

3. METHODOLOGY FOR THE EVALUATION

3.1. Approach to the structuring phase

This evaluation commenced with a structuring phase running from September 2003 to December 2003. During this phase, the following activities were undertaken:

- A review of relevant EC policy documents and a round of interviews with relevant EC staff in Brussels. Annex 14 presents the main documents that have been analysed for this evaluation. Specific country documents are listed in the various country reports.
- Drafting of the EC intervention logic in FA/FS. The resulting impact diagram (see Annex 3) represents the overall strategy of EC food aid and food security.
- Based on this impact diagram, a set of twelve evaluative questions was drafted and discussed with the members of the Steering Group. A full overview is given in Annex 4.
- A preliminary list of FSBL-financed projects was compiled and analysed to determine the character and volume of EC assistance within the FA-FS regulation.
- Based on the budget payment overviews extracted from the CRIS Saisie database and on the information from interviews with EC staff, a list of countries to be visited during the completion phase was proposed and discussed. The various steps of the selection process for the field visits are presented in Annex 5.

3.2. Approach to the completion phase

The completion phase was launched in January 2004 and ended in early June 2004.

The proposed evaluation approach consisted of the following components:

- *Briefing seminar in Brussels.* A briefing seminar has been organised in Brussels Mid-January for all international and national experts. Aim of the seminar was to share main relevant information and documents, discuss all evaluative questions and prepare the field visits. Annex 6 presents the programme of the seminar.
- *Field visits (10 countries).* The following countries were included: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Gaza, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru and Zimbabwe. Field missions were carried out from January to March 2004. Each mission was carried out by a senior international consultant together with a national expert. Each country visit lasted 15 days. For every country, there were two days briefing seminar, one days mission preparation, and five days for report drafting. All final country reports are presented in Volume 4 of this report.
- *Deepen the analysis of the food aid and food security budget commitments and payments based on the CRIS database and other EC financial information sources.* During the desk phase, the analysis focused on the regulation 1292/96, during the completion phase, the financial analysis was extended to the other EC instruments as well: EDF, MEDA, ALA, TACIS, CARDS, ECHO, Rehabilitation, NGO-Cofinancing). Annex 7 presents the results of the statistical analysis.
- *Document review and interviews with relevant resource persons in Brussels.* During the completion phase, various new documents were included, especially those concerning the other EC instruments and the national strategies. The interviews with resource persons served to deepen specific issues or questions in relation to the country field visits.
- *Comparative analysis of national strategy documents.* The aim of this comparative analysis of national strategies documents (CSP's, PRSP's, sectoral strategies relevant to food security, etc.) was to assess the interrelations between the various processes (role of the regulation in the CSP; role of EC in the elaboration of PRSP, etc.). This analysis

has been carried out for 20 important recipient countries. Annex 8 presents the selection process and Annex 9 the results of this analysis.

- *Analysis of the importance of food security in the various relevant EC instruments.* The aim of this analysis was to assess the potential and existing linkages between the FA-FS regulation and other instruments such as the geographical instruments (EDF, MEDA, ALA, TACIS, CARDS) and other relevant EC budget lines (ECHO, Rehabilitation, NGO-Cofinancing). Annex 10 presents the results of this analysis.
- *A questionnaire survey of a sample of 28 Delegations.* A sample of 28 countries was drawn with a wide geographical representation and including national and regional FA-FS programmes of various sizes. The questionnaires were sent to the Delegations. Annex 11 presents a summary of the questionnaire results while Annex 12 presents the various steps for the selection of countries and detailed questionnaire results.
- *Synthesis report.* A draft synthesis report was produced for discussion with the Evaluation Steering Group. The report synthesises the main results from the country reports as well as from the document analysis, former evaluation reports, delegation responses to the questionnaire and the comparative analysis between instruments. Based on this evidence, the report draws overall conclusions and formulates recommendations. After discussions with the Steering Group, it was decided to split the evaluation report into four volumes. Volume 1 is the main analytical/evaluative report. Volume 2 is a descriptive report that provides an overview of EC food security policies and operations, and the main relevant trends in EC cooperation. Volume 3 contains the annexes. Volume 4 consists of the ten country reports.
- All these information sources have been cross-checked before being integrated in the synthesis reports (evaluative and descriptive reports). Evaluation results are therefore not relying on only one information source.

Annex 2 presents in detail the methodology used for this evaluation, especially the various activities that have been carried out as well as the methodological answers that have been given so as to fulfil the quality criteria used by the evaluation unit to assess the evaluation reports.

3.3. Constraints

The main problem confronted by the evaluation team was the breadth of the subject being evaluated. The focus on the comparative analysis of various budget lines and geographical instruments, which was added towards the end of the structuring phase, widened the subject of the evaluation study considerably and led to a very tight work plan. One of the main challenges for the evaluators was to adhere to this revised and tightened work plan, while maintaining a high level of quality. The lack of an integrated and consistent database was also a major difficulty to be overcome.

The impossibility of postponing the final delivery of this report to a later date also put high pressure on the evaluation team¹¹. All activities mentioned in the above section on the evaluation methodology for the completion phase were carried out within four months only, which is a very short period for an evaluation with such a scope.

¹¹ The evaluation had to be finished in the foreseen timetable for contractual reasons.