

RESULTS OF IMPLEMENTING THE SAPARD PROGRAMME IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

During 2000-2006, Romania has benefited from support through the Special Program for Pre-Accession for Agriculture and Rural Development - SAPARD. The role of SAPARD program was to create the necessary implementation of an advanced agriculture and sustainable development of rural areas in the candidate states. Thus, for the 10 measures that were approved during August 2002 - April 2006, was hired a total of 4704 projects with a value of 1475.24 million Euro, total payments to beneficiaries of the program SAPARD was 1024, 72 million Euro. At the end of 2006, the total financial commitments by SAPARD program was 1475.24 million Euro, resulting in a one hundred percent degree of coverage of the Annual Financing Agreements (ÁFA) for the years 2000-2005 inclusive, and ÁFA 81.14% for 2006.

Keywords: *The Sapard Programm, measures, results, implementation*

INTRODUCTION

The SAPARD Programme was the third non-reimbursable financial instrument designed to support candidate nations in their approach of the structural reformation in the agricultural field and in other fields related to rural development, as well as in implementing the EC acquis concerning the Common Agricultural Policy and related legislation.

Between 2000 and 2006, Romania received 150 million Euro per year, making it the second great beneficiary after Poland; in addition, Romania's Government contributed 50 million Euro. Annual funds allotted to the ten nations beneficiaries of the SAPARD Programme are presented in the following figure:

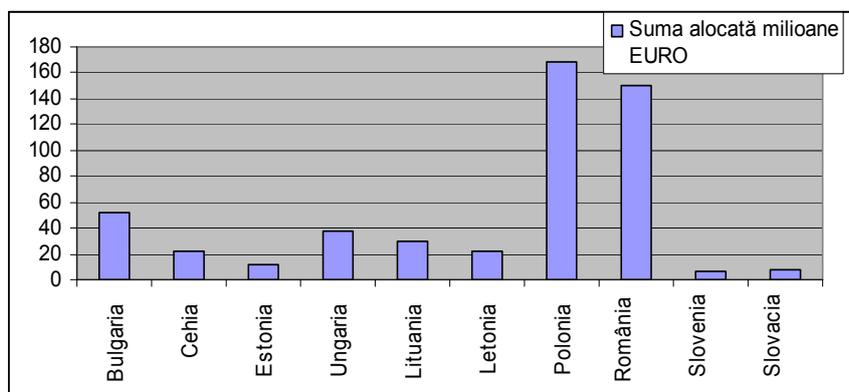


Fig. 1. Funds allocated through the SAPARD Program

SAPARD financed major projects in the agricultural and rural development fields. Romania identified **four priority measures to be taken** within this programme:

1. Improving agricultural and fish produce processing and marketing activities;
2. Developing and improving rural infrastructure;
3. Developing rural economy (investments in agricultural companies); economic diversification; forestry;
4. Developing human resources (improving professional training activities; technical assistance, including studies meant to support the training and monitoring of the programme, campaigns of information and publicity).

The funds allotted through the SAPARD Programme were available for private agricultural producers, for agricultural producers associations, for the small and medium enterprises, for local authorities (county councils, municipal, town, and communal halls).

The funds were allotted based on projects. The SAPARD Programme financed two major categories of projects:

- **private** (generating incomes), such as those related to investments in agricultural exploitations or in agricultural produce processing;
- **public** (non-generating incomes), such as those related to infrastructure development and improvement, to water resource management, or to forestry (public interest projects).

Co-financing rules were different for private and public beneficiaries:

- private beneficiaries were asked to finance from their won funds 50% of the project value;
- public beneficiaries (e.g., local communities) benefited from 100% financing of the project provided it generates incomes.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

In order to be able to achieve the goals of the present paper, we used as research methods: data collection, data analysis, data processing, and data synthesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysing data we could see that through the SAPARD Programme the following were achieved in a certain measure:

- promoting those objectives and actions that allow the modernising, restructuring, and renewing of the production systems of agro-alimentary production ensuring the quality requirements of the European Union;
- ensuring minimal conditions concerning agricultural and rural infrastructure;
- maintaining and/or increasing the number of jobs through both diversifying agricultural and non-agricultural activities and intensifying basic activities;
- stabilising and/or attracting youth to the rural area together with increasing the degree of knowledge of local cultural traditions and values;
- increasing the welfare level and vocational training of the inhabitants of the rural area;
- including the demands of development among other activities I agreement with the requirements of production standards concerning the environment in the European Union.

Financing was granted only to the projects considered eligible and acknowledged for financing as a result of auctions.

The SAPARD Programme relied on general principles. The functioning of the SAPARD corresponded to the functioning of the Structural Funds of the European Union, i.e. among others:

- to obtain a acknowledged by the Commission;
- the plan had to be correlated with the basic principles of the Structural Funds and with the Common Agricultural Policy;
- the U support was based upon co-financing;
- accepting and coordinating the plan was identical to the procedure applied in EU member nations in the case of regional programmes;
- the projects were assessed in three phases: previously, during, and after;
- observation and monitoring of programme implementation were ensured;
- the Payment Agency was established to administer money movement as in other EU member nations.

The National Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development was the first programming document aiming the entire rural area and ensuring the implementation of the first operational programme – the SAPARD Programme.

Designing and implementing the National Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development and the SAPARD Programme were based on EU regulations concerning structural funds for candidate nations and they were a first preparatory exercise with a view to using those funds.

Important measures of the SAPARD Programme in Romania

Measure 1.1. Improving agricultural produce processing and marketing

This measure aimed at the following:

- developing production and marketing technologies and improving produce quality;
- improving produce presentation and processing encouraging a better use of by-products;
- diminishing waste amounts;
- improving competitiveness of agricultural produce and increasing added value through the collection, storage, preservation, processing, and marketing in order to develop agro-alimentary networks;
- increasing employed population and improving incomes of agricultural producers through enhancing the processing and marketing of produce at local level;
- diversifying agro-alimentary production to ensure new markets and to develop agri-business services;
- developing new segments of biological produce oriented consumers through the development of new green markets;
- obtaining produce with a strong local or regional profile and developing specific standards;
- introducing new technologies and innovations, modernising the present ones with a minimal negative impact on the environment;
- ensuring food safety;
- observing food safety regulations;
- developing and consolidating competitive private economic agents;
- encouraging the system of integrated investments to introduce modern production and collection, conditioning, storage, processing, and marketing methods to increase performance and quality in marketed produce.

Supports granted within this measure complete other activities stipulated: investments in agricultural exploitations, improving structures in order to achieve alimentary produce veterinary and phyto-sanitary control and quality, agricultural production methods meant to protect the

environment and to sustain rural landscape, establishing producers' groups, and water resource management for agriculture.

Between 2000 and 2006, through this measure of the SAPARD Programme they allotted a 379.51 million Euro to financially support the establishment and modernisation of processing and marketing units for agricultural and fish produce.

Of the 202 investment projects within this measure, 85 belong to the "Meat and Eggs" sector, 48 to the "Milk and Dairy Produce" sector, 27 to the "Cereals" sector, 24 to the "Wine" sector, 17 to the "Vegetables-Fruit and Potato" sector, and 1 to the "Oil Crops" sector. A number of 2232 jobs were developed through these investments.

Measure 3.1. Investments in agricultural exploitations

Between 2000 and 2006, 25.07 million Euros were allotted to the farmers as financial support. It consisted in purchasing performing tractors, machines, and agricultural equipment, investments in the modernisation of the technologies for the production of agricultural produce and animal husbandry. Thus, by the end of 2006, they built and modernised 629 barns and other farm buildings; they modernised 16 glasshouses, measuring 1432 ha, and they built 71 new glasshouses measuring 16.689 ha; they purchased 8713 tools and equipments; they established and modernised 684.403 ha of fruit tree plantations and 952.540 vine plantations, etc.

Within this programme, they financed projects whose total value reached between 5000 and 2,000,000 Euro.

Measure 2.1. Developing and improving rural infrastructure

The general objectives of this measure were: improving the transportation opportunities; supporting economic, commercial, and tourism activities through the development of a minimal infrastructure; improving hygiene and sanitary conditions of the inhabitants and of the productive activities carried out in accordance with present standards; modernising the degree of comfort of the dwellings, improving environment quality, and diminishing pollution sources; maintaining rural population in rural areas.

By implementing the SAPARD Programme, they achieved a series of projects of rural infrastructure (2558 km of built and modernised roads, 4918 km of water supply networks, 863 de km of sewage networks). The number of communes that benefited from basic physical infrastructure (road, water supply, and waste water removal) was 821, of which 441 for roads, 295 for water, and 85 for waste water removal.

Measure 3.4. Developing and diversifying economic activities for the generation of multiple activities and alternative incomes

Through Measure 3.4. they supported investments in rural tourism and in other types of tourism (equestrian, mountain, etc.) with the largest share of the total investments within the measure. Thus, they have contracted 727

tourism projects for a value of about 64 million Euros, of which 121 have been completed. The projects achieved resulted in about 13,000 accommodation places and about 726 jobs. They also invested in craft and handicraft activities (19 craft units in which work 155 artisans), in beekeeping, etc.

Measure 4.1. Technical assistance for programme implementation

Technical assistance supported the implementation of the SAPARD Programme, i.e. the achievement of the measures at national and local levels.

The basic objective was to carry out the SAPARD Programme efficiently. To do so, the following were taken into account as major points: currently inform the public and the beneficiaries; ensuring the proper knowledge of the programme through the multiplying and disseminating of the documents; ensuring material, financial, and informational means necessary to support the design, monitoring, and assessment of the programme; ensuring instruction and training for the different agents responsible for the programme achievement; ensuring assessment and control of implementation of the programme by the European Commission.

CONCLUSIONS

The SAPARD Programme developed the financial and technical premises necessary in the process of adhesion to European structures. Thus, the funds operated through the **SAPARD Agency and later through the Payment Agency for Rural Development and Fishing** contributed directly to the economic and social development of the rural area, supported the private producer, supported agricultural associations and agricultural commercial societies and also local councils. They have also supported non-governmental organisations provided they established units specialised in agricultural machines.

Within the SAPARD Programme, they designed 6567 projects for a public value of 1985.35 million Euros, with 4549 financing projects for a public value of 1410.99 million Euros, representing 92.74% of the total amounts allotted through the programme.

So far, within the SAPARD Programme they made payments for a value of 1278.74 million Euro, representing 84.05% of the total amounts allotted through the programme.

The main fields for which **non-reimbursable funds** were allotted are as follows:

- agro-alimentary industry,
- agricultural exploitations,
- diversification of economic activities,

- constitution of agricultural, forestry, and fish farming producers,
- agricultural methods for ecological agriculture,
- forestry.

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