

Workshop Plan Bleu – CIHEAM
« Sustainable agricultural and rural development in the Mediterranean »
Bari, 8-10 May 2008

Summary

Some general considerations:

The Mediterranean is an area of contrasts, but of relevance for dealing with agricultural and rural issues;

Small and medium-scale farming have an essential role to play within the rural environment. As such, they also need to be mobilised to increase the security of local and national food supply in the Mediterranean basin, whilst environmental and soil-friendly farming practices such as the principles of conservation agriculture need to be encouraged;

Sustainable development needs to build on territorial dynamics tailored to the individual country but, just as rural areas cannot thrive without agricultural production being boosted and supported, so neither can there be agricultural development in the absence of dynamic rural areas. A share of the wealth generated by farming activity therefore needs to benefit the rural areas;

The Mediterranean lands are complex areas supporting multiple integrated functions (agro-food production, biodiversity, landscape preservation, cultural diversity...), and involving numerous stakeholders. Characterising them and establishing the conditions for their sustainability will depend on in-depth analysis, as yet virtually non-existent;

Territorial development must be based on a gradual process during which the various social stakeholders learn to shape a shared vision of the future and to work together in joint projects.

Some priorities:

- To include the promotion of a sustainable agricultural and rural sector amongst the development priorities, and to translate this political priority into budgetary terms in particular.
- To integrate climate risk, soil degradation and the effects of desertification, and eco-system preservation into agricultural and rural development strategies; to anticipate, plan and assess the adaptation measures to be implemented to this end.

- Before 2012, to set up a regional sustainable agriculture and rural development information system in order to have reliable and harmonised data collected at regular intervals and be in a position to shape relevant policies.
- In particular to undertake work towards characterising and quantifying the diversity of agricultural production systems and the farms related thereto, as well as the diversity of territorial systems.
- To provide the stakeholders involved in agricultural research and rural development with the means to increase and share their work and knowledge in order by 2012 to propose measures to encourage mobility and exchange between Mediterranean research institutes.
- To invite stakeholders from research and the rural world according to their abilities and responsibilities to collectively identify environmentally friendly agricultural production systems based on a system of property rights, access and secure usage modes, able to ensure a regular food supply for Mediterranean people.
- To draw up an inventory of territorial development projects, identifying the instruments used in order to involve local stakeholders and boost twinning and networking between projects conducted in different countries.
- To continue and reinforce the type of innovatory training for farmers and local stakeholders which enables them to take full part in the design, implementation and assessment of the operations which affect them.

Actions for the partners

- To assess on a two-yearly basis the progress made by Mediterranean riparian states towards implementing the Mediterranean Sustainable Development Strategy's chapter on «sustainable agricultural and rural development».
- To establish a Mediterranean platform for exchange about the territorial development processes initiated by the riparian states, stressing in particular the various tools used to encourage the effective participation of the people concerned in the design, realisation and monitoring of their area project.