

POSSIBILITIES OF APPLICATIONS OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

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Abstract. *The problem researched in this paper refers to the possibilities of applications of the rural development programs in the framework of the regional development programs and regional policy. Namely, the rural areas are one of resources of a given region, its potential or limitation, and therefore actively participate in the process of endogen development of the region, and the reactivation of its developmental potential. The village restoration program is thus considered a plan element, of the integrated approach to the spatial planning, defined at a national and operationalized at a regional and a local level as a means of more regular and endogenously based regional and rural development.*

Key words: *rural development program, spatial planning, regional policy.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The rural areas can differ very much in terms of contents, size and quality, but the degradation of villages and rural areas is identified as a global problem, so it is understandable that the approaches to, and dilemmas about, how to regulate the development of rural areas and how to treat it in theory and practice, are very numerous and topical. During the recent years, in the professional and social milieu there is an opinion that the problem of village and rural areas development can be adequately regulated within the regional development through the integrated planning and programming approach with a paradigm of sustainable development as a starting point. Such opinion ensures that by the mutual modification of two traditional approaches – regional/spatial planning and environment protection, the problem of rural areas is treated integrally and in multiple sectors, through the treatment of environmental, economic, social and spatial development aspects. Directing and regulating the rural development can be more efficiently conducted in the framework of the regional policy under the spatial planning as a top mechanism of total social development regulation.

Under this term, spatial planning, one does not mean of the comprehensive planning, which was present in the 60s, but a "new" strategic planning based on the integrated, hybrid planning approach combining the traditional regional concepts from the 80s and the new approaches based on the concept of the sustainable development and environmental component of the development. The changes occurring the last twenty years, which shift the planning in the favor of the proactive approach, in the developed countries primarily, resulted in the recovery of the shaken legitimacy of the spatial planning in the system of social regulation of development, that is, they resulted in its regeneration.

In the framework of these changes, the placing of the development programs and projects in the strategic boundaries of the spatial/regional and town planning has been progressively increasing, that is, a shift towards a program oriented development is obvious. Projects, and programs, become an important instrument for directing development, and the strategic development frame in whose scope the programs and projects are formed and conducted, become equally important as well. It needs to be said that as for the program orientation, the opinions are divided – on one hand, the realization of the development programs and projects is the only and final purpose of planning (The Netherlands, Japan), and on the other hand it is viewed as a risk to reduce planning only to a mere preparation and conducting of the programs and projects.

2. THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY ROLE

In the context of redefining the mechanisms of social regulation of development, the experience of many countries confirmed that the regional, "medium" level of planning and management is necessary for the legitimate and efficient directing of the development and public enterprises management, since the nature of the certain development problems always requires intervention at the levels between the central one and the local ones. The regional planning, which, in the past, had primarily political and social motivation, in the majority of developed countries gets in addition a developmental and economic dimension and evolves into a new approach to the total social-economic and spatial development. The "new" regional development policy, combines two components – development and regional, so along this lines, it is treated in two ways, as a (1) new approach to the development of the national economy based on the regulation principle ("regional increase of the economic activities leads to the growth of national economy as a whole: and a (2) the new approach to the regional development with the increasingly wider development influences on the total social and the spatial development. The opportunities for the new regional system lie in the advantages it provides as a development regulating mechanism, the advantages being: (1) solution of the development problems whose nature requires intervention at a medium level (bringing together the problem and the means to solve it); integration of the spatial planning and the economic policy at a regional level (so-called spatial efficient sector planning"); (3) integration of environment protection policy, in the framework of the regional interventions; (4) integration of rural development; (5) more efficient planning and management interventions and allocations of finances and (6) higher motivation of the local population to participate in the development initiatives.

In the light of the previously mentioned possibilities of regional planning, and in respect to the treatment and the role of the rural development, the following relations are significant:

- (1) The regional policy supports rural policy
- (2) the regional planning represents the most favorable mechanism for rural development regulation.
- (3) Region (or subregion) represent the most natural spatial and operative level for regulations of village and rural area development and implementation of development programs.

3. POSSIBILITIES OF APPLICATIONS OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The basic assumption is that the rural development programs are defined and realized in the framework of the regional development programs and regional policy since the rural areas are one of resources of a given region, its potential or limitation, and therefore actively participate in the process of endogenic development of the region, and the reactivation of its developmental potential.

The village restoration program is thus considered a plan element, of the integrated approach to the spatial planning, defined at a national and operationalized at a regional and a local level as a means of more regular and endogenously based regional and rural development.

The rural development programs, apart from the systems of the regional development programs, can be found at other spatial levels – as large regional development program initiatives and projects (EU programs), national and regional rural development policy and the programs ("Plans d'aménagement rural" in France, "For mountain areas" in Great Britain, "Dorferneuerung" in Germany etc.) and the programs of the rural development of a community (municipality). The national and regional programs of rural development are the most frequent form of the «vertical» development program – they define the goals, development strategies, development priorities and measures at the national and regional level, for various types of the areas which are defined as rural and which require a special treatment (for example, distant rural areas, border rural areas, mountainous rural areas, rural areas in the proximity of rural centers and similar).

On the other hand, the regional development program as a developmental-planning document of an administrative (statistical, planned) region, defines the position, significance and directions of rural development in respect to the structural characteristics – the type of the region and the rural area belonging to it, which may be diverse in character (in one region, for example those can be economically integrated rural areas, and the central and distant rural areas). In this way, the village restoration program, as a subprogram of the regional development program represents one aspect of the «horizontal» rural development program adapted to the regional conditions. By application of this model, the rural restoration program and the national (regional) rural development programs mutually support each other in this way, and the differences result from the administrative model – while the measures in the national and the regional programs of the rural development concern all the areas, and are general in character, the measures in the framework of the village restoration program relate to the concrete areas within a region. The connected-

ness of the measures and the compatibility of the programs can be achieved in the preparation phase, through joint planning and various forms of coordination.

If the managing and governing models of regional and rural policy are considered, significant differences can be noted, for each individual country, that is, for various regions in the extensively decentralized countries. IN the countries with the developed regional and rural policy, the rural areas development occur as a priority almost in all the national and regional plans and programs of development, but its importance, position and especially the development measures and predicted finances are very different, and, apart from the institutional and systemic frameworks and terms, primarily depend on: (1) the type and structure of a region; (2) regional development priorities and (3) type and structure of the rural areas. Yet, irrespective of the differences, the general goal of rural development can be defined as the increase of the quality of life I the rural areas through the preservation, improvement and the sustainable development of their economic, environmental, social and cultural vitality, both in order to revitalize the rural area itself, and to develop the whole region. One of the ways of realization of this goal is creation of the conditions that would make the qualities of the rural area its basic competitive advantages at a regional and/or national level, through the development strategy, program measures and activities.

As it is the case with other policies of economic development, the policies of the rural development comprise two opposing strategic approaches to the vision of the future of rural areas – the first is based on correlation with the internally oriented strategy – inward-looking strategy, and on the attitude that the rural world has its own capacities to enliven itself. The activities are mostly directed towards the improvement of the quality of life and the training of the local population, mobilization of the local community, creation of new jobs and similar (the characteristic example for Denmark, Belgium, Luxembourg, and northern regions of Italy. The other approach is externally oriented – outward-looking strategy, and the focus is on modernization. It is most frequently realized in the form of the economic development programs of the tertiary (tourism, development and promotion of the cultural heritage, information technologies) or primary activities (agriculture, food processing industry, fishing), that is, artisanship development programs or improvement of farming products quality (dominant agricultural regions in Spain, Mezzogiorno in Italy, Arctic region in Finland).

Many practical experiences of the countries with the program orientation demonstrate that the territorial development strategy, based on the integral approach applied in the process of activation of the territorial advantages is a good way to keep the effects and quality of the planning and program activities in the rural area and the region to which this area belongs. The systematic vision of the whole is the key element of the territorial strategy. Depending on the types, that is structural characteristics of the area, the application of the following program strategies is recommended:

- Complementarity strategies – for consolidated rural areas, where there already exist the results of program activities;
- Diversification and consolidation strategies – for the developed rural areas, as a support to the new "production lines" in the sector which is already dominant;
- Recovery and restoration strategies – restructuring of a rural area and formation of the basis for the territorial development strategy;

- Rebalancing strategies – for the rural areas with social and spatial imbalance;
- Promotional strategies – for the areas with high structural and demographic problems in the first phases of the program activities.

It is also characteristic that an increasing number of countries and regions tend to apply the development pattern based on the model of a "general product" instead of the unitary economy structure model while developing the economic activities. This model is a synthetic expression of a product characteristic for a territory, which directly generates a product family, and indirectly many activities which comprise a part or which constitute these products, (so called production "chain"). Also, a model of the "open system is rising, as it is based on the communication and networking of the rural areas at a regional, national and transnational level, and on the various forms of rural-urban partnership (Japan and developed EU members).

The structure of the village restoration program is defined by the methodology of production of a regional development program. Basically, any program, and thus both regional and the rural development program, has two parts – strategic and practical part. The strategic part determines the content of the program – key issues, area analysis, development vision and strategic goals, strategic priorities and contents of programs and subprograms. The practical part functionally determines the goals, participants, financial plan, time period, geographical area, projects et cetera. The structure of the village restoration program generally consists of four parts: (1) basic goals and action fields; (2) area analysis (SWOT analysis) – territorial profile of the area, (3) development priorities and measures; (4) implementation mechanisms (participants, program period, finances).

The problems occurring in relation to the application of the village restoration program at a regional scale, are a result of various factors, different in nature and character. The first group contains the factors from the domain of an institutional context and treatment of a regional development and planning itself (1), the other are related to the methodology and the very preparation and production process of the regional and rural development program (2), while the third are related to the program implementation and monitoring process (3). Ex ante evaluation of the regional development programs and rural development programs points at the key problems which may occur in the process of their preparation, and which mostly result from the ill coordination of the program and its parts. The problems are as follows: the wide scope of the programs without the clearly set priorities, absence of the common vision and the priorities of the region development; too many strategic and operative goals and insufficient commitment of the majority of goals; large number of the local projects which are not directed towards the structural changes at a regional and interregional level, by which the regional development plan loses its importance as a regional document; dispersion and inefficient spatial and sector allocation of the finances; application of numerous and immeasurable indicators; lack of organizational structure and professional personnel for preparation and production of the programs and projects; and, eventually, the unfeasibility, that is, the over ambitious financial structure required for the realization of the predicted program and project activities. The recommendations for the program preparation and production processes, intended both for the subjects engaged at their production and for the representatives of the local and regional authorities, are concerned with the adjustment of the internal parts of the program and their logical interlinking.

The success of the preparation and the production of the programs, and especially the development programs, is conditioned mainly by the organization of the developmental action, especially a relationship between the professionals and the local "players" in the program process. Even though each program is unique, because it refers to a concrete time and space, so the experience cannot be transferred directly, it is yet possible to define several fundamental connections and principles of program participants cooperation. Thus the relations between the principles about the consideration towards the resource/cultural heritage and the local entrepreneurship principle at a local level direct towards the various forms of local subjects partnerships (private producers, firms, NGOs and local self government organs). At a subregional and the regional level, the partners are primarily the state government and the experts, who, as a less "biased" participants prepare analyses and propose the developmental guidelines for the local communities. The role of the experts is primarily to define and analyze the development problems and priorities, form and direct the potential proposals for the improvement of the quality of living, present the possible professional solutions, and to permanently and in a comprehensible way inform the population about its potential, successful and less successful realizations of the program.

The foreign experience, and in one part the national one, indicate that the role of the local/rural population is of a great importance in the preparation of the programs and projects at a local and subregional level. The local population knows best its problems and needs, and their active participation in the preparation is a guarantee of a greater engagement in the realization of the program activities. Because of that, very often, in the initial phases of the program action, one of the main activities is actually the promotion and education of the population and various techniques of aid in preparation of the program. There one must expect the different motives and variable degree of motivation of the village population for (not) participating in the program and project activities.

4. CONCLUSION

The regional and rural development programs are new to the planning practice of Serbia. The potential of their application depends on the way of solving the topical problems which are institutional, economic and planning in nature. Generally speaking, the predictions indicate that in the present conditions, the application and the realization of the policy of more balanced regional development of Serbia, let alone the rural development policy, are highly uncertain. It is not yet clear, and there is a running dispute in the professional circles, how many regions constitute Serbia and which regions these might be. There is also a dilemma about the definition of the rural areas. Neither all the important system preconditions are present, such as: the general strategy of social-economic development at a national level; main national goals and instruments aimed at resolving the regional problems; institutions which will realize them; mechanisms of directing/stimulating and limiting the development; system for coordinated financing and stimulating the construction and allocating the public services and investments; system of selection and evaluation of the projects; establishing the structural development funds and specialized financial institutions etc. Yet the reasons such as: (1) topicality of the problem and the social need for the preparation and development of the appropriate planning activities in order to regulate the future development; (2) strengthening of the role of the strategic spatial

planning; (3) stronger integral approach in planning; (4) conditioning of the integration process through the application of the program based planning instruments and (5) stronger trend/efficiency of the program oriented planning activities, provide a sufficient legitimacy to this kind of research. In the case when there is no clearly defined national policy of regional and rural development, these programs can be of extreme importance for the development of the rural areas, and of an initial importance for forming the rural and regional development policies in the national limits.

The following institutional, planning and organizational preconditions are proposed for the constituting the policy of regional and rural development, that is to create the potential to implement the village restoration program in the regional environment: (1) in respect to the regional division, the division into regions for the purpose of planning and development at the level of NUTS 3 statistic division is proposed; (2) in respect to the definition of the rural areas, the settlement based definition is proposed, that is the application of a definition which views the rural areas as those out of the functional influence area of cities; it is a shared opinion that the administrative based definition of a municipality with the population density less than 150 d/km² does not fit our demands; (3) in respect to the basic institutional infrastructure, it is proposed that the Council for Structural Policy of the National Agency for Regional Development be formed, as well as the Agency for Regional Development (for a group of regions); (4) in respect to the main development and planning documents, the production of a National Development program is proposed, along with the Regional Development Strategy, Regional Development programs (documents which are anyway obligatory in the joining process) Sector Development programs and Joint Development Program.

If the management model is based on the two-stage division of responsibility: national-local, as it is currently the case in our country, the modification of the proposed model could go towards formulating village restoration program within the development and action plans and programs and planning document of municipalities, district or region which are defined for the purpose of research and/or planning. The programs would be coordinated with the national development strategy in a way which is possible through the current and proposed systems solutions. The influence of the program activities on the regional development would in this case be (im)measurable to the extent to which the development of a municipality or a district (does not) relate(s) to a form of regional division.

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MOGUĆNOSTI PRIMENE PROGRAMA RURALNOG RAZVOJA

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Problem koji se istražuje u ovom radu odnosi se na mogućnosti primene programa ruralnog razvoja u okviru regionalnih razvojnih programa i regionalne politike. Naime, budući da su ruralna područja jedan od resursa datog regiona, njegov potencijal i/ili ograničenje, pa stoga aktivno učestvuju u procesu endogenog razvoja regiona i (re)aktiviranja njegovih razvojnih mogućnosti.

Program obnove sela se tako smatra planskim elementom integrisanog pristupa prostornom planiranju, strateški definisan na nacionalnom, a operacionalizovan na regionalnom i lokalnom nivou kao sredstvo ravnomernijeg i endogeno zasnovanog regionalnog i ruralnog razvoja.