

GUIDELINES FOR THE EX ANTE EVALUATION OF 2014-2020 RDPS

Getting the most from your RDP

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Structure of the guidelines

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- **Foreword, Introduction**
- **Chapter 2: Why ex ante evaluation?**
- **Chapter 3: The ex ante evaluation process**
- **Chapter 4: Scope of the ex ante evaluation (to be developed)**



Mainly for Managing Authorities

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- **Chapter 5: Elements of the ex ante evaluation**
- **Toolbox: Glossary, ToR templates for ex ante & SEA, evaluation questions, outline of ex ante report, legal texts, list of context indicators**



Mainly for Evaluators

Questions concerning Ex ante Guidance Draft III

1. What do you like?
2. What is not yet included/missing?
3. What is unclear?
4. What is wrong?
5. What needs more details and must be expanded?

RD ex ante guidelines

Part I

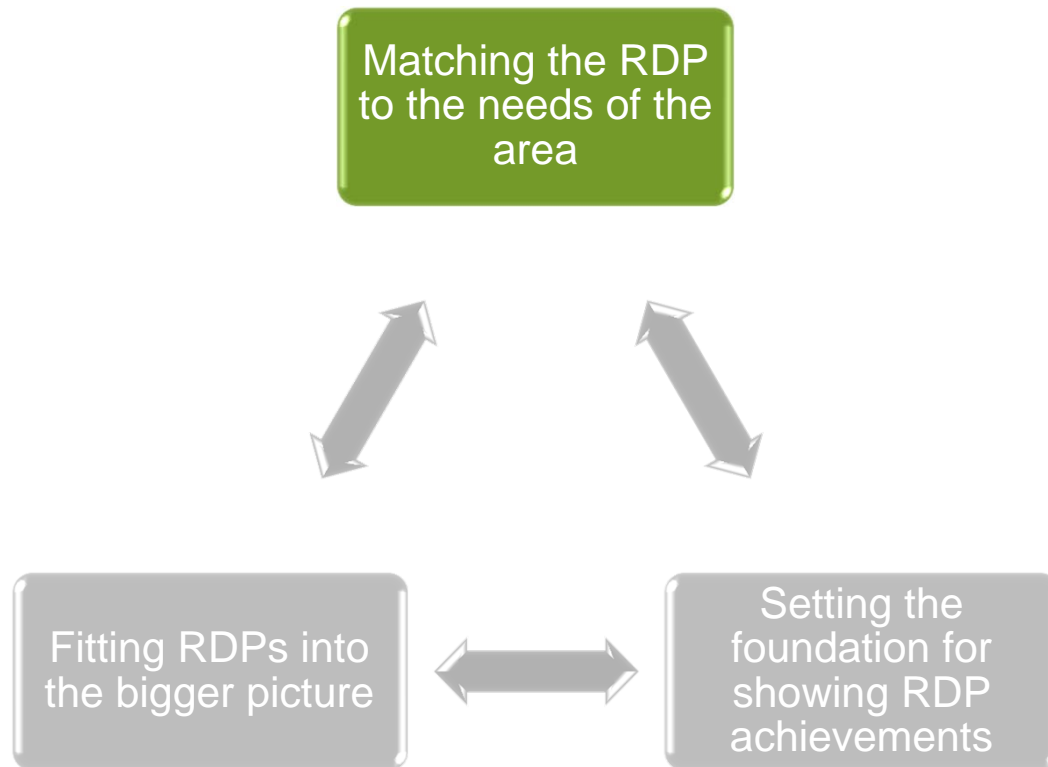
Draft III, pp 7 - 30

- **Foreword, Introduction**
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(to be developed)



**Mainly for Managing
Authorities**

Why ex ante evaluation?



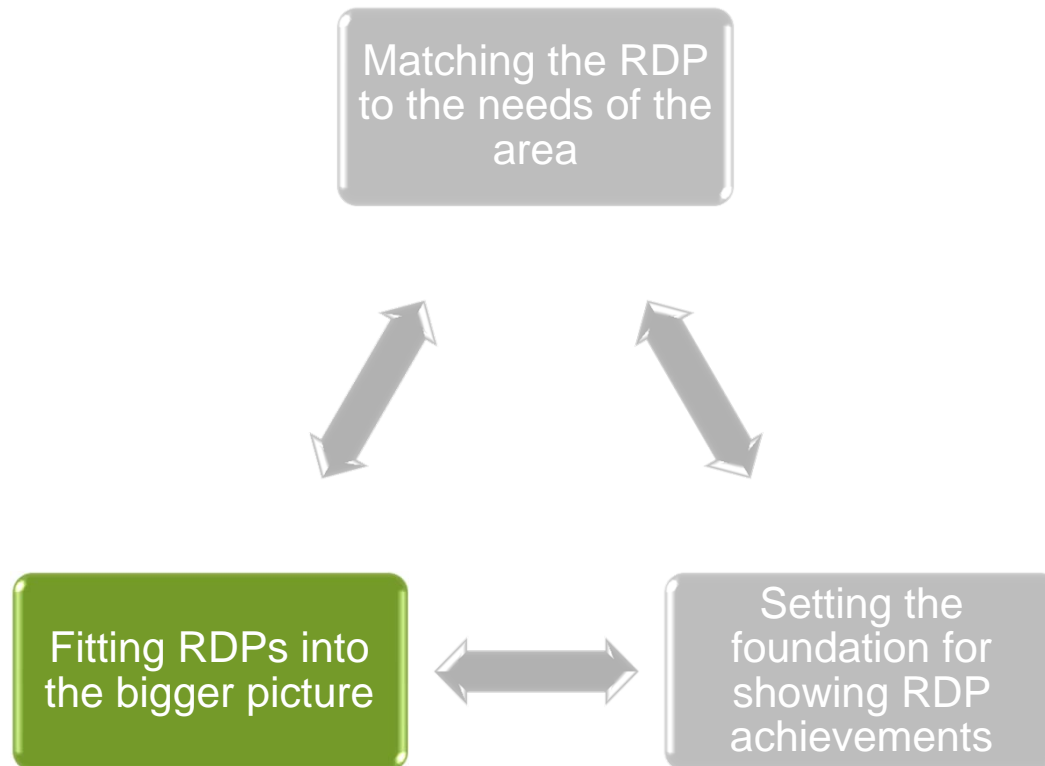
Ensures that RDP content makes sense

Checks if RDP responds adequately to the identified needs

Draws on previous experiences and lessons learnt

Brings external and objective view

Why ex ante evaluation?

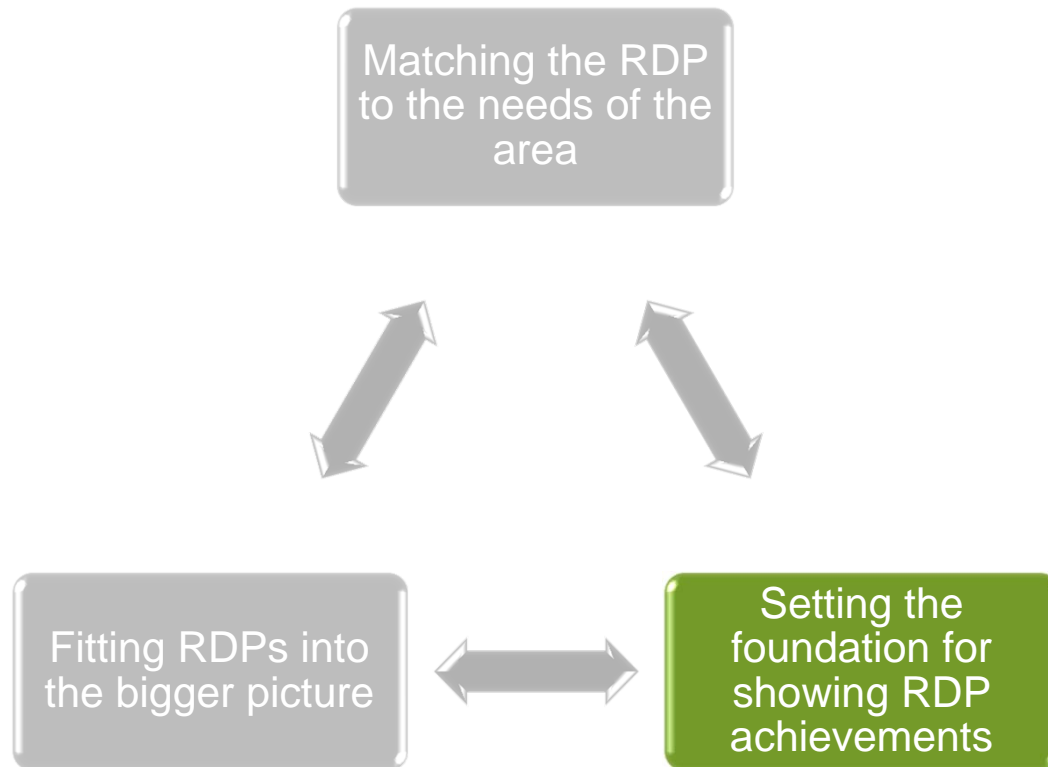


Assesses the consistency of the RDP with Pillar 1 (-> impacts)

Assesses interaction of the RDP with other national/regional funds interventions

Considers consistency with other CSF funds (ERF, ESF, EMFF, CF)

Why ex ante evaluation?



Ensures that appropriate indicators and values are included

Supports the specification of data types

Validates intervention logic

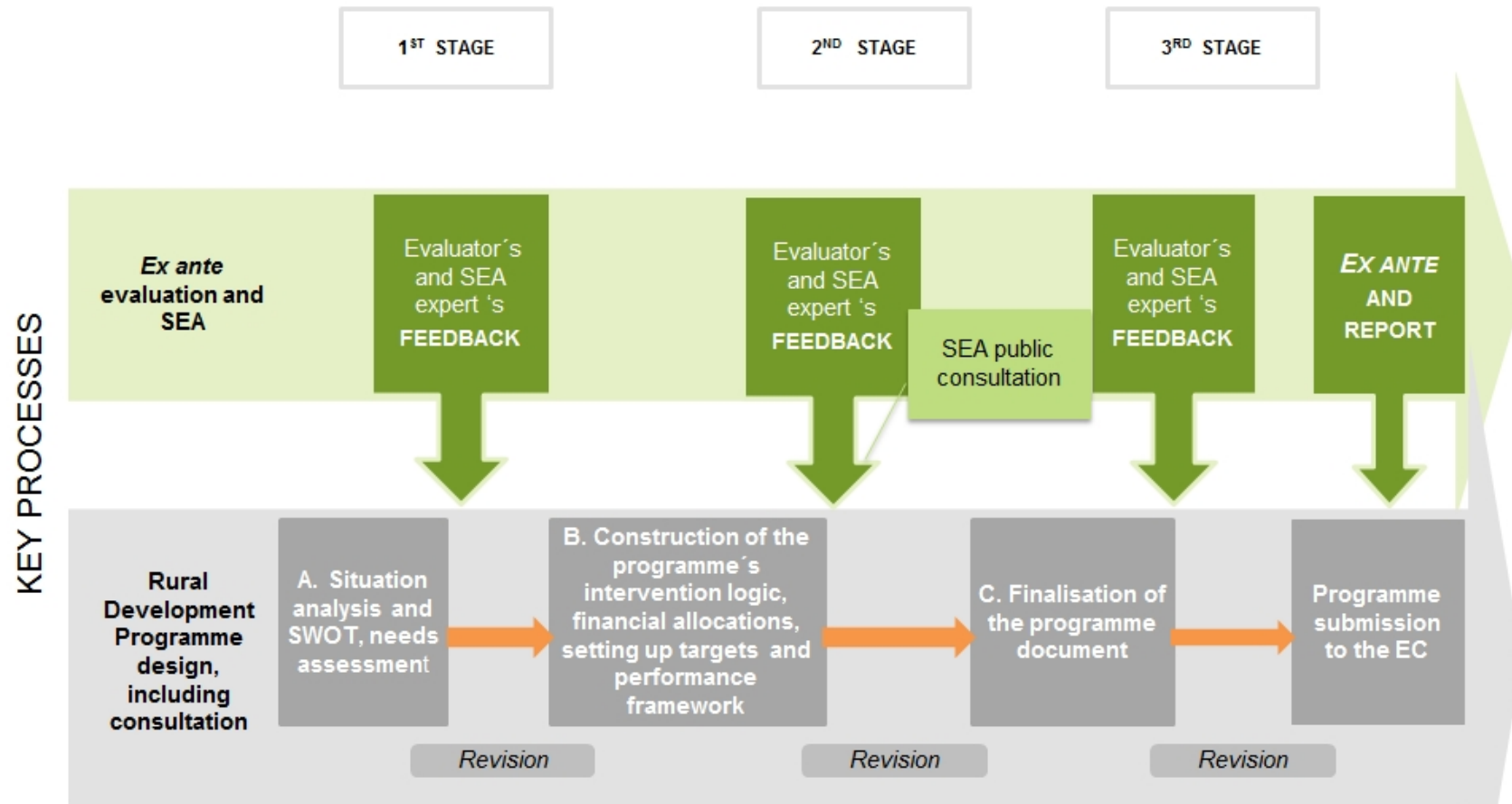
Links between results and overall impact (for regional programmes)

Stakeholders in the ex ante evaluation/ SEA and their roles



Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities
Managing Authorities of RDP and other ministry departments	Write RDP, organise consultation process, ensure information and publicity; tendering, prepare evaluation plan, submit RDP
Socio-economic partners in RDP design/SEA consult.	Participate in consultation on RDP design and SEA, contribute to RDP development
Ex ante evaluator(s)/SEA experts;	Carry out the ex ante evaluation and SEA
Environmental Authorities involved in the SEA	Conduct consultations with SEA stakeholders and transboundary consultations
The European Commission	Use ex ante evaluation/SEA and their recommendations during the RDP negotiation

The process of the Ex ante evaluation/SEA



1st STAGE

Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities
Managing Authorities of RDP and other ministry departments	prepare SWOT analysis and needs assessment revises on basis of recommendations made
Ex ante evaluator(s)	gives feedback on these analyses, identifies gaps provides recommendations for completing/improving description and analysis.
SEA experts	gives view on the analysis of the environmental issues , indicators, data and information requirements needed for the SEA
Socio-economic partners in the RDP design/ SEA consultation	are consulted on the situation analysis validated by the ex ante evaluator / SEA experts, give their views on needs of the territory and beneficiaries and on the justification for rural development interventions.

2nd STAGE

Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities
Managing Authorities of RDP and other ministry departments,	prepare intervention logic of RDP, decide on allocation of resources, outputs, common and programme-specific targets and milestones. revises on basis of recommendations made
Ex ante evaluator(s)	gives feedback on the intervention logic, coherence, allocation of budgets, indicators, target values/ milestones, monitoring system and data
SEA experts	give judgement on the potential environmental impact of the RDP intervention logic, propose alternative options, examine criteria and indicators
Environmental Authorities in SEA	conduct consultations with SEA stakeholders and transboundary consultations
Socio-economic partners in the RDP design/ SEA	discuss the intervention logic , budgets considering the feedback from the ex ante evaluator, SEA experts, validate/ adjust proposed targets and milestones for the performance framework,

3rd STAGE

Stakeholders in ex ante/SEA	Roles and responsibilities
<i>Managing Authorities</i> of RDP and other ministry departments	completes and finalises and submits draft programme document incl. ex ante and SEA, taking account of the recommendations made.
<i>SEA experts</i>	assess the environmental impact of the entire draft programme, propose alternatives and provide reasons for selecting them, etc.
<i>Ex ante evaluator(s)</i>	gives final feedback on the all parts of the draft programme document
<i>The European Commission</i>	use the RDP, ex ante/SEA report in negotiation process

Contractual relationships

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
One tender for both tasks by consortium or with the SEA sub-contracted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiently organised and spent resources • Consultation more effectively • Better coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care that full requirements of both exercises are adequately covered • May lower the number of stakeholders involved • May restrict pool of potential contractors
One tender for both tasks, separate lots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiently organised and spent resources • Consultation more effectively • Better coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement for more resources
Two different tenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEA is independent from ex ante • Broader spectrum of stakeholders involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires more resources • Potential timing problems if processes not synchronized

Steering the process



Establishment of Steering group, which conducts following tasks:

- Gather information and data to assess the baseline situation of territory/ sectors;
- Undertake the SWOT and need assessment;
- Prepare intervention logic , expected outputs and targets, financial allocations;
- Prepare the governance and management systems including delivery mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation procedures, evaluation plan, etc.;
- Integrate the Strategic Environmental Assessment ;
- Conduct public consultations in relation to RDP design and the SEA; etc.

Documentation of the ex ante evaluation and the RDP design



- document the dialogue of the ex ante evaluator with the programme developers
- describe how the recommendations from the ex ante evaluators have been taken into account in the RDP development
- include timing of main events, intermediate reports etc, accompanied by a table

Example of the documentary table



Date	Topic	Recommendation	How recommendation has been addressed, or justification as to why not taken into account
Situation and SWOT analysis, needs assessment			
Construction of the intervention logic			
Establishment of targets, distribution of financial allocations,			

Scope of the ex ante evaluation

- *To be developed*

Legal reference	Links to other legal provisions	Page/chapter	Evaluation subject	Comments
EAFRD, Art. 84 “analysis”	EAFRD, Art. 9, 1(b), Art. 84, Art. 9 (c) (iii), Art. 9 (a)		Situation analysis and SWOT	Linking the RDP ‘back’ to the territorial needs
EAFRD, Art. 84, the “design of programme’s intervention logic”	CPR, Art. 48.3(b), EAFRD, Art. 9.1(e,f,g) Art. 9.2(b)		Intervention logic, internal coherence	
	CPR Art. 48.3.(d) EAFRD Art. 9.1(m)		External coherence	CAP, CSF and other EU instruments
EAFRD, Art. 84, “Establishment of the programme targets”	CPR Art. 48.3(g) EAFRD Art. 84 Art. 9.1(j) Art. 9.2(c)		Adequacy of indicator target value	
CPR, Art. 48,1	EAFRD, Art. 9,		MS shall carry the	

Questions and Answers concerning Part I

1. What do you like?
2. What is not yet included/missing?
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RD Ex ante guidelines

Part II

Draft III, pp 31 - 162

- **Chapter 5: Elements of the ex ante evaluation**
- **Toolbox: Glossary, ToR templates for ex ante & SEA, evaluation questions, outline of ex ante report, legal texts, list of context indicators**



**Mainly for
Evaluators**

The technical part

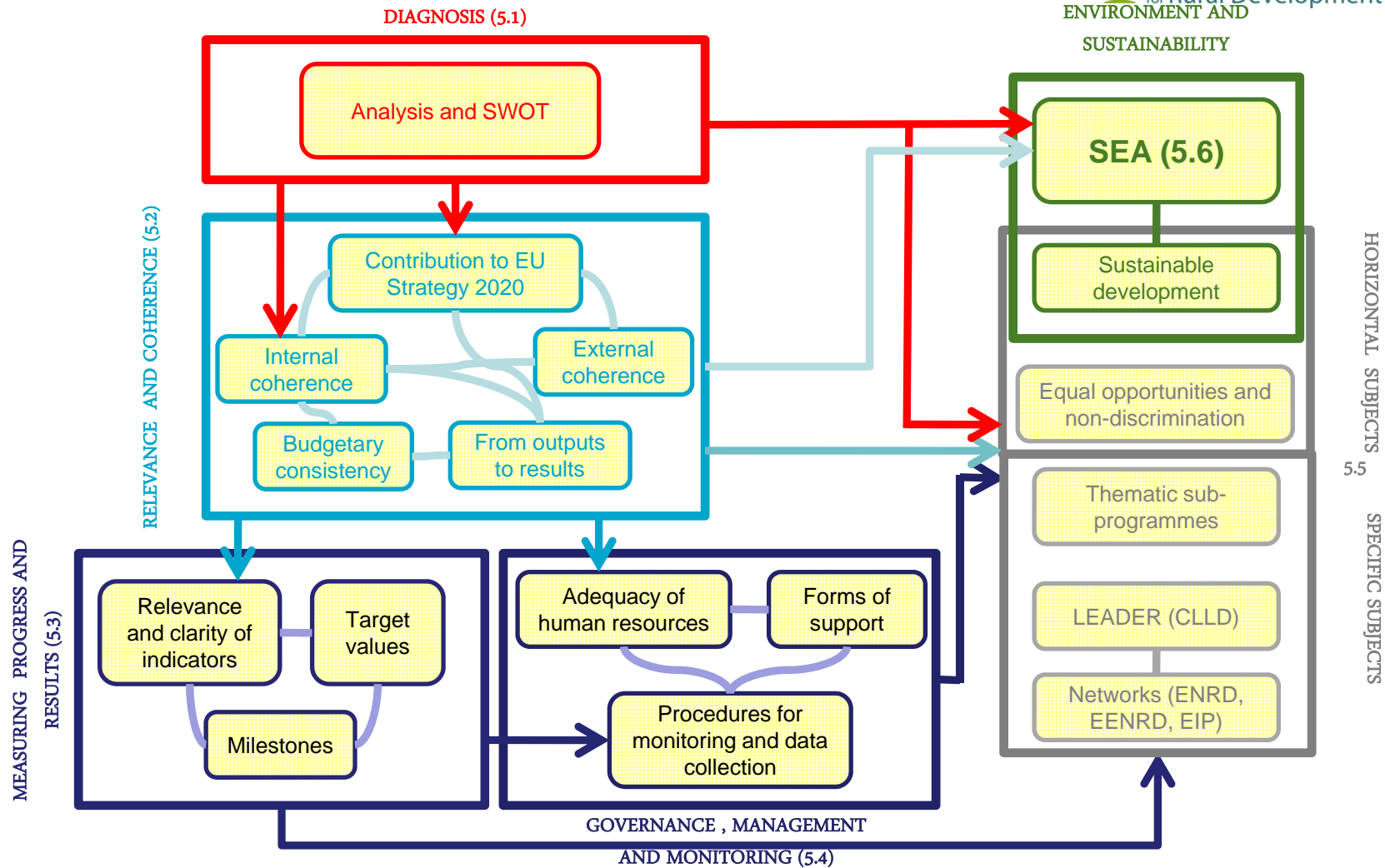
- Chapter 5: Elements of the ex ante evaluation
 - Art. 48.3 (CPR), Art. 84 (RDR)
- Sub-chapter 5.6: SEA
 - Art. 48.4 (CPR)
- Chapter 6: Toolbox

Chapter 5

Elements of the EAE




- The elements are organised in six sections:
 - Diagnosis (SWOT)
 - Relevance and Coherence
 - Measuring Progress and Results
 - Governance and Management
 - Horizontal and specific subjects
 - SEA
- The sequence follows the logic of the work flow and not the sequence of items cited under Art. 48.3(CPR)

The flow





How the elements are discussed:

- Purpose and importance: The *Why*
- Conceptual framing and possible difficulties: The **challenges**
- Approaches and methodologies: **suggested solutions**
- Do's 😊 and Don'ts ☹️
- Legal references and further reading: 
- Proposed evaluation questions 
- The key points 

Diagnosis:

The situation analysis and the SWOT

These are two steps: (i) the situation and needs analysis and (ii) the SWOT.

The situation and needs analysis and the SWOT should exhibit the baseline values for all common and programme-specific context, output, result and impact indicators.

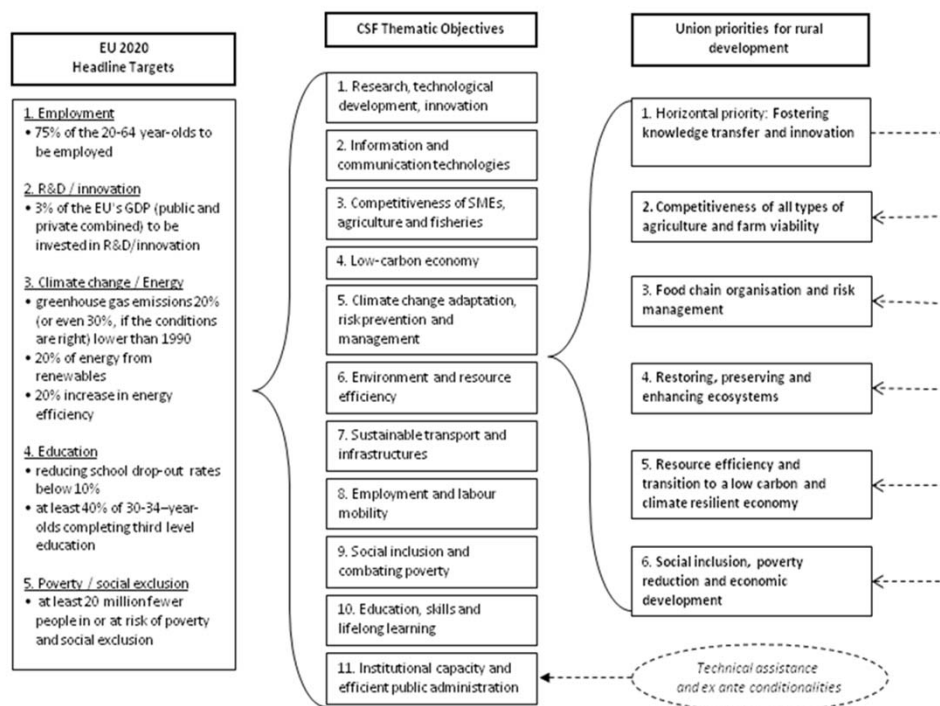
Involve stakeholders in both the analysis of the situation and in the SWOT appraisal (cross-coordination with PC and SEA).

A SWOT table should be telling; therefore the items listed should be interlinked, pay tribute to different perspectives and consider system boundaries (time, and space).

Relevance & coherence:

Contribution to EU 2020

Links between the EU2020 and the EAFRD



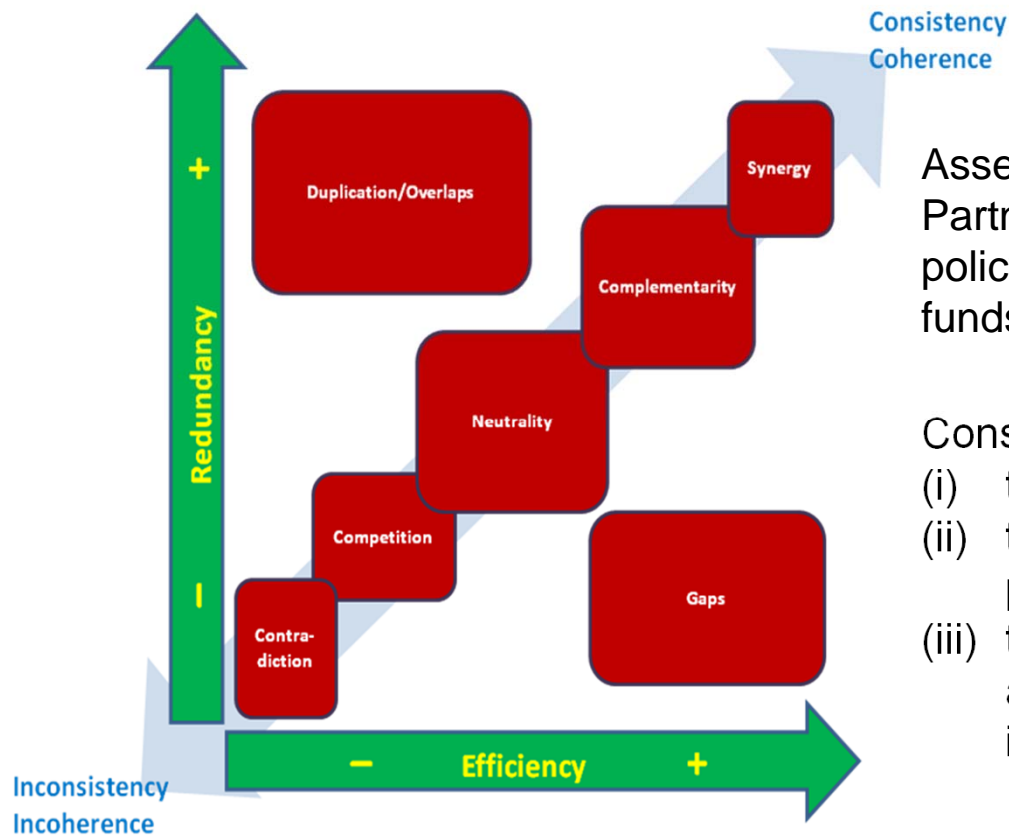
We recommend validating the whole intervention logic of the RDP and conduct the analysis together with the assessment of internal coherence and the expected contributions of outputs to results.

We also suggest analysing the interactions in the programming phase and the feedback mechanisms foreseen for programme implementation.

Specific attention should be devoted to the particular role of priority 1 aiming at innovation as a horizontal objective: 'fostering knowledge transfer and innovation'.

Relevance & coherence:

External coherence

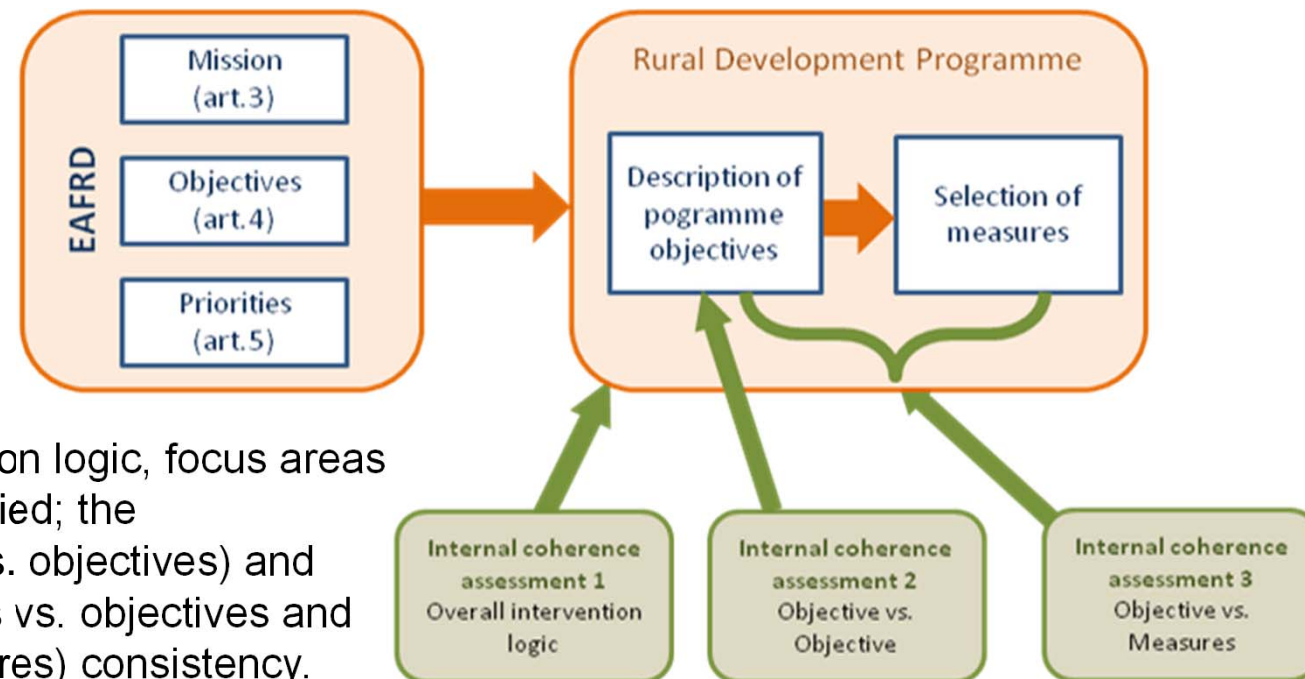


Assess coherence/consistency by looking at the Partnership Contract, CAP pillar 1, additional EU policy recommendations and any other coinciding funds and instruments at regional or national level.

Consider three aspects:

- (i) the process of programme design,
- (ii) the objectives and measures set out in the programme document, and
- (iii) the governance arrangements, management and communication provisions for the implementation period.

Relevance & coherence: **Internal coherence**



Assess the intervention logic, focus areas and measures identified; the vertical (measures vs. objectives) and horizontal (objectives vs. objectives and measures vs. measures) consistency.

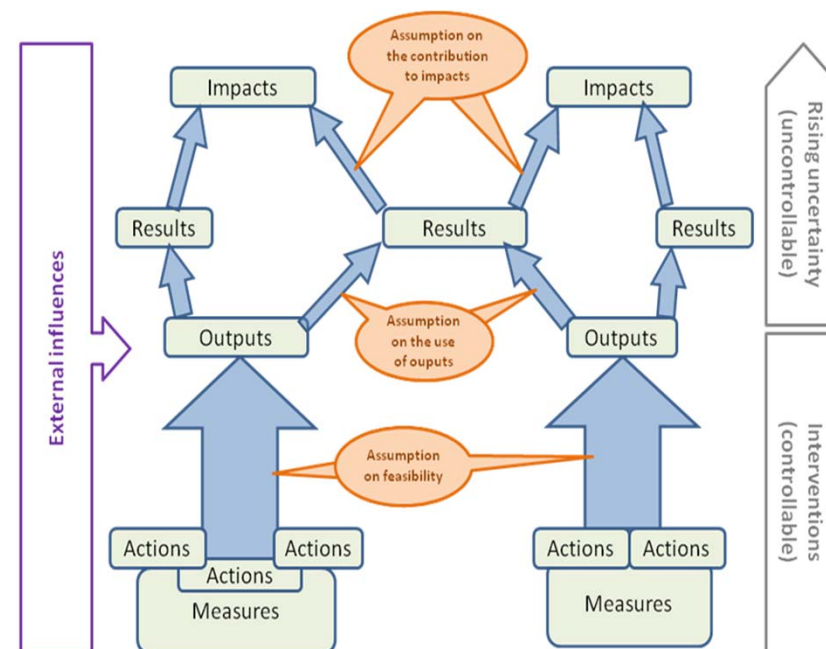
Support systems (Technical Assistance, Networks; see also 5.4 and 5.5)

Relevance and coherence:

Contribution of outputs to results

The *ex ante* evaluation should assess how the links (= assumptions) between measures/actions, outputs and results have been conceived by programme developers.

The main challenge is to validate the intervention logic in reverse order, from the expected results back to expected outputs, chosen measures and envisaged actions.



- We recommend drawing a graph of the intervention logic exhibiting
- the results chains linking actions, measures, outputs, results and impacts;
 - the assumptions determining the links between measures/actions → outputs → results;
 - the external factors which influence the achievement of programme objectives.

Relevance and coherence:



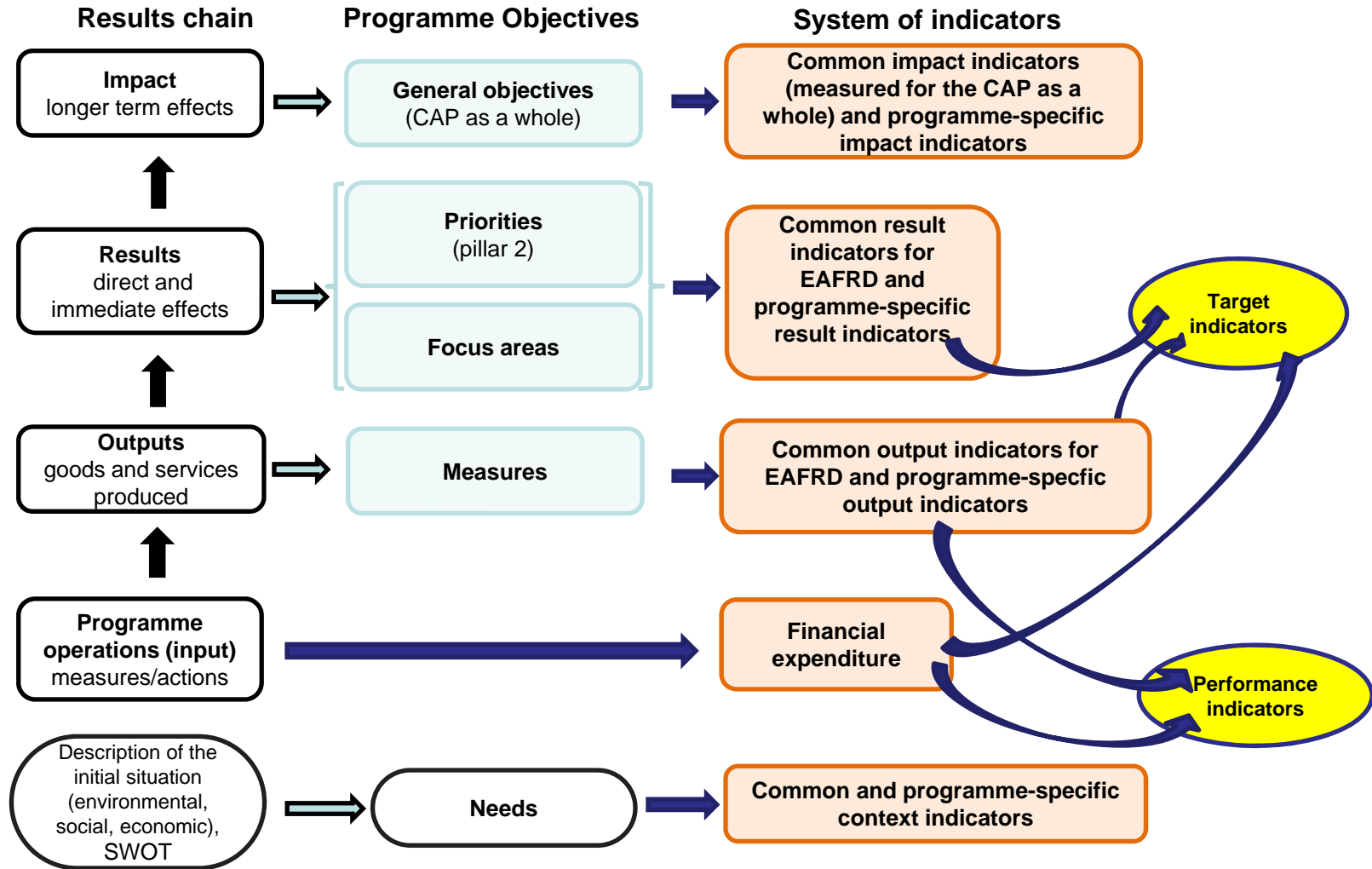
Budgetary consistency

Does the budgetary allocation match the planned outputs and targets for the achievement of focus areas?

We suggest carrying out this assessment in three steps:

- (i) internal financial coherence;
- (ii) External financial coherence;
- (iii) Assess the degree of risk associated with implementation and suggest follow up and possible corrective measures.

Measuring progress and results



The adequacy of target values

The *ex ante* evaluator should verify that the programme authorities have supplied target values for the indicators, particularly for those established as target indicators, and should determine if those values are coherent and reliable.

Cross-check the focus areas covered by target indicators with the budgetary allocation.

The method of calculation should be made clear as early as possible.



Measuring progress and results

Suitability of milestones

We propose to assess

- (i) the relevance and representativeness of the milestone target indicators;
- (ii) the plausibility of the targets set;
- (iii) the procedures foreseen to verify the milestone targets;
- (iv) the consistency of the RDP milestones against planned outputs and expenditures in the other programmes covered by the Partnership Contract.

Relevance and clarity of programme specific indicators

The *ex ante* evaluation should

- (i) determine the programme-specific indicators' relevancy;
- (ii) assess the SMARTness and CLEARness of the proposed indicators;

We recommend carrying out the assessment by

- (i) linking the hierarchy of indicators to the hierarchy of objectives as defined in the programme;
- (ii) developing a validation table to assess the quality of each indicator.

Human resources and administrative capacities

The scope of the *ex ante* evaluation needs to be carefully specified together with stakeholders and potential beneficiaries to ensure it is adequate and achievable.

Consider bottlenecks when budgeting periods overlap (at the beginning and in the end of a period).

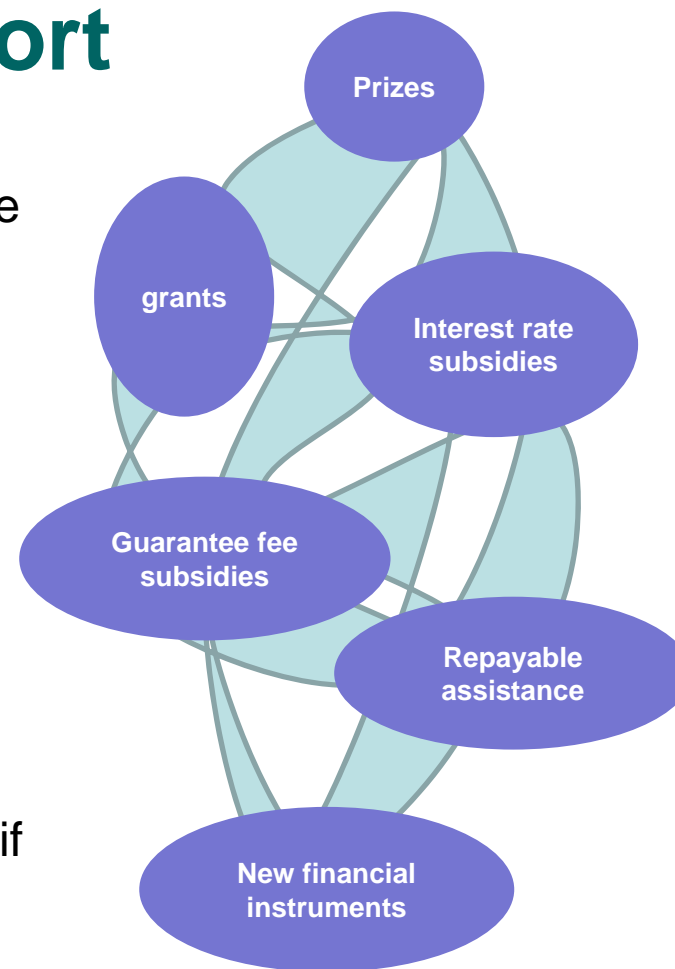
Check in particular: Technical Assistance, National Rural Networks (also see chapter 5.5), Evaluation Plan (also see further down in this section), lessons learnt from previous periods (also see analysis and SWOT).

Proposed forms of support

The *ex ante* evaluator should examine whether the planned forms of support are appropriate to achieve the goals set for the thematic priorities, and which combination of support forms can be absorbed by the beneficiaries addressed in the best possible way.

Experiences are still scarce namely with the new financial instruments.

The *ex ante* evaluator should advocate the simplification goal, first and foremost by checking if the opportunities for the simplified cost options have been properly used.



Monitoring, data collection and evaluation plan

There should be an appropriate system to record, maintain, manage and report information on the programme and its implementation, not only to inform the responsible authorities, but also to prepare the basis for evaluations.

The *ex ante* evaluator assesses the match between the objectives of the programme, the data needed, and the data actually collected in the monitoring system, anticipating possible bottlenecks and recommending preventive measures.

Assess the evaluation plan to see whether it is going to respond to the evaluations for the enhanced AIR 2017, 2019.

Check the fit with the monitoring system for CAP pillar 1 (common impact indicators!).

Horizontal and specific themes

- Equal opportunities and non-discrimination
- Sustainable development (‘sufficient advisory capacity’):
interface with SEA
- Thematic sub-programmes

Not explicitly mentioned in the legal texts, but still very much recommended:

- Networks
- LEADER (CLLD): **THE** case for cross-funds coordination.

Sub-chapter 5.6: SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment)

- *Close stretto* with RDP, PC
- Process according to the SEA Directive
- Stages:
 - SEA framework → statement
 - Scoping → statement
 - Environmental assessment → report
 - Public consultation and decision-making → statement
 - Monitoring → corrective measures

Toolbox



European Evaluation Network
for Rural Development

- Glossary
- Template ToR for *ex ante* evaluation
- Indicative ToR for Strategic Environmental Assessment with standard report format
- Proposed evaluation questions (overview)
- Outline of ex-ante evaluation report
- Legal texts
- List of context indicators

Questions and Answers concerning Part II

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