

## Evaluation of the EC cooperation with Nicaragua 1998-2008 Quality Grid on Draft Final Report

Concerning these criteria, the evaluation report is:	Unacceptable	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent
<b>1. Meeting needs:</b> Does the evaluation adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?				X	
<b>2. Relevant scope:</b> 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		
<b>3. Defensible design:</b> 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	
<b>4. Reliable data:</b> To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate? Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use?			X		
<b>5. Sound analysis:</b> Is the 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		
<b>6. Credible findings:</b> Do findings follow logically from, and are they justified by, the data analysis and interpretations based on carefully described assumptions and rationale?			X		
<b>7. Validity of the conclusions:</b> Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible findings?				X	
<b>8. Usefulness of the recommendations:</b> Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?				X	
<b>9. Clearly reported:</b> 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	
<b>Taking into account the contextual constraints on the evaluation, the overall quality rating of the report is considered</b>				X	

## Observations and Judgement

**Taking into account the contextual constraints on the evaluation, the overall quality rating of the report is considered:**

### **VERY GOOD**

*Based on an adequate design and a solid evaluation work, the evaluation report gives a clear and faithful picture of 10 years of EC cooperation in Nicaragua, focusing on the important questions and presenting credible findings, conclusions and relevant recommendations in order to improve the future EU cooperation. Budget Support and Rural Development chapters are particularly valuable and the conclusions on the Linkage between relief, rehabilitation and development, even if already known at local level, are also of general interest.*

#### **1. Meeting needs: VERY GOOD.**

The evaluation adequately addresses the information needs of the commissioning body, also responds to the Terms of Reference and to the comments done by the Reference group with balanced views. All the evaluation questions have been answered.

In addition, the report presents (p. 82 -85) an overall assessment on effectiveness in relation to the initial intervention logic and considerations on the main contributing factors.

#### **2. Relevant scope: GOOD.**

The evaluation covered the period (1998-2008) as requested in the Terms of Reference. The intervention logic is comprehensive and the evaluation covers the more relevant focal sectors and in particular the budget support instrument.

Geographically, the sample of projects analysed could have covered the Caribbean Coast but logistical problems were unavoidable.

Links with other donors' interventions and the partner government(s) policies were also well covered.

#### **3. Defensible design: VERY GOOD.**

The evaluation design is appropriate and adequate. The evaluation was carried out using the EuropeAid standard evaluation methodology. In addition the methodology used for the question on Budget support has been the most recent up to dated.

Different evaluation tools were correctly used: monitoring reports, interviews, focus groups and crosschecking information of 193 documents, 140 interviews and 5 focus groups.

The annexed volume on the methodology approach including the design of the evaluation and the information gathered is well structured and of easy use.

#### **4. Reliable data: GOOD.**

Data and information has been collected from reliable sources, as: legal documents, EC Policy & Strategy documents, relevant international documentation, project documents, monitoring and evaluation reports, statistics and interviews both to headquarters' staff and delegation's staff as well as to relevant Nicaraguan partners including successive administrations, etc.

As present circumstances lead sometimes to contradictory data, the consultant has

cross-checked sources as far as possible the information or detailed the case in the methodological annex. Limits of data collection are clearly presented.

**5. Sound analysis: GOOD.**

The evaluators have demonstrated to have a good knowledge on the evaluation methodology, on the country context, on the specific sectors of intervention and on the instruments used by the EC.

The analysis is done rigorously, cause-and-effect links are looked for and explained, relevant comparisons, in particular temporarily (before/after), are made explicit. Moreover the structure of the core text systematically refers to the annexes which further develop the basis for the analysis and show that the report is well-supported.

**6. Credible findings: GOOD.**

Occasionally, interpretation, hypothesis and interpretation may be controversial but overall results reflect a reasonable compromise between realities described by data and stated facts (eg. EQ 6 on education).

Effects of the important instruments and the details of their modalities are isolated as far as possible from external factors and contextual constraints (eg EQ 4 on Budget Support).

Findings are presented on a very compact way with useful summaries on every EQ.

**7. Validity of the conclusions: VERY GOOD.**

The conclusions derive from findings, and are grounded on facts and analysis easily identifiable throughout the report. Every judgement criteria is informed.

The conclusions are organised considering achievements and factors affecting effectiveness along clusters and debated in connection with diverse elements of context and the activities themselves. Limitations to conclusions validity are explicit.

Specific conclusions on Budget Support are detailed and well substantiated.

Finally the review exercise done in the overall assessment (p. 81-88) is complete and meant to be useful.

The identification and validation of transferable lessons is well done, for instance with Rural Development or Linkage between relief, rehabilitation and development.

**8. Usefulness of the recommendations: VERY GOOD**

Recommendations are impartial and linked to the conclusions. They also take into account the particular context of the partner country.

The team has picked up 6 major recommendations organised by order of importance, and with ticked addressee, favouring a better communication of the evaluation messages.

**9. Clearly reported: VERY GOOD**

The draft final report is presented in a very reader-friendly way: for every question the reader can easily trace every indicator (quotes and sources for quantitative and qualitative indicators) informing every judgement criteria. The structure and presentation of the report is clear and easy to read.

The report includes clear summaries at different levels (questions, important issues, general).