



# Rural Evaluation NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EUROPEAN EVALUATION HELPDESK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## **PROGRESS CHECK: HOW EVALUATORS IN SLOVAKIA ARE PREPARING AND CONDUCTING THE EVALUATION OF IMPACTS IN 2019**



### Overview of the Slovak rural development programme

The rural development programme (RDP) of the Slovak Republic, which began in 2014, has a total budget of €2 billion out of which €1.5 billion (74.3%) is financed through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The Slovak rural development programme primarily supports the strengthening of the competitiveness of agriculture, forestry

and food processing, which is primarily achieved through the financing of investments, vocational trainings, and advisory services. Investments in the storage, processing and marketing of products further supports the overall performance and sustainability of farms. Additionally, the rural development programme also supports the construction and reconstruction of forest roads, increased access to forested areas, and the modernisation and repair of drainage systems and canals.



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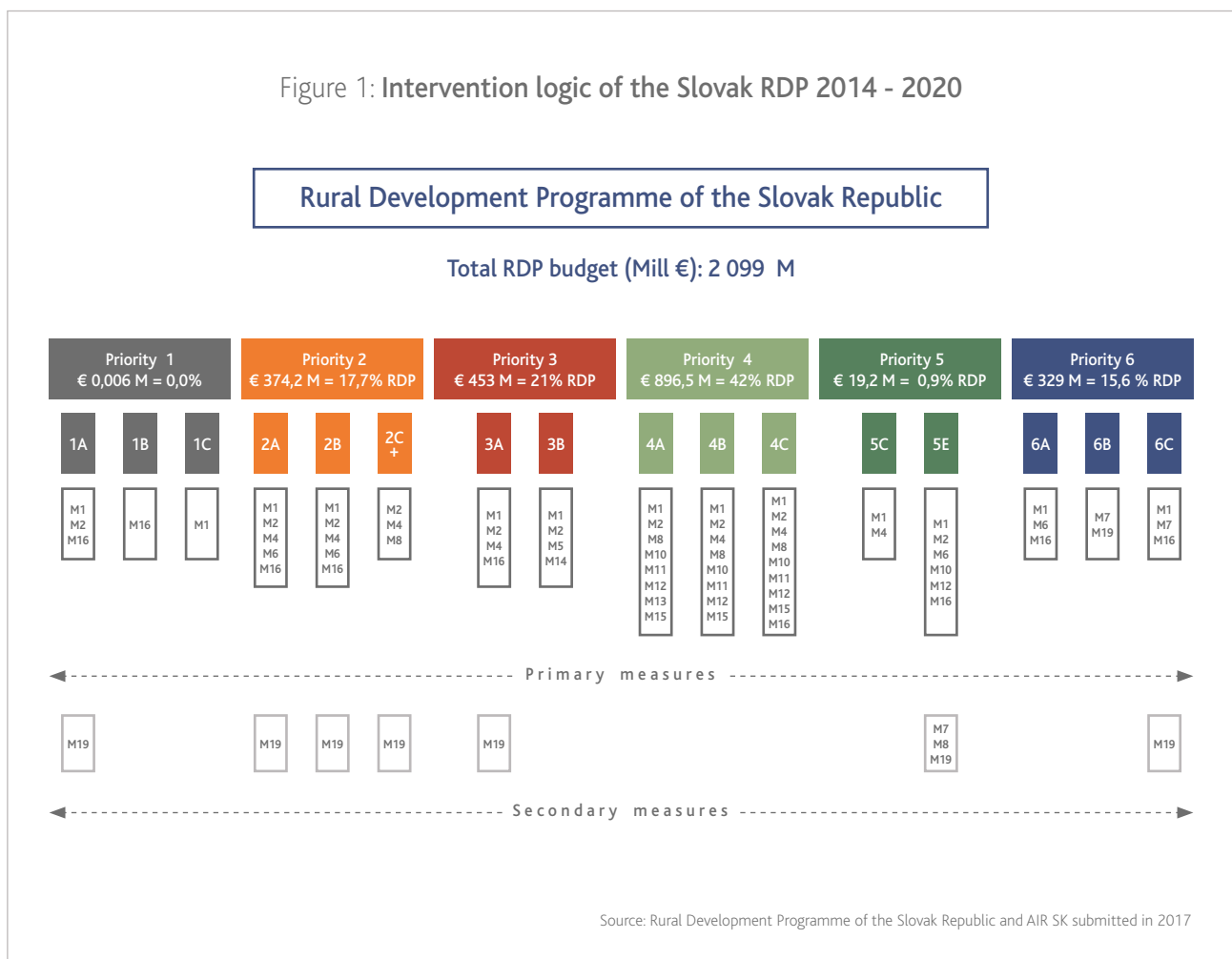
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Specific attention has been given to small and young farmers, encouraging them to invest in various entrepreneurial activities in the field of animal and plant production, as well as rural tourism and agro-tourism. In total, the programme budget allocation into rural development Priorities 1, 2 and 3 represents €827.2 million or 37.8% of the RDP's total public budget (Figure 1).

The programme further places an emphasis on the environment and the preservation of nature and climate actions. This is achieved primarily through payments into areas with natural constraints, NATURA 2000 areas and for agri-environment and climate actions in the agricultural and forestry sectors. In total, the programme budget allocation into rural development Priorities 4 and 5 represents €915.7 million or 42.9 % of the RDP's total public budget (Figure 1).

The Slovak rural development programme also supports village renewal activities (e.g. public infrastructure, public transportation, and the creating of green spaces). The programme supports in total 110 Local Action Groups (LAGs), which will implement multi-funded Community Led Local Development (CLLD) strategies. In total, the programme budget allocation into rural development Priority 6 represents €329 million or 15.6% of the RDP's total public budget (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Intervention logic of the Slovak RDP 2014 - 2020





By 30 September 2018 the Slovak RDP has shown sufficient uptake for evaluation in the focus areas of the RD Priorities 4 (40%), 3 and 2 (both between 20 - 30%), and the Focus Areas 5E (almost 60%). Contrastingly, Priority 5 has had very low uptake. Overall, however, the Slovak RDP has sufficient uptake to conduct the assessment of RDP results and impacts in 2019 (Figure 2).



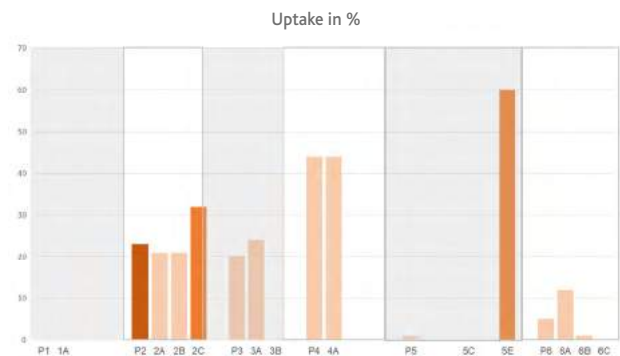
The European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development sat down with Slovak RDP evaluator, **Marek Pihulic**<sup>1</sup>, to find out how evaluators in Slovakia are preparing and conducting the evaluation of impacts in 2019. Marek Pihulic has been contracted by the Managing Authority of the Slovak RDP to conduct the RDP evaluations for the AIR 2017 and 2019.

### What have been the working steps or milestones of the evaluation process so far for the AIR 2019?

We have been contracted to carry out the activities in relation to the evaluation for the Annual Implementation Reports covering periods of 2014-2015 (Chapter 2), 2016 (Chapters 2 and 7), 2017 (Chapter 2) as well as the coming report in 2018 (Chapters 2 and 7), which includes the assessment of RDP impacts. The contract was awarded in January 2016 and work began almost immediately.

Our intention was to focus right from the start on the assessment of RDP results in 2017 and impacts in 2019 with a view to the ex post evaluation. We therefore aimed to set up the RDP evaluation system for

Figure 2: Uptake of the Slovak RDP by 30/09/2018



Source: Operation database of the Rural Development Programme of the Slovak Republic

the entire programming period including the evaluation to be conducted in 2019 and during the ex post phase. First, we have looked at the RDP intervention logic and linked the programme's priorities and focus areas with the common evaluation questions, judgment criteria, and result and impact indicators. Where necessary, we have also developed additional indicators at each objective level. In some cases, the common impact indicators (e.g. water quality) have also been used as additional indicators for observing RDP results. To visualise the evaluation framework, we have used the tables of the Working Document of the Evaluation Helpdesk, 'Common evaluation questions for Rural Development Programmes 2014-2020', but have completed them with our own evaluation elements (see the example for the Focus Area 2A in Table 1 next page). These evaluation elements have been used as the basis for all of the evaluations conducted during the programming period so far and will be used for those which are still to come, as well as the ex post evaluation.

Table 1: The evaluation elements for Focus Area 2A of the Slovak RDP

PRIORITY	FOCUS AREA	EVALUATION QUESTION	JUDGMENT CRITERIA	COMMON INDICATORS	ADDITIONAL INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE
P2	P2A	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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural output per annual working unit of supported agricultural holdings has increased</li> <li>• Farms have been modernised</li> <li>• Farms have been restructured</li> <li>• Economic performance of agricultural holdings have been improved</li> <li>• Participation of agricultural holdings on the market have increased</li> <li>• Diversification of agricultural activities/ production have increased</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in agricultural output on supported farms/AWU (FA 2A - Complementary result indicator)</li> <li>• % of agricultural holdings with RDP support for investments in restructuring or modernisation (FA 2A - Result indicator)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic farm size structure of supported farms</li> <li>• Division of supported investments according achieved outputs/results</li> <li>• GVA of supported agricultural holdings</li> <li>• Number of supported agricultural holdings for reconstruction/ modernisation/ diversification (M 4.1)</li> <li>• No of jobs created</li> <li>• Family farm income</li> <li>• Gross investment on fixed assets /agricultural output</li> <li>• Net investment on fixed assets / agric. Output</li> <li>• Sales/total output</li> <li>• % of agricultural output (by product)</li> <li>• % of agricultural income to total income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations database of paying agency</li> <li>• Monitoring reports of beneficiaries</li> <li>• Survey of evaluator – national agricultural holdings database, MoARD SK</li> <li>• Farm Structure Surveys (Eurostat)</li> </ul>

Source: Documents of the evaluator of SK RDP

### How has the data for the evaluation been collected and have there been any challenges?

The matrix of evaluation elements has allowed us to understand which data for which indicators we need to collect right from the programme's start in order to carry out the evaluations in 2017, 2019 and the ex post. Therefore, as the next step we started to discuss the data sources with the Managing Authority. The Managing Authority has been very helpful to find and sometimes also contact the data providers. Together we have identified the most suitable data providers and entered into communication with them. For example, we had at our disposal data for all of the different types of indicators related to the agricultural sector (result/impacts) information through the national database of agricultural holdings (in fact extended FADN, IACS and LPIS<sup>2</sup> data) as well as the animal register.

Since forestry in Slovakia is a very important sector and large part of the RDP, and there are no clear measurement points for water or soil related indicators, we have contacted the National Forestry Centre to discuss possible proxies to be used in the assessment of RDP effects on the environment in forested areas. With respect to socio-economic impact indicators the Managing Authority has played a key role in negotiating changes in the national statistics data collection system for rural poverty, which is at the moment collected at NUTS II level. Rural GDP per capita and rural employment is collected at NUTS III level. The intention was to ensure that these types of data are available for NUTS V level. This, however, requires legislative changes

and can be costly. Therefore, decisions have not been taken yet. For the assessment of RDP effects on the environment related to biodiversity/ Farm Bird Index we have contacted the Slovak Ornithology Society/ Bird Life International, non-governmental organisation DAPHNE and Slovak Academy of Science/Landscape Ecology Institute. To assess water quality and water abstraction we have received data from the Research Institute for Water Management and Slovak Hydrology and Meteorology Institute and for soil erosion by water and soil organic matters from the Research Institute of Soil Fertility.

### How did you select which methods to use for the evaluation?

After the data sources were clarified and the data made available, we could begin to customise the evaluation approach for not only the assessment of results, but also for impacts at the micro-level beginning in November 2016, while using the Helpdesk's guidelines. The selection of methods was done in a similar fashion to what the Helpdesk is suggesting now in the latest guidelines on the assessment of impacts by using logic models. For focus areas with a high uptake and sufficient data for setting up a counterfactual, more advanced methods were applied. This was the case for FA 2A, 3A and 2C – forestry, where we used the PSM/DiD<sup>3</sup> to assess the RDP's results in enhancing the competitiveness of agriculture. In the assessment we took into consideration not only measures with primary contributions to the above focus areas, but also measures with secondary contributions programmed under Priority 4 and Focus Area 5E. Area



based payments have been considered as one of the variables when constructing the counterfactual.

Quantitative findings have been triangulated through focus groups and individual interviews with various stakeholders, such as from various departments of the Managing Authority and representatives of beneficiary groups. Findings sometimes led to additional analytical work requested by the Managing Authority. For example, the client requested us to conduct the assessment of effects of payments for areas with natural constraints, while using the GPSM<sup>4</sup> method, since policy makers wanted to expand these areas. The analytical findings have shown that there is no need to expand this measure and the areas have not been enlarged.

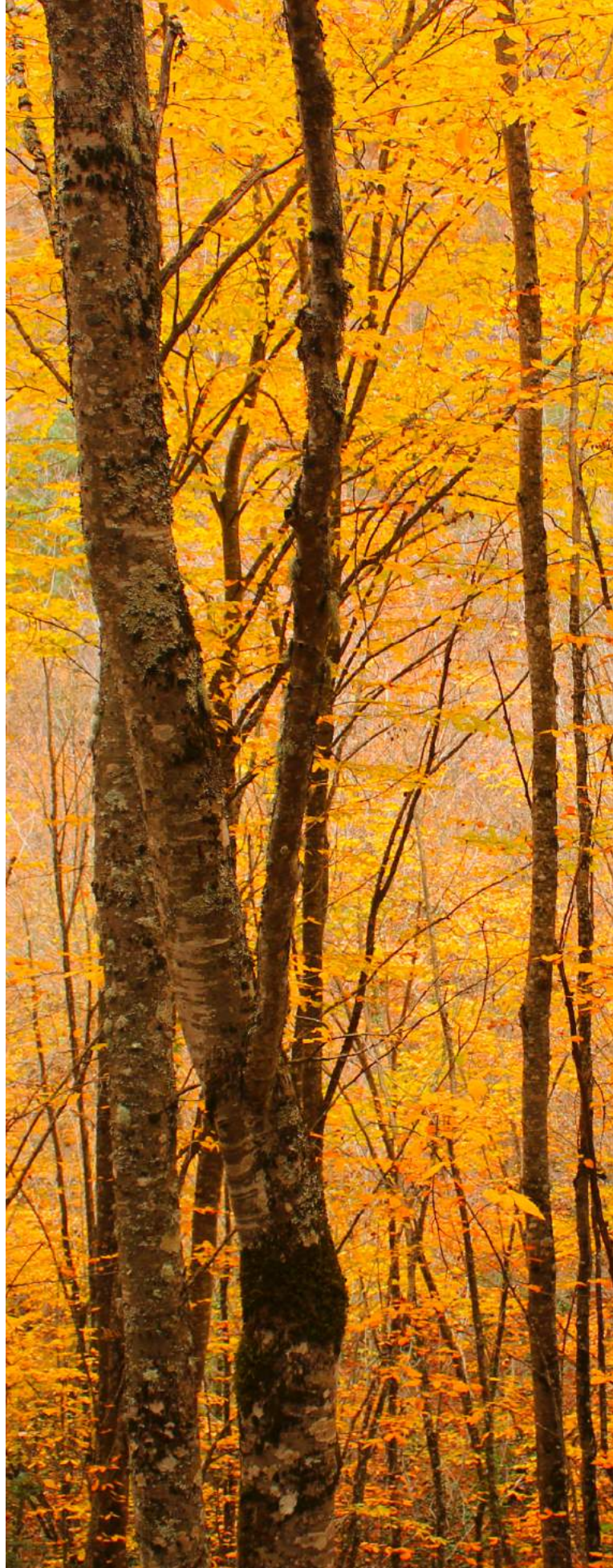
Work has continued since the first enhanced AIR on both types of indicators – results and impacts. This has included data collection and analysis at the micro-level during 2017 and 2018, as well as filling existing data gaps. For example, additional work will be done to ensure data to measure activities in the forestry areas will be collected to see how they contribute to the objectives of Priority 5 and Focus Area 5E.

### Where are you now in the process and what are the next steps?

At the moment (October 2018), we are focusing our effort on improving the system to collect data for the assessment of environmental effects, since it will be too late to start with it in 2019. We meet regularly with the Managing Authority and data providers to discuss the data gaps, especially in relation to those impact indicators used to assess biodiversity and HNV as well as rural poverty, employment and GDP per capita. We still have to resolve several issues in these areas before we start to conduct the assessment at the beginning of 2019. For the rest of the impact indicators, the situation with the data is quite favourable and the methodology to be used in the assessment is already set up.

### What areas do you feel strong in and what areas do you still need to do more to be prepared for the evaluation in 2019?

We are very strong in the assessment of RDP impacts on the competitiveness of agriculture, forestry and food processing sectors, where we can use very good databases, such as extended FADN, IACS/LPIS for agriculture and databases similar to FADN for forestry and food processing and we are equipped with advanced evaluation methods, which allows us to construct very high-quality counterfactuals. We have also resolved issues related to the databases and methods for the assessment of GHG emissions, water quality and water abstraction in agriculture. With that said, there are still open issues with respect to water quality and abstraction and soil erosion in the forestry sector and therefore there is still work which needs to be done for the evaluation in 2019 and for the



ex post evaluation. Additionally, for the assessment of biodiversity and HNV we still have significant data gaps, which prevent us from applying more advanced approaches. Our biggest weakness lies in the assessment of socio-economic impacts and is due to insufficient data. We would like to use the Evaluation Helpdesk's yearly capacity building event to discuss these gaps in more detail between us and with data providers.

### What is the situation with those impact indicators related to environmental impacts in the case of the Slovak Republic?

We still have problems with the assessment of RDP effects on biodiversity and HNV. The Helpdesk guidelines suggests using PSM/DiD at the micro-level, but this is not possible in Slovakia as in many other Members States. According to our knowledge, only the Netherlands and the United Kingdom can conduct the micro-level assessment of the RDP's effects on biodiversity to a sufficient degree, due to their high number of data points, which allows them to observe biodiversity at the farm level or in regions. In Slovakia, the number of data points is currently 140 across the entire country, which only allows use to make a macro-level assessment. We have a similar situation for HNV, and soil related impact indicators, where the number of measurement sites does not allow us to conduct the assessment at the farm/regional level, so we have to do it at the macro-level as well.

### What is the situation with the impact indicators used to assess the RDP impacts on rural GDP, rural poverty and employment in Slovakia?

The situation is very unfavourable in the assessment of rural poverty, employment and GDP per capita and there are two reasons for this. First, we have very little uptake of measures programmed under the focus areas of Priority 6. For measure M06 there will be only 30 projects and for measure M07 only 20 projects to conduct the assessment. This is far too low a number to show impacts. Second, there is a lack of statistical data to conduct the proper counterfactual analysis. To overcome this, we have created our own database of beneficiaries based on annual accounts, using the tax office register of profit/loss sheets, balance sheets and income statements which we use to create anonymous groups of entities that we now use as the control group. This counterfactual serves as the basis for the implementation of advanced methods such as PSM/DiD.

### How can evaluation stakeholders in the Member States increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the ex post evaluation based on what they are already doing for the evaluation in 2019?

The most important thing is to start to prepare the ex post evaluation at the beginning of the programme's implementation through setting up a single RDP evaluation framework for the entire period. After that it is important to ensure the data availability for all envisioned indicators (common, additional, programme specific) and have skilled people who

are equipped with methods, which comply with evaluation standards. Moreover, it is always useful to prepare a good survey to collect missing data. Surveys always work in cases where there is no data at all. But to conduct surveys is generally expensive. To prepare one good survey which can be used ongoingly across the programming period and would cover all missing data for all focus areas and indicators is cost effective and efficient. However, this requires a great deal of planning and thinking during the preparation phase or even while drafting the evaluation plan.

### What recommendations would you give to Managing Authorities and evaluators for the evaluation in 2019 based on your experience?

The key is data and therefore to pay significant attention to making sure the data is available. For this reason, collaboration and partnership between the Managing Authority and the evaluator is substantial. The Managing Authority has the authority to access many public data sources, where evaluators would have to pay a lot of money to obtain it.

To have such a partnership requires a Managing Authority which understands very well the evaluation methods, their strengths and weaknesses and their abilities to produce certain types of evaluation findings. Only a Managing Authority who knows what an evaluator is doing, can check the quality and manage the evaluation during its implementation.

On the other side evaluators must be well prepared. They must think three times before doing something and a long time before they even start to do the first steps. Evaluation is expensive, and we should all remember that we use tax payers' money, but we also use tax payers' money for implementing multi-billion euro funded EU programmes, so therefore evaluation is a very important tool to show what we are doing with these huge budgets. For this purpose, the evaluation should not be considered to be a nice walk in the beautiful orchard, but to be hard work with a high utility! ■

1. Executive Director of the company Projektové Služby, Ltd. <http://www.pseu.sk>
2. Farm Accountancy Data Network, Integrated Administration and Control System, Land Parcel Identification System
3. Propensity Score Matching / Difference in Difference
4. Generalized Propensity Score Matching



Send your questions to:

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# THE ROAD TOWARDS A **NEW COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (CAP)**

The CAP reform process for the post 2020 period is half-way through the legislative cycle with the final approval foreseen in 2019. The [Communication on the Future of Food and Farming](#), published on 29 November 2017, paves the way for a smarter, more modern and sustainable CAP.

**T**he CAP reform so far has been informed by the results of the ex post evaluations of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) 2007–2013, the [public consultation](#) on modernising and simplifying the CAP, and the [impact assessment](#) accompanying the legislative proposals.

In June 2018, the European Commission published the legislative proposals for the regulation on support for strategic plans, which describes the responsibilities of Member States and the European Commission concerning the development, implementation, and assessment of their plans ([CAP Strategic Plan Regulation](#)).

Additional legislation concerning the financing, management and monitoring of the future CAP has also been proposed ([CAP Horizontal Regulation](#)).

Some key principles which concern evaluation from the new proposals are to:

- **Shift the CAP delivery model from compliance to performance and results**

The CAP post 2020, establishes a common set of CAP general and specific objectives (economic, social, and environmental),

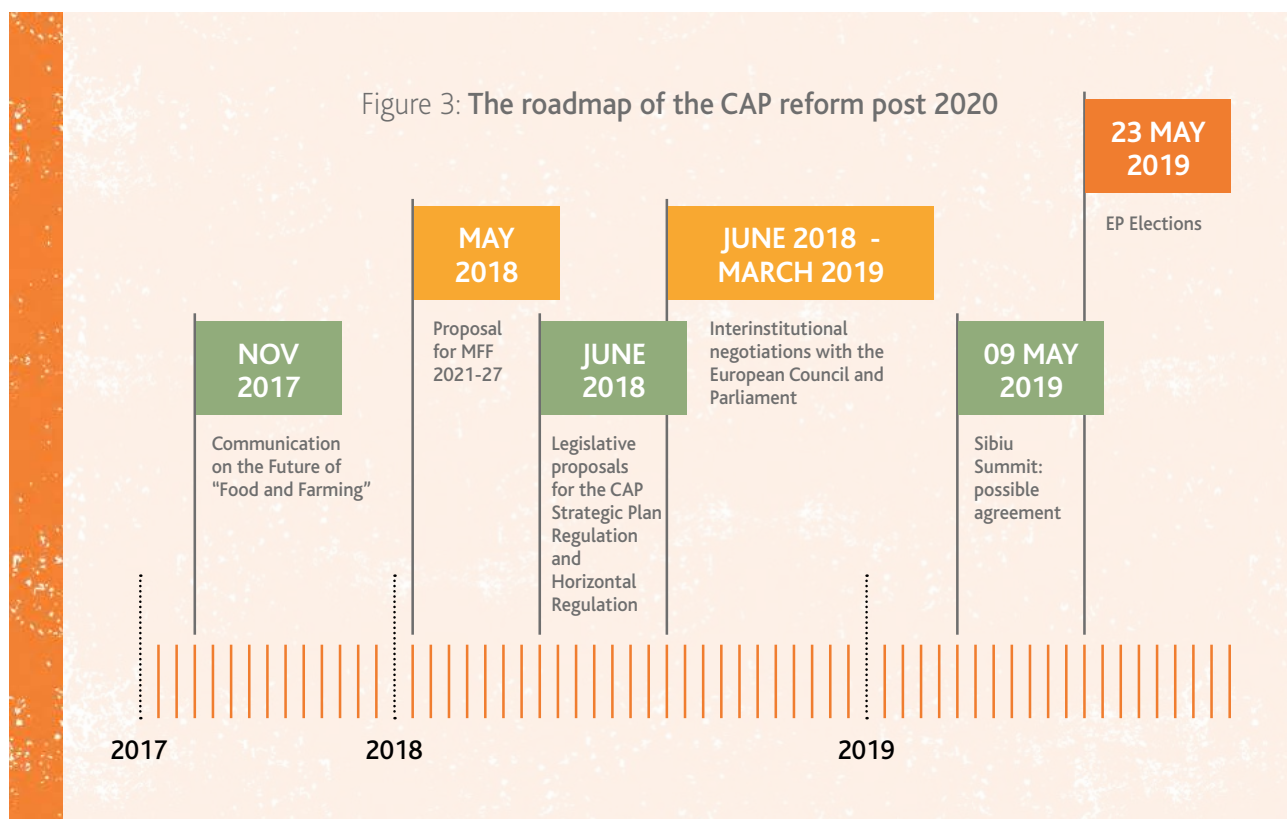
a broad outline of types of interventions supported, and a common set of indicators to assess performance on a multi-annual basis. Based on the current proposals, the scope of regulations at the European Union level has decreased, while the responsibilities for the delivery of the CAP has been rebalanced to the Member State level.

- **Increase flexibility and simplification for the Member States and beneficiaries**

Based on the proposed common objectives set out at the European Union level, the Member States will have more room to tailor their own interventions to the requirements identified in their SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis and assessment of needs. Moreover, CAP Pillar I and II interventions will be programmed under a single CAP Strategic Plan for each Member State, according to the proposal.

### Next steps

The Commission's legislative proposals are examined simultaneously by the European Parliament and Council's working parties. The future CAP will continue to be shaped through ongoing discussions concerning the [proposal on the Multi-Financial Framework \(MFF\) 2021/2027](#) published in May 2018. The European elections scheduled for May 2019 could represent an important milestone to secure an agreement between the European Union co-legislators. ■





# EVALUATIONWORKS! 2018: BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR THE EVALUATIONS IN 2019

The AIR submitted in 2019 requires an update of the evaluation findings that were previously reported in 2017, and additionally it will include:

- the findings from the assessment of the RDP's impacts, obtained through the calculation and interpretation of the net values of the CAP impact indicators;
- the RDP's contributions towards the EU's strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, as well as towards the biodiversity strategy; and
- the answers to the CEQs for RDPs 2014–2020 in relation to the EU level objectives (i.e. CEQs 22–30).

In 2019, the main evaluation challenges include the estimation and netting out of the various effects of the RDP. In situations where data availability is still scarce the establishment of the counterfactual may be problematic. Furthermore, capturing and upscaling effects can be methodologically demanding.

In order to support Member States overcome these new challenges, the possible topics of the Evaluation Helpdesk's EvaluationWORKS! 2018, yearly capacity building events include these themes. Member States have chosen one of two thematic topics:

1. Assessing RDP Achievement and Impacts in 2019
2. Evaluation of LEADER/CLLD

Events on the first thematic topic, provide a forum for the discussion of what needs to be reported on evaluation in the AIR 2019 and approaches and methods for assessing RDP impacts in 2019. The Helpdesk's, [Guidelines: Assessing RDP Achievements and Impacts in 2019](#), will serve as an important framework for these events. Events on the second thematic topic focus discussions on LEADER/CLLD

evaluation at both the RDP and local levels and will use approaches developed in the, [Guidelines: Evaluation of LEADER/CLLD](#), as a basis.

Participants of the capacity building events have the opportunity to have structured discussions with evaluation stakeholders in which they can draw from their individual experiences to exchange on what has worked well and what potentially needs to be improved at the RDP level.

These events are carried out in the local languages across the Member States by the Helpdesk's network of Geographic Experts and are adapted to meet the needs and specificities of each Member State.

The Geographic Experts act as a relay of the Evaluation Helpdesk in the Member States. They are in direct contact with relevant stakeholders in the Member States and facilitate a two-way flow of information between Member States and a broader network of stakeholders at the European Union level. ■



## Guidance on these thematic topics

[Guidelines:  
Assessing RDP Achievements and Impacts in 2019](#)

[Guidelines:  
Evaluation of LEADER/CLLD](#)

# OVERVIEW OF RDP EVALUATIONS IN THE MEMBER STATES

The analysis of Chapter 2 of the Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) submitted in 2018, shows that the number of completed evaluations has increased by 28% compared to the 2017 AIRs.

The reported evaluations touched upon different topics including various thematic areas (NRNs, synergies between EAFRD and other ESI Funds, technical assistance, etc.), RDP monitoring and evaluation, the RDP delivery mechanism and an array of other subjects (e.g. rural tourism, financial instruments and the ex post evaluation of RDPs 2007-2013). However, most of the completed evaluations are related to RDP priorities and focus areas. The following cases have been selected from a list of completed evaluations reported by the Member States in Chapter 2 of the AIRs in 2018 for the following reasons: they are available online, they are linked to specific RDP priorities, and the methodologies applied follow the recommendations provided in the Evaluation Helpdesk's Guidelines. ■



#### TITLE:

*Calculation of RDP Economic Impacts*

RDP: BE - Flanders    YEAR: 2017

#### ABSTRACT:

The study applies an econometric analysis of RDP effects on supported companies. The method consists of a fixed effect panel dynamic regression applied on multiple economic parameters. The analysis further assesses the complementary result indicator R2: change in agricultural output on supported farms/AWU.

LANGUAGE: Dutch

Link to the [publication](#)

RDP Priorities 2 and 3 related to CAP objective 1:  
Fostering competitiveness in Agriculture



#### TITLE:

*Summary of the Evaluation of RDP Potential to Support Innovation*

RDP: ES - La Rioja    YEAR: 2018

#### ABSTRACT:

The report presents a conceptual analysis of how RDP measures and actors contribute towards innovation in rural areas. Based on this analysis, conclusions and recommendations are provided to improve the innovation potential of the selected RDP measures.

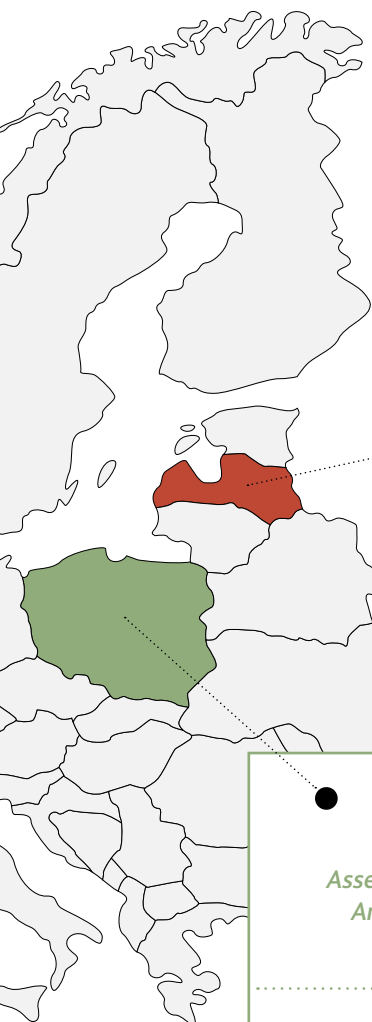
LANGUAGE: Spanish

Link to the [publication](#)

RDP Priority 1:  
Knowledge transfer and innovation







**TITLE:**  
*Assessment of Soil Quality Indicators in Areas Supported by RDP 2014-2020 Measures*

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**RDP:** Latvia    **YEAR:** 2017

**ABSTRACT:**  
 The study analyses changes in the agrochemical characteristics of soils from 2009 to 2016. Data for two indicators are collected: 1.) Soil organic matter, and 2.) Reaction of the soil (phosphorus and potassium used for plants; degree of soil agrochemical cultivation). Data was collected for beneficiaries and for control groups.

**LANGUAGE:** Latvian

Link to the [publication](#)

**RDP Priorities 4 and 5 related to CAP objective 2:**  
 Ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and climate action

**TITLE:**  
*Assessment of Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements in Local Action Groups Supported by RDP 2014-2020*

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**RDP:** Poland    **YEAR:** 2017

**ABSTRACT:**  
 The study performs a comprehensive assessment of the monitoring and evaluation arrangements established by the LAGs to assess their LEADER strategies. The assessment is based on multiple methods (survey, desk research, case-studies, a simulation game).

**LANGUAGE:** Polish

Link to the [publication](#)

**RDP Priority 6 related to CAP objective 3:**  
 Achieving balanced territorial development

**Deepen Your Understanding!**

A full list of the completed evaluation studies across the Member States reported in the AIR 2018 will be available in the, Summary Report: *Assessment of the Progress in Implementing the Evaluation Plans of RDPs 2014-2020 Chapter 2 of the AIR submitted in 2018*, at the end of December 2018



# BACK TO BASICS: MEASURING CAP IMPACTS (PART 3/3)

Assessing CAP Pillar II impacts in achieving the balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including creation and maintenance of employment

## Why are CAP impacts on balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities assessed?

There are several social challenges which rural areas in the EU are currently facing, such as aging, depopulation, and the declining access to health, education and social services. A competitive and dynamic agricultural sector remains an essential driver of the rural economy in much of the EU. This is true most predominately in rural areas where the primary sector represents roughly 5% of value added and 16% of employment<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, the economic diversification of the farming sector and rural communities becomes an important factor to generate jobs and income in rural areas. This is especially relevant when it is associated with food processing, tourism, trade, and encouraging people (including the youth) to live and work there. A knowledge-based

economy supported by Local Action Groups (LAGs), which leads to innovations can further support this process.

The CAP aims to ensure the balanced territorial development of rural areas through the implementation of rural development programmes (RDPs). Member States are required to show the RDP's achievements and socio-economic impacts on rural economies and communities along with the maintenance and improvement of rural employment throughout the programming period.

## What is to be assessed?

Three common impact indicators are to be used in the assessment of the EU's policy impacts on the balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of jobs:

Impact Indicators Related to balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities



I.14 Rural employment rate



I.15 Degree of rural poverty



I.16 Rural GDP per capita

**Balanced Territorial  
Development of  
Rural Economies and  
Communities Including the  
Creation and Maintenance  
of Employment**

2. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52010DC0672>





## How is this assessed?

In accordance with the RDP size, uptake, data-situation and resources (time, budget and the evaluator's skills) different evaluation approaches for calculating and netting out the values of the common impact indicators related to the balanced territorial development of rural areas can be applied.

Estimating the RDP impacts on rural poverty, employment and GDP and calculating net values of related CMES indicators is a challenging exercise for many reasons:

### CHALLENGES

#### Complexity of indicators:

All three of the related common impact indicators are complex and composed of a numerator and denominator, where the denominators are often difficult to calculate.

*By using qualitative methods an estimation of the denominators of common impact indicators on rural poverty, employment and GDP per capita can be achieved.*

#### Various definitions of rurality among Member States:

There are differences between how Member States define rurality. This can have consequences on the assessment as well as on the comparability of evaluation findings across the Member States.

*The evaluator should be aware of what the definition of rurality in a given Member State is and how this is reflected in the data collection at national/regional levels.*

#### Data availability:

Often data needed for the assessment of socio-economic impacts, which are provided by EUROSTAT and national/regional statistics, have two-year delays, which create problems in the assessment. This is particularly the case in Member States and regions where the RDP measures affecting socio-economic development in rural areas have been implemented later.

*In cases of low data availability, the evaluators are recommended to answer each respective evaluation question based on the application of a theory of change methodology or using qualitative evaluation approaches.*

#### Modelling techniques:

Modelling techniques (Computable General Equilibrium, input-output, etc.) for the evaluation in 2019 are only possible if the model exists in the country/region. Additionally, time issues may arise when constructing new models.

*In cases where there is not enough time to construct a model, the evaluator should apply other approaches besides modelling techniques (e.g. if data allows for the application of advanced methods, or in cases where there is insufficient data one can attempt to apply qualitative methods).*

SOLUTIONS

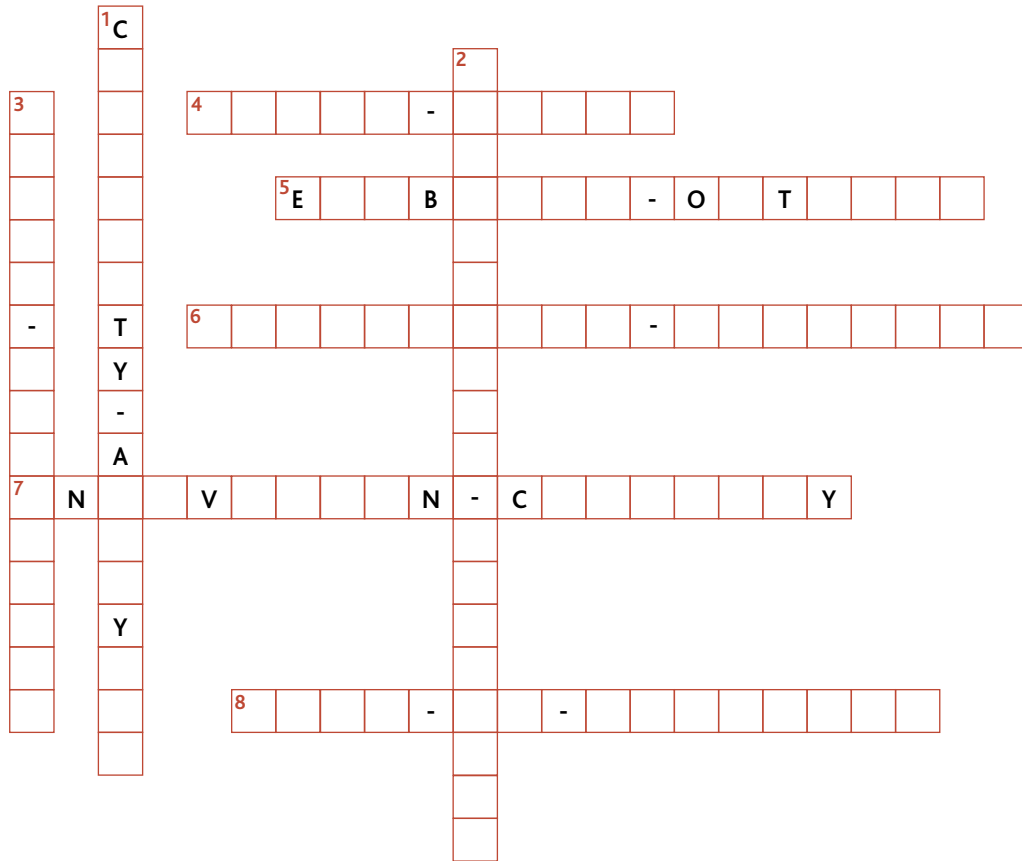
The recently published [Guidelines: Assessing RDP Achievements and Impacts in 2019](#) suggest three different quantitative approaches for calculating and netting out the values of these three common impact indicators.





# EVALUATION WORDS!

USE THE CLUES TO TEST YOUR EVALUATION KNOWLEDGE



## Across

- The benefits that are obtained thanks to the proper application of the LEADER method, compared to those benefits, which would have been obtained without applying this method.
- Outcome linked to the three innovation pathways proposed in the Guidelines: Evaluation of Innovation.
- The personal resources and evaluation- related skills necessary to fulfill evaluation tasks and activities.
- The continuing ability to combine and put into use different types of knowledge.
- The smallest part of an organised system which is being analysed.

## Down

- The study of relations of cause and effect which link a public intervention to its impacts.
- A way of conducting an evaluation, which covers its conceptualisation and practical implementation.
- Is a variable that is used to approximate, or to be representative of, a change or result that is difficult to measure.

## Expand your Mind!

The Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development has published an updated [Glossary of Key Terms Related to the Evaluation of Rural Development Programmes 2014-2020](#) available on its [eLibrary](#).

1. Causality Analysis 2. Evaluation Approach 3. Proxy Indicator 4. Added Value 5. Enabling Outcome 6. Evaluation Outcome 7. Innovation Capacity 8. Unit of Analysis







# CALENDAR - WHAT'S ON?

- GR – 1-5 October 2018 – 13<sup>th</sup> EES Biennial Conference: Evaluation for more resilient societies:**  
 What is the role of evaluation in understanding the multiple crises currently ongoing? Which are our collective responses? How can evaluation help make societies more resilient? The conference provided opportunities for participants to exchange on evaluation politics, capacity, systems, research, methods, communication and use. [Read more >>>](#)
- EE – December 2018 – EvaluationWORKS! 2018:**  
 Helpdesk capacity building event on reporting for the AIR in 2019. [Read more >>>](#)
- HR – December 2018 – EvaluationWORKS! 2018:**  
 Helpdesk capacity building event on reporting for the AIR in 2019. [Read more >>>](#)
- BE – 11 December 2018 – Rural Networks Assembly:**  
[Read more >>>](#)
- SK – 12-13 December 2018 – Good Practice Workshop: Approaches to assess environmental RDP impacts in 2019:**  
 Organised by the Evaluation Helpdesk. This Good Practice Workshop provides a forum for Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies, data providers and evaluators to discuss different approaches, challenges, and solutions related to assessing environmental impacts for the AIR in 2019. [Read more >>>](#)
- BG – December 2018 – EvaluationWORKS! 2018:**  
 Helpdesk capacity building event on reporting for the AIR in 2019. [Read more >>>](#)
- BE – 22 October 2018 – Rural Networks Steering Group:**  
[Read more >>>](#)
- PL – 24-25 October 2018 – Good Practice Workshop:**  
 Approaches to assess socio-economic and sector related RDP impacts in 2019: Organised by the Evaluation Helpdesk and the Polish Managing Authority. This Good Practice Workshop provided a forum for Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies, data providers and evaluators to discuss different approaches, challenges, and solutions related to assessing socio-economic and sector related impacts for the AIR 2019. [Read more >>>](#)
- ES – 25-27 October 2018 – Exploring new statistical frontiers at the intersection of survey science and big data:** The conference offers an opportunity to address the ongoing paradigm shift in how researchers produce, analyse, and use statistics. [Read more >>>](#)



**What's Going on in YOUR Member State?**

Share evaluation related events by emailing [info@ruralevaluation.eu](mailto:info@ruralevaluation.eu)

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The Evaluation Helpdesk works under the supervision of Unit C.4 (Monitoring and Evaluation) of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

*The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily express the official views of the European Commission.*

### European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development

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