



European
Commission

Synthesis of Mid-Term Evaluations of Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013

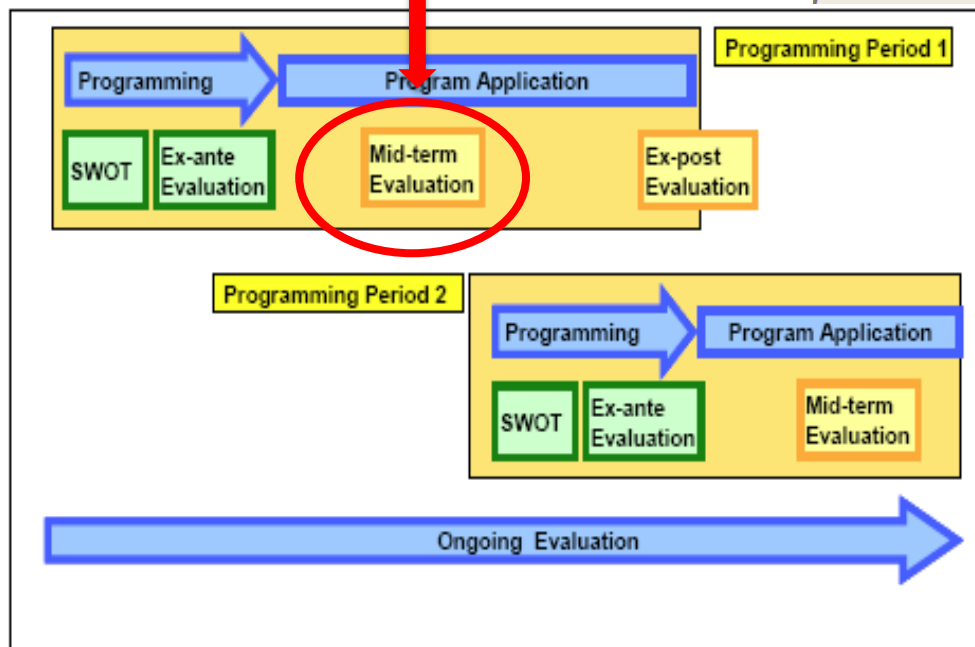
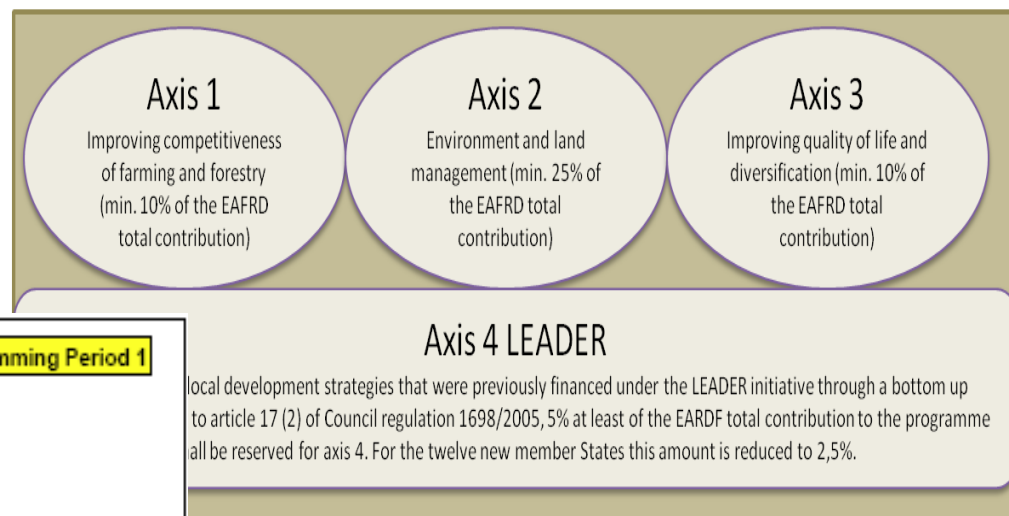
DG Agriculture and Rural Development
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Content

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- Scope of the work
- Methodology
- Evaluation of themes 1 – 7:
 - Implementation
 - Impacts
 - Complementarity
 - Delivery systems
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Networks
 - Conclusions and recommendations in the MTEs
- Overall conclusions and recommendations

Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 and its evaluation



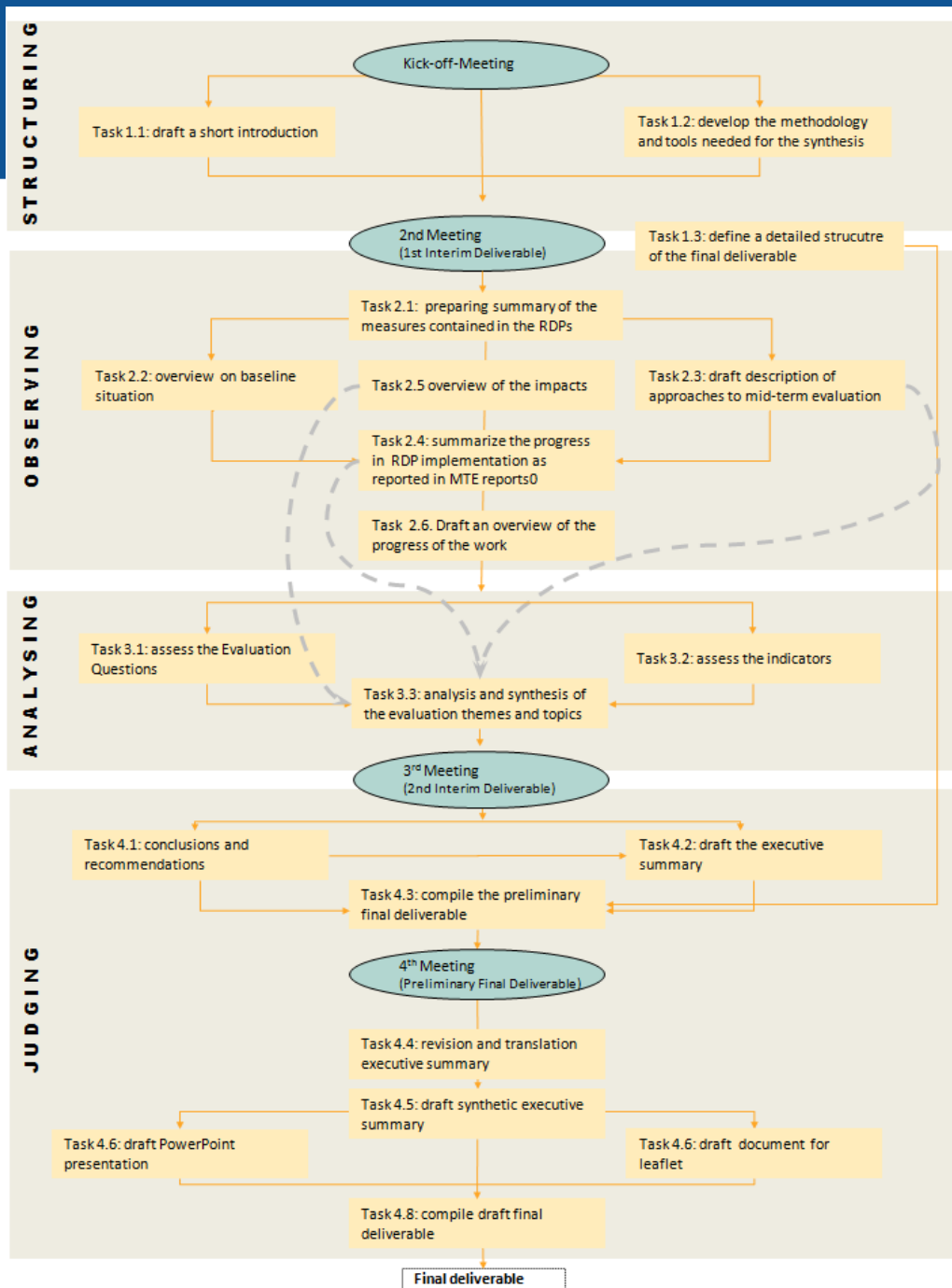
Scope of the work: the objectives



- Scope of the work: synthesis of mid-term evaluations (MTEs) of the 88 national and regional Rural Development Programmes and 4 Network Programmes 2007-2013
- Synthesis focuses on outputs, results and impacts achieved
- Synthesis draws conclusions on functioning of Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) and makes recommendations for improvements

Scope of the work: the tasks performed

The work was carried out between January and November 2012



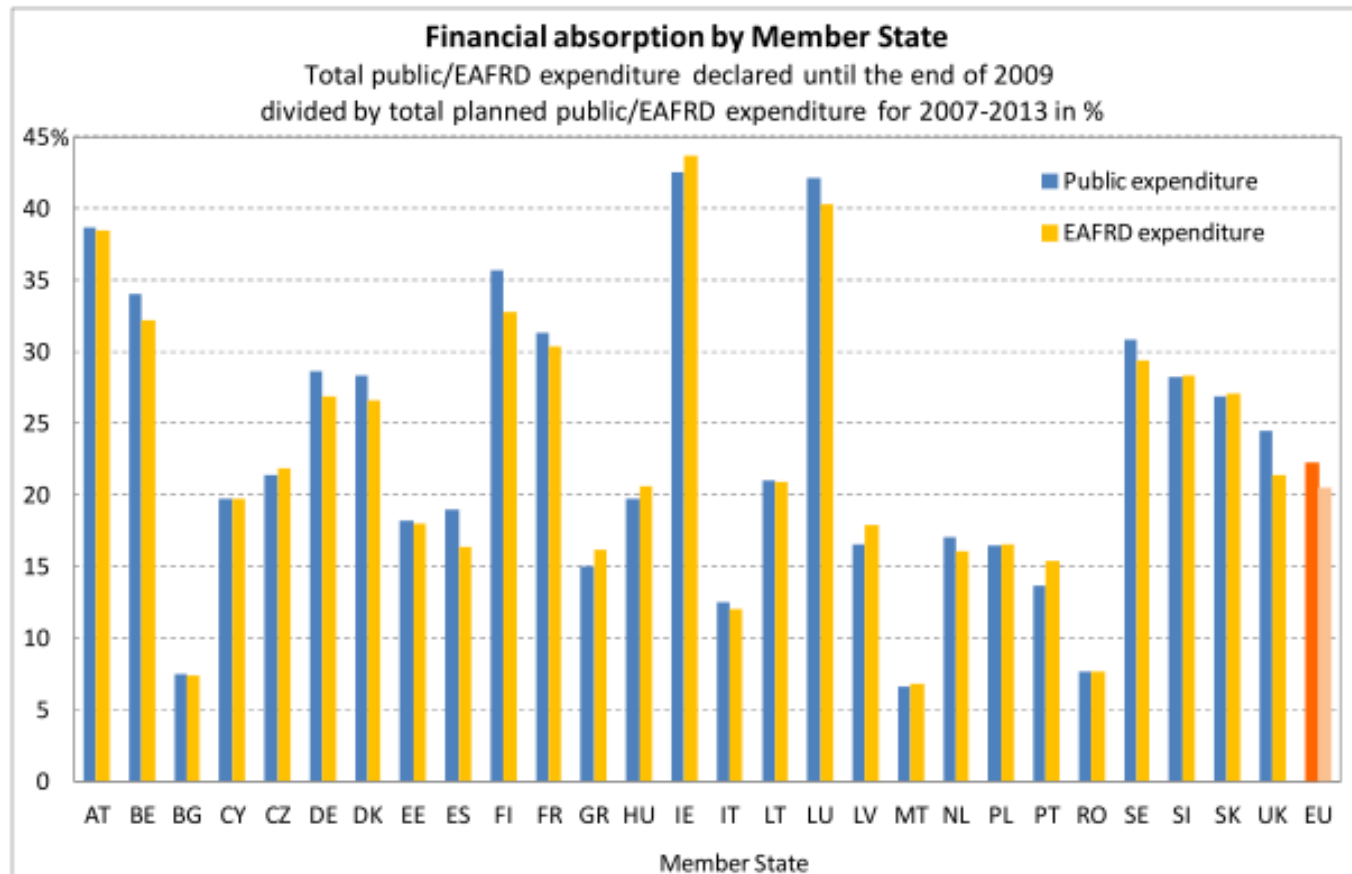
Methodology: the data sources

- MTEs of the 88 national and regional RDPs and 4 Network Programmes 2007-2013
- RDPs as first approved and as after the Health Check/ERP modification
- Annual Progress Reports 2009
- National Strategy Plans for Rural Development
- Financial Implementation Reports 2009
- Triangulation/contextualisation of information with other statistical sources and general information on the socio-economic context of programmes

Methodology: the tools used

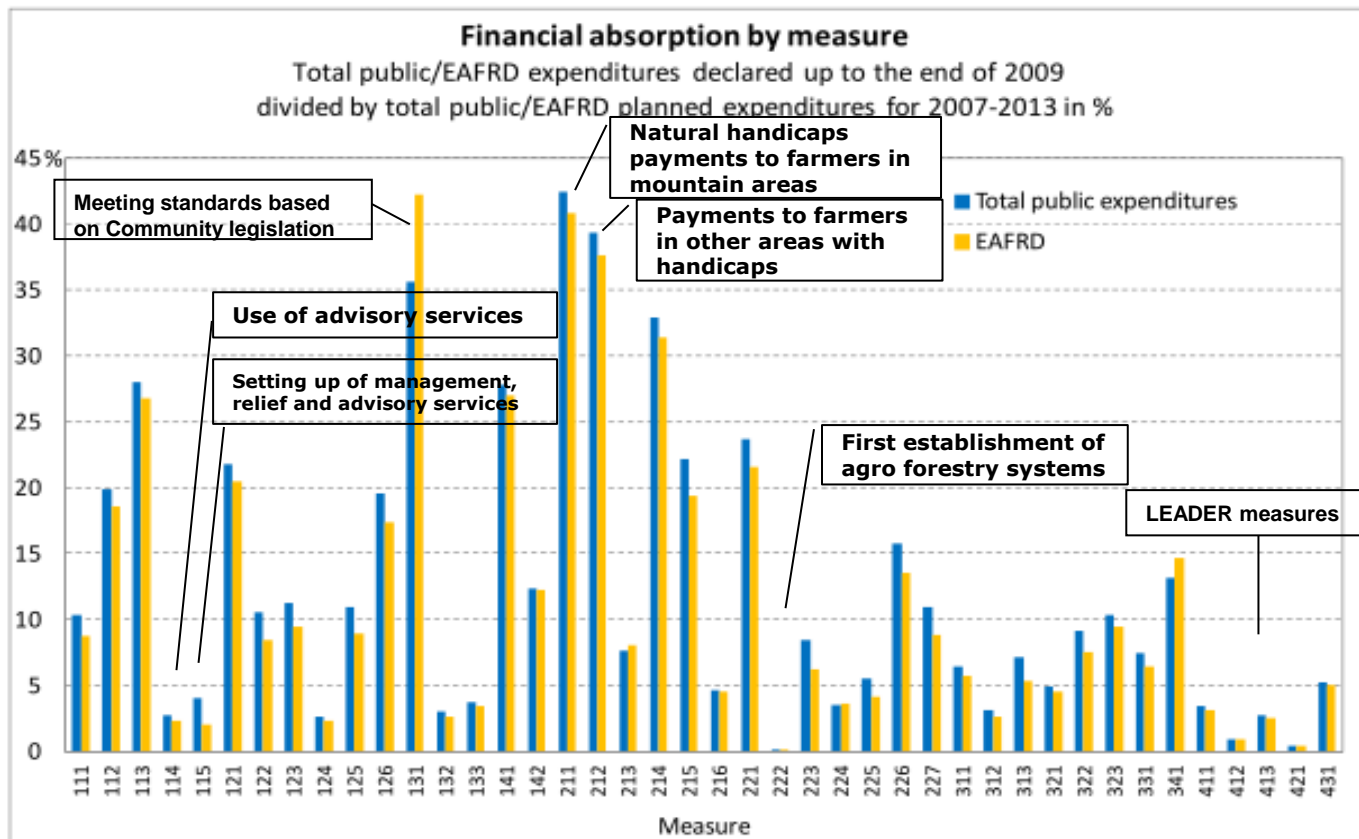
Tool	Components
<p>Tool 1: Assessment grid</p> <p><i>Data sources: mid-term evaluation reports (and Annual Progress Reports where relevant); regional/national RD programmes (where appropriate; national strategy plans).</i></p>	<p>a) Section for the full review of the MTE reports covering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – information on evaluation themes 1-7 – list of proposed information gaps (to be filled) – list of limits and validity of judgment/evaluation topic <p>b) Information on the sources used</p> <p>c) Guidelines for filling out</p>
<p>Tool 1.2: Evaluation questions grid</p> <p><i>Data sources: mid-term reports (and of their updates, where applicable);</i> <i>Additional Data sources (where appropriate)</i></p>	<p>a) Section for the full review of the Evaluation Questions covering Information on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – availability – relevance – quality – completeness of the question within the MTE report <p>c) Information on the sources used</p> <p>e) Guidelines for filling out</p>
<p>Tool 2: Indicator Assessment Grid</p> <p><i>Data sources: mid-term reports (and Annual Progress Reports where relevant); regional/national RD programmes; European Network for Rural Development</i></p>	<p>a) Sections for the full review of the output, result and impact indicators; targets established in relation to CMEF indicators</p> <p>b) Section for the full review of the baseline indicators</p> <p>c) Section for the full review of any programme specific indicators (output, result, impact, baseline)</p> <p>d) Guidelines for filling out</p>
<p>Tool 3.1: Data collection grid for Inventory of RD measures (breakdown by measure)</p> <p><i>Data sources: mid-term reports (and Annual Progress Reports where relevant)</i></p>	<p>a) Sections for all measures included in the RDPs</p> <p>b) Financial implementation of all measures including a split up by sources</p> <p>c) changes due to the Health Check and the Recovery Packages as reported within the period 2007-09</p> <p>d) remarks as stated in the MTE</p>
<p>Tool 3.2: Data collection grid for inventory RD measures (financial overview)</p> <p><i>Data sources: mid-term reports (and Annual Progress Reports where relevant)</i></p>	<p>a) overview of the budgets and expenditures as reported in the MTEs and APRs</p> <p>b) split up of budgets and expenditures per programme and Axis by source and year</p>

Theme 1: Implementation (1)



Source: RDIS Annual Financial Implementation (2010): European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development EAFRD. Financial Implementation report 2009; dataset includes 92 programmes (88 programmes plus 4 network programmes)

Theme 1: Implementation (2)



Source: RDIS Annual Financial Implementation (2010): European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development EAFRD. Financial Implementation report 2009. 88 programmes included.

Theme 1: Implementation (3)

Problems and challenges identified:

- Axis 4: selection procedures of LAGs, delimitation of areas
- Administrative issues: delivery mechanisms of the programmes, lack of manpower in the administration, flaws in designing the implementation mechanisms of certain measures
- Procedures and establishment of framework for managing programmes: handling of project applications and efficient conduct of the programme, monitoring system problems
- Circumstances of programme implementation: economic crisis, difficult approval procedure of the RDPs with the Commission
- Lack of information towards potential beneficiaries

Theme 2: Impacts (1)

Impact indicator: GROWTH / VALUE-ADDED

- 62 MTEs (69%): net positive impact on GVA; 28 MTEs: no effect or "too early to judge"
- Estimations based on a few measures (121, 123, 125, 313)
- Sometimes unrelated to targets, not adjusted for counterfactual or deadweight/displacement

Impact indicator: EMPLOYMENT

- 56 MTE (62%): net positive effect on job creation, especially in new MS
- 2/3 small effect, 1/3 modest to significant positive effect

Theme 2: Impacts (2)

Impact indicator: LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY

- 42 (47%): no / little impact or "too early" to judge
- Estimations mainly based on 6 measures (121, 123, 111, 131, 311, 312)
- Axis 2 and/or prioritised job retention (Axis 1 or 3) may have negative impact (10 MTEs assessed negative impact)

Theme 2: Impacts (3)

Impact indicators: BIODIVERSITY; HIGH NATURE VALUE FARMING & FORESTRY; WATER QUALITY; CLIMATE CHANGE

- Not convincingly measured using CMEF impact indicators
- Most commonly, positive impact inferred from results plus expert judgement/prediction, but only for Axis 2 measures (214, forestry, 216, 212)
- Evidence of promising programme specific / alternative indicators: water quality, nutrients and soils, local biodiversity indices, climate indicators...

SOCIAL BENEFITS stated in 14 MTEs

- Various evidence quoted: positive income effects, improved "quality of life" generally defined, improved social capital / capacity building, improved rural services and amenities, improved awareness and attitudes

Theme 3: Complementarity

- Coordination carried out by subcommittees or advisory boards within ministries of agriculture
- Assessment varies substantially between MTEs
- Significant level of coordination mentioned: Poland, France, Bulgaria, Latvia, Brandenburg & Berlin and Sachsen in Germany and Andalucía, Asturias, Murcia and Navarra in Spain
- Very low to insignificant level of coordination mentioned: Austria, Finland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Portugal, Estonia and several regions in other countries
- Analysis of general nature and difficult to interpret, results based on expert knowledge or random social investigations

Theme 4: Delivery systems

- Not obligatory issue for consideration in MTEs, but considered by 74%
- Various approaches, assessment of:
 - General aspects of RDPs (45%)
 - Selected aspects (17%)
 - Individual measures (4%)
 - Used as explanatory factor in C&R (8%)
- "Delivery burden" mentioned by 72% of MTEs
- Factors explaining delivery problems: changes, overlaps of legal procedures, inadequate staff and organization of Managing Authorities

Theme 5: Monitoring and evaluation (1)

- Overall performance of the system:
 - M&E system assessed as good overall (58%)
 - System often criticised for being too complex
 - Data gaps appeared, majority of MTEs collected additional data
 - Few MTEs make sufficient use of data on standard set of baseline indicators

Theme 5: Monitoring and evaluation (2)

- Findings on output indicators:
 - High level of availability and quality of quantitative information
 - On average 38% of target values achieved, with differences between axis 1 (30%), 2 (40%) and 3 (20%)
 - LEADER measures included in all programmes but just 80% of the MTEs report on the indicators - LEADER met 20% of targets

Theme 5: Monitoring and evaluation (3)

- Findings on result indicators:
 - 60% of the MTEs make reference to result indicators but only 30% report on targets as well as achieved values
 - Achievements vary greatly between individual measures (maximum 118%, minimum 6%)
 - Average achievements vary between axes: axis 1 (24%), axis 2 (90%) and axis 3 (48%)
 - Overachievements occur mainly in axis 2
 - Late start of implementation has led to an overall low level of achievements

Theme 5: Monitoring and evaluation (4)

- Recommendations for revision:
 - Further guidance on calculation and aggregation of indicators (improving target setting and accuracy of calculations) to strengthen database of indicators
 - Introduction of user-friendly platform for regular updating and interpretation of available data
 - Need for simplification, e.g. by reducing total number of evaluation questions
 - More flexibility in use of common indicators

Theme 7: Networks

- NRNs provide link between rural stakeholders and regional, national and European administrations
- Broad range of methods used for evaluation
- Impacts of NRNs identified:
 - exchange and distribution of best practices/experience
 - enhancement of capacities of actors/partnerships
 - raising awareness on RDPs
 - improving and supporting networking and cooperation
- No clear common patterns or problems and challenges identified

Theme 6: Conclusions and recommendations in MTEs

- 91% of MTEs provide conclusions and recommendations, but approach variable
- Frequently mentioned issues:
 - delays in implementation
 - budget reallocations: 76% of MTEs recommend revisions
 - inefficiencies in delivery systems
 - functioning of the axis: LEADER most often criticised
 - improve coherence of actions with strategic objectives, e.g. eliminate 3 axis structure of RDPs
 - timing of the MTEs: too early to come to well founded assessment of RDP performance

Overall conclusions: timing of MTEs

- Insufficient data to come to reliable assessment on programme impacts and performance
- Beneficial "early-warning tool" for taking up counter measures
- Recommendation:
 - Change timing of MTEs (later date and more flexibility) or
 - Change character of MTEs (towards implementation rather than impacts)

Overall conclusions: CMEF

- Common indicator system shows weaknesses
- Limited common understanding of definitions and calculations
- Too many indicators to be effectively covered in MTEs
- Recommendations:
 - Simplification of common indicator set
 - Improve guidance on use and calculation of indicators
 - Reduce number of evaluation questions

Overall conclusions: future EAFRD

- LEADER principles (especially area based approach and bottom-up approach) not well incorporated in RDPs, LEADER implementation slow
- Recommendations:
 - Sufficient staff and training for Managing Authorities and Paying Agencies necessary
 - Concentration of RDPs on more limited number of measures
 - Delivery issues to be included in analysis, neutral description better than concept of "burden"