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MONITORING & EVALUATION

**INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL
PROGRAMME FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF LIGURIA
REGION FOR THE PERIOD 2014-2020
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**Best Practices Report
Dissemination Synthesis**

Rome, May 2020

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ACRONYMS

ASL: Above sea level

MA: Managing Authority

BP: Best Practice

EAFRD: European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

RDP: Rural Development Plan

UDE: Unità di dimensione economica

EU: European Union

CeRSAA: Regional Centre for Agricultural Experimentation and Assistance

OD: Organized distribution

SCI: Site of Community Importance

Introduction

The identification and analysis of "Best Practices" (BP) represents a tool widely used in the planning and evaluation processes of public policies. Especially when the Best Practices aim to encourage innovative and strategically oriented intervention design and implementation methods, or in any case actions able to improve the effectiveness of the public support, in response to emerging needs and problems.

Indeed, the identification and description of BP is a process able to support the definition of "evidence-based policies", identifying experiences - tangible and directly verifiable - representative, and even emblematic, of the levels of innovation, quality and consistency achieved by the Programme.

In compliance with the specifications of the Terms of References, the Independent Evaluator has developed, within the framework and in support of the Programme's evaluation process, a specific assessment profile aimed at identifying, analysing and disseminating interventions with requirements consistent with a shared definition of BP.

This report illustrates the objectives of the specific project, the method it used, the results obtained so far, represented by the identification, description and selection of the first group of "Good Practices". In fact, the identification of additional best practices is expected during the subsequent phases of the evaluation process, following the implementation of the Programme and the progressive completion and therefore assessment of the individual interventions. The goal is to reach, at the end of the Programme, a real "Catalogue" of its BP, in order to provide - in parallel with the other evaluation approaches - a sufficiently comprehensive picture of the type of interventions carried out and their effects.

The BP report will have the dual function, on the one hand, of improving and making more effective the description and communication of the results of the Programme, on the other, of promoting opportunities for reflection on positive experiences, from which to draw practical elements of knowledge in the design of the next programming cycle. In other words, through the analysis of Best Practices, the evaluation process is able to develop elements contributing both to the "reporting" of the programmatic action and to its future improvement, on the basis of the lessons learned from the experience.

1. The Best Practices: definition, selection criteria and process for their identification and analysis

In this report, "Best Practice" (BP) means a project (also called "intervention") of the RDP, single or collective, carried out by a public or private beneficiary, which is a model of intervention considered positive based on predefined criteria and therefore worthy of analysis and dissemination.

The projects or interventions are defined "Best practices" if they possess one or more of the following criteria:

Sustainability	<p>The intervention shows the ability to produce sustainable benefits, even beyond its duration, without reducing or making the environmental, social and economic "capital" used no longer available.</p> <p>It is referred to economic, financial, social and environmental sustainability.</p>
Innovation	<p>The intervention allowed the testing of innovative processes, methods, products, with respect to established practices in the target territory, in the company or in the sector in which it operates.</p>
Effectiveness	<p>The implementation of the intervention and its effects are adequate and consistent with the expected procedural and implementation periods and with the objectives of both the Measure / Sub-measure of the RDP and of the beneficiary.</p> <p>It is referred to implementation efficiency, with respect to the time of realization and completion of the intervention and effectiveness in relation to the expected economic, employment, environmental and other kind of results.</p>
Relevance and Replicability	<p>The two requirements are linked together and therefore treated together. The intervention is <u>Relevant</u> if it creates a feasible development model, capable of giving an effective response to widespread needs in the context (business, sectoral, territorial) in which it is applied. This requirement often makes it more easily <u>Replicable</u> in other similar business or territories, a characteristic that can still be possessed by the intervention even in case of low relevance.</p>
Integration and Cooperation	<p>The intervention is a positive example of integration between various public support instruments: between the operations of the RDP and, possibly, between these latter and the instruments of other Programmes.</p> <p>The intervention has enhanced collaborations, exchanges and the creation of real "networks" between the beneficiary and other subjects (other companies, other players in the supply chain, institutions, research centres, etc.)</p>

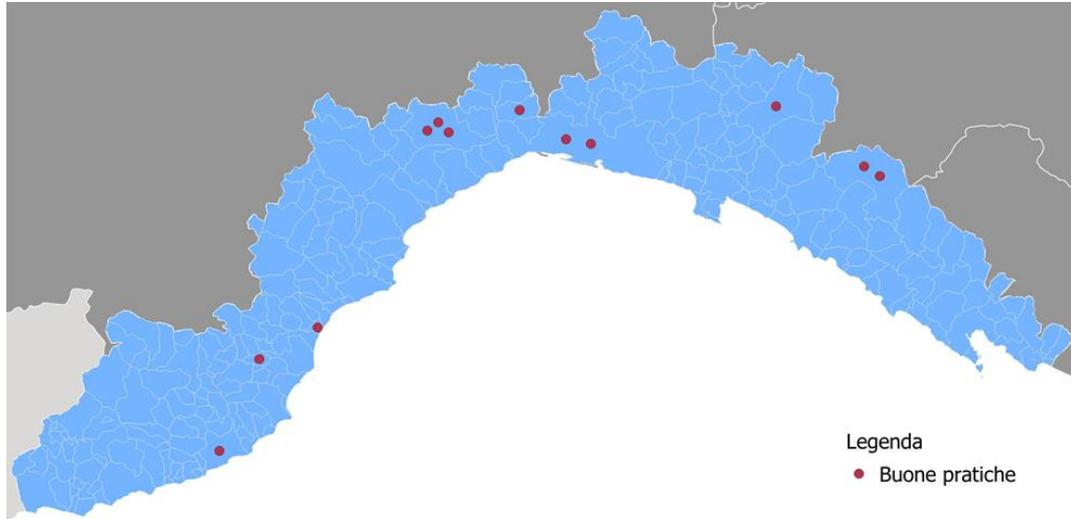
It should be noted that in order to identify the BPs and, above all, to use them in the improvement of the EU programming, it is necessary the coexistence of the "intrinsic" characteristics of the intervention (e.g. sustainability, innovation, effectiveness, etc.) with the requirements deriving from its application to the target context, expressed in the criteria of relevance and reproducibility.

The **process carried out for the identification and analysis of the BPs** was divided into the following **main phases**:

- 1) **comparison and sharing, between the Evaluation team and the regional offices** involved, in various capacities, in the planning and implementation of rural development policies, about the main *criteria to use in order to select the BPs of the RDP and on the "population" of interventions in the which to apply this selection*;
- 2) **identification of a first group of potential best practices** through the application of the aforementioned selection criteria; this activity was carried out mainly by the MA and by the regional structures involved in various capacities in implementing the RDP;
- 3) **analysis of the potential BPs proposed**, carried out by the Evaluation group with the support provided by the regional structures and the collaboration of the beneficiaries of the interventions. For this activity, two sources were used as the main information and judgment bases:
 - a) the **technical-administrative documentation**;
 - b) the results of the **interviews with the Beneficiaries and promoters of the interventions**;
- 4) on the basis of the results of the previous analyses, the process ended with the **final selection and description** of the first 12 Best Practices of the RDP, listed in Chapter 2 through homogeneous monographic sheets.

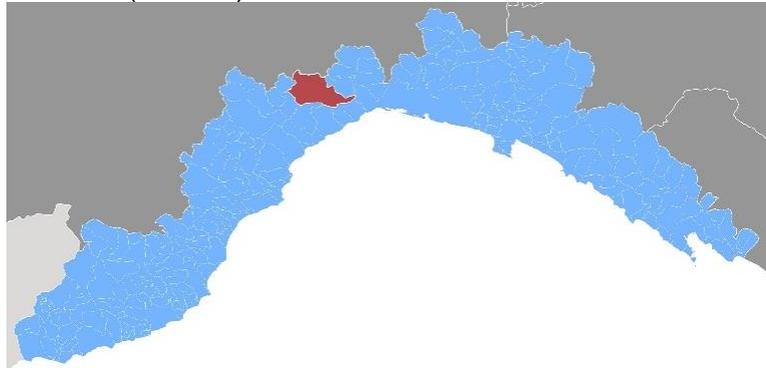
2. The description and the main elements of the first Best Practices selected

As anticipated in the introduction, in this chapter the "summary monographic sheets" of the 12 Best Practices (BP) selected to date are proposed.



2.1 Agricultural brewery in the Ligurian mountain

GENERAL INFORMATIONS

<i>Location</i>	Sassello (Savona) Badani 
<i>Beneficiary</i>	Brewery Altavia
<i>Purpose of the intervention</i>	Create and develop a company able to produce and sell craft beer using agricultural materials obtained in its own company (agricultural brewery)
<i>Interventions carried out with the support of the RDP</i>	Company investments for the cultivation of barley and hops and for brewing, including the phases of maltification, refermentation, maturation and bottling (Submeasures 4.1 and 4.2); spaces equipped for the presentation and tasting of beers (Submeasure 6.4)
<i>Keyword</i>	Beer - transformation of agricultural products - direct sales
<i>Financial resources</i>	Total investment made: € 264.167 (excluding VAT)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

1. Context and reasons for the intervention

The intervention takes place in a mountain area in the province of Savona, with a high naturalistic and landscape value (Beigua Regional Natural Park) and characterized by the presence of numerous typical agro-food productions. These potentials of the territory and its tourist attraction - also favored by its proximity to the Ligurian Riviera - encourage the development of entrepreneurial initiatives, such as this one, focused on the recovery, transformation and direct sale of local products in the same company. This is in contrast to the ongoing negative trends in depopulation and in the reduction of agricultural activities, which weigh on regional rural areas.

In this context, the 2014-20 RDP identifies as a priority requirement the support to investments aimed at increasing the competitiveness of businesses. This is a positive example of application of the development strategy for rural areas adopted by the RDP and of the integration of its aforementioned tools in support of the project idea developed by the Beneficiary to "grow beer".

ELEMENTS CHARACTERIZING THE BEST PRACTICE

<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>The investments made by the company "Altavia" with the contribution of the RDP have shown a good level of <u>economic and financial sustainability</u>: the profitability of the company is such as to quickly repay the investment cost and be able to stabilize over time the labor employed. These results, estimated already ex-ante during the preliminary assessment of the request for support, seem to have been achieved in the post-investment situation.</p> <p>The <u>environmental sustainability</u> of the company created and the activities that it has initiated is showed by some main elements: being a feasible example of a new production activity, in contrast to the recognized phenomena of depopulation and abandonment of rural areas and loss of "active management" of the territory performed by farmers. At the same time, the company and the sale of its products contribute to increasing knowledge of the Beigua area and encourage visits by tourists from urban centers and the nearby Riviera.</p>
<p>Innovation</p>	<p>The brewery uses recently acquired and therefore technologically advanced systems and equipment. The main elements of innovation are, however, identifiable in the agricultural phase, in particular in the recovery and enhancement of some varieties of barley (beer couplet) suitable for the production of malt for brewing and which require also adequate agronomic management of the crop, especially in fertilization.</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>Despite the initial delays in the submission and assessment phase of the applications for support, the realization of the investments, starting from their approval, has generally respected the chronogram defined in the Business Development Plan. The <u>economic results</u> achieved after about two years from the start of production activities, are in line with the forecasts, both in terms of production capacity and, above all, of creation of a wider network of customers (specialized premises and direct consumers) and price checked. In 2019, a turnover of approximately 250,000 euros was achieved, with annual increases of 30% from the initial one. The good ability to maintain sufficient levels of turnover should also be highlighted, even in the current emergency situation for COVID - 19, thanks to the production and organizational flexibility, the characteristics of the marketing channels and the links established with customers/consumers.</p> <p>The <u>employment results</u> achieved are also significant: 3 full-time employees and 1 part-time employees, with the prospect of hiring a new full-time employee shortly.</p>
<p>Relevance and replicability</p>	<p>The intervention is <u>relevant</u> for the territorial context in which it is carried out, the District of Beigua, as a concrete example of a business development model - based on the integration, in the company, of the cultivation, transformation and marketing phases – able to respond to present needs. This makes this model potentially "<u>replicable</u>" in the area or in regional territorial contexts similar in terms of problems and potential (like the other "rural areas").</p> <p>As highlighted by the young entrepreneur, the essential condition for the success of similar initiatives is the preliminary development of a clear and realistic business project that defines the type of product you want (and can) make and</p>

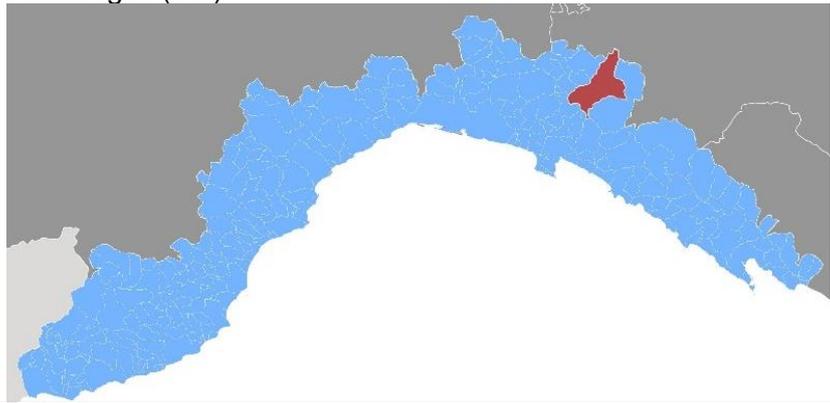
to whom and how to propose it. Ultimately, the search for an adequate balance between personal expectations and awareness of the constraints and potential of the territory in which the company is born and to which maintain a close relationship and acquire competitive factors.

Integration of support tools

The intervention is a positive example of integration between the various public support tools, and not only, in favor of the development of new entrepreneurship in mountain areas. The elaboration of a feasible business project starting from the initial idea was facilitated by the participation in 2014 in the Campus of the *ReStartApp* business incubator of the Garrone Foundation of Genoa. The subsequent participation in the RDP, by combining and integrating among them multiple support tools (Submeasures 4.1, 4.2, 6.1, 6.4), has therefore allowed the realization of the project, through the investments necessary for the concrete start of production activities.

2.2 Innovations in a dairy

GENERAL INFORMATIONS

<i>Location</i>	Rezzoaglio (GE) 
<i>Beneficiary</i>	Dairy Val d'Aveto srl Legal representative: Pastorini Graziella
<i>Purpose of the intervention</i>	Extend and diversify the production capacity of the existing dairy
<i>Interventions carried out with the support of the RDP</i>	Corporate investment in real estate and purchase of processing equipment (Submeasure 4.2)
<i>Keyword</i>	transformation of agricultural products - dairy - Innovation
<i>Financial resources</i>	Total investment made: € 1.084.155 (excluding VAT) Public contribution: € 433,661 (40% of the total investment)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

1. Context and reasons for the intervention

The territorial context in which the company operates is the Ligurian hinterland, a few kilometers from the coast and from Genoa, so much so that the Municipality of Rezzoaglio, and others in the area, are an integral part of the metropolitan city territory. The Val d'Aveto, a link between Chiavari and Rapallo on the Ligurian coast and Piacenza in the Po valley through the once important and thriving Val Trebbia, has been characterized since the 1950s by depopulation, aging of the

population, abandonment of agricultural activities and contraction of cultivated areas. For some time now, public intervention policies that favour new settlements of activities, mainly agricultural, but also tourism, have been opposed to these negative trends, with respect to which the territory has shown evident, albeit timid, signs of positive reaction.

The economic resources are still the exploitation of the woods and the residual agricultural activity, with small industrial settlements and a lively but not very significant summer tourist activity.

Part of the territory is within the Aveto Regional Natural Park, whose territory is crossed by a stretch of the Alta Via dei Monti Liguri, the most significant hiking route in the hinterland of Liguria.

The Val d'Aveto Dairy in Rezzoaglio is an important entrepreneurial reality and a concrete example of a strenuous, but positive application of the development strategies promoted by the RDP Liguria, strategies that are based on improving environmental performance, the quality of production and innovation of product.

ELEMENTS CHARACTERIZING THE BEST PRACTICE

<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>The investments made by Caseificio Val d'Aveto were concluded without experiencing any particular difficulties and the company can operate in the new available spaces; for the company, these were investments that were <u>economically and financially sustainable</u>, even if the positive effects on turnover, cost containment and rationalization of the use of production factors are expected for the next financial year 2021, after the COVID-19 emergency has been overcome. The investments certainly present the requirement of <u>environmental sustainability</u> for the solutions adopted aimed at saving energy and reducing water consumption.</p>
<p>Innovation</p>	<p>The first form of <u>innovation</u> concerns the <u>product</u>: Yogurt "colato" is undoubtedly a new product in the yogurt sector, although it is apparently very similar to the type of "Greek" Yogurt, which however does not acidify at low temperatures. The second innovation concerns the <u>process</u> with the characteristic "pouring" phases at low temperatures on dripping shelves for many hours. These are new processes and products with respect to consolidated practices in the territory and in this kind of production sector.</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>The Yoghurt processing and packaging equipment, already put into operation, confirms the quality of the choices made regarding their effectiveness in rationalizing and simplifying the production process.</p> <p>Despite some delays in the initial stages, the good planning of the interventions made it possible to respect the implementation times. In particular, it should be noted the great attention and availability of the local authority and other interested bodies that have provided concrete support to avoid delays in starting the works.</p> <p>The economic results after the first year of productive activity in the "new" organization determined by the interventions, are in line with forecasts, but the 2020 turnover will inevitably be negatively influenced by the emergency situation from COVID-19, which will lead to delays in reaching production regime and in the development of new commercial channels.</p>

**Relevance
and
replicability**

The intervention is very relevant for the municipality of Rezzoaglio and for the entire surrounding territorial context, for the economic and employment effects. It is customary for agri-food companies to settle in areas characterized by the presence of all types of services (roads, railways, commercial areas, high population density) in order to reduce costs and have larger and closer markets. Instead, the members of the Dairy have chosen the opposite path, showing that they believe in the project started way back in 1991.

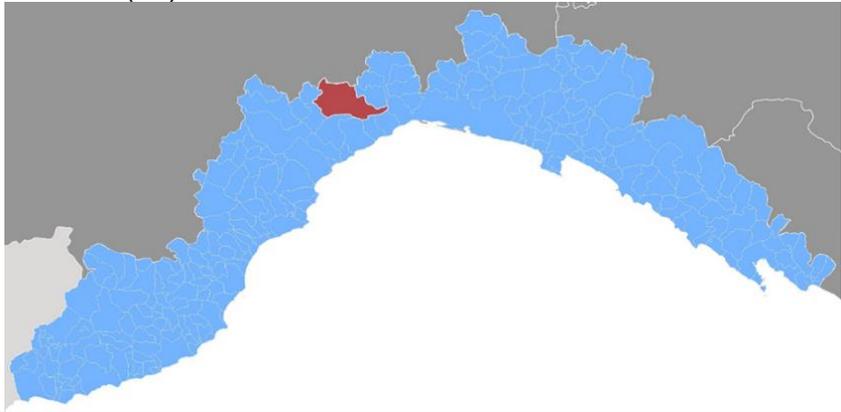
Being a company of a certain economic importance and an intervention with a cost of more than one million euros, it is difficult to find reproducibility aspects of the project, which remains an almost unique example, although it is desirable that many other companies (small or large) invest in the internal areas in the future, reversing the abandonment process that has characterized them in recent decades.

**Integration
and
Cooperation**

The intervention didn't use other public support tools or of the RDP. Nonetheless, the project is part of actions aimed to enhancing the rural areas of Liguria, as well as the Aveto and Alta Via dei Monti Liguri Natural Park.

2.3 The Snail of Beigua

GENERAL INFORMATIONS

<i>Location</i>	Sassello (Sv) 
<i>Beneficiary</i>	Chiocciola del Beigua Agricultural Society Legal representative: Giorgio VALLARINO (young farmer)
<i>Purpose of the intervention</i>	Create and develop a business of breeding and selling snails for food use
<i>Interventions carried out with the support of the RDP</i>	Settlement Young farmer (Submeasure 6.1). Company investments for land arrangement, fences, well, water distribution system, purchase of machines and tools (Submeasure 4.1)
<i>Keyword</i>	Heliciculture - Abandoned land recovery - direct sale
<i>Financial resources</i>	Total investment made: € 135.154 (excluding VAT) Public contribution: € 94,607 (70% of the total investment) Prize for setting up the young farmer: € 32,000

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

1. Context and reasons for the intervention

The territorial context in which the company operates is in the Ligurian hinterland, in the Municipality of Sassello, about twenty kilometers from the most famous coastal resorts. In a form similar to other rural areas, it is characterized by the depopulation, aging population, abandonment of farming activities and contraction of cultivated surfaces.

The context of a "mountain rural area" of high naturalistic and landscape value is also characterized by the presence of typical agri-food products and, as an additional element favorable to new settlements, by relatively low values of the land market. Taken together, these factors are favorable for the development of entrepreneurial initiatives such as the one described here, which are based on the recovery of land in partial or total abandonment in order to start local agricultural or livestock production - in this case as innovative as heliciculture - important to stem the trend towards depopulation and for the creation of value in rural areas that still appear vital, but structurally and socially weak.

The adhesion to the RDP took place after having planned in detail the intervention with the support of the International Heliculture Institute of Cherasco (Cuneo), which provided the elements for a correct, innovative and effective technical-economic management of the farm, including consultancy in the drafting of the Business Plan to verify the economic sustainability of the investment. The Chiocciola del Beigua Company then presented two subsequent requests for support under Submeasure 4.1 in addition to the request for a first settlement award under Submeasure 6.1 of the young partner Vallarino Giorgio as head of the company.

ELEMENTS CHARACTERIZING THE BEST PRACTICE

Sustainability

The investments made are completed, but they have not yet reached the level of economic and financial sustainability, expected when fully operational between 2020 and 2021. Moreover, the first production and economic results are in line with those envisaged in the business economic plan, drawn up in collaboration with the Heliculture Center of Cherasco (Cuneo) which follows and assists the beneficiary (like all the associates of the Center). In particular, there is a higher than expected productivity/mq, probable effect of the ideal climatic and environmental conditions of the site.

The company created and the activities launched present the requisite of environmental sustainability, helping to combat the depopulation and abandonment of rural areas. As in similar cases, activities and products contribute to increased knowledge of the territory and promote the growth of forms of naturalistic and environmental tourism, advocated by general policies to support rural areas.

Innovation

The first form of innovation concerns the activity itself; heliciculture is a new sector in the local panorama, but also rare in Liguria.

In addition, the company has adopted, on the recommendation of the Heliculture Institute of Cherasco, the most innovative techniques for the rational breeding of the snail, namely the "complete" natural cycle system (the product is not the snails introduced and "fattened" but those that are born from brooding snails and develop) and "natural migration", with spontaneous movement from the breeding areas to the fattening ones.

Of particular environmental, but also managerial, innovation is the sophisticated irrigation system for nebulization, programmed and automated, which allows to rationalize the use of water and obtain an ideal distribution, both for the surface and the ground, and for the life and development of snails. These are elements that demonstrate the implementation of new processes, methods and products with respect to established practices in the territory and in this production sector.

Effectiveness

The careful planning and the long phase of preparation of the project idea that preceded the presentation of the requests for support within the RDP, allowed to a substantial respect of the implementation times of the intervention.

There have been moments of difficulty, not so much in relation to the RDP procedures, as to the authorization processes started after the approval, in particular during the Conference of services; constraints have been imposed for the works connected to the excavation of the well and the laying of the accumulation tanks (modified during construction compared to those originally planned to adapt them to the needs of the irrigation system planned in the meantime) and a painting of the already positioned sheet metal fences was imposed, to adapt them to landscape requirements.

These difficulties led to not substantial delays, and additional costs.

The economic results after the first year of activity are in line with the forecasts even if the 2020 turnover, which was expected to reach or exceed 100,000 euros, will inevitably be negatively affected by the emergency situation from COVID - 19, which seems to preclude at least the commercial channel from for the cruise companies.

Hoping for a rapid recovery of the restaurant sector, which already in the first year has absorbed most of the production with the demand greater than the offer, the company will be able to overcome the difficulties both by strengthening the network of already consolidated and loyal customers (fishmongers), and by giving the product to the Cherasco heliciculture center, which guarantees collection from the members, but at a less profitable price (around € 5/kg).

The employment results attest that the use of 1 full-time working unit is already possible today; following the start-up of all the enclosures of the farm in 2020 it will be necessary to use 1 additional unit, or 2 part-time, with remuneration for all members, at variable quotas.

Relevance and reproducibility

The intervention is relevant for the territorial context of the Municipality of Sassello, for the Union of Municipalities to which it belongs and more generally for the surrounding territory of Beigua.

It is a new company whose owners don't have roots in the territory, but they have chosen it for its characteristics and potential, creating an innovative activity that integrates with the existing reality and with the projects to relaunch these rural areas.

Its reproducibility doesn't concern so much the specific breeding activity as heliciculture is in any case a minor sector, (which involves a limited use of agricultural area), but rather the business model of development that the young entrepreneur and its partners planned and subsequently created.

Although not originally in possession of specific skills and training bases, the three partners of Chiocciola del Beigua have long analyzed their design idea, identified a sector and a product with positive economic potential

and margins and they adopted a first marketing plan. This was done taking into account the constraints and potential of the territory in which the company was born and with the precious technical and training support of the Heliciculture Institute of Cherasco. Lastly, it should be noted that the three partners also paid a part of the share capital that was appropriate to the needs of the project.

Therefore, this constitutes a model of useful approach for other young people from rural areas willing to start successful businesses, integrating them with the richest and most articulated economic district of the Ligurian Riviera.

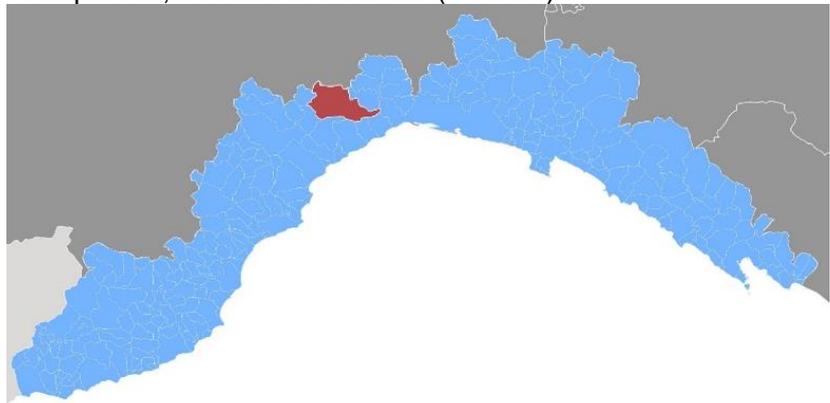
**Integration
and
Cooperation**

If the integration between Submeasures 6.1 and 4.1 is excluded, the intervention didn't use other public support instruments.

Nonetheless, the project fits harmoniously within the framework of other existing actions and tools aimed at the enhancement of rural areas, such as the Beigua Natural Park (having requested and obtained the inclusion of snails in the basket of products with the "Beigua" brand) or the Alta Via dei Monti Liguri, an excursion route that crosses also the territory of the Municipality of Sassello and which is proposed as a guiding thread for the development of hiking, food and wine, naturalistic tourism in the rural areas of Liguria.

2.4 Goat farming in the mountains

GENERAL INFORMATION

<i>Location</i>	Piampaludo, fraction of Sassello (Savona) 
<i>Beneficiary</i>	Cascina Giacobbe
<i>Purpose of the intervention</i>	To create and develop a livestock company for goat farming, with milk processing and sale of products on the farm
<i>Actions carried out with the support of the RDP</i>	Farm investments for the purchase of agricultural machinery and equipment, construction and equipment of premises for animal shelter, barn, milking room, dairy and attached room for direct sale. Installation of photovoltaic and solar thermal systems (Sub-measure 4.1)
<i>Keywords</i>	Goat breeding - goat cheeses - mountain - Beigua Park
<i>Financial resources</i>	Total investment made: € 399.008 (excluding VAT) Public contribution: € 177,851 (45% of the total investment)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

1. Context and reasons for the intervention

The intervention takes place in a rural area of the province of Savona, falling within the Beigua Regional Natural Park, which in turn is included in a larger territory recognized by UNESCO as a Global Geopark (Beigua Global Geopark) given the presence of an exceptional geological heritage. The naturalistic interest of the area (geodiversity and biodiversity) joins the beauty and uniqueness of its landscape, favoured by the combination of the mountain ridges with the Ligurian Riviera (real "balconies on the sea") elements that together contribute to the high tourist attraction of the area. Further strengths are the typical agro-food production, including confectionery, dairy (milk and cheese), honey, fruit jams, baked goods and those deriving from the processing of beef and sheep. In order to enhance the role that these productions play in enriching the local biodiversity, the Beigua Park has created the "Gustosi per Natura" brand, assigned to fresh and processed agri-food products of local origin.

These potentials coexist and are partially countered in their expression by the social and economic criticalities that characterize the territory, similar to those verifiable in other rural areas: depopulation and aging of the population; less quantity and quality of social and essential services; insufficient communication infrastructures (viability, digital connections); with reference to the agricultural sector, further reduction of cultivated / used areas, companies and employees.

The strategy and tools implemented by the 2014-2020 RDP and the regional implementation of the National Internal Areas Strategy (Decree of the Regional Council n. 859 / 2014 also identifies the Beigua-SOL among the four internal regional areas of intervention, which affects the targeted territory) address these potentials and problems.

Cascina Giacobbe, already in light of the first results achieved a few years after its establishment, is an emblematic case of positive application of the public support strategy implemented with the RDP.

ELEMENTS CHARACTERIZING THE BEST PRACTICE

Sustainability

The livestock enterprise set up, with the contribution of the RDP, by the Giacobbe family has a good level of economic and financial sustainability: the profitability of the firm at full capacity is such as to quickly repay the investment cost (net of contributions) and able to stabilize the labour employed over time. These requirements, estimated in advance as early as the preliminary investigation phase, appear easily reachable in the post-investment situation.

The environmental sustainability of the company created is manifested by some of its main requirements: the consistency of the type of farming and the architectural characteristics of the structures built with the natural environment and the landscape connotations of the territory; being a feasible example of a new production activity, objectively in opposition to the well-known phenomena of depopulation and abandonment of rural areas and loss of the "active management" functions of the territory carried out by farmers; at the same time, the company and the sale of its products contribute to increasing the knowledge of the Beigua area and the reasons for its visit by tourists from urban centres and the nearby Riviera.

Innovation

The livestock company uses recently built or purchased structures and equipment, therefore technologically more advanced than those frequently found in other farms in the area.

Effectiveness

Despite the initial delays in the submission and investigation phase of the support applications, the realization of the investments has generally respected the time schedule defined in the Business Development Plan. The economic results achieved, about one year after the production activities are fully operational, are in line with forecasts, both in terms of production capacity of the farm (milk) and the dairy (cheese), and with regards to the price raised in the channels of sales used, with respect to which, however, there are still many margins for improvement, in particular in the increase in direct sales and related customers. The production results translate into a total turnover of approximately € 100,000 / year and satisfactory employment results (3 working units employed full time and 1 part-time unit).

**Relevance
and
Replicability**

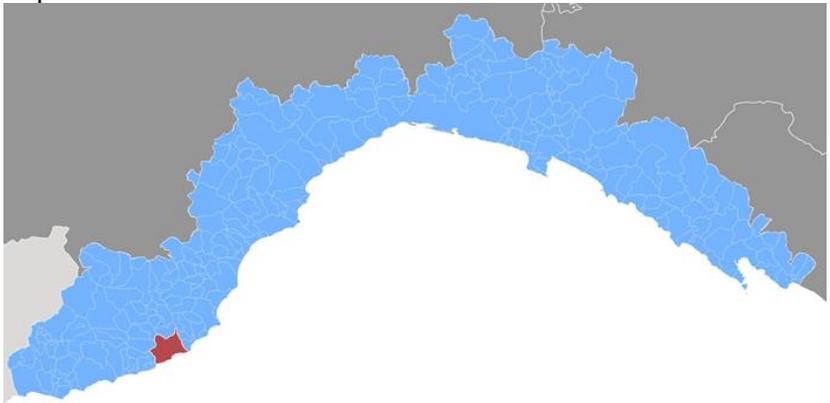
The intervention is relevant for the territorial context in which the District of Beigua takes place, as a concrete example of a business development model - based on the integration in the company between cultivation and breeding phases and transformation / marketing phases - capable of to respond to present needs. This makes this model easily "replicable" in other companies in the area or in regional territorial contexts with similar problems and potential (e.g. other rural areas). Its reproducibility is also favoured by a low level of technological innovation required.

**Integration
and
Cooperation**

The realization of the investments did not involve the use of differentiated public support instruments in an integrated form. The analysis carried out did not highlight a specific contribution of the intervention in favouring collaborations, and exchanges between the beneficiary and other companies or actors in the supply chain.

2.5 Young olive grower

GENERAL INFORMATION

<i>Location</i>	Imperia 
<i>Beneficiary</i>	Family company Aicardi
<i>Purpose of the intervention</i>	Develop the family olive farm by increasing the cultivated area and the value of production
<i>Actions carried out with the support of the RDP</i>	Settlement of a young farmer (Submeasure 6.1). Company investments for the productive recovery and mechanization of abandoned olive groves; renovation of buildings and purchase of equipment for processing, processing and packaging of olives (Sub-measure 4.1)
<i>Keywords</i>	olive growing - recovery of abandoned land - productive diversification
<i>Financial resources</i>	Total investment made: € 122,197 (excluding VAT) Public contribution: € 50,713 (54% of the total investment) Prize for setting up the young farmer: € 26,000

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

1. Context and reasons for the intervention

The intervention takes place in the hinterland of the province of Imperia, the "Riviera dei fiori", an area with rough morphology, of high naturalistic and landscape value, characterized by olive growing, based mainly on the Taggiasca variety which, together with other native cultivation, gives rise to the DOP Riviera Ligure extra virgin olive oil, a production which has increased sharply in quantity and value in recent years. The well-known phenomena of depopulation, aging of the population, reduction of agricultural activities in terms of cultivated areas and number of farms are opposed to these development potentials, with the consequent loss of their essential role of "safeguarding" the territory and the natural and landscape heritage. That is precisely the potential on which it is possible to build credible development paths for regional rural areas.

The 2014-2020 RDP strategy, in continuity with the previous ones, intended to break this mechanism, promoting not only the start but also the subsequent development of entrepreneurial realities led by young people able to reach, for structural conditions, levels of innovation and capacity relationship with the market, profitability levels adequate and stable over time. The business plan developed and implemented - with the financial support of the RDP - by the olive farm Aicardi is a valid example of the application of this strategy and the results achieved thanks to it.

ELEMENTS CHARACTERIZING THE BEST PRACTICE

Sustainability

The interventions carried out with the contribution of the RDP by the young farmer has a good level of economic and financial sustainability, because they determine an increase in profitability for the company such as to quickly repay their cost (net of contributions) and able to stabilize the workforce over time. These requirements, estimated in advance during the preliminary assessment phase, appear to be achieved in the post-investment situation.

Environmental sustainability is mainly manifested in the benefits generated by the productive recovery and rational management of abandoned olive groves: the safeguarding of the identity elements of the traditional olive-growing landscape of rural areas; the greater defence against soil degradation and hydro-geological instability.

Innovation

The recovery and restructuring of olive groves allow the application of modern agronomic techniques, the adoption of more rational defence and fertilization practices, a greater level of mechanization. In the processing and transformation phases, no significant innovations or changes are introduced with respect to traditional technologies and practices widespread in the area.

Effectiveness

The preliminary phase of the requests for support took longer than expected. However, the realization of the investments, starting from their approval, has generally respected the time schedule defined in the Business Development Plan, without encountering significant obstacles.

The economic results achieved, about a year after the conclusion of a large part of the investments (except for the complete entry into production of the recovered olive groves) are higher than expected, thanks mainly to a favourable trend in the demand for olives and to the appreciation that the company's production obtains on the market. This also translates into good results in terms of the creation and stabilization of work units, currently 3 full-time and further increasing in the short term.

Relevance and Replicability

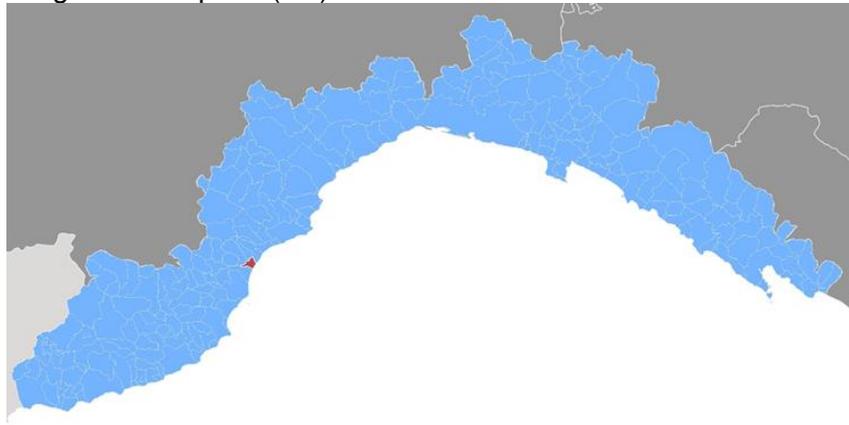
The intervention appears relevant for the territorial context in which it takes place, not in terms of quantitative impact, but as a concrete example of a business development model - based on the integration of agricultural and processing / marketing phases into the company - able to respond to present needs. This makes this model also sufficiently "replicable" in other companies in the area or in regional territorial contexts with similar problems and potential. Its replicability is also favoured by a not high level of technological innovation required.

Integration and Cooperation

The intervention is a positive example of functional integration between two support tools provided by the RDP which are able not only to encourage (with Submeasure 6.1) the start of the company run by the young person, but also to boost it, thanks to the investments financed with the Submeasure 4.1, the achievement of structural and management requirements appropriate to its development.

2.6 Rosemary in the Ligurian Riviera

GENERAL INFORMATION

<i>Location</i>	Borghetto S. Spirito (SV) 
<i>Beneficiary</i>	Ortingaunia Agricultural Company SS of Bruno Davide & Tosi Marco Regione Buesino 1 /A San Fedele - Albenga (SV) Legal representative: Tosi Marco
<i>Purpose of the intervention</i>	Production expansion, development and diversification (organic rosemary) of a company specialized in aromatic herbs
<i>Actions carried out with the support of the RDP</i>	Corporate investments for the arrangement of the land and for irrigation system with automated management. (Submeasure 4.1)
<i>Keywords</i>	Aromatic herbs - land recovery - saving irrigation water - organic agriculture.
<i>Financial resources</i>	Total investment made: € 58,157

INTERVENTION DESCRIPTION

1. Context and reasons for the intervention

The company operates in the context of the coastal strip in the Municipality of Albenga, an area that is characterized by the presence of a lively agricultural activity, mainly oriented towards greenhouse and open field horticulture.

The farms are numerous and organized and they put on the market a wide range of products ranging from the most common vegetables marketed in bulk, to the aromatic herbs packaged for organized distribution (OD) and free service. These are often specialized companies that in their ten-year development have had a dragging effect also for related industries. The geographical location of Albenga has also favoured the logistics necessary for the storage and distribution of the various products on the markets.

Albenga is also the headquarters of the Regional Centre for Agricultural Experimentation and Assistance (CeRSAA) which carries out experimentation activities, protection of agricultural products, dissemination of information on technological innovations, technical dissemination, training and professional qualification.

Over the years, this "district", rich in companies and products, has found less and less land available for cultivation, due to the parallel development of tourism activities. Instead, the tourism sector has determined greater possibilities for placing products and not surprisingly many companies, especially those of smaller and non-specialized sizes, have in recent years oriented themselves towards forms of direct marketing in the local area.

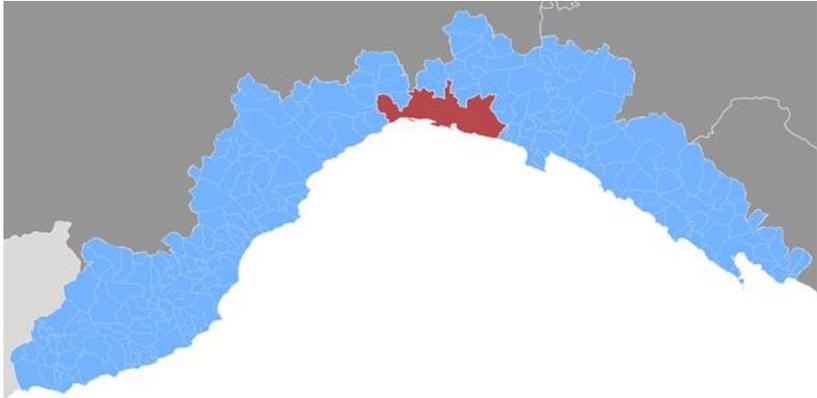
In this context, the 2014-20 RDP plays an irreplaceable role in supporting investments aimed at increasing the competitiveness of companies and this case is an example of applying this development strategy.

ELEMENTS CHARACTERIZING THE BEST PRACTICE

<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>The investments made by the Ortingaunia agricultural company are concluded and are already demonstrating their <u>economic and financial sustainability</u>. In particular, there is a higher than expected productivity, probably due to the ideal climatic and environmental conditions of the site but also to the particularly favourable and unexpected nature of the soil. The data, albeit partial, also confirm the <u>environmental sustainability</u> of the investments, especially as regards the low levels of irrigation water consumption.</p>
<p>Innovation</p>	<p>The investments do not have a particularly innovative connotation as regards the cultivation activity, if not for the size (it is believed that the one created is the largest plot of land cultivated with rosemary in Liguria). The irrigation system, on the other hand, presents elements of innovation in the possible fractional distribution of the water, also with respect to the degree of relative humidity of air and soil, and in the programming flexibility allowed by modern control devices.</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>The investments started immediately after the approval of the application for support. The times for carrying out the land improvement works and the irrigation system were in line with the forecasts and allowed to quickly activate the cultivation of rosemary in the new soil and to obtain the first productions already in 2019. From this point of view, the interventions maintained the expected effectiveness.</p>
<p>Relevance and Reproducibility</p>	<p>The intervention is undoubtedly <u>relevant</u> for the territorial context in which the company operates, both for the size of the Agricultural land grown in a single part, and for the product volumes that will derive from it. Conversely, the intervention is <u>difficult to reproduce</u>, in part for the same reasons: difficult or impossible to find plots with the characteristics of the one cultivated in this area today. Instead, what can be reproduced is the intervention <u>model implemented</u>, where the most qualifying point, also in environmental terms, is the recovery of a land that is no longer cultivated in order to obtain a good volume of product at full capacity also thanks to a modern irrigation system with reduced unit consumption and limited management costs.</p>
<p>Integration and Cooperation</p>	<p>The intervention does not include the integration between the various public support tools, apart from the recent conversion to organic started in 2016 and from which the commercial line of BioIngaunia aromatic herbs was born in 2019.</p> <p>The company has activated voluntary certification courses for some time, including GLOBALGAP, requested by many European large-scale distribution companies to guarantee quality products, safe and with documented traceability, and GRASP which integrates what is already in the GLOBALGAP standard on health and worker safety in the farms.</p>

2.7 Restart of basil production after the flood

GENERAL INFORMATION

<i>Location</i>	Genoa 
<i>Beneficiary</i>	Individual agricultural enterprise Cambiaso Stefano
<i>Purpose of the intervention</i>	Ensure the stability of the hillside affected by the hydrogeological instability caused by the November 2014 flood and restart the production of basil in a greenhouse
<i>Actions carried out with the support of the RDP</i>	Restoration of the terraces and reconstruction of a pre-existing greenhouse collapsed following a flood (Submeasure 5.2)
<i>Keywords</i>	Basil - natural disasters - restoration of agricultural potential - naturalistic engineering
<i>Financial resources</i>	Total investment made: € 517,517.12 (excluding VAT)

INTERVENTION DESCRIPTION

1. Context and reasons for the intervention

The intervention was carried out on agricultural land affected by a landslide following the flood that affected the province of Genoa on November 15, 2014. The land is located in an urban area (A), immediately upstream of the A10 motorway line Genoa-Savona, along the Ponente-Levante route, between the Genova Voltri and Genova Pegli tollbooths.

The land, arranged in terraces typical of the agricultural landscape of the Ligurian coastal hilly areas, is used for the cultivation of Genoese Basil (DOP) and fresh vegetables in the open field. The conditions of the land affected by the landslide movement (0.62 hectares) did not allow the continuation of cultivation. The landslide led to the almost total collapse of the stonewalls containing the terraces.

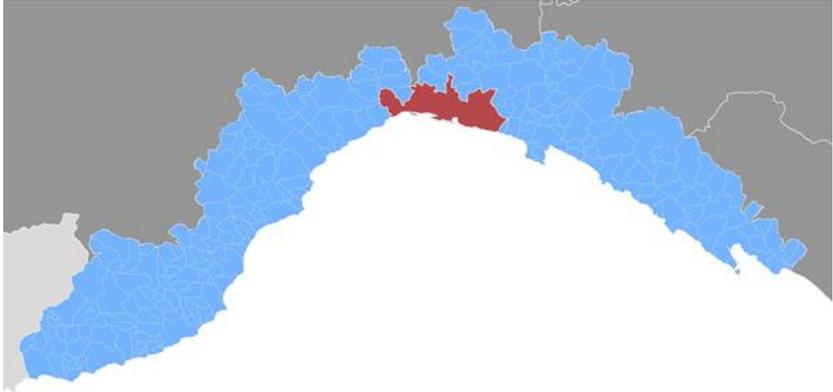
The Region intervened to support the investments necessary for the restoration of agricultural land and the production potential damaged by the calamitous event of November 2014 through sub-measure 5.2 of the RDP Liguria, approving, with Decree of the Regional Council n. 1394 of 15/12/2015, the criteria and methods for submitting simplified support applications. Finally, once the functionality of the IT services of the national agricultural information system (SIAN) has been verified, the Region, with Decree n. 1329 of 30/12/2016, has adopted the selection criteria and approved the procedures for the presentation of final applications.

ELEMENTS CHARACTERIZING THE BEST PRACTICE

<i>Sustainability</i>	The intervention produces lasting benefits over time, safeguarding both the economic activity of the farmer and the environmental and landscape value of the terraces.
<i>Innovation</i>	The intervention represents an innovation compared to traditional terrace construction practices. The technical solutions adopted take into account the changed climatic conditions and the increased risk of flood events and hydrogeological instability, increasing the water-tightness capacity of the terrace system and the stability of the slopes. The orographic characteristics of the area, with narrow and steep access roads to the bottoms, do not allow the access of heavy vehicles and, consequently, the transport of building materials is very difficult, if not impossible in reasonable times. The naturalistic engineering solutions have minimized the movement of earth off the site and in order to create the two curbs in reinforced concrete, the pours were performed with the help of a helicopter.
<i>Effectiveness</i>	The intervention, provided with all the necessary authorizations, was carried out immediately after its approval. The farmer has resumed his activity on the farm and its effects are adequate and consistent with the objectives of restoring the agricultural potential damaged by the flood. The terraces have been restored ensuring both the stability of the side and the maintenance of the rural landscape. The draining system in the terraces and the ducts ensure the constant outflow of groundwater ("vivagne") and surface water, even in the case of heavy rains.
<i>Relevance and replicability</i>	The intervention represents an effective response to the need for adaptation of the terraces to climate change and, as such, is reproducible in other situations in the Ligurian hilly area.
<i>Integration and cooperation</i>	<p>The interventions to restore agricultural potential cannot be combined with other financial instruments, existing at European, national and / or private level, for compensation for damage to structures and / or agricultural production.</p> <p>The permanent consolidation of the side is also preventive, causing effects similar to the interventions provided by sub-measure 5.1 to prevent damage due to climate change and other catastrophic events.</p>

2.8 Restart of organic fruit and vegetables production after the flood

GENERAL INFORMATION

<i>Location</i>	Genoa 
<i>Beneficiary</i>	Gli Orti di Staglieno SS Agricola Salita San Leonardo 13/9, 16128 Genoa Legal representative: Massera Marco
<i>Purpose of the intervention</i>	Restoration of dry stone walls and of the farm's agricultural potential, damaged by the 2014 flood
<i>Interventions performed with RDP support</i>	Slope rehabilitation with recovery of agricultural land and reconstruction of collapsed greenhouse (sub-measure 5.2)
<i>Keywords</i>	Fruit and vegetables farming – natural disasters – restoration of agricultural potential – dry stone walls
<i>Financial resources</i>	Total investment: € 32.855 Public contribution: € 26.284

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

1. Context and motivations of intervention

The farm's operational headquarters are located in the territory of Municipio IV - Genova Media Val Bisagno, which includes the Staglieno district. The activity takes place on the terraces of the east side upstream of the residential buildings rising on the edges of the Bisagno river.

It is an unusual location for a farm, but in the past many farms, mainly producing fruit and vegetables, operated on the terraces held up by the typical dry stone walls that still today characterize much of the rural landscape surrounding the residential areas of Genoa; the fruit and vegetable productions of the terraces fed the markets of the nearby city. The particular context obviously conditions the very few farms that have survived the social and economic evolution of the last decades, preventing any expansion of the agricultural land.

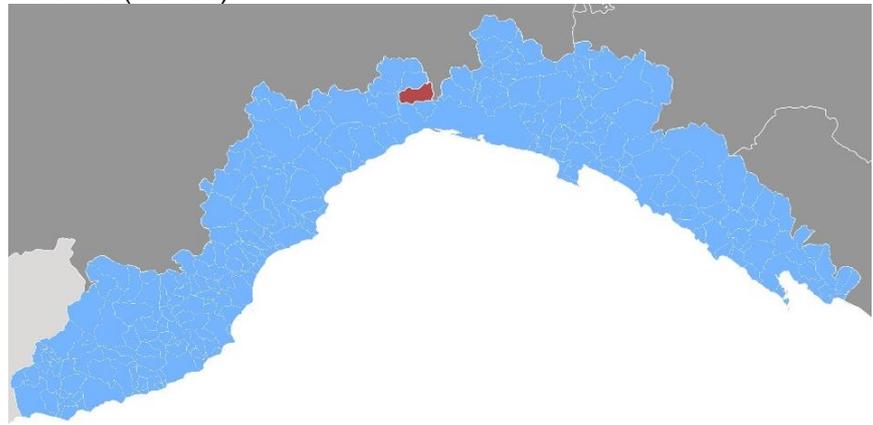
The RDP regional strategy for farms in these areas also foresees the possibility of obtaining economic support for construction works, plants, purchasing of machines and equipment. Other measures are added to these "competitiveness" measures, aimed at landscape conservation and maintenance of existing artefacts – in order to prevent phenomena of hydrogeological instability – or at the reconstruction of artifacts damaged by flood events, in this specific case referred to sub-measure 5.2.

The intervention is therefore aimed at the reconstruction of terraces, including some dry stone walls which were holding up terraces farmed by the Società Gli Orti di Staglieno, damaged by the flood of October 10th 2014.

ELEMENTS CHARACTERIZING THE BEST PRACTICE

<i>Sustainability</i>	The investments realized by “Gli Orti di Staglieno” are concluded, even though they have not covered all the damage caused by the flood event, which the farm is progressively repairing on its own. Anyway, the intervention has brought back to farming a substantial portion of the damaged terraces, with positive effects on the economic side that, for the farm, have equally positive consequences on the <u>financial and economic sustainability of the intervention</u> . The investments’ <u>environmental sustainability</u> is also proved since erosion processes have been stopped, restoring the landscape aspect of the site.
<i>Innovation</i>	These investments don’t have any innovative connotation, on the contrary terraces held up by dry stone walls are a very traditional – yet effective – solution to support cultivable terraces on the steep Ligurian slopes.
<i>Effectiveness</i>	The effectiveness of the performed intervention is confirmed as regards the restored wall portions, that have allowed to recover an equally important portion of cultivated area on the terracing level. The intervention has proved as very effective in eliminating risks for safety in the workplace, that were caused by collapsed walls and from the possible landslides of the bare ground behind them.
<i>Relevance and reproducibility</i>	The intervention is undoubtedly <u>relevant</u> not in the absolute sense, but in relation to the territorial context in which the farm operates; moreover, it is relevant to have favoured a restoration, yet partial, of pre-existent artefacts, this way avoiding new possible damages for adverse meteorological events both to the farm and the land below. The intervention is on the other hand perfectly <u>replicable</u> in all the territory’s terraced areas still farmed.
<i>Integration and Cooperation</i>	The intervention is part of a business context characterized by organic farming with adherence to Measure 11, but no forms of cooperation are foreseen. It is interesting, on the other hand, the integration of business activities in partnership with agricultural training Institutions, which have also held practical training courses in the farm’s headquarters for building dry stone walls, and non-profit organizations; in this context, the farm deals with social disadvantage, hosting above all migrants in need of integration.

2.9 Recovery and defence of forest topsoil

GENERAL INFORMATION	
<i>Location</i>	Masone (Genoa) 
<i>Beneficiary</i>	Cooperative Agricultural Firm Punta Martin Legal representative: Ivan Agostino MASSA
<i>Purpose of the intervention</i>	Recovery and improvement of forest floor damaged by fire and prevention of fire risks and hydrogeological instability.
<i>Interventions performed with RDP support</i>	Forestry interventions to encourage the development of forests less subject to fire risks (Sub-measure 8.3). Interventions for the reconstitution of forests damaged by fire, with techniques that avoid erosion and hydrogeological instability (Sub-measure 8.4)
<i>Keywords</i>	Forest topsoil – forestry operations – defence against fires and hydrogeological instability
<i>Financial resources</i>	Total investment: € 209.112,48 Public contribution: € 209.112,48 (100% of total cost)

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

1. Context and motivations of the intervention

The context of intervention is represented by forest areas located in rural areas of Liguria, where, as in other similar areas, numerous fires and instability phenomena have occurred in the past, favoured by desertion and by a lack of attention for forest management.

The forest interested by the intervention is in a territory managed by the Punta Martin rural Consortium in the municipality of Masone (GE) and has characteristics of high natural value, falling partly in an area of the Natura 2000 Network and more precisely within the Site of Community Importance Punta Martin (IT 1331501), managed by the Beigua regional park.

The Punta Martin rural consortium, which lacks its own structures capable of operating, has thus entrusted the responsibility for the interventions here described to the Cooperative Punta Martin, which has been operating for many years as a forestry company specializing in many forest areas throughout Liguria, and with which it has already collaborated on several occasions.

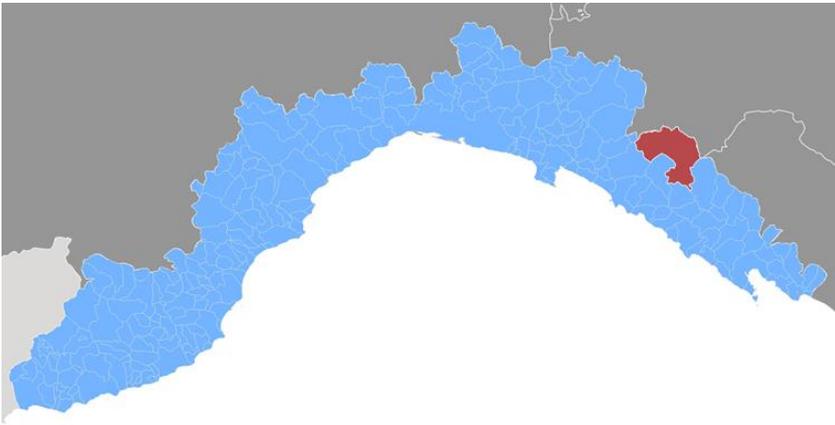
The projects, financed through the RDP Liguria, is one of the many initiatives implemented by the Cooperative over time in the area subject to intervention, using other EAFRD funding.

ELEMENTS CHARACTERIZING THE BEST PRACTICE

<p>Sustainability</p>	<p><u>Economic and financial sustainability</u> The nature of the interventions guarantees economic sustainability, since it increases the forest's environmental value, making it possible to conceive future multifunctional forest management activities.</p> <p><u>Environmental sustainability</u> The project is important as a model for a more effective and rational forest management, with an approach that is non-invasive and mainly naturalistic, favouring the spontaneous growth of "native" species (mainly broadleaved) and increasing biodiversity.</p>
<p>Innovation</p>	<p>The interventions financed and implemented are not particularly characterized by innovation. However, the beneficiary Cooperative has an approach to forestry that makes use of all the best intervention techniques and modern equipment and machines that allow effective cultivation treatments.</p> <p>In management, the beneficiary company will adopt, as in other similar situations, unusual and new management methods. For example, in the post-intervention management of recovered pasture areas, it has introduced a group of donkeys, in turned pasture and using electric fences, for the cleaning of clearings, embankments and edges of roads or naturalistic engineering works.</p> <p>In order to do this, it has not turned, as usual, to third-parties zootechnic firms, but instead it has changed its own organizational structure, starting its own breeding farm.</p> <p>The beneficiary Cooperative intends to replicate this type of management approach in the geographical context here described, above all because it is preparatory to a possible use of the forest for tourism purposes.</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>The beneficiary Cooperative will continue to operate for the maintenance of the forest areas granted in use for the expected residual time (10 years), thus directing the forest's natural development in order to effectively bring it back to normal productivity conditions.</p>
<p>Relevance and replicability</p>	<p>The intervention is relevant for the territorial context of the Municipality of Masone and more generally for the Mount Beigua surroundings, and it is absolutely <u>reproducible</u> in similar contexts of the Ligurian Appennines.</p> <p>This is a useful model for other young people from rural areas willing to start successful activities, integrating them with the richest and most articulated economic and tourist district of the Ligurian Riviera.</p>
<p>Integration and Cooperation</p>	<p>The interventions are integrated with the adherence to two different sub-measures of the RDP, 8.3 and 8.4. Furthermore, they integrate with the Natura 2000 network and are part of the actions aimed at enhancing the Beigua regional park, in particular with the Alta Via dei Monti Liguri, which also crosses the territory of the Municipality of Masone and which is proposed as a link for the development of hiking, food and wine, naturalistic tourism in rural areas also in this area of Liguria.</p>

2.10 Active forest management and defence of forest topsoil

GENERAL INFORMATION

<i>Location</i>	Legal and operations headquarters: San Colombano Certenoli (GE) Location of the intervention: Monte Gòttero – Varese Ligure (SP)
	
<i>Beneficiary</i>	Company “Floricoltura Vivai Cademartori” owned by Paola Peirano
<i>Purpose of the intervention</i>	Improve forestry management, profitability and reduced risks of fire of a state-owned forest area.
<i>Interventions performed with RDP support</i>	Creation of a forest penetration route (Submeasure 8.3)
<i>Keywords</i>	Forest topsoil – active forestry management – defense against fires
<i>Financial resources</i>	Total investment (Request for financial aid): € 285.954 Total public contribution: € 285.954

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

1. Context and motivation of the intervention

Mount Gòttero is a peak dominating the surrounding territory that extends from Centocroci Pass – separating the provinces of Parma and La Spezia – and Brattello Pass, between the provinces of Parma and Massa Carrara.

The territory, whose central part is located at altitudes above 1,500 m asl, is characterized by elements of high naturalistic value, so much that includes two SCI "Monte Gòttero", distinguished only by the different territorial jurisdiction ("Monte Gòttero" Emilia- Romagna and "Monte Gòttero - Passo del Lupo" Liguria).

In addition to the naturalistic value of the rocky outcrops, the territory also has a varied vegetation profile, with rare species and rich in biodiversity; in very general terms, it can be said that the tops are characterized by the presence of grazing areas managed by livestock farms, while the slopes are covered with dense forests which at the highest altitudes are mainly beech woods, and at lower altitudes are mainly chestnuts and Turkey oaks. Some portions of the territory are covered with coniferous (pine) woods, a species mainly introduced in the past during reforestation interventions.

A part of the forest area is state-owned and the Liguria Region has entrusted its management, with a 12-year concession, to the consortium Monte Gòttero, whose members include the Society "Floricoltura Vivai Cademartori" owned by Peirano Paola, which is in charge of operational forest management. With this specific intervention, the beneficiary Company intends to start an "active" management in the context of the multifunctionality of the forest ecosystem on behalf of the consortium Monte Gòttero.

The motivation for the intervention depends on the fact that the forest surface of Mount Göttero is at high risk of fire, especially due to the presence of dried chestnut stumps and suckers, as well as conifers. The creation of a penetration route is considered an indispensable premise for all future actions of active and rational forest management, in particular to avoid or better manage fires, but also to promote a balanced development of indigenous broad-leaved trees, less subject to this risk. It is therefore a "preliminary" intervention, preparatory to subsequent projects and interventions.

The RDP is the tool through which it is possible to support the envisaged investments and implement forest valorization policies, including future integration projects between forestry, agricultural and tourist activities. In this sense, it should be noted that in the Monte Göttero area there is a branch of the Alta Via dei Monti Liguri, an essential element for the tourist-excursion component of Liguria, and that at the foot of the mountain group there is the Val di Vara, a well-known district of Ligurian organic productions.

ELEMENTS CHARACTERIZING THE BEST PRACTICE

Sustainability

The investments foreseen by the beneficiary company, Floricoltura Vivai Cademartori owned by Paola Peirano, have not yet finished.

Economic and financial sustainability

The project's profitability is based on the potential to use the state forest area to remunerate the capital invested through the sale or direct use of the forest resources (e.g. wood chips for wood boiler in the Company's nurseries).

Environmental sustainability

It is linked to the use of techniques that will reduce the population of black pine, a species introduced with artificial reforestation, favoring the spontaneous development of "autochthonous" broadleaved trees, more important in terms of fire prevention and resilience and for forest biodiversity.

Innovation

The construction of a forest penetration path does not in itself present particular elements of innovation. However, some technical choices (with the adoption of naturalistic engineering works on the excavation front upstream of the track, to consolidate the slope from the beginning of the works' execution, and the construction of some sections of dry stone walls to reduce the escarpment angle and always contain it within 35 °) can be defined as innovative, at least with respect to techniques adopted in the past in cases of similar forest road works.

Moreover, the innovation can be better understood in the post-intervention management of the intervention at its conclusion, when the beneficiary plans to adopt the most modern techniques of exploitation of forest surfaces for economic and environmental purposes (for example "hole cutter" to encourage renewal) also following the indications and guidelines of Associations (Pro Silva) to promote these techniques.

Effectiveness

Not being yet concluded, the effectiveness of the project can only be analyzed later.

However, it can be reiterated how the construction of the penetration route will allow easier access to the forest and facilitate its management.

***Relevance
and
reproducibility***

The intervention is very relevant in the context of the state forest of Monte Gòttero, because it represents a first significant intervention of forest viability in an area strongly lacking this kind of actions, and can contribute to the subsequent development of an income forestry but also of activities aimed at and harmonious development of forest multifunctionality.

Also for the beneficiary company, the project represents an important moment to consolidate the management activity of forestry areas under concession, which complements the traditional one of plant nursery.

The project is also reproducible, since it represents a model of useful approach also for other companies already operating in the sector, but also for newly established companies managed by young entrepreneurs who choose to engage in activities such as conservation of the territory's naturalistic values, their protection, the prevention of effects of natural disasters and fires.

These are problems that require new organization and skills to solve, but also good practices to follow.

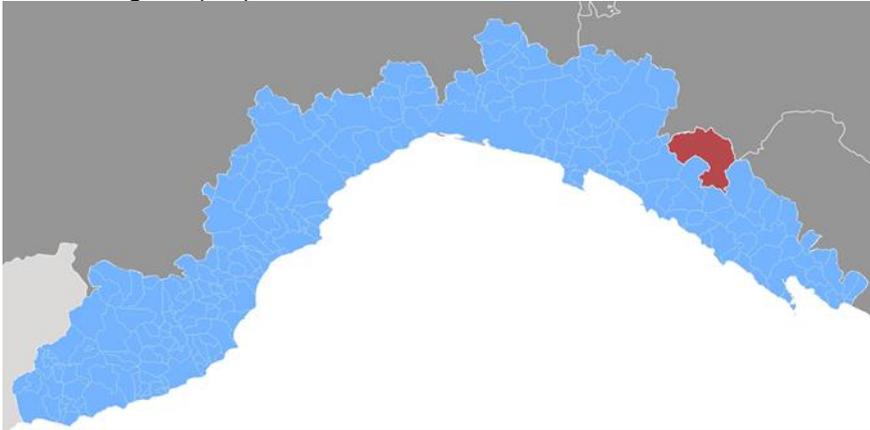
***Integration
and
Cooperation***

The project does not integrate with other RDP Measures, but it is intended in the framework of other existing actions and tools aimed at enhancing rural areas, such as the Alta Via dei Monti Liguri, which partially crosses the area subject to intervention.

Moreover, the intervention is partly carried out in the Natura 2000 network area and, for its promotion, the beneficiary company will benefit from the collaboration of the Pro Silva Italia Association that aims at the promotion of forestry "capable of meeting ecological and economic needs and social demands of today's society".

2.11 Infrastructure for access to agricultural and forestry land

GENERAL INFORMATION

<i>Location</i>	Varese Ligure (SP) 
<i>Beneficiary</i>	Municipality of Varese Ligure
<i>Purpose of the intervention</i>	Allow and improve accessibility, productive use and maintenance of agricultural and forest land
<i>Actions carried out with the support of the RDP</i>	Renovation works of the roadway with the reconstruction of the drainage system and the road surface / pavement; road safety protection and improvement works (Submeasure 4.3)
<i>Keywords</i>	Infrastructures - rural roads - access to agricultural and forestry land
<i>Financial resources</i>	Total investment made: € 353.081 (excluding VAT)

INTERVENTION DESCRIPTION

1. Context and reasons for the intervention

The intervention takes place in a rural area in the province of La Spezia, in Varese Ligure, a municipality located in the northern part of the Val di Vara.

The capital village is surrounded by 15 hamlets and, in the area, there are numerous historical elements as well as significant features of naturalistic interest (Sites of Community Interest) and landscape. The level of "quality of life" in terms of the environment and services to people and businesses is generally good. The total resident population reaches around 1,900 in 2019, confirming its progressive decrease over time (more than 5% in the last 20 years), an aspect that contributes to the classification of rural areas with "development problems" (areas D).

Agriculture is traditionally characterized by breeding activities and in recent years also by the significant development of organic production, as in the rest of the Val di Vara. Agricultural work, however, is hindered and rendered unprofitable, among other factors, also by the uneven morphology of the territory, combined with the current state of degradation in which most of the road infrastructures for access to agricultural and forest land are found. This determines the rarefaction of the cultivation operations, the reduced use of the land for production purposes and in many cases their complete abandonment, with consequent economic loss, reduced maintenance and control activities, increased risks of hydrogeological instability, negative effects in naturalistic terms (loss of biodiversity linked to agricultural and forest ecosystems) and landscaping.

Sub-measure 4.3 of the RDP is specifically aimed at supporting "investments in the infrastructure necessary for the development, modernization and adaptation of agriculture and forestry", also

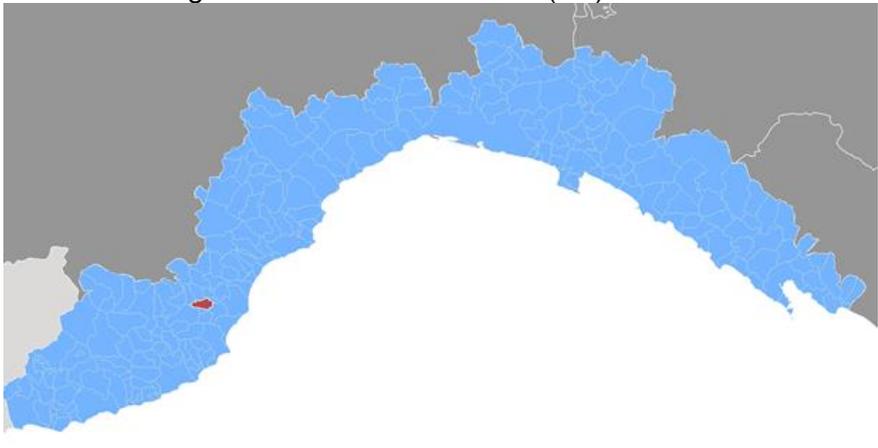
providing for adaptation to the needs of transit or regulation of water, roads or other forms of access to agricultural and / or forest land.

ELEMENTS CHARACTERIZING THE BEST PRACTICE

<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>This is a non-revenue generating public investment for which <u>economic sustainability</u> can be assessed in the indirect economic benefits (currently not quantifiable) for companies operating on land whose accessibility has improved. Benefits identifiable in the reduction of transport and movement costs by agricultural and forestry operators and other users (e.g. suppliers, buyers, tourists) and in the greater opportunities to be able to develop productive and economic diversification actions.</p> <p>The intervention also improves the <u>environmental sustainability</u> of the road infrastructure, reducing the risks of hydrogeological instability deriving from possible natural disasters (e.g. extreme weather events), hindering the abandonment and therefore promoting the active "monitoring" of agricultural or forest land, safeguarding the positive ecological and landscape externalities.</p> <p>At the same time, the improvement of roads and access favour the improvement of the living conditions of the local population, social relations, the possibility of better using the essential services, thus contrasting the depopulation phenomena (contribution in terms of <u>social sustainability</u>).</p>
<p>Innovation</p>	<p>Extraordinary maintenance works are carried out using modern naturalistic engineering techniques.</p>
<p>Efficacy</p>	<p>Extraordinary maintenance works are in progress, in accordance with the approved project and the relative chronogram.</p>
<p>Relevance and reproducibility</p>	<p>The intervention is <u>relevant</u> for the territorial context in which it takes place, resulting in benefits both for the operators involved in the productive use of the agricultural and forestry land of which access is improved, and for the local population in terms of road connection of the localities concerned. This is realized through works carried out in compliance with the construction and landscape features of the territory. These requirements make the infrastructure intervention easily <u>reproducible</u> in the area or in territorial contexts with similar problems and potential (e.g. other regional rural areas).</p>
<p>Integration and Cooperation</p>	<p>The intervention integrates functionally - with potential synergistic effects - with the investments in structural and technological modernization carried out on farms affected by the effects of infrastructure improvement. Corporate investments often made with the support of the RDP (e.g. with sub-measure 4.1).</p>

2.12 Irrigation infrastructures

GENERAL INFORMATION

<i>Location</i>	Fraction of Pogli del Comune di Ortovero (SV) 
<i>Beneficiary</i>	Irrigation Consortium of Land Improvement Pogli di Ortovero
<i>Purpose of the intervention</i>	Ensuring efficient rural infrastructure for the territory in order to avoid abandoning agriculture
<i>Actions carried out with the support of the RDP</i>	Improvement of the consortium irrigation infrastructure: replacement of pipes, restoration of the local well, water regulation works, improvement of the supply and distribution system and of the control system, replacement of the meters (sub-measure 4.3)
<i>Keywords</i>	Irrigation infrastructure - water saving
<i>Financial resources</i>	Total investment allowed: 197,470 euros (excluding VAT)

INTERVENTION DESCRIPTION

1. Context and reasons for the intervention

Ortovero is a rural town of about 1,600 inhabitants, located along the left bank of the Arroscia stream, 10 km from Albenga, in the province of Savona. The village is an ancient agricultural settlement and still today agriculture, based on the cultivation of vegetables, peaches, vineyards, olive groves, aromatic and ornamental plants, is among the main economic activities.

The Irriguous Land Improvement Consortium operates in the hamlet of Pogli. The Consortium owns a valid water collection concession, the capacity of the network is less than 250,000 m³ and the water body, where the well serving the irrigation infrastructure is located, is considered good in terms of quantity. Nonetheless, the plant was subject to significant water dispersions, mainly due to the lack of modern technological solutions capable of signalling anomalies and malfunctions of the network.

In fact, as described in the project attached to the support application, the pumping station was made up of a single submersible pump with a power of 15 kW. The auxiliary or rescue pump, of a vertical type that emerged, was no longer functional due to the flood of autumn 2014 which caused the flooding of the building that houses the plant.

Sub-measure 4.3 provides for the adaptation of the access roads to agricultural land and the construction of modernization works for irrigation systems and the provision of meters for measuring the water resources supplied, in order to reduce water losses and waste. To this end, the Consortium prepared the project and submitted the application for support on 15/03/2018.

ELEMENTS CHARACTERIZING THE BEST PRACTICE

<i>Sustainability</i>	The intervention produces lasting economic and environmental benefits over time, improving the infrastructure at the service of agriculture and preserving a good quantity of water.
<i>Innovation</i>	The intervention introduces important innovations in the management of irrigation infrastructures, introducing modern systems for controlling the functioning of the systems and constant monitoring of withdrawals and consumption.
<i>Efficacy</i>	The intervention is being completed. Modern control systems installed reduce the risk of waste and water dispersion, reducing withdrawals and improving the effectiveness of the distribution network.
<i>Relevance and Reproducibility</i>	The intervention represents an effective response to the need to adapt irrigation systems to reduce costs for irrigation and to save water, reproducible in other situations.
<i>Integration and Cooperation</i>	The intervention is integrated, favouring its adoption, with the investments for the transition to micro-irrigation made by the farms belonging to the irrigation Consortium, obtaining further effects on saving water.

3. Summary table and overall analysis of the selected Best Practices

In this Chapter, an attempt is made to evaluate the degree of "satisfaction" of the elements (or criteria) adopted in the selection of Best Practices, achieved by each intervention examined.

In other words, the table attempts to grade and compare the judgments provided in the final part by the individual monographic sheets illustrated in the previous chapter 2.

The judgments are attributed according to a simple three-level scale (low, medium, high) and are to be understood as the result of a first hypothesis subjectively elaborated by the Evaluation Group, on the basis of the information collected so far.

Looking at the table as a whole, we observe:

- ▶ The generally medium-high level reached by the interventions examined with respect to the majority of the selection criteria adopted, especially with regard to the **effectiveness** and **relevance** and **replicability** criteria; this result was significant, especially since the latter was the criterion for many aspects most important for the definition and choice of a "Best Practice";
- ▶ the degree of satisfaction of the **innovation** criterion is more heterogeneous, in half of the cases it is judged low, as a result of the failure to identify significant new elements both in the production processes and in the type of products; at the same time, the high evaluations given to 4 assessed interventions emerge, 3 of which related to entrepreneurial activities conducted by young people and one relating to irrigation infrastructure;
- ▶ the level of sustainability, in particular **economic and financial sustainability**, is generally medium-high; this is consistent with the aforementioned high level achieved by the effectiveness criterion (the economic objectives being prevalent in the initiatives examined), but it is also the result of the ex-ante evaluations of the proposals carried out in the preliminary assessment of support applications, also concerning precisely the financial sustainability of the investments;
- ▶ the level of **environmental sustainability** emerges - in terms of environmental benefits - especially in infrastructure projects (in particular in the irrigation one) and in the forestry field; for corporate development interventions, the environmental benefits are often indirect, i.e. identifiable in the positive effects that the start and permanence of new businesses entail in curbing the trend of depopulation of the internal areas (loss of the active presence of the territory and of its environmental and landscape values);
- ▶ finally, the degree of **integration** and potential synergy among the RDP tools within the individual company or infrastructure projects is overall low and verifiable, as already reported, in 6 BPs.

Tab.1 Summary table of the main elements (selection criteria) of the first 12 Best Practices selected

(X= basso – XX= medio - XXX= alto)

N.	Title	Location	Beneficiary	Elements characterizing the best practice: level of satisfaction achieved				
				Sustainability	Innovation	Effectiveness	Relevance and replicability	Integration and cooperation
1	Agricultural brewery	Sassello (SV)	Brewery Altavia	XXX (economic) XX (environmental)	XX	XXX	XX	XXX
2	Innovations in a dairy	Rezzoaglio (GE)	Dairy Val d'Aveto srl	XXX (economic) XX (environmental)	XXX	XXX	Relevance (XX) Replicability (X)	XX
3	The snail of the Beigua	Sassello (SV)	La Chiocciola del Beigua Agricultural Company	XX (economic) XX (environmental)	XXX	XXX	Relevance (XX) Replicability (X)	XX
4	Goat farming in the mountains	Sassello (SV)	Cascina Giacobbe	XX (economic) XXX (environmental)	X	XX	XX	X
5	Young olive grower	Imperia	Agricultural company famiglia Aicardi	XXX (economic) XX (environmental)	X	XXX	XXX	XX
6	Rosemary in the Ligurian Riviera	Borghetto S. Spirito (SV)	Agricultural company Ortingauinia	XXX (economic) XX (environmental)	XX	XXX	XX	X
7	Restart of basil production after the flood	Genoa	Agricultural company Cambiaso	XXX (economic) (XX (environmental)	XXX	XXX	XX	X
8	Restart of organic fruit and vegetables production after the flood	Genoa	Agricultural company Orti di Staglieno	X (economic) XXX (environmental)	X	XXX	XX	XX

N.	Title	Location	Beneficiary	Elements characterizing the best practice: level of satisfaction achieved				
				Sustainability	Innovation	Effectiveness	Relevance and replicability	Integration and cooperation
9	Recovery and defence of forest topsoil	Masone (GE)	Agricultural cooperative Punta Martin	XX (economic) XXX (environmental)	XX	XX	XXX	XX
10	Active forest management and defence of forest topsoil	Monte Göttero Varese Ligure (SP)	Company Floricoltura Vivai Cademartori	XX (economic) XXX (environmental)	XXX	XX	XXX	XX
11	Infrastructure for access to agricultural and forestry land	Varese Ligure (SP)	Municipality of Varese Ligure (SP)	XX (economic and social) XXX (environmental)	X	XX	XX	XX
12	Irrigation infrastructures	Ortovero (SV)	Irrigation Consortium of Land Improvement Pogli di Ortovero	XX (economic) XXX (environmental)	XXX	XXX	XX	XXX