

Rural Policy Coordination in Slovenia

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In **Slovenia**, there is **rather limited tradition of rural development measures** like those of Rural Development Programme (RDP) Axis 3 pertaining to entrepreneurship activities and quality of life in rural areas. Moreover, in these respects, the problems and needs of Slovenian rural areas are wide-ranging, beyond the scope of RDP measures. Therefore, development and coordination of policy actions among institutions and stakeholders involved in rural development is needed, both vertically and horizontally.

Coordination and integration of RDP with other similar programmes, particularly the Operational Programme of Regional Development (OP RD), does not yet function very well. Various measures are strictly delineated between these two programmes, which leads to potential exclusion of beneficiaries (especially those lacking initial capital, e.g. to start a new business). On the local level of policy implementation, there is much demand for integration, and actually overlaps occur between measures of these two programmes and from different funds as a consequence of the intermeshing of rural and regional development issues.



Case-study material shows that the theoretical potential for synergies through coordination mechanisms at the level of national strategic documents are still difficult to realize in practice at the territorial level and for individual RDP measures. Arbitrary exclusion mechanisms regarding rural activities are appear to be more serious than overlap problems between the various financial mechanisms. Analysis reveals some critical factors that explain the (lack of) synergies between multi-level and multi-framework rural policy delivery: weak information flow among different governmental bodies (e.g. the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Food, and the Governmental Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy), lack of social capital in the region, and unclear operational rules of Local Action Groups.



Institutional learning challenges

- More active role of representatives of various governmental sectors in rural development formation and implementation
- Better communications (transmission of information) between bottom- and upper-level stakeholders
- More flexible and tailor-made measures to encourage new businesses in the countryside

Policy recommendations

Future rural policy should be more integrated and coordinated; implemented through a single system supported by various governmental sectors and designed more under the horizontal principle.