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Ongoing Evaluation & the Evaluation Expert Network

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***Meeting on “Capacity building for rural networks”, Brussels,
30-31 March 2009***



Outline



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- 1. Why a new evaluation system for RD?**
- 2. Ongoing evaluation**
- 3. Evaluation Expert Network / Helpdesk**
- 4. Work activities (2009)**

Why a new evaluation system for RD?



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- **Lessons learnt from the previous period:**
 - Lack of clear strategic approach
 - Complexity of monitoring and evaluation systems
 - Evaluation as ‘stand-alone’ process
 - Problems in timely establishing and quantifying baseline indicators and target levels
 - EC guidelines presented too late
 - Need for capacity building
 - No European platform for exchange of experiences, good practice and information



New elements



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- A unique framework, and unique set of guidance documents, for monitoring and evaluation of all measures funded through the EAFRD (**CMEF**)
- A more **strategic approach** (definition of clear strategic priorities, identification of needs and related programme objectives)
- The establishment of an “**ongoing evaluation system**”
- The creation of a **European Evaluation Network for Rural Development**



Objectives of ongoing evaluation



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- Timely establishing and quantifying baseline indicators and target levels
- Better linking monitoring with evaluation in terms of data collection / provision
- Ensuring capacity building early on
- Ensuring continuity of evaluation activities, i.e. regular assessment of progress, annual reporting
- Supporting the establishment of good practices
- Preparing the ground for the mid-term and ex-post evaluations (2010, 2015)

Evaluation of RD measures 2007-2013



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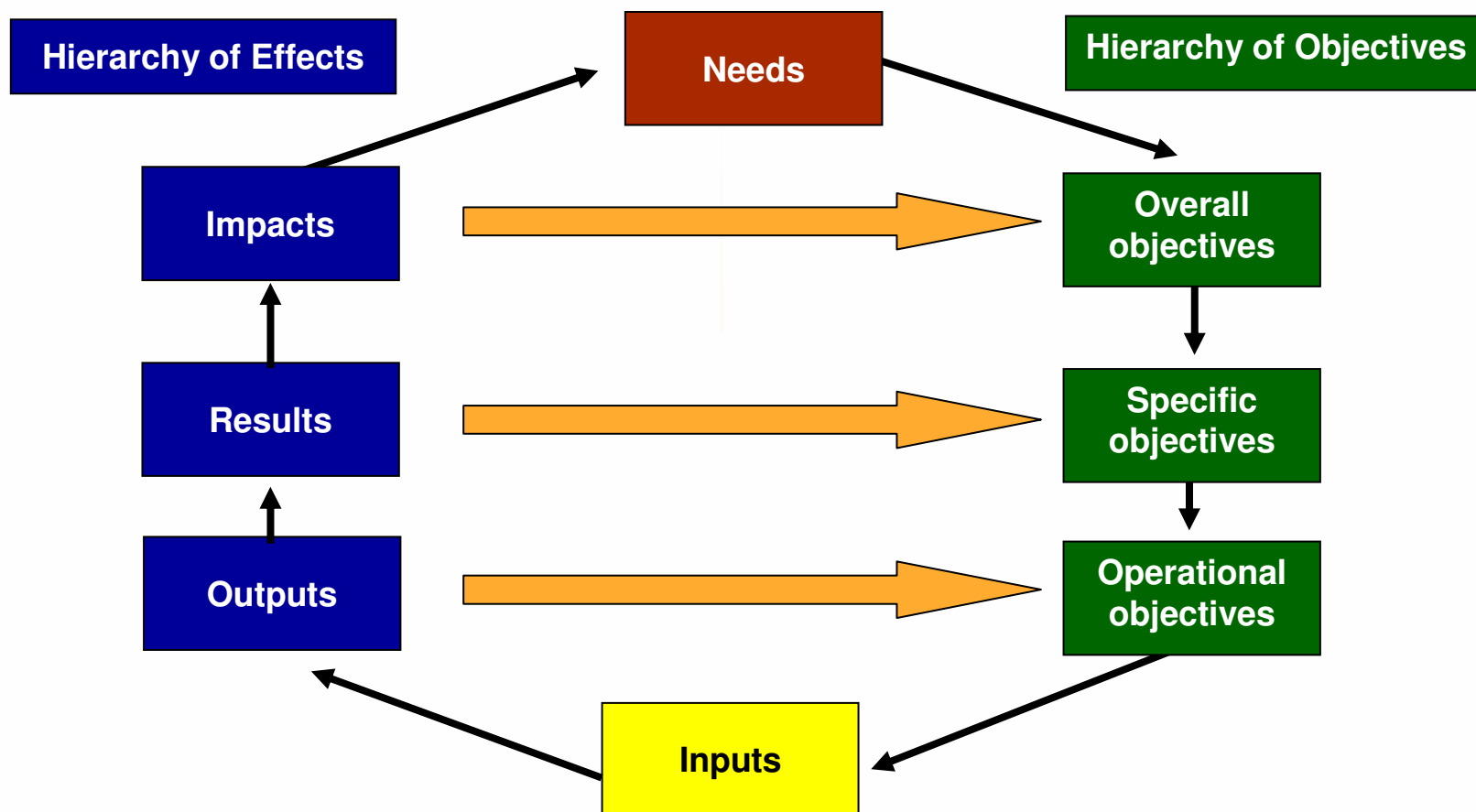
- New set of common evaluation questions based on Community priorities and objectives
- New set of common (baseline, output, result, impact) indicators ...
- ... to be complemented by programme-specific indicators
- Close link between “hierarchy of objectives” and “hierarchy of indicators”
- Assessment of impacts at programme level to be built up from the outputs and results of individual measures through the hierarchy of objectives



The intervention logic



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What are the main challenges?



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- Broad scope of intervention, therefore multiple impacts (economic, social, environmental ...)
- Multiple intervening factors
- Difficulties in defining the 'counterfactual' situation and assessing the net-effect of programmes
- Need for robust and comprehensive data sets
- Data collection is complex and time consuming
- Impacts might take long time to emerge
- Impacts often depend on site-specific or local conditions (e.g. environmental, social impacts)

Who are the actors?



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- *Evaluators*: assessment of the *impact* of RD measures / programmes falls *within the scope of evaluation*
- *Member States*: ensure availability of data on general trends, outputs and results; steer the evaluation process
- *Commission*: establishes the common framework, provides methodological support, facilitates capacity building + exchange of good practice, synthesis of mid-term & ex-post evaluations

⇒ **Evaluation Expert Network**



The Evaluation Expert Network



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Council Regulation 1698/2005, Art. 67 (e) on the European Network for Rural Development stipulates:

- to “*set up and run expert networks with a view to facilitating an exchange of expertise and supporting implementation and **evaluation** of the rural development policy*”

The **Evaluation Expert Network** is an integral part of the European Network for Rural Development, but it works independently in its daily tasks.



Logo



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Who is part of the Network?



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- Administrators in charge of RD programmes in the Member States
- Evaluators of RD programmes
- Academics / researchers with an expertise in the evaluation of rural development policy
- Interested stakeholders
- Representatives from the European Network for Rural Development



Objectives of the Network



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Overall Objective

To increase the usefulness of evaluation as a tool for improving the formulation and implementation of the rural development policy – assessing EU value added

Specific Objectives

- to increase capacity in the evaluation of RDPs
- to increase capacity in managing the evaluation process
- to help identify and share good practice



The « objective tree » of the Evaluation Network



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Specific objective 1

To increase capacity in the evaluation of rural development programmes

To help improve and adapt evaluation methodology and tools for RD

To foster a common understanding and improve the use of available evaluation tools

To improve and update guidance related to the CMEF

To improve the response to the needs



The « objective tree » of the Evaluation Network



Specific objective 2

To increase capacity in managing the evaluation process

To improve the response to the needs

To improve the assessment capacity

To support the implementation of ongoing evaluation

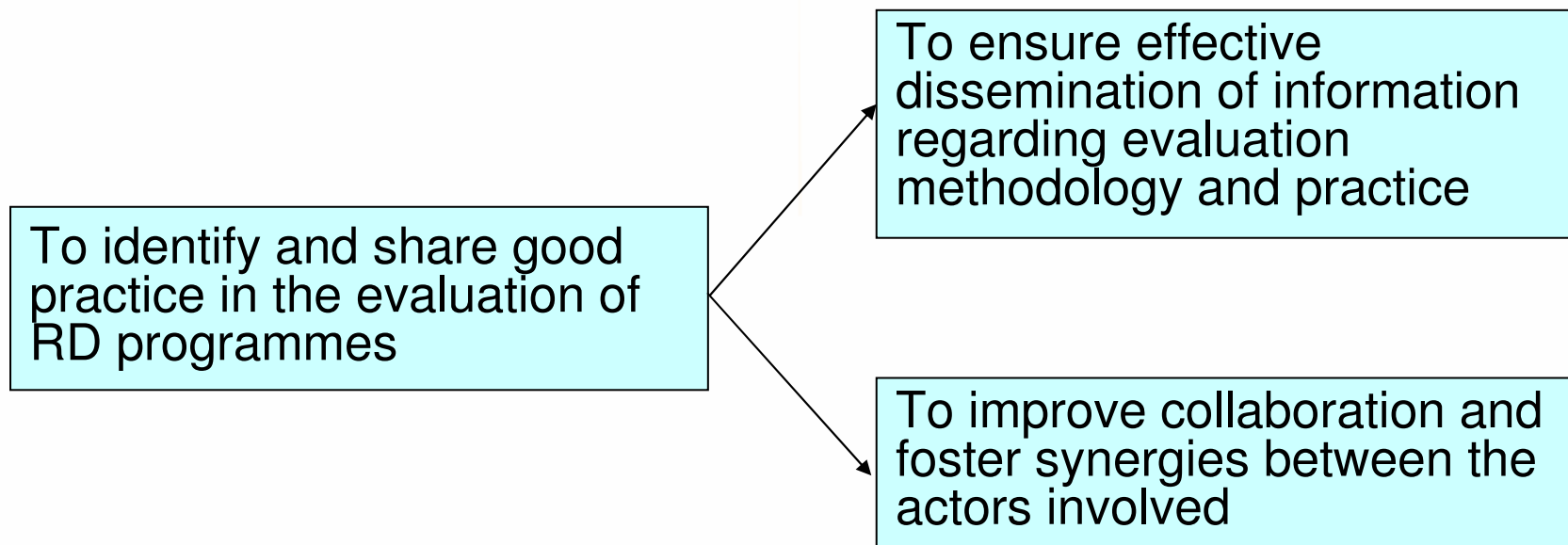
To harmonise approaches concerning the preparation for the mid-term and ex-post evaluations



The « objective tree » of the Evaluation Network



Specific objective 3



How does the Network function?



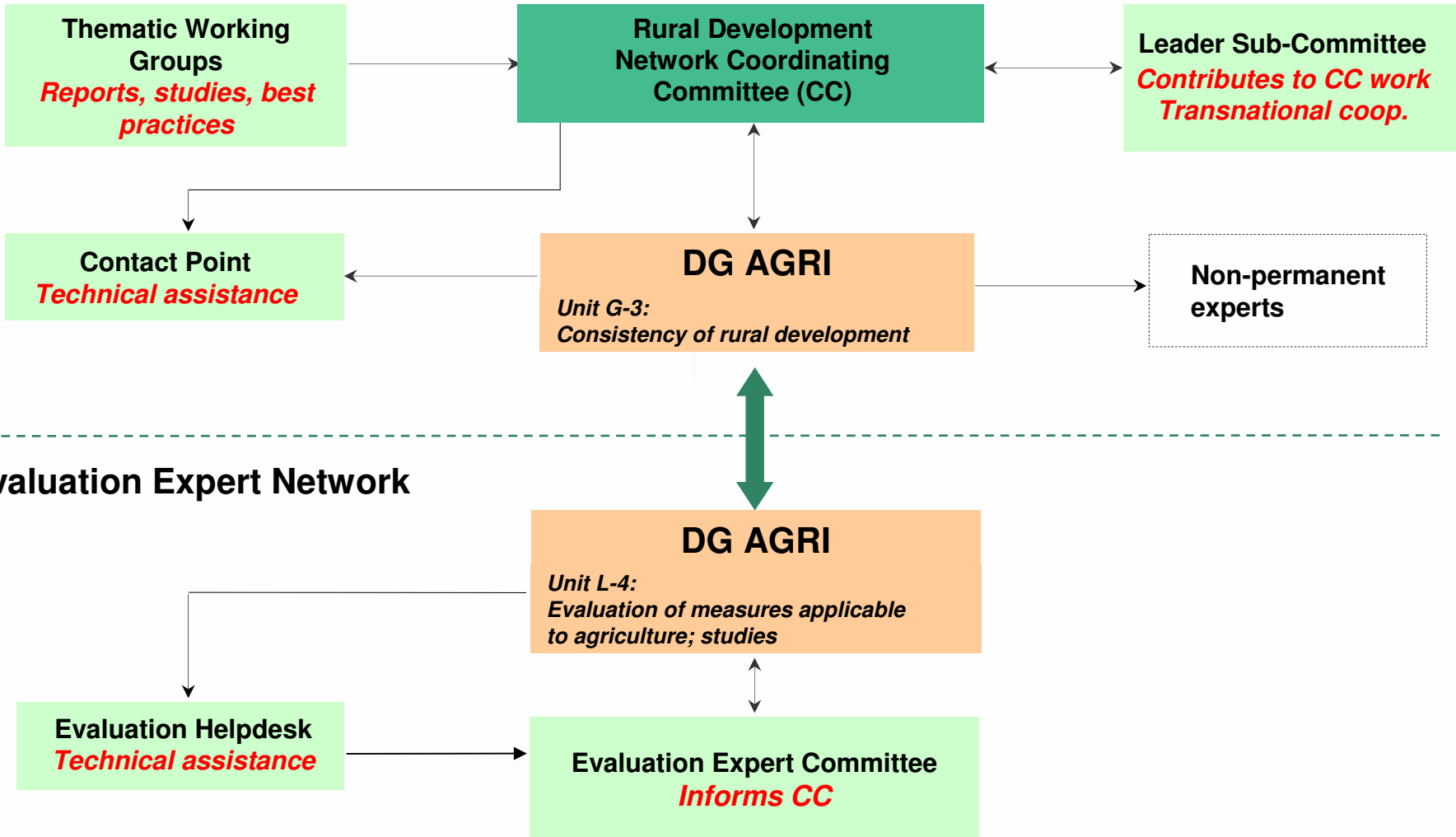
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- Overall co-ordination by the Commission (DG AGRI evaluation unit)
- Technical support by an external contractor ⇒ the '[Evaluation Helpdesk](#)' (⇔ Contact Point)
- Involvement of Member State experts
 - Evaluation Expert Committee
 - Workshops
 - Thematic working groups on specific issues
 - Newsletter, mailing lists

RD Network / Evaluation Expert Network



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Work Programme 2009



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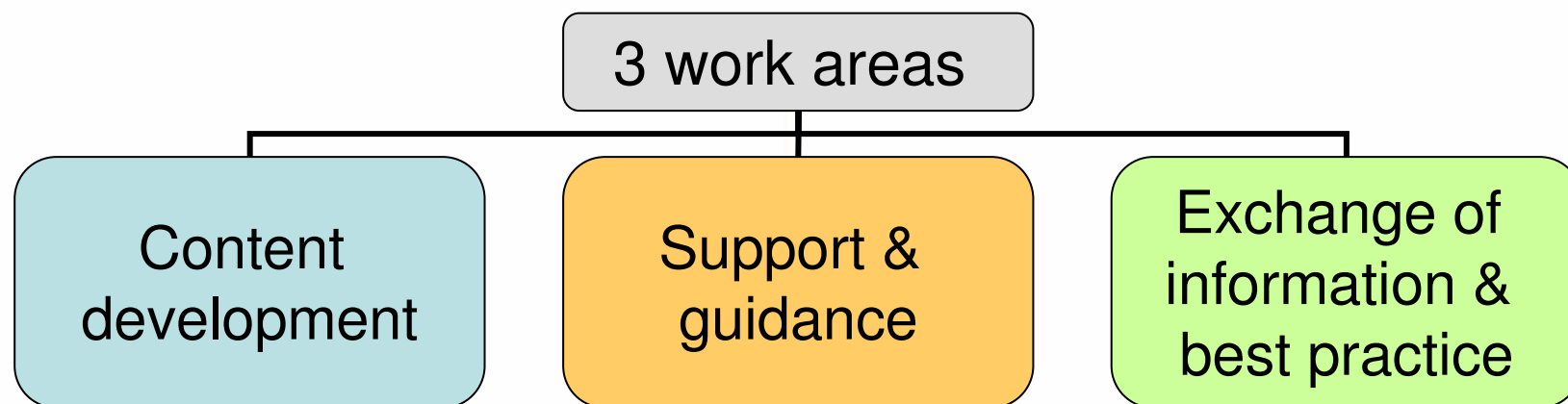
Developed on the basis of:

- SWOT analysis / needs assessment in the MS
- Focus groups / geographical experts
- Discussion in the Evaluation Expert Committee
- Feedback from the RD desks
- Feedback from the ENRD

Work activities



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Work activities



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A) Content development

- Thematic working groups
 - *HNV impact indicator - finalised*
 - assessing environmental impacts (AEMs)
 - constructing the counterfactual
 - capturing the impact of LEADER and of
 - measures to improve the quality of life in rural areas
- Thematic pool (desk research, surveys on specific technical questions, e.g. use of GIS in evaluation)
- Update of SWOT analysis & needs assessment



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GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

The Application of the High Nature Value Impact Indicator

2007-2013

Work activities



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B) Support & guidance

- Preparation of the mid-term evaluations
- Collection / dissemination of good practice
(evaluation process, methodological aspects regarding impact assessment, indicator measurement, etc.)
- Capacity building in the MS through targeted actions
(provision of supporting material, presentations)
- Enhancing evaluation knowledge in the Commission
- Glossary of terms related to evaluation
- Frequently Asked Questions – Helpdesk function

Work activities



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C) Information & dissemination

- Trilingual website
- Newsletter (3 issues in 2009)
- Participation in events
 - meetings of evaluators in MS
 - national evaluation networks
 - conferences / workshops on evaluation
 - focus groups
- Collaboration with the ENRD



Rural Evaluation News
Number 2 - March 2009

The newsletter of the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development

In This Issue ...

The new HNV guidance document and a German example; critical analysis of the RD evaluation system plus Member States needs; the Network's 2009 work programme; focus on ex-ante evaluations of RD programmes 2007-2013; how Italy is organising its National Evaluation Network; and news in brief, Q&A, events.

New guidance on the application of the HNV indicator

Guy Beaufoy, European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism

This month sees the launch of the Evaluation Expert Network Guidance Document on the application of the High Nature Value Impact Indicator.

The High Nature Value (HNV) Impact Indicator is one of seven indicators provided by the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) to assess the impacts of the 2007 – 2013 rural development programmes. Along with the Farmland Birds Indicator, the HNV indicator is intended to contribute to assessing the impact of programmes on biodiversity.

Indicators for HNV farming and forestry are in their infancy, and this HNV Guidance Document is intended to assist Member States in developing a workable HNV monitoring framework. The document is developed from, and replaces, a draft HNV Guidance Document that has been in circulation since 2007¹. Both documents build on a study carried out for DG Agriculture of the European Commission in 2007 (IEEP, 2007).

The challenge for Member States is to devise a set of indicators that will provide meaningful information on changes in the extent and in the condition of HNV farming and forestry, during the seven years of the rural development programmes.

Logically, the first step is for each Member State to assess the baseline situation against which the changes can be measured. This means estimating the extent of HNV farming and forestry, and gathering information on its condition in terms of farming practices and associated wildlife species and habitats.

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¹ IEEP, 2007. Guidance Document to the Member States on the Application of the High Nature Value Indicator. Report for DG Agriculture. Contract Notice 2006-G4-04.

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The Helpdesk



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Useful reading



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- The handbook for the CMEF:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/index_en.htm

- Synthesis of ex-ante evaluations of rural development programmes 2007-2013:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eval/reports/rurdev/index_en.htm

- Previous evaluations of rural development measures are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eval/index_en.htm#rep2