

QUALITY ASSESSMENT FORM

Title of the pilot project: Smart Eco-Social Villages (contract number AGRI-2017-0333)

DG/Unit: DG AGRI, Unit F1

- Officials managing the evaluation: Benoit Esmanne, Stefan Ostergard Jensen.

Contractor: Ecorys Brussels N.V

Assessment carried out by the technical managers.

Date of the Quality Assessment: March 2020.

(1) RELEVANCE

Does the pilot project respond to information needs, in particular as expressed in the terms of references?

SCORING	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
				X	

Arguments for scoring:

The study overall delivers information in line with the purpose and themes as defined in the tender specifications. The study has delivered a definition proposal for Smart Eco-Social Villages, based on the identification and analysis of good practices and highlighting the key features to be considered as a Smart Eco-Social village.

(2) APPROPRIATE DESIGN

Is the design of the pilot project adequate for obtaining the results needed for its purpose?

SCORING	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
				X	

Arguments for scoring:

The design and methodologies used for the different parts of the study are overall deemed appropriate, including qualitative as well as quantitative methods.

(3) RELIABLE DATA

Are data collected adequate for their intended use and have their reliability been ascertained?

SCORING	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
				X	

Arguments for scoring:

The use of data and methods for analysing data differ among the different parts of the study. The quantitative data used under theme 1 seems reliable in general, and under theme 2 as well. The reliability of the qualitative data (interviews and interaction with people of the villages) used under theme 3 and 4 is more difficult to assess.

(4) SOUND ANALYSIS

Are data systematically analysed and cover other information needs in a valid manner?

SCORING	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
			X		

Arguments for scoring:

The analysis of the quantitative data used under theme 1 seems systematic in general whereas the approach for analysing the qualitative data is more difficult to assess and seems much less systematic. Moreover, further collection and analysis of financial data from the case study assessed would have been helpful to draw more specific recommendations when it comes to funding opportunities and bottlenecks.

(5) CREDIBLE FINDINGS

Do findings follow logically from and are justified by, the data/information analysis and interpretations based on pre-established criteria and rational?

SCORING	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
			X		

Arguments for scoring:

In general yes, however, the analysis of qualitative input from local stakeholders is not very thorough, but is mainly a transmission of the sum of the messages received.

(6) VALID CONCLUSIONS

Are conclusions non-biased and fully based on findings?

SCORING	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
			X		

Arguments for scoring:

In general yes, however, the contractor's analysis and assessment of the qualitative data (input from local stakeholders) could have been more critical and reflecting, at the horizontal level.

(7) HELPFUL RECOMMENDATIONS

Are areas needing improvements identified in coherence with the conclusions? Are the suggested options realistic and impartial?

SCORING	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
			X		

Arguments for scoring:

The study includes a certain number of recommendations for policy makers and for local stakeholders in terms of likely preconditions and enabling factors for developing Smart Villages and in designing public support schemes.

(8) CLARITY

Is the report well structured, balanced and written in an understandable manner?

SCORING	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
		X			

Arguments for scoring:

The structure and clarity of the report and interim deliveries have been subject to some discussion with the technical managers and the project Steering Group. The clarity and language of the latest amended parts of the final delivery are deemed average, however, the final result of the report as a whole is satisfactory. It is therefore acceptable to publish the study, in particular when considering the high interest from stakeholders in the topic and given that another preparatory action following-up this pilot project is under implementation.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL REPORT

Is the overall quality of the report adequate, in particular:

- Does the report fulfil contractual conditions?

Yes. All deliverables were submitted and approved. However, the overall quality in terms of presentation and clearly communicating the findings, could have been better (e.g. more targeted towards specific stakeholders).

- Are the findings and conclusions of the report reliable, and are there any specific limitations to their validity and completeness?

Findings from case studies should be handled with care as they are based on limited data. Nevertheless, conclusions are overall reliable. The use and analysis of qualitative data however seems fairly uncritical and could have been more transparent.

- Is the information in the report potentially useful for designing intervention, setting priorities, allocating resources or improving interventions?]

Yes, the information is deemed useful for possible policy initiatives in the future, including support for Smart Villages. Based on the findings from this pilot project, a follow-up initiative in the form of a preparatory action on Smart Village has been launched and is being implemented.