

QUALITY ASSESSMENT FORM

Title of the study:

E-GOVERNANCE STUDY AT EU / MEMBER STATE LEVEL FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

DG/Unit: DG AGRI, Unit G2

- Official managing the study: Petr Lapka

Evaluator/contractor: Deloitte Consulting.

Assessment carried out by:

- Steering group with participation from AGRI D1, Dir. E-F-G, J4, L1, L4, M1 and DG REGIO.

Date of the Quality Assessment: January-February 2012

(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 covers the scope defined in the Task Description. Moreover, the Contractor included the latest information on the progress of e-Governance in other policy area, such as e-Cohesion policy. He also provided an additional high-level assessment (by Member States IT experts) of the potential usefulness of an on-going IT project (under e-Cohesion policy) for Rural Development.

(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 applied was based on the DG Informatics "Method for Assessing ICT Implications of EU legislation". The starting point of the study was, in line with the task description, the adaptation of the e-Governance evaluation tool to the context of management of Rural Development Programmes.

The evaluation tool was composed of two parts: cost-benefit analysis and qualitative checklists. The tool was reviewed with the steering committee for the e-Governance study, Rural Development committee, as well as with Member State IT experts.

The design applied was therefore adapted to information needs. However, the difficulty to estimate the costs-benefits of e-Governance for next five years was pointed out by some Member States IT experts. The limitations of the tool were clearly explained to the Rural Development Committee, which was in charge of appointing the national and regional IT experts for the study.

(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:

The data collection was designed in a way to enable the Contractor to cross-check the quantitative and qualitative information and estimates provided by Member State IT experts.

The IT experts supplied comprehensive data on the current state of play of the e-Governance solutions for beneficiaries. The contractor also exploited secondary data from other sources, including studies on the reduction of administrative burden.

However, for some aspects, reliable data were not sufficiently available and/or very difficult to estimate by the experts. In particular, only a limited number of replies contained reliable data on the cost-benefit analysis for next five years. The main reasons were the involvement of different actors (Paying Agencies, Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies) as well as uncertainty about ICT strategy and investment plans for multiannual periods, especially under the new MFF. The lack of information for the cost-benefit calculation is clearly mentioned 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 Contractor analysed the qualitative and quantitative data provided by the IT experts in a valid manner. The limitations, especially for the analysis of quantitative findings, 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 solid basis for supporting the qualitative findings as well as for the assessment of the current state of play of already implemented e-Governance solutions. The reasoning is well explained, and the findings are well justified.

The consultant was very conscientious of the instances where the information basis was not robust enough, such as some quantitative findings and cost-benefit estimates made by the IT experts. He 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:

For each principle of e-Governance, the conclusions are established in a clearly understandable and detailed manner. They are substantiated by the findings, which are drawn from the analysis. The conclusions are unbiased, balanced and prudent. The reasoning between the findings and the conclusions are well explained.

(7) HELPFUL RECOMMENDATIONS

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, unbiased and impartial, based on the findings of the report. They are relevant for the discussions on the future of e-Governance for the management of Rural Development Programmes. The Contractor also listed the recommendations from the e-Cohesion policy study and other e-Governance relevant project.

However, a consolidated shortlist of main recommendations from all different studies/sources could have been provided.

(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, 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 Good

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

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

The contractual conditions are fulfilled.

- **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. The limitations of the cost-benefit were explained to the Rural Development Committee before the assessment carried out by national and regional experts and they are clearly mentioned in the report.

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

The findings of the study are relevant for the discussions on the e-Governance solutions for beneficiaries within the context of the Partnership Agreements, and in particular the chapters on the efficient implementation of ESI Funds and reduction of administrative burden for the beneficiaries.

