

QUALITY ASSESSMENT FORM

Title of the study:

Use and efficiency of public support measures addressing organic farming

DG/Unit: DG AGRI, Unit H.3

- Official managing the study: Matthias Loesch

Evaluator/contractor: vTI (Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institut) – Institute of Farm Economics

Assessment carried out by:

- Steering group with the active participation of units E3, E4, F4, G1, G2, G3, H1, H3, H4, J.4, L1, L2, L3, L4 of DG AGRI

Date of the Quality Assessment: March 2012

(1) RELEVANCE

Does the study respond to information needs, in particular as expressed in the terms of references?

SCORING	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
				X	

Arguments for scoring:

The study adequately responds to the information needs of the commissioning body and fully meets the requirements of the terms of reference. The items of the descriptive part and the study questions are fully addressed and the geographical and time scopes of the study are covered. Even more case studies than required in the tender specifications were undertaken for answering the study questions.

(2) APPROPRIATE DESIGN

Is the study design adequate for obtaining the results needed for responding to the information needs?

SCORING	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
				X	

Arguments for scoring:

The study consists of two parts, a descriptive part containing an inventory of all forms of support for organic farming in the Member States of EU 27, and an analysis part which provides answers to the four study questions for six selected Member States, with case studies in nine regions.

The descriptive part provides a concise and complete overview of all support measures for organic farming, co-financed under Rural Development programmes, financed by the EU under the first pillar of the CAP, and national and regional measures. The overview is clear, well structured and also takes into account the existence of national and regional action plans for organic farming. Finally a typology of support policies is developed.

In the analytical part the design is appropriate for addressing each of the study questions which require different methodological approaches. The combination of different quantitative and qualitative approaches enabled each question to be answered in a clear and useful way.

(3) RELIABLE DATA

Are data collected adequate for their intended use and have their reliability been ascertained?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
SCORING				X	

Arguments for scoring:

The consultants used different data from the Commission, national and regional administrations and their network of national experts. These were combined in an intelligent way and cross checked as far as possible. Attempts were made to reduce gaps to the maximum extent possible but it must be recognised that it was very difficult to in cases of horizontal support schemes, notably in Rural Development programmes, to identify the share of support given to organic farming.

(4) SOUND ANALYSIS

Are data systematically analysed to answer questions and cover other information needs in a valid manner?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
SCORING				X	

Arguments for scoring:

The analysis undertaken to answer the four study questions is very developed and consists of an intelligent combination of various quantitative and qualitative methods. The methods are well adapted to the different nature of the questions.

(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?

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
SCORING				X	

Arguments for scoring:

The findings are well laid out and reflect the results of the analysis and of the collection of data undertaken for the descriptive part of the study.

(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 clear, well based on the results of the analysis and put together in an intelligent way on basis of all the relevant elements.

(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:

Even if not asked for in the terms of reference, the consultants put forward recommendations on what could be done at EU level to achieve a better framework for support of organic farming at the level of Member States and regions. These proposals are quite ambitious, but still realistic and logically derived from the conclusions.

(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 report is drafted in a very clear way and well structured so that relevant parts can be identified easily. The mass of data and information used is synthesised in a very intelligent way in order to provide a global overview.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL STUDY REPORT

Overall, the quality of the report is assessed to be **very good**

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

- **Does the study 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.

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

The findings and conclusions of the study are useful for developing the EU policy on organic farming, notably for the update of the European Action Plan, and for the design of Rural Development strategies in the context of the current discussion of the reform of the CAP after 2013.