



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate D. Sustainability and income support
D.4. Environment, climate change, forestry and bio-economy

Brussels,
AGRI.DDG2.D.4/AGT

Subject: STUDY ON "PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE EU FOREST STRATEGY"

Evaluation Sheet

Concerning these criteria, the study report is:	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1. Relevance: Does the study respond to information needs, in particular as expressed in the terms of references?		X			
2. Appropriate design: Is the design of the study adequate for obtaining the results needed to answer the study questions?		X			
3. Reliable data: Are data collected adequate for their intended use and have their reliability been ascertained?		X			
4. Sound analysis: Are data systematically analysed to answer study questions and cover other information needs in a valid manner?		X			
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?		X			
6. Valid conclusions: Are conclusions non-biased and fully based on findings?		X			
7. Clarity: Is the report well structured, balanced and written in an understandable manner?		X			
Taking into account the contextual constraints of the study, the overall quality rating of the report is:		X			

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE EVALUATION

1. Relevance: The study report sufficiently deals with the objectives and needs as defined in the terms of reference. It provided DG AGRI with some relevant information to write the *Commission Report on the Progress in the implementation of the EU Forest Strategy*, in particular an overall assessment of progress implementing the Strategy's multiannual implementation plan (MAP), and of the perceptions of different stakeholders concerning it.

2. Appropriate design: The steering group insisted in different phases of the study on the need to define and present an analytical framework how the evidence would be gathered and analysed. After significant efforts, the contractor finally succeeded to provide a reasonable study method coherent with the study needs. The method is described in the report, though often too concisely. The contractor built mostly on the expertise within their institution on topics related to the strategy to carry out a literature review and subsequent document analysis, and relied much on questionnaires and interviews for compiling additional information.

3. Reliable data: The data gathered seem sufficient for the main purpose of the study, i.e. to assess progress implementing the Strategy building on the actions defined in the MAP. Data collection was uneven in terms of quantity and quality, depending on the specific study themes, and the quality of data was finally robust as a result of checks by different Commission services within the steering group. Certain uncertainties and gaps of information remain, in particular on the collection and analysis of information from Member States and other sources on the implications and effects of the EU Forest Strategy beyond the EU policy sphere. The consultant found difficulties to compile data and information from Member States, and to adequately process it into the study.

4. Sound analysis:

The analysis was challenging given the complexity of themes and the multiple actors involved in its implementation. The analysis proposed appropriate quantitative or qualitative techniques, suitable to the study context. Desk and document analysis constitute the main analytical tool, and the method was described very concisely in the report; as a result, it was sometimes difficult to track back how certain replies to study questions had been processed, requiring several feedback loops to gain clarity. Triangulation and integration of data and information from different sources was challenging and not always fully successful, in particular for the information coming from questionnaires and interviews.

5. Credible findings: The findings are generally supported by the evidence provided, where expert and stakeholder opinions were considered and given significant weight. This sometimes led the consultant to present as findings some replies and perceptions of experts and stakeholders. At the request of the steering group, the contractor revised the text to ensure an adequate equilibrium presenting the findings, properly combining them with other evidence sources

6. Valid conclusions: The conclusions properly addressed the study themes. They are based on the study findings, drawn from the analysis. While the conclusions on progress implementing the Strategy were adequately built, the assessment of some issues, e.g. the evolved policy context, was a bit superficial and did not allow getting many conclusions. The findings are well presented and summarized in the report's final sections and annexes.

7. Clarity: In general terms the report is clear and its structure allows an easy reading. It includes all elements required by the tender specifications, despite the structure does not exactly follow the study questions for conciseness purposes, as the report addresses a big variety of topics. Generally, the information presented is clear, but replies to some study questions remain a bit hidden. Information could thus have been better structured and presented more concisely, to facilitate the clarity and readability of the report.

Alfonso GUTIERREZ
Technical Manager