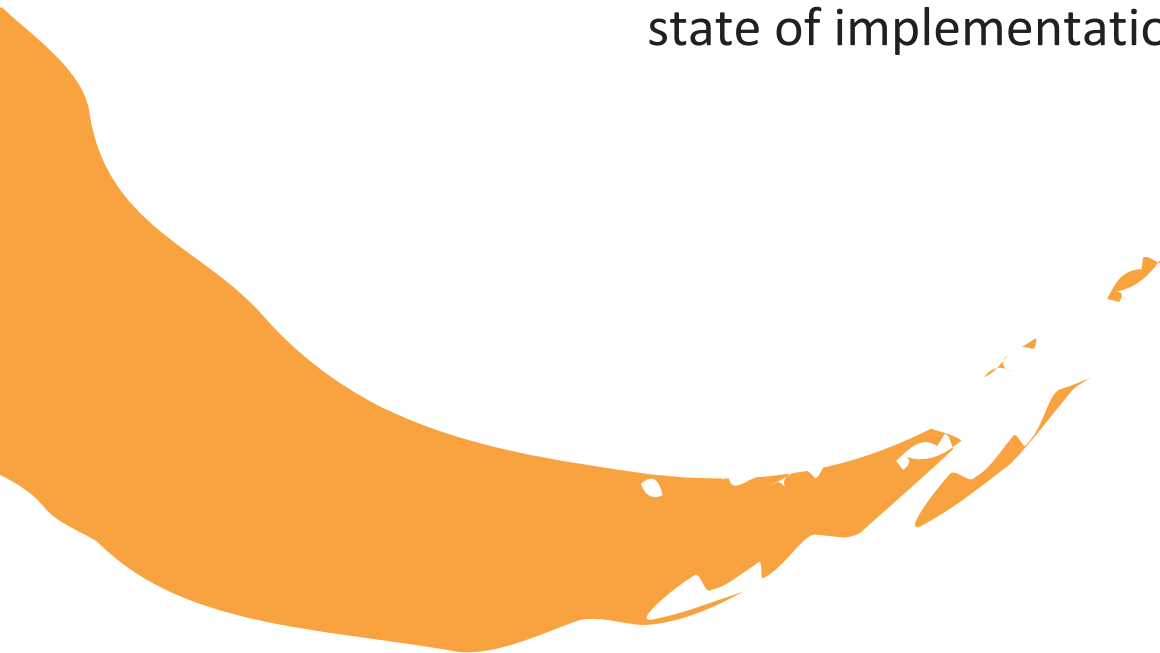




MINISTERO DELLE POLITICHE AGRICOLE  
ALIMENTARI E FORESTALI



# Organisation of on-going evaluation in Italy: state of implementation



L'AGRICOLTURA A BENEFICIO DI TUTTI



# **“Organisation of on-going evaluation in Italy: state of implementation”**

## **REPORT**

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## **Acronyms**

### **MA**

Managing Authority

### **CMEF**

Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

### **ESF**

European Social Fund

### **EFRD**

European Fund for Regional Development

### **EAFRD**

European Agricultural Fund for Regional Development

### **LAG**

Local Action Group

### **Mipaaf**

Ministry for Agricultural and Forestry Policies

### **NVVIP**

Regional evaluation and audit of public investments unit

### **RDP**

Rural Development Programme

### **UPE**

Unitary Plan of Evaluations

### **CMEF**

Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

### **AER**

Annual Execution Report

### **NRN**

National Rural Network

### **NSE**

National System for Evaluating Regional Policy

## Premise

Beginning in 2008, Managing Authorities (MA) of Rural Development Programmes (RDP) launched the necessary activities to establish the complex processes of evaluating rural development policy 2007-2013, set forth in Community regulations, by defining evaluation plans and the contents of the specific evaluation question, calling for procedures to outsource services of independent evaluation and setting up structures of “governance” of the evaluation process.

This report, after outlining principles and approaches that govern evaluation of rural development policy, offers an analysis of the state of implementation of the organisation of on-going evaluation in Italy; of time frames and choices made by Managing Authorities regarding assignment of on-going evaluation services, of the professional skills required, of expected products, including those intended to improve communication of evaluation results, and of funding employed; of the demand for evaluation expressed in terms of these specific evaluation questions and/or thematic and transverse in-depth investigations; of provisions regarding the interaction between on-going evaluation and evaluation of other territorial policies; of structures designed to support and guarantee the quality of on-going evaluation of RDPs. Based on the analysis of the Annual Execution Report of RDPs presented by MAs by June 2009 (for the year 2008), analysis is also offered of the main contents that emerged, of their correspondence to the *template* provided by the European Commission.

Finally, the report offers some useful reflections, so that the actors involved in evaluating rural development policy can better reflect and solidify the processes that can make evaluation an “ordinary” activity.

## Introduction

Programming and implementation of measures in favour of rural areas outlined by Community regulations currently in force are based on a design expressing Community priority objectives, National Strategic Plans and Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). The current regulation on rural development<sup>1</sup> introduces a more strategic approach to rural development, by defining three macro-objectives and reorganising sub-objectives and measure objectives compared to the previous programming cycle. Another new feature is that the current Rural Development Programmes fund all development measures called for in Community rulings in all rural areas of the European Union, whether classified as Convergence or Competitiveness objectives (toward implementation of policies financed by structural funds). Therefore, the RDP is the only programming document that implements rural development policy in an organic, systematic and unitary manner, through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

The emphasis on a more strategic approach toward rural development has also given rise to substantial changes in the system of evaluation and monitoring: “The approach to monitoring and evaluation in the 2007-2013 period is based on the same methods as previous periods, but will be implemented in a more systematic manner adapted to a series of new requirements set in regulations for rural development” (European Commission 2006<sup>2</sup>, p. 5). The major changes introduced consist of strengthening the strategic nature of monitoring and evaluation and the links between them; of the possibility to aggregate products, results and impacts of measures at a Community level, and above all of the organisation of *on-going* evaluation, which is carried out continuously during implementation of RDPs, regardless of their specific state of implementation. Therefore, evaluation in this cycle of programming (more so than in the past) is a fundamental tool for positively influencing processes of managing Rural Development Programmes, thus contributing to improving their efficiency and effectiveness.

In this very direction, evaluation can make a significant contribution to developing a “good practice”, as pointed out in Community Regulations and guidelines in the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) issued by the European Commission. Evaluation is indeed the place where critical nodes in Programme trends can be identified (both for processes and effects), and is the point of departure for all parties involved to improve quality and make potential changes.

Strongly of this conviction, the Ministry for Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies (Mipaaf), within the sphere of the National Rural Network Programme<sup>3</sup>, has established a National

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<sup>1</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2006), Manual of the Common Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation. Guideline Document 2007-2013 ([http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/index_en.htm)).

<sup>3</sup> The National Rural Network (NRN) is a program for support the implementation of rural development policy (Council Regulation – EC- No 1698/2005, art. 68).

System for Monitoring and Evaluating Rural Development Policies, with the goal of raising awareness of the real function of Programmes, improving transparency in evaluation processes and improving knowledge of the results and effects they generate.

The National System for Monitoring and Evaluating Rural Development Policies has already launched a series of activities (assistance to Managing Authorities, seminars, workshops, publications, etc.) with the operational goals of providing indications to Managing Authorities of RDPs on how to better organise activities of evaluation, contribute to developing a shared vision of evaluation as a useful activity necessary to the formulation and reorienting of programming processes and management of RDPs, support Managing Authorities of RDPs in identifying a concrete demand for evaluation, create conditions so that evaluation results are usable and respond to essential requirements of quality<sup>4</sup>.

Equally important is the capacity of the administration to provide direct or indirect comparisons with the evaluator regarding evaluation, data and methods used, results and potential recommendations. To this aim, the National System for Monitoring and Evaluating Rural Development Policies has already shown the advantages that derive from the structuring of an "RDP Evaluation Steering Group<sup>5</sup>", whose establishment is also called for in the Commission's guideline documents.

## **1. On-going Evaluation in the regulations and the National Rural Network proposal**

### **1.1 On-going Evaluation in Community regulations**

The group of activities that make up the current system of rural development evaluation is set forth in Reg. EC 1698/2005.

In Art. 80 of the cited regulations, the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) is introduced. The CMEF handbook offers a detailed framework of evaluation questions and the system of indicators. Unlike the previous programming period, the guidelines contained in the CMEF are less binding. The STAR 12004 document, in fact, also imposed strong indications regarding methodologies for use in evaluation of RDPs 2000-2006, as well as binding rigidly the logic of connection between effects and indicators. In this sense, the new guidelines appear to leave greater leeway to the evaluator, suggesting (mandatory, in effect) a bulky set of indicators to be quantified, and also a logic of "hierarchy" and how they are to be used, especially in view of *benchmarking* and counterfactual situations. According to CMEF

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<sup>4</sup>Where quality should not be understood only in terms of quality of data and methodologies used, but also in terms of capacity the results to generate added value in terms of knowledge for the actors concerned in the implementation and effects of rural development policy.

<sup>5</sup>"Organisation of Ongoing Evaluation", (2008) National Rural Network.  
<http://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/337>.



guidelines, evaluation is a process that makes it possible to judge measures based on results, impacts and the needs they are intended to satisfy. Evaluation analyses effectiveness, meaning achievement of objectives; efficiency, that is, the relationship between resources employed and results achieved; and the appropriateness of the measure, or the degree to which the objectives of the measure pertain to needs.

It seems appropriate to emphasise that changes in the system of monitoring and evaluation reflect major conceptual changes introduced by reform, meaning moving from a prevalently *measure-led* approach to a markedly *objective-led* approach, and the affirmation of a strategic approach to programming. Moreover, for the first time on-going evaluation is introduced which includes “all activities of evaluation to be implemented during the entire programming period, including ex ante, mid-term and ex post evaluations, as well as all other activities connected with evaluation which authorities in charge of the programme deem useful for improving management of the programme itself<sup>6</sup>”. Evaluation becomes a complex process, as well as a series of “products”, and involves a series of actors and activities.

Other regulatory provisions on evaluation are contained in Reg. 1698/2005, arts. 84-87, which should be mentioned for their relevance. In short, according to Art. 84: “Evaluations are for the purpose of improving the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of implementation of rural development programmes. They measure the impact of programmes in relation to Community strategic guidelines and specific problems of rural development in Member States and affected regions, particularly as regards the needs of sustainable development and environmental impact...” Article 86 refers to mid-term and ex post evaluation and specifies ways of managing evaluation, and especially its purpose:

- examine the progress of the programme compared to its objectives, using indicators of result and potential impact;
- improve the quality of the programme and its implementation;
- examine proposals of substantive changes to the programme.
- Prepare mid- term evaluation and *ex post* evaluations.

Furthermore, comma 6 specifies that mid-term and ex post evaluation analyse the degree of utilisation of resources, the effectiveness and efficiency of EAFRD programming, its socio-economic impact and its impact on Community priorities. They examine whether objectives of the programme have been achieved, and attempt to draw useful conclusions for policies of rural development. They identify factors that have contributed to the success or failure of the programme, including considerations of sustainability, and highlight good practices.

Despite changes, some of the European Commission’s basic methodological choices remain. Evaluation continues to be viewed as a process that makes it possible to judge measures based on needs, results and impacts, in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and relevance. In methodological terms, the choice adopted in the previous programming period is clearly

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<sup>6</sup> European Commission (2006), Manual of the Common Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation. Guidance Note B “Evaluation guidelines” [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/guidance/note\\_b\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/guidance/note_b_en.pdf).

repeated: “The key tool of evaluation is the so-called ‘intervention logic’, which establishes the causal chain from the budgetary input, via the output and the results of measures, to their impact. Thus, the intervention logic guides the consecutive assessment of a measure’s contribution to achieving its objectives.”(European Commission, 2006, CMEF – Guideline note B –Evaluation Guidelines, p. 3-4).

Community regulations, in addition to defining principles and approaches, provide a body of information as a basis for MAs to create their own systems of on-going evaluation, and, obviously, sets time limits for implementation. Some aspects of the evaluation system are very clearly defined (see the following table). Others, especially as regards organisational indications, can be modulated based on specific focus, needs and also MAs’ expectations with respect to information feedback from evaluation systems still being defined.

**Table 1 – Scheduled deadlines for various evaluation activities**

Activity	Responsibility	Deadline
Assignment of On-going RDP Evaluation 07-13	Managing Authority	31/12/2008
Report in the AER	Managing Authority	30/06/2008-2013
Delivery of mid-term Evaluation Report	Independent Evaluator	31/12/2010
Delivery of ex post Evaluation Report	Independent Evaluator	31/12/2015

Source: INEA

## 1.2 The concept of *on-going* Evaluation

As mentioned in the above sections, stimuli appear evident toward considering a new approach to evaluation, which no longer solely addresses *accountability*, but also geared toward its use as a tool to provide ways to understand the function and effects of policies. Confirming this approach, a European Network has been established to evaluate rural development, whose first goal is the sharing of experience among experts in various Member States (*European Evaluation Network for Rural Development*).

At the national level, Mipaaf has “re-launched”, setting up a National System of Monitoring and Evaluation, in the National Strategic Plan, for rural development policies, with the objective of making such activities and their results more effective and more widely used, both by structures in charge of programming and managing authorities of RDPs and by the partnership and civil society<sup>7</sup>. Mipaaf therefore hopes to improve the quality of evaluation through a more aware and responsible approach by Managing Authorities, and to support the system with actions that will increase evaluation capacity.

<sup>7</sup>“Governing the evaluation of rural development” (2009) Martina Bolli, Patrizia Fagiani, Alessandro Monteleone, (Agriregionieuropa Year 5, nr. 18). [http://agriregionieuropa.univpm.it/dettart.php?id\\_articolo=486](http://agriregionieuropa.univpm.it/dettart.php?id_articolo=486).

As we have said, the complex goals of evaluation in progress consist of generating a “value added” in cognitive terms, especially regarding effects of the measures funded. Only in this way is it possible to imagine that processes of management and (re)programming of policies can enhance information that is useful for improving efficiency and effectiveness. The first principle of the national approach to evaluation implies that Managing Authorities of programmes, which are in charge of evaluation activities, have a greater awareness of the importance of these activities.

In preparing evaluation activities, the principle of transparency becomes crucial: providing information about activities in progress and publishing results are the basics for increasing the use of evaluation in support of rural development policy. A process of evaluation cannot be considered complete, if it does not provide adequate room for dissemination of results within the administration, but also externally, in favour of public opinion. This is an important step, because “telling” about partial and final results of measures in an ample, articulated manner, in non-technical language, increases the community’s sense of belonging to policies, and improves the relationship between the administration and citizens.

The quality of a process of evaluation does not end with its internal organisation or the dissemination of results. Encouraging the sharing of different experiences and possible solutions to common problems can further improve the overall quality of evaluation processes. The implementation of rural development policy involves a great number of actors, interested parties, traditions, experiences and needs that are also very different (European institutions and local administrations; heterogeneous production sectors, associations and businesses). Already, during the last programming period, the need to coordinate the actors involved in evaluation of rural development policies was manifest in experiences that, though they responded to different logics, were based on sharing of experiences and knowledge. In continuity with these experiences, in the 2007-2013 rural development programming period, the “network” principle plays a priority role, as part of a system of competencies, experiences and professionalism.

### **1.3 The organisation of *on-going evaluation*: National Rural Network proposals**

The National Rural Network<sup>8</sup> and the National Evaluation System encourage the participation of interested parties in designing and managing RDP evaluation activities as soon as evaluation questions are defined, and in all phases of the evaluation process. Indeed, the various actors involved have specific and original cognitive needs regarding the implementation of policies (for example, effectiveness, distributive effects), which can be adequately exploited and can come together in forming evaluation questions. Thus, participation becomes one of the principles in the national approach to evaluation. From this point of view, the committent can encourage important processes of openness and participation, for example by specifying in tender specifications for evaluation services a broad and articulated composition for specific

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<sup>8</sup>“Organisation of Ongoing Evaluation”, (2008) National Rural Network.  
<http://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/337> .

sector competencies of the working group, and also by involving researchers, experts and universities in Steering Groups.

The approach adopted emphasises, finally, the importance of integrating evaluation strategies for rural development with evaluation of measures of other policies, implemented at the regional level. For example, compared to unitary regional policy, there are shared cognitive needs which can provide an overall vision of the effects of various policies on the territory. For this reason, the National Rural Network participates in the activities of the National System for Evaluating unitary regional policy (NSE), respecting the specifics of the normative and institutional framework of the various Funds involved (EAFRD, EFRD, EFD). It is hoped that accompanying paths of methodology and organisation of Managing Authorities of the various Funds for evaluation activities can be constructed from the respective support structures in a coordinated manner, so as to improve awareness among the central and regional administrations involved about the effective integration of policies which affect a single territory, and at the same time, through dialogue among various administrations, encourage consistency of the entire programming framework and the establishment of greater synergy among the policies.

In particular, as regards the time frame for assigning evaluation services (especially for the execution of evaluation reports), the funds allocated, the evaluation questions and the contents of the AER, Community regulations require that they at least fulfil the minimum requirements. For evaluation support structures and the interaction of other territorial policies with evaluation, rather, instructions are not binding. On these aspects of the organisation of *on-going* evaluation, the successive parts of the report define the state of the art and its variability in Italy.

## **2. The organisation of *on-going* evaluation in Italy.**

What are the choices made by the MAs of the RDPs regarding *on-going* evaluation for the 2007-2013 programming period?

This section, based on currently available documentation (evaluation plans for RDPs, Unitary Evaluation Plans, where they have been defined, bid notices and the tender specifications issued for the selection of external evaluation contracts), is designed to answer this question, by offering an analysis of the state of implementation and choices adopted regarding independent evaluators and allocated funds, the content of MAs' evaluation questions and communicating the results of evaluation analyses.

An analysis outlining the scenario of the organisation of *on-going* evaluation of rural development policy in Italy for 2007-2013.

### **2.1 Assignment of *on-going* evaluation services**

Art. 84 of Reg. (EC) 1698/2005 says that evaluation activities must be performed by independent evaluators and that Member States shall mobilise the necessary human and financial resources for the execution of evaluations, organise production and gathering of

required data and use information supplied by the survey system. Despite the opportunity to establish evaluation activities during the entire RDP implementation period (beginning in 2007), and the need to make surveys and analyses necessary to make a mid-term evaluation report by 31.12.2010, in general, at European and national levels, there has been a worrying delay in processes of **outsourcing to independent evaluators**. However, a recent round table of the European Evaluation Network<sup>9</sup> revealed that Italy's MAs are among the fastest in Europe. These data also appear to outline an even graver picture than what emerged from surveys conducted by the European Evaluation Network's *Helpdesk* in June 2009, which showed that only a fourth of Member States had launched procedures<sup>10</sup>, and most were scheduled to close by the end of 2009. In launching procedures to select independent evaluators, the choices of Managing Authorities of RDPs mainly involved method and length of on-going evaluation contracts. Regarding the former point, in conformance with Community regulations on rural development and national rules about service tenders<sup>11</sup>, Managing Authorities of RDPs, in calling for procedures to select independent evaluators, could choose to outsource evaluation activities to one or more parties, using the following methods:

- Issuing a notice of open tender
- Calling a restricted tender
- In-house assignment.

In terms of duration of contract, evaluation activities could be awarded to one (all *on-going* evaluation activities for the entire duration of programming) or more independent evaluators (a part of evaluation activities).

In this regard, nearly all Managing Authorities of RDPs in Italy opted to issue a single notice of tender, by which to select an evaluator for the entire 2007-2013 programming period.

The only exceptions were Piedmont and Friuli Venezia Giulia. In the first case, the MA of the RDP chose to award *on-going* evaluation services *in house* to its own Regional Body for Evaluation and Verification of Public Investments (NUVAL), with the support of a Steering Group made up of experts in evaluating rural development policy. A somewhat different choice was made by Friuli Venezia Giulia, which assigned services of *on-going* evaluation only for the first three years of programming (2008-2010), until the mid-term evaluation was complete; thus excluding successive evaluation activities, including *ex-post*, from the current selection.

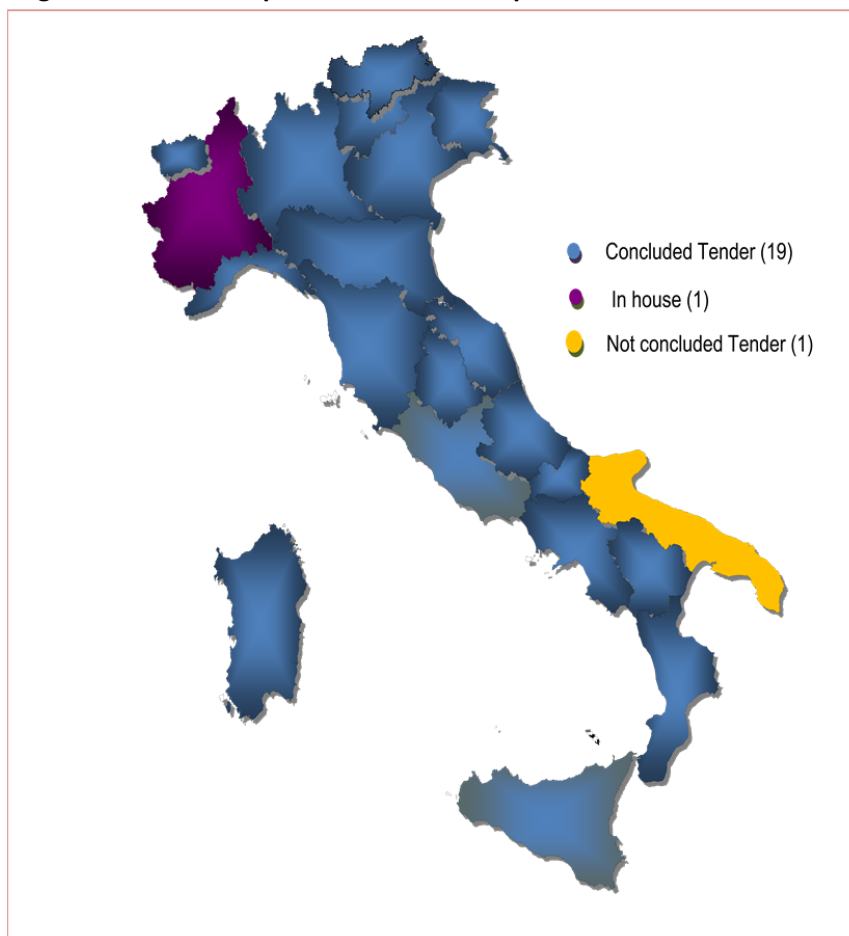
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<sup>9</sup> For further information see "Third and fourth meetings of the Evaluation Expert Committee" – the Evaluation Expert Network (March 2010), <http://agriculture.gouv.fr/sections/publications/evaluation-politiques/evaluations/estimation-effets>.

<sup>10</sup> For further information see "Preparing for the Mid-Term Evaluation of Rural Development Programme – A survey of the Member States" - European Evaluation Network for Rural Development – June 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Legislative Decree n° 163/2006, as amended by Decree No. 152, September 11, 2008.

**Figure 1 - State of implementation of independent evaluator selections**



Source: INEA processing of data

As regards the launch schedule for selection procedures, there is a **general delay**, especially in presenting mid-term evaluations of Programmes to the European Commission by 31 December 2010. On average, the time elapsed between approval of Rural Development Programmes in Italy<sup>12</sup> and issuance of calls for tender of evaluation services is more than a year (398 days). The best was the Lombardy Region, which took 59 days, whereas for all other Programmes more than a year elapsed, with peaks of 690 days.

At present<sup>13</sup>, 20 calls for tender have officially been awarded or are

being adjudged; evaluators were selected by December 2008 for only 8 RDPs (or within the first half of 2009); for several MAs, contracting of independent evaluators was completed in the first quarter of 2010, and only a few had begun structuring evaluation process activities (figure 1). Several evaluators in 2010 were involved for the first time in preparing an annual report of RDP evaluation – generally with 30 March deadlines – preliminary to drafting the chapter describing on-going evaluation activities in the Annual Execution Report (AER deadline is 30 June). The deadline for tender call for Puglia is in May.

Consequently, considering the above-described state of implementation of independent evaluator selection, the time available for them to complete mid-term evaluations<sup>14</sup> is more than a year in only eight cases, where tenders were awarded within 2008 (16/18 months),

<sup>12</sup> Reference to the date of the first approval of the Rural Development Programmes for 2007-2013.

<sup>13</sup> The data and information refer to the official sources (OJEC and GURI) of the call for bids and of the notice of contract awards updated to March 31, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> The art. 61 of Reg. EC 1974/2006 provides that the interim evaluations of the PSR should be submitted to the European Commission by December 31, 2010.

whereas all other Regions/A.P.s will take up to 9 months for structuring, surveying, analysis and processing of evaluation judgments and/or recommendations.

The causes of delays in launching selection procedures can be laid down to the complexity of *on-going* evaluation, but also to contingent factors that affected Administrations in the early phases of programme implementation, mainly:

- New features of *on-going* evaluation, which obviously required time to define various aspects of organisation, management, procedure and content;
- The need for clarity on various matters<sup>15</sup>, called for in regulations and the CMEF, on the part of designated Community bodies (DG AGRI and *Helpdesk* of the European Evaluation Expert Network);
- The European Commission requirement for revision of *baseline* indicators, which came during the launching of Programmes.
- The additional need to revise Programmes in light of the *Health Check* and new challenges;
- The juxtaposition of *ex post* evaluation activities in the 2000-2006 programming period with tender selection of *on-going* evaluation services.

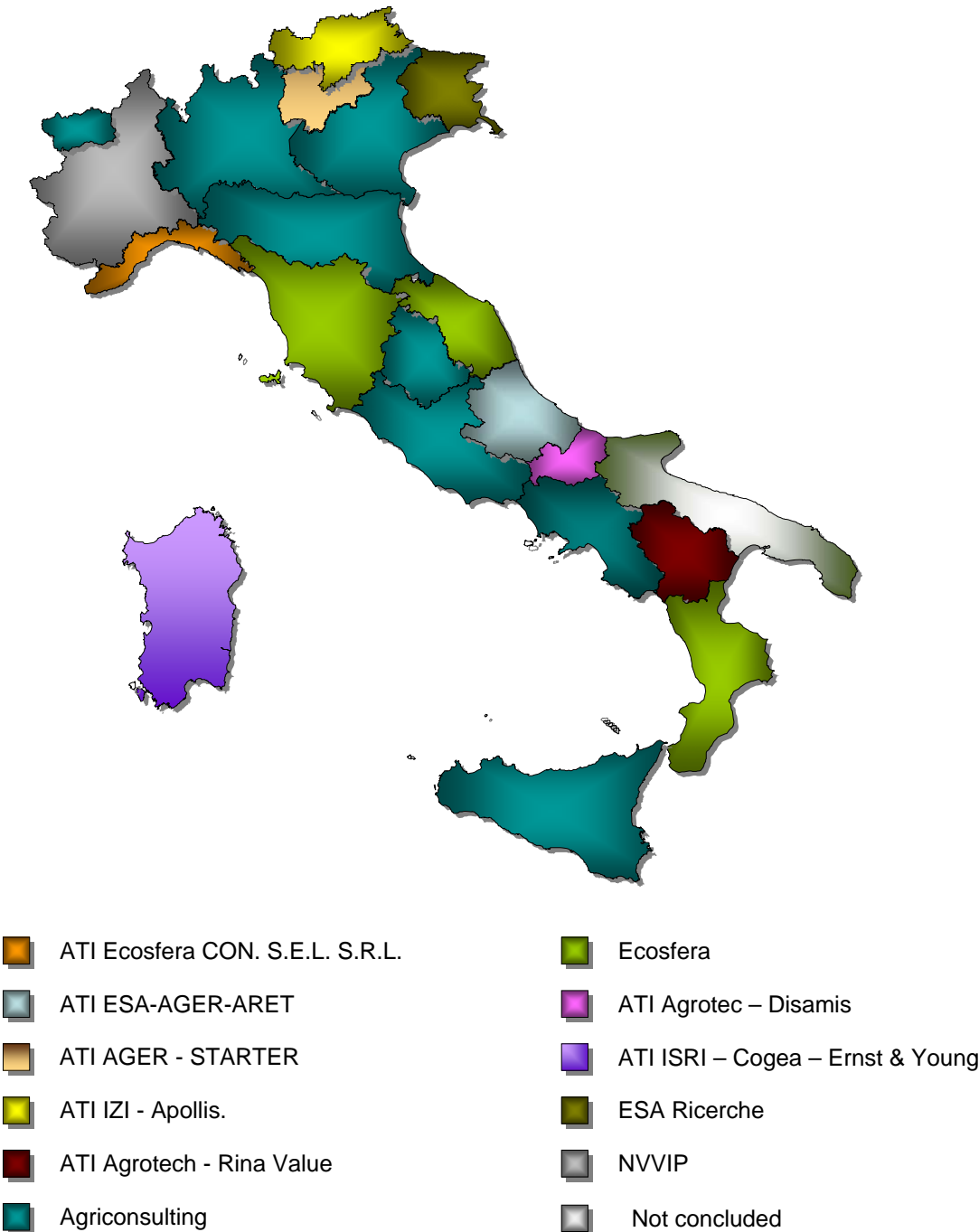
The result of analysis of evaluators **selected** to perform *on-going* evaluation services reveals a framework that is not much different from the 2000-2006 programming period: in some cases re-allocations were recorded (parties already involved in evaluation in the previous period, but for different RDPs than the current ones) as well as some replications (parties already involved in evaluation in the previous period in RDPs under current programming). Some interesting aspects may be pointed out, such as awarding the most lucrative tender to individual evaluators, and the concentration of partners in less lucrative contracts. Currently, in fact, out of 21 RDPs (figure 2), there are 15 independent evaluators involved in *on-going* evaluations, of which 7 partners are involved in 7 RDPs (with 36% of total funds allocated for *on-going* evaluation in Italy), 2 individual evaluators are involved in 12 RDPs (with roughly 60% of total funds allocated for *on-going* RDP evaluation in Italy). For the Piedmont Region, evaluation services were awarded to NUVAL (4% of total allocated funds for *on-going* evaluation in Italy). The overall picture of tenders also reveals another interesting aspect, the increase in the number of independent evaluators, with the entry of parties already experienced in evaluation of other public policies. In any case, analysis of evaluators' CVs shows that nearly all have specific experience in evaluation of rural development policy as well as evaluation of LEADERS; and in some cases they had prior experience in technical assistance in managing rural development measures during the 2000-2006 programming period. One interesting aspect is the establishment of partnerships, often apparently in response to the opportunity of pooling various experience not specifically related to rural development, acquired in the fields of evaluating other public policies, especially the current policy of cohesion. This may lead to an interesting "crossover" between evaluation contexts, in terms of methodological innovation

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<sup>15</sup> Reference to the difficulties encountered by the Managing Authority in interpreting the regulations and directions of the CMEF, repeatedly reported and discussed in the meeting of the Committee of European experts.

and survey and evaluation analysis tools.

Figure 2- Selected evaluators



Source: INEA processing of data



## 2.2 Requests for evaluation services

### 2.2.1. Services and products required of evaluators

As regards point-by-point identification of evaluation services and products to be required of evaluators in tender competitions, the NRN has provided a series of useful elements to respond better to the needs of Administrations, in terms of activities, time frame, survey and analysis methodologies, gathering of data, communication of results and interface between various parties involved in evaluation *governance*<sup>16</sup>. The same definition of tender specifications is also accompanied by a specific action by the NRN – TF Monitoring and Evaluation, which is also aimed at supporting a clearer definition of MAs' evaluation questions.

In general, tender specifications carry precise instructions about required services and products. Standard tender contents involve:

- Activities, evaluation reports and their characteristics;
- Organisation of the work of evaluation;
- Methodological instructions about surveys and evaluation analysis;
- Indications about sources for gathering data;
- The working group;
- The system of relationships in which the evaluator must be involved;
- Time frame for evaluation activities and production of reports;
- Other products expected (thematic evaluation analysis, data banks, communication and dissemination of evaluation results).

As regards the first point, table 2 presents an analysis of activities, services and products generally required by Administrations. Requests from Managing Authorities regarding organisation of evaluation activities indicate the desire to provide guidelines and to have guarantees of the quality of evaluation surveys, but also to provide constant oversight, beginning from when the design for evaluation is approved. It is also clear that, during the programming period, new survey needs may emerge, calling for revisions of the evaluation mandate. Indeed, Administrations point out the need to agree upon the evaluation design proposed by the evaluator, which defines the methodology and planning of RDP evaluation, but they also call for revision following the results of mid-term evaluation.

In almost all cases, the indications of the CMEF and the National Rural Network have been widely followed and often exceeded, regarding phases in the evaluation process (structuring, observation, analysis and judgment).

A strong requirement of MAs is structuring of adequate information systems for gathering and reporting primary data on the part of evaluators. In this sense, it appears that results of ex-

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<sup>16</sup> For further information see: "Organisation of Ongoing Evaluation", (2008) National Rural Network. <http://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/337>.

post evaluation have not always been capitalised satisfactorily, with respect to the capacity of information systems to furnish useful data and information in evaluation processes. Administrations therefore provide precise instructions about making direct surveys (gathering primary data) to be integrated with secondary data furnished by monitoring systems.

In this context, models and tools for processing and reporting data and information gathered during surveys take on relevance, and Managing Authorities issue precise requirements in the tender specifications about sampling and the use of geo-referencing techniques, econometric models and input-output; in addition to requiring the production of specific data bases and maps, which are useful for integrating regional information systems. The Lazio Region, for example, supplies detailed instructions on the minimum sample of beneficiaries to be selected with regard to the specific survey topic. As for the gathering of secondary data, precise instructions are given about sources (FADN-REA, the National Agriculture Information System, and regional data banks).

Support is also provided for conducting quality research (interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, and case studies) which best respond to the specifics of funded measures, and integrate quantitative surveys of monitoring systems for Rural Development Programmes. This opportunity is especially evident as regards evaluation analysis of the LEADER approach and Axis 3 of RDPs. In this regard, some interesting initiatives call for the evaluator to make periodic visits to measure beneficiaries, to make direct, systematic observations and facilitate communication about the effects of RDPs (Veneto).

**Table 2 – Actions and products of evaluation required in Tender specifications**

<u>Expected actions and products</u>	<u>Administration Instructions</u>
<b>Evaluation design</b>	<u>Required contents:</u> detailed plan of activities, time frame, outputs, methodology, verification of conditions of evaluability, proposal of additional evaluation questions and thematic investigation. <u>Average time of consignment:</u> 2-3 months from date of contract.
<b>Annual evaluation reports</b>	<u>Required contents:</u> description of on-going evaluation activities. In most cases, precise instructions are not given. <u>Average time of consignment:</u> yearly, with deadlines in March/April.
<b>On-going Evaluation in Annual Execution Reports<sup>17</sup></b>	<u>Required contents:</u> In general, reference is made to the Report format indicated by the CMEF <sup>18</sup> . <u>Average time of consignment:</u> yearly, with deadlines in March/April.
<b>Implementation of ex-ante evaluation</b>	<u>Required contents:</u> In a few cases, updating is required for analyses <sup>19</sup> on the development of

<sup>17</sup> Ex art. 86, 3. EC Regulation, 1698/2005.

<sup>18</sup> European Commission (2006a), Manual of the Common Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation. Guidance Note B "Evaluation guidelines", chap. 6. [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/guidance/note\\_b\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/guidance/note_b_en.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Among the authorities that express in more detail the need for updating the ex-ante evaluation there are "Lazio" and "Valle d'Aosta". Tuscany for example, requires update the ex-ante evaluation after the evolution of the PSR and approval of Local

	RDPs and, in this context, local development plans (LEADER) and revision of indicators. <u>Average time of consignment</u> : not stated.
<b>Mid-term evaluation report</b>	<u>Required contents</u> : In general, reference is made to the Report format indicated by the CMEF <sup>20</sup> . <u>Average time of consignment</u> : October/November 2010 for consignment of drafts of Reports.
<b>Updated SEA report</b>	<u>Required contents</u> : In some cases, analysis is required on level of achievement of targets of environmental sustainability and respect for recommendations. <u>Average time of consignment</u> : not stated.
<b>Updated mid-term evaluation report</b>	<u>Required contents</u> : There are no special indications. <u>Average time of consignment</u> : In general, March 2012.
<b>Ex-post evaluation report</b> <sup>21</sup>	<u>Required contents</u> : In a few cases indications are provided on the schema. <u>Average time of consignment</u> : In general, October 2015.
<b>Summary of Evaluation Reports</b>	<u>Required contents</u> : A technical summary for the Administration, one for the public and one for the partnership. Summaries are also required in a second language (generally English).
<b>Thematic or transversal evaluations</b>	<u>Required contents</u> : Specific evaluation surveys and annual thematic reports, support for evaluation activities of unitary territorial policy. <u>Average time of consignment</u> : not stated.
<b>Statistical and geo-referenced data banks</b>	<u>Required contents</u> : data gathered by the evaluator and adequate information technology support.

**Source: Regional call for tenders for PSR evaluator-INEA.**

As regards representation of evaluation reports, Administrations mainly require statements of evaluation judgements on aspects of a strategic nature, as well as the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of RDPs. There is particular interest in the effects of programmes, in terms of synergies with those funded by State aid, policies of cohesion, the Fund for Underused Areas and other financial instruments, as well as in the analysis of potential failures, good practices (and how they can be transferred), the indirect effects of measures funded within Rural Development Programmes.

With regard to recommendations, requests have a more operative nature and concern particularly proposals for procedural and organisational adaptation of strategy and

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Rural Development Programmes (PLSR) of provincial competence and integrated local development Strategies (SISL) relative to the axis 4 (Axis Leader). Tuscany also asks to review indicators of output, result and impact, where are not quantified in the ex-ante evaluation.

<sup>20</sup> European Commission (2006a), Manual of the Common Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation. Guidance Note B "Evaluation guidelines", chap. 6, [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/guidance/note\\_b\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/guidance/note_b_en.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Ex art. 86, 5. EC Regulation, 1698/2005.

implementation of the Rural Development Programme, the efficiency of funding flows and information systems, or, more specifically, the functionality of information procedures for presenting and managing requests for aid and payment.

### 2.2.2. Professional profiles and the relationships among evaluators

Requests made by Administrations for professional profiles of working groups reveal the **awareness of the complexity of services open for tender**. In general, a multidisciplinary composition is requested for the working group, with a minimum of five years experience (sometimes even eight) in the themes of the first three axes of the RDP. The project coordinator is usually required to have not less than 10 years experience in evaluation of rural development policies, or less frequently, of Community policies.

The professional qualifications most in demand are in agri-environment, forests, agriculture, local development and ability to conduct socio-economic analysis. There is little demand for professional profiles with specific competencies in evaluating the impacts of integrated planning and the LEADER approach. For the latter, only the MA for the Marche region makes a specific request for an expert. Finally, the Administrations' focus on the need to gather primary data and make qualitative surveys is reflected in the persistent demand for experts in monitoring, surveying, statistics and managing data banks.

The analysis of tender specifications also shows the Administration's particular attention to defining the system of relationships within which the evaluator must perform his or her services. In particular, there is a need for **continuous and systematic relationships** between evaluator and Administration, which appears to supersede the logic of outsourcing of services, emphasising the need to share the evaluation process, and not just the results. Special attention is given to **coordination modalities** of the working group with the Managing Authority and the partnership. In some cases, the adequate continuity of such relationships, in addition to the proposal of innovative solutions that encourage better communications among the three parties, is a relevant criterion in selecting evaluators as well. In addition to providing more adequate organisational and procedural methods, the evaluator is also required to test logical solutions that facilitate coordination with the Managing Authority. In almost all tender specifications, Administrations also establish **guarantee rules** for maintaining the candidate working group, and request authorisation in advance for potential changes. Little detail is provided about modality and frequency of evaluator interaction with other institutions, though he or she is expected to have frequent communication with them: IGRUE, EC, NVVIP and the Paying Agency. In view of promoting the relations with the national rural network, the evaluator is requested to participate to the events organized by the network. In some cases, is also required the interaction between the evaluator and the Regional body for the agricultural development.

### 2.2.3. Communicating evaluation results

Administrations seem very careful in planning actions and setting up communications projects

that can ensure **transparency** of implemented measures, and encourage the dissemination of information about the effects of rural development policy. The main targets are the partnership and populations in rural areas. In this sense, evaluators are required to perform actions and produce products that are easily **usable** and **differentiated** in relation to type of target, as well as solutions that are also innovative, and effective in communicating evaluation results, especially when aimed at the public. Often, a **communication plan** is required, and in some tender announcements their adequacy and innovation become selection criteria for candidates' technical skills, but more often they are included in the Rural Development Programme's communication plan.

Administrations have put great importance on communications and disseminating evaluation results. The actions and products most frequently required by Managing Authorities concern participation in, or organisation and managing of, public (and periodic) events to convey evaluation results, the drafting of reports, summaries and newsletters.

In this sense, there is also a strong focus on defining methods of interaction with the socio-economic partnership and the population. In some cases, specification is also made of time frame, the minimum number of events to be programmed, and the target of reference for each type of event. In the tender for the Tuscany Region, for example, the evaluator is asked to set up seminars and other annual events to study and convey results of evaluation activities geared toward subjects (a minimum of 50 for seminars) previously identified by Managing Authorities, as well as participating in a minimum number of events (3) for the entire contract period. A timetable is also indicated for setting up study or communications seminars.

The production of summary evaluation reports in a second language, usually English, but also German and French, is unanimously required in tender notices, with the obvious goal of facilitating communications, exchange of good practices and making comparisons with other Member States.

#### 2.2.4. Funding

The need to make the wisest choices for using adequate funds in assigning *on-going* evaluation services, which would reflect strategic relevance towards improving the programming of territorial policies, and the increased complexity compared to the 2000-2006 programming period, has already been pointed out by the National Rural Network as part of its activities in support of establishing the Monitoring and Evaluation Task Force evaluation systems for RDPs<sup>22</sup>.

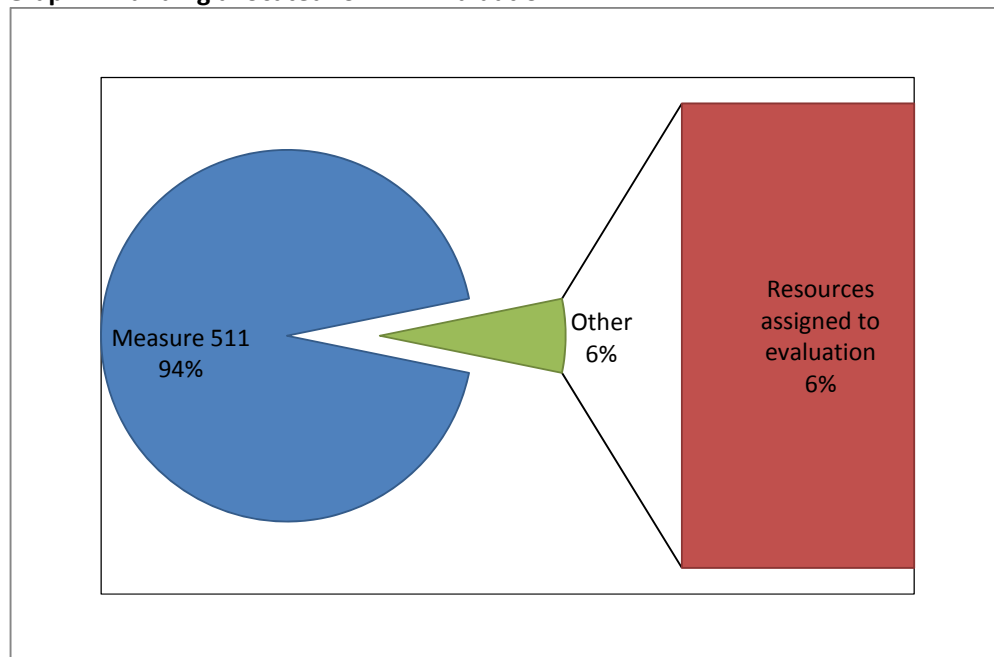
In this regard, allocation of funding has revealed greater attention on the part of MAs, and affected an average of 6% (graph 1) of the availability of 511 "Technical Assistance" measures of RDPs, with a range varying from 2% (Friuli Venezia Giulia<sup>23</sup>) to 15% (Emilia Romagna).

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<sup>22</sup> For further information see: "Organisation of Ongoing Evaluation", (2008) National Rural Network. <http://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/337>.

<sup>23</sup> Friuli Venezia Giulia has contracted the PSR assessment activities relating to the first three years of programming.

**Graph 1- Funding allocated for RDP Evaluation**



Source: INEA processing of data.

Total resources allocated by MAs amount to 26.5 Meuro, 22.8 Meuro of which are actually allocated, or 0.2% of total RDP resources.

The **average decline**<sup>24</sup> in tender compensation is significant, 18% with a range from 36% (Campania Region) to 6% (Autonomous Province of Trento). This result is evidently influenced by the combined effect of the weight assigned to the criterion of best economic offer, 25% on average, the possibility of evaluators making solo bids to offer a higher rebate margin, and the fact that the latter have been granted tenders with higher compensation.

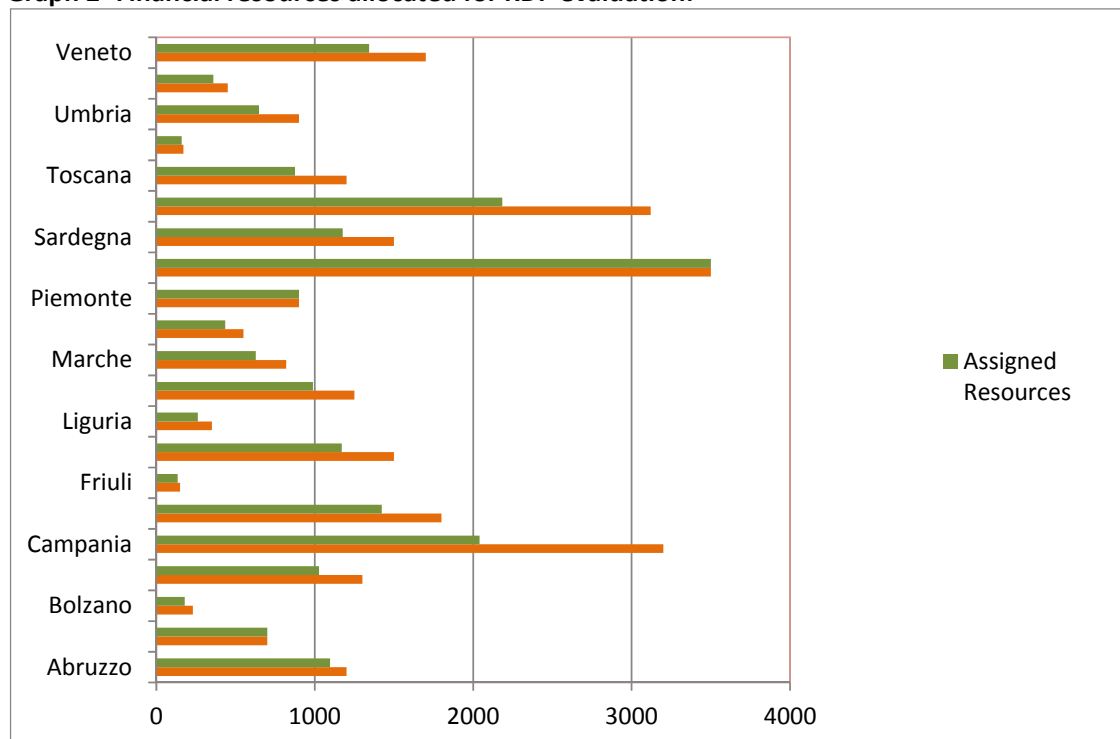
Financial resources funded for RDP evaluation services have been received in most cases by measure 511 in RDPs. But the logical correlation has not always been met between the complexity of evaluation services required (thematic surveys, LEADER approach, updating of SEAs and *ex-ante* evaluation, financial burden of RDP, request for the formulation of further evaluative questions, organisation of events to communicate evaluation results) and the amount of resources available for tender.

In only one case, in the absence of resources available for measure 511, they were supplemented by dipping into ordinary resources in the regional budget. This choice seems to reflect a broadened design of service, trusting to the effects of the entire regional policy for rural development, not bound by the nature of financial sources employed and integrated into

<sup>24</sup> For the calculation of the average were taken down the fees awarded officially in all cases except for the Puglia (expiring), Basilicata (official data not available), for which it was computed the value put on notice.

the activities of the unitary regional evaluation plan and the specific plan for RDP.

**Graph 2- Financial resources allocated for RDP evaluation.**



Source: INEA processing.

\*The figure for tender compensation is not available.

#### 2.2.5. Selection criteria for tender

An analysis of selection criteria for tender is made to provide some insights on the importance given by RDP MAs to various elements of evaluation services offered, with regard to what is required – represented in preceding sections – but also to possible innovative offers presented by evaluators.

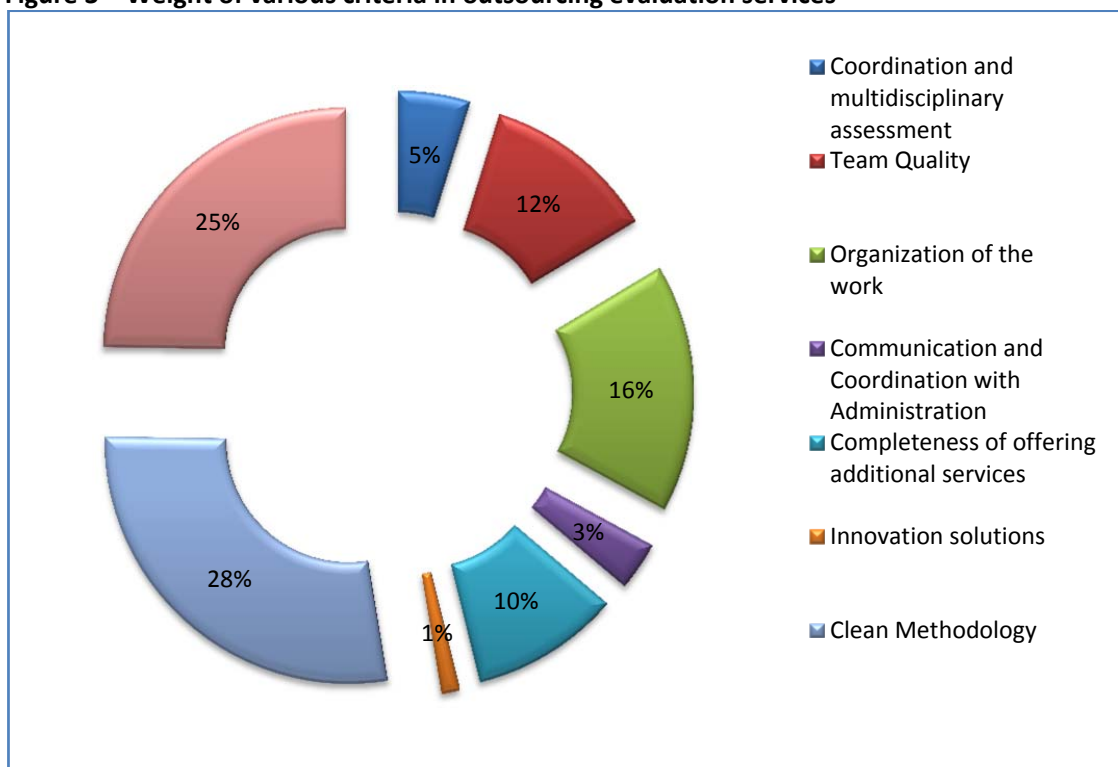
In this regard, Administrations **differed widely** in their **tender specifications**, and in **differing levels of detail** (figure 3). The most important criteria for granting tender may be by adequateness of survey methodologies proposed (approximately 29%) and modalities of work organisation and time frame proposed for the performance of services (15%). The use of computer support and data banks (as well as implementation of quality control systems) significantly affects the criterion of work organisation. Frequently, the evaluator is asked to present innovative solutions<sup>25</sup>. Other selection criteria are modality of interaction with Administrations, the proposal of thematic surveys and added evaluative questions, as well as

<sup>25</sup> The weight of the criterion on "innovation" of the proposed solutions refers only to cases mentioned explicitly in the contract as a criterion distinct compared to the other.

actions and communications products and dissemination of evaluation results. As concerns the work group criterion (12%), it includes requirements regarding adequate professionalism, the number of persons regularly involved, the structuring of the work group itself and possible proposal of additional professional qualification to those required. In some cases, experience in performing similar services, for example, in the sphere of evaluating structural funds, becomes important.

Finally, the importance of economic offer is 25% on average, though it can reach 30% to 40% (e.g. Umbria, A.P. Bolzano and Lombardy).

**Figure 3 – Weight of various criteria in outsourcing evaluation services**



Source: INEA processing on Tender Notices.

### **3. The specific evaluation questions expressed by Authorities in charge of RDPs.**

The evaluation question represents the object of RDP evaluation activities and expresses the European Commission's need for knowledge on the one hand, and those specifically of the MA on the other, about the results and effects of RDPs.

For its part, the European Commission has expressed its evaluation demands through **common evaluation questions** associated with individual RDP measures and included in the CMEF – Note B of guidelines, to which independent evaluators must answer in mid-term and ex-post



evaluations. The questions are formulated “*in such a way as to be used for a wide range of programmes*” and respond mainly to the European Commission’s minimum requests for information, including the EC’s need to take account of CAP investments in rural development. It was hoped, based on Community guidelines and the logic of measures undertaken, that RDP MAs would formulate their own more specific evaluative questions. This can be expressed through formulation of additional evaluative questions (according to modalities indicated by the EC) or by thematic and transversal evaluations.

In this regard, an analysis of reference documents (mainly tender notices, evaluation plans and Annual Execution Reports) shows that the **specific evaluative question** was expressed by Managing Authorities in a **clear and detailed** manner, and it seems to highlight an important awareness of “knowledge feedback” expected of evaluation.

The processes and modalities of defining specific evaluative questions are varied, but in general they attempt to reveal the requirements of various parties with an interest in territorial rural development measures.

For nearly all RDPs, a **path** was established with broad **participation** (focus groups, meetings, workshops), which also involved Administrations in charge of other policies (cohesion, Funds for Underused Areas, etc.), the economic and social partnership, Research Institutes and Universities, Regional Evaluation Agencies, experts in territorial policies and evaluators. The National Rural Network (monitoring and evaluation task force) has taken part in *ad hoc* meetings, designed to show the actual need for evaluating RDPs in relation to the specific focus of programmed measures, as well as giving support to defining tender specifications.

This leads to an **additional evaluative question**, which expresses a real need for study and specific analyses on the part of Administrations and local actors in rural development policies; which thus goes beyond the requirements of *accountability* to the EC, and often beyond the instructions provided by the National Rural Network<sup>26</sup>.

There also emerges an interest among RDP Managing Authorities in setting up evaluation activities about **transversal aspects**, which regard the effect of territorial policies in rural areas. Inasmuch, however, as various paths have been participated in and shared among representatives of administrations in charge of other territorial development policies, there is little propensity to structuring specific evaluative questions for RDPs within a broader plan of rural development policy evaluation, or better still, unitary regional/provincial evaluation plans. In general, the causes for the lack of structure in evaluative questions can be attributed to the lack of effective integration among policies, which would facilitate expression and sharing of common cognitive needs on the effects of development policies on rural territories; but also on the various obligations or various evaluation needs of MAs in charge of Development Programmes for policies of cohesion and rural development; or also the

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<sup>26</sup> “Organisation of Ongoing Evaluation”, (2008) National Rural Network. <http://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/337>.

different time frames for approval of Programmes and relative defining of evaluation plans; and finally to the difficulties and delays, as mentioned, of MAs of RDPs in setting up systems of *on-going* evaluation.

Finally, special attention should be devoted to the lack of definition, for almost all MAs, of regional or provincial evaluation plans for their own rural development policies, presumably because of the lack of a territorial policy of rural development per se, compared to the one defined on the basis of Community programming.

All things considered, analysis of the modalities leading to the definition of the specific evaluative questions of MAs of RDPs (evaluative questions, thematic or transversal evaluation, whichever), points up three main paths, which we emphasise by greater or lesser degree of “traceability or structuring” of the unitary planning of processes for evaluating territorial policies:

- “structured” processes: the evaluation question can be traced to unitary planning of evaluation processes for territorial policies of the Region/A.P.;
- “semi-structured” paths: the evaluation question is defined within a plan for evaluating rural development policy of the Region/A.P., which establishes content and traces it to a broader planning of processes for evaluating development policies of rural areas<sup>27</sup>;
- “non-structured” paths: the evaluative question is not traceable to the evaluation plan of the RDP or unitary regional plan; it is expressed in the tender specifications and represents the “sole” cognitive need of the Administration on the effects of RDPs.

In this very lively context, the important fact is that specific cognitive needs emerge, expressed in most cases in tender specifications calling for thematic or transversal analysis regarding clearly strategic spheres of relevance for the MA and rural territories; whereas in only a few cases (Campania, Emilia Romagna, Lazio, Sicily, Veneto and Puglia) additional evaluative questions have been added to the CMEF questionnaire.

The following sections present an in-depth analysis of the modalities chosen by MAs to express their own specific evaluative requirements: whether with added evaluative questions or thematic or transversal analyses.

### 3.1. In-depth thematic surveys and transversal evaluative analyses

Thematic surveys which are often explicitly called for in tender specifications or Evaluation Plans (unitary or regional) in most cases regard **spheres already indicated by the National Rural Network**<sup>28</sup>: integrated planning, the contribution of strategic objectives of RDP axes, the

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<sup>27</sup> Few regions/P.A. have defined its own Plan of evaluation for rural development policy. “Valle d’Aosta” has highlighted the “need to support the evaluation of rural development co-financed operations, including an assessment of major planned actions within the regional legislation” that belong to a wider regional rural development strategy.

<sup>28</sup> “Organisation of Ongoing Evaluation”, (2008) National Rural Network.  
<http://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/337> .

integrated approach, RDPs' capacity to integrate or develop complementarity and synergies with other programmes or financial instruments (cohesion policies, Funds for Underused Areas, etc.). Other themes for which Managing Authorities frequently request independent evaluators to make specific in-depth surveys are research and technological innovation, local development, environmental sustainability and equal opportunity.

In some cases, identifying **additional themes** for deeper study is called for but deferred until later. Modalities and time frames for such thematic studies are not detailed, except in cases where annual reports are requested concerning specific themes in the Rural Development Programme (e.g. environment, young farmers, integrated planning, employment, information societies, equal opportunity, etc.).

For Friuli Venezia Giulia, for example, three themes have been identified on which the evaluator will conduct specific evaluative surveys, regarding the impact of the RDP on organic farming, on setting up young farmers, and on territorial *governance*. Moreover, Valle d'Aosta made the singular decision to devote RDP evaluation entirely to two themes: marginalisation and diversification of economic activities in rural areas. These themes must also be examined in depth regarding the dynamics of the rural family (the backbone of the LEADER approach in Valle d'Aosta's RDP), with particular attention to economic and social aspects (for example migratory movements, age categories, and gender evaluations) for which specific indications must be provided regarding opportunities to define a "common synergic framework" of all possible instruments of public intervention.

Also interesting is the case of Liguria; in the context of the broader unitary evaluation plan for regional policies, it called for surveys in specific areas of shared interest to Authorities in charge of various territorial policies (competitiveness of the "Liguria system", attractiveness for business and human capital, conservation of patrimony and sustainable economic development, implementation of equal opportunity and non-discrimination in regional action). For each sphere, specific relevant themes have been identified for *ex-ante*, *mid-term* and *ex-post* evaluation, including some which are relevant for RDPs: evaluation of the impact of complex projects on employment; evaluation of territorial interaction of plans for conservation and development of environmental and cultural patrimony; and finally, evaluation of combined action of regional policies on overcoming physical and cultural barriers, including overcoming the *digital divide*.

As for the formulation of evaluative questions about **transversal aspects** of the effects of territorial policies on rural areas, these are essentially expressed through generic additional evaluative questions about interactions, synergies and complementarity created among various territorial policies. Such surveys are already recommended by Community rules and the CMEF, as well as by the National Rural Network, but formulated in such a way as to leave little room for maturation and structuring of questions within shared contexts of defining cognitive needs and planning of evaluation activities shared by managers of territorial policies.

Greater awareness and care in formulating specific evaluative questions can in fact be

observed among those Administrations that have defined a plan for evaluating rural development policy, or which have participated in defining a unitary plan for evaluating territorial policies.

In the case of Valle d'Aosta, for example, the region has shown a precise desire to coordinate with activities set forth in the Unitary Regional Evaluation Plan; the evaluator must interact with the Steering Group of evaluations of the various Programmes managed by the Region, and with NUVAL (Evaluation Unit), also for disseminating results. In this context, the evaluator is required to express a point-by-point judgment on the relevance and consistency of reports of complementarity and synergy of the Rural Development Plan with other Regional Operative Programmes "Competitiveness", "Employment" and "Cooperation", financed by EFRD and ESF Community funds, and with the Regional Action Programme financed by the underused areas fund, and also aims to include in RDP evaluation an analysis of the level of integration of the latter with specific regional instruments with their own funding.

### 3.2. Additional evaluative questions<sup>29</sup>

As aforementioned, 25% of Managing Authorities have expressed a specific need for information about the effects of funded measures, through the formulation of additional evaluative questions<sup>30</sup>. Thus new spheres of investigation have been introduced, or integrated with those already set forth by the European Commission in the common evaluation questionnaire.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of these additional questions (142 in all), aggregated by axis. An analysis of these questions shows mainly the need to study **transversal themes** (53) and those in Axis 1 (53). **Integrated planning** (territorial, supply chain, by "measure package") is one of the spheres of investigation for which additional transversal evaluative questions are most frequently proposed. It is moreover also the subject of thematic studies requested of the evaluator during tender or in the evaluation plan, especially in situations where much has been invested in that modality of planning. In specific, the evaluator is asked to take into account the effects, in terms of achievement of RDP objectives, coherence of implementation mechanisms, and economic coherence (cost/benefit analysis) of the instrument and the value added produced, and finally about attainment of strategic objectives compared to ordinary forms of implementing the RDP. Further, information is requested about the capacity of integrated planning in developing interactions, complementarity and synergies with other financial instruments employed in rural areas (ESF, EFRD and other regional public funds) and in creating business networks.

As regards additional evaluative questions that express a need for **thematic surveys**, the most frequent areas are the RDP's contribution to improving access to credit for farmers,

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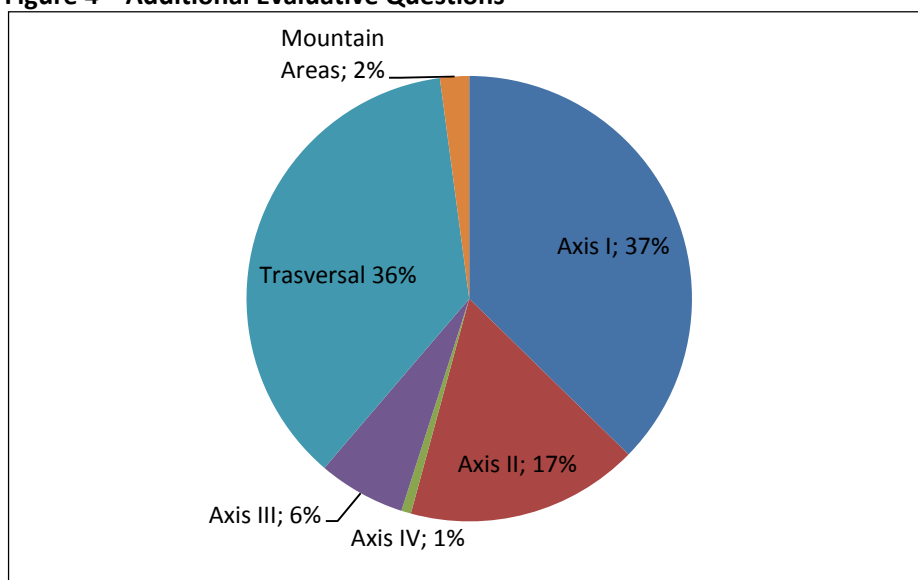
<sup>29</sup> For additional evaluation questions are understood all evaluation questions expressed by the management authority of PSR in addition to those provided for by the CMEF – B Note orientation cap. 7, associated with the individual measures of the RDP.

<sup>30</sup> Attached is the complete list of additional questions indicated in notices.

biodiversity, land conservation (protection from water erosion and maintaining organic substance) and protection of health and safety of farm workers. Also of interest are some additional evaluative questions meant to study implementation mechanisms, in terms of capacity to reach the potential target users and raising public awareness of the Rural Development Programme.

The request for analysis of **complementarity** and **synergies** among various programmes and/or financial instruments which intervene in rural areas tends to evaluate the complex contribution of environmental prevention and landscape protection, improving conditions of “habitability” (development of human potential) and economic sustainability of business activities.

**Figure 4 – Additional Evaluative Questions**



Source: INEA processing on tender specifications for on-going evaluation services.

As could be foreseen, themes associated with **environmental issues** are also broadly represented in additional evaluative questions, particularly with the request for evaluation of combating climate change, improving environmental sustainability of production processes, increased use of alternative energy sources and reducing the use of pollutants in agriculture. Few questions express the need to analyse measures to improve **awareness** in agriculture, effectiveness and value added of **farm consulting**. The lack of these additional questions about spheres transversal to measures denotes a view of the system of awareness which would require deeper analysis of interactions and complementarity, as well as value added of the whole of these measures compared to the achievement of the Programme’s strategic objectives. This latter aspect is dealt with only by the RDP MA in the Campania region, which expresses the need to study the capacity of measures 114 and 115 to develop synergies and to contribute to improving human capital in agriculture.

As regards the need for knowledge about the effects of **Axis 3 and Axis 4** of RDPs, an analysis

of additional questions reveals certain problems for Managing Authorities in expressing the specific need for knowledge. In particular, the eight additional questions about Axis 3 measures are mostly dedicated to studying the improvement of **profitability** of economic activities and their **diversification**, especially in terms of services (eco-services, tourism services), improving **territorial attractiveness** (territorial marketing and improving usability of places) and **social agriculture**. Only one additional question deals with Axis 4, and is designed to study the capacity of the LEADER approach to increasing the “feeling of belonging and collective responsibility of the local population toward the territory”.

As regards evaluation of the LEADER approach in rural development programming for 2007-2013 and the measures designed to improve quality of life, the NRN has held various meetings (focus groups, seminars and informal meetings) with evaluators and Managing Authorities, during which the strong need emerged to study in depth, exchange ideas and share practices in specific areas. It further emerged that, specifically for Axis 3, the greatest challenges involved defining the concept of quality of life – not clearly addressed in Community regulations or the CMEF – and thus establishing the degree to which it is necessary to conduct studies and analyses to evaluate its improvement as an effect of RDP; besides identifying the most appropriate sources and methodologies of investigation and analysis. As regards evaluation of the LEADER approach, various critical issues emerged which are principally linked to the inadequacy of the common evaluation questionnaire and its presumption to investigate impacts and results of typically modest development measures, and the complex context of rules and actions of RDPs within which the approach is implemented (the large number of subjects, financial circuits and assigning responsibility to LAGs, among others)<sup>31</sup>.

Finally, there are additional evaluative questions that express needs for knowledge, which are strongly sector-related. This is the case with Campania, which requires evaluators to investigate the contributions of Axis 1 and Axis 2 and the programme as a whole to creating a regional strategy of conversion in the tobacco sector.

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<sup>31</sup> For further information see “*Evaluation of the LEADER approach in programming for rural development 2007-2013*” -Report of focus group of March 10, 2010 (2010) national rural network.

#### 4. On-going evaluation in the Annual Execution Report

Guideline Note B for evaluation in the European Commission's Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework provides some indications about minimum content in the annual evaluation report for RDPs (table 3) to be included in a specific chapter of the Annual Execution Report. Recently, moreover, the European Evaluation Network<sup>32</sup> proposed that Member States provide further useful information, within the AER, to make a framework of evaluation systems established by MAs.

This section presents in a schematic manner information provided by MAs of RDPs in AERs presented to the European Commission for the year 2008, in describing the organisation of *on-going* evaluation.

Analysis of this information shows **little homogeneity**, in both topics addressed and the detail of the information contained therein, which can often be attributed not only to a different state of implementation of the organisation of *on-going* evaluation, but also to a **different interpretation of the indications in the CMEF**. Nonetheless, as described in the following table, in several cases, in the absence of on-going evaluation activities, Administrations have also gone **beyond Community requirements** in representing processes of selecting evaluators and systems of *governance* of the called-for evaluation, by providing details of structures and relationships. Results are also shown for *ex-post* evaluation activities and how they have been taken into consideration for programming in progress and designing RDP evaluation systems.

**Table 3 – Contents in Annual Execution Reports**

<b>CMEF: Proposed model for Annual Report of on-going evaluation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction</li> <li>2. The system put in place for ongoing evaluation</li> <li>3. The evaluation activities undertaken (ongoing and completed)</li> <li>4. Data collection</li> <li>5. Activities of the networking of people involved in evaluation</li> <li>6. Difficulties encountered and the need for additional work</li> </ol>
<b>Additional contents in Annual Execution Reports (AER)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Description of evaluation system (<i>governance</i> and procedure)</li> <li>2. Description of procedure to select the evaluator</li> <li>3. Description of evaluation services in outsourcing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic surveys</li> <li>• On-going evaluation</li> <li>• Ex-ante, mid-term and SEA update</li> <li>• Additional evaluative questions</li> <li>• Additional indicators</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Difficulties relating to the establishment of the on-going evaluation system</li> </ol>

<sup>32</sup> For further information see "Synthesis of the annual progress report for 2008 concerning ongoing evaluation" – European Evaluation Network for Rural Development – March 2010.

	<p>5. Description of coordination (the content and/or organisation) with the individual regional policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans for evaluation of RDP plans and uniform evaluation</li> <li>• Governance structures of overall evaluation</li> </ul> <p>6. Description of the implementation of the process of revision of indicators</p> <p>7. Description of the ex-post evaluations, recommendations and their implementation in the 2007-2013 programming period</p> <p>8. Communicating information about on-going evaluation to the Monitoring Committee.</p>
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**Source: INEA processing of Annual Execution Reports 2008.**



## 5. Support structures for on-going evaluation

### 5.1. Structure organisation: state-of-the-art

The new features and the complexity of evaluating Rural Development Policy for the current programming period require MAs of RDPs to define structures that can govern survey and evaluation analysis processes, professionally and organisationally, also through dialogue with independent evaluators, thereby also encouraging communication and the use of results.

In this regard, within the CMEF, the EC states that *“In order to ensure a high quality of the evaluation, a regular consultation of stakeholders should be ensured. The setting up of a steering group which accompanies the evaluation process and which involves representatives of different departments is advisable. The steering group should contribute to the preparation of the terms of reference. The members of the steering group can provide access to additional information; they shall support and monitor the work of the evaluator.”*<sup>33</sup>

In this matter the National Rural Network<sup>34</sup> has deemed it necessary to provide more detailed guidelines to respond to administrations’ diverse needs, and to expand the range of possible choices of organising MAs. In addition to the **steering group**, the NRN proposes a structure internal to the regional/provincial Administration, preferably inter-departmental, which performs the role of managing the quality of RDP monitoring and evaluation. This structure proposed by the NRN is the **technical monitoring and evaluation unit**, composed of a minimum of 3 or 4 work units.

This section thus presents an analysis of the organisational choices made by MAs, especially regarding models, roles and functions of *governance* structures of *on-going* evaluation.

The documentation of reference is made up of resolutions establishing the *steering groups* (or other structures governing the evaluation process), the Evaluation Plans of Rural Development Programmes, tender notices, tender specifications for evaluation service and the AERs for 2008. In some cases, information has been gathered by telephone interviews with regional/provincial contacts, as well as specific questionnaires<sup>35</sup> administered by Managing Authorities in cooperation with the National System of Regional Policy Evaluation.

Analysis reveals a general tendency for Administrations to establish *steering groups* to oversee and technically manage evaluation, emphasising special attention to this important structure in the service of evaluation.

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<sup>33</sup> European Commission (2006a), Manual of the Common Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation. Guidance Note B “Evaluation guidelines”, chap. 5.

<sup>34</sup> “Organisation of the Ongoing Evaluation”, (2008) National Rural Network. <http://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/337>.

<sup>35</sup> The reference is to the questionnaire “Report on evaluations of regional policy and rural development” (of SNV-RRN) administered managers evaluation Plans in May 2009 with the aim to collect information on ongoing assessment and ex post concerning regional policy and rural development policy.

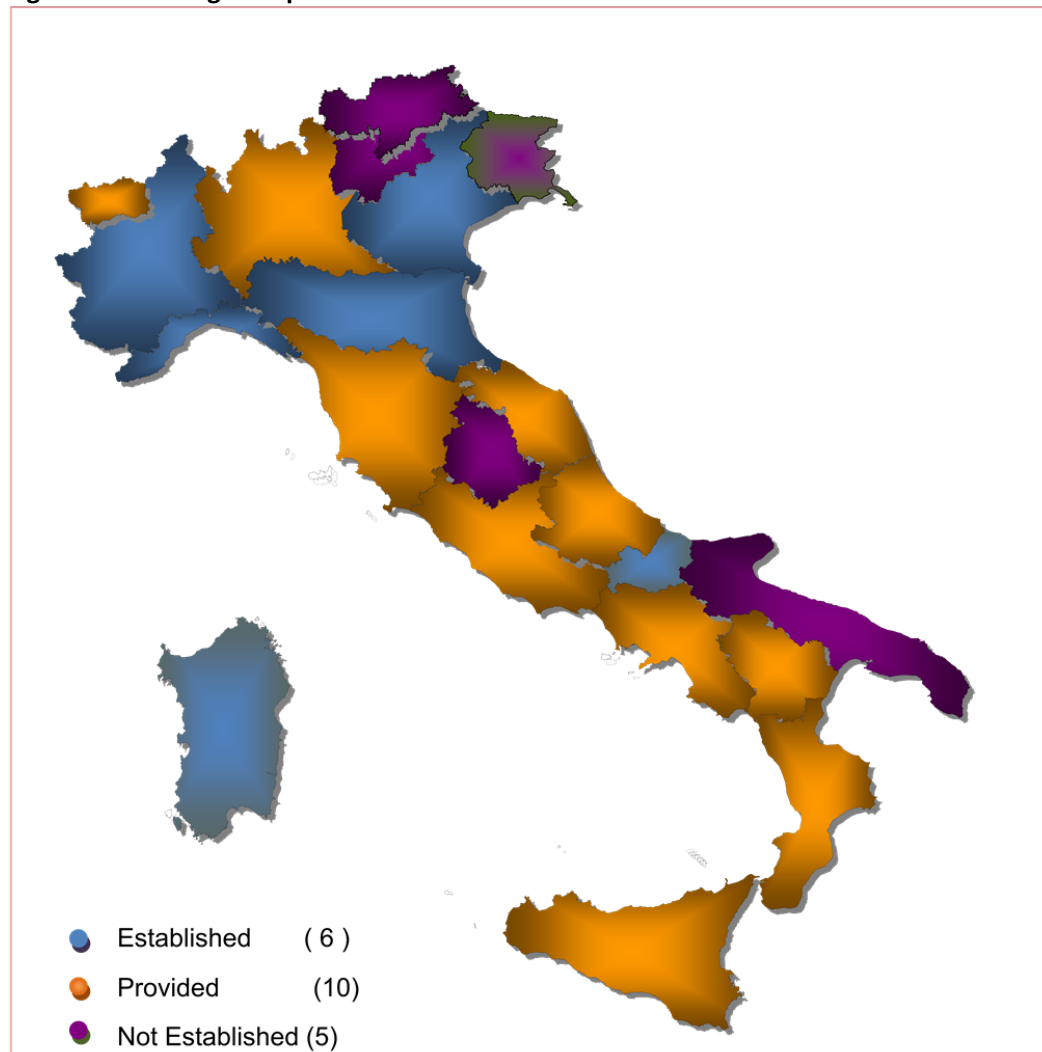
The organisational framework of evaluation *governance* structures that emerges from the aforementioned documentation shows a widespread **slowness** in defining and setting up such structures, compared to the implementation of Programmes, establishing monitoring and evaluation systems, and assigning evaluation services. For the majority of RDPs, *governance* structures for *on-going* evaluation are often designated after services have been assigned. This situation has caused a partial loss of effectiveness in some of the functions that both the EC<sup>36</sup> and the NRN had hoped the steering groups would perform: technical-scientific support in defining evaluation demand and identifying the needs regarding a territorial monitoring system.

To sum up, Figure 5 shows the “state-of-the-art” of the organisation of these structures, as revealed by the analysis performed. In particular, only four Managing Authorities have established *steering groups*, while eleven more have expressly shown their intention to do so. In several cases, it appears plans have been made to establish a technical evaluation unit within the Administration or bodies with similar functions. The Regions/A.P.s, depending on their own focus and needs, have indeed found alternative modalities, creating support structures with the goal of overseeing the quality of evaluation.

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<sup>36</sup> European Commission (2006a), Manual of the Common Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation. Guidance Note B “Evaluation guidelines”, chap. 5. 1.

Figure 5 - Steering Group outline



Source: INEA processing

## 5.2. Proposed models

Analysis reveals an appreciable **variety of solutions** Administrations have adopted or plan to adopt in terms of makeup, roles and functions of structures, demonstrating an increased capacity and awareness in defining systems for governing evaluation that best meet the needs of quality control in evaluation processes.

As for **numbers**, it appears that structures called for are fairly large, with a minimum of 9 – 10 members. This solutions also seems to respond to the requisite of broader representation of interested parties in developing rural areas, as RDP Managing Authorities are joined by other Administrations in charge of implementing cohesion policies, as well as evaluation experts, the NRN, the economic-social partnership, and sometimes the Paying Agency as well.

Large numbers and diverse representation have been attributed to the *steering group* in Emilia Romagna. It indeed includes almost all the Administrations variously involved in the current programming period at various levels of territorial government and some outside experts. This is evidently a viable choice within the specific regional context, and justified both by the ten years of experience acquired by the Administration in managing the *steering group* and by the ability to manage evaluation processes and provide effective feedback of evaluation results, also in terms of policies and relative mechanisms of implementation.

In Piedmont the choice was quite different, as evaluation activities were assigned *in house* to the Regional Evaluation Unit of Public Investments (REUPI). The steering group was established in any case, and made up of five members who directly perform evaluation activities, each according to competence, joined by representatives of the economic-social partnership and LAGs.

Cases in which *steering groups* have fewer members (5-6 members on average) seem to be structures with a different choice of Administration governance, of a management-administrative type (often of an inter-departmental nature), evidently closer to the idea of a technical unit for monitoring and evaluation. For the Autonomous Province of Trento, the steering group is made up of members within the administration in charge of the RDP; whereas, in Liguria and Valle d'Aosta, regional functionaries from different departments have been involved.

To strike a balance between consultation and technical-scientific support functions, solutions called for were "of variable geometry": the body of permanent members, in relationship to specific competencies or to the individual phase of the evaluation process, or to the theme under investigation, are assisted from time to time by a group of designated experts (thematic group, methodological support group, group of experts by Axis, etc.). For similar needs, in other cases sub-groups were called for (thematic or methodological) of an operative nature, for the purpose of overseeing specific phases or functions, to foster a more streamlined and effective working of the *steering group*.

As regards **degree of representation** of the steering groups, it should be noted that in all the Regions/A.P.s they include members of the Administrations of reference. In these cases, in addition to the MAs (which often involve their own staff in charge of measures), the regional/provincial Administrations include Environmental Authorities and units in charge of inspections and monitoring. In largely decentralised contexts (for example Emilia Romagna) territorial administrations are also involved (Provinces and Mountain Communities).

Designation of various types of experts show the needs of Managing Authorities for support on themes associated with the specific issues of RDP measures, RDP Axes, or transversal aspects (such as local development, equal opportunity and integrated planning); more than satisfying other needs, like adequacy and quality of assigned evaluation processes. Analysis also shows a certain correlation between specific professional qualifications required of independent evaluators in the tender specifications, and those of experts in the *governance*

structures. The involvement of REUPI often responds to the needs for methodological support<sup>37</sup> and integration with evaluations of other territorial policies. In comparison, nonetheless, it appears that none of the regions has explicitly called for involving unitary evaluators in evaluation governance structures.

The presence of delegates from the economic-social partnership and LAGs within some *steering groups* responds especially to the opportunity of collecting *stakeholders'* needs for knowledge, but often also for the contribution they can bring to evaluation *governance*, in terms of choosing the best ways to disseminate evaluation results, thanks to their specific expertise and their roots in the territory.

In a different way, a consulting role with the function of technical support in the matter of local development also appears in some cases to motivate involvement of Regional Development Agencies.

The lower presence of experts and partnership, compared to the administration, makes the groups less functional with regard to fulfilling relevant support functions for evaluation activities, which are linked to the scientific/methodological sphere on one hand and representation on the other.

In synthesis, analysis of degree of representation, roles, functions and numbers of various structures of governance in the evaluation process called for by Managing Authorities appears to reveal a scenario in which three main organisational models can be identified (Table 4), of which the *steering group* seems to be the most complex.

The *steering groups* seem to be a confluence of the most diverse needs of the administrations: consulting support, technical-scientific support and sometimes administrative support as well. The novelty of these structures, as well as the opportunity not to multiply resources dedicated to *governance* of *on-going* evaluation, may have sometimes influenced the decision to converge on the *steering group*, for instance, such functions as verifying conformity of evaluation services and products, and even issuance of authorisation to pay compensation to evaluators.

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<sup>37</sup> Scientific and methodological support are attributed to universities, research institutes and the national rural network.

**Table 4 – Configuration of various structures of governance for *on-going* evaluation**

Representativeness	Reduced	Average	Wide		
Purpose	Administrative Support	Tecno- Scientific Support	Representative/ Counseling	Administrative Support	Tecno- Scientific Support
Function	Check of conformity evaluation service and products	Tecno- Scientific Dialogue with evaluator	Collection of evaluation needs	Elaboration of Term references of evaluation services	Tecno- Scientific Dialogue with evaluator
		Facilitation of stakeholders's relations with RDP MA	Facilitation for definition of evaluation questions	Check of conformity evaluation service and products	Facilitation of stakeholders's relations with RDP MA
	Quality management and use of monitoring data	Facilitation for utilisation of evaluation results	Facilitation for use of evaluation results	Quality management and use of monitoring data	Facilitation for use of evaluation results
		Definition of evaluation question	Facilitation of stakeholders's relations with RDP MA	Communicate evaluation results	Definition of evaluation question
		Technical assistance on community regulation	Facilitation of relation between RDP MA and evaluator		Technical assistance on community regulation
Number of components	Low	Low	Variable geometry	Low	High

Source: INEA processing

On the other hand, the same functions of managing the monitoring system and editing the tender specification involve tasks and responsibilities which seem to go beyond the competencies of a body assigned to oversee – and not to manage directly – the quality of evaluation processes. There are several cases in which the *steering group* is assigned a more specific role to represent various stakeholders in the RDP, in which various needs are restated, for knowledge about the effects of measures funded by rural development policy, of “facilitating” flows of information and expressing evaluation needs. In such cases, the “variable geometry” definition is frequent, as the modular nature of components makes it easier to match the role assigned to operative needs.

The NVVIP is used in a different manner, both as an alternative *governance* structure to the *steering group* and as a component of it. In the first case, the competencies of quality oversight, and sometimes planning, of evaluation are assigned to the already-established NVVIP within the sphere of regional policy (Piedmont) or also to Evaluation Bodies specially formed to evaluate rural development policy. In Umbria, for example, a specific RDP Monitoring and Evaluation Body has been formed, in which RDP MAs are also represented –

through the regional service “Rapport with Community and National Agricultural Policies and Controls” and those in charge of measures – and Research Institutes (INEA). It contributes to the general setup of the monitoring and evaluation system, providing verification and certification of the quality of data, as well as gathering the cognitive needs within the administration in order to define evaluative demand. The same Body is also in charge of managing technical-methodological relationships with the evaluator, including follow-up reports on evaluative research activities. The assigning of a role of degree of representation of cohesion policies explains the presence of NVVIPs within the *steering group*.

Finally, the choice of the technical evaluation unit (or other similar structures within RDP or inter-departmental MAs) seems to respond to a more administrative management logic of *on-going* evaluation service, though it is sometimes open to coordination with other evaluation structures (inter-departmental solution).

## 6. Closing remarks

Analysis of the state of implementation of *on-going* evaluation systems (structures, actors and processes) of RDPs makes it possible to draw some concluding consideration and provides points for reflection about both MAs and evaluators and the NRN itself.

The first consideration, perhaps the most timely, obviously regards the **evaluative question**. While it is true that in defining evaluative mandates, MAs have shown a certain awareness and clarity in requests for services and products of *on-going* evaluation, it is also true that only in a few cases have Administrations expressed a specific evaluative question, which would represent the need for knowledge about the effects of their choices of rural development policy, and would thus go beyond the common evaluative questionnaire required by the European Commission. This could also be because of the lack of timeliness in setting up evaluation governance structures (Steering Groups/ NVVIPs/ technical monitoring and evaluation units) which would better support and promote processes of reflection (perhaps with wider participation) and comparison of specific cognitive needs. This is a good path to follow in future selection of independent evaluators, for better integration in defining evaluative designs, which can also be an occasion to consider ways of updating, redefining or proposing specific additional evaluative questions.

A second consideration concerns the choice of **methodologies** and **sources** of data and information for *on-going* evaluation. In this regard, while it is true that the common evaluation questionnaire of the European Commission still seems to respond to a logic of *accountability* and impose some constraints, it is also true that the new CMEF leaves more room for the choice of approaches and methodologies deemed more congruous. The challenge now appears to define appropriate evaluation designs that combine the demands of in-depth information with those of accountability, with an accurate and above all transparent definition of methodologies, evaluation procedures and the identification of more adequate sources of information.

More generally, as regards the whole system of on-going evaluation, an urgent need emerges to better define the **modalities of governance** (structures, processes, actors) and especially how to disseminate them. Analysis of the state of implementation presented in previous sections reveals a wide range of possible choices, where all the Regions/A.P.s can draw insights for the designation of structures, the definition of competencies and assignment of roles and functions. Less clear, however, is the scenario of relationships between the different actors involved in the system of on-going evaluation. At this point it is necessary to experiment and identify, in the course of programming, the methods that promote better definition and use of evaluation results.

Also with regard to governance structures of evaluation, analysis clearly identifies some of the support functions assigned to them by the MAs: sharing information with the evaluator, verification of compliance and quality of service and products, involvement of economic and social partnership; data management and information monitoring. However, there are further



functions to be carefully considered: the definition of contributions in terms of knowledge about the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of policy implementation, the use of evaluators' recommendations, the definition of paths of programming review.

Thus, a focal point is surely the opportunity of understanding the relationship between MA and evaluator, in a perspective of **dialogue** and mutual exchange of needs and knowledge, within which MAs are not only "informed" about the evaluation process but can develop a greater awareness of the usefulness of evaluation processes, the opportunities they offer to increase the legitimacy of their programming choices, and meeting the needs of the community. The evaluators will be able to better understand the MAs' needs for "knowledge feedback" and enhance the effectiveness of evaluation in terms of usefulness of results, the weighing of evaluative judgments and the use of recommendations in decision-making (local, regional, Community). In this perspective, *steering groups* can become a veritable "laboratory of innovation", in which discussion and sharing between the different parties can improve programming and development of rural areas.

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**Attachment: “Additional evaluative questions of MAs of RDPs ”**

<b>MA</b>	<b>Axis</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Additional question of MA</b>
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>111</b>	To what extent have training and information helped to achieve the regional strategy for restructuring and conversion of the tobacco industry?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>112</b>	To what extent has aid facilitated the sustainable setting up (in terms of staying in business) of young farmers of both sexes, in synergy with other measures?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>112</b>	What is the situation on the farm where young farmers are set up, in terms of farm characteristics, the young farmer and the possible former owner?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>113</b>	To what extent has aid helped in achieving regional strategy for restructuring and conversion of the tobacco industry?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>114</b>	To what extent has aid helped to achieve regional strategy of restructuring and conversion of the tobacco industry?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>115</b>	How has synergy developed between measures 115 and 114? How has that synergy improved human capital in the agricultural sector?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>115</b>	What have been the effects of launching inter-farm and substitution services on farms’ competitiveness?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>115</b>	To what extent has aid helped to achieve regional strategy of restructuring and conversion of the tobacco industry?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>121</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to environmental protection?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>121</b>	To what extent has aid helped to achieve regional strategy of restructuring and conversion of the tobacco industry?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>123</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments improved the conditions of remuneration and marketing for agricultural producers of raw materials which supply raw materials to beneficiary farms?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>123</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to environmental protection?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>123</b>	To what extent has aid contributed to achieving regional strategy for restructuring and conversion of the tobacco industry?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>124</b>	To what extent has aid contributed to achieving regional strategy for restructuring and conversion of the tobacco industry?

Campania	2	214	To what extent have environmental measures contributed to maintaining or improving soil, particularly with respect to reducing pollution, increasing organic matter and protection from water erosion?
Campania	2	216	To what extent has aid contributed to the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity of species and habitats of agricultural land and forests?
Campania	2	216	To what extent has aid helped to reduce the conflict between agriculture and the need to protect habitats and species?
Campania	2	216	To what extent has aid contributed to the maintenance of wetlands and surface water quality?
Campania	3	311	To what extent has aid contributed to achieving the regional strategy for the conversion of the tobacco industry?
Campania	Transversal	Transversal	What has been the impact of the Program on quality, overall (health, compliance with EU and non-EU quality standards, greater degree of penetration of Campania products in domestic and foreign markets) in interconnection and synergy with the EFRD?
Campania	Transversal	Transversal	To what extent has the program contributed to the promotion of gender equality, both with gender impact evaluation of the RDP as a whole, and with an evaluation of impacts - expected and/or possible - on the condition of the female population traced to individual interventions included in the Measures.
Campania	Transversal	Transversal	To what extent has the competitiveness of the agri-food sector increased as a result of the specific implementation of major projects (agribusiness, horticulture) supported by the EFRD?
Campania	Transversal	Transversal	To what extent has effective synergy/integration been achieved between the two funds (EAFRD and EFRD), and for the prevention of natural risks (especially water resources)?
Campania	Transversal	Transversal	To what extent has an effective synergy been achieved between the Programme - Axis 3 - and the ESF, whose objective is facilitating access to the labour market and raising human potential in the sector, and encouraging professional and social integration of rural people?
Campania	Transversal	Transversal	To what extent has an effective synergy been achieved between the Programme and the EFRD to achieve the objectives of conservation and enhancement of landscape?
Campania	Transversal	Transversal	To what extent has an effective synergy been

			achieved between the Programme and the ESF for measures to support hiring permanent workers, particularly in those areas of production where seasonal workers who are qualified and have special skills can find extended employment?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program helped to preserve the genetic diversity of plant and animal species of agricultural interest?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program helped to maintain sustainable farming in disadvantaged mountainous and hilly areas?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to accompanying the processes of conversion or restructuring in the tobacco industry?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the realization of joint projects (Integrated Supply-Chain Project, – Integrated Rural Projects for Protected Areas) vs. individual projects helped increase the effectiveness of the Programme in terms of contribution to restructuring, modernization of agriculture and adaptation of infrastructure resources in the area, improving the availability of essential services to local populations, the dissemination of information and communication technologies, prevention of environmental risks within the framework of nature and landscape enhancement of the area and making it more attractive?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has clustering helped to streamline administrative procedures in terms of lower transaction costs for farms and enhancing the quality of investment projects carried out by the cluster versus individual projects?
<b>Campania</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the Programme met the needs and the objectives it set for the seven macro areas of intervention?
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>111</b>	To what extent have training and information helped to support the system of regional knowledge, the creation of networks, and the sharing of information and best practices?
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>112</b>	To what extent has aid facilitated the sustainable setting up (in terms of staying in business) of young farmers of both sexes? What is the business situation in which there have been settlements, in terms of characteristics of the farm, the young farmer and the potential former owner?
<b>Emilia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>114</b>	To what extent has aid helped to improve the

<b>Romagna</b>			management and profitability of farms and forests? Provide details about: organizational, managerial and logistical skills, development of new products, processes and technologies, animal welfare, production techniques, quality standards, conditions occupational safety, management of natural resources.
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>123</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments improved the conditions of remuneration and marketing for agricultural producers of raw materials which supply raw materials to beneficiary farms?
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>123</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to environmental protection?
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>214</b>	To what extent have environmental measures contributed to maintaining or improving soil, particularly with respect to reducing pollution, increasing organic matter and protection from water erosion?
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>216</b>	To what extent has aid contributed to the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity of species and habitats of agricultural land and forests?
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>216</b>	To what extent has aid contributed to the maintenance of wetlands and surface water quality?
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>227</b>	To what extent has aid contributed to the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity of species and habitats of agricultural land and forests?
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent have environmental measures contributed to maintaining or improving soil, in terms of: protection from water erosion? Maintaining organic matter?
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to the improvement in the animal welfare?
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to health of agricultural workers?
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program helped to preserve the genetic diversity of plant and animal species of agricultural interest?
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program helped to maintain sustainable farming in disadvantaged mountainous and hilly areas?
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to the integrated approach to rural development? In particular as regards: supply chain planning, collective projects, agri-environmental agreements, pacts for development, the contribution of LEADER.
<b>Emilia</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the territorial approach helped

Romagna			to improve the effectiveness of the program, and what has been the territorial impact of interventions? In particular as regards: the value added of the integrated rural provincial projects, the application and impact in rural areas, the area-based approach used in Axis 1, the impact on mountain areas, the effects in areas of high environmental sensitivity.
Emilia Romagna	Transversal	Transversal	To what extent does the Programme's pursuit of Transversal priority have a positive effect? In particular as regards support and encouragement of young entrepreneurs, enhancement of organic farming, stimulating the development of environment-friendly bio-energy supply chains, the promotion of regulated quality products and NO GMOs.
Lazio	1	111	To what extent have professional training and exchange of information contributed to the internalisation of new knowledge? Distinguish in terms of: new technologies applied to farm production and quality schemes applicable to farm products.
Lazio	1	111	To what extent have professional training and exchange of information helped to increase workplace safety?
Lazio	1	112	To what extent has aid within Integrated Farm Planning contributed to increasing innovation and the introduction of new technologies in farm management?
Lazio	1	114	To what extent has aid helped to improve management and profitability of farms and forests? Provide details about: production techniques, quality standards, labour safety conditions, the management of natural resources (water, soil, renewable energy, forests, biodiversity), the adaptation of environmental legislation, public health, plant and animal health, animal welfare, good agricultural and environmental conditions, labour safety, access to new markets, technological innovation on farms (simplifying administrative procedures), access to complementary/alternative sources of funding, farm cooperatives/associations, with particular reference to supply chain strategies.
Lazio	1	115	To what extent has aid helped to improve management and profitability of farms and forests? Provide details about: production techniques, quality standards, labour safety conditions, management of

			natural resources, access to complementary/alternative sources of funding, farm cooperatives/ associations with particular reference to supply chain strategies.
Lazio	1	121	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to productive conversion, possibly through the production of energy from renewable sources and/or cultivating biomass for energy purposes?
Lazio	1	121	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to improving the competitiveness of the agricultural sector? In particular, to what extent have “short chains” been encouraged, through support for processing and marketing activities achievable by farms?
Lazio	1	123	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to improving the quality of agricultural and forestry products? In particular, to what extent were incentives provided for systems of traceability and labelling of products?
Lazio	1	123	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to improving working conditions and the safety of workers and encouraging the introduction of management systems or initiatives that result in less environmental impact?
Lazio	1	123	To what extent have subsidised investments improved the conditions of remuneration and marketing for agricultural producers of raw materials which supply raw materials to beneficiary farms?
Lazio	1	125	To what extent has the intervention avoided the need for alternative sources of water supply, which are more expensive and/or have greater environmental impact?
Lazio	2	214	To what extent have environmental measures contributed to the maintenance or improvement of land with particular reference to maintaining organic matter levels and containment of erosion?
Lazio	3	341	To what extent have supported activities increased capacity of actors in rural areas to evaluate rural development strategies?
Lazio	Transversal	Transversal	To what extent has the program facilitated access to credit for the share borne by the beneficiary?
Puglia	1	111	To what extent have subsidised training courses met the requirements, with particular reference to the training needs of farms, and consistent with other measures of the program? To what extent have



			training and information helped to support the system of regional knowledge, networking, exchange of information and best practices?
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>112</b>	What is the farm situation in which young farmers have been set up, in terms of characteristics of the farm, the young farmer and the possible transferor? To what extent has aid facilitated the adaptation or increase in size of farms in physical and economic terms after the initial setting up of young farmers? To what extent has aid disbursed through multiple measures affected the competitiveness of farms?
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>114</b>	To what extent has aid helped to improve management and profitability of farms and forests? Provide details regarding: organizational, managerial and logistical skills; computer knowledge; development of new products, processes and technologies; improvement of product quality; conformance to laws regarding environment, public health, plants and animals; animal welfare; good agricultural and environmental conditions; labour safety; farm cooperatives/associations, with particular emphasis on supply chain strategies. To what extent has aid helped to improve the competitiveness (in relation to national and international markets) of the agricultural sector?
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>121</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to permanent and sustainable activities of farms (in physical and economic terms)? To what extent has aid helped to improve competitiveness of the agricultural sector (in relation to national and international markets)? To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to the conversion of production, possibly through the production of energy from renewable sources and/or growing of biomass for energy purposes? To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to improving the quality of products? To what extent have “short chains” been encouraged, by support for processing and marketing on farms? To what extent has aid disbursed through integrated supply chain projects or multiple measures affected the competitiveness of farms?
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>123</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments improved the conditions of remuneration and marketing for agricultural producers of raw materials which supply raw materials to beneficiary farms?

			To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to environmental protection?
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>124</b>	To what extent has aid contributed to improving the environmental performance of production processes? To what extent has aid helped to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector (in relation to national and international markets)? To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to improving the quality of products?
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>125</b>	To what extent has the measure avoided the need for alternative sources of water supply, which are more expensive and/or of greater environmental impact?
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>132</b>	To what extent has aid helped to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector (in relation to national and international markets)?
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>214</b>	To what extent have environmental measures contributed to the conservation of genetic diversity in agriculture? To what extent have environmental measures contributed to maintaining or improving soil, particularly in relation to reducing pollution, increasing organic matter and protecting against water erosion?
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>216</b>	To what extent has aid contributed to the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity of species and habitats of farmland and forests? To what extent has aid contributed to reducing the conflict between agricultural activities and protection of habitats and species? To what extent has aid contributed to the maintenance of wetlands and surface water quality?
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>227</b>	To what extent has aid contributed to the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity of species and habitats of farmland and forests?
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>321</b>	To what extent has the service provided helped to improve the quality of life in rural areas? Distinguish between the different sectors (commerce, health, transport, information technology, economic activities); To what extent has the service provided helped to improve the attractiveness of rural areas? Distinguish between the different sectors (commerce, health, transport, information technology, economic activities).
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to the protection of soil in terms of: protection from water erosion? maintenance of organic matter? To what

			extent has the program contributed to the improvement of animal welfare? To what extent has the program contributed to safeguarding the genetic diversity of plant and animal species of agricultural interest? To what extent has the program helped to maintain sustainable farming in disadvantaged mountainous and hilly areas?
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to the growth of regional exports?
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<p>To what extent has the program ensured complementarities and coherence between the program and actions financed by the Cohesion Fund, European Social Fund and European Fund for Fisheries?</p> <p>To what extent has the program enhanced synergies between Axes? To what extent has the program contributed to the integrated approach to rural development? In particular as regards: integrated supply chain projects, collective projects, multi-measure packages, agri-environmental agreements, integrated-pilot projects of rural areas, the contribution of the LEADER approach. To what extent has the territorial approach helped to improve the effectiveness of the program and what was the impact of operations in the area? In particular as regards: application and impact in rural areas, the territorial approach used in Axis I, the impact on areas with more complex problems of development, effects in areas of high environmental sensitivity. To what extent has the pursuit of transversal priority in the program had a positive effect? In particular as regards: supporting and encouraging young farmers, enhancement of quality agriculture, promoting development of environment-friendly bio-energy. To what extent have interventions under the program contributed to improving exportation of food products?</p>
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>111</b>	To what extent have training and information helped to improve the situation of those concerned in terms of more opportunities (e.g. personal knowledge, commercial contacts, motivation to upgrade farms, etc.).
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>121</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to improving the income of beneficiary farmers?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>121</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to improving the quality of agricultural

			products?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>123</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments improved the conditions of remuneration and marketing for agricultural producers of raw materials which supply raw materials to beneficiary farms?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>123</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to the prevention of adverse impacts of activities on natural resources?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>124</b>	To what extent has aid contributed to improving the environmental sustainability of production processes?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>125</b>	To what extent has aid promoted the competitiveness of farms and forests and their development potential by the improvement of infrastructure? Provide details about: rural roads between farms; supply and distribution of water resources; providing electricity between farms.
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>211</b>	To what extent has aid contributed to preserving the countryside, improving the environment, preserving biodiversity, maintaining and protecting the characteristics of the agricultural landscape?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>212</b>	To what extent has aid contributed to preserving the countryside, improving the environment, preserving biodiversity, maintaining and protecting the characteristics of the agricultural landscape?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>214</b>	To what extent have environmental measures contributed to maintaining or improving the soil? Particularly with respect to reducing pollution, increasing organic matter and protecting against water erosion?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>214</b>	To what extent have environmental measures contributed to the health of agricultural workers?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>214</b>	To what extent have environmental measures contributed to improving the health and hygiene of agricultural production?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>216</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to strengthening Natura 2000 areas or other areas of high natural value, in terms of public use, with particular reference to recreation?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>226</b>	To what extent have preventive measures _ contributed to the maintenance of forests, with particular reference to protection against fire?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>227</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to enhancing forest areas in terms of public use, with particular reference to recreation?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>227</b>	To what extent have subsidised investments

			contributed to the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity of species and habitats of agricultural land and forests?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>311</b>	To what extent have investments had a lasting impact on income and the reduction of production costs of agricultural households?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>311</b>	To what extent have investments contributed to improving quality and expanding services offered in relation to rural enjoyment and social agriculture?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>312</b>	To what extent has support contributed to improving the quality of life in rural areas? Provide details about the effects of incentives for micro-enterprises in the services and eco-services sector.
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>312</b>	To what extent has the measure contributed to the spread of products marketed by micro-enterprises, with particular emphasis on typical local products?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>313</b>	To what extent has the measure contributed to promoting tourism? Distinguish between activities that take place on farms and others, and pay particular attention to territorial marketing actions that have better exploited rural routes.
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>323</b>	To what extent has the measure maintained the attractiveness of rural areas and encouraged the enjoyment of rural heritage?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>413</b>	To what extent has the LEADER approach contributed to the local population's feeling of belonging and collective responsibility to the territory?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program helped to promote sustainable development in rural areas, with particular reference to the objectives of environmental sustainability identified in the measures?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to soil protection in terms of: erosion protection? maintaining organic matter? protection from hydro-geological instability? protection against desertification? fire protection?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program helped to reduce inputs of pollutants in agriculture?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to the health of workers in the agriculture, forestry and food sectors?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to the health of consumers?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program helped to maintain farming in disadvantaged areas?

<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent have recommendations and guidelines for environmental mitigation contained in the SEA contributed to enhancing the environmental effectiveness of the program?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to increasing forestry production in terms of quantity and quality?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to the creation of networks of enterprises in different stages of supply chains?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to aggregation among farms?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to the integrated approach to rural development? In particular as regards: the package for young farmers; the supply chain package; the contribution of the LEADER approach.
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the territorial approach contributed to achieving the objectives of the program? In particular as regards: application and impact in various rural areas (A, B, C, D); the effect on disadvantaged areas; effects in areas of high environmental sensitivity.
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program helped to improve the quality of life of people living in rural areas (with particular attention to areas C and D), also in relation to the attractiveness of these areas?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to renewal and vitalisation of rural areas and the growth of local governance?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program encouraged cooperation between the public and private sectors?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program facilitated access to credit by the beneficiaries?
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent have the articulation of the program and the documents for implementation, the administrative procedures used, the eligibility criteria, the selection mechanisms and the priorities responded effectively to the objectives of the program?
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>112</b>	To what extent does aid for setting up young farmers through integrated farm projects (young farmer package) encourage young farmers to develop an overall evaluation of the issues of the farm's competitive development?
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>114</b>	To what extent has aid helped to improve the management and profitability of farms and forests?

			Provide details about: production techniques, quality standards, labour safety conditions, management of natural resources, animal welfare, energy saving and renewable energy production, market presence, marketing and logistics, information and communication technologies, innovation and technology transfer.
Veneto	1	121	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to improving the quality of agricultural products?
Veneto	1	121	To what extent have subsidised investments helped to maintain or increase employment levels?
Veneto	1	121	To what extent have subsidised investments increased production of energy from renewable sources?
Veneto	1	121	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to reducing consumption of irrigation water?
Veneto	1	121	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to increasing the share of direct sales of farm products?
Veneto	1	125	To what extent have subsidised investments contributed to countering the process of abandonment of rural properties?
Veneto	2	211	To what extent has the allowance helped offset additional costs and the loss of income due to disadvantages to agricultural production?
Veneto	2	214	To what extent have environmental measures contributed to maintaining or improving habitats and biodiversity? In particular to what extent have they contributed to an increase of genetic exchange among species of animals and plants?
Veneto	2	221	To what extent has the scheme contributed to fighting climate change, in particular through assistance for the production of renewable energy sources?
Veneto	3	313	To what extent has the measure helped to promote tourism and improve the quality of service? Distinguish among activities that take place on farms and other areas.
Veneto	Transversal	Transversal	To what extent has the Rural Development Programme promoted integration and aggregation, lasting and independent of available public aid, to individual farms as well as within the supply chain or in a territorial area?
Veneto	Transversal	Transversal	To what extent has the integrated approach helped to determine synergistic effects of interventions?

<b>Veneto</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the success of the integrated approach been conditioned by its increased procedural complexity, both for public implementers and for applicants?
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>Mountain Areas</b>	<b>Mountain Areas</b>	To what extent has the territorial approach countered the abandonment of land management?
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>Mountain Areas</b>	<b>Mountain Areas</b>	To what extent has the territorial approach facilitated the diversification of agricultural activities and rural economic development?
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>Mountain Areas</b>	<b>Mountain Areas</b>	To what extent has the program helped to maintain sustainable farming in disadvantaged mountainous areas?
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program helped to promote sustainable development in rural areas? In particular, to what extent has the program contributed to the three priority areas for protection and improvement of natural resources and landscapes in rural areas: biodiversity and the preservation and development of agricultural and forestry systems with high natural value and rural landscapes? water, from a qualitative and quantitative point of view? climate change? the production of renewable energy?
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to the restructuring and modernization of agriculture and forestry?
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to soil protection?
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program contributed to the health and safety of agricultural workers?
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent has the program helped to preserve the genetic diversity of plant and animal species of agricultural interest?
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent have the selection criteria helped to reach the target users and achieve measure objectives?
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent were the modalities of implementation perceived by the stakeholders and how did they affect the response of potential users?
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	<b>Transversal</b>	To what extent did information and publicity provided by the Communication Plan (CP) reach potential beneficiaries of operations and make the public aware of the activities of policies financed by the EAFRD?





**PIANO STRATEGICO DELLO SVILUPPO RURALE  
L'AGRICOLTURA A BENEFICIO DI TUTTI**

**RETE RURALE NAZIONALE 2007-2013**  
**Ministero delle politiche agricole alimentari e forestali**

Dipartimento delle politiche competitive del mondo rurale e della qualità  
Direzione generale della competitività per lo sviluppo rurale

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