

QUALITY ASSESSMENT FORM

Title of the evaluation:

EX-POST EVALUATION OF LEADER+

DG/Unit: DG AGRI, Unit L4

- Official(s) managing the evaluation: Zélie Peppiette

Evaluator/contractor: Metis GmbH with AEIDL and CEU as subcontractors

Assessment carried out by:

- Steering group with the active participation of units E1, E3, F2, F3, G1, G3, H1, H3, L1, L4 of DG AGRI and the units A3 of DG MARE, C3 of DG REGIO, E4 of DG RTD, and D1 of DG SANCO.

Date of the Quality Assessment: April 2011

(1) RELEVANCE

Does the evaluation 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 evaluation adequately covers the themes and evaluation questions as defined in the terms of reference.

The geographical scope and time scope for the evaluation related to the LEADER+ programmes have been fully covered. The synthesis provides a good overview of the utilisation of resources and the effectiveness and efficiency of the assistance and its impact in relation to eight themes. The evaluation delivers both the conclusions and recommendations per theme.

(2) APPROPRIATE DESIGN

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

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
SCORING			X		

Arguments for scoring:

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

The methodology developed for the evaluation of the LEADER+ programmes combined different analytical approaches:

- a) A desk study was performed to compile an inventory of the LEADER+ programmes, gathering information from the following data sources: the Annual Implementation Reports and available Closure Reports.
- b) The Questions-Criteria-Indicator Matrix identified appropriate judgement criteria and indicators for each evaluation question. It was used to establish which indicators were adequately covered by existing documents, and which required further research (inclusion in case studies, surveys, further desk research).
- c) The methods used for the data analysis from the Local Action Groups questionnaires, Managing Authorities questionnaires, and the National Network Unit interviews were as follows: creation of a database of descriptive statistics, cross tabulations, and triangulation.
- d) An in-depth analysis of the effects of LEADER+, in particular its overall impact, was conducted drawing on the information collected within the case studies.

The combination of these methodological approaches allowed all the evaluation questions to be addressed adequately in a credible way.

(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 evaluation relied on a range of data sources. The contractor had access to data provided by the Commission services (in particular annual implementation reports and closure reports).

The monitoring data used to compile the inventory of LEADER+ programmes proved to be incomplete and to contain inconsistencies. It was therefore decided that the inventory could not be used as a reliable and robust basis for further analysis.

The quantitative data were completed by quantitative and qualitative information collected during case studies (DE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HU, IT, LU, PL, and UK), which represent the most reliable source of information on the impacts of LEADER+ in selected areas.

(4) SOUND ANALYSIS

Are data systematically analysed to answer evaluation 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 systematic way, in line with the established methodology. The limitations of each of the analytical approaches and tools are clearly presented and 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 findings of the evaluation are clearly formulated and are supported by the evidence provided through the analysis. However, some caution should be used in extrapolating from some of the findings to more concrete widely applicable conclusions, since due to the problems in obtaining comprehensive data for the inventory, much of the data used in the analysis was obtained from a relatively small number of case studies.

(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 evaluation findings, which were drawn from sound analysis. They address all evaluation questions. Given the data constraints, they 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 are impartial and based on the evaluation findings, although they remain rather general (this was difficult to avoid given the data constraints). However, they identify a number of policy issues which are relevant for the development of future Leader policy.

(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 executive summary is well structured and balanced. The written style and the presentation are clear and adapted to different target readers.

The full text of the evaluation report is logically structured, but rather less accessible to a broader audience without particular technical knowledge.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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

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

- Does the evaluation fulfil contractual conditions?

Clearly and fully.

- 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 are identified.

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

The evaluation has been completed at a most appropriate time when the work on developing the post-2013 CAP policy framework is underway. The results of the evaluation are well structured and presented in view of being taken into account in this process. In this context the evaluation is useful and relevant.