



# Setting up the system to answer Evaluation Questions for Rural Development Programmes

**Carlo Ricci**, European Evaluation Help Desk





# Legal requirements

## **Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, art. 54:**

- Evaluation shall be carried out to improve the quality of design and implementation of programmes, as well as to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

## **Regulation (EU) No 1305/2014, art. 68:**

- M&E shall aim to demonstrate achievements of RD policy and assess its impacts, effectiveness, efficiency and relevance and contribute to better targeted support for RD

## **Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2014, Art. 14 and Annex V:**

- Common evaluation questions are part of CMES.

→ **Non-binding guidance:** *Working document: Common evaluation questions for rural development programmes 2014-2020.*





# The purpose of Evaluation Questions is to...

Define the **focus** of evaluations

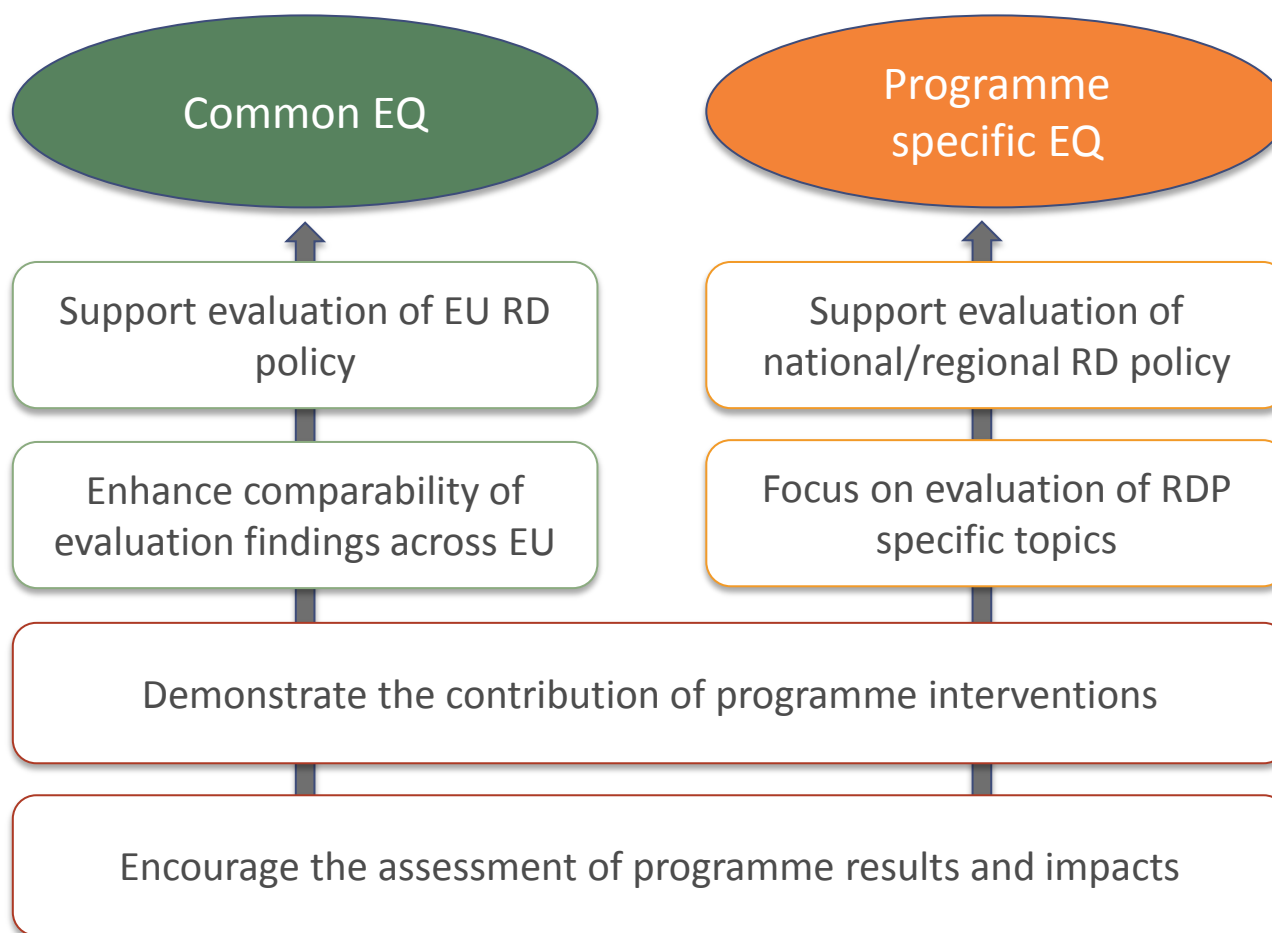
Demonstrate the **progress, achievements, results, impact, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency** of rural development policy

Explore **causal- effect**: „To what extent ....has the change happened.....due to the programme“

Reflect **the programme intervention logic**, i.e. SWOT, needs, objectives, measures, etc.



# Types of Evaluation Questions





# Common Evaluation Questions (CEQ)

To be answered in 2017, 2019, ex post

To be answered in 2019, ex post

## Focus area related CEQ

Linked to Focus Area **objectives**

Capture the **achievements of Focus Area related objectives**

Answered with the means of **result indicators** (and additional indicators/information when necessary)

## CEQ related to other specific aspects

Linked to **specific policy aspects**, such as synergies among priorities and focus areas, TA and NRN

Reported in the **AIR in 2017 and 2019** and in the **ex post** evaluation

## CEQ related to EU level objectives

Linked to EU level objectives

Capture the **contribution of the programme** towards the overall policy objectives

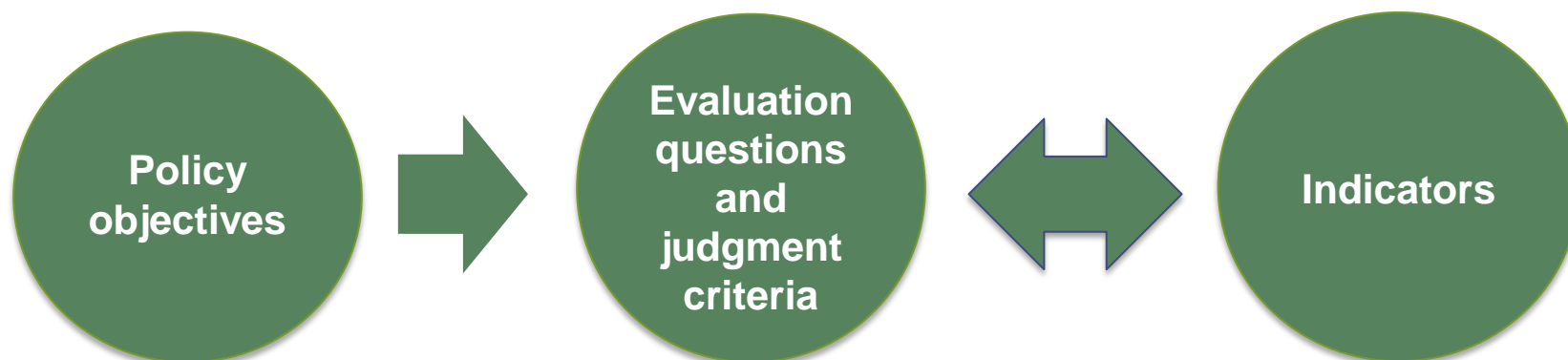
Answered with the means of **common impact indicators, context indicators and complementary result indicators** (and additional indicators/information)



# What is needed for a clear evaluation framework?

Sound evaluation is ensured by **consistency** between objectives, evaluation questions/judgment criteria and indicators, which allows to verify, whether:

- The evaluation framework is targeted towards the policy
- All terms used in the evaluation framework are harmonised
- Sufficient evidence to answer EQ can be collected







# Means to answer Evaluation Questions

Common and programme specific indicators

Type of indicator (no.)	Purpose	Data
<b>Common context indicators (45)</b> include impact indicators	Context description and analysis (SWOT and needs assessment) and assessment of impacts	Macro-data, collected annually by MA
<b>Impact indicators (16)</b>	Assessment of policy impacts of the RDP level within its context, <b>answer horizontal EQ</b>	Macro and micro-data, collected annually by evaluators (and operations database)
<b>Result indicators – performance indicators (25)</b> (include target and 6 complementary PII result indicators )	Assessment of direct and immediate policy effects within then group of RDP beneficiaries <b>and answer FA related EQ</b>	Micro-data, collected annually by operation database and evaluators
<b>Output indicators (27)</b>	Measure activities implemented within RDP measures	Micro-data, collected ongoingly by operations database
<b>Financial (input) indicators</b>	Refer to resources allocated to measures	Micro-data, collected ongoingly by operations database



## Programme specific EQs (PSEQs)

...are formulated by Member States when:

- CEQs do not capture the full range of achievements of objectives of the programme or focus area
- National (territorial) priorities are not covered by CEQs
- Programme shows potential indirect, secondary, unexpected or negative effects
- Specific evaluation topics included in the evaluation plan (e.g. RDP delivery, administration etc.)





# Programme specific indicators(PSI)

...are formulated by Member States,

- When common context indicators do not cover the specific characteristics of the programme area
- To answer programme specific evaluation questions
- When the programme shows RDP specific direct/indirect, primary/secondary, unexpected or negative effects
- When CEQs cannot be answered by common indicators in satisfactory manner (additional indicators)



# 4 Steps in setting up the system to answer evaluation questions



# Step 1

## Ensuring coherence and relevance of the RDP intervention logic



# Coherence and relevance of the RDP intervention logic (1)

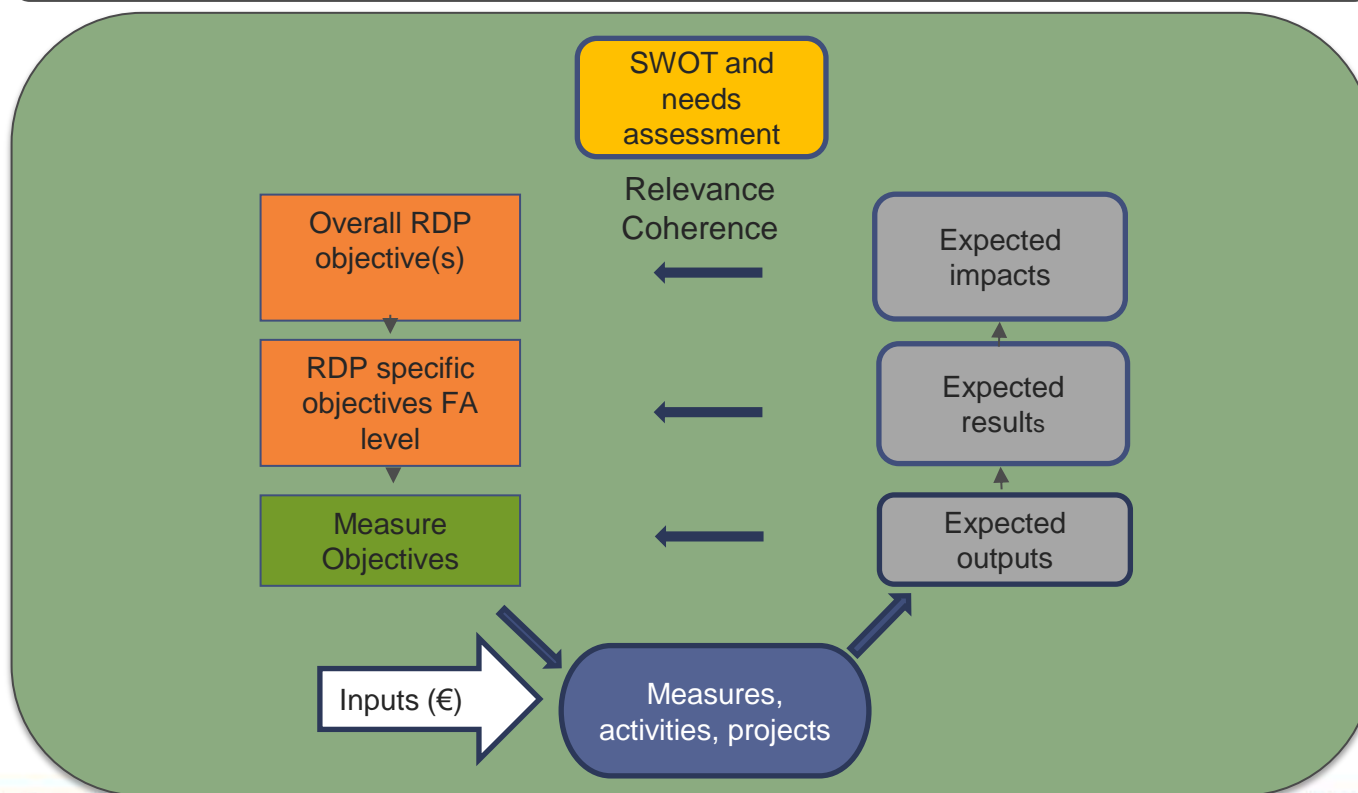
Why is this step important?

To ensure that RDP interventions contribute to the EU and national/regional rural development priorities



# Coherence and relevance of the RDP intervention logic (2)

Objectives and headline targets of the EU 2020 Strategy,  
CAP objectives and rural development priorities





## Step 2

# Ensuring consistency of the EQs and indicators with the intervention logic





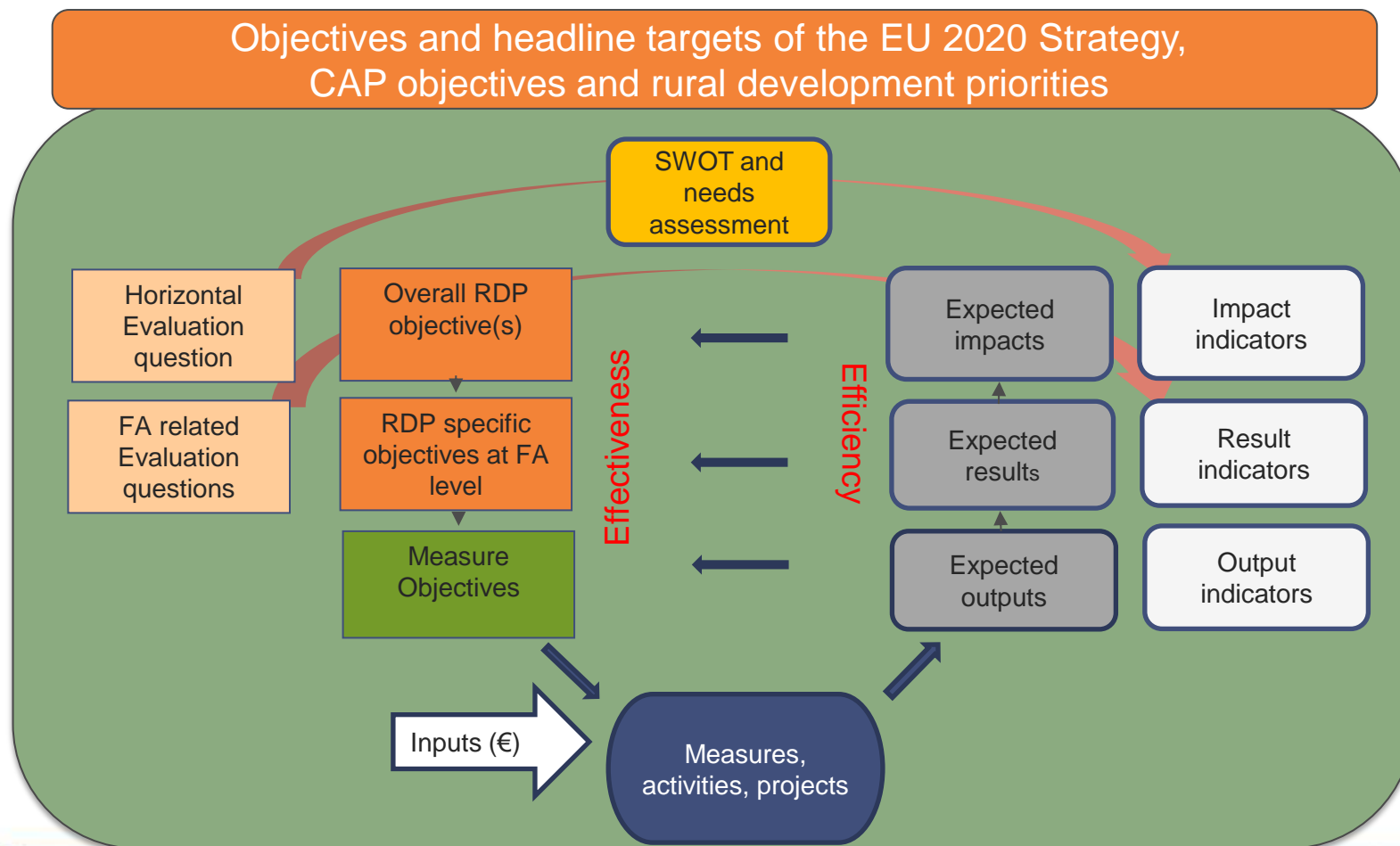
# Consistency of IL with EQs and indicators (1)

Why is this step important?

To have sufficient means assess the  
RDP effectiveness, efficiency, results  
and impacts.



# Consistency of IL with EQs and indicators (2)





# Programme effectiveness

## RDP effectiveness:

- Is the extent to which **objectives** pursued by an intervention are achieved

## Assessment of RDP effectiveness:

- **Evaluation Questions:**
  - play an important role in the assessment, asking: „To what extent has programme support contributed to the achievement of objective“, and
  - show causality between a change of relevant result/impact indicators and the programme
- **Indicators:** means to answer the evaluation questions



# Programme efficiency

## RDP efficiency:

- Is the relationship between employed resources and achieved programme effects at output, result and impacts level in pursuing a given objective through an intervention

## Assessment of RDP efficiency:

- Is part of **answering evaluation questions**, reflecting the costs of programme effectiveness
- Provides the information whether bigger achievements could have been obtained with the same budget or whether the same achievements could have been obtained at a lower cost



# Programme effectiveness and efficiency

... is assessed at:



Micro/  
beneficiary level

## **Programme results**

while answering FA related EQ  
with the means of result indicators  
(Reported in AIR 2017, 2019, ex  
post)



Macro/  
programme level

## **Programme impacts**

while answering EU RDP level  
EQ with the means of impact  
indicators  
(Reported in AIR 2019 and ex  
post)



# Programme results

- Measured for RDP beneficiaries with the means of result indicators,
- Related to focus area evaluation questions,
- Data required at micro-level: beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries,
- Calculated in net values, control groups required,
- Reflecting all types of programme and external effects.





# FA related CEQ and result indicators

Focus area related CEQ are answered with the common result indicators (Reg. 808/2014, Annex IV)



**Target indicators** measuring % of all supported units under a given RD support scheme (in fact extended output indicators) - 17 out of 25 indicators, 68%

*R3: % of agricultural holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers (focus area 2B)*

**Other target indicators** - 2 out of 25 indicators, 8%

*R21: Jobs created in supported projects (Leader) (focus area 6B)*

**Complementary result indicators** - 6 out of 25 indicators, 24%

*R2: Change in Agricultural output on supported farms/AWU (focus area 2A)*



# Programme impacts

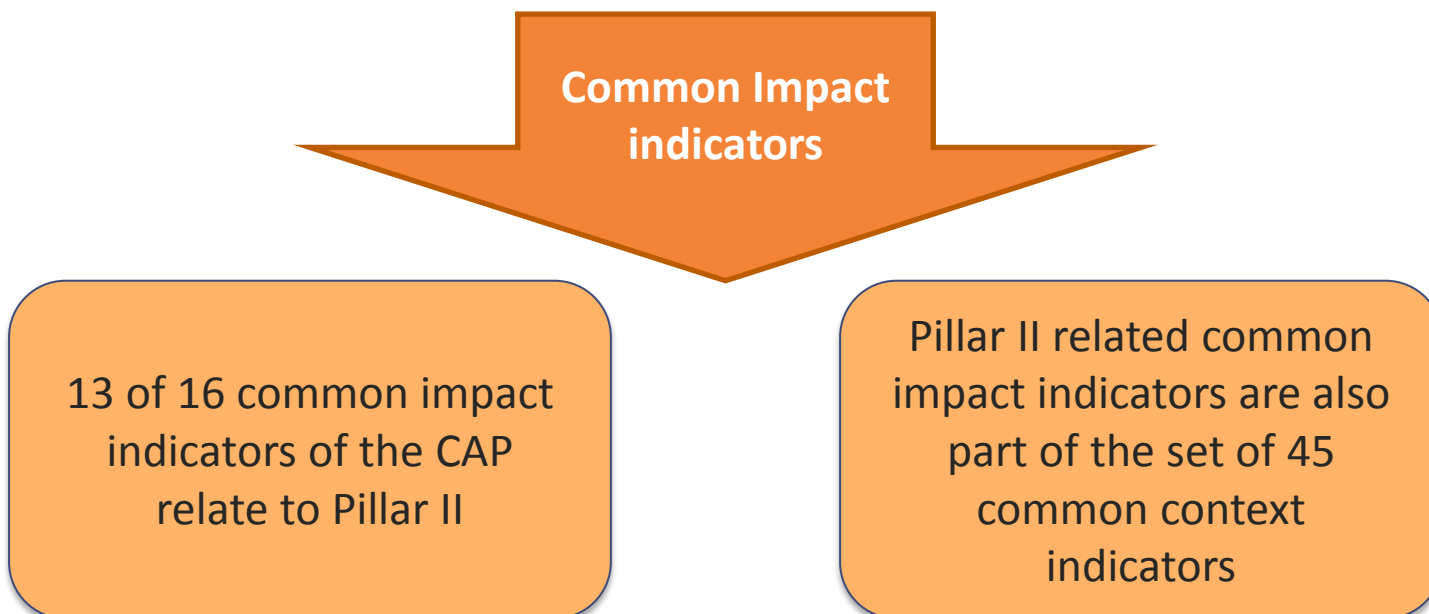
- Measured at RDP territory level with the means of impact indicators,
- Related to EU and RDP horizontal objectives evaluation questions
- Data required at micro- and macro-level: beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, linked to programme results,
- Calculated in net values,
- Reflecting all types of programme and external effects.



# EU objectives related CEQ and impact indicators

EU objectives related and other CEQ are answered with the common impact indicators

(Reg. 808/2014, Annex IV)





## Exercise 1

Assess the consistency between objective, evaluation question, judgment criteria and indicators





# Exercise 1

## Participants:

- Work in small groups filling the prepared template
- Discuss and answer the following key questions:
  - To what extent do judgment criteria, linked to EQ, sufficiently specify the success of an intervention in relation to given objectives?
  - To what extent do the common result indicators and proposed additional information allow to answer the evaluation question?
  - How do you propose to bridge the identified gaps?
- Summarise the outcomes of the discussion and fill them in the respective columns in the template.





## **Step 3**

# **Decide on the evaluation approach and select evaluation methods**





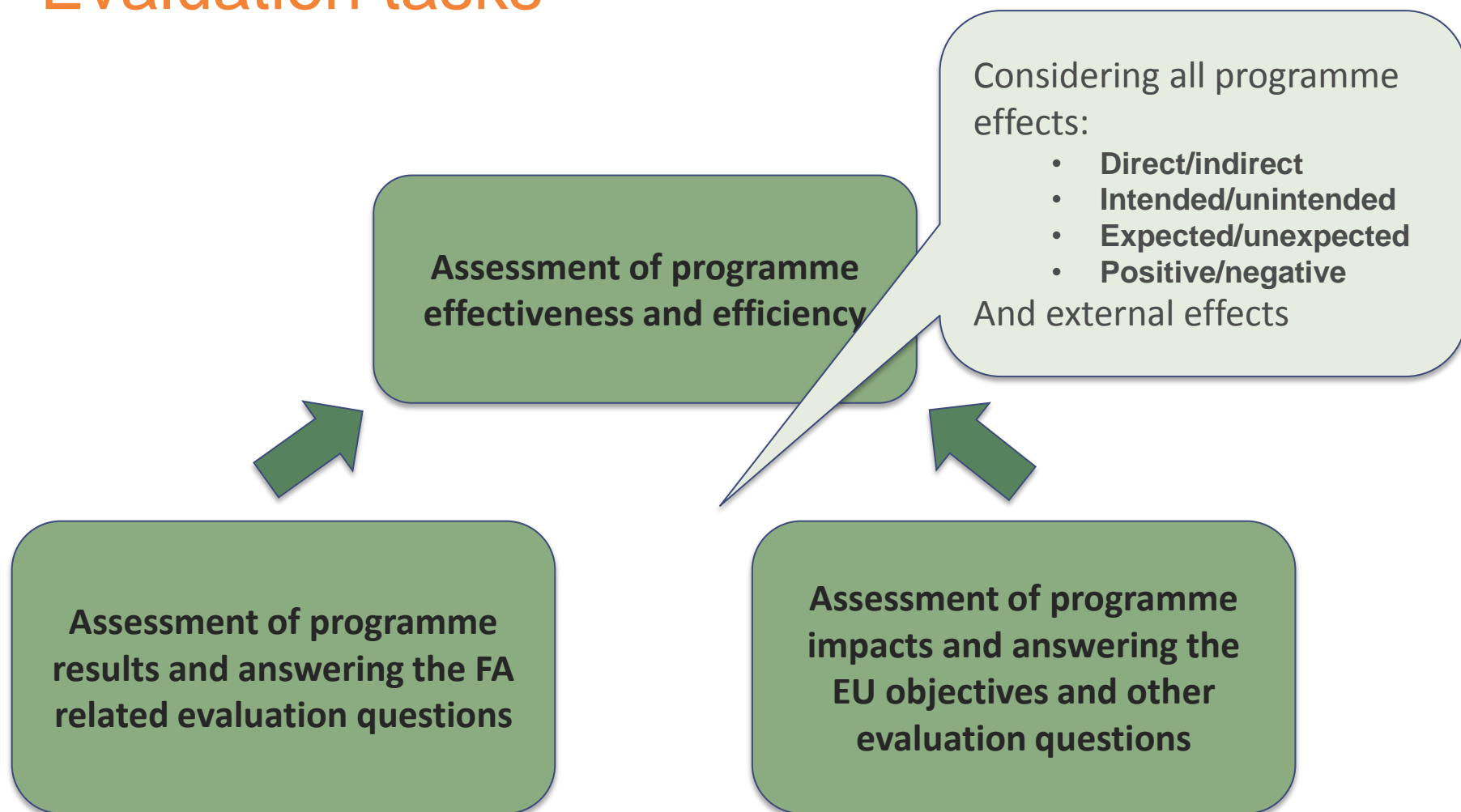
# Evaluation approach and methods

Why is this step important?

To safeguard robust evaluation findings which tell the „true story“ and help to improve the design and implementation of rural development programmes



# Evaluation tasks





# What are the main challenges?

Provide **evidence of a true cause--effect link** between the observed indicators and the RDP

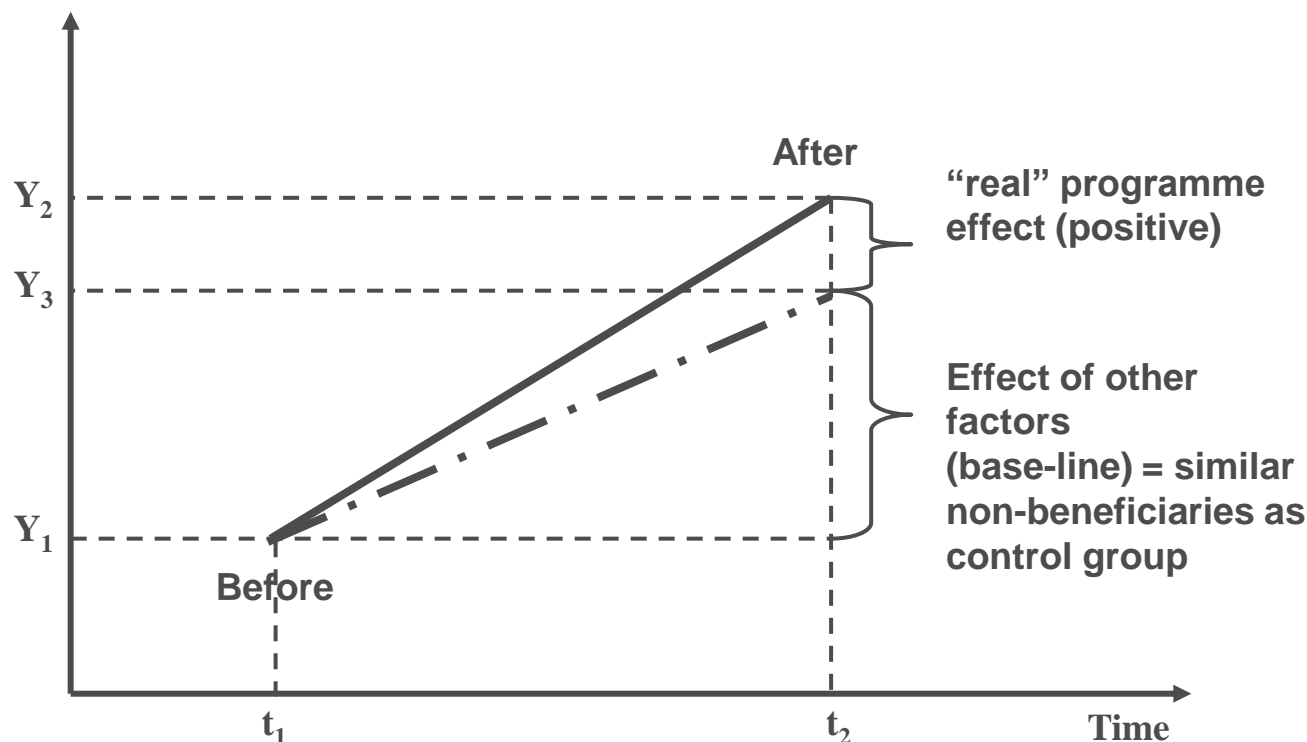
**Disentangle** the effects of single RD measures or the programme as a whole from effects of other intervening factors



# What are the main challenges? (1)

**Real effect** of a programme => not directly observable!

*Employment  
per farm,  
Income per  
AWU  
Investments  
etc.*





# Counterfactual

Evaluation methods based on **counterfactuals** have to be applied to:

- assess programme effects, which cannot be directly observed.
- Counterfactual is based on construction of a **control group** which is as similar as possible (in observable and unobservable dimensions) to beneficiaries of the intervention.
- The Comparison between beneficiaries and the control group **allows to attribute changes** in observed RDP results and impacts to the programme, while removing confounding factors.



# Evaluation approaches

- **Theory-based**
- **Quantitative** - with quantitative methods
- **Qualitative** - with qualitative methods
- **Mixed** - combining quantitative and qualitative methods is recommended, in which the **qualitative approach** should be applied to:
  - **validate** results obtained from quantitative approaches and/or
  - **analyse** the results more in-depth, e.g. through exploring the reasons and factors about how and why the observed changes have come about





# Evaluation methods

## Quantitative methods

Quasi-experimental design

Non-experimental design

Naïve estimates of counterfactuals

## Qualitative methods

Focus groups

Interviews

Surveys

Case studies

NOT  
RECOMMENDED!

Mixed methods