

STUDY ON KNOWLEDGE OF THE SITUATION OF MOUNTAIN AREAS IN ROMANIA AND OF THE POSSIBILITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE USE OF SPECIFIC STRUCTURAL FUNDS

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Abstract

The analysis of the Romanian mountain areas highlights the complexity of the monetary and ecological challenges confronted with the aid of mountain areas, characterized by means of problems in the use of agricultural land due to climatic, geological, and slope situations. Mountain areas are considered deprived, their ecological fragility requires specific improvement measures. The exodus of young human beings and the poverty, related to unsustainable aid exploitation, positioned extra pressure on those communities. The proposed study offers a case look at mountain regions in Romania, with a special cognizance of the European Union structural funds intended for the improvement of those regions between 2014 and 2020. This observation compares the effect of European structural finances on the development of Romania's mountain regions between 2014 and 2020, specializing in reading PNDR measures mainly carried out within the mountain areas. The unique measures that had been targeted for mountain regions at some point in that period, such as the finances allotted, the projects selected and shrunk, the bills made, and the consequences of those measures are mentioned within the take a look at. Specific examples and relevant character indicators are presented to guide the achievements in the improvement of mountain regions and applicable guidelines. The measures analyzed encompass investments in farms, the modernization of processing and marketing capacities, as well as support for small family farms. The study used monetary and bodily statistics to evaluate the effect of these measures, providing comparative analyses at country-wide and mountain-particular stages.

Keywords: *rural development, structural funds, mountain region, strategy*

INTRODUCTION

Romania's mountain areas cover approximately 30% of the overall territory of

the country and are prominent with the aid of a completely unique aggregate of natural and social factors. These regions hold

significant value for both biodiversity and Romania's cultural background. However, they face tremendous challenges, together with ecological vulnerability and severe economic boundaries, which have brought about an improved depopulation and a decline in conventional economic activities, including agriculture and cattle farming (Dumitru & Stefanescu, 2010; Mureșan & Cristea, 2011; UNDP, 2017).

Specifically, mountain areas are recognized for harsh climatic situations and tough terrain, with steep slopes and low soil fertility that drastically preclude agricultural activities (Boldor, Raianu, & Trifu, 1983; Alexandri & Luca, 2008). These factors increase manufacturing fees and restrict agricultural ability, making many activities in those areas economically unviable. Mountain agriculture is commonly subsistence-orientated, with small and very small farms, basically focused on animal husbandry and less on extensive agricultural production. For example, mountain farms average around 3.9 hectares, much smaller than farms in other EU regions, with lower productivity..

In addition to natural challenges, mountain regions face severe social and financial troubles, along with the outmigration of young people and a multiplied demographic decline (Sandu & Stoica, 2004; European Parliament, 2016). The active population in those regions has considerably reduced over a long time, as most young human beings migrate to city areas on the lookout for better employment possibilities and a better popular of living. This phenomenon ends in a getting old population and a loss of labor for traditional agricultural activities. Furthermore, poverty and limited access to adequate infrastructure remain chronic problems. Mountain communities have restricted access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and transportation, which contributes to increased poverty and exacerbates the isolation of these regions. In this context, the pressure on natural resources is intensifying, as their unsustainable

exploitation is, in many cases, one of the few available income sources.

To guide the development of these disadvantaged areas and encourage demographic stability, the European Union included mountain areas in the National Rural Development Program (PNDR) for 2014-2020, allocating widespread investment via the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). These budgets have been in general directed closer to supporting small and medium-sized farms, modernizing processing and marketing capacities for agricultural merchandise, and developing simple infrastructure.

Thus, rural development measures financed through the PNDR 2014-2020 sought to lessen the monetary hole among mountain areas and the rest of the us of a. A vital sub-measure, sM6.1, aimed to support the status quo of young farmers, encouraging younger generations to remain and paintings in these areas. Other sub-measures, along with sM4.1 (investments in bodily belongings) and sM4.2 (processing and advertising), contributed to productivity will increase and enhanced the competitiveness of mountain farms.

Although interventions from the 2014-2020 duration have contributed to improving living situations and improving the economic attractiveness of mountain areas, many challenges remain unresolved. Deficient infrastructure, confined markets that get rights of entry for agricultural products, and a loss of assorted financial opportunities are massive boundaries to the sustainable improvement of those areas. Additionally, economic guide policies need to include strict ecological measures, given the environmental fragility of mountain regions and the significance of preserving biodiversity.

In this context, the importance of an incorporated sustainable improvement method is vital for the future of Romania's mountain regions. In the long term, the success of aid measures will depend upon the authorities' capability to integrate rural improvement regulations with

environmental safety regulations and to stimulate investments inside the local financial system, developing stability among economic exploitation and natural useful resource conservation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study aims to evaluate the impact of European structural funds on the improvement of Romania's mountain regions between 2014 and 2020, focusing on the analysis of PNDR measures particularly carried out in those regions. A mixed method was carried out, incorporating quantitative analysis of financial and bodily records and a comparative approach between mountain areas and other Romanian regions. Data were gathered from legitimate resources, such as reviews from the Agency for Rural Investment Financing (AFIR) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR), which supplied distinctive records on funded initiatives and bills made (Popescu, 2018).

To replicate the diversity of assist measures, six PNDR sub-measures had been analyzed in element: sub-measure four.1 (investments in agricultural holdings), sub-measure 4.2 (processing and advertising), sub-measure 6.1 (assist for younger farmers' begin-ups), sub-degree 6.3 (development of small farms), sub-degree 7.2 (fundamental infrastructure modernization), and sub-degree 7.6 (cultural historical past conservation) (European Commission, 2013; Toma & Zahiu, 2010). The data analysis focused on key indicators, including the number of contracted projects, the total payments made, and the typology of beneficiaries. Financial records have been broken down by areas, assessing the differences among mountain regions and different areas

regarding the allocation and usage of funds (Figure 1).

Additionally, data were collected to have a look at the typology of beneficiaries in mountain regions, segmented into three major classes: younger farmers, small-owned family farms, and agricultural processors. The facts had been analyzed to apprehend the distribution of funds amongst these beneficiaries and the effect on the monetary and demographic balance of mountain areas. Figure 2 suggests the proportion distribution among these beneficiary types. The comparative technique covered an analysis of the once-a-year progression of payments, which turned into an assessment to decide the consistency and effectiveness of aid measure implementation over the years (Figure 3).

A descriptive evaluation was carried out to interpret the consequences, identifying key trends and variations in fund allocation. For example, Figure 1 on the distribution of budget allocated through sub-measures highlighted the investment priorities inside the mountain region, while the comparative evaluation with non-mountain areas found out regional variations in fund utilization (Figure 4). Statistical analysis was supplemented through graphical representations, together with bar charts and pie charts, which truly illustrated the proportions and trends found.

Through this system, the examination provides an in-depth angle on how European price ranges have been disbursed and applied in mountain areas, imparting concrete facts to support conclusions regarding the impact of rural improvement measures implemented in those regions.

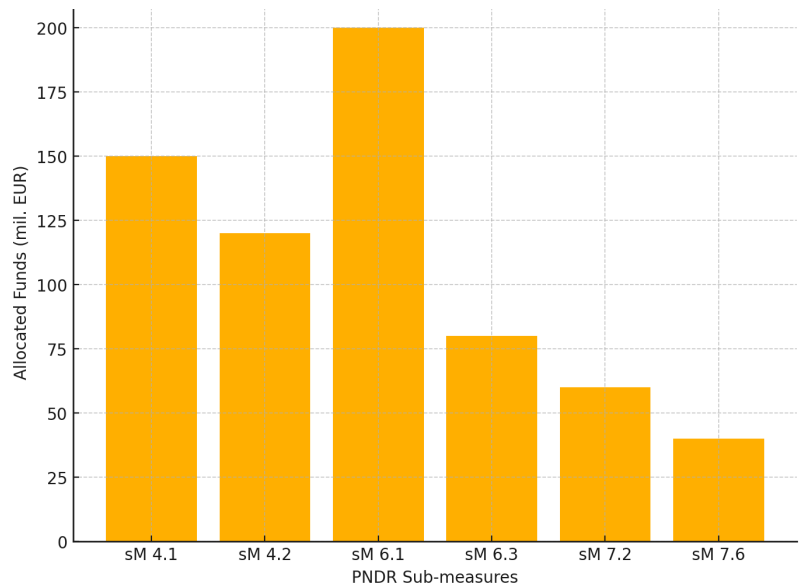


Figure 1. Distribution of funds allocated by sub-measures

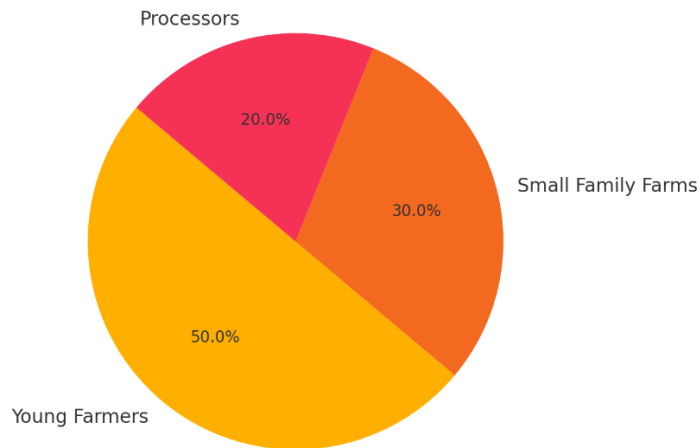


Figure 2. Percentage distribution of beneficiary types

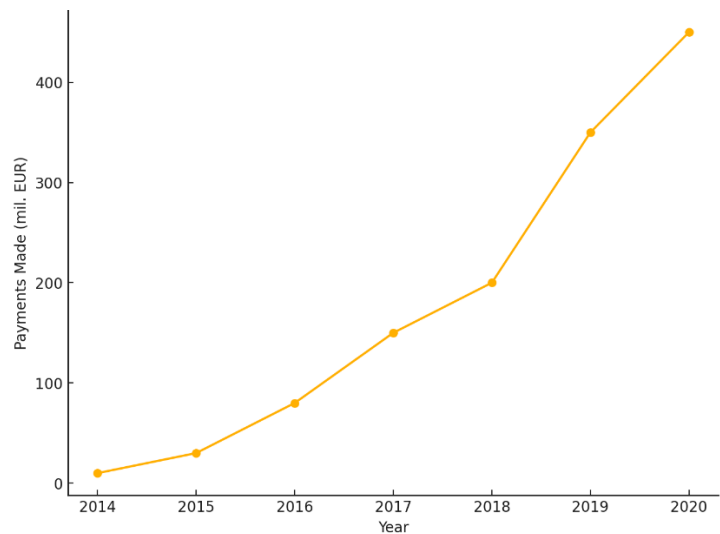


Figure 3. Annual progression of payments in mountain areas

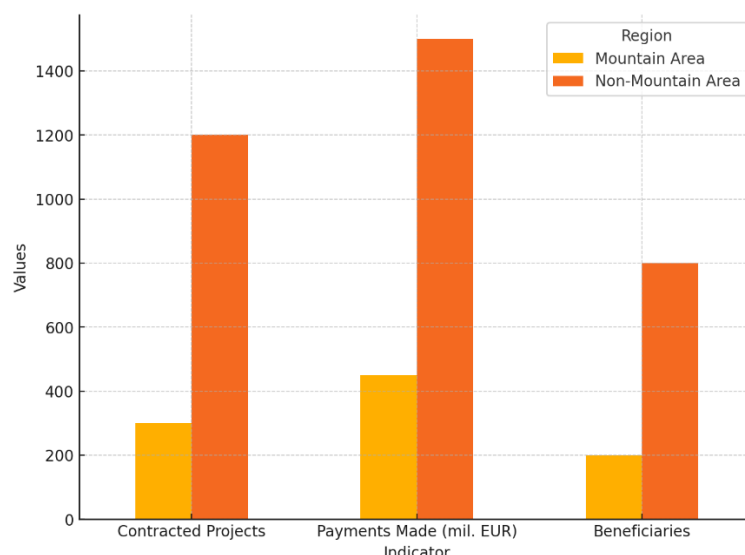


Figure 4. Comparative analysis between mountain and non-mountain areas

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study's findings reveal that the European structural budget provided through the National Rural Development Program (PNDR) between 2014 and 2020 has made a tremendous advantageous impact on Romania's mountain regions, particularly in selling socio-financial balance and improving agricultural productiveness (Guran & Ionescu, 2014; European Parliament, 2016). The centered sub-measures, specifically sM 6.1, which supports young farmers, and sM 6.3, which assists small family farms, have contributed to demographic balance by encouraging younger human beings to stay in or return to mountain areas (Ciolacu & Dragan, 2017). These initiatives have helped decrease depopulation trends by offering younger farmers essential resources to begin or enlarge their agricultural sports.

Infrastructure improvement has been another key outcome of those interventions. Investments facilitated with the aid of sub-measure sM 4.1 (investments in physical belongings) enabled upgrades in farm centers, device, and technological improvements, which

have without delay contributed to an increase in agricultural productivity (Diaconu & Iliescu, 2015; Stan, 2019). Sub-degree sM four.2, targeted processing, advertising, and marketing, have enabled mountain farmers to enhance the price-introduced potential of their merchandise, making it easier for them to attain a much broader market. This has improved the competitiveness of small farms and allowed nearby manufacturers to seize higher prices and expand their patron base, creating greater sustainable profit sources for mountain groups.

Additionally, the funding has supported simple infrastructure initiatives, specifically through sub-measures like sM 7.2, which financed road enhancements and important offerings. Improved infrastructure has facilitated less difficulty get admission to markets, assisting farmers in isolated regions to move goods greater effectively. This has been especially useful for perishable agricultural merchandise, permitting manufacturers to preserve product great and increase profitability. However, regardless of those effective effects, certain obstacles remain. The mountainous terrain and frequently

inadequate shipping infrastructure still make it tough for farmers to access larger markets or export opportunities (UNDP, 2017; Vlad & Bucur, 2020). Additionally, many small farmers face economic constraints that restrict their ability to fully enjoy the supplied assistance measures. While the budget have supplied a vital foundation, there is nevertheless a need for extra assets and initiatives geared toward expanding access to monetary help, especially for micro and small businesses operating in faraway mountain areas (Alexandri & Luca, 2008; Popescu, 2018). The evaluation suggests that future policies have to cope with these barriers by offering centered help to beautify the market get admission to and offer extra schooling packages to construct farmers' potential for sustainable agricultural practices. Developing more comprehensive rural infrastructure and improving digital connectivity can also assist mountain farmers have interacting with broader markets and combine into contemporary agricultural fee chains. Furthermore, considering the ecological sensitivity of mountain areas, ongoing assistance have to integrate environmental safety measures to make certain that development tasks do not compromise the biodiversity and specific landscapes of those areas.

In precis, while the 2014-2020 PNDR investment has laid a strong basis for monetary and social stability in Romania's mountain regions, persevered funding and coverage modifications are essential to overcoming final demanding situations and ensuring long-time period sustainability in these areas. The effects underscore the significance of a balanced method that combines financial improvement with environmental conservation to foster

resilient mountain communities in Romania.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis shows that the National Rural Development Program (PNDR) price range for 2014-2020 have definitely encouraged Romania's mountain regions, helping to improve monetary situations and support demographic balance (Toma & Zahiu, 2010; Dumitru & Stefanescu, 2010). Through centered sub-measures for younger farmers, a small circle of relatives farms, and infrastructure improvement, the funding has contributed to elevated productiveness, and superior market access, and recommended more youthful generations to settle in these regions. Despite those achievements, challenges remain, especially concerning infrastructure and marketplace accessibility, which avert the overall monetary integration of those areas (European Commission, 2013; Boldor, Raianu, & Trifu, 1983).

For sustained progress, destiny regulations should prioritize additional aid for infrastructure and increase financial get right of entry to for small farmers in mountain regions. Integrating environmental conservation measures can also be vital to maintaining the ecological integrity of those areas. Overall, a balanced approach that mixes financial support with environmental sustainability is important to fostering long-term resilience and growth in Romania's mountain communities.

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