



Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry

Independent Evaluation of the National Rural Network Program 2014-2022

Summary of Ex Post Evaluation Report

May 2025



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

MA	Managing Authority
NMA	National Managing Authority
RMA	Regional Management Authority
TA	Technical Assistance
SC	Supervisory Committee
RDC	Rural Development Strategic Complement
EC	European Commission
CREA	Agricultural Research Council
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
FG	Focus Group
LAG	Local Action Groups
ISMEA	Institute of Agricultural Food Market Services
MASAF	Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
PS	Strategic Priority
PSP	CAP Strategic Plan
PdCP	CAP Communication Plan
NCN Action Plan	National CAP Network Action Plan
RDP	Rural Development Program
AER	Annual Evaluation Report
RdP	CAP Network
RRE	European Rural Network
NRN	National Rural Network
EU	European Union
IE	Independent Evaluator

VEXA	Ex Ante Evaluation
VEXP	Ex Post Evaluation

Background and Objectives of the Report

The Ex Post Evaluation (VEXP) of the 2014-2020 NRN comes at the end of a tribulated programming period, due to the well-known pandemic events and the CAP renewal process that overlapped with it. The Ex Post Evaluation, of which this Report reports the main evidences, represents a crucial piece in the whole mosaic of the evaluation process; in fact, it cannot be considered as a still image of a precise moment in the implementation cycle of a Program, but rather as the concluding and summarizing act of a path started since the beginning of the service.

Just as the NRN Program has had to adapt to the changing conditions and needs of the reference context, so the evaluation has become a flexible accompanying tool in order to support those responsible for implementing the Program and better guide their decisions.

This accompanying path has always been based on listening to the different voices that make up the NRN, precisely in order to grasp the varied nuances that distinguish a Program whose actions address an almost indefinite universe of subjects and whose effects by their very nature are mostly intangible.

For this reason, splitting the Ex Post Evaluation from the entire evaluation process would not only have seemed a bold exercise, but more importantly would have risked limiting the understanding of the effects generated by the Program. The methodology proposed in the following pages is based on just such an assumption.

Based on the evidence thus found, the main objective of this Report is to answer the compulsory evaluation question under Regulation 808/2014 *"To what extent has the NRN contributed to the achievement of the objectives set forth in Art. 54(2) of Reg. (EU) No. 1305/2013?"*

1. Methodological approach

The evaluation framework of this report is grounded in the evidence gathered throughout the evaluation process together with the needs that emerged during the February 2025 Steering Group with the ultimate goal of answering the evaluation questions in the ex-post evaluation phase in a timely manner.

The evaluative conclusions are, therefore, the fruit of the exercise conducted throughout the service carried out for the client. The method and techniques used in the ex post evaluation included conducting a specific survey addressed to the universe of recipients in order to supplement and enrich with any new content the information already collected and, in particular, to quantify the result indicators of the Program (See Annex I). In this summary, only the full discussion of the response formulated for the mandatory question is given in the following chapter. However, in the logbook (See Ch. 3) the reader will find the main conclusions and recommendations related to the individual evaluation questions related to the logical framework of the Network Program together with aspects considered "cross-cutting" as they are related to all actions of the Network.

2. To what extent has the NRN contributed to the achievement of the objectives set forth in Art. 54(2) of Reg. (EU) No. 1305/2013?

The overall evaluation question ultimately asks to determine the contribution of the NRN 2014-2022 to achieving the very purposes for which the national networks were established, namely: *a) to stimulate stakeholder participation in the implementation of rural development; b) to improve the quality of implementation of rural development programs; c) to inform the public and potential beneficiaries about rural development policy and possible funding opportunities; and d) to promote innovation in agriculture, food production, forestry, and rural areas.* To this end, the IA traced the evolution of the Program, the ideas behind it and the activities that have characterized its implementation, trying to capture concrete results.

In the following, this request is primarily met by articulating the response with respect to the different dimensions of analysis/value-added of the NRN, which, in fact, retrace the above objectives and guided the IA in its assessment by adding cross-cutting elements.

Finally, the IA ventured to identify the contribution of the 2014-2022 NRN Program to the 6 CAP Priority Objectives: *(i) promoting knowledge transfer and innovation; (ii) enhancing the profitability and competitiveness of agriculture; (iii) promoting the organization of the food supply chain; (iv) preserving, restoring, and enhancing agriculture-related ecosystems; (v) encouraging resource efficiency and the transition to a low-carbon economy; and (vi) and striving for social inclusion, poverty reduction, and economic development in rural areas* in order to provide additional cognitive input.

The NRN and the dimensions of value-added analysis.

1. **Networking:** *stimulating stakeholder participation in rural development implementation*

The networking dimension, arguably, represents the heart of the NRN. It networked a plurality of actors - Managing Authorities, LAGs, agricultural enterprises, universities, NGOs, local governments - **creating a relational space** that facilitated the exchange of knowledge, best practices, innovative models and operational tools.

Through territorial animation activities, thematic tables, workshops, study visits and collaborative platforms, the NRN has enabled horizontal circulation of information, strengthening cohesion among different institutional levels and stakeholders. This has had a positive impact especially in terms of **improving the management of Rural Development Programs** by making them more effective in acting on innovation, competitiveness, supply chain and inclusion.

The Network Program has also fostered the emergence of multilevel and transnational networks, with particular momentum on issues such as local development (Focus area 6b) and social agriculture. Networking has **also** produced **intangible effects**, such as the consolidation of a shared language among rural actors, **a sense of professional community**, and the **spontaneous spread of virtuous practices**.

Through events, seminars, focus groups, study visits and collaborative platforms, it has made it possible to **connect different actors**, strengthened links between LAGs, MAs, businesses, local authorities, universities, NGOs and European institutions.

Finally, **the NRN's action in multilevel** (local-national-European) **contexts**, with thematic networks in the areas of Leader, AKIS, evaluation and social agriculture, **was particularly effective**. In Focus Area 6B, dedicated to local development, the contribution was evaluated positively by 89 percent of LAGs, thanks to support for participatory planning and the provision of cooperation tools.

The networking generated by the Program has stimulated:

- **The holding of more than 320 events** including seminars, focus groups, conferences;
- **Seventy percent of rural actors have participated at least once in an activity**;
- **65 percent of users used RRN products** to develop professional networks and strengthen operational relationships;

2. Governance: *improving the quality of program implementation*

The NRN has **contributed substantially to strengthening multilevel governance** of rural development by promoting coordination between central and regional administrations, technical support to MAs, and institutional capacity of actors involved in the management and evaluation of RDPs.

In particular, it has been active in improving the quality of RDP implementation through information tools, management models and programming support. The NRN, which acted as a "bridge," a liaison, also played a key role in supporting the transition to CAP 2023-2027 by contributing to the writing of the National Strategic Plan.

The numbers of governance activities:

- **79 products produced specifically for the PSP** in the three-year period 2021-2023 (analyses, guides, management models);
- Ninety percent of the MAs involved in the survey expressed **high satisfaction with the support actions received**;
- **Improvements in design and evaluation capacity** have been recorded through the use of platforms, databases, and tools such as PowerBI, GeoHub, podcasts, etc.

3. Communication: *informing the public and potential beneficiaries*

The NRN has made **communication a strategic tool**, not limiting itself to mere information dissemination, but promoting educational, participatory and active citizenship action. Communication has been used as a tool for transparency and dissemination of results.

Through **a programmatic action marked by synergy**, it has been able to convey complex content adopt an understandable language and convey it in accessible forms, adopting digital channels, social media, podcasts, webseries, public events and popular publications. This effort has resulted in a **growing visibility of rural development policy**, stimulating the

involvement of targets often far from institutional circuits: young people, consumers, schools, citizens. Initiatives such as "PAC Game" or "Rural World" have shown how NRN has succeeded in stimulating interest and participation even in informal settings.

Numbers and sample projects of communication in RRN:

- **349,499 visits to the RRN website** in 2024 (up 62% from 2020);
- **Significant increases in engagement on Instagram** (+124%) and LinkedIn (+155%).
- **Initiatives such as PAC Game, "Oleario," and "Words as Seeds"** have involved thousands of students, families and citizens in rural areas;
- **Eighty-five percent of survey respondents were positive** about the effectiveness of communication.

4. *Innovation: promoting innovation in agriculture, forestry, food production*

In the field of innovation, the NRN has played the role of **"facilitator and incubator"** of innovative **projects**, particularly through its **proximity with the world of PEI-AGRI Operating Groups** the interaction with the environment of research, dissemination of technological, organizational and environmental solutions. As innovation is one of the main thrusts of the Program, it has contributed significantly to the construction of a more integrated and dynamic **AKIS** system, promoting systemic innovation, not only technical, but also social and organizational. It has also worked in close connection with the European Horizon 2020 program.

It has provided technical assistance, dissemination tools, training tracks and networking to encourage the adoption of innovative solutions by agricultural and forestry enterprises.

What emerged **was a systems approach** to innovation, understood not only as technology adoption but also as organizational change, social capital creation and collective learning.

Some of the initiatives implemented in the field of innovation:

- **Over 100 GO projects supported** through documents, guidelines, consulting and networking;
- The **Innovaturale platform** has published dozens of fact sheets on innovative practices for resource efficiency and agroecology;
- Fifty-seven percent of academics responding to the survey indicated that through contact with the NRN, they have intensified ties with other actors (LAGs, companies, consultants);
- The catalog of good practices collects more than **70 replicable experiences**.

5. **Cross-cutting actions**

The overall effectiveness of the Program is also linked to its ability to act transversally, integrating different dimensions and ensuring complementarities between EAFRD objectives. **The NRN actions proved to be consistent with European strategies** (Europe 2020, Green Deal) **and were synergic with other funds** (ERDF, ESF, EMFF), particularly as far as the Italian Inner Areas initiative was concerned.

Cross-cutting actions have enabled the NRN to address complex challenges such as climate change, digitization, inclusion of youth and women, and promotion of renewable energy. Helping to build monitoring systems, participatory evaluation tools, and replicable models has solidified the approach as European good practice.

Many NRN actions acted **in a cross-cutting** way, simultaneously touching on multiple objectives:

- Support for the National Strategy for Inner Areas **(NIS) involved 72 areas**, strengthening social cohesion and environmental sustainability;
- **The Young Pastors' School initiative** combined social inclusion, tradition enhancement and skills transfer;
- Projects on **organic farming, "CAP and Health,"** climate change and digitalization have broadened the awareness of the citizenry.

In summary, the National Rural Network 2014-2022 has been **an enabling infrastructure for Italian rural development** because of its ability to connect, inform, accompany, and innovate. Despite some limitations related to institutional fragmentation and the difficulty of monitoring intangible impacts, the ex-post evaluation confirms that the NRN has played a key role in strengthening administrative capacity, institutional communication and active participation of the partnership, acting as an infrastructure capable of facilitating the effective implementation of rural development policy. **Its added value lies in its ability to network, facilitate cooperation and foster collective learning.**

Through an integrated approach based on networking, communication, innovation and governance, it has contributed effectively to the achievement of the six EAFRD priority objectives, with results that, although often intangible, are perceived and recognized by the actors involved. The degree of participation, product utilization rate (over 75 percent) and satisfaction (over 85 percent) confirm the systemic added value of the Program.

The NRN has proven to be an **enabling tool**, able to build networks, promote innovation, support governance and spread knowledge, strengthening the capacity of the Italian rural system to meet the challenges of sustainability, competitiveness and equity.

Finally, the NRN represented a **"generative network" that facilitated relationships, produced knowledge, strengthened capacity, and built trust.** A model to be consolidated and strengthened in the new cycle 2023-2027.

The NRN and the fulfillment of the 6 Priority Objectives of the CAP 2014-2022

1. Promotion of knowledge transfer and innovation

The NRN has played a central role in promoting innovation and knowledge transfer through networking, support to the EIP-AGRI Operational Groups, cooperation with Horizon 2020, and dissemination of rural development achievements through the good practice approach. Information platforms, training events and publications have been created that have nurtured

dialogue between farmers, researchers and consultants, facilitating a collaborative approach to solving specific problems in the agricultural sector.

The NRN has actively promoted knowledge transfer through:

- **More than 70 projects** related to promoting vertical knowledge and insights (e.g., "Administrative Capacity and Experience Exchange," "Synergies," "Monitoring and Evaluation");
- **Online platforms, databases, podcasts, e-learning courses and technical publications**, available free of charge, have promoted access to specialized information;
- **The indicator "% good practices disseminated" reached 70 percent** for Actions 1.1.1 and 1.1.3, demonstrating effectiveness in knowledge dissemination;
- **Networking (e.g., AKIS, evaluation, social farming) enhanced this capacity for exchange**, with 43.7 percent of respondents identifying this function as the main strength of NRN.

2. Enhancing the Profitability and Competitiveness of Agriculture

The NRN has helped strengthen agricultural competitiveness through **networking actions and dissemination of business culture**, with targeted initiatives toward young farmers, rural SMEs, the role of women in agriculture, etc. Networking activities facilitated the sharing of experiences and innovative business models, while communication initiatives modernized, enhanced the image of the agricultural sector and promoted the participation of agricultural entrepreneurs in EAFRD opportunities. Several other initiatives gave due emphasis to diversification, the role of agritourism and hospitality in Italy (e.g., creation and nurturing of the "National Directory of Agritourism").

The NRN has fostered competitiveness through:

- **Dissemination of practical and regulatory information** aimed at young farmers, forestry enterprises and rural SMEs;
- **Development of digital and management tools**, such as counseling and quality databases;
- **Promoting access to finance and business culture**, particularly through initiatives such as "Open School Copernicus."
- **According to the surveys, 65 percent of actors said they have intensified relationships through NRN, with impacts on competitiveness and entrepreneurial management.**

3. Promotion of the organization of the Food Supply Chain

The Program has facilitated the integration of agricultural producers into the agrifood chain by promoting synergies between economic and institutional actors and encouraging the creation

of networks. Specific initiatives have supported the development of short supply chains and the promotion of local products, improving the visibility and competitiveness of producers.

The Program supported:

- **The development of short supply chains**, enhancement of local products and cooperation between producers, processors and distributors;
- **Promotion of typical Italian products that are economic and identity lever of the territory** (e.g., initiatives such as "Oleario," which promoted tourism related to EVO oil);
- PEI-AGRI Operational Groups, often geared toward innovating agribusiness chain management, have seen strong support from the NRN;

4. Preservation of ecosystems

The NRN supported environmental sustainability, promoting agri-environmental practices, biodiversity and the adoption of eco-schemes. Activities have included information tools and technical supports for environmental management in rural areas, contributing to the conservation of agricultural and forest ecosystems, including through dialogue with LAGs and local communities.

In the environmental field, the NRN has:

- **Promoted eco-schemes**, biodiversity protection and carbon farming, in cooperation with Ministry and Regions.
- Supported **the mapping of Natura 2000 areas**, agri-environmental measures and the implementation of the BioReport.
- **Enhanced sustainable practices in inland areas** through monitoring tools and land management support.
- The actors' satisfaction rating on this objective exceeded 80 percent, particularly among the LAGs involved in the survey.

5. Efficient use of resources and transition to a low-emission economy

Through support for innovation, information and awareness-raising projects, the NRN has facilitated the introduction of environmentally friendly technologies, water and energy conservation and the promotion of renewable energy. Synergy with other European programs (e.g., Horizon and LIFE) has strengthened the coherence and complementarity of action on environmental issues.

In this area, the NRN has worked on:

- **Raising awareness of the rational use of resources**, including through thematic seminars on water and energy conservation;
- Connecting with **Horizon 2020** on topics such as precision agriculture and renewable energy;

- Technical and documentary support on practices such as **bioeconomy** and integrated soil management;
- The result is confirmed by **52 to 69 percent of actors** saying they were satisfied with the support they received on environmental efficiency issues.

6. Social inclusion and economic development of rural areas

The NRN has shown particular effectiveness in promoting social inclusion and local development through **support for multilevel governance, the enhancement of inland areas, and the participation of LAGs**. Activities such as the "School of Young Shepherds" or campaigns on organic farming have involved the citizenry, with special attention to young people and the disadvantaged, helping to generate employment and cohesion in rural areas.

On this front, the NRN has acted through:

- **Educational projects such as the Young Pastors' School**, the Rural World program, and activities in the Inner Areas.
- **Activation of more than 70 LAGs** and support for participatory local strategies (SSLs) to foster territorial cohesion.
- Production of events, multimedia materials and awareness campaigns to attract young people and women into agriculture.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

The main conclusions and recommendations for each of the 4 dimensions of analysis are returned below.

Table1 - Ex post evaluation NRN Program 2014-2022: main conclusions and recommendations

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations
<p>To what extent has the NRN contributed to achieving the objectives set out in Art. 54(2) of Reg. (EU) No. 1305/2013 <i>[stimulating participation, improving the quality of implementation, informing, promoting innovation]</i></p>	<p>The overall reach of the NRN shows how it is not just a "technical tool" but an agent of change that can contribute to the resilience, sustainability and vitality of Italy's rural areas.</p> <p>The NRN 2014-2022 has proven to be an "enabling infrastructure" for rural development in Italy, capable of facilitating the achievement of the six objectives of EU rural development policy through an integrated approach based on networking, communication, innovation, governance and cross-cutting actions.</p> <p>By succeeding in leveraging precisely the 4 dimensions of added value, it has helped strengthen administrative capacity, enhanced the role of institutional communication, and fostered partnership participation. It has promoted multi-level and thematic networks, generating positive aggregation processes even within civil society.</p> <p>On specific issues, such as innovation or sustainability, it has acted on a national scale and, again, has acted in coherence with European strategies (Green Deal, Europe 2020), fostering synergies between EAFRD, ERDF, ESF and EMFF.</p> <p>Within this framework, given the complexity of the programming cycle faced, the NRN's action has encountered significant critical issues:</p>	<p>Taking into account the conclusions just expressed, the IA suggests strengthening multilevel governance through national direction, overcoming information asymmetries and enhancing, networks and collaborations, the know-how and expertise of other actors, regions first and foremost.</p> <p>From the perspective of NRN's facilitation and intermediation functions, these should be consolidated, maintaining and expanding networking activities, in view of the new CAP cycle and in order to revive the participation of new/old actors.</p> <p>At the central level, it is suggested that monitoring of intangible impacts be strengthened, enhancing qualitative and participatory approaches to capture changes in the skills, culture and behaviors of stakeholders.</p> <p>With regard to the physical and financial monitoring activities of the Program, the PSP MA (as the person in charge of the 2023-2027 CAP Network) is invited to strengthen the process of collecting output indicators and related unit cost. Indeed, where relevant and where possible, it would be appropriate to carry out efficiency analyses of expenditure related to the initiatives of the future Network, which was not possible for the NRN 2014-2022.</p> <p>In the immediate future, it is suggested that continuity, flexibility and strategic coherence be</p>

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some structural weaknesses related to institutional fragmentation and the limited role of Regional Posts. ▪ Difficulties in monitoring intangible impacts, such as changes in culture or awareness. ▪ Fragility of the monitoring system of Program outputs and related costs. 	<p>ensured for the 2023-2027 CAP Network, enhancing the accumulated experience, established models and social capital generated.</p>
<p>Governance</p>	<p>The Program has good programmatic coherence (synergy) with all major development instruments (i.e., Co-financed Funds). However, this theoretical coherence has not always translated into implementation synergy.</p>	<p>It is suggested that mechanisms for operational coordination with other institutional actors (both at the national and local levels) involved in the management and implementation of the various financing instruments other than the CAP should be provided.</p>
	<p>Support for EAFRD implementation appears to be very positive, especially due to what the NRN has done in terms of exchanging experiences and good practices.</p>	<p>We recommend identifying operational tools (i.e., products) that can provide greater responsiveness to the needs of different rural actors.</p> <p>It is also recommended that the Network's areas of operation be simplified in order to streamline support and make it more effective.</p> <p>It is recommended that, for all interventions involving the enhancement or ex novo implementation of expenditure/advancement tracking tools of the National Program or Regional Complements, the National Paying Agency and, where present, the</p>

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations
		Regional Paying Bodies should be involved from the outset.
	The Network's Regional Posts do not always seem to have produced the planned results, nor have they been conducive to building a systemic approach in the territories.	It is recommended that the model of territorial support based on Regional Posts be made more effective in favor of more functional approaches to creating an osmotic center-periphery process, including from virtuous cases.
	The NRN's action in favor of improving the governance of rural areas appears very positive. It is mainly the LAGs that testify to the success of the interventions put in place.	It is recommended to intensify the use of networking tools on the ground in order to facilitate cooperation between different actors involved in local development.
<p>Networking - exchange and transfer of knowledge, information, experience, expertise, and best practices in rural development</p>	<p>Sharing experiences/good practices and experimenting with innovative models of cooperation to ensure a common base of information is the main strength of the NRN. The Program's ability to "network" is evident, particularly in some areas, such as Leader, AKIS, social agriculture, and monitoring and evaluation where the Network has been able to exchange information, expertise, and practices even for the purpose of taking common and innovative positions. Further confirmation of the positive role played by the Program as a facilitator of exchanges of good practices comes from the enhancement of result indicators, with particular reference to the % good practices indicator (70% on PS1 and more than 50% on PS2).</p>	<p>The working model developed in some contexts (AKIS, social agriculture, Leader, monitoring and evaluation, Administrative capacity), with particular reference to <i>networking</i>, could be replicated and adopted in other areas under the Program's purview.</p> <p>From a broader perspective, it is recommended that the Network's actions be integrated into AKIS national systems and territorial strategies, promoting a more strategic use of knowledge and innovation.</p>

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations
<p>Networking - participation and contributed to the activities of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) and the activities of the European Network PEI-AGRI</p>	<p>The NRN has contributed to the activities of the European networks with greater significance in areas where relationships were already solid and structured or in the case of technical collaborations on specific aspects/issues, discounting, in other cases, the lack of a sufficiently organized internal structure as a stable point of contact with the European Networks. Particularly at the community level, we note the loss of added value due to the effects of the pandemic, with the absence of direct relationships in favor of exchanges and meetings through online platforms.</p>	<p>Foster direct relations and stable collaboration with European networks through the organization of a permanent internal structure (e.g., point of contact for European networks within the Network structure).</p>
<p>Networking - monitoring and evaluation</p>	<p>The activities implemented were directed toward the creation of opportunities for discussion and involvement on the issues and good practices of rural development policy evaluation, including through cooperation and integration with other policies and knowledge transfer and technical/scientific dissemination. In particular, participatory modes were implemented, aimed at maximum interaction with the target group (e.g., through direct involvement in working groups).</p>	<p>The working model developed in monitoring and evaluation is recognized as good practice, and this is confirmed by the surveys conducted in ex-post evaluation.</p> <p>The earliest possible start of evaluation activities at the national level is urged, continuing in the promotion effort at the regional level as well.</p> <p>The initiation of the PSP evaluation, which is mandatory by regulation, could have a trailing effect in promoting the evaluation culture also among the regions and territories (where the regulatory constraint does not exist for 2023-2027), with an effect of strengthening the effectiveness of CAP interventions, promoting networking, and growing the rural system as a whole.</p> <p>It is, in fact, an effective continuation of fostering the robust community of practice built in previous</p>

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations
		<p>programming. The ongoing oversight of processes by the CAP Network may enable evaluation to achieve greater effectiveness and usefulness, including by ensuring a close link between national evaluator and regional evaluators. In addition, this also creates conditions for greater stakeholder participation in evaluation activities (e.g., dissemination of evaluation culture, holding events dedicated to the dissemination of results, etc.), with a broader positive effect on the networking processes promoted by the Network.</p>
<p>Networking - actors reached</p>	<p>Quantification of the indicator "% actors reached" returns a more than satisfactory overall picture of the Program's performance, in particular, for DPs 1 and 3 (e.g., 84% for outcome 1.1.1, 75% for 3.1.1 and 3.2.1); for DP 2, however, lower values are recorded for outcomes 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 (36%), but the value reaches 65% for outcome 2.1.1. Some products are able to reach actors more effectively and "create networks": conferences/seminars/ videoconferences create networks between firms and other sectors, networks between institutions and networks between firms; research and analysis papers are used effectively with reference to networks between institutions while workshops/focus groups are particularly useful for the purposes of networks between firms and other sectors.</p> <p>Regarding the issue of citizen involvement, several actions have been conducted by the Program throughout the programming cycle with the ambition of reaching out to target groups in order to:</p>	<p>Need to intercept key themes capable of attracting targets other than the "typical" ones of the Program, such as young people, etc., making the most of the potential of the communication tool, through also a "targeting" of civil society in order to be able to reach them more and more effectively.</p>

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ create a community, fostering the networking process among area stakeholders and stimulating knowledge sharing and innovative practices (e.g., Copernicus Academy project); ▪ Encourage more entrepreneurs to use dedicated tools to make the transition to sustainable agriculture (e.g., "organic farming" campaign); ▪ Create/facilitate networking, sharing of results and reflection for future choices. 	
<p>Communication</p>	<p>Communication has been a cross-cutting and strategic component of the Program, essential for the dissemination of the opportunities offered by the CAP and for strengthening Italian rural cohesion and identity. This action covered all targets of the Program and PS3 in particular, which was in line with the Programmer's dictate at the beginning of the 2014-2022 period.</p> <p>Since 2019, an effective and coordinated communication governance structure has been consolidated, capable of integrating different languages, tools and actors, with strong adaptive capacity and a synergistic approach. The work carried out by this "control room" is also evidenced by the positive results of the outcome indicators: according to monitoring data, communication has effectively reached both institutional actors and the general public, with a significant increase in web access (+62% since 2020) and growth in engagement on social media.</p>	<p>First and foremost, the IA suggests working on communication as an "enabling condition": in view of the 2023-2027 CAP period, it is recommended that communication be emphasized as a strategic lever for the functioning of the multi-actor and multi-level approach, within a centralized governance framework.</p> <p>This also implies the need to develop a coordinated inter-institutional strategy based on structured coordination between CREA, ISMEA and MASAF to strengthen the effectiveness and consistency of communication activities. Strengthening these aspects passes, necessarily, through a shared steering cabin that also includes the partnership-first and foremost the Regions. On this last aspect, the IA suggests recovering relational and inclusive dimensions, promoting more direct and personalized forms of exchange, especially in light of turnover in administrations and the need to consolidate relational capital. In fact, this aspect was</p>

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations
	<p>With regard to the target audience, to whom a specific survey was dedicated, the judgment is also positive: the responses show a good level of appreciation (liking shares 85%-88%) and use of the products (55%), with 75% of the actors involved with respect to the objectives of transparency and participation.</p> <p>Finally, the strength of communication in NRN was adaptive capacity (43%): the flexible and effective response to stimuli, changes and challenges - internal and external - through the timely adjustment of strategies, tools, processes and languages, while preserving consistency, continuity and keeping the pursuit of the original objectives stable.</p>	<p>pointed out as a point of weakness on which to take concrete action.</p> <p>The IA suggests continuing to integrate and innovate communication tools and build on the ability to capture new trends affecting rural development. Continue to experiment with multimedia languages, technologies and formats (podcasts, videos, social, events) including in hybrid modes (digital / in-person) to expand the reach and quality of engagement: this aspect may be one of the keys to success for the 2023-2027 CAP Network as well. And again: improve communication and civic participation by further expanding the accessibility of content and engaging new audiences (youth, citizens, schools) in rural development processes.</p> <p>Finally, regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the 2023-2027 CAP Network strategy, the IA suggests incorporating new judgment metrics that can better measure the effectiveness of the communication message and the results achieved on the target audiences. It is also suggested that the collection of feedback be made structured with respect to the broad audience to understand what the perceptions are with respect to the proposed message-or products.</p>
<p>Innovation - the role of the NRN</p>	<p>The NRN has sought to respond to critical issues due to delayed timelines and regional dissimilarities by promoting a liaison and sharing among regions of good practices and procedural solutions already</p>	<p>The Network could play the role of coordinator of such exchanges of experience between regions with different experiences and backgrounds. In addition, the promotion of interregional Operational Groups</p>

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations
	<p>identified and effective. The theme of good practices is one of the key aspects whose strategic importance was also often stressed by the recipients during the evaluation.</p>	<p>for projects covering the same issues would be desirable. This action would, according to the recipients, represent a definite added value generated by the Network</p>
<p>Innovation-promoting innovation and linkages between agriculture, food production and forestry and research and innovation</p>	<p>Dissemination and networking activities were effective, highlighting a number of outcomes attributable to the NRN's action, namely the effectiveness of the network built at the European level between stakeholders and EC/AKIS and the strong coordination action of the MA/Ministry on innovation. The NRN's contribution to promoting innovation is recognized as effective by <i>survey</i> respondents in ensuring effective communication of results and raising awareness of agricultural development issues and trends, while two outcomes appear improvable: the ability to identify/mobilize financial resources and facilitate dialogue with policy makers. Conference / Seminar / Videoconference represents the most welcome output for the promotion of innovation, confirming the importance of exchange and discussion, particularly on a topic such as innovation, where the component related to training and information support was found to be strategic in order to standardize the definition of innovation strategies and related measures of regional RDPs.</p>	<p>The CAP Network should continue to help improve knowledge of RDC opportunities for rural development through the production of technical and/or dissemination documents.</p>
<p>Innovation - Operating Groups</p>	<p>With reference to the implementation of the IEP, the Network has played a key role in fostering the exchange of information, facilitating information moments and facilitating cooperation.</p>	

Theme	Conclusions	Recommendations
	<p>One of the most interesting positive externalities brought about by the Network Program is its ability to generate networks of rural development actors. Promotional materials/publications, workshops and Focus Groups, as well as Research and Analysis Papers, appear to be the products most widely used by survey participants.</p>	
<p>Transversal</p>	<p>The NRN products have been widely used, finding appreciation from the various stakeholders involved in the Program.</p>	<p>It is recommended, however, that some products be revised in light of the lessons learned in the 2014-2022 period (i.e., simplification) in order to make them more relevant to the context in which they are used and make the support provided more effective, and efficient.</p>
	<p>The RRN model appeared to be flexible despite the organizational complexity of the Program, the broad articulation of the topics addressed, and the number and variety of the target audience.</p>	<p>We recommend, however, a simplification of the organizational model aimed at ensuring, at the same time, greater interaction and participation of all rural actors.</p> <p>It is also suggested that tools for verifying the "feasibility" of the Network's project ideas be introduced, so that their actual impact in terms of the effects generated can be assessed in advance.</p>

Annex I - Enhancement of result indicators

Priority	OS	RA	IR	Unit of measurement	Base value (2013)	Target value (2025)	Value monitored ex post	Source	Calculation method
1	1.1	1.1.1	% actors reached	%	90	100	84	Survey	The value is given by the answers given by the total number of respondents to at least one of the options in D.4 of the questionnaire
			Enjoyment of the Program	%	55	70	88	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of the total answers with value enough or fully on the total answers to D.3 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective considered
			% good practices	%	70	90	60	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.5 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
			% products used	%	25	35	32	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the reports given by the respondents on the product types in D.4 of the questionnaire
			% actors who have collaborated	%	-	-	39	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 1, 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.5 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
		1.1.2	Enjoyment of the Program	%	60	75	83	Survey	Value is calculated on the basis of the total of responses with value enough or fully on the total of responses to Q.3 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
			No. networks created	N.	-	-	189	Survey	The value is calculated based on the responses with intensity 2 and 3 out of the total responses to Q.7 of the questionnaire
			% good practices	%	-	-	65	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.5 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
			% actors who have collaborated	%	60	75	41	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 1, 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.5 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
		1.1.3	% actors reached	%	-	-	54	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the total number of respondents to at least one of the options in D.4 of the questionnaire
			Enjoyment of the Program	%	60	75	57	Survey	Value is calculated on the basis of the total of responses with value enough or fully on the total of responses to Q.3 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
			% good practices	%	70	90	-	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.5 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
			% products used	%	-	-	16	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the reports given by the respondents on the product types in D.4 of the questionnaire
		1.1.4	% actors reached	%	-	-	79	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the total number of respondents to at least one of the options in D.4 of the questionnaire
			Enjoyment of the Program	%	45	60	68	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of the total of responses with value enough or fully on the total of responses to D.3 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective considered with reference to the objective considered
			No. networks created	N.	-	-	290	Survey	The value is calculated based on the responses with intensity 2 and 3 out of the total responses to Q.7 of the questionnaire

Priority	OS	RA	IR	Unit of measurement	Base value (2013)	Target value (2025)	Value monitored ex post	Source	Calculation method
			% good practices	%	55	70	63	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.5 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
			% products used	%	35	45	37	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the reports given by the respondents on the product types in D.4 of the questionnaire
			% actors who have collaborated	%	-	-	46	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 1, 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.5 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
2	2.1	2.1.1	% actors reached	%	50	65	65	Survey	D.5
			No. networks created	N.	-	-	174	Survey	The value is calculated based on the responses with intensity 2 and 3 out of the total responses to Q.8 of the questionnaire
			% good practices	%	-	-	53	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of answers with value 2 or 3 out of the total answers given to Q.6 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
			% products used	%	-	-	33	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the reports given by the respondents on the product types in D.5 of the questionnaire
			% actors who have collaborated	%	50	65	31	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 1, 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.6 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
	2.2	2.2.1 e 2.2.2	% actors reached (2.2.1)	%	80	100	36	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the total number of respondents to at least one of the options in D.5 of the questionnaire
			% actors reached (2.2.2)		50	65			
			Appreciation of communication actions (2.2.1)	%	90	-	41	Survey	Value is calculated on the basis of the total of responses with value enough or fully on the total of responses to Q.3 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
			Appreciation of communication actions (2.2.2)		-	-			
			Enjoyment of the Program (2.2.1)	%	80	90	36	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of the total answers with value enough or fully on the total answers to D.2 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective considered
			% products used (2.2.1)	%	30	40	36	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the reports given by the respondents on the product types in D.5 of the questionnaire
			% products used (2.2.2)		-	-			
3	3.1	3.1.1	Appreciation of communication actions	%	80	90	85	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of the total answers with value enough or fully out of the total answers to D.1 of the questionnaire with reference to the considered objective
			% products used	%	30	40	55	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the reports given by the respondents on the product types in D.3 of the questionnaire
			% actors reached	%	-	-	75	Survey	The value is given by the answers given by the total number of respondents to at least one of the options in D.4 of the questionnaire

Priority	OS	RA	IR	Unit of measurement	Base value (2013)	Target value (2025)	Value monitored ex post	Source	Calculation method
	3.2	3.2.1	% good practices	%	-	-	55	Survey	Value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.4 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
			% actors reached	%	-	-	75	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the total number of respondents to at least one of the options in D.4 of the questionnaire
			% products used	%	-	-	55	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the reports given by the respondents on the product types in D.3 of the questionnaire
			Appreciation of communication actions	%	-	-	88	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of the total answers with value enough or fully on the total answers to D.2 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective considered
			Enjoyment of the Program	%	-	-	86	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of the total answers with value enough or fully out of the total answers to D.1 of the questionnaire with reference to the considered objective
			% actors who have collaborated	%	55	70	85	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 1, 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.4 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
4	4.1	4.1.1	No. networks created	N.	-	-	124	Survey	The value is calculated based on the responses with intensity 2 and 3 out of the total responses to Q.6 of the questionnaire
			% good practices	%	-	-	57	Survey	Value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.4 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
			% products used	%	-	-	15	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the reports given by the respondents on the product types in D.3 of the questionnaire
			% actors who have collaborated	%	-	-	57	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 1, 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.4 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
	4.2	4.2.1	% actors reached	%	-	-	62	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the total number of respondents to at least one of the options in D.3 of the questionnaire
			No. networks created	N.	-	-	128	Survey	The value is calculated based on the responses with intensity 2 and 3 out of the total responses to Q.6 of the questionnaire
			% actors who have collaborated	%	50	65	58	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 1, 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.4 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
			Appreciation of communication actions	%	-	-	76	Survey	The value is calculated on the basis of the total answers with value enough or fully on the total answers to D.2 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective considered
			% good practices	%	-	-	58	Survey	Value is calculated on the basis of responses with value 2 or 3 out of the total responses given to Q.4 of the questionnaire with reference to the objective under consideration
			% products used	%	-	-	22	Survey	The value is given by the responses given by the reports given by the respondents on the product types in D.3 of the questionnaire

