



ONLINE WORKSHOP ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER IN WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES

Albania

Dr. Edvin Zhllima

23 – 24 November 2020



Structure

1. Current research areas and capacity
2. Cooperation among institutions
3. Capacity of advisory services
4. Scope and extent of the EU and donor aid
5. Needs and potential of the research sector





Current research areas and capacity

Main figures (1/2)

- Albania spends about 0.2% of its GDP for research
- According to the Ministry of Education budget for scientific research 1% of the Ministry spending or 0.09% of the Government of Albania budget and 0.024% of the GDP.
- Lowest number of researchers per 1 million inhabitants (157 researchers) almost 60% of them work in government and the rest in higher education institutions
- The lowest rate of patents granted per million inhabitants

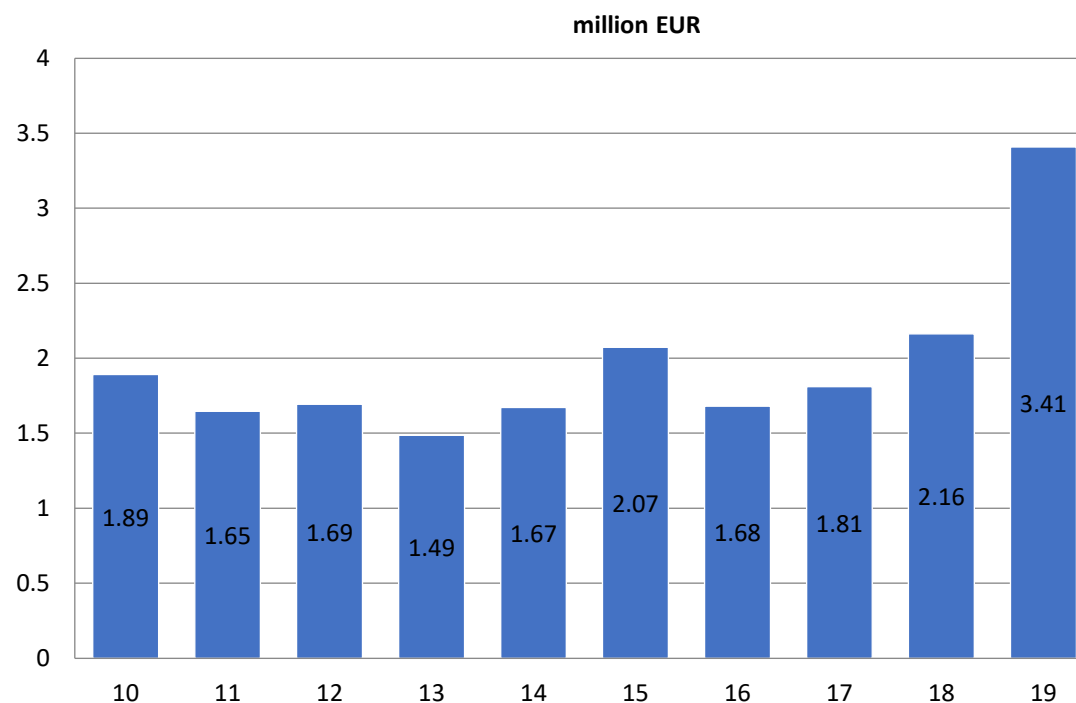


Main figures (2/2)

Budget for agricultural research

- Overall budgetary support in agriculture is 40 Mln Euro.
- Agriculture expenditure as a share of agriculture in the GDP is less than 2% (APM, 2019).
- The amount of research expenditures used by Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development namely the research, development, advisory and expert services has remained stationary at EUR 3.4 Million (APM, 2019).

Research, development, advisory and expert services



Main research actors in agriculture

- 5 Agriculture Technology Transfer Centers + as Food Safety and Veterinary Institute+ National Tobacco Agency +National Entity of Seed and Sapling
- 2 Universities (5 faculties at AUT in Tirana and 1 Faculty in UF.N in Korca).
- There are no centers of excellence in Albania.
- There are two bussines incubators in Tirane and Korce which are officially serving to business (not agricultural business so far) and two agriculture incubators.
- There are no official clusters (although there are clustered producers in fruits, vegetable and MAPs in Fier, Berat, Shkoder and Sarande)
- AIDA (Albanian Investment Development Agency) is supporting enterprises in developing their export and internationalization



Research areas of the ATTCs

ATTC	Main Field	Main objects	Main tasks
ATTC FushëKruja	Crops, livestock, natural resources	Forages, beans, cattle, pork, poultry and integrated farm management; Land and water;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identifying, testing, adapting and introducing new technological
ATTC Vlora	Crops, Postharvest	Fruit trees, olives, vineyards and citrus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – producing certified seeds and seedlings.
ATTC Shkodra	Crops and Cultivated MAPs	Crops (Maize) and MAPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Providing technical expertise to extension service staff and farmers;
ATTC Korça	Livestock and crops	1. Fruit trees (Apple) 2. Livestock (Cows and small ruminants) 3. Field crops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Preparing and publishing materials – Supporting with data and information
ATTC Lushnja	Crops	Open field vegetables and vegetable in green houses; Wheat;	



Research activities of the ATTCs

Activities	ATTC Fushë Krujë	ATTC Korça	ATTC Shkodra	ATTC Vlora	ATTC Lushnja
Improvements of products, services and processes		X		X	X
Laboratory services	X	X	X		X
Consulting and expertise	X	X	X	X	X
Information on standards and patents		X			
Technology transfer	X	X	X	X	
Technology testing	X	X		X	X
Database usage	X	X		X	
Joint participation in EU funded projects		X		X	



HR Capacities at research institutes

Approximately 280 research staff

- Agricultural Technology Transfer Centres – 152 employees;
- Food Safety and Veterinary Institute – 93 employees;
- National Tobacco Agency – 10 employees;
- National Entity of Seed and Sapling – 16 employees;



HR capacities at Universities

Universities	Researchers	Farm area and premises
Agricultural University of Tirana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Agriculture and Environment • Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness • Faculty of Forest Sciences • Faculty of Veterinary Medicine • Faculty of Biotechnology and Food 	<p>307 full-time academic staff and about 134 academic support staff</p> <p>More than 56% are Prof. Dr and Prof. Ass. Dr</p>	<p>140 Ha and 6 laboratories</p> <p>250 publications (1.3 per researcher)</p>
University Fan Noli in Korca Faculty of Agriculture	<p>23 full time of which 58 % are Prof. Dr and Prof. Ass. Dr</p>	<p>40 ha and 1 laboratory</p>



Financial capacities at ATTCs

Name of institution	Total annual income (approximated)	Sources of funding of research activities according to the 2018 income statement (%)		
		State budget	Donors	Own income
1. ATTC Fushë Krujë	47,440 EUR	100%		
2. ATTC Korça	365,000 EUR	76%		24%
3. ATTC Shkodra	20,000 EUR	90%		10%
4. ATTC Vlora	NA	90%	10%	
5. ATTC Lushnja	191,951 EUR	75%		25%



Financial capacities at Universities

- Centralized structure of budget expenditures
- Very few funding for research
- Financial means for laboratories are influenced by enrolment rates
- Negative trends of enrolment for the near future years.





Cooperation among institutions

Policy context

- The National Strategy for Development and Integration 2016-2021 - Pillar 4: Growth Through Sustainable Use of Resources
- Inter-sector Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2014-2020 Objectives 3.1 – 3.4 of the Inter-sectoral strategy for agriculture and rural development in Albania 2014-2020
- The National Plan for European Integration 2017-2019 - Chapter 25 which relates to Science and Research
- The Government of Albania is motivated to focus on research in agriculture due to the Agenda 2030 related to Strategic Development Goals, namely SDG Target 2.a and Target 9.5
- Education and research
 - National Strategy on Science, Technology and Innovation 2017-2022
 - National Strategy of Scientific Research, Technology and Innovation 2017-2022
 - On Science and Technological Development



Institutional context (1/2)

1. Ministry of Education and Sports (MES) and the National Council for Higher Education and Science (NCHES)
 - Universities
 - National Agency for Funding of Higher Education (NAFHE)-the funding of scientific activities
 - National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI) supports financially national projects on research-development
 - Council of Higher Education and Scientific Research
 - National Agency for the Financing of Higher Education (NAFHE)



Institutional context (2/2)

1. Ministry of Finance and Economy and Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA)
 - Vocational schools
 - Incubators
 - Patent and Trademarks Directory at MoFE
 - National Agency for Protection of Authors Rights
2. MARD
 - ATTCs
 - Extension services
 - Other institutes
3. Academy of Sciences
 - Sections related to specific sciences



Cooperation between ATTCs, Advisory services and farmers

- Extension services and ATTCs are coordinated for targeting farmers (more than 1/3 of the farmers) of 70.000 farmers (16% direct contacts)
- Weak coordination between Universities and ATTCs-since funding are provided by different entities (MARD vs MoE)
- Weak communication between Universities and Private Sector





Capacity of advisory services

Advisory services

- The public **extension service** basically provides technical assistance for farmers to increase their income and consists of three levels: central level, regional level and local level
- Four Regional Agricultural Extension Agencies (AREB's) were established as subordinate institutions of MARD
- 260 to 290 employees at central and local level operates 120 local Agricultural Information Centers (AICs)



Tasks of advisory services (1/2)

- To provide information and advice on technical and technological development of agricultural farms, in order to increase competitiveness in agriculture;
- To provide information and assist farmers to benefit from national support schemes, IPARD II and other projects in the field of agriculture and rural development;
- To promote and facilitate the establishment and functioning of different forms of farmers' cooperation;



Tasks of advisory services (2/2)

- To organize and carry out professional farmers training in the field of agriculture and rural development;
- To provide information on standards related to environment, quality, marketing, organic agriculture, products with geographical indications, etc.;
- To inform and advise farmers on the selection and use of machinery and agricultural equipment;
- To provide general information to the whole community of farmers and to the public through mass media.



Stated capacity

- Approximately 17% of the farmers nationwide were directly contacted individually or in groups
- Meetings in cooperation with ATTCs (35% of the meetings)
- Approximately 30,000 leaflets and more than 70 events
- 8,000 farmers assisted each year for applying for subsidy support



Extension service needs

- Limited number of specialists (on average, one specialist per 1,700 farmers)
- Engagement with a range of tasks outside their specific field
- Insufficient financial support in the form of investments in agricultural information centers as well as operational costs to carry out extension activities
- Limited capacities in farm management, business planning and marketing, as well as in providing technical support and assistance to other sectors (such as processors, wholesalers, retailers)
- Operational inefficiency (low market orientation) of public extension services





Scope and extent of development cooperation

Participation to Horizon and IPA

- The success rate of Albanian institutions in Horizon is low (submitted in total 319 eligible proposals to H2020 programme of which 40 grants were signed with a 10% success rate) - Albania is ranked 14 out of 16 EU associated countries.
- Instrument of Pre-Accession - **indicative funding allocation** during the period 2014-2020 €639.5 million of which the component that has been used for agriculture was 182.2 Mln Euro or slightly more than 35% of the overall funding (more than 6 Mln Euro going for M1, M2 and M7).
- Financing for agriculture sector and the involvement of the research institutions is not known.



IPESA project:

Improvement of the performance and quality of the public extension service in the livestock sector (Europe Aid/136437/IH/SER/AL)

- Efforts are being made to improve the capacity of extension service to select, design, communicate and disseminate to farmers useful information on agricultural production and management, including appropriate knowledge to the animal farming sector.
- In cooperation with the IPESA project, the following activities are being carried out:
 1. Drafting of the Extension Service Strategic Action Plan (document is in process);
 2. Two manuals are being prepared for the Public Extension structure;
 3. Five brochures and five leaflet are in process;
 4. Advanced level training of extension workers in livestock matters was carried out and is ongoing.



GIZ-Sustainable Rural Development SRD projects

It will consist of three interrelated fields of intervention (outputs):

- Output 1) Policy Advice for Rural Development
- Output 2) Promotion of Selected Value Chains
- Output 3) Improvement of Education & Training in Agriculture & Rural Tourism
- Output 4) Support to the development of an Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems/ AKIS)





Needs and potential of the research sector

Challenges for ATTCs

- Insufficient financial resources - overall amount of financing is less than 1 mln Euro
- Lack of international connections - very few international projects
- Insufficient number of researchers, especially young researchers (59 research officials with PhD In terms of age, majority lie in the category of 51-60 years old)
- Weak level of research output (number of scientific materials is less than 200)
- Lack of specific knowledge and experience
- Weak communication among researchers
- Limited connections with the companies benefiting from the research
- Need for update of infrastructure (advanced equipment and laboratories)



Challenges for extension service (1/2)

- Public extension service delivery in Albania is underfinanced
- To support national agri-sector objectives and priorities-Terms of reference to be updated
- Focus on performance related management (planning, needs assessment, leadership and service implementation).
- Include recruitment and professional development policy and performance assessments which are linked to promotion



Challenges for extension service (2/2)

- Include approaches to achieve progress towards an Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) and a Farm Advisory System (FAS) progressively harmonized with EU models and functionality
- The importance of combining development of advisers' soft skills and technical skills
- Government incentives for farmers to group together for advisory and other services



Challenges for Universities

- Weak orientation to research activity
- Very limited funding
- Limited or no incentives for applying for research funding due to weak supporting services
- Limited research output
- Only 1/4 of the publications are cited in impact factor journals (Publish and Perish database)
- Less than 10% of authors have a level of citations above 100



Ranking in Scopus by H index (of 25 countries)

Countries rank to 25 (CEEC)	Agricultural and Biological Science	Agronomy and Crop Science	Food Science	Veterinary	Forestry	Horticulture	Plant Science
Serbia	4	6	3	7	10	4	6
BiH	15	15	16	15	15	16	16
Macedonia	16	17	15	13	16	17	17
Montenegro	18	18	19	23	19	19	20
Albania	20	21	17	16	20	15	23

<https://www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php?category=1101>

