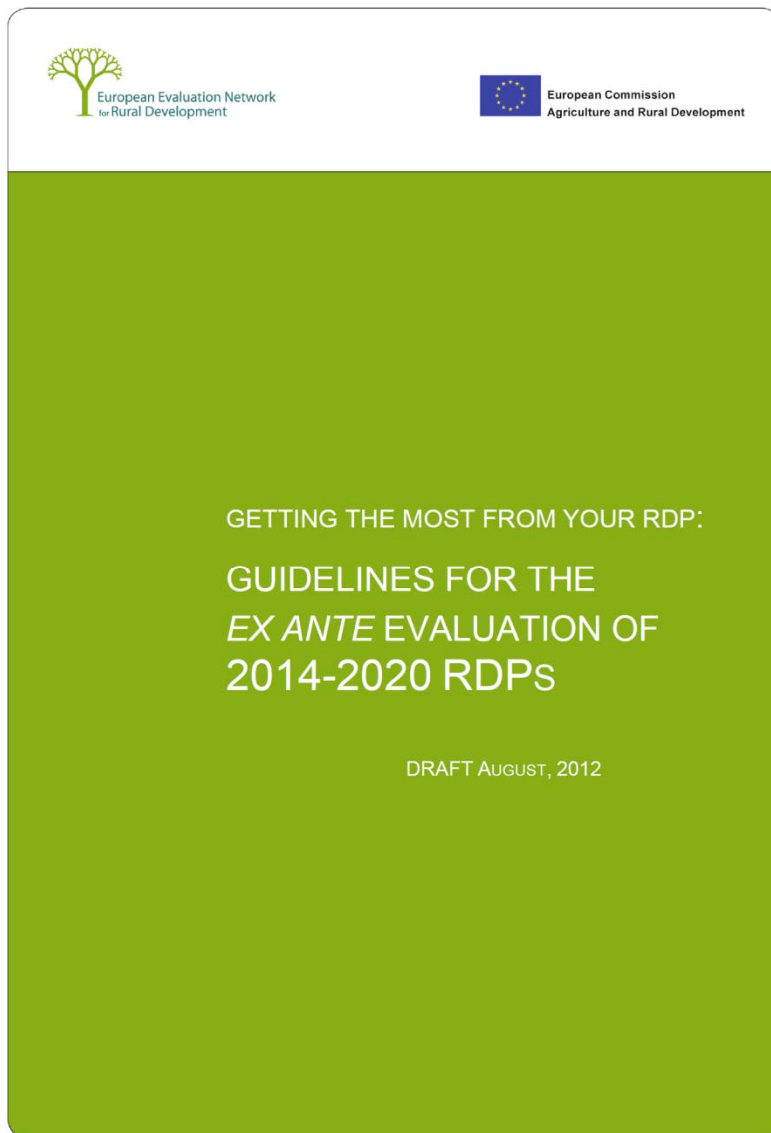


GUIDELINES FOR THE EX ANTE EVALUATION OF 2014-2020 RDPs

Jela Tvrdonova, Robert Lukesch, Hannes Wimmer



This version of the guidelines...

- integrates the comments received from Member States by mid-July 2012;
- has been thoroughly revised and corrected → make sure your evaluators use the updated version!
- will stay a draft until the legal acts are approved;
- can be downloaded from the „Our Publications“ section on <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation>

*Send any questions, remarks etc.to
jela@ruralevaluation.eu*

What are the main changes since the June version?

- Structure improved
 - Divided into three parts
- Chapters revised
 - Revision of all chapters, proposed evaluation questions, graphs,
- New content added
 - „Scope of the *ex ante* evaluation“ added
 - Sections on National Rural Network (Programmes) added
 - Glossary of terms added
 - Indicative number of man-days added
 - Legal texts added

Structure of the guidelines

1. Why ex ante evaluation?
2. The ex ante evaluation process
3. Scope of the ex ante evaluation



PART I:
Mainly for Managing
Authorities

1. SWOT analysis and needs assessment
2. Relevance, internal and external coherence
3. Measuring progress and outcomes
4. Governance arrangements, programme management and monitoring
5. Horizontal and specific themes
6. Strategic Environmental Assessment



PART II:
Mainly for
Evaluators

Glossary, template ToR for ex-ante and SEA,
Indicative number of man-days, proposed EQs &
table of contents, draft indicators, legal texts



PART III:
Toolbox

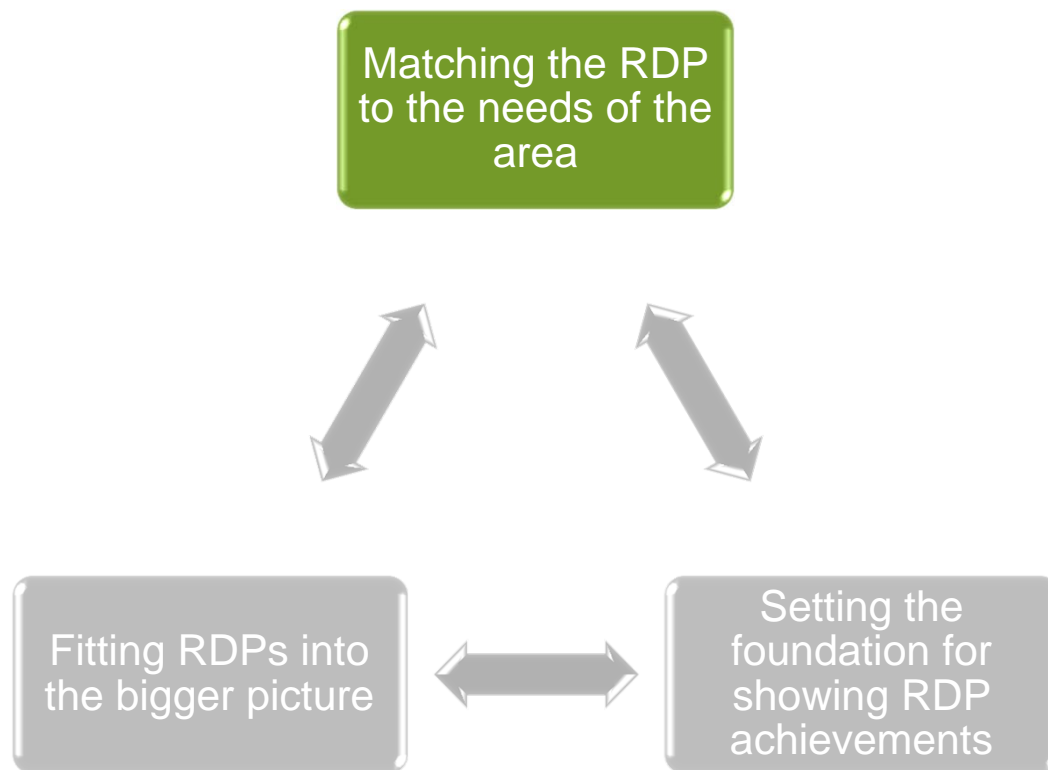
Part I

1. Why ex ante evaluation?
2. The ex ante evaluation process
3. Scope of the ex ante evaluation



PART I:
**Mainly for Managing
Authorities**

Why ex ante evaluation?



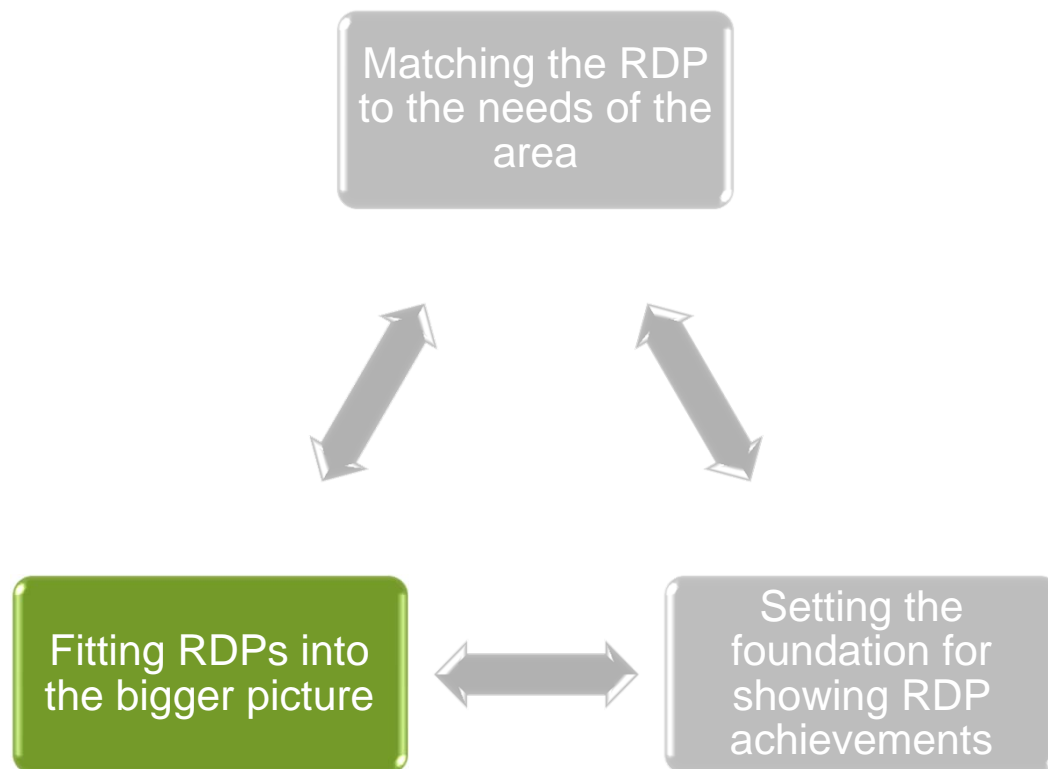
Ensures that RDP content makes sense

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?

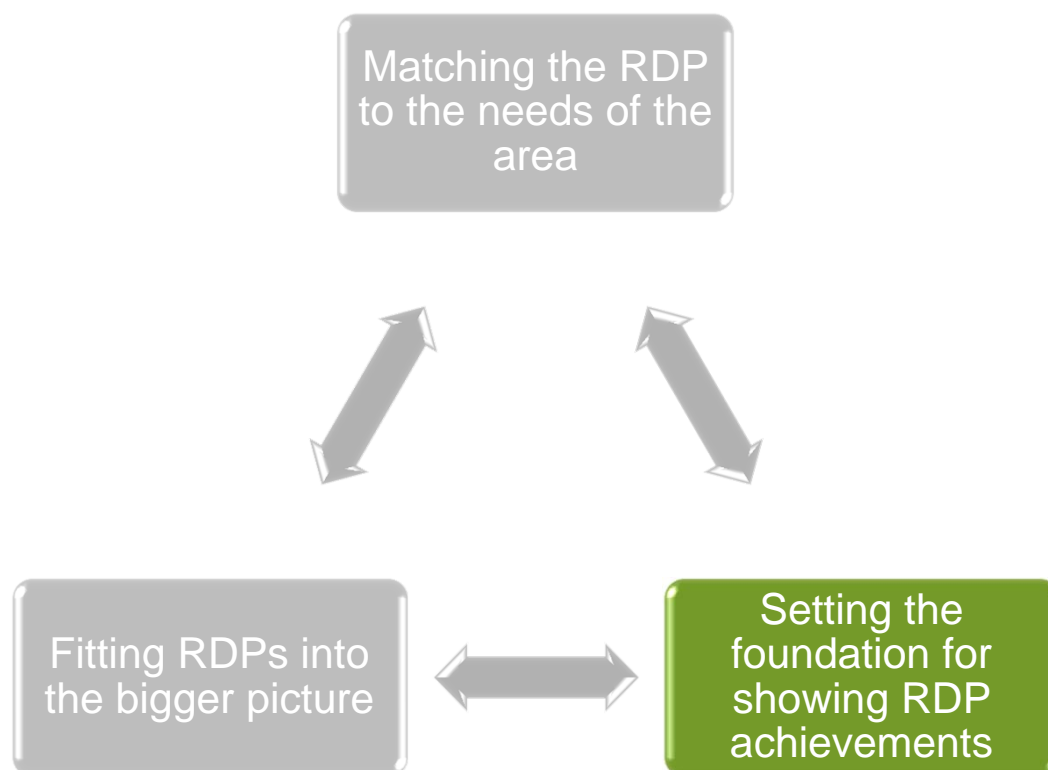


Assesses the consistency of the RDP with Pillar 1 (-> impacts)

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

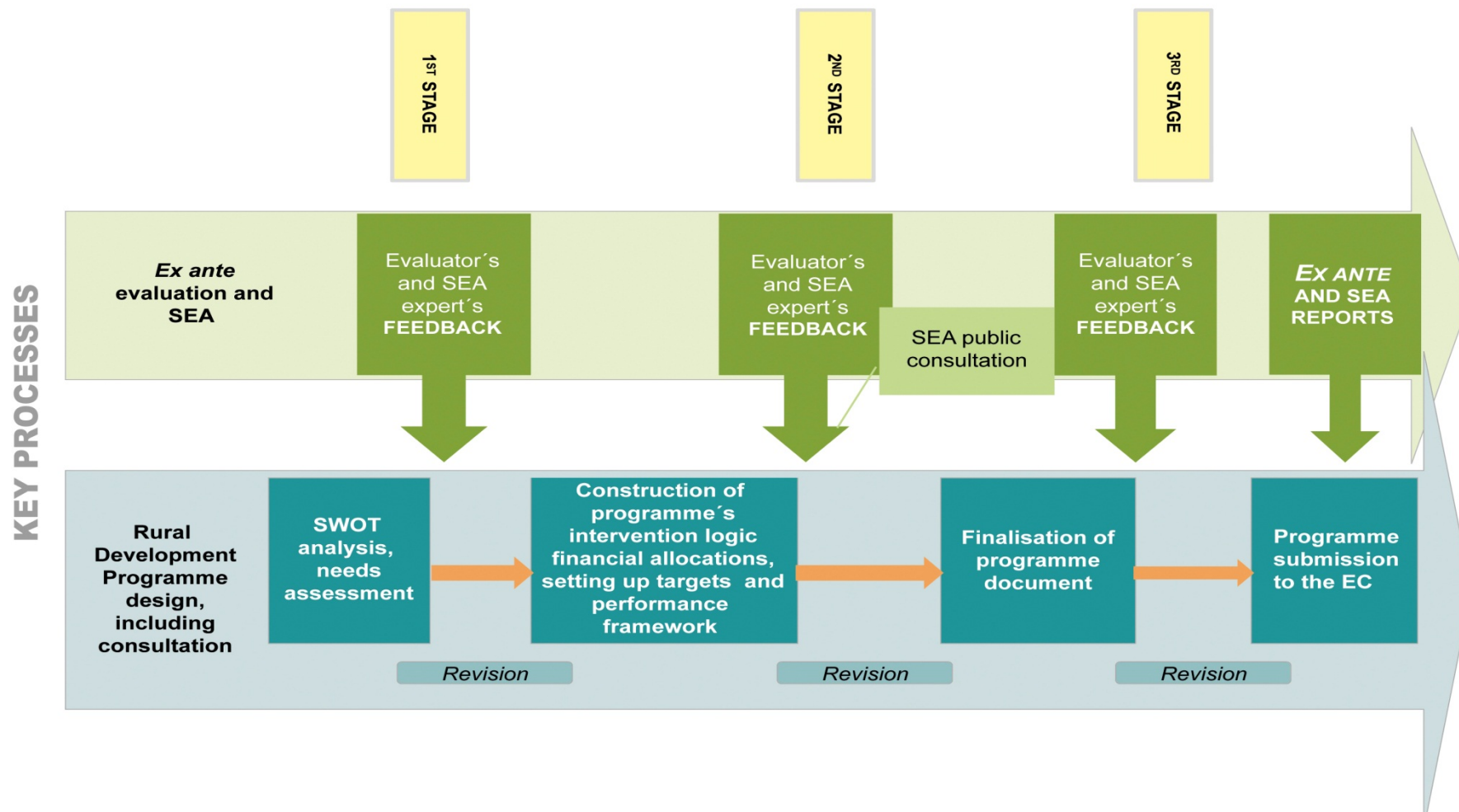
Validates intervention logic

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 and 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.

2nd Stage

Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities
Managing Authorities of RDP and other ministry departments,	prepare intervention logic of RDP, suggests allocation of resources, plan 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 and the ex ante report including SEA to the EC, 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

Contractual options for tendering ex ante

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 utilised resources • Consultation process organised more effectively • Better coordination of processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs care that full requirements of both exercises are adequately covered • May lower the number of stakeholders involved • May restrict pool of potential contractors with required specialisation
One tender for both tasks, separate lots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better coordination of consultation process • Independency of opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement for more resources • More complex management
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 for more resources (financial, management and coordination)

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,			
...			

Steering the process

It is recommended to establish **Steering Group** to conduct the following tasks:

- Gather and colate 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 SEA;

Specific considerations for ex ante evaluation of NRN Programmes

The same **legal requirements, purpose and process** as for RDPs, but...

NRNP do **not** have to undergo a separate **SEA**:

- **Less stakeholders**: MA, socio-economic partners, Ex ante evaluator and the EC
- **Simple tendering** (only 1 contract)

Contractual options for ex ante evaluation of NRNP

Option to conduct the ex ante	Advantages	Disadvantages
In house scenario	<p>Efficiently organised and utilised resources</p> <p>Better coordination of processes</p>	<p>Care needs to be taken that full and specific requirements of both exercises are adequately covered</p> <p>May lower the number of stakeholders involved</p> <p>May restrict independency of appraisal</p>
Tendering external ex ante evaluator	<p>Independency of opinion</p> <p>Broader spectrum of stakeholders involved</p> <p>Stronger evaluator specialisation possible</p>	<p>Possible requirement for more resources(financial, management and coordination)</p> <p>More complex management</p> <p>Potential timing processes might be less synchronised</p>

Scope of the ex ante evaluation



- Provides overview of requirements to conduct ex ante evaluation;
- Indicates where detailed guidance related to individual elements of relevant legal provisions can be found in Part II (link between Part I & II)

Example

Article 9 of the RDR

Article 9 of the RDR describes the content of the Rural Development Programme and lays down more specifically in Article 9(1)(a), (c) and (iii) that each Rural Development *Programme shall include the ex ante evaluation* in order to improve its design quality.

- ✓ The *ex ante* guidelines provide information on the related tasks in Part I: Chapter 2 – “The ex ante evaluation process”, page 15 suggesting the entire process should be conducted in three stages: 1) The appraisal of the SWOT analysis and the needs assessment, 2) The appraisal of the construction of intervention logic (external and internal coherence), financial allocations, setting targets and performance framework, 3) The assessment of the entire programme document including governance arrangements, programme management, monitoring, horizontal and specific issues.
- ✓ The *ex ante* guidelines also provide the information on the ex ante evaluation of National Rural Network Programmes in Part I: Section 2.4.5, page 25 and in Part II: Section 5.4, page 119. In Part I: Section 2.4.5 the purpose and process, including description of stakeholders, key steps, contractual relations and documentation of the process is provided. In Part II: Section 5.4 the tasks in relation to the *ex ante* evaluation of NRNP are described.

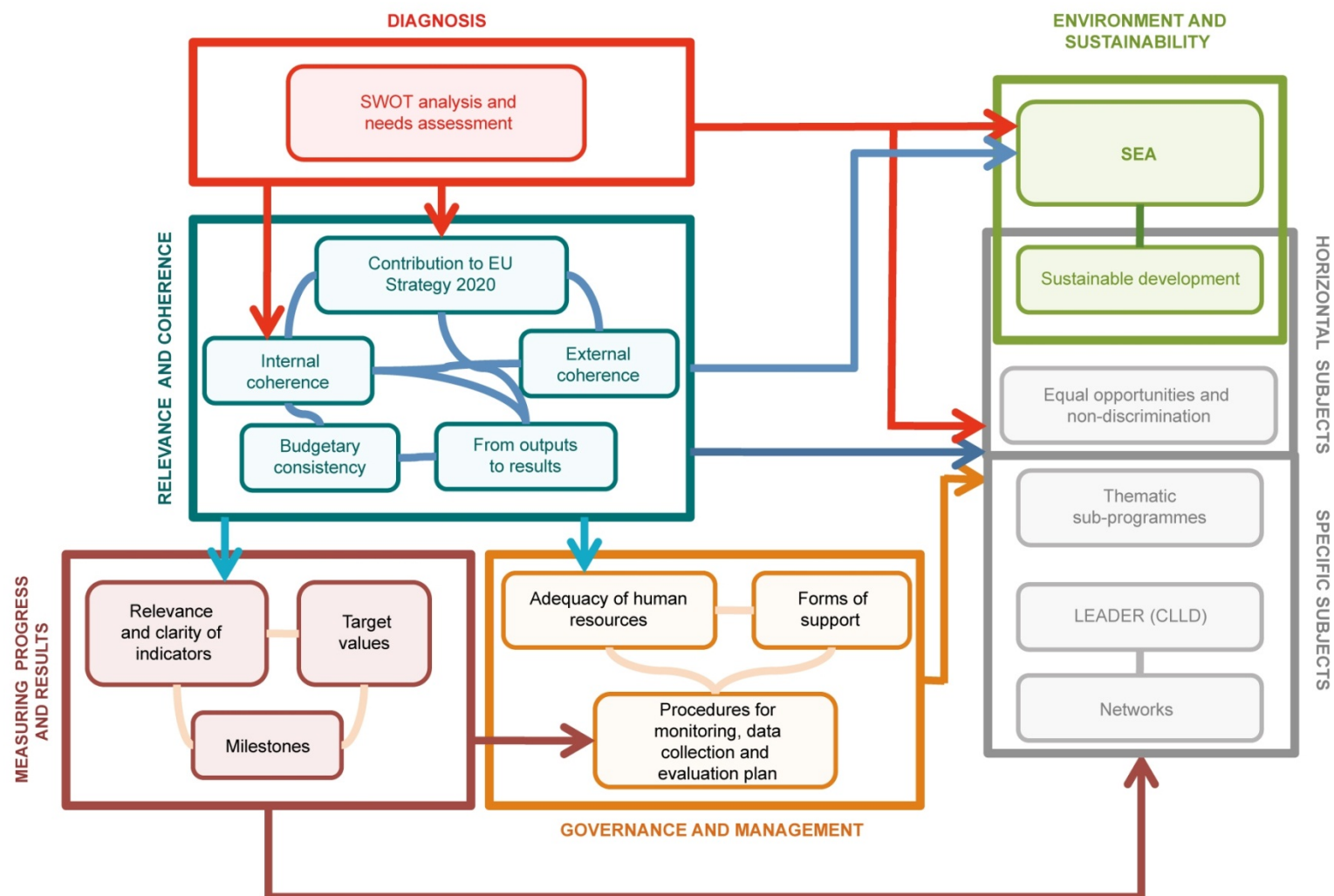
Part II

1. SWOT analysis and needs assessment
2. Relevance, internal and external coherence
3. Measuring progress and outcomes
4. Governance arrangements, programme management and monitoring
5. Horizontal and specific themes
6. Strategic Environmental Assessment

**PART II:
Mainly for
Evaluators**

N.B. The sequence follows the logic of the work flow and not the sequence of items cited under Art. 48.3(CPR)

The work flow



The evaluation themes are discussed in the guidelines using the following scheme:

- *The key issues*
- *What must be covered in the ex ante guidelines*
- *Proposed approaches*
- *Good and not so good practices*
- *Legal references*
- *Further reading*
- *Suggested evaluation questions*

The SWOT analysis and needs assessment

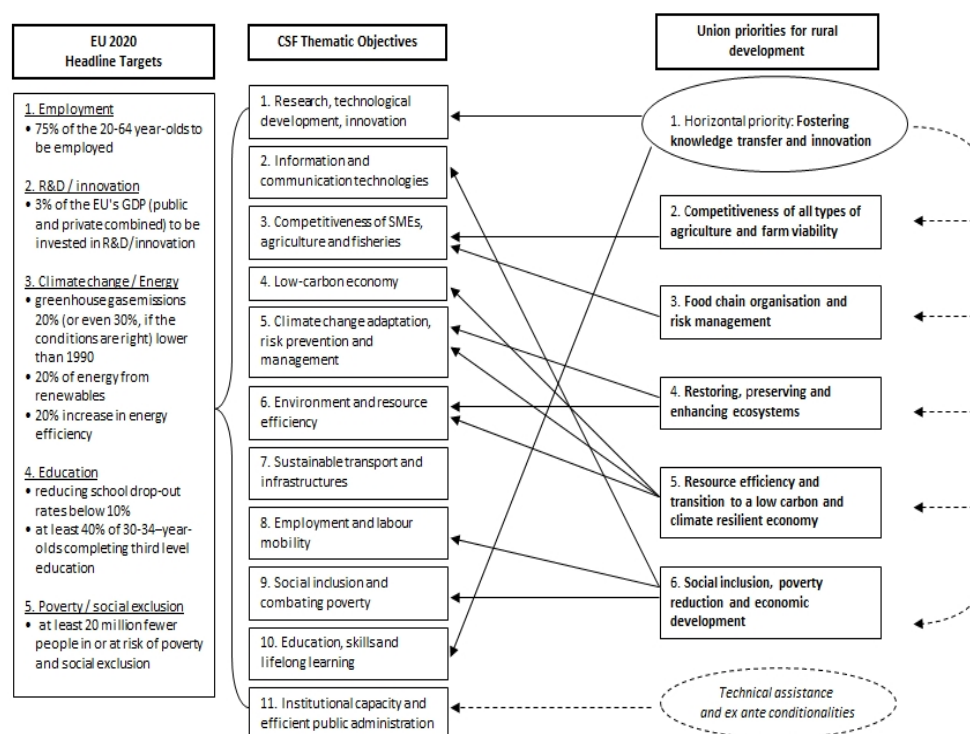
The SWOT and needs analysis should establish the baseline values for all common and programme-specific context, output, result and impact indicators.

Stakeholders should be involved in both the SWOT analysis and the needs assessment (cross-coordination with PC and SEA).

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

SWOT and needs analysis should be interlinked.

Contribution to EU 2020

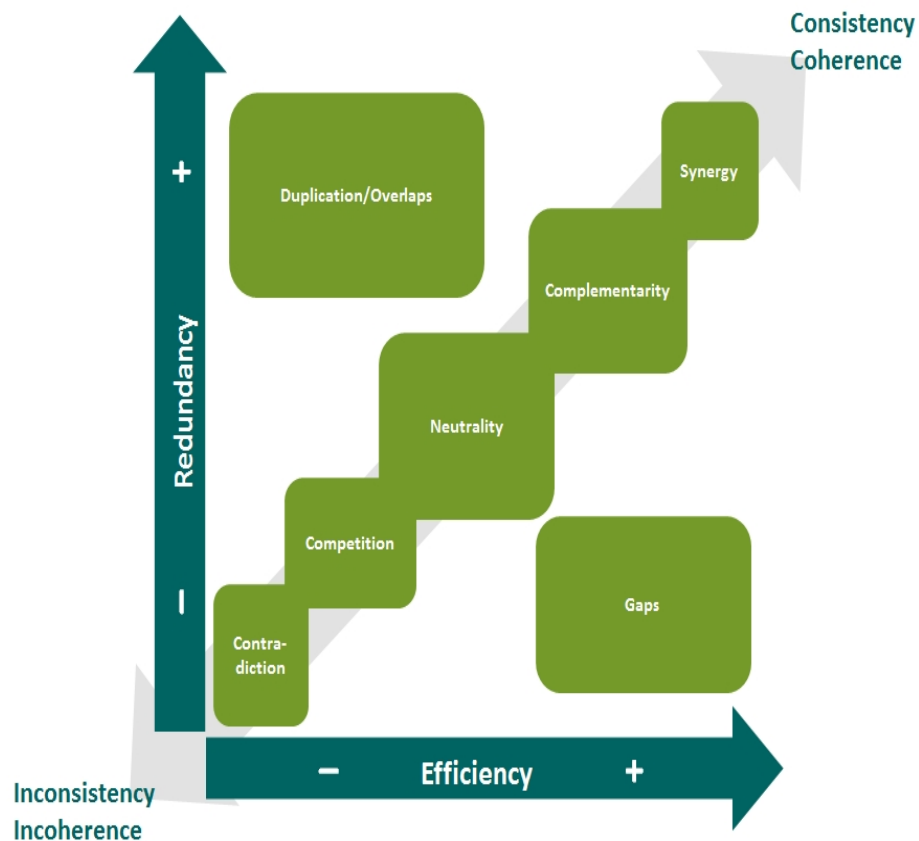


It is recommended to validate the whole intervention logic of the RDP and conduct the analysis together with the assessment of internal coherence and the expected contributions of outputs to results.

It is suggested to analyse the interactions in the programming phase and the feedback mechanisms foreseen for programme implementation.

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

External coherence



It is recommended to assess the coherence/consistency of the Programme design and its governance with:

- the Partnership Agreement
- the CAP pillar 1
- other EU strategies, policies and policy recommendations
- coinciding funds and instruments at regional or national level

Intervention logic

It is suggested to assess:

- if the objectives **correspond** to the European rural development priorities, and if the result chain is logically structured;
- the **coherence** between the objectives;
- the degree to which the selected **measures are adequate** to meet the objectives set forth in the programme;
- how the various **measures complement each other** in promoting the achievement of the objectives.

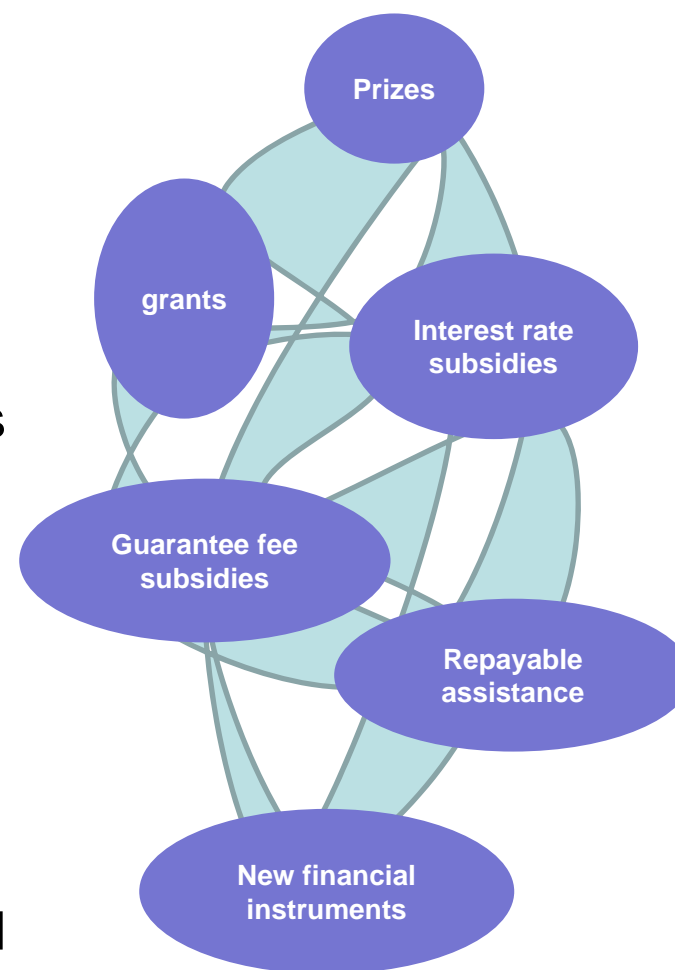
An evaluation of internal coherence should be undertaken both for the programme as a whole, as well as for thematic sub-programmes.

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 can be absorbed by the beneficiaries in the best possible way.

Experiences are still scarce namely with the new financial instruments.

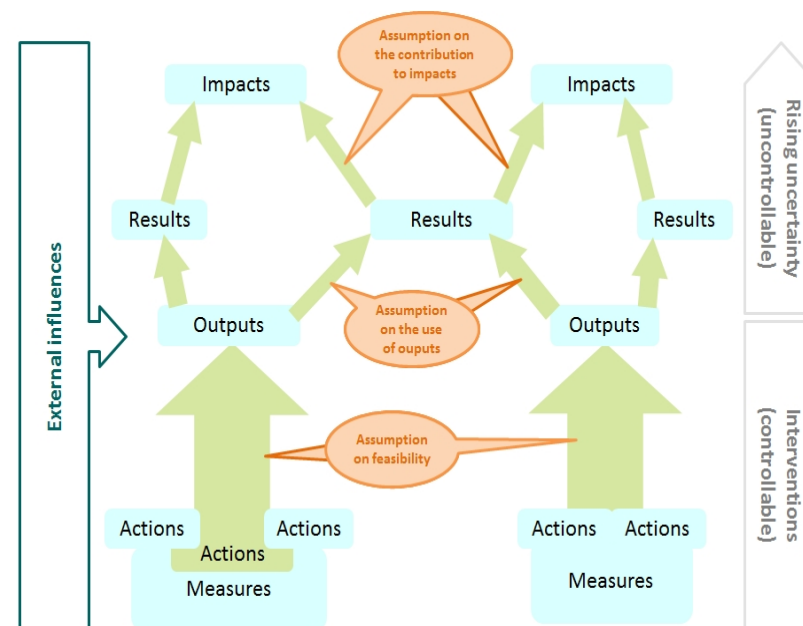
The *ex ante* evaluator should advocate the simplification goal, first and foremost by checking if the opportunities for the simplified cost options have been sufficiently taken up.



Contribution of outputs to results

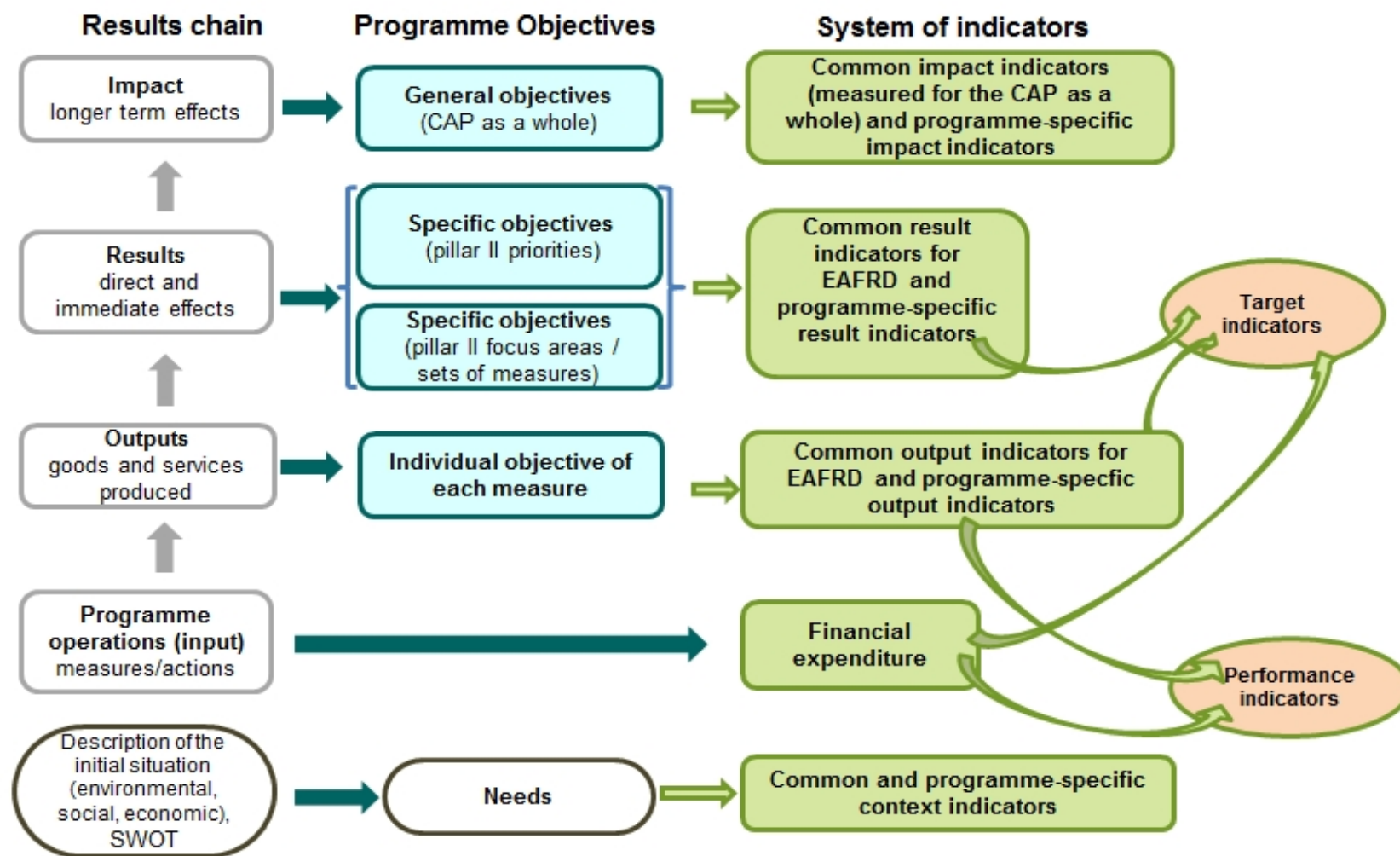
The *ex ante* evaluation should assess how plausibly the links (= assumptions) between measures/actions, outputs and results have been conceived by programme developers.

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.



- It is recommended to draw a graph of the intervention logic exhibiting
- (i) the results chains linking actions, measures, outputs, results and impacts;
 - (ii) the assumptions determining the links between measures/actions → outputs → results;
 - (iii) the external factors which influence the achievement of programme objectives.

Measuring progress and outcomes



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.

The adequacy of values for target indicators

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

The **sufficiency of budgetary allocation** for focus areas should be cross-checked with values of target indicators .

The **method of calculation** should be explained as clearly as possible.

Suitability of milestones for performance framework

The *ex ante* evaluator should assess whether:

- the values proposed by the Managing Authority for the **milestones** used in the performance framework **are appropriate and realistic** and that
- **achievement of these milestones** would give a **reliable indication** that the programme is on track to attain its objectives.

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 this part of the *ex ante* evaluation needs to be carefully specified together with the managing authority and other relevant stakeholders.

When budgeting periods overlap (at the beginning and in the end of a period), bottlenecks may occur which should be duly taken into consideration.

Particular importance should be given to the human resources allocated to Technical Assistance, Networks and the implementation of the Evaluation Plan.

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 ground 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.

The *evaluation plan* should be assessed in respect to the evaluations foreseen for the enhanced AIR 2017 and 2019.

The monitoring system and evaluation plan should take into account the *common impact indicators established for the CAP* as whole (common impact indicators!).

Horizontal and specific themes

- Equal opportunities and non-discrimination
- Sustainable development ('sufficient advisory capacity'): interface with SEA
- Thematic sub-programmes
- Networks
- LEADER (CLLD)

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- Close links with RDP, PC required, without losing distinct perspective
- Process standardized according to the SEA Directive
- Stages:
 - SEA framework → statement
 - Scoping → statement
 - Environmental assessment → report
 - Public consultation and decision-making → statement
 - Monitoring → corrective measures

Part III

**Glossary, template ToR for ex-ante and SEA,
Indicative number of man-days, proposed EQs &
table of contents, draft indicators, legal texts**



**PART III:
Toolbox**

Toolbox

- Glossary
- Template ToR for *ex ante* evaluation
- Indicative ToR for Strategic Environmental Assessment with standard report format
- Indicative number of man-days for *ex ante* and SEA
- Suggested evaluation questions
- Proposed table of content for the *ex ante* evaluation report
- Legal texts
- List of context indicators



Thank you for your attention!

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