# SWOT and needs assessment as a basis to develop a sound RDP intervention logic?

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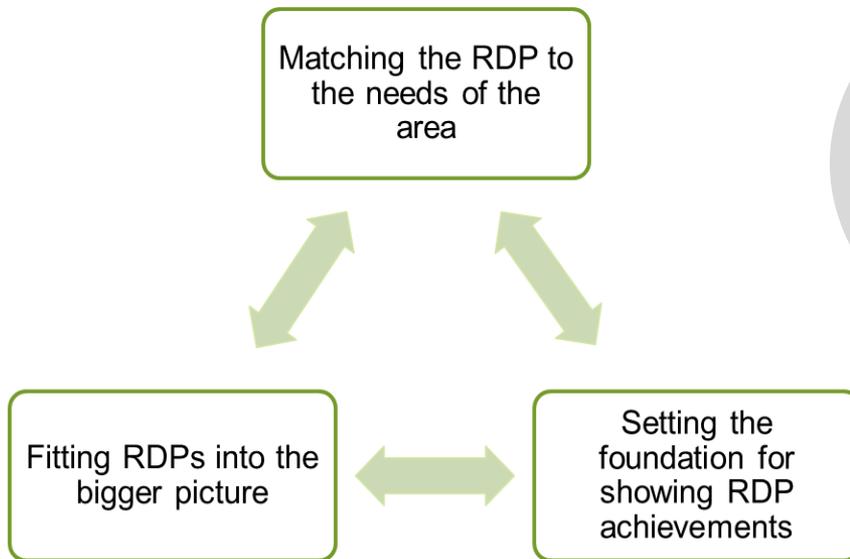# Outline of the presentation

❖ **Introduction**

❖ **The *ex ante* evaluation of SWOT and needs assessment (NA) as the prerequisite for sound intervention logic**

❖ **The *ex ante* evaluator's feedback on SWOT/ needs assessment**

Hello, my name is Ludwig Wittgenstein, I'll provide you some helpful thoughts from my "tractatus"
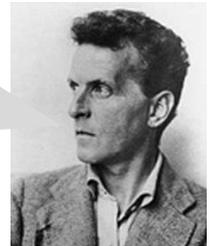
Introduction:

The role of the *ex ante* in setting up RDP interventions which are relevant, effective and efficient

Matching the RDP to the needs of the area

Fitting RDPs into the bigger picture

Setting the foundation for showing RDP achievements

4.116 Everything that can be thought at all can be thought clearly. Everything that can be put into words can be put clearly
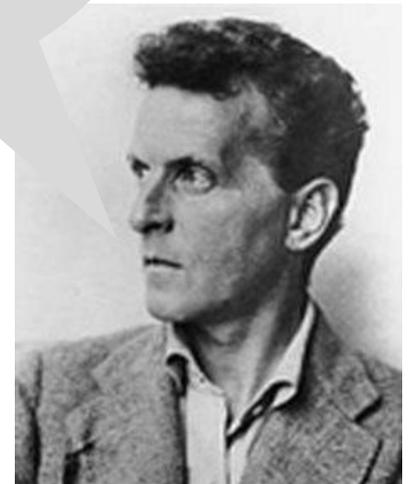
The *ex ante* evaluation of the SWOT and needs assessment constitute the first package out of three during the programming process

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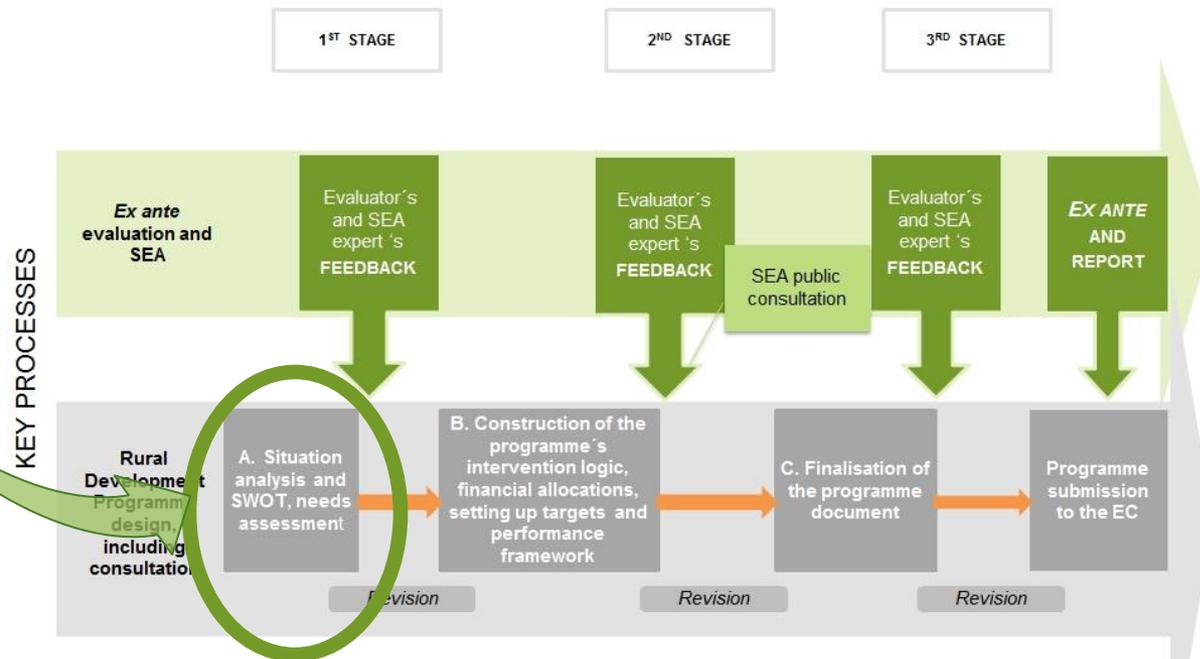
The *ex ante* evaluation of SWOT and needs assessment as the prerequisite for sound intervention logic
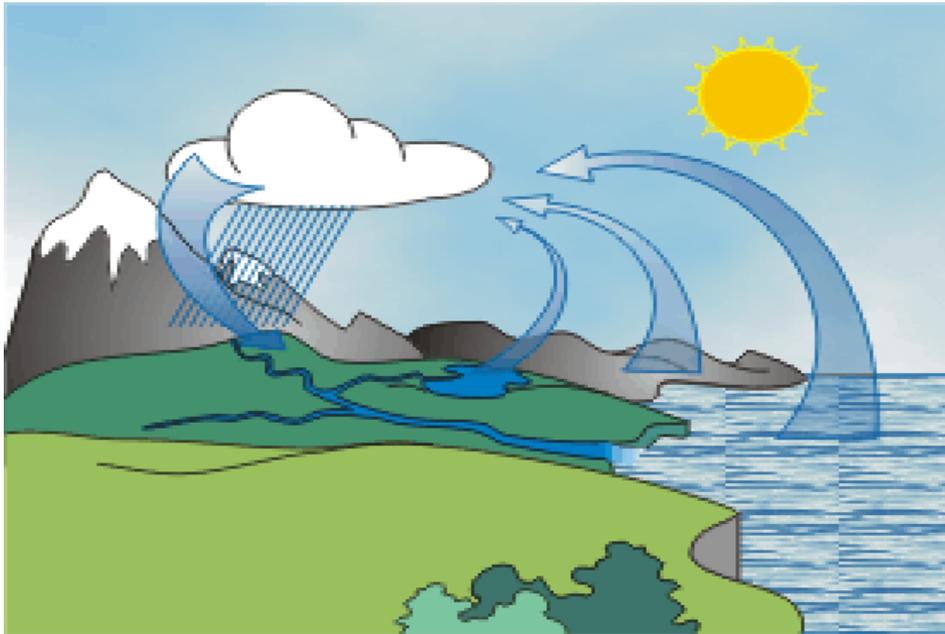
2.12 A picture is a model of reality
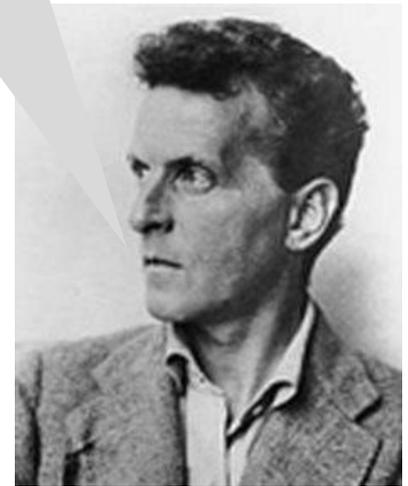
Context

Baseline ← Impact

SWOT

Needs assessment

Objectives/strategy

Priorities/measures/actions

Implementation

Results

Outputs

The diagnostic phase is integral part of the intervention logic

The intervention logic…

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- ...is a lineal and circular model of the programme cycle

- Cause-effect relationships are radically simplified in the intervention logic; in reality they resemble more a complex "tissue" than a "tree"

- In our water cycle metaphor, the diagnostic phase (SWOT and NA) could be consider as the upper catchment area of the river system

Simplification
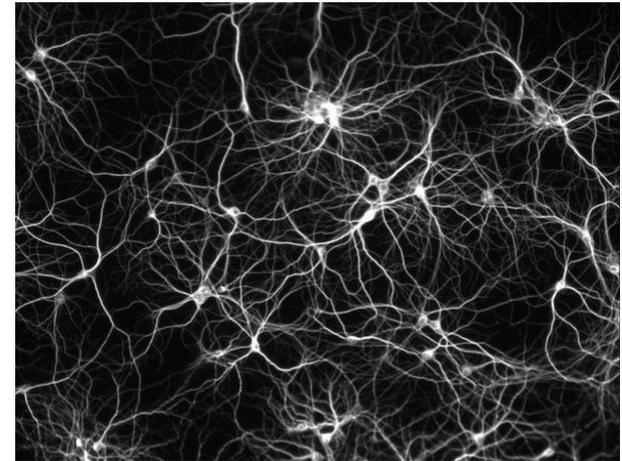
To be a solid foundation for the intervention logic, the SWOT has to…

- provide an analysis of the rural territory, the sectors / value chains concerned and the environmental state of the area seen in its wider context

- build on

  - Evidence (quantities <u>and</u> patterns): Common and programme-specific context indicators plus qualitative information

  - Lessons from earlier interventions

  - Anticipation of upcoming tendencies and global trends

- provide a sound justification of the use of public resources to support specific targets and particular groups of beneficiaries

The needs assessment is the fulcrum between the SWOT analysis and the strategic response

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1. SWOT of the programming area

- Viable food production

- Sustainable management of resources and climate action

- Balanced territorial development

2. Detailed needs analysis

- Per each priority and focus area

3. Strategic response

- Selection of relevant priorities / focus areas

- Fixing of objectives and expected results

- Planning the measures, outputs, financial allocation

So what's the *ex ante* evaluator's task with regard to the SWOT and NA?

- **The *ex ante* evalution has to**

  ➢ **Assess the completeness of the SWOT / NA**

  ➢ **Assess the completeness of the indicator system (with baselines) as well as the relevance of programme-specific indicators**

  ➢ **Assess the SWOT as the rationale for the identification of needs**

  ➢ **Examine global coherence of the SWOT / NA (internal, external, upstream, downstream)**

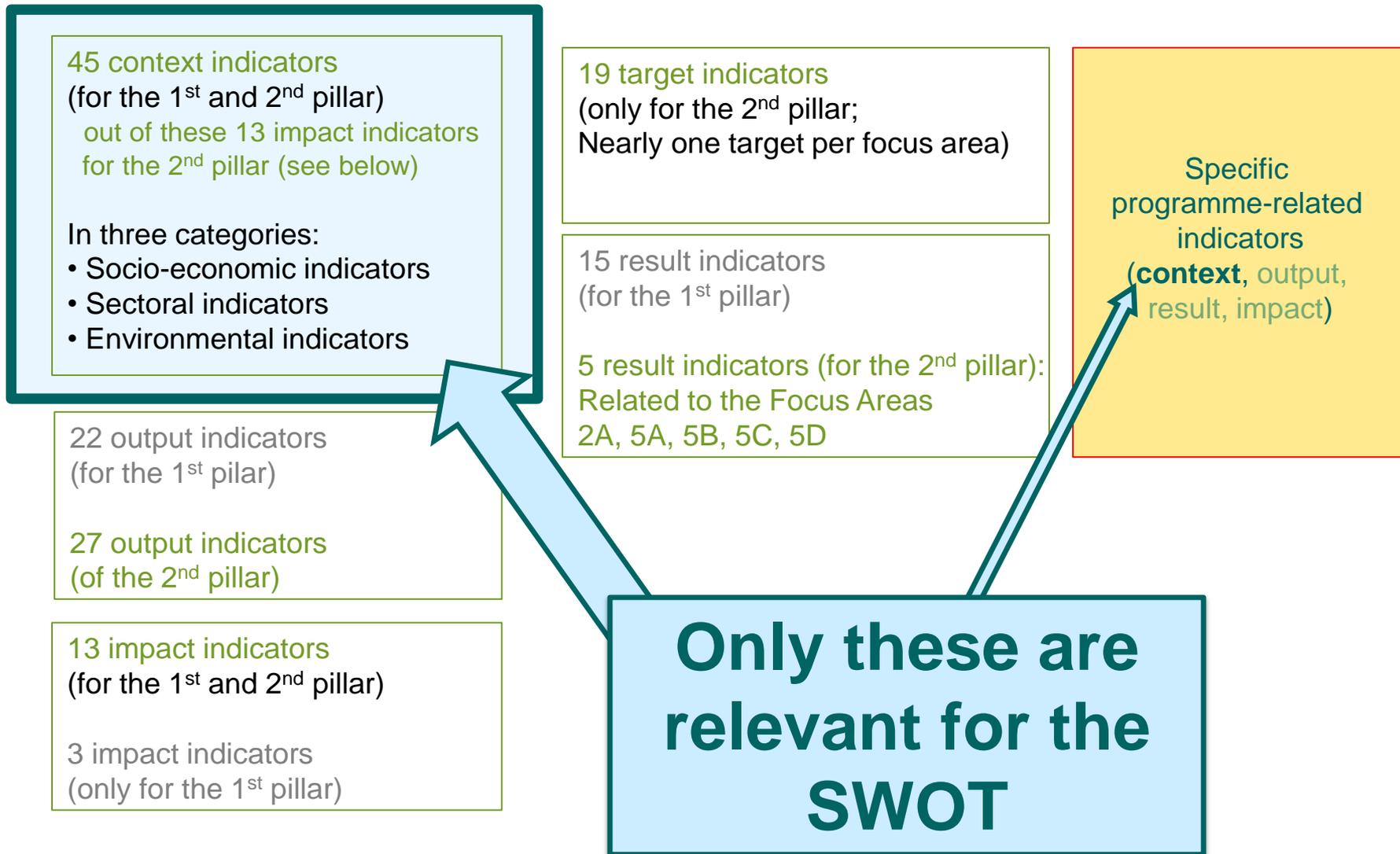# Quality criteria for SWOT and needs assessment

SWOT:

- Balancing out parts and wholes, quantities and patterns:
  - ✓ Sufficiently detailed and comprehensive;
  - ✓ Holistic image of the programming area
  - ✓ No unreflected contradictions
  - ✓ Reflection on the links between statements

- Establishing the baseline of all common context indicators and relevant programme-specific context indicators, adding qualitiative informations;

- Organised along the logic of the three CAP objectives.

IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS:

- Identification and prioritisation of the most relevant needs to be addressed by the RDP;

- Organised per priority, focus area and horizontal objective (environment, climate and innovation).

> **The SWOT and the NA are two distinct phases within the diagnostic process.**

Use of indicators in the SWOT analysis

45 context indicators
(for the 1st and 2nd pillar)
 out of these 13 impact indicators
 for the 2nd pillar (see below)

In three categories:
• Socio-economic indicators
• Sectoral indicators
• Environmental indicators

22 output indicators
(for the 1st pilar)

27 output indicators
(of the 2nd pillar)

13 impact indicators
(for the 1st and 2nd pillar)

3 impact indicators
(only for the 1st pillar)

19 target indicators
(only for the 2nd pillar;
Nearly one target per focus area)

15 result indicators
(for the 1st pillar)

5 result indicators (for the 2nd pillar):
Related to the Focus Areas
2A, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D

Specific programme-related indicators
(**context**, output, result, impact)

Only these are relevant for the SWOT

The scope of the *ex ante* evaluation of SWOT and NA

	Upstream	Downstream	Lateral
Without (between RDP and EU/other funds)	SWOT covering all the EU objectives / priorities?	All the identified and prioritised needs translated into the strategy?	Is there any (In-) consistency with SWOT/NA carried out for other programmes?
Within (between SWOT and NA)	All the identified needs covered by SWOT?	Any SWOT finding not covered by needs?	Are there unreflected contradictions and links within SWOT and NA?

Some examples for questions to be posed by the *ex ante* evaluator

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➢ *Is the SWOT complete and does it make appropriate distinctions? (for example between sub-zones, sub-types of target groups etc.)*

➢ *What is the evidence base for the SWOT? Are all common context indicators covered? Are the programme-specific indicators SMART and CLEAR and does the SWOT provide an understandable and realistic picture of the programming area?*

➢ *Are the relevant external links and relationships of the area made sufficiently clear?*

➢ *Are the needs consistently deduced from the SWOT ?*

➢ *Are specific needs (of the environment, of social groups…) taken into account?*

Methodological truisms

From what has been said it emerges that

- **the evaluator should have an intrinsic knowledge of the programming area and the sectors/value chains involved;**

- **the analysis of the SWOT and the NA are essential for laying a good foundation for the intervention logic; however it is not completed with the first "ex ante package". Specifically the coherence with the strategy/measures can only be definitely assessed in later stages;**

- **the *ex ante* evaluation team should cover the whole scope of the specific expertise required; a core team of generalists should bring the findings together at the level of priorities and horizontal objectives.**

4.024 To understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true. (one can understand it, therefore, without knowing whether it is true)
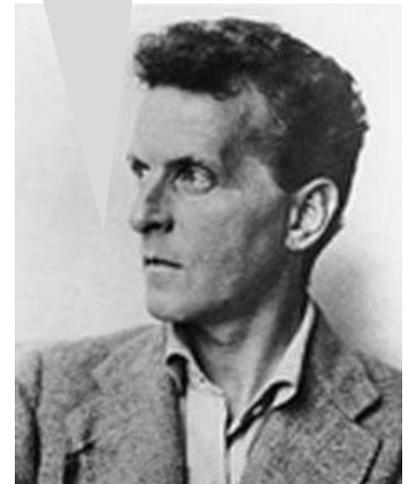
Two more practical hints

We recommend **answering each evaluation question** in three steps:

- ✓ **Description**
- ✓ **Judgement**
- ✓ **Recommendation**

We recommend **not to accept mere strings of data**. Data are necessary, but **it's the story which counts**: The story of an area and its people and of the particular support they need.

2.0272 The configuration of objects produces the states of affairs
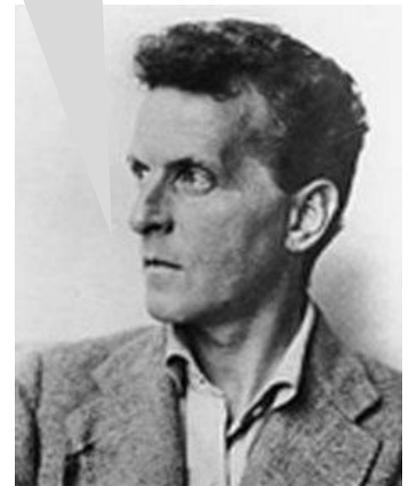
Involvement of stakeholders

- Stakeholder involvement is a core principle behind the Partnership Agreement and the programming processes in all five ESI Funds.

- Apart from the Managing Authority, implementing agencies and related experts, other social and economic actors and other public authorities should be systematically involved (and way beyond the scope of potential beneficiaries!). Their involvement may range from public information and consultation meetings to structured participation in thematic groups and web-based interaction.*

- Therefore the evaluator should be very much interested in the way how the SWOT and NA have been prepared:

  - **Who was invited, who has participated, from the outset to the writing?**

  - **In how far did the design of the participative process enable (or inhibit) relevant actors to step in?**

  - **Have interests of certain groups not been taken into account?**

* Public consultation is explicitly required in the SEA process. It is desirable to coordinate the EAE and the SEA in a way that public participation can be optimized.

7. What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence
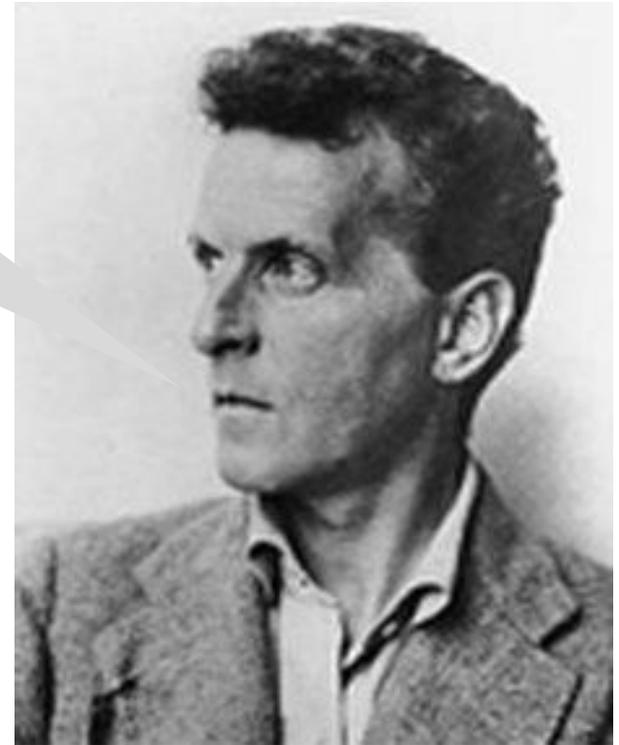
Thank you for your attention!

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