

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The European LEADER II evaluation report

This is **Volume 1 of the Final Report** of the European evaluation of the LEADER II Community Initiative. It contains the main report and the executive summary.

Volume 2 of the Final Report contains the bibliographical sources, interview partners and methodological tools used for quantitative data collection and qualitative investigations.

Volume 3 of the Final Report is a compilation of 13 case studies on trans-national cooperation projects and 10 comparative case studies on cost-effectiveness of the LEADER II initiative.

Volume 4 of the Final Report includes the 12 Geographical Reports on all Member States of the EU.

1.2 The contents of Volume 1 (main report) by chapter

Chapter 1 provides an executive summary of the whole report in English and French.

Chapter 2 recapitulates the specificities of the LEADER initiative and gives an overview of the aims, the scope, and the work organisation of the evaluation of LEADER II.

Chapter 3 presents the approach and the methodology chosen by the evaluation team as well as the necessary adaptations of the methodology while carrying out the task.

Chapter 4 to 8 give answers to the evaluation questions, according to the evaluation framework set out in figure 7. The evaluation questions were prescribed in the terms of reference of the evaluation, henceforth abbreviated by TOR. They are presented in full in chapter 2.2.3.

Chapter 4 describes the implementation of the Community Initiative using aggregated data on the number and scope of groups, the range of activities they carried out and the financial volume of funding per operational programme, per measure (A, B, C, D) and per fund (EAGGF, ERDF, ESF), as well as national public and private part-financing.

- TOR questions addressed: 1.4, 1.7, 1.8

Chapter 5 elaborates on the implementation of the LEADER method (the eight specificities) and the resulting behavioural changes. Each feature is addressed with regard to implementation and impact within one section. The chapter starts with the vertical feature, as this determined the context in which the groups unfolded their activities.

■ TOR questions addressed:

1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1.3, 2.3.1, 2.3.3	Decentralised management and financing
1.9	Learning from LEADER I
2.2.1	Territorial approach
2.2.2	Bottom-up approach
2.2.3	The local group (partnership approach)
2.2.4	Innovation
2.2.5	Multi-sectoral integration
2.2.6	Networking
2.2.7	Trans-national co-operation
2.3.2	Networking bodies

Chapter 6 focuses on the impact of LEADER II on the horizontal objectives: Adjustment of agriculture and diversification, employment, environment, income and equal opportunities. Although not being explicit aims of the LEADER initiative, they represent general concerns which are to be taken into account for all interventions of structural and agricultural funds.

■ TOR question addressed: 2.1.2

Chapter 7 provides an overview of the evaluation activities undertaken at the level of Member States and regions. The chapter also discusses to what extent they proved to be useful for this evaluation.

■ TOR questions addressed: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

Chapter 8 presents the main conclusions of this evaluation at a general level, followed by recommendations to European and national policy makers and administrators for future programming for rural development, especially after 2006.

■ TOR questions addressed: 2.1.1, 2.3.4

Chapter 9 contains a glossary including explanations of abbreviations.

1.3 Indications on quotations

There are three types of quotations in this report:

- Explicit quotations from external documents and reports: The source is mentioned in brackets after the quotation. If it is relevant for the whole evaluation, it can also be found in the bibliography, otherwise it is presented in full length in the footnote.
- Quotations from oral interviews and written questionnaires: In brackets the local area, region or country, where something has been said or written, is indicated. Local areas and regions are written out in full, countries are abbreviated by country code.
- Quotations from the evaluators' geographical reports: They are mentioned in the footnote. If it is mentioned that the quotation stems from focus groups, there is no footnote because it is obvious that the quotation is taken from the respective Geographical Report.

The regional and national evaluations of Member States served as very rich information sources for this report. Their contents were fully exploited and conveyed via the geographical reports, and through the quantitative data provided by the geographical evaluators for the grids used in this evaluation.