

Quality of Life and Management of Living Resources

Key Action n° 5

Sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry, and integrated development of rural areas including mountain areas

DOLPHINS

**Development of Origin Labelled Products :
Humanity, Innovation, and Sustainability**

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**OLPs and rural development
Introductory Paper**

Responsibles

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STRATEGIES

- 0.1. **Focussing on strategies** means to analyse which actors are involved in OLPs protection and valorisation actions, how they behave, what are the effects of these valorisation strategies on rural development, and which is the role played by OLPs in rural development strategies.
- 0.2. **"Multifunctionality" session** give a general overview on the potential positive effects of OLPs on social welfare and hence represents a preliminary framework for our analysis, while the **"Measurement" session** should give some indications and tools on how to evaluate empirically the "success" of the strategies.

1. Preliminary issues

THE CONCEPT OF ORIGIN LABELLED PRODUCTS (OLPS)

- 1.1. OLPs are agro-food products strictly linked to their geographical origin, i.e. the territory they come from give them some specific characters.
- 1.2. **The link between the typical product and its territory** comes out :
 - from paedoclimatic specificities and its strong link with localised specific production assets, both of material (i.e. specific plant varieties or animal breed) and immaterial nature (i.e. knowledge of local agents, organisation);
 - from local culture, when it characterises the "historical memory" of local population and it represents a catalyst of identity.
- 1.3. **Two dimensions** of the link between an OLP and his geographical origin should hence be underlined:
 - OLP is linked to a set of natural/physical resources specific of the territory;
 - OLP is linked to a set of local social features.
- 1.4. If we adopt a **wider concept of OLP**, not only a "unique" product, but just as identified for their provenience (*local, nostrano, regional as Angela Tregear states*), conclusion may change a lot.

THE COLLECTIVE DIMENSION OF OLPS

- 1.5. OLPs are very often characterised by a **"collective dimension"**, in the sense that they are linked not only with the skills of more firms, but also with locally created public goods and with the history, habits and culture of the local community.
- 1.6. OLPs are known outside their production area not principally by means of the firms names (private marks), but by means of **"geographical name"** of the territory OLP come from, which can be used also unfairly by local firms not complying with "local rules" (written or not) and also by non local firms.
- 1.7. Typical product can also be seen as a **social construction** made by some actors along time on the basis of some local resources, and which is **validated by the outside**. The construction of the link between the product and the geographical origin can be based on a differentiated combination of local resources.

DEFINITION OF RURAL AREAS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- 1.8. The definition of rural areas is quite vague and variable both in economic literature and in statistical sources. There are **many definitions of rurality**, often depending on the objectives of the researchers or policymakers analysis. Often rural areas are simply defined as "non urban", stressing low demographic density, sometimes coupled to the importance of agricultural activity.
- 1.9. The meaning of the term "rural" changes along **time**, adapting to the more general economic and social change. Especially in recent times, the "agrarian" and the "non urban" concepts has been substituted by a more articulated one, following the social and economic changes observed in "non urban" areas and the variability of situations and trends.
- 1.10. **Sectoral and spatial economic differentiation and integration** are now considered key elements of rurality. In more dynamic terms, many researchers underline the importance of characterising rurality according to the presence of a dependency/autonomy relationship regards to other development centers (industrial sectors, urban areas).

- 1.11. Rurality should be seen as the result of a global interrelation between agriculture and society (multifunctionality, externalities, public goods): new economic models emerge, no more based (only) on scale economies but rather on scope economies, diversification, new connections. This leads to a new agricultural and rural development model. These transformations affect also transformations at the firm level (redefinition of identities, strategies, practices, interrelations and networks). The rural is no more the monopoly of farmers: new actors emerge.
- 1.12. **The EU concept of rural development** refers to three main aspects, that we consider of primary importance for our analysis and may give us a reference point in the analysis of the role of OLPs in RD strategies:
- **Endogenous:** rural development should be mainly based on local resources (goods, skills, contextual knowledge) and on actors' ability to build projects; community participation in the definition and sharing of objectives (bottom-up) is a central point;
 - **Integrated:** rural development is not only agricultural development, but it considers multifunctionality of agricultural firms and more generally it considers the integration of all the economic and social activities at a local level (tourism, craft or industrial manufacturing, services, social activities, and so on);
 - **Sustainable:** rural development dynamics should work in a way that the resources used in the production processes are also reproduced locally (this may be defined as a complete production process), with special reference to environmental and cultural resources. The respect of natural and social environment plays a central role in the rural development process.

THE CONCEPT OF *TERRITORY* AND THE ROLE OF LOCAL ACTORS

- 1.13. Our definition of OLP asks for a **concept of territory** viewed not only as a geographical space and as a set of resources linked to this space, but also and mainly as the result of the action of a network of local (and non local) actors who have been building an organisational space aiming at creating and regulating local resources, and connecting to the external world.
- 1.14. Hence we can speak of "**development**" only in dynamic terms, when we observe some structural transformation, or simply some evolution of society and economy, resulting by actors' behaviours and strategies. As a consequence, the development of a certain territory results from the interaction between local and global forces starting from a determined allocation of resources (physical resources, human resources) between territories, in which a central role is played by the actors (private, collective, public). The development process may change the kind, the value and the allocation of resources of the territory, giving new basis for actors' behaviours and strategies.

2. The archetypical OLP-RD virtuous-circle and the diversity of olps

THE EVOLUTION OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-FOOD SYSTEM: MAINSTREAM, NON-HOMOLOGATED AGRICULTURE AND OLPS

- 2.1. The process of "**homologation**" of agriculture is caused by the diffusion of behaviour models that are typical of the urban and industrial sector, both at the production and consumption level. The homologated agriculture tends to lose part of its sectorial specificities, and to attain an efficient use of resources through scale economies and through the transfer of resources to other uses and sectors. Homologated agriculture is complying with fordist model.
- 2.2. Nevertheless the homologation process doesn't involve the whole agricultural sector in a uniform way, and in particular the most marginal and disadvantaged areas, where the capacity of reaction to the evolution of production techniques and competitive pressures is limited. Therefore a non-homologated agriculture persists. OLPs, as defined in previous points, are often an expression of this "**non-homologated agriculture**".
- 2.3. **Production factors** of non-homologated agriculture – owing to their specificity – are not easily transferable to the homologated model, and hence they cannot gain an adequate remuneration. This process results in a crisis of traditional farming and processing systems, and in a growth in marginality and abandon of agriculture in marginal rural areas, with evident deep social effects.
- 2.4. **Local actors** search for alternative specific and endogenous development models aiming at the remuneration of local resources. OLPs, as expression of "non-homologated agriculture", are very often an important element of strategies of rural development: local actors perceive the link of OLP with his specific territory as a tool for elaborate a differentiation strategy and, in this way, to remunerate local specific resources intransferable (or hardly transferable) in the homologated part of the agriculture, or in other economic sectors.

2.5. OLPs-based initiatives are hence a part of a more general model of quality differentiation which characterises recent evolution of agro-food system, and they make reference to the innovation based on hedonic and cultural attributes, and on identities. The post-Fordist transition requires flexibility and differentiation. Competition is based on quality and differentiated food for the new consumption patterns, and production costs are less important than “quality”.

THE OLP – RD VIRTUOUS CIRCLE (THE ARCHETYPE)

2.6. In the previous points reference has been made to an «**archetypical**» model of OLP (see *Boisseaux Barcelone paper*): an agro-food typical product resulting from a collective and territorialised tradition. OLP is hence strictly linked to a physical *terroir*, which is revealed by a local specific know-how which in turn derives from a local social system.

2.7. From the hinging of OLP to the different dimensions of the territory follows that :

OLP ARCHETYPE CHARACTERISTICS		EFFECTS ON RD AND ON THE TERRITORY
OLP typicity comes from local natural resources	↔	Sustainable exploitation of natural resources
OLP production factors are not reproducible nor transposable	↔	Localisation of economic activities
OLP know-how is site-specific and it is based on a organised local community	↔	Localization of know-how transmission and support to the reproduction of local social system
The name of OLP is the name of the place	↔	Promotion of the global image of the territory, and feed-back effects on the OLP
OLP supports the territorial identity of the producers and of the local population	↔	Territory is the space framework which guarantees the product identity

2.8. In a broader vision, OLPs contribute to communicate to society the vitality and the “quality” of rurality as a source of value rather than one of impoverishment. Besides it reinforces the identity of the inhabitants

OLPs & OLPs : THE ETHEROGENEITY OF OLPs

2.9. In the real world there is not only one «model» of OLP, but there is a set of differentiated situations : correspondence of real OLPs to the «archetypical» model is not the rule.

2.10. Moreover, OLPs are not steady but they cover complex **trajectories** and are subject to evolutions depending also on transformations at a local system scale and on firms strategies ; and in the same territory very often there are a number of OLPs which are interrelated.

2.11. As a consequence, evidence points out OLPs *per se* have not positive effects on rural development concerning the sustainable exploitation and remuneration of local (natural and non natural) resources, the localisation of economic activities and know-how transmission process, the support to the reproduction of local social system.

3. Actors and strategies

THE PLURALITY OF OLPs FUNCTIONS AND THE PLURALITY OF ACTORS' INTERESTS

3.1. The analysis of the link between OLPs and rural development should focus on the mechanisms by which the economic and social resources at the basis of the typical product are reproduced (or not...), including the institutional and governance structures which are in charge to manage this process. The point is how different individual and/or collective valorisation strategies can give a contribution or may represent a hindrance to a positive global effect on rural development.

3.2. The **pivot** for the development of opportunities offered by OLPs is the **cultural heritage**, that is the link of the product to the different aspects of the “territory”. As a matter of fact OLP model is coherent with market trends: today development of OLPs consumption is a part of more general evolution of agro-food system development model. This evolution is characterised by a market differentiation (of a private, public and collective kind) more and more centered on immaterial attributes of the products.

- 3.3. OLPs give to local actors the opportunity to escape from the effects of the homologation model of agriculture and processing, aiming at **creating a competitive advantage** over mass-products and also in mass-distribution systems and by this way at remunerating specific local resources employed in the production process, preserving them from the dissolution.
- 3.4. Local actors very often identify OLPs also as a tool to join **other aims, which are not strictly and directly linked to the provision of the good**. In fact OLPs are capable to generate positive external effects in the rural areas (landscape, environment, image and reputation of the area, cultural identity, and so on), in line with the recent attention on **multifunctionality** of agriculture. These external effects are interesting for various actors' groups, who try to implement strategies for capturing them, or for local public administrations interested in improving economic and social life in rural areas.
- 3.5. The opportunities offered by OLPs attract **different actors**. These actors can be highly **heterogeneous**: they can be directly involved in the activities of production and distribution of the product (within the supply chain) or not, they may have an individual or collective nature, and if they are collective they can be Public Administration Institutions (local administrations) and intermediate institutions (firms organisations, etc). In many cases they are external to the traditional area of production: for example the agents of the chain that are not local (as processing and distribution firms), scientific institutions, public institutions, consumption associations.
- 3.6. Each actor has his own outlook on the typical product, which depends on his own interests (economic, social, political, scientific, etc.). The diversity of the actors leads to a **diversity of objectives** that are locally pursued through the valorisation of the product.

STRATEGIES: CONSTRUCTION AND VALIDATION

- 3.7. OLP valorisation strategies are processes aiming at creating new ways to articulate **the link between the OLP local heritage and the general transformations at a global level**, with the aim of giving coherence to OLP local (traditional) farming and processing systems with general consumers search for quality. Case studies analysis points out the **central role of local actors** in re-building this link. Local actors direct their actions on the basis of their interests, which can be convergent or conflictual also at a local scale. The typology and the intensity of the effects on rural development arise from this game of cooperation and competition between local actors.
- 3.8. Two dimensions should be underlined concerning the role of local actors: an internal dimension (**construction-agreement**) and an external dimension (**validation-justification**). *see 8 framework of Boisseaux to further develop this point.*
- 3.9. **Internal dimension**: local actors re-build the links between OLPs and territories they come from, they recover and reinterpretate historical roots of the products and the link with local resources. Qualitative, collective and temporal **dimensions** are central in this definition (*see Prost contributions*). The OLPs-based strategies are hence a result of an agreement between local actors with regard to three dimensions:
 - **qualitative** dimension: local differentiation and search for external acknowledgement (market and institutional);
 - **temporal** dimension: recover the heritage and project it in the future;
 - **collective** dimension: cohesion of local community and voluntary solidarity. *We should also take into consideration the many individual initiatives around OLPs.*
- 3.10. **External dimension**: local actors should articulate new relationships between OLP and external entities (markets, consumers, mass distribution chains, etc.). The role of OLPs in the local/rural development is strictly linked to the global context (socio-economical context and political context) [*see Allaire, Barcelone notes*]:
 - at the **institutional** and protection level: the institutional tools for the valorisation of OLPs are elaborated at national and European level (EU Regulations), but also at world level (WTO negotiations)
 - at the **market** evolution level: development of OLPs is a part of more general evolution of agro-food system development model. This evolution is characterised by a market differentiation (of a private, public and collective type) more and more centered on immaterial attributes of the products and by the transformation of the governance structures.

4. Strategies AND EFFECTS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1. Cultural heritage linked to an OLP is an asset that local (and non local) actors aim at employ in their strategies. **Giving the diversity of actors' objectives, from an OLP-centered strategy can result very differentiated effects on different aspects of rural development.**
- 4.2. The effects of typical products valorisation strategies on rural development can be seen as the result of actors' behaviour and strategies around the typical product on the structure of local economy and society within rural spaces. Starting from a set of local resources, actors' behaviours (individual and collective action) build along time the typical product and activate actions aiming at giving value to the resources used in the production process by using a determined set of tools and methods. Individual and collective actions produce the effect of attaching value (or disvalue) to some local resources used to build the typical product, as well as other resources both local and non local, inducing an evolution within local economy and society which may eventually lead to a deeper structural transformation.
- 4.3. In the valorisation strategies there is a distinction between the socio-economic valorisation and the patrimonial and socio-cultural. As a consequence, another kind of effects to be considered is more connected to the socio-cultural dimension, and refers to support and relaunch folklore, history, local community's sense of belonging. Usually it has an internal dimension only, but this can support rural development paths.
- 4.4. The **evaluation** of OLP-based strategies on RD should be based on a «grid». In general, the standard criteria (as higher prices of OLP, increase in OLP sales, increase in employment, etc.) are not the only way if the aim is the evaluation of effects on RD. Diffusion of these economic effects inside the rural area, endogenousness of the strategy and participation of local actors, integration in the strategy of different resources of the rural area, sustainability and reproduction of social system can be the most important criteria in strategies evaluation.
- 4.5. **The "8 model" proposed by Boisseaux** stresses the need of a balance between what the territory brings to the product and what the producers return to the territory. Together with the effort of remunerating (so re-producing) local resources, we should also consider the re-production of the (local and global) social system. The **sustainability** of OLPs protection and valorisation strategies depends on both the remuneration of local resources and the typology of the social system.
- 4.6. There is **not empirical evidence** on effects of OLP-based strategies on RD evaluation criteria. But researches made in different EU countries give us some critical points that should be considered in this evaluation:
 - inclusion/exclusion, conflicts and cooperation
 - focus of the actors involved in the strategy
 - the degree of integration with local resources
 - the role of local public administrations and institutions
 - the role of external actors
- 4.7. **Inclusion/exclusion, conflicts and cooperation.** In the elaboration and implementation of a OLP-based strategy very often arise **conflicts**. As a matter of fact, actors involved in the OLP tend to make use of «OLP local heritage» for their own interests. In some cases OLP strategies are individual, and in others there is an «exclusion effect», i.e. one or a small number of actors make an appropriation of OLP positive effects. The initiative in some cases is taken by non producers, and often there is a "fracture" between agricultural firms (and their organisations) and the initiators, who may be cultural and regional associations more concerned with culture and identity than on income and added value, or other economic agents interested in the exploitation of the reputation of the products or other externalities produced with it. OLP valorisation strategy **generate winners and losers**. Evaluation of the strategy should identify different actors and interests involved, and the effects of the strategy at a local scale, which can be also negative effects.
- 4.8. **Focus of the actors.** Considering the actors' focus we can distinguish mainly to kind of strategies: a supply-chain strategy and an extended territorial strategy.
 - **Supply chain:** the valorisation of the typical product is interpreted by the local actors as a tool to allow a satisfactory remuneration of the specific assets directly used in the production process of the typical product. The actors are normally firms involved in the supply chain or their associations, but also local public institutions and other actors who may show the interest in strengthening and fostering an important part of the local economy; anyway the production system plays a central role in activating and fulfilling this strategy;

- **Extended focus:** the typical product doesn't have an importance in itself, but it is important as it can attract a supply (existing or potential) of a diversified range of goods and services localised in the rural area. In this strategy the firms involved in the typical product chain are only a part (sometimes a marginal one) of the actors that activate it, and are flanked by firms belonging to other economic sectors, by the public policy maker, by intermediate institutions representing widespread interests (cultural, social, etc.).
- 4.9. **Integration.** The **territory of origin** may be used by actors in OLP-based strategy as a quality sign, or the single components and resources of the territory may be encapsulated in the typical product as attributes.
- **Sign.** In the first case the territory is used by local actors as a sign of origin, stressing the informative meaning of the geographical name on the quality of the product in order to differentiate it from other competing products.
 - **Attribute.** In the second case the local actors explicitly use the elements of the territory to increase the value of the typical product and/or of the basket of local goods tied to it: the valorisation strategy aims at linking the product to a set of local resources that are specific of the territory and used as quality "attributes" of the product or of the basket. These specific resources can be tied to the chain of the typical product itself (production technique, varieties, races, etc.), but also to other sectors (handicraft, tourist services, etc.) and more in general to the territory (landscape and environment, local culture and artistic and cultural resources, etc.).
- 4.10. **Public institutions.** The role of the public institutions in supporting OLPs within rural development policies is another important aspect. Public institutions may play an important role in decision-making and negotiation processes, and in the effectiveness of OLPs valorisation strategies, but in some cases the interests of public institutions may diverge from farmers'. More generally, "the policy dimension does matter": this means that for the analysis of the link between OLPs and rural development attention should be paid also on the general structure and organisation of policy levels (UE, national, federal, regional, etc.: "governance capacities approach") and by this way to the role of (origin) labels within public bodies strategies ("politisation of the labelling").
- 4.11. **External actors** and local-global relationships: we often refer to OLPs valorisation strategies as example of endogenous development, but frequently resources, competencies, know-how come from the outside the rural area, from the city or the industrial and service sectors, and the economic exploitation of typical products is driven by external firms and institutions. A more comprehensive interpretation framework is needed to understand the role of non rural actors in building strategies and in capturing added value.

5. PDO-PGI : are they the only TOOLS FOR OLPs "rural friendly" VALORISATION STRATEGIES?

- 5.1. The central question may be synthetised as follow: is the legal system of protection of product denomination a condition to improve effects of OLP on rural economy and development? The use of a PDO or a PGI is often considered as a means to enhance rural economy and rural development, increase added value and market power, remunerate locked-in resources, obtain spill-over effects on the local economy and activate or re-inforce rural development.
- 5.2. Up to now there is no much **evidence** on the effects the institutionalisation process of OLPs may have on rural economy and rural development. Generally speaking it is not the institutionalisation of the resource "origin" (the collective elaboration and the public recognition of a platform which specifies the condition of exploitation of the resource "name of the place") in itself to set the conditions of development, but how this process is constructed and the effectiveness of the valorisation strategies built upon it (*Partners: 2 - France ETIC, 7 - Italy DSE*).
- 5.3. **Start-up.** PDO-PGI may help to build networks among local firms and between firms and local community. Actually actors who promote the initiative are not only producers, but also public local and non local institutions, research institutions, touristic organisations, consumer associations.
- 5.4. The choice to ask for a PDO or a PGI may change the direction and intensity of the effects on the rural economy and rural development.
- 5.5. The effects of PDO-PGI on link between OLP and rural development vary according to the contents of **Product Specifications** (Cahier des Charges). The way by which the Code of Rules (PDO-PGI products) is written may have different effects on typical products and on the value of local resources (external effects). How do the definition of production areas, techniques, and characteristic of the final product affect the value of local resources in the supply chain and outside it (externalities)? (*Partners: 3 - France LRDE, 7 - Italy DSE, 15 - Portugal IRIA, 8 - Switzerland SRVA*).

- 5.6. PDO-PGI recognition may help firms to “update” to the **modern logics** of quality assurance, certification, traceability, specialisation. At the same time this process may lead to **exclude** a big part of local firms and/or increase their production and marketing costs, or, alternatively, exclude them from the use of a traditional product name. As a matter of fact some evidences underline the difficulties faced by small-medium and/or artisanal firms in implementing PDO-PGI regulations as stated by Council Regulation 2081/92, in particular in marginal areas and when the quantities produced are small, and this in opposition to the expressed goals in EU OLPs policy (*Partners: 3 – France LRDE, 15 – Portugal IRIA, 10 – Spain*). Small TP producers in peripheral regions often lack local markets, are short of the resources and skills required to enter more distant markets, and have little flexibility in production.
- 5.7. PDOs products can stimulate rural development in marginal rural areas, or, at the opposite, only in dynamic rural areas PDO-PGI products are diffused and really used by the firms? (*Montresor contribution, with reference to Emilia Romagna region, points out that PDOs are located mainly in more developed areas*). OLPs could be the result and not the cause of the development of certain areas. Answering this question requires to map the diffusion of PDO-PGI in Europe and to analyse the presence of typical products in rural areas characterised by a different level of development.
- 5.8. Turning to “trajectories” of PDO-PGI, the institutionalisation may help external powerful actors (mass distribution, processing firms, traders) to extract resources and added value from the area of origin, menacing rather than fosterin local development.
- 5.9. Even where there is an opportunity to obtain a PDO or a PGI, often local actors are not interested in applying for any legal protection (*Corse, Belgium, Italy*): this is mainly the case of those products which have short marketing channels and rely on local consumers and tourists (*Partners: 3 – France LRDE, 2 - France ETIQ, 7 – Italy DSE, 15 – Portugal IRIA, 8 - Switzerland SRVA*), or more generally where estimated premium price is not sufficient to cover estimated certification costs plus “transformation” costs (the costs required to firm in order to adapt to the content of Product Specifications).
- 5.10. PDO-PGI is not the best solution to **enhance the diffusion of OLP effects on rural economy**: there are **other tools** for building networks between different local economic activities starting from the OLP, and that can create diversification opportunities in rural areas (tourism, non-food artisanal products, environmental and recreational services ...) based on search for scope economies. An interesting cases are the “product routes”; more in general, anaysis and evaluation of LEADER initiatives can give empirical evidences and give evaluation elements for more “territorial-based” strategies.

6. Policy implications

- ?? Considering the diversity of OLPs, supporting OLPs valorisation strategies is not always the best solution to activate positive rural development dynamics.
- ?? The **role of Geographical Indications** in supporting OLPs based RD strategies shows opportunities but also limits. This ask for more flexible and accessible tools, especially for marginal and disadvantaged rural areas and small and artisanal firms.
- ?? There is a need to signaling typical product specificities “**rural friendly**” to consumers. Which may be the way to do it?
- ?? **Geographical Indications cannot substitute other policies and government interventions to support OLPs development-based strategies**: structural problems (at agricultural, processing and distribution level), co-ordination problems, research and training activities, etc.
- ?? **Need of integration of policy tools at a local level** : need of levels of co-ordination at a local scale (Territorial Development Contracts - CTE in France, Agro-food quality districts and Rural Districts in Italy, etc.).
- ?? OLPs in general cannot alone support rural development processes : need to integrate OLPs with **other local valorisation intiatives**.

7. Research needs

- ?? In-depth analysis of the role of PDO-PGI in fostering rural development:
 - which are the appropriate indicators of the success of typical products for rural development (economic, social, etc.)?
 - who are the actors which participate to the activation of the request?
 - are PDO-PGI products located in marginal areas?
 - what kind of firm utilise PDO-PGI denominations?
 - do the way Product Specifications are written affect the production of (local) externalities?
 - who benefit of the initiative? Are they local actors?

- ?? There is not systematic and comparative analysis at European scale aimed at analysis and evaluation of RD strategies OLPs-based. This ask for a need of a common methodology.
 - on a practical field: which kind of initiatives for supporting the link between typical products and rural development (wine routes, collective marks, e-commerce, advertising, modern distribution channels, agro-tourism, rural tourism, etc.)?
 - or the opposite direction of the link: how rural development can affect and foster typical products?

- ?? Which are the public policies, with particular reference to the Common Agricultural and Rural Policies, that mainly affect OLPs and rural development? Is there a "governance" problem to solve - as mentioned in some RD Report - in order to make these tools have positive effects on rural development by means of the support of typical products?