
Implementation of EU rural development regulation in France : insights from the mid-term evaluation

Bruno Vindel¹

Complying with the legal framework of EU regulation 1257/99, the implementation of the rural development pillar of the CAP in France takes over several measures constitutive of previous programs, and institutes significant innovations, reflecting both the evolution of French rural territories and the political choice of a more sustainable and multifunctional agriculture. That is why, before describing the organisation and methodology of the recently completed mid-term evaluation, this paper emphasises the present trends of evolution in French rural zones. The lessons learned from the evaluation will be then detailed, in the third part of the paper.

¹ Sous-directeur de l'évaluation, de la prospective et des études, Ministère de l'agriculture, de l'alimentation, de la pêche, et des affaires rurales, 78, rue de Varenne, France, Bruno.VINDEL@agriculture.gouv.fr

1. Main features of the French “Plan National de Développement Rural” and adaptation to local dynamics

1.1 The evolution of French rural zones is based on multi-sectoral dynamics

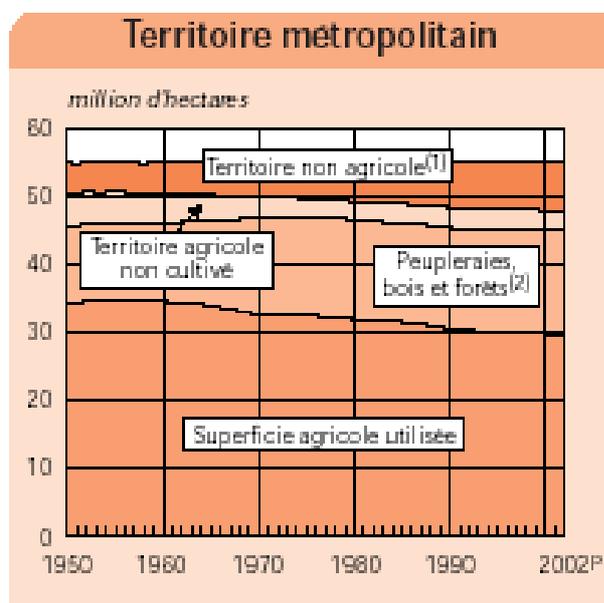
Rural territories in France were in the past considered globally as “the countryside” with an essentially productive function, in which agriculture was the leading (and often the sole) economic sector.

Since the middle of the seventies, and more notably since the early nineties, new functions have emerged, alongside with new dynamics in demography and population trends :

- a residential function, with a strong trend of peri-urbanisation (between 1990 and 1999, increase of 3,5 millions inhabitants in peri-urban areas) ;
- a recreative and touristic function ;
- a environmental function, encompassing protection of natural resources and biodiversity, protection against natural risks, and use of landscapes as living environment ;
- a renewed and diversified productive function, with industries (mainly small to medium size enterprises), social jobs linked to the residential function, and, of course, agriculture and forestry.

Agriculture is no longer the main economic activity in terms of employment (2 % of active population at national level) and of value added. But it remains central in the structuring of the national territory, modelling landscapes and occupying soils, at well as, in an other perspective, in food production and food security.

Figure 1: Use of national territory (1950-2002)



	1980	2002 p
	(1000 hectares et %)	
Agriculture area	31 744 57,8	29 587 53,0
Forestry area	14 615 26,6	15 394 28,0
Uncultivated agriculture area	2 757 5,0	2 816 5,1
Non-agriculture and non-forestry area	5 804 10,6	7 122 13,0
Total	54 919 100,0	54 919 100,0

SOURCE / Agreste – Statistique agricole annuelle.

All these trends, linked to the geography of France, have led to a great diversity of rural zones, which can however be grouped in three categories :

- rural zones linked to towns, with a dominantly residential function, or with both residential and productive functions ;
- fragile rural zones, with low population density, regressive trend in demography and little diversity in economic activities ; this category of rural zones sums up one third of France :
- rural zones in change, seeking for a new equilibrium, with a variety of trajectories, from new industries to tourism boom, agriculture being still present and performing different functions from crop and livestock production for local food-industries to environmental amenities.

1.2 New EU legal framework and new concepts at work to anchor rural zones in the future

Based on principles formulated at the Cork Conference on rural development (1996), Agenda 2000 did set clear objectives for the common agricultural policy (CAP): a modern and competitive agriculture, a sustainable agriculture, an agriculture benefiting to the welfare of rural communities. Two pillars of the CAP were therefore distinguished : commercial policy, on the one hand, and rural development policy on the other hand, with the special mission of « complementing the market policy taking care that expenditure for agriculture will play a greater role in land planning and protection of nature ». This is why regulation 1257/99 groups, in a single legal instrument, the provisions of nine pre-existing regulations, with appropriate additions. Needless to stress that this regulation does not exhaust the numerous aspects of rural development, as it does not deal with access to schools or public health services, roads and communication infrastructures, drinkable water and sanitation problems, to quote only some dimensions. Being the legal base of the CAP's second pillar, regulation 1257/99 is « by conception » agri-centered.

Parallel to Agenda 2000, and somehow interactively, new reflections and orientations were developed in France about the multifunctionality of agriculture, and about the means to take it into account, support and develop it. These reflections led to the notion of contract between the agricultural sector and the overall society, the latter asking the former not to be exclusively a food producer but also a producer of environmental amenities and to contribute to social well-being. The French law on agriculture of 1999 (Loi d'Orientation Agricole), created then this new type of contract between farmers and the State : the « contrat territorial d'exploitation » (CTE).

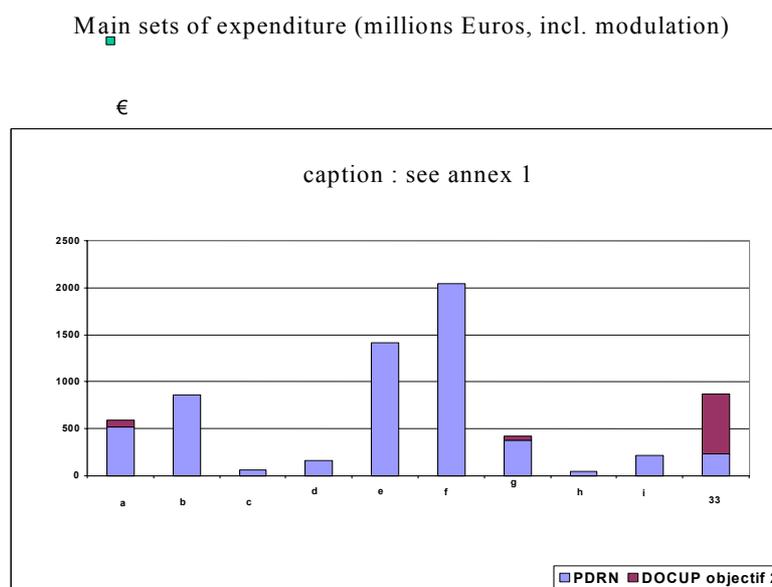
These elements explain why the application of EU regulation 1257/99 in France took the form of a multifaceted national programme, matching the diversity and specificities of rural zones with a series of targeted provisions (modernisation of farms, rejuvenation of the farming population, development of agri-environment,...), all that with a strong emphasis on multifunctionality of agriculture.

1.3 Implementation of Regulation 1257/99 in France : a multifaceted national plan and parts of regional “single operational programs” (SOPs)

In applying regulation 1257/99, France opted for a large national program, called Plan de Développement Rural National (PDRN), which groups 90 % of the financial resources. This choice was justified by concerns of territorial equity from a national point of view, and by the perceived necessity to pilot the implementation of the two major innovations of the programme (CTE and forestry measures). Besides to the national PDRN, some of the EU regulation 1257/99 provisions were integrated in the “Objective 2 SOPs”, in order to stimulate synergies with European structural funds (regional fund and social fund) ; this led to 20 regional chapters, due to be financed against EAGGF, in the several SOPs, with exclusive or shared (SOPs and PDRN) provisions.

The articulation between the two programming instruments resulted rather complex, and all the more that it was chosen to implement the 22 provisions of regulation 1257/99 : 17 in the framework of PDRN and 5 accessible through SOPs (see list in annex 1). It should also be quoted that some regions are concerned by Objective 1 SOPs (Corsica, Hainaut and overseas territories) financed against EAGGF-Guidance.

Figure 2 : Structure of PDRN / DOCUP



The PDRN set five priorities, described as follows:

priority A : Orientation of farms towards a multifunctional and sustainable agriculture

priority B : development and sustainable operation of forestry resources

priority C : development of value added and quality of agricultural and forestry products

priority D : more balanced use of national territory and reduction of economical inequalities through the fostering of employment

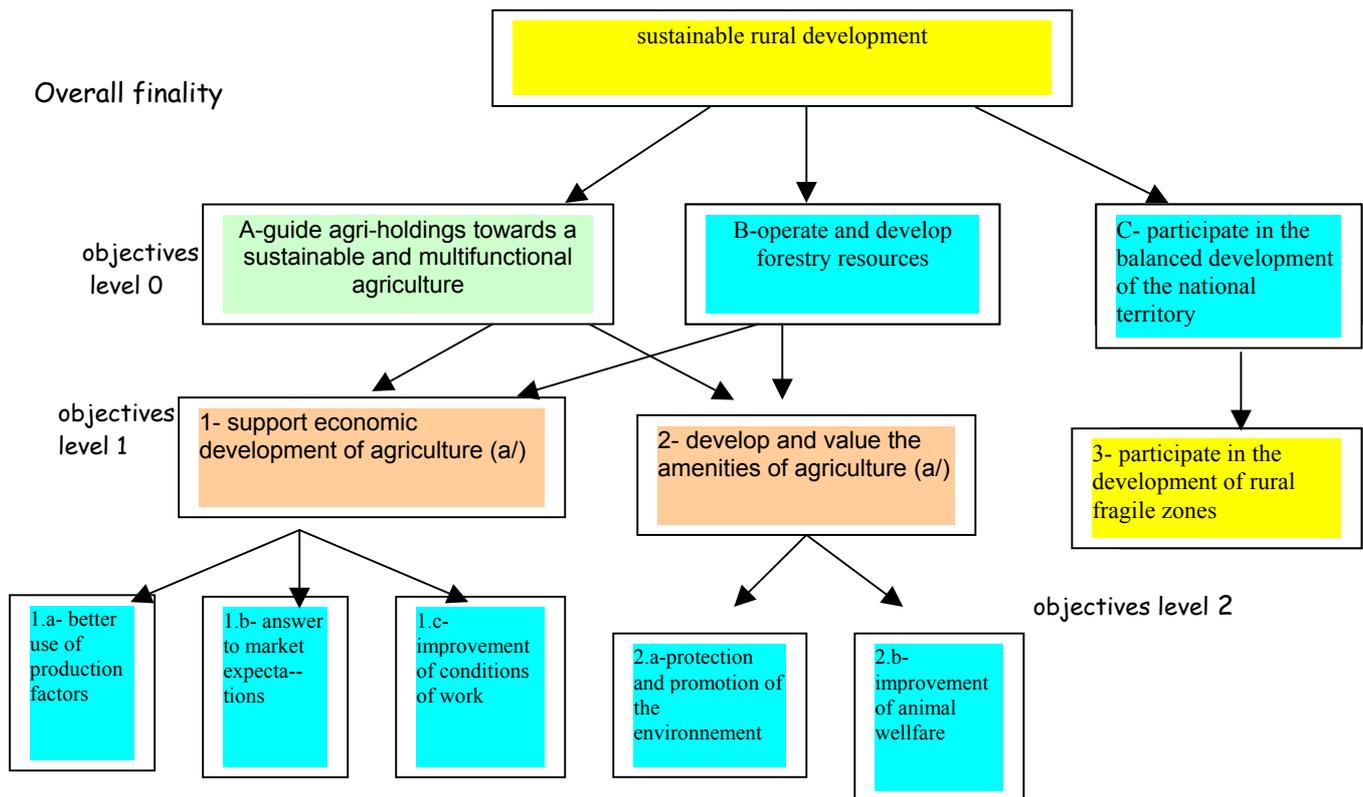
priority E : protection and sustainable operation of the ecological patrimony.

At the time of drafting the PDRN (second semester 1999), no logical framework was designed for it. This was made later and it appears worth considering it, as a tool for evaluation. The comprehensive log-fram is given in annex 2, the following figure being a simplified version.

The overall finality is clearly a contribution to a sustainable rural development (see above § I.1) and priorities defined originally are linked in a consistent way. The objectives formulated here match those of Agenda 2000, recalled above.

It seems interesting to note that there is no direct correspondence between specific measures and detailed objectives, as each measure, through its content and conditions of eligibility of beneficiaries, is meant to contribute to the several objectives, even if one appears predominant for a given measure

Figure 3 : Logical framework of PDRN



a/: « agriculture » includes here forestry

1.4 A set of significant innovations to guide agriculture towards more sustainability

Although many of the measures included in the PDRN are a direct continuation of previous specific programmes (investments in agricultural holdings, setting up of young farmers, investments on food-industries, less-favoured areas...), three main innovations deserve to be described here.

The “Contrat Territorial d’Exploitation” (CTE) is the main tool for the orientation of farms towards a sustainable agriculture, while expressing its multifunctionality, through a global project at holding level. A five-year contract, the CTE consists compulsorily of two parts (economic and environment-territorial), associating specific measures of the PDRN in a given set, corresponding to the farmer’s project, or to a group of farmer’s project. These projects are meant to reflect local/territorial concerns and orientations, and therefore are supposed to be discussed with other stakeholders.

A CTE is therefore a volunteer commitment, the territorial dimension being granted, at least in theory, through a common reflection of various actors around territorial stakes

(environmental concerns, quality of products, employment at farm level, for instance). An important evolution of this system took place during summer 2002, as CTEs in their original form were stopped and replaced by the “Contrat d’Agriculture Durable” (CAD). This new system, which was progressively enforced in 2003, keeps some features of the CTE, such as the contractual aspect. But it limits the cost of each individual contract and simplifies the implementation (the economic part is not compulsory any longer; for each territory or region, or for each contract-model, two environmental stakes must be defined, with three actions each, as a maximum).

The agri-environmental measures represent the only compulsory provision of regulation 1257/99. In comparison with previous programmes, the PDRN organises a considerable enlargement of the number of such measures, and makes the whole French territory eligible. As a consequence, the financial share of the agri-environment chapter appears to be the biggest (see above, figure 2); moreover, the budgetary revenue of the modulation of first pillar aids (implemented in 2000 and 2001) was concentrated on agri-environment. An important feature to quote here is that, with the exception of two “mass” agri-environment measures (aid to keep long-term green pastures and aid to crop-rotations), the rest of these measures are only enforced, and paid to farmers, in the framework of a CTE/CAD.

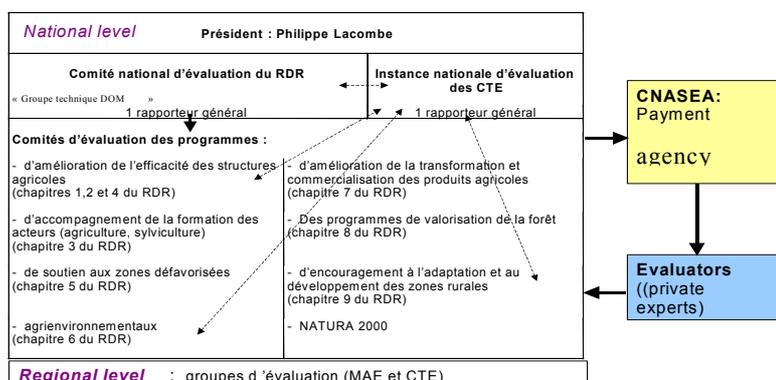
The third main innovation of PDRN consists in the inclusion of a lot of forestry measures in the plan, in addition to the more traditional aid to forestation of agricultural soils. This does not represent a large share of the financial scheme (see figure 2) but means considerable modifications of procedures (as the measures were previously nationally financed), and stronger links between agricultural and forestry, in a territorial perspective.

2. Framework and methodology of PDRN evaluation

21 An organisation of the evaluation open to a diversity of opinions

In order to ease the huge evaluation of PDRN, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Rural Affairs (MAAPAR) decided to structure it in 10 thematic blocks (including Natura 2000), in addition to the synthesis block, in charge of the transversal common evaluative questions. The work of each block was managed by a national steering committee, the synthesis being managed by the “Comité national d’évaluation du RDR” (CNE), in which the chairpersons of the thematic national steering committees were members. A special case was made for the evaluation of the CTE scheme, as it did not correspond directly to an identified chapter of regulation 1257/99. For the sake of coherence, the “Instance Nationale d’Evaluation” of CTE was chaired by the same person as the CNE, namely Dr. Philippe Lacombe, scientific director at INRA (Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique).

Moreover, it was considered useful to carry out evaluation work at the regional level, for the two specific chapter VI (agri-environment measures) and CTE scheme. The aim was to draw larger and richer information from the field, for the corresponding national levels of evaluation, as well as to make more people aware of the evaluation of PDRN.

Figure 4 : Organisation of the evaluation

It ended up in a very « open » way of management, as approximately 300 persons were involved (100 at national level and 200 in regions), among which researchers and academics, representatives of farmer's associations and environmentalist lobby groups, members of Parliament and of local councils, experts from the payment agency (CNASEA) and civil-servants from MAAPAR and from the department of environment (see annex 3). Following the deontological principles of evaluation, services of MAAPAR in charge of the day-to-day management of PDRN were invited to sit in the committees but were not responsible of the whole exercise. Concrete work was carried out by independent experts, contracted after tenders.

The global budget for this mid-term evaluation amounted 3.6 millions €, that is to say somehow less than 0.03 % of the total foreseen expenditure of PDRN (over the period 2000-2006); 50 % was dedicated to regional evaluations. Starting in January 2002, the whole process lasted two years with the following phases :

- first semester 2002 : committees meetings; first exchanges of views; formulation of France's evaluative questions; drafting of tenders documents;
- second semester 2002 : tenders and contracts with independent experts
- first semester 2003 : evaluations at regional level; thematic evaluations at national level; start of synthesis work;
- second semester 2003 : committees discuss and adopt thematic reports (including CTE synthesis); completion of synthesis

Roughly, regional evaluations of agri-environment measures and CTE lasted 6 months, thematic evaluation 9 months, and the synthesis 11 months.

2.2 Methodological difficulties to answer common evaluative questions

In general, thematic and regional evaluations are essentially based on :

- treatment of available statistical data, from the national agriculture statistics system and from administrative data bases (mainly CNASEA) ;
- surveys (pooling of beneficiaries, questionnaire mailing or interviews);
- case studies in sets of diversified territories;
- for agri-environment and CTE, synthesis of the twenty-one regional evaluations reports, with a common grid.

The evaluators experienced several methodological difficulties, especially regarding administrative data bases which are conceived (and built) more as book-keeping instruments than as monitoring tools. For instances, it is not all the time possible to characterize the beneficiaries of a given aid, with all the desirable details, because the administrative data-base does not include many technical information. A second source of difficulty was the absence of a baseline at the beginning of PDRN, making rather awkward to measure a change from a starting point; it ought also to be said that many agri-environmental measures are relatively easily described, in terms of achievements (length of hedges, for instance), but hard to evaluate in terms of impacts (protection of birds nesting in those hedges). However, this baseline difficulty was partially solved thanks to the data of the 2000 agricultural census and of the 2001 farm practices survey, the results of the French FADN (Farm Accounting Data Network) on farm incomes, and recent works carried out on demography and localisation of the French population.

These data allowed the experts in charge of the synthesis to re-construct a socio-economical and agro-environmental referential for the common evaluative questions.

At last, the PDRN, approved in 2000, entered into action very progressively, and some measures were only implemented from 2001 or 2002 onwards (article 33 of regulation 1257/99), making impossible any measurement of impact in 2003. This methodological limit appears of course in any mid-term evaluation, but it was emphasised here because of the slow start of the programme (see below).

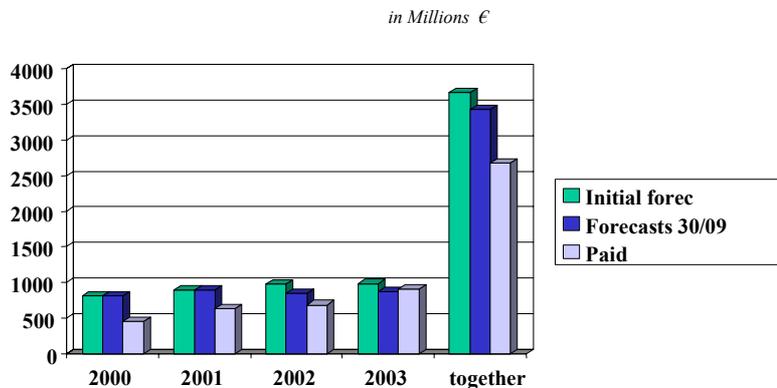
The synthesis itself consisted into four parts :

- analysis of the use of financial resources (inputs of PDRN) and of conditions of implementation ;
- six territorial case studies, illustrating both the main farming systems in France and the categories of rural zones referred to above (see below § III.1) ;
- comparisons with the implementation of regulation 1257/99 in other European Union member-states ;
- synthetic work, based on thematic evaluation reports, on the six common cross-cutting evaluative questions given by the Commission's guidelines, and on the four national evaluative questions (see annex 4).

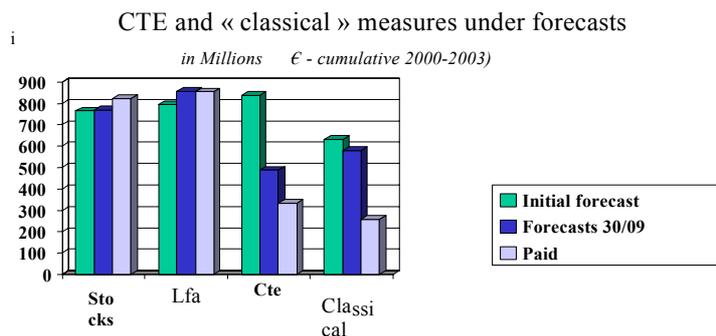
3. Findings and lessons learned from the evaluation

3.1 Achievements to date do not match forecasts in terms of public expenditure

In spite of the fact that many elements of the PDRN were the continuation of pre-existing measures, the programme witnessed a relatively slow start, and the total cumulative expenditure reaches 78 % of what was foreseen for 2000-2003, at the end of 2003. The following figures show explicitly the reasons of this under-consumption: while "stocks" (payments related to the previous programmes 1994-1999) and the compensatory allowances in less-favoured areas were by nature relatively easy to forecast, aids to investments (investments in agricultural holdings, setting-up of young farmers, food-industries and "article 33") were below expectations and the innovative character of the CTE scheme implied a very progressive enforcement, in spite of very ambitious objectives.

Figure 5 : Use of financial resources as a whole (2000-2003)**Figure 6 : Use of financial resources according to the sets of expenditure (2000-2003)**

« Stocks » and compensatory payments pre-dominant



It ought also to be said that whereas the previous socio-structural measures were financed against EAGGF-Guidance, administrative services of MAAPAR and of CNASEA (the payment agency) had to adapt to the procedures of EAGGF-Guarantee, which imply more management constraints, as well as more controls. EAGGF-Guarantee procedures, conceived for annual payments of aid pertaining to the first pillar of CAP, led to a re-definition of the respective roles of the payment agency and the MAAPAR deconcentrated services, the latter being in charge of processing the applications. The reflection, and consecutive decisions, is not yet completed in France, and this situation adds to the complexity in the implementation of PDRN.

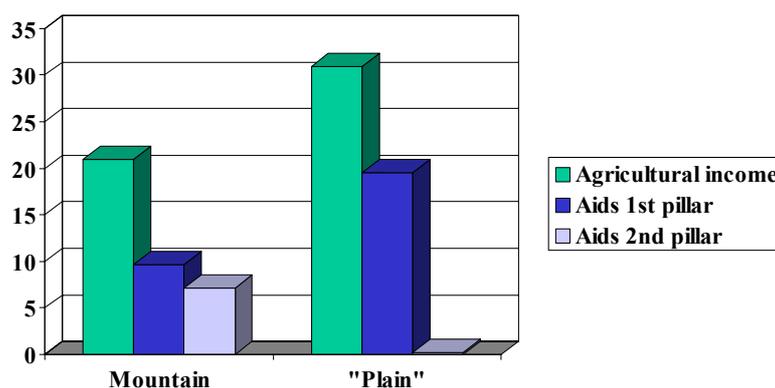
3.2 Socio-economic impacts are noticeable but unequal

- a) At a first level of analysis, the effect of PDRN on agricultural factors' productivity appears rather weak; this is however logical because of the relatively short period between investments made in 2000 or 2001 and the date of evaluation (mid-2003). The real productivity improvement impact of measures a, b and d of regulation 1257/99 (see annex 1) should be assessed over a longer period, and with a larger number of beneficiaries than the present one (37 452 cases for a total of roughly 660 000 farms in France).

- b) More noticeable is the impact of PDRN on the value added of the agricultural sector, in particular through the payments (the “wages”) for environmental amenities. On the basis of the different territorial case-studies, it can be said that diversification of farm-productions or of alternative activities (15 % of the CTEs) and food-quality or organic farming (18 % of the CTEs) are also two promising domains for value added increases at farm level. At national level, these orientations remain modest, and less important than in other European countries. The evaluation concludes that innovations and diversification towards off-farm activities being always risky, the classical « measure a » of regulation 1257/99 may be not well adapted; immaterial investments and technical assistance, especially for new entrepreneurship, ought to be considered in the future.
- c) The impact of PDRN on agricultural incomes appears much more significative, because of the volume of farm subventions that are paid (12 % of direct payments of CAP). This is of course all the more concentrated in less favoured zones, and particularly in mountainous regions, where nearly all farmers are beneficiaries of compensatory payments, these representing 44 % of agricultural income (see figure 7).

Figure 7 : Impact of direct PDRN aids on agricultural income Comparison between mountainous and other zones

Thousands €, by holding (FADN 2001)



This effect also appears in other less favoured zones, although it is heterogeneous, depending on the farming systems concerned (livestock vs crops). As a matter of fact, there is a strong concentration of the income impact on animal husbandry, especially bovine and sheep oriented farms, for which PDRN aids account for 29 % and 47 % of the income, and are complementary of first pillar aids. It is thanks to these supports that livestock farms do reach economic viability, the income remaining far below the national average (18 600 – 18 880 € / farms vs 27 600 € / farms).

From a more theoretical point of view, the income effect of PDRN, with its concentration in less-favoured zones and in livestock farming-systems, emphasises the need, in the CAP, for redistributive aids, managed at national level, to correct market effects, on a balanced vision of territory occupation.

d) One of the common evaluative questions (n° 2) was related to the effect of PDRN on rural employment. The evaluation shows that this effect was indirect and essentially a consequence of the income effect described above. The PDRN in itself induces few new jobs, with the exception of forestry measures, but the jobs being, in that case, in general temporary. Investment subventions to food-industries allow to maintain employment in the

beneficiary plants, or « up-stream », at farms level. On a more qualitative perspective, investments measures (in holdings, in food-industries and especially in the forestry sector) lead to the improvement of working conditions.

A special mention should be made here of the setting-up of young farmers policy (measure b of regulation 1257/99) :

- the number of viable settings-up is limited by the evolution of demography, with a low number of retirements nowadays, after a massive wave of retirements in the previous period (1990-2000) : this is why only 5 693 settings-up were considered by the PDRN by the end of 2002, although an objective of 8 000 had been put forward at the beginning of the plan;
- the economic environment at local level (skills in technical assistance, nature of food-industries or trading chains), is more favourable to the reproduction of existing farming-systems than to innovative orientations, and do not induce new jobs.

This does not mean, of course, that the policy for setting up of young farmers is meaningless. Not only has it a strong political dimension, but its role in the rejuvenation of farmers population is essential for the economic dynamism of rural zones. The PDRN evaluation shows that one should not consider absolute figures of settings-up of new farmers, but the ratio between rate of retirements and rate of settings up. This indicator was relatively low in 1988-2000 (34 %), this value being linked with a significative dwindling in the number of farms ; it reaches now 45 % and should reach 52 % in 2008. The high capitalistic intensity of the transfers of farms will need to strengthen the setting-up policy in the near future.

To conclude on the employment issue, the PDRN helps to maintain or limit the decrease in the number of jobs, for the sectors concerned by the programme; this effect is more noticeable in less-favoured and mountainous zones.

e) The PDRN basic document, drafted in year 2000, recognizes that the change in the rural population does not depend nowadays on the farmers population; however an impact of PDRN was expected on fragile rural zones (see § I.1) and, more generally, through a strengthened attractivity of rural zones, thanks to agri-environment measures.

This was not shown by the mid-term evaluation, and it can be said that the impact of PDRN on rural population is so far very weak.

Several reasons explaining this situation, beyond PDRN itself, can be quoted:

- the dynamics of population trends, described in § I.1 of this paper, is certainly stronger than any effect of the PDRN, mainly centred on agriculture and forestry ; in particular the standards of social services and infrastructures in rural zones are certainly crucial ;
- the improvement of the attractiveness of rural territories, resulting from landscapes management and/or valuated biodiversity, will be a long process, and it is too early to evaluate it.

However, it remains to measure accurately whether the supports granted by the PDRN to maintain or create economic activities, do contribute to a positive demographic evolution in vulnerable rural zones (demographic decline) or in zones sensitive to farm employment (because agriculture remains the main economic activity).

3.3 Environmental impacts

a) As explained above (see § I.3), a shift of agriculture towards more environmental friendly practices was an explicit objective of PDRN. That is why a huge effort was made at national level, in 1999 and 2000, for the conception and design of 25 sets of agri-environment measures, totalling 175 single measures (see annex 5). These were meant to be adapted to local peculiarities, through “regional agro-environmental syntheses”, which ended up in an offer of 2 650 measures. Financial provisions in the PDRN budget were accordingly settled (see figure 3). This represented a significant increase, and a considerable change in operation scale, in comparison with the 1994-1999 period, during which 270 measures (called

"operations locales agri-environnementales") had been agreed and financed, concerning 760 000 hectares. In addition, it is important to note that the distinction made between:

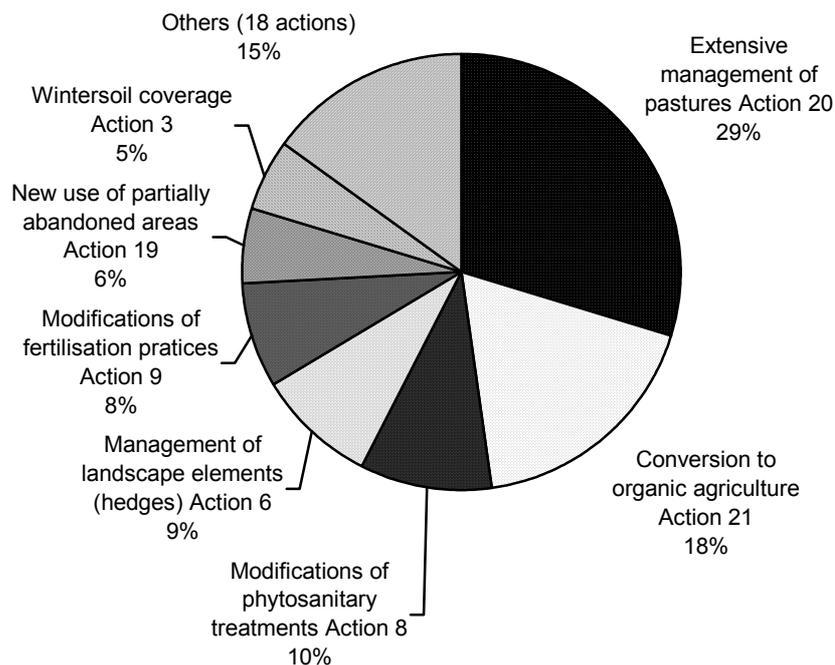
- mass measures in favour of pastures, which are relatively easy to implement from an administrative and technical point of view ;
- measures implemented through the CTE scheme, which need several technical and administrative steps before agreement, being felt by some farmers more as constraints than as an assistance to a re-orientation of their farming-system.

As a whole, the PDRN agri-environment provision concerns, after a three-year implementation period, roughly 7 millions hectares (24% of France's agricultural land) among which 3.65 millions hectares (13,6% of France's agricultural land) through the CTE scheme.

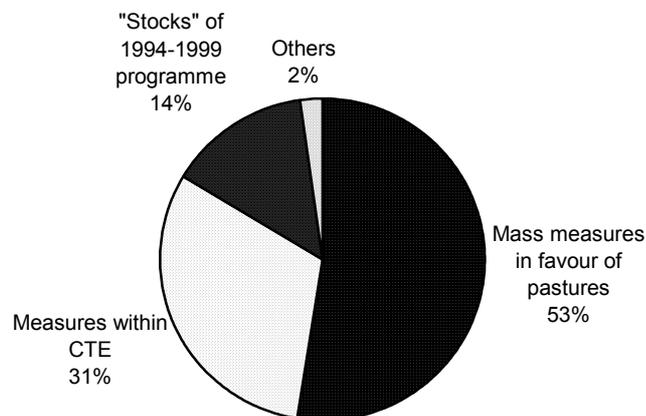
Figure 8 below shows that, among the large choice of measures, 7 of the 25 sets referred to above, account for 85% of the payments in 2002, with a predominance of action 20 (extensive management of pastures) and action 21 (conversion to organic agriculture). Regarding areas concerned, action 20 is also predominant (26%), followed by action 9 (22%) and action 8 (17%). Conversion to organic farming only accounts for 5% of areas.

Figure 8 : Payments by sets of agri-environment measure

8.1 Payments in 2002 by sets of measures for agri-environment measures within CTEs



8.2 EAGFF payments (2000-2003) by chapters of agri-environment measures



More detailed analyses carried out during the evaluation showed the regional agro-environmental syntheses did not play a real strategic role regarding targeting and financial incentive. As a consequence, territorial targeting on local environmental stakes remained too soft (with the large exception of mountainous zones) and farmers had the opportunity to choose agri-environmental measures that did not mean deep alterations in their practices. In parallel, cross-compliance on CAP first pillar direct aids was limited during the three first years of PDRN implementation, and the concept of « good agricultural practices » remained rather unclear for a majority of actors.

b) These elements have led to mitigated effects of PDRN on environment:

- as regards quality of water, the effect is so far too limited to really bent negative trends in vulnerable zones, for two reasons : absence of targeting of the efficient measure (n° 9) on the appropriate zones, and too little implementation of pasture-favourable measures in plains, with contradictions between first and second pillar ;

- as regards biodiversity, the evaluation notes a small effect thanks to management and keeping of hedges and to maintenance of natural pastures ; the Natura 2000 system started too recently to produce any measurable effect to date ;

- as regards landscape preservation, the impact is ascertained in mountainous regions, as well as in zones where husbandry based on long term natural pastures is predominant; however, methodological aspects and meaningful indicators remain insufficiently mastered to help in the formulation of real local/regional strategies on landscapes; this situation also impedes a well informed dialogue between farmers and other stakeholders (environment lobbies and local councils) on that matter ;

- as regards problems linked to soils (preservation, reduction of erosion...), the PDRN has certainly helped to a global awareness and some measures (in favour of long term pastures,

or hedges) have proven their relevance and effectiveness ; more targeting should be needed in vulnerable areas as well as more coherence with first pillar set-aside.

c) A special mention should be made here of the CTE scheme (transformed in 2003, as indicated above, into CAD - Contrat d'Agriculture Durable), as it was the vector of the majority of agri-environment measures, together with other PDRN measures, in an innovative form of contract. The number of CTEs signed in July 2003 was 49 368, representing 12 % of French professional farmers. The rate of contracting is higher in the east and south of France, and even higher in less-favoured zones, a good point from the redistributive point of view.

In spite of its administrative and technical complexity, or maybe thanks to this complexity, the CTE scheme has favoured environmental friendly practices in agriculture, and a real awareness of the « environment issue » by farmers and their organisations. In that sense, it has been the key instrument for the expression of the multifunctionality of agriculture, and for a positive attitude of farmers as regards sustainability. On the other hand, the employment impact of CTE was weak. It appeared difficult to reconcile individual projects of farmers and territorial collective stakes. Although interesting cases are recorded, the connection of the CTE scheme with other territorial policies was limited, for various reasons, variable from one region to another (dialogue between farmers organisations and environmental lobbies, implication of local councils, weak targeting of agri-environmental measures, uneven capabilities and routine of extension services...). This explains why the CTE scheme was reformed at the end of 2002, giving place to the CAD which encompasses conditions of better agri-environmental targeting, and maintains the direction towards sustainability and multifunctionality of agriculture.

Conclusion

The mid-term evaluation of the PDRN gave the opportunity of building a collective expertise thanks to the high number of persons involved and, through them, between their respective professional circles. It also produced a considerable amount of analyses, very partially reflected in this modest presentation, based on figures or field evidence. Finally, it led to recommendations for the improvement of the PDRN (improvement of data-bases for monitoring and impacts measurements, reformulation of measures and simplification of procedures, implication of local councils), as well as valuable insights for the future, to be shared with other Member-States and with the Commission.

What can be meanwhile answered to the question of PDRN's contribution to global rural development ?

With its strong focus on agriculture (and forestry), it seems normal that the PDRN has a more noticeable economic impact in regions where agriculture remains critical in terms of economic activity. Effects on employment, through job creation, are small but the improvement of working conditions (through farm investments or forestry aids) appears undeniable. The income effect is certain and well documented, with a special concentration on less favoured-zones. All these features show the legitimacy of rural development aids in the CAP.

In that sense, the PDRN has an important impact in favour of a more balanced development of the national territory, allowing inhabitants to remain in many zones which would be desertified and impoverished otherwise. Although several aspects need to be improved, the PDRN made farmers more sensitive to environmental questions, and helped a significant portion of them to express (and take advantage from) the multifunctionality of agriculture. This opens opportunities for rural development as it may strengthen the attractiveness of many zones. The PDRN has a clear guidance effect on agriculture, which is certainly to be strengthened with the implementation of the June 2003 CAP reform, as it suppresses contradictions between the two pillars. However, the implementation conditions of PDRN did not allow enough partnerships with non-agriculture actors of rural development. Efforts need certainly to be made in order to make farmers and their organisations feel better concerned

by territorial development strategies. A way of solution may be to conceive a more decentralised implementation system, though keeping a distinction between allocative measures and redistributive supports.

Summary

The implementation of EC regulation 1257/99 ("second pillar" of CAP), in France, takes the form of a large national program, called "Plan de Développement Rural National", associated to the integration of some rural development provisions in the objective 2 Single Operational Programs, at regional level. Having a clear finality in sustainable rural development, the PDRN appears relatively agriculture centred; besides classical measures such as compensatory payments in less-favoured areas or supports to young farmers settings-up, the PDRN encompasses three major innovations : integration of forestry measures, importance given to agri-environment and enforcement of the "Contrat Territorial d'Exploitation" (CTE), a scheme meant to foster the multifunctionality of agriculture (the "Contrat d'Agriculture Durable" (CAD) substituted CTE up to 2003).

The mid-term evaluation of the PDRN, carried out in 2003, shows its clear guidance effect on agriculture towards more sustainability, and its importance for less favoured areas. Detailed insights on socio-economic impacts, as well as on environmental effects of PDRN are given in the paper. Thanks to its participatory methodology, the evaluation also gave the opportunity of building up a collective expertise on rural development and its future.

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Annex 1

List of measures and chapters of regulation 1257/99

N° of measure	22 measures of RDR	chapter	programming
a	Investments in agricultural holdings	I	docup/pdrn
b	Setting up of young farmers	II	PDRN
c	Training	III	PDRN
d	Early retirement	IV	PDRN
e	Less favoured areas	V	PDRN
f	Agri-environment measures	VI	PDRN
g	Food processing	VII	docup/pdrn
h	Forestation of agricultural land	VIII	PDRN
i	Other measures of forestry	VIII	PDRN
j	Improvement of soils	IX	docup/pdrn
k	Land restructuring	IX	docup/pdrn
l	Replacement services	IX	DOCUP
m	Marketing of quality food stuffs	IX	docup/pdrn
n	Services to rural population	IX	docup/pdrn
o	Renewal of villages	IX	docup/pdrn
p	Diversification	IX	docup/pdrn
q	Water resources management	IX	docup/pdrn
r	Infrastructures	IX	DOCUP
s	Tourism and handicraft	IX	DOCUP
t	Environment protection	IX	docup/pdrn
u	Compensation of natural disasters	IX	DOCUP
v	Financial engineering	IX	DOCUP

Annex 2
Logical framework of PDRN
Cadre logique du programme français de développement rural

<i>Finalité</i>	Contribuer à un développement rural durable (y compris via la priorité B du PDRN sur les forêts)					
<i>Objectif de niveau 0</i>	Orienter les exploitations agricoles vers une agriculture durable et multifonctionnelle (cf. priorité A du PDRN)				3- Assurer un développement équilibré du territoire (ou la cohésion économique et sociale) -cf. priorité D du PDRN- -- Attente en termes d'équité sociale et territoriale	
<i>Objectif de niveau 1</i>	1-Soutenir le développement économique de l'agriculture (productivité, adaptation aux attentes du marché, qualité des produits, diversification des activités, conditions de travail,...) -c'est à dire, y compris ce qui correspond à la priorité C, développer la valeur ajoutée et la qualité des produits- -cf. priorité C du PDRN- - Attente en termes économiques		2- Développer et mettre en valeur les aménités de l'agriculture (sauvegarde et promotion de l'environnement, bien-être animal,...) -cf. notamment la priorité E du PDRN- - Attente en termes environnementaux			
<i>Objectif de niveau 2</i>	1.a- Assurer un meilleur emploi des facteurs de production ²	1.b- Répondre aux attentes du marché, y compris via la qualité des produits, la diversification des activités et les exigences d'hygiène et de sécurité alimentaire	1.c- Améliorer les conditions de travail	2.a- Sauvegarder et promouvoir l'environnement agricole et rural		2.b- Améliorer le bien-être animal
<i>Correspondance avec les priorités du PDRN (voir note 3)</i>	C et (A, B et F)			E et (A, B et F)		Idem (même formulation que l'objectif 3 ci-dessus de niveau 1)
<i>Principales questions transversales correspondant aux objectifs de niveau 1</i>	2,3 et 4			3 et 5		1, 2 et 3

NB :

1- L'agriculture est prise au sens large, en incluant la sylviculture, notamment pour les 3 objectifs de niveau 1

2- La priorité A correspond à l'objectif 0 ; les priorités B et F (forêt et formation) sont des priorités transversales à l'ensemble des objectifs ; les priorités C, E et D ne correspondent qu'à un objectif de niveau 1

3- La question transversale 7 sur l'agriculture durable et multifonctionnelle correspond à l'objectif de niveau 0 ; la question 8 sur le développement rural à l'objectif supérieur ou finalité ; les questions 6, 9 et 10 concernent l'ensemble des programmes

L'objectif de revenu est sous-jacent à tous les objectifs, notamment aux 3 objectifs de niveau 1 ; le critère de revenu (correspondant à la question transversale 3) est ainsi un critère important pour apprécier la grande majorité des mesures du RDR, notamment quant aux effets globaux.

Annex 3
Members of evaluation committees

- 6 présidents de comités nationaux d'évaluation extérieurs au Ministère de l'Agriculture -MAAPAR- (sur 9)
- 105 personnes dans les 9 comités nationaux :
 - 43 : MAAPAR (Ministère de l'Agriculture)
 - 10 : MEDD (Ministère de l'Environnement)
 - 7 : CNASEA
 - 2 : CGP (Commissariat général au Plan) et DATAR (Délégation de l'aménagement du territoire)
 - 5 : ARF (Association des régions de France) et ADF (Assemblée des départements de France))
 - 18 : Recherche et Université
 - 20 : Organisations professionnelles agricoles, associations de protection de l'environnement et autres associations
- Environ 200 personnes dans les 21 groupes régionaux d'évaluation des MAE et des CTE (4 présidences extérieures au MAAPAR)

Annex 4

Synthesis evaluative questions

Cross-cutting common evaluative questions

1. Dans quelle mesure le soutien a-t-il eu une influence sur le peuplement, la composition de la population et sa distribution dans les zones rurales ?
2. Dans quelle mesure le soutien a-t-il contribué à assurer l'emploi ?
3. Dans quelle mesure le soutien a-t-il contribué à assurer au monde rural un niveau de revenu approprié ?
4. Dans quelle mesure le soutien a-t-il amélioré la situation du marché, en particulier via la réorientation de la production et l'amélioration de la qualité et de la compétitivité ?
5. Dans quelle mesure les préoccupations environnementales ont-elles été prises en considération dans la programmation du développement rural de manière à améliorer les aspects environnementaux des activités exercées dans les zones rurales et notamment des activités agricoles ?
6. Dans quelle mesure la programmation et la mise en œuvre ont-elles contribué à obtenir les impacts attendus ?

French specific evaluative questions

7. Dans quelle mesure le programme a-t-il aidé à orienter les exploitations agricoles vers une agriculture durable et multifonctionnelle, priorité principale du PDRN ?
8. Dans quelle mesure le programme a-t-il aidé à soutenir le développement rural, objet du règlement (adéquation globale du programme à cette fin, adéquation par rapport à la demande sociale à ce sujet) ?
9. Pertinence des échelons de programmation choisis en France (PDRN et intégration dans les DOCUP objectif 2), à l'exclusion de plans régionaux de développement rural comme dans les autres grands pays de l'Union européenne ?
10. Cohérence de ce programme avec le premier pilier de la PAC. Y a-t-il des complémentarités des contradictions ?

Annex 5

Sets of agri-environmental measures

01	Reconvertir les terres arables en prairies
02	Allonger les rotations / Diversifier les cultures dans la rotation
03	Diminuer les surfaces en sol nu l'hiver
04	Planter des dispositifs enherbés / créer des zones tampons
05	Planter des éléments fixes du paysage (haies, mares...) (6 mesures)
06	Entretien / réhabilitation des éléments fixes (haies, fossés, talus, terrasses, mares...)
07	Réorganiser le parcellaire : réduire la taille des parcelles / modifier leur forme
08	Modifier les traitements phytosanitaires pour réduire les pollutions / développer les méthodes de lutte raisonnée ou biologique
09	Modifier la fertilisation
10	Améliorer la gestion des effluents agricoles
11	Diminution des prélèvements d'eau sur l'exploitation
12	Créer ou conserver des zones d'expansion de crues
13	Modifier le travail du sol
14	Planter des cultures spéciales d'intérêts faunistique et floristique
15	Préserver la diversité génétique et animale à usage agricole
16	Mode d'utilisation de la parcelle raisonné en fonction de la gestion d'espèces naturelles
17	Adapter les pratiques agricoles pour se protéger des prédateurs
18	Conserver les modes d'occupation des sols à intérêts paysager et patrimonial (coteaux, vergers, bocages...)
19	Réutiliser les milieux en dynamique de déprise
20	Gestion extensive des surfaces en herbe
21	Conversion à l'agriculture biologique
22	Agroforesterie
23	Réduire le drainage
25	Préservation des espaces agricoles périurbains en risque de déprise
30	Planification environnementale

Sources

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