

**ANALYSIS OF NRDP 2014-2022 FUNDS MOBILIZATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND THE ROLE AND ACTIONS OF AFRI IN SUPPORTING THE PROCESS**

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***Abstract:** The fact that the rural environment is not limited to agricultural activity is a certainty, and that it has many other resources is another certainty. But in order to support its future development, the method of "combining" these resources is very important, so that not only their capitalization to be achieved, but also the sustainability. A possibility to support the development of the rural environment was NRDP 2014-2022, the purpose of the financed measures and sub-measures being to harmonize the Romanian rural environment with the European one in terms of the development degree. The purpose of the research was to carry out a quantitative analysis of rural development and agribusiness funds mobilization for rural strategies and to highlight the role and actions of AFRI in supporting the process.*

**Key words:** rural area, development funds, development strategies, NRDP 2014-2022

### **INTRODUCTION**

As for the rural community, the differences in development, compared to the urban one, is significant: [1,2,5,9,12,13]

- Compared to the urban community, the rural one is more isolated, and the living conditions are a little harder, which is why a certain continuity of the productive processes is ensured, and thanks to the raw materials and traditional recipes, the products obtained are of great biological value;

- From an administrative point of view, the rural community covers small areas, and the number of houses is also small. But thanks to the high conservatism, certain elements that give originality to the rural community are preserved very well, namely traditions, customs, specific crafts, even popular architecture in some places, all of which create the specific charm of country life;

- A strong point is represented by the special quality of natural resources, which can be used in both agricultural and tourist activities.

It is certain that, doing a brief analysis of the rural environment, numerous positive values emerge, in addition to the current problems, which must be transformed into assets to solve the identified problems. At the level of many countries, intense concerns are noted in solving these specific problems of the rural environment, but in a way that balances its relationship with the urban environment and generates not only its revitalization but also the preservation of the unique values that give it specific individuality.

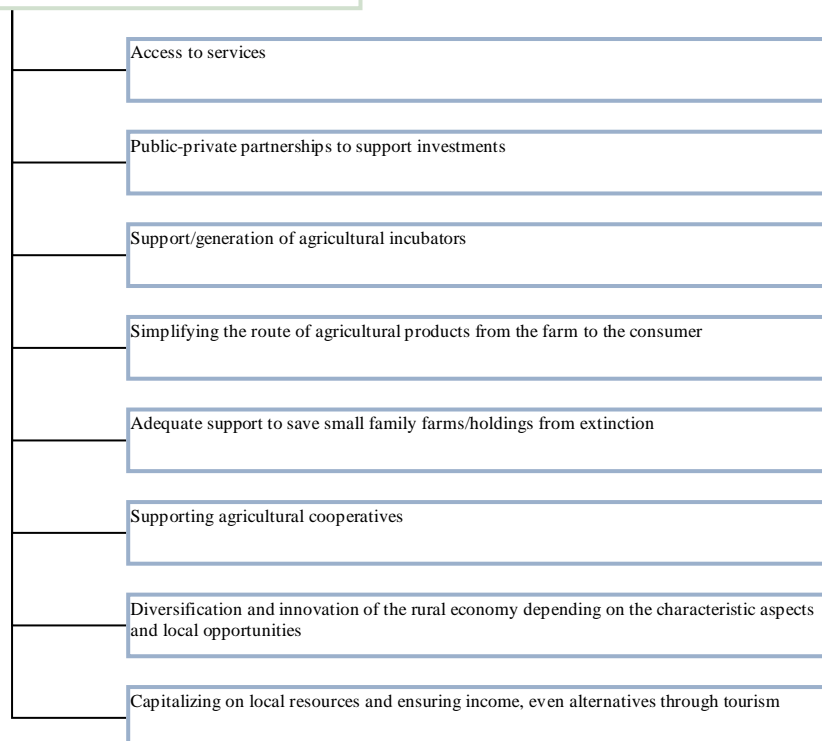
Rural communities require a vision that ensures the direction of future development, and this is ensured by the European Parliament, by different aids forms, [3,6,11] the directions necessary to be followed to ensure this desired being:

- access to services of rural communities, so that well-being and social inclusion are supported;

- orientation towards public-private partnerships to ensure the possibility of supporting investments;

- the provision of interventions to support/generate agricultural incubators, with the aim of reorienting young people towards the rural environment, these being the element considered essential for supporting the modernization process of agriculture;
- simplifying the route of agricultural products from the farm/agricultural household to the consumer, introducing digitization as a way to promote/ensure the simplification of distribution;
- emphasis on awareness of the important role of agricultural activity for safeguarding rural areas from poverty and ensuring the guarantee of high quality, sustainably obtained food;
- draws attention to small family farms/households, which are considered vital in maintaining cultivated land, the rural way of life, and for which adequate support is needed to save them from extinction;
- emphasizes the importance of agricultural cooperatives in the socio-economic and ecological support of this field of activity, and thus support the diversification of the local economy;
- the necessity of diversifying and innovating the rural economy is a must, but it is very important that they be made according to the characteristic aspects and local opportunities;
- tourism activity, obviously of a sustainable nature, can be considered in the capitalization of local resources and the provision of income, even alternative ones. The extent to which tourism activity can be used as a local development strategy in parallel with agricultural activity and food production is the extent to which sustainable development can be achieved.

*The European vision for the future of rural communities' directions*

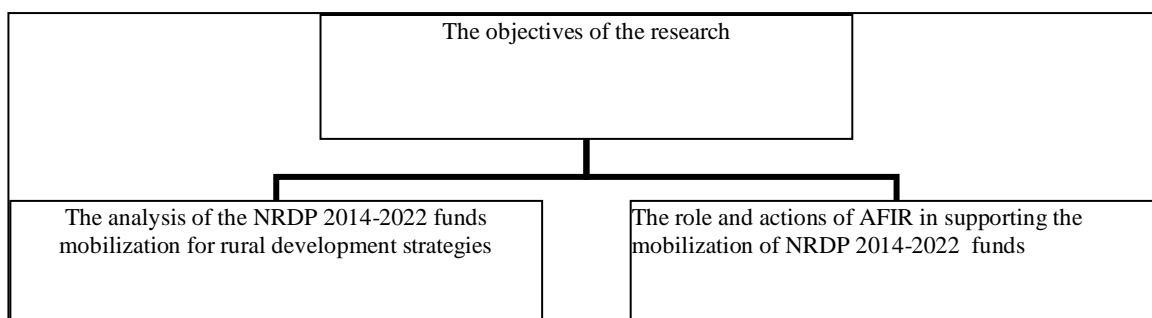


**Figure 1. The European vision for the future of rural communities' directions**

A possibility to implement this "vision" was NRDP 2014-2022. The aim of all NRDP measures is actually harmonization with the European model of rural development.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Through the research carried out, is pursued the quantitative analysis of the mobilization of rural development and agribusiness funds at the level of the Romanian rural environment [4,7,8] using the public information made available by MARD regarding the access stage of sub-measures from NRDP 2014-2022 , until 22.06.2023.



**Figure 2. The main objectives of the research developed**

The purpose of the undertaken research is summarized in certain specific objectives:

- The analysis of the NRDP 2014-2022 funds mobilization for rural development strategies;
- The role and actions of AFRI in supporting the mobilization of NRDP 2014-2022 funds.

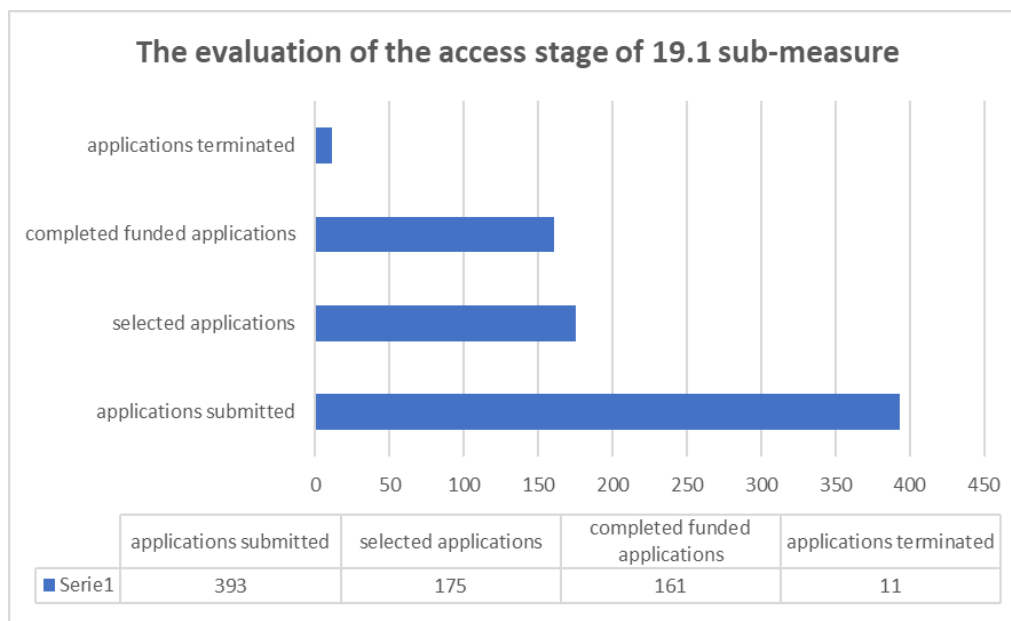
The Agency for Financing Rural Investments (AFRI) is a public institution subordinate to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) that operates according to Government Emergency Ordinance no. 41 of June 18, 2014, regarding the establishment, organization and operation of the Agency for the Financing of Rural Investments through the reorganization of the Payments Agency for Rural Development and Fisheries (PARDF), approved by Law 43 of March 17, 2015. The Agency for Financing Rural Investments (AFRI) consists of 13 specialized departments at the central level, 8 Regional Centers and 41 County Offices.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

For rural development strategies, three funding lines are allocated in the 2014-2022 NRDP, through sub-measures 19.1, 19.2, and 19.3, and the value of the support allocated through them amounts to 591,604,956 euros, meaning 4.65% from the total allocation of the fund. [10,14,15]

### **The evaluation of the access stage of 19.1 sub-measure**

This sub-measure ensures the necessary support for the preparation of rural development strategies, and the allocated value amounts to 6990183 euros.

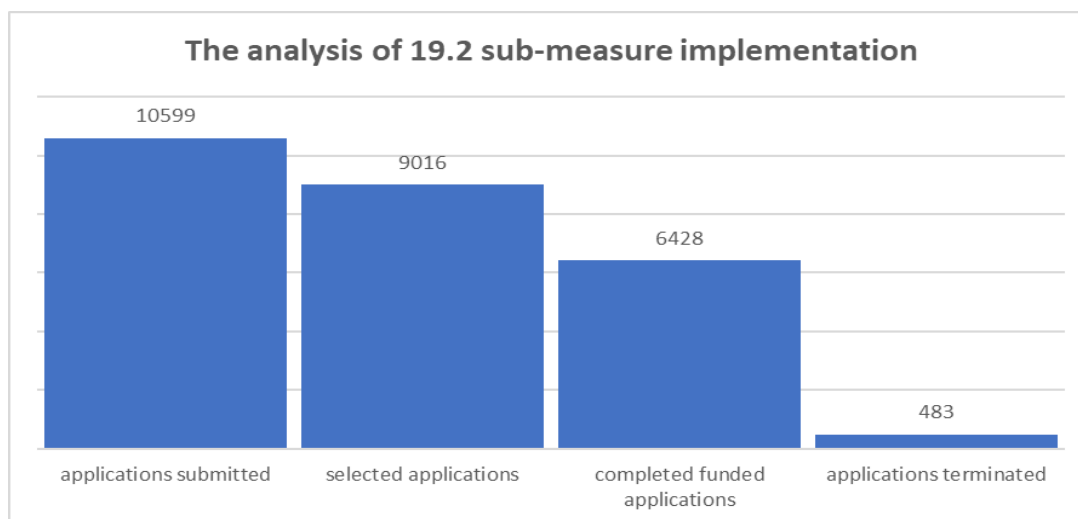


**Figure 3. The evaluation of the access stage of 19.1 sub-measure**

According to public statistics, 393 funding applications were submitted and 175 were selected, totaling a value of 2379232 euros. Over 90% of the applications selected for funding are completed.

**The analysis of 19.2 sub-measure implementation**

Sub-measure 19.2 is intended for the concrete implementation of the development actions within the strategy, and the value made available through this submeasure is 567640997 euros.

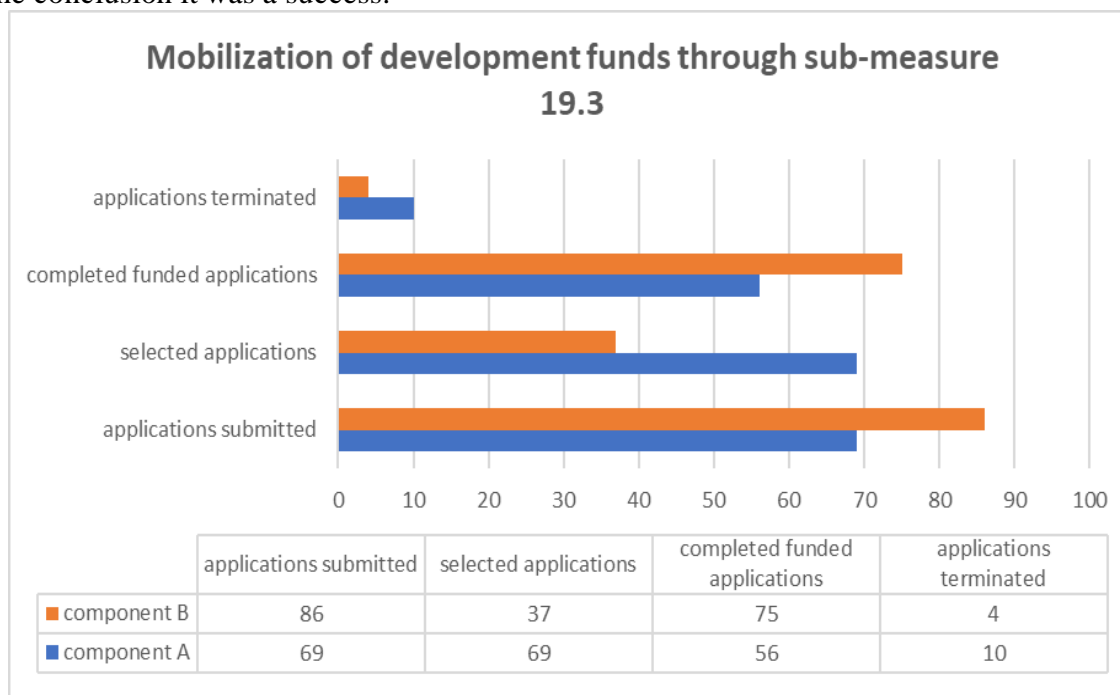


**Figure 4. The analysis of 19.2 sub-measure implementation**

The interest for this sub-measure derives from the large number of funding applications submitted, 10599. 9016 applications were selected for funding, with a value of 484097938 euros. From the applications selected for financing, 6428 are completed, meaning more than 70%, which highlights the effectiveness of the sub-measure.

### Mobilization of development funds through sub-measure 19.3

The support allocated through this sub-measure targets the LAGs, and its value amounts to 16973774 euros directed through the two components of the sub-measure. Also, in the case of this sub-measure, the support was a representative one, and the direction of its orientation is also representative, the Local Action Groups being important development actors. The degree of implementation of the sub-measure exceeds 80%, so in the conclusion it was a success.



**Figure 5. Mobilization of development funds through sub-measure 19.3**

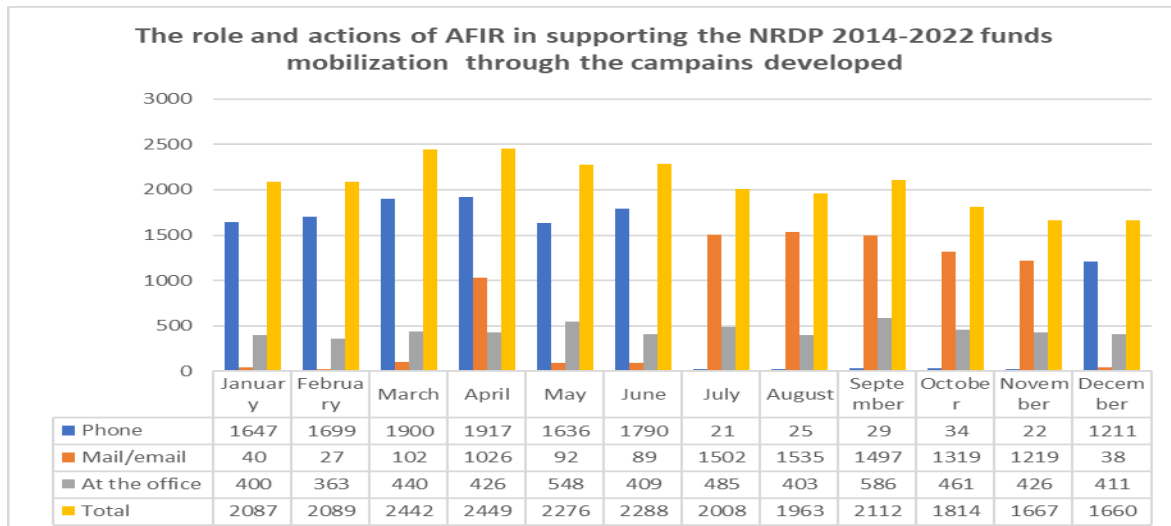
AFRI has an important contribution in the mediatization of funding through NRDP 2014-2022. This mediating involved actions either at the headquarters, by mail, or telephonic mediating. Considering the public information related to the media coverage through these possibilities, at the level of 2022 there were requests from 24855 people.

**Table 1.**

**The role and actions of AFRI in supporting the NRDP 2014-2022 funds mobilization**

Information	Phone	Mail/email	At the office	Total
January	1647	40	400	2087
February	1699	27	363	2089
March	1900	102	440	2442
April	1917	1026	426	2449
May	1636	92	548	2276
June	1790	89	409	2288
July	21	1502	485	2008
August	25	1535	403	1963
September	29	1497	586	2112
October	34	1319	461	1814
November	22	1219	426	1667
December	1211	38	411	1660

Source: processing public data published by AFRI



**Figure 6. The role and actions of AFRI in supporting the NRDP 2014-2022 funds mobilization-months analysis**

According to the information, telephone information predominated until June, and from July until almost the end of the year information by post/e-mail predominated. Regarding information at the headquarters, starting from January and ending in December, it remains relatively constant. In addition to this additional information, in various forms, AFRI also publishes the package of documents, respectively the specific deadlines for each sub-measure, therefore the support of this institution in ensuring the mobilization of rural development and agribusiness funds is a major one.

## CONCLUSIONS

Talking about "rural development" and trying to establish what are the priorities of this sector is, without exaggeration, one of the most ambitious and difficult projects. Rural and agricultural areas represent one of the most significant contributions regarding natural capital. The diversification of the rural economy is a key issue for the success of the rural development policy in general, and the issue of financing the rural environment and its specific activities is not a new one. Without a doubt, the National Rural Development Plan has been a real support for the Romanian rural environment over time, and the analysis of its sub-measures, but also of the generated impact, is without a doubt a current issue.

Regarding the sub-measures analyzed to highlight the mobilization of NRDP 2014-2022 funds for rural development strategies, the following are the final conclusions:

- On sub-measure 19.1, 393 funding applications were submitted and 175 were selected, 90% being completed.
- Sub-measure 19.2 was also successful. Of the applications selected for financing, 6428 are completed, meaning more than 70%, which highlights the effectiveness of the sub-measure.
- Also, in the case of sub-measure 19.3, the support was a representative a one, and the direction of its orientation is also representative, the Local Action Groups being important development actors. The implementation degree of the sub-measure exceeds 80%, which mean that it was a success.

AFRI made an important contribution to mediating the funding through NRDP 2014-2022, AFRI carrying out information campaigns, at the level of 202,2 for 24,855 people, in various forms.

The correct support of the future sustainable development of rural communities will have to consider the three directions: economic, ecological and social, as a unitary whole. The problems identified within rural communities require a coordinated, multi-level development, with emphasis on durability or sustainability, or why not development related to current times, meaning smart. What does this mean? That in addressing the development part, it must start from the specificity of each individual area, from one's own existing resources and using human capital and local knowledge to generate solutions to existing problems, obviously in full correlation with the specific local situations so as to adjust the balance between immediate costs and benefits acquired over time.

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