EX-POST EVALUATION STUDY OF THE NATIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2007-2013

Final version
April 2017

ACZ Consulting
Strategies and beyond
CONTRACTOR

SC ACZ Consulting SRL
str. Ștefan Velovan, bl. 23A, ap. 12
Craiova, jud. Dolj, Romania
Tel/fax: 0351 44 20 44
e-mail: office@aczconsulting.ro

T33 SRL
via Calatafimi, nr. 1
Ancona, Italia
Tel +39 071 9715460
fax +39 071 9715461
E-mail: info@t33.it

Drafting team:

Andrea FLORIA
Key expert I – Team leader - Specialist in the evaluation of public interventions

Nicola BRIGNANI
Key expert II – Specialist in the rural development sector

Pietro CELOTTI
Key expert III – Specialist in LEADER evaluation

Alexandru NICOARĂ
Key expert IV – Specialist in the evaluation of environmental sector

Vasile Alecsandru STRAT
Key expert V – Specialist in statistics/econometrics

Andrea GRAMILLANO
Key expert VI – Specialist in financial analysis

Irina CIOCÎRLAN
Project director
Rebeca NISTOR
Project assistant
CONTENT

LIST OF ACRONYMS.................................................................................................................................5

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.............................................................................................................................7
   I.1. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION ................................................................................................. 7
   I.2. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ...................................................................................... 8

II. INTRODUCTION........................................................................................................................................ 18
   II.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION REPORT ......................................................................................... 18
   II.2. STRUCTURE OF THE EVALUATION REPORT .................................................................................... 18

III. CONTEXT OF THE EVALUATION........................................................................................................... 20
   III.1. RELEVANT NATIONAL POLICIES ...................................................................................................... 20
   III.2. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL NEEDS WHICH UNDERPIN THE GRANTED SUPPORT ......................... 21
   III.3. BENEFICIARIES AND TARGET GROUPS .......................................................................................... 22
   III.4. TERMS OF REFERENCE .................................................................................................................... 27
   III.5. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION ......................................................................... 29
   III.6. SHORT RESUME OF THE PREVIOUS PROGRAMME EVALUATIONS .................................................. 29

IV. METHODOLOGY...................................................................................................................................... 32
   IV.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS AND OF THE EVALUATION METHODS USED ..................................................................................................................... 32
   IV.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMON AND SPECIFIC EVALUATION QUESTIONS, EVALUATION/ANALYSIS CRITERIA, TARGET VALUES/LEVELS ..................................................................................... 34
   IV.3. DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA SOURCES, TECHNIQUES USED FOR DATA COLLECTION (QUESTIONNAIRES, INTERVIEWS, SIZE AND SAMPLING CRITERIA FOR THE SAMPLES USED, ETC.) ......................................................................... 39
   IV.4. INFORMATION ON THE METHODS USED FOR THE QUANTIFICATION OF INDICATORS, IN ORDER TO CHECK THE QUALITY AND CERTAINTY OF DATA AND TO IDENTIFY POSSIBLE ERRORS ................................................................................................................................. 43
      IV.4.1. Calculation of common and additional result indicators ................................................................ 43
      IV.4.2. Organization and implementation of counterfactual analysis ................................................................ 45
   IV.5. TECHNIQUES/ METHODS TO ANSWER THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS ................................................................................................................................. 46
   V.6. PROBLEMS OR LIMITATIONS OF THE USED METHODOLOGY ............................................................ 49

V. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME, MEASURES AND BUDGET ................................................................51
   V.1. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION: ACTORS INVOLVED, INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT ................................ 51
   V.2. CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME; DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITIES AND MEASURES .............................. 56
      V.2.1. Description of Axis 1 Increasing the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector ...... 57
      V.2.2. Description of Axis 2 Improving the environment and rural area ..................................................... 62
      V.2.3. Description of Axis 3 Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy .......... 65
      V.2.4. Description of Axis 4 LEADER ........................................................................................................ 67
      V.2.5. Description of the technical assistance measure (M511), including NRDN .................................. 71
      V.2.6. Description of the measure for complementary direct payments (M611) ......................................... 72
   V.3. THE INTERVENTION LOGIC OF EACH MEASURE ............................................................................. 73
V.4. The forecasted budget for the entire period ........................................................................................................... 77
V.5. Extent of absorption and the actual amount spent .................................................................................................. 86
VI. RESULT INDICATORS .................................................................................................................................................. 89
VI.1. Description of the structure for the monitoring frame of NRDP, in terms of result indicators .......... 89
VI.2. Final values of common and additional result indicators ....................................................................................... 91
VII. THE GUARANTEE SCHEME .................................................................................................................................. 97
VIII. ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATIONS QUESTIONS .................................................................................................... 109
VIII.1. Analysis and comments on the indicators in accordance with the valuation criteria and the targets
       referred in the evaluation questions .......................................................................................................................... 109
       VIII.1.1. The analysis of the common and additional result indicators................................................................. 109
       VIII.1.2. Analysis of the impact indicators ........................................................................................................... 120
VIII.2. Analysis and comments on the quantitative and qualitative information from public statistics, specific
       studies/questionnaires or any other sources ............................................................................................................... 141
       VIII.2.1. Analysis and comments regarding the programme relevance ................................................................. 141
       VIII.2.2. Analysis and comments regarding the programme effectiveness ............................................................ 146
       VIII.2.3. Analysis and comments regarding the programme efficiency ............................................................... 154
       VIII.2.4. Analysis and comments regarding the programme impact .................................................................... 164
       VIII.2.5. Analysis and comments regarding environmental aspects .................................................................. 172
VIII.3. Answers to evaluation questions ......................................................................................................................... 177
       VIII.3.1. Common evaluation questions ................................................................................................................ 178
       VIII.3.1. Specific evaluation questions ................................................................................................................ 199
IX. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ........................................................................................................... 241
    IX.1. Coherence between the implemented measures and objectives; balance between the various measures of
        the programme ......................................................................................................................................................... 241
    IX.2. The degree of achieving the specific objectives of the programme and the objectives set in the National
        and Community Strategy .................................................................................................................................... 243
    IX.3. Recommendations based on evaluation results, including potential proposals for the update /
        modification of the NRDP 2014-2020 .................................................................................................................. 249
TABLES ......................................................................................................................................................................... 253
FIGURES ....................................................................................................................................................................... 256
ANNEXES ..................................................................................................................................................................... 257
## List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Complete name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAFS</td>
<td>Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFRI</td>
<td>Agency for Financing Rural Investments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Additional Indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Annual Implementation Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>Common Agricultural Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEB</td>
<td>Central European Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIB</td>
<td>European Investment Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMEF</td>
<td>Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPRDF</td>
<td>County Office of Payments for Rural Development and Fishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSG</td>
<td>Community Strategic Guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DID</td>
<td>Difference in Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAFRD</td>
<td>European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAFG</td>
<td>European Agricultural Guarantee Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENRD</td>
<td>European Network for Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPER</td>
<td>European Plan of Economic Recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESIF</td>
<td>European Structural and Investments Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ (c)</td>
<td>Common Evaluation Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ (s)</td>
<td>Specific Evaluation Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESU</td>
<td>Economic Size Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARD</td>
<td>Funding Agency for Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAEC</td>
<td>Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAV</td>
<td>Gross Added Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GG</td>
<td>Greenhouse Gases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HNV</td>
<td>High Natural Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAG</td>
<td>Local Action Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>Local Development Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER</td>
<td>Links between Actions for the Development of Rural Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LFA</td>
<td>Less Favored Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLC</td>
<td>Limited Liability Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Managing Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA NRDP</td>
<td>Managing Authority of National Rural Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARD</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA SOPE</td>
<td>Managing Authority of Sectoral Operational Programme Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Monitoring Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEWF</td>
<td>Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAEP</td>
<td>National Agency for Environmental Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSVFSN</td>
<td>National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAV</td>
<td>Net Added Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIS</td>
<td>National Institute of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNRD</td>
<td>National Network for Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRDP</td>
<td>National Rural Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSPRD</td>
<td>National Strategic Plan for Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OWSI</td>
<td>Organization of Water Users for Irrigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPAC</td>
<td>Operational Programme Administrative Capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARDF</td>
<td>Paying Agency for Rural Development and Fishery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIAA</td>
<td>Paying and Intervention Agency for Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSR</td>
<td>Propensity Score Matching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCGF</td>
<td>Rural Credit Guarantee Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDP</td>
<td>Rural Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPCRDF</td>
<td>Regional Paying Center for Rural Development and Fishery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMEs</td>
<td>Small and Medium Enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNCDP</td>
<td>Scheme of National Complementary Direct Payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAU</td>
<td>Territorial Administrative Unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. Executive Summary

I.1. Main findings of the evaluation

In the final version of the ex-post evaluation study of NRDP 2007-2013, the key findings of the evaluation were determined by the in-depth analysis carried out in relation to the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and results of the programme.

The main findings were defined based on the conclusions of the evaluation questions and are presented below:

- the objectives, interventions, activities and resources allocated through the programme addressed the most important needs related to rural areas throughout the entire period of programme implementation.

- the allocated resources were partially able to produce the expected results, because the values achieved for output and result indicators are, in many cases, lower than the level of financial absorption, demonstrating, in general, a lower level of effectiveness than the one initially planned. This can be explained, among other reasons, by an important initial over-estimation of the programme indicators targets, as well as the impossibility to review the initial methodology setting out the output and result indicators.

- the system and mechanisms for programme implementation have actively contributed to achieving the programme objectives, including by adopting measures to facilitate the contracting and implementation of projects by beneficiaries (eg by using the electronic system for submission of documents related to funding applications).

- the level of expenditures is generally consistent with the objectives initially set, even if effectiveness varies across the different axes and measures.

- the final quantified values of the output indicators show a mixed picture, with all axes characterized by the presence of output indicators with lower performance and higher performance compared to the planned values set within the last version of the Programme (version XVI, approved in November 2015).

- the effects on the environment (especially on biodiversity, validated through the results of two specialized studies) are present and favorable.
I.2. Conclusions and recommendations

The assessments made within the ex-post evaluation of NRDP 2007-2013 and the conclusions and recommendations provided mainly refer to the latest version of the NRDP (version XVI, approved in November 2015) so that, from a technical point of view, it reflects the financial changes and reallocations progressively implemented by the programme authorities in order to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the planned interventions. However, in some cases, when considered necessary, the assessment was based on an analysis in time of the evolution of the programme, comparing the planned achievements in the last approved version of NRDP with the activities, targets for outputs and results initially planned at the time of approval of the Programme.

Programme relevance

Conclusions

• originally, the programme approached the needs identified at the territorial level based on the socio-economic analysis; in a later phase, the needs identified initially were complemented during the implementation of the programme: thus, through the changes made to the programme, there have been undertaken actions in order to better approach the needs, including the changes in eligibility and selection criteria and financial changes (transfers of resources between different measures and axes).
• in general, it can be confirmed the internal coherence of the NRDP in terms of consistency of general objectives with funded interventions and planned achievements, excepting the measure regarding the support for semi-subsistence farms, for which the implementation has not been achieved in full conformity with the approach initial planned for achieving the overall goals.
• most of the measures defined and implemented through the Programme are consistent with the expected impact and results.
• the NRDP 2007-2013 has actively contributed to mitigate or resolve the specific problems of agriculture and rural sectors.

Recommendations

• Increased attention to the effective implementation of measures aiming the development of the forestry sector and of measures addressing the improvement of the human capital (through expert advice or training)
• Check and adjust the intervention logic at the time of adopting changes on measure fiches (insertion / deletion), so all the interventions proposed in the programme have a quantifiable correlation with the output and impact indicators.
Programme efficiency

Conclusions

• The financial resources have been planned at the level of NRDP, predicting a high level of efficiency, but their actual efficiency following the implementation of the Programme was lower than expected. Most of the results implied higher costs than initially planned, in some cases, values initially estimated being multiplied. This result can be mainly explained by an important initial over-estimation of the programme indicators target, as well as the impossibility of revising the initial methodology setting out the targets for output and result indicators. In perfect conditions, even under conditions of considerable experiences in the management of such a programme, as well as in a more favorable economic and financial environment, the results obtained by NRDP could have been obtained with a reduced level of public expenditures. However, the first programming period for a EU acceding country has never had such perfect conditions. The continued experience gained from the management system in terms of actions aimed at improving efficiency is a positive element that should be considered accordingly.

• The NRDP contributed to the objectives and priorities of the Community using the allocated resources in accordance with the achieved level of effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving the environment (Axis 2); for the objectives related to increasing the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry sectors and improving the quality of life in rural areas, diversifying the rural economy and developing the local capacity to increase employment levels and economic diversification (Axis 1, Axis 3 and Axis 4), the efficiency was lower than expected.

• Some of the factors that influence the effectiveness appear to be connected with the decisions taken in the programming stage and in the programme management during the implementation phase, which can be easily adjusted in the future, in order to create optimal conditions for improving efficiency. A set of other factors depend to a large extent by market imperfections and socio-economic problems of territories subject to intervention, so is not possible to adjust them in a reduced period of time, for this factors being necessary to monitor the framing of the generated effects within acceptable limits.

• The system and mechanisms for programme implementation have actively contributed to achieving the programme objectives, including by measures to facilitate the implementation of projects by beneficiaries. Administrative efficiency of the programme management system appears as satisfactory, especially considering the specific conditions of being the first RDP for the country.

Recommendations

• The adjustment of the methodology for establishing the values of the output and result indicators developed by the programme, in terms of planning realistic targets and targets correlated with the lessons learned in 2007-2013 period and with the evolving of the socio-economic context
• Initiating a dialogue with the EC, whenever the monitoring system shows significant differences between the targets and the achieved values of indicators, respectively when a revision of the proposed targets appears to be justified and necessary.

• Formulating and clearly defining the eligibility and selection criteria within the guidelines, in order to avoid the subjective interpretation of fulfilling the conditions required, in the phase of evaluating the applications.

**Programme effectiveness**

**Conclusions**

• The financial data show that the spending level is in general consistent with the objectives initially set, even if effectiveness varies across the different axes and measures.

• The level of achievement of output indicators show a mixed picture, with all axes characterized by the presence of output indicators with final lower of higher performances compared to the values planned in the last approved version of the Programme (version XVI, approved in November 2015).

• Data on procedural efficacy of axes 1 and 3 indicate that the programme is generally rather ineffective. Procedural effectiveness is influenced by two intrinsic factors at programme level, namely: the number of rescinded projects and the number of projects transferred to NRDP 2014-2020 through the transition process. The evolution of completed projects number, compared with the initially estimated number, is influenced by the limited procedural effectiveness of measures 125, 141, 142 and 313.

• Data on financial effectiveness presents a generally positive situation at programme level, especially in what concerns Axis 2; the only axes within which existed measures with reduced financial effectiveness were 3 (M313) and 4 (M421).

• Data on output indicators effectiveness showcase a heterogeneous situation for all the axes, about half of the output indicators of each axis recording values within the margin of positive effectiveness.

**Recommendations**

• Improving the monitoring system - It is important to stress that the effectiveness of any programme is strictly connected to the capacity of ensuring an adequate monitoring of the projects and actions implemented. In this sense, the analysis of the 2007-2013 monitoring system shows that, despite significant improvement, there is still room for improving the quality of the data collected at project level. Consequently, the evaluators recommend to further invest in the optimization of the IT system used for monitoring the NRDP. Considering the fact that this step is crucial for the correct evaluation of the progress of the Programme, there must be taken into account the impact that any error at this stage may create in the management of the activities. The necessary infrastructure (IT system) must
be built in a way to avoid any under dimension which could result in slowing down the process of data collection and thus compromising the monitoring process. The other main component of this mechanism, represented by the administrative body (human component), must benefit from the necessary training for collecting and handling the quantitative information. Thus, it is recommended, in the moment of developing the administrative capacity, to collaborate with organizations (public or private entities) specialized in the collection, handling and analysis of data. In particular, since many elements related to “capacity building” are referring to the central level, a strong coordination with the OP Administrative Capacity (OPAC) is needed.

It is highly recommended to foresee a set of indicators able to quantify also the immaterial effects, based on quantitative (i.e. financial resources and number of participants to training activities, number of partnerships created) and qualitative (focus groups, interviews, etc.) methods and sources.

Programme results

Conclusions

- Various external factors affected the implementation of NRDP. Global competition and climate changes have been relevant external challenges threatening the rural development and agricultural production affecting prices, demand and supply, and the conditions of production. Reduction of public spending have complicated the implementation of the measures which needed a public co-financing, such as measures increasing infrastructural endowments (e.g. M322). Economic crisis has reduced the financial capacity of programme beneficiaries from both the public and private sector and increased the difficulties of the applicants and beneficiaries in ensuring the adequate collaterals to cover their own co-financing or for making expenditures during the implementation period of the projects.

Beside the difficulties related to the financial capacity of the beneficiaries, programme authorities have underlined other two key factors which have generally limited the programme effectiveness. These are the limited experience of the programme applicants and the general low quality of the consultancy services at their disposal. Moreover, two other factors have affected negatively the programme implementation: the complexity of public procurement legislation and the unpredictability of the legislative framework.

- The implementation of NRDP provided various intangible results, which can not been fully measured. NRDP has played a pivotal role in increasing beneficiaries’ capacity to develop, manage and implement project activities (for instance, through the elaboration and use of the business plan) and the knowledge of Community regulations and procedures as well as developing useful networks for rural and local development.

Capacity building and networking are the two main types of intangible effects of the programme, which are relevant to explain its results and impact, but which were not quantified and systematically monitored through the monitoring system.
For instance, in axis 1, capacity building was a benefit of the measures promoting awareness and training (e.g. M111), supporting semi-subistence holdings and young farm managers’ (e.g. M141 and M112) and strengthening investments (e.g. 121, 122, 123). In axis 2 programme measures increased the awareness and knowledge of the beneficiaries of the good agricultural and economic conditions (GAEC) and of forest land management (M221).

The Programme has also contributed to promoting networking among firms along with fostering cooperation between public and private actors through LAGs. Networking was an effect of various priority axes: M142 supported the set-up of producer groups and axis 4 the adoption of the leader approach as a cornerstone of the local development in rural areas.

- Not all of the result indicators have met the targets. The comparison between target and achieved values of the result indicators shows the limited effectiveness of the programme, particularly for most of the measures within axis 1, 3, 4. On the other hand, axis 2 is effective in reaching the target values of the result indicators, except for measure 221. Axis 1 underperforms in terms of results for more economic related indicators (R.2, R.3, R.4) and performs better in terms of increase pf economic values for forests (M122) - however, the contribution of the axis to improving the economic competitiveness of the forestry sector at national level is very limited given the low forest area addressed by the measures compared to the total area of the forestry fund national. M112 fails in producing the expected amount of investments, while M121 reaches 8% of the target and M 125 realises only 37% of foreseen operations. Ineffectiveness in financial and output indicators explains the underperformance of M 123, M 141 and M 142 in reaching the result indicators’ targets.

Axis 2 is rather effective in reaching the 2015 target values of the result indicators, except in measure 221, which suffers from a low effectiveness in both financial and output indicators. The other measures benefit from an effective implementation of financial and output indicators (M 211, M 215) or at least a partially effective implementation demonstrated by some of the financial and output indicators (M 212, M 214).

Axis 3 is in general ineffective for the result indicators except for “Increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses” in measure 312. In spite of the effectiveness in achieving the targets of both financial and output indicators, the measure 322 does not meet the targets of the result indicators. This can be possibly explained by the limited procedural effectiveness and by the impact of external factors (e.g. economic crisis) reducing the resources of public administration for investments in rural infrastructure.

Axis 4 has not been effective in terms of common result indicators regarding jobs creation (R8.1., R8.2.) and for the additional result indicator regarding the development of innovative actions. On the other hand, for the other two additional indicators on training axis 4 is effective.

Measure 511 was affected by a significant reduction in the budget compared to the initial allocation. In the case of this measure, no targets have been set for the additional result indicators.

- There have been limitations which influenced the capacity to attract beneficiaries. Administrative procedures and delays in application and implementation phase along with the advertising campaigns have hindered the programme implementation and the achievement of the target of the result indicators.

Focus groups and case studies highlighted the difficulties for the access to the programme due to the low capacity and experience of applicants / beneficiaries, complexity and novelty of administrative procedures, delays in the implementation and difficulties in establishing RNDR. Moreover, even in
the case of the guarantee scheme for which advertising and marketing activities have had a significant success, there is space for future improvements.

**Recommendations**

- **Set-up of a warning system** - The ex-post evaluation of the 2007-2013 programme shows that in several cases the programme was not capable to meet the planned result indicator targets. This can be explained by an important initial over-estimation / under-estimation (for axis 4) of the programme indicators targets, as well as by the impossibility to review the initial methodology setting out the output and result indicators. To contrast this risk in the 2014-2020 the evaluators recommend to define a “warning system” to alert the programme in advance whenever the monitoring system shows significant differences between the targets and the achieved values of indicators. To this end, it is necessary to verify whether baseline values are built on a well-defined methodology, including the identification of appropriate quantitative and qualitative information sources that may be consulted (and eventually updated) during the 2014-2020 programming period for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

- **Adopt ad hoc arrangements to attract beneficiaries** – The difficulties in achieving the planned targets can be also explained by the limited capacity of advertising campaigns to reach the beneficiaries, by the length of the administrative procedure as well as the workload required to beneficiaries limiting the attractiveness of the programme and consequently its capacity to produce the targeted results. In this sense, the administrative burden and cost of the access to the measures represent a specific threat. To contrast this risk evaluators recommend to:
  - put in place an integrated administrative simplification strategy.
  - monitor carefully the future implementation of financial instruments and the advertising and marketing campaigns organized by the bodies implementing the financial instruments.

- **Plan specific actions to improve the functioning of the NRDN and adopt a mitigation strategy for the risks associated with the implementation and functioning of the network.**

- **Adopt a wider approach for involving partners in innovation process** - Moreover, as the 2007-2013 experience shows, the main challenges to the achievement of the expected results are the following external factors: increasing global competition, climate changes for agricultural production, reducing the share of public spending. To tackle the challenges related to external factors, the NRDP shall invest by involving all the interested partners. For instance, in the field of innovation, NRDP should invest not only in innovation as result of technological transfer but also in social innovation through a full involvement of all the quadruple helix\(^1\) partners, encompassing business sector, public sector, third sector and financial sector. Therefore, it is important, on one hand, for NRDP to focus on and reflect about the innovation system as a whole (relations between University, research centers, farmers and agricultural enterprises) and, on the other hand, to provide room for social experiment in the rural areas in the form of community services, public-private partnership, ICT welfare etc.

---

\(^1\) Quadruple helix is a participatory approach that includes key factors from central government, academics, the industrial environment, and civil society.
Larger involvement of all the partners might represent an opportunity to increase the leverage of the EU funds and thus ensure more effectiveness and impact of the programme.

**Programme impact**

**Conclusions**

- The Programme had a positive impact on the increase of added value and productivity in the rural environment. Axis 1 directly contributed to increasing the value added and productivity of the agricultural sector and food industry and indirectly to the economic growth of the national economy. Axis 1 of NRDP addressed the need to overcome subsistence levels of productivity in both the agriculture and forestry sectors by pursuing the challenging objective of improving the competitiveness of rural areas, by increasing farmers’ knowledge and skills (M111), modernizing agricultural holdings (M121) as well as increasing afforestation and promoting the sustainable management of forests (M122). Moreover, through M112, the axis promoted the renewal of the generation of farm managers and increased the competitiveness of food industry, especially through the introduction of innovation and the adaptation of enterprises to EU standards (M123). Increase of competitiveness also implied an efficient use of agricultural lands based on the new property structure (M125), including new infrastructures and well-organized agricultural holdings (M141) and workforce, through the promotion of organized groups of producers’ (M142). In spite of the rather low effectiveness (compared to the initial targets), the 2007-2013 NRDP was capable to contribute to increasing productivity of the economy within the rural environment. In particular measures 121 and 123 had a significant impact on the increase of the gross added value in primary sector.

- The Programme had a positive impact on environment. Axis 2 directly contributed to reversing biodiversity decline, maintenance of high nature value of farmland and forestry, improvement of water quality, combating climate change and indirectly to create the conditions for a better quality of living in rural areas as well as to adopt a more sustainable development model.

- The Programme had a positive impact on job creation. Despite the programme did not achieve the targets for the thematic result indicators (R8.1., R8.2.), both axis n.3 and 4 have contributed to creating jobs. In particular, axis n.3 directly contributed to creating jobs and indirectly to diversifying rural economy, creating new local services and to the valorisation of environmental resources and cultural heritage, while axis n.4 directly contributed to jobs creation and the improvement of the local governance, indirectly contributing to rural economic diversification and to creating a higher involvement of private partners in local development strategy through LEADER approach. Most of new jobs were created thanks to M312 and M313 and regarded males and females >25 years old. M313 is the measure creating more jobs in relative terms for females (61% of the jobs are for female) and for young people (under 25 years representing 20% of new jobs. However in absolute terms, M312 has created more jobs for young people (890) and females (2034). Agro-tourism is the sector employing more females and young people in absolute terms among the industries detailed in the report. Counterfactual analysis shows the capacity of the programme to create net benefits in terms
of jobs through M312, M313, M411, M413. Comparing beneficiaries with non-beneficiaries, beneficiaries of both M312 and M313 perform better in jobs’ creation in the period 2009-2015. Similarly, estimates show the net effect in terms of job creation of both measure 411 and 413 in the period 2012-2015 when most projects have been initiated and finalised.

- The guarantee scheme had a positive contribution to the overall implementation of the Programme. The guarantee schemes had a positive impact in economic and financial terms, addressing the second most important challenge for getting a loan during the programming period of NRDP, which is the lack of collaterals. Moreover, the guarantee scheme contributed to improving the willingness of banks to provide a loan for beneficiaries located in the rural environment, thus increasing the debt capacity and investment capacity of the beneficiaries and contributing to a better economic performance. The guarantee schemes allowed attracting necessary private resources for project implementation and simplifying the access to credit market for the private beneficiaries within NRDP 2007-2013.

**Recommendations**

- Mapping the secondary and compensation effects - In the perspective of the implementation of the 2014-2020 programme, it is recommended a particular attention to the secondary effects of the increase of the productivity (in particular in the primary sector). More precisely, it is recommended to verify to what extent did the productivity increase as a result of the reduction of number of jobs (if the increase in productivity is resulting from fewer jobs).
- Measure to what extent the employment benefits are accompanied by productivity growth and are sustainable overtime – It is recommended to further evaluate to what extent the jobs’ increase in rural areas have affected productivity in non-agricultural sectors and have reduced the risk of depopulation of rural areas.
- Define specific forms of support (e.g. financial instrument) for directly tackling the difficulties of beneficiaries for accessing financing sources. One important obstacle to the competitiveness of the entire rural economy is the access to financing for small and micro farmers. In this sense for what concerns the 2014-2020 programme, it is recommended to define specific forms of support for directly tackling the difficulties of beneficiaries for accessing financing sources, not only in the form of guarantee schemes but by also envisaging the possibility to implement additional type of financial instruments (ie micro credit or equity).

**Environmental aspects**

**Conclusions**

- Related to Axis 2:
a. Targets of output and result indicators were generally met or exceeded (difficulties in this regard were encountered only on measure 221), the objectives planned at axis level being largely achieved.

b. HNV area (million hectares) was relatively constant (according to the specialty study carried out at MA’s NRDP level, there has been a minor decrease from 2.4 in 2007 to 2.37 in 2015); When analyzing the HNV surface there should be considered that NRDP effects are present and favorable (ie maintaining HNV, changes in HNV areas), but the indicator’s evolution can’t be exclusively reported to the effects generated by the programme implementation, the implementation period being relatively short (7 years) in relation to the time needed for the occurrence and monitoring of environmental factors.

c. Regarding the evolution of impact indicators, it is noted that according to the study results on calculating the present value of indicator "Index of farmland bird populations in Romania", the indicator decreased from 1 (in 2010) to 0.97 (in 2015); the decline is minor possibly because there were negative effects in the short term; also, the decreasing value of index with only 3% compared to 2010 indicates the achievement of proposed objectives - to maintain environmental quality;

d. The calculated value of the index bird population during 2010-2015, according to the calculations made within the specific study contracted by MA NRDP, can be mainly attributed to the analysis of a relatively short series of statistical data (its monitoring following to be continued during the programming period 2014-2020), not being possible to identify the specific generating factors determined by the implementation of NRDP, which influence the population trends of targeted bird species recorded at national level. In what concerns the potential effects of NRDP 2007-2013 implementation, management requirements formulated within the Programme aimed at maintaining the habitat of bird species characteristic to Romanian farmland, in order to preserve those species.

e. Direct / indirect beneficiaries, currently does not see the effects of the application of Axis 2 measures on the environment, a potential explanation being the lack of specific training on environmental themes;

f. Following the analysis of data available after the implementation of NRDP 2007-2013, there were reassessed the scores awarded according to the Environmental Report of NRDP 2007-2013 and noticed that negative scores have a clear tendency to decrease.

• Related to axis 1, 3, 4:
  a. Defining general and specific objectives for these axes was carried out considering the alternative of improving qualitative environmental factors;
  b. All projects funded through these axes, which were considered to have a potential impact on the environment, respected environmental standards imposed by EC and national legislation, following the procedure of environmental impact assessment; therefore the effects on the environment are considered positive or at least neutral.

• Related to the strategic assessment of the programme environmental impact:
  a. Subsequently to the programme implementation, the strongly negative scores (eg, those associated to GHG emission or air emission) are falling, which means that measures implementation was generally having direct positive environmental results.
Recommendations

- Concluding agreements / insurance protocols to cover both the correlation of databases with relevant information for analyzing the effects of various interventions on the environment and the dissemination of scientific studies at inter-institutional central level, to be able to analyze and interpret from an integrated perspective, the effects on the environment;
- Continue the monitoring of the selected indicators and the reporting to the authorities, to determine the impact of the NRDP 2007-2013 on the environment, on an extended period of time.

*Programme contribution to the principles related to gender equality and non-discrimination*

Conclusions

- the selection criteria adopted for the various measures of NRDP have not had any discriminatory content or effect, in relation with the sex, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation of the applicants. For this reason they can be considered fully compliant with the principle of non-discrimination and equal opportunities.
- Monitoring data split by gender, when available, show a much higher participation of women to the programme than expected.
- In some cases (Axis 3, Axis 4) the programme pursued a proactive approach in favour of non-discrimination and gender equality, with particularly remarkable efforts in terms of Axis 4.

Recommendations

- The progressive adoption of a gender mainstreaming approach should be considered, by introducing gender-related criteria in more measures, in all the PAs;
- Gender-split indicators should be adopted and monitored wherever relevant, especially for measures where positive approaches are adopted;
- Selection criteria having the purpose of promoting gender equality and non-discrimination should be introduced with an independent score from any other criteria.
- Accessibility for disabled persons to infrastructures funded by the programme should be considered in the selection criteria, at least in terms of minimal respect of the legislation in force.
II. Introduction

II.1 Purpose of the evaluation report

The purpose of the final ex-post evaluation report is to present the results of the analysis and evaluation activities of the NRDP 2007-2013 interventions, at the end of the implementation phase, from the perspective of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, as well as the achievements, results, impact, factors of success or failure related to the programme.

During the evaluation activities, the team of experts used qualitative and quantitative analysis methods and techniques that substantiated the answers to the common and specific evaluation questions and allowed the development of the conclusions and recommendations presented within the evaluation report.

More precisely, based on the qualitative information collected through the field research (survey among beneficiaries and interviews with key stakeholders) and desk research, the report provides information on the achievement of result indicators (activity 3). Moreover, based on the qualitative information collected through the semi-structured interviews, case studies applied among beneficiaries, focus groups with programme authorities and from the desk analysis conducted, the report provides relevant results and conclusions on the evaluation of guarantee scheme (activity 2), on the evaluation of various programme axis (activity 1) and offers feedbacks to the common and specific evaluation questions (activity 4).

The ex-post evaluation study was based on data that reflect the situation registered until 31.12.2015, in compliance with the Annual Progress Report of 2015.

II.2. Structure of the evaluation report

The content of the evaluation study was defined according to the requirements expressed by the Contracting Authority in the tender documentation and the recommendations contained within the Guidelines for the ex-post evaluation of 2007-2013 RDPs, developed by the European Commission together with the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development (section 3 of the Toolbox).

Thus, this evaluation study details, among other information, the following: implementation context of NRDP 2007-2013 (national policies, relevant needs, beneficiaries and target groups etc.); main elements and methodological tools applied during the evaluation process; content of NRDP 2007-2013 in terms of adopted strategy and planned financial allocations; common and additional result indicators set out in the Programme; analysis of impact indicators developed by the programme, etc.

A novelty element in relation to the minimal structure of the evaluation study, as recommended by the EC, is represented by the analysis of the financial instrument implemented within NRDP 2007-2013, namely the guarantee scheme funded from NRDP, applied at the level of axis 1 (measure 121 and measure 123) and 3 (measure 312 and measure 313).
Not least, the evaluation study summarizes the answers to 22 common evaluation questions (set out in the Guide for the ex post evaluation of rural development programmes for the 2007-2013 period developed by the European Commission together with the European Network for Rural Development Evaluation), 2 specific evaluation questions (formulated by the MA NRDP) and 23 evaluation questions regarding the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results, impact, success and failure factors of the programme (recommended in the Guide for the ex post evaluation of rural development programmes 2007-2013 elaborated by the European Commission together with the European Network for Rural Development Evaluation). Also, 5 specific evaluation questions are related to the evaluation of the implementation of the guarantee scheme financed by the NRDP 2007-2013. Based on these, there were formulated a series of conclusions and recommendations on the implementation of the NRDP.

The evaluation study also includes a set of annexes including the fiches of result indicators, a synthesis of main results obtained through the implementation of guarantee scheme, the logic intervention diagram etc.
III. Context of the evaluation

III.1. Relevant national policies

In the programming period 2007 - 2013, Romania received about 14 billion euros from the EU budget through CAP, funds allocated to Pillar II having a higher share than those allocated to Pillar I. Pillar I is the basis for direct payments and market measures, while Pillar II addresses rural development and environmental improvement, funds allocated to this pillar being accessed through the projects submitted under the National Rural Development Programme and based on the single area payment applications. In order to support a balanced restructuring of agricultural field, through the Council Decision of 19 June 2006 for adapting Annex VIII of the Accession Treaty of Bulgaria and Romania, Point E, Section 1, it was decided to transfer a share of 20% from the allocation of Pillar II to Pillar I.

The rural development policies and actions for the period 2007-2013 were established by the National Strategic Plan for Rural Development 2007 - 2013, which is the basis for the implementation of the National Rural Development Programme 2007 - 2013.

The National Rural Development Strategy for the 2007-2013 period was also supported by other complementary programmes initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, namely the Farmer Programme launched in 2005 to support long-term investments in agriculture and agro-industrial sector, the Agricultural Rendering Programme aimed at concentrate the agricultural areas in efficient farms and the Food Competitiveness Growth Programme aimed at supporting investments in the implementation of food quality and food safety management systems within the food processing units during the period 2003-2009.

An important aspect for the harmonious development of rural areas is the adoption of LEADER measures, which allows a bottom-up approach of needs and issues specific to rural areas. Thus, in 2006, there were undertaken for the first time, at national level, actions to implement the LEADER approach. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has selected a number of representatives for some territories, in order to complete LEADER structures and activities, context in which were organized training activities on constructing partnerships, animation activities, developing strategies of rural development, defining territorial plans of actions etc.

The activities carried out prepared the implementation of LEADER Axis –NRDP 2007-2013 in Romania. Thus, Axis 4 of NRDP aimed to improve local governance and promote the endogenous potential of rural areas, encouraging launch and operation of local development initiatives.

LEADER approach seeks a balanced development of rural areas by involving local stakeholders in the process of identifying the needs of their communities.

---

2 National Rural Development Programme
3 National Strategic Plan for Rural Development 2007 – 2013, p. 77
Within NRDP, LEADER approach has encouraged the implementation of the following types of action: development and implementation of local development strategies; preparation of local development plans; construction of public-private partnerships, animation and acquisition of skills by LAGs.

III.2. Economic and social needs which underpin the granted support

The support provided through NRDP aimed at improving social and economic needs faced by rural areas, starting from the initial situation that characterized rural areas at the beginning of the programming period (2007).

Romania’s rural areas cover 87,1% of the country’s territory, and according to data provided by the National Institute of Statistics on 1st January 2007, rural population represented 44,55% out of the sheer population of Romania, aspect that highlights a pronounced rural character of the country.

The aging process of population, manifested not only at national but also at European level, is more pronounced among rural population, where a downward trend is noticed among young people, along with an increase of people aged over 65. This tendency is also driven by the migration phenomena, in rural areas being noticed the migration of youngsters to urban areas or even abroad, and the migration of population aged over 35, from urban areas to rural areas.

Demographic phenomena influence labor market in rural areas, which face a number of problems. Thus, during 2002-2007, active population in rural areas has decreased by 6,67%, while the active population in urban areas increased by 4,5%.

In what concerns the employment rate, this was higher in rural areas (56,7% in 2007) compared to urban areas (51% in the same year), but most rural residents were employed in agriculture (67,7%). A significant proportion of people working in agriculture worked in small-sized, individual farms, characterized by low productivity and low average incomes. Employment of rural population in subsistence agriculture determines the existence of a lower level of unemployment in rural areas compared to urban areas. In 2007, the number of unemployed persons in rural areas was 222.729, decreasing compared to 2002 and representing approximately 35% of the unemployed persons registered at national level.

According to the information provided by the National Institute of Statistics, in 2007, the agricultural area of Romania was 14.709.299 hectares, representing 61,7% of the land fund surface. The agricultural surface decreased over time, so that in 2007 was reduced by 20.000 hectares compared to the previous year, fact resulted from the inclusion of certain lands into urban areas or from the use conversion of agricultural land. Agricultural area is however mostly used in small farms that practice subsistence agriculture, which diminish the performance of agricultural sector. Thus, at the level of 2007, there were 3.931.350 agricultural holdings, out of which 3.851.790 were using agricultural area. Of these, 3.451.160 agricultural holdings (representing 89,6% of the total holdings) were of small size, under 5 ha and only 400.630 were over 5 ha. Of the latter, only 14.399 holdings were larger than 50 ha and could be classified as large farms4.

4 National Institute of Statistics - Statistical Yearbook 2009
In terms of production per hectares, data provided by the National Institute of Statistics show that this has significantly decreased in 2004–2007, cereal grains production being reduced, for example, with a rate of over 100% in 2007, compared to 2006. This drastic decrease of production in 2007 was caused by drought phenomena occurred during the year.

Analyzing the data on enterprises statistics at national level, it is noted that in 2007, only 18.6% of newly created enterprises nationwide were registered in rural areas. This highlights once again the reduced interest for the development of non-agricultural activities in rural areas, before the opportunities emerged following the launch of calls for proposals on measure 312 and measure 313 in 2008 and thereafter.

Other key problems specific to rural environment refer to the quality of transport infrastructure and technical-urban infrastructure, access to medical, social and educational services and environmental quality. For example, in rural areas, according to data provided in 2004, only 33% of population had access to public water network, while the data provided by NIS show that in 2007, in rural areas, only 426 localities benefited from a public sewage network.

In the educational field, the main problems faced by rural environment relate to poor educational infrastructure, teachers’ level of training, state of education establishments and reduced presence of students in classes. As a result, the number of higher education graduates was low in rural areas. On the other hand, given the high employment rate in agriculture and forestry, it was needed the provision of continuous training activities to facilitate the development of skills and knowledge and allow diversification of agriculture and forestry, concurrent with the sustainable land management and environmental protection.

### III.3. Beneficiaries and target groups

Analyzing the distribution of direct beneficiaries, eligible within the NRDP 2007-2013, by the legal basis of establishment, organization and functioning, there is observed a prevalence of beneficiaries (as number of measures in which these are eligible) belonging to categories such as commercial enterprises, authorized natural persons and individual enterprises supported by most of the programme’s measures, as illustrated in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Types of direct beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 111 “Vocational training, information actions and diffusion of knowledge” | Providers of vocational training, information and diffusion of knowledge - public or private entities active in the field of adult vocational training and / or information and dissemination of knowledge that meet the eligibility and selection criteria. Farmers who fulfill at the moment of applying the following conditions:  
- are under 40 years and set up for the first time on an agricultural holding as head of the |
### Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Types of direct beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>121 “Modernization of agricultural holdings”</strong></td>
<td>Farmers, except the producers organizations from the fruits and vegetables sector, for investments supported through Pillar 1. Potential beneficiaries: unauthorized natural persons, if they commit to receive the authorization until the date of financing contract conclusion. Producers groups and cooperatives, provided that the realized investments serve the own members’ interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>122 “Improving the economic value of forests”</strong></td>
<td>Private owners of forests, natural persons or their associations; Local communities owning forests in common (with indivisibly property rights) or their associations; Communes and municipalities owning forests or their associations; Other owners of forest different from the state property, independent forest owners (churches, hospitals, schools) and their associations; Mixed associations of any of the above categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>123 “Adding value to agricultural and forestry products” together with the three state aid schemes XS 13/2008, XS 28/2008 and N578/2009</strong></td>
<td>For agricultural products: Micro-enterprises and Small and Medium Enterprises; Other companies that do not fall into the category of micro-enterprises, small and medium enterprises, and which have less than 750 employees or a turnover that does not exceed 200 million euros; For forestry products: micro-enterprises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>125 “Improving and developing infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry”</strong></td>
<td>Sub-measure 125 a: organizations / federations of public utility held by owners / holders of agricultural land; local councils and their associations. Sub-measure 125b: owners / associations of private forest; local councils and their associations owning forests; state forest fund manager - National Forest Administration Romsilva Sub-measure 125c: commons; state forest fund manager - National Forest Administration Romsilva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>Types of direct beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141 “Supporting semi-subsistence agricultural holdings”</td>
<td>Farmers classified in the semi-subsistence category⁵; Unauthorized natural persons, if they undertake to authorize, until the conclusion of the financing contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142 “Setting up of producer groups”</td>
<td>Producer groups officially recognized from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143 “Providing farm advisory and extension services”</td>
<td>Advisory and consultancy providers or public or private entities;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211 “Support for less favored mountain areas”</td>
<td>Farmers developing agricultural activities on agricultural land located in disadvantaged mountain areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212 “Support for less favored areas-other than mountain areas”</td>
<td>Farmers that develop agricultural activities on agricultural land located in significant unfavoured areas, respectively in areas disadvantaged from specific natural conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214 “Agri-environment payments”</td>
<td>Farmers who voluntarily take agri-environmental commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215 “Animal welfare payments”</td>
<td>Commercial holdings from the pig and poultry farming sector, sanitary and veterinary licensed and commercial holdings of type A, sanitary and veterinary registered, specific to pig farming sector, who voluntarily take commitments to animal welfare.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 221 “First afforestation of agricultural land” | Legal owners of farmland. The categories of beneficiaries eligible for support under measure 221 are the following:  
  • Private owners of farmland, for the establishment of forest plantation and execution of maintenance works for a period of five years and a compensatory premium for the loss of income through afforestation, determined per year and per hectare, for a period of 15 years;  
  • Local authorities owning agricultural land, only for plantation establishment. If the agricultural land destined to afforestation is leased by a natural person or legal entity, premiums for plantation maintenance and compensatory payments, as provided in the preceding paragraph may also be granted. |
| 312 “Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises” | Micro-enterprises, both those already existing and start-ups, which are registered and conduct the activity proposed through the project in a rural area. |

⁵ Semi-subsistence farm is the farm that mainly produces for its own consumption, but which commercializes a part of its output. It has a dimension of 2-8 ESU.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Types of direct beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>313 “Encouraging of tourism activities”</td>
<td>Micro-enterprises, natural persons (who will commit to get minimally authorized with the status of AFP), communes and associations of communes, NGOs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>322 “Village renewal and development, improvement of basic services for the economy and rural population and upgrading the rural heritage”</td>
<td>Communes, through their legal representatives, local authorities or inter-community development associations, NGOs, natural persons and legal entities who own or control national/cultural heritage objectives of local interest. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as required by Law 346/2004, activating or following to activate in the field of information and communications technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>322e)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 „Implementing local development strategies”</td>
<td>Local Action Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.21 “Implementing cooperation projects”</td>
<td>Local Action Groups, Public/private partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.31 “Local action groups functioning, skills acquisition and territory animation”</td>
<td>Economic and social partners from the LEADER potential territory Other representatives of civil society such as farmers, women living in the rural area, youngsters and their associations, from the LEADER potential territory Public partners covering partially or totally the LEADER territory Local Action Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>511 „Technical assistance”</td>
<td>Institutions directly involved in the implementation of specific activities of NRDP for 2007-2013, such as: the Managing Authority and its county structures, PARDF, PIAA, TIFH, Certification Body, Coordinating Body, competent authority and other bodies involved in the implementation of NRDP.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NRDP 2007-2013, version XVI, approved in November 2015
The main categories of indirect beneficiaries identified at the level of the five axes are presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axis</th>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Categories of indirect beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Axis 1:</strong> Improving the competitiveness of agricultural and forestry sector</td>
<td>Farmers, Enterprises from the agricultural and forest industry, Organizations / federations of public utility belonging to owners / holders of agricultural land, local councils and their associations, The administrator of the state forest fund, Farmers on 2-8 ESU holdings, Producer groups</td>
<td>People activating in agriculture, and agri-food industry, Farmers, Rural population, Local authorities, Suppliers of agricultural products and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Axis 2:</strong> Improving the environment and the countryside</td>
<td>Users of agricultural and forest land</td>
<td>Population living in disadvantaged mountain areas, Population living in disadvantaged areas - other than mountain areas, Population from areas selected as having a special environmental value, Communities from rural and urban areas where commitments have been applied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Axis 3:</strong> The quality of life in rural areas and the diversification of the rural economy</td>
<td>Microenterprises, natural persons (not registered as economical agents) who will commit to get minimally authorized with the status of AFP and to function as micro-enterprises up to the contract signing date</td>
<td>Rural population, Accommodated tourists and visitors, Local authorities of rural areas, Suppliers of agricultural and non-agricultural products and services, Farmers, Representatives of civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Axis 4:</strong> LEADER</td>
<td>Microenterprises, natural persons (not registered as economical agents) - who will commit to get minimally authorized with the status of AFP and to function as micro-enterprises up to the contract signing date, communes through their legal representatives, in accordance with the national legislation in force and their associations, NGO s, Public bodies, Natural persons and legal entities</td>
<td>Economic agents, Farmers, Representatives of civil society, Local public authorities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tabel no. 2 Types of indirect beneficiaries of NRDP 2007-2013
### III.4. Terms of reference

The **overall objective** of the ex-post evaluation is represented by the intervention analysis of National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 at the completion of implementation phase, respectively the evaluation of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of these interventions and of the outputs, results, impact and success or failure factors of the programme. Achieving the overall objective will ensure the contribution of ex-post evaluation to the manner in which the rural development programme has responded to the needs of Romania on the one hand, and also the extent to which the programme has contributed to the EU priorities in terms of rural development.

**Specific objectives** aim to:

- Analyzing the use of resources allocated to Romania under EAFRD during 2007-2013, the effectiveness and efficiency of EAFRD programming, of its socio-economic consequences and its impact on Community priorities, including new challenges,
- Providing information on the degree of achievement of objectives set through NRDP 2007-2013, identifying the factors that contributed to the success or failure of the programme implementation, including in terms of sustainability,
- Highlighting the lessons learned on rural development policy and defining best practices,
- Quantifying programme indicators in accordance with the provisions of the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework,
- Analyzing the impact of implementing guarantee schemes funded by the NRDP 2007-2013.

The ex-post evaluation of NRDP is part of the legal framework established at European level by Council Regulation (EC) no. 1698/2005, Commission Regulation no. 1974/2006 and Delegated Regulation (EU) no. 807/2014 of the Commission and is carried out taking into account the existing Community strategic guidelines and the national legal framework.

According to the provisions of the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, the ex-post evaluation of National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 is performed by the independent evaluator ACZ Consulting SRL & T33 SRL, selected following a public tendering procedure. The contract of services *Ex-post evaluation of the National Rural Development Programme 2007 - 2013* was signed on 12th of September 2016 and has an implementation period of 11 months, out of which 8 months are foreseen for the effective implementation of activities and 3 months for the submission and approval of the final activity report and the final payment application file.
Considering the provisions of Article 86 – (EC) Regulation No. 1698/2005 in conjunction with art. 18 of Delegated Regulation No. 807/2014, under which the deadline for submitting ex-post evaluation report to the European Commission is 31st of December 2016, at the kick off meeting, held on 20th of September 2016, it was agreed that the association will provide an interim version for the Ex-post evaluation study of NRDP 2007-2013 up to 31st of December 2016, the final version of the evaluation study following to be submitted by the end of March 2017.

The association formed by ACZ Consulting SRL and T33 SRL developed and provided, as part of the ex-post evaluation, the following deliverables:

- Final ex-post evaluation study;
- Power Point presentation of the final evaluation report;
- Project database comprising information collected from primary and secondary sources;
- Results of the activity 4.2.3 Calculation of common and additional result indicators set out in the fiches of NDRP measures for projects completed until 31st of December 2015.

In accordance with the guidelines contained in the Guidelines for the ex-post evaluation of 2007-2013 RDPs, elaborated by the European Commission, the ex-post evaluation of rural development programme involves four methodological phases shown in the figure below:

Figure no. 1   Methodological phases of the ex-post evaluation

- Structuring phase aims to establish a clear understanding of the evaluation tasks and prepare the information and data sets, as well as the analytical tools needed to answer the evaluation questions. The structuring process enables to identify the starting information and the manner to address main evaluation subjects.

- Observation phase is intended to identify relevant and available information for the ex-post evaluation of NRDP. During this phase, the evaluation team identifies sources of information, tools and methods for data collection and methods for checking the validity and utility of qualitative and quantitative collected data.

- The analysis phase involves the use of methods and techniques of processing, composition and synthesis of available information and the use of tools and techniques of findings triangulation, that enhance the reliability of conclusions regarding the effects and impact observed by evaluators. The team of evaluation experts carries out at this stage, a thorough and detailed analysis of all the information collected in order to assess the net effects and impact of measures and programmes compared to the target levels and programme objectives, at both the beneficiary and territorial level.

- During the assessment / evaluation phase, evaluators develop answers to all the evaluation questions and formulate conclusions and recommendations in correspondence with the analyzes carried out in the previous stages.

A detailed presentation of the methodological approach adopted within the phases listed above can be found in Chapter IV Methodology.
III.5. Scope and objectives of the evaluation

The ex-post evaluation of rural development programmes is a legal requirement. The generic aim of evaluation, including the ex post, is focused on three levels, namely: to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of rural development programmes.

In general, evaluations should assess the impact of the programmes with regard to the Community strategic guidelines and the rural development objectives specific to the Member States and regions concerned.

More specifically, the ex-post evaluation, must examine:

- the degree of utilization of resources;
- the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme;
- the socio-economic impact of the programme; and
- the programme’s impact on the Community priorities, including new challenges.

More detailed, as proposed by the Guidelines for ex post evaluation of rural development programmes and the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, the scope of the evaluation is to assess the performance of programme axis and measures in terms of the objectives of rural development policy, namely:

- Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector;
- Improving the environment and the countryside;
- Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy;
- Building local capacity for employment and diversification;
- Ensuring consistency in programming (maximize synergies between axes);
- Complementarity between community instruments.

III.6. Short resume of the previous Programme evaluations

According to the provisions comprised in the EC Regulation no. 1698/2005, National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 has been evaluated before its implementation (ex-ante evaluation and strategic environmental evaluation) and during its implementation (interim evaluation). The three evaluations conducted are summarized below.
**Ex-ante evaluation of NRDP 2007-2013**\(^6\)

**General objective:** To optimize the allocation of budgetary resources and improve programming quality through the identification and evaluation of:

- Medium- and long-term needs;
- Objectives to be achieved;
- Anticipated results;
- Quantified targets, especially in terms of impact in relation to the baseline situation;
- Added value of the Community;
- The extent to which were considered the Community priorities;
- Lessons learned from the previous programming period;
- Quality procedures for implementation, monitoring, evaluation and financial management.

**Period when the evaluation activities were conducted:** September 2006 – May 2007

**Substantiation of the evaluation** in terms of legislative norms and comunitary regulations:

- (EC) Regulation No. 1085/2006;
- (EC) Regulation No. 1698/2005;

**Aspects analyzed** within the evaluation:

- Evaluation of problems approached in the preliminary programme (version I of NRDP, approved on February 2008)
- Consistency and objectives of NRDP
- Evaluation of the proposed measures
- Anticipated positive and negative impact of measures included in the programme
- Added value of the Community involvement including state aid
- Monitoring and evaluation system
- Rural Network
- Consultation with economic and social partners

---

**Strategic environmental evaluation of NRDP 2007-2013**\(^7\)

**General objective:** contribution to the integration of environmental considerations related to the preparation and adoption of NRDP.

**Period when the evaluation activities were conducted:** November 2006 – May 2007

**Substantiation of the evaluation** in terms of legislative rules and community regulations:

- (CE) Regulation no. 1698/2005
- Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of Rural Development 2007-2013 (CMEF)

---


\(^7\) Environmental Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment of NRDP (2007), Annex 3B of NRDP 2007-2013
- Government Decision no. 1076/2004 on establishing the procedure for the environmental assessment of plans and programmes, with its subsequent modifications and additions

**Aspects analyzed** within the evaluation:
- Relevant aspects of the environmental status
- Environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected by the implementation of NRDP
- Existing environmental problems relevant to NRDP
- Environmental objectives set at national, EU or international level which are relevant to NRDP
- Potential significant environmental effects
- Potential significant environmental effects in the cross border context
- Measures proposed to prevent, reduce and offset as full as possible any adverse environmental impact resulted from the implementation of NRDP
- Reasons which have led to selecting the alternatives chosen and description of how the evaluation was carried out
- Measures envisaged for monitoring the significant effects of NRDP implementation

**Interim evaluation of NRDP 2007-2013**

**General objective**: analyzing the socio-economic impact of the National Rural Development Programme on the sustainable and balanced development of Romanian rural areas and on the community priorities, as well as the assessment of effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the Programme

**Period when the evaluation activities were conducted**: August 2010 – December 2010

**Substantiation of the evaluation** in terms of legislative rules and communitary regulations:
- (CE ) Regulation no. 1698/2005

**Aspects analyzed** within the evaluation:
- Major objectives of the Programme by reference to the needs identified in the analysis phase
- Programme structure: Description of priorities, measures and target groups
- Programme implementation: actors and institutional context
- The implementation flow of the Programme
- The Intervention logic of each measure
- Main changes made during the implementation of NRDP
- Budget allocation
- Evaluation of each measure in terms of share held within the programme
- Establishing the net impact of each measure
- Balance of outputs and results: the effectiveness and efficiency of measures
- Programme relevance
- Answers to the evaluation questions

---

The ex-post evaluation of NRDP 2007-2013 was launched in September 2016.

IV. Methodology

IV.1. Description of the structure of the evaluation process and of the evaluation methods used

The ex-post evaluation of the National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 covers the key stage of analysis and evaluation of the programme, axes and measures in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and achievements reported to the results/impacts generated for the specific needs of rural areas and primary sector actors. The team of experts is reviewing also the role and contribution of external factors with significant impact on the success and failure of the programme, and highlights best practices.

Figure no. 2 The elements and criteria of programme assessment

The evaluation activities follow the guidelines contained in the Guidelines for the ex-post evaluation of 2007-2013 RDPs, developed by the European Commission and the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development, and are presented in the figure below.
### Figure no. 3  
**The evaluation process: main activities and methodologies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context analysis</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desk research, respectively the analysis of administrative data and data from secondary sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs identification (SWOT analysis)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstruction and verification of the logical model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative analysis</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data collection: survey based on questionnaires applied on-line and public sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculation of the result indicators for beneficiaries (data collected following the on-line survey)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterfactual methods comparing beneficiaries with non-beneficiaries (Ministry of Finance data on Ltds)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative analysis</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews with representatives of the MA and key stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers to EQs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answers to the evaluation questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions and recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The methodology used for ex post evaluation of NRDP included, according to the figure above, the use of a mix of methods and techniques for quantitative and qualitative analysis, based on which there were developed answers to common and specific evaluation questions and drawn conclusions and recommendations.

During the context analysis the evaluators have made the collection and analysis of administrative data and of information coming from secondary sources. The activity contributed to enhancing the understanding of the sector policy and socio-economic context, while having the role to design specific details for the tools used in the qualitative and / or quantitative analysis performed in subsequent stages of the evaluation process.

As a first step, the quantitative analysis focused on collecting data from primary sources (organization of a questionnaire based survey among the beneficiaries of NRDP 2007-2013) and secondary sources (TEMPO database of the National Institute of Statistics and progress reports of the project “Completion of the common and additional result indicators foreseen within the measure fiches of NRDP, for finalized projects”), based on which the result indicators have been calculated.

In the second phase of the quantitative analysis, the evaluation team has made a counterfactual analysis of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of Axis 1, 3, 4, in order to measure the impact and net effects of the programme interventions.

The qualitative analysis involved:
- conducting 16 interviews (7 interviews with representatives of the MA NRDP, 1 interview with representatives of AFRI, 1 interview with representative of PAIA, 1 interview with representatives of the guarantee fund manager and representatives of financial intermediaries, 2 interviews with
representatives of the academic environment, 2 interviews with representatives of key actors for the economic activity in the agricultural sector, 2 interviews with representatives of key stakeholders relevant for the environment sector);

- conducting 121 case studies at the level of NRDP 2007-2013 beneficiaries, with projects or commitments completed by the end of 2015⁹ (see Annex 9 of the study for more details on the information gathered through the case studies);

- conducting 5 focus groups, one for each Axes of the programme, with representatives of the MA and other key stakeholders.

IV.2. Description of the common and specific evaluation questions, evaluation/analysis criteria, target values/levels

Through the ex-post evaluation of the NRDP 2007-2013, are provided answers to 22 common evaluation questions (defined by the Guidelines for Ex-post Evaluation of 2007-2013 Rural Development Programmes, elaborated by the European Commission and the European Evaluation Network For Rural Development), 2 specific evaluation questions (formulated by the MA NRDP) and 23 evaluation questions regarding the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results, impact, success and failure factors of the programme (recommended in the Guide for the ex post evaluation of rural development programmes 2007-2013 elaborated by the European Commission together with the European Network for Rural Development Evaluation). Also, 5 specific evaluation questions are related to the evaluation of the implementation of the guarantee scheme financed by the NRDP 2007-2013. Based on these, there were formulated a series of conclusions and recommendations on the implementation of the NRDP. According to the evaluation methodology and considering the investigated elements, each evaluation question is part of one of the following evaluation / analysis criteria:

- Relevance
- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Result
- Impact
- Factors of success and failure
- Guarantee scheme.

Along with the evaluation / analysis criteria, for each evaluation question was established the relevant contribution of one or more result and / or impact indicators, these being evaluated based on the degree of achieving the proposed targets (if no relevant result and / or impact indicators were identified related to a certain evaluation question, the answer to the question was elaborated on the basis of information gathered

⁹ The selection of the beneficiaries participating in the case studies was possible on the basis of the information contained in the centralizing statements with beneficiaries made available to the evaluation team by the MA NRDP (for Axes 1, 3, 4, M511), PAIA (M211, M212, M214, M215 - for the 2014 campaign), AFRI (M221).
from other data sources such as desk research, semi-structured interviews, case studies, focus groups etc.). The extensive analysis of the evaluation questions can be found in Annex 8 of the Study.

The following table illustrates the description of the adopted evaluation approach, for each evaluation/analysis criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation/analysis criteria</th>
<th>Description of the approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance</strong></td>
<td>The analysis foresees an overview of the manner and extent to which the objectives and programme design are in correspondence with the challenges and specifics of the rural area and the needs and priorities of beneficiaries. However, the analysis was carried out taking into account the extent to which the objectives and programme design have been in line with the existing needs at the time, given that the circumstances impacting the implementation of the programme are variable and may have changed compared to the moment when the programme was developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency</strong></td>
<td>The evaluation of programme efficiency requires an analysis of the funds allocated and achievements or results of implementing the programme. The evaluators are verifying the extent to which it would have been possible to obtain more achievements and results with the same available resources or if the same outputs and results would have been obtained by allocating a lower amount of resources. The efficiency depends on the size of the budget allocated to the programme interventions and the manner in which funds were distributed across the axes and measures. The budget allocated to the programme is analyzed for consistency and contribution to the priorities of the European Community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>The evaluators carried out an analysis of the effectiveness and achievements following the implementation of NRDP 2007-2013, dealing with issues on how the interventions set out in the programme have generated the expected changes by addressing the specific needs of rural areas and elements that have contributed to the achievement of the objectives of rural development policy and priorities defined at EU, national and regional level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results</strong></td>
<td>The evaluation of the results of the programme implementation required the examination of the changes within the programme beneficiaries due to the programme’s interventions. The collection and the analysis of the results indicators was the starting point of the evaluation which was then completed with information coming from qualitative sources (interviews and case studies) and from the counterfactual analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact</strong></td>
<td>The evaluation of the impacts of the programme implementation required examining the extent to which the change observed in the programme area can be attributed to the programme. The analysis was paved on the evidences provided by the impact indicators as well as on the quantitative and qualitative findings collected in the various steps of the evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success and failure factors</strong></td>
<td>Factors influencing and contributing significantly to the success or failure of specific interventions were identified in interviews and case studies, being conducted a thorough analysis of the inherent and contextual issues and burdens affecting the interventions of the rural development programme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation/analysis criteria | Description of the approach
--- | ---
The evaluation of the guarantee scheme required examining the effectiveness of this specific programme intervention. This was possible by analyzing all the available monitoring data on the final recipients of the financial instruments.

Source: Methodology proposed for the ex-post evaluation of NRDP 2007-2013, December 2016

In order to provide an answer to the evaluation questions, the evaluation process focused on the analysis of the programme from the perspective of above mentioned criteria.

Relevance

By assessing the **relevance**, the evaluation experts analysed to what extent the programme, namely the selection and eligibility criteria, are adequately designed to address the challenges of the rural development area of the programme and the needs of the target groups, taking into account the EU priorities related to CAP.

The analysis was conducted through an evolutorial approach, trying to capture the most important changes in how the programme addressed the rural development needs and policies over time, through its various changes and versions.

The analysis of relevance was mainly based on desk research and semi-structured interviews with the programme management system representatives and key stakeholders.

Effectiveness

The evaluator experts analyzed the programme's achievements in terms of expected changes such as achieving the proposed values for the programme indicators, through quantitative and qualitative evidence. In this respect, the evaluators analysed:

- Procedural effectiveness, by analysing the procedural implementation with a particular focus on contracted projects;
- Financial effectiveness, by comparing the values of the financial indicator (the proposed value and the achieved value);
- Effectiveness at the level of the results, by comparing the achieved and proposed values at the level of output and result indicators.

This approach makes it possible to clarify the underlying reasons for the programme's effectiveness. For example, a lower performance of a measure regarding the output indicator may be due to procedural obstacles (lower implementation level than expected, meaning that fewer projects have been completed) and / or to obstacles related to the programme’s capacity to spend financial resources. Thus, the measures are classified as follows:

- **Effective**, if the measure reaches a value of the indicator that is greater than or equal to the expected value (achievement equal to the expected value / greater than 100%);
- **Somewhat effective**, if the measure reaches a value of the indicator that is greater than 80% of the target value and less than 100% of the target value (between 80% and 100%);
To evaluate the programme’s efficiency, the team of experts conducted a two-step analysis:

- The first step was to carry out a benchmarking analysis, taking into account NRDP and rural development programmes of other EU countries, in order to compare the expected efficiency of the programme activities. This analysis focused solely on the latest version of the programmes, comparing the estimated unit cost of projects for the same measures of the different programmes.
- The second step focused on the NRDP. The evaluation experts compared the unit costs envisaged with those actually achieved for the funded projects.

The second step of the analysis aimed to estimate the programme's efficiency by comparing the expected unit cost to achieve an output / result indicator as projected in the Programme with the actual unit cost verified after the end of the implementation period.

The expected unit cost of an indicator is obtained by dividing the allocation of a specific measure to the target value of the indicator considered. Was considered the cost in terms of public expenditure and all the values (allocations and target indicators) were taken from the latest version of the NRDP.

The actual unit cost of an indicator is obtained by dividing the final expenditure recorded for a certain measure to the corresponding value of the indicator considered, based on the information contained in AIR 2015.

This methodology allows to identify the differences between the expected efficiency and the real efficiency of the measures in terms of the real unit cost of the funded projects. The resulting differences can be explained, on a case-by-case basis, by the influence of the following factors, referring either to the obtained values of the indicators or to the cost of implementing the projects:

- higher project implementation costs than expected;
- overestimating the initial targets for output and result indicators;
- issues related to the effectiveness of the measures, which are implemented partially or only for a particular type of project / beneficiary.

For Axis 2 measures, implemented on the basis of pre-established standard costs, the possible differences between the expected and actual efficiency can be explained, in general terms, only by the inconsistencies between the target values and the obtained values of the relevant indicator, as the costs of the commitments have a fixed value.

According to the results obtained, the measures are classified as follows:
More efficient than expected, if the measure achieves a unit cost for each output, which is less than 90% of the expected unit cost;

Less efficient than expected, if the measure reaches a unit cost value for the output indicator, which is 110% of the expected proportion, which means that producing a single output unit actually costs more than expected;

Effective as expected, if the measure reaches a unit cost value that is between the two previous categories.

Figure no. 4 The approach for assessing relevance, effectiveness and efficiency

Results

The evaluation team analysed a series of elements that characterized the socio-economic context of NRDP implementation during 2007-2014 / 2015 in order to ensure a better understanding of the existing conditions at the territory level, which influenced the final values achieved for the common and additional results indicators. Specific methodological details were also considered in the evaluation to calculate the values of the result indicators. Finally, the evaluation of the results included an analysis of the degree of achievement for each common and additional result indicator.

Impact

The team of experts identified the programme’s contribution by using counterfactual methods for Axis 1 and 3, for the measures for which they could be applied, and by analysing the case studies for collecting qualitative conclusions on project implementation, effects and impact, including capacity building, environmental effects, training effects, socio-economic benefits (income, employment growth etc.). The analysis aims to evaluate the programme’s contribution to national changes, thus exceeded the simple evaluation of the effectiveness and of the achievement of the proposed targets. The impact assessment is conducted to provide qualitative and quantitative proxy information on the net effects of the programme, as well as its contribution to the registered changes.
The impact assessment of the programme also included the use of a comprehensive set of research methods and techniques. The desk research was conducted to collect relevant information on each axis, but also on the main context changes, while the semi-structured interviews provided inputs and explanatory elements on the performance and implementation of the programme. The logical models of each measure were used to reconstruct the intervention logic and identify the expected results. The conclusions of case studies and focus groups have completed the counterfactual analysis with qualitative results regarding the impact of the programme.

**Success and failure factors**

The evaluation process implied the identification of the internal and external factors that have influenced the implementation of the NRDP as well as their impact on the programme interventions.

**Guarantee scheme**

The evaluation of the guarantee scheme included a thorough analysis of the results generated by the use of the financial instrument at the level of the NRDP beneficiaries.

**IV.3. Description of the data sources, techniques used for data collection (questionnaires, interviews, size and sampling criteria for the samples used, etc.)**

In order to calculate the value of the result indicators and carry out the qualitative evaluation of the impact of NRDP 2007-2013 there were collected data from both primary and secondary sources.

In what concerns the sources of primary data used for drafting the final version of the ex-post evaluation study, these were collected through:

- the organization of a questionnaire survey, applied among the beneficiaries of NRDP 2007-2013
- the organization of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in the management, implementation and monitoring of NRDP 2007-2013
- the organization of case studies at the level of beneficiaries of NRDP 2007-2013 with projects finalized by the end of 2015;
- the organization of focus groups to present and discuss the evaluation results obtained on the basis of the tools described above;

As secondary sources there were used the Tempo databases of the National Institute of Statistics and the interim activity reports elaborated within the project *Calculation of common and additional result indicators planned under the fiches of NRDP measures for finalized projects* (out of where were collected the intermediate values of result indicators).

The secondary sources used to collect the data needed to run the counterfactual analysis were the Ministry of Public Finance (for information on assets, liabilities, capital, revenues, expenditures, turnover and average number of employees from 2010-2015 for the beneficiaries included in the analysis) and the website...
www.listafirme.ro (for information on assets, liabilities, capital, turnover and average number of employees from 2007-2009 for the beneficiaries included in the analysis).

Thus, within the evaluation activities undertaken, one of the main tools used to collect the required quantitative information was the questionnaire. This enabled the collection of information on projects funded by NRDP 2007-2013, completed throughout the period 2008-2015, this information aiming, among other things, the series of data necessary for calculating result indicators, the environmental issues, the use and usefulness of guarantee scheme, main problems encountered by beneficiaries during the project implementation etc. To respond to the particularities of each measure and types of beneficiaries, the questionnaire used was differentiated for each measure and, where appropriate, for each type of eligible beneficiaries. Also, the questionnaire was applied differently depending on the period in which the beneficiaries have completed the project (period 2008-2014 and year 2015 were treated distinctly). The questionnaire was not applied to beneficiaries under the measures of Axis 2 because:

- the final value of the common result indicator R6 relevant for measures 211, 212 and 214 was presented in AIR 2015 based on data processed by PAIA;
- for M215 no result indicator has been planned;
- the R6 indicator relevant for M221 has the same value as the one presented in AIR 2014 considering that no projects financed through this measure was finalized in 2015.

The application and completion of questionnaire was conducted online or by phone, on a representative sample of beneficiaries. Questionnaire application and data collection were concluded undertaking the following stages:

1. It was selected a representative sample of beneficiaries, depending on the total number of beneficiaries for each measure.
2. There were collected email addresses from beneficiaries. This information was taken from the databases provided by the beneficiary and from alternative sources. Within this stage, beneficiaries for whom it was not possible the identification of an e-mail address, were telephonically contacted.
3. For each measure, type of beneficiary (where the case), project completion period (2008-2014 or 2015) it was created an online form for data collection.
4. The questionnaires’ web addresses were emailed to recipients along with an address provided by MA NRDP and AFRI to support the collection of data.
5. Beneficiaries selected in the sample were telephonically re contacted and requested to fill in the questionnaires sent by e-mail.

Thus, in the first stage was identified the number of beneficiaries for each measure, taking into account the following two principles:

1. Ensuring the representativeness of results;
2. The resources available for data collection and analysis.

Tabel no. 4 Samples selected for each measure, both for projects completed in 2015 (new) and for projects completed in 2008-2015 (old)

- no. of beneficiaries-
Questionnaires were elaborated distinctly, depending on the completion year of projects and the specificity of measures. Qualitative data collection was realized through 16 semi-structured interviews held during November-December 2016. Interviews were conducted face to face or via Skype, key stakeholders being represented by:

- representatives of the Managing Authority (7 interviews);
- other key actors within the programme management system: AFRI (1 interview), PAIA (1 interview)
- Representatives of the guarantee fund manager and representatives of financial intermediaries: RCGF, Transilvania Bank (1 interview);
- key economic actors: League of Associations of Agricultural Producers in Romania, AGROSTAR (2 interviews);
- academic environment: Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences - AAFS, Agricultural Economics Institute of the Romanian Academy (2 interviews);
- other relevant actors for environment sector (2 interviews): Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests - Biodiversity Directorate, AGROMRO Association

In order to organize the interviews, there were undertaken the following stages:

- Preparing the list of proposed participants to interviews and interview guides and sending them to the Contracting Authority. The interview guide has enabled a certain degree of flexibility in what concerns the aspects discussed and the replies received so as to ensure the possibility of deepening the additional issues of interest identified during discussions.
- Contacting the interviewees in order to verify their availability for participating to interviews;
- Transmission of interview guides to participants, prior to conducting the interviews;

* Sampling methodology is presented in Annex 1 of the study, which includes the fiches of result indicators.

Source: Annex 1 of the Inception Report corresponding to the contract having as objective the ex-post evaluation of NRDP 2007-2013, November 2016
• Conducting the interviews and drafting the interview reports.

Through the interviews, it was pursued the collection of information needed for a thorough understanding of the following items related to the programme:

- Relevance;
- Effectiveness;
- Efficiency;
- Guarantee scheme;
- Environmental issues;
- Financial planning;
- Specific items related to the implementation of certain axes and measures.

In order to complete the qualitative information from semi-structured interviews with the perspective of individual beneficiaries, case studies were organized and carried out among beneficiaries of NRDP 2007-2013 with projects completed by 31 December 2015. The case studies were designed as a list of questions addressed to beneficiaries complemented by a number of aspects directly related to the implementation of the Programme, which the beneficiaries were asked to assess/to score (e.g., on the administrative procedures to submit the financing dossier or to request the reimbursement of the expenditures). Given the heterogeneity of the measures defined in the programme and in order to identify the specific elements, the list of the aspects investigated through case studies has been individualized at the level of the measure, including for the measures addressed by the guarantee scheme (a case study model for each measure).

The evaluation team defined three selection criteria for the beneficiaries included in the sample to which the list of questions of the case studies was sent:

- representativeness (beneficiaries were selected with projects finalized in the period 2008-2013, in 2014 and in 2015; it was followed a balanced territorial representativity of the beneficiaries, respectively the representativity of a region not to exceed 25% of the total number of case studies)
- the complexity of the project (for each measure, the projects were grouped according to their total budget, i.e., the public expenditure + the contribution of the applicant, in small, medium and large projects; for each measure a project was selected for each group)
- specific topics of interest, if applicable (for measures where sub-measures or packages have been defined, beneficiaries have been selected under different sub-measures / packages).

Initially, it was envisaged the collection of 3 case studies completed for each measure (the selected sample included a larger number of beneficiaries, assuming that not all the beneficiaries contacted would provide a completed fiche) to which were added three additional case studies for each of the measures addressed by the guarantee scheme defined within the NRDP 2007-2013 (M121, M123, M312, M313). As a result of the high interest shown by beneficiaries for this initiative of collecting information - more responses were received compared to the initial estimates for some measures (M121, M125, M312, etc.), the evaluation team considered it opportune to analyse all the responses received from beneficiaries in order to draw conclusions as pertinent as possible and connected with the reality of the territory. In total, 121 fiches filled in by the beneficiaries for the case studies were collected (97 fiches related to the measures defined in NRDP
2007-2013 + 24 additional fiches at the level of the measures under the guarantee scheme, respectively M121, M123, M312, M313). More information on the results obtained by centralizing the information gathered through case studies can be found in Annex no. 9.

The last method for collecting qualitative information was represented by the focus groups. Thus, five focus groups were organized and conducted, one for each Axis of the Programme. Through the focus groups, the team of evaluators aimed to present and discuss with the MA representatives and key stakeholders in the field of agriculture and rural development, the "in work" findings resulted from the evaluation activities.

Within each focus group participated between 12-16 people (Axis 1 - 15 persons, Axis 2 - 16 persons, Axis 3 - 13 persons, Axis 4 - 14 persons, Axis 5 - 12 persons). The conclusions drawn from the debates within the focus groups are reflected in Chapter VIII.2. and in the answer to the evaluation questions in Chapter VIII.3.

IV.4. Information on the methods used for the quantification of indicators, in order to check the quality and certainty of data and to identify possible errors

IV.4.1. Calculation of common and additional result indicators

The process of collecting and structuring data in a suitable data frame for statistical analysis implied several checks to ensure that data written in the database object of indicators calculation is valid according to predefined rules and constraints.

The use of an on-line survey system and a digital database has proved to be particularly advantageous for the purpose of data collection as it was speeded up the process, minimized the level of information inconsistency and was allowed a faster data manipulation.

In general, the variables collected through the on-line survey system are either beneficiary anagraphy or balance sheets elements. For this reason, the on-line survey implements several preliminary automatically controls to minimize the error of data typing mistakes. For example, the control of type-email for the field beneficiary email or the minimum value being greater than zero for positive balance sheet variables.

For example, such a preliminary automatically check was the predefined control of e-mail field, which compulsory requests the inclusion of '@' symbol in order to validate the filled in field and to transmit the completed questionnaire; another example is the mandatory introduction of a minimum value greater than zero for positive balance sheet variables (income).

---

10 Data collection from beneficiaries for calculating result indicators values for projects completed in 2015 was done through an on-line questionnaire survey: the questions were uploaded on the server of t33 (Consortium Partner), a link being generated through which it was possible to acces and complete the questionnaire. The link was sent by email to the beneficiaries selected in the sample and they entered the answers to the questions directly in the online accessible form.
During the process of data collection through the online questionnaire, administrative personnel was constantly involved in order to ensure the effectiveness of online survey and veracity of data, and to monitor the rate of response necessary to build samples. The activities carried out by the administrative personnel were multiple, varying according to the priorities set in each period:

- Daily checking of centralized databases containing responses from beneficiaries, so as to focus the efforts of contacting beneficiaries on measures that lacked a satisfactory response rate;
- Verifying the quality of reported indicators;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of beneficiary: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code fiscal: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numele si prenumele persoana responsabila (respondent):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calitatea respondentului: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beneficiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reprezentant legal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>altele (contabil, etc)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Telephone: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Organizing and operating a telephone service for the technical assistance of beneficiaries\textsuperscript{11}, which provided clarifications or additional information, depending on the obstacles encountered by them during the completion of online questionnaires. The process was coordinated by a technical manager, who oversaw the collection of quantitative data, with the aim to improve and streamline the entire process.

• Getting in touch, by telephone, with the persons included in the sample, but who hadn’t completed the questionnaire, in case of measures with a low rate of response. This activity has been planned in time, based on a daily analysis of response rates and based on the deadlines initially set. Thus, beneficiaries were reminded the necessity of completing the online questionnaire, being suggested to call the technical assistance service in case of doubts related to certain questions.

• Completing the online questionnaire by CATI method, in cases where this was requested by the beneficiaries who had no online access to it.\textsuperscript{12}

All these activities carried out by the administrative staff facilitated the process of collecting quantitative data, ensured obtaining accurate and relevant data and made possible the achievement of response rates, needed to complete the samples calculated for each measure and project completion period.

\textbf{IV.4.2. Organization and implementation of counterfactual analysis}

As to identify the impact of the measures, according to the methodology illustrated in the Inception report, the evaluation team estimated the net effect through the use of propensity score matching techniques and difference in difference. In particular, the propensity score matching was estimated through a logit model identifying a comparable set of non-beneficiaries with beneficiaries of finalised projects per each measure at the level of which was possible to perform the counterfactual analysis (M 112, M121, M123, M312, M313, M411 and M413). Data collection included a set of non-beneficiaries which does not include doubles and encompass SRL and SA having already submitted an application within the programmes funded by EU funds for agriculture and rural development (NRDP 2007-2013 or SAPARD 2004-2006), without being successful, thus sharing with beneficiaries a similar propensity to invest and / or to make projects in rural development and agriculture. After the identification of a comparable set of units (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, having dropped doubles\textsuperscript{13}), a difference-in-difference model was calculated, meaning the difference between the average variation of the result variable overtime within the set of matched beneficiaries and the same difference (of the same variable in the same period) within the set of matched non beneficiaries. The difference is the net effect, thus the impact of the measure.

The NRDP monitoring framework allowed the use of two main result variables to estimate net impacts: GVA and full time equivalent employees (FTE). For the measures included in the counterfactual analysis, was calculated the overtime variation of the proxy variable of GVA (calculated as the difference between total

\textsuperscript{11} The contact details of the persons responsible for clarifying the possible questions of the beneficiaries in relation to the content of the questionnaire were provided by the address for forwarding the questionnaire, issued by the MA NRDP and AFRI, which was sent to all the beneficiaries contacted by email to fill out the questionnaire.

\textsuperscript{12} CATI method (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) – is a method of quantitative/qualitative research which implies a telephone interview assisted by a computer software application, through which operators follow a script provided by this application.

\textsuperscript{13} Dropped doubles refer to beneficiaries of more than one measure and to non-beneficiaries of one measure and beneficiary of other measures.
revenues and total costs) and the variation of FTE (full time equivalent) employees. Due to limits of data availability, the estimates used data on SRL and SA and mainly on the period of 2009-2015. In the case of M 41.1 and M 41.3, since most of the projects have been submitted around 2012, the FTE variation has been calculated for the period 2012-2015 and for the sake of comparison with other measures also for the period 2009-2015.

The reference year of the statistical matching is the year before the projects have started to produce any effect. Notably, it usually refers to the submission year of each measure. Considering the large variety of submission and finalization year and the unavailability of the exact data regarding the start and finalization for all the projects, the reference year of statistical matching has been established for each measure based on the existing information from the databases used to monitor the implementation of the projects under the NRDP 2007-2013. 2009 has been established as the reference year for all the measures except M 41.1 and M 41.3. 2009 has been selected as the reference year for the statistical matching since data availability is much higher compared to 2007 and 2008 and since most projects have not yet started (or at least produced effects) before 2009. However, in the case M 411 and M 413, statistical matching has been based on 2012, when most project applications have been submitted14.

IV.5. Techniques/ methods to answer the evaluation questions and to draw conclusions

In line with the recommendations contained in the Guidelines for the ex-post evaluation of RDPs 2007-2013 elaborated by the EC, the methodological approach proposed to estimate the impact and the net effect of NRDP 2007-2013 is made up of a mix of methods for quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis whose application will guarantee the credibility and accuracy of the results of the evaluation process. Thus, the proposed approach involves applying the following methods: Logic model; Case study; Focus group; Counterfactual methods for impact assessment. A brief description of the evaluation methods is described below:

a. Logic model

Logic model is a method used to identify the causal relationship between the internal and external elements of the programme. Thus, through the logic model, the elements of the programme are structured in order to emphasize the programme theory. The two phases of programme theory, respectively normative theory15 and causative theory16 are reflected in the logical models that describe the activities considered to make a difference and that relate these activities to the expected results of the programme.

14 To ensure comparability the variation of Full time equivalent employees has been calculated for both 411 and 413 in the period 2015-2009 and the variation of full time equivalent employees in the period 2015-2009 for all the other measures in axis n.1
15 Normative theory presents the rationale and justification for the programme structure and activities
16 Causative theory represents the empirical knowledge about the causal relationship between the intervention and the outcome
The method was applied between September 2016 and January 2017 and was used to develop findings on the relevance of the programme and on the logic of intervention at the level of each axis.

b. Case study

Case studies represent an analytical method used for an in-depth understanding of complex interactions and processes, in order to offer a “vision from within.”

In the framework of this evaluation, were conducted at least three case studies for each measure included in NRDP 2007 – 2013, to which were added additional case studies conducted for the measures addressed by the guarantee scheme financed through NRDP 2007-2013 (M 121, M 123, M 312, M 313).

The case studies were defined as a list of questions addressed to the beneficiaries, namely as topics subject to qualitative assessment by beneficiaries. The case studies fiches have been differentiated at the level of each measure, so there was a fiche for each measure of the Programme. The completion of the case studies fiches was done online or by phone by the beneficiaries selected in the sample (the case studies fiches were sent by email to the selected beneficiaries or, in the case of the beneficiaries indicating the impossibility of completing the questions online, the fiches were completed by phone).

The case studies were carried out in four stages: 1. selection of the case studies; 2. collection, classification and correlation of data resulting from the analysis of project documents, interviews with project managers/beneficiaries and processing of this data and information; 3. preparing a report for each case study; 4. global analysis of case studies.

The method was applied in February 2017 and the results obtained were presented and discussed within the focus groups. Also, the results obtained through the analysis of case studies were integrated into the answers to the evaluation questions.

c. Focus group

Focus group is a method of participatory research and evaluation, undertaken in the form of a discussion with a selected group, consisting of about 6-8 people, organized to get information on the participant’s views and experiences, data thus collected being used to validate the conclusions drawn from the evaluation.

It was organised a focus group for each axis of NRDP 2007-2013 for validating the key findings emerged through the analysis of the impact by counterfactual methods and case studies. A number of key stakeholders were involved, including: the Managing Authority and APIR, PAIA, research institutes, associations etc.. A summary report of the discussions was distributed to participants after the event so that participants can make comments and, if necessary, request changes.
The main aspects discussed within the focus groups were related to the impacts and results of each axis, the debate being focused on the following themes:

- Contribution of each measure to the impact of the axis, identifying the key conclusions for each axis;
- Contribution of external factors;
- Lessons learned for the 2014-2020 programming period.

The method was applied in March 2017.

d. Counterfactual methods for impact assessment

Counterfactual evaluation aims at providing a plausible causal interpretation of the extent to which an intervention had an impact on certain relevant results based on empirical evidence and under some assumptions. The identification of a causal relationship is useful for making predictions about the consequences of changing circumstances or policies; it suggests what would happen in alternative (or “counterfactual”) plans.

The data were collected in a way that does not directly interfere with how they arise (“only observe”) and come from the past (not collected through the study. This data were collected for a sample of comparable beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (counterfactual sample).

The methods were applied between February and April 2017 and the results obtained were used to determine the net impact of programme interventions, the final findings being integrated into the answers to the evaluation questions.

➢ DID Method (difference in difference)
By applying DID\textsuperscript{17}, effects are determined by subtracting the difference in results between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, considering for each group the difference between the values registered in the period before receiving the support through the NRDP (project implementation), and the values from the period after receiving the support through the NRDP (project implementation). The approach is organized in the following steps: 1) defining the outcome variable(s); 2) defining the time dimension (DID estimate time); 3) computing the double difference, as an average for the two groups in the two time periods; 4) running the regression.

➢ Propensity Score Matching (PSM)
The method selects a group of non-beneficiaries similar to the beneficiaries, except that the first ones did not benefit from intervention support.

The estimation strategy was developed in the following steps: 1) identifying all the relevant variables for adequate comparison between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries; 2) estimating the propensity score as similarity measure between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries; 3) matching pairs of beneficiaries and non-

\textsuperscript{17} The method is based on the fact that outcome variables are available for beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, both before and after the intervention.
beneficiaries by Propensity Score closeness; 4) estimating the net average effect as the mean of each pair difference.

The net effect of the interventions is estimated as being the difference between the average of the outcome variables between the ‘beneficiaries’ and ‘non – beneficiaries’.

V.6. Problems or limitations of the used methodology

The following table illustrates the main problems or limitations relating to the different methodologies used in the evaluation process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Identified methodological limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Questionnaire survey, analysis of data from primary sources | Completion of data in the questionnaire made directly by the beneficiaries did not guarantee the quality of data collected, requiring subsequent phone checks carried out by administrative staff, for confirmation or correction of outliers.  
In order to calculate the R² indicator for measure 125 it was necessary to use a sampled approach in three stages.  
It was taken into account the selection of all direct beneficiaries classified as OWUI, the sample being completed through the selection of 17 TAU beneficiaries, respectively 17 indirect beneficiaries - economic agents from the territorial area of TAU beneficiaries. R² value comprises the absolute value of GAV generated by direct OWUI beneficiaries, while the evolution of GVA at UAT and indirect beneficiaries is analyzed from the perspective of relative variations due to existing methodological limitations, defined in the Interim Progress Report No. 3 of the project Calculation of common and additional result indicators planned under the fiches of NRDP measures for finalized projects |
| Case study                   | Methodological limitations related to case studies were mainly the following:  
1. failure to complete the minimum number of three case studies for measure 111  
2. lack of availability of project managers/ beneficiaries for providing answers to questions within the questionnaire (M 143).  
These methodological limitations have been offset by considering a higher number of responses received from beneficiaries under other Programme measures. The minimum number of foreseen case studies has been exceeded (the minimum initial estimated number was 78 case studies, the final number of case studies considered in the analysis was 121) |

---

18 "Methodological limitations related to the estimation of GVA growth, in absolute terms (thousands euro) result from the following causes:  
1. GVA changes registered by indirect beneficiaries of projects financed under measure 125 are both positive and negative, being determined by several major and minor, systematic and random factors;  
2. Impossibility to identify a significant number of influencing factors, which could allow the use of methods such as: the construction and validation of a regression model, the method of isolated factors influence, and also the method of decomposing rest for estimating the contribution of factors to the GVA modifications;  
3. High heterogeneity and territorial dispersion of indirect beneficiaries under measure 125", pg. 63-64, Progress Report no. 3 of the project Calculation of common and additional result indicators planned under the fiches of NRDP measures for finalized projects."
### Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified methodological limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counterfactual analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The possibility of performing the counterfactual analysis was influenced by the availability of data related to the evolution of the main economic and financial indicators both at the level of beneficiaries and of the comparable group of non-beneficiaries. Thus the counterfactual analysis was possible only for the measures that included in the list of beneficiaries private entities registered as LLC or Agricultural Company (M112, M121, M123, M312, M313, M41.1, M41.3), the financial information required for the group of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries being obtained from the database of the Ministry of Public Finance and from the website <a href="http://www.listafirme.ro">www.listafirme.ro</a>. For the measures which not included in the list of potential beneficiaries LLCs or Agricultural Societies, it was not possible to carry out the counterfactual analysis due to the lack of data related to the economic evolution of non-beneficiaries (the public sources of information do not include economic and financial information regarding authorized natural persons, individual businesses, family businesses, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Strategy for identification of correlation or conditional DID |
| Combining Difference-in-Difference with Propensity Score Matching method was particularly useful as it allowed to compare outcome variables for beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, both before and after the intervention (the moment of project implementation), with better control of the selection bias. There was a methodological limitation regarding the availability of explanatory variables data that limit to the minimum the influence of external factors, e.g. pre-intervention features or unobserved features different between the two groups (i.e. the selection bias). |

Source: Inception report elaborated within the contract having as an objective the ex-post evaluation of NRDP 2007-2013, November 2016
V. Description of the programme, measures and budget

V.1. Programme implementation: actors involved, institutional context

In the Chapter 11 of the NRDP 2007-2013, are presented in detail the institutions involved in implementing the programme, the allocated responsibilities and the manner of interaction at inter-institutional level. Thus, the institutional system for the management, control and implementation of NRDP 2007-2013 was composed of:

**Tabel no. 6 The institutional system for the management, control and implementation of the NRDP 2007-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Designated institution</th>
<th>Main responsibilities</th>
<th>Territorial units involved</th>
<th>Number of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Managing Authority</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 central unit</td>
<td>307 positions: 85 at central level and 222 at county level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development - General Directorate for Rural Development</td>
<td>Programme management and implementation</td>
<td>42 county units (Rural development divisions)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Payment Agency</td>
<td>Effectuates and manages the payments at programme level</td>
<td>1 central unit</td>
<td>1.300 positions: 250 at central level, 350 at regional level and 700 at county level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Payment Agency for Rural Development and Fishing</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 Regional Centers of Payments for Rural Development and Fisheries (RCPRDF)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42 County Offices of Payments for Rural Development and Fisheries (COPRDF)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Certification body</td>
<td>Certifying the truthfulness, completeness and accuracy of the accounts of the accredited Payment Agencies</td>
<td>1 central unit</td>
<td>313 positions: 176 at central level and 137 at regional level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audit Authority established besides the Romanian Court of Accounts</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 Regional Directions for Audit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* in 2014, out of the 42 county rural development structures within GDRD MA NRDP, 25 county structures were taken over by the AFRI, 17 structures remaining at the level of GDRD MA NRDP.

Source: NRDP 2007-2013, version XVI, approved in November 2015

19 In the 2014-2020 programming period, the title was modified in Agency for Financing Rural Investment
Additionally to the institutions presented in the table above, the implementation and management of Axis 2 of the NRDP 2007-2013 involved the mobilization of the following public authorities, to which there were delegated specific tasks:

**Tabel no. 7 Other institutions involved in the management of NRDP 2007-2013 (exclusively for the interventions included within Axis 2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr. crt.</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Main responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Paying and Intervention Agency for Agriculture</td>
<td>Implementation and specific tasks of authorization, payment, accounting, debt collection, monitoring and reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Agency</td>
<td>On site checks of specific requirements within the commitments closed by beneficiaries (M215)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Territorial Inspectorate for Forestry and Hunting</td>
<td>On site checks of works related to set-up, maintenance, planting and maintenance of plantation, compliance with Good Agricultural and Environment Conditions (M221)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cooperation agreements signed between MARD, PIAA, NSVFSA, TIFH

Given that at national level there were two payment agencies, one for the payments awarded from EARDF (PARDF) and the second, the Payment Agency for Interventions in Agriculture (PAIA), for the payments related to EFAG, was desirable to establish a Coordination Body (set up under the PARDF), whose responsibility was acting as the sole interlocutor of the two agencies in relation with the European Commission.

During the programme implementation, at inter-institutional level, there have been cases of delegating certain functions and responsibilities, the most important being:

- MA→PARDF: implementing certain measures, managing the system for monitoring the beneficiaries, implementing the information and publicity measures at programme level
- PARDF→PAIA: managing compensatory measures provided under Axis 2 of the NRDP;
- PARDF→NSVFSA: carrying out the on-spot checks of specific requirements within the commitments closed by beneficiaries of measure 2015
- PARDF→Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests – General Directorate for Forests: assessment of the technical documentation and on-site check for beneficiaries of forestry measures with payments per surface within Axis 2 (measure 221)

In accordance with Article 77 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005, the efficiency and quality of programme implementation were continuously monitored and discussed in the Monitoring Committee. The Monitoring Committee was established in February 2008, by order of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, its composition being changed 3 times during the programme implementation (in 2009, 2010 and 2015). The structure of the MC comprised 37 members and 5 observers (without voting rights), as follows:

- 43% of members and observers - institutions and public authorities (Ministries, National Institutes, etc.)
- 57% of members and observers\(^{20}\) - representatives of the private sector (associations in the fields of agriculture, forestry and food industry, associations working in the field of ecology and environmental protection, associations active in the field of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, representatives of the capital market etc.)

During the implementation of the NRPD 2007-2013 were held 13 formal meetings of the MC, as follows, the average participation rate of members at the meetings being over 70%:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date of the meeting</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1. 28-29 February</td>
<td>1. not stated in the minutes of the meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. 24 June</td>
<td>2. 26 members + 2 observers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3. 27 March</td>
<td>3. 32 members + 2 observers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4. 02 March</td>
<td>4. 34 members + 2 observers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. 17 December</td>
<td>5. 31 members + 2 observers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>6. 22 June</td>
<td>6. 31 members + 1 observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. 20 December</td>
<td>7. 32 members + 2 observers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>8. 26 June</td>
<td>8. 33 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. 13 November</td>
<td>9. 27 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>10. 21 June</td>
<td>10. 25 members + 1 observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. 29 November</td>
<td>11. 28 members + 2 observers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>12. 13 June</td>
<td>12. 28 members + 1 observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>13. 18 September</td>
<td>13. not stated in the minutes of the meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The main activities performed by the NRPD MC, were\(^{21}\):
- Analysis and approval of the criteria for selecting the financed operations (in case of any changes in the measure sheets);
- Periodic review of the progress made towards achieving the specific objectives of the NRPD;
- Examining the results of the implementation of each measure / axis and monitoring the quality of programme implementation;
- Examining the results of the ongoing evaluation;
- Analysis and approval of the Annual progress report and of the evaluation reports, before sending it to the Commission;
- Developing recommendations and proposals to improve the programme’s impact;

\(^{20}\) Out of which:
- 29% representatives of associations from the field of production and processing of agricultural and forestry products
- 19% representatives from the environmental sector
- 29% representatives of organizations that promote sustainable development and support local initiative
- 23% representatives of trade unions, bodies that promote equality and associations that promote business support

\(^{21}\) NRPD 2007-2013, version XVI, chapter 12.2 Monitoring Committee, page 473
- Analysis and approval of the proposals for adjusting / modifying the Programme;
- Review and approval of the proposal for amending the Commission Decision regarding the contribution of the EARDF.

As a result of the changes in the socio-economic context, influence of external factors or internal analyzes performed at the level of the programme’s authorities, during its implementation, the NRDP has been amended 15 times. The updates of the programme and their content are summarized in the following table:

Tabel no. 9  The main amendments to the NRDP 2007-2013 versions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Data of transmission /Date of approval by the EC</th>
<th>Changes of Measure fiches</th>
<th>Financial aspects</th>
<th>Introduction of additional elements</th>
<th>Updating other sections of the programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>February 2008</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>July 2008/September 2008</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>March 2009/April 2009</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>guarantee scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>July 2009/December 2009</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>allocation by EPER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>March 2010/August 2010</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>October 2010/May 2011</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>322d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>125c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>214 - P5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Organic farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>May 2011/August 2011</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>March 2012/April 2012</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Measure 215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>May 2012/June 2012</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>August 2012/December 2012</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>Not applicable, the version was withdrawn</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Measure 322e)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen from the table above, most programme changes aimed reallocation of funds at the level of the financial plan or modifying the elements contained in the measure fiches. 2009 marked the introduction of two new items at programme level, namely the guarantee scheme under measures 121, 123, 312 and 313 and additional financial allocation through EPER while within the period 2012-2013 were introduced new measures / sub-measures, in order to meet the identified needs (measure 215, submeasures d) and e) of measure 322, package 5 – Organic farming if measure 214).

All the versions of the NRDP were initially discussed and approved by the MC of the NRDP and then were submitted for approval to the European Commission.
V.2. Content of the Programme; description of priorities and measures

The National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (NRDP) is a programmatic document based on which have been accessed the amounts allocated to Romania, through the European Agricultural and Rural Development Fund for the programming period 2007-2013.

The overall objective of the NRDP 2007-2013 was to increase the competitiveness of the agri-food and forestry sectors, to improve the rural environment and rural areas, the quality of life in rural areas, to diversify the rural economy, to launch and ensure the operation of local development initiatives.

In order to achieve the objective, were defined four axes (Axis 1 “Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector”; Axis 2 “Improving the environment and the countryside”; Axis 3 “Improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy”; Axis 4 LEADER) to which were added the measures regarding the technical assistance (M 511) and complementary direct payments (M 611). Overall, 23 measures were implemented within the programme since 2008.

The description of NRDP axes and measures, presented below, was conducted based on the information contained in the XVIth version of NRDP 2007-2013, approved in November 2015.

According to the recommendations and policies adopted at Community level, the objectives and sub-objectives defined at the level of 4 axes were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axis</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Sub-objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector</td>
<td>Knowledge and human potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Physical potential and innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transition in the new member states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Environment and the countryside</td>
<td>Sustainable management of agricultural lands and forests, protection and improvement of natural resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Quality of life</td>
<td>Diversification of the rural economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quality of life in rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>LEADER</td>
<td>Leader approach in programming integrated rural development initiatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V.2.1. Description of Axis 1 Increasing the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector

The general objective of the Axis 1 is to improve the competitiveness in agri-food and forestry sectors. In order to achieve this goal, specific objectives were established:

1. Supporting farmers and persons carrying out their activity in the agri-food and forestry sectors, to improve human capital and capacity to adapt to the new context;
2. Accelerating the structural adaptation of agriculture and encouraging semi-subsistence farms to enter the market;
3. Modernizing agricultural holdings;
4. Increasing farms’ adaptation from an economic and environmental point of view;
5. Supporting the agri-food industry;
6. Improving the forests’ management and developing the forestry products.

These specific objectives are linked to three strategic objectives of the NSP, namely: improving knowledge and skills, improving farm competitiveness and restructuring and modernization of the processing and marketing of agricultural and forestry products, while respecting the principles of sustainable development.

The overall financial allocation on Axis 1, following the de-commitment operated by the European Commission in 2015, was 4,785,667,281 Euro, out of which 2,885,269,470 Euro public expenditure and 1,900,397,811 Euro private expenditure.

The support awarded through this axis is motivated by the importance of the agriculture and forestry in rural areas, where the majority of the active population is employed in these sectors. However, it must be strengthen the potential of these sectors, given that there are a number of problems related to low labor productivity, the existence of a large number of farms that practice a subsistence agriculture, low levels of education and skills, underdeveloped marketing channels for farm products and the need for restructuring the small enterprises from the processing sector.

Hereinafter, are presented the measures to increase the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry sectors (the actual expenditures incurred under the EAFRD are presented in Chapter V.5):

Measure 111 Vocational training, information and diffusion of knowledge

Specific objectives:

- To acquire relevant information and knowledge that will ensure the sustainable management of both agricultural and forestry land, improve management quality at farm level, restructuring and modernization of the sectors for processing and commercializing agricultural and forestry products, thus contributing to the improvement of living conditions and decrease of unemployment in rural areas.
- To improve and develop the necessary competencies for persons involved or that will be involved in forestry activities to practice a sustainable management of forests in order to increase the forestry surfaces, wood processing and efficient capitalization of forestry products.
Overall financial allocation: 79.325.638 Euro (public expenditure only)

Beneficiaries:
- direct beneficiaries: providers of vocational training, information and diffusion of knowledge
- final beneficiaries: adult people involved in the agricultural, forestry (including forest owners) and agri-food sectors

The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure: 6 providers of services for 36 projects

The total number of final beneficiaries of the measure: 48.321 farmers

Measure 112 Setting up young farmers

Specific objective: Increasing incomes of the holdings managed by young farmers.

Financial allocation: 303.913.965 Euro (public expenditure only)

Direct beneficiaries: farmers who fulfill, at the moment of applying, the following conditions:
- Are under 40 years and are set up for the first time on an agricultural holding as head of the holding;
- Possess or make a commitment to acquire competences and vocational skills in connection with the activity they are about to develop;
- Submit a business plan for the development of farming activities;
- Are members of the farmer’s family which have worked more than 50% of their working time within the holding (not necessary in the family farm) with at least 12 months before the date of the setting-up on their behalf.

The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure: 12.770

Measure 121 Modernization of agricultural holdings

Specific objectives:
- Introduction and development of new technologies and procedures, production diversification, adjusting the profile, level and quality of production to market requirements including the organic production, as well as obtaining and using energy from renewable sources;
- Adaptation of holdings to Community standards;
- Income increasing of the supported holdings;
- Supporting the members of producer groups or of other associative structures with the aim of encouraging the association phenomenon.

Financial allocation: 1.531.325.196 Euro, of which 816.988.825 Euro public expenditure and 714.336.371 Euro private expenditure

---

22 The complete list of indicators to be achieved and the cumulative values recorded by the end of 2015 can be found in Annex no. 12
Direct beneficiaries:
- Farmers, except the producers’ organizations from the fruits and vegetables sector for investments supported through Pillar 1.
- Potential beneficiaries: unauthorized natural persons if they commit to receive the authorization until the date of concluding the financing contract.
- Producers groups and cooperatives may be beneficiaries of the measure if the investments serve the own members’ interests.

The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure: 2,835

Measure 122 Improvement of the economic value of forests

Specific objectives:
- Improve the forest structure or renew of low productive, degraded forests, support the programmes for replacing the low productive forests or forests which are not consistent, with the fundamental natural type, such as coniferous forests located outside the natural area, with tree species suitable to the site conditions and less affected by natural damages (e.g. windfall, insect attacks etc.);
- Purchasing of cutting equipments and machineries for undertaking the technical measures and operations required until the exploitability age (e.g., thinning, pruning, combating pests and diseases) and technical support necessary for these works (labor force, services)
- Purchasing equipments and machineries needed for harvesting works with low impact on the environment with the exception of machineries used for both harvesting and primary processing of wood – e.g. harvesters which are eligible under measure 123.
- Production of forestry seedlings of high quality, for own purpose, through the establishment of forest nurseries, when there is a need of afforestation works within the forest property.

Financial allocation: 4,166,127 Euro, of which 2,291,370 Euro public expenditure and 1,874,757 Euro private expenditure

Direct beneficiaries:
- Private forest owners, natural persons or their associations;
- Local communities having forest properties in common (non-divisible property rights) or their associations;
- Communes and municipalities having forests in possession or their associations;
- Other categories of non-state forest owners, independent forest owners (e.g., churches, hospitals, schools etc.) and their associations;
- Mixed associations of any of the categories above.

The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure: 16
Measure 123 Increasing the added value of agricultural and forestry products, including state aid schemes XS 13/2008, 28/2008 and XS N578 / 2009

Specific objectives:

- The introduction and development of technologies and procedures for obtaining new competitive agricultural and forest products;
- The adaptation of enterprises to the new Community standards both in the processing and in the products’ distribution phases;
- The improvement of the incomes for the supported enterprises through increased added value of the agricultural products;
- Increasing the added value of forestry products, as well as the economic efficiency of micro-enterprises’ activity, through the development and modernization of equipments, processes and processing technologies.

Financial allocation: 1.786.571.137 Euro, of which 719.924.994 Euro public expenditure and 1.066.646.143 Euro private expenditure

Direct beneficiaries:
- for agricultural products: Micro-enterprises and Small and Medium Enterprises; other companies that are not micro-enterprises, small and medium enterprises, but have less than 750 employees or a turnover not exceeding 200 million EUR;
- for forestry products: Micro-enterprises.

The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure: 935

Measure 125 Improving and developing the infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry

Specific objectives:

- To raise the agricultural activity’s efficiency by improving the input’s supplying and a better capitalization of resulted products;
- To improve the environment quality and to diminish the pollution sources.

Financial allocation: 685.926.010 Euro, of which 117.540.540 Euro private expenditure and 568.385.470 Euro public expenditure

Direct beneficiaries:

- submeasure 125 a: organizations/ federations of public utility of the agricultural land owners/holders; local councils and their associations;
- submeasure 125 b: forests private holders/owners and their associations; local councils and their associations holding forests; the Administrator of the state forests fund - National Forest Administration – ROMSILVA.

---

23 According to the information presented in the AIR 2015, the average value of a project was 1.789, 21 thousand euros by dividing the total investments to the number of finalized projects
The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure: 679

**Measure 141 Supporting semi-subsistence agricultural holdings**

**Specific objectives:**
- Increasing the production volume for marketing purposes, in order to transform the semi-subsistence farms into economically viable farms.
- Diversification of production, depending on market demands and introduction of new products.

**Financial allocation:** 359,568,418 Euro (public expenditure only)

**Direct beneficiaries:**
- Farmers engaged in semi-subsistence category 24;
- unauthorized natural persons if they commit to receive the authorization until the date of concluding the financing contract.

The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure: 52,768

**Measure 142 Setting up of producer groups**

**Specific objectives:** Encouraging the setting up of producer groups in agriculture and forestry, in order to obtain good quality products, in line with the EU standards, by implementing consistent production technologies and supporting the access to the market.

**Financial allocation:** 22,530,738 Euro (fully public expenditure)

**Direct beneficiaries:** Producer groups officially recognized starting with January 1st, 2007 until 31st of December 2013

The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure: 61

**Measure 143 Providing farm advisory services**

**Specific objectives:** Improving the general management of agricultural holdings to reach performance, with impact on general improvement of holdings’ outputs, diversification of farms’ activities, identification of requirements necessary to respect the Community standards regarding the occupational safety and environmental protection.

**Financial allocation:** 12,340,052 Euro (public expenditure only)

**Beneficiaries:**

---

24 The semi-subsistence farm represents the holding which produces, in particular, for self-consumption and also market a part of its output. The economical size of semi-subsistence farms may fluctuate between 2-8 ESU

25 Of which 3 projects in transition from SAPARD to NRDP
The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure: 2 beneficiaries which implemented 7 projects

The total number of final beneficiaries of the measure: 15,717 farmers

**V.2.2. Description of Axis 2 Improving the environment and rural area**

By implementing the measures of the Axis 2, it was aimed to maintain and improve the quality of rural areas by promoting a sustainable management of agricultural and forest land, targeting the following specific objectives:

1. To contribute in less favored mountain areas, to the continued use of agricultural land, thereby maintaining the viability of the countryside, as well as maintaining and promoting sustainable farming activities.
2. To contribute in less favored areas – others than mountain area, to the continued use of agricultural land, thereby maintaining the viability of the countryside, as well as maintaining and promoting sustainable farming activities.
3. To contribute to a sustainable rural development by encouraging agricultural land users to introduce or continue methods of agricultural production compatible with the improvement of the environment, including biodiversity, water, soil and rural landscape.
4. Ensuring higher standards of animal welfare in animal farms by covering additional costs and loss of revenue to improve the environmental conditions and animal welfare due to commitments voluntary assumed for the welfare and protection by applying measures, other than the mandatory technological measures, for exceeding the mandatory minimum standards.
5. Extension of forested areas in order to contribute to the protection of water, soil, against harmful natural and human factors, as well as to ensure leisure activities, based on its multifunction role.

These specific objectives are related to the following strategic objectives:

- to continue the use of agricultural land in disadvantaged areas and to promote sustainable agriculture;
- conservation and improvement of the natural resources and habitats;
- to promote the sustainable management of forests.

The financial allocation for Axis II was of **3,163,717,818 Euro**, of which **3,163,239,363 Euro public expenditure** and **478,455 Euro private expenditure**.

The need for balanced development of rural areas has imposed the adoption of measures that contribute to improving the state of the environment in rural areas by addressing problems caused by the abandonment of farming in disadvantaged agricultural areas, the manifestation of climate change, the low use of higher
standards for animal welfare, the existence of a low level of awareness regarding the practices of extensive management of agricultural land etc.
These measures are presented below.

**Measure 211 - Support for less favored mountain areas**

**Specific objective:** To contribute in less favored mountain areas to the continued use of agricultural land, thereby maintaining the countryside, as well as maintaining and promoting sustainable farming activities.

**Financial allocation:** 769,555,055 Euro (total public expenditure)

**Beneficiaries:** farmers which are farming in less favored mountain areas

**The total number of beneficiaries of the measure:** 360,993 (supported farms)

**Measure 212 - Support for less favored area, other than mountain areas**

**Specific objective:** To contribute in less favored area, other than mountain areas, to the continued use of agricultural land, thereby maintaining the countryside, as well as maintaining and promoting sustainable farming activities.

**Financial allocation:** 435,641,913 Euro (total public expenditure)

**Beneficiaries:** farmers which are farming in LFA, respectively in areas disadvantaged by specific natural conditions

**The total number of beneficiaries of the measure:** 151,524 (supported farms)

**Measure 214 - Agri-environment payments**

**Specific objective:** To contribute to a sustainable rural development by encouraging land users to introduce or continue methods of agricultural production compatible with the protection and the improvement of the environment, including biodiversity, water, soil and rural landscape

**Financial allocation:** 1,428,418,898 Euro (total public expenditure)

**Beneficiaries:** farmers

**The total number of beneficiaries of the measure:** 321,544 (supported farms)

**Measure 215 – Payments for animal welfare**

**Specific objective:** ensuring higher standards of animal welfare in animal farms by covering additional costs and loss of revenue to improve the environment and animal welfare due to commitments voluntary assumed for the welfare and protection, by applying measures, other than mandatory technological measures, for exceeding mandatory minimum standards.

**Financial allocation:** 526,421,530 Euro (total public expenditure)
**Beneficiaries:** commercial holdings from the pig and poultry farms, veterinary licensed and commercial holding type A, sanitary and veterinary registered, specific to the pig sector, who voluntarily assume commitments for animal welfare, in accordance with art. 40 of EC Regulation no. 1698/2005, shall be eligible under this measure.

**The total number of beneficiaries of the measure:** 898 supported farms

**Measure 221 - First afforestation of agricultural lands**

**Specific objective:** Increase the area of forests playing the role of protecting the waters, soils, and of forests having a role of protection against natural and anthropic disturbances, as well as ensuring recreational functions, on the basis of its multifunctional role.

**Financial allocation:** 3.680.422 Euro, of which 3.201.967 Euro public expenditure and 478.455 Euro private expenditure.

**Direct beneficiaries:**
- private holders of agricultural land;
- public authorities holding agricultural land.

**The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure:** 21

V.2.3. Description of Axis 3 Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy

**The overall objective** of Axis 3 is to encourage the diversification of the rural economy and to improve the quality of life in rural areas.

In order to support this goal, **specific objectives** were defined:

1. Diversification of non-agricultural economic activities within agricultural households and encouraging the small entrepreneurs in the rural area;
2. Creation, improvement and diversification of tourism facilities and attractions;
3. Creation and modernization of the basic physical infrastructure in rural areas;
4. Improving the quality of the social, natural and economic environment from the rural area;
5. Protection and conservation of the cultural and natural rural patrimony.

These specific objectives are related to the following strategic objectives:

- Maintaining and developing economic activities by increasing the number of jobs;
- Increasing the attractiveness of rural areas.

---

26 Of which 3 projects transferred from SAPARD to NRDP
The overall financial allocation for Axis 3 was of 2.719.923.445 euro, of which 2.337.695.653 euro public expenditure and 382.227.792 euro private expenditure.

The strategic importance of axis 3 is inevitably connected with the reality of rural areas and the challenges encountered in the process of diversification of the rural economy. One of the most important issues facing the rural economy is the fierce need for diversification of farms or other existing businesses, expanding to other sectors (non-agricultural) - need transformed into a logical response to a dynamic agricultural market.

The specific objectives were constructed to address the problems identified in rural areas, at national level: low income, low number of jobs, dependence on subsistence farms, aging or lack of entrepreneurship rooted in access to learning opportunities in this regard.

The measures defined for Axis 3 are presented below:

**Measure 312 Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises**

**Specific objectives:**
- Creating and maintaining jobs in the rural area;
- Increasing added value in the non-agricultural activities;
- Creating and diversifying the services for the rural population provided by the micro-enterprises.

**Financial allocation:** 625.563.208 euro (of which 437.878.414 euro public expenditure and 187.684.794 euro private expenditure)

**Beneficiaries:**
- direct beneficiaries: contracts (Micro-enterprises, both existing ones and those start-ups that are registered and operate the activity proposed by the project, in rural areas)
- indirect beneficiaries: projects (services for rural population provided by micro-enterprises)

**The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure:** 2.693 (of which 2629 for setting up micro-enterprises and 64 contracts for the development of micro-enterprises)

**The total number of indirect beneficiaries of the measure:** 2.107

**Measure 313 Supporting tourism activities**

**Specific objectives:**
- To create and maintain jobs through tourism activities, especially for women and youth;
- To increase the added value in tourist activities;
- To create, improve and diversify the tourism infrastructure and services;
- To increase the number of tourists and the duration of visits.

**Financial allocation:** 467.000.862 euro (of which 303.550.560 euro public expenditure and 163.450.302 euro private expenditure)

**Beneficiaries:**
- direct beneficiaries: micro-enterprises, natural persons (taking the commitment that until the date of signing the financial contract to authorize themselves with a minimum status of authorized natural person) communes and associations of communes, NGOs.

- indirect beneficiaries: accommodated tourists and visitors / day

The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure: 1,289

The total number of indirect beneficiaries of the measure: 50,421 (of which 30,564 tourists staying overnight and 19,857 visitors/day who benefited from recreational facilities financed)

Measure 322 Village renewal and development, improving basic services for rural economy and population and upgrading rural heritage

Specific objectives:

- increase the number of inhabitants from rural area which benefit from improved services;
- increased access and ensuring traffic flows in rural areas affected by floods, that benefit from the restoration of technical infrastructure;
- improvement (rebuilding, including upgrading, if applicable) of technical infrastructure in rural areas affected by floods

Total financial allocation: 1,627,359,375 euro (of which 1,596,266,679 euro public expenditure and 31,092,696 euro private expenditure)

Beneficiaries:

- direct beneficiaries: communes, through their legal representatives, local authorities or intercommunity development associations, NGOs and cultural organizations and religious institutions, natural persons/legal entities, that own or manage cultural/natural patrimony objects of local interest.
- indirect beneficiaries: residents of areas targeted by the direct beneficiaries.

The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure: 934 communes

The total number of indirect beneficiaries of the measure: 1,629,015 inhabitants

V.2.4. Description of Axis 4 LEADER

The general objective of LEADER Axis is to start and ensure the operation of local development initiatives.

In order to support this objective, the following specific objectives were defined:

1. Participation of the rural communities members in the local development process and encouraging the innovative actions;

2. Encouraging the stakeholders at local level to work together with representatives of other communities inside the country or from abroad;
3. Fostering partnerships, preparing and assuring implementation of the local development strategies.

These specific objectives are consistent with the following strategic objectives:

- Promoting endogenous potential of territories
- Improving the local governance.

The overall financial allocation on Axis 4 was **524.094.639 euro** (of which **386.164.150 euro public expenditure** and **137.930.489 euro private expenditure**)

The development of local rural communities cannot be achieved without the active involvement of relevant stakeholders from the community in decision making. In this context, arises the need to create local structures for connecting legal representatives of the private and public sector, stable societies from inside or outside the country, that can analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the community and are able to bring innovative solutions to local problems, setting appropriate objectives and priorities and implementing best practices from other similar partnership structures.

In this regard have been selected structures called LAGs (Local Action Groups) in two sessions for the submission of Local Development Plans: the first taking place between 1st September to 15th November 2010 and the second between 1st of March to 2nd of May, 2012.

In the following section, are presented the measures defined for Axis 4:

**Measure 41 Implementation of local development strategies**

**Operational objective:**

- Implementing local integrated development strategies and projects in order to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector, the environment and rural area and the quality of life and to diversify the rural economy in rural area.

**Overall financial allocation:** **451.874.742 euro** (of which **315.616.734 euro public expenditure and 136.258.008 euro private expenditure**)

**Number of submitted projects:** 9,472

**Number of selected projects:** 7,211

**Number of contracted projects:** 7,038 (of which 3,519 on Axis 1 and 3,519 on Axis 3)
### Tabel no. 11 Projects contracted under measure 41, on types of operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axis</th>
<th>Operation/measure</th>
<th>Number of projects contracted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEADER – Axis 1</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>121</td>
<td>606</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>122</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>123</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>141</td>
<td>797</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>142</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER – Axis 3</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>3.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>313</td>
<td>289</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>322</td>
<td>2.490</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Progress Report of 2015 corresponding to NRDP 2007-2013

### Submeasures:

**Submeasure 411 – Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector**

Financial allocation: 183.081.072 euro (of which 95.202.158 euro public expenditure and 87.878.914 euro private expenditure)

**Submeasure 412 – Improving the environment and the countryside**

Financial allocation: 31.381 euro (of which 29.498 euro public expenditure and 1.883 euro private expenditure)

**Submeasure 413 – The quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy**

Financial allocation: 268.762.289 euro (of which 220.385.078 euro public expenditure and 48.377.211 euro private expenditure)

**Measure 4.21 Implementing cooperation projects**

Objective:

- Participation of Local Action Groups in cooperation projects

Through measure 421 were financed projects for trans-national cooperation (between Romania and other EU member states or EU non-member states) and inter-territorial cooperation (among LAGs and other groups/partnerships, which are organized according to the LEADER approach). These projects are implemented under the responsibility of a coordinating LAG.
Overall financial allocation: 3.749.704 euro (of which 3.205.997 euro public expenditure and 543.707 euro private expenditure)

Number of submitted projects: 265

Number of selected projects: 107

Number of contracted projects: 92 (of which 85 projects with inter-territorial participation and 7 projects at trans-national level)

Measure 4.31 Running the Local Action Groups, acquiring skills and animating the territory

Operational objectives:

The measure aims to increase the capacity of implementing local development strategies through:

- Capacity building at local level
- Ensuring the human, financial and technical resources in order to support the LAGs activity
- Training the LAGs staff for drawing up and implementing local development strategies
- Animating territory.

Overall financial allocation: 68.470.193 euro (of which 67.341.419 euro public expenditure and 1.128.774 euro private expenditure)

Submeasures:

Submeasure 431-1 –Building public - private partnerships

Financial allocation: 6.639.557 euro (of which 5.510.783 euro public expenditure and 1.128.774 euro private expenditure)

Number of submitted projects: 112

Number of selected projects: 111

Number of contracted projects: 97

Submeasure 431-2 –Running the Local Action Groups, acquisition of skills and animation of the territory

Financial allocation: 61.830.636 euro (public expenditure)

Number of contracts signed: 163
V.2.5. Description of the technical assistance measure (M511), including NRDN

Through the measure 511, Axis 5 offers support to the preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities related to the National Rural Development Programme, contributing to the effective, efficient, correct and transparent implementation of it. Therefore, the Technical Assistance measure act as a tool that ensures a common approach in coordinating the rural development policy.

The financial allocation for measure 511 represents 1,42% of the total budget of NRDP and includes also the National Rural Development Network.

Measure 511 Technical assistance

Specific objectives:

- ensuring a good management and use of the resources assigned for the efficient development of the NRDP;
- improving and maximizing the impact of the NRDP;
- ensuring the transparency, information, communication and promotion of the NRDP and of the Community support offered for its development;
- ensuring a good cooperation with the European Commission and the social and economic partners;
- setting up and ensuring the functioning of the National Rural Network.

Overall financial allocation: **131.564.204 Euro** (public expenditure only) of which expenditures for NRDN: **16.129.498 Euro**.

Beneficiaries:

- **direct beneficiaries**: institutions directly involved in the implementation of specific activities related to NRDP 2007-2013, as: Managing Authority and its county structures, PARDF, PAIA, TIFRH, Certifying Body, Coordination Body and other bodies involved in the implementation of the NRDP.
- **indirect beneficiaries**: economic operators, institutions and bodies involved in the implementation of the NRDP through technical assistance contracts, in order to meet the requirements of EU legislation for a fair and effective management of the EU financial assistance in Romania.

The total number of direct beneficiaries of the measure: **7**

The total number of contracts signed with external providers: **159**

National Rural Development Network

The specific objective of the National Rural Development Network is to stimulate the development of active partnerships between the public, private and non-government sectors, bringing together representatives of local / central public authorities, involved in rural development, local collectivities, NGOs (professional associations, foundations ). Also NRDN actively contributes to promoting intra and transnational cooperation.
The implementation of NRDN activities was facilitated through the project "Establishment and support of the National Rural Development Network" conducted by the company Innovacion y Dessarrollo Local S.L. - Spain between 02.11.2011-23.11.2012 and 31.07.2014 - 31.07.2015.

Between 2011 – 2015, the activities conducted by NRDN included the following aspects:

- A 1 – Support for the management and operation of NRDN;
- A 2 – Organization and the Secretariat of the National Coordination Committee, Leader Working Group, thematic working groups and expert meetings;
- A 3 – Thematic expertise, applied to several activities;
- A 4 – Information and communication regarding the actions of the National Rural Development Programme;
- A 5 – Support for the exchange of ideas and experience;
- A 6 – Transfer of best practices;
- A 7 – Providing training services for institutional capacity building to support the development of LAGs;
- A 8 – Support for inter-territorial and transnational cooperation;
- A 9 – Support for the exchange of information and coordination with ERDN and other national networks;
- A 10 – Participation at European and national events;
- A 11 – Support for promoting traditional products, producer groups and tourism;
- A 12 – Support for the monitoring and evaluation of NRDN by the MA.

Maximum initial financial allocation: 108.364.828 lei

Minimum financial allocation: 82.891.908 lei

Final financial allocation: 63.628.338 lei (16.129.498 euro)

V.2.6. Description of the measure for complementary direct payments (M611)

Measure 611 was part of the direct payment schemes for agriculture, the institution responsible for its implementation being the Payments Agency for Intervention in Agriculture, which is financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF), complementary national direct payment scheme (CNDPS) transferred from the European Agricultural and Rural Development Fund (EARDF) and funds from the national budget.

Financial allocation:
The measure 611 was applied between 2007-2009, the level of payments originally recorded being below 419.527.376 EUR so that the planned funds were amended, being set an amount of 392.527.376 EUR (of which 314.021.901 from EARDF), which successfully covered the payments.
V.3. The intervention logic of each measure

According to the recommendations of the Guidelines for ex-post evaluation of rural development programmes 2007-2013, the assessment of the intervention logic of each measure is not limited to verifying whether the administrative requirements and the theoretical elements are integrated into the strategy defined at programme level, but also aims to examine the practicability of the programme based on its axes and measures. The logic of intervention is analyzed in relation to the relevance, coherence and effectiveness of the implemented interventions, to determine the existence of potential structural weaknesses and to provide any recommendations to improve the future sectoral policies.

For this analysis, were identified three general arguments underlying the logic of the measures implemented under NRDP: competitiveness and economic performance, public goods / "bads" and regulatory compliance, quality of life and social objectives. In order to meet the identified needs and to achieve the objectives, the intervention logic of each measure has been defined based on a main argument (the primary intervention logic) and on a subsidiary argument (secondary intervention logic). The initial logic that grounded the introduction of measures under the programme has been verified according to the indications from the document Note E of Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of Rural Development 2007-2013 (CMEF), the results of the analysis being presented in the matrix below:

**Tabel no. 12 Primary and secondary intervention logic, per measures of NRDP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Primary intervention logic</th>
<th>Secondary intervention logic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>111 “Vocational training, information and diffusion of knowledge”, 112 „Setting up of young farmers” 143 „Providing advisory services for farmers”</td>
<td>competitiveness and economic performance</td>
<td>quality of life and social objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121 “Modernization of agricultural holdings”, 122 „Improving the economic value of the forests”, 123 “Increasing the added value of agricultural and forestry products” 125 „Improving and developing the infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry”</td>
<td>competitiveness and economic performance</td>
<td>quality of life and social objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141 „Supporting semi-subsistence agricultural holdings”</td>
<td>competitiveness and economic performance</td>
<td>quality of life and social objectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

27 Public goods / "problems" assimilate including the items related to improving the environment and rural space since these components are public through their nature and are of interest to the general population.

28 Public "problems" (public bads) existing on the market, generate discontent among population and thus contribute to reducing economic welfare (eg air pollution).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Primary intervention logic</th>
<th>Secondary intervention logic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>142 „Setting up of producer groups”</td>
<td>competitiveness and economic performance</td>
<td>quality of life and social objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211 „Support for less favored mountain areas”, 212 „Support for less favored areas, other than mountain areas”</td>
<td>public goods / “problems”</td>
<td>quality of life and social/public objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214 „Agri-environment payments”</td>
<td>public goods / “problems”</td>
<td>competitiveness and economic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215 „Animal welfare”</td>
<td>public goods / “problems”</td>
<td>competitiveness and economic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221 „First afforestation of agricultural lands”</td>
<td>public goods / “problems”</td>
<td>quality of life and social objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>312 „Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises”, 313 „Supporting tourism activities”</td>
<td>competitiveness and economic performance</td>
<td>quality of life and social objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>322 „Village renewal and development, conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage”</td>
<td>quality of life and social objectives</td>
<td>competitiveness and economic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 „Implementation of local development strategies”, 421 “Implementing cooperation projects”, 431 “Running the Local Action Groups, acquiring skills and animating the territory”</td>
<td>quality of life and social objectives</td>
<td>competitiveness and economic performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Regarding the intervention logic of the measure 511, given the nature of the needs and actions financed under the measure, it can be assimilated, at secondary level, to all the three reasons presented above.

Source: Guidelines for the ex-post evaluation of 2007-2013 RDPs, data processed within the ex-post evaluation activities of NRDP 2007-2013

The intervention logic for each axis, including measures, can be found in Annex 2 of the Evaluation report, which is a schematic analysis based on the final version (no. 16, approved in November 2015) of the NRDP 2007-2013. Regarding the final element of the intervention logic, namely the impact of the programme, the matrix below shows the contribution of the various measures to the impact indicators selected under the programme:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axis</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Impact indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Economic growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>112</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>121</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>122</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>123</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>141</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>142</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Improving the environment and the countryside</td>
<td>211</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>212</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>214</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>215</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>221</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Quality of life in rural areas</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>313</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>322</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. LEADER</td>
<td>411</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>412</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>413</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>421</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>431</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Thematic Working Group of the Experts Evaluation Network, data processed within the ex-post evaluation activities of NRDP 2007-2013

Thus, in terms of thematic concentration of the programme strategy, it can be seen that the main impact, planned through the proposed interventions, is linked to the economic development of the agricultural sector and of the rural area, more than half of the analyzed measures (12 measures) having a direct contribution to the relevant impact indicators. Secondary, the programme strategy aims at increasing the quality of life in rural areas by creating jobs, and protecting and preserving the environment. These findings are also confirmed by the analysis made on the primary and secondary intervention logic, at the level of the
measures, the competitiveness and economic performance being the main rationale for 13 measures of the NRDP.

The changes of the programme during its implementation led to some updates of the originally defined intervention logic, the most important in terms of changes produced in the socio-economic context and, consequently, at the level of needs, being:

- Version IV (approved in December 2009): amendment of the programme according to the European Economic Recovery Plan (additional financial allocation for measures 121, 123, 125, 214, 312 and 322)
- Version VI (approved in May 2011: introduction of sub-measure 125c) Works for construction, reconstruction and modernization of infrastructure for flood prevention and protection; sub-measure 322d) Investment in works on rehabilitation and modernization of road infrastructure damaged by floods in 2010; package 5 - Organic farming, under measure 214 Agri-environment payments
- Version VIII (approved in April 2012): introduction of sub-measure 215 – Payments for animal welfare
- Version XII (approved in December 2013: introduction of sub-measure 322e) Investment on broadband infrastructure in rural areas.

At the level of those changes, programme strategy has been adapted in order to reflect the proposed changes, but SWOT analysis and the analysis of the socio-economic context have not been updated in an integrated manner (information being disparate and individualized in the document - for example a specific section of SWOT analysis regarding the subject of animal welfare), the intervention logic of the new introduced measure fiches (in versions VI, VIII, XII) is clearly justified, including by the exact identification of the needs justifying such intervention. During programme implementation there were no structural changes in the system of common and additional result indicators, but only changes of values (financial allocation associated to the indicator), the intervention logic of measures and axes not being changed from a structural point of view.

The conclusions of the intervention logic analysis, in terms of ex-post evaluation, reveals that, in general, the structure of axes and measures was coherent with the strategy and objectives of the programme.
V.4. The forecasted budget for the entire period

Total public contribution within the NRDP 2007-2013 (XVI version, approved in November 2015) was of **9,296,460,216 euro**, out of which **8,097,271,931 euro** from EARDF and EERP. Initially, total public contribution within the NRDP 2007-2013 was of **9,970,795,600 EUR**, out of which **8,022,504,745 euros** from EARDF.

According to the decision to revise Romania’s rural development programme for 2007-2013 and amend the Decision C (2008) 3831 approving the rural development programme, the European Commission decommitted in 2015 the sum of 26,926,813,53 euros (changes were recorded as the XVth version of the NRDP). The decision of de-commitment was based on the provisions of art. 38 of the EU Regulation no. 1306/2013, corroborated with art. 41 of EU Regulation No. 907/2014 of the Commission.

Another important change related to the financial support allocated to the operations defined within the NRDP 2007-2013 was the supplementation of the funds through the implementation of the European Economic Recovery Plan, introduced with the IVth version of NRDP (approved in December 2009), in order to ensure the correspondence with the priorities established through the Health Balance Sheet of the Common Agricultural Policy. The additional funding earmarked through the EERP amounted 101,694 mil. euros and supported the priorities related to climate change, renewable energy, water resource management, biodiversity, restructuring of the dairy sector and expanding and improving broadband internet infrastructure.

An essential point for analyzing the budget allocated to private investments from NRDP is also the introduction of the financial guarantee instrument, whose main objective was to improve the business environment and increase the accessibility of farmers, rural SMEs and other categories of NRDP beneficiaries to credit sources on the financial-banking market (IIIrd version of NRDP approved in March 2009). There were established two guarantee schemes co-financed by the EAFRD: the guarantee scheme for agriculture (guarantees for beneficiaries' loans under measures 121 and 123) and the guarantee scheme for small and medium-sized enterprises (guarantees for SMEs benefiting from measures 312, 313 and components of measure 123 covered by state aid schemes).

Analyzing the temporal variation of financial allocations, it is noticed that the amount allocated to the agricultural guarantee scheme was reduced by 48.88% (from 190,000,000 euro as originally set at the approval of the guarantee scheme, in the IIIrd version of NRDP from 2009, to 97,119,222 euros, in the latest version of NRDP, approved in 2015). The cumulative allocation of the SME guarantee scheme has shown a similar trend, decreasing by 39.35% over the implementation period of the programme.
During the implementation period, total public contribution has been reduced by 6.76% compared to the initial value, but the EARDF contribution (EARDF and EERP, starting with version IV of the Programme – approved in December 2009) decreased by less than 1% as a consequence of the growth rate of EARDF contribution from 80.46% to 87.10%.

In what concerns the financial allocation per axis, this element was further analyzed in terms evolution in each version of the programme.

From the perspective of financial planning per axis, a number of significant structural changes can be seen at the level of funds, a milestone in this evolution being the version IX of NRDP, approved in June 2012. In this version there was a significant reduction of the public national contribution for the programme (as a result of the derogation granted to Romania in what concerns the maximum EAFRD contribution rate, namely its increase to 95% for axes 1, 2, 3, 4 and TA31) The increase of the EAFRD contribution rate to the maximum of

31 Prior to this change of the programme, the maximum public contribution as well as the co-financing rates from the EU budget for each coherent group of measures with specific objectives (axis) were established according to
95% out of the total public contribution occurred as a result of the proposal submitted by Romania to DG Agri services in 2012, in the context of the adoption at EU level of some legislative packages on rural development, namely the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council no. 1312/2011 amending (EC) Regulation No. 1698/2005 on certain provisions related to the financial management of Member States experiencing or being threatened by serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability and the Council Implementing Regulation no. 1353/2011 amending (EC) Regulation No. 1698/2005. The reduction of the national contribution to the programme led to a reduction of pressures on the state budget.

Another point of reference for the evolution of the financial planning at NRDP level was represented by the XIIth version of the programme (approved in December 2013), which reduced the financial allocation for Axes 1, 3, 4 and M 511, M 611 and increased the allocation of Axis 2 (the main reason was to avoid the de-commitment of the amounts corresponding to the less performing measures in terms of expenditure incurred by 2013). Subsequently, the allocation of Axis 2 increased constantly, so in the last version of the programme, it managed to hold a share of over 34% of the total public contribution of the Programme, exceeding the allocation for Axis 1.

From the perspective of the share held by each axis in the total financial allocation of the Programme:

- Axis 1 originally held around 40% of the NRDP allocation, reaching 31% in the final version (version XVI, approved in November 2015)
- Axis 2 originally owned around 23% of the NRDP allocation (considering the total allocation, including measure 611), respectively 25% (considering the allocation addressed only to NRDP measures), reaching 34% in the final version (version XVI, approved in November 2015)
- Axis 3 held around 24,8% of the initial allocation of NRDP, reaching 25,1% in the final version (version XVI, approved in November 2015)
- Axis 4 held around 2,3% of the initial allocation of NRDP, reaching 4,1% in the final version (version XVI, approved in November 2015)
- Measure 511 held around 3,7% of the initial allocation of NRDP, reaching 1,4% in the final version (version XVI, approved in November 2015)
- Measure 611 held around 6,2% of the initial allocation of NRDP, reaching 4,2% in the final version (version XVI, approved in November 2015)

Thus, it can be seen that the importance of Axes has temporally changed, financial priorities being adjusted accordingly; thus, allocations needed to finance various needs associated to different measures have changed due to either an initial undervaluation of the required financial effort or the dynamics of eligible operations financed by NRDP 2007-2013. From the perspective of reallocation among axes, positive changes of financial allocation were recorded on Axis 2 and 4, the redeployments to these axes being achieved by reducing the financial allocation of Axis 1 and 3, measure 511 and measure 611.

Further on, developments in the financial allocation is analyzed for each implemented measures within NRDP 2007-2013. The graphical representation does not include the XV version of NRDP (approved in September).

Regulation no. 1698/2005. In this respect, for Axes 1, 3, Leader and Technical Assistance, the EU contribution rate was 80% and for Axis 2 it was 82%.
since this change does not presents a detailed financial allocation by measures of axes 1-4\textsuperscript{32}, but only cumulated per each axis and per measures 511, 611.

**Figure no. 8** The evolution of the financial allocation for the measures of Axis 1 - public expenditure

![Figure 8](image)

*Source: data processing NRDP 2007-2013 - versions I-XVI*

The main measures of the Axis 1 in terms of financial allocation were 121 "Modernization of agricultural holdings" and 123 "Increasing the added value of the agricultural and forestry products". These 2 measures were constantly totalizing over 50% of the total financial allocation for Axis 1.

**Figure no. 9** Changes in total public expenditure, allocated per measures of Axis 1

![Figure 9](image)

*Source: data processing NRDP 2007-2013, versions I-XVI*

Considering the entire implementation period of the NRDP, the most significant reductions were recorded for measure 123, for which the final financial allocation was being reduced by one third compared to the

\textsuperscript{32} DECISION OF IMPLEMENTING of 29/09/2015 revision of Romania's rural development program for the programming period 2007-2013 and amending Decision C (2008) 3831 of 16 July 2008 approving the rural development program
amount that was initially estimated. The reductions applied to measure 123 occurred against the backdrop of the deficit of Axis 2 measures and the need to increase the efficiency of resources allocated to the entire programme, taking into account, on the one hand, the nature of the projects implemented through this measure (complex investments involving long periods of implementation), and, on the other hand, the increased rate of cancelled contracts. Measure 122 "Improving the economic value of forests" ranks second in terms of reducing the financial allocation in absolute terms, but in relative terms, its final allocation represented only 1.16% of the amount initially estimated. The only positive financial variation was recorded by measure 125 - "Improving and developing infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry", where the final allocation was 20% higher than the original.

Figure no. 10 The evolution of the financial allocation per Axis 2 measures - public expenditure

Source: data processing NRDP 2007-2013, versions I-XVI

At the level of Axis 2, the main measure in terms of financial allocation was 214 "Agri-environment payments", this measure having constantly above 40% of the total budget of the Axis. Through the VIII NRDP version (approved in April 2012), it was introduced a new measure to Axis 2, namely 215 "Animal welfare", its initial allocation being doubled by the end of 2015.
Considering the entire implementation period of the NRDP, the most significant reductions were recorded for the measure 221 “First afforestation of agricultural land”, its final financial allocation accounting only 1.4% of the initial estimated value (a reduction of over 225 mil. Euro).

The reduction of the financial allocation can be explained by the low attractiveness of this measure due to the relatively low level of compensatory premiums granted for the establishment and maintenance of forest plantations and the deadline set for the closure of commitments (31.12.2013). Moreover, the Programme of environmental improvement through the afforestation of degraded land, ecological reconstruction and sustainable forest management financed by the Environmental Fund, was a more attractive and competitive instrument compared to the support provided by Measure 221.

The most important positive changes in absolute terms are recorded for measures 214 and 215.
At the level of Axis 3, Measure 322 "Village renewal and development, conservation and upgrading of rural heritage", comprised over 60% of the total funds allocated for this axis, justified by the typology of the funded projects. The performances of the measure 313 "Supporting tourism activities" recorded during the programme implementation, have reduced the allocation towards the originally planned value, in the end the measure holding 13% of the financial allocation for axis 3 (versus 22% as initially planned, in the first version of the Programme).

Measure 312 "Support for creation and development of micro-enterprises" benefited from a slight increase of the financial allocation, surpassing in time measure 313 in terms of share of budget held at axis level.

Figure no. 13  
Changes in total public expenditure allocated per measures of Axis 3

Source: data processing NRDP 2007-2013, versions I-XVI

At the level of Axis 3, the only negative change in financial allocation was recorded within measure 313, as this measure had a relative reduction of about 45%. The reduction of the financial allocation occurred taking into account the poor performance, the relatively high rate of cancelled financing contracts and, last but not least, the specificity of the projects implemented through this measure. Measures 312 and 322 recorded slight increases of 14% and 3%. The overall level of variation for this axis was negative, as movements of redeployment to other axes and measures of the programme were conducted.
Figure no. 14  Evolution of financial allocation per measures of Axis 4 - public expenditure

Source: data processing NRDP 2007-2013, versions I-XVI

The main measures of Axis 4 in terms of total allocated budget are 41 "Implementation of local development strategies" (ie Leader Axis 1 - 411 and Leader Axis 3 - 413) and 431 "Operation of Local Action Groups, acquisition of skill and animating the territory ". For these measures were registered also the most important additions to the amounts initially allocated.

Figure no. 15  Changes in total public expenditure allocated per measures, Axis 4

Source: data processing NRDP 2007-2013, versions I-XVI

From the perspective of variations of allocated public expenditure, there is a highlight on measure 413, with an increase of over 140% from what appears in the first version of NRDP, followed by measure 411 with an additional 65% of public expenditure originally projected. The most significant reduction of the financial allocation was recorded for measure 412 (Leader Axis 2), its final value representing only 0,13% of its initial allocation. The reallocation of funds to measures 413 and 411 has been made as a result of the high degree
of access and the increased interest that beneficiaries have shown for the funding opportunities supported by these measures.

**Figure no. 16  Evolution of the financial allocation for measure 511 - public expenditure**

![Figure no. 16](image)

*Source: data processing NRDP 2007-2013, versions I-XVI*

Reported to the total public expenditure, for the Technical Assistance measure (including NRDN) was initially allocated 3.77% out of the total programme budget. Subsequently, the allocation for this axis was reduced significantly (by 66%) in the VIII version of the NRDP (approved in April 2012), reaching in final version (version XVI, approved in November 2015) 1.42% of total public expenditure. From the perspective of the budget allocated for organizing the National Rural Development Network, the change has been negative, expected expenditures being initially reduced by over 70% (for running) and 38% (for the action plan) as a result of the difficulties encountered in the contractual relationship with the economic operator responsible for the organization and functioning of NRDN.

**Figure no. 17  Evolution of the financial allocation for measure 611 - public expenditure**

![Figure no. 17](image)

*Source: data processing NRDP 2007-2013, versions I-XVI*

The evolution of the financial allocation for additional payments was a downward one, the allocation of the measure decreasing along with the VIII and XII versions of NRDP with over 37% from the initial estimated
value. This variation can be explained by the limited availability of funds (only until the end of 2009, the measure being implemented during 2007-2009), the difference between the initial allocation and the payments made being relocated to address the additional funding needs of Axis 2, thus avoiding the de-commitment of the savings made under this measure.

V.5. Extent of absorption and the actual amount spent

The situation of payments reported to the budget allocated to the National Rural Development Programme indicates a financial execution rate of 89.48%. In absolute terms, by the end of 2015, were made payments of 8.318.927,12 thousands euros (including EAFRD and EERP) – 7.135.496,60 thousands euros ERDF, out of the allocated 9.296.460,22 thousands euros.

Analyzing the financial execution rate within the four axes, it is observed that the highest absorption rate is recorded by axis 2 (96.05%) and axis 4 (91.49%), followed at a difference of few percents, by axis 1 (85.22%) and axis 3 (83.45%).

The high financial execution rate of the Axis 2 was determined by direct payment to beneficiaries, increasing the level of compensation payments for measures 211 and 212, as well as by the introduction of new packages and new measures during the programme implementation (measure 214 and 215).

Figure no. 18  The budgetary allocation and value of payments for the axes of NRDP 2007-2013

Source: Data processed by the authors based on information taken from the NRDP and the annual progress reports

In the case of axes 1 and 3, the financial absorption was lower compared to axes 2 and 4, the main cause consisting in the difficulty of beneficiaries to ensure the rate of co-financing, both from own resources and from borrowed resources, in the context of economic crisis and tightening credit conditions. Another
influential factor for reducing the financial execution at the level of axis 3 was the financing of infrastructure projects with a long implementation period.

Analyzing the ratio between the payments and the budget of the rural development programme, per measures, it appears that the highest rate of financial execution is registered by measure 211 – Support for less favored mountain areas (100,14%), closely followed by measures 212 – Support for less favored mountain areas – other than mountain areas (99,08%) and 112 – Setting up of young farmers (98,27%), as illustrated in the table below:

112 – Setting up of young farmers (98,27%), measures 211 – Support for less favoured mountain areas and 212 – Support for less favoured area – other than mountain areas (99,75%) and measure 4.1 Implementation of local development strategies (94,60%), as illustrated in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure/Axis</th>
<th>Total cost (mii €)</th>
<th>Public expenditure (mii €)</th>
<th>Value of payments (000 €) total</th>
<th>out of which EARDF</th>
<th>Rate of financial execution (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>111 – Vocational training, information actions and diffusion of knowledge</td>
<td>79.325,64</td>
<td>79.325,64</td>
<td>19.347,35</td>
<td>18.379,88</td>
<td>24,39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112 – Setting up of young farmers</td>
<td>303.913,97</td>
<td>303.913,97</td>
<td>298.661,38</td>
<td>260.504,74</td>
<td>98,27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114 – Providing farm advisory and extension services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121 – Modernization of agricultural holdings</td>
<td>1.531.325,19</td>
<td>816.988,83</td>
<td>716.825,07</td>
<td>614.443,68</td>
<td>87,74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122 – Improvement of the economic value of forests</td>
<td>4.166,12</td>
<td>2.291,37</td>
<td>1.877,97</td>
<td>1.734,51</td>
<td>81,96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123 – Increasing the added value of the agricultural and forestry products</td>
<td>1.786.571,13</td>
<td>719.924,99</td>
<td>552.785,58</td>
<td>478.522,28</td>
<td>76,78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125 – Improving and developing the infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry</td>
<td>685.926,01</td>
<td>568.385,47</td>
<td>525.285,41</td>
<td>482.737,84</td>
<td>92,42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141 – Supporting semi-subsistence agricultural holdings</td>
<td>359.568,42</td>
<td>359.568,42</td>
<td>333.413,88</td>
<td>297.821,89</td>
<td>92,73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142 – Setting up producers groups</td>
<td>22.530,74</td>
<td>22.530,74</td>
<td>5.452,90</td>
<td>4.993,02</td>
<td>24,20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143 – Providing farm advisory and extension services</td>
<td>12.340,05</td>
<td>12.340,05</td>
<td>5.084,77</td>
<td>4.706,17</td>
<td>41,21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total per Axis 1</td>
<td>4.785.667,27</td>
<td>2.885.269,48</td>
<td>2.458.734,31</td>
<td>2.163.844,01</td>
<td>85,22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211 – Support for less favored mountain area</td>
<td>769.555,05</td>
<td>769.555,05</td>
<td>770.594,16</td>
<td>732.064,45</td>
<td>100,14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure/Axis</td>
<td>Total cost (mil €)</td>
<td>Public expenditure (mil €)</td>
<td>Value of payments (000 €)</td>
<td>Rate of financial execution (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212 - Support for less favored areas, other than mountain area</td>
<td>435.641,91</td>
<td>435.641,91</td>
<td>431.637,21</td>
<td>99,08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214 – Agri-environment payments</td>
<td>1.428.418,90</td>
<td>1.428.418,90</td>
<td>1.377.933,58</td>
<td>96,47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215 – Animal welfare</td>
<td>526.421,53</td>
<td>526.421,53</td>
<td>457.489,55</td>
<td>86,91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221 – First afforestation of the agricultural lands</td>
<td>3.680,42</td>
<td>3.201,97</td>
<td>522,22</td>
<td>16,31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Axis 2</strong></td>
<td>3.163.717,82</td>
<td>3.163.239,37</td>
<td>3.038.176,72</td>
<td>96,05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>312 – Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises</td>
<td>625.563,20</td>
<td>437.878,41</td>
<td>314.654,67</td>
<td>71,86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313 – Support of tourism activities</td>
<td>467.000,86</td>
<td>303.550,56</td>
<td>137.768,25</td>
<td>45,39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>322 – Village renewal and development, improving basic services for rural economy and population and upgrading of rural heritage</td>
<td>1.627.359,37</td>
<td>1.596.266,68</td>
<td>1.498.500,02</td>
<td>93,88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Axis 3</strong></td>
<td>2.719.923,43</td>
<td>2.337.695,65</td>
<td>1.950.922,94</td>
<td>83,45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Implementation of the local development strategies</td>
<td>451.874,74</td>
<td>315.616,73</td>
<td>298.576,91</td>
<td>94,60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.21 Implementing cooperation projects</td>
<td>3.749,70</td>
<td>3.206,00</td>
<td>1.121,87</td>
<td>34,99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.31 Running the Local Action Groups, acquiring skills and animating the territory</td>
<td>68.470,19</td>
<td>67.341,42</td>
<td>53.615,59</td>
<td>79,62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Axis 4</strong></td>
<td>524.094,63</td>
<td>368.164,15</td>
<td>353.314,37</td>
<td>91,49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>511 Technical assistance</td>
<td>131.564,20</td>
<td>131.564,20</td>
<td>125.251,41</td>
<td>89,20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>611. Direct complementary payments</td>
<td>392.527,37</td>
<td>392.527,37</td>
<td>392.527,37</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total NRDP (without 611)</strong></td>
<td>11.324.967,35</td>
<td>8.903.932,85</td>
<td>7.926.399,75</td>
<td>89,02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>11.717.494,72</td>
<td>9.296.460,22</td>
<td>8.318.927,12</td>
<td>89,48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Data processed by the authors based on information taken from NRDP, version XVI, approved in November 2015 and the Annual Progress Report of 2015*
VI. Result indicators

VI.1. Description of the structure for the monitoring frame of NRDP, in terms of result indicators

The monitoring framework was defined within NRDP and it is detailed in Annex 1A, that comprises quantifying indicators for monitoring and evaluation, according to distribution of the three categories, following the European regulations and the programming documents:

- Output indicators;
- Result indicators;
- Impact indicators.

Result indicators are defined as indicated in the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework 2007-2013. Within NRDP, they are grouped into two categories: common and additional result indicators, logically correlated with measures implemented in each axis.

The table below details the list of 10 common result indicators and the measures that contribute to the achievement of the forecasted values:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>M111</th>
<th>M112</th>
<th>M211</th>
<th>M212</th>
<th>M214</th>
<th>M221</th>
<th>M312</th>
<th>M313</th>
<th>M322</th>
<th>M41</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Processing of data comprised in NRDP 2007-2013, version XVI, approved in November 2015

Legend:

- Indicator R1 = Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity related to agriculture and/or forestry
- Indicator R2 = Increase of the non-agricultural Gross Value Added in supported enterprises
- Indicator R3 = Number of holdingsenterprises introducing new products and/or new techniques
- Indicator R5 = Number of farms entering the market
- Indicator R6 = Area under successful land management contributing to biodiversity and high nature value farming/forestry, water quality, mitigating climate change, soil quality, avoidance of marginalization and land abandonment
- Indicator R7 = Increase of the non-agricultural Gross Value Added in supported enterprises
- Indicator R8(1) = Gross number of jobs created
- Indicator R8(2) = Additional jobs created

Indicator R10 = Gross number of jobs created
Indicator R8(2) = Gross number of jobs created - Measures 311, 312, 313 and LEADER
Indicator R9 = Additional number of tourist visits
Indicator R10 = Population in the rural area benefiting from improved services

In the table below are listed the 13 additional result indicators and the related measures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tabel no. 16 Additional result indicators and the related measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Processing of data comprised in NRDP 2007-2013, version XVI, approved in November 2015

Legend:
Indicator IA1 = Number of tourist accommodation structures which diversify the range of travel services provided in supported
Indicator IA2 = Number of beneficiaries who develop innovative actions
Indicator IA3 = Number of hectares on which there was improved the forest structure
Indicator IA4 = Number of projects aimed at improving the forest structure
Indicator IA5 = The number of enterprises that meet EU standards as a result of the support
Indicator IA6 = Number of semi-subsistence holdings that introduce new products and/or techniques
Indicator IA7 = Increase of agricultural gross value added in supported holdings (mil. euro)
Indicator IA8 = Number of persons who have successfully completed a training in the field (LAG) - General training
Indicator IA9 = Number of persons who have successfully completed a training in the field (LAG) - specialized training for GAL representative
Indicator IA10 = Number of purchased computer equipment
Indicator IA11 = Number of informational materials distributed during promotion and information activities regarding NRDP and EAFRD
Indicator IA12 = Number of persons trained by actions financed under the technical assistance measure
Indicator IA13 = Number of auxiliary stuff employed and paid through this measure

Within the ex-post evaluation of the NRDP 2007-2013, there was collected data from beneficiaries of projects completed in 2015 in order to calculate the related result indicators. Thus, in Annex 1 of the study, are listed the sheets of common and additional result indicators for those result indicators calculated in relation to projects completed in 2015.

During the implementation of the NRDP 2007-2013, Annex 1A of the NRDP has not substantially changed, having undertaken only minor revisions, to correlate the respective financial information of the Annex with the updated financial allocation of the programme.
VI.2. Final values of common and additional result indicators

The aggregated values of common result indicators defined within NRDP 2007-2013 are presented as it follows (source: processed and aggregated data collected within the ex-post evaluation of NRDP 2007-2013, December 2015):

R1. Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity related to agriculture and/or forestry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Measure</th>
<th>Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity related to agriculture and/or forestry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>111. Vocational training, information actions and diffusion of knowledge</td>
<td>48,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>48,319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R2. Increase of the non-agricultural Gross Value Added in supported enterprises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Measure</th>
<th>Increase of the non-agricultural Gross Value Added in supported enterprises (’000 in euro)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural sector</td>
<td>Food industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112. Setting up of young farmers</td>
<td>38,007,44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113. Early retirement</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114/143. Use of advisory services</td>
<td>520,46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115. Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In case of indicator R2, for some measures (121, 122, 123), it was recorded a decrease of the value in the final report comparing to the value presented in the Annual Implementation Report of 2014 for NRDP 2007-2013 of Romania. This is explained by the fact that the annual variation of GVA can be both positive and negative (which leads to the decrease and not the increase of GVA). This evolution of the indicator is correlated with the macroeconomic evolution of agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, reported by the NIS. According to the provisional reported data, the value recorded by this sector in 2015 represents only 88,2% of its recorded value in 2014. Moreover, this value is decreasing compared to the previous reports (provisional data indicating 90,6%), existing the possibility to have an even lower final value reported by NIS. Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector had a negative contribution of -0,6% to the GDP increase of 3,9% (registered in 2015 compared to 2014).

In order to ensure consistency and comparability, the calculation methodology provided by CMEF, which was used also previously when reporting indicators within NRDP, has been applied. However, it should be noted that the calculation methodology for the indicator growth of GVA is contradictory with the name of the indicator because the name refers to a growth, while the calculation methodology evaluates a change and thus foresees the possibility of a decrease (the presented methodology is appropriate only in case of a continuous upward trend. This type of evolution is just a particular case of many potential outcomes). To harmonize those two elements it would be necessary to change the name of the indicator from "growth" to "variation" or change the calculation methodology so as to consider only positive changes, namely increases. Through such an approach it would be avoided, from the logical point of view, the assignment of a negative growth to an investment.

In addition to that, from the conceptual point of view, the indicator underestimates the impact of the investment because it does not show the value of the GVA in case of an economic evolution with concave parabolic trend.
### Related Measure

**Increase of the non-agricultural Gross Value Added in supported enterprises ('000 in euro)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Measure</th>
<th>Agricultural sector</th>
<th>Food industry</th>
<th>Forestry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>121. Farm modernization</td>
<td>309,079,80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>309,079,80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122. Improving the economic value of forests</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>481,91</td>
<td>481,91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123. Adding value to agricultural and forestry products</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>271,307,82</td>
<td>35,717,83</td>
<td>307,025,65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124. Cooperation for the development of new products</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125. Infrastructure related to development and adaptation</td>
<td>130,75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>130,75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131. Compliance with the demanding standards based on the Community legislation</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>347,738,45</strong></td>
<td><strong>271,307,82</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,199,74</strong></td>
<td><strong>655,246,01</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* - for TAU beneficiaries and indirect beneficiaries of measure 125 it was calculated the percentage increase of GVA, reported by respondents (there were considered only answers that reported growth and percentage of growth). The resulting values are 17,46% (which represents 2371,43 ('000) euros) for the beneficiaries TAU and 3,85% (which represents 83,7 ('000) euros) for indirect beneficiaries.

- for OWUI beneficiaries there were 12 valid responses (and 6 non-answers) on which it was performed the extension for the entire collective of 18 OWUI (according to the methodology of the indicator). Non-respondents were considered to be similar to the average respondents.

### R3. Number of holdings/enterprises introducing new products and/or new techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Measure</th>
<th>Number of holdings/ENTERPRISES introducing new products and/or new techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural holding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121. Modernization of farms</td>
<td>1,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122. Improving the economic values of forests</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123. Adding value to agricultural and forestry products</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124. Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,655</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### R5. Number of farms entering the market
R6. Area under successful land management contributing to bio diversity and high nature value farming/forestry, water quality, mitigating climate change, soil quality, avoidance of marginalization and land abandonment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Measure</th>
<th>Area (ha) under successful land management contributing to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) bio diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211 - Support for Mountain Areas</td>
<td>4.169.931,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212 – Support for Less favoured Areas – other than Mountain Areas</td>
<td>1.903.376,07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214 – Agri-environment payments</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R7. Increase of the non-agricultural Gross Value Added in supported enterprises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Measure</th>
<th>Increase of the non-agricultural Gross Value Added in supported enterprises ('000 in euro)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural holding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311. Diversification into non-agricultural activities</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>312. Creation and development of small enterprises</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313. Encouragement of tourism activities</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### R8(1). Gross number of jobs created

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Measure</th>
<th>Gross number of jobs created</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 25</td>
<td>&lt; 25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311. Diversification into non-agricultural activities</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>312. Creation and development of small enterprises</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>6.377</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>1.779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313. Encouragement of tourism activities</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER Axis 1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER Axis 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER Axis 3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>7.569</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>2.586</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### R8(2). Gross number of jobs created - Measures 311, 312, 313 and LEADER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of job created within the agricultural holding</th>
<th>Domain type</th>
<th>Gross number of jobs created</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 25</td>
<td>&lt; 25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs in agricultural holdings</td>
<td>Agro-tourism</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Craft</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Renewable energy production</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs outside the agricultural holdings</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Craft</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 17** The aggregated values of additional result indicators are defined within NRDP 2007-2013 as it follows:

34 For indicator 9 it was recalculated the value presented in RAI3 (Progress Report no. 3 of the project Calculation of common and additional result indicators planned under the fiches of NRDP measures for finalized projects, which was the basis for the calculation of result indicators reported in AIR 2014) because this underestimates the value of the indicator due to a miscalculation. Specifically, to the value indicated in RAI 2 was added the value of the indicator number of overnight stays (2014) and not the value of the indicator number of visitor/stay (2014). Thus, it was corrected the value of the indicator for 2014 (RAI3), and then it was calculated the final achieved value by adding the corrected value to the indicator value calculated for 2015.
### Additional indicators regarding results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axis</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>Number of farms that meet EU standards as a result of support</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>Number of enterprises that meet EU standards as a result of support</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>Number of semi-subsistence holdings that introduce new products and/or techniques</td>
<td>1,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>431.1</td>
<td>Total number of trained persons who have successfully completed the training action - general training</td>
<td>1,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>431.1</td>
<td>Total number of trained persons who have successfully completed the training action - specialized training for LAG representative</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>Number of tourist accommodation structures which diversify the range of travel services provided in supported</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>Number of projects aimed at improving the forest structure</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>Number of hectares on which there was improved the forest structure</td>
<td>30,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>Increase of agricultural gross value added in supported holdings (mil. euro)</td>
<td>520,46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Number of beneficiaries who develop innovative actions</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Processing of data comprised in NRDP 2007-2013, version XVI, approved in November 2015

---

35 The value of the additional result indicators for measure 511 "Technical assistance" is reported annually, not cumulative. The values for the additional result indicators for M511 recorder in 2015 can be found in Annex 1 of the study.
VII. The Guarantee Scheme

A) Methodological approach

The evaluation of the guarantee schemes builds on various sources and methods. Some methods and sources have been used mainly to perform the evaluation activities at the programme and guarantee scheme level, in particular:

- monitoring data analysis provided by RCGF through the Managing Authority;
- semi-structured interviews with the Managing Authority of the Programme and with the financial intermediaries and the manager of the fund - RCGF.

Other methods and sources have been used to collect evidences at the level of beneficiaries, in particular:

- questionnaire surveys;
- statistical analysis of the performance of a sample of beneficiaries at the level of the guarantee scheme;
- case studies.

B) The rationale of the guarantee scheme

The main reasons underpinning the guarantee scheme are illustrated in the figure below.

Figure no. 19 Reasons that led to the implementation to the guarantee scheme

Address credit market failure | Attract private funding | Increase efficiency, effectiveness and impact

B.1) Address credit market failure hindering programme implementation. The guarantee scheme was foreseen to facilitate the programme implementation and to address the difficulties beneficiaries could have in finding the appropriate collaterals to provide the private cofinancing for NRDP projects. The guarantee scheme was designed to:

- Address asymmetric information on the credit market. The credit market usually encounters problems in terms of asymmetric and limited information between borrower and lenders. The lenders do not know exactly the borrower and encounter high costs on the assessment of the creditworthiness. This situation is even more important for SMEs and in the agricultural sector.

36 Version III of the Programme of 2009 has introduced the guarantee system in paragraph 5.2.7.
According to the SAFE surveys (2009-2016), Romanian SMEs experienced higher costs of financing than the large enterprises and most of them opted mainly for bank loans. The situation is even more critical for SMEs in the agricultural sector because the profitability of agriculture is lower compared with other sectors also due to the land fragmentation at farm level. They are perceived as riskier because indicators on solvency and liquidity are difficult to apply to their situation and they do not have a long track record of credits. According to the ex-ante assessment for the financial instruments of 2014-2020 NRDP, Romanian banks usually require between 110-140% of collaterals to obtain investment loan and administration costs of borrowing are higher compared to the financial capabilities of potential beneficiaries.

- **Mitigate exacerbating credit market conditions.** The implementation of the guarantee scheme has taken place in a challenging period. In particular financial crisis, since 2008, has exacerbated credit market conditions worldwide and also in Romania, leading to an increasing number of non-performing loans and thus a more conservative policy of banks and higher costs for loans and more demanding requirements in terms of collaterals.

**B.2) Attract private funding to support the achievement of NRDP objectives.** The guarantee scheme was designed to facilitate the access for NRDP beneficiaries to loans and thus to cover the private cofinancing of their projects. The mechanism of the guarantee scheme was supposed to activate private loans from the private sector supporting project implementation. Moreover, the guarantee scheme was an opportunity to further stimulate the “financial ecosystem” in designing ad hoc instruments and products for the agricultural sector and rural development, by capitalizing on the successful “Farmer” experience, a set of measures aiming at facilitating the access to credit for farmers and implemented from 2005 to 2009 through SAPARD funds. During 2007-2013 programming period, other financial instruments were available in the country such as JEREMIE initiative, offering loans, guarantees and equity investments to SMEs, the ‘Kogălniceanu’ SME programme providing credit lines.

**B.3) Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of programme resources and their impacts on the economy.** Introducing the guarantee was useful to provide collaterals for loans to cover the private cofinancing and thus ensuring higher impacts of the programme.

---

37 The aforemencioned ex-ante assessment of the financial instruments for NRDP 2014-2020 provides further details.
C) Management and investment strategy of the Guarantee System

Two guarantee schemes have been established under NRDP 2007-2013:

- **Agricultural Guarantee Scheme**, providing loan guarantees to the beneficiaries of the measure 121 "Modernization of agricultural holdings" and measure 123 "Adding value to agricultural and forestry products";

- **Guarantee scheme for small and medium enterprises (SMEs)**, providing guarantees for SMEs benefiting from the measures 312 "Support for creation and development of micro enterprises", 313 "Encouraging tourism activities" and components of the measure 123 covered by State aid schemes.

Overall, guarantees were issued for loans to NRDP applicants (selected to be financed) if they were not in financial difficulty, according to the EC Communication 244/2004, and up to 80% of the loan supporting the implementation of the project selected for funding under NRDP.

Each guarantee scheme has been managed by the RCGF, selected as fund manager through a competitive public procurement procedure and thus a contract was signed between the Managing Authority and RCGF. The RCGF was established in 1994, through PHARE financing, as a private entity 99.997% owned by commercial banks, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to support agricultural producers by guaranteeing their loans. The banks provided loans for EAFRD co-financed projects and asked RCGF for guarantees. The implementation of the guarantee schemes financed through NRDP involved 31 banks as financial intermediaries throughout Romania. Beneficiaries of NRDP were given the possibility to submit a request for a guarantee once they had a contract signed with PARDF for a project financed through NRDP. The guarantee system started to operate in March 2010 after the signature of the funding agreement.

The initial allocation of the guarantee system under NRDP was reduced from 220 million euro (initial allocation) to 115 million euro in 2013, with more than a half of this amount being taken from the guarantee scheme for M121. The change was due to the amendments of the EAFRD implementing regulations which have foreseen that the financial allocation for guarantee schemes should be correlated with the estimated rate of failure of secured loans. The final amounts allocated for the scheme in the agricultural sector were EUR 97,119,222 and for the non agricultural sector EUR 18,194,231. The allocation of EAFRD to the guarantee system was 92,250,762.4 euro, being 84.2% for the agricultural sector and 15.8% for the non-agricultural sector and being in both cases 80% of the total NRDP amount allocated to the guarantee schemes. The investment strategy has been defined according to NRDP objectives without the direct involvement of private investors in ensuring the capital for the guarantees. The guarantee system is state aid-free according to Commission guidelines at the level of beneficiaries (final recipients), guarantee fund and financial intermediaries. Thus, final beneficiaries paid a market price for the guarantees.

---

38 Managing Authority analysed macro-economic conditions and modifications of the EU reg. 1974/2006 (art. 52) and proposed a budget reduction of the guarantee scheme. The proposal was approved by the European Commission in December 2013 (see Annual Implementation Report, 2013, pages 140-141) leading to the budget reduction of the guarantee system.

39 Community Guidelines for State Aid in the Agriculture and Forestry Sector 2007 to 2013, Commission Notice on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty to State aid in the form of guarantees.
D) Contribution of the guarantee scheme

The implementation of the guarantee scheme has produced valuable results for addressing the challenges on the credit market identified at the set-up. The guarantee scheme: 1) contributed to smoother programme and project implementation; 2) attracted private funding supporting programme implementation and increasing efficiency and effectiveness; 3) produced positive impacts in economic and financial terms; 4) demonstrated good management capacity.

D.1) Smoother programme and project implementation

Achievements: 100% resource absorption and 2/3 of the beneficiaries would have had problems of credit without the guarantee from NRDP

The data provided by the Managing Authority on the activities of the guarantee scheme shows the 100% absorption of the planned resources (also considering the reduction of the budgetary allocation from 220 to 115 million euros) by the guarantee scheme. The questionnaire to beneficiaries40 of measures 121, 123, 312, and 313 indicates:
- the importance of the guarantee scheme to make investments and thus to support the programme implementation as well as projects for rural development, in particular under NRDP;
- the needs in terms of access to credit, because 2/3 of the beneficiaries would have had problems of credit without the guarantee from the NRDP, delaying project implementation and creating difficulties in ensuring the cash-flow.

Lessons learned and future areas of improvement – The case study analysis suggests the assessment of the opportunity of adopting other financial instruments in the future, such as equity, loan and micro-credit, which could be more adapted to support specific final recipients as start-ups and very small local entities. This finding is in line with the 2014-2020 ex-ante assessment of the financial instruments which shows various alternatives, also coming from the off-shelf financial instruments.

40 The evaluation team has collected a series of relevant information on the guarantee scheme through the questionnaire used for the programme result indicators in the case of measures 121, 123, 312, and 313.
D.2) The performance of the guarantee scheme

**Achievements:** The multiplier effect of the guarantee scheme was 2.3055 (higher in the measures for the agricultural sector); the EAFRD leverage effect was 4.41 euro (higher in the agricultural sector).

The present evaluation analyses the performance of the guarantee scheme through the analysis of: the value of guarantees and credit released, the multiplier effect and the multiplier effect. The multiplier effect is calculated as a multiplier of public resources, i.e. the ratio of the amount allocated to the guarantee scheme (EAFRD and national allocation) and the amount guaranteed. EAFRD leverage effect is calculated as the ratio of the total credit value of funding released and EAFRD, showing how many euros of credits are released for one euro of EAFRD.

The data provided by the Managing Authority on the activities of the guarantee scheme, fully illustrated in Annex 3, show the **capacity of the guarantee scheme to make additional funds available to ensure project implementation.** With an allocation of 115 million euro to the guarantee scheme, of which 80% EAFRD and divided 84% for projects in the agricultural sector and 16% for non-agricultural sector, the programme contributed to:

- **Ensuring guarantees for 265 million euro,** 85% of which, about 227 million euro, for the agricultural sector (M 121, M123 agriculture) and 15% for non agricultural sector (measure 123 not agriculture, measure 312, 313);

- **Releasing 407 million euro of credits** with private funding of the financial intermediaries, of which 85% for the agricultural sector (about 350 million euro), and 15% for the non agricultural sector. All the credits have been divided across the measures as follows: 48,1% for the beneficiaries of measure 121, 37% for the measure 123 (agriculture) and 5,2% for the 123 (non agriculture), 8,2% for measure 312 and 1,5% for measure 313.

The multiplier effect of public resources reaches 230,55%, calculated as the ratio of the amount guaranteed and the amount allocated to the guarantee scheme. The analysis of the multiplier effect shows that:

- The ratio is over 300% for measures 312 and 313 and close to 300% in 123 under the agriculture guarantee scheme.

- Comparing the two lots, for the agricultural guarantee reaches 234% and in the non agricultural 210% due to a limited performance of the non agricultural portion of measure 123 (129%).

The analysis of the leverage shows that:

- **EAFRD leverage effect,** calculated as the ratio of the credits released and EAFRD allocation, is 4,41 meaning that for one euro of EAFRD 4,41 euro of loan on the credit market has been released. The effect is higher in the agricultural sector (4,46) than in non agricultural sector (4,17);
In order to benchmark the aforementioned findings, there were considered the results of the ex-post evaluation of ERDF and of the Cohesion Fund (2007-2013)\(^{41}\), as well as the experience from the FI Compass platform.

The ex-post evaluation of ERDF and of the Cohesion Fund (2007-2013), and especially the results of Work package 3 – Financial instruments for enterprises, provides some references for the performance of the financial instruments, in particular guarantee, in terms of leverage (attraction of private and public financial resources compared to the ERDF contribution, see table 21 of the final report):

- High performing programmes are Languedoc-Roussillon in France and Economic growth operational programme in Lithuania, Czech Operational programme “Enterprises and innovation” from Czech Republic, respectively achieving 18, 5.3 and 9 of leverage.
- Other experiences have similar and even lower leverage than the Romanian guarantee scheme such as: Polish Operational Programme Malopolskie (1.2-1.5 of leverage), Spanish operational programme technological fund with 2 of leverage, Hungarian operational programme economic development 2.4 of leverage.

The FI Compass platform provides a review of experiences for EAFRD. One of the key references is Languedoc-Roussillon which reaches a leverage of 8.4. However, it has a limited comparability, because it has been implemented in a very different financial ecosystem from the Romanian one, builds on the integration with other financial instruments and with different levels of direct involvement of private funds, EIF and JEREMIE involvement, which are not present in the NRDP guarantee scheme.

All in all, comparing the achievements of the NRDP guarantee system with findings from ERDF and EAFRD experiences, it has an intermediate performance, which is not negligible considering the initial conditions of the credit market in the rural areas as well as the simple contribution of public resources in covering the guarantees without the involvement of private capital and other EU direct initiatives and players such as EIF, EIB and Jeremie.

The guarantee scheme has contributed to achieving the NRDP objectives, by *increasing its effectiveness* (by providing collateral guarantees, the guarantee scheme has contributed to increasing the availability of the banks for granting credits and, consequently, has strengthened the capacity of the final beneficiaries of the guarantee scheme to realize the investments planned through the projects financed by NRDP - more details are provided in the following paragraphs), and by *ensuring an effective and efficient use of resources*. In particular it has facilitated the attraction of private funding for cofinancing part of the project budget and it has promoted the multiplier effect and the leverage of EU resources.

**Lessons learned and future areas of improvement** - Despite the performance of the guarantee scheme, according to the findings of the ex-ante evaluation of the financial instruments planned under the NRDP 2014-2020\(^{42}\), the following factors have partially hindered the implementation: lack of personnel (mainly due to budgetary constraints) of public bodies involved in the implementation of programmes financed from

---


\(^{42}\) The ex-ante evaluation for the implementation of Financial Instruments within NRDP 2014-2020
European funds; bottlenecks or delays for the finalization of the submission and selection sessions (delays and time required to complete the evaluation and selection procedures); the IT system that presented some inconsistencies caused by the initial structuring of the information in the system (there were not anticipated the data needs for monitoring the implementation of the guarantee scheme in connection with the general implementation of the NRDP). As already mentioned in the ex-ante assessment for 2014-2020 period, the proposal for a new IT system and the already undertaken measures of continuous monitoring of the procurement could potentially further improve the future performance of the financial instruments.

D.3) The guarantee scheme had a positive impact in economic and financial terms

**Achievements**: increased debt capacity and investment capacity of the beneficiaries and contribution to a better economic performance

Two additional analyses have been undertaken to evaluate the impact of the guarantee scheme: case studies and statistical analysis of a sample of finalized projects, which is provided in annex. These analyses have completed the findings of the monitoring data and interview with MA and the fund management. All in all, all the analyses undertaken for the ex-post evaluation demonstrate that the guarantee scheme has both direct and indirect effects:

a) **Direct effects**: through providing collateral guarantees, the guarantee scheme facilitated the access to the credit market of the RNDP beneficiaries from rural areas (credits provided by the banking financial institutions) with a direct effect of facilitating (for the final beneficiaries of the guarantee scheme) the realization of the investments planned through the projects financed under NRDP, in accordance with the laws on the state aid. In other words, by covering with public resources the risks of granting a credit to the economic operators from the rural areas, NRDP increased the availability of the banks to grant a credit and consequently facilitated the possibility for the final beneficiaries of the guarantee scheme to realize the planned investments at the level of the projects financed by the NRDP.

According to the results of the SAFE survey (see the tables below), the lack of collateral guarantees was a key limiting factor for obtaining the credits, especially during the "peak" period of the financial crisis, namely 43 In section 5.1.7 from the "Ex-Ante Evaluation for the Implementation of Financial Instruments in the NRDP 2014-2020" study, there are stated the following: "A factor that had negative consequences on the implementation of NRDP 2007-2013, but also on other European programs based on structural funds, was the staff deficit (mainly due to budgetary constraints) from the public bodies involved in implementing these programs. The preparation of the National Rural Development Program requires a very high workload. Thus, there were taken the necessary steps to fill the vacancies by competition".

44 In section 5.1.7 from the "Ex-Ante Evaluation for the Implementation of Financial Instruments in the NRDP 2014-2020", there are stated the following: "Another obstacle signaled by the Annual Progress Report of NRDP for 2013 was a legislative one stipulating that the organization of public procurement is under the responsibility of the staff from the specialized procurement department within each city hall. It has been found that in many cases this staff is not specialized in projects evaluation, and therefore the legal project representatives have to consider external expertise (specialists from other institutions, contracting consultancy services), factors that cause delays in the evaluation process".
the year 2011. In this respect, these data confirms that, by implementing the guarantee scheme, NRDP addressed one of the key issues faced by the Romanian companies during the financial crisis. In addition, the tables below also illustrate that the situation (i.e. the availability of banks to provide credit) has improved over time. This evolution of the banking market context should therefore be taken into account when designing a new financial instrument during the 2014-2020 programming period.

**Tabel no. 18 Key limiting factors to get a loan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU 27</strong></td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>EU 27</td>
<td>Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no obstacles</td>
<td>27,4%</td>
<td>19,8%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient collateral or guarantee</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>29,3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest rates or prices too high</td>
<td>23,7%</td>
<td>33,7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaborations on 2009, 2011, 2016 ECB-EC Survey on SMEs

**Tabel no. 19 Willingness of banks to provide a loan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU 27</strong></td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>EU 27</td>
<td>Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>7,60%</td>
<td>12,8%</td>
<td>27,00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remained unchanged</td>
<td>32,70%</td>
<td>32,8%</td>
<td>52,00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deteriorated</td>
<td>30,20%</td>
<td>27,1%</td>
<td>12,00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaborations on 2009, 2011, 2016 ECB-EC Survey on SMEs

**Tabel no. 20 Main competitiveness challenges of firms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU 27</strong></td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>EU 27</td>
<td>Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finding customers</td>
<td>29,10%</td>
<td>24,1%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>12,80%</td>
<td>14,6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>access to finance</td>
<td>16,10%</td>
<td>15,1%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>costs of production or labour</td>
<td>7,70%</td>
<td>12,2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>availability of skilled staff or experienced managers</td>
<td>7,80%</td>
<td>13,6%</td>
<td>5,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation</td>
<td>7,20%</td>
<td>7,7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaborations on 2009, 2011, 2016 ECB-EC Survey on SMEs

b) **Indirect effects:** The information collected through the statistical analysis of the existing information and the analysis of the results obtained from the case studies shows that, compared to the beneficiaries from the same NRDP measures that did not access the guarantee scheme, the
beneficiaries of the guarantee scheme had a better economic performance on GVA and the number of employees. This finding can be explained by the fact that the provision of the collateral guarantees had the effect of both facilitating the investments planned through the project financed by NRDP and of improving the investment capacity in general for the beneficiaries of the guarantee scheme (compared to the beneficiaries of NRDP that did not access the guarantee scheme)\(^\text{45}\). Moreover, according to the information collected from the case studies, it resulted that, by providing the necessary financial support for investments and by reducing the bottlenecks in terms of access to finance, the guarantee scheme promoted the efficiency increase (reducing production costs) and the adoption of business models focused on the quality of the production. Furthermore, the information collected through the case studies has shown that the possibility of having the necessary financial support for the planned investments has generated for the beneficiaries of the guarantee scheme new opportunities for developing internal skills and access to qualified staff.

Further details on the findings of the case studies are provided below.

**Tabel no. 21 Findings from the case study analysis on the guarantee scheme**

Case studies of M 121 (Modernisation of agricultural holdings) show:

- **Common benefits for beneficiaries with the guarantee scheme and without** encompass:
  - intangible effects such as networking opportunities with local actors and firms.
  - modification of cultivation practices (e.g. new techniques, organic agriculture).
  - reduction of production costs and easier access to financing.

- **The guarantee scheme contributes to a better economic performance**, in terms of increase in both revenues and jobs. This result can be explained by two factors: business capacity and guarantee scheme. Beneficiaries of NRDP accessing the guarantee scheme differ from those not accessing the guarantee for their capacity to invest in innovation, promoting a business model not only finalized to cost reduction but oriented to quality of production. The second factor explaining economic success is the role of the guarantee scheme, which is deemed crucial to support the investments and reducing the problems in finding the appropriate collaterals. Moreover, some of the NRDP beneficiaries that accessed the guarantee scheme, notably the start-ups and bigger sized beneficiaries, suggest the adoption of other financial instruments for the future, in particular loans and equity which might be more appropriate to meet the future challenges on the market of rural production.

Case studies of M 123 (Adding value to agricultural and forestry products) show:

- **Common benefits for the NRDP beneficiaries which have accessed the guarantee scheme and the NRDP beneficiaries which did not access it** encompass:
  - Administrative and management capacity;
  - Adoption of new technology and techniques;
  - Increase the safety at the work place;
  - Increase energy efficiency.

- **The guarantee scheme contributes to a better economic performance**, in terms of increase in both productivity and jobs. This result can be explained by two factors. First of all, the NRDP beneficiaries accessing the guarantee are also able to invest in innovation and to promote a business model not only finalized to cost reduction but also to increased production quality. The second factor explaining economic success is the guarantee scheme, which is deemed crucial to support the investment and reducerea

---

\(^{45}\) This finding is supported by the statistical analysis included in Annex 3 of the study, which demonstrates a higher increase in total assets over the period 2010-2015 for beneficiaries of NRDP that have accessed the scheme, compared to beneficiaries of NRDP that did not apply to the guarantee scheme. Similar findings also result from the analysis of the case studies.
EVALUAREA EX-POST A PROGRAMULUI NAȚIONAL DE DEZVOLTARE RURALĂ 2007-2013

problemelor legate de accesul la finanțare. Moreover, most final NRDP beneficiaries that accessed the guarantee scheme suggest the adoption of other financial instruments than the guarantee scheme for the future, in particular loans, which might be more appropriate to meet the future challenges on the market of rural production.

Case studies of M 312 (Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises show:

- **Socio-economic benefits of both types of projects with the guarantee scheme and without** relate to:
  - o Developed new economic activities diversifying the local economy, as services to population and producing renewable energy;
    - a. Increased number of employees including people younger than 25 years and women and higher revenues;
  - o Established networking opportunities with local actors and firms and acquired competences and availability of skilled experts and knowledge of EU regulations and procedures;
  - o Easier access to funding, which ensured the possibility to support new services and increase the incomes of micro-enterprises and to better reach the market (clients) and reduce costs of production;

- **Guarantee scheme contributes to supporting some larger investments compared to the investments realized by the NRDP beneficiaries that accessed the guarantee scheme and, overall, to achieving better economic results.** However, other financial instruments could be preferable in the future to support micro-enterprise investments (e.g. loans or microcredit)

- **Projects financed through NRDP (with and without the guarantee) are expected to contribute to longer term benefits of projects** such as creation of new employment as well as the stabilization of the existing ones. Also the introduction of organization innovations led to new approaches and processes able to develop innovative products so as to explore new market opportunities.

Case studies of M 313 (Encouragement of tourism activities) show:

- **Socio-economic benefits of both types of projects with the guarantee scheme and without** encompass:
  - o Diversification of investments addressed to tourist accommodation and facilities in rural areas through the promotion of different kinds of news services in rural tourism, including accommodations, along with leisure activities.
  - o Ensuring stable or increasing tourist flows;
  - o Increase in the employment of young people and women in the field of rural tourism.

- **Guarantee scheme contributes to**:
  - o supporting some larger investments (realized even after the implementation of the NRDP funded project) compared to the investments made by program beneficiaries who did not access the guarantee scheme;
  - o increasing internal skills and having access to skilled staff;
  - o ensuring efficiency gains (reducing production costs) and achieving better economic results. However, other financial instruments could be preferable in the future to support micro-enterprise investments (e.g. loans or microcredit or equity).

- **The projects financed through NRDP (with and without the guarantee) are expected to contribute to longer term benefits of projects** such as creation of new employment as well as the stabilization of the existing ones and new market opportunities.

**Lessons learned and future areas of improvement –** Despite the improvements of the last years, according to the ex-ante assessment of 2014-2020 period, the coverage of the financial services in rural areas and for agriculture remains lower compared to the rest of the country and access to bank loans for SMEs and start-ups (in agriculture) is still a challenge, in particular for farms at subsistence and semi-subsistence level.
D.4) The implementation of the guarantee scheme demonstrated good management capacity

**Achievements:** The evaluation shows that the guarantee scheme has been capable to: adapt to external adverse conditions; ensure an efficient management of the NRDP resources at fund level; target the appropriate beneficiaries; promote a successful advertising and marketing capacity.

The aforementioned values of the performance indicators of the fund (e.g. leverage, multiplier) also depends on the capacity of the management staff from RCGF to adapt to external adverse conditions, such as the reduction of the allocated budget. Moreover, the guarantee scheme shows its efficiency with a default rate of 8.73% considering all the executed guarantees, lower than the estimated failure rate foreseen in NRDP at the end of the implementation period of the guarantee scheme (18.98%). The ad hoc questionnaire applied to NRDP beneficiaries (receiving and not receiving the guarantee scheme) shows that:

- **The guarantee scheme has been successfully targeted** to those needing financial support. In fact, 45% of the respondents being NRDP beneficiaries and not being final recipient of the guarantee scheme could ensure the adequate financial coverage through their own resources and / or collaterals, while 45% did not have the need of credit.

- **Advertising and marketing activities of the guarantee scheme have been rather successful** because less than 10% of the survey NRDP beneficiaries not receiving the guarantee were not aware of the existence of the financial engineering instrument. However, the awareness of the existence of the guarantee scheme has slightly worsened from the period 2008-2014 to the last year (2015). As a consequence, for the future implementation of financial instruments, it seems important to monitor overtime the success of advertising and marketing campaigns, even if already at good level.

**Tabel no. 22 Reasons for not having the guarantee (valid answers – no NA and others) – 2008-2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In case you did not benefit from guarantees offered by NRDP through RCGF -IFN S.A, the reasons where the following:</th>
<th>M121</th>
<th>M123</th>
<th>M312</th>
<th>M313</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was not aware of the existence of the facility offered through RCGF -IFN S.A.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>10,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not need any credit</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>44,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had enough own guarantees to obtain the credit</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>45,4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaborations based on the questionnaire survey for result indicators
Lessons learned and future areas of improvement – Despite the good management performance, the data collected and analyzed in the evaluation activities showed that the level of information on the opportunities foreseen in the program related to the access of the guarantee has slightly reduced from the period 2008-2014 to the last year (2015). As a consequence, for the future implementation of financial instruments, it seems important to monitor overtime the success of advertising and marketing campaigns, even if already at good level.

E) Lessons learned and elements that can be increased in the next programming period

The evaluation identified the following lessons learned:

- Positive previous experiences in SAPARD for both the MA and the RGCF allowed the success of the financial instrument and its credibility for financial intermediaries and final recipients;
- The capacity to respond to the market fluctuations and to a wide and varied set of recipients increased the success of the instrument as well as its effectiveness;
- For the future implementation of financial instruments, it seems important to monitor overtime the success of advertising and marketing campaigns, even if already at good level to increase the awareness of potential final recipients.
- Improving the IT system, as pointed out by the ex-ante evaluation of financial instruments for 2014-2020 period could affect positively the implementation of the guarantee scheme and further increasing the benefits for the Romanian rural development.
- Since financial services in rural areas and for agriculture remain limited, it could be interesting to explore other financial instruments than guarantee (or in addition to the guarantee) which could be adapted to specific needs and recipients (e.g. equity, loan and micro-credit for start-ups and very small local entities).
VIII. Answers to the evaluations questions

VIII.1. Analysis and comments on the indicators in accordance with the valuation criteria and the targets referred in the evaluation questions

Elaborating the answers to the evaluation questions involves aggregating the findings resulting from the analysis of all the information collected during the evaluation process, both of qualitative and qualitative nature.

The quantitative information that has been used to provide answers to the evaluation questions refers to:

- the percentage values that reflect the level of achieving the targets set for the result indicators (common and additional);
- the net effect of the interventions defined in the program in relation to the defined impact indicators;
- other relevant statistical indicators (especially with a sectoral relevance: e.g. milk production at European level, national agricultural production, etc.) collected from official sources (Eurostat, National Institute of Statistics).

The correlation between the evaluation questions and the indicators, respectively the relevant targets, is detailed in Annex 8 of the Study. The analysis of the results and impact indicators in relation to the established targets and the analysis / evaluation criteria to which they contribute are presented below.

VIII.1.1. The analysis of the common and additional result indicators

This section is organized into 3 sub-sections:

a) a first part presenting a series of elements characterizing the socio-economic context of NRDP implementation during the period 2007-2014 / 2015 in order to ensure a better understanding of the existing conditions at the territorial level, which influenced the final values achieved for the common and additional result indicators;

b) description of some methodological elements for analyzing the values recorded by the result indicators;

c) specific analysis of the level of achieving the proposed targets for the result indicators.
VIII.1.1.1. Elements that determined the macroeconomic context during 2007-2015

The macroeconomic context is analyzed from the perspective of four indicators: agricultural production index, employment rate of rural people aged 15-64, the amount of investments made by public authorities and the total agricultural production at national level.

Figure no. 21   Evolution of total agricultural production at national level (divisions 01-03 according to NACE Rev. 2), during the period 2007 - 2014

During the 2007-2014 analysis period (Tempo NIS database), the total agricultural production had a fluctuating evolution that shows that the entire rural environment did not experience a notable economic development during the programming period of the Program. This fluctuating evolution influenced to some extent the gross added value registered by the beneficiaries of the NRDP 2007-2013. Based on the analysis of the graphical representation, it is obvious that in 2012-2014 period the value of the indicator is significantly lower than in 2011 or 2009.

Figure no. 22   Agricultural production index for 2007 - 2015

Data sources: Tempo NIS database, 2017

Data sources: Tempo NIS database, 2016
The agricultural production at the level of the entire national economy over the period 2007-2015 has fluctuated, so it cannot be concluded that the agricultural sector has made a positive evolution at the national level. Moreover, it is notable the descending trend recorded by the agricultural production index over the period 2013-2015.

Figure no. 23  
*The evolution of investments of the local public authorities in the rural area, between 2007 and 2015*

Data sources: Tempo NIS database, 2016

The investments of local public authorities realized in rural areas did not show an ascending noticeable trend over the analyzed period (during the period 2011 - 2014 there is even a slightly descending trend), except for 2015 when there is a significant additional amount of their values (the data provided by NIS for 2015 is provisional). Nevertheless, the effects on the rural economy can be observed after the actual realization of the investments, so the period 2007-2014 is defining to understand the conditions at the territory level, which influenced the development of the economic activities during the programming period of the NRDP. From the financial dimension point of view, the most important investments made by the local public authorities refer to the infrastructure existing at the level of the territory. The under-dimensioning or non-planning of substantial investments for the development of rural infrastructure can also be seen as an important cause of the evolution and of the level of development of rural economic activities, taking into consideration the fact that the attractiveness of the territory for investors is directly influenced by the level of development of the transport and basic infrastructure.

---

46 For 2015, the data is still provisional.
The employment rate in rural areas had a strong descending trend over the analyzed period, so it can not be considered an increase in the number of jobs available during this timeframe. This indicator can also be seen as having a direct contribution to the overall socio-economic development of the rural environment during the analyzed period. Given that the number of jobs is on a descending trend, it is expected that the whole economic activity will have a similar trend and that the purchasing power of the rural population will also be negatively affected.

Corroborating the evolution of the four indicators analyzed above, it is clear that the level of development of the rural environment in Romania during 2007-2015, from a macroeconomic perspective, has stagnated or even experienced a slight deterioration.

The above-mentioned general context is an important element to be considered in interpreting the level of achievement / non-achievement of the targets assumed for some of the common and additional result indicators defined in the Rural Development National Program 2007-2013.

VIII.1.1.2. Elements specific to the analysis methodology of the final values for the result indicators

In order to ensure a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the output result indicators, it is important to consider, beyond the macroeconomic context, two other specific issues that were of significant importance in the delimitation of the findings of the ex-post evaluation, and which have an essential importance for ensuring the correctness of data interpretations.

Firstly, during the implementation of NRDP 2007-2013, for various reasons (for example due to the reintroduction of the maximum EAFRD contribution rate of 95% or to avoid the decommitment of the saved

Data sources: Tempo NIS database, 2016
amounts at the level of the different measures), the budget allocated to specific measures in the program was reduced, respectively it has been reallocated. However, this process of budget optimization was not accompanied by a recalculation of the target values of the common and additional result indicators related to the respective measures (only the output indicators were updated), and it was not possible to adjust the methodology initially established for the calculation of the result indicator values. The omitted phase had to be based on an iterative process similar to the one used in the initial stage of establishing the targets and be amended with the average cost values recorded during the period of the programme already implemented. The omission of this step has triggered a chain effect that has contributed to the low achievement of the target values initially established (low performance of the measure - reduction of the allocated budget - failure to meet the target values of the result indicators).

Secondly, for the indicators R2 and R7 (on GVA growth), it should be considered the inconsistency between the name of the indicator and the calculation methodology proposed at the level of CMEF. Thus, the name indicates an increase, and the calculation methodology analyzes the changes over time in the value of the indicator, being implicitly possible the situation of some decreases of GVA.

VIII.1.1.3. Specific analysis of the level of achievement of proposed targets for the result indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr. crt.</th>
<th>Result indicator</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Evaluatio n/ analysis criteria</th>
<th>Percentage of achieving the established targets</th>
<th>Axis/ measure relevant for the calculation of the indicator</th>
<th>Elements that negatively influenced the achievement of the proposed targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>R1. Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity related to agriculture and/or forestry</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>52,52%</td>
<td>Axis 1/111</td>
<td>Mainly, the delays in the process of public procurement for the selection of professional training providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>R2. Increase in agricultural gross value added in supported farms</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Result Impact</td>
<td>28,16%</td>
<td>Axis 1/112</td>
<td>Main problems faced by beneficiaries: high volume of requested documents / production sale / unfavorable weather conditions / high prices of inputs, especially fuel and fertilizers / tax system / lack of tabulated land needed to make the proposed investments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14,23%</td>
<td>Axis 1/121</td>
<td>Main issues faced by beneficiaries: difficulty in providing co-financing and obtaining credits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77,42%</td>
<td>Axis 1/122</td>
<td>Reduced number of beneficiaries due to the low level of attractiveness of the measure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### EVALUAREA EX-POST A PROGRAMULUI NAȚIONAL DE DEZVOLTARE RURALĂ 2007-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr. crt.</th>
<th>Result indicator</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Evaluatio n/ analysis criteria</th>
<th>Percentage of achieving the established targets</th>
<th>Axis/ measure relevant for the calculation of the indicator</th>
<th>Elements that negatively influenced the achievement of the proposed targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>R3. Number of holdings introducing new products and/or new techniques</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>9,81%</td>
<td>Axis 1/121</td>
<td>Main issues faced by beneficiaries: difficulty in providing co-financing and obtaining credits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55,56%</td>
<td>Axis 1/122</td>
<td>Reduced number of beneficiaries due to the low level of attractiveness of the measure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45,01%</td>
<td>Axis 1/123</td>
<td>Main issues faced by beneficiaries: difficulty in providing co-financing and obtaining credits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>R5. Number of farms entering the market</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>5,95%</td>
<td>Axis 1/141</td>
<td>Main problems faced by beneficiaries: lack of financial resources and lack of the activity profitability and very high dependence on weather conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12,46%</td>
<td>Axis 1/142</td>
<td>Fragmentation of the sector from the point of view of the organizational structure of the individual producers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>R6. Area under successful land management contributing to: biodiversity and high nature value farming/forestry,</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>- Surface for which the abandonment of agricultural activities is avoided 96,64%</td>
<td>Axis 2/ 211 și 212</td>
<td>It is not the case, the percentages to achieve the proposed target are over 90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47 The percentage of 0.54% represents only the achievement of OUAI (Organization of Water Users for Irrigation) beneficiaries. The percentage increase was between 2.05% - 4.49%

48 By the end of 2015, there were an additional 15,216 projects that had all five payment installments paid, but the administrative completion note was not made. Considering that they are not considered to be finalized from the point of view of the administrative procedures applied for the closure of a project, they were not considered in the calculation of the R5 result indicator.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr. crt.</th>
<th>Result indicator</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Evaluatio n/ analysis criteria</th>
<th>Percentage of achieving the established targets</th>
<th>Axis/ measure relevant for the calculation of the indicator</th>
<th>Elements that negatively influenced the achievement of the proposed targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water quality, mitigating climate change, soil quality, avoidance of marginalisation and land abandonment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Axis 2 / 214</td>
<td>The level of accessing the measure was lower in the 2015 campaign, as the beneficiaries were able to access the corresponding measure from NRDP 2014-2020 (M10), the latter having greater flexibility in relation to the specific environmental requirements. Changes in the legal framework: the ban on access to measure 10 for the 2014-2020 period, if farmers opted for access to the review clause, adopting new commitments on agri-environment and climate standards, specific requirements for land situated below 600 m altitude and other changes regarding harvest techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,71%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Axis 2 / 221</td>
<td>The reduced attractiveness of this measure, due to the low level of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nr. crt.</td>
<td>Result indicator</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Evaluatio n/ analysis criteria</td>
<td>Percentage of achieving the established targets</td>
<td>Axis/ measure relevant for the calculation of the indicator</td>
<td>Elements that negatively influenced the achievement of the proposed targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>R7. Increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Result Impact</td>
<td>90,39%</td>
<td>Axis 3/ 312</td>
<td>compensatory subventions granted for the establishment and maintenance of forest plantations, as well as the deadline set for the closure of the commitments. The simultaneous implementation (until 2011) of a similarly more attractive tool for beneficiaries (Program for improving the quality of the environment by afforestation of degraded land, ecological reconstruction and sustainable forest management financed by the Environment Fund).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>R8(1). Gross number of jobs created</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Result Impact</td>
<td>30,67%</td>
<td>Axis 3/ 312</td>
<td>It is not the case, the percentage of achieving the proposed target is over 90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legislative changes that affected the implementation of the projects:
- the definition of lists with tourist interest areas, the beneficiaries being dissatisfied with these delimitations
- imposing additional fire protection conditions, which has generated additional ineligible costs for the beneficiaries

The reduced real supply of workforce in rural areas as a result of the depopulation of this territory. The general economic context that does not encourage the development of economic activities at the level of small entrepreneurs. The high cancellation rates for financing contracts, the main reasons being: creating artificial conditions for accessing non-reimbursable funds, failing to meet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr. crt.</th>
<th>Result indicator</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Evaluatio n/ analysis criteria</th>
<th>Percentage of achieving the established targets</th>
<th>Axis/ measure relevant for the calculation of the indicator</th>
<th>Elements that negatively influenced the achievement of the proposed targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the eligibility criteria in the ex-post period, as well as irregularities identified in the realization of the procurements proposed in the projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,31%</td>
<td>Axis 3/ 313</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The reduced real supply of workforce in rural areas as a result of the depopulation of this territory. The general economic context that does not encourage the development of economic activities at the level of small entrepreneurs. The high cancellation rate of financing contracts, most cancellation being operated at the request of the beneficiaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,81%</td>
<td>Axis 4 (Leader Axis 1 și 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The reduced real supply of workforce in rural areas as a result of the depopulation of this territory. The general economic context that does not encourage the development of economic activities at the level of small entrepreneurs. Relatively low value of individual projects funded under LDS, with beneficiaries not having adequate economic capacity to create a large number of new jobs through the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>R8(2). Gross number of jobs created</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Result Impact</td>
<td>18,22%</td>
<td>312, 313, 411 and 413</td>
<td>See the explanations provided on the indicator R8(1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>R9. Additional number of tourists visits</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>3,06%</td>
<td>Axis 3/ 313</td>
<td>The basic and transport infrastructure is not sufficiently developed at rural level, which negatively influences the attractiveness of the territory for potential tourists =&gt; reduction of demand for tourist services in rural areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>R10. Population in rural areas</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>32,24%</td>
<td>Axis 3/ 322</td>
<td>Main issues faced by beneficiaries: bottlenecks in the public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49 By using the number of nights spent and the number of visits as benchmarks indicators
50 NRDP 2014-2020, pag 58: “the rural tourism has not reached a satisfactory level of development, especially in terms of the quality of the infrastructure and the services provided, especially the recreational ones"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr. crt.</th>
<th>Result indicator</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Evaluation/ analysis criteria</th>
<th>Percentage of achieving the established targets</th>
<th>Axis/ measure relevant for the calculation of the indicator</th>
<th>Elements that negatively influenced the achievement of the proposed targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>procurement process carried out by public beneficiaries. The implementation period of the projects overlapped over the period of the general economic crisis, which at the level of Romania had a significant negative impact on the investments made by the public sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Number of tourist accommodation that diversify their range of touristic services</td>
<td>Additional</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>9.96%</td>
<td>Axis 3 / 313</td>
<td>The basic and transport infrastructure is not sufficiently developed at rural level, which negatively influences the attractiveness of the territory for potential tourists =&gt; reduction of demand for tourist services in rural areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Number of beneficiaries who develop innovative actions</td>
<td>Additional</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>411, 413</td>
<td>The general economic context that does not encourage the development of economic activities at the level of small entrepreneurs. Relatively low value of individual projects funded under LDS, with beneficiaries not having adequate economic capacity to implement innovative concepts in the current activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Number of hectares on which forest structure was improved</td>
<td>Additional</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>67.542.22%</td>
<td>Axis 1 / 122</td>
<td>It is not the case, the percentage of achieving the proposed target is over 100%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Number of projects to improve the forest structure</td>
<td>Additional</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Axis 1 / 122</td>
<td>It is not the case, the percentage of achieving the proposed target is over 100%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Number of enterprises that fulfill the EU standards as a result of the support</td>
<td>Additional</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>2.41%</td>
<td>Axis 1 / 121</td>
<td>Main issues faced by beneficiaries: difficulty in providing co-financing and obtaining credits. The criterion on which the indicator was calculated was a selection criterion (not all the beneficiaries chose this commitment), not an eligibility one, and it was only applicable to projects that with upgrading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nr. crt.</td>
<td>Result indicator</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Evaluatio n/ analysis criteria</td>
<td>Percentage of achieving the established targets</td>
<td>Axis/ measure relevant for the calculation of the indicator</td>
<td>Elements that negatively influenced the achievement of the proposed targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Number of semi-subsistence farms that introduce new products and / or techniques</td>
<td>Adittion al</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>6,25%</td>
<td>Axis 1 / 141</td>
<td>Main problems faced by beneficiaries: lack of financial resources, lack of profitability and very high dependence on weather conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Growth of agricultural GVA in the supported holdings (euro)</td>
<td>Adittion al</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>4,16%</td>
<td>Axis 1 / 143</td>
<td>The measure was initially addressed to young farmers and semi-subsistence farms: counseling and consultancy services for semi-subsistence farms were contracted in 2011 (the first projects for which consultancy was provided, for measure 141 were submitted and selected in the year 2011 and the second session was organized in 2012 - the duration of the project implementation was 3 years) - counseling and consultancy services were not contracted for the target group of young farmers due to some problems in the public procurement process that led to the cancellation of the procedure. In 2015, no projects completed under Measure 141 were declared finalized in order to make a recalculation of the indicator. The indicator is more relevant for measure 114 The use of advisory services by farmers and foresters, measure 143 having a much more limited nature from the point of view of the consultancy type offered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Number of persons who have successfully completed a training in the field (GAL) - General training</td>
<td>Adittion al</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>96,22%</td>
<td>Axa 4 / 431</td>
<td>It is not the case, the percentage of achieving the proposed target is over 90%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Number of persons who have successfully completed a training in the field (GAL) - specialized training for the</td>
<td>Adittion al</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Axa 4 / 431</td>
<td>It is not the case, the percentage of achieving the proposed target is 100%.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VIII.1.2. Análisis de los indicadores de impacto

Esta sección presenta valores actualizados para los indicadores de impacto basados en los datos de Eurostat y otras fuentes nacionales. Generalmente, los datos de Eurostat proporcionan datos comparables, tomando en cuenta el hecho de que los valores del programa, los valores del año 2013 y 2015 se usualmente calculan usando la metodología y completando las bases de datos Eurostat. Las discrepancias, si las hubiera, entre los valores del programa y los valores de Eurostat para el mismo año se pueden explicar por las diferentes definiciones de los indicadores proporcionadas por el Departamento de Agricultura y las metodologías utilizadas en el nivel de Eurostat. Para cada indicador de impacto, las definiciones y limitaciones consideradas, así como el nivel de cumplimiento, respectivamente la evolución en el tiempo, y la contribución específica del programa a través de las medidas implementadas se detallan.

El valor del indicador de impacto (1) El crecimiento económico

*Baseline indicator values and methodological limitations:* Los indicadores se calcularon hasta el año 2013 y 2015 respectivamente, hasta el punto en el que estos datos estaban disponibles en el nivel de Eurostat. Algunos de los datos usados para establecer el valor de referencia no proporcionan datos actualizados para 2013 y 2015 para todos los indicadores (por ejemplo, el Anuario Estadístico de Rumania). Además, la mayoría de los indicadores definidos a nivel sectorial se refieren al sector económico según NACE Rev. 1 (hasta 2008) y según NACE Rev. 2 (después de 2008). Desde el punto de vista metodológico, los efectos netos se estimaron a través de la variable proxy GVA calculada a nivel de medida, habiendo un carácter unitario (sin una distribución sectorial).51

*Tabla no. 24 El valor del indicador de impacto (1) crecimiento económico*52 - estimaciones iniciales

51 Es importante notar que el valor del indicador de impacto se refiere a un aumento neto, mientras que el valor de referencia y el valor final (2013-2015) se refieren al país que incluye a los beneficiarios y no-beneficiarios como un todo. Según el enfoque metodológico, la evaluación del equipo de evaluación ha evaluado la variación en el tiempo del indicador usando datos desde la estadística oficial y realizando el análisis cuantitativo en el nivel de medida para estimar el efecto neto.

52 Los datos de Eurostat son enteramente comparables a lo largo del tiempo ya que los valores de referencia y los valores de 2013 y 2015 se calculan a través de la misma metodología (nama_10_a_64) usando NACE Rev. 2 – ESA 2010. Esto no es necesariamente el caso en la comparación entre los valores de referencia del programa y los valores de Anuarul Statistic al României. Como un hecho, el valor del indicador de impacto se estableció cuando se usó NACE Rev. 1.
| Impact indicator                                                                 | Baseline value (Annex 1B of NRDP) | Value for 2013-2015                              | Initial objective for 2013 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|**********************************|************************************************|----------------------------|
|                                                                                 | **47.686 (2004) Source: Eurostat (nama_10_a_64) using NACE Rev. 2 – ESA 2010 and aact_eaa01 (at basic prices)** | **119.422 (2013) 134.080,91 (2015) Source: Eurostat (nama_10_a_64) using NACE Rev. 2 – ESA 2010 and aact_eaa01 (at basic prices)** | |

* Note: in the grey cells is the information provided by the ex-post evaluation team

(Instead of NACE Rev. 2) and ESA 95 instead of ESA 2010. Thus, it is preferable to use Eurostat data for making the over time comparison. Discrepancies between the NRDP baseline values and the Eurostat values for the same years can be explained by the different definitions of the indicators provided by DG AGRI.

53 This value was calculated based on an average exchange rate, considering the value of Euro in 2013 (1 Euro = 4.419 Lei) and value in million lei at current prices. 34,402.8 as reported at page 394 of the Statistical Yearbook of Romania (2015).

54 This value was calculated based on an average exchange rate, considering the value of Euro in 2013 (1 Euro = 4.419 Lei) and value in million lei at current prices. 32,638.9 as reported at page 394 of the Statistical Yearbook of Romania (2015).

55 This value was calculated based on an average exchange rate, considering the value of Euro in 2013 (1 Euro = 4.419 Lei) and value in million lei at current prices, 561,403.6 – 34,402.8 correspondent with total – primary sector – as reported at page 400 of the Statistical Yearbook of Romania 2015.

56 This is calculated as the total NACE value „minus” the value of the primary sector.

57 This is calculated as the total NACE value „minus” the value of the agricultural sector.
**Evaluation/analysis criteria:** Result, Impact

**The level of achieving the proposed targets and the analysis of the indicators evolution:** Overall, the values of the GVA indicator across all the sectors show an increase compared to the values recorded in 2005 and 2007. In order to assess the net effects of the Program, the team of evaluators conducted several counterfactual analyzes, detailed in section VIII.2.4 of the study. These analyzes were carried out at measure level to identify the net average effect of each measure in relation to the gross added value created.

**Table no. 25 The value of the impact indicator (1) economic growth** 58 – achieved targets

|------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|

58 Data from Eurostat are completely comparable overtime since the baseline and the 2013 and 2015 values are calculated through the same methodology (nama_10_a_64) using NACE Rev. 2 – ESA 2010. This is not necessarily the case in the comparison between NRDP baseline value and the figures from Anuarul Statistic al României. As a matter of fact the baseline values of NRDP have been established when it was used NACE Rev. 1 (instead of NACE Rev. 2) and ESA 95 instead of ESA 2010. Thus, it is preferable to use Eurostat data for making the over time comparison. Discrepancies between the NRDP baseline values and the Eurostat values for the same years can be explained by the different definitions of the indicators.

59 This value was calculated based on an average exchange rate, considering the value of Euro in 2013 (1 Euro = 4.419 Lei) and value in million lei at current prices, 34.402,8 as reported at page 394 of the Statistical Yearbook of Romania (2015).

60 This value was calculated based on an average exchange rate, considering the value of Euro in 2013 (1 Euro = 4.419 Lei) and value in million lei at current prices, 32.638,9 as reported at page 394 of the Statistical Yearbook of Romania (2015).
**EVALUAREA EX-POST A PROGRAMULUI NAȚIONAL DE DEZVOLTARE RURALĂ 2007-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>using NACE Rev. 2 – ESA 2010</td>
<td>Source: Eurostat (nama_10_a_64) using NACE Rev. 2 – ESA 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>86.714 (difference between the baseline value and the value in 2015)</td>
<td>29.108 (difference between the value in 2007 and the value in 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.686 (in 2004)</td>
<td>Source: Eurostat (nama_10_a_64) using CAEN Rev. 2 – ESA 2010 and aact_eaa01 (at baseline prices)</td>
<td>119.422 (2013)</td>
<td>134.080,91 (2015)</td>
<td>71.736 (difference between the baseline value and the value in 2013)</td>
<td>14.795 (difference between the value in 2007 and the value in 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Source: Eurostat (nama_10_a_64) using NACE Rev. 2 – ESA 2010 and aact_eaa01 (at baseline prices)</td>
<td></td>
<td>86.395 (difference between the baseline value and the value in 2015)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: in the grey cells is the information provided by the ex-post evaluation team.

---

61 This value was calculated based on an average exchange rate, considering the value of Euro in 2013 (1 Euro = 4.419 Lei) and value in million lei at current prices, 561.403,6 – 34.402,8 correspondent with total – primary sector – as reported at page 400 of the Statistical Yearbook of Romania 2015.

62 This is calculated as the total NACE value „minus“ the value of the primary sector.

63 This is calculated as the total NACE value „minus“ the value of the agricultural sector.
**The contribution of the Program:** In general, in the situations of not reaching all the planned targets for the result indicators, the Program had a net effect on the creation of the GVA for some measures. On average, throughout 2010-2015 period, from the perspective of all the axes, the measures that generated a net effect through the finalised projects were:

- Measure 123 led to an increase of 150,000 lei (net added value) at the level of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries. This average value at the level of each beneficiary of a finalised project can be used as a reference to extrapolate the total value for the entire sample of finalised projects within measure 123 (592 finalised projects by beneficiaries registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise). As a consequence multiplying the average net value added produced by 592 projects gives the total net value added of the measure 123 “Adding value to agricultural and forestry products”, which reaches about 89 million Lei. It is important to highlight that this value refers to the performance in 2010-2015 of a part of the beneficiaries (registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) compared to the non-beneficiaries (also registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) for which it has been possible to conduct the counterfactual analysis;

- Measure 411 has led to an increase of 237,000 lei (net added value) at the level of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries. This average value at the level of each beneficiary of a finalised project can be used as a reference to extrapolate the total value for the entire sample of finalised projects within measure 411 (122 finalised projects by beneficiaries registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise). As a consequence multiplying the average value of net value added produced by 122 projects gives the total value added net effect of the sub-measure 411, which is about 29 million Lei. It is important to highlight that this value refers to the performance in 2010-2015 of a part of the beneficiaries (registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) compared to the non-beneficiaries (also registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) for which it has been possible to conduct the counterfactual analysis.

**Tabel no. 26 Net value added in M 123 and sub-measure 411**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of firms beneficiaries of finalised projects</th>
<th>Estimate of the average net in added value (2010-2015)</th>
<th>Total net value added based on the extrapolation of the average value (2010-2015)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M123</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>15002610 Lei</td>
<td>88815451,20 Lei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M411</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>237594,80 Lei</td>
<td>28986565,60 Lei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>117802016,80 Lei</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: data collected and processed within the ex-post evaluation of NRDP 2007-2013

These findings demonstrate that the net effect of the program on the increase in GVA is limited to the level of two measures that are specifically linked to the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors. Overall, the total net effect in value added of the programme is 117 million Lei. This shows the net effect of the programme in the period 2010-2015 at the level of beneficiaries registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise in terms of contribution to the economic growth of the primary sector. 117 million Lei (aprox. 26 mil. euro) of net effect of value added in the primary sector (agriculture and forestry) in 2010-2015 represents:
- about 20% of the total increase of the value added in the primary sector (590 million Lei) over all the period 2007-2015;
- 1% of the total expected increase in 2007-2015 of the net value added in all the sectors, including also secondary and tertiary sector for which according to the findings of the counterfactual analysis there is no statistically significant net effect. This relative underperformance of the programme can be explained by: a) the difficulty in achieving the expected results in terms of gross value added (see chapter VIII.1.1); b) some of the analysed measures (e.g. 112, 121, 312, 313, 413) have not produced net effects in terms of value added and thus beneficiaries not performing better than non-beneficiaries; c) it was not possible due to limited number of observations and / or data availability to conduct counterfactual analysis for all NRDP measures and types of beneficiaries (e.g. agricultural holdings registered differently than SRL/Agricultural enterprise).

Gross value added in the primary sector was reported by the R2 result indicator of EUR 655.246 million. Gross value in the non-agricultural sector was reported using the R7 result indicator, which was 151,055 million euros. In total, the gross added value generated at the level of direct beneficiaries of the program is EUR 806,301 million64.

The value of impact indicator (2) creation of jobs

**Baseline indicator values and methodological limitations:** The indicators were calculated up to 2013 and 2015 respectively, to the extent to which these data were available at Eurostat level. Some of the sources used to establish the reference value do not provide updated data for 2013 and 2015 and/or they have provided updated definitions for the calculation method. For example, the number of jobs in rural area is available at the level of 2005 but can not be found in the statistical publication Romania in figures - statistic breviary 2015 (for example, the Romanian Statistical Yearbook). Moreover, the most indicators defined at sectoral level refer to the division of economic activities according to NACE Rev. 1 (prior to 2008) and according to NACE Rev. 2 (after 2008). From a methodological perspective, the net effects on the jobs creation were estimated at the measures level, these having a unitary character (without a sectoral distribution)65.

**Tabel no. 27 The value of the impact indicator (2) jobs creation66 - initial estimates**

---

64 The calculated gross added value is not mathematically comparable to the programmed impact indicator, the latter being net value added.
65 It is important to notice that the baseline value and achieved value and also the formulation of the target refer to the country as a whole and not to the net increased. However, the evaluation has assessed the over time variation of the indicator by using official statistics and conducting the counterfactual analysis to measure the net effect of the measures in terms of job creation.
66 Eurostat ensures more recent data than national bulletins or statistical reports.
### Evaluation/analysis criteria: Result, Impact

**The level of achieving the proposed targets and the analysis of the indicators evolution:** Overall, the values of the indicator on the number of jobs are lower compared to the values recorded in 2005 and 2007. In other terms, the performance of labour market in the primary sector, food industry and secondary and tertiary sector has been negative in Romania leading to an overall reduction of jobs in the programming period. In order to assess the net effects of the Program, the team of evaluators conducted several counterfactual analyzes, detailed in section VIII.2.4 of the study. These analyzes were carried out at measure level to identify the net average effect of each measure in relation to number of jobs created (full time equivalent).

**Tabel no. 28 The value of the impact indicator  (2) jobs creation** - achieved targets

---

67 Source of information is the “Romania in figures - Statistical Summary, 2015”. This source was chosen according to the source used for the baseline value provided in NRDP. The value from Romania in figures - Statistical Summary is the same as in the Eurostat database.

68 NRDP did not provide any baseline value. The proposed value corresponds to what proposed in Annex 11 of the Final Report of Intermediary Evaluation of NRDP.

69 Eurostat ensures more recent data than national bulletins or statistical reports.
### Development of employment in the primary sector
*(Employment in primary sector – thousands of persons)*
- Baseline value: 2.943 (2005)  
  *Source: NRDP and Eurostat lfsa_egana NACE REV. 1*
  2.184 (2015)  
  *Source: Eurostat lfsa_egana2– NACE REV. 2*
  -759 (valoare 2015-valoare 2005)
  -578 (value 2015-value 2007)

### Development of employment in food industry
*(Employment in food industry – thousands of persons)*
- Baseline value: 222 (2006)  
  *Source: Eurostat lfsa_egana2d – NACE REV. 1*
  196 (2015)  
  *Source: Eurostat lfsa_egana22d– NACE REV. 2*
  -26 (value 2015-value 2005)
  -19 (value 2015-value 2007)

### Development of employment in non-agricultural sector
*(Employment in secondary and tertiary sectors – thousands of persons)*
- National 6.204 (2005)  
  Rural 1.523 (in 2005)  
  *Source: Romania in figures – statistic breviary 2008, NRDP*
- National 6.048 (2014)  
  *Source: Romania in figures – statistic breviary 2015*
  -123 (value 2013-value 2005)
  +180 (value 2015-value 2005)
- Rural: n.a  
  -240 (value 2015-value 2007)
  *Source: Eurostat lfsa_egana NACE rev. 1*
- National 6.048 (2013)  
  *Source: Eurostat lfsa_egana2 NACE rev. 2*

---

**The contribution of the Program:** In general, in the situations of not reaching all the planned targets for the result indicators, the Program had a net effect in relation to the labor market dynamic. On average, throughout 2009-2015 period, the measures that generated a net effect through the finalised projects in axis n.1 were:

---

*Note: in grey cells is the information provided by ex-post evaluation team*

70 Source of information is the "Romania in figures - Statistical Summary, 2015". This source was chosen according to the source used for the baseline value provided in NRDP. The value from Romania in figures - Statistical Summary is the same as in the Eurostat database.

71 NRDP did not provide any baseline value. The proposed value corresponds to what proposed in Annex 11 of the Final Report of Intermediary Evaluation of NRDP.
- Measure 121 led to an increase of the number of employees (net value, full-time equivalent) by 3 units at the level of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries; This average value at the level of each beneficiary of a finalised project can be extrapolated for the entire sample of finalised projects within measure 121 (1134 finalized projects by beneficiaries registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise). As a consequence by multiplying the average value of net jobs created by 1134, the total employment effect of the measure 121 is 3,496. It is important to highlight that this value refers to the performance of a part of the beneficiaries (beneficiaries registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) compared to the non-beneficiaries (also beneficiaries registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) with counterfactual analysis in 2009-2015;
- Measure 123 led to an increase in the number of employees (net value, full-time equivalent) by 17 units at the level of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries; This average value at the level of each beneficiary of a finalised project can be extrapolated for the entire sample of finalised projects within measure 123 (592 projects finalized by beneficiaries registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise). As a consequence by multiplying the average value of net jobs created by 592, the total employment effect of the measure 123 is 10,120. It is important to highlight that this value refers to the performance of a part of the beneficiaries (beneficiaries registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) compared to the non-beneficiaries (also beneficiaries registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) with counterfactual analysis in 2009-2015.

These achievements (about 13,600 net jobs[^72] in total in 2009-2015) are particularly relevant since:
- n.1 but was more concentrated on economic growth and labour productivity produced, rather than on the objective regarding number of jobs
- the primary sector experienced a substantial reduction in terms of jobs (-578,000 according to the National Statistical Institute in the period 2007-2015).

Under axis n.3, on average, throughout 2009-2015 period, the measures that generated a net effect through the finalised projects were:
- Measure 312 led to an increase in the number of employees (net value, full-time equivalent) by 4.5 units at the level of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries; This average value at the level of each beneficiary of a finalised project can be extrapolated for the entire sample of finalised projects within measure 312 (1,460 finalized projects by beneficiaries registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise). As a consequence by multiplying the average value of net jobs created by 1,460, the total employment effect of the measure 312 is 6,672. It is important to highlight that this value refers to the performance of a part of the beneficiaries (registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) compared to the non-beneficiaries (also registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) with counterfactual analysis in 2009-2015;
- Measure 313 led to an increase in the number of employees (net value, full-time equivalent) by 2.8 units at the level of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries; This average value at the level of each beneficiary of a finalised project can be extrapolated for the entire sample of finalised projects within measure 313. As a consequence by multiplying the average value of net jobs created by 126, the total employment effect of the measure 313 is 348. It is important to highlight that this value

[^72]: Net jobs = jobs created additionally at the level of the beneficiaries of NRDP versus non-beneficiaries, representing a direct contribution of the Program to the labor market.
refers to the performance of a part of the beneficiaries (registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) compared to the non-beneficiaries (also registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) with counterfactual analysis in 2009-2015.

These achievements (about 7.020 net jobs\textsuperscript{73} in total in 2009-2015) confirms the positive contribution of the Programme to improving the quality of life and diversifying the economy in the rural areas.

On average, considering the period 2009-2015, the measure which generated a net effect through finalized projects within Axis 4 is measure 411 which led to an increase in the number of employees (net value, full-time equivalent) by 1 unit at the level of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries. This average value at the level of each beneficiary of a finalised projects can be used as a reference to extrapolate a total value for the entire sample of finalised projects within measure 411 (122 finalized projects by beneficiaries registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise). Thus, by multiplying the average value of net jobs created by 122, the total employment effect of the measure is 122. It is important to highlight that this value refers to the performance of a part of the beneficiaries (registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) compared to the non-beneficiaries (also registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise) with counterfactual analysis in 2009-2015. As far as measure 413 is concerned, the counterfactual analysis did not provide statistically significant results for the period 2009-2015 on net job-related outcomes but these were identified in relation to the 2012-2015 period.

The following table summarises all the figures mentioned above.

\textsuperscript{73} Net jobs = jobs created additionally at the level of the beneficiaries of NRDP versus non-beneficiaries, representing a direct contribution of the Program to the labor market.
Tabel no. 29 Net jobs created through measures 121, 123, 312, 313, 411

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Number of beneficiaries of finalised projects registered as SRL/Agricultural enterprise</th>
<th>Estimate of the net jobs created (2009-2015)</th>
<th>Total net jobs created based on the extrapolation of the average value (2009-2015)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M121</td>
<td>1,134</td>
<td>3,083</td>
<td>3,496,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M123</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>17,096</td>
<td>10,120,83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M312</td>
<td>1.460</td>
<td>4,57</td>
<td>6,672,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M313</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>2,76</td>
<td>347,76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M411</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>1,006</td>
<td>122,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,434</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>20,759,65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: data collected and processed within the ex-post evaluation of NRDP 2007-2013

Overall, in the period 2009-2015, the measures analysed through the counterfactual analysis has created a net effect of about 20,760 jobs.

The net effect in the non-agricultural sector reaches 7,142 which represents 13% of the target value of the impact result indicator (54,288).

The gross effect in the non-agricultural sector, in terms of total number of jobs created by the NRDP, can be calculated based on the result indicator R8,(1), considering the values related to M312, M313 and Leader Axis 3. Its value is 10,934 jobs, accounting for 20,14% of the target value of the impact indicator (54,288).

Considering the period 2012-2015, at the level of which the evaluation focused on measures 411 and 413, on average:
- Measure 411 led to an increase in the number of employees (net value, full-time equivalent) by 2.26 units at the level of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries;
- Measure 413 led to an increase in the number of employees (net value, full-time equivalent) by 1.77 units at the level of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries;

The findings are particularly important in the context of the negative labor market dynamics in the analyzed period (especially considering the reduction in the number of jobs in the agricultural sector, the food industry and, in general, the various economic sectors). Consequently, although the conditions that characterized the labor market have worsened compared to the period 2005-2007, with a slight recovery only in the last part of the analyzed period, the Program had a generally positive impact in relation to job creation at the level of Axes 1, 3 and 4.

---

74 Net jobs = jobs created additionally at the level of the beneficiaries of NRDP versus non-beneficiaries, representing a direct contribution of the Program to the labor market.
The value of the impact indicator (3) labor productivity

Baseline indicator values and methodological limitations: Due to the lack of relevant information from official sources, it was not possible to calculate the value of the labor productivity impact indicator using the same methodology as the one based on which the reference values included in the NRDP were determined. As an alternative, this study proposes the Eurostat time series presented below.

| Tabel no. 30 Calculation of the proxy for the impact indicator (3) labor productivity |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Productivity agricultural sector euro in thousand euro per AWU (Annual Working Unit) | 2007 | 2008 | 2013 | 2015 | Method |
| Productivity forestry and logging sector thousand euro per AWU | n.a. | 9.4 | 11.0 | n.a. | own calculation as the ratio Gross Value Added in the forestry and logging sector / AWU in the forestry and logging sector. |
| Productivity forestry and logging sector thousands euro per employee | 11.9 | 9.1 | 11.7 | 12.4 | own calculation until 2008 as the ratio Gross Value Added in the forestry and logging sector / the number of employees in the forestry and logging sector. |
| Productivity food industry thousands euro per employee | 30.6 | 33.8 | 39.2 | 37.1 | own calculation as a ratio Gross Value Added / employees. |

Source: Eurostat, 2016

Evaluation/analysis criteria: Result, Impact

The level of achieving the proposed targets: Overall the programme achieved the target value of productivity growth only in the agricultural sector, while being below the target in all the other cases. According to the information contained in the latest version of NRDP 2007-2013 (XVIth version, approved in November 2015), it is estimated an annual increase in labor productivity by 8% for the agricultural and the food industry sector. The increase in labor productivity is below the 8% threshold for the forestry sector and the forestry exploitation sector (both by the calculations reported for UAA and the number of employees) and for the food industry for the period 2007-2013 and 2007-2015. On the other hand, the level of labor productivity growth in relation to the agricultural sector is higher than the initially estimated target.79

75 The ratio uses the Eurostat series aact_eaa01 (at basic prices) for the Gross Value Added and aact_al10 for the Annual Working Unit.
76 The ratio uses the Eurostat series t_for (tag00058) (at basic prices) for the Gross Value Added and for the Annual Working Unit.
77 The ratio uses the Eurostat series nama_10_a64 for the added value and Eurostat lfsa_egana2d for the employment figures. 2001 value confirms NRDP value. From 2009 on own calculation the values of employees is based on Eurostat lfsa_egan22d.
78 Until 2008 own calculation as a ratio Gross Value Added / employees, based on Eurostat nama_10_a64 for the added value and Eurostat lfsa_egana2d for the employment figures. From 2009 on own calculation as a ratio Gross Value Added / employees, based on Eurostat nama_10_a64 for the added value and Eurostat lfsa_egan22d for the employment figures.
79 Different values of the growth rate can be calculated using different formulas. In this case, the formula used is: (final value - initial value) / (initial value * number of years in the analyzed period). The considered duration is eight years in most calculations, except for the calculations related to "forestry productivity and the forestry sector - EUR thousand / UAA" for which it was considered a 5-year period for the 2008-2013 period. Another approach could be the Annual Growth Rate (RCCA) = [(final value) / (initial value)] ^ (1/number of years). The formula generates slightly different results that are not reproduced in this study to facilitate understanding of the obtained results obtained.
Tabel no. 31 The proxy indicator for the impact indicator (3) labor productivity – achieved targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in labor productivity (variation method)(^{80})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase (Initial year – 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity agricultural sector euro in thousand euro per AWU (Annual Working Unit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity forestry and logging sector thousand euro per AWU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity forestry and logging sector thousands euro per employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity food industry thousands euro per employee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurostat, 2016

The analysis of the indicator evolution in the period 2007-2015: Since the productivity is the ratio between GVA and the number of employees (or UMA), the two main factors influencing the productivity growth rate refer to the production capacity and the dynamics of the labor market. The analysis of the data provided by Eurostat shows that:

- Productivity growth in the agricultural sector depends to a large extent on labor market variations and less on GVA growth.
- Productivity growth in forestry and the forestry sector is more influenced by the increase in VAB than by the increase in UAA / number of employees.
- Increasing the productivity in the food industry depends to a large extent on labor market variations and less on VAB growth.

The contribution of the Program: By combining counterfactual analyzes on the increase of the GVA and the increase in number of jobs, there are two measures that show statistically significant results: measure 123 and measure 411.

However, for measure 123, even if there is a net effect both at the GVA level and in terms of the number of jobs created, the remarkable performance of the beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries is related to job creation, more than the the one related to the increase in GVA. As a result, the net productivity growth (ratio between GVA and number of employees) cannot be calculated in comparison with the values recorded by non-beneficiaries. On the other hand, measure 411 shows a better performance of GVA registered by beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries, more than the one related to the number of jobs created, thus demonstrating a net benefit of the productivity growth. Even if these findings largely depend on the relatively limited effect of the Program on the growth of GVA in parallel with the remarkable performance in creating new jobs, it is demonstrated that the Program has the capacity to contribute to improving the productivity without negatively affecting the number of jobs in rural area, inclusively through measures specifically addressed to the agricultural sector. This conclusion is particularly valid considering measure 411 which supports the improvement of the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors.

\(^{80}\) final value - initial value) / (initial value * number of years in the analyzed period). The estimated duration is eight years in most calculations, except for the calculations related to “forestry productivity and the forestry sector - EUR thousand / UAA” for which it was considered a 5-year period for the 2008-2013 period.
It is noted that the program has had an effect on productivity growth in the agricultural sector, notably through measure 411. This contribution to agricultural productivity growth, which grew with approximately 9% during the programming period, is not negligible, as this increase at the national level was mainly due to the reduction of the number of jobs.

**The value of the impact indicator on environment (4) Reversing Biodiversity decline**

**Baseline indicator values and methodological limitations:** According to the information contained in the final version of the NRDP 2007-2013 (version XVI, approved in November 2015) for the impact indicator (4) no reference values were provided and no targets were set. The reference value, respectively the updated value, was established by the studies elaborated within the project "Establishing the current level for the index of the poultry populations specific to the agricultural lands in Romania" (beneficiary NRDP MA, financed by the Technical Assistance measure - M511). Taking into account that the implementation of the program was completed in 2015, from the perspective of the most relevant representation of the impact produced by the interventions financed by NRDP, in the evaluation was considered the value registered by the indicator in 2015.

**Tabel no. 32 Value of the impact indicator (4) Reversing Biodiversity decline – initial estimates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact indicators</th>
<th>Related baseline indicators</th>
<th>Reference value</th>
<th>Objective 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(4) Reversing Biodiversity decline</td>
<td>Biodiversity: Index of the population of specific birds for the farmlands in Romania</td>
<td>Available after the approval of the Program, based on studies funded through the Technical Assistance measure</td>
<td>The target will be set after the values for the core indicators are available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation/analysis criteria:** Result

**The level of achieving the proposed targets:** The results of the project "Establishing the current level for the index of the poultry populations specific to the agricultural lands in Romania" indicate for the year 2010 (the reference year for calculating the population trends) a baseline value of 1.0 (100%) of the "index of the poultry populations specific to the agricultural lands in Romania". At the level of 2015, the index was recalculated by following the same methodology, resulting in a 0.97 index of only 3% decreasing compared to 2010. Thus, it was found that the value of the index was relatively constant, with no biodiversity decline in terms of the index analyzed during the reference period 2010-2015.
Tabel no. 33 Value of the impact indicator (4) Reversing Biodiversity decline – achieved targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact indicators</th>
<th>Related baseline indicators</th>
<th>Reference value in 2010</th>
<th>Reference value in 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(4) Reversing Biodiversity decline</td>
<td>Biodiversity: Index of the population of specific birds for the farmlands in Romania</td>
<td>1,0081</td>
<td>0,9782</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The contribution of the Program: Crex crex herds remained stable (or slightly increased) in 2015 compared to the 2010 reference year at the national level, in the Axis 2 implementation areas. For Lanius minor species there was a statistically unreliable trend, with no major fluctuations (unreliable trend = there was no significant increase or decline for the species, but it is not certain that population growth and/or decline trends are below or above 5% per year). For the species Falco vespertinus, the conservation status of the species in the Western Plain seems favorable over the analyzed period. There are no major differences between eligible areas and non-eligible areas for agri-environment payments, the flocks being stable in both of them.

The value of the impact indicator on environment (5) Maintenance of high natural value in the forestry areas

Baseline indicator values and methodological limitations: The baseline values of reference indicators were determined on the basis of information available at MADR level (for High Natural Value Areas - OR in High Natural Value Areas, reference year 2007) or the information provided by Forest Europe - MCPFE Report83 (Component on species of tree populations - Distribution of species by FOWL zones, reference year 2001). Taking into account that the implementation of the program was completed in 2015, from the perspective of the most relevant representation of the impact produced by the interventions financed by NRDP, in the evaluation there were considered the values of the indicators registered in 2015. For the first reference indicator, there were analyzed the values recorded in 2015 provided by the project "Establishing the current level for the monitoring of high natural value meadows in Romania" (beneficiary NRDP MA, financed by the Technical Assistance measure - M511). For the second reference indicator, the MCPFE Report for 2015 no longer reports data broken down by species; so the data source used for calculating the values registered in 2015 is MMAP - Report on Romania’s State of Forests (2015), indicator Distribution of forests by species and groups of species.

81 Source: Project „Establishing the current level for the index of farmland bird populations in Romania”, beneficiary MARD
82 In 2015, source: Project „Establishing the current level for the index of farmland bird populations in Romania”, beneficiary MARD
83 Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe
Tabel no. 34 Value of the impact indicator (5) Maintenance of high natural value in the forestry areas– initial estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact indicators</th>
<th>Related baseline indicators</th>
<th>The reference value</th>
<th>Objective 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5) Maintenance of high natural value in the forestry areas</td>
<td>Lands with High Nature Value OR in the areas with High Nature Value - million ha</td>
<td>2,40 mil ha (in 2007)</td>
<td>Maintaining agricultural and forest land with high added value supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tree species composition Distribution of species per areas of FOWL (% coniferous trees/% broadleaved/%mixed)</td>
<td>28,6/71,4/0,0 (in 2001)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation/analysis criteria:** Result

**The level of achieving the proposed targets and analyzing the indicators evolution:** By analyzing the results of the project "Establishing the current level for the monitoring of high natural value meadows in Romania" it is observed that the effects on high natural value land are present and positive (maintaining HNV, respectively changes in HNV areas). Also, the composition by species of the tree populations did not show significant variations in 2015 compared to the reference value (relative variation less than 2.2%). Thus, it can be concluded that the objective of maintaining agricultural and forestry land with high added value has been fulfilled.

Tabel no. 35 Value of the impact indicator (5) Maintenance of high natural value in the forestry areas – achieved targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact indicators</th>
<th>Related baseline indicators</th>
<th>The reference value</th>
<th>Updated value in 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5) Maintenance of high natural value in the forestry areas</td>
<td>Lands with High Nature Value OR in the areas with High Nature Value - million ha</td>
<td>2,40 mil ha (in 2007)</td>
<td>2,37 mil ha meadows of high natural value $^{84}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tree species composition Distribution of species per areas of FOWL (% coniferous trees/% broadleaved/%mixed)</td>
<td>28,6/71,4/0,0 (in 2001)</td>
<td>26,49/73,51/0,0 $^{85}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The contribution of the Program:** The program contributed to maintain high nature value agricultural areas through the implementation of measures 211, 212 and 214 (Package 1) and of the related commitments. The results aimed at the level of these measures in relation to the provision of an area contributing to the maintenance of biodiversity and HNV areas (for measures 211 and 212), respectively of a surface contributing to biodiversity and the high natural value of agricultural land (for measure 214) were reached at a rate of 90%. Thus, it can be concluded that the Program has actively contributed to the maintenance of high natural value agricultural areas. Regarding the forest areas, the Program covered this type of land through measures 122 and 221. The area involved in the projects implemented and finalized under these measures (30.394 ha - M122, 50 ha - M221) represents only 0.46% of the total area of the forestry fund in Romania (6.555.000 ha)

$^{84}$ In 2015, source: project „Establishing the current level for monitoring high-value natural grasslands in Romania”, beneficiary MARD


%conifers include the following species: spruce, fir, other resinous; %hardwood includes: beech, cherry, various countries, various soft
in 2015, according to the information provided by MMAP). In these circumstances no significant contribution of the NRDP 2007-2013 can be estimated for the maintenance of the forest areas.

The value of the impact indicators on environment (6) Improvement in water quality

**Baseline indicator values and methodological limitations:** According to the information contained in the final version of NRDP 2007-2013 (version XVI, approved in November 2015) no reference values were provided for the impact indicator (6) and no targets were established. Taking into account that no specific studies financed by the Technical Assistance measure have been carried out for the calculation of the reference indicators during the period 2007-2015, the evaluators have determined the reference value, namely the updated one on the basis of the information provided by Eurostat (the list of agro-environment). The latest updated values for nitrogen balance are for 2014. Regarding nitrate and pesticide pollution, no official sources for identifying the indicator have been identified. Thus, the evaluators analyzed a proxy indicator, namely the amount of nitrates per liter per intervals and types of water bodies recorded in the monitoring stations in Romania during 2004-2007 and 2008-2011 (there are no more recent data).

**Tabel no. 36 The value of the impact indicators (6) Improvement in water quality – initial estimates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact indicators</th>
<th>Related baseline indicators</th>
<th>The reference value</th>
<th>Objective 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(6) Improvement in water quality</td>
<td>Gross Nutrient Balances – Nitrogen balance (kg/ha)</td>
<td>Available after the approval of the Program, based on the studies funded through the Technical Assistance measure</td>
<td>The target will be set after values for reference indicators become available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pollution by nitrates and pesticides</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation/analysis criteria:** Impact

**The level of achieving the proposed targets and the analysis of the indicators evolution:** In relation to the changes in the gross balance of the nutrients - the nitrogen balance between 2005 and 2014, it can be seen that there was a significant reduction in the amount of nitrogen used in the agricultural area used in Romania. The negative value of the indicator recorded in 2014 shows that, at national level, the inputs considered in the nitrogen balance (the amount of fertilizers, manure, other elements: seeds and planting material, biologically fixed nitrogen by leguminous crops and mixtures of legumes and vegetables; Nitrogen fixed by atmospheric deposition) are lower than the outputs (the amount of nitrogen removed by crop harvesting, the amount of nitrogen removed by harvesting and grazing, the amount of crop residues removed from agricultural land). Also, the negative trend of the indicator indicates a reduction in potential environmental risks (including water quality) at the level of agricultural area used. Regarding the amount of nitrates from agricultural sources / liter of water, there is an improvement in the period 2008-2011 compared to the period 2004-2007, especially at the groundwater level (most of the monitoring stations recorded a smaller quantity of nitrate mg/liter). In relation to the surface waters, the situation remained relatively constant over the two analysed periods.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact indicators</th>
<th>Related indicators</th>
<th>baseline indicator</th>
<th>The reference value</th>
<th>Updated value in 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(6) Improvement in water quality</td>
<td>Gross Nutrient Balances – Nitrogen balance (kg/ha)</td>
<td>Improvement in water quality</td>
<td>In 2004-2007(^{86}): Groundwater &lt;25 mg nitrates / l: 75% of monitoring stations (1,028 stations) 25-40 mg nitrates / l: 10% of monitoring stations (137 stations) 40-50 mg nitrates / l: 4% of monitoring stations (55 stations) &gt; 50 mg nitrates / l: 11% of monitoring stations (151 stations)</td>
<td>In 2008-2011(^{87}): Groundwater &lt;25 mg nitrates / l: 76.5% of monitoring stations (1,380 stations) 25-40 mg nitrates / l: 8.3% of monitoring stations (150 stations) 40-50 mg nitrates / l: 3.8% of monitoring stations (69 stations) &gt; 50 mg nitrates / l: 11.5% of monitoring stations (206 stations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Improvement in water quality</td>
<td>Pollution by nitrates and pesticides - The amount of nitrates per liter per intervals and types of water bodies (^{88})</td>
<td>12 kg/ha SAU (in 2005)</td>
<td>-1 kg/ha SAU(^{86}) (in 2014)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The contribution of the Program:** The program has influenced the water quality in particular through the implementation of measures 125, 322 and 214. At the end of the programming period, in terms of the reported result indicators, measure 214 has completed commitments that have contributed to improving the quality of the water on an area of 2.19 million hectares. The irrigation systems on an area of 27,631 ha were also upgraded and rehabilitated through the projects finalized under Measure 125, and through the measure 322, 1,663.59 km of water supply pipes were realized. It can be concluded that the Program has made a

---


\(^{88}\) Source: REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT on the implementation of Council Directive 91/676/ EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources drawn up on the basis of the Member States’ reports for the period 2008-2011

\(^{89}\) Total number of groundwater monitoring stations at national level in 2004-2007: 1,371 stations

\(^{90}\) Total number of groundwater monitoring stations nationwide in 2008-2011: 1,805 stations

\(^{91}\) Number of surface water monitoring stations nationwide in 2004-2007: 1,241 stations

\(^{92}\) Number of surface water monitoring stations nationwide in 2004-2007: 1,241 stations
positive contribution to improving water quality but it cannot be provided an accurate assessment of the level of contribution of the program to the evolution of this indicator.

The value of the impact indicator on environment (7) Contribution to combating the climate change

Baseline indicator values and methodological limitations: According to the information contained in the final version of NRDP 2007-2013 (version XVI, approved in November 2016) for the indicator "SAU for renewable energy production" no reference values were provided. Considering that no specific studies financed by the Technical Assistance measure for the calculation of the reference indicators were carried out during the period 2007-2015, the evaluators established the reference value based on the information provided by DG AGRI and Eurostat (the list of agri-environment indicators) - for this indicator, the latest available information provided by Eurostat is for 2007 (considered as the reference value). Regarding the "Renewable Energy Production" indicator - from agriculture and forestry, the most recent information provided by DG AGRI and Eurostat refers to 2010. For the indicator "Greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture", the most recent information provided DG AGRI and Eurostat refer to 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact indicators</th>
<th>Related baseline indicators</th>
<th>The reference value</th>
<th>Objective 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(7) Contribution to combating the climate change</td>
<td>Production of renewable energy from agriculture (ktoe)</td>
<td>0 (in 2006)</td>
<td>Increased production of renewable energy and agricultural areas used for energy and biomass crops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Production of renewable energy from forestry (ktoe)</td>
<td>1.663 (in 2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SAU dedicated to the production of renewable energy SAU for energy and biomass crops</td>
<td>Available after the Program approval, based on studies funded through the Technical Assistance measure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emissions of greenhouse gases and ammonia from agriculture 1.000 t equivalent CO₂)</td>
<td>11,946,54 in 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation/analysis criteria: Impact

The level of achieving the proposed targets and analyzing the indicators evolution: The renewable energy production recorded a positive evolution in the analyzed period (2006-2010), both in terms of agriculture and forestry. There is no updated information on the agricultural area used for the production of renewable energy or for energy and biomass crops. The greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture increased significantly in the year 2014 compared to the reference value registered in the NRDP (increase of over 46%) - at the level of 2007, the value of the indicator was 19,833.5 so that compared to the time of the Program initiation, the indicator has registered a reduction. The agricultural greenhouse gases include: nitrogen oxide
(N2O) resulting mainly from the application of fertilizer and manure to soils; Methane (CH4) resulting, inter alia, from animal emissions, stored manure or (to a lesser extent) from rice cultivation.

**Tabel no. 39 Value of the impact inidcator (7) contribution to combating the climate change – achieved targets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact indicators</th>
<th>Related baseline indicators</th>
<th>The reference value</th>
<th>Updated value in 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(7) Contribution to combating the climate change</td>
<td>Production of renewable energy from agriculture (ktoe)</td>
<td>0 (in 2006)</td>
<td>9893 (in 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Production of renewable energy from forestry (ktoe)</td>
<td>1.663 (in 2006)</td>
<td>3.90094 (in 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SAU dedicated to the production of renewable energy</td>
<td>88.000 ha (in 2007)</td>
<td>No more recent information was found than 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SAU for energy and biomass crops</td>
<td>11.946,54 in 2003</td>
<td>17.522,4595 (in 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emissions of greenhouse gases and ammonia from agriculture 1.000 t equivalent CO2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The contribution of the Program:** The program contributed to increase the renewable energy production, in particular through Axes 1 and 3 (Measures 121, 123, 312, 313), where specific equipment was eligible for being purchased. However, it cannot be provided an estimation of the extent to which the Program has contributed to the updated values of the reference indicator "Renewable Energy Production" - from agriculture and forestry, as most of the investments funded under the Program were completed after 2010, and the latest value provided by Eurostat for this indicator is related to 2007. Regarding the quantity of greenhouse gases produced by the agricultural activities, the Program has contributed to the reduction of this by the commitments implemented at the level of measure 214.

**The values of the additional impact indicators on environment**

For the additional environmental impact indicators, target values were not provided at the Program level. The evaluators identified updated values for these indicators, as long as data is available from official sources. No updated data for the "Technological use of fertilizers used in agriculture" and "Surface water quality" indicators were identified. The heterogeneity of the additional environmental indicators in terms of the elements analyzed and the availability of the data makes it difficult to delineate a direct connection between the Program and the evolution over time of the indicators. Based on the findings formulated in relation to the NRDP's contribution to the achievement of the objectives set for the impact indicators (4), (5), (6), (7), it is appreciated that the Program had an indirect cross-sectional contribution to the evolution of all additional impact indicators on the environment.

---

93 Value corresponding to 2010


94 Value corresponding to 2010


95 Value registered in 2014 – indicator Greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture (sursă: EEA)

### Table No. 40 Value of the additional impact indicators on environment – updated values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional indicators</th>
<th>Reference value</th>
<th>Potential data source</th>
<th>Updated value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ammonia emissions from agriculture</strong></td>
<td>153,000 t (in anul 2005)</td>
<td>State of the Environment - Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests</td>
<td>1,219,138 t&lt;sup&gt;96&lt;/sup&gt; (in 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technologic consumption of fertilizers used in agriculture</strong></td>
<td>16,316 t t active substance (in 2005)</td>
<td>National Institute for Statistics</td>
<td>No relevant data was found on NIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Used pasture surfaces</strong></td>
<td>Grassland 3,329,984 ha Meadow 1,531,491 ha</td>
<td>National Institute for Statistics</td>
<td>Grassland 3,272,165 ha Meadow 1,556,246 ha&lt;sup&gt;98&lt;/sup&gt; in 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surface water quality</strong></td>
<td>Quality class for lakes and rivers in the basins&lt;sup&gt;99&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>National Administration Romanian Waters</td>
<td>Centralized data were not identified in the reports issued by ANPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mortality and morbidity rate at national level</strong></td>
<td>Mortality rate: 12,1‰ Morbidity: 16,159 thousand illnesses</td>
<td>National Institute for Statistics</td>
<td>Mortality rate: 3,9‰ Morbidity: 260,997 illnesses&lt;sup&gt;100&lt;/sup&gt; (in 2015)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<sup>96</sup> Value calculated at the level of 2013, based on data taken from Romania’s Informative Inventory Report 2015

<sup>97</sup> Indicator Land surface by use - pasture and meadow

<sup>98</sup> Data available for 2014

<sup>99</sup> Lakes, it is verified the indicator "Sorting the main lakes in Romania into quality categories according to the water chemistry"

- Rivers, it is verified the indicator "Distribution of the tmonitoring sections on quality categories according to the overall evaluated situation"

<sup>100</sup> Data collected from NIS Tempo database, december 2015
VIII.2. Analysis and comments on the quantitative and qualitative information from public statistics, specific studies/questionnaires or any other sources

VIII.2.1. Analysis and comments regarding the programme relevance

In general NRDP has maintained a satisfactory level of relevance of its strategy and its activities with the needs of the rural areas. This also considering that during the implementation of the program, rural areas faced new challenges, for which the interventions and resources allocated through the program have been tailored to respond adequately.

The reaction of the management system to the change of conditions and needs have been prompt: during the programming period, NRDP went through 15 procedures of modification which resulted in 16 different versions of the programme. Modifications have been of different kind (financial remodulation, changes in the measure fiches, etc.) and have impacted to the programme relevance, efficiency, effectiveness to a various extent.

The modification which overall have impacted the most on the programme appear to be n.2 (which introduced the guarantee scheme for axis 1 and axis 3), n.3 which adapted the programme to receive the PERE allocation, n. 7 which introduced measure 215 and a general system of re-utilization of the economies of the previous calls to finance projects eligible but not funded and n.13 which performed financial remodulations needed to maximize effectiveness and efficiency of the programme.

The table in annex 5 presents the detail of every programme modification, its content, and the estimation of the related impact on programme relevance, efficiency and effectiveness. Generally speaking, the modifications appear to have impacted more often the efficiency of the programme, while relevance was less interested by changes.

The analysis shows that all programme changes were based on stakeholder consultation, after which analyzes were carried out to confirm the new needs identified locally.

The interviews with relevant key actors highlighted the fact that initially there were some syncopes in the programme-specific needs, but through the updates made to the programme, there were taken appropriate measures to better address these needs, including changes in the eligibility and selection criteria and financial reallocation.

Nonetheless, the important changes in the financial allocations to the PAs between the beginning and the end of the programming period, (see analysis developed in chapter V.4) appear more related to aspects of effectiveness and efficiency than to correspondent changes of the needs of the territory.
The important decrease of the allocation for axis 1 (-28%), as well as the increase of the allocation for axis 2 (+34%) and axis 4 (+64%) don’t match a correspondent variations of the relative importance of the related needs of the rural areas addressed, but can be explained by the dynamics of good management of the programme according to the principle of effectiveness and efficiency.

The good level of absorption recorded for the axis for which the financial allocation has been increased proves however the correspondence between the final allocation and the receptivity of the territory for these kinds of interventions.

**Specific findings on relevance for Axis 1**

- All measures are associated with at least one result indicator (common or additional) and at least one impact indicator; from the perspective of the quantification of the results, the most complex indicator is R2 on the increase of GVA in agricultural holdings, and from the perspective of impact, the cross-cutting indicator for all measures is labor productivity
- All the measures of Axis 1 and their related output indicators, are correlated and justified by the general objective of the axis and the strategy of NRDP; considering the three specific sub-objectives, sub-objective 2 - the competitiveness of the primary sectors of agriculture and forestry (development of physical and innovation potential) has the main contribution in terms of financial resources and outputs/
- The main measures that have produced the added value were 121 and 123, through these measures being developed the production, storage, preservation capabilities of the farmers, etc.
- Measure 141 (on supporting the semi-subsistence farms) had no notable results in economic terms for the respective beneficiaries, being perceived in the territory more as a social tool and not for the economic competitiveness of the beneficiaries.
- The evolution of the structure of Axis 1 has been promptly adapted to reflect new conditions and needs of rural areas. Measures of Axis 1 have been reviewed in 6 versions of the programme. The most important example of adaptation of the axis to the changing needs is when Romania was faced with major floods in 2010; thus it was decided to finance some investment initiatives to reduce the effects of floods and prevent them. Thus measure 125 was completed with sub-measure 125 c) Construction, restoration and modernization of the flood prevention and protection infrastructure. This sub-measure was financed through the reduction of the allocation for measure 122;
- Despite the changes, the structure of the axis has not undergone major restructuring, from the point of view of the financial allocation to measures. Measures 121 and 123 have remained the most important ones in the last version of the programme as well as in the initial one. However, some other measures have undergone major restructuring, like measure 122, 142, 143 whose allocation has drastically decreased in the final version of the programme, as well has their significance in the overall implementation of the axis.
• A significant modification of the program aimed at changing the percentage of co-financing under measure 121, following the EC recommendations.
• NRDP 2007-2013 created a favorable context for beneficiaries who have followed the relocation of the economic activity in the agricultural sector, by supporting investments in physical assets.

**Specific findings on relevance for Axis 2**

• Axis 2 was the axis with the highest absorption, having reallocated funds from other axes, for the measures for which the interest was increased. The measures of Axis 2 were generally considered as having a high rate of success: for example the measure 214 was a well-constructed measure, which was complemented with additional new packages during the implementation of the programme, which had positive results in implementation, while the measures 211 and 212 have been easier to implement, given that they had more flexible conditions, but, independently, they were updated to increase their attractiveness towards beneficiaries (increase the level of payments).

• There were two stages for the identification of the needs, which are reflected in the actions of the program: the planning of operations was performed after realizing an analysis of the current situation at the time, and the program design was based on a consultative process.

• The evolution of Axis 2 has been following the evolution of needs of rural areas. For example, in order to improve the general environment and rural areas, the need for better conditions of farming, with direct impact on water quality and microclimate, contributing to the increase of quality and safety of food and food from livestock, which determine consumer safety and contribute to the improvement of quality of life in rural areas, has arisen. Thus, in 2012, the program content has been updated with the introduction of a contextual analysis of the sector of swine and poultry breeding and a separate SWOT analysis for these sectors. Therefore, to address the needs of animal welfare measure was introduced 215 - Animal welfare payments. To finance the new measures funds were relocated from other budget measures / axes. Also, in the case of measures 211 and 212 the level of payments has been modified to increase their attractiveness, while in the case of measure 214 new packages were introduced in order to meet the needs identified in the territory.

• Through all the 16 versions of NRDP, the structure of the axis has not undergone major restructuring, from the point of view of the financial allocation to measures. Measure 214 has always remained the most important one, followed by measure 211. Some relevant changes have been made in the case of other measures, with measure 221 losing progressively its incidence on the overall balance of the axis, and the newly created measure 215 increasingly progressively its importance by representing at the end the 3rd most important measure in terms of budget.

• Most of the measures implemented within Axis 2, respectively the related output indicators, are coherent and justified by the general objective of the axis and strategy of NRDP; measure 215 "Payments for animal welfare" introduced in version VIII of NRDP (approved in April 2012) does not seem to be fully integrated in the intervention logic of this axis, meaning that is associated only with output indicators (without impact and result indicators), but it is justified by the needs of local
stakeholders to cover additional costs and income losses caused by the voluntary application of higher standards in commercial swine and poultry breeding farms. However, the implementation of this measure contributes to the overall objective of Axis 2 having a positive impact on the environmental factors, particularly on water quality, through the application of superior technological measures compared to mandatory measures.

Specific findings on relevance for Axis 3

- all the measures implemented within Axis 3, respectively the related output indicators, are coherent and justified by the general objective of the axis and strategy of NRDP; out of the two specific sub-objectives, sub-objective 1 - diversification of the rural economy has the major contribution in terms of financial allocation and planned achievements
- all measures are associated with at least one result indicator (common or additional) and at least one impact indicator; both impact indicators are transversally defined at the level of the three measures within Axis 3
- The content of Axis 3 has reacted constantly to the new conditions and needs emerging from rural areas. Some example:
  - reallocation of financial resources from M 313 to M 322 for supporting the rehabilitation of road infrastructure in rural areas affected by the floods from 2010.
  - The implementation of measure 322 was also affected by the changes of the national legislation for the purposes of allocating complementary funds for road infrastructure in rural areas, which has led to the need to establish a protocol between MARD (MA NRDP and PARDF) and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration to verify the demarcation of funds.
  - The changing of eligibility criteria la nivelul măsurilor 312 și 313; these have been amended in order to include in the category of potential beneficiaries, natural persons who commit to get authorized at least as a physical person and operate as a micro-enterprise, by the date of signature of the financing contract.
  - De asemenea, more in general, there were changes in the selection criteria to prioritize relevant investments for the objectives of Axis 3.
  - Thus, in the case of M312, by changing the selection criteria it was intended to prioritize productive investments and medical and veterinary services.
  - Similarly, changes in the selection criteria of M322 planned to prioritize social investments and / or cultural activities implemented by partnerships between the local authority and an NGO and / or a cultural institution.
  - Regarding the evaluation criteria, the implementation of M 312 was characterized by a change in the approach for the evaluation of the projects which included also investments in renewable energies. Thus, following the EC audit, a key aspect emerging was the assessment
of the selection criteria for this type of investments by giving a score proportional to the share of the investment size.

- The financial structure of Axis has not undergone radical changes. The axis is the only one having preserved the same substantial financial allocation throughout the programming period. Measure 322 has constantly represented the predominant one, with a weight between 62.5% of the overall budget in the first version and over 68% in the last one. Instead, measure 313 has lost its initial incidence reducing its budget almost by a half at the end of the programming period compared to the initial planning. Measure 312 has slightly increased its importance, by becoming in the end the 2nd most important measure of the axis, in terms of financial allocation.

Specific findings on relevance for Axis 4

- The implementation of Axis 4 has been strongly characterized by an adaptive approach to the needs of the territory. While at the beginning the programme had the target of establishing and funding 80 LAGs/local development strategies (LDS), after the first selection process of the LDS, the interest showed by the local stakeholders convinced the programme authorities regarding the opportunity to select additional strategies and therefore LAGs. The budget allocation to the axis has been adapted accordingly.
- The Leader approach has been substantially used to support projects consistent with the specific objectives of Axis 1 and 3, but not necessarily competitive in the ordinary funding procedures of those axis. The importance of a local strategy backing up these project applications has been evident for the local development. Commitments similar to the ones on Axis 2 were not included in the local strategies, as the access to the measure of axis 2 was open enough to local beneficiaries, even without channeling their engagement through local strategies.
- In the overall scenario of an increasing budget, measures of the PA have basically preserved the initial respective incidence as planned, with the exception of Measures 412 – substantially eliminated – and 431 which suffered a very strong reduction in terms of budget;

Specific findings on relevance for Axis 5

- Axis 5 has been planned with a high level of relevance, considering the needs of the authorities involved in the management of NRDP and of the management system in general, and have maintained this high level of relevance throughout the full implementation period.
- Regarding the set-up and functioning of NRDN:
  - During the 2007-2013 period the activities for setting up and implementing the NRDN were totally externalized to a private provider through a public procurement procedure that in 2011 assigned a framework contract for the entire duration of the remaining programming period.
Between 2012 and 2014 all NRDN activities were stopped due to problems with the private providers in charge of the implementation of the NRDN. More precisely, at the end of step one, expenditures declared by the provider were not coherent with the initial budget plan. The budget for step 2 was agreed only after two years of negotiations between the provider and the MA.

- The implementation of NRDN was homogenous at the level of the different territories. Despite the delays in the implementation of step 2 of the contract, in only one year all activities initially planned (in 2011) were carried out with significant results in terms of involvement of the local stakeholders.

VIII.2.2. Analysis and comments regarding the programme effectiveness

This chapter illustrates the analysis of the programme effectiveness. The information presented in the chapter are mainly based on the analysis of the programme document, of the AIR and of the information collected through the interviews.

### Specific findings on effectiveness for Axis 1

**Procedural effectiveness.** In general terms, the analysis of the 2015 AIR shows that axis 1 is rather ineffective, because all measures have not yet finalized all the contracted projects. Delays in the finalization of the projects characterize in particular M 125, M 141 (until December 2015 3.025 projects have been declared finalized; additional to the 3.025 finalized projects there are another 15.216 projects which, at the of 2015, had all the 5 installments paid and should receive the notice of finalization and M 142 (less than half of the approved projects are finalized). For what concerns these last three measures additional elements have to be considered:

- In the case of M 125, it has to be considered that 150 projects have been transferred to submeasure 4.3 of NRDP 2014-2020. 16 projects have been financed in 2015 through PERE for the water saving.
- In the case of M 141: (1) The measure has a multiannual character, which has led to an extended timeframe for its implementation; (2) The very low effectiveness in terms of share of finalized projects out of contracted is even lower if the target of contracted project is considered (63.544) instead of the final target (52.768).
- In the case of M 142, NRDP 2007-2013 received 3 transferred projects from measure 3.2. of SAPARD and 22 projects have been transferred to NRDP 2014-2020 (submeasure 9.1.).

For what concerns the other measures, in the case of M 112, it is important to underline that through the transition procedure, 791 projects have been transferred to submeasure 6.1 of RNDP 2014-2020. Concerning M 121, the measure shows that 66% of the contracted projects have been finalized, however this low performance can be even worse if the target of the programme (version XVI, approved in November 2015)
(37.345) is taken into account instead of the final target (8.738) of contracted projects. In addition, by 2015, 20 projects have been contracted and have been financed through the European Plan for Economic Recovery (PERE) to address new challenges and needs. In particular 13 projects have been approved to invest in the production in milk products.

In the case of M 122 it is important to notice that the projects were concentrated only in four out of 8 regions of the country: South West Oltenia, West, North-West, Center.

Regarding M 123, the effectiveness at procedural level is affected by the fact that 60 projects have been transferred to submeasure 4.2 of NRDP 2014-2020. 10 projects have been financed in 2015 through PERE for the renewable energy (5 projects) and in the sector of milk products (4 projects) and 1 in the water saving (1 project).

**Financial effectiveness.** Although below the foreseen targets, the analysis of the relation between the actual payments and the planned financial allocation (made on the basis of the information provided by the 2015 AIR) depicts a more positive picture than the analysis of the procedural effectiveness illustrated above. As a matter of fact, for M 112, M 125 and M 141, actual payments represent almost 90% of the allocated budget for these measures. Legislative constraints were the main reasons behind the low financial and procedural performance of M 142 which has been reflected on the output indicator. Another ineffective measure is M 111, which, on the other hand, was rather close to the target procedural performance (see the previous bullet point). The main challenge of the implementation of M 111 has been the application of public procurement procedures.

In the case of M 121, a positive factor which increased the financial execution of the measure is the delivery of the measure of the guarantee scheme. The financial execution of the projects under PERE is 29.27%, lower than the general value of the measure.

Finally, the good performance recorded in financial effectiveness by measure 122 should be consired taking into account that the final allocation fo this measure was only slightly above the 1% of its allocation at the beginning of the programming period. Thus, even if compared to the final version of the budget, its effectiveness may be satisfactory, from a historical perspective the measure is not financially effective.

**Effectiveness at outputs level.** The achievement of the foreseen targets of the output indicators is quite heterogeneous across and within the measures. Almost half of the output indicators (7 out of 15) show achieved values in line with the targets while the others underperform. Looking at measure’s level, M 122 (the smallest measure in terms of budget allocation) appears as the most effective in terms of achievement of the targets set for the output indicators, with both output indicators presenting achieved values close to or above the planned targets. This is anyway only a technical phenomenon due to the fact that the output indicator for measure 122 were adapted together with the progressive reduction of its budget, which ended up to be around 1% of the initial one (according to version I of NRDP 2007-2013, approved in March 2008). In the case of the measures with the highest share of available budget (M 121, M 123, M 125) the picture is ambivalent. Measures 121 and 125 have generated higher investments than expected, while measure 123 reached the planned target of the output indicator (see the output indicator “Total volume of investments”). In the case
of M 121 this underperformance can be explained for the problems of co-financing encountered by farmers. Despite a low performance in terms of project finalization, M 112 and M 143 appear somewhat effective for the financial and output indicators regarding the farmers even if M 112 underperforms in terms of “Total volume of the investments”. Moreover, in what concerns M 111, it is important to underline that the objective of the measure was to train farmers, supporting beneficiaries of measures 112 and 141 and conducting activities of information and knowledge transfer and diffusion. However, no actions have been made to disseminate information and knowledge and the main efforts of the available resources and administrative capacity of the MA of RNDP have been devoted to support beneficiaries of M 112 and M 141 and to other activities (demanding public procurement procedures). This situation at least partially explains the non-achievement of the output indicators. As a matter of fact, the activities for farmers were almost at the target value of the output indicators in 2015, even if 2 out 36 signed contracts were not yet formally finalized, even though from a technical and financial point of view the activities were finalized.

**Effectiveness at results’ level.** Taking into account all the context and methodological considerations that have been express in chapter VIII.1.1, especially those related to the fact that result indicators have generally not been updated along with the financial remodulations of the programme - Axis n.1 does not reach the 2015 target values of almost all the result indicators, except those additional ones of measure 122, which proved to be effective in improving hectares on which forest structure was improved and implementing the related projects. The axis underperforms for both intangible results related to training and capacity building (M111) and for other more economic related indicators (R.2, R.3, R.4), while the axis is highly performing for improving the economic value of the forests (measure 122). Underperformance at the level of M 111 can be explained by the ineffectiveness in financial and output terms of the measure, while the success of measure 122 is due to the capacity of allocation of financial resources even with a lower number of projects than expected stimulating an amount of investments higher than expected. Measure 112, 121 and 125 do not meet the result indicators’ targets, because even if they are rather effective looking at the financial indicators, they fail in one of the output indicators. M112 does not succeed in producing the expected growth in value, while M121 reaches 8% of the target of farms and M 125 realizes only 37% of foreseen operations. Ineffectiveness in financial and output indicators explains the underperformance of M 123, M 141 and M 142 in reaching the result indicators’ targets. M 141, while being somewhat effective for financial and output indicators, its beneficiaries (semi-subsistence farms) fail in reaching the market and introducing new products and techniques. Considering the measure level, the effectiveness of the output indicators or the result indicators was evaluated against each indicator (if a measure is linked to several output or result indicators there is a differentiation per indicator assigned within the correspondent cell for effectiveness at output level or effectiveness at results level). More details are provided in Annex no. 10.

**Tabel no. 41 Evaluation of the effectiveness of measures within Axis 1 for each criteria (procedural, financial, outputs and results)**
**Financial effectiveness:** In general terms, Axis 2 is generally very effective in financial terms. The only exception is M 221 which, as a result of a progressive reduction of its budget of almost 99% from the initial version of NRDP (approved in March 2008), has a very limited financial weight (0.1% for the total public expenditure of Axis 2, according to the financial plan included in NRDP – version XVI, approved in November 2015). The 2015 Annual Implementation Report provides specific explanations on the implementation of the measures of the axis. In the case of M214, the main reasons motivating the reduction of access to agri-environment measure are related to modifications of the legal framework. The prohibition to have access to measure 10 of 2014-2020 if farmers have opted to access clause of revision, the adoption of new commitments of agri-environment and climate standards, specific requirements for land located at less than 600 m, and other modifications related to mowing.

**Effectiveness at outputs level:** the level of achievement of the targets set for the output indicators depict a quite heterogeneous picture, with almost half of the output indicators (5 out of 9) presenting achieved values in line with the initial targets and the others appearing as ineffective. Looking at measures’ level, M 211 and in particular M 215 appear as the most effective in terms of achievement of the targets set for the output indicators, with both presenting output indicators with achieved values in line or above the initial targets.

---

**Specific findings on effectiveness for Axis 2**

**Procedural effectiveness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M.</th>
<th>Procedural effectiveness</th>
<th>Financial effectiveness</th>
<th>Effectiveness at outputs level</th>
<th>Effectiveness at results level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>high performing</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>high performing</td>
<td>high performing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: specific analysis of monitoring data, programming documents, AIR 2015
In the case of M 212 and M 214, the picture is ambivalent, with both measures presenting one over performing and one underperforming indicator. For what concerns M 221, the low effectiveness in financial terms is confirmed by the analysis on the effectiveness at output level. Regarding the effectiveness of measures in terms of area employed, the analysis shows a heterogeneous situation, with effective measures (M 212, in particular, and M 211), and measures with limited or very limited effectiveness (M 214, M221).

**Effectiveness at results’ level.** Axis n.2 is rather effective in reaching the target values of the result indicators, with the exception of measure 221.

Considering the measure level, the effectiveness of the output indicators or the result indicators was evaluated against each indicator (if a measure is linked to several output or result indicators there is a differentiation per indicator assigned within the correspondent cell for effectiveness at output level or effectiveness at results level). More details are provided in Annex no. 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M.</th>
<th>Financial effectiveness</th>
<th>Effectiveness at outputs level</th>
<th>Effectiveness at results level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>211</td>
<td>high performing</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>high performing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>high performing</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: specific analysis of monitoring data, programming documents, AIR 2015

**Specific findings on effectiveness for Axis 3**

**Procedural effectiveness.** In general terms, according to data on the number of projects axis 3 appears rather ineffective. This is particularly true in the case of M 313 for which only 12% of the contracted projects have been finalized.

In the case of M 312, it is important to underline that by the end of 2015, 489 projects have been financed in 2015 through PERE for the renewable energy (with a financial execution of 44,32%).

**Financial effectiveness.** The low procedural performance of M 313 is confirmed by the analysis of the actual payments, 45% of the allocated budget (already reduced of almost 45% compared to NRDP initial version –
approved in March 2008) was spent. The analysis of the financial effectiveness also highlights the good performance of M 322. Despite the highest amount of budget allocated (EURO 1,5 billion) and 45% of contracted projects have been finalized, M 322 shows level of expenditures in line with the ambitious planned targets.

**Effectiveness at outputs' level.** The negative performance of M 313 is confirmed by the analysis at output level, even if it is interesting to notice that despite the limited number of projects finalized (only the 12% of the project contracted) the volume of the investments already generated by the measure is close to the 80% of the planned target. The level of achievement of the foreseen targets set for the output indicators confirms the good performance of M 322 with both output indicators in line or above the planned targets. In the case of this last measure, it is interesting to notice that: (1) Additional indicators have been included and with a rate of execution higher than 100%: Number of communes identified in the Master Plans for the infrastructure of water / wastewater, funded by FEAR, Number of communes that have not benefited from EU funding, Number of kilometers of road realized through the physical infrastructure component; (2) 26 projects have been financed under PERE for internet broadband.

Finally, the situation of M 312 appears very critical with only ¼ of the foreseen target. As clearly emerged during the interviews with the programme authorities, difficulties of beneficiaries in ensuring the co-financing has negatively affected the implementation of M 312. However, for what concerns this last measure, it is also important to underline that under PERE the indicator *Number of microenterprises* reveals high level of effectiveness (489 achieved value against the target of 155).

**Effectiveness at results' level.** The axis is in general ineffective for the result indicators except for “Increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses” in measure 312. Despite the effectiveness in both financial and output indicators, recording a limited effectiveness in terms of procedures, the measure 322 does not meet its own targets. This can be possibly explained by the limited procedural effectiveness and by the impact of external factors (e.g. economic crisis) reducing public resources and hindering the rural and infrastructural development.

Considering the measure level, the effectiveness of the output indicators or the result indicators was evaluated against each indicator (if a measure is linked to several output or result indicators there is a differentiation per indicator assigned within the correspondent cell for effectiveness at output level or effectiveness at results level). More details are provided in Annex no. 10.
Evaluation of the effectiveness of measures within Axis 3 for each criteria (procedural, financial, outputs and results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M.</th>
<th>Procedural effectiveness</th>
<th>Financial effectiveness</th>
<th>Effectiveness at outputs level</th>
<th>Effectiveness at results level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>312</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>322</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>high performing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: specific analysis of monitoring data, programming documents, AIR 2015

**Specific findings on effectiveness for Axis 4**

**Procedural effectiveness.** According to the data on the number of finalized projects, measures 411 and 413 had a low performance in terms of procedural effectiveness, as by the end of 2015 15% and 22% of the contracted projects had been finalized. Measure 431 has a very good level of effectiveness (nearly 100% completed projects). Measure 421 had the weakest performance in terms of procedural effectiveness, with only 8.7% completed projects out of the total contracted.

**Financial effectiveness** By considering that more than 80% of the entire axis budget is devoted to measure 41, the analysis reveals that axis 4 is generally characterized by a good level of effectiveness in financial terms. At the level of the different measures, it is also interesting to notice that the smallest measure in terms of financial allocation (M 421) is the one showing extremely low level of expenditures compared to the planned targets, being actual payments equal to 35% of the allocated resources.

**Effectiveness at outputs’ level.** The comparison of targets and achieved values at output level shows a quite heterogeneous picture, with almost half of the output indicators (4 out of 9) over-performing while the others slightly underperforming. It is in particular interesting to highlight that programme created approximately the double of LAGs initially planned (in the first version of the Programme, approved in March 2008), nevertheless it was not possible to achieve the planned targets in terms of (1) surface area covered by the LAG, (2) population covered by the LAG, (3) number of projects financed by the LAG. On the other hand, the table above also shows that the good performance of the LAGs in terms of mobilization of the local stakeholders (see “number of members in LAGs” and “private partners and NGOs”) as well as in their capacity to take part to project initiatives (“Number of LAGs participating in cooperation projects”). M 421 and 431 underperform in terms of number of projects and actions reflecting the low performance in terms of financial indicators, while M 421 confirms the good performance in terms of number of LAGs.
Effectiveness at results’ level. The comparison of target and achieved values shows ineffectiveness of the axis regarding the economic performance, while being effectiveness in training. As a matter of fact, the axis n.4 is not effective for all the common result indicators on jobs creation and for the additional result indicator regarding the development of innovative actions. On the other hand, for the other two additional indicators on training the axis n.4 is more effective.

Considering the measure level, the effectiveness of the output indicators or the result indicators was evaluated against each indicator (if a measure is linked to several output or result indicators there is a differentiation per indicator assigned within the correspondent cell for effectiveness at output level or effectiveness at results level). More details are provided in Annex no. 10.

Tabel no. 44 Evaluation of the effectiveness of measures within Axis 4 for each criteria (procedural, financial, outputs and results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M.</th>
<th>Procedural effectiveness</th>
<th>Financial effectiveness</th>
<th>Effectiveness at outputs level</th>
<th>Effectiveness at results level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>411</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>high performing</td>
<td>Ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>412</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>413</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>421</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>high performing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>431.1</td>
<td>high performing</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>somewhat effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>431.2</td>
<td>high performing</td>
<td>somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>high performing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>431.3</td>
<td>high performing</td>
<td>high performing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: specific analysis of monitoring data, programming documents, AIR 2015

Specific findings on effectiveness for Axis 5

Financial effectiveness: in general terms, from the financial perspective, the Technical Assistance axis appears effective, with almost the totality of the allocated resources allocated that have been spent by 2015.

Effectiveness at outputs’ level: the budget allocation for this axis is divided into two different type of projects: Technical Assistance projects for AFRI and Technical Assistance projects for MA which also includes NRDN. At the current stage respectively 91 and 68 projects have been realized, which, according to qualitative information collected through the interviews, is in line with the targets.
Further details on the financial effectiveness and on the effectiveness at output level are provided in the tables in annex 10.

**Effectiveness at results’ level:** Measure 511 has been one of the measures influenced by a significant reduction of the budget, compared to the initial financial allocation. At the beginning of the programming period, it had an allocation of 3,77% of the total budget of the programme, while at the end of the programming period, its financial allocation was 1,42% of the total budget. Under these circumstances, the evolution of the indicators during the programming period has been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>AIR 2012</th>
<th>AIR 2013</th>
<th>AIR 2014</th>
<th>AIR 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of IT equipments purchased</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>2.685</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of information and promotion materials regarding NRDP and EARDF</td>
<td>316.436</td>
<td>1.685.000</td>
<td>316.436</td>
<td>210.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of trained persons in activities financed through technical assistance</td>
<td>1.500</td>
<td>1.749</td>
<td>3.286</td>
<td>3.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of auxiliary staff paid through technical assistance</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: processing data included in the AIRs for NRDP 2007-2013

**VIII.2.3. Analysis and comments regarding the programme efficiency**

In line with the methodology described in chapter IV, programme efficiency has been assessed through the analyses of a combination of sources:

- desk research and administrative documents;
- interviews;
- case studies.

For the analysis of the efficiency of measures as planned, the benchmarking approach adopted has compared the financial plans and indicators of NRDP to 4 other RDP of other EU countries.

For the analysis of the efficiency of measure implementation, the analysis has been mainly founded on the unitary cost methodology, and supported then by findings from interviews with the MA and relevant stakeholders.

For the measures with investments targeting private beneficiaries, the efficiency of the use of the resources allocated to the project has been the object of a set of questions in the case studies. Still the case studies are the source of information for our assessment of the procedural/administrative efficiency of the programme.

**Specific findings on efficiency for Axis 1**
a) Efficiency of measures as planned.

- The comparison analysis performed considering NRDP and 4 other rural development Programmes of other EU countries (see Annex no. 4) shows that NRDP has been planned with a generally higher efficiency than the other Programmes, as the planned unitary costs for the achievement of indicators tend to be lower than in the other Programmes. For the specific of Axis 1, the analysis of a sample of 4 measures demonstrates that the general trend is confirmed, with the programme recording medium/high level of expected efficiency, being second only to France for measures 112 and 121.

b) Efficiency of the implementation of measures

- When considering the efficiency of the actual Programme implementation, things change quite deeply. The analysis of the efficiency at the level of output indicators (see Annex no. 11) shows that Axis 1, for 5 out 9 measures in total, has had higher unitary costs than expected.
- The differences are very significant in some cases. The cost of the support for a beneficiary of measure 121 was 10 times higher than expected. This is partly explained by the fact that the measure has been accessed by another category of projects/beneficiaries than the one that was expected, so this may produce relevant considerations related to the relevance, rather than efficiency.
- The same situation, but with less intensity, existed for measures 123 and 125, where the final unitary costs for financed enterprises/activities reached more than the double of the planned values.
- Measures 111, 112 and 122 show a minimum variation between the expected unitary cost and the real unitary cost of the output indicator, which means that these measures have achieved the planned level of efficiency.
- The measures of axis 1, with a higher efficiency than expected are measure 111 – for which the unitary cost of a person trained has been 42% lower than expected, and measure 142, for which the final unitary cost for a supported producer group was 31% lower than the expected cost.
- When considering the efficiency of the achievement of result indicators (see Annex no. 11), the situation of the Axis becomes more homogenous, as basically all the measures, with the only exception of 111, have had an efficiency lower than expected. The GVA increase as a result of the interventions has generally revealed higher cost. For an additional Euro of GVA, in the case of beneficiaries for measure 112, the expected cost was 2,25 euro and the final one 7,88 euro. For Measure 121, the expected cost was 0,38 Euro and the final one 2,32 Euro. The highest difference related to the unitary cost for the growth of GVA is reported for Measure 125 where an additional Euro was supposed to cost 24 Euro and it finally had a unitary cost of 4,041 euro.
- Also beside the costs related to the increase of GVA, there are other important differences: the unitary cost for obtaining, through measure 141, the entrance on the market of a semi-subsistence farm was about 16 times higher than expected.
- Considering that this was the first EARDF programming period in Romania, after joining the EU, an important part of these differences can be explained by an initial overestimation of indicator targets and the impossibility of updating, during the programme implementation, the target values assigned to
indicators depending on the evolution of project implementation, according to data provided by the monitoring system.

- Besides the overestimation of targets, the efficiency of axis 1 interventions appears to be affected also by some substantial factors. Interviews with the MA and with the relevant stakeholders have revealed the following possible factors that affected the efficiency of Axis 1:
  - The failure of the approach targeting semi-subsistence farms, as this kind of beneficiary has applied only very partially and the average dimensions of beneficiaries/projects has been much higher than expected;
  - The imperfection of the agricultural equipment market in Romania, with prices too high compared to other countries and possibly conditioned by the presence of NRDP itself; however, the opinion expressed by academics, does not seem to fully comply with the opinion of beneficiaries, as resulting from the case studies, which conclude that the Romanian market is similar to the ones from other EU countries
    a. The application strategy of the applicants (and their consultants) often aiming to ask for the maximum allowed values, beyond their real investment capacities and needs.
  - The perception of the beneficiaries of projects financed through Axis 1 which participated to the case-studies about the efficiency of the implementation of their project appears quite positive: for measure 112, 121 and 123 beneficiaries perceives the efficiency of their project implementation as high. For measure 122 the assessment decrease to medium. For the other measures the case studies did not provide relevant information on this aspect.

c) Procedural implementation efficiency

- The procedural efficiency of the axis has been assessed mainly based on the opinion of the beneficiaries, as emerging from the case studies (see Annex no. 9 for the detailed analysis). In general, beneficiaries have a « medium » perception of the efficiency of the procedures for project application, for all the measures, except for 142/143 where this perception decrease to a « low » level. The perception of efficiency for the project implementation procedures appears much different according to the measures: beneficiaries of measures 111, 122, 141 consider it « high », while those of measures 142/143 « low ». For the other measures beneficiaries perceive a « medium » level of efficiency.
Tabel no. 46 Synthesis of the efficiency assessment by measure – Axis 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Efficiency of measures</th>
<th>Efficiency of resources at project level(^{101})</th>
<th>Procedural efficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved/cost of outputs</td>
<td>Achieved/cost of results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>More efficient than expected</td>
<td>More efficient than expected</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>As efficient as expected</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>As efficient as expected</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>More efficient than expected</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration of monitoring data, programme documents, case study reports. For further details and the values at the basis of the assessments, please see annex 11

**Specific findings on efficiency for Axis 2**

\(a\) Efficiency of measures as planned.

- As the overall Programme in general, Axis 2 has been planned with a higher level of efficiency compared to programmes from other Member States. The compared analyses (see annex 4) shows that the Programme has the absolute best values being second only to France and only for the expected cost per Hectar of Measure 214. Probably this is due to generally lower standard values of subventions, established by Romania compared to other countries, within in the interval allowed by the EU Regulation

\(b\) Efficiency of the implementation of measures:

- The analysis of axis implementation efficiency, by reference to output indicators on number of supported beneficiaries, shows a more varied situation, with some measures which appear clearly more effective

\(^{101}\) Assessment limited to investment projects. It refers to the cost-effectiveness of the implementation at project level, putting in relationship the financial resources assigned with the project’s activities and output. It is based on the qualitative perception of beneficiaries as collected through case-studies
than what was foreseen (214, 215, 221) and others less effective (211, 212). In particular, measure 212 is the worst performing, with a unitary cost almost double than expected\textsuperscript{102}. 

- Considering the output and result indicators on employed surface, all measures present final values slightly more or less in line with the ones expected (measure 215 does not have a result indicator), except Measure 221, where an hectare of supported surface has a final cost of 10.400 euro against the 3.660 planned value.

- In the framework of an Axis fully implemented through a system of standard subventions/contributions differences between expected and achieved efficiency can be explained only by a mismatch between expected and achieved values of indicators. This is actually the case for Axis 2: the analysis of the dynamics of the implementation of the measures shows the following key explaining factors:
  a. standard subventions/contributions have been established for all the measures, but accompanied in almost all the cases by a system of degressivity, which reduces the amount of the funding depending on the size of the applicant firm; the presence of degressivity affects the possibility of estimating exactly the targets for outputs and result indicators, as the pattern of beneficiaries, according to their size, can not be easily estimated, especially in a country which is at its first real experience of a rural development programme. So, differences can be explained by the fact that the final pattern of beneficiaries has been different from the one expected, with small firms having probably been more than expected in the cases where measures have recorded a lower efficiency rate;
  b. standard subventions/contributions have been modified during the programming period, based on more updated estimation of the needs/disadvantages of the beneficiaries compared to the market. However, these modifications were not matched with a correspondent modification of the targets for outputs and result indicators. From that moment, the set of established targets could not adequately represent the way in which the budget of the measure would be spent.

c) Procedural implementation efficiency:

- The procedural efficiency of the axis has been assessed mainly based on the opinion of the beneficiaries, as emerging from the case studies (see annex 9 for the detailed analysis). In general, beneficiaries have a «medium» perception of the efficiency of the procedures for submission of the single payment request, for all the measures, except for 221 where this perception decrease to a «low» level. The perception of efficiency for the implementation procedures of the commitments appears instead more divided between an assessment of «medium» (valid for measures 211, 215 and 221) and «low» for measures 212 and 214, in this latest case mainly due to the paying procedures which are considered too long;

\textsuperscript{102} Measures 211, 212, 214, 215, 221 were implemented using a standard cost-based payment system established by specific calculation methodologies developed by specialized institutions as indicated in the EU regulations.
### Specific findings on efficiency for Axis 3

#### a) Efficiency of measures as planned.
- The international comparison (see annex 4) shows controversial results about the expected efficiency of Axis 3. While the unitary cost per expected beneficiary was relatively high (not the highest, anyway, compared to other countries), the expected cost per job created was dramatically lower compared to the Programmes from the other countries.

#### b) Efficiency of the implementation of measures:
- Analyzing the efficiency of the implementation of Axis 3, on the **output indicators**, the huge increase (almost 3 times) of the unitary cost of supporting a microenterprise under measure 312, compared to the expected one, is the most striking data, also considering that this value was not among the lowest at planning level.
- Other 2 measures respect more or less the forecast, although for Measure 322, the increase of 14% in terms of unitary cost drives this measure among the category of the “less efficient”.
- The analysis of the final cost of the **result indicators** that demonstrate a very low efficiency of the implementation of the Axis, in general the lowest of the whole NRDP.
- All the three measures show important differences between the final unitary costs of results and the expected one. In general, the cost of new jobs created (measures 312 and 313 proved to be beyond expectations, with values even 6 times higher in rural tourism sector - 313). However, the very high failure of the indicator on the tourist presence determines a final unit cost of more than 1.600 euros per visit, compared with the cost of 110 euro planned.
- The perception of the beneficiaries of projects within Axis 3 which participated to the case-studies about the efficiency of the implementation of their project (measures 312 and 313) appears quite positive: for measure 312, beneficiaries perceive the efficiency of their project implementation as high. For measure 313 the assessment decrease to medium.
c) Procedural implementation efficiency:

- The procedural efficiency of the axis has been assessed mainly based on the opinion of the beneficiaries, as emerging from the case studies (see annex 9 for detailed analysis). In general, beneficiaries have a "medium" perception of the efficiency of the procedures for project application, for all the measures, except for 322 where this perception increases to a "high" level. The perception of efficiency for the project implementation procedures appears even more positive, as it results "high" for beneficiaries of measures 312 and 322, and "medium" for beneficiaries of measure 313.

### Table 48 Synthesis of the efficiency assessment by measure, Axis 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Efficiency of measures</th>
<th>Efficiency of resources at project level</th>
<th>Procedural efficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>Achieved/cost of outputs</td>
<td>Achieved/cost of results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>312</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>As efficient as expected</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>322</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration of monitoring data, programme documents, case study reports. For further details and the values at the basis of the assessments, please see annex 11

### Specific findings on efficiency for Axis 4

a) Efficiency of measures as planned.

- The Comparative analysis (see annex 4) shows that, for what regards the planned efficiency, NRDP values for Axis 4 are in line with the other countries, with the exception of Hungary that on several indicators records very high expected unitary costs. Even in the case of this axis, for indicators related to jobs created NRDP has, by far, the most efficient value.

b) Efficiency of the implementation of measures:

- The analysis of the efficiency considering the output indicators confirms the conclusion of the analysis of output indicators from the effectiveness point of view. Axis 4 is efficient in terms of number of LAGs

---

103 Assessment limited to investment projects. It refers to the cost-effectiveness of the implementation at project level, putting in relationship the financial resources assigned with the project’s activities and output. It is based on the qualitative perception of beneficiaries as collected through case-studies.
created as well as in the capacity to mobilize local stakeholders while the costs for financing projects through the LAGs as well as for covering the targeted population and area is higher than expected.

- The analysis on the efficiency of result indicators shows a dramatic failure for the efficiency of the indicator related to jobs created. While, according to the planning, a new job was forecast every 16,600 euro of support, the implementation has shown that the cost of a new job through PA4 is more than 229,000 Euro.

- The perception of the beneficiaries of projects funded through Axis 4 which participated to the case-studies about the efficiency of the implementation of their projects appears indeed positive: for sub-measures 413, 421 and 431.1, beneficiaries perceive the efficiency of their project implementation as high. For sub-measure 411 the assessment decrease to medium.

c) Procedural implementation efficiency:

- The procedural efficiency of the Axis 4, assessed based on the opinion of beneficiaries, as emerging from the case studies (see annex 9 for detailed analysis), shows that, beneficiaries of sub-measures 411 and 421 and 431.1 perceive the efficiency of the procedures of project application as « High» while beneficiaries of Sub-Measures 413 and 431.2 perceive it as « medium ».

The perception of efficiency for the project implementation procedures appears as « high » only for sub-measures 421 and 431.1, while for sub-measures 411, 413 and 431.2 the assessment is only « medium ».

Tabel no. 49 Synthesis of the efficiency assessment by measure, Axis 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Efficiency of measures</th>
<th>Efficiency of resources at project level</th>
<th>Procedural efficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>Achieved/cost of outputs</td>
<td>Achieved/cost of results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Mediu</td>
<td>More efficient than expected</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>421</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>More efficient than expected</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>431.1</td>
<td>Mediu</td>
<td>Less efficient than expected</td>
<td>More efficient than expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>431.2</td>
<td>Mediu</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration of monitoring data, programme documents, case study reports. For further details and the values at the basis of the assessments, please see annex 11

---

104 Assessment limited to investment projects. It refers to the cost-effectiveness of the implementation at project level, putting in relationship the financial resources assigned with the project’s activities and output. It is based on the qualitative perception of beneficiaries as collected through case-studies.
EVALUAREA EX-POST A
PROGRAMULUI NAȚIONAL DE
DEZVOLTARE RURALĂ 2007-2013
Specific findings on efficiency for Axis 5

Given that at the programme level there were not set targets for additional result indicators related to this measure, efficiency can’t be measured as a ratio between the planned and the final unitary cost. Based on the interviews conducted with representatives of MA and the information contained in AIR 2015, the achieved values for the additional result indicators were in line with the identified needs, the measure efficiency being at least the one expected.

The lack of information regarding the initial targets limits the possibility to assess at which extent the objectives initially set have been or not effectively achieved. However, data provided in the tables above, show that despite the reduction of the resources allocated, axis 5 allowed to realize a significant number of actions for supporting the implementation of the programme. Information collected from the programme bodies in charge of the implementation of axis 5 (see in particular the focus group organized in March 2017) attest a general satisfaction of the programme bodies regarding the effectiveness of the projects financed by the TA. In particular, programme authorities stressed the importance of realization of the programme IT system which has represented a key step for improving the quality of the programme implementation. This was confirmed also by the stakeholders interviewed (interviews were carried out in November and December 2016) which have underlined that the setting up of the IT system has strongly improved the quality of the programme implementation.

Information collected through the various evaluation activities have also highlighted that the implementation of the 2007-2013 programme was characterised by various difficulties encompassing, according to several stakeholders, the capacity to inform about the opportunities offered by the programme was limited and the set-up of the programme monitoring system, which represented a serious challenge as demonstrated by the late implementation of ad hoc monitoring activities for quantifying specific result indicators. These examples suggest possible areas of future improvement to capitalise on the significant efforts put in place by the TA and the acquired experiences either through training (ie see the significant number of persons trained or the important number of informative actions carried out) or through the implementation of the programme which was completely new for both programme bodies and potential beneficiaries.
VIII.2.4. Analysis and comments regarding the programme impact

The evaluation has combined qualitative and quantitative techniques to measure the impact of the programme. In the case of Axis 2 the analysis has also relied in some specialized quantitative research previously committed by MADR.

Specific findings on impact for Axis 1

a) Findings coming from quantitative analysis

**M112:** The impact of the measure is estimated as a net effect through the variation of the proxy of VAB in the period 2010-2015 by using counterfactual methods based on propensity score matching and difference in difference. However, an additional estimate has been conducted for the variation of full time equivalent in the period 2009-2015. Both estimates are not statistically significant in terms of p-value with both t-test and Wilcoxon. Overall, beneficiaries compared to matched beneficiaries do not perform better in terms of increase of proxy VAB in the period 2010-2015 and full time equivalent employees’ variation in the period 2009-2015.

**M121:** The impact of the measure is estimated as a net effect through the variation of the proxy of VAB in the period 2010-2015 by using counterfactual methods based on propensity score matching and difference in difference. However, an additional estimate has been conducted for the variation of full time equivalent in the period 2009-2015. The estimate using proxy VAB is not statistically significant in terms of both t-test and Wilcoxon test. As a consequence, beneficiaries do not perform better than non-beneficiaries in terms of proxy VAB in the period 2010-2015. On the other hand, following a similar approach, the variation of full time equivalent employees in the beneficiaries in the period 2009-2015 is positive and statistically significant compared to the performance of non-beneficiaries.

**M123:** The impact of the measure is estimated as a net effect through the variation of the proxy of VAB in the period 2010-2015 by using counterfactual methods based on propensity score matching and difference in difference. However, an additional estimate has been conducted for the variation of full time equivalent in the period 2009-2015. Both estimates are statistically significant with Wilcoxon test (VAB variation is not significant with t-test) and produce positive results. Overall, beneficiaries performed better than non-beneficiaries in the period 2010-2015 for increase of proxy VAB and in the period 2010-2015 for the increase in full time equivalent employees.
Tabel no. 50 Overview of the results of the estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Result variable of the estimates</th>
<th>Mean value post matching</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Obs.</th>
<th>Net effect (B-NB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>d_gva_1510</td>
<td>67.797,25</td>
<td>not significant</td>
<td>62.964,30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>d_fte_1509</td>
<td>1,435</td>
<td>not significant</td>
<td>0,185</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>d_gva_1510</td>
<td>149.621,00</td>
<td>not significant</td>
<td>117.818,30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>d_fte_1509</td>
<td>5,870</td>
<td>significant</td>
<td>3,083</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>d_gva_1510</td>
<td>485.988,20</td>
<td>not significant</td>
<td>150.026,10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>d_fte_1509</td>
<td>20,140</td>
<td>significant</td>
<td>17,096</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: elaborations of the evaluation team.

Note 1: that the three last estimates show significant values at least for Wilcox test and thus net effects can be considered significant. Additional details are provided in annex

Note 2: d_gva and d_fte indicates the overtime variation. “Net Effect” gives the difference of the post matching values of beneficiaries “minus” non-beneficiaries. IT indicates the difference in difference net effect.

b) Findings coming from qualitative analysis

M111 shows a limited contribution to economic growth and labour productivity of the primary sector, food industry and forestry. In particular M111 contributed to capacity building (management and marketing skills, ecologic agriculture competences, support for beneficiaries of other measures like M112 and M141 with long term effects on labour productivity).

M112 shows an intermediate contribution to economic growth and labour productivity of the primary sector, food industry. More precisely, the measure contributed to capacity building (developing the managerial skills, through the use of business plan, and improved understanding of legislative framework, introducing new techniques in the agricultural holding and environmental compliance for the protection of crops and livestock).

M121 has largely contributed to economic growth and labour productivity of the primary sector, food industry, with the aforementioned limits on the achievement of the result indicators and on the net effects on the value added. Moreover, M121 has had a medium contribution to the reorganisation of the dairy sector and limited contribution to the provision of renewable energy and improved water management. In addition to what highlighted through the counterfactual analysis such as, M121 contributed to the following specific economic benefits for the beneficiaries: reduced production costs, considering the for the beneficiaries which had also used the guarantee scheme, this specific benefit has been even higher. Moreover, M121 has been useful for increasing partnership opportunities with local actors and firms, and capacity building (introducing new technologies, organic agriculture, new types of crops and new shelters for livestock).
M122 has had very limited impact on economic growth, while contributing to networking with other partners, capacity building (developing managerial and technological skills, improving forest management and production capacity).

M123 has largely contributed to economic growth and labour productivity of the primary sector, food industry, with the aforementioned limits on the achievement of the result indicators and on the net effects on the value added. In addition the measure has contributed to the provision of renewable energy and reorganisation of the diary sector and to capacity building (increasing administrative and management capacity, introducing new technologies); capacity to increase safety at work; supply of energy from renewable sources.

M125 has a limited contribution to the economic growth and labour productivity of the primary sector, food industry. Moreover, M121 has contributed to improving and developing infrastructure in forestry and improving the infrastructure for farmers and facilitating the re-use of abandoned land.

M141 has contributed to capacity building (awareness and knowledge of EU production and processing standards, acquiring business plan management skills, better understanding of the regulatory framework, introduction of new techniques), increased income of semi-subistence agricultural holdings.

M142 has contributed to capacity building (increasing administrative and management capacity) and improving understanding of the regulatory framework.

M143 has a limited contribution to the economic growth and labour productivity of the primary sector, food industry and forestry.

**Specific findings on impact for Axis 2**

**a) Findings coming from qualitative analysis**

Case study analysis and focus groups allow identify the following qualitative evidences on the impact.

Measures 211 and 212 had an important contribution to the objectives of maintaining biodiversity, maintenance of high nature value farmland, improving water quality and climate change. In particular the two measures contributed to capacity building: knowledge and skills gained related to Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions as well as concrete information on the application of these conditions.

Regarding the objective of maintaining biodiversity, the impact of the implementation of measures 211 and 212 is significantly lower than the one connected with the implementation of measure 214, the latter including a wider package of specific actions.
M 214 contributed to Capacity building (acquiring new land management techniques, eg promoting organic food products, using organic fertilizers, composting organic material) and preserving natural capital and improving its maintenance.

M 215 contributed to the following environmental and natural benefits: Improving animal welfare (living quarters, bedding, natural light), preventing specific pathologies and decreasing animal mortality, increasing labor productivity.

M 221 contributed to capacity building (improvement of forestry and forestry management capacity) natural and environmental benefits (the projects have funded deciduous planting, promoting and protecting biodiversity).

b) Analysis of the results of the studies contracted by MARD in order to identify the evolution of the indicators for High Nature Value farming systems and the bird populations index specific to the farmlands in Romania

- **Indicators of High Nature Value farming systems (HNV)**

The attempt to express the biological structure of the grasslands, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, in an understandable and extrapolated way is difficult; in the absence of a methodology to quantify the values, the study has proposed one which will be further developed in future studies. In order to solve this task, most European countries have sought for species of plants acting as indicator used to correlate with the total high wealth, following the compliance with certain characteristics: to be identifiable by farmers, to be constantly present in the habitats of the target agricultural land, to be sensitive to changes in agricultural management, etc. Besides the number of species, it is also important the representativeness of those species for certain meadows. Because of this, in the report it was preferred the collection of on-the-field data related only to certain species, considered by the experts as having indicative value.

In order to extrapolate the data obtained from the field to all the surface of permanent pasture in Romania, it was necessary the division of those lands according to the relevant environmental factors related to the specific wealth, from biological point of view, thus using sampling criteria which ensures the representativeness.

It was determined the optimal species list at national level. It is needed the presence of at least 5 species from the list for the detection of a good quality (minimum optimum) of the grasslands.

**Results:**

The grassland areas considered of good quality (*High Nature Value*) are approx. 1.3 million hectares out of the total of approx. 2.6 million hectares of permanent grassland. More precise, the High Nature Value grasslands constitute 48.95% from the studied permanent grassland – the quality reference indicator (% of good quality grassland estimated for each area is expressed in the study.

**Conclusions:**
The study was conducted, based on a sampling methodology that ensures national representativeness, only on one side of permanent grasslands in Romania, comprising 2.6 million hectares out of a total of 4.85 million hectares. Given the high number of locations tested, it is considered that the percentage of permanent grassland with high nature value (48.95%) has a high coefficient of statistics and scientific safety. Thus, based on this analysis, the total area of high nature value grasslands in Romania is estimated at 48.98% out of the total of 4.85628 million hectares, meaning 2,377,149 hectares.

The surface indicator from Romania with High Nature Value of type 1 (based on semi-natural vegetation) has a maximum value according to the estimates from the Rural Development Programme (approx. 3.8 million hectares).

- **The calculation of the current value of the indicator “Index of the bird populations specific to farmlands in Romania”**

The index provides information on population trends of bird species associated with the farmland and it is calculated and used as an indicator of biodiversity at European Union level. At European level, there were chosen 39 species of birds that are characteristic. In Romania, a monitoring of bird species associated with farmland, at national level, was properly conducted in 2010. The data obtained in 2010 are used as baselines for calculating the index values in 2015.

The index presented in this report was calculated using data from both the monitoring of the interim period (from the years 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014) and the data collected in 2015.

There were chosen 20 bird species associated with the farmland, representative for Romania. For two species (*Corvus frugilegus* and *Perdix perdix*), from reasons related to the ethology of the species, have not been evaluated the trends. Therefore the "Index of the bird populations specific to farmland in Romania" was calculated for 18 species.

**Result:**

The survey results indicate for 2010 (the reference year for calculating the population trends) a baseline value of 1.0 (100%) of the "Index of the bird populations specific to farmland in Romania". By 2015 it has been recalculated by following the same methodology, resulting an index of **0.97**, with only 3% less than in 2010, thus being achieved the objective to maintain the quality of environment.

**Conclusions:**

In relation to the potential effects of the implementation of NRDP 2007-2013, it is concluded that even though management requirements implemented in areas with agri-environment commitments were meant to protect the habitats favorable to these species, at this moment it is not possible to identify the factors generating national trends. The generating factors can be identified only for those species for which the trends recorded growth, decline or are stable, but it requires a separate study adapted to the environmental requirements specific to each species, different in terms of methodology, targeting both the monitoring of the habitats and the agricultural practices.
Specific findings on impact for Axis 3

a) Findings coming from quantitative analysis

**M312:** The impact of the measure is estimated as a net effect through the variation of the full time equivalent employees in the period 2009-2015 by using counterfactual methods based on propensity score matching and difference in difference. An additional estimate has been conducted for the variation of the GVA over the period 2010-2015. The estimate of FTE is statistically significant and shows positive results in terms of increase of full time equivalent employees of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries. Thus, beneficiaries perform better than comparable non-beneficiaries. On the other hand, there is no statistical significance of the better performance of non-beneficiaries in the GVA.

**M313:** The impact of the measure is estimated as a net effect through the variation of the full time equivalent employees in the period 2009-2015 by using counterfactual methods based on propensity score matching and difference in difference. An additional estimate has been conducted for the variation of the GVA over the period 2010-2015. The estimate is statistically significant and shows positive results in terms of increase of full time equivalent employees of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries. Thus, beneficiaries perform better than comparable non-beneficiaries. On the other hand, there is no statistical significance of the better performance of non-beneficiaries in the GVA.

**Tabel no. 51 Overview of the results of the estimates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Result variable of the estimates</th>
<th>Mean value post matching</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Obs.</th>
<th>Net effect (B-NB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>312</td>
<td>d_fte_1509</td>
<td>6.466</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>312</td>
<td>d_gva_1510</td>
<td>71.307,49</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>-36.409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313</td>
<td>d_fte_1509</td>
<td>5.865</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313</td>
<td>d_gva_1510</td>
<td>-2465,07</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>-114,853</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: elaborations of the evaluation team

Note: d_gva and d_fte indicates the overtime variation. “Net Effect” gives the difference of the post matching values of beneficiaries “minus” non-beneficiaries. IT indicates the difference in difference net effect. The “*” indicates the level of significance.

b) Findings coming from qualitative analysis

Case study analysis and focus groups allow identify the following qualitative evidences on the impact:

- The Axis 3 measures aim to improve the quality of life in rural areas, both by creating jobs and increasing farmers' incomes, by diversifying the rural economy and by improving local services and harnessing environmental resources along with cultural heritage. Axis 3 had a
strongly and directly contribution for the economic growth and creation of new jobs in the non-agricultural sector. However, axis 3 also had indirectly contributed to the competitiveness of the primary’s sector by providing opportunities to new jobs and also to the preservation of cultural heritage in rural areas. All the measures are strongly connected because measure 322 has facilitated the implementation of measures 312 and 313, through the creation of basic infrastructure.

- Measure 312 was elaborated to balance the situation of the three sectors at the national economy level, characterized by an excess of workers in agricultural sector, especially in the subsistence and semi-subsistence agriculture, which affects the competitiveness of the agricultural sector.

M 312 has contributed to: diversification of the rural economy (eg development of services for the population or the production of energy from renewable sources, which would not have been possible in the absence of the NRDP); creating jobs; capacity building (cooperation, new approaches).

M 313 has contributed to: diversification of tourism activities (eg leisure activities, investment for accommodation and small facilities), increase of rural tourism (new services or stable / increased tourist flows), capacity building.

M 322 has contributed to: permanence / stability of residents in areas served by new infrastructure; improving infrastructure.

**Specific findings on impact for Axis 4**

**a) Findings coming from quantitative analysis**

**M411**: The impact of the measure is estimated as a net effect through the variation of the full time equivalent employees in the period 2009-2015 and in the period 2012-2015 by using counterfactual methods based on propensity score matching and difference in difference. The two variations have been considered for the following reasons: 2009-2015 variation ensures comparability with other measures, while 2012-2015 is more relevant because most project applications have been submitted in 2012. Two additional estimates related to the GVA have been conducted using the same methodology for the variation over the period 2010-2015. The estimate is statistically significant in terms of p-value with both tests and shows positive results in terms of full time equivalent employees in the period 2009-2015 and in 2012-2015. Since the variation in the period 2012-2015 is higher than in all period 2009-2015, it is clear the added value of the measure in creating employment benefits. Similar positive results are related to the variation of the GVA over the two period assessed 2010-2015 and 2012-2015.

**M413**: The impact of the measure is estimated as a net effect through the variation of the full time equivalent employees in the period 2009-2015 and in the period 2012-2015 by using counterfactual methods based on
propensity score matching and difference in difference. The two variations have been considered for the following reasons: 2009-2015 variation ensures comparability with other measures, while 2012-2015 is more relevant because most project applications have been submitted in 2012. Two additional estimates related to the GVA have been conducted using the same methodology for the variation over the period 2010-2015. The estimate is statistically significant in terms of p-value with both tests and shows positive results in terms of full time equivalent employees in the period 2012-2015, while it is not statistically significant in 2009-2015. Since the variation in the period 2012-2015 is higher than in all period 2009-2015, it is clear the added value of the measure in creating employment benefits. As regards the GVA, results show the absence of statistical significance of the estimate in both period considered.

### Tabel no. 52 Overview of the results of the estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Result variable of the estimates</th>
<th>Mean value post matching</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Obs.</th>
<th>Net effect (B-NB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>411</td>
<td>d_fte_1509</td>
<td>2,517</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1,006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>411</td>
<td>d_fte_1512</td>
<td>1,542</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>411</td>
<td>d_gva_1510</td>
<td>344.146,6</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>237.594,80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>411</td>
<td>d_gva_1512</td>
<td>58.248,18</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>24.875,83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>413</td>
<td>d_fte_1509</td>
<td>1,750</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>413</td>
<td>d_fte_1512</td>
<td>2353</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>413</td>
<td>d_gva_1510</td>
<td>87895,16</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35.598,53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>413</td>
<td>d_gva_1512</td>
<td>50.260,09</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>-24.803,43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: elaborations of the evaluation team

Note: d_gva and d_fte indicates the overtime variation. “Net Effect” gives the difference of the post matching values of beneficiaries “minus” non-beneficiaries. IT indicates the difference in difference net effect. The “**” indicates the level of significance.

### b) Findings coming from qualitative analysis

Axis 4 has contributed to the economic development of rural areas by stimulating and supporting specific activities of the primary sector and non-agricultural sector. LEADER approach allowed the consolidation of territorial coherence and implementation of integrated actions, aspects that generated the diversification and development rural economy, in the benefit of communities. Axis 4 played a significant role in improving civil society participation in joint initiatives for local development and stimulating innovative approaches to rural areas by finding new solutions to traditional problems, the LAG operation itself could being considered a novelty for rural areas.

In particular sub-measure 411 has contributed to promote cooperation with the LAG and creating jobs, while sub-measure 413 also diversified the rural economy.
Measure 421 has contributed to cooperation between LAGs at interregional level and promotion of joint initiatives / events.
Measure 431 has contributed to the LAG’s capacity to involve local actors and training activities.

**Specific findings on impact for Axis 5**

*a) Findings coming from qualitative analysis*

Measure 511 had a significantly positive impact on the program’s management, monitoring and control capacity. The conclusions drawn from the focus groups show that the projects implemented through the technical assistance measure have contributed to:

- ensuring the effective information of potential applicants and the ability to draw up calls for projects on time and in accordance with European regulations and national legislation.
- the capacity to adopt a procedure for the evaluation of project proposals in line with European regulations.
- timely realization of the contracting and payment stage for the beneficiaries in order to ensure them the necessary funds for the implementation of the activities.
- the ability to set up a quality IT monitoring system and ensure efficiency in monitoring the funded measures and the functioning of the IT system.

**VIII.2.5. Analysis and comments regarding environmental aspects**

In what concerns the environmental aspects of Axis 1 of the NRDP, the findings coming from the analysis of qualitative data collected show that the environmental legislation, the imposed deadlines and documents required for obtaining the environmental permit, have generated some delays in the submission of the projects.

The solutions adopted during the implementation period in relation to the identified problem were:

- signing cooperation protocols for 2007-2013, between the NRDP MA, SOP Environment MA, PAIA and the National Environmental Guard, AFRI and NAEP, in order to facilitate the transfer of information between institutions;
- in the situation in which there were problems with obtaining the environmental permit/agreement, it was preferred the solution of relocating the investment (eg relocation of certain forest roads).

In what concerns the effectiveness of the program, there have been identified gaps in terms of environmental legislation on the procedure for environmental assessment of the projects; the solution was its adaptation by MMAP, in the sense of reducing the procedural terms, see the Decision no. 445/2009 regarding the impact assessment of certain public and private projects on the environment and the subsequent legislation Order.
No. 135/76/84/1284 of 10 February 2010 related to the approving of the methodology for the application of environmental impact assessment for public and private projects, as well as the Order no. 19 of 13 January 2010 for approving the methodological guide on proper assessment of the potential effects of plans or projects on the protected natural areas of community interest.

In can be concluded that, from the perspective of medium and long terms objectives, the environmental measures need time to show the impact larger than a programming period. The net effects of the program measure that aimed the quality and the conservation of the environment are difficult to be quantified at the national level, especially because the areas of intervention are not exclusive for the investments financed by the NRDP.

In order to realize the environmental impact analysis of the implementation of NRDP 2007-2013, there were analyzed the potential environmental impacts of the measures related to Axis 1-4, according to the Environmental Report carried out for the NRDP 2007-2013.

The analysis carried out was mainly focused on the assessment of the potential negative environmental effects of the Program, the assessment of potential positive effects being regarded as secondary, for the following reasons:

1. according to the general and specific objectives, the NRDP was developed and implemented to ensure the qualitative growth of the environmental factors, therefore it is believed that through the implementation of NRDP, the effects on the environmental objectives considered positive before the implementation of the program remained the same;
2. the NRDP comply with the environmental standards imposed at the EC level, therefore the effects on the environmental objectives considered positive have retained the same trend;
3. from the perspective of the impact on the environmental factors it is crucial to examine how the implementation of the NRDP has diminished/improved the effects initially identified as negative;
4. the impacts associated with the axes 2 and 4 are fully positive considering the nature of the funding granted through its specific measures.

Tabel no. 53 The negative effects of implementing the measures of Axis 1 of the NRDP on the analyzed environmental objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr. crt.</th>
<th>Relevant environmental objectives</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Habitat conservation</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Maintaining the HNV</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The absorption and the storage of GHG</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The decrease of GHG emissions</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The decrease of air emissions</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Environmental Report for NRDP 2007-2013
Tabel no. 54 The negative effects of the implementation of the measures related to Axis 3 of the NRDP on the analyzed environmental objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr. crt.</th>
<th>Relevant environmental objectives</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Reducing waste generation</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The decrease of GHG emissions</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The decrease of air emissions</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Environmental Report for NRDP 2007-2013

Tabel no. 55 The negative cumulative effects of the implementation of measures related to the 4 axes of the NRDP for the analyzed environmental objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr. crt.</th>
<th>Relevant environmental objectives</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Reducing waste generation</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Habitat conservation</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Maintaining the HNV</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The absorption and the storage of GHG</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The decrease of GHG emissions</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The decrease of air emissions</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Environmental Report for NRDP 2007-2013

Tabel no. 56 The analysis of the scores awarded according to the Environmental Report for the NRDP 2007-2013

Conclusions according to the Environmental Report of NRDP 2007-2013

1. Reducing the waste generation - the impact on this objective is mostly positive and it is due to the support on one hand of the activities of improving the technologies, of the investments for a better management of the waste at the enterprise level, but also of the investments in platforms for waste storage. The statistical data collected and analyzed by the MMAP through the Annual Report on the Environmental Situation in Romania 2014 shows a decreasing trend in the volumes of waste generated at national level. Although the statistical data related to the implementation of NRDP measures cannot be taken from the general synthesis, it can be said that the effects of NRDP are notable and positive RDP.

2. Habitat conservation - the cumulative effect of the implementation of the NRDP is mostly positive. The limitation of the human pressure, the expansion of the forested areas, the maintaining of the habitats of species associated It appears, according to the study results on calculating the current value of the indicator "Index of the bird populations specific in farmland in Romania", that the indicator has decreased.

Conclusions according to the ex-post collected data
Conclusions according to the Environmental Report of NRDP 2007-2013

- To agricultural crops represent important elements to ensure the favorable conservation status of the wildlife. The negative effect was attributed to the infrastructure works that can expand the habitat fragmentation process. This negative effect can be reduced by considering those aspects in the projections of the works. It should also be remembered that through this objective there are discussed the potential cross-borderer positive effects.

Conclusions according to the ex-post collected data

- From 1 to 0.97. The decline is minor, being framed within the normal accepted variation. It should also be noted that, in relation to the potential effects of implementing the NRDP 2007-2013, it is not possible to identify the factors generating the population trends of the targeted bird species registered at the national level. However, it can be concluded that, considering the national economic growth, during the implementation of the RDP, the pressure of economic activities was countered by the enforcement of environmental measures, which led to the maintenance of environmental parameters.

3. Maintaining the HNV - The program will have a positive impact on maintaining the natural value of the farmland by ensuring their permanent use and compensation for losses due to application of agricultural production methods compatible with the environmental protection.

- It appears, according to the study results, HNV indicators that the area (million hectares) was relatively constant (according to the specialized study elaborated at the MA NRDP level, there was registered a minor decrease from 2.4 - 2007 to 2.37 – 2015). When analyzing the evolution of HNV surface, there should be taken into consideration that NRDP effects are present and favorable (ie maintaining HNV, changes in HNV areas) but the indicator evolution can’t be exclusively reported to the effects generated by the programme implementation, the implementation period being relatively short (7 years) in relation to the time needed for the occurrence and monitoring of environmental factors.

4. The GHG absorption and storage – the NRDP will make an important contribution also to the achievement of this relevant environmental objective, by supporting the extension and restoration of forest areas.

- As a result of analyzing the annual data of the implementation of NRDP, it is shown that the absorption for the expansion and restoration of the forested areas was a low rate, the achieving percentage being of 5.71%. It can be concluded that the impact on the GHG absorption and storage was minor.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusions according to the Environmental Report of NRDP 2007-2013</th>
<th>Conclusions according to the ex-post collected data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. The decrease of the GHG emissions – for this environmental goal was quantified an important component with negative impact. The benefits (positive impact) of the implementation of the program are more consistent and with long-term effects.</td>
<td>According to the Eurostat reports, it is confirmed a decrease in the GHG emissions at the national level; this is a hardly noticeable decrease but the positive impact of the NRDP implementation can be measured only over a long period of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. This is the relevant environmental objective which is the most &quot;affected&quot; by the implementation of the program. The cumulative negative value of the impact is due to the high volume of construction works (mostly infrastructure), but also to the purchase of machines. There are two important elements related to the assessment of the negative impact on the atmosphere:</td>
<td>The statistical data collected and analyzed by MMAP through the Annual Report on the Environmental Situation in Romania 2014 show a decreasing trend of the quantities of atmospheric emissions generated at national level. Although the statistical data related to the implementation of the measures in the RDP can not be extracted from the general synthesis, it can be said that the effects of the NRDP are notable and positive, therefore the previous premise of the Environmental Report according to which the emissions from the works will have a local character (in the area of the investment) and a low generation in time (during the realization of the construction works) can be validated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The emissions generated from these works will have a local character (at the level of the investment area) and a low generation in time (during the realization of the construction works);</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• On the long-term, the effect of realizing the infrastructure works on the quality of the ambient air will be positive, by reducing the emissions characteristic of the exhaust gases and of the particles ones related to the improvement of the traffic conditions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Environmental Report for NRDP 2007-2013, processed data collected through the ex-post evaluation activities of NRDP 2007-2013

Following the analysis of the data available after the implementation of the NRDP 2007-2013, it can be performed a reassessment of the scores awarded according to the Environmental Report for the NRDP 2007-2013.
Tabel no. 57 The negative cumulative effects of the implementation of measures related to the 4 axes of the NRDP analyzed environmental objectives reevaluated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr. crt.</th>
<th>Relevant environmental objectives</th>
<th>Initial score</th>
<th>Ex-post score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Reducing waste generation</td>
<td>- 1</td>
<td>- 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Habitat conservation</td>
<td>- 1</td>
<td>- 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Maintaining the HNV</td>
<td>- 1</td>
<td>- 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The absorption and the storage of GHG</td>
<td>- 1</td>
<td>- 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The decrease of GHG emissions</td>
<td>- 2</td>
<td>- 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The decrease of air emissions</td>
<td>- 3</td>
<td>- 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Environmental Report for NRDP 2007-2013, processed data collected through the ex-post evaluation activities of NRDP 2007-2013

VIII.3. Answers to evaluation questions

The chapter is structured in two sections:

a) Common evaluation questions: 22 common evaluation questions (set out in the Guide for the ex post evaluation of rural development programmes for the 2007-2013 period developed by the European Commission together with the European Network for Rural Development Evaluation),

b) Specific evaluation questions: 2 specific evaluation questions (formulated by the MA NRDP), 23 evaluation questions regarding the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results, impact, success and failure factors of the programme (recommended in the Guide for the ex post evaluation of rural development programmes 2007-2013 elaborated by the European Commission together with the European Network for Rural Development Evaluation); 5 specific evaluation questions are related to the evaluation of the implementation of the guarantee scheme financed by the NRDP 2007-2013. Based on these, there were formulated a series of conclusions and recommendations on the implementation of the NRDP.
VIII.3.1. Common evaluation questions

**EQ (c) 1 (impact). To what extent has the RDP contributed to the growth of the whole rural economy??**

NRDP contributed to increase the Romanian rural economy in particular through the investments made under axes 1, 3 and 4.

Axis 1 of the NRDP addressed the need to overcome subsistence levels of productivity in both the agriculture and forestry sectors by pursuing the challenging objective of improving the competitiveness of rural areas, through a series of complementary measures aiming to increase farmers knowledge and skills (M111), modernizing agricultural holdings (M121) as well as increasing afforestation and promoting the sustainable management of forests (M122). Moreover, through M 112, this Axis addressed the need to renew the generation of farm managers in order to improve the management of productive activities and to increase the incomes of young farmers. The axis also aimed at increasing the competitiveness of food industry and forestry products, especially through the introduction of innovation and the adaptation of enterprises to EU standards (M123). Competitiveness also implies an efficient use of agricultural lands and forests based on the new property structure (M125), including new infrastructures and well-organized agricultural holdings (M141) and workforce, through the promotion of organized groups of producers’ (M142).

Axis 3 faced the challenge to decrease depopulation rates and to improve the quality of life in rural areas by both increasing territorial attractiveness and creating job opportunities. Measures under PA 3 aimed at improving farmers’ incomes, through the diversification of rural economy, the creation of new local services and the valorization of environmental resources and cultural heritage. Measure 312 had the specific objective to better the quality of life, through the creation of micro business and the increase of the added value of non-agricultural activities. On the other hand, Measure 313 promoted tourism as a major growth sector in many rural areas by improving the overall attractiveness of the countryside, while Measure 322 supported the renovation of buildings as well as of rural roads and the management of environmental resources (i.e. parks, mountain paths, etc.).

Axis 4 aimed at developing rural areas’ potentials through the LEADER Approach, which promoted area based local development strategies to be implemented by public-private partnerships, organized in Local Action Groups (LAGs, hereinafter), through a bottom up approach.

As previously underlined, all three axes offered an important contribution for increasing the Romanian rural economy. The analysis of the programme indicators and the counterfactual analysis show that the programme played a key role in increasing the competitiveness of the primary and non-primary sector, in particular:

- Axis 1, through Measures 121 and 123 contributed to increasing the gross value added in primary sector. Moreover, the counterfactual analysis of M 123 shows a net effect of the measure: beneficiaries performed better than similar (matched) beneficiaries in the period 2010-2015 for the
increase in gross value added. In what concerns labour productivity, there has been a general increase in agricultural sector, forestry sector and food industry, with the agricultural sector showing the best performance in terms of annual growth rate. Since labour productivity represents the ratio between gross value added and the workforce, its fluctuations may depend on economic and employment dynamics. In the period 2007-2015, in the agricultural sector, the labour productivity growth largely depends on the decrease of employees (in annual working units). In the forestry sector, both gross value added and number of employees (in annual working units) increased in the period 2008-2013, but gross value added had a double growth rate compared to the number of employees.

- Axis n.3 has created 151 million euro of additional gross value added in non-agricultural sector, largely due to M312, directly contributing to diversification of the rural economy, through the creation and development of micro-enterprises and partially the development of tourism sector. The results of the counterfactual analysis did not provide statistically significant information demonstrating a differentiated evolution of GVA over the period 2010-2015 at the level of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

- Axis n.4 offered an important contribution to make the rural areas more dynamic and more keen to take advantages of the opportunities offered by the programme. Moreover, the counterfactual analysis shows that M 411 and 413 had directly contributed to the job creation in the rural areas. On average, considering the period 2010-2015, measure 411 generated 237,000 lei of additional GVA at the level of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries.

**EQ (c) 2 (impact). To what extent has the RDP contributed to employment creation?**

The programme has contributed directly or indirectly to job creation or to better and safer jobs, by investing in a better quality of life and environment, promoting economic and productivity growth and in particular in axis 3 and 4, through M312, M313, M411 and M413. Most of new jobs were created thanks to M312 and M313 and regarded males and females >25 years old. M313 is the measure creating more jobs in relative terms for females (61% of the jobs are for female) and for young people (under 25 years representing 20% of new jobs. However in absolute terms, M312 has created more jobs for young people (890) and females (2034). Agritourism is the sector employing more females and young people in absolute terms among the industries detailed in the report.

However, the programme was not effective in reaching the targets of the common result indicators (number of jobs created) and thus was less impactful than expected in the programming phase. Despite the gross values of jobs created are lower than expected, counterfactual analysis shows the capacity of the programme to create net benefits in terms of jobs through M312, M313, M411, M413. illustrating the contribution of the programme to the implementation of local development strategy and to diversification of rural economy. Comparing beneficiaries with non-beneficiaries, beneficiaries of both M312 and M313 perform better in jobs’ creation in the period 2009-2015. Similarly, estimates show the net effect in terms of job creation of both measure 411 and 413 in the period 2012-2015 when most projects have been initiated and finalised.
EQ (c) 3 (result). To what extent has the NRDP contributed to protect and enhance natural resources and landscape including, biodiversity and HNV farming and forestry?

At global evaluation level, the National Rural Development Program 2007 - 2013, as a whole, has enabled maintaining and even improving the favorable environment for future generations in a fairly balanced manner and, through its implementation, it didn’t have a significant negative impact on the environment. This is confirmed by the majority of positive evaluations related to the effects of the measures within Axis 1, 2, 3 and 4. The strong positive effects have been identified especially for the measures within Axis 2.

Measures 211 and 212 - have contributed to maintaining biodiversity and landscape in the designated areas. The targets for output and result indicators were generally reached or exceeded, the objectives planned at the level of measures being largely achieved. Analysis of case studies and interviews highlight an increased interest of beneficiaries, especially for measure 211.

For these measures, a good and even very good performance was achieved, with the achieved value of indicators representing over 96% of the initially estimated values. For the area where the abandonment of agricultural activities is avoided, the indicator has a value of 4.17 mil Ha, which represents 96.64% of the estimated value of 4.32 mil Ha. For the area contributing to the maintenance of biodiversity and HNV areas, the indicator has a value of 4.17 mil Ha, which represents 96,64% of the estimated value of 4,32 mil Ha. For the area contributing to the maintenance and improvement of soil quality, the indicator has a value of 0.52 mil Ha, which represents 113,44% of the estimated value of 0,46 mil Ha. Another aspect regarding the good performance of these measures may be that the allocation of the whole Axis 2 ultimately had a weight of 34%, although initially it was only 23%. Also, the increase in allocation for Measure 211 compensated for the decrease in Measure 212.

Measure 214 - This measure has had significant positive effects on biodiversity and landscape through all the packages it included. Thus the area of HNV (million hectares) was relatively constant (according to the specialty survey carried out at the level of the MA NRDP, there was a minor decrease from 2,4 - 2007 to 2,37 - 2015). In analyzing the evolution of the HNV area, it must be considered that the effects of NRDP are present and favorable (maintaining HNV, respectively, changes in HNV areas), but the evolution at the level of the indicator can not be reported exclusively to the effects generated by the program implementation, the implementation period being relatively short (7 years) in relation to the time required for the manifestation and monitoring of the environmental factors.

Regarding the evolution of the impact indicators, according to the results of the study on the calculation of the current value of the indicator "Bird Index for agricultural land in Romania", the level of indicator has decreased from 1 (in 2010) to 0,97 (in 2015); the decrease is minor and possibly due to short-term negative effects; also the falling value of the index – 0,97 with only 3% decreasing units as compared to 2010 indicates the achievement of the planned objectives - to maintain the quality of the environment;
The calculated value of the bird population index for the period 2010-2015 according to the calculations made at the level of the specific study contracted by the MA NRDP may be attributed mainly to the analysis of a relatively short statistical data series (its monitoring will be continued during the 2014-2020 programming period), as it is not possible to identify specific generating factors determined by the implementation of NRDP which influence the evolution of the total number of birds, considering the targeted species. Regarding the potential effects of the implementation of NRDP 2007-2013, the management requirements formulated at the level of the Program aimed at maintaining the habitat characteristic of the bird species specific to the agricultural lands in Romania, in order to preserve the respective species.

This measure has generally achieved a good performance, which can be demonstrated by the significant allocation under Axis 2 (constantly over 40%). It is also worth mentioning that the whole of Axis 2 benefited from an increase in the financial allocation from 23% to 34%.

Measure 215 had an insignificant contribution to maintaining biodiversity or influencing the landscape mainly due to the objectives of this measure - also the number of applications at the level of the measure was relatively low, therefore the effects on the two factors are insignificant. It should be noted that subpackage 4a - correction of the level of nitrites and nitrates in the water had increased positive effects on the water environmental factor.

Measure 221 - This measure had a very poor performance. An important explanation may be the massive decrease in the financial allocation, which has come to account for only 1.4% of the initial allocation (a reduction of EUR 225 million). Under these conditions, the value of the associated result indicator was only 50 ha, which represents only 5.71% of the estimated value of the indicator - 875 ha.

**EQ (c) 4 (impact). To what extent has NRDP contributed to the supply of renewable energy?**

NRDP had a limited contribution to the provision of renewable energy. M121 contributed to obtaining and using energy from renewable sources, while some projects in M123 to increasing renewable energy production. In the case of M121, the indicator "Number of holdings that produce and use renewable energy" reached the performance rate of 47.86%, the number of the holdings being of 179 out of 374. In this regard, PERE in 2015 has financed 5 projects for renewable energy. Axis 2 contributes to the conservation of biodiversity, while Axis 3 to increasing the attractiveness of rural areas. In the case of M 312, it is important to underline that by the end of 2015, 489 projects have been financed in 2015 through EERP for the renewable energy (with a financial execution of 44.32%). Regarding the evaluation criteria, the implementation of M 312 was characterized by a change in the approach for the evaluation of the projects which included also investments in renewable energies. Overall, all together, measures 311, 312, 313 and LEADER has created 13 jobs in renewable energy production, 3 for males under 25, 8 for males older than 25 years and 3 for females older than 25 years. This was due mainly to the contribution of M312, which supported microenterprises for producing renewable energy, thanks to the introduction of ad hoc selection criteria as an opportunity to diversify rural economy.
EQ (c) 5 (result). To what extent has the NRDP contributed to improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector?

Axis 1 of the NRDP addresses the need to overcome subsistence levels of productivity in both the agriculture and forestry sectors by pursuing the challenging objective of improving the competitiveness of rural areas, through a series of complementary Measures aiming to increase farmers knowledge and skills (M111) as a means for ensuring productions quality and introducing innovation (organization, technologies, procedures and products), modernizing agricultural holdings (M121) as well as increasing afforestation and promoting the sustainable management of forests (M122). Moreover, through M 112, this PA addresses the need to renew the generation of farm managers in order to improve the management of productive activities and to increase the incomes of young farmers. The PA also aims at increasing the competitiveness of food industry and forestry products, especially through the introduction of innovation and the adaptation of enterprises to EU standards (M123). Competitiveness also implies an efficient use of agricultural lands and forests based on the new property structure (M125), including new infrastructures and well-organized agricultural holdings (M141) and workforce, through the promotion of organized groups of producers’ (M142) and by improving general management at farm level (M143).

The analysis of the result indicators shows that axis n.1 does not reach the 2015 target values of almost all the result indicators, except those additional ones of measure 122, which proved to be effective in improving hectares on which forest structure was improved and implementing the related projects, but in a scenario of massive financial reduction of the measure compared to the targets foreseen at the beginning of the programming period.

The axis performances were lower compared to estimation from the programme (version XVI, approved in November 2015), even though for several outcome indicators the target values were reduced over the programming period. Moreover, the implementation of the axis was negatively influenced by external factors such as the economic crisis, the limited beneficiaries’ financial capacity, the credit market failure do not ensuring the necessary collaterals to NRDP beneficiaries and to SMEs in rural areas, the low quality of consultancy services, the foreign markets crisis and the modification in legislation. Only Measure 125 experienced an increase of budget, but its net effects could not be calculated because of methodological limits, as it is better explained in the following analysis per Measure:

However, in spite of the budget reductions and of the external factors hindering the implementation, axis n.1 has contributed to increasing the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector by increasing the gross value added and labour productivity of both sectors. Thus, even if the result indicator R.3 didn’t reach the expected target values, it shows an increase in the in the gross value added of 655 million euro mainly due to the contribution of investment measures 121 and 123.

Beside the findings emerging from the quantitative analysis, qualitative information collected through the survey and focus groups prove that the Programme (axis 1) succeeded in increasing beneficiaries’
management and marketing skills, through, for instance, the use of a business plan as a starting point for their activities. Farmers also acquired competences on production techniques and the sustainable use of the land like, for example, through organic agriculture, protection of crops and feeding animals. Moreover, farmers’ revenues increased between 5% and 20%. All in all, projects also allowed to improve the knowledge of EU mechanisms and procedures.

**EQ (c) 6 (impact). To what extent has the RDP accompanied the restructuring of dairy products sector?**

Eurostat indicators on the whole milk production shows the limited importance of the production in Romania compared to other top players in Europe such as, UK, Germany, Italy and Spain. However, in the programming period (2007-2015), after Slovakia and Poland still lagging behind in terms of production and Czech Republic which reaches higher values in terms of production, Romania scored the fifth country in Europe, in terms of growth of production, achieving 111% between 2007-2015\(^\text{105}\).

\(^{105}\) From this calculation, all EU countries are included except Portugal, Malta and Luxembourg for which there are no data in 2015

În acest calcul, toate țările UE sunt incluse, cu excepția Portugaliei, Malta și Luxemburg, pentru care nu există date în 2015
NRDP contributed to restructuring dairy products sector, in particular through Axis n.1. By 2015, 120 projects out of 5907 have been finalised of M112 in the dairy products sector, 87 out of 1871 within M121, while for M123, depending on the priority sector, the division of the contracted projects within the measure 123 classic (without state aid schemes) is as follows: • "Milk and dairy products, meat, meat products and eggs" - 114 with the value of 92.681,79 thousand Euro.

Overall, Axis 1 had moderately contributed to the restructuring of the diary sector, mainly through the measures 121 and 123.

**EQ (c) 7 (impact). To what extent has the RDP contributed to climate change mitigation and adaptation?**

Statistical data collected and analyzed by the Ministry of Environment through the annual report on the environmental situation in Romania, 2014 shows a downward trend of the quantities of atmospheric emissions at national level.

Although the statistical data related to the implementation of the NRDP axis 2 measures can not be extracted from the overall synthesis, it can be conclude that the effects of the NRDP are positive. The direct and indirect effects of Axis 2 measures have contributed to objectives such as mitigating and adapting to climate change
by maintaining and sometimes improving the ecological functions of river waters as well as by protecting soil against erosion. As regards to the quantity of greenhouse gases produced by agricultural activities, the Programme has contributed to the reduction of this, in particular through the commitments implemented under measure 214.

**EQ (c) 8 (impact). To what extent has the RDP contributed to improvement of water management (quality, use and quantity)?**

NRDP has been designed to address environmental problems of rural context, inter alia, water management in terms of quality, quantity and use because, according to data provided in 2004, only 33% of population had access to public water network, while the data provided by NIS show that in 2007, in rural areas, only 426 localities benefited from a public sewage network. Improving water management and infrastructure was useful to promote rural economy as well as quality of life for rural population.

Axis 1 had a medium contribution to improved water management, with the exception of M125, which had a significant contribution. In the case of M 125, it has to be considered that 150 projects have been transferred to submeasure 4.3 of RNDP 2014-2020. 16 projects have been financed in 2015 through PERE for the water saving. Regarding other measures, according to AIR 2015 1 project for water saving has been financed under M 123, while the other measures had a limited and indirect impact.

Axis 2 contributed to the priorities of CSG 2 and thus to increasing the water quality. Measures 211 and 212 had an important contribution to improving water quality and climate change, while agri-environment payments under M214 have contributed to successful land management for water quality of ha 2.186.400,82, which is 82,72% of the initial target (2,64 million hectares). Axis 2 had a positive impact on the environmental factors, particularly on water quality, through the application of superior technological measures compared to mandatory measures.

Under axis n.3, the contribution of the measure 322 was significant for improving the infrastructural endowments for water management. Among the additional common indicators the indicator regarding the Number of communes identified in the Master Plans for the infrastructure of water / wastewater exceeded the target.

**EQ (c) 9 (result). How did the RDP contributed to improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy?**

Axis 3 faced challenges such as decreasing depopulation rates and to improving the quality of life in rural areas by both increasing territorial attractiveness and creating new jobs. Measures under axis 3 aimed at improving farmers’ incomes, through the diversification of rural economy, the creation of new local services and the valorization of environmental resources and cultural heritage. Measure 312 has the specific objective
to better the quality of life, through the creation of micro business and the increase of the added value of non-agricultural activities. On the other hand, Measure 313 promotes tourism as a major growth sector in many rural areas by improving the overall attractiveness of the countryside. The rationale of the Measure is contributing to reverse the negative trends of economic conditions and depopulation by improving basic services to population, including infrastructures able to promote local economy and renewing rural villages so as to enhance their attractiveness. At the same time, Measure 322 supports the renovation of buildings as well as of rural roads and the management of environmental resources (i.e. parks, etc.).

However, certain external factors negatively influenced the implementation of projects selected within the measures of Axis 3. In addition to the economic crisis, there are: the high complexity of public procurement legislation, the unpredictability of the legislative framework along with the applicants’ limited experience in the field of the proposed investment.

Measure 312, that was the only one experiencing a 14% increase in the budget, almost reached the target value by recording a total expense of 134,68 Meuro, which represent 90,39% of the programmed budget (149 Meuro). Despite this, the Measure did not succeed in reaching the expected number of new job opportunities created (R8.1. Gross number of jobs created), since the final value (9046 units) only represents the 30,67% of the target value.

As for Measure 313, which had a 45% budget cut, it reached only 17,06% of the target value by investing 16,38 (mil Euro) out of 96 Meuro. Such a scarce performance is probably mainly due to the difficulty to obtain the environmental agreement and rigidity of the guide and implementing rules for the selected projects. As long as R8.1 is concerned, the Measure only achieved the 7,31% of the target value by creating 1.008 new jobs out of the expected 13.783. Nonetheless, according to the opinion of the beneficiaries involved in the case studies, the measure enabled the diversification of investments addressed to tourist accommodation and facilities, through the promotion of different kinds of news services all over the Country. Private firms and micro-enterprises have mainly invested in rural tourism, including accommodations and leisure activities, while public bodies were able to develop both small-scale infrastructures and rural tourism initiatives. However, M313 only reach 3% of the target value for additional tourist visits (R9. Număr suplimentar de vizite turistice)

Despite the targets for the result indicators have not been met, the counterfactual analysis highlights that both M312 and M 313 had a positive effect in terms of increase of full time equivalent employees of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries. This evidence confirms the importance of the role played by the NRDP in creating jobs in rural areas.

Moreover, beside the positive impact in terms of employment, axis 3 contributed, through M 322, to renovate and create basic infrastructures in the rural areas. Also in the case of M 322, the general performance with respect to the initial targets of the corresponding result indicator is low (people benefitting from financed services in rural areas represent the 32,24% of the target value foreseen for R10 -1.629.015 citizens out of 5.035.00). However, qualitative information collected through the focus groups and the case
studies show the relevance of the projects financed under M 322 for combating the depopulation of the rural areas and more generally for improving the quality of life in the rural areas.

In conclusion, even in the case of not reaching the planned targets for the result indicators, it can be stated that the investments financed by NRDP have positively influenced the development of the rural environment (quality of life and diversification of economic activities) in view of increasing the attractiveness of the territory for the unoccupied workforce (through the creation of new jobs, also in the non-agricultural sector) and through the development of basic infrastructure. Regarding the tourist attractiveness of the rural environment, the main contribution of the NRDP was related to the creation of improved conditions in the existing accommodation capacities. It is necessary to integrate them with further actions to diversify the offer of tourist services (other than the accommodation) at the level of the territories where the projects financed by M313 were implemented.

EQ (C) 10 (impact). To what extent has the RDP contributed to creation of access to broadband internet (including upgrading)?

The indicator of household broadband internet connect of Eurostat (isoc_ci_it_h) shows a large improvement across EU28 countries, passing from 42% in 2007 to 80% in 2015. Despite Romania as well as Greece were the least performers in 2007, they have largely progressed. Romania increasing the percentage by 713%, from 8% to 65% of the total housings. However, in the EU-28 ranking Romania still lags behind the countries, slightly better than Bulgaria (59%). The programme contribution to broadband access was limited and occurred in the latest phase of the programme implementation period. One of the latest versions of the programme (Version XII - approved in December 2013) has introduced the sub-measure 322e, targeting investments on broadband infrastructure in rural areas. The number of households with Internet access reached by sub-measure 322e is 7,707, representing 40.72% of the target of 18,929 households. Additional resources for addressing needs related to broadband have been allocated for a total of 26 projects with a total amount of investments of 6,432,85 million Euro and a public value (EREP) of 4,371,86 million Euro.

EQ (c) 11 (result). To what extent has the NRN contributed to RDP objectives?

The objective of National Rural Development Network was to stimulate the development of active partnerships between the public, private and non-government sectors, bringing together representatives of local / central public authorities, involved in rural development, local collectivities, NGOs. In this sense the NRDR was supposed to contribute to get the local stakeholder more dynamic and more ready to seize the opportunities offered by the NRDP.
In the 2007-2013 programming period the RNDR was set up through the project "Establishment and support of the National Rural Development Network" conducted by the company Innovacion y Dessarrollo Local S.L. – Spain.

The project was characterised by significant delays, in particular, between 2012 and 2014 when the project was stopped due to the problems related to the expenditures declared by the provider which were not coherent with the initial budget plan. However, despite these initial problems, all activities initially planned were finally carried out with significant results in terms of involvement of the local stakeholders.

As reported in the programme documents "the National Network for Rural Development has as a general objective to enlist the energy of all actors in the rural development process, and to promote an effective flow of information, exchange of ideas and good practices, and cooperation among the actors". Keeping in mind the significant delays that have characterised the set up of the RNDR in Romania it is possible to affirm that these objectives were achieved only during the last phase of the implementation of the NRDP (after 2014); within this context, during the first phases of the implementation of the programme, its capacity to mobilise local actors and to support cooperation and exchange of good practices was limited. Even with the realization of all the activities initially planned, the condensation of the planned initiatives within the NRDN at the level of a short period of time (to recover the inactivity of the network) towards the end of the NRDP implementation period had a more limited contribution to the fulfillment of the NRDP objectives (eg most of the Axis 1 and 3 project submission sessions were conducted until 2012, while the main activities within the NRDN were organized in 2014) compared to the scenario in which the activity of NRDN would have taken place simultaneously and continuously with the implementation of NRDP.

**EQ (c) 12 (result). To what extent has the TA contributed to RDP objectives?**

The objective of the TA measures financed under Axis 5 was to support the preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities related to the National Rural Development Programme, and to contribute to the effective, efficient, correct and transparent implementation of it.

The TA under axis 5 was one of the measures affected by a significant reduction in the budget compared to the initial allocation. At the beginning it was a budget which represented 3.77% of the total and finally ended up with a budget representing just 1.42% of the total budget.

From the financial perspective, the Technical Assistance axis appears effective, with almost the totality of the allocated resources allocated that have been spent by 2015. The lack of information regarding the initial targets of the output and result indicators limits the possibility to assess at which extent the objectives initially set have been or not effectively achieved. However, data provided by the programme monitoring system as well as the perception of the stakeholders interviewed show that the TA realize a significant number of actions for supporting the implementation of the programme. In particular, the realization of the programme IT system (system for on-line submission of projects) has represented a key step for improving
the quality of the programme implementation. Information collected through the various evaluation activities have highlighted that the implementation of the 2007-2013 programme was also characterised by various difficulties. I.e. according to several stakeholders the capacity of the programme to inform about the opportunities offered by the programme was limited. Similarly, the set-up of the programme monitoring system represented a serious challenge as demonstrated by the late implementation of ad hoc monitoring activities for quantifying specific result indicators. These examples suggest possible areas of future improvement to capitalise on the significant efforts put in place by the TA and the acquired experiences either through training (see the significant number of persons trained or the important number of informative actions carried out) or through the implementation of the programme which was a completely new element for both programme bodies and potential beneficiaries.

EQ (c) 13 (efficiency). How efficiently have the resources allocated to the RDP been used in relation to achieving the intended outputs?

This evaluation question addresses the fundamental aspect of program efficiency, namely the cost-effectiveness of program implementation in terms of achievements, results and impact. To analyze this, the evaluation team began by assessing the effectiveness of the planned achievements through a comparative analysis with other countries' rural development programs. Then attention was focused on the actual level of result and outcome indicators, as compared to the final level of corresponding expenditures. The detailed results of these analyzes are available in Chapter 8 and in Annex 4.

In general, the NRDP has been assessed as a programme drafted considering a very high level of efficiency compared to other Member States' rural development programs. Implementation of the programme has shown, however, a great difficulty in maintaining the expected level of efficiency. Most of the measures performed with a significantly lower level of efficiency compared to the initial expectations in terms of output and / or result indicators, with the exception of measures 111, 214, 421. In several cases, the difference between projected and realized efficiencies is more than significant - see cases of measures 112, 121, 125, 141, 313.

The magnitude of the phenomenon leads to the assumption that an important part of it could be explained through an overestimation of the initial targets, as well as by the impossibility of updating the initial methodology for setting targets for output and result indicators.

For some indicators, the implementation difficulties of the related measure would have played a role in this dynamics. But, normally, a tedious implementation of an intervention involves roughly the same financial and physical aspects, without altering the expected unitary cost.

For some measures with a "project number" or "number of beneficiaries" output indicator, the unitary cost of the indicator may be distorted by the unexpected dynamics linked to the size of the funded projects (if the allocation covers only larger projects than the initially expected average size, then the performance indicator
cannot be reached because its initial value was calculated on the basis of a much lower average budget / project than the maximum value requested by the beneficiaries. However, this situation should not affect the unitary cost of achieving the output indicators, as seems to be the case in the NRDP (in particular measure 121). In some cases, the level of inefficiency is simply another consequence of poor performance in a measure, in terms of its effectiveness, as seems to be the case for measures 141 and 313.

The conclusion of the evaluation is that the resources were planned at the level of the NRDP, anticipating a high level of efficiency, but their effective efficiency as a result of the implementation of the Programme was lower than expected. Most of the results involved higher costs than planned, in some cases, baseline values multiplying.

**EQ (c) 14 (result). How and to what extent has the measure contributed to improving the competitiveness of the beneficiaries?**

NRPD financed various measures aimed at improving the competiveness of the beneficiaries. At axis 1 level:

- M 111 financed service providers aiming at increasing the skills of final beneficiaries (e.g. rural workforce involved in the agricultural, forestry and agri-food sectors).
- M 112 financed young farmers.
- M 121 financed farmers.
- M 122 financed private owners of forests, natural persons or their associations, local communities owning forests in common (with indivisibly property rights) or their associations, communes and municipalities owning forests or their associations, other owners of forest different from the state property, independent forest owners (churches, hospitals, schools) and their associations, mixed associations of any of the above categories.
- M 123 financed micro-enterprises and other small medium enterprises and micro-enterprises in the forest sector.
- M 141 financed farmers in semi-subsistence category.
- M 142 financed producer groups.
- M 143 financed consultancy and advisory service providers for farmers

The analysis of the result indicators for axis 1 shows, that the programme had a limited effectiveness in ensuring the achievement of the targets initially set out. However, the the analysis of the result indicators and the counterfactual analysis also shows that axis 1 has contributed to economic growth (increased gross value added) and labour productivity growth of the direct beneficiaries. Programme result indicators in fact show the increase in the gross value added of 655 million euro mainly due to the contribution of investment measures 121 and 123 in 2007-2015. Moreover, the counterfactual analysis of M 123 shows a net effect of the measure: beneficiaries performed better than similar (matched) beneficiaries in the period 2010-2015 for the increase in gross value added.
Axis 1 had the twofold objective of increasing the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors, through different kinds of actions, such as:

- training activities aimed to increase competences and skills of farmers so as to foster the sustainable use of tenures and natural resources, to introduce innovation in the production process and to improve beneficiaries’ knowledge of project management and, more in general, of EU legislation and procedures (M111);
- supporting young farmers with the aim to renew the generation of farm managers (M112);
- modernizing agricultural holdings to align them to EU standards, through the introduction of new technologies, product diversification and organizational changes (M121);
- addressing the sustainable management of forests, through afforestation and the promotion of specific activities to consolidate the sustainability of the forestry activity (M122);
- increasing the competitiveness of food industry and forestry products by promoting innovation in line with Community standards (M123);
- adapting agricultural and forestry infrastructure to the new property structure resulted after the property restitution process in order to increase agricultural and forestry sectors’ competitiveness (125).

As a result, most of the Measures did not reach target values, mainly because of the lower financing, but also due to external factors, such as the effects of the economic crisis that deeply affected the agricultural and forestry sectors. Qualitative analysis that involved main stakeholders and beneficiaries (case studies and focus groups) enabled to detect also NRDP’s internal factors that might have negatively affected financed projects, such as: beneficiaries’ lack of financial resources, the slowness of the application procedures and timing for reimbursement, difficulties in elaborating and managing a business plan, beneficiaries’ lack of knowledge on programme’s requirements.

Regarding the contribution to the competitiveness of the agricultural sector:

- As highlighted by the quantification of R 1 (Number of participants who have successfully completed training in the field of agriculture and / or forestry) measure 111 offered a significant contribution to improving the competences of the farmers even if less than expected compared to the programme targets (version XVI, approved in November 2015). Even if the foreseen result was was not reached 100%, qualitative analysis’ evidence prove that projects under M111 allowed to improve participants’ management and marketing skills as well as ecologic agriculture competences creating the conditions for a general growth of labour productivity.
- The programme had a relative good performance in relation to the number of firms introducing new products/technologies (R3. Number of holdings / enterprises introducing new products and / or techniques), which, if appropriately supported in the future, could represent a good basis for the forthcoming projects.
For what concerns the GVA of the agricultural firms involved, as highlighted by the quantification of R 2 (Increase in gross agricultural value added in supported holdings / enterprises) measures 112, 121, 125 and 141 were rather ineffective.

Similarly, the programme was poorly effective in supporting firms entering new markets (R 5 Number of agricultural holdings entering the market) both with M141 and M142.

Regarding the contribution to the competitiveness of the forestry sector, Measure 122 had an important contribution to the improvement of forest management (30.394 hectares improved through implemented projects). However, the forest area that was addressed through projects of M122 represents less than 0.5% of the existing national forest fund (6.555 million ha). The effects of the NRDP on the competitiveness of the forest sector are limited and are mostly valid at the level of direct beneficiaries.

**EQ (c) 15 (impact). How and to what extent the measure contributed to improving the environmental situation?**

Following the analysis of the data available after the implementation of the NRDP 2007-2013 it was performed a reassessment of the scores awarded according to the Environmental report for NRDP 2007-2013. The analysis shows that the negative scores have a clear tendency to decrease, especially in the case of axis 1 and 3. The re-evaluated environmental factors were reduction of waste generation, lower GHG emissions, and lower air emissions. It is mentioned that in the analysis there were not reassessed factors that had clear positive trends (eg the improvement of the surface and underground water quality as a result of NRDP implementation is directly reflected through the result indicator R6). Thus it can be concluded that:

- related to the implementation of Axis 1, 3 and 4 measures, the negative scores estimated at the time of elaboration of the Environmental Report for NRDP 2007-2013 have a clear tendency of diminishing, thus demonstrating that the effects of NRDP implementation on the environment are positive (all investments financed at the level Axes 1, 3, 4 that have had a significant impact on the environment have undergone the appropriate assessment or environmental impact assessment and are subsequently implemented only in conjunction with specific measures to mitigate the negative effects on the environment).

- regarding the effects of Axis 2 implementation, it is noted that measures 211 and 212 have contributed effectively to enhancing the quality of the environment, in particular through the qualitative improvement of ecosystems in the areas designated for Measure 211 and the qualitative preservation of ecosystems for the areas designated for Measure 212.

- Measure 214 had the most significant positive effects for enhancing the quality of the environment through all the packages defined at this level: the main effects are the growth and maintenance of ecologically valuable ecosystems (habitats for important species at European level).
- Measure 215 did not directly affect biodiversity or landscape, mainly due to the objectives of this measure; this measure has produced significant positive effects on the environmental factor “water” through sub-package 4a - correction of nitrite and nitrate levels in water
- The implementation of measure 221 was not carried out according to the initial planning, considering that the initially planned financial resources redistributed redistributed (to avoid automatic decommitment); the percentage of achievement of the specific result indicator (R6) is 5.71%. It can be concluded that the impact on GHG absorption and storage at the level of forest areas was minor.

In general, it can be appreciated that NRDP has produced positive environmental effects (especially with regard to biodiversity conservation) or contributed to maintaining environmental status.

EQ (c) 16 (result). How and to what extent has the measure contributed to the economic diversification of beneficiaries?

Axis 3 aimed at diversifying beneficiaries’ economic performances mainly by supporting the production of renewable energies and tourism activities, services and infrastructures, through Measures 313 and 322. The specific objectives were creating new job opportunities, especially for young people and women, developing natural and cultural resources potentials as well as improving the overall attractiveness of rural areas for tourist purposes. The analysis of the result indicators for axis shows, that the programme had a limited effectiveness in ensuring the achievement of the targets planned (according to the last version of NRDP, approved in November 2015). As already highlighted in the specific analysis on the effectiveness of the Programme (see Chapter VIII.2.2), Axis 3 did not achieve the expected results, probably because of important changes occurred during programme implementation, such as: reallocation of financial resources from M313 to M322 to restore road-networks affected by floods in 2010, changes in the National legislation dealing with the allocation of complementary funds for road infrastructures in rural areas along with changes in the eligibility and selection criteria, which negatively affected the implementation of this Axis.

Regarding the contribution of various measures to the diversification of economic activities in the rural areas:

- Measure 313, which experienced a 45% budget cut, reached only 17% of the target value for planned investments by investing 16,38 mil Euro (instead of the planned 96 Meuro) in rural tourism. Private beneficiaries mainly invested in accomodation and leisure activities, while public entities developed small-scale infrastructures and rural tourism initiatives, which have not produced significant effects on tourists flows yet nor on beneficiaries incomes, but, as stressed by the participants to focus groups, they directly contributed to the general economic growth of the non-agricultural sector. The counterfactual analysis also shows that axis 3 has contributed to the economic growth and diversification of the direct beneficiaries (comparing beneficiaries with non-beneficiaries, it was shown that M312 and M313 beneficiaries had better performance in terms of job creation over the period 2009-2015).
M312 and M313 have created 151 million euro of additional gross value added in non-agricultural sector, largely due to M312 (directly contributing to diversification of the rural economy, through the creation and development of micro-enterprises) and to a lesser extent due to development of economic activities linked to rural tourism (M313).

By improving basic services in rural areas, measure 322 has made an important contribution to the diversification of the rural economy (economic agents being a category of indirect beneficiaries of these investments).

### EQ 17 (result). How and to what extent has the measure contributed to improving the quality of life of beneficiaries?

NRDP contributed to the improvement of the quality of life in the rural areas mainly through the village renewal and development (measure 322). Most municipalities beneficiaries of the measure have developed road infrastructures or water supply pipelines, with the aim to improve the conditions of rural areas (for both citizens and visitors) as a basis for future social and economic local development.

However, as highlighted by the analysis of the result indicators, the final number of persons benefiting from the services is lower than expected (according to version XVI of the Programme, approved in November 2015) which can be possibly explained by the limited procedural effectiveness and by the impact of external factors (e.g. economic crisis) reducing public resources, with a direct impact of hindering the rural and infrastructural development.

### EQ (c) 18 (impact). What other effects, including those related to other objectives/axes, are linked to the implementation of this measure (indirect, positive/negative effects on beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, local level)?

NRDP had various other effects, additional compared to those initially planned. In the next lines there are listed the measures which provided additional effects:

a) Indirect effects
- Measures 112, 121 and 123 contributed to restructuring dairy products sector
- Measures 121, 123, 312, 313, 411 and 413 contributed to the development of production of renewable energy
- Measures 125, 214, 322 contributed to improving the quality of water in the territories at which projects or commitments (in the case of measure 214) have been implemented

b) Positive effects on beneficiaries
• All measures within axis 1, 2, 3 have contributed to raising beneficiaries’ awareness of funding opportunities from EU funds to support and develop their activities, and the experience of the implemented projects / engagements is an advantage in terms of understanding and continuing to access funding in the following programming periods.

• Accessing the guarantee scheme by the beneficiaries of measures 121, 123, 312, 313 contributed to the development of a working relationship between the beneficiaries and the banking institutions; so if they choose to apply for a new loan in the future, these beneficiaries will already have a constructive experience with the institution, which can increase the bank’s availability to provide new loans to that beneficiary.

• Measures 211 and 212 have helped to increase the quality of life for beneficiaries of small land plots and the competitiveness and economic performance of beneficiaries of large land plots.

• Measure 215 has helped to improve the competitiveness and economic performance of beneficiaries.

c) Positive effects on non-beneficiaries

• Measures 421 and 431 have contributed to the operationalization of LAG structures, which, following the finalization of the projects financed under NRDP 2007-2013, continued to work, providing support and specialized advice to all local actors, regardless of the status of beneficiary or non-beneficiary of the NRDP.

• The investments funded through measures 112, 121, 122, 123, 312 and 313 created the necessary framework for the development of related economic activities (carried out economic agents which were non-beneficiaries).

d) Local level effects

• Measures 125 and 322, through investments in basic infrastructure in rural areas, contributed to the development of the local economic environment with medium and long-term effects in terms of: employment (by attracting investors), quality of life (improving living conditions from the perspective of access to basic services), reducing the rate of migration in rural areas (by increasing labor demand and improving access to basic services).

Concerning the negative effects of the Program, they can only be reported to the beneficiaries whose funding contracts have been cancelled: failure to reimburse the costs incurred or to request reimbursement of the funding provided for the partial implementation of the projects has created difficulties in ensuring the necessary cash flow to carry out the current activities for those beneficiaries.

Additional to the above mentioned effects, axis n.1 has contributed to the increase in labour productivity in the agricultural and forestry sector and in food industry. However, the increased labour productivity at national level has been based in particular in the agricultural sector and in the food industry on the decrease of number of jobs. As demonstrated by counterfactual analysis, axis n.3 and n.4 have contributed with a net effect in jobs creation partially compensating the negative effects due to productivity gains, promoting new employment opportunities by diversifying the rural economy.
EQ (c) 19 (result). To what extent has the RDP contributed to building local capacities for employment and diversification through LEADER?

Axis 4 aims at developing rural areas’ potentials through the LEADER Approach, which promotes area based local development strategies to be implemented by public-private partnerships, organized in Local Action Groups (LAGs, hereinafter), through a bottom up approach. Sub-Measure 411 overall objective is to promote the long-term and sustainable development of rural areas by implementing integrated and innovative strategies jointly developed by rural actors, while Sub-Measure 413 aims at improving the quality of life in rural areas and at diversifying rural economy through the promotion of shared strategies and plans based on the cooperation of the most relevant stakeholders and local actors, also at the inter-regional and transnational levels.

The analysis of the result indicators for axis 4 shows the programme was only partially effective in achieving the targets initially defined. Nevertheless the evidences collected through the evaluation activities show that in spite of the limited effectiveness at result indicators’ level, axis 4 played a key role for strengthening local capacity in diversifying the rural economy and in creating new jobs opportunities.

This was achieved in two different ways. Firstly, projects financed through leader had the direct effect of creating new networks among the local stakeholders, in particular between public and private stakeholders located in the rural areas. According to the opinions collected though the case studies and the focus groups this has represented a key factor for making the overall economy of the rural areas more dynamic.

Secondly, projects financed under axis 4 directly contributed to the creation of new jobs opportunities, even if without reaching the programme target values. The counterfactual analysis shows that beneficiaries of projects financed through Axis 4 have performed better than non-beneficiaries in terms of number of jobs created.

In addition, the LEADER Approach have produced immaterial effects, that can hardly be quantified by the given result indicators. The main achievements can be considered more in terms of sustainability guaranteed by an innovative form of cooperation between public and private actors at territorial level, that must be further implemented in the current programming period, also by foreseeing a performance framework able to assess LAGs performances as well as parameters to measure the results of local strategies.

EQ (c) 20 (result). To what extent have LAGs contributed to achieving the objectives of the local strategy and the RDP?

LAGs are the main actors of the LEADER approach and, in the framework of the NRDP, they played a key role in supporting beneficiaries in the implementation of projects, in line with the general objectives of the proposed Local development Strategies (LDS).
Both quantitative and qualitative analysis highlighted the capacity of LAGs to involve beneficiaries in the elaboration of local strategies and to improve their knowledge and competences on project management. The quantification of the additional result indicator “Number of persons who have successfully completed a training in the field (LAG) - General training” has shown the good performance of Measure 431, since 1.578 beneficiaries took part in the training initiatives organized by LAGs (out of 1.640 expected participants), representing 96.22% of the target value.

The performance even improves when considering the additional result indicator „Number of persons who have successfully completed a training in the field (LAG) - specialized training for the LAG representative” that reached the target value of involving 300 beneficiaries in the given training activities (100%), which allowed to better understand objectives and main characteristics of the LEADER Approach and to deepen administrative aspects of the NRDP as well as project development and management.

As highlighted by case studies, beneficiaries particularly appreciated LAGs’ capacity of involving local actors in both the elaboration and development of the LDS as well as in the overall decision-making process. It can rightly be said that LAGs succeeded in promoting cooperation among local actors in the development of LDS, especially in defining expected results, main activities and related financial resources as well as in increasing, in doing so, the sense of ownership in the development of local strategies.

In view of measuring the results gradually achieved by the 2014-2020 NRDP, it would be appropriate, as suggested by participants to focus groups, to develop a specific set of indicators for monitoring LDS so as to also improve the evaluation of LAGs performances.

EQ (c) 21 (result). To what extent has the LEADER approach been implemented?

The LEADER Approach was applied for the first time in the framework of the 2007-2013 NRDP and, despite initial programming uncertainties (i.e. identification of baseline and target values relating to LAGs), Axis 4 had high levels of effectiveness in relation to both payment capacity and achievement of output indicators’ target values.

The Programme enabled the creation of 163 LAGs, covering 142.267 Km2 of territory and involving 6.770.589 of citizens, which financed 7.038 projects reaching more that 70% of relating target values. This means that the Programme was somewhat ineffective in relation to the programming capacity about LEADER, but this can be due to both lack of experience as well as to an overestimation of the target value.

The added value of LEADER approach has been mainly represented by the opportunity to finance projects under Priority Axes 1 and 3 specific involving LAGs and their public-private partnerships, their selection and financing being correlated with the project relevance for the local needs identified within the LDS.

Nonetheless, the quantification of R8 - Gross number of jobs created showed the weak capacity of Axis 4 to directly create new employment, which, however, has been observed for basically all Axis of the NRDP.
As already stated in the previous pages (EQs 18d, 18 e and 21), selected result indicators did not allow to catch and measure all effects produced by LEADER, especially those related to governance, cooperation as well as application of new competences gained by beneficiaries through training activities. Even so, the analysis of additional indicators stressed the strong ability of LAGs to involve local actors and develop their skills on the functioning of LAG and the territorial animation techniques.

**EQ (c) 22 (result). To what extent has the implementation of the Leader approach contributed to improving local governance?**

Measure 421 encouraged the cooperation among LAGs of different territories facing similar challenges with the aim to strengthen local development strategies’ effects, also at the transnational level with both UE and Non-EU Countries. Indeed, the financial support is provided for inter-territorial (within a Member State) or transnational cooperation projects (between territories in several Member States and with territories in third countries) involving different LAGs. Through the organization of LAGs, Sub-Measure 431-1 has the specific objective to build long-lasting public-private partnerships able to design and further implementing shared local development strategies to reinforce territorial coherence and synergies between measures intended to develop the broader rural economy and community. This Sub-Measure 431-2 is addressed to improve LAGs capacity to manage territorial animation activities aiming to involve local actors in the design and implementation of local development strategies in the framework of the LEADER Approach. To this end, LAGs and the partners involved are ensured accurate information as well as appropriate training to develop the skills needed to fulfill their tasks in a satisfying way, and, more in general, to enhance the quality of life in rural areas.

Because of the lack of specific indicators measuring changes/improvement in local governance through the LEADER Approach, the response of this Evaluation Question is based on the findings of qualitative evaluation analysis aimed to identify immaterial effects of Axis 4.

In particular, case studies allowed to emphasize the pivotal role played by LAGs in fostering cooperation among local actors, especially in promoting public-private partnerships, in the development and implementation of Local Development Strategies.

Moreover, cooperation projects enabled LAGs to promote collaborations with similar bodies at the interregional level to develop joint initiatives aimed to foster innovation and environment protection as well as the organization of joint events (including seminars and publications) to share experiences.

All in all, the implementation of LEADER has introduced an innovative form of local governance based on the cooperation of local actors aimed to elaborate and achieve common goals. Furthermore, in the opinion of participants to the focus group, the adoption of a bottom-up approach has strongly contributed to the development of civil society in the rural areas, since citizens are more aware of their role in developing opportunities and improving the attractiveness of their territories.
In view of measuring the results gradually achieved by the 2014-2020 NRDP, it would be appropriate to develop a specific set of indicators for monitoring changes/improvement in local governance due to the application of the LEADER Approach.

VIII.3.1. Specific evaluation questions

**EQ (s) 1 (relevance). To what extent have the objectives, interventions, activities and resources allocated to the programme addressed the most important needs related to rural areas throughout the entire period of the programme implementation?**

NRDP 2007-2013 provides a socio-economic analysis of the rural environment updated at the time when the programme has been drafted (2007), based on which the elements of the SWOT analysis have been defined. Different identified needs were grouped so as to be addresses in the 4 axes of NRDP as follows:

- **Axis 1** has addressed the needs to increase the performance of farms, labor productivity, level of education and competence of human resources; develop agricultural market channels; modernize and restructure small enterprises from food industry and forestry sectors;

- **Axis 2** addressed the need to maintain and improve the quality of environment in rural areas by promoting sustainable management of both agricultural and forest land. Also it tackled the promotion of better standards for its sustainable development and animal welfare.

- **Axis 3** addressed the needs to diversify the rural economy and increase the attractiveness of rural areas;

- **Axis 4** focused on capitalizing local potential and improving local governance in order to address the needs of rural areas according to the specific priorities of each territory.

During programme implementation, rural areas faced new challenges, interventions and resources allocated to the program being adapted to respond appropriately, as follows:

- **Axis 1**: Following the floods which occurred in Romania in 2010, it was decided to finance investments for mitigating the effects of the floods and for their future prevention. Thus, measure 125 was supplemented with sub-measure 125 c) Construction, rehabilitation and modernization of infrastructure for flood prevention and protection. This sub-measure was financed by reducing allocation foreseen for the measure 122.

- **Axis 2**: in order to improve the general environment and rural areas, the need for better conditions of farming, with direct impact on water quality and microclimate. Thus, in 2012, the program content has been updated with the introduction of a contextual analysis of the sector of swine and poultry
breeding and a separate SWOT analysis for these sectors. Therefore, to address the needs of animal welfare measure was introduced 215 - Animal welfare payments. To finance the new measures funds were relocated from other budget measures / axes. Also, in the case of measures 211 and 212 the level of payments has been modified to increase their attractiveness, while in the case of measure 214 new packages were introduced in order to meet the needs identified in the territory.

- **Axis 3:** Following the floods of 2010, the measure 322 was supplemented with sub-measure 322 d) Investment on rehabilitation works and modernization of road infrastructure damaged by floods in 2010. In terms of its financial allocation, the funds were transferred from measure 313.

- **Axis 4:** Initially, the objective of the LEADER Axis was the establishment of 80 LAGs. Given the growing interest of local stakeholders, it was decided to organize two calls of selection, so that the establishment of a larger number of LAGs responding to the needs of the territory could be achieved, selecting in the end 163 LAGs.

NRDP 2007-2013 has undergone 15 changes (16 versions of NRDP 2007-2013) during its implementation, the changes generally aiming to introduce new measures or actions, like broadband, animal welfare, organic farming, floods interventions, guarantee scheme etc. The updates made to the Programme were based on information received from stakeholders, after which targeted analyses were performed to confirm the new needs locally identified.

The analyses has pointed out a lower interest of beneficiaries towards the activities funded through training measures and provision of advisory services, as well as investments within the forestry sector, compared to other measures of the program. Thus, in the case of measures 111 "Vocational training, information and diffusion of knowledge" and 143 "Provision of farm advisory and extension services" the output indicators have not been achieved, while in the case of measures 122 – „Improving the economic value of forests” and 221 – „First afforestation of agricultural land” a relatively small number of projects was submitted.

According to analyses regarding rural environment and included in the relevant documents produced concerning agriculture and rural development (Partnership Agreement, NRDP 2014-2020, Position Paper of the Commission services on the development of the Partnership Agreement and programs in Romania for the period 2014-2020, the Health Check of the Common Agricultural Policy), rural areas have not experienced the emergence of a significant number of additional needs or their extreme intensification during 2007-2013, thus concluding that NRDP 2007 - 2013 continued to address the needs of rural areas, as they were originally defined or later updated, during its entire period of implementation.

Interviews conducted with relevant stakeholders revealed that initially, there were some gaps in the needs defined in the programme, but the changes made to the programme included actions to better approach the needs, including through changes in eligibility and selection criteria and financial reallocations.
Therefore it can be concluded that the objectives, interventions, activities and resources allocated in the programme addressed the most important needs related to rural areas throughout the period of implementation of the programme, the only measures which could have been more intensively addressed being those related to the forestry sector and soft measures (concerning training or related to consultancy and advisory services for programme beneficiaries).

**EQ (s) 2 (relevance). To what extent has the programme generated changes that addressed the needs of the rural areas?**

Interventions and activities funded through the National Programme for Rural Development 2007-2013 were defined according to the identified needs of the rural environment, generating changes that have contributed to its improvement.

The socio-economic analysis included in the content of the National Programme for Rural Development 2014-2020 identifies the challenges facing agriculture and rural areas, highlighting the progress made in certain areas, in order to properly plan future rural development efforts.

Thus, it was found that the most important changes resulting from NRDP 2007-2013, per axis, are:

- **Axis 1**: renewal of agricultural assets by upgrading production technologies, equipment and storage spaces.

- **Axis 2**: increasing the area on which agri-environmental measures are implemented. Also under this axis, the addition of measure 215 Payments for animal welfare helped meet the needs of actors from the territory, through funding given to cover the additional costs and loss of income caused by the voluntary application of higher standards in commercial swine and poultry breeding farms.

- **Axis 3**: creating new jobs, diversifying economic activities by increasing the number of microenterprises performing non-agricultural activities, creating tourism infrastructure for accommodation / increasing accommodation capacity in agro B&Bs (bed and breakfast), developing basic physical infrastructure through rehabilitation / development of roads, water pipes and sewerage etc., expanding access to broadband services.

- **Axis 4**: creation of a large number of Local Action Groups (163), through which there were financed projects that addressed specific needs in local communities.

In the beginning of the programming period, there were also activities which, in an attempt to address the needs of rural areas, have generated adverse effects in the agricultural sector, like artificial division of medium sized farms in order to access the funding of the Programme on multiple projects, only the formal involvement of young persons for the installation in rural areas in order to access the available funding (subsequently, eligibility conditions under M112 were modified in order to avoid these situations) . Also, the
funds addressed to subsistence farms have not always led to their sustainable economic development (mainly due to the limited financial capacity of semi-subsistence farms, even under the conditions of the annual support provided within the NRDP).

The conclusion of this evaluation question is that the implementation of NRDP favored and generated relevant changes in rural areas, which are matched to the needs identified in the territory and that were addressed in the strategy of the programme.

**EQ (s) 3 (relevance). To what extent are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with the overall objectives?**

To assess the internal consistency of the programme, specifically the interrelation between the general objective, interventions funded and planned achievements, the intervention logic for each axis was analyzed including its evolution during the implementation of NRDP.

During the drafting process of NRDP, respectively when defining the priorities and objectives included in the programme, it was ensured the coherence and synergy with the National Strategic Plan for Rural Development 2007-2013 (NSP), developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in 2006. According to the conclusions of NSP, interventions financed by NRDP 2007-2013 followed both differentiated and integrated (via LEADER) approach of the three key issues for rural development: (1) mitigating structural disadvantages and economic development of the agricultural and forestry sector; (2) sustainable use of resources and environmental protection; (3) improving the living conditions of rural residents regardless of age group, employment or labor market status, pursuing in particular the involvement of young people in agriculture and creating jobs by diversifying non-agricultural activities in rural areas. The three items presented above are part of the intervention logic of RDP 'axes according to the diagram tree connecting objectives and financed measures presented in the Guide on ex-post evaluation of the RDP 2007-2013 elaborated by the EC:

- **Axis 1 (general objective - competitiveness of agriculture and forestry sectors)** - (1) (3);
- **Axis 2 (general objective - the environment and the countryside)** - (2);
- **Axis 3 (general objective - quality of life)** - (1) (3);
- **Axis 4 (general objective - LEADER)** - (1) (2) (3).

Analyzing each of NRDP axes in terms of consistency between objectives and implemented measures, the following conclusions were formulated:

- **Axis 1**: all the measures implemented within Axis 1, respectively the related output indicators, are coherent and justified by the general objective of the axis and strategy of NRDP; considering the 3 specific sub-objectives, sub-objective 2 - competitiveness of agriculture and forestry sectors (developing physical potential and innovation) had the major contribution in terms of financial resources and achievements. Nonetheless the implementation of the Axis has not fully followed the
original approach of the objective to “mitigate structural disadvantages and provide economic development of the agricultural and forestry sector”, which was based on heavy investments on the development of semi-subsistence farms: these farms contributed only to a minor extent to the financial, output and result indicators of Axis 1.

- Axis 2: most of the measures implemented within Axis 2, respectively the related output indicators, are coherent and justified by the general objective of the axis and strategy of NRDP; measure 215 "Payments for animal welfare" introduced in version VIII of NRDP (approved in April 2012) does not seem to be fully integrated in the intervention logic of this axis, meaning that is associated only with output indicators (without impact and result indicators), but it is justified by the needs of local stakeholders to cover additional costs and income losses caused by the voluntary application of higher standards in commercial swine and poultry breeding farms. However, the implementation of this measure contributes to the overall objective of Axis 2 having a positive impact on the environmental factors, particularly on water quality, through the application of superior technological measures compared to mandatory measures.

- Axis 3: all the measures implemented within Axis 3, respectively the related output indicators, are coherent and justified by the general objective of the axis and strategy of NRDP; out of the two specific sub-objectives, sub-objective 1 - diversification of the rural economy has the major contribution in terms of financial allocation and planned achievements;

- Axis 4: all the measures implemented within Axis 4, respectively the related output indicators, are coherent and justified by the general objective of the axis and strategy of NRDP; measure 4.1 "Implementation of local development strategies" has the largest contribution to the overall objective of the axis. It is important to mention the development of local capacity in sub-measure 431.2 "Functioning of Local Action Groups, skills acquisition and animation of the territory" (in Romania, the LEADER approach was applied for the first time, compared to other EU countries with a much richer experience in this area) expressed by the professional expertise gained by teams managing the LAGs during this programming period, which will certainly have a positive impact in the implementation of Measure 19 "Support for local development through LEADER" within NRDP 2014-2020.

From the perspective of the selection criteria defined in the measures, considering the changes made at Programme level, Axis 1 underwent the most updates (revisions at measures level being made in six versions of the programme), followed by Axis 3 at the level of which the selection criteria for M312 and M313 were revised in 3 versions of the Programme. Thus, considering that there were no changes in the strategy of the programme in terms of overall objectives of these axes during implementation, it can be concluded that the definition of the selection criteria required a period of harmonization with the reality in the territory, their initial version ensuring only partially the needed conditions for achieving the planned objectives. Updating the selection criteria led in time to a better implementation of the measures, which contributed directly to the achievement of the programme objectives.

Based on analyzes conducted through desk research it can be concluded that the program had a high degree of internal consistency considering the correlation between general objective, financed interventions and
planned outputs, with the exception of the measure to support semi-subsistence farms, where the implementation has not been fully in line with the initial planned approach to achieve its objectives.

**EQ (s) 4 (relevance). To what extent are the activities and achievements of the programme consistent with the intended results and impact?**

Relations between interventions and achievements planned in the Programme, respectively results and expected impact are represented in the intervention logic for each axis of NRDP through the existing links between measures and common and additional result indicators, being also justified through the correlation matrix between measures and impact indicators included in Chapter V.3. of this evaluation study.

Analyzing each of the NRDP axes in terms of consistency between planned impact, results with the measures implemented, the following conclusions were formulated:

- **Axis 1**: all measures are associated with at least one result indicator (common or additional) and at least one impact indicator; in terms of quantifying the results, the most comprehensive indicator is R2 GVA growth in agricultural holdings, while in terms of impact the indicator which is transversal to all measures is labor productivity. The field research conclusions show that, for the measure supporting semi-subsistence farms, the impact has not been quite as expected, since the support through the Programme has not always led to a viable economic development of these farms.
- **Axis 2**: most of the measures are associated with the common result indicator R6. Surface of agricultural and forest lands under management contracts and at least one impact indicator, excepting measure 215 which has no associated result or impact indicator.
- **Axis 3**: all measures are associated with at least one result indicator (common or additional) and at least one impact indicator; both impact indicators are transversally defined at the level of the three measures within Axis 3.
- **Axis 4**: all measures are associated with an outcome indicator, but only 2 of the 3 measures are associated with an impact indicator, the exception being measure 4.31 "Running the local action group, acquiring skills and animation"; also under Measure 4.1 "Implementation of local development strategies", sub-measure 412 (LEADER Axis 2) has no associated impact indicator, given the low value of its financial allocation. Interviews conducted with key stakeholders show that, following the implementation of this axis, additional positive results were obtained, considering the creation of strong partnerships between public authorities, NGOs and representatives of the private sector and civil society, whose cooperation for local development is to be perpetuated beyond the 2007-2013 period. Also, by setting up LAGs in rural areas, highly qualified labor force was attracted, who has developed specific expertise in the field of accessing and implementing projects financed by EU funds, currently holding the ability to capitalize other public financing sources, following the completion of the support of NRDP.
The selection criteria for the public beneficiaries defined within each axis have not been substantially altered during the implementation of the programme. Those related to measures addressing private beneficiaries have been updated several times during 2009-2012 (3-8 versions of RDP), as a consequence of both recommendations provided by the EC, as well as the need to clarify their application so as to clearly define the conditions. Changing the selection criteria had a direct impact on output and result indicators, since through the clarifications the access to financing within those interventions being made more fluid and more clearly defined for the targeted beneficiaries.

In general, it can be concluded that the measures defined and implemented within the Programme were mostly consistent with the expected impact and results, emphasizing though the need to verify and adjust the intervention logic when changes are made to measure fiches (insertion / deletion) so that all interventions proposed in the Programme have a quantifiable correlation with the result and impact indicators.

EQ (s) 5 (relevance). To what extent have the programme activities generated public goods or corrected the problems of agricultural and rural market and whether there are other alternatives or more efficient ways that would have generated public goods or corrected problems of the agricultural and rural market?

National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 represents one of the most important programmes implemented nationwide, with measures aimed at addressing the specific problems of agriculture and rural areas.

Given the trends of the European and national economic context, programme interventions have focused on strengthening competitiveness and development of scale economies in the agricultural field, taking into account the need to protect nature, environment, natural resources, soil, water in rural areas and improving quality of life for rural population.

Although initially the programme strategy was formulated based on the context indicators specific to the favorable economic situation of 2008, this was revised and strengthened in the process, being made a number of changes in terms of financial allocation at measure level.

Assessing the relevance of rural development programme from the perspective of the extent to which the foreseen interventions and activities generated solutions for the problems specific to agricultural and rural sectors the following are revealed:

- Measures supported by Axis 1 focused on improving the competitiveness of commercial and subsistence farms and restructuring and upgrading the processing and marketing of agricultural products sectors, thus contributing actively to the development of agricultural market;
- Measures of Axis 2 have supported the improvement of environment and rural areas, through continued use of agricultural land in disadvantaged areas and promoting sustainable agriculture,
conservation and improvement of natural resources and habitats and promoting sustainable management of forests;

• The support provided under Axis 3 encouraged the diversification of rural economy by maintaining and developing non-agricultural economic activities and increase jobs in rural areas;

• LEADER Axis integrates, through local development strategies, the objectives regarding the promotion of territories endogenous potential by creating jobs, maintaining population in rural areas and developing economic activities by local operators

Interviews conducted with key actors relevant to agriculture and rural development areas have highlighted a number of issues and recommendations to improve interventions, among which stand out:

• A part of the budgetary allocation corresponding to measure 141- Supporting semi-subsistence agricultural farms was used to implement mainly social interventions, beneficiaries of this measure not having a significant contribution to creating added value for agricultural sector, which generated a reduced efficiency of the funds used. It was recommended to support economically competitive beneficiaries, which can generate a significant gross added value in the agriculture sector. By analyzing the distribution of financial allocation within Axis 1, it is noted that M141 holds a share of 12.46% of the total public expenditure, with an allocated value of 359,568.42 thousand euros. After constructing a hierarchy of measures of Axis 1, according to the share of allocated financial support, there is a difference of nearly 16% between M121-modernization of farms, placed in the first position and M141 - Supporting semi-subsistence farms, which is fourth. Thus it can be concluded that the budget for M141 was one balanced in relation to the was balanced compared to other measures of Axis 1 and also with the specific needs of the agricultural sector consisting of semi-subsistence farms; the low efficiency in using its funds is a result of the financial size of the projects submitted and the economic viability of beneficiaries.

• Some of the funded projects were had as beneficiaries farmers who did not possess a vast experience in this sector, being difficult for them to survive on the agricultural market, which is a very competitive one.

• Given the disparities of development between regions, it was recommended to plan financial allocation and eligibility criteria on types of projects, depending on the specific of each region.

• Given the importance of foreign investment as a potential development engine of Romanian rural development areas, the programme should take a greater account of conditions and preconditions for attracting them, while checking their potential added value to the local economy.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 has actively contributed to mitigate or solve problems specific to agricultural and rural sectors, but the effectiveness of its interventions can be improved by focusing and channeling efforts towards creating an environment
favorable to investments in rural areas, allocating differently available funds, according to the specific of regions and support competitive beneficiaries, whose activities generate a significant added value to agriculture and rural economy.

**EQ (s) 6 (effectiveness). To what extent were the programme objectives achieved?**

As illustrated in the previous sections RDP’s effectiveness has been assessed by considering three different dimensions (procedural effectiveness, financial effectiveness, effectiveness at outputs level).

The key findings resulting from the current analysis are the following:

- **Procedural effectiveness**, which analyses the procedural implementation through a specific focus on contracted projects. At the programme level, according to AIR 2015, data on the procedural effectiveness of axes 1 and 2 reveals that this is generally rather ineffective (on average 49% projects are finalized). More precisely:
  - Under axis 1 all measures have not yet finalized all the contracted projects. Delays in the finalization of the projects characterize in particular M 125, 141 and 142 (less than half of the approved projects are finalized).
  - Axis 3 also generally appears rather ineffective, particularly in the case of M 313 for which only 12% of the contracted projects have been finalized.

- **Financial effectiveness** is assessed by comparing the value of the financial allocation (target and achieved value). At programme level, the financial data show that the level of expenditures is slightly effective if compared to the initial targets (on average actual payments represent the 73% of the allocated expenditures), even if the effectiveness varies at the level of the different axes and measures. More precisely:
  - Under axis 1, although below the initial targets, the actual payments are more than 90% of the initial allocation (financial effectiveness) in the cases of M 112, M 125 and M 141, according to version XVI of NRDP, approved in November 2015.
  - Axis 2 is generally very effective in financial terms. The only exception is M 221 which however has a very limited financial weight (0,1% from the total of the financial allocation at the axis level).
  - The financial effectiveness of axis 3 measures is heterogeneous: M 312 and M 313 are rather ineffective; M322 has the highest financial allocation at the level of this axis (over 1,5 billion EURO), having finalized 45% of contracted projects and showing a level of expenditures in line with the ambitious initial targets.
  - Axis 4: by considering that more than 80% of the entire axis budget is devoted to M 41, axis 4 is generally characterized by a good level of effectiveness in financial terms

- **Effectiveness at outputs level** - the comparison between achieved and target values at the level of output indicators defined within the programme show that in general the programmed reached the effectiveness degree initially estimated (on average the level of achievement is at 90% of the initial
targets). However, the level of achievements of output indicators depicts an heterogeneous picture, with all axes characterized by the presence of underperforming and over performing output indicators. More precisely:

- **Axis 1**: almost half of the output indicators (7 out of 15) show achieved values in line with the initial targets while the others underperform.
- **Axis 2**: almost half of the output indicators (5 out of 9) present achieved values correlated with the initial targets (these indicators record a rate of achievement of over 80%) and the others appear as less performant (their evolution fall into the category “somewhat ineffective” or “ineffective”). From the perspective of indicators reported to the total employed/assisted area, 2 out of 4 indicators record a good or very good performance (M211 and M212), while M221 appears to be the only ineffective measure of Axis 2.
- **Axis 3**: three out of 5 output indicators are underperforming. It is interesting to notice that: the negative performance of M 313 is confirmed by the analysis at output level; the level of achievement of the initial targets set for the output indicators confirms the good performance of M 322 with both output indicators in line or above the initial targets.
- **Axis 4**: almost half of the output indicators (4 out of 9) over performing while the others slightly under performing. It is in particular interesting to highlight that programme created approximately the double of GAL initially planned, nevertheless it was not possible to achieve the initial targets in terms of (1) surface area covered by the GAL, (2) population covered by the GAL, (3) number of projects financed by the GAL. On the other hand, the table above also shows that the good performance of the GALs in terms of mobilization of the local stakeholders.
- **Axis 5**: Budget allocation under this axis is distributed between two types of projects: technical assistance projects at AFIR level and technical assistance projects at MA level, the latter including NNRD. Overall, there were implemented 91, respectively 68 projects, values that according to the qualitative information gathered through the interviews are consistent with the initial objectives.

In general, the analysis of the effectiveness reveals that the programme is generally ineffective in procedural terms (on average 49% projects are finalized), slightly effective in financial terms (on average actual payments represent the 73% of the allocated expenditures) and rather effective from the outputs’ perspective (on average the level of achievement is at 90% of the initial targets).

Procedural effectiveness is influenced by two intrinsic factors of the programme, namely: the number of rescinded projects and the number of projects transferred to NRDP 2014-2020 through the transition process. Thus, the low percentage of completed projects in the total number of contracted projects is influenced by:

- the large number of rescinded projects during 2013-2015 within the NRDP 2007-2013 (over 13.000 rescinded financing contracts according to the situation registered at the end of 2015). Projects were
mainly rescinded on the beneficiary’s demand through the parties’ agreement (8,956 projects) or because of breaching contract clauses (4,586 projects);

− the number of projects transferred to NRDP 2014-2020 through the transition process (over 24,000 projects transferred, most of them from M141 – 20,859 projects; from Axis 1 there were transferred 21,981, from Axis 2-4 projects, from Axis 3-316 projects, from Axis 4-1,731 projects).

The evolution of the number of completed projects, compared with the number initially estimated, is influenced by the limited procedural effectiveness of measures 125, 141, 142 and 313.

According to the aspects highlighted by the representatives of MA during the semi-structured interviews, projects completion was a challenge for the private beneficiaries of measures 125 and 313, as a result of the difficulties related to ensuring the co-financing amount for the investment and the overestimation of costs associated with the investment. The main problems encountered by public beneficiaries, which in some cases led to the termination of funding contracts, were linked to blockages arising from the application of public procurement legislation (mainly the extended term for solving the appeals). Moreover, MA representatives have stressed that the delays that have characterized the implementation of certain measures, in particular measure 143, have depended on the number of complaints submitted by bidders during the procurement procedures.

**EQ (S) 7 (effectiveness). What were the main factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?**

Quantitative and qualitative information collected and summarized in the previous sections of the chapter show the presence of several factors which have positively and negatively affected the implementation of the 2007-2013 RDP. The most relevant are the following:

1. **RDP 2007-2013 was a new programme**, which implied for the administrations in charge of the implementation of the programme, but also for all applicants and beneficiaries, the need to develop knowledge and competences in line with legislative framework imposed by the EU rules. At administrative level, this also implied specific difficulties in managing public procurement procedures (see, as a title of example, the difficulties faced in the management of the NRDN contract framework) and grant selection procedures (see, as a title of example, the need to revise M 312 selection criteria following the EC audit).

2. **National laws approved during the implementation of the programme** positively or negatively affected the programme effectiveness. Among the laws with a positive impact, the new law on public procurement which, despite approved at the end of the programming cycle has increasing the overall administrative effectiveness of the last public procurement procedures launched by the programme. On the opposite, new national laws have in some cases created specific problems to the programme implementation, as in the case of the new law of tourist which, by defining new rules on touristic activities partially incoherent with the criteria set out in the RDP made it necessary for the MA to request a derogation from the new national law.
3. **Economic crisis**, which has generally limited the financing capacity of the applicants and of beneficiaries. Even if it has to be underlined that despite the crisis the Romanian economy was characterized by a constant growth (see GDP growth of +3.4% in 2015). Moreover, at public sector level, a financial assistance mechanism was needed from 2013 until 2015 to ensure a lower state budget effort for the cofinancing.

4. Also bearing in mind the negative effects of the economic crisis, qualitative information collected confirm that the decision to implement a **guarantee scheme** to support the co-financing capacity of the programme beneficiaries can be seen as a positive factor, which has enhanced the overall effectiveness of the programme.

5. **National legislation on public procurement** has negatively affected the procedural effectiveness of the programme, the difficulties encountered by public beneficiaries (delays in implementation of project activities due to the time necessary for solving the appeals filed by losing tenderers) leading in some cases to requests from beneficiaries to terminate the contract.

6. Implementation of NRDN activities was interrupted for a period of about 2 years due to the difficulties encountered in the relationship with the provider, arising from non-compliance by the parties with contractual provisions. The cessation of the entire network could have been avoided, at least partially, if the services and specific activities would have been provided by more than one economic operator, the MA’s option of concluding a framework agreement with a single economic operator for the organization and functioning of the entire NNRD being an assumed risk (negative factor), given the dependence created to a single economic operator.

---

**EQ (S) 8 (effectiveness). To what extent has the programme contributed to the European priorities for rural development 2007-2013?**

The Community’s Strategic Guidelines (CSG) are defined in the Council Decision of February 2006 (2006/144/EC), within the framework of Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 to integrate Gothenburg and Lisbon European Councils’ conclusions. Community strategic guidelines for rural development are the:

- Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector
- Improving the environment and the countryside
- Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy
- Building local capacity for employment and diversification

---

106 At the end of the first stage (first subsequent contract), expenditure declared by IDEL (selected provider) were not consistent with the original budget plan; basically there was an imbalance between the costs declared for the actual activities performed under the contract (very low) and the costs claimed for staff (very high). The budget for the second stage (second subsequent contract) was approved after two years of trials and negotiations between the provider and the MA. Despite the delays in implementing the second stage of the contract, all the activities originally planned (in 2011) were carried out under the second subsequent contract, registering significant results in terms of local actors’ involvement.

• Ensuring consistency in programming
• Complementarity between Community instruments

This report contains a preliminary assessment to be updated in the final report through the findings of the additional quantitative and qualitative analyses (case studies and counterfactual analysis and analysis of result indicators).

Under CSG 1, Axis 1 contributes to knowledge transfer, improving the modernization, innovation and quality of the food chain level and the priority sectors for investments in human and physical capital. Axis 2 contributes to the priorities of CSG 2, namely: biodiversity and preservation of the HNV agricultural and forestry systems, increasing the water quality and mitigating the effects produced by the climate changes. NRDP contributes to achieving the priorities of CSG 3 such as creating the conditions for economic growth and employment opportunities through measure 312, supporting micro-enterprises, measure 313 supporting tourism activities, measure 322 investing in village renewal and development. Measure 312 was designed to address unemployment and to encourage investments in microenterprises, while measure 313 aim at diversifying the rural economy and a stabilization factor of this population through the development of local networks, promotion of the agri-tourism sub-sector and encouragement of the active involvement of women and young people. All the measures of Axis 3 contribute to increasing local capacity and community identity under CSG 4. However for this CSG a specific axis (Axis 4) has been included specifically to improve local governance and animate the endogenous potential for the development of rural areas through the LEADER approach.

NRDP addresses climate change in axis 1, 2 and 3 horizontally. Axis 1 contributes through the principles of sustainable development", and energy efficiency and renewable sources and equipment for the production of energy from renewable sources in agriculture and forestry. Axis 2 contributes to the conservation of biodiversity, while Axis 3 to increasing the attractiveness of rural areas through measure 322 and the 312 for the purchase of equipment for renewable energy production.

In conclusion, it can be said that the program had a positive contribution to the implementation of the European rural development priorities for 2007-2013, even if to a lesser extent compared to the initial plans, as resulting from the findings on the effectiveness of the result indicators.

EQ (s) 9 (efficiency). To what extent were the allocated resources able to produce the expected results and impacts?

For the reasons set out in the answer to the common question no. 13 presented in the previous section, given strictly the elements covered by this specific evaluation question, the conclusion of the evaluation is that the allocated resources were partially able to produce the expected results, because the values achieved for the output and result indicators are, in many cases, lower than the level of financial absorption, demonstrating a generally lower level of efficiency than projected. While, in some cases, this may be due to the poor performance of the measure relative to the initial predicted efficiency level, greater attention is needed in
relation to setting the targets - and reviewing them when necessary - and how to drive the program interventions in order to reach the set targets.

**EQ (S) 10 (efficiency). Could there have been produced the same results and impacts at lower costs?**

This question aims to establish if, beyond the absolute level of efficiency demonstrated by the programme, is there any alternative policy/methodology of intervention that could have guaranteed better results in term of efficiency. The answer to this question is elaborated by the team of evaluators based on the results of the interviews with key actors within the MA and key stakeholders, as well as a desk analysis based on the comparison with similar programmes in other EU member countries. Due to the unavailability for the public, until the moment of the drafting of this interim report, of the final implementation report for the programmes considered for comparison, its results are only partial and based on the planned efficiency of the programmes. As already highlighted, the planned efficiency of NRDP appears higher than the programmes compared.

As highlighted in the answer to EQ (S) 9, implementation of NRDP has anyway shown a lower level of efficiency than the planned one, especially for some interventions. When asked about programme efficiency, some interviewee have expressed opinions on the reasons for its decrease (see EQ.9) as well as their ideas on how better results and impacts could be reached with smaller costs. Improved implementation mechanisms have been suggested for some measures, like the introduction, where possible, of Standard Cost Options, the introduction of stricter eligibility requirements to avoid - in some cases - artificial over budgeting of projects and – in others – artificial proliferation of projects.

To a higher scale, a completely different policy approach has been suggested, in order to reach some general objectives of the programme in a strategically different way, supposedly more efficient: focusing the public resources on creating the infrastructural preconditions for the private investments, especially from foreign investors. Several opinions have been gathered doubting the efficiency of the support to semi-subsistence agricultural firms considering the development objectives of the programme. In general, no interviewee has shown the conviction that the efficiency of the programme implementation could not, to some extent, be improved. On the other hand, it must be considered that this was the first national experience of European funds addressed to the development of agriculture and rural areas, this being essentially also an exercise for developing specific planning and management skills, which has been perceived as a positive input.

Accordingly, the answer to EQ.7 is the following: under perfect conditions, including an important experience with the management system specific to this type of Programme, and a more favorable economic and financial environment, the efficiency degree of the programme could have been higher. However, the first programming period for a recently accessed country has never been performed under perfect conditions. The constantly increasing consciousness of the management system about the margins of improvement of the efficiency is a positive aspect that should be taken in due consideration.
EQ (s) 11 (efficiency). To what extent was the contribution to the Community's priorities and objectives achieved with the allocated funds?

In conformity with EC Regulation no. 1698/2015, the objectives of rural development policy set up by Community strategic guidelines for rural development in the programming period 2007-2013 are:

- Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector;
- Improving the environment and the countryside;
- Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy;
- Building local capacity for employment and diversification;
- Ensuring consistency in programming (maximize synergies between axes);
- Complementarity between Community instruments.

For the purpose of the evaluation of programme efficiency, the evaluation team has considered to focus the analysis on the first 4 objectives:

- Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector;
- Improving the environment and the countryside;
- Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy;
- Building local capacity for employment and diversification;

which correspond to the Axis 1-4 of NRDP.

For each of this objective, the measure in which NRDP has contributed to its achievement with the allocated funds has been established based on the average level of efficiency of the correspondent Axis in the achievement of its result indicators through its individual measures.

From this point of view, Axis 1 shows the lower level of efficiency, with unitary costs of achievement of result indicators 148 times the expected ones. Measures of Axis 2 demonstrate an average level of efficiency very high, with average unitary costs 15% higher than the expected costs; measures of Axis 3 and Axis 4, on the contrary, show an average level of efficiency lower than expected by increasing the expected cost by respectively +550% and +1258%.

Accordingly the level in which NRDP has contributed to EU objectives with the allocated resources can be considered as in line with the approved level of efficiency for what is related to the improvement of the environment (Axis 2); for the objectives related to the increase of competitiveness of agricultural and forestry sector (Axis 1) the improvement of the quality of life in rural areas, the diversification of the rural economy

\[108\] The calculation has been based on a ponderate average with the final financial allocation of each measure as a weight

\[109\] The value, completely abnormal, is determined for a large part, by the presence of the VAB growth as a result indicator for most of the measure, an indicator with a high volatility and sensitiveness to external economic and financial factors.
and the building of local capacity for employment and diversification (Axis 3 and Axis 4) the level has been lower than the expected.

**EQ (S) 12 (efficiency). What factors influenced the cost effectiveness for the implementation of the programme?**

This EQ is aiming to identify the factors that have determined possible underperformance in terms of efficiency during the programme implementation. Considering the conclusions previously presented connected to the level of efficiency of NRDP, it’s actually particularly relevant to understand the causes of the phenomenon, which indicate an important gap of efficiency in implementing the programme. Overall, the assessment of the efficiency of the program’s measures was affected by aspects related to the targets for output and result indicators. The targets were:

- Initially overestimated, due to lack of adequate historical data, NRDP 2007-2013 being the first rural development program after EU accession;
- Outdated / unchanged during implementation, even in those cases of amending the standard contributions within Axis 2, where important changes in the implementation procedures had a clear impact on programme indicators.

A more precise management of the target indicators during the programme implementation would have allowed a fair representation of the performance capabilities of the programme and therefore would have lead to better results of effectiveness evaluation.

Beyond these general aspects, through the evaluation methodologies, have been collected several hints that can be considered possible reasons affecting the efficiency of the Programme, especially for what relates to investment measures:

- An excessive allocation of resources within Axis 1 to semi-subsistence firms, which have eventually not fully absorbed them, and in any case are not seen as contributing in a significant way to the achievement of programme results and impacts in terms of economic development of agricultural sector;
- Not considering the option of land pooling when defining the selection criteria for the calls, thus creating as possible effect the phenomena of artificial division of farms in order to access grants multiple times;
- The attitude of many beneficiaries (with the involvement of their consultants) to submit projects with the highest admitted value, without a real comparison with their need and financial capacity to support the investment;
- The scarce experience and professional preparation of many farmers that got support from the programme, but who were not familiar with the competitiveness and difficulties that may be encountered in the agricultural market.
• Lack of experience with LEADER approach in Romania

Synthesizing, a part of the factors affecting efficiency appear related to the approach taken in the stage of programme management, which can be easily adjusted in the future in order to create optimum conditions for the improvement of the level of efficiency. Another part of the factors are more depending on the imperfection of the market and on the socio-economic problems of the targeted areas which cannot be changed in the short period, but rather contained within acceptable limits.

**EQ (S) 12 (result). To what extent has the programme responded to the needs of direct beneficiaries?**

Axis n.1 has been designed to promote competitiveness and economic performance as well as quality of life and social objectives through:

- Measures promoting knowledge and improving human potential (M111 and M112) of rural workforce and in particular younger farmers;
- Measures restructuring and developing the physical potential and promoting innovation of agricultural holdings (M121), improving the economic value of forest (M122), adding value to agricultural and forestry products (M123), improving infrastructure for agriculture and forestry (M125);
- Transitional measures for Romania for semi-subsistence agricultural holdings (M141), producer groups (M142), and providing advisory and extension services to farmers (M143).

M111 responds to the need of organizing training sessions and information meetings for the direct beneficiaries (service providers) aiming at increasing the skills of final beneficiaries (e.g. rural workforce involved in the agricultural, forestry and agri-food sectors) for improving competitiveness in agricultural, forestry and food sectors, promoting the sustainable use of agricultural land and environment protection as well as acquiring relevant information and knowledge. M112 addresses the need of renewal of farm managers’ generation, benefiting directly young farmers under specific conditions promoting the acquisition of management skills and administrative capacity and increasing competitiveness.

M121 supports farmers, except the producers’ organizations from the fruits and vegetables sector for investments supported through Pillar 1, and producers groups and cooperatives to address the following needs: development of new technologies and procedures, production diversification (organic production), adaptation to Community standards and encouraging association. M122 supports a wide set of direct beneficiaries encompassing: private owners of forests, natural persons or their associations, local communities owning forests in common (with indivisibly property rights) or their associations, communes and municipalities owning forests or their associations, other owners of forest different from the state property, independent forest owners (churches, hospitals, schools) and their associations, mixed associations of any of the above categories. The measure addresses the development needs of improving the economic value of forests and thus addressing the sustainable management of forests through the afforestation work.
with forestry seedlings of high quality. M123 supports in the agricultural sector micro-enterprises and other small medium enterprises and micro-enterprises in the forest sector to address their development needs encompassing: increasing the competitiveness and productivity of food industry and forestry products, increasing innovation and incompliance with Community standards. Overall the measure aims at increasing the added value of the supported units. M125 supports: organizations/ federations of public utility of the agricultural land owners/holders; local councils and their associations; the Administrator of the state forests fund - National Forest Administration – ROMSILVA communes. The aim is to increase infrastructural endowments for developing and adapting agricultural and forestry to the new property structure resulted after the property restitution process in order to increase agricultural and forestry sector competitiveness. M141 supports as direct beneficiaries farmers in semi-subsistence category unauthorized natural persons if they commit to receive the authorization until the date of concluding the financing contract in order to address the development needs of agricultural holdings such as increasing production volumes and diversification of production. M142 supports producer groups as direct beneficiaries in order to increase the limited size of producers in agriculture and forestry encouraging association to improve productivity, quality of products and the access to the market. M143 supports as direct beneficiaries service providers to benefit indirect beneficiaries (farmers) through advisory services for improving farm management and performance of agricultural holdings.

Axis n.2 supported the general improvement of the environment and the countryside through:

- Measures promoting the sustainable use of agricultural lands (M211, M212, M214, M215). Within this set of measures, some of them (M211, M212) produce public goods (e.g. improving the environment and rural space) and promote competitiveness and quality of life and social / public objectives, while others (M214, M215) produce public goods (e.g. improving the environment and rural space) and competitiveness;

- Measures promoting the sustainable use of forestry lands (M221).

M211 addressed as direct beneficiaries farmers in less favored mountain areas to promote a continued use of the land and promoting sustainable farming activities, while M 212 supported farmers in less favored areas other than mountains. M214 supports directly farmers with agri-environment payments to promote the adoption of methods compatible with the protection and the improvement of the environment, including biodiversity, water, soil and rural landscape, while M215 with payments for animal welfare.

Final beneficiaries of measure 221 are private holders of agricultural and public authorities holding agricultural land for addressing through afforestation the needs of environment protection against natural and anthropic disturbances, as well as ensuring recreational functions, on the basis of its multifunctional role.

Axis n.3 aimed at improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversifying the rural economy through ad hoc measures for diversifying the rural economy and mainly involving (M312, M313) and to improve quality of life (M322). Direct beneficiaries of M312 are microenterprises (existing and start-ups), M313 microenterprises, natural personal, communes and associations of communes, NGOs and 322 communes and SMEs (however beneficiaries actually include communes at the end of the programme).
Axis n.4 has implemented the leader approach aiming at promoting the quality of life and social objectives as well as competitiveness and economic performance by supporting local development strategies (M41), interterritorial and transnational cooperation (M42) and running local action groups, acquiring skills and animating the territory (M43). Direct beneficiaries of M41 are local action groups, of 421 local action groups and public/private partnerships, and 43 economic and social partners from the LEADER potential territories, civil society and public partners.

Axis n.5 has been designed to provide technical assistance for the programme implementation having as direct beneficiaries institutions directly involved in the implementation of specific activities related to NRDP 2007-2013, as: Managing Authority and its county structures, PARDF, PAIA, Certifying Body, Coordination Body and other bodies involved in the implementation of the NRDP. Benefits of axis n.5 should interest all the economic operations and other bodies involved in the implementation of the programme. Moreover, within axis n.5, the National Rural Development Network has been supported to stimulate the development of active partnerships between the public, private and non-government sectors, bringing together representatives of local / central public authorities, involved in rural development, local collectivities, NGOs (professional associations, foundations).

From the perspective of the relevance of the programme, the rural areas did not face a significant number of additional needs or their extreme intensification during the period 2007-2013, so that NRDP 2007 - 2013 continued to address the needs of the rural beneficiaries, so originally defined or updated later, throughout its implementation period. However, it has been necessary to adjust certain elements at the level of the Programme in order to optimize beneficiaries' access to funding in line with their needs and the rural development priorities defined at European level. Such changes mainly focused on eligibility and selection criteria (especially for Axis 1 and 3) and financial reallocations between axis and measures (implemented across all axis and measures throughout the implementation period).

From the perspective of the effectiveness of the measures:

- Axes 1 and 3 are generally characterized by an average effectiveness related to the payments made (directly correlated with the effectiveness of the output indicators for the total volume of investments) and lower in terms of the number of finalized projects (being directly correlated with the effectiveness of the output indicators on the number of supported beneficiaries for most measures); in relation to the result indicators, the level of effectiveness is low for both axes.
- Axis 2 is generally effective and highly performing considering all the dimensions analyzed (payments, output indicators and result indicators).
- Axis 4 is generally characterized by a low effectiveness in relation to the number of projects finalized in the selected LDS, but the payments made within were about 95% of the total financial allocation; in terms of LAG beneficiaries, effectiveness has been high in the light of all the dimensions (completed projects, payments made, output indicators); considering the result indicators, the level of effectiveness is low.
- Axis 5 is characterized by high financial effectiveness. The effectiveness of output and result indicators could not be calculated as programme targets were not defined for these indicators.
From the perspective of efficiency in output and result indicators, this was generally lower than the initial expectations. Axis 2 performed best with respect to the calculated efficiency for the output and result indicators.

By summing up the findings from the evaluation of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme, it can be concluded that the programmed was built to meet the needs of all direct beneficiaries as identified from the socio-economic analysis of the rural environment. However, the capacity to address these needs during the implementation period was higher for beneficiaries of Axis 2 measures (high effectiveness and efficiency), LAG beneficiaries supported through Axis 4 measures (421, 431) and beneficiaries of the technical assistance measure (511).

**EQ (s) 14 (result). To what extent were the programme objectives achieved for the group of direct beneficiaries?**

The analysis of the result indicators shows that axis n.1 does not reach the target values foreseen in the last version of the Programme (version XVI, approved in November 2015), for almost all the result indicators, even if many cases the targets planned for the result indicators have been reduced compared to the initial version of the Programme (version I, approved in February 2008).

Even if less than expected in the programming phase (i.e. the initial target for the result indicator R1 Number of participants who have successfully completed a training activity in the field of agriculture and / or forestry was reduced from 326.038 participants to 92.000 participants).

The measure regarding professional training, information and dissemination of knowledge (M111) has produced positive effects in terms of capacity building for rural workforce and young farmers encompassing increased management capacities (e.g. use of business plan) and marketing skills, acquired competences on agriculture practices (organic production, adoption of new techniques and standards), improved understanding of the legislation.

In a similar way, even if to a lesser extent compared to the initial estimation, measures were designed to aid the restructuring and developing the physical potential and promoting innovation of agricultural holdings (M121), improving the economic value of forest (M122), adding value to agricultural and forestry products (M123), improving infrastructure for agriculture and forestry (M125). Both M121 and 122 have benefits in terms of networking opportunities and capacity building, while M121 has contributed to improving water quality and reducing production costs and M122 to increasing volume of raw materials production, productivity and networking with other partners. M123 has increased productivity and added value (in particular with the guarantee scheme), ability to increase safety at work, capacity building and contributed to increasing renewable energy production, while M125 improved and increased infrastructure in forestry and improved accessibility for farmers and facilitated the agricultural reuse of abandoned land. Overall the guarantee scheme in M121 and M123 have produced more economic benefits in terms of added value and
jobs, as well as in terms of debt and investment capacity compared to the other beneficiaries not receiving the guarantee scheme by providing the necessary collaterals for funding the private cofinancing at project level. Counterfactual analysis made for Axis 1 shows a direct net effect in the increase of VAB in beneficiaries compared to the performance of non-beneficiaries in the period 2010-2015 (just in the case of M123; in the case of M112 and M121 there were no statistically significant results regarding the increase of GVA at beneficiary level, compared to non-beneficiary), showing the direct contribution to the impacts of the programme in terms of economic growth, labour productivity.

Transitional measures for Romania for semi-subsistence agricultural holdings (M141), producer groups (M142), and providing advisory and extension services to farmers (M143) have generated limited effects in relation to reaching the set targets (ie addressing a lower number of beneficiaries compared to the targets planned in the last approved version of the NRDP). However, the beneficiaries surveyed through case studies have highlighted the positive effects generated by the implementation of the measures, in particular connected to capacity building regarding: increased awareness and knowledge of EU standards, acquired skills on the business plan, introduction of new techniques, increased administrative capacity.

Axis n.2 is rather effective in reaching the 2015 target values of the result indicators (according to the last version of NRDP 2007-2013, approved in November 2015), except in measure 221, which suffers from a low effectiveness in financial, output and result indicators (even if the targets for the result indicators were significantly reduced in the last version of the NRDP compared to the first approved version of the Programme - March 2008). Measures 211 and 212 contributed to reversing biodiversity decline and maintenance of high nature value of farmland and forestry, while 214 and 221 (the latter less than expected in the programming phase) also to improving water quality and combating climate change.

M211 supported farmers in mountains and M212 in less favored areas other than mountains in continuing their activities in the designated areas and, in the same time, to acquire knowledge and skills on the Good Environmental and Agricultural Conditions.

M214 supported farmers by providing compensatory payments, by promoting the use of extensive agricultural land management practices that ensure sustainable use of natural resources (eg organic farming techniques, grazing, banning or limiting the use of chemical fertilizers, the use of organic fertilizers) And improving the conservation and conservation of natural capital, while M215 ensured compensatory payments to improve animal welfare, i.e. to prevent specific diseases and to reduce the animal mortality rate, but also to reduce the environmental impact of the breeding farms of swines and poultry.

The payments from M221 were addressed to private landowners and local public authorities owning agricultural land (even if less than expected in the programming phase), which contributed to improving their land management capacity and forestry products, in orde to promote and protect biodiversity, water and soil.

Axis n.3 is in general ineffective for the result indicators except for “Increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses” in measure 312. Despite the effectiveness in both financial and output
indicators, recording a limited effectiveness in terms of procedures, the measure 322 does not meet its own targets. This can be possibly explained by the limited procedural effectiveness and by the impact of external factors (e.g. economic crisis) reducing public resources and hindering the rural and infrastructural development.

M312 promoted the diversification of rural economy (e.g. developing services to population or by producing renewable energies, which would not be possible without NRDP), jobs increase and capacity building of local actors in terms of cooperation capacity and new approaches to local development. M313 benefited to the local actors of rural development by diversifying tourism activities (i.e. leisure activities, investments for accommodation and small facilities), increasing rural tourism (new services or stable/increasing touristic flows), jobs, and capacity building of local actors.

Overall the guarantee scheme in M312 and M313 have produced more economic benefits in terms of added value and jobs, as well as in terms of debt and investment capacity compared to the other beneficiaries not receiving the guarantee scheme by providing the necessary collaterals for funding the private cofinancing at project level.

Counterfactual analysis of both M312 and M312 for enterprises show a positive impact estimated as a net effect through the variation of the full time equivalent employees in the period 2009-2015 by using counterfactual methods based on propensity score matching and difference in difference. Beneficiaries (SA and SRL) performed better than non-beneficiaries.

The comparison of target and achieved values shows ineffectiveness of axis n.4 regarding the economic performance, while being effectiveness in training. As a matter of fact, the axis n.4 is not effective for all the common result indicators on jobs creation and for the additional result indicator regarding the development of innovative actions. On the other hand, for the other two additional indicators on training the axis n.4 is more effective. Sub-measures 411, 413 and 421 contribute to collaboration with LAGs, even if 421 at interregional level with the promotion of joint events and initiatives. Sub-measures 431.1 and 431.2 show the capacity of LAGs to involve local actors and successful training activities.

Even if jobs created are lower than expected, the counterfactual analysis shows a net effect, thus a positive performance in statistical terms of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries. For the sub-measure 411, the impact is estimated as a net effect through the variation of the full time equivalent employees in the period 2009-2015 and in the period 2012-2015 by using counterfactual methods based on propensity score matching and difference in difference. The two variations have been considered for the following reasons: 2009-2015 variation ensures comparability with other measures, while 2012-2015 is more relevant because most project applications have been submitted in 2012. The estimate is statistically significant in terms of p-value with both t-test and shows positive results in terms of full time equivalent employees in the period 2009-2015 and in 2012-2015. Since the variation in the period 2012-2015 is higher than in all period 2009-2015, it is clear the added value of the measure in creating employment benefits. The impact of the sub-measure 413 is estimated as a net effect through the variation of the full time equivalent employees in the period 2009-2015 and in the period 2012-2015 by using counterfactual methods based on propensity score
matching and difference in difference. The two variations have been considered for the following reasons: 2009-2015 variation ensures comparability with other measures, while 2012-2015 is more relevant because most project applications have been submitted in 2012. The estimate is statistically significant in terms of p-value with both t-test and shows positive results in terms of full time equivalent employees in the period 2012-2015, while it is not statistically significant in 2009-2015. Since the variation in the period 2012-2015 is higher than in all period 2009-2015, it is clear the added value of the measure in creating employment benefits.

Measure 511 was one of the measures affected by a significant reduction of the budget, compared to the initial allocation. At the beginning of the implementation period, it had a budget representing 3.77% of the total, and finally came to have a budget which represents only 1.42% of the total budget. The evolution of the additional result indicators demonstrates significant results in terms of the number of computer equipment purchased, the number of informative materials for promotion and information on NRDP and EAFRD, the number of persons trained through the actions financed by the technical assistance measure and the number of auxiliary personnel paid by the technical assistance measure. Even though for these indicators no program-level value targets have been set, qualitative information gathered through the evaluation process confirms the importance of these results obtained to ensure an appropriate management of the Programme.

EQ (s) 15 (result). How did the expected results reflect the European Community priorities of rural development 2007-2013?

The NRDP has been the first initiative under the EARDF since Romania joined the EU. In line with Community provisions, the Programme aimed to contribute to the fulfillment of each priority for Rural Development set in the Council Decision of February 2006 (2006/144/EC) for the 2007-2013 programming period as follows:

- Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector
  This general objective has been pursued mainly through Axis 1 that enabled to improve farmers’ managing competences, to increase productivity and infrastructures as well as beneficiaries’ networking skills, through capacity building actions as well as investments. Evaluation analysis highlighted that axis 1 did not reach the target values of almost all the result indicators, except additional ones relating to M122, which proved to be particularly effective in improving hectares devoted to forestry management/productions. This axis underperformed for intangible results related both to training and capacity building (M111) and for other economic indicators (R.2, R.3, R.4), but it succeeded in improving the economic value of the forests (M122).

- Improving the environment and the countryside
  Axis 2 had the highest fund absorption and reached, in most cases, the expected results. Implementing the specific requirements of the axis allowed beneficiaries to acquire knowledge on the Good Environmental and Agricultural Conditions and on new techniques of land management (e.g. by promoting organic agriculture, limiting grazing, manual mowing or mowing with light equipments, prohibiting or limiting the use of chemical fertilizers, using minimal soil mining methods, using organic fertilizers, applying composted manure) along with the implementation of works for the establishment and maintenance of forest plantations, these being
sustainable methods of using resources which are contributing to the preservation of natural resources. Also, by increasing animal welfare, M215 has helped to improve environmental factors on the one hand and to increase food quality.

- Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy

Axis 3 aimed to improve the quality of life in rural areas through the diversification of rural economy (mainly fostering tourism and promoting renewable energies) as a mean for creating new job opportunities and increasing rural areas’ attractiveness. The analysis of both output and result indicators showed a poor performance of this axis, except for the “Increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses” pursued by M312, that was somewhat effective. Nonetheless, the Programme clearly supported beneficiaries in developing services to population, which would not be possible without NRDP and that need to be further implemented during the current programming period.

- Building local capacity for employment and diversification

This crosscutting objective, involving both public and private beneficiaries, has been pursued through the joined implementation of all Axis, which foresaw training activities aimed to develop beneficiaries’ capacity to manage and implement projects as a basis for future initiative, especially under EU funds. All in all, the Programme enabled beneficiaries to learn and apply new techniques and to introduce organization, process and products innovations. Projects also enhanced firms’ capacity to cooperate among them so as to increase the changes of job opportunities and economy diversification. The constitution of LAGs under axis 4 has been particularly effective in in the horizontal priority of improving governance at local level and mobilizing endogenous potentials in rural areas, through public-private partnerships and the support to firms in implementing their projects under axis 1, 2 and 3.

- Ensuring consistency in programming

Ex post evaluation analysis has highlighted the internal coherence of the NRDP as the structure of Axis and Measures, including synergies between them, are coherent with the strategy and objectives foreseen by the Programme. During implementation, the strategy has been rather modified to be adapted to changes occurred in the meantime and to better fit new needs at territorial level. Even though the SWOT Analysis has not been update, the intervention logic of the newly introduced measure fiches (in versions VI, VIII, XII) is clearly justified, including the exact identification of the needs justifying such intervention.

- Complementarity between Community instruments

NRDP strategy is clearly defined and in line with the Cohesion Policy and European Strategies, without any overlapping with other EU financial instrument. Interventions funded by the NRDP are clearly addressed to rural areas and Axis are able to produce multiple effects. The NRDP contributed to the objectives and priorities of the Community using the allocated resources to improve the environment (Axis 2), increase competitiveness of agriculture and forestry sectors and improve the quality of life in rural areas, diversifying the rural economy and developing the local capacity to increase employment levels and economic diversification (Axis 1, Axis 3 and Axis 4).

As stressed in the previous parts of this Ex post evaluation report and in the responses of other Evaluation Questions, the performance of the NRDP has been highly influenced by external factors, such as the economic crisis that deeply affected rural areas, and internal changes, like budget modifications and reallocation of
funds among measures (or within sub-measures), that led to delays in the finalization of projects and did not allow the whole fulfillment of target values, which, in some cases, were overestimated.

Nonetheless, NRDP overall strategy complied with the EU 2007-2013 priorities for Rural Development.

**EQ (S) 16 (impact). To what extent the changes emerged within the programme area can be attributed to the programme itself?**

The main changes emerged in the programme area regard economic growth (measured by the gross value added growth), labour productivity (measured by ratio between gross value added and employees), jobs creation and environmental issues such as reversing biodiversity decline, maintenance of high nature value of farmland and forestry, improvement of water quality, contribution to combating climate change.

Axis 1 has significantly contributed to the economic growth of the primary sector and the food industry and to labor productivity in the food industry, agriculture and forestry, mainly through the measures 121, 123 and 125. Axis 1 had moderately contributed to the restructuration of the diary sector, mainly through the measures 121 and 123. Overall, the axis has contributed to a lower extent to increasing renewable energy production in particular through M 123.

Axis n.1 was expected to contribute to economic and labour productivity growth. However, many external factors have hindered the axis implementation. As a matter of fact, most of the result indicators of axis n.1 do not reach the planned target values, even in the context in which the targets for multiple result indicators have been reduced in the final version of NRDP (approved in November 2015) compared to the initial version of NRDP (approved in March 2008). The main external factors were the economic crisis, the limited beneficiaries’ financial capacity and difficulty to find the necessary collaterals on the credit market failure, the low quality of consultancy services reducing the possibilities for applicants to obtain funding, the foreign markets crisis more relevant for measures 121 and 123 and the modifications in legislation. In spite of the external factors hindering the implementation, axis n.1 has contributed to economic growth (increased gross value added) and labour productivity growth. Programme result indicators show the increase in the gross value added of 655 million euro mainly due to the contribution of investment measures 121 and 123 in 2007-2015. Measures 121 and 123 contributed to increasing the gross value added, since, according to Eurostat, gross value added in primary sector in the Romanian economy increased by about 590 million euro, while in food industry by 680 million euro and in secondary and tertiary sector of about 29454 million euro. Moreover, the counterfactual analysis of M 123 shows a net effect of the measure: beneficiaries performed better than similar (matched) beneficiaries in the period 2010-2015 for the increase in gross value added. In what concerns labour productivity, there has been a general increase in agricultural sector, forestry sector and food industry, with the agricultural sector showing the best performance in terms of annual growth rate. Since labour productivity represents the ratio between gross value added and the workforce, its fluctuations may depend on economic and employment dynamics. In the period 2007-2015, in the agricultural sector, the
labour productivity growth largely depends on the decrease of employees (in annual working units). In the forestry sector, both gross value added and number of employees (in annual working units) increased in the period 2008-2013, but gross value added had a double growth compared to the number of employees, thus ensuring labour productivity growth. In the case of the food industry, productivity increased at lower rates than the agricultural sector, half of productivity growth was due to VAB increase and half to a lower number of employees in the period 2007-2015.

Axis n.2 is rather effective in reaching the 2015 target values of the result indicators, except in measure 221, which suffers from a low effectiveness in both financial and output indicators. Other factors negatively affecting the programme implementation were related to the variability of legislation in force, which for instance limited the implementation of M214 in 2015 compared to what occurred in the previous years. Overall, the axis n.2 contributes to maintaining biodiversity, maintaining high nature value of farmland and forestry, improvement of water quality, combating climate change.

Axis n.3 was expected to impact on the growth of gross value added and jobs creation. Axis 3 is in general ineffective in achieving the final target value of result indicator except for “Increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses”. Overall the axis 3 (M312 and M313) has created 151 million euro of additional gross value added in non-agricultural sector, largely due to M312 (which contributed directly to diversification of the rural economy, through the creation and development of micro-enterprises) and to a lesser extent due to the development of economic activities within the tourism sector (M313). The main external factors hindering the implementation of the axis encompass economic crisis, unpredictability of the legislative framework, reduction of public resources (which limited the financial capacity of public beneficiaries funded through M322, required to start and sustain the investment until the amounts were reimbursed through the programme). Counterfactual analysis shows that, beneficiaries of both M312 and M313 perform better than non-beneficiaries in jobs’ creation in the period 2009-2015.

Axis n.4 was designed to contribute to economic growth and jobs creation, by stimulating through the LEADER approach and territorial animation of local action groups the initiative of local stakeholders, capacity building of local actors, increasing the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors, promoting the quality of rural life/ diversification. Counterfactual analysis focuses on the performance of the set of enterprises involved in the projects and other non-beneficiaries. The counterfactual analysis shows that beneficiaries of measures 411 and 413 performed better than non-beneficiaries in terms of number of jobs created between 2009-2015.

**EQ (S) 17 (impact). What are the direct and indirect effects of the programme?**

Axis n.1 directly contributed to increasing the value added and productivity of the agricultural sector, forestry sector and food industry and indirectly to the economic growth of the country. The main direct effect of M111 is capacity building of rural workforce (e.g. increased management capacities, marketing skills,
acquired competences on agriculture practice, improved understanding of the legislation) and the indirect effects regard economic growth and productivity thanks to the improved human capital.

The main direct effects of M112 encompass capacity building of young farmers and renewal of farm managers’ generation. Indirect effects encompass increase in value added and productivity of agricultural sector.

The direct effects of M121 and M123 are economic growth of the primary sector, food industry, and productivity growth of food industry, agriculture and forestry, while M125 improved and increased infrastructure in forestry and improved accessibility for farmers and facilitated the agricultural reuse of abandoned land contribution to economic growth of primary sector and M122 increased the volume of raw materials production, productivity and networking with other partners in the forestry sector.

The direct effects of M142 concern economic growth. M141 supports farms entering the market, while M143 contributed to improving management capacity of agricultural holdings.

Axis n.2 directly contributed to maintaining biodiversity, maintaining high nature value of farmland and forestry, improvement of water quality, combating climate change and indirectly to create the conditions for a better quality of living in rural areas as well as to adopt a sustainable development model.

Axis n.3 directly contributed to creating jobs and indirectly diversifying rural economy, creating new local services and to the valorization of environmental resources and cultural heritage. Axis n.3 is in general ineffective for the result indicators except for “Increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses” in measure 312. Direct effects of M312 are business diversification and promotion of non agricultural activities, increasing or maintaining employment at the beneficiary’s level, with positive results in terms of economic performance (e.g. income increase, new services promoted). Moreover, the measure has stimulated the capacity building of beneficiaries, in what concerns competences in finding new clients, competition, access to funding, costs of production, availability of skilled experts and knowledge of EU regulations and procedures.

M313 has contributed to diversifying investments in rural areas to promote the development of tourist accommodations and facilities in rural areas, with positive effects at local level on rural tourism and employment. Agri-tourism is the main sector for additional employment opportunities for young people and women. Counterfactual analysis shows the net effects in terms of jobs created of M312 and M313 in the period 2009-2015 by using counterfactual methods based on propensity score matching and difference in difference. The estimates are statistically significant and shows positive results in terms of increase of full time equivalent employees of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries. Thus, beneficiaries perform better than comparable non-beneficiaries.

In spite of its limits in implementation and effectiveness, M322 has contributed to the encouragement of tourism activities, through the restoring of existing cultural heritage, the building of new infrastructure and the promotion of new social and cultural services and/or the improvement of local infrastructure networks.
Axis n.4 directly contributed to jobs creation and the improvement of the local governance, indirectly contributing to rural economic diversification and to creating a higher involvement of private paterns in local development strategy through LEADER approach. Axis 4 played an important role. It directly contributed to jobs creation, with a net effect of M411 and M413 as demonstrated by the counterfactual analysis. Indirectly it promoted the dynamics of rural areas and facilitated the creation of networks among local stakeholders involved in the local development strategies, more dynamic and more keen to take advantages of the opportunities offered by the programme. Moreover, the counterfactual analysis shows that M 411 and 413 had directly contributed to the job creation in the rural areas.

**EQ (S) 18 (impact). What multiplier effects has the programme produced?**

First of all, the guarantee scheme promoted a multiplier effect of public resources, calculated as the ratio of the amount allocated to the guarantee scheme (EAFRD and national allocation) and the amount guaranteed. The multiplier effect of public resources reached 230,55%, calculated as the ratio of the amount guaranteed and the amount allocated to the guarantee scheme. The ratio is over 300% for measures 312 and 313 and close to 300% in 123 under the guarantee scheme for agricultural sector. Comparing the two lots, for the agricultural guarantee reaches 234% and in the non agricultural 210% due to a limited performance of the non agricultural portion of measure 123 (129%).

Secondly, NRDP supported another type of multiplier effect, promoting the productivity growth of primary, agriculture, forestry and food industry sector and at the same time the diversification of rural economy with more innovative activities, supporting and developing business activities and increasing jobs and gross value added. The programme in this way addressed the needs of economic development of less favored areas, by promoting a more efficient economic organisation, stimulating the transition from agricultural to non agricultural sectors promoting the start-up and development of enterprises, tourism activities and infrastructural development in rural areas and increasing the productive capacity and productivity of the agriculture sector.

**EQ (S) 19 (impact). What are the external factors that influenced the effects of the programme?**

Various external factors influenced the NRDP. First of all the financial capacity of the programme beneficiaries, which negatively affected the implementation of all programme axes, but in particular of the investment measures (axes 1 and 3). This difficulty was exacerbated by the economic crisis, which made even more difficult for the programme to implement the projects due to the difficulties of the applicants and beneficiaries in ensuring the adequate collaterals to the financial market.

Beside the difficulties related to the financial capacity of the beneficiaries, programme authorities have underlined other two key factors which have generally limited the programme effectiveness. These are the limited experience of the programme applicants and to the general low quality of the consultancy services.
at their disposal. These two factors has made extremely difficult for the programme to dispose of a sufficient number of good project proposals.

Another relevant factor negatively affecting the implementation of all programme measures is the unpredictability of the legislative framework, both European and national which has obliged to modify and review already implemented measures in order to make them consistent with the changing legislative context.

For what concerns the presence of specific external factors negatively affecting the implementation of specific programme measures, according to the information collected from the case studies and the focus groups, the implementation of Axis 4 has been hampered by the difficulties encountered by LAGs in taking steps to obtain bank guarantee letters, due to certain provisions specific to the legal form of organizing a LAG. While in the case of axis 2, the absence of management plans for nature 2000 areas has limited the effectiveness of specific projects implemented under axis 2.

**EQ (S) 20 (factors of success and failure). What were the main inherent / contextual factors that stimulated NRDP interventions influencing positively the objectives?**

Three contextual / inherent factors stimulated NRDP interventions influencing the objectives and supporting the achievement of the targets. The new law on public procurement which was approved at the end of the programming cycle contributed to increasing the overall administrative effectiveness of the last public procurement procedures launched by the programme. Moreover, two factors were useful to address the lack of financing capacity to implement the programme. The financial assistance mechanism was useful to from 2013 until 2015 to ensure a lower state budget effort for the cofinancing. Last but not least the successful experience of FARMER financial engineering instrument under the SAPARD programme has been a useful source of information for designing the new guarantee scheme under NRDP which facilitated the programme and project implementation under axis n.1 and n.3

**EQ (S) 21 (factors of success and failure). What are the main objective / subjective factors that weakened NRDP interventions, influencing negatively the objectives?**

The main objective / subjective factors weakening NRDP interventions, influencing negatively the capacity to achieve the objectives encompass:

- Programme factors. First of all, budget modifications implied a reduction in the number of contracted and finalised projects and the capacity of the programme to deliver the expected results and impacts as foreseen in the programming phase. Secondly, according to the qualitative data collected during the evaluation process, the complexity of administrative procedures (connected to the submission of projects and, at a later stage, to their implementation) was a challenge for beneficiaries.
• Beneficiaries’ factors. First of all, beneficiaries attested a low capacity to deal with programme complexity (e.g. difficulties of understanding of procedural aspects implementation, lack of capacity also due to poor consultancy) and needed collaterals and/or private cofinancing to start-up and finalised their projects, in particular if related to investments.

• Context factors. Macro-economic conditions reduced available public resources to support public investments in infrastructure, to support the general programme implementation (national cofinancing) and to support with additional programmes and resources the same objectives as those in NRDP, economic crisis exacerbated the financing and economic development challenges for rural areas.
EQ (S) 22 (factors of success and failure). To what extent have the objective / subjective factors encouraged / weakened the achievement of programme objectives and contribution to the Community’s priorities?

Subjective and objective factors have affected the achievement of programme objectives and contribution to the following objectives of rural development policy set up by Community strategic guidelines for rural development in the programming period 2007-2013: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector; Improving the environment and the countryside; Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy; Building local capacity for employment and diversification; Ensuring consistency in programming (maximize synergies between axes); Complementarity between Community instruments.

Programme budget modifications have weakened the capacity of the programme to achieve the objectives and the contribution to Community priorities as well as the complementarity between Community instruments. For instance, the low capacity of the programme to contribute to jobs increase implied a lower contribution to the community priority in terms of equality of opportunity and sustainable development. Moreover, the lower investment capacity of local authorities hindering the implementation of infrastructural investments (e.g. M322) limited the capacity of the programme to contribute within the sphere of demarcation with ERDF and CF to transport infrastructure and water infrastructure and the contribution to the development of microenterprises (Axis n.1 and n.3). At the same time, the successful implementation of the guarantee scheme contributed to the complementarity with the ERDF (SOP) ensuring guarantees for the business development. Moreover, financial assistance has allowed ensuring the financing capacity to implement the programme in the 2013-2015 period and thus contribution to all the Community priorities including complementarity with other instruments. Furthermore, the introduction of M322e in 2013 represented an opportunity for the programme to contribute along with ERDF to broadband infrastructure.

Programme administrative obstacles hindered the capacity of the programme to disclose new development opportunities for the a more productive agricultural, forestry sector and food industry (axis n.1) and to diversify the economy in rural areas (axis 3). Moreover, the limited capacity of beneficiaries not used to the rules of rural programme or the insufficient professional qualification of their consultancy support were also an other weakness on the way of achieving programme objectives and community priorities.

Three contextual / inherent factors stimulated NRDP interventions influencing the objectives and supporting the achievement of the targets. The update of the law on public procurement in 2011 contributed to increasing the overall administrative effectiveness for public procedures procedures launched by the public beneficiaries (amending the legislation in the field of public procurement in 2011 by modifying the assessment factors considered at the level of the terms of reference - the switch to quantifiable assessment factors). Moreover, two factors were useful to address the lack of financing capacity to implement the programme; 1) the financial assistance mechanism was useful to from 2013 until 2015 to ensure a lower state budget effort for the cofinancing; 2) the successful experience of FARMER financial engineering instrument under the SAPARD programme was the backbone for designing the new guarantee scheme under NRDP which facilitated the programme and project implementation under axis n.1 and n.3

Financing obstacles, such
as lack of collaterals or cofinancing, lack of credit on the market to support NRDP projects, in particular investments, which created more difficult conditions for beneficiaries to implement / finalise their projects and thus to improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector as well as the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy and building local capacity for employment and diversification. On the other hand, the guarantee scheme has been a useful means to support programme beneficiaries in implementing and finalising their activities.

Adverse macro-economic condition and the economic crisis limited the capacity of ensuring local development and exacerbated the financial conditions for public administrations and farmers and microenterprises in rural areas.

Other adverse conditions. Rural and remote areas suffered from adverse conditions, as low infrastructural endowments, decreasing public resources, depopulation trends which were relevant factors hindering the results and impact of the programme, in particular axis n.3 and 4 trying to contribute to better and more solid economic development of rural areas. Other adverse conditions were adverse weather conditions, low economic profitability of some agricultural activities, lack of transport infrastructure and service. These adverse conditions complicated the development and growth of agricultural sector as well as the diversification towards new services (e.g. tourism sector) of rural economies.

Implementation of the program and contribution to Community priorities have been adversely affected by both subjective factors and objective factors. In particular, improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector as well as improving the quality of life and diversifying the economy in rural areas have been adversely affected by the financial crisis that has limited the capacity of private beneficiaries to identify the financial resources needed to ensure co-financing within the funded projects. Moreover, the contribution to Community priorities and the achievement of the objectives of the program were influenced by administrative obstacles and, in the case of specific measures, the reduction of budgetary allocations.

In conclusion, the factors listed above had a significant impact on the increase of competitiveness of agricultural and forestry sector (Axis 1 objective) and the diversification of the rural economy and the improvement of the quality of life in the rural area (Axis 3 objective). The objectives of improving the environment and the rural area (Axis 2 objective) and the start-up and operation of local development initiatives (Axis 4 objective) were less influenced by the factors previously defined.

Regarding the Community priorities, the factors presented above have significantly influenced the Program's contribution to improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector; Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging the diversification of the rural economy; Strengthening local capacity for employment and diversification. The Community priorities concerned with ensuring programming coherence (maximizing synergies between axes); complementarity of Community instruments; improving the environment and of the rural area have been influenced by these factors to a lesser extent.
EQ (s) 23 (factors of success and failure). To what extent have the objective / subjective factors affected the results / impact of the programme?

The following objective and subjective factors affected the results / impact of the programme:

- Programme budget modifications. Some measures have been affected by budget modifications, which hindered the capacity of the programme to deliver the expected results and impacts as foreseen in the programming phase;
- Programme administrative obstacles, regarding the objective and subjective challenges of programme implementation of the programme, such as problems related to the complexity of the programme rules and procedures (e.g. reimbursement and payments) and the capacity of beneficiaries (e.g. difficulties of understanding of procedural aspects implementation, lack of capacity also due to poor consultancy);
- Financial obstacles, such as lack of collaterals or cofinancing, lack of credit on the market to support NRDP projects, in particular investments, which created more difficult conditions for beneficiaries to implement / finalise their projects. In this regard, the guarantee scheme has been an opportunity to support programme beneficiaries in implementing and finalising their activities;
- Adverse macro-economic conditions. Public administration investments have not increased between 2011 and 2014 and decreased afterwards, showing that the general conditions were not favorable to public investments, as infrastructure in measure 322. Moreover, the economic and financial crisis has not allowed a significant growth of the agricultural sector and has exacerbated the financial conditions for public administrations and in rural areas;
- Other adverse conditions. Rural and remote areas suffered from adverse conditions, as low infrastructural endowments, decreasing public resources, depopulation trends which were relevant factors hindering the results and impact of the programme, in particular axis n.3 and 4 trying to contribute to better and more solid economic development of rural areas. Other adverse conditions were adverse weather conditions, low economic profitability of some agricultural activities, lack of transport infrastructure and service. These adverse conditions complicated the development and growth of agricultural sector as well as the diversification towards new services (e.g. tourism sector) of rural economies.

Thus, it is noted that the programme’s results / impact were affected by factors that could not be controlled through the implementation of the Program (external factors), especially the financial crisis, which limited the capacity of private beneficiaries to identify the financial resources needed to ensure co-financing for the funded projects. In conclusion, the above-mentioned factors have mainly influenced the results covered under Axes 1, 3 and 4 and the impact on the economic growth generated by the programme measured through GVA and the number of new jobs created. The results planned under Axis 2 were not significantly influenced by the above-mentioned factors, and the environmental impact was as expected.
EQ (S) 24 (efficiency). To what extent have the implementation mechanisms contributed to achieving the programme objectives and facilitated the access of beneficiaries to the programme?

This question aims at establishing the role of the managing system in the achievement of the results of the programme and, in particular, to understand if it has been a factor of efficiency or inefficiency. The intention is to identify those procedural steps / issues that are considered to have the most influence on the cost of interventions, both at programme management level and at beneficiary level, as well as those elements which were considered a positive factor by facilitating programme and project implementation.

The main methodological research tool was the semi-structured interviews with the MA and stakeholders in the territory. Another relevant methodological tool for providing an answer to this evaluation question was the case study at the level of the direct beneficiaries of NRDP 2007-2013.

Based on information gathered, the implementation system and mechanisms of the programme is not a factor that generates inefficiency. However, according to most inputs collected, some improvements could be taken into account.

Conclusions of the interviews with the authorities involved in programme management reflected the problems encountered during the implementation of NRDP, especially during its early years of implementation, which were generated by some requirements of the national legislation and difficulties in harmonizing the content of the programme with the administrative procedures regulated at national level (for example, when updating the national legal provisions concerning the classification of rural agro-touristic accommodation structures according to the occupied surface). These difficulties were however resolved over time (the provided example supposed granting an exemption from law for the beneficiaries of NRDP), there were no administrative problems identified during the programme implementation, which had not been resolved until the end of its implementation period.

Reimbursement and paying procedures were seen as difficult and heavy (in case of Axis 1, 3 and 4) due to the high volume of requested documents, and the introduction of the full electronic correspondence with beneficiaries (possibility of submitting online funding applications) was seen as a great achievement towards administrative simplification. Regarding Axis 2, there were reported no specific problems in relation to the procedures for obtaining payments per area (or per headage).

From experts and stakeholders outside the “machine” of NRDP implementation system, the aspects to be improved in the administrative efficiency are related to ensuring a uniform interpretation of guidelines and instructions among the different public bodies.

EQ (S) 24 (efficiency). To what extent were the selection criteria appropriate for the compliance with the principle of non-discrimination and equal opportunities?
The approach of the programme to gender equality and non-discrimination

Chapter 15 of NRDP establishes the approach of the Programme to equal opportunities and non-discrimination. According to what there established "The objective of eliminating all forms of discrimination between men and women applies to all stages of development, implementation, to monitoring and evaluation stages."

Moreover, "Measures of the National Rural Development Program complies with Community secondary legislation on preventing all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The support offered through this programme is accessible to all potential beneficiaries, once they fulfill certain preset eligibility criteria "Looking at the operational implementation of the programme, NRDP tackles the non-discrimination and gender equality principles with 2 different approaches:

- first, a “guarantee approach” is generally applied: for all the procedures for project selection, within all the PAs, NRDP guarantees that these will be performed without any discrimination based on sex, rasă, origine etnică, convingeri religioase sau credințe, invaliditate, vârstă sau orientare sexuală.
- second, but limitedly for some specific measures, within axis 3 and axis 4, NRDP goes beyond, declaring a “promotional approach”, with selection criteria that will be articulated in a way to give priority, in funding, to certain categories of beneficiaries (women, young people).

The first, the guarantee approach, should be seen as the simple guarantee of the respect, by the selecting procedures of NRDP, of the existing EU and national legislation on gender equality and non-discrimination. In this sense, this approach should be considered as compulsory and minimal: as a matter of fact, should any selecting procedure have a discriminatory content, this could be considered an irregularity based on those legislations.

On the contrary, the second level shows the intention of the Programme to perform a more proactive policy in favour of gender equality and non-discrimination, going beyond the minimal requirements; this happens by using the programme allocations, besides their primary purpose, also to actively promote the involvement of women and groups subject to discrimination in the dynamics of rural development.

In order to provide an answer to the evaluation question, the evaluators have performed the following two-folded analysis:

- on the first “guarantee” approach, a desk analysis of the evaluation criteria used during the project selection processes, to verify the absence of any discriminatory criteria, followed by an analysis on the available gender-split indicators, to see if the effectiveness of the programme is reflected equally for all the relevant groups/categories of persons monitored;
- on the second approach, a desk analysis of the positive/promotional criteria used in axis 3 and 4, to evaluate their promotional potential. Unfortunately the absence of gender split output indicators for
axis 3 and 4 prevents from extending the analysis to the effectiveness of the criteria to promote a higher participation of women and groups at risk of discrimination among the applicants.

**The effectiveness of the guarantee approach.**

The first analysis, focused on the applicant guidelines of all the PAs, easily demonstrates the absence, from the selection criteria, of any criteria that might have a discriminatory effect on the applicant, by limiting the access to funding for women or groups at risk of discrimination.

The evaluation grids for Axis 1, as foreseen by the Programme document, do not contain any positive criteria against discrimination, with a partial exception for Measures 121 and 141, where a part of the score (respectively 8 and 30 points) are allocated to applicants having an age lower than 40. This should not anyway be seen as a measure taken against the discrimination of young people, but rather as the operational tool to implement one of the key policies of rural development in Romania, which is the decrease of the average age of farmers. Although some potential applicant could, on the contrary, perceive this criteria as been discriminatory against old farmers, it is the EU rural development itself to incentivate it, based on economical and statistical evidence on the structure of the European rural firms.

Besides this exception, evaluation criteria for axis 1 and 2 are exclusively based on technical aspects related to the projects, which can be assessed as completely neutral in terms of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation of the applicant.

The non-discriminatory effect of the selection criteria is also confirmed by monitoring data. For some measure within axis 1, NRDP has established targets for outputs indicator specifically split per gender/age. It is the case of measure 111 (n. of participants to the training sessions), 112 (n. of farmers supported), 143 (n. of counselled farmers), 141 (n. of semi-subs. firms receiving assistance). The following table shows that, in every case where data are available, the female-related component of the indicator has recorded an achievement level much higher than the overall value of the indicator.
Tabel no. 58 Achieved targets for the gender related indicators within the Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>General % of achievement</th>
<th>% of achievement of the female component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>N. of participants</td>
<td>42,02%</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>N. of farmers supported</td>
<td>93,68%</td>
<td>330,26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>n. of semisubs. firms receiving assistance</td>
<td>83,04%</td>
<td>261,24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>n. of counselled farmers</td>
<td>31,43%</td>
<td>60,81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data processed by the evaluation team, AIR 2015

These values confirm that, at least in terms of gender equality, selection criteria did not have a discriminatory effect, and that, on the contrary, women have accessed the related measures in a much greater extent than expected.

The effectiveness of the proactive approach

The second analysis has focused on the evaluation criteria for axis 3 and 4, for which the Programme, as mentioned, had announced a proactive approach to improve the involvement of women and group at risk of discrimination in the rural economy.

The analysis of the evaluation grids for measures 312 (support for micro-enterprises in non-agricultural sectors) and 313 („Encouraging the tourism activities”) reveals indeed the presence of a criteria which gives priority to “projects run by women / young people aged up to 40 years at the date of projects submission”, allocating respectively 10 and 5 points over 100 to these categories.

The weight of this criteria for measure 312 is indeed heavy (for example, the similar measure activated by ERDF in non-rural areas (“POR 4.3”) allocated only 6 points to the contribution of the project to gender equality and non discrimination).

On the other hand, the inclusion in the same criteria of both women and young people under 40 years of age limits the gender equality purpose of the approach, which is mixed up with the general objective of keeping young people active in rural areas (adopted also for measures 121 and 141), which, in our opinion, does not have anything to do with non-discrimination. In concrete terms, women are here in competition with younger men, compared to who, even if young themselves, they don’t get any additional points. Splitting the same points between 2 different criteria, one for women and one for young people, irrespective from their respective weight, would have appeared as a more effective approach to gender equality promotion.

The case of measure 322 “Village renewal and development, improving basic services for rural economy and population and valorisation of the rural heritage” is different. Not being open to private beneficiaries, but to
local authorities and other bodies in charge with the local infrastructure, the correspondent evaluation grid can not give score based on the sex of the beneficiary or its belonging to protected categories. Nonetheless, the analysis of the criteria shows important elements of a pro-active approach towards non-discrimination:

- up to 10 points are attributed to projects based on the degree of poverty of the area they refer to. Indirectly, this means a priority for projects addressing the most disadvantaged groups of the rural population;
- up to 10 points are awarded to projects that provide solutions for first setting up and equipping of childcare centers (nurseries, kindergartens, assistance after the school program - "after school", centers for the elderly and people with special needs.

On the other hand, no specific mention is made neither in the evaluation nor in the eligibility grid about the need to guarantee the access to the newly created infrastructures to people with handicap.

As mentioned before, NRDP took a strong commitment in taking into account of gender equality and non-discrimination in the procedure for the selection of GALS for the implementation of axis 4.

The selection procedure that was implemented not only respected this commitment but has been characterized by a remarkable attention to these aspects.

The evaluation grid for the selection of the GALS contained, among other the following relevant priority criteria:

- Groups with representatives of ethnic minorities (To receive points each partnership must include at least one organization of ethnic minorities) "with a score of 5 points
- Groups with a balanced representation of youth (Youth will be people aged up to 40 years. A balanced representation of young people will be considered optimal and will receive the maximum score if at least 25% of the legal representatives of organizations forming the partnership are young)", 5 points
- Groups with a balanced representation of women (A balanced representation of women will be considered optimal and will receive the maximum score if at least 25% of the legal representatives of the organizations forming the partnership are women", 5 points.

The attention paid in the grid to each of the 3 elements of potential discrimination (sex, minority, age) and the fact that they have been scored independently, represents for sure an effective measure of promotion of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, that for many aspects appears much advanced, to the extent of being potentially considered a best practice in the field.

The fact that the selection procedures of the GALS ended up, at the end of the programming period, with the selection of basically all the applicant groups, does not diminish the value of the approach adopted.

In conclusion, the analysis leads to the following reply to the evaluation question:
The selection criteria adopted for the various measures of NRDP have not had any discriminatory content or effect, in relation with the sex, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation of the applicants. For this reason they can be considered fully compliant with the principle of non-discrimination and equal opportunities. Monitoring data split by gender, when available, show a much higher participation of women to the programme than expected.

Without getting to a “mainstreaming” approach, in some cases (Axis 3, axis 4) the programme has tried to go beyond the simple guarantee of respecting the principles, adopting approaches of pro-active promotion of gender equality and non discrimination. While for the selection of GALs in axis 4 this resulted in a remarkable set of relevant criteria, in relation to minorities, gender and age, for axis 3 the effort has been only partial, with the gender equality criteria being introduced not independently from the one related to the age of the applicant. The absence of gender-related indicators for axis 3 and 4 reduced the possibility to assess the effectiveness of the most pro-active approaches adopted by the Programme in relation to gender equality. The accessibility for disabled person in the infrastructure funded by the programme does not enter the scope of the selection criteria.

EQ (s) 26 (guarantee scheme). To what extent has the guarantee scheme financed by NRDP 2007-2013 contributed to achieving the programme objectives?

The guarantee scheme contributed to the achievements of the NRDP 2007-2013 objectives by addressing three major challenges in the credit market in the relevant sectors for rural development:

- **Asymmetric information** in the market of loans due to the fact lenders do not know exactly the borrower and encounter high costs on the assessment of the creditworthiness.

- **Lack of appropriate collaterals**. In order to finance part of the investments funded by NRDP, project beneficiaries need collaterals which are not always available. In particular, the guarantee scheme provided the necessary guarantee to support programme beneficiaries (farmers, rural holdings and enterprises) in the access to market of loans. The guarantee schemes were designed as an ad hoc instrument, specific for agricultural and non-agricultural beneficiaries of the NRDP. This had a positive impact on the capacity of the programme beneficiaries to finalize the investments supported with EU funds. This result confirms the positive experience of SAPARD when the guarantees had played a crucial role for supporting the projects financed through pre-accession funds.

- **Exacerbating credit market conditions**. The guarantee schemes ensured the flows of loans at advantageous conditions with remarkable socio-economic effects in a period of crisis.

- **Stimulating the financial ecosystem** by capitalizing on the successful “Farmer” programme experience. In other terms, the guarantee schemes of the NRDP also had the objective to improve the financial ecosystem and the confidence of the financial intermediaries as well as increase their skills and competences for supporting the specific sector of agriculture and designing appropriate products. In this regard, it was designed to capitalize on the ”Farmer” programme successful experience launched with the SAPARD programme.
The main benefits of the guarantee schemes were the following:

- **Employment benefits.** 10,200 jobs\(^{110}\) were created and maintained during the period 2010-2014;
- More “beneficiaries”. Given the possibility to reuse the funds within the schemes, from the guarantee system benefited a larger number of entities than a simple non-repayable grant, with a total number of 797 final recipients\(^{111}\) and 1043 guarantees until the end of 2015 (the final number of projects guaranteed is 797, according to the information contained in AIR 2015; the number of beneficiaries of guarantee with finalized projects until the end of 2015 is 462);
- **More effective and efficient policy delivery.** Furthermore, the use of financial instruments represents a more market-oriented approach to allocate resources with a more efficient and effective reach of programme objectives. Case study and statistical analysis (see the annex) show that the guarantee schemes contribute to a better economic performance (e.g. GAV and full time equivalent employees) and in the case of the non-agricultural scheme also to larger investments than without the guarantee.

The guarantee scheme contributed to efficiency gains (reducing production costs); promoted the adoption of a business model not only finalized to cost reduction, but oriented to quality of production ensuring the necessary financing support for the investments and reducing the bottlenecks in terms of access to financing; created new opportunities of increasing internal skills and having access to skilled staff. Moreover, the guarantee scheme contributed to higher debt and investment capacity in the period 2009-2015 of the final recipients of NRDP compared to the beneficiaries not receiving the guarantee.

---

\(^{110}\) According to the case study made within the project Fi-compass, regarding the Rural Credit Guarantee Fund in Romania, for the period 2007-2013, available at: https://www.fi-compass.eu/sites/default/files/publications/case_study_rural_credit_guarantee_fund_romania_0.pdf

\(^{111}\) See Annex C to the study, section 7
EQ (s) 27 (guarantee scheme). To what extent has the guarantee scheme financed by NRDP 2007-2013 facilitated the implementation of projects financed by the programme by increasing the accessibility of farmers and rural SMEs to credit sources from financial-banking market?

There were 797 final recipients of guarantees, approximately 65% being financed from Axis 1 (357 projects M121, 125 projects – M123) and 35% being financed from Axis 3 (245 projects – M312; 38 projects – M313). The guarantee scheme:

- **Ensured guarantees for 265 million euro**, 92% of which for the agricultural sector (M 121, M123 agriculture);
- **Released 407 million euro of credits**, of which 85% for the agricultural sector;
- **Contributed to a multiplier effect of public resources** of 230,55%, calculated as the ratio of the amount guaranteed and the amount allocated to the guarantee scheme.
- **Produced EAFRD leverage effect**, calculated as the ratio of the credits released and EAFRD allocation, of 4,41. For one euro of EAFRD, 4,41 euro of loan on the credit market has been released.
- **Created EU fund leverage of 5,62**. It is a ratio calculated as follows: at the numerator there is the sum of the programme allocation and credits minus the commissions of the fund management and at the denominator the EAFRD allocation. This ratio gives 5,62. This means that after subtracting the commissions, for each euro of EAFRD 5,62 euro have been invested either by the programme (through guarantees) or by the credit market (through loans).

The questionnaire surveys applied to beneficiaries of the measures 121, 123, 312 and 313, shows that:

- 2/3 of the beneficiaries of both guarantee scheme and grant would have had problems of credit without the guarantee from the NRDP;
- The guarantee scheme has been crucial for NRDP beneficiaries to have access to the credit market in particular until 2014, and after 2015 also to ensure a smoother project implementation and finalization of investments regardless the measure under analysis
- The guarantee scheme has been well targeted, since 45% of the respondents not receiving the guarantee scheme can ensure the adequate financial coverage through their own resources and / or collaterals, while 45% did not have the need of credit. The remaining 10% were not aware of the guarantee scheme of NRDP.

The fund management has been effective in terms of advertisement and marketing, since less than 10% of the beneficiaries of the grant not receiving the guarantee were not aware of the existence of financial engineering instrument. However, awareness of beneficiaries of the existence of the guarantee scheme has slightly worsened from 2008-2014 period to the last year (2015). As a consequence, for the future implementation of financial instruments, it seems important to focus more on the advertising and marketing of the fund, even if already at good level. The fund could improve its capacity in the future to further reach potential applicants and final recipients to address the lack of awareness of the small portion of beneficiaries.

EQ (S) 28 (guarantee scheme). To what extent has the banking market considered useful to introduce this instrument in order to support the agricultural sector and SMEs in rural areas?
Asymmetric information implies high risks and administrative costs and reduce banks and financial intermediaries’ interest to support investments. The guarantee scheme reduced the risks and the administrative costs for the lenders, or at least mostly transferred them to another entity (the public sector). As a consequence, the guarantee scheme has led to an increase of the openness of the market credit institutions (eg. banks) towards loans for microenterprises, SMEs and farmers in rural areas. The evaluation also shows that, until the time of the evaluation, the resources allocated to the guarantee scheme have been efficiently managed with a default rate of 8.73% considering all the executed guarantees, lower than what expected in the Annual Implementation Report of 2011 (18.98%). A full and complete assessment of this rate will be possible after the last guarantee has been terminated, considering that the currently calculated default rate, which is less than half of the estimated target, could increase in the coming years, until the termination of the last guarantee provided.

**EQ (S) 29 (guarantee scheme). To what extent has the guarantee scheme influenced the offer of financial products on the market in order to support the programme beneficiaries?**

The guarantee scheme has represented the main financial product in Romania for the rural sector. No other instruments of this kind existed, until the moment it was introduced. The financial institutions have created banking products tailored to the needs of NRDP beneficiaries in order to ensure, by completing the beneficiaries’ own resources, the financing gap needed for the implementation of the project. The development of these products was due to the specific guarantee schemes that facilitated the relationship between financial institutions and beneficiaries of the Programme. In spite of the improvements of the last years also due to the contribution of the guarantee scheme (SAPARD and NRDP), the coverage of the financial services in rural areas and for agriculture remains lower compared to the rest of the country and access to bank loans to SMEs and start-ups (in agriculture) is still a challenge, in particular for farms at subsistence and semi-subsistence.

**EQ (S) 30 (guarantee scheme). To what extent have the funds made available for the implementation of guarantee scheme involved additional resources to ensure the implementation of projects?**

The two guarantee schemes are funded completely through EAFRD (80%) and national funds (20%) with an actual allocation of 115 million euro in 2015 without any private contribution. Nevertheless, the NRDP allocation of 115 million euro ensured guarantees for 265 million euro and generated approximately 408 million euro in loans. Each EAFRD euro has contributed to produce 4.41 euro of loan and, subtracting the commissions, 5.62 euros of programme support (guarantees) and loans (private contribution). This helped the implementation of projects and facilitated the collection of the necessary resources for covering the private cofinancing.
IX. Conclusions and recommendations

IX.1. Coherence between the implemented measures and objectives; balance between the various measures of the programme

Conclusions resulting from the evaluation of programme relevance

- originally, the programme approached the needs identified at the territorial level based on the socio-economic analysis; in a later phase, the needs identified initially were complemented during the implementation of the programme: thus, through the changes made to the programme, there have been undertaken actions in order to better approach the needs, including the changes in eligibility and selection criteria and financial changes (transfers of resources between different measures and axes).
- in general, it can be confirmed the internal coherence of the NRDP in terms of consistency of general objectives with funded interventions and planned achievements, excepting the measure regarding the support for semi-subsistence farms, for which the implementation has not been achieved in full conformity with the approach initial planned for achieving the overall goals.
- most of the measures defined and implemented through the Programme are consistent with the expected impact and results.
- the NRDP 2007-2013 has actively contributed to mitigate or resolve the specific problems of agriculture and rural sectors.

Conclusions resulting from the evaluation of the environmental aspects

- Related to Axis 2:
  g. targets of output and result indicators were generally met or exceeded (difficulties in this regard were encountered only on measure 221), the objectives planned at axis level being largely achieved
  h. HNV area (million hectares) was relatively constant (according to the specialty study carried out at MA’s NRDP level, there has been a minor decrease from 2.4 - in 2007 to 2.37 - in 2015); When analyzing the HNV surface there should be considered that NRDP effects are present and favorable (ie maintaining HNV, changes in HNV areas), but the indicator’s evolution can’t be exclusively reported to the effects generated by the programme implementation, the implementation period being relatively short (7 years) in relation to the time needed for the occurrence and monitoring of environmental factors.
i. regarding the evolution of impact indicators, it is noted that according to the study results on calculating the present value of indicator "Index of farmland bird populations in Romania", the indicator decreased from 1 (in 2010) to 0.97 (in 2015); the decline is minor possibly because there were negative effects in the short term; also, the decreasing value of index with only 3% compared to 2010 indicates the achievement of proposed objectives - to maintain environmental quality;

j. the calculated value of the index bird population during 2010-2015, according to the calculations made within the specific study contracted by MA NRDP, can be mainly attributed to the analysis of a relatively short series of statistical data (its monitoring following to be continued during the programming period 2014-2020), not being possible to identify the specific generating factors determined by the implementation of NRDP, which influence the population trends of targeted bird species recorded at national level. In what concerns the potential effects of NRDP 2007-2013 implementation, management requirements formulated within the Programme aimed at maintaining the habitat of bird species characteristic to Romanian farmland, in order to preserve those species.

k. direct / indirect beneficiaries, currently does not see the effects of the application of Axis 2 measures on the environment, a potential explanation being the lack of specific training on environmental themes;

l. Following the analysis of data available after the implementation of NRDP 2007-2013, there were reassessed the scores awarded according to the Environmental Report of NRDP 2007-2013 and noticed that negative scores have a clear tendency to decrease.

- Related to axis 1, 3, 4:
  c. Defining general and specific objectives for these axes was carried out considering the alternative of improving qualitative environmental factors;
  d. All projects funded through these axes, which were considered to have a potential impact on the environment, respected environmental standards imposed by EC and national legislation, following the procedure of environmental impact assessment; therefore the effects on the environment are considered positive or at least neutral.

- Related to the strategic assessment of the programme environmental impact:
  b. Subsequently to the programme implementation, the strongly negative scores (eg, those associated to GHG emission or air emission) are falling, which means that measures implementation was generally having direct positive environmental results.
IX.2. The degree of achieving the specific objectives of the Programme and the objectives set in the National and Community Strategy

With reference to the objectives defined in the European priorities for rural development, there were concluded the following:

- Axis 1 contributes to knowledge transfer, improving the modernization, innovation and quality in the food chain and priority sectors for investment in physical and human capital.
- Axis 2 contributes to preserving biodiversity, HNV farming and forestry systems, water and climate changes.
- Axis 3 and, especially, M 312 and 322 have contributed to creating conditions for opportunities for growth and employment, while measure 313 aimed at diversifying the rural economy. All the measures of axes 3 and 4 have helped increase the local capacity and community identity.
- NRDP is addressing climate change in axis 1, 2 and 3 (horizontally).

Conclusions resulting from the evaluation of programme efficiency

- The financial resources have been planned at the level of NRDP, predicting a high level of efficiency, but their actual efficiency following the implementation of the Programme was lower than expected. Most of the results implied higher costs than initially planned, in some cases, values initially estimated being multiplied. This result can be mainly explained by an important initial overestimation of the programme indicators target, as well as the impossibility of revising the initial methodology setting out the targets for output and result indicators. In perfect conditions, even under conditions of considerable experiences in the management of such a programme, as well as in a more favorable economic and financial environment, the results obtained by NRDP could have been obtained with a reduced level of public expenditures. However, the first programming period for a EU acceding country has never had such perfect conditions. The continued experience gained from the management system in terms of actions aimed at improving efficiency is a positive element that should be considered accordingly.
- The NRDP contributed to the objectives and priorities of the Community using the allocated resources in accordance with the achieved level of effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving the environment (Axis 2); for the objectives related to increasing the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry sectors and improving the quality of life in rural areas, diversifying the rural economy and developing the local capacity to increase employment levels and economic diversification (Axis 1, Axis 3 and Axis 4), the efficiency was lower than expected.
- Some of the factors that influence the effectiveness appear to be connected with the decisions taken in the programming stage and in the programme management during the implementation phase,
which can be easily adjusted in the future, in order to create optimal conditions for improving efficiency. A set of other factors depend to a large extent on market imperfections and socio-economic problems of territories subject to intervention, so is not possible to adjust them in a reduced period of time, for this factors being necessary to monitor the framing of the generated effects within acceptable limits.

- The system and mechanisms for programme implementation have actively contributed to achieving the programme objectives, including by measures to facilitate the implementation of projects by beneficiaries. Administrative efficiency of the programme management system appears as satisfactory, especially considering the specific conditions of being the first RDP for the country.

Conclusions resulting from the evaluation of programme effectiveness

- The financial data show that the spending level is in general consistent with the objectives initially set, even if effectiveness varies across the different axes and measures.

- The level of achievement of output indicators show a mixed picture, with all axes characterized by the presence of output indicators with final lower of higher performances compared to the values planned in the last approved version of the Programme (version XVI, approved in November 2015).

- Data on procedural efficacy of axes 1 and 3 indicate that the programme is generally rather ineffective. Procedural effectiveness is influenced by two intrinsic factors at programme level, namely: the number of rescinded projects and the number of projects transferred to NRDP 2014-2020 through the transition process. The evolution of completed projects number, compared with the initially estimated number, is influenced by the limited procedural effectiveness of measures 125, 141, 142 and 313.

- Data on financial effectiveness presents a generally positive situation at programme level, especially in what concerns Axis 2; the only axes within which existed measures with reduced financial effectiveness were 3 (M313) and 4 (M421).

- Data on output indicators effectiveness showcase a heterogeneous situation for all the axes, about half of the output indicators of each axis recording values within the margin of positive effectiveness.

Conclusions resulting from the evaluation of programme results

- Various external factors affected the implementation of NRDP. Global competition and climate changes have been relevant external challenges threatening the rural development and agricultural production affecting prices, demand and supply, and the conditions of production. Reduction of public spending have complicated the implementation of the measures which needed a public co-financing, such as measures increasing infrastructural endowments (e.g.
M322). Economic crisis has reduced the financial capacity of programme beneficiaries from both the public and private sector and increased the difficulties of the applicants and beneficiaries in ensuring the adequate collaterals to cover their own co-financing or for making expenditures during the implementation period of the projects.

Beside the difficulties related to the financial capacity of the beneficiaries, programme authorities have underlined other two key factors which have generally limited the programme effectiveness. These are the limited experience of the programme applicants and the general low quality of the consultancy services at their disposal. Moreover, two other factors have affected negatively the programme implementation: the complexity of public procurement legislation and the unpredictability of the legislative framework.

- The implementation of NRDP provided various intangible results, which can not been fully measured. NRDP has played a pivotal role in increasing beneficiaries’ capacity to develop, manage and implement project activities (for instance, through the elaboration and use of the business plan) and the knowledge of Community regulations and procedures as well as developing useful networks for rural and local development.

Capacity building and networking are the two main types of intangible effects of the programme, which are relevant to explain its results and impact, but which were not quantified and systematically monitored through the monitoring system.

For instance, in axis 1, capacity building was a benefit of the measures promoting awareness and training (e.g. M111), supporting semi-subsistence holdings and young farm managers’ (e.g. M141 and M112) and strengthening investments (e.g. 121, 122, 123). In axis 2 programme measures increased the awareness and knowledge of the beneficiaries of the good agricultural and economic conditions (GAEC) and of forest land management (M221).

The Programme has also contributed to promoting networking among firms along with fostering cooperation between public and private actors through LAGs. Networking was an effect of various priority axes: M142 supported the set-up of producer groups and axis 4 the adoption of the leader approach as a cornerstone of the local development in rural areas.

- Not all of the result indicators have met the targets. The comparison between target and achieved values of the result indicators shows the limited effectiveness of the programme, particularly for most of the measures within axis 1, 3, 4. On the other hand, axis 2 is effective in reaching the target values of the result indicators, except for measure 221. Axis 1 underperforms in terms of results for more economic related indicators (R.2, R.3, R.4) and performs better in terms of increase of economic values for forests (M122) - however, the contribution of the axis to improving the economic competitiveness of the forestry sector at national level is very limited given the low forest area addressed by the measures compared to the total area of the forestry fund national. M112 fails in producing the expected amount of investments, while M121 reaches 8% of the target and M 125 realises only 37% of foreseen operations. Ineffectiveness in financial and output indicators explains the underperformance of M 123, M 141 and M 142 in reaching the result indicators’ targets.
Axis 2 is rather effective in reaching the 2015 target values of the result indicators, except in measure 221, which suffers from a low effectiveness in both financial and output indicators. The other measures benefit from an effective implementation of financial and output indicators (M 211, M 215) or at least a partially effective implementation demonstrated by some of the financial and output indicators (M 212, M 214).

Axis 3 is in general ineffective for the result indicators except for "Increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses" in measure 312. In spite of the effectiveness in achieving the targets of both financial and output indicators, the measure 322 does not meet the targets of the result indicators. This can be possibly explained by the limited procedural effectiveness and by the impact of external factors (e.g. economic crisis) reducing the resources of public administration for investments in rural infrastructure.

Axis 4 has not been effective in terms of common result indicators regarding jobs creation (R8.1., R8.2.) and for the additional result indicator regarding the development of innovative actions. On the other hand, for the other two additional indicators on training axis 4 is effective.

Measure 511 was affected by a significant reduction in the budget compared to the initial allocation. In the case of this measure, no targets have been set for the additional result indicators.

There have been limitations which influenced the capacity to attract beneficiaries. Administrative procedures and delays in application and implementation phase along with the advertising campaigns have hindered the programme implementation and the achievement of the target of the result indicators.

Focus groups and case studies highlighted the difficulties for the access to the programme due to the low capacity and experience of applicants / beneficiaries, complexity and novelty of administrative procedures, delays in the implementation and difficulties in establishing RNDR. Moreover, even in the case of the guarantee scheme for which advertising and marketing activities have had a significant success, there is space for future improvements.

Conclusions resulting from the evaluation of programme impact

- The Programme had a positive impact on the increase of added value and productivity in the rural environment. Axis 1 directly contributed to increasing the value added and productivity of the agricultural sector and food industry and indirectly to the economic growth of the national economy. Axis 1 of NRDP addressed the need to overcome subsistence levels of productivity in both the agriculture and forestry sectors by pursuing the challenging objective of improving the competitiveness of rural areas, by increasing farmers’ knowledge and skills (M111), modernizing agricultural holdings (M121) as well as increasing afforestation and promoting the sustainable management of forests (M122). Moreover, through M 112, the axis promoted the renewal of the generation of farm managers and increased the competitiveness of food industry, especially through
the introduction of innovation and the adaptation of enterprises to EU standards (M123). Increase of competitiveness also implied an efficient use of agricultural lands based on the new property structure (M125), including new infrastructures and well-organized agricultural holdings (M141) and workforce, through the promotion of organized groups of producers’ (M142). In spite of the rather low effectiveness (compared to the initial targets), the 2007-2013 NRDP was capable to contribute to increasing productivity of the economy within the rural environment. In particular measures 121 and 123 had a significant impact on the increase of the gross added value in primary sector.

- The Programme had a positive impact on environment. Axis 2 directly contributed to reversing biodiversity decline, maintenance of high nature value of farmland and forestry, improvement of water quality, combating climate change and indirectly to create the conditions for a better quality of living in rural areas as well as to adopt a more sustainable development model.

- The Programme had a positive impact on job creation. Despite the programme did not achieve the targets for the thematic result indicators (R8.1., R8.2.), both axis n.3 and 4 have contributed to creating jobs. In particular, axis n.3 directly contributed to creating jobs and indirectly to diversifying rural economy, creating new local services and to the valorisation of environmental resources and cultural heritage, while axis n.4 directly contributed to jobs creation and the improvement of the local governance, indirectly contributing to rural economic diversification and to creating a higher involvement of private partners in local development strategy through LEADER approach. Most of new jobs were created thanks to M312 and M313 and regarded males and females >25 years old. M313 is the measure creating more jobs in relative terms for females (61% of the jobs are for female) and for young people (under 25 years representing 20% of new jobs. However in absolute terms, M312 has created more jobs for young people (890) and females (2034). Agro-tourism is the sector employing more females and young people in absolute terms among the industries detailed in the report. Counterfactual analysis shows the capacity of the programme to create net benefits in terms of jobs through M312, M313, M411, M413. Comparing beneficiaries with non-beneficiaries, beneficiaries of both M312 and M313 perform better in jobs’ creation in the period 2009-2015. Similarly, estimates show the net effect in terms of job creation of both measure 411 and 413 in the period 2012-2015 when most projects have been initiated and finalised.

- The guarantee scheme had a positive contribution to the overall implementation of the Programme. The guarantee schemes had a positive impact in economic and financial terms, addressing the second most important challenge for getting a loan during the programming period of NRDP, which is the lack of collaterals. Moreover, the guarantee scheme contributed to improving the willingness of banks to provide a loan for beneficiaries located in the rural environment, thus increasing the debt capacity and investment capacity of the beneficiaries and contributing to a better economic performance. The guarantee schemes allowed attracting necessary private resources for project implementation and simplifying the access to credit market for the private beneficiaries within NRDP 2007-2013.
Conclusions resulting from the evaluation of programme’s contribution to the principles of non-discrimination and gender equality

- the selection criteria adopted for the various measures of NRDP have not had any discriminatory content or effect, in relation with the sex, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation of the applicants. For this reason they can be considered fully compliant with the principle of non-discrimination and equal opportunities.
- Monitoring data split by gender, when available, show a much higher participation of women to the programme than expected
- In some cases (Axis 3, Axis 4) the programme pursued a proactive approach in favour of non-discrimination and gender equality, with particularly remarkable efforts in terms of Axis 4.
IX.3. Recommendations based on evaluation results, including potential proposals for the update / modification of the NRDP 2014-2020

**Recommendations resulting from the evaluation of programme relevance**

- Increased attention to the effective implementation of measures aiming the development of the forestry sector and of measures addressing the improvement of the human capital (through expert advice or training)
- Check and adjust the intervention logic at the time of adopting changes on measure fiches (insertion / deletion), so all the interventions proposed in the programme have a quantifiable correlation with the output and impact indicators.

**Recommendations resulting from the evaluation of programme efficiency**

- The adjustment of the methodology for establishing the values of the output and result indicators developed by the programme, in terms of planning realistic targets and targets correlated with the lessons learned in 2007-2013 period and with the evolving of the socio-economic context
- Initiating a dialogue with the EC, whenever the monitoring system shows significant differences between the targets and the achieved values of indicators, respectively when a revision of the proposed targets appears to be justified and necessary.
- Formulating and clearly defining the eligibility and selection criteria within the guidelines, in order to avoid the subjective interpretation of fulfilling the conditions required, in the phase of evaluating the applications.

**Recommendations resulting from the evaluation of programme effectiveness**

- Improving the monitoring system - It is important to stress that the effectiveness of any programme is strictly connected to the capacity of ensuring an adequate monitoring of the projects and actions implemented. In this sense, the analysis of the 2007-2013 monitoring system shows that, despite significant improvement, there is still room for improving the quality of the data collected at project level. Consequently, the evaluators recommend to further invest in the optimization of the IT system used for monitoring the NRDP. Considering the fact that this step is crucial for the correct evaluation of the progress of the Programme, there must be taken into account the impact that any error at this stage may create in the management of the activities. The necessary infrastructure (IT system) must be built in a way to avoid any under dimension which could result in slowing down the process of data collection and thus compromising the monitoring process. The other main component of this
mechanism, represented by the administrative body (human component), must benefit from the necessary training for collecting and handling the quantitative information. Thus, it is recommended, in the moment of developing the administrative capacity, to collaborate with organizations (public or private entities) specialized in the collection, handling and analysis of data. In particular, since many elements related to “capacity building” are referring to the central level, a strong coordination with the OP Administrative Capacity (OPAC) is needed.

It is highly recommended to foresee a set of indicators able to quantify also the immaterial effects, based on quantitative (i.e. financial resources and number of participants to training activities, number of partnerships created) and qualitative (focus groups, interviews, etc.) methods and sources.

Recommendations resulting from the evaluation of the programme results

- **Set-up of a warning system** - The ex-post evaluation of the 2007-2013 programme shows that in several cases the programme was not capable to meet the planned result indicator targets. This can be explained by an important initial over-estimation / under-estimation (for axis 4) of the programme indicators targets, as well as by the impossibility to review the initial methodology setting out the output and result indicators. To contrast this risk in the 2014-2020 the evaluators recommend to define a “warning system” to alert the programme in advance whenever the monitoring system shows significant differences between the targets and the achieved values of indicators. To this end, it is necessary to verify whether baseline values are built on a well-defined methodology, including the identification of appropriate quantitative and qualitative information sources that may be consulted (and eventually updated) during the 2014-2020 programming period for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

- **Adopt ad hoc arrangements to attract beneficiaries** – The difficulties in achieving the planned targets can be also explained by the limited capacity of advertising campaigns to reach the beneficiaries, by the length of the administrative procedure as well as the workload required to beneficiaries limiting the attractiveness of the programme and consequently its capacity to produce the targeted results. In this sense, the administrative burden and cost of the access to the measures represent a specific threat. To contrast this risk evaluators recommend to:
  
  - put in place an integrated administrative simplification strategy.
  - monitor carefully the future implementation of financial instruments and the advertising and marketing campaigns organized by the bodies implementing the financial instruments.

- **Plan specific actions to improve the functioning of the NRDN and adopt a mitigation strategy for the risks associated with the implementation and functioning of the network.**
• Adopt a wider approach for involving partners in innovation process - Moreover, as the 2007-2013 experience shows, the main challenges to the achievement of the expected results are the following external factors: increasing global competition, climate changes for agricultural production, reducing the share of public spending. To tackle the challenges related to external factors, the NRDP shall invest by involving all the interested partners. For instance, in the field of innovation, NRDP should invest not only in innovation as result of technological transfer but also in social innovation through a full involvement of all the quadruple helix\textsuperscript{112} partners, encompassing business sector, public sector, third sector and financial sector. Therefore, it is important, on one hand, for NRDP to focus on and reflect about the innovation system as a whole (relations between University, research centers, farmers and agricultural enterprises) and, on the other hand, to provide room for social experiment in the rural areas in the form of community services, public-private partnership, ICT welfare etc. Larger involvement of all the partners might represent an opportunity to increase the leverage of the EU funds and thus ensure more effectiveness and impact of the programme.

**Recommendations resulting from the evaluation of the programme impact**

• Mapping the secondary and compensation effects - In the perspective of the implementation of the 2014-2020 programme, it is recommended a particular attention to the secondary effects of the increase of the productivity (in particular in the primary sector). More precisely, it is recommended to verify to what extent did the productivity increase as a result of the reduction of number of jobs (if the increase in productivity is resulting from fewer jobs).

• Measure to what extent the employment benefits are accompanied by productivity growth and are sustainable overtime – It is recommended to further evaluate to what extent the jobs’ increase in rural areas have affected productivity in non-agricultural sectors and have reduced the risk of depopulation of rural areas.

• Define specific forms of support (e.g. financial instrument) for directly tackling the difficulties of beneficiaries for accessing financing sources. One important obstacle to the competitiveness of the entire rural economy is the access to financing for small and micro farmers. In this sense for what concerns the 2014-2020 programme, it is recommended to define specific forms of support for directly tackling the difficulties of beneficiaries for accessing financing sources, not only in the form of guarantee schemes but by also envisaging the possibility to implement additional type of financial instruments (ie micro credit or equity).

\textsuperscript{112} Quadruple helix is a participatory approach that includes key factors from central government, academics, the industrial environment, and civil society.
Recommendations resulting from the evaluation of the environmental aspects

- Concluding agreements / insurance protocols to cover both the correlation of databases with relevant information for analyzing the effects of various interventions on the environment and the dissemination of scientific studies at inter-institutional central level, to be able to analyze and interpret from an integrated perspective, the effects on the environment;
- Continue the monitoring of the selected indicators and the reporting to the authorities, to determine the impact of the NRDP 2007-2013 on the environment, on an extended period of time.

Recommendations resulting from the evaluation of programme’s contribution to the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination

- The progressive adoption of a gender mainstreaming approach should be considered, by introducing gender-related criteria in more measures, in all the PAs;
- Gender-split indicators should be adopted and monitored wherever relevant, especially for measures where positive approaches are adopted;
- Selection criteria having the purpose of promoting gender equality and non-discrimination should be introduced with an independent score from any other criteria.
- Accessibility for disabled persons to infrastructures funded by the programme should be considered in the selection criteria, at least in terms of minimal respect of the legislation in force.
Tabels

TABEL NO. 1  TYPES OF DIRECT BENEFICIARIES WITHIN THE NRDP 2007-2013 .......................................................... 22
TABEL NO. 2  TYPES OF INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES OF NRDP 2007-2013 ................................................................. 26
TABEL NO. 3  THE PROPOSED APPROACH FOR EACH EVALUATION/ANALYSIS CRITERIA ........................................... 35
TABEL NO. 4  SAMPLES SELECTED FOR EACH MEASURE, BOTH FOR PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2015 (NEW) AND FOR PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2008-2015 (OLD)................................................................. 40
TABEL NO. 5  LIMITATIONS OF DIFFERENT METHODOLOGIES USED IN THE EX-POST EVALUATION OF NRDP ...... 49
TABEL NO. 7  OTHER INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF NRDP 2007-2013 (EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE INTERVENTIONS INCLUDED WITHIN AXIS 2) ............................................................... 52
TABEL NO. 8  CALENDAR OF MEETINGS OF THE NRDP MC.......................................................................................... 53
TABEL NO. 9  THE MAIN AMENDMENTS TO THE NRDP 2007-2013 VERSIONS ............................................................. 54
TABEL NO. 10 OBJECTIVES AND SUB-OBJECTIVES DEFINED WITHIN NRDP 2007-2013, PER AXIS ...................... 56
TABEL NO. 11 PROJECTS CONTRACTED UNDER MEASURE 41, ON TYPES OF OPERATIONS .................................. 69
TABEL NO. 12 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY INTERVENTION LOGIC, PER MEASURES OF NRDP ................................. 73
TABEL NO. 13 CONTRIBUTION OF MEASURES TO THE IMPACT INDICATORS DEFINED UNDER THE NRDP 2007-2013 .......................................................... 75
TABEL NO. 14 BUDGET ALLOCATION AND FINANCIAL EXECUTION RATE AT THE LEVEL OF MEASURES / AXES OF NRDP 2007-2013 ........................................................................................................ 87
TABEL NO. 15 COMMON RESULT INDICATORS AND RELATED MEASURES................................................................. 89
TABEL NO. 16 ADDITIONAL RESULT INDICATORS AND THE RELATED MEASURES ................................................... 90
TABEL NO. 17 THE AGGREGATED VALUES OF ADDITIONAL RESULT INDICATORS ARE DEFINED WITHIN NRDP 20072013 AS IT FOLLOWS: .............................................................................................................................. 95
TABEL NO. 18 KEY LIMITING FACTORS TO GET A LOAN .......................................................................................... 104
TABEL NO. 19 WILLINGNESS OF BANKS TO PROVIDE A LOAN .................................................................................. 104
TABEL NO. 20 MAIN COMPETITIVENESS CHALLENGES OF FIRMS ........................................................................ 104
TABEL NO. 21 FINDINGS FROM THE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS ON THE GUARANTEE SCHEME .............................. 105
TABEL NO. 22 REASONS FOR NOT HAVING THE GUARANTEE (VALID ANSWERS – NO NA AND OTHERS) – 2008-2015 .................................................................................................................................. 107
TABEL NO. 23 ANALYSIS OF THE INDICATORS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE EVALUATION CRITERION AND THE ESTABLISHED TARGETS .................................................................................. 113
TABEL NO. 24 THE VALUE OF THE IMPACT INDICATOR (1) ECONOMIC GROWTH - INITIAL ESTIMATES ............ 120
TABEL NO. 25 THE VALUE OF THE IMPACT INDICATOR (1) ECONOMIC GROWTH – ACHIEVED TARGETS ............ 122
TABEL NO. 26 NET VALUE ADDED IN M 123 AND SUB-MEASURE 411 ........................................................................ 124
EVALUAREA EX-POST A PROGRAMULUI NAȚIONAL DE DEZVOLTARE RURALĂ 2007-2013

TABEL NO. 27 THE VALUE OF THE IMPACT INDICATOR (2) JOBS CREATION - INITIAL ESTIMATES ......... 125
TABEL NO. 28 THE VALUE OF THE IMPACT INDICATOR (2) JOBS CREATION - ACHIEVED TARGETS .......... 126
TABEL NO. 29 NET JOBS CREATED THROUGH MEASURES 121, 123, 312, 313, 411 .............................................. 130
TABEL NO. 30 CALCULATION OF THE PROXY FOR THE IMPACT INDICATOR (3) LABOR PRODUCTIVITY ........ 130
TABEL NO. 31 THE PROXY INDICATOR FOR THE IMPACT INDICATOR (3) LABOR PRODUCTIVITY – ACHIEVED TARGETS ................................................................. 132
TABEL NO. 32 VALUE OF THE IMPACT INDICATOR (4) REVERSING BIODIVERSITY DECLINE – INITIAL ESTIMATES .................................................................................. 133
TABEL NO. 33 VALUE OF THE IMPACT INDICATOR (4) REVERSING BIODIVERSITY DECLINE – ACHIEVED TARGETS .............................................................................. 134
TABEL NO. 34 VALUE OF THE IMPACT INDICATOR (5) MAINTENANCE OF HIGH NATURAL VALUE IN THE FORESTRY AREAS—INITIAL ESTIMATES .................................................. 135
TABEL NO. 35 VALUE OF THE IMPACT INDICATOR (5) MAINTENANCE OF HIGH NATURAL VALUE IN THE FORESTRY AREAS – ACHIEVED TARGETS ......................................................... 135
TABEL NO. 36 THE VALUE OF THE IMPACT INDICATORS (6) IMPROVEMENT IN WATER QUALITY – INITIAL ESTIMATES .................................................................................. 136
TABEL NO. 37 THE VALUE OF THE IMPACT INDICATOR (6) IMPROVEMENT IN WATER QUALITY – ACHIEVED TARGETS .................................................................................. 137
TABEL NO. 38 THE VALUE OF THE IMPACT INDICATOR (7) CONTRIBUTION TO COMBATING THE CLIMATE CHANGE – INITIAL ESTIMATES .......................................................... 138
TABEL NO. 39 VALUE OF THE IMPACT INDICATOR (7) CONTRIBUTION TO COMBATING THE CLIMATE CHANGE – ACHIEVED TARGETS ............................................................................. 139
TABEL NO. 40 VALUE OF THE ADDITIONAL IMPACT INDICATORS ON ENVIRONMENT – UPDATED VALUES .... 140
TABEL NO. 41 EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEASURES WITHIN AXIS 1 FOR EACH CRITERIA (PROCEDURAL, FINANCIAL, OUTPUTS AND RESULTS) ......................................................... 148
TABEL NO. 42 EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEASURES WITHIN AXIS 2 FOR EACH CRITERIA (PROCEDURAL, FINANCIAL, OUTPUTS AND RESULTS) ......................................................... 150
TABEL NO. 43 EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEASURES WITHIN AXIS 3 FOR EACH CRITERIA (PROCEDURAL, FINANCIAL, OUTPUTS AND RESULTS) ......................................................... 152
TABEL NO. 44 EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEASURES WITHIN AXIS 4 FOR EACH CRITERIA (PROCEDURAL, FINANCIAL, OUTPUTS AND RESULTS) ......................................................... 153
TABEL NO. 45 EVOLUTION OF THE ADDITIONAL RESULT INDICATORS FOR MEASURE 511................... 154
TABEL NO. 46 SYNTHESIS OF THE EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT BY MEASURE – AXIS 1 ......................... 157
TABEL NO. 47 SYNTHESIS OF THE EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT BY MEASURE, AXIS 2 ................................. 159
TABEL NO. 48 SYNTHESIS OF THE EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT BY MEASURE, AXIS 3 ................................. 160
TABEL NO. 49 SYNTHESIS OF THE EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT BY MEASURE, AXIS 4 ................................. 161
TABEL NO. 50 OVERVIEW OF THE RESULTS OF THE ESTIMATES ........................................................................ 165
TABEL NO. 51 OVERVIEW OF THE RESULTS OF THE ESTIMATES ........................................................................ 169
TABEL NO. 52  OVERVIEW OF THE RESULTS OF THE ESTIMATES ................................................................. 171
TABEL NO. 53  THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF IMPLEMENTING THE MEASURES OF AXIS 1 OF THE NRDP ON THE ANALYZED ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES .................................................................................. 173
TABEL NO. 54  THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEASURES RELATED TO AXIS 3 OF THE NRDP ON THE ANALYZED ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES .................................................................................. 174
TABEL NO. 55  THE NEGATIVE CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES RELATED TO THE 4 AXES OF THE NRDP FOR THE ANALYZED ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES .................................................................................. 174
TABEL NO. 56  THE ANALYSIS OF THE SCORES AWARDED ACCORDING TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT FOR THE NRDP 2007-2013 ................................................................. 174
TABEL NO. 57  THE NEGATIVE CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES RELATED TO THE 4 AXES OF THE NRDP ANALYZED ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES REVALED .................................................................................. 177
TABEL NO. 58  ACHIEVED TARGETS FOR THE GENDER RELATED INDICATORS WITHIN THE PROGRAMME ........ 235
Figures

FIGURE NO. 1 METHODOLOGICAL PHASES OF THE EX-POST EVALUATION ................................................................. 28
FIGURE NO. 2 THE ELEMENTS AND CRITERIA OF PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT ............................................................... 32
FIGURE NO. 3 THE EVALUATION PROCESS: MAIN ACTIVITIES AND METHODOLOGIES ............................................... 33
FIGURE NO. 4 THE APPROACH FOR ASSESSING RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY ................................. 38
FIGURE NO. 5 LAYOUT OF AN ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE – EXAMPLE WITH PREDEFINED TYPES OF RESPONSE, ALLOWED VALUES AND COMPULSORY FIELDS ................................................................. 44
FIGURE NO. 6 THE EVOLUTION OF THE FINANCIAL ALLOCATION OF NRDP 2007-2013 - TOTAL PUBLIC CONTRIBUTION 78
FIGURE NO. 7 THE EVOLUTION OF FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS PER AXIS - TOTAL PUBLIC CONTRIBUTION ........ 78
FIGURE NO. 8 EXPENDITURE THE EVOLUTION OF THE FINANCIAL ALLOCATION FOR THE MEASURES OF AXIS 1 - PUBLIC EXPENDITURE 80
FIGURE NO. 9 CHANGES IN TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE, ALLOCATED PER MEASURES OF AXIS 1 ......................... 80
FIGURE NO. 11 VARIATION OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ALLOCATED PER MEASURES, AXIS 2 .................... 82
FIGURE NO. 12 THE EVOLUTION OF THE FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PER MEASURES OF AXIS 3 - PUBLIC EXPENDITURE 82
FIGURE NO. 13 CHANGES IN TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ALLOCATED PER MEASURES OF AXIS 3 ..................... 83
FIGURE NO. 14 EVOLUTION OF FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PER MEASURES OF AXIS 4 - PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ...... 84
FIGURE NO. 15 CHANGES IN TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ALLOCATED PER MEASURES, AXIS 4 ....................... 84
FIGURE NO. 16 EVOLUTION OF THE FINANCIAL ALLOCATION FOR MEASURE 511 - PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ........ 85
FIGURE NO. 17 EVOLUTION OF THE FINANCIAL ALLOCATION FOR MEASURE 611 - PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ........ 85
FIGURE NO. 18 THE BUDGETARY ALLOCATION AND VALUE OF PAYMENTS FOR THE AXES OF NRDP 2007-2013 .. 86
FIGURE NO. 19 REASONS THAT LED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION TO THE GUARANTEE SCHEME ............................... 97
FIGURE NO. 20 MOTIVATIONS FOR NOT BENEFITING FROM THE GUARANTEES OFFERED BY NRDP THROUGH RCGF-IFN S.A. ........................................................................................................................................ 108
FIGURE NO. 21 EVOLUTION OF TOTAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AT NATIONAL LEVEL (DIVISIONS 01-03 ACCORDING TO NACE REV. 2), DURING THE PERIOD 2007 - 2014 ........................................................................ 110
FIGURE NO. 22 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION INDEX FOR 2007 - 2015 ................................................................. 110
FIGURE NO. 24 EVOLUTION OF THE EMPLOYMENT RATE OF PERSONS AGED 15-64 IN THE RURAL AREA, IN THE PERIOD 2007 - 2015 .................................................................................. 112
FIGURE NO. 25 1000 TONS OF MILKY PRODUCTS (D2120 – EUROSTAT - WHOLE MILK INDICATOR) .................. 184
Annexes

- Annex 1 - Result indicators fiches, the calculated values for the projects finalized in 2015 and the degree of achievement of common and additional result indicators
- Annex 2 - Intervention logic
- Annex 3 - Information on the implementation of the guarantee scheme
- Annex 4 - Efficiency of NRDP - benchmark analysis
- Annex 5 – Revisions made in various versions of NRDP
- Annex 6 - Detailed description of the counterfactual analysis
- Annex 7 - Database used for counterfactual analysis
- Annex 8 - Matrix of correlation of specific and common evaluation questions, assessment / analysis criteria, target levels and data sources
- Annex 9 - Analysis of case studies
- Annex 10 – Detailed analysis on programme effectiveness
- Annex 11 – Detailed analysis on programme efficiency
- Annex 12 - List of common and additional output indicators and final values achieved
- Annex 13 - Territorial impact assessment
- Annex 14 - Bibliography