



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
AGRICULTURE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Directorate G. Economic analyses and evaluation  
**G.4. Evaluation of measures applicable to agriculture**

Brussels,

**EX-POST EVALUATION 1994-1999 OF THE MEASURES UNDER  
REGULATION 951/97**

**Subject: Quality grid based on the Final Report submitted by Agra CEAS, 9 July  
2003**

**PRELIMINARY REMARK**

The following text and grid provides a global assessment of the above-mentioned evaluation study. The Commission steering group in charge prepared it at the end of the evaluation process.

If the report is to be published on the Internet, the present grid, with the comments of the steering group, will complement the final report.

The judgement is made on the methodological approach followed to answer the evaluation questions, not on the results, conclusions or recommendations reached by the contractor. It has to be pointed out that it is not the opinion of the evaluators nor the content of their conclusions that are judged here, but only the methods used for obtaining them.

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

The evaluation does not fully address the requirements set out in the terms of reference. It was much limited by the absence of national ex-post evaluations in several Member States and limited comparability of the other reports. The data collection efforts by the evaluators did not fully make up for these gaps. Some attempts at developing *typologies of rural zones* as explanatory variables were undertaken by the evaluator but could not be brought to a conclusive result. They also suffered from a lack of regionalised data in the national evaluation reports. This means that potentially important territorial aspects of the effects of Reg. 951/97 could not properly be measured. The evaluation questions as set out in the terms of reference have been answered, the issues of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, utility and sustainability have been addressed, even if only partially with satisfying results. On the whole, the evaluator delivered what had been promised in the original tender.

Global 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 evaluation has reviewed the programme strategy and rationale in its historical and market context to a satisfactory extent. However, the presentation of outputs is insufficient, partly due to a lack of harmonised up-to-date data at European level. Regarding the results and expected impacts of the measures the analysis is of satisfactory quality.

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?**

The methodological limitations are emphasised and sometimes over-emphasised in the report. Efforts to overcome those limitations were not satisfactory, especially in the case of the UK where no national ex-post evaluation report existed. More effort should have been invested in trying to transform findings and judgements from the national-level evaluations into robust statements for the European level synthesis. The evaluation design would have benefited from a more iterative co-operation between the core team and the national subcontractors.

Global assessment: poor

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

Limited availability of data was a main problem for this evaluation, and the contractor must take some responsibility for it, as the extent to which primary data for filling the gaps were sought was not sufficient. The evaluator himself suspects a certain degree of bias in the national evaluation reports and findings are presented with caution. The selection and concrete use of data sources by the evaluator and his subcontractors are not always completely clear (cf. incomplete lists of interviewees).

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 has been carried out in a sufficiently systematic manner. Guidelines for the validation of secondary data by the national sub-contractors and for interviews were drawn up. Not all evaluation questions could be answered in a meaningful way. The evaluators addressed the issue of cause-effect including problems of deadweight in a satisfactory manner. The question of displacement effects should have been discussed more fully regarding their potential impact on the cohesion objective of structural funds. Keeping in mind the methodological and data limitations, the answers provided are valid.

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 findings do follow logically from the analysis. Methodological limitations and limited data robustness are always taken into account in the formulation of judgements and recommendations.

Global assessment: satisfactory

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

The presentation of conclusions is somewhat blurred by constant references to the different degrees of evidence in different MS. Within these limits of data availability and evaluation methodology the conclusions are credible.

Global 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 are sufficiently detailed and useful. However, they would have been more convincing with a stronger evidence base, the lack of which means that the evaluator's preconceptions of Reg. 951/97 are not always fully counterbalanced.

Global assessment: 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?**

The report is written in a clear language, the optical presentation of main findings and recommendations in boxes is helpful. Generally, conclusions and recommendations are sufficiently understandable. Global assessment: Satisfactory

**10. ASSESSMENT OF THE REPORT AS A WHOLE**

Taking into consideration all the aspects discussed above, the overall judgement of this evaluation report is: **Satisfactory**

<b>Concerning these criteria, the evaluation report is:</b>	<b>Unaccep- table</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Satisfac- tory</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excel- lent</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>Taking into account the contextual constraints on the evaluation, the overall quality rating of the report is considered</b>			<b>X</b>		