D1.5 Evaluation Methodology

Project Acronym:	PoliRural	
Project title:	Future Oriented Collaborative Policy Development for Rural Areas and People	
Grant Agreement No.	818496	
Website:	www.polirural.eu	
Contact:	info@polirural.eu	
Version:	1.4	
Date:	30 May 2021	
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Dissemination Level:	Public	X
	Confidential - only consortium members and European Commission Services	
Keywords:	Policy, evaluation, concept, roadmap.	

Revision History

Revision no.	Date	Author	Organization	Description
0.1	29/5/2020	Petra Korkiakoski	HAMK	Internal review
0.2	29/05/2020	Patrick Crehan	CKA	Internal review
0.3	29/05/2020	Denis Kolokol	KAJO	Internal review
0.4	29/05/2020	Pavel Kogut	21C	Internal review
0.5	29/05/2020	Pawel Chmielinski	ERDN	Internal review
0.6	29.05.2020	Denis Kolokol	KAJO	Internal Review
0.7	07/06/2020	Christian Hartmann	Joanneum (JIIP)	Prefinal version
0.8	09/06/2020	Pavel Kogut	21C	Edits and revisions
0.9	10/06/2020	Christian Hartmann	Joanneum (JIIP)	Final version
1.0	26/03/2021	Christian Hartmann	Joanneum (JIIP)	Revision based on monitors' feedback
1.1	13/04/2021	Anne Gobin	VITO	Minor edits and recommendations
1.2	16/04/2021	Pawel Chmielinski	ERDN	Suggestion to stress more the relationship between pilot measures and EU programmes
1.3	21/04/2021	Pavel Kogut	21C	Addressing comments from internal review
1.4	30/05/2021	Milos Ulman	CULS	Final edits and revisions

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Executive Summary

The aim of this delivable is twofold. On the one hand it provides the reader with basic defintions, concepts, and tools for evaluation work on the other hand it provides a definition of the policy evaluation process in PoliRural on general level.

In the first part of D1.5 first the question 'What is an Evaluation' is being discussed followed by a presentation of evaluation objectives and criteria. Then a brief overview on quality criteria for conducting evaluations and functions an evaluation might have is given. Furthermore, the differences between internal and external evaluations are discussed as is monitoring. Additionally, concepts such as participatory evaluation and the multi-method approach are introduced.

The second part of the deliveable is devoted to a proposal of concrete steps in the evaluation process and the presentation and discussion of the evaluation matrix. These elements form the main pillars of the evaluation concept. Furthermore, a tentative presentation of activities and milestones for the next six months is given as is a simple contingency plan to mitigate risks to the evaluation field work associated to the COVID 19 pandemic. Finally, in the section on conclusions and next steps in particular an outlook on upcoming additional work on evaluation methodology is provided.

In the annex to the deliverable five concepts are presented as potential tools for evaluation: The Logic framework Approach, the Theory of Change, Outcome Mapping, Most Siginficant Change, and Method for Impact Assessment of Programmes and Projects (MAPP).

1　Introduction

The purpose of this deliverable is to provide guidelines for the evaluations to be carried out in the 12 PoliRural pilot regions. The goal is twofold. On the one hand the deliverable aims to provide a basic understanding of the evaluation work and concepts, on the other hand it will provide a toolbox and a conceptual framework for the evaluations in the pilot regions.

In chapter 2 basic concepts and definitions are provided. This is done in order to provide a common understanding of key concepts and approaches for evaluations among all PoliRural Partners.

In chapter 3 an overview on how to do Evaluations in the PoliRural Pilot Region is given. The chapter presents the conceptual approach for the evaluations and introduces supporting methods to conduct the evaluation work.

In Chapter 4 the roadmap for the implementation of WP 4.5 is introduced and challenges related to the COVID 19 pandamic are addressed.

2   Basic Concepts and Definitions

2.1   What is an Evaluation?

The term evaluation comes from the Latin word "valor", i.e. value, and the prefix e/ex, that is, off. Together, this means 'drawing a value from something', that is, a valuation on the case. In its broadest definition, evaluation means the assessment of the value of an object. This can be a product, a process or a project or program. In the scientific literal sense, systematic Methods and data-based evidence required to support an assessment. This is also the difference to everyday language use of the word. Already the morning view out of the window to examine the weather is a simple form of evaluation.

There is no single commonly agreed definition for evaluation. The following definitions offer good starting points:
"Evaluation goes beyond an assessment of what has happened; it considers why something has occurred (…) and, if possible, how much has changed as a consequence. It should look at the wider perspective and provide an independent and objective judgement of the situation based on the evidence available.

Evaluation looks for evidence of causality – i.e., did the intervention (help) bring about the expected changes or were there other unintended or unexpected changes? Beyond listing outputs and describing changes, evaluations should investigate any links between the observed changes and the [policy measure]. Generally, evaluations should be carried out only after sufficient time has passed to allow for changes to be identified and/or measured.
An evaluation should also assess the strength of the evidence obtained, and the implications for the robustness of the conclusions reached. Although there are many useful activities which may cover some of the elements of an evaluation (e.g. reports, implementing reports, monitoring exercises, audits, and studies including cumulative cost assessments) it is unlikely that any of these sources will on their own address all of necessary issues in order to qualify as an evaluation."[1]

"Evaluation is an objective process of understanding how a policy or other intervention was implemented, what effects it had, for whom, how and why. Evaluations need to be tailored to the type of policy being considered, and the types of questions it is hoped to answer. The earlier an evaluation is considered in the policy development cycle, the more likely it will be that the most appropriate type of evaluation can be identified and adopted.
Good-quality evaluations generate reliable results which can be used and quoted with confidence. They enable policies to be improved or can justify reinvestment or resource savings. They can show whether or not policies are delivering as planned and resources being effectively used. Good-quality evaluations can play important roles in setting and delivering on government priorities and objectives, demonstrating accountability, and providing defensible evidence to independent scrutiny processes. They also contribute valuable knowledge to the policy evidence base, feeding into future policy development and occupying a crucial role in the policy cycle. Not evaluating, or evaluating poorly, will mean that policy

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[1] European Commission's Better Regulation Toolbox, Chapter VI Evaluations and fitness checks, Tool #43 "What is an evaluation and when is it required?" (see p.3 of the pdf: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/better-regulation-guidelines-evaluation-fitness-checks.pdf)

makers will not be able to provide meaningful evidence in support of any claims they might wish to make about a policy's effectiveness. Any such claims will be effectively unfounded."[2]

2.2 Evaluation Objectives and Criteria

In general, evaluations can be aimed at four interrelated objectives:

1. the generation of knowledge
2. the exercise of control
3. the creation of transparency to allow dialogue
4. the documentation of the success (legitimation).

The Better Regulation toolbox of the European Commission (2017)[3] defines the following evaluation criteria:

- Effectiveness: "Effectiveness analysis considers how successful [a policy measure] has been in achieving or progressing towards its objectives."
- Efficiency: "Efficiency considers the relationship between the resources used by an intervention and the changes generated by the intervention (which may be positive or negative)."
- Relevance: "Relevance looks at the relationship between the needs and problems in society and the objectives of the intervention and hence touches on aspects of design."
- Coherence: "The evaluation of coherence involves looking at a how well or not different [policy measures] work together. It may highlight areas where there are synergies which improve overall performance (…); or it may point to tensions e.g. objectives which are potentially contradictory, or approaches which are causing inefficiencies."

2.3 Quality Criteria for Conducting Evaluations

The quality requirements for evaluations can be summarised in four guiding principles:

1. **Usefulness:** An evaluation is high quality when it is designed to meet the needs of the many stakeholders involved.
2. **Credibility:** To be useful, evaluations need to be credible. This is often achieved through ensuring a degree of objectivity. Transparency is crucial.
3. **Robustness:** Although there are no objective criteria for quality, an evaluation should be well-designed, with an appropriate evaluation approach and methods, and well-executed.
4. **Proportionate:** Proportionality is a key concept in evaluation. Not all interventions will require the same level of scrutiny or have the same learning needs.

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[2] UK Magenta Book ("recommended central government guidance on evaluation that sets out best practice for departments to follow"), chapter 1 "Key issues in policy evaluation" (see p.11 of pdf: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/220542/magenta_book_combined.pdf)

[3] https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation-why-and-how/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox/better-regulation-toolbox_en

2.4   Functions of an Evaluation

One can not only pursue different objectives with evaluations, but also combine different objectives (see Table 1). Evaluations can be used to

- to improve the planning of a programme or measure (**ex-ante evaluation**)
- to observe the implementation processes (**on-going evaluation**) or
- to determine the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions ex-post (**ex-post evaluation**)

Accordingly, evaluations can be more **formative**, i.e. actively shaping, process-oriented, constructive and communication-promoting, or more **summative**, i.e. summarising, balancing and results-oriented. In principle, both evaluation perspectives can be adopted in all phases of a programme. However, since there are hardly any starting points for a summative evaluation in the planning and design phase of a programme, it can only have a formative character during implementation. During the implementation phase, both formative and summative evaluations are possible. Ex-post Analyses are usually summative evaluations, as the design aspect is not applicable. However, they can also gain formative significance through corresponding informational feedback loops for follow-up projects.

Table 1: Evaluation perspectives and concepts

Programme Phase	Analytical perspective	Cognitive Interest	Evaluation Concepts
Program formulation/ Planning phase	Ex-Ante	"analysis for policy", "science for action"	preformative/ formative: actively shaping, process-oriented, constructive
Implementation phase	On-Going	Both possible	formative/summative: both possible
Post-Implementation phase	Ex-Post	"analysis of policy", "science for knowledge"	summative: in summary, balancing, results-oriented

Source: Stockmann, 2004[4]

2.5   Internal vs external Evaluations

In principle, evaluations can be carried out as internal or external evaluations. They are regarded as **internal** if they are carried out by the same organisation as the programme itself. Such an in-house evaluation has the advantage that it can be carried out quickly and with little effort, that the evaluators generally have a high level of expertise, and that the results can be implemented immediately. Weaknesses of the internal evaluation are mainly seen in the fact that the evaluators usually do not have sufficient methodological competence to be able to work independently and distance, that they may be so busy with their program and are arrested for not recognizing more promising alternatives.

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[4] Stockmann, R. (2004). Was ist eine gute Evaluation? Einführung zu Funktionen und Methoden vonEvaluationsverfahren. (CEval-Arbeitspapier, 9). Saarbrücken: Universität des Saarlandes, Fak. 05 EmpirischeHumanwissenschaften, CEval - Centrum für Evaluation. https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-11801

External evaluations are carried out by persons who do not belong to the donor or the implementing organisation. As a rule, therefore, external evaluators have greater independence, profound methodological competence and professional evaluation knowledge and are familiar with the field in which the programme is located.

2.6   Monitoring

Internal evaluations can be extended to **continuous monitoring**. Monitoring can start at the level of the overall system, a policy field, a programme or individual intervention measures. Input, output and impact data can be recorded. A well-known example of a monitoring system at policy area level is environmental monitoring, which provides measurement data on the state of the environment.

At programme level, a monitoring system has the task of continuously providing management with data on programme progress and the achievement of objectives. Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey (1999: 231) therefore define: "Program monitoring is a form of evaluation designed to describe how a program is operating and assess how well it performs its intended functions".[5]

2.7   Participatory Evaluation

The validity of evaluation results can be significantly improved if evaluations are participatory - i.e., **involving actively all relevant stakeholders**. On the one hand, a valid evaluation of measures and results is only possible on the basis of voluntary and proactive cooperation of all parties involved. And on the other hand, evaluation results can only be successfully integrated into development processes are fed in when the parties involved do not use the evaluators as external "controllers", but as partners with complementary tasks.

The practical application of the participatory approach can ideally mean that the evaluators, together with the evaluated persons, develop a proposal for the evaluation procedure, the evaluation criteria, the actors to be involved, etc. On the one hand, it is important to create a 'climate of trust' as a prerequisite for a well-functioning exchange of information between evaluators and those being evaluated; on the other hand, the content and implementation of the evaluation must be oriented as closely as possible to the interests and needs of the participants themselves. Such a procedure is open to continuous adaptation of the evaluation instruments used, so that changing contextual conditions in the valuation process can be taken into account.

2.8   Multi-method approach

Another central component of an evaluation concept is the selection of suitable evaluation methods and the precise development of instruments for data collection. Since an experimental or quasi-experimental survey design, which is usually necessary for impact studies, is often not applicable due to temporal and structural conditions, this can be avoided by a systematic compilation and application of different survey methods. As a rule, a combination of qualitative and quantitative instruments is useful for evaluations.

While the analysis of process-related data (programme control, programme process, etc.) are primarily qualitative survey methods, quantitative survey and evaluation procedures must be

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[5] Rossi, P., Freeman, H., & Lipsey, M. (1999). Evaluation: A systematic approach (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

used to check the achievement of objectives, impact and causal considerations. Methods frequently used in evaluations are

- secondary analyses of existing materials
- guided interviews
- standardized surveys
- case studies

Which methods are selected and used depends on the central questions of an evaluation dealt with here, i.e. which goals and tasks are pursued and who carries out the evaluation.

3 How to do Evaluations in the PoliRural Pilot Regions

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the evaluation matrix for assessing policies and a step-by-step guide to use it effectively. Its aim is to offer support to the Pilots while they identify and gather the information required for the evaluation process as well as help them to select tools for evidence collection.

The Evaluation Matrix is divided into **three sections**. The first two sections provide guidelines for collecting the information required for the evaluation, while the third section guides the Pilots throughout the evaluation process according to three different criteria: effectiveness, relevance, and coherence.

Section one of the Evaluation Matrix (see Table 3) guides the Pilots in collecting general relevant information on the policy measure[6]:

- (0) Needs
- (1) Objectives
- (2) Inputs/actions
- (3) Outputs
- (4) Outcomes
- (5) Impacts

Section two of the Evaluation Matrix (see Table 3) guides the Pilots in gathering information on the external factors that influence the policy measure.

- (a) External influencing factors
- (b) External policy factors

In section one and two, the columns of the evaluation matrix provide the following information:

- Description about the information required
- Tools and references that can be used to get this information (documents, surveys, interviews, focus group, etc)
- Suggested questions that can be asked to obtain the required information

Section three of the Evaluation Matrix (see Table 4) guides the Pilots in evaluating the policy while using the information collected in section 1 and 2, according to the following criteria:

- (I) Effectiveness
- (II) Relevance
- (III) Coherence

In section three, the columns of the evaluation matrix provide the following information

- Description of the evaluation criteria
- Tools that can be used to make the evaluation
- Evaluation questions

The interactions between these three sections: – evaluation elements, external factors and evaluation criteria - are shown in the diagram below and presented in greater detail in the following subsections (Figure 1).

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[6] The element from which the policy is implemented, which can be a funding program, a tool/instrument etc.
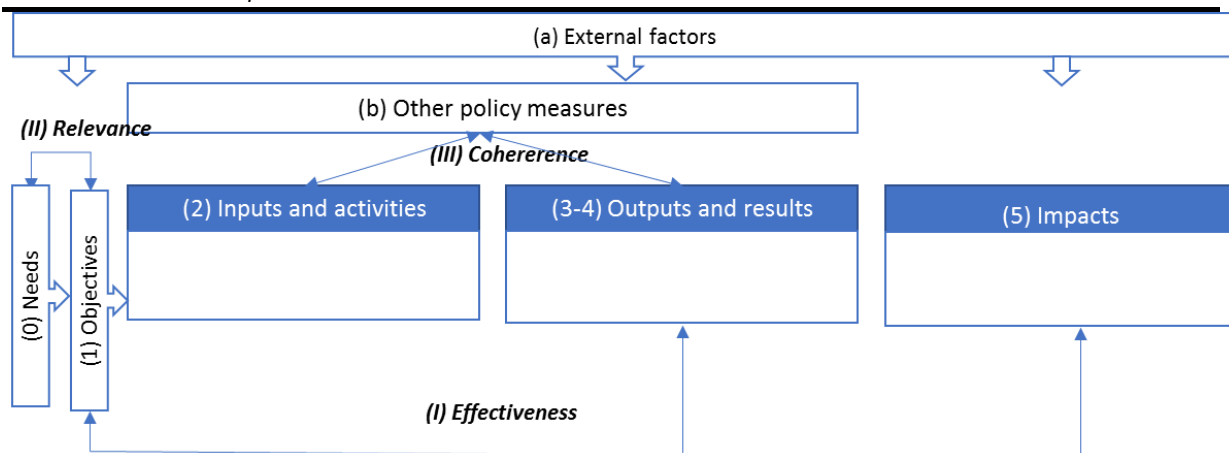
Figure 1: Logframe – graphical illustration

It is worth mentioning that the measures that the Pilots will assess policies at different stages of implementation. The policy measure selected for evaluation may not be fully implemented while others will be. By using the evaluation matrix Pilots can evaluate the measure in such a way that it can be compared with the other pilots.
A uniform approach is therefore a fundamental requirement.

3.2   Steps to carry out the evaluation process

The evlaution process consists of five consecutive steps to be carried out by each of the 12 pilots (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Steps of the evaluation process

In the following we will present each step in detail also combining the evaluation process with the three sections of the evaluation matrix.

3.2.1   Step 1: Pilots to select one or two policy measures

This relates to the policy measures that have been already identified in the deliverable 4.4: needs-policy canvas developed in task 4.4.

For the selection of the policy measure to evaluate, the following criteria shall be taken into account:

- <u>Future Relevance</u>: the policy responds to one or more critical or relevant needs
- <u>Policy Influence:</u> Capacity to steer and monitor the policy measures in this area
- <u>Easy access to required information</u>
- <u>Implementation Status:</u> The policy measure must be completed or in an advanced stage of implementation (80%). It must be ensured that there will be enough information available (qualitative and quantitative) to evaluate it<u>.</u>

3.2.2   Step 2: Pilots to complete the profile of the policy measure(s) selected

The table below will help the pilots to describe the chosen policy measure. The table provides a quick overview of the type of policy measure selected and some key aspects that have been considered for its selection. In order to ensure the traceability of the evaluation process, some information about the needs and the pillar defined in the previous deliverables (D1.3 and D4.4) is included in the profile.

Table 2: Template for the regional policy profiles

Policy Description	
Pillar (according to the rural attractiveness needs D1.3)	Seven main pillars have been set-up for the needs gathering in Task 1. Select the pillar related to the needs of the selected policy measure (see deliverable D1.3) 1. Availability of public and other services 2. Recreational and social activities 3. Living conditions and quality of life 4. Demographics and Human capital 5. Business Economy and Innovation 6. Social and cultural aspects of rural areas 7. Environment and biodiversity
Needs	List and describe the needs covered by the selected policy measure. (see the identified needs for this policy measure in D4.4 Policy-needs canvas)
Policy measure/instrument	Title of the policy measure selected and a brief description (half a page maximum, preferably shorter). Explain how the policy instrument is expected to deliver. This can be via investments, subsidies or taxes, but may also work through other mechanisms such as rules and regulations, such as land use restrictions (e.g. on housing; on farming), as well as forms of collaboration in-kind / public-private partnerships
Coordination	• Stakeholders involved in the project and beneficiaries (e.g. farmers, local authorities, local businesses, NGO, etc.) • Dissemination: evidence of diffusion and evaluation of results (e.g. telling people about the action via radio, local, regional or national newspapers, free newspapers, websites, social media (e.g. twitter, ..), (town hall) meetings, more academic literature, …..) and • Monitoring (e.g. measurement of the number of people, frequency of activities, views of ….)
Budget allocation	Amount of budget allocated to the intervention • EU contribution if any • National/regional/local contribution (indicate which. If more than one, indicate the amount for each)

Policy Description	
	• Private funding(e.g. industry, foundation, business angel) • Other funding sources
Policy / administrative capacity needed to steer and monitor the measure	Number of people (FTE[7]) Tools / equipment to roll out the measure
Beneficiaries	• Number of beneficiaries (e.g.: SME/farmer/NGO etc.) (if not available, try to make an estimate e.g. 1-10, 11-50, 51-100, 0ver 100 but less than 1000, over a thousand, etc.) • Number of beneficiaries relative to the intended target group(s)(e.g. 50 farmers out of a regional population of, e.g., 500) • Type of beneficiaries (SME/farmer/NGO etc)
Status	Policy measure should be finished or on going but well-advanced: • Start date • End date (actual or anticipated) • Extent to which the measure is advanced (between 80% and 100% implemented)
Transferability	Is the measure transferable to other areas or to other farms/rural businesses facing the same issue? Is it transferable outside of the farming/rural domain? Has it been already replicated elsewhere in your country or in Europe?
Synergies with other EU policy measures	Does the policy contribute to the objectives of other EU policy domains? (e.g. energy transition, digitalization, circular economy, healthy living, etc.)

3.2.3   Step 3: Collection of information

Pilots collect the information from the different sources following the guidelines of the evaluation matrix in section 1 and 2 (Table 3). Desk research is the fundamental tool and can be complemented surveying panel members and conducting interviews with interested participants. Pilots will decide on the stakeholders, including policy makers, that should be asked for further input. The information will also be completed with the needs identified in the different approaches carried out through text mining.

Table 3 Evaluation Matrix, part 1

	What you are looking for	What tools you could use to find the information (examples)	What information you could gather and questions you could ask (examples)
Section 1: Evaluation elements			
(0) Needs (e.g. of society, of stakeholders/beneficiaries)	Description of need for the policy measure – why it is being implemented, what problem or opportunity it aims to address	Desk research (from existing documents e.g. those shared in the regional Hub, and from the data that you are gathering (monitoring data)) D4.4 Policy needs canvas Text mining	• What were the initial needs that the policy measure was designed to address? • Has that changed? If so, why? • What are the current needs?
(1) Objectives	Description of key objectives of the policy measure.	Desk research (e.g. documents shared in the regional Hub, monitoring data)	• What are the objectives of the policy measure?

[7] FTE: Full time equivalent for example two people both working half days only would be the equivalent of one person in FTE

	What you are looking for	What tools you could use to find the information (examples)	What information you could gather and questions you could ask (examples)
(2) Inputs/actions	Include a description of inputs and actions of the policy measure.	Desk research (e.g. documents from the regional Hub, monitoring data)	• What is the budget of the policy measure? • What are the actions following the policy measure?
(3) Outputs	Include a description of direct outputs i.e. short-term results of the activities. (affect to all policy measure) about the measures in progress - result so far	Desk research (e.g. documents shared in the regional Hub, monitoring / reporting / evaluation / data)	Quantitative: Indicators will depend on your policy measure but could include numbers of people, activities, products, outputs as well as types of people, activities, products, etc. For example, a tourism-related project could see an increase in the number of reservations.
(4) Outcomes	Include a description of medium-term outcomes achieved.	Desk research e.g. (documents shared in the regional Hub, monitoring data)	Quantitative: Indicators will depend on your policy measure but could include change in behaviour For example, a tourism-related project could record year-on-year increased tourism revenues Also: new jobs, new services, etc., as a result of the measure (in the medium term).
(5) Impacts	Include a description of wider long-term economic, societal, and environmental impacts that have been achieved or are expected to be achieved. Impacts are difficult to determine, especially if a policy measure has been applied only recently (this applies to policy measures that have been running for 4 to 5 year)	Desk research (e.g. documents shared in the regional Hub, monitoring data) Interviews/survey to beneficiaries involved (SME, farmers, associations, NGO, etc)	Quantitative: Indicators (see annex- Impact survey) - For example, a tourism related project could see a number of new facilities starting up as attractions for the increased number of tourists and the economy of the town/region improving Also refers to social development, economic growth, and sustainability. Qualitative information e.g. the tourism project could see visitor satisfaction in a post-visit survey
Section 2: External Factors			
(a) External influencing factors	Include a description of influencing factors that are external to your policy measure but have a direct impact on it.	Focus group with policy makers and/or Interview/Survey to beneficiaries involved (SME, farmers, associations, NGO, etc)	• What have been the external factors influencing the implementation or achievement of the objectives of the policy measure (external factors are those political, economic, environmental, social or technological factors that have influenced the achievement of the objectives of the policy measure but are beyond

	What you are looking for	What tools you could use to find the information (examples)	What information you could gather and questions you could ask (examples)
			the control of the policy measure evaluated) • Please include 3 most relevant external factors that have influenced the policy implementation process
(b) External policy factors (outside of the policy area of the measure)	Include a description of other relevant policies (local, regional, national, EU).	Information (D4.4 Policy Needs-Canvas)	There are several policies related to one need (international level, EU level, regional level and local/grassroot level) • A brief description of 3 other policy measures (name of the policy measure, 1-2 sentence description)

3.2.4   Step 4: Evaluation of effectiveness, relevance, and coherence

Pilots evaluate the selected poliy measure against the criteria of effectiveness, relevance, and coherence following the guidelines of the evaluation matrix in section 3 (Table 5). It is recommended to organize focus groups with regional stakeholders panel to present and discuss the evaluation results.

Table 4 Evaluation Matrix, part 2

	What you are looking for	What tools you could use to find the information (examples)	What information you could gather and questions you could ask (examples)
Section 3: Evaluation criteria			
(I) Effectiveness	Effectiveness - assessment of how successful the action has been in terms of achieving or making progress (see 3 above: Outputs, 4: Outcomes) towards the objectives set (see 1 above) and how external factors (see a above) and other external policy factors (see b above) have influenced the progress.	Desk research Focus group with policy makers /Survey to beneficiaries involved (SME, farmers, associations, NGO, etc)	Assessment of success in reaching the objectives (1) and achieving the outputs (3) and outcomes (4) of the policy measure and how external factors (a) have possibly contributed to the achievement of the objectives (see annex: Effectiveness survey): • *To what extent the policy measure has achieved its objectives? Include an evidence-based judgement of the progress made.* • *What were the key success factors in achieving the objectives?* • *What were the key obstacles hindering the progress?*

	What you are looking for	What tools you could use to find the information (examples)	What information you could gather and questions you could ask (examples)
(II) Relevance	Relevance – assessment of the relationship between the needs (e.g. of society) (0) and the objectives (1) of the intervention.	D4.4 Policy needs canvas Interview/Survey to beneficiaries involved (SME, farmers, associations, NGO, etc) and/or policy maker (focus group), Text mining	Assessment of needs (0) and objectives (1) of the policy measure: (see annex-Relevance survey) • *To what extent the objectives of the policy measure met the initial needs?* • *How well do the original objectives correspond to the current needs?* • *To what extent the policy measure is still relevant?*
(III) Coherence	Coherence – assessment of the initiative (0-3) compared to other initiatives and policies (b).	Desk research D4.4 Policy-needs canvas there are several policies related to one need (international level, EU level, regional level and local/grassroot level).	Assessment of coherence of the policy measure (0-3) with other policy measures (b) (see annex- Coherence survey) • To what extent the policy measure is coherent with other policy interventions which have similar objectives? • To what extent is the policy measure aligned with other local and regional policy measures? • To what extent is the policy measure aligned with relevant national policy measures? • To what extent is the policy measure aligned with relevant EU policy measures? CAP, LEADER • To what extent the policy measure is contributing to EU added value?(e.g.EU Regions Targets: Globalisation, climate change, Energy challenge, demographic change)

3.2.5 Step 5: Reporting

The reporting template includes detailed instructions for the pilots on how to present the results of the evaluation carried out. The tentative draft structure of the reporting template is presented below. The tentative structure and content of the evaluation report, evaluation criteria and evaluation questions follow loosely the guidance provided by the European Commission (2017) Better Regulation Guidelines[8]. The objective is not however to carry-out a complete policy evaluation, but a "light" version tailored to the needs of Polirural Pilots. For instance, the evaluation criteria take into account only three dimensions: effectiveness,

[8] European Commission (2017) Better Regulation Guidelines, Chapter VI, Guidelines on evaluation (including fitness checks Available: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/better-regulation-guidelines-evaluation-fitness-checks.pdf

relevance and coherence, as suggested in the Task description of the Polirural Grant Agreement. This tentative structure is still subject to modifications and is complemented by more detailed guidance before launching the evaluation process.

The reporting template

Executive summary

1.   Introduction (1-2 pages)
1.1 *Objectives (*what measure you are evaluating and why you chose this measure)
1.2 *Context of the evaluation* (in the context of your project under RIA)
1.3 *Structure of the evaluation report* (a brief description of the chapters below)

2.   Background and status of the policy measure (2-3 pages)
Description of the background of the policy measure and the current status. Including answers to the following questions:
- Why was the policy measure initiated? What was the background context?
- What were the objectives of the measure?
- What is the current status of implementation? How is the progress made? (Is related to how is progress monitoring done?)
- Have there been issues related to the implementation? (e.g. any delays, speeding up, changes in plans, etc.)
- What is the current situation of the different stakeholders targeted by the measure? How have they been affected by the measure?

3.   **Evaluation of the impacts of the policy measure (5-7 pages**)
3.1   *Description* - Describe the context, needs, objectives, inputs, outputs, outcomes, impacts of the policy measure in a structured manner, supporting and structuring the evaluation. Use the tools above to do this in a structured way.

3.2   Effectiveness of the policy measure
The evaluation of effectiveness is a measure of the progress made towards achieving the objectives of the policy measure, looking for evidence of why, whether or how these changes are attributed to the policy measure. Evaluation questions to be answered in this section includes:
- To what extent the policy measure has achieved its objectives? Include an evidence-based judgement of the progress made.
- What were the key success factors in achieving the objectives?
- What were the key obstacles hindering the progress?

3.3   Relevance of the policy measure
The relevance refers to evaluation of whether the objectives of the policy measure are still relevant or there has been changes in the underlying problems and drivers. The evaluation looks at the relationship between the needs and problems and the objectives of the policy measure. Questions that should be answered in this section:
- To what extent the objectives of the policy measure met the initial needs?
- How well do the original objectives correspond to the current needs?

- To what extent the policy measure is still relevant?

3.4   *Coherence of the policy measure*

The evaluation of coherence assesses how well the policy measure is aligned with other local, regional, national or EU policy measures. All policy measures to be inverstigated by pilots in T4.5 are expected to have strong relation with the EU Policy and funding streams, and they can be connected directly (so use of EU funds, like in LAGs) or sometimes coherent (as complementary) to the already existing national and regional policy measures. The evaluation report should provide answers to following questions:

- To what extent is the policy measure coherent with other policy interventions having similar objectives?
- To what extent is the policy measure aligned with other local and regional policy measures?
- To what extent is the policy measure aligned with relevant national policy measures?
- To what extent is the policy measure aligned with relevant EU policy measures? E.g. CAP, LEADER, digital transformation, green deal, demographic change, etc.
- To what extent the policy measure is contributing to EU added value? (e.g. EU Regional Targets: Globalisation, climate change, energy challenge, demographic change)

4.   Conclusions (1-2 pages)

This chapter summarises your findings from the evaluation of your policy measure. (What are the final conclusions that you draw from the evaluation?)

4 The roadmap for the implementation of WP4.5

4.1 Activities and Milestones

According to the work-plan a total of six months is foreseen to complete this task. Below you will find a tentative list of necessary activities and milestones[9]:

Activity	Responsible	Date - start	Date - end
Training on evaluation work with a special focus on selection of the policy	JIIP team	September 18th 2020	
Identification and selection of relevant policy measures	Pilots	August, 31st 2020	September, 30th 2020
Preparation of the policy profile	Pilots	August, 31st 2020	September, 30th 2020
Training on the field work	JIIP team	September 29th 2020	
Collection of information	Pilots	September, 1st 2020	November, 26th 2020
Assessment of effectivess, relevance and coherence of the selected policy measure.	Pilots	September, 1st 2020	November, 26th 2020
Training on reporting of the evaluation results	JIIP team	November, 13th 2020	
Reporting	Pilots	November, 26th 2020	December, 20th 2020

4.2 Proposed measures to mitigate COVID 19 associated risks

For the evaluation related field work there exist a couple of risks that are associated with the COVID 19 pandemic. The following table summarizes these risks and proposed measures for mitigation:

Risk	Proposed Measure
Limited possibility for face-to-face interviews	Personal interviews are conducted with tools like Microsoft Teams or GoToMeeting
Limited possibility for focus groups as physical meetings	Focus groups are conducted with tools like Microsoft Teams or GoToMeeting
Low survey response rates due to COVID 19 infections	Postponement of the cut-off date for the survey

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[9] Activities and Milestones could be still subject to change, in order to better match the needs of the pilots and the other work in WP4. Furthermore textmining and System Dynamics modelleling might change the necessary actions.

5 Conclusion and Next steps

The evaluation concept forms the basis for the evaluation work for WP4.5 and also for WP6. It provides on the one hand a basic introduction into concepts and main aspects of evaluation studies, on the other hand a toolbox with evaluation methods and general instruction for field work are provided.

Accordingly this concept needs to be complemented with further practical support to the pilots. This support will be given in shape of an evaluation support facility (ESF) that will provide in course of the evaluation work guidance on bilateral basis. The ESF will help through the different steps of the evaluation process and provide further tools and practical support.

An important next step is to define the role of Text Mining (TM) in T4.5 Evaluation of Regional Policy Measures. As described in the Grant Agreement, T4.5 "involves two parallel tracks: one focused on big data analysis through text mining, another on the more traditional approach which involves survey research." To ensure that TM is meaningfully represented in the final results, it is important to define early in the T4.5 process the different ways in which Semex can support evaluation. For example, Semex can:

- Identify additional issues/benefits linked to a specific policy that weren't picked up by the survey, and so make the evaluation more complete
- Confirm/validate survey findings by revealing broadly positive or negative sentiment toward to the same policy
- Cast the same policy in a different light compared to survey, allowing pilots to reach a more balanced conclusion about policy's performance
- Reveal important local/regional measures that weren't identified by T4.4. Needs-Policy Mapping but which may merit attention

A special working group comprising pilots, evaluation experts, TM experts, foresight experts and System Dynamics experts will be set up in June 2020 to ensure that evaluation activities are fit for purpose and deliver actionable insights.

6   Annex 1: Tools for Evaluation

6.1   Logic Framework approach

6.1.1   Introduction

The Logical Framework Approach is a systematic, analytical planning process for the goal-oriented planning of a project (or programme) and its monitoring and evaluation system. Basic idea of the Logical Framework Approaches is, starting from a well-founded situation and problem analysis, the planned mode of operation of the project finally to a relatively simple, linear effect model (Logic Model) condense. This serves as the basis for planning the monitoring and evaluation system, in which the outputs and effects of the project are assessed quantitative or qualitative indicators should be recorded. Finally, the effectiveness of the project and the monitoring and Evaluation system in a standardised table (logframe) in summary. The Logical Framework Approach is therefore not per se an impact measurement method. Rather, it helps to evaluate projects and to plan in a goal- and impact-oriented manner.

The term Logical Framework Approach (LFA) should be differentiated from the term Logical Framework Matrix (LFM), the so-called logframe. The Logical Framework Approach is the entire planning process. The logframe, however, is a product of it and one of the tools.

6.1.2   The Process

The exact procedure is described slightly differently depending on the source. According to the PCM Guidelines of the European Commission[10], the Logical Framework includes the following steps:

1) **The stakeholder analysis** should clarify who the stakeholders (partners, target groups, beneficiaries, opponents, etc.) are, who might be involved in the project and/or be affected positively or negatively.

2) **The problem analysis** identifies the negative aspects of the existing situation. These are put into a cause-and-effect context and presented in a "problem tree". The development of the problem tree is preferably done in a participatory way with the stakeholders.

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[10]   https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/dear-programme/documents/europeaid-project-cycle-management-guidelines
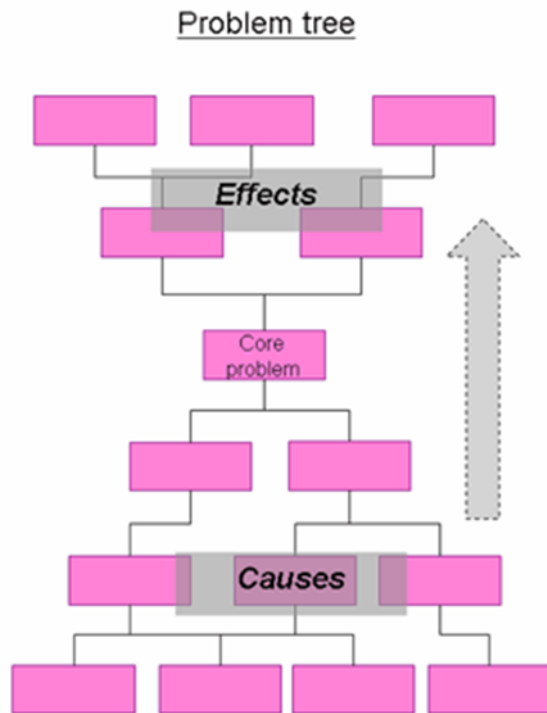
Figure 3: The problem tree, Source: SECO (2007)[11]

3) In **the analysis of objectives**, solutions for the identified problems are developed. The negative aspects in the problem tree are transferred into future desired, positive situations and are represented in a goal tree with a means-purpose logic. In the simplest case the objective tree has exactly the same structure as the problem tree.

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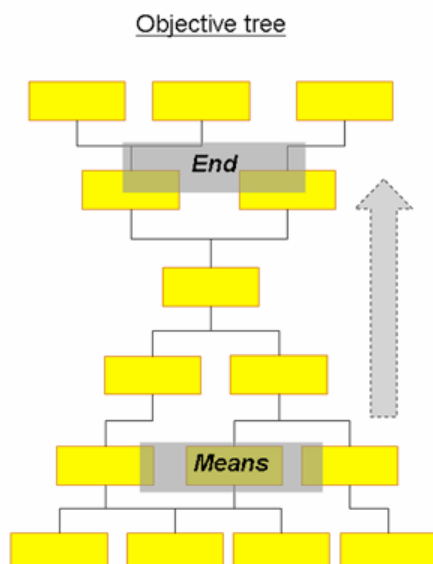
[11] SECO (2007), The Logical Framework User Manual

Figure 4: The objective tree, Source: SECO (2007)[12]

4) The **strategy analysis** should clarify which of the (usually several) ways to the objective in the objective tree is most appropriate and feasible. Criteria to be considered are: already existing opportunities, probability of success, local ownership, costs, Resources, relevance, effectiveness, negative impacts, etc.
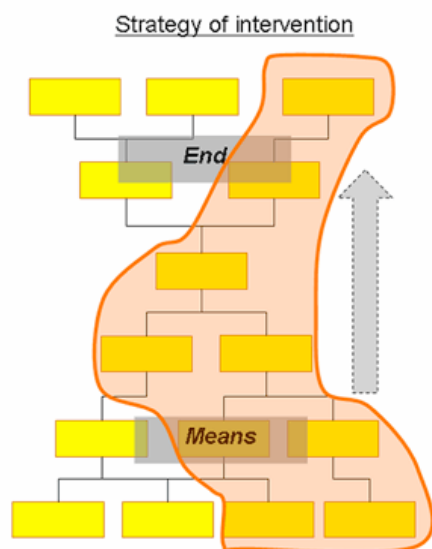

Figure 5: The strategy of intervention, Source: SECO (2007)[13]

6.1.3   Development of the Logical Framework Matrix

The results of the logical framework analysis (stakeholders, problems, goals, strategies) are presented in the Logical Framework Matrix (Logframe). This represents a summary of the project design. The simplest form of the Logframe is a matrix with 4 columns and 4 rows.

	Project Description	*Indicator*	*Source*	*Assumption*
Impact	Longer-term effects and contribution of the project to the overall objectives.	How (with what measures) is the impact measured, including planned quantity, quality and time?	How is the information collected, when and by whom?	
Outcome	Direct benefits and effects of the project for the target groups.	How (with what measures) is the outcome measured, including planned quantity, quality and time?	As above	If the outcome is achieved, what assumptions must be met to contribute to the impact?
Output	Concrete products or services provided by the project.	How (with which metrics) is the output measured, including planned quantity, quality and time?	As above	If the outputs are produced, which assumptions must be fulfilled in order to contribute to the outcome?

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[12] Ibid.
[13] SECO (2007), The Logical Framework User Manual

Activities	Activities that must be undertaken in order for the project to produce the desired outputs.			If the activities are carried out, what assumptions must be met for the output to result?

Table 5: Schematic display of a logframe, Source: European Comission (2004)

The first column of the logframe summarizes what the project should do and shows the causal relationship of the target hierarchy. From bottom to top, it is based on a linear logic model. In the fourth column the so-called assumptions are entered. These are the external factors that possibly or certainly have an influence on the success of the project, but are not within the sphere of influence of the project managers. The first and fourth columns together form the "vertical logic" of the logframe:

- If the activities are performed and the assumptions (at this level) are correct, the outputs are produced.
- If the outputs are produced and the assumptions are correct, outcomes are achieved.
- If the outcomes are achieved and the assumptions are correct, the project will contribute to the overall goal (impact).

In the second column the indicators are entered with which the achievement of the objectives at the respective level can be measured. At the same time, the third column shows how and where these indicators can be collected (called sources or Means of Verification). The connection between objectives, indicators and their sources is called the "horizontal logic" of the logframe.

6.1.4   Resume

The Logical Framework Approach is undoubtedly a powerful tool to plan projects in an impact-oriented way. The process is designed to ensure that impacts are also measured, but no explicit method of measurement is proposed. The Logical Framework Approach can be well implemented:

- promote dialogue between all stakeholders
- contribute to the identification of problems and correct solutions
- contribute to clarifying and concretising the objectives and impacts of the project
- Enabling and planning evaluation and impact measurement

6.2   Theory of Change

6.2.1   Introduction

Theory of Change is an approach proposed and promoted by the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, New York, and ActKnowledge, New York[14]. It should be noted that the term "Theory of Change" in other contexts may simply mean any kind of impact model. The Theory of Change in the sense used here actually refers to two things: firstly, a systematic project planning process (the Theory of Change process or method) and secondly, a specific form of impact model (the actual Theory of Change), which is the product of this process. The basic idea of the process is to determine, starting from the overall objective and project goal of the project, which preconditions the project must create in order to achieve these impact

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[14] https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/community-builders-approach-theory-change-practical-guide-theory-development/

goals. Indicators for measuring the preconditions and objectives are then defined and it is planned which activities must be undertaken to create these preconditions. Finally, the whole process is graphically represented in a flow chart or impact model. This representation is the Theory of Change of the project. Similar to the Logical Framework Approach, the Theory of Change is therefore not an impact measurement method per se, but helps projects and their evaluation in impact-oriented planning.

6.2.2   The process

The process consists of the following 5 steps:
1. Identify goals and assumptions
2. Backwards mapping and connecting outcomes
3. Developing indicators
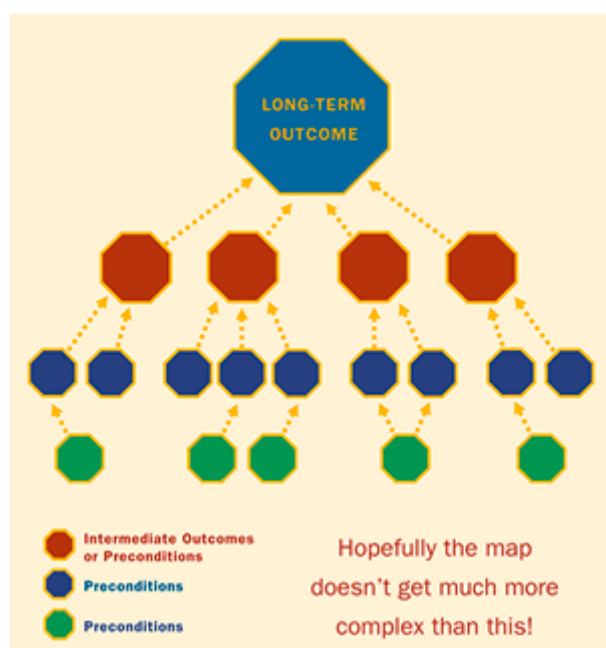4. Identifying interventions
5. Writing a narrative

Figure 6: Theory of change - schematic presentation of causal links, Source: Stiftung Zewo

In a **first step**, the overall objective and the project objectives were to be elaborated in a participatory process. Special attention will be paid to determining at the same time which external assumptions have to be fulfilled in order to achieve these objectives at all.

In the **second step**, backward induction is used to find out which interim results (prerequisites) must be achieved in advance, both in terms of time and logic, so that the project objectives can follow. It should be noted that these preconditions should also be effects (changes, states, achieved results) and not activities. Also in this phase, great attention should be paid to the underlying assumptions.

In the **third step**, indicators should be found for all preconditions and outcomes so that the progress of the project can be continuously monitored during the implementation phase and finally a good database for impact measurement is available.

Figure 7: Theory of change - schematic presentation of interventions, Source: Stiftung Zewo

The **fourth step** is to determine where in this impact tree the project should unfold its activities. It is assumed that there are steps that will take place independently and others where intervention by the project will be necessary. The final result of the process is thus a drawn impact tree, in which indicators, assumptions and interventions are drawn in at the appropriate places.

In the **fifth and last step**, this graph should be explained in writing.

6.2.3   Resume

As a project planning process, Theory of Change should primarily facilitate dialogue between different stakeholders, help to identify correct solutions and to clarify and concretise the goals and effects of a project, and enable impact-oriented monitoring and evaluation. Theory of Change is particularly suitable

- when complex projects and programmes are planned.
- when programme effects are to be (continuously) recorded with a close monitoring and evaluation system.

Theory of Change claims to implement a detailed impact model and monitoring system and is accordingly complex.

6.3   Outcome Mapping

6.3.1   Introduction

Outcome Mapping was developed at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), in Ottawa, Canada, and published in 2001 in the form of a manual[15]. It is a system for recording the progress of projects/programmes and a structured process for planning them. The central concept of Outcome Mapping is that development is based on changing people's behaviour. In contrast to classical impact measurement methods, the focus is therefore not on (logically linked) project performance and its effects on the target groups. Instead, outcome mapping concentrates on behavioural changes ("outcomes") of direct partners with whom the project works (the so-called "boundary partners"). Outcome Mapping is a qualitative and participatory approach and focuses on the project's contribution to development. It was developed especially as a tool for learning and self-evaluation.

6.3.2   The process

The Outcome Mapping planning process consists of three phases and twelve steps, which are ideally carried out in the planning phase of general project management. The following figure displays the three stages of the Outcome Mapping process.

Figure 8: The three stages of the outcome mapping process, Source: Earl, S. et al., 2001

Stage 1 – Intentional Design: Here it should be clarified (in a participatory way) and determined to which overarching changes the project should contribute and with which strategies this should be achieved. First of all, a "vision" (why?) and a "mission" (how?) for the project are put in writing. Central is the identification of the primary "Boundary Partners" on

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[15] Sarah Earl, Fred Carden, and Terry Smutylo (2001). Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs

which the project wants to concentrate. These typically include the direct recipients of the project's services (e.g. a local partner organisation), but also other stakeholders. For each "Boundary Partner" the general desired change in behavior is described and several concrete changes in behavior (so-called "Progress Markers") are recorded. Finally, the activities with which these behavioral changes are influenced in the course of the project are determined.

Stage 2 – Outcome and Performance Monitoring: In the second phase, a system for ongoing monitoring will be developed. The basic idea here is not only to monitor the results achieved (changes in behaviour). In addition to these, data on the activities and the function of the project as an organisational unit will be collected. First of all, priorities for monitoring will be defined and three data collection instruments will be planned based on these priorities. By means of the "Outcome Journal" the progress of the "Boundary Partners" regarding "Progress Markers" is collected. The activities undertaken for the benefit of the partners and their results are continuously documented in the "Strategy Journal". Finally, internal processes are continuously monitored with the help of a "Performance Journal".

Stage 3 – Evaluation Planning: The final step is to clarify which aspects of the project (specific outcomes, activities or processes) are to be evaluated and to plan the resources required for this.

6.3.3   Resume
Outcome Mapping is well suited:
- To analyse the effects of development projects whose success cannot be measured by quantitative indicators alone.
- To analyse the effects of participatory projects which aim to improve the behaviour (e.g. interaction, action/reaction and participation) of specific actors in complex systems.
- To understand who the actors are with whom a project is working and what changes should be achieved with which strategies.
- to plausibilise the contribution of a project to a development (contribution).
- to learn.

In turn, this means that outcome mapping is less suitable for accountability purposes or for determining the project's direct contribution to development (attribution). Outcome mapping is also a planning and monitoring instrument, which is why it does not seem sensible to use outcome mapping for evaluations that are initiated only after the completion of a project.

6.4   Most Significant Change
6.4.1   Introduction
The Most Significant Change technique was developed in the 1990s by Rick Davies and published in a User Guide in 2005 (with Jess Dart)[16]. It is a qualitative and participatory method for recording the impacts of a project or programme. Most Significant Change can be used as monitoring during a project. But the technique also contributes to the evaluation of a project by providing "data" on its outcomes and impacts. Most Significant Change is essentially based on collecting stories about significant changes, especially among the target groups of a

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[16] https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/most_significant_change

project, and selecting the most significant ones in a systematic process over several stages. Most Significant Change is particularly suitable for complex and multi-layered projects with different impacts. Unexpected effects are also recorded. A successfully implemented Most Significant Change technique leads to whole teams focusing their attention on the effects of a project. Most Significant Change is therefore particularly suitable for learning.

6.4.2 The process

The User Guide describes implementation of Most Significant Changes in 10 steps:

1. How to start and raise interest
2. Defining the domains of change
3. Defining the reporting period
4. Collecting Significant Change stories
5. Selecting the most significant of the stories
6. Feeding back the results of the selection process
7. Verification of the stories
8. Quantification
9. Secondary analysis and meta-monitoring
10. Revising the system

The first step is to involve different stakeholders and motivate them to participate (as the process is very participatory). The next step is for the stakeholders to determine in which areas or on which topics the Significant Changes should be collected. They also determine how often the stories are collected.

The stories are collected from those who are most directly involved, i.e. mostly beneficiaries or project staff in the field. The stories will be collected mainly with the following simple question: "What do you think was the most significant change for the beneficiaries of the project during the last three months?

The collected stories are filtered in the hierarchical structure of the project, programme or organisation. Specifically, at each level, the stories are analysed and discussed in groups and finally a single "Most Significant Story" is passed upwards in each defined thematic area. At the same time, the criteria for this selection are reported back to the interested stakeholders. At the highest organisational level, a document is created with the stories finally selected.
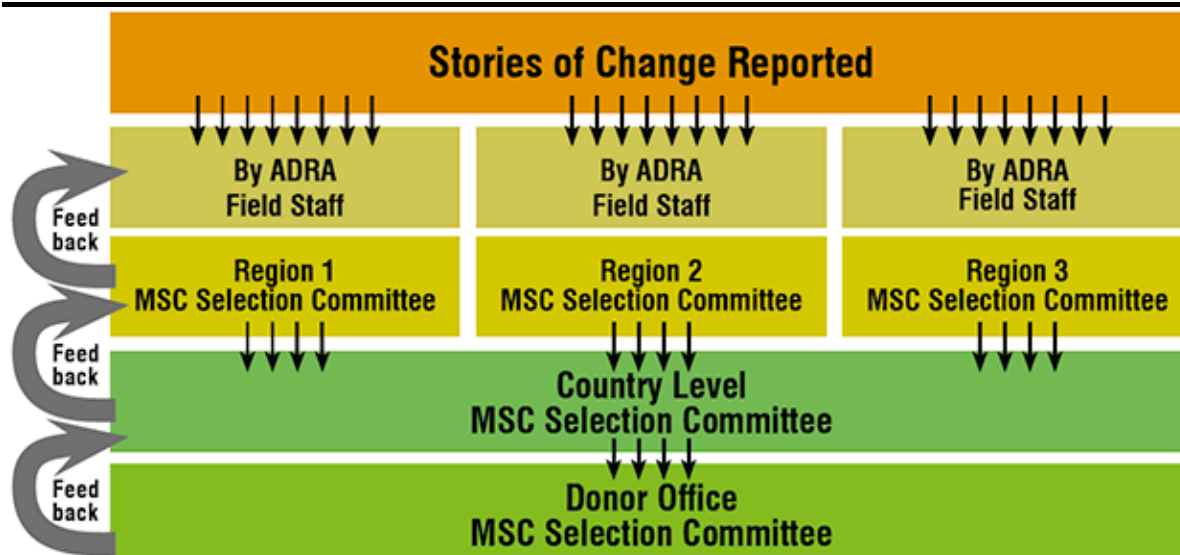
Figure 9: Example of the selection process (ADRA Laos), Source: MSC User Guide

In a next step, the selected stories can be verified with a field visit to ensure that they are correct and to obtain additional information about the important event. A further step can be to additionally quantify the qualitative information of the stories. For example, with information on how many people have experienced the same change.

The last two steps are a monitoring of the monitoring (e.g. who participated and with what influence on the results? Which types of changes were told and how often?) and monitoring the process itself (e.g. what was learned through the application?)

6.4.3   Resume

Most Significant Change is well suited

- when complex projects/programmes, multiple and different effects are produced.
- when unexpected changes are also to be recorded.
- to capture effects of large programmes with many organisational levels.
- to capture impacts of participatory projects/programmes with a focus on social change.
- to capture impacts that are difficult to capture using traditional methods.
- if there is no previous knowledge of monitoring and evaluation, it is easy to communicate.
- if a detailed picture of the changes is desired.
- to plausibilise the contribution of a project to a development (contribution).
- to learn.

Most Significant Change is relatively time-consuming and only takes effect after several rounds of selection and feedback. It therefore makes less sense to use Most Significant Change,

- if an expected change is to be confirmed.
- a completed project is to be evaluated retroactively.
- the average experience of the beneficiaries is to be determined.
- a quick and cheap evaluation for accountability purposes is to be prepared.

6.5   Method for Impact Assessment of Programmes and Projects (MAPP)

6.5.1   Introduction

MAPP was developed in 1999 by Dr Susanne Neubart at the German Development Institute (DIE)[17]. It is a participatory procedure for recording the effects of a project or programme. MAPP is based on group discussions in which changes and effects in the environment of a project or programme are recorded and evaluated retrospectively and with the help of logically sequential instruments. The group first analyses the impact of the project in general and in detail on the basis of several self-determined indicators. Then the relevant measures and activities of the project (and other actors) are listed and prioritised. Finally, also in the group, the contribution of the individual development measures to the identified developments is evaluated. According to the authors of the method, this allows the allocation gap to be bridged. MAPP is well suited to the assessment of multidimensional development projects. Unexpected effects are also recorded. The assessments are primarily qualitative in nature and are based on the subjective assessments of the group discussion participants.

6.5.2   The process

The procedure consists of applying the following 6 instruments in a logical sequence:
1) Lifeline: The overall development of the project region from the perspective of the population over the period of the project to be evaluated is assessed on a five-point scale and recorded graphically.
2) Trend analysis: The development over this period is recorded in detail using several criteria and an overall trend is determined for each criterion. This step also includes the definition of the criteria (indicators) by the participants of the group discussion themselves.
3) Cross-checking: Statistics, monitoring data, observations, etc. can be used to verify the results of the trend analysis.
4) List of measures: The activities of the project under consideration and any other actors (other projects, government, etc.) are listed and ranked according to their relevance to the beneficiaries. In addition, the contribution of the beneficiaries themselves in terms of work and finances is also evaluated.
5) Impact matrix: In the group discussion, the effect of the individual measures (4.) on the individual development criteria (2.) is now evaluated and recorded in a matrix. This matrix can be used to evaluate which measures had a high impact overall and which indicators developed well or poorly.
6) Development and impact profile: The most important information from the previous instruments is summarised in an overview. This shows whether overall development is robust or vulnerable (uneven), which main factors promote development and what role development measures of various organisations play.

6.5.3   Resume

MAPP is well suited

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[17] http://www.ngo-ideas.net/mediaCache/MAPP/MAPP-Description.pdf

- for projects/programmes whose target groups are clearly identified and whose effects can be perceived by these target groups.
- for the evaluation of multidimensional target concepts (e.g. endogenuous regional development, democratisation, etc.).

A certain culture of discussion in the region is a prerequisite for successful implementation. Only then can true consensus, as well as controversial perceptions, be identified in the group discussions.

7 Annex 2: Responses to the monitors' comments

Comment made by the monitors	Explanation
Overall: well written; clear; methods' descriptions are based on literature; aim to present a guideline for application in the study areas. As well as including a chapter on basic concepts and definition, a synthesis of existing knowledge on evaluation is presented before going on to provide a tailored guide on how to do evaluations in the regions (ch.5). More detailed and clearer instructions are required as some key questions remain unanswered, in particular a clear guidance on the EU policy framework (and relating ex-ante and interim evaluation) for all policy areas affecting the regional development of rural areas is lacking.	Ch 5 (now Ch 3) has been completely revised with a more detailed guide on the evaluation work, p.12-p.21
Ch 4 -it is not clear what this is for -while it may inform the contents of Ch 5, is it necessary?	Ch 4 has beenput into the annex, p. 23
Ch 5 is very broad and could be further developed by giving a more detailed guide on the evaluation process (actively incorporating some of the steps in Ch 4).	This chapter (now Chapter 3) has been completely revised with more detailed guide on the evaluation work, p.12-p.21
Section 6 explains the next steps for the second half of 2020; Corona is notmentioned; the level of detail is not clear when partners will select three measures.	The challenges related to COVID are now addressed in section 4.2, p22