

THE POTENTIAL OF THE RURAL AREA DEVELOPMENT OF STEFAN VODA COMMUNE IN CALARASI COUNTY

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Abstract

The concept of development means all forms and methods of socio-economic development, and it is based first of all on ensuring a balance between these socio-economic systems and the elements of natural capital. Călărași county is situated in the South-East part of the country and of the Romanian Plain, on the left shore of the Danube. It has a surface of 5088 sqkm and it occupies 2.1% of Romania surface. The relief is mainly represented by fields. The county depends on agriculture and economy in the rural area. In the rural area of Călărași county 49.1% of the total population in the country lives, most involved in agricultural activities or activities related to it. Communes are the most important category of administrative units, both numerically and in terms of population. The proposed paper presents aspects regarding the potential of sustainable development of Stefan Voda commune in Călărași county.

Key words: commune, region, rural area, rural development

INTRODUCTION

Calarasi county is situated in the South-East part of the country. It has a decreasing population and a density of about 62.6 inhabitants/km, we must consider it as being mostly rural, counting 194,190 inhabitants in the rural area (59% of the total population in 2009) that represents with 21% more than the average of the countries that joined EU recently. Thus, the rural and agricultural development will form a solid pillar. The county success and prosperity depend on its own economic performances. The county is dependent on agriculture and economy in the rural area. The spread of globalization threatens the traditional agriculture.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the presentation of Stefan Voda commune, the information collected from the Sheet of each locality, provided by each local council and information collected from the County Department of Statistics and from Călărași Department for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The sheets provided by the County

Department of Statistics were analysed, for the elaboration of the diagnosis analysis of the commune, that included: data about commune situation and about its physical-geographical characteristics; statistics and census made at local level, in demography, labour force employment sectors, economic sector, education and culture, animal and vegetal production.

Also the SWOT analysis was used for evaluation the present status of the commune and rural area development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Ștefan Vodă commune is a new commune, which formed in the place of the former Sohat, "GRĂTARU", which existed before 1895, in the very place of the commune today [1]. Sohatul Grătaru was a gathering of a few huts, and even a few little houses, in which the land workers or shepherds were living with their flocks coming on manor properties. In winter, some of them retreated to Calarasi town, where land owners and tenants were living, such as Stănculescu, Tudorache Miulescu Guțulescu, whose descendants are living today. Siliștea Station was established

in 1884 almost halfway between Calarasi and Ciulnița. The station was called Siliștea until 1920, when its name changed to "Fălcoianu" in the memory of Fălcoianu General who died in the First World War.

In 1894 the first allotments were made here according to the rural law. They split from the estates Calarasii Vechi property, 1500 ha of arable land. Then they were given jobs and places for houses construction on this property. The documentary record of this village was in 1895. The main economic activity is agriculture and services providing. Following the analysis of the data in the table below, we can mention:

Ștefan Vodă communes lies on a surface of 7.152 ha, of which 95,5% is arable land, and the rest of 4,5% is occupied by yards 3,4% and roads 1,0%. At the end of 2011 it had 808 houses, 0,6% less than in 1992 and 7,4% less in 2002;

The population is formed of 2.346 persons in 2011, and in the analyzed period it is remarked a decreasing trend, the year 2011 having with 10,8% less persons than year 1992.

Table 1. Commune surface

Agriculture surface according to its use – hectares	6749	6749	6749
Arable land - ha	6701	6701	6701
Surface – vineyard and vine nursery - ha	48	48	47
Surface with non agricultural land total - ha	403	403	403
Surface with water and ponds – total – ha	-	-	-
Surface with constructions total - ha	22	22	22
Surface – ways of communications and railways total – ha	157	157	157
Surface with degraded and non productive land – total - ha	224	224	224
Agricultural surface – private ownership – ha	6888	6888	6888
Arable surface –private ownership - ha	6691	6691	6692

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Călărași county, 2011

From the data taken from the Statistical Yearbook of Călărași county it results that the total population of the commune on 1st July 2011 was of 2463 inhabitants. The social-economic conditions have a remarkable influence also regarding the multiple aspects on the structure and evolution of the demographic phenomena. In the table below it can be seen the natural movement of the population in Ștefan Vodă commune.

Table 2. Population movement

Indicator	2009	2010	2011
Total population on 1 st July	2457	2476	2463
Born – live	43	21	24
Deceased	24	32	36
Natural gain	19	-11	-12
Marriage	15	7	7
Divorce	2	5	5
Born - dead	0	0	0

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Călărași county, 2011

As regards the labour force, the total number of employees in 2011 was 111, 34 persons being employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing, 22 persons in education, 14 persons in public administration and 16 persons in social care and health.

In the rural area of Ștefan Vodă commune, 12 companies are located, of which 4 on agricultural sector.

Following the previous table, we can note the structure on activity sector of the SMEs existing in Ștefan Vodă commune:

- The agricultural sector is represented by a number of 4 companies, established in the period 1994-2007, of which we can notice 2, SC CHIREA SRL and SC CHIREA 2000 SRL, belonging to the same entrepreneur, with a number of 15 employees, respectively 14, both being specialised on cereal crops (except for rice), vegetables and oil seed plants;

- The commerce is represented by 6 companies, all in the sector of en detail commerce in non specialised stores, selling mainly food, products, drinks and tobacco, the most recently established being Sc Florymar Com Impex SRL, in 2007;

- Services sector has 2 companies, both

established in 2008, SC Ormih Construct SRL and SC Vulcan Prest Com SRL, the first in the sector of residential and non residential buildings works, with a number of 5 employees and the second with 1 employee, in the sector of vehicle repair and maintenance. [2]

Further on, we present the situation of the surfaces grown with the main crops in Stefan Voda commune

Table 3. Surfaces grown with the main growing in Stefan Voda commune in the period 2009-2011

Surface	UM	2009	2010	2011
Surface grown with cereals	ha	4150	4600	4800
Surface grown with maize	ha	380	400	612
Surface grown with sun flower	ha	1600	1800	2123
Surface grown with vegetables	ha	27	30	38
Surface grown with vineyards	ha	102	99	75
Surface grown with fruit trees	ha	1800	2173	3581

The Table 4 presented the evolution of the animal stock in Stefan Voda commune [3]

Table 4 The evolution of animal stock in Stefan Voda commune in the period 2009-2011

Categories	UM	2009	2010	2011
Cattle	head	123	37	35
Swine	head	1100	970	712
Sheep	head	1330	1107	853
Poultry	Head	12104	10300	9800

The SWOT analysis highlighted the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the studied commune.

The SWOT Analysis is a strategic planning method of analysis by identifying internal and external factors that may affect the proposed strategic objectives by evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of an initial reference situation.

Strengths

- people are interested in local business sector development;

- various funds can be accessed, access to which we can rely on the expertise of local staff;

- best of electricity and telecommunications networks (access to both landline and mobile).

- the existence of numerous companies with vegetable, livestock and agriculture services and marketing profile;

- high share of private ownership of arable land;

- possibility to use the compost in agriculture;

Weaknesses

We mention the weaknesses of the commune:

- lack of more opportunities of fun and leisure (parks and gardens);

- poor access to social services and health services;

- Poor adaptation to European standards in agriculture;

- crop diversification is little used in farms and agricultural lands are fragmented;

- total lack of tourist infrastructure in the commune

- limited access to sources of information.

Opportunities

- sustainable development of the community there are various sources of funding (for economic competitiveness, rural development, environment, regional development, improve infrastructure, increase government capacity and human resource development);

- developed agricultural, vegetable, livestock and favourable natural leisure potential;

- spatial ability leisure;

- potential for organic farming;

- economic potential by selling compost or business development in the field of organic farming;

- potential for using renewable energy sources (solar, biomass and biogas);

- increased potential for projects in partnership with neighboring communes;

- attracting potential investors;

- Potential for the development of food processing sector.

Threats

- underestimation of the rural area;

- lack of capital to support investment;

- poor utilization of the existing potential

- slow development of the rural economy;

- increasing disparities between rural communities;
- youth migration to the urban areas;
- widening discrepancies in the rural communities and their excessive depopulation;
- decrease the number of pupils, due to low birth rates, partial degradation of cultural infrastructure (community center, library);
- adverse weather conditions for traditional agriculture due to the global warming that will result if urgent action is not taken to a risk of desertification;
- the need for huge and long term investments.

CONCLUSIONS

SWOT analysis highlighted as *strengths* the resources ensured by the good quality of the agricultural lands but also the activities in the livestock sector; the most important *weaknesses* of the communes consists of the poorly developed infrastructure, the lack of jobs and population aging; the main *opportunities* are represented by the respondents desire for development, the possibility to access national, intra-community subsidies and attract foreign investments; the *threats* consist of the imminent depopulation, lack of capital, lack of information that can diminish considerably the development chances;

From the above characteristics resulted the image of a community that has the desire for the development of the rural area but an aging community from demographic point of view, with poor opportunities on the labour market, but with a very high level of cooperation potential in order to achieve some common goals, including regarding the achievement of public goods.

The vision regarding the economic-social development of the rural communities in Călărași county is the creation and support of the competitive, stable, healthy and diversified social economic sector, to ensure the continuous economic growth and the increase of the quality of life of the commune inhabitants.

REFERENCES

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