7th EUROPEAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK CONFERENCE 2009

29 – 30 October 2009, Debrecen, Hungary

Book of Abstracts

Meeting supported by:

International Visegrad Fund

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Hungary

Faculty of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, University of Debrecen
## Programme

29 October 2009 – “A” épület Nagytanácsterem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.00-9.00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9.00-9.30 | Welcome session Chairing person – J. Katona-Kovács  
A. Nábrádi – Dean of the Faculty of Applied Economics and Rural Development  
Z. Florianczyk – Secretary of European Rural Development Network |
| 9.30-11.00 | Session I. Chairing person – A. Fieldsend  
K. Czapiewski, Z. Florianczyk, K. Janc – Agricultural Knowledge and Rural Economy – Using Two Complementary Research Methods  
| 11.00-11.30 | Coffee Break |
| 11.30-13.00 | Continuation of session I. Chairing person – J. Antal  
T. Muilu, N. Kotavaara – Networking Rural Expertise  
M. Tudor, D. M. Voicilas – Innovation and Real Labour Force in Rural Areas as a Basis of Future Rural Development  
R. Kamiński – Investment in Social Infrastructure in Rural Areas – Does it Support the Development of Social Capital? |
| 13.00-14.00 | Lunch “K” épület |
| 14.00-16.00 | Session II. Chairing person – J. Neuwirth  
A. Vaishar, M. Šťastná, Z. Lipovská – Possibilities of Development in Regions after Mining: Renewal of Rural Milieu in Bohemian-Saxonian Borderland  
V. Székely – Tourism Clusters as a Tool for the Improvement of Rural Competitiveness: First Experiences from Slovakia  
D. Klepacka – Kołodziejska S. Michalska – Does Less Favoured Areas Measure Support Sustainability of European Rurality?  
O. Kleban – Problems of Effective Use of Physical Capital in Agricultural Enterprises of Ukraine |
| 16.00-16.30 | Coffee Break |
| 16.30-18.00 | Continuation of session II. Chairing person – D. M. Voicilas  
P. Jokinen, M. Järvelä, A. Paloviita, A. Puupponen – Do Local Food Supply Chains Meet the Targets of Sustainable Livelihood? A Case Study in Central Finland  
M. Błęd – Alternative Income Sources of Farming Families in Poland  
<p>| 19.00 | Welcome dinner “K” épület |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>30 October 2009</th>
<th><strong>Fényház</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session III.</strong> Chairing person – Z. Florianczyk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.30-10.30</td>
<td>Jan W. Owsinski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Stanny, A. Czarnecki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. Kata, D. Zajac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30-11.00</td>
<td><strong>Coffee Break</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00-12.30</td>
<td><strong>Continuation of session III</strong> Chairing person – G. Nagy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. Mudri, F. Ligetvári, K. Gyöngyössy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Matej, C. Tomaž</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Pakurár, J. Oláh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30-14.00</td>
<td><strong>Final discussions and prospects</strong> Chairing person – K. Wagner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00</td>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong> “K” épület</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.00</td>
<td><strong>Sightseeing tour in Debrecen</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.00</td>
<td><strong>Farewell dinner</strong> “K” épület</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scientific Committee**

Antal József, University of Debrecen, Centre of Agricultural and Technical Sciences, Hungary  
Andrew Fieldsend, Research Institute of Agricultural Economics, Hungary  
Zbigniew Florianczyk, Secretary of European Rural Development Network, Poland  
Katonáné Kovács Judit, University of Debrecen, Centre of Agricultural and Technical Sciences, Hungary  
Nábrádi András, University of Debrecen, Centre of Agricultural and Technical Sciences, Hungary  
Julia Neuwirth, Federal Institute of Agricultural Economics (AWI), Austria  
Nagy Géza, University of Debrecen, Centre of Agricultural and Technical Sciences, Hungary  
Vladimir Szekely, Academy of Sciences, Institute of Geography, Slovakia  
Dan Marius Voicilas, Academy of Sciences, Institute of Agricultural Economics, Romania  
Klaus Wagner, Federal Institute of Agricultural Economics (AWI), Austria

**Organising Committee**

Antal József, University of Debrecen, Centre of Agricultural and Technical Sciences, Hungary  
Andrew Fieldsend, Research Institute of Agricultural Economics, Hungary  
Katonáné Kovács Judit, University of Debrecen, Centre of Agricultural and Technical Sciences, Hungary  
Oláh Judit, University of Debrecen, Centre of Agricultural and Technical Sciences, Hungary  
Popovics Péter, University of Debrecen, Centre of Agricultural and Technical Sciences, Hungary
Rural Action Learning – designed to promote competencies and strengthen participation – a study on the effectiveness of out-of-school learning in the region

Johanna Schockemöhle, Erika Kalmária Hollósi and János Cser

Introduction

The objective of the evaluation study is to empirically assess the effectiveness of structured learning activities to promote the participation of children, young people and adults in rural areas and thus to contribute to a common and sustainable development of rural areas. For this purpose, the educational-methodological concept of Rural Action Learning was developed, tested in practice and evaluated. Methods and results of the evaluation are presented and discussed in the following.

The concept of Regional Learning that was developed in the context of this study integrates the regional approach of Salzmann with the objectives, issues and methods of Education for Sustainable Development. The main target categories of both the BNE and the Salzmann approach – participatory competence and regional identity – are adopted and combined. The underlying idea is that there are strong links between the development of regional identity and the acquisition of participatory competence insofar as they are interdependent and mutually strengthening regional participation. Both target categories are part of a comprehensive regional ability to participate.

Method

A triangulative method was adopted to examine the effectiveness of Regional Learning with regard to both its objective and the conditions for a successful implementation. As part of the effectiveness evaluation, a quantitative survey was conducted with 2,134 participants in regional learning activities in five European project regions – Bretagne, Latvia, Lower Saxony, Tyrol, western Hungary. A two-group pre-test and post-test design was used for the questionnaire-based study. In order to determine conditions which are particularly appropriate for a successful implementation of Regional Learning, the concept evaluation was based on feedback of the organizers of learning activities, as assessed by quantitative questionnaires for each activity and qualitative guided interviews. A total of 18 people from all five European project regions participated in the interview study.

Results and discussion

Obtained by using a triangulative method, the results of this study are complex and cannot be given here in detail. However, the main results can be summarized as follows:

⇒ The results of the survey of participants indicate that Regional Learning promotes regional identity and participatory competence. The age-specific test groups show significantly more pronounced trait expressions than the relevant control groups.

⇒ Action-oriented measures are needed to enable regional learning sites to develop their full potential. On-site learning per se has no noticeable effect. This clear result corresponds to the statements of many interview partners who identify the lack of action orientation as a great weakness of out-of-school regional learning. However, the organizers name a wide range of options to remedy this defect.

⇒ A detailed look at the test groups shows that Regional Learning does not promote all participants equally. Test persons who had strong trait expressions prior to the learning activity show little or no desired changes. A stronger inner differentiation in Regional Learning is therefore necessary.

⇒ Results obtained in the Western Hungarian region indicate that neither the young generation, nor adults are fully aware of local products and agricultural produce of their surroundings; life in rural areas is promoted, but involvement in socio-economic processes and local/regional activities is very limited.

The results show the great potential of Regional Learning to promote competence development and regional identity. In particular, positive changes at actional level that were reported half a year after the intervention confirm this finding. Based on the results, specific criteria can be defined that will allow a successful implementation of the concept in practice.
Agricultural knowledge and rural economy – using two complementary research methods

Konrad Czapiewski, Zbigniew Floriańczyk and Krzysztof Jane

Despite diminishing role in the economy, agriculture remains its position as primary sector. That reflects the superiority of demand for food over the other human economic activity products. The superiority of food production resulted in extraordinary effort to maintain agriculture activity even if it is not economically justified. Recent works stress the other, namely environmental and social, functions of agriculture that are not economically valuated. Therefore agriculture activity can be observed even on areas that are not suitable for food production.

Differences in environmental conditions directly influence the productivity of agricultural activity. This however in the light of agronomy science achievements are of lessens importance in maintaining local agriculture competitiveness on international level. Knowledge and ability of farm operator to recognise and adopt most promising technologies vary sustainable development of farm.

The role of knowledge transfer in rural and agricultural development is widely recognised and stressed in regional development policies. In case of European Union programs aiming at increase of farmer knowledge and of implementation of modern agricultural technologies are a part of Common Agricultural Policy. However recent studies shows, that only part of these programs beneficiaries utilise their knowledge in agriculture. That indicates possible growing competition for agricultural knowledge capital between different sectors of economies. As a paradox growing possibilities of employment in other than agricultural sectors could led to withdrawing of the human knowledge capital from farms, which are not able to provide competitive incomes. In such case the increase of knowledge instead of providing base for farm development has an opposite effect.

The aim of the research is to investigate the relationship of agricultural knowledge level and farm performance from the space perspective in Poland. The regions of high potential of withdrawing human knowledge from agriculture are to be identified. On this basis model of farm that effectively utilise agricultural knowledge will be proposed. This to support rural policies aiming at human capital improvement in rural areas.

Precondition, that knowledge is the most important element of agricultural productivity, will be investigated with using two complementary research methods. First step will be microeconomic analysis on the level of individual farms. With using the date from Polish FADN (Farm Accountancy Data Network) will be verify the hypothesis of dependency between educational level of farmers and productivity, commercialization and investments of farm. This will be a “global dependency” which should give a core portion of information about Polish agriculture. Second step will be based on spatial analysis made on the lowest administrative level – gmina (commune – NUTS V). After testify the global dependency between agricultural knowledge and rural economy, there will be made spatial typology of areas according to two basic elements: knowledge and productivity (e.g. high knowledge with high productivity). Thanks to that, it will be possible to delimitate areas with future perspective of agriculture function, and that where because of high “brain drain”, human capital in agriculture is very low, and it will influence a lot a future possibilities of agricultural productivity.

That two different research approaches will give an scientific added value, thanks to its complementary. Coming from spatial detailed analysis on the farm level, into the spatial approach, but based on averages, possible to make complex and multidisciplinary investigation. Very detailed level of spatial analysis (over 2 000 units) should give a big portion of information about specific resources (human capital) in rural areas in respect to its functional features.
Increasing community social capital, providing public goods and enhancing inequalities in north-eastern rural Romania

Krisztina Melinda Dobay, Ioan Sebastian Brumă and Lucian Tanasă

The aim of this article is to present tangible forms of knowledge generated by analyzing regional/local experiences, in during more than ten years of synergetic cooperation between scientific researchers and public consultants in providing “public goods” for rural development in Romania. In this regards, the article contains a theoretical approach of the key concepts for the sustainable rural development and a practical approach referring to the major steps undertaken in order to adjust, at least locally, the “classical triangle” to the new rural paradigm.

Development is a continuous adaptation for maximizing the permanently changing wellbeing, and not a simple movement towards a fixed goal. It is, in fact, a process of continuous adaptation, problem-solving and opportunity exploiting under pressure, searching for wellbeing.

People's wellbeing depends on two types of goods: private goods, that are expected to be obtained through the market, mostly by using own resources mostly, and public goods, various things that usually are generated by the public domain. One main public good might be considered knowledge as it is a non-rival good par excellence and one that in the longer run is difficult to maintain in an excludable form. Knowledge can be seen as the basic mean through which we understand and give meaning to the world around us. The tangible form of knowledge is the information. Human actions and practices can be seen also as tangible expression of knowledge. We are speaking nowadays about knowledge and information systems defined as set of actors, networks and/or organizations, expected or managed to work in synergy to support knowledge processes.

Social and economic trends within rural areas necessitate more highly trained, specialized and technically competent specialists, more likely “socio-economic community workers”.

In the article we are analyzing how prepared is the Romanian advisory public service to face the complex problems of the rural communities.

Presenting best practices and lessons learned from “worth case scenarios” we are showing how important knowledge, social capital and capacity building are when dealing with new economic and social conjunctures.
Networking rural expertise
Toivo Muilu and Niina Kotavaara

The aim of this paper is to analyse emergence of rural expert networks and their function on the basis of two example networks. The Finnish case study is Rural Studies network and the European example is European Rural Development Network (ERDN). Networking has been regarded as a central model of action during this century for most of the fields of society and economy. The European Union emphasizes the role of cooperation between member countries, organizations and regions and also the EU research framework programmes are based on present or project-based research networks in most cases.

In Finland the need for networking has been highlighted because of small number of population and sparse population structure, which leads to low and scattered number of actors and experts. There is a need to join the limited forces. Networking is also expected to create new innovations, increase productivity and save public resources. Rural Studies network of Finland was established in 2002 and it has become a joint platform of rural expertise between ten Finnish universities. The origins of ERDN are in Poland also in 2002 and at present it aggregates rural researchers from several EU countries. The empirical material consists of two web questionings directed to participants of the two networks in spring 2009.

Besides scientific significance the present study is expected to have social interests, at least among the financiers, planners and decision-makers of regional, rural and university policies. The study may recognize problems and thresholds which could be removed or lowered in order to promote networking. To conclude, possible outcomes of the study are the formulation of backgrounds and implementation of expert networks of rural research, recognition of success factors and problems and proposals for best practices. The study is financed by the Academy of Finland.
In the last decades, the debates quite often focused upon the entrepreneurial economy and entrepreneurial capitalism; the researchers demonstrated that the high levels of entrepreneurial activity can have positive effects upon job creation and economic growth. The entrepreneurship became an instrument for the economic development in the rural areas. In the last ten years, the European Union and the member states of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) introduced policies that use entrepreneurship as a main instrument for the development of rural areas (EU - Lisbon Declaration of March 2000).

The new economic growth models highlight the positive impact that the new business initiation has upon the economic growth of both developed and developing economies. For the rural area, the entrepreneurial sector development represents an important component whose dynamics and structure influence the sustainable economic growth rate. By their characteristics: innovation, close links with the community, high dynamics, optimum use of local resources, job creation, the small and medium-sized enterprises have a positive impact upon development, mainly at local and regional level.

A successful private initiative depends not only upon the entrepreneurs’ innovating capacity but also upon the available zonal labour force, whose characteristics (age, professional training, experience) influence the rate of innovation adoption at the level of firms.

The common West European problems are the following: population ageing and proportional (and often also absolute) decline of the labour force. These deficits are partially covered by the East-West migration flows for work, but these labour force movements generate similar problems on the labour markets in the origin countries.

The external migration flows for jobs from CEE countries to West European countries are motivated, on one hand, by the lack of occupational alternatives in the origin countries, and on the other hand by the significant differences between the labour remuneration in the origin countries and the West-European countries, as main destinations of the circulating migration flows. The job deficit in the CEE countries is much stronger in the rural areas, so that the pressure upon the occupational migration is greater with the active population in these areas. Furthermore, these emigrants’ characteristics (with low or medium professional training) are suitable for the job supply in foreign countries; these jobs require a low qualification level (constructions, agriculture, housekeeping, basic services).

For instance, while officially 1.2 million Romanians left abroad for working on contract basis, the estimations of the specialty studies reveal that in reality their number is at least double, as here those people are included who are working abroad without being registered at the labour force migration offices. As a result, about 2.5 million Romanian people are working abroad. Out of these, the studies indicate that 50% ( Dumitru, Diminescu, Lazea 2004; Migration Office) come from the rural area. About 4.4 million active people are living in the rural areas. Hence about 1/3 of these people left for work abroad. From this perspective, it seems imperiously necessary to determine the actual available labour force in the Romanian rural area, namely the number and structure of the people who are effectively available to contribute to the labour supply on the rural labour market in Romania.

**Methodology and data used**

The main characteristics of the rural entrepreneurship that enable us to evaluate the stage and development dynamics of the business initiative envisage four main aspects: The capacity of rural population from a certain area to perceive the opportunities of business development and the extent to which it assumes the risks of business initiation and continuation; incidence of entrepreneurial concerns in the employed population that expresses the propensity of economically active people to fructify their initiatives and to become independent from the constraints imposed on the labour market; the measure of the entrepreneurship capacity in a certain rural area to be open, to understand, internalize and even generate innovating models; territorial human capital characteristics from the perspective of the active implication on labour market.

Qualitative and quantitative analyses are based on secondary data supplied by the National Institute for Statistics (NIS) and the Ministry of Agriculture.
Conclusions and expected results

The rural entrepreneurship capacity to bring an active contribution to sustainable economic growth, to provide jobs and to contribute to the general welfare increase has an optimizing trend when: the total number of entrepreneurs is great and increasing; the share of employers in the employed population is on the rise; the young people are well represented in the age structure of employers.

The main question that remains is the following: what is the innovation level and who will be the innovators in the rural area in the CEE countries as long as the migration level to the West-European countries remains high? As a consequence, the following question arises: what is the real available labour force in the rural area in the CEE countries on which the economy can rely, both in statistical and practical terms?

As a result of this study, the approximate determination of the innovation level, of the real labour force in the rural area and of the interdependencies between these two indicators is expected, under the conditions of a strong migration phenomenon.
Investment in social infrastructure in rural areas – does it support the development of social capital?

Ryszard Kamiński

The state of rural social infrastructure and its impact on the quality of life and functioning of rural communities are traditionally seen as marginal to the “mainstream” development activities. The low quality of social infrastructure is, however, an important factor in the marginalization of rural areas. In the first programming documents after Poland’s accession to the EU the following diagnosis is presented: social infrastructure in rural areas is under-invested and does not correspond to needs. In particular, cultural and tourist establishments as well as schools and health care centres are insufficiently developed. Since the year 2004, the most important programme to finance investments in social infrastructure is the village renewal programme, which had an allocation of EUR 112.5 million within the Sectoral Operational Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development 2004-2006, and within the Rural Development Programme for the years 2007-2013 this allocation is even more significant and is expected to reach EUR 589.6 million. Approximately 17,000 investment projects in 4840 villages are expected to be implemented. More than 50% of all village renewal funds for the years 2004-2006 were used to modernize village halls and the so-called “other public meeting places”. Of course, one can ask the question: how can such “financial injection” into social infrastructure affect the life of rural communities?

Previous research by the author, published in 2008, proves that village halls are, according to the answers of village leaders, used primarily as playing ground for children. Other functions are mentioned less frequently, such as: organisation of meetings, trainings, family events. Children’s activities are not organized on a regular basis and the village halls often remain unused because of lack of personnel, e.g. someone to take care of the children or other organizational obstacles. In the municipal budgets it is increasingly difficult to find resources for village hall personnel, and most village leaders have been struggling for years for funds for running costs, heating, small-scale equipment etc. While EU funds can result in the physical renovation of thousands of village halls, the question of how these establishments will function remains open. How will the running costs be financed? Social infrastructure can have a significant impact of preventing the erosion of social capital. However, this process must empower local communities. These communities must have a sense of ownership and take responsibility for the functioning of the village hall. It is clear that this element was missing in the design of the Polish development programmes. Thus, investment in social infrastructure may not always lead to the strengthening of rural social capital.

An example of a bottom-up initiative is the creation in many Polish villages of non-public schools run by community associations. It was a spontaneous reaction of many rural societies to the closing down of their village school. The way in which the national school network was reformed, by transferring the decision as to the nature of such schools to local self-governments, caused many local economic and social conflicts as to the existence of such schools in small areas. On the one hand, the low educational subventions and demographic trends have forced self-governments to economise. On the other hand, the closing down of rural schools will cause irreversible losses for village communities. The idea to solve the conflict concerning rural schools is for village families and inhabitants to establish local associations. These associations would act as founding bodies for the local schools. The establishment of an association for the development of rural areas leads to create schools that are more active and more economical at the same time. It also helps to integrate local communities. According to the estimates of the Federation for Educational Initiatives, 400 private schools (with public status) were established in Poland between the years 1998-2008. Additionally, 300 local communities are threatened by school close downs every year. There is evidence that many rural associations implement cultural activities and take up actions in the sphere of social service, health care and care for the disabled. Sport and tourist activity involves children and teenagers as well as adult inhabitants. The direct commitment of parents and pupils as well as the creation of a “family atmosphere” facilitates the process of solving pupils’ behavioural problems. Some associations also carry out a variety of business activities, active-career teaching and other forms of adult education for village inhabitants. Such institutions are open all day, throughout the whole year, serving as the heart of village life.
A potential link between the two intervention methods described above is the Leader approach. In the period 2007-2013 over 300 Local Action Groups will be created, covering most of Poland’s rural areas. As a result of lobbying by Polish rural NGOs this approach contains, in addition to investment funding targeted at municipalities, the so-called “small projects” which support bottom-up initiatives, similar to those of local associations running small community schools. One of the questions that should be asked now is: in view of the large financial scope of the projects implemented from EU funds, will there be enough commitment and common sense to ensure appropriate impact on social capital? Will the bureaucracy related to EU programmes permit a widespread support to local communities, enabling a synergy effect between investment and bottom-up capacity building?
Possibilities of development in regions after mining: renewal of rural milieu in Bohemian-
Saxonian borderland

Antonín Vaishar, Milada Šťastná and Zdenka Lipovská

Most of European mining regions are passing through substantial economic restructuring guided by important social and environmental changes. The introduced project is a part of the INTERREG program. Situation in eight central European mining regions in different natural and social conditions are under investigation, six scientific partners are engaged.

The Ohře valley under Ore Mts. was originally rural area with some agriculture, mining activities and traditional local industries like textile or ceramics. The character of landscape was totally changed by large open-cast mining activities after the WWII. Additionally, also social system was completely reversed by population exchange and by industrialization of the area. The traditional relation to the landscape, settlements and society was lost. The mining activities evoked the development of heavy industries: production of power, chemical industry and machinery. Such an industrial structure damaged the environment heavily. The image of the region is very bad.

The investigation concerns the Sokolov-East micro-region defined by the association of communes in the surroundings of the Sokolov district town (population 25,000). Besides the town Sokolov, the micro-region is formed by four small towns and 9 villages. Despite of the industrial character of the economy, the settlement system is rural. The communes are associated in the LAG LEADER+ Sokolovsko as well. The mining activities are still in operation in a limited extent with the prospect of their finishing in about 2030. Sokolovská uhelná is the company responsible not only for the mining but also for the land reclamation.

The existence of the company (which is engaged also in power production and landscape reclamation) is a big advantage of the region to compare it with the other ones. There is somebody who is responsible for resolutions of environmental and landscape damages and who has sources for doing it. Additionally, Sokolov-East is no shrinking region. Though the population numbers of three largest towns decrease, villages grow up preliminary due to immigration.

The main question and aim of the paper is whether it is possible to change the mining landscape back to the rural one and under which conditions. From the methodological viewpoint following clusters of conditions are to be investigated: natural and environmental conditions, cultural heritage, human factor, institutional networking and creating the new image of the region. The main motto is: how to turn disadvantages into benefits.

Almost complete destroying the topography affords an occasion to create a complete new landscape by using artificial shapes. Water and greenery play the main role in the reclamation. Some projects are suggested, planned or even realized in the district: golf course, natural swimming pool, artificial lake. Such activities should be connected with the cultural heritage of the territory like the royal town and castle Loket. The idea is to create new landscape and new image, to attract tourists who are able and disposed to spend their money in the region in order to gain substitutive financial sources after finishing the mining.

The situation is complicated by existing social structure and social milieu in the region. Miners are very well paid people not because of the high qualification but because of the heavy and dangerous labour. It is almost impossible to re-qualify them. The absence of the familiar relation to the region is another problem. It seems that to break the human and psychological barrier will be more difficult then to invest money and inventions to the landscape creation. Possible cross-border collaboration and its utilization is not for gaining money from European funds but also for real cross-border benefit, which is the next question.

The micro-region is not supposed to be agricultural, neither in the future. But it could be rural in terms of multi-functional utilization. The new landscape will offer a chance for the development of tourism and leisure activities which should be combined with other functions. Suitable geographical position near the Saxonian border but open more to the Bavarian side could be employed. The social structure of the region seems to be the main barrier of the future development.
Tourism clusters as a tool for the improvement of rural competitiveness: first experiences from Slovakia

Vladimír Székely

Slovakia is the country with unusually appropriate conditions for development of tourism. Therefore the governmental programmes with economic development of rural area as one of their priorities emphasise diversification of economic activities including creation of new work opportunities in the sphere of tourism, which plays an important role as a key segment of strategy for rural local development.

In connection with development of tourism and rural areas there appear some studies based on concept of clusters. The term “cluster” is used in scientific and technical literature for strong tendency for networking of economical activities and for their spatial (geographical) concentration. The term “cluster” was introduced by American economist M. Porter, who described it not only as analytical concept but also as political tool for achieving competitiveness of various economical branches (particularly in manufacturing) and spatial units. Porter defines clusters as “geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions (universities, standards agencies, and trade associations) in particular fields that compete but also cooperate”. The very positive image of clusters is related to their (very often) uncritical presentation – clusters are described by high productivity, by growth of entrepreneurial activities, as an important means for support of competitiveness and innovations, by knowledge formation and way to progressive knowledge economy.

Networks and active participation of the individual players (municipalities, firms, etc.) of these networks are the core features of clusters. Network relationships are particularly important for the tourism sector, which is represented by the groups of organizations trying cluster together to form a destination context.

Tourism clusters are the result of the co-location of complementary firms, which may not necessarily be involved in the same sector, but may benefit by pre-existing network membership and alliances’ dynamics. Networks provide firms with access to knowledge, resources, markets, or technologies and can operate as a strategic alliance if the firms involved enter into the voluntary arrangement of exchanging, sharing or co-developing products or services. Another benefit from these is knowledge transfer as a process through which one member of the network is affected by the experience of another member.

Generally is accepted that the purpose of tourism clusters and networks is to highlight the availability of certain activities in one destination or region and to get enterprises of all sizes (small, medium, and large) that would normally work in isolation to co-operate and build a successful tourism product in the locality. According to the cluster “theory” the potentially successful tourism product will contribute to the local and regional competitiveness.

The main aim of paper is concentrated in its theoretical part. We are trying to describe potential benefits of cluster concept application not only on tourism development in rural areas, but also on general local and regional development. On the other side, in the context of the overestimation of assets from application of cluster concept for individual players and region, we are trying to stress the attention on some dangers for involved companies and own rural development.

In the second part of paper we introduce the first attempt of Slovak tourism cluster establishment. Tourism cluster “Liptov” (name of the historical Slovak region) is a result of agreement between crucial rural and urban players who decided to cooperate with aim to increase the visit rate of region and to achieve individual successes by common prosperity. The short description of crucial players is the base for understanding their willingness to coordinate activities leading to common marketing presentation of their newly established tourism cluster.
Does Less Favoured Areas Measure support sustainability of European rurality?
Dorota Klepacka – Kołodziejska and Sylwia Michalska

The Common Agricultural Policy supports less favoured areas in Europe since 1975. Council Regulation (EC) 1698/2005 describes the objective of the LFA scheme as follows: “natural handicap payments in mountain areas and payments in other areas with handicaps should contribute, through continued use of agricultural land, to maintaining the countryside, as well as to maintaining and promoting sustainable farming systems.”

The LFA support scheme accounts for a great proportion of funds set aside from the EU budget for rural areas. Opponents of the LFA measure argue that objectives set to it are too broad and vague, something which gives member states too much freedom in interpreting the objectives and makes reliable evaluation and verification of the measure difficult. LFA schemes, like most measures aimed to support rural development, are planned at the EU-27 level but are intended for countries which differ greatly in economic and environmental terms.

Given the controversial nature of this instrument, the author decided to set following questions to the research:

- Whether the less favoured areas scheme is equipped with adequate tools to reach its goals?
- Whether the LFA scheme influences the improvement of cohesion between non LFA and LFA areas?

In the course of the methodology, for the quantitative part of the research the Polish Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) is used, for the qualitative part the conducted field studies (in 4 Polish regions) and the examination of the Polish and foreign literature on the subject.

Basing on the research and studies the author draws the following conclusions.

In Poland the farmers treat the compensatory allowances from LFA scheme as a direct payment. They are not aware of “philosophy” of the programme. The LFA scheme may accelerate the polarisation of the farms development. The medium farms are the ones that due to the EU direct funds either stop to develop or take advantage of the funds and accelerate the improvement. The first group includes the farms close to towns will off farms incomes, not willing to invest in environmental requirements. The second group covers mostly young farmers finding opportunity in EU funds.

In the EU the member states with small farms limit themselves to minimal requirements: those imposed by the European Commission. As a result, the subsidies get “diluted” because they go to too many beneficiaries. The member states which have more developed agricultural sectors, larger farms and better infrastructure have introduced many additional stipulations. As a result, the LFA measure in these countries is something more than support to farmer incomes. Among the additional criteria are those aimed to improve environmental quality, which supports the “greening CAP” principle introduced under Agenda 2000. Another goal is to improve the farming structure through the introduction of additional criteria, like for example farm size and the age of the beneficiary.

The LFA scheme is not equipped in adequate tools to realise the mentioned goals. According to the study field direct payments is not enough reason for farmers to continue the land farming. The real reasons are: decent incomes from farm (with or without payments), lack of other than rural education, skills, the force of habit working on farm, feeling of no alternative and unemployment in urban areas, emotional reasons.

Moreover the belief that the instrument basing on area payments with quite soft environmental requirements will deliver “maintaining and promoting sustainable farming systems” seems to be to optimistic.
Problems of effective use of physical capital in agricultural enterprises of Ukraine

Oksana Kleban

Problems of full and effective use of physical capital are major in every economic science. Agricultural enterprises’ activities are directed to achieve the profit from a physical asset use, thus to be competitive in the region.

From the beginning of 1991 agricultural sector of Ukrainian economy was reformed by the ownership transformation – from collective to private property. It was considered, that business initiative of private owners would automatically ensure necessary results. But the course of events in next years confirmed the mistake of this opinion.

Physical capital of agricultural enterprises was formed for the mass production in large-scale enterprises on the basis of planned agricultural output. Nowadays a lot of enterprises are small-scale and disamalgamated. It this case the problem of effective use of physical capital became acute.

The aim of this paper is to research the theoretical, methodological and practical questions of forming and effective use of physical capital in agricultural enterprises.

The dynamics, structure, proportion of the capital assets recreation of agricultural enterprises is analyzed. The economic efficiency of the physical capital is researched on the whole, as well as in its separate types. The methods of the efficiency increase of the fixed capital assets in a short-term market period are proved.

The effective physical capital use in agricultural enterprises is possible under conditions of providing optimal level of usage intensity, business forecasting and government regulation.
Local food production is a significant way to diversify the basis of farm livelihood. In terms of sustainable livelihood, it seemingly appears beneficial to the farmers and their families. Although European case studies have proposed that the multi-dimensional sustainability of local food systems is not self-evident, local food carries several meanings related to sustainability. This paper connects local food to the broader context of local development and social change: it is aimed to understand how local food production may open up new opportunities to the otherwise marginal rural entrepreneurship and how these opportunities might contribute to sustainable development.

The well-known notion of multifunctional agriculture is used in a wide variety of contexts. Economic approaches have focused primarily on commodity and non-commodity production of goods generated by modern agriculture with associated "externality" issues. Policy approaches have identified the policy environment as the key driver for multifunctionality. Further, the broadest approaches also incorporate the strengthening of social capital and the changing societal perceptions of farming as the key components of multifunctionality. The production of local food seemingly has multifunctional dimensions since it emphasises the multiple value of agriculture in the regional framework. Actors in the strongly multifunctional agricultural regime show tendencies for local and regional embeddedness, characterised by activities that will help provide new income and employment opportunities for the agricultural sector, as well as “associational interfaces” that are highly significant in establishing trust, common understandings, working patterns, and different forms of cooperation between stakeholder groups in the food supply chain.

We analyse the emerging food supply chain networks in terms of social capital and interfaces. Our empirical case study focuses on Central Finland with approximately 260,000 inhabitants. The study combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. Firstly, the survey aims to explore farmers’ collaboration and networks as well as various sustainability issues associated with the farms. Secondly, the qualitative case study includes interviews with major stakeholders. In-depth interviews have been made with twenty-seven farmers, eight representatives of food industry, eleven managers from local retails, and fifteen rural development managers working with local food projects. In order to understand the local food supply chain, we start from the definitions given for local food by different actors. Further, we discuss the basic social factors underlying the local food action and the initiatives to create a working supply chain compatible with the food market and targets of sustainable livelihood.

It is concluded that in Central Finland the local food action is advancing with slow steps of adaptation to external challenges and by aiming to overcome the internal rigidities of social organisation and the conventions of the food market. The adoption of new technologies is an essential part of this agenda. Yet, there are several peculiar challenges in the Northern Model of local food system. Local food initiatives may well be launched by individual farms, food industry, public authorities, and development professionals. A real challenge for farmers’ livelihood and local sustainability is the complexity of local networks. Moreover, there seems to be a gap between the farmers’ reality and the public policy discourse on the community and local food conceptions.
The problem of incomes derived by farming families is among the central issues involved in improving the living standards of the farming population. In general, farming families’ incomes are much lower than those earned by other social and occupational groups. Seeking non-agricultural sources of income offers a chance to change this state of affairs and, given the fragmentation of Polish farms, is becoming a must for Polish farming families. This trend is increasingly widespread and strong.

It inspired research aimed to examine the scale of Polish farming families’ engagement in multiple occupations. The main research hypothesis is that the non-agricultural activity is the main livelihood for families of farmers who engage in multiple occupations.

The research was conducted as part of the project entitled “Socio-Economic Preconditions for Sustainable Development of Rural Areas in the Natura 2000 Network of the Green Lungs of Poland.” The research covered 15 rural districts located wholly within the Natura 2000 Network in north-eastern Poland and four control districts located outside this area.

Interviews were conducted in each rural district with non-randomly selected farmers, i.e. those holding commodity farms larger than 10 hectares, to determine the scale of engagement in multiple occupations. The whole sample was composed of 386 farmers. The interviews were conducted with the farm operators and other members of the farming households. The following problems were analysed: type, length and place of non-agricultural work, livelihoods of the household as a whole and of individual household members, with the main livelihood specified, livelihood structure, and views about the level of incomes derived from the farm and plans concerning farming activity.

The research findings may serve as recommendations for decision-makers on how to shape rural development policy and in consulting on the use of structural funds and other forms of support for the multifunctional development of rural areas in Poland.
Diversification of economic effects of milk production in selected group of organic and conventional farms in Poland in 2006-2007

Marcin Żełko and Krysztof Zmarzłowski

Poland’s accession to the European Union has had a significant influence on the development of organic farming. A dynamic increase of organic farm’s number is mainly a matter of law and financial support as an effect of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Therefore, there appears a chance for the development of the certified organic products market. Moreover, a demand for such products is still exceeding a supply. Dairy products in particular made of organic milk are enjoying a great concern among consumers. However, organic milk production is still carried out on a small scale, yet a constant demand for organic dairy products makes organic milk more competitive to conventional milk productions.

The activity of organic farms promotes a sustainable development of rural area. Apart from social and environmental elements of the development, an economic aspect of organic production proves to be very important. Strong and weak points of organic milk production may be indicated due to a detailed evaluation/analysis of accounting data regarding the entire farm as well as a product analysed.

A combination of accounting data from two compatible systems: Polish FADN – on whole farm level and AGROKOSZTY – on a product (milk) level will be analyzed in this study. The economic results of the entire household will be shown against the background of Polish FADN accounting data from analyzed farms.

The main objective of the study will be a comparison competitiveness of cow milk production at organic and conventional farms. The economic and production condition of milk in the years 2006-2007 will be assessed. To this extent, an important issue will involve a comparison of milk amount and sale price dynamics in selected groups of farms. One of significant aspects will include an analysis of allocation of organic milk and the product sale prices presented therein. In order to evaluate the situation on the market where the product is placed, selected economic indicators at farm and product level will be applied. Individual and aggregate indexes will be used to analyze a dynamics of the amount and sale price changes. The most important individual indicators will be: indexes of average amount and sale prices of milk; whereas the aggregate indexes to be used are the Laspeyres and Paasche indexes.

In order to achieve the aims set, a research sample will be selected to include certified organic farms and conventional farms, where accounting data were collected under the Polish FADN and AGROKOSZTY systems, in the years 2006-2007.
Rural municipalities in Poland: development types, paths and perspectives

Jan W. Owsinski

The report presents the results from the analysis of the population of Polish rural municipalities, this analysis being a continuation of the work, whose output was presented at the ERDN seminar in Vienna in 2008. The analysis reported was carried out in the framework of two different projects, and so its purposes were multiple, although in each case related to “sustained development”. An essential aspect has also been associated with “comparison” (yielding “development quality”), which necessitated establishment of “types”, within which comparison would be justified. Thus, one would have to deal with “development types”, strictly linked with “development paths”, and therefore also with “perspectives” (hypothesised futures), especially if definite ergodicity (space vs. time) can be assumed.

A number of techniques were used in the study, ranging from correlation analysis, through simple linear regression and factor analysis down to cluster analysis.

Polish municipalities (NUTS 5), altogether more than 2500 units, are formally classified into three categories: urban municipalities (309), rural municipalities (close to 1600), and urban-rural municipalities (around 600). At the NUTS 4 level the municipalities, or communes, form counties, of which there are altogether 385. Most of county seats are located in urban communes, only few in urban-rural communes. The urban-rural communes are formed when the urban unit is small enough to warrant joint administration with the surrounding rural unit.

The study reported encompassed not only formally rural, but also urban-rural municipalities, in view of significant overlapping of their essential characteristics. The analysis accounted for more than 20 variables, based on the data provided by the Central Statistical Office (GUS) in the form of the Regional Data Bank (BDR), for all the municipalities in Poland, over the period 2003-2007. These data suffer from a number of serious shortcomings, as explained in the previous paper for ERDN workshop in Vienna. Still, they are the most reliable source of information on the lowest level of administrative breakdown.

After the first stage of analysis, a rough working hypothesis was formulated concerning the classification of rural municipalities in Poland, namely municipalities:

- with high and increasing population densities, located within or at the fringes of the large urban agglomerations, usually featuring high levels of economic activity (outside agriculture), as expressed through the numbers of businesses per 1 000 inhabitants, the structure of revenue of the municipal budgets (tax-related revenues) and the budget revenues per capita;
- with high and increasing population densities, located close to smaller urban centres, or in areas with low urbanisation indices, characterised by a wide variety of variable values, meaning, in particular, that an important part of actually taking place socioeconomic processes in these areas goes officially unnoticed (employment, revenues);
- endowed with definite positive location rent, first of all associated with tourism and recreation, especially along the seaside, in some of the lake districts, and in some mountain areas; these are mainly distinct through economic variables, similarly as the two previous categories;
- endowed with a location rent, associated with economic activity – particularly location of an important business or a number of businesses, often dating yet from the socialist period, and frequently, though not exclusively, from the mining and energy sector; at least some of these are well visible through the number of registered employed outside of family farming per 1 000 inhabitants;
- truly “rural” and “agricultural”, in which farming seems to really play an important economic and social role, as seen through employment and tax revenue data;
- “rural”, but “marginal” rather than “agricultural” in the sense of activity levels and budget revenues; this category might be subdivided into (a) the ones, in which agriculture plays a lesser role due to “objective” factors (forest areas, mountains, etc.), and (b) where there is
simply serious depopulation and abandonment of agricultural activities, usually situated far from urban centres.

The study aimed at verification of this rough hypothesis, and its validity in terms of numbers of municipalities in particular categories, as well as identification of potential significant subcategories, and their more detailed characteristics. The conclusions include the development perspectives, as implied by (i) dynamics to date within a given (sub-)category; (ii) the specific characteristics, especially related to the socio-economic activity levels and the robustness of the local systems, as measured, in particular, through variables pertaining to human capital (e.g. personal income tax per capita, number of employed per business, presence and importance of post-primary education).
The level and determinants of sustainable rural development in the Region of Green Lungs of Poland

Monika Stannay and Adam Czarnecki

The research was composed of two parts. In the first one, an attempt was made to determine spatial variations in the level of sustainable development of rural areas in the region of Green Lungs of Poland by means of taxonomic analysis. To this end, the notion of sustainable development had to be translated into the language of empirical indicators. The indicators were used to evaluate individual components of this development.

The level of sustainable development was presented as a meta-feature (composite indicator) made up of three components: environmental, economic and social. The environmental component, which was the most difficult one to operationalise, was defined with the use of the typical pressure-state-response framework. It was defined by means of variables describing pressure on the environment, the degree of its attractiveness, and environmental protection. The economic component was understood as characteristics of the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, economic activity characteristics, and the level of affluence (budgets) of rural districts (communes). The social component was described by demographic structure, educational characteristics, social activity and living standards (including the aspect of infrastructure). The analysis was conducted on a set of 341 rural communes (NUTS 5), which means urbanised areas were excluded.

The second part of the research project was designed to identify factors determining the current picture (level) of sustainable rural development within the region of Green Lungs of Poland. The main rationale for conducting the research, in the context of objectives and methods used in its first stage, was to verify the hypotheses proposed, select partial variables, and supplement the analysis with some important content to allow a more valid interpretation of research findings.

The researchers used factor analysis, which helped them achieve notable benefits, including reducing the large number of variables without losing information they contained, exposing hidden structures and relationships, and adding additional substance. A detailed analysis of highest-reliability factors was conducted. It made the interpretation of research findings much easier, which was important considering that sustainable development is a very complex research problem. Each component – economic, social and environmental – was analysed separately. As a result, it was possible to isolate variables describing not only the level of sustainable development of the communes under research but also their performance according to individual components.

The most important conclusions from the research:

- Strong statistical correlation between the level of economic development and the level of social development; no correlation between the level of socio-economic development and the level of environmental development;
- Spatial disparities in the level of sustainable development, with the possibility to determine the degree of variability and define barriers to development;
- The highest level of economic and social development is seen in rural districts of suburban areas;
- A high level of the environmental component is observed in areas covered to a large extent by the Nature2000 network and areas which have the potential to develop tourist and related functions.
Economic effects of the Common Agricultural Policy on employment in Austria
Karl M. Ortner, Julia Neuwith and Klaus Wagner

About 5% of Austria’s employed population is engaged in agriculture – mostly farmers and family members. Only 2% of the national gross product stems from agriculture and this share decreases constantly such as the number of employed people in this sector. Subsidies in agriculture prevent from a larger decrease. A national study of the Federal Institute of Agricultural Economics estimated the effects of public payments in agriculture on employment in two ways. A partial analysis focusing exclusively on the agricultural sector (data from the Farm Accountancy Data Network- FADN) shows a preservation of 40,000 - 50,000 jobs for the year 2004 in agriculture because of public payments without taking into account effects and interdependencies to other sectors. Assuming that agricultural subsidies would be distributed to other sectors, an input-output analysis shows a decrease of work places in agriculture (-45,000) and an increase (12,000) in other sectors. But in all a decrease of 33,000 work places is the result under the assumption of a constant volume of overall production. Payments for labour force in agriculture are very low and it is not easy to shift agricultural labour force to more profitable sectors which would heighten Austria’s economic performance. Due to these reasons public payments for agriculture seem to be a relatively cheap possibility to prevent unemployment with the side effects of keeping up settlement in peripheral regions and maintaining the landscape for the advantage of other sectors, e.g. for tourism.

Another short study estimated the potential effects of the Austrian Rural Development Program (RDP) 2007 – 2013, which was necessary due to a strong requirement of the EU Commission to achieve realistic figures of quantified objectives for the RDP. The average situation of the years 2006 to 2008 was compared to the hypothetic situation from 2007 to 2013 without RD measures. It included the assumption of an agricultural adaptation process with a limited decrease of agricultural employment up to 4% per year. The effects of lower production on commodity prices have not been taken into account. The cumulative differences of the recent situation to the hypothetic situation 2007 to 2013 give hints to effects of the RDP:

- RDP contributes to the agricultural net product in purchasing power in 7 years with € 0.2 billion (=19%) but in total national economy the net product stays constant;
- During the period of 7 years RDP keeps an amount of 32,000 work places in agriculture, without RDP measures 9,000 work places would shift to other sectors and 23,000 people would be unemployed;
- Labour productivity in agriculture depreciates in 7 years by 5.6% because of RDP measures;
- In addition the RDP has effects on biodiversity, resource protection and maintenance of settlements, landscape and production which were not included in the estimation.
The impact of the farmers’ relationships with the institutions on the income of agricultural holdings in Poland

Ryszard Kata and Dariusz Zając

Encompassing Polish agriculture by the common EU agricultural policy has made a very positive impact on the farmers’ income in Poland. In 2004 the income increased twice (precisely: 2.1) comparing to the average within the years 2001-2003, and in the following years it also indicated a slight upward trend. It was mainly the effect of the increase of EU subsidies. Their participation in the holdings income rose from somewhat more than 9% to almost 39% in 2004 and 52% in 2006. In the balance of subsidies particularly the EU subsidies constitute the straight majority.

The statistic data show however that the income profits from the union support are not allocated evenly, but in greater degree they concern farms of larger area and economically strong farms maintaining the persistent relations with the market. It should be assumed that the level of farmers’ participation in the supporting of the subsidies is derived from their activeness in the relationships with the institutional environment. Taking advantage of the relief programs requires using vast knowledge, especially financial, legal, technological or ecological one. Without the institutional environment’s support, farmers are not able to tackle all the requirements connected with the EU financing.

Farmers, through their relationships with the institutional environment can therefore receive profits by way of political income (subsidies, surcharges, market protectionism), but also the benefit due to economic income through the growth of the effectiveness of running a business, as the result of the institutional support in the scope of implementing innovations, cooperation processes and integration in the agriculture.

Considering the foregoing aspect, the main purpose of this study is to outline interrelations between agricultural holdings income and their relationships with the institutional environment. In the course of analysis the thesis will be verified that the farmsteads’ income in conditions of functioning EU supporting instruments are more and more dependent on the farmers’ relations with institutions-meaning formal organizations in this context.

The source of empirical data will be the survey research in the form of questionnaire carried out among the farmers from the south-eastern region of Poland. The opinion poll was conducted in the first half of the year 2007 among the randomly chosen sample group of 856 farmers- owners of the individual agricultural holdings.
The paper deals with the general term of ‘networking’ which can refer to any interconnected group or system. It analyses the lessons, experiences and the main obstacle of the networking activity, implemented in the former programming period, i.e. 2000-2006, and so for the current programming period, i.e. 2007-2013 in Hungary.

It introduces the steps and structures of the Hungarian National Rural Network. Officially the Article 68 of the Regulation 1698/2005/EC contains provisions to the establishment of the National Rural Network, which aims at:

- Identifying and analysing the best practises on rural development, providing information about them and organizing exchanges of experiences and know-how,

- Preparing training programmes for local action groups in the process of formation and giving technical assistance for inter-territorial and trans-national cooperation between LAGs.

Networking activity is looked upon as a permanent, improvable tool that can assist in developing the rural quality and economy. The successful adaptation to persistent rural acts will depend on many elements, as our survey shows. As we learned by the experiences up till now, Hungary is also on the way of learning, and it has to draw the conclusion from time to time, the process of network building is drawn from the rural stakeholders and the wider rural economy point of view. This paper has a conclusion of the value of networking, and it says that the rural life will have a new aspect inside the European Union.
Rural tourism is a growth industry within the Catalan economy. Rural tourism has opened new ways of economic activity and lifestyle for the rural population, among them the farmers. Interest in the countryside by the demand and the necessity to face with the downturns of rural economies (constraints in agrarian production, reductions in subsidies, rural outmigration, etc) has resulted in public administration becoming more active towards rural tourism.

The CAP has been outlining, throughout these last 20 years, the on-farm diversification activities such as rural tourism in order to create jobs, diversifying the economic based and provide better quality of life to the rural population. In the report “Rural Development Next Generation: better, broader, simpler” (July; 2004), the EU Commission sets up encouraging tourism in rural areas as one of the activities to improve quality of life and diversification (axis3) and reinforce the EU’s rural development policy. In 1991 European Commission implemented the EU Initiative Leader to promote rural development. The emphasis of the Initiative was on developing a new approach of rural policy to solve the problems of rural areas lagging in their development and lacking diversification. Since then, two Leader Programmes has been implemented: Leader II (1996-1999) and Leader+ (2000-2006)

Leader is based on the bottom-up approach involving the mobilisation of local resources and the creation of local partnership-based bodies, and integrated and multi-sectoral approach reinforcing the economic environment, in order to contribute to job creation and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage.

Increasing emphasis is being placed on devising innovative development strategies for rural areas. Considerable stress is laid on integration, participation and empowerment. Integration implies a need for cross-sectoral harmonisation of developmental objectives as well as increased co-ordination between agencies involved in the developmental process. Participation implies consultation with those most directly affected, hence increasing the level of involvement of local people in the development process. Empowerment suggests a greater degree of influence being wielded by local residents. Moreover, to think of the development of rural society only in terms of agriculture leads to a number of very familiar impasses. The notion itself of rural development has emerged from the awareness that the vertiginous growth of productivity gains in agriculture made it necessary to invent new sources of wealth and job creation in rural society to keep the population there and limit the exodus whilst remaining in balance with the environment. Under this context, Leader provides support to a wide range of local activities related to the valorisation of local products, to communications and technology rural services neighbourhood businesses, tourism and environmental services (rubbish recycling, water management, etc).

Catalonia is one of the most important coastal tourism regions of Spain but also on rural tourism. Catalonia represents around 12% of the total rural tourism accommodations in Spain. The aim of this paper is to analyse the impact of Leader in the development of rural tourism in Catalonia, both in social and economic terms and suggest some recommendations. We use the information provide from a questionnaire done to almost 900 beneficiaries of Leader + projects in the framework of the evaluation of Leader+ in Catalonia.
“Leader” approach and local development strategies in Slovenia

Bedrač Matej and Cunder Tomaž

Introduction
The 4th development axis of Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 is the LEADER axis which presents a novelty in the Slovenian agricultural policy. In January 2009, Slovenia finished the selection procedure for Selection and Confirmation of Local Action Groups. In this programming period Slovenia will have 33 Local Action Groups, which covers 97% of rural areas and 94% of rural population.

Material and methods
The prepared paper briefly outlines theoretical arguments for introducing of LEADER approach and examines its implementation in Slovenian rural development policy. It’s based on desk research drawing from responsible literature, legislation documents and available research studies. No modelling work was elaborated in the framework of the analyses. Critical evaluation is carried out in alignment with generally used and known policy evaluation techniques.

The paper is divided into three parts. In the first part, general characteristics of LEADER approach and measures which are carried out in Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 are presented. In the second part, an analysis of 33 Local Action Groups is described. The main focus is given to spatial-demographic characteristics, structure of partnership and organisation of decision making body. The paper completes with an analysis of 33 Local Development Strategies. We analysed to what extent the strategic goals and priority tasks of Local Development Strategies follow the economic, social and spatial-environmental component of sustainable development.

Results
Integrated rural development programmes which are prepared with active involvement of local citizens have a long tradition in Slovenia. In the period 1991-2006, Slovenia introduced “Programmes of Integrated Rural Development and Village Renewal” and “Development Programmes for Rural Areas” which were quite similar with the LEADER initiative in the European Union. From 2007-2013 programming period the LEADER approach has been mainstreamed within overall EU rural development policy. This means that LEADER is included in national and regional rural development programmes supported by the EU, alongside a range of other rural development axes.

The established Local Action Groups are very heterogeneous in the matter of size, structure of partnership and administrative structure. All LAGs strictly take into account the “bottom-up approach”, although some of them do not involve individual persons into their partnerships. Municipalities still represent the majority of public institutions in partnerships which is understandable, because they have gained a lot of experience with similar programs in the previous years.

An analysis of strategic objectives in the local development strategies shows that development of micro enterprises and tourism represents the greatest opportunity for a faster restructuring and economic growth of rural areas. Strategic objectives in the field of agriculture are still mainly oriented towards the improvement of production (especially in the production of safe and quality food) and marketing of agricultural products. The great importance is also given to development of agricultural infrastructure and protection of the environment in rural areas.

Discussion and conclusions
A comprehensive analysis of 33 Local Development Strategies indicates a great diversity of Slovenian countryside. In the frame of defined strategic objectives and priority tasks they consider all aspects of sustainable development. On the level of priority tasks more attention should be given to social and spatial issues.
Why do we need a more locally focused rural employment policy in the EU?
Miklós Pakurar and Judit Olah.

EU policies have not been planned to a manner to solve problems with a one size fits all method. However in practice the EU suggestions are translated mechanically to national and regional policies, in many instances, without taking into account the real interests and needs of the inhabitants at different regional levels. This way the capitalization of EU policies and funds is not as efficient as it should be since the endogen potentials of localities are not utilized properly.

Our hypothesis is that the rural areas of the EU are so diverse that the significant differences in employment, economic, social, educational and infrastructural features of rural regions necessitates a more locally focused policy which partly can be proved by statistical data. The analysis is based on the Eurostat General and Regional database and on national statistical databases.

What are the reasons that one size fits all solutions has to be avoided and has to be changed with locally adapted policies? Probably this question can be answered partly by the facts of statistical data with which the differences, in some cases extremely huge alterations amongst territorial features, can be demonstrated. Analysing employment and employment related data it was pointed out that indicators of EU localities differs greatly in many instances. As the differences in indexes of PU, IR and PR regions, differences amongst rural regions were discussed above some important examples are mentioned to demonstrate the diversity in rural Europe. Economic indicators like GDP, GVA and income of households showed great fluctuations from region to region, the income of households was nine times higher in the highest income NUTS2 IR region than in the lowest income NUTS2 region. Long term unemployment was about seven times higher in a PR region than in another PR region on NUTS2 level. Three times more people was in human resources in science and technology as a percentage of total population in the leading PR NUTS2 region than in the lagging PR NUTS2 region.

Differences based on rurality are a common topic of rural policies and rural science in EU countries however the differences in rural features of different countries may be notably important. Analysing the employment-unemployment indicators and those indicators that closely related to employment we found that in many instances the major differences are between the post-socialist new member states (NMS) and the EU 15 countries. In some cases the indicators are not available on NUTS2 or NUTS3 levels but if there are major differences at country level, we would anticipate, major differences that this probably also applies at (rural) regional level.

As a consequence of the changes in the economy, affected by the EU and regional policy, the rural population has to adapt to the new environment. Probably those communities can better comply with the changes that are able to foresee the consequences of current actions. Therefore the knowledge of general tendencies in rural employment and rural development is essential for adapting to changes.

With respect to main features of the work force an aim of this publication to identify the most relevant issues. The description of the work force based on the territorial and demographic characteristics, economic attributes, employment parameters, human resource data, and on the characteristics of tourism and infrastructure.

There is an increasingly diverse rural landscape in many respects including economic prosperity, accessibility to population centres, population density, and presence of natural capital. Some of these differences are captured by the work carried out in this research which highlights the importance of the need for local solutions.