

ASPECTS REGARDING THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA AND IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Sârb Gh. Sebastian *

*University Of Oradea, Faculty of Environmental Protection, 26 Gen. Magheru St.,
410048 Oradea, Romania

Key words: consultancy, agricultural

INTRODUCTION

The National Agency for Agricultural Consultancy (NAAC) use to be an institution of the central public administration, with legal status, subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development totally financed from the state budget and from its own incomes. NAAC carried out its activities based, and the GD no. 676.1998, with further changes and completions, and on the GO no. 22/2005 concerning the reorganization of the activity of agricultural consultancy acknowledged, and modified by the Law no. 77/2005.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The research was conducted at the Timis County Office for Agricultural Consultancy (COAC), the current local Chambers of Agriculture and County and covers all aspects of agricultural consultancy involvement in support farmers in Timis County. The data collected were centralized, analysed and interpreted, so that we were able to obtain relevant conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The role and importance of public and private consultancy for the farmers result from the quality, capacity and agricultural performance of the farmers as basic indicators of efficiency, productivity, development and support for the agricultural sector in each country. The high quality and performance of the farmers are not innate, but they need to be developed through either the study of agricultural sciences in an educational system through extension and consultancy courses for agriculturists.

This is the reason why most governments and development

agencies admit the necessity of supporting and developing agricultural extension (consultancy).

Most states have some kind of "Agricultural Consultancy and Extension" system or service. The main problem of the extension policy is that a number of farmers need this kind of services and public funds are limited. One way to increase the number of farmers that benefit from extension services without increasing the burden on the public sector is to cooperate with private sector, nongovernmental organizations and with farmers associations.

It has been generally admitted that agricultural extension is essential for the development of agriculture, though the functions of agricultural extension are still being debated. These different points of views concern:

- technological transfer,
- an informal form of education and of development of the human capital.

These two functions are important in the effort to improve and revitalize agricultural consultancy activities. Acknowledging these two functions emphasise two main aspects:

- 1 - the large number of farmers that need consultancy services -i.e. the issue of coverage;
- 2 - the limited number of resources available for consultancy activities - i.e. the issue of resources.

These complementary issues have implications in institutional regulations and the design and management of extension services in the developing nations.

Agricultural consultancy services use a wide range of strategies and methodologies to serve as many farmers as possible. These strategies include increasing the use of mass- media and communication techniques. They have introduced long-distance learning, strategic extension campaigns for the quick dissemination of educational messages to a large number of farmers using different mass channels and media. Other approaches are based on group methods and on the participation of other related services, to serve large numbers of farmers when they are organized in association.

National Agency for Agricultural Consulting use to coordinate:

- ◆ at the county level, 41 County Offices of Agricultural Consultancy (COAC) and the Municipal Office for Agricultural Consulting Bucharest;
- ◆ at commune level, 546 Local Centres of Agricultural Consultancy (LCAC), directly subordinated to COAC;
- ◆ The Agronomist's Houses completely financed from their own incomes, in accordance with the GD 1901/2004.

The beneficiaries of these services were:

- Agricultural producers;

- The rural population involved in different activities generating income.

The general objective of activity:

- organizing free of charge activities meant to vulgarise, to supply consultancy, to assist technically, to educate and train professionally;
- promoting and applying the strategies and programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, including programs of international cooperation;
- supporting agricultural producers in accessing structural funds and other domestic and foreign financing;
- supporting agricultural producers in associating;
- supplying consultancy to foreign investors in order to identify possibilities and opportunities in investment in Romanian agriculture.

Activities organized and services supplied:

- vulgarisation and promotion;
- editing, multiplying and distribution tree of charge publications and materials;
- technical assistance.

Duties and Responsibilities NAAC:

- preparing the rural population involving in agricultural, fishing, forestry and other types of activities with a view to accessing the EU;
- disseminating legal regulations harmonized with European Union ones;
- promoting rural development programs among rural population;
- assisting technically for a quick accession of structural funds, of the supporting system for and of other financing programs;
- preparing and improving rural population involved in the field of agriculture, fishery, and forestry.

The Timis County Office for Agricultural Consultancy (COAC) aimed at supporting the process of reform in agriculture through activities of vulgarisation and technical assistance, managerial consultancy, professional training, technical assistance for the application of research results and for the insurance of the informational flow necessary for the agricultural producers in the private sector and for the specialists to organise and operate modern, efficient and competitive agricultural exploitations.

Situation of achievements of the Timis COAC, between 2009 and 2011:

- *technical assistance*: over 1410 consultations;

- *demo plots*:

- 8 plots cultivated with wheat and barley total area of 12 ha,
- 7 lots of cattle with a total of 313 heads
- 1 lot of swine with a total of 10 heads
- 1 lot of honeybees with a total of 80 hives

- **information through magazines, folders, brochures, posters and books:** COAC Timis edited its own "Informative Bulletin" (1300 copies distributed to the farmers free of charge).

- **creation of collective farms:** COAC Timis supported the first cooperative "PRIMAGRO BANAT" in Gătaia - whose main field activity is Purchase and sale of agricultural raw materials, live animals, textiles and semi-finished goods, which has a total of 13 members.

- **support for associations:**

- the "Ovitim Miorița " Association in Costei, which has 56 members: sheep breeding;
- the S.C. Banat Melon SRL, Association in Vizejdia, has five members: valorising vegetables.
- the "AGRICOM" Association in Comloșu Mare has 5 members: valorising grains and technical plants.

- **editing of technological charts with national and local distribution;**

- **designing technico-economic models in:** cabbage, turnip, cauliflower and in the following fruit trees: cherry, apricot, peach, plum - 16,000 pieces.

- **two rural development projects for:**

- Measure 1.2.1 - Modernising a vegetal farm by purchasing a maize harvesting combine + tractor for the amount of 11,674 euros, a project that has been acknowledged and completed.
- Measure 1.2.1 - Building a stable for 20 dairy cows for the amount of 328.000 Euro, a project that has been acknowledged and that is being completed.

- **professional training:** by 2008 the Timis COAC trained 3951 students in different trades.

The period 2009-2010 coincides with restructuring of the consultancy, with the creation of the County Chambers of Agriculture according to GD 1609/2009, and with their subordination by the county councils, with the achievements of the Chamber of Agriculture of the Timis County.

The Timis County Chamber of Agriculture was created on the ground of the GD. No 1609/December 2009. The present Chamber of Agriculture were created, by reorganizing the offices/centres of agricultural consultancy and of Bucharest subordinated to National Agency for Agricultural Consultancy.

The Chambers of Agriculture are decentralized public institutions with legal personality, subordinated to the county councils and financed from their own incomes and from subsidies the state budget.

The responsibilities, leadership, organizational structure and payment rolls of the Chambers of Agriculture are acknowledged by decisions of the local

councils.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) through its compartment "Extension and professional training " within the Direction "Agricultural Policies", ensures the technical and methodological coordination of the county chambers of agriculture, and supply support and consultancy to help to achieve these objectives.

Starting with of 01.03.2010, they have created the Timis County Chamber of Agriculture subordinated to the Timis County Council.

Organizational chart of the Timis County Chamber of Agriculture.

According to the e organizational chart acknowledged through the Decision of the Timis County Council approved by No 78/12 08.2010, the Timis County Chamber of Agriculture is structure as follows:

- Division Education, professional Training, and Human Resources;
- Division projects design and assessment;
- Division Extension, Consultancy and promotion associative forms;
- Division Budget, Finance, Accountancy, and own Income;
- Communal Agricultural Centres.

Table 1

Situation of Timis Chamber of Agriculture EAFRD projects in 2010

Current number	Measures accessed	Number of projects	Value of projects (Euro)
1	Measure 112	15	370.000
2	Measure 141	69	103.500
5	TOTAL	84	473.500

Source: own research, Timis CAJ Activity Report 2010

Table 2

Graduates of training courses organized by the Timis COAC (2008-2009) and Timis CAJ (2010-2011) per trades

Course title	Period				Total graduates / jobs
	2008	2009	2010	April 2011	
Horticultural	128	-	-	-	128
Employed in crop production	261	37	211	131	640
Work with animals	95	-	133	97	325
beekeeper	-	-	38	100	138
Total graduates/year	484	37	352	328	1231

Source: own research, Activity Report 2008-2010 COAC-CAJ Timis

The impact of the courses on the graduates of training programmes is as follows:

- the beneficiaries are trained for their domain of activity;

- 1.46% of the graduates have been employed in the field for which they were trained;
- 30% of the graduates accessed European funds in measures 112, 141 and 121;
- 20% have got a license as Licensed Physical Person (PFA);
- 10% have got a license as Individual enterprise. (Î.I).

CONCLUSIONS

Under the present conditions, agricultural consultancy is the closest structure to Romanian farmers: the consultant is the first to contact farmers and the first to carry on their needs to the ministry, local council or prefecture.

The lack of access to information prevents small farmers, to benefit from consultancy and, therefore, for developing their business, from orientation towards to market of production and from competing on the eu market.

Though access to consultancy services is free of charge, beneficiaries are afraid of later taxation for these services.

The level required to reach the Romanian agriculture in a time extremely small compared to the evolution of European countries or other states of Central Europe is a great effort from the farmers and the state.

We believe that no other instrument for the implementation can be reliably than a proactive consulting and effective, close to farmers needs.

REFERENCES

1. Mateoc-Sîrb Nicoleta, Man T.E. (2007), Dezvoltarea rurală și regionala durabilă a satului românesc, Editura Politehnica, Timișoara;
2. Oțiman, P.I. coordonator și alții, (2006) Dezvoltarea rurală durabilă în România, Editura Academiei Române, București;
3. Raport de activitate Oficiul Județean de Consultanță Timiș - 2010;
4. Raport de activitate camera Agricolă a județului Timiș - 2011;
5. x x x- <http://www.fonduri-finantari.eu/articol/anca> Agenția Națională de Consultanță Agricolă.
6. Sârb Gh. S, - 2010 Aspecte privind dezvoltarea regională în România și Uniunea Europeană