

# Analysis of six Hungarian and six EU-funded research projects

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**Abstract – A consortium of eight organisations has secured EU Framework 7 funding for a 30-month research project on employment in rural areas. This project has the full title “New Sources of Employment to Promote the Wealth-Generating Capacity of Rural Communities” but will be known by its acronym “RuralJobs”. RuralJobs will approach the issue by quantifying the employment needs and potentials in different types of pilot areas within contrasting reference areas in six EU countries, evaluating the effectiveness of past and current policies in addressing these needs and potentials, and by systematically analysing the results, provide guidelines on how to better target future rural development measures. This paper analyses six Hungarian and six EU-funded research projects.**

## INTRODUCTION

The research work of RuralJobs is structured into five work packages (WPs 2-6). Work Package 2, Task 2.2. aims to identify and assess the outputs and impacts of national and EU-funded projects, with a view to: creating a directory of “good practices” which will be accessible from the RuralJobs website; synthesizing the results to define the “state of the art” in research at the European level; and quantifying the extent to which good practices have been disseminated to date.

This Work Package sets the background for the research and indicates the areas to be investigated with regards to findings from a large panel of projects.

Fieldsend–Boone (2008) pointed out that the PRAXIS project focused on the role of regional and local authorities in facilitating the creation of local partnerships and in providing the spatial planning framework and support for sustainable businesses to prosper in rural areas. It was designed to identify good practices, facilitate future development of regional rural entrepreneurship partnerships and strategies, support business innovation and foster an entrepreneurial culture in rural areas.

The Cross-Border Centre of Expertise in Rural Development (HVTK) is a partnership between six organizations including universities and rural development practitioners from Hungary, Romania and the UK. The objective of HVTK is to encourage dialogue and to exchange experiences between academics, students and practitioners in the subject

of sustainable rural development (Fieldsend et al., 2007).

HVTK also collaborated with the Interreg IIC (www.praxisnetwork.net) project called “Praxis – Making Rural Entrepreneurship Work”. HVTK used the Praxis expertise to develop a questionnaire about the restrictive factors of cross-border rural entrepreneurs. The results of the questionnaire were reported by Fieldsend and Nagy (2006).

RUR@CT is a network for mainstreaming good practice. RUR@CT will greatly increase the long-term impact of RuralJobs by providing a network of mutual support which will promote “change through exchange” by building stakeholder capacity (Fieldsend, 2008).

The TRATOKI partnership developed the tools on the basis of good practice examples, success marketing, and a mutual learning process. The tools were tested via demonstration projects. The TRATOKI Toolkit is a valuable asset in light of European policies. These good practices examples were described by Ditha (2006).

## METHODS

Task 2.2 “Review and assessment of national and EU-funded research and dissemination projects” includes three steps: (1) Identification of international projects or studies; (2) Analysis of international and national projects or studies; and (3) Synthesis report.

Operational *research good practice* allows listing the innovative research methodologies which have been used and which may also be used in RuralJobs: What is new in the project in terms of its research approach and/or methodology? In what way are such approaches and/or methodologies appropriate to understand rural development issues?

Beyond the clear scope of reviewing and summarizing a series of projects related to rural employment, there seem to be mixed goals in terms of good practice. On one hand, the review of selected “*operational good practice*” is expected to illustrate and support decision-making in the field of rural employment and has a policy remit. On the other hand, “*research good practice*” intends to open the way to further research practice for RuralJobs. This report will thus integrate these two distinct components in its analysis of good practice.

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## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Indeed, each of these projects gives examples of good methodology of work that could be useful for our RuralJobs project; provides new pieces of information that further our knowledge on rural employment; and reveal several operational good practices on which to focus more closely and investigate their transferability to another context.

### **Brand new methods**

For the purpose of a *PhD Thesis on Human Resource Development in Agriculture*, a new system of indices was developed for qualification examinations. By using this system, the human resources of an organization could be evaluated on the basis of qualification, and the workforce staff of different qualifications could be compared.

The overall objective of the *SUPPLIERS* Project was to assist the sustainable development of small-scale food enterprises in lagging rural regions (LRRs) of the European Union and Poland through the development of new tools and models for supply/distribution chain integration leading to improved market accessibility and competitiveness.

In the *Hungarian Social Security System Project*, 20 small townships were examined in the course of research. When selecting these, the most determining aspects were unemployment and regional relations.

### **Forward-looking models and scenario foresight**

In the *IDARA Project*, there was some sector-modelling, which aimed to derive the effects (direction and value) of certain agricultural policy scenarios. In modelling the impact of adoption of the CAP, the Copenhagen agreement was used as a basis.

The *SUPPLIERS Project* developed new models of supply chain integration which assist market access and competitiveness whilst encouraging business growth, employment, value added generation and innovation amongst food producing Small and Middle enterprises (SMEs) in lagging rural regions. Twelve enterprises were selected for case study analysis. These were selected because of their success in regional, national and international markets through utilizing a range of supply chains. A number of best practices are highlighted in these case studies.

### **The labour market in rural areas**

The *RESTRIM Project* found that the willingness of the municipality and other actors to take risks in development strategies could be identified as significant. If local government can diversify its own activities, e.g. in the form of new networks, a more participative approach to both service provision and rural development could be envisaged more generally.

The *PhD Thesis on Human Resource Development in Agriculture* covers the problems of the job market directly. The need for a new type of manager and for the utilisation of qualified human resources can also be observed in agriculture. A new type of manager can negotiate, has good skills in establishing contacts; he is sensitive to problems, creative, and innovative. In this current situation of the agricultural sector, the efficient utilisation of human resources can be one of the outbreak points in the future.

*The Employment in the Non-Profit Sector Project* stated that mobility is mainly important from the aspect of social integration. In the social groups where the permanently unemployed congregate, employment is the only way out among the channels of mobility.

## SUMMARY

RURALJOBS must bring useful tools to decision makers. It is important to identify very practical processes, facilitate employment and create jobs. Each of these projects gives examples of exceptional methods of work that could be useful for our RuralJobs project. They provide new pieces of information that further our knowledge on rural employment and reveal some operational good practices on which to focus more closely and see their transferability to another context.

Networking holds a special place in these projects. Indeed, as shown above, in most of them, particularly in the European ones, networking of researchers and/or practitioners is the basis of the foundation of the project. The good practice issue will be detailed later in the same part as clustering since the objectives are quite the same; the aim of this part is to emphasize the way in which networking can help to improve research in rural employment.

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