

1. PRELIMINARIES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the dissertation was to analyse the use of national and EU subsidies on rural development in the South Trans-Danubian region, in relation with the critical investigation of the subsidising programs. The actuality of the subject is shown by several factors.

Firstly, due to the reforms defined in AGENDA 2000, rural development has become the second pillar of the European Union; this policy has got in the foreground in Hungary as well, recently.

As the European Union subsidises only programmed developments, it is also timely to analyse the effects of the implemented programs and draw the conclusions.

Thirdly, the LEADER approach getting more important in the EU development policy makes the subject of the dissertation actual; which is mentioned as horizontal principle in the agricultural and rural development plans for the years 2007 to 2013.

According to the hypothesis of the research, the most effective way to ensure sustainable development is such a programmed rural development policy that is based on and integrates endogen resources and local values.

The objectives of the dissertation are:

1. *A complex analysis of the national and international literature* on rural development, in order to find out the efficiency of different theoretical and practical works and researches done during the preparations of rural development policies.
2. *Analysis of the objectives and effects of the recent rural development programs*, with special regard to the alignment of the plight analysis and strategic objectives, and to whether the use of endogen resources gets enough emphasis in achieving the aims of the program.
3. *Analysis of rural development subsidies and their effects* in the South Trans-Danubian region.
4. *Analysis of the viability of endogen, integrated development programs in the region*. As its élat ant example is the LEADER community initiative, the aim was to reveal the experiences of this program, the LEADER+ program the AVOP LEADER+ program had started in spring.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Secondary research:

The secondary research was carried out an aggregate investigation of the plight analysis, strategy, objectives and tools of the SAPARD Plan. Special emphasis was laid on the alignment of the plight analysis and the strategic objectives, and on whether the use of endogen resources gets enough emphasis in reaching the aims of the program.

Similarly, the objectives of the subsidies and the results obtained were analysed in case of Rural Development targeted funds (RDF) had been implemented prior to the SAPARD program.

The data and documents of three Local Rural Development Work teams and deep interviews with locals and the Regional Rural Development Office (REVI) who all took part in the LEADER+ pilot program were used to collect experiences of and information on the program.

The efficiency analysis of rural development subsidies in the South Trans-Danubian region was based on the indicators given in the tenders of the previous institution of the Agricultural Ministry responsible for the Rural Development in the region.

These data were compared to the projected figures of the SAPARD Plan. In case of the RDF, because projections were not available, the output indicators and the results of deep interviews were used.

As many of the economic, natural environmental, social or territorial changes can not be quantified, also qualitative researches were needed. As **primary research**, it was necessary to complement the set of indicators with the subjective opinions of people taking part and of those being the final beneficiaries of the programs. To get information on the previous, both questionnaires (n=133) and deep interviews with three officers of the REVI were used.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Effectiveness of scientific fundamentals in strategic planning

The question was: how effectively the different theoretical and practical works and researches can be used in preparations of rural development policies.

It was found that the preparation documents and fundamental studies of the plight analysis of rural development plans, national or regional strategies are not effectively used.

The reasons for it can be partly that the preparations of a strategy *necessitates considering numerous aspects* (EC Council Regulations, strategic directives of the community, national conceptions, ensuring avoiding doubly foundation). It is assumable that the writers of the fundamental documents intended to *pursue complexity* in defining rural problems and solutions. EU funds, however, can be used for only particular measures. While, the third reason, in my opinion, is that the researchers are drawn by their commitment and conciseness, and the real decision makers are politicians who are influenced by different lobbying powers, as well.

In my opinion, as rural areas suffer from several problems, the analysis of problems should focus on the most challenging and urging ones to solve, and in the end, it will bring solution for the others, too.

It can be also stated that information on the rural problems or giving overall or even particular solutions can be useful but on their own are not sufficient for the decision makers. It would be necessary to mark both the development plan and the measure, and a particular fund to execute any proposals.

3.2 Use of rural development subsidies in the South Trans-Danubian region

3.2.1 Efficiency of Rural Development Targeted Funds in the South Trans-Danubian region

Between the years 2000 and 2003, 703 tenders were submitted in the South Trans-Danubian region, out of which 358 ones won. In the order of the regions, with this figure per thousand head, the South Trans-Danubian region stands in first place; while with the number of winner tenders per thousand head, it takes the second place with minimal difference. In this period, investments of almost 3.4 billion HUF were induced in the rural region with 1.6 billion HUF of subsidy.

The final results of the program can be analysed with the help of indicators. However, technical contents rather than indicators were found in the old recording system, which made the analysis more difficult.

In case of the measure “Development and renewal of villages”, 80% of the investments were used for reconstructing buildings. It partly contributed to maintain a unique character of the villages, and partly the buildings with new functions became useful for the local community. 15% of the investments were used for the protection or reconstruction of environment or public areas. All these improved the life quality of the rural population. In 2000, the RDF program enabled 7 settlements of the region to create their area development plans. Although RDF supported programs to improve communities, the data show that the majority of the rural population has not recognised the importance of communities.

Most of the tenders were submitted and won within the measure “Supports for developing alternative incomes”. In the region, compared to the national figures, outstanding number of ideas was born for alternative incomes.

Many investments aimed at *ecological production*, which prioritises the environment friendly, sustainable use of the natural resources and in many cases they were situated on Sensitive Natural Areas. The program encouraged the *production and marketing of locally produced special food and non-food products*. The intention was to increase the locally added value of unique rural products. Also, it supported the *production of handcrafts*. Besides that it provides alternative income for the local population, production of handcrafts is an important element of conserving traditions. *Agricultural tourism* was the segment where most of the tenders won. Especially, the supports for development of beds in villages, and touristical attractions were popular.

It is extremely important that the investments supported by the RDF program created several jobs. According to the data given in the deep interviews, the number of maintained or created jobs reached several hundreds in Hungary during the four years of its period.

The third group was the **infrastructural investments**, where most of the subsidies were paid compared to the previous measures.

Within it, the renewal of agricultural roads was most popular. As the result of RDF, 25.5 kilometres of road was built, this is quite an amount if comparing it to the projected figure of the SAPARD program. By reducing the costs of the farmers, the profitability of the production improved. Also the interest of the producers has been served by the renewed markets.

Regionally, handling of 18 000 m³ sewage was supported, which is far behind the needed amount. An excellent example was the establishment of a sewage treatment poplar farm in Aparhant, Tolna county, which was supported by the RDF program in 2000.

Also within the infrastructural investments, informatical nodes were established to supply the producers with up-to-date information.

3.2.2 Assessment of the overall program of RDF

One of the greatest results of RDF is that it helped the rural population **change their point of view**, and many of them **took part in planning and programming certain activities of rural development**. However, this fact can not be quantified by any indicators.

During the collective work of programming, the so far isolated actions became a **complex regional conception**. Several local work teams appeared that have attracted wide relations, multilateral knowledge and experiences.

The preparation program for SAPARD enabled both the caller and the submitters of tenders to get an important amount of information and **experiences**. The subsidising system was based on the principles of the EU rural development, and it intended to enforce these as well. Further important result was the determining of rural areas, which was induced by the SAPARD Plan.

In summarising, during the four years of the RDF program, investments of almost 3.4 billion HUF were induced in the rural region with 1.6 billion HUF of subsidy, which helped the development of rural areas stop lagging behind. However, payment of 1.6 billion HUF is only a drop in the sea, it served good and useful goals.

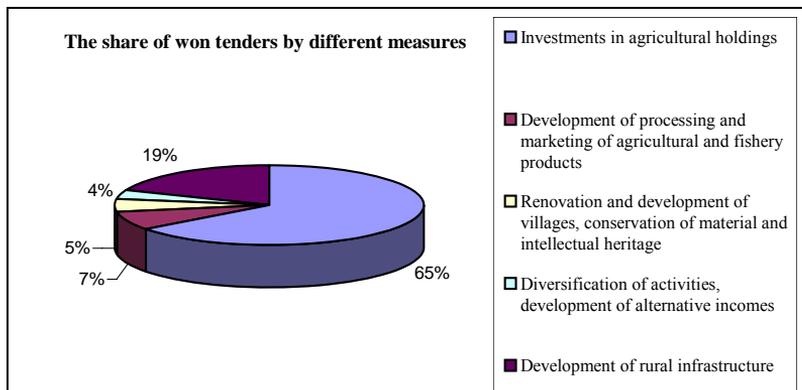
3.2.3 Use of SAPARD subsidies in the South Trans-Danubian region

The SAPARD Plan targeted both to improve efficiency and create jobs at the same time. This is an ambivalent goal setting, because the plan assumes the execution of opposite processes.

In the analysis of the effects of the program, the projected indicators of the plan and the final results were compared in such way that the national projections were calculated in the proportion of won tenders in the region.

In the South Trans-Danubian region, 1196 tenders were submitted in the SAPARD program; 419 of them and 403 proposers were supported.

The share of won tenders by different measures is shown in Figure 1.



Source: own calculation based of the data of the Hungarian Regional Rural Development Office, Kaposvár

Figure 1: The share of won tenders by different measures

In case of both submitted and won tenders, the most popular measure was the Investments in agricultural holdings. The SAPARD Plan contains the highest amount of funds for this measure, intending to support the technical development primarily.

In the region, the sum of the total investments generated by 8.6 billion HUF of capital injection of the program is more than 17.6 billion HUF.

Table 1 shows the result indicators and quantities of the “**Investments in agricultural holdings**”.

Comparing the indicators with those in the plan, it is found that in case of the first eight indicators, the program apparently managed to achieve the projected figures. However, an in-detail analysis shows more:

Table 1: Projected and result indicators of the measure “Investments in agricultural holdings”

Indicators	Projected		Achieved
	National	Regional*	
Number of farms to be developed, out of which	1100	209	214**
- share of those in less favoured areas (%)	35	7	6 % (16)***
- share of those managed by women (%)	4	1	10,2 % (22)
- share of those managed by young farmers (%)	9	2	8 % (19)
Number of maintained and new jobs, total (head)	4267 2133 6400	811 405 1216	8099.5 159 8258.5
Share of farms to be developed	2 %	2 %	****2.7%
Modernisation of stables			
- cattle (hd)	137 000	26 030	3 077
- hog (hd)	358 700	68 153	1 800
- poultry (1000 m ²)	600	114	16
Other modernising investments			
- granary (1000 t)	152	29	27
- tractors	2 573	489	123

* calculated on the South Trans-Danubian region (19 percent of the total).

** 28 of the tenderers submitted more (2-5) tenders.

*** according to the list issued in 64/2004. (10.12.) MVH .

**** in 2003 in the region, 7807 companies dealt with agricultural production, forestry and game management.

Source: SAPARD Plan, HSO Web Statinfo, 2006, own calculation

As the definitions of maintained or new jobs was neither exactly given in the plan, nor the data given in the tenders are reliable in many cases, exact consequences can not be drawn. In addition, several jobs were axed according to the answers of the questionnaires.

The next three indicators show significant lags. Because of the strict and costly requirements, very little number of tenders was submitted in the sub measure “Investments in animal buildings”. While in this period, the profitability of animal producing farms was extremely low, because of that many of the farmers had difficulty with arising even the own capital needed for the subsidy

The last two indicators do not cover all the machinery that was purchased with the support of SAPARD.

Further, the effects of “Supports of investments in agricultural holdings” were that out of the objectives of the SAPARD program, it improved the

marketing efficiency of agricultural products and increased and also modernised the machinery of farmers. Although, it must be mentioned that only farms could win their tenders, who had demonstrated their viability. Because of that, the small farmers did not benefit from the program at all.

“Improving processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products”

As the result indicators show, in most cases, the projected figures to create the conditions of food security and hygiene, environment protection and animal welfare had been overestimated.

In the region, the projected figures were achieved or over performed only in case of wine and table egg production. Although 22 new jobs were created and managed to maintain 1009 old ones, the notes made in case of the previous measure are relevant here, as well.

“Renovation and development of villages, rural intellectual and material heritage and its protection”

It was almost impossible to compare the projected and result figures because of the difference between the project sheet of the tenders and the result indicators of the SAPARD Plan. This is where the anomalies of planning and executing are the most eye catching. These problems occurred much more times less in case of the AVOP.

The most popular measure of this program was the revitalisation of architects and historical places, which contributed the use of these buildings for new activities, as well. Interviews with several leaders of local governments revealed that the implemented investments helped improving the life quality of the population.

Out of the result indicators of SAPARD, the program maintained 73 and created 22 new jobs and improved the quality of the environment. In 2003, the migration difference of the region was -1217 (*HSO, 2004*), it is likely that the program also helped reducing this figure.

“Diversification of activities, development of economic activities for alternative incomes”

Almost all the tenders submitted dealt with rural tourism. Although, only 15 tenders won, it would highly contribute the poor employment and incomes of the rural population. In my opinion, this is one the most problematic point in rural development; much more attention, organisation work, information and outer help are needed in order to exploit better the opportunities given by alternative activities. The measure contributed to maintain 23 and created 15 new jobs.

The measure **“Development of infrastructure in rural areas”** supported informatinal and communication investments. Most of the won tenders improved agricultural roads. Compared to the projection of the plan,

more than double, altogether 67.6 km road was built in the region. However, precise data are not available; the program greatly helped improving the efficiency of production by reducing the transportation costs.

In my opinion, modernisation of energy supply is at least as important as the previous one, however only 7 investments were implemented. Therefore, it should be given more promotion and emphasis in the future.

According to the datasheets, 15 organisations taking part in “*developing informatical and communication systems*” helped 9 043 companies and 212 329 person to access internet.

Only 6 villages tendered for *alternative sewage treating investment* and 2 of them for local markets, however there are very few markets with good infrastructure that are suitable for selling local product in the rural areas.

The measure contributed to maintain 2735 and created 60 new jobs.

3.2.4 Opinion of farmers supported on the SAPARD program

As 65% of the won tenders were submitted for “Investments in agricultural holdings”, the questionnaire survey targeted those farmers who tendered and won in this measure.

According to the answers on the first four questions:

1. Do you think that the SAPARD subsidy and the implemented investments improved the competitiveness of your holding?
2. Can a higher income be seen after the investments done in your establishment?
3. Do you want to expand your production in the future?
4. If yes, has the SAPARD grant influenced your decision on expanding?

the majority of the farmers feel that the SAPARD grants helped their production become more competitive, four fifth of them thinks that it resulted in higher incomes, as well. Also four fifth of the farmers plan further expansion; two third of them was influenced by the SAPARD grant in making such decision.

Thus, increasing the incomes, as an impact indicator of “Investments in agricultural holdings” was successfully achieved by the program.

In the fifth question, changes in the employment after the investments were asked. In case of the involved segment, the program has partly achieved its objective, and 70% of the interviewed producers did not change employment. Only 42 new jobs were created. Meanwhile, 7% of the companies axed several jobs (26 employees), due to the improving effectiveness. This was a surprising result; hence tender axing jobs would not have been supportable.

According to the answers on questions 6 and 7 on the qualification, outstandingly high proportion, 51% of the interviewed graduated from college or university, and also most of those (37%) with agricultural qualification had diploma. The ratio of those with no agricultural qualification is however also high (14 %).

63 percent would attend professional education, out of them 90 percent has already got agricultural qualification, which reflect on that qualified people like to get up-to-date professional information. 35 percent however would not attend any education program, 22% of them does not have any agricultural qualification. Unfortunately, this measure was not prepared in time and accredited by the EU and thus the SAPARD program did not contain it.

According to the answers on the next question, 56 percent would take part in producer group. It is interesting that 88 percent of them are qualified people. 6 percent of the interviewed is already member; however those who would not join this program represent also a high share (36%). Unfortunately, neither this measure was invited in the program, due to similar reasons to the previous.

The next three questions are related on the Agricultural Operative Program. The intention was to find out whether the SAPARD program managed to prepare on the Structural Funds. Only 32% of the interviewed people took part in the AVOP tenders. Partly because of the slow process of financing, which caused liquidity problems; another reason can be to arise the own financial sources needed to the tenders especially for small farms, while prior to a new investments it is necessary to create reserves, too.

Two third of those, however, who bear sufficient financial reserves won in this program as well; thus SAPARD proved to be a good pilot project from this aspect.

One of the important tasks of the SAPARD program would have been to transfer knowledge and skills of tendering for the rural population and agricultural workers. Oppositely, 70% of the tenders were written by outer person; therefore the program has not achieved this goal.

According to the answers on the last three questions, the highest benefit of the program was that the grants reduced the costs of investment, increased competitiveness and the producers managed to set up up-to-date technology. More than 70% of the producers think that the process was quite complex and bureaucratic, the payments were late, which caused that the end of the investments was late. Additionally, submitting a tender was very expensive; thus serious liquidity problems occurred in many cases. Also, many of the producers saw it as a problem that the grant is paid afterward the investment.

Moreover, the following problems were listed in the answers: poor credibility, slow return on capital invested, lack of long term loans available, lack of the defence of domestic market and calculable prices. In many cases, the answers given reflect on that the producers have false expectations on the government and its roles.

3.2.5 Assessment of the overall SAPARD program

The process of the preparations and accrediting of the program was unreasonably long.

Although, both in the name and objectives of the program SAPARD took on the development of rural areas, only those connected to agricultural production were involved in the execution. Only the “Renovation and development of villages” and “Development of rural infrastructure” enabled the local governments to take part, but the funds targeted were only sufficient for a very little part of the demands (8 %).

It is a severe problem that both the measures of “Support of education” and “Support for producer groups” were left out of the program. However in Hungary, both the low qualification level and the scattered fields are barriers of competitive farming.

From the other side, SAPARD proved to be a good pilot program in transferring the experiences, knowledge and information on the EU procedure and requirements, rural development projects and tendering, for both the institutional and the tenderers’ side. Although, SAPARD does not apply an integrated, endogen rural development approach, at all.

3.3 Comparison of the impacts of RDF and SAPARD in the South Trans-Danubian region

In summarising, during the four years of the RDF program, investments of almost 3.4 billion HUF were induced in the rural region by 1.6 billion HUF of subsidy, which helped the development of rural areas to stop lagging behind. With a payment of 1.6 billion HUF, 358 investments were implemented, needing only a minimum number of new jobs in the government sector and by using the existing subsidising infrastructure. Its success was primarily due to that the civil servants who took part the preparations of decisions on subsidies were also involved in the legal preparations of these decisions, in making the program and coaching the small region managers, too. In this complex system, the principles of the EU, such as subsidiarity, partnership and programming were seen well.

Comparing the effects of RDF and SAPARD in the same 3 measures (renovation and development of villages; diversification; development of rural infrastructure), it can be seen that with similar costs of investments implemented, the SAPARD program used 1.5 times more subsidies for less

than one third of the beneficiaries. Meanwhile, the apparatus was larger, the speed much smaller and the satisfaction of the beneficiaries was much less.

The analysis of the indicators shows that within the measure *Renovation and development of villages, rural intellectual and material heritage and its protection*, RDF induced more than double investments with less support than the program SAPARD.

Also, RDF helped more companies to implement their investments within the measure *Support of alternative incomes* than SAPARD; although the amount of subsidies used is multiple.

Only the measure *Improvement and development of the rural infrastructure* is where the subsidies provided by the program SAPARD is triple than that of the RDF; and it was primarily used for building and improving agricultural roads by the beneficiaries.

3.4 LEADER+ experience in the region

The analysis of both the LEADER pilot and the AVOP LEADER+ programs show that the rural population of the region can think in programs; with necessary directing and mentoring it is suitable to create and implement their local sustainable development plans. It can be stated that the rural population of the region has the sufficient willingness, ideas and competence; only they need an efficient framework (mentoring, institutional and procedural support, help in developing community, good examples) to help.

4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The following **conclusions** can be drawn from the results of the survey:

1. The rural development policy of the European Union is not eligibly adoptable for Hungary. The primary reasons are in the different field structure and the historical background of agricultural production. After the change of the regime, many small holdings appeared, while the number of former large farms multiplied, their size decreased. In general, the small holdings are not competitive; most of them are even not viable, either. Subsidies are not available for these enterprises, or if yes, their profitability worsens (unused machinery, liquidity problems). The larger holdings, however, can exploit many of the EU subsidies. Thus, the higher incomes accumulate in a narrow group rather than dissimilate in the rural areas. Therefore, beside of the benefits of the EU subsidising system, it can not be managed to maintain rural employment and stop migration. For those who give up agricultural production there are not alternatives.

2. Due to that the rural development policy is part of the Common Agricultural Policy; the solutions for rural problems are expected from the agricultural policy: none of the other sectoral policies deal with the question of rural problems. Solutions for all the problems of rurality can not be expected from and financed by only the second pillar of the CAP.

3. In Hungary, both the natural and the socio-cultural resources provide good opportunities for a sustainable, integrated rural development that is based on endogen resources. The use of the resources is, however, restricted by many national and international factors. Although series of reforms of the CAP take place in the EU, and the importance of rural development has been emphasised, there is an absence of a clear strategy for the rural development of the CEECs. To form and enforce such a policy would be the top interest of the new member countries.

4. Today, the objectives coming from the plight analysis are often not aligned with the tools of implementation. The operation of the institutional system is not sufficient, and the Hungarian rural development policy also lacks thinking in long term.

5. It was found that the preparation documents and fundament studies and assessments on rural development plans, national or regional strategies are not effectively used.

6. The comparison of impacts of three rural development measures in case of the RDF and the SAPARD program show that with similar amount of support, RDF induced more investments and achieved better results shown by the indicators than SAPARD did. Its success was primarily due to that the civil servants who took part the preparations of decisions on subsidies were also involved in the legal preparations of these decisions, in

making the program and coaching the small region managers, too. Thus, in this complex system, the principles of the EU, such as subsidiarity, partnership and programming were seen well. The tender documents of the RDF became “user friendly”, which also contributed the successful use of the funds.

One of the greatest results of RDF is that it initiated and supported the rural population change their point of view, and many of them took part in planning and programming certain activities of rural development. Although the results are not measurable, they proved that the process of experiencing has gone through. In summarising, measured to its potential, RDF managed to achieve its objectives.

7. Some of the objectives of the SAPARD Program have been achieved. As the majority of the supports of the program connected to the agriculture, primarily it contributed to the modernisation of the sector. Thus, SAPARD partly fulfil its tasks on improving the market effectiveness, it improved production, but along with the improving effectiveness it also axed several jobs. According to the results of the survey, the program managed very small improvement in *food safety and hygiene, environment and animal welfare*. Neither a sufficient result was obtained in *increasing the production of higher quality and higher added value products*. Due to the delay in inviting the measures, the *supports for environmental investments and producer groups* were left out. *Maintaining jobs and creating new jobs* partly succeeded, as in case of certain companies the number of jobs decreased despite of the aims of the program. Because, the rural development subsidies hit only 28% of the total subsidies, and within it 68% was used for development of the infrastructure (primarily for agricultural roads), it is obvious that the program had poor impact on improving the ability of rural areas to maintain the population.

10. The analysis of both the LEADER pilot and the AVOP LEADER+ programs show that endogen, integrated rural development programs are viable in the region. The rural population of the region is suitable to create and implement their local sustainable development plans.

Based on the conclusions drawn, the following **recommendations** can be defined:

1. As neither the Hungarian rural areas nor the Hungarian agriculture are comparable to those of the European Union, neither the rural policy of the EU can be adopted without changes. The Hungarian rural development necessitates a complex approach; it can not be restricted to sole measures related to the agriculture.

2. Studies and document made in the preparations of rural development plans and strategies can be better used, if also the reasons and causes of the

arising problems revealed in the plight analysis would be indicated. Such a structured system, showing the priorities and the most critical problems would be transparent and the most useful for the decision makers.

3. Different revealing and proposing studies can be used more efficiently, if the proposers could define which development plan, measures of different directives and certain funds can be connected to their ideas and if they call the attention to arise sufficient financial sources.

4. In the South Trans-Danubian region, a successful, rural development activity with complex impact necessitates the following:

- Programming based on partnership, building on local resources and on the activity of local actors, prioritising the arising problems and focusing on the fundamental problems in the first step;
- Ensuring the participation of local actors not only in planning but in selecting projects, as well;
- At least at the level of regional institutions, participation of the government in the professional coordination of all processes and transferring necessary information and specific knowledge;
- The priorities of the programs should be defined from the point of social usefulness and not according to the interest of different lobbies seeking for short term benefit;
- Ensuring further subsidies available to complement the local resources.

5. NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

1. In the South Trans-Danubian region, by using a complex analysing method (analysis of naturals, indicators, questionnaires, deep interviews), I have analysed the use of rural development subsidies considered as continuous. I have given recommendations to improve the efficiency of the future use of subsidies.
2. I have found that the rural development measures had been implemented before the EU accession and according to the logics of the EU well served the preparation period, despite of the poor financial sources
3. I have shown that the rural development measures were not able to result in great progress – especially in case of the SAPARD program-, because the delays and unpreparedness, and restricted financial sources; however these helped those (mostly the producers) who are involved to get a better chance to attract the more significant future funds.
4. With the analysis of rural development measures implemented, I have proven that the most sufficient policy is based on a sustainable and complex rural development that makes effort on an intensive use of the endogen resources and a harmonised use of different financial sources.
5. According to my experiences, the future success of rural development is dependent on – beside of making the subsidising systems simpler and more transparent – whether controlling systems measuring the performance and implementation objectively will be established and functioning.

6. PUBLICATIONS IN THE FIELD OF THE DISSERTATION

PUBLICATIONS IN ENGLISH

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← Formázott: Felsorolás és számozás

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