

ASPECTS REGARDING THE EFFICIENCY OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT WITHIN AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

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***Abstract:** Project management facilitates the integration of innovations and emerging technologies into agricultural practices, enabling their testing and implementation to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the agricultural sector. A crucial part of this process is the constant monitoring and evaluation of progress, using performance indicators and other evaluation tools to identify and solve problems in a timely manner and to adjust strategies in accordance with established objectives. In the context of concerns related to climate change and the conservation of natural resources, the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices is increasingly important, and project management can play a key role in this direction, protecting the environment and promoting the well-being of local communities. For Romania's rural development, it is crucial to optimize the impact of European funds through their proper management, and project management proves to be an essential tool for increasing the efficiency, sustainability and competitiveness of agriculture in the contemporary context.*

***Keywords:** project management, agricultural enterprises, efficiency.*

***JEL classification:** M15, O15.*

1. Introduction

In the contemporary era, where climate change, population growth and pressure on natural resources are becoming more acute, agriculture is facing unprecedented challenges. In this context, project management becomes an essential tool to deal with the complexity and dynamics of the agricultural sector. Project management in agriculture is a strategic and systematic approach to planning, implementing and monitoring agricultural activities with the aim of achieving precise objectives within a defined timeframe and resources. Its importance is reflected in several crucial aspects. An agricultural project can involve a variety of resources, including land, labor, water, agricultural inputs, etc. Project management allows rigorous planning of these resources so that they are used efficiently and sustainably, avoiding waste and optimizing results. Agriculture is exposed to risks and uncertainties, such as unpredictable weather conditions, market changes or technical problems. By implementing proper project management, these risks can be proactively identified, assessed and managed, reducing their impact on production and profitability.

Project management facilitates the integration of innovations and emerging technologies into agricultural practices. Projects can be designed to test and implement new technologies, cultivation methods or sustainable practices, contributing to improving the efficiency and competitiveness of the agricultural sector. An essential aspect of project management is the constant monitoring and evaluation of progress. Through the use of performance indicators and other evaluation tools, it is possible to follow the evolution of the project in real time, promptly identifying problems and adjusting strategies to achieve the proposed objectives. Sustainable agriculture is becoming increasingly important in the context of concerns related to climate change and the conservation of natural resources. Project management can be used to promote sustainable agricultural practices, protecting the environment and ensuring the well-being of local communities.

2. Project management – conceptual framework

A project is characterized by dedicated resources, by a single point of responsibility, by clear limits within which the resources and results can fit, of a limited duration; the project is a useful way of organizing work; projects do not appear without deliberate intervention;

A deeper analysis in the field allows us to find that several people questioned to define the term "project", at the beginning of training courses in the field of project management, suggested various answers:

- promoting an idea, structuring a series of ideas, agreeing various proposals (action plans);
- to visualize, plan and define the course of a desired action to reach a specific future situation;
- to describe, at a given moment and in a given situation, the process of a change that must be initiated in order to create a new situation at a given moment in the future;
- process that involves the construction of a global program, taking into account the various aspects of a situation, in order to reach another situation;
- a desired, a process, a tool that can be used for its future planning, for establishing goals and objectives; a successful project is first and foremost that project that has achieved its predetermined objectives and that has produced a change for the better in the community where it was implemented.

The use of these standard concepts, tools and documents covering the entire existence of a project is sometimes seen as an "integrated approach" to managing the project cycle.

For a better understanding, we must differentiate between the notion of process and the notion of project. The process represents the normal, day-to-day activities of an organization.

The project represents the activities outside the routine activities, something done in addition to the usual day-to-day work. Of course, in certain fields (construction, scientific research or the development of computer programs), normal, day-to-day work is done on projects.

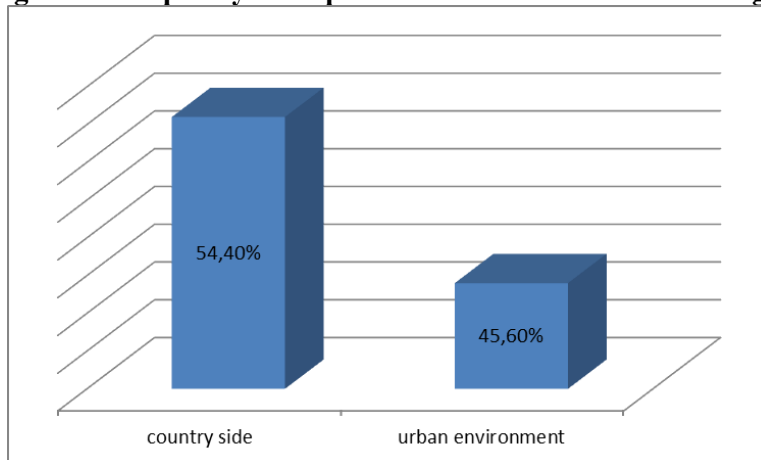
3. Research methodology

This research approach focuses on the impact of project management on the performance of agricultural enterprises. The general objective is based on the thematic-applicative study of project management in order to improve the efficiency of project management at the level of agricultural enterprises. The questionnaire was distributed to 206 respondents.

The results of the study are highlighted in the following graphs.

The question in the questionnaire about the respondents' place of origin shows that 54.4% of respondents come from the rural area and 45.6% from the urban area. (figure 1)

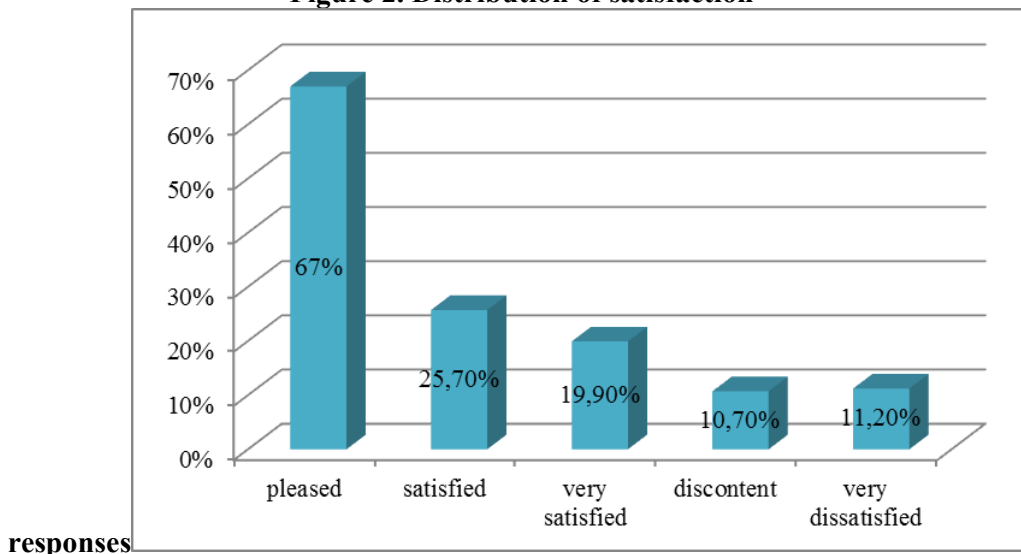
Figure 1. Frequency of responses for the environment of origin



Source: authored based on data interpretation

Regarding the degree of satisfaction of the respondents in relation to financial-banking institutions for supporting projects with non-reimbursable financing, the majority of 67% declare themselves satisfied, while 25.7% are satisfied, 19.9% are very satisfied, 10, 7% are dissatisfied and 11.2% declare themselves very dissatisfied. (figure 2)

Figure 2. Distribution of satisfaction



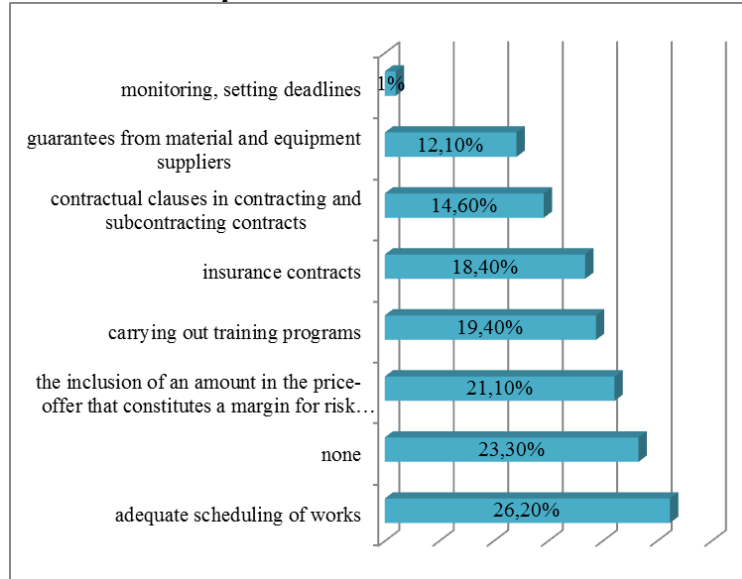
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Regarding the methods of preventing, reducing or eliminating the risks associated with the projects used in the organization of which the respondents are a part, the results of the multiple variants demonstrate the following:

- 26.2% chose the appropriate scheduling of the works
- 23.3% chose the option "none"
- 21.1% opted for the inclusion of an amount in the offer price that would constitute a margin for risk coverage
- 19.4% ticked the realization of training programs
- 18.4% opted for insurance contracts

- 14.6% chose contractual clauses in joint venture and subcontract contracts
- 12.1% checked guarantees from material and equipment suppliers
- 1% opted for: monitoring, setting deadlines

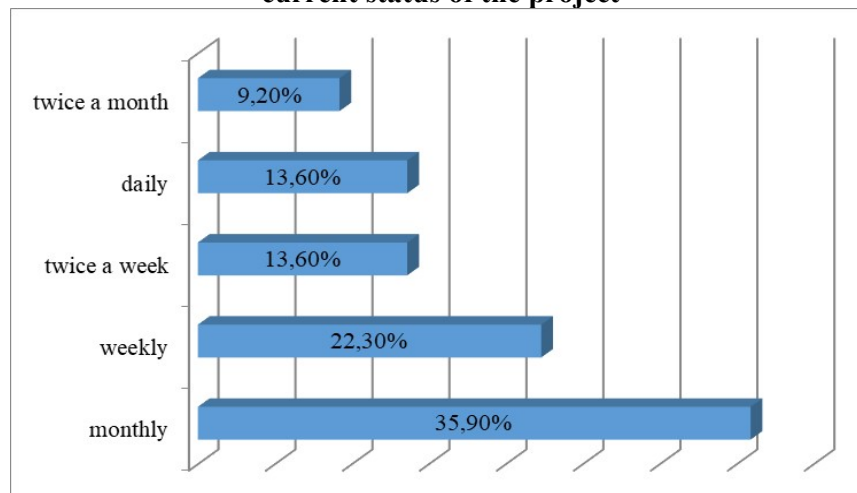
Figure 3. Distribution of responses for methods associated with risk management



Source: authored based on data interpretation

The distribution of responses for the frequency of preparing reports on the current status of the project highlights the following aspects: a majority percentage 35.9% declares that they prepare this report monthly, 22.3% weekly, 13.6% twice a week, 13.6% daily, 9.2% twice a month, are recorded in small percentages and the variants: annually or never. (figure 4)

Figure 4. Distribution of responses for the frequency of preparing reports on the current status of the project

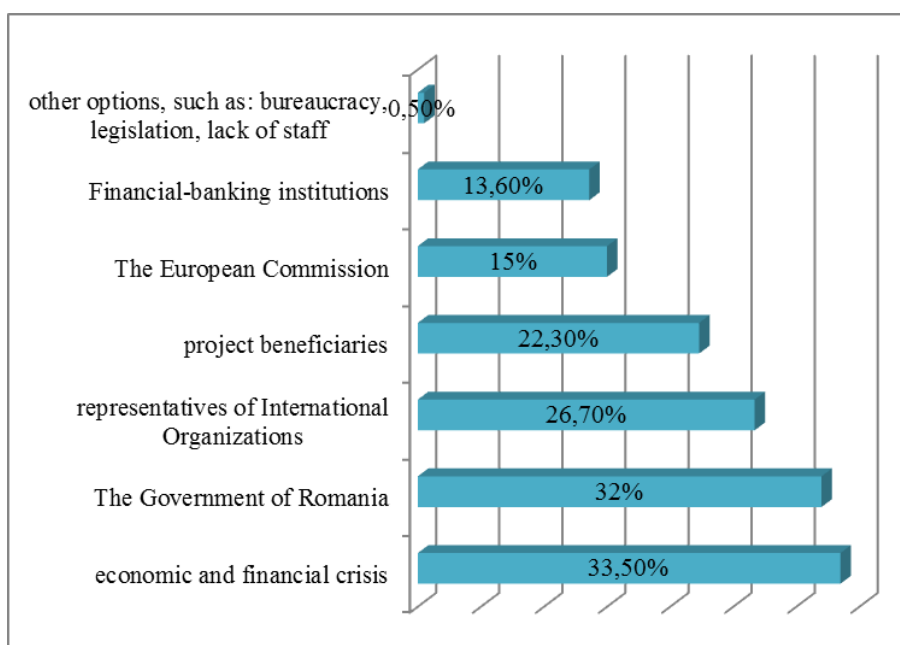


Source: authored based on data interpretation

Regarding the respondents' opinions regarding the factors that determined the low absorption rate of the Structural and Cohesion Funds, they reflect the following situation (figure 5):

- 33.5% opted for the economic and financial crisis
- 32% chose the Government of Romania
- 26.7% consider the representatives of International Organizations as a factor of influence
- 22.3% opted for the version of project beneficiaries
- 15% chose the European Commission
- 13.6% chose financial-banking institutions
- 0.5% is for other options, such as: bureaucracy, legislation, lack of staff

Figure 5. Distribution of responses for the determinants of the low rate of absorption of Structural and Cohesion Funds



Source: authored based on data interpretation

Through this scientific approach, it is considered appropriate to access European funds and the initiative of various categories of beneficiaries who want to modernize their agricultural holdings, increase the size of their agricultural holdings and become competitive on the market by accessing European funds intended for this sector must be encouraged.

4. Concluzii

Great project management is about much more than keeping the iron triangle of project management under control: delivering on time, budget and project scope, because it unites clients and teams, creates a vision for a successful project, and it gets everyone on the same page with what it takes to stay on track for success. When projects are properly managed, there is a positive impact that reverberates beyond the delivery of "stuff". Without proper project management, teams and clients are exposed to chaotic management, unclear objectives, lack of resources, unrealistic planning, high risk, project deliverables poor quality,

over-budget and late-delivered projects. Excellent project management matters in achieving performance because well-trained project managers deliver success.

Project management creates and enables teams to be motivated, to realize that their work matters. And that skilled project management team ensures that the right things are delivered, things that deliver a real return on investment and make customers happy

Every organization has strategic objectives, and projects promote these objectives. Project management is important because part of the specific duties is to ensure that there is rigor in the correct design of projects so that they fit well within the broader context of our client's strategic frameworks. Good project management ensures that the objectives projects align closely with strategic business objectives. In identifying a solid business case, particularly in agriculture, and being methodical about calculating ROI, project management can help ensure that the right thing is delivered, which will provide real value. Of course, as projects progress, risks may arise that turn into problems or even change the business strategy. But a project manager will ensure that the project is part of that realignment. Projects that veer off course or don't adapt to business needs can end up being costly and/or useless.

Project management is important because it brings leadership and direction to projects. Without project management, a team can be like a rudderless boat, moving but without direction, control or purpose. Leadership enables team members to do their best work. Project management provides leadership and vision, motivation, removing obstacles, coaching and inspiring the team to do their best work.

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