

CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR THE REALIZATION OF SWOT ANALYSIS TO ELABORATE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

C. PAVELIUC-OLARIU¹

¹University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary
Medicine, Iasi
e-mail: codrin.po@gmail.com

This paper aims to present the ways of making SWOT analysis using quantitative and qualitative models and establishing the optimal development strategies of rural settlements in the North – East region of Romania, previously used to establish strategies within organizations. This represents an adaptation of this approach to another area of activity. Stratification criteria were established for the general domains at the level of all rural settlements in this development region (trade and catering, agriculture, living conditions, rural infrastructure, access to basic services, public order and safety, constructions, administration and civil society and others) that were then classified, according to actual needs of local communities, into areas of expertise. This conceptual model can be applied to the entire North – East development region, being built on data collected from 6 different counties (Botosani, Iasi, Vaslui, Bacau, Neamt, Suceava). Based on the stratification criteria of the domains encountered in the rural villages of the North – East region, a division and classification of the durable rural development strategies of local communities has been realized according to the opportunities and threats presented by their external environment and by their strengths and weaknesses. By virtue of these characteristics determined by the quantitative and qualitative models of the SWOT analysis, we will have four types of strategies that can be used. It has been discovered that the majority of local communities' present characteristics that do not allow the application of only one type of strategy, but that can generate various combinations between the four types of achieving them. It results then a customization of the conceptual model of realizing the local development strategies according to local conditions. However there is a preponderance of one of the four types of strategies (SO, ST, WO, WT).

Key words: SWOT, analysis, development, strategy, potential.

The rural space in Romania represents an essential component of the general evolution of the economy. Three key resources give a true dimension to the necessity of agricultural restructuring and durable rural development: usable agricultural area (14,8 mil. ha), agricultural workforce (3,5 millions) and the total area of the rural space (90% of the country's surface). Romania must adopt rural policies that should comprise elements of acceleration of the compatibilization process.

In this context, the present paper proposes establishing the analysis methods utilised presently by the local authorities in the North – East Region for realising and implementing local development strategies on a short, medium and long term basis, as well as improving this method to increase organizational efficiency.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

To analyse the impact that the utilised method has over the final result, a synthesis of the literature data has been realized. In the second phase of the research project, a series of programmes and projects were taken into study, as long as the rural development strategies of the rural communities, emphasizing the action areas established, as well as implementation conditions of the established actions through which wants their implementation. The management method used primarily was the comparison, seconded by the PEST analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

On a regional scale, the established objectives are those that have as a primary purpose the permanent improvement of the quality of life in the rural areas through: economic increase and the increase of the job offer, the diversification of economic activities in the rural space, encouraging entrepreneurial initiatives in the rural environment and supporting them, encouraging succesful environmental initiatives, promoting teritorial equilibrium, constructing the capacity for local partnerships, promoting the aquisition of skills that might help mobilize the local potential, encouraging privat-public partnerships, promoting cooperation and innovation, the improvement of local administrations through the introduction of new technologies, the diversification of services in rural economy offered to agricultural entrepreneurs, improving basic services, the capitalization of the cultural, architectural and natural heritage for increasing the the atractivity and the quality of life in the rural environment.

The North-East Development Region, from which the research area is a part, is characterised by the lack of diversification of economic activities, which determines excessive dependency on agriculture, reduce economic efficiency of agricultural activities, operating defectively of the land fund and of the capitalization of agricultural products.

In this area, there area disparities between rural areas, subregions in which the poverty is more accentuated or there are milder forms (*table 1*).

Table1

The average poverty index^{x1}. The rural community, on development subregions

Development Region	Rural development subregions ^{xx)}	Average community poverty index
Nord - Est	1. Suceava, Neamț, Bacău	14.24
	2. Iași, Botoșani, Vaslui	19.38

^{x1)} The index is constituted as a factorial score from the infantile mortality rate, emigrations, general fertility;

^{xx)} The subregion index has been calculated a weighted average of the composite poverty index at a village level, the average being the village population;

Source: *Analiza Dezvoltarii Rurale in Romania, 1999.*

In the study „Accesul autorităților locale la fondurile europene” realised by 2009 by the Soros Foundation Romania, we find the main problems that the local public administrations of rural communities in the North-East Region considered as being an impediment in the way of development:

1. the lack of poor state of water networks;
2. the lack or poor state of sewage systems or treatment plants;
3. the lack or poor state of other networks (gas, electricity etc.);
4. the lack or poor state of roads and other big infrastructure works (bridges, dams, restored sides etc.) ;
5. environmental problems and waste management;
6. social – cultural problems;
7. other problems. Examples: cadastral issues, the undercapitalization of the economic potential, the insufficient staff in mayors offices etc.;

These problems have been identified through polls at the level of local communities in the rural space, the most frequent way of expressing the development deficiencies of rural communities being the **SWOT analysis**.

To exemplify the usage of this method, the action area of the SWOT analysis realised in the „Mogosesti-Siret Village, Iasi County Local Development Strategy” has been presented:

- Economic development;
- Work places;
- Standard of living ;
- Housing;
- Road infrastructure;
- Water and sewage infrastructure;
- Gas distribution infrastructure;
- Electricity and public lighting infrastructure;
- Health care assistance infrastructure;
- School infrastructure;
- Public services;
- Basis and entertainment areas;
- Local tourism and external and internal partnership relations.

As it can be seen, the approach of this local development strategy is one that doesn't take into account the observations realized on site for the creation of the Mogosesti-Siret village strategy. From the structure of the presented action area, it can be observed a classic structure that contains areas on which can be acted to obtain a short term fix of the quality of life of the rural population, not taking into account the medium and long term objectives.

In comparison, in the «Socio-economic development strategy of the Mircesti village, Iasi county» the SWOT analysis has been replaced, in an experimental purpose, by an analysis that shows the development potential of the local community. This analysis was fundamented by a public opinion surveying about the development potential of the local population in the village and, also, about the needs of their community. This survey was completed by rural population along

with decision factors in public institutions, local businesses, NGOs' and others. Thus, the following action areas have been defined (tabel 2):

Table 2

Action areas in the development potential analysis– Mircesti village, Iasi county

Action area	Sector
I. SOCIAL	CULTURE AND TRADITIONS
	ART
	EDUCATION
	SOCIAL SERVICES
	HEALTH
	PUBLIC SAFETY
	LIVING CONDITIONS
II. ECONOMIC	INDUSTRY
	AGRICULTURE
	SILVICULTURE
	COMMERCE AND FOOD SERVICES
	SERVICES
	(AGRO)TURISM
	CONSTRUCTIONS
III. URBANISM	LAND MANAGEMENT
	PUG AND PUZ
	LAND IMPROVEMENT
IV. ENVIRONMENT	ENVIRONMENT QUALITY(QUALITY,AIR,SOIL)
	HUMAN HEALTH PROTECTION
	DURABLE NATURAL RESOURCES UTILIZATION
	INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT
V. INFRASTRUCTURE	TEHNICO-EDILITARY
	ENERGETICS
	GREEN AREAS
	LAND STABILIZATION
	PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK
	ADMINISTRATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Source: *Strategia de dezvoltare economico-sociala a comunei Mircesti, judetul Iasi, 2009*

As it can be seen in *table 3*, the development potential analysis realized in the Mircesti village case comprises a larger number of action areas than the SWOT analysis presented previously, its purposes being of emphasizing the development needs of the community, as well as the resources that it has/ will have in order to respond to these needs. For each sector fo the action areas, the following aspects have been analyzed.

Table 3

The development potential analysis- model

Existent resources	Human resources	-
	Material resources	-
	Other forms	-
Needs:		-
Ways of achieving	Material	-
	Financial	-
	Human	-
Observations		-

In comparison, in the development potential analysis, over the SWOT analysis, in its preparation methodology, the necessity of realizing a documentation-informing phase on site for a correct analysis of local conditions and a good previsioning of the ways of achieving that will be mentioned later is mandatory. The necessities will be identified just following a thorough field analysis and a public opinion surveying stage because statistical documents that can be made available to consultant in durable rural development don't always present correctly and completely the needs of the local community, the potential available, as well as the motivation regarding the participation in the community development objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

The rural space is defined as being the surface in which the population density/km² is smaller than 150 inhabitants/ km², according to the definitions of the rural space, based on the methodology of the Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development (OCDE).

The realization and implementation of the local development strategy in an organized and continuous manor, based on a well realized model, can lead, in a time horizon of 10 years to a rural space development that can be quantified through removing development disparities present at this time both between the localities of the North-East Development Region counties, as well as between these and those in the other 7 development regions.

The development potential analysis present, as its main advantages, the high degree of accuracy of the collected data in the local community and, implicitly, of the final results, the identification of all the involved factors in the decision-making process at the level of every territorial-administrative unit and, also, of the resources that are or will be available for the implication the socio-economic development process, despite their type. As a disadvantage, it can be mentioned the longer duration for its preparation (due to the field collection stages) and the relative high costs.

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