

LEADER ACTIVITY IN THE SOUTH TRANSDANUBIAN REGION LEADER AKTIVITÁS DÉL-DUNÁNTÚLON

Boglárka BITÁNÉ BÍRÓ*, Diána KOPONICSNÉ GYÖRKE

School for Management and Business Administration, University of Kaposvár, 7400 Kaposvár, Guba Sándor utca 40., Hungary

* Corresponding author: Bitáné Bíró Boglárka Tel.:+36 302-149-541 e-mail: nausika75@citromail.hu

Manuscript received: October 27, 2009; Reviewed: April 20, 2009; Accepted for publication: July 30, 2009

ABSTRACT

When the European Union started their new program the LEADER, with a completely new approach, there were a lot of skeptics against the initiative based on local developments. Since then the system has proven to be successful and after the accession to the European Union Hungary can also take part in such projects. This study is to evaluate the experiences of the first application period on the example of the region of South Transdanubia.

Keywords: local development, LEADER+, support of the European Union, South Transdanubian Region, activity of applications

ÖSSZEFOGLALÁS

Amikor az Európai Unió útjára indította az akkoriban teljesen új felfogáson alapuló programját, a LEADER-t, sokan szkeptikusok voltak a helyi fejlesztéseken alapuló kezdeményezéssel szemben. Azóta a program „beérett”, és az Európai Unióhoz való csatlakozás után Magyarország számára is megnyílt a lehetőség az ilyen típusú projektek számára. Jelen tanulmány az első pályázati időszak tapasztalatait kívánja értékelni A Dél-dunántúli régió példáján.

Kulcsszavak: helyi fejlesztés, LEADER+, Európai Unió támogatása, Dél-Dunántúl, pályázati aktivitás

RÉSZLETES ÖSSZEFOGLALÁS

A LEADER szemlélet kialakulása a 90-es évekre tehető, amikor felértékelődött a helyi közösségeken alapuló fejlesztés. Az Európai Unió ilyen logikájú támogatásai számára hozta létre a LEADER programot. A vizsgált program logikája szerint helyi akciócsoportok létrehozhatnak egy helyi fejlesztési stratégiát. Az országos kifizető hatóságok ezen stratégiák alapján határozzák meg az akciócsoportok számára rendelkezésre álló keretösszeget. A legfontosabb újszerűsége a programnak, hogy a konkrét pályázatokat, kifizetést és ellenőrzést maguk az akciócsoportok végzik

Magyarország csatlakozása óta vesz részt a programban. Jelen tanulmány Dél-Dunántúl NUTS 2 régió programban való részvételét vizsgálja meg részletesen. A vizsgált régióban tíz nyertes akciócsoport működött. 395 projekt valósult meg a vizsgált időszakban. A projektekre a megítélt támogatási összeg közel 760 millió forint. A régiót alkotó három megye, Baranya, Somogy és Tolna eltérő módon vesz részt a programban. Abszolút értékét tekintve a legtöbb projekt Baranya megyében található, míg Tolna megye a sereghajtó. Ez azonban magyarázható a megyék eltérő földrajzi kiterjedésével és népességszámával. Az ezer lakosra jutó projektek száma kiegyenlítettebb képet mutat, bár Somogy megyének kiemelkedő értéke van. Ez a kiugróan magas aktivitás az egy projektre eső támogatások vizsgálatakor is megmutatkozik. Míg a régió egészét tekintve 1,9 millió forint ez az érték, addig ez Somogy megyét tekintve közel 2,4 millió forint. A vizsgált projektek 104 településen valósulnak és valósultak meg.

A tanulmány külön foglalkozik a kulturális témájú és a beruházási típusú projektek vizsgálatával. Egy projekt kulturálisnak tekinthető, ha kulturális intézményeket, műemlékeket vagy emlékműveket támogat, ha a faluközpontot újítják meg történelmi értékeivel együtt, ha a projekt kulturális eseményekkel vagy hagyományokkal kapcsolatos stb. Ebben az értelemben Dél-Dunántúlon 127 projektet vizsgálhatunk meg közelebbről. Ebben a támogatási kategóriában Somogy megye mellett Tolna megye is kiemelkedő eredményekkel bír, ha az egy projektre eső átlagos támogatás nagyságát vizsgáljuk

A beruházási projektekkel kapcsolatban megállapítható, hogy Tolna megye a harmadik maradt, de a programokból származó támogatási összeg elfogadható, ha azt a népességhez és az álláskeresők számához viszonyítjuk. Baranya megye nyerte el a legtöbb támogatási összeget, amely a népessége alapján indokolt, azonban az álláskeresőkhöz viszonyítva teljesítménye nem túl jó. Somogy megyében pedig a népességhez és az álláskeresők számához viszonyítva jóval nagyobb támogatási összeg lenne indokolt.

A támogatási aktivitást tehát szükséges a kisebb földrajzi területek társadalmi-gazdasági helyzete alapján is vizsgálni, ezért javasoljuk, hogy az árnyaltabberedmények érdekében a foglalkoztatottsági-munkanélküliségi mutató – a régiónál kisebb földrajzi vagy statisztikai-tervezési területen is - felhasználásra kerüljön minden későbbi hasonló jellegű tanulmányban.

INTRODUCTION

The Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union is permanently transforming. Earlier, the main goal was to ensure work for the rural population and satisfactory amount of food supplies. Nowadays the quality of the products of the food industry, the protection of environment, the cultural traditions and landscape of the rural areas are the important priorities of CAP [1].

Till the end of the 80's the sectoral supports were defined in the rural development programs. From the early 90's new methods were elaborated and the local communities have also been incorporated into the development process. This relatively new program was the LEADER program (Liasion Entre Actions pour le Development de l'Economie Rurale – Relationship between actions for the rural development). In this new system an action group creates the development strategy of the rural area. These groups contain the local government, entrepreneurs, NGOs and civil associations. On the basis of the development strategy the financing organization determines a frame amount for this action group. This action group has the right in the future, on the basis of their strategy, to announce competitions and choose the supported projects. [7]

The first LEADER type program was the LEADER I. between 1991 and 1993 with 400 million ECU total sources. The second one was LEADER II. between 1994 and 1999. The total amount of supports was in this case 1.7 billion ECU. The LEADER+ program is the newest one from 2000 until the year of 2006. Considering the successes of the programs the LEADER goes on also from 2007. [4]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is based on the statistical data about the Agricultural and Rural Development Operational Program published on the website of the Hungarian National Development Agency. The authors also used information about the population from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, and statistical data published by the Labour Office of the region. After the selection of the South Transdanubian data from the country-wide database, statistical proportions were computed and

summarized in tables and graphs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Hungary has taken part in the examined program since the accession to the European Union. In Hungary the LEADER+ Community initiative projects are carried out under the Hungarian Agricultural and Rural Development Operational Program (ARDOP). This program has included the Program in the Priority of Development of Rural Areas under chapter 3.5. (Measure LEADER+). For the structure of the Hungarian National Development plan, and ARDOP, as its component, see reference 2. It contains four types of activities supported by the European Union.

Action 1. Acquisition of Skills

This measure supports information and training of the population, preparation of the potential Local Action Groups (LAG) for Action 2. The goal is to encourage the active participation in the development process. It helps to prepare for the planning and implementation of LEADER + measures. In the framework of this action training courses, workshops, presentations can be organized.

Action 2. Pilot integrated rural development strategies

Between 1999 and 2001, as a result of integrated programming in terms of agricultural structures and rural development in micro regions, voluntary associations of rural settlements were established. Due to this program and co-operation several rural communities have been able to create LAGs in line with the principles of LEADER +. In the framework of this action can be supported these LAGs. The goals can be adopting of integrated territorial rural development strategies, e.g.: preparation of application, the establishment and support of small businesses. A LAG should participate in Action 1 and has two opportunities to join Action 2. The population of these LAGs should be between 10 000 and 100 000 persons. The LAGs should be homogeneous units in physical, geographical, economic and also social terms.

Action 3. Support for inter-territorial and transnational co-operation

Beneficiaries can be local governments and their associations, Hungarian legal entities and economic organizations without legal entities, NGOs, foundations, natural persons, private entrepreneurs and their associations.

Action 4. Networking for communication at European, national and regional levels

Beneficiary is a national coordinating unit selected in the framework of a tendering procedure.

The rate of the support can be up to 100% by Action 1 and 4. By Action 2 and 3 it can be 50-65 % in case of revenue generating projects and up to 95% in case of non-revenue generating investments. [2]

For the LEADER type measures in Hungary EUR 25 millions are available in the period of 2004-2006. The EU share from the total budget is EUR 18.75 millions [7]

In Hungary 2761 project were supported in the framework of ARDOP 3.5. in the seven NUTS 2 regions. These are 39 % all of the ARDOP projects (7026). The total amount of the support is almost 7 billion HUF. This amount is actually only 5.8% of the ARDOP supports. [5]

Baranya, Somogy and Tolna counties include the examined region. In this area there are 10 Local Action Groups (LAG) financed from LEADER sources. These are:

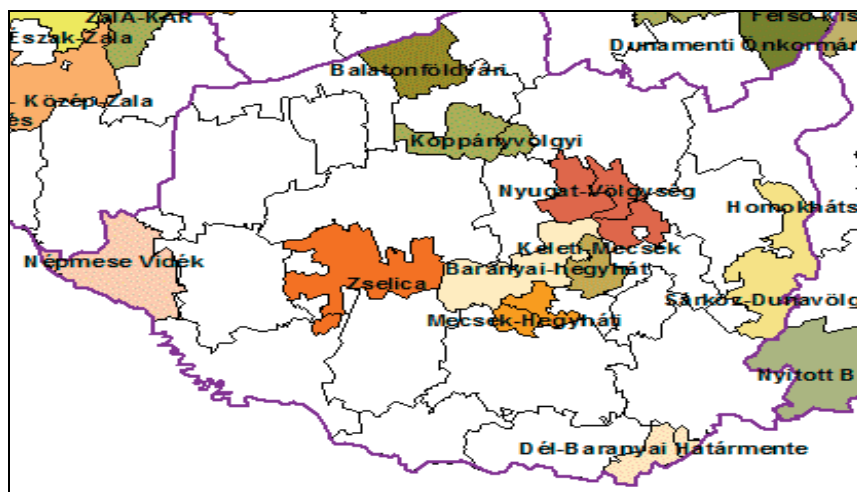
1. Balatonföldvári Kistérségi Akciócsoport
2. Baranyai Hegyhát Helyi Vidékfejlesztési Akciócsoport
3. Dél-Baranyai Határmenti Települések Akciócsoport
4. Keleti-Mecsek Akciócsoport
5. Koppányvölgyi Akciócsoport
6. Mecsek-Hegyháti Akciócsoport
7. Népmese Vidék
8. Nyugat Völgység
9. Sárköz-Dunavölgye Akciócsoport
10. Zselica [4]

Map 1 shows the location of these groups:

In South Transdanubia 1557 applications were sent in for the ARDOP. From these projects were 872 aimed the rural development priority. 64,5% from these (562) were LEADER+ projects. Most of them (70%) were supported. In the following this study will examine the supported projects.

395 supported projects exist in the examined region. It is 14% of all Hungarian LEADER projects. From the 395 supported projects 390 have valid contracts. Unfortunately the settlement of supports existed until the end of March 2008 only by 173 projects. It shows that it's quite slow to realize a LEADER project. [5] The distribution of the projects between the tree counties of the region is shown in Table 1.

The most projects are supported in Baranya County, the less in Tolna County. The number of the projects for 1000 persons answers this trend. As we examine the counties separated, the same trend can be noticed in the term of supported and contracted projects: in Baranya County from the 244 applications 181 were supported, 179 have



Source: after [8], 2008

Map 1. Winner LAGs in the region of South Transdanubia
1. térkép, Nyertes akciócsoportok Dél-Dunántúlon

Table 1.
1. táblázat

County Megye	Number of the Projects (pieces) Projekttek száma (db)	Total support (million HUF) Összes támogatás (millió Ft)	Population (thousand person) Népesség (ezer fő)	Number of the Projects for thousand person (pieces) Ezer főre jutó projektek száma (db)	Support for thousand person (million HUF) Ezer főre jutó támogatás nagysága (millió Ft)
Baranya	181,00	300,59	407,40	0,44	0,74
Somogy	129,00	304,71	335,20	0,38	0,91
Tolna	85,00	151,57	249,70	0,34	0,61
Total/Összesen	395,00	756,87	992,30	0,40	0,76

Source: after [5] own calculation, 2008

valid contract, but only 63 settlements existed until this time. In Somogy County there were 185 applications, from these 129 were supported, 127 have valid contract, but the number of settlements is just 55. In the case of Tolna County the numbers are: 133, 85, 84 and 55. The total support in the examined region is about 760 million HUF. Considering the rate of supports the total cost of the examined 395 projects can be 1.2 billion HUF. The distribution of the supports between the three counties is shown in Figure 1.

The support for one project is 1.9 million HUF in the region. As we examine the counties separately, we can point out, that the supports in Somogy County are overrepresented. The different amounts of support can be seen in figure 2.

The average support rate is 76 %. There are only eight projects with a support rate of 100%. These are the

applications of the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development as the ARDOP Managing Authority. The decisions about the applications – except the 8 projects of the Managing Authority – were made in 2007. This could be an other reason, why the managing and the execution of the projects are in such an early stage.

The projects were realized in 104 towns and villages. Orfű (Baranya County) has the most projects with 25 supported ones and 29 million HUF. The second one is Csurgó in Somogy County. In these towns exist 18 projects with 31 million HUF support.

The supported projects can be classified after the content of them. We can create several categories, like projects in connection with infrastructural development, training, tourism and accommodation or raising the investment rate.

Cultural projects

A quite big part of the projects are cultural programs. In the following the study examines these projects.

The European Union supplies directly the cultural field in only one program. It was the so called Culture 2000 program between 2000 and 2006. But beside this program there are a lot of opportunities to support this sector. The theme of our study is one of them. The examined projects aren't supported because of its cultural connections. But actually the culture is supported at all. A project ranks among cultural, if cultural institutions, libraries, historical buildings or monuments are supported, if the main square of the village with its historical houses is renovated, the project is connected with traditions or with other cultural events. In the South Transdanubian Region there are 127 cultural projects in this term.

As we can see, half of the projects exist in Baranya County and in the other half share Somogy and Tolna County. The situation is completely different as we examine the distribution of the supports. 195 million HUF is the total support. 35% becomes Baranya (beside half of the projects), 38% Somogy and 27% Tolna. The difference is more conspicuous if we examine the average supports in each county.

Except of Baranya County the amount of support per project is higher than the average cultural support in the region. The average support rate is about 79%. It's higher than the number among all of the LEADER + type

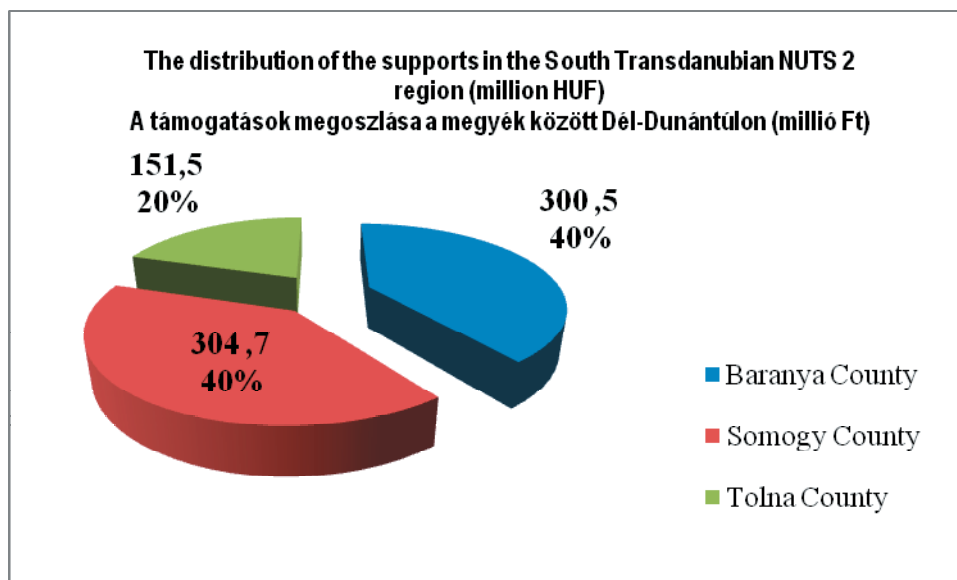
activities in the region. Considering the rate of supports the total cost of the examined 127 project in the field of culture can be 267 million HUF.

Investment projects

Another important part of the projects refers to economical investments. The activity in this type of projects is very important due to influence over the unemployment rate. The employment standard is one of the macro-economic indicators which is fixing the development of the social-economical section. The membership in the European Union – beside the strict regulations about the unemployment rate – offers significant support for the development of the Hungarian economy and the South Transdanubian region. This part of the study is reviewing the proportion of the economical investments in the region of South Transdanubia and its counties through the LEADER+ program.

As mentioned before, the decisions about the support of the projects were made in 2007, but the activity of the participants refers to the period of the program, therefore we use for comparison an average number of unemployed and population of the same time.

We can see in Table 2., that the population in the counties shows a difference, but this is not followed by the unemployment rate, by the number and the amount of the supports. Tolna County is the smallest geographical area, it has a relatively low unemployment rate and applied for the less investment projects. Baranya and Somogy County



Source: after the statistics of [5] own structure and calculation, 2008

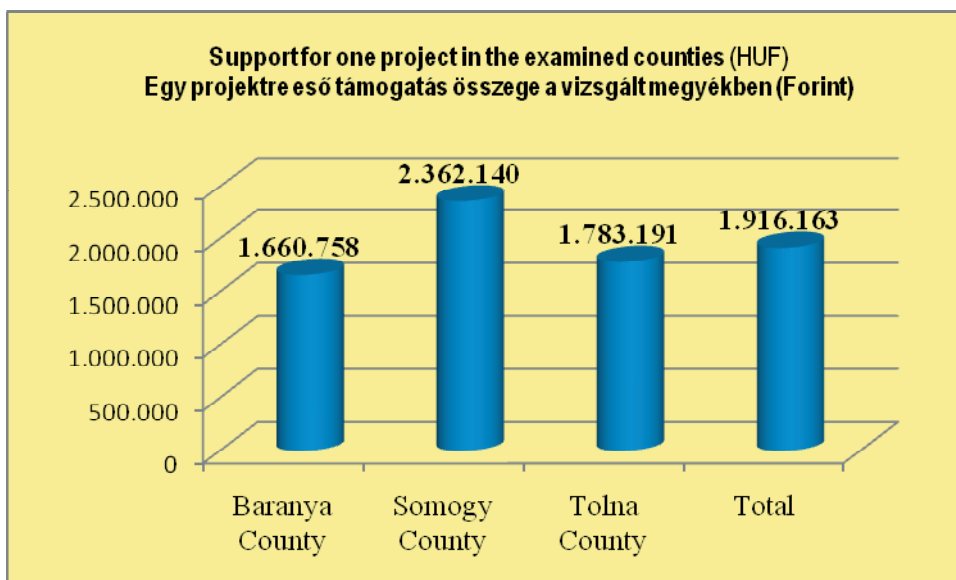
Figure 1.
1. ábra

have almost the same numbers referring to population and employment, but there is a quite big difference between the number and the amount of the support.

If we would like to have an other point of view, it is useful to analyze this difference with statistical proportions. We found the following result shown by Figure 6.

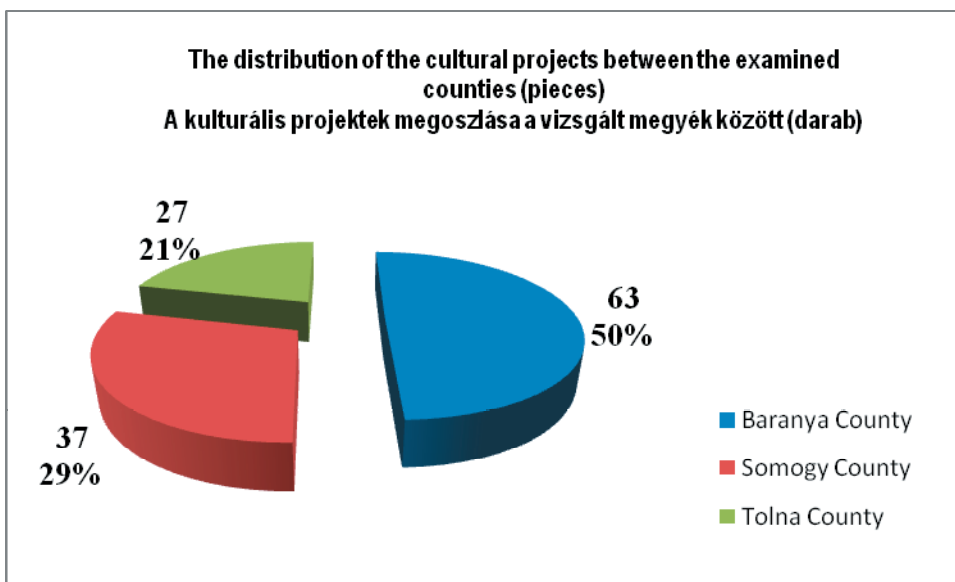
Compared to Table 2 the distribution of the amount of the supports shows a subtle result. Tolna County is the

third in this case too, but the graph shows that the amount is reasonable when it is compared to the population and the unemployment data Baranya County won the highest amount and this is justified by the number of the population, but not by the unemployment. Somogy County has about 66 thousand people less than Baranya and higher unemployment, and in this viewpoint should justify more support for it.



Source: own calculation, 2008

Figure 2.
2. ábra



Source: own calculation, 2008

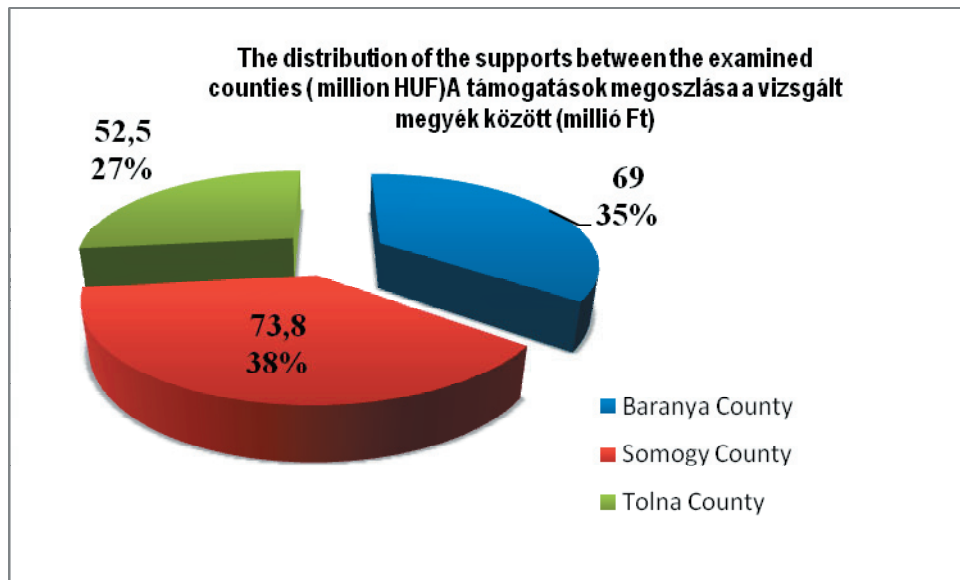
Figure 3.
3. ábra

CONCLUSION

The average project number in Hungary is 394 projects per region. This number indicates that the South Transdanubia region participated in the LEADER+ program absolutely in the average with its 395 supported projects.

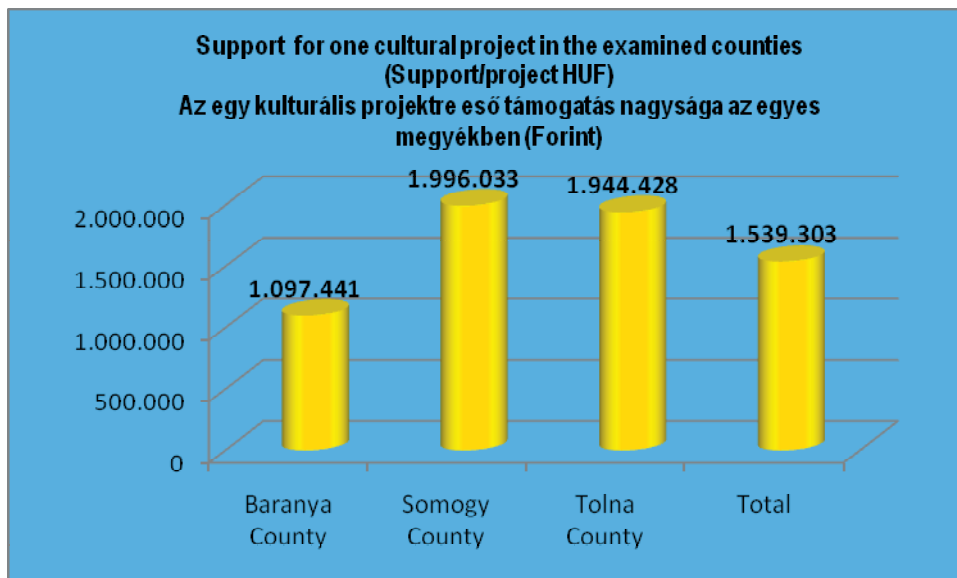
Traditionally, the region is divided in three counties, which are differently active in applying for LEADER+ projects.

In the number of the projects, besides the ratio in the total project number in the region, Baranya County is overrepresented in both cultural and investment programs. Tolna County is everywhere the last one, but a subtle result shows that these numbers are justified by the smaller area, lower population and unemployment rate. However, Somogy County has a higher population than Tolna, and a higher unemployment rate than Baranya and is still not participating as well as the socio-



Source: own calculation, 2008

Figure 4.
4. ábra



Source: own calculation, 2008

Figure 5.
5 ábra

economical need is. It is overrepresented in the support for one project, but compared to the population and the unemployment the activity – and therefore the amount of the support - is low.

To sum it up, the results of this study are showing that the activity in the South Transdanubian region in the LEADER+ program is around the country average, but there is a need to make sure that the smaller geographical areas are participating as their local economical conditions would prefer. The number of the cultural and investment

projects are pointing to the need of the population, and the unemployment rate is a very good sample for the local socio-economical circumstances, therefore is adorable to use them in the future analyzing, for more subtle results.

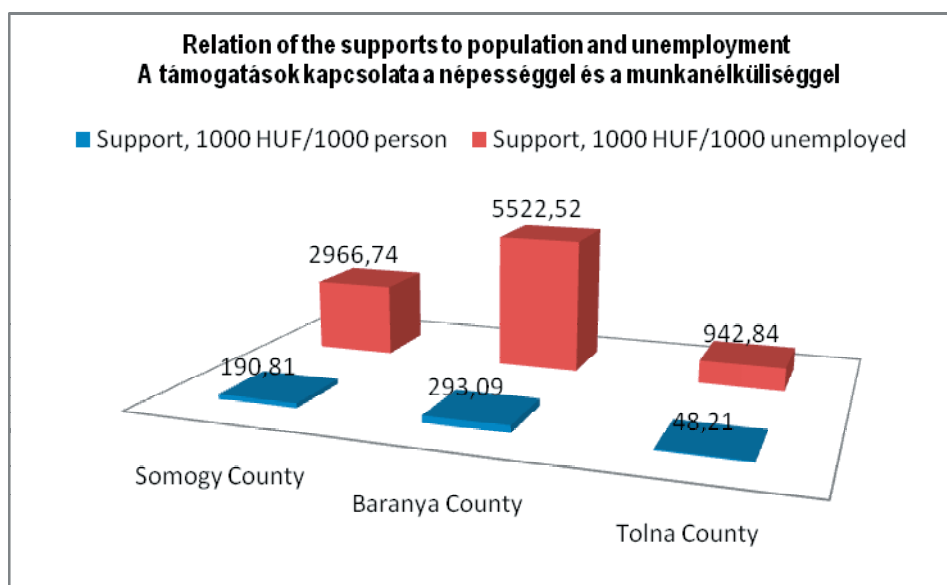
REFERENCES

[1] Fazekas Zs., Nemes G., Fertő I.: A Közös Agrárpolitika költségvetésének reformja és hatásai a magyar agrárpolitika mozgásterére. (The reform of the

Table 2.
2. táblázat

County Megye	Number of investment projects (pieces) A beruházási projektek száma (db)	Amount of support (Thousand HUF) Támogatás nagysága (Ezer Ft)	Average support rate (%) Átlagos támogatási arány (%)	Support/project (Thousand HUF) Egy projektre eső támogatás (Ezer Ft)	Population (thousand person) Népesség (ezer fő)	Number of unemployed (thousand person) Munkanélküliek száma (ezer fő)
Somogy County	20	63290,4	63,5	3,2	331,7	21,3
Baranya County	40	116433,2	57,6	2,9	397,3	21,1
Tolna County	5	11817,0	83,0	2,4	245,1	12,5
Total/Összesen	65	191540,6	61,7	2,9	977,2	55,0

Source:[3] and own calculation, 2008



Source: after the statistics of [5] own structure and calculation, 2008

Figure 1.
1. ábra

budget of the Common Agricultural Policy and its effect on the Hungarian agricultural policy) Kézirat. Budapest, 2005

[2] Hungarian Agricultural and Rural Development Operational Program (ARDOP), 2004, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, In: <http://www.nfu.hu/doc> (downloaded 17.03.2008.)

[3] www.afsz.hu. The homepage of the Hungarian Labour Office (downloaded 17.03.2008.)

[4] www.ec.europa.eu. The homepage of the European Committee (downloaded 20.03.2008.)

[5] www.nfu.hu The homepage of the Hungarian

National Development Agency, Statistics and lists about the supported projects in the framework of ARDOP (downloaded 03.04.2008.)

[6] www.ksh.hu The homepage of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, Data from the Census 2001 (downloaded 04.02.2008)

[7] www.leaderkozpont.hu The homepage of the Hungarian Leader Centre (downloaded 17.03.2008.)

[8] www.vati.hu The homepage of the VÁTI Hungarian Public Nonprofit Company for Regional Development and Town Planning (downloaded 17.03.2008.)

