

EVALUATION SERVICE FOR THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF THE SARDINIA REGION 2014/2020

GENERAL EVALUATION REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE PROGRAM

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

V. 1.0

Contents of the general evaluation report on the progress of the program (31 October 2019)

The structure of the General Assessment Report on the progress of the Program is based on the answer to the thirty questions of the QVC, each of which is the subject of an independent discussion which includes:

- the definition and demarcation of the context to which the question refers,
- the description of the implementation status (only for questions 1-18),
- the definition of judging criteria and indicators,
- the description of the quantitative and qualitative methods and sources of information used,
- an illustration of the results of the analysis,
- the answer to the evaluation question,
- summary tables of conclusions and recommendations.

Two reflections of a "horizontal" nature have developed following the reflections conducted in the context of the common evaluation questions:

- the first related to the *governance system* of the RDP 2014-2020,
- the second regarding the effectiveness of the selection criteria.

Finally, the Report contains the framework of the result and impact indicators and the Framework of reference for the effectiveness of the implementation.

Observation and analysis methodologies implemented

The contents of the general evaluation report on the progress of the program are the result of a series of data collection and analysis activities, both transversal and specialist-thematic.

The transversal activities contributed to the definition of an equal basic information framework for all the focus areas, which was based on:

- the recognition and analysis of all the implementation procedures activated until May 2019, and of the related documents;
- the collection of primary information on the procedures implemented, in progress and in anticipation;
- the download, verification and processing of monitoring data from the SIAN database related to both support and payment applications;
- the download and organization of SIAN data related to plots and animal heads of companies benefiting from premium measures;
- the collection of updated secondary data related to the regional context (sources Eurostat, Istat, DG-agri ISPRA, Sina-net, MEF, etc.);
- the collection and systemization of municipal secondary statistical and monitoring data.

Another part of the activities allowed to deepen the specific aspects related to each focus area and measure. These include:

- detailed analysis and "strategic" characterization of the commitments expected by the surface measurements;
- qualitative analysis of LAG Local Development Plans
- the acquisition and analysis of the project data and implementation of the BUL strategy.
- the design, collection and processing of information from primary sources, through the preparation of questionnaires to be submitted to beneficiaries and not;
- the development and use of economic and environmental models for the determination of result and impact indicators;
- the implementation of primary data collection stages at:
 - the beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries of various measures of the Program, regarding the characteristics and expectations of the projects presented (CAWI survey with around 700 respondents);
 - the responsables of the LAGs (CAWI survey);
 - implementation managers (10-15 interviews on different implementation and organization topics);
 - the individuals directly involved in the project selection procedures (CAWI survey with 20-40 respondents).

Finally, to answer the questions related to the general strategic objectives (QVC 22-30), some model analysis were developed, in particular through the following activities:

- Development of a production function at company level to estimate the marginal impact on the output generated by a productive investment, to which the regional RCA data have been applied for the 2009-2017;
- application of the RUSLE2 methodology to regional scale - revised Universal Soil Loss Equation with data obtained from the database European Soil Data Centre (ESDAC);
- analysis of the spatialization GIS of ESDAC-JRC data related to the content of organic carbon in the soils;
- quantification of emissions according to the IPCC method on the basis of the commitments expected by the premium measures and of the involved areas;
- estimation of water needs and their variation on the basis of parameters obtained from FADN data;
- analysis of spatial correlation between the nitrate content in fresh water and agricultural practices in tax areas;
- analysis of the contribution of the RDP to the achievement of the Europe 2020 objectives;

- adoption of a statistical-descriptive approach suitable to offer an adequate reading of the context indicators and their relationship with the effects generated by the RDP at a territorial level regarding the impact indicators concerning employment, poverty and per capita GDP;
- analysis of selection procedures and of the effectiveness of the criteria.

Main conclusions of the analysis

In light of the information collected, it is not yet possible to evaluate the effects of many FAs, due to the insufficient level of implementation. This is especially true for FAs 1A, 1B, 1C, 3B, 5C and 6A.

Regarding the focus areas most affected by investment measures, there is limited functioning and there is a certain slowness in the investigation of aid applications and in disbursements of payments. For FA 2A the situation however offers good prospects, even if for the moment only in terms of the commitments made, while 2B has a positive trend impact on the entry of qualified young farmers and on generational turnover. With regard to investments in transformation and marketing, the companies involved in FA 3A are strongly linked to the agricultural production of the territory and industrial projects aim primarily at efficiency and cost reduction, in the alternative to increasing production capacity.

In reference to the environmental aspects connected to Priority 4, the contribution of the RDP is currently still limited, considering the areas involved, with respect to the safeguarding / improvement of agricultural biodiversity and the improvement of the quality of the soils (in terms of increase of the organic substance). With regard to the general state of the waters, which can be considered on the whole as relatively positive, it is difficult - especially for groundwater - to establish a direct link between Program activities and their quality.

Transversely to the environmental issues mentioned above, a positive role seems to be played by organic agriculture, and the role of consultancy (M2), not yet activated at the time of writing this Report, could be potentially interesting.

For the focus areas of Priority 5, the analysis carried out mainly focus on the relevance of the interventions involved, given the low level of implementation. In terms of effectiveness, however, a reduction in greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture was estimated, due to the indirect contributions of the measures for integrated production (10.1.2), for organic agriculture (11.1) and for animal welfare (14.1).

On the issue of cooperation, in its various forms, it has not yet been possible to fully elaborate and develop the tools and strategies envisaged, which represented the main challenge of this programming cycle and that will inevitably have an arduous implementation path.

An apparently easier target to pursue (at least for the experience acquired) is that of diversification, which however has just started, both at the level of rural communities and at company level. A low level of implementation can also be found in relation to the strategies adopted by the LAGs in the Leader approach: however, a good degree of innovative potential is highlighted, due in particular to the composition of the partnerships created and the projects expressed.

Concluding on some cross-cutting aspects, a marginal contribution by the RDP to the reduction of the gap with the Europe 2020 target values set at regional and national level is assumed, while with regard to the effectiveness of the selection criteria, the almost always high amount of applications yet to be instructed it makes it impossible to formulate a final and definitive judgment on it, even at the moment we can not but appreciate the simplification made by the Managing Authority when compared to the previous programming period.