

QUALITY ASSESSMENT FORM

Title of the evaluation:

Supporting study for the evaluation of Decision No 406/2009/EC (Effort Sharing Decision)

Evaluator/contractor:

Ricardo Energy and Environment

DG/Unit:

DG CLIMA, Unit C2. Officials managing the evaluation: Jürgen Salay, Sarah Sheridan

Assessment carried out by:

Steering group with participants from DGs Climate Action (CLIMA), Secretariat General (SG), Legal Service (LS), Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI), Competition (COMP), Economic and Financial Affairs (ECFIN), Energy (ENER), Environment (ENV), Internal Market, Industry Entrepreneurship and SMES (GROW), Joint research Centre (JRC), Mobility and transport (MOVE), Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO), Research and Innovation (RTD) Taxation and Customs Union (TAXUD), Trade, and European Environment Agency (EEA).

Date of the Quality Assessment:

23 December 2015

(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 report addresses and responds to all the evaluation questions mentioned in the terms of references and covers the required scope.

The report considers interactions between the policy evaluated and other relevant policies. The report also considers the evolution of the intervention and changes in the problems and needs compared to the situation at the start of the intervention. However, it also acknowledges that the policy is still fairly early in its implementation with key events in the reporting cycle only occurring for the first time in 2016.

The evaluation adds value to existing policy knowledge.

(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 method followed is coherent with the evaluation needs and was discussed and agreed with the Commission project team and steering group. The approach taken is clearly described in the report and details of the method followed are given to allow replication of certain elements, i.e. the stakeholder consultations and interviews.

All the relevant stakeholders were invited to participate in the process through a number of different questionnaires and targeted interviews.

The report acknowledges the potential weaknesses in data gathering and on subsequent analysis, due to the Effort Sharing Decision (ESD) being at an early stage of implementation and the first compliance check only occurring in 2016. In addition, the report acknowledges that it could be difficult to get significant numbers of responses to all of the questionnaires. However, this was decided to be an acceptable risk as it was mitigated by the ability to do targeted, follow-up interviews. Significant explanation is given of these limitations and the resulting impact on analysis and conclusions has been included throughout the report. Limitations have been included for each evaluation question, highlighting the specific data limitations and particular impact on the analysis and conclusions.

The intervention logic is clearly set out and then referred to throughout the report.

No ethical issues have arisen, other than on confidentiality of responses which has been ensured by the contractor.

(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 contractors assessed a large range of relevant literature and studies and the steering group is not aware of additional key documents. These and other sources of information are comprehensively identified and referenced. However, few of these studies look explicitly at the implementation of the ESD and so there were limitations in this data source.

The contractors undertook a number of stakeholder consultations and interviews and drew on the results of an EU public consultation. The contractors were then able to cross-reference these results against Member State reports required under the ESD.

The report provides significant explanation of data limitations and the resulting impact on analysis and conclusions. Limitations have been included for each evaluation question, highlighting the specific data limitations and particular impact on the analysis and conclusions. The report is explicit that the level of data available for each evaluation question is different.

The consultants acknowledge that there are some difficulties in gathering data due to the fact that a number of other related policy instruments (e.g. Renewable Energy Directive) were also introduced at the same time as the ESD, and that the ESD is still fairly early in its implementation. This makes it hard to isolate the effect of the ESD alone.

The consultants used the survey and interview format to allow them to better understand which actions are attributable to the ESD. However, there are natural limitations to this approach which the contractors have explained.

It is acknowledged that in some sections, particularly the question on efficiency, it has been difficult to obtain much quantitative data and so estimations and extrapolations are made with resulting uncertainties.

There is no evidence of bias in the resulting report from these weaknesses. The risk of bias in the survey results is addressed through comparing these with other fact based findings and using them to support, explain or caveat results.

(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 evaluation questions are answered through sound analysis based on appropriate data sources. The report acknowledges that the limitations in available data, explained above, have an impact on the ability to draw strong conclusions. For each evaluation question the report states the specific data sources, limitations and resultant impact on the analysis. The report cross-checks findings from Member State reporting and stakeholder consultations and interviews to determine drivers and influences for particular outcomes.

A baseline and counterfactual were developed on the basis of documented evidence and are well used. The analysis makes it clear what progress has been achieved compared to what was expected when the legislation was introduced.

While a good range of stakeholders was consulted the responses were primarily from Member States. However, as they are the stakeholder group with the most interest in and experience of the subject of the evaluation this was to be expected.

Most argumentation is explicitly based on solid factual evidence and limitations to the analysis and conclusions are well described.

(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 report acknowledges that there are limitations in evidence, due to the fact that the ESD is still fairly early in its implementation and there was a low response to some stakeholder questionnaires, and that this has an impact on analysis and the ability to make credible findings. The limitations relevant to different evaluation questions have been clearly set out.

The results balance the evidence provided from different sources in order to draw conclusions and conclusions are sufficiently caveated where data is limited.

Due to the lack of many other data sources, stakeholder views are relied on significantly for some questions, but they are appropriately presented as subjective points of view with relevant caveats.

All evaluation questions are answered and where evidence is lacking this is explicitly stated. There do not seem to be any major contradictions in the findings.

(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 reached are supported by the evidence presented. The report is clear throughout that there are a number of limitations in data which impact the ability to draw definitive conclusions in some areas. Therefore, general conclusions are drawn supplemented by specific conclusions which are caveated.

The conclusions are presented in a well ordered and prioritised manner relative to the evaluation questions. They are coherent and logically argued, substantiated by evidence and analysis, and interpreted in relation to the policy context.

The conclusions are free of personal or partisan considerations and there is no reason to expect bias in the views expressed. There are no obvious controversial issues that are presented in an inappropriate manner.

(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:

A number of helpful recommendations have been provided which stem logically from the analysis and conclusions. They are clearly set out and placed in the text with the relevant conclusion. As was the case in previous sections, it is difficult for many recommendations to be made this early in the implementation of the ESD, so the report focuses on what is appropriate at this stage, which is primarily around further data gathering.

(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 written and presents the required content in a clear and well-structured format. There is clear link between the interpretation and conclusions. The executive summary is clear and concise with clearly expressed results.

The introductory chapters (chapters 1 and 2) which set out the purpose and context of the evaluation and the Effort Sharing Decision are clearly drafted and concise, allowing for greater detail on the evaluation questions.

The chapter which analyses the evaluation questions is well structured with a consistent and logical format. Useful introductory sections are included for each question including context setting and limitations sections which clearly highlight the specific constraints applicable.

Specialised concepts are generally well defined throughout the report and a glossary of terms is provided.

The length of the report is appropriate and tables and graphs are well used.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

The report fully fulfils the contractual conditions. It is considered that the findings and conclusions are reliable given the data limitations and the relatively short period of time the Effort Sharing Decision has been implemented. The information in the report will provide useful input to the impact assessment accompanying the proposal for the Effort Sharing Decision in a 2030 context.