

Reform of the Rural Development Policy in Slovenia – challenges and dilemmas

Cunder Tomaž*

Introduction:

Rural development policy is one of the key issues and priorities for Slovenia on its way to European Union. The Rural Development Plan (RDP), which will be prepared under the criteria of the EU legislation, comprises several measures, which are to be co-financed by the EU funds. They will contribute to environmentally, socially and economically sustainable development of rural areas in Slovenia.

The prepared paper briefly outlines theoretical arguments for introducing of EU comparable rural development policy and examines the implementation of different support measures in Slovenian agricultural policy. The objectives of the paper are:

- to analyse the principles of current rural development policy in Slovenia and to expose the crucial differences in corresponding policy support in Slovenia and EU,
- to carry out critical assessment (evaluation) of the proposed RDP for the period 2004 - 2006 with special emphasis on its consistency and reconciliation with identified needs, objectives and means,
- to point on possible consequences – positive or negative – of reformed policy on economical, social and environmental structure in Slovenia.

Material and Methods

The paper is based on desk research drawing from responsible literature, legislation documents and available research studies. Emphasis is given to the two turning policy reforms – 1998 Program of Agricultural Policy Reform in Slovenia and CAP Reform, which is currently discussed in EU. No modelling work was elaborated in the framework of the analyse. Critical evaluation is carried out in alignment with generally used and known policy evaluation techniques.

Results

A successful implementation of the Rural development programme in Slovenia depends of many items including administrative structure, provision of information, monitoring of progress, integration with other policy objectives and the financial resources available. Programme which is developed under EU comparable regulations have multiple objectives regarding environment and landscape. However, it also has some economic and social objectives, which often bring competition between different policy interests. The rural development objectives might not be fully achieved in case when measures are taken without sufficient coordination with other CAP measures. A careful monitoring effort - also by introducing rural development indicators, is needed to asses incentive payment schemes for their success in achieving of planning objectives and their effectiveness as policy instruments.

Discussion and conclusions

In order to revitalise and accelerate the economic and social development of rural areas in Slovenia, simultaneous and co-ordinated promotions of various support activities are needed. Measures, involved in Slovenian rural development programme, could be effectively implemented only in the situation(s) where the following policy aspects can be ensured:

^a Agricultural Institute of Slovenia, Department of Agricultural Economics, Hacquetova 17., SI – 1000 Ljubljana

* Corresponding author. Tel.: + 386 1 28 05 110; Fax: + 386 1 28 05 255

E-mail adress: tomaz.cunder@kis-h2.si

- further promotion of “side benefits” of agriculture in Slovene rural areas,
- complete integration of agriculture inside the current political system, programmes and occurrences,
- assurance of quality-environment as a basis for sustainable economic development,
- adoption of long-run agricultural, social, regional and ecological policies.

Key references:

Cunder, T. 1998. Kmetijstvo in ohranjanje poseljenosti v Sloveniji = Agriculture and preserving of settling pattern in Slovenia. V: RECNIK, Metka (ed.), VERBIC, Jože (ed.). Kmetijstvo in okolje = Agriculture and environment: zbornik posveta = proceedings of the conference, Bled, Kmetijski inštitut Slovenije (Agricultural Institute of Slovenia): 37 - 47,

Ilbery, B., Chiotti Q., Rickart, T. 1997. Agricultural restructuring and sustainability – a geographical perspective. Sustainable Rural Development, 3. Toronto: 279 – 329,

OECD. 2001. Multifunctionality – towards an analytical framework, Agriculture and Food: Paris: 27 – 56,

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES. Council Regulation (EC) No. 1257/1999 on support for rural development from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) and amending and repealing certain Regulations, Brussels