

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, IN ACCESSING EUROPEAN FUNDS. CASE STUDY, CĂLĂRAȘI COUNTY

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Abstract

The major significance of the actual financing context is that, through the community budget, the rural communities can receive money in order to support development strategies, the financing under programs specific to the rural sector can be correlated to the financing programs by regional policy, environment policy, enterprise policy, education sector policy, etc. But, in order to benefit efficiently by the community interventions system, the major problem for the Romanian rural communities is related to: the identification of the different funding opportunities; the elaboration of a project portfolio adequate for the won development options; finding co-financing sources. Taking into consideration the complexity of such an approach and considering the particular situation of the Romanian rural sector it results that the key role in the rural development and use of the opportunities provided by the European context belongs to the public administration. The good information and information dissemination at the community level, possibly with best practice examples from other EU counties can have an essential role in attracting funds and projects that improve the effectiveness of the development strategies.

Key words: public administration, development strategy, economic and social development, implementation of European programs, strategic directions, sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

The economic and social development of Călărași county is set up in accordance with the regional development concepts, correlated with economic sector and civil organizations, with Romania's National Development Plan, Development Plan Regional Development Strategy of the South Muntenia, etc. . and external factors (EU programs, provisions of international conventions, international relations of Local Councils and County Councils) that may positively influence the development processes.

With a decreasing population and its density of approximately 62.6 inhabitants / km should be it must be considered mainly rural county, numbering 194,190 inhabitants (County Department of Statistics, 210) in rural areas (59% of the total population in 2009) which is 21% higher than the average of the new countries that join the EU.

Thus, agricultural and rural development will form a solid pillar. Success and prosperity of the county depend on its economic performance. The county is dependent on

agriculture and rural economy. The spread of globalization threaten traditional agriculture.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to study the role of public administration in accessing and implementing European funds Calarasi county, three specific research methods were used: dynamic, deductive and quantitative economic analysis, SWOT analysis, survey or participative research that involves collecting information on site using the technique of research "interview".

The study on analysis of the involvement of the public administration in accessing grants in Calarasi county had as its starting point the information obtained from the following sources: Statistical Yearbook Calarasi - Edition 2012 Socio - economic Calarasi, Statistical data from the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development; Calarasi development Strategy, developed by the county council, Publications of the National Institute of Statistics and data obtained from site observations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The stakeholders that could contribute to the development of the rural communities are directly local authorities, local businesses interested in promoting activities and special products obtained, implicitly interested in local economic development by promoting electronic commerce, financial assistance and technical adoption of innovative solutions in the private sector, teachers, students wishing to return in the commune after graduation, initiative committees established within the projects implemented in recent years in the village (they have experience in identifying and prioritizing needs - public consultation but especially in identifying funding sources and implementing various projects) and investors attracted by facilities (infrastructure, the potential of young people, spaces, the possibility to connect to the gas in the near future, urban land available for the construction of houses and investment).

By the rural infrastructure development program (CJ Calarasi, 2010), the financial allocation by Government Decision 432/08.04.2010 for projects in Calarasi county of 59,196,964.00 lei, for the following objectives: **water abstraction and distribution** in 21 towns in the county, accounting for 55.44% of the total, **sewerage and treatment stations** in 4 localities with a value of 14,523,440.00 lei, respectively - 24.53% of the total, **to build a platform storage and waste recovery**, in Fundeni and Ștefan cel Mare villages, with a value of 4046 .090,00 lei and - 6.82%; **rehabilitation of main roads** - made in Gurbănești and Nana communes, with a value of 4,021,042.00 lei, respectively - 6.79%; **little bridges on roads** - made in Nana commune, Călărași county with a value of 3,800,000 lei (MADR, Dezvoltare Rurala).

Related to project financed under post-accession funds – by ERDF/ROP program, in Călărași county, on 31 January 2012 these have the following structure: FROM EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, BY *Regional Operational Program 2007-2013 – Priority axis 2, Major Intervention Area 2.1. "Rehabilitation and modernisation of county road network, urban streets – including construction/rehabilitation of ring roads "*, projects: "Modernisation and

rehabilitation of county road DJ 301 section Fundeni - Budești, km.13+000 - km.36+578". The project is funded by the European Union, funding contract *no.231/12.05.2010* – project total value: 43.795.745,88 lei, project implementation duration: 31 months; **"Improvement of access to European transport road network in Călărași county, by the rehabilitation and modernisation of DJ 201B, km.19+000 - km.39+950, on section limit of Ialomița county- Valea Argovei și DJ 303, km.26+294 - km.48+278 Valea Argovei - Mânăstirea"**. The project is funded by the European Union, funding contract *no.430/07.07.2010* – project total value: 44.944.350,96 lei, project implementation duration: 31 months; **"Modernization and rehabilitation of county road DJ 303 SECTION Călăreți - Valea Argovei KM.0+000 - KM.26+294"**. The project is funded by the European Union, funding contract *no. 564/08.10.2011* – project total value: 55.557.533,56 lei, project implementation duration : 31 months.

FROM THE COHESION FUND, By Environment Sector Operational Program 2007-2013 – Priority Axis 1, Major Intervention Sector 1.1. "Extension/modernisation of water/waste systems", the project "Extension and rehabilitation of water and sewerage systems, in Călărași county". The project is funded by the European Union, funding contract *no.91.803/09.10.2010* – project total value: 440.395.303 lei, project implementation duration: 62 months. **FROM THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND, by Administrative Capacity Development Operational Program 2007-2013 – Priority Axis 1, Major Intervention Sector 1.3. "Improvement of organisational efficiency", projects:** "Personalized training for a modern public administration". The project is funded by the European Union, funding contract *no.28/07.08.2010* – project total value: 1.312.972,35 lei, project implementation duration: 12 months; "Development of professional competences within the local public administration in project management and public procurement sector". The project is

funded by the European Union, project implementation duration : 12 months.

The vision of socio-economic development of rural communities in Calarasi county is to create and sustain a competitive socio-economic sector, a stable, healthy and diversified one to ensure continued economic growth and the improvement of the life quality of citizens in Calarasi communes. (CC Calarasi, 2012).

Table 1. Correlation of socio-economic development objectives in Călărași county, with external funding sources

Proposed objectives and actions		External funding opportunities
1. Development of basic infrastructure		
1.1 Roads		POR-Axis 2
1.2 Water –sewerage		POS Environment
1.3. Gas		
1.3.1	Connection to gas network	POS Environment
1.3.2	Biogas use	Fund for Environment ,POS Competitiveness
1.4. Electric power		Romanian Fund fro energetic efficiency, Fund for Environment, POS Competitiveness – Axis 4
2. Development of rural economy and agricultural productivity increase		PNADR, POR
2.1 Commerce		Cross Border Cooperation Program
2.2 Tourism		POR – Axis 5, PNADR
3. Protection and improvement of environment quality		
3.1 Soils and waters		
3.1.1	Use of agricultural best practices	PNADR
3.1.1	Continuation of obsolete land rehabilitation	PNADR
3.2 Waste		PNADR, Environment Fund, POS Competiveness – Axis 4
4. Improvement of social conditions		POS D R U
5. Improvemnt of education, culture, health and pleasure conditions		
5.1 Education		POR – Axis 3
5.2 Culture		Cultural Fund
5.3 Health		POS-HRD
5.4 Pleasure		Cultural Fund

The economic and social development strategy of Calarasi county aims to use the potential, opportunities and real availability for development, including the creation of a stimulating and competitive business environment, designed to attract significant private investment in the country and abroad. Some of the proposed objectives we can mention the importance of skills training for

public participation, stimulating adaptability of citizens to change the culture, transforming villages into a common reference point for other communes, not least, the efficient and focused use of all local resources, correlated with attracting and rational use of public and private financing funds, internal and international funds (ADR Muntenia Sud, 2012).

To this end, we propose the correlation of the objectives and actions to be achieved, with external financing possibilities (Table 1).

CONCLUSIONS

The Project management will allow the village local administration to develop the skills to identify, develop and implement projects under its responsibility and according to the local development strategy, **from the phase of identification, design and planning to the evaluation of the results** to ensure that work is carried out as planned and within budget.

The stakeholders will have to effectively implement the mechanism of **decentralization and externalisation**, because, firstly, the public administration must be a good planner, manager, monitor and evaluator of the project in its various stages of development and implementation.

In order to optimize and increase the project results and their number and their consistency with limited human resources and internal logistics, their implementation is oriented as follows (Dragulin D., 2012):

- many sectoral projects of low value to be implemented by specialized units of the town all, but also by NGOs sector and the private sector, especially through public-private partnerships;

- Big infrastructure projects must be the favourite for the use of internal resources of the town hall in terms of planning and control and externalisation to achieve different stages of their implementation (consulting, design, implementation, support and project management).

Thus, following the internal assimilation of project management mechanisms, local

administrative structure will know (Iova RA, 2012):

□ to plan projects as a whole and to present them to the beneficiaries (local stakeholders) and to approve the project terms (budget, resources, time scheme, conditions, responsibilities);

□ to allot financing, material and human resources to start the project (human resources, sub-contractors logistics, etc.);

□ to elaborate and to implement evaluation and monitoring systems;

□ to control the project development from all points of view

(financial, qualitative, delivery terms on projects or concerned activities);

□ to report to the beneficiaries regarding the way the project develops;

□ to provide advice and assistance to participants in the project to accomplish the tasks according to the requested standards;

□ to evaluate the project in testing phases and to make the needed changes;

□ to evaluate the project results after a certain period from delivery, from the point of view of beneficiary satisfaction and improvement of objectives in activity.

These things will be possible primarily through **training programs for projects responsible persons within the Town Hall** with the result in the creation and introduction of project management culture by projects, including the use of IT & C technologies in the local public administration in order to obtain maximum performance in the design of projects for local sustainable development of the village. These projects will result in each town halls in the creation of a department of development and implementation of projects, consisting of a sufficient number of specialists who will identify and ensure the implementation of the projects proposed by local development strategy.

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