

Target and milestones appraisal: lessons from the ex ante evaluation of RDPs in Spain

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General Outline

- Introduction
- The starting point on target/milestones assessment:
 - Link between intervention logic and target and milestone setting.
 - Analysis of indicators.
- Approaches on target/milestones assessment.
- Reflections on milestone setting.
- Conclusions and recommendations.

Introduction

- **5 RDP Ex Ante Evaluation, including SEA:** Andalucía, Murcia, Galicia, Islas Baleares y Navarra.
- **Two years of work:** between July 2013 to July 2015.
- **Previous involvement in 4 of these 5 RDP** (ongoing evaluation and mid term evaluation RDP 2007-2013).



Andalucía



Murcia



Galicia



Baleares



Navarra

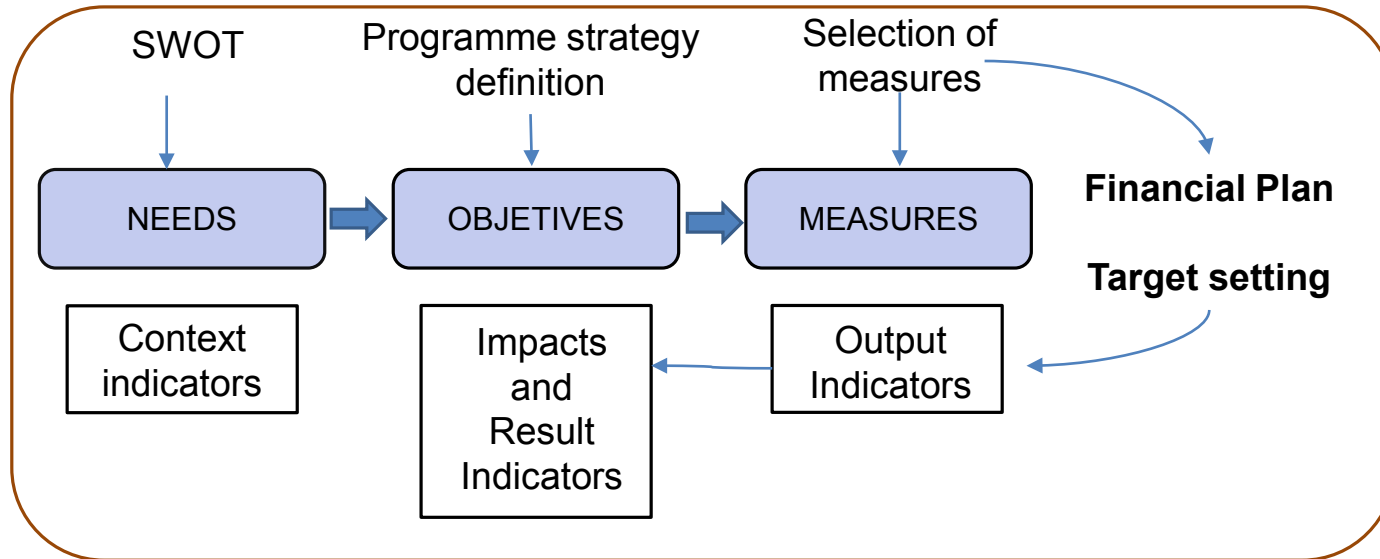


Introduction

The 5 evaluation processes had their particularities, but the general approach was:

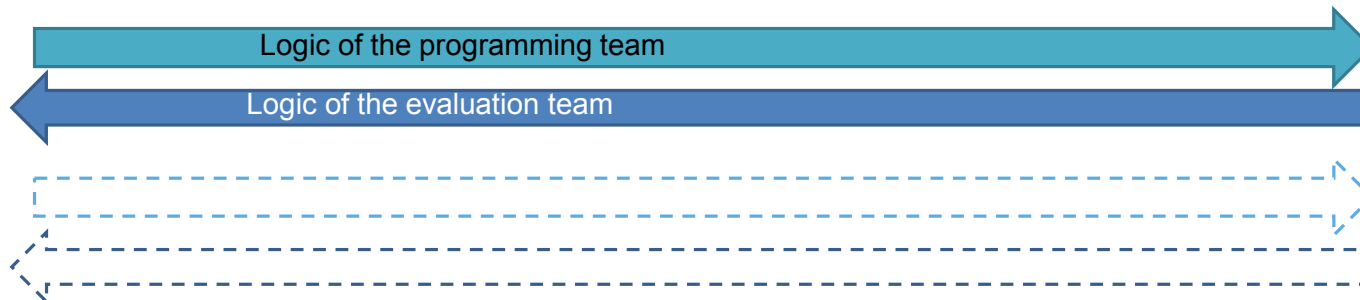
- Intertwined and iterative process, including a high involvement of the Managing Authority in the process.
- Integrate the views of different stakeholders.
- Combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques.
- Training perspective of evaluation – empowerment approach.

Link between intervention logic and target and milestone setting



This process has to be followed several times:

- Evaluate the consistency of the intervention logic
- Assess whether the target values established are coherent with the needs and objectives.
- Assess the coherence of the budget: is the budget sufficient to reach the objectives that address the described needs?



Appraisal of targets/milestones: the starting point

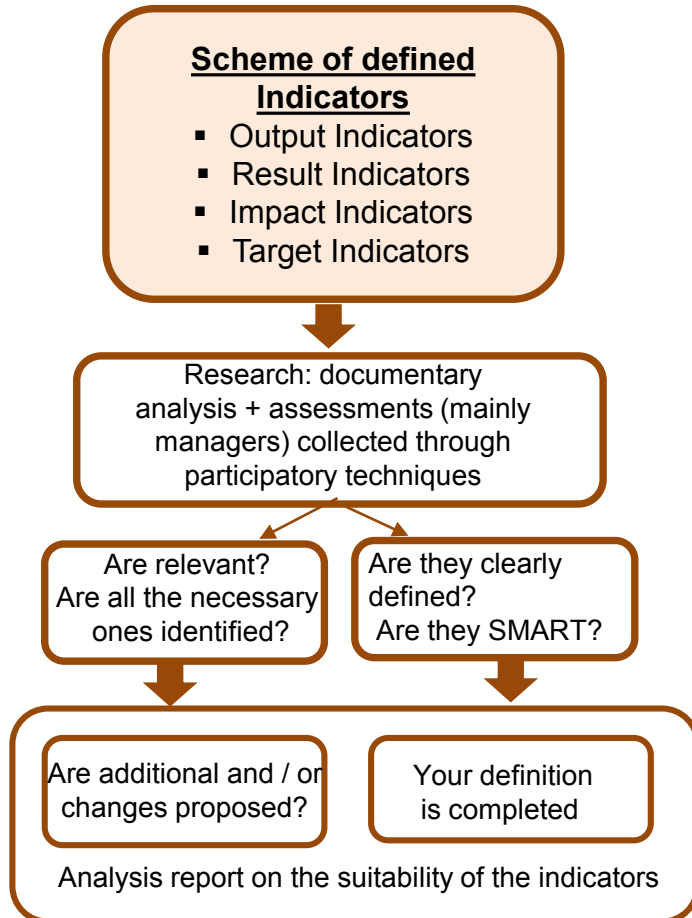
In order to be able to **appraise the targets/milestones** the evaluator needs a starting point from the MA (first estimate), although a first common work between MA/evaluator could also be done.

Starting point of the appraisal:

1. **Detailed analysis of the indicators** (detailed understanding of what we are measuring and with what unit of measurement) in order to appraise targets and milestones. Clarify any doubts or different interpretations.
2. Before progressing to next phase, we need clarity on:
 - **The details of measures and actions** that contribute to **each indicator**: the target will be the sum of what each measure contributes. For this we also need to **analyse the intervention logic**.
 - **A first proposal of the financial plan**, with the greatest detail/disaggregation possible.

Challenge: targets must be realistic, not very ambitious nor unreachable nor too low

1. Detailed analysis of the indicators



Need to understand clearly what we are measuring and with what units of measurement in order to calculate targets and milestones. Clarify any doubts or different interpretations.

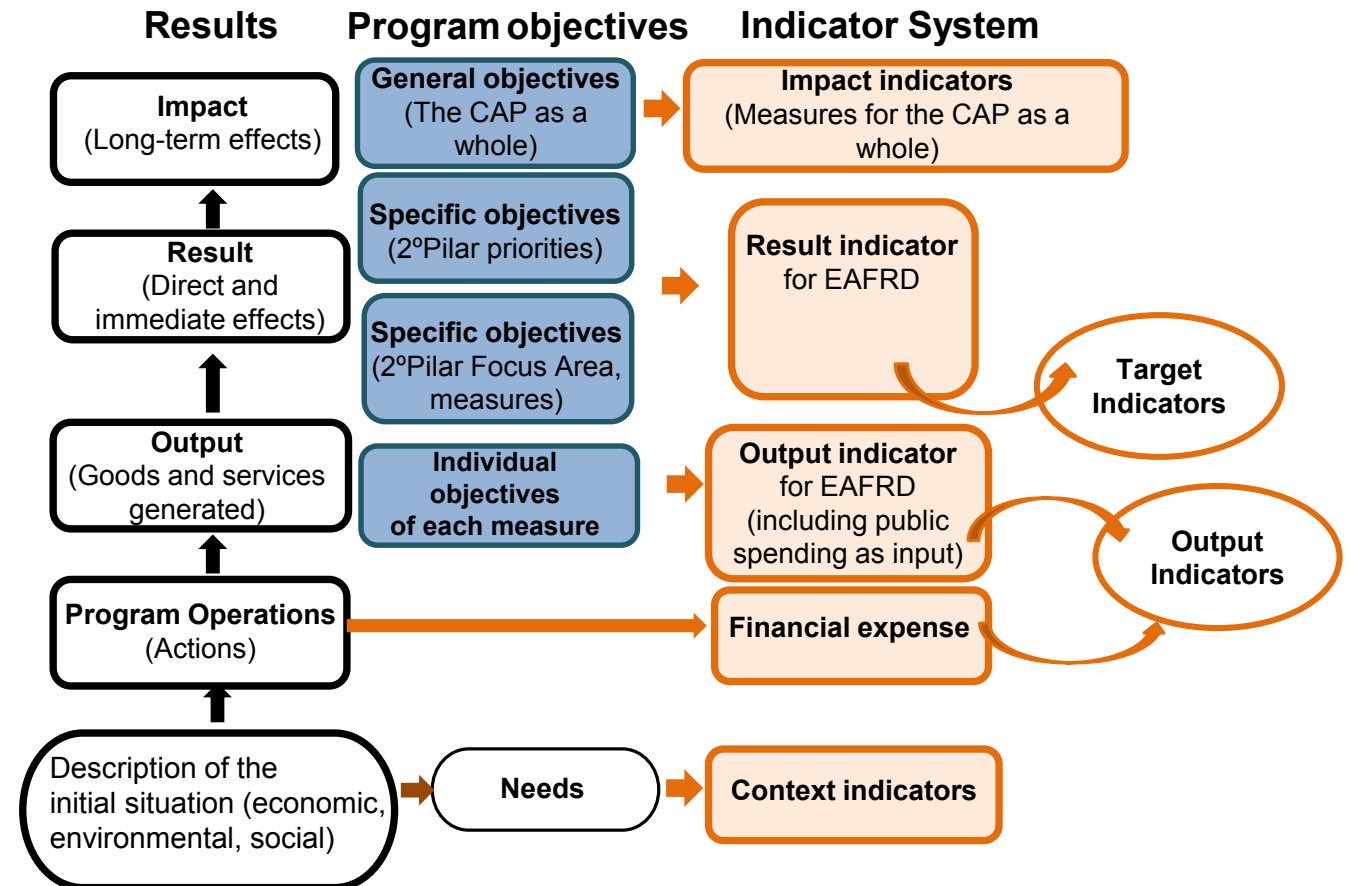
Are there any indicators missing? Are they too many?

- All common indicators, relevant to the programme, have been included
- **There are no gaps** in the identification of indicators. If any gaps, additional indicators will be proposed.
- Additional programme specific indicators are **adequate, realistic, clear, measurable, reachable** from a cost-benefit point of view, **relevant** and **achievable** in the given timeframe.
- Are interpretations the same between the evaluation and programme management teams?

2. Detailed analysis of measures and financial plan

Before progressing to next phase, we need clarity on:

- ✓ **The details of measures and actions** that contribute to **each indicator**: the target will be the sum of what each measure contributes. For this we also need to **analyse the intervention logic**.
- ✓ **A first proposal of the financial plan**, with the greatest detail/disaggregation possible



Appraisal of targets/milestones

FIRST Define a **UNIT COST (€/ physical unit)** for each output indicator, based on:

- 1. Analysis of each measure individually:** do we need more detail? what exactly is foreseen to do with the measure and how? Check for example:
 - Target group/beneficiaries
 - Eligibility / principles of prioritisation criteria
 - Maximum support amounts, if any
 - Types of support: grant, investment, ...
- 2. Historical analysis:** Has this type of intervention been implemented before? (2007-2013, 2014-2020): analyse unit costs and also any deviations that have been observed in the past between objectives and actual achievements
- 3. Expert estimates:** managers or others (University experts, evaluators, ...)
- 4. Other possible references** (similar interventions/programmes: Interreg, other Funds, H2020..)

Appraisal of targets/milestones

SECOND. Calculate the TARGET for the output indicator based on the UNIT COST (€/ physical unit) and the proposed financial allocation

THIRD. Estimate the result indicators based on the output indicators:

- In 2014-2020, various targets were a proportion between output and context indicators
- Analyse again in detail the measures that, in combination, contribute to the RESULT, based on:
 - Individual analysis (do we need more detail? What exactly are the measures expected to do?)
 - Historical analysis (past experiences)
 - Expert assessment (managers/others)
 - Other references (similar interventions in other Funds)

CHALLENGES:

- Result indicators should go beyond the mere upscaling of output indicators, they need to measure changes in the socio-economic and environmental context.
- Long-term planning: what if there are changes in the context? What if the profile of beneficiaries evolves? What if the typology of projects changes?
- Average cost vs unit cost: it is not always possible or convenient to use unit costs (when there are different typologies of beneficiaries)

Example

Appraisal of Target 14 link to FA 5A FA 5A- Increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture

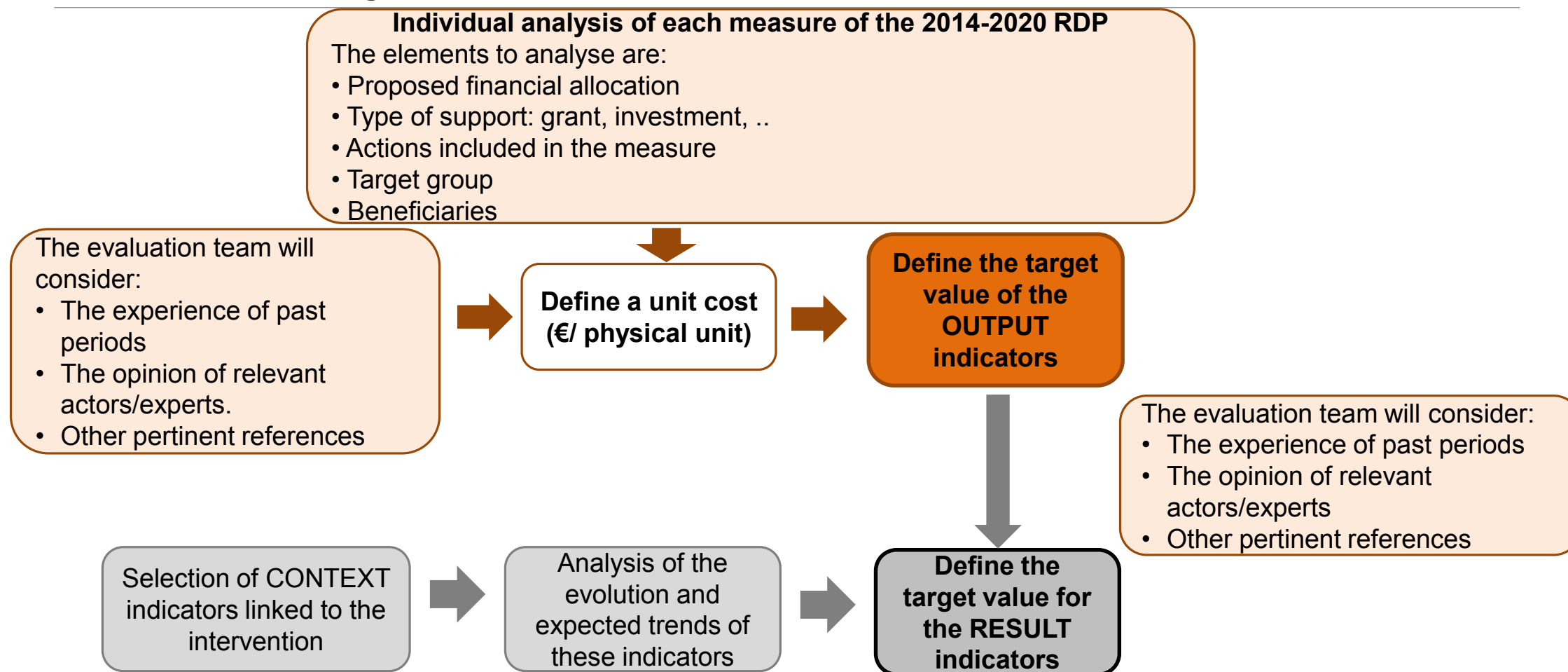
- What measures are programmed under FA 5A? What are the linked indicators?
 - Measure 4.3
 - Output Indicator: Number of hectares switching to more efficient irrigation systems through RDP support described above
 - Context indicator: Total irrigated land in a base year
 - Target: Percentage of irrigated land switching to more efficient irrigation system
- Are planned actions similar to last period operations?
- What is the planned financial assignment?

- Comparison of unit cost €/ha- with measure 125 period 07-13: not only with planned targets but also with real execution.

	Estimated target 14-20	Target 07-13	Executed AIR 2013
Area under irrigation operation (ha)	66.493,00	147.658,00	89.905,62
% irrigated land	8,66%	19,24%	11,71%
Public expenditure (1000 euros)	112.500,00	497.906,45	192.412,31
Ratio euros /ha	1,69	3,37	2,14

- Recommendations:
 - Maintain or even decrease the proposed target
 - Include, as in the past period, an indicator linked to water saving

Summary of the appraisal process



Reflections on milestone setting

When planning milestones it is important to consider and analyse:

The time foreseen for putting in place the analysed measures / interventions and to this end, analyse the foreseen types of support:

- Average time for publishing Calls vs contracting processes.
- Is it foreseen to use methods for the calculation of simplified costs? This would imply slower implementation at the beginning vs greater acceleration of programme management once the methods have been defined.
- Is it foreseen to use financial instruments? This would also imply slow start and later acceleration as above.

The maturity/development time of projects and/or management:

- Development of investments vs grants, and under investments, distinguish between large infrastructures and small projects, for instance.
- Typology of beneficiaries.
- Areas of the territory.
- Actors involved in management.

Conclusions and recommendations

- The evaluator needs to have a thorough knowledge of the programme and the development context – complemented with ‘field work’ and collection of expert opinions to cover the knowledge gaps.
- New/innovative actions are welcome but challenging as there are is no past experience – evaluators need to look for other references and take them on board with caution.
- The ex-ante evaluator needs to be aware that unit costs are only average costs. If we estimate different unit cost by kind of projects or different unit cost by typologies of beneficiaries we will arrive to a better estimation.

Reflection on challenges for the ex ante evaluation in the new period

- **The challenge of long-term planning:** what if there are changes in the context? If the profile of beneficiaries evolves? If the typology of projects changes? It is recommended to:
 - Foresee a revision calendar based on alerts when there are deviations
 - Register all the process for the calculation of targets/milestones and the assumptions made, so as to assess if they are still valid
- **From intermediary milestones (current period) to annual targets (future):** define the preconditions for complying with such an exhaustive planning
- **Assessment of needs vs defined target:** the definition of targets may imply changes in the budget and it will be necessary to start the process all over again. It may be necessary to make calculations as automatic as possible so that any changes or analysis of different scenarios become simpler

Further information on all Spanish RDPs and their ex ante evaluations:

<https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/desarrollo-rural/temas/programas-ue/periodo-2014-2020/programas-de-desarrollo-rural/programas-autonomicos/>

Thank you

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