

The Impact of Socio-Economic Structure of Rural Population on Success of Rural Development Policy

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Project team

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Project background

- **The project objectives:**
 - To present the current state of the rural areas and RD policy in Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina;
 - To explore socio-economic characteristics of rural population;
 - To understand motivational factors and barriers of rural population to apply for RD support;
 - To understand motivational factors and barriers of rural population to take part in formal organisations; and
 - To understand the informal rural networks organisation and structure.
- **Project Focus: Farmer**
To contribute policy decision makers to increase the application and absorption of RD funds.

Objective and coverage

Understanding the motivational factors behind farmers decision to apply for RD support

Theory of Planned Behavior

Coverage:
Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina
Total sample size: 895

Social Capital Theory

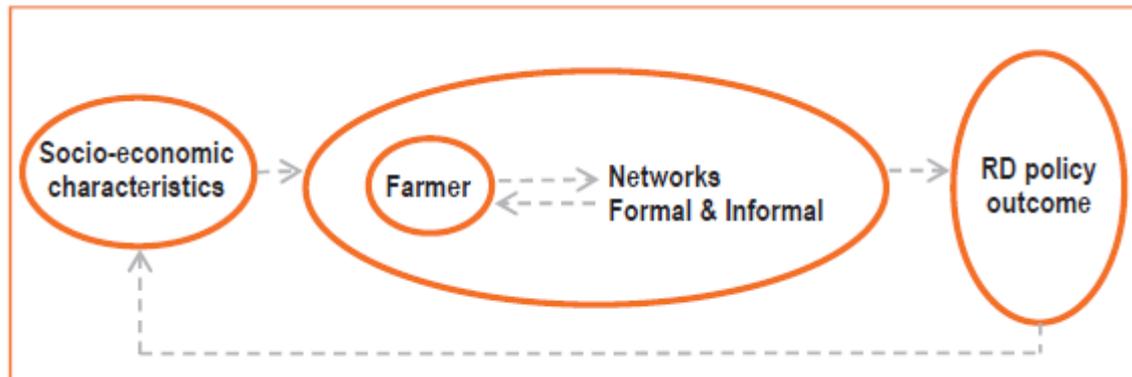
Each country \approx 300

Sub-regions in each country:
One with an active organizations
&
One without active organizations



Data and Method

- **Survey:** November-December 2014, face-to-face interviews
- **Questionnaire:** Three major blocks:
 - Evaluation of RD programs,
 - Networking,
 - Farmer and Household profile
- **Analysis:**
 - Behavioral approach: Multivariate techniques (with SPSS)
 - Networking approach: Social network analysis (with Ucinet and NetDraw)



Research results (1)

TPB - Farmers' intentions to apply for RD support are influenced by a) their attitude toward RDP, b) the importance of other people opinion, and c) their own perception of ease or difficulty to apply for support!

Attitudes towards RD support - Most farmers in all three countries positively assess the RD support for the development of the farms, as well as for projects of common interest.

- greater enthusiasm is shown with regard to the use of RD support to improve their own farms.
- The intention to apply correlates positively to almost all statements reflecting attitudes towards the use of RDP.

Subjective norms towards RD support - Farmers acknowledge the approval from family and important other people to apply for RD support

- In Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is mostly the farm manager that makes decisions individually on whether to apply for RD support. The respondents in Macedonia usually make such decisions in consultation with the family and with other people they respect.

Perceived behavioural control towards RD support - The personal ability of the farmer (perceived control over information, knowledge and experience to independently prepare the RD application and ability to finance RD investments) is generally assessed as an obstacle.

- The confidence of farmers to meet the requirements outlined in the RD measure applications significantly correlates with the intention for farmers to apply in the future in all three samples.

Research results (2)

Farmers membership structure

- In all three countries, farmers' membership rates are very low, which reflects a poor structure of official social interactions (networks) built on strong personal bonding ties with limited capabilities to support the development of bridging and linking social ties.
- The most prominent factors of low membership rates are:
 - a lack of active organisations that support social interactions, and accordingly, a lack of membership experience;
 - personal perception that membership is demanding;
 - a lack of information on organisations in general;
 - a lack of self-confidence; and
 - high perceptions of risk regarding business undertaking (low intention to invest).
- Reasons which are connected with personal affection, negative perception of benefits, and organisation management are much less pronounced with smaller variations across all three countries.
- Even the farmers who lack the willingness to join organisations find them useful, and a lack of organizations is perceived as a main obstacle to becoming a member.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions:

- *Rural areas and rural development policy*
- *Socio-economic characteristics of surveyed farmers*
- *Incentives and barriers to apply for RD support*
- *Membership in formal organisations*
- *Social network structure*

Recommendations:

- *Farmer driven approach*
- *Institutional driven approach*
- *Policy driven approach*
- *Contribution and future application*

More information:

Monograph:



Policy briefs:

Recommendations for
Enhancing the Rural
Development Policy in

- Macedonia
- Serbia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina

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