



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
Directorate G. Horizontal aspects of rural development  
**G.1. Consistency of rural development**

Brussels,  
PW/ G1 D(2008)

**EVALUATION OF THE STUDY  
"REVIEW OF RURAL DEVELOPMENTS INSTRUMENTS "**

**Subject: Quality assessment of the study  
"Review of Rural Developments Instruments"  
Agri-2006-G4-10**

**1. GLOBAL REMARK**

The following text and grid provides a global assessment of the above-mentioned evaluation. The assessment has been prepared at the end of the evaluation process.

The judgement is made on the methodological approach followed to answer the evaluation questions, but also to some extent on the created databases, results, conclusions or recommendations reached by the contractor.

**1. Meeting the needs: Does the study adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?**

Overall the evaluation report addresses well the requirements of the terms of reference.

The study is well structured and provides a detailed analysis of rural development instruments based on identification of characteristics and needs of rural areas in the EU-27. The novelty of the study is the presentation of a comparison of expenditures by Member States and measures for the two programming period 2000-06 and 2007-13. The data-base constructed for that purpose could also be used for other studies related to the implementation of the EU's rural development programs. However, this data-base is not fully complete due to the fact that the project analysis was conducted before all RDPs 2007-13 were approved.

Furthermore, the study used a significant number of case-studies in order to assess intervention rationales and instruments against the EU priorities on rural development as outlined in the Community Strategic Guidelines on rural development. On that basis the study also tried to assess to which extent the implementation mechanisms for rural development policies should be adapted to deliver the expected results in a more effective and efficient way. Due to the multitude of rural development measures and the vast differences between the EU's rural regions the answers given with the individual case-studies is often anecdotal and needs to be interpreted with caution.

Final assessment: Satisfactory

**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 context and purpose of the study are clearly described. The rationale of the policy is correctly interpreted and the cost-effectiveness of the policy with respect to outputs are well examined. For the assessment of cost-effectiveness on the basis of results and impacts of rural development policies a lack of quantitative data has been discovered. This lack is partly due to the fact that the new programs for the funding period 2007-13 are still in an early stage.

Final assessment: Satisfactory

**3. Defensible design: Is the study design appropriate and adequate to ensure that the full set of findings, along with methodological limitations, is made accessible for addressing the tasks?**

Overall, the study design allowed the evaluators to gear the different tasks to a good extent. Numerous case-studies and a literature were conducted based on which a meaningful assessment was possible. However, limitation related to the database has in some cases created certain analytical limitations.

Final assessment: Good

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

Given the many different types of RD measures and the many regions in which the EU's RD programs have been implemented vast amounts of data have been collected. The data related to characteristics of rural areas and expenditures by RD measures has been of good quality. In contrast the collection of information related to needs of rural areas proved also conceptually more difficult. Further difficulties encountered related to the fact that for some groups of measures the availability of adequate data was much weaker than for others.

Final assessment: Satisfactory

**5. Sound analysis: Is quantitative and qualitative information appropriately and systematically analysed according to the state of the art so that the study tasks are addressed in a valid way?**

The analysis is considered good given the time-frame and availability of data. In general the study focused on qualitative methods and quantitative approaches were used only modestly. Particularly the case-studies often are based on anecdotal evidence and specific findings from case-studies could not be tested in a wider cross-sectional sample due to a lack of resources and time. The assessment of the EU's rural development policy instruments therefore remains rather general.

Final 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?**

Findings do generally follow logically from the analysis and their justification is stemming from the case-studies, literature review and the experience of the contractor. Justifications for the findings are given in a convincing way.

Final assessment: Good

**7. Validity of the conclusions: Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results? Are they unbiased?**

The conclusions provided in the report are clear and are based not only on the data-sets analysed, case-studies and experience. They address the whole range of implementing the EU's rural development policy. The conclusions provide arguments related to general provisions enshrined in the legal provision for the entire policy area as well as arguments related to the implementation of the policy area in the regional and/or national programs. The and provide clear linkage with the analytical sections.

Final assessment: Satisfactory

**8. Usefulness of the recommendations: Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?**

The recommendations do stem from the analysis and the conclusions. A good proportion of expert judgment is included, which however results in good and useful recommendations.

Final assessment: good

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

The report is mainly descriptive and the case-studies are somewhat lengthy, in particular the descriptive part, sufficiently describes the context and purpose of the policy. However, the outcomes of the evaluation part could have been presented in a more reader friendly way. As mentioned above, in some cases the presentation of the EU policy instruments makes it difficult to link certain conclusions with their respective analytical basis. However, the draft final report – excluding the Annexes – is a rather clear document. In particular chapter six and the executive summary provide an excellent synthesis of the overall findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Final assessment: Good

**The overall assessment of the evaluation:** Satisfactory

Peter WEHRHEIM

Technical manager

<b>Concerning these criteria, the evaluation report is:</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Poor<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>1. Meeting the needs:</b> Does the evaluation adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?			<b>X</b>		
<b>2. Relevant scope:</b> 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?			<b>X</b>		
<b>3. Defensible design:</b> 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?				<b>X</b>	
<b>4. Reliable data:</b> To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate? Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use?			<b>X</b>		
<b>5. Sound analysis:</b> 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?			<b>X</b>		
<b>6. Credible findings:</b> Do findings follow logically from, and are they justified by, the data analysis and interpretations based on carefully described assumptions and rationale?				<b>X</b>	
<b>7. Validity of the conclusions:</b> Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results?			<b>X</b>		
<b>8. Usefulness of the recommendations:</b> Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?				<b>X</b>	
<b>9. Clearly reported:</b> 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?				<b>X</b>	
<b>The overall quality rating of the report is considered</b>			<b>X</b>		

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<sup>1</sup> The foundation "Poor" should be considered as weak as the contractual obligations are considered to be fulfilled.