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EVALUATION OF THE COMMON MARKET ORGANISATION
IN THE SECTOR OF RAW TOBACCO

Subject: Quality grid for the final report
submitted by COGEA on 30 June – 2 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 ?

All the evaluation questions of the terms of reference have been addressed. All the themes have been covered, as well as the diversity of member States and regions where tobacco is grown.

After several preliminary versions failing to meet the expectations of the steering group, the final report addresses most of them. Concerning the markets, main weak points are the analysis of world prices and of conversion possibilities. One can also regret that no more could be done about production costs.

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 ?

The contractor's team prepared a diagram of impacts, explained the expected effects of the instruments (from outputs to impacts), and addressed the unexpected effects. By covering all the evaluation questions, the evaluation team also covered the full scope of the CMO instruments.

Besides, by integrating the latest data available, and expanding analysis beyond the evaluation questions on the regional aspects (in particular classification of producing regions), the contractor showed their understanding of the rationale and interactions of the policy.

Global assessment : good

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 criteria and indicators required to answer the evaluation questions were identified in the inception report. Some of them could not be implemented for various reasons (see point 4 on data). The agreed design was mostly followed, and is explained separately for each evaluation question. The methodology followed and its limitations are clearly presented in chapter 3 of the report.

As far as qualitative analysis is concerned, questionnaires were sent to producer groups and processors, and interviews took place with manufacturers and administrations. The questionnaires prepared were particularly detailed. Although this led to delays in the evaluation process, the steering group acknowledges the positive contribution of this qualitative work to the whole evaluation. However, very little room was given to non-beneficiaries such as regional administrations, processors, health and environment NGOs. The qualitative data must be taken with this reserve.

Global assessment : satisfactory

4. RELIABLE DATA: To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate ? Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use ?

Finding relevant and consistent data has been a major obstacle in this evaluation. The direct management data were available with the Tobacco Unit. Other public databases proved difficult to use : inconsistencies under COMEXT, too small samples under RICA/FADN. Price data on processed tobacco, which is not covered by the CMO, but would have been interesting in the context of this evaluation, could not be found. The steering group acknowledges these difficulties, for which the contractor can not be held responsible.

The qualitative data concerning beneficiaries was thorough (see comments under point 3), and the quantitative data used were reliable and adequate.

Global assessment : good

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 ?

The data analysis as presented in the final version of the report is clearly explained and substantiated. The indicators chosen for the analysis of holding income and production costs were at times far-fetched.

The inputs of the different sources of qualitative and quantitative evidence (statistical analysis, questionnaires, interviews) are clearly differentiated. When possible, different data sources are compared to support the conclusions.

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 ?

Generally speaking, the assumptions made are explicitly put forward in the text of the report. The answers to the evaluation questions contain the contractor's perception of the rationale of the instruments, and follow logically from the analysis. Findings are credible, although some of them should be put in perspective, in particular when they are based on beneficiaries' opinions.

Global assessment : satisfactory

7. VALIDITY OF THE CONCLUSIONS: Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible results ?

The conclusion chapter follows from the answers to the evaluation questions and puts them in perspective, balancing one against the other according to the

evaluator's judgement on the points at stake. The steering group doesn't necessarily share all of them, but acknowledges they are clear and credible.

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 report does not contain recommendations.

Global assessment : not applicable

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 structure of the report is clear, and allows for ad hoc use of parts of the data and analysis. Separate conclusions for each evaluation questions are short and clear.

The main reproach to the report is its length (220 pages). However, this can be explained by the high number of evaluative questions (15), and the wide scope of the study.

Global assessment : satisfactory

10. ASSESSMENT OF THE REPORT AS A WHOLE

The steering group acknowledges the work carried out by the evaluation team to analyse the policy, identify its intended and unintended impacts and assess them in a balanced way. This report is rich in quantitative and qualitative data, and provides a thorough reflection on the sector of raw tobacco and its specific problems. Its limits have been explained above.

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? NOT APPLICABLE					
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		