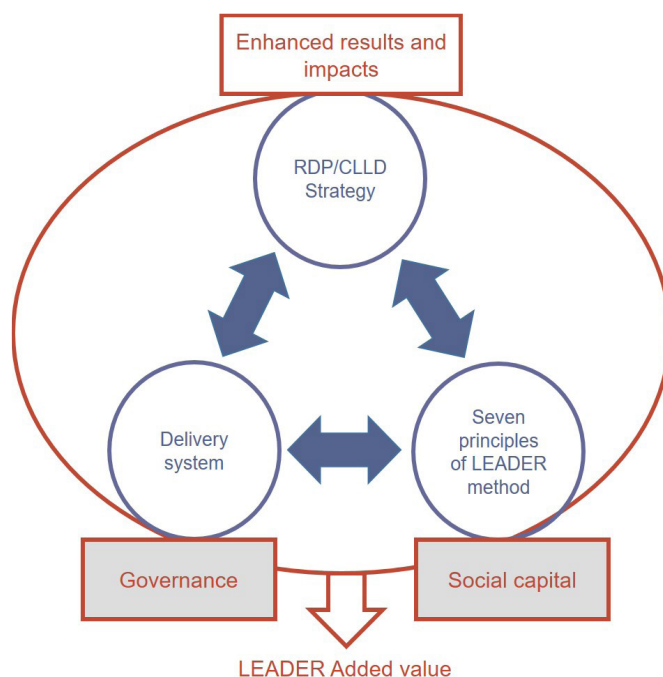
At the local level, the evaluation considers the **achievements of the CLLD strategy** in addressing the local area's needs and the benefits provided to the specific rural territory and its population. At the same time, the CLLD strategy's outputs and results shall contribute to the RDP's objectives and the objectives of the Partnership Agreement and the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The LEADER/CLLD method makes it a unique instrument for the **development of rural areas across the EU** (figure 1). This method highlights the role of local partnerships (LAGs), in the development of specific rural areas. Local partnerships facilitate the implementation of the area based and multi-sector local strategies developed in a participatory way to address the local needs, while at the same time promoting innovation, cooperation and networking among actors.

Evaluation enables stakeholders to see if the LEADER method has been applied properly. For this purpose, the **LEADER/CLLD delivery mechanism** set up by programme authorities and LAGs can be assessed.

The proper application of the LEADER/CLLD method can generate added value, which can be distinguished as benefits created in addition to those which would have been achieved without applying the method (figure 2).

Figure 2: CLLD Added Value



Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development. 2016

The added value of LEADER/CLLD can be observed at all levels – national, regional and local, as different forms of social capital (e.g. trust among actors, a build-up of the local identity, motivation, social networks, etc.), improved local and multi-level governance in the implementation of LEADER/CLLD (participatory decision making, involvement of more stakeholders in decisions, etc.) and the enhancement of programme results and impacts (more sustainable businesses and jobs, better tailored infrastructure to meet local needs, etc.). Evaluation enables one to discover the added value of LEADER/CLLD.



### NEW GUIDELINES ON THE EVALUATION OF LEADER/CLLD

To assist the rural development stakeholders in planning, managing and conducting the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD at the programme and local levels, the European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development is currently developing Guidelines for the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD.

<sup>1</sup> Article 33, point 1(f), and Article 34, point 3(g) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council

<sup>2</sup> Article 67 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council

<sup>3</sup> Article 68 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council

<sup>4</sup> Accomplishment refers to results, impacts, effectiveness and efficiency.

<sup>5</sup> Only UK-England has programmed LEADER/CLLD under FA 6A 'diversification and job creation'.

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The Evaluation Helpdesk works under the supervision of Unit E.4 (Evaluation and studies) of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The contents of this fact sheet do not necessarily express the official views of the European Commission.