

IDENTIFYING THE MAIN INFORMATION SOURCES WITH REGARD TO EUROPEAN FUNDING

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Abstract. *The development of the Romanian rural has undergone important variations in terms of economic and financial instruments. The failure of the support policy in the fields of agriculture and rural development during the first stages of transition was determined by the slow pace of the economic reform and shaping of market-viable agricultural structures. The research undertaken allowed for the depiction of tendencies and theoretically and practically-fundamented conclusions for the efficient access and employment of European funding for rural development. The method for data collection and processing selected for both studies was the inquiry, while the research instrument employed was the survey. The preamble of the study involved the analysis of the general regulatory framework of European funding for rural development in Romania. Research objectives aimed at the main co-financing sources of private beneficiaries in Cluj county and beneficiaries' assessment of project filing methods.*

Keywords: rural development, European, funding, projects.

INTRODUCTION

Objectives underlying the funding for rural development must be analysed and comprehended in the most practical manner possible by Romanian authorities for the specific purpose of sustainable efficiency that is of utmost necessity for private entrepreneurs, as well as administrative units in the rural area that would absorb community funding. The analysis conducted on the number of European funding beneficiaries in Cluj county revealed that the main beneficiaries of non-reimbursable funds within the SAPARD and FEADR programmes were administrative units, city halls, followed by private beneficiaries. This is the reason why the latter were selected respond to the survey, in order to analyze the causes that led to a situation of this sort. The research subject envisions the highlight of European funding absorption capacity in the case of private beneficiaries of Cluj county. The content of this study was designed to start from the information provided on the basis of the survey conducted on the private beneficiaries of SAPARD and FEADR funding. The objectives of the case study are: to identify the main information sources with regard to European funding; the analysis of the main cofinancing sources of beneficiaries, the assessment of project filing method, the degree of satisfaction regarding project implementing; the analysis of the impact that these projects exerted on direct and indirect beneficiaries.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

For data collection and attaining the objectives at hand, the direct face-to-

face enquiry method was used, at the home/company headquarters of the subjects under survey. This method was selected considering the relative long length of the survey (29 questions) and to provide comfort to those under survey.

The research sample involved private beneficiaries of SAPARD and/or FEADR non-reimbursable funding. Until the date of the research, the number of SAPARD and FEADR contractors was 126 private enterprises or authorised physical individuals, who represent the survey basis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The knowledge, desire for information on the success in developing a business, on the specific traits of the outside economic environment are essential premises for success. As such, one of the main objectives of the study was to identify the main sources of information regarding SAPARD and/or FEADR programmes for those under survey. As expected, a great part of respondents (63.4%) heard both of the SAPARD, as well as the FEADR programme. However, it can be observed that almost a third of respondents have not heard of both funds, which represents a negative aspect (Table 1).

Table 1
Answers to the question „Have you ever heard of co-financing for rural development?”

<i>Answers to the question</i>	Number of respondents	Frequency (%)
Only of SAPARD	5	12.2
Only of FEADR	10	24.4
Both of SAPARD and FEADR	26	63.4
Neither of one, nor the other	0	0
TOTAL	41	100

The main sources of information regarding European funding that were identified as a consequence of the survey, are: other beneficiaries 39.0%; newspapers, radio, TV 17.1%; commune mayoralty 14.6%; friends, neighbours, relatives 14.6%; agricultural chamber 7.3%; consultants 4.9%.

Table 2
Sources of information regarding SAPARD/FEADR

No.	Sources of information	Number of respondents	Frequency(%)
1	From other beneficiaries	16	39.0
2	From the mass-media	7	17.1
3	From the mayoralty	6	14.6
4	From the agricultural chamber	3	7.3
5	From consultants	2	4.9
6	Other sources	6	14.6
7	Non-response	1	2.4
Total			

Thus, there is a balance between unofficial information sources 53.6% (other beneficiaries, relatives, friends, neighbours) and official sources 43.7% (mass

media, mayoralty, agricultural chamber etc.). It is to be noticed that the previous experience of European funding beneficiaries is the most beneficial, while official information sources play a smaller part.

CONCLUSIONS

The research conducted allowed for the depiction of tendencies and theoretically and practically-fundamented conclusions for the efficient access and employment of European funding for rural development.

Recent evolutions in the European financing system through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) confirm two major tendencies: a predominant orientation towards the financing of development programmes for the rural area; an increase of complementarity for agricultural financing by means of „policy financing”, with the essential aim of promoting an essential economic, social and territorial cohesion process. In order to benefit from the system of community interventions, the major issues for rural communities are to: identify financing opportunities, setting an adequate project portfolio for personal development options; finding co-financing sources.

Such an approach is conditioned by drafting a strategy for development, for human resource development and the promotion of a public-private partnership for joint-interest priority areas. Considering the process for accessing European funding and the situation of the Romanian rural area, it becomes clear that the role of „catalyst” in rural development and the capitalization of European opportunities, must be assigned to local and regional decision-makers.

Farmers and entrepreneurs in the rural area must be supported to make full profit of the FEADR financing opportunities, the instrument that is most adapted to the development needs of rural communities and that provide for a unitary and coherent context of European support for local rural development strategies.

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