Summary 244944 - SPARD (Spatial Analysis of Rural Development Measures)

Stronger accountability requirements and EU budget constraints increase the pressure towards policies targeted on specific objectives, e.g. provision of public benefits. The intention of the call KBBE-2009-1-4-02 was to enhance the capacity for effective targeting of Rural Development Prpgrammes (RDPs) within the EU through spatial analysis. It was explicitly aimed for applying a specific method for data analysis with focus to spatial determinants, which up to now had not yet been used in a systematic manner for the evaluation of RDPs: Spatial econometric modeling. With the introduction of the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) the data monitoring situation for the RPP 2007-2014 together with improved availability of additional spatial data was expected to having reached a state feasible to meeting the requirements for applying spatial econometric analysis at different scales. The FP7 collaborative project SPARD (Spatial Analysis of Rural Development Measures) was carried out from 04/2010 – 06/2013 and was organized in 6 work packages under collaboration of 9 Partner institutions from 8 countries. The main objectives and results were as follows:

1. To provide a framework for organizing the collection and the use of regional key baseline data and evaluation results of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) and other statistical and economic information in a systematic, clear and concise way. SPARD collected, quality checked and harmonized the available CMEF data until 2011, and related relevant EUROSTAT and spatial data at NUTS3 and developed the SPARD Data Viewer for data retrieval and download (access via www.spard.eu or www.spard-is.eu).
2. To explain the causal relationships between regional characteristics and needs, on the one hand, and the RDPs implementation and success in their spatial dimension, on the other. SPARD developed an analytical framework combining RDP structure and intervention logic with requirements for spatial econometric modeling. Reports and papers on targeting strategies and performance at EU and case study scales were developed and a modeling study on cost effectiveness of AEM participation levels was conducted.
3. To develop and apply a spatial econometric modeling approach at different scales. . The vast majority of project activities was dedicated to the development, elaboration and validation of spatial econometric models for the three measures 121 (modernization), 214 (agri-environmental measures) and 311 (diversification). At EU- scale expenditure and impact models were tested, at programming scale in six case study regions (Brandenburg (DE), North Holland (NL), Emilia Romagna (IT), Midi Pyrénées (FR), Scotland (UK) and Eastern Slovenia (SI)) participation, expenditures and impact models. Results indicate spatial dependencies and neighborhood effects, which advice the use of spatial econometrics for evaluation purposes. Results also hint to time lags, and strong differences between regions. One serious obstacle that that sets clear limitations to a broad application of the method in evaluation so far is the insufficient data availability particularly for impact indicators. The preferred scale for spatial econometric analysis for RDP evaluation is NUTS4-5/ LAU2. SPARD research, particularly at case study scale brought various new insights into structural and spatial (geophysical, natural, socio-economic) determinants for participation in RDPs.
4. To build a tool that will help policymakers, both at EU and Member States/ regional level, to design better targeted RDPs. A key physical output of the SPARD project is the information system SPARD-IS (www.spard-is) that comprises research results and the SPARD Data Viewer. The SPARD website www.spard.eu in addition offers access to policy briefs, animated ppts and publications. A Special Issue with the journal of Regional Studies is in preparation.