



THE EMILIA-ROMAGNA REGIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RDP) 2007/2013

# MIDTERM EVALUATION

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

march 2011



Regione Emilia-Romagna

Giving a new boost to a unique land



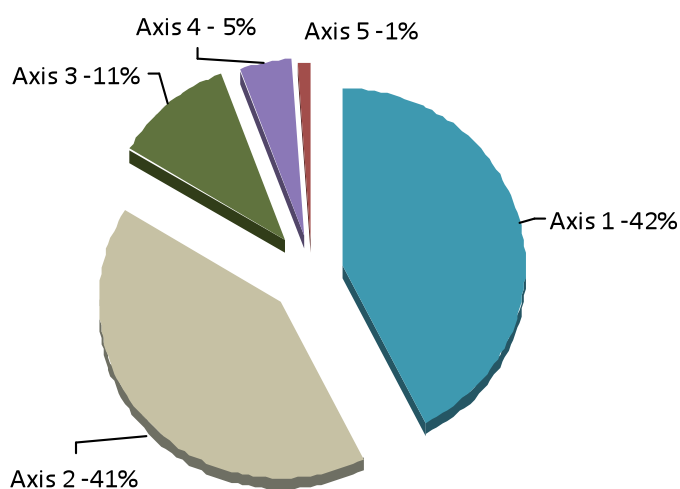
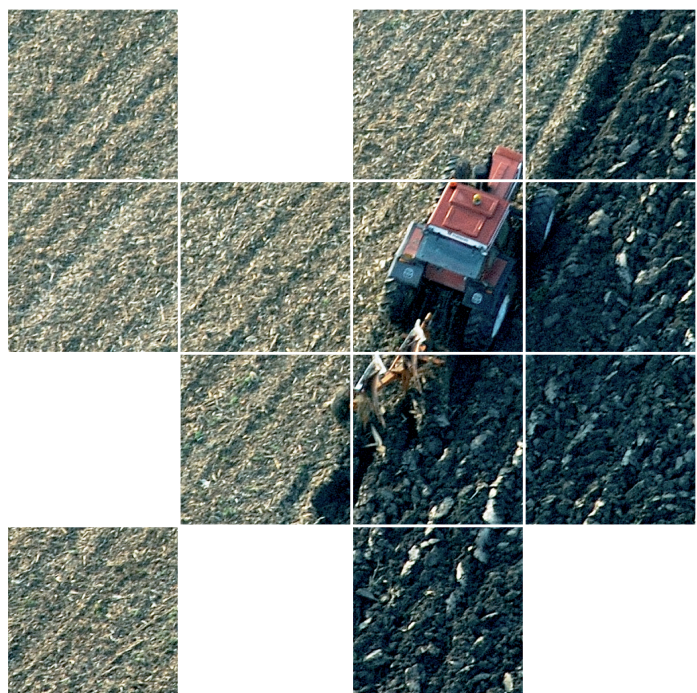


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# THE EMILIA-ROMAGNA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Emilia-Romagna RDP was approved by the European Commission in September 2007 (as one of the first Italian RDP to be approved) and underwent subsequent amendments. Today's version results from a radical update made in December 2009, following the CAP health check, the EU economic recovery plan and the addition to the RDP of a few municipalities of Alta Val Marecchia, which were transferred from the Marche Region to Emilia-Romagna. The Emilia-Romagna Rural Development Programme (RDP) for the seven-year period from 2007 to 2013 contains as many as 30 different measures, some of which are further divided into actions.



The Programme was granted more than 1,058,637,015 euros for its implementation, Axis 1 and Axis 2 absorb 84% of public expenditure.

## The RDP Scopes of Action

Intervention Objectives	Axis and Reference Measure	Beneficiaries
Improving professional capacities and supporting generational turnover	Axis 1 Measure 111 (vocational training) Measure 112 (young farmers) Measure 113 (early retirement) Measure 114 (advisory services)	Agricultural and forestry farmers, forest holders, helping spouses, family workers, employees and training organisations
Investments in the innovation and modernisation of undertakings and in production chain integration	Axis 1 Measure 121 (investments in agricultural holdings) Measure 122 (investments in forestry holdings) Measure 123 (investments in processing and marketing undertakings) Measure 124 (innovation projects)	Agricultural and forestry holdings, forest holders, processing and marketing undertakings, groupings of entities from agri-food and forestry production chains
Investments to upgrade physical infrastructure	Axis 1 Measure 125 (rationalisation and protection of water resources)	Special-purpose consortia formed by a minimum of 20 agricultural holdings
Consolidating and developing the quality of agricultural production	Axis 1 Measure 132 (participation in quality schemes) Measure 133 (promotion of and information on quality products)	Agricultural holdings, producers' associations
Handicap payments in mountain areas and Nature 2000 areas	Axis 2 Measure 211 (handicap payments in mountain areas) Measure 212 (handicap payments in other disadvantaged areas)	Agricultural holdings whose owner is aged less than 65
Agri-environment payments, payments for animal welfare and biodiversity	Axis 2 Measure 214 (agri-environment payments) Measure 215 (animal welfare) Measure 216 (non-productive investments)	Agricultural holdings, public agencies, environmental protection associations and land-improvement co-operatives
Forest environment payments	Axis 2 Measures 221 (afforestation of agricultural land) Measures 226, 227 (restoring forest production potential, introducing prevention actions and non-productive investments)	Agricultural holdings, natural and corporate persons, private individuals and public bodies
Diversification of economic activities, incomes, tourism services and micro-enterprises	Axis 3 Measure 311 (diversification into non-agricultural activities) Measure 313 (encouragement of tourism activities)	Agricultural stakeholders, itinerary managers, local bodies and park authorities
Interventions to improve the attractiveness of rural land	Axis 3 Measure 321 (services for rural land) Measure 322 (rural village development and renewal) Measure 323 (conservation of the rural heritage) Measure 331 (training for the rural population) Measure 341 (local development publicity/facilitation)	Local bodies, public and private associations and training organisations
Local development strategies	Axis 4 LEADER approach through programming and implementation initiatives by Local Action Groups (LAGs) and use of Measures under Axes 1, 2 and 3	The beneficiaries of individual Measures implemented by the programme defined by the LAG

# BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE ADVANCEMENT

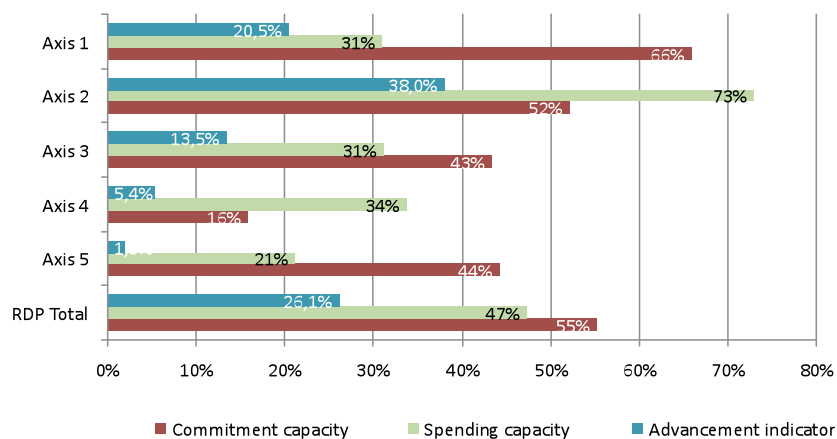


An analysis of the implementation process suggests a positive financial performance: commitments (584 million euros) accounted for 55% of the budgeted public expenditure in November 2010 while the payments incurred (276 million euros) accounted for 26% of the budget (the advancement indicator was in excess of the national average by nearly 18%) and 47% of commitments (spending capacity). Commitments were made in relation to all Measures included in the Axes excluding Measure 125 in Axis 1 and Measure 215 in Axes 2. In Axis 4, commitments basically derived from the grant of aid for the management of Local Action Groups (LAGs) (Measure 431) and – to a lesser degree – the implementation of Measures 413 and 411.

Expenditure advancement was more influenced by Axis 2 while structural or infrastructural measures requiring more financial resources presented an advancement indicator generally below the RDP average.

In Axis 1, commitments were very high (295 million euros, with commitment capacity – i.e. the commitments-to-available-resources ratio – at 66%) whereas payments were relatively limited (92 million euros, with 31% spending capacity and 20.5% advancement capacity). In Axis 2, commitments amounted to 227 million euros (with commitment capacity at 52.0%) and payments to 165 million euros (with spending capacity at 73% and advancement capacity at 38%). In Axis 3, commitments amounted to 48.5 million euros (with commitment capacity at 43%) and payments to 15.0 million euros (with spending capacity at 31% and advancement capacity at 13%). In Axis 4 commitments amounted to 8.1 million euros (with commitment capacity at 16%) and payments to 2.7 million euros (with spending capacity at 34% and advancement capacity at 5.4%).

### Comparison of financial advancement indicators



# PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND GOVERNANCE MODEL

The levels of financial and procedural advancement demonstrated the effectiveness of the action implemented by the Regional government with a few peculiarities worth noting.

The preparation of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) at regional level was followed by a phase of implementational 'fine-tuning' at provincial level through the compilation of Provincial Integrated Rural Programmes (in acronym PRIPs). PRIPs describe in detail the strategic choices made for sustainable development in the provincial territory with due account taken of the RDP, the understandings and programmes in force locally and the other instruments of the new cohesion policy. PRIPs were approved between December 2007 and January 2008.

Another innovative element introduced for the programme management was the implementation of public initiatives as part of a negotiated programming process for the better programming of the overall intervention.

Concurrently, the Regional Government defined and approved a number of instruments and regulations required for the management of financial resources and for the implantation of programmed interventions. The acts governing financial planning were enacted in 2007 and 2008 (i.e. the Regional Cabinet Resolutions DGR no. 1441 of 1 October 2007, DGR no. 1559 of 22 October 2007, and DGR no. 101 of 28 January 2008). More specifically, the programming for 2007-2013 introduced the principle of joint management responsibility through the allocation of the majority of resources at provincial level and the definition of incentives and/or compensations in the allocation of resources between local bodies so as to achieve the full utilisation of funds earmarked for rural development.

Equally in 2008, Axis-specific and Measure-specific Operational Programmes were approved which contain the criteria and guidelines for the subsequent issue of regional/provincial invitations to apply for aid. In 2009, by DGR 672/2009 a "Production Chain Projects" Operational Programme was approved.

The overall programming approach and the general implementation criteria of the RDP have met the requirement of consistency between the pursued objectives and regional, national and Community priorities for rural development, as well as the requirement of relevance to the specific 'demands' of the regional context.

## Beneficiary agricultural holdings in the two programming periods and incidence on the total for the Region

	<b>Beneficiary agricultural holdings RDP 2007-2010</b>	<b>Beneficiary agricultural holdings RDP 2000-2006</b>	<b>Regional agricultural holdings</b>
Holdings	18,134	15,759	81,962
UAA-Utilised Agr. Area (ha)	488,327	451,669	1,052,585
Average UAA per farm (ha)	27	29	13

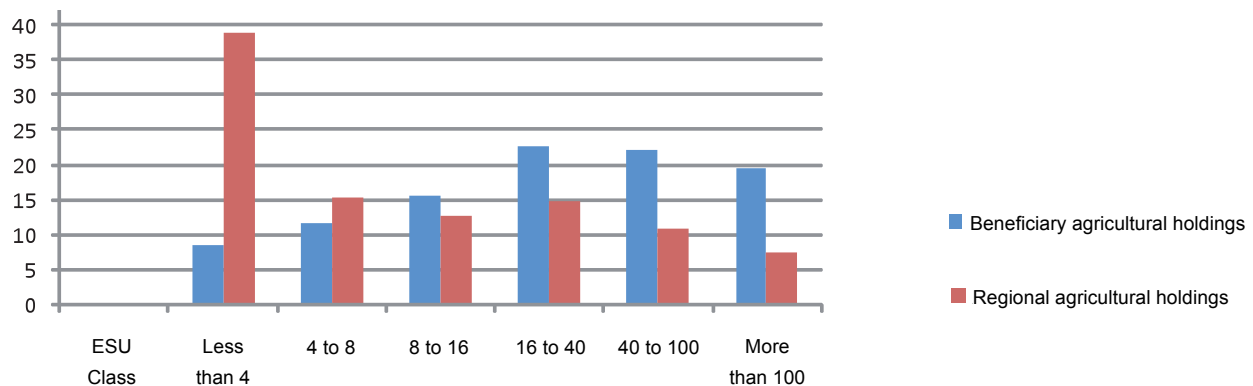
The analysis made on the implementation mechanisms as well as on the consistency and effectiveness of the applied priority criteria suggests that, where criteria worked more incisively, i.e. on some Investment Measures, the effects of the selection followed the direction recommended by the Regional Government and the Provincial Governments concerned. However, it is worth noting that, in this early phase of the Programme, most of the eligible applications had a financial coverage, which caused the priority criteria – introduced by Regional and Provincial Governments for funnelling the selection of initiatives towards the defined strategic objectives and priorities – to be unapplied.

With these resources the Rural Development Plan has so far aided 18,979 beneficiaries, 95% of which were agricultural holdings (18,134). Therefore, through the RDP, the Emilia-Romagna Regional Government reached 27% of operating agricultural holdings registered with the Chamber of Commerce in 2010.

A comparison between the 2007-2013 and 2000/2006 programming periods shows a growth of participating agricultural holdings in the new RDP and consequently of the overall Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) affected by the new incentives, which accounts for almost half of the regional UAA.

The programming choices and the consequent priorities introduced to select interventions have directed incentives towards holdings with higher profitability and higher labour volume absorption capacity. More specifically, more than 40% of supported agricultural holdings belong to high economic classes (from 40 to more than 100 European Size Units) whereas less than 20% of farms have less than 8 ESUs. However, such performance is strictly associated with the characteristics and objectives of interventions. While, for instance, under Measure 121 – Modernisation of agricultural holdings – farms with medium to high economic sizes produced the majority of projects and absorbed the relevant incentives, under Measure 311, consistently with priority criteria, less competitive farms, with smaller ESUs, were more rewarded. 49% of farms having implemented diversification have economic sizes between 4 and 16 ESUs.

### Comparison of the percentage distribution of beneficiary farms with total farms by ESU class.





# THE ACHIEVEMENT OF TRANSVERSAL AND THEMATIC PRIORITIES



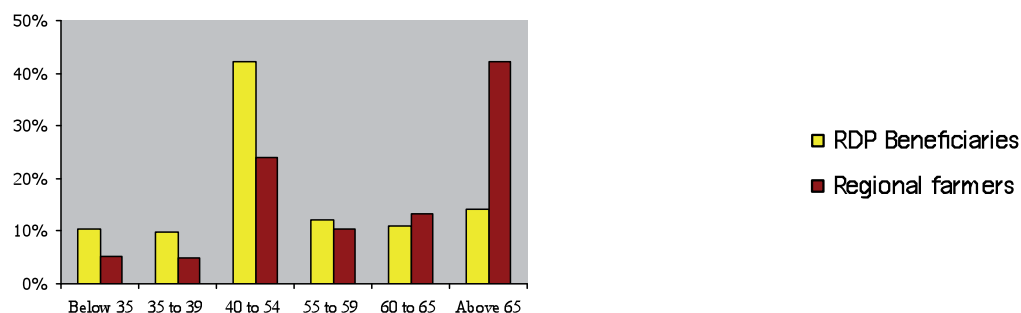
## THE YOUTH AND WOMEN

Regional programming continues to pursue the objective of rejuvenating the agricultural population, which in the previous programming period had already favoured - to a significant extent - access by farmers aged below 40 to the various forms of support. The RDP 2007-2013 ensures and concentrates support in favour of this age group through dedicated Measures, such as Measure 112, and a complex system of eligibility criteria and priorities in all Axes and Measures intended for farms.

In particular, young farmers accounted for 19% of the total beneficiaries, which was nearly twice the incidence of young farmers among all the farmers of the Emilia-Romagna region, yet still far from 39% measured in the ex post evaluation of the past RDP.

In a few cases (Measure 311), the 'spontaneous' propensity to apply for resources from the youth - which was measured horizontally across the full Programme - was even strengthened by the effects of the prescribed selection mechanisms at both regional and provincial level.

### Distribution of farmers by age groups: a comparison between the RDP and the regional context



Women's participation was less marked: the weight of women in the submitted applications (25.2%) was in line with the weight of women among regional farmers (25.3%, source: ISTAT 2007). A 'higher interest' was found for Measure 311 with special reference to the "rural tourism" component, where women accounted for 31% of received applications and 37% of financed applications. In this measure, the 'gender' criteria were effective.

# THE TERRITORIAL APPROACH

The RDP 2007-2013 targets mountain areas, disadvantaged areas and typically rural areas to a decisive degree.

The Programme defines, for each Measure/Action, an exclusive/priority area for intervention and territorial criteria direct financial resources to areas with the highest criticalities and where intervention is more urgent.

The evaluation found that public intervention effectively funnelled support towards areas with higher requirements and involved the regional territory with interventions in line with the strategic priorities defined by the Regional Government.

Mountain areas	<p>The incidence of financed mountain-area projects in the total number of projects (55%) was decisively above the relative incidence of population (10%) and agricultural presence (26%) in these areas (regional figures). This situation results from the selection method implemented by the RDP for assessing the eligibility of applications for financing, as well as – more importantly – from the high propensity to apply for aid in such areas probably due to the publicity, information and application-promotion initiatives organised by the Regional Government and the Provincial Governments concerned.</p>
Rural areas	<p>The majority of applications and public aid concentrated in intermediate rural areas: C areas absorbed nearly 50% of funded applications, which benefited from little less than 300 million worth of public aid.</p> <p>Although areas with overall development problems (D areas) corresponded to only 25% of the surface and 4.4% of the population, they absorbed 26.5% of applications and 17.4</p> <p>The distribution of incentives between Axes reflected the RDP programming approach and the weight of rural areas grew progressively, consistently with the RDP objective, in shifting from Axis 1 (15%) to Axes 3 (42%) and 4 (54%).% of aid (nearly 100 million euros).</p>
Disadvantaged areas	<p>The RDP has intervened in support of disadvantaged areas through “dedicated Measures” and targeted absolute or relative priority criteria privileging these types of areas by defining ranking lists for incentives. Through these conditions more than 53 of funded applications originated from disadvantaged areas, the large majority of which were mountain areas.</p>



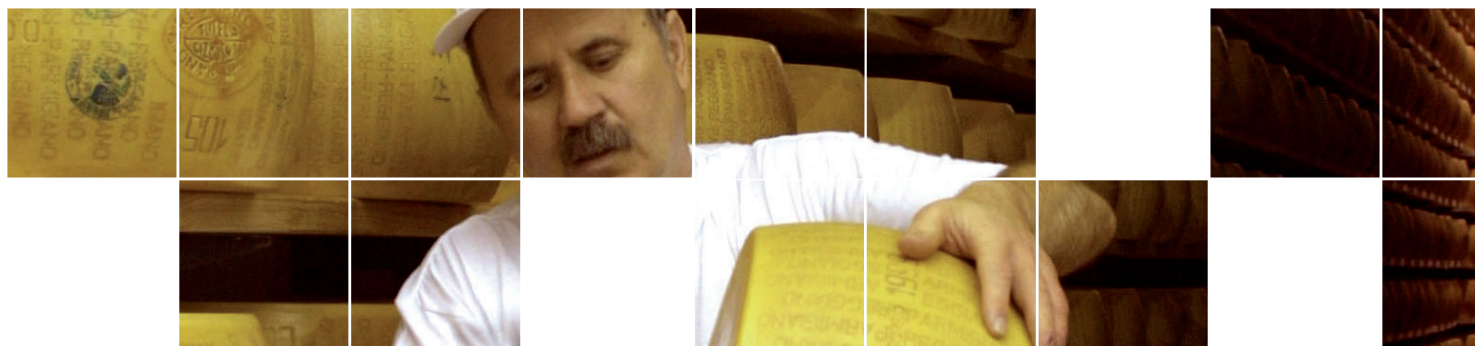
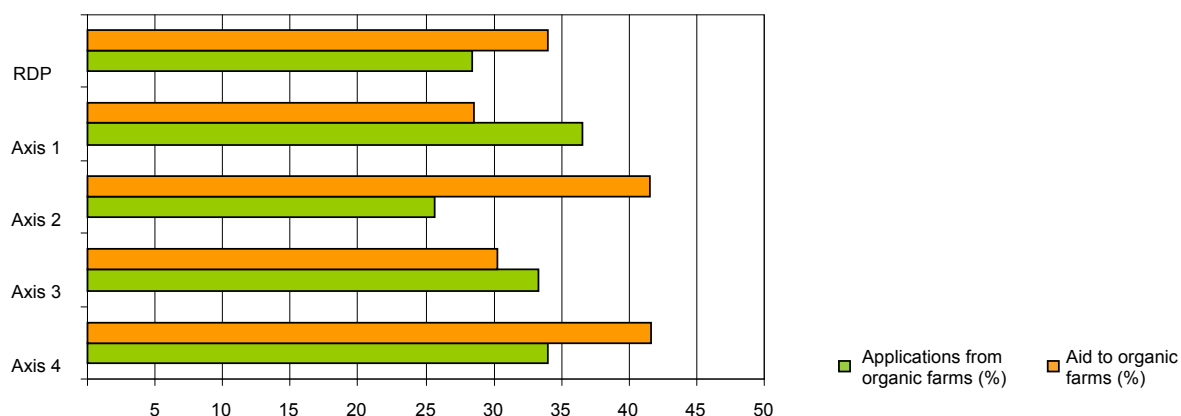
# THE ORGANIC SECTOR

The RDP 2007/2013, similarly to the previous RDP 2000–2006, supports the development of organic farming through direct interventions (such as the agri-environment payments under Action 2, Measure 214) as well as in the context of the other courses of action envisaged by Axes 1 and 3. In particular, forms of aid worth considering are payments for the partial coverage of the certification expenses under Measure 132, for which 90% of applications found eligible for financing were submitted by organic farms.

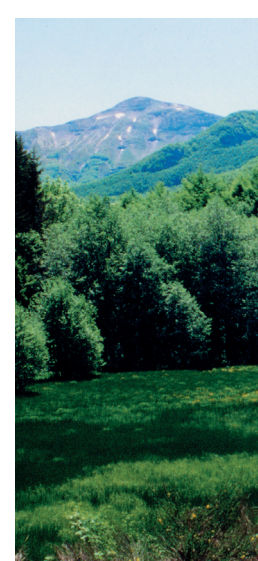
With due account taken of the current situation of the RDP as a whole in terms of applications from organic farmers benefiting from aid and, therefore, in terms of overall support to the sector, please note that 28% of the applications approved for financing originated from organic farmers. Such applications absorbed 34% of the assigned public funds. In particular, the situation for each of the three Axes was the following:

- under Axis 1, 37% of applications approved for financing and 29% of funds were meant for organic farming;
- under Axis 2 the percentage of funded applications was 26%, but organic farms absorbed 42% of funds;
- under Axis 3, 33% of applications approved for financing and 30% of funds were meant for organic farmers;
- under Axis 4, incidence grew to 34% of funded applications and 42% of granted funds.

## Support to organic farming in the overall RDP 2007-2013 as of 31-12-2010



# THE MAIN RESULTS OF THE PROGRAMME



The Midterm Report provides an evaluation of the degree of achievement of targets and shows the replies given to the Evaluation Questions of the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) for the majority of Measures in order to provide a preliminary picture equally with reference to situations that are yet to reach full stabilisation. Therefore, the results of the performed analyses are meant to be preliminary and their validation and review will be made in the course of the ongoing evaluation activities.

## AXIS 1 – IMPROVING COMPETITIVENESS IN THE AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY SECTORS

The specific objectives defined in the RDP for **Axis 1** “are not exclusively meant to be a further sub-categorisation of the priorities fixed in the regulation, but also reflect the strategic approach, synergies and integrations underlying the achievement of national and EU objectives”. As a result, the strategy of Axis 1 was strengthened through the adoption of innovative implementation instruments and methods that meet the requirement of offering a type of support that is functional to the various aspects impacting on the development of the agricultural and forestry system.

The purpose of “*enhancing the professional skills of farmers and other persons involved in agricultural and forestry activities* through integrated training, information and counselling actions in support of knowledge and dissemination of information” was coped with by the Regional Government through the implementation of a “Green Catalogue” and the adaptation of procedures to the objectives of simplification and rationalisation.

The development of innovative procedures and instruments has been instrumental in matching the overall supply of services and instruments to the expectations of farmers and entrepreneurs.

The effects on corporate activities of the acquired knowledge – measured through a sample survey conducted on the participants in training, information and counselling activities – were positive for 73% of participants in training courses and for 68% of farmers having used the counselling services. Training courses contributed to the improvement of the global management of a farm (45%) and the economic management of activities (21%). The most significant effects of counselling were: the increase of safety at work (33%), the adoption of production quality systems (21%), the improved conditions of hygiene and animal welfare (18%) and the improved economic management of activities (17%).

The judgments expressed by respondents on the quality of training and information actions suggest a decisively excellent situation with special regard to the qualification of trainers. the interaction established in courses and the matching of the service offered to the initial expectations.



## Participants in training and information services

	Number of participants	Training and information days	Main subjects covered
Training services	4,869	34,651	53% of participants followed courses in cross-compliance and safe work environment. 43% of participants followed courses in competitive services and support to production.
Information services	515	837	65% of participants followed information services on competitiveness and support to production.
Total for Action 1, Measure 111	5,384	35,487	

Interventions in favour of *generational turnover* were implemented “by supporting the setting up of young and skilled farmers and the structural adaptation of farms”. Implementation methods encouraged the youth to prepare plans suited to farm development requirements and to consider the opportunity of access to Measure 121.

The majority of young farmers participated in training courses (57.4%) and counselling services (16.6%). The support now offered is easing structural adaptation in all farms where young farmers are working, through the implementation of the investments provided for in Farm Development Plans. This was the main innovation introduced in the programming for 2007–2013. The young farmers involved in Measure 121 were nearly 50% of the total farmers for an investment volume covering 74% of the costs of interventions prescribed by the Farm Development Plan. The types of intervention mainly pertained to the construction/refurbishment of farm buildings (64%) and the purchase of equipment and machinery (24%).

## Setting up of young farmers

Amount of the setting-up premium	The single premium ranges from 15,000 to 40,000 euros depending on the quality of the farm development plan presented by the applicant
Young beneficiaries from 2007 to 2010	A total of 936 young farmers inclusive of 83 spill-overs from programming period 2000–2006 (52.8% vs. the target value). 308 were women beneficiaries; average age of newly set-up farmers was 28.6
Investments envisaged in farm development plans	Farm development plans involved an overall investment volume worth 148 million euros (139% vs. the target value), of which 99 for farm modernisation interventions under Measure 121
Young beneficiaries participating in other Measures of RDP 2007–2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 500 were beneficiaries under Measure 111 (training and information)</li> <li>• 135 were beneficiaries under Measure 114 (technical support services)</li> <li>• 126 were beneficiaries under Measure 132 (participation in quality schemes)</li> <li>• 21 were beneficiaries under Measure 311 (diversification)</li> </ul>
Structural characteristics of farms of newly set-up farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average physical size was 37.1 ha of utilised agricultural area</li> <li>• Average economic size was 112.56 ESUs, corresponding to around 135,000 euros worth of standard gross income per annum</li> </ul>

The objective of “improving and consolidating the degree of integration of the agri-food production chain and promoting the pooling of farms” has been most effectively expressed through a production-chain oriented approach (or “vertically integrated approach”).

The vertically integrated approach that was adopted for implementing the numerous Measures of Axis 1 is favouring the production chain *reorganisation* and, at the same time, the *pooling* of producers.

The creation of *production-chain projects* has favoured amalgamation in the different sectors concerned through an extensive participation of farms and an overall investment volume worth more than 278 million euros. 1,235 farms subscribed to the Modernisation Measure with an investment volume of more than 170 million euros, or 61% of the total investment volume triggered by the PIF (the Production-chain Integrated Plan).

The processing and marketing undertakings participating in production-chain projects with specific investments for the enhancement of agricultural and forestry products are in the number of 98 and generated 33% of the overall investment volume. Significant interventions were also initiated in the forestry/ timber sector: a total 38 direct beneficiaries of the sector (of which 35 forestry holdings) have applied for aid for 4.8 million euros worth of investments. Innovation is a strategic objective of the Programme, which is implemented through an integrated approach: in the approved production-chain projects, all agri-food segments were covered by cooperation initiatives for the development of innovation; the fruit and vegetable, dairy and cereal production sectors are worthy of mention for the number of initiatives launched.

A total of 67 production chain projects were approved. The integrated approach involved the various production sectors of the region in projects mainly intended for agricultural production. Among the sectors concerned the following are worth noting by number of entities concerned and involved investments volumes: fruit and vegetable, dairy, wine production, cereal production and – in more general terms – bovine and swine meat production. In production-chain projects, interventions mainly consisted in the rationalisation of production cycles and reduction of cost in the livestock breeding and harvesting phases, the adoption of innovative technologies, the upgrade and rationalisation of technical equipment, animal welfare, the mechanised management of vineyards, the economic enhancement of intrinsic product characteristics, technological innovation and rationalisation of the production cycle. Project distribution by prevailing production-chain objective suggests that 74% of subsidised investments are meant for purposes related to basic agricultural production.

In Measure 121 (individual and production-chain projects) aid to interventions in production-chain projects, as opposed to individual projects, was more effective in encouraging the pursuance of objectives related to the rationalisation of production cycles and reduction of costs in the livestock breeding and harvesting phases, the adoption of innovative technologies, the upgrade and rationalisation of technical equipment, animal welfare, the mechanised management of vineyards, and the economic enhancement of intrinsic product characteristics.

The distribution by prevailing objective of the farms having benefited from Measure 123 through production-chain projects suggests an orientation towards the rationalisation and innovation of production processes – as was similarly observed in individual projects.

The evaluation of the degree of achievement of targets has produced preliminary potential results to be further reviewed and cross-checked in the ongoing evaluation.

In the farms participating in Measure “investments in agricultural holdings” (Measure 121) occupational stability and consolidation effects are foreseen following farm modernisation and innovation interventions – which account for 98% of investments.

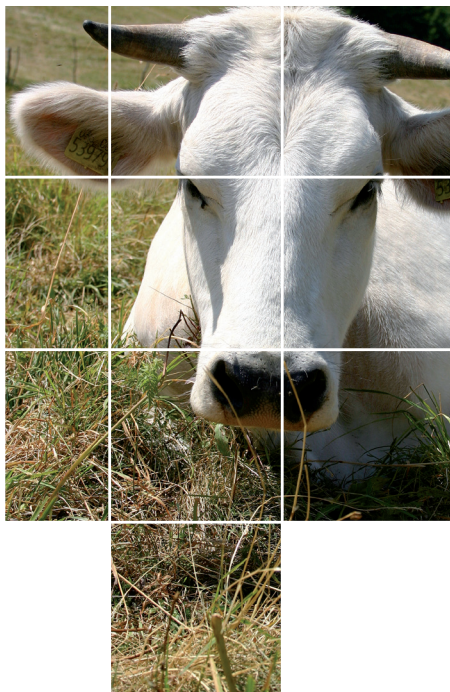
In the sector of bovine meat, the majority of interventions were dedicated to investments for the improvement of animal welfare and for ensuring health guarantees. In the sectors of drinking milk, fresh curd cheeses and matured cheeses with protected designation of origin, interventions mainly pertained to the rationalisation of production cycles, the reduction of costs and the improvement of animal welfare.

In the grain sector, the large majority of interventions were dedicated to the introduction of process innovations through the rationalisation of technical equipment and the improvement of working conditions and safety standards. Finally, the introduction of innovative technologies and process innovation were the main purposes of investments in the wine sector; in the sector of fresh and processed fruit & vegetables, investments were intended for the introduction of innovations, varietal conversion, the rationalisation of the use of water, improvement of the refrigeration chain and the upgrade and rationalisation of technical equipment.

Investments subsidised by Measure 123 in the processing and marketing sectors generally concerned structural investments designed for the rationalisation of production processes; among the financed holdings, such purpose prevailed in the wine production, processed fruit and vegetables and dairy product sectors.

The innovations introduced in the financed processing and marketing undertakings pertained to the various aspects of farm activities such as production processes, cost efficiency improvement, market share acquisition and consolidation and improvement in the offered service level, and were intended to cope with specific sectoral problems.

In the implementation of interventions in favour of farmers’ participation in food quality systems special attention was focused on farms having subscribed to organic-product certification systems; these farms account for 90% of the total beneficiary farms of the Measure, as was foreseen by the adopted priority criteria and objectives. Therefore other quality systems were less represented, although they constitute an appreciable part of agricultural production in the region.



# AXIS 2 – ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL SPACE IMPROVEMENT



The intervention strategy defined in the RDP for **Axis 2** and the envisaged methods or instruments for its implementation are as a whole consistent with and relevant to the specific regional 'requirements' and capable of directing support towards initiatives that are likely to produce significant results and to impact on the programmed objectives (in a word, effective) through a rational use of the available financial resources (in a word, efficient).

This can be achieved, first and foremost, by a suitable "zoning" of the regional territory reflecting that envisaged by the Regulation as well as other EU, national and regional legislation, which amounts to translating in territorial terms the environmental requirements and to which the specific objectives of the Axis are connected. The territorial approach is further strengthened by the structuring of the programming framework and of financial planning at provincial level in the context of Provincial Integrated Rural Programmes (PRIPs).

This programming and implementing approach is concretely applied through the identification of local areas eligible for support to which other minimum requirements are added that are associated to the characteristics of beneficiaries or to the type of crops concerned; all of these elements favour a more targeted use of aid.

On the other hand, a more modest contribution to such requirement is offered by priority criteria (mainly territorial criteria) that were indeed introduced but have so far been used to a limited extent in procedures – as a consequence of a demand for aid which is below the level of originally earmarked financial resources, and as a result of the decision by the Regional Government to proceed with the financing of all eligible applications for aid.

The interventions initiated by Axis 2, which contribute to *protect water resources*, chiefly cover 133,000 ha of agricultural land, corresponding to 64% of the target value of the common indicator R6 estimated in the RDP and to nearly 14% of the total utilised agricultural area (UAA) in the region.

Such incidence is higher in mountain areas and lower in plane areas in which, however, a good intervention capacity of agri-environment actions was found (in particular in terms of integrated production) in the more specific priority areas subject to water resource protection and – among these – the zones vulnerable to nitrates of agricultural origin (or NVZs – nitrate vulnerable zones – in acronym); the incidence is however higher than the level reached in the previous programming period. A significant contribution from the afforestation of agricultural land was observed (Measure 221) which covers, if the 'spill-over' from the previous period is included, nearly 5,500 ha of which 40% is formed by areas subject water resource protection and 22% by NVZs.

## Contribution of the agri-environment Measure in the maintenance and improvement of water quality

Actions with favourable effects on water management	Action 1: integrated production Action 2: organic farming Action 3: vegetation cover to limit the release of soil pollutants to water Action 8: untilled soil and extensive grazing Action 9: conservation of natural and semi-natural spaces of the agricultural landscape Action 10: set-aside for environmental purposes
Surface under commitment	132,800
Target value of the surface under commitment	207,587
Degree of achievement of target	64%
Surface under Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) commitment	37,000 ha, or 10.9% of the relative UAA (committed area/utilised agricultural area ratio)
Surface under commitment in erosion-protected areas (NVZ, Nature 2000)	51,000 ha, or 11.4% of the relative UAA (committed area/utilised agricultural area ratio)

With regard to the objective of *Protecting soils as an environmental resource*, the relevant interventions cover an agricultural and forestry surface measuring nearly 128.000 hectares, corresponding to 61% of the RDP target value and 14% of the regional UAA.

The performed analyses were mainly intended to assess the effectiveness of agri-environmental actions (Measure 214) on the reduction of erosion phenomena and the retention of organic substance in the soil.

Considering the first aspect, i.e. agricultural land subject to agri-environmental commitments (in particular Actions 1, 2, 3 and 8 including 'spill-overs') which consists of areas more exposed to the risk of erosion, this land measured in 2009 nearly 73,000 ha with an incidence on the total UAA which was positively higher in the areas with higher risk levels: 81% of the committed surface is made up of soils rated under classes 3 and 4 (with a higher erosion risk), Similar results were obtained for the afforestation supported by Measure 221.

More specific analyses on effects assessed in terms of *reduction of superficial water erosion* resulted in a high estimated unit effectiveness (i.e. reduction of erosion on the surface subject to interventions) for the grassing commitments on the orchards of Action 3 (-98%) and Actions 1 and 2 (-66%); this was followed, in order of importance, by effectiveness assessed in terms of retention of meadows and pastureland as per Action 8 (-37%), whereas a more reduced level of unit effectiveness was found for the commitment to reduce the length of slopes to 60m as per Actions 1 and 2 (-7.1%).

The regional agricultural surface at risk amounts to 440,700 ha. As no anti-erosion interventions were introduced, as provided for in Rule 1.1 on cross-compliance and agri-environment Measures, every year an overall soil loss in the region of 21.6 million tonnes was assessed, or 49 tonnes per hectare.

Measure 214 has achieved a reduction of erosion phenomena to the tune of 897,000 tonnes (-4.4%) on the full surface of hilly and mountainous areas as a result of the combination of contributions from all Actions designed to combat the erosion phenomenon.

This result is attributable to the commitments introduced for the soil management of arable land under Actions 1 and 2, which contributed to a 3.4% reduction, to the grassing of orchards under Actions 1 and 2 (0.88%) and to Action 3 targeting the conversion of orchards to vegetation covers (-0.12%). A modest contribution comes from the maintenance of permanent meadows and pastureland (Action 8) with -0.01%.

## Reduction of the erosion phenomenon as a result of cross-compliance and of the agro-environmental measure

Regional agricultural surface deemed subject to erosion risk	440,750
Annual erosion for the failed application of Rule 1.1 on cross-compliance and of the agri-environmental measure	21,604,042 tonnes per annum
Lower erosion as result of Rule 1.1 on cross-compliance	1,271,415 tonnes per annum, with a 5.89% reduction
Lower erosion as result of the agri-environmental measure	897,066 tonnes per annum, with a 4.4% reduction
Overall lower erosion as a result of Rule 1.1 on cross-compliance and of the agri-environmental measure	2,168,482 tonnes per annum, with a 10.3% reduction
Surface under commitment in erosion-protected areas (NVZ, Nature 2000)	51,000 ha, or 11.4% of the relative UAA (committed area/utilised agricultural area ratio)

The agri-environmental actions with their envisaged commitments in favour of the retention of a *stable organic matter content in the soil* (in particular Actions 1,2,3,4 and 8) cover a total agricultural land of nearly 51,000 ha with a concentration index (committed area/utilised agricultural area) favourably higher in the regional areas with a poor organic matter content. As a whole, it is estimated that Measure 214 determines an increase in Soil Organic Matter (SOM) equal to 62.9 million kg with an average increase of 637 kg/ha, such quantities are high in absolute terms and significant in terms of carbon sink. However their effect on the increase of the stable organic matter in the soil is limited, except for Action 2 (organic farming) and 4 (increase of organic matter).

The agricultural and forestry surface affected by interventions that – in various forms and to varying degrees – contribute to the specific objective of *protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of species and of the habitat in agricultural land, favouring the correct management of Nature 2000 areas, protecting and developing*





*the agricultural and forestry systems with high natural value* is estimated at 166,000 ha, hence nearly 18% of the regional UAA. In such respect, Measures 211 and 212 favour the retention of mainly extensive agricultural uses (meadows and pastureland) for vast mountainous and hilly areas, which are largely considered of “high natural value” in that they constitute ecosystems for numerous species of fauna and flora. The agri-environmental actions determine positive effects either by commitments for reducing the levels of use and/or toxicity of pesticides and herbicides (on an agricultural surface measuring about 97,000 ha) or by the mere fact that they encourage such agricultural practices and methods as crop rotation, and the retention of pasture for the benefit of animal feeding and reproduction (Actions 1,2 and 8) on an agricultural surface of nearly 111,000 hectares.

The territorial distribution of such surfaces seems favourable, with a committed area/utilised agricultural area index that was found to be higher in areas subject to “prevailing natural protection” and, in particular, the areas in the Nature 2000 Network as opposed to the regional average value. The two specific Actions 9 (conservation of natural and semi-natural spaces) and 10 (set-aside for environmental purposes) recorded a poor level of participation at least in this first phase. Afforestation (nearly 5,530 ha through Measure 221 including spill-overs) contributed to improve the biodiversity levels in comparison with the previous agricultural use of the soil; a lower contribution was made to the increase of the purely “forestry areas with high natural value” – which was limited to permanent afforestation for environmental purposes. A special role was played by interventions to reduce the risk of forest fires (Measure 226) and non-productive forest investments of Measure 227 – which are often mutually supplemental and some of them are specifically aimed at the protection and increase of biodiversity.

The use of the “farmland bird index” (FBI) indicator for evaluating the effects of the RDP seems highly limited by the scarcity of data and methodological reasons. However, the validity of the type of actions financed by the RDP for the benefit of biodiversity has been confirmed by the relatively extensive international literature available on the subject and by the surveys recently conducted on the regional territory.

In December 2009, a total of 4100 adult livestock units – including the spill-overs from the previous period – were reportedly financed; these included endangered bovine, equidae, ovine and swine species. The impact of the support ensured by Measure 214 in relation to breed numbers at regional or national level seems variable but, in a few cases, it was significant such as for the Modenese cow, the Nero di Parma black pig, the Cornigliese and Cornella Bianca sheep, and the Reggiana cow. The areas used to grow varieties of vegetable species threatened by genetic erosion were still very limited: 45 ha with the highest commitments recorded for wine grapes crops (20.1 ha) and cherry orchards (15.6 ha).

The objective of *contributing to the attenuation of climatic change and improving the quality of air* was mainly, but not exclusively, pursued by the Measures under Axis 2.

More specifically, the RDP 2007-2013 envisages various types of interventions under the various Axes to meet this priority.

Under Axis 1, Measure 121 envisages incentives for investing in the production of energy from renewables and for energy saving and Measure 123 encourages investments in the collection and disposal of waste from agri-food undertakings for – among other purposes – energy production.

Axis 3 supports the construction of new wind power, geothermal power and solar power plants with plant capacities of less than 1 megawatt, with the ultimate purpose of favouring the diversification into non-agricultural activities and of producing electricity for rural communities.

However the most important contribution to the problem of emissions comes from Axis 2, which helps combat climatic change with the full set of Actions under Measure 214 and with forestry Measures. The contribution pertains, in the first place, to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (nitrous oxide in particular) following the reduced level of utilised nitrogenous fertilisers fostered by agri-environmental actions (such effect concerned an overall surface of about 94,950 ha) and by afforestation. Many of these courses of action also determined an increase or a retention of the atmospheric carbon fixing in the soil organic matter and forestry biomass.

The overall evaluation of the impact of Measures introduced in the RDP 2007-2013 on the climatic change objective was quantified in terms of reduced greenhouse gas emissions expressed as tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per annum. As shown in the table below, all funded (and so far completed) interventions contributed to reduce 141,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, of which more than 138,000 tonnes as a result of Axis 2.

## Impact arising from the implementation of RDP 2007-2013 in terms of reduced emissions into the atmosphere

Measure	Types of implemented interventions	Effects	Measurement of the effect
Measure 121	The Measure promotes, in particular: alternative energies (renewables in general and bio-energies in particular); energy saving; short production chains and short rotation forestry	Effects in terms of avoided greenhouse gas emissions through the production of energy from renewables and a lower consumption of fossil energy	36.1 tonnes of CO2 equivalent per annum
Measure 214	The Measure promotes, in particular: conservation and/or increase and/or restoration of organic matter in the soil; organic farming; integrated farming; conversion of arable land into meadows and pastureland and/or maintenance of meadows and pastureland; conservation of natural shrubby hedges and/or trees and/or planted plots and/or tree clusters and maintenance of vegetation covers (grassed strips with e.g. a buffer function)	Effects in terms of CO2 absorption from the atmosphere through the storage of organic carbon in agricultural soils. Effects associated with the reduction of nitrogenous fertilisers (which in turn results in lower nitrous oxide emissions from agricultural soils) – these effects still have to be assessed in the evaluation	100,650 tonnes of CO2 equivalent per annum
Measure 221	Payments for the first afforestation of agricultural land	Effects in terms of CO2 absorption from the atmosphere and storage of organic carbon in the wood biomass	38,021 tonnes of CO2 equivalent per annum corresponding to 2,199,444 tonnes of total stored carbon at the end of cycle
Measure 311	By Action 3, it funds interventions for the construction of plants for generating, using and selling energy and/or heat with a maximum capacity of 1 megawatt	Effects in terms of avoided greenhouse gas emissions through the production of energy from renewables and a lower consumption of fossil energy	725 tonnes of CO2 equivalent per annum
Measure 321	By Action 3, it funds interventions for the construction of plants for generating and using thermal energy and electricity	Effects in terms of avoided greenhouse gas emissions through the production of energy from renewables and a lower consumption of fossil energy	1,971 tonnes of CO2 equivalent per annum

The total impact of the Programme Measures (141,404 tonnes of CO2 equivalent produced) estimated from the data so far available amounts to a 2.87% reduction on the total emissions from the agricultural sector (as will be remembered, the objective for Italy is a 6.5% reduction in the period of 2008 to 2012 from the 1990 levels).

With regard to the objective of *maintaining sustainable agricultural activities in disadvantaged areas*, Axis 2 directly intervenes through Measures 211 and 212 and with the different agri-environmental actions, in particular Action 8 for the conservation of extensive meadows for a total covered surface, net of overlaps, of nearly 98,000 ha, i.e. a value slightly above the programmed target value corresponding to 53% of the regional UAA in mountainous and disadvantaged areas.

# AXIS 3 - QUALITY OF LIFE AND ECONOMY DIVERSIFICATION

In October 2010, all measures under **Axis 3** were initiated (the Annual Operational Programme approved by the Regional Cabinet Resolution DGR 685 of 12 May 2008 and the following invitations to apply) while the first LAG invitations were formalised with regard to the Actions under Measure 413. The objectives of rural economy development and quality of life were earmarked 135 million euros, i.e. little less than 13% of the RDP resources (Axis 3 and Axis 4). The programming approach has been consistent with the local requirements and revolves around a few well-tested Measures/Actions that are highly contextualised and capable of detecting demand from the territory. The distribution of incentives has met the programming conditions.

In Axis 3, the system of criteria adopted for the selection of the initiatives is - as a general rule - made up of a few elements defining contributions in line with the Programme strategic priorities (rural territories, the youth, women, undertakings of smaller economic size) and the multiple objectives pursued by the type of interventions offered by the RDP. The application of selection criteria generally determines a set of projects effectively oriented towards strategic objectives and priorities, although the selection in this case was not made with the same intensity in all Provinces.

The positive elements to be emphasised pertain to governance.

Through PRIPs, the SWOT analysis was focused on local evidence. The provincial strategic choices, which were differentiated from province to province, have been fine tuned to reflect local needs.

The implementation of public initiatives within a negotiated programming process (a Pact for Local Integrated Development) has been instrumental in a shared choice of the interventions to be financed, an optimised use of financial resources, a better integration between financial instruments, and the removal of 'competition' between institutions in accessing financial resources.

The objective of supplementing farmers' income by diversifying the mix of revenues was pursued primarily by Measures 311 and 313. Measure 311 "Diversification" reached 237 undertakings (38% of the target value), most of which were interested in Action 1, rural tourism.

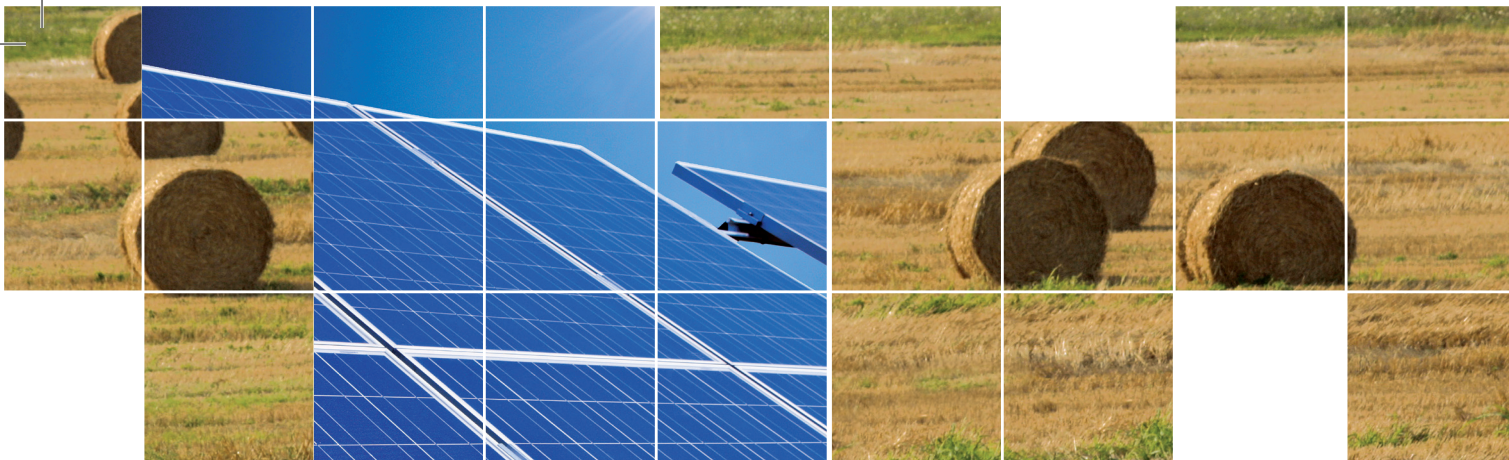
Support to farm holidays was confirmed as an effective instrument to rejuvenate the structure of the agricultural system and favour women's work. The youth - or 18% of regional agri-tourism farmers - were 44% of aid beneficiaries as a result of the application of the priority criteria.

After the application of priority criteria, women, which run 36% of rural tourism farms in the region (only sole proprietorships are considered in this case), were 44% of the total number of owners of holdings having benefited from incentives.

The applied implementation procedures met the requirements of holdings of small economic size located in the more marginal areas. Through the application of priority criteria, 25% of the financed applications fell in 'D' areas.

The majority of interventions under Measure 311-1 had traditional characteristics, i.e. their purpose was the creation of bed spaces (976





in total) although the situation changed from province to province depending on requirements. In the Provinces in which rural tourism was more developed, supply-qualification processes prevailed, whereas in 'less developed' Provinces, what prevailed was the creation of bed spaces; this element is indicative of a positive effect of the selection.

Use of Action 2 was still very limited, with only one approved project.

As many as 95 entrepreneurs (or 87% of the targeted beneficiaries) embarked on initiatives in the energy sector (Action 3 – Energy) which implied the construction of plants fuelled by renewable energy sources in farms for a total installed capacity of 2 Mwp, or 40% of the target value (5.9 Mwp).

### Participation in measure 311: diversification

	Action 1 (rural tourism)	Action 2 (tourist accommodation)	Action 3 (renewable energies)
Target fixed in terms of total number of beneficiaries for the full period 2007–2013	456	61	108
Projects approved until 2010	141	1	95
Degree of achievement of target	31%	Less than 2%	87%
Total value of investments	77 million euros	10.4 million euros	24 million euros

With Measure 313, the RDP has effectively expanded the supply of accommodation facilities (this was particularly the case in marginal rural areas) and of tourist services and improved the infrastructure serving the rural tourism sector. The 23 subsidised initiatives (21% of the target value) absorbed 45% of the budgeted public expenditure and reflected all of the wine and food itineraries planned in the programming phase. The initiatives were concentrated in the provinces of Bologna, Parma and Ferrara in line with the presence of highly qualitative typical products and with the degree of development and maturity of the "wine and food specialty roadmap" of these Provinces. The specific objective of *improving the attractiveness of the rural environment* was pursued through a set of Measures. By Measure 321 (basic services), a significant contribution was made to improve local land attractiveness:

- interventions implemented with Action 1 (renovated ducts and tanks) improved service provision in 60 Municipalities in areas 'C' and 'D'; as a consequence of this, 90,744 inhabitants (i.e. 115% of the target value) could potentially benefit from waterworks improvement achieved through subsidised interventions;
- financed applications for Action 2 (road links) related to the improvement of a 220 km long local road network. The interventions concerned a total of 58 Municipalities located indistinctively in all provinces of the region, 70% of which were in area D, with a special D-area concentration in the provinces of Parma (9 Municipalities) and Modena (13 Municipalities). 14 thousand inhabitants were the 'best served' part of the population as a result of the improved road network, with an average of 119 inhabitants per intervention and 65 inhabitants per kilometre of improved road;

- a positive change from the past was the installation of 13 biomass-fuelled heating plants (and district heating systems) in replacement of the pre-existing, often obsolete installations fuelled by non-renewable sources. Electricity installations now serve 100 buildings (users) mainly for public uses such as schools (14), public offices, gym halls/swimming pools and welfare/community service centres.

The 69 initiatives supported by Measure 322 (village renewal and development) reached 60 villages, or 35% of the target value. As a whole, interventions positively contributed to raise the landscape and environmental value of the territory: in 65% of cases, interventions were made on buildings of historical and architectural interests or buildings that form part of the cultural heritage.

All initiatives were designed to finance public bodies in the context of the PSLs (Integrated Local Development Pacts) and were primarily intended for areas with a higher incidence of farming: 85% of projects involved mountainous and disadvantaged municipalities in D areas (including very small and scarcely populated villages).

85% of interventions were directed to municipalities and areas forming part of food and wine itineraries: the integration between interventions on the building stock and tourism interventions promoted by Measure 313 on itineraries was intended to create synergies in view of an increase in the number of tourists. Indeed, the growth of tourism is among the objectives of the RDP, which seeks to systematically mobilise the diversified and rich availability of resources in rural areas throughout the region by providing support in the qualification of rural land and the growth of tourism services.

The objective of *enhancing the human capital* was pursued by Measures 331 "Training and Information" and 341 "Publicity/Facilitation". Through the first Measure, a total of 83 training initiatives were selected which were translated into 36 completed courses having involved 766 rural workers, of which 305 were women, largely with a good cultural background and an employment. Only 20 out of the 766 participants had also applied for support under the RDP and their followed courses were not related to the types of interventions for which they had applied for aid.

By way of conclusion, an analysis of the projects still in progress showed examples of strong integration between Measures. A number of meetings with privileged witnesses have shown, even in small disadvantaged rural municipalities, several examples of best practices evidencing that continuity now exists with the previous programming phase and that integration has been ensured through other support instruments (such as Structural Funds) with which positive results were achieved both in terms of increased tourist numbers and in terms of new job opportunities (e.g. with youth cooperatives involved in management tasks), which results will be subject to further investigations. Given the accomplishments made in this early programming phase, the degree of achievement of objectives can be judged as good: the RDP has effectively increased the number of farms performing non agricultural activities, although their degree of diversification was fundamentally limited to tourist hospitality and energy production. The support provided has ultimately improved: the availability of accommodation facilities (in marginal rural areas in particular), the supply of tourist services and the available infrastructure serving rural tourism, and has also favoured the enhancement and better exploitation and enjoyment of the cultural and architectural heritage in rural areas.

The territorial approach behind the implementation of Axis 3 has produced excellent results for the most marginal rural areas, one reason being the concentration of interventions under Measures 321 and 322 intended for the growth of local attractiveness in the smallest and most marginal Municipalities of mountain areas.

Indeed, as a result of the programming priorities, incentives to support multiple activities as a form of income supplementation in less competitive holdings were spread extensively throughout the region with a special focus on the pre-Apennine Municipalities, whereas support in favour of rural land under Measures 321 and 322 was concentrated on the Apennine mountain municipalities and municipalities of the Po delta.

The terms of implementation of such measures and degree of concentration driven by the level of subscription to the Integrated Local Development Pacts (PSLs) have allowed even Municipalities that are currently hardest hit by depopulation problems to access aid under the RDP, i.e. 79 Municipalities in C and D areas, which together account for 4% of the regional population, hosted 52% of projects under Axis 3 and attracted 54% of public financial resources.





### *Negotiated programming under Axis 3*

Negotiated programming that culminates into the signature of Integrated Local Development Pacts (PSLIs), is an innovation introduced in the period 2007-2013 to increase the quality of projects and improve the results of the RDP in terms of public interventions designed for the improvement of the living conditions of the local population with special regard to typically rural areas within the Region.

The new approach is based on concentration on a provincial scale and is applied to measures designed for public beneficiaries or entities managing public services and utilities, i.e. mainly infrastructure with specific local significance and intended for the pursuance of objectives of general interest for the local community.

The RDP Evaluation Report expressed an overall positive judgment on this Pact as an instrument, and even considered it a good practice to improve governance in rural areas. Through the definition of shared selection and evaluation criteria, the concentration approach, the negotiation between Provincial Governments and Municipalities and the involvement of local stakeholders expressing the interests of various production sectors may be conducive to a more correct choice of interventions to be financed, an optimised use of financial resources and a better programming approach for the intervention as a whole while favouring integration between financial instruments. A further positive outcome resulted from the ability to overcome the “competition” between institutions in their access to financial resources with the additional opportunity to favour weaker stakeholders and make public interventions more harmonious and specifically targeted to system-specific needs.

## AXIS 4 – LEADER APPROACH

The Emilia-Romagna RDP, specifically in the section dedicated to **Axis 4** and the LEADER approach, specifies that the local development strategies proposed by Local Action Groups (LAGs) will contribute, through the LEADER practice and methodology, to the achievement of the objectives under Axes 1, 2 and 3 of the RDP. The general objective underlying the local development strategy is *the enhancement of intrinsic potentials of rural territories, the maintenance and expansion of employment through the consolidation of existing entrepreneurial initiatives and the development of new undertakings, the promotion of new employment opportunities with a special focus on women and the youth, the growth of the culture of participation in the decision-making and socialisation processes, the improvement of the quality of life, the diversification of economic activities, the strengthening of rural identity and the improvement of their attractiveness.*

With that in mind, as on 2009, 5 LAGs had been approved (initial target indicator 36) which involve nearly 48% of municipalities, 11.7% of the population and more than 50% of the regional territory. The intervention requirements for the LEADER Axis coincide with those emerged from the analysis conducted for the other Axes and, during the application of the Programme implementation mechanisms, they were detailed in the PRIPs.

Since Axis 4 is a methodological axis, its specific objectives are intended for improving the governance and exploitation of local intrinsic potentials; on the other hand, with regard to operational objectives and especially to Measures 411, 412, 413 and 421, these in actual fact correspond to the specific objectives of other Axes.

For Axis 1, although the contribution of LEADER was negligible in financial terms, almost all LAGs have identified three objectives: to improve profitability in the agricultural sector; to rationalise the agricultural and forestry product processing and marketing segment; and to improve and strengthen the production chain integration.

With regard to Axis 2, all LAGs have taken up Measure 216, which involves such objectives as safeguarding and enhancing the biodiversity of the species and the habitat of agricultural territories, favouring the correct management of areas in the Nature 2000 network, protecting and developing the agricultural and forestry system with a high natural value.

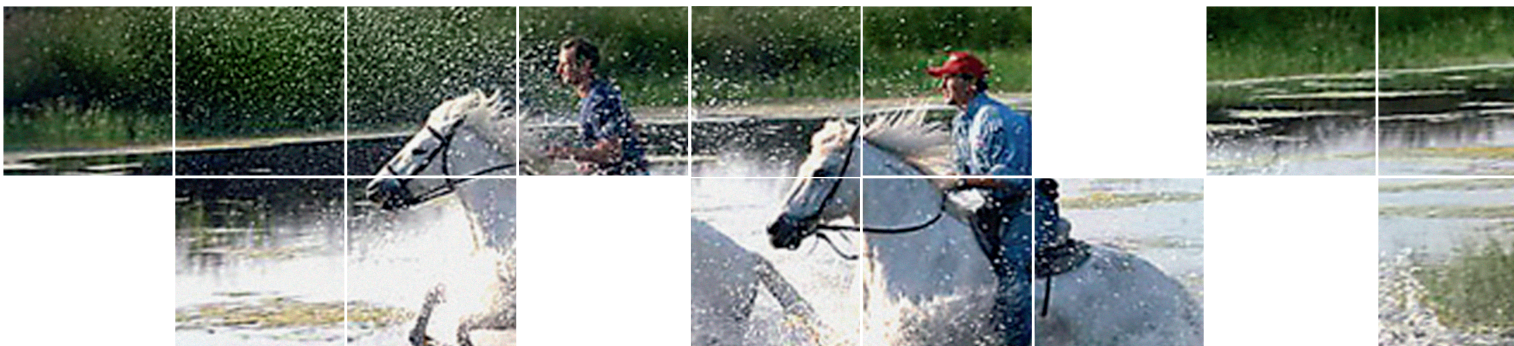
With regard to Axis 3 on which, as envisaged by the RDP, financial contribution was planned to be equal to at least 50% of the resources of Measures 411, 412 and 413, it is worth observing that the LAGs' priorities rest with the two objectives associated with income support and attractiveness growth. By contrast, there was a lower level of contribution in favour of human capital, with only two LAGs having taken up Measure 331.

With regard to Axis 4, our performed analysis reported an advancement of implementation at 30 September 2010. As on that date, in particular,

- all LAGs had published the first invitations, mainly concentrated on Measures 411 (Measure 121) and 413 (Measures 311 and 322), which showed that the response from local entrepreneurs was good;
- only the LAG Antico Frignano committed resources on Measure 411 (nearly 49% of the earmarked resources), while for Measure 413 resources were committed by the LAG Soprip;
- for the Cooperation Measure, all LAGs presented an application for aid to cover the expenses of initiatives in support of cooperation for an amount of public resources equal to 0.4 million euros – 33% of the resources specified in the Annual Operational Plan;
- Measure 431 was the only Measure whose amount was disbursed.

As on 30 September 2010, a small number of projects were in progress on "specific LEADER actions". However, the absence of completed projects and the specific and absolutely preliminary state of advancement for the large majority of projects could be used for evaluations on individual merits at this stage.

The LAG Soprip is using for specific LEADER Actions nearly 34% of the public resources allocated to Measures 411, 412 and 413. The LAG therefore has attached special importance to the specific LEADER Actions – whose function is to support system actions and favour projects originating from local groupings, including intersectoral pools, and targeted to specific territorial 'products' such as – in the farming sector – ultra-small local production chains not contemplated among the RDP Measures. With reference to Measure 411, as of today's date, an invitation was published for the implementation of a *Pilot project for the enhancement of local small production chains* intended for farm associations, a *Pilot project for the Nero di Parma black pig*, which had already been initiated in the previous programming phases, and a *'Kilometrozero' pilot project* for the enhancement of agricultural products in the Parma area. Measure 412 was taken up with a considerable level of contribution from the specific LEADER Actions, which constitute little less than 50% of the public resources allocated to this Measure. As of today's date, two projects have been defined: a Pilot project based on hired labour, *Zero-carbon tourism*, for energy efficiency in tourist sites through local renewable resource promotion (pursuant to the conformity opinion from the LEADER Technical Committee of 4 Aug. 2010) and a "Study on the use of biomass". In financial terms, Measure 413 proportionally made the least use of the specific action, which amounted to only 18% of the public resources allocated to the Measure. Currently, the following initiatives are in place: *Analysis of training requirements related to new businesses and professions*, a *Pilot project for the enhancement and promotion of food museums*, and a *tourist promotion and marketing programme for the Parma LEADER area*. The LAG is currently defining proposals for another





three initiatives among which one dedicated to the cabled Apennines Area. The LAG Delta 2000 makes an appreciable use of the LEADER specific Actions which in the financial programming phase were assessed as corresponding to nearly 35% of the public resources allocated to Measures 411, 412 and 413, and consequently allots investments to these Measures in a proportionately balanced way. With reference to Measure 411, no initiatives have so far been launched that fall under this Measure. Through the specific Action of Measure 412, however, a number of activities of project compilation and definition are in progress, among which an environmental education initiative meant for schools and two proposals to be developed with the Po Delta Park. The specific Action of Measure 413 is highly diversified and reflects a particularly detailed planning of activities. This Action has now reached a good state of advancement: i.e. such events and initiatives as the 'Primavera Slow 2010', the participation in the British Birdwatching Fair 2010 and the production of a birdwatching guide, a Plan for communication and information on the natural and cultural heritage of the Po delta area, a feasibility study for the institution of a food and wine itinerary in the eastern plane of the Ravenna Province, and a number of demo actions meant for businesspeople operating along the tourist routes and itineraries of the territory.

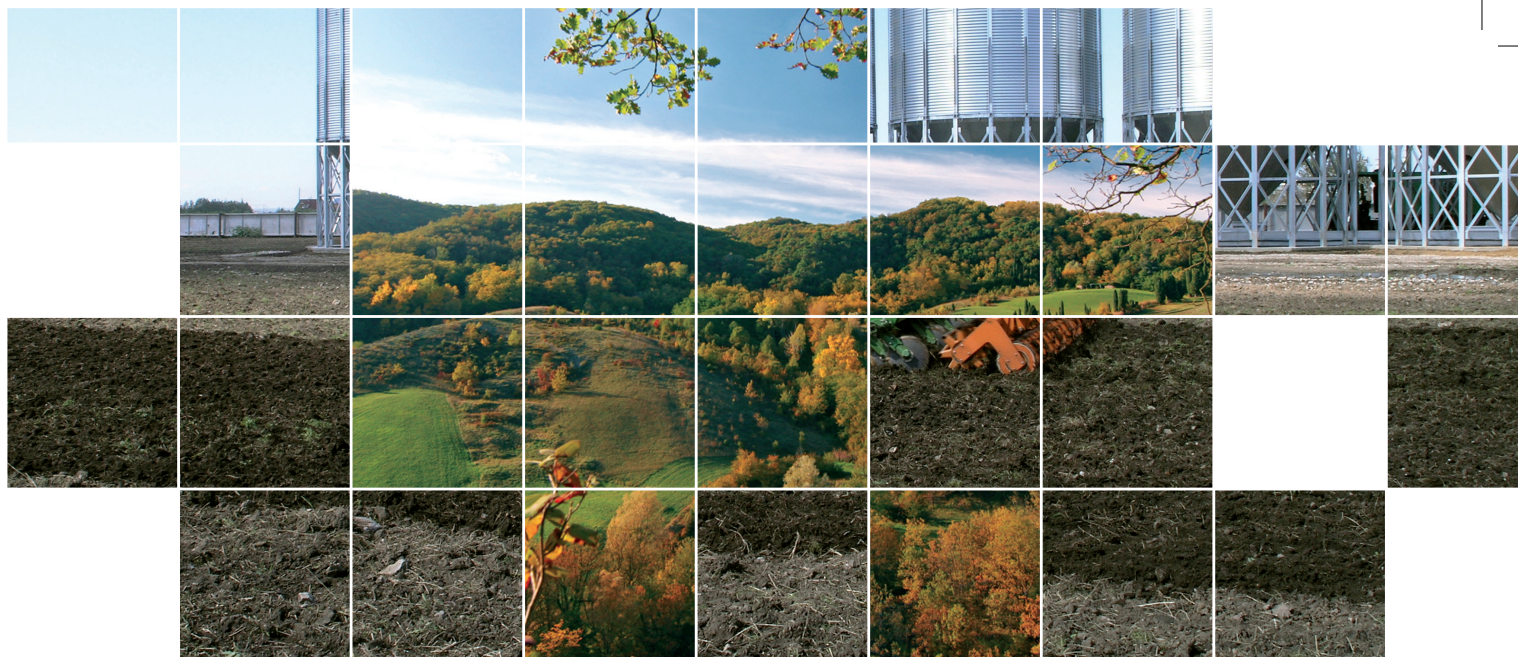
The LAG Antico Frignano has in store a number of projects to be developed through the specific LEADER Action for a value of little less than 35% of the total public resources allocated to Measures 411, 412 and 413. In particular, it uses this type of action chiefly for the implementation of Measure 413, whose Action 7 absorbs most resources in both percentage and absolute terms. As for Action 7 of Measure 411, the following initiatives have so far been launched: *Tourist promotion of chestnut groves* and two initiatives (projects in the course of being defined) on the experimental growing of a plant from which a sweetener is produced, and for the non-food exploitation of chestnut groves. With reference to the specific Action connected to Measure 412, the LAG has identified two Actions, both of which are meant for the tourist promotion of biotopes, i.e. sites with high natural value and rich in faunal resources. For Measure 413, the following initiatives are in place at this stage: an Enterprise Project designed to encourage young people to opt for new forms of self-employment, a project for local-territory promotion through the safeguard of local traditions and culture and pivoting around two key

historical figures, Mathilde di Canossa for the Reggio Province and Raimondo Montecuccoli for the Modena Province.

The LAG L'Altra Romagna has invested nearly 40% of the public resources allocated to Measures 411, 412 and 413 in the specific LEADER actions, and has planned to use the highest percentage share in the 'Competitiveness' Measure; more specifically, for the implementation of its strategies, this Measure uses 45% of the allocated resources through specific Action 7. With reference to Measure 411, in this phase, the LAG is defining and developing project proposals and, as a result, no projects in progress were reported. With regard to Measure 412, through the specific Action in question, the GAL intends to develop the theme of biodiversity as a value for production chains. With regard to Measures 413, the specific LEADER Action mainly supports initiatives designed for the strengthening of the territory as a 'product' in the context of promotional and marketing activities. In this phase, a *project jointly organised with the Vena dei Gessi park* is still in progress.

The LAG Appennino Bolognese envisages the lowest level of investments in the specific LEADER Actions, which as a whole are worth little less than 23% of the allocated public resources. The 'Quality of Life and Diversification' Measure is the one that makes the highest use of the specific LEADER Actions. In Measure 411, Action 7 consists of a single complex project for the establishment of the *Rural Club of the Bolognese Apennine*. Currently, a proposal is being defined for a *Feasibility Study on the Rural Club*. Equally for Measure 412, the applicable specific Action consists of a single project to establish a *competence centre on energy saving and efficiency*. At this stage, no advancements were reported but the LAG informed that a project proposal was being drafted. With reference to Measure 413, in the current phase, a pilot project is being defined to promote the Bolognese Apennine as a destination.





# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis made in the Evaluation Report on the management of the rural development policy in Emilia-Romagna suggests no special criticalities: the time intervening between the programming phase and the phase of publishing calls for applications and collecting applications was relatively short and expenditure advancement was satisfactory. The programming process and the terms for RDP management were designed rationally and with a clear focus on results. The governance model that gives Provincial Governments a co-decision role ensures that emphasis is put by the Programme on the specific province of interest.

By contrast, the Report underscored the poor use of selection criteria (with a limited degree of application except for Measures 121, 123, 311 and 321), which however the evaluator found crucial to apply (in order to improve the efficiency of interventions) and to strengthen even further in view of the better integration and effectiveness of system-wide actions (with special regard to the tourism sector).

In addition, the available financial advancement indicators for some measures (with levels well below expectations) call for the need to ponder over an accurate distribution of financial resources so as to ensure their full use.

As regards Axis 1, the evaluation analyses made on the basis of the early results for the implemented interventions provide a substantially positive picture with regard to the implementation of the intervention strategy, which was found consistent and effective in relation to the priorities defined by the Programme, yet influenced by factors outside the intervention context, which the Regional Government cannot always directly control.

The evaluator has specific recommendations to make on the Green Catalogue, whose use needs to be continued by further promoting its consultation by farmers, in order to achieve their better autonomy and awareness in selecting the most appropriate training, information and counselling services. In addition, the evaluator suggests a prompt update of offers to cater for the needs of the agricultural and forestry communities.

Clear problems emerged in the level of participation in food quality schemes. The effectiveness of Measure 132 was below expectations, which clearly shows participation difficulties attributable to the low level of financed amounts, intensity of the aid and administrative and bureaucratic costs to be borne by farmers. The financial envelope allocated to such measure has been overestimated in comparison with the calculated expenditure forecast. The evaluator finds it appropriate to promptly revise the financial envelope for Measure 132 and deems it

fit to fully rethink the intervention as a whole for the future programming period.

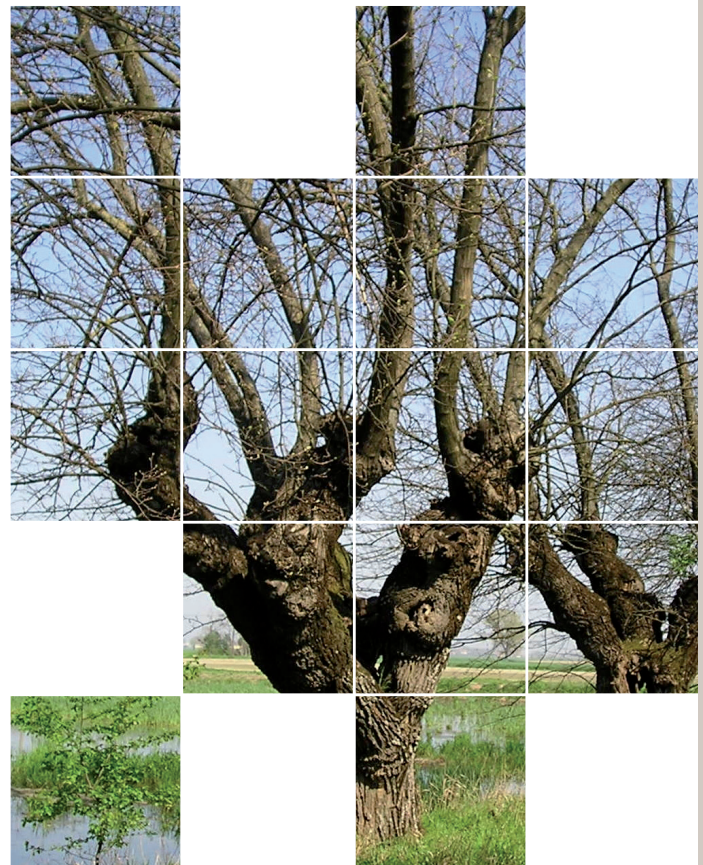
The intervention strategy defined in the RDP for Axis 2 and the defined terms and instruments for its implementation were as whole consistent and relevant to the specific “requirements” of the regional context and were able to direct aid to projects that could potentially achieve significant results and impacts in relation to the planned objectives. However, the evaluator recommends reassessing the instrument of agri-environmental agreements to improve the effectiveness of commitments through their optimum concentration and dissemination in the areas that most require interventions.

Finally, the evaluator calls for the identification of new actions within Measure 214 to combine the reduction of environmental impacts with the use of innovative farming methods, e.g. process innovations in arable crops to reduce energy consumption and improve soil quality. In addition, it recommends favouring the extension of organic farming to fruit and vegetable growers through a higher level of incentives.

The results of the evaluation of Axis 3 – preliminary as they may be – were positive with special regard to the quality of procedural and implementation methods. In encouraging area-specific interventions by calls for application as well as by negotiated programming, these methods proved to be a strength of the RDP in order to maximise its effectiveness in line with its priority objectives. In the Evaluation Report, the recommendation is made to continue towards this direction by possibly strengthening the role of negotiated programming and consequently targeting the maximum degree of interaction between public measures and other types of interventions (e.g. road works and promotion of tourism).

Recommendations on Axis 4 relate to procedural and management aspects. In particular, the evaluator encourages the Region to continue its accompanying actions in favour of LAGs to favour a better understanding of the procedure that these bodies are required to observe in the current programming period. In addition, it is appropriate for the Regional Government to consider the opportunity in the current programming period to allow LAGs to adopt the implementation mechanisms that were adopted for integrated projects. In so doing, LAGs could play an important governance action in their respective territories, so as to favour cooperation between different stakeholders (public bodies, universities, producers’ associations, holdings and undertakings) in the context of partnerships meant for the implementation of integrated area projects or micro-production chain projects.

The third and last recommendation is meant for LAGs and concerns the strategic monitoring of their respective programmes. The reliability of targets needs to be monitored and improved both at the level of individual projects and horizontally for the reconstruction of regional indicators.





Directorate General  
for Agriculture, Fishing  
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