

QUALITY ASSESSMENT FORM

Title of the evaluation:

**MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
FOREST ACTION PLAN**

DG/Unit: DG AGRI, Unit L4

- Official(s) managing the evaluation: Andre Kolodziejak

Evaluator/contractor: European Forest Institute (EFI) in Joensuu, Finland, together with University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU) in Vienna, Austria, Centre Tecnologic Forestal De Catalunya (CTFC) in Solsona, Spain and University of Hamburg, Institute for World Forestry (UHH/vTI) in Hamburg, Germany.

Assessment carried out by:

- Steering group with the active participation of units H-4 and L-4 of DG AGRI, G-4 of DG ENTR, B-1 of DG ENV and E-1 of DG SANCO.

Date of the Quality Assessment: November 2009

(1) RELEVANCE

Does the evaluation 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 evaluation fully covers the scope defined in the Terms of Reference.

(2) APPROPRIATE DESIGN

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

SCORING	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
					X

Arguments for scoring:

The methodology design fits the objectives of the evaluation. The first part of the evaluation report shows a very systematic and precise description of the 18 Key Actions and 55 Activities of the Forest Action Plan. The starting point of the second part of the report dealing with the evaluation questions was, in line with the Terms of Reference, the theoretical analysis of the impact of the Forest Action Plan using comprehensive intervention logic. In answering the evaluation questions, the results of this theoretical analysis were confronted with the results of the implementation inventory.

The methodology developed for the empirical analysis combined three different analyses:

a) Literature study

b) Study of the relevant documents and minutes of the Standing Forestry Committee (SFC), the Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork (AGFC), the Advisory Committee on Community Policy regarding Forestry and Forest-based Industries (AC-FBI) as well as the Commission Inter-service group on Forestry (IGF).

c) Qualitative analysis which was fed by the information collected within three case studies related to particular evaluation questions and surveys of Commission officials, stakeholders and Member States.

Although impacts in a mid-term evaluation have mostly not yet (fully) materialized this methodology allowed answering all evaluation questions 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 contractor had access to the data provided by the Commission services, which were treated in an appropriate way and are well presented.

The biggest data sources were the outstanding surveys carried out and the implementation records on the Key Actions and Activities of the SFC.

The contractor has used the best available secondary data such as those from Eurostat, United Nations and has made great efforts to ensure their reliability.

(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 rigorous way, and it is well developed both in quantitative and in qualitative terms based on the said evaluation questions. Any limitations of each of the analytical approaches and tools are clearly presented and fully 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 supported by the evidence provided through the sound analysis. Member States' and stakeholders' opinions were considered, where appropriate, and in an unbiased way. The contractor was keen to assess expected impacts as not in all cases impacts have already materialised at the mid-term stage.

(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 established in a clearly understandable and detailed manner. They are substantiated by the evaluation findings, which are based on the design and drawn from the sound analysis and the precise record of the implementation of the Forest Action Plan.

(7) HELPFUL RECOMMENDATIONS

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 clear and unbiased. Given the competences of the EU in Forestry Policy is far from easy to present recommendations that are both logically following from the analysis and realistic. Nevertheless, the presented recommendations are helpful as they are impartial and realistically linked to the policy context and take full account of the valuable contributions made in the different surveys.

(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 well-structured and balanced with respect to themes and stakeholders. Unnecessary repetitions have been avoided and the written style and the presentation are clear and adapted to different target readers. The report has the appropriate length and is enough reader-friendly despite the complexity of the subject at hand.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL EVALUATION 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 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.

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

The evaluation study is ready to be used, in particular in the SFC, the Commission and the Council to discuss the second-half time of the Forest Action Plan and its follow-up after 2011. Concerning the latter it can thus also contribute to renewal of the Forest Strategy of 1998 from which the Action Plan resulted. Therefore, the findings of the evaluation are relevant and should be exploited further with respect to the possibilities offered by the policy.