

Quality Assessment for Final Study Reports

According to the Commission **Better Regulation Guidelines and toolbox** the Quality Assessment (QA) by the Inter Service Group judges the external contractor's report and its overall process. It is the final "sign off" by the ISG of the contractor's work and includes a judgement on whether key aspects of the work conducted meet the required standards and provides any related comments.

If the evaluation is selected for review by the Regulatory Scrutiny Board, this QA and minutes of the last ISG meeting will form part of the package submitted to the RSB.

In compliance with the above, this documents provides a **Quality Assessment checklist** to be completed **for all interim and ex-post evaluations**, in order to:

- give a structured feedback to the Evaluator on the draft report, and
- support and justify the approval of the final version of the report.
- Provide stakeholders and citizens with an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation.

The assessment criteria included should be applied also with reference to the specific Terms of Reference for the evaluation to be assessed and specific agreements made between the evaluation Steering Group and the Evaluator during the execution of the contract.

The checklist can be quickly filled out by ticking boxes, but becomes most useful when also including comments in the open fields.

Quality Assessment for Final Report

Study on the ENRD and the NRNs' contribution to the implementation of EU Rural Development policy

DG/Unit D1 *(only name of unit – no name of persons as regards personal data protection)*

Assessment carried out by(*):

Steering group

Evaluation Function

Other (please specify)

(*) Multiple crosses possible

Date of assessment **18 April 2023 ad-hoc ISG meeting**

Study on the ENRD and the NRNs' contribution to the implementation of EU RD policy

Objective of the assessment	Aspects to be assessed	Fulfilled? Y, N, N/A	Comments
1. Scope of evaluation	Confirm with the Terms of Reference and the work plan that the contractor :		
	a. Has addressed the evaluation issues and specific questions	[Y]	
	b. Has undertaken the tasks described in the work plan	[Y]	The study manager checked that all the tasks included in the interim and final deliverable were duly executed
	c. Has covered the requested scope for time period, geographical areas, target groups, aspects of the intervention, etc.	[Y]	The geographical coverage was the whole EU plus UK. Seven Member States (AT, BE-WA, EE, FR, IT, SK, SL) were selected as case studies through a clustering exercise agreed by the Steering Group, grouping together networks with a comparable structure and operational set-up. The case studies supported the analysis and judging phase within the triangulation of sources and approaches to better reply to the evaluation questions.
2. Overall contents	Check that the report includes:		

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of report	a. Executive Summary according to an agreed format, in the three required languages (minimum EN and FR)	[Y]	In two languages, EN & FR, as it was planned in the Terms of Reference and the contract
	b. Main report with required components	[Y]	The content of the final report is as planned in the Terms of Reference and the contract.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Title and Content Page ▪ A description of the policy being evaluated, its context, the purpose of the evaluation, contextual limitations, methodology, etc. ▪ Findings, conclusions, and judgments for all evaluation issues and specific questions ▪ The required outputs and deliverables ▪ Recommendations as appropriate 		
	c. All required annexes	[N/A]	No annex required
3. Data collection	Check that data is accurate and complete		
	a. Data is accurate	[Y]	The ISG acknowledged the limitations in data availability and reliability as explained by the evaluator. Remedial actions were undertaken through triangulation of sources of information and approaches (literature and documentary review, data analysis, surveys, case studies, interviews, and focus groups). The analysis and conclusions are as accurate as possible due to those limitations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data is free from factual and logical errors ▪ The report is consistent, i.e. no contradictions ▪ Calculations are correct 		
b. Data is complete	[Y]	Same as previous comment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant literature and previous studies have been sufficiently reviewed ▪ Existing monitoring data has been appropriately used ▪ Limitations to the data retrieved are pointed out and explained. ▪ Correcting measures have been taken to address any problems encountered in the process of data gathering 			
4. Analysis and	Check that analysis is sound and relevant		

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judgments	a. Analytical framework is sound	[Y]	The methodology and data collection used are clearly described in a dedicated section of the final report.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The methodology used for each area of analysis is clearly explained, and has been applied consistently and as planned ▪ Judgements are based on transparent criteria ▪ The analysis relies on two or more independent lines of evidence ▪ Inputs from different stakeholders are used in a balanced way ▪ Findings are reliable enough to be replicable 		
	b. Conclusions are sound	[Y]	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conclusions are properly addressing the evaluation questions and are coherently and logically substantiated ▪ There are no relevant conclusions missing according to the evidence presented ▪ Findings corroborate existing knowledge; differences or contradictions with existing knowledge are explained ▪ Critical issues are presented in a fair and balanced manner ▪ Limitations on validity of the conclusions are pointed out 		
5. Usefulness of recommendations	a. Recommendations are useful	[Y]	The findings and recommendations are useful, especially for future national CAP networks (successors of the NRNs in the CAP 2023-2027) and the Commission services dealing with the EU CAP Network
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommendations flow logically from the conclusions, are practical, realistic, and addressed to the relevant Commission Service(s) or other stakeholders 		
	b. Recommendations are complete	[Y]	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommendations cover all relevant main conclusions 		
6. Clarity of the report	a. Report is easy to read	[Y]	The report is long but easy to read in terms of written style and language used. However, given the complexity of the subject, and notwithstanding the fact that all terminology is defined, some parts may be difficult to fully understand for readers not familiar with networking. See
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Written style and presentation is adapted for the various relevant target readers ▪ The quality of language is sufficient for publishing ▪ Specific terminology is clearly defined ▪ Tables, graphs, and similar presentation tools are used to facilitate understanding; they are well commented with narrative text 		

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			also subsequent comment.
	<p>b. Report is logical and focused</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The structure of the report is logical and consistent, information is not unjustifiably duplicated, and it is easy to get an overview of the report and its key results. ▪ The report provides a proper focus on main issues and key messages are summarised and highlighted ▪ The length of the report (excluded appendices) is proportionate (good balance of descriptive and analytical information) ▪ Detailed information and technical analysis are left for the appendix; thus information overload is avoided in the main report 	[Y]	The final report reflects the effort to describe the complexity of the subject without losing clarity. The nature of the subject did not allow for shorter executive summary. The leaflet provides more succinct information.

Overall conclusion		
The report could be approved in its current state, as it overall complies with the contractual conditions and relevant professional evaluation standards	[Y]	