THE USE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS IN TIMIS COUNTY

UTILIZAREA FONDURILOR DE DEZVOLTARE RURALA IN JUDETUL TIMIS

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Abstract: *The rural development of Timiş County, a balanced space in terms of climatic conditions, soil and relief, has a special importance both for the population of the County and for the national economy. It also represents the cultural area where the customs, traditions and specific area folklore were preserved and transmitted, a relationship between past and present. The authors of this paper show how the rural development funds in Timiş County have been used, focusing on the measures and activities related to rural development, in accordance with the western region development Strategy. After presenting these measures, they proceeded to paneling the submitted and contracted projects which have been undertaken in Timiş County, the priorities being also established in the same time. The general conclusion drawn in this paper relates the fact that, for a better absorption of the rural development funds, it takes more than one eligible projects.*

Key words: *rural development, Timiş, funds, measures, priorities*

Timis County is located in the western side of the country, and is bordered at west by Serbia, Montenegro and Hungary, at east by Hunedoara County, at south-east by Caras-Severin, and Arad County at the north. With a total area of 869,665 ha, Timis County owns 3.65% of the territory of Romania, holding – in size – the first place in the country. The landscape is characterized by the predominance of plain, which covers the western (low plain) and central (high plain) parts of the county. The plain enters in the form of creeks in the hills, on the Timis valleys (towards Lugoj) and Begheiului (towards Făget), and in the eastern county the Pogănişului pre-mountain hills and the southern part of Lipovei Plateau take place.

EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) is the unique tool for financing rural development policy at European level. Of objectives can be mentioned: improving competitiveness in agriculture and forestry, improving the environment and the countryside, improving quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economical activities; implementation of "LEADER" local programs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The authors of this paper have completed more phases. In the first phase, it has been required a theoretical and bibliographical documentation on European funds, rural development and about Timis County. It has been defined the issue and formulation of the main hypotheses in order to constitute an explanatory and convincing model, inducing the importance and activity of the researched subject. The second phase – on the ground – has been one of most important, in terms of a dialogue with lots of personalities from the Timis County Council, from the Paying Agency for Rural Development and Fisheries. The final phase has been drawn up and completed by the collected information. The drafting of this paper was made in laboratory, based on the notes from the ground, the existing material and consulted bibliography.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the Regional Development Strategy of the West Region 2007-2013, we fiind the measures, sub-measures and rural development activities namely:

Measure 1. Diversification of alternative economical activities in rural areas, which has as sub-measure quality of life improvement in rural areas and promoting the diversification of economic activities. The main activities that should be considered is to increase the competitiveness of the agricultural sector by supporting young farmers in business development; creation and development of production networks and distribution of biological and technical supply; encouraging rural tourism and craft activities; environmental conservation of the patrimony and traditions specific to the region and, last but not least, information

campaigns and promoting opportunities related to business in rural areas.

Measure 2. Rural infrastructure development, which has as sub-measure hydro infrastructure developing, transport, communications and energy. Activities specific to this measure develop several aspects: creation and development of water supply and sanitation networks, transport and communications infrastructure development and electrification of villages still unconnected to the national network.

Measure 3. Rural area specific assistance has as sub-measure ensuring access to health services and education from rural areas population at the level of the urban areas. Two sub-measures are characteristic of this measure: financial aid for health professionals and teachers who wish to settle in rural areas, including those who want to initiate a private practice and achieve sanitary education actions targeting the rural population school youth, adult population, young mothers and elderly population.

Rural developing projects included in the Timis County Council's strategic localities program are represented in the table below, being highlighted the financial data contained in the current version of PS TCC IPL Timis Strategic Program:

Table 1. Study of completion degree of the rural development use of funds in Timiş County.

Total projects (nr.)	Projects included in the 2007-2013 Strategic Program		Strategic program priority projects		Priority projects share value (%)
	Estimated total value	Local co-financing total value	Estimated total value	Local co-financing total value	
	EURO		EURO		
227	95.216.178	45.500.000	0	0	0

Source: OJPDRP Timis

Thus, have been estimated, primarly, the total amounts related to the projects of strategic development on each axis, as well as the total local amounts co-financing rural development axis (column 1). In this context, the co-financing refers both to the amounts by which the grant project beneficiaries contribute to the implementation of various programs, as well as to projects financed exclusively from Timis County Council's own financial resources. The financial data contained in columns 2 and 3 refers

both to projects, Timis County Council, as well as to strategic partners and projects, (mainly of public administrations in Timis County), where these data were supplied by those who hold them. In the columns 4 and 5, only amounts related to *the number of projects considered as priorities* have been estimated, on the strategic development axes, as well as the local *co-financing* amounts for them. For the case of Rural Development strategic axis number 8, there is no financial data regarding the priority projects, since these projects are sole responsibility of local public administrations and of which there is no data concerning priority conditions.

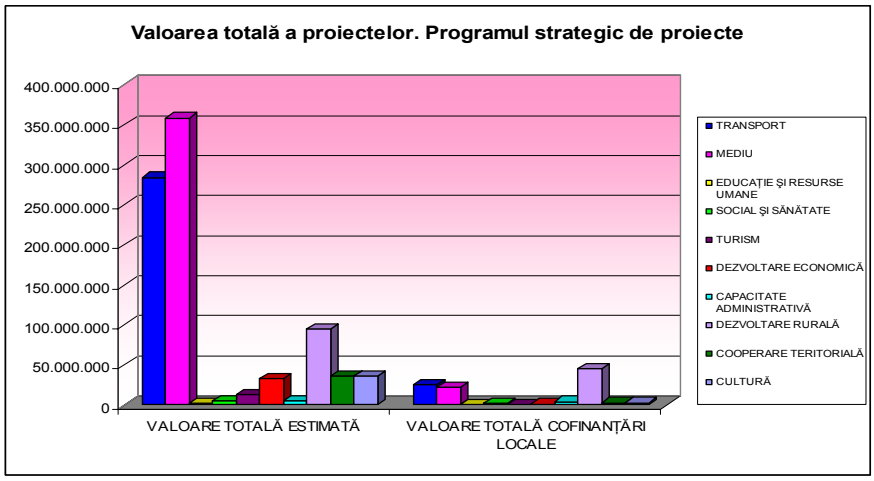


Figure 1. The total value of projects in Timis County from the strategic program of projects

As seen from the above presentation, the share value of the project is majority within the axis of *Environment* and *Transport*, followed by *Rural Development* axis. The share value of the local co-financing is majority within the *Rural Development* axis, which is explained by the large number of projects of local public administrations from the Timis County financed from their own and governmental funds.

Amid a political situation difficult to crystallize, it has appeared, in this part of the country earlier, the idea of setting up direct bridging outside the official framework. They have materialized at first through twinning numerous villages and towns with similar ones from abroad and later have been established business and education partnership links of collaboration

between institutions, culture and research, NGOs have been created Gradually however paved for establishing direct relations at administrative institutions with strict programs made for the realization of large projects.

Table 2. Projects submitted and contracted through SAPARD after 2008

Measure	Projects submitted			Projects contracted		
	No of projects	Total value eligible CF - EURO	Public Value eligible CF - EURO	No of projects	Total value of contracts - RON	Public value of contracts - RON
M 1.1	23	54.797.292	28.262.737	23	194.435.068	100.208.308
M 3.1	125	35.031.591	19.347.394	125	126.846.491	69.907.083
M 3.4	28	4.333.723	2.166.861	27	15.050.724	7.525.362
M 3.5	1	47.912	23.956	1	168.067	84.034
M 1.2	1	2.000.000	2.000.000	1	7.227.800	7.227.800
M 3.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
M 3.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
M 2.1	8	7.363.881	7.363.881	8	27.822.342	27.822.342
TOTAL	**186**	**103.574.399**	**59.164.830**	**185**	**371.550.493**	**212.774.929**

Source: OJPDRP Timis

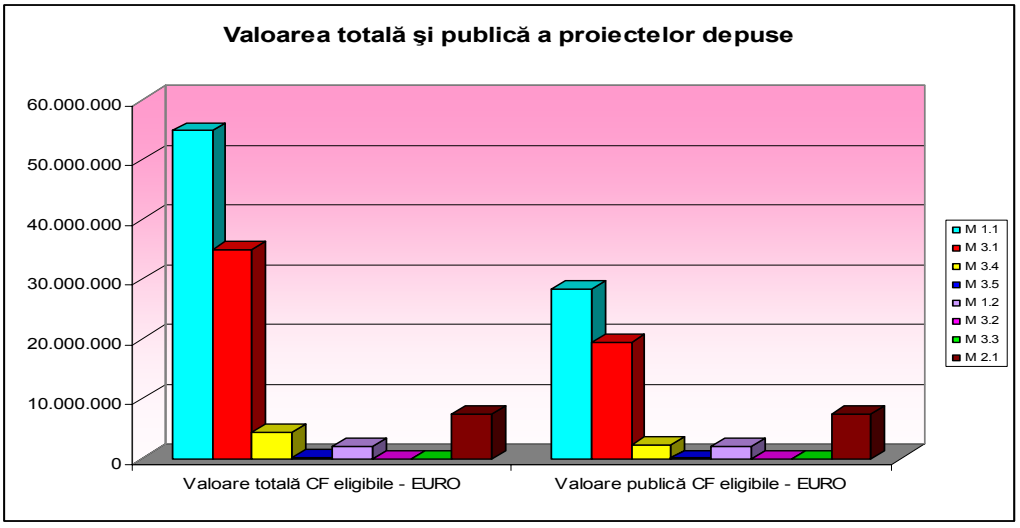


Figure 2. Value of submitted projects

Table 3. Projects submitted and contracted through Romanian SAPARD

Measure	Projects submitted			Projects contracted		
	No. Of projects	Value lei	Value Euro	No. Of projects	Value lei	Value Euro
M 1.1	5	7.497.644	26.749.656	5	26.749.656	13.374.828
M 3.1	37	14.822.343	52.972.502	36	48.115.881	25.512.137
M 3.4	4	977.351	3.462.353	4	3.462.353	1.731.177
TOTAL	**46**	**23.297.338**	**83.184.511**	**45**	**78.327.890**	**40.618.142**

Source: OJPDRP Timis

Table 4. Projects submitted and contracted since 2008

Measure	Projects submitted			Projects contracted		
	No. Of projects	Value lei	Value Euro	No. Of projects	Value lei	Value Euro
112	234	25.840.119	6.052.502	98	11.834.583	2.777.502
121	277	724.750.342	184.012.207	106	306.741.348	78.643.858
123	59	686.842.504	169.729.116	27	249.681.167	64.622.816
123S	14	90.934.167	22.242.996	11	55.436.132	14.574.278
312	283	254.375.293	59.353.239	131	125.262.660	29.163.481
313	31	46.078.328	10.813.148	15	23.773.864	5.672.873
221	1	331.863	79.015			
125	18	72.570.402	17.644.682	1	4.142.299	999.999
322	94	960.130.473	237.302.437	17	176.321.875	41.488.877

Source: OJPDRP Timis

Paying Agency for Rural Development and Fishing (APDRP) checks in the field all the projects completed through the regional centers - Completed Projects Control Office. The methodology for ex-post control is applied unitary on the beneficiaries, so by the territorial structures, but also by the Control and Fraud (DCA) which, in addition, will have in the check sheets the tracking accuracy and integrity of ex-post check in the field by territorial structures through Completed Projects Control Office.

To economically develop the rural areas, it would be necessary to create programs that would stimulate the creation of microenterprises, aimed at activities upstream and downstream of agriculture. This can lead to an

increase in employment, attracting mainly young people to these areas and reducing the unemployment rate among the population. Simultaneously strategic approach to agriculture and supply and beverage industry is one of the main ways to develop small and medium-sized businesses and outgoing of the rural population from the status of own consumption.

CONCLUSIONS

For better absorption of funds provided by the Member States, many projects are needed, eligible and with impact, openly and transparently managed. Funds absorption capacity is even greater as more beneficiaries are better prepared for their management.

So that EU funded programs to meet the real needs, the planning and implementation need to be made with all social partners. On the other hand, openness and transparency in fund management can not be achieved without the involvement of social partners, including NGOs, as otherwise require the European regulations.

The necessary condition for overall success in accessing European funds is to overcome the current tensions and suspicions. Accountability, fault tolerance, trust and cooperation between different categories of actors involved are the safest steps to value the opportunities offered by community funds absorption.

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