



INDEPENDENT EVALUATION SERVICE OF ABRUZZO RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 2014/2020

INTERMEDIATE EVALUATION REPORT

SYNTHESIS

V. 1.0

The Intermediate evaluation report contains the answers to the thirty questions of the common evaluation questionnaire, based on the information framework that could have been acquired until the end of May 2019.

It is not yet possible to evaluate the effects of many measures, based on the information collected, due to the insufficient and / or incomplete level of implementation.

This is true, in particular, for the focus areas 1A, 1B, 3B, 5A, 6A.

Since the approval of the Program, several critical aspects have emerged that have contributed to determining this situation.

It is evident, in general, the difficulty of the regional offices to implement and follow the entire range of policies and planned interventions. The result is a retreat only on the most consolidated and cost-effective interventions. This can be clearly seen in the large number of planned and not yet initiated interventions. In some cases with an uncertain fate.

Even where the interventions have been started, however, there are critical issues that determine the prolongation of many procedures beyond the year, sometimes two.

The main results of the evaluation analysis are summarized below, divided by the main thematic areas.

TRAINING

The catalogue of training offers covers all the FAs activated by the RDP, offering courses on all the main topics of interest of the RDP. However, there is a clear gap between the dissemination objectives of the Program and the demand for training by operators.

Indeed, the analysis of the vouchers assigned so far shows a strong imbalance towards some FA (primarily 2A, 3A and 2B) to the detriment of others (6A, 6C, 5A and, at least in part, also P4). Consequently, only a





The forecasts made by the applicants through the business plans are overall very optimistic, perhaps too much.

The interventions selected in the previous programming and completed in the current one, which may have actually produced effects, are few and small.

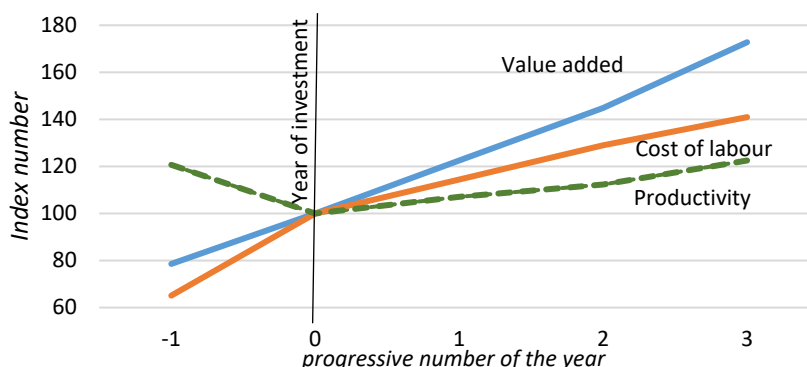
On the basis of a model specifically developed to analyse the micro effects of productive investments, it has been possible to estimate a return on investment in terms of added value of approximately 25% per annum of the total investment sustained.

The estimated effects on family income are around 10% of the investment, while those on business income are around 7.5%.

The procedure in support of investments in forestry technologies and forestry transformation has had two successive failures and, to date, it is inactive.

The measure supporting the interventions for the diversification of activities in the non-agricultural sector is seriously delayed and has yet to be activated.

Business plan forecasts for changes in added value, labor costs and productivity following the investment



SUPPLY CHAIN INTEGRATION AND COOPERATION

Among the most advanced PSR policies, the one in support of quality products stands out (especially the measure for promotion).

The promotion initiatives guarantee continuous information and promotion action both towards specialist targets and towards the general public (but only for wine products and, to a lesser extent, fruit and vegetables)

Conversely, the intervention to support the investments of processing companies has a significant delay. In the only procedure completed, the selection criteria favoured the projects that undertake to develop integrations with the local context in terms of activating or strengthening the short supply chain.

About 28% of the investment projects concern companies that have their own agricultural production higher than 80% of the needs.

On the issue of cooperation in its various forms, which represented the main challenge of this programming cycle, the tools and strategies envisaged have not yet been fully developed, and it can be imagined that the implementation path will be laborious.

Where procedures have led to the selection of projects (16.2 and 16.4), the formation of very numerous and varied partnerships has been favoured, but the planned projects are still to be implemented.

PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

The agro-climatic-environmental measures, together with that for organic agriculture, impose a series of commitments that can significantly contribute to the regional biodiversity in the long term (above all to that of the subsoil), to the reduction of harmful inputs and to the prevention erosion and soil compaction.



DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL ECONOMIES

RDP resources aimed at promoting diversification are rather limited.

It can therefore be expected that the impacts on the territory of rural areas will inevitably be limited both in terms of new businesses and the jobs created.

As implementation has not yet started, on the one hand, interventions should be concentrated in restricted areas and, on the other, a strict selection should be made on the economic sustainability of the business project.

It is also essential that the beneficiaries are involved in training actions aimed above all at increasing their management skills.

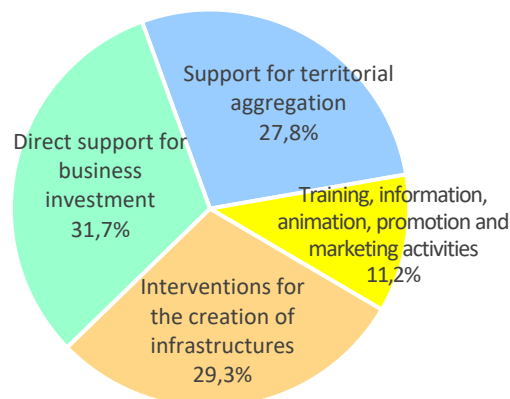
Implementation of the measure for the expansion of the broadband network proceeds rapidly: the planned works have already been started or completed in more than half of the 110 municipalities involved and in 35% of cases they are in the final planning phase.

If the strategy specifically aimed at territorial development is very late and therefore cannot determine expectations of macro effects, not even extending the analysis to all the interventions financed by the RDP, the model developed highlights appreciable effects on income, employment, and poverty directly related to the RDP.

LEADER APPROACH

The programming activities of the LAGs resulted in local animation consistent with the principles of participatory and bottom-up programming. The partnerships of the LAGs are broad and include both public entities, and, mainly, private entities, both associative and entrepreneurial. The LDPs allocate a high share of the available resources to system projects and to support collaboration between businesses and local actors, local project / product communities, networks and districts. The LAGs in Abruzzo have scheduled a series of inter-territorial cooperation projects to be developed together on a regional scale.

PSL GAL: breakdown of planned investments by type



CONTRIBUTION TO EUROPE 2020

The state of implementation of the Program is such that its contribution to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy is still largely theoretical.

This is true, in particular, for the social objectives: the employment and poverty alleviation effects attributable to the RDP are still zero.

The contribution of the RDP to investments in research and development is not null, but it is minimal: it may however become relevant with the implementation of measure 16 when fully operational.

Of greater importance is the contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions both because of the management of fertilizers and effluents, and for the reduction of the consumption of diesel oil for agricultural processes.



PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The regional monitoring system depends significantly on the SIAN (National Agricultural Information System): this makes it difficult to collect information useful for evaluation and reporting needs, especially for structural measures.

The online business plan (BPOL) represents, on the other hand, a useful tool that is able to lighten the load of complexity required for accessing the RDP opportunities.

The management structure of the Program is characterized by a strong sense of collaboration, oriented towards transparency and openness.

However, there are at least two general critical profiles, in addition to those concerning specific measures and policies. The first is represented by the actual difficulty of the structure to implement and follow the entire range of planned policies and interventions, with the effect of a retreat only on the most consolidated and cost-effective interventions.

The second concerns the management of beneficiary selection procedures. Net of the dispute, which also exerts an important weight, many selection procedures exceed the year, sometimes two.

