

QUALITY GRID
Evaluation of the Commission's support to the ACP Pacific region
Final Report

Concerning these criteria, the evaluation report is:	Unacceptable	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1. Meeting 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 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: 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 findings?			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		

Observations and Judgement

Taking into account the contextual constraints of the evaluation, the overall quality rating of the report is considered: Good. The evaluation covers the strands of action funded under the different programmes and strategies in the particular period of time as indicated in the ToR, but a more in-depth assessment of the country strategies should have been undertaken. Methodological choices are adequate, but could have been better explained. The quantity of data collected is impressive. However, data could have been better put into relation with each other in the analysis. Nevertheless and within the limits of data and analysis, the findings are credible and the conclusions are well balanced and clearly derive from findings. The major number of recommendations is very practical and they are prioritized. Unfortunately the report is not particularly reader-friendly and could be stronger in getting the message across.

1. Meeting needs: Poor. The evaluation does not fully adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body. According to the TOR ("The evaluation will analyse, for the case studies (countries) selected, also the relevance, logic and coherence of the Commission's national strategies, the consistency between programming and implementation as well as the implementation of the national indicative programmes.") a more in-depth assessment of the country strategies should have been undertaken. Due to the absence of such in-depth assessments the country notes are based on collected data, but not the outcome of the type of work the Commission had asked for.

2. Relevant scope: Good. The evaluation covers the strands of action funded under the different programmes and strategies in the particular period of time as indicated in the ToR. The evaluation team has chosen an adequate scope; however, a few weaknesses on a couple of particular single issues have been determined.

For example, the Samoa Sector Note on Sustainable Management of Natural Resources ignores – to some extent - the wider context and challenges the region is facing in particular due to its vulnerability to climate change. Climate change and associated needs, such as the need to adapt or the need to put more emphasis on disaster risk reduction etc., are well reflected in the chapter on policy developments, but not referred to in the conclusions.

3. Defensible design: Good. Methodological choices are adequate, but could have been better explained. The relevant subchapters in chapter one of the final report could have explained the evaluation method in more detail, e.g. information on how the data was analysed during the desk phase, how data gathered from interviews were cross-checked with data from the desk phase would have been welcome. The sources of information for answering each evaluation question are detailed well in the annex. Nevertheless, a more transparent design would enable the reader to better understand where and how conclusions are drawn from.

4. Reliable data: Poor. The quantity of data collected is large, but their reliability is put into question. This is the case of e.g. the Solomon Islands; insufficient data and evidence were collected regarding the full consequences of the political tensions (1999-2003) and their impact on the delivery of aid; besides, the operations of RAMSI (Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands) during the period under evaluation, their impact and side effects on donor operations have not been sufficiently addressed in the evaluation report.

In other cases no data or data of insufficient depth were collected in order to answer the questions, e.g. Evaluation Question 6 regarding the percentage of additional training courses per key sector (no data); and whether results of interventions have contributed to increased skills, motivation and ability (data of insufficient depth). This suggests that the planning had not been well thought through in terms of the data that would be needed to proof the findings.

There is relatively sparse use of the data of the annex for answering the evaluation questions. This raises the question to what extent this large amount of data is linked to questions and analysis. Triangulation of data is not clearly shown either.

- 5. Sound analysis: Poor.** The analysis mainly consisted in cross-checking information collected during interviews with documentary data. The evaluation report does not contain comparisons. Reasoning between data and their analysis is either absent or weak: Data have not been put into relation with each other and it seems that data processing through cross-checking has not been done sufficiently. There are very few tables or graphs only to ease the understanding of complex findings.

The cause and effect relations throughout the whole report are not clearly visible and the links between the main report and the data in the annex are weak. References to analysis in the annex are not always evident in the main report, e.g. saying see annex x for the bibliography instead of pointing precisely to where sound and comprehensive analysis of the particular data can be found.

- 6. Credible findings: Good.** Within the limits of data and analysis the findings are credible. They reflect the overall and particular context of this large and diverse region as well as the realities of the individual countries that were studied.
- 7. Validity of the conclusions: Good.** Taking into account the limited depth of analysis, the conclusions are well balanced and clearly derive from findings. Conclusions are grounded on facts and findings that are easily identifiable throughout the report. The limitations to conclusions' validity are pointed out as well as the context in which the analysis was done. More concise and shorter conclusions would be appreciated by the reader.

Overall strategic level conclusions indicate well, including through examples, how the Commission could have increased the leverage of its support.

The conclusions presented in form of thematic clusters are mostly practical. However, some issues do not translate into conclusions, e.g. and as already mentioned under point 2, climate change and associated needs are well reflected in the chapter on policy developments, but do not translate into the conclusions and main lessons of the sector note.

- 8. Usefulness of the recommendations: Very Good.** The major number of recommendations is very practical. Recommendations are prioritized, which is highly appreciated. Besides, recommendations from the thematic clusters contribute and complement strategic level recommendations.

The recommendations include useful suggestions showing options for the way forward, e.g. recommendations regarding a way forward for optimizing the impact of regional programming (C2.2). The recommendations also offer concrete options and highlight critical decisions that

need to be taken, e.g. whether the Commission should either withdraw from certain sectors or intervene at both regional and national levels.

- 9. Clearly reported: Poor.** The report is not very reader-friendly. The report could be stronger in getting the message across, mainly through shorter sentences and more concise phrasing. The syntax of the conclusions tends to be rather complex, sometimes formulated in form of long and complicated sentences. There are very few tables or graphs to ease the understanding of complex findings.

The summary is well structured and contains the main messages. However, readers may encounter difficulties to grasp the main messages easily. The links between the main text and the annexes could have been better explained. The report and its annexes lack a graphic presentation of the overall approach of the evaluation, which would help the reader to quickly get an overview.