



Evaluation Report

Project title: AWARE Quality management  
and evaluation of the project 2015-1-  
DE02-KA202-002342



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## Summary

The establishment of a quality management plan and procedure (=WP 7, activity leading organisation was *Naturland e.V.* supported by GfRS) aimed to ensure that all WPs and the project as a whole were implemented to the quality level of best practice in the respective WP.

The project quality management contributed to assist partners in monitoring and controlling their own activities, assess progress and provide tools to identify emerging problems and take corrective action in due time and facilitate the relationship between the AWARE Consortium and NA-BIBB.

The project partner *Naturland e.V.* was responsible for the design, the assignment of related tasks and implementation of the quality management. In order to ensure up-to-date information of all project partners, *Naturland e.V.* was in close contact with the project management committee about the results during the meetings. It was responsible for supervising the project progress and implementing corrective actions in case of deviations from the plan. In addition, it was regularly checked whether the expenditures are in line with budget forecast, to ensure that the partners produce all documentation required by their obligations and to resolve strategic, technical and methodological issues that arose during project activities.

During the period reported, it was continuously monitored, that WP goals have been achieved as planned. During the project live time there were slight delays as well as challenges to overcome, but these were not affecting the achievement of the objectives of the project. All assumed indicators were achieved in the dimension specified in the project application.

## Introduction

### Background

The AWARE Project targets the improvement of animal welfare in organic livestock husbandry. Organic animal production aims to deliver excellent animal welfare, while independent annual inspection and certification aims to confirm this and to provide a guarantee on a 'good life' of farm animals, meeting the high expectations of consumers buying organic animal products. Any failure in the delivery of the aspect of animal welfare risks undermining of the reputation of organic production as well as inspection and certification throughout the EU. The legally defined standards for delivering welfare were interpreted in the past in a resource oriented way, including e.g. space per animal in housing, type of housing, and type of feed. The exclusive use of resource related criteria is becoming outdated, as experience and recent scientific knowledge indicate insufficiency of this approach alone. An innovative and scientifically informed evaluation of the animals in order to determine their 'welfare outcomes' is more meaningful in underpinning the inspection process and aiding communication of any deficiencies to farmers in a way that they can understand and act upon.

### Number and profile of participating organisations

The six organisations which participated in the AWARE project delivered specialist knowledge on the inspection and certification of organic livestock farms, being competent and highly qualified in animal welfare inspections. These organisations included three organic control bodies, namely Gesellschaft für Ressourcenschutz mbH (Germany), CCPB srl (Italy), and Agro Bio Test sp. z o. o. (Poland), further project partners were leading organic farmers associations with a high competence in animal welfare

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inspections (Soil Association (UK), Naturland e.V. (Germany)). The Georg-August-University of Göttingen (Germany) brought learning and teaching competence to the project.

### Objectives and undertaken main activities

The inspection of ‘welfare outcomes’ is an emerging approach that the partners pursued in their own standards and inspection systems. The AWARE project included the interconnection of these pioneering organisations, to share experiences, evaluate the preceding work and to develop a common and coherent concept. After agreement on a concept on common animal-related criteria, an accessible training and learning package had been created with the support of a University and made available to other organisations, being easy to disseminate, to support an optimum training approach. The concept is aimed to be added to the widely accepted inspection toolkit that has already been successfully initiated under a previous project by the lead partner organisation GfRS.

### Methodology, project management and quality assurance

The Project coordinated a stepwise approach to the activities as well as ensuring proactive dissemination through multiple platforms, including seminars, specialist media, and the internet for communication of the project outputs. The work of the partners was facilitated by Skype meetings, face-to-face meetings and training events. The approach to welfare assessment was tested and evaluated on farms over the different farming systems associated with the diverse geographical locations of the partners, therefore producing robust output that is widely relevant and applicable throughout the EU.

### Results, impact, and long-term benefits

The project outcomes allow consistent improvement of the performance in organic animal welfare inspections, using a harmonised robust approach to its assessment. It benefits the individuals involved, their organisations, the organic farmers and the wider organic sector that now has access to the high quality learning and training materials. Thus, a positive and lasting impact on the welfare of thousands of farmed animals throughout the EU is expected.

### Structure

The project was structured into seven works packages:

- Work Package 1 – Administration and Coordination
- Work package 2 – Evaluation of existing concepts relevant for organic agriculture for animal welfare for different species animal species in the EU Member States
- Work package 3 – Development of a common inspection approach
- Work package 4 – Development of a training curriculum and training concept for organic inspectors
- Work package 5 – Development of the E-learning-Platform
- Work package 6 – Dissemination and exploitation of project results
- Work package 7 – Project quality management

## Evaluation results

Several quality objectives were set up to evaluate whether the project could be considered as successful.

All these quality objectives were reached.

- 1) A practical approach to the inspection of animal welfare issues as described in the project specification was reached within the foreseen budget level.
- 2) The elaborated training contents by trial E-learning platform and pilot courses were evaluated in all countries involved (see previous section).
- 3) The time frames and punctuality commitments were kept as drawn in the project plan (with only some notable exceptions, see point below).
- 4) Continuous and close contact between project partners in form of information exchange by means of physical and electronic meetings over the whole Project period was kept.

## Work Package 1 – Administration and Coordination

### Description of activities and achievements:

WP 1 was the project co-ordination by GfRS and was running the whole project duration. The following activities were completed in this work package:

- 1) Contracting with project partners

Fully achieved

- 2) Creation of project management committee

Fully achieved

3) Organization of physical meetings of the project management committee (project kick-off-meeting in Göttingen, Germany, and several meetings from 2016-2018) as well as of regular Skype-Conferences and phone calls as needed for ongoing project co-ordination and evaluation. Each meeting followed an agenda sent beforehand and minutes were taken and circulated to the partners for all the meetings. Each of these meetings was used to discuss organizational matters, for collaborative communication and exchange, as well as for organisation of financial aspects and coordination of tasks and deadlines.

Fully achieved

- 4) Set-up and management of a [project webpage](#) (in English, German, Polish and Italian) including a newsletter section and an internal section for the project partners.

Fully achieved

- 5) Management of finances.

Fully achieved

**Problems encountered:**

With regard to the project management and administration, no significant problems were detected that would put the project implementation at risk.

**Method of assessment:**

Quality control through regular follow-ups at meetings, through skype and phone calls between Naturland and GfRS.

## Work package 2 – Evaluation of existing concepts relevant for organic agriculture for animal welfare for different animal species in the EU Member States

**Description of activities and achievements:**

WP 2 consisted of the evaluation of existing inspection concepts relevant for organic agriculture for animal welfare for different animal species in the EU member states (responsible: CCPB with contributions of all project partners. It led to intellectual output O1.

The activities consisted of:

1) Review of literature and approaches from recent EU-projects (e.g. Welfare Quality® (<http://www.welfarequality.net/>), Animal Welfare Platform (<http://www.animalwelfareplatform.eu>), AWIN ([https://cordis.europa.eu/result/rcn/171404\\_de.html](https://cordis.europa.eu/result/rcn/171404_de.html)) and EUWELNET (<http://www.euweln.net>). The search also included tools such as google scholar and organic E-prints.

Fully achieved

2) Description and comparison of the existing inspection concepts of the certification bodies participating in the project, of the Quavera network and a survey on EOCC level.

Fully achieved

**Problems encountered:**

The survey on EOCC level started in June 2016 and lasted longer than planned. The feedback of the respondents was delayed, so the final assessment was not finalized until September 2016. Nevertheless, the report ('Report on existing inspection concepts for animal welfare in organic production for different animal species') which comprises the intellectual output (O1) of this WP was successfully completed with input and support from all relevant project partners. The delay did not pose any risk for further project implementation.

**Method of assessment:**

Quality control through follow-ups at meetings, through skype and phone calls between Naturland, CCPB and GfRS.

## Work package 3 – Development of a common inspection approach

**Description of activities and achievements:**

WP 3 dealt with the development of a common inspection approach (responsible: Soil Association with contributions of all project partners. It led to intellectual output O2 and included as activities:

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1) Development of a joint approach including animal-related indicators. This approach was developed by the AWARE project partners in a workshop, as WP2 revealed that the AWARE partners are the leading experts in the field (involved in all relevant inspection concepts in use).

Fully achieved

2) Feedback to the joint approach by an online-survey established at SurveyMonkey open for control authorities, control bodies and selected experts.

This activity was changed during the project implementation, due to the fact that WP 2 had revealed that the AWARE partners are leaders in this field and that the use of welfare outcomes in the context of organic farming is not undertaken by others. Instead of having a broad survey, the final protocols were circulated to a small number of experts from outside of the AWARE project in order to check their practicality and applicability in a range of countries.

Achieved

3) Adjustment of the inspection concept after feedback from AWARE partners.

Fully achieved

**Problems encountered:**

After the evaluation activities in WP2, it became clear that a broad survey is not the appropriate tool to develop a joint approach but the better way would be to gather all the knowledge available in the project consortium. This change of approach was considered beneficial for the project progress and therefore did not constitute any risk for the project implementation.

**Method of assessment:**

Quality control through follow-ups at meetings, internal discussions, through skype and phone calls between project partners.

## Work package 4 – Development of a training curriculum and training concept for organic inspectors

**Description of activities and achievements:**

WP 4 included the development of a training curriculum and a subsequent training concept for organic inspectors (responsible: Naturland with contributions of all project partners). It led to intellectual output O3. The activities were:

1) Drafting of the curriculum and the training concept

Fully achieved

2) Feedback by the project partners and of selected external national experts for animal welfare issues (e.g. participating in the relevant EU-projects, national authorities)

Fully achieved

3) Adjustment and final curriculum and training concept

Fully achieved

**Problems encountered:**

No significant problems were detected that would put the project implementation at risk.



**Method of assessment:**

Quality control by document check, internal assessment, follow-ups at meetings, through skype and phone calls between project partners.

## Work package 5 – Development of the E-learning-Platform

**Description of activities and achievements:**

The topic of WP 5 was the development of the E-learning-Platform (responsible: GfRS) and the implementation of pilot training courses. It led to intellectual output O4. The e-learning and four courses were implemented by the project partners as follows:

1) Development of a E-Learning platform to be used by organic inspectors for harmonization of knowledge regarding animal welfare organic inspections by the use of animal related criteria, to be conducted prior to participation in a practical training course.

Fully achieved

2) Organization and implementation of four pilot training courses in Germany, Italy, Poland and United Kingdom. The courses were complemented by a moderated e-learning tool for preparation including final exams. Courses were taught by animal welfare experts, comprised by respective animal welfare experts of the host organizations, external experts, and university staff.

Fully achieved

3) Evaluation of courses (through participants' feedback in evaluation forms).

Fully achieved

4) Adjustment and final refinement of the training concept and the e-learning.

Fully achieved

**Problems encountered:**

No significant problems were detected that would put the project implementation at risk.

**Method of assessment**

Quality control through follow-ups at meetings, internal discussions, through skype and phone calls between project partners.

## Work package 6 – Dissemination and exploitation of project results

**Description of activities and achievements:**

WP 6 was the dissemination and exploitation of the project results. It consisted of the following activities:

1) Set-up of a detailed dissemination and exploitation plan

Fully achieved



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2) Information about the project results through the project webpage and through articles in magazines and journals (e.g. Agr-Europe, Göttinger Tageblatt, TAZ, Top Agrar)

Fully achieved

3) Continuous information of and discussion with key organizations of control bodies (e.g. KdK, FEDERBIO, EOCC) and of the organic sector (e.g. IFOAM-EU, BÖLW, FEDERBIO and other organic sector organisations) about the project results.

Fully achieved

4) Invitation of participants from different control bodies (e.g. AgroBioTest, ecocert IMO, GfRS, LAVES, LC GmbH, ABCert, LACON, ÖkoP, QS GmbH, TÜV Rheinland Polska, PCBC, PNG, bureau veritas polska, Bioekspert, AgroEko) and other relevant organisations (e.g. Deutscher Tierschutzbund, Naturland, Uni Göttingen) to the training activities.

Fully achieved

5) Information on and discussion about the project results at key conferences (e.g. international events BIOFACH and IFOAM World Congress) and stakeholder events

Fully achieved

**Problems encountered:**

No significant problems were detected that would put the project implementation at risk.

**Method of assessment:**

Quality control by document check, internal assessment, follow-ups at meetings, through skype and phone calls between project partners.

## Work package 7 – Project quality management

WP 7 was the project quality management implemented by Naturland. It ran during the whole project duration and consisted of these activities:

- definition of quality goals for the project

Fully achieved

- set-up of procedures and forms required to support the project partners in implementing, reporting, monitoring and evaluating their WP and activities

Fully achieved

- design and support implementation procedures and forms.

Fully achieved

**Problems encountered:**

A challenge were staff changes in the participating organisations. Naturland as an example, had several staff changes during the project in the position of the animal welfare expert, the same is true for GfRS. Through a thorough handover, partners tried to assure that the loss of knowledge and the impact to the project was kept to a minimum.

**Method of assessment:**

Most of the monitoring took place through the project's transnational meetings. As the project consortium was rather small and the meetings very frequent, the major part of project monitoring

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could be completed this way. At the same time, this was considered to be the most efficient approach since representatives from all organisations were present and could directly try to solve any issues or questions arising. Meetings took e.g. place during BioFach fairs 2016-2018. Each of these meetings was used to discuss organizational matters, for collaborative communication and exchange, as well as for organisation of financial aspects and coordination of tasks and deadlines. For all meetings, minutes were produced to document common decisions and to be able to follow up on them in order to make sure that all activities were implemented as planned.

Next to the meetings, project partners were regularly in contact by email and phone to discuss project progress and the next steps to take. This was especially true for the project coordinator GfRS and Naturland as the partner responsible for quality management.

Another important part of the assessment was the analysis of questionnaires filled in by participants after the courses (see description WP5). The project partners used these questionnaires as a tool to continuously improve the content of the courses and the way the content was presented. Additionally, after all the courses were finalised, all questionnaires were analysed to get a full picture of the quality of the courses.

The analysis showed that between 74% and 98% of the participants gave (very) good reviews regarding the overall organisation, implementation of the course and competence of the trainer as well as regarding the benefit and the overall applicability of the content. Also the comments from participants show that the quality of the presentations as well as the knowledge and competence of the trainers was what impressed them the most. Points for improvement were e.g. time management which the project partners will try to take into account.

The staff involved were the main responsible of the organisations and the person responsible for animal welfare.