

EUROPEAN
EVALUATION
HELPDESK
FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT



GLOSSARY

KEY TERMS RELATED TO THE EVALUATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES 2014-2020

JUNE 2021

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The Evaluation Helpdesk is responsible for the evaluation function within the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) by providing guidance on the evaluation of RDPs and policies falling under the remit and guidance of DG AGRI's Unit C.4 'Monitoring and Evaluation' of the European Commission (EC). In order to improve the evaluation of EU rural development policy the Evaluation Helpdesk supports all evaluation stakeholders, in particular DG AGRI, national authorities, RDP managing authorities and evaluators, through the development and dissemination of appropriate methodologies and tools; the collection and exchange of good practices; capacity building, and communicating with network members on evaluation related topics.

Additional information about the activities of European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development is available on the Internet through the Europa server (<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu>).

GLOSSARY

KEY TERMS RELATED TO THE EVALUATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES 2014-2020

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1 INTRODUCTION

This Working Document has been initiated on the basis of the existing glossary annexed to the European Commission – Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (2017) [Technical Handbook on the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the Common Agricultural Policy 2014 – 2020](#), hereafter referred as '*DG AGRI (2017) Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020*'. Moreover, it contains key terms related to evaluation developed by, or used during the European Evaluation Helpdesk's [Thematic Working Groups \(TWG\)](#).

KEY TERMS RELATED TO THE EVALUATION OF RDPS 2014-2020

A

Ad hoc evaluation

Evaluation activity which complements planned evaluation during the programming period, in response to specific evaluation needs or information gaps. Ad hoc evaluation can be conducted in the form of specific evaluation study, survey, set of case studies, etc.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Added value of LEADER/CLLD

The added value of LEADER/CLLD refers to the benefits that are obtained thanks to the proper application of the LEADER method, compared to those benefits, which would have been obtained without applying this method. The added value of LEADER/CLLD can be expressed as improved social capital, as improved governance and as enhanced results and impacts of programme/strategy implementation.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2017), [TWG 3](#)

Administrative capacity

It relates to the ability of public structures to identify and solve implementation problems. Capacity deals with a set of functional conditions that allow governments to elaborate and implement programmes with better performance. These conditions are shaped by important factors such as human resource characteristics, management strategies, diffusion of ICT applications, etc., but also by strategies aimed at building cooperation between governments and stakeholders, etc.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Allocative efficiency

Allocative efficiency, also referred to as Pareto efficiency, occurs when resources are so allocated that it is not possible to make anyone better off without making someone else worse off.

Source: [OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms](#).

Annual implementation report

Comprehensive report on the implementation of a Rural Development Programme in the previous financial year. The required contents of the report are spelled out in the Common Provisions Regulation, the Rural Development Regulation and related implementing acts. The report is submitted to the Commission.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Annual Work Unit (AWU)

Unit of measurement of labour force in agriculture. An Annual Work Unit is equivalent to a full-time employment. One AWU corresponds to the work performed by a person undertaking fulltime agricultural work on the holding over a 12-month period. The yearly working time of such worker is 1800 hours (225 working days of 8 hours per day), unless national provisions governing contracts of employment are specified. As the volume of agricultural labour is being calculated on the basis of fulltime equivalent jobs, no one person can therefore represent more than one AWU. This constraint holds even if it is known that someone is working on agricultural activities for more than the number of hours defining full-time in the Member State concerned.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

B

Baseline

State of the economic, social or environmental context at a given time (generally at the beginning of the intervention), and against which changes will be measured.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Baseline indicators

Baseline indicators reflect the state of the economic, social or environmental context, at a given time (generally at the beginning of the intervention). Baseline indicators are used in the SWOT analysis and the definition of the policy strategy. They fall into two categories: 1) Objective related baseline indicators. These are directly linked to the wider objectives of the policy. They are used to develop the SWOT analysis in relation to objectives identified in the regulation. They are also used as a baseline (or reference) against which the policies impact will be assessed. 2) Context related baseline indicators. These provide information on relevant aspects of the general contextual trends that are likely to have an influence on the performance of the policy.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Benchmarking

Qualitative and quantitative standard for comparison of the performance of an intervention. Such a standard will often be the best in the same domain of intervention or in a related domain. Benchmarking is facilitated when, at the national or regional level, there is comparative information of good and not so good practice. The term benchmarking is also used to refer to the comparison of contextual conditions between territories.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Beneficiary

Person or organisation directly affected by the intervention whether intended or unintended. Beneficiaries receive support, services and information, and use facilities created with the support of the intervention (e.g. a family which uses a telephone network that has been improved with public intervention support, or a firm which has received assistance or advice). Some people may be beneficiaries without necessarily belonging to the group targeted by the intervention. Similarly, the entire eligible group does not necessarily consist of beneficiaries.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Bottom-up evaluation

Set of techniques which allow to scale up the evaluation findings from the micro- to the macro-level (e.g. from farm to sector, from plot to the RDP area). For instance, these can be: GIS, satellite images or spatial analysis.

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2018)*, [TWG 5](#)

C

Capacity building

Activity that seeks to develop the knowledge and skills of actors involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Rural Development Programmes.

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015)*, [TWG 1](#)

Case study

In-depth study of data on a specific case (e.g. a project). The case study is a detailed description of a case in its context. It is an appropriate tool for the inductive analysis of impacts and particularly of innovative interventions for which there is no prior explanatory theory.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Causality analysis

The study of relations of cause and effect which link a public intervention to its impacts. Causality analysis may be inductive. In this case, it investigates the mechanisms likely to produce impacts, as well as confounding factors likely to have an influence. Causality analysis may also be deductive (or hypothetic-deductive). In this case, it examines whether assumptions about impacts are not contradicted by the facts. It may also supply a quantitative estimation of impacts.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Cluster

A grouping of independent undertakings, including start-ups, small, medium and large undertakings as well as advisory bodies and / or research organisations – designed to stimulate economic / innovative activity by promoting intensive interactions, the sharing of facilities and the exchange of knowledge and expertise, as well as contributing effectively to knowledge transfer, networking and information dissemination among the undertakings in the cluster.

Source: [Guidance document "Co-operation" measure, November 2014](#)

Coherence

The extent to which complementarity or synergy can be found within an intervention and in relation to other interventions.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Common Evaluation Question (CEQ)

An element of the Common Evaluation Framework which focuses the evaluation on measuring achievement against EU policy objectives. The Common Evaluation Questions could be complemented with programme-specific evaluation questions.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Common indicator

An indicator is a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor. In the context of the rural development policy, the set of common indicators, binding for all Member States, serves to measure achievements and changes at both RDP and European level.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

It consists of a common set of indicators, as defined in article 80 of Council Regulation No 1698/2005. The list of common baselines, output, result and impact indicators for the Rural Development Programmes 2007-13 is found in Annex VIII of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006 of 15 December 2006. Guidance on the CMEF was drawn up by the European Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, and has been published in the form of a handbook.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Common Strategic Framework (CSF)

The document translating the objectives and targets of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth into key actions for the CSF Funds, establishing for each thematic objective the key actions to be supported by each CSF Fund and the mechanisms for ensuring the coherence and consistency of the programming of the CSF Funds with the economic and employment policies of the Member States and of the Union.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Comparability

Quality of an indicator which uses the same measurement unit to quantify the needs, objectives or effects of several different interventions. Comparability is useful for establishing norms for judgement. Efforts made to improve comparability involve the harmonisation of measurement units and result, initially, in the definition of standard indicators, i.e. indicators that can be used in several regions with the same definition for the same sector of intervention.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Comparison group

A group of study participants which resembles beneficiaries in all respects, except for the fact that it is unaffected by the intervention (i.e. non-beneficiaries). A comparison group is closely related to a control group. However, whereas a comparison group is exposed to all the same conditions as the experimental group except for the variable that is being tested, the control group is not exposed to any condition.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Complementarity

The fact that several public interventions (or several components of an intervention) contribute towards the achievement of the same objective.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Consistency

The harmony, compatibility, correspondence or uniformity among the parts of a complex thing. In European legal texts and working documents it is often used equivalently to coherence.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Consultation

Consultation describes a process of gathering feedback, comments, evidence or other input on a particular intervention from other entities either from within the Commission (Inter service consultation) or from outside the Commission (stakeholder consultation).

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Consultation strategy

A Consultation strategy sets out one or more approaches to ascertain the views of stakeholders about a given issue. The strategy identifies relevant stakeholders for a new initiative under preparation by the Commission and defines the appropriate methods, tools and timing of consultation activities. For example, web-based public consultation may be complemented by approaches such as workshops, meetings, letters etc. The Roadmap informs about the Consultation strategy.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Context

The socio-economic environment in which an intervention is implemented.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Context indicator

It provides information on relevant aspects of the external environment that are likely to have an influence on the design and performance of the policy, e.g. GDP per capita, rate of unemployment, water quality.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Contextual changes

External factors that have considerable capacity to generate unanticipated outcomes in terms of policy implementation. For example, confounding factors that stem from other programmes funded by ESI funds, national funding or other investment programmes as well as the socio-economic consequences

caused by COVID-19 and the EU's response with providing recovery efforts for rural development under the Next Generation EU, which can influence the RDP's interventions, targets and results.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2021), [TWG 8](#)

Control group

A group of study participants who have not been exposed to a particular treatment. The term is typically used in experimental designs with random assignment. A control group is closely related to a comparison group. However, whereas a comparison group is exposed to all the same conditions as the experimental group except for the variable that is being tested, the control group is not exposed to any condition.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Cost-effectiveness

Ability to provide sound evaluation findings whilst spending less money.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2018), [TWG 5](#)

Counterfactual situation

A situation which would have occurred in the absence of a public intervention, also referred to as "policy-off" situation. By comparing the counterfactual and real situations, it is possible to determine the net effects of the public intervention. Various tools can be used for the construction of the counterfactual situation: shift-share analysis, comparison groups, simulation using econometric models, etc. At the baseline, the real situation and the counterfactual situation are identical. If the intervention is effective, they diverge.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Credibility

Ability of the method to generate findings which can be trusted by stakeholders, for example the method demonstrates the causality, isolate programme effects from other factors, eliminate the selection.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2018), [TWG 5](#)

Criterion

Characteristic on which the judgement of an intervention can be based. An evaluation criterion must be explicit, that is, it must clearly show if the intervention will be judged better or worse. An intervention is generally judged in terms of several criteria.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Cross-cutting Issues

Issues that horizontally affect all areas of the policy. Important cross-cutting issues for rural development include innovation, environment and climate change.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Cut-off score

Especially used in Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD), a cut-off score is a predetermined threshold established to create the treated group, which includes all units at or above the threshold, as well as to

create the comparison group, which includes all units below the threshold. The threshold is usually specified in terms of the size of some known relevant variable.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2018), [TWG 5](#)

D

Deadweight

Deadweight is defined as the effects which would have arisen even if the intervention had not taken place. Changes observed in the situation of beneficiaries following the public intervention or reported by direct addressees as a consequence of the public intervention, that would have occurred, even without the intervention. For example: a farmer received assistance for the building of a self-catering cottage. However, an investigation into the profitability of the investment and the underlying motives suggest that he would have built the cottage, even without support. Thus, there is deadweight since the construction of the cottage cannot be imputed entirely to the intervention.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Delivery mechanism

The way in which a policy is implemented, more specifically the set of administrative arrangements and procedures which ensure that policy objectives become concrete actions on the ground. Delivery mechanisms vary amongst Member States (and sometimes also between regions and across measures) due to differences in the legal and administrative arrangements related to policy implementation.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Displacement effect

Effect obtained in an eligible area at the expense of another area. Displacement effects may be intended (e.g. displacement of a public administration from the capital to a 'lagging' region) or unintended (e.g. 10% of the jobs created by a regional development programme resulted in the disappearance of jobs in other eligible regions). When they are not intended, displacement effects must be subtracted from gross effects to obtain net effects.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Disposable income

Disposable income includes all income from work (employee wages and earnings from self-employment); private income from investment and property; transfers between households; all social transfers received in cash including old-age pensions.

Source: [Eurostat \(2018\) Statistics explained. Glossary.](#)

E

Economic size of farms

The economic size of farms is one of the criteria utilised to classify agricultural holdings according to the Community typology for agricultural holdings. With Commission Regulation (EC) No 1242/2008, the economic size of an agricultural holding is measured as the total Standard Output (SO) of the holding expressed in euro. The sum of all the Standard Output per hectare of crop and per head of livestock of each holding is a measure of its overall economic size.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Effectiveness

The extent to which objectives pursued by an intervention are achieved. An effectiveness indicator is calculated by relating an output, result or impact indicator to a quantified objective.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Efficiency

Best relationship between resources employed and results achieved in pursuing a given objective through an intervention. Efficiency addresses the question whether the more effects could have been obtained with the same budget or whether the same effects could have been obtained at a lower cost? An indicator of efficiency is calculated by dividing the budgetary inputs mobilised by the quantity of effects obtained.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Enabling outcome

Outcome linked to the three innovation pathways, such as: 1.) identifying and nurturing potential innovative ideas; 2.) building capacity to innovate; and 3.) build enabling environment for innovation. It can be expressed as changes to rate and quality of emerging innovative ideas; changes to capacity to innovate; and changes to the enabling environment.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2017), [TWG 4](#)

Endogenous development

Increase in economic activity based on internal competitive advantages within a region or territory. The main factors of endogenous development are human capital, entrepreneurial spirit, local saving, local innovation networks and natural conditions. By contrast, exogenous development concerns the inward transfer of capital, technology, know-how and skills.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Europe 2020 strategy

As laid down in the Communication from the Commission (COM [2010] 2020 from 3.3.2010), it sets out a vision of Europe's social market economy for the 21st century, with the aim to turn the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. The EU2020 Strategy is the common reference document for all European policy support instruments for the programming period 2014-2020.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

European innovation partnership

As part of the Innovation Union flagship initiative, it is an approach to EU research and innovation. It is challenge-driven, acts across the whole research and innovation chain, and streamlines, simplifies and better coordinates existing instruments and initiatives.

Source: [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Europe 2020. Flagship Initiative Innovation Union \(2010\)](#)

European Innovation Partnership “Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability” (EIP AGRI)

Launched by the European Commission in 2012, EIP AGRI is the European Innovation Partnership focusing on the agricultural and forestry sectors. EIP AGRI brings together innovation actors and creates synergies between existing policies. Its overarching aim is to foster competitiveness and sustainability in these sectors, thereby contribute to: ensuring a steady supply of food, feed and biomaterials, and the sustainable management of the essential natural resources on which farming, and forestry depend by working in harmony with the environment.

Source: [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' \(2012\)](#)

Evaluation

Evaluation is a process of judgement of interventions according to their results, impacts and the needs they aim to satisfy. Evaluation looks at the effectiveness, the efficiency, the coherence and at the relevance of an intervention.

Source: [DG AGRI \(2017\) Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Evaluation activity

Covers all the activities that Managing Authorities and other stakeholders have to carry out during the evaluation process. Evaluation activity enables evaluators to conduct evaluation tasks and to assess programme result and impact, as well as the contribution of the Rural Development Programme to Union priorities.

Source: [European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development \(2015\), TWG 1](#)

Evaluation approach

An evaluation approach is a way of conducting an evaluation. It covers its conceptualisation (purpose, objectives, evaluation standards, decisions on methods and tools applied in a certain combination as linked to available and collected data and information) and practical implementation (applying methods and tools) to produce evidence on the effects of intervention and its achievements).

Source: [European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development \(2018\), TWG 5](#)

Evaluation capacity

The personal resources and evaluation-related skills necessary to fulfil evaluation tasks and activities.

Source: [European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development \(2015\), TWG 1](#)

Evaluation during the programming period

Evaluation which takes place throughout the implementation of a programme (formerly known as 'ongoing evaluation'). It includes all evaluation activities carried out during the whole programming period, comprising ex ante evaluation, reporting in enhanced Annual Implementation Reports, ex post evaluation as well as other evaluation-related tasks such as the compilation and refinement of indicators and data collection.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Evaluation governance

The set of appropriate institutional arrangements for managing evaluation aimed at ensuring effective processes and for making full use of the information generated by monitoring & evaluation systems. The institutional arrangements must address three requirements: developing a policy and a set of guidelines for evaluation; ensuring impartiality and independence; linking evaluation findings to future activities.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Evaluation management

This is the targeted employment of resources and coordination of processes with the aim to carry out an effective evaluation. Evaluation governance sets the institutional frame for evaluation management.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2016), [TWG 2](#)

Evaluation plan

It sets out the evaluation activities including the institutional arrangements (evaluation governance) and management provisions (evaluation management) for a whole programme implementation period.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Evaluation question

A question that need to be answered by evaluators. These are usually posed by those commissioning an evaluation. Evaluation questions normally feature in the terms of reference of evaluation projects.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Evaluation result

Outcomes of the assessment of efficiency, effectiveness, impact and achievements of an intervention in comparison with policy objectives.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Evaluation stakeholder

Groups or organizations with an interest in the evaluation of the policy in question. The evaluation stakeholders typically include, but are not limited to, programme managers, decision-makers, beneficiaries and evaluators.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Evaluation task

Tasks to be completed by evaluation, defined in the legislative texts and the EU evaluation guidelines, or, in the case of programme-specific evaluation tasks, the Managing Authority. If an external evaluator is involved in evaluation the Terms of Reference specify the evaluation tasks to be carried out.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Evaluation topic

Specific subject that a particular evaluation is focused on. For example, rural development priorities and focus areas, or cross-cutting issues.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Evaluator

The people who perform the evaluation, usually in a team in complex programmes that require a mix of skills and competencies. Evaluators gather and interpret secondary data, collect primary data, carry out analyses and produce the evaluation report. They must be independent vis à vis the commissioning body or programme managers.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Ex-ante conditionality

It seeks to ensure that the necessary preconditions for investments to flourish are in place. Four types of preconditions can be identified: (i) regulatory, (ii) strategic, (iii) infrastructural-planning and (iv) institutional. Regulatory preconditions primarily relate to transposition of EU legislation. Strategic preconditions are linked to strategic frameworks for investments; while infrastructural-planning preconditions relate to major infrastructure investments. Institutional preconditions aim to ensure institutional effectiveness and adequate administrative capacity.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Ex-ante evaluation

Evaluation which is performed before policy implementation. Its purpose is to gather information and to carry out analyses which help to ensure that an intervention is as relevant and coherent as possible. Its conclusions are meant to be integrated at the time decisions are made. Ex-ante evaluation mainly concerns an analysis of context, though it will also provide an opportunity for specifying the intervention mechanisms in terms of what already exists. Moreover, it provides the necessary basis for monitoring and future evaluations by ensuring that there are explicit and, where possible, quantified objectives.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Ex-post evaluation

Evaluation which recapitulates and judges an intervention when it is over. It aims at accounting for the use of resources, the achievement of intended and unintended effects. It also tries to draw conclusions which can be generalised to other interventions. For impacts to have the time to materialise, ex post evaluations need to be performed sometime after implementation of the intervention.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

External coherence

Correspondence between the objectives of an intervention and those of other interventions which interact with it.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

F

Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN)

The FADN is an instrument for evaluating the income of agricultural holdings and the impacts of the CAP. It consists of an annual survey carried out by the Member States of the European Union. The services responsible in the Union for the operation of the FADN collect every year accountancy data from a sample of the agricultural holdings in the European Union. Derived from national surveys, the FADN is the only source of microeconomic data that is harmonised, i.e. the bookkeeping principles are the same in all countries. Holdings are selected to take part in the survey on the basis of sampling plans established at the level of each region in the Union. The survey does not cover all the agricultural holdings in the Union but only those which due to their size could be considered commercial. The methodology applied aims to provide representative data along three dimensions: region, economic size and type of farming. While the European Commission is the primary user of analyses based on FADN-data, aggregated data can be found in the Standard Results database.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Farm Structure Survey (FSS)

The basic Farm structure survey is carried out by all EU Member States. The information collected in the FSS covers land use, livestock numbers, rural development, management and farm labour input (including the age, gender and relationship to the holder of the agricultural holding). The survey data can then be aggregated by different geographic levels (countries, regions, and for basic surveys also district level). The data can also be arranged by size class, area status, legal status of the holding, objective zone and farm type. The FSS is conducted consistently throughout the EU with a common methodology on a regular basis and provides therefore comparable and representative statistics across countries and time, at regional levels (down to NUTS 3 level). Every 3 or 4 years the FSS is carried out as a sample survey, and once in ten years, as a census. The countries collect information from individual agricultural holdings, which are the basic unit underlying FSS, and, observing strict rules of confidentiality, data are forwarded to Eurostat. The FSS covers all agricultural holdings which meet the minimum requirements set in the applicable legislation.

Source: Eurostat glossary (2019), [Farm Structure Survey](#)

Focus area

The sub-field of policy at which the intervention is targeted. The six Union priorities for rural development are broken into 18 operational focus areas in order to better structure the attribution of measures and planned interventions.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Full-Time Equivalent Employment (FTE)

Full-time equivalent units are used to improve the comparability of measures of employment. Figures for the number of persons working less than the standard working time of a full-year full-time worker

should be converted into full time equivalents, with regard to the working time of a full-time full-year employee in the unit. Included in this category are people working less than a standard working day, less than the standard number of working days in the week, or less than the standard number of weeks/months in the year. The conversion should be carried out on the basis of the number of hours, days, weeks or months worked.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

G

Governance

It can be understood as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. In contrast to older (narrower) definitions the term does not only indicate what a government does, but also includes structures set up and actions undertaken in partnership with the civil society and the private sector.

Source: 'From measuring impact to learning institutional lessons: an innovation system's perspective on improving the management of international agricultural research', Hall, A., S. Rasheed, N. Clark, *Agricultural Systems* 78: 213-241. and B. Yoganand, (2003).

Greenhouse Gases (GHG)

The 'greenhouse effect' is the term commonly used to describe the natural process through which atmosphere gases absorb and reradiate infrared radiation from the earth's surface, and which is largely responsible for life on earth. It is generally accepted that human activities as the combustion of fossil fuels are altering the composition of gases in the atmosphere, which could cause heat that would normally be radiated out to be retained. There is indeed mounting evidence that emissions of greenhouse gases are causing global and European surface air temperature increases, resulting in climate change. Like any other economic sector, the agriculture sector produces greenhouse gases, and is a major source of the non-CO₂ greenhouse gases methane and nitrous oxide. Both gases are many times more powerful greenhouse gases than CO₂. Greenhouse gases include CO₂, CH₄, N₂O and fluorinated gases (HFCs, PFCs and SF₆).

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

The concept is used in the European System of Accounts (ESA). GDP at market prices – is the final result of the production activity of resident producer units (ESA 2010, 8.89). GDP is the total market value of all the goods and services produced within the borders of a nation (or region) during a specified period. It can be defined in three ways: (a) production approach: GDP is the sum of gross value added of the various institutional sectors or the various industries plus taxes and less subsidies on products (which are not allocated to sectors and industries). It is also the balancing item in the total economy production account; (b) expenditure approach: GDP is the sum of final uses of goods and services by resident institutional units (final consumption and gross capital formation), plus exports and minus imports of goods and services; (c) income approach: GDP is the sum of uses in the total economy generation of income account (compensation of employees, taxes on production and imports less subsidies, gross operating surplus and mixed income of the total economy).

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Gross effect

Change observed following a public intervention, or an effect reported by the direct beneficiaries. A gross effect appears to be the consequence of an intervention but usually it cannot be entirely imputed to it. The following example shows that it is not sufficient for an evaluation merely to describe gross effects: Assisted firms claimed to have created 500 jobs owing to the support (gross effect). In reality, they would in any case have created 100 jobs even without the support (deadweight). Thus, only 400 jobs are really imputable to the intervention (net effect).

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)

The concept is used in the European System of Accounts (ESA). Gross fixed capital formation consists of resident producers' acquisitions, less disposals, of fixed assets during a given period plus certain additions to the value of non-produced assets realised by the productive activity of producer or institutional units. Fixed assets are produced assets used in production for more than one year.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Gross Value Added (GVA)

The concept is used in the European System of Accounts (ESA). GVA is the net result of output valued at basic prices less intermediate consumption valued at purchasers' prices. Gross value added is calculated before consumption of fixed capital. GVA is equal to the difference between output (ESA 2010, 3.14) and intermediate consumption (ESA 2010, 3.88).

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

H**Hierarchy of objectives**

This is a tool that helps to analyse and communicate objectives and shows how interventions contribute to global, intermediate and operational objectives. It organizes these objectives into different levels (objectives, sub-objectives) in the form of a hierarchy or tree, thus showing the logical links between the objectives and their sub-objectives. It presents in a synthetic manner the various intervention logics, derived from the regulation, that link individual actions to the overall goals of the intervention.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Holder (of an agricultural holding)

Holder of the agricultural holding is the natural person, group of natural persons or legal person on whose account and in whose name the holding is operated and who is legally and economically responsible for the holding, i.e. who takes the economic risks of the holding. Depending on whether the holder is a "natural" or a "legal" person the holdings are classified under following groups: Holdings where the holder is: · a natural person and the sole holder of an independent holding, · a group of natural persons being a group of partners on a group holding, · a legal person. Holder who is a natural person and the sole holder of an independent holding is generally, but not necessarily, also the manager. There can be only one manager on the holding.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Human resource

The set of individuals who make up the workforce of an organization, business sector or an economy. The definition includes the treasure of knowledge embodied by these individuals. 'Human capital' is sometimes used synonymously with human resources, although human capital typically refers to a narrower view; i.e., the knowledge the individuals embody and can contribute to an organization. Likewise, other terms sometimes used include 'manpower', 'talent', 'labour' or simply 'people'.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

I

Impact

In an impact assessment process, the term impact describes all the changes which are expected to happen due to the implementation and application of a given policy option/intervention. Such impacts may occur over different timescales, affect different actors and be relevant at different scales (local, regional, national and EU). In an evaluation context, impact refers to the changes associated with a particular intervention which occur over the longer term.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Impact assessment/impact assessment report

Impact Assessment is an integrated process to assess and to compare the merits of a range of policy options designed to address a well-defined problem. It is an aid to political decision making not a substitute for it. The Roadmap informs whether an impact assessment is planned or justifies why no impact assessment is carried out. An impact assessment report is a SWD prepared by the lead service which presents the findings of the impact assessment process. It supports decision making inside of the Commission and is transmitted to the Legislator following adoption by the College of the relevant initiative. The quality of each IA report is checked by the Regulatory Scrutiny Board against the requirements of the relevant guidelines.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Impact indicators

These refer to the outcome of intervention beyond immediate effects. They are normally expressed in "net" terms, which means subtracting effects that cannot be attributed to the intervention (e.g. double counting, deadweight), and taking into account indirect effects (displacement and multipliers).

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Implementation

Implementation describes the process of making sure that the provisions of EU legislation can fully enter into application.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Inception impact assessment

The inception Impact Assessment is the initial description of the problem, its underlying drivers, the policy objectives, policy options and the economic, social, environmental impacts of those policy

options. It provides a comprehensive basis for stakeholders to provide feedback, information and opinions.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Indicator

Tool to measure the achievement of: an objective; a resource mobilised; an output accomplished; an effect obtained; or a context variable (economic, social or environmental). The information provided by an indicator is a datum used to measure facts or opinions. An indicator must, among other things, produce simple information which is communicable and easily understood by both the provider and the user of the information. It must help the managers of public intervention to communicate, negotiate and decide. For that purpose, it should preferably be linked to a criterion on the success of the intervention. It should reflect as precisely as possible whatever it is meant to measure (validity of construction). The indicator and its measurement unit must be sensitive, that is to say, the quantity measured must vary significantly when a change occurs in the variable to be measured.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Innovation capacity

The continuing ability to combine and put into use different types of knowledge.

Source: Chuluunbaatar, D. and LeGrand, S., 2015. *Enabling the capacity to innovate with a system-wide assessment process*. [Occasional Papers](#) in *Innovation in Family Farming*. FAO, Rome.

Innovation outcome

Innovation outcomes are resulting from the enabling outcomes (e.g. new practices, increased income, adoption of more sustainable farming practices).

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development* (2017), [TWG 4](#)

Innovation pathway

A process through which RDP activities produces outputs, results and impacts which contribute to the achievement of RDP objectives, influencing and influenced by the innovation system in which it happens.

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development* (2017), [TWG 4](#)

Innovation support service

Innovation support services work using models that are adapted to local conditions and could play an important role in bringing the right people into projects, connecting farmers and advisers with researchers and helping to identify funding.

Source: [EIP - AGRI brochure](#) on *Innovation Support Services*

Innovation system

The groups of organisations and individuals involved in the generation, diffusion and adaptation, and use of knowledge of socio-economic significance, and the institutional context that governs the way these interactions and processes take place.

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development* (2017), [TWG 4](#)

Input

Financial, human, material, organisational and regulatory means mobilised for the implementation of an intervention.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Input indicator

These refer to the budget or other resources allocated at each level of the assistance. Financial input indicators are used to monitor progress in terms of the (annual) commitment and payment of the funds available for any operation, measure or programme in relation to its eligible costs.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS)

IACS consists of a number of digital and interconnected databases with the aim to ensure that income support is managed and controlled in a standardised way in all EU countries. It comprises the land parcel identification system; a system allowing farmers to graphically indicate the agricultural areas for which they apply for aid (the geospatial aid application); a computerised database for animals in EU countries where animal-based aid schemes apply; and an integrated control system which ensures systematic checks of aid applications based on computerised cross checks and physical on-farm controls (on-the spot checks). The EU countries operate the IACS through accredited paying agencies. The system applies to all income support schemes (whether obligatory or not) as well as certain rural development support measures which are granted based on the number of hectares or animals held by the farmer. EU countries also use the IACS to ensure that farmers respect some of the requirements and standards mandated by cross-compliance.

Source: [Integrated Administration and Control System \(IACS\) website](#)

Interactive innovation

In interactive (system) innovation, building blocks for innovations are expected to come from science, but also from practice and intermediaries, including farmers, advisory services, NGOs, researchers, etc. as actors in a bottom-up process. Interactive innovation includes existing (sometimes tacit) knowledge.

Source: [EIP AGRI \(2014\) Guidelines on programming for innovation and the implementation of the EIP for agricultural productivity and sustainability.](#)

Intermediate bodies

Delegated bodies (Local Authorities, Regional Development Bodies or Non-Governmental Organisations) that the Member State or Managing Authority has designated to carry out the management and implementation of rural development operations.

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015)*, [TWG 1](#)

Internal coherence

Correspondence between the different objectives of the same intervention. Internal coherence implies that there is a hierarchy of objectives, with those at the bottom logically contributing towards those above.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Interservice (steering) Group

An Interservice group is a group of Commission representatives from more than one Directorate-General or service who discusses priority cross-cutting issues and steers and monitors elements of the policy making process that require the interaction of more than one Directorate-General or other Commission service. Interservice steering groups are required for the preparation of major initiatives, entailing impact assessments, stakeholder consultations, evaluations and Fitness Checks.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Intervention

Intervention is used as umbrella term to describe a wide range of EU activities including: expenditure and non-expenditure measures, legislation, action plans, networks.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Intervention logic

The intervention logic is the logical link between the problem that needs to be tackled (or the objective that needs to be pursued), the underlying drivers of the problem, and the available policy options (or the EU actions actually taken) to address the problem or achieve the objective. This intervention logic is used in both prospective Impact Assessments and retrospective evaluations.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

IPCC Tier

In the context of estimating GHG emissions, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) proposes a series of methods. IPCC methods use emission factors and activity data, as well as auxiliary data (e.g. information on forest type and condition, management practice or disturbance history). IPCC describes methods at three levels of detail, called *tiers*. A tier represents a level of methodological complexity. Usually three tiers are provided. Tier 1 is the basic method, Tier 2 intermediate and Tier 3 most demanding in terms of complexity and data requirements. Tiers 2 and 3 are sometimes referred to as higher tier methods and are generally considered to be more accurate.

Source: IPCC (2019), [2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories](#)

L

Land Use/Cover Area frame statistical Survey (LUCAS)

LUCAS is a series of harmonised surveys across all Member States organised regularly by the Joint Research Centre to gather information on land cover and land use. The name reflects the methodology used to collect the information. Estimates of the area occupied by different land use or land cover types are computed on the basis of observations taken at more than 250,000 sample points throughout the EU rather than mapping the entire area under investigation. By repeating the survey every few years, changes to land use can be identified.

Source: Joint Research Centre, European Soil Data Centre (2020), [LUCAS](#)

Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS)

A geographic information system that allows the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) to geo-locate, display and spatially integrate its constituent data. It contains diverse spatial data sets from multiple sources which together form a record of all agricultural areas (reference parcels) in the relevant Member State and the maximum eligible areas under different EU aid schemes in Pillars 1 and 2 of the CAP. LPISs comprise alphanumeric and graphic elements.

Source: European Court of Auditors (2016), [The Land Parcel Identification System](#)

M

Macro- and micro-level consistency check

Micro- and macro-level consistency check is the assessment of the correspondence or coherence between the evaluation findings observed at micro- and macro-level.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2018), [TWG 5](#)

Manager (of an agricultural holding)

Manager of the agricultural holding is the natural person responsible for the normal daily financial and production routines of running the holding concerned. In the context of the farm structure survey, a manager is considered to be non-family labour. Holder of the holding who is a natural person and the sole holder of an independent holding is generally, but not necessarily, also the manager. There can be only one manager on the holding.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Measure

Within the framework of European rural development policy, the basic unit of programme management, consisting of a set of similar projects and disposing of a precisely defined budget. Each measure has a particular management apparatus. Measures generally consist of projects. Many measures are implemented through a process of Calls for Proposals and subsequent appraisal.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Measurement unit

Used to observe a phenomenon, change or variable, and to place it on a quantitative scale. A measurement unit allows for quantification. An elementary indicator is associated with a measurement unit and has only one dimension (e.g. km of 10 motorway; number of training courses). Some measurement units are divisible and others not (e.g. 20.3km were built; 30 trainees were qualified). Measurement units must be harmonised if indicators are to be comparable.

DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Method

Methods are families of evaluation techniques and tools that fulfil different purposes. They usually consist of procedures and protocols that ensure systemisation and consistency in the way evaluations are undertaken. Methods may focus on the collection or analysis of information and data; may be quantitative or qualitative; and may attempt to describe, explain, predict or inform action. The choice of methods follows from the evaluation questions being asked and the mode of enquiry - causal, exploratory, normative etc. Understanding a broad range of methods ensures that evaluators will select suitable methods for different purposes.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Methodology

Most broadly, the overall way in which decisions are made to select methods based on different assumptions about what constitutes knowing (ontology) what constitutes knowledge (epistemology) and more narrowly how this can be operationalised i.e., interpreted and analysed (methodology).

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Monitoring

An exhaustive and regular examination of the resources, outputs and results of public interventions. Monitoring is based on a system of coherent information including reports, reviews, balance sheets, indicators, etc. Monitoring system information is obtained primarily from operators and is used essentially for steering public interventions. When monitoring includes a judgement, this judgement refers to the achievement of operational objectives. Monitoring is also intended to produce feedback and direct learning. It is generally the responsibility of the actors charged with implementation of an intervention.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Monitoring and evaluation system

A system for collecting information at regular intervals to facilitate the reporting, analysis and evaluation of programme performance with evaluation methods. The system covers all monitoring and evaluation activities, including the governance of the system itself. The monitoring and evaluation system is coordinated by the Managing Authority and is the basis for communicating evaluation findings internally and externally. In the Rural Development Regulation, the term specifically describes a common system, developed by the Commission and Member States, which aims to demonstrate progress and achievements, assess the impact, effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of rural development policy interventions. It contains a limited number of common indicators relating to the context, outputs, results, and impacts of the programmes.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Monitoring data

Data regularly gathered on programme beneficiaries through the monitoring system. This data includes information on inputs and outputs and permits the monitoring of the programme's progress.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Multi-annual work plan

A work plan that extends over several years and covers all items to be accomplished over the time period with a breakdown of tasks and their timelines. A multi-annual work plan can be divided into smaller segments, such as annual work plans.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Multiplier effect

Secondary effect resulting from increased income and consumption generated by the public intervention. Multiplier effects are cumulative and take into account the fact that part of the income generated is spent again and generates other income, and so on in several successive cycles. In each cycle, the multiplier effect diminishes due to purchases outside the territory. The effect decreases much faster when the territory is small and when its economy is open.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

N

Naïve evaluation approaches

Naïve evaluation approaches are based on techniques which attribute the whole changes observed in a given indicator to the programme or intervention, without applying robust counterfactual analysis to exclude the confounding factors. These include: Before/After estimator, 'with' vs. 'without' approach, or comparison with population's average.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2018), [TWG 5](#)

National farm bookkeeping databases

Farm bookkeeping data is collected yearly by professional national farm accounting organisations and/or associations, however, it is not harmonised across EU Member States. This dataset is commonly used by the national FADN Liaison Agencies to standardise the results and feed the FADN system. In most cases the number of farms included in the national survey is much larger than farms fed into the FADN system.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2021), [TWG 8](#)

National rural networks

National rural networks interlink the organisations and administrations involved in rural development. Member States with regional rural development programmes may run a specific programme for the establishment and operation of their national rural network. Networking by the national rural network aims to: (a) increase the involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of rural development; (b) improve the quality of implementation of rural development programmes; (c) inform the broader public and potential beneficiaries on rural development policy and funding opportunities; (d) foster innovation in agriculture, food production, forestry and rural areas.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Natura 2000

Natura 2000 is the centrepiece of EU nature & biodiversity policy. It is an EU wide network of nature protection areas established under the 1992 Habitats Directive. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. It is comprised of

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated by Member States under the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21.05.1992), and also incorporates Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which they designate under the 1979 Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2.04.1979).

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Net effect

Effect imputable to the public intervention and to it alone, as opposed to apparent changes or gross effects. To evaluate net effects, based on gross effects, it is necessary to subtract the changes which would have occurred in the absence of the public intervention, and which are therefore not imputable to it since they are produced by confounding factors (counterfactual situation). For example, the number of employees in assisted firms appears to be stable (change or gross effect equal to zero). However, it is estimated that without support there would have been 400 redundancies (counterfactual situation). Thus, 400 jobs were maintained (net effect).

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)

The NUTS nomenclature serves as a reference for the collection, development and harmonization of EU regional statistics and for socio-economic analyses of the regions. Legal basis is Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS). In the farm structure survey (FSS) and in the farm accountancy data network (FADN), specific regions are used, based on different levels of NUTS or recombination of NUTS.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

‘Nomenclature statistique des Activités économiques dans la Communauté Européenne’ (NACE)

NACE (Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community) was adopted in order to establish a common statistical classification of economic activities within the European Community in order to ensure comparability between national and community classifications and hence national and community statistics. NACE is the European standard classification of productive economic activities. NACE presents the universe of economic activities partitioned in such a way that a NACE code can be associated with a statistical unit carrying them out. The structure of NACE is described in the NACE Regulation as follows:

- i. a first level consisting of headings identified by an alphabetical code (sections),
- ii. a second level consisting of headings identified by a two-digit numerical code (divisions),
- iii. a third level consisting of headings identified by a three-digit numerical code (groups),
- iv. a fourth level consisting of headings identified by a four-digit numerical code (classes).

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

NRN action plan

A plan of NRN covering at least activities regarding:

- a. the collection of examples of projects covering all priorities of the rural development programmes;
- b. the facilitation of thematic and analytical exchanges between rural development stakeholders, sharing and dissemination of findings;

- c. the provision of training and networking for local action groups and in particular
- d. technical assistance for inter-territorial and transnational co-operation;
- e. the provision of networking for advisors and innovation support services;
- f. the sharing and dissemination of monitoring and evaluation findings;
- g. publicity and information concerning the rural development;
- h. the participation in and contribution to the European network for rural development

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2016), [TWG 2](#)

O

Objective

Clear, explicit and initial statement on the effects to be achieved by a public intervention. A quantitative objective is stated in the form of indicators and a qualitative objective in the form of descriptors. Specific objectives concern the results and impacts of an intervention on direct beneficiaries. A global objective corresponds to the aim of the intervention. The aim of an intervention is to produce an impact expressed in global terms, e.g. reducing regional disparities in development levels. Objectives may also be intermediate. Objectives which specify outputs to be produced are called operational objectives. If the objectives of a public intervention have not been clearly defined beforehand, the evaluation can try to clarify them afterwards. In that case, it is preferable to refer to implicit objectives. Objectives should be expressed in SMART terms (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-dependent).

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Operational groups

Groups of people (such as farmers, researchers, advisers, etc.) who work together on a practical innovation project with concrete objectives.

Source: [EIP - AGRI brochure](#) on Innovation Support Services

Operations database

Refers to the electronic system for recording monitoring and evaluation-related information of RDPs as required by the EAFRD regulation. It contains key information on the implementation of the programme, on each operation selected for funding, as well as on completed operations, needed for monitoring and evaluation, including key information on each beneficiary and project.

Source: Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council

Output

Action which is financed and accomplished (or concretised) with the money allocated to an intervention. A project promoter undertakes to produce an output in immediate exchange for the support granted. Outputs may take the form of facilities or works (e.g. building of a road, farm investment; tourist accommodation). They may also take the form of immaterial services (e.g. training, consultancy, information).

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Output indicator

It measures activities directly realised within programmes. These activities are the first step towards realising the operational objectives of the intervention and are measured in physical or monetary units. Example: number of training sessions organised, number of farms receiving investment support, total volume of investment.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

P

Partnership agreement

It is the document prepared by the Member State with the involvement of partners in line with the multi-level governance approach, which sets out the Member State's strategy, priorities and arrangements for using the ESI Funds in an effective and efficient way so as to pursue the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and which is approved by the Commission following assessment and dialogue with the Member State.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

It consists of a set of elements as defined in article 115 of the proposal or the CAP Strategic Plan Regulation, COM/2018/392 final (SPR): common context, output, result and impact indicators; targets and milestones; data collection, storage and transmission information; regular reporting on performance, monitoring and evaluation activities; and evaluation activities linked to the CAP Strategic Plan. The performance framework will be established under the shared responsibility of Member States and the Commission, which will allow reporting, monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the CAP Strategic Plan during its implementation. The list of common indicators related to output, result, impact and context as set out in Annex I of the proposal for regulation.

Source: *Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council: CAP Strategic Plan Regulation, COM/2018/392 final (SPR)*

Performance framework

For each programme under the common strategic framework, a performance framework shall be defined with a view to monitoring progress towards the objectives and targets set for each programme over the course of the programming period. In 2019, the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, shall undertake a review of the performance of the programmes with reference to the performance framework. On the basis of the performance review, a performance reserve shall be allocated in 2019 to programmes and priorities which have achieved the milestones set in the performance framework.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Practicability

Extent to which the method can be applied without adverse consequences (e.g. ethical) given the available data, resources, time.

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2018)*, [TWG 5](#)

Primary contributions of LEADER/CLLD

Direct contributions of operations implemented under LEADER/CLLD to the objective linked to the main focus area (usually 6B - local development in rural areas) under which LEADER/CLLD is programmed.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2017), [TWG 3](#)

Primary data

In the context of an evaluation, data collected ad hoc directly in the field at the time of the running evaluation.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Programme

Organised set of financial, organisational and human interventions mobilised to achieve an objective or set of objectives in a given period. A programme is delimited in terms of a timescale and budget. Programme objectives are defined beforehand; an effort is then made systematically to strive for coherence among these objectives.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Programme effects

The programme effect is the difference in value of the specific outcome (e.g. gross value added, or labour productivity) for the same unit with the programme and without the programme. This definition is valid for any unit of analysis (e.g. person, farm, enterprise, area of land, community, village, region, programming area or country) and any outcome (expressed in terms of sectoral, environmental or socio-economic indicators) which can plausibly be related to the programme. Programme effects can never be directly observed because of other intervening factors and therefore their assessment requires the use of a counterfactual analysis. Programme effects can for example be calculated using the following methodologies:

- Average Treatment Effect (ATE) – measures the effect of a programme on the population of the programme through assessing its beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (randomly selected).
- Average Treatment on the Treated (ATT) – measures the effect of a programme through assessing only the programme's beneficiaries.
- Average Treatment on the Non-treated (ATNT) – measures the effect of a programme through assessing only the programme's non-beneficiaries.

In cases when the estimation of ATT is based on a sample of data, the ATT is understood as the Sample Average Treatment on the Treated (SATT).

In cases when the ATT is estimated using the data of the whole population of beneficiaries, the ATT is called the Population Average Treatment on the Treated (PATT).

When the estimation of the ATT is based on a representative sample of data the SATT is considered equal to the PATT.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2021), [TWG 8](#) and [TWG 5](#)

Programme-specific evaluation questions

Programme specific evaluation questions are formulated for the purpose of the evaluation of a specific programme, in view of providing a deeper insight into the overall implementation of that programme or

to reflect specific objectives of that programme. Contrary to them, "common" evaluation questions apply to all the programmes.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Programme-specific indicator

An indicator is a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor. The set of common indicators, binding for all Member States, serves to measure achievements and changes at programme and European level. Since common indicators may not fully reflect all effects of programme activities, the Managing Authorities in the Member States are asked to complement the common indicator set by defining additional indicators to capture the full range of intended effects of a given programme, in particular for national priorities and site-specific measures. These additional indicators are called programme-specific indicators.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Propensity score matching

Propensity score matching (PSM) entails estimating a statistical model for the entire sample (treatment and potential controls) that yields an estimated propensity to participate in a programme for each individual or firm - regardless of whether they actually participated in the given programme/measure or not. Treated individuals or firms are then matched to programme non-participants on the basis of the propensity score. A control group identified in such a manner can subsequently be used to derive an estimate of the counterfactual. The critical assumption underlying the matching approach is that the selection process can be characterised by the observable data only.

- Radius (or calliper) matching is applicable if the distance measured in terms of their individual propensity scores between units in the two groups is lower than a chosen tolerance limit.
- When Kernel matching is applied, every supported unit is matched with a weighted average of all non-supported units with weights that are inversely proportional to the distance between the supported and non-supported units.

Sources: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2021), [TWG 8](#)

European Commission (2015), [Investment support under rural development policy](#)

Proxy indicator

Also known as an indirect indicator, a proxy indicator is a variable that is used to approximate, or to be representative of, a change or result that is difficult to measure directly.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Purchasing Power Standard (PPS)

Purchasing Power Standard (PPS) shall mean the artificial common reference currency unit used in the European Union to express the volume of economic aggregates for the purpose of spatial comparisons in such a way that price level differences between countries are eliminated. Economic volume aggregates in PPS are obtained by dividing their original value in national currency units by the respective purchasing power parity. PPS thus buys the same given volume of goods and services in all countries, whereas different amounts of national currency units are needed to buy this same volume of goods and services in individual countries, depending on the price level.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Q

Qualitative indicator

A description, in the form of a concise, clear and stable statement, of an objective to achieve, or an impact obtained. The organisation of descriptors in the form of a structured grid may constitute the first step in the construction of an indicator. If several descriptors have been established beforehand, they can be used to construct an observation grid. By means of this grid a phenomenon or change can be observed and described in a qualitative and structured way. Evaluation cannot afford to exclude from its scope of analysis an important objective or impact simply because it is difficult to measure quantitatively when in fact it is considered to be important. In that case, it is preferable to collect qualitative data and to structure them by means of descriptors.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

R

Rationale

The fact that an intervention can be justified in relation to needs to satisfy or sectorial and socio-economic problems to solve. Ex-ante evaluation verifies the real existence of these needs and problems, and ensures that they cannot be met or solved by existing private or public initiatives. Thus, the inadequacy or shortcomings of other initiatives (whether private or public) may be a fundamental element in the programme rationale.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

RDP innovation potential

RDP innovation potential is the extent to which the specific RDP approach designed towards innovation can foster innovation and achieve policy objectives in rural areas within a given innovation system or context.

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2017)*, [TWG 4](#)

RDP union priority

Six European-level priorities that translate the EU2020 goals and CAP objectives into rural development interventions. The Union priorities for rural development are defined in the Rural Development Regulation.

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015)*, [TWG 1](#)

Recommendation

Proposal aimed at enhancing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, added value and coherence of the programme/strategy; at redesigning the objectives and measures; and/or at the real-location of resources. Recommendations should be linked to evidence-based conclusions.

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2017)*, [TWG 3](#)

REFIT

REFIT is the European Commission's Regulatory Fitness and Performance programme launched in December 2012. The Commission's REFIT is a rolling programme to keep the entire stock of EU legislation under review and ensure that it is 'fit for purpose' that regulatory burdens are minimised and that all simplification options are identified and applied. REFIT identifies opportunities to reduce regulatory burdens and simplify existing laws in order to ensure that the objectives of the legislation or policy can be reached in a more effective and efficient way.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Regulatory scrutiny board

A body set up by the Commission which scrutinises draft impact assessment reports and major retrospective evaluations and issues opinions with a view to improving their quality or providing guidance for the future.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Relevance

The extent to which an intervention's objectives are pertinent to needs, problems and issues. Questions of relevance are particularly important in ex ante evaluation because the focus is on the strategy chosen or its justification.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Reliability

Quality of the collection of evaluation data when the protocol used makes it possible to produce similar information during repeated observations in identical conditions. Reliability depends on compliance with the rules of sampling and tools used for the collection and recording of quantitative and qualitative information.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Reporting

A comprehensive summary and presentation of monitoring and evaluation findings with regard to effectiveness, efficiency, impact and achievement of the intervention. Precedes communication of evaluation results to stakeholders and general public.

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015)*, [TWG 1](#)

Representative data

A sample is representative, if all the elements in a population have the same chance of being part of the sample. Hence, a representative sample has the same general characteristics as the target population and therefore accurate conclusions about a population can be drawn from the sample.

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2021)*, [TWG 8](#)

Result

Advantage (or disadvantage) which direct beneficiaries obtain at the end of their participation in a public intervention or as soon as a public facility has been completed. Results can be observed when an operator completes an action and accounts for the way in which allocated funds were spent and managed. At this point s/he may show, for example, that accessibility has been improved due to the

construction of a road, or that the firms which have received advice claim to be satisfied. The operators may regularly monitor results. They have to adapt the implementation of the intervention according to the results obtained.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Result indicator

It measures the direct and immediate effects of the intervention. It provides information on changes in, for example, the behaviour, capacity or performance of direct beneficiaries and are measured in physical or monetary terms. Example: gross number of jobs created, successful training outcomes.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Retro planning

Also known as reverse scheduling and backward planning, retro planning refers to the process of planning a project by identifying a deadline and working backwards to the start date, designating the component steps in reverse order of time.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Rigour

Ability to produce exact findings. Rigorous evaluation requires first of all to be able to rely on a causal analysis. Rigour in causal attribution of the applied quantitative evaluation method (part of an overall evaluation design) comes very close to the ideal, i.e. experimental design.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2018), [TWG 5](#)

Roadmap

A roadmap is a tool to substantiate the political validation of an initiative the Commission is preparing and, to inform stakeholders about planned consultation work, impact assessments, evaluations, Fitness Checks. It is published at an early stage by the Secretariat General on the Commission's web site and helps stakeholders prepare timely and effective inputs to the policy making process.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Robustness

Ability to produce findings which are stable and resilient to small but deliberate changes.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2018), [TWG 5](#)

S

Secondary contributions

Contributions of an operation to focus areas other than the focus area under which the operation has been primarily programmed. They are assessed in the context of the evaluation activities for the enhanced AIRs and the ex-post evaluation, e.g., when calculating the Complementary Result indicators. The evaluators should, if possible, calculate / assess the complementary result indicator of a specific focus area, taking into account both, primarily programmed operations and the operations which have secondary contributions to that specific focus area. The quantification of secondary

contributions provides a much completer and better picture of the achievements of the specific focus areas under each RDP priority.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2017), [TWG 8](#)

Secondary contributions of LEADER/CLLD

Contributions of operations implemented under LEADER/CLLD to additional focus areas, other than the main focus area (usually FA 6B), under which LEADER/CLLD is programmed and con-tributes primarily. Secondary contribution could be predominant and additional. Predominant secondary contributions to the FA to which the operation contributes significantly. Additional secondary contributions to the FA to which the operation contributes but not significantly.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2017), [TWG 3](#)

Secondary data

In the context of an evaluation, existing information, e.g., statistics, monitoring data, data from previous evaluations.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Self-assessment

Self-assessment is a formative process that is de-signed and conducted by those who implement an intervention or are part of it (e.g. management bodies, decision bodies, beneficiaries). It generates an inside view on the activities and focuses on the overall performance. Involved actors – with or without the help of an external moderator - analyse the way in which they do things and ask themselves how they contribute to the achievement of the agreed objectives and goals. The participatory nature of self-assessment induces learning effects among all those who are part of it. European

Source: Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2017), [TWG 3](#)

SMART objectives

In addressing the question of effectiveness, detailed consideration needs to be given to the extent to which objectives conform to the SMART criteria. Specific Do they specify the target group and the factors that need to change? Measurable Are they written in a measurable format, e.g. magnitude of effects, number to be reached? Achievable Are they feasible given the available time money, staffing? Relevant Are they relevant for the target group? Time dependent Do they set the time frame within which the objectives must be reached?

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Social capital

Social capital can be defined as “networks together with shared norms, values and under-standings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups”.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2017), [TWG 3](#)

Social innovation

Social innovation can be defined as the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations.

Source: European Commission - DG REGIO, DG EMPL, DG AGRI, etc. (2013) [Guide to Social Innovation.](#)

Stakeholder

Stakeholder is any individual or entity impacted, addressed or otherwise concerned by an EU intervention.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Standard Output (SO)

The Standard Output (SO) is the average monetary value of the agricultural output at farm-gate price of each agricultural product (crop or livestock) in a given region. The SO is calculated by Member States per hectare or per head of livestock, by using basic data for a reference period of 5 successive years; for example, SO 2007 covers the calendar years 2005 to 2009, or the agricultural production years 2005/06 to 2009/2010. The SO of the holding is calculated as the sum of the SO of each agricultural product present in the holding multiplied by the relevant number of hectares or heads of livestock of the holding. The SO coefficients are expressed in euros and the economic size of the holding is measured as the total standard output of the holding expressed in Euros. Holdings may be classified in economic size classes, the limits of which are also expressed in euros. The SO coefficients are calculated for more than 90 separate crop and livestock items. This large number of items not only reflects the diversity of agriculture within the European Union, but also indicates the level of detail that is required to ensure that the results of the FADN and of other surveys are comprehensive and reliable.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

This is a similar technique to Environmental Impact Assessment but normally applied to policies, plans, programmes and groups of projects. Strategic Environmental Assessment provides the potential opportunity to avoid the preparation and implementation of inappropriate plans, programmes and projects and assists in the identification and evaluation of project alternatives and identification of cumulative effects. Strategic Environmental Assessment comprises two main types: sectoral strategic environmental assessment (applied when many new projects fall within one sector) and regional SEA (applied when broad economic development is planned within one region). Within the EU, SEA is governed by the provisions of Directive.

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015)*, [TWG 1](#)

Strategy

Selection of priority actions according to the urgency of needs to be met, the gravity of problems to be solved, and the chances of actions envisaged being successful. In the formulation of a strategy, objectives are selected and graded, and their levels of ambition determined. Not all territories and groups are concerned by the same development strategy. Ex-ante evaluation examines whether the strategy is suited to the context and its probable evolution.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Substitution effect

Effect obtained in favour of direct beneficiaries but at the expense of a person or organisation that does not qualify for the intervention. For example, a person unemployed for a long time found a job owing to the intervention. In reality, this job was obtained because someone else was granted early retirement. If the objective was the redistribution of jobs in favour of disadvantaged groups, the effect can be considered positive. An evaluation determines, with regard to the objectives of the intervention, whether

the substitution effect can be considered beneficial or not. When it is not beneficial, the substitution effect must be subtracted from gross effects.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

SWOT analysis

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The analysis of these four aspects has become the standard method for taking stock of the situation in an area, sector or theme and deciding on strategic priorities, objectives and measures. The SWOT should reflect evidence contained in the baseline and other indicators as well as more qualitative information. Ideally it should take into account stakeholder opinions. The strengths and weaknesses refer to the existing positive and negative attributes whereas the opportunities and threats to the future.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Synergy

The fact that several public interventions (or several components of an intervention) together produce an impact which is greater than the sum of the impacts they would produce alone (e.g. an intervention which finances the extension of an airport which, in turn, helps to fill tourist facilities, also financed by the intervention). Synergy generally refers to positive impacts. However, phenomena which reinforce negative effects, negative synergy or anti-synergy may also be referred to (e.g. an intervention subsidises the diversification of enterprises while a regional policy helps to strengthen the dominant activity).

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

T

Target

Detailed performance requirement, arising from a policy objective, which needs to be met in order to achieve the stated objective. Targets are quantified whenever possible and are typically time-bound.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2015), [TWG 1](#)

Target indicator

For each focus area chosen among the six rural development priorities, quantifiable target indicators are defined at Community level. Target indicators should be linked, as directly as possible, to rural development programmes interventions, minimising the effect of external factors. They should be indicators which can be simply and regularly monitored, minimising the data requirements for beneficiaries and administrations, as the values of these indicators will be monitored regularly throughout the lifetime of each rural development programmes. Wherever possible established indicators and methods should be used. For the most part, target indicators will be at the result level, with the exception of Priority 1, which is horizontal and whose results are captured through the outcomes of other priorities. For the focus areas under this priority, the target indicators will be established at output level.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Target level

Estimates of an impact in relation to the baseline situation, based on past experience and expert judgement. A standard approach is to use benchmarks established in past programme reporting, evaluation and studies. Evaluators generally play an important role in the context of the ex-ante evaluation by verifying quantified targets for outputs and results and in the setting of quantified (and where appropriate qualitative) targets for impact.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Technical assistance

With regard to public support programmes or programming frameworks, Technical Assistance is the providing of advice, assistance, and training pertaining to the setting up, implementation and management of the programme. From the Technical Assistance budget, the CSF Funds may support actions for preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and communication, networking, complaint resolution, and control and audit. The CSF Funds may be used by the Member State to support actions for the reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries, including electronic data exchange systems, and actions to reinforce the capacity of Member State authorities and beneficiaries to administer and use the CSF Funds. These actions may concern preceding and subsequent programming periods. Up to 0,25% of the EAFRD can be dedicated to Technical Assistance activities such as listed under Article 51 of the CPR.

Source: EVALSED (2013) *The resource for the evaluation of Socio -* [Economic Development. Evaluation guide.](#)

Terms of Reference (ToR)

The ToR specifies the conditions under which the tasks related to the evaluation/SEA will be conducted, sets up roles and responsibilities, and informs potential evaluators/SEA experts what is expected in respect to content, process and timing. If they are clearly outlined in the ToR, the applicants' responses to the proposed terms may provide a key indication as to their suitability for the task.

Source: *European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2016)*, [TWG 2](#)

Thematic and analytical exchanges

Exchanges can be promoted by NRNs in different forms. The most common form of thematic exchanges developed by NRNs, has been permanent or ad hoc Thematic Working Groups (TWGs). NRN TWGs bring together diverse stakeholders to discuss, analyse and share information on common topics, often resulting in recommendations.

Source: *European Network for Rural Development – Contact Point (2014)*. [NRN Guidebook](#)

Theory of change

“Theory of change” which is frequently applied in theory-based evaluations can be described as a way describing the set of assumptions explaining both the mini-steps leading to the long-term goal and the connections between policy or programme activities and outcomes that occur at each step of the way. Theory-based approach is an approach in which attention is paid to theories of policy makers, programme managers or other stakeholders, i.e., collections of assumptions, and hypotheses - empirically testable - that are logically linked together. It premises that programmes are based on explicit or implicit theory about how and why a programme will work. The main characteristic of theory-based evaluation is that it provides an explicit causal chain (or ‘theory of change’) linking the intervention with specific effects; and then it uses this causal chain to guide the collection of evidence and the

analysis of causal contribution by developing hypotheses that can be tested through critical comparisons.

Source: Eurostat. Statistics explained, [Glossary](#).

Transparency

Transparency of an evaluation methodology requires that users know exactly its main elements, structure, parameters, rules and functional responses. A user can therefore monitor that they are followed. A valid estimate of the counterfactual should be based on clear and transparent assignment rules.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2016), [TWG 2](#)

Type of Farming (TF) of an agricultural holding

The concept has been developed in the Community typology for agricultural holdings (Commission decision 85/377/EEC). The type of farming on a holding is the production system of a holding which is characterised by the relative contribution of different enterprises to the holding's total standard gross margin. Depending on the amount of detail required, there are three nested levels of type of farming: 9 general types, 2217 principal types, and 5620 particular types (cf. Annex I of Commission Regulation types (EC) No 1242/2008

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

U

Unit of analysis

The smallest part of an organised system which is being analysed. The unit of analysis can be defined at the micro and macro level of assessment. For instance, the unit of analysis at micro level could be parcels or farms whereas at macro level it could be catchment or NUTS 3, as well as the entire RDP territory.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2018), [TWG 5](#)

Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA)

Utilised agricultural area (UAA) is the total area taken up by arable land, permanent grassland, permanent crops and kitchen gardens used by the holding regardless of the type of tenure. Common land used by the holding is not included. The term does not include unused agricultural land, woodland and land occupied by buildings, farmyards, tracks, ponds, etc.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

V

Validity

It can refer to internal, external, and convergent validity. "Internal Validity": Results of non-empirical methods are valid if they are logically sound. Results of empirical methods are valid if they are logically sound and factually sound. Logical soundness can be verified, and high transparency makes this easier. Factual soundness is verified if the result is identical to the true parameter which mostly cannot be observed (see counterfactual). "External validity" is a quality measure of empirical research. In our context "external validity" means whether the results obtained from a case study will be more or less

the same if a similar programme is in place in another context as well. "Convergent validity" is given if different methods employed to answer the same research question yield similar results.

Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2016), [TWG 2](#)

Value for money

Term referring to judgement on whether sufficient impact is being achieved for the money spent. It is often calculated by dividing the total project costs by the number of beneficiaries reached and comparing the cost with alternative comparable measures in relation to the target groups and desired impacts.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

Verifiable objective

An objective stated in such a way that it will subsequently be possible to check whether or not it has been achieved. A way of making an objective verifiable is to quantify it by means of an indicator linked to two values (baseline and expected situation). An objective may also be verifiable if it is linked to a descriptor, i.e. a clear and precise qualitative statement on the expected effect.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

W

Windfall profit

Profit that occurs unexpectedly due to extraordinary changes in the market situation/government regulation.

Source: DG AGRI (2017) [Technical Handbook for the CMEF 2014-2020](#)

European Evaluation Helpdesk

Boulevard Saint-Michel 77-79

B - 1040 BRUSSELS

T: +32 2 737 51 30

Email: info@ruralevaluation.eu

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu>

