



*European Network for
Rural Development*

**Thematic Working Group 1: Targeting territorial specificities and
needs in Rural Development Programmes**

Rural Typologies and their use in RDP 2007-2013: Sardinia

EN RD Contact Point

7 April 2011



Connecting Rural Europe

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1. Definition of typology used in the RDP 2007-2013

The rather extremely diverse territory of Italy means that the OECD definition would be too crude to reflect the specific needs of rural areas with very heterogeneous characteristics. Hence, in order to define a rural typology to be used in the context of the RDP 2007-2013, a two-stage (national and then regional) procedure which modified the OECD definition was employed. This classification has been defined in the context of relevant NSP and adopted also in the National Strategy Framework Reference in order to identify the priority of the Cohesion Policies.

First, at the national level, municipalities (LAU2) were classified according to the altitude zone (plain, hill and mountainous) at the province level. The process of defining these zones was as follows:

- First, provincial capital communes, with a population density of over 150 inhabitants per km², which include only the most residual elements of agriculture, were treated as "urban areas in a strict sense" and omitted from further consideration.
- Second, the OECD methodology was applied to the remaining communes, and predominantly urban, intermediate and predominantly rural areas were identified not at the provincial level (as in the OECD methodology), but through distinguishing the provincial communes by altitude zone and calculating for each of the three zones (plain, hill and mountain) the incidence of the population of the communes classified as rural.
- Third, the category of predominantly urban areas was sub-divided into two groups, namely:
 - communes more similar to provincial capitals (e.g. the communes around major Italian cities and/or certain coastal communes with a high degree of urban development) and
 - a series of densely populated communes, where a rich and intensive agriculture is present (e.g. the plains of Northern Italy). For this purpose, predominantly urban areas were re-classified, on the basis of the density (150 inhabitants/sq. km) and the proportion of agricultural area within their territory. Thus, communes with high population density but also having over 2/3 of their territory in agriculture were defined as "urbanised rural". By applying the altitude zone analysis, a further category of area was obtained, defined as "highly urbanised rural".
- Fourth, the revised OECD areas were cross-related to the three altitude zones and the country's three territorial districts (North, Centre and South) to form the following 4 homogeneous macro-areas:

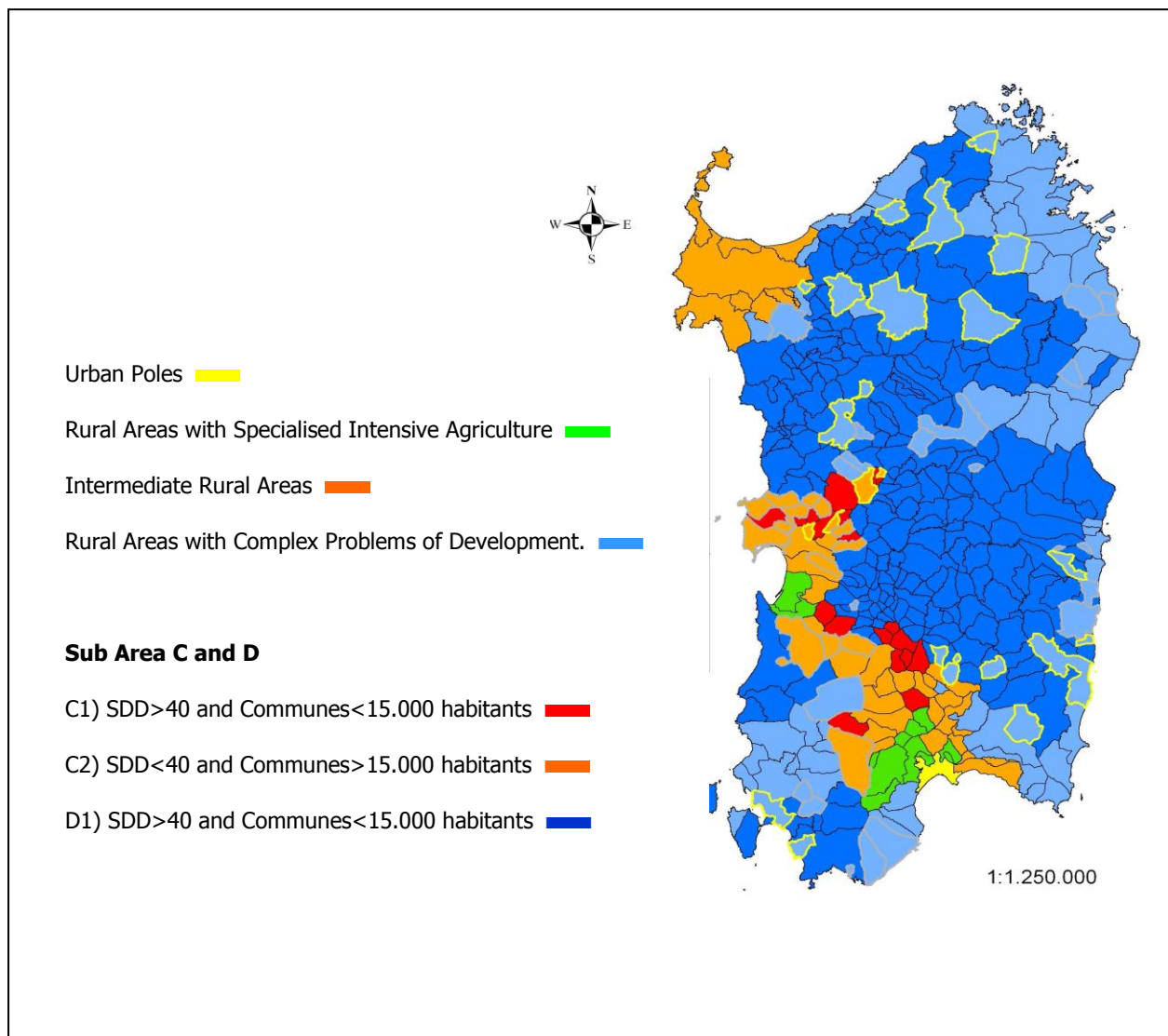
- A. Urban Poles;
- B. Rural Areas with Specialised Intensive Agriculture;
- C. Intermediate Rural Areas;
- D. Rural Areas with Complex Problems of Development.

In the second stage, Italian regions were authorized to adopt a more detailed articulation of their territory, providing that this leads to a typology which reflects one of the above types of zone. In the context of the national classification, most of the Sardinian territory falls within Zones C (Intermediate Rural Areas) and D (Rural Areas with Complex Problems of Development). In preparing the Sardinia RDP, the Regional Council decided to divide each of Zones C and D into two parts through an investigation and assessment of 'demographic malaise'. The state of demographic malaise was obtained by the combination of variables expressing the local demographic situation. These variables include the % variation of the population in the periods 1951-2001 and 1991-2001; the index of births over deaths in the period 1991-2001; the indices of ageing and dependence; the % of the population aged over 65 years and less than 5 years in 2001. The outcome of this procedure was the following four-part zoning of Zones C and D (See Figure, below):

- C1 Intermediate rural areas with high levels of demographic malaise;
- C2 Intermediate rural areas with good or moderate levels of demographic malaise;

- D1 Rural areas with complex development problems with high levels of demographic malaise;
- D2 Rural areas with complex development problems with good or moderate levels of demographic malaise.

The two zones with high levels of demographic malaise – C1 and D1 – are located mainly in mountain and hilly inland areas, and have an average population per commune of less than 3,000. Communes in these two zones represent 164 of 366 type C and D Sardinian communes.



2. Factors captured by the typology

The aim of the rural typology devised for Sardinia was to delineate mountain and inland hill areas which face rather significant problems of socio-economic and structural decline and are thus, in needs of a different approach in terms of rural development policy intervention. The main characteristics of these two zones are not described in the Sardinian RDP, however the classification of the territory is coherent with the classification defined into the NSP. The NSP defines rural areas with complex development problems as characterised by:

- Very low population density.
- Low levels of local development processes.
- By high ageing index (compared to the national average).

- By an extensive, rather non-competitive, low-productive agricultural activity and a variety of natural habitats and areas with high natural value.
- By high rates of unemployment, low household income, and limitations in the availability of basic services to the local population.
- By a high dependence of local employment on agriculture sector and a lack of alternative job opportunities, as most other sectors (such as handicrafts and tourism) lack dynamism.
- By several inadequacies regarding social infrastructure and low levels of quality of life.

The method used for the two-stage definition of these areas contains structural and especially, demographic indicators. This is justified by the fact that depopulation and the deterioration of the local socio-economic fabric seem to be the main facets of rural decline in Sardinia.

In turn, the Sardinia RDP states the following policy objectives related to the above two zones: to improve the attractiveness of the rural territories for people and for enterprises; to revitalise the productive tissue and to maintain vital and dynamic local communities; to halt depopulation; to maintain existing, and create new, job opportunities; to increase employment among women and young people; to sustain the occupation, and the productivity, of the farm holdings; and to reduce social isolation and exclusion. These policy objectives are pursued through interventions within Axes 3 and 4 which concentrate in these specific zones.

3. Use of the typology in the application of RDP measures

As noted above, the Sardinia typology is used to apply RDP Axis 3 and 4 in areas C1 and D1. Hence, the RDP states that the following measures will be applied in these areas:

- 311 Diversification towards non-agricultural activities
- 312 Support for creation and development of micro-enterprises
- 313 Stimulation of touristic activities
- 321 Basic services for the economy and rural population
- 322 Development and renewal of villages
- 323 Protection and beneficial use of the rural heritage
- 341 Acquisition of competences, animation and implementation
- 41 Implementing local development strategies

Measures 311, 323 and 341 are partly by implemented by the Regional Council and partly by the LAGs. Measures 312, 313, 321, 322 and 41 are wholly implemented by LAGs. Measure 41 is simply the vehicle through which Measures the Axis 3 measures are mainly implemented. In Sardegna, the Leader approach is only used within C1 and D1 zones.

The RDP shows a gross budget for these measures, of 18 ml. EUR (1.44% of the total RDP budget) for Measures 311, 323 and 341 and 169,9 ml. EUR (13.56%) for Axis 4 and the other Axis 3 measures.

Also, the RDP states that ERDF and ESF will bring support to these areas. However, it does not indicate the scale of these resources. Also, this typology facilitates in a way the local management of demarcation. The RDP does not contribute to aquaculture activities, which are reserved for the EFF. If the LAGs and the Fishery action groups are operating on the same territory, the respective action plans should include the specific demarcation lines.