

# QUALITY ASSESSMENT FORM

**Title of the evaluation:**

**SYNTHESIS OF MID-TERM EVALUATIONS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES 2007-2013**  
**Contract number: 30-CE-0468564/00-75**

**DG/Unit: DG AGRI, Unit L4**

- Official(s) managing the evaluation: Annette Hurrelmann

**Evaluator/contractor:** Österreichisches Institut für Raumplanung ÖIR, in association with ÖAR Regionalberatung GmbH, Polish Academy of Science, ECORYS Nederland BV, University of Gloucestershire

**Assessment carried out by:**

- Steering group with the active participation of DG AGRI E.1, E.3, E.4, F.1, F.4, G.1, G.2, G.3, H.1, H.3, H.4, L.1, L.2, L.4; SG C.1; DG BUDG A.2; DG REGIO C.4; DG RTD A.3 and E.4; DG ENV B.1

**Date of the Quality Assessment:** November 2012

## **(1) RELEVANCE**

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

<b>SCORING</b>	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
			X		

Arguments for scoring:

The evaluation adequately covers the seven evaluation themes as defined in the terms of reference. The depth of coverage on each of the seven themes corresponds to their relevance and available information for analysis.

The synthesis provides an overview of the outputs, results and impacts achieved so far by the 2007-2013 RDPs as well as the effectiveness of the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF). It delivers conclusions and recommendations based on the findings from the evaluation themes.

## **(2) APPROPRIATE DESIGN**

*Is the design of the evaluation adequate for obtaining the results needed to answer the evaluation questions?*

<b>SCORING</b>	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
			X		

Arguments for scoring:

The approach of the evaluation was in line with the Terms of Reference.

The methodology developed for the synthesis of the MTEs was based on:

- an appropriate selection of information sources - mostly MTE reports, Annual Progress Reports, Rural Development Programmes, National Strategy Plans for Rural Development
- a useful combination of qualitative and quantitative analytical tools – mainly in the form of assessment grids used to collect the relevant information for the MTE reports and other source data, as well as a synthesis grid to bring these together for analysis.
- the triangulation/contextualisation of information from the source materials with other statistical sources and general information on the socio-economic context of programmes.

The combination of these approaches allowed the evaluation questions to be addressed adequately.

### **(3) RELIABLE DATA**

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

<b>SCORING</b>	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
			X		

Arguments for scoring:

**The evaluation relied on a range of data sources.**

**The contractor had access to data provided by the Commission services, in particular the Mid-Term Evaluation reports, RDPs as first approved and as after the Health Check/ERP modification, Annual Progress Reports and National Strategy Plans.**

**Analysis showed that information on financial data provided in the MTE reports was not presented in a way that allowed for an overall comparison as reports used different financial statuses to describe "RDP expenditure". Therefore it was decided – in agreement with the steering group – to base the financial analysis on standardised financial reporting tables provided by DG AGRI representing all payments effected by end-2009.**

**The reliability of all information and data used from the source report has been ascertained by the contractor to the extent possible, and where necessary the appropriate caveats are clearly stated in the evaluation report.**

**In line with the terms of reference, and in view of the limited time available for completing the synthesis, the contractor has not carried out additional data collection beyond making use of available data from the sources mentioned.**

### **(4) SOUND ANALYSIS**

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

<b>SCORING</b>	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
			X		

Arguments for scoring:

**The analysis was carried out in a systematic way, in line with the proposed methodology.**

**The limitations of each of the analytical approaches and tools employed as well as the limitations of the underlying data set are clearly presented and taken into account in the interpretation of the results.**

**The evaluators used triangulation and other techniques to validate, compare and combine the results of the different approaches, in order to produce an overall assessment of the outcome of the programmes and the effectiveness of the CMEF at the mid-term stage.**

## **(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 finding with respect to each of the topics within the evaluation themes are clearly formulated and follow logically from a rational interpretation/analysis of the source data.

As the MTE reports used as source data are often of variable quality and detail as regards their information on particular topics, this fact is necessarily also reflected in the synthesis of the findings and can be a limiting factor to the overall quality of the findings. The contractor has included the appropriate caveats in the text of the report where necessary.

## **(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 substantiated by the findings of the synthesis, which were drawn from sound analysis. Conclusions are provided at different levels: first as conclusions to each of the topics analysed within the seven evaluation themes, second as a synthesis of the conclusions provided in the MTE reports (responding to evaluation theme 6) and third as general overall conclusions of the contractor drawn from the synthesis exercise.

Given the constraints mentioned above, the conclusions are balanced and prudent.

## **(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 provided are impartial and in line with the findings and conclusions of the synthesis. They identify a number of policy issues which should be considered for the development of the Rural Development Policy as well as the future design of the monitoring and valuation framework.

To ease practical implementation of these recommendations, they could in some case have been formulated in a more concrete and specific way.

## **(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 well structured and clearly oriented on the demands formulated in the terms of reference. The depth of coverage of the seven evaluation themes differs, corresponding to their relevance and the availability of appropriate information for analysis.

Overall, the report is written in a sufficiently clear and understandable manner, however, the clarity of the text varies across the different chapters. The language used is sometimes not easily accessible, especially for a broader audience without particular knowledge of Rural Development Policy.

## **OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

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

- Does the evaluation fulfil the contractual conditions?  
→ Yes
- Are the findings and conclusions of the report reliable, and are there specific limitations to their validity and completeness?  
→ The findings and conclusions in the report are reliable, the limitations are mostly due to the varied quality of the MTE reports used as source material and are

clearly identified in the text.

- Is the information in the report potentially useful for designing intervention, setting priorities, allocating resources or improving interventions?  
→ The information constitutes a useful input for the establishment of the future Rural Development Policy and the development of the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the 2014-2020 period.

Overall, the quality of the report is assessed to be **Good**.