

RuDI main findings and policy recommendations

FP7 project (no. 213034) „Assessing the Impact of Rural Development Policies“

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Presentation outline

Research findings and policy recommendations along the following topics:

- **Designing** better policy at EU and national levels for the coming funding period
- Improving policy **delivery**: both currently and in future funding periods
- Improving the **evaluation** of RD policies and facilitating institutional learning
- What is the future of **RD**? Key challenges for rural development

policy design

Designing better policy at EU and national levels for the coming funding period

Research findings I

- Strongest single **institutional influence** upon RDP design across EU-27: agricultural ministries
- **Split** design ('separate design for each axis'), and **uniform** RDP approaches
- Targeting of expenditure: mostly driven by **historic patterns**, rather than by needs/potential
- Difficulty of establishing **territorial approach** to RD: (partly) a consequence of political context

Designing better policy at EU and national levels for the coming funding period

Policy recommendations I

- **Consolidate training and strengthen inter-institutional trust** in the new funding period
- Replace present axes with a more **strategy-led** grouping of measures, to better enable the **synergies** between measures
- Provide **more flexible frameworks** at EU, MS and regional level to account for the **diversity of needs**

Designing better policy at EU and national levels for the coming funding period

Policy recommendations II

- Allow **time for local-level establishment of the programme** in all MS: strong & effective networks/relationships
- Increase **stakeholder participation in policy design, delivery and evaluation**, facilitating inclusion of all legitimate needs

policy delivery

Improving policy **delivery**: both currently and in future funding periods

Research findings I

- 2 major contrasting patterns:
 - **Centralised** (many MS/regions):
Driven by sectoral administration - involving the majority of RDP measures
 - **Decentralised** (fewer MS/regions):
Driven by multiple actors - only applied to some measures

Improving policy **delivery**: both currently and in future funding periods

Research findings II

- **Devolution** of implementation responsibilities:
 - **Coherence** among development programmes
 - **Coordination** between RD work and regional development objectives
 - New modes of governance, **territorial approach**
- 2 factors influencing **Leader implementation**:
 - LAGs' **role within** their territories & degree of autonomy
 - LAGs' **room for manoeuvre**

Improving policy **delivery**: both currently and in future funding periods

Policy recommendations I

- National/regional authorities: use flexibility provided by EU guidelines to **tailor individual delivery**
- Establish a coordinated rural policy system
- **Empower** all (local) actors involved: **coordination** as prerequisite for **effectiveness**
- Strengthen **strategic capacities of local partnerships**: training, good practice exchange etc.

Improving policy **delivery**: both currently and in future funding periods

Policy recommendations II

- Promote a **more integrated Leader approach** for rural action:
 - Integration **within** the Leader region
 - **Inter-regional** projects between LAGs
 - Stronger linkages to **other programmes**

evaluation

Improving the **evaluation** of RD policies and facilitating institutional learning

Research findings I

- Managing Authorities' are increasingly **interested in the results of evaluation**, but mainly only **use the positive** aspects
- **CMEF**: perceived as a useful tool, but does not always sufficiently capture key policy impacts
- Limitations. E.g. timing and practical issues.
- Work towards systemic analysis

Improving the **evaluation** of RD policies and facilitating institutional learning

Policy recommendations I

- Strengthen **territorial and thematic focus** in evaluation. Use **case-studies** (less dependence on timing), and provide more resources for such approaches
Deepen **institutional learning** through **complementary** evaluation methods
- Consider the **interaction** of RDPs with other (EU-level) funding sources

future rural development

What is the future for RD policy?
Key challenges for rural development.

Research findings I

- The unique value added of RD policies: **integration** of a **physical domain** (landscape, biodiversity etc.) with the **economic and social dimensions**
- **Evaluation efforts** are not matched by the **limited usefulness of results** in terms of institutional learning
- **Mainstreaming of Leader:** major challenge to RDP design in many MS, leading to divergent approaches across the EU-27

What is the future for RD policy?
Key challenges for rural development.

Research findings II

- Farmers' increasing willingness to integrate **environmental measures**, especially if adjusted to specific local conditions/farming systems, and resulting in an additional income
- RDPs in **marginal rural HNV areas** may be insufficiently sensitive to rural business logic, socio-cultural drivers and motivations

Where should the **future RD** go?
Key challenges for rural development.

Policy recommendations I

- **Maintain Pillar 2**, but enabling flexibility in the **grouping of measures**
- **Ensure the practical follow-through** of Strategic Guideline agreements - need for more ongoing and inclusive support
- Provide more support to local-level administration in order to implement the **“EU RD spirit”**

Where should the **future RD** go?
Key challenges for rural development.

Policy recommendations II

- Strengthen the role of future **monitoring and evaluation** as part of EU RD policy:
 - Include requirements for **thematic, territorial case studies** and **qualitative** approaches
 - Focus on **effectiveness of policy processes**
- Foster **territorial approaches**:
 - Allow for the diverse needs of rural areas
 - Implement integrated projects based on local stakeholder coalitions

[general conclusions]

- Overcome partial linkages: **theory – practice** in RD policy
- Complexity of the **relationship between RD policy** with **agricultural** and **regional policies**, with important implications for RDP design
- Inertia and **policy heritage**: a potential handicap to innovative reform
- Evidence of emerging **institutional learning**

Thank you for your attention!



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