



WORKING DOCUMENT

EXAMPLES OF EVALUATION ELEMENTS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF RDP EFFECTS ON THE COMPETITIVENESS OF AGRICULTURE

WORKING PACKAGE 3

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP No 8

'EX POST EVALUATION OF RDPs 2014-2020: LEARNING FROM
PRACTICE'

MARCH 2021

Disclaimer: *This document has been prepared by evaluation experts based on good practice available from the current programming period. This document is non-binding and only intended to facilitate the work of evaluators and managing authorities in the context of preparing for the ex post evaluation of the RDPs 2014-2020.*

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The Evaluation Helpdesk is responsible for the evaluation function within the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) by providing guidance on the evaluation of RDPs and policies falling under the remit and guidance of DG AGRI's Unit C.4 'Monitoring and Evaluation' of the European Commission (EC). In order to improve the evaluation of EU rural development policy the Evaluation Helpdesk supports all evaluation stakeholders, in particular DG AGRI, national authorities, RDP managing authorities and evaluators, through the development and dissemination of appropriate methodologies and tools; the collection and exchange of good practices; capacity building, and communicating with network members on evaluation related topics.

Additional information about the activities of European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development is available on the Internet through the Europa server (<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu>).

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INTRODUCTION

This Working Document is one of the outcomes of the Working Package 3 '**Assessment of RDP effects on fostering the competitiveness of agriculture**' which analyses the emerging evaluation issues particularly related to the evaluation of RDP effects on the competitiveness of agriculture. It focuses on Common Evaluation Questions 4 and 6 and provides **a non-exhaustive list of possible additional evaluation elements and a list of actions that Managing Authorities and evaluators may consider when preparing and conducting the ex post evaluation.**

The examples of additional evaluation elements are not mandatory, and they are considered as recommendations aimed to assist Member States improve the assessment of competitiveness.

This document aims to facilitate the exchange and learning from current practices with a view to support Member States in preparing for the **ex post evaluation of RDPs 2014-2020**. It complements [Annex 11](#) of the Helpdesk Guidelines 'Assessment of RDP results: How to prepare for reporting on questions for rural evaluation in 2017'.

This document responds to the various reported challenges related to answering the Common Evaluation Questions 4 and 6¹ with the means of common evaluation elements (e.g., result indicators):

- CEQ 4 'To what extent have RDP interventions contributed to improving the economic performance, restructuring and modernisation of supported farms in particular through increasing their market participation and agricultural diversification?'
- CEQ 6 'To what extent have RDP interventions contributed to improving the competitiveness of supported primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain through quality schemes, adding value to the agricultural products, promoting local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and inter-branch organisation?'

The drafting of this document has been carried out in the context of the Evaluation Helpdesk's Thematic Working Group, '[Ex post evaluation of RDPs 2014-2020: Learning from practice](#)'. It has been prepared by evaluation experts using existing documentation ([Working document on evaluation questions](#)) as well as examples collected from the Member States in the course of this Thematic Working Group. This document is also based on suggestions for additional evaluation elements and feedback from evaluation stakeholders provided during and after the Good Practice Workshop '[Assessing the contribution of RDPs to a competitive and viable agricultural sector](#)' (9-10 December 2020).

¹ The common evaluation questions with their respective judgment criteria and indicators can be found in the [Working Paper 'Common Evaluation Questions for Rural Development Programmes 2015'](#).

ESTABLISHING THE EVIDENCE TO ASSESS RDP EFFECTS ON COMPETITIVENESS

Answers to the common evaluation questions must be based on sound evidence collected by means of common and, where relevant, additional indicators. The rationale for developing additional indicators is explained below.

Complementing the common evaluation framework

The common evaluation questions (CEQs) for the assessment of RDP effects on the competitiveness of agriculture (notably CEQ 4 and CEQ 6) encompass a broad range of aspects that are not necessarily captured by the existing common indicators. For instance, farm viability and competitiveness (CEQ 4) is more than just an increase in output or the modernisation and restructuring of farms. Moreover, the integration of primary producers in the agri-food chain (CEQ 6) goes further than just the percentage of agricultural holdings receiving support for participating in quality schemes, local markets, short supply circuits and producer groups/organisations. Additional judgment criteria and indicators may offer more detailed evidence for providing sound answers on the achievements of each respective focus area (FA).

Capturing effects on the competitiveness of the farming sector

The farming sector is subject to constant changes as a result of digitalisation and innovation, which affect indicators like farm income and turnover or labour productivity. Such changes should be reflected in the evaluation elements with a view to obtain all the RDP's effects. In order to fully capture the effects of the RDP on competitiveness, The Good Practice Workshop 'Assessing the contribution of RDPs to a competitive and viable agricultural sector'² highlighted the need to complement existing evaluation elements with additional ones. This workshop further emphasised the need to review existing indicators to answer Common Evaluation Question 4 under FA 2A 'Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification'.

Capturing effects on the competitiveness of the non-farming sector

Besides the farming sector there are also other sectors of agriculture along the value chain which receive RDP support under the competitiveness objective, for instance, food processing, distribution and marketing. Support in these sectors is channelled primarily through FA 3A 'Improving competitiveness of primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain through quality schemes, adding value to agricultural products, promotion in local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and organisations and inter-branch organisations'. The common evaluation elements of CEQ 6 under this FA are not sufficient for analysing the non-farming sector along the value chain. Therefore, it is not evident how to assess the effects of RDPs on aspects like the improved position of beneficiaries in the value chain or the increased value of agricultural products through processing, etc.

Going beyond the assessment of economic effects

When assessing competitiveness, there are also other effects besides the economic effects. They include the development of capacities of beneficiaries, the support for young people in activities along the value chain, the integration of beneficiaries in the value chain, environmental effects or networking and cooperation. These aspects are not captured by the common evaluation elements and require the development of additional evaluation elements if one wishes to include such effects in the overall assessment of competitiveness.

The following tables provide a non-exhaustive list of additional evaluation elements, notably judgment criteria and indicators as well as some suggested data sources that could be used to answer Common Evaluation Questions 4 and 6.

² Good Practice Workshop 15: Assessing the contribution of RDPs to a competitive and viable agricultural sector: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/good-practice-workshops/assessing-contribution-rdps-competitive-and-viable-agricultural_en

Examples of judgement criteria, indicators and data sources for answering CEQ 4

Common Evaluation Question 4: To what extent have RDP interventions contributed to improving the economic performance, restructuring and modernisation of supported farms in particular through increasing their market participation and agricultural diversification? (FA 2A)

Judgement criteria	Common / Additional result indicators	Possible data sources
For measuring economic performance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural output per annual working unit (AWU) of supported agricultural holdings has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R2: Change in agricultural output on supported farms / AWU (<i>Common Complementary result indicator</i>) 	<p>For beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database <p>For beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries FADN data base and anonymised paying agency data (no information which could identify entity or person) needed to identify beneficiaries of RDP measures linked to Focus Area 2A³ Eurostat: Farm structure survey Standard outputs per Member State and region and year: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/agriculture/so-coefficients Total standard outputs (overall economic size of farm) per Member State and region per year: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rica/database/report_en.cfm?dwh=SO Regional/National agricultural statistics (e.g., farm bookkeeping data, standard outputs) National institutions: GIS data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farms’ economic performance has improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic farm size structure of supported farms Gross or net farm Income Gross investment on fixed assets / agriculture output Return on sales, assets or investments of supported agricultural holdings, as well as changes in these returns 	<p>For beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database <p>For beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <p>FADN (SE410; SE420; SE430; SE516): http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rica/database/database_en.cfm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eurostat: Farms structure survey Eurostat: Economic accounts for agriculture (EAA) for computation of context indicators Eurostat: Agriculture Labour Input statistics (ALI) for computation of context indicators Regional/National agricultural statistics (e.g. farm bookkeeping data)

³ Questionnaire of FADN for 2014: to see what data are available for the rural development measures - table M Subsidies: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32012R0385&rid=1>

Judgement criteria	Common / Additional result indicators	Possible data sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Productivity has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Net added value or income per AWU Agricultural labour input (% annual rate of change) EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation) per AWU 	<p>For beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database Survey of beneficiaries <p>For beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FADN (SE444) Eurostat: Farm structure survey (e.g. standard outputs) Regional/National agricultural statistics (e.g. standard outputs) National institutions (e.g. GIS data for evaluation of environmentally related measures) Survey on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural production has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural production / output 	<p>For beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database Surveys of beneficiaries National Tax Offices Audited accounts of beneficiaries <p>For beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FADN Eurostat: Farms structure survey Eurostat: Agricultural output, price indices and income Regional/National agricultural statistics Business registers National Tax Offices Survey on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross and net margins of the supported farms have increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in the gross or net margin of farms 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross value added (GVA) of supported agricultural holdings has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change of GVA in supported holdings 	

Judgement criteria	Common / Additional result indicators	Possible data sources
For measuring farm diversification		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural diversification of farms has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of agricultural output (by product) % of agricultural income to total income % of agricultural holdings that changed or diversified production activities 	<p>For beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database Surveys of beneficiaries National Tax Offices Audited accounts of beneficiaries <p>For beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FADN Eurostat: Farm structure survey Eurostat: Agricultural output, price indices and income Regional/National agricultural statistics Business registers National Tax Offices Survey on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments in infrastructure that improve accessibility of farms has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Net investment on fixed assets / agricultural output Volume and/or type of investment in infrastructure Change in investments devoted to modernisation, digitalisation and innovation 	
For measuring farm restructuring or modernisation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farms have been restructured or modernised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R1/T4: % of agriculture holdings with RDP support for investments in restructuring or modernisation (<i>Common result indicator</i>) Net investment on fixed assets / agricultural output 	<p>For beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database Surveys of beneficiaries National Tax Offices Audited accounts of beneficiaries <p>For beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FADN Eurostat: Farm structure survey Eurostat: Agricultural output, price indices and income Regional/National agricultural statistics Business registers National Tax Offices Survey on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments in infrastructure that improve accessibility of farms has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in investments devoted to restructuring, modernisation, digitalisation and innovation 	

Judgement criteria	Common / Additional result indicators	Possible data sources
For measuring market participation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market participation of farms has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership to cooperatives or to a farmers' organisation 	<p>For beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database Surveys of beneficiaries National Tax Offices Audited accounts of beneficiaries <p>For beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FADN Eurostat: Farm structure survey Eurostat: Agricultural output, price indices and income Regional/National agricultural statistics Business registers National Tax Offices Survey on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The market access has improved for supported agricultural holdings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sales per total output 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The market share of agricultural holdings has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in net turnover against total output 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New markets developed by supported farms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of agricultural holdings that entered new markets with RDP support 	
For measuring innovation capacity of farms		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers have benefited from tools to improve their knowledge and capacity for innovation and adaptation to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of farms benefiting from tools to improve their knowledge and capacity for innovation and adaptation to change 	<p>For beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database Surveys of beneficiaries National Tax Offices Audited accounts of beneficiaries <p>For beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FADN Eurostat: Farm structure survey Eurostat: Agricultural output, price indices and income Regional/National agricultural statistics Business registers National Tax Offices Survey on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The capacity of farmers to collaborate has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of farmers participating in cooperation projects Number of farmers participating in training actions 	

Examples of judgement criteria, indicators and data sources for answering CEQ 6

Common Evaluation Question 6: To what extent have RDP interventions contributed to improving the competitiveness of supported primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain through quality schemes, adding value to the agricultural products, promoting local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and inter-branch organisation? (FA 3A)

Judgement criteria	Common / Additional result indicators	Possible data sources
For measuring improvements in competitiveness		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitiveness of supported primary producers has improved Sales of agricultural products have increased Labour productivity of beneficiaries have increased (<i>compared to the whole population</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparison between the margins of producers involved and those not involved in quality schemes, short supply circuits, producer groups and inter-branch organisations Variation in the unit price and/or production cost of agricultural products Labour productivity in supported holdings participating in quality schemes, local markets, producer groups Agricultural output on supported farms 	<p>Beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database <p>Beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries and/or National/Regional statistics Eurostat: Agricultural output, price indices and income http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Agricultural_output_price_indices_and_income Eurostat: Farm structure survey, etc. (for the total number of holdings) http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/agriculture/data/main-tables FADN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The share of the final price of agriculture products retained with primary producers has increased The demand for agricultural products by processing and marketing companies has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Margin of primary producers in the final price of agricultural products in local markets 	<p>Beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database Survey Audited accounts of beneficiaries <p>Beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries National Tax Office National/regional statistics FADN Business register

For measuring participation in quality schemes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of quality schemes by primary producers has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of primary producers introducing quality schemes with RDP support R4/T6: % of agricultural holdings receiving support for participating in quality schemes, local markets and short supply circuits, and producer groups and/or organisations (<i>Common result / target indicator</i>) 	<p>Beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database Survey <p>Beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries National Tax Office National/regional statistics FADN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income of supported primary producers has increased by implementing measures addressing quality of agricultural products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in income or GVA of supported primary producers participating in quality schemes 	
For measuring the added value of agricultural products		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The added value of agricultural products of primary producers has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in gross added value of supported agricultural holdings 	<p>For beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database Surveys of beneficiaries National Tax Offices Audited accounts of beneficiaries <p>For beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FADN Eurostat: Farm structure survey Eurostat: Agricultural output, price indices and income Regional/National agricultural statistics Business registers National Tax Offices Survey on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RDP has encouraged investments in agri-food industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of primary producers, farmers, agri-food industries investing in marketing and/or processing processes, by sector Share of product development, technology development, market diversification, etc. of investments in agri-food industries 	

For measuring participation in groupings		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The integration of producers in the food chain has been supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of processing and/or marketing projects supported by the RDP promoted by producers or producer groups 	<p>For beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database Surveys of beneficiaries National Tax Offices Audited accounts of beneficiaries <p>For beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FADN Eurostat: Farm structure survey Eurostat: Agricultural output, price indices and income Regional/National agricultural statistics Business registers National Tax Offices Survey on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing/new groupings of actors in agri-food chain are reinforced/created by RDP support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new groupings created or existing groupings reinforced with RDP support 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of primary producers in short circuit schemes, quality-oriented producer group and/or inter branch organisation has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R4/T6: % of agricultural holdings receiving support for participating in quality schemes, local markets and short supply circuits, and producer groups/organisations (<i>Common result / target indicator</i>) 	
For measuring the promotion of local markets		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of local sectors and new markets has been facilitated The RDP has fostered the strengthening or development of high added value markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of emerging sectors reinforcing their market position Share of agricultural raw material acquired on local markets by the processing industry 	<p>For beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Database Surveys of beneficiaries National Tax Offices Audited accounts of beneficiaries <p>For beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FADN Eurostat: Farm structure survey Eurostat: Agricultural output, price indices and income Regional/National agricultural statistics Business registers National Tax Offices Survey on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPING ADDITIONAL EVALUATION ELEMENTS

In order to develop additional evaluation elements in practice, Managing Authorities and evaluators may take a number of steps/actions for deciding whether and which evaluation elements to add for the ex post evaluation of RDP effects on the competitiveness of agriculture. Some of these actions are:

- Review the intervention logic in relation to the competitiveness objectives of the RDP, in order to gain a better understanding of what competitiveness means in the RDP context, taking into account the whole supply chain, especially in relation to the evaluation of Priority 3 and understanding the links between the farm and the non-farm sector.
- Check whether existing evaluation elements take into account the RDP's intervention logic and are sufficient to provide robust answers to the CEQs related to competitiveness.
- Consult with evaluation stakeholders and experts on the comprehensiveness of existing evaluation elements for assessing the RDP's effects on competitiveness.
- Identify gaps in the existing judgment criteria and indicators.
- Develop suggestions for additional judgment criteria and indicators that address the identified gaps in existing evaluation elements. The above tables offer some suggestions for inspiration. Do not forget it may be relevant to use additional, non-quantitative indicators (e.g. relevance of food supply chains, synergies between promotion and quality) as they may offer information on the broader effects on competitiveness beyond the farm sector that cannot be measured through standard indicators.
- Check the availability of data and the relevance of existing data sources for obtaining evidence for the additional evaluation elements.
- Consider additional data sources if needed (e.g. regional databases) and consider the methodologies for collecting and analysing the data (e.g. check tips/guidance on how to answer CEQs in [Annex 11](#) of the Helpdesk Guidelines 'Assessment of RDP results: How to prepare for reporting on questions for rural evaluation in 2017').
- Consider alternative evaluation methods that can help to assess value creation in the farming and non-farming sector as well as societal effects from the implementation of interventions along the food supply chain. Such methods include network or cluster analysis, multi-criteria analysis, network mapping and clustering, etc. The [Good Practice Workshop, 'Assessing the contribution of RDPs to a competitive and viable agricultural sector'](#) offers useful insights into the use of such methods.
- Propose adjustments to the data collection and management methods if needed for the future.

European Evaluation Helpdesk

Boulevard Saint-Michel 77-79

B - 1040 BRUSSELS

T: +32 2 737 51 30

Email: info@ruralevaluation.eu

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

