

## Quality Assessment for Final Report

**DG AGRI/Unit D.1 ‘Rural Areas & Networks’**

**Assessment carried out by (\*):**

Steering group  [X]

Evaluation Function  [ ]

Other (please specify)  [ ]

(\*) Multiple crosses possible

**Date of assessment**      **03 May 2024**

Objective of the assessment	Aspects to be assessed	Fulfilled? Y, N, N/A	Comments
1. Scope of evaluation	<p>Confirm with the Terms of Reference and the work plan that the contractor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Has addressed the study issues and specific questions</li> <li>b. Has undertaken the tasks described in the work plan</li> <li>c. Has covered the requested scope for time period, geographical areas, target groups, aspects of the intervention, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Y Y Y</p>	<p>Covered the scope and even proposed an upgraded way to consider different categories of national approaches and a new way to distinguish between CAP measures that go beyond farming, or address farming only, or are “joint”, which brought additional insights.</p>
2. Overall contents	Check that the report includes:		

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of report	<p>a. Executive Summary according to an agreed format, in the three required languages (minimum EN and FR)</p> <p>b. Main report with required components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Title and Content Page</li> <li>▪ A description of the policy being evaluated, its context, the purpose of the evaluation, contextual limitations, methodology, etc.</li> <li>▪ Findings, conclusions, and judgments for all evaluation issues and specific questions</li> <li>▪ The required outputs and deliverables</li> <li>▪ Recommendations as appropriate</li> </ul> <p>c. All required annexes</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>	<p>The report answers the evaluation study question within the limits of available data and includes all the elements required in the specifications.</p>
3. Data collection	Check that data is accurate and complete		
	<p>a. Data is accurate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data is free from factual and logical errors.</li> <li>▪ The report is consistent, i.e. no contradictions.</li> <li>▪ Calculations are correct.</li> </ul>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Data has been sourced from the best sources available at the time of conducting the data collection. The contract team has combined several sources to provide the most accurate data at various geographical levels, working at NUTS3 level being particularly challenging. There has been a</p>

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			comprehensive discussion on which data sources to choose. The data sources used have however limitations, which the contractor explained thoroughly in the successive deliverables and in the final report.
	b. Data is complete	Y	Same as above. There has been extensive discussions on the data collected given their complexity and the lack of data at what would have been the most adapted level of granularity (LAU) and the contract team has made important efforts to achieve the best possible result and take into account the comments from the steering group.
4. Analysis and judgments		Check that analysis is sound and relevant	
	a. Analytical framework is sound	Y	The analytical choices made are clearly explained, in the different places where clarifications are needed. The contractor used a mix of methods
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The methodology used for each area of analysis is clearly explained, and has been applied consistently and as planned.</li> <li>▪ Judgements are based on transparent criteria.</li> <li>▪ The analysis relies on two or more independent lines of evidence.</li> <li>▪ Inputs from different stakeholders are used in a balanced way.</li> <li>▪ Findings are reliable enough to be replicable.</li> </ul>		

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			(data analysis, case studies, literature review) to answer the study questions.
	b. Conclusions are sound	Y	<p>Conclusions are balanced and related to evidence in the report. They are cautiously phrased to take into account the heterogeneity of situations encountered in different countries and the data limitations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conclusions are properly addressing the evaluation questions and are coherently and logically substantiated.</li> <li>▪ There are no relevant conclusions missing according to the evidence presented.</li> <li>▪ Findings corroborate existing knowledge; differences or contradictions with existing knowledge are explained.</li> <li>▪ Critical issues are presented in a fair and balanced manner.</li> <li>▪ Limitations on validity of the conclusions are pointed out.</li> </ul>
5. Usefulness of recommendations	a. Recommendations are useful	Y	<p>Recommendations can be linked to observations from the analytical part. The contractor outlines approaches that would increase effectiveness, relevance and coherence and various levels at which improvements are needed. They elaborate on improvements to make in the EU framework and on the interplay with national approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recommendations flow logically from the conclusions, are practical, realistic, and addressed to the relevant Commission Service(s) or other stakeholders</li> </ul>

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	b. Recommendations are complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Recommendations cover all relevant main conclusions</li></ul>	Y	Recommendations do refer to the conclusions.
6. Clarity of the report	a. Report is easy to read <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Written style and presentation are adapted for the various relevant target readers.</li><li>▪ The quality of language is sufficient for publishing.</li><li>▪ Specific terminology is clearly defined.</li><li>▪ Tables, graphs, and similar presentation tools are used to facilitate understanding; they are well commented with narrative text.</li></ul>	Y	The report reads well and is well illustrated by numerous maps and graphs which add a lot of value (e.g., clustering of rural and intermediate regions in relation to LTVRA action areas).
	b. Report is logical and focused <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The structure of the report is logical and consistent, information is not unjustifiably duplicated, and it is easy to get an overview of the report and its key results.</li><li>▪ The report provides a proper focus on main issues and key messages are summarised and highlighted.</li><li>▪ The length of the report (excluded appendices) is proportionate (good balance of descriptive and analytical information)</li><li>▪ Detailed information and technical analysis are left for the appendix; thus, information overload is avoided in the main report</li></ul>	Y	The report is well structured, and the contractor has made good efforts to remove duplications. The report is longer than initially foreseen, but this is mainly due to our will to retain a high number of illustrations that consume space.

<b>Overall conclusion</b>		
The report could be approved in its current state, as it overall complies with the contractual conditions and relevant professional evaluation standards	Y	The report is well-elaborated, with a lot of new evidence and analysis that will add value to the next steps of reflection on EU policies for rural areas. The contractor went even beyond expectations on a

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	<p>number of aspects, despite the fact the tasks given were quite challenging in the time allocated and considering limitations on data availability and reliability for the different funds, measures, sub-measures and geographical levels. They have made these limitations explicit, preventing wrong interpretations.</p>
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