

Reply to an email from Spain, following the Expert Group meeting of 10 May 2017
Ares(2017)2624659

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

1 – Each RDP must reply to the Common Evaluation Questions (Annex V of Regulation 808/2014) the best it can. Annex 11 of Guidelines "Assessment of RDP results: how to prepare for reporting on evaluation in 2017" is just a guidance document, it is not binding.

Reply: Correct. Those Guidelines are non-binding. Guidelines intend to help Member States reply to the evaluation questions. The replies to the evaluation questions in 2017 and 2019 must take into account the (conclusions and recommendations of the) evaluation activities undertaken according to the evaluation plan (Annex I, Part I, point 9 of Regulation 808/2014). To reply to the evaluation questions in 2017 and 2019, the Managing Authority may (also) request the contribution of evaluators.

For RDPs / Focus Areas with a very low level of completed projects, Article 4 (5) of Regulation 1303/2013 should also be taken into account: the respect of the principle of proportionality having regard to the level of support allocated and the overall aim of reducing the administrative burden on bodies involved in the management of the programmes.

In order to prepare for the AIR to be submitted in 2019, Managing Authorities should check if the evaluation activities included under point 9 "Evaluation plan" of their RDPs are appropriate. If an update of that text is needed, the revised evaluation plan should be included in the next modification proposal of their RDP.

2 – The quantification of secondary contributions has no legal basis and, therefore, is not compulsory. However, it is recommended, in order to show a more complete picture of the achievements of the programme. Regulations only request the identification of the secondary effects to Focus Areas 2A, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D and 6A.

Reply: Correct. It is compulsory to identify (flag) the projects with secondary contributions to Focus Areas 2A, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D and 6A (Art 14(4) of Regulation 808/2014). To report and quantify "programme achievements, in particular through assessment of the complementary result indicators, and relevant evaluation questions" (Annex VII, point 7 of Regulation 808/2014), evaluators should (if possible, it's not compulsory) calculate / assess the complementary result indicator of a specific Focus Area, taking into account all the operations which have secondary contributions to that specific Focus Area. The quantification of secondary contributions provides a much complete and better picture of the achievements of the specific Focus Areas under each the RDP. To be able to show what the Rural development policy is achieving and how the rural development budget is used, the more complete the achievements of the RDP are reported and evaluated, the better. However, the quantification of secondary contributions is not compulsory.

3 – Annex I, Part I (content of RDPs), Point 11 (c) of Regulation 808/2014 establishes that the indicator plan includes a table setting out, qualitatively, the additional contribution of measures to other focus areas.

Reply: Correct. This table is filled in *ex ante* and has the purpose to look at what could be the potential additional contributions. It is therefore a part of the overall intervention logic of the programme and it will be relevant that evaluators have a look at these *ex ante* assumptions. If possible (non-binding, this is not compulsory), the actual additional contributions of each project should be collected and assessed by evaluators in order to get a clearer picture of the RDP achievements under each Focus Area.

4 – Article 14 of Regulation 808/2014 only requires an electronic record of the programme if operations with secondary contributions to Focus Areas 2A, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D and 6A are flagged (we also consider that it is a qualitative record).

Reply: The RDP electronic information system is compulsory (article 70 Regulation 1305/2013). The Managing Authority has to identify (flag) the projects with secondary contributions to Focus Areas 2A, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D and 6A (Art 14(4) of Regulation 808/2014). However, to assess the complementary result indicators, evaluators should (this is not compulsory) quantify the secondary contributions (see reply to point 2 above).

5 – The contribution of each LEADER project to other Focus Areas than FA 6B¹, does not have a legal basis. It is however recommended, in order to show a more complete picture of the achievements of LEADER.

Reply: It is compulsory to identify (flag) the projects with secondary contributions to Focus Areas 2A, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D and 6A (Art 14(4) of Regulation 808/2014). The quantification of secondary contributions is very useful to demonstrate the full achievements of the programmes (in this case, of LEADER). However, as mentioned above (point 2), it is not compulsory, it is not specifically required by the Regulations.

6 – Annex III presented in the Rural Development Committee of 5 April 2017, to be included in SFC as part of the AIR ("summary table of quantified results"), requests the secondary contributions of all operations for Focus Areas with associated complementary result indicators. It also asks for the contribution of LEADER projects to other Focus areas than FA 6B. Taking into account the above, filling in these elements of the table is not compulsory.

Reply: See replies above. Annex III will be, as much as possible, automatically filled-in with data from other tables of the AIR. For secondary contribution values that are specifically requested in the AIR, it is recommended to include the available data, whenever possible, to show a more complete picture of the achievements of the RDP and of LEADER. However, as mentioned above, it is not compulsory.

7 – The Commission intends to explain better which parts of the AIR (SFC template) are recommendations or Good practices, and which parts must be filled in. The Commission also intends to simplify the requirements of the monitoring and evaluation system for the enhanced AIR to be submitted in 2019.

Reply: Correct. A specific meeting will be held in Latvia, on 19-20 September, to discuss what can be simplified. Member States can (also) send their comments by email before the meeting, to ensure that all comments are taken into account (including from those who, for one reason or another, might not be able to attend the meeting). Emails with simplification proposals on evaluation and SFC template should be sent to agri-evaluation@ec.europa.eu, stating in the email subject: "**Simplification proposal**".

8 – In general, the compulsory requirements are the ones established in the Regulations.

Reply: Correct. The guidance listed in Annex VI of Regulation 808/2014 ensures that these documents are a recognised part of the monitoring and evaluation system, but their contents (the Guidelines) are non-binding.

¹ FA 6A, for England