The rural governance system in Leader Plus: the application of an integrated planning methodology in Calabria (South Italy)¹

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1. Introduction

Recently, a transformation has occurred in the government procedures and processes of European rural societies. This phenomenon has been characterised by the passage of decisional power from government to local governance, which includes both governmental institutions governmental not groups working together about the planning of a territory (Marsden e Murdoch, 1998).

Such new forms of management have already modified considerably the rural areas of many European countries. Some examples are offered by the Local Action Groups (LAGs) of the Leader Initiative and by the different typologies of the Integrated Plans involved in the Regional Operative Plans

(POR) for the regions, which are covered by "Objective 1". Within the POR, an important moment is represented by the institution of a Partnership, which is formed by the representatives of public and private economic interests and is responsible for the planning activity of the strategies to carry out in the area and, in some cases, for projects implementation.

Although governance brings innovation about political

Abstract

Local Governances play a major role in the rural development of European countries. In governance, decisions are taken by multiple actors organized in partnerships. Governance failure may occur when conflicts arise within the partnership in the planning phase. The utilization of decision-aid models in order to manage the conflicts rising in the phase of agreement simplifies the decisional process and facilitates the elaboration of a development strategy shared by all Partnership members. The goal of this study is to present an integrated methodology that may be utilized by the experts of a Local Group in order to find out a development strategy with the contribution of the socio-economic partnership as a whole. The methodology has been applied in Calabria, South Italy, in an area with 44 town councils and with a socio economic partnership that counts more than 100 partners. The methodology favoured the definition of a strategy developed with the contribution of the partnership as a whole.

Résumé

Les structures de gouvernance locale jouent un rôle d'importance primordiale dans le développement rural des pays européens. S'agissant de la gouvernance locale, les décisions sont prises par plusieurs acteurs organisés en partenariat. La gouvernance peut se solder par un échec lorsque des conflits surgissent au niveau du partenariat dans la phase de planification. L'utilisation des modèles d'aide à la décision, pour gérer les conflits qui pourraient surgir dans la phase d'accord, simplifie le processus de prise de décision et facilite l'élaboration d'une stratégie de développement partagée par tous les acteurs du partenariat. L'objectif de cette étude est de présenter une méthodologie intégrée qui pourrait être employée par les experts d'un Groupe Local afin d'envisager une stratégie de développement avec la contribution du partenariat socio-économique. Cette méthodologie a été appliquée en Calabre, dans le sud de l'Italie, dans une zone avec 44 conseils communaux et un partenariat socio-économique qui compte plus de 100 partenaires. La méthodologie retenue a permis de définir une stratégie s'appuyant sur la contribution du partenariat dans son ensemble.

decisions on a local level, it presents problems because it implies achievement of a decision by multiple actors. Therefore, within the Integrated Plans, one of the most important issues concerns the necessity of simplifying the agreement activity. This is why some reflections - on the role played by the Partnership during a rural governance process - are proposed

Partnership members have different viewpoints about the problems and objectives related to the socio-economic development to promote in an area. Disagreements rising during the assembly can cause decisional conflicts that either slow down the planning activity or lead to a premature decision, so that it is often

impossible to analyse all reasonable solutions (Priem et al., 1995). At this purpose, decision-aid models may play a major role; indeed, they allow managing the conflicts rising in the phase of agreement, by simplifying the decisional process and by supporting the definition of strategies by all Partnership members.

This study presents an interactive methodology outlined within a Local Development Plan (PSL) in Calabria, in order to simplify the process of convergence among the different members of the Partnership about a territorial development strategy shared by each member.

The first part of the study includes some reflections on the development of the concept of rural governance and on its application within the European Integrated Plans in Calabria. The second part outlines an integrated planning

paragraphs 3.2, 4.3, 5.

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methodology and analyses its application within the Leader Plus Initiative. The conclusions point out some advantages and disadvantages of the used methodology.

2. Local governance in the integrated planning of rural areas

2.1. The development of the concept of governance

In the last decade, the interest by researchers in the management forms of rural areas has gradually increased (Goodwin, 1998). Since the second post-war period, according to Marsden e Murdoch (1998), agriculture has lost the leading role traditionally played in the past and has assumed a new multifunctional role that is no more linked to the logic of simple production. This new and widely discussed perspective implies a lot of political and economic processes that are necessary to satisfy the several needs of rural areas and consequently, it leads to the search for new management typologies that are adequate to the changed situation of agriculture. Indeed, the change in the rural world has been followed by an even greater interest of several authors in the definition of the government systems of rural areas. Gradually, the attention has moved from the traditional forms of government to the modern models of governance. It is important to underline that this term is used with different shades of meaning, according to the different authors, in order to indicate new management forms that are more complex than traditional ones.

Marsden e Murdoch (1998) state that Great Britain has witnessed a gradual passage from government to governance. Unlike the former, the latter overcomes the old model of public interventions, because it is based both on the free-market economy and a social redistribution policy. In particular, Woods (1998) considers the new-born governance as a reaction to the Fordism crisis, during which the rural sector had identified itself mainly with an intensive agriculture, and as a transition towards Post-Fordism, characterised by a highly diversified and multifunctional agriculture that tried to satisfy the demand for new structures capable of ruling the economic local activity.

Another definition highlighting the difference between the concept of government and that of governance is proposed by Stoker (1998): while the term government refers to the decisional authority structured and represented by the modern State, the term governance recognises internal and external activities through an interdependence between government forces and not governmental ones. Lion et al. (2003) affirm that unlike the government, the governance involves a plurality of actors for the implementation of local policies. They work in a complex social reality in which interactions and power levels are multiplied and in which State policies are decentralised. The term governance stands for a multilevel partnership, in which the consultation becomes a way to represent the interests of administrations,

social and economic actors and citizens. Moreover, the governance gives the guidelines to the decisional actors, in order to improve the results of policies implementation. Because of the plurality of actors and the decentralisation of public action, it is necessary to involve the actors working on a local level in bottom-up strategies.

Although governance brings innovation about political decisions on a local level, in order to prevent governance failure, it is necessary to facilitate the achievement of a decision by multiple actors. Even if all the members of governance want to reach the development of the beneficiary area, it is also true that they often have different viewpoints about the priorities to define and the strategies to carry out.

Stoker (1998) has proposed five statements, pointing out as many aspects of the governance system:

- it refers to a complex group of actors and institutions coming from both government structures and not governmental ones;
- it highlights the confusion of responsibilities among the public and private associations involved in the decisional process. Such a phenomenon is characterised by an "infinite circle of responsibilities" (Goodwin, 1998), so that, in case of failure, the groups blame each other and it is difficult to establish which group has been responsible;
- it emphasises the power dependence in the relationships among the institutions involved in collective actions, and troubling the definition of common objectives and the coordination of interventions;
- it refers to self-governing networks; in such systems the interests of Partnership members may overcome either the interests of the society or those of the actors who do not belong to the nets;
- it shows that the power of attaining political objectives is not limited to governmental authority. Indeed, the government will play a new role for guide and management, instead of basing his action on direct interventions. From this point of view, the government role will consist in identifying the actors and in developing the opportunities and the links among them, in order to make them able of self-governing.

However, the governance system is not infallible: conflicts and difficulties may rise among different actors and institutions. This is why a governance system does not always represent a more efficient solution than a free-market economy or than government interventions. Goodwin (1998) considers the empirical research as the best way for finding solutions to the above-mentioned problems and for holding the attention to the importance of governance.

2.2. The Leader Plus in Calabria

The Leader Plus involves all the EU rural territories which, according to the parameters established by the European Commission, must number a population going from 10.000 to 100.000 inhabitants and a demographic density of not more than 120 inhabitants/km², unless the Commission

itself allows concessions.

The general objectives of Leader Plus aim at limiting the phenomenon of rural depopulation and at developing the economy of the territory, by diversifying the activities of agricultural firms and by promoting integrated local development actions. These are based on an endogenous approach, therefore, on the development initiatives of local communities. According to Leader guidelines, the strategic choices to carry out derive from the key-concepts of innovation, integration and sustainability. They allow to point out such objectives as the realisation of original and quality development strategies structured around one or more priority themes; the realisation of actions that are integrated and/or complementary to the development objectives of structural programs; the opening of rural areas towards other European and extra-European Countries; the spread of information, experiences and know-how; the finding of development solutions for rural areas. In this way, beneficiary areas can become a pattern for future EU policies.

These general objectives lead to the definition of Leader Plus in four priority axes, each of them presenting specific measures, actions and interventions.

In beneficiary areas, the setting up of the Leader Initiative follows a precise planning scheme, which presents the following phases:

- The European Commission establishes Leader Plus guidelines, containing the general objectives and the strategies the Initiative wants to promote.

-The Regions, after receiving the guidelines, propose a Regional Leader Plan (PLR), which must include the characteristics, the potentialities of the beneficiary area and the specific objectives to attain through Leader Plus. The Plan will be successively evaluated by the Commission and if it is approved, it will be started through a proper Regional Announcement; on the contrary, it will come back to the Region in order to be modified.

-Afterwards, following a bottom-up approach, through the LAGs and their socio-economic Partnerships, beneficiary areas submit the Local Development Plans to the Region for evaluation.

The socio-economic analysis of the territory, carried out by Regione Calabria, has shown the scarce capability of the area to create new jobs and to establish economic, social and cultural relations among the different productive sectors in and outside the territory. Therefore, the general objectives of the Regional Leader Plan (PLR) deal with the increase of job opportunities for women and young people and promote the creation of an integrated system among the different sectors of the regional economy, and the break with the isolation of Calabrian rural areas. The general objectives have allowed defining the specific ones that aim at integrating the weak areas with the strong ones, in order to develop a territorial solidarity. They also aim at avoiding depopulation, at increasing employment, at enhancing the territory, in order to improve the quality of life. The strate-

gies to follow for attaining the general and specific objectives concern the enhancement of material, immaterial and natural endogenous resources, with the preservation and the conservation of the environment and landscape, with the diversification of productive activities, with the support for the creation of local development systems and for a co-operation between enterprises and territory.

According to the characteristics of the Calabrian territory analysed in the PLR, specific catalyst themes have been pointed out (natural ecosystems, archaeological, historical and cultural resources, local tourism, typical local products), on which PSLs must be focused.

In Calabria, the selected themes for the Leader intervention have been 14, among which two concerning natural ecosystems, three dealing with archaeological, historical and cultural resources, three referring to typical local products and the last six to tourism. The available PSLs had to be at least 4 (one for each catalyst theme) and not more than 8, in order to grant the presence of strong themes in the whole territory.

In Leader Plus, the beneficiaries' typology is represented by the LAGs, made up of actors promoting the PSL and managing the financial resources allocated by the Commission. The constitution of the LAG is based on the formation of a Partnership that must represent a balanced and a representative selection of public and private operators drawn from the different sectors of the territory. The involved actors can be either public structures or semi-public organisations or private ones, such as category associations, local enterprises, agricultural professional associations, trade unions, voluntary associations and no-profit sectors, sporting and cultural associations, etc. In forming the Partnership, an innovative element is represented by decisional power. Indeed, in order to involve more private actors, it has been established that the participation of Public Authorities were less than 50% in some sections, such as the board of directors and the management staff.

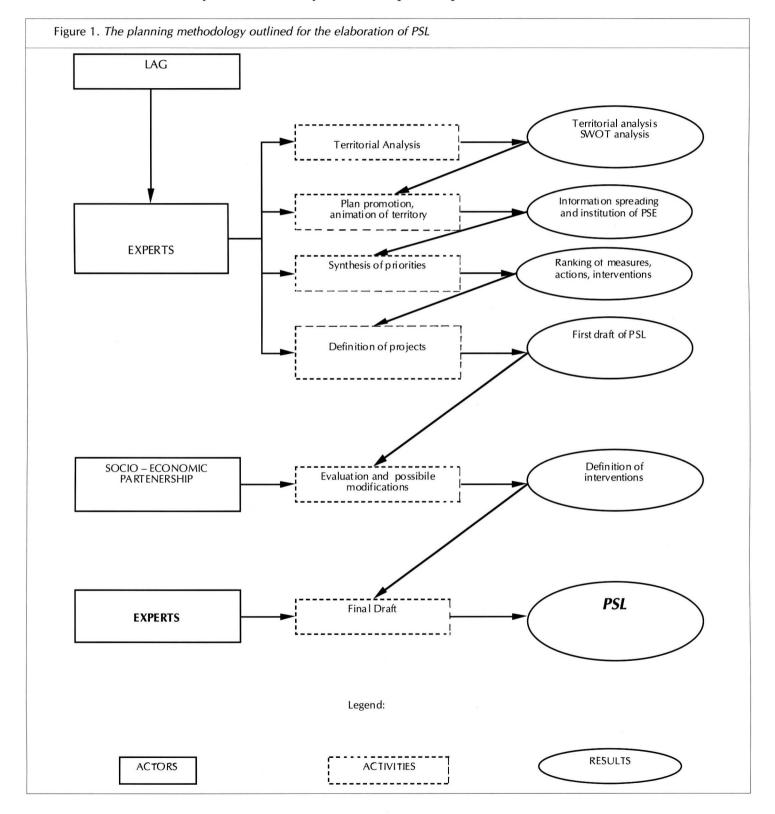
3. Methodological aspects 3.1. The decisional problem

As it has already been underlined, the setting up of Leader Plus includes the institution of a Partnership, expression of the local governance system, which is made up of the representatives of public and private economic interests. It is also responsible for the planning activity of the strategies to carry out in the area and, in some cases, for projects implementation. The planning activity is addressed to the definition of PSL. It represents a particular moment, because the members of the Partnership often have different viewpoints about the problems and objectives related to the socio-economic development to promote in the area. Therefore, decisional conflicts may rise during the assembly and may slow down the planning activity. A right interpretation and a proper representation of the divergent opinions represent the key-factor for a successful intervention,

because they facilitate the integration of the different exigencies in a shared development strategy. In this way, none of the different territorial interests will be excluded in the final choice. On the one hand, it has been said a lot about the principles and the role of the Partnership during the planning phase; on the other, the way of resolving decisional conflicts is still not very clear. This is why decision-

aid models can play an important role in making the decisional process more transparent and in supporting the definition of strategies with the contribution of the different decisional actors of the Partnership.

The next paragraph presents a methodology that aims at resolving decisional conflicts raising during the agreement phase: it provides for useful instruments addressed to reach



a development strategy which can be promoted and shared by the whole Partnership.

3.2. Integrated planning methodology

The steps related to the preparation of the PSL have been schemed in figure 1: the actors appear in the first column, the activities and the results of each single phase appear in the other columns. The result of each intermediate phase works as an input for the following step. The group of experts carries out a territorial and socio-economic analysis addressed to the catalyst theme of the area. The research concludes with the SWOT analysis, in order to define synthetically the strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and threats of the selected area. Contemporaneously, the experts start the activities of Plan promotion and animation of the territory, through the organisation of public meetings that are addressed to the spread of the contents and opportunities related to the Leader Plus Initiative. The institutional actors operating in the territory, the representatives of

associations and all those who are interested in the Initiative are invited to the meetings, through public announcements.

These activities lead to the institution of the socio-economic Partnership (PSE), responsible for the PSL planning. Each partner is precisely informed of his role within the PSL and at the same time, it is realised a first evaluation of the plans to insert in the PSL.

At this point, the

problem is represented by the definition of priority actions and interventions and, therefore, by the allocation of available resources in Regional Leader Plan. In order to find a development strategy which can be shared by the whole PSE, a decision support system and a convergence phased process - already experimented for the realisation of an Integrated Plan for Calabrian rural areas (Marcianò et al., 2003) - has been carried out. According to the results from the priorities synthesis, to the information collected from the previous activities and to the compatibility between the results and the PLR guidelines, the group of experts defines the projects to insert in the Plan. Thus, the first drafting of the PSL - with the picture of interventions, of the financial dimension and of its various steps - is presented during the

assembly and submitted to the PSE for evaluation. In the last phase, the group of experts draft the final document of the PSL containing the modifications approved by the assembly, the description of the planning phases and the obtained results. Later, the document will be examined and evaluated on a regional level. A more careful investigation on each methodological phase is carried out in the following paragraphs.

4. The case-study: The "Reggino Versante Tirrenico" Leader Plus

4.1. The socio-economic analysis of the territory

The Local Development Plan "Reggino Versante Tirrenico" has been started by the "Vate" and by the "Asprogal", two Local Action Groups which have worked within Leader II. For the setting up of Leader Plus, they have also organised themselves in a Temporary Enterprises Associa-

tion, called "Aspromar". Scientifically co-ordinated by a university team, a group of experts has been appointed to attend the preparation of the Plan.

The area included in the Leader Plus "Reggino Versante Tirrenico" is of about 115.000 hectares and located along the North-Thyrrenian side of the district of Reg-Calabria. covers the Plain of Gioia Tauro and the low portion of

Area Leader Plus "Reggino Versante Tirrenico" Leader Plus

Area Leader Plus "Reggino Versante Tirrenico"

Reggino Versante Tirrenico"

Reggino Versante Tirrenico (1)

Reggino Calabria (1)

Reggino Calab

the South-Thyrrenian side of Aspromonte (fig. 2). The area, including 44 town councils, covers about 36% of the district and 7.5% of the regional territory. The selected area numbers 208.623 inhabitants with a density of 180 inhabitants/km².

The territorial economy is strongly linked to the primary sector; indeed, the agricultural activity absorbs 32% of total employers. However, most workers are incorporated in the tertiary sector (50%) and the rest in the secondary one (18%). About young workers, an increase of employers in the tertiary sector has been observed and a decrease in the agricultural and industrial one.

The SWOT analysis has emphasised mainly the cultural and environmental peculiarities of the territory as a

Table 1. The Falthership	o of "Reggino Versante Tirrenico" Leac	lei rius
Public Authorities	Mountainous community "Versante Tirrenico Meridionale" Mountainous community "Versante Tirrenico Settentrionale" 44 Municipal administrations	POLITICIANS
	Medit erranean University of Reggio Cal abria ARSSA (Regional Agricultur al Extension Service Assistance) "As promonte" National Park Authority	EXPERTS
	Gender Committee of Regione Calabria	LAFER 13
LOCAL ACTION GROUPS AGRICULTURAL PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	GAL V.A.T. E., AsproGAL Confagricoltura, Col diretti, Confcooperative, A.P.O.R., C.I.A.	associations
ASSOCIATIONS, TRADE-UNIONS, NO PROFIT OR GANIZATIONS	Conf-commercio; Confartigi anato; Confesercenti; CISL, CGL, UGL, CONASCO, AGIA, WWF, Local Associations and Cooperatives	

strength, the small size of farms as a weakness, the diversification of tourist supply as an opportunity and the isolation of agricultural farms as a threat.

4.2. The Plan promotion, the animation of territory and the formation of PSE

The group of experts has started the activities of Plan promotion and territory animation through the organisation of public meetings. Carried out at the same time, the territorial analysis and the above- mentioned activities have led to the formation of the PSE, with the participation of more than 100 members coming from public and private sectors (table 1). These activities have not only included public meetings, but also private ones between the experts and each partner; moreover, they have allowed the exclusion of not achievable objectives and the identification and the resolution of some disagreements among the members of the PSE. By giving the PSE a decisional role in territory development, subtle conflicts have been avoided during the elaboration and approval of the Plan. Moreover, in these phases the partners have presented planning ideas, most of which have been inserted in the PSL.

4.3 The synthesis of priorities and the definition of the Local Development Plan

The large number of the Partnership members has troubled the choice of a common development strategy. In this phase, the decisional problem has consisted, first of all, in the elicitation of individual preferences related to priority measures, actions and interventions included in the Regional Leader Plan. Later, in the phase of the approval of PSL, the decisional problem has consisted in simplifying the convergence process of the priorities expressed by the dif-

ferent members of PSE. In this way, they have been led to a shared solution about the most appropriate resource allocation. The decisional problem has been faced, by using and adapting a methodology experimented by Marcianò et al. (2003) within one Integrated Plan for Rural Areas in Calabria.

The adopted methodology includes the decomposition of the decisional problem into levels and sublevels, the importance of which is evaluated by eliciting the preferences of the Partnership members. The obtained data are processed by using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), a multiple criterion method, created by Saaty (1988, 2001a, 2001b).

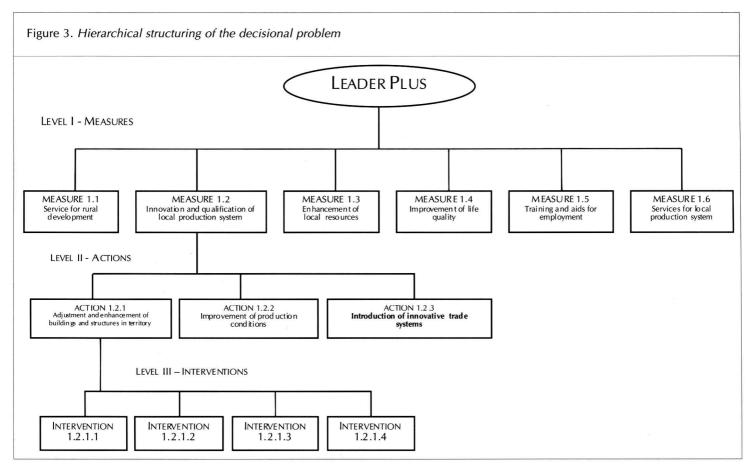
The AHP method develops in three phases:

- decomposition, or the hierarchic structuring of the decisional problem into various levels and sublevels;
- formulation of comparative judgements expressed through pairwise comparisons made between the elements of a particular level and repeated for all levels in which the decisional problem has been decomposed;
- composition of priorities, or synthesis of priorities, defining the arrangement of the alternatives related to the decisional problem.

The application of the first phase deals with the structuring of the decisional problem into hierarchic levels and sublevels, each of them being characterised by precise components. The hierarchic structuring involves the decomposition of the overall goal, belonging to the top level, into more elements which define the superior level in a more detailed way. The decomposition process goes on through the definition of further sub-levels, in order to establish the overall goal in a concrete and precise way.

In the case-study, the hierarchic scheme of figure 3 represents the so-called decisional tree, that is the problem decomposed into levels and sub-levels. The Leader Plus is divided into 6 measures, representing the first level of decomposition and including 20 actions representing the second level. The third level of decomposition is represented by 42 kinds of interventions available within different actions. There is also a fourth level of decomposition represented by the different planning typologies to insert within each intervention. However, this last level is not displayed in figure 4, because such plans are identified and prepared by the experts, according to the definition of priorities.

The second phase, the formulation of comparative judgements, is realised by presenting proper questionnaires to the members of the PSE. The questionnaires are structured, in order to determine the relative importance of the elements belonging to the decisional tree through the matrices of pair wise comparisons between the elements of each level. The third phase, or composition of priorities, allows the alternatives arrangement. In order to quantify the relative priorities of the various elements belonging to the decisional tree, a generally used method consists in the calculation of the



eigen value associated to the eigenvector of maximum module of each pair wise comparisons matrix.

The synthesis of priorities has produced a different arrangement of alternatives for each interviewed member. In order to outline an arrangement which expressed the preferences of the whole Partnership, a phased convergence process has been carried out, grouping the several members into three categories, that are those of Politicians, Experts, Associations (table 1).

About this phase, we have evaluated the efficacy of the model in reflecting:

- the preferences of each decisional actor;
- the will of each decisional actor to reach a group solution.

The convergence process has been carried out in three phases:

- i) on an individual basis, by transforming into quantitative terms the qualitative preferences expressed by each partnership member when answering the questions (first level of convergence);
- ii) on a category basis, by gathering the preferences of each interviewed member into each category, through the average of the individual data, thus obtaining the priorities for politicians, experts and associations (the second level of convergence);
- iii) on a partnership basis. This level of convergence has been realised, by proposing a further questionnaire, in

which each actor has been asked to express his own opinion on the weight each category should assume in the final group decision. This last questionnaire has provided the weights of each category. Through them, the preferences for the financial allocation by each category, resulting from the second level of convergence, have been gathered towards one only solution.

4.4. The definition of projects, the evaluation in assembly and the definition of PSL

The results from the synthesis of priorities have been used as a starting-point for the definition of the projects to insert in the different typologies of the interventions and actions established by the PLR. For the financial allocation of the funds addressed to each project, it has been necessary to select an indicator of realisation for each typology of project. Such indicators have been quantified, according to the results obtained from the priorities synthesis. The financial resources have been addressed in a decreasing way with respect to the ranking of actions and interventions. Each project has been financially dimensioned, according to the position of its typology in the synthesis phase and to its achievement costs. Afterwards, it has been derived the budget for each intervention, action and measure. In this way, the fourth level of the decisional tree- related to the projects to insert in each intervention – has been outlined.

The different project typologies and the financial plan de-

Intervention 1.6.2.1 210.000 Studies and research on the economy of job market ACTION 1.6.1 300 000
Specific services for the enhancement and integrated management of local resources ACTION 1.6.3 65.000

Promotion of territory and of typical local products ACTION 1.6.2 210.000 Research, economic and social analyses Intervention 1.6.1.1 250.000 Enterprise advice Intervention 1.6.3.1 65.000 Brands and fairs Intervention 1.6.1.2 50.009 Creation of enterprise nets ACTION 1.6.4 0
Services for the analysis of demand Intervention 1.6.4.1 0 Focus on innovation needs MEASURE 1.6 575.000 Services for local production system Intervention 1.6.1.3 0 Financial ingeneering Intervention 1.5.1.2 52 609
Activity for raising citizens,
awareness about the use of alternative
energy sources Intervention 1.5.2.1 120.000 Creation of job opportunities for women and young people Intervention 1.5.1.1 150.000
Training courses for autonomous activities 202.000 ACTION 1.5.2 120.000
Aids for engagement and for emersion from illegal job MEASURE 1.5 322.000 Training and aids for employment Intervention 1.5.2.2 *\theta* Aids against illegal job ACTION 1.5.1 Training activities MEASURE 1.4 460.000 Improvement of life quality Intervention 1.4.2.2 100.000
Support to familiar demand for services Intervention 1.42.3 280.600
Realisation of services for specific categories 360.000 Intervention 1.4.2.1 80.000
Planning of innovative services 100.000 evement of ACTION 1.4.1 100.000 Interventions in supporting people's access to services ACTION 1.42 369.000
Planning and development of innovative services supporting autonomy and social integration Intervention 1.4.1.1 0
Restructuring and equipment of buildings 190.000 50.000 Intervention 1.3.5.2 45.000 Planning of tourist parcels/products Intervention 1.3.6.2 50.000 Promotion and distribution of tourist parcels Intervention 1.4.1.2 | Reinforcement and improve services structures Intervention 1.3.6.1 30.00 Interventions in supplying tourist parcels/products Intervention 1.3.7.2 46 Quality certification of services Intervention 1.3.7.5 2 Promotion of welcome culture Intervention 1.3.7.1 50 Information offices and guides LEADER PLUS Intervention 1.3.5.1 Market analysis Intervention 1.3.7.3 Ferritorial brands Intervention 1.3.7.4 Increase and improven Intervention 1.3.4.1 Cultural initiatives MEASURE 1.3
1.610.000 Enhancement of local resources ACTION 1.3.6 80.000
Promotion and distribution of tourist parcels ACTION 1.3.1 390,000
Adjustment and enhancement of buildings
and structures in territory ACTION 1.3.7 160.000 Information offices and territorial interventions in creating welcome structu Intervention 1.3.1.2 200.000 Enhancement of historical centres Intervention 1.3.2.1 159.000 Equipped areas ACTION 1.3.3 385.000
Management and enhancement of local heritage Intervention 1.3.3.4 100.000 Thematic parks ACTION 1.3.4 190.000
Promotion and realisation of innovative cultural imitatives Intervention 1.3.2.2 200.000 Recovery of areas and landscape Intervention 1.3.3.3 110.000
Welcome structures 60.000 Intervention 1.3.1.1 190.000
Adjustment, restructuring and decoration of buildings ACTION 13.2 350.000
Preservation of territory and landscape Intervention 1.3.3.2 75.000 Visiting centres ACTION 1.3.5 95.000 Increase in attraction of rural territory Intervention 1.3.2.3 0 Cultural recovery of areas Intervention 1.3.3.1 Publishing activities Innovation and qualification of local production system MEASURE 1.2 2.127.500 Intervention 1.2.3.1 100.000
Investment in selling and distribution nets Intervention 1.2.2.1 206.000 Investment in industrial, agricultural and artisan enterprises ACTION 1.2.1 1.827.500
Reinforcement and development of enterprises competitiveness Intervention 1.2.1.2 927.500 Diversification of agricultural activities 200.000 450.000 250.000 ACTION 1.2.3 100.000 Introduction of innovative trade systems ACTION 1.2.2 200.000 Improvement of production conditions Intervention 1.2.1.1 450. Intervention 1.2.1.4
Investment in tourism Intervention 1.2.1.3 Investment in PMI MEASURE 1.1
Service for rural
development

Figure 4 - Hierarchical ranking of the synthesis of priorities and financial allocation of PSL

fined for sections, measures, actions, interventions and financial resources – together with the methodological phases followed for the realisation of PSL – have been presented during the assembly. The modifications proposed and discussed by the Partnership members during the assembly have led to the final situation of interventions, which is displayed in figure 4. Here, the hierarchical ranking resulting from the priorities synthesis phase is represented by the position in each column of the actions, interventions and by the allocated financial resources. It is important to underline that in some cases the financial resources are submitted to modifications decided during the assembly. For convenience of summary, figure 4 does not include the projects of each intervention but its total budget (for a detailed description of the projects, see Calabrò et al., 2003). Finally, readjusted the PSL according to the changes decided within the Partnership, the experts have drafted the final document of PSL, showing the followed methodological phases and the obtained results. Later, the PSL has been evaluated and approved by Regione Calabria.

5. Conclusions

In the last years, not only has agriculture assumed a new multifunctional role, but also have the government models of the rural world changed notably. Indeed, the number of the actors involved in the implementation of rural policies – that are even more decentralised - has multiplied, and the relations and interactions between public and private actors involved in the management of a rural territory have become more complex. Thus, it has developed the governance system, a complex self-governing net with a strong participation of actors working on a local level, according to a bottom-up development strategy. Through the spread of governance systems, the role of the State is gradually transforming from a propulsive centre of public interventions to an organisation centre, which is responsible for co-ordination activities.

Governance plays a main role in the policies for the development of rural areas, above all in the Integrated Plans, including complex agreement activities within the socio-economic Partnerships formed by the representatives of public and private economic interests. One of the main reasons leading governance to failure may be represented by possible tensions and difficulties among different actors and institutions during the Partnership assembly. Indeed, the Partnership members often have different viewpoints about the problems and objectives related to the social and economic development to promote in the area. Therefore, decisional conflicts can rise during the assembly and slow down the planning activity. This is why decision-aid models are useful to simplify the decisional process and to facilitate the elaboration of a development strategy shared by all Partnership members.

The methodology presented in this study and applied to a Local Development Plan within the Leader Plus Initiative in Calabria has allowed the group of experts to tackle efficiently the complexity of the decisional problem, achieving a strategy shared by the whole Partnership. The elaborated Plan derives from a series of analyses and from a complex interactive process between experts and the other decision makers of the Partnership. On the one hand, the territorial analysis has allowed to highlight the characteristics of the area, on the other the activities of Plan promotion and territory animation have led to the institution of a Partnership representing local interests. The method used for the synthesis of priorities has quantified the preferences expressed by the different decisional actors about priorities allocation. Moreover, the convergence process, divided into phases, has revealed itself efficient; indeed, it has facilitated the identification of development strategies that are shared by several Partnership members. It is important to underline that the synthesis of priorities has been carried out through a method that is rather different from the vote of majority, whose final choice generally excludes the preference of the minority group. Through the used method, the priorities expressed by the Partnership members have been arranged, allowing a classification of all alternatives made with the contribution of all the Partnership members who have been interviewed and involved in the decisional process. An aspect of the research, still under examination, concerns the ex-ante evaluation system of the Integrated Plans effects. which in these applications have been limited to the indicators of realisation established by the POR and by the Regional Leader Plan.

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