

## **CAP 2014/2020: COMPLIANCE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SYSTEMS FOR SAVING WATER RESOURCES**

The Partnership Agreement related to CAP 2014/2020, for what concerns using Funds from CAP 2014-2020 for infrastructure investments, requires “compliance” with art. 45-46 of Water Frame Directive.

Rules of chargeability for investment support refer to investments in general and define expenditures eligible for EAFRD Fund support, providing, in the case of investments with possible effects on the environment, a preliminary assessment of their environmental impact. Article 46 makes specific reference to irrigation investments and integrates the principles of the Water Framework Directive. Specifically, for general matters, it should be referred to Article.45, which requires an environmental impact assessment for all investments that are likely to have adverse environmental effects and identifies the expenses eligible for EAFRD Fund support.

Article 46 considers eligible only planned interventions in areas falling within the River basin management plans notified to the European Commission, with programs of measures. Art 46 requests the compulsory installation, or the presence, of flow meters and, with regard to the improvement of an existing irrigation system, or an element of infrastructure for irrigation, it requires an appraisal that shows a water-saving potential including, as a minimum, between 5% and 25%, according to the technical parameters of the system or the existing infrastructure.

If the investment concerns surface or underground water bodies considered in the Management Plan in not good conditions from a quantitative point of view, the article 46 admits to funding interventions that can guarantee: a) an effective reduction of water consumption at the level of investment, amounting to at least 50% of potential water savings made possible by the investment and b) in the case of investment in a single farm, a reduction of the farm total water consumption of at least 50% of the water-saving potential that can be made at the level of investment. Art. 46 also states that the farm total water consumption includes water sold by the farm. These conditions are not requested for investments in an existing plant which affects only energy efficiency and investments for the creation of a basin or investments for the use of recycled water that has no impact on a body of surface or underground water.

For the extension of the irrigated area, art. 46 provides that investments involving a resulting net increase in irrigated area through surface waters are eligible only if: a) the state of the water body was not considered "less than good "from a quantitative point of view in the management plan for the river basin district and b) an environmental review, carried out or approved by the competent authority, also referred to a group of farms, that shows that the investment will not have a significant negative impact on the environment. Surfaces established in the program that are not irrigated, but where in the recent past was active an irrigation system, can be considered irrigated in determining the net irrigated area.

Italian Minister of Agriculture in relation to the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020, with decree 31 July 2015, approved specific guidelines, applicable to the EAFRD Fund for the definition of standard criteria under which the Regions will manage the methods of quantification of water volumes used by end users for irrigation; this in order to promote the use of measuring instruments and the application of water prices based on the volumes used, both for associated users and self consumption. The reference tool has

been identified in Sigrian (National Information System for Management of Water Resources in Agriculture), geo-referenced database designed to collect and process informations about the use of water for irrigation, which will create a single database Reference to the irrigation sector in the service of all government and regulatory bodies.

Inside these guidelines a monitoring system of volumes (pickup and delivery), has been decided and there will be advices on the ways and opportunities of using measurements or estimates of water consumption in agriculture, taking into account differences in management, organizational and economic, between the Consortia management and those based on self-supply. Furthermore, in reference to install or not meters, it will be taken into account cultural, territorial and historical differences. Where it is economically disadvantageous or technically impossible to install them, it is possible to proceed with the estimation methods considered most suitable.

It has been established, at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, a permanent table, coordinated by the Head of the Department of European and international policies and rural development, involving the Ministry of the Environment, the Regions and autonomous Provinces, Authorities of the river basin district, CREA, ANBI (National Association for reclamation and irrigation), ISTAT and agricultural associations, with the task of monitoring the activities specified in the Guidelines with regard to the collection and management of data on irrigation volumes, as well as to propose further documents aimed to standardize the methods of estimation.

In Italy irrigation is critical to ensure the production and the very existence of farming. In particular for the productions of quality agriculture products, for many of which irrigation it is indispensable. Italy has the largest number of products with protected designation of origin (PDO) and protected geographical indication (IGT) in the European Union. These productions are important also in terms of the socio-economic development and national income as it is considered that in Italy they generate a total economic value of around € 12 billion/year.

The definition from the Regions of a consistent method for the quantification of the volumes of water intended for irrigation will certainly better use the financial resources of the CAP 2014-2020 for Investments irrigation within the Rural Development Planet.