

QUALITY ASSESSMENT FORM

Title of the study:

THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC GOODS THROUGH AGRICULTURE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

DG/Unit: DG AGRI, Unit H1

- Official managing the study: Christiane Canenbley

Evaluator/contractor: Institute for European Environmental Policy, IEEP, United Kingdom.

Assessment carried out by:

- Steering group with active participation from AGRI D1, D3, G1, G3, H1, H4, L1, L2, L4, I1, DG ENV, ECFIN, JRC and REGIO.

Date of the Quality Assessment: January 2010

(1) RELEVANCE

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

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
SCORING					X

Arguments for scoring:

The study fully covers the scope defined in the Terms of Reference, including a definition of public goods provided through agriculture, a presentation of farming practices delivering public goods and an identification of policy measures needed for encouraging the provision of public goods.

(2) APPROPRIATE DESIGN

Is the study design adequate for obtaining the results needed for responding to the information needs?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
SCORING				X	

Arguments for scoring:

The methodology design is carefully reasoned and fits very well the objectives of the study. The starting point of the study was, in line with the Terms of Reference, an elaboration of the concept of public goods based on economic theory. This theoretical work formed a robust basis for the methodological design of the study, including extensive empirical work.

The methodology developed for the empirical analysis combined different elements, including qualitative analysis fed by the information collected within case studies and surveys, expert judgements and quantitative analysis based on FADN and indicator data.

The study team was flexible to adapt the methodology if needed. The design applied is therefore adapted to information needs and data availability and has, thus, allowed answering all information needs in a credible way.

(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:

Multiple ways of data collection were effectively targeted. The size and the sampling techniques for the data collection ensure a good reliability of primary data while also secondary data was well exploited. The data sources are clearly identifiable in the report.

The quantitative data were completed by qualitative information collected during regional case studies, which were carried out in the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the UK. The contractor also exploited secondary data from other sources, including evaluation reports, literature review and an in-depth analysis of the policy framework. However, for some aspects, reliable data were not sufficiently available, but as no better data sources exist the approach used was appropriate and the limits of the data sources are clearly stated in the report.

(4) SOUND ANALYSIS

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

SCORING	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
				X	

Arguments for scoring:

The analysis was carried out in a rigorous way and is well developed. The different analytical tools used were appropriate, analysing the qualitative and quantitative data in a valid manner. The limitations of each of the analytical approaches and tools are clearly presented and fully taken into account in the interpretation of the results.

(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:

The data sources form a robust basis for supporting the findings, which are well justified. The reasoning is well explained, the assumptions made and the methodological limitations are carefully described.

The consultant was very conscientious of those instances where the information basis was not robust enough and tried to avoid any judgements, which were not sufficiently founded by the sources exploited.

(6) VALID CONCLUSIONS

Are conclusions non-biased and fully based on findings?

SCORING	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
				X	

Arguments for scoring:

The conclusions are established in a clearly understandable and detailed manner. They are substantiated by the findings, which are drawn from the sound analysis. The conclusions are unbiased, balanced and prudent. The reasoning between the findings and the conclusions are well explained.

(7) HELPFUL RECOMENDATIONS

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 recommendations are clear and unbiased; they are helpful as they are impartial, based on the findings of the report and take well into account the ongoing political discussion. The recommendations do not provide clear policy proposals for the future but identify crucial issues, which have to be considered for the future development of the Common Agricultural Policy.

(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 report is very well structured, written in a very clear language and therefore easily understandable. Unnecessary repetitions have been avoided and the written style and the presentation are clear and adapted to different readers.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL STUDY REPORT

Overall, the quality of the report is assessed to be very good

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

- **Does the study fulfil contractual conditions?**

Clearly and fully.

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

The findings and conclusions of the report are reliable and clear.

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

The study report has been finalised before the discussion about the future of Common Agricultural Policy has reached its crucial phase. As in this debate more and more often reference is made to public goods provided through agriculture, the findings of the study report are highly relevant and can be used in ongoing policy debates.