

The Medium- and Long-term Vision: Transforming Agriculture and Rural Development in Romania

*Conference organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the World Bank
on the reform and investment priorities for Romanian agriculture and rural development*

June 3, 2015

Radisson Blu Hotel, Bucharest, Romania

Background

The key sector challenges and strategic priorities for action are outlined in the Medium- and Long-term Vision (2020/2030) and in the subsequent strategic documents, prepared by MADR with World Bank technical support. Adopting and implementing the sector vision and strategy documents would constitute a major step forward towards a coherent, far-reaching and stable public policy framework.

In addition, the Romanian agricultural administration also needs to undergo a comprehensive institutional reform, to include the modernization and digitization of its systems and procedures, and the strengthening of its human capacity to better meet current and future business needs.

Objective of the conference

The conference aims to stimulate a broad discussion with sector stakeholders on the current challenges and future goals in the Romanian ARD, in relation to the long term global and European trends.

It will equally serve as a forum for MADR senior management to present the medium- to long- term reform and investment priorities in agriculture and rural development (ARD), going beyond the EU-regulated framework.

At the same time, it will be a platform for widely disseminating some of the main results of the Programmatic Reimbursable Advisory Assistance to the MADR for Strengthening Strategic and Operational Management, which has benefited from World Bank technical support. Several of the knowledge products developed through this Assistance were geared to inform MADR's sectoral and institutional reform choices; at the same time, a number of pilot initiatives demonstrated the benefits of streamlining and digitizing many of the workflows and procedures within the ARD administration.

Audience

While the conference is organized jointly with MADR, the audience will be broad. Benefiting from the participation of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, senior MADR officials (State Secretaries, Director Generals and Directors), former European Commissioners for Agriculture and Rural Development and lead World Bank experts, the audience will include key institutional partners, such as representatives of the Chancellery and other Romanian Ministries, and members of the Agriculture Committee of the Romanian Parliament. In order to engage in a broad discussion on the future opportunities and needs, the conference also targets research institutions, universities, representatives of the farming and agri-food processing sector, as well as various rural organizations.

In order to promote wide public dissemination, mass-media is also invited.

Agenda

09:00 – 09:30	Registration and coffee
09:00 – 09:30	Coffee with the press (by invitation only)
09:30 – 09:45	Opening remarks Elisabetta CAPANNELLI, Country Manager, World Bank, Romania Daniel CONSTANTIN, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development

Session 1: A Sustainable Future for the Romanian Agriculture and Rural Space

This session will bring out the outlook for the agriculture and rural space that Romania is envisioning by 2020/30. This vision is anchored in the three dimensions of sustainability: economic, environmental and social, which respond to the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly integrated and interdependent world.

After the main panel interventions, the discussion will zoom in on how Romania will tackle the challenges of one of the most visible global drivers in the sector: climate change. Source of both opportunities and threats, it has been impacting the Romanian agriculture more and more. In particular, changes in precipitation and temperature patterns require novel adaptation responses, well suited to and understood by the Romanian farmers – both large and small. The discussion will specifically focus on what Romania plans to do with regard to modernizing its irrigation systems, introducing innovative risk management tools, or improving farm practice across farm groups.

09:45 – 10:30	Panel interventions Holger KRAY, Lead Agriculture Economist, World Bank <i>Farming for the future: the environmental sustainability of agriculture in a changing world</i> Franz FISCHLER, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, 1995-2004 <i>Farming, a riskier business? The economic sustainability of agriculture in a more volatile world</i> Dacian CIOLOS, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, 2010-2014 <i>Farming, as a way of life. Perspectives on the social sustainability of agriculture</i> Daniel CONSTANTIN, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development <i>The long-term vision for a sustainable agriculture in Romania</i>
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10:30 – 11:30	Panel discussion and Q&A
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Special focus: Building a Vision on the Green Promise

This session will feature the unique example of Ireland, who successfully developed its long term vision for agriculture and rural areas around the Origin Green Program. This is the only sustainability program in the world that operates on a national scale, uniting government, the private sector and food producers through Bord Bia, the Irish Food Board. Independently verified, it enables Ireland's farmers and producers to set and achieve measurable sustainability targets – reducing environmental impact, serving local communities more effectively and protecting the extraordinarily rich natural resources that the country enjoys.

The program is the living proof that economic and environmental sustainability are not mutually exclusive – in fact, they can reinforce each other and lead to a country's agricultural success.

11:30 – 12:00	Shane HAMILL, Bord Bia Origin Green Ambassador, World Bank <i>Smart, green and sustainable: Lessons from Ireland's Food Harvest 2020 vision for agri-food growth</i> Grahame DIXIE, Advisor, World Bank
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch break

Session 2: Knowledge and Information Systems for Cutting-Edge Agriculture in Romania

This session will explore how unlocking the power of data and innovation can help both farmers and agricultural administrations perform better, and achieve the sector vision and strategic goals. Better data systems will also foster knowledge generation and transfer among all actors in the sector. But strong actors are critical to start with.

After the panel interventions, the discussion will zoom in on solutions to complete the reforms Romania started in agricultural research, extension and advisory services, with a view to further strengthening and modernizing the country's agriculture knowledge and information systems. For instance, the Romanian research and development sector was substantially restructured after 2005, and the competitiveness of its institutions greatly improved. Yet more efforts need to be made to respond to the new sector challenges and opportunities (including the European Innovation Partnerships), and these may include closing institutional gaps, increasing investment in infrastructure and information systems, or reorienting the sectoral knowledge and information agenda. The session will explore these dimensions.

13:00 – 13:45	Panel interventions
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	<p>Holger KRAY, Lead Agriculture Economist, World Bank <i>Agriculture in the age of Big Data</i></p> <p>Franz FISCHLER, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, 1995-2004 <i>The knowledge economy in Europe and how it shapes farming</i></p> <p>Dacian CIOLOS, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, 2010-2014 <i>European Innovation Partnerships: when farming goes high-tech</i></p> <p>Grahame DIXIE, Advisor, World Bank <i>Doing Business Indicators: measuring and benchmarking the performance of the regulatory environment</i></p> <p>George TURTOI/Daniel BOTANOIU, State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development <i>New horizons: the outlook on a modern administration and public service delivery</i></p>
<p>13:45 – 14:45</p>	<p>Panel discussion and Q&A</p>
<p>14:45 – 15:00</p>	<p>Concluding Remarks</p> <p>Elisabetta CAPANNELLI, Country Manager, World Bank, Romania</p> <p>George TURTOI/ Daniel BOTANOIU, State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</p>