



European Evaluation Network
for Rural Development



European Commission
Agriculture and Rural Development

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE COMMON EVALUATION QUESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS ON MID- TERM EVALUATION REPORTING

JULY 2010

Copyright notice

© European Communities, 2010

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Manuscript finalised in July 2010

The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the official views of the European Commission.



The European Evaluation Network for Rural Development (abbreviated to “Evaluation Expert Network”) operates under the responsibility of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development. The overall aim of the Network is to increase the usefulness of evaluation as a tool for improving the formulation and implementation of rural development policies by helping to establish good practice and capacity building in the evaluation of Rural Development Programmes up until 2013.

Additional information about the activities of the Evaluation Expert Network and its Evaluation Helpdesk is available on the Internet through the Europa server (<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/>)

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE
COMMON EVALUATION
QUESTIONS &
RECOMMENDATIONS ON MID-
TERM EVALUATION REPORTING

JULY 2010

CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION 3**
 - 1.1 Objectives of this explanatory note..... 3
 - 1.2 The legal framework and purpose of the MTE 4
- 2 THE PURPOSE AND USE OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS..... 5**
 - 2.1 What is the use of Evaluation Questions at the programme level?..... 5
 - 2.2 What is the use of Evaluation Questions at the EU-level? 5
 - 2.3 What is the use of Evaluation Questions for policy makers at EU and national/regional levels? 6
 - 2.4 What practical challenges have emerged in recent EU synthesis evaluations in “synthesizing” national and regional answers to Evaluation Questions? 6
- 3 EVALUATION QUESTIONS – MAIN ELEMENTS AND WORKING STEPS 7**
 - 3.1 Main elements 7
 - 3.2 Main working steps related to Evaluation Questions..... 10
- 4 ANSWERING OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION 11**
 - 4.1 The indicative outline..... 11
 - 4.2 Example: Translation of CMEF-outline structure into MTE report..... 12
- 5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORTING & ANSWERING THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS..... 15**
- 6 ANNEX 17**

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objectives of this explanatory note

(1) The framework for the monitoring and evaluation of Rural Development Programmes in the period 2007-2013, namely the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF), foresees that evaluation activities are organised on an ongoing basis. This includes at programme level ex ante, mid-term, and ex post evaluation as well as any further evaluation activities. The mid-term evaluation (MTE) in 2010 marks a milestone in so far as it shall propose measures to improve the quality of programmes and their implementation.

(2) In the judgment phase of the MTE the independent evaluators in the Member States are therefore asked to draft answers to the common and programme specific Evaluation Questions, those that apply to the measure axes as well as all horizontal ones, in the context of the mid-term evaluation report.

(3) Evidence has shown that in the first half of 2010 most programmes were already well advanced in preparing the Evaluation Questions and drafting the MTE report. However, an MTE survey and several information requests received from the Member States have also revealed, that on some issues evaluation stakeholders would appreciate additional information. Particular areas concerned include:

- ▶ Further information regarding the use and purpose of the Evaluation Questions
- ▶ Specific explanations regarding the approach for answering the Evaluation Questions
- ▶ Clarifications concerning the structure of the MTE report

(4) The current explanatory notes will therefore **summarize existing guidance** (in particular information from the Handbook on CMEF and its annexes), and further enrich this with practical examples from the Member States. Through the use of illustrative examples a common understanding should be achieved resulting in more consistent approaches across evaluations reports.

The main elements of these explanatory notes comprise:

- ▶ Further explanations regarding the use and purpose of Evaluation Questions
- ▶ Summary on working steps for answering Evaluation Questions including examples
- ▶ A synoptic summary of the main MTE-elements from existing guidance documents

(5) **The use of these explanatory notes is optional.** The information is intended as a supporting material for evaluation stakeholders (Managing Authorities, evaluators) to perform the mid-term and ex post evaluations.

1.2 The legal framework and purpose of the MTE

(6) According to Article 84 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)¹ Rural Development Programmes shall be subject to ex ante, mid-term and ex post evaluations in accordance with Articles 85, 86 and 87.

(7) Article 86 (4) of the same regulation specifies that in 2010, ongoing evaluation shall take the form of a **separate mid-term evaluation report**. The mid-term evaluation shall **propose measures to improve the quality of programmes and their implementation**. A summary of the mid-term evaluation reports shall be undertaken on the initiative of the Commission. Article 61 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006² specifies that the mid-term evaluation shall be submitted to the Commission respectively by 31 December 2010 at the latest.

(8) **The purpose of the mid-term** (and ex-post) evaluations according to Article 86 (6) is as follows:

- ▶ to examine the degree of **utilisation** of resources, the **effectiveness** and **efficiency** of the programming of the EAFRD, its **socio-economic impact** and its **impact on the Community priorities**;
- ▶ to cover the goals of the programme and aim to draw lessons concerning rural development policy;
- ▶ to identify the factors which contributed to the success or failure of the programmes' implementation, including as regards sustainability, and identify best practice.

Consequently, both the mid-term evaluation report and the ex post evaluation report shall contain **answers to all common and programme specific Evaluation Questions**, derived from an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance of measures and programmes. The reports will also include a judgment on the degree to which measures and programmes as a whole meet their targets and contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the national strategies as well as the Community strategy. On the basis of evaluation findings, the mid-term evaluation report has also to identify the need of change of programmes, where applicable.

(9) **The MTE reports feed directly into the EU-level synthesis**, which aggregates results at EU-level. They also serve as a basis to assess the CMEF, its practicality and functionality. To this end, the MTE should also identify difficulties/inconsistencies and propose improvements. Such suggestions can still be taken into account for providing support in the current programming period, and will moreover contribute to the review of the CMEF for post-2013.

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

² Commission Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006 of 15 December 2006 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

2 THE PURPOSE AND USE OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

2.1 What is the use of Evaluation Questions at the programme level?

(10) Evaluation Questions support Managing Authorities and Monitoring Committees in fulfilling their tasks. These programme bodies should use evaluation results as a basis to (1) examine the progress of the programme in relation to its goals by means of result and, where appropriate, impact indicators; to (2) improve the quality of programmes and their implementation; to (3) examine proposals for substantive changes to programmes. To execute these tasks properly, the programme bodies need answers to a series of well-defined questions from their evaluators. These questions are usually formalised and structured in a set of Evaluation Questions.

(11) Evaluation Questions ensure that programme bodies collect relevant information from their RDPs. By cross-checking Evaluation Questions with indicators, programme bodies get a good indication about the type and scope of information to be collected for their evaluators. All information must be relevant for answering the Evaluation Questions and help to draw conclusions for programme practice and policy learning.

(12) Evaluation Questions are a key tool in order to steer the evaluations process and to improve the quality of evaluation reports. In the Terms of Reference the set of common and programme specific Evaluation Questions is included and as such is an essential tool to set the evaluation themes and to direct the evaluators towards the “right” focus. Clear Evaluation Questions support the formulation of precise and relevant answers.

(13) Evaluation Questions encourage RD programme bodies to ask for impacts. For every day programme management and steering Managing Authorities are usually sufficiently served with implementation-related information at output (and result) level. While output and result indicators are easier to obtain and quickly available, programme impacts are methodologically more difficult to assess and sometimes hard to measure in an early stage. However, evidence-based policy formulation will require answers about programme impacts.

2.2 What is the use of Evaluation Questions at the EU-level?

(14) The Common Evaluation Questions from the CMEF ensure, that all RD programmes across Europe ask the same questions. Although the rural contexts, the needs, the programmes, their implementations systems and evaluation methods differ substantially between the single programmes, the set of common questions contributes to the comparability of evaluation results across Europe.

(15) The set of Common Evaluation Questions avoids the fragmentation of evaluation cultures and fosters the proliferation of common practices and standards of evaluation. For the evaluation stakeholders within and between Member States the common set of questions is a useful “reference point” for information exchange. They enable them to compare the definitions, approaches and methods across programmes, which is an important precondition for a common learning process. This gives Member States with less developed evaluation cultures the possibility to participate in a know-how transfer across EU27.

(16) A consistent and coordinated approach to the MTE prepares the ground for the synthesis at EU-level. Ideally, the data used for the assessments should conform to high quality standards and comparable methodologies should be used for their analysis. In this

context it is also important that the Evaluation Questions are treated "as is" and that an attempt is made to answer them using the specified indicators. Comments on the applicability, the functionality and relevance of the Evaluation Questions are welcome, as are alternative formulations but this should be **in addition** to addressing the existing Evaluation Question, not instead of, or else the EU-level synthesis is compromised.

2.3 What is the use of Evaluation Questions for policy makers at EU and national/regional levels?

(17) Evaluation Questions are a tool to “summarize” highly complex evaluation findings in a “digestible” way for policy makers. Programme bodies and evaluators sometimes complain that policy makers do not show sufficient interest in the outcomes of evaluations, and that strategic decisions are made elsewhere. However, this is partly due to the fact that relevant information is often not available at the right time and in an adequate form. Evidence based findings on the programme therefore need to be available in a policy-oriented language, which is capable of passing key messages to the interested public and to decision-makers.

2.4 What practical challenges have emerged in recent EU synthesis evaluations in “synthesizing” national and regional answers to Evaluation Questions?

(18) While Common Evaluation Questions were developed by the Commission’s services as a basis for the EU-level synthesis of the different evaluations undertaken at national or regional level, the experience of past synthesis work at EU-level has identified certain shortcomings:

- ▶ In some cases **not all Common Evaluation Questions were addressed** or single questions were modified, thus making a comparison difficult.
- ▶ **Few programme specific Evaluation Questions** were formulated, while at the same time the Common Evaluation Questions were experienced as “top-down”.
- ▶ **Different approaches in answering the Evaluation Questions** made the comparison a complex exercise.
- ▶ Answers to Evaluation Questions are sometimes **rather generic and not sufficiently evidence based**.
- ▶ Within single answers, **missing cross-references** to the analytical parts made it difficult to follow the reasoning behind the judgements.

3 EVALUATION QUESTIONS – MAIN ELEMENTS AND WORKING STEPS

3.1 Main elements

(19) The Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) includes **Common Evaluation Questions** that act as a minimum set of questions to ensure that essential impacts of Rural Development Programmes are analysed across EU27. Additional **programme specific Evaluation Questions** are formulated by the Managing Authority of the RD programmes and address the specific focus of the programme or go more into depth in areas which are not sufficiently addressed by the Common Evaluation Questions.

(20) The Evaluation Questions included in the CMEF provide inputs for decision-making and policy design. They concern usually the result or impact level or a group of impacts. While in principle descriptive, normative, predictive or critical questions can be posed, the majority of Evaluation Questions listed in the CMEF are **causal questions**, which aim to explore the relations of cause and effect (To what extent is that which occurred attributable to the programme?). In this way, they contribute to one of the main aims of evaluation, the identification of causal links between policy implementation and observed effects.

3.1.1 Common Evaluation Questions

(21) Evaluation Questions are the guidelines for evaluators and programme bodies that guarantee a coherent approach. They are based on the **intervention logics**, which have been substantially simplified in the current period. In chapter 8 of Guidance note B – Evaluation guidelines the Common Evaluation Questions are listed:

- A) 51 Evaluation Questions for Axis 1
- B) 51 Evaluation Questions for Axis 2
- C) 27 Evaluation Questions for Axis 3
- D) 8 Evaluation Questions for Axis 4
- E) 19 Horizontal Evaluation Questions related to the horizontal objectives and Community Priorities

(22) A total of **156 Common Evaluation Questions** need to be answered in the context of the mid-term and ex post evaluation of Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013, **provided that the respective measures have been activated by the programmes**. The relationship between Evaluation Questions and indicators is further outlined in the intervention logic for the single measures as presented in Guidance note E – Measure Fiches.

(23) **Horizontal questions** assess the contribution of the whole programme to the achievement of the overarching objectives. They therefore apply to all axes and the evaluators must look at both the positive and the negative effects of all measures applied.

3.1.2 Programme Specific Evaluation Questions

(24) Programme specific Evaluation Questions are formulated for the evaluation of a specific programme, in order to provide deeper insight into the overall implementation of the programme or to reflect programme specific objectives. During the evaluation process, programme specific Evaluation Questions should be considered and answered in the same way as Common Evaluation Questions, i.e. they are included in the Terms of Reference for evaluation projects, are covered by common and/or programme specific indicators and the answers are included in the mid-term and ex post evaluation reports.

3.1.3 Key terms

(25) Key terms help to achieve a common understanding with respect to central terms and concepts addressed in the common and programme specific Evaluation Questions. Key terms should be provided at programme (or Member State-) level in the form of a glossary which is accessible to all parties involved in the implementation of the evaluation. The review of the Evaluation Questions is a good starting point to develop such a glossary. It needs to be updated throughout the whole evaluation process and central terms need to be carefully cross-checked with available definitions at EU and national level.

(26) Where definitions are missing at EU-level, programme evaluators are asked to develop and define key terms for their own programme (e.g. for terms such as "competitiveness", "sustainable land management" or "quality of life" etc.).

Textbox: Good Practice in defining key terms related to Evaluation Questions 2007-2013

Begriffe und Indikatoren zu den Evaluierungsfragen des LE 07-13
Inhaltsverzeichnis

1 Umwelt	3
1.1 Abschätzung des Klimawandels	3
1.2 Bodenerosion	4
1.3 Erhaltung der Landschaft	4
1.4 Erhaltung der Landschaft in Natura 2000-Gebieten	5
1.5 Fortschreiten von Naturkatastrophen	6
1.7 Fortschritt	6
1.8 Landwirtschaftliche Biodiversität in Berggebieten	9
1.9 Nachhaltige Bodenbearbeitung	10
1.10 Nachhaltige Bodenbearbeitung	10
1.11 Nachhaltige Betriebsverfahren	11
1.12 Nachhaltige landwirtschaftliche Landschaft	12
1.13 Verbesserung der Bodenqualität	12
1.14 Verbesserung der Bodenqualität	13
1.15 Verbesserung der Humusqualität	17
1.16 Verbesserung der Wasserqualität	18
1.17 Verbesserung der Wasserqualität	19
1.18 Verbesserung der Wasserqualität	20
1.19 Verbesserung der Wasserqualität	20
1.20 Verbesserung der Wasserqualität	20
2 Humankapital	21
2.1 Ausweitung des traditionellen Wissens in betrieblichen Gebieten	21
2.2 Eigenes Potenzial	21
2.3 Gleichberechtigung	21
2.4 Governance	22
2.5 Humankapital - Humankapital	22
2.6 Kapital, Projekte umzusetzen / Kapital, Programme umzusetzen	23
2.7 Management von Ressourcen	24
2.8 Partnerschaft zwischen den Partnern	25
2.9 Unternehmenskultur der ländlichen Bevölkerung	26
2.10 Unternehmenskultur	26
2.11 Verbesserung der sozialen Praxis	29
2.12 Verbesserung von Arbeitsbedingungen	30
3 Wirtschaft	30
3.1 Bedingungen für Wachstum	30
3.2 Bessere Nutzung von Produktionsfaktoren	31
3.3 Diversifizierung der ländlichen Wirtschaft	32
3.4 Effizienz	32
3.5 Entwicklung der ländlichen Wirtschaft	33
3.5.1 Lokales und globales	33
3.5.2 Lokales dynamisches Wachstumsmodell	33
3.7 Wettbewerbsfähigkeit	36
3.8 Zentrale Beschäftigungsgeschichten	38
4 Qualität und Innovation	39
4.1 Innovation	39
4.2 Innovation im Nahrungsmittelbereich	40
4.3 Kooperation in der Produktion	41
4.4 Marktregeln	41
4.5 Marktregeln	42
4.6 Mehrwert der Produkte	42
4.7 Modernisierung	43
4.8 Neue Technologien	44
4.9 Qualität der Produkte	44
4.10 Transparenz des Produktionsprozesses	45

In 2008 an integrated working group in Austria was formed with the aim to further develop and define the key terms related to the Common Evaluation Questions of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. The definitions and conceptual reflections are summarized in a compendium, which lists 60 key terms under the following headings:

- (1) environment: e.g. soil erosion, traditional agricultural landscapes
- (2) human capital: e.g. governance, gender mainstreaming
- (3) economy: e.g. diversification of rural economy, competitiveness
- (4) quality and innovation: e.g. market share, market access
- (5) quality of life: e.g. attractiveness of rural areas, quality of life in rural areas

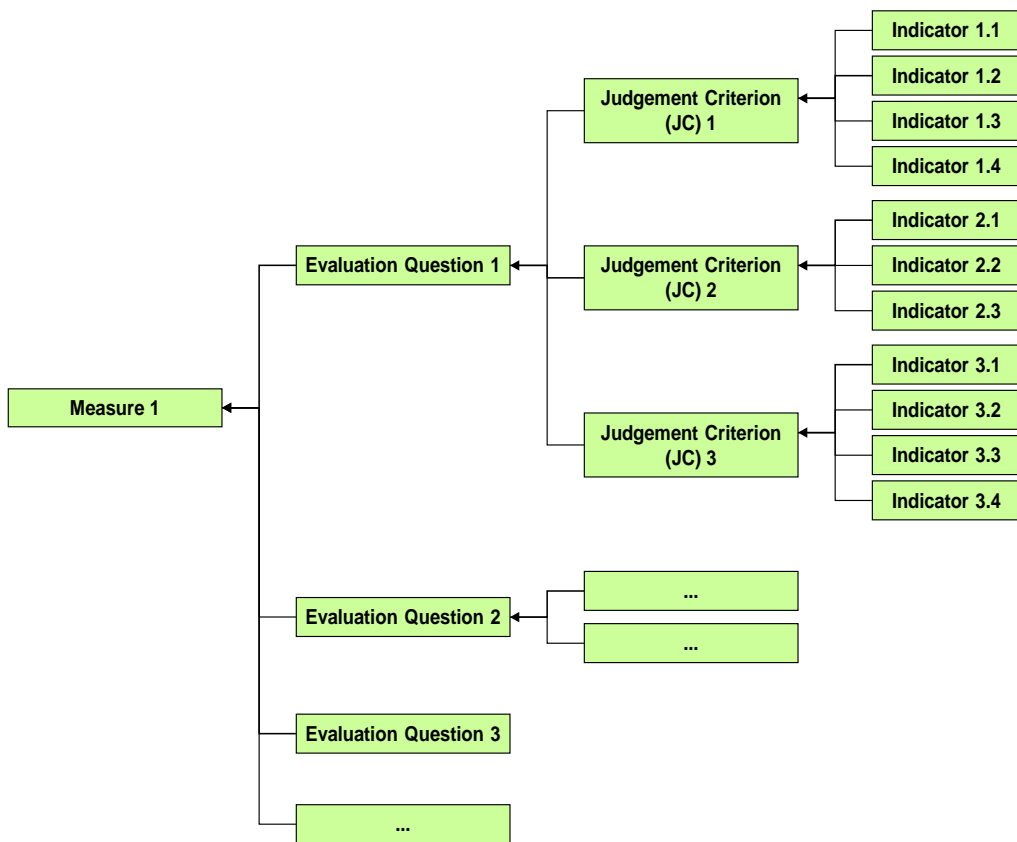
Further Information: "Begriffe und Indikatoren zu den Evaluierungsfragen des LE 07-13". (file-type: pdf, language: German)
http://www.gruenerbericht.at/cm2/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=350&Itemid=27

3.1.4 Judgment Criteria and indicators

(27) Judgment criteria are essential to give a judgment with respect to a particular Evaluation Question. In the current programming period explicit judgment criteria have not been provided at the EU-level but must be defined by the programme evaluators in the structuring phase. The Evaluation Questions of the CMEF generally require judgment criteria

- ▶ related to the relevance of the programme
- ▶ related to its effectiveness
- ▶ related to its efficiency

(28) The use of judgment criteria is a fundamental quality requirement for evidence based answering of Evaluation Questions. The link between Evaluation Questions – judgment criteria and indicators has to be transparent with a view to facilitate the EU-level evaluation synthesis.



3.2 Main working steps related to Evaluation Questions

(29) The following table gives a synoptic overview of activities related to Evaluation Questions throughout the evaluation process.

Working Phase	Main activity related to Evaluation Questions	CMEF guidance
Setting up the evaluation system	<p>The Managing Authority establishes precise (programme specific) questions and reviews the Evaluation Questions (common and programme specific) and the related indicators in order to assess what needs to be done in terms of information gathering and analysis.</p> <p>Common and programme specific Evaluation Questions are integrated as key parts into the terms of reference for evaluation projects or studies.</p>	Guidance note B – Chapter 5.1.2. and 5.1.3
Structuring	<p>The evaluators prepare the information, analytical tools and methodology to answer the Evaluation Questions (intervention logics for different measures, key terms, judgment criteria, indicators, target levels).</p>	Guidance note B, chapter 5.2.1
Observing	<p>The evaluators identify the available and relevant information, specify the validity and use of the quantitative and qualitative data used, create the tools needed for the quantitative and qualitative analysis, and collect data and qualitative information needed for answering each Evaluation Question.</p>	Guidance note B, chapter 5.2.2.
Analyzing	<p>The evaluators analyze all information available with a view to assessing the effects and impacts of measures and programmes in relation to the objectives and target levels.</p>	Guidance note B, chapter 5.2.3.
Judging	<p>Based on the judgment criteria, the common and programme specific indicators, the evaluators answer all Evaluation Questions and draw conclusions and recommendations related to the effects of single measures as well as the programme as a whole.</p> <p>The evaluators draft the evaluation report and include relevant information regarding the approach for answering Common Evaluation Questions (methods, key terms, judgment criteria) in Chapter 4 (Methodology) and Chapter 6 (Answers to Evaluation Questions Analysis and discussion of indicator(s) with respect to judgment criteria and target levels referred to by Evaluation Questions).</p>	Guidance note B, chapter 5.2.4. & chapter 7 (Indicative outline of an evaluation report)

4 ANSWERING OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

4.1 The indicative outline

(30) In this chapter the indicative outline of an evaluation report, as suggested by the **CMEF Guidance note B (chapter 7)**, is presented before practices from Member States about how to translate this structure into evaluation reports are shown.

Indicative outline of an evaluation report according to CMEF Guidance note B (chapter 7)	
1	<p>Executive summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main findings of the evaluation - Conclusions and recommendations
2	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purpose of the report - Structure of the report
3	<p>The Evaluation Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brief contextual information about the programme: related national policies, social and economic needs motivating assistance, identification of beneficiaries or other target groups - Description of the evaluation process: recapitulation of the Terms of Reference, purpose and scope of the evaluation - Brief outline of previous evaluations related to the programme
4	<p>Methodological Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of the evaluation design and the methods used - Description of key terms of programme specific and the Common Evaluation Questions, judgment criteria, target levels. - Sources of data, techniques for data collection (questionnaires, interviews; size and selection criteria for samples ...); information about how the indicators are calculated in order to assess the quality and reliability of the data and identify possible biases. - Techniques for replying to the Evaluation Questions and arriving at conclusions. - Problems or limitations of the methodological approach.
5	<p>Description of Programme, Measures, and Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme implementation: actors involved, institutional context - Composition of the programme; description of priorities and measures - Intervention logic of single measure - Budget foreseen for the entire programming period - Uptake and budget actually spent
6	<p>Answers to Evaluation Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis and discussion of indicator(s) with respect to judgment criteria and target levels referred to by Evaluation Questions. - Analysis and discussion of quantitative and qualitative information from public statistics, specific surveys/enquiries, or other sources. - Answers to the Evaluation Question
7	<p>Conclusions and Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coherence between the measures applied and the objectives pursued; balance between the different measures within a programme. - Degree of achieving programme specific objectives as well as objectives set out in the national strategy and the Community Strategy. - Recommendations based on evaluation findings, including possible proposals for the adaptation of programmes.

4.2 Example: Translation of CMEF-outline structure into MTE report

The following example from Germany tentatively shows, how the CMEF outline structure can be “translated” into an evaluation report:

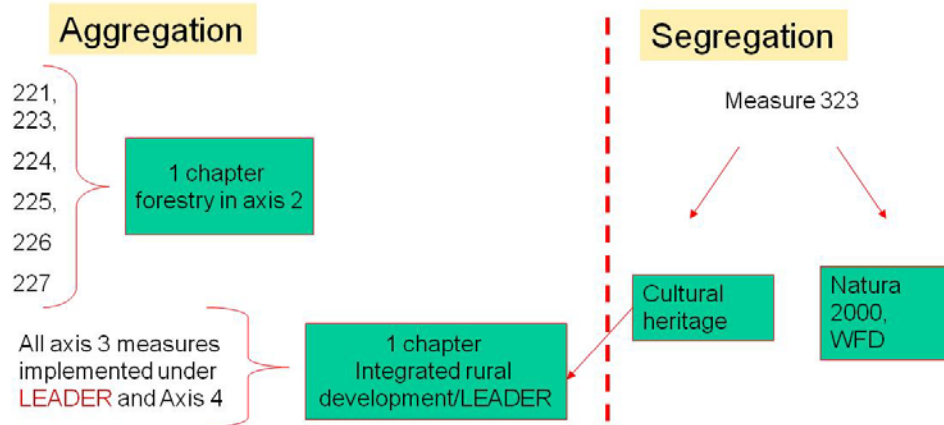
Part I	Executive Summary	- German / English (30 pages)
	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance of RDP in relation to 1. Pillar and structural funds - Main changes in socio- economic, environmental and political parameters - Structure of the RDP (planned) - Analysis of financial implementation (per measure and regional) - Implementation structure
Part II	Reporting on measure evaluation	e.g. for Investment schemes (121) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summary - Brief description of the support scheme, intervention logic and objectives - Relevant Evaluation Questions and evaluation methods - Data - Administrative implementation - Financial input, output and results - Evaluation Questions - Conclusions and recommendations
Part III	Programme evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation design, methods, data for programme evaluation • Objectives and relevance check • Programme impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employment creation and growth (CEQ 1) ○ Modernisation of agriculture (CEQ 7-10) ○ Biodiversity (CEQ 2a, 3a) ○ • Synopsis of programme impacts • Conclusions and recommendations - Programme implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key chapters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplification and improvement of efficiency (CEQ 18,19) • Multilevel Governance/Good Governance (CEQ 11, 15, 12, 5) • Internal and external synergy (CEQ 13, 14) • Capacity building (CEQ 16, 17)

Source: Summary according to PPT Regina Grajewski, vTI Institute for Rural Studies. Presentation given at the EXCO Meeting on 2 July 2010 – “MTE in Germany: Structuring and use of Common Evaluation Questions (CEQ)”

The “indicative outline of an evaluation report” structure (CMEF guidance note B, chapter 7) has been further broken down for the evaluation of the measure and programme level while at the same trying to avoid redundancies for both levels. Part I shows that, going beyond the CMEF requirement, here the Executive Summary is provided in the national as well as in English language. This is considered a good practice in so far as the English language summary facilitates considerably the exchange of evaluation results across the EU.

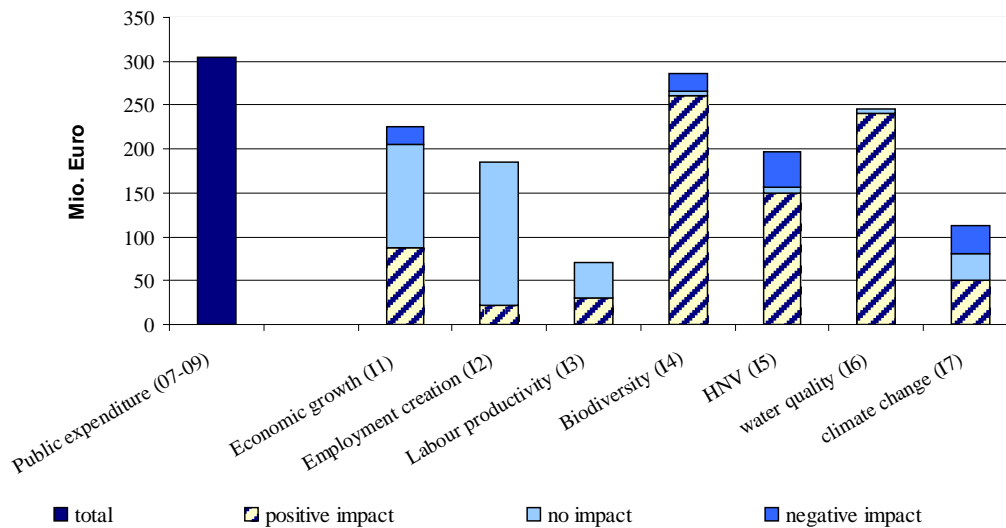
Part II shows that the Evaluation Questions for single measures have been “aggregated” under different evaluation themes, while in particular cases they were further “segregated”. The latter is due to the fact that EC measure codes correspond only to a limited extent to the funding structure of the German Bundesländer. Consequently measures were assembled and

separated with a view to present evaluation results in an adequate form for domestic needs, while at the same time being coherent with the EU reporting requirements.



Source: Regina Grajewski, vTI Institute for Rural Studies. Presentation given a the EXCO Meeting on 2 July 2010 – “MTE in Germany: Structuring and use of Common Evaluation Questions (CEQ)”

Part III contains two main chapters on programme impacts and programme implementation. Programme impacts are related to the horizontal Evaluation Questions, which are to be answered with CMEF impact indicators and additional programme specific indicators. The following figure illustrates the programme impacts as „Public expenditure 2007-09 with impacts on... „



Source: Regina Grajewski, vTI Institute for Rural Studies. Presentation given a the EXCO Meeting on 2 July 2010 – “MTE in Germany: Structuring and use of Common Evaluation Questions (CEQ)”

5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORTING & ANSWERING THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Drafting the MTE report

- ▶ **Cover the content and follow the structure as presented in the indicative outline** of an evaluation report according to CMEF Guidance note B (chapter 7) with a view to address both the measure and programme impacts.
- ▶ **Provide information to facilitate exchange with other Member States:** Although not mandatory in this programming period, it is considered a good practice to include an Executive Summary in English in the MTE report.

Structuring the Evaluation Questions

- ▶ **Carry out a “relevance check” of Evaluation Questions** based on interviews with the programme bodies: cover all Common Evaluation Questions, but go more in-depth on those that are particularly relevant for your programme.
- ▶ **Develop additional programme specific questions** where the Common Evaluation Questions do not cover the particular focus of the programme.

Answering the Evaluation Questions

- ▶ **Treat the Evaluation Questions "as is", and attempt to answer them using the specified indicators.** Comments on the applicability, the functionality and relevance of the Evaluation Questions are welcome, as are alternative formulations but this should be in addition to and not instead of addressing the existing Evaluation Question.
- ▶ **Provide answers to all common and programme specific Evaluation Questions** provided that the measures have been activated by the respective RD programme.
- ▶ **Give evidence based answers** which clearly relate to defined judgment criteria and indicators.
- ▶ **Provide concise answers** to Evaluation Questions and indicate cross-references to further analytical chapters.
- ▶ **Provide information on the key terms** that have been further developed in the context of the MTE.
- ▶ **Further differentiate answers to Evaluation Questions** where regional, territorial, social, gender aspects are relevant and where the available indicators allow for more detailed conclusions.
- ▶ **Indicate the methodology used for answering the Evaluation Question.**
- ▶ **Establish transparency concerning information sources** by indicating also in the answers to EQs the sources used (database, survey, literature etc.)

- ▶ **Provide information concerning the limitations of the validity of the findings.**
Describe the constraints encountered and their impact on the evaluation findings.

Further consult the following information sources

- ▶ Guidelines on the preparation of the mid-term evaluation
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/evaluation-processes/mid-term-evaluation/introduction/en/introduction_home.cfm
- ▶ Frequently Asked Questions in relation to the MTE
<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/faq/en/mte.cfm>
- ▶ Glossary of key terms
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/glossary/en/glossary_home_en.cfm
- ▶ Further Helpdesk publications
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/library/evaluation-helpdesk-publications/en/evaluation-helpdesk-publications_home_en.cfm

6 ANNEX

The following annex contains practices from Member States to answer the Common Evaluation Questions in the 2000-2006 period. The analysed examples are taken from the ex-post evaluation report of the former period and are limited to those chapters which are explicitly dealing with EQs. It is not intended to judge single answers as “good” or “bad” but rather to show different approaches adopted by the Member States. The “main characteristics of the provided answers” are briefly described according to the following criteria:

- ▶ Explicit use of Evaluation Question and formulation of answer
- ▶ Explicit use of judgment criteria
- ▶ Reference to target level/baseline
- ▶ Quantification of indicators
- ▶ Further break-down of indicators
- ▶ Indication of information-source
- ▶ Cross-references to further analysis results
- ▶ Discussion of validity/reliability of findings

The examples and extracts from evaluation reports are provided in their original language.

6.1.1 Example 1 - Answer to evaluation question: “To what extent has the aid facilitated the enduring setting-up of young farmers of either sex?”

A) Example from RD ex post evaluation 2000-2006, Austria (AT):

<p>Frage II.3: In welchem Umfang hat die Beihilfe sich auf die Zahl der Junglandwirte beiderlei Geschlechts ausgewirkt?</p>
<p>Kriterium II.3-1: Höhere Anzahl von Junglandwirten, die sich niedergelassen haben</p>

In der Niederlassungsförderung waren im Mittel aller Bundesländer 20% der Betriebsübernehmer als weiblich durch Indikatoren in der Datenbank ausgewiesen. Einen großen Anteil von weiblichen Betriebsübernehmern, nämlich 35%, gab es in Salzburg. Die Anteile der weiblichen Übernehmer lagen in den Bundesländern Niederösterreich bei 18, in Oberösterreich bei 24 und in der Steiermark bei 20%.

Die Auswertung der Datenbank wurde um ein weiteres wichtiges Merkmal von Betriebsübernehmern erweitert. Es wurde auch das Vorhandensein von Partnern zum Zeitpunkt der Antragsstellung in die Tabelle 15 aufgenommen. Von den 9.725 Fällen in der Niederlassungsförderung für Junglandwirte hatten 39% der Übernehmer keinen Partner im Antrag angeführt. Es spiegelt sich in den Ergebnissen der Tabelle 19, die zwar ausschließlich die Teilnehmer an der Niederlassungsförderung repräsentieren, auch das aus der Praxis bekannte Problem von Hofübernehmern, einen für den Betrieb passenden Partner zu finden, wider.

Tabelle 19: Betriebsübernehmer und deren Partner nach Bundesländern

Bundesland	Ins-gesamt	Betriebsübernehmer		
		mit weiblichen	mit männlichen	ohne
		Partner		
Kärnten	672	316	52	304
Niederösterreich	2.696	1.157	495	1.044
Oberösterreich	2.834	1.136	675	1.023
Salzburg	767	295	271	201
Steiermark	1.811	848	389	574
Tirol	778	363	64	351
Vorarlberg	120	74	2	44
Wien	47	19	2	26
Österreich	9.725	4.208	1.950	3.567

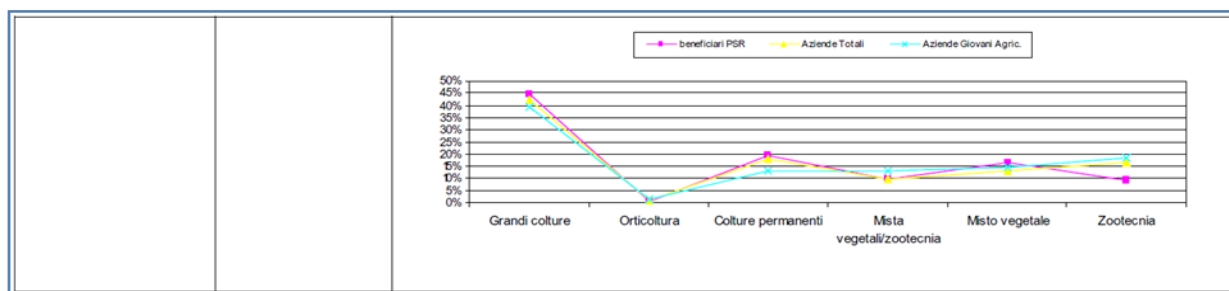
Source: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/countries/au/ex_post_de.pdf, page 44

Main characteristics of provided answer:

- ▶ Explicit use of Evaluation Question and formulation of answer: *yes, answer only indirectly formulated*
- ▶ Explicit use of judgment criteria: *criteria mentioned, but not explicitly used in answer*
- ▶ Reference to target level/baseline: *no*
- ▶ Quantification of indicators: *yes, absolute and relative values (%)*
- ▶ Further break-down of indicators: *by gender, by regions (Bundesländer), without partner*
- ▶ Indication of information-source: *mentioned but not further specified (“database”)*
- ▶ Cross-references to further analysis results: *yes (reference to table 15 and 19)*
- ▶ Discussion of validity/reliability of findings: *no*

B) Example from RD ex post evaluation 2000-2006, Umbria (IT):

Domanda II. 3. In che misura gli aiuti hanno influito sul numero di giovani agricoltori di entrambi i sessi insediatisi?		
Criterio II. 3- 1. Si è insediato un maggior numero di giovani agricoltori		
Indicatore	Fonte	Risposta
II. 3- 1. 1. Numero di giovani agricoltori insediatisi con gli aiuti (ripartiti per sesso)	Indagine diretta presso i beneficiari del PSR Umbria, Sistema informativo dell'Arusia, e RICA-Valutazione 2005	Il numero totale dei giovani insediati è di 1730 di cui 870 donne e 860 uomini. Nel 30% dei casi i beneficiari senza contributo non si sarebbero insediati e un altro 16% avrebbe seguito tempistiche e modalità differenti. Il confronto tra i giovani insediati attraverso il PSR, il totale delle aziende agricole umbre e quelle condotte da agricoltori sotto i 40 anni mostra, relativamente all'orientamento tecnico economico (OTE), una netta prevalenza, per i giovani beneficiari, di ordinamenti specializzati in grandi colture (45%) e colture permanenti (20%). Molto bassa è invece la percentuale del settore zootecnico (9%) rispetto al contesto agricolo regionale (17%) e a quello dei giovani agricoltori umbri (18%).



Source: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/countries/it/umbria/ex_post_it.pdf, pages 112 - 113

Main characteristics of provided answer:

- ▶ Explicit use of Evaluation Question and formulation of answer : yes
- ▶ Explicit use of judgment criteria: yes
- ▶ Reference to target level/baseline: yes
- ▶ Quantification of indicators: yes (1730 young farmers)
- ▶ Further break-down of indicators: yes - by gender, by holding (specialisation)
- ▶ Indication of information-source: yes (survey among beneficiaries, Information system dell'Arusia, FADN-Evaluation 2005)
- ▶ Cross-references to further analysis results: not explicitly mentioned
- ▶ Discussion of validity/reliability of findings: no

6.1.2 *Example 2 - Answer to evaluation question: “To what extent have natural resources been protected... in terms of the quality of ground and surface water, as influenced by agri-environmental measures?”*

A) Example from RD ex post evaluation 2000-2006, France (FR):

5.1.2 QVI 1B : Quels effets les mesures agroenvironnementales ont-elles produits en matière de qualité des eaux (masses souterraines et de surface) ?

5.1.2.1 Logique d'action des MAE du PDRN 2000-2006 sur la thématique de la qualité des eaux de surface et des eaux souterraines

Rappel

La problématique de la qualité des eaux a été décomposée dans le référentiel à mi-parcours en fonction :

- de l'origine de la ressource : eaux souterraines et eaux de surface ;
- des principaux types de polluants incriminés : pollution azotée représentée par les nitrates, et pollution par les produits phytosanitaires.

Les pollutions par d'autres agents (phosphore, bactéries...) ne sont pas prises en compte.

Principales mesures intéressant la qualité de l'eau

Thèmes	Méthode	Effets forts	Effets faibles
Qualité des eaux nitrates	réduire les apports	0101A 0901A 1003A 2001B 2001C 2001D 2002B 2002C 2002D 2003B	0102A 0103A 0202A 0204A 0903A 0904A 1402A 19PHA 2001A 2001E 2001F 2001G 2002A 2003A 2004A 20PPP 20PPT 2100B 2100C 2100D 2100E 2100F 50000 0202Z 2101A 2101B 2101C 2101D 2101F
	réduire les transferts	0101A 0102A 0103A 0104A 0301A 0302A 0303A 0303B 0304A 0803A 2100B 2100C 2100D 2100E 2100F 2101A 2101B 2101C 2101D 2101F	0201A 0401A 0501A 0501B 0503A 0701A 0702A 1403A 2004A 2301A 2302A
Qualité des eaux pesticides	réduire les apports	0101A 0102A 0103A 0104 0202A 0802A 0804A 0808A 0809A 1302A 1304A 1602A 1605A 2100B 2100C 2100D 0802B 2101A 2101B 2101C 2101D	0201A 0703A 0801A 0805A 0806A 0807A 0810A 0811A 0812A 0813A 0904A 1402A 1404A 2004A 2100E 2100F
	réduire les transferts	0101A 0102A 0103A 0104A 0301A 0302A 0303A 0303B 0304A 0401A 0501A 0501B 0701A 0702A 0803A 2100B 2100C 2100D 2100E 2100F	0201A 0402A 0403A 0503A 0601A 0813A 1302A 1403A 2004A 2504A

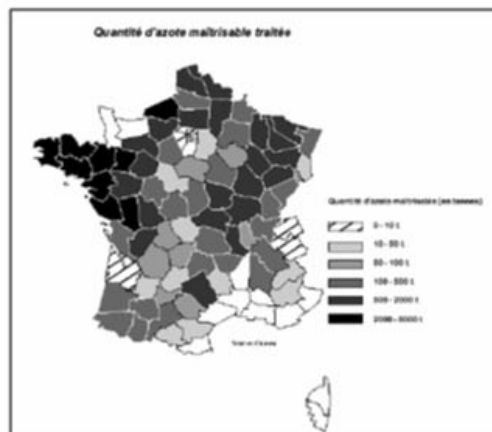
Le catalogue de mesures intéressant la qualité des eaux est très large car, à côté de mesures très ciblées (groupe 8 et 9 : modifier les pratiques ayant trait aux phytosanitaires et à la fertilisation), de nombreuses mesures peuvent contribuer à l'amélioration ou à la préservation de la qualité des eaux par réduction des émissions et/ou des transferts de polluants (ex : mesure 21 conversion à l'agriculture biologique, groupe 5 : implanter des éléments fixes du paysage, mesure 20 : gestion extensive des prairies).

5.1.2.2 Les mesures concernées ont un impact positif reconnu par les études scientifiques

Les mesures ont fait et font l'objet de programmes de recherche et de suivi qui ont permis de valider leur intérêt par rapport aux objectifs visés. L'analyse de 53 études a permis l'évaluation des MAE en Europe (rapport final 2005 Oréade Brèche). Les principales mesures suivantes sur l'amélioration de la qualité de l'eau :

- Réduction des apports d'intrants : effet rapide et durable, mais pas pour toutes ;
- Réduction des transferts de polluants : piégeage et dégradation des polluants (conversion des terres arables en prairies) ;

Figure 26 - Bilan du PMPOA 2 – Quantité d'azote maîtrisable traitée (en tonnes) (Source Rapport CNASEA 2006)



Dans les régions d'élevage à l'herbe, où la qualité des eaux est bonne et se maintient. D'après les déclarations des répondants à l'enquête (226), les MAE auraient évité le retournement de près de 5% des prairies engagées, soit de l'ordre 205 000 ha.

En parallèle, toujours d'après l'enquête, des fertilisants minéraux ont été "économisés". Ils représentent entre 25 000 et 27 000 tonnes d'azote minéral par an, soit entre 10 et 13% des apports annuels sur les surfaces en herbe couvertes par les MAE du PDRN.

Les effets nets des MAE sur l'amélioration de la qualité de l'eau - et sur les pratiques et le maintien des systèmes vertueux - sont donc relativement faibles.

(Pour plus de détail voir chapitre 4.2).

5.2.2.2 Jugement

Le catalogue de mesures proposées en vue de la préservation ou l'amélioration de la qualité des eaux a été très large, mais seules quelques mesures ont été souscrites de façon importante.

Les zones à enjeux nitrates et pesticides sont bien identifiées, le dispositif relatif aux zones vulnérables reste toutefois prééminent.

L'appréciation des effets des MAE sur la qualité de l'eau ne peut pas être mesurée à l'échelle macroéconomique, d'une part à cause d'une inadéquation des outils de mesures avec cette problématique, et d'autre part parce que les mesures les plus ciblées ont été souscrites avec une faible densité et ont été mises en œuvre de façon peu contraignante (pratique préexistante). Pour les eaux souterraines intervient aussi le délai des temps de réponse des aquifères.

En revanche, quelques sites limités en surface et engagés depuis plusieurs années, actions de reconquête de la qualité (comme certains bassins versants ou zones de captage d'eau potable) prouvent l'efficacité des MAE et dans la durée.

Les MAE n'ont pas eu d'effets nets significatifs sur la qualité des eaux.

Toutefois, quelques pratiques vertueuses, comme les cultures pérennes, ont été souscrites.

Source: Extract of two sections out of 11 pages. For full answer see http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/countries/fr/ex_post_rapport_fr.pdf, pages 105-115

Main characteristics of provided answer:

- ▶ Explicit use of Evaluation Question including judgement: *yes*
- ▶ Explicit use of judgment criteria: *yes, complemented with own judgement criteria*
- ▶ Reference to target level/baseline: *yes*
- ▶ Quantification of indicator: *yes*
- ▶ Further break-down of indicators: *yes, by type of zone and type of holding*

- ▶ Indication of information-sources: *yes (ODR, Annual Reports of CNASEA, FADN, case studies, beneficiary survey etc.)*
- ▶ Cross-references to further analysis results: *yes, cross-references to other chapters*
- ▶ Discussion of validity/reliability of findings: *yes, including explicit analysis of net-effects and external effects*

B) Example from RD ex post evaluation 2000-2006, Ireland (IE):

VI.1.B. To what extent have natural resources been protected... in terms of the quality of ground and surface water, as influenced by agri-environmental measures?

Criterion: Reduction of agricultural inputs potentially contaminating water.

Area subject to input-reducing actions thanks to agreement

(ha)

All of the 2,002,041 ha under the REPS contract will be subjected to input reducing actions. All of this land (100%) could have reduced applications of chemical fertilizer and manure or slurry. The stocking density could have been reduced on all (100%) of this land. No information is available on the actual proportion of land that would have reduced applications of fertilizer, manure and slurry or been the subject of reduced stocking density. This information could possibly be provided by a review of a sample of environmental plans prepared under REPS 2 and 3. There are no arrangements to promote the planting of crops with low inputs and a reduction in the application per ha of plant protection products.

Criterion: Improved quality of surface water and/or groundwater.

Concentration of (the relevant) pollutant in water flowing from areas under agreement = the proportion of surface/groundwater above the threshold concentration of the relevant substance (mg, g, etc per litre)

The indicator chosen to measure this effect is the proportion of river channel monitored by the Environmental Protection Agency which has a pollution status of slight or moderate as determined by the level of N and P present. The expected effect of REPS is that this proportion will fall and as already indicated in the introduction to this section that is the case. The baseline in 1997 was 27%, by 2002 this had been reduced to 29% and by 2006 to 28%. However, this reduction will have been influenced by many factors other than changes to farming practices on REPS farms and in a situation where the European Court of Auditors has challenged whether public money should be spent on agri-environmental schemes if the actual environmental benefits cannot be quantified, it will be necessary to present a much more accurate estimate of the REPS effect.

However, the final report of the Lough Derg and Lough Ree Catchment Monitoring and Management System suggests a significant relationship between the implementation of REPS measures and improved water quality: for example improvements in water quality over the 1996-99 period were observed more frequently (almost double) in farmed areas with high REPS uptake (over 30%) than in areas with less than 30% uptake.

To what extent have natural resources been
water resources, as influ

Source: Extract from answer - for full text see http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/countries/ir/ex_post_en.pdf, pages 148 - 153

Main characteristics of provided answer:

- ▶ Explicit use of Evaluation Question including formulation of answer: *use of evaluation question but answered only for single judgment criteria without summary judgement*
- ▶ Explicit use of judgment criteria: *yes*
- ▶ Reference to target level/baseline (e.g. before/after, counterfactual): *yes*
- ▶ Quantification of indicator: *yes*
- ▶ Further break-down of indicators: *no*
- ▶ Indication of information-sources: *yes*
- ▶ Cross-references to further analysis results: *not explicitly mentioned*
- ▶ Discussion of validity/reliability of findings: *yes, explicit discussion of limitations*

6.1.3 Example 3 - Answer to evaluation question: “To what extent has employment in rural areas been maintained?”

A) Example from RD ex post evaluation 2000-2006, England (UK):

Chapter IX. Promoting the Adaptation and Development of Rural Areas		Indicator ref. IX.3-1.1		
To what extent has employment in rural areas been maintained?				
Criteria	Employment of the farming population maintained/increased			
Indicator	Farm employment created/maintained by assisted actions (FTE, no. of holdings concerned)			
Scheme	Rural Enterprise Scheme (RES)			
Answer	15,084 FTE on 2,735 holdings			
Explanation of Sources and calculations				
From the RES monitoring data, 14,570 FTE of farm employment was projected to be created/sustained through the supported projects, which relate to 2,735 farm holdings. However, the progress in achieving these targets was available for only 10-15% of the supported projects. The progress data shows that 2,455 FTE, which is 103.5% of initial target of 2,371 on-farm FTE projected to be created/sustained for these projects. If same level of achievement is assumed for all other supported projects without progress being record, then it will give an estimate of 15,084 (=14569.6*103.5%) farm employment will be created/sustained by supported actions.				
		Farm	Non-Farm	Total
Number of jobs created	Sum of progress	1296.42	587.48	1883.9
	Sum of targets for those with progresses	1224.82	389.56	1614.38
	Sum of PROJECTFINALTARGET	8057.96	2458.11	10516.07
Number of jobs sustained	Sum of progress	1159.15	823.58	1982.73
	Sum of targets for those with progresses	1146.96	800.85	1947.81
	Sum of PROJECTFINALTARGET	6511.64	7596.35	14107.99
Total Number of jobs created (Sum of progress)		2455.57	1411.06	3866.63
Total Number of jobs sustained (Sum of targets for those with progresses)		2371.78		
Total Sum of PROJECTFINALTARGET				
Total number of farms (based on CPH numbers of holdings)				
References to data sources				
... monitoring data: RES .xls				

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/countries/uk/england/ex_post_en.pdf (extract from appendix 5)

Main characteristics of provided answer:

- ▶ Explicit use of Evaluation Question including formulation of answer: yes (however, the answers are provided at the level of judgement criteria in appendix 5; whereas a generic answer to several Evaluation Questions can be found in the main analytical chapters)
- ▶ Explicit use of judgment criteria: yes
- ▶ Reference to target level/baseline (e.g. before/after, counterfactual): yes (14,570 FTE of farm employment)
- ▶ Quantification of indicator: yes
- ▶ Further break-down of indicators: yes
- ▶ Indication of information-sources: yes (RES scheme monitoring data)

- ▶ Cross-references to further analysis results: *no*
- ▶ Discussion of validity/reliability of findings: *no*

B) Example from RD ex post evaluation 2000-2006, Niedersachsen (DE):

9.6.1 Frage IX.1 – In welchem Umfang ist das Einkommen der ländlichen Bevölkerung erhalten oder verbessert worden?

Zusammenfassung

Die Artikel-33-Maßnahmen zielten ganz überwiegend auf Infrastrukturprojekte und investive Projekte öffentlicher Zuwendungsempfänger, deren Einkommenseffekte nur schwer zu messen und zuzuordnen waren. Direkte Einkommenseffekte durch Förderung einzelner Unternehmen waren eher die Ausnahme. Dementsprechend waren die quantifizierbaren Einkommenswirkungen relativ gering:

- Positive Wirkungen auf landwirtschaftliches Einkommen hatte v. a. die Flurbereinigung. Die errechneten 28 Euro pro Jahr und Hektar flurbereinigter LF bzw. 9 Mio. Euro pro Jahr stellen nur einen Teil der Gesamt-Einkommenseffekte dar, die aufgrund ihrer Vielschichtigkeit nicht voll quantifizierbar waren. Die Einkommenswirkungen des ländlichen Wegebaus waren ebenfalls nicht quantifizierbar.
- Direkte Einkommenswirkungen für die nichtlandwirtschaftliche Bevölkerung sind durch Projekte der Dorferneuerung entstanden, vereinzelt als Einkommenssteigerung geförderter Personen, aber mehr noch durch Schaffung neuer Arbeitsplätze in Folge von geförderten Projekten.

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/countries/de/niedersa/ex_post_de.pdf (extract from pages 24 - 26)

Main characteristics of provided answer:

- ▶ Explicit use of Evaluation Question including formulation of answer: *yes, a summary answer to the question is provided, followed by a detailed answer for each criteria*
- ▶ Explicit use of judgment criteria: *yes*
- ▶ Reference to target level: *not directly mentioned*
- ▶ Quantification of indicators: *partly*
- ▶ Further break-down of indicators: *yes*
- ▶ Indication of information-sources: *yes (survey, case study)*
- ▶ Cross-references to further analysis results: *no*
- ▶ Discussion of validity/reliability of findings: *no*



European Evaluation Network
for Rural Development

Evaluation Helpdesk

260 Chaussée St Pierre – B-1040 Brussels

Tel: +32 (0)2 736 18 90

E-mail: info@ruralevaluation.eu

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation>