Integrating Rural Development and Regional Territorial/Landscape Planning. Tools for program implementation and monitoring

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Abstract

In the EU, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and its second pillar devoted to Rural Development, increasingly stress the importance of agriculture as a driver to support the environmental and the socio economic development of rural areas. Agriculture is ever more envisaged as a multifunctional activity aimed not only at producing food commodities, but also at delivering environmental services. The key challenges for European agriculture towards 2020, as outlined by the European Commission, include guaranteeing food security, preserving natural assets and rural landscape, contrasting climate change and pursuing territorial cohesion and balance (EC, 2011). By responding to these challenges, the new CAP will also contribute to implement the EU 2020 Strategy in terms of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In particular it is foreseen that CAP contribute to environmental sustainability by ensuring sustainable land management, providing environmental public goods, addressing biodiversity loss (EC, 2010: 6). However, achieving these ambitious objectives calls for a deeper integration between CAP and other regional territorial governance policies and instruments.

Agricultural policies in fact have traditionally been designed and implemented with a sectoral approach, despite the deep interplay between agriculture, spatial development and environmental conservation policies. On the other hand, spatial planning at different scale has also traditionally paid low attention to agricultural areas, often considered as "white areas", at most to be preserved from future urbanization,
rather than considered as important drivers of socio-economic and environmental developments. In this paper we maintain that to enhance the effectiveness of agricultural policies in delivering environmental benefits, a deeper integration with Territorial and Landscape Plan must be pursued, both in the their design and during monitoring. We present the case study of Piedmont Region (north-west Italy) where new territorial planning instruments have been recently approved, to investigate the current degree of integration between Rural Development programs and the Regional Territorial and Landscape Plan. Results indicate that integration between these two instruments is still poor, and that this is hampering their effectiveness in delivering the environmental objectives outlined by both instruments. We discuss some critical points and put forward some suggestion to foster a deeper integration. In particular we show how the monitoring schemes of these instruments may be integrated to cover the full array of environmental aspects (including landscape), and identify which environmental performance indicators included in their monitoring frame may be sensitive to synergic effects deriving by their concurrent implementation.

**Keywords**: Common agricultural policy, Rural development, Spatial Planning, Landscape Planning, monitoring

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