

Final evaluation report on Regulation (EEC) No 2019/93 introducing specific measures for the smaller Aegean islands concerning certain agricultural products

Quality assessment

Preliminary note

The steering group would make two points further to the report :

- The consumption of flour and fruit and vegetables taken into account for the calculation of local needs (point 3.1 of the report) appears too low. In the case of flour, the consultant looked only at consumption as bread, although flour is used in the production of many other everyday items. In the case of fruit and vegetables, the figures used were reduced by the difficulties of supply which exist.
- The following specific features of the way in which aid for local production is applied do not appear in the report:
 - In 1995 the accepted density of olive trees rose from 50 to 80 trees per ha. (table 4.1.10 of the report).
 - Aid for the private storage of cheese may be spread over two consecutive years (table 4.1.14 of the report) and relates to the island of Limnos in the department of Lesvos (Annex B.2).
 - Aid for bee-keeping was limited to 100 000 hives in 1993-94 and then to 50 000 hives from 1995 (Annex B7).

Quality assessment

(1) Does the report answer the questions?

The report replies to the questions on evaluation set out in point V of the call for tenders and the consultant has taken account, as far as possible, of the comments made by the steering group.

Initially, the lack of available data was a major problem but the consultant succeeded in using alternative methods to obtain certain information so that he could give thorough answers to the questions asked. That effort was particularly appreciated by the steering group.

This situation meant that the time required grew from four months to nine.

(2) Was the scope appropriate?

It was found that the scope defined in the specification was too narrow for a sound assessment of the impact on socio-economic development of the measures studied, particularly those specifically aimed at local production. The group took note that a study of structural measures (Objective 1) or others being applied and their interaction with the regulation would have been needed.

(3) Was the methodology appropriate?

The methodology had to be adjusted in the light of the data available, which considerably reduced options open to the consultant. Nevertheless, the alternatives used were satisfactory.

Use of the case study on aid to transport and surveys of known interlocutors in the case of aid to local production supplemented the monitoring data reconstituted on the basis of payments recorded by the paying agency and meant that, as far as possible, a method permitting reasoned conclusions could be devised.

The time available for the evaluation did not permit a study of the counterfactual situation.¹

(4) Were the data reliable?

This was the major problem of this evaluation. The lack of physical monitoring data by island and of a harmonised content irrespective of product which the consultant could use easily meant that he had to reconstruct this information himself.

To do so, he used the database on payments by the paying agency to reconstruct information and secure the indicators he needed. The calculation is, of course, open to challenge but the point of departure, the complete summary of inputs by the body subject to checks by the EAGGF, is sound.

This shortcoming considerably undermines the work as a whole, with the result that one of the main recommendations of the study is the establishment of a suitable monitoring system. If this is not done, no further evaluation in this field can be contemplated.

¹ The situation if there had been no programme.

(5) Is the analysis sound?

As far as possible, the main conclusions were supported by individual items of information (case studies) and qualitative information (surveys of local agricultural directorates). Several approaches to each question were adopted (e.g. for supply aid, the quantitative coverage of needs, correspondence with the actual costs of transport and a study of market prices) in an attempt to consolidate arguments based on information which it was difficult to check.

(6) Are the results credible?

Despite being based on unreliable quantitative data, the conclusions were as a whole logical and credible.

This is less true of the derogations from the structural measures, where the whole argument is based on another evaluation study (carried out as part of the structural measures) on which the group is unable to express an opinion.

(7) Are the conclusions impartial?

The conclusions were unbiased by personal positions and the source of all information and its limitations were clearly set out. They followed logically from the analysis undertaken.

(8) Are the recommendations useful?

The recommendations were constructive and reasonable. One of the strong points of this evaluation is precisely that it derives recommendations which can be very useful to decision-makers from a confused mass of information.

(9) Was the report clear?

The report was adequately clear and readable.

The steering group decided to accept the final evaluation report.

Summary grille for assessment of the evaluation work

In respect of this criterion, the report is:	Unacceptable	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1. Does the report answer the questions? Does the evaluation deal adequately with the requests for information made in the comments and does it comply with the specification?					X
2. Was the scope appropriate? Were the rationale of the programme, its implementation, its results and its impact studied completely, including its interaction with other policies and any unexpected consequences?			X		
3. Was the methodology appropriate? Was the design of the evaluation suitable and appropriate for providing the results required (within the limits of their validity) to answer the main questions of the evaluation?				X	
4. Were the data reliable? Were the primary and secondary data collected or selected appropriate? Were they sufficiently reliable in terms of the use expected to be made of them?			X		
5. Is the analysis sound? Does the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative information comply with the norms? Is it complete and appropriate for providing answers to the questions raised by evaluation ?			X		
6. Are the results credible? Do the results follow logically and are they justified by analysis of the data and interpretations based on carefully presented explanatory hypotheses?			X		
7. Are the conclusions impartial? Are the conclusions correct and unbiased by personal or partisan considerations?					X
8. Are the recommendations useful? Are the recommendations useful, applicable and sufficiently detailed to be applied in practice?				X	
9. Is the report clear? Does the report describe the background and the aim of the programme evaluated, its organisation and the results achieved in a way which makes the information provided easy to understand?			X		
Bearing in mind the specific constraints imposed on this evaluation by the background, the evaluation report is considered to be				X	

Decision by the steering group: To accept the final evaluation report