



Methodological challenges in ex post evaluation

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Objective: Discuss definitions, challenges and solutions related to...

- Results and impacts
- Effects and “net effects”
- Externalities
- Unexpected effects in economic, social and environmental domains
- Factors distorting the estimation of programme effects

Programme results and impacts



Definitions:

Results are direct and immediate effects of policy or programme interventions to be calculated or estimated at the programme beneficiary level (DG Agri terminology)



Impacts are causal effects of an intervention lasting in medium or long term and refer to the effect of the programme beyond the immediate direct beneficiaries at the level of the intervention (DG Agri terminology)



Programme results and impacts

Challenge

Evaluators may face difficulties when differentiating between programme results and impacts.

- *Terminology used by clients*
- *Understanding of RDP intervention logic*

Solutions

- Relying on DG AGRI terminology/compliance to the CMES/evaluators share terminology with the MAs
- Ex-post Eval Guides: focus on a dynamic reading of the IL/Good understanding of the IL
- The on-going evaluation approach certainly helped evaluators to achieve good understanding of the RDP 's IL and its implementation

Programme effects



Definitions:

Programme effect (result/impact) can be understood as a difference in value of specific outcome for the same unit with the programme and without the programme for any analysed unit of observation (e.g. farm, village, region, programming area, country, etc.).

An **outcome** is the state of the target population or the social conditions that a programme is expected to have changed defined by means of observable and usually measurable indicators.

Programme effects



Challenge

Assess the programme effects under real world conditions, i.e. to calculate the scope and the magnitude of both intended and unintended changes in specific outcomes that are solely due to policy intervention and not to other factors.



Solutions

- Good context analysis and understanding of the dynamics intervening during the RDP implementation
- Good analysis of the implementation theory/delivery
- Some factors emerge already in the AIRs
- Assessments not limited to indicator quantification: qualitative analysis

Direct versus indirect effects

Definitions:

Programme direct effects are those affecting programme beneficiaries in an immediate way as a direct consequence of programme support.

Programme indirect effects refer to the programme effects spread throughout the economy, society or environment, beyond the direct beneficiaries of the public intervention.

Direct versus indirect effects

Distinguishing the direct and indirect programme effects,



Challenge

Possible contamination of control group – biased estimation of programme results and impacts!

Over- or underestimation of programme effects, while not taking in consideration programme indirect effects



Solutions

- Based on reliable and comprehensive Context analysis: analysis of the observable changes in contexts
- Full involvement of MAs to clearly identify expected and not expected RDP results
- Matter of method/technique: crucial the full acknowledgement (and explanation) of the bias/limitations

Programme net effects



Definitions:

Programme net effects (for both results and impacts) are only those effects which are attributable solely to the intervention and take into consideration indirect effects

Programme net effects

Specify which elements to account for calculation of programme net effects



Challenge

Distinguish “observable” changes from those caused by the intervention

Net out indirect effects



Solutions

- **Which elements are taken into account for net effects ?**
- Good IL understanding to make clear observable expected changes
- Reliable secondary data from MAs monitoring systems is crucial/Monitoring systems designs advised by the evaluators
- Reliable primary data collected by evaluators – rely on good total quality data management methods

Programme externalities

Definitions:

Positive or negative programme externalities are programme effects that may simultaneously occur in various RD domains (e.g. economic, social, and environmental) both at the level of direct programme beneficiaries and/or non-supported population, or programme area.

Negative externalities may lead in a precisely opposite direction to that intended

Programme externalities



Challenge

Identify all positive and negative unexpected effects in economic, social and environmental domains, which the programme may cause on beneficiaries and the entire non-supported population in the programme area

Solutions

- Identification of programme causes of externalities (theory/delivery) at ex ante and on-going phases is crucial: e.g. selection criteria, synergies with other policies, ...
- SEA incorporates social and environmental externalities and mitigation measures: on-going up-dating and account in the Ex-post analyses

Factors distorting the estimation of programme effects – confounding factors



Definitions:

Confounding (non-programme related) factors are directly or indirectly correlating with the decision to participate in the programme (socio-economic situation of farmers, accessibility of loans etc.) Confounding factors are therefore alternate explanations for an observed relationship between intervention and outcome.

Factors distorting the estimation of programme effects – confounding factors



Challenge

Choose the evaluation methodologies that properly isolate the effect of the intervention from other potentially confounding factors.

Ensure data sources to allow for comparisons reducing the confounding factors

Solutions

- DATA MANAGEMENT: Reliable primary data by the evaluators – rely on good total quality data management methods
- METHODS CHOICES: Use of mix of methods: Triangulation
- Matter of method/technique: crucial the full acknowledgement (and explanation) of the bias/limitations

Factors distorting the estimation of programme effects – selection bias



Definitions:

Selection bias is a confounding factor, which occurs if participants and a control group statistically differ with respect to observable and non-observable characteristics that do have an influence on outcome variables.

Self-selection bias relates closely to selection bias. It occurs if potential beneficiaries (enterprises, farms or communities) that anticipated participation in the programme already adjusted their own performance prior to the start of the programme in order to comply with programme eligibility criteria.

Factors distorting the estimation of programme effects – selection bias



Avoid over- or underestimation of programme effects due to the selection bias

Challenge

Reduce selection bias and minimize the role of unobservables

Recognize the self-selectin bias

Construct the robust counterfactual

Solutions

- Use of mix of methods: Triangulation
- Need for take into account Trade-offs on costs: to what extent that bias is relevant for the assessments?
- Good evaluation is also full acknowledgement (and explanation) of the bias/limitations encountered in the analyses



Thank you for your attention!

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