



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
AGRICULTURE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Directorate G. Economic analyses, forward studies, evaluation
G.4. Evaluation of measures applicable to agriculture

Brussels, 20 December 2002
Proqual1.doc

EVALUATION OF THE PROMOTION POLICY FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Quality judgement of the final report submitted by UBM Consulting in November 2002

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The quality judgement is made separately for the “ex-post” and the “ex-ante” part of this evaluation (points A and B) because the nature of these two parts is different. The standard judgement grid needed to be adapted to be used for the “ex-ante” part.

The judgement below is made on the methodology, not on the results, conclusions or recommendations reached by the contractor. It has to be pointed out that it is not the content that is judged here, but only the methods used for obtaining it.

A EX-POST EVALUATION

1. MEETING THE NEEDS: Does the evaluation adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference ?

One of the objectives of this study was to obtain an overview of the promotion carried out until now, which before the establishing of the new regulatory framework was governed by (11) product specific regulations (The information campaign on the regulations on the PDO, PGI and TSG is a specific case). The consultants made a considerable effort to put together and synthesise the voluminous and heterogeneous information, as concerns the analysis of the objectives at different levels and the extracting of the details contained in the numerous activity and evaluation reports. Furthermore they tried to enlarge and complete this information by interviews and use of statistical sources. In doing so they obtained an overview of promotion policy which is already an important achievement.

The evaluation questions have been understood, as the introductory paragraphs to the answers to each question show. The structuring (criteria, indicators) is carried out in a systematic way and also taken up in the analysis and the conclusions (see points below).

All evaluation questions have been answered and the core issues of this evaluation have been addressed. This does not exclude criticism at certain aspects of the answers as will be laid down below.

Global assessment : *good*

2. RELEVANT SCOPE: Is the rationale of the policy examined and its set of outputs, results and outcomes/impacts examined fully, including both intended and unexpected policy interactions and consequences ?

The objectives and the instruments of the promotion policy are well described and analysed. The specific nature of this policy organised via product specific legislation and individual campaigns has also been taken into account.

The evaluators made a considerable effort to collect information available about past campaigns (see point 4). The difficulties to identify impacts due to missing information are pointed out. In order to enlarge the basis for information the evaluation team considered not only the campaigns for the four products explicitly mentioned in the terms of reference (olive oil, quality beef, milk and linen) but also for other products (flowers and ornamental plants, citrus fruit, apples, and grape juice) and in this aspect went even beyond the requirements of the terms of reference.

However, more attention could have been given to unexpected impacts and interactions between products.

Global assessment : *good*

3. DEFENSIBLE DESIGN: Is the evaluation design appropriate and adequate to ensure that the full set of findings, along with methodological limitations, is made accessible for answering the main evaluation questions ?

The structuring work has been done thoroughly in taking into account the relationship between individual campaigns and the overall policy. The results of this work have also been taken up in the analysis and the conclusions.

There is also a valuable approach for collecting and synthesising information (see point 4) and a solid analysis.

However, the limits of the analysis methods used could have been pointed out better (see point 5) and the conclusions and findings could be presented in a more comprehensive and synthetic way in the answers to the individual questions.

Global assessment : *satisfactory*

4. RELIABLE DATA: To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate ? Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use ?

The study is mainly based on three sources of data and information:

- evaluation and activity reports on individual promotion campaigns
- interviews with competent persons involved in the carrying out of promotion measures (national authorities, professional organisations, publicity agencies).
- general statistical information on the markets of the products concerned

As the reports on the individual campaigns were very heterogeneous and in most cases insufficient in evaluation terms, (this constraint was already pointed out in the terms of reference) many information gaps had to be filled through interviews and general market information. The considerable efforts of the evaluation team in this respect, in particular as concerns the interviews, have to be recognised.

However, the research for statistical information on the market context could have been more exhaustive.

Global assessment : *good*

5. SOUND ANALYSIS: Is quantitative and qualitative information appropriately and systematically analysed according to the state of the art so that evaluation questions are answered in a valid way ?

The evaluation team tried to answer to the evaluation questions by combining information from the three sources mentioned above. Due to the lack of information in the evaluation reports the answers had to be based to a large extent on the results of the interviews (see point 6 on the problems in this). They applied an interesting approach to quantify and synthesise the qualitative information obtained in the interviews. This approach would have merited to be discussed more in detail, in particular as concerns its limitations.

The analysis on the basis of the statistical and market information could in some aspects have been developed further, in particular as concerns certain products and interactions between products.

Global assessment : *satisfactory*

6. CREDIBLE FINDINGS: Do findings follow logically from, and are they justified by, the data analysis and interpretations based on carefully described assumptions and rationale ?

The report contains a lot of interesting findings in particular on the different impacts of the campaigns on creation or enlargement of consumption possibilities, on consumers' attitudes and behaviour and on the relative effectiveness of the different instruments.

However, the problem that the findings are to a considerable extent based on results of interviews with persons involved in the carrying out of promotion campaigns

should have been pointed out and discussed more. Even if due to the lack of other data there was no alternative way to obtain information, the possibility exists that the involved persons have a too positive view on the effectiveness of promotion measures since they might have an interest in the continuation of publicly funded promotion.

Findings on market impacts could have been more developed.

Global assessment : *satisfactory*

7. VALIDITY OF THE CONCLUSIONS: Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results ?

The *overall* conclusions are presented in a differentiated way, as it is necessary in the case of a rather complex policy with various instruments. The limits of their validity are pointed out.

As the conclusions are illustrated with examples and in particular as cases of “good practices “ are highlighted, they reveal interesting details.

In the answers to the *individual questions*, however, the conclusions are not presented and pointed out clearly enough (see point 10).

Global assessment : *satisfactory*

8. USEFULNESS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS: Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable ?

This criterion is not applicable for the “ex-post” part, since all the recommendations were included in the “ex-ante” part of the report.

9. CLEAR REPORT: Does the report clearly describe the policy evaluated, including its context and purpose, together with the procedures and findings of the evaluation, so that information provided can easily be understood ?

The answers to the individual questions are not presented in a very clear way and in particular the core aspects of the answers (findings and conclusions) are not pointed out sufficiently. It has to be noted that for most of the questions a lot of detailed information on individual campaigns had to be put together. It would have been useful to put more details in the annexes and to present the answers in a more synthetic way, highlighting the most important examples.

The presentation of the “Résumé” and the overall conclusions and recommendations is, however, considerably better.

The texts are sometimes difficult to understand because the way of drafting is not always clear and sometimes unusual expressions are used.

The structure of the report is not clear enough. There are too many sub points in the table of contents.

Global assessment : *poor*

10. ASSESSMENT OF THE “EX-POST” PART OF THE REPORT AS A WHOLE

In recognising the considerable effort of collecting and synthesising data and the fact that on basis of poor data availability interesting findings could be presented the overall judgement on the “ex-post” part is “*satisfactory*”.

EVALUATION OF THE PROMOTION POLICY FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS – EX POST PART

Concerning these criteria, the evaluation report is :	Unac-ceptable	Poor	Satisfac-tory	Good	Excel-lent
1. Meeting the needs: Does the evaluation adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?				X	
2. Relevant scope: Is the rationale of the policy examined and its set of outputs, results and outcomes/impacts examined fully, including both intended and unexpected policy interactions and consequences?				X	
3. Defensible design: Is the evaluation design appropriate and adequate to ensure that the full set of findings, along with methodological limitations, is made accessible for answering the main evaluation questions?			X		
4. Reliable data: To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate. Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use?				X	
5. Sound analysis: Is quantitative and qualitative information appropriately and systematically analysed according to the state of the art so that evaluation questions are answered in a valid way?			X		
6. Credible findings: Do findings follow logically from, and are they justified by, the data analysis and interpretations based on carefully described assumptions and rationale?			X		
7. Validity of the conclusions: Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results?			X		
8. Usefulness of the recommendations: Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or shareholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?					
9. Clearly reported: Does the report clearly describe the policy being evaluated, including its context and purpose, together with the procedures and findings of the evaluation, so that information provided can easily be understood?		X			
Taking into account the contextual constraints on the evaluation, the overall quality rating of the “ex-post” part of the report is considered			X		

B EX-ANTE EVALUATION

1. MEETING THE NEEDS: Does the evaluation adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference ?

It has to be noted that the ex-ante part of the task was more complex and less clearly defined than the ex-post part. The main task consisted in answering the evaluation questions also in a prospective sense and in estimating possible future impacts of promotion measures. Furthermore methodological possibilities to isolate the impact of Community measures on the consumption of the products concerned were to be examined and a better system of monitoring and evaluation of the individual campaigns and the policy as a whole was to be proposed.

Except for the issue of isolating the impact of Community promotion on consumption these issues are addressed in the report. This does not exclude criticism on the way these issues have been treated, as will be laid down below. In particular the advice given for future campaigns is not founded enough in order to permit improvement of future evaluations of promotion measures.

Global assessment : *poor*

2. RELEVANT SCOPE: Is the rationale of the policy examined and its set of outputs, results and outcomes/impacts examined fully, including both intended and unexpected policy interactions and consequences ?

The objectives and the instruments of the new promotion policy are well described and analysed. The differences to the former system are pointed out (a more horizontal and thematic approach). However there could have been a more critical regard of the new system and eventual problems or inconsistencies could have been pointed out (e.g. too many products competing on limited funds). Also more attention should have been given to unexpected impacts and interactions between products.

Generally speaking for the ex-ante aspect the view should have been broader. Also other promotion systems (those of the Member States but also of competitors, notably the US) should have been taken into consideration.

Global assessment : *satisfactory*

3. DEFENSIBLE DESIGN: Is the evaluation design appropriate and adequate to ensure that the full set of findings, along with methodological limitations, is made accessible for answering the main evaluation questions ?

Also for the ex-ante part the structuring work has been done thoroughly in taking into account the new regulatory framework for promotion. Efforts have been made to learn from past experience and to provide practical recommendations for future campaigns.

However, the analysis does not go further than the one made in the ex-post part and therefore there is no solid basis for the conclusions and recommendations made. Additional information sources could have been identified and utilised (see next point).

Global assessment : *satisfactory*

4. RELIABLE DATA: To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate ? Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use ?

For an ex-ante evaluation data collection has a different meaning because it consists more in a reflection about which data will be needed for future evaluations.

A particular point of criticism is that the aspect of market and marketing information needed for the evaluation of future campaigns is only very little developed.

Furthermore, as mentioned above it is regrettable that the evaluation team did very few efforts to enlarge the data basis obtained for the ex-post part. It would have been important to include at least qualitative (and if possible quantitative) information based on the promotion experience of Member States and third countries.

Global assessment : *poor*

5. SOUND ANALYSIS: Is quantitative and qualitative information appropriately and systematically analysed according to the state of the art so that evaluation questions are answered in a valid way ?

The analysis made in the ex-ante part does not go very much beyond the taking up of the results of the ex-post part with some evidence obtained through the interviews with competent persons involved. Therefore it is too limited in order to provide insights on the anticipation of future impacts.

In this aspect more efforts would have been necessary, in particular as concerns the possibilities to isolate the impacts of Community promotion in the general market context and in taking account of the presence of other generic and private promotion measures. In this context experience obtained in the Member States and third countries (in particular the USA) should have been used.

The advice provided for the evaluation of future campaigns is therefore too general and not sufficiently founded in order to permit a real improvement.

Global assessment : *poor*

6. CREDIBLE FINDINGS: Do findings follow logically from, and are they justified by, the data analysis and interpretations based on carefully described assumptions and rationale ?

As (due to the limitations of the analysis) the findings are mainly presented in the form of conclusions this criterion is not treated here.

7. VALIDITY OF THE CONCLUSIONS: Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results ?

There are some conclusions on the duration of campaigns, minimum budgets, co-financing rates etc. However, these conclusions do not go very deep. It seems that they are essentially based on a repetition of the results of the ex-post evaluation and on common sense. There the lacks in the analysis become evident.

Global assessment : *poor*

8. USEFULNESS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS: Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable ?

Indeed the report contains a lot of practical recommendations for future campaigns, e.g. on their duration, on the choice of products and countries. It also contains proposals for files to be used for the selection and evaluation of campaigns.

However all these proposals, even if they are presented in operational form, provide few possibilities for a real improvement of evaluation of future campaigns. For instance on the issue of isolating impacts on consumption the only recommendation consists in constituting comparison groups.

Global assessment : Even if the proposals made are not directly applicable in practice, in recognising the efforts made to present an operational system for monitoring and evaluation of campaigns: *satisfactory*.

9. CLEAR REPORT: Does the report clearly describe the policy evaluated, including its context and purpose, together with the procedures and findings of the evaluation, so that information provided can easily be understood ?

Also the ex-ante part of the report is not well structured so that the information is difficult to identify. The criticism on the drafting of the texts applies also here.

Global assessment : *poor*

10. ASSESSMENT OF THE “EX-ANTE” PART OF THE REPORT AS A WHOLE

In the ex-ante part the ambitions of the evaluation team did not go far enough. There they essentially used the results of the ex-post part but did not consult literature or use the experience of other generic promotion. Consequently the usefulness of conclusions and recommendations is limited.

Therefore the overall judgement of the ex-ante part is evaluation report is : *poor*.

EVALUATION OF THE PROMOTION POLICY FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS – EX ANTE PART

Concerning these criteria, the evaluation report is :	Unac-ceptable	Poor	Satisfac-tory	Good	Excel-lent
1. Meeting the needs: Does the evaluation adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?		X			
2. Relevant scope: Is the rationale of the policy examined and its set of outputs, results and outcomes/impacts examined fully, including both intended and unexpected policy interactions and consequences?			X		
3. Defensible design: Is the evaluation design appropriate and adequate to ensure that the full set of findings, along with methodological limitations, is made accessible for answering the main evaluation questions?			X		
4. Reliable data: To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate. Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use?		X			
5. Sound analysis: Is quantitative and qualitative information appropriately and systematically analysed according to the state of the art so that evaluation questions are answered in a valid way?		X			
6. Credible findings: Do findings follow logically from, and are they justified by, the data analysis and interpretations based on carefully described assumptions and rationale?					
7. Validity of the conclusions: Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results?		X			
8. Usefulness of the recommendations: Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or shareholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?			X		
9. Clearly reported: Does the report clearly describe the policy being evaluated, including its context and purpose, together with the procedures and findings of the evaluation, so that information provided can easily be understood?		X			
Taking into account the contextual constraints on the evaluation, the overall quality rating of the “ex-ante” part of the report is considered		X			

