

## THE ECONOMICAL, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF RURAL AREAS IN VASLUI COUNTY

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*The paper presents the main aspects that characterize the economic potential of the countryside in Vaslui County.*

*Vaslui County is part of the North- East Development Region - Romania and covers an area of 5318 km<sup>2</sup> (approximately 2.2% in the country), occupying the 27 place in country after Bistrita - Nasaud county. In the county there are 3 municipalities (Vaslui, Barlad, Huși), 2 cities (Negrești, Murgeni), 81 communes and 460 villages.*

*To characterize the economic potential, the authors examined the reality of economic resources (capital and labor) through the statistical indicators to identify the meaning of the relation "resources - factors - economical effects".*

*The analysis shows that in the rural area of Vaslui County are major sectorial issues whose resolution requires investment projects designed to improve the economical situation.*

**Key words:** rural area, Vaslui, land fund .

The territory of Vaslui County is located in the east of the country and is a district in Moldova region of Romania. Situated on the River Barlad, it crosses the south and southeast of the Central Moldavian Plateau and in the central it spans Tutova Hills and Falciu Hills, divisions of Barlad Plateau - part of the Moldavian Plateau.

The county neighbors the following: Iasi in the north, Neamt in the north-east, Bacau in the west, Galati in the south and Vrancea in the south-west. To the east, the River Prut forms the border between Romania and the Republic of Moldova.

With an area of 5318 km<sup>2</sup>, Vaslui County ranks 27, after Bistrita-Nasaud and represents approximately 2.2% of the country. Within the county there are 5 cities (Vaslui, Barlad, Husi, Negresti, Murgeni), 81 communes and 460 villages.

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

The research has been conducted in Vaslui and the analysis was aimed at achieving the economic, social and environmental indices in the rural areas of Vaslui County.

In this content, the following research method was used: diagnostic analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Several parameters were analyzed for social – economical diagnosis, among which the most important are:

### **The demographic frame:**

Population size of an area is the central pole of economic analysis, because the elements that characterize the population express the potential development of a territory.

Table 1

#### **Demographic balance**

		2005	2006	2007	2008
Birth rate	Vaslui county - total	12,18	12,12	12,03	11,37
	Rural	12,84	12,73	12,86	-
	Urban	11,26	11,24	10,84	-
Death rate	Vaslui county - total	11,30	11,02	11,26	11,50
	Rural	13,87	13,32	13,83	-
	Urban	7,70	7,75	7,58	-
Natural growth	Vaslui county - total	0,88	1,10	0,77	-0,13
	Rural	-1,03	-0,59	-0,97	-
	Urban	3,56	3,49	3,26	-

The distribution of population by age allows us to comment on current resources and future workforce in the population.

Population age structure is included in the following table:

Table 2

#### **Population age structure**

	Vaslui county (rural)					
	2005		2006		2007	
	Number of persons	%	Number of persons	%	Number of persons	%
Total population	268.922	100	267.853	100	267.802	100
Young people	78.677	29,3	77.882	29,1	76.867	28,7
Adult people	125.366	46,6	125.267	46,7	126.479	47,2
Elderly population	64.909	24,1	64.704	24,2	64.456	24,1

### **Agricultural potential**

The agricultural potential of an area is characterized by four economic indicators:

1. land fund;
2. agricultural land per capita;

3. structure of agricultural usage;

4. shipment of animals in 100 ha.

1. In Vaslui county, in 2006, the structure of the land by use was as follows:

Table 3

**The structure of the land by use**

Categories of use	Area - ha
Total area	531840
Agricultural area	401018
Woodland	80154
Water	8251
Other areas	42417

Thus, Vaslui County occupies a total area of 531,840 ha, of which: 75.4% agricultural land, forest 15.1%, 1.5% water, 8.0% other land.

2. Agricultural land per capita is an indicator of areal, expressing the ratio of agricultural area of the municipality (county, region, country, etc.) and its population. The indicator value in Vaslui County is the average total rural area of 0.87 ha per capita and is a high value comparing with the national average (0.68 ha / inh.).

3. In Vaslui county there is an advantageous structure of the land due to high share of agricultural land (75.4%) and, above all, the most valuable economically - plouable land (72.6% of total agricultural) and areas with vineyards and orchards (3.7% of total agricultural).

Table 4

**The structure of agricultural land by use**

	2005		2006		2007		2008	
	ha	%	ha	%	ha	%	ha	%
Agricultural area (total), in wich:	401340	100	401018	100	401236	100	401191	100
Plouable land	291299	72.5	291358	72.7	291202	72.6	291340	72.6
Natural graseland	87131	21.7	86522	21.5	87226	21.7	87365	21.8
Natural meadows	7913	2.0	7954	2.0	7951	2.0	7951	2.0
Vineyards	12276	3.1	12382	3.1	12259	3.1	11957	3.0
Orchards	2721	0.7	2802	0.7	2598	0.6	2578	0.6

4. Density (charge) of animals at 100 ha (LU - livestock units per 100 ha), is calculated as the ratio between the total number of animals expressed in LU and the total agricultural land area multiplied by 100 analyzed. The indicator obtained

reflects the relationship between animal husbandry and vegetable farming potential. It presents quantitative aspect of the livestock sector.

Table 5

**Density of animals at 100 ha**

	Bovins	Swine	Sheep	Goats	Horses	Birds	Bees
2005	28.6	9.8	10.5	0.4	8.5	2.8	-
2006	30.3	9.9	10.6	0.4	7.7	2.7	-
2007	27.0	8.9	10.2	0.8	7.8	2.6	-

We appreciate that in terms of land resources, Vaslui County has a naturally high agricultural potential (agricultural area represents 75.4% of total area, returning 0.87 ha of agricultural land per capita, compared with 0.68 ha in Romania, with 0.7 ha in France, in Germany 0.24 ha, 0.39 ha in Italy, 0.4 ha in the world.

**Forestry potential**

Forestry potential is assessed by indicator forest area per capita. Analysis of this indicator shows the following: Vaslui County average is of only 0.18 ha / inhabitant, versus the national average of 0.28 ha per site, indicating a low forest potential.

**The tourism potential**

The tourism potential is expressed with the indicator “attractive tourist”, which is determined by the presence in the villages of protected natural areas, built protected areas, rural tourism expressed in number of villages included in such a circuit. In Vaslui county, the most communes have reduced tourism potential (are natural tourist attractions and / or constructed) - Bădeana municipalities, Bălteni, Horbanca, Mălușteni, Glodeni, Movileni.

**Industrial potential**

As part of North-Eastern region, Vaslui County has the lowest number of SMEs, about 8.5% and Northeast development region has the lowest number of SMEs per 1.000 inhabitants, only 13.2% of the total.

In Vaslui county, the most SMEs are dealing with trade (51%), the rest are active in industry (33%), services (11%) and agriculture (5%).

**Conditions of rural areas habitat - living area**

The living area represents the space within habitable rooms. Surface area per capita is 12.72 m<sup>2</sup> in Vaslui county and 11.86 m<sup>2</sup> in the total country.

In all rural areas, habitable area have values ranging between 6 meters / capita and more than 20 meters per inhabitant. Most municipalities (75%) are in the range of 10.0-11.9 m<sup>2</sup> / capita.

**Environmental conditions in rural Vaslui county**

In Vaslui county we can't talk about critical areas in terms of air pollution. Major problems are related to water quality in the areas of cities, most affected being the Vaslui River.

It is noted that plowable land is found in classes I and II of creditworthiness, 30.15% and 36.16%, meadows are found in classes IV and V quality, with percentage of 31.37% and 43.46%, especially on steep slopes.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Vaslui County includes 5 urban centers (Vaslui, Barlad, Husi, Negresti and Murgeni), 81 communes and 46 villages, that has 5318 km<sup>2</sup> (approximately 2.2% of the country), being on the 27<sup>th</sup> place from this point of view in the country.

2. Physical-geographical framework promotes the production and development of natural processes due to some factors of natural risk: floods, landslides.

3. Demographic:

- Increased demographic imbalance in rural areas, percentage of population aged continuing to grow;
- The ratio of elderly and young people favor the replacement of only 89.2% of the current elderly population.

4. Economic aspects:

- rural economy is largely based on agriculture;  
- most SMEs in the county are dealing with trade (51%), only 5% being active in agriculture.

5. Environmental issues - no critical points of atmosphere pollution, but there are issues regarding water quality, especially in city areas.

6. To improve the economic situation existing in Vaslui county, investment projects should follow:

- Achievement of a diverse and efficient agriculture;
- Involvement of local people in the rural development;
- Diversification of economic activities;
- Protection and rehabilitation of natural environmental factors.

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