

RURAL RESILIENCE PROJECT

Annual Report
2023

IFAD Loan No: 2000001702

IFAD GRANT No: 2000001703

ASAP Grant No: 2000001701

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ABDS	Agribusiness development support
AIPA	Agency of Interventions and Payments for Agriculture
ALGP	Association of Lavender Growers and Processors
AWPB	Annual Work Plan & Budget
APEG	Association of Producers and Exporters of Grapes
BOEC	Bids Opening and Evaluation Commission
BP	Business Plan
CA	Conservation Agriculture
CC	Climate Change
CPIU IFAD	IFAD Consolidated Programme Implementation Unit
CRWMID	Climate resilient water management and infrastructure development
CfP	Call for Proposals
DFA	Dairy Farmers Association
CW	Civil Works
FATCRI	Farmers adaptation through climate resilient investments
FFS	Farmer Field School
HVC	High Value Crops
GoM	Government of Republic of Moldova
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPSC	IFAD Programme Steering Committee
ISAAC	Improve smallholder and agribusiness adaptive capacity
LDG	Local Development Group
MAFI	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry
MCGF	Moldova Credit Guarantee Fund
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NBCI	Non-Banking Credit Institution
NBM	National Bank of Moldova
NCFM	National Commission for Financial Market
NFF	National Farmer Federation
NBCOs	Non-Banking Credit Organizations
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
OA	Organic Agriculture
OEAPM	Office for External Assistance Program Management
PFI	Participating Financial Institutions
PIM	Programme implementation Manual
PG	Producers Group
PY	Programme year
RFC	Rural Finance Corporation
RRP	Rural Resilience Project
RM	Republic of Moldova
SCAs	Savings and Credit Associations
SGPFF	Sheep & Goat Producers Farmer Federation
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPs	Service providers
TA	Technical Assistance
ToR	Terms of Reference
YEs	Young Entrepreneurs

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Title:	Rural Resilience Project (RRP) – IFAD VII
Financing Agreement Number:	IFAD Loan No: 2000001702; IFAD Grant No: 2000001703; ASAP Grant No: 2000001701
Goal and Objective:	The overall goal of the RRP is to improve the well-being of Moldova’s rural population and reduce poverty. The underlying project development objective is to strengthen the resilience and improve economic opportunities for the rural poor food security and safety, vulnerability to climate change, increasing competitiveness and reduce the flow of migration from rural areas.
Components:	<p>Component 1: Improve smallholder and agribusiness adaptive capacity. This component will enhance the smallholder resilience and adaptive capacity, enabling them to overcome critical climatic and productivity challenges through investments in productive rural infrastructure and Agri-systems. The component will address the Climate Change adaptation priorities identified by GoM and will operate under two sub-components:</p> <p><i>1.1 Climate resilient water management and infrastructure development</i> will support investments in productive rural infrastructure to remove the bottlenecks hampering the consolidation and expansion of competitive farms and village-based agri-business and to foster the adaption of climate smart technologies.</p> <p><i>1.2 Farmers adaptation through climate resilient investments</i> will include: (a) support smallholder farmers in the adoption of climate-resilient crop production systems and technologies, through investment grants and capacity development support; (b) support food/nutrition security and business diversification of women groups in high climate- and poverty-vulnerable areas and (c) support public and private investments in ecological restoration measures aiming to reduce climate-related risks and improve ecosystem services for agriculture.</p> <p>Component 2: Agribusiness development support. The expected outcome of the component is to enhanced access to financial services and markets for rural transformation and is implemented through the following sub-components:</p> <p><i>2.1 Term finance for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)</i> <i>2.2 credit guarantees for MSMEs;</i> <i>2.3 technical support for MSMEs, which includes technical support to agribusiness, youth entrepreneurs and Saving and Credit Associations.</i></p>
Term:	72 months: 14.08.2017 –31.03.2024
Project Year:	7
Reporting period:	January-December 2023
Initial Allocation:	IFAD Loan 18.2 million USD, IFAD Grant 0.5 million USD, ASAP Grant 5.0 million USD
Expenditures as of 31.12.2023 cumulative:	IFAD Loan 15.36 million USD (84% ¹), IFAD Grant 0.31 million USD (62%), ASAP Grant 3.88 million USD (78%), total donors funds 19.55 million USD (83%).

¹ Actual cumulative comparing to initial allocation

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

1. **FINANCIAL PROGRESS.** In the designated timeframe, CPIU executed planned tasks outlined in RRP AWPB, ensuring that project milestones were met and resources were allocated efficiently.

2. For the implementation of activities during 2023, according to revised AWPB, has been planned to disburse a total amount of USD 6.38 million from IFAD resources and ASAP Grant. Actual, for implementation in 2023 of projects activities, as per reporting period, has been disbursed the amount of USD 6.67 million from total donors' funds that represent 105% from planned budget. It is worth mentioning that, for the same reporting period of 2022, the total cost was achieved at 25 % (details in the table 1).

Table 1: Plan vs. Actual Figures, by financiers

(USD '000)

2023	IFAD		ASAP	Total Donors Funds	GoM	Beneficiaries	PFIs	Total
	Loan	Grant						
Annual Plan	3 930.72	133.87	2 317.74	6 382.33	1 537.13	2 015.22	-	9 844.87
Actual	4 274.06	71.81	2 326.64	6 672.50	837.40	2 522.99	-	10 032,89
Actual vs Plan %	109%	54%	100 %	105%	54%	125%	-	102%

3. Budget execution of the donors' funds for 2023 reported to the annual budget plan was achieved at 105% that is an amount of USD 6.67 million. From IFAD Loan was disbursed USD 4.27 million that represents 109% from the planned amount, USD 71.81 thousand or 54% from IFAD Grant and USD 2.33 million or 100% from ASAP Grant (details in the table 2).

Table 2: Financial execution by donor's funds

(USD '000)

2023	IFAD Loan	IFAD Grant	ASAP Grant	Total Donors funds
Annual Plan	3 930.72	133.87	2 317.74	6 382.33
Actual	4 274.06	71.81	2 326.64	6 672.50
Actual/AWPB %	109%	54%	100%	105%

4. For 2023 year, Component 1 has an execution of 98% IFAD Loan and 102% ASAP Grant. Component 2 has an achievement of 121% IFAD Loan and 66% IFAD Grant. Project Management has an execution of 91% IFAD Loan, 30% IFAD Grant and 35% ASAP Grant (details in the table 3).

Table 3: Plan 2023 vs. Actual Figures Components, by donor's funds

(USD '000)

Component	IFAD Loan			IFAD Grant			ASAP		
	AWPB 2023	Actual	Disbursed (%)	AWPB 2023	Actual	Disbursed (%)	AWPB 2023	Actual	Disbursed (%)
Component 1	1 794.35	1 756.28	98%	-	-	-	2 260.39	2 307.07	102%
Component 2	1 884.81	2 288.67	121%	86.80	57.43	66%	0.89	-	-
PM	251.56	229.12	91%	47.07	14.38	30%	56.46	19.57	35%
Total	3 930.72	4 274,06	109%	133.87	71.81	54%	2 317.74	2 326,64	100%

5. Actual Cumulative Expenditures.

As of 31 December 2023, RRP in Moldova amounted to USD 19.55 million, which constitutes 83% of the initially allocated IFAD and ASAP funds. Over the course of these years, IFAD Loan utilization reached 84% of the initial allocation, equivalent to USD 15.36 million. Additionally, ASAP funds disbursed accounted for 79% of their initial allocation, totalling USD 3.89 million, while IFAD Grant disbursements amounted to USD 0.31 million, representing 61% of the initial allocation. (Chart 4)

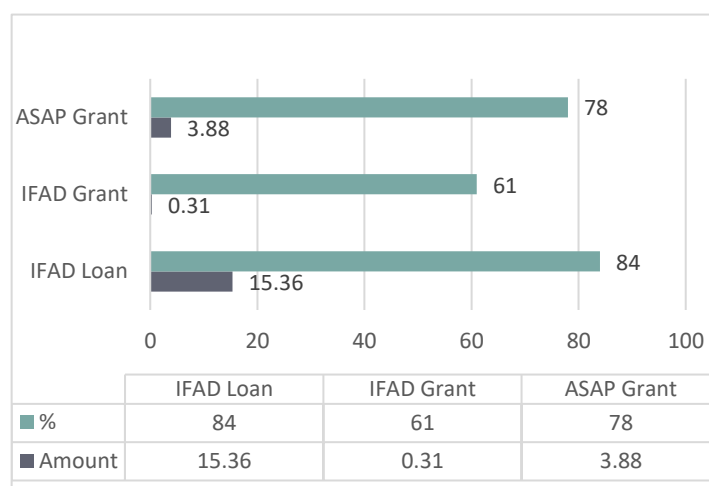


Chart 4: Actual Cumulative Expenditures

6. The overall budget realization, inclusive of local contributions, reached 95% of the initial allocation, totalling USD 34.97 million. Notably, it is important to highlight that financing from IFAD and ASAP sources generated an in-country contribution of USD 15.42 million from Project Beneficiaries, the Government, and Participating Financial Institutions (details in the table 5).

Table 5: Initial Allocation vs. Actual cumulative figures, by financier

(USD '000)

	IFAD		ASAP	Total external funds,	GoM	Beneficiaries	PFIs	Total
	Loan	Grant						
Appraisal	18 199.59	500.23	4 939.81	23 639.64	4 749.26	6 125.70	2 436.52	37 011.72
Actual Cumulative	15 363.51	305.26	3 886.70	19 555.47	2 947.06	10 639.66	1 830.14	34 972.34
Disbursed (%)	84%	61%	79%	83%	62%	174%	75%	95%

2. PHYSICAL PROGRESS. The most important achievements in the reporting period are the following:

- **14 infrastructure projects** completed;
- **62 agricultural smallholders** benefited from grants to invest in the adoption of climate-resilient crop production systems and technologies;
- **46 grants for women** smallholder business diversification;
- **35 loans** have been disbursed to rural entrepreneurs, including **4 loans** disbursed to **young entrepreneurs**, **15 loans** to **SMEs** and **16 loans** disbursed to **micro entrepreneurs**;
- **21 shelterbelts** for 21 LPS established, with a cumulative area of **401.14 ha**;
- **15 ha of grasscovering** for **2 beneficiaries**;
- **5 grants** for **5 women groups**;

3. BOTTLENECKS. Project team highlights several bottlenecks that are hindering the successful implementation of the project and the expenditure of the budget. These bottlenecks have been caused by various factors that have negatively impacted the project's progress.

- **Compounding Challenges:** After a record decrease of 27.2 percent in 2020 against a background of severe drought, Moldovan agriculture saw a record harvest in 2021, with an increase in the

agricultural production index of 57.9 percent year over year. For 2022, the persistence of hydrological drought has compromised a proportion of the crops, and the dynamics of the expected agricultural production suggest a production decrease of around 15–20 percent. This situation has created a shortage of funds, as communities struggle to collect contributions for the project, hindering its progress.

- Escalating Raw Material Costs: The prices for raw materials have soared, significantly raising the beneficiary's contribution. As a consequence, securing the required funding for infrastructure projects has become increasingly difficult, as the financial burden on the communities remains high.
- Equipment Shortage: The increased price of equipment has left farmers unable to procure the necessary tools and machinery. Some essential equipment needed for the project is no longer available, posing additional obstacles to the successful implementation of the project.
- It is worth mentioning that one of the factors that hampers the CPIU Projects activities is the flow of personnel. Climate Resilience Specialist resigned at the beginning of the year, although a new CR specialist was hired in May 2023, this disruption impacted the continuity and smooth execution of project tasks.
- Another significant setback occurred with the procurement specialists. For an extended period, there was a lack of procurement specialists, and the situation persisted until May 2023 when new specialists were contracted. Adding to the challenges, the recent resignation of the Grant Consultant Specialist in June 2023 posed another hurdle for the CPIU Projects. The departure of this specialist might have disrupted the grant management process, potentially affecting the timely disbursement of funds and coordination with project partners.

These bottlenecks underscore the complex and multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by the Rural Resilience project. Addressing these issues requires thoughtful and strategic consideration to find viable solutions and ensure the project's success. Adaptability, innovative thinking, and strong collaboration with local communities and partners will be essential in navigating these challenges and achieving the project's intended outcomes.

4. DETAILED PROGRESS BY PROGRAMME COMPONENTS

1. Component 1: Improve smallholder and agribusiness adaptive capacity

7. The primary objective of this component is to enhance the smallholder resilience and adaptive capacity, enabling them and empowering effectively tackle pressing climate-related and productivity obstacles. This will be achieved through targeted investments in productive rural infrastructure and Agri-systems. The component is specifically tailored to align with the Climate Change adaptation priorities identified by the Government of Moldova and will be implemented through two distinct sub-components:

Sub-component 1.1: Climate-resilient water management and infrastructure development

8. This sub-component will support investments in productive rural infrastructure to remove the bottlenecks hampering the consolidation and expansion of competitive farms and village-based agri-business and to foster the adaption of climate smart technologies.

9. The component offers support to three types of investments in public infrastructure:

- *Micro and small irrigation schemes.* Typically, these systems include a main lined pond providing the necessary conditions for the establishment of HVCs and the uptake of water saving irrigation practices in farm areas.
- *Access roads and bridges.* To secure all weather access to agricultural production areas and to the facilities of Agro-processing enterprises. Typically, these projects consist of 4 m wide roads with hard or stabilized gravel surfacing.

- *Rainwater harvesting ponds.* These investments focus on the progressively expanding areas (particularly in the central districts) lacking access to reliable sources of surface water, mitigating the negative impacts of climate change on small scale livestock and irrigated crop production. This kind of infrastructure will include several main activities: restoring the storage capacity of existing ponds or for constructing new embankments in appropriate locations. Typically, these ponds have a capacity of 300.0 to 500.0 thousand m³ and an embankment height not exceeding 5 m. When awarding grants for rehabilitation of ponds and for catchment areas of rainwater, should be taken into account that these ponds serve exclusively for use of: water for irrigation, as a source of water for domestic and wild animals. These ponds are not to be rented for fish farming (fish growth). Will only be considered rainwater harvesting ponds where water meets the requirements of quality irrigation and soil condition.

10. For the implementation in 2023 of Climate-resilient water management and infrastructure development subcomponent the amount of USD 2.18 million was planned for the financing of 17 infrastructure projects. The actual figures show the use of USD 1.76 million IFAD Loan and USD 403.00 thousand ASAP sources, USD 406.11 thousand Government contribution and USD 1.19 million beneficiaries' contribution. The total sub-component cost reached USD 2.16 million that represents 99 % of the planned annual budget (details in the table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Annual Plan vs. Actual Figures, by financiers (USD '000)

2023	IFAD		ASAP	Total Donors Funds	GoM	Beneficiaries	Total
	Loan	Grant					
Revised Annual Plan	1 794.35	-	388.01	2 182.36	686.25	1 184.72	4 053.3
A. Infrastructure development	1 759.17	-	380.40	2 139.57	664.86	1 184.72	3 989.15
B. Infrastructure development supervision and studies	35.18	-	7.61	42.79	21.39	-	64.18
Actual	1 756.28	-	402.95	2 159.22	406.11	1 185.68	3 751.02
A. Infrastructure development	1 730.18	-	398.17	2 128.34	381.54	1 185.68	3 695.56
B. Infrastructure development supervision and studies	26.10	-	4.78	30.88	24.58	-	55.46
Disbursed (%)	98%	-	104%	99%	59%	100%	92%

11. The progress of the subcomponent during the reported period is exemplified below, showcasing the execution of tasks set in the RRP AWPB, which facilitated the timely achievement of project activities, resource optimization, and the fulfilment of project objectives.

12. In the reported period were signed contracts for implementation of 12 infrastructure projects. For all the projects were contracted supervisors for civil works execution. It is worth mentioning the 2023, can be considered the most successful year, the year with the most achievements in terms of infrastructure projects construction.

13. By the end of 2023, CPIU has received the works for:

- 4 irrigation systems for a cumulative area of 227 ha;
- 7 road segments with a total length of 4.97 km;
- 3 water harvesting ponds with a total volume of 229 thousand m³.

14. **Construction works of small-scale irrigation investments in Cucoara village, rayon Cahul** started at the beginning of June. The completion of works took place on 22 August 2023. The work was carried out according to the project and construction schedule. The project aims to irrigate 32,8 ha of land.



15. The contract for the construction of irrigation system from **Varvareuca village, rayon Floresti** was signed in April 2023. The completion of works took place at the end of August 2023. The project aims to irrigate 125 ha of land.



16. The civil works for the construction of irrigation system from **village Pelinei, rayon Cahul** started in May 2023. The works completion took place on 10 August 2023. The works were carried out according to the project and construction schedule. The total irrigated area is 19 ha.



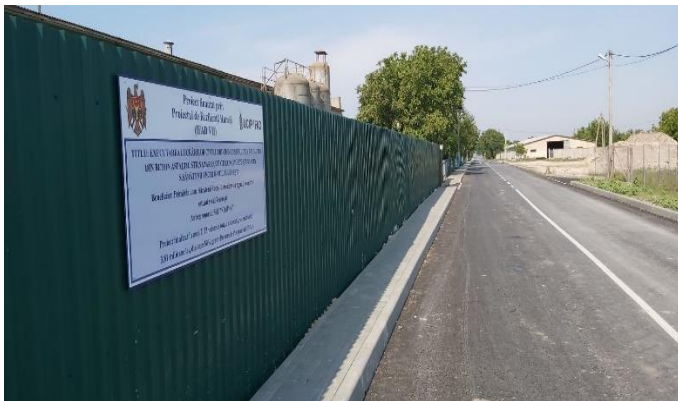
17. The civil works for the construction of irrigation system from village **Gura Cainarului, rayon Floresti** started in July 2023. Completion of work took place at the end of November 2023. The work was carried out according to the project and construction schedule. The irrigated area will be 50 ha.



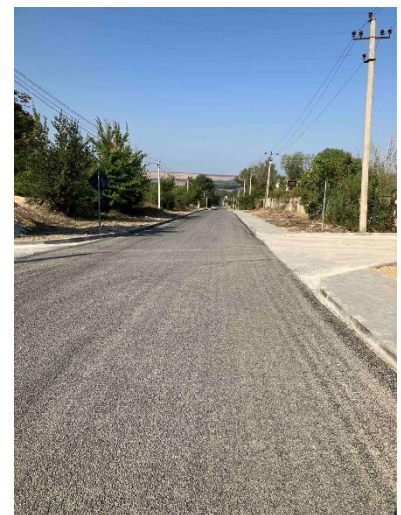
18. **Construction of access road in Bogdanovca village, rayon Cimisia** with a length of 0,56 km started in June 2023. The works proceeded according to the work performance schedule and the reception of final works took place at the end August 2023.



19. The construction of road segment with a length of 0,55 km in **Sartenii Vechi village, Telenesti rayon** commenced in May with no delays. The completion of works took place in August 2023.



20. The contract for the construction of a road segment with a length of 0.46 km in **Leova town** commenced in May with no delays. Completion of work took place at the end of August 2023. The work was carried out according to the project and work schedule.



21. Construction works for the rural road in **Truseni village, mun. Chisinau** were initiated in June 2023. The road segment of 1,3 km was completed in September 2023. The work was carried out according to the project.



22. Another road segment, the construction of which was initiated in the reporting period, is located in **Copceac village, UTA Gagauzia region**. It has a length of 0.916 km. Completion of works took place at the end of November 2023.



23. The construction of the road segment from **Valeni village, Cahul rayon** was initiated in the reporting period and had the completion in October 2023. It has a length of 0.7 km.

24. The bridge from Causeni town has the status of unfinished object due to the lack of authorization certificate from the control bodies provided by law. However, the object is functional and is used by the local people.



25. In the reporting period were **constructed three harvesting ponds:**

- in Andrusul de Sus village in the South of the republic and
- two ponds in Grimancauti village, in the North for two different beneficiaries.

26. The contract for the construction of the pond in **Andrusul de Sus village, Cahul rayon** was signed at the beginning of the year, in January 2023. The capacity of the pond is of 80 thousand m³. Completion of work took place at the end of August 2023. The works were carried out according to the project and construction schedule.

27. The works for harvesting pond from **Grimancauti village, Briceni rayon (Gojan beneficiary)** were launched in May 2023. The capacity of the pond is of 44 thousand m³. Completion of work took place at the end of October 2023. The work was carried out according to the project and construction plan.

28. The contract for the construction of the harvesting pond from **Grimancauti village, Briceni rayon (Lesnic beneficiary)** was signed at the end of 2022, but the works began in 2023. The construction of the pond with the capacity of 98.6 thousand m³ was completed at the end of August 2023.



29. Under the activities related to „Infrastructure development supervisor and studies“, in December 2023 CPIU hired a consultant who will develop, based on an accomplished survey, an atlas on the renewable energy water pumping equipment (solar and wind pump stations used for irrigation) with examples of concrete equipment, its technical characteristics, prices and recommendations for farmers. This information will be further placed on CPIU website and shared with farmers. The contract amount for this activity is USD 2,47 thousand. The deliverable shall be provided in Q1 2024.

Sub-component 1.2: Farmer's adaptation through climate resilient investments

30. This subcomponent includes the following activities:

- support smallholder farmers in the adoption of climate-resilient crop production systems and technologies, through investment grants and capacity development support;
- support food/nutrition security and business diversification of women groups in high climate and poverty-vulnerable areas;
- support public and private investments in ecological restoration measures aiming to reduce climate-related risks and improve ecosystem services for agriculture.

31. For the implementation of subcomponent 1.2: „Farmer's adaptation through climate resilient investments“ was planned to disburse USD 1.87 million. The total amount disbursed in the reporting period is USD 1.90 million, that represents 102 % of Annual Plan (details in the table 1.2).

Table 1.2: subcomponent 1.2. achievement, by financiers

(USD '000)

2023	IFAD		ASAP Grant	Total Donors Funds	GoM	Beneficiaries	Total
	Loan	Grant					
Annual Plan	-	-	1 872.38	1 872.38	374.09	271.73	2 518.19
Actual	-	-	1904.12	1 904.12	61.60	315.26	2 280.98
Actual/plan, %	-	-	102 %	102 %	17 %	116 %	91 %

32. Regarding the execution of sub-component 1.2., ASAP Grant has a realisation of 102 %, with USD 1.9 million disbursed from the planned amount of USD 1.9 million (details in the table 1.3).

Table 1.3: Sub-component 1.2. Annual Plan vs. Actual Figures, by donors funds

(USD '000)

Subcomponent 1.2	ASAP Grant		
	Annual Plan	Actual	Disbursed (%)
1.2.1. Climate resilient production system on technologies for smallholders	658.51	397.19	60 %
1.2.2. Ecological restoration interventions	704.41	999.84	142.00 %
1.2.3. Knowledge management	93.00	88.63	95 %
1.2.4. Women smallholder on farm adaptation (pilot)	87.11	35.25	40 %
1.2. 5. Matching grants	329.35	383.20	116 %
Total	1 872.38	1 904.12	102 %

1.2.1. Climate resilient production system on technologies for smallholders

33. The sub-component activities are implemented by 3 specialists: Climate Resilience Specialist, National Consultant on Climate Change Resilience and Grant Consultant with the support of service provider "FARM", contracted in 2021. At the beginning of the year Climate Resilience Specialist has resigned from his position and in April the Grant Consultant took the position of Financial Services Specialist within the CPIU. In order to enable the continuation of the activities in May was recruited a new Climate Resilience Specialist and launched the employment call for Grant Consultant. Unfortunately, in mid-June, National Consultant on Climate Change Resilience also resigned from his position. Thus, this has a great impact on the development of the on-going project activities, as for a period of time, these activities have been paused on hold.

34. In order to resume above mentioned activities as of September the vacant position of Climate Resilience Consultant has been filled, allowing the situation in this area to be remedied and by the end of 2023 the process of application receipt and grant disbursement went smoothly.

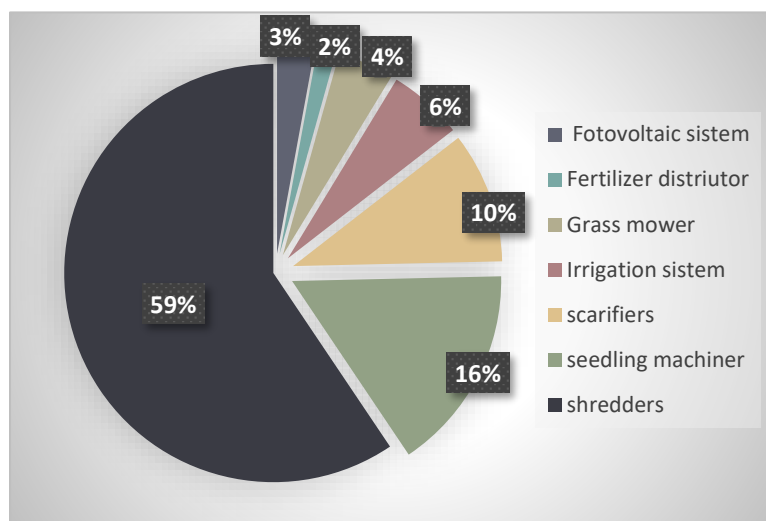
35. Social mobilization, grant application and implementation support (1.2.1.1) was provided by FARM. Based on amendment to contract signed in 2022, FARM assumed to support potential applicants under the on-farm resilient activity in development of technical specifications for the goods to be procured and analysis of the 3 quotations. In 2023, the support was provided to 21 applicants for climate resilient grants, that are 42% of the planned annual number (50 applicants under on-farm resilient activity).

36. Field technical support for participating farmers (1.2.1.2) – under on-going contracts three individual consultants (i.e. expert in conservative and organic agriculture, irrigation expert, renewable energy expert) continued to provide pre-finance and post-finance technical assistance. In the reporting period 58 beneficiaries have been assisted by the expert in conservative and organic agriculture, 4 beneficiaries-assisted by the irrigation expert and 2 beneficiaries were consulted by renewable energy expert.

37. Investment grants for on-farm resilient activities (1.2.1.3) – Investment grants for on-farm resilient activities (1.2.1.3) – in the period January – 31 December 2023 CPIU organized 9 Committee meetings for Grant Approval. As a result, 64 grant applications were approved and 62 grant applications were disbursed. Besides, CPIU IFAD developed contract templates and signed contracts with grant beneficiaries under Call

for Application No. 3, from which 36 of them for post-investments and 26 pre-investments (including Escrow account).

38. The approved grants were disbursed for 43 shredders, 12 mini-till seeding machines, 8 scarifiers, 4 irrigation systems, 2 photovoltaic systems, 3 grass mowers and 1 fertilizer distributor, totalling 73 equipment for 62 beneficiaries (details in percentage on the chart).



39. For 2023, 85 grants have been planned to be financed with a total amount of 558,6 thousand USD. At the end of the year, 73% of the plan have been achieved, representing 62 grants financed with the total disbursed amount of USD 342.58 thousand (details in the table 1.4).

Table 1.4: Grant for on-farm activities Annual Plan vs. Actual Figures (USD '000)

	Number	ASAP Grant
Plan		
1.2.1.3. Investment grants for on-farm resilient activities	85	558.6
Actual		
1.2.1.3. Investment grants for on-farm resilient activities	62	342.58
Actual/Plan, %	73%	61%

1.2.2. Ecological restoration interventions

40. Support to restoration plans (1.2.2.1) In the period of shelterbelt plantation, the SP in charge submitted the request for increasing the contractual amount due to increasing of overall prices. As the request was not accepted and approved the contact was terminated in May 2023. Another service provider should be contracted in order to ensure the proper supervision of the works for all steps. Further to the advertisement published for hiring of a new service provider, a contract is concluded in August with an economic agent for the continuation of the reception of the works for the establishment of forest plantations in the municipalities. In the same period Moldsilva Agency comes with an application for funding of planting works with planting material within the framework of the National Programme for Afforestation in the Republic of Moldova. After the IFAD approval CPIU IFAD accepted the application for funding and announces a tender for the employment of a technical officer to take over the planting works. In December CPIU IFAD contracted a technical officer for the reception of planting works at the forestry enterprises, namely: Balti Forestry Enterprise, Edinet Forestry Enterprise, Glodeni Forestry Enterprise, Soroca Forestry Enterprise, Calarasi Forestry Enterprise, Chisinau Forestry Enterprise, Tighina Forestry Enterprise, Comrat Forestry Enterprise.

41. In order to strengthen and increase the forestry sector's capacity to adapt to climate change and to promote agroforestry practices in the Republic of Moldova, in August 2022 CPIU has launched the tender for the selection of a service provider to organise capacity building training for adaptation to climate change of the forest sector in the Republic of Moldova, based on Quality-Cost Based Selection Method (QCBS) method. Following the evaluation of 3 shortlisted companies that expressed their interest to participate at the tender,

two companies that accumulated more than 70 points, received Request for proposal (RFP). The RFPs were submitted in February 2023, but due to lack of procurement staff the offers are to be evaluated in priority mode after procurement specialist is hired. After hiring a procurement specialist, the files submitted were analysed and in September 2023 the service provider - ONF International was contracted to carry out training with forestry employees from the Moldsilva Agency. According to the provisions of the contract, ONF International organised in October 2023 a study visit to Romania with 15 employees from different forest enterprises, and in November organized a study visit to France with another 15 forestry employees.

42. *Investment on ecological restoration, shelterbelts (1.2.2.2)* – In the reporting period there have been signed contracts with the service providers selected in the previous year for the establishment of shelterbelts in 13 PLS.

43. Likewise, in 11 localities the plantation works have been executed in proportion of 100%, for the other two localities, due to the lack of seedling material the works are postponed (Grinauti Moldova, Rediul Mare villages) (details in the table 1.5).

Table 1.5: Planned Ecological restoration lots

(USD '000)

	Ecological restoration/ Shelterbelts	Ha	Amount planned per LPA
1	<i>Shelterbelt in Stefan Voda</i>	10	33,39
2	<i>Shelterbelt in Gradiste/ Cimisia</i>	6	18,66
3	<i>Shelterbelt in Horesti/ Ialoveni</i>	10	25,31
4	<i>Shelterbelt in Zaim/ Causeni</i>	9	23,72
5	<i>Shelterbelt in Ferapontievca/ UTAG</i>	8	26,03
6	<i>Shelterbelt in Mindresti Codru/ Telenesti</i>	10	32,61
7	<i>Shelterbelt in Mindresti/ Telenesti</i>	10	30,66
8	<i>Shelterbelt in Burlacu/ Cahul</i>	10	24,00
9	<i>Shelterbelt in Sauca/ Ocnita</i>	10	33,41
10	<i>Shelterbelt in Cruglic/ Criuleni</i>	10	29,03
11	<i>Shelterbelts (in the catchment areas of water schemes and reservoirs) in Costuleni/ Ungheni</i>	10	25,60

44. The overview of the situation regarding some of the plantation works is illustrated below:

	
<p><i>Establishment of the shelterbelt in Mindresti/Codru village, rayon Telenesti</i></p>	<p><i>Establishment of the shelterbelt in Cruglic village, rayon Criuleni</i></p>
	
<p><i>Establishment of the shelterbelt in Horesti village, rayon Ialoveni</i></p>	<p><i>Establishment of the shelterbelt in Stefan Voda town</i></p>
	

<i>Establishment of the shelterbelt in Zaim village, rayon Causeni</i>	<i>Establishment of the shelterbelt in Burlacu village, rayon Cahul</i>
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45. At the end of 2023 CPIU IFAD granted eight forestry enterprises under the Moldsilva Agency for planting works and seedling material (details in the table 1.6.).

No.	Forestry Enterprise	LPA	Area, ha	Grant amount, USD	Realized, %
1.	Balti	Biliceni Noi, rayon Sangerei	56,60	83 630,19	100%
2.	Calarasi	Bravicea, Rădeni, rayon Calarasi	22,20	25 728,16	100%
3.	Chisinau	Onitcani, rayon Criuleni	10,00	15 464,87	100%
4.	Comrat	Cioc-Maidan, rayon Comrat	28,10	76 998,73	100%
5.	Edinet	Grimancauti, rayon Briceni; Scăieni, rayon Donduseni	60,39	92 907,01	100%
6.	Glodeni	Cajba, rayon Glodeni	45,44	146 365,08	100%
7.	Soroca	Gura Camencii, rayon Floresti	22,00	25 728,16	100%
8.	Tighina	Delacau, rayon Anenii Noi; Saiti rayon Causeni	53,41	108 547,77	100%

46. *Investment on ecological restoration, grass cover (1.2.2.2.)* - The project aims to promote measures to prevent and stop soil erosion processes, but also to increase the resilience of ecosystems to climate change by establishing grass covers in multi-year plantations.

47. In February 2023 was launched the tender for the selection of service providers for the establishment of grass-covering/ pastures (14 lots). Within the set time, no bids were submitted.

48. However, a single contract was signed with Loganesti village, Hincesti rayon as a result of the similar tender launched in October 2022.

49. In October 2022, was opened the call for grants for the establishment of grass covers in orchards and vineyards (table grapes) for young and women beneficiaries of the Rural Resilience Project. The amount of the grant is up to USD 300 per 1 ha, for a maximum of 10 ha of the area effectively grassed. In the reporting period three application were submitted. Two of the applicants have executed the works in spring season, for a cumulative territory of 14,7 ha, the third one withdraw the application.

	
<p><i>SRL Agrocreativ Invest</i> Village Pirjota, rayon Riscani 4.71 ha</p>	<p><i>SRL Dadu Farm</i> village Malcoci, rayon Ialoveni 10 ha</p>

1.2.4. Women matching grant facility

50. As per project design, in 2023 was planned to provide technical assistance to women smallholders in order to develop a small rural business and increase income, through two main activities:

- 1) Social mobilization and business development; and
- 2) Capacity building.

51. In 2023 for implementation of planned activities from ASAP grant was used USD 35.25 thousand representing 41 % of the amount planned for the 2023 year (*USD 87.11 thousand*) (details in the table 2.11). The GoM contributed with USD 2.65 thousand representing exemption from paying VAT on services provided. Achievements in terms on volume of sub component activities are presented in the table 2.11.

1.2.4.1. Social mobilization and business development

In 2023 the assistance in mobilisation and business development for women individuals was provided via FARM Company, the service provider contracted for the entire RRP period, being responsible for:

- identification of business proposals;
- guiding in starting a business and procedures on registration the entity/business and/or making a decision on business diversification;
- support in development of technical specifications for the goods to be procured, analysis of the 3 quotations, elaboration of business plan and
- preparation of application for submission to PFIs.

52. Besides the assistance to women, based on Amendment to the contract, the SP provides support to potential applicants, under the on-farm resilient activity, in development of technical specifications for the goods to be procured and analysis of the 3 quotations. In 2023, 28 women applicants (*or 112% of plan*) and 16 applicants (*64% of plan*) for climate change resilience received SP assistance and was used USD 9,42 thousand vs USD 7,4 thousand planned, due to the higher number of women assisted, for whom assistance is more expensive, includes the elaboration of BP.

53. The planned trainings for women in marketing were revised and replaced by a study visit: thus, for this activity was selected the National Association of beekeepers; the *contract was negotiated for USD 15,193*, twice less than projected, due to participation and selection of National Association as SP, who has collaborations with association from Romania. In total 19 women beneficiaries of grants in the field of beekeeping and the representative of MAFI had the opportunity to participate in a study visit to Romania, where they learned about new production and processing technologies applied in the field, about forms of cooperation of beekeepers, other relevant to the sector. On the return, a zoom session was organised where women shared their experience with other women in the field. The amount of USD 15.16 thousand was paid used from ASAP Grant.



54. The amount of USD 14,1 thousand was used for the formation / consolidation of 4 women's group, elaboration of the business plan and preparation of the funding application. All 4 groups were qualified as eligible and approved for financing. The amount of USD 14,4 thousand was used for payment of services provided to formation and subsequently financing of 4 women groups.



application. All 4 groups were qualified as eligible and approved for financing. The amount of USD 14,4 thousand was used for payment of services provided to formation and subsequently financing of 4 women groups.



1.2.4.2. Capacity building

55. Within the ongoing contract with ANTiM, in 2023 were organized 3 training sessions (the last one was agreed to be organised in Q1, 2024) for 37 women RRP beneficiaries on “peculiarities of maintaining the accounting records within the Peasant Farm”. It should be mentioned that under the contract with ANTiM it was agreed to support, in cooperation with ILO, ODA, and UNDP, the organisation of ECO START YOUTH forum, an event organized by youth promoting eco and green business, by covering the expenses associated with the coffee break for 65 youth women participants. The total amount paid in 2023 was USD 3.0 thousand, the balance will be paid in Q1, 2024.

56. Also, the RRP beneficiaries in beekeeping had the opportunity to be assisted by an apicultural expert Nicolae Eremia in the evaluation and expertise in the field of beekeeping technological processes. Taking into consideration that the activity of beekeeping is for the most of women a small family business, the assistance was high appreciated. During 2023, 12 women beneficiaries were supported from ASAP Grant by the expert assistance amounting to USD 0.93 thousand, including USD 210 unpaid balance of 2022.

57. In recent years, the GoM has managed to attract several financial assistance projects for the development of the agricultural sector. Subsidy measures for farmers have also been extended. Consequently, it was projected the developing a platform, which would centralize detailed information of different financing opportunities from different external sources/projects and which would help farmers to form an optimal financial package, depending on the needs they have in the business, but also the specific financing conditions of each financier. The Contract with service provider TRIGAVA Ltd was signed on November 08, 2023 and negotiated for USD 40.690; the activity is being implemented and is due to be completed in February 2024. In 2023 it was disbursed the first instalment according to Contract in the amount of USD 8.1 thousand (20% of the Contract amount).

Table 2.11. Women smallholder on farm adaptation (pilot)

1.2.4. D. Women smallholder on farm adaptation (pilot)	Performance indicators
1.2.4.1. Social mobilization and business development	
<i>Assistance for women, ongoing contract with FARM -58/21</i>	<i>44 applicants assisted (50 plan), including 28 applicants for women grants and 16 applicants for climate resilient grants</i>
<i>Consolidation of women group</i>	<i>5 women group</i>
<i>Study visits for women grant beneficiaries (Romania)</i>	<i>22 participants, including 19 women grant beneficiaries, 2 CPIU IFAD representatives and 1 MAFI representative</i>
1.2.4.2. Capacity building of women grant beneficiaries	
<i>Training of women, ongoing contract with ANTiM - 32/21</i>	<i>37 (planned 59) women trained</i>
<i>The assistance of the beekeeping /Ongoing contact with apicultural expert</i>	<i>12 (plan 11) beneficiaries assisted</i>
<i>Elaboration of web platform: find financing and calculate the cost of the investment</i>	<i>1 platform in progress</i>

1.2.5. Matching grants

58. In order to create more synergies between Project activities, the matching grants for women individuals funded under ASAP was combined with micro loans under sub-component 2.1., the geographical area of the women grant target group was extended at national level, and the funds are channelled through partner commercial banks.

59. In 2023, based on CPIU/Government's proposals for changes in implementation modalities that have been assessed as relevant by IFAD supervision mission held in November/December 2022 to accelerate lending, the ceiling for women individuals funded was increased up to USD 7.5 thousand (equivalent of MDL 140.0 thousand) and loan portion ceiling up to MDL 600.0 thousand, as for MEs. Up to MDL 175.0 thousand the 80/20 ratio was applied (thus the grant amount not exceed set limit of MDL 140.0 thousand) and the loan portion increased up to MDL 460.0 thousand.

60. As result in increasing the grant and loan ceilings, in 2023 the average loan size increased by 51% compare with 2022, representing accordingly MDL 89.09 vs MDL 58.75; and average grant size by 61% or MDL 133.67 vs MDL 82.85 in 2022. The grant amount disbursed in 2023 amounts to USD 383,20 thousand (including the amount of USD 31.78 thousand - payment of the grants to support 5 women groups) and loan portion to USD 253,22 thousand for 46 individual women entrepreneurs. The grant beneficiaries contributed USD 49,66 thousand, including the amount of USD 10.43 thousand - the contribution of the grants to support 5 women's groups (details are presented on the point 62 and in the table 2.12.).

Table 2.12. Matching grants

(USD '000)

1.2.5. E. Matching grants		Number	Value, USD'000				Total
			ASAP Grant	IFAD loan (Sub-component 2.1.1.1)	Beneficiary contribution	GoM	
Plan			329.35	220.61	32.13	109.99	692.08
1.2.5.1	<i>Grants to support individual legal registered entrepreneurs</i>	45	289.96	220.61	25.53	102.11	638.21
1.2.5.2	<i>Grants to support women groups</i>	5*5 <i>members</i>	39.39	-	6.60	7.88	53.87
Actual			383.20	253.22	49.66	12.22	694.30
1.2.5.1	<i>Grants to support individual legal registered entrepreneurs</i>	46	383.20	253.22	49.66	12.22	698.30
1.2.5.2	<i>Grants to support women groups</i>	5		-	-	-	-
Actual/plan, %			116	115	155	11	100

61. The largest share, 76% of the women's financing portfolio was used to finance beekeeping businesses; 17% of the portfolio to finance the horticulture sector, and 7% was almost equally distributed in livestock and field crop production. By regions due to the acceptance of the alignment of the project end date (IFAD loan) 30 September 2023 to the closing date of 31 March 2024, the financing of women individuals will continue into the first quarter of 2024.

62. In terms of **funding for women's groups** (details presented in the table 2.12 above), in the reporting period, 5 women's groups received financing for business development in processing of apiculture products -1 group; drying of aromatic and medicinal plants -1 group; and bakery - 3 groups. The disbursed grant is in the amount of USD 31.78 thousand and the women's groups contributed USD 10.43 thousand, representing 24% vs. 15% requested of the value of assets eligible for funding. These payments were provided from line 1.2.5.1. Production Support Grant (individual).

63. Challenges faced in funding of women's groups were related to the beneficiaries' own contribution, thus one group with which a contract was signed in 2022, namely Conceptfruct Agro SRL, refused funding due to financial problems and its inability to collect the contribution.

2. Component 2: The Agribusiness Development Support

64. The expected outcome of the component is to „enhanced access to financial services and markets for rural transformation”. The component was implemented through the two following sub-components:

- sub-component 2.1. Term finance for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs);
- sub-component 2.3. Technical support to MSMEs.

* In 2022, the funds of USD 4.0 million allocated to sub-component 2.2: Credit Guarantee for MSME were repurposed to sub-component 2.1. for financing of SMEs and YEs, therefore no activities were planned/implemented under the sub-component 2.2.

65. In the reporting period, last Project year, for the implementation of ABDC component activities from IFAD funds were disbursed USD 2,3 million, representing 121 % of annual plan. The amount above plan was used for term finance for micro, small and medium enterprises, due to increased demand after a pause caused by events in the region.

66. The beneficiaries contributed with USD 1,1 million, or 2 times more than plan, due to the increase in the price of equipment and inputs related to the financed investments; GoM contribution constitute USD 276.2 thousand, covering duties and taxes on goods and services procured under the Project; PFIs contribution is not mandatory. The financiers' contribution brought the total component cost to USD 3.8 million representing 135% of annual plan (details in the table 2.1).

Table 2.2.1.: ABDS components vs 2023 Annual plan

(USD '000)

ABDS Sub - Components	IFAD		ASAP grant	Beneficiaries	GoM	Total
	Loan	Grant				
Annual Plan	1,884.81	86.80	0.89	468.92	350.38	2,791.80
2.1: Term finance for MSMEs	1,862.66	-	-	435.7	328.41	2,626.77
2.3. Technical support to MSMEs	22.15	86.80	0.89	33.22	21.97	165.03
Actual	2,288.67	57.43	-	1,152.7	276.22	3,775.02
2.1: Term finance for MSMEs	2266.52	-	-	1,108.6	275.78	3,650.9
2.3. Technical support to MSMEs	22.15	57.43	-	44.1	0.44	124.12
Actual/ plan	121.4	66.2	-	245.8	78.8	135.2

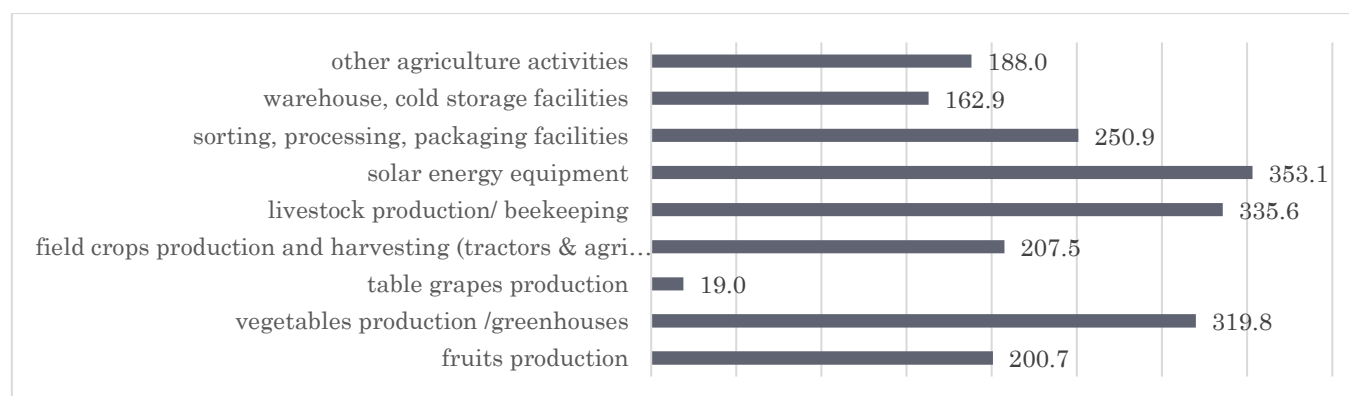
67. **Sub-component 2.1. Term finance for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** aim to support the investments, including independent working capital, of the three target groups:

- Micro-entrepreneurs;
- Young entrepreneurs; and
- Small and Medium-enterprises.

The allocated to MCGF funds were used for SMEs financing. Overall, during 2019-2023, 177 MSMEs received business development funding worth USD 12.2 million, exceeding the allocated amount of USD 11.6 million by USD 0.6 million.

68. In the reporting period were funded 34 investments (representing 103% of revised annual target), inclusive: 15 micro entrepreneurs (88%), 5 YEs (83%) and 14 SMEs (155%). The number of loans is almost similar to year 2022 (33 loans disbursed); the main factor continues to be the uncertainty in the region, the increase in prices and consequently the increase in the contribution of beneficiaries, which is quite costly for the small ones. It is worth noting that, in order to support agricultural producers, the GoM/MoF reduced the interest rate on project loans, thus lowering the annual interest rate from 17% at the beginning of the year to 16.2%, then to 12.6% and to 10.1% at the end of the year. This support has encouraged entrepreneurs to invest and further develop their businesses in agriculture.

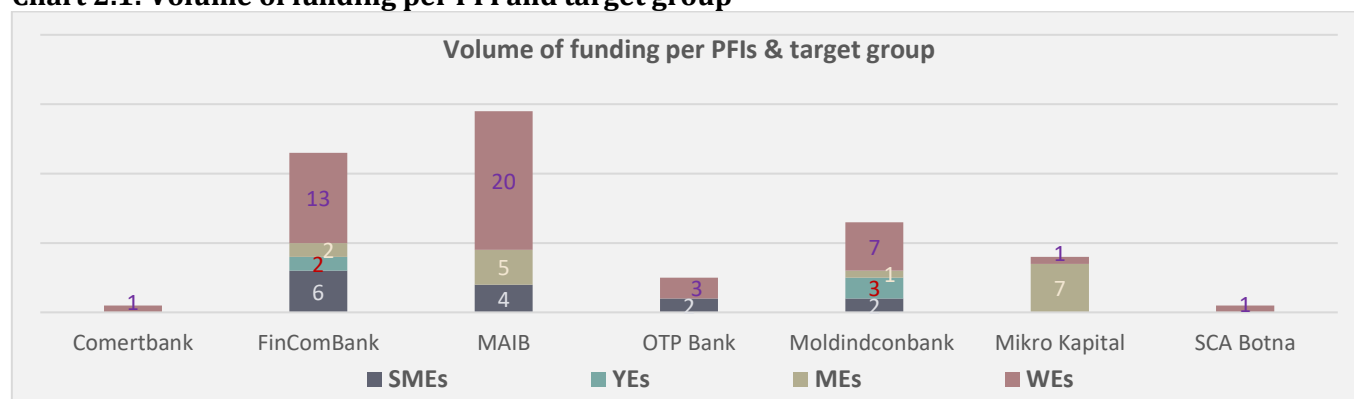
69. The largest share of the term finance portfolio, 26.5% was used for development of horticulture (*fruits, vegetables and table grapes production*); a significant share of 17.3% was used to finance the procurement of solar energy equipment; 20% of portfolio was used for sorting, processing, packaging and storage facilities, other 16.5% for development of livestock production (details are presented in chart below, in USD'000).



70. **Implementation arrangement.** SMEs funding was carried out through four (4) partner commercial banks, namely: FinComBank (43% of the number of loans disbursed to SMEs), MAIB (29%), OTPBank (14%) and Moldinconbank (14%), the most active in this category was FinComBank. The young entrepreneurs, micro-entrepreneurs and women pilot matching grant scheme financing was channeled through three windows:

- 5 commercial banks, namely: Comertbank (1.5% out of total number disbursed to YEs, MEs and women pilot); FinComBank (26%); MAIB (38%), being the most active; OTPBank (4%); and Moldinconbank (17%);
- non-banking financial institution “Mikro Kapital” (12%);
- SCA “Botna” directly to its members (1.5%).

Chart 2.1: Volume of funding per PFI and target group



71. **The micro entrepreneurs** (based on CPIU/Government's proposals for changes in implementation modalities that have been assessed as relevant by IFAD supervision mission held in Nov/Dec 2022 on increasing the loan amount from MDL 300,000 to a maximum MDL 600,000 (~USD 31 thousand) benefited in 2023 from USD 237.8 thousand (106% of revised plan) for term investments in rural business activities. As a result of increasing the loan amount to MDL 600,000, 5 micro entrepreneurs (33% of the total number) accessed amounts higher than MDL 300,000, others remaining cautious about larger investments. Although working capital loans were approved to support MEs for the start of the agricultural season, but during 2023 there were no requests for individual working capital loans.

72. In 2023, 17 loans were granted under micro entrepreneurs lending facility, but from the records on the classification of enterprises by size (new classification in force from April 2023), of the total categories: SMEs, YEs and MEs, 25 beneficiaries, i.e. 73%, are micro-entrepreneurs. Classifying loans by size, within the limit of MDL 600 thousand, 17 microloans were granted in 2023, or 50% of the number of loans granted to all categories: SMEs, YEs and MEs.

73. The total amount of USD 466.7 thousand (105% of the Annual plan) disbursed from IFAD micro entrepreneurs lending facility was used approximately in the same amount for micro entrepreneurs financing, i.e. USD 213.52 thousand or 51% and USD 253.22 thousand or 49% for financing of women individuals under the matching grant facility (details under activity 1.2.5). The ME beneficiaries contributed with USD 134.1 thousand in cash, representing 36% vs requested 10%, and the GoM with USD 19.3 thousand (exemption from paying taxes, duties and VAT). The GoM contribution is lower than planned because some goods purchases do not include payment of VAT (details on micro entrepreneurs lending facility is presented in the table 2.2.2 below).

Table 2.2.2. Achievements of micro entrepreneurs financing activity (USD '000)

sub-component 2.1: Term finance for MSMEs	Number		Value by financiers			Total investment cost
	Total	incl. women	IFAD loan	Beneficiary contribution	GoM	
Plan	17	5/30%	443.58	24.8	44.59	512.97
2.1.1. Micro entrepreneurs	17	5/30%	222.97	24.8	44.59	292.36
2.1.1. Women micro entrepreneurs*	-	-	220.61	-	-	220.61
Actual	15	4/27%	466.73	134.1	19.36	620.19
2.1.1. Micro entrepreneurs	15	4/27%	213.52	134.1	19.36	366.98
2.1.1. Women micro entrepreneurs*	-	-	253.22	-	-	253.22
Plan/actual, %	88.2	90.0	105.2	5 times-	43.4	120.9

74. **Young entrepreneur (YE) financing.** The planned target in terms of volume of young entrepreneurs funding was 83% achieved and 76% in terms of value. However, it should be noted that appraisal target was

achieved at 123% in terms of volume and at 112% in terms of value. In 2023 financing was provided to 5 YEs, using USD 212.28 thousand from IFAD funds. Based on conditions set, the loan beneficiary contributed with USD 88.7 thousand, representing 29.5% of total project cost vs requested 10%, the GoM contributed with USD 14.55 thousand (exemption from paying taxes, duties and VAT).

Table 2.2.3. Achievements of young entrepreneurs financing activity (USD '000)

subcomponent 2.1: Term finance for MSMEs	Number		Value by financiers			Total investment cost
	Total	incl. women	IFAD loan	Beneficiary contribution	GoM	
Plan	6	2/30%	279.53	31.1	55.91	366.54
2.1.1.2. Young entrepreneurs						
Actual	5	3/60%	212.28	88.7	14.55	315.53
2.1.1.2. Young entrepreneurs						
Plan/actual, %	83.3	2 times	75.9	2.8 times	26.0	86.0

75. **For Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) financing**, in 2023, the amount of USD 1.59 million was used. The high demand for these loans, as well as an available balance on the infrastructure activity, allowed the financing of 14 SMEs vs 9 planned. The beneficiaries contributed USD 885.8 thousand, representing 35% to the total project cost, vs 25% required under the conditions set, and GoM with USD 241.87 thousand (details are presented in the table 2.2.2. below).

Table 2.2.2: Number and value of investments by target group (USD '000)

subcomponent 2.1: Term finance for MSMEs	Number		Total Value			Total investment cost
	Total	incl. women	IFAD loan	Beneficiary contribution	GoM	
Plan	9	3/30%	1139.55	379.85	227.91	1747.31
2.1.1.3. SMEs						
Actual	14	3/21.4%	1587.51	885.8	241.87	2715.18
2.1.1.3. SMEs						
Plan/actual, %	155.6	71.3	139.3	233.2	106.1	155.4

76. **Sub-component 2.3. Technical support to MSMEs** comprises a number of measures to widen and deepen the impacts of other components, including technical support to (1) agribusiness, (2) youth entrepreneurs, and (3) SCAs development, (4) financial literacy, and (5) knowledge management and targeting. In 2023 under the technical support to MSMEs subcomponent the following activities were performed (*details on costs by financiers are shown in the table 2.2.3*).

77. **The support to agribusiness (2.3.1.)** was oriented to support producer groups/association in the establishment of processing plant and development of producers' capacity, based on their needs.

78. For establishment of processing plant or other value-added equipment, was foreseen to support 4 producers' groups (honey processing; table grapes storage; plums drying; and milk processing). In 2023, 3 groups refused the financing in the context of the price increase, which made it difficult to ensure their own contribution; but also, of the events in Ukraine, which determined the groups to put the investment on hold. The only one group "Porcescu Ion Iurie" PF managed to procure the equipment from its own contribution, and CPIU purchased the part of honey processing equipment, representing 40% of eligible investment, from Project funds. The equipment was delivered and paid in Q2 (USD 22.15 thousand); the beneficiary's contribution constituted USD 44.10 thousand.

79. On the basis of the contract signed with the Technical University of Moldova, a total of 48 seminars were organised in 2023, with cca 15 participants each, on production and processing technologies, product quality improvement, in the following areas: Cattle - 12 seminars*4 subjects/46 participants; 2) Sheep and goats - 9

seminars*3 subjects/54 participants, 3) Beekeeping - 9 seminars*3 subjects/46 participants; 4) Berries - 6 seminars*6 subjects/18 participants; 5) Table grapes - 12 seminars*4 subjects/48 participants. In order to understand and apply what was studied in the seminars, 8 local visits were organised for learning and exchange of experience. The amount of USD 53.1 thousand was paid from ASAP grant under Knowledge management and communication activity (*ref. no. 1.2.3.1*).

80.Support to youth. Entrepreneurship involves continuous decision-making processes on business, on how to plan and make a correct decision in accessing a loan. With digital transformation already a reality in Moldova, CPIU IFAD supports and facilitates access to digital tools for IFAD Project's target groups, but not only: young entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs, small entrepreneurs, remittance recipients, etc. In 2023 were developed two web tools:

- (i) quiz "Evaluate your business idea", https://abdc.ucipifad.md/qsm_quiz/evaluateaza-ideea-de-afacere/, which will help the smallholders in business decision-making; and
- (ii) credit calculator "Compare and consciously choose", <https://abdc.ucipifad.md/calculatorul-de-credit-compara-si-alege-constient/>, which will help entrepreneurs to compare cost across different loans and evaluate benefits of financing.

The web tools were integrated into the online financial and entrepreneurship education platform "AgriBusiness Development Center" <https://abdc.ucipifad.md> and was developed by the Business Development Capital. The budgeted amount of USD 3.5 thousand, including 12 months maintenance of the platform, will be disbursed in Q1, 2024 from IFAD Grant.

81.Under SCA development was provided support on development of the SCA sector strategy. The activity was planned for 2022, but the tender was cancelled and the new tender with revised ToR by NCFM was launched in Q3, 2022. The contract was signed on March, 2023 with Dave Grace & Associates and the activity implemented, being delivered „Moldovan Savings and Credit Associations Sector Development Strategy for period 2023-2028” approved by NCFM². An amount of USD 56.72 thousand was paid in 2023 from IFAD Grant.

82.For the implementation of the SCAs Sector Development Strategy, several strategic priorities have been identified and the National Central Association of AEÎ (NCASCA) has taken the overall lead in coordinating the implementation of these activities. In the context of the transition of SCAs to National Bank of Moldova, at the request of NCASCA it was agreed to provide financial support for the organisation of a study visit to Ireland for representatives of NCASCA (council and lead staff), where the credit union system is well developed and operates under the supervision of the central bank, which will be a valuable opportunity for the NCASCA, but also for savings and loan associations in the Republic of Moldova to learn for Ireland experience. The activity will be carried out in Q1, 2024.

83.Financial literacy. Initiated in 2022, the development of the eLearning platform „AgriBusiness Development Centre”, as a continuation of financial and entrepreneurial education activities for small farmers, young people and women entrepreneurs, was finished, but the last instalment of USD 3.8 thousand USD of the contract with SP „Business Development Capital” for maintenance services of App - <https://abdc.ucipifad.md/> will be paid in Q1, 2024.

² Note that approval by NCFM does not necessarily mean full agreement with all contents of the SCA sector strategy, but rather that the deliverable has been completed to professional standards.

Table 2.2.3: Costs of technical support to MSMEs

(USD '000)

Sub-component 2.3: Technical support to MSMEs	IFAD loan	IFAD grant	ASAP grant	Beneficiary contribution	GoM	Total cost
Plan 2023	22.15	86.80	0.89	33.22	21.97	165.03
2.3.1. Support to agribusinesses	22.15	-	-	33.22	4.43	59.80
2.3.2 Support to Yes	-	3.50	-	-	0.70	4.20
2.3.3 SCA development	-	76.30	-	-	15.26	91.56
2.3.4 Financial literacy	-	7.0	-	-	1.40	8.40
2.3.5 Knowledge management and targeting	-	-	0.89	-	0.18	1.07
Actual 2023	22.15	57.43	-	44.10	0.44	124.12
2.3.1. Support to agribusinesses	22.15	-	-	44.10	0.44	66.69
2.3.2 Support to YEs	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.3.3 SCA development	-	56.73	-	-	-	56.73
2.3.4 Financial literacy	-	0.70	-	-	-	0.70
2.3.5 Knowledge management and targeting	-	-	-	-	-	-
Actual /Plan, %	100	66,2	-	132.8	2.0	75.2

3. Project Management

84. The overall management of the Project lies within the responsibility of the CPIU IFAD, established by the Government Decree, entrusted with responsibility for implementation, coordination of all activities, including financial management. Currently, the CPIU IFAD comprises 18 full time employees: CPIU director, 12 specialists in charge of the on-going programme' implementation, driver and 4 consultants.

85. CPIU continues to exercise its responsibilities in terms of:

- Project Planning: Developing comprehensive project plans, including defining project scope, objectives, deliverables, timelines, and resource requirements.
- Project Coordination: Ensuring effective communication and collaboration among various stakeholders, team members, and departments involved in the project.
- Resource Management: Allocating and managing resources efficiently, including human resources, materials, and budgets, to meet project requirements.
- Risk Management: Identifying potential risks and developing risk mitigation strategies to minimize the impact on project outcomes.
- Progress Monitoring: Regularly monitoring project progress and performance against established milestones and timelines.
- Budget Management: Overseeing project budgets, tracking expenses, and ensuring adherence to financial constraints.
- Quality Control: Ensuring project deliverables meet quality standards and addressing any deviations or issues promptly.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Engaging with project stakeholders, clients, and relevant parties to keep them informed of project progress and address their concerns.
- Compliance: Ensuring project activities align with IFAD policies and relevant regulations.

86. To ensure the optimal management of RRP for 2023 was planned USD 481.50 thousand. This includes USD 298.63 thousand IFAD contribution, USD 56.46 thousand ASAP and USD 126.41 thousand Government contribution. In the reported period was disbursed USD 263.06 thousand which represents 74% from the planned amount (details in the table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Plan vs. Actual Figures, by financiers

(USD '000)

2023	IFAD		ASAP	Total donor funds	GoM	Total
	Loan	Grant				
Plan	251.56	47.07	56.46	355.09	126.41	481.50
PM Investment Costs	15.00	47.07	36.89	98.96	22.51	121.47
Recurrent Costs	236.56	-	19.57	256.13	103.91	360.04
Actual	229.12	14.38	19.57	263.06	93.46	356.52
PM Investment Costs	14.89	14.38	-	29.27	3.02	32.29
Recurrent Costs	214.28	-	19.57	233.79	90.44	324.24
Spent (%)	91%	31%	35%	74%	74%	74%

3.1. Knowledge Management and Communication Activities

87. The role of knowledge management is to generate and share knowledge and experience between each employee involved in the working process of an institution. Various aspects are vital for a better result obtained by an organization, one of the most important aspects is KM implementation.

88. During first part of 2023, CPIU's KM&C Specialist focused on Social Media content:

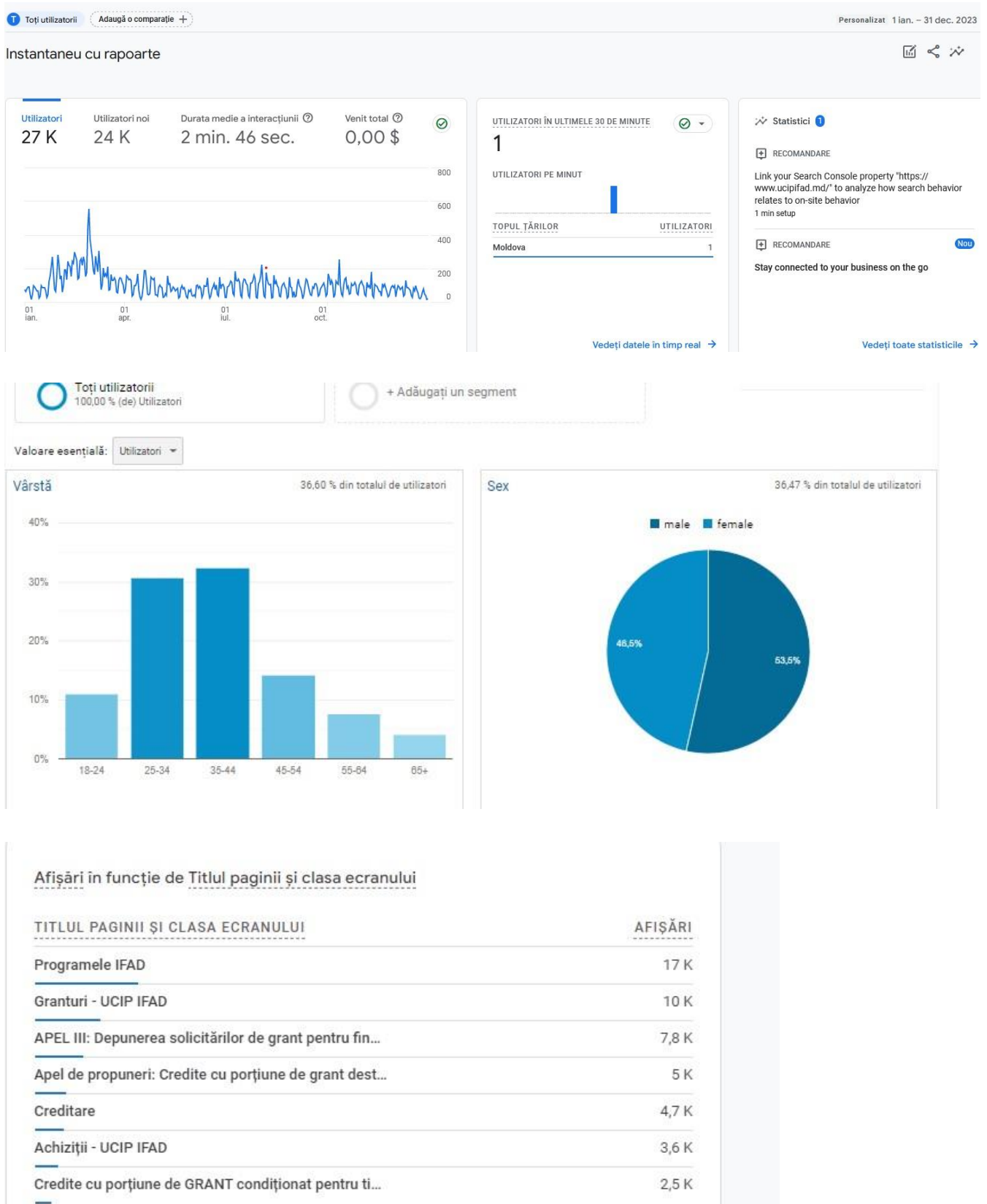
[Facebook/Instagram/Odnoklassniki/Youtube](#), in order to promote and disseminate information, being the best way to always keep contact with beneficiaries, partners ([agribusiness portal](#)) and mass media.

89. [CPIU's website](#) is the first source of information for those who want to be informed on CPIU's activities: for the reporting period were published [11 success stories](#) and [25 news articles](#).

90. The statistics for the reporting period (*details in the point 3.2 CPIU's website statistic*):

- over **17 237** visited the website;
- **16 %** are returning visitors;
- **71.22%** from Moldova;
- **46,58%** are from Chisinau, **23,44%** are not set, and **1,31%** from Balti;
- **53,5%** male, **48,5 %** female;
- **32.40%** are 35-44-year-old;
- **53,15%** from mobile, **46,36%** from desktop, **0,49%** from tablet; **15,42%** views are for CPIU front page, **9,40%** - grant related page, **3,10%** - procurement page

Table 3.2.: CPIU IFAD web page view



91. During first half of 2023, KM&C specialist as per usuals was engaged in disseminating information regarding IFAD Project, best practices and success stories on the mass media service provider, a local agricultural portal that CPIU contracted for 36 months, the division created before on Agrobiznes web site for CPIU IFAD <https://agrobiznes.md/ucip-ifad> was enriched with all information, news, videos, success stories regarding CPIU activities during the contractual period, for 2023 on the portal were presented [9 news/11 success stories/36 online events/visits/3 interviews](#) (since 2019 were accomplished over 158 news/58 success stories/52 online events/visits).

92. The new project initiated and managed by Agrobiznes portal, in 2021, an [online library](#) offers free of charge publication related to agriculture elaborated in R. Moldova. Due to CPIU IFAD and Agrobiznes collaboration several publications elaborated by CPIU IFAD have been uploaded in different categories.

93. Even though online mass media is getting more popular, there is public that is still using printed mass media as an information source, from this perspective CPIU does pursue its collaboration with "Curierul agricol" newspaper in 2023 (January-June), they did publish success stories and invitation to procurement contests printed newspaper - 10 issue).

Cu suportul IFAD fermierii din Grimăncăuți vor reconstrui un bazin de acumulare a apei

Schimbările climatice impun noi cerințe și ajustări a procesului tehnologic pentru producerea culturilor agricole. Unul dintre acestea este introducerea irigațiilor, care poate fi realizată cu succes atunci când există o sursă de apă.

În majoritatea localităților din țara noastră, bazinele de acumulare, sau așa zisele iazuri sunt într-o stare deplorabilă, iar autoritățile publice locale nu dispun de resurse pentru curățarea și întreținerea acestora.

În satul Grimăncăuți, din raionul Briceni, activează 898 de agenți economici, dintre care 874 sunt gospodării țărănești de fermieri ce au ca activitate de bază creșterea culturilor horticole, în special deținând plantații multianuale de mere, cireșe, prune, dar și pepinieră pentru producerea materialului săditor.

Pentru a crește competitivitatea sectorului de producere a

acordul, fără probleme, pentru restabilirea bazinului dat, deoarece APL nu dispune de surse financiare pentru a reconstrui, realitatea de sine stătătoare lacurile din localitate, astfel că suntem bucuroși că grupul client a reușit să se unească și să vină cu o contribuție personală pentru a realiza acest proiect.

Vitalie Dvorschi susține că condiții nefavorabile existente pentru sectorul agricol fac ca orice sursă de apă să fie importantă, atât pentru agenții economici

destul de mari și mă refer aici la lipsa precipitațiilor în anul 2022. Seceta ne-a unit ca să realizăm această investiție și să putem avea acces la apă, care este o condiție primordială pentru a dezvolta o agricultură cu valoare adăugată și a implementa tehnologii avansate de producere.

Fermierul susține că, realizarea acestui proiect va oferi posibilitatea să utilizeze apa din bazinul de acumulare, inclusiv și altor companii din regiune.

„Toți membrii grupului client



care prelucrează teren agricol, cât și pentru creșterii de animale.

„Este primordial să înțelegă toți că de apa din iazurile renovate va beneficia nu doar grupul client, dar și întreaga localitate. Odată ce agenții economici, ce au activități în domeniul agricol, vor avea acces la această sursă de apă vor putea produce fructe de calitate și astfel își vor dezvolta afacerea, iar odată cu aceasta se va dezvolta localitatea, raionul, întreaga țară. Iazurile sunt în proprietatea primăriei, iar grupul client, după reconstrucție, va lua în folosință lacul pentru o perioadă mai mare de timp și va utiliza această sursă pentru activitățile pe care le desfășoară”.

Igor Lesnic, reprezentantul grupului client spune că au apelat la Proiectul IFAD pentru reconstrucția lacului de acumulare din sat. Au depus formularul

de activități în domeniul agricol și anume, dețin plantații multianuale (livezi de mere, cireș) și o pepinieră de producere a materialului săditor. După reconstrucție, lacul de acumulare va fi în gestiunea Primăriei, aceasta având misiunea de a gestiona corect. Contribuția grupului client a fost în mărime de 10% din investiția totală. Primăria Grimăncăuți ne-a oferit suportul în realizarea acestui proiect deoarece problema lipsei apei este una comună și stringentă”.

Reconstrucția acestui lac de acumulare va permite irigarea a 200 de ha de culturi agricole ale grupului client aplicant, dar și a altor fermieri mici care prelucrează terenuri în zona dată.

După cum a specificat Igor Lesnic, nu a fost complicat să depună dosarul de aplicare, iar actele solicitate au fost completate cu ajutorul colaboratorilor UCIP IFAD.

UCIP IFAD și ACSA la finele Campaniei de informare a Componentei Proiectului TRTP: „Gestionarea adaptată la schimbările climatice a apelor în gospodăriile agricole” în ariile rurale



Republica Moldova este expusă frecvent unui risc sporit de secete și fenomene climatice extreme, care sau accentuat în ultimele decenii datorită schimbărilor climatice globale și regionale. Pe parcursul ultimilor 20 de ani, cel puțin 7 ani au fost cu secete devastatoare și severe care au afectat între 50-75% din teritoriul țării și au compromis între 40-70% producțiile culturilor agricole. Secetele au un impact negativ asupra sectorului agricol, cu o scădere semnificativă a productivității agricole, scăderea calității produselor agricole și o incidență mai frecventă a diabetului și bolilor.

În acest context, datorită acordului de finanțare încheiat între Guvernul Republicii Moldovei și Fondul Internațional de Dezvoltare Agricolă (IFAD), prin intermediul Uniunii Consolidate de Implementare a Programelor IFAD (UCIP IFAD) se implementează Proiectul „Jumătățile Capacității pentru Transformarea Zonei Rurale (TRTP)”, care are ca scop stimularea creșterii economice rurale la scară largă și de reducere a sărăciei prin investiții și intervențiile complementare în zonele mai vulnerabile și defavorizate la climă din toată țara.

Oportunitățile oferite de Programele de finanțare IFAD vin să completeze eforturile Guvernului și a Administrațiilor Publice Locale de ordinul II de a asigura surse de investiții pentru dezvoltarea afacerilor rurale, crearea de noi locuri de muncă, producerea și procesarea culturilor cu valoare adăugată înaltă.

Astfel, Start la Campania de informare a Componentei Proiectului TRTP, „Gestionarea adaptată la schimbările climatice a apelor în gospodăriile agricole” a fost dat în raionul Orhei la data de 10 martie 2023 cu încheierea în raionul Criș-

al cliimei și de comisiune a surselor de apă. UCIP IFAD prin Fondul de Adaptare va oferi sprijin și granturi grupelor de producători și micilor fermieri cu terenuri de până la 10 ha (deținute și cultivate) pentru investiții în infrastructura de irigație și scheme de irigație la scară mică conectate la Sistemele Centrale de Irigație (SCI) existente din

din cadrul AUA1 sau de la sursa de apă existentă în localitate, care vor include stații de pompare, conductă de aducțiune a apei, bazin de acumulare a apei câmpit și gosterul cu până la 15.000 mc, și b) construcția/reabilitarea lacurilor/iazurilor de acumulare a apei utilizate exclusiv pentru irigație.



Granturi – investiții cu valoare maximă 7.500 dolari SUA, și o contribuție de coparticipare de minim 30% a potențialului beneficiar, pentru producătorii agricoli – mici, tineri antreprenori și femei din arii rurale (cu excepția de Chișinău și Bălți), care cultivă până la 10 hectare de terenuri agricole

Implementarea componentei proiectului nominalizat are două abordări, care includ: asistență financiară sub formă de Granturi în valoare maximă de 300.000 dolari SUA unui Grup – client (grup de minim 20 beneficiari eligibili), iar în cazul în care sunt mai puțin beneficiari valoarea maximă a grantului se va calcula după formula: 15.000 dolari SUA x Nu-

pepinieră horticolă, inclusiv membri a 41 de Asociații de Utilizatori de Apă la Irigație. Pe tot parcursul implementării activităților de lucru promovarea oportunităților de finanțare în sectorul irigațiilor la scară mică oferite prin intermediul Programelor IFAD au fost împărțite cu producătorii agricoli prin intermediul mass media națională și regională cu publicația a 19 articole regionale, 4 articole naționale și 5 reportaje TRM.

În cadrul Activităților regionale de informare – instruire a participanților peste 500 de producători agricoli și antreprenori rurali din secourile culturilor cu valoare adăugată înaltă. Dintre aceștia peste 200 de fermieri și-au dat acordul pentru a participa la proiect și de primi asistenta financiară sub formă de granturi oferite de UCIP IFAD pentru investiții în sisteme de irigație la scară mică.

Pe parcursul acestor 3 luni de zile în paralel cu implementarea Campaniei de informare a Componentei Proiectului TRTP, „Gestionarea adaptată la schimbările climatice a apelor în gospodăriile agricole” pentru producătorii agricoli și antreprenorii rurali, dl Anatolie Fala împreună cu echipa sa oferă suport și servicii de consultanță tehnică gratuită la pregătirea pachetelor de documente spre aplicare la granturile IFAD pentru infrastructura de irigație și scheme de irigație la scară mică, a 14 producători agricoli din 9 raioane ale țării. Inclusiv sa inițiază activitatea de formulare a 5 Grupe – clienți de beneficiari care vor aplica la granturile destinate dezvoltării infrastructurii de irigație.

Vom menționa, că prin intermediul consultanților Asociației Naționale de Dezvoltare Rurală (ACSA), pe tot parcursul implementării proiectului se va acorda suport și servicii de consultanță tehnică gratuită la: diseminarea informațiilor și identificarea grupelor – clienți și micilor fermieri, la pregătirea pachetului de grup și individuale pentru aplicare la granturile IFAD pentru infrastructura de irigație și scheme de irigație la scară mică, inclusiv lucrările adoptate de tehnologii inteligente de economisire a apei și creșterea rezilienței micilor fermieri prin adoptarea de practici agricole inteligente de adaptare la schimbările climatice.

Producătorii agricoli, membrii AUA1 și APL, onitnerași în implementarea proiectelor de dezvoltare a infrastructurii și sistemelor de irigație

ISTORIE DE SUCCES DE LA UCIP IFAD

Datorită grantului de la UCIP IFAD, 5 fermieri au extins suprafețele irigate cu 100 hectare



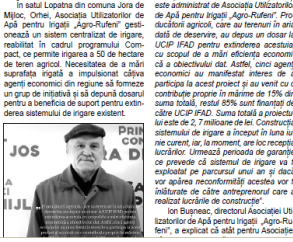
alți acces la irigare, deoarece pe aceste terenuri sunt sădite fructe moderne, ce aduc un venit suplimentar, dar și o producție de calitate ce este exportată în alte țări. Sperăm că, datorită acestui proiect se va îmbunătăți și starea economică, cât și financiară a Asociației. La moment, Asociația are 28 de membri, o bună parte dintre terenurile pe care le dețin membrii sunt deja irigate, dar odată cu darea în exploatare a noi porțiuni, numărul membrilor va crește, iar și suprafața irigată. Până la moment, se așteaptă aproximativ 50 de hectare, dar odată cu darea în exploatare a sistemului de irigare credem că vom ajunge la 100-150 de ha".



Florin Ciobotari, președintele Asociației „Agro-Rufeni”, membru al grupului client, a spus că, sistemul să fie valorificat la maxim de către producătorii din regiune, astfel să se realizeze o agricultură performantă care să aducă beneficii atât producătorilor, cât și întregii comunități.

Seceta din ultimii ani vine să confirme necesitatea sistemelor de irigare care sunt vitale pentru agricultură, iar reabilitarea și modernizarea lor va aduce accesul unuia din cei mai mari producători agricoli ce vor utiliza apa pentru creșterea unei producții competitive.

„În satul Lopatna există deja un sistem de irigare, care era compus dintr-o stație de pompare situată pe râul Nistru și pompi apoi în-un bazin de acumulare, iar ulterior aceasta era folosită pentru irigare. Acest sistem era funcțional și este administrat de Asociația Utilizatorilor de Apă pentru Irigații „Agro-Rufeni”, Producătorii agricoli, care au terenuri în satul Lopatna de deservire, au deșeură de la irigații, în cadrul programului Com-pact, ce permite irigarea a 50 de hectare de teren agricol. Necesitatea de a mări suprafața irigată a impulsionat câțiva agenți economici din regiune să formeze un grup de inițiativă și să depună dosarul pentru a beneficia de suport pentru extinderea sistemului de irigare existent.



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UCIP IFAD sprijină activitățile agricole de adaptare la schimbările climatice

BENEFICIARIII ȘI CRITERIILE DE ELIGIBILITATE
 Pentru a beneficia de granturi pentru măsuri de adaptare a sistemelor de producere agricolă la schimbările climatice, solicitanții trebuie să corespundă următoarelor criterii de eligibilitate:
 1. sunt întreprinderi înregistrate sub orice formă organizatorico-juridică sau persoane fizice înregistrate (gospodării țărănești sau întreprinderi individuale), care practică activități agricole sau de procesare a producției agricole în zonele rurale controlate de autoritățile din Republica Moldova, cu excepția unităților care au activitate în orașele Chișinău și Bălți; întreprinderile care sunt înregistrate în orașele Chișinău și Bălți, dar care au filiale sau întreprind activități agricole în zonele rurale vor fi considerate eligibile;
 2. mențin evidența contabilă pentru toate tranzacțiile și operațiunile efectuate în conformitate cu legislația în vigoare;
 3. au cel puțin un an de experiență în domeniu;
 4. suprafața terenului deținut în proprietate și/sau arendat cumulativ nu depășește 50 ha;
 5. cooperativele, în care cel puțin 70 % din membri dețin individual în proprietate și/sau arendă cumulativ max. 50 ha;
 6. posedă certificate eliberate de organul național sau internațional de certificare, care confirmă activitatea de producere ecologică (organică, biologică) sau că gospodăria este în perioada de conversie de la metoda tradițională la cea ecologică (organică, biologică). Aceasta se referă doar la solicitanții cu activitate în agricultură ecologică;
 7. nu au datorii la bugetul de stat. În cazul existenței datoriei la bugetul de stat, solicitanții de grant vor prezenta o confirmare de la organele de resort privind eşalonarea acestora;

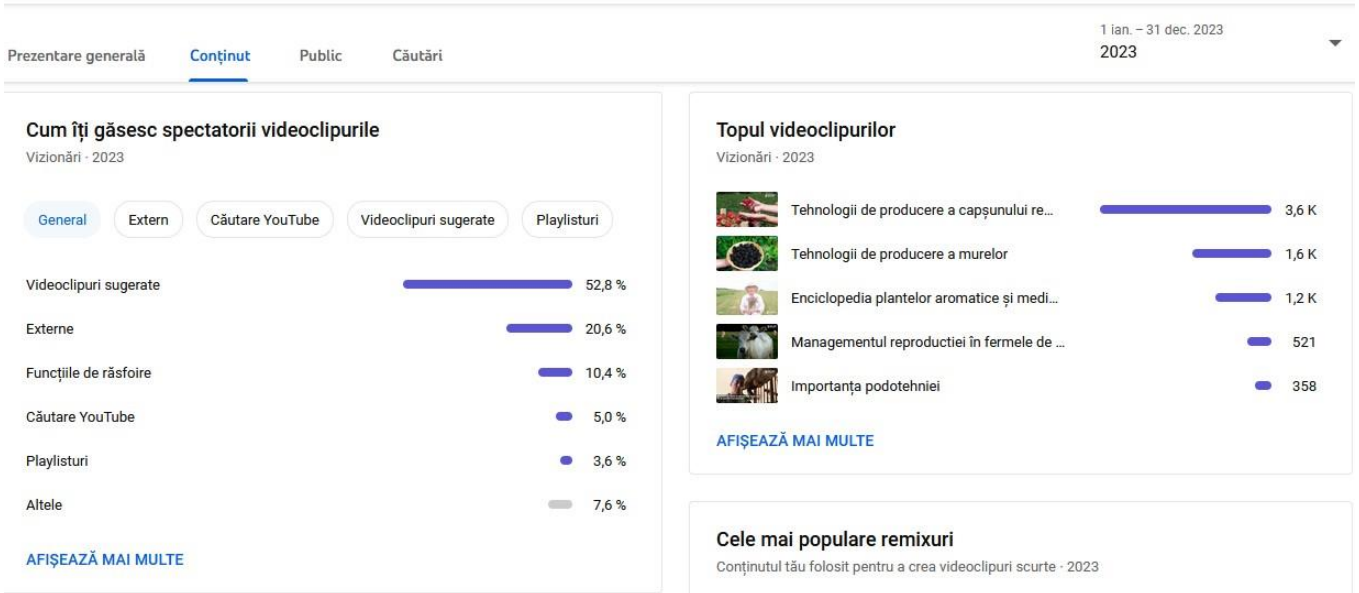
INVESTIȚIILE ELIGIBILE
 UCIP IFAD acordă asistență financiară sub formă de grant pentru finanțarea activităților, care ar asigura o mai bună adaptare a sistemelor de producere agricolă primară la schimbările climatice și vor include următoarele tipuri de investiții eligibile:

- Echipamente la implementarea tehnologiilor eficiente de irigare micro-presurizată;
 - Echipament pentru agricultura conservativă;
 - Sisteme anti-grindină și plasă pentru umbră;
 - Set de igheaburi, tevi și rezervoare pentru colectarea apei de ploaie de pe construcțiile din zona de producție;
 - Echipament de producere a energiei solare în zona de producere;
 - Mașini și utilaje folosite în sistemul de producere a culturilor organice;
 - a) mașini pentru distribuirea îngrășămintelor organice;
- *Cererile care nu vor corespunde cu cerințele obligatorii pentru constatarea eligibilității echipamentului și specificațiile tehnice minime, nu vor fi admise la evaluare la etapa de calificare.

8. dispun de mijloace financiare suficiente pentru asigurarea contribuției proprii la valoarea grantului.
 Detaliile privind: investițiile neeligibile și beneficiarii neeligibili; structura și conținutul contractului de achiziție a bunului cu finanțare din grant, procedura de evaluare a cererilor de finanțare și condițiile de prezentare a pachetului de documente sunt descrise detaliat pe pagina
 • www.ucipifad.md
 • Rubrica Servicii/Granturi
 • **Proiectul de Reziliență Rurală (IFAD VIII)**
 • **APEL III: Depunerea solicitărilor de grant la finanțarea măsurilor de adaptare a sistemelor de producție agricolă la schimbările climatice.**
 Modelul Cererilor de finanțare pot fi descărcate accesând pagina web a UCIP IFAD, fiecare cerere va fi semnată și stampilată de către conducătorul întreprinderii agricole însoțite de setul de documente autentificate.
 Cererile de finanțare pot fi depuse până sau după ce bunurile au fost procurate.
 Pentru rambursare sunt eligibile bunurile procurate după data de 14 august 2020.
 Programul de granturi este implementat în perioada 2020-2023 până la epuizarea resurselor financiare disponibile. Solicitanții de grant va solicita clarificări și concretizări prin expedierea mesajelor la adresa electronică a UCIP IFAD office@ucipifad.md sau va contacta angajații UCIP IFAD la următorul număr de telefon: +(22) 223073.

94. For social media content, Facebook/Instagram pages, the information presented were related to financial opportunities, success stories, news, study visits, videos (details 2.3.3 Facebook and Instagram statistic), thus in the 31 december of 2023:

- 4901 followers (in 2022 Facebook page had 4140 followers);
- 674 followers Instagram page (in the end of 2022 Insta had 596 followers);
- 80,5% Moldova and 45.5 % followers are from Chisinau (Facebook);
- 79.3% Moldova and 43.5 % followers are from Chisinau (Instagram);
- 53.8 % women, 46.2% men (Facebook);
- 45.1% women, 54.9% men (Instagram);
- Facebook age group 35-44 years old, the main group which 21% women and 16,7% men;
- Instagram age group 25-34 years old, the main group which is women 17,7% and men 24,0%.



96. Printed materials elaborated in 2023 for RRP to enhance awareness of climate-resilience grants opportunities, were printed flyers and distributed in order to promote the component opportunities during several events held by MAFI (e.g., Europe day, Moldagrotech spring 2023, Food&Drinks exhibition).

97. In order to disseminate information on the grants and loans dedicated to young entrepreneurs offered within ongoing IFAD Projects CPIU IFAD participated, by a contract of collaboration for sponsorship, in the Business Plan contest organized by the Technical University, Faculty of economics and business engineering, the Department of economics and management which took place in March 2023.

The contest was a professional communication platform for young people in the entrepreneurial field (launch and development of a business), whose mission was to develop the entrepreneurial skills of students/master's and to support/strengthen and build an entrepreneurial culture, capable of accelerating business initiation and operational management based on business plans. CPIU IFAD's participation in the event gave maximum visibility among young people, the target of IFAD Projects, and potential beneficiaries for TRTP, also CPIU IFAD benefit from media coverage:

- <https://utm.md/blog/2023/03/15/feb-utm-concursul-national-al-planurilor-de-afaceri-competitivitatea-si-inovatiile-la-dezvoltarea-afacerilor-pentru-tineri/>
- <https://agrobiznes.md/concurs-national-al-planurilor-de-afaceri-competitivitatea-si-inovatiile-la-dezvoltarea-afacerilor-pentru-tineri.html>
- https://agrobiznes.md/au-fost-premiate-cele-mai-bune-planuri-de-afaceri-ale-tinerilor-cu-suportul-ucip-ifad.html?fbclid=IwAR0bUtljkSSmeL4EnpmDmB29oT-AHiyw1pG6dmPd_qVXrIdnNV8U189CYPi
- <http://www.ucipifad.md/noutati/au-fost-premiate-cele-mai-bune-planuri-de-afaceri-ale-tinerilor-cu-suportul-ucip-ifad/>

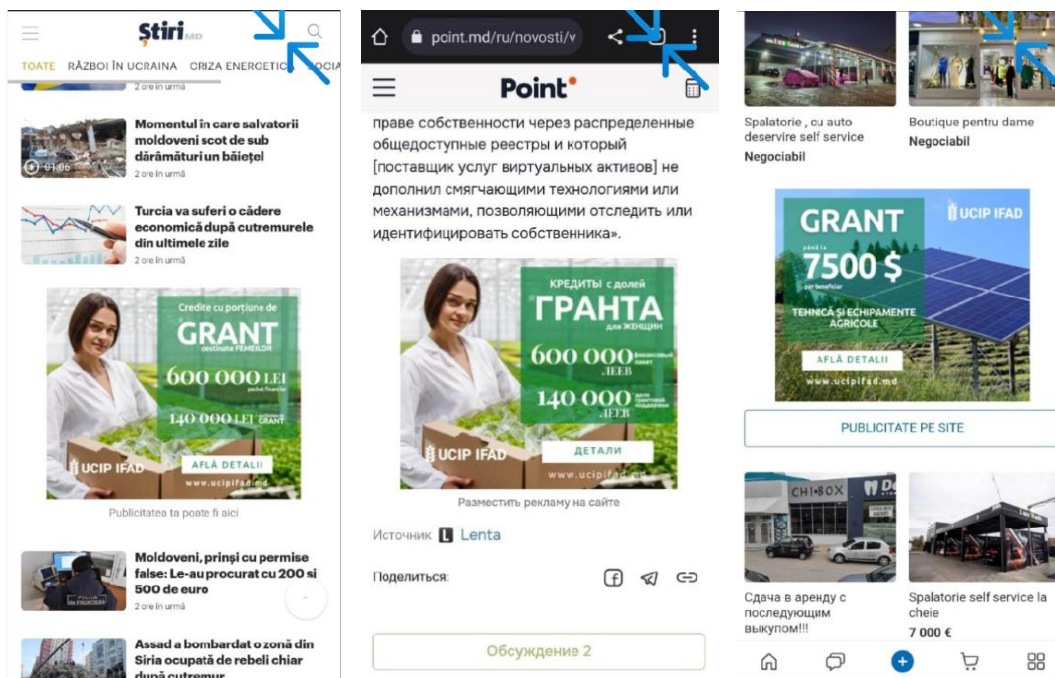
98. For a better dissemination of the IFAD Projects products (grants & matching grants) through different media and channels of information, CPIU direct contracted, several service providers for elaborating and disseminating a 30 second video on a national TV channel and national radio stations, also on popular websites promote web banners.

The selection of service providers was based on previous fruitful collaboration, in the case of AgroTV ([Jevis LTD](#)) for [video](#) elaboration which was broadcasted on AgroTV:

- 10.03.2023-31.03.2023 - total times video was broadcasted – 116 times, total minutes -56;
- 01.04.2023-30.04.2023 – total times video was broadcasted – 150 times, total minutes -72.

For web banners, CPIU IFAD selected the [Simplas LTD](#) with the most visible websites (in Romanian and Russian):

- www.999.md – 1 000 000 views:
- www.point.md – 600 000 views:
- www.stiri.md – 600 000 views.



Regarding the Radio channels, CPIU IFAD have chosen the stations that are received on air throughout the territory of the Republic of Moldova as follows:

- Radio Moldova - the radio spot in the period 01-30 of March was broadcasted 240 times, 120 minutes;
- Radio Moldova Tineret - the radio spot in the period 01-30 of March was broadcasted 240 times, 120 minutes;
- Radio Plai – the radio spot in the period 01-30 of March was broadcasted 164 times, 82 minutes.

99. The eLearning platform “AgriBusiness Development Center” abdc.ucipifad.md [educational digital materials](#) content for the platform was elaborated and uploaded to the eLearning platform, including [video content](#) on the agricultural domain.

100. CPIU IFAD organized a round table with representatives of specialized associations to discuss the challenges and opportunities of rural entrepreneurship, [on 24th of February 2023](#).

101. On the 2nd of March, an [informational session](#) was organized by CPIU IFAD with the participation of suppliers of agricultural machinery and equipment. During an online session held via Zoom, CPIU IFAD presented meeting was discussed the possibilities of providing financial support to agricultural producers through IFAD Programme.

102. Gender Specialist who is in charge from October 2023 within TRTP project, has participated in the meeting with the members of the RRP supervision mission from December 2023.

103. As a result, IFAD Gender Expert recommended the organization of a workshops/conferences on GEWE practices with key development practitioners, policy makers and others on the topic to raise awareness and lay the foundation of policy dialogue activities.

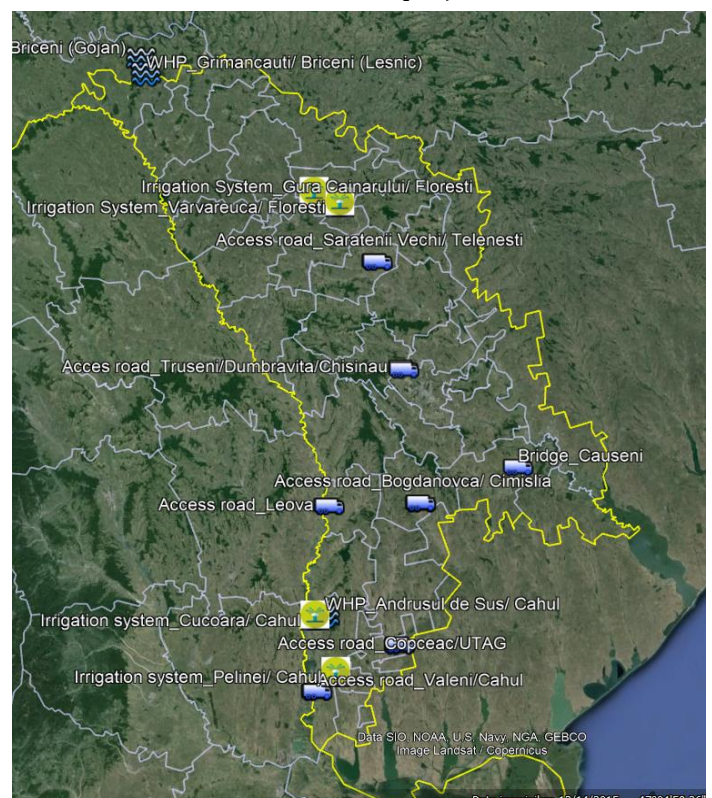
104. The ToR for contracting of a dedicated SP for the organization of a workshop on GEWE practices was developed, and the tender will be launched after the approval of RRP budget. The workshop will be attended by key development practitioners, policy makers and RRP and TRTP actual beneficiaries as well as potential future IFAD beneficiaries. In order to ensuring visibility of activities the results of the workshop will be promoted through press releases, published on the website, social media and sent to the press.

3.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

105. The main role of a Monitoring and Evaluation team within Rural Resilience project is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of project activities and outcomes. The M&E team is responsible for systematically collecting and analysing data to measure the project's progress, identify areas of success and challenges, and make informed decisions to improve project implementation.

106. Being at its last year of implementation, the Project has registered an important outcome within both components, for some activities achieving the target for the entire project.

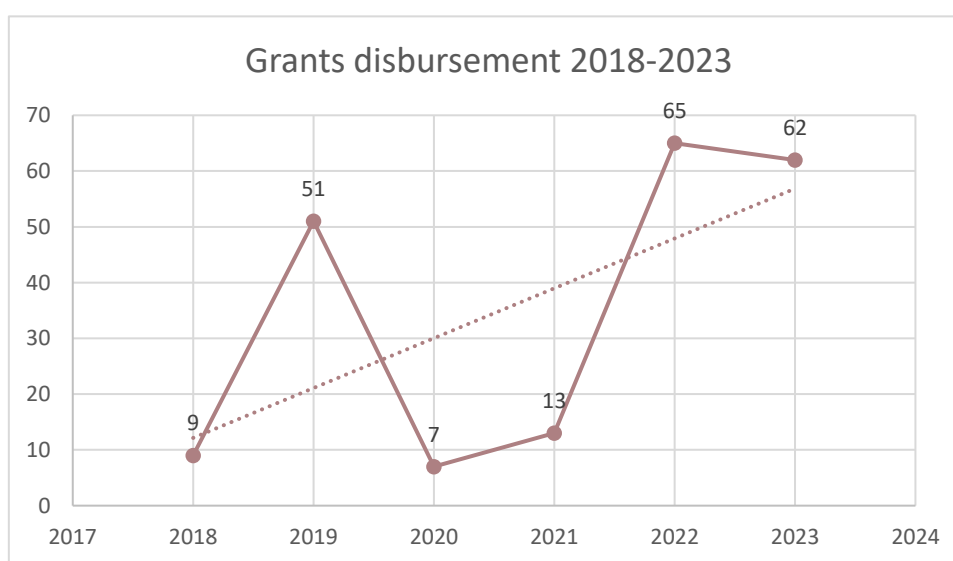
107. For 2023, within Component 1, 52.714 households have benefited from IFAD intervention, through the construction 14 projects: 4 irrigation systems, 7 access roads and 3 water harvesting ponds. Being located in 9 rayons: 2 in the North of the country, 2 in the Centre and 5 in the South part, covering 13 localities. Such comprehensive infrastructure development laid the foundation for multifaceted progress, fostering socio-economic growth in the regions. Representing a diverse demographic landscape, there were 28.584 men, 29.579 women and 11.520 young people, fostering



inclusivity and empowerment within communities, which are direct and indirect beneficiaries of those infrastructure projects.

108. This achievement of 2023 infrastructure objects do not only address immediate infrastructural needs but also prioritized the socio-economic inclusion for sustainable prosperity, nurturing a conducive environment for long-term growth and resilience. The enhanced access to irrigation systems bolstered agricultural productivity, paving the way for food security and economic stability. Simultaneously, improved connectivity through access roads facilitated market integration, unlocking new avenues for trade and commerce. Furthermore, the implementation of water harvesting ponds underscored IFAD's commitment to environmental sustainability, mitigating the impact of climate variability and safeguarding precious natural resources for future generations.

109. During 2023, 62 grants related to climate resilient production and farm-level post-harvest management were financed during 2023, for 50 men and 12 women. Among the equipment identified as indispensable for advancing conservation agriculture principles, the most demanded equipment were shredders for crop residue management, mowers and seeding machines. This equipment play critical roles in supporting the principles of conservation agriculture by facilitating crop residue management, cover crop maintenance and precision planting, promoting cover crop establishment, and enabling reduced-till or no-till planting systems. This equipment contributes to soil health, natural resources conservation, and overall sustainability in agricultural systems, aligning closely with the goals of conservation agriculture.

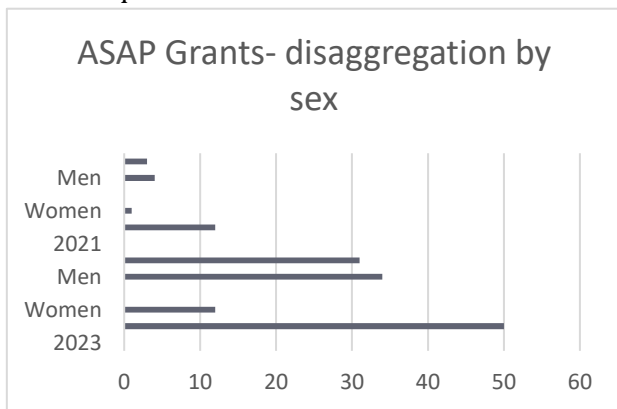
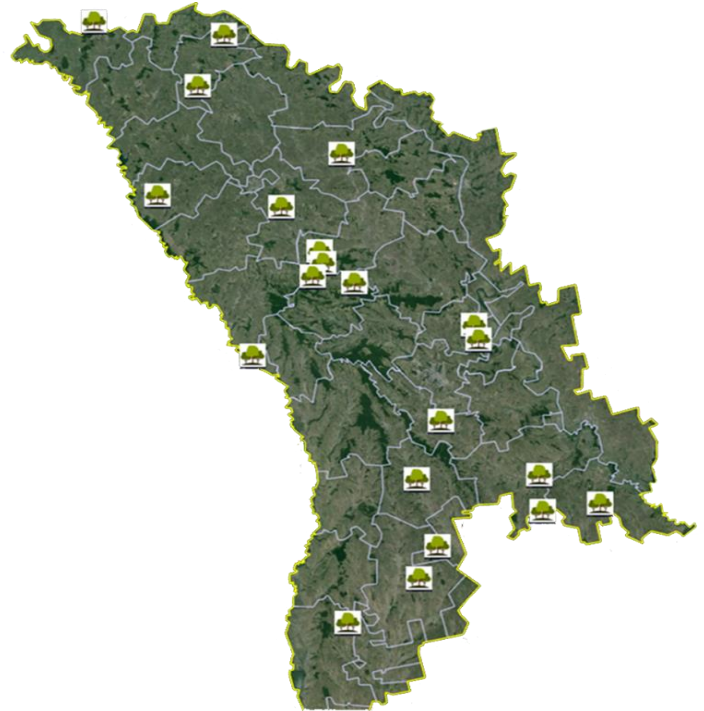


110. The chart above, illustrates the trajectory of grants disbursement over the years. It can be noticed a considerable variation, beginning with 9 grants disbursed in the first year of implementation and a considerable increase in 2019 with 51 grants financed, marking a turning point in the program's expansion and reach. Followed by a considerable decrease in 2020 and 2021 as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown measures, grant disbursement experienced a notable decline, with only 20 grants allocated over the two-year period. In 2022, after the pandemic withdrew and the renewed interest, 65 grants were financed, reflecting a resurgence in program activity.

The year 2023, which is considered the last full year of implementation, was a crucial year for all activities on the one hand, and a difficult one on the other. In June 2023, Climate Resilience Specialist responsible for grant disbursement has resigned, and another dedicated specialist came in place in autumn. Thus, in the

reporting period, due to a significant period of the lack of specialist, 62 grants were financed, instead of 100 initially planned.

111. Despite the challenges encountered along the way, the cumulative achievement of the program by the end of 2023 stands at 207 grants financed, representing 49% of the target set. Looking ahead, CPIU remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing sustainable agriculture practices, with plans to finance an additional 58 grants in the first quarter of 2024.

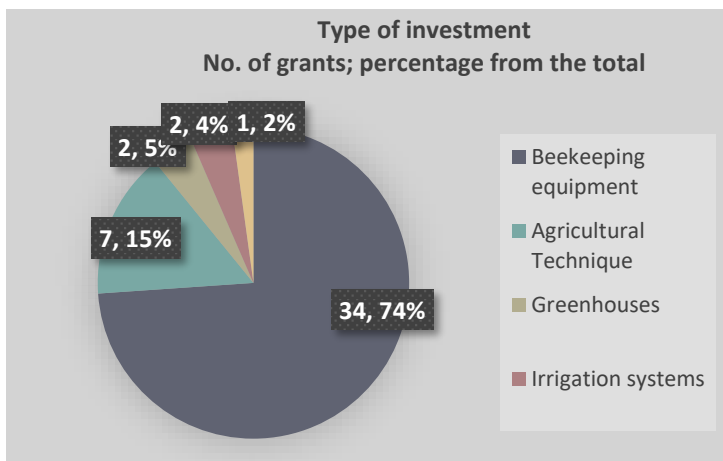


112. Another important achievement in 2023, is the establishment of 401,14 ha of shelterbelts within 21 local public authorities. This activity was a crucial one for the outreach of the project, as the activity had reached 49.086 people or 17.530 households.

113. The established shelterbelts will serve over years as natural barriers against soil erosion, wind damage, and desertification, ensuring the sustainability of the land and resources.

The activity across the country was paramount for safeguarding the environment, communities, and agricultural productivity. Moreover, the plantation will provide crucial habitats for biodiversity, mitigate climate change by sequestering carbon, and enhance the resilience of the ecosystems in the face of increasingly extreme weather events.

114. During the reporting period, 46 women have been financed with dedicated grants for women’s business diversification. Most of the activities financed are in the field of beekeeping, followed by grants for agricultural technique (tractors). The chart below shows the types of interventions supported by IFAD during 2023.



115. Such investments provided are not only a financial support for a business expand or start-up, it contributes to employment generation, particularly in rural areas where job opportunities may be limited, encouraging their active participation in economic activities, fostering their financial independence and contributing to household incomes.

116. The grants enable women to diversify their business ventures, potentially leading to the establishment of new enterprises. Beekeeping, for instance, can create opportunities for honey production, wax processing, and other related activities, thus fostering entrepreneurship and innovation. Initiatives like beekeeping, vegetable and fruit growing often require additional labour force, thus leading to job creation within local communities.

By specifically targeting women for grants and support in traditionally male-dominated sectors like agriculture and beekeeping, there is a broader impact on promoting gender equality. It challenges stereotypes and creates pathways for women to thrive in non-traditional roles, thereby contributing to societal progress.

117. Likewise, financing of five women groups during 2023, for the development of the activities in the field of beekeeping, pastry production and aromatic and medicinal plants. Grants for women's group represents a strategic investment with multifaceted benefits. A „ collective grant” enables larger investments, facilitating the procurement of necessary equipment, and infrastructure improvements across multiple sectors. This exchange fosters a culture of continuous learning and capacity building, empowering women with valuable skills and insights applicable across different sectors. Collaboration among women within a group sparks creativity and innovation. As individuals from diverse backgrounds come together, they exchange ideas, experiment with new techniques, and explore innovative approaches to business development.

118. In the reporting period, there were financed 35 entrepreneurs, from which 11 women and 16 young entrepreneurs.

119. Making the analyses of the M&E database, it can be observed that various entities, including SMEs, YEs and Microentrepreneurs have received substantial financial support for agricultural and related activities. These investments range from cultivating crops and managing livestock to acquiring equipment and implementing sustainable farming practices. By investing in a wide range of agricultural activities, these initiatives aim to create employment opportunities, enhance productivity, and drive sustainable development in rural areas.

120. The loans provided for agricultural development in 2023 represent a significant investment in the country's rural economy, with a particular focus on empowering women, supporting young entrepreneurs, and fostering collaboration and innovation within the agricultural sector. This approach not only stimulates economic growth but also contributes to the overall sustainability and resilience of the agricultural industry.

121. In conclusion, the project, nearing its completion, has demonstrated significant achievements within both components, particularly in infrastructure development and support for agricultural initiatives.

In 2023, Component 1 witnessed the successful completion of infrastructure projects, benefiting households across various regions, promoting socio-economic growth and inclusivity. Additionally, grants for climate-resilient production and farm-level management provided critical support to both men and women entrepreneurs, fostering sustainability in agriculture.

The financing of grants, contributed to employment generation and economic empowerment, particularly for women. Moreover, the establishment of the shelterbelts underscores the project's commitment to environmental sustainability and community resilience.

Collective grants enable larger investments, facilitate capacity building, and foster collaboration and innovation among women entrepreneurs.

Overall, the Rural Resilience project's investments in agriculture, infrastructure, and entrepreneurship have not only stimulated economic growth, but also contributed to gender equality, environmental conservation, and community resilience, laying a solid foundation for sustainable development in rural areas.

Annex 1: Outputs Table as of 31.12.2023

Indicator	Unit	Revised target SVM Nov 2021	31 December 2023		
			Plan 2023	Actual 2023	Cumulative 2023
Component 1 Improve smallholder and agribusiness adaptive capacity	Men	10146	8186	28584	29717
	Women	4348	3568	29579	30690
	Young Total	2899	3561	11520	12379
	<i>Young Men</i>	2030	2467	5700	6106
	<i>Young Women</i>	869	1094	5820	6273
	HH	14494	6278	52714	54339
Sub-component 1.1: Climate Resilient Water Management and Infrastructure Development (CR-WMID)	Men	2030	5979	4301	5051
	Women	870	2558	4194	4786
	Young Total	580	2558	1700	2176
	<i>Young Men</i>	406	1791	868	1119
	<i>Young Women</i>	174	767	832	1057
	HH	2900	3061	3046	3769
Micro and small irrigation schemes	Number	24	4	4	7
Small agro enterprises in micro and small irrigation schemes	Number	72	19	19	34
Micro and small Irrigation schemes constructed/rehabilitated	Km	n/a			8.887
Hectares of land irrigated (from irrigation schemes)	Ha	1440	226	226.96	486.92
Number of beneficiaries (from irrigation schemes)	Number	1600	19	19	34
	<i>Men</i>	1120	15	15	25
	<i>Women</i>	480	4	4	9
	Young	320	4	4	9
	<i>Young Men</i>	224	3	3	6
	<i>Young Women</i>	96	1	1	3
Access roads	Number	12	6	7	8
Roads constructed (km)	Km	24	6.6	4.97	6.64
Small rural enterprises benefit (from access roads)	Number	50	46	48	52
Households benefit (from access roads)	Number	1200	2390	2376	2755
Villages from access roads	Number	12	6	7	8
Number of beneficiaries from access roads (Direct+Indirect beneficiaries)	Number		6693	6653	7651
	<i>Men</i>		4686	3393	3883
	<i>Women</i>		2007	3260	3768
	Young		2007	1331	1716
	<i>Young Men</i>		1405	679	861
	<i>Young Women</i>		602	652	855
Rainwater harvesting ponds	Number	4	3	3	4
Rainwater harvesting ponds capacity	m3	1200000		229000	259438
Households benefit (from rainwater harvesting ponds)	Number	100	652	651	980
Number of beneficiaries (People in LPA benefited from rainwater harvesting ponds)	Number		1825	1823	2152
	<i>Men</i>		1278	893	1143
	<i>Women</i>		547	930	1009
	Young		547	365	451
	<i>Young Men</i>		383	186	252
	<i>Young Women</i>		164	179	199
Sub-component 1.2 Farmers' adaptation through climate resilient investments	Men	8116	2207	24283	24666
	Women	3478	1010	25385	25904

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	Young Total	2319	1003	9820	10203
	<i>Young Men</i>	1624	676	4832	4987
	<i>Young Women</i>	695	327	4988	5216
	HH	11594	3217	49668	50570
Grants related to climate resilient production and farm-level post-harvest management	Number	420	57	62	207
	<i>Men</i>	294	47	50	151
	<i>Women</i>	126	10	12	56
	Young	84	22	28	85
	<i>Young Men</i>	68	15	23	65
	<i>Young Women</i>	16	7	5	20
Women Smallholders Vulnerability and Business Diversification Pilot grant	Number	200	30	46	139
	<i>Young Women</i>	40	14	25	68
Technical assistance for Women Pilot Grant	Number		29	28	72
	<i>Young Women</i>		11	11	39
Women Groups beneficiaries supported with grant (min. 5 members/grant)	Group	10	5	5	6
	Number	50	25	25	31
	<i>Young Women</i>	10	7	8	10
W-1 support the restoration of vegetation shelterbelts around farm-land plots	Ha	200	102	401.14	429.47
Beneficiaries of shelterbelts	Number	n/a	11	21	25
	<i>Men</i>				1
	<i>Women</i>				2
	Young			0	0
	<i>Young Men</i>				0
	<i>Young Women</i>				0
	LPA		11	21	22
LPA (People in LPA benefited from shelterbelts)	<i>Men</i>		1540	23872	23962
	<i>Women</i>		660	25214	25324
	Young		660	9668	9728
	<i>Young Men</i>		462	4737	4762
	<i>Young Women</i>		198	4931	4966
W-2 support the restoration of vegetation cover in the catchment areas of water schemes and reservoirs	Ha	30	10	0	0
W-3 support the restoration of communal grassland	Ha	200	92.7	15	61.2
Beneficiaries of grassland restoration	Number	n/a	6	2	8
	<i>Men</i>			1	3
	<i>Women</i>			1	4
	Young			2	4
	<i>Young Men</i>			1	2
	<i>Young Women</i>			1	2
	LPA		7	0	1
LPA (People in LPA benefited from grassland restoration)	<i>Men</i>		735	0	70
	<i>Women</i>		315	0	80
	Young		315	0	120
	<i>Young Men</i>		221	0	0
	<i>Young Women</i>		94	0	0
People trained under sub comp 1.2	Number			447	703
	<i>Men</i>			360	479
	<i>Women</i>			87	224
	Young			89	160
	<i>Young Men</i>			71	93
	<i>Young Women</i>			18	67
Component 2: Agribusiness development support	Men	2089	20	60	729
	Women	1075		128	620
	Young Total	633	7	103	718

	<i>Young Men</i>	444	10	17	364
	<i>Young Women</i>	189		86	354
	HH	3164		188	1,349
Subcomponent 2.1: Term finance for MSME					
	Number	106		16	62
Micro entrepreneurs financed with loans	<i>Men</i>	74	16	12	41
	<i>Women</i>	32		4	21
	Young	21		4	32
	<i>Young Men</i>	15	4	3	19
	<i>Young Women</i>	6		1	13
	Number	30	7	4	36
YE financed with loans	<i>Young Men</i>	21	5	1	26
	<i>Young Women</i>	9	2	3	10
	Number	54	3	15	77
SME financed with loans	<i>Men</i>	38	2	11	53
	<i>Women</i>	16	1	4	24
	Young	11	1	8	16
	<i>Young Men</i>	8	1	6	12
	<i>Young Women</i>	3	0	2	4
	Number	106	0	20	79
`-Of which Microloans (Micro Entrepreneur & YE < 600 000 MDL)	<i>Men</i>	74		13	50
	<i>Women</i>	32		7	29
	Young	21	0	7	48
	<i>Young Men</i>	15		3	27
	<i>Young Women</i>	6		4	21
Collaboration with NCFM					
	Number	25		0	11
Remittance Grant	<i>Young Men</i>	18			6
	<i>Young Women</i>	7			5
	Young	25		0	11
Subcomponent 2.3: Technical support to MSME					
Matching grants of up to US\$25,000 per PG for processing, linkages with the financial sector (VCD)					
	Number	10	0	1	1
	Number	50	5	5	5
Producers Group beneficiaries supported with grant (min. 5 members/grant)	<i>Men</i>	35	5	5	5
	<i>Women</i>	15		0	0
	Young	10	1	1	1
	<i>Young Men</i>	7	1	1	1
	<i>Young Women</i>	3	0	0	0
	Number	63	0	0	26
Young entrepreneurs supported with business plan (max 450\$)	<i>Young Men</i>	45	0	0	17
	<i>Young Women</i>	18	0	0	9
	Number	150	0	0	126
Youth entrepreneurs training participants (post-financing)	<i>Young Men</i>	105			87
	<i>Young Women</i>	45			39
	Number	300	0	0	81
SCA Staff trained	<i>Men</i>	210	0		30
	<i>Women</i>	90	0		51
	Young	60	0	0	22
	<i>Young Men</i>	42			11
	<i>Young Women</i>	18			11
	Number	170	0	46	266
VCD trained participants	<i>Men</i>	119	0	23	198
	<i>Women</i>	51	0	23	68

	Young	34	0	13	70
	<i>Young Men</i>	24	0	4	38
	<i>Young Women</i>	10	0	9	32
	Number	300	0	102	683
People trained in financial literacy	<i>Men</i>	210	0	8	281
	<i>Women</i>	90	0	94	402
	Young	60	0	73	402
	<i>Young Men</i>	42	0	2	162
	<i>Young Women</i>	18	0	71	240
Beneficiaries received more than one activity	Men			29	
	Women			72	
	Young Total			20	
	Young Men				
	Young Women				
	HH			101	
Total number of RRP (excluded beneficiaries with more than one activity)	Men	12361	8,206	28615	30318
	Women	5297	3573	29635	31,133
	Young Total	3532	3574	11603	12,995
	<i>Young Men</i>	2473	2,477	5,717	6,448
	<i>Young Women</i>	1059	1,097	5,906	6,567
	HH	15852	6303	52801	55,383
	HH members	44386	17648	147843	155071