



Assessing the added value of LEADER

Guidelines
Annexes 2 to 8

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Annex 2. Example of the LAG level monitoring database

There are several monitoring data on LAG activities as well as on projects (operations) implemented in the LAG area that can be systematically collected by LAGs and used for reporting as well as evaluations. Considering that LAGs are very different from one another and their work on implementation of Local Development Strategies (LDS) can also differ, the data they collect can be very diverse. However, to facilitate a structured approach as well as to streamline data collection to some extent on the CSP level, the MA/PA and LAGs could agree on data that could be collected from all LAGs in the Member State. For this, a common structure for collecting relevant monitoring and evaluation related data could be developed.

The tables below provide examples of how the data could be collected and organised based on examples of several LEADER added value output and result indicators provided in the evaluation framework of these guidelines, whereas the data source, the 'LAG level monitoring database', is also mentioned.

Table 1. Monitoring of LAG activities

| Relevant indicator code | Indicator/activity | Q1, Year X | Q2, Year X | Q3, Year X | Q4, Year X | Total (Year X) |
|-------------------------|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| LAV.0.09 | Number of training/capacity building activities that have helped improve the administrative and technical skills of LAGs by type of organiser (e.g. LAG, MA/PA, National CAP Network, other) (total number of activities) | | | | | |
| | <i>Number of activities organised for the LAG staff</i> | | | | | |
| | <i>Number of activities organised for the LAG decision-making body</i> | | | | | |
| | <i>Number of activities organised for the LAG members</i> | | | | | |
| | <i>Number of activities organised by the LAG</i> | | | | | |
| | <i>Number of activities organised by the MA/PA</i> | | | | | |
| | <i>Number of activities organised by the National CAP Network</i> | | | | | |
| | <i>Number of activities organised by other bodies (specify or add rows)</i> | | | | | |



| Relevant indicator code | Indicator/activity | Q1, Year X | Q2, Year X | Q3, Year X | Q4, Year X | Total (Year X) |
|--|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| LAV.0.10 | Number of animation activities (total number of activities) | | | | | |
| | > Activity type X (number) (e.g. individual one-on-one advice) | | | | | |
| | > Activity type Y (number) (e.g. study visits) | | | | | |
| | > Activity type Z (number) (e.g. meetings with potential beneficiaries) | | | | | |
| | > Etc. | | | | | |
| | Targeted stakeholder groups: | | | | | |
| | > Sector X (number of activities) | | | | | |
| | > Sector Y (number of activities) | | | | | |
| | > Etc. | | | | | |
| | Targeted territories: | | | | | |
| | > Territory X (number of activities) | | | | | |
| | > Territory Y (number of activities) | | | | | |
| | Type of beneficiaries: | | | | | |
| | > Actual/project promoter | | | | | |
| | > Potential | | | | | |
| | Organiser: | | | | | |
| > The LAG alone | | | | | | |
| > In cooperation with other actors (e.g. regional business, social, cultural and environmental organisations, and public authorities). | | | | | | |
| LAV.0.13 | Number and type of interactions between the MA/PA and LAGs or LAG representatives (number) | | | | | |
| | > Type W (e.g. coordination meetings with MA/PA) (number) | | | | | |
| | > Type X (e.g. MC meetings) (number) | | | | | |
| | > Type Y (e.g. training provided by the MA/PA) (number) | | | | | |
| | > Type Z (e.g. LAG meetings where MA/PA participated) (number) | | | | | |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



Table 2. Monitoring of projects (operations) implemented in the LAG area

| Relevant indicator code | LDS projects (operations) | Project A | Project B | Total Year X | Project C | Project D | Total Year Y |
|-------------------------|--|-----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| LAV.O.14 | Ratio EAFRD/other sources | | | | | | |
| | <i>Total amount (in EUR)</i> | | | | | | |
| | > <i>EAFRD (in EUR)</i> | | | | | | |
| | > <i>Private (in EUR)</i> | | | | | | |
| LAV.R.12 | Operation (project) includes voluntary work (YES/NO) | | | | | | |
| | Hours (days) of volunteering work | | | | | | |
| | Operation implemented by (type of promoter): | | | | | | |
| L701 | <i>Private individual business</i> | | | | | | |
| L702 | <i>Public administration</i> | | | | | | |
| L703 | <i>Representative of private economic local interests</i> | | | | | | |
| L704 | <i>Representative of social local interests</i> | | | | | | |
| L705 | <i>Research organisation</i> | | | | | | |
| LAV.O.02/L706 | Operation jointly implemented by several types of promoters | | | | | | |
| LAV.O.03 | Number of participants (in joint operations) | | | | | | |
| LAV.O.16 | New project promoters supported by the LAG (YES/NO) | | | | | | |
| LAV.R.17 | Operation was developed/improved through consultation with the LAG (YES/NO) | | | | | | |
| LAV.O.22 | Project contributes to (YES/NO): | | | | | | |
| | > <i>economic sustainability</i> | | | | | | |
| | > <i>environmental sustainability</i> | | | | | | |
| | > <i>social sustainability</i> | | | | | | |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



Annex 3. Factors that facilitate or impede the measurement of LEADER added value

The table below presents a list of factors that facilitate or impede the measurement of the different elements of each of the LEADER added value components.

Table 3. Factors that facilitate or impede the measurement of LEADER added value

| Factors that facilitate or impede the measurement of LEADER added value | |
|--|--|
|  Improved social capital | |
| Factors that facilitate measurement | Factors that impede measurement |
| <p>Social capital can be measured by analysing change in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > shared mental models and beliefs required to engage in a behaviour; > shared social norms and activation of new relations (e.g. trust, reciprocity, cooperation and networks); > new opportunities (i.e. access to resources and social support, skills, knowledge and advice). <p>There are ways to evaluate the type and direction of behavioural changes. A certain behaviour may be (a) increased, (b) decreased, (c) enhanced, (d) improved or even (e) maintained despite negative pressures.</p> <p>The size of the network can be computed to assess its changes over time.</p> | <p>Social capital is a concept that applies at the local level and is quite difficult to measure at the CSP level.</p> <p>Difficult to measure trust and, as a consequence, the change of trust. It is quite difficult to measure the change of trust in local community members determined by the activities performed by the LAGs. Normally, this is based on observing the change in perceptions of respondents, which requires including perceptions by external actors to collect more robust information. It may also be done by comparing an area with a similar one not covered by LAGs.</p> <p>Need for baseline or benchmark. A baseline or benchmark is necessary to define the starting point or a situation that would have happened without LEADER/the implementation of LDS (how social capital would have been without LEADER implementation in an area). Also, the level of evaluation will determine the source of the baseline e.g. for LAG/local level indicators, baselines are usually LAG specific.</p> <p>Social capital is the most difficult to operationalise. However, there is a lot of relevant research related to conceptualising^{1,2} and measuring social capital. Although social capital could be reviewed considering the most recent research and practical guidance for its operationalisation, it would be recommended to establish a working operational definition of social capital. Such definitions are provided in Annex 7 'Working definitions and glossary'.</p> |

1 Claridge, T., *Current Definitions Of Social Capital Academic Definitions In 2019*, January 15, 2020, <https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/current-definitions-of-social-capital/>, and International Social Capital Association, Social capital - is there an accepted definition in 2020?, YouTube, uploaded on 28 November 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=sep4ji3gv4w&t=77s>.

2 Pisani, E., Franceschetti, G., Secco, L., and Christoforou, A., (eds.), *Social Capital and Local Development*, Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54277-5>.



Factors that facilitate or impede the measurement of LEADER added value



Improved governance

| Factors that facilitate measurement | Factors that impede measurement |
|---|---|
| <p>Some governance elements can be measured, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">> the capacity of LAGs to build quality multi-level partnerships and manage cooperation, therefore having an active role in shaping multi-level governance;> the skills of LAG staff for local development purposes e.g. animation, communication, conflict resolution, leadership, and group and project management, which are as relevant as technical skills like marketing and tourism, etc;> the capacity of the LAG to act as a development agent by having staff with relevant skills for key development issues e.g. digital transition, climate change, social cohesion, etc.> the capacity of LAGs to manage funds from various public and private sources;> the readiness to broaden decision-making processes by including wider parts of the community and more local actors. | <p>LAGs in the EU operate with different governance models. Depending on the governance model used, the utilisation of CAP resources could differ across LAGs in the EU.</p> <p>Need to consider other funds. In view of the programme level in countries with the multi-fund approach, it may be impeding if governance is only assessed related to EAFRD/ LEADER and does not consider other funds. LAGs, on the other hand, must manage different sets of rules and eligible themes.</p> <p>Need to collect unbiased views. Assessments are usually based on estimations of participants. Therefore, biased answers could be a problem, whereas 'outside views' are more difficult to collect to judge, such as the openness of local governance arrangements.</p> <p>Changes in thinking takes time to observe and measure. A lot of indicators for local governance are related to the way of thinking, such as understanding the interests of others, but changes in core beliefs need quite some time to develop. Therefore, time horizons are a problem for measurements of long-term effects.</p> <p>Need for a baseline or benchmark. A baseline or benchmark is necessary to define the starting point or a situation that would have happened without LEADER/ LDS implementation (how governance would have been without LEADER implementation in the area). For instance, local governance indicator baselines are LAG specific. However, baselines for indicators on multi-level governance should be developed bearing in mind that they are influenced by the MA, PA and NN.</p> |



Factors that facilitate or impede the measurement of LEADER added value



Enhanced results and impacts

| Factors that facilitate measurement | Factors that impede measurement |
|---|---|
| <p>Enhanced results can be observed in the type and quality of projects that produce different (better) results to those that would have been implemented without the LEADER method e.g. new types of project promoters, more projects emerging due to a lower threshold for getting access to funding and projects that respond better to the needs of the local community.</p> <p>Enhanced results can also be measured by looking into collective projects i.e. jointly implemented by several types of promoters.</p> <p>In addition, it is possible to take into account easily measurable results and compare these with similar results achieved without LEADER (e.g. number of jobs created, new businesses created, services created or improved, smart village strategies supported and persons covered by supported social inclusion projects (starting with results and impacts already foreseen in the PMEF) and innovative projects supported).</p> <p>It is expected that LEADER projects are selected based on a needs analysis so they reflect local needs and can effectively solve them. The existence of a needs assessment and selection criteria can be analysed to ensure the 'right' projects are selected.</p> | <p>Project-based vs strategy-based measurement. The measurement of enhanced results and impacts seems to stress a project-based view instead of successful implementation of a strategic set of projects.</p> <p>Comparisons between LEADER and non-LEADER is often challenging. The elements 'more innovative projects' and 'more sustainable projects' are challenging to measure as they assume a comparison between LEADER and non-LEADER projects. This kind of comparison is often difficult as neither the beneficiaries, target groups nor the instruments used are the same for these two sets of projects. In addition, the objectives are often also different.</p> <p>Challenging to measure innovativeness of projects. At the same time, innovativeness is not expected from all LEADER projects.</p> <p>Difficult to measure 'impacts' of LEADER. Whereby 'results' are quite good to examine, there are obviously severe problems with measuring 'impacts', especially since the fields of actions in the LEADER context are very different, and it is not possible to develop a well-elaborated 'intervention logic' to detect the impacts for rural development. Furthermore, the relatively limited financial resources for LEADER (around EUR 4 million on average per LDS) over five years makes it difficult to produce a real impact.</p> <p>Lack of local level context indicators. LEADER may produce structural changes that could lead to impacts. Understanding the link between the results and potential changes could enrich the effectiveness of the LEADER method. However, there is no baseline to measure structural change, as there are no context indicators at the local level.</p> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



Annex 4. Example of linking LEADER principles with LEADER added value components

The visualisation of links between LEADER principles and the added value components can be beneficial to identify exact activities of LAGs and other LEADER stakeholders that support the creation of LEADER added value. Although there is not a one-to-one relationship between them, the suggested evaluation framework in these guidelines demonstrates that the LEADER principles are inherent in the added value elements of LEADER. The table below offers examples of activities/actions that operationalise LEADER added value components and links them to respective LEADER principles. It has no intention to present all the possible links and contributions. It rather presents some of examples rather than an exhaustive list of links.

Such a matrix could be used by LAGs and MAs as a guidance for understanding the links between LEADER principles and LEADER added value components. It can also serve for evaluators to reconstruct the intervention logic and develop evaluation frameworks for evaluating LEADER added value. The underlying idea is that the seven LEADER principles produces LEADER added value when applied to the implementation of the LDS/LEADER operations (projects), the animation/capacity building activities provided by LAG and other LEADER stakeholders, and the delivery mechanism. The source of the added value is therefore the synergy between all seven principles of the LEADER method and that the collective application of these principles by every LAG within the EU creates added value.

Table 4. Examples demonstrating possible links between LEADER principles and LEADER added value components

| LEADER principle (and how it is implemented) | LEADER added value components | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | Improved social capital | Improved governance | Enhanced results and impacts |
| Bottom-up approach (LDS is prepared by local actors) | Local actors interact in preparation of the LDS and develop trust towards the LAG during this process (networking and trust). | Local community members contribute to the development of LAG area by sharing their views and ideas ³ . Local actors share their knowledge and learn from each other (skills and capacity building). | Local community members have better knowledge of local needs and are better informed about the support opportunities - therefore, more projects (operations) valorise specific territorial assets and new project promoters emerge. |
| Area-based approach (LDS reflecting local needs and objectives for development is prepared) | The process of preparing and implementing the LDS contributes to building trust between local actors and their capacity to work together to reach common aims. | Local actors are involved in processes that contribute to the LDS that they would otherwise not have. Shared responsibilities and risks related to local development. | Projects (operations) that make better use of the advantages of an area are implemented. Projects that meet the specific needs of an area are implemented. |
| Local partnerships (as part of the LAG or projects involving the collaboration of local actors) | Formal and informal networks are formed at the local level, involving representatives of the public and private sector. | During the preparation and implementation of the LDS and LEADER projects participatory governance arrangements are formed. The composition and structure of the LAG involving relevant decision-making actors and those that can influence decision-making are balanced. | Promoters who work together on projects ensure that the benefits of the projects are spread more widely. |

³ New project promoters fall into the category of enhanced results and impacts.



| LEADER principle (and how it is implemented) | LEADER added value components | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | Improved social capital | Improved governance | Enhanced results and impacts |
| | | <p>Mechanisms and processes are developed by public, economic and civil society stakeholders by articulating their interests, exercising their legal rights, meeting their obligations and mediating their differences.</p> | |
| <p>Integrated and multi-sectoral strategy (the LDS addresses different challenges and integrates projects at local level)</p> | <p>Different interests (e.g. economic, social, environmental, public and private) are expressed and balanced at the local level.</p> <p>Formal and informal networks are formed at the local level, involving representatives of different sectors.</p> <p>Representatives of different sectors at the local level contribute to shared beliefs, values and common understanding of problems and solutions.</p> | <p>Actors representing different sectors participate in decision-making on the content and implementation of the LDS and (or) local projects.</p> <p>Multi-level networks and partnerships are formed (e.g. for improved decision-making and implementation of local projects).</p> | <p>Implementation of integrated projects (jointly implemented by several types of promoters) produces synergies and additional benefits (e.g. contributing to a circular economy, complex solving of local problems and new cooperation initiatives).</p> |
| <p>Innovation (LAGs and project promoters implement innovative projects in local contexts)</p> | <p>New ideas for projects (operations), products and processes that can be developed and implemented within LEADER.</p> | <p>New, innovative forms of acting and decision-making at the local level emerge.</p> <p>Participation in decision-making enables the promotion of innovative projects for the LAG area.</p> <p>Service innovations in LAG administration activities related to animation, consultation and capacity building of local project promoters.</p> | <p>Social, technological, process, service, and other types of innovations at local level are implemented within LEADER (such projects (operations) would not necessarily be seen as innovative at the national level).</p> |



| LEADER principle (and how it is implemented) | LEADER added value components | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| | Improved social capital | Improved governance | Enhanced results and impacts |
| <p>Networking (LAGs participate in regional, national and European networks)</p> | <p>Participants of networks form shared beliefs and values and a common understanding of problems and solutions.</p> | <p>LAG members are involved in decision-making outside the LAG area (multi-level governance). They contribute to better decisions and influence decision-making outside the LAG area.</p> <p>Participants in networks gain more power (build coalitions) to promote necessary decisions at local, regional or national level.</p> | <p>Participation in different networks and collaborative projects (networking to engage different partners to work with) serves as a source of inspiration and generates new ideas for projects.</p> |
| <p>Territorial cooperation (LAGs implement territorial cooperation projects that include LAG staff and members as well as other members of local communities)</p> | <p>LEADER stakeholders participate in territorial cooperation projects, learn from each other (capacity building) and build trust with others (this serves as a catalyst for new partnerships, networks and projects).</p> <p>Participants in cooperation projects form shared beliefs and values.</p> | <p>Shared views on problems and necessary decisions.</p> <p>Participants in territorial cooperation projects gain more power (build coalitions) to promote necessary decisions at local, regional or national level.</p> | <p>Participation in territorial cooperation projects serves as a source of inspiration and generates new ideas for projects and collaborative approaches to solve common problems.</p> <p>Wider dissemination of good practices (from one LAG to another).</p> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



Annex 5. Detailed evaluation framework (with additional indicators)

This annex presents a detailed evaluation framework with **additional indicators** to complement the suggested one in these guidelines, which was proposed by experts in the Thematic Working Group for LEADER added value. Many of these indicators have been used in the past, such as for the evaluation support study of the costs and benefits of the implementation of LEADER⁴. This way, Member States can access a wider menu of relevant indicators for further inspiration.

The tables in this annex contain the following for each LEADER added value element/key element to assess: (1) related evaluation question; (2) factors of success; (3) justification for the use of additional indicators; (4) activities that could be in the focus when assessing respective element; (5) output indicators (with additional (useful to have) indicators proposed) and data sources; (6) assumptions; (7) result indicators (with additional (useful to have) indicators proposed) and data sources; (8) assumptions; (9) impact indicators (with additional (useful to have) indicators proposed) and data sources.



Improved social capital

The exemplified evaluation framework for social capital can be used to assess to what extent the implementation of the LEADER approach increases social capital in terms of improved networking, enhanced mutual support and trust, and endorsement of shared mental models, values and beliefs.

Table 5. Detailed evaluation framework (with additional indicators) for improved social capital: Networks

| Component | Improved social capital |
|--|---|
| Key element to assess | 1. Networks |
| Evaluation question | To what extent does LEADER contribute to quality interactions and networking among relevant actors? |
| Factor of success/ brief description | FOS.S:1.01: The size and diversity of the network and quality of interactions within the LAG are improving or remains at a high level. |
| Justification for the use of additional indicators | <p>Although the main output and result indicators can reflect the size and diversity of the network, additional ones are proposed to better capture the quality of interactions within the network. <u>Additional output indicators</u> may be used to measure the opportunities for interaction between the network members as well as a more detailed picture of the connections developed.</p> <p><u>Additional result indicators</u> can illustrate the immediate outcome of these interactions, on the evolution of the composition of the network and the improvements in the network quality. Taken together, the additional indicators may establish a solid background for the interpretation of the impact indicator.</p> |
| Activities | Setting up or maintaining the local partnership: the composition of the LAG, LAG general assembly meetings and other complementary formats/activities that facilitate interactions within the LAG. |

⁴ European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, *Evaluation support study of the costs and benefits of the implementation of LEADER – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2762/995751>



| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>LAV.O.01: Number of LAG members broken down by type of organisation: a) public administrations; b) private local economic interests; c) social local interests; and d) other.</p> <p><i>(Data source: DME Annex VII to the Regulation (EU) 2022/1475. Variables L600 to L604)</i></p> <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.O.22: Number of LAG general assembly meetings and other formats/activities that facilitate interactions within the LAG.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG yearly reports, LAG level monitoring data)</i></p> <p>LAV.O.23: Number and type of participants in LAG general assemblies.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG yearly reports, LAG level monitoring data)</i></p> <p>LAV.O.24: Number of connections between LAG members in the same field (which would allow the creation of a stakeholder map by topic and reveal new sub-networks).</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG yearly reports, interviews, survey)</i></p> |
| <p>Assumptions</p> | <p>The variety or heterogeneity of LAG members leads to higher representativeness of different categories of local actors in the LAG.</p> |
| <p>Results (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>LAV.R.01: Network Diversity Index of the LAG membership.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Administrative records of the LAG. DME Annex VII to the Regulation (EU) 2022/1475. Variables L600 to L604)</i></p> <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.R.20: Evolution of the number of LAG members broken down by type (public, private, social local interests, etc.).</p> <p><i>(Data source: Based on DME Annex VII to the Regulation (EU) 2022/1475. Variables L601 to L604 and the same data collected at a later point in time)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.21: Quality of interactions of the LAG members amongst themselves.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Interviews, surveys)</i></p> <p><i>Examples of survey content to measure quality: being heard; common understanding reached; conflicts resolved; useful exchanges; relations only among actors pertaining to the same category; relations among actors pertaining to different categories; relations among actors pertaining to different hierarchical levels; relations which are detrimental to the social context (negative social capital).</i></p> |
| <p>Assumptions</p> | <p>A comprehensive and varied composition of the LAG network, with frequent interactions, can lead to improved quality of their relationships.</p> |
| <p>Impacts (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>LAV.I.01: LAG members that consider a quality cooperation culture has developed between LAG members.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> |
| <p>Factor of success/ brief description</p> | <p>FOS.S.1.02: The social interactions in the LAG area (but outside the LAG itself) have improved or remain at a high level thanks to LEADER.</p> |
| <p>Activities</p> | <p>Implementation of local development operations (projects).</p> |



| | |
|---|---|
| Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.O.02: Number (or ratio) of operations (projects) jointly implemented by several types of promoters (specifying types).</p> <p><i>(Data source: DMA Annex VII to the Regulation (EU) 2022/1475. Variables L700 and L706. Interviews and surveys to specify types)</i></p> <p>LAV.O.03: Number of participants in joint operations (projects).</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | <p>Participation in LEADER projects brings community members in contact with each other and can lead to more engagement in community life through participation in local groups.</p> |
| Results (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.R.02: Evidence of participants in LEADER projects (operations) who improve their capacity to organise themselves in social groups and integrate into the community fabric.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | <p>Engagement of community members in local groups contributes to improved social interactions.</p> |
| Impacts (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.I.02: Perception of improved social interactions in the LAG area amongst participants in LEADER projects.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> |
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| Factor of success/ brief description | <p>FOS.S.1.03: The LAG has developed or maintained networking with relevant partners outside the LAG area.</p> |
| Justification for the use of additional indicators | <p>A set of main indicators is proposed to measure the extent to which the LAG engages in networking outside the LAG area, notably through interregional and transnational cooperation projects and interactions with external actors.</p> <p><u>Additional output indicators</u> may be used to capture other potential interactions of the LAG and LAG members with other networks and institutions or the participation of LAG members in learning events, outside the LAG area.</p> <p>An <u>additional result indicator</u> may also be used to obtain evidence of interactions of the LAG with external networks at different levels (regional, national and transnational). An <u>additional impact indicator</u> may be used to capture the quality of these external interactions.</p> <p>Taken together, the additional indicators may establish a solid background for the interpretation of the <u>additional impact indicator</u>.</p> |
| Activities | <p>LAG participation in networks. LAG interactions with various networks. Implementation of interregional and transnational projects.</p> |
| Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.O.04: Number of interregional cooperation operations (projects) implemented by the LAG.</p> <p><i>(Data source: DME. Variable L708)</i></p> <p>LAV.O.05: Number of transnational cooperation operations (projects) implemented by LAG.</p> <p><i>(Data source: DME. Variable L709)</i></p> <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> |



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| | <p>LAV.O.25: Number of LAG members that participate in other networks at different levels (local, regional, national, transnational). <i>[Data source: Interviews, surveys]</i></p> <p>LAV.O.26: Number of new cooperations of the LAG with other relevant institutions within and outside the LAG area. <i>[Data source: Interviews, surveys]</i></p> <p>LAV.O.27: Number of participations in learning events outside the LAG area (study visits, learning exchanges, international conferences etc.) – can be counted as participation per LAG member or learning event attended. <i>[Data source: Interviews, surveys]</i></p> |
| <p>Assumptions</p> | <p>LAG members' participation in other networks, as well as interactions and new cooperations established, can increase the number and quality of external networks that the LAG is associated with.</p> <p>Participation in interregional and transnational projects contributes to the LAG's ability to 'hold down' external inspiration and markets.</p> |
| <p>Results (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>LAV.R.03: Evidence of the quality of interactions of LAG members with other (external) actors. <i>[Data source: Surveys, focus groups]</i></p> <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators: LAV.R.22: Number of external networks to which LAG participates: a) at different levels (local, regional, national, transnational); b) linked to LEADER or of a broader character; and c) promoted by the LAG. <i>[Data source: Interviews, surveys]</i></p> |
| <p>Assumptions</p> | <p>Participation in other networks and frequent interactions of LAGs with others can lead to stronger networks, more strategic relations and generally improved quality of cooperation.</p> <p>The interregional/transnational exchange contributes to an exchange of ideas and fosters the skills to develop new ideas.</p> |
| <p>Impacts (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators: LAV.I.13: Change in the perception of LEADER stakeholders that consider the quality of external networking to have improved. <i>[Data source: Interviews, surveys]</i></p> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



Table 6. Detailed evaluation framework (with additional indicators) for improved social capital: Mutual support and trust

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| Component | Improved social capital |
| Key element to assess | 2. Mutual support and trust |
| Evaluation question | To what extent has LEADER contributed to mutual support and trust within the LAG and the local community? |
| Factor of success/ brief description | FOS.S:2.01: The level of mutual support and trust within the LAG, and the local community in the LAG area has increased or remains at a high level. |
| Justification for the use of additional indicators | <p>A set of main indicators creates a structure to measure mutual support and trust, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > measuring evidence of trust in the LAG, > capturing the result of this evidence on the level of trust the local community puts in the LAG, and, ultimately, > estimating the improvement of the normative social capital in the LAG area. <p><u>Additional output indicators</u> are proposed to provide a deeper understanding of trust by distinguishing between its two dimensions: particularised trust, which is trust toward people the individual knows from frequent interactions (e.g. among colleagues in the LAG or the LAG decision-making level); and generalised trust, which is a more abstract attitude toward the population of the LAG area in general.</p> <p><u>Additional result indicators</u> are also proposed to distinguish between the immediate effects of LEADER implementation on the perceived levels of trust horizontally in the LAG area and vertically among the different players of LEADER governance.</p> <p>Finally, <u>additional impact indicators</u> are proposed to measure how the levels of perceived trust evolve and become established over time horizontally in the LAG area and vertically among the different players of LEADER governance.</p> |
| Activities | All LAG activities, meetings and other interactions between MA, PA, NN and LAGs. |
| Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.O.06: Evidence of trust in the LAG. <i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.O.28: Particularised trust among LAG members. <i>(Data source: Interviews, focus groups involving people within and outside the LAG)</i></p> <p>LAV.O.29: Generalised trust in the LAG area (context to capture the level of trust in the LAG area). <i>(Data source: Case studies, focus groups, survey)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | <p>The existence of trust within the LAG, i.e. among LAG members, reduces disputes and leads to faster resolution of disputes if they emerge. The existence of trust in the LAG area supports building economic relationships and paves the way for improving economic performance.</p> <p>Mutual support and trust between the central level structures (MA, PA, NN) and LAGs contribute to more effective implementation of LEADER.</p> |



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| Results (indicators)/ Data sources | LAV.R.04: Level of trust of the local community towards the LAG. <i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups, case studies)</i> |
| | Additional (useful to have) indicators: LAV.R.23: Level of mutual support and trust between LEADER stakeholders (MA, PA, NN and LAGs). <i>(Data source: Interviews, focus groups, survey)</i> LAV.R.24: Perception of LAG members about open dialogue, resolution of local disputes, transparency, and acceptance of each other's views/ideas in relation to local development. <i>(Data source: Interviews, focus groups, survey)</i> |
| Assumptions | Open dialogue, transparency of the decisional process, acceptance of new visions and continuous monitoring of the LAG activities facilitate the emergence of social trust between LAG members. Dialogue, transparency and good coordination facilitates the emergence of trust amongst LEADER stakeholders (MA, PA, CAP NN and LAGs). |
| Impacts (indicators)/ Data sources | LAV.I.03: Change in the trust of the local community towards the LAG. <i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups, case studies)</i> |
| | Additional (useful to have) indicators: LAV.I.14: Change in the perception of LAG members on the level of trust between them. <i>(Data source: Interviews, focus groups, survey)</i> LAV.I.15: Change in the perception of the MA, PA, NN and LAGs on the level of trust between them. <i>(Data source: Interviews, focus groups, survey)</i> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)

Table 7. Detailed evaluation framework (with additional indicators) for improved social capital: Shared mental models, values, and beliefs

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| Component | Improved social capital |
| Key element to assess | 3. Shared mental models, values and beliefs |
| Evaluation question | To what extent does LEADER contribute to shared mental models, values, and beliefs? |
| Factor of success/ brief description | FOS.S:3.01: Shared vision for the LAG area, territorial identities, common objectives, values and/or beliefs are promoted by LEADER within the LAG and LAG area. |
| Justification for the use of additional indicators | A coherent set of main indicators is provided to capture social awareness in the LAG area and its immediate effect on the quality of cooperation in the local community, and, ultimately, on the perceived impact of LEADER implementation in improving local identity and image of the area. |



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| | <p><u>Additional result indicators</u> are proposed to better focus the immediate effects of increased social awareness on better understanding social problems and increasing social inclusion.</p> <p>An <u>additional impact indicator</u> is proposed to complement the main indicator by focusing even more on the perceived role of LEADER towards increasing social inclusion and the adoption of shared values and how this evolves over time.</p> |
| Activities | LAG activities, especially those that foster critical analysis of the region (e.g. during LDS development). Also, activities to communicate facts and figures as well as outcomes of the LDS processes. |
| Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.O.07: Evidence of shared social awareness in the LAG area.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | The involvement of people in cooperation projects builds their common understanding of social problems and increases their solidarity and propensity to include disadvantaged groups, women and young people in cooperation projects. |
| Results (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.R.05: Evidence of shared values in cooperation and/or joint operations (projects), considering (a) capacity to keep agreements; (b) truthfulness in social and economic relationships; (c) responsiveness and respect for the rule of law; and (d) capacity to avoid opportunistic behaviours or free riding.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> |
| | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.R.25: Degree of recognition of social problems.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Interviews, focus groups)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.26: Level of inclusiveness in cooperation projects (welcoming disadvantaged groups).</p> <p><i>(Data source: Interviews, focus groups)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | The combination of solidarity, recognition of social problems and the inclusiveness of disadvantaged groups, women and young people facilitates cooperation based on shared mental models and beliefs. |
| Impacts (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.I.04: Perception that LAG actions have had an impact on improving local identity and the image of the LAG area, its people, resources and products.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> |
| | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.I.16: Change in the perception of local community members that LEADER contributes to shared mental models and beliefs and inclusive cooperation.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Interviews, focus groups, survey)</i></p> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)





Improved governance

The exemplified evaluation framework for governance can be used to assess to what extent the implementation of the LEADER approach improves local and multi-level governance and increases transparency of processes and decision-making.

Table 8. Detailed evaluation framework (with additional indicators) for improved governance: Local governance

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| Component | Improved governance |
| Key element to assess | 1. Local governance |
| Evaluation question | To what extent has the implementation of LEADER led to the establishment of processes and mechanisms, coordinated and animated by the LAG to ensure participatory, transparent, and inclusive decision-making and strong community engagement in strategy development and implementation? |
| Factor of success/ brief description | FOS.G:1.01: Inclusiveness in decision-making – the LAG’s capacity to bring together organisations and people in an inclusive manner in decision-making is improving or remains at a high level. |
| Justification for the use of additional indicators | <p>The set of main indicators measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > the representativeness at the decision-making level, > the immediate result of the representativeness on establishing solid processes that further facilitate and reinforce inclusiveness and, finally, > the local community’s perception of the LAG’s ability to inclusively bring organisations and people together in decision-making. <p>An <u>additional output indicator</u> is proposed to complement the measurement of representativeness by capturing the opportunities for these representatives to meet and work together at the general assembly and other meetings relevant to decision-making.</p> <p>An <u>additional result indicator</u> is proposed to show how the representativeness and opportunities to work together may lead to a virtuous circle of increasing representation.</p> <p>An <u>additional impact indicator</u> is proposed to show the effect of openness and inclusiveness on the local community’s general perception of the LAG’s role in fostering inclusiveness.</p> |
| Activities | <p>LAG general assemblies with elections or appointments to the LAG decision-making body. The represented groups and/or organisations get the possibility to critically evaluate the way in which their interests and preferences are constructed/pursued by the board members and the included stakeholders can influence the decisions of the board. Coordination meetings. Set up rules and activities to ensure mobility in the decision-making group. LAG staff and decision-making body with the capacity to facilitate processes and participation.</p> |
| Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.O.08: Number of LAG members in the decision-making body by type of organisation they represent, and by gender and age: a) public administrations; b) private local economic interests; c) local social interests; and d) other (not covered by the previous categories).</p> <p><i>[Data source: DME. Variables L610 to L620. (Annex VII to the Regulation (EU) 2022/1475)]</i></p> |
| | Additional (useful to have) indicators: |



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| | <p>LAV.O.30: Number of LAG general assembly meetings and/or other meetings relevant to decision-making.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG yearly reports, LAG level monitoring data)</i></p> |
| <p>Assumptions</p> | <p>The LAG's openness and inclusiveness allow new community members and actors to be involved and for already elected/appointed board members to get input from people in the territory.</p> <p>Written statutes are a precondition for the involvement of new groups, including aspects related to mobility in decision-making.</p> <p>General assembly meetings lead to possibilities for new community members and actors to be involved and for already elected/appointed board members to get input from people in the territory.</p> <p>Wider participation of different groups strengthens legitimacy and fosters conflict solving with an early integration of different views.</p> <p>The work of the governance arrangement includes participants who have not participated before.</p> <p>LAG staff can assist the decision-making body in the involvement of new members and help arrange activities that lead to the anchoring of persons, member groups and member organisations to the LAG.</p> |
| <p>Results (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>LAV.R.06: Evidence of LAG processes that facilitate inclusiveness in local governance.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.R.27: Evolution of the number of LAG members broken down by type (public, private, social local interests, etc.).</p> <p><i>(Data source: DME. Variables L601 to L604 and the same data collected at a later point in time)</i></p> |
| <p>Assumptions</p> | <p>An inclusive composition of the LAG decision-making body with solid processes for further facilitating inclusiveness increases the credibility of the LAG, which can be reflected in a more positive perception of the LAG among the local community.</p> |
| <p>Impacts (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>LAV.I.05: Perception of local community members that the LAG brings together organisations and people in an inclusive manner in decision-making.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.I.17: Change in the percentage of local community members that think LEADER gave power to the local community and involved new actors beyond what is achieved in centrally (nationally or regionally) administered schemes.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> |
| <p>Factor of success/ brief description</p> | <p>FOS.G.1.02: The administrative and technical skills of the LAG and its staff (in areas covered by the LDS) are improving or remain at a high level.</p> |



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| Justification for the use of additional indicators | <p>The main output and result indicators set the basis for capturing the activities that help LAG staff, decision-making body and members to acquire new skills and how these skills are integrated into LAG's day-to-day work and improve it.</p> <p>An <u>additional result indicator</u> is proposed to measure the participation of LAG staff, decision-making body and LAG members in the capacity building activities.</p> <p>An <u>additional impact indicator</u> is proposed to show the change in the general perception among the local community regarding the quality of the support provided by the LAG as an outcome of the acquired skills and their integration into the LAG's work.</p> |
| Activities | <p>Capacity building or training events addressed to LAG staff, decision-making body and LAG members. Animation activities. LDS development activities. Network management activities.</p> |
| Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.O.09: Number of training/capacity building activities that have helped improve the administrative and technical skills of LAGs, by type of organiser.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring databases, interviews)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | <p>Participation in capacity building or training events, as well as in different LAG activities leads to new or improved skills.</p> |
| Results (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.R.07: Evidence of improvement of administrative skills.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.08: Evidence of improvement of the technical skills of LAGs in the LDS and areas covered by it.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.R.28: Number of participants in capacity building activities (including training) broken down by the type of participants (LAG staff, LAG decision-making body, LAG members).</p> <p><i>(Data source: Records/monitoring data in the MA/PA)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | <p>By acquiring new or improving their skills, LAG staff, the decision-making body and members can provide better quality support to local development processes, such as animation, strategy development, cooperation, etc.</p> |
| Impacts (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.I.18: Change in the percentage of LEADER project promoters that consider the LAG staff, decision-making body and/or LAG members provide good quality support e.g. animation support, support to the development of LDS, support to cooperation processes, etc.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Interviews, surveys)</i></p> |
| Factor of success/ brief description | <p>FOS.G.1.03: The LAG has improved animation and support to actual and potential beneficiaries.</p> |
| Activities | <p>Animation activities. LDS development activities. Network management activities.</p> |



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| Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.O.10: Number of animation activities, by target stakeholder group, organiser and type of activity.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG yearly reports, LAG level monitoring database)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | <p>The animation activities and support provided will motivate local community members to participate in the implementation of the LDS.</p> |
| Results (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.R.09: Evidence of support provided to applicants and beneficiaries, and, particularly, to those that have not applied or been supported before, including hard-to-reach groups.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> <p>LAV.I.06: Number of new applicants as a result of animation and support activities.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database)</i></p> |
| Factor of success/ brief description | <p>FOS.G.1.04: Communication within LAG, with prospective applicants and the local community is improving.</p> |
| Justification for the use of additional indicators | <p>The main indicators can measure the efforts of a LAG to communicate its activities and the role of LEADER in empowering local communities, which ultimately leads to increased visibility of the EU in these communities.</p> <p><u>Additional result indicators</u> are proposed to obtain deeper insights into the immediate result of these communication activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > in achieving a more diversified composition of projects implemented under the LDS; and > in providing local community members with the opportunity to be heard. <p><u>Additional impact indicators</u> are also proposed to estimate the change in local perceptions about the LDS and the role of the LAG and also the extent to which the communication efforts of the LAG increase inclusiveness and bring more people in contact with local development.</p> |
| Activities | <p>Communication activities. Animation activities..</p> |
| Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.O.11: Number of LAGs with relevant documents concerning their activities available on a website.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG website)</i></p> <p>LAV.O.12: Evidence of the LAG's communication activities and their reach.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG website, interviews, focus groups, communication statistics)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | <p>Communication activities will increase the awareness of the local community regarding the LEADER approach and the role of the LAG and LDS. In addition, more local community members will be motivated to participate in projects implementing the LDS. Moreover, together with animation activities, they will provide opportunities for local community members to be heard and become part of local governance.</p> |
| Results (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.R.10: Percentage of the local community members who are aware of a) the LAG; b) its activities; and c) the LDS.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> |



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| | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.R.29: Share (balanced distribution) of operations (projects) implemented by type of promotor, as follows: (a) private individuals or businesses; (b) public administrations; (c) representatives of private economic local interests (e.g. business associations, chamber of commerce, etc.); (d) representatives of social local interests (e.g. non-governmental organisations, local associations, etc.); (e) research organisations; (f) jointly implemented by several types of promotors; (g) promotors that fall under other categories than those listed, indicating also i) promotors who are not LAG members and ii) promotors who have not applied before.</p> <p><i>(Data source: DME. Variables L701 to L707, LAG level monitoring database)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.30: Number and type of improvements and changes of work procedures based on local community members' proposals and evaluations.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG yearly reports, LAG ongoing evaluations)</i></p> |
| <p>Assumptions</p> | <p>The more awareness is developed regarding LEADER and its implementation, and the more local community members and actors implement projects and/or have the opportunity to shape the local governance procedures, the more the visibility of the role of the EU in empowering local communities is increasing.</p> |
| <p>Impacts (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>LAV.I.07: Evidence of local community members that think LEADER brings the EU closer to citizens.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> <p>LAV.I.08: Evidence of local community members with a perception that the LAG is a credible institution/central agent for local development.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.I.19: LEADER sustains processes of bottom-up involvement. More people in local development.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Analysis of result/output indicators)</i></p> <p>LAV.I.20: Change in the percentage of local community members who are aware of the LAG and understand the principles/strategy being worked on.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Survey at the LAG area)</i></p> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



Table 9. Detailed evaluation framework (with additional indicators) for improved governance: Multi-level governance of LEADER

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| Component | Improved governance |
| Key element to assess | 2. Multi-level governance of LEADER |
| Evaluation question | To what extent has the implementation of LEADER led to the establishment of collaborative processes and mechanisms between MA/PA, regional authorities, networks and LAGs, based on EU level standards, to empower LAGs, and enhance their decision-making, management and accountability capacities? |
| Factor of success/ brief description | FOS.G:2.01: The coordination and communication between the LAG and other levels of governance is improving or remains at a high level. |
| Justification for the use of additional indicators | <p>The set of main indicators captures the interactions between the levels of governance and the opportunities and potential for LAGs to collectively negotiate solutions to improve the delivery mechanism and, hence, the development of positive perceptions at all levels about the functioning of multi-level governance.</p> <p><u>Additional output indicators</u> are proposed to focus more on the capacity building interactions and the interactions with partners outside the core delivery mechanism.</p> <p><u>Additional result indicators</u> are proposed to better understand the result of interactions in terms of the number of participants and skills acquired, the division of competences among the levels of governance and its effect on reducing administrative burden and implementation time.</p> <p><u>Additional impact indicators</u> are proposed to better reflect the changes in attitudes between the levels of governance and the extent to which the governance arrangements increase inclusiveness and bring more people into contact with local development.</p> |
| Activities | LAGs are involved in designing 'systems' and 'procedures' they will operate within. MA/PA staff organise/participate in capacity building workshops on the LEADER method and administrative simplification approaches. The MA/PA, NN and other networks organise capacity building events for LAGs. The MA/PA ensure capacity building communication. The MA/PA participates in LAG meetings in the LAG areas. Conditions for the implementation of inter-regional and transnational projects. |
| Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.O.13: Number and type of interactions between the MA/PA and LAGs or LAG representatives (e.g. participation in meetings, assemblies, MC meetings).</p> <p><i>(Data source: Records/monitoring data in the MA/PA and the LAG, Interviews with staff from the LAG, MA and PA)</i></p> <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.O.31: Evidence of consultations with LAGs on the design of systems and procedures and their simplification.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Records/monitoring data in the MA/PA)</i></p> <p>LAV.O.32: Number and type⁵ of capacity building events for LAGs organised by MA/PA, National CAP Network.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Records/monitoring data in the MA/PA)</i></p> |

⁵ Type refers to capacity building: a) on regulatory conditions; b) on project development/the LEADER method and its role in CSP/evaluation.



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| | <p>LAV.O.33: Evidence of interactions with other relevant development institutions a) in the LAG area; b) other national networks; and c) other EU networks (e.g. membership and participation in activities/events).</p> <p><i>(Data source: Interviews, surveys)</i></p> |
| <p>Assumptions</p> | <p>The involvement of local governance actors such as LAGs improves and streamlines procedures for implementing legislation. Capacity building of staff contributes to improved implementation of LEADER. Case management that better accommodates the LEADER method with local governance as a value-adding part of multilevel governance. Capacity building events contribute to positive storytelling about LEADER and support many LAGs at a time. Meetings and interactions between MA/PA staff and LAGs improve implementation.</p> |
| <p>Results (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>LAV.R.11: Evidence of improved quality of interactions between the MA/PA/NN and LAGs or LAG representatives.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Survey, interviews with staff from the LAG, MA, PA and NN)</i></p> <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.R.31: Number and type of LAG staff, decision-making body and/or LAG members participating in capacity building activities (including training), organised by MA/PA, NN or other bodies.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Records/monitoring data in the MA/PA)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.32: Number of LAG meetings in which MA/PA staff participate.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Records/monitoring data in the MA/PA)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.33: Evidence of skills and capacities of MA/PA/NN in managing the relationship with LAGs by type of skills (e.g. conflict resolution, coordination).</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.34: Number and type⁶ of tasks which are completely delegated to the LAGs, indicating whether they fall under Article 33.3 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 or not.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Records/monitoring data in the MA/PA)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.35: Number and type of tasks for which other levels of governance (e.g. MA/PA, regional, etc.) have exclusive competence.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Records/monitoring data in the MA/PA)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.36: Number and type of tasks for which responsibility is shared by LAGs and other levels of governance.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Records/monitoring data in the MA/PA)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.37: Evidence of reduced administrative burden among project holders.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups, case studies)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.38: Reduced time: a) for project approval; b) for eligibility checks; c) for control.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database/records/monitoring data in the MA/PA)</i></p> |
| <p>Assumptions</p> | <p>Improved quality of interactions between the MA/PA/NN and LAGs or LAG representatives through improvements and simplifications in the systems, rules and procedures as well as activities that improve communication and coordination, and strengthen the links between them.</p> |

⁶ Type refers to: a) for project approval; b) for eligibility checks; c) for control.



| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Impacts (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.I.09: Evidence of a positive perception of people in the MA/PA/NN and LAG who consider that the links and coordination/communication between the MA/PA/NN and the LAGs have been strengthened.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> |
| | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.I.21: LEADER sustains processes of bottom-up involvement. More people in local development.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Analysis of result/output indicators)</i></p> <p>LAV.I.22: Change in the percentage of MA/PA and LAG staff that consider the MA/PA is managing the relationship well with the LAGs.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Interviews, surveys)</i></p> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



Enhanced results and impacts

The exemplified evaluation framework for enhanced results and impacts can be used to assess to what extent the implementation of the LEADER approach leverages existing resources, promotes more innovative and sustainable projects that are tailored to local needs and enhances links between local actors.

Table 10. Detailed evaluation framework (with additional indicators) for enhanced results and impacts: Increased leverage

| Component | Enhanced results and impacts |
|---|---|
| Key element to assess | 1. Increased leverage |
| Evaluation question | To what extent does LEADER generate leverage? |
| Factor of success/ brief description | FOS.E:1.01: The LDS stimulated further investment or activities in the LAG area to achieve the strategic objectives of the LDS not directly funded by LEADER. |
| Justification for the use of additional indicators | <p>The set of main indicators measures the additional financial and human (voluntary) resources mobilised by the LDS.</p> <p>An <u>additional output indicator</u> is proposed to capture the leverage in the capacity of LAG and LAG members to benefit from funding opportunities and bring more investments in the LAG area.</p> <p><u>Additional result indicators</u> are proposed to capture the springboard effect of the LEADER method in terms of new non-funded projects, replication of successful projects and using other funds.</p> |
| Activities | Implementation and management of the monitoring system. Implementation and monitoring of operations (projects). Networking and technical assistance. Continuous interaction with promoters of the supported projects. Communication activities. |



| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>LAV.O.14: Ratio of EAFRD funding for LDS to other (non-EAFRD) funding spent on the LDS, of which a) by private sources, b) by public sources.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database, LAG yearly reports. DME. Variable L922)</i></p> <p>LAV.O.15: Evidence (number and expenditure) of projects to which the LAG applies outside EAFRD.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database, interviews)</i></p> |
| <p>Assumptions</p> | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.O.34: Evidence of animation activities that helped local actors access other sources of funding to achieve the strategic objectives of the LDS.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database, interviews)</i></p> |
| <p>Results (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>LAV.R.12: Evidence of operations (projects) that include voluntary work.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database, interviews)</i></p> <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.R.39: Evidence of operations (projects) promoted/supported by the LAG that generate new non-funded projects.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Interviews, focus groups)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.40: Evidence of implemented innovative operations (projects) that are replicated by other (public/private) actors in the area.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.41: Evidence (number and amount) of projects initiated/supported by the LAG that helped local actors access other funds.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database/interviews with LAG staff)</i></p> |
| <p>Factor of success/ brief description</p> | <p>FOS.E.1.02: LEADER interventions made it possible to identify and motivate new project promoters.</p> |
| <p>Justification for the use of additional indicators</p> | <p>The set of main indicators captures the efforts of the LAG to identify and motivate new project promoters well by measuring their number and the positive perception of the local community on LAG capacities.</p> <p>An <u>additional result indicator</u> is proposed for a more quantitative estimation of the level of new promoters compared to the total number of LEADER project promoters.</p> |
| <p>Activities</p> | <p>Animation activities and technical assistance. Communication activities carried out.</p> |



| | |
|---|--|
| Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.O.16: Number of new project promoters supported by the LAG where financial support from the LEADER intervention was decisive.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database, interviews, surveys)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | <p>The leverage effect is expressed by assessing to what extent projects would have been carried out without LEADER support. The animation and communication activities informed and motivated potential beneficiaries to apply. They also helped new project promoters improve their initial proposals and contributed to speeding up the implementation of their projects.</p> |
| Results (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.R.13: Evidence of local community members in the LAG area with a positive perception of the LAG's capacity to identify and empower new project promoters.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> |
| | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.R.42: Share (%) of new and/or different from mainstream profiles of companies/actors implementing operations (projects).</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database, interviews, surveys)</i></p> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)

Table 11. Detailed evaluation framework (with additional indicators) for enhanced results and impacts: Projects well-tailored to the needs of the territory

| | |
|---|---|
| Component | Enhanced results and impacts |
| Key element to assess | 2. Projects well-tailored to the needs of the LAG area |
| Evaluation question | To what extent do the LEADER strategy and LAG actions meet specific local needs and territorial objectives? |
| Factor of success/ brief description | FOS.E.2.01: LEADER meets specific local needs and territorial objectives by enabling projects by a variety of promoter types that valorise specific territorial assets and identities. |
| Justification for the use of additional indicators | <p>The set of main indicators reflects the variety of project promoters and how their operations (projects) address the identified needs. It also reflects how this diversity builds on territorial assets, which fosters the community identity and leads to smoother and more inclusive structural changes.</p> <p>An <u>additional impact indicator</u> is proposed to capture perceptions about the extent to which LEADER can be better placed to address local needs compared to centrally managed interventions.</p> |
| Activities | <p>Consultations with the local community to define local needs and discuss the intervention logic and the design of measures. Meeting with local community/actors to design specific operations tailored to the opportunities of the LAG area. Meetings with the LAG decision-making body and LAG members to discuss the relevance of implemented operations (projects) and, if needed, revise the LDS intervention logic to better address local needs.</p> |



| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>LAV.O.17: Number and share of operations (projects) implemented by different types of promoters.</p> <p><i>(Data sources: DME. Variables L700 to 709)</i></p> <p>LAV.O.18: Number of operations (projects) that contribute to each typology of needs identified in the LDS, including green, digital or social transition of rural areas.</p> <p><i>(Data sources: DME. Variables L800 to 810. LAG level monitoring database)</i></p> |
| <p>Assumptions</p> | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.O.35: Number of specific operations (multi-purpose), implemented by LAG.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database, interviews with LAG staff)</i></p> |
| <p>Assumptions</p> | <p>Promoters who implement projects with better knowledge of how local assets may be used to address identified needs will increase the share of projects that build on territorial assets.</p> |
| <p>Results (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>LAV.R.14: Percentage of operations (projects) that valorise unique territorial assets.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups, LAG monitoring database)</i></p> |
| <p>Assumptions</p> | <p>The more operations (projects) implemented by a variety of promoters building on territorial assets the more effective and inclusive the changes in the local socio-economic structures and the more evident the LEADER approach fosters community identity.</p> |
| <p>Impacts (indicators)/ Data sources</p> | <p>LAV.I.10: Evidence of operations (projects) that produce community benefits and reinforce community identity.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> |
| | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.I.24: Perceptions that the needs of the territory are better met by LDS supported operations (projects) compared to other CSP measures with similar objectives.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Interviews, focus groups)</i></p> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



Table 12. Detailed evaluation framework (with additional indicators) for enhanced results and impacts: Projects with innovative elements at a local level

| | |
|---|---|
| Component | Enhanced results and impacts |
| Key element to assess | 3. Projects with innovative elements at a local level |
| Evaluation question | To what extent are LEADER projects innovative in the local context? |
| Factor of success/ brief description | FOS.E:3.01: LEADER fosters introduction/diffusion of innovations in the local context. |
| Activities | Development of selection criteria. Capacity building events. Animation and training activities, technical assistance. |
| Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources | LAV.0.19: Number of operations (projects) which are innovative in the local context. <i>(Data source: DMA. Variable L710)</i> |
| Assumptions | LAGs and local project promoters implement various types of innovation (e.g. product, process, service, organisational, technological, social, business models and other types). Innovation is defined locally by national or regional authorities or the LAGs themselves. |
| Results (indicators)/ Data sources | LAV.R.15: Percentage of expenditure in innovative operations (projects) to the total expenditure. <i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database)</i> LAV.R.16: Evidence of innovations produced at the local level in response to a) digital; b) green; c) economic; and d) social challenges/transition. <i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i> |
| Assumptions | As the share of innovative operations (projects) increases due to the LEADER approach, stakeholders' perceptions of LEADER's improved ability to generate innovation at the local level change. |
| Impacts (indicators)/ Data sources | LAV.I.11: Percentage of LEADER stakeholders who consider that LEADER contributes to the generation of new ideas, products or processes in the LAG area that are innovative in the local context. <i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



Table 13. Detailed evaluation framework (with additional indicators) for enhanced results and impacts: Sustainable projects

| | |
|---|--|
| Component | Enhanced results and impacts |
| Key element to assess | 4. Sustainable projects |
| Evaluation question | To what extent do LEADER projects produce sustainable results? |
| Factor of success/ brief description | FOS.E:4.01: LEADER projects produce sustainable results. |
| Justification for the use of additional indicators | <p>The main indicators reflect the mix of projects and the enabling environment created by the support provided by LAGs for the improvements of the projects.</p> <p>An <u>additional output indicator</u> is proposed to capture sustainability through the evolution of funded projects after the funding period.</p> <p>An <u>additional result indicator</u> is proposed to quantify the share of investments in services and infrastructure that survive after the funding period.</p> <p>Finally, an <u>additional impact indicator</u> is proposed to estimate the optimistic attitude of LEADER stakeholders toward the prospective durability of projects and effects.</p> |
| Activities | Implementation of operations (projects). Technical assistance to the LEADER project promoters/beneficiaries. Project monitoring. Continue the interaction with promoters of the supported operations (projects). |
| Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.O.20: Number of operations (projects) that contribute to: a) economic; b) environmental; and c) social sustainability.</p> <p><i>(Data sources: LAG level monitoring database, CSP electronic information system, LAG yearly reports)</i></p> <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.O.36: Number of projects that evolve into other projects or become part of other projects or networks after the funding has ended. (This indicator would apply to projects funded in previous programming periods and can only be used in the current period in the context of an ex post evaluation, provided they have been completed early in the current programming period).</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database, CSP electronic information system, LAG yearly reports)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | Projects based on local knowledge and/or improved with the support of LAG will be more sustainable. |
| Results (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.R.17: Evidence of operations (projects) whose sustainability has been improved through consultation within the LAG.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.18: Evidence of operations (projects) which are sustainable due to knowledge of local conditions.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups, interviews)</i></p> |



| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.R.43: Number/share of operations (projects) related to the enhancement of services and infrastructures for the local community that survive for at least five years after the funding has ended.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database, CSP electronic information system, LAG yearly reports)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | As more sustainable projects are observed, LEADER stakeholders will become more optimistic about the prospective durability of projects funded by LEADER and the effects they produce. |
| Impacts (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.I.25: Percentage of LEADER stakeholders that consider the effects of LEADER projects last beyond the funding.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Focus groups, surveys)</i></p> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)

Table 14. Detailed evaluation framework (with additional indicators) for enhanced results and impacts: Projects that promote links between local actors

| | |
|---|---|
| Component | Enhanced results and impacts |
| Key element to assess | 5. Projects that promote links between local actors |
| Evaluation question | To what extent does LEADER promote links between actors (e.g. partnerships, networks, jointly implemented projects and collaborations) that would not have existed without it? |
| Factor of success/ brief description | FOS.E:5.01: Collaborative projects are established or sustained. |
| Justification for the use of additional indicators | <p>The main indicators reflect the number and share of projects that work in synergy and produce cooperation.</p> <p>An <u>additional output indicator</u> is proposed to also capture the number and type of cooperations that are formed by the implementation of the synergistic projects.</p> <p><u>Additional result indicators</u> are proposed to quantify the share of public expenditure for LEADER projects implemented by several types of promoters, interregional and transnational cooperation projects in the total amount paid by EAFRD for the implementation of operations (projects).</p> <p>An <u>additional impact indicator</u> is proposed to reflect the extent to which LEADER stakeholders perceive LEADER as an instrument that fosters stronger links between local actors.</p> |
| Activities | Animation activities, meetings, technical assistance. |



| | |
|---|--|
| Outputs (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.O.21: Number of LEADER operations (projects) that work in synergy.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database, interviews, LAG yearly reports)</i></p> |
| | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.O.37: Number and type of cooperations that emerge from LEADER projects.</p> <p><i>(Data source: LAG level monitoring database, surveys)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | <p>The correct application of the integrated, multisectoral approach and cooperation led to the promotion of concrete and functional links between rural actors and generated synergies at the project level and between project actors.</p> |
| Results (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>LAV.R.19: Share of LEADER operations (projects) that have produced cooperation in the form of networks, partnerships, jointly implemented projects and other collaborations/synergies.</p> <p><i>(Data source: DME. Variables L706, L708, L709 and L700)</i></p> |
| | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.R.44: Share of public expenditure for LEADER operations (projects) implemented by several types of promoters.</p> <p><i>(Data source: DME. Variables L706 and L922.)</i></p> <p>LAV.R.45: Share of public expenditure for cooperation operations (projects).</p> <p><i>(Data source: DME. Variables L708, L709 and L922.)</i></p> |
| Assumptions | <p>The more joint cooperation operations (projects) are implemented the more positive the percentage of LEADER stakeholders that consider LEADER strengthens the links between local actors.</p> |
| Impacts (indicators)/ Data sources | <p>Additional (useful to have) indicators:</p> <p>LAV.I.26: Change in the percentage of LEADER stakeholders that consider LEADER produces stronger links between actors.</p> <p><i>(Data source: Surveys, focus groups)</i></p> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



Annex 6. Examples from using the suggested evaluation framework

The Thematic Working Group that developed these guidelines also worked with experts and stakeholders on the following examples that evaluate LEADER added value at the LAG and CSP level. They provide the evaluation scope and objectives and a description of the different evaluation steps, notably planning, preparing, structuring and collecting evidence, as well as analysing information, answering evaluation questions and disseminating information to target audiences.

These examples are inspired by real evaluations and use elements of the evaluation framework provided in the guidelines as well as some additional indicators closer to the context of the provided examples. The process of developing/adapting the framework should also inspire designing/adapting the guidelines' indicators to a specific context and evaluation needs.

Example 1: LAG level evaluation of LEADER added value with a focus on governance

This step-by-step example shows a practical application of the evaluation of LEADER added value at LAG level. The main focus is on governance aspects.

Background

In this example, the given LAG area covers five predominantly rural municipalities. The LAG area has 45 000 rural inhabitants, whereas the 15 000 inhabitants of the inner part of the biggest town are not covered by LEADER. The LAG finances co-operation, investment, knowledge transfer and training, as well as business development measures. The LAG has a staff of four persons working part-time (a LAG manager, a finance expert, a project advisor, and a person working on communication and youth activation). In addition to the EARDF funding, the LAG also manages projects from other funding sources (e.g. ESF, ERDF and Citizens' Europe). The LAG has a tripartite governing body with three representatives from each of the five municipalities (a representative each from the public sector, private sector and the local community). In addition, the LAG has a working group on youth.

An idea about introducing community-led local development to the inner part of the biggest town has been discussed in several forums. Some sceptical views were expressed on the value of community-led local development as opposed to direct funding for urban development through open calls. Others stressed the importance of engaging the local community in the development. The LAG and an urban activist group decided to apply for external funding the following year to set up a community-led local development group in the urban area ('urban LAG'). To secure co-financing from the town, the town council requested the LAG to provide information on how the LAG has been able to improve the participation of different kinds of actors in local development i.e. an analysis of the governance component of LEADER added value.

Planning the evaluation

To begin with, the LAG set up an evaluation taskforce consisting of interested LAG decision-making body members, LAG staff, the MA and a researcher with expertise in good governance to plan the evaluation focus, process and timeline.

In the planning phase, the evaluation task force:

- > defined the purpose and focus of the evaluation;
- > agreed the administrative and coordination arrangements for the evaluation;
- > defined the evaluation topics and tasks;
- > screened the available data and information;
- > planned the timeline and available resources for the evaluation;
- > planned the dissemination of the evaluation findings.

Given that the evaluation was to be used in the funding application for setting up the LAG, and the town council wanted information on the ways in which the LAG has improved participation in local development, the **evaluation focused on the improved governance aspect of LEADER added value**. The evaluation would also give the LAG important information on its governance mechanisms, the quality of interactions within the LAG network and the success of its efforts to improve inclusiveness of local development. The LAG would also receive recommendations for improvements both in terms of improving its inclusion work and monitoring the developments.

The LAG financed the evaluation and managed the evaluation contract. The task force operated as the steering group for the evaluation. The external evaluator was selected through an open call for tender. The LAG had a maximum of EUR 15 000 reserved for the evaluation. In addition, the LAG dedicated a total of 20 working days from two staff members over a period of one year to plan, prepare and manage the evaluation and disseminate the findings. The planning and preparation phase was scheduled to last two months. Once the evaluator was selected, the evaluation was to be conducted over six months. The final month would be spent on disseminating the evaluation findings and discussing internally the lessons learned.

As there was a need for information on the improvement and quality of the participation of different kinds of actors in local development, the task force examined the concept of good governance, which is typically considered to be participatory, equitable and inclusive, consensus oriented, responsive, accountable, transparent, and following the rule of law⁷. The taskforce noticed that the following LEADER principles furthered good governance: **local partnership and bottom-up development**.

7 OHCHR, About Good Governance, UN, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/good-governance/about-good-governance>.



The task force decided to focus the evaluation on the improvement of participation and collaboration of different kinds of actors in local development. Since the evaluation is conducted in the LAG area only, there was not enough data to conduct a quantitative evaluation. Hence, the evaluation had a qualitative nature. To increase the robustness of the evaluation, the task force decided that a **theory-based approach** should be used with participatory elements.

The task force discussed the evaluation tasks and decided to include the following items:

- > a literature review on the improvement of participation and networking in local development;
- > theory of change review ⁸;
- > document and indicator analysis;
- > electronic surveys to LAG members and LAG decision-making body members;

- > thematic interviews with local associations and municipal decision-makers; and
- > a participatory workshop for local community members.

Existing data included information about the LAG members, decision-making body and working group members over the period of 15 years - the participants in LDS planning. Furthermore, the evaluation used meeting minutes of the LAG decision-making body and working groups, as well as the surveys conducted by the LAG, which were targeted at local community members and actors involved in LDS planning and implementation.

The task force drafted a communication and learning plan for the evaluation. The communication started when the evaluator was selected and the LAG communication supported the recruitment of informants for the interviews and surveys. The evaluation finished in a learning seminar, where the results were presented. When the evaluation was finalised, the findings were communicated to different target groups, using suitable tools and channels for each.

Preparing for evaluation

When preparing the evaluation, the task force revisited the intervention logic and the theory of change and defined evaluation questions based on the topics of interest identified previously. The theory of change can also be used to define hypotheses, whose validity is examined through the collected data. The picture below depicts the theory of change of the internal aspects of LAG governance.

Table 15. A depiction of the theory of change of the internal aspects of LAG governance

| ACTIONS IF we implement certain actions | MECHANISM AND desired processes happen in a certain way | CHANGE that leads to expected change | Main objective |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>The LAG actively supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > diversifying decision-making body membership; > creating working groups and other thematic groups for different stakeholders to participate in LAG work; > creating a participatory process for preparing the LDS; > creating and maintaining transparent and equitable internal procedures. | <p>Different kinds of people are interested in joining the LAG activities, LAG decision-making bodies and LDS preparation process and implementation.</p> <p>The internal procedures are accepted and taken as guidelines in decision-making and interactions within the LAG network.</p> | <p>The LAG bodies include different kinds of people who are welcome to join and come from various backgrounds, age groups and genders.</p> <p>The LAG decision-making bodies' working mechanisms ensure that all kinds of actors can influence decision-making.</p> <p>The LAG strategy development and implementation includes different kinds of local community members/actors.</p> | <p>The participation and quality of interactions of different kinds of actors in local development are improved.</p> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)

8 Resch, A., Using the theory of change approach for assessing the intervention logic - Lessons learned from the impact evaluation of P6 of the Austrian RDP 2014-2020, PowerPoint, Presented at the Good Practice Workshop Appraising Intervention Strategies Under the CAP: Experiences and Outlook, Rome, 2019, & Resch, A., Evaluation Plan for the Agriculture and Rural Advisory System (ARAS), 2018, https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/publications/appraising-intervention-strategies-under-cap-experiences-and-outlook_en.



The evaluation questions focused on different aspects of improved governance as well as the quality of interactions within the LAG network, brought by the application of LEADER method, especially the principles of local partnership⁹ and bottom-up approach¹⁰. Then, the evaluation task force structured the evaluation by drafting the evaluation criteria, defining the data and information required to answer the evaluation question, and identifying data sources. These steps also informed the drafting of the terms of reference for the evaluation.

Structuring the evaluation

The example below focuses on one evaluation question capturing the local governance aspects related to the LAG and LDS. When structuring the evaluation, the evaluation questions are complemented with factors of success, which link the indicators and data to the evaluation questions.

Table 16. Example for structuring the evaluation

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Evaluation question | <p>To what extent has the application of the LEADER principles of local partnership and bottom-up approach led to improved governance?</p> <p><i>(See similar evaluation question in these Guidelines: To what extent has the implementation of LEADER led to the establishment of processes and mechanisms, coordinated and animated by the LAG to ensure participatory, transparent, and inclusive decision-making and strong community engagement in strategy development and implementation?)</i></p> |
| Factor of success | <p>Inclusiveness in decision-making – the LAG’s capacity to bring together organisations and people in an inclusive manner in decision-making is improving or remains at a high level. (FOS G.1.01)</p> <p><i>(This is evidenced by the LAG decision-making bodies that include different kinds of people from various backgrounds and age groups. The LAG procedures and working mechanisms ensure that all kinds of actors can influence decision-making and these procedures are respected and actively promoted. The LDS development and implementation processes include different kinds of people and actors.)</i></p> |
| Indicators | <p>Output:</p> <p>O.1: Number of LAG members in the decision-making body by type of organisation they represent, and by gender and age: a) public administrations; b) private local economic interests; c) local social interests; and d) other (not covered by the previous categories). (<u>LAV.O.08</u> in these guidelines).</p> <p><i>Additionally:</i></p> <p>O.2: Number of LAG working groups and number of members by age, gender and education.</p> <p>O.3: Number of people who participated in LDS development process by age, gender, education, ethnic background, sector of organisations represented and size of organisation.</p> <p>Result:</p> <p>R.1: Evidence of LAG processes that facilitate inclusiveness in local governance. (<u>LAV.R.06</u> in these guidelines).</p> <p><i>Additionally:</i></p> <p><i>The majority of the quantitative and qualitative evidence points to the fact that LAG processes facilitate improvements in local governance.</i></p> <p>Impact:</p> <p>I.1: Perception of local community members that the LAG brings together organisations and people in an inclusive manner in decision-making. (<u>LAV.I.05</u> in these guidelines).</p> <p><i>Additionally:</i></p> <p><i>The majority of the quantitative and qualitative evidence points to the fact that the LAG activities have improved the participation and quality of interactions of different kinds of actors in local development.</i></p> |

9 The local partnerships for area development work through a specific and structured governance mechanism – in LEADER this is referred to as the Local Action Group (LAG). Involvement in the partnership means that the people who were previously the passive ‘beneficiaries’ of a policy become active partners and drivers of their area’s development; this is a defining characteristic of community-led local development. Source: https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/networking/leader/leader-explained_en

10 The bottom-up approach is at the heart of LEADER. LEADER conceives that local people are the best experts to drive the development of their territory. This bottom-up approach means that the local community and local players can help define a development pathway for their area consistent with their needs, expectations and plans. Doing this through a collective approach with delegated decision-making enables them to take charge of their own area’s future. They make decisions about the local strategy and the selection of the priorities to be pursued. Active participation is encouraged at every stage throughout the process; during LAG and strategy development, implementation, evaluation and review. The involvement of local actors should be fair and transparent including the population at large, economic, civic and social interest groups and representative public and private institutions. Source: https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/networking/leader/leader-explained_en

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Data sources | DME. Variables L610-L620, LAG's monitoring database, indicator analysis, LAG process descriptions, document analysis, electronic surveys, interviews and focus groups. |
| Factor of success | The LAG has improved animation and support to actual and potential beneficiaries. (FOS G.1.03) |
| Indicators | <p>Output:</p> <p>O.4: Number of animation activities by target stakeholder group, organiser and type of activity. (LAV.O.10 in these guidelines).</p> <p><i>As for the type of LAG activities, the focus is on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > working groups and other thematic groups for different stakeholders to participate in LAG work; > participatory processes for preparing the LDS; > LAG internal decision-making processes. <p>Result:</p> <p>R.2: Evidence of support (by type of support) provided to applicants and beneficiaries, and, particularly, to those that have not applied or been supported before, including hard-to-reach groups. (LAV.R.09 in these guidelines)</p> <p>I.2: Number of new applicants as a result of animation and support activities. (LAV.I.06 in these guidelines)</p> |
| Data sources | LAG yearly reports, LAG level monitoring, surveys and focus groups. |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)

Collecting the evidence

The evaluation started with a literature review on the improvement of participation and networking in local development and a review of the theory of change. The existing data included information about the LAG members, decision-making body and working group members over the period of 15 years - the participants in the LDS planning process. Furthermore, the evaluation could use the meeting minutes of the LAG decision-making body and working groups, as well as surveys conducted by the LAG, which targeted local community members and other stakeholders in the LDS process.

The data collection was conducted over a period of five months. The data collection started with document analysis, in which a structured template (e.g. Excel) is used to extract information from available documents relating to the factors of success and the data required. The available indicators were then analysed to gain a good background of the structure of the LAG bodies and their changes over time.

For the main output indicator 'Number of LAG members in the

decision-making body by type of organisation they represent' ([LAV.O.08](#)), the following data was collected from the LAG's monitoring database:

- > Number of members in the LAG's decision-making body that represent public administrations.
- > Number of members in the LAG's decision-making body that are representatives of private local economic interests (e.g. economic organisations, local businesses, etc.).
- > Number of members in the LAG's decision-making body that are representatives of social local interests (e.g. non-governmental organisations, local associations, etc.).
- > Number of members in the LAG's decision-making body falling under other categories than those listed above.
- > Number of female members in the LAG's decision-making body.
- > Number of young persons in the LAG's decision-making body.

To gain a deeper understanding of the LAG activities and governance, the above data was subsequently complemented with data from interviews and a survey to collect views from key stakeholders, i.e. the LAG staff, decision-making body and a representative sample of LAG members. The interviews also informed the drafting of the electronic survey to LAG members and LAG decision-making body members. The survey also included questions for obtaining information on the result and impact indicators. The table below offers an example of the survey questions.



Table 17. Example of survey questions

Electronic survey – some suggestions for questions

Background questions

- > Age
- > Gender
- > Place of residence
- > Role in LAG (decision-making body member, working group member, LAG member)

Views on inclusiveness of the LAG

Please rate your agreement with the following sentences (1: do not agree --- 5 agree fully)

- > The LAG decision-making body has a sufficient representation of people from different backgrounds
- > The LAG decision-making body has a sufficient representation of people from different age groups
- > The LAG working groups have a sufficient representation of people from the entire LAG area
- > The LAG working groups have a sufficient representation of people from different backgrounds
- > The LAG working groups have a sufficient representation of people from different age groups
- > The LAG working groups have a sufficient representation of people from the entire LAG area
- > The LDS development process included people from different backgrounds
- > The LDS development process included people from different age groups
- > The LDS development process included people from the entire LAG area
- > The LAG has taken steps to include different kinds of people in its work

If you wish, you can elaborate your answers further [open text box]

Views on processes that facilitate inclusiveness of the LAGs

Please rate your agreement with the following sentences (1: do not agree --- 5 agree fully)

- > Rules and procedures (code of conduct) for decision-making are developed by the LAG
- > Procedures for conflict resolution are put in place by the LAG
- > Rules governing representativeness in the decision-making body are developed by the LAG.
- > Rules and procedures ensuring balanced representation of interests.
- > Rules and procedures ensuring inclusion of interests of vulnerable groups in the decision making.
- > Procedures ensuring meaningful participation, transparency and accountability.

If you wish, you can elaborate your answers further [open text box]

Overall perception of the LAG's inclusiveness:

To what extent do you agree that the LAG brings together organisations and people in an inclusive manner in decision-making?

Please rate your agreement (1: strongly disagree --- 5 strongly agree).

If you wish, you can elaborate your answer further [open text box]

Evidence of support (by type of support) provided to applicants and beneficiaries:

Please rate your agreement with the following sentences (1: do not agree --- 5 agree fully)

- > The LAG office is open every day for a sufficient number of hours
- > There is competent staff at the LAG office to offer advice and answer any queries



- > Queries are dealt with on the spot
- > The LAG has defined hard to reach groups, identified their needs and provides specific communication material and/or capacity building support addressed to these groups
- > Other type of support available (specify)

If you wish, you can elaborate your answer further [open text box]

Suggestions for improvement

How could the LAG improve its decision-making processes? [open text box]

How could the LAG improve the inclusion of different kinds of actors and community members in local development? [open text box]

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)

The thematic interviews with local associations and municipal decision-makers focused on the LDS process, as well as the external perception of the inclusiveness of the LAG. The interviews were complemented by a focus group for local community members, the discussion centres around the inclusiveness of the LDS process and ways for the LAG to work with different stakeholders and groups.

Focus group

A focus group is a qualitative research method in which a small group (6-10 people) of selected people (e.g. based on demographics) answer predefined questions in a moderated setting. Focus groups are a good way to explore different views on topics and gain deep qualitative information through probing questions.

A focus group requires a moderator, who facilitates the discussion, and a co-moderator, who collects qualitative information about the discussion. A focus group typically lasts 1-1.5 hours and is recorded.

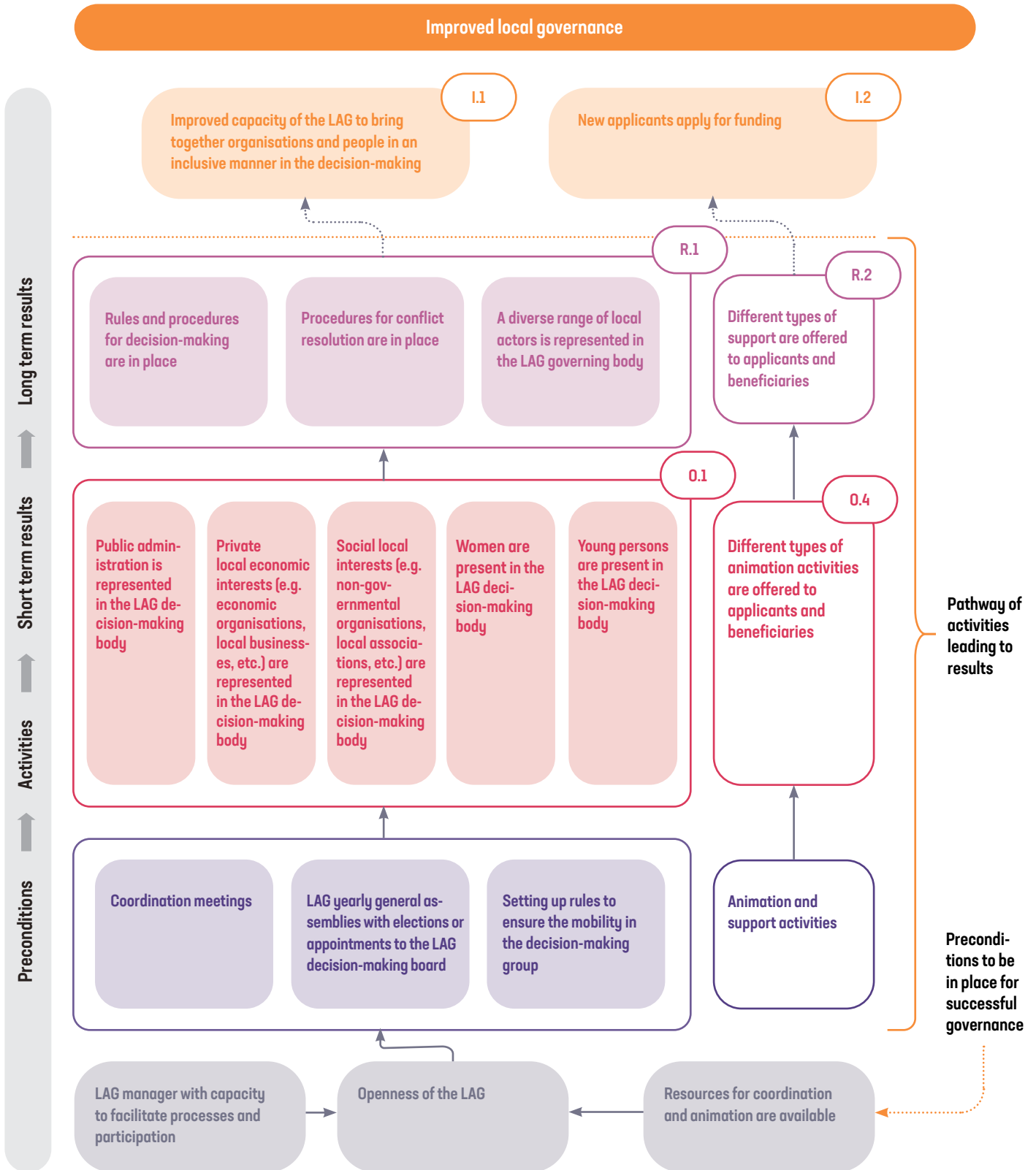
NB: A focus group is used for gathering information. It should not be confused with a workshop, which aims at arriving at a commonly agreed conclusion.



Analysing the information and answering the evaluation questions

The collected information was analysed using qualitative methods (e.g. categorisation, content analysis) and descriptive statistical methods, where possible. The analysis focused on the different aspects of the theory of change, starting from the activities and moving through the mechanism to the change and the overall objective. If the evidence supports the theory of change in all the sections, it is considered to hold (see figure below). That is, the LAG activities have led to improvements in the participation and quality of interactions between different kinds of actors in local development and have encouraged new applicants to apply. The analysis was done thematically in such a way that all the collected data and information were considered to arrive to the evaluation findings. After the evaluation findings were finalised, the judgement of success was done based on the factors of success defined in the structuring phase of the evaluation.

Figure 1. Example of the theory of change pathway



Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



The analysis was written up in a comprehensive report, where the evaluation questions were also answered clearly. The report must have a clear logic, meaning there is a summary of the evaluation findings, the conclusions are based on the findings and the recommendations are based on the conclusions.

Disseminating the evaluation findings to the relevant target audiences

After finishing the evaluation report, communications materials (e.g. PPT, blog post, media release and infographics) were produced on the basis of the evaluation findings. The evaluation can be published at a webinar or in-person event, where the main target groups and stakeholders are invited to hear about the findings and recommendations and discuss how to incorporate this information into their activities and plans. The LAG can also ensure the follow-up of any recommendations and the actions agreed to implement these recommendations.

Example 2: CSP level evaluation of LEADER added value

The example of the CSP level evaluation of LEADER added value is based on a real evaluation¹¹ of the LEADER intervention programmed and implemented in Lithuania in 2014-2020. It shows that some of the elements for assessing the added value of LEADER suggested in these guidelines were already used in the past and validates their practical relevance. In addition, this example shows how the effectiveness and efficiency of applying the LEADER principles were assessed using a composite indicator.

Background

Evaluation scope - The evaluation covered:

- › all four sub-measures of the RDP Measure M19 (LEADER programme);
- › all rural 49 LAGs/LDSs;
- › 1 535 approved local projects (out of which 877 were completed at the end of 2020);
- › 25 approved cooperation projects (eight of which were completed at the end of 2020: one inter-territorial cooperation project and seven transnational cooperation projects).

Evaluation objectives were:

1. To assess **delivery mechanism** of the LEADER programme (implementation of seven LEADER principles, stakeholder involvement in planning and implementation of the LEADER programme, role of MA/PA in strengthening LAG capacities and role in decision-making processes, and LAG animation activities).
2. To assess the **effectiveness and efficiency** of the LEADER programme (RDP Measure M19 and its sub-measures M19.1, M19.2, M19.3, M.19.4).
3. To assess the **added value** of the LEADER.

The focus was on the evaluation of the implementation of LEADER principles at the local level and the contribution of local projects to the implementation of RDP focus areas.

Evaluation levels and time frame - Some aspects and indicators were assessed at the national (programme) level, but most of them were assessed at local (LAG/LDS) level and aggregated/compared at national level. The evaluation covered the period from the preparation, selection, and approval of the LDSs in 2015-2016 and their implementation until 31/12/2020.

Focus of an example - This case was chosen as an example because it covered both local and national levels. It included qualitative and quantitative evaluation of LEADER including LEADER added value based on surveys, interviews, case studies and a composite indicator - Performance Index of LEADER approach (PILA). This

example focuses on evaluation methods (surveys and a composite indicator) and quantitative indicators used to assess the LEADER added value.

Planning the evaluation

The evaluation was initiated by the MA (Ministry of Agriculture of Lithuania). It appointed an external evaluator. The call for tenders was announced in August 2021. The tenders were submitted in September 2021. The contract with the selected external evaluator was signed on 30/12/2022, evaluation activities were completed in six months:

- › The inception report was submitted on 11/01/2021.
- › The interim report was submitted on 07/04/2021.
- › The draft final report was submitted on 09/06/2021.
- › The final report was submitted on 07/07/2021 and revised on 12/07/2021.

Each evaluation report was discussed with the MA officials and revised after their comments. The draft final report was presented to the representatives of LAGs and PA.

Preparing for evaluation

The evaluation assumed that effective and efficient implementation of LEADER principles ensures LEADER added value, but there were no clear linkages established between the LEADER principles and LEADER added value components during the evaluation. The assessment of implementation of LEADER principles was based on one set of indicators (some of them were available for all 49 LAGs and some only for the three included in the case studies) and the assessment of LEADER added value was based on another set of indicators (available for all 49 LAGs).

Structuring the evaluation

The evaluation included many evaluation questions, including on the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of LEADER. However, this example focuses on the evaluation question related to the LEADER added value:

11. ESTEP, Impact of the LEADER Program, a Measure of 2014- 2020 Lithuanian Rural Development Programme, on Social Inclusion, Poverty Reduction and Rural Economic Development in 2014-2020, Vilnius, 2021, https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/publications/study-impact-leader-lithuanias-2014-2020-rdp_en.



Has the support provided through the LEADER approach created added value compared to the support provided through other RDP interventions?

The evaluation of LEADER added value was based on 'subjective' indicators (i.e. assessed with a survey of LAG members). The framework for assessing the LEADER added value is presented in the following table.

Table 18. Example of the evaluation framework: evaluating the LEADER added value

| Added value element | Factors of success | Indicators | Data sources |
|--|--|---|---|
| Evaluation question: Does the LEADER approach improve social capital and governance at the local level? | | | |
| Social capital/Networks | The quality of interactions of the LAG with different types of organisations improves over time. | Share of LAG members who think that since the beginning of the LDS implementation relationships with different types of organisations have improved. | Survey of LAG members. Comparison of the results with the survey conducted in 2014. |
| Social capital/Mutual support and trust | The level of mutual trust of LAG members towards the work of the LAG has improved. | Evidence of trust in the LAG by LAG members: Share of LAG members, who feel that different aspects of the LAG work are very favourable or favourable. | Survey of LAG members. Comparison of the results with the survey conducted in 2014. |
| Social capital/Mutual support and trust | The level of mutual trust in the LAG territory improves over time. | Evidence of trust in the LAG by the local community: Share of LAG members who agree or partly agree that since the beginning of the LDS implementation the level of trust of the local community towards the LAG has increased. | Survey of LAG members. Comparison of the results with the survey conducted in 2014. |
| Communication | The LEADER approach improves the capacity of the LAG to provide clear, up-to-date, communication on its activities to the main target groups in the territory. | Evidence of the local community who are aware of the LAG and its activities. | Survey of LAG members. New question, no comparison with the survey of 2014 was possible. |
| Evaluation question: Does the LEADER approach produce enhanced results and impacts? | | | |
| Increased leverage | The support stimulated activities in the territory to achieve the strategic objectives of LDS. | Number and share of projects involving volunteers at the local level. | Monitoring data. LAG data. Expert judgement. |



| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Projects tailored well to the needs of the LAG area. | LEADER meets specific local needs and territorial objectives. | Share of projects implemented to the total submitted by type of objective/area of the LDS, of which the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Number and share of projects, including aspects of sustainable development at local level. > Number and share of projects beneficial to young people at local and national level. > Number and share of projects aimed at social inclusion at local and national level. > Number and share of integrated projects at local level. | Monitoring data. LAG data. Expert judgement. Survey of LAG members. |
| | LEADER produces enhanced benefits to different sectors, organisations and societal groups. | Share of LAG members who think that the LEADER approach and projects in the LAG area produce very high benefits, including to different sectors, organisations and societal groups. | Monitoring data. LAG data. Expert judgement. |
| Innovative projects | LEADER fosters introduction/diffusion of innovations in the local context. | Number and share of innovative projects at LAG level. | Monitoring data. LAG data. Expert judgement. |
| Projects that promote links between actors | New partnerships, networks and collaborations are established or sustained. | Number and share of projects implemented jointly by social and community businesses at local and national level. Number and share of projects implemented with partners at local and national level. | Monitoring data. LAG data. Expert judgement. |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)

Collecting the evidence

The most challenging and time-consuming tasks during the evaluation were preparing data collection tools (questionnaires), analysing, standardising and aggregating LAG-level data, collecting qualitative data for the case studies, and meaningfully aggregating data at the national level (including developing a composite indicator) to manage the scope of the analysis and draw conclusions.

As the monitoring indicators used at the RDP and local level were limited (the main output indicator was the number of projects and the main result indicator was the number of new jobs created), it was important to collect and analyse **additional data**. Some additional data were already collected by the MA for different purposes (e.g. data on innovative projects at local level and types of innovation introduced by local project promoters), so the task of the evaluator was to analyse and structure these data and use them for answering evaluation questions. However, most of the additional data had to be collected by an evaluator. The tools used are listed below (e.g. surveys, case studies, performance index of the LEADER approach).

Surveys - To collect additional data and to standardise and ease the collection of local data, it was decided to develop two questionnaires:

1. Questionnaire to survey LAG administrations and LAG members on their views regarding implementation of LEADER principles and LEADER added value.
2. Questionnaire to survey LAG administrations and collect factual data on different aspects of LAG activities related to the implementation of LEADER principles, animation activities and other aspects.

Google Forms were used for developing an online version of the questionnaires. The National LAG Network (an organisation that unifies all rural LAGs) was responsible for sending the questionnaires to the LAGs and LAGs were responsible for sending the questionnaire to LAG members.

An example of some survey questions related to the indicators of the evaluation framework above is shown below.



Table 19. Example of survey questions

Quality of interactions:

Please rate the LAG's relationship with the following actors since the beginning of the LDS implementation (improved, unchanged, worsened):

- > National authorities (public authorities or their territorial units in the territory of the LAG)
- > Regional authorities (Regional Development Council)
- > Local authority (municipal council)
- > Local authority (municipal administration)
- > Economic partners (businesses and their representative organisations) operating in the territory of the LAG
- > Social partners (communities and other non-governmental organisations) operating in the area of the LAG

Mutual trust:

Please state your agreement with the following statements (agree, partially agree, disagree)

- > The general atmosphere of the LAG is favourable
- > The LAG takes into account different opinions in decision-making
- > The LAG includes a constructive problem and conflict resolution process
- > Trust of citizens towards the LAG strengthened
- > Increased involvement of villagers in social and voluntary activities
- > Increased capacity, skills and confidence of local people in solving local problems
- > Improved attitude of rural people towards the future of their area

Transparency:

Please state your agreement with the following statements (agree, partially agree, disagree)

- > The LEADER method increases transparency in decision-making
- > The LEADER method increases the integrity of project promoters and their accountability to the population of the LAG area

Enhanced results and impacts:

The LEADER approach and the projects implemented in the LAG area have benefited the following institutions, enterprises and organisations (very high, high, low, very low benefit):

- > Municipal administration and its subordinate bodies
- > Rural community organisations
- > Non-governmental organisations active in the field of environmental protection
- > Other non-governmental organisations
- > Public authorities involved in nature conservation (State Service for Protected Areas, protected area directorates and visitor centres)
- > Other public authorities, bodies and companies operating in the LAG area or their territorial units (e.g. State Tax Inspectorate, Employment Service, Social Security, State Forestry Service)
- > Tourism services sector
- > Cultural services sector
- > Social services sector
- > Business
- > Non-agricultural businesses
- > Agricultural businesses

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



Case studies – To deepen the analysis of the implementation of LEADER principles and ensure objective, independent evaluation based on data collected and observations made by the evaluator (and not on data provided by LAG administrations), it was decided to prepare three **case studies at local level**. These case studies were focused on comprehensive evaluation of LEADER principles at local level.

Performance Index of LEADER approach (PILA) – To compare the results of the case studies and to quantify the results of the analysis, it was decided to develop a composite indicator. The aim of PILA was to compare the effectiveness and efficiency of the LEADER approach at local level. For each LEADER principle, PILA included one or more criteria for effectiveness and one or more criteria for efficiency. To define the value of each criterion, more indicators coming from different data sources were used. The PILA was composed of:

- > 12 criteria of effectiveness (marked with letter K);
- > 9 criteria of efficiency (market with letter E);
- > 61 indicators of effectiveness (market with letter R);
- > 33 indicators of efficiency (market with letter RE).

The PILA was composed based on the data that were available or relatively easy to collect. Some indicators were **objective** (based on monitoring or administrative data collected by the evaluator) and some were **subjective** (based on surveys). Some indicators were qualitative by nature, but for the purpose of quantitative evaluation (calculation of PILA) they were quantified as binary indicators (with the values 1 or 0, where 1 meant that a specific feature was available and 0 meant that a specific feature was not available e. g. application of good practices from cooperation projects, local projects introducing technological innovations and cooperation agreements with research institutions).

Some indicators of PILA were available for all LAGs (as their values were defined from monitoring databases or surveys), but some indicators were defined only during the preparation of LAG level case studies (because defining their values required analysing mainly qualitative project data, which was very time consuming and impossible for all LAGs with the time and resources available for the evaluation).

Table 20. Composition of PILA: number of criteria and indicators for each LEADER principle

| LEADER principle | No. of effectiveness criteria | No. of effectiveness indicators, total (out of them - available for all LAGs) | No. of efficiency criteria | No. of efficiency indicators, total (out of them - available for all LAGs) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--|
| Area-based approach | 3 | 9 (3) | 1 | 2 (0) |
| Bottom-up approach | 1 | 9 (1) | 2 | 4 (2) |
| Partnership approach | 1 | 4 (2) | 2 | 14 (14) |
| Innovation | 3 | 8 (3) | 1 | 2 (2) |
| Integrated approach | 1 | 13 (5) | 1 | 2 (0) |
| Networking and cooperation | 2 | 10 (7) | 1 | 5 (0) |
| Local financing and management | 1 | 8 (8) | 1 | 4 (4) |
| Total | 12 | 6 (28) | 9 | 3 (22) |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



Analysing the information and answering the evaluation questions

Analysing and judging was based on three approaches:

- > Assessment of mandatory requirements and additional elements
- > Comparison of objective and subjective data
- > Comparison with available baselines or benchmarks

Mandatory and additional elements - Each LEADER principle was described by mandatory requirements set in national legislation. The evaluation looked at the implementation of the mandatory requirements (if and how they are implemented at local level and how they are perceived by LAG members) and at some additional aspects related to each LEADER principle. These additional aspects were identified based on a literature review (evaluations and other studies related to the implementation of LEADER principles and LEADER added value).

Objective and subjective evaluation - The idea of the evaluation was to compare objective (monitoring, administrative and qualitative data collected by the evaluator) and subjective data (surveys) on the same subject. For instance, the evaluation of the LEADER contribution to different focus areas was based on monitoring data (distribution of projects by focus areas and analysis of their content and results). The results of the objective evaluation were compared and complemented with the perceptions of LAG members on the LEADER contribution to specific focus areas.

Use of baselines and benchmarks - An important component of every evaluation and especially evaluation of LEADER added value are baselines and benchmarks (indicator values against which judgement is made on the improvements in relation to social capital, governance, or results or impacts). During the evaluation several types of benchmarks were used (see table below).

Table 21. Types of baselines and benchmarks used during the evaluation

| Type of benchmark | Description | Other comments |
|---|--|--|
| Comparison with a baseline survey conducted in 2014 | In 2014, the MA (Ministry of Agriculture) conducted an internal evaluation of LEADER approach, which included a survey of LAG administrations and LAG members. During the survey conducted in 2021, evaluators aimed to keep the key questions unchanged to compare the results of the two surveys. | This was considered as a 'golden standard' baseline. It was recommended to conduct short surveys of LAG members on a regular basis (e.g. every year) focusing on a limited number of the most important aspects of the implementation of LEADER methods and LEADER value added. This would be relatively cheap and extremely useful. |
| Comparison between LAGs or average value of all LAGs | In case of quantitative indicators used to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of LEADER method and LDS implementation, a comparison between the LAGs or an average value of all LAGs was used as a benchmark (e.g. average expenditure per one new job created, number of new jobs created per 1 000 inhabitants of LAG territory). | In most cases comparison between different programming periods or at different points of time is relatively expensive. It requires at least two measurements and comparability of the subjects e. g. if the requirements of different programming periods are different, comparison might be irrelevant. |
| Special approach to formulating survey questions | In cases where some specific aspects were not addressed in the survey of 2014, LAG members were asked to think whether something has improved compared to 2007-2013 or is improving over time. | Such an approach allows for measuring 'improvement' without organising two surveys, but it might be biased and is considered as least objective. However, it is relatively cheap as only one survey needs to be conducted. |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



Annex 7. Working definitions and glossary

| Term | Description |
|---|--|
| LEADER method or the seven LEADER principles | <p>The LEADER method is the combined application of the LEADER principles: (1) bottom-up approach; (2) area-based approach; (3) local partnership; (4) integrated and multi-sectoral strategy; (5) networking; (6) innovation; (7) inter-territorial and international cooperation. The method is offered for all structural funds as community-led local development (CLLD), hence covering all EU areas (rural/urban/coastal).</p> <p><i>Source: Adapted from Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2017)</i></p> |
| Added value of LEADER/ CLLD | <p>The added value of LEADER/CLLD refers to the benefits that are obtained thanks to the proper application of the LEADER method, compared to those benefits, which would have been obtained without applying this method. The added value of LEADER/CLLD can be expressed as improved social capital, improved governance, and enhanced results and impacts of programme/strategy implementation compared to interventions implemented without the LEADER method.</p> <p><i>Source: Adapted from Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2017)</i></p> |
| Social capital in LEADER | <p>Networks, mutual trust, shared mental models and beliefs that foster quality of collaboration and cooperation within and among LAG areas.</p> <p><i>Source: Adapted from Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development (2017)</i></p> |
| Governance in LEADER | <p>Local and multi-level processes and mechanisms that ensure effective and transparent decision-making and relations between different actors involved in LEADER implementation, contributing to bringing the EU closer to citizens.</p> |
| Local governance in LEADER | <p>Processes and mechanisms established, coordinated and animated by the LAG to ensure participatory, transparent and inclusive decision-making and strong community engagement in strategy development and implementation.</p> |
| Multi-level governance in LEADER | <p>Processes and mechanisms established collaboratively between Managing Authority/Paying Agency, regional authorities and LAGs, based on EU level standards to empower LAGs, enhance their decision-making, management, and accountability capacities, and promote responsive, innovative, and tailored Local Development Strategies.</p> <p><i>Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2023)</i></p> |
| Enhanced results and impacts in LEADER | <p>Mobilising endogenous potential, valorising territorial assets and strengthening links between local community members/actors to achieve more with available resources and foster innovative, sustainable and integrated community-driven projects that drive lasting impacts in the LAG area.</p> |
| Particularised trust | <p>Trust found in close social proximity and extended toward people the individual knows from everyday interactions (e.g. family members, friends, neighbours and co-workers).</p> <p><i>Source: Freitag and Traunmüller (2009)</i></p> |
| Generalised trust | <p>A rather abstract attitude toward people in general, encompassing those beyond immediate familiarity, including strangers (e.g. people one randomly meets in the street, fellow citizens, foreigners, etc.).</p> <p><i>Source: Freitag and Traunmüller (2009)</i></p> |

Source: Elaborated by the EU CAP Network with the support of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2024)



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