

Comparative Case Study IT: Rural Development Programme Toscana – Rural Development Programme of Umbria¹

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¹ Author: Carlo Ricci, TEKNICA

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0. Introduction

This report analyses two Rural Development Plans (RPD) applied in two Italian north-central regions: Toscana (the "Leader type") and Umbria (the "other").

In Italy, implementing RDP is performed at Regional level (NUTS II) and the Ministry of Agriculture (Ministero delle Politiche Agricole e Forestali – MiPAF) plays a co-ordination role at national level. It is responsible for the allocation of the financial resources among Regions and for the annual expenditure previsions. This activity is achieved through a National Monitoring Committee, involving all Italian regions. Furthermore, the payments of RDP are managed by a national agency (called AGEA). Just a few Regions (including Toscana) have a regional body enrolling this function.

There is already a historical agricultural tradition in both regions, known for high-quality productions and with high rate of integration of agricultural income due to the farm holiday activities. In general, these two regions present themselves as "advanced" from the socio-economic point of view. In order to represent this kind of situation, some indicators, capable to represent these two realities, have been elaborated.

Table 1 – Indicators of socio-economical context of both regions

	Toscana	Umbria
Population density (inhabitant/sq.km)	155	99
Unemployment rate (%)	4,8%	5,7%
Employment rate for women (in % active population)	37%	35%
Employment rate for young people < 25 (in % active population)	32%	28%
Share of agriculture in the GDP (%)	2%	3%
GDP per capita (EUR)	24150	17300
% Organic Farming Area/Used agricultural Area	5,5%	5,8%
% Farms with processing products*	11,1%	3,1%
Farms with agro-tourism activities**	2262	580

*Sources: Regional Annual RDP report, *ISTAT (2001) V Agricultural Census, **ISTAT (2002) Statistiche del Turismo*

It is generally considered that the conditions of context are determinant in order to understand the results of these two programmes as well.

Moreover, the following two aspects should not be undervalued: the size of these two regions and the fact about the different "institutional numerosness", as reported on the table below:

Table 2 – Comparison between population and present institutions in both regions

	Toscana	Umbria
Population (inhabitants)	3.565.000	426.000
Provinces	10	2
Mountain Communities	20	9
Communes	287	92

1. Programme Description

1.1 Description of the Toscana RDP (Leader-type)

Approval decision of the Rural Development Plan	CE Decision n. C(2000)2510 of 07.09.2000 modified by Decision n. C(2001)2442 of 02.08.2001 Decision n. C(2002)3492 of 08.10. 2002
Geographical zone	Entire territory of the Toscana Region

Actors and tasks in the vertical partnership

Managing authority: REGION TOSKANA

Tasks of the Region:

- dictating the operational times, determining the direction and the steps of the pathways;
- deciding the allocation of the resources for macro areas and for the sector of intervention, defining the conditions of priority for the selection of the applications at different levels, in a legally binding way at first level (regional) for strategically relevant requisites, that can be integrated and/or modified at other levels.
- conserving the managerial title of the Measures and/or Measures Actions that are beyond the provincial dimension because of the strategic value and the potential incidence of the decided interventions on the regional agricultural and agro-industrial system.
- making monitoring arrangements by using the elaborated and transmitted data by the delegated Bodies and by ARTEA

Paying authority: since 2002 ARTEA, before AGEA (national paying organism)

Tasks of ARTEA (regional paying organism):

- arranging the forms for the access to the benefits and for the management of the administrative activity of inspection and control, in harmony with their own responsibilities and operational needs;
- authorising the payments: it consists in establishing the amount that must be paid for the applicants, after having verified the admissibility of the applications in conformity with the Community normative, but also the existence of the conditions foreseen for the allotment;
- executing the payments: it consists in giving instructions until the authorised amounts are paid;
- accounting the payments: it consists in entering the payments through the computerised system purposely arranged, and prepare periodical synthesis of expenditure destined to the European Commission.

Other involved subjects: Delegated bodies (Provinces and Mountain Communities) – Authorised Centres for the presentation of the application for funding

Tasks of the delegated bodies (10 Provinces and 20 Mountain Communities):

- They have to complete together with LRDP (Local Rural Development Plan) the programming process by conforming, according to the options of local development, the regional objectives to the territorial specificities.
- They have to carry out the administrative and technical proceedings of the applications (received by ARTEA), relative to the Measures which management has been delegated to them; they approve the result of the proceedings and the classification within the limits of the available funds destined to different measures and take care about the communication of the results to the interested applicants.
- In order to activate the Measures relative to investments in infrastructures, they plan, “long term intervention programmes defined on the basis of the detection of the local needs, carried out with the subjects that will be responsible for the implementation and the co-financing of the interventions” and which validity is conditioned by agreements that link the subjects with mutual commitments in order to guarantee a co-ordinated, quick and effective implementation of the programmed interventions. (Measure 8.2 part, 9.1, 9.6, 9.7, 9.9 and 9.10)

Tasks of the Authorised Centres for the Procedural Assistance (CAAP):

These have been instituted by the Regional Law n. 11/1998. They collect and examine the applications to verify their formal conformity and completeness, by making possible the streamlining of the reception and managerial procedures of the applications files and remarkable operational synergies between the regions, the delegated bodies and the unions.

Committees: Regional co-ordination Unit – Provincial tables of concertation (green tables)-
Technical work groups – Consulting groups.

The Regional co-ordination unit is a technical support unit consisting of regional officers who are responsible for the measures' management. It is a working group, its aims are : monitoring activities of the programme and solving problems that arise during application.

At local level there are several formal and informal committees(such as the Green tables). They lead and co-ordinate the Local Plans of Rural Development (PLSR).

General aim of the Plan: *“Support for the improvement of the quality of life in Toscana”*

Specific aims:

1. *Support for the improvement of the business competitiveness, for the agricultural income and for the high-quality productions*
2. *Support for the preservation and improvement of the environmental and landscape quality of the rural areas*
3. *Support for the fruition of the opportunities offered by the rural areas*

Total OP public resources: 721,647 Millions of Euro

	Values in MEURO	%
Public expenditure	721,647	68,54%
Contrib. UE	328,93	31,24%
Private	331,246	31,46%
Total cost	1.052,89	100%

Measures

Asse	N. measure	Name measure	Programmed public expenditure MEURO
Asse 1	1	a. Investment in agricultural holdings (Ch. I, art. 4-7).	92,6
Asse 1	2	b. Setting-up of young farmers (Ch. II, art. 8).	60,902
Asse 1	3	c. Training (Ch. III, art. 9).	2,961
Asse 1	4	d. Early retirement (Ch. IV, art. 10-12).	3,253
		- previous engagement	1,519
Asse 1	7	g. Improving processing and marketing of agricultural products (Ch. VII, art. 25-28).	16
Total asse 1			175,716
Asse 2	5	e.1&2 Less-favoured areas (Ch. V, art. 13-21).	0,232
Asse 2	6	f. Agri-environment (Ch. VI, art. 22-24).	312,703
		- previous engagement	178,599
Asse 2	8.1	h. Afforestation of agricultural land and i. Other afforestation (Ch. VIII, art. 31, 30).	78,405
		- previous engagement	64,877
Asse 2	8.2	i. Other forestry measures (Ch. VIII, art. 30, 32).	51,797
Total asse 2			443,137
Asse 3	9.1	k. Reparcelling (Ch. IX, art. 33).	0,054
Asse 3	9.2	l. Setting-up of farm relief and farm management services (Ch. IX, art. 33).	0,041
Asse 3	9.3	m. Marketing of quality agricultural products (Ch. IX, art. 33).	3,904
Asse 3	9.4	n. Basic services for the rural economy and population (Ch. IX, art. 33).	8,854
Asse 3	9.5	p. Diversification of agricultural activities and activities close to agriculture to provide multiple activities or alternative income (Ch. IX, art. 33).	54,984
Asse 3	9.6	q. Agricultural water resources management (Ch. IX, art. 33).	5,589
Asse 3	9.7	r. Development and improvement of infrastructure connected with the development of agriculture (Ch. IX, art. 33).	8,719
Asse 3	9.8	s. Encouragement for tourist and craft activities (Ch. IX, art. 33).	16
Asse 3	9.9	t. Protection of the environment in connection with agriculture, forestry and landscape conservation as well as the improvement of animal welfare (Ch. IX, art. 33).	0,194
Asse 3	9.10	u. Restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and introducing appropriate prevention instruments (Ch. IX, art. 33).	0,371
Total asse 3			98,71
Altre azioni (valutazione ecc.)			4,084
Total			721,647

1.2 Description of the Umbria RDP

Approval decision of the PRD	CE Decision n. C(2000) 2158 of 20.07.2000 modified by Decision n. C(2001) 3899 C(2001) of 3/12/2001
Geographical zone	Entire territory of the Region Umbria

Actors and tasks in the vertical partnership

Managing authority: Region Umbria

Tasks of the Region:

(i) institution of a system gathering reliable financial and statistic data about the implementation for the surveillance activities of the plan; (ii) elaboration and presentation of the annual relation to the Commission, within the 30th June of every year; (iii) organisation, in collaboration with the Commission and the Member State, of the mid-term evaluation; (iv) co-ordination of the activities of the persons in charge of the measure (Responsible of Measure), direct executors of the management and of the implementation of the interventions; (v) verification of the regular execution of the administrative controls and in loco; (vi) guarantee of the regular carrying out of the initiatives for sensitising and publicising the plan.

The function of Responsible of Measure has been assigned to some officers for the operational management of the plan and in particular:

(i) the elaboration of the calls; (ii) the selection of the applications; (iii) the adoption of all the administrative provisions in connection with the execution of the works; (iv) the keeping of a distinct bookkeeping system or of a bookkeeping codification appropriate to all the acts considered by the measure; (v) the transmission of the data of procedural, financial and physical monitoring, to the Director of the Department.

Paying authority: AGEA (national paying organism)

Tasks of AGEA (national paying organism):

(i) promulgation of the implementing procedures of the PRDs; reception of Community and national resources by the Endowment fund (Igrue); (ii) allotment of the funds for the final subjects of the interventions (individualized by the paying lists transmitted by the regions); (iii) report and certification of the expenditure to the European Commission; (iv) functions of control about the regularities of the financial operations.

Other involved subjects: USIA + SAT

Tasks of ARUSIA :

The Managing Authority is supported in its activity by the ARUSIA – *Regional Umbrian Agency for the Agricultural Development and Innovation* – who is responsible for the operational structure of the Region by carrying out animation initiatives directed to farmers, targeted to the development and to the continuous technological and productive innovation of the agricultural section. In the ambit of the implementation of the RDP, the ARUSIA, carries out the proceedings and the selection of the applications for the Agro-environmental and afforestation measures (Measure 2.1.2 and 2.2.1.) and for some actions deriving from the passed programming period. Reg. CE 2078/92; Reg. CE 2079/92;

Reg. 2080/92). It must also manage the applications on electronic support through the software supplied by AGEA.

Formed committees: Enlarged Monitoring Committee

Tasks of the committee:

The Region was not obliged to set up a Monitoring Committee, because there is a national one. Anyway it was set in a formal way into two distinctive forms. The first one ensures the technical co-ordination of the programme, and is composed by the officers responsible of each measure. The second form is more related to the participation of the local socio-economic forces. The aim of the Monitoring Committee is to ensure effectiveness and quality of the implementation.

General aims of the plan: *To guarantee the safe-guard and the strengthening of the multi-functional role of the agriculture in the socio-economic and environmental context typical for the Umbria Region*

Specific aims:

1. *Favouring permanent residence in rural areas because of production purposes and of territorial conservation*
2. *Favouring a more efficient system of agro-industrial development compatible with the typical nature of the Umbrian territory*

Operating aims:

1. Improving the structures of the farms by guaranteeing a better efficiency in the transformation and marketing cycles
2. Conserving and valorising the resource environment through the involvement of the farms being active on the territory
3. Favouring the growth of services for the rural territory by valorising the landscape and by supporting activities that are complementary to the agricultural one

Total public resources of the plan: Millions of Euro

	Values in MEURO	%
Public expenditure	395,2	70%
Contrib. UE	179,6	32%
Quote Private	166,7	30%
Total cost	561,9	100%

Measures

The following table represents the last version of the financial plan, presented from the Region to the Commission for the formal approval.

Asse	N. measure	Name measure	Programmed public expenditure MEURO
Asse 1	111	a. Investment in agricultural holdings (Ch. I, art. 4-7).	59,81
Asse 1	113	p. Diversification of agricultural activities and activities close to agriculture to provide multiple activities or alternative income (Ch. IX, art. 33).	12,111
Asse 1	114	b. Setting-up of young farmers (Ch. II, art. 8).	24,761
Asse 1	115	d. Early retirement (Ch. IV, art. 10-12).	0,071
Asse 1	121	g. Improving processing and marketing of agricultural products (Ch. VII, art. 25-28).	31,235
Asse 1	122	m. Marketing of quality agricultural products (Ch. IX, art. 33).	9,804
Asse 1	132	c. Training (Ch. III, art. 9).	4,385
Total			142,177
Asse 2	211	e.1 Less-favoured areas (Ch. V, art. 13-21).	17,594
Asse 2	212	f. Agri-environment (Ch. VI, art. 22-24).	145,754
		- previous engagement	102,64
Asse 2	213	t. Protection of the environment in connection with agriculture, forestry and landscape conservation as well as the improvement of animal welfare (Ch. IX, art. 33).	15,545
Asse 2	221	h. Afforestation of agricultural land and i. Other afforestation (Ch. VIII, art. 31, 30).	44,37
		- previous engagement	44,37
Total			223,263
Asse 3	321	s. Encouragement for tourist and craft activities (Ch. IX, art. 33).	1,898
Asse 3	323	n. Basic services for the rural economy and population (Ch. IX, art. 33).	6,222
Asse 3	331	o. Renovation and development of villages and protection and conservation of the rural heritage (Ch. IX, art. 33).	5,816
Total			13,936
Altre azioni			15,824
Total			395,2

2. Starting conditions

2.1 Starting conditions and initiation of the Toscana RDP

The elaboration of the Rural Development Plan in Toscana takes place at a moment of substantial changes in the institutional regional structures of the region. In particular, a progressive process of administrative, planning and managing decentralisation is going on. Above all, this process concerns the strengthening of the provincial competencies. In fact with the issuing of the Regional Law on August 11th 1999, n. 49 "Norms for regional programming" it was established that there were two programming levels in Toscana:

1. the regional plans and programmes "defining the main lines for the implementation of the policies, the co-ordination of other intervention instruments and the integration of regional, public and Community resources";
2. the local development programmes "selecting the projects and defining the interventions to achieve by integrating local and regional resources", taking into account the strategies that are relevant at local level.

According to this Law, the Plan of Rural Development, part V "competent authorities and responsible organisms", foresees that the implementation should be carried out through the delegated bodies (provinces and mountain communities), as for the administrative functions. Chapter VI highlights how the management of the initiatives foreseen in the plan the delegated bodies must prepare Local Plans of Rural Development (LPRDs). In these last programmes, beginning from the analysis of the territorial situation and of the specific problems of their own rural areas, the bodies determine the strategies of actions oriented to rural development, by defining their specific conditions.

The main subjects involved in this process are the Toscana Region, the provinces and the mountain communities. Together with these public subjects, and with the LEADER approach, a system of consultation and harmonisation with the private representatives of collective interests has been introduced, in particular the agricultural unions. Therefore tables of local consultation (sometimes the existing provincial green tables) have been set up.

The main aim to re-locate the specific competencies of programming and administration of the RDP from the regional level to the local level, is concretely to start delegating new functions to the territorial bodies. The mechanism of transmission considers the preparation of the LPRD as a main instrument. In this way the local communities have been obliged to reason about their territory from a programme viewpoint and with an overall vision, by using new instruments, which also mean forms of local consultation and harmonisation expressed on the plans of local development.

The regional directives for the preparation of the LPRDs establish the scheme of reference for the drafting of the LPRDs and their presentation and approval terms. The scheme of LPRD forms obviously a guide instrument, provided by the region to the local bodies. The contents of the LPRDs are therefore:

- the description of the area of reference of the LPRD and the definition of the problems to be tackled;
- the aims, the strategies and the specific priorities of intervention, which, according to the different Measures, can be of sectoral type (for typologies of action and single sections or interventions) and/or territorial (communes, parks and natural reserves, underprivileged areas).

For the preparation of the LPRDs, a determinant activity of support and a technical assistance were provided from a part of the region. Such activity concretely meant a technical co-ordination prepared for every province, also by organising work groups. In this ambit the following activities have been achieved:

- a detailed presentation of the Plan of Rural Development and of the measures of function for all the measures:
- a discussion about the presentation forms and methods of the local plans;
- a support and harmonised revision of the plans.

It was really an intense activity that began in October 2000, before the launching of the directives (February 2001). Such co-ordination action from the part of the region lasted 6 months (see ahead for timing).

2.2 Starting conditions and initiation of the Umbria RDP

The preparation of the Rural Development Plan in Umbria has been based from one side with respect to the timetables and to the formalities foreseen by the Community regulations and from the other side on the implementation of partnership consultation.

The evaluator of the Umbria RDP carried out a first analysis on how the partnership functions; the partnership is set up in the Green Table and in the enlarged section of the Monitoring Committee. A survey about eight associations taking part in the Green Table was carried out (Evaluation report). The results of this survey made clear that the implemented partnership was operational and had gathered a large and attentive participation of all the subjects.

“The level of involvement of the institutional and social parts in ... programmatic definition of the PRD (has determined) ... the involvement of the institutions, the local bodies and the local actors of the territory and by favouring a more punctual individuation of the critical states in matter of implementation”.

(Evaluation report RDP Umbria).

During this first phase, the partnership expressed itself through direct participation in different implemented harmonisation tables and saw a high percentage of involvement of the bodies and the institutions, with constructive and punctual interventions. The participation of the partners during the harmonisation phase, moreover, seems to respect the following criteria: the high level of competencies, the balancing of interests, the respect of principles of environmental sustainability and of equal opportunities.

The partnership during the preparation phase of the programme, from the draft of the plan to the elaboration of the final document, assumed an essential role for the definition of some strategic lines. The strategy, the aims and the choices included into the programmatic document were enriched with contents and efficacious operational indications for the following implementation phase of the Plan. Among the main results produced by the partnership activity, the evaluator points out: (i) the effects of economic animation on the territory inherent to the same consultation process with the local bodies and the socio-economic actors; (ii) more responsible various subjects involved in the implementation, as provided by the sharing of the strategic lines of the PRD.

Another aspect is worth being noted. The participation of the local socio-economic forces has not a defending role, but it has concrete and positive contribution in promoting and improving the RDP investments.

3. Time line reconstruction

3.1 Time line of the Toscana RDP

The acts and decisions implementing the Toscana RDP are numerous. The main ones are stipulated in the following table. In the following approval decisions of the programme, the European Commission ratified the regional choices not to activate some Measures (Measures e, k, l and t), but also the suspension of the Measures b and u from the annuity 2003. Beyond the reported implementation moments on the table, the following issues are worth mentioning:

- the procedures to make the Agency of the Allocations for the Agriculture (ARTEA) the programme paying organism, operational. The first instructions were given in November 1999, the national recognition took place in November 2001, and the complete effectiveness in 2002 (beginning from the following payments to 15th October 2001);
- the annual revision of the LPRDs, with the updating of the expenditure prospect.
- the implementation of calls for the Measures g, h, m, n, and s of regional competence.

3.2 Time line of the Umbria RDP

The main implementation moments of the Umbria PRD are represented by the procedures gathering and funding of the projects. The Umbria Region for some Measures proceeded with the publication of a long-term call, as shown in the following table.

Toscana RDP Timeline

Decision making level	European Commission	Regional Council		Local bodies	Regional council	European Commission	Local bodies	Regional council	European Commission
Programme, activities	September 2000 Approval of the programme	November 2000 – Resolution for the allocation of the competencies for the implementation of the Measures; Criteria and assignment modalities of the resources for the delegated bodies	February 2001 – Directives for the presentation of the LPRDs, outline of reference and terms of presentation	April 2001 – presentation of 21 LPRDs	from May 2001 progressive approval of the LPRDs	August 2001- new approval decision of the programme	from September 2001 – issuing of calls for the implementation of the LPRDs	February 2002 – Setting-up of co-ordination unit PRD	October 2002 – new approval decision of the programme
Support structures	Publicity for the initiative through the Toscana ARSIA (regional agency for agricultural services)	from October 2000 – Activity of technical assistance from the part of the region to the delegated bodies, implementation of work groups and of consultation for the preparation of the LPRDs				Activity of assistance and revision of the LPRDs			

Umbria RDP time line

Decision making level	European Commission	Regional council		European Commission	Regional council	Regional council
					Council of the Local Autonomies, Chamber of Commerce, University	
Programme, activities	July 2000 – Approval of the programme	March 2001 – joint long-term call for the implementation of the Measures a, g, o, p, q, s	subsequent and separated long-term provisions for the call of the Measures b, c, e, f, m, r, t	December 2001- new approval decision of the programme	June 2002 – Contract agreement of the Pact for the development of Umbria	October 2003 – approval request of the modified programme
Support structures	Harmonisation – Green Table + enlarged section of the Surveillance Committee	ARUSIA – Activity of technical support, animation and diffusion information				

4. Description of the features which were mainstreamed in the Toscana RDP

4.1 Concerning the eight LEADER features

- **Area-based approach**

About 80% of the Toscana RDP resources is dedicated to the achievement of the Local Plans of Rural Development (LPRDs).

The choice of the areas relies on administrative parameters: the provinces and the mountain communities can present the plans. Anyhow, in the RDP, the different types of rural contexts in Toscana are identified by using a classification work done by the IRPET (regional research institute). Such analysis is based on the relationships that the agriculture established with the other economic activities present in the territory. Resuming this method of analysis, the following kinds of rural systems can be distinguished in the territorial ambits of intervention of the LPRDs : agricultural, tourist, residential, marginal, with agricultural presence and not agricultural (see the annexed map).

Moreover, the Toscana Region established in the beginning, with determined criteria, the resources to assign for every plan.

The allocation is carried out according to the following criteria:

- 1° year: according to objective parameters established for Measure and relative to the territorial characteristics and to farm structure, but also to the previous commitments about the Community regulations absorbed by the CE regulation 1257/99;
- 2° year and the following ones: the allotments of the first years are corrected according to the effective needs of the single bodies, in terms of admissible requests, always within the limits of the overall availability.

The initial allocation system of the resources relies on two aspects, the first general one takes the socio-economic characteristics of the areas into account o, the second specific one links to the single measures.

The general allocation criteria, referring to the size of rural conditions of the territory and the principles of socio-economic cohesion, are defined by the following parameters: SAU (=utilised agricultural surface); SUT (=total utilised surface); density of population; agricultural employed, depopulation; GDP per capita.

The specific criteria for Measure are linked to the specific aims of the single measures and use parameters like the VAA (=Added value in agriculture), number of the enterprises registered in the Chamber of Commerce, forest surface, well-watered surface, beds for farm holidays, mountain surface, etc.

In half of the cases, the available resources are allocated, by assigning 50% for general criteria and 50% for specific criteria. For the remaining Measures the direct line of intervention prevails towards an aimed use of the resources: it deals with the case of some resources of rural development (ex art. 33), where more importance is given for aspects of general kind, and for Measure 5 in which a major level of resources for more or less specific aspects., on the contrary, was allotted

The application of this allocation system of the resources made possible for the delegated bodies to have the total budget at their disposal in order to use it for their programming activity.

All the provinces (10) presented the LPRD, whilst 11 (over 20 in total) mountain communities presented the plan, for a total of 21 LPRDs implemented over 30 potential ones.

▪ **Bottom-up approach**

The local bodies during the preparation of their plans have received a set of instructions to follow strictly from the part of the region. The commitments to be respected are:

- the amount of the allocated resources, as seen previously;
- the budget as it must respect the percentage of the resources allocated for the axis of the PRD (during the period 2003-2006: Axis 1 = 24,54%; Axis 2 = 56,53%; Axis 3 = 18,93%);
- the annual allocation of the resources (2003 = 20,63%; 2004 = 28,00%; 2005 = 27,47%; 2006 = 23,90%);
- the use of those Measures, according to the commitments and modalities established in the PRD, as shown in the following table.

Allocation of the Measures for competent body

Measure	Axis of reference	Measure n.	Regional	Provinces	Provinces + mountain communities
a. Investment in agricultural holdings (Ch. I, art. 4-7).	Axis 1	1			x
b. Setting-up of young farmers (Ch. II, art. 8).	Axis 1	2			x
c. Training (Ch. III, art. 9).	Axis 1	3		x	
d. Early retirement (Ch. IV, art. 10-12).	Axis 1	4			x
e.1 Less-favoured areas (Ch. V, art. 13-21).	Axis 2	5			x
e.2 Areas with environmental restrictions (Ch. V, art. 16).	Axis 2	5			x
f. Agri-environment (Ch. VI, art. 22-24).	Axis 2	6			x
g. Improving processing and marketing of agricultural products (Ch. VII, art. 25-28).	Axis 1	7	x		
h. Afforestation of agricultural land and i. Other afforestation (Ch. VIII, art. 31, 30).	Axis 2	8.1			x
i. Other forestry measures (Ch. VIII, art. 30, 32).	Axis 2	8.2	action iii		x (no action iii)
j. Land improvement	NA				
k. Reparcelling (Ch. IX, art. 33).	Axis 3	9.1		x	
l. Setting-up of farm relief and farm management services (Ch. IX, art. 33).	Axis 3	9.2		x	
m. Marketing of quality agricultural products (Ch. IX, art. 33).	Axis 3	9.3	action i	action ii	
n. Basic services for the rural economy and population (Ch. IX, art. 33).	Axis 3	9.4	x		
o. Renovation and development of villages and protection and conservation of the rural heritage (Ch. IX, art. 33).	NA				
p. Diversification of agricultural activities and activities close to agriculture to provide multiple activities or alternative income (Ch. IX, art. 33).	Axis 3	9.5			x
q. Agricultural water resources management (Ch. IX, art. 33).	Axis 3	9.6		x	

Measure	Axis of reference	Measure n.	Regional	Provinces	Provinces + mountain communities
r. Development and improvement of infrastructure connected with the development of agriculture (Ch. IX, art. 33).	Axis 3	9.7		x	
s. Encouragement for tourist and craft activities (Ch. IX, art. 33).	Axis 3	9.8	x		
t. Protection of the environment in connection with agriculture, forestry and landscape conservation as well as the improvement of animal welfare (Ch. IX, art. 33).	Axis 3	9.9		actions ii+iii	action i
u. Restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and introducing appropriate prevention instruments (Ch. IX, art. 33).	Axis 3	9.10			x
v. Financial engineering (Ch. IX, art. 33).	NA				

For the preparation of the Local Plans of Rural Development, the regions has set up an activity of technical assistance, oriented both to understand the functioning mechanisms of the PRDP and the programming methods and modalities.

The Plans tackle diversified and specific problems connected to the respective territorial intervention ambits. The analysis about the problems leads to the great issues of social, economical and environmental kind. In generally these matters interest the rural areas and are dealt with specific intervention strategies aimed at improving the competitiveness of the sector, at quality of agricultural productions, at diversification of the activities, at income rise, but also at conservation and safeguard of the natural environment and at valorisation of the landscape and cultural emergencies of the territory. From other side, some new elements regard the approach that helps to carry out the implementation of the Local Plans. In particular, specific references to the co-ordinated actions over the territory can be found in the LPRDs of the Provinces of Grosseto and Pisa. Other PLRDs point out, instead, the necessity of streamlining of bureaucracy and of better services for the enterprises, both generally and specifically during the implementation of the interventions.

The evaluator of the Toscana PRD, by analysing the 21 LPRDs, has highlighted the main emerging differentiations in terms of priority of actions. Utilising three specific aims from the regional plan, have been individuated, with the help of the indications of the LPRDs and the resources allocated for the single Measures, the different strategies, related on the following table.

		I PRIORITY		
		1.1. IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURES	1.2. ENVIRONMENTAL SAFE-GUARD AND IMPROVEMENT	1.3. VALORISATION OF THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCTIONS
II PRIORITY	1.1. Improving agricultural structures			Grosseto, I1.Amiata Grossetana TOTAL 2 LPRDs
	1.2. Environmental safe-guard and improvement	Arezzo, Firenze, Lucca, Massa e Carrara, Prato, A.Lunigiana, C.Garfagnana, D.Media Valle del Serchio, E1.Mugello, E2.Montagna Fiorentina, G.Casentino, H.Valtiberina, L.Elba e Capraia TOTAL 13 LPRDs		Pisa, Pistoia, F.Alta Val di Cecina TOTAL 3 LPRDs
	1.3. Valorisation of the quality of the productions	Siena, I2.Amiata Senese TOTAL 2 LPRDs	Livorno TOTAL 1 LPRD	

Source: Agriconsulting – Intermediate evaluation report of the Toscana PRD 2000-2006, page 57

The table above indicates how the major part of the plans have prevalently used the priorities chosen in regional ambit. In any case, the bottom-up approach has permitted to orient the use of the Measures at local level showing differences about the strategic choices. Moreover, it is necessary to point out that at the beginning not all the LPRDs did not activate all the Measures to be potentially implemented; this comes out from the annual relation of execution 2002 as the following table reports.

Implemented Measures on 31/12/02 per Body

	Delegated body	A	b	c	d	f	h	i	m	p	u
1	Province of Arezzo (includes CM Q. Pratomagno)	X	x			x		x	x	x	
2	CM G. Casentino	X	x					x		x	
3	CM H. Valtiberina	X	x			x				x	
4	Province of Firenze	X	x			x		x		x	x
5	CM E1. Mugello	X	x			x		x		x	
6	CM E2. Montagna Fiorentina	X	x			x		x		x	x
7	Province of Grosseto (include CM R. Colline Metallifere – CM S. Colline del Fiora)	X	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
8	CM I1. Amiata Grossetana	X	x			x				x	x
9	Province of Livorno	X	x		x	x		x		x	
10	C.M. L. Elba e Capraia	X	x							x	
11	Province of Lucca (include CM M. Alta Versilia – CM N. Area Lucchese)	X	x	x				x		x	
12	CM C. Garfagnana	X	x			x		x			
13	C.M. D. Media Valle del Serchio	X	x			x		x		x	
14	Province of Massa Carrara	X	x					x			
15	CM A. Lunigiana	X	x					x		x	
16	Province of Pisa	X	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
17	C.M. F. Alta Val di Cecina	X									
18	Province of Prato (include CM P. Val di Bisenzio)	X				x		x		x	
19	Province of Pistoia (include CM O. Appennino Pistoiese)	X	x					x	x	x	
20	Province of Siena (include CM T. Cetona – CM U. Val di Merse)	X	x		x	x				x	
21	CM I2. Amiata Senese	X	x			x		x		x	

Source: Toscana Region – Annual execution report – annuity 2002

▪ **Local Partnership**

In the first place, the setting-up of the PLRDs took up all the local public bodies and also produced a partnership of vertical type: regions – provinces – mountain communities – communes.

In presenting Rural Development Local Plans, Local Authorities had to prove the activation of the local partnership. There were not any specific regional constraints in identifying the representatives to be involved in plan building. With the analysis of a certain numbers of plans, it seems that the activities devoted to stimulating partnership vary among areas.

The most used model is the "Green Tables", that implies the involvement of the agricultural organisation. In a few cases, the plan promoter required the participation of an environmental association, the representatives of other economic sectors and labour unions.

Differences among plans also refer to the number of meetings organised, from at least one to more than ten.

The use of consultation tables of the local economic forces, in particular the agricultural trade associations, permitted an extremely important involvement of the basis.

- **Innovation**

The innovation rate of the interventions is not easily verified, also because the admissible investments are those referred to the RDP, and they allow little margin of manoeuvre. Some innovative formulas in specific Measures were somehow experimented.

In particular, for the Measures of regional competence, innovative investments in the Measures were started:

- n. Basic services for rural economy and population (Ch. IX, art. 33): initiatives in favour of disabled subjects have been planned and supported:
- s. Encouragement for tourist and craft activities (Ch. IX, art. 33): support for investments oriented to the adhesion of innovative managing forms of the tourist holding (for example environmental certification imposing to use non-polluting materials, public biocatering, biobuilding and biofurniture);

At local level, instead, the innovation can mainly be seen in the joined use of some Measures (see multi-sectoral integration).

- **Multi-sectoral integration**

It is difficult to talk about multi-sectoral integration when the agricultural sector is strictly the one that really absorbs almost all the resources. In fact, the financial resources are scarce and asymmetrical.

The experimented integration is more connected to the strengthening of the productive food-chain through investments on the company structures related to transformation and marketing. In some realities, these interventions were also connected to the local promotional actions, not funded with the PRD.

Finally, the evaluator underlines the linkages between measure a and measure f at local level. In this case, the role and the impacts of the agro-environmental measures are strengthened by the incentives devoted to the farms restructuring.

- **Decentralised management and financing**

The system adopted by the Toscana Region is really destined to administrative and managing decentralisation. As already reported in the chapter 1, the delegated bodies are responsible for the whole procedural course, from the programming to the selection of the projects, to the monitoring. These bodies are exclusively exonerated from paying taxes, considering the paying organism ARTEA intervenes at this point because of the function mechanisms of the FEOGA,

Also in this case the Toscana Region, as opposed to the other regions, makes use of a regional, not national organism, deliberately formed in 1999, and that has been operative since 2002 as already seen previously.

4.2 Co-operation and networking

Co-operation and networking are the two LEADER features that are less used. The motivation for that is mainly due to the non admissibility of these investments Reg.1257/99. Therefore no measures were foreseen about this.

The Toscana Region intends to stimulate the comparison between the bodies responsible for the LPRDs by carrying out a communication activity . Moreover it considers that some activities of co-operation and networking could be started with LEADER+.

At last, it is relevant to point out those cases where local bodies have moved autonomously in order to set up forms of co-operation and networking, by exchanging information and using common programming and implementation methods; so they have recorded economies of scale.

4.3 Concerning the specific EC requirements for LEADER+

During the preparation of the LPRDs, there was a possibility to concentrate the resources on specific arguments with a thematic approach and the definition of a Pact of Area. This option was almost always overlooked in the LPRDs. The main motivations that induced to underrate the importance of this option derived principally from the time limits (60 days) – the limit for the presentation of the LPRDs.

4.4 Concerning the enlargement or multiplication of projects initiated under LEADER

There were not any initiative to reinforce the investments supported by LEADER II, even though the more innovative PRD investments derived from the observation of the results of the Community Initiative. Moreover, it is relevant to point out that a few LAGs of LEADER II (3 out of 10) actively collaborated to the implementation of the LPRDs.

At the moment, better connections with the LEADER+ are being experimented.

5. Concerning the features described for the Toscana RDP

5.1 What has furthered mainstreaming?

▪ Context of reference

The experience of the Toscana Region results to be a very particular one in Italy as a whole. In the first place, in fact, local communities have always traditionally expressed dialogue and required vertical partnership relationships. This attitude, which can also be found in rural territories, certainly favoured the implementation and the transfer mechanism of the LEADER features, in particular decentralisation and partnership, in the region.

▪ Changes in the regional and national institutional structure

The process of administrative decentralisation, started in 1990s with the region, did not take place in other Italian regions. The new national legal system reinforced the regional action towards this kind of process: the Constitutional Law of the 7th October 2001 introduces new important changes. One of these changes is the passage of the exclusive legislative power in matter of agriculture to the regions.

- **Specific aspects of the regional action**

The other aspects of more clearly organisational kind are reported in the chapter 8.

5.2 What has hindered mainstreaming?

- **Admissibility of the expenditure**

Different LEADER features like multi-sectoriality, innovation, co-operation and networking have only arisen a marginal interest. It dealt mainly with features that were more connected to the nature of the financed investments. The main problem derives therefore from the admissibility of the investments as in Reg. 1257/99.

- **Flexibility of the programme**

Because different LPRDs are part of the overall financial plan of the region, it is therefore necessary to pay tactfully attention not to alternate the financial balances established in the approval decision of the programme. From this point of view, as it will be seen in the chapter of the recommendations, the use of the LEADER features requires a great flexibility from the part of the referential general programme.

- **Application of the evaluation principles**

During this first application phase of the LEADER features into the PRD, the region concentrated mainly on the normative and procedural aspects being forced to impose the programming and managing mechanism ex novo. In this phase evaluation and self-evaluation were ignored.

6. Synergies

Generally in these two regions, as in all the other Italian regions outside Objective 1, we can examine programmes related to: Objective 2, Objective 3, Equal and Interreg.

Referring to the Objective 2 programmes, it is important to highlight that the possibility of integration between RDP and the Single Programme was not chosen by any Region Administration. So, in Northern Italy, there are two different programmes without inter-linkages. The difficulties in integrating the programmes are linked to:

- the different timing period in programming;
- the very high differences in managing financial resources (EAGGF has an annual expenditure, instead of a pluri-annual of FEDER).

The existence of two separate programming system effects, in a negative way, the synergies that could arise with a conjunct management.

6.1 Synergies between the Toscana RDP and other programmes

The DOCUP Objective 2 in Toscana relies on the use of Integrated Plans of Local Development (IPLDs), a consistent set of projects elaborated and managed at provincial level. The main goals are the following two:

- the harmonisation at local level;

- the joint competition between the provinces, as the resources are pre-assigned and there is no need of a call. This allows not to exclusively offer benefits of funds for the provinces with better capacities in respect of those with greater needs.

The imposed system and the functioning mechanism are very similar to those of the LPRDs. The IPLDs were presented after the LPRDs and therefore they were able to benefit from the previous experience.

All the regional programmes try to co-ordinate the achievable goals, but the existing different programming systems between the different funds of fact do not allow a firm managing co-ordination. In any case, the regional services in charge of the PRD also participate in the committee of surveillance of the Objective 2, 3 and LEADER+.

In concrete terms, no direct integration or synergies have been found in the application of RDP and Objective 2, even though they have the same methodological framework.

This evidence is the main issue met in analysing Toscana case-study. The emergence of so many programmes at local level and the high growth of diversified policy tools could lead to a lack of co-ordination and, in some way, to crowding out effects of investments.

6.2 Synergies between the Umbria RDP and other programmes

The Plan of Rural Development in Umbria acknowledges the necessity to find connections between the different policies concerning the Umbria territory. In order to be really able to co-ordinate the different activities of the mentioned programmes, and with the end to activate synergies in different measures the Umbria Region has implemented various harmonisation instruments.

In this sense, it is clear that in 2002 the Region promoted the definition of the “**Development Pact for Umbria**”, that “represents a strategic and joint framework of all the acts of regional programming, with particular reference to the programmes valid on the Community funds and [...] represents therefore a work method that with respect to the autonomy of the contracting parties defines the responsibility of both parties in the exercise of their duties and prerogatives. [...] The Pact represents of the basic instruments for the creation of the necessary convergence, integration and synergies which lead to the construction of the system Umbria” (Development Pact for Umbria page 3.) it is highlighted in this document which programmes participate in order to achieve determined goals, by emphasising the synergies establishing at the level of the different ongoing programming and pointing out the resources used for the same goal.

Similarly, the approval of the **Annual Programming Document** (APD) 2003-2005 proposes to create a consistency for the different actions implemented in the region thanks to the constant monitoring in itinere of the activities promoted by the same region, by the state through its various bodies and by the European Community. The ADP individuates strategic and priority actions for the region with the goal to create an integrated programming. This harmonisation and evaluation instrument in itinere of the programmes, enabled the region to determine, due to the changes of the demand, that “2003 will be the year to intensify the implementation process of the RDP, but also the year of reformulation, widening and reinforcement for rural development policies”. In order to guarantee an efficiency improvement of different implemented actions, the region is studying the formulation of an “outline of law on rural development in order to enhance the regional duties of programming, and to promote a correct operational interpretation about the criteria of the subsidiarity”.

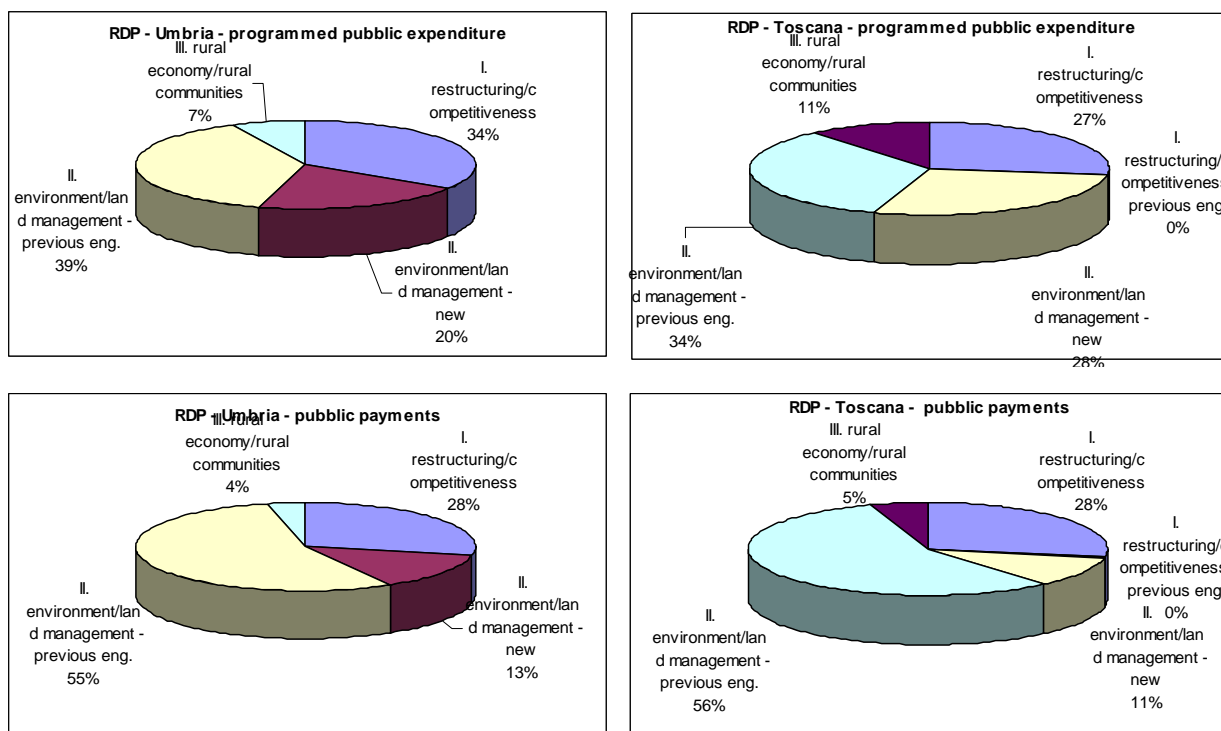
In this case, it is better to talk about complementarity rather than synergies. Each regional programme has a specific role in targeting objectives (RDP material investments in agricultural sector, Ob. 2 material investments in other sectors, LEADER+ immaterial investments for rural areas).

7. Comparison of outcomes and added value between the Toscana RDP and the Umbria RDP

7.1 Outcomes concerning behavioural changes	
<p><i>Leader-type programme</i></p> <p>The programming system used in Toscana has certainly generated positive effects in terms of behavioural changes.</p> <p>In the first place towards the local bodies involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the necessity to prepare development plans has implied an activity for territorial diagnosis, returning a better overall vision about the territory from the strategic viewpoint; – starting-up the harmonisation tables with private subjects has strengthened the role of proposals and collaboration of these last ones, getting them more involved in making successful plans; – the transfer of competencies of managerial type permitted a better knowledge on the implementation mechanisms and instruments of the Community policies; – forms of collaboration were achieved between the public bodies of the same province, trying to find out the same goals to be reached; – the LPRDs favoured the preparation of the more general kind of plans for socio-economic development. <p>as far as the regional administration is concerned, its role was widened: not only activity of programming and management but principally activity of co-ordination of the needs expressed at local level.</p> <p>Finally, at a stricter managerial level, the use of the CAAPs improved the procedures and simplified the presentation of the applications.</p>	<p><i>Other programme</i></p> <p>The organisational and managerial system developed in Umbria to implement the RDP foresees beyond a well defined internal structure in terms of tasks and responsibilities, the direct involvement of the ARUSIA, a separated structure from the regional organ, even though with a regional participation.</p> <p>This kind of body carries out technical, agronomic and data processing activities. The tasks of ARUSIA (technical support on the territory, gathering and computerisation of the applications, direct management of some Measures, technical and administrative controls and relationship with the national paying organism – AGEA) have had following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a better availability of human resources participating in the programme, also in order to improve the projectcapacity of the territories; – improving the implementation procedures. <p>Moreover, the use of a computerised procedure substantially reduced the administrative and control times.</p>

7.2 Expected or observed added value in respect to the achievement of the goals of the respective programme	
<p><i>Leader-type programme</i></p> <p>The total expenditure of the Toscana PRD came out to 55% of the programmed resources.</p> <p>The articulation of the expenditure with respect to the three specific goals of the plan, agreeing with the three priority axes, introduces itself as follows:</p> <p>I priority: 62%</p> <p>II priority: 60%</p> <p>III priority: 24%</p> <p>After having used the decentralised programming system through the LPRDs there have been some advantages to achieve the goals of the plan.</p> <p>In the first place, it deals with a process that allowed to accelerate the expenditure of the programme, as it decentralised the administrative procedures without engulfing the regional structure. Co-ordination faced some difficulties; they were already mentioned in the annual performance relation in 2002 as well. These difficulties seemed to be overcome at the beginning of the annuity 2003.</p> <p>Second, it is considered that the expenditure was more appropriate and efficient. This aspect is connected to the fact that the expenditure was better aimed. Generally speaking, it is considered that the best efficiency was achieved in the ambit of the first specific goal: <i>Support for the improving of the business competitiveness, the agricultural income and the quality productions.</i></p> <p>Moreover, the system enabled to avoid the crowding out effect of the weaker areas in respect of those stronger and more organised ones.</p>	<p><i>Other programme</i></p> <p>The total expenditure of the Umbra PRD came out to 65% of the programmed resources.</p> <p>The articulation of the expenditure with respect to the three specific aims of the plan, agreeing with the three priority axes, introduces itself as follows:</p> <p>I priority: 54%</p> <p>II priority: 75%</p> <p>III priority: 11%</p> <p>These data show that the Umbria Region has been very efficient with the expenditure of the resources destined to the programme.</p> <p>But also asymmetries of expenditure are evident in relation to the goals: the expenditure level of the third axis seems to be very low, most of all if considered in relation to the allocated resources which are also modest.</p>
7.3 Expected or observed added value in respect to the Community Objectives	
<p><i>Leader-type programme</i></p> <p>As for this aspect, it seems to be too early to make any reliable consideration.</p>	<p><i>Other programme</i></p>

In the graphs the resources have been classified according to the three community priorities, as described at the Salzburg conference. Despite the programming reveals some differences among the two programmes, the expense distribution in practice flattens the differences.



One of the main aims of the Toscana Region , through decentralisation, partnership and bottom up, is to direct the resources to face those problems or to strengthen those potentials being specific for the local context.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out that some difficulties have been found by individualising intervention priorities fitting the specific local problems and potentialities. In other words, it seems that the local levels were not fully able to valorise, in the operational phase, the opportunities coming from the decentralisation of programming functions. Moreover, as it was pointed out in paragraph 4.1 that the objectives improving the environmental conditions mostly seem to be effective, thanks to the combined use of premiums and investments.

7.4 Expected or observed added value in respect to governance aspects

For the Toscana RDP ,all the aspects connected to the governance were reinforced. The experience of the LPRDs and their widespread territorial articulation laid the foundation for future initiatives.

In the Umbria RDP ,the region showed to be particularly efficient from the operational viewpoint. This work is testified by the high level of expenditure of the resources.

This efficiency is testified by an increased amount of public financial resources devoted to Umbria during a National Monitoring Committee in 2002. This aspect is not negligible to reinforce trustfulness towards the institutions from the part of the beneficiaries of the investments.

7.5 Expected or observed added value in respect to competencies

See the paragraph 7.1

8. Success factors for mainstreaming

The case-study enabled to recognise and to individuate different success factors during the implementation of the LEADER features in the rural development policies. These factors are generally connected to the territorial context, to the political and institutional options and to the solution of organisational type.

▪ Factors connected to the territorial context

In the first place, it is necessary to point out among this typology of factors the identification of the territorial diversity and the variety of rural areas. In Toscana, since 1980, studies, researches and analysis have been worked out in order to understand the different typologies of rural systems that are of interest for the region. The universities and the regional agencies (like the IRPET and the ARSIA) participated in these studies by opening a scientific and political debate. This all led also to an increased attention from the decision makers to the territorial dynamics and to the issuing of different instruments of policies; among them, a Regional Law controlling the rural districts appeared very clearly .

The same plan for rural development in the part related to the diagnosis refers to the various forms of rural conditions present in the region and uses a classification of the areas, elaborated by the IRPET, as seen in the chapter 4.1.

The consolidated patrimony of analysis and territorial classifications, allows the region to make strategic choices that are widely shared.

At the same time the Region can refer to forms of collaboration, work in partnership, harmonisation systems, often in connection to the development of specific territorial contexts. This also prepare 'fertile soil' where to root the LEADER features.

▪ Factors connected to the political and institutional factors

In such a territorial context, it seems evident that the political and institutional systems particularly pay attention to the local dynamics and tries to meet their needs.

For this purpose, identifying the political and strategic value of an operation like the one experimented in Toscana becomes a determining factor in order to introduce innovations into the institutional structures. The process of administrative decentralisation, briefly described previously, is a result of a progressive adaptation of the system of the competencies. But it would not have been possible if a series of acts had not been issued, from the regional law to the different resolutions of Council. The commitment of the political part has therefore been very evident and has forced the administrative part to find more appropriate solutions.

The solution adopted in Toscana is not limited to the decentralisation of the administrative and managerial functions (as it also happens in other regions), but assigns a programming and planning role to the local bodies going beyond the present instruments at their disposal.

This type of decentralisation also means a subsequent displacement towards the bottom from the part of the representatives of collective interests, like for instance the trade associations. The final result is also the one to foster better contacts between the representatives at regional level with the bottom and a necessary reinforcement of the structures at local level.

▪ **Organisational solutions**

The implications of organisational nature are manifold and they allow this system to function:

- a) the use of a **concrete vertical partnership**. The Toscana Region has ensured a close co-ordination between the local bodies and the regional administrative structure. A great number of meetings were organised, the strategic lines were discussed, but also more strictly operational aspects. Only thanks to this constant dialogue, it has been possible to clarify all the implications connected to programming and management of the LPRDs to the local bodies;
- b) the availability of **organised structures**, capable to meet both programming and management requirements . The human resources necessary consider very diversified competencies like:
 - the management of the projects, and in particular those co-financed by structural funds. In fact, these projects require technical and specific competencies like those regarding financial, physical and procedural monitoring, or control and inspection of the investments;
 - the management of the partnerships, both in the programming and in the implementation phase of the initiatives;
 - the promotion of the investments and the search for innovative solutions, capable to make the local plan progress.

It is not a case that the most innovative PLRDs are really those with better familiarity on the structural programmes.

At last, also the implications for the management of the plans in terms of data processing systems must not be underestimated;

- c) the starting-up and the **preservation of the harmonisation tables**. In the Tuscan provinces the Green Tables were formed, carrying out a precise activity of collaboration with the identification and the verification of the activities;
- d) the development of **collaboration forms** between bodies. Even though not utilising a codified model of co-operation and networking, the exchange of information, the sharing of the experiences, the vision of successful projects form the main instruments for learning.

If decentralisation increases on the one hand the complexity of the system, through creating difficulties in co-ordination and in informative flows, it constitutes from the other hand the structural condition able to guarantee, besides a coherent application of the regional, national and community normative framework, a more effective (and therefore efficient) use of the, not abundant, available financial resources.

The full expression of the inherent potentialities in the managerial model of the Toscana RDP, nevertheless, can be in some measure attenuated by the complexity of its design (in terms of involved subjects and attribution of the respective competencies) and, in particular, by the inevitable difficulties risen up in the operational synchronisation of the various activities and in the transmission of the information by a subject to another. This aspect is therefore dealt with in the recommendations.

9. Recommendations

The success factors mentioned here above form a basis for the recommendations to be formulated. In this paragraph, anyhow, other considerations are also reported deriving from the comparison between the limits and the potentials of these two programmes.

9.1 Concerning particular aspects which could be simplified or should be better adapted

The application of the LEADER features during the programming phases

These two cases-study emphasise how the application of the LEADER features must be taken into due consideration beginning from the starting phases of the programming (that means during the preparation of the ex ante evaluation and the programme design:

- In the first place, the diversities of the rural areas must be evident and recognised. In Toscana the strong territorial differences and the too wide size of the Region are the mainstay, on which the whole action trying to meet the different needs is set up. In Umbria, instead, the size and the differences do not clearly mark the territory. Furthermore, as it was also pointed out in the evaluation report that in Umbria the need to direct the RDP better towards the territorial priorities is tangible.
- In the second place, it seems absolutely necessary to have, during the preparation phase of the plan, an organisational structure at the bottom which is sufficiently capable to express the needs and to elaborate action priorities. In the case of the Toscana Region, the role played by the Provinces (they were assigned with the advanced tasks of administrative and programmatic decentralisation), enabled to facilitate the transfer process of the competencies. For lack of such structures, the times for the preparation of the management strategies and methods should have been certainly longer. In Toscana, in fact, the process of decentralisation developed during one year, a period considered as not compressible anymore. The role of the Region in this outline changes substantially. Its tasks become really concrete towards the involved territories in a consistent activity of general co-ordination of the programming, of transferring procedures and forms of collaboration, verification and control, of stimulation and animation. As for the general co-ordination, the way followed by the Umbria Region could reveal itself particularly efficient in order to compose a unique way of different development instruments at the Region's disposal. But there are also operational aspects of which hinder co-ordination, like different programming times, different function mechanisms (for instance long-term or annual investments). The effects of these kinds of differences should be considered during the programming phase because at the same time they form an element that reinforces the necessity of flexibility from the part of the programme (see further).

All the territories are not often able to correspond efficiently to a decentralisation process, and therefore it seems to be absolutely necessary to have a guide and an orientation. It could be useful to make the programming phases concentrate on priority issues of intervention. In this way, the main problems to tackle could be identified at local level, and consequently the possible ways to follow could be suggested. This kind of system allows to hold in due consideration territorial differences and at the same time raises the level of innovation and proposal from the part of the areas. The evaluator of the Toscana PRD indeed highlighted how the local structures still tend to be too bashful to propose specific priorities. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the instrument of the foreseen Pact of Area has been used a little (it should not be hidden that it is due to the swiftness during the preparation of the LPRDs).

At last, if it is true that a strong co-ordination of the development policies is required at regional level , at the same time it is also a priority at local level, in order to avoid a plurality of instruments which intervene on the same territory with different aims. The co-ordinated and conjunct use of the different instruments from one side makes the whole process more efficient by avoiding to overlap the cost centres, and at the same time it makes the action more efficient.

9.2 Concerning specific implementation questions of LEADER features

From the analysis there were a good number of difficulties to apply to the LEADER features together with the rules established for the functioning of the FEOGA.

The first important hindrance is due to the typology of admissible investments. More than once in course of the survey, it showed how the typologies of admissible expenditures to FEOGA adapt themselves badly to a mainstreaming process , because they were too oriented towards the agricultural sector. In this sense, the possibility, that LEADER offers to widen the fields of competence of the fund, is extremely important above all for the characteristics of multi-sectoriality, networking and co-operation. For this reason, it is necessary to move from a multi-sectoral point of view in order to set up a real mainstreaming process of LEADER.

9.3 Concerning the removal of obstacles for mainstreaming

Another important aspect is due to the necessity to have a more streamlined and flexible programme of reference. In fact, a specific difficulty encountered is the lack of a margin of manoeuvre in the programme's actions. The flexibility of the programme is really an indispensable requirement in order to be able to make the resources meet with the local needs. The Toscana Region in order to avoid these kinds of problems set constraints for the LPRDs in terms of annual expenditure and for axis. If there had not been these constraints, it is very likely that the choices at local level should have been more appropriate. Furthermore, in case of the FEOGA, which relies on annual estimate of expenditure, it occurs to be more efficient to understand eventual obstacles and to find immediate remedy for them. The transfer mechanisms about the difficulties from the local level to the regional level and vice versa can determine a loss of financial efficiency and as a result, a reduction of the resources.

This aspect reminds directly the necessity to have an efficient communication, verification and control system. At the moment when the plurality of subjects of the programme management intervenes, it is necessary to reinforce the systems of communication even though there is an operative synchronisation of the various activities and in the transmission of the information between the subjects.

9.4 What should not be mainstreamed and why

What has emerged from these two cases suggests that the process of mainstreaming should interest wide territories from one side and diversified enough from the other side. Indeed the use of the LEADER features implies costs in organisational and managerial terms. Therefore the main conditions to assess the applicability and the appropriateness of the systems of programming derive, as usually, from:

- the analysis about the needs, and, therefore the presence of diversified requirements;
- the availability of the resources (human, time, financial and organisational) in order to promote an adequate methodological and operational support);
- the benefits in terms of better efficiency, verifying the effective achievement of the action priorities (also promoting specific forms of monitoring and evaluation).

10. Table of interviews

Name of interviewee	Function	Date of interview
1. Lorenzo Drosera	Funzionario della Regione Toscana, componente dell'unità di coordinamento del PSR e responsabile del LEADER+	19 novembre, 20 gennaio
2. Giuseppe Merli	Funzionario della Regione Umbria, e responsabile della sezione Piani e Programmi in Agricoltura	22 gennaio e 26 gennaio
3. Massimo Bagarani	Esperto, valutatore del PSR Umbria	23 gennaio
4. Nicoletta Ricciardulli	Esperta, valutatore del PSR Toscana	27 gennaio
5. Lucia Tudini	Esperta, PSR Toscana	27 gennaio

Sources

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<http://www.rete.toscana.it/sett/agric/srurale/psr/bandi/pianilocali.html>

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Rural Contexts in Toscana

