



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 950/97**

**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 limited by the absence of national ex-post evaluations in two Member States and limited comparability of the other reports. The data collection efforts by the evaluators could not fully make up for these gaps. The evaluator attempted to develop *typologies of rural zones* but they proved to be of limited use as explanatory variables and were only applied to the Farm Investment scheme. A coverage of the support schemes in zones covered by *Objectives 1 and 6* was possible only to a very limited extent, as ex-post evaluations for these zones did not specifically address the measures under Reg. 950/97. On the whole, however, the evaluator delivered what had been promised in the original tender, and the evaluation questions listed in the terms of reference are addressed.

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?

Outputs are presented only to a limited extent, mainly due to a lack of harmonised up-to-date data at European level. The evaluation has reviewed the programme strategy and the interaction of the individual measures with their contexts/environments to a satisfactory extent. Although handicapped by the limited data basis, the analysis regarding the results and expected impacts of the measures. is of acceptable 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 emphasized in the report but efforts to overcome those limitations were not completely satisfactory. The European-level abstraction of findings and judgements from the national-level evaluations is not carried out to a sufficient extent. In this respect hypotheses should have been tested directly with national stakeholders but not with national subcontractors. The supplementary data collection by the evaluator for those countries where no ex-post evaluation reports were available was not sufficient. 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. Even if he can't be held responsible for the lack of output data, the extent to which primary data for filling the gaps were sought was not sufficient. The reliability of the data collected by the evaluator and that used from secondary sources is sufficient. However, it was felt that qualitative information could have been more fully exploited.

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?

Given the limitations on the use of qualitative data noted above, the analysis has been carried out in a sufficiently systematic manner. Guidelines for the validation of secondary data by the national sub-contractors were drawn up. However, it seems that no guidelines for interviews existed. Not all evaluation questions could be answered in a meaningful way. The evaluators addressed the issue of cause-effect including problems of deadweight/displacement in a satisfactory manner. Keeping in mind the methodological and data limitations, the answers 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 analyses. 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 conclusions are presented in a clear manner and are credible within the limits of data availability and evaluation methodology.

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 unbiased, well differentiated for the different measures under Reg. 950/97, and take into account regulatory changes implemented or

envisaged for the following programming periods. The steering group considered the recommendations to be of good quality, however, in view of the limitations as to evidence base and evaluation methodology, it decided by majority to give them a 'satisfactory' overall rating. The recommendations may nevertheless constitute a useful input for the reflections regarding the post 2006 Structural Funds programming period.

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. Conclusions and recommendations are sufficiently precise. Annexes are clearly structured.

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**

Concerning these criteria, the evaluation report is:	Unacceptable	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1. Meeting the needs: Does the evaluation adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?			X		
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?			X		
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?		X			
4. Reliable data: To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate? Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use?		X			
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?			X		
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?			X		
7. Validity of the conclusions: Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results?			X		
8. Usefulness of the recommendations: Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?			X		
9. Clearly reported: 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?			X		
Taking into account the contextual constraints on the evaluation, the overall quality rating of the report is considered			X		