Assessment of RDP results under the Focus Area 6B - The application of the MAPP method in Estonia
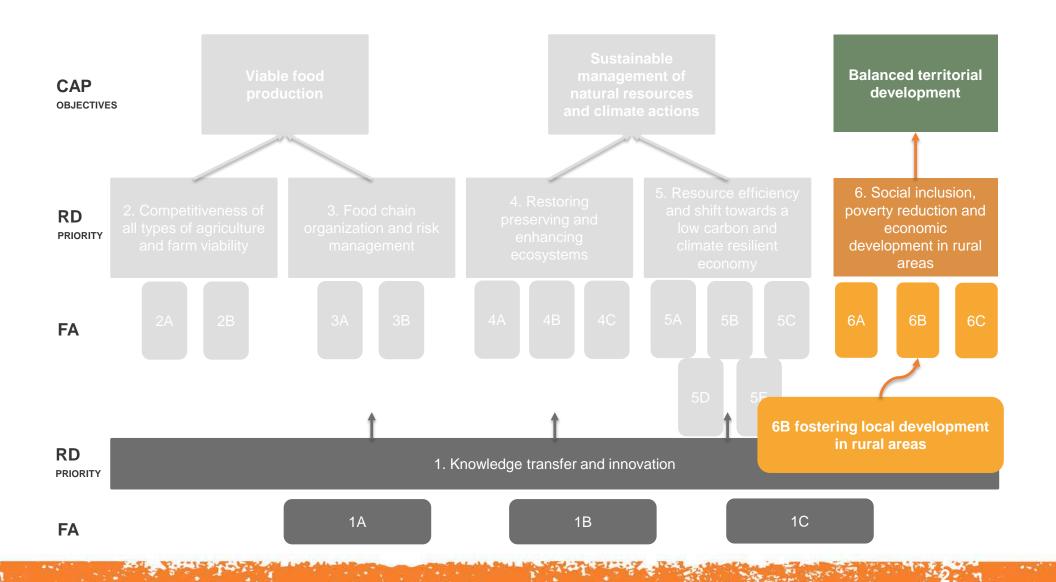
Mati Mõtte

Team Leader of Rural Economy Research and Analysis

Institute of Economics and Social Scienses

www.emu.ee

Eesti Maaülikool
Estonian University of Life Sciences

Majandus- ja sotsiaalinstituut
Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
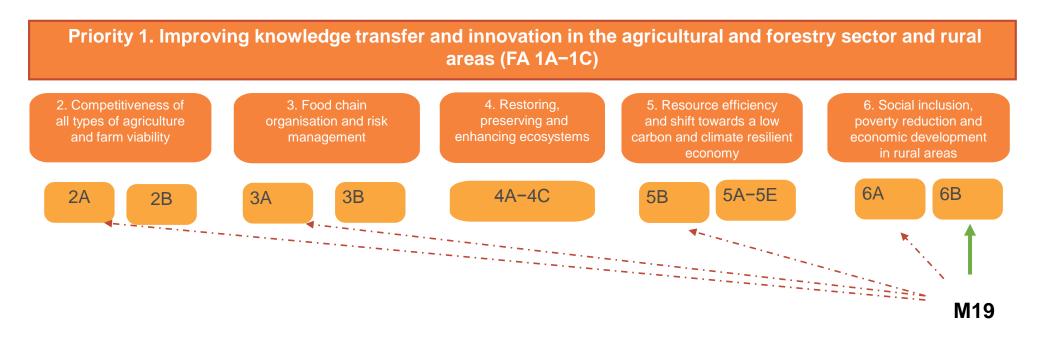
Common Evaluation Question N. 17 linked to FA 6B*:

"To what extent have RDP interventions supported local development in rural areas?"

* Annex 5 to Commission Implementing Regulation 808/2014

Outline

1. RDP design and uptake
2. Planning and preparing for the assessment of FA 6B
3. Structuring and conducting the evaluation
4. Evaluation findings
5. Methodological challenges and limitations
6. Evaluation report and its use
7. Lessons learnt for the AIR in 2019

RDP design and uptake in Estonia

Priority 1. Improving knowledge transfer and innovation in the agricultural and forestry sector and rural areas (FA 1A−1C)

| 2. Competitiveness of all types of agriculture and farm viability | 3. Food chain organisation and risk management | 4. Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems | 5. Resource efficiency and shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy | 6. Social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas |

2A 2B 3A 3B 4A−4C 5B 5A−5E 6A 6B

M19

Primary contribution

Secondary contribution

Level of uptake of M 19 in EE (2016)

	M 19.1	M 19.2	M 19.3	M 19.4	Total
Budget 2014 – 2020, €	1 700 000	68 140 000	2 500 000	17 660 000	90 000 000
Uptake sum, €	1 587 869	237 027	18 740	1 822 909	3 666 545
Uptake rate	93,4%	0,3%	0,7%	10,3%	4,1%
Number of projects	26	31	2	26	85

5

Planning and Preparing the assessment of FA 6B (1)

Date	Main Steps
February 2017	**Step 1: Structuring of the evaluation -** development of a specific methodological document (following the SFC template) which describes the possible methodologies to answer each common evaluation question, incl., CEQ17; **Step 1.1:** data and information collection on completed projects to screen the possibilities of using qualitative methods; **Step 1.2**: selection of the evaluation methodology based on the timeframe and project uptake;
March	**Step 2: Fieldwork of evaluation-** Observing (manage data collection); **Step 3:** Analysing (calculations of indicators);
April	**Step 3:** Analysing (continued); **Step 4:** Focus group interview (MAPP method); **Step 5**: Judging (interpretation evaluation findings);
May	**Step 6**: Panel discussion; **Step 7**: Reporting findings to the Managing Authority (final report);
June 2017	**Step 8**. Presentation in Monitoring Committee and reporting to EC.

Planning and Preparing the assessment of FA 6B (2)

Evaluation Elements used:

1. **Common Judgment criteria and result indicators** proposed in the Helpdesk's Working Paper

   o The common judgment criteria guided the indicator selection and interview structure. For each judgment criterion, between 1 to 8 indicators were identified;

2. **Additional evaluation questions** were developed for the interviews (MAPP method): e.g.

   o "Which supported activities have contributed to the quality of life and employment in the rural area the most?

3. **Additional indicators** used to improve the quantitative analysis, *for example*:

Judgment Criteria	Additional Result Indicator
Employment opportunities have been created via local development strategies	• Supported activities have contributed the quality of life and employment in rural areas
Access to services and local infrastructure has increased in rural areas	• Population benefiting from services created
Rural people have participated in local actions	• Number of participants in the formulation of the strategy and in the events to introduce the strategy; • Number of participants in the encouragement events held by LAG; • Number of members in the LAGs; • Number of trainings carried out by the LAGs; • Orientation of projects

Structuring and Conducting the Evaluation (1)

Table 1. Combination of methods used to answer CEQ 17

Quantitative Methods	Qualitative Methods
• **Descriptive statistics** of Context and Output Indicators (frequency, averages, classifications, etc.)	• **Face-to-face interviews (N=3)** Qualitative estimations from different stakeholders on LEADER progress
• **Before-after calculations** – result and target indicators analysis	• **Telephone survey (N=31)** To collect data on jobs and validating the number of jobs calculated through quantitative data
• **Comparison analysis with the sector performance** – result and target indicators analysis	• **Focus group (N=1, 10 participants)**
• **Input-output analysis (IO)** – result indicators analysis	• **Panel discussion (N=1, 19 participants)** Covering the results of all RDP Priorities 1-6, including LEADER

Structuring and Conducting the Evaluation (2)

Table 2. Quantitative Data used to answer Common Evaluation Question 17

Data Sources	Collected data
Paying Agency (ARIB); Database: MAIT, MATS and ARMA;	• Common Output and Result indicators from the AIR datasheets (monitoring tables A, B, F); • Monitoring data collected from the project application and project payment; • Detailed data on beneficiaries (location and contacts) and supported activities according to assigned and paid aid.
Ministry of Rural Affairs (Managing Authority)	• Pre-collected specific implementation data about LAGs;
National Statistics of Estonia; Eurostat	• Information on rural areas, sectors (e.g. tourism, farming, food industry); • RDP 2014−2020 context indicators.
National Business Register	• Financial indicators from the annual reports of companies, which can reflect the performance of the M 16.2 economic performance*.

*The economic analysis for FA 6B was not carried out because of the low uptake.

The MAPP method - Method for Impact Assessment of Programmes and Projects

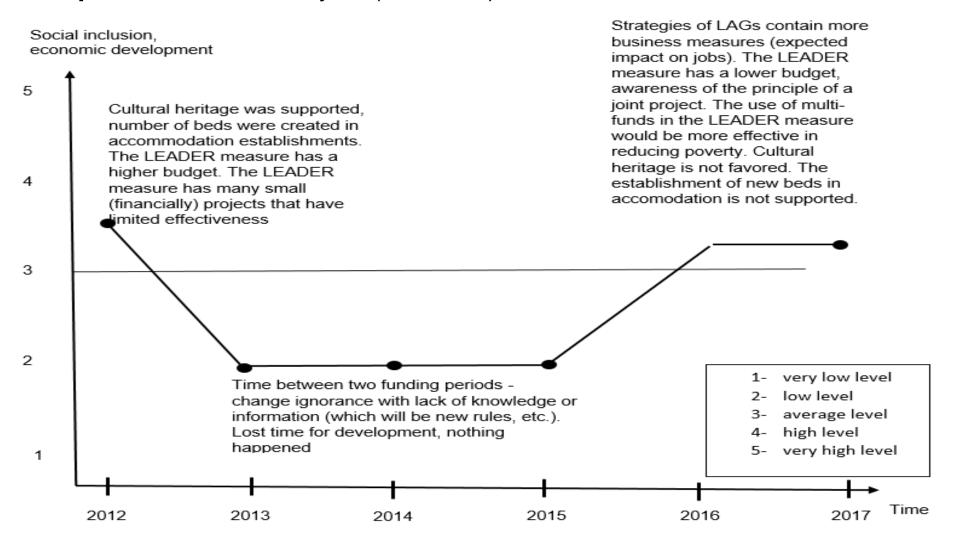The MAPP method is conducted mainly through a facilitated focus group;

- Participants: LAG representatives, project beneficiaries, the Estonian Rural Network, and the Managing Authority.
- The following MAPP tools were completed:
  - Trend analysis (Life curve);
  - List of interventions and activities;
  - Influence matrix;
- After the focus group, the evaluator summarizes the results in a "development and impact profile"

Strengths of the MAPP method:

- Participants had the opportunity to express their opinion – MAPP is based on group discussion;
- MAPP is a qualitative tool, but includes quantitative elements→ the discussion leads to numerical and understandable values;
- MAPP takes into account and ranks all relevant RDP interventions, as well as all interventions from other programmes

Evaluation findings (1)

Graph 1. The trend analysis (life curve)

Social inclusion, economic development

Cultural heritage was supported, number of beds were created in accommodation establishments. The LEADER measure has a higher budget. The LEADER measure has many small (financially) projects that have limited effectiveness

Strategies of LAGs contain more business measures (expected impact on jobs). The LEADER measure has a lower budget, awareness of the principle of a joint project. The use of multi-funds in the LEADER measure would be more effective in reducing poverty. Cultural heritage is not favored. The establishment of new beds in accomodation is not supported.

Time between two funding periods – change ignorance with lack of knowledge or information (which will be new rules, etc.). Lost time for development, nothing happened

1- very low level
2- low level
3- average level
4- high level
5- very high level

2012   2013   2014   2015   2016   2017   Time

Evaluation findings (2)

Table 3. List of interventions to support the development of quality of life in rural areas

Measure	Programme	Relevance
Preparatory support to LAG strategy (M 19.1)	RDP 2014−2020	••••
Support for implementation of operations (M 19.2)	RDP 2014−2020	••••
Implementation of cooperation activity (M 19.3)	RDP 2014−2020	••••
Support for running costs and animation (M 19.4)	RDP 2014−2020	••••
Entrepreneurship start-up support	ESF	••••
Start-up support, companies development program	ERF	••
Grants for NGOs (Local Initiative Program, Incubator for Smart Solutions), NGO Development	National Foundation of Civil Society	••

RDP measure

Schemes supported by other public interventions (used as a comparison)

Legend
- •   - poor relevance
- •••••   - high relevance

Evaluation findings (3)

Table 4. MAPP influence matrix

Indicators	Intervention					
How strong is the influence of intervention x on indicator y?	**Investment support to food processing (M 4.2)**	**Support for investments on development of non-agricultural activities (M 6.4)**	**Preparatory support for LAG strategy (M 19.1)**	**Support for implementation of operations (M19.2)**	**Implementation of cooperation activity (M 19.3)**	**Support for running costs and animation (M 19.4)**
Development of small business and diversification of business activities						
Competitiveness (incl. economic income, modernity of fixed assets)	3	4	0	4	2	2
Diversification of business activities	3	4	0	4	2	2
Providing added value to agricultural products	3	1	0	4	2	2
Business cooperation	2	2	0	4	4	3
Jobs						
The creation of suitable and attractive jobs	2	3	0	3	1	0
Involvement						
Involving local people in the preparation and implementation of the strategy	0	0	2	0	0	3
Involving different parties in local government governance	0	0	2	0	1	2
Availability of services						
Availability of services other than IT services	0	2	0	3	2	2
Availability of IT services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Integrated development of rural areas						
Quality of life in the regions	1	3	23	4	3	2
∑ Active (completed by the evaluator)	**14**	**15**	**6**	**26**	**17**	**18**

0 - no influence, 1 - slight influence, 2 - medium influence, 3 - strong influence, 4 - very strong influence

Evaluation findings (4)

Table 5. Quantitative Indicators used to answer Common Evaluation Question 17

Indicator	Results
• C1 Total polation of Estonia; • Population in rural areas	1,31 mln 0,590 mln
• O18 Population covered by LAGs	0,499 mln
• O19 Number of LAGs selected	26,00
• R22/T21 Percentage of rural population covered by local development strategies	62,92%
• Number of members in LAGs	1.869,00
• Number of participants in the formulation of strategy	9.225,00
• Number of participants in the encouragement events held by LAG	9.124,00
• Number of trainings carried out by LAGs	116
• Population benefiting from created services	44.689,00
• Orientation of projects	Regional specific: N=20 Community services: N=2; Innovative: N=26 Targeted to business: N=16

Methodological Challenges and Limits

The main challenges encountered in 2017:

1. Little quantitative data available on LEADER projects to answer the CEQ 17;

2. The wide scope of the LEADER measure makes the evaluation too broad → Common Result indicators are not always able to capture the effects;

3. The preparation, conduction, and reporting of the results from the MAPP method is quite complicated (especially in SFC);

4. The focus group allows for the triangulation of findings, but it is highly resource-consuming (e.g. time constraints, simplification of questions, skilful moderator).

Open issues for 2019:

1. How to assess cooperation projects when the level of uptake and the final effects are low?

2. How to assess secondary contributions and present its effect?

3. How to re-apply the MAPP method when there is a lack of interest among beneficiaries on evaluation activities?

Evaluation Reporting and Use

Conclusions:

1. The Common Result and Additional Indicators show that the LEADER measure has been well implemented (good preparation of CLLD strategies);

2. The qualitative methods (face-to face interviews, telephone survey, MAPP tools) revealed that the LEADER measure is necessary and relevant → positive impact on rural small businesses;

3. The methods applied were important to set up a baseline situation (useful to assess the future RDP effects).

Recommendations:

1. An important bottleneck for assessing FA 6B is the distribution of LEADER projects to other Focus Areas (secondary contributions) → further efforts are needed to clarify the work of the parties such as the Ministry of Rural Affairs, Paying Agency and LAGs.

2. The target goal of "created jobs" is high, while some of the jobs will be project-based → results are difficult to capture with full-time equivalent per year, e.g soft projects.

Lessons learnt for the AIR in 2019

1. Keep a balance between the qualitative and quantitative methods;

2. Time pressure for involving stakeholders (i.e. questionnaire, focus group):

   o Solution → collect primary data from electronic registers (monitoring and ongoing evaluation before the reporting year) and simplify matters (questionnaires);

3. The inclusion of secondary contributions in the LEADER assessment will significantly affect the evaluation findings in 2019:

   o around 4.000-5.000 projects with secondary contributions are expected;

   o the accuracy of the database will play a major role.

4. Try to continue and improve the previous methodologies → Do not abandon or change the methodological direction.

Thank you for the Attention!

Estonian University of Life Sciences

Institute of Economics and Social Sciences

Tel. +372 731 3016

Mati.Motte@emu.ee

Good Practice Workshop:
"How to report on evaluation in AIRs: experience and outlook"
Riga 19-20 September 2017