European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development

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Rural Evaluation NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EUROPEAN EVALUATION HELPDESK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

LEADER/CLLD Evaluation

Laying the Conceptual Foundation of the Approach

The history of LEADER[1] is extensive and has grown progressively over the past twenty-five years. LEADER began as a pilot initiative in 1991 (LEADER I) and has evolved with numerous iterations (LEADER II, LEADER +) into a conventional, mainstreamed, methodological approach used for European rural development.

The European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development interviewed, Jean-Michel Courades[2], who is currently a thematic expert for the Evaluation Helpdesk and Pedro Brosei[3], who is currently the vice president of the European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD). Jean-Michel and Pedro highlighted the strategic moments in the history of LEADER and its evaluation and why it has been the central approach used for European rural development.

Acting as **a bottom-up, multi-sector, partnership and area-based tool**, LEADER has empowered rural territories through local development strategies, prepared and implemented by local public-private partnerships called Local Action Groups (LAGs). Over the decades, LEADER has proven to be an effective instrument contributing to the maintenance of rural countryside and population, enhancement of cultural and natural heritage,

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Cantabria Region, Spain

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> and generation of business and employment opportunities based on local resources. "It was the first integrated rural development instrument, before Pillar II was officially created, and accepted by rural communities as the first European rural policy instrument…It used to stand for rural development or rural development policy at the European level", muses Jean-Michel. In this context, many Member States lacked a strong rural development policy prior to LEADER.

Laying the foundations of the LEADER approach through the ex post evaluation

LEADER has been widely touted as an innovative bottom-up means to rural development, however, rarely is the important role of LEADER evaluations recognised. LEADER's ex post evaluation findings and recommendations have played a critical role in laying the conceptual foundation for what we now call, the LEADER approach, bringing it from a community initiative to a mainstreamed fundamental part of rural development policy in Europe.

The path of LEADER evaluations conveys a particular story, one of institutional and societal learning. Evaluations played a crucial role in the trajectory of the LEADER method, first and foremost through ex post evaluations. Ex post evaluations are conducted during a unique time in the policy cycle, when the next implementation period is already underway, therefore most of their conclusions and recommendations feed into the next programming period. Ex post evaluations are not only nurtured by the insights from the period they are evaluating but also reflect ongoing debates thus serving as essential conduits of communication and change through their recommendations.

The LEADER I initiative (1991-1993) was subject to a European ex post evaluation (EU12)[4]. Based on survey data of all 217 LAG beneficiaries, the results and impacts of LEADER interventions were thoroughly assessed through a qualitative inquiry sample of 50 LAGs with regard to their local action plans, modes of functioning, and the observable impacts on the local communities. More importantly, the ex post evaluation of LEADER I focused on the results and impacts of interventions in the LEADER areas and pioneered an exploration and model for how its particular features contributed towards achieving a more effective approach to rural development. Apart from assessing local impacts in terms of employment, business creation and development, the evaluators placed special emphasis on the overall governance system in LEADER, e.g. the implementation of partnerships, bottom-up and networking principles, and changes in institutional patterns triggered by decentralised implementation procedures. The importance given to governance in the first ex post evaluation of LEADER I, had major repercussions on shaping LEADER beyond a financing instrument, into a means of integrating rural areas into the European system. "For many rural areas, which felt possibly marginalised or not connected to other countries it was a possibility to be connected with other Member States and to have transnational cooperation possibilities with other countries, this was a major added value", states Jean-Michel. These successful mechanisms of governance in LEADER I were "codified" in this evaluation and later became the seven LEADER features, or "operational principles" of bottom-up strategies, local public partnerships, innovation, multi-sectoral approaches, area-based approaches, cooperation and networking.

"For many rural areas which felt possibly marginalised or not connected to other countries it was a possibility to be connected with other Member States and have transnational cooperation possibilities with other countries, this was a major added value".

Solidifying a bottom-up approach through evaluation requirements

With the conceptual framework laid through the ex post evaluation of LEADER I, the ex post evaluation of LEADER II furthered the development of the LEADER approach. LEADER II showcased that in just 5 years nearly half of the groups surveyed implemented the LEADER method to a certain extent and that the implementation of the method was highly correlated with positive outcomes. Jean-Michel postulates, "It was really improving the governance at the local level so the rural communities could really see the benefits of LEADER…[a]lthough it was not an easy method to implement with European funds, with a lot of reporting rules, it was accepted at the local level as a very useful tool". The LEADER II ex post evaluation focused LEADER into becoming both a financial development instrument and an effective tool for reshaping governance in rural society. The evaluation demonstrated that less successful outcomes were predominantly related to cases where the initiative was used as a funding instrument alone without directly engaging LEADER governance principles (i.e. hindered by centralised governance, causing weak local partnerships and numerous institutions and agencies contesting for the leading role). The ex post evaluation of LEADER II clearly showed that more LAG autonomy facilitated increased participation and structural changes at the local level. This autonomy also fostered stronger inter-institutional modes of interactions between LAGs, network support units, and programme administrations at regional, national and EU levels.

Despite some difficulties, the results of the ex post evaluation of LEADER II were sufficiently encouraging to give the European Commission reason for a follow-up study on assessing the possibilities of embedding the LEADER approach in mainstream rural development policies[5].

Evaluations of LEADER+ continued these findings and the solidification of the LEADER approach, clarifying evaluation requirements defined for the European level, allowing for a progressively more detailed LEADER approach for programme authorities in the Member States.

The 2007-2013 programming period saw the mainstreaming of the LEADER approach into rural development policy, solidifying its effectiveness as a policy instrument. "It was a good Community Initiative for three generations and then it was considered to be mature enough to be mainstreamed", states Pedro Brosei. The idea was implemented through the method and the LEADER method was translated into legal principles and rules to ensure its proper implementation via three measures supporting: the

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development. 2016

implementation of local development strategies, cooperation among LAGs and LAGs functioning. Ultimately, the development from idea to legal principles was facilitated by this important process of these evaluations.

Community-Led Local Development (CLLD): Broadening the LEADER approach to all ESI Funds

"The impact of LEADER on local governance is beyond the rural development policy and CAP. It became a model of governance for local development applicable for the sectoral policies and urban policy. It was recognised as a success story", states Jean-Michel.

LEADER's wide-scale success in the EU's rural areas has led other EU Funds to implement this approach in other areas, utilising the idea of CLLD. CLLD supports better mobilisation of potential at sub-regional and local levels in rural, fishery and urban territories, addressing their needs and contributing to all targets of Europe 2020. As such, CLLD is a tool to reinforce the coordination and integration of several ESI Funds[6] and achieve synergies among them at sub-regional and local level, supporting the Europe 2020 Strategy. CLLD can be understood as broadening the LEADER approach across both Funds and regions.

CLLD is one of two instruments[7] to encourage integrated approaches in supporting the territorial development[8] in the 2014-2020 programming period. The CLLD principles set up in the legal framework follow the LEADER principles applied in previous programming periods. In accordance with the legal framework CLLD shall be[9]:

- Focused on specific sub-regions;
- Led by LAGs, composed of representatives of both public and private local, socio-economic interests, of which none will represent more than 49% of the voting rights in making decisions;
- Carried out through integrated, multi-sector and area-based strategies, which take into consideration local needs and potentials, include innovative structures, and benefit from networking and cooperation.

In the 2014-2020 programming period, clear support has been delivered in the formulation of a joint legal framework, harmonising the procedures for the four ESI Funds, with the objective of increasing consistency and encouraging a single local community-led strategy over multiple Funds. Numerous features in the 2014-2020 programming period are focused on abridging community-led local development including:

- A single methodology for CLLD will be applicable over all ESI Funds and regions;
- Support for ESI Funds will be consistent and coordinated, allowing for multi-funded schemes for beneficiaries to better meet their needs;

- Running costs of management and animation of the implementation are possible through a single "Lead Fund";
- The maximum co-financing rate will be increased in some cases;
- For the first time the evaluation of the LDS is mandatory[10].

With a proliferation in funds facilitating the LEADER/CLLD approach, the evaluation of this approach becomes increasingly important to ensure not only accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness to stakeholders, but as illustrated through the history of LEADER, to serve as a vital policy learning tool fostering the success of a new cross-cutting multi-fund aspect.

Guidelines for the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD: Empowering a collective future

In order to support Member States and evaluators to better understand what is required for reporting in the 2014-2020 period concerning LEADER/CLLD and to help them achieve the best results, the Evaluation Helpdesk has launched the Thematic Working Group (TWG) "Evaluation of LEADER/CLLD". The principal outcome of this TWG will be a guidance document developed in collaboration with evaluation experts from the Member States, members of the Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP, DG AGRI officials and the Evaluation Helpdesk.

These guidelines will lead stakeholders through planning, preparing, conducting and reporting on the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD and provide advice to Managing Authorities, evaluators, LAGs, Paying Agencies and National Rural Networks on the:

- Management and process of LEADER/CLLD evaluation, reporting, dissemination and follow up;
- Evaluation of LEADER/CLLD at the RDP level;
- Evaluation at the LAG level. ■

1. In French, *Liaison entre actions de développement rural.*
2. Jean-Michel Courades was a former DG AGRI Official. From 2002 to 2010 Jean-Michel was at the policy desk for LEADER coordination. From 2010 to 2013 Jean-Michel was in the unit responsible for the ENRD where he supervised the content of ENRD activities including LEADER.
3. Pedro Brosei was formerly the network coordinator in the German and European LEADER+ networks and horizontal coordinator for LEADER in DG AGRI from 2008 to 2014.
4. Published in 1999. http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leader1/index_en.htm
5. Published 2004. http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eval/reports/leader/sum_en.pdf
6. European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF) and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), whereas it is obligatory for the latter Fund. Article 32.1 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013
7. Second policy instrument to support the integration of approaches to territorial development is integrated territorial investment, Article 36 of Regulation (EU) no 1303/2013
8. Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020, Commission staff working document, Part I, 2012, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/strategic_framework/csf_part1_en.pdf
9. Article 32.2 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013
10. According to Article 33.1(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, arrangements for evaluation have to be part of the local development strategy.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development. 2016

EvaluationWorks! Capacity building events: outcomes of 2015 and outlook for 2016

"**EvaluationWORKS!**" is the yearly capacity building event of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, which is organised in each Member State of the EU to provide a platform for strengthening the evaluation capacity among rural development evaluation stakeholders.

Between October 2015 and June 2016, 29 trainings in 28 Member States have been concluded.

- The trainings were attended by a total of 750 participants
- The majority of the participants were from Managing Authorities
- A large proportion of participants were from LAGs
- Evaluators are still underrepresented

Participants' feedback from the capacity building events highlighted:

- An increase in the know-how on evaluation (all Member States)
- The usefulness of practical exercises and working groups
- The exchange and transfer of good practices through case studies

Issues successfully clarified through EvaluationWORKS!

MODULE A:
Common Monitoring and Evaluation System

- The purpose and use of the CMES
- The difference between the CMES and CMEF and major changes compared with the previous programming period
- CMES elements and their linkages; the evaluation plan (EP); indicators; evaluation questions (EQs)

MODULE B:
Setting up the system to answer Evaluation Questions

- The purpose of the evaluation questions (EQs) and the related evaluation requirements on the evaluation of RDPs, the Annual Implementation Reports (2017/2019)
- How to make consistency checks among EQs, judgment criteria, indicators, etc.
- Use of qualitative and quantitative methods and data collection systems

MODULE C:
Evaluation of LEADER/CLLD

- Requirements for the evaluation of LEADER (at RDP and LAG level)
- The roles of the stakeholders with emphasis on the links between the MA, PA, NRN and LAGs
- Development of LEADER-related CMES elements (judgment criteria and indicators) in line with the intervention logic and the hierarchy of objectives of the LDS to understand the added value of LEADER

Follow up actions & future priorities for 2016 EvaluationWORKS! events

Most Member States have **already planned follow-up actions for the**:

- **Development and dissemination of methodological support by the MA**
- **Planning of** trainings, workshops, conferences, etc.
- **Exchange and transfer of experiences and good practices with other Member States**
- Assessment of potential **revisions to their Evaluation Plans** and/or **Indicator Plans**
- **Increased support for the NRNs** and further **involvement with all measure managers in the evaluation process**

The Evaluation Helpdesk capacity building events in 2016, will continue to establish **direct links with rural development evaluation stakeholders**. Continued support will be given to **address the knowledge gaps** of evaluation stakeholders in areas such as the operations databases, Evaluation Plan, Annual Implementation Report, LEADER evaluation and NRN evaluation. ■

FIND OUT MORE!

Capacity Building Activities section on the website of the European Evaluation Helpdesk

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The 9th Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP

The Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP met for the 9th time in Brussels on May 24, 2016. Representatives of the European Commission and the Member States attended the meeting.

DG AGRI updated the experts on its evaluation and studies plan for 2016-2020, which is based, among other elements, on the 6-year evaluation cycle laid down in Article 18(3)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012.The Evaluation Helpdesk provided an update on the "Guidelines on Assessment of RDP results: how to prepare for reporting on evaluation in 2017". DG AGRI clarified that the guidelines have been improved since the last meeting and were being reviewed and quality controlled for its approval and publication. DG AGRI further presented the progress on the SFC 2014 Annual Implementation Report and Pillar I indicators. The JRC presented the results of a study on how economic experiments can inform EU agricultural policy and DG AGRI presented the OECD's annual exercise to evaluate the CAP 2014-2020. The outcomes of the synthesis of ex ante evaluations of RDPs 2014-2020 were further presented to the delegates. The Evaluation Helpdesk presented their third Thematic Working Group "Evaluation of LEADER/CLLD", in addition to the outcome of their capacity building events in 2015 and their outlook for 2016. Germany and Austria gave an informative presentation on the implementation of the Evaluation Plans in their respective countries.

This issue highlights the presentation made by Zélie Peppiette (Assistant to the Deputy Director General for Rural Development and Research, DG AGRI) on when and how to amend RDP targets and indicators, based on a series of frequently asked questions received from several Member States. This presentation emphasised the link between planned outputs and targets, distinguishing between the approval and implementation phases. Targets are values established at the beginning of the programming period, at the approval stage, to be monitored to assess achievements. Targets were established in line with the RDP strategy and were

validated by taking planned outputs into consideration. In the SFC, coherence with the planned outputs was ensured because some target values were calculated from planned output data in the indicator table. This automatic calculation has now been removed as it is no longer needed. Zélie pointed out, however, that when modifying the RDPs, the MA should keep in mind that the planned outputs should be structured to achieve the established targets. This means that during the implementation phase planned outputs should be adjusted where necessary to achieve the targets set. If a MA sees errors in the initial targets, it should correct the errors in the first RDP amendment available and provide an explanation of the error to Commission services.

There are however specific cases when targets may be amended:

- If the strategy for a particular FA is written in general terms, a change in approach to addressing that FA may still be consistent with the existing text. However, this should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- When rounding targets. Due to the automatic calculation, some targets have been set as figures with decimals. There is the possibility (not an obligation) for the MA to round the targets.

Regarding the question whether targets can only be changed under Article 11(a)(i) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, the presenter clarified that this provision defines one specific case, where there is a change of more than 50% in a target resulting from a substantial modification of the RDP strategy. This is assessed cumulatively, taking into account all successive changes. Changes that are less than 50% would fall under another legal basis, depending on the content of the amendment, but may also involve a modification to Chapter 5 of the RDP.

The presentation concluded that the legal definition of "strategic amendment" serves to identify and limit the number of significant shifts in the strategy during the lifetime of the RDP. ■

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development. 2016

Second Good Practice Workshop: 7-8 June, Bonn Germany

The second Good Practice Workshop co-organised by the Evaluation Helpdesk and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), "Preparing the assessment of High Nature Value Farming in Rural Development Programmes 2014-20" took place on 7-8 June 2016 in Bonn, Germany.

This Good Practice Workshop's aim was to provide an environment for discussion and foster an exchange between Member States of useful practices in identifying and monitoring the extent and quality of HNV farmland.

This workshop came at an important interval in time as Member States are in the process of preparing their monitoring and evaluation systems for their Annual Implementation Reports (AIR) 2019 in which they will have to report on the HNV farming impact indicator. Moreover, HNV farming is the only CAP impact indicator for which there is **no common methodology** explicitly provided at the EU level, making the sharing of experiences between Member States all the more essential in order to build capacity.

The event was well received and had an attendance of 51 participants, including members of the European Commission, Managing Authorities, evaluators, academics and the Evaluation Helpdesk from 22 Member States.

The Good Practice Workshop was conducted over the course of two days with the first day consisting of a stimulating selection of presentations and discussions, including five case studies from across the Member States on topics including:

- Methodologies used by different Member States (DE, ES, DK, EE, IT) to identify HNV farming (extent and condition);
- Exploring the focus in quality assessments of HNV farming in the Member States including a:
  Scoring approach (EE, DK), mapping approach for typologies (ES), and assessment based on quality levels (DE, IT);
- Collection of sufficient data for building an adequate baseline for future assessment.

'It was very encouraging to see the innovative approaches being taken by some Member States to develop, test and use indicators suited to their particular HNV farming systems, despite some data problems. I particularly welcomed the discussions about the need to understand the socio-economic aspects of HNV farming systems, not just for evaluation but also for targeting appropriate CAP support. Quite simply, if the farmers do not see a viable future for HNV farming, we risk simply monitoring its decline'.

Clunie Keenleyside
Senior Fellow, Agriculture and Land Management Programme
Institute for European Environmental Policy

Introductory presentations were made on topics including, the framing of the HNV farming indicator in RDPs 2014-2020 by the European Commission and preliminary survey results from the Member States on approaches used to identify HNV farming by the Evaluation Helpdesk core team. ■

Key lessons and takeaway points from participants

- Identification, monitoring and assessment of HNV Farming should be based on a solid methodology, which allows one to capture the dynamics, the evolution, and how policy is effecting HNV farming.
- The last programming period was about learning. Previously, only the extent of HNV farmland was assessed, in the current programming period it is crucial to make further progress in assessing the quality of HNV farming.
- It is important to have a solid baseline situation with regard to the extent and quality of HNV farming: RDPs 2014-2020 include HNV values, however, the ex post evaluations of the RDPs 2007-2013 may still serve as an aid for the establishment or update of these baselines.
- It is important to ensure that approaches currently being developed to monitor and assess changes in the extent and quality of HNV farmland take into account specific data and design needs of policy evaluations.
- Data sharing among institutions and organisations needs to be further improved.

The Conceptual Framework of LEADER/CLLD Evaluation

The LEADER approach has been transferred into a broader policy instrument[11], to encourage integrated approaches in supporting the territorial development[12] in the programming period 2014-2020, called Community-Led Local Development (CLLD).

LEADER/CLLD is a tool, which operates in a multilevel framework, and therefore requires a multilevel evaluation at:

- RDP level, as the measure programmed under a Pillar II objective and;
- Local level, through LAGs, who may be using several ESI Funds to achieve their objectives under a single CLLD strategy linked to a given territory and also at the same time contributing to the achievement of EU level objectives.

In both cases, the evaluation can assume a multidimensional nature, focusing typically on the assessment of effectiveness, efficiency, results and impacts of the interventions at each of the two levels and the links between them. A key aspect of LEADER/CLLD evaluations is the focus on the application of the seven LEADER/CLLD principles and the added value provided for RDPs, rural areas and populations. As illustrated in the figure on the next page, these seven principles and their added value play a dynamic role in linking the RDP and local levels in evaluations.

The objectives of the LEADER/CLLD evaluation at each level are to:

- Demonstrate the achievements of LEADER/CLLD towards local, national and EU rural development objectives;
- Contribute to better targeted support for rural areas and beneficiaries;
- Provide knowledge of how to design and implement LEADER/CLLD better. ■

11. CLLD is one of the two instruments to support integrated approaches to territorial development. Second policy instrument are integrated territorial investments, Article 36 of Regulation (EU) no 1303/2013
12. Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020, Commission staff working document, Part I, 2012, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/strategic_framework/csf_part1_en.pdf

See chart on the next page

EU 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

RDP LEVEL

CAP overall objectives, Rural development priorities and their focus areas

1A 1B 1C 2A 2B 3A 3B 4A 4B 4C 5A 5B 5C 5D 5E 6A 6B 6C

Added value for RDP

LEADER/ CLLD

7 principals: bottom up, partnership, networking and cooperation, area based and multi-sector strategies and innovation

Delivery RDP level

Added value for LAG

LAGs territories and population

Local partnerships

CLLD Strategies

+ CLLD from other ESI Funds

LOCAL LEVEL

Running and animation of LAGs

Delivery LAG level

Calendar - What's on?

April 2016:

- **DE – 21-22 April 2016:** Quality of evaluation-methodological and technical challenges, perspectives, instruments: This event was organised by the German Evaluation Society (DeGeval). Read more >>>

May 2016:

- **FI – 24-26 May 2016 – Results-oriented CLLD in fisheries areas:** This event was organised by FARNET and ESKO FLAG. This event introduced the importance of having results-oriented CLLD and how to better demonstrate the results achieved through improving the understanding of a well-structured Intervention Logic for monitoring and evaluation. Read more >>>

- **BE – 24 May 2016 - 9th Meeting of the Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP:** The Helpdesk presents the outline of the content of the 3rd Thematic Working Group on evaluation of LEADER/CLLD and requested feedback from participants. The results of the 2015 Yearly Capacity Building events were further presented to the group. Read more >>>

GUIDELINES ARE DEVELOPED IN A COLLABORATIVE WORKING PROCESS

Thematic working group drafts guidelines

Permanent Team of Evaluation Helpdesk
Core team members
Thematic experts
DG AGRI

Peer reviewers including
ENRD Contact Point
EIP-AGRI Service Point

Stakeholders comment on draft guidelines

Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP

Sounding Board
Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP
Rural Network Steering Group, Subgroup on LEADER/CLLD
DG REGIO, DG MARE, DG EMPL

June 2016:

- **DE – 3 June 2016:** Helpdesk capacity building event on setting up the system to answer EQs. Read more >>>

- **DE – 7-8 June 2016 – Good Practice Workshop on High Nature Value (HNV):** Organised by the Evaluation Helpdesk and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz – BfN). The event was well attended with 51 participants, including members or the European Commission, Managing Authorities, evaluators, and academics from 22 Member States. It was conducted over two days and had a stimulating selection of presentations and discussions, including five case studies from the Member States (DE, DK, EE, ES, IT). Read more >>>

>

Send your questions to:
info@ruralevaluation.eu

- **BE – 9 June 2016 – 2nd Meeting of the 3rd Thematic Working Group on the Evaluation of LEADER/CLLD:** The meeting was facilitated by the permanent team of the Evaluation Helpdesk and attended by the drafting experts, peer reviewers and representatives of DG AGRI Unit E.4.
  As an outcome of the meeting the Thematic Working Group on the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD completed the conceptual framework of the guidelines and solidified an outline and distribution of tasks for future work. Read more >>>

GUIDELINES WILL CONTAIN RELEVANT INFORMATION FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS

PART I INTRODUCTION	PART II EVALUATION AT RDP LEVEL	PART III EVALUATION AT LAG LEVEL	PART IV ANNEXES
Introduction Purpose and legal framework Conceptual framework - bigger picture How to use the guidelines	Conceptual framework and focus of evaluation Stakeholders involved Evaluation cycle - planning, preparing, conducting, reporting and follow up		Glossary Examples of ToRs Evaluation questions and indicators Content of Evaluation report LAG operations database

- **BE – 16 June 2016 – 5th EU Rural Networks' Steering Group:**
  The Helpdesk presents its capacity building activities in 2015 and what will be covered in 2016. Further announcements covered new thematic work on LEADER/CLLD, as well as events on the ex post evaluation, and NRN evaluation.
  Read more >>>

July 2016:

- **IT – 4-5 July 2016 – Good Practice Workshop on the ex post evaluation 2007-2013:**
  Organised by the Evaluation Helpdesk and the Italian Rural Network. This good practice workshop covered different methodological approaches chosen to assess results and impacts of RDPs 2007-2013 and how to answer evaluation questions. Moreover, it provided a forum for the discussion of data needs and solutions found to overcome data-gaps.
  Read more >>>

- **UK – 14 July 2016 – Planning the evaluation of National Rural Networks 2014-2020: Challenges, lessons, guidance:** The Helpdesk presents on the forth coming guidelines on the evaluation of NRNs and a case study from Finland in relation to evaluation activities of NRNs for 2014-2020.
  Read more >>>

The Evaluation Helpdesk works under the supervision of Unit E.4 (Evaluation and studies) of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily express the official views of the European Commission.

European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development

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