

## EVALUATION ROADMAP

**Roadmaps aim to inform citizens and stakeholders about the Commission's work to allow them to provide feedback and to participate effectively in future consultation activities. Citizens and stakeholders are in particular invited to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions and to share any relevant information that they may have.**

<b>TITLE OF THE EVALUATION</b>	Evaluation of the impact of LEADER on balanced territorial development
<b>LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT</b>	DG AGRI C.4 – Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>INDICATIVE PLANNING (PLANNED START DATE AND COMPLETION DATE)</b>	Planned start Q3 2020 Completion date Q2 2022
<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/cap-glance_en">https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/cap-glance_en</a> <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en">https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en</a> <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/cmef#evaluation">https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/cmef#evaluation</a> <a href="https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld_en">https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld_en</a>
<b>The Roadmap is provided for information purposes only. It does not prejudge the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described by the document, including its timing, are subject to change.</b>	

### A. Context, purpose and scope of the evaluation

#### Context

One of the EU's main objectives is to strengthen its economic, social and territorial cohesion. The Treaty on the functioning of the European Union requires to promote harmonious development and seek to reduce disparities with special attention to rural areas.

The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) contributes to a balanced territorial development through a series of measures to promote economic development, employment, growth, poverty reduction and social inclusion in rural areas financed as part of the EU Rural Development Policy.

LEADER (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale) is a method used to engage local actors in the design of community-led rural development strategies. The European Structural Funds finance the LEADER approach to community-led local development (CLLD)<sup>1</sup>, mainly via the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Moreover, the EU Regulation governing the rural development funding requires Member States to implement LEADER as a compulsory measure<sup>2</sup>.

Therefore, LEADER is included in the national and regional Rural Development Programmes (RDP) of each Member State. In the current programming period 2014-2020 it is implemented by around 2 800 Local Action Groups, which are composed of representatives of public and private local socio-economic interests, and covers more than 60% of rural population in the EU<sup>3</sup>.

#### Purpose and scope

This evaluation will assess the Common Agricultural Policy's contribution to socioeconomic aspects of territorial development, focused on LEADER.

Although Managing Authorities in Member States have to carry out evaluations of the RDPs, which include LEADER, they do not necessarily analyse the instrument to the same extent, making it difficult to scale the findings up to the EU level. An evaluation of LEADER at the EU level is thus essential to have a broader view of its implementation and will allow a cross-national assessment of the instrument, taking into account the different implementation methods. This evaluation will seek to capture LEADER effects, identify factors of success and

<sup>1</sup> Articles 32-35 of the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

<sup>2</sup> Article 59 of the EAFRD Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

<sup>3</sup> [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld_en)

failure and draw lessons for improving local development policies in rural areas. The outcome of the evaluation should help design better support for rural areas and communities under the CAP plans and feed into the future Rural Development Policy.

The evaluation will take a broader analytical perspective assessing not only the effects of the local strategies on the local economy and social cohesion, but also the LEADER approach as a governance tool. To this end, the evaluation will take into account the relevant aspects related to the principles that define the LEADER methodology for local empowerment and make it distinct in terms of programme implementation (the so-called '[Seven Features](#)' of LEADER).

The evaluation will examine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and the EU added value of LEADER. Coherence with other EU policies and actions will also be addressed.

The focus will be on the current programming period 2014-2020, with a special attention to the new elements of the instrument (such as the start-up kit; simplified cost options, or the increased running and animation supports). However, in order to capture the long term impacts of LEADER, the analysis will also relate to previous programming periods.

## B. Better regulation

### Consultation of citizens and stakeholders

The aim of the envisaged consultations is to seek information and feedback from the relevant stakeholders in relation to the effects of LEADER on local rural development, strengthening local communities and cooperation. The consultation activities will target the following main stakeholders: local action groups, public authorities in EU Member States, paying agencies, rural networks and other organisations, including farmers organisations; academia and experts as well as NGOs and relevant other civil society organisations with a special attention to gender and organisations dealing with vulnerable groups in rural areas. Given the specificity of LEADER, targeted consultation activities, notably through the rural networks, will be conducted to gather relevant opinions and information from stakeholders.

These consultations activities may take the form of workshops, surveys, focus groups and/or interviews in the context of the external support study.

The Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP and the ENRD's permanent subgroup on LEADER and community led local development may be requested to provide information on possible relevant activities at Member State level, in particular arrangements for collecting baseline data and for monitoring and evaluating the LEADER measure.

After completion of the external evaluation study, a presentation and discussion will be held with stakeholders and civil society organisations within the context of the relevant Civil Dialogue Groups, European Rural Networks, Rural Development Committee and expert groups to receive feedback on the findings to be used as input for the preparation of the Commission Staff Working Document on the evaluation.

A synopsis report, providing a summary of the results of all the consultation activities, will be annexed to the evaluation staff working document.

### Data collection and methodology

Starting from a theory-based analysis of LEADER as an integrated and multi-sector support instrument to strengthen local social cohesion and cooperation with a particular focus on the participatory approach, an intervention logic must be developed. The intervention logic should demonstrate the relevant linkages between LEADER and other relevant measures and the objectives of local development and must also situate the LEADER approach in the overall design of the CAP.

The methodology should be able to answer a set of evaluation questions defined to assess LEADER against each evaluation criterion (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence and UE added value). It should also be able to assess the net impacts of LEADER identifying and isolating the influence of this measure as far as possible from other policy interventions and non-policy factors influencing local development.

As far as possible, the findings should be based on quantified evidence, with indication of any limitations of the results obtained and completed with a well-reasoned qualitative assessment.

The evaluation will use data provided by Member States, notably indicators and information provided in the RDP Annual Implementation Reports (AIR), by Local Action Groups, statistical information collected by the Commission as well as other available data (e.g. data collected by national and regional statistical units or Rural networks). Relevant [completed or on-going EU](#) or national evaluations or studies (e.g. Evaluation of the Common Agricultural Policy's impact on territorial development of rural areas: socioeconomic aspects, [Synthesis of the evaluation components included in enhanced AIR](#), Ex-ante evaluations of rural development programmes 2014-

20) should be taken into account.

Any other relevant project (e.g. [SIMRA H2020 project](#)), reports on socio-economic development of rural areas (such as statistical data, reports and maps from Eurostat, the Joint Research Centre), toolkits ([LEADER toolkit](#)) and guidelines (e.g. [Evaluation Helpdesk guidelines](#)) will also be considered.

The evaluation will also use Commission documents such as the "[Socio-economic challenges facing EU agriculture and rural areas](#)" and the impact assessment which accompanies the legislative proposals for the CAP after 2020.