

It is Nice to Get an (Advisory) Package

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Abstract: Croatian farmers found themselves facing new challenges in implementing the Common Agricultural Policy with the Croatian accession to the EU in 2013. Advisory Service Croatia in 2016 started with a new advising system application in the form of advisory packages in order to assist farmers in adapting to these changes. The advisory package is a set of operations and services designed for beneficiaries – farmers or foresters and is seeking to provide efficient and quality advice which is in line with the EU Common Agricultural Policy guidelines. Advisory packages consists of activities that meet priorities, focus areas and topics set by the Rural Development Programme and are conducted under Rules on implementation of Measure M02 “Advisory Service, service for the management of farms and help for farms”. The catalog of advisory packages is the main tool for advising. By selecting a particular package, the beneficiary, together with the advisor, defines the intensity, area of activity, subunits and duration of the advisory package. “Mixing farm system” is the most used advisory package, while “Fattening pigs” and “Agricultural Biodiversity” are the least used packages. First experiences are satisfying regarding that 2016 was a test year for packages implementation. Detailed evaluation will provide answers concerning further development and improvement of advisory packages.

Key words: Advisory Package, Catalog of Advisory Package, Common Agriculture Policy, Rural Development Programme, Advisory Service Croatia, EU Funds

Introduction

Improving agricultural advisory is a permanent task within AKIS¹. With Croatian accession to the EU, 2013, Croatian farmers found themselves facing new challenges in implementing Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)..

Advisory package is essentially a description of the advisory content conducted by one or more advisors. It is designed in the following structure:

“Your situation” – status of your farm,

“You want” – possibility to co-design the content of package,

“Packages content” – offering professional content of packages,

“Expected results” – performance after implemented packages.

The purpose of new system of advising in the form of advisory packages is to adjust advising to the needs of farmers and to be more specific and efficient (“package” is something tangible

¹ AKIS- Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems

unlike “advising”). Does that system work? What is the experience of its implementation in Croatia and what is the comparison with a similar system in the German state of Baden Württemberg? Hopefully, we’ll answer this questions in this paper.

A Brief Overview of Agriculture in Croatia

Farms in Croatia can be characterized as being relatively small: the average size of 5.6 ha per holding in 2010 was considerably less than the average of 14.4 ha per holding across the whole of the EU- 27.²

In the structure of agricultural holdings in 2012, 233.280 agricultural holdings are engaged in agricultural activities in Croatia utilizing 1.316.010 ha of agricultural land. (RDP, 2014)

In 2016, out of the total of 190,000 registered farms in Croatia, 63% avail of less than three ha of land. The power of medium to large farms (20-300 ha), which own about 32% of agricultural land and whose importance for market sale is increasing, has been on the rise for the last ten years.

During the process of joining EU, Croatian agriculture was exposed to the strong demands to producers to implement basic elements of sustainable agriculture in the whole agricultural production. While agricultural sector in EU countries has been changed step by step towards the adoption of the basic principles of sustainable agriculture, it is expected that agronomists and farmers in Croatia adopt these principles almost immediately.³

Croatia has solid development resources. Crops are dominant in plain areas, orchards and vineyards in hilly areas, livestock production in the mountains, while Mediterranean cultures are present on the coast. In the structure of total agricultural production, in 2012, crops production prevailed with 63%, and farming had the leading position. (Nikolic et al, 2017)

A Brief Description of Advisory Service Croatia

Advisory Service Croatia (ASC) is a public institution for advisory activities in agriculture, rural development, fisheries and forest management. The Founder of ASC is the Republic of Croatia, and the rights and obligations of the Founder are carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture. (Statute of Advisory Service Croatia, 2014) Advisory Service Croatia acquires the funds for its operation from the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia, and from 2016 is co-funded by EAFRD. ASC operates via the Central Office in Zagreb and county branch offices employing more than 260 employees. Pursuant to its activity defined by the Act, the Advisory Service Croatia performs its tasks in the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia in 117 offices.

Agricultural advisory activity consists of the following tasks and assignments:

- the technological and technical improvement of farms and the provision of professional assistance to farmers with the goal of increasing the profits from agricultural activities and supplementary activities on farms,
- the provision of professional advice, instructions and practical demonstrations from the field of agriculture and fisheries for the purpose of presenting new technologies and techniques, as well as management methods, and the transfer of all knowledge and

² Eurostat Statistics Explained- the article presents statistics from Farm structure survey (FSS) conducted in Croatia in 2010.

(http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/Structure_of_agriculture_in_Croatia)

³ Data extracted from project “Lifelong learning for sustainable agriculture in Alps-Danube-Adriatic-Region” implemented by prof.dr.sc. Renata Bozek from Faculty of Agriculture.

skills necessary for the development and preservation of values of rural areas and sustainable development of agriculture and fisheries,

- the participation in and preparation of development plans for farms (investment programmes, business plans, programmes for the development of rural areas, etc.),
- the participation in the creation and the implementation of agricultural and fisheries policy measures in line with the regulations and acts of the Government of the Republic of Croatia,
- the participation in the implementation of programmes for the development of agriculture, fisheries, rural areas and islands,
- the participation in the implementation of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 measures,
- the promotion of knowledge in agriculture and fisheries with the aim of preserving biodiversity and landscape diversity in the interest of village, rural areas and islands,
- encouragement and assistance in the establishment and the work of various forms of associations of farmers and entities in fisheries,
- the provision of counselling services to beneficiaries of fisheries subsidies in terms of the implementation of structural policy measures, market regulation measures and special subsidies,
- the implementation of the system of agricultural accountancy data through annual surveys (FADN),
- the dissemination of information and publishing for the purpose of development of agriculture, fisheries, rural areas and islands,
- the organization, monitoring and data collection on the occurrence of harmful organisms in crop production,
- the organization, implementation and participation in international and domestic scientific and professional projects,
- the planning and harmonization of advisory work with professional services in agriculture and fisheries,
- the organization, participation in and holding of professional gatherings, events, conferences and exhibitions. (Statute of Advisory Service Croatia, 2014)

By the end of 2016, Advisory Service completed the year with a total of 252 employees, out of which 196 agricultural and 29 forestry professions. Due to the specificity of the work, a total of 209 advisors with more than 3 years of working experience participated in the implementation of M02 of RDP, but in most part 181 advisors. (Annual Implementation Plan of M02 for 2016, 2015)

Legal Basis

Legal basis for implementation of advisory system is article 15⁴ of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 and her supplementary and

⁴ Paragraph 1, article 15 provides that support under measure M02 shall be granted in order to help farmers, young farmers, forest holders, other land managers and SMEs in rural areas benefit from the use of advisory services for the improvement of the economic and environmental performance as well as the climate friendliness and resilience of their holding, enterprise and/or investment and to promote the setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as forestry advisory services, Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005, Official Journal of the European Union, L 347/505, 20th of December, 2013

implementing regulations: Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 807/2014 of 11 March 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and introducing transitional provisions, Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2014 of 17 July 2014 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Another important regulation related to the implementation of the respective measure is Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 17 December 2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 352/78, (EC) No 165/94, (EC) N2799/98, (EC) No 814/2000, (EC) No 1290/2005 and (EC) No 485/2008 which prescribes establishment of Farm Advisory System (FAS) and thus complements this measure.⁵

As far as national legislation is concerned, the Minister of Agriculture passed the Rules on the implementation of Measure M02 Advisory Service, service for management of farms and help for farms. These Rules determine the manner and the conditions for implementing measure M02 and are strictly in line with the abovementioned Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013. As stated in the Rules concerned, acceptable beneficiary of measure M02 is only Advisory Service, while governing body of the Rural Development Programme of the Republic of Croatia is Ministry of Agriculture while operational implementation of the Programme is in jurisdiction of the Paying Agency in Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development. This project is co-financed with the European Union funds with 85% EU funds (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) and 15% Republic of Croatia state budget. Advice for farmers or forest owners was free of charge and remains free with RDP implementation.

Advisory Package

Preparation

To begin the implementation of measure M02, extensive preparations were required. During 2015 and 2016 numerous activities have been undertaken in the preparation, securing and implementation of measure M02. In 2015 and 2016, more than 50 meetings were held with the representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and of the Payments Agency in Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development who are Governing Body for RDP implementation. Also, numerous meetings were conducted in Advisory Service Croatia for quality preparation of RDP implementation. At first, we in ASC gathered numerous information from RDP and then started with “adjustment process”. An assessment of the needs for educating advisers on subjects from RDP was developed in parallel with advisory package designing. To ensure the quality of advisory packages, in 2016 Advisory Service has carried out compulsory professional trainings for advisors within ad hoc courses and training of trainers. Also, Advisory Service has carried out methodically professional trainings within ad hoc courses and CECRA Training the trainers (Certificate for European Consultants in Rural Areas).

About Advisory Package

⁵ In Article 12 to 14 it is prescribed what FAS shall cover, what specific requirements needs to be fulfilled and categories of beneficiaries that have access to FAS, Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 17 December 2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy, Official Journal of the European Union, L 347/549, 20th of December, 2013

Advisory Service Croatia advisory package is a set of operations and services designed for package user (farmers or foresters) and is aiming to provide efficient and quality advice which is in line with the EU Common Agricultural Policy guidelines. Advisory packages consists of activities that meet priorities, focus areas and topics set by the Rural Development Programme. (Annual Implementation Plan of M02 for 2016, 2015)

Advising is conducted through 4 types of operation:

- **Type of operation 2.1.1.: Cross-compliance and agri-environmental-climate and organic farming** – for organic producers (including farmers who cross over to ecological farming - beneficiaries of M11) and farmers with “green” obligations (M10 beneficiaries) or "multiple compliance",
- **Type of operation 2.1.2.: Modernizing and increasing the competitiveness of the agricultural holdings** – for small agricultural holdings, farmers beginners in agricultural production, and other agricultural farms with the aim of modernizing and increasing the competitiveness of the farms.
- **Type of operation 2.1.3.: Advice on the forestry holdings** – for forest owners with the aim of improving economic performance and ecological efficiency, protecting the climate and the resilience of their economies, enterprises or investments.
- **Type of operation 2.1.4.: Advice to young farmers** – for young farmers, beneficiaries measure M06, sub-measures 6.1. “Support for start-up business for young farmers” from RDP, and young farmers – persons who are not older than 40 at the time of submission of the request for advisory package and for the first time in an agricultural holding are assumed to be holder of that farm but not longer than 18 months prior to submitting a request for advisory package.

Each advisory package contains several units and is designed so that the counseling service can be tailored to the needs of a particular farmer or forest owner. Advisory activities on an agricultural holding or forest estate may be carried out by an adviser of the required specialty or, as appropriate, by multiple advisors of various specialties.

Advising in agriculture is conducted through 3 types of operation (2.1.1.; 2.1.2. and 2.1.4.) and in forestry through type of operation 2.1.3. Because of the specificity and the differences in agriculture and forestry, advisory packages are adjusted and divided in two large section: agriculture and forestry.

Agriculture

Counseling activities in agriculture advisory package of agricultural production are divided into several units:

1. Package opening
2. Agricultural practice – agroecology
3. Livestock production
4. Plant Production
5. Plant protection
6. Mechanization, equipment and facilities
7. Agroecconomics
8. Rural development
9. Agricultural products processing
10. Package closure

Each of these units has its own subunits:

1. PACKAGE OPENING
 - a) introduction to agricultural production
 - b) farm condition analysis

2. AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE – agroecology
 - a) Biodiversity
 - b) Good agricultural and environmental conditions
 - c) Environment and climate change
 - d) Natural resource management
 - e) Energy efficiency and renewable energy sources
 - f) Sustainable use of pesticides
 - g) Natura 2000
 - h) Animal health welfare and protection
 - i) Manure management
 - j) Agricultural land management

3. CATTLE BREEDING
 - a) Herd / Flock / Apiary Management
 - b) Cultivation
 - c) Fodder production
 - d) Nutrition
 - e) Reproduction
 - f) Hygiene and zootechnical conditions

4. PLANT PRODUCTION – horticulture and farming
 - a) Crops/ plantation overview and recommendations
 - b) Planning the sowing / planting of a new crop / plantation
 - c) Breeding, care and irrigation of crops / plantations
 - d) Seed / nursery production
 - e) Conversion / restructuring / revitalization
 - f) Harvest / harvesting / extraction / mowing
 - g) Processing and care (wine, SAD, olive oil)
 - h) Storage

5. PLANT PROTECTION
 - a) Crop / plantation health status overview
 - b) Mischievously organisms determination
 - c) Harmfulness level determination
 - d) Recommendation for the suppression of mischievously organisms

6. MECHANIZATION, FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT
 - a) Plan of procurement and use of mechanization, equipment and facilities
 - b) Safe handling of mechanization and equipment
 - c) Machines and equipment adjustment

7. AGROECONOMICS
 - a) Calculation of gross margin and income
 - b) Basic economic and financial indicators calculation and analysis of
 - c) Agricultural Accounting
 - d) Management optimization

8. RURAL DEVELOPMENT
 - a) Diversification

- b) Quality standards implementation
- c) Products labeling, processing and marketing

9. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS PROCESSING

- a) Agricultural products processing technology
- b) Hygiene and health conditions in processing
- c) Registration of objects for products processing

10. PACKAGE CLOSURE

- a) Final opinion

Advisors provide advice following the order, according to the chosen advisory package and package activities. Beneficiary decides which of these subunits are most appropriate for his farm. Consult is mandatory on points from at least one subunit “Agricultural Practice” in every package, which is in accordance with the aforementioned priorities and mandatory topics.

Forestry

Activities in advisory packages for forests are related to forest management advice that has implemented advises on the protection of wild flora and fauna habitats, bird and water protection.

Compulsory activities in each package are related to the ecological and security aspect of the relationship with the habitat and the living world in the forest and activities related to an appropriate way of management or treatment – according to the estimated situation on the forest parcels. These are activities listed in the group: “Habitat, water, flora and fauna protection” and “Land and habitat protection measures (technical recommendations)”. (Rules on implementation of Measure M02, 2015)

How can a farmer / forest owner become beneficiary of the advisory package?

Advice through the advisory package starts with the signature of the farmer / forest owner on the “Request for Advice”. By selecting a particular package, the beneficiary, together with the advisor, defines the intensity, area of activity, subunits and duration of the advisory package. The farmer / forest owner can send request online (www.savjetodavna.hr), via e-mail, by telephone or directly at one of the 117 ASC offices in the Republic of Croatia. Advisors carry out consultations on advisory procedures for the purpose of providing consistent advice by using checklists for farmers and forest owners. Beneficiaries can also receive expert materials related to the specialist areas of counseling. Advice ends with package closure by issuing a Certificate of advice. The Certificate is signed by the advisor and the farmer / forest owner as a proof that all advices were delivered to the beneficiary. Also it contains all of the provided advices with date, time and duration of advice, so the beneficiary has a permanent document which can be used in similar situation in the future.

The Catalog of Advisory Packages is the Main Tool for Advising

The Catalog of advisory packages in Croatia is prepared according to the Catalog of advisory packages in Baden Württemberg (BW). The Catalog of advisory packages from Baden Württemberg is an innovative concept for offering advice to farmers. Preparation for this BW Catalog begun in 2012 and was published in September 2015. More than 150 advisors and experts were involved in process of forming. The BW Catalog contains 64 modular advising (advisory packages) that allows farmers to choose the contents of advising; respectively modules that best suit the specific needs of their farms and is offering introductory, basic, and special advisory modules. The Catalog of advisory packages in Croatia has been prepared by

senior coordinators and advisors of specialties since September 2015. The ASC Catalog in was first published in April 2016 with number of 99 advisory packages, and in October 2016 it was revised and amended, and the number of packages increased to 114 due to the farmers needs and harmonization with the rules of implementation:

Tabel 1.: Advisory package number in 2016 and 2017 per type of operation

Type of operaton	Advisory packages	
	2016	2017
2.1.1.	14	39
2.1.2.	41	32
2.1.3.	3	3
2.1.4.	41	40
TOTAL	99	114

Both Catalogs are designed by the types of agricultural production, but in ASC Catalog forestry requirements are represented. In ASC Catalog all of the advisory packages are basic. ASC Catalog was sent via classic mail to more than 100000 farmers to introduce them with new approach to advice.

Tabel 2.: BW and ASC Catalog comparison

Baden-Württemberg Catalog	Advisory Service Croatia Catalog
Published in September 2015	Published in April/October 2016
64 modules	99/114 advisory packages
Specifies prices and intensity of public funding	Prices of singular packages are not specified
Maximum amount of co-financing farmers is 1100 €, and intensity 50-100 %	All packages are free of charge for beneficiaries
Advisory organisations authorized to offer individual modules are listed,	Advising is carried out only by the Advisory Service Croatia
Catalog offers introductory, basic and special modules	Basic
No limits on number of packages/modules on farm will use	Number of advisory package is limited to 2 advisory packages in 3 years per beneficiary
No forestry	Forestry included

In addition to the Catalog of Advisory packages, a new tool has been created – The handbook on implementation of advising, where advisory processes are described, e.g. introductory conversations, definition of the package, advising process, documentation in SEMIS (an electronic monthly reporting system for employees).

Experience in Applying Advisory Packages in Croatia in 2016

In the Annual plan for implementation of measure M02 for 2016, 2636 advisory packages were planned, and 3270 advisory packages were opened by 181 advisors, which amounts to

124% of realization. Since 2016 was the test year and for the first time in the history of ASC advising was conducted through advisory packages which were formulated in a specific way. Overall realization is more than satisfying. On the other hand, realization by type of operation was somewhat different because it was not possible to foresee user demand for a particular type of package:

Tabel 3.: Comparison of planned and realized number of packages in 2016 per type of operation

Type of operation	Number of packages in 2016	Plan for 2016	Percentage of plan realisation
2.1.1.	480	1054	46%
2.1.2.	2548	923	276%
2.1.3.	82	132	62%
2.1.4.	160	527	30%
TOTAL	3270	2636	124%

The largest part in advising was in type of operation 2.1.2. “Advising on modernization and increasing the competitiveness of agricultural holdings”, followed by type of operation 2.1.1. “Counseling on Multiple Conformity, Measures” Agriculture, Environment and Climate Change “and Ecological Growth”, and in smaller part type of operation 2.1.4 “Advising Young Farmers”. The smallest part in advising took type of operation 2.1.3. “Forestry Counseling” because of its specificity in forest management.

In 2016, 1297 advisory packages were closed, and overall advising continues in 2017 through 1973 opened advisory packages.

In 1297 conducted advisory packages, a total of 37,136.25 working hours and 324,726 km was spent, average 28.63 hours and 250 km per advisory package. The total financial value of the work in conducted packages amounted to 356,179.58 EUR, which is an average of 274.62 EUR working hours per package, the average working hour value in the package is 9.59 EUR.

Tabel 4.: Conducted packages overview for 2016

Total number of conducted packages	Total number of working hours in packages	Total packages financial work value in €	Average number of working hours per package	Average package financial value in €	Average working hour value per package in €	Total number of kilometers in packages	Average kilometers number per package
1297	37,136.25	356,179.58	28.63	274.62	9.59	324,726	250.37

The average number of advisory package per advisory is 15, average duration of package is 29 hours and average working hour value per package is less than 10€. In Baden Württemberg the average number of advisory package per advisory is 45, average duration is 10 hours, and average working hour value per package is 70€. Main goal in adaptation process in the future of advisory packages implementation in ASC is to bring closer numbers to data from Baden Württemberg.

The total value of all advisory packages (ongoing and conducted) in 2016 was 937,405.49 €, which is 58% of the 1,634,198.11€ envisaged in the Annual Implementation Plan of the

Measure M02 for 2016. Since 2016 was the test year and the full realization of the measure M02 implementation began in July 2016, it can be said that the results are satisfactory.

Evaluation

SEMIS (Electronic Monthly Employee Reporting System) is an internal Advisory service`s electronic system. Daily advisors activities are recorded and the costs incurred by carrying out these activities are recorded in SEMIS.

The System has been upgraded for the implementation and monitoring of activities related to the measure M02. It is possible to collect and analyze data by various categories for the desired period from the System

Monitoring of implementation has been developed in cooperation with the Governing Body.

The supervision of the provision advisory services to beneficiaries is in accordance with the recommendations of the European Court of Auditors and the European Commission has been developed according to the following categories: age, sex, degree of education, production sector, size of the economy (ha), legal status, ecological production, beneficiary of rural development measures.

SEMIS Data

According to SEMIS data, the evaluation of the conducted advisory packages in 2016 found that the largest number of advisory packages beneficiaries are over the age of 60, most of the farm holders are male. Also, it was found that more than 2/3 beneficiaries have secondary education. According to the type of production, most of farms are mixed farms, and the evaluation of the farm size found that 60% of users in the category below 5 ha. More than 90% of beneficiaries are family farms, most of which are not using RDP measures nor are included in ecological production. Advisory packages should help to improve this data in the next years.

“Mixing farm system” is the most used advisory package, while “Fattening pigs” and “Agricultural Biodiversity” are the least used packages.

Beneficiary Evaluation

Survey questionnaire was filled out by 402 conducted advisory packages beneficiaries and expressed their satisfaction with advisory packages and advisors with scores rated from 1 (inadequate) to 5 (excellent). The average score of the farmers / forest owners on the advisory packages content and quality was 4.46. Satisfaction with advisors who provide advices in advisory packages was 4.89 and this can be interpreted as a sign of success and quality implementation on advising.

Advisors Evaluation

The evaluation was also done by surveying the advisors involved in the implementation of sub-measure 2.1. The survey list was fulfilled by 173 advisors involved in the implementation of the measure M02 and expressed their satisfaction with advisory packages and their experience in advisory packages rated 1 (inadequate) to 5 (excellent). The average advisors grade on the content and quality of counseling packages was 3.05. The satisfaction of advisors with experience in the advisory packages was rated average at 2.97.

It is evident that advisors evaluate advisory packages or their implementation with a lower grade than farmers. This fact requires a more detailed analysis of this phenomenon.

Possible explanation might be insufficient preparedness of field advisers to apply new forms of financing and advising, which, without a dilemma, was a major challenge for most of the advisers.

Governing body will conduct detailed evaluation on measure M02 implementation in 2017.

Problems in Implementation of Advisory Package and Solutions

One of the main problems was restriction of 2 advices in 3 years per beneficiary. That restriction was conducted in case if one advisory package would have a price of 1500€. Since the average price of advisory package is 275€, and one working hour value of advisers lower than 10 €, there is no fear that the price of 1500€ could be reached. Also, most of beneficiaries expressed a desire for repeated cooperation with ASC through advisory package. Solution is simple - abolish the restriction and enable more than 2 advices in 3 years.

There were also problems with restriction on young farmers. According to our RDP a young farmer is person who is not older than 40 at the time of submission of the request for advisory package and for the first time in an agricultural holding is assumed to be holder of that farm but not longer than 18 months prior to submitting a request for advisory package. There are not a lot of young farmers who are eligible with these conditions, so it would be stimulating for them if a limit of 18 months could be reviewed.

Some of the problems occurred in short preparation of implementation of this measure M02 (IT sector, specific technical details) and were solved and are still resolving and upgrading with implementation.

Also, there were problems with slow administration solutions so Ministry of Agriculture, Payments Agency in Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development and Advisory Service Croatia are working together to simplify and improve most of the administrative obstacles.

Experiences from Baden Württemberg are positive because after the introduction of advisory packages more farms requested advices through advisory packages than before. Since the beginning of the application in Croatia, in January 2016 until the end of April 2017 total number of advisory packages (ongoing and conducted) was 4358. The test year was 2016, so it is to be expected that the interest for advisory package will grow.

Conclusion

Croatian farmers are facing new and significant challenges in implementing Common Agricultural Policy. The Advisory Service Croatia is tracking this challenges and is adapting and transforming in order to provide most efficient advice in real time.

Advisory packages are an innovative advisory system enabled by EU co-financing. According to our findings so far, this system of advisory packages was implemented in Baden-Württemberg, Austria* and Croatia. For the further development of this system, it is necessary to intensify the transnational exchange of experience and good practice. Important development goals should be simpler, administrative implementation and co-financing, supplementing the content of the module, and training of advisers for the application of advisory packages.

The Advising system, through advisory packages, helps the clearer definition of activities and expected goals of advising. The purpose of the new system of advising in the form of advisory packages is to adjust advising to the needs of farmers and to be more specific and efficient.

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