



REPORT
**on the Perspectives of Women in Rural and
Agricultural Regions of the Republic of North
Macedonia**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AWU – Average working units

ESARNM – Employment Service Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia

AADE – Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

SSO – State Statistical Office

EU – European Union

EUR – Euro

AH – Agricultural holdings

IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

IPARD – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development

AAU – Agricultural area used

MAFWE – Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Economy

MKD – Macedonian denar

ILO – International Labour Organization

SMEs – Small and medium-sized enterprises

MPDIF – Macedonian Pension and Disability Insurance Fund

MLSP – Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

USD – U.S. dollar

FAO – UN Food and Agriculture Organization

SDG – Sustainable development goals

CFCD – Central Financing and Concluding Deals Sector, within the Ministry of Finance



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research on "Perspectives of Women in Rural and Agricultural Regions of the Republic of North Macedonia" was carried out within the project on "Gender Mainstreaming in Rural and Agricultural Development", funded by the European Union via the Ministry of Finance (CFCD), and implemented by partner organizations (Union-National Gender Equality Council, Rural Coalition, and Association for Local and Rural Development).

This research was done in five (5) municipalities (Kumanovo, Gostivar, Strumica, Prilep, and Struga), and included their surrounding villages.

The project as such represents a direct result of the experience all organizations have gained in terms of women empowerment in agriculture, and of their willingness to work together in order to increase the usage percent of IPARD funds in the process of approximation of North Macedonian agriculture standards to the relevant European Union ones.

A series of activities has aimed to improve the Payment Agency's efficiency in terms of delivering counseling and educational services by improving the quality of information and training delivered to all citizens, with special emphasis being laid on women and young people, and on encouraging gender aspect integration to the country's agricultural policies and rural development.

In order to achieve these specific goals, partners have been working together with the staff of two State institutions (Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging, and the Payment Agency), agricultural workers (with emphasis laid on women and young people), and municipalities as IPARD funds direct beneficiaries. As already mentioned, the project directly results from our experience in this field and from needs in this regard expressed by agricultural workers and by relevant institutions' staff that need to provide support to agricultural workers and to the rural development by making use of current limited resources and capacities.

Activities undertaken are expected to improve agricultural workers' knowledge on possibilities for rural development support, which in turn will lead to increasing the percentage of usage of IPARD funds. Moreover, these activities will help the Payment Agency to effectively design and carry out trainings and informative sessions it carries out prior to announcing each public call. And finally, results obtained in this research are expected to give to the State guidelines to draft specific policy modification measures, towards greater inclusion of male and female agricultural workers in agricultural policy creating and implementing.



Section 1

Current Status, and Legal Framework



1.1 Agricultural situation and the status of rural women

A) Current situation of agriculture and rural women in the world and EU

Agriculture is one of the most widely present world population activity and plays a key part in the production of food, environmental protection, landscape preservation, employment in rural regions, and food safety. In terms of gender equality, significant differences have been noted between women and men. For instance, women-owners of agricultural holdings own significantly smaller farms than male owners. In addition, the share of female agricultural holding owners has been particularly higher when it comes to farms without clear specialization in terms of cattle breeding or agricultural product generating.

Seen worldwide, women have been providing significant contribution to rural economy in all world regions. In developing countries, women on average make up some 40% of the agricultural production labour force: from 20% in Latin America, to 50% or beyond in certain regions of Africa and Asia. In numerous cases, women face more limitations than men when gaining access to key productive resources (such as land) and to services (such as loan funding, extension, and social welfare); they cope with salary discrimination in rural labour markets, and quite often work on family farms without receiving any reimbursement. All this has been limiting their capacity to contribute to agricultural production. Women on average spend 85-90% of their time every day to prepare food for the household, to take care of children, and to do other household chores. If rural women could have equal access as men to resources, funds, services, and economic possibilities, they would become a key moving force in the fight against rural poverty. In addition, enabling women to fully participate in household management and in decision making on community level will also contribute to improving children well-being and giving them better perspectives, whereby poverty of future generations will be reduced and contribution will be provided for long-term socio-economic development.¹

In EU frames, agriculture was one of the first sectors of the economy (following the coal and the steel) that attracted the attention of policy creators. The 2013 number of persons regularly employed in EU agriculture amounted to 22.2 million, corresponding to 8.7 million average working units. Of this figure, 91% was regular family work (expressed by persons), where a single holder and members of that holder's family together make up the family labour force. Nonetheless, in most EU Member States, agricultural employment has been decreasing in the last 50 years, another challenge being existing labour force ageing. In EU-28, 58.2% of the total labour force (expressed by persons) are men. The "visible" contribution to the agricultural labour force has been less expressed with women than with men as women's participation in agricultural jobs has been about 41%.²

Women's share in agriculture has been slowly increasing. In 2005, some 27% of EU-28 agricultural holdings were owned by women; the increasing of this share is mostly due to the accession of new EU Member-States from Eastern Europe, as countries in which such a tendency has been noted.³

Significant variations have existed in the EU in terms of women's participation in agriculture: from 45% in Austria, 43% in Romania, 41% in Poland, Greece, and Slovenia, to 20% in Denmark, and 12% in Ireland.⁴

Recent data shows that, although men have dominated this particular profession on the level of EU, the number has been increasing of agricultural holdings managed by women (30%), which nonetheless are smaller than men-managed agricultural holdings, hence generating lower revenues.⁵

The EU agricultural sector has been dominated by older population; most of agricultural workers aged beyond 65 are women (40%), and less are men (27.6%).⁶

¹ Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (2014)

² European Institute for Gender Equality – Agriculture and rural development

³ European Commission – Future of CAP: Women and farming

⁴ Eurostat – Women as share of agricultural workforce (2016)

⁵ European Commission – Future of CAP: Women and farming

⁶ Ibid.



In particular, 71% of EU cattle farms have been managed by male agricultural holding managers, with women making up only 27% of agricultural holding owners (the rest being owned by legal persons). Organic agriculture has been practiced by some 2% of all agricultural workers in the EU, regardless of the gender. In 2013 women made up 24% of all organic agriculture workers in the EU, and covered 13% of the EU's area dedicated to organic agriculture.⁷

While agriculture has been the main food production sector, rural development has been connected with promoting village vitality and rural community wellbeing. Rural areas provide food, raw materials, jobs, and a wide variety of environmental goods and services, such as cultural landscapes, biodiversity, storing carbon, water, and soil. More than a half of the EU surface area has been classified as mostly rural (51.3% in 2012), with 22.2% of the European population living in these regions.⁸

The participation of women in employment and economic development has been of key importance in the achieving of goals contained in the EU 2020 Strategy⁹, which has been an area to which agricultural and rural areas are capable of providing own contribution. In 2014, agriculture in the EU-28 was seventh in size employer or women (3.3%). For men, agriculture has been a bit more important in terms of providing jobs (5.2%).¹⁰ However, this data may be erroneous as it fails to include the informal rural economy, in which women continue to be included. Women have played a key role in rural families, communities, and economies. They have been the moving force behind rural region maintenance, preservation, and development, in both cultural and economic contexts. They have been contributing towards the preservation of rich and diversified cultural heritage and towards tradition forwarding. In addition, they have composed a significant section of agricultural workforce, and have been contributing to rural sector development in circumstances of continuous depopulation. Unfortunately, women in rural regions have also been an invisible force as their presence and role have not been accurately reflected in relevant statistics, because women tend to declare themselves as unemployed, especially when undertaking unpaid agricultural work.

Many women being part of agricultural work fail to receive a special revenue from their husbands or from other household male members; they are not given any social security entitlement, and often do not hold ownership rights over agricultural land or farms.

Women actually provide a major portion of the agricultural production labour, though official statistics (based on census and research instruments) frequently fails to identify female labour and its contribution to community well-being. Problems remain in terms of collecting reliable and comprehensive data on the labour of rural women in agriculture and in other producing sectors, due to the following: 1) female labour invisibility; 2) female labour seasonal and shortened nature; and 3) unpaid family labour (mainly by women and children).¹¹ To overcome this situation, gender sensitive initiatives have been implemented in some European countries, such as joint ownership of farms and agricultural holdings.

However, rural areas have been essential to the achieving of the main Europa 2020 goal, in particular the achieving of a 75% employment rate with population aged between 20 and 64. Mostly rural regions have been generating 22% of total employment in the EU-28, yet the employment rate in these regions has been lower than in other types of regions. This has especially been the case with women, older workers, and lowly qualified workers. Generally speaking, this has mainly been due to the lower levels of employment possibilities and of education among members of the rural region workforce.¹²

The development of entrepreneurship and self-employment in agriculture and rural regions has also been key to the improvement of women's employment situation. Women's contribution to rural economies can be promoted by means of self-employment and small businesses. According to the European Commission, women are capable of taking the lead in terms of innovations and diversification in rural regions by developing new activities, production lines and services. For instance, women can develop activities in the fields of agro-

⁷ European Institute for Gender Equality "Relevance of Gender in the Policy Area"

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Europe 2020 – A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

¹⁰ "European Institute for Gender Equality "Relevance of Gender in the Policy Area"

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid



tourism, food and beverage production, craft trade enterprises, and care services. Women often have an additional advantage: they are aware of local needs and are familiar with them, and they possess their specific interpersonal and communication skills..¹³

Rural region development requires new economic activity creation and development, as new farms and diversification to non-agricultural activities. This may include providing agriculture and forestry services, as well as activities related with health care, social integration, and tourism. This is another measure that can encourage entrepreneurship among women in rural regions.

Being a EU membership candidate country, North Macedonia has been maintaining several equal possibility i.e. gender equality mechanisms. Inspired by the EU Common Agricultural Policy, the country has also confirmed its rural development policy, which is of social importance because 45% of the population lives in rural regions. It is, however, certain that rural development policy needs to include gender issues, and that development priorities need to be defined for rural women in other areas as well (such as education, health care, social protection, economy) because women make up 49% of all rural area inhabitants¹⁴.

B) The situation of agriculture and rural women in North Macedonia

Agriculture (agricultural sector) is a national economy industry including agricultural production and agricultural product primary processing. Agricultural product primary processing is a process of preparation and storage of primary products of plant or animal origins, by the moment of their release to turnover, in a manner to contribute to the preserving of their quality, and to their mechanical and chemical consistency.¹⁵

Almost 45% of Macedonian population lives in rural regions, making up some 87% of the country's total surface area. The presence of the State has been decreasingly felt in these regions which is why numerous villages have begun to deteriorate in the recent decade. Consequences of this neglect have been especially hard to members of vulnerable groups living in highlands. As much as 43% of members of households living in those areas have responded they lack sufficient money for food. Especially in isolated areas, there are very few health care centres, schools, and community culture centres. Hence, education standards there have been very low. Though official figures suggest that 95% of Macedonians are literate, less than 25% of poor inhabitants have managed to gain more than elementary education; women dominate this group: 73% of illiterate persons i.e. citizens lacking education, are women. Inadequate development policies in terms of sewage systems, lack of clean potable water, lack of roads and traffic networks, coupled with agricultural production problems related with ever higher prices of inputs and market insecurity, have all led to widely present stagnation and have forced numerous young people to leave their villages and settle in urban areas. Moving out beyond any control has somewhere led to complete village population depletion in a very short period of time. As early as in 1998, it was noted that even 121 villages have no more inhabitants, the trend having continued to the next years as well, and as much as 21% of the total number of villages throughout North Macedonia have each less than 50 inhabitants. Only 10 or less people live permanently in each of 104 Macedonian villages. In addition, also the number has decreased of civic associations and organizations in rural areas. Decreased social capital deprives the rural population of the capacity to cope with deteriorated conditions and has forced many of local people to move to towns and cities. Young women in some rural parts escape village life by getting married in towns and cities; the negative impact of rural gender balance is already being felt.¹⁶

Revenue and resource distribution has been quite uneven, mostly affecting children aged under 14, rural women, and unemployed men. Young people (aged between 15 and 29) have been one of the most vulnerable and easily affected groups in terms of social exclusion. Informal labour has mostly affected young workers and long-term unemployed persons. Small farmers living in rural regions have been adversely affected as they have

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Center for Research and Policy Making, "Perspectives of Women in Rural Regions", p. 9.

¹⁵ Law on Agriculture and Rural Development, Article 2, item 5, published in The Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 49/10 date 12 April, 2010

¹⁶ The Federation of Farmers of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Multi-dimensional Analysis of Poverty in the Republic of Macedonia", 2017



lacked the ability to make efficient use of production factors; there has been low productivity of factors (workforce included), lowest salaries and pensions viewed in national terms, lack of social capital, absence of trust, resulting in low interest in small farmer organized activities via cooperatives.

Fiscally supported active labour market policies, as well as certain gains of private sector employment, especially in construction activities, have contributed to unemployment rate decrease. At the same time, pensions have been rising in the recent five years, ultimately reaching 30% of central government's total expenditures in 2016.¹⁷ In terms of the economic activity most frequent status, the rate of poor employed persons amounts to 8.9%, and the rate of poor pensioners i.e. retired persons amounts to 7.3%. According to data from the State Statistical Office, the Gini coefficient (a measure of inequality in revenue distribution) amounted to 33.7% in 2015, which is a small decrease in terms of revenue distribution as compared to 2010, when Gini index amounted to 40.8 (the 2010 Laeken indicator of poverty, according to the State Statistical Office).¹⁸ World Bank data shows continuous increase with the Gini index in the Republic of North Macedonia, from 28.13% in 1998, to 44.05% in 2008. According to family income source, poverty has been highest with households living on social aid (90.6%), followed by households gaining income from agriculture (57.4%), and households gaining income from temporary working engagements (57.3%).

According to a survey done by the Center for Research and Policy Making¹⁹, the 2011 average living standard in rural families amounted to 5,424 MKD (88 EUR) monthly, compared with 25,771 MKD (420 EUR) monthly, earned by urban inhabitants. The agricultural sector has traditionally been characterized by lower salaries on national level, which in 2017 amounted to 16,740 MKD (some 270 EUR). Agriculture also has the lowest pensions. Minimum pensions received by farmers amounted to 3,744 MKD (60 EUR) in December 2010, and the average (full) agriculture pension in the same period amounted to 6,282 MKD (a bit more than 100 EUR). The average (full) agricultural pension has been paid to 13,264 men and to 1,851 women, which means women in agriculture receive only 12% of it. On the other hand, women have been more numerous as beneficiaries of minimum agricultural pension.

Rural households achieve considerable revenues by means of subsidies related with agricultural production, which has not been the case with households living in urban settings. In terms of gender issues (rural men vs. rural women), a 2011 survey done by the Center for Research and Policy Making showed that rural women are most often deprived of any form of revenue, which means that 58% of all rural women have no revenues of their own, more than double the number of men in rural regions.²⁰ Calculated average personal income for men amounts to 8,873 MKD, whereas women get less than half of that amount – 3,890 MKD. In addition, considerably higher percentage of men also show higher self-sufficiency in comparison with rural women (i.e. 73% of men versus 41% of women). An important aspect contributing to the raising of self-sufficiency level with rural women is their education level (meaning, the more educated women are, the higher is their self-sufficiency level).

As in most of other Balkan post-Socialism countries, a major part of agricultural households belongs to the group of small individual agricultural producers (99%), with some 58% of them owning farms of less than 1 ha each, or 87.6% of households each own less than 3 ha of land. In 2013, agricultural area used (AAU) increased to 315,900 ha, which on its part increased the average AAU per household to 1.9 ha. About one half of farms specialize in cereal production or maintain mixed production (mixed with market gardening or cattle breeding).²¹ Due to slow farm consolidation process, small farmship, and low levels of production factor usage, Macedonian agriculture has been facing low factor productivity (labour force included). According to agriculture household structure and economic size, half of the households in the country (84,740 households, or 49.6% of the total number of households) gained revenues below 2,000 EUR in 2013, and if the next in size economic group (gaining revenues between 2 and 4 thousand EUR) is included, this figure rises to 118,396 households, nearly 70% of all households. Only 0.4% of households maintain economic size of 25 to 50 thousand EUR.²²

¹⁷ World Bank (2017)

¹⁸ The Federation of Farmers of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Multi-dimensional Analysis of Poverty in the Republic of Macedonia", 2017

¹⁹ Centre for research and Policy Making, "Perspectives of Women in Rural Areas", 2012

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, 2014-2020.

²² Survey on Farm Structure, and on Agriculture Holding Typology and Structure, 2013.



Private financial resources have also been important, especially in countries recording higher migration and lower living standard. Due to various socio-economic influences, migration in the country has been tending to increase. In 1990s, 11.1% of the population migrated, and in 2000 and 2010, this figure increased to 16.8% and 21.3% respectively. Changes in remittance inflow have indicated huge variations over the years, however have contributed significantly to the GDP (2.8% in 2002; 4.2% in 2007; 4.1% in 2012).²³

1.2 The Legal Framework

Article 9 of the Republic of North Macedonia's Constitution, which regulates citizen and political freedoms and rights, clearly states: "The citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia shall be equal in terms of their freedoms and rights irrespective of gender, race, skin colour, national and social background, political and religious belief, property and social status".²⁴

The adoption in December 1999 by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality, drafted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, marked the beginning of promoting and of attributing increased significance to women's rights in all spheres of social living.²⁵ In the years afterwards, the Government have acknowledged the necessity of integrating the principle of equal opportunities for women and men, which has thus become an integrated part of numerous laws and bylaws constituting the Macedonian national legislation.

In 2006, the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was adopted for the first time²⁶. In this context, the 2007-2012 National Action Plan for Gender Equality was also adopted²⁷, as well as the 2012 Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men²⁸, and the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination²⁹. The Equal Opportunities Law aims to establish equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres of social life; it identifies the equal opportunities issues as a concern for the society as a whole, that is, for all entities in both public and private sectors, that are to be working towards eliminating hindrances in this regard and towards establishing full equality between women and men.

Item 2, Article 6 of the Law on Labour Relations³⁰ regulates the provision of equal opportunities and of equal treatment in terms of access to employment, workplace conditions, equal pay for equal work done, social insurance professional schemes, job leaves, working hours, and employment contract cancelling. All these regulations and legislation pieces aim to provide gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men. The legal framework, therefore, *does* exist, commitments towards gender equality *have* been present, yet the persistence has been evident of the gender gap and discrimination in everyday life.

Planning agriculture and rural development on national level, goals of the national agricultural policy, national agricultural policy planning/monitoring/assessment, partnerships with social and economic partners in the field of agriculture, measures to organize and support agricultural markets, direct payments and rural development, State aid to agriculture and rural development. forms of organizing and associating in agriculture, and supervision over the enactment of measures, as well as implementation monitoring, have all been regulated by the Law on Agriculture and Rural Development.³¹

²³ World Bank "World Development Indicators"

²⁴ The Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, incl. constitutional amendments I-XXXII. –Skopje, Article 9, The Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2011.

²⁵ The National Action Plan for Gender Equality, 1999, MLSP.

²⁶ The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 66/2006.

²⁷ The 2007-2012 National Action Plan for Gender Equality, Skopje, May 2007, MLSP.

²⁸ The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 6/2012.

²⁹ The Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 50/2010.

³⁰ The Law on Labour Relations, Article 6, item 2, "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 167/2015

³¹ The Law on Agriculture and Rural Development, consolidated version, March 2017



The above mentioned piece of legislation states that goals contained in the Republic of North Macedonia's national agricultural policy are to be directed to the following:

- » providing for stable production of high-quality and cheaper food, and providing sufficient food to the population,
- » increasing agriculture's competitive capacity,
- » securing stable revenue levels in the agricultural economy,
- » rural region sustainable development, and
- » optimal usage of natural resources by respecting nature and environment protection principles.

In order to achieve the above mentioned goals, the legislator has foreseen a series of measures and policy instruments in the following fields: agricultural market regulation and support; direct payments; and rural development. The implementation of the national agricultural policy has been financed by the Republic of North Macedonia's State budget, the European Union budget, donations, and other sources in line with the law.³²

Another key institution in the development of agriculture has been the Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging (AADE), established on the basis of the Law on Establishing the Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging.³³

The AADE, via its system for providing advisory services to agricultural holdings (AHs), aims to enable knowledge and information transfer, as well as usage of such knowledge and information by AHs towards improving economically justifiable agricultural production quality and quantity improving, achieving competitiveness of Macedonian agricultural products in the EU market and beyond, agriculture sustainable development in rural regions, as well as providing support in agrarian policy development and implementation by maintaining an AH database on the basis of field visits to AHs.

The funds for financial support to rural development in 2018, to the total amount of 2,132,000,000.00 denars have been provided, in line with the 2018 Republic of North Macedonia's State budget³⁴, section 140.04 – Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development, Programme 2 – Financial Support to Agriculture and Rural Development, SubProgramme 20 – Financial Support to Agriculture, Item 464 – various transfers, to the amount of 320,000,000.00 denars, Programme 2A – Financial Support to Rural Development, Item 489 – Capital Subsidies for Enterprises and Non-Governmental Organizations, to the amount of 1,812,000,000.00 denars.

The 2018 Government financial support measures include two overall types of measures:

- 1) Measures for rural development financial support
- 2) Measures for agriculture and rural development technical support

For purposes of implementing measures contained in the 2018 Programme for Rural Development Financial Support, the Agency has been issuing open public calls for requests for financial support beneficiary using.

Especially significant role in agricultural development has been played by the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development – the IPARD II Programme (2014-2020)³⁵ for the Republic of North Macedonia,

³² Ibid

³³ The Law on Establishing the Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging, "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 3/98.

³⁴ The Republic of North Macedonia's 2018 State Budget, "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 196/17.

³⁵ The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development – the IPARD II Programme (2014– 2020)



which has enabled access to European Union's funds for financial assistance to sustainable agriculture and rural development, with focus placed on the implementation of the European Community legislation in terms of the Common Agricultural Policy and competitive sustainable agriculture measures, strong and sustainable rural communities, and diversified and sustainable rural environment. The IPARD Programme contains measures giving favourable treatment to female agricultural workers i.e. they get more scores with ranking. In this context, the Declaration on the Improvement of the Social and Economic Status of Women in Rural Regions was signed between the MLSP and MAFWE.³⁶

³⁶ The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Economy: "Ministers Nikolovski and Carovska co-sign the Declaration for Improved Status of Rural Women".



Section 2

***International Experience and Good Practice on the Importance
of Including the Gender Perspective in Rural and Economic
Development***



2.1 Sustainable Development Goals

Millennial development goals expired in 2015; as continuation thereof, the UN developed and adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, in a document entitled “Transforming Our World: Sustainable Development 2030 Agenda”.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) comprise a set of 17 goals, 169 aims, and 230 indicators to promote development progress, at the same time protecting our Planet. Also known as Global Goals, they affect all governance and development sectors, and invite all countries to action.

The 2030 Agenda is global by nature and universal by application; it is why the Agenda is applicable to all countries, both developed and developing, taking into account various national conditions, capacities, and development levels. In this manner, universal concerns and challenges have been addressed, at the same time accepting the fact that each country has been facing various needs, priorities, and capacity to answer challenges and demands contained in the Agenda 2030.

The main motto of this document is “Leave No One Behind”; it was adopted by all UN Member States. The document itself contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals whereby an end is intended to be put to extreme poverty, inequality, and injustice, by preserving at the same time our Planet. This Agenda has a timeframe and implementation deadline by 2030.

Agriculture is especially emphasized under Goal No. 2, in addition to Goal No. 5, relating to gender equality.

Key players in the implementation of Agenda 2030 are the countries that need to adjust policies reflecting their national realities and to provide regulatory and encouraging structures to help the achieving of new goals.

➔ The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are the following:

- » Goal 1: Ending poverty in all its forms, everywhere.
- » Goal 2: Ending famine, achieving food safety, and promoting sustainable agriculture.
- » Goal 3: Providing healthy life and promoting well-being for all age groups.
- » Goal 4: Enabling comprehensive and high-quality education for all, and promoting lifelong learning.
- » Goal 5: Achieving gender equality, and empowering all women and girls.
- » Goal 6: Providing access to water and sanitation for everyone.
- » Goal 7: Providing access to acceptable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.
- » Goal 8: Promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent employment for everyone.
- » Goal 9: Developing flexible infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialization, and encouraging innovation.
- » Goal 13: Taking emergent action to fight climate change and effects thereof.
- » Goal 15: Achieving sustainable forest management, fighting desertification, stopping land degradation and restoring original condition, stopping biodiversity loss.
- » Goal 16: Promoting just, peaceful, and inclusive societies.
- » Goal 17: Revitalizing global partnership for sustainable development.³⁷

³⁷ United Nations Sustainable Development Goals



2.3 Positive Policies and Practices round the World

The following examples of positive practices have been taken over from the European Network for Rural Development, which has promoted women's participation in agriculture.

1. The region of Stockholm, Sweden (2012-2015)³⁸ – Business Development for Women – adjusted support for rural women-entrepreneurs.

Business Development for Women enabled a business training programme for 60 female beneficiaries, providing them with knowledge and skills required to develop their own business plans for own rural business development.

Project summary:

The full potential of female entrepreneurship in rural areas may be hindered by insufficient business knowledge, skills, and trust. This project enabled business training in six sessions for a total of 60 women. Theoretical courses were accompanied with practical exercises based upon real cases.

In addition to the training course, materials and activities, a Facebook group was created to facilitate female entrepreneurs' networking and peer support.

Project results:

Increased business knowledge, skills, and trust for 60 rural women.

Fifty participants completed business plans that were afterwards approved by external consultants.

Participants passed the training by continuously high ratings; many of them recommended the programme to their friends and acquaintances.

Many women continue to connect among themselves and offer support to other peers.

2. SPAIN (2010-2013)³⁹ – project for new jobs and technologies

The project for new jobs and introducing new technologies included eight local action groups coming from six regions of Spain – Andalusia, Asturias, Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla and Leon, and Madrid. Its goal was to stimulate entrepreneurship among rural women in the frames of the National Rural Network, thereby improving their access to information and communication technologies. The project assigned "employment agents" in each of the five regions, to provide employment support to rural female rural entrepreneurs. Also, during the project, 11 online training courses were organized, attended by 833 women, and seminars were held on how women may establish agriculture cooperatives.

Project results:

As a result of the project, 43 new enterprises were established. These enterprises were registered, including a list of products they offer, on "Vivero Virtual", a kind of a "virtual incubator". Also, support has been provided within the project for establishing female association networks.

³⁸ European Network for Rural Development "Business Development for Women – tailored support for female rural entrepreneurs"

³⁹ European Institute For Gender Equality – Online Business Training for Rural Women 2010 - 2013



3. LITHUANIA (2014-2015)⁴⁰ – “Goodies Village”

This Lithuanian LEADER project enabled women from a small village to create a brand for their organic fruit and vegetables, and to increase revenues they generate by selling their products from home.

Project summary:

Pociūnėliai is a small village in Schaulai, Lithuania. Population there has been decreasing in number recently as young people willingly move to bigger cities, and business has decreased as well. Men usually work in the agriculture and forestry sectors, or perform manual labour. Nonetheless, it is women that have quite limited job opportunities. Local women mostly raise fruits and vegetables. At one moment, they begun to sell their products which are of organic nature – yet with limited success. Their village lies far away from bigger towns, and their fresh products have difficulty to reach urban markets. It is why women there started to think how they could cooperate in order to sell more.

In this project, the “Village goodies” brand was initiated, in order to help women sell their organic products better. A packaging line, order cards, information brochures, and a website were created. Working spaces were remodeled to meet hygiene requirements, and machines were bought (a juice maker, and drying equipment). The drying equipment is of special importance as product lifetime is relatively short, and drying can extend the sale date. After several experiments, women expanded the scope of products offered to include herbal tea, and candies made of carrot, beetroot, and pumpkins.

Project results:

The project enabled village women to work together and to use the leverage of organic product demand present in neighbouring towns. This in turn enabled them to expand the scope of products offered in order to better serve the urban market.

Women achieve higher yields with their seasonal products offered.

Fifteen women have been successfully employed in the enterprise, providing thereby an additional impetus for the local methodology.

⁴⁰ European Network for Rural Development - “Goodies Village” in Lithuania



Section 3

Goals and Methodology



3.1. Research Goals

The goal of the present research is to provide relevant information on the basis of which assessment will be made of perspectives that rural women have (in terms of socio-economic development, opportunities to access State-offered services, maternity leave and pension usage/regulation, etc.), reasons for the low percentage of usage of IPARD funds financing, and hindrances (of administrative and practical nature) that agricultural workers face when applying for/using financing, agricultural workers' needs in terms of training and further development, with special emphasis laid on women and young people in general.

In particular, the research goal is to be achieved by means of several tasks:

- » Evaluating rural women structure in five municipalities, by education and employment status.
- » Evaluating access to local level services (schools, hospitals, banks etc.).
- » Evaluating women's status in terms of agricultural land and machinery ownership.
- » Evaluating the acquaintance with, and possibilities for, applying for various types of financial support for rural and agricultural development, and challenges rural women face when achieving this.
- » Information opportunities, chances for attending training sessions and for knowledge upgrading.

The research provides an overview of the legal framework and detects problems that occur with using IPARD fund financing, and ways to overcome them by adjusting the Macedonian agriculture to relevant EU standards, and by upgrading national institutions' capacities to meet population demands in this regard.

The qualitative analysis also takes into account the economic, social, and cultural contexts of living on the local community level, but also on the level of permanent residence, being a significant factor in the implementation of current national and local strategies and action plans.

3.2. Approach and Methodology Applied

Findings from the present analysis have been based upon a methodology specially developed for the present research. This includes primary and secondary data collection. Secondary data has been obtained by analyzing key documents (laws, analyses, research papers). We here focus on primary data collection including a combined methodological approach covering the following:

- a) a survey
- b) focus groups
- c) interviews with key affected parties

The survey was conducted on locations as follows:

Gostivar – villages Tumceviste, Orkuse, Dolna Banjica, Gorna Banjica, Debreše, Cajle, Negrane, Forino, Recane, Vrutok, Senokos, Negotino-Polosko, Vrutok, Toplica, Pirok, Gradec, Raven, Vrapciste, Sretkovo, Trebiste, Novo Selo, Zubovce, Beloviste, Zelezna Reka, Vrben, Belicica, Cerovo, G. Jelovce, Duf, Sence, D. Gjonovica, Rostuse, and Pristojnica – and the town of Gostivar

Kumanovo – villages Orasac, Skackovce, Ljubodrag, Umin Dol, Nikuljane, Celopek, Pelince, Dragomance, Tromegja, Recica, Pcinja, Rezanovce, Dolno Konjare, Dovezence, Novo Selo, Lopate, Agino Selo, Prezovo, Romanovce, Vojnik, Gorno Konjare, Stepanec, Bajlovce, and Karpos

Struga: villages Velgosti, Trebenista, Volino, Radozda, Kaliste, Mislesevo, Arbinovo, Zlesti, Lesani, Belcista, Ramnej, Klimestani, Leskoec, Meseista, Velesta, Jablanica, Korosista, Marunista, Delogozda, Vranista, Mislesevo, Visni, Livada, Oktisi, and Korosista



Prilep: villages Zagorani, Erekovci, Caniste, Dupijacani, Nebregovo, Pasino Ruvci, Obrsani, Alinci, Seleverci, Kanatlarci, Galicani, Kadino Selo, Bucin, Malo Konjari, Golemo Konjari, Vitoliste, Kanatlarci, Veselcani, Novo Lagovo, Vitoliste, Dunje, Galicani, Slavej, Krivogastani, Kruseani, Korenica, Vogjani, Debreste, Nebregovo, Sekirci, and the town of Prilep

Strumica: villages Kosturino, Kuklis, Dobrejci, Dabile, Bosilovo, Dukatino, Gradatorci, Vladevci, Radicevo, Vasilevo, Kalugjerica, Radovis, Ignjevo, Novo Selo, Kolesino, Susica, Mokrievo, Borisovo, Sedlarci, Bansko, Mokrino, Monospitovo, Piperevo, Angelci, Susevo, Kosturino, Ormanli, Dorlamos, Tri Vodi, Popcevo, Murtino, Sacevo, Banica, Gabrovo, Prosenikovo, Svidovica, and Veljusa.

Each interviewer on average talked to 16 women and to 4 men, meaning a total of 500 women and 100 men were surveyed.

The questionnaire consisted of four (4) sections: general information, starting and leading an own business doing some agricultural activity, agriculture and rural development support, and training/information. Filling-in the questionnaire took 15 minutes at most. Survey participation was anonymous, each respondent's personal identity was guaranteed not to be revealed.

The project staff was responsible for organizing interviews with local institutions responsible for rural and agricultural development, but also with other local institutions such as Employment Agency local offices (in terms of pension regulation), the Social Care local centres, municipal departments in charge of local economic development etc.

According to gender, most of the respondents (81%) are women. Women dominance in the present analysis is of great significance as it will give us a clear and precise picture of what rural women's status and position are today. It is the rural woman who is the focus of the present analysis.

The question of whether they permanently live in an urban or in a rural environment was answered by 585 of 600 respondents. Of them, 486 (81%) stated they permanently live in villages, and 99 (16.5%) said they have lived in towns. Though the present research was aimed to detect the situation of rural agricultural population, a control respondent group composed of respondents living in urban environments was also included.

According to ethnic affiliation, most of the respondents are Macedonians (77%), followed by Albanians (15.5%) and Serbs (4.7%). There were also Roma (0.3%), Croatians (0.2%), Turks (1.2%), and Macedonian Moslems (0.7%).

The question of age was answered by all 600 respondents; most numerous, with participation of 29.8% (179) were respondents aged between 41 and 50. A bit less numerous were respondents aged between 31 and 40, whose participation was 25.7%, (154 respondents), viewed in absolute numbers. These were followed by persons aged between 51 and 64 (140 respondents, 23.3% of the total). Least present were the youngest and the oldest respondents; each participated by 5% in the total number of respondents. Respondent age structure provides context to data obtained in the survey, reflecting the views and experience of dominant age group members (respondents aged between 31 and 64).

According to level of education completed, most of the respondents graduated from secondary (high) school, of which 39.8% completed education in secondary vocational schools, 17.5% completed gymnasium, and 21.3% completed primary (elementary) education. Nineteen percent of respondents completed higher education, and 1% have completed no formal education of any kind. Other low percentages were provided by respondents having completed other higher education forms. This respondent educational structure reflects a generally low educational level.

The civil (marital) status question was answered by 598 of 600 respondents. Of these, 501 (83.8%) said they were married, 77 (12.9%) were single, 13 (2.2%) were widows/widowers, and 7 (1.2%) said they were divorced.

Most of the respondents take care of one to two children in the family; according to children's age, 21.2% of respondents have children aged between 20 and 26, 19.8% have children aged between 6 and 15, 17.3% have



children aged between 15 and 19. Of respondents, 14.8% have children aged 27, and almost the same is the number of respondents having no children (14.6%). In addition, 12.4% of respondents take care of children aged up to 6, of which 66% take care of one child.

In terms of employment, most of the respondents (37.8%) are unemployed, of which the majority (some 67%) are registered with the Employment Agency. The remaining respondents are almost equally employed in the private and public sectors (13.3% and 12.3% respectively) or are self-employed as agricultural workers (13.2%) or small business founders (4.5%). Some 3.5% of respondents are retired persons i.e. pensioners, and 8.5% are registered according to the Law on Pension and Health Care Insurance.

Focus groups

In order to check the applicability of questionnaires prepared, focus groups were organized in each municipality that covered almost 100 participants in the 5 pilot-municipalities. These focus groups were mixed in composition; they included representatives of local associations active in the agriculture and rural development sector (25), representatives of local self-government units, of AADE (Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging) (6), of Ministry of Agriculture regional units (6), of the Public Enterprise for Pastures (3), of veterinary stations (2), and individual male and female agricultural workers (56).

Participants of focus groups composed of agricultural workers were asked to identify practical problems faced that were afterwards transformed to questions directed to representatives of local and national support institutions. Each focus group was led by a professional moderator.

Interviews with key stakeholders

Interviews on the perspectives of women in rural regions, on financial support usage, and on reasons for the low number of applications for financing from IPARD funds, submitted especially by women and by young people were conducted with key stakeholders (the Payment Agency, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Economy, the Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging etc.).

To this end, questionnaires were prepared for agricultural workers and for representatives of local and national support institutions, the aim being to investigate the perspectives of women in rural areas (in terms of socio-economic development, opportunities to access State-provided services, maternity leave and pension usage/regulation, etc.), reasons for the low percentage of usage of IPARD fund financing, and barriers (both administrative and practical) agricultural workers face when applying for funding or when using funding obtained, with special emphasis laid on women and young people; on which basis questionnaires were drafted to interview agricultural workers and representatives of local and national support institutions.

During questionnaire development, each partner assisted in the identification of experts in their operational fields, the aim being to adopt a holistic approach to enable insight to agricultural workers' positions and needs, to be later included in project activities and serve as a basis for policy recommendations.



Table 1: Survey sample, following meetings with institutions, by ethnic affiliation and by gender

	Men (number, percentage)	Women (number, percentage)	Albanians (number, percentage)	Macedonians (number, percentage)	Serbs (number, percentage)	Total
Struga	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	0	10
Gostivar	5 (62.5%)	3 (37,5%)	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	0	8
Kumanovo	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	1 (12.5%)	5 (62.5%)	2 (25%)	8
Prilep	8 (61.5%)	5 (38.5%)	4 (30.8%)	9 (69.2%)	0	13
Strumica	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	0	5 (100%)	0	5
Total	25 (56.8%)	19 (43.2%)	12 (27.3%)	30 (68.2%)	2 (4.5%)	44

During meetings with representatives of institutions, representatives of the following institutions were interviewed:

- » Employment Centres within the Employment Service Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia (ESARNM)
- » Social Work Centres
- » Municipalities
- » Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging (AADE)
- » Payment Agency

3.3. Target Groups

Primary research target groups consist of women and young people in rural and agricultural regions of five Macedonian municipalities.

Rural women (only 30% being registered owners of land) are defined as female population permanently living in rural regions. Rural women represent the most basic group of active economic life in comparison to rural men. Young women living in rural communities find it hard to access the labour market.



Section 4

Research Findings



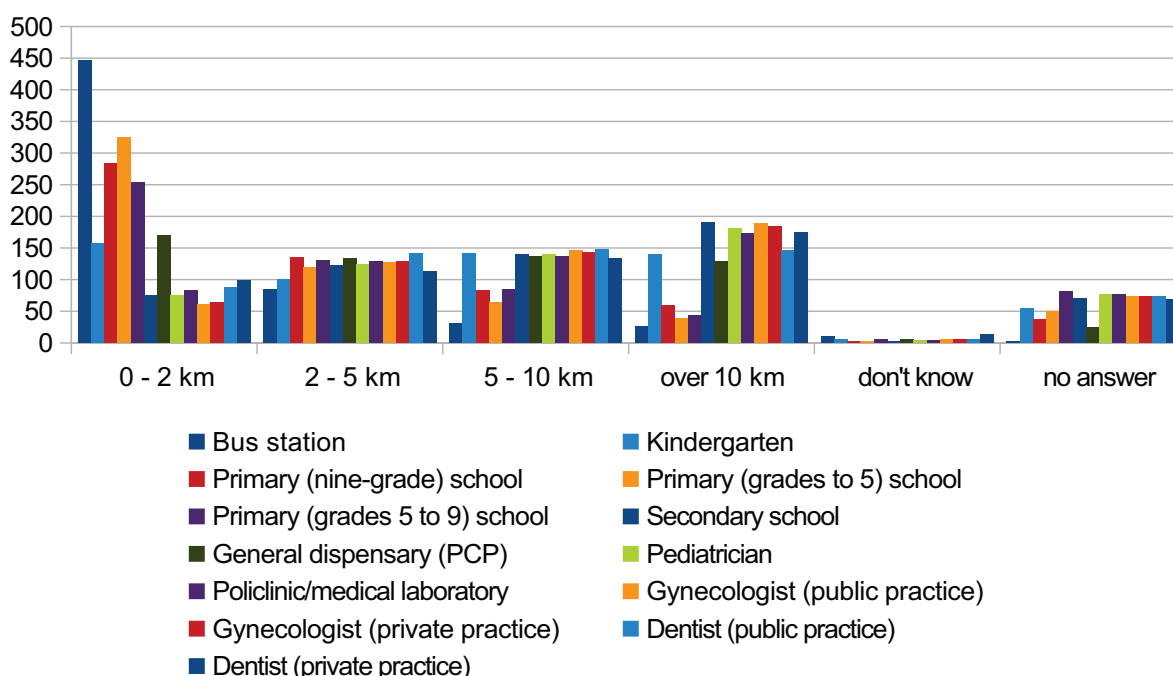
4.1. Access to Basic Services

Respondents were asked to say how far they live from some institutions, services and facilities necessary for unhindered everyday living and maintaining satisfactory living standards. The survey showed respondents not always having good access to units mentioned. Though almost **90%** of respondents said they live **zero to 2 kilometres away from a bus station**, and some **80%** said they live **at this same distance from a local grocery store**, there are numerous services that are farther from their place of living and are less accessible.

Of respondents, 281 or 46.8% live 5 to 10 km away from a kindergarten. These distances mean women are often forced to leave the labour market, to stay at home and take care of the children, which on its part lowers total family income and worsens overall financial security of thus affected families. Sufficient coverage by kindergartens and unhindered access to them is a human rights issue, and social resources need to be mobilized to provide as soon as possible this basic service to parents and to their children.

Availability of primary schools is moderately good. Of respondents, 419 (almost 70%) live at zero to 2 km or at 2-5 km away from a primary nine-grade school. At longer distance from this type of primary schools (i.e. at 5-10 km, or more than that) live 23.7% i.e. 142 respondents.

Secondary school availability is also unacceptably low. As many as 320 of respondents (53%) live at a distance of 5 to 10 km or beyond from the nearest secondary (high) school. As many as 319 (53.2%) of respondents said they live at a distance of 5 to 10 kilometres or more from the nearest library, which additionally limits respondents' possibilities in terms of intellectual upgrading. In addition to education, access to health care services provides huge room for improvement - 266 respondents (44.3%) live at a distance of 5-10 km or beyond from the nearest dispensary where their chosen PCP treats them. Access to health care is key for the prevention and early treatment of numerous curable diseases, and is also another basic human right. The situation is similar when it comes to access to a pediatrician (321 respondents or 53.5% live at a distance of 5-10 km and more from the nearest one); access to a polyclinic/medical laboratory (309 respondents or 51.5% live at a distance of 5-10 km and more from the nearest one); access to a dental health practice (293 respondents or 48.9% live at a distance of 5-10 km or more from the nearest one), or access to a pharmacy (289 respondents or 48.1% live at a distance of 5-10 km or more from the nearest one).



Graph 1. Access to basic services



Institutional and administrative services need to be equally accessible to each and every person – too often not so with rural area inhabitants. Of respondents, 313 (52.1%) need to travel 5-10 km and more if they wish to physically access a municipal local office. What is more, 321 respondents (53.5%) live at a distance of 5-10 km and more from the nearest Ministry of Agriculture local office. Of respondents, 336 (56%) live at a distance of 5-10 km and more from the nearest Social Work Centre; and finally, 337 respondents (56.1%) live at a distance of 5-10 km and more from the nearest office of the Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging (AADE). If a respondent needs to visit the local Employment Service Agency office, chances are (56%) it will be one of those 336 respondents living at a distance of 5-10 km and more from the nearest such office.

Access to banking services is a basic precondition for formal economy participation and for current production capacity investment and extending. Unfortunately, 330 (55%) of respondents live at a distance of 5-10 km or more from the nearest bank, and 327 (54.5%) live equally far from the nearest ATM or bank they use.

Of respondents, 328 (54.7%) live at a distance of 5-10 km or more from the nearest theatre or cinema.

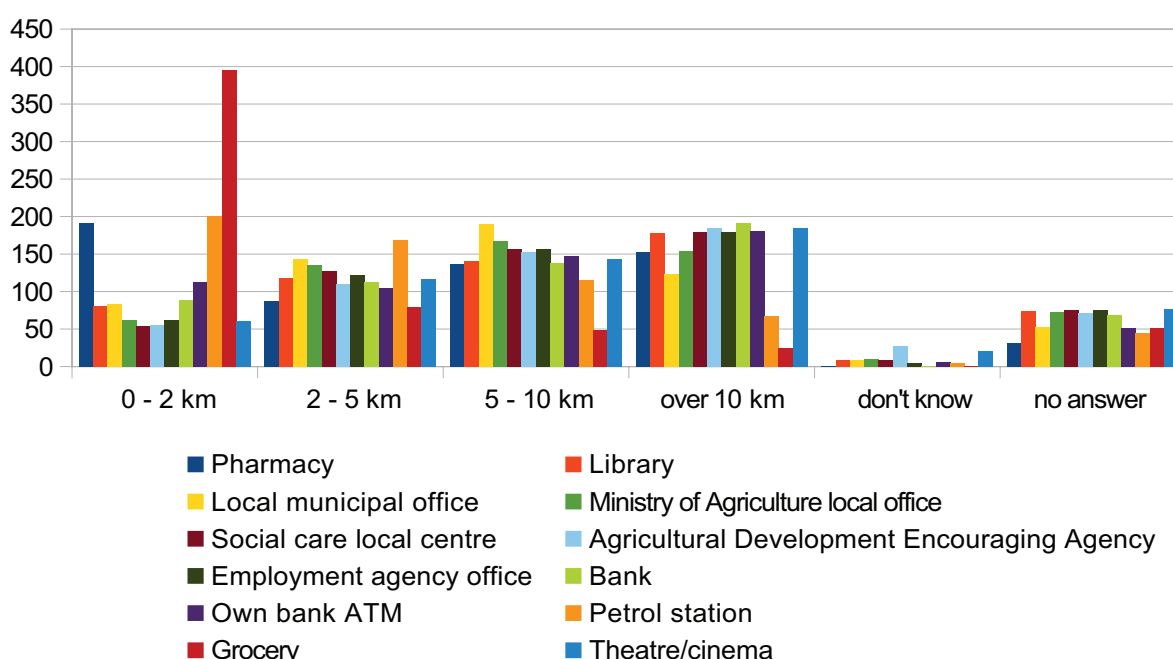


Chart 2. Access to basic services

Focus group findings additionally confirm that difficulties are encountered in the access to health care services and kindergartens – rural region inhabitants have no medical service at all and no access to daily child care facilities. In this regard, respondents especially emphasized the need for women to complete and upgrade their education and to be included in municipal social life because they have no services available near to places they live in, and also do not leave home except when required, and have no organized forms available through which they may be able to act.

It can be concluded that rural women have easiest access open to meeting the most basic living needs (such as food and public transport); for all other services offered by the State (such as health care and social care), they have to make additional efforts in order to meet their needs in that regard. Lacking own PCPs in the place of permanent living deprives these people from the right to regular medical checks, prevention against various diseases, and necessary medical treatment when need be. Especially worrying is the lack of access to gynecologists and to pediatricians, medical professionals essential for the preservation of women's sexual health and for child and infant health protection. Even gaining access to education (especially secondary education), which by the way is obligatory in the country, represents a challenge for the inhabitants of some rural regions. Most women from rural regions also have difficulties to access State-provided services related to employment (rendered by local offices of the Employment Service Agency and the Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging). Not every unemployed person is able to regularly register in person at ESARM local offices (due to physical distance and costs involved), which is why many unemployed women do not register at ESARM local offices and are therefore not able to benefit from services offered by the Agency.



4.2 Possibilities and Conditions for Own Business Starting in Agriculture

It was evident that most rural women are not landowners. The survey question “Are you a landowner?” was answered by 605 respondents. Of them, a bit more than a half (**52.2%** i.e. 316 respondents) **answered negatively**, **36.4%** (220) **answered affirmatively** i.e. said they own the land they work on. The rest of the respondents (11% – 67) circled other alternative answers. Most of the women who are not landowners have secondary education completed at most (175 of 232 women), and more than half of them are unemployed. If this fact is borne in mind, these women may be said to have been deprived of numerous entitlements and allowances in the agriculture and rural development field, and are not able to make use of benefits and financial aid offered by the State and by IPARD funds.

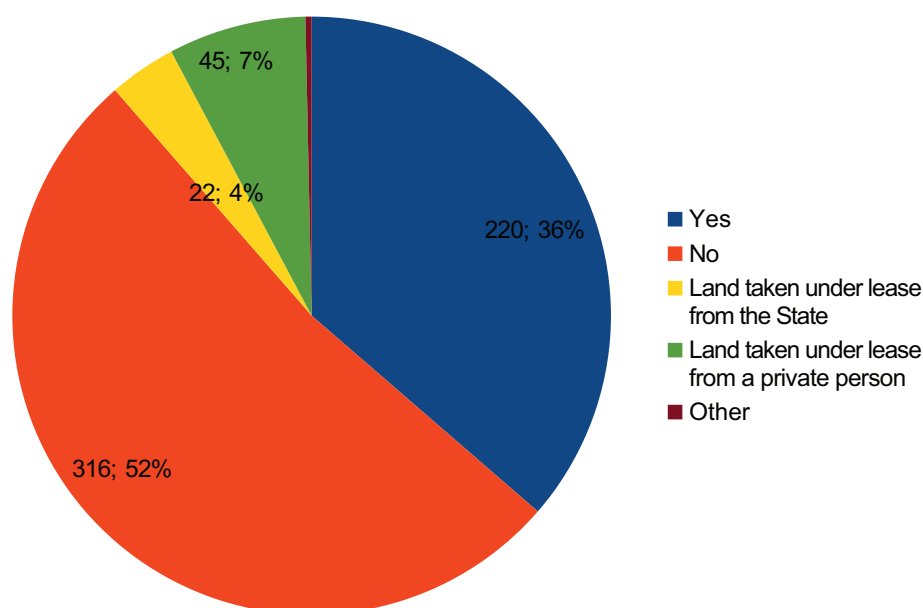


Chart 3. Land ownership

Answers from focus groups confirm the fact that traditional customs persist in terms of land inheriting, with only male children being considered to divide the land inherited, yet that in some regions these are being overcome, slowly but surely, and that the number of cases has been increasing in which female children as well appear as inheritors of property divided. Spouses rarely buy land as they mostly work on land they have inherited; this is mostly due to agricultural production decrease in the region as a whole, in particular to the rather difficult situation of agricultural workers with price and market placement instability for their products. In this regard, focus group participants agreed that it is due to this circumstance and the lack of stimulation that young people increasingly often decide to migrate and live in another country, so the number has been quite small of young women being registered as agricultural workers. Women registering as agricultural workers are most often older women that pay their health care and pension insurance allowances themselves, so as to be able later on to exercise their entitlement to receiving pensions.

This situation differs a bit in the Polog region: here, in 90% of cases, the land is owned by men, though recently cases have begun to occur where women too register as agricultural workers. Positive examples have been noted of women that, in addition to subsidies, have been using (as individual agricultural workers) funding from the rural development programme. A major problem noted is the difficulty encountered with concluding land leases due to unclear and/or unsolved property relations, so numerous family agricultural holdings have not been able to apply for subsidies because they lack land ownership evidence.

However, men mostly hold land ownership and apply for subsidies and for registration as agricultural workers. This measure too, when it comes to a registered agricultural worker (a registered individual agricultural



worker, as per the Law on Agricultural Activity Performing) has not been used almost at all due to numerous deductions and taxes involved; namely, when a person becomes a registered individual agricultural worker, they also become a legal person, and have to keep accounting records as big firms do, meaning they have to allocate at least 3 thousand denars each month for a registered accountant to keep their books regardless of the profit they achieve, with there being almost no difference between subsidies and encouraging this type of agricultural workers.

Women are often used to keep the form and use higher subsidy rates, with men continuing to own and manage agricultural holdings. In more than 98% of cases, land lease is concluded with the woman, with contract existing only, and the land itself almost never being transferred to her name, to dispose of it and to use it with no limits.

While in terms of age groups, the survey mostly covered **women aged between 31 and 64 (78.8% of respondents)**, figures are far from satisfactory in terms of officially registered years of registered working experience: 145 respondents (**24.2%**) have **6-10 years of registered working experience**, 164 respondents (**27.4%**) have **0-2 years of registered working experience**, 109 respondents (**18.2%**) have **3 to 5 years of registered working experience**, with only **17.2%** or 103 respondents have **11-19 years of registered working experience**. There were 70 respondents having **20 or more years of registered working experience** which makes up **11.7%** of the total survey population.

12. How many years have you been working in agriculture?

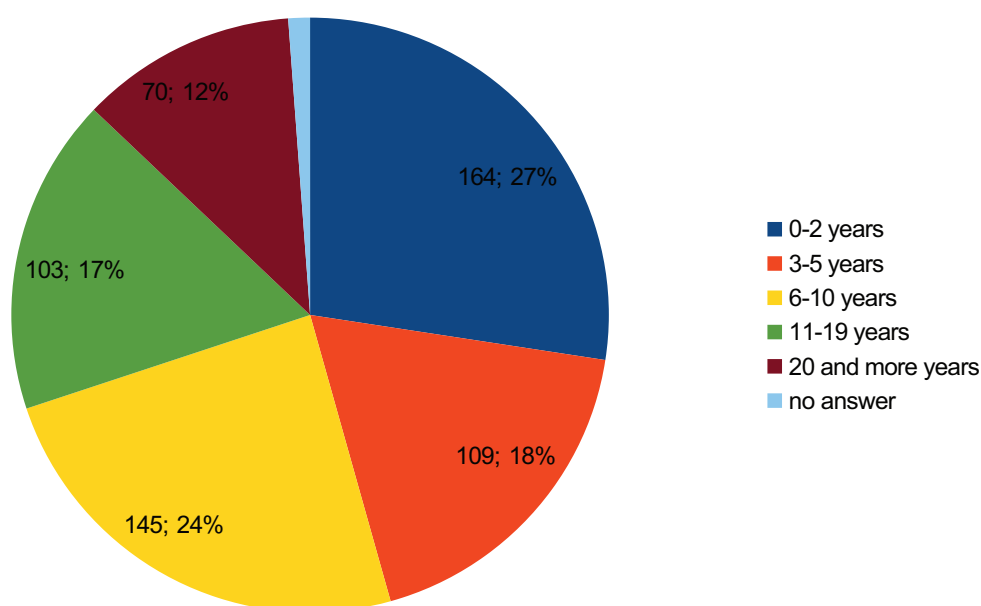


Chart 4. Duration of agricultural activity performing

Of all respondents, 170 (**29.1%**) work in agriculture as their **primary activity**; agriculture is **secondary activity** for 142 respondents (**24.3%**), whereas no answer or variant answers to this question were given by 273 respondents (**46.7%**).

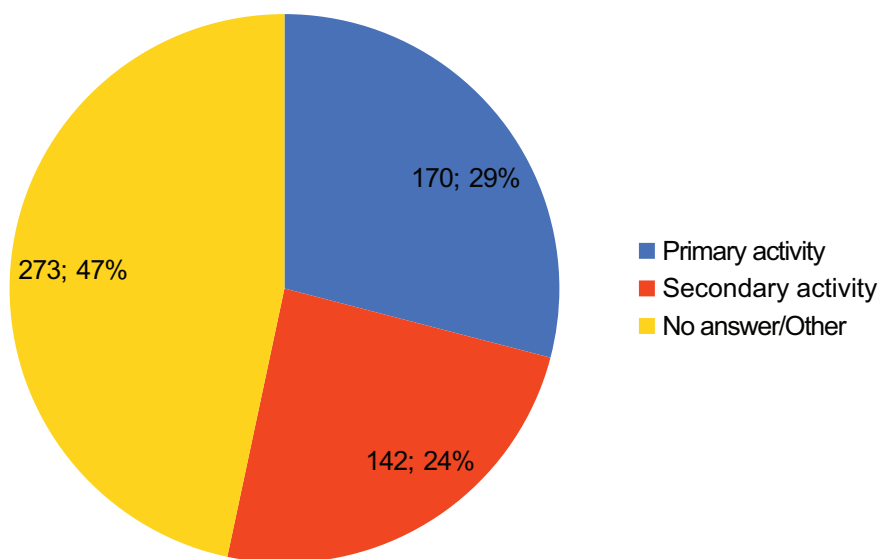
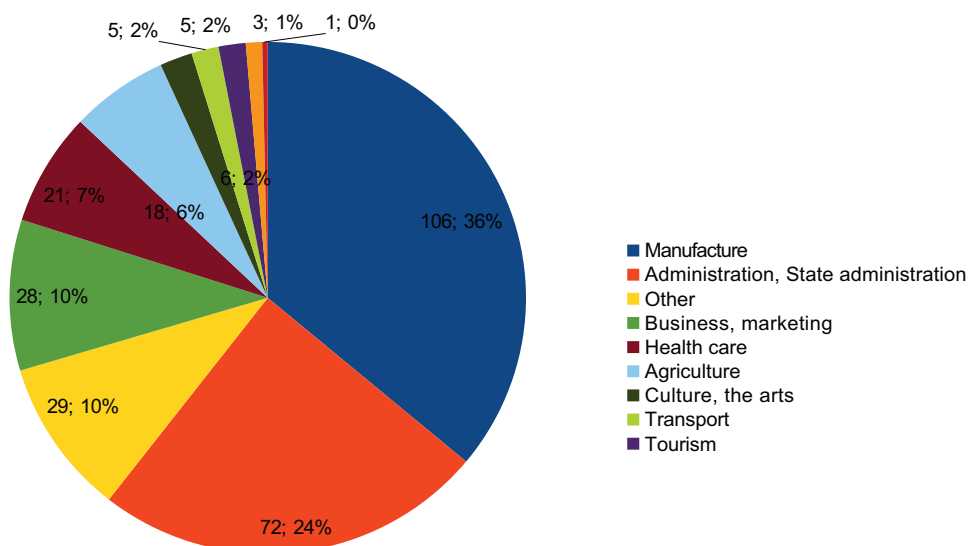


Chart 5. Agriculture as primary activity

In addition to being active in agriculture, survey participants have been active in other areas as well; 288 respondents (48%) said they have been performing other activities in addition to agriculture. They mostly used to work in **manufacture** (106 – **36.1%**), in **State administration** (72 – **24.5%**), **other** (29 – **9.9%**), **business and marketing** (28 – **9.5%**), **health care** (21 – **7.1%**), as well as in other fields, such as culture and the arts, transport, and tourism.

15. In which areas have you worked so far (if any) in addition to agriculture?



Графикон број 6. Други дејности и занимања

As for respondents' adult family members, most often two adult family members work in agriculture (250 respondents i.e. 41.8%). In 117 cases (19.6%) three adult family members work in agriculture, and 106 respondents (17.73%) said four adult members of their families were agricultural workers.



16.1 How many of your adult family members work in agriculture?

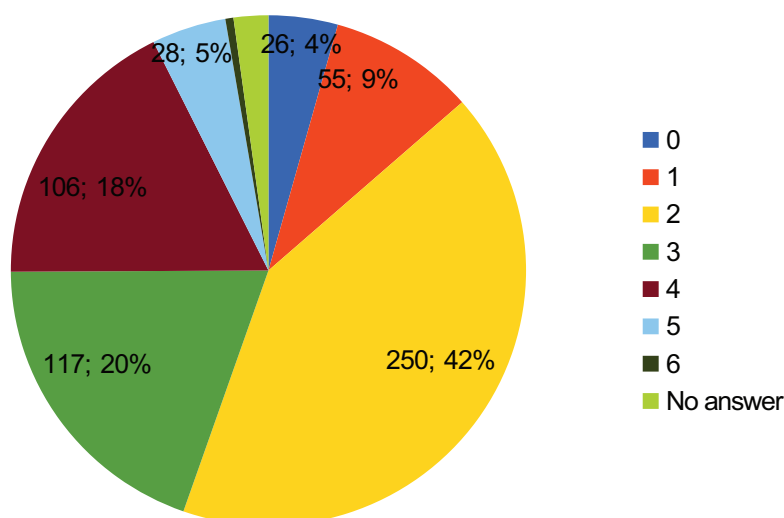


Chart 7. Number of adult family members working in agriculture

While 473 respondents (78.9%) said **more than one of their adult family members works in agriculture**, most of them said **only one family member was a registered agricultural worker** (247 – 41.2%), with 237 respondents (39.6%) having **no adult family member registered as an agricultural worker**.

16.2 How many of your family members working in agriculture have been registered as agricultural workers?

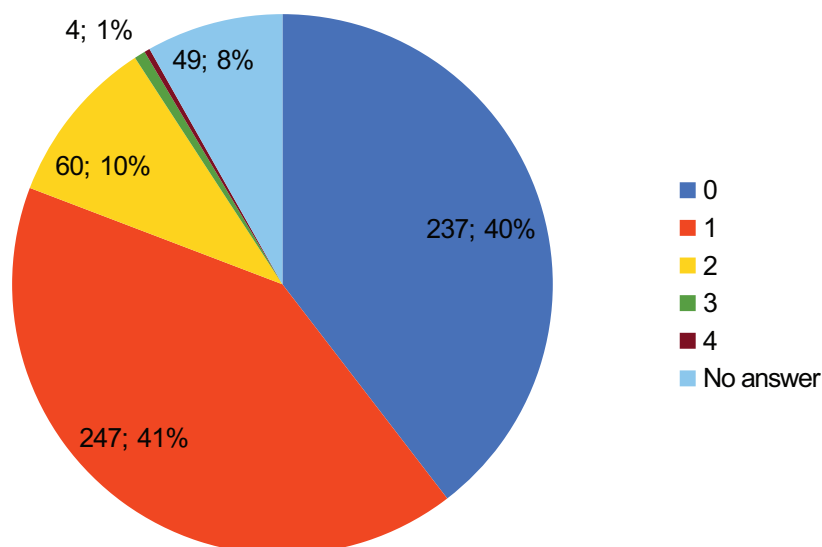


Chart 8. Number of household members registered as agricultural workers

Most of the respondents (286 i.e. 47.7%) said **one member** of their family is agricultural holding carrier i.e. has applied for subsidies; 166 respondents (27.7%) said **no member** of their family is agricultural holding carrier, and 108 respondents (18%) said **two members** of their families appear as carriers of their agricultural holding.



16.3 How many members of your family are family agricultural holding carriers i.e. apply for subsidies?

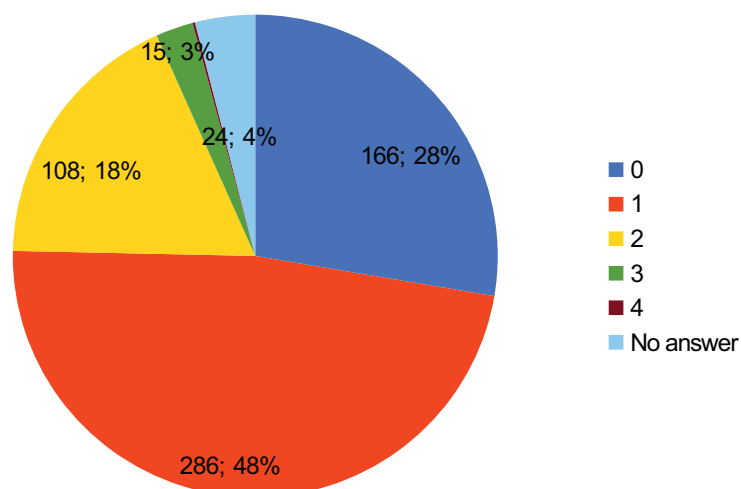


Chart 9. Number of household members being agricultural holding carriers (applying for subsidies)

17. How familiar are you with the legislation on own business maintaining/initiating i.e. on agricultural activity registering?

An alarming percentage of respondents (**42.7%** i.e. 256 respondents) said they are **very little familiar** with the legislation regarding own business initiating/agricultural activity registering; 147 respondents (**24.5%**) said they are **not familiar at all**; 171 respondents (**28.5%**) believe they are **sufficiently familiar**, and only 24 respondents (**4%**) consider themselves **well familiar** with relevant legislation and procedures.

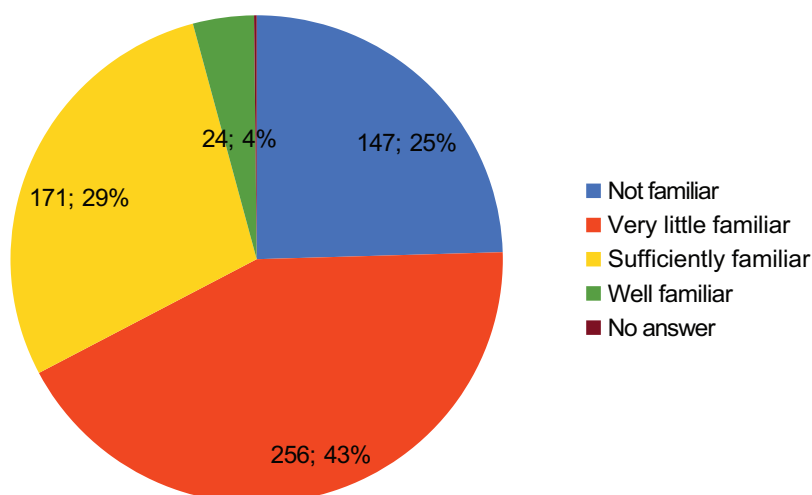


Chart 10. Degree of familiarity with legislation on own business initiating/maintaining, agricultural activity registering



18. Do you believe the national legislation to be favourable for the development of agricultural activity in North Macedonia? (e.g. the Law on Agricultural Activity, the Law on Agriculture and Rural Development?)

The question of whether they believe the national legislation to be favourable for the development of agricultural activity in North Macedonia, exactly **one half of respondents** (300 persons) said they **don't know**; 214 respondents (**36%**) answered **affirmatively**, and a **negative answer** was given by 82 respondents (**14%**).

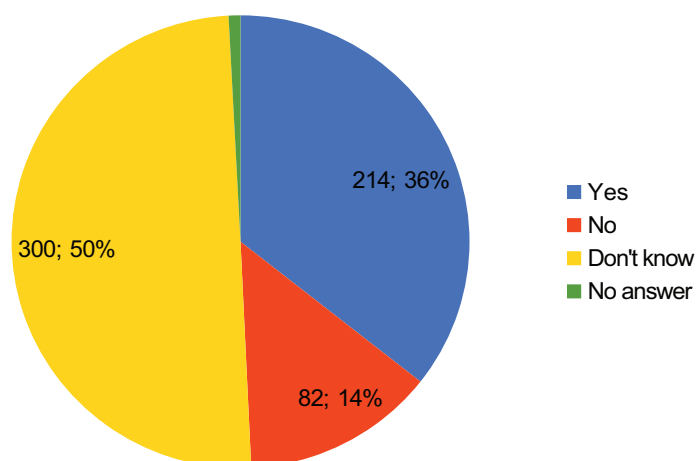


Chart 11. Opinions on the favourability of the national legislation for agriculture activity development in North Macedonia

Survey results and focus group findings in this regard coincide, especially in terms of gender-based property distribution, mostly done to the behalf of men, which hinders women's opportunities in terms of financial independence, in particular when it comes to their registering as individual agricultural workers or applying for funding from IPARD funds. Most rural women own a segment of the land disposed by the family or a part of farm animals. Access to public facilities and services such as kindergartens, schools, health care services etc. has been hindered due to their distance from permanent residence places; only a small segment (some 20%) of rural women own a car, even less of them own a tractor. Moreover, many women exist beyond formal economy. The need was identified of more education and women involvement in public life in the territories of their municipalities, as well as of modifying subsidy/aid usage eligibility criteria in order for them to be accessible to women in rural regions.



Support to Agriculture and Rural Development

In the survey sample, 302 respondents (50,3%) said they are **able to differentiate** between the National Rural Development Programme and the IPARD Programme; 292 respondents (a bit less than 48.7%) said they **cannot differentiate** between these two. Familiarity with these two programmes (one domestic, and one European) is a basic prerequisite for best usage of all advantages they offer to agricultural holdings in the Republic of North Macedonia and for accelerating agricultural sector development.

19. Can you differentiate between the National Rural Development Programme and IPARD?

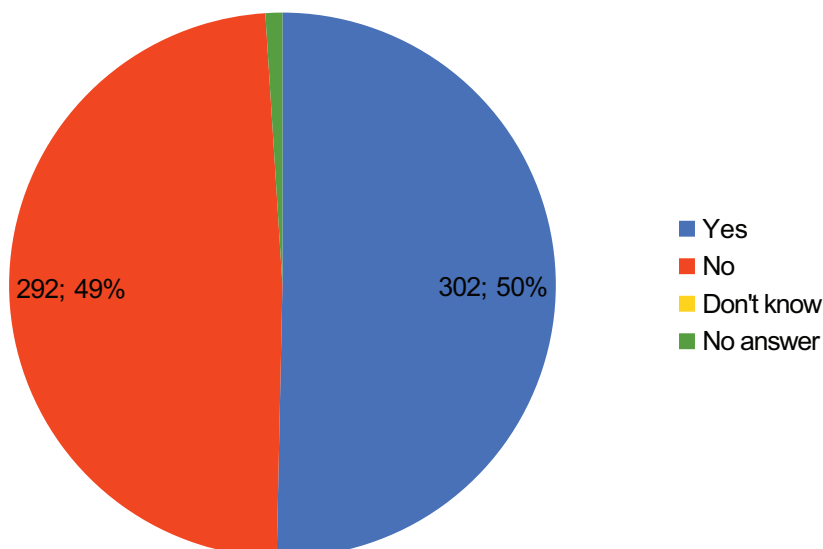


Chart 12. Differentiating by respondents between the National Rural Development Programme and IPARD

Most of the respondents (174 – 29%) assessed their own information and knowledge on measures contained in the National Rural Development Programme with **the lowest score, which is 1**; 167 respondents (27.8%) assessed their own information with the score 3; 104 respondents i.e. 17.3% gave themselves the score 4, 96 of survey respondents (16%) think 2 is the adequate score for their own level of information.

20. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is the worst/lowest score, and 5 is the best/highest score), please assess: 20.1 How well you are informed and acquainted with measures contained in the National Rural Development Programme?

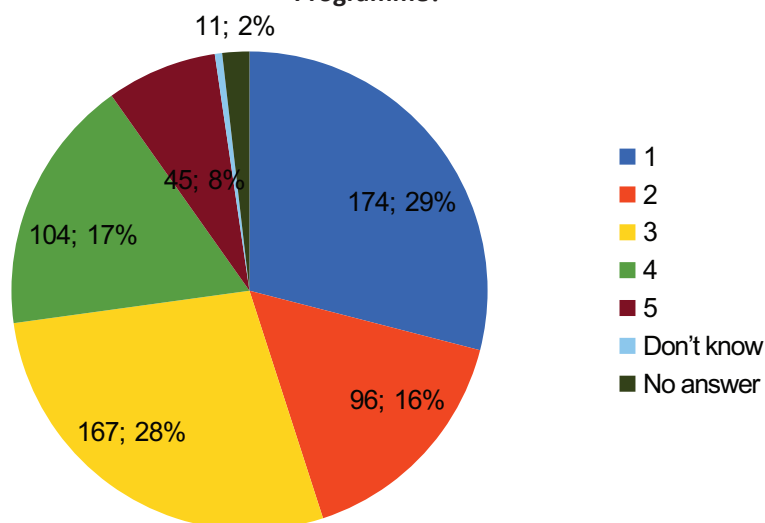


Chart 13. Information and acquaintance with measures contained in the National Rural Development Programme



20.2 Information and acquaintance with IPARD funds

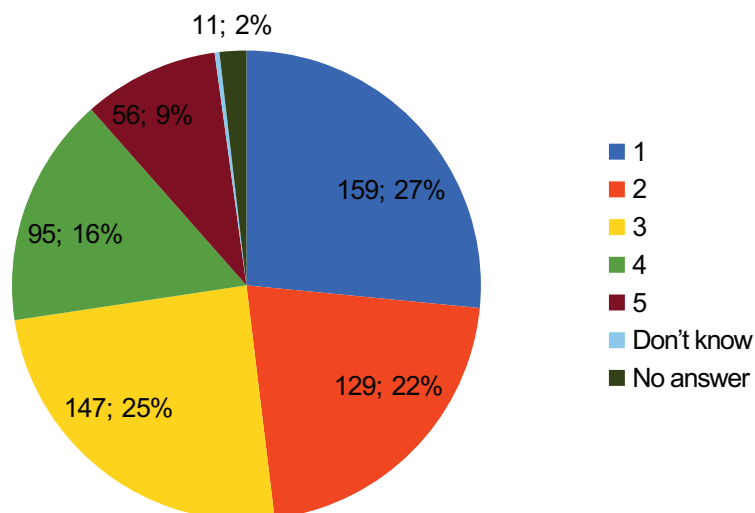


Chart 14. Information and acquaintance with IPARD funds

20.3 MAFWE local office operation and services

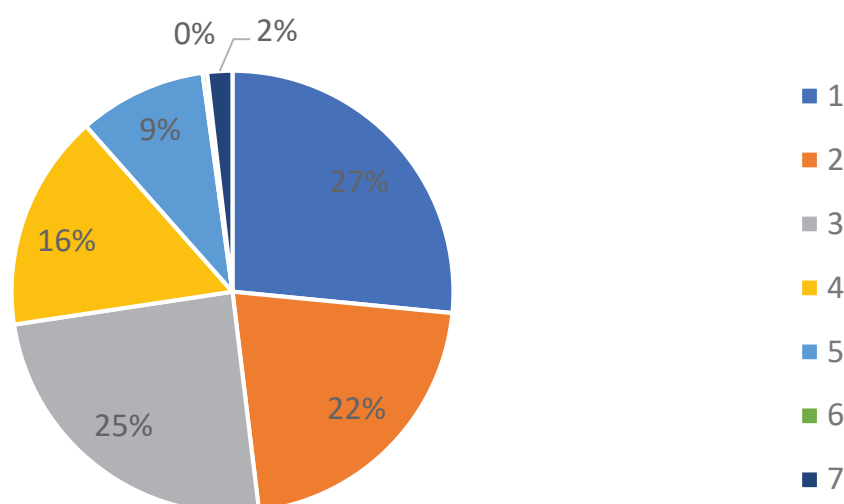


Chart 15. MAFWE local office operation and services

The level of information in terms of IPARD funds is even lower; 190 respondents (**31.8%**) gave themselves the score 1; 140 respondents (**23.4%**) gave themselves the score 3; 122 respondents (**20.4%**) assessed themselves by score 2; and only 92 respondents (**15.4%**) gave themselves the score 4. Insufficient knowledge of IPARD funds has been one of the main hindrances for usage thereof.

The operation and services of local offices of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy are not at all known to 159 (**26.5%**) of the respondents; 147 respondents (**24.5%**) are quite well (3) informed; 129 respondents (**21.5%**) believe the level of their information in this regard may be given the score 2; 95 respondents (**15.9%**), give themselves the score 4; and 56 respondents (**9.3%**) considered themselves excellently informed in this regard (score 5).

On the other hand, operation and services of the Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging are **not at all known** to most of the respondents (158 i.e. **26%**). Second come respondents being **moderately (score 3)** familiar with this - 143 respondents i.e. **24%**. The third place is shared by respondents stating they are **very well (score 4)** informed, and respondents claiming they are **sufficiently (score 2)** familiar (106 respondents i.e. **18%**).



20.4 Operation and services rendered by the Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging (AADE)

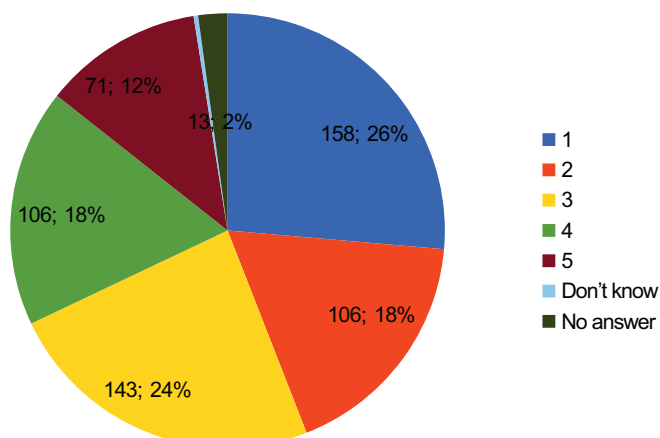


Chart 16. Operation and services rendered by the Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging (AADE)

The Payment Agency operation is least recognizable among respondents. As much as 201 respondents (**34%**) assessed their own information in this regard by the score **1**. **Sufficiently informed (score 2)** were 141 respondents (**24%**), whereas 123 respondents (**21%**) held their information on the Payment Agency's should be **assessed by score 2**.

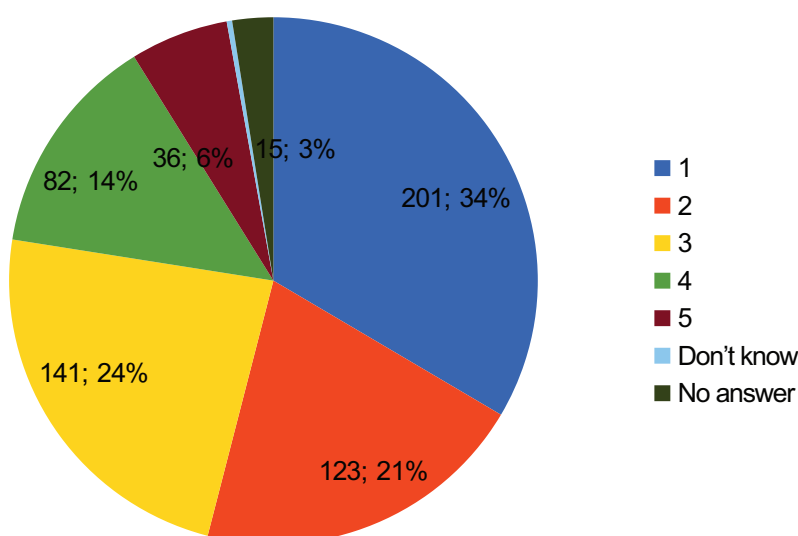


Chart 17. Acquaintance with Payment Agency operation

Survey respondents were given an opportunity to also assess the operation of the municipalities in terms of supporting agriculture. Most of them said it was **extremely negative** (167 respondents – **28%**), 157 respondents (**26%**) consider municipality operation **moderately positive (score 3)**, and only 107 respondents (**18%**) assessed municipality operation as **positive**.



20.6 Cooperation with municipalities/ municipalities' operation in terms of supporting agriculture

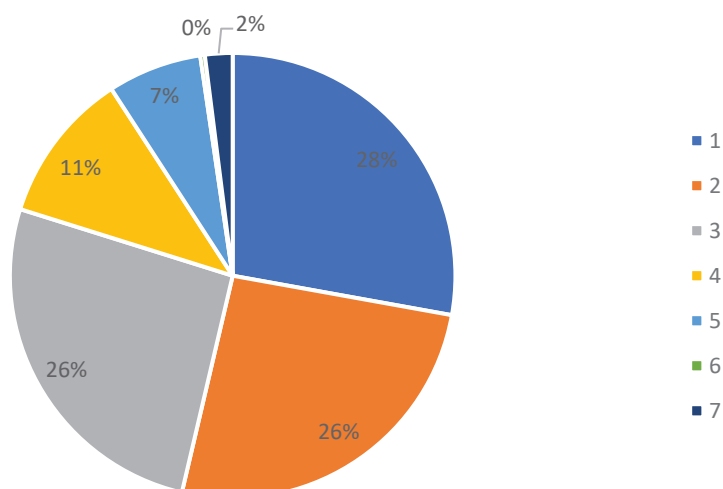


Chart 18. Cooperation with the municipality (and municipality performance) in terms of support for agriculture

In terms of personal information level on possibilities for agriculture support from various sources (e.g. municipalities, the Ministry etc.), most of the respondents, 166 or **28%** said they were **well informed (score 3)**, approximately one fourth of respondents (148) said their information in this regard was **insufficient (score 1)**, and **141 respondents** said it was **sufficient (score 2)**. **Very well (score 4)** or **excellent (score 5)** is the information level on the part of 130 respondents i.e. **22%** of all respondents.

20.7 Level of information on opportunities for agriculture support from various sources (municipalities, the Ministry etc.)

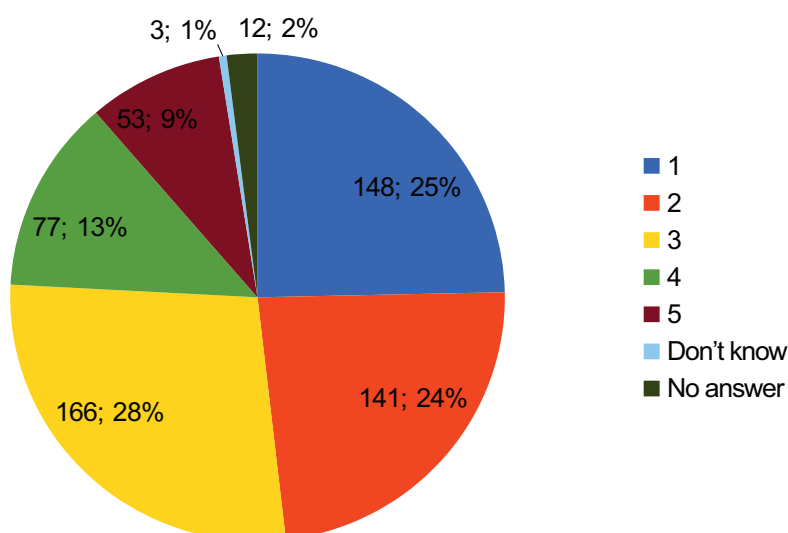


Chart 19. Level of information on opportunities for agriculture support from various sources (municipalities, the Ministry etc.)



21. Are you familiar with the IPARD Programme?

As for the question on how many respondents are familiar with the IPARD Programme, extraordinary low level of information was noted: 217 respondents (36%) **know a little, but would like to know more**, 214 respondents (36%) **know nothing** about the programme, 89 respondents (15%) **know a little**, and would like to use it, and only 37 respondents (6%) **know it and use its advantages**.

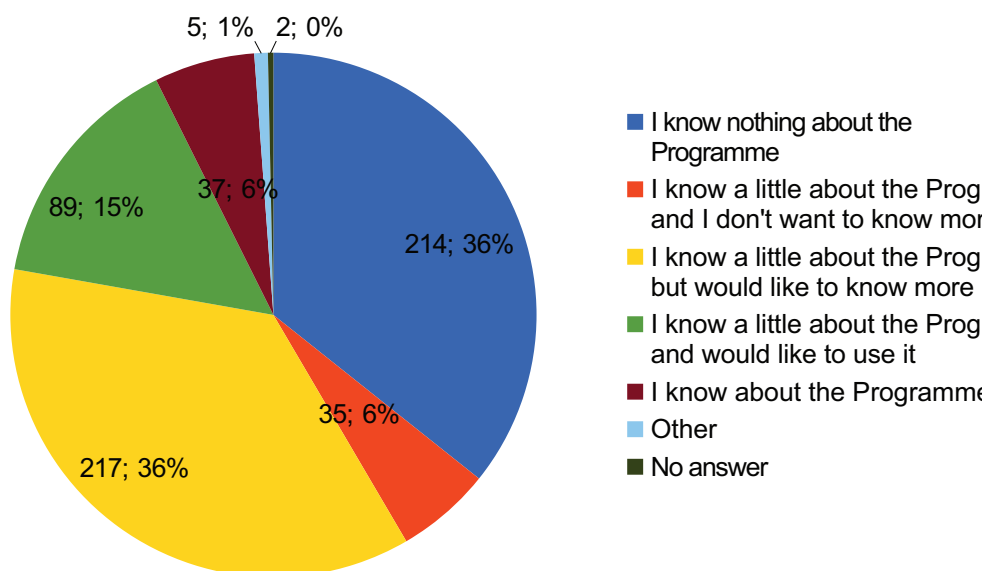


Chart 20. Familiarity with the IPARD Programme

In view of answers obtained to the above mentioned question, it is not surprising that 560 respondents (93%) **have not used any funding** from the IPARD Programme. That they have been this Programme's **beneficiaries** was said by only 36 respondents (6%). To the question on whether they have used any IPARD Programme funding, of **487 female respondents**, 461 i.e. **94.7%** said they **had never used it**; 26 women (5.3%) **have used IPARD Programme funding**. The situation is a bit different with **male respondents** - **98 of 111 respondents (88.2%) have not used IPARD funding**, whereas **affirmative answer** to this question was given by 10 respondents (9%).

21.1 Have you used IPARD Programme funding? (i.e. Have you applied for IPARD funding and obtained it personally?)

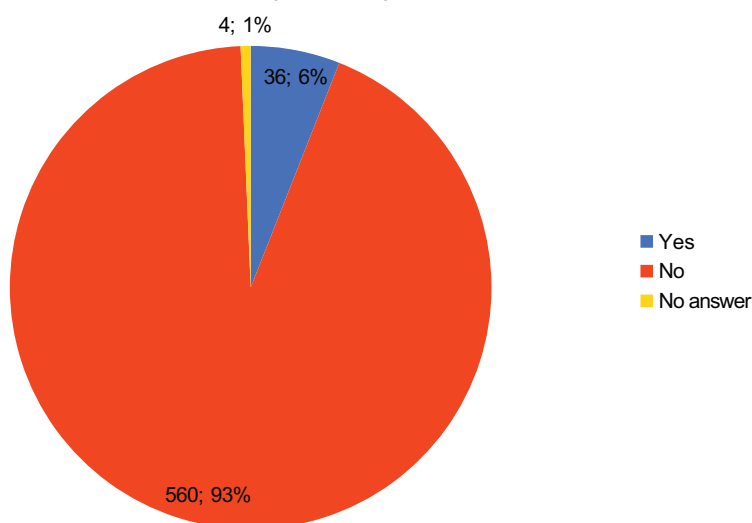


Chart 21. Applying for IPARD Programme funding



In order to qualify respondents' negative answers to the above question, they were asked to state the reason for their recent not making use of the IPARD Programme: 215 respondents (37%) said the reason was absence of sufficient information. These were followed by respondents not having applied because they did not own property themselves (151 respondents i.e. 26%); 106 respondents (18%) consider the application procedure to be too complex and time-consuming.

Similar results as with answers to the question on IPARD Programme funding usage were obtained in answers to the question on usage of funding from other programmes, for instance the young farmer programme: 536 respondents (89%) never made use of any of these programmes. This question was answered affirmatively by only 56 respondents (9%). To the question on whether they had used funding from other programmes, of 111 male respondents, 23 (20.7%) answered affirmatively; 87 (78.3%) of respondents said they had never used other programmes. For comparison, of 487 women, 446 (91.5%) never applied for funding from other programmes, with 37 (7.6%) having applied at some point.

22.1 Have you made use of funding from other programmes? (e.g. the programme for supporting young farmers, the rural development programme, or another programme support)

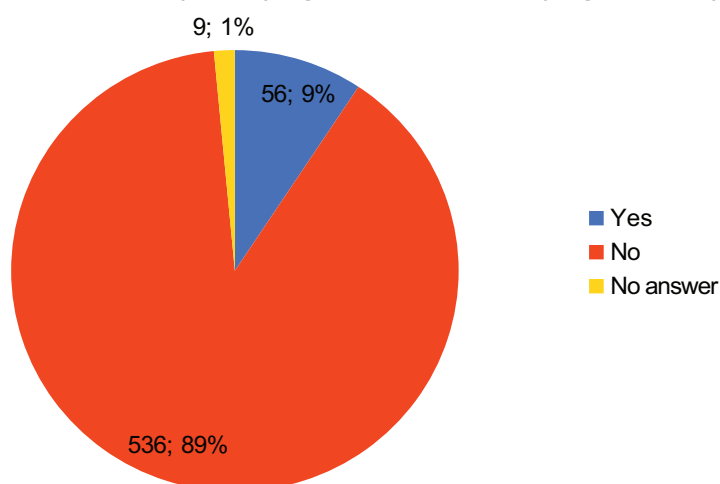


Chart 22. Applying for funding from other programmes

In responding to the above question by giving reasons, respondents showed similar distribution as with answers to the question on IPARD Programme funding applications: lack of information came first (204 respondents i.e. 37%), followed by not having own property (161 respondents i.e. 29%), and the perception that application procedures as such are too complex and time-consuming.

22.2 If you answered by NO, please specify:

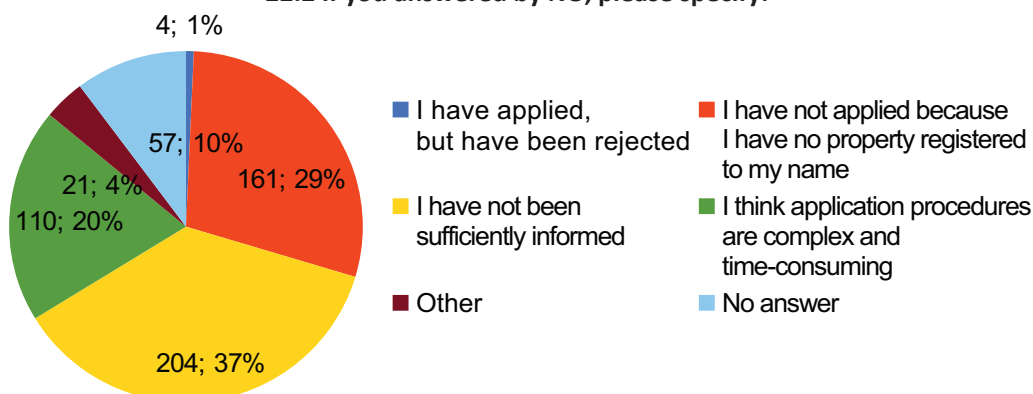


Chart 23. Reasons for not applying to other programmes



Most respondents (318 i.e. 47%) obtain information of agricultural policies and support opportunities via information media, television, and the radio. Next, they get informed via the Internet and social networks (141 respondents i.e. 21%), and the rest obtain information on meetings with representatives of the Ministry or of AADE, associations or chambers, municipal officials, local businessmen, local communities etc..

23. From where do you most often get information on agriculture policy novelties and on support opportunities? (please select three answers at most)

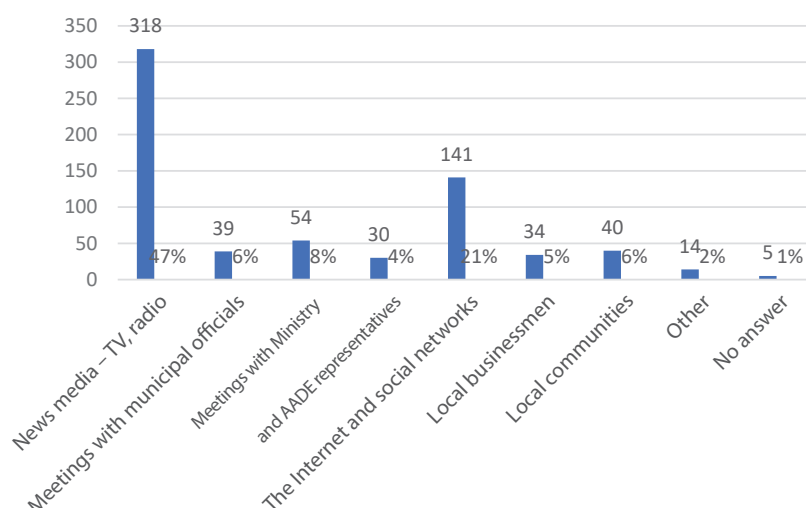


Chart 24. Media via which information is obtained on agriculture policy novelties

In terms of relations with MAFWE representatives, 448 respondents (75%) said they had not answered invitations from the Ministry to attend presentations of their subsidy and rural development annual programmes. Only 144 respondents (24%) provided positive answers to this question.

24. Have you ever been invited to attend information meetings for the following purposes:

24.1 MAFWE subsidy and rural development annual programme presentations

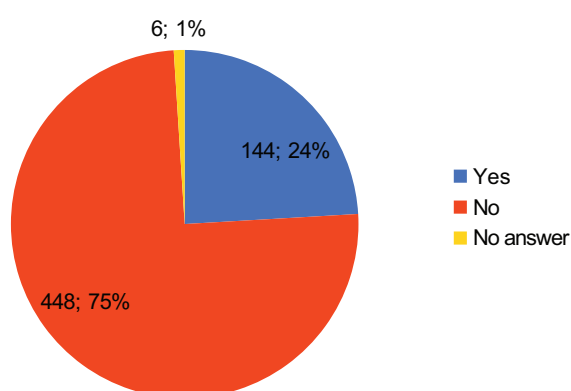


Chart 25. Invitations to attend presentations of MAFWE subsidy and rural development annual programmes

A bit more respondents (179 i.e. 30%) said they had been invited to attend presentations of MAFWE annual programmes on subsidies and rural development (i.e. via regional offices of the Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging): 416 respondents (69%) said they had never been invited to such an event.



24.2 Presentations by AADE of annual subsidy and rural development programmes (via Agency's regional offices)

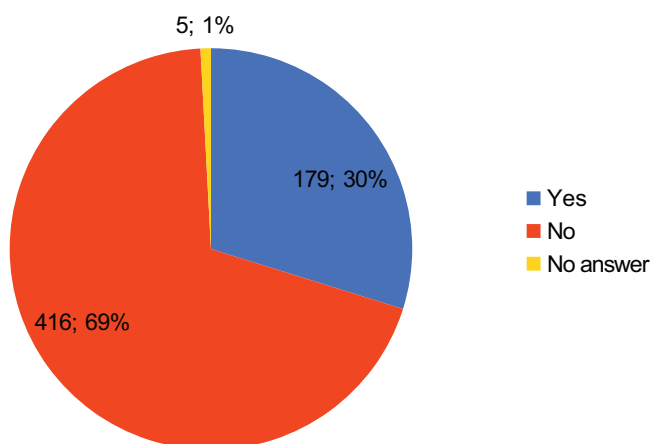


Chart 26. Invitations to attend presentations of AADE subsidy and rural development annual programmes

Most of respondents (43%) said they had been invited at a presentation or direct meetings with municipal officials at which municipal budgets and programmes in the area were presented; 54% of respondents said they had never been invited to such an event.

24.3 Presentations of municipal operational programmes and budgets (via field visits, local communities etc.)

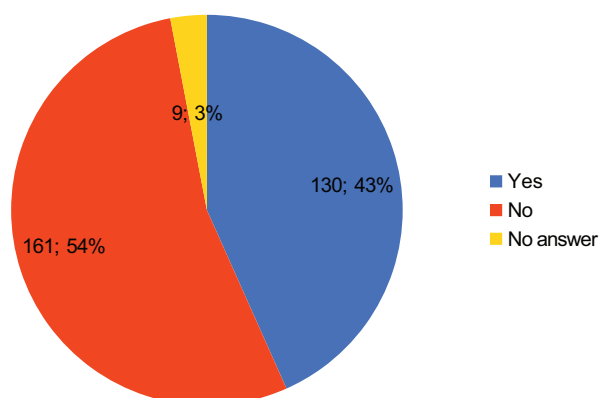


Chart 27. Invitations to municipal operational programme and budget presentations

Very few respondents (only 110 i.e. 18%) said they had been invited to an IPARD Programme presentation by the Payment Agency – as many as 480 respondents (80%) said they had never been invited to such an event.



24.4 IPARD Programme presentations by the Payment Agency

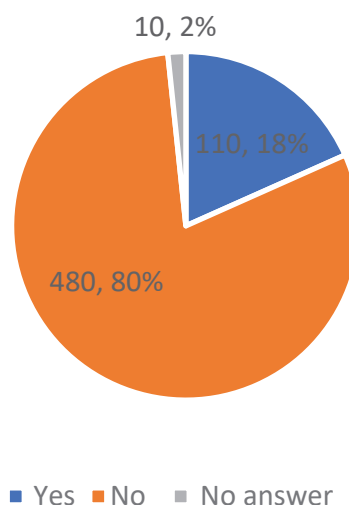


Chart 28. Invitations to IPARD Programme presentations by the Agency

Affirmative answers prevail over negative ones mostly with the question on whether respondents have received an invitation for informative meetings organized by non-governmental organizations – 222 respondents (37%) said they had received such an invitation, though most of them (371 i.e. 62%) said they had never been invited to such an event.

24.5 Informative meetings organized by citizen associations (non-governmental organizations)

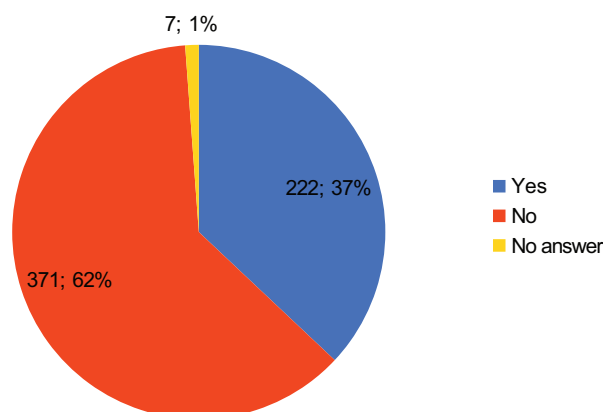


Chart 29. Invitations received for informative meetings organized by citizen associations (non-governmental organizations)

The number of respondents having attended initiating agriculture activities courses or trainings is exceptionally low – only 106 respondents (18%) said they had attended a course or a training of this kind – this question was answered negatively by 82% of respondents (492 individuals).



25. Have you attended a course (training) on agriculture activity (initiating)?

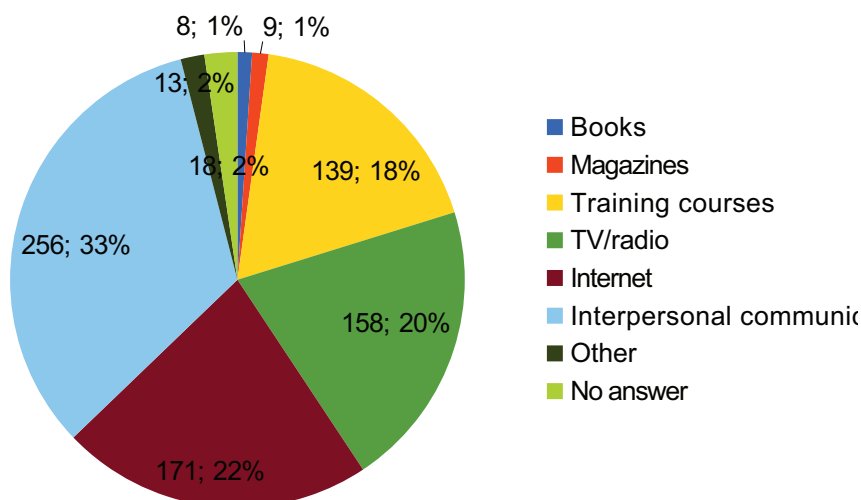


Chart 30. Most often used medium to gain new information and knowledge on agricultural activity

It can be noted from answers given that agricultural workers gain most of their information and knowledge on agricultural activity via informal channels, such as interpersonal communication (256 respondents i.e. 33%), the Internet (171 respondents i.e. 22%), or TV/radio (20%). Only 139 respondents (18%) said they had attended a training or a course.

Similarly as in the survey, focus group participants shared partially positive experiences with Ministry of Agriculture local offices and with the ways of sharing support information and opportunities, most often via notification boards and e-mails. Cooperation with AADE, MAFWE, and the Payment Agency varies between regions, with institution officials and agricultural workers closely cooperating at some places. Agricultural workers are assisted in filling-in applications for the 50-50 Programme i.e. the Rural Development Programme. At other places, agricultural workers are hardly served; they do not receive information timely, field visits are rare and formal, so they are forced to wait for a non-governmental organization to come to them and share information. More detailed information is necessary especially when it comes to female agricultural workers, directly in the field, in rural regions.

Local self-government units and local Social Work Centres do offer one-time assistance, yet this assistance is general and does not include agricultural workers only; very few programmes of local self-government units are directed to female agricultural workers as target group. In some regions, veterinary stations as well were mentioned; good cooperation has existed with them, and agricultural workers are satisfied with the cooperation and information they have been getting from these institutions.

Very few agricultural workers have been in any way included in the work of the Ministry of Agriculture in terms of development programmes and measures, agricultural worker support strategies and action plans; what is more, these programmes never identify female agricultural workers as a category in need of more assistance. Absence of a strategic approach to agriculture development, lack of State aid to agricultural workers, lack of encouragement and support for young people to engage in agriculture, lack of branding for Macedonian products when placing on markets in neighbouring countries, illegal trade – are the most significant of the many problems faced by agricultural workers in the five pilot-municipalities.

In general, focus group participants confirmed very few of them have applied for funding and have received any. They believe low IPARD funding usage (as well as low usage of funding from other programmes) is due to insufficient preparedness on the part of family agricultural holdings as entitlement criteria are too high for conditions in which Macedonian agriculture has been functioning. Female agricultural workers (and all others) that have applied for using various measures are satisfied with the treatment received from institutions, and with the dynamics of refunding their purchased agricultural machinery according to the 50-50 principle, within the Rural



Development Programme. This 50% split may even reach 85% with female agricultural workers, which means they need to pay themselves only 15% of the price if they have been registered as agricultural workers; they believe it is exactly here that emphasis should be laid when promoting women's registration as female agricultural workers.

As in the previous two sections, survey results once again show the same fact demonstrated by focus group participants' statements. The level of financial aid using via various programmes has been very low (**560 i.e. 93% of all respondents never used IPARD Programme funding, and 536 i.e. 89% of respondents never used funding available from other programmes**); agricultural workers have not used this funding due to, as they state, politicization in the procedure of fund granting, lack of capacities in institutions in terms of supporting the application process, lack of trust in institutions and in the manner of fund granting, too large documentation that needs to be prepared when applying, as well as the administrative maze they face when preparing documentation required for applying. For comparison, within the survey, the most significant reason stated for not applying for IPARD funding is the **lack of sufficient information (36% i.e. 215 respondents), lack of own property (25% i.e. 151 respondents), and belief that the procedure itself is too complex and time consuming (18% i.e. 106 respondents)**.

In order to improve the status of agricultural workers, focus group participants recommended that good practices be taken over from neighbouring countries in terms of agriculture development support by State institutions, that regional centres be established whose staff would provide institutional assistance and support to agricultural associations and cooperatives (thereby to agricultural workers themselves), that a focused strategic approach be adopted to the solving of problems faced by agricultural workers, that cooperation and support be strengthened from State institutions to agricultural workers in terms of elimination of corruption and grey trade, that Macedonian agricultural products be branded, thereby contributing to their better market placing and more stable prices.

4.3 Capacity Building Needs

In terms of agricultural workers' trainings and information, the majority of respondents (547 i.e. 91%) said they had Internet access at home. As opposed to this, one third less (398 i.e. 66%), or 405 (67.5%), said they maintain a functional e-mail address or Facebook account. Exactly one-half of respondents (300 i.e. 50%) said they knew how to use MS Word, and considerably less of them (218 i.e. 36%) said they knew how to use MS Excel.

The number of subscriptions to agricultural magazines is extraordinary low: only 5% of respondents answered this question positively. Another low number is the one of respondents using e-banking (payments via the Internet) – 139 respondents i.e. 23%. The latter is of great significance as many agricultural workers live far from banks, and if they used e-banking more, they would be able to save considerable time and transport costs.

The question on whether they have a "B Category" driving licence, was affirmatively answered by a bit more than half of respondents (316 i.e. 53%), of which 105 of 111 male respondents (95%), and 210 of 487 female respondents (43%), whereas 282 respondents (47%) gave negative answers to this question. Having a driving licence would enable women in rural areas access also to a considerable part of services located farther from their places of residence, and would also contribute to these women's personal autonomy, especially if poor public transport beyond urban areas is taken into account.



28. Do you have a B Category driving licence?

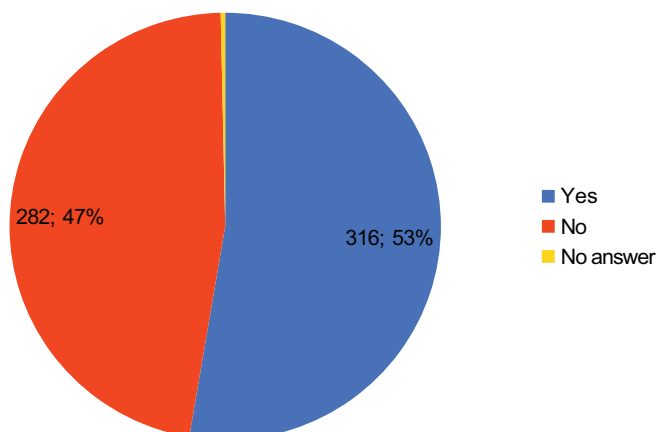


Chart 31. Owning a B Category driving licence

Considerably less respondents said they had a tractor driving licence – 133 respondents (22%) answered affirmatively, of which 62 (46%) women, but only about 13% of the total number of female respondents and 71 male respondents - 54% of the total number of affirmative answers, and 64% of the total number of male respondents, with negative answers given by 437 respondents i.e. 73% of them.

Even lower was the number of respondents having answered positively the question on whether they own a motorcycle driving licence. Only 83 respondents (14%) said they owned such a licence, and 485 respondents answered negatively.

In terms of capacity and knowledge strengthening, asked to assess the need of additional trainings on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest need, and 5 being the highest need, 265 respondents (44%) assessed by score 5 the need for trainings on applying for IPARD funding, and 105 respondents (18%) assessed the same need by score 4. Moderate need (score 3) was assessed by 87 respondents (15%), and 115 respondents (19%) showed very little or no interest in this type of trainings.

29. In which areas do you need additional trainings (please rank from 1 to 5)

29.1 Applying for IPARD funding

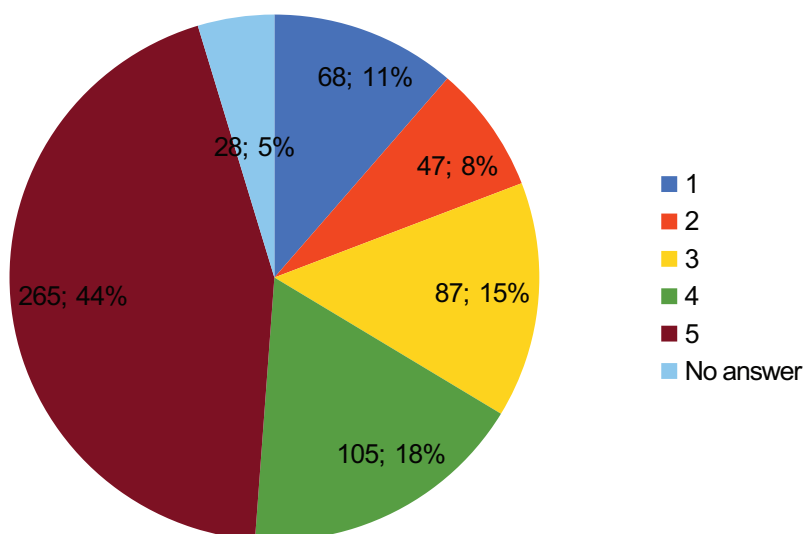


Chart 32. Interest in trainings on applying for IPARD funding



There was also high interest expressed in trainings on good agricultural practice introducing – 263 respondents (44%) gave score 5 (highest) to this need, 113 respondents (19%) gave score 4 to this need, 106 assessed this need as moderate, whereas 111 respondents (18%) expressed low or no interest in this type of training

29.2 Introducing good agricultural practices

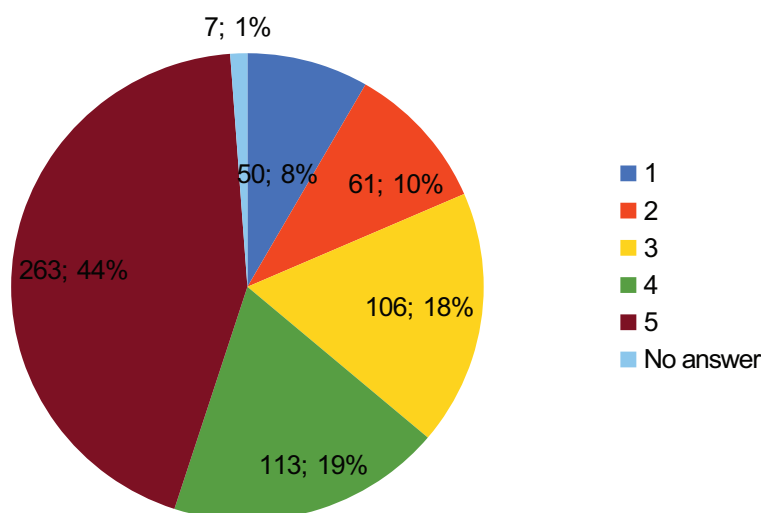


Chart 33. Interest in trainings on good agricultural practice introducing

A bit lower interest was noted in trainings on agricultural holding management i.e. in finance governing and keeping. The number of respondents having expressed a strong need of this type of trainings was a bit lower: 226 respondents (38%) gave score 5 to this need, 102 respondents (17%) gave it score 4, and 142 respondents (24%) expressed moderate need of this type of trainings, giving it score 3. The number of respondents not interested in these trainings is quite stable - 122 or some 20% of all respondents.

29.3 Agricultural holding management (governing and finances)

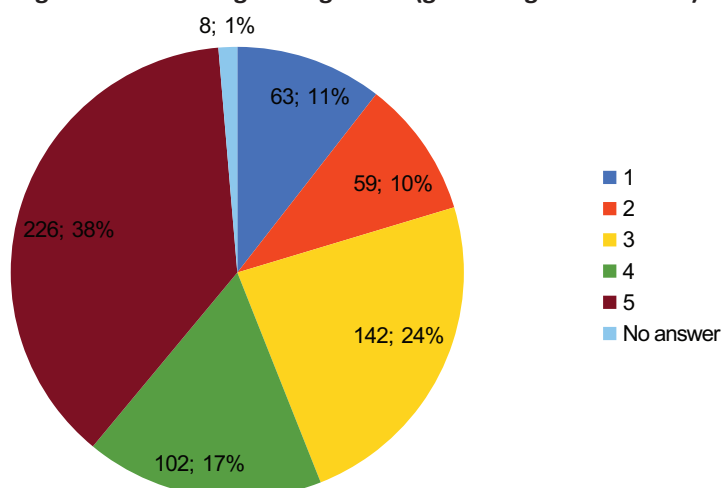


Chart 34. Interest in trainings on agricultural holding management

Similar situation was detected regarding the need of trainings on possibilities for activity expansion and for production diversification; 216 respondents (36%) expressed highest interest, 112 (19%) gave this need score 4, 127 respondents (21%) expressed moderate interest, and low or no interest was expressed by 136 respondents (23%).



29.4 Possibilities for activity expansion and for production diversification

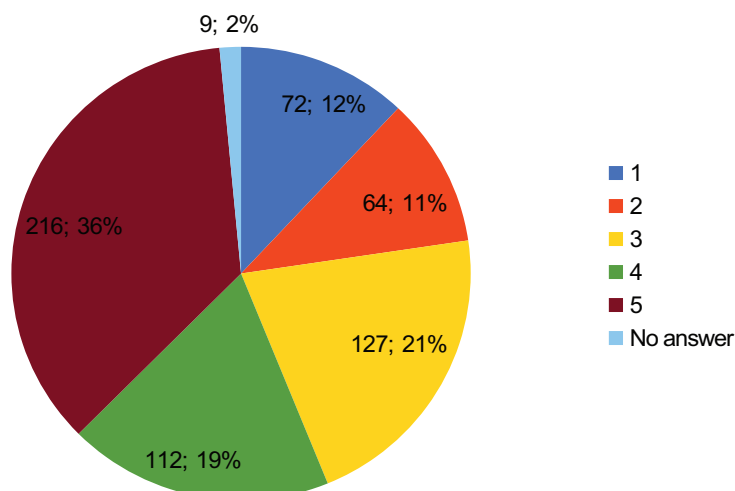


Chart 35. Interest in trainings on activity expansion and on production diversification

If there would be a chance to attend a training on possibilities to use the Internet to promote agriculture, 221 of respondents (37%) said they would be strongly interested (score 5 given), 108 respondents (18%) gave their interest score 4, 123 respondents (21%) said they would be moderately interested, and low or no interest was expressed by 141 respondents (24%).

29.5 Possibilities of using the Internet to promote agriculture

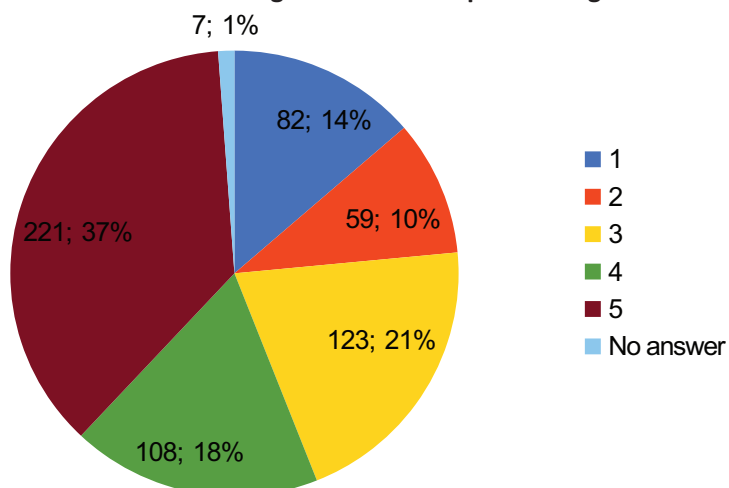


Chart 36. Interest in possibilities for using the Internet to promote agriculture

In terms of marketing for agricultural products, 243 respondents (41%) gave score 5 to their interest in trainings in this field; 115 respondents (19%) gave score 4 to their interest, 131 respondents (22%) said they would be moderately interested to participate in this type of training, whereas low or no interest was expressed by 105 respondents (18%).



29.6 Marketing for agricultural products

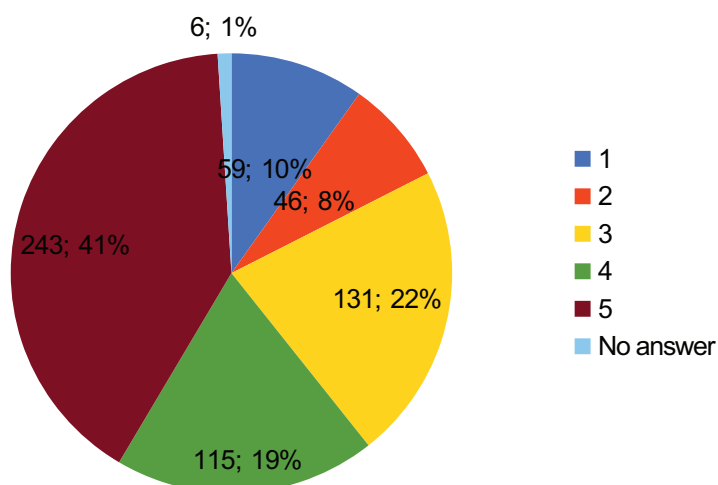


Chart 37. Interest in trainings on marketing for agricultural products

Least interest was measured in participation in trainings for the LEADER Programme; scores 5 and 4 were given to own interest in this training by 213 respondents (36%) and 76 respondents (13%) respectively. Moderate interest was expressed by 138 respondents (23%), whereas low or no interest was expressed by 159 respondents (27%).

29.7 The LEADER Programme

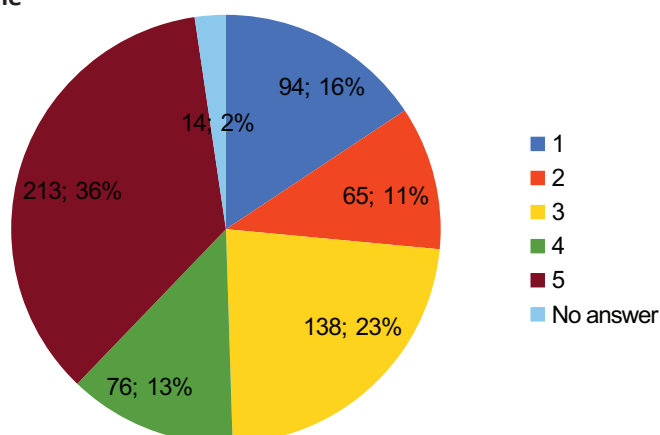


Chart 38. Interest in participation in the LEADER Programme trainings

The main findings in terms of improving the situation of agricultural workers show these people's needs in terms of capacity building mostly related to gaining skills and knowledge on modern (online) ways to promote and sell their products. In particular, greatest interest was shown in the following topics:

- applying for IPARD Programme funding,
- introducing good agricultural practices,
- agricultural holding management, finance managing and keeping,
- agricultural product marketing,
- using the Internet to promote agriculture,
- possibilities for activity expansion and for production diversification.



Low respondent interest in the LEADER Programme is not surprising as the initiation of this programme has been postponed for years.

Focus group participants also mentioned taking over good practices from neighbouring countries in terms of State institutions' agricultural support and development, establishing regional centres whose staff will assist the institutional support to agricultural associations and cooperatives (thereby indirectly, agricultural workers), adopting a focused strategic approach to solving issues faced by agricultural workers, cooperation and support from State institutions for agricultural workers in terms of eliminating corruption and grey trade – and, branding Macedonian agricultural products, to contribute towards they better market placing and more stable prices.



Section 5

Conclusions and Recommendations



Following are key recommendations to be deduced.

5.1. The Situation of Women in Rural and Agricultural Regions

1.1. Conclusion:

Most of female respondents (339 of 487 i.e. almost 70%) have little or no knowledge of the legislation on managing or initiating own agricultural business; they do not know if and to what extent it is appropriate and favourable for them.

Recommendation:

Institutional mechanisms need to be developed to educate rural women on the possibilities for initiating own agricultural business, and on the gains of such engagement on their part in terms of financial independence and improved access to pension and health care insurance.

1.2 Conclusion:

While the majority of rural women do have adequate access to transport services (428 female respondents i.e. 87% of the total number of 487 live at a distance of 0-2 or 2-5 km from the nearest bus station), many of them need to make additional efforts to make use of certain basic services offered by the State, especially health and social care, as well as part of educational institutions for their children. For instance, 235 female respondents (48%) live at a distance of 5-10 km or more from the nearest kindergarten, and 271 of all female respondents (55%) live at this same distance from the nearest secondary (high) school (secondary education being obligatory according to national law). Relatively better is the situation in terms of living close to elementary (primary) schools; 116 of 487 female respondents (23%) live at a distance of 5-10 km or more from the nearest nine-grade elementary school; this is not a low number of women that need to find time during their day to provide for their children's educational services.

Recommendation:

Better transport options are needed for women in rural areas due to the low extent of dispersion with essential public services and to the strong impact that access to such services has on the quality of these women's life. As primary and secondary education is obligatory by national law, women having children at that age are exposed to financial and legal compliance risks as they live quite far from primary and secondary education facilities. Improving public transport connections in rural settlements can considerably improve life outcomes for this population group. Organized student transport is another approach that might be able to help overcome this problem.

1.3 Conclusion:

Access to gynecologists and to pediatricians is especially worrying as it is on this set of services that women's reproductive health and the health of their children rests – 264 women or 54% of women in the survey live at a distance of 5-10 km or more from the nearest pediatrician, and at this same distance from the nearest gynecologist live 276 (56%) of all 487 women covered by the survey.

Recommendation:

Health care coverage needs to be extended in rural areas, especially in terms of primary health care, gynecologist and pediatrician services. Mobile health dispensers, rural field visits by medical staff from nearby rural centres, and other measures recommended by public health experts need to be organized.



1.4 Conclusion:

State-provided services related to employment (the Employment Service Agency and the Agency for Agriculture Support) are also hard to access by most of the women living in rural areas (271 women interviewed i.e. 55% live at a distance of 5-10 km or more from the nearest Employment Service Agency local office). As a result of the inability of each unemployed person to personally register at regular intervals at ESA local offices (due to distance and costs involved), many unemployed women do not register at the Employment Service Agency and are therefore not able to benefit from services offered by the Agency. Partially as a consequence of this fact, 192 female respondents (39%) are unemployed.

Recommendation:

More cooperation is needed among municipal services, Employment Service Agency local offices and other relevant institution in order to better cover rural areas by employment support, with special emphasis laid on these areas' female population.

5.2. Support from Institutions:

2.1 Conclusion

Information on novelties introduced to agricultural policies and on possibilities in this regard is most often obtained by rural women from public information media – television and radio, as well as from social networks: this is how 254 of female respondents (about 52% of total 487) get informed. The fact is again confirmed⁴¹ that, while men tend to more directly be included in social issues debates via public gatherings/discussions, women, especially those from rural regions, are also interested to participate, yet in a manner that will not pose limitations to their time and in their performing of everyday duties, primarily at home.

At the same time, almost half of women interviewed (233 of all 487 female respondents, or some 48%) have almost no information on measures contained in the National Rural Development Programme. This is also illustrated by their lack of information on the operation and services offered by key institutions responsible for rural developments, such as local offices of MAFWE, AADE, the Payment Agency, even municipal authorities.

Recommendation:

Municipalities and MAFWE local offices need to design specially tailored approaches for rural women by using various tools (door-to-door information, citizen organizations, women's debate groups etc.) in order to achieve better information on policy changes, national strategies, and other news in this field directly affecting agricultural workers.

5.3. Financial Aid Using (Barriers, Challenges)

3.1 Conclusion: When it comes to the level of information on the part of female agricultural workers regarding IPARD funds, 269 of 487 female respondents (55%) assessed their own information by scores 1 or 2 (on a scale between 1 and 5) which means more than half of them have never applied for IPARD Programme funding or have never used such aid (stated by 461 of 487 female respondents i.e. 94.7% of the total). Affirmative answers to this question were given by 4 female respondents (5.3%). Main reasons stated for this situation include lack of own property (135 female respondents i.e. 28% of the total number of rural female respondents covered by the survey), and lack of sufficient information (179 female respondents, about 37% of the total number of female respondents in the survey). The situation is a bit different with men: 98 of 111 male respondents (88.2%) have not used IPARD funding, and positive answer to this question was given by 10 male respondents (9% of the total).

⁴¹ "Analysis of Current Practices of Using Citizen Consultation Mechanisms in Local Policy Creation and Their Efficiency" [Electronic source] / [Kristina Hadzi-Vasileva]. - Stip: Local Community Development Foundation, 2017.



Participation rate in other programmes as well has been low – to the question on whether they have been covered by the Young Farmer Support Programme, the Rural Development Programme or by another type of support, negative answer was given by 446 of 487 female respondents (about 92%), whereas of 75 female respondents from the Albanian ethnic community, 70 (93.3%) said they had never made use of funds from other programmes. Minor variations were noted with the application for assistance rate when ethnic affiliation is taken into account as a contributing factor. Most often quoted reasons for not making use of other programmes include lack of information (170 female respondents or 35%) and the fact that female respondents do not own any property as personal (143 respondents i.e. 29%). Furthermore, some respondents believe the procedure to be very complex and time consuming (84 female respondents i.e. 17%), and in some cases another family member has been aid beneficiary. The question on whether they had used funding from other programmes was affirmatively answered by 23 of 111 male respondents (20.7%); 87 male respondents (78.3%) said they had never used funding from programme. Men, on average, appear twice more often as beneficiaries of other programmes.

Recommendation:

Tailored training needs to be organized in which rural women will be targeted interested in applying for IPARD funding, and not knowing how to do it. In training organization, women's duties and capacities need to be taken into consideration.

In addition, simplifying and shortening the application procedure are recommended.

3.3 Conclusion: Rural women are limited in their access to training and capacity building on agricultural activity improvement as most of them have never attended any course/training related with agricultural activity (407 of 487 female respondents i.e. 84%), and are informed by the word of mouth and via the Internet (314 of 487 female respondents i.e. 64%). Hence, rural women need additional training in almost all key areas related with agricultural production (new approaches, marketing, finance management etc.), and also with ways to apply successfully in order to obtain IPARD funding.

Recommendation:

Conceptualization, drafting, and carrying out are required of integrated training modules for rural women in which need and willingness have been detected to develop integrated agricultural holding management skills, in order to open for them possibilities for facilitated access to IPARD funds and capital intensive agricultural production.



Section 6

Capacity Analysis of Institutions Supporting Agriculture and Rural Development (Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development)



6.1 Capacity Analysis Main Findings

In order to compare data obtained from focus groups and from field interviewing, a special questionnaire was used in the survey for (1) State institutions working in the agriculture field the Payment Agency, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Agency for Agricultural Development Encouragement, cf. Appendix 1) being institutions directly affecting agricultural policy implementation, and from the aspect of their capacities and possibilities to meet agricultural workers' needs, and (2) institutions delivering a kind of support to women or to agricultural workers, such as social work centres, local self-government units, the Employment Service Agency (cf. Appendix 2), in order to obtain insight on their role in perspective developing for women in rural and agricultural regions of the Republic of North Macedonia.

With AADE, the Payment Agency (of the five pilot municipalities, the Agency maintains regional offices only in Kumanovo and Strumica), and MAFWE regional offices, main challenges faced related to insufficient material and human resources to serve adequately all agricultural workers; staff assisting agricultural workers in application filling-in or providing advisory services most often perform other working duties as well: no staff member works engaged specially for giving assistance and support to agricultural workers. No local meetings or consultations are organized when creating annual agriculture and rural development programmes, and no initiatives are submitted for legislative modifications or for any other modifications in line with agricultural workers' demands and needs, the reason being their view that their initiative would not be taken into account anyway or that they may lose their job if they express an opinion or view that differs from "the one above".

The Payment Agency has been hardest to access by agricultural workers whereas AADE has most often held field meetings with the population of rural regions. For information purposes, information materials are used that are distributed to local communities, as well as direct meetings with agricultural workers, organized agricultural worker visits to relevant institutions, and local information media (radio, TV). Procedures for applying for IPARD Programme funding are comprehensive and complex yet, in line with agricultural workers' demands and needs, these have been simplified through the years, and increased interest on the part of agricultural workers has been noted each year in funding available. In general, cooperation with other institutions has been satisfactory; agricultural workers most often apply as individuals, very rarely as an association; men dominate as applicants, and there have been divided opinions regarding State budget allocations for agriculture sector support in terms of whether they have been sufficient or not. Civic sector support to agriculture is needed, yet not necessary.

In almost all meetings with representatives from employment centres (ESARM local offices), to most of questions asked regarding agricultural worker registration/employment, efforts by the institution to promote agricultural worker employment and encouragement, also encouraging women from rural regions to get employed, NEGATIVE answers were obtained as this institution has declared itself not competent on most of duties mentioned in the questionnaire and added that MAFWE and MPDIF are institutions maintaining data to be used for answering these questions.

Similar answers were recorded also from representatives of Social Work Centres; they stated no official classification or division was made between individuals being or not being agricultural workers i.e. that all of them are treated as citizens that are or are not beneficiaries of social assistance, child allowance, and caretaker allowance. Questions were mostly asked by men in the family that come to town, average age with this category of citizens being between 40 and 55.

Municipalities also have no special programmes specifically intended for agricultural development; most often, this field is covered by municipal local economic development strategies and programmes. With the exception of Strumica and Prilep, where agricultural workers and tobacco producers dominate, no special meetings are organized in other municipalities with agricultural workers to meet their needs, and no specific civic initiatives are active originating from agricultural workers themselves; on the other hand, municipalities state they do not have major competencies to take more comprehensive action in this particular sector, except supporting citizen associations: this support is a general one and may be requested among others by agricultural worker associations as well; to this should be added occasional allocation of funds by municipalities (not large amounts) in cases of smaller-scale floods or similar damages.



6.2 Capacity of the Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development – Payment Agency

The Payment Agency was established on 11 June 2007 with the adoption by the Republic of North Macedonia's Parliament of the Law on Establishing the Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development. The goal with this Agency has been more successful realization of Republic of North Macedonia's agriculture and rural development policy measures.

The Agency is to enable efficient management of funding from the State Budget, and of funding from the European Union Pre-Accession Assistance funds for rural development.

The Agency is responsible for the following:

- executing direct payment measures in agriculture;
- performing interventions to the agricultural product market;
- production quota implementing;
- carrying out rural development measures;
- organizing funding from the European Union Pre-Accession Assistance funds for rural development;
- enacting State aid measures in the agricultural sector.

The Agency performs the following:

- receiving, recording, and processing applications for financial support;
- approving funding payments;
- organizing financial and accounting operations;
- performing internal audits;
- organizing, carrying out, and coordinating administrative and technical checks, and checks in situ;
- data collecting and processing;
- database and registry maintaining;
- drafting reports and analyses.

According to the Rulebook for Job Position Organizing in the Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture, the planned number of Agency staff members is 283, of which currently 188 staff members are engaged.

In 2018, the Agency maintained and allocated funding to the total amount of 6,210,500,000.00 MKD.

This amount may be divided to two major categories, in particular:

1. Measures for agricultural holding revenue support

- Direct payments for agricultural plant production (1,500,000,000.00 MKD)
- Direct payments for cattle breeding production (1,100,000,000.00 MKD)

2. Measures for additional agricultural development support (State aid to agriculture)

- Aid with insurance and insurance premiums (70,000,000.00 MKD)
- Aid for agricultural land protection (1,000,000.00 MKD)
- Aid for specific categories of agricultural holding heads (10,000,000.00 MKD)
- Aid to the cattle breeding sector (12,000,000 MKD)
- Aid with losses caused by nature disasters and unfavourable climate events that occurred in 2016 (50,000,000.00 MKD)



- Aid with losses caused by nature disasters and unfavourable climate events that occurred in 2017 (50,000,000.00 MKD)
- Additional aid with losses caused by nature disasters and unfavourable climate events that occurred in 2016 (50,000,000.00 MKD)
- Additional aid with losses caused by nature disasters and unfavourable climate events that occurred in 2017 (50,000,000.00 MKD)
- Financial aid for storing domestically produced wheat of 2018 yield (1,000,000.00 MKD)
- Material costs of Programme implementation (15,000,000.00 MKD)
- Payment of arrears from programmes for financial support to agriculture in the previous years (3,301,500,000.00 MKD)

6.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Conclusion:

With **AADE, the Payment Agency (maintaining regional offices only in Kumanovo and Strumica, of the five pilot municipalities), and MAFWE regional offices**, main challenges faced relate to insufficient material and human resources required to serve properly all agricultural workers. No local meetings or consultations are organized when creating annual agriculture and rural development support programmes, and no initiatives are raised for any changes in line with agricultural workers' demands and needs, the belief here being that such initiatives will meet no approval.

Recommendation:

The volume needs to be increased of human resources serving agricultural workers, and individuals working in the field need to be more involved in the process of formulating initiatives for legislation modifications, national strategies, and national policies.

2. Conclusion:

The Payment Agency is the one hardest to access by agricultural workers, and AADE hold the greatest number of field meetings with the population of rural regions. Applying procedures for funding (especially when it comes to the IPARD Programme) are comprehensive and complex, but have been simplified through the years in line with agricultural workers' demands and needs; also, interest has been increasing each year in funding available. Generally speaking, cooperation with other institutions has been satisfactory; agricultural workers most often apply as individuals (very rarely as associations); men dominate as applicants; opinions are divided on whether State Budget allocations for the agricultural sector have been sufficient or not. Civic sector support to the agricultural sector is needed, yet not necessary.

Recommendation:

Agricultural workers need to be educated, with special emphasis on rural women, in benefits of founding agricultural cooperatives in terms of risk sharing, better negotiating position during buying-off season, as well as cheaper agricultural plant insurance against natural disasters.

3. Conclusion:

In almost all meetings with representatives from **employment centres (ESARM local offices)**, to most of questions asked regarding agricultural worker registration/employment, efforts by the institution to promote agricultural worker employment and encouragement, also encouraging women from rural regions to get employed, **NEGATIVE** answers were obtained as this institution has declared itself not competent on most of



duties mentioned in the questionnaire and added that MAFWE and MPDIF are institutions maintaining data to be used for answering these questions.

Recommendation:

Improved inter-institutional cooperation is one of the most efficient ways to improve overall efficiency in taxpayer fund spending without major investment outlays to infrastructure, staff training, or other additional costs. Institutions such as ESARM need to develop policies adjusted to the needs of citizens irrespective of their activity, gender, or place of permanent residence, to be compatible with MAFWE policies and MPDIF operation.

4. Conclusion:

Similar answers were given also by representatives from Social Work Centres who said no official classification or distinction was made between agricultural workers and non-agricultural workers i.e. that all individuals processed were citizens entitled or not entitled to social assistance.

Recommendation:

Improved capacities in Social Work Centres in terms of classifying and collecting information on various social groups and levels of citizens-beneficiaries of their services, including here agricultural workers as well (and, in this group, rural women in particular), may contribute to better designing and carrying out of policies to be better adjusted to the situation in the field and to create long-term improvement in citizen lives.

5 Conclusion:

Municipalities also have no special programmes specifically intended for agricultural development; most often, this field is covered by municipal local economic development strategies and programmes. On the other hand, municipalities state they do not have major competencies to take more comprehensive action in this particular sector, except supporting citizen associations: this support is a general one and may be requested among others by agricultural worker associations as well; to this should be added occasional allocation of funds by the municipalities (not large amounts) in cases of smaller-scale floods or similar damages.

Recommendation:

Municipalities should take coordinated action together with larger civic sector entities.



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Appendices



APPENDIX 1 FIELD RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

**Questionnaire on
Perspectives of Women in Rural and Agricultural Regions of the Republic of North Macedonia**

SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Gender: a) female b) male

2. Age: a) 18-25 б) 26-30 в) 31-40 г) 41 - 50 д) 51 - 64 е) 65 and beyond

3. Place of living: a) town б) village

4. Civil status

a) married

b) single

c) divorced

d) other (please specify) _____

5. Ethnic affiliation:

a) Macedonian

b) Albanian

c) Roma

d) Vlach

e) Other (please specify) _____



6. Please select age/ number of children you take care of:

- a) up to 6/ ____
- b) 6-15 years/ ____
- c) 15 - 19 years/ ____
- d) 20 -26 years/ ____
- e) 27 years and beyond/ ____
- f) no children/ ____

7. Employment status (only if retirement deductons are paid):

- a) unemployed
- b) self-employed – agricultural worker registered in accordance with the Law on Agricultural Activity (holder of activity)
- c) registered according to the Law on Pension and Health Care Insurance
- d) self-employed (small business founder)
- e) family agricultural holding carrier
- f) public sector employee
- g) private sector employee
- h) contracted employee
- i) unemployed
- j) other (please specify) _____

If unemployed, have you registered with the Employment Service Agency?

- A) Yes б) No

8. Please specify education level:

- a) no formal education
- b) primary education (primary school completed only)
- c) secondary vocational education
- d) secondary/high school (gymnasium)
- e) high education (university)
- f) other (please specify) _____



9. Basic service vicinity (please mark relevant field)

Service/Facility	Distance				
	0-2 km	2-5 km	5-10 km	Over 10 km	Don't know
Bus stop					
Kindergarten					
Primary (nine-grade)					
Primary school (up to grade five)					
Primary school (grades five to nine)					
Secondary school					
General dispenser (GPP)					
Pediatrician					
Polyclinic/medical laboratory					
Gynecological practice, public					
Gynecological practice, private					
Dentist practice, public					
Dentist practice, private					
Pharmacy					
Library					
Municipal local office					
MAFWE regional office					
Social Work Centre					
AADE local office					
ESARM local office					
Bank					
Own bank ATM					
Petrol station					
Grocery store					
Theatre/cinema					



SECTION TWO: OWN BUSINESS INITIATING AND MAINTAINING – AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY

10. Do you own agricultural land?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I have State-owned land under lease
- d) I have privately owned land under lease
- e) Other (please specify) _____

11. Of your family's total possessions, what do you personally possess?

(please mark by "X")

The dwelling you live in	Personally (respondent)	Husband	Wife	Parents	Comment
Part of the land					
Animals					
Car					
Tractor					
Combine harvester					
Motorcycle					
Other (please specify)					

12. How many years have you been working in agriculture? _____

13. How many years of working experience do you have? (officially registered anywhere)

- a) 0-2 b) 3-5 c) 6-10 d) 11-19 e) 20 and beyond

Of these, how many years have you worked in agriculture? _____

14. Is agriculture your primary activity or your additional activity?

If additional activity, please answer Question No. 15, and if primary activity, please answer Question No. 16.

15. In which areas have you worked so far (if any, in additional to agriculture):

- a) Administration, State administration
- b) Transport
- c) Tourism
- d) Information technology
- e) Business, marketing
- f) Agriculture



- g) Manufacture
- h) Telecommunications
- i) Culture, the arts
- j) Health care
- k) Other:

16. How many family members do you have?

- a) children (aged up to 18)
- b) adults
- c) elderly/pensioners

16.1. How many of your adult family members work in agriculture?

16.2. How many of them have registered as agricultural workers?

16.3. How many of your family members are family agricultural holding carriers i.e. apply for subsidies?

17. How much are you familiar with the legislation on own business managing/ initiating i.e. agricultural activity registering?

- a) not familiar b) little familiar c) sufficiently familiar d) very familiar

18. Do you believe national legislation is favourable for agricultural activity development in North Macedonia?
(e.g. the Law on Agricultural Activity, the Law on Agricultural and Rural Development)

- a) Yes b) No c) Don't know

If answer is "No", please state reasons:

.....

.....

.....

.....



SECTION THREE: SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

19. Do you differentiate between the National Rural Development Programme and the IPARD Programme?

- a) Yes b) No

20. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is the worst/lowest score, and 5 is the best/highest score), please rank the following:

Information and knowledge of measures contained in the National Rural Development Programme	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Information and knowledge of IPARD funds	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
MAFWE regional offices' performance and services	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
AADE regional offices' performance and services	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Payment Agency performance	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Cooperation with the municipality, municipal performance in supporting agriculture	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Information on possibilities for agricultural support from various sources (municipality, Ministry ...)	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

21. Are you familiar with the IPARD Programme?

- a) not familiar
b) little familiar, don't want to know more
c) little familiar, but would like to know more
d) little familiar, but would like to make use
e) familiar and making use
f) other

22. Have you ever used any IPARD Programme funding (have you personally applied for funding, and received it)?

- a) Yes What was the funding used for?
Who actually carried out the investment: you, or someone in your family?
.....

- b) No

If answer is No, please specify:

- a) I applied, but was rejected
b) I haven't applied because I don't personally own any property
c) I don't have sufficient information
d) I think the procedure is too complex and time-consuming
e) other



23. Have you ever used funding from other programmes? (e.g. the Young Farmer Support Programme, the Rural Development Programme, or another programme)

a) Yes

From which programme, and what did you use the funding received for?

b) No

If answer is No, please specify:

a) I applied, but was rejected

b) I haven't applied because I don't personally own any property

c) I don't have sufficient information

d) I think the procedure is too complex and time-consuming

e) other

24. How are you mostly informed on new trends in agricultural policies and on support possibilities? (please select three answers at most)

a) public information media – TV, radio

b) meetings with municipal staff

c) meetings with MAFWE or AADE staff

d) meetings with representatives of various associations and chambers

e) the Internet, social networks

f) local businesses (buy-off points, processing businesses etc.)

g) local communities

h) other

25. Have you ever been invited to attend information meetings such as:

Presentation of MAFWE annual subsidy and rural development programmes	Yes	No	Comment/Note
Presentation of AADE annual subsidy and rural development programmes (via Agency's regional offices)	Yes	No	Comment/Note
Presentation of the annual municipal operational programme and budget (via field visits, local communities etc.)	Yes	No	Comment/Note
Presentation of the IPARD Programme by Payment Agency staff	Yes	No	Comment/Note
Informative meetings organized by citizen associations (non-governmental organizations)	Yes	No	Comment/Note
Other (please specify)	Yes	No	Comment/Note



SECTION FOUR: TRAININGS AND INFORMATION

26. Have you ever attended a course (training) on agricultural activity (initiating)?

a) Yes b) No

27. From where do you get latest information and knowledge on the agricultural activity you perform?

a) Books b) Magazines c) Training courses d) TV/radio

e) the Internet f) Word of mouth (personal communication) g) other

28. Using the Internet (please mark the relevant field)

Do you have Internet access at home?	Yes	No	
Do you have a functional e-mail address?	Yes	No	
Do you have a Facebook account?	Yes	No	
Do you know how to use MS Word?	Yes	No	
Do you know how to use MS Excel?	Yes	No	
Are you subscribed to any agricultural magazine?	Yes	No	
Do you use (personal) e-banking? (payments via Internet)	Yes	No	
Comment			

29. Driving and driving licence

Question	Yes	No	Comment
Do you have a B-category driving licence?			
Do you have a tractor driving licence?			
Do you have a motorcycle driving licence?			

30. In which areas do you need additional training? (please rank on a scale between 1 and 5)

Training needed	RANK/SCORE					Comment
Applying for IPARD Programme funding	1	2	3	4	5	
Introducing good agricultural practices	1	2	3	4	5	
Agricultural holding maintaining (management and finances)	1	2	3	4	5	
Possibilities for activity extension and for production diversification	1	2	3	4	5	
Possibilities for using the Internet for agriculture promotion	1	2	3	4	5	
Agricultural product marketing	1	2	3	4	5	
The LEADER Programme	1	2	3	4	5	
Other (please specify)	1	2	3	4	5	



APPENDIX 2

Focus group questions

SECTION 1 – the situation of women in rural and agricultural regions

- Do women own property?
- Have there been any changes in land inheriting customs i.e. have female children begun to be included in land dividing?
- When a married couple buys land, who gets officially registered as land owner?
- What are the possibilities for women's employment i.e. which family members have been registered as agricultural workers?
- Do women receive any salary when working in the field/garden/dairy etc.?
- Are women officially registered? Which officially registered status do they have? Unemployed?
- Are women pension beneficiaries and, if so, which pensions do they use?
- Do women use the possibility to get registered as individual agricultural workers or as workers via family agricultural holdings, or in another way? If not, why?
- What happens when women decide to have children? Do they use maternity leave?
- Do you know any woman registered as an agricultural worker and having used maternity leave?
- What is the access to services like? (e.g. health care facilities, kindergartens, schools etc.)
- What are the needs and possibilities involved in terms of education completion, retraining, new skill gaining etc.?
- Has there been any form of women's organized action (e.g. associations, cooperatives etc.)?

SECTION 2 – support from institutions

- Are you informed (and, if so, how?) on the programmes of various institutions?
- What has been cooperation like with the local self-government in terms of support to agricultural workers, providing information etc.?
- Have you received any support from the Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging, and how much are you satisfied with the Agency's operation?
- What do you think about the operation of the Payment Agency, and which aspects of its work may be improved?
- Do you get any assistance from local Social Work Centres (as departments of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) e.g. one-time aid and other types of support?
- Are you familiar with the operation of the Ministry of Agriculture, and have you managed to obtain any information from them?
- Are you familiar with opportunities for rural development and agriculture support offered via the Government's Annual Rural Development Programme? What have been your possibilities and problems encountered in the obtaining of these funds?



SECTION 3- financial aid using (hindrances/challenges)

- Do you have any possibilities open for obtaining loans?
- Is financial aid offered adequate to your needs as a female agricultural worker?
- Have you used any one-time financial aid for personal needs from local social work centres or from your municipality?
- Have you used any State-organized aid? If so, what kind of financial aid have you used? (e.g. subsidies)
- How was your experience in using State-organized aid?
- Have you ever used subsidies and, if so, what were your possibilities, difficulties, delays etc.?
- Have you applied for IPARD Programme funding? Are you familiar with this Programme? (difficulties/challenges involved)
- Do you know of any other financial aid opportunities, and have you used other types of financial aid? (e.g. via NGOs etc.)





9) Have you attended any professional trainings during your employment?

A. YES B. NO C. Yes, but not sufficiently

10) Do you believe NGO sector assistance is needed in agriculture?

A. YES B.NO C. Needed, but not necessary

11) Who do you think (if either) dominates among persons applying for assistance?

A. Men B. Women

12) Have there been special measures/programmes/preferences to encourage female agricultural workers to use IPARD funds, also in the frames of national measures supporting agriculture and rural development?

A. YES B. NO

13) Do you believe budget allocations determined are sufficient for agriculture support and development?

A. YES B.NO

14) 14) How do agricultural workers apply more often?

A. As individuals B. As associations C. Other (please specify) _____

15) Are consultative meetings organized with agricultural workers when drafting rural development programmes?

A. YES B. NO

16) If answer to previous question is YES, how are agricultural workers informed on consultative meetings?

17) Does the body/agency/institution you work at receive initiatives, suggestions. and proposals from agricultural workers?

A. Yes, every day B. Yes, rather rarely C. No

18) Has the body/agency/institution you work at ever submitted an initiative to modify or amend a legislation piece related to agriculture?

A. YES B. NO

19) How are agricultural workers informed/invited to apply for financial support? Please specify



SECTION 4

Topics for discussion with the staff of the Employment Service Agency - ESARM

- Do you maintain special programme lines for supporting agricultural worker employment/registration?
- Do you maintain special programme lines for supporting women and young people employment/registration?
- How do beneficiaries register most often: according to the Law on Agricultural Activity or according to the Law on Pension and Health Care Insurance?
- Who is more numerous as registered agricultural workers: women or men?
- Has there been a case of female agricultural worker using maternity leave? What is the legislative solution to this?
- Does ESARM encourage agricultural workers to register, and if so, does it maintain relevant campaigns etc.?
- How do you inform agricultural workers on encouragement measures? Does ESARM staff present employment programmes by going to villages, or are ESARM measures presented by someone else?
- Do you think interest in agricultural worker registering has tended to increase or decrease?
- What do you think can be improved in ESARM performance in terms of agriculture and rural development? (e.g. number of staff encouraging women and young people to register as agricultural workers)
- Do you consider documentation required for agricultural worker registering/employment to be complex and too comprehensive?
- Which is the most frequent reason to reject agricultural workers' requests for registration/employment?
- Do you maintain efficient cooperation with local authorities? What other bodies and institutions does ESARM most often cooperate with?
- What do you think about the performance of MAFWE, the Payment Agency, and the Agency for Agricultural Development Encouraging?
- Do you cooperate with NGOS, and do you think it is necessary for you to maintain cooperation with NGOS?
- Does ESARM undertake initiatives for implementing additional measures, and does it raise any initiatives for more efficient managing of agriculture and rural development?
- Which ESARM measures are agricultural workers most interested in when applying?
- Do you organize consultative meetings with agricultural workers in order to improve your performance?
- Does ESARM staff need additional training or information on how to improve communication with agricultural workers?



Topics for discussion with the staff of Social Work Centres

- Do you keep records of issues on which agricultural workers most often address you?
- About which problems agricultural workers most often address you, and what kind of assistance they most often ask for? (e.g. one-time aid, caretaking etc.)
- Who addresses you more often: women or men? Which age group is most dominant?
- Do you know which agricultural families need to be visited on the spot? If yes, do you have sufficient staff and vehicles for regular visits?
- Do you cooperate with various bodies and institutions on issues agricultural workers address you about and, if so, with which?
- Does your staff need additional training and, if so, what type? (regarding assistance to agricultural workers)
- Can your performance be improved and, if so, in which ways?

Topics for discussion with municipalities

- Do you maintain a special agriculture and rural development programme? If so, do you think it needs to be extended?
- Do you organize training in agriculture programme designing? If so, how often?
- Which bodies and institutions do you cooperate with? How has that cooperation fared?
- Do you cooperate with the NGO sector, and how has that cooperation fared?
- Have you allocated budget funds for encouraging agriculture?
- Do you hold meetings with agricultural workers? If so, how often?
- About which issues do agricultural workers most often address you?
- Do you provide agricultural workers with assistance/advice and, if so, which staff members do it?
- Do you raise specific initiatives to encourage agriculture? What kind? What has been the income thereof?
- Do you have sufficient equipment and material/human resources?
- What is the situation with female and young agricultural workers? Are they numerous enough in comparison to men? What has the municipality been doing to encourage women and young people in agriculture?



- Does the municipality perform field surveys, and does it keep statistics on the situation of agriculture in its territory?
- How do you inform agricultural workers on issues that affect them?
- What are the major specific achievements and visible results of your municipality in the agriculture sector?
- What do you think the situation is of agricultural workers in the territory of your municipality?



