MINISTERO DELLE POLITICHE AGRICOLE
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"National Rural Networks: How to show their benefits"

Case Study [Italy]

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Introduction

Part 1 Monitoring and evaluation framework of the NRN

Part 2 Evaluation methods and results

Part 3 Conclusions and lessons
(Evaluation governance; Evaluation approach, methods and activities)

NRN and NRNP: the Italian context

•need of Italian NRNP arises from the regionalization of MS
•need of networking and actions aimed at defining common pathways for the definition and management of rural development policy, supporting the management of RDPs, the exchange of practices, common methods and tools, avoiding duplication with reference to RDPs TA

Why an NRNP evaluation has been conducted?

In 2010 the contract has been signed with the external evaluator (Lattanzio, former Ecosfera Vic).

The evaluation arises from the need to verify on-going performance of the NRNP in order to improve it with specific corrections (evaluation recommendations)

"*Supporting the NRNP implementation, the ongoing evaluation is not simply a product (represented by the evaluation reports) but a process aimed at assessing the NRNP oucomes*"
On-going evaluation italian ToRs

Strict cooperation with MA and Steering Group to support the NRN for revising strategies, planning activities and increasing quality of managing and planning

Evaluation approach oriented to the on-going utilization of the results

Evaluation results useful for:
1.monitoring outputs/results/impacts (corrective measures)
2.planning activities of Task Forces/Working Groups
3.learning lessons for the future programming period (e.g. study visit, success of communication activities)

Annual evaluation Reports, recommendations provided per objective, on-going answering to Evaluation Questions, Next steps for planning evaluation activities

Dissemination via NRN events (national/european); web-site; on-going involvement of stakeholders informed on evaluation activites; Partnership Table/Monitoring Committee

Link between EQs/IL/Indicators (examples from Italy)

Evaluation Questions	Global Objective	Impact Indicator	Specific Objective	Result Indicator	Action	Output Indicators
To what extent do the activities of NRN have increased the capacity of managing authorities and other partners involved in the implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of rural development programs?	1. Improvement of governance	Improvement of governance in terms of: involved actors, intensity of relation, level of participation	1.1. Supporting Administration in improving the performance of RDPs	% of actors reached by the NRN's support	1.1.1. Support to administration implementing the RDP	1) Papers for a broader audience 2) Guidelines 3) Survey, Report or other analysis 4) Congress 5) Seminar/Workshop 6) Meeting 7) Focus group 9) NRN participation to events and Fairs 10b) Study Visit, Stage, experience exchange, memorandum of understanding – international level 11a) Support and consultancy – high intensity 11b) Support and consultancy – average intensity 11c) Support and consultancy – low intensity 12) Information System
				% of NRN's outputs utilised	1.1.2 Support to the National M&E system	1) Papers for a broader audience 2) Guidelines 3) Survey, Report or other analysis 5) Seminar/Workshop 6) Meeting 7) Focus group 8) Media campaign 10a) Study Visit, Stage, experience exchange, memorandum of understanding – national level 10b) Study Visit, Stage, experience exchange, memorandum of understanding – international level 11a) Support and consultancy – high intensity 11b) Support and consultancy – average intensity 11c) Support and consultancy – low intensity 12) Information System
			1.2 Promoting the connection between institutions and partnership in the implementation of rural development	% of stakeholders cooperating with the NRN	1.2.1 National Board of partnership	1) Papers for a broader audience 4) Congress 5) Seminar/Workshop 6) Meeting

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Main evaluation methods/tools

Social Network analysis, Customer satisfaction, web-based tools for stakeholders involvement in planning annual activities and 2014-2020 programming, result indicators, self-assessment, web-based questionnaries, RDPs case-studies

New set of indicators in the MTE (2010) for monitoring results/impacts
1.cross-cutting output, result and impact indicators for monitoring and planning
2. the 7 Italian cross-cutting indicators are connected to the intervention logic and suitable for all the NRNP specific objectives
3.quali-quantitative method of calculation

Cross-cutting result Indicator
1. % actors supported by the NRN
2. Customer Satisfaction degree
3. % *output* utilised
4. Networks created
5. % *stakeholder* cooperating with the NRN/interviewed
6. Satisfaction on communication actions
7. % GPs and innovations disseminated / catalogued

Focus on Social Network analysis

Within the framework of the evaluation of the Italian NRN, SNA is used as a technique to analyse the capacity of the programme to create connections between internal and external subjects of the NRN. SNA is not only a technique but also a knowledge base of primary importance for measuring the results and impacts of the network. It provides in-depth qualitative and evidenced-based data for evaluation of network programmes, usually hard to assess due to their intangible nature

Two examples of SNA 2011 (stakeholders); 2012 (stakeholders + NRN structure)
Networking capacity resulting from collection of data from stakeholders and NRNs structure self-assessment (web-based questionnaires)

Main problems faced: availability of data/questionnaires completed; 2011, complexity of the tool including availability of SNA software (Ucinet, Netminer etc.)

Main results of 2012: actors involved and not involved per each theme (annual planning based on SNA results with a specific view on actors to be involved and collaborative or less collaborative outputs per each theme)

Evaluation question	Social capital proxy	Elements of social capital to be assessed	Indicators	Quantity
How did the NRN succeed to disseminate the idea of cooperation in rural development among public administration?	Participation of public administration in networks promoted by the NRN	Measure	Public administration involved in contact/collaboration with NRN structures	Number
		Intensity	Number of rural stakeholders involved in contact/collaboration with NRN structures	Low/Medium/Strong
		Type of networking (Top-down or bottom-up)	Number of networks (contact/collaboration) promoted by NRN structures –(top-down) or by stakeholders (bottom-up)	Number of top-down networks Number of bottom-up networks
		Frequency	Number of contact/collaboration created among stakeholders and between them and NRN structures	Low/Medium/Strong

Two examples of SNA 2011 (stakeholders); 2012 (stakeholders + NRN structure

Actors involved

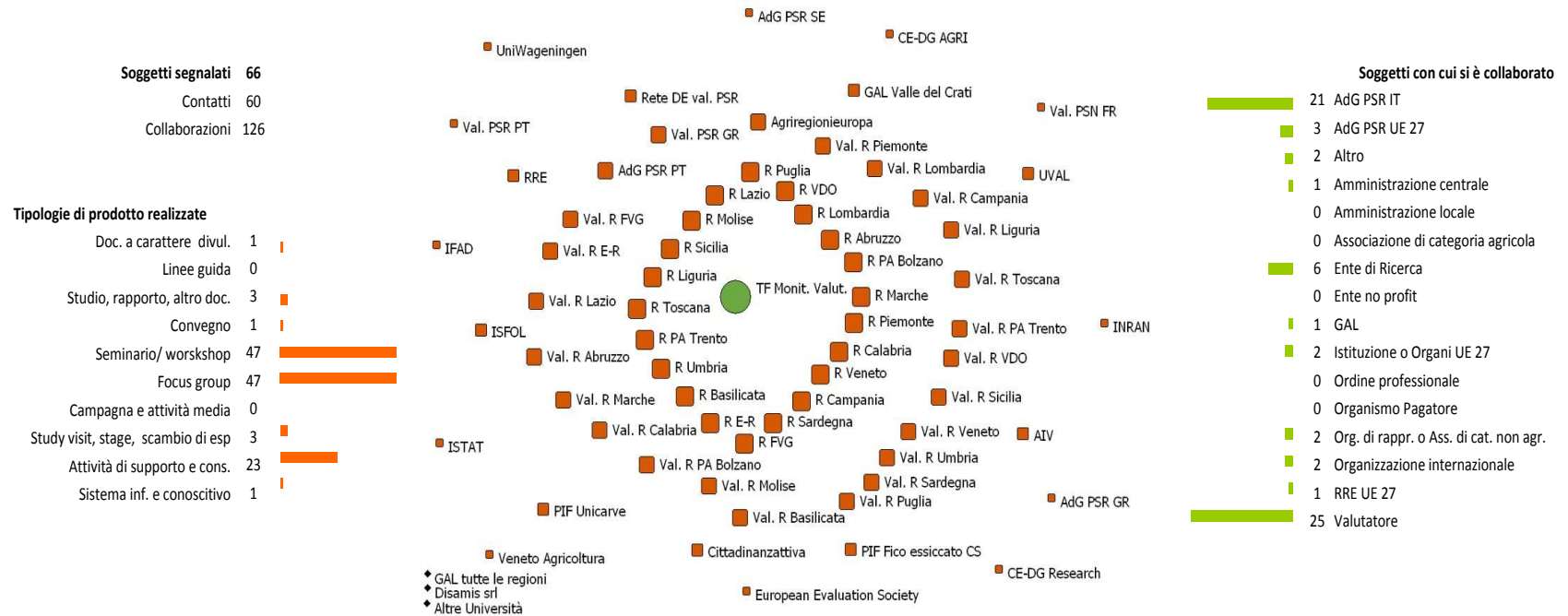**First step: NRNP structures self-assessment and only stakeholders of NRNP Table of Partnership**
Second step: Customer Satisfaction to wider panel of actors (indicated by the Italian NSU as "collaborative actors")

Tools for collecting data

First step: self-assessment questionnaire;
Second step: web-base survey (on-line questionnaire, survey monkey). SNA questions included in the CS questionnaire

Part 2: Evaluation methods and results 5/5
NRNP structures self-assessment within SNA:
main data collected and the M&E Task Force network

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Actors	Contacts	Documents	Guidelines	Study, Report	Event	worskshop	Focus group	Medai campaign or other media activity	Study visit, stage, Exchange of experience	Consultancy activity	Managing and monitoring system
Y	X		X								
Z					X						
…											

Soggetti segnalati **66**

Contatti   60

Collaborazioni   126

Tipologie di prodotto realizzate

Doc. a carattere divul.	1
Linee guida	0
Studio, rapporto, altro doc.	3
Convegno	1
Seminario/ worskshop	47
Focus group	47
Campagna e attività media	0
Study visit, stage, scambio di esp	3
Attività di supporto e cons.	23
Sistema inf. e conoscitivo	1

Soggetti con cui si è collaborato

21	AdG PSR IT
3	AdG PSR UE 27
2	Altro
1	Amministrazione centrale
0	Amministrazione locale
0	Associazione di categoria agricola
6	Ente di Ricerca
0	Ente no profit
1	GAL
2	Istituzione o Organi UE 27
0	Ordine professionale
0	Organismo Pagatore
2	Org. di rappr. o Ass. di cat. non agr.
2	Organizzazione internazionale
1	RRE UE 27
25	Valutatore

Network diagram labels:
AdG PSR SE, CE-DG AGRI, UniWageningen, Rete DE val. PSR, GAL Valle del Crati, Val. PSN FR, Val. PSR PT, Agriregionieuropa, Val. PSR GR, Val. R Piemonte, RRE, AdG PSR PT, R Puglia, Val. R Lombardia, UVAL, R Lazio, R VDO, Val. R Campania, Val. R FVG, R Molise, R Lombardia, Val. R Liguria, IFAD, R Sicilia, R Abruzzo, R Liguria, R PA Bolzano, Val. R Toscana, Val. R Lazio, TF Monit. Valut., R Marche, R Toscana, R Piemonte, Val. R PA Trento, INRAN, ISFOL, R PA Trento, R Calabria, R Umbria, Val. R VDO, Val. R Abruzzo, R Veneto, Val. R Marche, R Basilicata, R Campania, Val. R Sicilia, R E-R, R Sardegna, Val. R Veneto, AIV, Val. R Calabria, R FVG, Val. R Umbria, ISTAT, Val. R PA Bolzano, Val. R Sardegna, PIF Unicarve, Val. R Molise, Val. R Puglia, AdG PSR GR, Val. R Basilicata, Veneto Agricoltura, Cittadinanzattiva, PIF Fico essiccato CS, CE-DG Research, GAL tutte le regioni, Disamis srl, Altre Università, European Evaluation Society

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Key elments/Conclusions	Lessons
Evaluation governance: clear identification of evaluation responsibles/Steering Group (MA/SG and Evaluator)	1. Shared evaluation questions/activities (annual planning) 2. Effective evaluation, concrete results 3. Capacity building 4. NRN adjustments/corrective measures
Strict link between on-going and ex ante evaluation	1. Added-value for capitalizing lessons and on-going outcomes 2. Single point of contact for both evaluation, simplification of procedures and of evaluation governance
Evaluation reporting	1. Synthetic, appealing layout 2. Recommendations per objective 3. On-going answering to EQs 4. Evaluation dashboard 5. Planning evaluation activities/next-steps

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Key elments/Conclusions	Lessons
Partecipative and collaborative evaluation approach	Useful and effective evaluation (monitoring, planning activities, programming the forthcoming Programme)
Stakeholders involvement	2007-2013 NRN results, activities planning, programming 2014-2020
Specific and innovative evaluation methods tailored on NRN specificities (SNA, cross-cutting indicators)	The need of quali-quantitative methods for gauging the networking capacity and the NRN achievements as a whole
Connection Eqs/IL/indicators	Clear NRNP monitoring and evaluation Important for assessing NRNP outcomes
Use of cross-cutting indicators	Reliable monitoring and assessment of NRNP objectives Simplification of annual reporting Annual planning connected with indicators
Implementation of SNA also compared with other methods	Assessing NRNP networking capacity/intagible results Building "connection maps" (actors, collaborative tool) Brokers of the network (stakeholders, task-forces)

Thank you for your attention and enjoy the network!

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**Italian 2007-2013 NRNP on-going Evaluation
Italian 2014-2020 NRNP ex ante Evaluation**