

STUDY ON PPP-TYPE ASSOCIATIVE STRUCTURES IN ROMANIAN AGRICULTURE

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Abstract

This paper aims to highlight the main aspects of Public-Private Partnership associative structures within the agricultural sector in Romania. Thus, in this paper we have detailed aspects of a statistic nature and not only, regarding the size of the activity of these associative structures of the Public-Private Partnership type, with particular reference to the Inter-professional Organisations for Agri-Food Products (OIPA) and Local Action Groups (GAL). Thus, with the help of statistical data provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) and the National Federation of Local Action Groups (FNGAL), it was possible to determine the territorial coverage of these associative structures throughout the country, as well as to determine the degree of involvement in agriculture (for LAGs) or economic efficiency (for IFAPs).

Keywords: Public Private Partnership, OIPA, LAGs, Romanian agriculture.

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Introduction

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is a form of collaboration between the public and private sectors for the development, financing, implementation and/or management of a public project or service. This type of collaboration is primarily aimed at bringing benefits to both the public and private sectors and is used in many areas such as infrastructure, health, education, transport, energy, agriculture and many others. (Valea, 2004, Comisia Europeană, 2021a; 2021b)

In a PPP, each party involved has well-defined roles and responsibilities. The public sector remains responsible for regulation, oversight and the provision of basic services, while the private sector contributes capital, project management expertise and efficient operations (Alexandru, 2004).

One of the main motivations for a PPP is access to private capital to finance projects that would traditionally be financed from the public budget. The private sector invests in the project and, in return, may receive a profit from the operations or services provided (Belecciu and Tigănescu, 2012).

Another important aspect of PPPs is the transfer of risk to the private sector. Risks such as those related to costs, delays in implementation or service performance can be transferred to the private partner, who has a strong interest in managing these risks effectively to ensure the profitability of the project (Hamlin and Neamțu, 2005; Moldovan, 2017)

Public-private partnerships can be of variable duration, covering long periods of time, from a few years to decades. This depends on the type of project and the specific agreements made between the parties (Florin, 2011).

The government or public entity involved must take an active role in overseeing and regulating the partnership to ensure that public interests are protected and that services or projects are delivered according to the standards and terms of the agreement. (Petrescu, 2010; Levai, 2012)

In terms of novelty, the research includes a quantitative analysis of data on the most important aspects of the organisations that make up the public-private partnership, up-to-date data on the value of the projects carried out, the territorial coverage of the associative structures, and their productivity through the analysis of economic-financial data.

1. Literature review

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in agriculture are collaborations between the public and private sectors to develop and improve the agricultural sector. These collaborations are designed to support economic growth, rural development and food security by leveraging the resources, finances and expertise of both sectors (Neacșu, 2018; Repez and Neacșu, n.d.)

PPPs can be used to develop agricultural infrastructure, such as the construction and upgrading of roads, irrigation, storage and processing facilities for agricultural products. The private sector can bring expertise in the management and operation of these infrastructures, while the government can provide adequate funding and regulation. (Ghizdeanu, 2014)

The private sector can bring technology, experience in agricultural management and expertise in research and development, which can improve the productivity and quality of agricultural production (Cretu, 2010, Comisia Europeană, 2022).

PPPs can provide financing and investment for farmers, agricultural cooperatives and other entities in the agricultural sector. This can include providing loans, grants or capital for the expansion and modernisation of farms and agricultural facilities.

PPPs can improve supply and distribution chains for agricultural products, thereby facilitating access to markets for farmers and increasing the added value of their products. (Atamusov, 2021)

PPPs can support training and capacity development programmes for farmers and agricultural workers to improve farming practices and business management. They can help increase agricultural production and ensure access to quality food for communities. This is crucial for a country's food security.

PPPs in agriculture can promote sustainable agricultural practices and environmental protection by incorporating responsible standards and practices into projects and agreements. An important aspect of PPPs in agriculture is managing risks associated with price fluctuations, climate change and other threats. Government and the private sector need to establish mechanisms to manage these risks in their agreements (United Nations, 2015)

2. Interbranch Organisations for Agri-Food Products (OIPA)

Following Romania's accession to the EU and the commitments made in this regard, in 2008 the interbranch organisations for agri-food products (OIPA) were regulated for the first time by GEO no. 103 of 3 September 2008.

The purpose of the IFAPO is to represent the interests of the member trade associations for a specific food chain with a view to developing a competitive agri-food sector that meets the current needs of consumers.

Every year the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development updates the register of recognised IFAPOs. In the year 2023 MADR recognises 5 FVPOs, namely (MADR, 2022):

A. The Interprofessional Organisation for Cereals and Derived Products in Romania (OIPCPRD) which also includes the Association "Interprofessional Organisation for Cereals, Oilseeds and Derived Products" (OIPCOPD);

B. The National Interprofessional Wine Organisation (ONIV);

C. The Interbranch Organisation for Poultry Meat, Eggs and Processed Products (OICPOPA);

D. National Interbranch Organisation for Fruit and Vegetables in Romania (OIPA ProdCom);

E. The Inter-professional Pork Organisation (OICP).

The agri-food supply chains currently represented are the cereals and derived products/oilseeds and derived products supply chain, the wine sector supply chain, the poultry meat and eggs supply chain, the fresh and processed vegetables and fruit supply chain and the pig meat supply chain.

2.1 Interprofessional Organisation of Cereals and Derived Products from Romania O.I.P.C.P.D.R.

It has been recognised by MADR since 2011. The founding members of OIPCPRD are L.A.P.A.R., A.F.R., ROMPAN, ANAMOB, and in time A.D.C.E.R., A.N.T.P.A.R.

A.R.C.P.A., A.N.F.N.C. have joined.

Table 1. Situation of projects in which ROMPAN was coordinator or partner

Nr.crt.	Project Name	Implementation period	Project value	ROMPAN Status
1	Stop Waste to VET - "Metode de reducere a risipei alimentare la produsele făinoase prin dezvoltarea competențelor specifice ale specialiștilor din sector"	28.02.2022 - 27.02.2024	-	Coordinator
2	DISOPAN - Consolidarea și promovarea dialogului social la nivelul industriei de morărit panificate	10 months	1.129.626,00 lei	Coordinator
3	MAKIS - Modernizarea sistemului de informare și cunoaștere în agricultură	17.07.2009-30.09.2010	315.633 eur	Coordinator
4	Qbake - Calificări pentru Industria Europeană de Panificație	01.02.2012-31.01.2014	-	Partner
5	FLEXI-IA-FPC - Flexibilitate pe piața muncii pentru industria alimentară prin formare profesională continuă	-	8.569.641,50 lei	Partner

Nr.crt.	Project Name	Implementation period	Project value	ROMPAN Status
6	Îmbunătățirea nivelului de cunoștințe, competențe și aptitudini ale angajaților din industria de morărit, panificație și produse făinoase	01.10.2019 – 01.04.2021	-	Coordinator
7	SAFETYCER - Strategies to predict, prevent and reduce the effect of fungal contamination on cereals quality, production and food safety	01.10.2017 – 01.09.2019	-	Coordinator
8	HYPOGLICEDIET - Cooperarea pentru inovare și schimb de bune practici în dieta hipoglicemică pentru persoanele cu diabet	01.09.2019 – 01.06.2021	-	Partner
9	FBforPDD - Let's produce new functional bakery products for people with digestive disorders	01.12.2019 – 01.11.2021	-	Partner

Source: ROMPAN data processing

2.2 National Interprofessional Wine Organisation (ONIV)

ONIV was recognized in 2011 as an O.I.P.A. in the wine sector. It groups together producer organisations in the wine production, processing, distribution, storage, transport and marketing of grapes, wine and their processed products from all wine-growing regions. According to the official website, ONIV is the first inter-professional organisation in Romania to be recognised by the European Commission. ONIV members are the 31 professional associations that bring together around 150 companies.

Following the analysis of the location of the companies in the territory, we have made the territorial representation by counties. Thus, we can mention that the members of OIPA-ONIV in the wine sector are present in 24 counties in Romania. Moreover, it can be seen that the members of producer organisations in the wine sector can be found in all 8 wine-growing regions of the country. Thus, the national representation of the Romanian wine sector has a very good coverage.

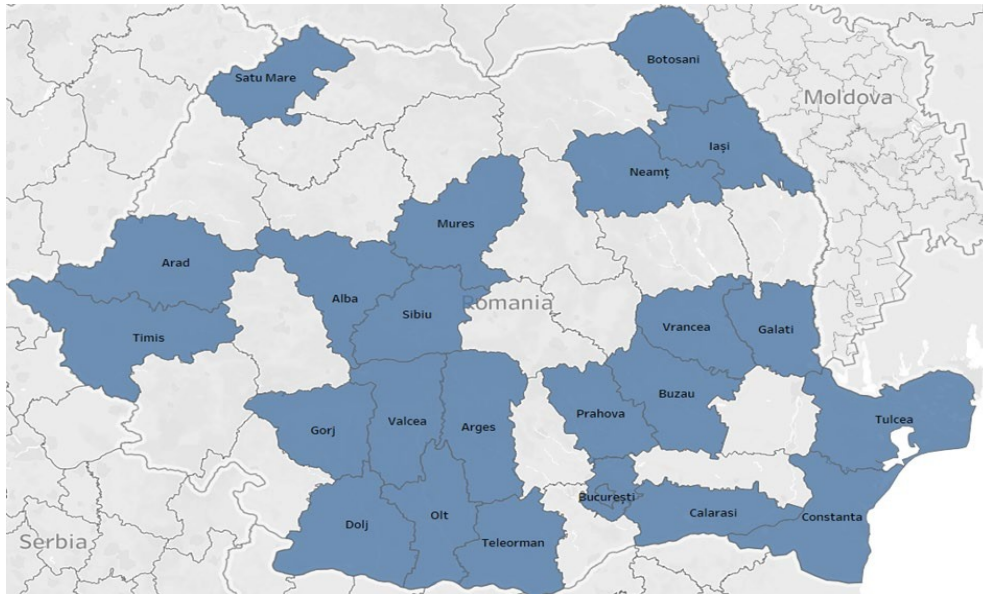


Figure 1. Territorial distribution of OIPA - ONIV members
Source: MADR and mfinante.gov.ro data processing using Tableau Public

According to data processed by MADR and mfinanțe.gov.ro, 4,684 people are employed by producer organisations in the wine sector.

Analysing the cumulative profit per county recorded by the companies in the top 5 counties, the ranking changes as follows: Timis (42.9%), Bucharest (17.7%), Dolj (16%), Constanta (8.6%), Olt (5.6%). The counties with the highest losses are Buzău and Satu Mare.

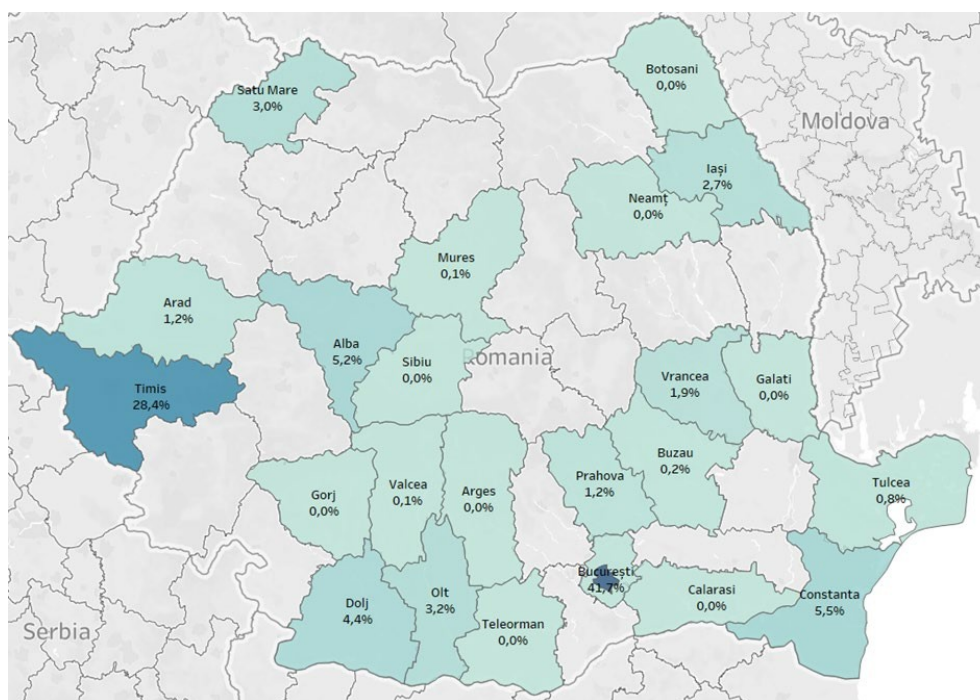


Figure 2. County-wide share of cumulative turnover of OIPA - ONIV members

Source: MADR and mfinanțe.gov.ro data processing using Tableau Public

Regarding the economic performance of OIPA-ONIV members by counties, we can observe that in 2022 the top 5 counties by turnover are: Bucharest (41.7%), Timis (28.4%), Constanta (5.5%), Alba (5.2%), Dolj (4.4%). These counties represent more than 80% of the total turnover of all OIPA-ONIV members.

2.3 Interbranch Organisation for Poultrymeat, Eggs and Processed Poultrymeat

Members of OICPOPA are the Romanian Union of Poultry Breeders (UCPR), the Romanian Society of Veterinary Doctors in Avian and Small Animal Pathology (SMVPAAMR) and the Nutricomb National Association of Combined Feed Producers (ANP Nutricomb).

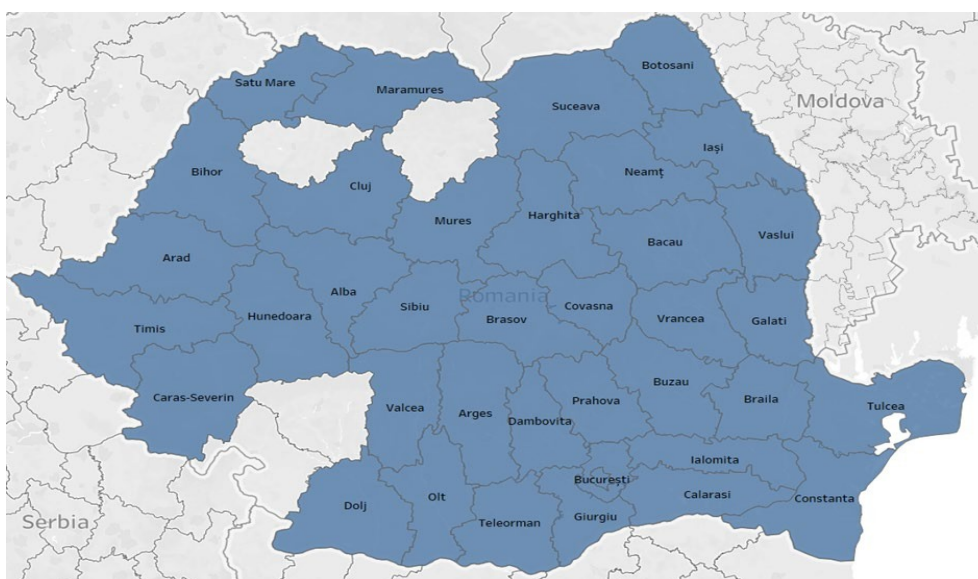


Figure 3. Territorial distribution of IOPCO members
Source: Data processing avicultura.ro using Tableau Public

According to data processed from avicultura.ro and mfinanțe.gov.ro 13910 people are officially employed in companies in the poultry meat and eggs sector. Analyzing the cumulative profit by counties recorded by the companies, 3 counties in Romania record the highest profit, namely: Alba (35.3%), Bacău (13.2%) and Iași (7.1%). The companies with the highest losses are located in Brasov county.

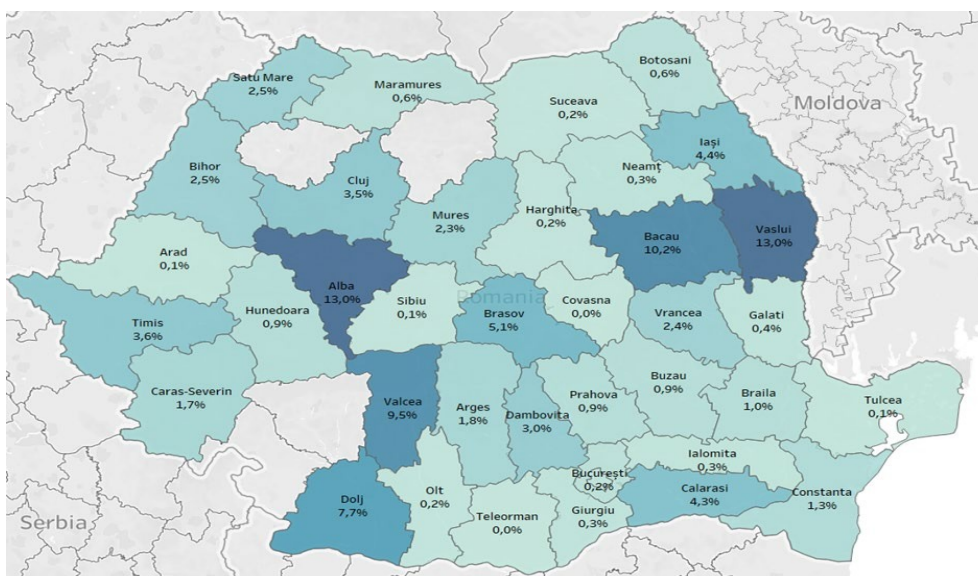


Figure 4. County-wide share of cumulative turnover of OICPOPA members
Source: Data processing avicultura.ro and mfinanțe.gov.ro aid Tableau Public

Regarding the economic performance of OICPOPA members by counties, we can see that in the top 5 counties by cumulative turnover of members per county we have the following ranking: Vaslui (13%), Alba (13%), Bacău (10.2%), Vâlcea (9.5%), Dolj (7.7%). These counties represent more than 50% of the total turnover of all OICPOPA members.

2.4 National Interprofessional Organisation of Romanian Fruit and Vegetable Products

The members of Prod Com Vegetables and Fruit are the National Association of Vegetable Producers in Solar Greenhouses and Field, the Association of Transylvanian Apple Producers, the Association of Mushroom Producers and Distributors in Romania, the Association of Fruit Producers in Moldova and the Employers' Association of the Fruit and Vegetable Preserves and Mixed Preserves Industry "ROMCONSERV".

Following the analysis of the location of OIPA-ProdCom members in the territory, according to the data processed from MADR and the official OIPA-ProdCom website, we have made the territorial representation by counties. Thus, we can mention that OIPA-ProdCom member organisations in the fresh and processed fruit and vegetables sector are present in 19 counties in Romania.

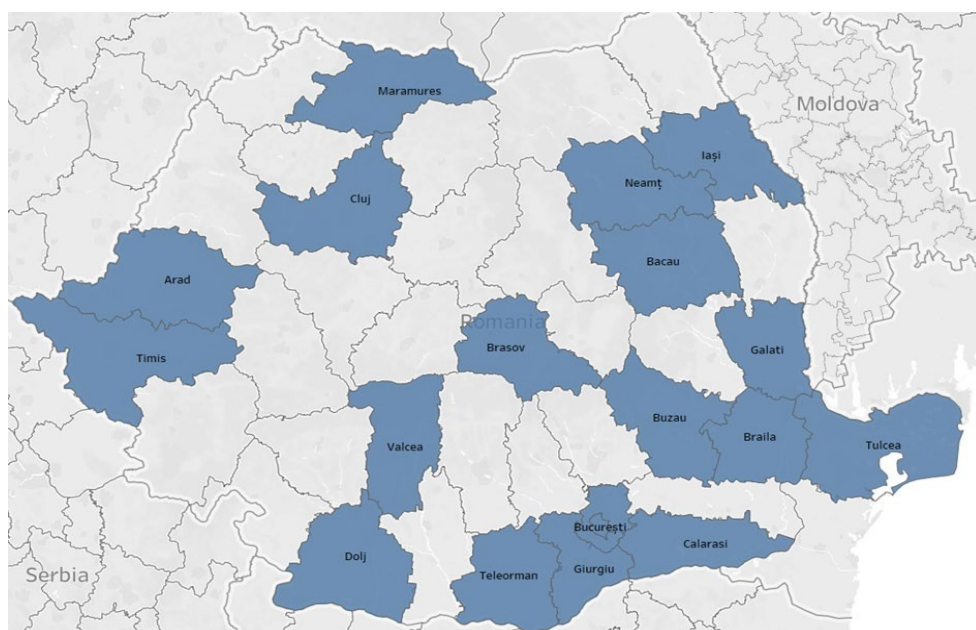


Figure 5. Territorial distribution of OIPA members - ProdCom

Source: Data processing avicultura.ro using Tableau Public

According to data processed by MADR, oipalegume-fructe.ro and mfinanțe.gov.ro 543 people are officially employed in companies in the fresh and processed fruit and vegetables sector. Analysing the cumulative profit per county recorded by the companies, 3 counties in Romania record the highest profit, namely Bucharest (83.8%), Brașov (11.2%) and Braila (10.8%). The county with the highest losses is Valcea.

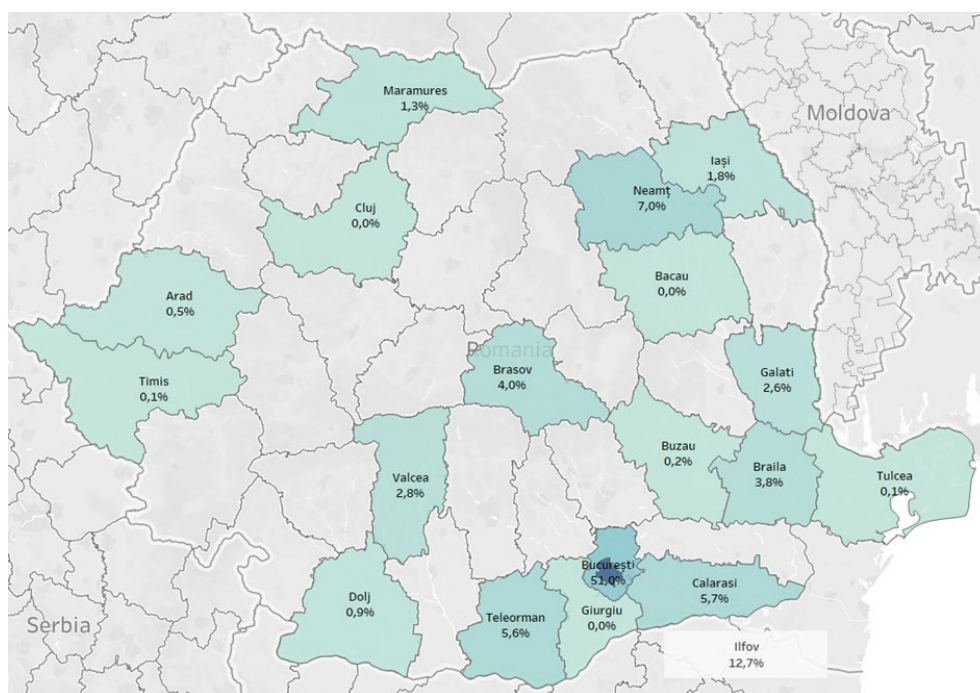


Figure 6. County-wide share of cumulative turnover of OIPA ProdCom members

Source: Data processing avicultura.ro and mfinanțe.gov.ro aid Tableau Public

Regarding the economic performance of OIPA ProdCom members by counties, we can see that in the top 5 counties by cumulative turnover of members per county we have the following ranking: Bucharest (51%), Ilfov (12.7%), Neamt (7%), Calarasi (5.7%), Teleorman (5.5%). These counties represent more than 80% of the total turnover of all OIPC members.

2.5 Interprofessional Pork Organisation (OICP)

The members of OICP are the Romanian Pork Association - ARC and the Association of Pork Producers in Romania - APCP. Each of the two associations represents the interests of members in the pork sector.

Following the analysis of the data taken from MADR on the location of the members of the two associations, ARC and APCRP, in the territory we have made their territorial representation by counties. Thus, we can mention that the members of the OICP in the pork sector are present in 33 counties in Romania. Moreover, it can be seen that the national representation of the fresh and processed fruit and vegetable sector in Romania is about 78%.

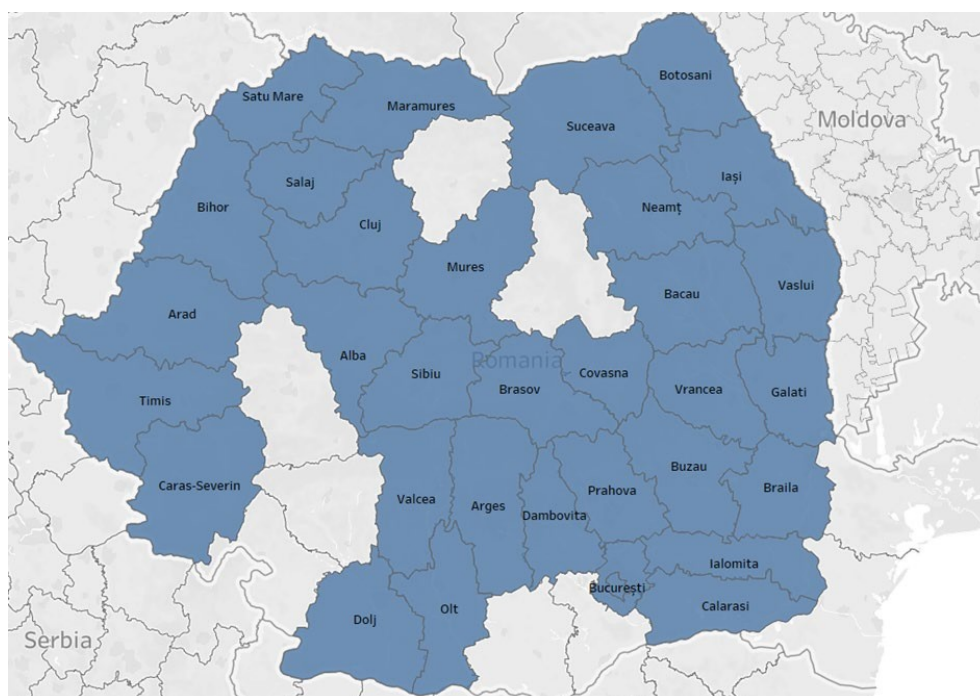


Figure 5. Territorial distribution of IOPC members

Source: Data processing avicultura.ro using Tableau Public

The economic performance of the 105 OICP member companies was processed according to MADR and mfinanțe.gov.ro data and is detailed in the table and graphs below. Thus, 25133 people at national level are employed under contract and carry out activities within the pork sector.

Analysing the cumulative profit by county recorded by member companies, the top 5 counties change their ranking as follows: Brasov (25.4%), Alba (19.3%), Bucharest (12.2%), Prahova (7.6%), Dâmbovița (5.8%). The counties with the highest losses are Călărași and Ialomița.

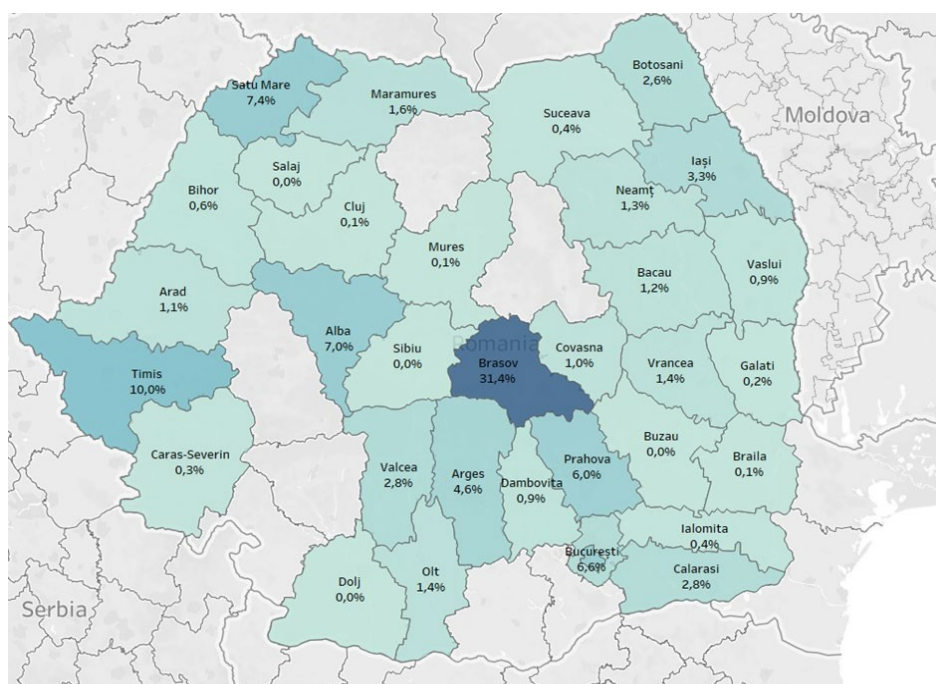


Figure 6. County-wide share of cumulative turnover of ICOP members
Source: Data processing avicultura.ro and mfinanțe.gov.ro aid Tableau Public

Regarding the economic performance of OICP members by counties, we can see that the top 5 counties by turnover are Brasov (31.4%), Timis (28.4%), Timis (10%), Satu Mare (7.4%), Alba (7%). These counties represent more than 50% of the total turnover of all OICP members.

3. Local Action Groups (LAGs)

Local Action Groups (LAGs) are a significant component of rural development policy in Romania, representing a mechanism to encourage the sustainable promotion of the development of localised communities and rural areas. These groups were established in Romania during the 2000s, following the country's accession to the European Union, under the influence of European policies and funding to promote rural development. Before investigating the progress and relevance of Local Action Groups (LAGs) in the Romanian context, it is imperative to establish a clear definition and understanding of the LAG concept. These groups are modalities of public-private partnership, bringing together representatives of local authorities, the private sector and civil societies in a given rural area, in order to elaborate and implement an integrated local development strategy. The main aim of the Local Action Group (LAG) is to provide resources and support to local communities to identify and use their development potential in a sustainable way. These public-private partnership groups are essential for promoting integrated local development in rural areas.

The National Federation of Local Action Groups in Romania presents a statistic of all local action groups in our country, at county level. We would like to present this statistic below, with our own interpretation, i.e. with the determination of the total number of LAGs per county.

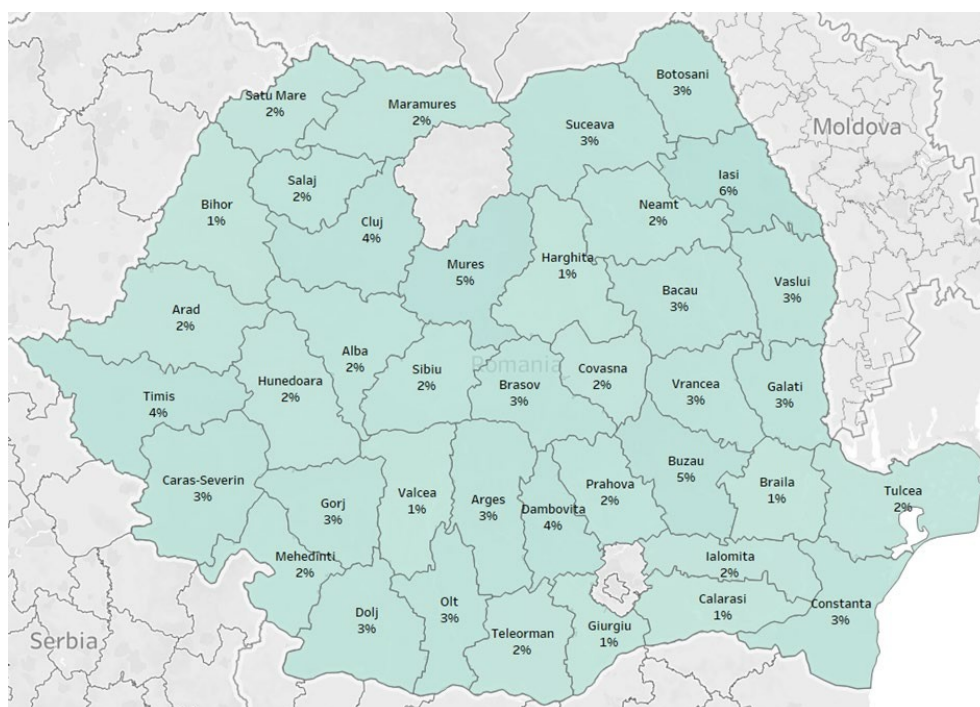


Figure 8. Share of Local Action Groups at county level in total

Source: processing of FNGAL data using Tableau Public

Similarly, if Iasi county has registered the most Local Action Groups, it also has the largest share, so the 11 LAGs represent about 6% of the total 175 LAGs at national level. Mures and Buzau counties have a share of LAGs in the national total of 5% each, and Cluj, Dambovitza and Timis counties have 4% each of all LAGs at national level. At the other end of the scale, with a minimum percentage of 1%, are Giurgiu, Harghita, Valcea, Bihor, Braila and Calarasi counties.

Figure 9 shows graphically, at county level, the number of Local Action Groups that have among their measures the development of the agricultural and food sector in any form of the many situations and options available through funding programmes.

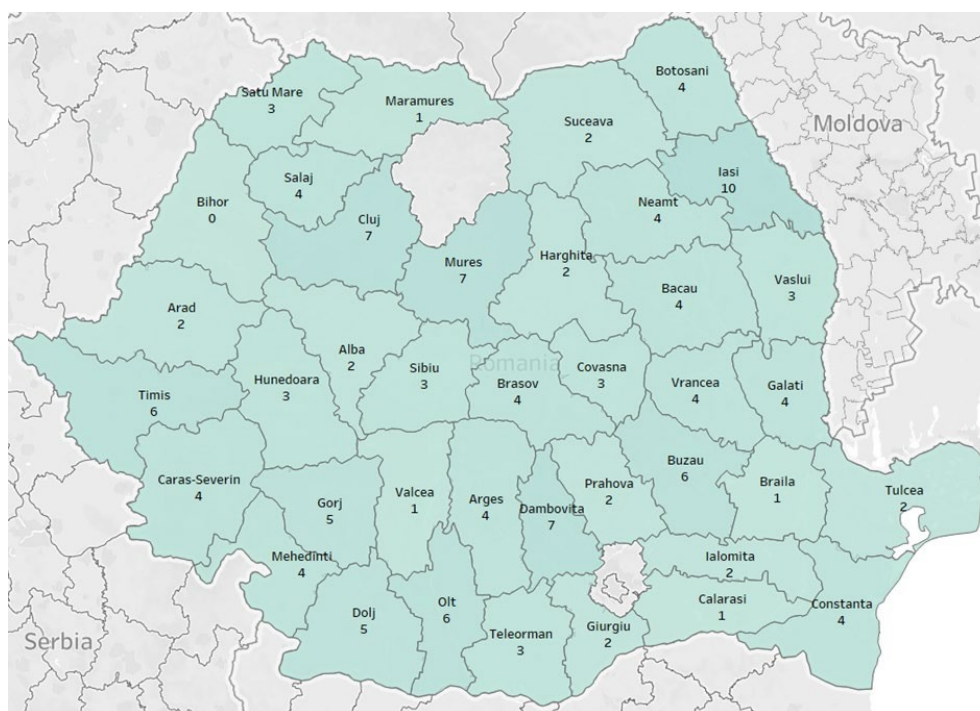


Figure 9. Distribution of LAGs at county level for the development of the agricultural sector

Source: processing of FNGAL data using Tableau Public

Out of the total of 175 Local Action Groups in Romania, 141 LAGs present measures aimed at the development of the agricultural sector, regardless of its form, according to the activities of these LAGs either currently or in the past.

The ranking of the counties is maintained, if in Iasi county there were 11 LAGs, well of these, 10 are LAGs contributing to the development of the agricultural sector. In Mures county out of the 9 LAGs, 7 contribute to the development of agriculture, and in Cluj and Dambovită counties all 7 LAGs in each county contribute to the development of the agricultural sector. At the bottom of the ranking, although the counties with the fewest LAGs have at least one of them or the only one in the county (Brăila, Călărași) to target the agricultural development component, unfortunately Bihor county, with the only LAG it has, does not record any activity aimed at developing the agricultural sector.

The number of LAGs aiming at the development of the agricultural sector can also be calculated as a proportion of the total number of LAGs, so that at national level the 141 LAGs also aiming at the development of agriculture represent about 81% of the total 175 LAGs at national level.

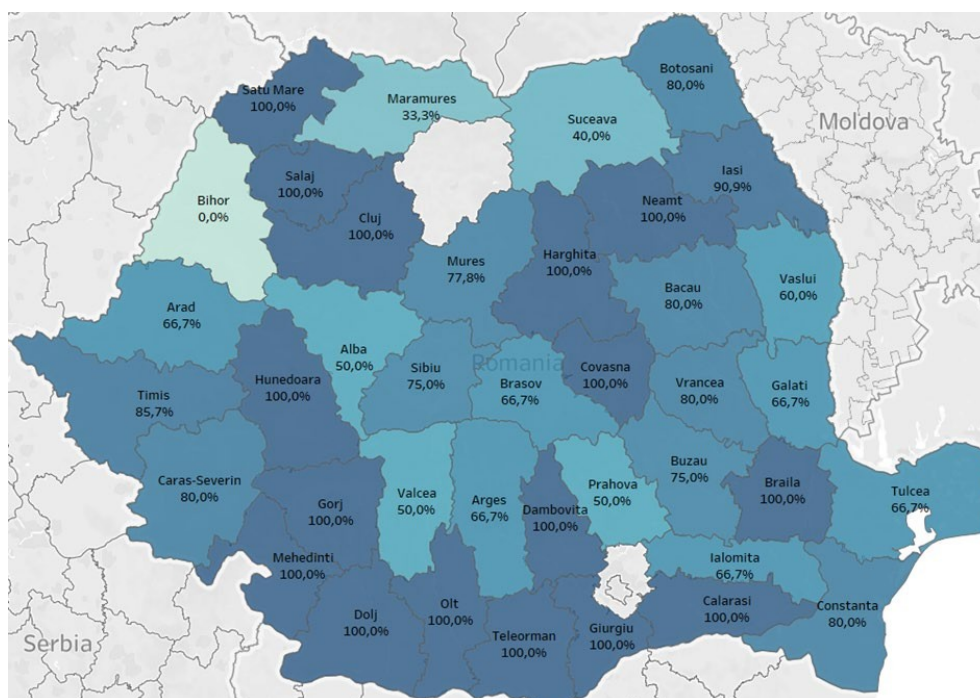


Figure 10. Share of LAGs targeting agricultural sector development in total LAGs

Source: processing of FNGAL data using Tableau Public

Discussing about the share of LAGs that support the development of agriculture in their total, we are a little different from the ranking, given that the counties with many LAGs, but also those with fewer can have high shares, the best example being here the counties of Braila and Calarasi which have a certain LAG each, this one also targeting the agriculture component, thus registering a share of 100%, we can also discuss the county of Iasi with the most LAGs, and the share of those that also target agriculture is over 90%.

There are a total of 16 counties with a share of 100%, in other words all LAGs in the county have a component contributing to the development of the agricultural sector, namely: Cluj, Dâmbovița, Olt, Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinți, Neamț, Sălaj, Covasna, Hunedoara, Satu-Mare, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Harghita, Brăila and Călărași, in descending order of the number of LAGs from 7 to 1.

There are counties where 3 out of 4 LAGs present measures covering the agricultural sector, namely Buzău and Sibiu counties with a share of 75%.

There are also counties where 2 out of 3 LAGs present measures covering the agricultural sector, i.e. Arges, Brasov, Galati, Arad, Ialomita and Tulcea counties have a share of 67%.

In Alba, Prahova and Valcea counties half of the LAGs present there have measures covering the agriculture component, and 1 out of 3 LAGs present measures for the development of the agricultural sector in Maramures county.

Conclusions

It is important to note that the structure and specific details of public-private partnerships can vary considerably by country, region and scope, and are subject to local laws and regulations.

Therefore, any such collaboration must be well planned, regulated and supervised to ensure equitable benefits for all parties involved and for the community as a whole.

Public-Private Partnerships in agriculture can bring significant benefits but also challenges. It is important that these collaborations are well planned, regulated and monitored to ensure that they contribute effectively to the development of the agricultural sector and to the improvement of the living conditions of rural communities.

Interprofessional Organisations for Agri-Food Products (OIPA) in Romania represent groups of producers and businesses in the agri-food sector that cooperate to promote and develop their products in a sustainable and efficient way. These organisations play an important role in supporting agricultural producers and the food industry in the country. It is important to note that each IFAPO may have specific aims and activities, and these may vary depending on the production sector and geographical region.

Local Action Groups are distributed in different regions of Romania, each with its own characteristics, resources and needs. This has led to the development of specific strategies adapted to the local context. LAGs focus on improving living conditions in rural areas, including supporting local agriculture, promoting traditional products and creating economic opportunities in rural areas. LAGs provide financial support and advice for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and local entrepreneurship, helping to develop and diversify local economies.

It is important to note that these findings may vary depending on the LAG and the specificities of the region. However, the active involvement of local communities and continued support from authorities and non-governmental organisations are essential for the success of LAGs and the sustainable development of rural areas in Romania.

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