EUROPEAN
EVALUATION
HELPDESK
FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

European Commission

SUMMARY REPORT

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION PLANS OF RDPs 2014-2020

OCTOBER 2016

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 E.4 'Evaluation and studies' 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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ABBREVIATIONS

AIR	Annual Implementation Report
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CLLD	Community-led Local Development
CPR	Common Provision Regulation
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
ECG	Evaluation Coordination Group
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ENRD	European Network for Rural Development
EP	Evaluation Plan
ERDF	European Rural Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESG	Evaluation Steering Group
ESI Funds	European Structural and Investment Funds
FBI	Farmland Bird Index
HNV	High Nature Value
IACS	Integrated Administration and Control System
LAG	Local Action Group
LDS	Local Development Strategy
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MS	Member State
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRN	National Rural Network
NSU	Network Support Unit
PA	Paying Agency
PPIMS	Project Information Management System
RDP	Rural Development Programme
TA	Technical Assistance
WEFO	Welsh European Funding Office

1   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) incorporate Evaluation Plans (EPs) in which Managing Authorities specify in seven sections how monitoring and evaluation activities will be conducted in the 2014-20 period. In the Annual Implementation Report submitted in 2016 (AIR) the actual evaluation activities are reported for the first time.

The Evaluation Helpdesk screened 115 EPs (out of 118 RDPs[1]) and extracted key features for further analysis. The first activities in implementing the EPs were assessed on the basis of the information provided by the Member States in the Annual Implementation Report 2016. In total 115 AIRs were screened whereas in 8 AIRs (from ES, IT) no evaluation related contents were found (=empty section 2 of the AIR), while few other others report mainly contents in relation to the ex-ante evaluation, or only dissemination activities (e.g. ES-Extremadura, LU, HU).

1.1   Evaluation Plans included in RDPs 2014-2020

The Evaluation Plans included in RDPs 2014-2020 have been drafted in accordance with the minimum requirements outlined in the Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2013. They are structured in seven sections, as described below, and the degree of detail given by the Member States varies across the countries (e.g. in terms of length of the EP ranging from two pages in ES-Cantabria up to 29 pages in ES-Catalonia).

Objectives and purpose of the evaluation plan

A clear reference to the common EP objective of ensuring sufficient and appropriate evaluation activities is given in 83% of the EPs. Thirty-eight percent contain in addition programme-specific EP objectives. A number of EPs refer to the improvement of the communication between the stakeholders while others include a specific thematic focus.

Governance and coordination

Governance and coordination of the RDP monitoring and evaluation system has been defined in great detail in nearly all EPs. Besides the mandatory bodies to be involved in evaluation (MA, PA, MC, beneficiaries) Member States have described in detail many other bodies playing a key role in the evaluation (e.g. technical working groups). The contribution of Local Action Groups (LAGs) and National Rural Networks (NRNs) to evaluation is specifically recognised in 65% and 40% of EPs respectively. LAGs are mentioned as information providers for evaluation, being part of the Evaluation Steering Group (ESG) or responsible for carrying out a self-assessment of Local Development Strategies. NRNs disseminate monitoring and evaluation-information and provide evaluation support to LAGs. The majority of RDPs make use of non-mandatory Evaluation Steering Groups as key tool for content-related steering of evaluation activities and for ensuring the quality of the evaluation results, for highlighting new evaluation needs and for following up evaluation results. Coordination of evaluation activities with other ESI Funds is explicitly addressed in more than half of the EPs. It is mainly organised through multi-fund Monitoring Committees (MC) or evaluation steering groups with participations from other funds.

Evaluation topics and activities

The planned **evaluation topics and activities** are indicatively described in 97% of the EPs. They are very diverse and correspond to the specific priorities and interest of the programmes. Around 20 overarching thematic and horizontal evaluation topics could be identified. The standard topics such as the evaluation of the six rural development priorities, cross-cutting issues, National Rural Networks,

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1 The National Frameworks (DE, ES, FR) do not include an EP.

CLLD/ LEADER/ LAGs are clearly addressed in most – but not in all – EPs. Many EP refer to *ad-hoc* evaluations, which will be tendered out in accordance with the evaluation needs as they arise.

Programme-specific evaluation topics are presented in a number of EPs, e.g. employment in rural areas; young people in agriculture; agro-environment-climate measures; biodiversity, production units/farms, preservation of water resources, economic development of the forestry sector, agro-food industry; organic farming.

Methodological specifications concerning the planned RDP evaluations they have generally been very scarce in the EPs, keeping flexibility for MAs and evaluators to specify methods in the tendering phase. Reference to the analysis of net effects is given to a higher degree for result indicators, than for impact indicators. Reference to the mandatory assessment of secondary contributions of operations to focus areas is only given in a few EPs.

Data and information

The **data management systems** have been described in almost all EPs. Overall, the EPs highlight new processes, better quality control, improved user interfaces, and a better coordination between the relevant actors as major changes to face the challenge and provide data on time. In a number of EPs the information obligation by the beneficiaries will be better aligned with the evaluation requirements. Guidelines and agreements between the local/regional actors and the MA are expected to ensure the availability of monitoring data on time for evaluation purpose. Data gaps, bottlenecks and potential difficulties include lack of information on context indicators at regional level, lack of updated information at certain territorial levels, lack of a central database for M&E data and problems with matching and consolidating data.

Timeline

The timing of evaluation activities is presented in most of the EPs in relation to the major common evaluation milestones: the enhanced AIRs to be submitted in 2017 and 2019, and the *ex-post* evaluation in 2024. Additional programme-specific evaluation milestones are mentioned in about one-third of the EPs, however without giving a precise indication on their timing.

Communication

Communication activities are described in 92% of the EPs and differ mainly in the use of communication channels to reach the different target recipients, including user friendly and easy understandable summaries. Meetings of the MC, focus groups and workshops with relevant stakeholders are used in many countries internally to discuss the evaluation findings and present good practices. The follow-up mechanisms to ensure the use of evaluation findings are (at least partly) described in 65% of the EP, but in many cases without much detail.

Resources

The financial and human resources which are necessary for carrying out evaluation activities were specified in around half of the EPs. The financial resources for evaluation were mainly presented in the form of a global budget. In other EPs qualitative statements were made that sufficient resources will be provided.

According to the (limited) quantitative information on financial resources provided, the percentage of the total programme budget 2014-20 (EAFRD) allocated to implement the evaluation plan ranges from 0.06% (FR-National) to 1.5% (ES - Islas Baleares).

An average of 0.43% of the total programme budget (EAFRD) is planned in RDPs to cover the activities of the evaluation plan (under the Technical Assistance budget). A specific situation is given in a National Rural Network programme where 1.9% of the total budget is allocated to evaluation activities (FR – NRN programme).

Most of the EPs mention the need of contracting additional external expertise. Evaluation-related capacity building is recognised in about half of the EPs as of key importance for successful RDP evaluation. Member States refer to internal and national evaluation-related trainings but also to those offered at the European level (ENRD, European Commission).

1.2 Evaluation activities reported in the Annual Implementation Reports submitted in 2016

This section describes the progress in implementing the EPs and is based on the screening of section 2 of the draft[2] annual implementation reports (AIR) submitted in 2016. The evaluation activities undertaken during the years 2014 and 2015 can be summarised as follows:

- The evaluation activities reported mainly concern the planning and preparation phase of evaluations. With regard to this phase, 116 activities were reported in the AIRs submitted in 2016, e.g. the preparation of Terms of Reference and tendering procedures, the setting-up of administrative arrangements etc.

- Thirty-seven RDPs have also carried out evaluation-related activities of the structuring phase, e.g. review of evaluation questions and indicators, development of an evaluation approach and methods.

- Twenty-three RDPs also reported activities from the implementation phase.

- 8 AIRs (from ES, IT) do not report evaluation related contents at all (=empty section 2 of the AIR), while few other others report mainly contents in relation to the ex-ante evaluation, or dissemination activities (e.g. ES-Extremadura, LU, HU).

The evaluation topics explicitly addressed in the AIR submitted in 2016 are cross-cutting issues, the evaluation of Rural Development priority 4 (Ecosystems) and the evaluation of CLLD/ LEADER/ LAGs.

Data management related activities were reported in 75 of the AIRs submitted in 2016, most of them related to the preparation of the operation database to collect data and information, screening of data and information sources and arrangements to fill data gaps.

A number of 66 **completed evaluations** have been reported from RDPs. These evaluations, however, include numerous *ex ante* evaluations, strategic environmental assessments, and mid-term and *ex-post* evaluations of the 2007-13 period. Around 33 evaluations refer mainly to the 2014-20 reporting period.

Overall, 89 evaluation-related **communication activities** were reported in the AIRs submitted in 2016, of which the main communication channels were a website (26 activities) and discussions in meetings (28). Communication activities undertaken in relation to publicising evaluation findings mostly refer to the publication of the *ex-ante* evaluation reports. In total, 238,112 stakeholders were accounted for, mainly related to meetings, workshops, etc. The number of stakeholders reached through online channels is reported to be difficult to monitor and therefore evidently underestimated. Communication activities during the *ex-ante* evaluation were however included. Regarding the addressed evaluation topics, the majority of the communication activities refer to cross-cutting issues, but also to evaluations of RD priority 4 (ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry). Most of the communication activities are organised by the Managing Authority and the ministry or one of its departments and the main target groups envisaged are the general public, the programme authorities, the ministry(ies) and its departments themselves, evaluators and other economic and social stakeholders and partners.

The monitoring and evaluation system, and the corresponding EP, may be subject to **modifications** during the programming period. In the reporting period 2014 and 2015 a number of four EPs were already updated. Modifications concentrate on the following areas:

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[2] It does not take into account subsequent versions of AIR submitted in 2016 sent following improvement requests from DG AGRI.

- changes in bodies who facilitate data collection;

- changes in the timing of evaluation activities (evaluation of the RDP implementation initially envisaged in 2016 is postponed to 2017 and will be conducted in a multi-fund approach parallel to the evaluation of the other ESI Funds implementation in the region);

- the elaboration of an inter-fund EP covering all ESI Funds in the region was omitted;

- the budget for financing the EP out of the technical assistance was corrected regarding VAT.

1.3   Overall quality assessment

The Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development has under the guidance of DG AGRI Unit E.4 analysed the quality of the EPs and of the evaluation-related information reported in the AIR submitted in 2016.

Evaluation Plans

With regard to the **quality** of evaluation plans it can be concluded that the provisions made for monitoring and evaluation in the RDPs are overall adequate in about 80% to ensure that sufficient and appropriate evaluation activities are undertaken and to provide information needed for programme steering for the annual implementation reports to be submitted in 2017 and 2019 and the *ex-post* evaluation, and to ensure that data needed for RDP evaluation is available.

Strengths have been identified as: the clear commitment given to the Common EU objectives, the efforts to describe the set-up of the evaluation-related governance system in the RDPs; the increased concern with ensuring the quality of evaluation by making use of non-mandatory evaluation steering groups, the completion of the EP with detailed internal planning documents, careful planning of provisions to disseminate evaluation findings to appropriate target groups.

Weaknesses have been identified with respect to vagueness of the specifications on the resources used for monitoring and evaluation, the unclear timeline of evaluation activities besides those required by the legal framework; the missing methodological specifications and descriptions of mechanisms of how these will be made.

Progress made in implementing the Evaluation Plan

Based on the information reported in the AIR submitted in 2016 it can be concluded that the main progress in the implementation of the EP took place in the planning and preparation phase of evaluations (e.g. making the governance-arrangements for monitoring and evaluation operational and contracting evaluation experts). The most advanced RDPs have entered into the structuring phase of the evaluation activities (e.g. conceptualisation of evaluation approach, review of evaluation questions and indicators).

Problems and issues identified comprise the overall scarce reporting on evaluation activities (even on preparatory activities) bearing the risk of late tendering procedures in many Member States, the missing activities to ensure data and quality for evaluators. Common standards on how to complete section 2 of the AIR are missing that potentially lead to misinterpretations.

Specific areas to be observed and key questions

Based on the outcome of the screening of Evaluation Plans and Annual Implementation Reports 2016 several key questions have been identified in order to ensure that the evaluation activities are progressing on time.

(1) Governance

- How far is the RDP with contracting (independent) evaluation experts in view of the evaluation activities necessary for the AIR 2017?

(2) Data management

- Have data needs been clarified and has a data management system been established which is able to meet the data needs of the evaluators on time?

(3) Timing

- Which preparatory steps has the MA carried out in view of the evaluations activities for the enhanced AIR 2017? (e.g. review of evaluation questions, indicators, data sources).

2   INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Purpose

Every year, the Evaluation Helpdesk assesses the progress in the implementation of the Evaluation Plans (EPs) included in each Rural Development Programme (RDP), on the basis of the information included in the Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs). This begun in 2016 when the Annual Implementation Reports 2016 presented the progress made in implementing the Evaluation Plans for the first time.

In addition, in 2016 the Evaluation Helpdesk established a baseline and analysed the Evaluation Plans included in each approved Rural Development Programme in order to extract the main features of the evaluation plans, focusing on what the Member States have planned in terms of evaluations during the programming period 2014-20. The analysis also focused on finding examples of good practice to be shared with Member States. The outcome of this task is presented in a working paper.

This working paper is used as a background for the Annual Summary Report 2016 which is elaborated by the European Commission. The contribution for the Annual Summary Report was provided at the beginning of September.

The full working paper including annex is presented to the Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) in November 2016.

Working method

The working method consisted of desk research of all EPs included in RDPs, as well as of the analysis of all Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) submitted by the Managing Authorities (MA) by the end of June 2016. The Evaluation Helpdesk developed two screening tools to extract relevant information. Geographic experts analysed the documents in July 2016 and completed the screening tools which were subsequently analysed, summarised and interpreted by the permanent team of the Evaluation Helpdesk.

Information sources

Overall, there are 118 RDPs in this programming period in the 28 Member States. Out of these, 115 RDPs included an Evaluation Plan and 115 AIRs submitted in 2016 where screened. Three RDPs (National framework programmes of DE, ES, FR) do not include an Evaluation Plan.

3   MAIN FEATURES OF THE EVALUATION PLANS IN THE RDPS

3.1   Background

The EP is a new element within the rural development monitoring and evaluation system for the programming period 2014-2020, and is a mandatory formal requirement for all RDPs. In the past MAs have used various approaches and tools to structure, implement and manage the evaluation activities in the course of the ongoing and mid-term evaluation of their RDPs.

However, the results and the quality of the evaluation varied considerably depending on the administrative and evaluation capacities and the availability of data. Often the timing of the evaluations did not coincide with the availability of relevant information or the ability of the MA and the evaluators to conduct a proper methodological approach. In the 2014-2020 programming period the EP allows for building upon experiences in the planning of the evaluation, planning ahead, identifying crucial prerequisites and milestones, and finally setting the 'cornerstones' for the RDP's evaluation system.

For the current programming period **the legal provisions** are as follows:

- Regulation No 1303/2013 (Common Provisions Regulation) defines in Article 56 that "...an evaluation plan shall be drawn up by the managing authority...[and]...it shall be submitted in accordance with the Fund-specific rules."

- Regulation No 1305/2013 defines in Article 75 that "...Annual Implementation Reports shall include ... a summary of the activities undertaken in relation to the evaluation plan".

- Regulation No 808/2013 defines in Point 2 of Annex VII a uniform presentation of the elements to be included in the evaluation plan.

DG AGRI has issued non-binding guidelines "Establishing and implementing the evaluation plan of 2014-2020 RDPs" illustrating what an evaluation plan would consist of, outlining why it is important, and showing how it can help to ensure that evaluation activities are conducted effectively.

The guidelines translate the binding minimum requirements of the evaluation plan and also provide recommendations on how to set-up and run evaluations during the programming period. These guidelines are of fundamental importance for the present task.

The elements of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system as presented in the evaluation plan and reported by the AIR are outlined in the figure below.

Figure 1. Elements of the M&E system presented in the evaluation plan and AIR
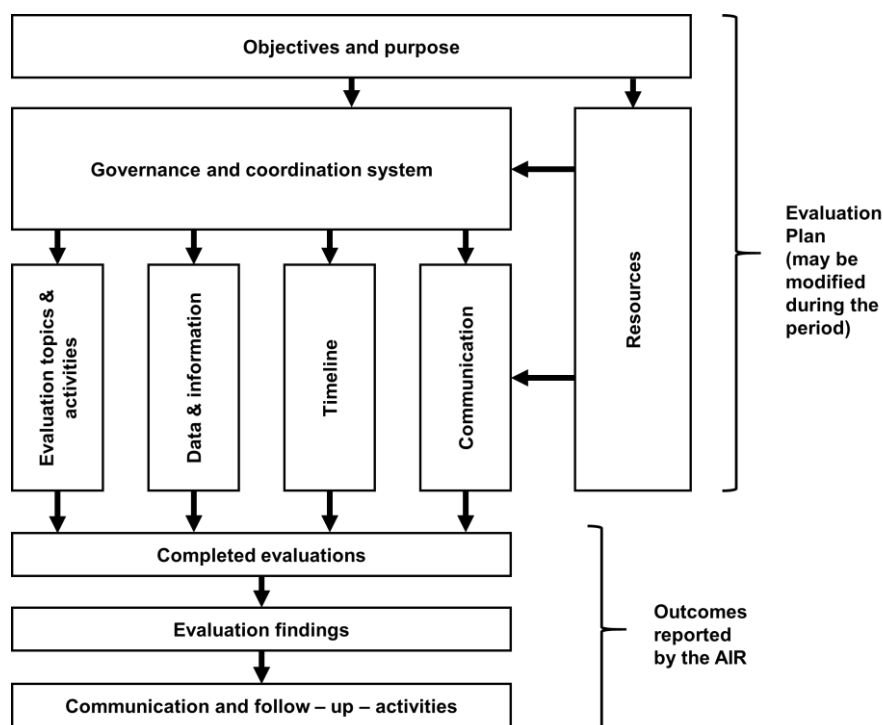
When setting up a monitoring and evaluation system, the first thing to do is to clarify the basic **objective and purpose** in line with the legal framework. The overall objective will guide the whole set-up and implementation of the M&E system.

The next major issue is the organisational set-up of the system and the clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders represented in the **governance** structure. Only a well-designed governance system and ongoing coordination between the stakeholders ensure the delivery of good evaluation results.

A fundamental concern is to ensure appropriate **resources** for administrators and evaluators to carry out data management and evaluation activities.

An early definition of thematic priorities for evaluation, the so-called **evaluation topics**, should provide a clear reference point for the **evaluation activities** during the programming period.

Evaluation cannot work without an electronic **data management** system which records, manages and reports information on operations. This is a complex task and requires a coordinated approach between institutions and beneficiaries.

Data collection and evaluation activities have to follow a clear **time plan**, taking into account EU-wide evaluation milestones.

In order to make better use of evaluation findings, the **communication** of evaluation findings to the different target groups has to be strengthened using appropriate communication channels. Also a **follow-up mechanism** should be defined.

It is advisable to apply quality control procedures and quality criteria on all aspects of the monitoring and evaluation system with the assistance of responsible bodies.

The monitoring and evaluation system, and the corresponding evaluation plan, may be subject to **modification** during the programming period caused by substantial changes in the RDP strategy or RDP implementation.

3.2 General characteristics of the Evaluation Plans

Length of Evaluation Plans

The average length of an Evaluation Plan is 12 pages. As illustrated in the figure below, 41% of the Evaluation Plans have up to 10 pages, while the majority have between 11 and 20 pages. Just three EPs (MT; SK; ES-Catalonia) have more than 20 pages, with a maximum of 29 pages in ES-Catalonia. The minimum is three pages in ES-Cantabria which also shows that there are large discrepancies within a Member State (MS).

Figure 2. Length of the Evaluation Plans[3]
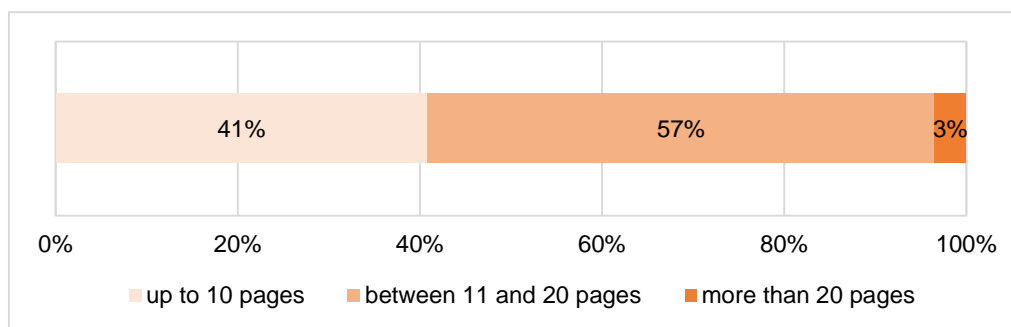
Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Internal evaluation planning tools

As illustrated in the figure below, 19% of the EPs are complemented by other internal and more-detailed planning documents. In a number of Member States, Annual Working Programmes are being prepared (such as in BE; EL; LV; NL), while other EPs are complemented by evaluation concepts, manuals, activity plans and other planning documents (such as in AT; CZ; DE). However, for majority cases (56%) it was not clear if such an internal document would exist.

Figure 3. Is the EP complemented by other internal planning documents?[4]
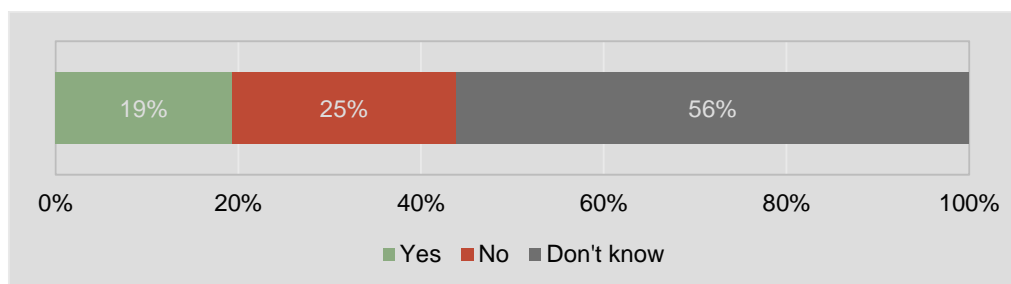
Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

3.3 Objectives and purpose of the Evaluation Plan

According to the minimum requirement, this section of the EP should contain a reference to the common EU objective and purpose of the Evaluation Plan, to ensure that sufficient and appropriate evaluation activities are undertaken, in particular to provide information needed for programme steering, for the Annual Implementation Reports to be submitted in 2017 and 2019 and the ex post evaluation, and to safeguard that data needed for the RDP evaluations are available (common evaluation plan objectives). Additional specific programme-related objectives may be formulated in the EP to reflect programme-specific needs.

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[3] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016
[4] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Reference to common EP objectives

83% of the EPs refer to the EU common evaluation plan objectives as outlined in the minimum requirements, while only PL and LU make no reference at all and 14% do so in part (IT - 4; DE - 2; FR - 9; BE - 1).

Figure 4. Does the EP reference to the EU common evaluation plan objectives?[5]
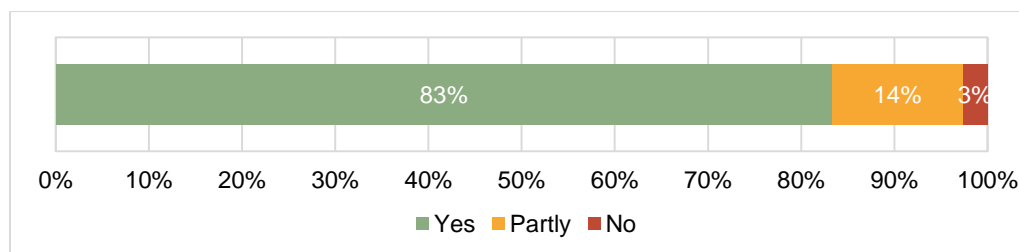
Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Programme-specific evaluation plan objectives

Additional programme-specific objectives are presented in 38% of the EPs (AT; BE, BG; CY; CZ; EE; ES; FR; DE; IE; IT; LT; SI; SK; UK). A number of EPs refer to the improvement of the communication between the stakeholders (BE; BG; FR; IT; ES), while others include a specific thematic focus (EE on HNV farmland; IE on climate change and emissions from animal production; innovation and participatory local development in IT-Sardinia).

3.4   Governance and coordination of monitoring and evaluation

According to the minimum requirement, this EP section should contain a brief description of the monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the RDP, identifying the main bodies involved (defined by the legal provisions) and other relevant bodies and their responsibilities. It should explain how evaluation activities are linked with RDP implementation in terms of content and timing.

Main bodies involved in Monitoring and Evaluation

The main bodies involved (MA, PA, MC, beneficiaries) are presented in 72% of the EPs, and partly presented in 25%. They are not mentioned in IE and in the EPs of the Rural Network in France and Germany.

Figure 5. Does the EP present the main bodies (MA, PA, MC, beneficiaries) involved in the monitoring and evaluation system?[6]
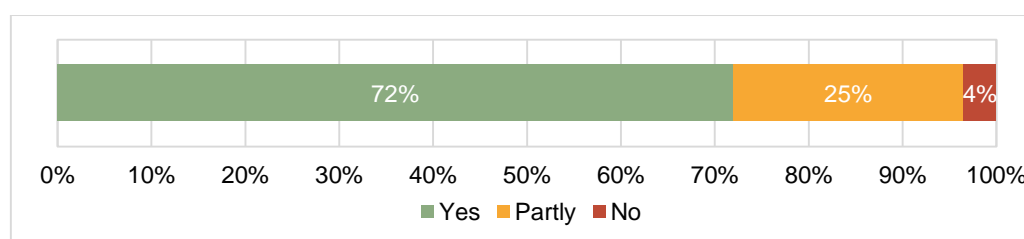
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

The responsibilities of the main bodies in the monitoring and evaluation system are presented in 89% of the EPs. They are not presented in 12 EPs, namely in AT, FR (5 EPs), DE (2), ES, IE and IT (2).

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[5] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016
[6] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Figure 6. Does the EP present the responsibilities of the MA, MC, PA, beneficiaries in the monitoring and evaluation system?[7]
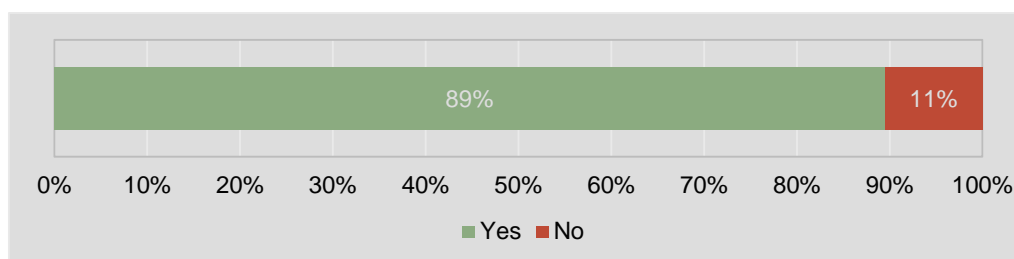
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Regarding the responsibilities and tasks of the main bodies, their roles are similarly defined in the EPs.

- The **Managing Authority** (MA) has the overall responsibility for governance and functioning of the M&E system, the design and management of an electronic information system (some PAs are also responsible for it, as in LT), the elaboration of the AIRs and for the provision of indicator data to the Commission. The MA is also responsible for the EP and its implementation.

- The **Monitoring Committee** (MC) will examine the evaluation activities and the results of the RDP and their efficiency in relation to defined objectives, revise and approve AIRs, supervise all evaluation activities and issue recommendations to the MA. In some cases, the MC is also responsible for disseminating results, as representatives from other funds may also be included in the MC and as it collaborates closely with other Networks (e.g. the Regional Rural Network in LU).

- The **Paying Agency** (PA) will work closely with the MA and has an important role for information and data provision on projects implemented and payments.

- The **beneficiaries** have a role as data providers to the MA and to evaluators.

Involvement of LAGs

The involvement of the Local Action Groups (LAG) in the monitoring and evaluation is mentioned in 67% of the EPs. In the majority of the EPs LAGs are described as: (a) providers of monitoring data and information, (b) part of the Evaluation Steering Group, and (c) the internal evaluation and self-assessment of Local Development Strategies (LDS) and Community-led Local Development (CLLD).

LAGs are not mentioned in AT, BE (1 RDP), BG, CY, CZ, ES (3), FI (1), FR (17), DE (3), IT (8) and LV.

Figure 7. Does the EP mention the involvement of LAGs in the RDP monitoring and evaluation?[8]
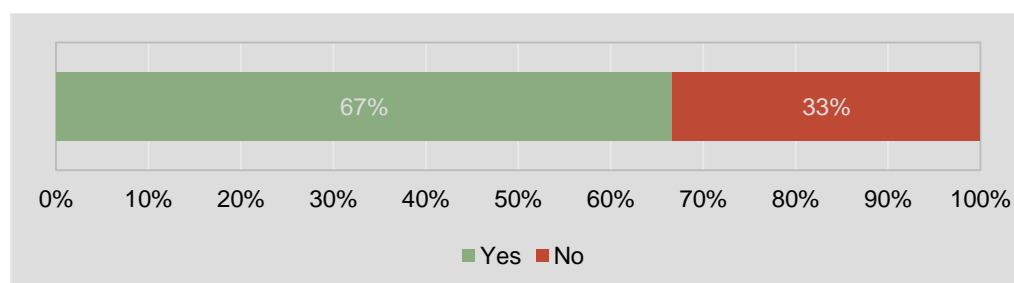
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

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[7] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016
[8] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Involvement of NRN/NSU

The involvement of the National Rural Network (NRN) and/or the Network Support Unit (NSU) in the RDP monitoring and evaluation is mentioned in 40% of the EPs. One of the main tasks reported is the communication and dissemination of evaluation findings and results (e.g. in BE-Wallonia; CY; HR; FI-Mainland; UK (all EPs)). The coordination and support of stakeholders and the increase of the level of awareness regarding the M&E among stakeholders is another important function (e.g. in CZ; HR; LU; RO). In some regions of France (e.g. PACA, Limousin) and Italy (Molise, Sicily) and in SI the NRN forms part of the Evaluation Steering Group. Additionally, the NRN is mentioned as the data provider (e.g. in EE; FR-Corse; FR-Rhone-Alpes; IT-Friuli Venezia). The NRNs also provide evaluation support for LAGs (e.g. in FR-Limousin; HU, PT-Acores and IT-Sicilia).

Figure 8. Does the EP mention the involvement of NRN/NSU into monitoring and evaluation?[9]
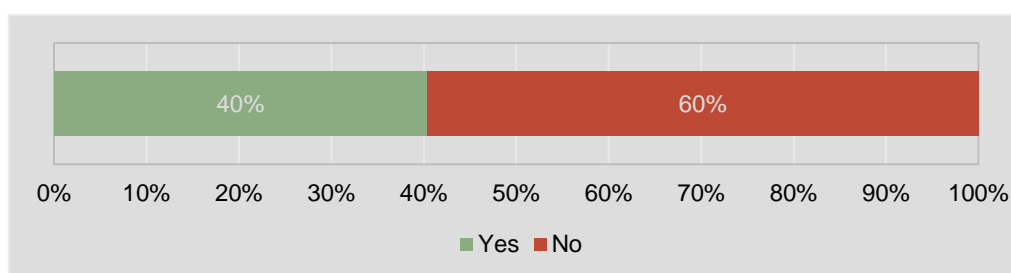
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Evaluation Steering Group

Overall, 68% of the EPs mention the set-up of an (non-mandatory) Evaluation Steering Group (ESG). Evaluation Steering Groups are responsible for content-related steering of evaluation activities, the coordination of the *ex-ante* evaluation (BE), the quality control of evaluation activities (e.g. FI; HR; IT-Lazio), highlight new evaluation needs, the dissemination of evaluation findings (e.g. FR- Rhone-Alpes; BE; IT-Marche), follow-up of the recommendations, methodological and technical support, set-up of the annual evaluation plan and activities.

Furthermore, in some EPs the multidisciplinary approach of the ESG is highlighted, which is needed to address the evaluation in its various components.

The information provided regarding the composition of the ESGs underlines the multidisciplinary approach in several Member States. While in some (e.g. AT; EE) the ESG is composed of the specific departments, the Paying Agency and the evaluation department of the MA. In other Member States (e.g. EL; FR-Languedoc-Roussillon; IT-Piemonte) the ESG also includes 'external' experts from research institutions, relevant stakeholders and (local) actors in the programme implementation. In BE-Wallonia the external evaluators are part of the ESG.

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[9] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Figure 9. Does the EP mention the set-up of an Evaluation Steering Group?[10]
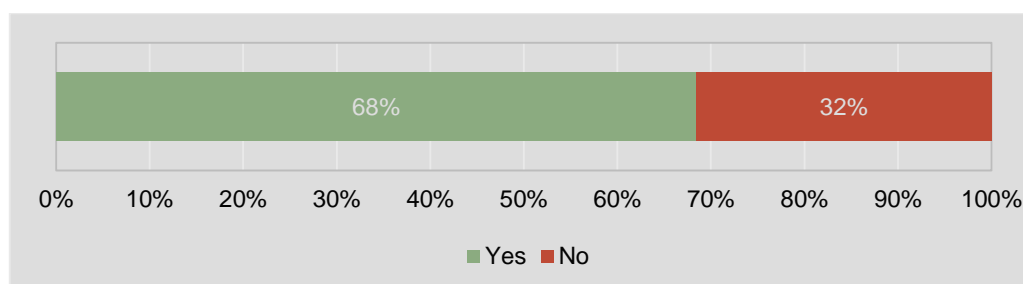
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

No information regarding the set-up of an Evaluation Steering Group was provided in the EPs of BG, DE, DK, ES (5 EPs), FR (5), HU, IT (5), LU, NL and SE.

Other bodies involved in monitoring and evaluation

Other bodies involved in M&E were mentioned in 76% of the EPs.

Figure 10. Are other bodies involved in monitoring and evaluation?[11]
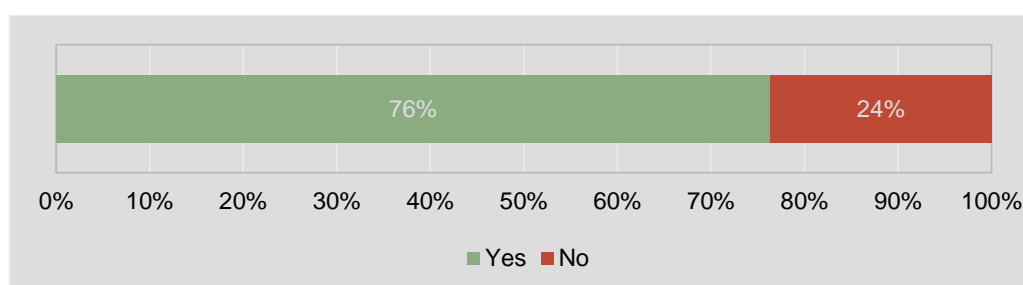
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Other bodies mentioned are technical working groups, designated by the Evaluation Steering Groups to implement and manage activities (FR), Evaluation Working Groups (HU), an Inter-Ministerial Committee to coordinate activities of the ESI Funds (SI), thematic working groups for technical tasks (ES), research institutions (e.g. the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, which provides evaluation expertise and supports the process - UK). Measure managers in the NL assess the content-related progress of the measures and inform the MA about relevant studies that could be used for the monitoring and evaluation of the Dutch Rural Development Programme. In Austria the governing board of the RDP and the steering group are responsible for the content-related steering of the evaluation activities. National statistical offices are mentioned in a large number of EPs as the main external source for the provision of additional data.

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[10] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016
[11] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Coordination with RDP implementation

Provisions to link evaluation activities with RDP implementation are mentioned in 57% of the EPs, but are kept quite vague in most of the cases. In the German EPs the need for more transparency in the evaluation process is described as the main reason for linking evaluation activities with RDP implementation. BE-Wallonia mentions the involvement of external evaluators in the ESG. In IT-Valle d'Aosta the EP establishes the Evaluation Unit for the Managing Authority, which is the body linking evaluation with the planning and implementation of Regional Policies

In various Spanish EPs (e.g. Madrid, National programme, Andalusia, Murcia) several actions are envisaged to link evaluation activities with RDP implementation:

- an online survey of the members of the MC about the evaluation topics that should be tackled and other relevant questions about the evaluation;
- development of guidelines that will define the measures and variables to be collected, and internal reports. These reports will include explanations about the monitoring and evaluation process;
- participation in the meetings for evaluation and monitoring of the Directorate of agriculture and rural development of the ministry (MAGRAMA);
- creation of a thematic committee /thematic working group for evaluation and annual meetings;
- revision of the alert system of the performance framework;
- online support to facilitate the communication and information among the agents involved in the monitoring and evaluation process;
- periodic specific thematic meetings with different agents.

Figure 11. Does the EP mention any provisions to link evaluation activities with RDP implementation?[12]
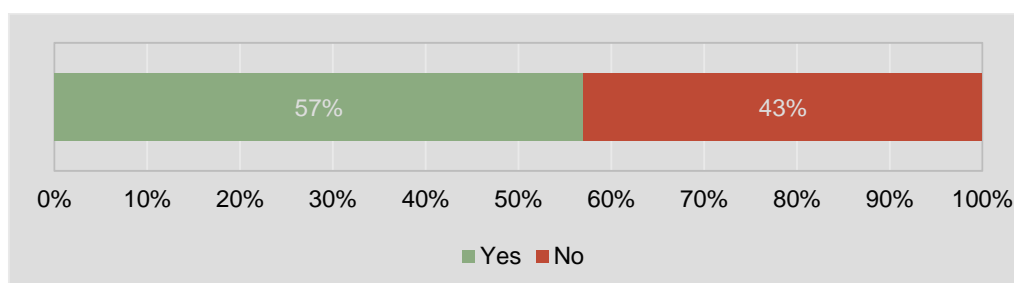
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Independency of evaluators

Almost half of the EPs mention provisions to ensure that the evaluators (experts) function independently from the programme implementation without much detail given in the EPs. Most EPs refer to the principle of independence and the selection of external evaluators through public tendering procedures.

In Sweden, a research group is linked to the Evaluation Secretariat. The group consists of researchers from the Swedish universities and colleagues with special scientific competence in methodology and substance related to the RDP. In order to promote independence of the evaluation, the evaluation reports generated by the research group will be published in a special report series, which is independent of the MA. The research group represents an editorial board responsible for quality control of the assessments published.

Figure 12. Does the EP mention provisions to ensure the evaluators (experts) functional independency from programme implementation?[13]
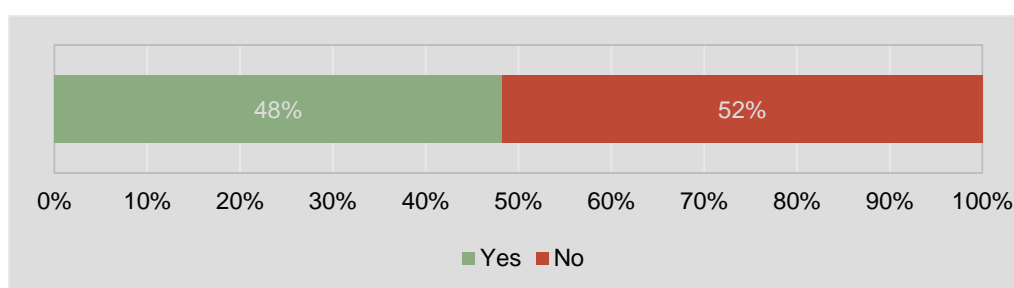
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Coordination with other ESI Funds evaluations

More than half of the EPs mention any coordination of RDP activities with other European Structural and Investment Funds' (ESI Funds) evaluations. The coordination across the different Funds is mainly organised through the multi-funds Monitoring Committees (e.g. in DE and FR) and evaluation steering groups with participations from other Funds. In Germany, the MAs of the ESI Funds form part of the MC.

In Member States with a large number of RDPs such as Spain and France about half of the EPs, and even more in IT, do not present any coordinated evaluation activities in the EP, as the figure 14 illustrates.

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[13] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Figure 13. Does the EP mention any coordination of RDP evaluation activities with other ESI Funds evaluations?[14]
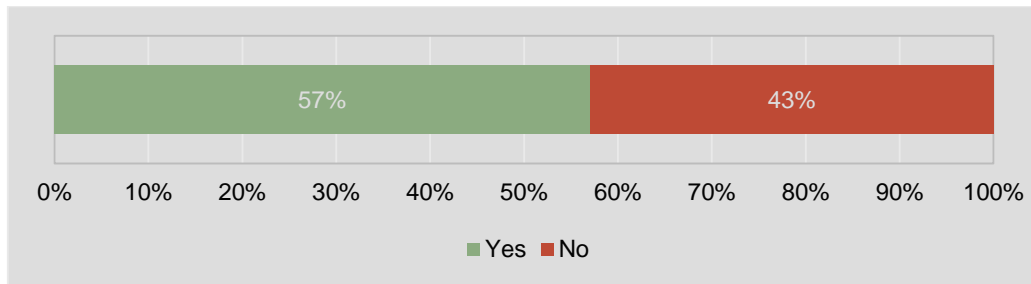
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Figure 14. Coordination of RDP evaluation activities by MS[15]
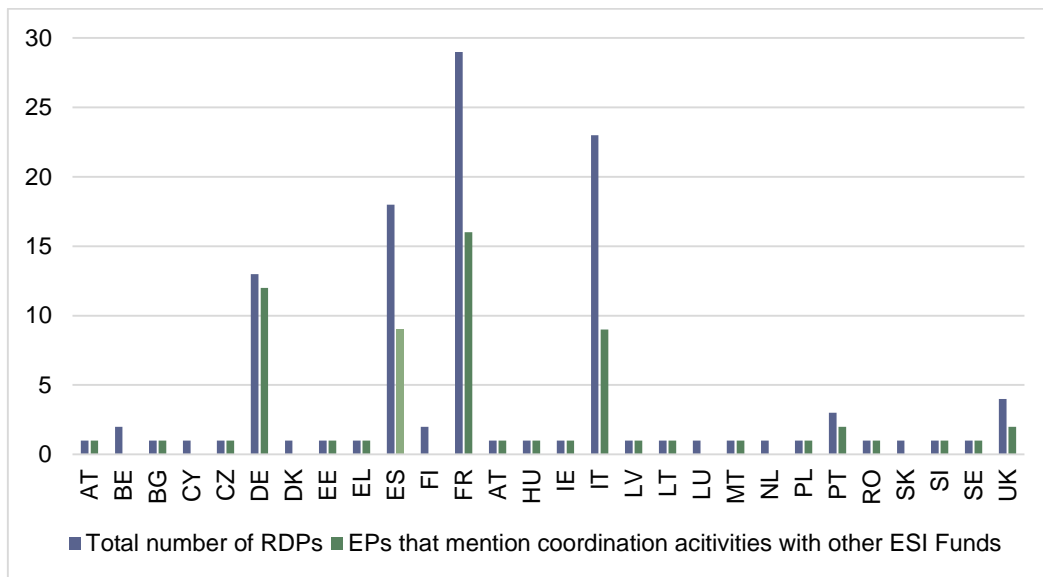
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Evaluation-support for LAGs

About one-third of the EPs in 15 Member States mention specific evaluation support for the LAGs. This consists of capacity building (e.g. in AT; IT-Lombardy; IT-Toscana; ES-Asturias; RO); methodological support in the set-up and coordination by the MA (e.g. in EL; HU; SE and UK), by the NRN (e.g. in LT; PT; and RO), by independent evaluators (IT-Lazio; IT-Sardinia).

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[14] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016
[15] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Figure 15. Does the EP mention any specific evaluation support for LAGs?[16]
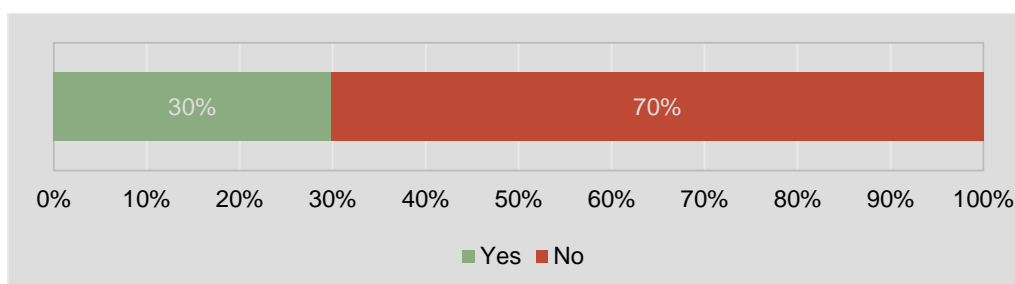
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

In **Austria**, the Managing Authority started in 2014 to build capacity within the LAGs for a common progress control system of Local Development Strategies and for yearly reporting. The MA provided guidance for the elaboration and application of the "impact model" for planning and progress control of Local Development Strategies (May 2014). A series of seminars for LAGs were held in 2014 and 2015 related to the elaboration of the Local Development Strategy and to the introduction of the so called 'impact model'.

In the **Czech Republic**, there is an NGO, an association of LAGs which has provided in the past support to the evaluation at LAG level in collaboration with the NRN. Several capacity building activities have been implemented and the LAGs have been encouraged to conduct the evaluation.

In **Sweden** the Managing Authority (the Evaluation Secretariat) is responsible for providing specific methodological support to the LAGs when they design their monitoring and evaluation activities. These include: mapping the need for complementary support for monitoring and evaluation needs at LAG level. Also the provision of support to the LAG monitoring and evaluation by activities such common IT system for reporting and area-specific report generation, coordination of choice and definition of specific indicators, methodological support for LAG evaluations, and dissemination of evaluation results between LAGs.

3.5   Evaluation topics and activities

According to the minimum requirement, this section should contain an indicative description of the evaluation topics and activities anticipated, including, but not limited to, fulfilment of EU requirements (e.g. assess each priority at least once during the programming period according to CPR Art. 56 (3). Demonstrate the progress and achievements of rural development policy and assess the impact, effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of rural development interventions according to RD Reg. Art. 68 (a)). It should cover activities needed to evaluate the contribution of each of the RDP priorities to objectives, assessment of result and impact indicator values, analysis of net effects, thematic issues (including sub-programmes), cross-cutting issues, the National Rural Network and the contribution of community-led local development strategies. It should also include planned support for evaluation at LAG level. It should mention any programme-specific elements such as work needed to develop methodologies or to address specific policy areas.

Description of evaluation topics and activities

97% percent of the RDPs do (at least partly) describe the evaluation topics and activities planned during the programming period.

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[16] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Other evaluation topics reflecting specific regional and territorial needs are envisaged in about 70 EPs, e.g. the programme impacts and contributions to specific sectors (forestry, etc.), young people and human capital, employment in rural areas, cooperation, innovation, livestock, etc.

Figure 16. Does the EP describe the major evaluation topics and activities during the programming period?[17]
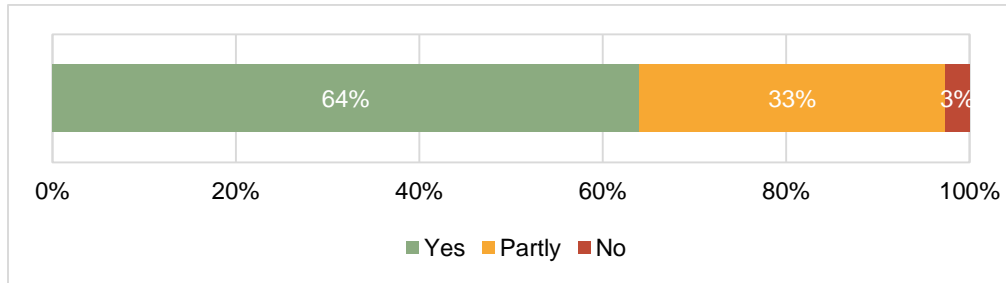
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

As illustrated in the figure below, the standard topics (six RD priorities, NRN, CLLD/ LEADER/ LAGs) are clearly addressed in most, but not in all, EPs.

Reference to the analysis of net effects and secondary contributions is only given in a few EPs. *Ad-hoc* evaluations are addressed in a large number of EPs and will cover emerging evaluation needs.

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[17] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Figure 17. Evaluation topics and activities explicitly mentioned in the EPs (multiple answers possible)[18]

RD Priority 1 (knowledge transfer and innovation)	64
RD Priority 2 (farm viability and competitiveness)	63
RD Priority 3 (food chains, processing &…	59
RD Priority 4 (ecosystems related to agriculture…	66
RD Priority 5 (resource efficiency, low carbon…	67
RD Priority 6 (social inclusion, poverty red., eco…	61
National Rural Networks	56
CLLD/LEADER/LAGs	89
Cross-cutting issues innovation, environment,…	100
Horizontal principles sustainable development,…	41
Other evaluation topics reflecting specific needs	58
Evaluation of RDP measures or group of measures	54
The evaluation of the programme delivery…	34
The evaluation of the technical assistance	29
Achievement of RDP focus area-related objectives	44
Secondary effects (secondary contributions)	16
Net effects of the RDP measures in relation to…	32
Net effects of the RDP to changes in CAP impact…	23
Sub-programmes (acc. Reg. 1305/2013, Art. 7)	10
Ad hoc evaluations to respond to newly emerging…	69
Quality assurance and quality control across the…	15

Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

NRN evaluation

The evaluation of National Rural Networks is mentioned in about 52% of the EPs. In a number of cases, the evaluation of the NRN is mentioned but not further specified. In some EPs, it is mentioned as one of the (cross-cutting) evaluation topics or activities, and its aim of assessing the added value, the impact and its contribution in the implementation and achievement of the objectives of the rural development policy.

In **Malta**, it is foreseen to strengthen the role of the National Rural Network for the 2014-2020 period. A greater emphasis will be given to effective stakeholder engagement, including the involvement of a higher number of individuals with the required knowledge to provide effective support to the implementation of the RDP. Following on from past experiences (effective and efficient communication activities, significant stakeholder involvement, etc.) the MA will embark on the following key steps and timetable for re-launching the NRN 2014-2020. It will convene meetings of the NRN Committee to oversee the re-launching and resourcing of the new NRN 2014-2020. Proposals will be presented regarding the strategic approach to animate the network, including the intervention logic, setting of objectives, prioritisation of actions and allocation of financial/human resources. A multi-annual NRN Action Plan will integrate actions for strengthening the network to fulfil the requirements of Art. 54 of Regulation No. 1305/2013.

In **Spain**, in this programming period the NRN will be evaluated in the framework of the Evaluation Plan of the National Programme instead of having an independent evaluation (as it was in the past period when there was no national programme).

In **Bulgaria**, the RDP envisages a tender procedure for selection of the NRN support unit. This tender has not been launched yet and currently the NRN is not functioning.

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[18] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

LEADER/CLLD evaluation

In many RDPs the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD is mentioned as one of the important evaluation topics. As described above, LAGs are responsible for the internal evaluation and self-assessment of the Local Development Strategies (LDS) and Community-led Local Development (CLLD) and the added value of LEADER.

In **FR-Picardie**, the contribution of LEADER to the Union priority 6 is referred to in the EP as a programme-specific evaluation topic.

In **BE-Flanders** the LEADER approach will be evaluated, based on self-assessments by the LEADER-groups and measure managers, combined with a global evaluation at programme level.

In many **German** RDPs the evaluation of LEADER is carried out by an evaluation of the contribution in the implementation of LEADER to achieve the objectives of the programme (based on indicators in the application process of the concrete measures) and by the self-assessment of LEADER at LAG-level (based on own set objectives and indicators).

In **Portugal** (and other Member States) the EP mentions the necessity to establish mechanisms of coordination between the evaluation of the RDP and the evaluation of the LDS. This requires the creation of a common framework for the evaluation of the LDS so as to integrate this information in the evaluation of the RDP and to ensure training and dissemination activities of the LAGs, to be developed by the National Rural Network.

In **ES-Andalucía** there will be a specific analysis of the efficiency of the CLLD and its management and the results obtained.

Other evaluation topics

Other evaluation topics were mentioned in the EPs of 10 Member States (BE; ES; FI; FR; HU; IT; RO; SE; SI; UK). These topics often overlap with the categories in the figure above, but some more specific evaluation topics (in many cases covering specific regional or territorial needs) not listed yet were found, as follows:

- contribution of the programme on employment in rural areas (FR-Martinique; FR-Champagne-Ardenne; ES-Murcia); on young people in agriculture (IT-Abruzzo, IT-Calabria; FR-Limousin);

- agro-environment-climate measures and assessment of their effects on water resources (FR-Poitou-Charentes);

- biodiversity (e.g. FR-Pays de la Loire; IT-Lazio; UK-Scotland), production units/farms (FR-Bretagne), preservation of water resources, economic development of the forestry sector, agro-food industry (e.g. FR-Pays de la Loire; IT-Molise); organic farming (FR-Midi-Pyrenees);

- territorial development: sustainable regional development and spatial planning (FR-PACA), territorial levelling effect (regional differences) (HU), territorial development (IT-Friuli-Venezia), less favoured mountain areas (RO), geographic distribution of aid in relation to environmental problems and rural location (SE);

- private-public partnership (FR-Champagne-Ardenne) and Innovation and technological transfers (FR-Auvergne); contribution to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (ES-Navarra; ES-Canary Islands).

Quality assurance and quality control activities for better evaluation

Very few EPs provide any information about the quality control mechanisms in the M&E process. In many Member States, the Evaluation Steering Groups (and the MA) have a key role in quality control.

In **Spain**, the EP foresees a set of evaluation activities that will improve the quality of evaluation: meetings for analysing the evaluation needs, the design of an annual working plan, the identification and evaluation of the quality of the data sources, the establishment of an alert system for monitoring the performance framework.

3.6 Data and information

According to the minimum requirement, this section should provide a brief description of the system to record, maintain, manage and report statistical information on RDP implementation and the provision of monitoring data for evaluation. It should identify the data sources to be used, data gaps, potential institutional issues related to data provision, and proposed solutions. This section should demonstrate that appropriate data management systems will be operational in due time.

Description of the information system

The information system to record, maintain, manage and report data on RDP implementation is (at least partly) described in 95% of the EPs. No description is provided in the EPs of DE (2 EPs), FI (1), FR (1) and IT (2). The characteristics of the information system are given in most of the EPs, sometimes not being very specific. Some examples are shown in the figure below.

Figure 18. Does the EP describe the information system on RDP implementation?[19]
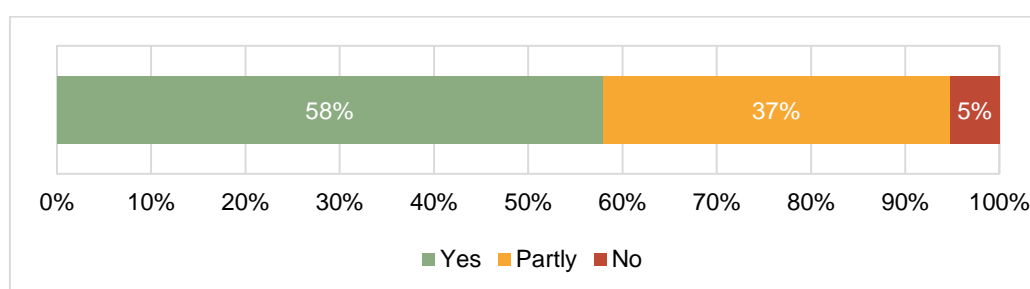
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

The information system is described in detail in **Slovakia**, including the sources of primary and secondary data on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries as well as describes how the existing gaps will be overcome. It also specifies databases used to collect data for evaluation. The main sources of primary data are the operation database IACS (Integrated Administration and Control System) for beneficiaries and for the total rural population. It is information sheets of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, which collects data from 2,600 entities spread across the entire country.

Progressive proposals are also included, e.g. how to link operation database with IACS and how to ensure high quality data collected from beneficiaries. It also shows clearly how the operation database collects data which will allow to construct control groups (data from annual account, production characteristics etc.). It describes in detail which data provider has its functions and it is visible which data collection problems have been resolved during the last programming period, e.g. the Farmland Bird Index (FBI), biotopes and the High Nature Value (HNV), water quality, use of pesticides, fertilisers, all significant information to be used in the 2014-2020 evaluation.

In **FI-Åland** the majority of the data and information collected to provide a basis for monitoring and evaluation is retrieved from the electronic system for administering support, used by the MA.

Area-based support is administered through the central support application of 'IACS support application' which will be used for the entire country. There is an electronic application system for the area-based payments, and the information is transferred directly to the database. The information of those

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[19] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

applicants who choose not to use the electronic application system, the application and details given in it will be transferred to the system manually so that the database contains all the information. Support for projects is administered in the electronic system 'Hyrrä', which is applied countrywide. The applicants create an application directly to the Hyrrä database. In the same way as in the IACS application, those applications that are not made electronically will be registered manually in the database by the MA administrators, resulting in a comprehensive database. Furthermore, the payment system 'Sampo' is used by the Rural Agency (Mavi) to execute the RDP payments. The reporting function of Sampo will also be used in compiling data and material for monitoring and evaluation of the programme. In addition to collection of statistical information, a system for environmental monitoring will be implemented through special studies or through the development of monitoring with respect to the environmental measures implemented in the selected focus areas. This is done to ensure adequate access to data within the designated area.

Wales has developed a sophisticated data management system. All data for the RDP will be collected through WEFO-online and stored in a computerised data capture system, ensuring all data in Annex 3 of Article 125(8) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 is collected. Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) Online / Programme and Project Information Management System (PPIMS) have been used by WEFO for the implementation of the 2007-13 programmes. The system is being developed to manage the Rural Development Programme (RDP) alongside the Structural Funds programmes for the 2014-20 period. It allows sponsor organisations to interact with Welsh Government at a number of stages during their project's lifecycle. Since its introduction WEFO's sponsors have become more familiar with its use and the system is working well. The use of WEFO-online to submit documentation to WEFO ensures that documents are automatically stored in the system. The system ensures compliance with Art. 70 Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 on the use of an electronic information system to hold beneficiary data. All schemes will be required to collect data at the level of the individual and organisation that they assist and transfer this to WEFO.

Specific provisions for data management

The information systems of the Member States were updated to meet the new requirements for M&E in this programming period. In a number of EPs (e.g. AT; FR), the information obligation by the beneficiaries will be better aligned with the evaluation requirements. Guidelines and agreements between the local/regional actors and the MA should ensure the availability of monitoring data on time for evaluation purpose. Overall, the EPs highlight new processes, better quality control, improved user interfaces, and a better coordination between the relevant actors as major changes to face the challenge and provide data on time. In SK beneficiaries have to face budget shortcuts in case they do not provide the requested data.

Data gaps, bottlenecks and possible solutions

With regard to data gaps and bottlenecks, potential difficulties in this programming period include: lack of information on context indicators at regional level (e.g. in ES), lack of updated information at certain territorial level (e.g. in BE), lack of a central database for M&E data and problems with matching and consolidation of data (e.g. in SE).

Only a few EPs report on possible solutions to overcome problems encountered and often they are not very specific. Some EPs refer to better coordination between the relevant actors and to offer specific training and develop guidelines and manuals for the beneficiaries. In FR-Lorraine application forms were adapted to the need of evaluation. In Finland a new environmental monitoring system is currently being prepared as there was the problem that different regions recorded monitoring data differently.

In most Member States the application forms are directly linked to the IT System in order to provide the necessary data. Guidelines were published to facilitate this process for the beneficiaries. LAGs also have access to the electronic application system.

With regard to **data protection**, very few EPs (e.g. several EPs of FR; EL; SE; SI include this issue, without further specifications.

The provisions to ensure a **good quality** of the monitoring data include the above mentioned guidelines (e.g. in EL, NL), training (e.g. FR-Corse; UK-Northern Ireland), the development of good practices (e.g. FR-Rhone-Alpes), counterfactual methods (e.g. in FR-Basse-Normandie; FR-Aquitaine).

3.7   Timeline of evaluation activities

According to the minimum requirement this EP section should contain the major milestones of the programming period and an indicative outline of the timing needed to ensure that results are available at the appropriate time.

Reference to common milestones

The major common milestones (AIRs, enhanced AIRs to be submitted in 2017 and 2019, *ex-post* evaluation in 2014) are, at least partly, addressed in almost every EP, while additional programme-specific evaluation milestones were found in about one-third of the EPs. The major common milestones were not addressed in IT-National and DE-Rural Network.

Figure 19. Does the EP reference to the major common milestones during the programming period?[20]
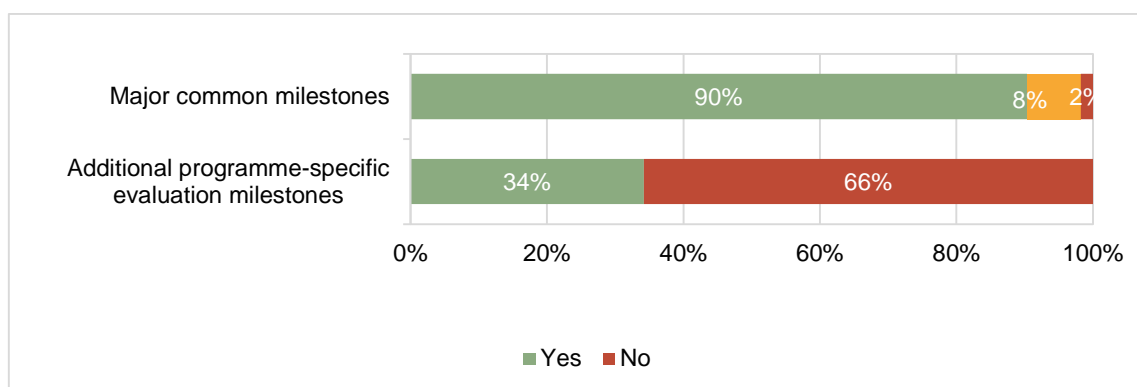
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

The additional programme-specific evaluation milestones mentioned in the EPs include[21]: the evaluation of the communication plan (BG, IT-Calabria), the evaluation of the information system (BG, LU in 2015), the evaluation of the NRN (BG; FR;LU), the evaluation of the functionality of selection criteria (FI in 2017, FR), the evaluation of the achievement of regional objectives (FR in 2019), the evaluation of measures insufficiently used by potential beneficiaries - low uptake - (FR-Martinique in 2017), the elaboration of an internal evaluation plan and the selection of the external evaluator (IT-Sardinia in 2015 and 2016), the elaboration of an handbook (NL), the revision of variables required in the operation database (ES-Madrid and Balearic Islands), and the review of the methodology (ES-Valencia in 2016) among others.

3.8   Communication of evaluation findings

According to the minimum requirement, this EP section should contain a description of how evaluation findings will be disseminated to target recipients, including a description of the mechanisms established to follow-up on the use of evaluation results.

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[20] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

[21] The planned year to conduct the mentioned programme-specific evaluation was added when it was available.

Communication approach and target groups

The approach to disseminate evaluation findings to target recipients is (at least partly) described in 92% of the EPs.

Figure 20. Does the EP describe the approach to disseminate evaluation findings to the target recipients?[22]

| 46% | 46% | 7% |

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Yes ■ Partly ■ No
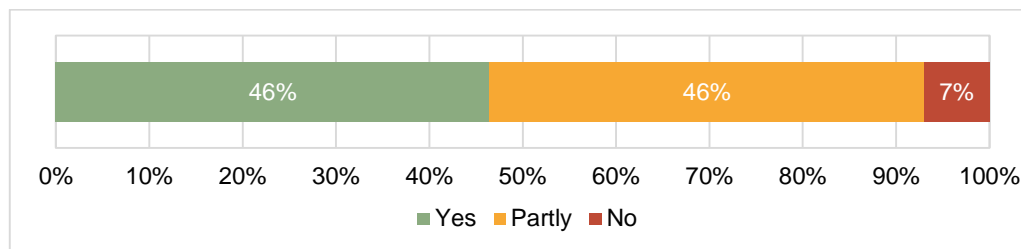
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Communication approaches among the Member States differ by target group. The aim is to adapt communication tools to the target recipients when disseminating evaluation results. While in many cases a website will be used to disseminate evaluation findings to the general public, often including user friendly and easy understandable summaries, meetings of the MC, focus groups and workshops with the relevant stakeholders, will be used internally in many countries to discuss the evaluation findings and present good practices with the aim of improving the implementation of the programme.

Regarding the envisaged target groups, illustrated in figure 21 below, in addition to the main bodies involved (MC, MA, PA, beneficiaries) more than half of the EPs mention the general public, the policy makers and the implementing bodies. NGOs, NRNs, LAGs and the scientific community are targeted to a lesser extent.

The European Commission, various technical working groups and Evaluation Steering Groups are also mentioned under 'other' target recipients.

In the RDP of the **UK-Northern Ireland** it is stated that "it has been noted that in the previous programme there was insufficient communication of evaluation results to policy teams. In order to improve communication with policy teams' regular meetings and seminars with presentations of findings will be arranged".

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[22] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Figure 21. Envisaged target recipients[23]
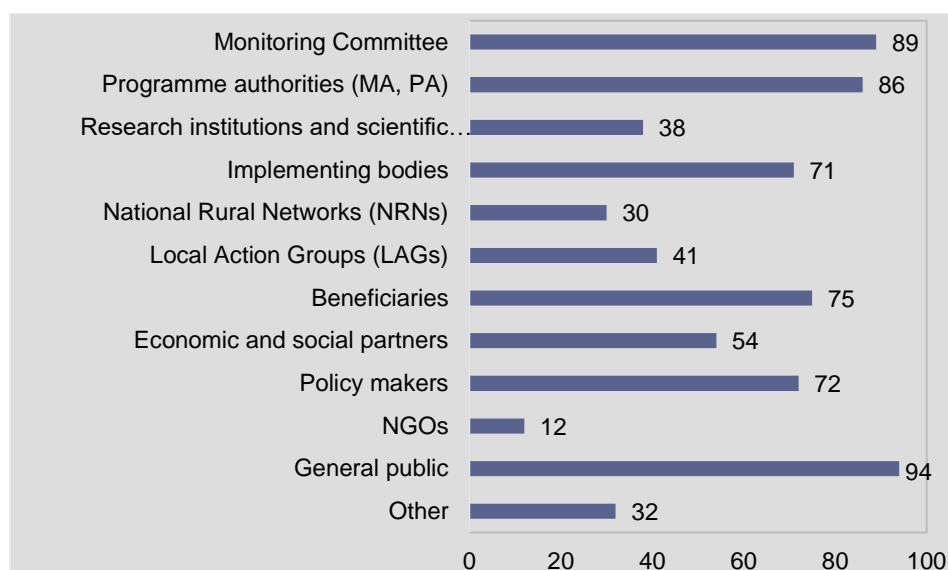
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Specification of information channels

With regard to the use of communication channels, most of the RDPs established a website to disseminate relevant information and evaluation findings. Events and publications are also cited, while social media and newsletters are used less.

Press releases, workshops and seminars are also referred to under 'other'.

Figure 22. Information channels used for dissemination[24]
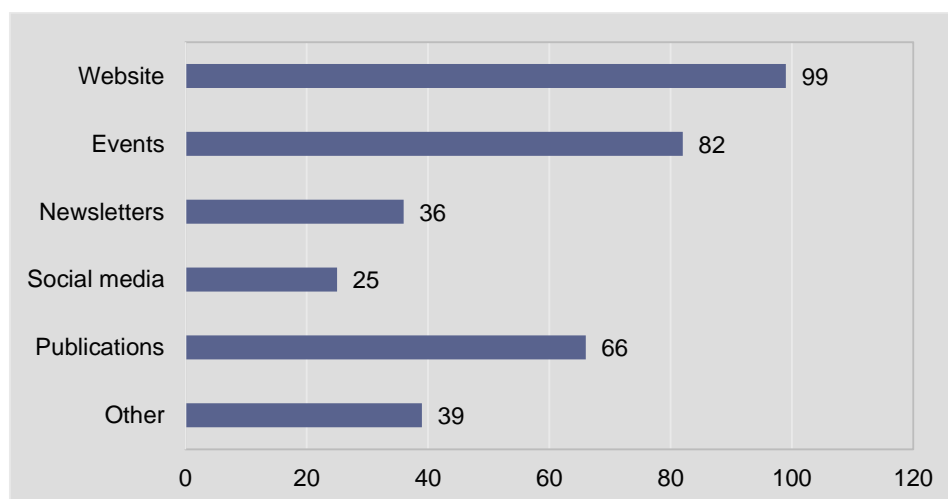
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Publicity

Most of the RDPs (68%) do not provide any information about the availability of evaluation reports online in full. In 29% of the RDPs it is mentioned that all evaluation reports will be published and available in full. Beside the full reports, summaries, easy readable summaries and brochures will also be published online.

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[23] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016
[24] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Figure 23. Are there provisions mentioned in the EP to ensure that all evaluations are made available to the public in full length?[25]
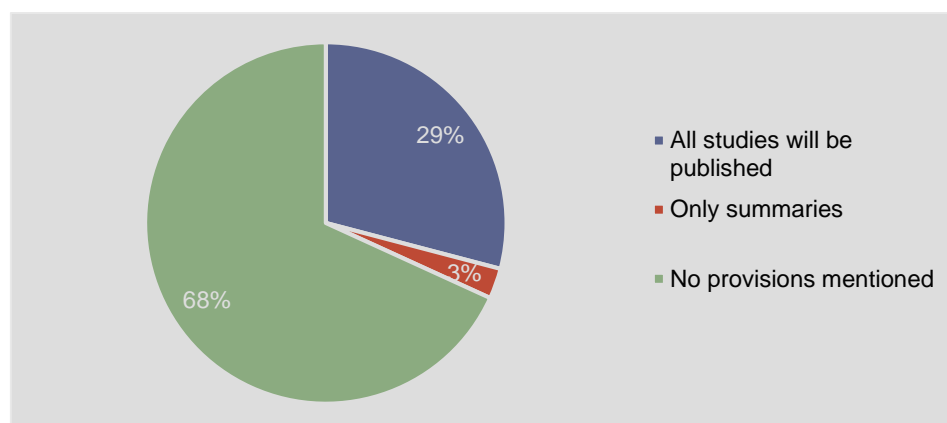
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Use of evaluation findings

The follow-up mechanisms on the use of evaluation findings are (at least partly) described in 65% of the Evaluation Plans. In a number of cases, there is only a general statement about the follow-up without any specifications.

The exchange of information takes place in focus groups, seminars or workshops with all relevant stakeholders, implementation bodies and external evaluators. In Finland there is a link to the good practice and the learning process related to evaluation during the last programming period. The elaboration and the use of an action plan is explicitly mentioned in AT, BG, FR-Guadeloupe, FR-Martinique and SI. In ES-Aragon, it is foreseen to organise an event in the middle of the programming period to reach conclusions on the different aspects of M&E, while in France the Rural Network monitors the follow-up of evaluation findings. In Germany, the discussion in the MC during the revision of the AIR before submitting it to the Commission will be a key mechanism for the follow-up of the implementation of the evaluation results.

The Monitoring Committee, the Managing Authority and the Evaluation Steering Committee are the main actors when it comes to the collection of information and the set-up of focus groups, etc., but their responsibilities and their interaction varies slightly across the Member States.

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[25] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Figure 24. Does the EP describe the follow-up mechanisms on the use of evaluation findings?[26]

| 25% | 40% | 35% |

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Yes ■ Partly ■ No
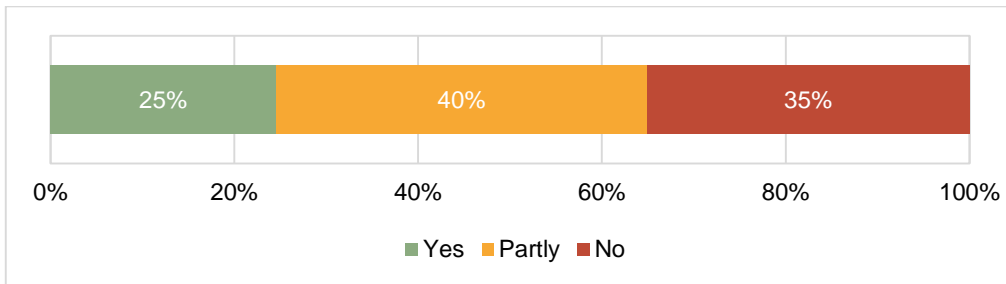
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

3.9 Resources for monitoring and evaluation

According to the minimum requirement, this EP section should describe the resources needed and foreseen to implement the plan, including an indication of administrative capacity, data, financial resources, IT needs. It should also describe the capacity building activities foreseen to ensure that the evaluation plan can be fully implemented.

Description of resources available for evaluation

The financial resources required for the implementation of the evaluation activities are described in 50% of the EPs, while 55% of EPs include a description of staff resources.

Figure 25. Does the EP describe the staff / financial resources needed for the implementation of the evaluation activities?[27]

| staff resources | 55% | 45% |
| financial resources | 50% | 50% |

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Yes ■ No
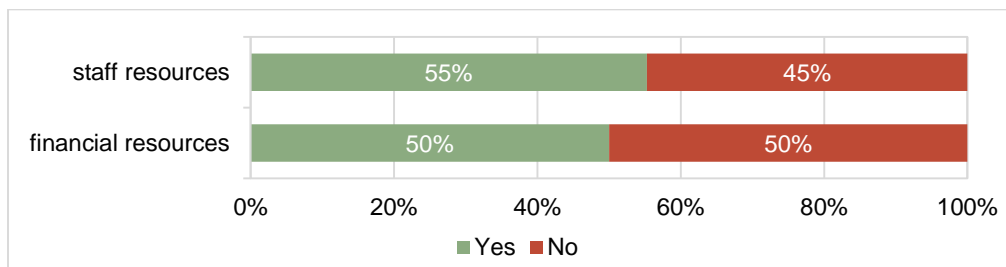
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Financial resources

The financial resources for evaluation were mainly presented in the form of a global budget. In some EPs (e.g. all German EPs) qualitative statements were made stating that sufficient resources will be provided.

As illustrated in the figure below, about one-third of the EPs present only qualitative information about the financial resources of this programming period. The global budget is reported in 41 of the EPs, while very few EPs specified the resources into detail providing information by year, by activity or by full-time equivalent.

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[26] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

[27] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Figure 26. In which way does the EP present the financial resources? (multiple answers possible)[28]
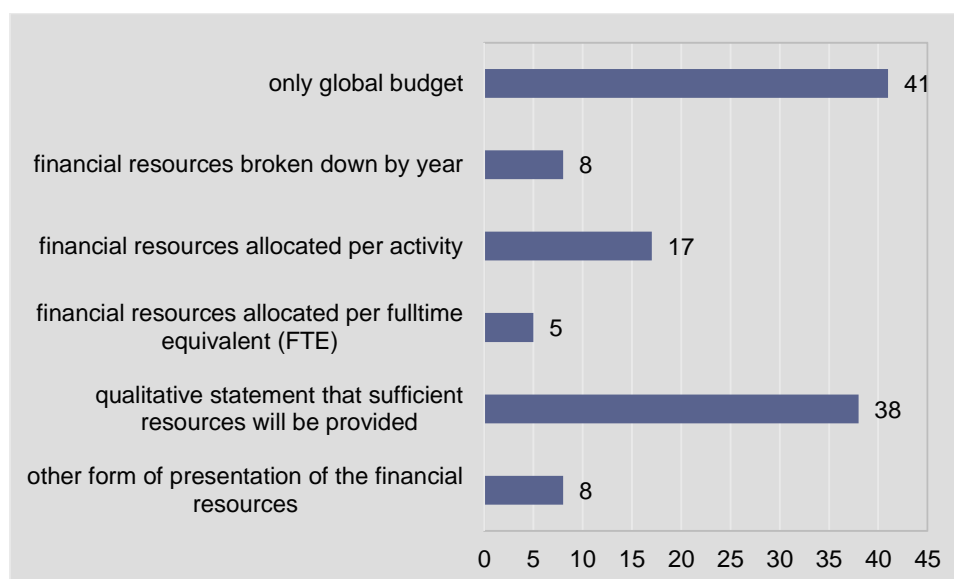
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

According to the (limited) quantitative information on financial resources provided, the percentage of the total programme budget 2014-2020 (EAFRD) allocated to implement the evaluation plan ranges from 0.06% (France-National) to 1.5% (ES - Islas Baleares). An average of 0.43% of the total programme budget (EAFRD) is planned in RDPs to cover the activities of the evaluation plan under the Technical Assistance budget. It is, however, not clear in all cases which exact costs are covered by the reported figures.

Ideally the budget for implementing the EP should be broken down into activities such as evaluation, monitoring, coordination and governance, and reporting (IT – Sicilia).

A specific situation is given in a Network programme where 1.9% of the total budget is allocated to evaluation activities (FR – National Rural Network programme), as it also includes evaluation activities covering other regional RDPs.

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[28] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Figure 27. % of total programme budget 14-20 (EAFRD) allocated to implement the evaluation plan[29]
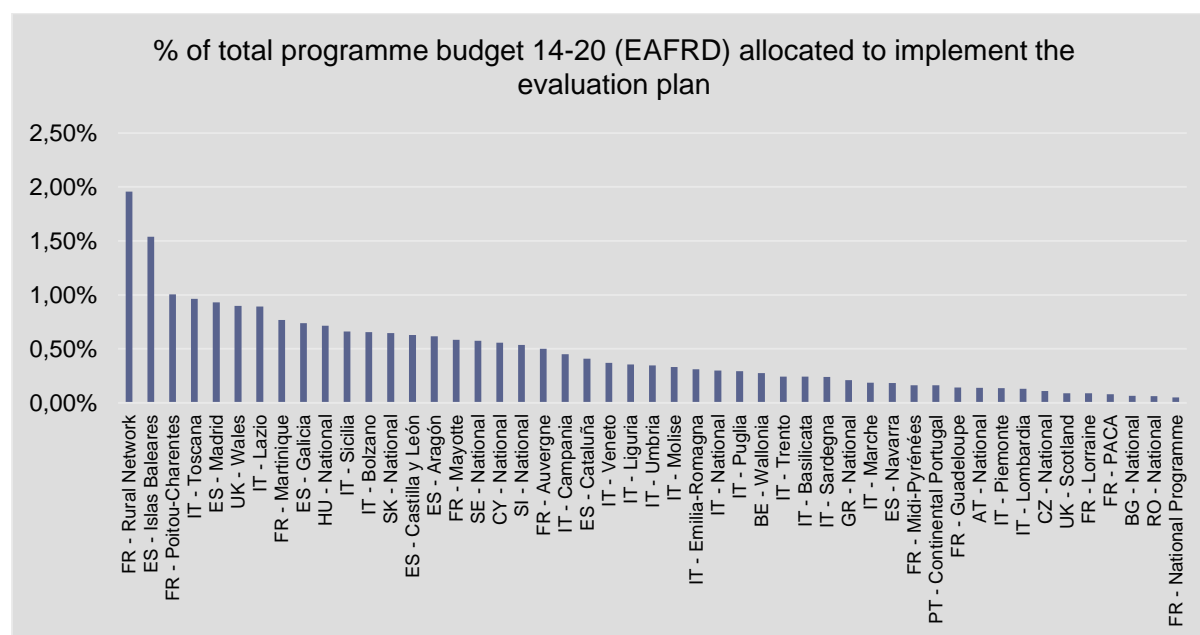
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Table 1. Financial resources by RDP to implement the EP[30]

Rural Development Programme	EU/EAFRD contribution to implement the EP (EUR)	EU contribution/ EAFRD to the total RDP 2014-2020 (EUR)	% of total programme budget 2014-2020 (EAFRD) allocated to implement the evaluation plan
FR - Rural Network	450,000	22,999,212	1.96%
ES - Islas Baleares	939,000	61,000,000	1.54%
FR - Poitou-Charentes	4,000,000	397,522,211	1.01%
IT - Toscana	4,000,000	414,746,000	0.96%
ES - Madrid	712,320	76,529,160	0.93%
UK - Wales	5,882,354	655,839,163	0.90%
IT - Lazio	3,000,000	336,388,000	0.89%
FR - Martinique	1,000,000	130,200,000	0.77%
ES - Galicia	6,570,000	889,800,000	0.74%
HU - National	6,500,000	907,840,959	0.72%
IT - Sicilia	8,847,168	1,338,712,000	0.66%
IT - Bolzano	2,400,000	366,405,380	0.66%
SK - National	10,000,000	1,545,272,844	0.65%
ES - Castilla y León	6,099,326	969,189,286	0.63%
ES - Aragón	2,874,562	466,986,760	0.62%
FR - Mayotte	350,000	60,000,000	0.58%
SE - National	10,150,000	1,763,565,250	0.58%
CY - National	736,000	132,244,377	0.56%

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[29] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016, only those programmes were considered who reported a budget to implement the evaluation plan

[30] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016, only those programmes were considered who reported a budget to implement the evaluation plan

Rural Development Programme	EU/EAFRD contribution to implement the EP (EUR)	EU contribution/ EAFRD to the total RDP 2014-2020 (EUR)	% of total programme budget 2014-2020 (EAFRD) allocated to implement the evaluation plan
SI - National	4,491,900	837,849,803	0.54%
FR - Auvergne	6,013,468	1,202,693,608	0.50%
IT - Campania	5,000,000	1,110,935,000	0.45%
ES - Cataluña	1,430,686	348,652,161	0.41%
IT - Veneto	1,900,000	510,679,000	0.37%
IT - Liguria	480,000	135,000,000	0.36%
IT - Umbria	1,315,000	378,012,000	0.35%
IT - Molise	700,000	210,000,000	0.33%
IT - Emilia-Romagna	1,600,000	512,990,000	0.31%
IT - National	6,420,000	2,140,000,000	0.30%
IT - Puglia	2,900,000	990,918,000	0.29%
BE - Wallonia	730,000	264,031,878	0.28%
IT - Trento	733,250	301,470,451	0.24%
IT - Basilicata	1,000,000	411,497,000	0.24%
IT - Sardegna	1,500,000	628,035,000	0.24%
EL - National	10,000,000	4,718,291,793	0.21%
IT - Marche	1,000,000	537,961,503	0.19%
ES - Navarra	249,550	136,514,270	0.18%
FR - Midi-Pyrénées	2,150,000	1,307,335,083	0.16%
PT - Continental Portugal	5,755,000	3,500,000,000	0.16%
FR - Guadeloupe	250,000	174,024,818	0.14%
AT - National	5,500,000	3,938,000,000	0.14%
IT - Piemonte	1,500,000	1,093,054,267	0.14%
IT - Lombardia	1,500,000	1,157,646,104	0.13%
CZ - National	2,500,000	2,305,673,996	0.11%
UK - Scotland	763,060	844,000,000	0.09%
FR - Lorraine	300,000	329,091,290	0.09%
FR - PACA	360,000	476,769,791	0.08%
BG - National	1,499,731	2,336,716,966	0.06%
RO - National	5,000,000	8,100,000,000	0.06%
FR - National Programme	300,000	607,750,000	0.05%
Average % (without FR - Rural Network)			0,43%

Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Examples of allocation of resources in Member States are presented below.

In **Greece** (National RDP) the required resources were estimated based on the actions contained in the modules of the EP for governance and coordination, for the preparation and implementation of the evaluation, for the reports and the dissemination of the evaluations results. The total amount of expenditure allocated to evaluation activities (including the necessary supporting studies and information system e.g. creation or update) will be between EUR 8 and EUR 10 million, which is approximately 20% of the funds of the technical assistance.

In **Hungary** (National RDP) EUR 6.5 million are allocated in the framework of TA for: the implementation of evaluation activities presented in section 3 of the EP; capacity building, HR

development; carrying out public procurement procedure to select evaluators; preparing analyses, statistical reports, studies; carrying out tasks of control system, technical assistance; the operation of informatics systems, IT development, connecting the IT systems of different organisations; methodological developments of evaluations, and providing training, workshops, conferences.

In **Austria** (National RDP) the evaluation department II/1 within the ministry BMLFUW is equipped with two full-time equivalent staff to deal with the organisation, implementation and coordination of the monitoring and evaluation activities. The Implementing bodies who are in regular contact with the evaluators, use no funds from the technical assistance. The Paying Authority and the implementing bodies at Länder level will provide sufficient financial and personnel capacity to support the M&E activities from their own resources. The cost of the evaluation experts is expected to rise to around EUR 5.5 million and it will be covered by the technical assistance budget. The total cost of the evaluation - including costs that are covered by national means - will amount to around EUR 8 million.

In **Portugal** (Continental Portugal) the EP states that it is difficult in the programming phase to estimate accurately the costs of the implementation of the system for monitoring and evaluation, since a set of decisions that may influence is still open.   However, based on the experience of the previous programming period, the MA prepared a preliminary version of the financial framework, considering: expenditure relating to human resources, recruitment, training, assessment, information dissemination and a participation in the costs of adaptation of the information system of the RDP. The EP contains a table with the allocation of financial resources broken down by year.

In the **UK – Wales** costs were calculated very accurately as EUR 5,882,354. This is a large sum for a small country but it is underpinned by an extraordinarily thorough approach.

Staff resources

Regarding staff resources, most of the EPs only include qualitative statements about staff resources. However, a number of EPs (e.g. BE; CZ; MT) report the need of additional human resources due to the higher level of monitoring and evaluation requirements compared to the last programming period. The amount of full-time equivalent financed by Technical Assistance ranges from less than one (e.g. FR-National Programme; LU) to four (e.g. ES-Basque Country; IT-Toscana; DK) and 5.5 (ES-Navarra). Most of the EPs mention the need of contracting additional external experts.

Capacity-building

Information about capacity building was found in about half of the EPs. While a number of statements were very general, some EPs provided detailed information about what is planned in this respect during this programming period. The main focus lies on training regarding M&E for different target groups, both for internal (MA) staff, for implementing bodies, with the objective of disseminating a common evaluation culture. Member States refer to internal and national evaluation-related training but also to those offered at the European level (ENRD, European Commission).

Figure 28. Does the EP describe capacity-building activities for internal administrators and implementing bodies?[31]

| 49% | 51% |

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

■ Yes ■ No
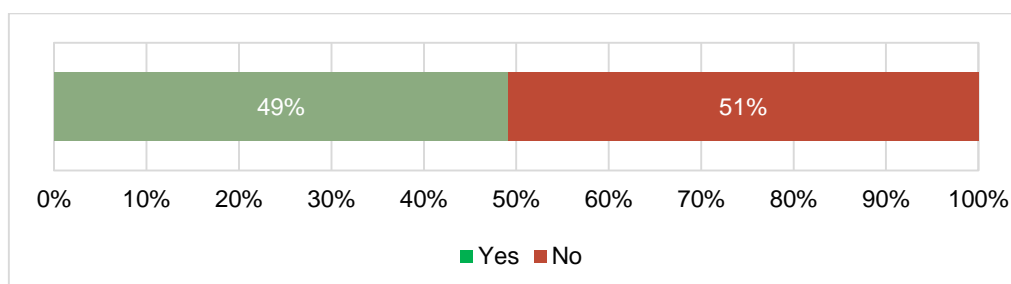
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

In a number of cases (e.g. BE; FR-Rhone-Alpes; IT-Marche; LV) training abroad, such as workshops organised by the ENRD and the European Commission was mentioned. Another important aspect regarding capacity building is training in the use of the IT-System (e.g. in ES-Galicia; ES-Madrid). In Greece, there are two education cycles, one for executives of implementing bodies, and one for executives of LAGs with emphasis of self-assessment, as the need for capacity building activities is particularly high due to the significant participation of implementing bodies and for the first time activation of interim MAs (13 regional MAs). In FR-Mayotte a lifelong learning plan was set-up by the MA, to address the training needs of the staff.

Specific provisions for NRN, LEADER/CLLD/LAG

The description of the resources related to the evaluation of **NRN** is reported in only a few EPs. In six EPs the NRN will provide capacity building through training courses for the PA and the LAGs. In France, the NRN evaluation is allocated a minimal amount of EUR 0.9 million in order to achieve at least nine evaluation studies (national level).

With regard to provisions for **LEADER/CLLD/ LAG** no specific information was provided in the EPs. As stated above, LAGs will receive capacity building, and in some cases the EP refers to staff resources within the MA which will provide LEADER support.

3.10 Good practice

Good practice approaches in the evaluation plans were identified by the geographic experts in three main areas:

• governance and coordination

• evaluation of thematic issues, and

• data management.

Almost no good practice approaches were detected in the evaluation of national rural networks.

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[31] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

Figure 29. Good practice in the different sections of the evaluation plan[32]

Good practice in the evaluation plan

- Good practice in governance and coordination
- Good practice in the evaluation of thematic issues
- Good practice in data management
- Good practice in the evaluation cross-cutting issues (sustainable development, climate…
- Good practice communication of evaluation findings
- Good practice in the evaluation of CLLD/LEADER/LAG
- Good practice in the provision of resources for monitoring and evaluation
- Good practice in the evaluation of NRN

0   10   20   30   40   50   60

Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

The following section presents a selection of good practice examples per different section of the EP.

Good practice examples in the area of governance and coordination

In most evaluation plans the coordination arrangements between different key actors and ESI Funds (such as frameworks and technical working groups) were identified as good practice. In other cases, evaluation related training courses for the MAs, technical support for evaluation by the respective technical departments and a clear role of an independent evaluation department were mentioned.

An advantage of the **Austrian** administrative structure is the independent evaluation department II/1, which holds a clear role and acts independently of the MA and implementing bodies. To overcome the evaluation focus at measure level, priority responsible persons were introduced in the administrative system for each of the six RD priorities in order to act as contact persons for the evaluators at this level.

A good feature of the **FR-Rhône-Alpes** governance and coordination arrangements is the coexistence of a Monitoring Committee dealing with the RDP uptake and steering and six regional thematic committees responsible for the evaluation findings and recommendations' follow-up.

FR- Midi-Pyrénées – as many other French programmes - tried to ensure the coordination of evaluation activities related to all ESI Funds in the region. It established an Inter-Funds Monitoring Committee (whose composition reflects issues for the entire implementation of all ESI Funds Operational Programmes, including the RDP), an EAFRD-specific Monitoring Committee and *ad-hoc* Evaluation Steering groups specifically dealing with the RDP evaluations activities.

ES - La Rioja set-up an Evaluation Coordination Group to coordinate and monitor the different evaluations. Its characteristics are a permanent group composed of a small number of people, mainly from the Monitoring Committee and also representatives of entities that participate in the evaluation. The ECG cooperates with at least one manager from each measure for the purposes of the ongoing evaluation. La Rioja has also set-up a coordination framework through a Coordination Committee for EU Funds. All organisations responsible for ERDF, ESF and EAFRD participate in this Committee. The Committee will share the M&E activities under each Fund, present the results of evaluations and assess

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[32] EP Baseline assessment – July 2016

the results obtained. There are also mechanisms to take advantage of potential synergies that may emerge during the evaluation process.

SE – National established an Evaluation Secretariat, who has an overall responsibility for coordinating and organising evaluation activities. It also established a research group that is responsible for method development and supports the MA in improving quality of evaluations.

There is excellent coordination described in the **UK - Wales** within the RDP and reach across other ESI Funds.

An encouraging element of the **Irish** model is that it is not seen just about meeting EU requirements but the whole architecture of evaluation must also be dovetailed to meet national requirements.

In **EL – National** it is planned to create a National Evaluation Network in order to stimulate lacking evaluation activities.

In **HU – National** the Prime Minister's Office organises training courses for the MAs in order to ensure common practices primarily in evaluation of horizontal issues.

PT - Continental Portugal foresees the creation of an evaluation coordination group which has the objective to coordinate evaluation activities and harmonize guidelines.

In **DE-Saxony** the technical support ('Fachliche Begleitung') from the technical departments helps to better monitor and evaluate the RDP measures. Evaluators work closely with the technical departments. Findings will be integrated in the AIRs and recommendations will be discussed with the MA and the MC to further develop the programme. It is the responsibility of the respective department of the Saxon State Ministry for the Environment and Agriculture (SMUL). They can commission external service providers.

An advantage of the evaluation process in **BE-Wallonie** is the selection of an external evaluator to deal with all RDP evaluation activities from mid-2015 to mid-2019 in a first phase, and from the beginning of 2021 to the end of 2024 in a second phase. This shall ensure evaluators' independency from the programme implementation for the duration of the programming period.

Good practice examples in the evaluation of thematic issues

In a number of evaluation plans there is an explicit desire to deepen the evaluation in areas that matter to the programme. Important topics were identified in an early stage to allow preparation work. A deepening of knowledge and evaluation on some themes seems to be a very encouraging step. Examples of good practice are given below.

The EP in the **FR - Basse-Normandie** RDP – in line with other French programmes - specifies precise evaluation themes and judgment criteria per Union Priority, focusing on the major challenges addressed by the programme.

The **FR-Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur** EP lists programme-specific thematic evaluation activities that are expected to be undertaken. For each of these thematic evaluation activities, specific evaluation questions and indicators have been developed and linked to potential data providers.

In **ES - Región de Murcia** – as in other Spanish RDPs - the EP not only considers the common evaluation thematic issues but it includes other interesting specific topics such as horizontal objectives and specific issues of the region.

In **IE – National** the evaluation plan is strong on dealing with climate change issues.

Identifying HNV farmland in **Estonia** has been one of the important themes, which was started in the previous programme period already.

UK – Wales mentions especially CLLD and across business issues.

IT- Umbria focuses on the traditional agricultural sectors (olive oil, wine, cereals, and tobacco) whereas **IT-Toscana** mentions as important topics the evaluation of innovation (Operational Groups of the European Innovation Partnership), climate change and environment (biodiversity).

The Managing Authority in **FR-Picardie** as other French programmes plans an 'evaluation warning system' based on output indicators. This system allows to alert stakeholders involved in the programme steering when there is a low or no uptake of some rural development measures or insufficient results compared to the objectives of the RDP. In those cases, indeed, the MA is expected to launch additional thematic evaluation activities addressing these issues at programme-specific milestones. This is expected to contribute to creating stronger and better linkages between the monitoring and evaluation system and the RDP implementation.

Good practice examples in data management

Some serious effort has gone into developing better data management and e-governance, e.g. development of indicator fiches, collaboration agreements between key actors, improvement of operations database, quality assurance for the collection of monitoring and evaluation data. However, also some threats were identified (HU).

FI – Åland Islands plan the creation of an environmental monitoring system to ensure data for evaluations.

In **Estonia** a very high percentage of applications is directly managed through the electronic tool of the paying agency (PA). The PA improves its tools continuously and it is foreseen for some measures to apply only through this electronic tool, which allows much quicker data management. The PA also provides data to the ongoing evaluators for analysing and studies.

In **FR-National** guidelines and fiches for the calculation of specific indicators will be developed to ensure the timely availability and reliability of monitoring and evaluation data.

FR - Poitou-Charentes Regional observatories have been precisely identified and will be involved in the provision of monitoring data in diverse thematic areas (Regional Observatory on the Environment, Regional Agency for Climate and Environment Evaluation, Partnership network related to data on water resources in Poitou-Charentes, ATMO).

Midi-Pyrénées MA foresees a process of quality assurance for the collection of monitoring and evaluation data. The MA identifies data gaps and inconsistencies in operation and statistic databases as well as in the data transmitted by LAGs. A table then summarises these anomalies case by case and is sent to all departments which, within the MA, are in charge of projects appraisal for them to review and complete the data. An *ex post* control check will then be ensured to report the evolutions of information.

In **HU-National** the present PA has a very good monitoring data collection system. All data are collected through an electronic platform and the reliability of data can be checked immediately. However, this will be jeopardised since the ARDA which plays the role of PA will be liquidated.

IT - Friuli-Venezia Giulia the MA established collaboration agreements with the PA in order to make the necessary data available.

The **Lombardy** region in IT has invested significant resources (human and financial) to implement a complex data management system. The result is the next birth of a complete system and functioning both for monitoring and for the evaluation.

In **SK – National** there is certainly very good practice in ensuring data for evaluation and using advanced methods within the farming, food processing and forestry sector, especially in the field of socio-economic indicators. Also very good practice in using the PA monitoring system to collect a lot of data to be able to construct matched control groups.

The MA in **ES - Galicia** – as it is the case also in other ES programmes - described a very ambitious data management system that will be the key stone for the monitoring system. It includes different management applications from different units and it allows the MA to observe the progress in the implementation of the programme at any time.

ES - Madrid describes a three-step system for data management which seems very solid and well-planned for implementing the evaluation. The repetition of the three steps is a really good practice as it will improve the system as the programme goes on.

Good practice in the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD/LAG

Overall, the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD is still very 'nebulous' but some good approaches could be identified as presented below.

The Managing Authority in Austria started in 2014 to build capacity within LAGs for a common progress control system of Local Development Strategies and for yearly reporting.   The MA provided a guidance for the elaboration and application of the 'impact model' for planning and progress control of Local Development Strategies (May 2014).   A series of seminars for LAGs were held in 2014 and 2015 related to the elaboration of the LDS and to the introduction of the so called 'impact mode'.

In **BE-Flanders** evaluation is based on self-assessment in combination with a global evaluation on a programme level.

In **IT-Lazio** LAGs have to make a self-assessment according to the standards defined by the steering group and with the regional support.

IT – Campania the independent evaluator will have to hold training courses directed to the LAGs staff.

In the **Spanish** programmes the evaluation of the CLLD/LEADER/LAG is mentioned in several sections of the RDP, anyway a more detailed plan will be needed in the future.

Good practice in the evaluation cross-cutting issues (sustainable development, climate change, innovation, equality and non-discrimination)

There is only very limited information on the promising approaches on how to evaluate cross-cutting issues.

The **SI** evaluation plan put much emphasis on climate change. Knowledge transfer measures focusing on climate change and implementation of climate mitigation measures shall be looked at.

UK-England is quite strong on Climate Change Monitoring.

UK - Northern-Ireland is clear in wanting to check out equality issues.

The **Spanish** evaluation plans mention the evaluation of the cross-cutting issues such as sustainability, climate change, innovation. Taking into account the importance of job creation in Spain it would be very relevant to put also job creation as a horizontal issue.

The **ES – Extremadura** programme will have a statistical information management system that allows to obtain necessary information for monitoring and evaluation including the contribution to cross-cutting objectives.

Good practice communication of evaluation findings

Not many but very interesting communication approaches were detected in the evaluation plans.

Estonia plans annual information days for RDP facilitators and wider public to introduce studies carried out by ongoing evaluators.

FI Åland Islands incorporated the concept of learning from the evaluation process in the RDP evaluation. It means that all evaluation activities are linked to a specific follow-up work in the form of e.g. seminars or trainings to clarify the results of evaluations and to implement modification suggestions.

FR-Aquitaine provides an Inter-Funds Platform aiming at disseminating evaluation results for all ESI Funds Operational Programmes.

IT - Friuli-Venezia Giulia plans a specific evaluation activity to evaluate the effectiveness of the communication plan.

IT – Puglia developed a smartphone 'app' for communication of evaluation results.

The number of diffusion channels described in the EP of **ES-Galicia** is very high and using different channels is a good practice for reaching a wider public.

The communication Plan of **ES-Navarra** is very ambitious and complete and the diffusion channels are very well linked with the type of target agent.

Good practice in the provision of resources for monitoring and evaluation

The EP of **ES-Navarra** is very detailed considering the evaluation activities that will be funded under the budget allocated for the implementation of the RDP. It is a good practice that the EP lists the set of activities that could be funded under the budget allocated to the implementation of the EP.

UK Wales plans to invest heavily and have very high expectations of good impact evaluation. This is 10 times the allocated resource for Scotland which is a bigger region.

In **ES - Andalucía** the subsection about the resources is very detailed concerning human resources (however, information about financial resources is missing).

Good practice in the evaluation of NRN

Information on this topic is rarely given in the evaluation plans.

In **BE-Flanders** Evaluation methodology is a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, such as a general 'customer' satisfaction survey.

In **ES - National Programme** the NRN is treated almost as a cross-cutting item in the EP and it appears in every section. This EP has the additional responsibility of evaluating the NRN and considering what is explained it is very easy to understand how it is done. Also, it is a very good practice that the EP considers the experience obtained from the last period in the evaluation of the NRN 2007-2013 and it includes it in this new National Programme (that did not exist in the previous period).

In the **UK – Scotland**, it is worth mentioning that the previous NRN evaluation was robust and critical and to which the Scottish Government listened and responded.

3.11 Summary assessment, conclusions and recommendations on better evaluation planning

With regard to the **quality** of evaluation plans it can be concluded that the provisions made for monitoring and evaluation in the RDPs are overall adequate to ensure that sufficient and appropriate evaluation activities are undertaken and to provide information needed for programme steering, for the Annual Implementation Reports to be submitted in 2017 and 2019 and the *ex-post* evaluation, and to ensure that data needed for RDP evaluation is available.

Strengths have been identified as: the clear commitment given to the Common EU objectives, the efforts to describe the set-up of the evaluation-related governance system in the RDPs; the increased concern with ensuring the quality of evaluation by making use of non-mandatory evaluation steering groups, the completion of the EP with detailed internal planning documents and careful planning of provisions to disseminate evaluation findings to appropriate target groups.

Weaknesses have been identified with respect to vagueness of the specifications on the resources used for monitoring and evaluation, the unclear timeline of evaluation activities besides those required by the legal framework and the missing methodological specifications and descriptions of mechanisms of how these will be made.

Based on the EP screening, there are certain areas that should be specifically observed in the next Annual Implementation Report:

- **Data management:** Proper functioning of the data collection system, robustness and quality of data and the availability of data on time. A number of information systems were updated to meet the new requirements of this programming period, or a still being updated. Many EPs do not provide provisions on how to address potential data gaps and bottlenecks. Furthermore, the definition of programme specific indicators and the calculation of result indicators, gross and net values is a relevant issue to be observed.

- **Capacity building / support of LAGs:** On time provision of support and assistance to LAGS in order to enable them to effectively assess CLLD strategies 2014-2020 is often not specified.

- **Secondary contributions / net effects:** The collection of necessary data and the measurement of net effects is not mentioned in a number of EPs.

- **Resources:** The section on (financial and staff) resources devoted to fulfilling the EP is poor in a number of cases. There is a lack of information related to the financial resources needed and foreseen to implement the plan or the IT needs.

- **Counterfactual evaluation:** More details should be provided on the specific approach to conducting counterfactual evaluation and the method for creating control groups and data collection of non-beneficiaries.

- **Information exchange / coordination:** There could be more specific information on coordination with other ESI Funds, especially in relation to LEADER/CLLD and information exchange between evaluators and implementers.

- **Timing:** There should be a focus on the timely collection of data, the timely provision of data to the evaluators and a time schedule for the intended evaluations and an explanation of the reasons.

4 THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE EVALUATION PLANS

4.1 Background

Starting in June 2016, and for every year until 2024, Member States shall submit to the European Commission an Annual Implementation Report (AIR) on the implementation of the previous calendar year's Rural Development Programme.

The 2016 report covers the calendar years 2014 and 2015. The AIR provides information about the progress concerning the implementation of the RDP and the evaluation plan. The AIRs are drafted and submitted by the Member States and are subject to admissibility and approval procedures.

The screening of section 2 of the AIR submitted in 2016 was carried out by the Evaluation Helpdesk in July/early August 2016 for two purposes: (1) to synthesise the information contained in section 2 a-g, and (2) to draft a synthesis working paper which feeds into the ESI Fund common summary report.

The information basis for the screening are the following sub-sections of the AIR submitted in 2016 according to SFC2014 EAFRD AIR technical guidance 'Proposed technical structure and content of Annual Implementation Reports (AIR)':

- 2a) Description of any modifications made to the evaluation plan in the RDP during the year, with their justification;

- 2b) Description of the evaluation activities undertaken during the year (in relation to section 3 of the evaluation plan);

- 2c) Description of activities undertaken in relation to the provision and management of data (in relation to section 4 of the evaluation plan);

- 2d) A list of completed evaluations, including references to where they have been published on-line;

- 2e) A summary of completed evaluations, focusing on evaluation findings;

- 2f) Description of communication activities undertaken in relation to publicising evaluation findings (in relation to section 6 of the evaluation plan);

- 2g) Description of the follow-up given to evaluation results (in relation to section 6 of the evaluation plan).

The analysis follows the structure and the content of section 2 of the AIR submitted in 2016.

4.2 Completeness of the AIR submitted in 2016 - section 2

Only 15 AIRs (or 13%) provided information on all seven sections, as illustrated in the figure below. In about one-fourth of the AIRs submitted in 2016 only one section or no information at all was reported.

Figure 30. Completeness of the AIRs submitted in 2016 by filled out sub-section[33]
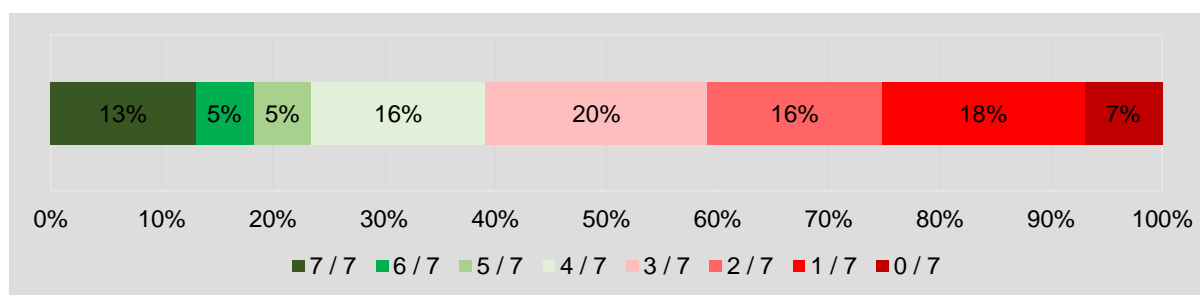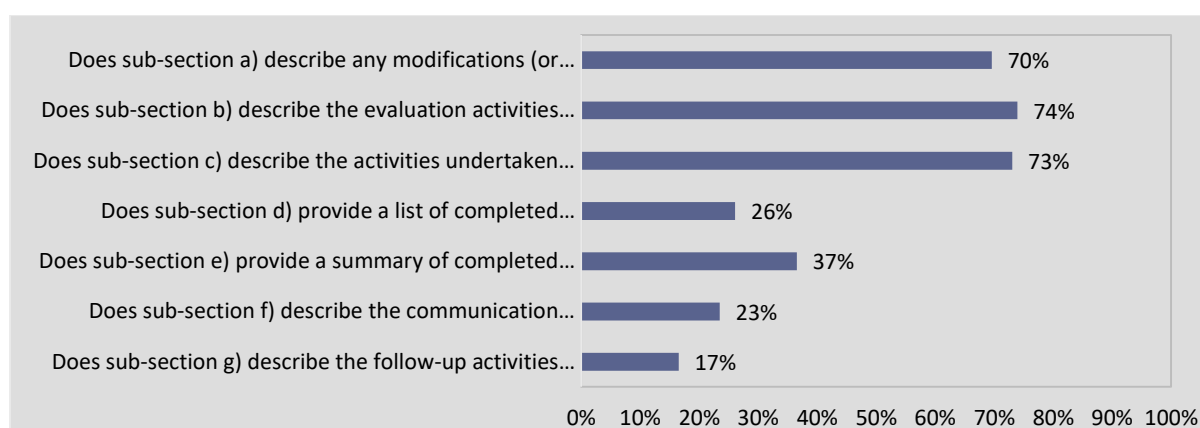

Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

The figure below illustrates the share of the completeness of the seven sections of the AIRs submitted in 2016 is illustrated. While the first three sections are completed in about two-thirds of the AIRs submitted in 2016, they are less complete with regard to sections d) to g), where less than one-third provide the information. However, this is also due to fact the RDPs are in an early stage and as sections d) to g) depend form each other. 8 AIRs (from ES, IT) do not report evaluation related contents at all (=empty section 2 of the AIR), while few other others report mainly contents in relation to the ex-ante evaluation, or dissemination activities (e.g. ES-Extremadura, LU, HU).

Figure 31. Completeness of each sub-section of the AIRs submitted in 2016[34]

Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

4.3 Description of any modifications made to the evaluation plan in the RDP during the year, with their justification (Sub-section a)

This sub-section describes the modifications of the EP in 2014 and 2015.

Modifications of the EP were reported in six AIRs submitted in 2016 in four Member States, namely in BE-Wallonia, ES-Basque country, FR-National Programme, FR-Franche-Comte, FR-Paca and IT-Emiglia Romana.

The modifications concentrate on the following areas:

• changes in bodies who facilitate data collection;

• changes in the timing of evaluation activities (evaluation of the RDP implementation initially envisaged in 2016 is postponed to 2017 and will be conducted in a multi-funds approach parallel to the evaluation of the other ESI Funds implementation in the region);

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[33] AIR submitted in 2016 Screening – August 2016
[34] AIR submitted in 2016 Screening – August 2016

- the elaboration of an inter-funds EP covering all ESI Funds in the region was omitted;

- the budget for financing the EP out of the technical assistance was corrected regarding VAT.

4.4 Description of the evaluation activities undertaken during the year (Sub-section b)

This sub-section describes the progress in implementing the EPs and is based on the screening of section 2 of the draft[35] annual implementation reports (AIR) submitted in 2016 which include the evaluation activities undertaken during the years 2014 and 2015.

Overall, 176 single evaluation activities could be detected in the years 2014, 2015 from the reported information in the AIRs submitted in 2016, excluding the 18 reported *ex-ante* evaluations. Evaluation activities reported include not only the conduction of evaluations, but also the preparation of evaluation-related handbooks, guidelines or manuals and different kind of meetings, working groups, the selection of external evaluators, the set-up of the evaluation steering group and evaluation-related training activities.

As illustrated in the figure below, most of the activities were related to cross-cutting issues and the RD priority 4, but also to CLLD/ LEADER/ LAGs, followed by activities related to the other RD priorities. Fewer activities were reported in relation to net effects and secondary contributions and the quality assurance.

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[35]   It does not take into account subsequent versions of AIR submitted in 2016 sent following improvement requests from DG AGRI.

Figure 32. Planned Evaluation topics (EPs) and evaluation activities (AIRs submitted in 2016)[36]
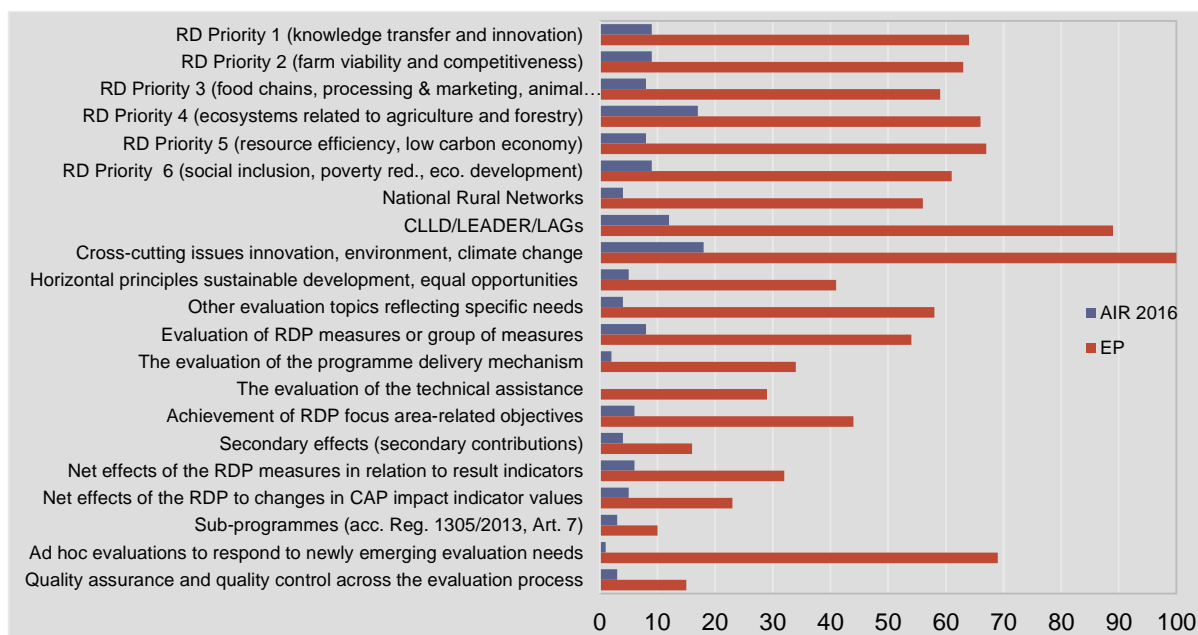
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

Examining the reported evaluation activities by phase and Member State, as it is illustrated in the Figure below, they mainly concern the planning and preparation phase of evaluations. With regard to this phase, 116 activities were reported in the AIRs submitted in 2016, e.g. the preparation of Terms of Reference and tendering procedures, set-up of administrative arrangements etc.

Thirty-seven evaluation-related activities can be linked to the structuring phase, e.g. review of evaluation questions and indicators, development of an evaluation approach and methods

Twenty-three activities were reported from the conduction and dissemination phase.

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[36] EP Baseline Assessment & AIR submitted in 2016 Screening – July / August 2016

Figure 33. Number of reported evaluation activities by Member State and phase[37]
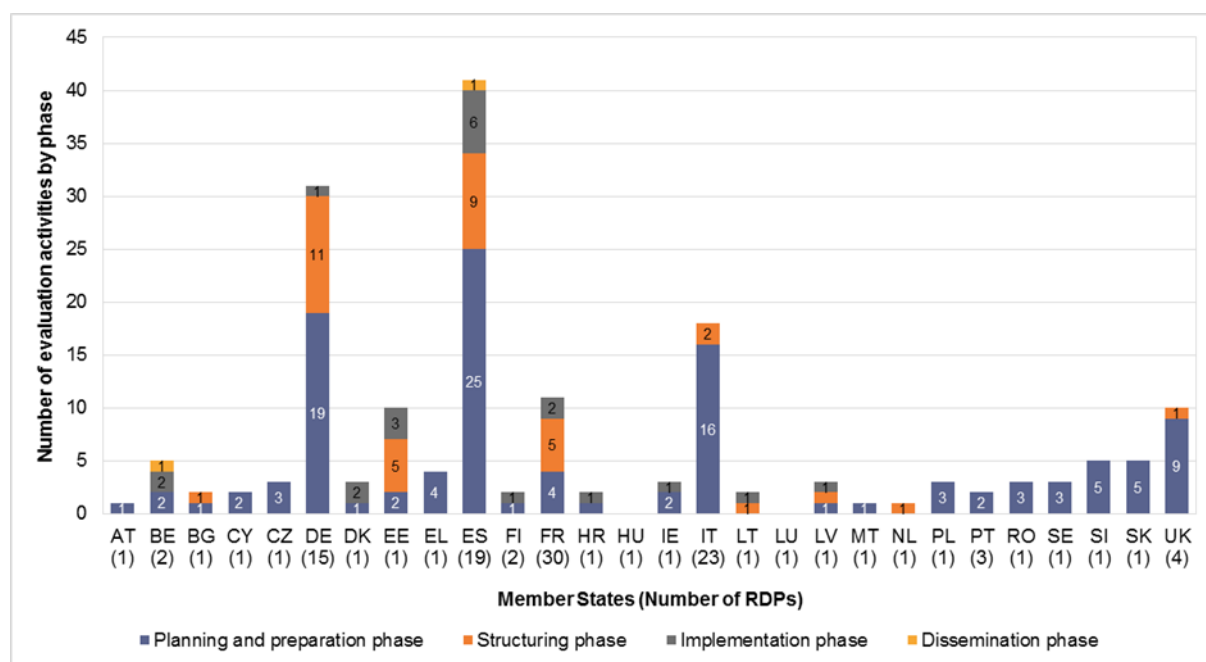
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

4.5 A description of activities undertaken in relation to the provision and management of data (Sub-section c)

This sub-section of the AIR submitted in 2016 relates to section 4 of the EP (chapter 2.6 in this report). It illustrates the activities and achievements regarding the information system and data management of 2014 and 2015.

Overall, 131 activities related to data management were reported in 75 of the AIRs submitted in 2016, most of them concerning the preparation of the operation database to collect data and information, the screening of data and information sources and arrangements to fill data gaps, including:

- **BE-Flanders -** Learning effects form previous programming period. Based on the experience in the previous programming period, changes have been made in the way data is collected.

- **DE-Baden-Württemberg -** Setting up data systems: A new software-based data system has been operationalised. The first pilot measure using the new software system is LEADER. Data needs and data provision have been operationalised in meetings and discussions between staff of the managing authorities and departments responsible for the RD measures and the monitoring agency of the Landesanstalt für Entwicklung der Landwirtschaft und der ländlichen Räume (LEL). Data for area-based measures, investment support measures and the land consolidation measure are provided by the Landesamt für Geoinformation und Landentwicklung in Kornwestheim (LGL). For all other measures data are provided by the responsible authorities.

- **ES-Andalucia -** Construction of the indicator system.

- **ES-La Rioja -** Design of an IT application for M&E of the RDP based on the adaptation of the existing one from the 2007-2013 period.

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[37] AIR submitted in 2016 Screening – August 2016

Table 2. Reported activities related to data management[38]

Type of data management activity	No of activities reported
Preparing and running the operations database to collect data and information for evaluation	67
Screening data and information sources/providers to ensure the application of robust evaluation methods (including preparation of counterfactual analysis)	21
Arrangements to fill data gaps and collect missing information	18
Agreements with data providers and necessary arrangements/legal steps to include the identified providers´ data in the databases used in the RDP evaluation	19
Other activities	6
Total number of data management activities reported	**131**

Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016

4.6 A list of completed evaluations, including references to where they have been published on-line (Sub-section d)

A list of the completed evaluations, including references to where they have been published on-line is available in the Annex.

4.7 A summary of completed evaluations, focusing on evaluation findings (Sub-section e)

This section gives an overview of the conducted evaluations in 2014 and 2015 and includes some examples. The early stage of this programming period has to be considered looking at the total number of completed evaluations and findings.

Sixty-six completed evaluations have been reported in the AIRs submitted in 2016. These evaluations, however, include numerous *ex ante* evaluations, strategic environmental assessments, and mid-term and *ex-post* evaluations of the 2007-13 period. Around 33 evaluations refer mainly to the 2014-2020 reporting period. Completed evaluations were mainly related to 'RD priority 4' and the 'evaluation of the programme governance and delivery mechanism'.

With regard to RD priority 4, completed evaluations include the programme comparison of four RDPs in Germany, the 'Supplementary environmental assessment of changes to the Danish rural development programme, 2016-2018' in Denmark, and reports on the monitoring of farmland bird species in Slovenia.

With regard to the 'evaluation of the programme governance and delivery mechanism', completed evaluations include an evaluation about simplification of the Swedish RDP and the EMFF OP, a study about the awareness of the public of the RDP in Finland, and the above mentioned RDP comparison in Germany.

With regard to CLLD/ LEADER/ LAGs in DE-Berlin-Brandenburg a consistency analysis of Local Development Strategies 2014-2020 was conducted.

Furthermore, in BE-Flanders a self-assessment of the NRN, in Estonia several studies of the Estonian Life Science University and in Spain (National Programme) a study about setting up of the monitoring and evaluation system of the National RDP and an analysis and revision of the indicators included in the NRN were conducted, among others.

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[38] AIR submitted in 2016 Screening – August 2016

Overall, 20 **evaluation findings** were reported in 13 AIRs submitted in 2016 (excluding 29 findings related to the ex-ante evaluation and some related to the AIR or the past programming period). Some results are given below:

In **BE-Flanders** two self-assessments (2014 and 2015) of the NRN were conducted. The internal assessment provides an overview of all the activities from the Flemish rural network in 2014, and – if available - complemented with an evaluation of the activity and concluding remarks for the coming years. 2014 was a transition year for the RDP. The preparations for the new programming period were in progress. On 13 February 2015 the programme was officially approved by the EC. The Flemish rural network has tried to inform the stakeholders on the future policy, goals and changes. In the evaluation of 2015 the goals of this year were compared to the realisations. The common themes in the report are organisation, communication and transnational support. In addition, the stakeholders' survey is described, and it includes, among other things, the expectations of the stakeholders from the network and the intention to participate in action groups. To conclude the report provides remarks for the coming years.

The consistency analysis of the LDS in **DE-Brandeburg-Berlin** came to the conclusion that the strategies of the 14 LEADER regions in Brandenburg match the requirements of the RDP Brandenburg-Berlin and contribute in achieving the objectives of the programme.

In **FI-Mainland** the study on the awareness of the public of the RDP measured, inter alia, the RDP communication. The RDP support opportunities are not well known amongst the wider public. More than half of rural SMEs were unaware of the RDP these.

In **Sweden** the evaluation 'What needs to be simplified? Evaluation of the Swedish RDP and the EMFF OP' was undertaken. It resulted that the simplification efforts have gone towards the right direction. The beneficiaries of RDP business support find the process very tedious. The simplification has mainly benefited the RDP beneficiaries. It is easy to apply for support, but the problems in the support application, modification and the payment process remain.

4.8   A description of communication activities undertaken in relation to publicising evaluation findings (Sub-section f)

This sub-section relates to section 6 of the evaluation plan (chapter 2.8 in this report) and describes the communication activities of 2014 and 2015.

Overall, 89 evaluation-related **communication activities** were reported in the AIRs submitted in 2016. The main communication channels stated were the websites (26 activities) and the discussion in meetings (28). Communication activities undertaken in relation to publicising evaluation findings mostly refer to the publication of the *ex-ante* evaluation reports.

In total, 238,112 stakeholders were accounted for, mainly related to meetings, workshops, etc. The number of stakeholders reached through online channels is reported to be difficult to monitor and therefore evidently underestimated. However, communication activities during the *ex-ante* evaluation were included. Regarding the addressed evaluation topics, the majority of the communication activities refer to cross-cutting issues, but also to evaluations of RD priority 4 (ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry).

Most of the communication activities are organised by the Managing Authority and the ministry or one of its departments and the main target groups envisaged are the general public, the programme authorities, the ministry(ies) and its departments themselves, evaluators and other economic and social stakeholders and partners.

4.9 Description of the follow-up given to evaluation results (Sub-section g)

This sub-section describes the follow-up activities of 2014 and 2015. They relate to the improvement of programme design or programme implementation following new approaches or key findings of evaluation activities.

Overall, 85 **follow-up activities were reported** related to the improvement of programme design or programme implementation in the AIRs submitted in 2016 of 11 Member States. Follow-up activities include: (a) specific recommendations from studies (e.g. limitation of usage of plant production products in EE), (b) recommendations from evaluation reports (*ex-ante*, ongoing), (c) methodological recommendations (e.g. additional specification of evaluation criteria and (d) organisational recommendations (e.g. the set-up of an Evaluation Coordination Group in ES-La Rioja).

4.10 Summary assessment, conclusions and recommendations on better reporting

Based on the information reported in the AIR submitted in 2016 it can be concluded that the main progress in the implementation of the EP took place in the planning and preparation phase of evaluations (e.g. making the governance-arrangements for monitoring and evaluation operational and contracting evaluation experts). The most advanced RDPs have entered into the structuring phase of the evaluation activities (e.g. conceptualisation of evaluation approach, review of evaluation questions and indicators).

Problems and issues identified comprise the overall scarce reporting on evaluation activities (even on preparatory activities) bearing the risk of late tendering procedures in many Member States, the missing activities to ensure data and quality for evaluators. Common standards how to complete in section 2 of the AIR are missing that potentially lead to misinterpretations.

Specific areas to be observed include the proper set-up of the operations database, the early start of tendering procedures for the evaluations to be included in the AIR, to be submitted in 2017, the progress in the evaluation activities overall. By the end of the next reporting period (end 2016), the preparatory steps for carrying out the evaluations activities for the AIR 2017 will have to be concluded.

5 OVERALL ASSESSMENT

5.1 Conclusions of the screening of EPs and the AIRs submitted in 2016

Conclusions concerning the EPs

- Most of the EPs demonstrate the clear intention to fulfil the minimum requirements on evaluation, some of the EPs took the opportunity to show programme specifics.

- Non-mandatory evaluation steering groups and working groups are the key instruments to steer RDP evaluations and to ensure the quality of the evaluation results.

- Important evaluation topics were identified at an early stage to allow for preparatory work. A deepening of knowledge and evaluation of some themes appear to be a very encouraging step but serious gaps remain.

- Overall, the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD is still very 'nebulous' but some positive approaches could be identified.

- Some serious effort has gone into developing better data management, but it is still a major challenge to ensure data for evaluations.

- There is a very unbalanced situation among EPs in quantifying resources for evaluation (some providing exact figures, others providing no figures and only descriptive information).

Conclusions concerning the AIRs submitted in 2016

- Main progress took place in the planning and preparation phase of evaluations.

- The most advanced RDPs have entered into the structuring phase of the evaluation activities.

- Data management systems were (or are still being) updated to meet the new needs and requirements but their operation is sometimes unclear.

- Reporting lacks common standards on to how to complete section 2 of the AIR (leading to misinterpretations, e.g. inclusion of *ex-ante* activities or how to count stakeholders reached).

- Scarce reporting on evaluation activities bearing the risk of late tendering procedures.

5.2 Key questions emerging out of the screening

Based on the outcome of the screening of Evaluation Plans and Annual Implementation Reports 2016 several key questions have been identified in order to ensure that the evaluation activities are progressing on time.

Resources

- What financial and human resources are allocated by the RDP to cover M&E activities? (Only 50% of the Evaluation Plans specified resources)

Governance

- How is the evaluation organised and coordinated in the RDP? (e.g. non-mandatory Evaluation Steering Group established, ongoing communication with data providers etc.)

- How far is the RDP with contracting (independent) evaluation experts in view of the evaluation activities necessary for the AIR 2017?

Data management

- Is the operation database collecting only the minimum set of data required by the EC (target and output indicators) or is it also collecting data which can be used for evaluation purposes (e.g. on result indicators)?

- Have data needs been clarified and has a data management system been established which is able to meet the data needs of the evaluators on time?

Timing

- Which preparatory steps has the MA carried out in view of the evaluation activities for the enhanced AIR, which has to be submitted in 2017? (e.g. review of evaluation questions, indicators, data sources)

Evaluation methods/ approach

- Which evaluation approach is envisaged to be applied for the assessment of RDP results in 2017? (quantitative, qualitative, mixed approach)

Evaluation capacity

- What has been done to ensure that responsible actors understand the evaluation requirements and concepts? (e.g. common and programme specific evaluation elements, secondary contributions and net effects, etc.)

LEADER/CLLD, NRN

- What advancement has been made to ensure proper LEADER/CLLD and NRN evaluation activities?

- What does the MA and/ or the NRN do to provide support to LAGs on evaluation at local level (e.g. training, guidelines, etc.)?

Quality assurance

- Which provisions are in place to ensure the quality of evaluations? (e.g. a detailed planning of evaluation apart of what is specified in the compulsory evaluation plan; a system to communicate with evaluator and the set-up of quality criteria for evaluation reports etc.)

6 ANNEX

Table 3. List of completed evaluations reported in the AIR submitted in 2016

CCI	Programme Name	Publisher	Year of publication	Authors	Title	URL
2014BE06 RDRP001	FLANDERS	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	2015	Spriet A., Van Den Steen A. & Vanslembrouck N.	Internal evaluation. Working year 2014	http://www.ruraalnetwerk.be/pdpo-iii/publicaties/evaluaties-werkjaren/evaluatie-werkjaar-2014-en-planning-2015
2014BE06 RDRP001	FLANDERS	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	2016	Spriet A., Van Den Steen A. & Mariën J.	Internal evaluation. Working year 2015	http://www.ruraalnetwerk.be/pdpo-iii/publicaties/evaluaties-werkjaren/evaluatie-werkjaar-2015-en-planning-2016
2014DE06 RDRP007	BRANDENBURG/BERLIN	Ministry for Rural Development, Environment and Agriculture	tbc	Schwarz, U.	Coherence Analysis of the regional development strategies 2014-2020 of the LAGs in Brandenburg	www.eler.brandenburg.de
2014DE06 RDRP007	BRANDENBURG/BERLIN	Ministry for Rural Development, Environment and Agriculture	Not published	Bathke, M., Horlitz, Jungmann, S., Schwarz, U., Stegmann, S. und D. Welz	Detailed evaluation concept	www.eler.brandenburg.de
2014DE06 RDRP010	HESSEN	Thuenen Institute	2016	Regina Grajewski	Comparison of four RDPS: PFEIL Lower Saxony / Bremen, LPLR Schleswig-Holstein, NRW-Programm and EPLR Hessen: Finances, support measures, priorities, support types, trageted beneficiaries and implementation	www.eler-evaluierung.de (ab 3. Quartal 2016)
2014DE06 RDRP012	NIEDERSACH./BREMEN	Thuenen Institute / entera	Not published	Evaluationsteam	Detailed evaluation concept of PFEIL 2014 - 2020	Internal working paper
2014DE06 RDRP012	NIEDERSACH./BREMEN	Thuenen Institute	2016	Regina Grajewski	Comparison of four RDPS: PFEIL Lower Saxony / Bremen, LPLR Schleswig-Holstein, NRW-Programm and EPLR Hessen: Finances, support measures, priorities, support types, targeted beneficiaries and implementation	http://www.ml.niedersachsen.de/portal/live.php?navigation_id=38441&_psmand=7

CCI	Programme Name	Publisher	Year of publication	Authors	Title	URL
2014DE06 RDRP012	NIEDERSACH ./BREMEN	Thuenen Institute / entera	2016	Barbara Fährmann	Progress in the implementation of the evaluation plan of PFEIL 2014 - 2020, reporting year 2016	http://www.ml.niedersachsen.de/portal/live.php?navigation_id=38441&_psmand=7
2014DE06 RDRP021	SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN	Thuenen Institute	2016	Regina Grajewski	Comparison of four RDPS: PFEIL Lower Saxony / Bremen, LPLR Schleswig-Holstein, NRW-Programm and EPLR Hessen: Finances, support measures, priorities, support types, targeted beneficiaries and implementation	Not specified.
2014DE06 RDRP021	SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN	Thuenen Institute / entera	2016	Petra Raue	Progress in the implementation of the evaluation plan of the LPLR 2014 - 2020, reporting year 2016	Not specified.
2014DE06 RDRP021	SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN	Thuenen Institute / entera	Not published	Petra Raue, Kristin Bormann Achim Sander, Bernhard Forstner, et al.	Detailed evaluation concept of the LPLR	Internal working paper
2014DK06 RDNP001	DK	Ministry of Environment and Food / The Danish Agrifish Agency	2015	NaturErhvervstyrelsen	Supplementary environmental assessment of changes to the Danish rural development programme, 2016-2018	http://naturerhverv.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/NaturErhverv/Filer/Tvaergaaende/EU-arbejdet/Landdistriktsprogrammet_2014-2020/Supplerende_milljoevurdering_af_aendring_af_landdistriktsprogrammet.pdf
2014EE06 RDNP001	EE	Estonian University of Life Sciences	2015	Kersti Aro, Mati Mõtte	Defining optimal indirect cost rate for implementation of LEADER measure in the period of 2014-2020	http://ms.emu.ee/userfiles/MSI%20failid/Uuringud/Kaudse_kulu_aruanne_01062015.pdf
2014EE06 RDNP001	EE	Agricultural Research Centre	2016	Põllumajandusuuringute Keskus	Ongoing evaluation report on RDP 2014-2020 priorities 4 and 5 measures and priority 3 animal welfare measure	http://pmk.agri.ee/pkt/index.php?valik=302&keel=1&template=mak_sisu.html
2014EE06 RDNP001	EE	Agricultural Research Centre	Not specified.	Põllumajandusuuringute Keskus	Report of the studies carried out in 2015 for ongoing evaluation of Estonian Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (RDP 2007-2013) Axis 2 and RDP 2014-2020 priorities 4 and 5	http://pmk.agri.ee/pkt/files/f90/aruanne_uuringud_2015.pdf
2014EE06 RDNP001	EE	Estonian University of Life Sciences	2015	Kersti Aro, Jaana Prants, Mati Mõtte	Reorganisation possibilities in the pig farms with at least 50 places finishing and planning to finish pig farm activity due to African swine fever and its other economical co-impacts	http://www.agri.ee/sites/default/files/content/uuringud/2015/uuring-2015-seakasvatajad.pdf

CCI	Programme Name	Publisher	Year of publication	Authors	Title	URL
2014EE06RDNP001	EE	Estonian University of Life Sciences	2015	Mati Mõtte, Ants-Hannes Viira, Rando Värnik, Jaana Prants	Analyses of the large-scale investment project measure requirements and evaluation criterions	http://www.agri.ee/sites/default/files/content/uuringud/2015/uuring-2015-suurprojektid.pdf
2014EE06RDNP001	EE	Estonian University of Life Sciences	2015	Kersti Aro	Innovation measurements to analyse agricultural sector and food industry entrepreneurs´ investments and competitiveness	http://ms.emu.ee/userfiles/MSI%20failid/Uuringud/OECD_innovatsioonimoodikud.pdf
2014ES06RDNP001	ES national programme	Agriculture Ministry (MAGRAMA)	Not specified.	Tragsatec	Analysis and revision of the indicators included in the NRN	N/A
2014ES06RDNP001	ES national programme	Agriculture Ministry (MAGRAMA)	Not specified.	R2R consultores	Evaluation about the setting up of the monitoring and evaluation system of the National RDP.	N/A
2014ES06RDRP014	NAVARRA	Department of Rural Development, Environment and Local Governance of Navarra.	2015	Gestión Ambiental de Navarra S.A.	Report, Indicators included in the Environmental Monitoring Programme of Navarra's RDP 2007-2013 (+2014). Data from 2007 to 2014.	http://www.navarra.es/NR/rdonlyres/8F2D0367-55B2-4D41-BA20-9FC03245AA19/335664/PVAIndicadoresagroambientales2015.pdf
2014ES06RDRP007	CASTILLA-MANCHA	Directorate General of Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Development	Not specified.	SEO/Birdlife	Obtain indicators in Castilla-La Mancha through the monitoring programme of common reproductive birds (ICC35).	Not to be published
2014ES06RDRP007	CASTILLA-MANCHA	Directorate General of Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Development	Not specified.	SEO/Birdlife	Integrated study of the impact of sub-measure 214.1 Extensive dry agrosystems of the RDP Castilla-La Mancha 2017-2013	Not to be published
2014ES06RDRP007	CASTILLA-MANCHA	Directorate General of Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Development		Tragsatec	Ongoing evaluation report (2015) of the RDP Castilla-La Mancha 2007-2013	Documento de uso interno para su incorporación a la evaluación Ex post Programa de Desarrollo Rural 2007-2013
2014FI06RDNP001	FI Mainland	TNS-Gallup	2015	Pasi Saarnivaara, Jenni Kivinen ja Eeva Heikkilä	Awareness of the public in 2015 of the Mainland Finland RDP	https://www.maaseutu.fi/fi/maaseutuohjelma/arviointi-ja-seuranta/Sivut/Tutkimukset-ja-selvitykset.aspx

CCI	Programme Name	Publisher	Year of publication	Authors	Title	URL
2014FR06 RDRP073	MIDI-PYRENEES	EDATER and AND International Consulting groups	2015	Cabinets EDATER et AND	Impact evaluations descriptive fiches	N/A
2014HR06 RDNP001	HR	Ministry of Agriculture	2015	Sveučilište u Zagrebu Agronomski fakultet i Oikon d.o.o. – Institut za primijenjenu ekologiju	Assessment of common context agri-environmental indicators of RDP 2014-2020 with description of methodology for their assessment and recommendation for further monitoring	http://ruralnirazvoj.hr/files/documents/Evaluacijsko-izvjesce_final.pdf
2014LV06 RDNP001	LV	Latvian State Institute of Agrarian Economics	2015	Dr. biol. A. Auniņš, sadarbībā ar Dr. geogr. P. Lakovski, 2015.g. decembris	Farmland Bird Index Changes During the Period 2007-2013 and Impact of RDP 2007-2013 Measures on it.	http://www.lvaei.lv/images/LANN/Atskaite_LAP_2007_2013_ietekme_uzLPI.pdf
2014LV06 RDNP001	LV	Latvian State Institute of Agrarian Economics	2015	Lauku attīstības novērtēšanas nodaļas pētnieki Dr. oec. A. Vēveris; Mg. oec. J. Hāzners sadarbībā ar Mg. Sc. Ing. E. Bengu un L. Dambiņu, 2015.g. novembris	Changes of the Competitiveness of Farms Influenced by RDP 2007-2013 Projects.	http://www.lvaei.lv/images/LANN/Atskaite_LAP_projekti_konkuretspejas_izmainas.pdf
2014LV06 RDNP001	LV	Latvian State Institute of Agrarian Economics	2015	Dr. biol. M. Balalaikins; Dr. biol. A. Aniščenko; Msc. biol. K. Aksjuta; Bsc. biol. D. Zviedrāne, 2015. g. decembris	The Spread of Ground Beetles in Conventionally and Organically Farmed Agrocenozis.	http://www.lvaei.lv/images/LANN/Skrejvabolu_atskaite_BLA_konvencialos_laukos.pdf
2014MT06 RDNP001	MT	Managing Authority	2016	Colin Cremona	Annual Impementation Report (2014/2015)	www.eufunds.gov.mt
2014SE06 RDNP001	SE	Swedish Board of Agriculture	2015	Terese Strenger, Sweco Strategy; Silke Tindrebäck, Sweco Strategy; Peter Sandén, Sweco Strategy; Jennie Westman, Sweco Strategy	What needs to be simplified? Evaluation of the Swedish RDP and the EMFF OP	http://webbutiken.jordbruksverket.se/sv/artiklar/utv151.html
2014SI06R DNP001	SI	DOPPS-BirdLife Slovenia	2015	Kmecl P. & Figelj J.	Monitoring of common breeding bird species for the calculation of the Slovene	http://www.program-podezelja.si/images/SPLETNA_STRAN_PRP_NOVA/2_PRP_2007-

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CCI	Programme Name	Publisher	Year of publication	Authors	Title	URL
					farmland bird index - report for year 2014. - DOPPS, Ljubljana	2013/2_4_Spremljanje_in_vrednotenje/Vrednotenje/MONITORINGI_PTIC/SIPKK15_poročilo.pdf
2014SI06RDNP001	SI	Biotechnical faculty of the University of Ljubljana	2015	Verovnik R., Zakšek V., Govedič M., Zakšek B., Kogovšek N., Grobelnik V. & Šalamun A.	Monitoring of selected target species of butterflies in years 2014 and 2015	http://www.program-podezelja.si/images/SPLETNA_STRAN_PRP_NOVA/2_PRP_2007-2013/2_4_Spremljanje_in_vrednotenje/Vrednotenje/MONITORINGI_METULJEV/monitoring_metuljev_2015_koncno_porocilo/monitoring_metuljev2014_2015.pdf
2014SI06RDNP001	SI	DOPPS-BirdLife Slovenia	2015	Denac K., Mihelič T., Kmecl P., Denac D., Bordjan D., Figelj J., Božič L. & Jančar T.	Montoring of selected bird species populations - census of nesting birds 2015	http://www.program-podezelja.si/images/SPLETNA_STRAN_PRP_NOVA/2_PRP_2007-2013/2_4_Spremljanje_in_vrednotenje/Vrednotenje/MONITORINGI_PTIC/MONITORING_POPULACIJ_IZBRANIH_VRST_PTIC/Porocilo_monitoring_2015_final.pdf

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