

# FOCUS GROUP 2012 ITALIA



Some participants debating and expressing their opinion in front of the Ex Ante Evaluation panel.

## A “FLASH” METHOD TO START REASONING ABOUT THE FUTURE

The second part of the meeting was dedicated to get participants' feedbacks, comments and suggestions about Monitoring and Evaluation future development, encouraging a reflection about five distinctive aspects: ex ante evaluation, target indicators, evaluation plan, steering group and the extent of the activities out-sourcing.

### 2014-2020: LET'S START

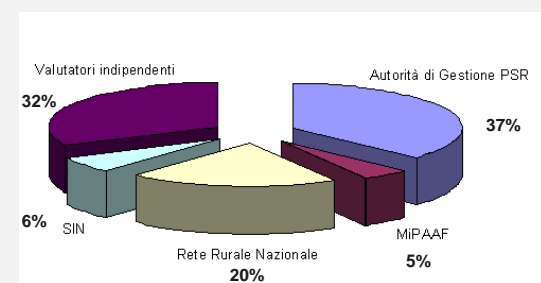
The 2012 Focus Group was held in Rome on November 8<sup>th</sup> at the INEA. It was organised by the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development Helpdesk, in cooperation with the National Rural Network.

The meeting met a great success with 65 people enrolled. It was entirely focused on the near future prospects of the Rural Development Programmes monitoring and evaluation: considering both the present programming period and the next one to come. What are the main changes? How do we get prepared to face them properly?

To start answering or, at least, to start looking for answers to these questions, the meeting was structured into two phases:

- a) a long opening session meant to illustrate the main differences between the two programming periods (the present one and the next to come), with relation to Monitoring and Evaluation standards. Moreover, two in-depth studies, dedicated especially to ex ante Evaluation and to the new Indicators Framework, were presented;
- b) a second session dedicated to collect participants' feedbacks, comments and suggestions. Because of the short time available, the entire work had been conceived and developed through a “flash” method.

### 2012 Focus Group: Who participated



### A “flash” method to dialogue together about the future



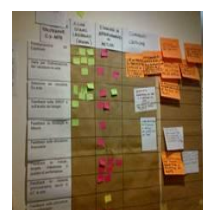
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After receiving a kit, with the necessary materials to express their point of view, the participants followed a path



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made of five steps laid out with template and related instructions. So, everybody could exchange views with



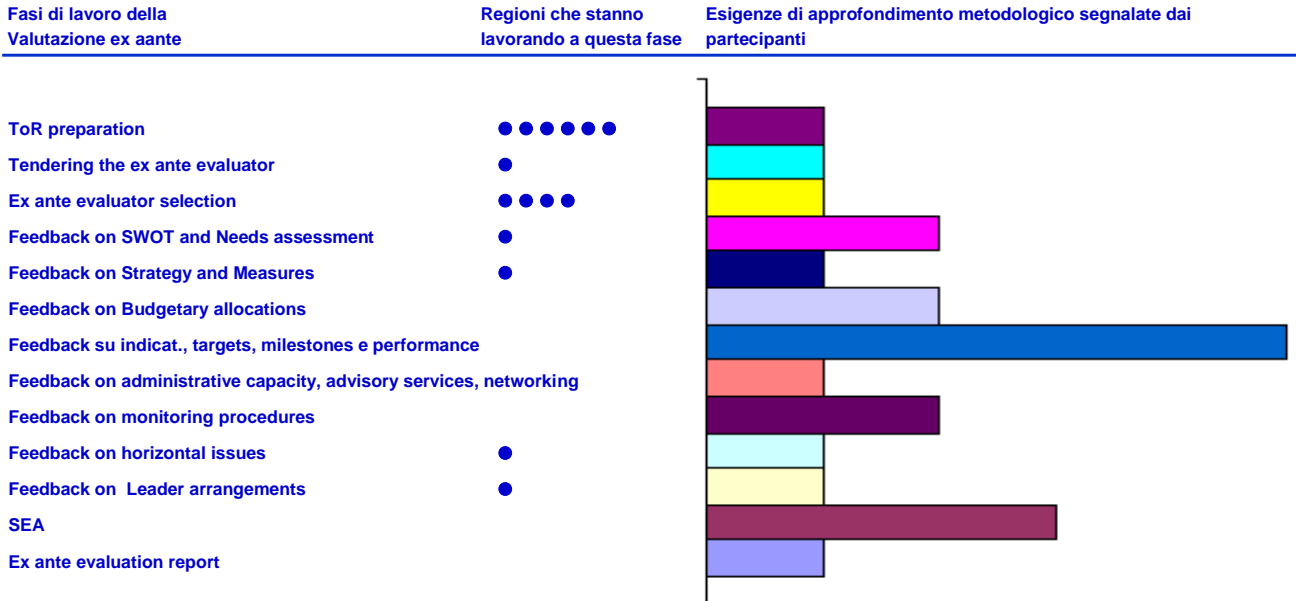
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their colleagues quickly and could elaborate their first impressions on the future prospects of the R. D. M&E system.



## EX ANTE EVALUATION: WHERE HAVE WE GOT TO?

Actually, the ex ante preparation represents the first concrete step within the monitoring and evaluation system of the new programming period. As come out during the Focus, most of the Italian regions have just begun paying attention to this task and, for this reason, the contribution of Roberto Cagliero, one of the authors of the European guide dedicated to this issue and recently published by the helpdesk, met a huge interest on the part of the participants



## PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

- Short time to select the evaluator by means of a competition
- Entrusting: is it possible to use the trust piece rate?
- Timing problem: *"we are late in this process. This method might be inapplicable"*.
- Too much importance is given to formal aspects: *"It is recommended to begin with the results, but they are never ready"*.
- The expenditure (€ 40,000) suggested in the guide is not adequate considering the actual needs.
- Specifications: what's the service length?
- How differently we operate in relation to other funds.
- What is the evaluator's role as regards ex ante conditionalities?
- Is the target quantification an evaluator's duty?
- The level of financial incoherence in connection to the target quantification.
- Difficulty to connect financial budget with target indicators.



Comments and observations on EAE

## A EUROPEAN GUIDE TO THE EX ANTE EVALUATION

The guide, "Getting the most from your RDP: guidelines for the ex ante evaluation of 2014-2020 RDPs", was distributed in June 2012 by the Evaluation Helpdesk to accompany the Managing Authorities through the different stages of the ex ante evaluation of the 2014-2020 RDPs.

This document is divided into three parts. The first one is specifically addressed to the Managing Authorities and illustrates ex ante evaluation goals and structure. The second section is addressed to the evaluators and it describes evaluation contents and a variety of available tools.

The third part clarifies the details about the procedures to activate and it also gives preliminary instructions about the context indicators.

In November 2012 the NRN published an abstract in Italian of the guide edited by Roberto Cagliero and Silvia De Mattheais.



## CMEF 2014-2020: PARTICIPANTS' FIRST FEEDBACK

### Feedback about the target indicators: Part I

Focus Area	Target indicator	Giudizi di criticità
P1A - Fostering innovation and the knowledge base in rural areas	% of expenditure for the 3 measures: 'Knowledge transfer & information action' + 'advisory services' + 'cooperation' in relation to the total RDP expenditure	1
P1B - Strengthening the links between agricultural and forestry and research and innovation	TOTAL number of co-operation operations planned under the cooperation measure (groups, networks/clusters, pilot projects...) [across all focus areas]	4
P1C - Fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agriculture and forestry sectors	Total number of participants trained [across all focus areas]	3
P2A - Facilitating restructuring of farms facing major structural problems...	% of agriculture holdings with RDP support for investments in restructuring	0
P2B - Facilitating generational renewal in the agricultural sector	% of agriculture holdings with RDP supported business development plan for young farmers	0
P3A - Better integrating primary producers into the food chain...	% (of total farms) of farms supported under quality production schemes, short circuit schemes or producer groups and inter-branch organisation	0
P3B - Supporting farm risk management	% (of total farms) of farms participating under risk management schemes	3
P4A - Restoring and preserving biodiversity, ... and the state of European landscapes	% Forest or other wooded area under management contracts supporting biodiv. + % Agricultural land under management contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes	5
P4B - Improving water management	% of Agricultural land under management contracts improving water management + % of forestry land under management contracts to improve water management	3
P4C - Improving soil management landscapes	% of Agricultural land under management contracts improving soil management + % of forestry land under management contracts to improve soil management	2

Even if conceived in strict connection to the 2007-2013 CMEF, the new monitoring and evaluation framework, shows some relevant innovations that we can summarize in the following points:

- The observation field widens out on the entire CAP;
- Impact indicators cover both the first and the second pillars;
- Target indicators of the second pillar;
- Operations database;
- Evaluation Plan;
- Mid-term evaluation will be no longer made;
- More information available in the Annual Report (RAE);
- Information provided by the beneficiaries (art. 78);

The main changes within 2014-2020 Rural Development Monitoring and Evaluation system were introduced by Graziella Romito (Ministry for Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies) during the opening section of the meeting.

### TARGET INDICATORS: MISSION POSSIBLE?

Target indicators are singled out within the output and result indicators sets. They measure a quantifiable target for each Focus Area.

Their values should be obtained directly from monitoring data or, under some circumstances, combining monitoring data with the coefficients provided by orientation documents (e. g., to estimate renewable energy production in new investments).



The poster dedicated to the target indicators for 2014-2020.

As expected, the Indicators Plan has been one of the most debated and controversial topics. Participants, especially after the reported experience at the CMEF, expressed skepticism and concern with comments like: "automatic indicators are an impossible dream"; "it's better to leave out the result indicators from the targets"; "18 target indicators are too many, it's better have not more than 10 target indicators"; "everything is still really blurred!". The tables displayed on the left on this page and on the next report the whole set of target indicators. Next to each entry, it is specified the number of participants who judged the "potentially critical" quantification and the specific issues.



## Feedback sugli indicatori target: parte seconda

Focus Area	Target indicator	Condizi di criticità
P5 A - Increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture	% of irrigated land switching to more efficient irrigation system	7
P5 B - Increasing efficiency in energy use...	Total investment in energy savings and efficiency (€)	6
P5 C Facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy...	Total investment in renewable energy production (€)	0
P5 D - Reducing nitrous oxide and methane emissions from agriculture	LU concerned by investments in live-stock management in view of reducing the N2O and methane emissions + % of agricultural land under management contracts targeting reduction of N2O and methane emissions	3
P5 E - Fostering carbon sequestration in agriculture and forestry	% of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration	0
P6 A - Facilitating diversification, creation of new small enterprises and job creation	Jobs created in supported projects (also under dB for LEADER)	10
P6 B - Fostering local development in rural areas	% of rural Population covered by local development strategies + Rural population benefiting from improved services / infrastructures + Jobs created in supported projects (Leader)	5
P6 C - Enhancing accessibility to, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas	Rural Population benefiting from new or improved services / infrastructures (ICT)	2

## TO KNOW MORE ABOUT FOCUS TOPICS

<http://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/9818> - All the reference documents of the Focus 2012 (slides, chips etc.)

<http://www.youtube.com/user/rdpeuropean> - 6 video clips to explain Rural development 2014- 2020.

**Focus Group 2012 Italia Participants:** Alessandro Monteleone, Sabrina Speciale, Patrizia Bernacconi, Andrea Furlan, Teresa Schipani, Cinzia Crocé, Tiziana De Martino, Giuseppe Mazzeo, Rosaria, Garzarella, Lorenzo Cichelli, Anna Fava, Claudio Lamoretti, Angela Menguzzato, Giuseppina D'Urso, Maria Antonietta Valiante, Patrizio Boccioni, Michele Sardilli, Garofano Francesco, Manuela Corleto, Paola Cappelletti, Graziella Romito, Enrica Addis, Barbara Andreuccetti, Mery Pampaluna, Daniele Demarca, Angelo Liberato, Silvia Gianbenedetti, Michelangelo Scalabrella, Manuela Sette, Giampiero Mazzocchi, Luigi Servadei, Sebastiano Forestale, Elisabetta Bavarese, Silvia De Mattheais, Vincenzo Caré, Raffaele De Franco, Roberta Buonocore, Valter Miceli, Stanislao Lepri, Mena Izzi, Elena Angela Peta, Augusto Buglione, Vincenzo Fucilli, Michela Ascani, Valentina Carta, Cinzia De Sanctis, Eugenio Corazza, Francesca Antilici, Francesco Licciardo, Ornella Mappa, Leonardo Gallico, Nicoletta, Ricciardulli, Graziana, Di Zonno, Ugo Abbagnano, Maria Queiroz, Federico Benvenuti, Leonardo Ambrosi, Enrico D'Angelillo, Vincenzo Angrisani, Margherita Zingaro, Paolo Zingaro, Carlo Andrea Pelagallo, Francesco Luci, Francesca Angori, Luisa Veneto, Virgilio Buscami. **Speakers:** Graziella Romito, Roberto Cagliero, Simona Cristiano, **Facilitation & reporting:** Carlo Ricci, Marta Striano, Silvia De Mattheais.

## HOW WILL THE EVALUATION MANAGEMENT CHANGE?

Managing Authorities representatives have been asked to express about two specific aspects of the ongoing evaluation management: outsourcing degree and steering group composition and role. As to the first point, on the one hand, full outsourcing systems appear to be preferred, on the other hand, 8 people out of 18 among those who answered thought it was interesting the adoption of in house systems (4) or of sequential outsourcing. Regarding the second point, it came out that it is necessary to use SG also as factor of involvement, interaction and communication with other programs referents and with Rural Development Programme stake holders. About the members, besides the RDP implementation and M&E managers, it became clear the necessity to involve in the process the following figures: scholars and experts on the involved subjects, environment and energy qualified territorial agencies, other funds /programmes evaluators and referents, local development dealing organizations.

## WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITIONAL PHASE?

The following table reports the support requirements and the need of an in-depth study suggested by the participants regarding the different aspects of the evaluation Plan. As to support procedures, it aroused interest the idea of activating work groups on specific issues more than programming seminar activities.

Componenti del piano di valutazione	Esigenze
1 OBJECTIVES. Evaluation objectives and goals	0
2 GOVERNANCE	
RDP internal and external coordination	3
Ex Ante, Swot and Evaluation Plan links	0
Organizational structure and evaluation managing	2
Management of the evaluation results quality	0
3 EVALUATION TOPICS	
Main objects (prioritizing important areas)	0
Rough time schedule	0
4 DATA	
Data collection regarding objectives and indicators	9
5 TIME TABLE	
Time programme according to the main milestones	2
6 COORDINATION	
Links to other evaluation systems	10
7 LEADER	
LAGs responsibilities in the strategies setting	4
NRN responsibilities (including LAGs support and evaluation)	2
Other Structural Funds integration	7
Practical guide writing	2
8 COMMUNICATION.	
Communication strategy addressed to a wide audience	2
Communication strategy addressed to the stake holders	2
Feedback about evaluation results by policy maker	2
Follow up on the use of the recommendations	3
9 RESOURCES	
Budget e resources for the evaluation	2