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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate G. Economic analysis, perspectives and evaluations
G.4. Evaluation of measures applicable to agriculture; studies

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STUDY TO ASSESS THE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN ON FARMS ARISING FROM THE CAP

Subject: Quality grid based on the Final Report submitted by Ramboll Management

PRELIMINARY REMARK

The following text and grid provides a global assessment of the above-mentioned evaluation study. The Commission steering group in charge prepared it at the end of the evaluation process.

The judgement is made on the methodological approach followed to answer the evaluation questions, not on the results, conclusions or recommendations reached by the contractor. It has to be pointed out that it is neither the opinion of the evaluators nor the content of their conclusions that are judged here, but only the methods used for obtaining them.

1. Meeting the needs: Does the study adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?

The study addresses well the information needs of the commissioning body and fits fully the terms of reference.

The study provides a broad overview of the administrative burden for farmers in the five member States selected. The study was also instrumental in adapting the EU Net Administrative Cost Model to make it better applicable.

On the whole, the contracted undertaking delivered fully what was envisaged in the tender dossier and the all tasks listed in the Terms of Reference have been addressed.

Global assessment: **good**

2. Relevant scope: Is the rationale of the policy examined and its set of outputs, results and outcomes/impacts examined fully, including both intended and unexpected policy interactions and consequences?

The study concerned a fact finding study. The question is not relevant.

Global assessment: -

3. Defensible design: Is the study design appropriate and adequate to ensure that the full set of findings, along with methodological limitations, is made accessible for addressing the tasks?

The methodological design for the study is partly given by the EU Net Administrative Cost Model. However, the tender specifications also required Ramboll Management to assess the EU Net Administrative Cost Model and where necessary to suggest improvements.

The study team was flexible and imaginative in finding solutions to improve the methodology and to find solutions for practical problems (in particular with regard to the origin of information obligations). The set up of the fieldwork was exemplary.

Global assessment: **excellent**

4. Reliable data: To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate? Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use?

The method used does not result in statistically significant results. The method allows gathering comparable data from different Member States at reduced costs. The quality of the field work gives good confidence for the reliability of the outcomes.

Global assessment: **good**

5. Sound analysis: Is quantitative and qualitative information appropriately and systematically analysed according to the state of the art so that the study tasks are addressed in a valid way?

The analysis of the causes of the different levels of administrative burden in the five Member States concerned was satisfactory. The analysis was extremely difficult to undertake because of the lack of comparable implementation methods. Moreover, the method used does not allow the isolation of individual causes of administrative burden.

The qualitative information was well used to identify the main cost drivers. The different tools used and presented were globally appropriate.

Global assessment: **satisfactory**

6. Credible findings: Do findings follow logically from, and are they justified by, the data analysis and interpretations based on carefully described assumptions and rationale?

The conclusions presented follow logically from the data collection. The interpretation of the data is credible and consistent. The reasoning for the approach chosen is well explained, the assumptions made and the methodological limitations of the indicator are carefully described.

Global assessment: **good**

7. Validity of the conclusions: Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results? Are they unbiased?

The conclusions are laid out in a clearly understandable and detailed manner.

The administrative costs per farmer (and per hectare) are based on a sound analysis and credible findings. It is not biased and given the data constraints, the indicator proposes a balanced and prudent approach for measuring the administrative burden for farmers.

Global assessment: **good**

8. Usefulness of the recommendations: Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?

The study has provided important background information on the effects of the EU legislation for the administrative costs of farmers. This information will be used immediately in the "Health Check" project currently ongoing.

Global assessment: **good**

9. Clear report: Does the report clearly describe the policy evaluated, including its context and purpose, together with the procedures and findings of the study, so that information provided can easily be understood?

The report is well-structured and written in an easily understandable language. The origin of different administrative burdens in the Member States concerned is well presented. Also the methods used is clearly explained.

Global assessment: **good**

The overall quality rating of the report is considered: good

Concerning these criteria, the evaluation report is:	Unacceptable	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1. Meeting the needs: Does the study adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?				X	
2. Relevant scope: Is the rationale of the policy examined and its set of outputs, results and outcomes/impacts examined fully, including both intended and unexpected policy interactions and consequences?					
3. Defensible design: Is the study design appropriate and adequate to ensure that the full set of findings, along with methodological limitations, is made accessible for addressing the study tasks?					X
4. Reliable data: To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate? Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use?				X	
5. Sound analysis: Is quantitative and qualitative information appropriately and systematically analysed according to the state of the art so that the tasks are addressed in a valid way?			X		
6. Credible findings: Do findings follow logically from, and are they justified by, the data analysis and interpretations based on carefully described assumptions and rationale?				X	
7. Validity of the conclusions: Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results?				X	
8. Usefulness of the recommendations: Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?				X	
9. Clearly reported: Does the report clearly describe the policy being evaluated, including its context and purpose, together with the procedures and findings of the study, so that information provided can easily be understood?				X	
The overall quality rating of the report is considered				X	