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The rural policy as a tool for the natural resource management

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overview

- EU25 rural regions: 92% of landscape, 45% of the Gross Value Added, 53% of the employment (OECD criteria)
- EU25 agricultural and forestry sectors: 8,3% of the employment; 4.4% of the GDP, 77% of the land use, for the 12-13% as Natura 2000 and for 10-30% High Nature Value Farming System (IRENA project).
- critical period of the rural sector \Leftrightarrow re-definition in the EU context: *sustainable development*, engine of the EU development policies on the basis of the decision of the European Council stated at Göteborg (2001) and re-launched in 2005 and 2006 with the European Council adoption of the Sustainable Development Strategy



general aims

- Promote a new "*European model*" of development (competitive increase, growth of the innovation technologies, combating human induced climate change, controlling of public health, sustainable management of natural resources, improving of transport and and land use) that
 - is triggered by a *best knowledge* and the *Innovation Technologies* (IT)
 - tries to promote *solutions for the social needs based on the best knowledge shared as strategic choices*
 - Undergoes to a *monitoring and evaluation process* of the strategies that should allow an on-going comparison between policies expectations and innovative knowledge
- This framework should generate an adaptive process, in which the *interaction between (scientific) knowledge and policy re-launch the sustainable and general development of the EU system*



RD Policies: a testing ground of the “*European model*”

- Because
 - RD it is now a distinct development policy, where the sustainability it is primary pursued using the *natural resources* and the “*environment*” as competitive trigger
 - complementarity (compulsory integration and subsidiarity with EU, national and local policies) is a central innovative issue
 - the integration of the environmental dimension it is today not only and simply a transversal integration of environmental policies and rules, but a explicit development policy tool



does the adaptive process work?

- From the financial and administrative perspective EU RD policy (compulsory integrated with other EU, national and local policies) appears to be a good strategic approach in achieving the sustainable "*European model*" of development
 - programming tools cope with competitiveness, employment , natural resources management, giving to the "externalities" a new marketable perspective and transforming the environment in a competitive boost
 - the economic tools (schemes of measures) seem to be progressively able to ensure the strategies aims
 - mostly because coupled with a (annually) review system that should optimise the local fit of the policy



does the adaptive process work?

- But, two limits are becoming evidents:
 - 1) (not much to do with science) there is a resistance even from the bureaucratic (less obvious) or the producer lobbies (more obvious) sides to transform a *sectorial policy* in a *local development* policy (axis 4, the LEADER approach, tries to lower it)
 - 2) There is an evident lack of information feedback between BK to policy input, a core cog of the “*European model*” SD engine



best knowledge feedback: what's the problem?

- difficulties of science to inform policy and management (Baskerville, 1997)
- difficulties of the social and human science to interact each other to jointly inform the policy and management (transdisciplinary failure: mistrust and jealousy within/among disciplines and “schools”)
- overplus of “shortermism” (- time, + career oriented) in the research effort, in terms of field/office or short/long term options (more smartly: the research scale issue)
- delay in the upgrade of policy and management output (Wallington et al., 2005)



... and more scientific difficulties

- These quite human difficulties are coupled to
 - the complexity of the (rural) landscape, that intrinsically brings uncertainty that has to be communicated to the policy makers and managers, to allow them to progressively adjust the solutions
 - disturbance (human and not), openness and heterogeneity, which are intrinsic features of rural landscape
 - composition, structure and functions that are contingent on the history and spatial context of each rural system
 - the “synergies” among these natural complexity and that one generated by the measures schemes used to implement the rural sustainable development



the feedback needs

- we need:
 - a long-term, structured, and multiscalar survey approach (the scale issue, Stevens et al., 2007) to fulfil the lack of feedback between knowledge and probable output in RD
 - ground data, that are essential to monitoring the landscape effects of policy and management
 - to cope with the high variability of ecological systems
 - to verify expectation and to cope with uncertainty
- we do not need
 - more computer aided behavioural analyses of spatial metrics, before clearing their ecological or social meaning



in fact:

- On the *agri-environmental measures* side (as assessed in 2005), the administrative / financial monitoring of measure expenditure (“uptake figures”)
 - does not give factual information about the environmental results of their implementation
 - does not give effective information to review the programs and schemes to cope with the policy objectives
- ⇒ last programming (2007-2013) requirements (*compulsory baseline indicators*) only very partly fulfil this gap



...and ...

- On the *landscape preservation and structural transformation* (afforestation, agri-forestation) side, similar consideration may be drawn
 - payments to enhance natural resources management decoupled with landscape spatial planning do not necessarily correspondent to policy objectives (Franco, 2002; Jongman, 2002; Madsen, 2002)
- In general:
 - payment schemes strongly based on local results scaling up, and without sufficient farmers training, do not correspondent to policy objectives (EASY 5th framework EU Project)



ideas to find out solutions

- Since that (speaking about present ecology)
 - uncertainty is a core concept of the non-equilibrium ecology
 - most ecological knowledge comes from managed systems far from a human free equilibrium climax
- A first common sense solution could be the enforcing the information feedback between theory and application (Wallington et al., 2005)



ideas to find out solutions

- How?
 - Direct engagement of the scientific world with society
 - Promoting upgraded awareness in the policy makers, to correctly drive the bureaucratic engine
 - approaches that account for the intrinsic characteristic of ecological systems and of the embedding of social values → participatory processes and / or valuation of shared societal values
 - *e.g.*: ecological trajectories, Hughes, 2005; Scenarios, Nassauer & Corry, 2004; rural area planning linked to RD schemes; landscape diagnosis tools, Bastian et al., 2006; connection between ecological history contingency and landscape history legacy ...



and what about the *best knowledge* contribution?

1. encouraging the participative approach with the local actors and stakeholders before and during the researches linked to the programmes implementation
2. contributing with “*the best knowledge*” to a clearer definition of environmental objectives (area specific, realistic, quantitative) at the landscape scale, to be pursued by single or mix of measures
3. advising policy makers to embed in the programming structure long term on the ground evaluation of environmental measures impacts at the landscape scale (e.g. by geo-referencing the measures application, allowing synergies with risk assessment and natural resources management and planning)



and what about the *best knowledge* contribution?

4. *environmental services* can represent a new market for rural enterprises' income and should be a central issue in RD policy, but local research it is urgent

- to bid them inside the schemes as shared public benefits (climate change, biodiversity, hydro-geologic risk, landscape amenities)
- to link them to other emerging markets (privileging bioenergies: climate change, carbon market, renewable energy policies)



thank you for your attention

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