



2nd International Symposium "NEW METROPOLITAN PERSPECTIVES" - Strategic planning, spatial planning, economic programs and decision support tools, through the implementation of Horizon/Europe2020. ISTH2020, Reggio Calabria (Italy), 18-20 May 2016

Integrated Local Development in Coastal Areas: the Case of the “Stretto” Coast FLAG in Southern Italy

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Abstract

The importance of fisheries and their central role in creating strong relationships with the territories of some coastal communities has generated a revision process of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). With the EC Regulation 1198/2006, a specific axis in the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) has been inserted and, in particular, Article 45 of the EFF describes the promotion of local development through participatory processes, in order to understand better the real needs of an area. The Fishery Local Action Groups (FLAGs) have been introduced as governance systems involving a greater plurality of local actors for the realization of local development plans (LDPs) based on the valorization and diversification of the activities around the fisheries. The present study provides an analysis of the local development process experienced by the “Stretto” Coast FLAG in South Italy. The planning phase has been carried out through an integrated methodology that has facilitated the elaboration of a development strategy built on the basis of local knowledge and shared by the different partnership members. To this purpose, a decision-aid model was used in order to elicit and aggregate, the individual preferences related to priority measures and interventions to be included in the LDP. Later, the paper analyzes the implementation phase which was characterized by various delays and remodulations, that hindered the realization of several interventions initially planned in the LDP.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of ISTH2020

Keywords: Integrated local development; fisheries governance; decision-aid model; AHP

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1. Introduction

In the programme 2007-2013 of the UE's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAGs) have been activated in order to integrate the dimensions of territorial and local development and bottom-up approaches experienced in the Leader programme. In this way, a greater involvement of local actors in the decision making process of defining local development plans (LDPs) was fostered within a more complex and inclusive governance system represented by the socio-economic partnership of the FLAGs. To this purpose, the FLAGs represent the instrument of territorial governance for fishery development, since they involve a greater plurality of local actors coming from public, private and non-profit sphere. As an expression of partnership and, therefore, of collective policy, the FLAGs are deputed to favor and manage the network of different stakeholders, and play a central role for the sustainable development of the fisheries areas in economic, environmental and social terms.

As participation and co-management can ensure a greater effectiveness of the strategies outlined in the context of fisheries governance, they become essential ingredients for the development of fishery communities. According to Symes (2006), in order to achieve an effective system of co-management a wide knowledge base, a proper representation of stakeholders and the involvement of civil society are necessary. Participation plays a major role in the effectiveness of co-management it is important to make greater use of participation (Gray, 2005), as this can increase the level of involvement of both the stakeholders and the local communities in the formulation of development process, and ensure that each of them play an active role within the decision making process. Participation processes allow stakeholders to acquire and to experience their learning capacity in identifying development interventions that fit the effective needs of the territory (Romeo & Marcianò, 2014) and integrate such key elements as territory, partnership and strategy (Budzich-Tabor, 2014).

The inclusion of a high diversity of stakeholders can lead to the definition of development strategies taking into account a wide variety of perspectives, thus enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of the decision-making process. However, decision making processes with multiple actors are rather complex; conflicts may arise for different viewpoints, interests or controversies that may occur between actors of different groups (Jentoft & Chuenpagdee, 2009). In the planning phase, these critical issues can slow down the activities and, in case of conflict escalation, they can cause governance failure.

This study analyzes the integrated local development process of the "Stretto" Coast Flag, in Southern Italy. In particular, the planning phase deals with a methodology simplifying the elaboration of a development strategy built on the basis of local knowledge and shared by the different partnership members. In such a context, a decision-aid model based on a multicriteria method was used to support a decision-making process characterized by multiple decision makers and multiple goals (De Montis & Nijkamp, 2006). The decision-aid model is based on the Analytic Hierarchy Process and a convergence process, implemented to quantify individual and collective preferences related to priority measures and interventions to be included in the LDP. Moreover, with respect to a previous study conducted by Marcianò, Romeo, & Cozzupoli (2015), this study analyzes the implementation phase of the Local Development Plan, highlighting the causes of delay and financial modifications that hindered the realization of several interventions originally planned in the LDP. The paper is organized as follows: the next paragraph focuses on the methodological phases of the integrated planning model; the third and fourth ones deal respectively with the results of the planning and implementation phases, while the last paragraph summarizes the discussions.

2. The Planning Phase

2.1. The Integrated Planning Methodology

The planning phase of the LDP was carried out, by following a methodological approach that can be summarized in three phases: territorial analysis, animation and concertation (Calabrò, De Luca, Gulisano & Marcianò, 2005; Marcianò 2012; Marcianò, Romeo, & Cozzupoli, 2015). These phases are represented in Figure 1.a where actors appear in the first column and activities and results related to each phase in the others.

The first step includes a territorial diagnosis through a knowledge process aimed at pointing out the useful information that can support the definition of a proper development strategy. The phases of the territorial analysis can be distinguished into *general*, *specific* and *finalized* ones, the contents of which depend on the objectives of the

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