



MINISTERO DELLE POLITICHE AGRICOLE
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Evaluation of RDPs in Italy: Lessons Learned from 2000-2006

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Purpose and outline of the presentation

The topic of the paper is the analysis of the organisational aspect of RDP evaluation. In particular:

- ❑ When can an evaluation be called a “good evaluation”?
- ❑ Which elements are important to characterise a good evaluation?
- ❑ The importance to support learning process

Outline:

- ❑ Rural development programming system in Italy
- ❑ Evaluation 2000-2006: some evidences
- ❑ The National evaluation system in the NSP and through the National Rural Network



Rural development programming system in Italy

49 programs during 2000-06

- ❑ 21 RDPs - *EAGGF Guarantee Section*
- ❑ 7 Regional Programs – *EAGGF Guidance Section* (integrated with other Structural Funds)
- ❑ 21 Regional Programs Leader – *EAGGF Guidance Section*

22 programs during 2007-13

- ❑ National Strategic Plan for Rural Development
- ❑ 21 RDPs
- ❑ 1 National Rural Network



Key role of evaluation in sustainability of the system
High number of evaluation activities has represented a good test to understand strengths and weaknesses



Evaluation 2000-2006: some evidences

The quality of demand evaluation

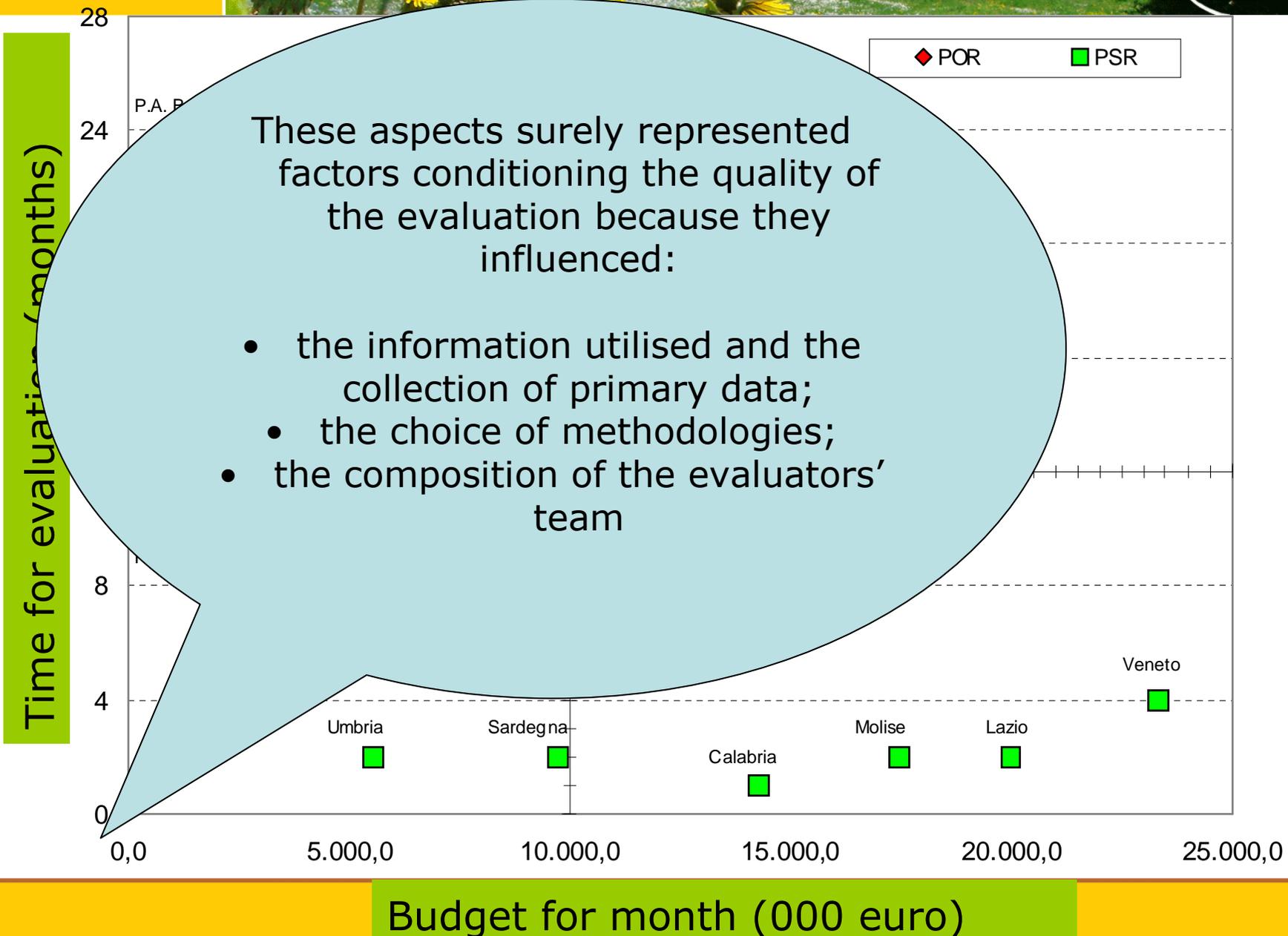
Managing Authorities (MA) are not used to express a real evaluation demand. Such circumstance is mainly referable to the lack of an evaluation culture in public administrations, (regulation commitment rather than a tool to support decision-making and to orient public expenditures).

Three main elements have confirmed this conclusion:

- ❑ the shortage of time allocated to put in place all the steps of evaluation process;
- ❑ the shortage of financial resources to implement evaluation;
- ❑ the lack of ownership in the evaluation questions



The financial budget (vs. the time)





Evaluation 2000-2006: some evidences

The ownership of evaluation questions

- ❑ the evaluation demand expressed by MA is often limited to reproducing the requests included in the regulation or EC guidelines
- ❑ the evaluation demand can not limit to what asked by the EC. The evaluation demand represents, in fact, the set of priorities which will have to be assessed and, therefore, the aspects which the independent evaluator will have to take in account in its analysis
- ❑ the use of the EC guidelines has provided a common work scheme and has guaranteed greater homogeneity in the arrangement of activities, increasing the availability of comparable results with which to affect a common reading at the national level of the results of the different programs



Evaluation 2000-2006: some evidences

The Management models for the evaluation

The organisation inside the MA & and relationship with the evaluators

- ❑ In general absence of Evaluation Units
- ❑ Regional Evaluation Groups
- ❑ Steering groups

The evaluation “market”

- ❑ Associations of consultant firms
- ❑ Universities or Public research institutes
- ❑ Staff of evaluators
- ❑ Increase in number of independent evaluators and in the quality of their technical offers



Evaluation 2000-2006: some evidences

The evaluation results

- ❑ In general, as regards the effects of the interventions, we have to consider the remarkable steps forward made on the improvement of evaluation capacities , in particular in terms of the quantification of indicators, the analysis of the causes and feedback for the to RDPs

- ❑ Nevertheless, some difficulties occurred, especially in terms of the comparability of results across different regions/evaluations, the significance of results outside the context of the single area or evaluation where they have been estimated, the good quality and validity of the outcomes





Evaluation 2000-2006: some evidences

Concerning the effects of the agri-environmental measures, positive effects have been highlighted with reference to:

- the changes in gross nutrient balance (nitrogen and phosphorus, in particular)
- the reduction of soil erosion,
- the conservation of biodiversity

However, the clearest limit is represented by the difficulty to concentrate territorially the interventions, especially in the most sensitive areas, and the risk of low effectiveness due to an insufficient critical mass





Evaluation 2000-2006: some evidences

**The evaluation report is sufficient? NO!!!
The importance of dissemination activity and of
the discussion with stakeholders**

- ❑ The synthesis of report
- ❑ The special sessions in Monitoring Committee
- ❑ The “forum” of the partnership
- ❑ The “week” of the Regional Government (special meeting during a week)





Evaluation 2000-2006: some evidences

The utilisation in RDP 2007-13

- a lot of new choices in the Italian RDPs were driven by the evaluation results, in terms of:
 - integration of different measures/interventions (at farm, sector or territorial level)
 - concentration of intervention with a “needs focused approach” (national classification of rural area different from OECD; focus on sensitive or HVN areas)
 - decrease of financial budget for the less effective interventions (i.e. agri-environment integrated production)
- the evaluation results gave a great contribution to a realistic quantification of the new indicators’ target values. Thanks to this process, in Italy, for the first time, a good framework of quantified indicators is available



The future: The start up of National evaluation system

Objectives:

- ❑ to interface with the Commission as concerns the definition of the evaluation methods and modalities
- ❑ to promote the “governance” of evaluation activity
- ❑ to promote the diffusion and use of evaluation activities, including through activities relating to training, information and the exchange of good practices
- ❑ to orient evaluation activities at the regional level, promoting the adoption of methods, techniques and instruments for the analysis of the effects of intervention measures;
- ❑ to promote ad hoc national evaluation for themes that are significant and strategic at the national level
- ❑ to guarantee a link with the activities of the National Evaluation Network for Cohesion Policies
- ❑ to improve the link with the scientific research

The start up the Activities:

- ❑ the definition of a working document illustrating the set of information to be collected at the project level to comply with the EU and national monitoring requirements
- ❑ the elaboration of a working document on “the organisation of on-going evaluation” aimed to suggest organisational solutions for a good governance of this activity
- ❑ the definition of common impact evaluation methodologies (i.e. utilisation of FADN and ad hoc samples; how to assess the impact of RD on the FBI index; definition of HNV and their evolution; etc.)
- ❑ the direct collection of basic data for the monitoring and evaluation of environmental effects (i.e. AGRIT for the collection of information related to cross compliance; MITO for the collection of information on farm birds, etc.)
- ❑ the definition of a statistical protocol for a systematic quantification of baseline indicators (i.e. statistics at rural area level according with Italian classification; statistics on access to broadband internet connections; statistics on the payment of CAP; FBI; etc.)



Thank you!

