



Evaluation Workshop

"Evaluation activities 2007-2013 –Evaluation perspectives 2014-2020"

The Programming and Evaluation Unit of the Managing Authority for the RDP of Greece, organized a workshop on 6th June 2012 in Athens, concerning the on-going evaluation system 2007-2013 and the monitoring and evaluation system post-2013 according to the RD and CSF regulation proposals.

In this workshop, **Mr Leo MAIER**-Head of Unit L.4:Evaluation of measures applicable to agriculture; studies-DG Agriculture and Rural Development (EC), **Mr Sebastian ELBE**- Monitoring and Evaluation Network, Agrarian Structure and Rural Development (MEN-D, GERMANY), **Mrs Simona CRISTIANO**-National Institute of Research on Agricultural Economics (INEA,ITALY) and **Mr Dimitrios LIANOS**-On going Evaluator of RDP of Cyprus, were invited to participate.



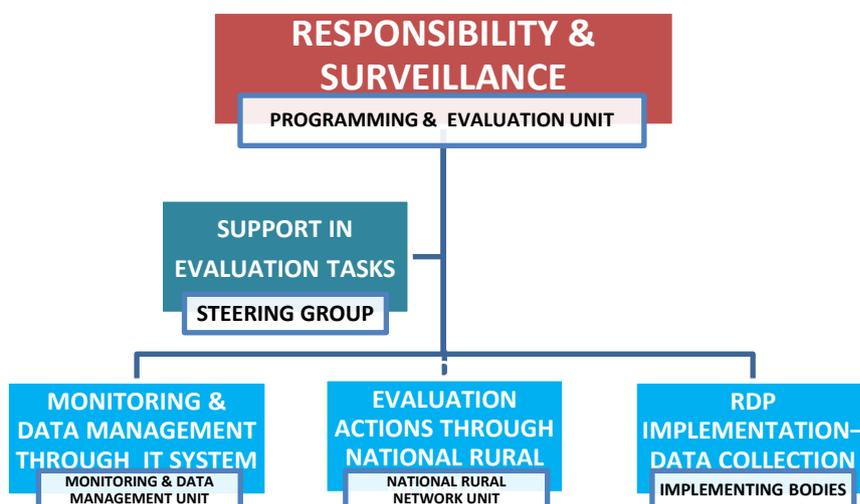
Mr Vangelis DIVARIS-Special Secretary, welcomed the participants and **Mrs Anastasia KANNAVOU**-Head of Programming and Evaluation Unit of Managing Authority for the RDP of Greece, explained the way of working through a participatory process and mentioned the aim of the workshop.

Aim of the workshop:

The exchange of views and concerns regarding the on-going evaluation among the Member States and of best practices derived from the ex-post 2000-2006 and midterm evaluations of 2010.

Furthermore, a discussion concerning issues for monitoring and evaluation for the next programming period took place, as well as about what can be expected and how to be better prepared.

ON GOING EVALUATION SYSTEM



The first presentation was made by **Mrs Alkistis LIATSIKOU**, officer of Programming and Evaluation Unit of MA for Greek RDP and was referred to the evaluation activities of Greek RDP that have been undertaken till now (On-going evaluation system, impact assessment methodologies, Steering Group, Evaluation plan 2012).

The above diagram, about the **On-going Evaluation System**, was presented and as far as the final selection of **impact assessment methodologies** is concerned, there was a reference in the calls for tenders for three expert studies-one per thematic evaluation section-(Competitiveness-Differentiation, Environment, Quality of life-Leader). Additionally, it was mentioned, that the **Steering Group** has been reestablished with regular meetings and active participation of consistent and stable members. Finally, the **Evaluation Plan for 2012** which was presented, includes:

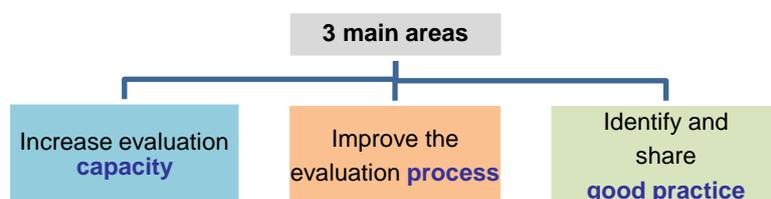
- Technical meetings with Implementing Bodies
- Constant information and dissemination of best practices and methods to the stakeholders
- Data management and collection activities
- Capacity building
- Networking

The next presentation, made by **Mr Leo MAIER**, focused on **the state of play of on-going evaluation, the weaknesses, the achievements, the current challenges and future prospects.**

How is EU network working in practice?

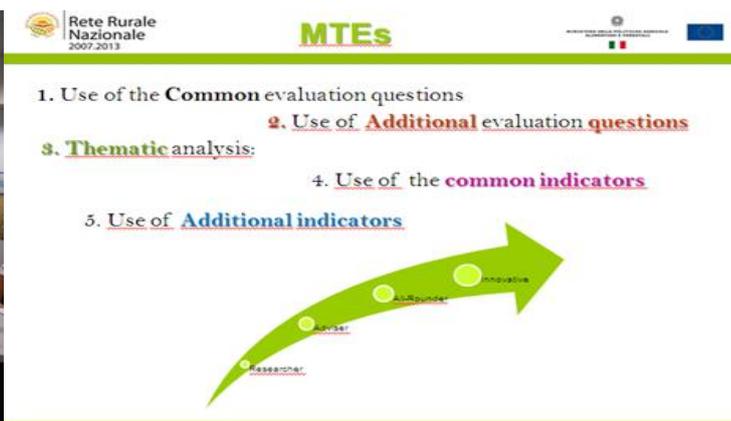
Work programme of the network

- SWOT analysis / needs assessment in the MS
- Focus groups / Helpdesk geographical experts
- RD country desk officers



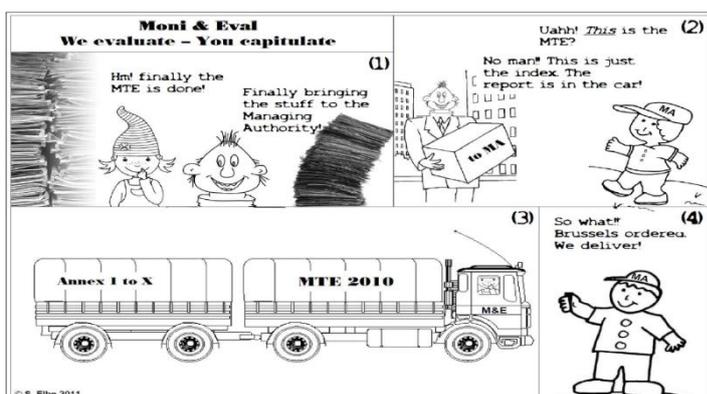
There were references to the **weaknesses** of the previous programming period, where the evaluation was treated as a disconnected, stand-alone exercise, focused on individual measures, with limited link to broader objectives. It was pointed out that **on-going evaluation** should become an integral part of the programme cycle and should ensure capacity building early, encourage timely data collection, encourage information sharing, ensure continuity of the evaluation activities, help establish good evaluation practice, provide regular feedback through annual reporting, prepare for the mid-term and ex-post evaluations. Also the presentation was referred to **what has been achieved so far**. The system of on-going evaluation is largely operational, many of the initial hurdles have been overcome, a fruitful co-operation between the MS and COM has been established, an active dialogue among the MS is emerging, a considerable amount of capacity building and preparatory activity has been going on in the MS, activities for information sharing and exchange of good practice among MS have been proven to be particularly useful. Finally, the presentation closed with the **future prospects**, bringing the actors together (MA, PA, evaluators), improving the planning of the evaluation process, developing a data coordination and provision plan, continuing to refine evaluation approaches/tools, analyzing conditions concerning the enabling environment.

Afterwards, there was another interesting presentation by **Mrs Simona CRISTIANO**, that concerned the on-going evaluation of RDPs: governance and practices of the Italian mid-term evaluations.



There was an analytical presentation of Governance Structures & Models, which was focused on **first findings** of Governance (evaluation governance, evaluation capabilities, awareness and communication), **findings of Mid-Term Evaluations** (MTEs are broadly recognized as just an accomplishment, difficult & too burdening, innovative approaches take place on demand-driven evaluations, on-going participative and inclusive processes: sharing methodologies, findings & recommendations, increase territorial approach of the evaluation: stakeholders and LEADER, etc.) and **on-going Evaluation-activities**.

Mr Sebastian ELBE, made a presentation for evaluating impacts-lessons learned from ex-post 2000-2006 and MTE 2010.



EAFRD Germany 2007-2013

- 14 RDPs
- EAFRD ca. 9 billion
- Public ca. 14,6 billion
- Top ups ca. 3.3 billion
- Health check ca. 942 mio.

The presentation was focused on Evaluating RDP impacts in Germany (highest quality methods, missing quality assurance, economic impacts, data collected and methods applied, data basis).

The first part of presentation closed with the presentation of **Mr Dimitrios LIANOS**, who talked about the evaluation of measures 121,123 in the context of on-going evaluation of RDP of Cyprus.

The second part of the workshop, started with the splitting up of the participants in three different working groups in order to discuss the following questions:

1st Working Group: Good practices of governance

1. Do the Local Action Groups make self-evaluation? If so, how this self-evaluation is organized? With central guidance or on the initiative of the LAG?
2. Were the beneficiaries involved in the evaluation procedure? If so, in what stage of the evaluation this happened and how?
3. Was the added value of LEADER assessed and how?
4. Do you think that LEADER approach has increased social capital in areas of intervention?
5. Do you think is it possible to calculate the impact of the RDP through Axis 4 in social capital and how can be calculated the values of the indicators (output, result, impact)?
6. Have you ever tried to estimate the change in social capital in your area during any of the programming periods and what method did you use? Did you have any difficulties? How did you face them?

2nd Working Group: Good practices of impact assessment as a start tool for the ex-post evaluation

1. What actions are planned for the preparation of the ex-post evaluation?
2. Was the administrative cost of the evaluation estimated? Has a cost-benefit analysis of the current evaluation system been made? Are there any suggestions for the reduction of the administrative cost?

3rd Working Group: Availability of data-Indicators

1. Sources of data-Connection with indicators (application forms, ELSTAT, EUROSTAT, RICA, etc.)
2. Indicators i.e. Gross Value Added
3. Recommendations for the simplification of data collection



What came out?

From the Working Group with subject: "Good practices of governance" the participants concluded that Leader approach has obviously increased social capital, although it's too early to estimate it for the current programming period. During the last two programming periods, LAGS had carried out evaluation activities in an informal way, as the evaluation wasn't so binding by the EC. In general it's not easy to evaluate the impact of Leader approach, since LAGS are also development agencies and contribute to the implementation of other programs financed by other Funds. Investments in the framework of Leader are of small scale and the impact of the program is not significant. There isn't any officially established evaluation method.

It seems that the only way to estimate the effectiveness of the program is to observe happiness, trust, recognition, satisfaction, motivation etc. However, LAGS have already used, methods of evaluation such as questionnaires, meetings, interviews, etc, collecting and processing data and extracting useful results. In order to be prepared for the next programming period, formal methods of evaluation and self evaluation must be defined by the Managing Authority in collaboration with the LAGS.

From the Working Group with subject: "Good practices of impact assessment as a start tool for the ex-post evaluation" and as far as the net effect of impact indicators, is concerned, the participants concluded that the economic impact indicators are quite easily to be assessed by result indicators even though markets are not stable. Concerning the environmental impact indicators, it is difficult to find the link between the measures and the impact. It's a huge issue and a hint to investigate. The EU right indicators are not always national right. Also there were proposed alternatives for environment impact indicators. Water footprint is better than water quality, especially in Mediterranean areas. Soil coverage by plants, organic material in soil and soil microbes' activities are better fitted in East-Mediterranean areas than soil quality. It was stated that sustainability is a common field between the three sectors (economic, environmental, social).

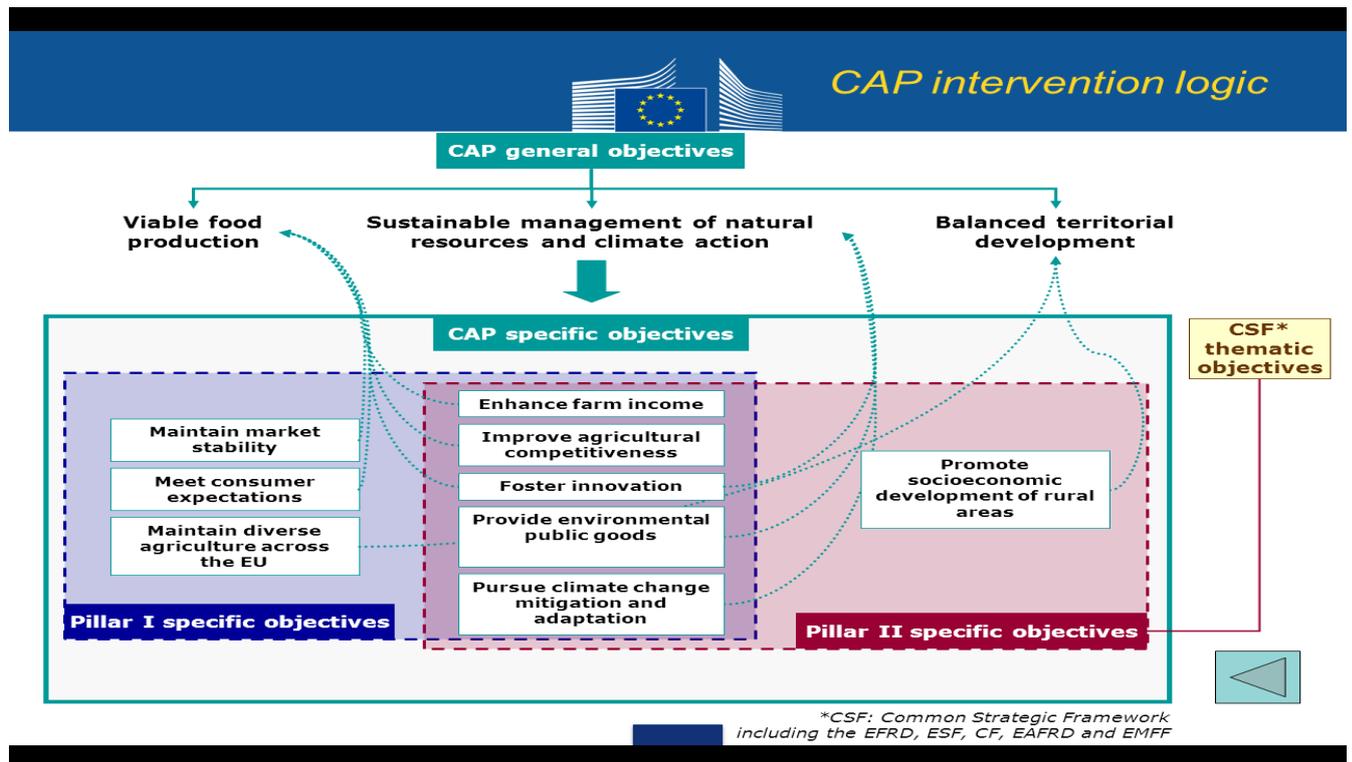
General thoughts

A discussion was made for the use of impact assessment by the politicians. Member States have to provide politicians with concrete and solid indicators to prove the cost benefit of the public money. Even if the Monitoring and Evaluation system is not perfect we have something to present to politicians. We must be more honest with aims. We have to keep the old system and analyze it. It is not possible to design the framework for 27 Member States. It needs time to find the best way to assess impacts.

From the Working Group with subject: " Availability of data-Indicators" the participants concluded that the lack of coordination between EU policies and DG's (DG AGRI, DG ENVI, DG REGIO) in relation to data collection, methodologies and indicators has as a result, Member States not to be able to fulfill their obligation concerning evaluation. Also the lack of common definitions between the available data bases results to different values, raising questions, concerning their credibility and utility. Finally, it was highlighted that the time period in which data is collected, differs from the time period needed in order to assess the indicators demanded.

True to the purpose, the working methods for the workshop were highly participatory, which allowed the participants to share experiences, views, best practices and common challenges as far as the current M+E system is concerned. It was a great opportunity to exchange ideas, transfer knowledge, increase capacity building and establish a collaborative network of European practitioners of EU monitoring and evaluation.

Mr Leo MAIER, made the final presentation of the workshop and focused to the evaluation perspectives post 2013.



In the presentation, it was pointed out that the term "ongoing evaluation" does not figure in the legislative proposals for post-2013 and the idea lives on in the evaluation plan. There is a shift of focus from building the ongoing evaluation system to planning and carrying out evaluations. More flexibility is needed for evaluations to serve the needs of (i) programme implementation and (ii) EU level reporting. RD evaluation post-2013 is embedded in an overall M&E system for the CAP as a whole, with common indicators for the 2 pillars. 1st and 2nd pillar evaluations is likely to be carried out quite differently (second pillar at programme level on the basis of the revised CMEF, first pillar evaluations carried out largely by COM). Another part of the presentation was about the legal framework for the evaluation plan and its purpose for MS, since the evaluation plan has the potential to become the major steering tool for RD evaluation in the next period.



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