Indicators for the Evaluation of the EU's Rural Development Programmes
Task 1 to 5

Final Report (18th of November 2005)
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Client: European Commission, DG Agriculture

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1 Executive summary

1.1 Introduction

On September 20, 2005, the Council of the European Union adopted the EU's rural development policy for the next programming period 2007-2013[1]. The new council regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) reinforces the current rural development policy while simplifying its implementation. The Commission redeveloped its rural development policy with the following main features:

- *One funding and programming instrument*, the European Agriculture Rural Development Fund (EARDF);
- *A genuine EU strategy for rural development* with better focus on EU priorities;
- *A strengthened bottom-up approach*. Each programme includes the Leader approach with possibilities for innovative governance based on local bottom up initiatives;
- *Reinforced control, monitoring, evaluation and reporting*. A common monitoring and evaluation framework will be implemented in collaboration with the Member States in order to support the programme management and maximize the impact of the rural development programmes. The programmes are continuously evaluated by means of an ongoing evaluation system.

The study 'Indicators for the evaluation of the EU's rural development programmes' contributes to the preparations by DG Agriculture of the common monitoring and evaluation framework. More specifically, this study on 'indicators for evaluation' provides draft guidelines on the use of output and result indicators. The indicators form the basis to assess the progress and the effects of rural development policies following their implementation in the new programming period (2007 – 2013).

Output and result indicators are directly related to the hierarchy of objectives at the different levels of the rural development policy (i.e. measure/programme level, regional/national/EU level). The most important key concepts of the rural development programme, the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, together with the common indicators to follow up the rural development are explained in the following. Guidelines are provided on how to monitor the implementation of measures and operations within each rural development programme effectively, and practical steps are established to define additional indicators where appropriate. In order to assure consistent procedures to gather and analyse the monitoring information throughout the Union, a common framework for programme reporting is proposed. Each of these parts is elaborated in separate 'tasks', for which the structure and the main findings are discussed here.

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[1] Council Regulation (EC) N° 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), O.J., 21.10.2005, L277/1

1.2   Task 1: Explanation of key concepts

The key concepts relevant for the new approach within the context of the new regulation on rural development are explained in a clear and didactic manner, illustrated with concrete rural development examples. First, a short introduction on the new rural development policy is given. This policy focuses on three main objectives, which are the three pillars of this new programming period, namely "improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector", "enhancing the environment and countryside" and "enhancing the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy". The Leader initiative, focusing on enhanced cooperation between the different stakeholders, will be implemented within the mainstream rural development programming.

Hierarchy of Objectives

Intervention logic

Around these four axes (three objectives and the Leader approach), a whole range of sub-objectives and measures are set up, structured in a hierarchical way. This hierarchy of objectives visualises the link between the objectives, the sub-objectives, the measure objectives and the measures. The chain of causality between the programme measures on the one hand and the expected effects, on the other hand, can be presented in a schematic way by the intervention logic. This intervention logic shows the logical relationship between the allocation decisions and the hierarchy of measures coupled with the hierarchy of objectives, and is presented for each measure (see annex II to task 1). The generic example of the intervention logic is presented in the following figure.

Figure 1: A general example of an intervention logic
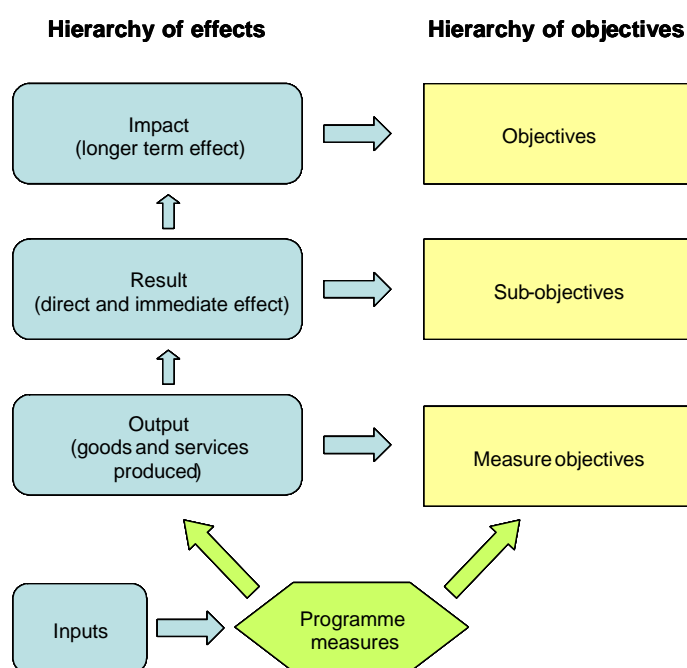
Source: Commission methodological working paper 3 (Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation: an indicative methodology).

As this figure shows, the overall achievement of outputs, results and impacts is then clearly linked to the programme objectives as follows:
- Objectives are expressed in terms of impacts

- Sub-objectives are expressed in terms of results
- Measure objectives are expressed in terms of outputs

The 'programme life cycle' begins with the assessment of the current and future needs of the rural areas and the agricultural sector. Next, the programme is developed by defining the goals to be achieved and the measures under which specific projects can be approved. The definition of these objectives and their measures is a crucial step in the procedure of the lifecycle of a programme. The Member States' programmes need to take into account the Community Strategic Guidelines to establish their national strategy plan for rural development. The strategic guidelines for rural development have been adopted by the Commission on the 5th of July, reflecting agreed priorities at EU-level (the Göteborg sustainability goals and the renewed Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs) yet leaving sufficient flexibility to take into account the specific needs and objectives of the Member States.

In order to follow up (and, if necessary, to redirect) the implementation of the programme, a well-established monitoring system is needed to collect and report the necessary data timely in a standardised and transparent way. The monitoring system needs to be designed before the programme is implemented. Monitoring and evaluation take place throughout the programme implementation. They allow for programme revision and adaptation. The information, gathered through the monitoring system, is analysed and assessed to evaluate the different aspects of the programme, namely the design, management, implementation, results and impact.

We defined several success criteria for a good monitoring system. To elaborate a well functioning monitoring system one has to take into account instrument specific as well as context specific criteria. Appropriate indicators need to be defined and used as an integral part of this monitoring system. We enumerated the quality criteria that an indicator has to satisfy in order to be useful and provided examples for each type of indicator (input, output, result, and impact)

The different concepts, related to the monitoring and evaluation of the programme (like input, output, result, impact, deadweight, multiplier effects, gross versus net benefits etc), are explained. The box below illustrates the concepts input, output, result and impact and provides examples for each.

Box 1: Difference between inputs, outputs, results and impacts

	Definition	Example
Inputs	Financial and administrative means mobilised	EAFRD-funding per RDP measure, number of administrative staff involved in the implementation of a measure
Outputs	What is directly accomplished with the means mobilised	Farm investments financed by EAFRD-funds; organisation of training sessions on sustainable agriculture
Results	The initial benefits arising from the programme, normally measurable by aggregation from the projects	Better land management around farms, better skilled farmers
Impacts	The indirect effects at the level of the programme	Improvement of the environment in rural areas, higher revenue of farmers

Source: IDEA Consult on the basis of the information at www.evalsed.info and the site of DG agri. (*http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/rur/eval/index_en.htm*)

Monitoring and evaluation serve as an important tool for the management and follow-up of rural development programmes. Monitoring and evaluation allow for follow up, justification and control, steering, problem detection and last but not least communication.

The most important monitoring and evaluation concepts are illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 2 **:** Key issues for monitoring and evaluation
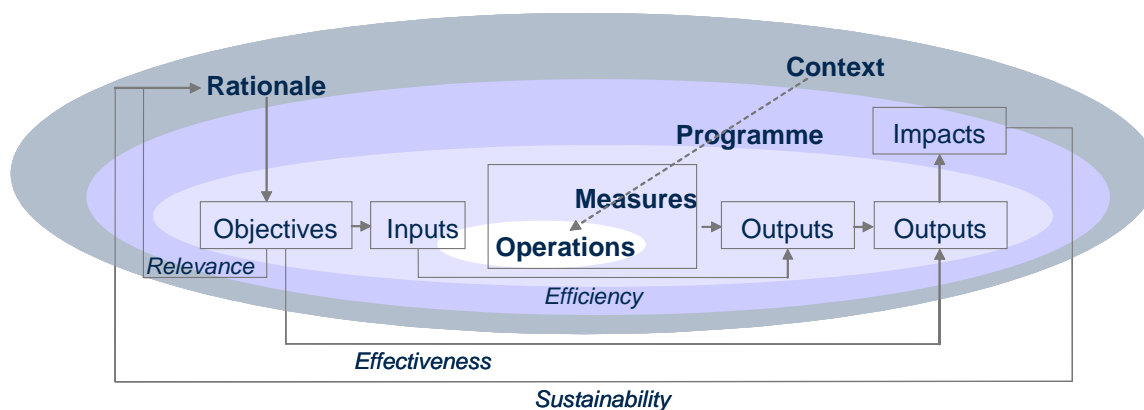
Source: ECORYS & IDEA Consult based on ECORYS-NEI and DG Regio

In short, relevance is about to what extent the programme's objectives are relevant in relation to the evolving needs and priorities at national and EU level. Efficiency examines whether the outputs are in proportion to the resources (inputs) allocated, whereas effectiveness asks to what extent the programme has achieved its measure objectives, sub-objectives and objectives. The question of 'to what extent can the changes (or benefits) be expected to last after the programme has been completed', is a sustainability-question.

Evaluation activities are performed at several moments in the programming process: before (ex ante), during (ongoing) and after (ex post) the implementation of the programme. The

principle of the on going evaluation stems from the fact that, almost continuously, correct and clear information on the projects and activities within a particular programme is required for reporting, control, information.

In order to highlight the needs of the different actors in the programming and monitoring/evaluation process, the role of each of them is described: beneficiaries, project managers, programme managers, members of the Monitoring Committees, Member States and the European Commission.

1.3   Task 2: Definition of common indicators

In Task 2, a set of common indicators that correspond to the hierarchy of objectives, is defined, based on different sources:

- EC documents: draft regulation, monitoring and evaluation guidelines
- Current EC monitoring tables for RDP and Leader
- Member States' documents about monitoring and evaluation of their national and regional RDP's (eg. Northern Ireland, UK, Belgium (Flanders), the Netherlands)
- The updated MEANS collection
- Topic-related studies and statistics

Table of common indicators In line with the quality criteria, listed up in Task 1, the appropriateness and relevance of the indicator to the objective and interventions concerned is ensured. The indicators are also easily quantifiable and measurable, can be aggregated at the level of the axis, programme and EU level, and are applicable to all 25 Member States. All the indicators are structured in an indicator table, where the link with the objectives is made. The table below illustrates an indicator table for the first axis and its first sub-objective.

Axis	Measure[2]	Indicator	Subdivision[3]
1. Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector			
a) Promoting knowledge and improving human potential			
1.A.1	Vocational training and information actions	▪ number of participants to training ▪ number of training days received	Division according to ▪ gender ▪ age category ▪ type of activity ▪ type of participants
1.A.2	Setting up of young farmers	▪ number of assisted young farmers ▪ total volume of investment	Division according to ▪ gender ▪ sector ▪ age category
1.A.3	Early retirement	▪ number of farmers early retired ▪ number of farm workers early retired ▪ number of hectares released	Division according to: ▪ gender ▪ age category
1.A.4	Use of advisory services	▪ number of farmers supported ▪ number of forest holders supported	Division according to the type of advice
1.A.5	Setting up of management, relief and advisory services	▪ number of newly set up management, relief or advisory services	Division according to type of service

Moreover, the link between the hierarchy of objectives, the measures and all types of indicators (output, result, impact) is visualized in the general indicator table (see Annex 2 of the report).

Indicator fiches

A system of indicator fiches provides operational definitions and guidance on using and measuring the output indicators at the level of individual projects. Moreover, operational definitions and guidance for the result indicators listed up by the Commission[4] are given (for gross benefits at the level of the project). In addition, we proposed a selected number of additional common result indicators per key objective (axis/priority). These common result indicators do not cover all programme activity, but they seek to ensure the broadest coverage without imposing an undue burden on project managers and beneficiaries.

These indicator fiches are elaborated for all output and result indicators, clarifying and providing explanatory information on the definition, the type of the indicator, possible subdivisions of the indicator, the unit of measurement, the level of collection, the responsible actor for collection, the collection method, the source of the relevant data, the registration frequency and the target, related to the indicator. The indicator fiches are elaborated in Annex 3A and 3B of the report. Annex 3A contains the fiches of the output indicators. Annex 3B contains the fiches of the result indicators.

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[2] Source: Regulation on Rural Development, adopted on June 25th, 2005.
[3] The categories are defined (and explained where necessary) in the indicator fiches
4 These predefined result indicators are: agricultural value added; non-agricultural value added, successful training results (agricultural and non-agricultural); and successful land management results (area successfully managed in LFA areas, in areas subject to NATURA 2000, restrictions and areas under agri-environmental contracts).

1.4 Task 3: Treatment of additional programme indicators

Since common output and result indicators may not fully capture all effects of programme activity, it may be desirable to define additional output and result indicators within the programmes to ensure sufficient flexibility to take into account differences in strategies as well as the diversity of regions across the EU.

Among other things, differences can occur because of:
- demographical differences: age structure, gender structure, birth rate, …
- geographical differences: size of the country, population density, presence of mountain areas and other areas with natural handicaps, presence of forest, …
- differences in biodiversity: existence of different plants and animals, …
- climate differences
- social and cultural differences: educational level of the population, …
- differences in level of economical development and activities: importance of agricultural sector in the economy of the Member State, level of technological development and ICT, …

Such additional indicators should be developed by Member States and programme managers in a flexible manner, but in accordance with the general principles outlined in the previous tasks. In the third task, we provide guidance on the development of additional indicators to ensure good fit with the programme strategy, the hierarchy of objectives and the intervention logic.

Using a four-steps approach, the reader is guided through the different phases of defining an additional indicator. Figure 3 shows us the main steps of this approach.

Figure 3: Four-steps-approach for defining additional indicators

1. Analyzing the relevance and utility of an additional indicator

2. Defining the type of indicator: input, output, result or impact

3. Checking the defined indicator with the quality criteria for indicators

4. Creating a detailed indicator fiche for each of the defined additional indicators
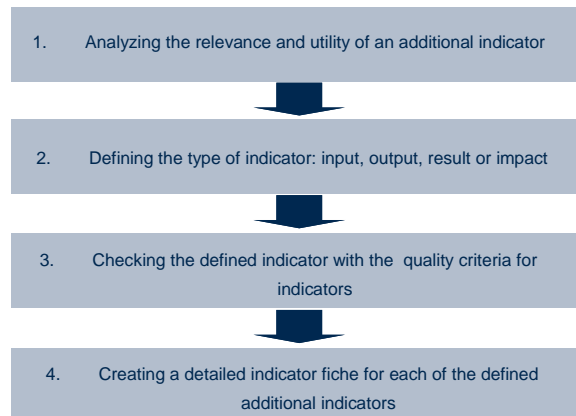
The appropriateness and relevance of an additional indicator is analysed through a decision tree (see figure below) in the first step.

Figure 4: Decision tree for relevance of additional indicators
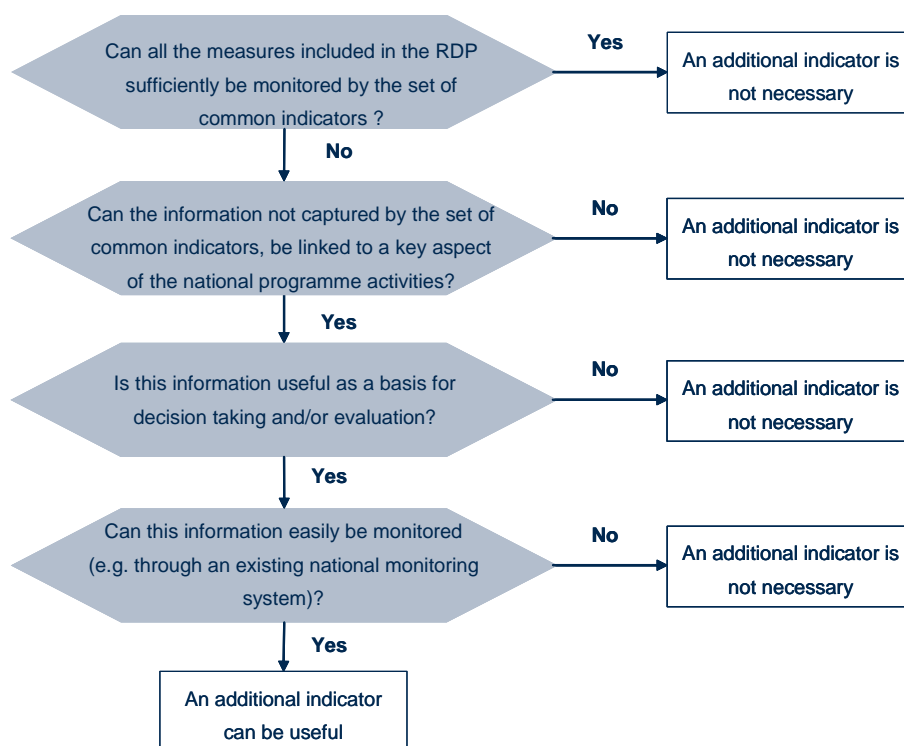
Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult

If an additional indicator can be useful, one needs to decide what kind of indicator to define in order to achieve the desired monitoring result. To tackle the second step the reader is again guided with a decision tree and practical hints are provided on which kind of indicator to define (output, result, impact). Checking that the indicator is easily quantifiable and measurable, and that it can be aggregated at the level of the axis and the programme, among other relevant quality criteria, makes up the third phase. Developing an indicator fiche, including the same kind of information as in the indicator fiches for the common indicators, is the final step. Practical guidance is provided for each of these steps, illustrated with concrete examples.

Finally, the chapter zooms in on the processes that take place when defining a set of indicators and the different actors that play a role in defining this set.

1.5   Task 4: Definition and measurement of output and result indicators for programme managers

Aim of monitoring and evaluation activities

The purpose of Task 4 is to provide guidance on the implementation of monitoring and evaluation procedures. Monitoring is a broad concept, covering all activities under the rural development programmes related to data collection, registration and reporting. Monitoring and evaluation activities need to provide (1) information in order to follow up of the progress of the programme, (2) data to the EC in accordance with EC-guidelines on monitoring of rural development programmes, and (3) data useful for external evaluators to analyse the effects

and results of the programme. This task provides guidance on how to implement such a multipurpose monitoring system.

In this multipurpose monitoring system the timing of the information provision is essential since monitoring and evaluation are time-related procedures. The figure below presents the timetable for monitoring and evaluation during the programme period 2007-2013 in relation with the programme life cycle.

Figure 5 Timetable for monitoring and evaluation in relation with the RDP's 2007-2013[5]

	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16
			START			**MID TERM**			**END**			
Programme life cycle	Programme development											
		Programme approval										
			MS Programme implementation									
				Programme revision/adaption (annually and/or after evaluation)								
									End			
Monitoring	Defining set of indicators											
		Establishing Monitoring system										
				Monitoring tables and progress reports To be submitted annually on 30/06								
Evaluation	Ex-ante (phase I)	Ex-ante (phase II)										
				On going evaluation								
					MTE							
											Ex post Eval. Report	

Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult

It is clear from the timetable that the rural development programme has important milestones during its life cycle. These milestones have implications for the work of the programme managers. We identify 4 milestones influencing the monitoring and evaluation activities: programme approval (2006), programme implementation (per calendar year between 2007 and 2013), programme revisions and adaptations (e.g. after mid term review of the programme in 2010), and the end of the programme (2013 for programme implementation, 2015 for evaluation).

It is clear that programme managers are responsible for the results of the monitoring system, but they need to cooperate with project managers and measure managers to make the monitoring system work. The exchange of monitoring data is to be situated at four levels:

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[5] This timetable for monitoring and evaluation is a draft version since the EC is still working on the guidelines for monitoring and evaluation.

- at the level of the projects: application for support, approval - leading to the start of the project, implementation of the project and payment of support, end of the project
- at the level of the measure: control of project information, aggregation of project information, submission to programme manager
- at the level of the programme: control and aggregation, submission to EC
- at the level of the EC: control, and also aggregation of Member State information

In order to ensure that the necessary information is exchanged, a timetable for provision of monitoring and evaluation information to the programme managers is provided.

Moreover, a 'capacity-checklist' is established, making it possible to screen the existing capacity available for monitoring and evaluation of the rural development programmes. This checklist is based on the following questions:

- Are the monitoring and evaluation guidelines clear?
- Are (monitoring) instruments in place?
- Are the responsibilities in the monitoring and evaluation process clear? Is there a clear division of tasks?
- Is there enough staff to perform the monitoring activities?
- Are the necessary skills available? Is training needed?
- Is there a time schedule for monitoring and evaluation activities?
- Is awareness raising needed?

Problems that can arise specifically during the monitoring process are treated, and some straightforward solutions are proposed.

Finally we proposed a template for a measure fiche. The measure fiche has been developed as a practical instrument for the national/ regional programme makers and programme managers. The measure fiche should reflect the link between a particular measure and the overall intervention logic. It explains the rationale of a particular measure, or why a particular measure is needed. The important elements of a measure fiche are described in the template below.

Name of the measure	
Rationale of the measure	The rationale of the measure describes how and where the measure is linked with, or located in the intervention logic. It is a textual description of the intervention logic. It describes what is needed to implement the measure, to what it will lead and how the measure contributes to the overall objectives of the programme. The rationale of the measure needs to provide guidance to the Member State in order to decide whether or not this measure is important for the rural development in their regions.
Content of the measure	The content of the measure gives an indication of possible concrete activities that can be supported under this measure. This description is not exhaustive.
Target group	
Target area	
Common indicators	- Input, output and result indicators corresponding to the measure - Baseline and impact indicators: the measure contributes to changes in the baseline situation of the fields covered by these indicators
Example of additional indicator	
Link rationale of the measure and indicators	Presentation of the intervention logic of the measure by means of a figure, based on the common indicators corresponding to the measure

1.6 Task 5: Proposed programme reporting arrangements

During the programming period of an RDP, several reporting tools are used to get a grasp on the progress of the programmes. For each programme several reports are produced: reports of project promoters, annual reports, financial reports, reporting of the monitoring tables, evaluation reports, reporting of the evaluation indicators. These reports are submitted to many different actors: EC, national and regional authorities. One of the experiences from the mid-term evaluations 2000-2006 of the RDPs was that, in this reporting framework, a multitude of indicators were contained, which were generally not easy to aggregate. In addition, the coherence between data of payment authority, monitoring tables and evaluations were not always optimal.

An inventory of problems identified at EC level and in the Member States[6] is made, indicating the strengths and weaknesses of the main elements of the current reporting system. We distinguished four categories: the procedure for reporting, the technical aspects of the monitoring tables, the content of the tables and the use of CAP-IDIM.

Many of the weaknesses are being remedied by the preparatory work of the EC for the programming period 2007-2013. From now on, information will be provided about the purpose of the monitoring exercise, indicators will be known to the Member States at the beginning of the programming period, the financial reporting will be aligned with the calendar years, context indicators will be aligned with existing data sources, indicators for monitoring

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[6] Source: STAR Committee, technical working group on monitoring (21/01/05), interview with EC staff and with programme managers.

and evaluation will be aligned and there will be guidance about the definitions of the indicators.

However, the most important challenges with respect to the remaining weaknesses are:

- improving the procedural aspects of the monitoring system with special attention for data delivery (quantity and quality)
- providing a solution to the technical aspects of the monitoring tables (e.g. protected cells, unit of measurement)
- aligning the monitoring systems of the Member States and EC monitoring tables
- improved use of CAP-IDIM

We elaborated a first draft of reporting format for monitoring data, keeping in mind that the format needs to be user friendly, integrated, comparable over time and that it needs to be relevant input for evaluation. Therefore, it is suggested to use Excel tables as presentation format. The tables contain both the input and output indicators and give yearly realized values for the indicators. Moreover, the reporting results of all programming years are put next to each other in one table. This makes it easy to evaluate the progress and the effectiveness of the programme.

Furthermore the new Regulation adopted by the Council on September 20th, 2005 provides for several reporting moments. From June 30th, 2008 until June 30th, 2016 the Management Authority must send to the Commission an annual progress report on the implementation of the programme.

2 Introduction to the study

The study 'Indicators for the evaluation of the EU's rural development programmes' is part of the preparations by DG Agriculture to implement the rural development policy under the new programming period 2007-2013[7]. As the Terms of Reference request, the study shall for this purpose "…provide draft guidance to the Commission on the use of indicators in rural development programmes in the new programming period from 2007-2013. This guidance will be used as a basis for guidelines to Member States on the use of indicators based on the new approach outlined in the proposed Rural Development Regulation…". More in particular, "the study shall provide draft guidelines on the use of output and result indicators that form the basis for assessment of the progress of rural development policy during the implementation phase. The study will also make explicit the link between the definition of objectives, the choice of output and result indicators, and the evaluation of impact. This guidance shall be based on the requirements of the new regulatory framework[8], existing Commission guidelines and studies, best practice in the field of programme management, the experience of Member State programme managers, and where appropriate assessment of existing programme documents."

This report contains the results of the study. The text is divided into five chapters, each of them concentrating on a specific task:

- Task 1 explains the key concepts of monitoring and evaluation in relation to the EU rural development programmes.
- Task 2 describes the set of common output and result indicators that will be used to follow up the rural development programmes.
- Task 3 explains how additional output or result indicators can be defined.
- Task 4 provides guidance on how to implement a monitoring and evaluation system, and on the definition and measurement of the indicators.
- Task 5 is dedicated to the reporting format for programming period 2007-2013.

There are also four annexes to the report:

- Annex 1 contains the detailed hierarchy of objectives of rural development programmes
- Annex 2 contains a general indicator table (output, result and impact indicators)
- Annex 3A includes explanatory fiches of the common output indicators, Annex 3B contains the fiches of the common result indicators and Annex 3C shows the subdivisions of the indicators in an extended indicator table
- Annex 4 includes measures fiches for each measure listed in the Rural Development Regulation.

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[7] Council Regulation (EC) N° 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), O.J., 21.10.2005, L277/1.

[8] Council Regulation (EC) N° 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), O.J., 21.10.2005, L277/1.

3 Task 1: Explanation of key concepts

3.1 Terms of Reference

With respect to Task 1, the Terms of Reference request the following: "the contractor will define and explain in a clear and didactic manner the key concepts involved in the new approach within the context of the new regulation. In particular, they will focus on specific nature of rural development programming, covering, inter alia, the following aspects:

- The role of data collection, indicators, monitoring and evaluation within the programming cycle.
- A synthesis covering the key concepts of programme strategy, hierarchy of objectives and intervention logic and the need to establish clear chains of causality from intervention to effect.
- The distinction between indicators of (financial input), output, result and impact and the relation between the different types of indicator in the monitoring and evaluation process.
- The distinction between gross benefits at the project level and net benefits at the level of the programmes (Explanation of the role of the counterfactual in impact analysis and the concepts of deadweight, displacement and multiplier effects).
- The different needs of actors in the programming process: beneficiaries of support, project managers, programme managers, members of the Monitoring Committees, Member States, European Commission (and by extension the European Parliament and Council as the budgetary authority).

These concepts should be illustrated with concrete rural development examples and referenced, where appropriate to the relevant literature."

3.2 Introduction

Task 1 contains the key concepts related to the monitoring and evaluation of rural development programmes.

This part of the study is realised by means of compilation and synthesis activities. The text is based on a selection of sources out of the wide range of existing literature on monitoring and evaluation. In addition, we find it important to include the experience from previous research projects. The bibliography contains the references to the literature and documents used.
We have structured the explanation of key concepts in a logical order, based on the life cycle of development and implementation of rural development programmes. We distinguish three main subjects:

- Policy context of the rural development programmes
- Main aspects of monitoring and evaluation
- Definition, role and types of indicators for rural development

Within each section, key concepts are identified, defined and their role is described. Examples are taken from the rural development area to illustrate these key concepts.

3.3 EU's new rural development policy

3.3.1 Policy background

On September 20, 2005, the Council of the European Union adopted the EU's rural development policy for the next programming period 2007-2013. The new council regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) reinforces the current rural development policy while simplifying its implementation. The Commission redeveloped its rural development policy with the following main features:

- *One funding and programming instrument*, the European Agriculture Rural Development Fund (EARDF);
- *A genuine EU strategy for rural development* with better focus on EU priorities;
- *A strengthened bottom-up approach*. Each programme includes the Leader approach with possibilities for innovative governance based on local bottom up initiatives;
- *Reinforced control, monitoring, evaluation and reporting*. A common monitoring and evaluation framework will be implemented in collaboration with the Member States in order to support the programme management and maximize the impact of the rural development programmes. The programmes are continuously evaluated by means of an ongoing evaluation system.

In order to ensure that EU's rural development policy stays focused on the most important and urgent rural development issues, the reform is focussed on three major policy objectives:

- *Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector* (targeting human and physical capital in the agriculture and food sector –promoting knowledge transfer and innovation- and quality production);
- enhancing the *environment and countryside* (through support for land management);
- *enhancing the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy* (reinforcing the socio-economic links between agriculture and forestry and the wider rural area).

A total EU funding of €13.7 billion per year is proposed for the programming period 2007-2013.

These objectives of the future rural development policy are related to the wider EU policy strategy. After all, rural development policy is the second pillar of the CAP and should integrate the major policy priorities as spelled out in the conclusions of the Lisbon (March 2000) and Göteborg (June 2001) European Councils. While the Lisbon conclusions aim at making the European Union the most competitive knowledge-based economic area by 2010, the Göteborg conclusions added a new emphasis on protecting the environment and achieving a more sustainable pattern of development. The latter conclusions also highlighted the fact that, in the context of Agenda 2000, European Agricultural policy had "become more oriented towards satisfying the general public's growing demands regarding food safety, food quality, product differentiation, animal welfare, environmental quality and the conservation of nature and the countryside". Against the background of these main EU priorities, the Community

Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development programming period 2007-2013 were adopted by the Commission in July 2005.

The mission and objectives of the rural development programmes are elaborated in the next section.

3.3.2 Hierarchy of objectives of EU rural development programmes

> The hierarchy of objectives is a tool that helps to analyse and communicate programme 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.

The EU rural development programmes follow a clear hierarchy of objectives. As mentioned in the definition, there are objectives and sub objectives. We illustrate the hierarchy of objectives in the figure below.

Figure 6 Hierarchy of objectives according to the new EU rural development policy
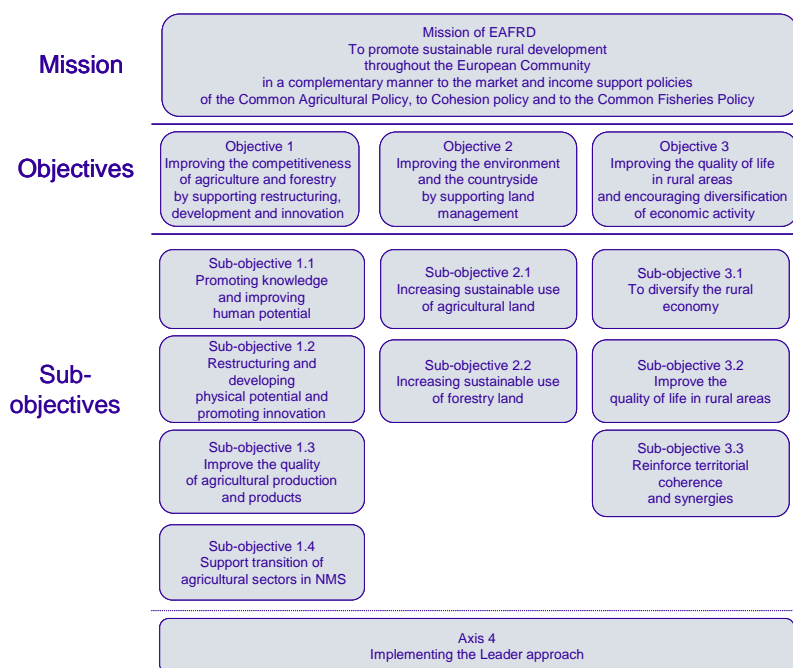
Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult based on the Council Regulation on Rural Development.

Looking at the figure above, it is clear that we distinguish three levels in the hierarchy of objectives: the highest level is the overall mission of rural development programmes as described in the regulation (Article 3). Thereafter, we find the three objectives. These objectives are mentioned in Article 4 of the Council Regulation. The regulation defines 4 axes for the implementation of the objectives. The sub-objectives are formulated per axis. The first three axes correspond to the three objectives. The fourth axis is the Leader approach. The Leader approach will be implemented within the mainstream rural development programming.

The lowest level of objectives consists of the measure objectives on rural development. They are not represented in this figure, but can be found in annex 1, where a schematic view of the complete hierarchy of objectives is given, including the measure objectives as an extra level (column). These objectives correspond to the goals to which each of the measures contributes.

Although not included in the hierarchy of objectives, we need to mention also the horizontal objectives of EU rural development programmes. The horizontal objectives are included in the Council Regulation and apply to all measures and operations of the programmes regardless the axis to which they belong.

Box 2 Horizontal objectives of EU rural development programmes

- to contribute to the achievement of economic and social cohesion policy objectives (1)[9]
- to integrate other major policy priorities as spelt out in the conclusions of the Lisbon and Göteborg European Councils for competitiveness (growth and employment) and sustainable development (1)
- to take account of the particular nature of agricultural activity which results from the social structure and from structural and natural disparities between the various rural areas (2)
- to strengthen the arrangements for partnership (4)
- to encourage the elimination of disparities and the promotion of equality between women and men (7)[10]
- to take into account the diversity of situations ranging from remote rural areas suffering from depopulation and decline to peri-urban rural areas under increasing pressure from urban centres (11)

Source: EC, DG Agriculture (2005)

3.3.3   Key concepts of rural development policy

This section explains the intervention logic of the rural development programmes, the programme life cycle, the different programme levels and the different types of effects of programmes.

The intervention logic

The intervention logic is a tool used to relate the implementation of a public intervention[11] to its objectives. It is based on a schematic presentation of the intervention clarifying the chain of causality between programme (measures) and expected effects. This scheme shows thus the logical relationship between the allocation decisions and the hierarchy of objectives.

The intervention logic clarifies the link between the operations in a programme and the (hierarchy of) objectives of rural development policy. The intervention logic highlights what

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[9] The number refers to the recital number in the Council Regulation.

[10] The Rural Development Regulation stresses further that the RDP's should promote equal opportunities between men and women and prevent any kind of discrimination (Article 8).

11 An intervention is any action or operation carried out by public authorities regardless of its nature (policy, programme, measure or project). Interventions generally take one of the following forms: construction or improvement of facilities, subsidies, loans, secured loans, consulting or provision of services, training, information campaigns, setting up of rules and regulations.

kind of operations is needed to reach these objectives. In short, this scheme visualises how exactly a programme can reach its objectives through its measures. Figure 7 presents a general example of the intervention logic of a programme. The core elements in this figure are the different types of effects of a measure and the different types of objectives to which the measure can contribute.

Figure 7 : A general example of an intervention logic

Hierarchy of effects   **Hierarchy of objectives**

Impact
(longer term effect) → Objectives

Result
(direct and immediate effect) → Sub-objectives

Output
(goods and services produced) → Measure objectives

Inputs → Programme measures
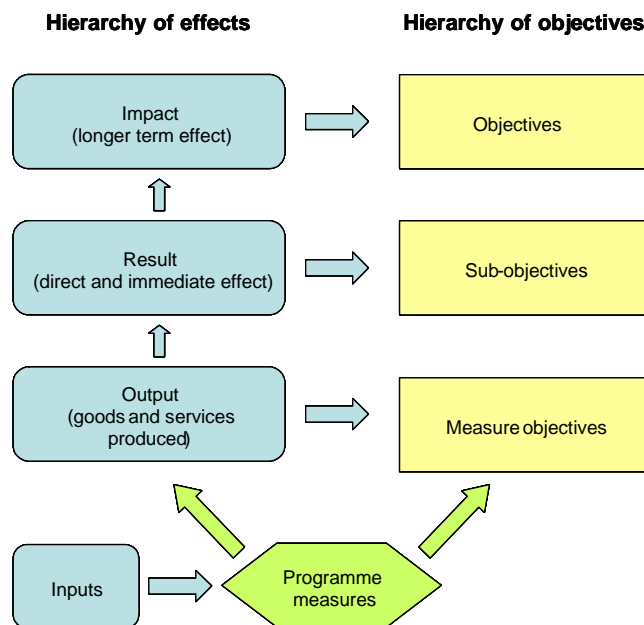
Source: Ecorys NL/ IDEA Consult based on Commission methodological working paper 3 (Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation: an indicative methodology).

The intervention logic outlined in Figure 7 should be viewed from two different perspectives: top down and bottom up.

Starting from the top down, there is a logical relationship between the three levels of programme objectives:

- The national or regional rural development programmes (based on the Community Strategic Guidelines – see supra), are developed and implemented according to the *objectives* that relate to the specific context of the assistance (e.g. reform of the Common Agricultural Policy) and the strategy for assistance (e.g. to restore and enhance the competitiveness of rural areas).

- These objectives give rise to *sub-objectives* corresponding to priority areas for operations that are implemented via targeted policy measures such as the Rural Development Measures/Schemes eligible for funding under the Council Regulation on support for rural development by the EAFRD.

- Each of these measures/schemes then have *measure objectives* relating to their day-to-day administration.

At the same time, from the bottom up:

- All measures/schemes (e.g. an agri-environment scheme and its sub-measures) are implemented using various resources (financial, human, technical or organisational) that are referred to as *inputs*.

- The use of these inputs (e.g. spending financial resources) gives rise to a series of physical *outputs* (e.g. number of farmers joining an agri-environment scheme) that demonstrate the progress made in implementing the objectives of the measure/scheme.

- The direct and immediate effects arising from the progress made in implementing the measure/scheme are called the *results* (e.g. the increased area of farmland being managed in a specific environmentally-friendly way) and contribute to the sub-objectives.

- These results can further be expressed in terms of their longer-term effects or *impacts* on the achievement of the programme's objectives (e.g. to protect and improve natural resources and the rural environment).

As Figure 7 shows, the overall achievement of outputs, results and impacts is then clearly linked to the programme objectives as follows:

- **Objectives** are expressed in terms of **impacts**
- **Sub-objectives** are expressed in terms of **results**
- **Measure objectives** are expressed in terms of **outputs**

An example for the measure "agri-environment payments is provided in Figure 8; the intervention logic of each measure can be found in the specific measure fiches (see annex 3 to this document).

Figure 8 : A specific example of an intervention logic in the context of the measure "agri-environmental payments (art 37 of the Regulation)
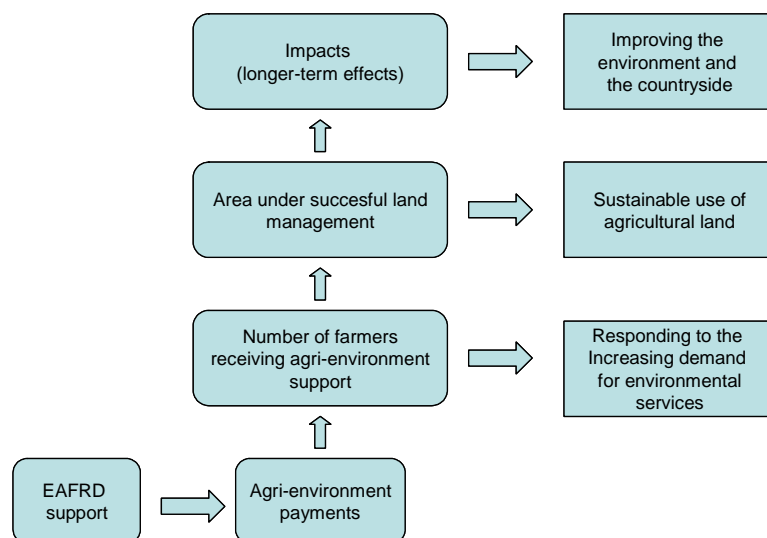
It is clear that intervention takes place at different levels, involving several aspects like input, output, result and impact of a programme. All these elements will be elaborated more in detail in the next sections.

The programme life cycle

The **programme life cycle** is a term used to describe the lifespan of a specific programme, from its formulation to the review of the different parts of the programme. It comprises:
  - the assessment of the current and future needs;
  - programme development;
  - programme implementation;
  - revision and adaptation.

In addition, throughout the programme life cycle, two horizontal activities take place:
  - monitoring;
  - evaluation.

The life cycle of a rural development programme[12] starts with a thorough analysis of the current situation on rural development. The analysis based on baseline indicators is usually an assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of rural areas -a so-called SWOT-analysis- bringing out the needs of the rural areas. The second step is then to formulate the objectives of the programmes and to set its priorities.

The Community Strategic Guidelines for rural development have been adopted by the Commission on the 5th of July, reflecting agreed priorities at EU-level (the Göteborg sustainability goals and the renewed Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs) and identifying the areas important for the realisation of these Community priorities. The guidelines translate these EU-priorities to the three core objectives of the future RD-policy (competitiveness, environment/land management and diversification/quality of life) yet leaving sufficient flexibility for the Member States to translate these priorities into their national strategies, taking into account their specific needs and objectives. Moreover, the complementarity with other EU policies (Cohesion, environment,…), the correct implementation of the new market oriented Common Agricultural Policy, and the successful integration of the new Member States are of main importance for an effective and efficient rural development policy.

The Member States must develop a national strategy plan that is consistent with these strategic guidelines. This plan should indicate the current situation, the chosen priorities and the overall strategy to answer the needs of rural development in the Member State concerned as identified in the SWOT analysis. The rural development programmes must be based on this national strategy plan, implementing the objectives and operations described at national level. This includes the choice of specific measures (see infra) and the allocation of funding between the different possible measures.

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[12] The different stages in the programme cycle are also applicable to policy development (e.g. agricultural policy, rural development policy) and to the projects developed within the programme.

The implementation of the rural development programmes in the EU Member States is the following step in the life cycle and takes seven years. The implementation of the programme and its concrete measures happens through specific projects of individual farmers or other actors.

The progress and results of the programme will be followed up or monitored through a monitoring system. The monitoring system consists of a set of indicators that are structured according to the hierarchy of objectives. This monitoring system enables the responsible actors within the new rural development programme to guide and monitor the implementation of the chosen operations in a structured way, both at national and regional level. The programme will be evaluated on an ongoing basis providing feedback and input for programme revisions and adaptations where necessary. The life cycle process is designed to guarantee an effective and innovative rural development policy.

Figure 9 visualises the programme life cycle as described above. It is important to note here that the monitoring system needs to be designed before the programme is implemented. First, one can only monitor the operations along certain dimensions if those dimensions are known in advance. Second, the follow up of the programme (through monitoring and evaluation) needs to begin as soon as the operations start. Furthermore, evaluation activities are performed at several moments in the programming process in order to (re)direct the programmes and activities in a timing manner. Therefore, evaluations are performed before the programme is developed (ex ante evaluation), while the programme is being implemented (mid term evaluation) and after the programme activities are finished (ex post evaluation). More information about monitoring and evaluation can be found in part 3.4 of this text.

Figure 9 : The life cycle of the rural development programmes
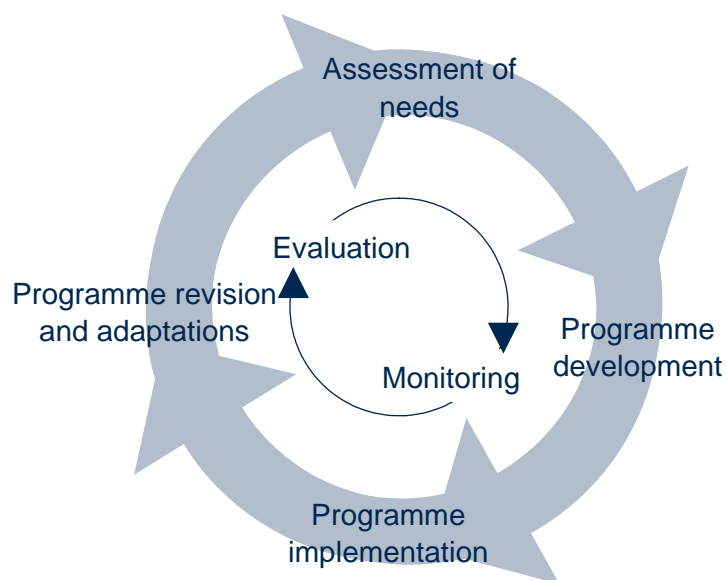
Source: ECORYS & IDEA Consult based on the new guide to evaluating socio economic development (www.evalsed.info)

Different levels of the rural development programme

As the role and the tasks of the different actors in the programming process significantly differs between the different levels of the rural development programme, it is important to distinguish these different levels. Ranked top – down or from a global to an operational level, one can differentiate four levels: context, programme, measure and project.

An intervention programme is situated within a broader **context**, in this case the situation in the rural areas of the EU Member States and the EU agricultural and rural development policies. Within this context, each Member State submits either a single **Rural Development Programme** (further also referred to as RDP) for its entire territory or a set of regional programmes which include a selection of measures.

➔ *A programme is an organised set of financial, organisational and human interventions mobilised to achieve an objective or set of objectives in a given period. A programme is limited in terms of timescale and budget.*

➔ *A measure is a set of operations contributing to the implementation of an axis. It is the basic unit of programme management, disposing of a precisely defined budget. Each measure has a particular management apparatus.*

It is important to note that none of the **rural development measures** (as listed in Annex 2) are compulsory, with the exception of agri-environment in axis 2. The Member States are responsible for the implementation of the measures through specific **operations**.

➔ *An operation is a project, arrangement or action, limited in terms of time schedule and budget, and placed under the responsibility of an operator.*

The figure below shows once more these four levels of a policy in a graphical way.

Figure 10: Different levels of a policy
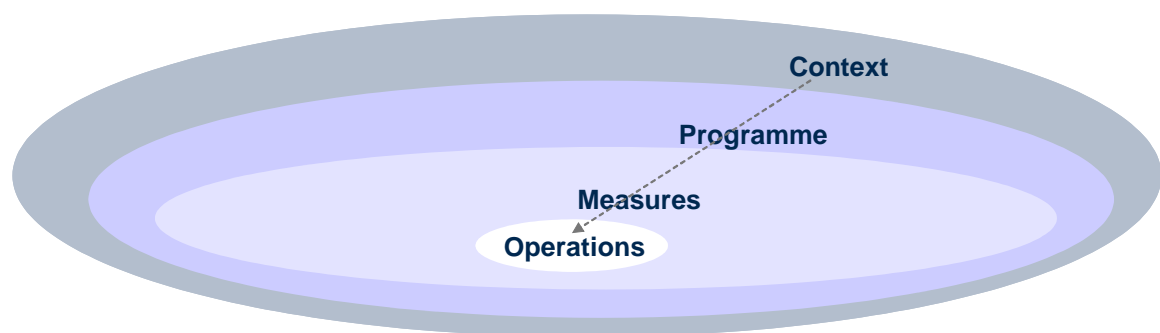
Source: ECORYS & IDEA Consult

Inputs, outputs, results and impacts

> ***Inputs*** are financial, human, material, organisational and/or regulatory means mobilised for the implementation of a programme.

This definition gives a relatively broad meaning to the word "input", which will be used throughout the rural development programme. Nevertheless, it is important to know that some prefer to use the word "inputs" for financial or budgetary resources only. Where this limitation is appropriate, the term "financial inputs" will be used in our guidelines.

> ***An output*** is that which is financed and accomplished (or concretised) with the resources allocated to an intervention.

An operator or project manager undertakes a specific operation or project to produce an output in immediate exchange for the support granted. Outputs may take the form of facilities or works. They may also take the form of services.

> ***A result*** is/are the benefit(s) that fall to the direct or other beneficiaries of the interventions as soon as the project outputs are completed.

Results can be observed when an operator completes an action or a project. For example accessibility has been improved due to the construction of a road. Or, for example, as a result of advisory services farm management improves.

> ***An impact*** is a consequence of the programme:
> - affecting direct beneficiaries following the end of their participation in an intervention or after the completion of public facilities, or
> - affecting other beneficiaries (who may be winners *or* losers).
>
> The impact is in fact the change in the baseline situation that can be attributed to the programme.

Impacts can be considered at different levels: certain impacts can be observed among direct beneficiaries (e.g. turnover generated for the suppliers of assisted firms), others only at macro-economic or macro-social level (e.g. improvement of the image of the assisted region). Some impacts can already be detected after a few months, while others are only perceived in the longer term. It is important to remember that impacts may also be positive or negative, expected or unexpected. Box 3 below summarizes the difference between inputs, outputs, results and impacts and provides examples for each type.

Box 3: Difference between inputs, outputs, results and impacts

	Definition	Example
Inputs	Financial and administrative means mobilised	EAFRD-funding per RDP measure, number of administrative staff involved in the implementation of a measure
Outputs	What is directly accomplished with the means mobilised	Farm investments financed by EAFRD-funds; organisation of training sessions on sustainable agriculture
Results	The initial benefits arising from the programme, normally measurable by aggregation from the projects	Better land management around farms, better skilled farmers
Impacts	The long term benefits of the programme compared to the intial situatiion	Improvement of the environment in rural areas, increased competitiveness of farmers

Source: IDEA Consult on the basis of the information at www.evalsed.info and the site of DG agri.
(*http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/rur/eval/index_en.htm*)

The figure below places these key concepts within the different policy levels of Figure 10.

Figure 11 : Key concepts of an intervention
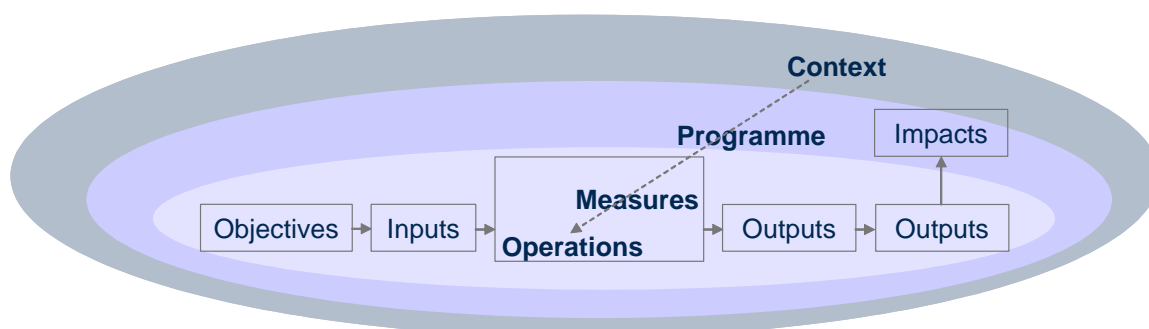
Source: ECORYS & IDEA Consult based on ECORYS-NEI and DG Regio

Gross versus net effects, deadweight, displacement, multiplier effects

In order to assess the effect of rural development programmes, it is important to distinguish further between the possible effects of a programme. There is an important distinction between gross effects and net effects. Furthermore, deadweight and displacements effects can occur. Finally, multiplier effects can arise. Each of these concepts is explained in the next paragraphs.

Gross versus net effects

Net effects are effects directly due to the public intervention and to it alone, as opposed to apparent changes or gross effects. To measure net effects it is necessary to subtract the changes which would have occurred in the absence of the public intervention from the gross effects. These changes are not due to the programme.

Example:
The number of employees in the assisted farms appears to be stable, this means that the change or gross effect equals zero. However, it is estimated that without support there would have been 400 redundancies. Thus, 400 jobs were maintained: this is the net effect accountable to the programme.

Although the definition of the net effect is comprehensible, it is usually rather complicated to calculate these net effects. However, the calculation of the net effects does not strictly belong to the tasks of the programme manager. It will be part of the external evaluation of the programme, which is typically done by specialized evaluators. The same goes for the calculation of deadweight, displacement and multiplier effects.

Deadweight

Deadweight is the change observed among direct beneficiaries of the public intervention, or reported by direct addressees as a consequence of the public intervention, that would have occurred, even without the intervention.

Example:
A farmer received support for the investment in a self-catering cottage. In a survey among beneficiaries of the investment support, he states that the support enabled him to create better quality facilities, but that he would have built the cottage even without support. Thus, there is a deadweight effect since the construction of the cottage cannot be attributed to the support the farmer received.

Displacement

Displacement is the effect obtained in an eligible area at the expense of another area, and may be intended or unintended. When they are not intended, displacement effects must be subtracted from gross effects to obtain net effects. The term is sometimes used to refer to the effects of an intervention affecting one beneficiary at the expense of another within the same territory.

Example of intended displacement:
Transfer of a centre showing local crafts from the city to the rural area: jobs for the craftsmen are created in the rural area but lost in the city.

Example of unintended displacement:
On farm producing and selling of food products creates revenue for the farmer at the expense of the revenue of the local shop keeper.

Multiplier effects

Multiplier effects are secondary effects and cumulative in nature. Multiplier effects are extra effects originating from the initial intervention, but due to the changes that the intervention induces on other (economic) variables and/or actors.

> *Example:*
> Consider for example *the income multiplier effect*. Thanks to an intervention of the RDP, the farmers' competitiveness and hence, his/her income has increased. This *extra* income generated is spent again (local shop) and generates additional income (for the shopkeeper), and so on, in several successive cycles. In each cycle, the multiplier effect diminishes due to, for example, the fact that part of the extra income is being saved and not spent.

3.3.4 Actors in the programming process

There are several actors involved in the rural development programming process. This section will briefly present the different actors and their function in this process.

European level

EU rural development policy needs clear objectives and specific priorities before rural development programmes can be developed in the Member States. After all, national and regional programmes must seek to answer to the most important needs of the rural sector. In this context, the Commission has adopted on the 5th of July 2005 Community Strategic Guidelines for rural development. The Council Regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) defines objectives and measures as a framework for individual projects and establishes rules on partnership, programming, evaluation, financial management, monitoring and control related to rural development. The regulation has been adopted by Council on the 20th of September 2005[13].

European Commission

The European Commission prepares most of the work needed to ensure that priorities on rural development are identified and that the resulting EU policy is implemented in an efficient and effective way in the Member States. To this aim, the Commission provides concrete guidelines on the monitoring and evaluation of the national/regional rural development programmes and assesses the proposed programmes on the basis of their consistency with the Community strategic guidelines for rural development, the national strategy plan and the Regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). This assessment is necessary in order to ensure an efficient use of European funding.

Furthermore, the Commission develops -together with the Member States- a common monitoring and evaluation framework. This framework contains a limited number of common indicators relating to the baseline situation and the financial execution, implementation, results and impact of the programmes. The Commission will be assisted by a Rural Development Committee and a European Network for rural development.

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[13] Council Regulation (EC) N° 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), O.J., 21.10.2005, L277/1

The European network for rural development

Within the context of the EAFRD regulation (Article 67), a European Network for Rural Development will be established for the networking of national networks, organisations and administrations active in the field of rural development at Community level. The network will be coordinated through various tools and services, for example, structured and clear information provision via the use of specific databases, publications, electronic network, inter territorial co-operation brokerage and assistance, thematic work groups and meetings, publishing guidelines and newsletters.

The tasks of the European Network are to:
- collect, analyse and disseminate information on rural development measures and on developments in European rural areas;
- collect, disseminate and consolidate at Community level good rural development practice (by setting up and running expert networks to support implementation and evaluation of the rural development policy);
- organise meetings and seminars at Community level for those actively involved in rural development;
- support the national networks and trans-national cooperation initiatives.

National and regional level

Monitoring Committee

For each rural development programme a Monitoring Committee shall be set up, chaired by a representative of the Member State or of the Managing Authority. Its composition shall be decided by the Member State and shall include economic and social partners, and any other appropriate body representing civil society or non-governmental organisations. The Monitoring Committee shall see to the effectiveness of the implementation of the rural development programme. To that end, the Monitoring Committee:

- shall be consulted on the selection criteria for financed operations;
- shall periodically review progress made towards achieving the specific targets of the programme, on the basis of the documents submitted by the Managing Authority;
- shall examine the results of implementation, particularly achievement of the targets set for each priority axis and ongoing evaluations;
- shall consider and approve the annual progress report and the last progress report before they are sent to the Commission;
- may propose to the Managing Authority any adjustment or review of the programme.

Managing authority

The Managing Authority, which may be either a public or private body acting at national or regional level, is responsible for managing and implementing the programme in an efficient, effective and correct way. This includes:

- ensuring that operations are selected for funding, in accordance with the criteria applicable to the rural development programme;
- ensuring adequate recording and maintaining statistical information on monitoring and evaluation;
- ensuring that beneficiaries and other bodies involved in the implementation of operations are aware of the requirements they need to fulfil;
- ensuring that programme evaluations are conducted, conform to the common monitoring and evaluation framework (and submitting these evaluations to the Commission and the relevant national authorities);
- leading the Monitoring Committee and sending it the documents needed to monitor implementation of the programme in the light of its objectives;
- ensuring that the paying agency receives all necessary information on funding, before payments are authorised;
- drawing up the annual progress report and, after approval by the Monitoring Committee, submitting it to the Commission.

Each year, on presentation of the annual progress report, the Commission and the Managing Authority shall examine the main results of the previous year. Following that examination the Commission may make comments to the Member State and to the Managing Authority, which will inform the Monitoring Committee thereof. The Member State shall inform the Commission of action taken in response to those comments.

Programme managers

In order to ensure the implementation of the Rural Development Programme on a daily basis, programme managers are appointed. The programme managers support the tasks of the Management Authority. They are usually responsible for the communication with the EC and between the members of the national rural development network.

Measure managers

Measure managers are responsible for all projects which fall within the measure he/she is in charge of. The measure manager is the link between the programme manager of his country or region and the project managers who apply within the measure. Measure managers approve the projects within their measures and control and perform payments to the beneficiaries of support. Moreover, they must seek to identify rapidly possible bottlenecks which could hinder the effective implementation of the measure concerned.

Operators (project managers)

An operator or project manager is a public or private person or organisation which requests (and possibly obtains) assistance in the framework of an intervention for a given operation or project (e.g. rehabilitating a run down rural site). Once the project is approved, he is fully responsible for the correct execution of the project concerned.

Beneficiaries of support

Beneficiaries of support are operators, bodies or firms, whether public or private, responsible for implementing operations or receiving support. Beneficiaries are thus situated at the lowest (implementation, operational) level, where concrete outputs are realized.

> *Example for agri-environment payments:*
> The beneficiary shall have to implement sustainable agricultural methods on his agricultural land compatible with the environment and with the preservation of the rural landscape over a period of at least five years from the date of concluding the contract.

It is important to note that the term 'beneficiary' is a rather wide concept, sometimes including project managers too. For example, if a farmer directly applies for EU-support within a 'personal' project, he is both beneficiary and project manager.

Project participants

Project participants are farmers, other individuals (for instance inhabitants of a supported area) or firms who participate in the actions or projects of operators and project managers. Such projects can be training sessions for durable agriculture, afforestation of agricultural land, conservation of rural heritage, etc. Project participants don't *necessarily* receive direct financial support, they benefit from the Commission's rural development aid through the involvement in the projects concerned.

Evaluators

From the programming life cycle it can be seen that evaluation has an important role within the whole process of rural development programming. As evaluation activities are performed at several moments in the programming process, evaluators need –almost continuously- correct and clear information on the projects and activities within a particular programme. Evaluators analyse and interpret these (monitoring) data, so as to review and revise the running schemes and measures, and/or to improve the design and development of future programming.

The rural development programmes will be evaluated before, during, and after the implementation of the programme. The ex-ante evaluation aims to optimise the allocation of budgetary resources and to improve programming quality. The evaluation taking place during the implementation of the programme will examine the progress of the programme towards the realisation of its objectives, ensure the quality of programme and its implementation and propose changes to the programme where necessary and appropriate. The ongoing evaluation will thus be organised on a multi-annual basis. In 2010, the findings of the ongoing evaluator will be consolidated in a mid-term evaluation report and in 2015 in an ex post evaluation report. In section 2.4 additional explanations on these different evaluation moments are provided.

3.3.5 Related literature

For interested readers, more literature on rural development and the European rural development policy can be found at the site of the European Commission (Agriculture Directorate-General), section of Rural Development:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/rur/index_en.htm

Publications
- o http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/rur/publi/index_en.htm

Other interesting documents:
- o European Commission, DG Agriculture. Impact assessment of rural development programmes in view of post 2006 rural development policy (final report by EPEC, november 2004)
  europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/ eval/reports/rdimpact/pilot_en.pdf

- o Fact sheets on rural development: Rural development in the European Union (2003) & New perspectives of EU rural development (2004).
  europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/ publi/fact/rurdev/refprop_en.pdf

3.4   Monitoring and evaluation

The European Commission aims for an improved "common monitoring and evaluation framework" for the rural development programmes 2007-2013. This framework is developed by the Commission and the Member States using a general approach, thereby defining a limited number of common indicators relating to the baseline situation, and specifying the monitoring and evaluation of the financial execution, implementation, results and impact of the programmes. This chapter treats the key concepts related to these monitoring and evaluation activities. The role and definition of indicators for rural development will be explained in the next chapter (Chapter 3.5).

3.4.1   Definition of monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is following up the implementation of the programme on a regular basis, consisting of two main activities:
- data collection
- data reporting

A well-established monitoring system provides here the framework to collect and report the necessary data in a timely manner and in a standardised and transparent way.

Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of a programme or policy. All aspects of a programme can be evaluated: design, management, implementation, results and impact.

Monitoring and evaluation are very related, in the sense that the information collected in the monitoring system is vital for the evaluation process. For evaluation purposes the data from the monitoring are not sufficient. Usually, additional information will have to be collected.

3.4.2   Role of monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation have an indispensable place in the programme life cycle, as is shown before. Monitoring and evaluation serve as an important tool for the management and follow-up of rural development programmes. Monitoring and evaluation allow for:

- *Follow up*: a clear identification of the progress of a programme
- *Justification and control* an improved accountability of public money spent
- *Steering:* an identification of necessary adaptations in the programme
- *Problem detection*: a better focus of the programmes to the needs in the area of rural development
- *Communication*: a clear and found communication of results to a range of actors and interest groups

In this context, the Commission stated that:

"*The effectiveness and the impact of actions under the Fund [also] depend upon improved evaluation on the basis of a common monitoring and evaluation framework*"[14].

It is clear that monitoring and evaluation play an important role within the process of the design, implementation and follow-up of rural development programmes and projects. In this context, it is interesting to take a look at the specific position of both monitoring and evaluation within the life cycle of the rural development programme. An example of this place is visualised in Figure 12, where a summary of the central place of monitoring and evaluation procedures within an agri-environment scheme can be found.

Figure 12: The Position of Monitoring and Evaluation within an Agri-environment Scheme
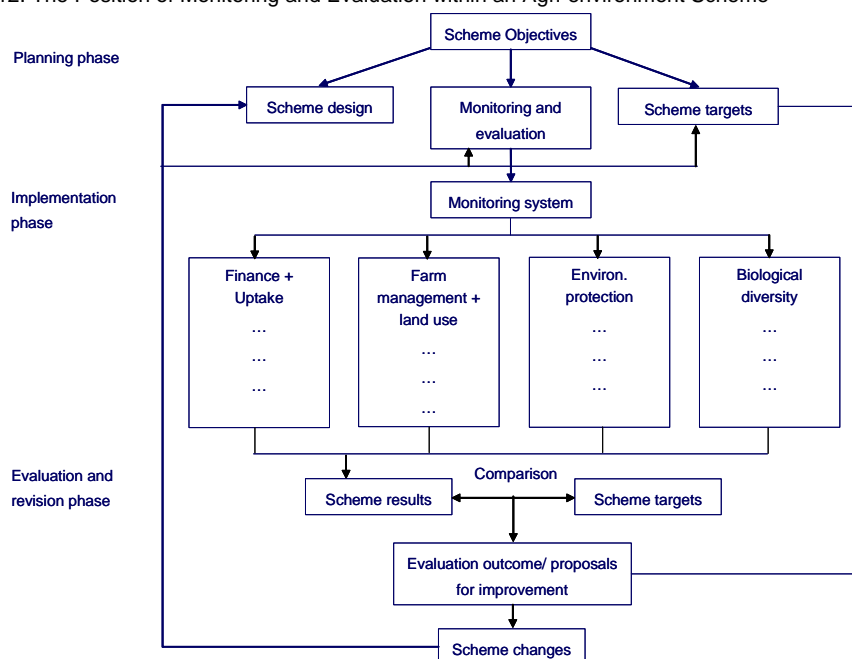
Source: *Developing Agri-Environment Programmes In Central And Eastern Europe – A Manual* published jointly by Avalon, Netherlands, and Institute for European Environmental Policy, London (2002)

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14 European Commission proposal for rural development policy: "better, broader, simpler" and "one fund, one programme, one control", launched on 14 July 2004 (page 14, point (64)).

It can be seen from the figure that monitoring is a major part of the implementation of the programme. A monitoring and evaluation framework provides the basis for good and efficient follow-up, which in turn helps evaluators to assess the results obtained.

Monitoring and evaluation take place at different moments and levels, involve different aspects and make use of several information sources. To have a clear image of the most important concepts with respect to monitoring and evaluation, the section 3.4.3 focuses on the monitoring concepts and the section thereafter on the most important evaluation concepts.

3.4.3   Main concepts of monitoring

To assure an accurate monitoring, a good monitoring system needs to be put in place. When elaborating procedures for monitoring and monitoring systems in general the following elements are important aspects to decide on:

- *The content of the monitoring system*: what data need to be collected? How many data should be collected to keep the system performing?
- *The level of the data collection*: data collection usually starts at the project level and data are aggregated further on measure level and programme level. Some data can be taken directly from statistical sources.
- *The responsibility*: who will be responsible for the implementation of the monitoring system, at EU-level and at Member State level? Usually the programme manager is responsible for the monitoring system; often the data collection is delegated to the authority responsible for a measure.
- *The technical aspects*: how should the data be collected and registered? Here there are many possibilities e.g. Excel files, Access databases, Word documents.
- *The reporting procedure*: how should the data be reported and how frequent? The EU regulation foresees an annual monitoring report from the Member States to the EC.
- *The resources for the monitoring system*: how much time, persons and/or money is needed for the implementation of the monitoring system? And how will it be financed?

When elaborating the above elements it is also important to keep in mind some overall success criteria for a good monitoring system. These success criteria can be divided into two categories:
- Instrument specific success criteria
- Context specific success criteria
The following box summarizes the main success criteria.

Box 4: Success criteria for a good monitoring system

Instrument specific success criteria:

- The monitoring system allows for a comparison between achieved results and defined objectives
- A monitoring system, generally sollicited by many users, needs to be maximally standardized to allow for aggregation of results
- At the same time it is flexible enough to allow more user specific aspects (here Member State specific

context)

- The output of the system must be completely digital
- It is user friendly (by using for example *simple, widely used* ICT applications)
- It is as quantified as possible. Even qualitative results can be translated in a quantitative score.
- It is dynamic:it can be adjusted when required by a changing context

Context specific criteria:

- The monitoring system needs to be fully embedded in the processes of the programme manager (Member States)
- The system must be accepted by all users through:
  o Clear communication and promotion of the system: The monitoring system must be known from the beginning of the programme implementation by all actors that feed the data into the monitoring system
  o Clear guidance on the useage of the system
  o Feedback and validation of the results revealed by the system
  o Minimal the administrative burden for the users

Source: ECORYS & IDEA Consult

The monitoring system for the monitoring of the EAFRD programmes included in the Council Regulation is a system based on the use of indicators.

More guidance on monitoring and evaluation will be provided through the Commission's regulation and guideline documents for the rural development programmes 2007-2013. In chapter 4 we will focus especially on the content of the monitoring system where we describe the role, definition and criteria for indicators.

3.4.4 Main concepts of evaluation

Key issues of evaluation

The key issues of evaluation discussed beneath are the different evaluation criteria. These criteria determine to a great extent the indicators that will be developed further on. In general, evaluations address a specific set of issues to enable the detailed assessment of the assistance. Figure 13 shows how these issues are tackled within a given programming framework. The evaluation criteria are explained below and summarized at the end of this section.

Relevance

Relevance examines the consistency between the objectives (as structured in the hierarchy of objectives, see supra) and the needs of the target groups (for example, farmers) and their context (for example, rural sites, the desire for qualitative food and a preserved environment).

Efficiency

Efficiency looks at the ratio between the outputs, results, and/or impacts and the inputs (particularly financial resources) used to achieve them. Examining efficiency entails the following questions: Can the same results be produced using less input? Alternatively, can the same amount of input produce better results?

Effectiveness

Effectiveness compares what has been done with what was originally planned, *i.e.*, it compares actual with expected or estimated outputs, results, and/or impacts. The concept of "effectiveness" tends to concern just one aspect of the programme's effects, *i.e.*, the expected positive results. Programmes, however, can also produce unexpected positive and/or negative results which the agreed indicators might not be able to detect.

Sustainability

Sustainability examines whether the impact continues to have an effect after the programme or project has been finished.

Figure 13 : Key issues for monitoring and evaluation
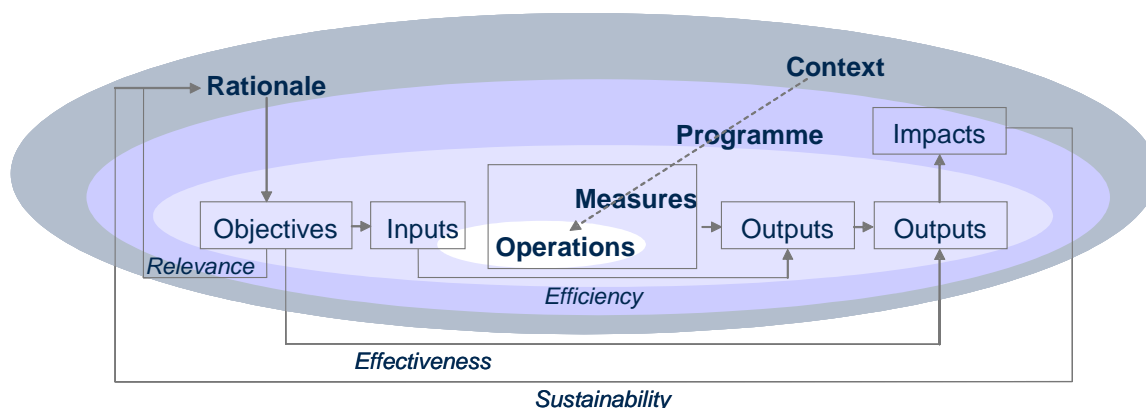
Source: ECORYS & IDEA Consult based on ECORYS-NEI and DG Regio

Box 5: Summary of evaluation criteria

Relevance	To what extent are the programme's objectives relevant in relation to the evolving needs and priorities at national and EU level?
Efficiency	How were the resources (inputs) turned into outputs or results?
Effectiveness	How far has the programme contributed to achieving its measure objectives, sub-objectives and objectives?
Sustainability	To what extent can the changes (or benefits) be expected to last after the programme has been completed?

Source: Commission methodological working paper 3 (Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation: an indicative methodology)

Evaluation moments

Besides the different evaluation issues that can be identified, there are also different moments of evaluation. Depending on the moment in the programming cycle, the evaluation will focus on different issues. The figure below represents the different evaluation moments and the relation between them.

Figure 14: The principle of "continuous" evaluation
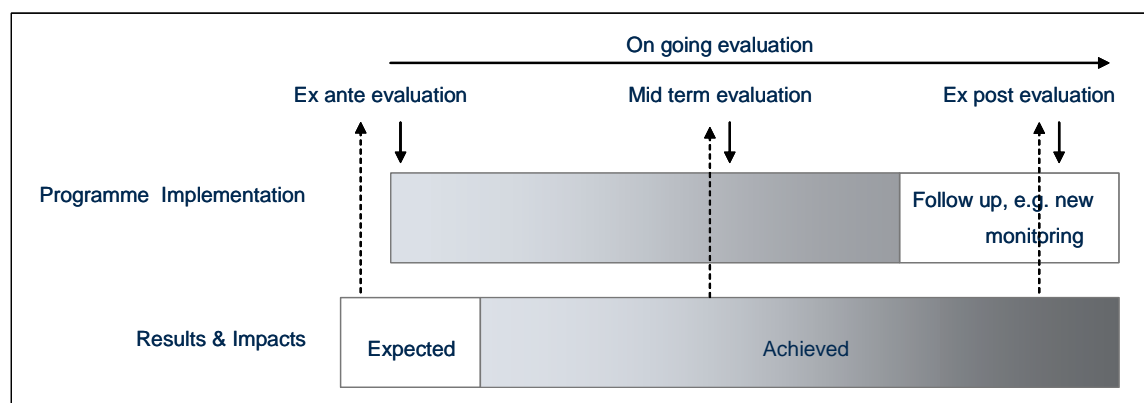
Source: IDEA Consult/ECORYS based on Guidelines for the Evaluation of Rural Development Programmes supported by SAPARD (EC, DG Agriculture, 2001)

Before describing into detail the main issues tackled in each type of evaluation (ex ante, mid term, ex post), the principle of "continuous" or ongoing evaluation is highlighted.

Ongoing evaluation

As evaluation activities are performed at several moments in the programming process, evaluators need –almost continuously- correct and clear information on the projects and activities within a particular programme. The Council Regulation therefore requires the establishment of a system of ongoing evaluation, organised on a multi-annual basis over the programming period 2007-2013. Such provision allows the evaluators to follow the implementation of the programme closely and to have a clear view on the quality of the implementation. At the same time, the set up and functioning of the monitoring system can be accompanied. This is essential as the (monitoring) data are the basis for evaluation activities. The ongoing evaluation will take the form of a separate mid term evaluation report in 2010. In 2015, ongoing evaluation takes the form of a separate ex-post evaluation report.

Ex ante evaluation

An ex ante evaluation is performed before the programme implementation. This form of evaluation helps to ensure that an intervention is as relevant and coherent as possible. An 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. It provides the relevant authorities with a prior assessment of whether development issues have been diagnosed correctly, whether the strategy and objectives proposed are relevant, whether there is incoherence between them or in relation to Community policies and guidelines, whether the expected impacts are realistic, etc. Moreover, it provides the necessary basis for monitoring and future evaluations by ensuring that there are explicit and, where possible, quantified objectives.

➔ An **ex ante evaluation**[15] should thus feature the following elements:
- The linkage and consistency between objectives, sub-objectives, and measures to be contained in the programme;
- The existence and relevance of the output, result, and impact indicators for each level of assistance;
- The reliability of the level of quantification of the objectives.

Mid-term

The mid-term evaluation is performed towards the middle of the programming period. This evaluation critically considers the first outputs and results, which enables it to assess the quality of the monitoring and implementation. The mid-term evaluation shows the translation into operational terms of initial intentions and, where relevant, points out the de facto amendments to objectives. Through comparison with the initial situation, it shows the evolution of the general economic and social context, and judges whether the objectives remain relevant. It examines whether the evolution of policies and priorities of other public authorities raises problems of coherence. It also helps to prepare adjustments and reprogramming, and to argue them in a transparent manner. Mid-term evaluation not only relies strongly on information derived from the monitoring system, but also on information relating to the context and its evolution.

➔ The mid-term evaluation should:
- Examine whether the programme is still relevant or whether it should be adjusted according to new needs;
- Examine the degree of effectiveness achieved on the basis of the indicators collected with the monitoring system;
- Assess the quality and relevance of these indicators.

Ex-post

Ex-post evaluation recapitulates and judges an intervention when it is over. Using final monitoring data, it aims at accounting for the use of resources, the achievement of expected (effectiveness) and unexpected effects (utility), and for the efficiency of interventions. It strives to understand the factors of success or failure, as well as the sustainability of results and impacts. For impacts to have the time to materialise, the ex post evaluation needs to be performed some time after implementation.

➔ The ex-post evaluation should:
- Examine the final results and impact of the programme;
- Analyse whether the results and impacts are sustainable;
- Examine whether the available means are allocated efficiently;
- Give directions for the next programming period based on the experiences of the previous programme.

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[15] See also European Commission, The Ex-ante Evaluation of the 2000-2006 interventions, Working paper No 2 (1999)

Evaluation and monitoring are highly linked with each other. In the table below we summarize for each evaluation moment the main issues that are evaluated and the link with the monitoring system in terms of the required indicators necessary as input for the evaluation.

	Evaluated issue	Type of monitoring indicators used
Ex ante	relevance	baseline indicators
Mid term	effectiveness	output and result indicators
Ex post	efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability	result and impact indicators
Ongoing	Implementation of the programme Preparation of mid term and ex post evaluation	Output, result and impact indicators

3.4.5 Role of the different actors in the monitoring and evaluation process

As all the different actors mentioned before (see Section 3.3.4) have specific tasks in the monitoring and evaluation of rural development activities, it is interesting to summarise here their roles within the programme. The table below indicates their role within the three pillars of the monitoring and evaluation process: data collection, reporting and analysis.

TABLE 1: Role of the different actors in the monitoring process

	Data collection	Data reporting	Data analysis
European Commission			x
Monitoring Committee			x
Managing authority		x	x
Programme managers	x	x	
Measure managers	x	x	
Operators/Project managers	x	x	
Programme evaluators			x

Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult

It is important to note here that all these actors must work together within formal and informal partnerships to fulfil their goals. These partnerships shall thus be involved in the preparation and monitoring of the national strategy plan and in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the rural development programmes.

Data collection is typically performed at the level of projects. All data reporting is then directed to a higher level, where it can be aggregated to a certain degree to get a more global view of the outputs and results of the rural development programme of a specific region or country. Data analysis is performed by the managing authorities, monitoring committees, independent programme evaluators and the EC.

3.4.6 Further readings on monitoring and evaluation

Additional information about monitoring and evaluation activities can be found at:

- Guidelines to the evaluation of rural development programmes 2000-2006 supported from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund. Directorate General for Agriculture, 1999

  http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/rur/eval/guide/2000_en.pdf

- Commission working paper 3: Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation: an indicative methodology. Methodological working papers for the Programming period 2000-2006.

  europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/doc/indic_el.pdf

- Publication website for the evaluation of socio-economic development issues (http://www.evalsed.info/) and previous publications of MEANS.

3.5 Indicators for rural development policy

3.5.1 What is an indicator?

An indicator can be defined as a variable. That variable can then be quantified to measure different types of issues: an objective to achieve; a resource mobilised; an output accomplished; an effect obtained; or a context variable (economic, social or environmental). An indicator produces quantified information with a view to helping actors concerned with public interventions to communicate, negotiate or make decisions.

3.5.2 The role of indicators for the EU rural development programmes

It is clear that the programmes and measures for rural development, will bring about a vast amount of data and information both at regional, national and European level. The common monitoring and evaluation framework will manage this information stream by means of a predefined set of indicators. We call this predefined standard set of indicators the **common set of indicators**. So, this list of common indicators is the corner stone of the monitoring and evaluation system.

These indicators are structured and harmonised ratios or numbers with respect to rural development projects and summarize the main information coming from the RDP's. The indicators are selected in such a way that they offer a logical and coherent description of the programme beginning with the most immediate level (actual expenditure) and proceeding to the most general level (the effects produced by that expenditure). Indicators are useful instruments to get insight in the progress and success of a programme.

Hence, the main role of indicators can be summarized as followed:
- Instrument for measuring relevance:
  o Indicators can express the needs and priorities at national and EU level concerning rural development so the relevance of the programme can be analysed.
- Instrument for monitoring evaluation
  o Indicators can give insight in the progress of a programme (public expenditures, number of beneficiaries reached, …). Both financial progress and progress towards the objectives can be measured.
- Instrument for measuring effectiveness:
  o Indicators can express the level of success of a programme: what are the direct and indirect results of the activities undertaken under the programme.
- Measuring efficiency: indicators can give insight in how the resources are allocated.

3.5.3 Common indicators versus additional indicators

As mentioned above, the European Commission defined a set of common indicators that will form the basis for monitoring and evaluation of the RDP's. Each Member state will be obliged to follow up, register and report these common indicators on a regular basis. However, for the programming period 2007-2013, the Commission distinguishes between

common indicators and **"additional indicators"**. Each Member State should also define its own additional indicators that can complement these common indicators. The definition and the role of an additional indicator is the same as the general definition and role of an indicator as given in the previous paragraph. The only difference with the common indicators is that the additional indicators are freely chosen by the Member state.

Defining additional indicators

Because of the differences between the RDP's as a result of different needs and objectives concerning rural development, also different aspects and information need to be followed up. Each Member State puts different accents, different foci on specific target groups and so on, based on their specific needs (see supra). The selected set of common indicators in step 1 can therefore be insufficient to enable a profound monitoring and evaluation system because it can be too general, incomplete, not adapted to the specificity of the country's RDP.

We distinguish two kind of additional indicators:
- A completely newly defined indicator
- A further detail of an existing common indicator, for example focused on a specific area or a particular target group

The need for additional indicators will depend highly on the level of specificity of the RDP. The more specific the RDP is, the less sufficient the common indicators will be to enable good monitoring and evaluation practices.

Task 3 presents a four step approach on how the additional indicators can be defined.

3.5.4   Quality criteria for indicators

To be useful, indicators must satisfy a number of quality criteria. The basic rule for constructing indicators is that they should be SMART:
- **Specific -** The indicator should be precise and concrete. The indicator is easy to understand and to communicate. It must be clear what is being measured with the indicator.
- **Measurable** – It should be possible to quantify the indicator.
- **Available/Achievable –** It should be possible to obtain the data in a cost-effective way.
- **Relevant –** The indicator has to be relevant for the programme. The indicator must tell something about the implementation or the effects of the programme, it must be sensitive to the programme measure (in other words, its value will change because of the programme operations). When collecting an indicator, the information contained in it should be used afterwards for decision-taking in any kind of form (evaluation, strategy steering, communication, control, …).
- **Timely –** The indicators should be measured regularly so that they are available in time and can show developments over time. It is helpful to have time series information based on consistently applied and precise indicator definitions.

Besides the well known SMART criteria two additional quality criteria can be defined:
- *Comparability***:** indicators can be compared over time, between countries/regions and with benchmarks. This is, for example, useful for the efficiency evaluation criterium.
- *Possibility to aggregate*: analogue to the comparability, it must be possible to aggregate an indicator over different projects, measures, Member States, …

A more elaborated guideline with tips and hints to construct such indicators are found in Task 3 of this study.

3.5.5 Types of indicators

Although indicators can be categorized in many ways, we will focus on the typology according to the intervention logic of the programme. Following the intervention logic explained above, there are 4 different types: input, output, result and impact indicators.

Input indicators

Resource or input indicators refer to the budget or other resources (like for example, human capital) allocated to 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 cost.

> *Example:*
> *EAFRD budget per measure, maximum % of EAFRD financing of projects*

Output-indicators

Output indicators aim at measuring activities directly realised by the projects. These activities or outputs are the first step in realising the operational objectives of the project and are measured in physical or monetary units.

> *Examples:*
> *Number of training sessions organised, number of supported business plans for diversification into non-agricultural actions, number of farms receiving investment support through EAFRD*

Result -indicators

Result indicators aim at measuring the results and direct effects of the projects and show whether the specific objective of the project has been achieved. They provide information on changes to, for example, the behaviour, capacity or performance of direct beneficiaries. Such indicators can be of a physical (reduction in wasted crops, number of successful trainees, number of young starter-farmers, etc.) or financial (leverage of private sector resources, decrease in transportation cost,..) nature.

> *Example:*
> *Percentage of farmers that participated to training sessions, number of farms that starts or enlarges non-agricultural diversification activities*

Impact-indicators

Impact indicators refer to the consequences of the programme beyond the immediate effects on its direct beneficiaries, and are linked to the objectives of the programme. Two concepts of impact can be defined. Specific impacts are those effects occurring after a certain lapse of time but which are, nonetheless, directly linked to the operation taken. Global impacts are longer-term effects affecting a wider population. Clearly, measuring this type of impact is complex and clear causal relationships often difficult to establish.

Example:
Specific impact: increase in skill level of farmers participating to training
Global impact: increase of educational level of farmers, improved competitiveness of farm businesses through better management skills

Note 1: a same indicator can be an output, result or impact indicator, depending on which objective of the programme it is linked to.

Note 2: Also qualitative aspects of the programme can be measured by an indicator. This can be achieved through surveys where respondents are asked to score certain statements. For instance, "how would you score -between 1 and 4, from weak to very strong- the contribution of the measure to the diversification into non-agricultural activities".

4 Task 2: Definition of common indicators

4.1 Terms of Reference

The study findings laid down in this report have been based on the Terms of Reference, in particular the section on Task 2. For the sake of ease and consistency, the specific wording of the Terms of Reference has been included here:

"The contractor will define a set of common indicators that correspond to the indicative hierarchy of objectives outlined in annex 1. For all common indicators, the guidance should ensure the appropriateness and relevance of the indicator to the objective and interventions concerned, that the indicator is easily quantifiable and measurable, and that it can be aggregated at the level of the axis, programme and EU level. The common indicators will be applicable to all 25 Member States.

The contractor will provide operational definitions and guidance for the following result indicators for gross benefits at the level of the project:
1. agricultural value added,
2. non-agricultural value added,
3. successful training results (agricultural and non-agricultural)
4. successful land management results (area successfully managed in LFA areas, in areas subject to NATURA 2000 restrictions and areas under agri-environmental contracts). In addition, the contractor may propose up to two further common result indicators per key objective (axis/priority), as appropriate. The common result indicators need not cover all programme activity, but should seek to ensure the broadest coverage without imposing an undue burden on project managers and beneficiaries.

The contractor will provide operational definitions and guidance on a limited number of output indicators at the level of individual projects. These output indicators should correspond to the actions outlined in annex 2. In principle, one common output indicator per action should be defined. However, where appropriate the contractor may define additional indicators. In no case, should the number of output indicators exceed 30. Particular attention should, be given to activities for which it is difficult to define common result indicators. To ensure consistency across programmes, the unit of measure of each common output should be clearly defined."

4.2 Introduction

The tables below summarize the set of indicators for the four axes of EU rural development programmes. This list of indicators is made by means of a selection process. The following selection criteria have been taken into account[16]:

- simple and clear interpretation
- relevant for 25 Member States

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[16] These criteria comply with the quality criteria for indicators defined in Task 1.

- easy to aggregate from project level to EU level or from beneficiary level to EU level
- measurable
- for output indicators: yearly frequency should be possible.

The indicators are built around the hierarchy of objectives and the linked intervention logic as defined in the Rural Development Regulation. However, there is a clear difference between the output and the result indicators. The output indicators are defined at the *measure level*. The set of output indicators is linked to the set of measures presented in the Council Regulation. The result indicators on the other hand are defined per axis. The result indicators do not necessarily have to cover all measures.

The structure for both the output and result indicators needs to be in line with the hierarchy of objectives and the intervention logic containing the priorities and measures for the EU rural development policy.

Additionally, for each of the indicators a detailed *fiche* is made up. These fiches represent a detailed identity card for all indicators such that a transparent interpretation and implementation framework is made available to all indicator users. These indicator fiches can be found in Annex 3. Annex 3A contains the fiches of the output indicators. Annex 3B includes the result indicator fiches.

We used different sources to build the list of common indicators:
- EC documents: Council regulation, monitoring and evaluation guidelines;
- Current EC monitoring tables for RDP and Leader;
- Member States' documents about monitoring and evaluation of their national and regional RDP's (eg. Northern Ireland, UK, Belgium (Flanders), the Netherlands);
- The updated MEANS collection.

At the end of task 2 we elaborated a "general set of indicators". This general set of indicators represents all common output, result and impact indicators[17], linked to the hierarchy of objectives (please see Annex 2).

4.3   Discussion of output indicators

4.3.1   Types of output indicators

We distinguish different types of output indicators. There are output indicators that measure how many persons or organisations have benefited from the support like number of applications approved, number of beneficiaries. The number of applications can be asked as a standard indicator for each measure in the monitoring reporting format (as is the case in the monitoring tables 2000-2006). However, the number of applications is not a good proxy for the number of (unique) beneficiaries since it allows for double counting e.g. when a farmers receives investment support for two different investments in one year. Therefore, we use the indicators that can measure the number of unique beneficiaries of a measure e.g. number of unique participants to training.

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[17] Impact indicators have been defined in the study 'Impact analysis: study on baseline and impact indicators for rural development programming 2007-2013' (2005).

There are indicators that measure the amount of activity supported by a measure like the total volume of investment supported under an investment measure. The amount of activity can be expressed in financial or non-financial terms.

There are also financial indicators related to the public expenditure for the implementation of a measure. For the programming period 2007-2013 the financial data will be expressed in total public expenditure (total amount + amount of EARDF). With respect to the issue of reporting realised expenditure versus committed expenditure, it seems preferable to monitor the realised expenditure. A close collaboration between the programme manager and the payment agencies in the Member States is then required.

In the overview table of the common output indicators we did not include "number of applications". That indicator will be integrated in the reporting format (task 5). The financial data (total public expenditure) will not be explicitly mentioned either but will be included in the reporting template. Only activity indicators clearly different from the standard financial data are included in the table.

4.3.2 Subdivision of output indicators

Most of the indicators will be broken down into subcategories like age, gender, sector, type of beneficiary, type of activity supported, type of area. The subdivisions are required to enhance the information content of the indicators. As such the data will provide information for the programme managers and evaluators. Moreover, the Rural Development Regulation stipulates that indicators "shall be broken down by sex and age of the beneficiaries where the nature of the assistance permits so "(Art. 81). The following procedure has been followed to elaborate the subdivisions:
- Selection of necessary subdivisions. In many cases, subdivisions can be derived from the conditions applicable to the measures (e.g. type of beneficiary, size of holding or enterprise receiving support, location of the supported land).
- Selection of appropriate categories. We use categories in line with the content and the conditions of the measures in the Regulation. Standard EU classifications are used if possible (e.g. on agricultural branches, product categories).
- Adaptation of standard categories: the categories are sometimes adapted in function of the measure. For instance, the age categories for the young farmers measure and the early retirement measure differ[18] from the general age categories used in other measures.

The subdivision and the categories per subdivision are described for each indicator in the indicator fiches (see Annex 3A and Annex 3B). In annex 3C, we provide an overview of the subdivisions per axis and per measure.

4.3.3 Territorial dimension

A last issue is the territorial dimension, hereby referring to the different territorial targets of the measures (e.g mountain areas, areas with handicaps other than mountain areas, Aegean

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[18] The age categories of the young farmers measure focus on the youngest age groups. For the age categories of the early retirement measures there is a focus on the oldest age groups.

Islands, areas eligible under the Convergence Objective, outermost regions). The territorial dimension should, where relevant, also be included in the monitoring system. It can be important to know in which area a beneficiary or a (farm)land is situated when other conditions for (eligibility for) support apply. We suggest to develop subdivisions for the input indicators (total public expenditure, of which EARDF) or output indicators (number of ha supported divided by territory or type of land) depending on the type of measure. The following measures have a territorial dimension according to the Regulation (Council Regulation on support for rural development by the EARDF):

- modernisation of agricultural holdings (art. 26): the maximum support rate is different depending on the region (and also on the age of the farmer). The different categories of areas are: outermost regions, smaller Aegean Islands within the meaning of Regulation EEC N° 2019/93, mountain areas/areas with handicaps other than mountain areas/Natura 2000 areas and areas under Directive 2000/60/EC, new Member States, other areas. The input indicator can include the territorial subdivision.
- improvement of the economic value of forests (art. 27): the maximum support rate is different depending on the region. The different categories of areas are: outermost regions, mountain areas/areas with handicaps other than mountain areas/Natura 2000 areas and areas under Directive 2000/60/EC, other areas. The input indicator can include the territorial subdivision.
- adding value to agricultural and forestry products (art. 28): the maximum support rate is different depending on the region. The different categories of areas are: regions eligible under the Convergence Objective, outermost regions, smaller Aegean Islands within the meaning of Regulation EEC N° 2019/93, other regions. The input indicator can include the territorial subdivision.
- measures targeting the sustainable use of agricultural land (art. 37-41): the measures are targeted at different areas (mountain areas and areas with handicaps other than mountain areas, Natura 2000, Areas under Directive 2000/60/EC, other areas). In this case, the output indicators for the measure reflect the target area (area supported in ha). Where necessary, the output indicators have territorial subdivisions (implementation of overlapping measures on the same territory).
- measures targeting the sustainable use of forestry land (art. 43 to 49): these measures are targeted at specific areas (Natura 2000 forest areas, forests under high or medium fire risk according to forest protection plans) or have different maximum support rates according to the region (first afforestation of agricultural land, first establishment of agro-forestry systems on agricultural land, first afforestation of non-agricultural land). Others have different conditions for implementation according to the region (wooded areas of the territories of the Açores, Madeira, the Canary islands, the smaller Aegean islands within the meaning of Regulation EEC N° 2019/93 and the French Overseas Departments). The territorial dimension is reflected in the subdivision of the output indicators.

4.4 Output indicators

The output indicators measure the activities directly realised by the projects. In the table below, the output indicators are formulated for each measure. In addition, the last column provides several categories that specify possible subdivisions.

Axis	Measure[19]	Indicator	Subdivision[20]
1. Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector			
	a) Promoting knowledge and improving human potential		
1.A.1	Vocational training and information actions	▪ number of participants to training ▪ number of training days received	Division according to ▪ gender ▪ age category ▪ type of activity ▪ content of activity ▪ type of participants
1.A.2	Setting up of young farmers	▪ number of assisted young farmers ▪ total volume of investment	Division according to ▪ gender ▪ type of agricultural branch ▪ age category
1.A.3	Early retirement	▪ number of farmers early retired ▪ number of farm workers early retired ▪ number of hectares released	Division according to: ▪ gender ▪ age category ▪ type of agricultural branch
1.A.4	Use of advisory services	▪ number of farmers supported ▪ number of forest holders supported	Division according to the type of advice
1.A.5	Setting up of management, relief and advisory services	▪ number of newly set up management, relief or advisory services	Division according to type of service
	b) Restructuring and developing physical potential and promoting innovation		
1.B.1	Modernisation of agricultural holdings	▪ number of farm holdings that received investment support ▪ total volume of investment	Division according to ▪ age category of the farm holder ▪ type of investment ▪ type of agricultural branch
1.B.2	Improvement of the economic value of forests	▪ number of forest holdings that received investment support	Division according to type of owner

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Axis	Measure[19]	Indicator	Subdivision[20]
		▪ total volume of investment	
1.B.3	Adding value to agricultural and forestry products	▪ number of holdings supported ▪ total volume of investment	Division according to: ▪ type of beneficiary ▪ type of the holding ▪ type of innovation
1.B.4	Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and in the forestry sector	▪ number of cooperation initiatives supported	Division according to: ▪ the sector ▪ the type of cooperation initiative
1.B.5	Infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry	▪ number of operations supported ▪ total volume of investment	Division according to type of operation
1.B.6	Restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and introducing appropriate prevention actions	▪ number of beneficiaries ▪ total volume of investment	Division according to ▪ the type of damage
	c) Improving the quality of agricultural production and products		
1.C.1	Meeting standards based on Community legislation	▪ number of beneficiaries	Division according to field of the standards
1.C.2	Participation of farmers in food quality schemes	▪ number of supported farm holdings participating in a quality scheme	Division according to ▪ the origin of quality scheme ▪ the product category
1.C.3	Information and promotion activities	▪ number of supported actions	Division according to ▪ the origin of quality scheme ▪ the product category
	d) Transitional measures for the New Member States		
1.D.1	Semi-subsistence farming	▪ number of semi-subsistence farm holdings supported	Division according to size of holdings
1.D.2	Producer groups	▪ number of supported producer groups ▪ turnover of supported producer groups	Division according to: ▪ type of producer groups ▪ type of agricultural branch(es) for which producer groups are created

Axis	Measure[19]	Indicator	Subdivision[20]
2. Improving the environment and the countryside			
	a) Sustainable use of agricultural land		
2.A.1	Natural handicap payments to farmers in mountain areas	▪ number of supported holdings in mountain areas ▪ supported agricultural land in mountain areas	Division according to type of area
2.A.2	Payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas	▪ number of supported holdings in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas ▪ agricultural land area supported in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas	Division according to: ▪ type of handicap ▪ type of area
2.A.3	Natura 2000 payments, and payments linked to the Water Framework Directive	▪ number of supported holdings in Natura 2000 areas/under WFD ▪ supported agricultural land area under Natura 2000/under WFD	Division according to type of area
2.A.4	Agri-environment payments	▪ number of farm holdings and holdings of other land managers receiving support ▪ total area under agri-environment support ▪ total number of contracts ▪ physical area under agri-environment support ▪ number of applications related to genetic resources	Division according to ▪ the 'age' of the commitment ▪ the type of commitment Division according to the type of actions
2.A.5	Animal welfare payments	▪ number of farm holdings receiving support ▪ number of animal welfare contracts	Division according to ▪ the kind of animals ▪ the 'age' of the commitment
2.A.6	Non-productive investments	▪ number of farm holdings and holdings of other land managers receiving support ▪ Total volume of investments	Division according to type of investments

Axis	Measure[19]	Indicator	Subdivision[20]
	b) Sustainable use of forestry land		

2.B.1	First afforestation of agricultural land	▪ number of beneficiaries receiving afforestation aid
		▪ number of ha of afforested land
			Division according to
			  ▪ type of land ownership
			  ▪ tree type (only for number of ha)
			  ▪ the 'age' of commitment

2.B.2	First establishment of agroforestry systems on agricultural land	▪ number of beneficiaries ▪ number of ha under new agroforestry systems	Division according to ▪ tree type (only for number of ha)

2.B.3	First afforestation of non-agricultural land	▪ number of beneficiaries receiving afforestation aid
		▪ number of ha of afforested land
			Division according to
			  ▪ type of owner
			  ▪ the 'age' of commitment

2.B.4	Natura 2000 payments	▪ number of forest holdings receiving aid in Natura 2000 area ▪ supported forest land (ha) in Natura 2000 area	

2.B.5	Forest environment payments	▪ number of forest holdings receiving support
		▪ forest area under forest-environment support
		▪ number of contracts
			Division according to
			  ▪ type of commitment
			  ▪ the 'age' of commitment

2.B.6	Restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions	▪ number of prevention/restoration actions
		▪ supported area of damaged forests
			Division according to
			  ▪ the type of action
			  ▪ the type of damage

2.B.7	Non-productive investments	▪ number of supported forest holders ▪ total volume of investment	Division according to the type of investments

Axis	Measure[19]	Indicator	Subdivision[20]
3. Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity			
	a) Diversification of the rural economy		
3.A.1	Diversification into non-agricultural activities	▪ Number of beneficiaries	Division by type of rural non agricultural Activity
3.A.2	Support for business creation and development	▪ Number of micro-enterprises supported	Division according to type of micro-enterprise (newly created or existing)
3.A.3	Encouragement of tourism activities	▪ Number of new tourism infrastructure elements supported ▪ Total volume of investment	Division according to the type of investment
	b) Improvement of the quality of rural life in the rural areas		
3.B.1	Basic services for the economy and rural population	▪ Number of supported actions (ICT Initiatives and other) ▪ Total volume of investment	Division by type of actions
3.B.2	Village renewal and development	▪ Number of villages where actions took place ▪ Total volume of investment	Division according to type of revitalisation
3.B.3	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage	▪ Number of rural heritage actions supported ▪ Total volume of investment	Division according to type of heritage (natural – cultural heritage)
	c) Training and information		
3.C.1	Training and information	▪ Number of participating economic actors to supported training activities ▪ Number of days of training received by the participants	Division of participants according to: ▪ Type of actor ▪ Gender ▪ Age category ▪ Type of the activity ▪ Content of the activity
	d) skills acquisition and animation		
3.D.1	Skills acquisition, animation and implementation	▪ number of skills acquisition, animation and implementation actions ▪ number of participants to actions ▪ number of supported public-private partnerships	Division according to: ▪ Type of action ▪ Gender (only for number of participants) ▪ Age category (only for number of participants)

Axis	Measure[19]	Indicator	Subdivision[20]
4. Leader			
4.A	**a) Implementing local development strategies**	▪ Number of local action groups ▪ Total size of the LAG area (km²) ▪ Total population in LAG area ▪ Number of projects financed by LAGs	Division according to new/existing LAG Division according to axis of RDP
4.B	**b) Cooperation**	Number of supported cooperation projects	Division according to: ▪ level of cooperation ▪ axis of RDP
4.C	**c) Running the local action group, acquiring skills and animating the territory**	▪ Number of supported actions	Division according to type of action

4.5   Result indicators

The set of result indicators has some characteristics that makes it more complex to determine the best indicators for each axis.

The table below presents the indicators per axis, and includes an assessment of the measurability of the indicator. Measurability is an essential quality criterion for this common set of indicators.

Axis	Indicator*	Subdivisions
Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector	Successful agricultural training results: number of actors involved in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors, that successfully ended a training activity	Division according to: ▪ gender ▪ age category ▪ type of successful result ▪ type of participant
	Gross value added by supported farmers and forest holders	division according to: ▪ measure ▪ type of holding
	Number of holdings introducing new products and/or new techniques	division according to: ▪ measure ▪ type of holding ▪ type of redeployment of production
	Increased value of agricultural production under recognized quality label/standards	division according to: ▪ measure ▪ field of label ▪ type of agricultural product involved
	Number of farms entering the market	
	Private leverage and public leverage	
Improving the environment and the countryside	Areas under successful land management contributing to: ▪ improvement of bio diversity ; ▪ improvement of water quality; ▪ climate change ▪ improvement of soil quality	division according to measure
	Avoidance of marginalization and land abandonment	division according to measure
	High nature value farmland areas supported	
	Private leverage and public leverage	

Axis	Indicator*	Subdivisions
Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity	Non-agricultural gross value added in rural areas	division according to: ▪ measure ▪ type of holding
	Gross number of jobs created	division according to: ▪ on farm jobs versus off farm jobs ▪ gender ▪ age category
	Additional number of tourist visits	
	Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	division according to type of beneficiary
	Increase in internet penetration in rural areas	
	Successful non-agricultural training results: number of participants that successfully ended a training activity	division according to: ▪ gender ▪ age category
	Private leverage and public leverage	

The result indicators are also divided into subcategories. The subdivisions are presented in the respective result indicator fiches (see annex 3B).

4.6   Indicator fiches

4.6.1   Definition and objectives

Our past monitoring and evaluation experience shows that providing a standard set of indicators is only one of the necessary steps to reach a profound, transparent and uniform monitoring system. Furthermore, it is crucial to provide a well-defined interpretation framework for each of the selected indicators. After all, a standard set of indicators is not very useful when the different users (Member States) still interpret the indicators in a different way. Therefore, we will make an indicator fiche for each of the selected indicators. This indicator fiche is the "identity card" of the indicator. It is a clear guideline for the user on:

- How to understand the indicator (definition, link to the objectives and activities, …)
- How to measure the indicator (unit of measurement, level of input, responsible actor for input, sources, …)
- How to interpret the indicator (defining norms, does a certain output or result confirm to that norm, ...)

The fiche ensures a uniform interpretation of each indicator and hence makes an aggregation of the indicator on national and EU level possible.

4.6.2   Template of the indicator fiche

Name of the indicator	Explanation
Definition of the indicator	Describes the composition, content and meaning of the indicator.
Type of indicator	Indicates if it is an input, output, result or impact indicator. It also indicates the objective and the measure to which it relates.
Subdivision	Sometimes, it is desirable to divide an indicator into subcategories, in order to provide more detail. E.g., a distinction according to gender, age, type of activity, type of geographic region, …
Unit of measurement	E.g., absolute number, number of full time equivalents (FTE), percentage, monetary unit, …
Level of collection	Indicates the lowest level on which the indicator needs to be collected: beneficiary level, project level, national measure level, national programme level.
Responsible actor for collection	Indicates the person, responsible for the *collection* of the necessary data to quantify the indicator. This actor must report/register these data in a clear and structured way so as to make it easy for the programme manager to gather these data for annual reporting to the Commission.
Collection method	Indicates how the (data for the) indicator should be collected (project administration, existing databases, documents, administrations, surveys, statistics, …). For

	each method, the responsible actor/ institution needs to be indicated as well (the promoter, Eurostat, national institute for statistics, OECD, EU institution, …)
Source	Indicates if the data sources are RDP-related or external (e.g. statistics agencies, local authorities).
Frequency	With which frequency does the indicator need to be measured? With which frequency does the indicator need to be reported?
Target	Where possible a target could be defined for the indicator. It can be a quantifiable objective that has to be reached after a certain period of time. A target will only be defined in the case of output indicators since they are defined at the level of the measure.

4.7   General indicator table

As mentioned before, it must be possible to link an indicator to the hierarchy of objectives. As a control on the logic of the definition of all indicators we constructed a general indicator table. This table summarizes and visualizes the links between output indicators, result indicators and the hierarchy of objectives. Moreover, impact indicators have been included. The impact indicators are based on the results of the study "Impact analysis: study on baseline and impact indicators for rural development programming 2007-2013" (EC, DG Agriculture, 2005). In this way, the general indicator table reflects the intervention logic of EU's rural development programmes. This table is shown in Annex 2.

5 Task 3: Treatment of additional programme indicators

5.1 Terms of reference

The study findings laid down in this report have been based on the Terms of Reference, in particular the section on Task 3. For the sake of ease and consistency, the specific wording of the Terms of Reference for this task has been included here:

"Since common output and result indicators may not fully capture all effects of programme activity, it may be desirable to define additional output and result indicators within the programmes. Such additional indicators should be developed by Member States and programme partnerships in a flexible manner, but in accordance with the general principles outlined above. The contractor should therefore provide guidance on the development of additional indicators as regards:

- Their development in the light of programme strategy, hierarchy of objectives and intervention logic and the need to focus additional indicators on key aspects of the programme strategy.
- The distinction between indicators of output, result and impact and the relation between the different types of indicator in the monitoring and evaluation process.
- The need to ensure sufficient flexibility to take into account differences in strategies as well as the diversity of regions across the EU.
- The distinction between gross benefits at the project level and net benefits at the level of the programmes.
- The different needs of actors in the programming process: beneficiaries of support, project managers, programme managers, members of the Monitoring Committees, Member States, European Commission.
- The appropriateness and relevance of the indicator to the objective and interventions concerned, that the indicator is easily quantifiable and measurable, and that it can be aggregated at the level of the axis and the programme".

5.2 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to give the Member states, and more specific the programme (and the measurement) managers, a practical guide on how they have to construct the set of additional indicators that they will use for monitoring the progress of their programme and for the different evaluation purposes and obligations. First we explain why additional indicators are desirable in a very diversified European Union where all Member States have their own specificities and needs concerning rural development support. Subsequently a four-steps-approach is presented on how an additional indicator can be defined. Finally the chapter zooms in on the timing of composing the set of indicators and the different actors that play a role in defining this set.

5.3   The reasoning behind additional indicators

The reasoning behind the definition of additional indicators is to give Member States flexibility in creating a monitoring and evaluation system adapted to their needs. Nevertheless this flexibility is only possible as long as it stays within the lines drawn by the European hierarchy of objectives and the European intervention logic for rural development. This idea of "restricted" flexibility is shown in the figure below.

Figure 15: Set of indicators for monitoring and evaluation
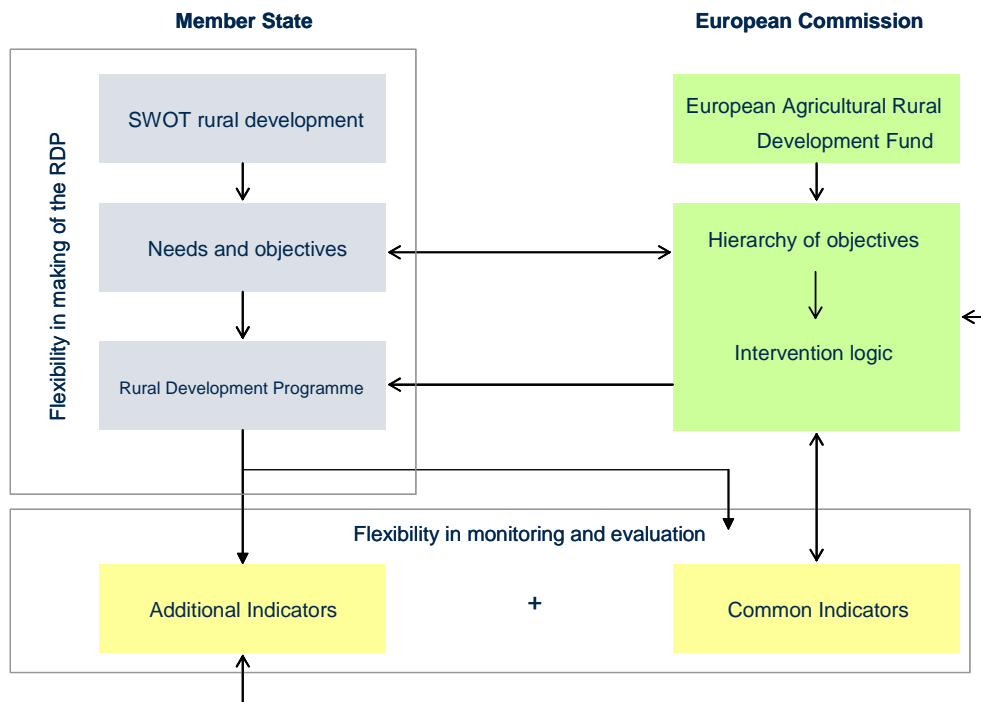
Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult

The flexibility which is offered to the Member States starts with the definition of the RDP's. This flexibility between programmes is indispensable because of the large differences that exist between the Member States concerning their needs and priorities for their rural development strategy. Among other things, differences can occur because of:
- demographical differences: age structure, gender structure, birth rate…
- geographical differences: size of the country, population density, presence of mountain areas and other areas with natural handicaps, presence of forest, …
- differences in biodiversity: existence of different plants and animals, …
- climate differences
- social and cultural differences: educational level of the population,
- differences in level of economical development and activities: importance of agricultural sector in the economy of the Member State, level of technological development and ICT…

When developing their RDP, the Member States need to make up a SWOT analysis of their rural development. From this SWOT the different needs and objectives can be distilled. Subsequently these needs and objectives have to be hold up against the existing national and regional intervention programmes. When certain needs are not covered by

the existing national and regional programmes, they can be confronted with the European hierarchy of objectives and the European intervention logic for rural development. Each country has to decide which of the measures defined by Europe in the regulation on rural development, is able to fill in the needs and objectives that the Member State identified in the SWOT. In this way each Member State can create an individualised programme composed of a selection of measures as defined by the Commission.

Some practical examples that can illustrate different contexts for rural development programmes in the Member States[21]:

Example 1:
    The extent to which current measures on agricultural restructuring and competitiveness are relevant to the challenges facing rural areas is important to define the future rural policy. The nature of challenges facing the regions within the 25 Member States differ widely, with most variation seen in the new Member States. In some Member States the agricultural sector is characterised by many very small farms and there is a need for large scale structural change. In these areas, the early retirement measure is often prominent.
    In other Member States (especially in North West Europe) farms are generally bigger and more efficient, and becoming larger over time. In these cases other priorities such as training, developing new opportunities like energy crops, better marketing, and meeting higher standards (for example for animal welfare) are often the main issues.

Example 2:
    Access to public services and healthcare is also a significant issue in many rural areas. In the more remote areas, there are problems with encouraging healthy living and the supply of quality healthcare (especially in the new Member States). This comes hand-in-hand with the problem of lack of access to public services, and inadequacy in rural housing which many rural areas face. Education is extremely important for employment and income, but a problem often faced by rural communities is the lack of access to higher education and lifelong learning opportunities. In the new Member States rural educational access and attainment is lower than national averages.

Example 3:
    In Member States with few remote rural areas, in-migration to rural areas from urban areas is an increasing trend, often involving increased populations of commuters and retired people. This leads to problems such as increased development pressures in the countryside, a change in the balance of rural communities, and shortages of affordable housing as wealthier urban incomers out-bid local residents. In other Member States with more remote rural areas, rural depopulation takes place and the rural population is usually older than average. In these areas, new sources of income and employment need to be developed.

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[21] Source: Impact assessment of rural development programmes in view of post 2006 rural development policy, DG Agri, November 2004

As a consequence of the flexibility in the definition of the RDP's, the same kind of flexibility is needed in setting up an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system. This flexibility is translated in a different set of indicators that each country applies for the monitoring and evaluating their RDP. *Before* starting with the implementation of the programme each Member State should compose its own indicator set that will be used for the monitoring and evaluation of the programme. The timing of the definition of the indicator set is discussed in section 4.9. This set can be divided in a set of common indicators and in a set of additional indicators. We distinguish two kind of additional indicators:

- A completely newly defined indicator
- A further detail of an existing common indicator, for example focused on a specific area or a particular target group

The need for additional indicators will depend highly on the level of specificity of the RDP. The next paragraphs describe a four step approach on how the additional indicators can be defined. The figure below shows the flexibility in the definition of the indicator set.

Figure 16: Set of indicators for monitoring and evaluation
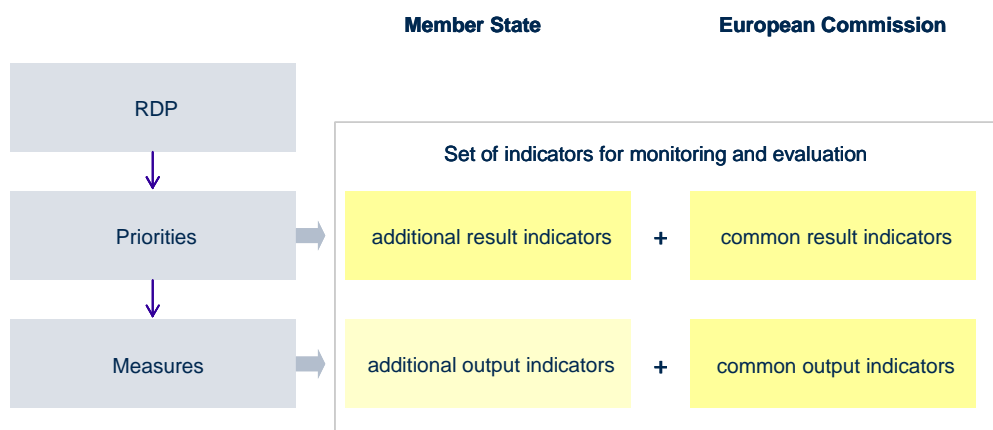
Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult

5.4   The four-steps-approach

When Member States decide to define additional indicators they must ensure themselves of the usefulness, the relevance of the additional indicators. A good indicator also has to meet certain quality criteria and for all indicators that are defined it must be clear how it will be measured and collected. Therefore a four-steps plan has been made that guides the Member States in defining their set of indicators. The figure below describes this four-steps-approach:

Figure 17: Four-steps-approach for defining additional indicators

1. Analyzing the relevance and utility of an additional indicator
2. Defining the type of indicator: input, output, result or impact
3. Checking the defined indicator with the quality criteria for indicators
4. Creating a detailed indicator fiche for each of the defined additional indicators
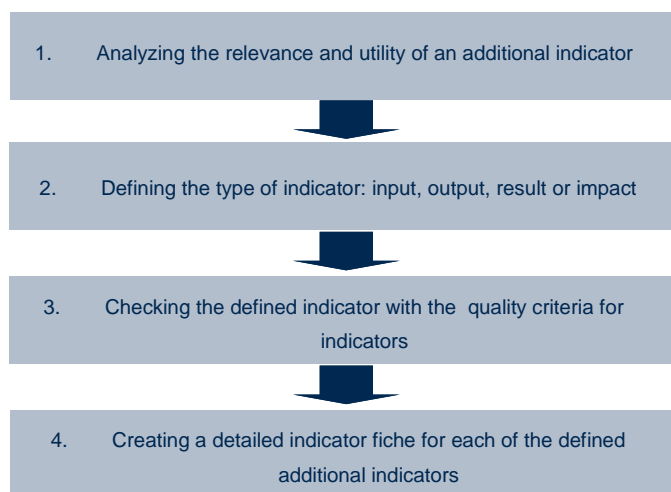
Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult

The next paragraphs describe in detail the different steps.

5.5 Step 1: Analyzing the relevance and utility of an additional indicator

5.5.1 Description

As mentioned before, the Member States need to define their set of indicators that they will use to monitor and evaluate their RDP, before actually implementing the programme. This set will consist of common indicators and additional indicators. The common indicators have to be selected from a set of indicators formulated by the European Commission while the additional indicators are to be defined by the Member States to give an answer on the specificity of each RDP. Nevertheless before starting to define additional indicators you must be sure that they are really necessary and that they are adding value to your monitoring and evaluation system. Therefore the following decision tree has been developed.

Figure 18: Decision tree for relevance of additional indicators
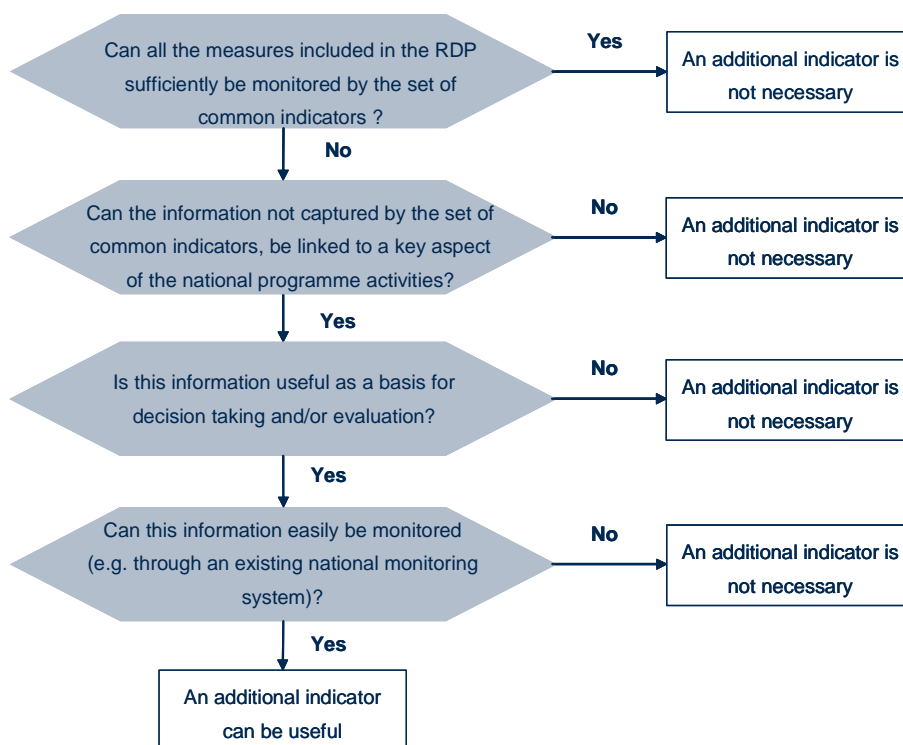
Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult

To see whether or not it is **relevant and useful** to define additional indicators, in a first step, the RDP operations/actions should be compared with the intervention logic of rural development and the set of common indicators that is connected to this intervention logic. In this way the "shortcomings" can be identified.

A possible shortcoming is that there are measures with no common result indicator available in the set of common indicators. This is only possible for the result indicators since they are not one-on-one related to the measures while the common output indicators are defined for each measure separately. Some measures can have different result indicators, some have none, one result indicator can be the result of several measures etc. It is obvious that when Member States include measures in their RDP where no, a few or too general common result indicators are defined, additional indicators need to be selected to guarantee the monitoring of those measures.

Besides "blanks" that can occur in the set of relevant common result indicators, it can also happen that the common indicators are not complete. The common indicators can be too general, or there may be too few common indicators to reflect the planned operations falling under the measures.

Once the shortcomings of the set of common indicators are identified, you have to analyse whether or not these shortcomings prevent a good monitoring of certain key priorities of the programme. If for example some information is not captured by a common indicator but it is not a strategic aspect of the RDP, it is not necessary to define an additional indicator.

A key priority can be defined as a priority spending area that has been outlined by the Member State in its national strategy plan because it responds to a very particular need of the Member State or region. To define whether some operations form a key aspect of the programme the following criteria can be used:
- A key aspect could absorb a sufficiently large part of the financial means
- A key aspect could refer to a specific need and objective identified in the SWOT of the rural development of the Member State
- A key aspect could refer to a specific target group that the Member State wants to reach with the RDP
- A key aspect could be a political hot topic
- …

If it is decided from the previous steps that certain key aspects of the RDP are not covered by the common indicators, it can become useful to define an additional indicator. Nevertheless, there are two more conditions that you should take into account.

When you define an indicator you must be sure that the indicator will be **effective** as a basis for decision taking or that it gives important information for the evaluation purposes of the programme. Make sure that the indicator you want to select will be really used, for example to follow up the progress of your programme, to evaluate its results and value added, for communication purposes, for steering the rural development programme, …

A last aspect crucial in your decision to define an additional indicator is the **cost effectiveness** of monitoring the extra information. Even if it is useful and relevant to define an additional indicator for a key topic of the RDP, it must be possible to collect it and this without too complex and expensive efforts. The following actions can help the programme manager or evaluators to decide if an indicator is cost effective:

1. Make an inventory of the data and indicators that are already collected by all the measure managers. Also list the different registration/collection instruments which are put in place (for example: registration templates which need to be filled in by project managers, databases, …)

2. Analyse if these data and indicators collected by the measure managers can cover the information you want to monitor and which is not captured by the common indicators. If this is the case you have a cost effective additional indicator since no extra effort needs to be done because the collection and registration instruments are already in place.

3. If the present data and information collected by the measure managers is not covering the additional information you want to monitor, analyse if a simple expansion of the existing registration/collection instruments is enough to collect the extra information needed. If this is possible the additional indicator will be cost effective since the effort to collect it is minimal.

4. Investigate if the needed information is not yet collected by another national or international organisation (for example national institutes of statistics, research centres, universities, other governmental bodies not directly involved with rural development, sector organisations, unions, …). If this is the case, analyse if this information is public or can be achieved for a small allowance. If yes, this can be a cost effective additional indicator.

5. If however a complete new registration system needs to be installed to collect the additional information or the expenses are too high to achieve the data from

another organisation, the indicator is not cost effective. The cost of achieving the indicator might be higher than the added value of the indicator for the monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

If all of the above conditions are fulfilled, the definition of an additional indicator can be relevant and useful. In this case, you can proceed with step 2.

5.5.2   Some examples

Here we describe some examples where the definition of an additional indicator can be relevant. These examples will also be applied in the next steps.

Example 1: A Member State wants to stimulate organic farming through investment support for farmers who switch from traditional agriculture to organic farming, through adapted training activities, …
The set of common indicators does contain indicators on training but not specifically on training for organic farming. Here an additional indicator can be recommended. In this case the additional indicator(s) will be a further detail of existing common indicators on training (see above number 3 on cost effectiveness) and can easily be integrated as subdivision within the existing set of indicators on training.

Example 2: A Member State wants to improve the local access to and use of ICT facilities and applications in rural areas through infrastructural investments, development of online community services and training offered to the local inhabitants. Examples of online community services can be: electronic notification of change of address, electronic application for official documents,…Here new indicators will need to be defined since the common indicators are too general: e.g. number of online services developed by the communities, number of rural inhabitants connected to internet, … In addition you will need to set up also an appropriate mechanism and instrument to collect the new indicators.

5.6   Step 2: Defining the type of indicator

5.6.1   Output, result, impact indicator

There are different types of indicators depending on what they measure and on which level they measure (project – measure – programme). Although indicators can be categorized in many ways, we will focus on the typology according to the intervention logic of the programme. The intervention logic clarifies the link between the operations in a rural development programme and the (hierarchy of) objectives of rural development policy, highlighting what kind of operations is needed to this aim. The decision tree in the figure below shows us on the right side the hierarchy of objectives and on the left side how this hierarchy is linked to the type of indicator we have to define.

Figure 19: Decision tree for type of indicator
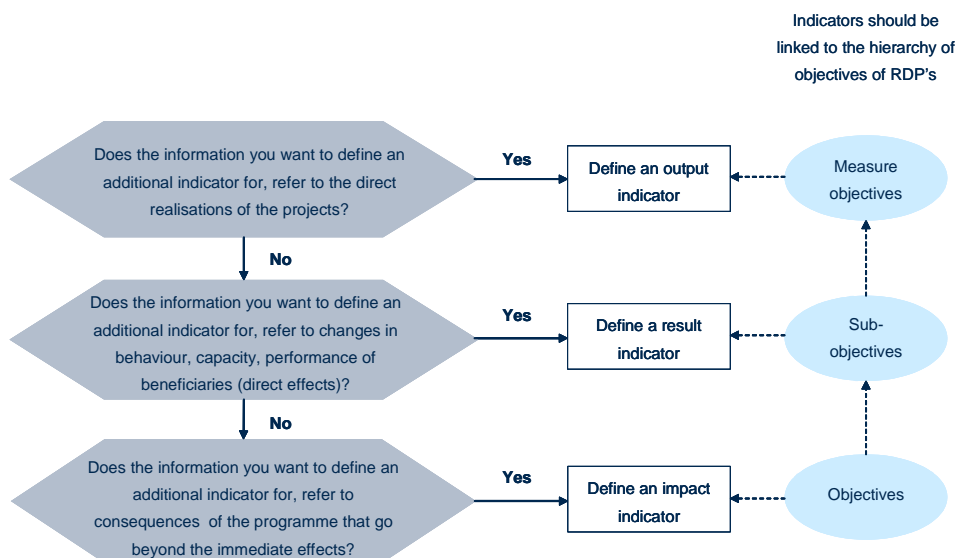
Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult

According to the intervention logic, the European Commission uses four types of indicators: input, output, result and impact (confer supra, section 2.5.5).

From these four types the input indicators[22] will probably not differ substantially amongst the Member States. Hence the definition of additional input indicators will be less relevant. For each of the other three types we elaborated some examples of situations where an additional indicator can be useful.

Output-indicators

Output indicators aim at measuring activities directly realised by the projects. These activities or outputs are the first step in realising the operational objectives of the project and are measured in physical or monetary units.

Examples of additional output indicators:

Focus/ priority	Additional output indicator
Ex. 1: Organic farming	number of training sessions on organic farming organised
	number of farm holdings that received support for organic farming
	number of ha supported for organic farming
Ex. 2: Access to and use of ICT	number of online services developed by the municipalities
	number of ICT trainings organized for inhabitants
	number of infrastructural ICT works supported (i.e. cabling, …)

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[22] Resource or input indicators refer to the budget or other resources (like for example, human capital) allocated to 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 public expenditure.

Result indicators

Result indicators aim at measuring the results and direct effects of the projects and show whether the specific objective of the project has been achieved. They provide information on changes to, for example, the behaviour, capacity or performance of direct beneficiaries. Such indicators can be of a physical (e.g. reduction in wasted crops, number of successful trainees, number of young starter-farmers) or financial (e.g. leverage of private sector resources, decrease in transportation cost) nature.

Examples of additional indicators:

Focus/ priority	Additional result indicator
Ex. 1: Organic farming	number of existing farm holdings that switched partly or completely to organic farming
	number of new start ups in organic farming
Ex. 2: Access to and use of ICT	Number of houses connected to Internet in the supported rural area
	number of inhabitants that use online community services

Impact indicators

Impact indicators refer to the consequences of the programme beyond the immediate effects on its direct beneficiaries, and are linked to the objectives of the programme. Two concepts of impact can be defined. Specific impacts are those effects occurring after a certain lapse of time but which are, nonetheless, directly linked to the action taken. Global impacts are longer-term effects affecting a wider population. Clearly, measuring this type of impact is complex and clear causal relationships are often difficult to establish.

Examples of additional indicators:

Focus/ priority	Additional impact indicator
Ex. 1: Organic farming	number of new jobs created in organic farming
	% of agricultural revenue created by organic farming
Ex. 2: Access to and use of ICT	increase of E-business in rural areas
	use of electronic banking/ financial transfers through internet

5.6.2 Practical hints on defining the type of an indicator

Hints for defining the type of the indicator:

1. Most of the time the output indicators express:
   - number of projects supported
   - number of beneficiaries directly reached with the project/ action
   - amount of support granted in euro

2. It is not always easy to maintain a clear line between the output and result indicators or between result and impact indicators. The following table with some key words can help to make the differences clearer.

OUTPUT	RESULT	IMPACT
- direct	- direct	- indirect
- realizations (operations undertaken because of the support)	- results of the undertaken operations	- long term horizon
		- results/ effects

3. Most of the time the impact indicators express:
   - an effect in the longer term
   - a macro economic change (income, employment, revenue, added value…)
   - a change in the overall context situation of a region or country (social, economical, environmental, agricultural, …changes) as outlined in the National Strategy Plan.

5.7 Step 3: Checking the quality criteria for indicators

During the last decade, the use of indicators became a wide spread instrument for monitoring and evaluation purposes. But indicators are equally valuable for communication, controlling and steering purposes. "Indicator" became a buzzword in the private sector as well as in the public sector. This has led to a mass of indicators. whereas not all indicators are as well defined and therefore relevant as they should be. In order to be useful, indicators must satisfy a number of quality criteria. Those quality criteria were enumerated in Task 1. It is not absolutely required that an indicator meets all these criteria: it is not because an indicator doesn't meet one of the above quality criteria that it becomes a bad indicator.

Following from the quality criteria, we can list some practical guidelines for defining a good indicator:

1. Only define indicators that are strictly necessary
2. Define as much as possible indicators that can be measured through existing data sources, or by the development of a simple registration system
3. If you make use of subjective indicators (indicators which express an opinion of persons and are not based on quantitative or qualitative facts), use a representative sample when the indicator is used for evaluation, control, communication or steering purposes
4. Make sure the indicator as it is defined can not be misinterpreted in terms of content, units, …
5. Avoid too many ratio indicators: indicators expressed as a percentage are more difficult to aggregate than absolute indicators and in general they are more complex. It is better to ask the composing elements of the ratio indicator separately
6. Define indicators that stay stable over a certain period of time, meaning they are not only relevant now but also in the future. In this way evolution can be measured.

5.8   Step 4: Developing an indicator fiche

In the last step of our four-steps approach, a detailed indicator fiche has to be elaborated. It is crucial to provide for each defined additional indicator a clear framework for interpretation. Otherwise the indicator will not be very useful. When the different users (programme manager, measure managers, project managers) interpret the indicators in a different way, the collected data will be unreliable. The fiche ensures a uniform interpretation of each indicator and hence makes aggregation of the indicator over all projects possible. Moreover, elaborating a fiche will improve the overall quality of the indicator.

An **indicator fiche** is the "identity card" of the indicator. It is a clear guideline for the user on:

- How to understand the indicator (definition, link to the objectives and activities, …)

- How to measure the indicator (unit of measurement, level of input, responsible actor for input, sources, …)

- How to interpret the indicator (defining norms, does a certain output or result confirm to that norm, …)

The following table gives the template and the description of all fields of an indicator fiche (confer supra, section 3.6.2).

Name of the indicator	Explanation
Definition of the indicator	Describes the composition, content and meaning of the indicator.
Type of indicator	Indicates if it is an input, output, result or impact indicator. It also indicates the objective and the measure to which it relates.
Subdivision	Sometimes, it is desirable to divide an indicator into subcategories, in order to provide more detail. E.g., a distinction according to gender, age, type of activity, type of geographic region, …
Unit of measurement	E.g., absolute number, number of full time equivalents (FTE), percentage, monetary unit, …
Level of collection	Indicates the lowest level on which the indicator needs to be collected: beneficiary level, project level, national measure level, national programme level.
Responsible actor for collection	Indicates the person, responsible for the *collection* of the necessary data to quantify the indicator. This actor must report/register these data in a clear and structured way so as to make it easy for the programme manager to gather these data for annual reporting to the Commission.
Collection method	Indicates how the (data for the) indicator should be collected (project administration, existing databases, documents, administrations, surveys, statistics, …). For each method, the responsible actor/ institution needs to be indicated as well (the promoter, Eurostat, national institute for statistics, OECD, EU institution, …)
Source	Indicates if the data sources are RDP-related or external (e.g. statistics agencies, local authorities).
Frequency	With which frequency does the indicator need to be measured? With which frequency does the indicator need to be reported?
Target	Where possible a target could be defined for the indicator. It can be a quantifiable objective that has to be reached after a certain period of time. A target will only be defined in the case of output indicators since they are defined at the level of the measure.

All measure fiches contain examples of additional indicators. These additional indicators are proposed, among others, based on:
- mid term evaluations previous programming period 2000-2006 where the indicators used by the Member States themselves were analysed
- monitoring and evaluation guidelines of the Commission

Consequently, the measure fiches can be of inspiration for the programme and measure managers to find additional indicators.

5.9 Timing of the definition of the set of indicators

It is crucial that the Member States start well on time with the composition of their set of indicators and this for the following reasons:
- All indicators that will be used by the Member States (common indicators and additional indicators) for monitoring and evaluation, have to be included in the National Strategy Plans
- All actors that are involved with monitoring and more specific with the collection of indicators must be aware of all indicators that need to be collected, at the beginning of the programme and at the start of the individual projects. It is much easier and less time consuming to collect data during the running period of a project with a timely and clearly defined set of indicators, than when ex-post actions have to be undertaken to collect the necessary data about projects that ended already.
- The set of indicators (both common and additional) that will be used during the implementation of the programme must not only serve monitoring purposes but also evaluation purposes (ex-ante, midterm, ex-post). In this sense it is recommended that the composition and/or the evaluation of the set of indicators is one of the subjects of the ex-ante evaluation. The external evaluation team could, among others:
    o Assist the programme manager in setting up the set of indicators and identifying relevant additional indicators;
    o Execute a quality control on the set of indicators which has been defined by the programme office;
    o Advice on how to implement the set of indicators;
    o Make sure that the set of indicators also serve the necessary evaluation purposes.

5.10 Actors involved in the definition and use of additional indicators

In a last paragraph we describe the different actors involved and their different tasks/ activities concerning the definition of set of indicators that will be used for monitoring and evaluating the programme.

Concerning the definition of additional indicators the following actors are involved:
- The European Commission
- The programme managers
- The measure managers

- The project managers/ end beneficiaries, depending on the type of the project/ action
- Third parties: for example other national or regional public administrations, private organizations, …
- Evaluators in the Member States for the execution of the obliged external evaluations of the programme (ex-ante, midterm, ex-post)

The next figure shows the process of the definition and the use of indicators. We further describe the process step by step in more detail.

Figure 20: Process of definition and use of indicators

1. Definition of common indicators

2. Definition of additional indicators

3. Evaluation of the set of indicators

4. Management of and responsibility for the indicators per Member State

5. Delegating the monitoring tasks

6. Registration and collection of the indicators

7. Reporting of the indicators

8. Evaluation of the programmes

9. Communication

Source: ECORYS/ IDEA Consult

Steps 1, 2: The process starts by defining the common and the additional indicators by the European Commission and the Programme/Measure managers. Also the external evaluation team for ex-ante evaluation can play an important role in defining the set of indicators (see above). The previous paragraphs already described in detail how the common indicators need to be selected and how the additional indicators need to be defined.

Step 3: The set of indicators can be validated by the EC and/or some experts. These experts must be well aware of the situation and the problems of the rural areas in the Member State. If the evaluators of the ex-ante evaluation were not involved in making the set of indicators, we recommend that at least they evaluate, during their ex-ante evaluation, the set of indicators that will be used.

Steps 4, 5: Once the set of indicators (common and additional) is finalised, the programme manager must inform everybody of his duties concerning the collection and reporting of the indicators. He delegates the different monitoring tasks to the measure managers, who can inform the project managers and beneficiaries of the support. After all, it is on this level (operational level) that most of the indicators have to be collected.

Step 6: The responsibility for the collection of indicators that can not be collected on the level of the operations/projects lies with the measure manager or the programme manager. They need to find the necessary sources for the required information. Possible sources are: national institutes of statistics, research centres, universities, other governmental bodies not directly involved with rural development, sector organisations, unions, … It is the responsibility of the programme and measure manager to provide the necessary reporting and collection tools to facilitate the quantification and the measurement of the indicators.

Step 7: When all indicators are collected, they need to be reported to the actors involved: the project managers need to report to the measure manager, the measure manager to the programme manager who, in turn, needs to report annually to the EC.

Step 8: In a next step the indicators will be used for analyses and evaluation:
- Independent external evaluation of the programme: external evaluators have to be appointed for an ex-ante, a midterm, and an ex-post evaluation of the programme.
- Decision taking concerning current and next programming period by the programme manager and the European Commission: a mid term evaluation can reveal the need to adapt the current programme or an ex ante evaluation can give direction to the defining of the new strategy for the next period.

Step 9: Finally all actors involved can communicate the results coming from the indicators in press articles, annual reports, monitoring reports, research documents, etc…

The following table summarizes once more the process of defining and using indicators and the different actors that are (or can be) involved for the different steps. As the table shows, there are many actors involved in the definition and use of indicators. The programme manager has the very important task to coordinate, delegate and manage all monitoring activities and to safeguard the correct registration and use of indicators. He is the central figure enabling the flow of information and indicators to all other parties involved.

Table 2: Division of tasks in the definition and use of the additional indicators

	EC	Programme manager	Measure manager	Project manager/ beneficiary	Evaluators	Others
1. Definition of common indicators	X					
2. Definition of additional indicators		X	X			
3. Evaluation of set of indicators	X				X (experts)	
4. Management and end responsibility of the indicators per Member State		X				
5. Delegating monitoring tasks		X →	X →			
6. Registration and collection of the indicators		X	X	X	X (impact indicators)	X (other data and indicator sources)
7. Reporting indicators	←	X ←	X ←	X		(e.g. national and regional authorities)
8. Evaluating the RDP by using the indicators	X				X	
9. Communicating indicators (press, annual reports,…)	X	X	X	X	X	X

Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult

6 TASK 4: Definition and measurement of output and result indicators for programme managers

6.1 Terms of Reference

The findings laid down in this chapter have been based on the Terms of Reference, in particular the section on Task 4. For the sake of ease and consistency, the specific wording of the Terms of Reference of this task has been included here:

"The study should not restrict itself to the definition of indicators, it should also provide a framework of guidance for the use of indicators during the implementation phase of the programme as well as necessary monitoring procedures. For each common output and result indicator particular attention should be given to the practical steps that must be carried out by project beneficiaries to accurately record relevant information. This will include the following elements:

- Clear definitions of the measurement of indicators relating to all necessary information required from the project beneficiary, including where appropriate guidance on the presentation and calculation of outputs and results.
- Timetables for the provision of information to programme managers in relation to the completion of the project and the benefits that follow.
- Suggestions on the type of support and capacity building that may be necessary to ensure effective monitoring across the programme.
- Advice on how programme managers should deal with problematic cases and failure to provide information".

6.2 Introduction

The purpose of Task 4 is to provide guidance on the use of indicators and the implementation of monitoring and evaluation procedures. We take as a starting point that monitoring is a broad concept covering all activities under the rural development programmes related to data collection, registration and reporting. These activities contribute:
- providing information to follow up of the progress of the programme;
- providing data to the EC in accordance with EC-guidelines on monitoring of rural development programmes (e.g. monitoring tables);
- providing data useful for external evaluators to analyse the effects and results of the programme, in accordance with EC-guidelines on evaluation of rural development programmes.

This text will provide guidance on how to implement such a multipurpose monitoring system.

The guidance is developed in the following way: first of all, we introduce the timetables for the provision of information within the framework of the rural development programmes. Thereafter, we provide a checklist in order to screen the necessary and available capacity for the monitoring and evaluation of a national or regional RDP. Thirdly, we treat the problems that can arise specifically during the monitoring process. Finally, the definition and measurement of the common indicators is described by means of indicator fiches. All fiches of the output and result indicators can be found in Annex 3.

6.3 Timetables for information provision

6.3.1 General timetable for evaluation and monitoring

In the multipurpose monitoring system the timing of the information provision is essential since monitoring and evaluation are time-related procedures. The figure on the next page presents the timetable for monitoring and evaluation during the programme period 2007-2013 in relation with the programme life cycle.

It is clear from the timetable that the rural development programme has important milestones during its life cycle with consequences for the work of the programme managers and his collaborators. We identify 4 milestones influencing the monitoring and evaluation activities: programme approval (2006), programme implementation (per calendar year between 2007 and 2013), programme revisions and adaptations (e.g. after mid term review of the programme in 2010), and the end of the programme.

Figure 21 Timetable for monitoring and evaluation in relation with the RDP's 2007-2013

	START			MID TERM			END				
	'05	**'06**	**'07**	**'08**	**'09**	**'10**	**'11**	**'12**	**'13**	**'14**	**'15**	**'16**
Programme life cycle	Programme development											
		Programme approval										
			MS Programme implementation Programme revision/adaption (annually and/of after evaluation)						End			
Monitoring	Defining set of indicators Establishing Monitoring system											
				Monitoring tables and progress reports To be submitted annually on 30/06								
Evaluation	Ex-ante (phase I)	Ex-ante (phase II)										
				On going evaluation							Ex post Eval. Report	
						MTE						

Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult

Milestone 1: programme approval
- Monitoring: programme managers will define the set of indicators that will be used to follow up the programme and as an information source for the evaluation of the programme. The common indicators provided by the EC can be complemented with additional indicators. Ex ante evaluators can support the programme manager in this task. The programme managers should also establish the monitoring system that will measure the RDP indicators (see further in the section on capacity building for more information on this point)
- Evaluation: an ex-ante evaluation is required in the stage of the programme development. The ex-ante evaluators need to be timely appointed by the programme authorities. Preferably, the selection process should start in 2005. There will be an ex-ante evaluation in two phases (see further guidance from the EC).

Milestone 2: programme implementation per calendar year
- Monitoring: every year the monitoring indicators need to be reported to the EC by the 30th of June. This exercise will start in 2008. Although the reporting of the data may be an annual action, data collection and registration is considered to be a continuous activity. The monitoring activities need to be carefully planned. Below, we introduce a more detailed timetable for the monitoring process.
- Evaluation: a system of ongoing evaluation on a multi-annual basis will be put in place. The results of these ongoing evaluation activities will be included in the annual progress report. In 2010 the ongoing evaluation shall take the form of a separate mid-term evaluation report (MTE). Again, the evaluator should be appointed on time, namely in 2007 if the results from the ongoing evaluation are to be included in the progress reports from 2008 onwards. For the analyses in the MTE, the evaluator will need the monitoring data collected between 2007 and 2009.

Milestone 3: programme revisions and adaptations
- Monitoring: changes in the programme[23] need to be reflected in the monitoring system. When new measures are added, the corresponding common indicators need to be measured also.
- Evaluation: the external evaluations should provide useful information that helps to adjust the programme. Especially the mid term evaluation is designed for this purpose.

Milestone 4: programme end
- Monitoring: the monitoring system will contain all information and the indicators about the programme implementation between 2007 and 2013 on an annual basis.
- Evaluation: the ongoing evaluation activities continue until 2015 and provide input for the ex post evaluation, also due in 2015. The evaluations performed towards the end of the programming period are important to assess the results and the impact of the programme. The recommendations provided by evaluators can feed the development of a next rural development programming period.

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[23] We assume here that it will be possible to adapt the programme annually for certain types of changes.

6.3.2 Timetable for the monitoring data

Programme managers are responsible for the well functioning of the monitoring system, but they need to cooperate with project managers and measure managers to make the monitoring system work. We will therefore look in more detail at the timetable for provision of monitoring information to the programme managers.

Figure 22 Timetable for information provision to programme managers
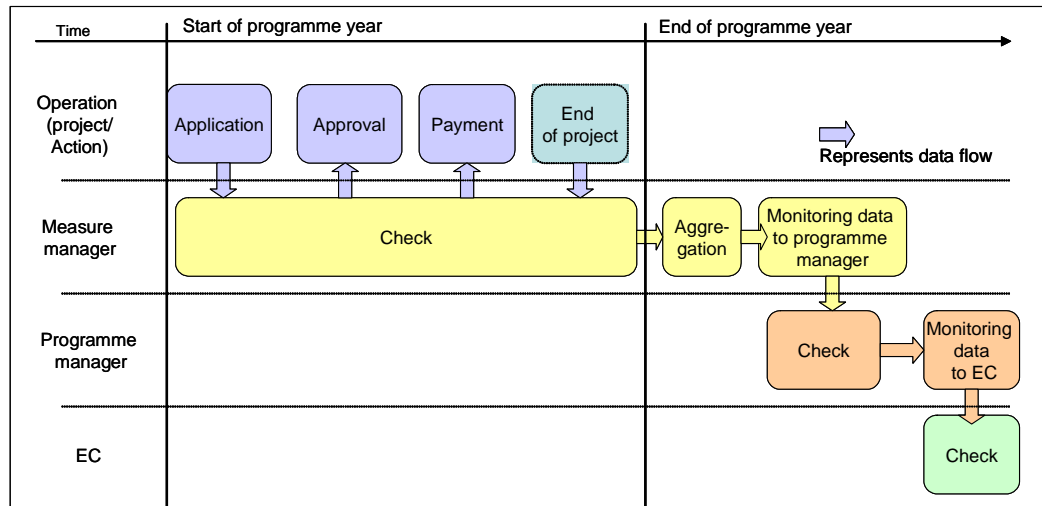
Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult

The timetable shows the monitoring steps that lead to the exchange of monitoring data on four levels:
- on the level of the projects: application for support, approval - leading to the start of the project, implementation of the project and payment of support, end of the project;
- on the level of the measure: check of project information, aggregation of project information, submission to programme manager;
- on the level of the programme: check and aggregation, submission to EC;
- on the level of the EC: check, and also aggregation of Member State information.

When applying the timetable in the Member State, it is important for programme managers to:
- define internal deadlines for measure managers calculating backwards from the deadline to provide the monitoring data to the EC;
- take into account that time is needed for checking, asking questions to the measure managers and quantifying the indicators;
- make sure that measure managers inform project managers of their information responsibilities, and use strict deadlines for the submission of applications. If a measure uses a continuous application system, it must be clear which dates are the cut-off points for one monitoring period.

The time schedule following from this exercise could be expressed as follows: on the 30th of June 2008, all Member States will need to report their monitoring data of the past programming year (2007) to the Commission. Counting backwards, internal deadlines can be fixed. The measure managers could be asked to hand over the monitoring data at

the latest on the 31st of March to the programme manager, who controls the data and prepares the annual progress report for the EC. The measure manager himself has time from 1st of January until 31st March to collect the necessary data from the project managers, to control the data and aggregate them on measure level. At the moment of application, the project managers should know exactly what timing they need to respect.

It is however difficult to determine in general a throughput time for each step in the monitoring process. This will depend on the number of measures, the number of projects and beneficiaries, the type of projects et cetera. With respect to the type of projects, the following aspects influence the timetable for the collection and reporting of monitoring data:

- support can be provided over several years (e.g. investment support). This is especially important for the monitoring of the financial data.
- projects may run over different years, consequently the end of the project may be in a year different from the year of application and approval. It should be clearly defined when the project data enter into the monitoring system.
- measures with continuous application systems differ from measures with calls for proposals in a certain period or against a fixed deadline.

6.4 Capacity building for the monitoring and evaluation of Rural Development Programmes: a checklist

Before elaborating the checklist that can be used to define the necessary capacity for the monitoring and evaluation system of Rural Development Programmes, we would like to stress two basic conditions for the functioning of this system.

A first condition is that the monitoring and evaluation system must be a transparent system. It must be clear who does what, and what the result of the activities must be.
The second condition is that the monitoring and evaluation system is conceived as a partnership project between the EC, the programme managers, the measure managers, the project managers and/or beneficiaries of the programme and the evaluators of the programme. It is clear that the first condition, namely a transparent system, will facilitate the second condition, namely a partnership of all actors.

By means of a checklist it is possible to screen the existing capacity available for monitoring and evaluation of the rural development programmes. If the capacity is not sufficient, suitable actions should be taken. Please note that we focus mainly on the internal capacity of the structure responsible for the programme management. We will therefore mainly consider the monitoring activities since evaluation is the task of an external evaluator. However, the programme manager and the measure managers have to reserve time to collaborate with the evaluator.

The checklist is presented below. It contains seven questions. Each question of the checklist will be explained. Moreover, per question we will indicate a number of tools that can help to define the monitoring capacity.

Table 3 Checklist for defining the monitoring and evaluation capacity

1. **Are the monitoring and evaluation guidelines clear?**

2. **Are (monitoring) instruments in place?**

3. **Are the responsibilities in the monitoring and evaluation process clear? Is there a clear division of tasks?**

4. **Is there enough staff to perform the monitoring activities?**

5. **Are the necessary skills available? Is training needed?**

6. **Is there a time schedule for monitoring and evaluation activities?**

7. **Is awareness raising needed?**

Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult

1. Are the monitoring and evaluation guidelines clear?

The monitoring and evaluation process for the rural development programmes is subject to requirements described in the EU regulations and in the monitoring and evaluation guidelines from the EC. The requirements must be clear to all the actors involved in the monitoring and evaluation process. We suggest to organise information sessions for all actors at the start of the programming period (these sessions should take place in 2006/2007, see timetable). These sessions have a double purpose:
- to inform about the requirements with respect to the monitoring of the RDP;
- to check the need for further information.

Tools:
- Documents containing EU regulations and EC guidelines
- Training and information sessions organised by EC, by the programme managers for measure managers, paying agency, local authorities,…
- Presentations by programme managers

2. Are monitoring instruments in place?

The monitoring instruments are instruments used to register, collect and report the data generated by the implementation of the programme measures. Programme managers, paying agencies, measure managers and project beneficiaries need different instruments:
- programme managers: monitoring tables based on the EC template, technical support, timetables, indicator fiches for common indicators (see EC) and additional indicators, control mechanisms;
- measure managers: monitoring sheets for the measure based on EC template, database containing information about applicants and beneficiaries of the measure, template for application by beneficiaries, technical support, timetables, control mechanism, indicator fiches for common indicators and additional indicators (for their measure);
- beneficiaries and/or project managers: they use application forms developed by measure managers.

These instruments need to be harmonised and compatible at all levels of the programme. The aggregation of the data at programme level will be facilitated by using standard tools. Digital data registration is a minimum requirement.

Tools:
- Indicator fiches for common and additional indicators
- Templates for data registration, collection and reporting (application forms, databases containing information of all applicants and beneficiaries)
- Monitoring tables (EC template)
- Timetables for data collection and reporting
- EC guidelines and other guidance documents
- Control mechanism including a control and audit track for each measure
- Technical support (ICT – system) to ensure the digital registration. Excel seems currently the most appropriate tool for data reporting. To create large databases and keep track of data flows (e.g. financial flows), more advanced software is needed.

3. Are the responsibilities in the monitoring and evaluation process clear? Is there a clear division of tasks?

It must be clear who is responsible for what aspect of the monitoring and evaluation. The programme manager is the main responsible. However in most of the cases he will delegate this responsibility. In the case of monitoring, the responsibility can be delegated to a separate monitoring unit[24] e.g. located at the programme secretariat. Part of the responsibility will also be delegated to measure managers, and to the beneficiaries of support. After all, the data need to be collected bottom up, starting at the level of the operations.

The division of responsibilities and corresponding tasks must be made at the start of the programme since the monitoring process should start together with the implementation of the programme and no later. It is also important that the programme manager thinks of a system to maximize the compliance of the monitoring tasks. This system can be based on bonuses and rewards in case of a timely and correct data delivery or on penalties if the data delivery does not meet the requirements.

In the case of evaluation, it is the responsibility of the programme manager to organise an independent external evaluation.

Tools:
- Organigram indicating the division of tasks
- Communication about monitoring and evaluation procedures, e.g. in the management committee and the steering committee of the programme
- Reward and/or penalty system in connection with data delivery to the programme manager/measure manager

4. Is there enough staff to perform the monitoring activities?

The collection and reporting of monitoring data is a time consuming activity, especially in the beginning of the programme when the system needs to be installed and tested. It is important to know how much staff is foreseen and to estimate how much staff is needed. If the available human resources are not sufficient, then it should be considered to look for additional capacity, e.g by recruiting new staff. As mentioned before, evaluation of

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[24] Monitoring can be outsourced to an external organisation. This was done e.g. by the Netherlands in the period 2000-2006. However, this outsourcing was not positively evaluated and is therefore not recommended.

the RDP has consequences for the capacity of the programme managers and the measure managers although evaluation is done by external evaluators. During the evaluation, the programme management will spend time in order to work together with the evaluators and to provide monitoring data and other information.

Although it is difficult to estimate the amount of labour time needed, we can identify the variables that influence the necessary amount of staff. These variables are the following:

- the number of measures in the programme: more measures require more labour time for monitoring, especially when each measure is coordinated by a separate administration involving different measure managers.
- the number of (potential) beneficiaries: the more beneficiaries that are involved and need to report data about their activities, the more labour time is needed to follow up, coordinate, delegate, control the monitoring activities
- the scale of the programme in terms of budget: the bigger the budget that needs to be controlled, the more monitoring is needed. Especially the financial monitoring will be more intense.
- the degree of automation of the data collection: when an ICT application is put in place (e.g. a web based application), monitoring will be less time consuming for the programme and measure manager. This holds under the condition that the application is user-friendly, integrated (all actors use the same system; the system covers both application and monitoring procedures) and highly performing (minimum interruptions, maximally operational)
- availability of other data sources: the more indicators that can be collected on the basis of an external official data source (Eurostat, National institute for statistics, …) or an internal existing database, the less staff will be needed for monitoring
- the level of experience and expertise of staff involved: an efficient monitoring is highly dependent on the persons in charge of monitoring. It is an added value if persons gained experience in the previous programming period.

Tools:
- Manpower planning
- Analysis of staffing in previous programming period

5. Are the necessary skills available? Is training needed?

The team responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the RDP should have a range of skills and competences. Given the complexity of the monitoring process, there are a number of skills required to implement the monitoring activities. The following skills apply:

- Quantitative methods (minimum mathematical background)
- ICT knowledge
- Knowledge of agricultural and rural development policy measures
- Analytical skills
- Process management skills

It is also an advantage to have team members with a few years of experience in the field of monitoring and evaluation on one hand, or the implementation of rural development policy measures on the other hand. Also experience with other EU structural funds like ERDF is relevant. This experience can be gained in the programming period 2000-2006.

If the skills are not (sufficiently) available, they can be acquired through additional training for staff members or by hiring external expertise (e.g an ICT-consultant to design the payment registration system).

Tools:
- Staff screening
- Skills and competences check lists (e.g. available at the human resources department)

6. Is there a time schedule for monitoring and evaluation activities?

In order to respect the deadlines requested by the EC, a time schedule needs to be developed and communicated to all actors involved in the monitoring and evaluation process.

A general timetable has been developed in section 6.3. However, this timetable needs to be detailed and specified in terms of deadlines, tasks, names of responsible persons per task according to the specific situation of each Member State. This is required for each measure and at programme level, and for each evaluation moment. Also project beneficiaries need strict deadlines for the submission of their application and for the provision of other information.

7. Is awareness raising needed?

Monitoring and evaluation activities are not always recognised as important for the implementation of policy measures. There can be several indications for a lack of awareness or even resistance for the monitoring and evaluation system. For instance:
- lack of interest for the information sessions at the start of the programme
- head of public administrations responsible for the measures are not willing to commit staff to the monitoring tasks
- late data delivery, no data delivery, data are of low quality
- measure managers hesitate to collaborate with the evaluators

What can be done? Both preventive and curative actions are possible.
Preventive actions:
- explain the role of monitoring and evaluation in the programming cycle at the start of the programme
- explain the usefulness of monitoring data for all actors
- explain the consequences of not fulfilling the monitoring requirements ('carrot and stick' strategy)
- create a partnership for the evaluation, make sure that measure managers are involved (e.g. through participation in the steering committee for the evaluation study)

Curative actions:
- explain the role of monitoring and evaluation in the programming cycle
- communicate results of the monitoring exercise (e.g. comprehensive report highlighting intermediate results of the RDP)
- provide additional support or additional resources to measure managers, evaluators, monitoring unit (e.g. additional staff, additional information and guidance,…)

6.5 Action plan for setting up monitoring and evaluation system

In this paragraph we describe which concrete actions the programme manager has to undertake to set up a monitoring and evaluation system before the new programming period starts.

1. Information session

In a general information session the programme manager invites all measure managers and all other actors that will be involved with monitoring and evaluation. During this session the following topics can be dealt with:
- General objectives of monitoring
- Monitoring and evaluation requirements of the EC, DG Agri, with discussion of the EC material and guidelines

2. Screening current monitoring

In a second step all the measure managers have to make an inventory of the monitoring tools that they used for their measure in the previous programming period. They need to analyse which indicators are collected with the current tools. This list of indicators need to be evaluated according to the quality criteria (see task 1, task 3) of a good indicator and on the basis of previous experiences.

Subsequently, the measure manager and the programme manager need to make a comparison between the current set of indicators and the "general indicator table" for the new programming period as proposed by the EC. In addition, the current set of indicators also needs to be compared to the new national or regional RDP. After all, only for the measures relevant for the national/regional RDP, the common indicators from the general table need to be collected obligatory. Therefore it is very important to start on time with the screening of the current monitoring and evaluation system.

3. Analyzing the gaps in the set of indicators
4. Adapt current tools
5. Set up new tools

When comparing the set of current indicators with the general table of indicators as proposed by the EC, two types of "gaps" can occur:
- It can be the case that with the current monitoring tools some required indicators are not yet captured.
- It can be the case that important information specific for the own RDP is not captured by the required general table of indicators.

In the latter case the measure manager and the programme manager have to evaluate if the information can be subject to an additional indicator. This analysis can be done by the four-steps-approach (see task 3).

In both cases new indicators are introduced in the existing set of indicators. This has repercussions on the necessary monitoring tools. Here there are two options:
- Adapting the existing monitoring tools. For example the measure manager monitors the activities through an application form which is then inputted in a database. It might be enough to add an extra field in the application form to capture the new indicator.
- Creating a new monitoring tool. When it is not possible to measure a new indicator through adapting the existing tools, a new tool must be created. This can be for example a survey that will be held at the level of the beneficiaries to capture several of the result indicators.

6. Analyzing the excess of indicators in current set of indicators
7. Four-steps approach for additional indicators

When comparing the set of current indicators with the general table of indicators as proposed by the EC, it is also possible that the current set of indicators contains indicators which are not required by the EC. In this case the programme and measure manager have to analyse if it is desirable to define these indicators as additional indicators, following the four-steps-approach for additional indicators (see task 3). Otherwise these indicators can be omitted.

8. Set of indicators for new programming period

Step 1 to 7 lead to a new set of indicators that will be applied for the new programming period. We suggest to validate this set of indicators by all actors involved with monitoring in order to reach consensus on this set. If possible we recommend also validation with (external) actors involved in evaluation. In this sense, the screening of the existing set of indicators, the setting up or at least the validation of the new set of indicator for the monitoring and evaluation of the RDP, can be part of the ex ante evaluation. Also the European Commission can validate the Member State's set of indicators.

9. Implementation of the tools and indicators for new programming period

In a last step the new or adapted tools and the new set of indicators have to be implemented before the start of the new programming period.

6.6 Problem solving

The purpose of this section is to provide advice on how programme managers can deal with problematic situations concerning the data delivery. The table below gives an overview of some of the problems that might occur. We have identified the corresponding strategies that can be used to prevent or solve these problems or threats. A general recommendation is to discuss the problems with the actors concerned, to look together for the reasons and to try to find common solutions.

Table 4 Overview of solutions for problems with the monitoring activities

Problem/threat	Description	Solution
Resistance against monitoring tasks	It is possible that there is no will to perform the monitoring tasks as necessary (see also checklist, question 7) or to collaborate with the evaluators	• explain the role and the usefulness of monitoring and evaluation in the programming cycle • communicate results of the monitoring exercise (e.g. comprehensive report highlighting intermediate results of the RDP and/or of the (intermediate) evaluation • provide additional support and/ or additional resources to measure managers, evaluators, monitoring unit
Bad data delivery	Late delivery of data or no delivery of data to the programme manager	• check if it was clear what kind of information is required • check if there was a common understanding of

			the time table
		•	check the implementation status of the measures (if a measure has not been implemented yet, no data can be provided)
Low quality of data	Inconsistent data, missing data, wrong calculations	•	check if the reporting template is user friendly
		•	check if there is sufficient staff to provide the data
		•	check if the indicator fiches have been applied e.g. if calculations have been performed correctly
Changes in the programme	Deactivation of measures, adding new measures	•	ensure flexibility in the monitoring system (e.g. inform new measure managers timely about the monitoring requirements)
Change of staff	This concerns changes of staff involved in the monitoring tasks	•	ensure transmission of tasks to a colleague
		•	ensure the formation of a new staff member

Source: ECORYS/IDEA Consult

In general, it is important to prevent problems. Many problems can be avoided by a few simple procedures:
- Communication about deadlines
- User friendly reporting formats
- Appropriate guidance and manuals accessible to all persons involved in the monitoring
- Focus monitoring requirements on the essential data (do not ask what is available elsewhere, or what is not essential)
- Make clear that evaluation is different from audit and inspection

6.7 Indicator fiches

The indicator fiches for the common output and result indicators provide detailed information on the definition and measurement of the indicators. The fiches are presented in Annex 3.

6.8 Measure fiches

6.8.1 Objective of the measure fiche

The measure fiche has been developed as a practical instrument for the national/ regional programme makers and programme managers. The measure fiche should reflect the link between a particular measure and the overall intervention logic. It explains the rationale of a particular measure, or why a particular measure is needed. The fiche should give clear indication to the Member States when a particular measure is relevant to the particular situation of the rural development in the Member State. It should provide guidance to the Member States:
- to develop their own rural development programme;
- to set up their set of common indicators;

- to define their additional indicators.

The important elements of a measure fiche are described in the template below.

6.8.2 Template measure fiche

Name of the measure	
Rationale of the measure	The rationale of the measure describes how and where the measure is linked with, or located in the intervention logic. It is a textual description of the intervention logic. It describes what is needed to implement the measure, to what it will lead and how the measure contributes to the overall objectives of the programme. The rationale of the measure needs to provide guidance to the Member State in order to decide whether or not this measure is important for the rural development in their regions.
Content of the measure	The content of the measure gives an indication of possible activities that can be supported under this measure. This description is illustrative and does not have an exhaustive character.
Target group	
Target area	
Common indicators	- Input, output and result indicators corresponding to the measure - Baseline and impact indicators: the measure contributes to changes in the baseline situation of the fields covered by these indicators
Example of additional indicator	
Link rationale of the measure and indicators	Presentation of the intervention logic of the measure by means of a figure, based on the common indicators corresponding to the measure

The elaborated measure fiches can be found in Annex 4.

7 TASK 5: Proposed programme reporting arrangements

7.1 Terms of Reference

The findings laid down in this chapter have been based on the Terms of Reference, in particular the section on Task 5. For the sake of ease and consistency, the specific wording of the Terms of Reference of this task has been included here:

"The study should propose a general framework for the reporting of programme outputs and results at the level of the axis, the programme, and the Member State. For each main area of intervention it should be possible to identify the corresponding financial input and common result indicator. The study should assess the feasibility of identifying the financial input and common result by output indicator. The study should also outline possible reporting arrangements for additional output and result indicators".

7.2 Introduction

During the programming period of an RDP, several tools are used within the reporting framework to get a grasp on the progress of the programmes. For each programme several reports are produced: reports of project promoters, annual reports, financial reports, reporting of the monitoring tables, evaluation reports, reporting of the evaluation indicators, etc. These reports are submitted to many different actors: i.e. EC, national and regional authorities.

In this reporting framework a multitude of indicators are contained, which are generally not easy to aggregate. In addition, the coherence between data of payment authority, monitoring tables and evaluations is not always optimal. There is clearly a need for harmonizing the indicator reporting. This is one of the experiences from the mid-term evaluations 2000-2006 of the RDPs.

The objective of this task is to study the feasibility of harmonized and simplified reporting for common as well as additional indicators. We will focus here on the monitoring tables as core instrument for indicator reporting. First, we will identify difficulties experienced by all parties with the monitoring tables proposed by the Commission during the current programming period (2000-2006). Thereafter, we propose a reporting format for the new programming period.

7.3 Overview of difficulties with monitoring tables 2000-2006

With respect to the monitoring data, the current reporting format is the Excel file containing the monitoring tables. There is a central template provided by the EC to the Member States. The templates are accompanied by guidelines on how to complement the tables. The monitoring tables have been used since the start of the rural development programmes in 2000-2001. At the end of 2004, it became possible to do web based reporting of the monitoring tables by means of CAP-IDIM.

However, the implementation has not been without problems. We have made an inventory of problems identified at EC level and in the Member States[25]. We have also indicated the strong points in the monitoring tables. We distinguish four categories: the procedure for reporting, the technical aspects of the monitoring tables, the content of the tables and the use of CAP-IDIM.

1. Procedure for reporting	
Strengths	Weaknesses
- Guidelines for monitoring tables are clear (documents provided by EC) - Deadline of 30th of June following each reporting period covered is feasible	- No clarity about control and validation procedure by EC - Existence of different tolerance levels within the EC with respect to missing data and the quality of data - It is felt that it is more important to fill all cells, than to focus on quality of the data delivered - Lack of information about the purpose of monitoring exercise, and what is done with the figures by the EC - Need for contact persons at EC (help desk function) - It is difficult to match financial data (running from October year x to October year x+1) in the monitoring tables since the tables follow calendar years. - It is felt that currently too many indicators have to be collected - The indicators were not known by the Member States at the beginning of the programme period - The context indicators are not always in line with existing national and international data sources (e.g. National institutes for statistics, Eurostat).

2. Technical aspects of the monitoring tables	
Strengths	Weaknesses
- Excel format is a common standard tool that is user friendly	- Frequent errors because of different units of measurement (euro/million of euro, ha/ thousands of ha) - There are missing data, the amount of data available varies across the RDP's - Protected cells in the sheets reduce flexibility

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[25] Source: STAR Committee, Meeting on stocktaking of monitoring and evaluation experience in rural development 2000-2006, 21.01.05 and interviews with EC staff and with programme managers.

	(e.g. it is not possible to fill in a total amount if the categories are not known) - If there is no match between the indicators in the monitoring tables and the existing databases about the RDP measures in the Member States, it requires a lot of work to calculate all figures.

3. Content of the monitoring tables	
Strengths	Weaknesses
- Same type of indicators applied for all measures	- Definitions of the required indicators are not always clear and can be interpreted in different ways - Difficult to link to programme achievements (results, results) - Information captured in the monitoring tables have not always been useful for evaluators

4. CAP-IDIM	
Strengths	Weaknesses
- Web based reporting: could increase efficiency of the monitoring procedure - Allows for automatic aggregation of data at EU-level - Large capacity, keeps track of all information per RDP per year	- The system is not very printer friendly: files can only be printed per sheet, a pdf-file is then created - The Member State does not have a copy for its own use. It must use Excel for this but then it is more work (every figure needs to be copied to CAP-IDIM). Most of the MS still use the Excel file, which the EC then loads into CAP-IDIM - The difference between 'update' procedure (for input of data) and 'submit' procedures (for confirming the data input) is not always clear

We can conclude from this overview that many of the weaknesses are being remediated by the preparatory work by the EC for the programming period 2007-2013, for instance:
- information will be provided about the purpose of the monitoring exercise;
- indicators will be known to the Member States at the beginning of the programming period;
- the financial reporting will be aligned with the calendar years;
- context indicators will be aligned with existing data sources;
- there will be guidance about the definitions of the indicators;
- indicators for monitoring and evaluation will be aligned.

The most important weaknesses that remain a challenge to overcome are:
- improve the procedural aspects of the monitoring system with special attention for data delivery (quantity and quality);
- the technical aspects of the monitoring tables (e.g. protected cells, unit of measurement);
- alignment of Member States monitoring systems and EC monitoring tables;
- use of CAP-IDIM.

7.4 Proposed reporting format

We elaborated a first draft of a reporting format. We kept in mind the following criteria:

- User friendly: the table is made up in Excel. We also minimized the amount of sheets by taking one sheet for each programme axis.
- Integrated:
    o Input and output: the table contains as well the input as the output indicators. This makes it easier to make the link between input and output. The public expenditure (total amount and amount of EARDF) are the input indicators. The output indicators have been defined as a set of common output indicators per measure (see also Chapter 3, Task 2). If a Member State defines additional output indicators (see Chapter 4, Task 3), they need to be integrated in the reporting format.
    o Target and realised: the table gives the target for each indicator that has to be defined at the beginning of the programme, and the realised numbers in each year.
    o Result indicators: if the result indicators will be reported with the same timing and frequency as the output indicators, the corresponding subdivisions.
- Comparable over time: the reporting results of all programming years are put next to each other in one table. This makes the table a good instrument to follow up progress in one glance.
- Relevant input for evaluation: because objectives and realised values can be compared in one table, it becomes easy to calculate the progress and the effectiveness of the programme.

The print screens on the next page shows a possible reporting template following the principles described above. We elaborated the template for the measure "Vocational training and information actions".

Furthermore the new Regulation adopted by the Council on September 20th, 2005 provides for several reporting moments. From June 30th, 2008 until June 30th, 2016 the Management Authority must send to the Commission an annual progress report on the implementation of the programme. Each of the progress reports must contain the following elements:

- changes in the general context and in the Community and national policies that have a direct impact on the implementation of the programme;
- the progress of the programme in relation to the objectives set;
- the progress of the financial implementation of the programme;
- a summary of the ongoing evaluation activities;
- the steps taken to ensure the quality of the programme implementation;
- a declaration on compliance with Community policies;
- where applicable, re-utilisation of aid.

Axis 1: Improving competitiveness of the agricultural and the forestry sector

	to be filed in
	automatic calculation

Table of input and output indicators

Measure	Type of indicator	Indicator	subindicator	Target	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL	% of target realised	Remarks
Vocational training and information actions	input	Amount of public expenditure realised ('000 EUR)	total									**0**	**0,0%**	
			of which EAFRD									0	0,0%	
	output	Number of participants to training	total									**0**	**0,0%**	
		according to gender:	male									0	0,0%	
			female									0	0,0%	
			gender not known									0	0,0%	
		according to age category:	<25									0	0,0%	
			25≤age<40									0	0,0%	
			40≤age<55									0	0,0%	
			55≤									0	0,0%	
		according to type of activity:	a demonstration project,									0	0,0%	
			a course									0	0,0%	
			a workshop									0	0,0%	
			an information session									0	0,0%	
			other									0	0,0%	
		according to content of the activity:	management, administrative and marketing skills									0	0,0%	
			ICT training									0	0,0%	
			new technological processes and machinery									0	0,0%	
			new regulations									0	0,0%	
			product quality									0	0,0%	
			maintenance and enhancement of landscape and protection of the environment									0	0,0%	
			other									0	0,0%	
		according to type of participant:	participants active in farming									0	0,0%	
			participants active in food industry									0	0,0%	
			participants active in forestry									0	0,0%	
		number of training days received (by all participants)	total									**0**	**0,0%**	

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  - http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/events/salzburg/index_en.htm and

  - http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/events/salzburg/proceedings_en.pdf

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Annex 1. Hierarchy of objectives

Hierarchy of Objectives - Rural Development Regulation [26]

Objectives (art. 4)	Sub-objectives	Measure Objectives	Measures
Improving the competitive-ness of the agricultural and forestry sector	*Promoting knowledge and improving human potential*	-to ensure an appropriate level of technical and economic training and knowledge, including expertise in new IT to meet the requirements of the evolution of agriculture and forestry (15)	20 (a) (i) vocational training, information actions, including diffusion of scientific knowledge and innovative practices for persons engaged in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors
		- to facilitate the establishment of young farmers and structural adjustments of their holdings (16)	20 (a) (ii) setting up of young farmers
		- to achieve a significant structural change of transferred holdings (17)	20 (a) (iii) early retirement of farmers and farm workers
		- to improve the sustainable management of holdings (18)	20 (a) (iv) use of advisory services by farmers and forest holders
		- to help farmers and forest holders to adapt, improve and facilitate management and improve overall performance by further enhancing human potential (19)	20 (a) (v) setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as forestry advisory services
	Restructuring and developing physical potential and promoting innovation	- to improve the economic performance of holdings through better use of production factors including the introduction of new technologies and innovation (21)	20 (b) (i) modernization of agricultural holdings
		- to broaden the economic value of private forests and increase diversification of production and enhancing market opportunities, while maintaining sustainable management (22)	20 (b) (ii) improving the economic value of forests

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[26] Remark: the table summarises the hierarchy of objectives of the rural development regulation. This hierarchy lays out in a logical presentation the links between the overall objectives of the regulation and the measures which can be supported: *Objective -> Sub-objective -> Measure Objective -> Measure Activity*. The tables cover the three main objectives - competitiveness, environment, rural economy - as well as the Leader Axis and horizontal objectives -e.g. Lisbon and Göteborg. For each of the objectives the reference in the legal text is provided. The number in brackets refer to the whereas clause, except where the full article reference is given. It should be noted that the presentation of the objectives is not always uniform in the legal text and may have required interpretation.

		- to improve the processing and marketing of primary agricultural and forestry products through investment in improved efficiency, renewable energy, new technologies and new market opportunities (23)	20 (b) (iii) adding value to agricultural and forestry products
		- to take advantage of market opportunities through widespread innovative approaches in developing, new products, processes and technologies (24)	20 (b) (iv) cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and in the forestry sector
		- to improve infrastructure necessary to increase the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry (25)	20 (b) (v) improving and developing infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry
		- to restore agricultural production potential and introduce appropriate prevention measures contributing to competitiveness (25)	20 (b) (vi) restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and introducing appropriate prevention actions
	Improving the quality of agricultural production and products	- to promote a more rapid implementation by farmers of demanding standards based on Community legislation (27)	20 (c) (i) helping farmers to adapt to demanding standards based on Community legislation
		- to encourage farmers to participate in schemes which provide assurances to consumers on the quality of products or production process (28)	20 (c) (ii) supporting farmers who participate in food quality schemes
		- to improve consumers' awareness of the existence of quality schemes supported under rural development programmes (29)	20 (c) (iii) supporting producer groups for information and promotion activities for products under food quality schemes
	Transitional measures for the New Member States	- to encourage semi-subsistence farms in the NMS to move into the market (30)	20 (d) (i) supporting semi-subsistence agricultural holdings undergoing restructuring
		- to encourage the setting-up of producer groups in the NMS (30)	20 (d) (i) supporting setting up of producer groups

Objectives (art. 4)	Sub-objectives	Measure Objectives	Measures
Improving the environment and the countryside	*Sustainable use of agricultural land*	- to contribute in mountain areas with handicaps to the continued use of agricultural land thereby maintaining the countryside, as well as maintaining and promoting sustainable farming systems (33)	36 (a) (i) natural handicap payments to farmers in mountain areas
		- to contribute in other areas with handicaps to the continued use of agricultural land thereby maintaining the countryside, as well as maintaining and promoting sustainable farming systems (33)	36 (a) (ii) payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas
		- to help farmers to address specific disadvantages resulting from the implementation of Council directives on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and those in the field of water policy in river basin areas (34)	36 (a) (iii) Natura 2000 payments and payments linked to Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD)
		- to respond to increasing demand for environmental services by encouraging farmers and other land managers to introduce or continue agricultural production methods compatible with the protection and improvement of the environment, the landscape, natural resources etc (35)	36 (a) (iv) agri-environment payments
		- to encourage farmers to adopt high standards of animal welfare which to beyond the relevant mandatory standards (36)	36 (a) (v) animal welfare payments
		- to support commitments undertaken under agri-environmental measures or other environmental objectives and enhance the public amenity value on-farm of Natura 2000 areas and other areas of high natural value (37)	36 (a) (vi) support for non-productive investments
	Sustainable use of forestry land	- to extend forest resources on agricultural land to contribute to the protection of the environment, the prevention of natural hazards and mitigate climate change (38)	36 (b) (i) first afforestation of agricultural land
		- to promote the combination of extensive agriculture and forestry systems, aimed at the production of high quality wood and other forest products (39)	36 (b) (ii) first establishment of agroforestry systems on agricultural land
		- to extend forest resources on non-agricultural land to contribute to the protection of the environment, the prevention of natural hazards and mitigate climate change (38)	36 (b) (iii) first afforestation of non-agricultural land

		- to help farmers to address specific disadvantages resulting from the implementation of Council directives on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (34)	36 (b) (iv) Natura 2000 payments
		- to respond to increasing demand for environmental services by encouraging forest holders to enhance biodiversity, preserve high value forest systems and reinforce the protective value of forests with respect to soil erosion, maintenance of water resources	36 (b) (v) forest-environment payments
		- to restore forestry potential in forests damaged by natural disasters and fire and introduce preventive actions (42)	36 (b) (vi) restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions
		- to support commitments undertaken under forest-environmental measures or other environmental objectives and enhance the public amenity value of the areas concerned (43)	36 (b) (vii) support for non-productive investments
Objectives (art. 4)	*Sub-objectives*	Measure Objectives	Measures
To improve quality of life in rural areas and diversification of economic activity	*Diversification of the rural economy*	-to diversify farming activities towards non-agricultural activities, develop non-agricultural activities and promote employment (46)	52 (a) (i) diversification into non-agricultural activities
			52 (a) (ii) support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises with a view to promoting entrepreneurship and developing the economic fabric
			52 (a) (iii) encouragement of tourism activities
	Improvement of the quality of life in the rural areas	- to improve basic services, including local access to ICTs and carry out investment making rural areas more attractive in order to reverse trends towards economic and social decline and depopulation of the countryside (46)	52 (b) (i) basic services for the economy and rural population
			52 (b) (ii) village renewal and development
			52 (b) (iii) conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
	To reinforce territorial coherence and synergies	- to enhance human potential required for the diversification of the local economy and provision of local services (46)	52 (c) training and information for economic actors operating in the fields covered by axis 3

	Sub-objectives	Measure Objectives	Measures
		- to increase capacity for the implementation of local strategies (48)	52 (d) skills acquisition and animation with a view to preparing and implementing a local development strategy
Leader (Axis 4)	*- To implement the Leader approach in mainstream rural development programming*	- to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector by means of support for restructuring, development and innovation	63 (a) (i)* implementing local development strategies with a view to achieving the objective of axis 1
		- to improve the environment and the countryside by means of support for land management	63 (a) (ii)* implementing local development strategies with a view to achieving the objective of axis 2
		- to improve quality of life in rural areas and encourage the diversification of economic activities	63 (a) (iii)* implementing local development strategies with a view to achieving the objective of axis 3
		- to promote cooperation and best practice	63 (b) implementing cooperation projects involving objectives selected under 63 (a)
		- to increase capacity for the implementation of LEADER	63 (c) running the local action group, acquiring skills and animating the territory as referred to in article 59 (studies, information, training of staff, promotional events and training of leaders).
Technical Assistance			66 technical assistance for programme preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities.
Horizontal objectives	- to contribute to the achievement of economic and social cohesion policy objectives (1) - to integrate other major policy priorities as spelt out in the conclusions of the Lisbon and Göteborg European Councils for competitiveness (growth and employment) and sustainable development (1) - to take account of the particular nature of agricultural activity which results from the social structure and from structural and natural disparities between the various rural areas (2) - to strengthen the arrangements for partnership (4) - to encourage the elimination of disparities and the promotion of equality between women and men (7) - to take into account the diversity of situations ranging from remote rural areas suffering from depopulation and decline to peri-urban rural areas under increasing pressure from urban centres (11)		

Source: EC, DG Agriculture based on Council Regulation on Rural Development, adopted on September 20, 2005.

Annex 2. General Indicator table

Hierarchy of Objectives - Rural Development Regulation

General Indicator table

Objectives (art. 4)	Sub-objectives	Measure Objectives	Measures	Output	Result	Impact
Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector	*Promoting knowledge and improving human potential*	-to ensure an appropriate level of technical and economic training and knowledge, including expertise in new IT to meet the requirements of the evolution of agriculture and forestry (15)	20 (a) (i) vocational training, information actions, including diffusion of scientific knowledge and innovative practices for persons engaged in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors	- Number of participants to training - Number of training days received	- Successful agricultural training results: number of actors involved in the agricultural food and forestry sectors that successfully ended a training activity	Increase in training and education in agriculture Increase in labour productivity in agriculture Improved age structure in agriculture Increase in labour productivity in forestry
		- to facilitate the establishment of young farmers and structural adjustments of their holdings (16)	20 (a) (ii) setting up of young farmers	- Number of assisted young farmers - Total volume of investment	- Gross Value Added by supported farmers and forest holders	
		- to achieve a significant structural change of transferred holdings (17)	20 (a) (iii) early retirement of farmers and farm workers	- Number of farmers early retired - Number of farm workers early retired - Number of hectares released		
		- to improve the sustainable management of holdings (18)	20 (a) (iv) use of advisory services by farmers and forest holders	- Number of farmers supported - Number of forest holders supported		
		- to help farmers and forest holders to adapt, improve and facilitate management and improve overall performance by further enhancing human potential (19)	20 (a) (v) setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as forestry advisory services	- Number of newly set up management, relief or advisory services		

	Restructuring and developing physical potential and promoting innovation	- to improve the economic performance of holdings through better use of production factors including the introduction of new technologies and innovation (21)	20 (b) (i) modernization of agricultural holdings	- Number of farm holdings that received investment support - Total volume of investment	- Gross Value Added by supported farmers and forest holders - Number of holdings introducing new products and/or new techniques	Increase in labour productivity in agriculture Increase in labour productivity in forestry Increase in labour productivity in food industry Increase in gross fixed capital formation in forestry Increase in gross fixed capital formation in agriculture Increase in gross fixed capital formation in food industry Increase in economic development of primary sector Increase in economic development of food sector
		- to broaden the economic value of private forests and increase diversification of production and enhancing market opportunities, while maintaining sustainable management (22)	20 (b) (ii) improving the economic value of forests	- Number of forest holdings that received investment support - Total volume of investment		
		- to improve the processing and marketing of primary agricultural and forestry products through investment in improved efficiency, renewable energy, new technologies and new market opportunities (23)	20 (b) (iii) adding value to agricultural and forestry products	- Number of holdings supported - Total volume of investment		
		- to take advantage of market opportunities through widespread innovative approaches in developing, new products, processes and technologies (24)	20 (b) (iv) cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and in the forestry sector	- Number of cooperation initiatives supported		
		- to improve infrastructure necessary to increase the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry (25)	20 (b) (v) improving and developing infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry	- Number of operations supported - Total volume of investment		
		- to restore agricultural production potential and introduce appropriate prevention measures contributing to competitiveness (25)	20 (b) (vi) restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and introducing appropriate prevention actions	- Number of beneficiaries - Total volume of investment		
	Improving the quality of agricultural production and	- to promote a more rapid implementation by farmers of demanding standards based on Community legislation (27)	20 (c) (i) helping farmers to adapt to demanding standards based on Community legislation	- Number of beneficiaries	- Gross Value Added by supported farmers and forest holders	Increase in gross fixed capital formation in agriculture

	products	- to encourage farmers to participate in schemes which provide assurances to consumers on the quality of products or production process (28)	20 (c) (ii) supporting farmers who participate in food quality schemes	- Number of supported farm holdings participating in a quality scheme	- Increased value of agricultural production under recognized quality label/standards	Increase in economic development of primary sector
		- to improve consumers' awareness of the existence of quality schemes supported under rural development programmes (29)	20 (c) (iii) supporting producer groups for information and promotion activities for products under food quality schemes	- Number of supported actions		Increase in economic development of food sector Increase in labour productivity in food industry
	Transitional measures for the New Member States	- to encourage semi-subsistence farms in the NMS to move into the market (30)	20 (d) (i) supporting semi-subsistence agricultural holdings undergoing restructuring	- Number of semi-subsistence farm holdings supported	- Number of farms entering the market	Increase in labour productivity in agriculture
		- to encourage the setting-up of producer groups in the NMS (30)	20 (d) (i) supporting setting up of producer groups	- Number of supported producer groups - Turnover of supported producer groups		Increase in economic development of primary sector
Objectives (art. 4)	*Sub-objectives*	Measure Objectives	Measures	Output	Result	Impact
Improving the environment and the countryside	*Sustainable use of agricultural land*	- to contribute in mountain areas with handicaps to the continued use of agricultural land thereby maintaining the countryside, as well as maintaining and promoting sustainable farming systems (33)	36 (a) (i) natural handicap payments to farmers in mountain areas	- Number of supported holdings in mountain areas - Supported agricultural land in mountain areas	- Area under successful land management contributing to: - improvement of bio diversity - improvement of water quality - climate change	Increase in agricultural areas under Natura 2000 Increase in high nature value farmland areas Increase in water quality Water quality: decrease in pollution by pesticides and
		- to contribute in other areas with handicaps to the continued use of agricultural land thereby maintaining the countryside, as well as maintaining and promoting sustainable farming systems (33)	36 (a) (ii) payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas	- Number of supported holdings in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas - Agricultural land area supported in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas		

					- improvement of soil quality	nitrates
	{Sustainable use of agricultural land}	- to help farmers to address specific disadvantages resulting from the implementation of Council directives on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and those in the field of water policy in river basin areas (34)	36 (a) (iii) Natura 2000 payments and payments linked to Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD)	- Number of supported holdings in Natura 2000 areas/under WFD - Supported agricultural land area under Natura 2000/under WFD	- Avoidance of marginalization and land abandonment - High nature value farmland areas supported	Biodiversity: increase in population of farmland birds Soil: decrease of areas at risk of soil erosion Soil: increase in organic farming
		- to respond to increasing demand for environmental services by encouraging farmers and other land managers to introduce or continue agricultural production methods compatible with the protection and improvement of the environment, the landscape, natural resources etc (35)	36 (a) (iv) agri-environment payments	- Number of farm holdings and holdings of other land managers receiving support - Total area under agri-environmental support - Total number of contracts - Physical area under agri-environmental support - Number of applications related to genetic resources		Climate change: increase in production of renewable energy from agriculture Climate change: decrease of share of agriculture in GHG emissions
		- to encourage farmers to adopt high standards of animal welfare which to beyond the relevant mandatory standards (36)	36 (a) (v) animal welfare payments	- Number of farm holdings receiving support - Number of animal welfare contracts		
		- to support commitments undertaken under agri-environmental measures or other environmental objectives and enhance the public amenity value on-farm of Natura 2000 areas and other areas of high natural value (37)	36 (a) (vi) support for non-productive investments	- Number of farm holdings and holdings of other land managers receiving support - Total volume of investment		

					Area under successful land management contributing to:
					  - improvement of bio diversity
					  - improvement of water quality
					  - climate change
					  - improvement of soil quality
					
					  - Avoidance of marginalization and land abandonment
						Increase in forestry areas under Natura 2000
						
						Increase in water quality
						
						Decrease of areas at risk of soil erosion

	Sustainable use of forestry land	- to extend forest resources on agricultural land to contribute to the protection of the environment, the prevention of natural hazards and mitigate climate change (38)	36 (b) (i) first afforestation of agricultural land	- Number of beneficiaries receiving afforestation aid - Number of ha afforested land		
		- to promote the combination of extensive agriculture and forestry systems, aimed at the production of high quality wood and other forest products (39)	36 (b) (ii) first establishment of agroforestry systems on agricultural land	- Number of beneficiaries - Number of ha under new agroforestry systems		
		- to extend forest resources on non-agricultural land to contribute to the protection of the environment, the prevention of natural hazards and mitigate climate change (38)	36 (b) (iii) first afforestation of non-agricultural land	- Number of beneficiaries receiving afforestation aid - Number of ha of afforested land		
		- to help farmers to address specific disadvantages resulting from the implementation of Council directives on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (34)	36 (b) (iv) Natura 2000 payments	- Number of forest holdings receiving aid in Natura 2000 area - Supported forest land (ha) in Natura 2000 area		
		- to respond to increasing demand for environmental services by encouraging forest holders to enhance biodiversity, preserve high value forest systems and reinforce the protective value of forests with respect to soil erosion, maintenance of water resources	36 (b) (v) forest-environment payments	- Number of forest holdings receiving support - Forest area under forest environment support - Number of contracts		
		- to restore forestry potential in forests damaged by natural disasters and fire and introduce preventive actions (42)	36 (b) (vi) restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions	- Number of prevention/restoration actions - Supported area of damaged forests		

				- Number of supported forest holders - Total volume of investment		
		- to support commitments undertaken under forest-environmental measures or other environmental objectives and enhance the public amenity value of the areas concerned (43)	36 (b) (vii) support for non-productive investments	- Number of supported forest holders - Total volume of investment		
Objectives (art. 4)	*Sub-objectives*	Measure Objectives	Measures	Output	Result	Impact
To improve quality of life in rural areas and diversification of economic activity	*Diversification of the rural economy*	-to diversify farming activities towards non-agricultural activities, develop non-agricultural activities and promote employment (46)	52 (a) (i) diversification into non-agricultural activities	- Number of beneficiaries	- Non-agricultural Gross Value Added in rural areas - Gross number of jobs created - Additional number of tourist visits	Increase in other gainful activity of farmers Increase in employment in the non-agricultural sector Increase in GVA in non-agricultural sector Increase in tourism infrastructure in rural area
			52 (a) (ii) support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises with a view to promoting entrepreneurship and developing the economic fabric	- Number of micro-enterprises supported		
			52 (a) (iii) encouragement of tourism activities	- Number of new tourism infrastructure elements supported - Total volume of investment		
	Improvement of the quality of life in the rural areas	- to improve basic services, including local access to ICTs and carry out investment making rural areas more attractive in order to reverse trends towards economic and social decline and depopulation of the countryside (46)	52 (b) (i) basic services for the economy and rural population	- Number of supported actions (ICT initiatives and other) - Total volume of investment	- Increase in internet penetration in rural areas - Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	Increase in internet take up in rural areas Decrease of net migration rate Increase of share of GVA in services
			52 (b) (ii) village renewal and development	- Number of villages where actions took place - Total volume of investment		
			52 (b) (iii) conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage	- Number of rural heritage actions supported - Total volume of investment		

		Measure Objectives	Measures	Output	Result	Impact
	To reinforce territorial coherence and synergies	- to enhance human potential required for the diversification of the local economy and provision of local services (46)	52 (c) training and information for economic actors operating in the fields covered by axis 3	- Number of participating economic actors to supported activities - Number of days of training received by participants	- Successful non-agricultural training results: number of participants that successfully ended a training activity	Increase in training and education in rural areas
		- to increase capacity for the implementation of local strategies (48)	52 (d) skills acquisition and animation with a view to preparing and implementing a local development strategy	- Number of skills acquisition, animation and implementation actions - Number of participants to actions - Number of supported public-private partnerships	- Successful non-agricultural training results: number of participants that successfully ended a training activity	
	Sub-objectives	Measure Objectives	Measures	Output	Result	Impact
Leader	*- To implement the Leader approach in mainstream rural development programming*	- to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector by means of support for restructuring, development and innovation	63 (a) (i)* implementing local development strategies with a view to achieving the objective of axis 1	- Number of local action groups - Total size of the LAG area (km²) - Total population in LAG area - Number of projects financed by LAGs	- Gross number of jobs created	Increase in development of LAGs Increase in GVA in rural areas Increase in employment in rural areas
		- to improve the environment and the countryside by means of support for land management	63 (a) (ii)* implementing local development strategies with a view to achieving the objective of axis 2			
		- to improve quality of life in rural areas and encourage the diversification of economic activities	63 (a) (iii)* implementing local development strategies with a view to achieving the objective of axis 3			
		- to promote cooperation and best practice	63 (b) implementing cooperation projects involving objectives selected under 63 (a)	- Number of supported cooperation projects		
		- to increase capacity for the implementation of LEADER	63 (c) running the local action group, acquiring skills and animating the territory as referred to in article 59 (studies, information, training of staff, promotional events and training of leaders).	- Number of actions supported		

Technical Assistance			66 technical assistance for programme preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities.			
Horizontal objectives	- to contribute to the achievement of economic and social cohesion policy objectives (1) - to integrate other major policy priorities as spelt out in the conclusions of the Lisbon and Göteborg European Councils for competitiveness (growth and employment) and sustainable development (1) - to take account of the particular nature of agricultural activity which results from the social structure and from structural and natural disparities between the various rural areas (2) - to strengthen the arrangements for partnership (4) - to encourage the elimination of disparities and the promotion of equality between women and men (7) - to take into account the diversity of situations ranging from remote rural areas suffering from depopulation and decline to peri-urban rural areas under increasing pressure from urban centres (11)					

Source: Council Regulation on Rural Development, adopted on September 20, 2005; 'Impact analysis: study on baseline and impact indicators for rural development programming 2007-2013', 2005

Annex 3. Indicator fiches

See separate documents:
- Annex 3A: Fiches of output indicators
- Annex 3B: Fiches of result indicators
- Annex 3C: Extended indicator table

Annex 4. Measure fiches

See separate documents

Annex 5. List of figures