Assessment of the implementation of the evaluation plans of RDPs 2014-2020

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POWERED BY

Task & Workflow

Assess the **Evaluation Plans** included in RDPs 2014-2020

Assess the information included in **section 2 of the AIRs submitted in 2016**

Helpdesk develops screening tools for EPs and AIRs	Geographic Experts screen EPs and AIRs submitted in 2016	Helpdesk synthesises findings in Working Document
April/ May	**June/ July**	**August**

Information sources

- **115 Evaluation Plans (EPs)** of the RDPs 2014-2020
    - *N.B: The National Frameworks of DE, ES, FR do not include an EP!*
- **115 Annual Implementation Reports (AIR) submitted in 2016** with focus on section 2 „The progress in implementing the evaluation plan"
    - *In 8 AIRs (ES, IT) no evaluation related content was reported.*

Key features of the evaluation plans included in RDPs 2014-2020
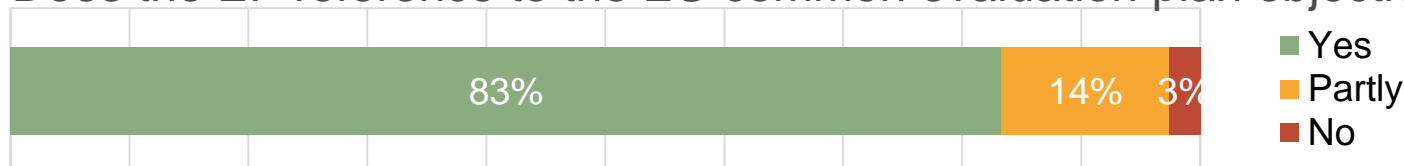
Results of the EP screening

EP: General characteristics

- **EPs in the RDPs 2014-20** were
    - drafted in accordance with the minimum requirements in the Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2013.
    - structured in 7 sections

- **Degree of details varies** across the programmes
- Some are formulated in a **rather general** way
    - little practical and operational information
    - Fulfill legal compliance without giving details on what will be done

EP: Objective and purpose of the EP

Does the EP reference to the EU common evaluation plan objectives?

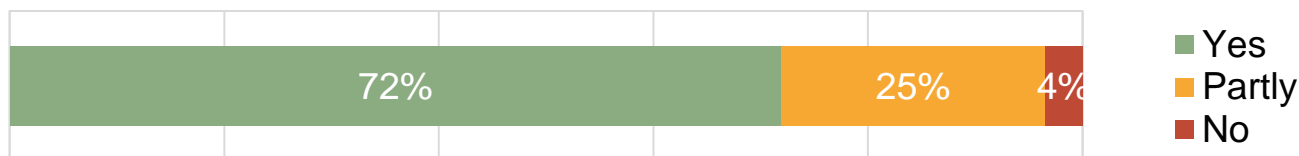|	
83%	14% 3%

- Yes
- Partly
- No

- Additional programme-specific EP objectives in 38% of EPs

  - specific thematic focus (e.g. EE; IE; IT-Sard.),

  - communication betw. stakeholders (e.g. BE; BG; ES; IT)

- **Most of the EPs demonstrate the clear intention to fulfill the minimum requirements on evaluation.**
- **Some of the EPs took the opportunity to show programme specifities!**

EP: Governance & coordination

Does the EP present the main bodies (MA, PA, MC, beneficiaries) involved in the monitoring and evaluation system?

72%	**25%**	**4%**

- Yes
- Partly
- No

- **Other bodies mentioned**: Technical work groups (FR), Interministerial committee (SI), thematic work groups (ES), research institutions (UK), etc.

- Non-mandatory **Evaluation Steering Groups** are present in 68% of the EPs

- **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**

EP: Good practice governance/coordination

- AT-National has an **independent evaluation department**
    - **priority responsible person** were newly introduced to act as contact person for the evaluators and to overcome the evaluation focus at measure level.
- SE – National established an **Evaluation Secretariat**
    - has an **overall responsibility** for coordinating and organising evaluation activities.
    - a **research group** was established and is responsible for method development and supports the MA in improving quality of evaluations.
- UK – Wales has an **excellent coordination** within the RDP and to reach across other ESI funds.

EP: Evaluation topics and activities

- Indicatively described in 97% of the EPs

- **Standard topics** are clearly addressed in most – but not in all – EPs (6 RD priorities; NRN; CLLD/ LEADER/ LAGs)

- Reference to the analysis of **net effects** and **secondary contributions** is only given in a few EPs

- **Ad-hoc evaluations** will cover emerging evaluation needs

- **Important topics were identified in an early stage to allow preparatory work. A deepening of knowledge and evaluation on some themes seems to be a very encouraging step but serious gaps exist**

EP: Good Practice eval. topics / activities

- The FR - Basse-Normandie RDP specifies **precise evaluation themes and judgement criteria** by Union Priority, focusing on the major challenges addressed by the programme

- The ES - Región de Murcia (as other Spanish regions) includes **other specific evaluation topics**: horizontal objectives, specific issues of the region

EP: CLLD/ LEADER/ LAGs

Does the EP mention the involvement of LAGs in the RDP monitoring and evaluation?

67%	33%

- Yes
- No

- Evaluation support is mentioned in 30% of the EPs

- LAGs are responsible for data provision, self-assessment, members of ESG and MC, but in many cases they are not (further) specified

- **Overall, the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD is still very "nebulous" but some good approaches could be identified**
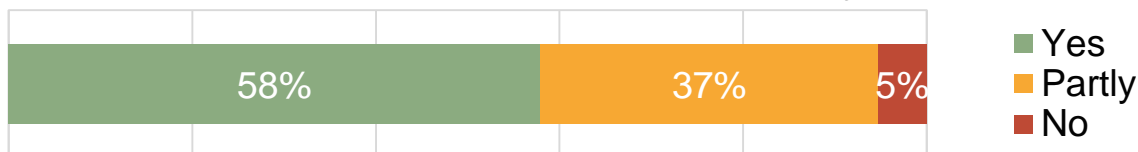
EP: Good practice CLLD/ LEADER/ LAGs

- **Capacity building** in **Austria**
    - organised by the MA for a common progress control system of local development strategies and for yearly reporting (e.g. elaboration of the local development strategy, introduction to "impact model")
- In **BE-Flanders** evaluation will be based on self-evaluation in combination with a **global evaluation** on programme level

EP: Data management / Information system

Does the EP describe the information system on RDP implementation?

58%	37%	5%

- Yes
- Partly
- No

- Data management systems were updated or newly set-up
- Still under development in some RDPs (EL, BG, CY, HR)
- Major issues: improve the reporting chain (data loss), availability of data on time, better align the information obligation by the beneficiaries with the evaluation requirements

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

EP: Good practice data and information

- SK – National has a 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.
    - **using the PA monitoring system** to collect a lot of data to be able to construct matched control groups
- FI – Åland plans the creation of an **environmental monitoring system** to ensure data for evaluations
- In EE - National a high percentage of applications is directly managed through the **electronic tool of the paying agency**

EP: Financial resources

- Financial resources for carrying out evaluation activities are specified in around half of the EPs.

    - mainly presented in form of a global budget, or

    - qualitative statements that sufficient resources will be provided.

- **There is very unbalanced situation between EPs quantifying resources and others providing no figures and only descriptive information**
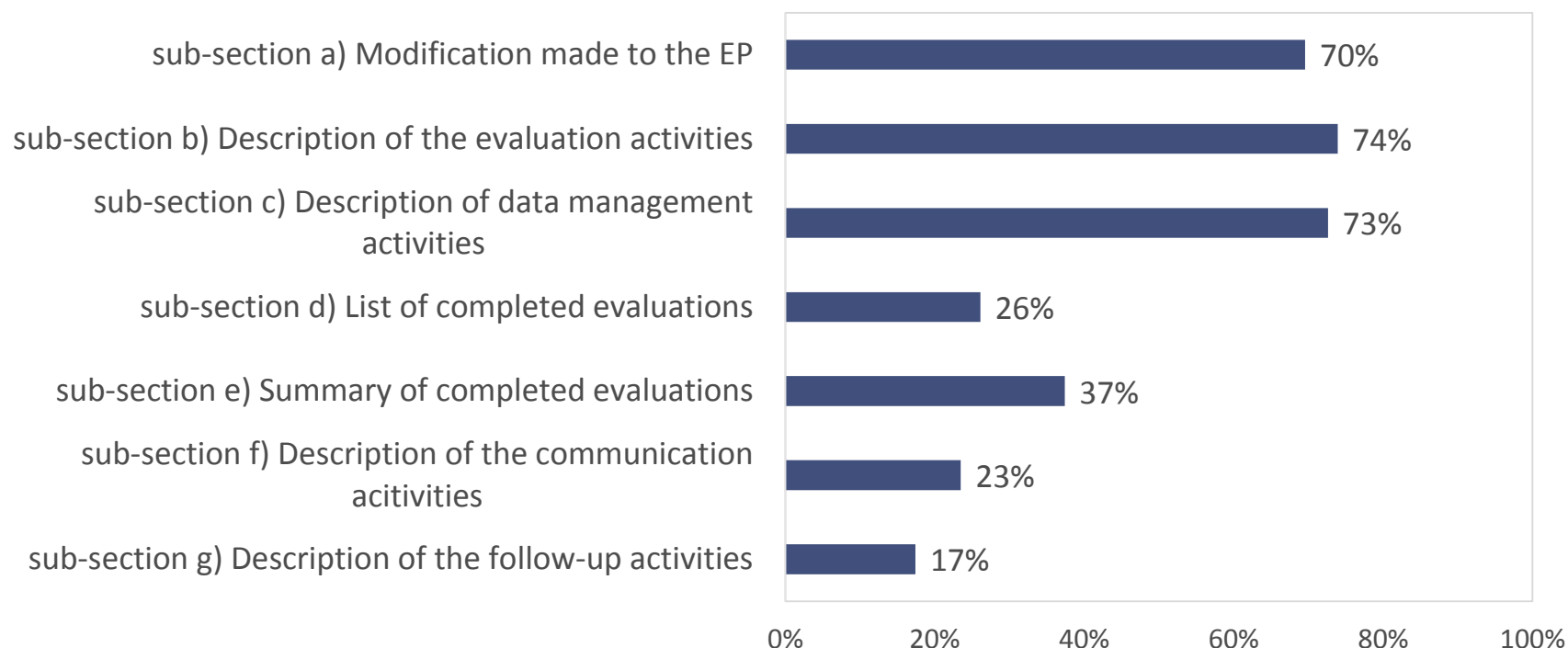
The progress in implementing the EP

Results of the screening of section 2 of the AIRs submitted in 2016 (reporting period 2014 and 2015)

AIR: Completeness of section 2

Only in 15% of the AIRs submitted in 2016 all 7 sub-sections of section 2 were completed.

Sub-section	Percentage
sub-section a) Modification made to the EP	70%
sub-section b) Description of the evaluation activities	74%
sub-section c) Description of data management activities	73%
sub-section d) List of completed evaluations	26%
sub-section e) Summary of completed evaluations	37%
sub-section f) Description of the communication acitivities	23%
sub-section g) Description of the follow-up activities	17%

AIR: EP modifications (sub-section a)

6 EPs were updated in the reporting period 2014 and 2015.

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)
- the elaboration of an **inter-funds EP** covering all ESI-Funds in the region was skipped
- the **budget** for financing the EP out of the technical assistance was corrected regarding VAT

AIR: Evaluation activities by phase (sub-section b)

Evaluation activities of planning & preparation phase :
- 116 activities reported ($\rightarrow$ clear majority!)
- e.g. the preparation of terms of reference and tendering procedures, set-up of administrative arrangements

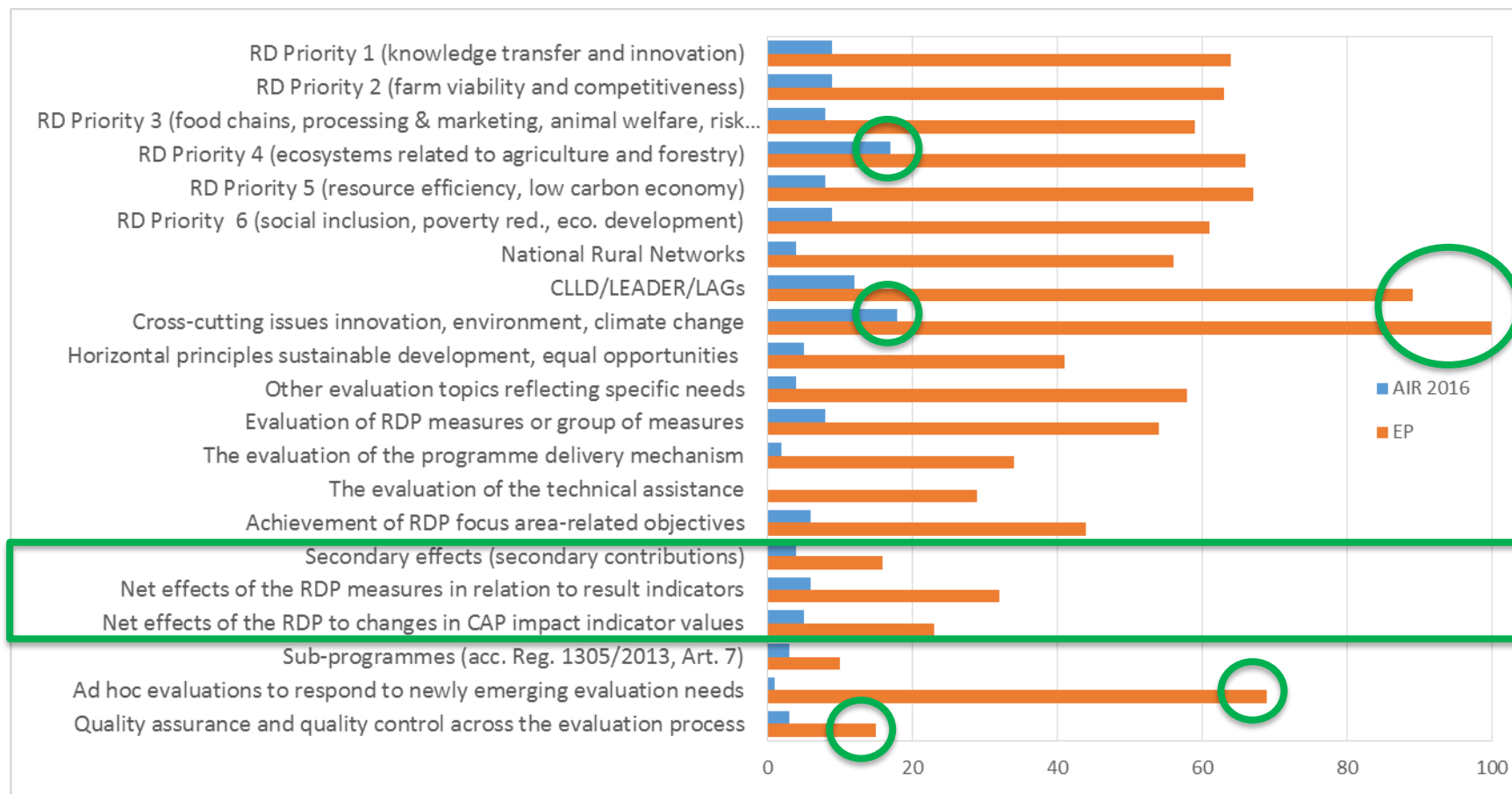**Evaluation activities of structuring phase:**
- 37 activities reported,
- e.g. review of evaluation questions and indicators, development of an evaluation approach and methods

Evaluation activities of conducting & dissemination phase
- 23 activities reported
- mainly related to the ex-ante evaluation 2014-20 or the ex-post evaluation of RDPs 2007-13

Evaluation topics (EP) and activities (AIR)

AIR: Data management activities (sub-section c)

About half of the activities were related to preparation and running of the operations database

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

AIR: Completed evaluations (sub-section d) & Evaluation findings (sub-section e)

35 completed evaluations (excluding 30 ex-ante evaluations) were reported of 16 RDPs, including

- Evaluations related to indicators (ES)
- Evaluations of the programme, the NRN, the LDS (DE, BE-F, SE)
- Evaluation of the awareness of the public of the RDP (FI)
- Innovation measurements in EE

40 evaluation findings were reported

- 11 implementation related findings
- 10 resource related findings

AIR: Communication activities (sub-section f) & Follow-up activities (sub-section g)

89 communication activities were reported, but one third was related to the ex-ante evaluation

- Main communication **channels**: Website, meetings
- Adressed **topics**: evaluation of the programme governance and delivery mechanism, RD priority 4, cross-cutting issues
- **238,000** stakeholders reached (including publication of ex-ante evaluations online)

85 Follow-up activities were reported, including specific recommendations in studies, methodological & organisational recommendations, etc.

Conclusions on the progress made in implementing the EP

Strengths

- **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 **updated** to meet the new needs and requirements

Conclusions on the progress made in implementing the EP

Weaknesses

- **Reporting lacks of common standards** how to fill in chapter 2 of the AIR (leads to misinterpretations, e.g. inclusion of ex-ante activities, how to count stakeholders reached)
- **Scarce reporting** on evaluation activities bearing the risk of late tendering procedures
- Some RDPs are seriously **lagging behind** – is there a sound early warning system?
- **Data management systems** are still being updated and its functioning is sometimes not clear

Thank you for your attention!

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