



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar
gyfer Datblygu Gwledig;
Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



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Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

Evaluation Guidance for Co-operation and Supply Chain Development Scheme Projects

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Introduction

This document provides guidance on evaluating Co-operation and Supply Chain Development Scheme (C&SCDS) projects funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Separate guidance on monitoring and the performance indicators specific to the whole WGRC-RDP 2014-2020 is in the process of being developed and will be made available in the future.

This guidance contains four sections:

- **Section 1:** explains the rationale for evaluation of C&SCDS and places evaluation within the context of European Commission and Welsh Government requirements. It addresses common issues with evaluation in the context of the RDP.
- **Section 2:** outlines the importance of clearly defining the objectives of your evaluation, and identifying appropriate research questions to guide your work. It includes descriptions of approaches to impact evaluation and a section on logic modelling.
- **Section 3:** explores the data requirements and research methods for evaluating your project. It provides information on monitoring data, baseline, the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research and an overview of some key research methods.
- **Section 4:** includes practical advice on writing, commissioning, implementing and managing the evaluation contract. This includes a standardised specification for evaluations and an example report template.

Section 1: Evaluation Context 2014-2020

In response to feedback received in the previous programme, the Welsh Government has changed its approach to monitoring and evaluation in the WGRC-RDP 2014-2020. This entails a smaller number of indicators than in the last period so that projects can focus on collecting more accurate data. Projects are also being asked to collect accurate beneficiary contact details so that surveys can be undertaken with project beneficiaries to explore the reasons behind wider impacts of the interventions. Evaluations will become the key output for reporting any additional benefits of project interventions that are not captured in the indicator system. The introduction of standard templates will assist in the synthesis of evaluation findings at a national or regional level. Additionally, the Wales Rural Network (WRN) will have a greater role in distributing evaluation reports.

It is anticipated that these changes will result in a proportionate monitoring and evaluation system that is able to more effectively capture the wider impacts of activities. This will result in the easier collation of evidence that demonstrates the strengths and weaknesses of interventions across Wales.

1.1. Purpose of Evaluation

The main purpose of evaluation is to learn something about a project, scheme or programme. Evaluation is concerned with investigating the implementation and impact of activities that have been delivered as part of a project. It examines the reasons why indicator results may or may not have been achieved and the extent to which the outputs and results can be attributed directly to the activities of the project. Evaluations also address questions surrounding the quality of interventions and consider contextual factors which may have affected the success of an operation.

Evaluations offer insight into whether an intervention has worked and where improvements may be possible. They can also provide an early indication of any issues which can allow the projects to change practices at an early stage

if necessary. They therefore enable project managers to improve the design and implementation of their projects. At a wider level evaluations support decision makers within Welsh Government to improve policy and strategy based on evidence.

1.2 Welsh Government evaluation requirements

Project participation in evaluations is important because projects bring invaluable knowledge and contacts, as well as a practical perspective on the monitoring and evaluation process in their target area. Projects should therefore:

- Undertake the monitoring and evaluation of their own activity.
- Participate in Programme evaluations of the WGRC-RDP 2014-2020¹

It is best practice to have evaluation carried out by evaluators independent of the project delivery team. This will help to ensure results and recommendations are impartial. Therefore all projects funded through the Co-operation and Supply Chain Development Scheme should include an independent external evaluation of the project activities. If a project wishes to depart from this approach, please contact Strategy Branch to discuss and agree an alternative approach.

Evaluation activities should be proportional to the scale of the project being evaluated. Due to the variety of project activity being delivered through the C&SCD scheme, this guidance does not have the scope to provide a detailed discussion of the most appropriate approach for every type of project. There is no 'one size fits all' approach to evaluation. It is therefore important that all projects consider their own evaluation requirements.

Projects are encouraged to review the Programme level evaluation of the Supply Chain Efficiency Scheme, and project level evaluations of similar activity undertaken in the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013².

¹ See Annex 3 for the Programme Evaluation Schedule 2014-2020

² Examples of SCES project level evaluations can be found on the Wales Rural Network site here: <http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/wales-rural-network/publications/?lang=en>

The Strategy Branch can provide assistance with devising evaluation specifications, advising on methodologies, sitting on tender scoring panels for evaluation contracts, sitting on evaluation steering groups for meetings with appointed evaluators, and commenting on draft research reports. Please contact the team directly via RDPM&E@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

1.4 Planning your Evaluation

It is important that you consider the evaluation requirements of your project from the early stages of its development. Planning what activities will need to be undertaken ensures evaluation take place at the appropriate time and sufficient time and resources are available to allow the evaluation to be completed to a satisfactory quality.

Activities linked to evaluation preparation comprise:

1. Consider purpose of evaluation and intended outcomes of evaluation work (for example, do you want to know whether the project was well run? Or about direct outcomes for participants? Or about broader outcomes and impacts beyond immediate participants? These options are explored in more detail in Section 2 below);
2. Develop project-specific evaluation questions linked to the aims and objectives of the project, identify links to indicators and relevant common evaluation questions;
3. Review potential approaches to the assessment of results and impacts (for final evaluations) and select proposed evaluation methods/ approach;
4. Establish data requirements and how that data will be collected. Data should be collected in an electronic format, stored and shared securely ensure arrangements for data collection and storage are compliant with the Data Protection Act³ and, from 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation⁴;
5. Prepare privacy notices and agreements which allow the data to be shared as required for the evaluation;
6. Identify the budget required and project governance arrangements;
7. Prepare a specification and plan tendering procedures (if external evaluators are conducting the evaluation). A specification template is available in Section 3.3; and
8. Create a communication plan for sharing evaluation findings and recommendations.

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>

⁴ <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/>

The structure of the rest of this document is as follows:

Points 1 and 2 relating to the research objectives and research questions are covered in section 2

Point 3, 4 and 5 relating to the availability of data and the choice of research methods are covered in Section 3

Point 6, 7 and 8 concerning the commissioning and management of the evaluation are covered in Section 4.

Section 2: Research Objectives and Questions

Section 2 considers the objectives and research questions for your evaluations. Section 2.1 looks at designing the aims and objectives of your research and the different types of evaluation you may consider. Section 2.2 provides an overview of the importance of logic models when thinking about your evaluation requirements. Section 2.3 addresses the choice of research questions and the Common Evaluation Questions (CEQs) required by the European Commission (EC).

2.1 Aims and objectives

When thinking about your evaluation you need to have a clear idea of what you aim to find out from the research and how the findings will be used. This might be to assess the impact of your project or to understand how well your project has been implemented. It is important that the aims of the evaluation are made clear as this defines the focus and limits of the work, and it is therefore important that these objectives are realistic and proportionate to the resources available for the exercise. Broadly there are four types of evaluations that may be considered:

- **Baseline evaluation:** may be undertaken to collect data on the characteristics of the people or organisations expected to benefit from the project before the project begins. Once the project is completed, this baseline data can be used to assess whether the situation of beneficiaries has changed over the course of the project. It should be

noted that the collection of “before and after” data is not sufficient to demonstrate a project *caused* any changes. For this we would need to undertake an impact evaluation (described below). However the collection of baseline data is an important first step. It is important that this is done at the very outset of the project.

- **Process evaluations:** focus on how a project is being delivered. Among other things, process evaluations can help establish whether the project is operating as its designers planned, whether those involved in the project believe it is operating effectively and help identify good and bad practices in delivery. Process evaluations tend to involve monitoring data analysis and interviews with key stakeholders.
- **Impact evaluations:** will examine the impact of the programme once interventions have been delivered. It will also provide information on the lessons which may need to be taken forward in future to implement similar activity more effectively.
- **Ongoing evaluations:** are able to provide on-going assistance and advice in a pro-active manner, rather than viewing the programme achievements at fixed points in time. This approach can assist in identifying data needs early in the project which will assist the latter stages of the evaluation. However if this approach is adopted projects need to be realistic about the level of engagement they expect from the evaluators as this approach requires an appropriate amount of resources.

In practice, it is likely that evaluations will involve a mixture of these approaches. In thinking about these types of evaluation it is worth noting that previously many evaluations have tended to focus on process evaluations. However, in future, greater emphasis will be placed upon evaluating the impact of projects. Evaluating the impact of a project can be done in two main ways, Counterfactual Impact Evaluation and Theory Based Impact Evaluation.

Counterfactual Impact Evaluations (CIEs) use control groups to help assess the impact of an intervention. In its simplest form, a CIE compares a group of participants or business who have received support (the treatment

group) with another of similar characteristics who have not (the control group). The control group provides insight into what would have happened to the treatment group had they not taken part in the project, i.e. the 'counterfactual' case, which helps identify the impact of the intervention. While this may demonstrate the impact of the intervention this would need to be complemented with further evaluation work to understand why or how the intervention worked. CIEs will not be appropriate for all projects as they:

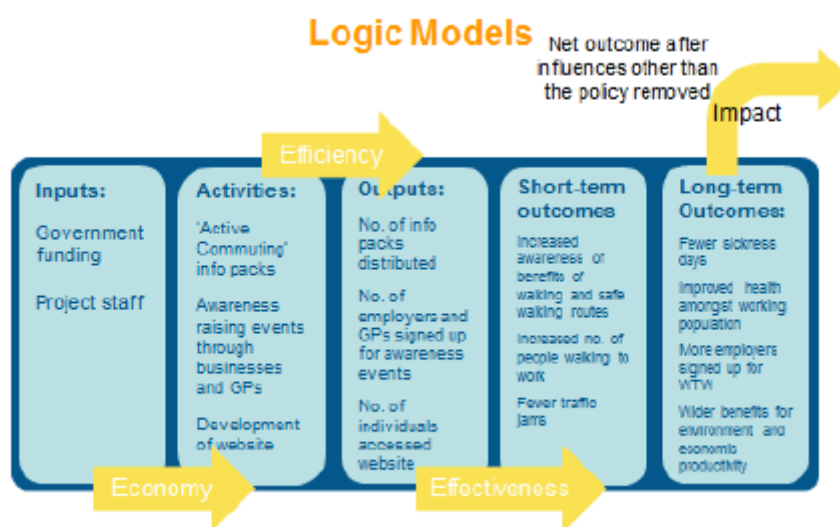
- are expensive to implement,
- require clear control groups that are similar to those receiving the intervention (in practice this is not always possible),
- require sufficient and robust data on both the control and treatment group
- are less well suited to complex projects with multiple project aims

Theory Based Impact Evaluations (TBIEs) seek to assess the impact of a project by analysing the theory and assumptions behind the project, and using research to assess whether the underlying theories and assumptions of the project are correct. One of the main assumptions that a TBIE will aim to test is that the project has the intended impact. Although a TBIE is not as robust as a well-designed CIE, TBIEs are more flexible than CIEs and have fewer preconditions, however given the reliance on the theory of the intervention it is necessary for there to be a clear, concise and explicit intervention logic behind your project. Therefore it is recommended that you produce a project logic model which helps you do this (see below). Furthermore, TBIEs do not just give an indication of whether there has been an impact, but also seek to understand why or how an intervention has worked.

2.2 Developing a logic model

A logic model helps projects to formulate and refine the operational logic of their intervention which in turn will assist in thinking about your evaluation. An effective logic model sets out the rationale of a project, from why it is needed, what it will do and what it hopes to achieve as a result. It is recommended that all projects develop a logic model at the start of the project. A logic model consists of six stages:

1. Set out the broad objectives and context of the intervention
2. Identify all the inputs or resources going into the project including financial, human and organisational resources
3. Map the activities that will take place during the project such as the number of training courses or workshops
4. Identify the recorded outputs of the project, for example participants attending training courses, business supported
5. Identify the anticipated short term outcomes of the project
6. Identify the longer term outcomes of the project



When developing your logic model these stages should be mapped out as clearly and concisely as possible and the underlying assumptions or conditions between each stage should be articulated. The logic mapping exercise will enable you to focus on the project's operational logic which in turn will help inform the evaluation objectives and research questions and in turn the choice of research design and methods. When it comes to evaluating your project, this exercise will assist in assessing whether your project worked as planned and whether it achieved its objectives.

There are a number of generic logic models available for reference in the Magenta Book: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-magenta-book>

2.3 Research Questions and the Common Evaluation Questions for the Rural Development Programme

A key part of your evaluation is the development of suitable research questions that guide the research. These evaluation questions should flow from the objectives and tasks of your projects and should correspond to the overarching objectives of your evaluation. The conclusions of the evaluation must clearly answer these questions, present the evaluators reasoned judgement (rather than personal opinion) and must be supported by the evidence collected and analysed as part of the evaluation. When deciding what questions to pose it is important that the questions are specific, clearly defined and answerable.

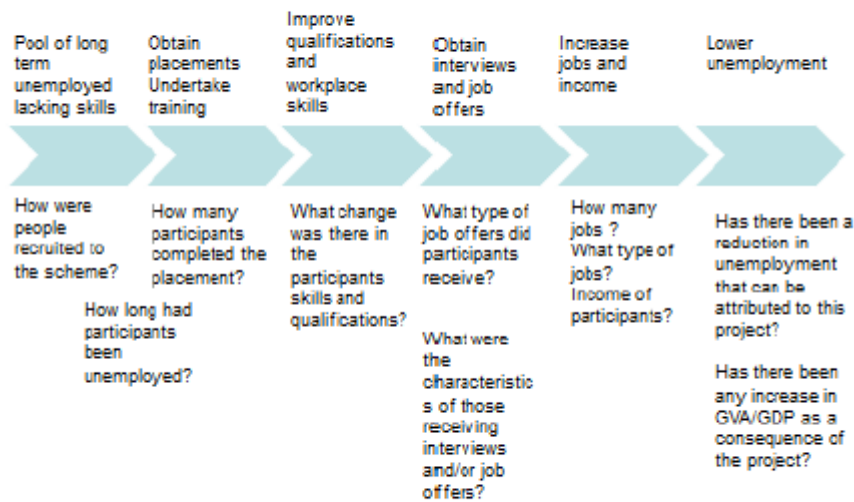
The questions you choose will likely depend upon the type of evaluation you are commissioning:

- A baseline evaluation might, for instance, address questions relating to the need for the project, the socio-economic characteristics of the population, or the appropriate sampling design. The baseline is intended to provide a reference value against which targets are assessed.
- A process evaluation is normally conducted as part of a mid term or final evaluation once sufficient project activity has taken place to assess implementation. Process evaluations address questions relating to the progress of the project toward its indicators, aims and objectives, the effectiveness of management and project processes, and make recommendations regarding any changes to bring about improvements
- An impact evaluation typically takes places towards the end of a project and addresses questions that relate to the impact of the intervention as well as reflect on what has worked well (or otherwise), why and how.

When developing your research questions it may be helpful to refer to your logic model as it will assist in developing appropriate evaluation questions

linked to particular stages of your project. Looking at each stage of a logic model and the assumptions made between each stage, it is possible to identify relevant research questions as shown in the below diagram.

From logic modelling to evaluation questions



Adapted from Magenta Book (2011) Box 2c

Given the breadth of activity being undertaken by projects as part of this scheme this guidance is unable to specify what evaluations questions would be appropriate for your projects. Therefore it is necessary for you to consider the specific requirements of your project when developing your research questions. While this guidance does not specify exactly what questions you should seek to answer through your evaluation, we do require you to consider the wider EC Common Evaluation Questions (CEQs) relevant to your projects and how your evaluation questions could contribute to answering these questions. A full list of the CEQs is provided in Annex 2.

CEQs are an important element of the EU Common Monitoring and Evaluation System. They help define the focus of evaluations and allow for examination of the progress, impact, and achievements of rural development interventions at various scales including Wales, the UK and other EU Member States.

CEQs are answered using specific judgment criteria and indicators (see example in Table 1 below). The judgement criteria are used to link the indicators to the CEQ which help to collect the evidence to develop the answers. The judgement criteria set by the EC are only a starting point and additional judgement criteria should be developed by evaluators which are designed to address issues specific to each project. In total there are 30 CEQ which includes one for each of the 18 Focus Areas, with the remaining 12 assessing Horizontal priorities. A full list of the CEQs is available in Annex 1.

Not all of these CEQs will apply to your project and it is only necessary to consider those CEQs that are most relevant to your project. As stated in the C&SCDS Guidance notes, activity under the scheme must address at least one Focus Area. Projects should therefore seek to compile evidence, through evaluation, to address the CEQ their activity is linked to. In addition, it may not be possible to directly answer the CEQs given that these are designed to apply to evaluations of Rural Development Programmes as a whole. Nonetheless, the CEQs and associated judgement criteria can be useful in developing research questions for project level evaluations and projects should consider how they can be applied to their specific context.

As an example, Table 1 provides key information on how to address the CEQ for Focus Area 6A. Projects should consult the full list of CEQs in Annex 1 and build in relevant CEQ to the evaluation specification.

Table 1 – Common Evaluation Question example – Priority 6A

		Focus Area 6A - Fostering local development in rural areas
Focus Area-Related Common Evaluation Question		To what extent has the RDP intervention supported the diversification, creation and development of small enterprises and job creation?
Judgement Criteria		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small enterprises have been created • Small enterprises have diversified their economic activity • Jobs have been created
Common Rural Development Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs created in supported projects (<i>FA 6A – Result indicator</i>)

Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of small enterprises in the non agricultural sector created with the RDP support • % of new small enterprises created with the RDP support
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Section 3: Data Requirements

Having identified the objectives of your evaluation and determined appropriate research questions for the evaluation it is important to consider where the data to answer these questions will come from. Broadly it is helpful to consider this in two ways: what existing data are available that may assist your evaluation and what new data may need to be collected through the evaluation process. These considerations should be thought through as soon as possible in the project lifecycle.

3.1 Existing Data

One of the key sources of information in the evaluation will be existing information that is available without primary data collection. This may take the form of existing administrative data⁵, other ongoing surveys and, of most relevance to projects funded as part of the C&SCD scheme, monitoring data collected as part of project activity. This will typically include financial data, data relating to performance indicators and contact details of participants and beneficiaries supported by the project if relevant. While these data are not collected for evaluation purposes they are nevertheless helpful for evaluation activity. For instance performance indicator data can show whether the project is achieving its targets. However monitoring data are less able to assist in understanding the reasons why a project may, or may not, be reaching its targets.

Effective monitoring data are of further importance in terms of the collection and storage of participants' or beneficiaries' contact details which may be

⁵ Data collected primarily for administrative purposes, rather than research – for example health and tax records. Examples of national-level administrative data can be found here: <https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/key-data/administrative-data>. It is also possible that projects may collect some administrative data themselves, for example records of people who attended events or training courses.

used as part of evaluation activity. You should consider the level of data collection required, proportional to your project. For example, if a training course is run, participants' details should be recorded and you should make clear, in the form of a privacy notice⁶, how their data will be used – in particular that it will be shared with evaluators who may wish to contact them as part of the evaluation. Projects should maintain up to date contact details using electronic databases for all operations and for all beneficiaries of interventions. When handling personal data projects should ensure they are meeting data protection requirements set out in the 1998 Data Protection Act (DPA), and those that will take effect as part of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) in 2018.

It is essential that data are collected in a systematic way and that it is robust and high quality. For example, once you have decided what data you need to collect from participants, you should ensure this data is always collected from all participants in the same way. You will want to avoid situations where you have gaps in your records for some participants or have collected different kinds of data from different participants (unless there is a good reason to do so). You should also consider how the data is stored, this will need to be secure, but should also be in a format that is accessible and usable to those who will utilise the data. It is recommended that electronic systems are put in place to store the data. **Without reliable data it is not possible to accurately understand the impacts of the interventions or whether they are meeting their targets.**

It is very important to consider monitoring and evaluation activities and agree responsibilities and processes for data collection as soon as possible in project implementation. A lack of available data may require the evaluator to employ other methods to collect this data which will add to the cost and time of the evaluation.

3.2 Baseline Data

⁶ <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/privacy-notice-transparency-and-control/>

Where possible, projects are encouraged to think about what baseline data are available for their project. The availability of baseline data is important as it is necessary for evaluators to compare findings during the lifetime and/or at the end of a project, against the position before intervention began. Without baseline figures it is more difficult to demonstrate the value of an intervention. Baseline data can also help us understand the socio-economic conditions within the area of intervention before operations begin or at a participant/enterprise level by capturing key characteristics at the start of their engagement. Baseline data should be focussed on areas that are directly related to the activities delivered by individual projects. It is important that baseline data are collected prior to an intervention starting.

Baseline data can be collected from different sources depending on the requirements. For example, when obtaining data relating to the socio-economic conditions within the area of an intervention it is likely that existing data sources may be appropriate. These may include data from the 2007 - 2013 RDP programme, existing evaluation reports, and current data sets such as those available on the Stats Wales websites⁷. For projects directly supporting people or businesses, monitoring data collected at the point of entry may be a key source of information for individual baseline data. Data such as turnover and number of FTE jobs can be recorded at the start and end of an intervention to allow a comparison of change. By referring to this data in a final evaluation, evaluators can measure exact changes, as opposed to asking beneficiaries to approximate the level of change.

3.3 Collecting New Data

Having identified your research objectives and questions and the availability of existing sources of data it is necessary to consider where there may be gaps in the data and what research methods may be needed to help evaluate

⁷ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue>

the project. When developing the specification for an evaluation contract it is essential to outline the methods you would expect an evaluator to employ. If this is not clear, the bids you receive may not include the relevant methodologies for your research requirements. However, you may want to consider asking bidders to propose alternative methods if they think these would be more effective for meeting the aims and objectives of the evaluation. This can be risky, as you might not get what you think are the best methods, but it does give bidders the opportunity to be creative and suggest methods you had not considered. If you adopt this approach it is even more important to be very clear on what you want to get out of the evaluation so that bidders do not propose inappropriate methods. It is also essential to explain why you have chosen the particular methods you have outlined in the specification, especially if you have decided against other methods for various reasons.

Broadly it is helpful to consider research in two categories, as either quantitative or qualitative research. This distinction is important as it has implications for the sort of data that can be collected, what can be done with the data, and the research questions that can be answered.

Quantitative research is typically concerned with the collection of data that can be measured and quantified in a numeric format. In evaluations, new quantitative data is typically collected via surveys of those affected by a project (see table below). Quantitative research is most appropriate when you want to know how much an intervention has achieved or the value of changes that have been achieved. Quantitative research is less helpful in answering questions of how or why a change has taken place.

Qualitative research is less concerned with numerical data and quantification and places more emphasis on understanding actions and attitudes through the analysis of words, text and speech. Where quantitative research is concerned with questions of *what* or *how much*, qualitative research is more suited to questions of *why* or *how* particular things have happened and is more interested in providing rich detailed accounts of the subject matter. As a result of this qualitative research typically involves a smaller amount of

people/cases as it is more interested in gathering detailed in-depth data. As a result qualitative research is less suited to producing generalisable findings.

3.3.1 Research Methods

It is important to consider your research requirements and the data needed to answer those questions. It is likely that you will include both *why* and *how* questions and *what* and *how much* questions, therefore a mixed methods approach that encompasses both quantitative and qualitative research methods may be appropriate. The following section provides an overview of some of most common research methods and their relative advantages and disadvantages for research. This list is neither exhaustive nor an indication of everything that your specification should include. Instead you should consider your requirements and specify the most appropriate methods to meet them. Additional links to detailed sources on methodology are available in Appendix 1.

Table 2 – Common research methods

Research Method	Description	Requirements/Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages
Survey	A survey consists of a standardised set of questions that are asked of a large number of people with the intention of producing aggregate level statistics. They can be conducted in a number of ways, either through telephone, mail, online or through face to face interviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If survey administered to same population it can be used to trace changes over time • Requires contact details of participants or a readily available distribution list • If you want to produce generalizable findings care needs to be taken in the sampling of your participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows collection of large amount of data • Can be easily replicated through repeat surveys • Can be quick and cheap to administer in comparison to other methods • Can enable generalisations about impact of project • Can be used to collect data from participants/beneficiaries of intervention to assess opinions on effects of the intervention or from those not involved in project to assess wider reach of interventions or to act as control group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit to how much data can be collected through a survey • Complex survey questions may need to be tested to ensure that they are understood in the same way • Not suitable where the subject matter in question is overly complicated or sensitive
Qualitative Interviews	Qualitative interviews allows flexibility in terms of the directions of questions and places emphasis on the interviewee's point of view and acquiring more rich data. Qualitative interviews are typically carried out in person or over the telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to have access to participants for interview • Will likely need to transcribe the interviews for analysis • Sampling is important in choosing the respondents as will affect the data collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows collection of rich data that allows better insight into peoples behaviour and attitudes. • Allows insight into what respondents think is important • Allows greater flexibility in asking questions and more scope for greater detail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection process is more time consuming • Can collect data from fewer people which limits your ability to generalise the findings • Less suitable for accurate measurements of change

Focus Groups	Similar to interviews, focus groups involve a facilitator who stimulates discussion within a group meeting of between six to eight people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to have access to respondents to participate in the focus group • May need to transcribe the focus groups for analysis • Sampling is important when choosing the respondents as this will affect the data collected • May not be suitable for more sensitive topics of discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like interviews, focus groups allow the collection of rich data that assists in understanding peoples behaviour and attitudes • This approach is useful to obtain a range of views and perspectives in a shorter time than interviews. • Allows an examination of group interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcription of focus groups takes a lot of time • Data collected from a limited number of people which prevents wider generalisation of findings • Dynamics of the group need to be managed carefully to stop one person dominating discussion.
Case studies	Case studies involve a detailed and intensive analysis of a single 'case'. A case can be a number of things, such as a person, business, or community. It is important to specify what the case is.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to distinguish these from case studies as publicity exercises. Research case studies are time intensive and require a significant amount of research in the case area. • Typically entail a number of research methods to collect data on the case. • Being clear about why a certain case has been selected is important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows an in depth study into a particular intervention or element of a project that can explore how and why it has or has not worked. • Particularly useful for complex interventions or projects. • Can provide a broad range of data to assist in understanding how or why something has worked. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and resource intensive. • Limited in its ability to generalise findings beyond the case site.

3.3.2 Contacting your participants

In conducting the research methods contractors will need to be able to contact the beneficiaries of the intervention. To enable this, project managers should have access to up to date contact details for the beneficiaries which they can pass onto the evaluators. Projects will need to be aware of data protection requirements and should circulate privacy notices to all participants/beneficiaries at the start of their engagement which sets out why their data are needed, what their data will be used for and who will access their data, including evaluators. If this is not in place it may jeopardise the evaluation process and make it more difficult to contact participants. When contacting participants as part of the evaluation it will be necessary for the evaluators to outline why the research is being conducted, what will happen with the data and to seek the persons consent for taking part in the research. Participation in the research must be voluntary and a participant should be given the option to withdraw their participation in the study at any point.

Section 4: Commissioning and managing the evaluation

Section 4 examines some of the key considerations when managing your research contract. 4.1 concerns some of the key considerations before commissioning your evaluation. Section 4.2 provides an outline of a specification template. Section 4.3 provides a draft template for an evaluation report and section 4.3 considers commissioning your evaluation. 4.5 looks at the management of the contract once it has been commissioned. 4.6 looks at issues of quality control when receiving the report and section 4.7 relates to the use of findings and dissemination of evaluation findings.

4.1 Before Commissioning your Evaluation

4.1.1 Timetables

It is important that sufficient time is granted to the evaluation processes, including the development of the specification and allowing time for revisions to be made to this. It is also important to take into consideration the time taken as part of the procurement and assessment process. When considering the length of research and the submission of the final report you should factor in time to allow feedback on the report and any amendments that contractors may be expected to make. You should develop an evaluation timetable that sets out these considerations in a clear way to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for each of these stages. In developing this timetable you should work backwards from the desired time of receiving the final report through each stage of the process.

4.1.2 Resources

Appropriate and sufficient resources should be provided for monitoring and evaluation. Budgets for externally commissioned evaluations should be proportionate to the aims and objectives of the operation. Inadequately resourced evaluations are likely to lead to poor quality evidence or even false conclusions and may not provide the evidence base needed for future project planning.

4.1.3 Evaluation Steering Group

Before commissioning an evaluation, projects are recommended to create a steering group to oversee the contract. This should be comprised of: stakeholders interested in the final results of the evaluation, individuals in the organisation who have knowledge of the projects (including monitoring data) and, representatives from project deliverers. Please contact the Strategy Branch to request a member of the team to sit on your evaluation steering group.

Governance arrangements will set out who is responsible for which task, which could include the project manager, senior responsible owner, project director or steering group.

Table 2 - Evaluation quality control responsibilities

Internal Project Manager	Senior Responsible Owner/Project Director	Steering Group
Drafting specification	Ensuring appropriate resources	Ensuring quality and relevance
Obtaining necessary data and security clearance	Ensuring necessary information is collected and available to evaluators	Facilitating work of external evaluators
Day to day management of risks		Access to information and contacts
Ensuring on track, meets objectives, is on time and within budget		Quality assurance: design, questions, methods, research tools
Contractors: advice and responding timely to issues arising		Assist in analysis and interpretation
Quality assurance		
Feedback findings to relevant audience		

Source: Magenta Book (Table 5c)

The governance arrangements should also be clear as to who is responsible, as data controller, under the Data Protection Act (1998) and, from 2018, the GDPR.

4.2 Specification

The specification is a crucial stage in the evaluation process. It will be used as the reference document over the course of the evaluation to measure progress and ensure the successful evaluator is conducting the work required. As discussed in section 2 and 3, it is important that the aims, objectives, and required methodology are clearly and comprehensively outlined. If the scope of an evaluation is poorly defined from the start, the final result will likely be of poor quality also.

When designing specifications for contracts your organisation may have standard templates which you should follow. Table 3 below may be used as a guide of the sections which are useful to consider including in draft specifications.

Table 3 – Specification template

Specification section	Guidance note
Background	<p>Set out the background to the evaluation, both in terms of the policy area (e.g. the background to the C&SCDS, background to the WGRC-RDP 2014-2020, and also explain what the project aims to achieve) and the wider context within which the evaluation will operate (e.g. why is the evaluation being commissioned at this time, how will the results be used).</p> <p>This section should answer the question of why you are commissioning the research project.</p>
Aims and Objectives	<p>The broad aims given in this section should answer, in broad terms, the question of what you want to achieve as a result of the evaluation.</p> <p>This section should include the key areas that you would like the evaluators to examine as it provides the contractual basis upon which the work will take place.</p>
Methodology	<p>Clearly set out the methods you wish the contractor to employ. Explain any challenges you foresee (e.g. timescales for completion, methods).</p> <p>Potential bidders should have a clear understanding of what</p>

	<p>the commissioner is trying to achieve but should feel free to suggest the best method of achieving it.</p> <p>If you want a specific method/s to be employed ensure you include it here.</p>
<p>Tender deadlines and contract award criteria</p>	<p>The timetable section should set out the milestones for the project tendering from advertising the specification, through to project award.</p> <p>This section should clearly set out the award criteria that the bids will be scored against, including the weighting for each section. The cost of the contract should be included as part of the total award score. Example scoring criteria could be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding of the research context and response to brief (1,500 word limit - 20%) 2. Methodological approach; including rationale, suitability of methods proposed, timescales for delivery and anticipated risks and proposed mitigation (3,000 word limit – 40%) 3. Details of the project team; relevant prior experience, roles and responsibilities within this contract (1,500 word limit – 20%) 4. Cost (20%) <p>It is advisable to set word limits for each section.</p>
<p>Timescales and duration of contract</p>	<p>Outline contract start and end date as well as table outlining key deliverables and deadlines.</p> <p>Key stages of delivery could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception report • Fieldwork • Draft final report • Presentation to client • Final report <p>Timetables should allow for the turnaround of reports from draft to sign off so that tenderers account for this time in their planning.</p>

Budget and price schedule	<p>This section should set out the budget for the work. We recommend you propose a cost range, which gives a broad indication of the costs of the evaluation to encourage competitiveness whilst providing an idea to tenderers as to the expected cost of contract.</p> <p>You should include a price schedule outlining the milestones at which invoices will be paid. These could link to the key stages of delivery identified above.</p>
Welsh language and translation requirements	<p>The Contractor should note the requirement to ensure that the Welsh and English languages are treated equally. This includes the capacity to undertake the fieldwork bilingually, such as interviews and community surveys. Reports should be available in both English and Welsh.</p>
Contract monitoring	<p>Contact points for client and contractor and non-compliance arrangements.</p>
Data security	<p>Contracts must be compliant with the 1998 Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations.</p> <p>Appropriate arrangements need to be in place to ensure that data are transmitted securely between evaluation contractors and the client/beneficiary. Contractors must also be able to store data securely.</p>

Please send any specifications you wish to receive comments on to RDPM&E@wales.gsi.gov.uk. In addition, Style Guidance and a Government Social Research (GSR) report template are available also.

4.3 Commissioning the contract

Once your evaluation specification had been completed it is necessary to commission the evaluation. When commissioning your evaluation projects should adhere to Local Authority or company protocol but it is advised that the evaluations are put out to open tender on the sell2wales⁸ website.

⁸ For advice on procuring services in Wales please contact the National Procurement Service; <http://nps.gov.wales/?skip=1&lang=en>

Once bids have been received you will need to score the submitted evaluation proposals in line with the assessment methodology outlined in the evaluation specification. When scoring the submitted bids you should follow your own internal processes to ensure due process is followed.

The successful evaluators should be independent of the project and should not include any of the project stakeholders. Members of the Strategy Team are available to comment and score evaluation tenders.

4.4 Managing the Contract

Once the evaluation has been commissioned and awarded an inception meeting will be an important part of the contract. This is where final arrangements for the research can be finalised and the core aims of the research agreed. You should produce a report or summary of this meeting to be agreed by all parties so that there is a clear consensus on what is planned. As the research progresses it is important that project managers keep in frequent contact with evaluators to ensure that the contract is proceeding as planned. This may be in the form of regular telephone calls, email updates or pre arranged reporting meetings. The active management of the contract is an important process as regular contact may assist in preventing problems occurring, speeding up access to respondents and ensuring that the evaluation timings do not slip unless agreed by both parties.

4.5 Report template

In an effort to standardise and create common features across RDP evaluations the example template below gives an indication of the sections that should be included. This template will vary depending on the size of the projects being evaluated and the scale of the evaluation. The Strategy Branch may be consulted during the process for advice and comments on evaluation tenders and proposed structure. Below is an outline example of the structure of an evaluation report:

Executive Summary

- Main findings of the evaluation; and

- Conclusions and recommendations.

Introduction

- Purpose of the report; and
- Structure of the report.

Context

- Brief contextual information about the programme;
- Discussion of previous evaluations related to the programme;
- Description of the project/ programme being evaluated; and
- Programme implementation; actors involved, institutional context.

Methodological approach

- Explanation of the evaluation design and the methods used;
- Sources of data; and
- Problems or limitations of the methodological approach.

Financial and Indicator information

- Uptake and budget actually spent, with detailed tables of the breakdown of how much money specific projects received; and
- Tables of all monitoring indicator data that have been collected over the course of the project. These data should form the basis for further evaluation to explain the results.

Results of primary research

- Analysis and results of the research undertaken;
- Emphasis should be placed on the analysis of the data rather than presenting the results; and
- Discussion of relevant Common Evaluation Questions for Rural Development Programmes 2014-2020 to allow for cross-examination of results across Wales.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Presentation of the overall conclusions of the programme which take into account programme-specific and national strategy objectives; and
- Recommendations based on the evaluation findings, including, if relevant, proposals for the adaptation of programmes.

A full template and style guidance is available from the Strategy Branch. In addition, it is advisable to provide the Strategy Branch with copies of the draft reports to comment on before evaluation reports are finalised.

4.6 Receiving the report and Quality Assurance

When you receive the draft reports from the evaluators it will be necessary to check the report prior to payment. While minor typographical or factual errors may be acceptable for you to change yourself, if there are persistent problems

in the content of the report on the basis of typos or factual inaccuracies the report should be sent back to the contractors to correct as soon as possible. The report should correspond to any reporting requirements that were agreed at the inception meeting and report templates provided. The results from the research should be analysed and presented clearly in the final reports. Evaluations should not simply serve as a presentation and description of project achievements, but rather they should focus on explaining the reasons for the impacts and exploring the reasons for any less successful aspects of the project. Evaluation reports should also make a series of recommendations for future activity. These should be based on the findings of the evaluation.

4.7 Effective use of results

Undertaking an evaluation should not be viewed as a 'tick-box' exercise. The evaluation recommendations should be communicated to those involved in the project. Each recommendation should be considered by the steering group after the evaluation, and reviewed at a future point for actions that may need to be taken as a result of the recommendations. Where possible recommendations and findings offered in the evaluations should influence changes to project delivery. If this is not possible due to the stage at which the evaluation is received, for instance a final evaluation once project activity has ceased, the findings should still be of importance in the design of future interventions. As well as effectively using the information in reports, it is strongly recommended you review other evaluations undertaken by similar projects to identify best practice elsewhere and lessons learnt in the delivery of activities under the previous Programme.

The evaluation recommendations are a key element of the report. If evaluation reports are planned to be published online, projects may wish to publish their response to the report recommendations, alongside the publication of the report.

The main audience for the evaluations produced are those involved with the project to which the findings relate. However, the project board, organisational stakeholders, other projects conducting similar projects, and the Welsh Government should all also receive copies of all evaluations undertaken. Final

evaluation reports should be published online. This is important because, not only does it provide transparency for how the public money has been spent (on the project and on the evaluation) but it also allows others to learn from the findings of the evaluation.

Before an evaluation report is finalised it is often useful to arrange for the contractor to present the key findings to staff working on the project. This is a useful way for those involved to discuss the evaluation findings and recommendations with the evaluators, ask questions, and to consider what the findings and recommendations mean to them and future activity.

To communicate the findings effectively to wider interested parties you may wish to use methods such as: online bulletins, local seminars, conferences, workshops and published papers. In addition, the Wales Rural Network Support Unit (WRNSU) runs events. The WRNSU is contactable through their mailbox - ruralnetwork@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

To ensure that learning opportunities presented by evaluations are implemented it may be appropriate to conduct a review some time following the completion of the evaluation to consider progress against any recommendations made in an evaluation.

Annex 1 – Further Guidance

Common Evaluation Questions for Rural Development Programmes 2014-2020: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/uploaded-files/wp_evaluation_questions_2015.pdf

Evaluation of the Supply Chain Efficiency Scheme: <http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/previous/project-evaluations/supplychain-efficiency/?lang=en>

Evaluation of Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme: <http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/previous/project-evaluations/pmg-scheme-evaluation/?lang=en>

European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development: <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/evaluation>

EC Impact Evaluation Centre: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/policy/evaluations/guidance/impact_faq_theor

NAO – Evaluation in Government: <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/evaluation-government/>

HM Treasury Magenta Book: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-magenta-book>

HM Treasury Green Book: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government>

ESRC Framework for Research Ethics 2010 (revised September 2012) (PDF, 480Kb): http://www.esrc.ac.uk/images/framework-for-research-ethics-09-12_tcm8-4586.pdf

Social Research Association Ethical Guidelines: <http://the-sra.org.uk/research-ethics/ethics-guidelines/>

GSR Ethical Assurance for Social Research in Government: <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/networks/gsr/publications>

Annex 2 – List of Common Evaluation Questions

A full list of the Common Evaluation Questions for rural development is provided below. For detailed information on the judgement criteria, linked common indicators, and additional information for each CEQ please see: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/uploaded-files/wp_evaluation_questions_2015.pdf

Focus Area related evaluation questions

Focus Area		Evaluation Question
P1A	Fostering innovation, cooperation, and the development of the knowledge base in rural areas	1. To what extent have RDP interventions supported innovation, cooperation and the development of the knowledge base in rural areas?
P1B	Strengthening the links between agriculture, food production and forestry and research and innovation, including for the purpose of improved environmental management and performance	2. To what extent have RDP interventions supported the strengthening of links between agriculture, food production and forestry and research and innovation, including for the purpose of improved environmental management and performance?
P1C	Fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agricultural and forestry sectors	3. To what extent have RDP interventions supported lifelong learning and vocational training in the agriculture and forestry sectors?
P2A	Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification	4. To what extent have RDP interventions contributed to improving the economic performance, restructuring and modernization of supported farms in particular through increasing their market participation and agricultural diversification?
P2B	Facilitating the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and, in particular, generational renewal	5. To what extent have RDP interventions supported the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and in particular, generational renewal?

P3A	Improving competitiveness of primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain through quality schemes, adding value to agricultural products, promotion in local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and organisations and inter-branch organisations	6. To what extent have RDP interventions contributed to improving the competitiveness of supported primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain through quality schemes, adding value to the agricultural products, promoting local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and inter-branch organization?
P3B	Supporting farm risk prevention and management	7. To what extent have RDP interventions supported farm risk prevention and management?
P4A	Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas, and in areas facing natural or other specific constraints, and high nature value farming, as well as the state of European landscapes	8. To what extent have RDP interventions supported the restoration, preservation and enhancement of biodiversity including in Natura 2000 areas, areas facing natural or other specific constraints and HNV farming, and the state of European landscape?
P4B	Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management	9. To what extent have RDP interventions supported the improvement of water management, including fertilizer and pesticide management?
P4C	Preventing soil erosion and improving soil management	10. To what extent have RDP interventions supported the prevention of soil erosion and improvement of soil management?
P5A	Increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture	11. To what extent have RDP interventions contributed to increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture?
P5B	Increasing efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing	12. To what extent have RDP interventions contributed to increasing efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing?
P5C	Facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy, of by-products, wastes and residues and of other non food	13. To what extent have RDP interventions contributed to the supply and use of renewable sources of energy, of by-products, wastes, residues and other non-food raw material for

	raw material, for the purposes of the bio- economy	purposes of the bio-economy?
P5D	Reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture	14. To what extent have RDP interventions contributed to reducing GHG and ammonia emissions from agriculture?
P5E	Fostering carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry	15. To what extent have RDP interventions supported carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry?
P6A	Facilitating diversification, creation and development of small enterprises, as well as job creation	16. To what extent have RDP interventions supported the diversification, creation and development of small enterprises and job creation?
P6B	Fostering local development in rural areas	17. To what extent have RDP interventions supported local development in rural areas?
P6C	Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas	18. To what extent have RDP interventions enhanced the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas?

Evaluation questions related to other aspects of the RDP

Other RDP aspect	Evaluation Question
Operational Performance	19. To what extent have the synergies among priorities and focus areas enhanced the effectiveness of the RDP?
Technical Assistance	20. To what extent has technical assistance contributed to achieving the objectives laid down in Art. 59(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Art. 51(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013?
National Rural Networks	21. To what extent has the national rural network contributed to achieving the objectives laid down in Art. 54(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013?

Evaluation questions related to EU level objectives

EU Objective	Evaluation Question
EU 2020 Headline Targets	<p>22. To what extent has the RDP contributed to achieving the EU 2020 headline target of raising the employment rate of the population aged 20-64 to at least 75%?</p> <p>23. To what extent has the RDP contributed to achieving the EU 2020 headline target of investing 3% of EU's GDP in research and development and innovation?</p> <p>24. To what extent has the RDP contributed to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to achieving the EU 2020 headline target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% compared to 1990 levels, or by 30% if the conditions are right, to increasing the share of renewable energy in final energy consumption to 20%, and achieving 20% increase in energy efficiency?</p> <p>25. To what extent has the RDP contributed to achieving the EU 2020 headline target of reducing the number of Europeans living below the national poverty line?</p> <p>26. To what extent has the RDP contributed to improving the environment and to achieving the EU Biodiversity strategy target of halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services, and to restore them?</p>
CAP Objectives	<p>27. To what extent has the RDP contributed to the CAP objective of fostering the competitiveness of agriculture?</p> <p>28. To what extent has the RDP contributed to the CAP objective of ensuring sustainable management of natural resources and climate action?</p> <p>29. To what extent has the RDP contributed to the CAP objective of achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment?</p> <p>30. To what extent has the RDP contributed to fostering innovation?</p>