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“Competition for Resources in a Changing World:
New Drive for Rural Development”

Territorial Sustainable Development in Aranjuez-Sardinal, Central Pacific Region of Costa Rica

OLMAN QUIROS¹, VERA VARELA², ANABELLE BENAVIDES³

¹*University of Costa Rica, School of Agricultural Economics, Costa Rica*

²*Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Rural Development, Costa Rica*

³*Ministry of Agriculture, Agricultural Extension Service, Costa Rica*

Abstract

The little effectiveness of the prevailing economic development model and its consequences in the persistence of the rural poverty, have motivated the rise of innovative and more holistic approaches. During the last years a new methodology is taking place: Territorial Sustainable Rural Development (Desarrollo Rural Territorial Sostenible: ETDR). The ETDR is essentially an integrated process of rural territories, agents (stakeholders), markets and public political intervention. The approach searches the integration of the rural territories to its interior (endogenous development potential factors) and with the national economy and defines its spectrum of action in four dimensions: 1- the natural base of the resources in the territory and the environment, 2- the local development economy, 3- the social relations, and 4- the institutions as final expression of the interaction of its inhabitants, and delimits them to a geographical space.

The zone of study, the watershed of the rivers Aranjuez and Sardinal in the Pacific Central Region of Costa Rica presents a tropical rainy climate, means annual temperatures vary with altitude. The farm production is centred on small and medium producers of coffee on organic, sustainable and conventional farms. These farms produce also milk and vegetables: chili (*Capsicum* spp.), green bean, tomato, cabbage.

The objective of the project is to improve the institutional and the civil society capacities (farmers and farmers' organisation) in the territory, through the creation of new mechanisms of organisations, the promotion of collective action and the empowerment of local communal and economic initiatives.

Preliminary results of this process are: 1- Map of actors in the territory; 2- Map of investments; 3- Institutional equipment conformed; 4- Local committee formed; 5- Strategic areas for the elaboration of the definitive plan of development: gender, tenancy of the properties (land tenure), infrastructure, knowledge management. These topics are essentially the bases of the “Local Economic Development”, and indicate that the proposed strategy of ETDR is the appropriate one

Keywords: Economic development, rural development, sustainability, watershed