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Evaluation of the Agricultural Program in the Czech Official Development Assistance Since 2008

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Abstract

Agriculture is still the most important economic sector for 70 % of rural people living in the Global South. Farmers continue to face low productivity, unstable agricultural policy, population growth and climate changes. Nowadays, the agricultural development cannot be understood only in terms of production. Foreign cooperation in agriculture must also take into account the social, environmental, cultural and other aspects.

The study analyses the trajectory of the Czech development assistance focused on agricultural sector since 2008, the year when the professional Czech Development Agency was created. The research uses descriptive methods to evaluate the agricultural projects of the Czech ODA according to selected criteria (type of project, time period, type of funding and donor, project country, target group, type of implementing organisation, etc.). Furthermore, the qualitative evaluation criteria reflecting current discourse on aid effectiveness in the agriculture and rural development are also used. The underlining framework is based on OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability). Primary data includes interviews with the actors of the Czech development assistance. Secondary data is obtained from the project's documentations.

The accession of the Czech Republic to the EU has influenced aid effectiveness and institutional structure of the Czech development assistance. The coordination of agricultural projects is no longer in the hand of the Ministry of Agriculture; this responsibility was taken over by the Czech Development Agency in 2010. The Czech assistance to agriculture profits from the experience with the transition process, from a centrally planned economy to a market one. Nowadays, the Czech Republic considers agriculture as a sector priority in the Czech ODA. Since 2008, the Czech development actors have implemented more than 50 agricultural projects in wide range of topics from the supply of technology to the non-formal education services, quality management, etc. in the countries of Eastern Europe (Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia), Africa (Ethiopia, Angola and Zambia) and Asia (Mongolia, Yemen). Most of the agricultural projects are implemented by NGOs; the rest of them is carried out by private companies, universities and governmental institutions.

Keywords: Development, donors, effectiveness, farmers, NGOs, programme evaluation