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Guidelines for *Ex post* Evaluation of the RDP 2007 - 2013

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This is a topic of great interest

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INSIGHTS | PERSPECTIVES

AGRICULTURE POLICY

EU agricultural reform fails on biodiversity

Extra steps by Member States are needed to protect farmed and grassland ecosystems

Science, June 2014

The Observer

Saturday 24 November 2012

British bird species 'face extinction' if EU cuts £8bn agriculture subsidy

Content

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- Rural policy
- Why do we need to evaluate rural policy
- Legal background
- Experiences from the MTE
- Guidelines for the *ex post* evaluation:
  - Who are target groups?
  - What is the structure and the content?
  - What is new?

EU rural policy

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Is……

- Highly important in **European identity**, development and cohesion;
- **Multi-stranded** and dealing with communities, social development, services, environmental quality, farm and forest development;
- Presenting very **different challenges in different places**;
- **Recognising the complexity** of the challenge;
- **Focusing** on collectively agreed limited number of **objectives**;
- **Complementary to national policies** that support rural development;
- Giving **"room for manoeuvre"** for member states following the subsidiarity principle.

The need for accountability of EU rural policy

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- **90 billion Euros** spent on the RDPs 2007-2013
- At a time of considerable financial hardship and **crisis** for Europe, was this money well spent?
- Could it have been **better spent**?
- What is the role of the **monitoring and evaluation** in showing the accountability? Does it work well?

The need for comparability

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- On key policy issues, the **Commission needs to know** how well the measures are working.
- It is still important to recognise that the capacity to make gains is **highly contingent on geography**.
- We need to be very **careful about "naming and shaming"**.
- A common framework offers the possibility of creating a **common basis** but allowing MSs to nuance the evaluation.

Evaluation in policy cycle

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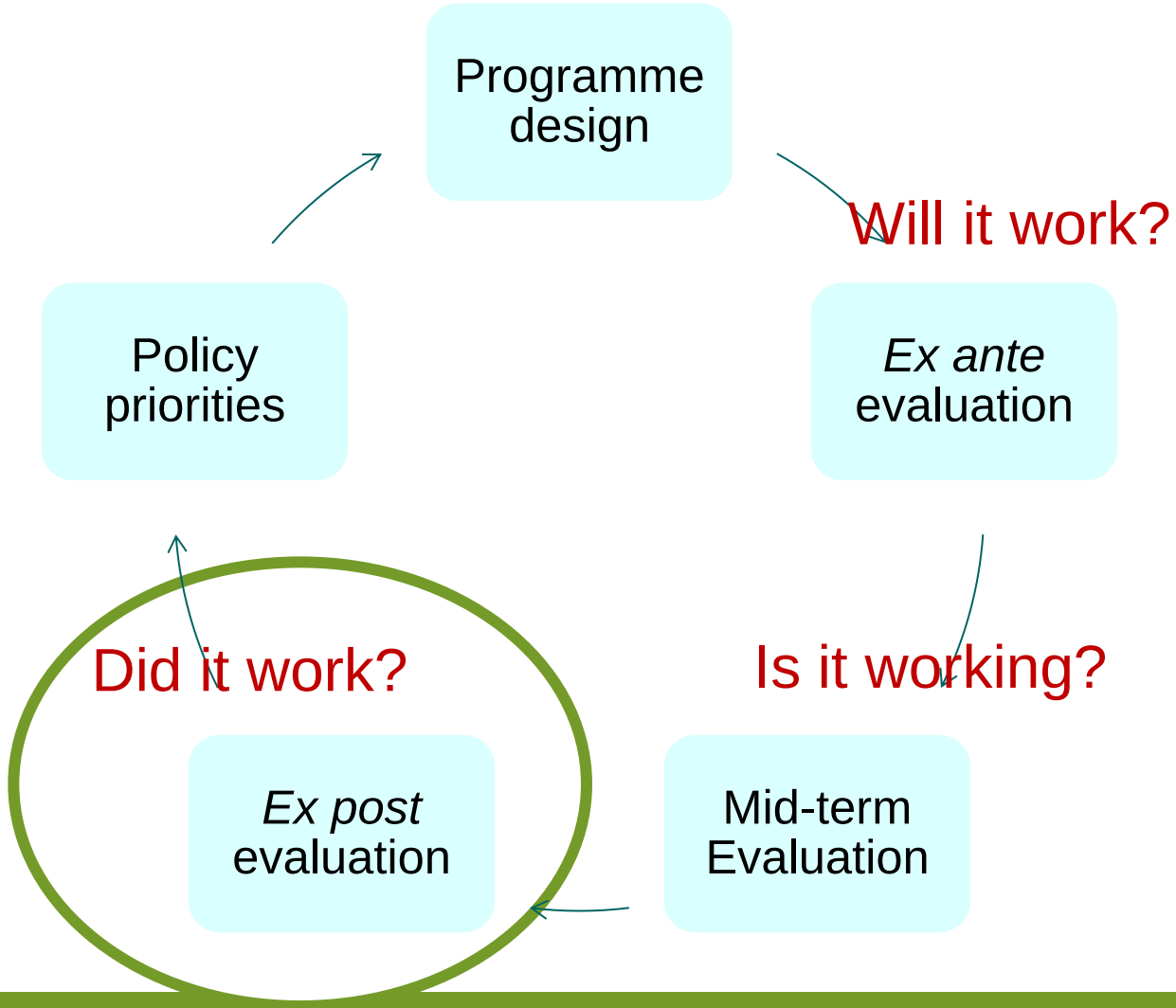

What is the legal framework?

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Community strategic guidelines for rural development

Council Regulation (EC) 1698/2005

Commission Regulation 1974/2006 and its Annex VIII

CMEF as guidance to implement the legal framework

Para 66 of 1698/2005 (revised):

"The effectiveness and the impact of actions under the EAFRD also depend on improved evaluation on the basis of the common monitoring and evaluation framework. In particular, the programmes should be evaluated for their preparation, implementation and completion."

Experiences from the MTE

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- The **best MTEs are getting a grip on the CMEF** and implementing it effectively, generating good evidence of what is working, what is being taken up, etc.

  BUT

- **Many MTEs were rather weak**, a product of low expectations, limited skills, unavailable (or hard to find) data, limited budgets etc., showing….

MTE reports: from low to high scores in the three categories

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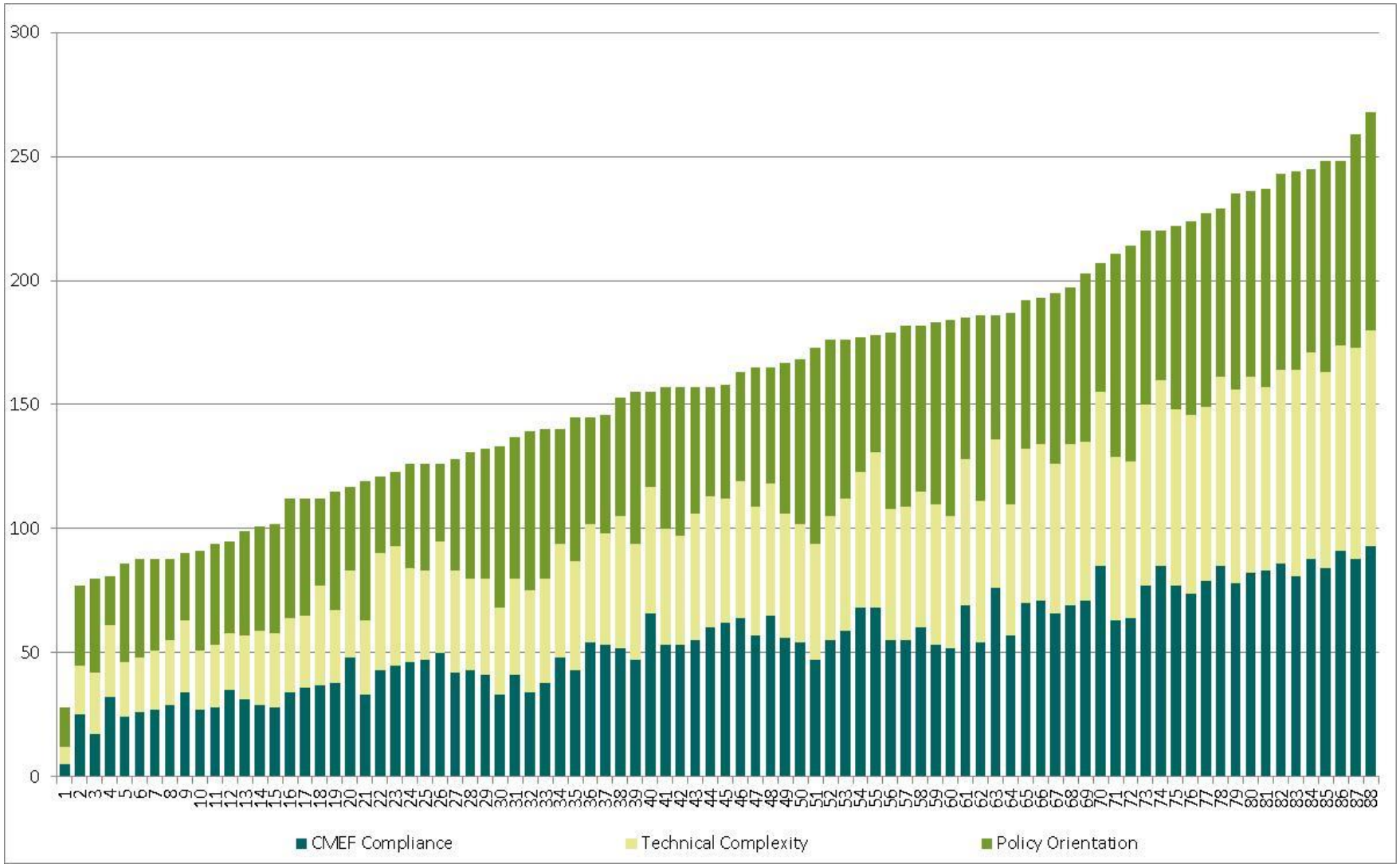

Experiences from the MTE

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- …evidence of outcomes 'often very sketchy'
- …often no real evidence of impact
- …gaps in management systems for collection of data needed for evaluation:

"it became clear, that the information provided by the MTEs and accompanying documents… is prone to data gaps and limited information due to various reasons."

But we should now be moving beyond these problems!

What do we need?

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- **Better accountability** demanded by society
- Stronger **commitment** to effective evaluation by MSs
- Stronger **learning culture** in the evaluation community to understand better how RDPs are performing
- **Enhance** the design and implementation of the **CMEF** and **support evaluation stakeholders** to conduct the evaluation:

That support for the* ex post *evaluation is what we offer here

Ex post evaluation guidelines

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Introduction

For everyone

Introduces
ex post evaluation and its role in policy cycle

Explains
the scope and focus of *ex post* evaluation, legal requirements and common evaluation elements

Part I

Mainly Managing Authorities

Introduces
the process of the *ex post* evaluation, steps to be conducted and role of evaluation stakeholders

Explains also specificities with respect to NRN

Part II

Mainly Evaluators

Discusses and explains
intervention logic, evaluation questions, indicators, methods and data

Part III

Toolbox

Provides
additional practical tools for *ex post* evaluation preparing, implementation and reporting

Introduction

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For everyone who is reading the *ex post* evaluation guidelines

New structure

What is *ex post* evaluation for?

What is *ex post* evaluation
Why do we need specific guidlelines
What are the target groups and how they can use guidelines

Scope of the *ex post* evaluation

Policy objectives
Focus of evaluation
Legal framework
Common and programme-specific elements

Content of Part I

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Mainly for Managing Authorities to steer and manage the *ex post* evaluation

Process of the *ex post* evaluation

Stakeholders
and their role
Key steps: planning,
Implementing, disseminating

***Ex post* evaluation of national rural network programmes**

Purpose,
scope and process

Part II – for whom?

Mainly for evaluators to conduct the evaluation

BUT also:

- **Managing Authorities** of RDPs to find useful information
  - for the preparation of ToR to select the evaluator,
  - in the stage of planning, preparing and steering the *ex post* evaluation
  - Managing Authorities and **other rural development stakeholders involved in evaluation** (MC, evaluation steering groups, EC DO etc.) in assessing the quality of the *ex post* evaluation reports.
  - **All** those who are **interested in the evaluation** of the EU rural development interventions.

Part II – what is in there?

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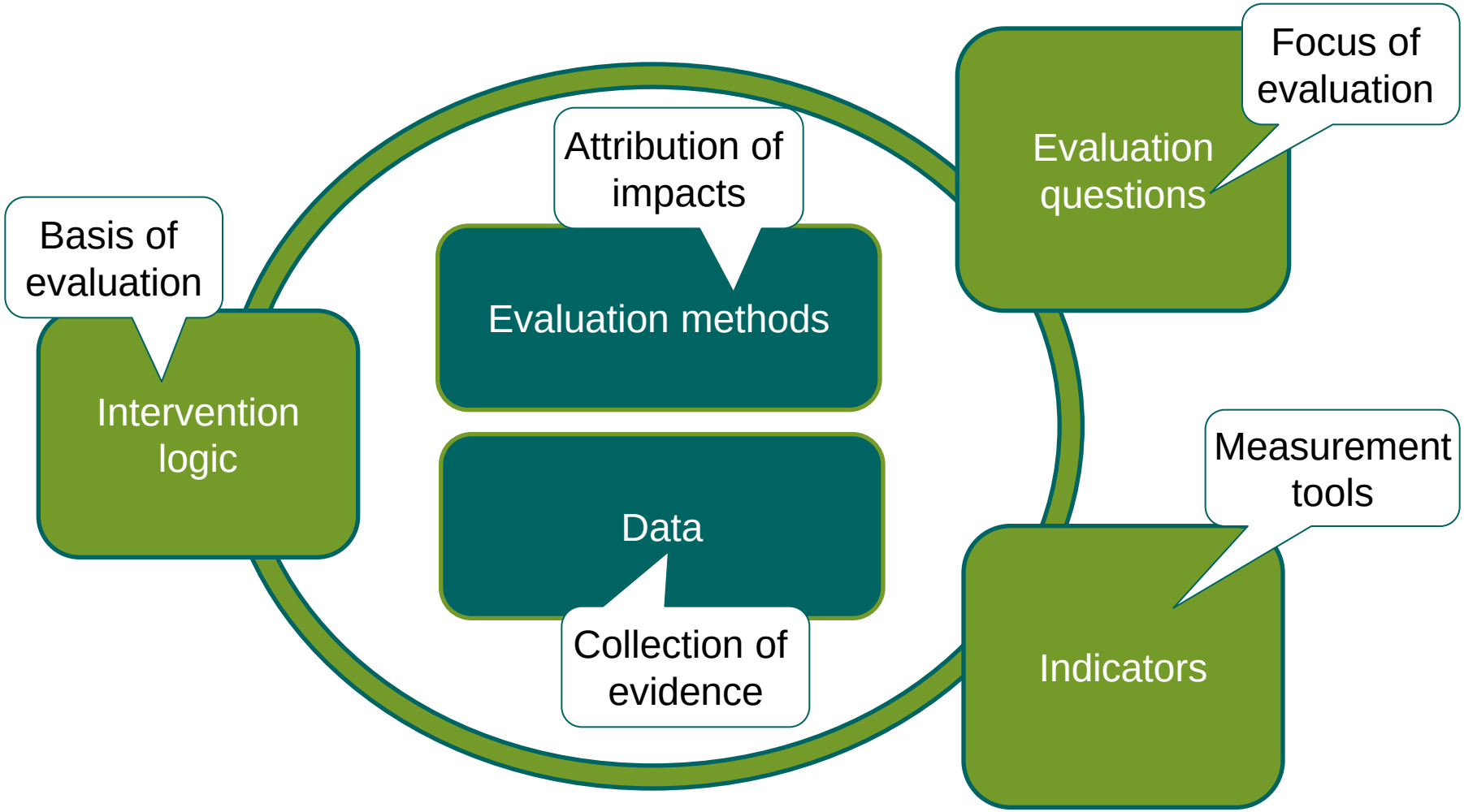

Intervention logic

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- **What do we mean by intervention logic?**
  - EU rural policy and RDP intervention logic and its evolution over the time (e.g. Health check),
- **What are major challenges?**
  - Complexity of composition: overall, axis and operational objectives, measures, activities, expected outputs, results and impacts,
  - Looking beyond the visible – various types of IL (economy, public goods/bads, quality of life),
- **What shall be assessed?**
  - Relevance, coherence, unintended effects, efficiency,
- **How shall the intervention logic be assessed?**
  - Two stages in assessment: desk scrutiny, facilitated workshops.
- **Specificities with respect to TA and NRN**

Evaluation questions

- **The role of evaluation questions in *ex post* evaluation**
  - Common and programme specific evaluation questions
  - Evaluation question, judgment criteria, links to indicators: triangular consistency

New!

Revised set of common evaluation questions

- **Programme specific evaluation questions**
  - Role of programme specific evaluation questions
  - Development of programme specific evaluation questions and judgment criteria, links to indicators
- **How to use evaluation questions in *ex post* evaluation of RDP?**
  - In structuring, observing, analysing, judging, reporting
- **Specificities with respect to TA and NRN**

New!

Revised set of common evaluation questions

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- **Original set** of 150 common evaluation questions of CMEF has been **simplified and reduced** to the essential demand for knowledge from the European perspective.

3 groups of CEQs

Programme-related:
Community strategic priorities
Health Check objectives
7 impact indicators
TA and NRN
Efficiency of RDP resources

Measure-related:
Contribution of
the measure
to its axis objectives
Other measure effects
and contribution
to other axes objectives

Leader approach-related:
Community strategic priorities:
Employment, diversification
and governance
Leader approach
LAG contribution
to LDS and RDP

Indicators

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- **The CMEF indicators in *ex post* evaluation**
  - Definitions, role and types of indicators (baseline, input, output, result and impact)
  - Values for indicators
- **Programme-specific indicators**
  - Existing indicators and development of new indicators
- **How to use indicators in evaluation of RDPs**
  - Balancing importance and measurability
  - Coherence with intervention logic, links to evaluation questions, methods and data,
  - Interpretation of values,
- **Specificities with respect to Leader**
  - **Examples of additional indicators linked to revised CEQ**
- **Specificities with respect to TA and NRN**

New!

Methods

New structure and more guidance

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Methodological challenges in assessing programme effects

- Distinction between **programme results and impacts**
- Identification of main **programme effects – direct and indirect** (leverage, deadweight, multiplier, displacement, substitution effects)
- Identifying programme **net effects**
- Distinction of positive and negative **externalities**, expected and unexpected programme effects
- Identifying **factors distorting programme effects** (confounding factors, selection bias, self-selection bias, homogeneous and heterogeneous treatment effects, etc.)

Addressing methodological challenges

- Using **counterfactual** in addressing methodological challenges
- Evaluation **designs** (randomised, quasi-experimental, non-experimental)
- Key **approaches** to evaluation (Theory based, quantitative, qualitative, mixed) – advantages, disadvantages, when to be used, various techniques to apply etc.
- How to **select appropriate evaluation design** (quality standards, considering limits and constrains, e.g. resources)
- **Suggested methods** in relation to the assessment of individual axes, TA, NRN and answering related evaluation questions

Data

- Major **challenges in data management** and collection during the evaluation of RDP
- Data needed for evaluation of **RDP results at beneficiary level**
- Data needed for evaluation of **RDP results and impacts at RDP level**
  - Economic
  - Environmental
  - Social
- Specificities with respect **TA and NRN**

Content of Part III – Toolbox

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- Objective trees as part of RDP intervention logic
- New set of reviewed EQs — New!
- Outline of *ex post* evaluation report
- Example of quality assessment grid for evaluation report based on the DG Agri assessment grid
- Example outline of the technical specification of the ToR
- Retro planning table the *ex post* evaluation
- Examples of Leader-specific additional indicators — New!
- Examples of evaluation methods
- Tool to identify data sources for evaluation — New!

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Thank you for your attention!

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