

Good Practice Workshop

“Methods for Assessing Impacts of Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013”

CASE STUDY FROM EVALUATION OF RDP AZORES (PT) – MULTI-METHOD APPROACH (FOCUS ON THE QUALITATIVE METHODS)

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Features of the Programme

Region



Features of the Programme

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

- Obtain agricultural and forestry systems and agri-food companies competitive and environmentally sustainable, along with economic, social and cultural revitalization of rural areas

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Dynamism of agricultural and forestry sectors;
- Modernization and diversification of the productive scenery;
- Establishment of infrastructures to support agroforestry;
- Preservation of environment and landscape;
- Maintenance of an economic and social fabric in rural areas (particularly in the islands with lower economic and social dynamics).

Features of the Programme

Main characteristics of the RDP for the Autonomous Region of Azores 2007-2013

- total public expenditure of approximately 345 million Euros
- implementation of 14 of the 20 measures foreseen
- 72% of the financial execution concentrated in 4 Measures

121 Modernisation of agricultural holdings (16%);
123 Adding value to agricultural and forestry products (20%);
212 Payments to farmers in areas with handicaps (20%);
214 Agri-environment payments (16%).

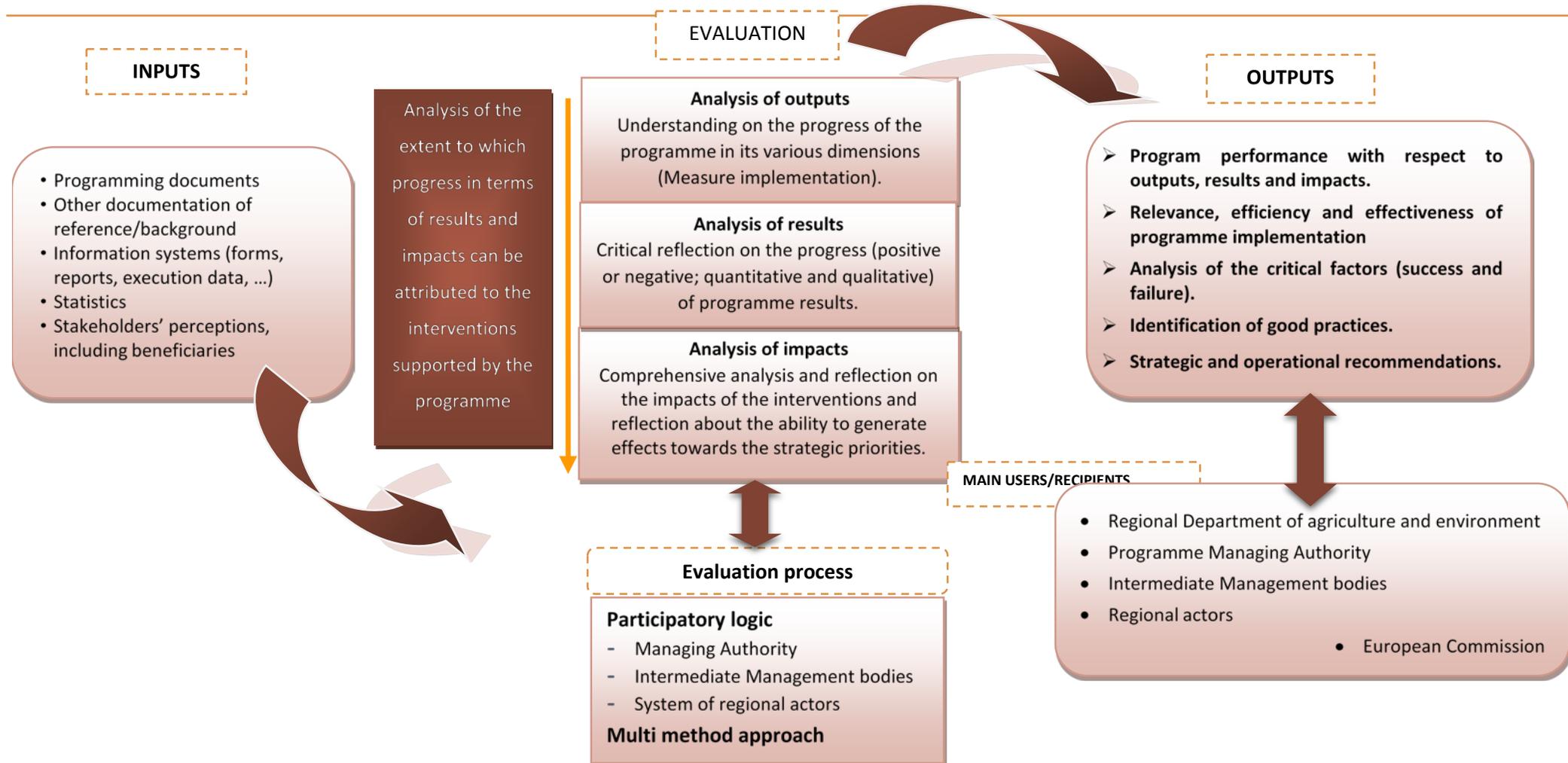
Led to concentration of evaluation efforts in these measures

Plus LEADER (5,5%)

Ongoing evaluation

- annual reports since 2008, and MTE in 2010.
- *ex post* evaluation foreseen between January – September 2016 (work field – finished; analysis – Ongoing)

Comprehensive evaluation model - Multi-method approach



CEQs: Methods of collection of information

Mix qualitative and quantitative data and information

Qualitative information

Metodologies Evaluation Questions	Desk research	IT system	Case studies	Questionnaire Beneficiaries	Interviews	Focus- group
CEQ 1 - 14	++	-	-	-	++	+
CEQ 15 - 20	++	++	++	++	+	-
CEQ 21	++	++	++	++	+	-
CEQ 22	++	-	-	-	++	++
CEQ 23	-	-	++	+	++	+
CEQ 24	+	-	-	-	++	+



- Analysis of statistical data – all the baseline indicators (objective and context were collected)
- Analysis of FADN data – counterfactual analysis for Measure 121
- Analysis of accounts and financial reports – counterfactual analysis for Measure 123

Limitations: Overview of data availability at RDP level

- ✓ Insufficient disaggregation of the statistical information.
- ✓ Inexistence of baseline information.
- ✓ Unsatisfactory data from FADN.
- ✓ Lack of systematized data on the contribution of the support to the Programme's objectives.
- ✓ Lag on the data availability (at least 2 years).

Limitations: Other constraints

- ✓ Production of results beyond the evaluation period (and taking in consideration the data lag).
- ✓ Size of the programme and regional/geographical context.
- ✓ Social and economic context.

Data & Information sources (qualitative basis)

Desk research (research and analysis of documentary information and statistics)

- Studies, technical reports and documents from various sources, aiming to undertake a critical analysis of the factors that influenced and framed the context of the implementation of the programme.

Analysis of information systems (information on the application forms)

- Descriptive data about the supported projects and beneficiaries, aiming to characterize the beneficiaries and to cross-check with data of physical and financial nature.

Interviews

- Covered a range of regional actors in order to obtain contrasted views on the implementation of the programme and its results and impacts and to capture individual perception of each stakeholder.
- Information collected analyzed through a grid of reading and interpretation common to all interviews.

Data & Information sources (qualitative basis)

Case studies

- In-depth analysis of quantitative and qualitative aspects, under the perspective of results (beneficiaries level) and the impacts (regional level).
- Selection through a set of criteria (beneficiaries of investment projects; of environmental measures; and of LEADER measures).
- Analysis based on a concept of "bunch" or chain (e.g., covering production/processing)

Questionnaire to beneficiaries

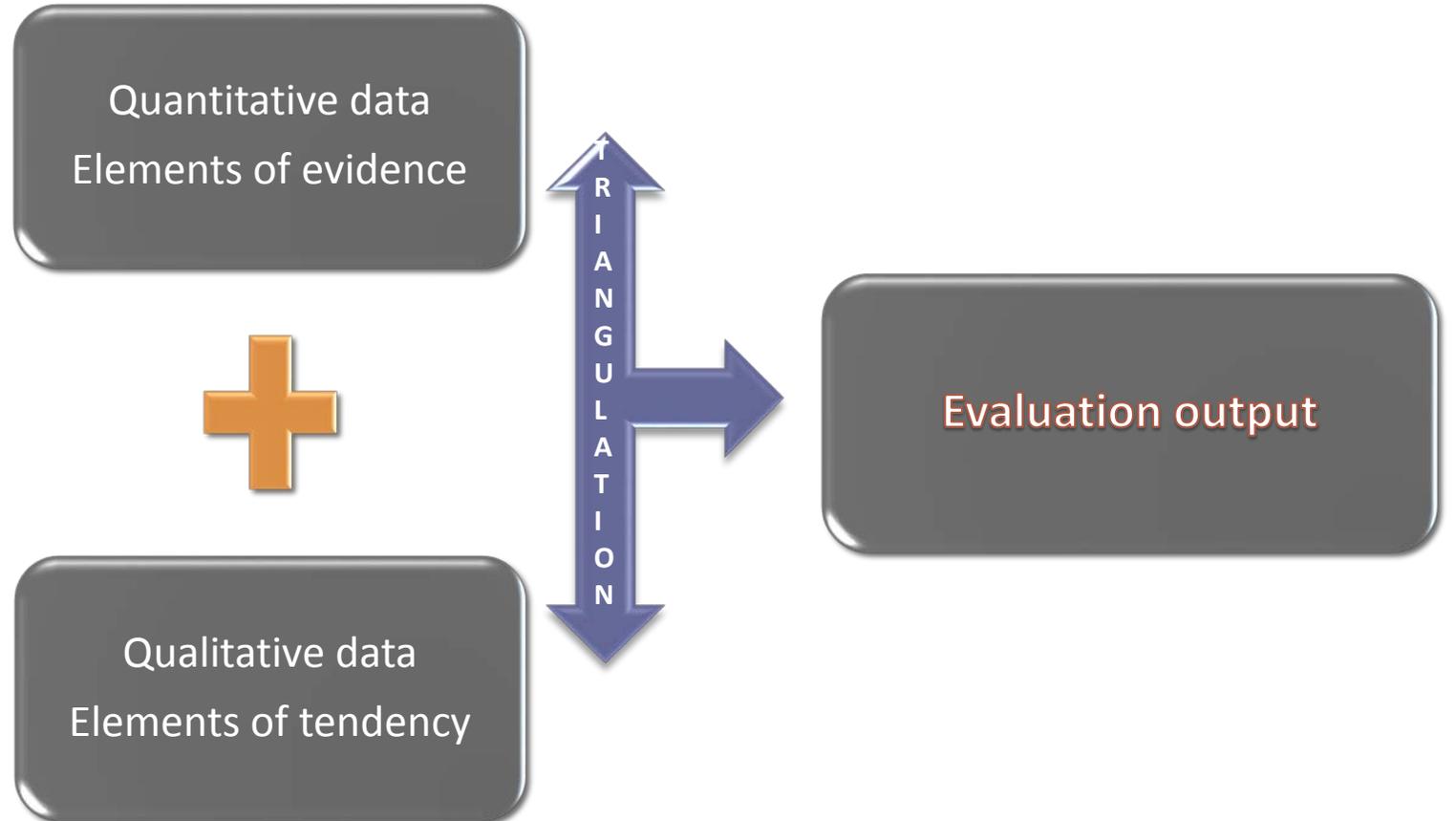
- Help to detect patterns and deviations from expected results and represent a collective perception of a given measure. (had similar questions to the MTE, allowing comparisons).
- Conducted inquiries (samples of): beneficiaries of investment projects; beneficiaries of environmental measures; beneficiaries of the LEADER measures.

Focus group

- Logic of auscultation, involvement and active participation of key actors in the process of evaluation and integration of new approaches/new perspectives.
- To be held in the last phase of the evaluation process, in a perspective of assessment and discussion of the preliminary conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

Specific example

Evaluation approach in answering
the EQs



Specific example

Answering to the CEQ 15. How and to what extent has the Measure 121 contributed to improving the competitiveness of the beneficiaries

Quantitative method

Counterfactual analysis using FADN data

Qualitative methods

Desk research

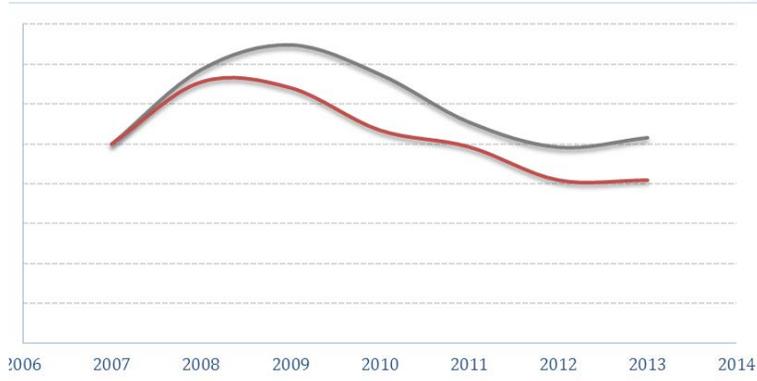
Inquiries

Interviews

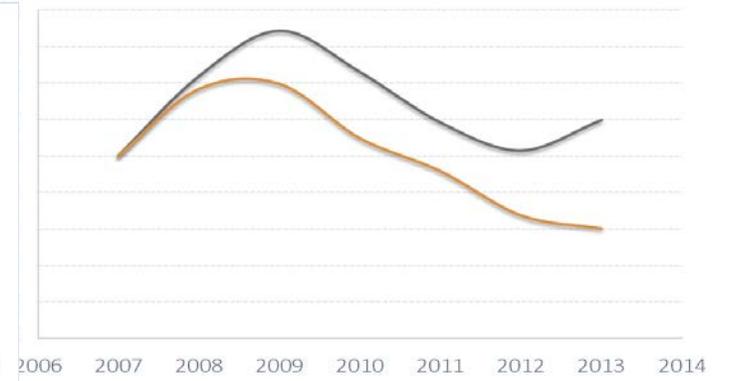
Case studies

IT system

Gross value added



Labour income



With RDP
Without RDP

- *Integration of the economic context* (e.g. crisis on the milk sector: prices going down).
- *Consideration of other results of the measure (reflected in its objectives)* (e.g. improvement of the living and working conditions).
- *Consideration of secondary effects* (e.g. increase in the quality of products – mainly milk).
- *Consideration of unexpected results* (e.g. debt and farms financial sustainability).
- *Motivation for certain investment profile* (about 70% of the public expenditure was spent on "Machinery and equipment").
- *Awareness to other issues* (e.g. robustness of the application forms analysis).

Specific example

Answering to the CEQ 15. How and to what extent has the Measure 121 contributed to improving the competitiveness of the beneficiaries?

The projects have had positive results on the increase of production capacity of farms, however, this increase was not achieved through productivity gains or through better management of production factors, reducing the possibilities of increase of competitiveness of farms.

[preliminary]
Recommendations
for 2014-2020



Strategic: better targeting of the support

Operational: set demanding and result-orientated criteria for the approval of investment projects; decrease the support on the investment projects merely orientated to machines.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the method used

Advantages of the methodological approach

- ✓ Can be used transversely (contribute to answer all Evaluation Questions).
- ✓ Find tendency elements of the Programme implementation (to be cross-checked with the elements of evidence and vice versa).
- ✓ Identification of dimensions that are worth to be explored (e.g. unexpected results).
- ✓ Justification of the results (provide more detailed information to explain).
- ✓ Involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process.
- ✓ Allows for a robust evaluation results.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the method used

Limitations/challenges of the methodological approach

- ✓ Time consuming and costly.
- ✓ Assurance of the information accuracy to construct a viable body of evidence (in particular when assessing the programme effectiveness and efficiency).
- ✓ not always the results of qualitative and quantitative analyses are coincident (integration of different perspectives, sometimes opposite).
- ✓ Findings are more difficult to characterize in a visual way (no objectively verifiable result).

Lessons and recommendations on the application of the method

- ✓ Strength of qualitative information in its ability to provide descriptions of how stakeholders experienced the RDP implementation and how they interpret the respective results .
- ✓ Effectiveness of qualitative information in identifying intangible factors (which are not readily apparent in the quantitative data).
- ✓ Effectiveness of qualitative information in interpreting and better understand the quantitative data and to describe and explain cause-effect relations.

Open issues to be discussed

- ✓ Not as well understood and accepted as quantitative research within the scientific community.
- ✓ The evaluation team won't be able to answer most of the CEQs of the first group. How to address this issue?

Thank you for your attention