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**THE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN FUNDS ON RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN ROMÂNIA**

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IN THE FIELD OF ACTIVITY**

**Summary of the doctoral thesis in economics**

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## CONCEPTUAL MILESTONES OF THE RESEARCH

**Actuality and importance of the topic addressed.** The current interest in global and regional development is determined by the need to address and solve within national economic policies some new difficulties, generated in the context of the restructuring and reform processes triggered in the central and eastern regions of the European continent. As for rural development in România, at the level of 2007, it is characterized by: few investments in education, technologies, development, research and consultancy; poorly developed economic activities; poorly promoted local agri-food products; unsatisfactory and discouraging results of work in small and medium-sized farms; lack of information; local and regional public administrations too little involved due to unqualified and financially unmotivated staff; climate change affecting agriculture; almost non-existent communication with the outside, unfavorable for exports.

România's rural areas were far behind urban areas in terms of access to infrastructure, services and information and the large number of very poor people. Accession and integration to the European Union was expected and desired a lot by the population of România, the desire for development and proximity to developed countries made Romanians look optimistically towards the future. The standard of living was very low and the country was looking for solutions to find itself. Since 2007, the European Union's common agricultural policies have proposed various programs and projects, national, regional and local, on all levels, to improve România's economy and livelihood.

In this sense, this paper carries out an analysis of rural areas in România, with a specific research for Neamț county but also a comparison with Strășeni district as a rural area in the Republic of Moldova. The thesis represents a fundamental research of the European funds implemented through the financing programs from European funds. This analysis is useful to all beneficiaries of European funding, entrepreneurs and individuals who want to attract European funds for development, but also to public institutions, intermediate bodies, management authorities.

Thus, one of the targets pursued in the research is *highlighting the impact of European funds on the rural environment in România*. Another aim of the work is the proposal of new methods of evaluation of local areas, which should help in the way of creating financing programs. They should be formulated and implemented according to the zonal specificity, taking into account several social and territorial aspects.

**Description of the situation in the research field and identification of associated problems.** Based on the actuality and importance of the researched theme, we can mention that the situation regarding rural development in România takes on new values in the context of the evaluation and appreciation of the impact of the allocated European funds. In this context, we mention that since 2007, România is facing big problems on all levels, and the rural area and agriculture were far behind the developed countries of the European Union. Subsistence agriculture was carried out with inefficient machinery, with old and unmotivated people, and was dominated by small family holdings. Unfortunately, a lot of young people left the country for a better life, and thus the young and competitive workforce was lost. The country's gap with the European Union average was very large, but the agricultural policy developed the operational programs in the hope of reducing this gap. Starting with the lack of infrastructure but also with the lack of information, the country needed European funds, but also the projects already implemented in other countries.

In this sense, we mention that starting with the first year of România's integration into the European Union, 2007, and until 2022, two programming periods took place 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 and resources were drawn from all funds accessible European development. Projects were approved for the improvement of the infrastructure, for the purchase of new and high-performance machinery in agriculture, for consultancy in accessing European funds, for the creation of new family businesses, for attracting young people to the countryside, for

education and training, for the protection of the environment.

Economic activities began to develop and be competitive, communication with the outside improved exports, the results of farmers' work began to be satisfactory, young people returned to the country to work with family members, agricultural products became better from qualitative and competitive point of view.

The paper presents theories and concepts regarding rural development, rural policy instruments, the evolution of European funds and impact models and solutions for the management of the efficiency of European funds. The rural area of România is analyzed and the impact of European funds on its development is identified.

The operational programs and the common agricultural policies were related to the existing realities in the community area, their vision being a natural consequence of the historical context for each individual country and taking into account the specificity of the economies of the member states. They pursued the integration of the countries into the European Union, but preserving the specificity of the areas and improving their unique and identifiable points. Of course, various difficulties were encountered in the implementation of many projects, human and procedural errors, some predictable, others not. The restructuring and reform processes launched had and still have as their main goal to ensure a decent standard of living for the inhabitants of the member countries of the European Union.

**The degree of study of the research topic.** The theoretical and practical approaches regarding European funds allocated to rural development have been researched in the works of renowned scholars such as: Kilkenny M., Margarian A., Masot N., Volanen R., Nemes G., Douwe PJ, Bianco J. , Bock B. , Servillo L. , Kumpulainen K., Scott M. , Pollerman K. , Halfacree K. , Plüschke-Altof B. , Dwyer J. , Mantino F., Debertain DL , Benga E. , Krugman P., Krugman P., Rizov M., Pulina P. , Cristiano S., et al. At the same time, the respective issue was also researched by Romanian and Moldovan scientists, as follows: Belli N., Rusali M., Bleahu A., Bujor T., Sandu D., Cojanu V., Botezatu E., Peleanu I., Zanzir E., Badescu I., Zamfir C., Molnar M., Paveliuc- Olariu C., Pavel A., Moldovan BA, Juravle A., Șerban A., Gavrilesu C., Corad B., Iamandi-Cioinaru C., Man T., Marin M., Moldovan C., Neculau G. , Teșliuc E., Grigoraș Vl., Stănculescu MS, Vremiș M., Nicoara R., et al.

The scientific literature dedicated to the theoretical and practical aspects regarding the impact of European funds on rural development, constitute the starting points that were the basis of the elaboration of the respective research. At the same time, it should be mentioned that the aspect related to the impact of European funds from the perspective of rural development remains uncertain and has not been subjected to detailed research in România, which determined the area of research and finalization in that field.

**The aim of the paper** is to evaluate the impact of European funds and develop recommendations for increasing the impact and management of the efficiency of European funds in order to develop the rural space in România.

Based on the purpose of the work, to carry out the research we established the following **objectives** :

1. Identifying the impact of European funds on the rural labor market;
2. Evaluation of the impact of EU-funded projects;
3. Analysis of the effects produced to determine the level of achievement of the expected objectives;
4. Determining the impact of European funds on the development of rural areas by using the Eurobarometer methodology;
5. Examining the static and dynamic indicators of the endogenous development of rural areas, under the impact of European funds ;
6. Assessment of the level of absorption of European funds intended for rural areas;
7. Establishing mechanisms to increase the impact of European funds from the perspective of rural development .

**The research hypothesis** consists in the possibility of rural development by increasing the impact of European funds. The author believes that the efficiency of European funds will increase with the improvement of impact factors, vernacular analysis and management of European funds, based on the case study Neamț County in România.

**The methodology of scientific research** . In order to achieve the objectives of this research, the following research methods will be used: *the method of analysis and synthesis* , *induction and deduction*, *analogy* - which are the main scientific research methods, used directly in the initial phases of the work, and later are used as a basis for economic, mathematical and statistical research methods. For the realization of the doctoral work, *the national and international specialized literature was used and analyzed*, as well as the reports of the European Union, the European Institute in România, the Management Authorities of the European Commission, domestic and international governmental sources, but also from the non-governmental sector. Also, the methodologies of financial analysis, eligibility or cost-benefit analysis (according to the CE methodology) were used with all its components: financial, economic, sensitivity analysis or risk analysis. At the same time, taking into account the specifics of the research, the research method is mainly applied, interdisciplinary, descriptive and causal.

**The novelty and originality of the work** derives from the purpose, the objectives drawn, the review of the literature, the results of the investigations carried out, which consist of :

1. substantiation and synthesis of empirical studies of the impact of different dimensions of support programs from European funds on rural development;
2. analysis of the methodologies used in the evaluation of Romanian rural development for different NUTS levels;
3. realization and application of the Eurobarometer methodology regarding the identification of problems in the implementation of rural development programs and impact factors based on the measurement of perception for the case of Neamț County;
4. the argumentation of a strategic approach in the management of investments from European funds for the development of rural space by introducing *the notion of vernacular expertise* ;
5. adjusting the model for recording and evaluating the impact of European funds on the social-economic development of rural areas, *based on the social accounting matrix method* .

**Important scientific problem solved in the thesis** resides in the analysis of the effects created by the funds introduced in agriculture. Original data were obtained on increasing the impact and efficiency management of European funds on rural development, through vernacular expertise and the application of the social accounting matrix method .

**The theoretical significance of the thesis consists in** addressing theories and concepts regarding rural development; identification of rural policy instruments from the perspective of rural development management; the systematization of theoretical and empirical studies on the impact of different dimensions of support funds for rural development; arguing the tools and models necessary for monitoring and evaluating the impact of European funds on rural development.

**Application value of research resides in :**

1. carrying out a survey according to the Eurobarometer methodology, with the aim identifying problems specific to rural areas;
2. proposing a model for recording and evaluating the impact of European funds on the social-economic development of rural areas, based on *the social accounting matrix method* ;
3. quantifying the degree of endogenous development of rural areas in Neamț County under the impact of European funds;
4. determining the level of absorption of European funds intended for rural areas in Neamț

County;

5. the application of impact factors and vernacular expertise in increasing the impact of the management of the efficiency of European funds related to rural development, based on Neamț County;
6. simulation of models and impact solutions for the management of the efficiency of European funds, based on the data of Neamț County.

The results of the doctoral thesis are addressed both to the beneficiaries of structural and cohesion funds from the public or private environment, as well as to the institutions responsible for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation of these funding sources or the formulation and implementation of development strategies at the local, regional and national level . At the same time, the results of the doctoral research are useful for the general population, the academic environment, students, PhD students and research experts.

**The structure and content of the thesis** . The work was structured in a logical order, so as to ensure the achievement of the purpose and objectives outlined. Therefore, the thesis is composed of annotation, introduction, 3 chapters, conclusions and recommendations, bibliography and appendices.

In *Introduction* the actuality and importance of the topic addressed are addressed, the situation in the research field is described with the identification of associated problems, the purpose and objectives of the research are stated, the research hypothesis, the synthesis of the research methodology, the novelty and scientific originality of the work with the description of the situation in the field, the scientific problem, the theoretical significance and the applicative value of the work, as well as the approval of the results obtained.

*Chapter 1 "Theoretical - conceptual approaches regarding the impact of European funds on rural development"* reflects the multidimensional approach to the concept of rural development, focusing on policy instruments and rural development management. At the same time, the emphasis was directed towards the theoretical foundation and empirical studies of the impact of different dimensions of the support programs on rural development.

*Chapter 2 " The impact of European funds on rural development in România "*, is based on the study of the evolution of European funds for the rural development of România, with an emphasis on the development regions and the stages of creation of European funds, at the same time the instruments and models that allow both monitoring and evaluating the impact of European funds intended for rural development, and finally the methodological aspects applied for the evaluation of Romanian rural development were highlighted. After an extensive analysis of European funds, the tools and sets of indicators specific to rural development, applied to the agricultural field in România, were highlighted.

*Chapter 3 " Increasing the impact of European funds on rural development "*, reflects the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the impact of European funds on rural development, as well as the comparative analysis of Neamț County in România and Strășeni district in the Republic of Moldova applying the Eurobarometer methodology. Based on the results of the survey, the author highlighted common challenges with those of rural areas in the European Union and identified problems specific to the rural space of Neamț County and Strășeni district. At the same time, the important application value associated with the thesis is the record and evaluation model of the impact of European funds on the socio-economic development of rural areas, *based on the social accounting matrix method* . In this sense, the impact factors were identified, the vernacular analysis was approached and impact models and solutions were proposed for the efficiency of the management of European funds on rural development based on the Neamț County case study.

*The conclusions and recommendations* report the most significant conclusions formulated as a result of the research on the impact of the European funds allocated for rural development in România, and the submitted recommendations have the character of a proposal and suggestions for the institutions responsible for the implementation, monitoring and

evaluation of European projects, in order to increase the impact of the European funds . The conclusions and recommendations presented by the results obtained during the research, arising from the analysis of the comparative situation between România and the Republic of Moldova, as well as based on the simulations carried out, allowed the achievement of the purpose and the outlined objectives.

**Approving the results of the investigation.** The main scientific results were disseminated through national and international conferences, as well as in articles published in specialized journals. The proposed recommendations, in order to increase the impact of European funds on the development of the rural area, were capitalized through 4 implementation certificates.

The basic ideas were presented in several scientific events, among which the most significant are listed:

1. The international scientific conference "*Science and the challenges of the 21st century* " , from 10 November 2022; title of the article "*Analysis of operational programs implemented in România* " , Chişinău, Republic of Moldova.
2. The national conference with international participation "*Creative economy. Innovation Marketing*", 8th Edition, May 26, 2022; the title of the article "*Rural development strategies*", Bucharest România.
3. International scientific-practical conference " *Global and Regional Aspects of Sustainable Development*", from February 26-28, 2021; title of the article *Rural development through agrotourism* , Copenhagen, Denmark.
4. International symposium "*Health through Education*" , from June 2020; title of the article " *Procedural and administrative solutions and mechanisms applied by AFIR for the efficiency of the management of European funds PNDR 2020* " , Bacău, România.

**Key words** : European funds, agriculture, workforce, financial resources, labor market, allocated funds, investments in agriculture, environment, rural development.

## THESIS CONTENT

**Chapter 1 "*Theoretical - conceptual approaches regarding the impact of European funds on rural development*"** reflects the multidimensional approach to the concept of rural development, focusing on policy instruments and rural development management. At the same time, the emphasis was directed towards the theoretical foundation and empirical studies of the impact of different dimensions of the support programs on rural development.

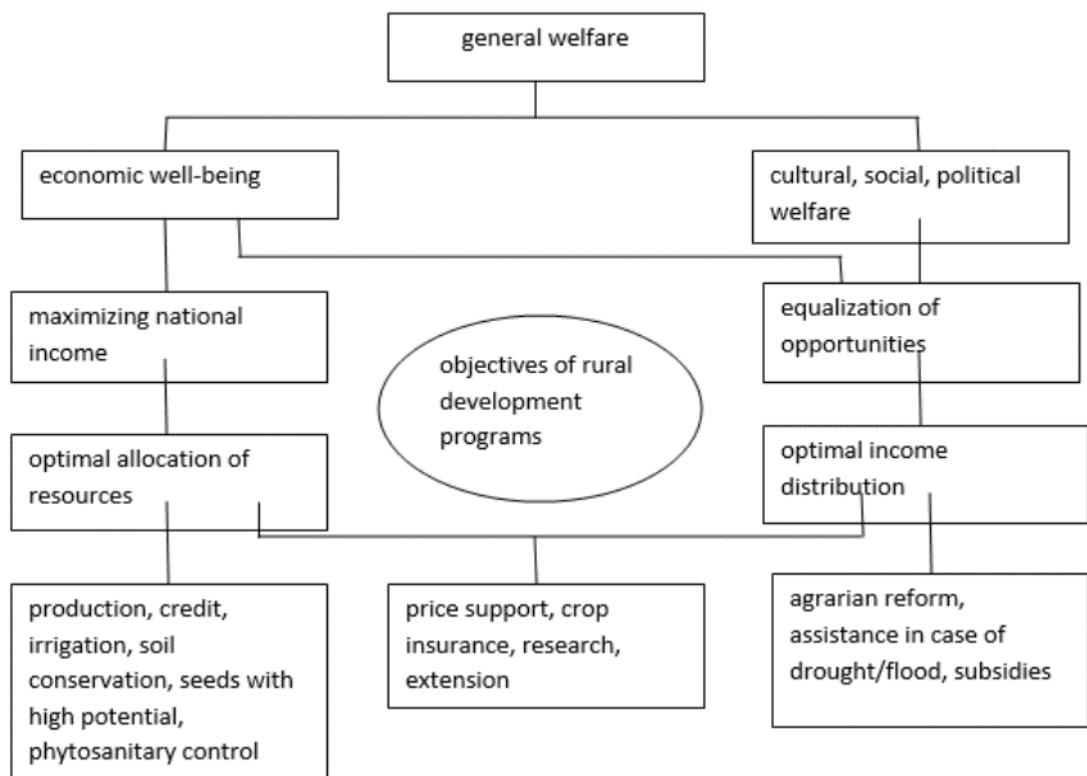
The term *sustainable rural development* in the view of researchers Bujor T., and Grinciuc L. [4, p.262], "can be defined as a general improvement of the economic and social well-being of rural residents and of the institutional and physical environment in which they live" . The development of rural areas is presented as a process in which the region is actively involved, in order to involve all initiatives for the efficient and economical use of its own resources, for both social and economic advantage [4, p.262]. The notion of "development" is associated with that of "growth", although they are not identical [4, p.262].

The current concept of " *rural development*" is based on that of sustainable development and has some basic characteristics [3, p.290]: i) *Sustainable rural development* implies equitable and balanced economic development, with a high level of social cohesion and inclusion and assuming responsibility for the use of natural resources and environmental protection [3, p.290] ; i) *Extensive or integrated rural development* , which refers to the development of the rural environment by expanding the means of communication and information and by expanding activities from the rural environment to the non-agricultural sector and promoting extensive agriculture, whose essential coordinate is information transfer (the concept of extensive agriculture here it is different from the traditional one, which defined the opposite of intensive agriculture) [3, p.290]; iii) *multisectoral rural development* , which refers to the creation of networks and partnerships between international organizations, national agencies or civil society



organizations, with a view to a multisectoral approach [3, p.290] .

Rural development strategies can be *of growth* , which implies the increase of GDP/place at a higher rate than population growth, considered one of the basic components of the concept of rural development, and the role of the state consists in supporting the development of physical and social infrastructure and a favorable climate for rural entrepreneurship, so that the benefits flow to the poor [31] , which, however, under the conditions of market mechanisms, proved its inconsistency; *of welfare* , which has a paternalistic orientation and likewise did not withstand criticism; *responsible* , when community participation and control of designed activities are performance indicators; or *integrated* , which presents a mix of strategies aimed at building the capacity of the community to create partnerships with the government in solving problems, which involves a complex matrix of decentralized structures, qualifications, institutional coordination, social intervention and managerial systems, as well as systems of directives on food safety covering the entire agricultural and agri-food sector and international standards on food traceability.



**Figure 1.1. Hierarchy of rural development policy objectives**

Source: [27, p.41]

The economic literature divides policy instruments into the following groups: 1. regulatory instruments, which affect property rights (bans, creation of new rights of use or access); 2. economic instruments, affecting the relative costs and benefits of individuals who choose to take positive actions (incentives or rewards), for example payments (one-off investments, or regular multi-year payments), loans or loan guarantees, tax reductions or tax offsets , and negative (disincentives), for example taxes or duties; 3. informational or advisory tools - those that enable people to make better decisions based on a more complete understanding of problems or situations. In practice, most policies include a combination of instruments in one or more 'packages' [23] .

According to the DG AGRI study [7] , the minimum expenditure thresholds are designed to ensure that each program pays due attention to each of these main EU priorities for RD and can have beneficial effects both under the RDP and at EU level , the analysis of the balance between planned expenditures for "sectoral" and "territorial" measures showing that the former is dominant in all Member States, although the Netherlands, Malta allocate about 40%, Estonia, Latvia, Germany - 25% or more of the planned expenditures to territorial measures, and Belgium and Luxembourg - over 90% to sectoral measures. On average, the EU 27 allocates 18% for territorial measures, the EU15 just over 15% and the 12 new member states 21.5% [ 6 ] .

**Table 1. 1. Three minimum thresholds at the level of Europe 2020 general priorities (sustainable, inclusive and smart growth)**

		% of total EU funds
<b>Sustainable growth</b>	Competitiveness in agro-food forestry systems Food quality Combating climate change Sustainable management of natural resources	25%
<b>Inclusive growth</b>	Diversification and vitality of rural areas Social inclusion Strengthening local and governance capacities Network development	20%
<b>Smart growth</b>	Research and development knowledge transfer Access to the digital society	5%

*Source:* [103, p.60]

The authors [16] argue that these 3 thresholds should be the most appropriate level for the establishment of the minimum threshold by the EC, the Member States and the regions allocating funds among the 10 common rural development priorities within the general priorities of Europe 2020, this new structure and the minimum thresholds being, however, quite different from the current situation and having important implications for the *management of the RDP* in the 2007-2013 programming system (i) by determining the minimum expenditure thresholds at the level of the Axis and at the level of the general priorities of the EU 2020 or of the RD priority group; (ii) by adopting within each EU 2020 general priority the 10 common priorities established for the DR or the specific priorities for the DR in accordance with the strategy of the member states, which would allow a certain flexibility in the allocation of EAFRD funds within the limits of a common grid of EU-specific priorities for rural development; (iii) by including in the financial plan in the RDP and in the National Rural Development Framework the total breakdown of the EAFRD for each specific priority, which should be indicative, with the possibility of annual financial flexibility in the implementation of the priorities; (iv) through strategic monitoring and evaluation, which would aim to verify and evaluate annual progress in reaching the financial, result and impact targets established for each rural development priority.

Financial support from European programs can also weaken motivation if the support itself is able to compensate for low revenues and profits, thus conditioning lower efficiency and reduced competitiveness. This means that, because there is support available, inefficient eligible regions/communities/fields/industries/businesses remain inefficient or facilitate the entry of new inefficient actors [2] , and as a consequence do not gain in competitiveness to compete with more advantageous international or local producers and not to reach the objectives of the support actions [13] , that most of the support for investments within the rural development program [ 25] being intended to cover part of the costs associated with restructuring, innovations, research and other technological developments [20], [34].

Since aid covers certain costs, program support can lead to a change in the mix of different factors of production to minimize costs [12] , sometimes with a negative effect on employment, depending on whether the financed factor functions as a complement or a substitute.

Consequently, support can lead to inefficient investment combinations if it provides an incentive to overinvest in capital at the expense of other factors [2], the risk of an ineffective combination increasing with higher support levels.

Funding failures can be explained based on the theory of externalities about the "spill over" effect to third parties, when the effects of the migration of positive and negative externalities are not taken into account. An example would be the agricultural sector, called multifunctional, which, in addition to producing food, also contributes to the maintenance of open landscapes and small communities, considered positive externalities from production. Therefore, higher levels of support should be given to productions that generate this type of positive spillover effect [17], [18].

Higher levels of support should also be given to individual companies that produce goods that generate other types of positive effects, for example because they are healthier or more environmentally friendly, support and other policy instruments allowing control of a production that generates positive societal effects in a certain desired direction. Another positive spillover effect is the transfer of knowledge and information between companies and within/between rural areas. The agricultural industry also has negative externalities, a consequence of which is the extensive degeneration of natural resources and increased emissions. However, support for conversion to organic production may be necessary to implement these changes, which often generate high costs for farmers through lower production, expenses related to certification and administration, etc. Support for strengthening incentives for farmers to change their production to an environmentally better alternative also generates benefits for society in the long term through the positive externalities it implies [25].

Thus, the agricultural sector, generating positive spillover effects, should be financed additionally. However, the current level of support is much higher than what can be justified with positive externalities in the form of increased self-sufficiency and conservation. At the same time, research on other positive effects, such as employment, community preservation or animal husbandry, is insufficient.

It is also important to mention that the general rural well-being of a country starts from the local well-being, that at the present moment the need for sustainable development starts from the creation of seeds, degrowth for the local economy, as a generator of well-being. The synergy created locally through the European funds introduced in the local, rural economy determines a synergistic effect. The rural economy, as a component of the local economy, develops through the institutional factor and the human factor. At the same time, the impact of European funds on the development of the skills of the labor force in particular and of the individual in general, plays an extremely important role in the local-rural economy.

Based on the theoretical analysis, it can be stated that support programs have both positive and negative effects, but it is difficult to determine the aggregate effect of different levels of support. At the same time, empirical studies that explicitly study the levels of support and their role in the effects of support are few and reflect very conflicting effects of support.

***Chapter 2 "The impact of European funds on rural development in România"***, is based on the study of the evolution of European funds for the rural development of România, with an emphasis on the development regions and the stages of creation of European funds, at the same time the instruments and models that allow both monitoring and evaluating the impact of European funds intended for rural development, and finally the methodological aspects applied for the evaluation of Romanian rural development were highlighted. After an extensive analysis of European funds, the tools and sets of indicators specific to rural development, applied to the agricultural field in România, were highlighted.

We mention that the accession to the EU was the starting point of the reform of the economy in the rural areas of România, due to the need to align with the European rural area [38]. European rural areas are based on: protecting the environment, comfortable housing for the population and efficient agriculture [38].

The first steps towards the integration of România into the EU aimed at the opening of the 31 negotiation chapters, including Chapter 7 *Agriculture*, the negotiations focused on the state of agriculture and the rural economy: the rural area dominated by agriculture and an infrastructure (transportation, communications, social and commercial) mostly outdated and deficient; agriculture with outdated technologies to a large extent, with low technical and economic performances compared to the EU average; the very low incomes of Romanian farmers, with a negative impact on the entire rural area, all these aspects creating a vicious circle of underdevelopment in agriculture. Against this background, it was expected that the support for private investments in agricultural holdings would benefit from the link between the economic development of the agricultural sector and rural development, instead România assumed certain commitments, among which: the organization and operation of the Payments and Intervention Agency Agriculture (APIA), the organization and operation of the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) and the implementation of the SAPARD Program (Tab.1.2).

**Table 1.2. The stages of creation of European Funds**

Funds allocated to România by the EU during the pre-accession period, 2002-2007
The SAPARD program (Special Accession Program for Agriculture and Rural Development) – intended to support the accession preparations of Central and Eastern European countries
Funds allocated to România by the EU in the post-accession period, 2007-2013
FEGA - European Agricultural Guarantee Fund
EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) – focuses on solving problems specific to rural areas in the EU
The funds allocated to România in the period 2014-2020
ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) - promotes balanced development in EU regions
ESF (European Social Fund) – supports employment-related projects across Europe and invests in EU human capital
EAFRD - European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
FC (Cohesion Fund) – finances transport and environmental projects in countries with gross national income per capita below 90% of the EU average (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, România, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary)
Funds allocated to România by the EU during the pre-accession period, 2002-2007
The SAPARD program (Special Accession Program for Agriculture and Rural Development) – intended to support the accession preparations of Central and Eastern European countries
Funds allocated to România by the EU in the post-accession period, 2007-2013

*Source:* compiled by the author

The inability to manage investments from European funds has been a problem since 2007, during the years 2007-2013 România lost 1.64 billion euros [24] from the allocated cohesion funds, a fact that determined the introduction of new criteria in addition to the GDP criterion, which are the basis of national allocations [39]: *general unemployment*. România registers a 20% youth unemployment rate. The European Union compensates the country's inability to provide support to young people by granting additional funds; *level of education*. Countries that face problems in the educational system and are below the European average level, receive additional financial support; *climate change*. To reduce the level of pollution, energy inefficient areas receive greater financial support for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as well as for energy efficiency; *receipt and the integration of migrants*. Countries receiving migrant populations receive increased funding for coverage additional expenses (Italy, Spain, Greece) [39].

The convergence report on the accession to the euro area [5], published by the European Commission, showed that România meets only the criterion related to public finances [39] out of 5 necessary criteria (criteria related to price stability, exchange rate and long-term interest

rates long [39], the convergence of national and European legislation), the current government being late with the respective measures, România previously fulfilling 3 criteria: public finances, inflation and long-term interest rate [39], when the record increase in inflation up to 5.2 % generated the increase in the price of bank loans, and determined the ranking of România in the last place in the EU [39]. At the same time, according to estimates, România is having a hard time completing the stages requested by the EU, that is why reducing the budget deficit is a priority [39].

There is a series of indicators that derive from a set of variables defined at the level of a territorial unit [1]. However, in România there are few studies regarding the construction of a measurement index of local, especially rural, economic development. The most famous studies are [22]: Human Development Index [1], [37]; Locality Development Index [191], [305]; Corruption Perception Index [1], [21] The composite indicator measuring the human/intellectual capital of a country (Bontis,N) [1] [35], etc.

The Local Human Development Index (LDI) or the Community Capital Index (IDC) was proposed by Sandu D. [29] based on the UN Human Development Index (HDI) methodology, used in the UNDP system [22]. HDI and HDI include indicators that measure education, economic performance and the health status of the population [22], the HDI containing in aggregate form the values of the indicators corresponding to the types of capital existing at the level of any community: human capital, health capital, vital capital and material capital [22]. The study on the socio-economic development potential [1], [22], of rural areas carried out by ASE, proposes a set of *indicators* , grouped according to 5 criteria: endogenous potential, physical-geographic characteristics, human capital, economic activities and technical-building equipment [22].

*Analysis of the diversification potential of economic activities at the commune level*, according to the ASE study, is based on 6 indicators and focuses on capturing existing trends in economic development in rural localities [1, p.17-18]:

- number of economic agents (SME, AF, PFA) per 1000 inhabitants - the indicator expresses, from a demographic perspective, the density of economic agents at the level of the UTA and aspects regarding the entrepreneurial base, the level of economic development and the way in which the local economy responds to the demand for consumption of the resident population;
- number of employees in IMM, PFA and AF per 1000 inhabitants - quantitatively reflects the ability of economic agents to provide jobs;
- the share of the employed population in the tertiary and secondary sectors (cumulative) in the total employed population expresses the ability to diversify economic activities and, implicitly, to obtain relatively high incomes;
- a weak representation of the industrial and service sectors can be associated with a low degree of independence in terms of providing the goods and services needed by the population;
- an economy in which diversification and consolidation trends have already been manifested is more attractive from the point of view of investors and has a higher potential for growth;
- number of accommodation units, shows the number of tourist reception structures and the degree of tourist attractiveness of the area, which together with the specific infrastructure and the tourist fund, make up the real tourist offer;
- the indicator has particular relevance for mountain communes or areas with high potential, where tourism is an important component of the local economy;
- number of arrivals, is a barometer of the intensity of tourist activities in the area;
- developed touristic localities are heavily transited, which is reflected in the number of arrivals in accommodation units;

- the share of agricultural holdings with sizes over 5 ha in total holdings - represents the segment of the middle class in Romanian agriculture, which, in general, does not generate income that can be potentially invested and does not represent interest as commercial partners. They are vulnerable to market pressures in the absence of means of production and financial resources, having little chance to capitalize and modernize, which conditions their stimulation through the PNDR.

According to the Atlas [28, p.241] in Neamț County in 2016, 8 villages, including 5 from the Alexandru Cel Bun administrative unit, 1 from Dumbrava Roșie and 2 from the city of Bicăz, were characterized by the highest LHDI index (distribution of localities according the type of human development in the county based on the Population and Housing Census, 2011, is presented in Tab. 1.3).

**Table 1.3. Distribution of rural localities (at village level) in Neamț County according to the type of local human development**

Type of local human development	Village (united SIRUTA)		Population	
	Number	%	Number	%
The smallest development	63	19.0	14798	4.5
Medium - low development	100	30.1	64804	19.8
Average development	100	30.1	143086	43.7
Medium-high development	61	18.4	92261	28.2
Comprehensive Development (LHDI)	8	2.4	12436	3.8
TOTAL	332	100	327385	100

Source: [28, p.241]

*Chapter 3 "Increasing the impact of European funds on rural development"*, reflects the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the impact of European funds on rural development, as well as the comparative analysis of Neamț County in România and Strășeni district in the Republic of Moldova applying the Eurobarometer methodology. Based on the results of the survey, common challenges with those of rural areas in the European Union were highlighted and problems specific to the rural area of Neamț County and Strășeni district were identified. At the same time, the important application value associated with the thesis is the record and evaluation model of the impact of European funds on the socio-economic development of rural areas, *based on the social accounting matrix method*. In this sense, the impact factors were identified, the vernacular analysis was approached and impact models and solutions were proposed for the efficiency of the management of European funds on rural development based on the Neamț County case study.

Based on the assumption that the rural areas of Neamț County in România or the Republic of Moldova, the Strășeni District being chosen for a comparative analysis, face a series of common challenges with those of rural areas in the European Union, from lower connectivity and lack of services to lower employment opportunities, and to identify the problems specific to the rural area of Neamț County, in the period July - October 2021 we conducted a survey according to the methodology used at the national level when preparing the Eurobarometer Flash 491 report "A long-term vision for rural areas " [10] developed based on the methodology of telephone interviews (fixed and mobile) UE27 - 25841 | RO - 1010 in the period 09.04 - 18.04.2021 for the General Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Development of the EC, which for 15 years aims to draw attention to the specific needs of rural areas in 27 EU member states in order to improve the coordination of policies affecting the areas rural areas and the quality of absorption of European funds.

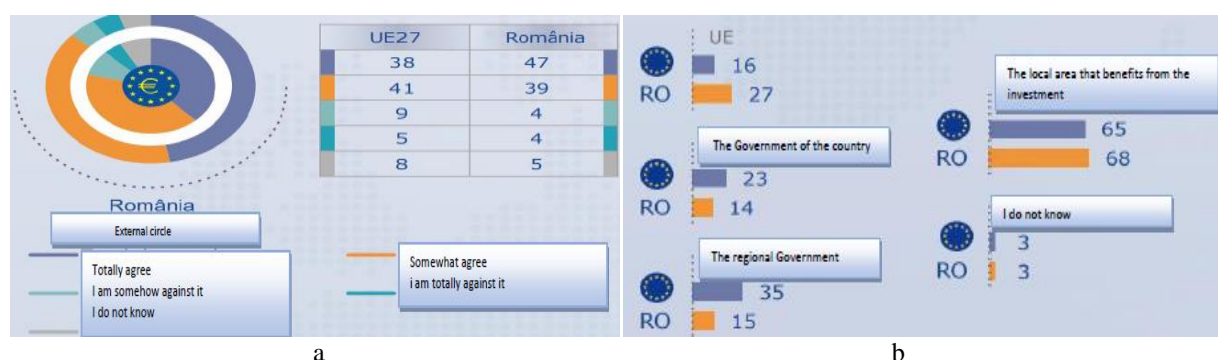
The survey included 7 questions and included 100 respondents from 57 rural localities and 26 villages in the Strășeni District of the Republic of Moldova. Table 1.4 shows the fields of the 6 themes of the survey and the formulation of the questions.

**Table 1.4. Thematic areas of the survey for the rural areas of Neamț County**

Rural settlements (municipalities) from Neamț County	Survey topic areas					
	1. Special attention given to rural areas in decisions regarding public spending	2. What is important for the development of rural areas?	3. Involvement in decisions affecting local areas	4. The consequences of the pandemic COVID-19	5. Raising awareness of the risks of climate change in rural areas	6. Raising awareness of EU actions aimed at addressing environmental issues
	Q1 When the EU takes decisions on public spending, the specific needs of rural areas are taken into account. Do you agree or oppose this EU action? (%)	Q3 When the EU invests in rural areas in România, in your opinion, who should decide how the investment money is spent? (%)	Q2 What specific needs of rural areas in România do you consider to require the most attention? (%)	Q9 To what extent do you agree that... (%)	Q6 After all current COVID-19 restrictions end, how likely are you to deploy the following activities compared to the period of before the pandemic? (%)	Q7 Which of the following, if any, is a problem in your local area/in the rural areas of the County. NEAMȚ? (%)
						Q8 Are you aware of EU actions aimed at addressing these environmental issues in your local areas/rural areas of the Jud. NEAMȚ? (%)

Source: developed by the author based on the Flash Eurobarometer methodology EU27 - 25841|RO – 1010, [10]

According to the Eurobarometer report [10], 79% of EU respondents support the EU taking into account rural areas in EU public spending (Fig.1.2a), the decision-maker regarding investment spending being considered the local area that benefits from the investment (Fig.1.2b) - 68% Romanians, 67% Bulgarians, 85% Poles, 20% Hungarians, 63% Croatians. Although support is expressed by the majority of respondents in all Member States, there is a wide variation in the proportion "strongly supporting" this practice.



**Figure 1.2. Flash Eurobarometer 491 "A long-term vision for rural areas", 2021, [10]**

The results of the survey in rural Neamț county show that approximately 92% of respondents (in the Republic of Moldova, respectively 80%), compared to 86% at the country level and 79% at the EU level, express their agreement regarding the spending for rural areas from the European public budget (Tab. 1.5.).

**Table 1.5. Survey results, Neamț County, România and Strășeni District, Republic of Moldova, question Q1**

Q1 When the European Union makes decisions on public spending, the specific needs of rural areas are taken into account. Do you agree or oppose this EU action? (%)					
N ro=5700 N md = 2600	Q1R1 Totally agree	Q1R2 Somewhat agree	Q1R3 I am somewhat opposed	Q1R4 I object total	Q1R5 I do not know



		NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI	NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI	NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI	NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI	NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI
Total, pers.		5 032	1950	221	130	47	26	51	26	349	468
%		88.28	75	3.88	5	0.82	1	0.89	1	6.12	18

Source: Developed by the author based on the Eurobarometer Flash UE27 methodology - 25841 | RO – 1010, [10], [36]

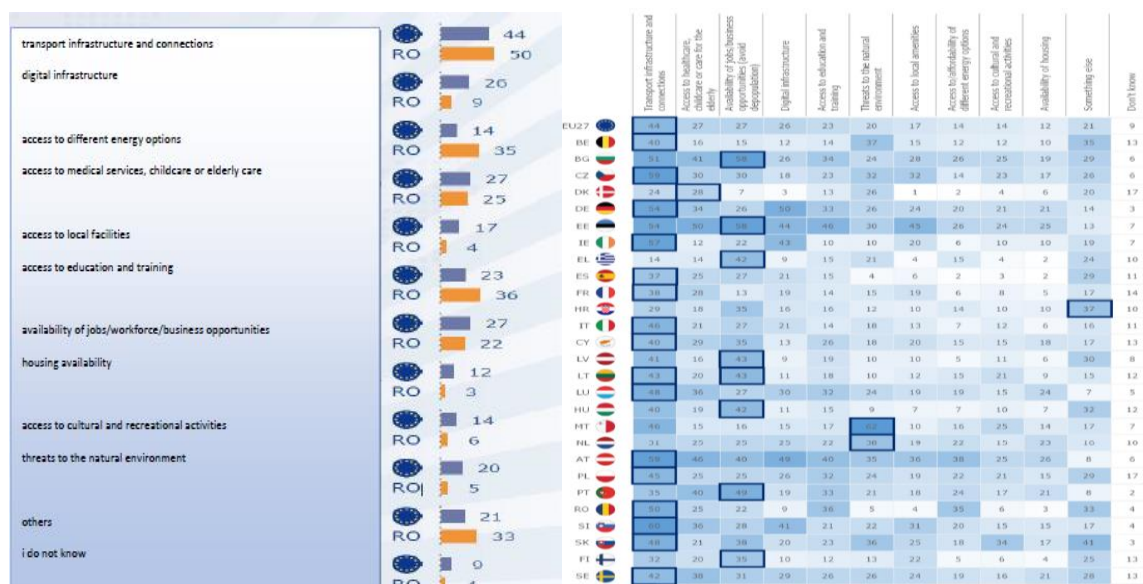
When asked about the decision-maker of the expenses, approximately 82% of the respondents from Neamț county compared to 68% at the country level and 65% - EU (in the Republic of Moldova, respectively 70%), claimed that the rural area should decide the beneficiary of European funds ( Table 1.6).

**Table 1.6. Survey results, Neamț County, România and Strășeni District, Republic of Moldova, question Q3**

<b>Q3 When the EU invests in rural areas in România, in your opinion, who should decide how the investment money is spent? (%)</b>										
N ro = 5700 N md = 2600	Q3R1 eu		Q3R2 The country's government		Q3R3 Regional government		Q3R4 The local area benefiting from the investment		Q3R5 I do not know	
	NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI	NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI	NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI	NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI	NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI
Total, pers.	344	208	156	52	304	260	4662	1820	234	260
%	6.03	8	2.74	2	5.33	10	81.79	70	4.11	10

Source: Developed by the author based on the Flash Eurobarometer methodology UE27 - 25841 | RO – 1010, [10], [36]

The key need of rural areas mentioned most frequently by 44% of respondents from 16 Member States is transport infrastructure and connections (Fig.1.3.), for example, 51% Romanians, 50% Bulgarians, 45% Poles, 40% Hungarians, 29% Croats, between 52% and 59% of respondents answer that it is difficult or impossible to travel by public transport in their local area.



**Figure 1.3. Eurobarometer Flash 491 "A long-term vision for rural areas", 2021 ( Base: those who support the EU, considering rural areas in public spending decisions, n=20,942).**

Source: [10]



At the level of Neamț county, the problem of rural transport was mentioned by 13.5% of respondents, access to energy - approximately 12%, local facilities - 10%, special facilities for children and the elderly - 9%, education, including professional - 9%, availability of places of work and business opportunities - approximately 12%, environmental problems - 5% (Tab. 1.7.), in the Republic of Moldova, respectively 11%, 10%, 9%, 10%, 11% and 6%.

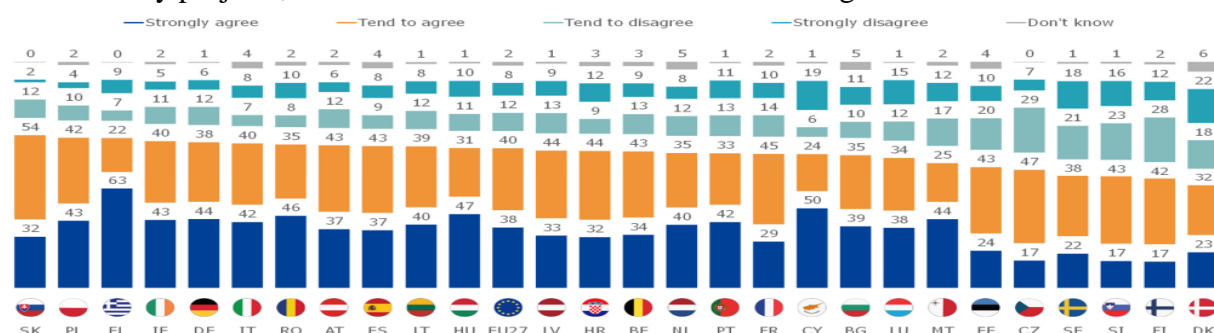
**Table 1.7. Survey results, Neamț County, România and Strășeni District, Republic of Moldova, question Q2**

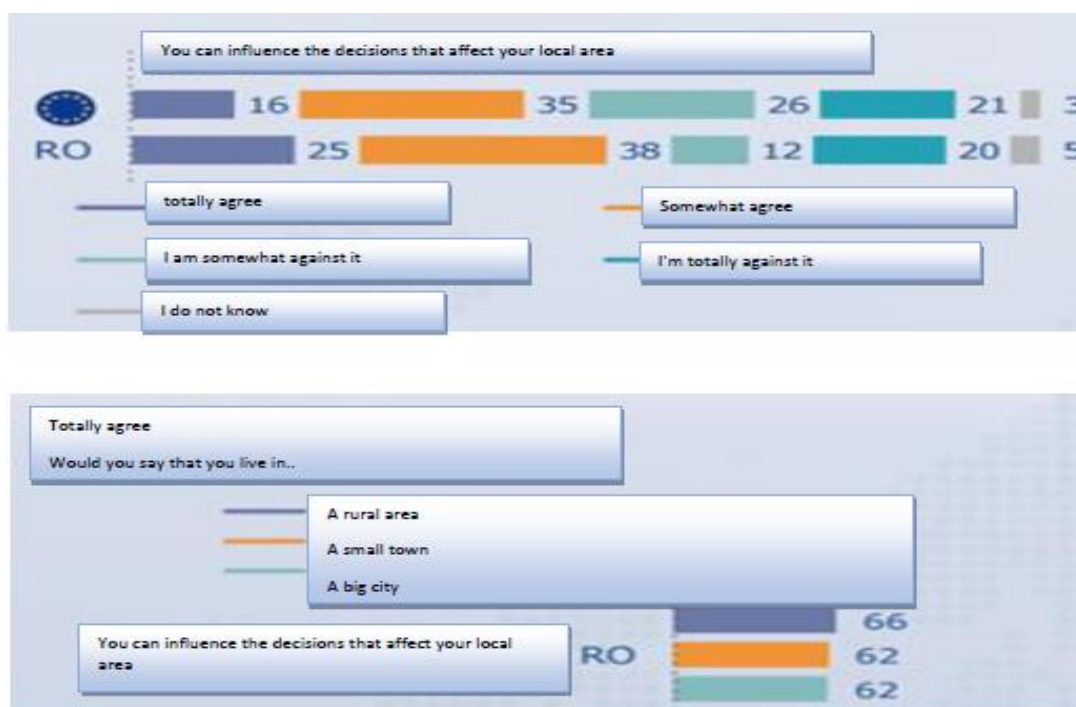
Q2 What specific needs of rural areas do you think require the most attention in EU public spending decisions? (%)												
N ro=5700 N md = 2600	Q2R1 Transport infrastructure and links (eg between urban areas and other towns/villages )	Q2R2 Digital infrastructure (band internet access wide)	Q2R3 Access to/cost of different energy options (gas, electricity , etc.)	Q2R4 Access to services medical, childcar e or elderly care	Q2R5 Access to facilities local, such as shops, post offices, pharmacies, libraries	Q2R6 Access to education and training	Q2R7 Availability of jobs/labour/business opportunities to prevent depopulation	Q2R8 Housing availability	Q2R9 Access to cultural activities and recreation of	Q2R10 Threat the environment natural	Q2R11 Other	Q2R12 I do not know
Total, pers.												
NEAMȚ	770	649	664	534	584	515	665	604	371	301	18	15
STRĂȘENI	286	312	286	234	260	260	286	260	208	156	26	26
%												
NEAMȚ	13.5	11.39	11.65	9.37	10.24	9.03	11.67	10.6	6.51	5.28	0.32	0.26
STRĂȘENI	11	12	11	9	10	10	11	10	8	6	1	1

Source: Developed by the author based on the Eurobarometer methodology  
Flash EU27 - 25841 | RO – 1010, [10], [36]

In rural areas, respondents would like to see more local bus services (56-57%), intercity bus services are most frequently mentioned by respondents in villages and remote rural areas (40%). Digital infrastructure as a problem is considered by 9% Romanians (12% of respondents from rural Neamț), 26% Bulgarians and Poles, 11% Hungarians, 16% Croatians, [10] all other needs being mentioned by a considerably smaller number of respondents.

Regarding involvement in decisions affecting local areas, 63% of Romanian respondents, including 66% from rural areas (33% Bulgarians, 47% Poles, 57% Hungarians, 63% Croatians) were more decided compared to 51% EU ( Fig. 1.4.). EU citizens are divided when asked whether they can influence decisions affecting their local area, with 51% agreeing and 47% disagreeing, 78% of respondents would like to be more involved in decisions affecting their local area, with the highest levels of agreement seen in Slovakia (86%), Greece and Poland (both 85%). 63% of respondents say they would like to get more involved by participating in citizen consultations, 56% would attend meetings or events organized in their local area or get involved in community projects, 42% would like to be more involved through social networks.





**Figure 1.4. Eurobarometer Flash 491 survey**  
**" A long-term vision for rural areas", 2021 (Base: all respondents n=25,841)**  
*Source:* Developed by the author based on the Eurobarometer methodology  
Flash EU27 - 25841 | RO – 1010, [10]

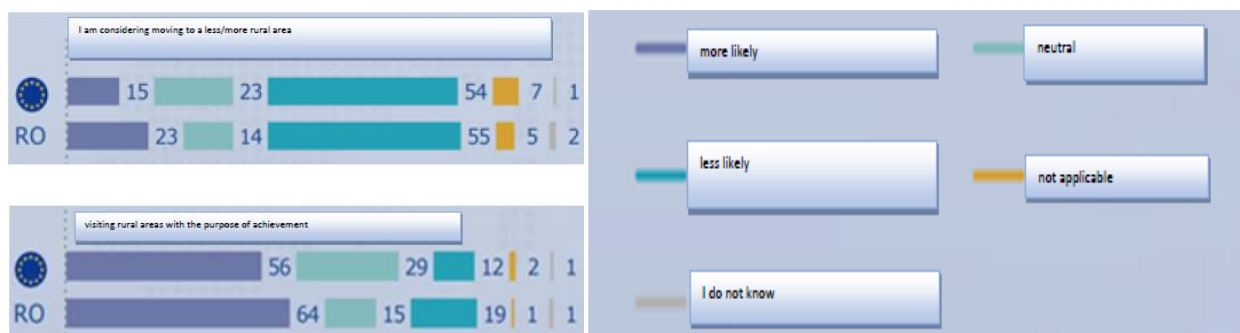
Only 7.6% of the rural respondents from Neamț would like to believe that they could influence the decisions affecting the rural area where they live (Tab. 1.8 ), but the majority (82%) are not convinced that they could have any influence ( in the Republic of Moldova, respectively 80%).

**Table 1.8. Survey results, Neamț County, România and Strășeni District, Republic of Moldova, question Q9**

<b>Q9 To what extent do you agree that you can influence decisions affecting the rural area?(%)</b>								
N ro=5700 N md = 2600	Q9R1 Totally agree		Q9R2 I tend to agree agree		Q9R3 I tend to disagree		Q9R5 I do not know	
	NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI	NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI	NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI	NEAMȚ	STRĂȘENI
Total, pers.	230	260	431	260	4679	2080	360	260
%	4.03	10	7.56	10	82.09	80	6.32	10

*Source:* Developed by the author based on the Eurobarometer methodology  
Flash EU27 - 25841 | RO – 1010, [10], [36]

Regarding the consequences of the pandemic, 1/3 of respondents say that after the end of restrictions they will be much more likely to visit rural areas for leisure, and about 1/12, compared to before the pandemic, are likely to consider moving in a more rural area (for urban residents) or in a less rural area (for rural residents) (Fig.1.5) [10]. Moving to a rural area is admitted with a high probability by 23% of Romanian respondents, 22% - Bulgarians, 14% - Poles, 12% - Hungarians, 14% - Croatians).



**Figure 1.5. Eurobarometer Flash 491 survey  
"A long-term vision for rural areas", 2021**

*Source:* Developed by the author based on the Eurobarometer methodology  
Flash EU27 - 25841 | RO – 1010, [10]

The survey data show that only 4% of respondents from rural Neamț and 5% from Strășeni (Tab.1.9) consider the possible move to a more rural area, this presupposes the change of residence to an area even more rural than where they live at the moment of the survey, most of the answers mentioning the new opportunities to get to know better different rural areas of the country with the purpose of relaxation (88% and 80% respectively Neamț and Strășeni).

**Table 1.9. Survey results, Neamț County, România and Strășeni District, Republic of Moldova, question Q6**

Q6 After all current COVID-19 restrictions end, how likely are you to do the following activities compared to pre-pandemic? (%)										
No = 5700 Nmd=2600	Q6R1 I am considering moving to a less/more rural area					Q6R2 Visiting rural areas for the purpose of relaxation				
	Q6R11 More likely	Q6R12 Neutral	Q6R13 May unlikely	Q6R14 Not applicable	Q6R15 I do not know	Q6R21 More likely	Q6R22 Neutral	Q6R23 May unlikely	Q6R24 Not applicable	Q6R25 I do not know
Total, pers.										
NEAMȚ	231	344	4662	159	304	5032	47	51	350	220
STRĂȘENI	130	130	2080	1301	30	2080	26	26	260	208
%										
	4.05	6.04	81.79	2.79	5.33	88.28	0.82	0.90	6.14	3.86
STRĂȘENI	5	5	80	5	5	80	1	1	10	8

*Source:* Developed by the author based on the Eurobarometer methodology  
Flash EU27 - 25841 | RO – 1010, [10] , [36]

In terms of environmental issues, 65% of EU citizens responding answer that an immediate problem for rural areas in their country is rising temperatures and extreme weather conditions, as well as the destruction of natural habitats, the loss of animals or plant species, or they do not present a problem too high, or no problem for less than 20% of respondents. 52% of respondents believe that there is an immediate and urgent problem with dependence on fossil fuels rather than cleaner forms of energy.

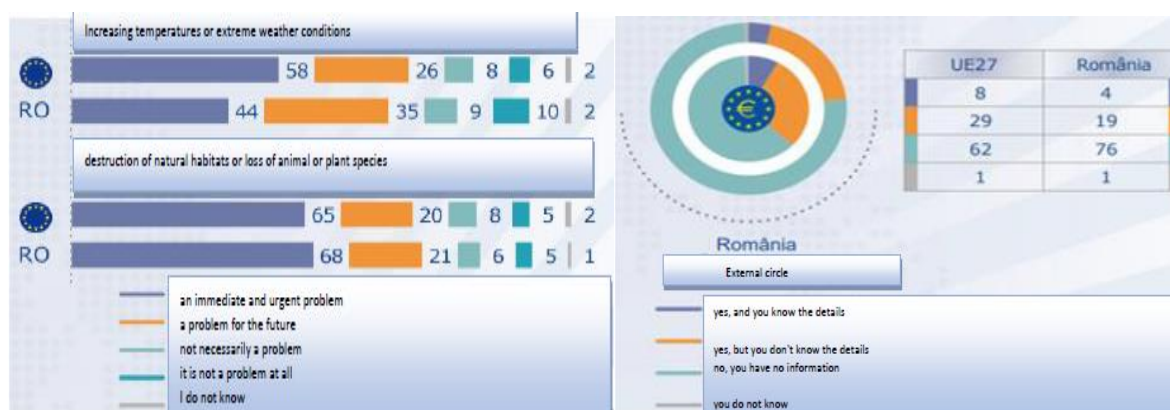
Respondents from the rural areas of Neamț county *do not consider that there is any problem related to the increase in temperatures or the intensity of extreme weather phenomena* (88%, 15% - Strășeni), as well as the problem of the destruction of natural habitats (82% Neamț, 0% Strășeni), at the same time recognizing the existence of threats to the natural environment (5% each for both areas) and moving the solution of these problems to the future in the answers (Tab.1.10), in the Republic of Moldova, respectively 5%.

**Table 1.10. Survey results, Neamț County, România and Strășeni District, Republic of Moldova, question Q7**

Q7 Which of the following, if any, is a problem in your local area/in rural areas of România? (%)										
N ro=5700 N md=2600	Q7R1 Rising temperatures or extreme weather conditions					Q7R2 Destruction of natural habitats or loss of animal or plant species				
	Q7R11 An immediate and urgent problem	Q7R12 Rather, a problem for the future	Q7R13 No definitely a problem	Q7R14 No not a problem at all	Q7R15 No know	Q7R21 An immediate and urgent problem	Q7R22 Rather, a problem for the future	Q7R23 Not necessarily a problem	Q7R24 No not a problem at all	Q7R25 I do not know
Total, pers.										
NEAMȚ	47	51	220	5032	350	159	304	4662	231	344
STRĂȘENI	2080	130	0	390	0	2080	130	0	390	0
%										
NEAMȚ	0.82	0.90	3.86	88.28	6.14	2.79	5.33	81.79	4.05	6.03
STRĂȘENI	80	5	0	15	0	80	5	0	15	0

*Source:* Developed by the author based on the Eurobarometer methodology  
Flash EU27 - 25841 | RO – 1010, [10], [36]

At the same time, only 19% of respondents (32% - Bulgaria, 9% - Hungary, 8% - Croatia) know about EU actions aimed at addressing environmental problems in their local areas (rural areas) in România, less than the number respondents from the EU (29%), and 76% of Romanian respondents, 14 pp more than the EU average (64% Bulgarians, 38% Poles, 60% Hungarians, 65% Croatians) are not informed about these environmental actions [10] .



**Figure 1.6. Eurobarometer Flash 491 survey  
" A long-term vision for rural areas", 2021**

*Source:* Developed by the author based on the Eurobarometer methodology  
Flash EU27 - 25841 | RO – 1010, [10]

The survey shows that 82% (10% - Strășeni) of the respondents from Neamț have no information about EU actions in the field of environment, approx. 7% (25% - Strășeni) are informed, but do not know the details of the actions, and still about the same (6 % and 10% respectively) are not interested in environmental issues (Tab.1.11).

**Table 1.11. Survey results, Neamț County, România and Strășeni District, Republic of Moldova, question Q8**

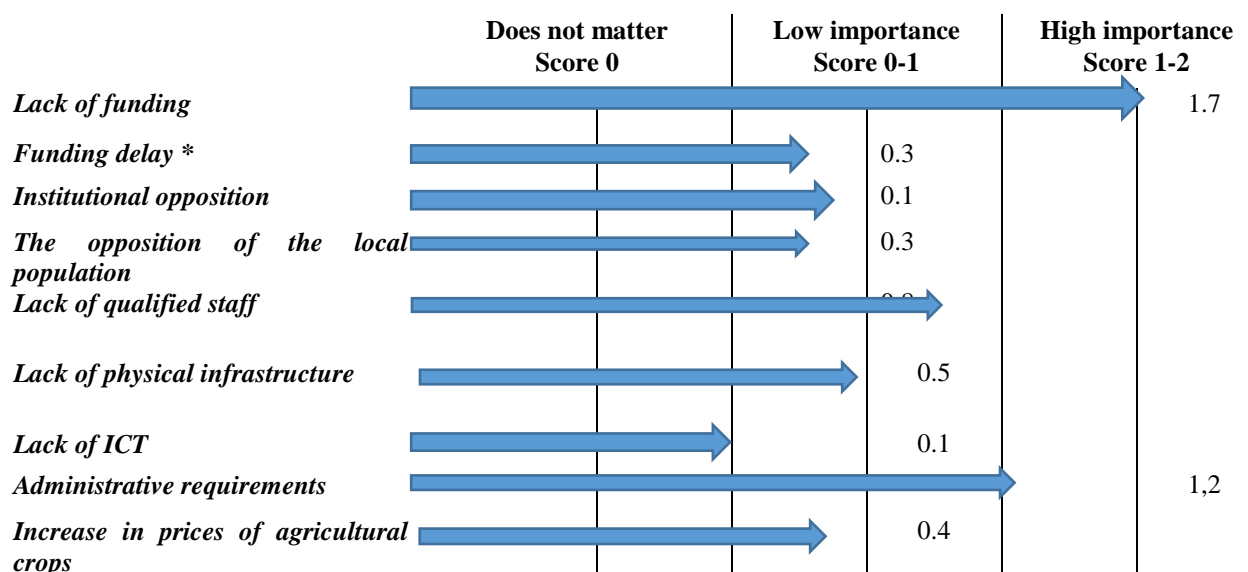
Q8 Are you aware of any EU actions to address these environmental issues in rural areas? (%)				
N ro=5700 N md =	Q8R1 Yes, and I know the details	Q8R2 Yes, but I don't know the details	Q8R3 No, I have no information about such actions	Q8R4 I do not know

2600	NEAM Ț	STRĂȘEN I	NEAM Ț	STRĂȘEN I	NEAM Ț	STRĂȘEN I	NEAM Ț	STRĂȘEN I
Total, pers.	230	1430	431	650	4679	260	360	260
%	4.03	55	7.56	25	82.09	10	6.32	10

Source: Developed by the author based on the Eurobarometer Flash UE27 methodology - 25841 | RO – 1010,[10], [36].

Thus, the study confirmed that the rural areas of Neamț County in România and those of Strășeni District in the Republic of Moldova face a series of common challenges with those of rural areas in the EU, from lower connectivity and lack of services to opportunities less employment, however, demonstrating some particularities in terms of the perception of European programs for rural development, especially the agreement on spending for rural areas from the European public budget, the beneficiary of European funds as the decision-maker of spending, involvement in decisions that affect local areas, influencing decisions what affects the rural area where they live or the lack of information about EU actions in the field of the environment at the local level.

In the study of the impact of funds on rural development [19, p.274], we aimed to identify the key factors that facilitate the success of projects in rural areas at the stages of project development, noting that rural projects face general difficulties such as, for example , in their initial stages, bureaucratic issues, difficulty in finding qualified staff at the levels required for implementation, including for specific technical functions and general management and administration tasks, delay in funding, widespread mistrust among local communities, sometimes opposition from certain actors, in particular, the local administration, and specific difficulties, related to the site features of the projects in the process of realization, the solution of which requires certain expertise (Fig. 1.7).



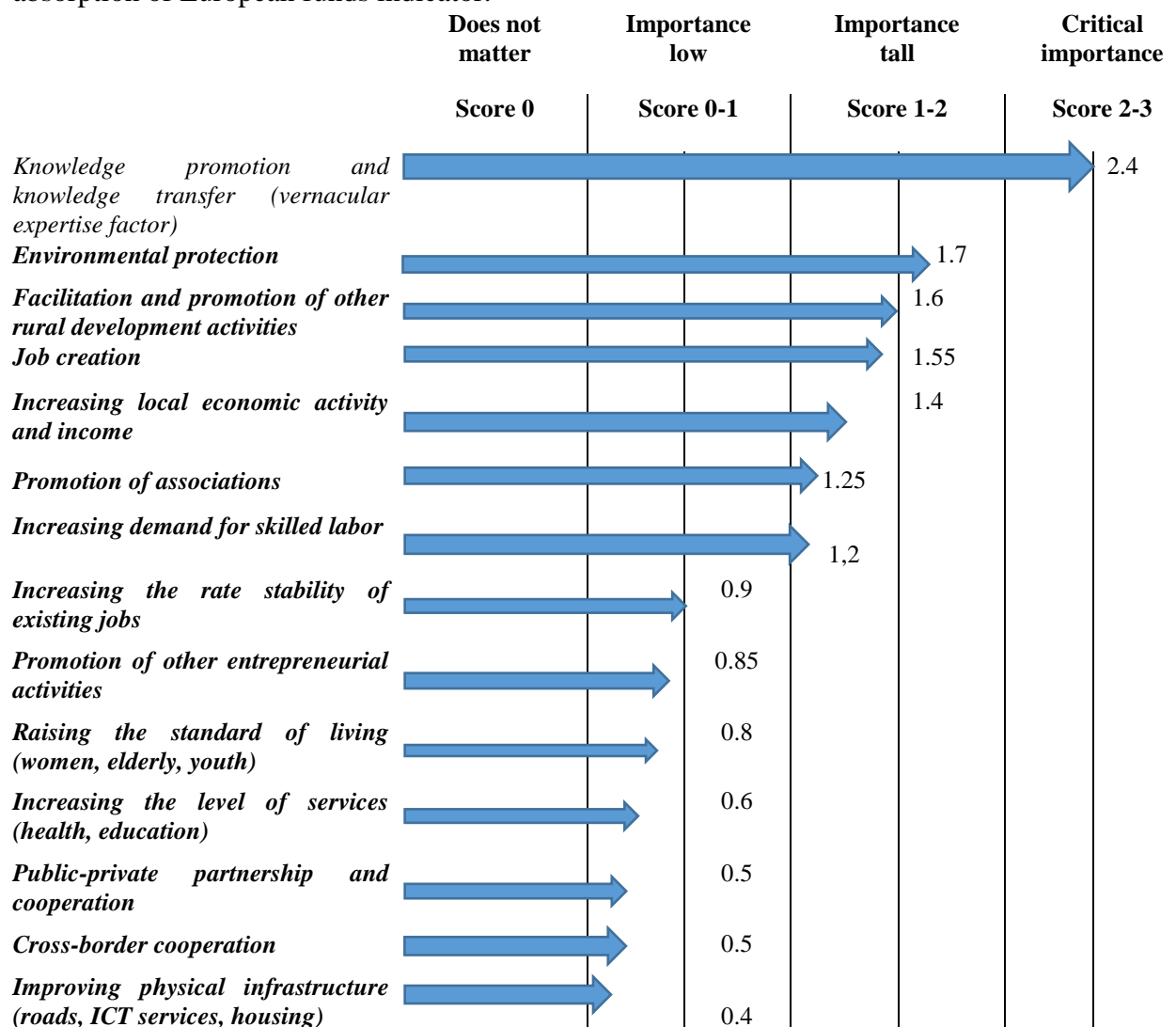
\* The water-sewerage project with approx. 325,000 beneficiaries, with a value of over 250 million euros out of a total of 80 million. Euros allocated to România in 2020.

**Figure 1.7. The main difficulties faced by rural projects  
(frequency of cases, %)**

Source: Developed by the author based on the survey for the Neamț case study

The results of the survey show (Fig.1.8), that one of the keys to intervene and a tool increasingly used in development narratives is considered socially distributed expertise, understood more and more as an idea of democratization of knowledge, when the Internet has the ability to enormously expand the potential of the production and consumption of information and knowledge by sharing knowledge within partnerships in the process of implementing programs,

in particular, of rural development from funds accessed by UATs or the private environment, which requires a lot of involvement more active, with Neamț county being in a low place in the absorption of European funds indicator.



**Figure 1.8. Impact factors in the implementation of projects financed by European funds**

Source: Developed by the author based on the survey for the Neamț case study [8]

In order to better understand the causes of the discrepancies between the concepts of European programs for financing investments in rural areas and the level of their realization at the local level, especially the low level of capitalization of funds through local projects, it is important to examine the changing relationship between scientific, professional and non-professional expertise in rural development, covering a wide spectrum of programming-planning processes, implementation mechanisms and rural development models.

For this we propose the use of a new *concept of vernacular expertise*, introduced in the scientific circuit by P. Lowe in 2019 [15], but which in România has not spread widely in practice, a concept that is the basis of neo-endogenous development models and which addresses the expertise that the people of a certain place have and develop, which must be understood not only as a local experience and knowledge (local knowledge) [26] accumulated about the place, but also essentially fed by sources and external agents, and as a result, which can be better recognized and improved in development processes and policy agendas [30]. In particular, the interaction between scientific, professional and non-professional expertise in the field of rural development must be examined, rural development being a case that offers the opportunity to



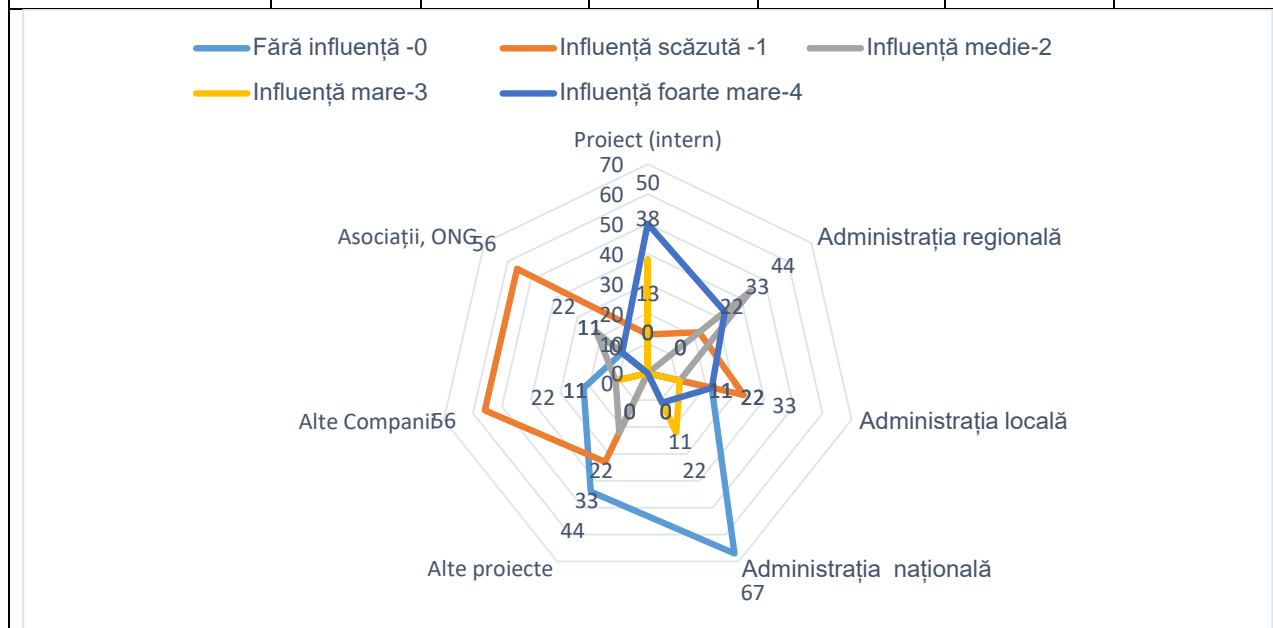
conceptualize expertise due to the variety of well-documented, sometimes experimental management models and knowledge exchange [11].

Based on the fact that the implementation of projects requires a relatively large relational network, we further analyzed the influence that different actors had on the design and implementation of projects within the networks with the participation of actors who have an active role in the managerial structure of the projects.

The analysis showed that: (1) for many interviewees, the major actors are those who participate in one or more of the project stages (internal actors); (2) the significance of the role of internal actors (project partners) is assessed as high and very high; (3) the intervention of public actors is particularly significant, especially in relation to promotion and financing policies, regional governments are perceived as the most influential external actors, and the role of other external actors, for example, collective associations, private companies, is much less significant for the realization of projects; (4) the role of regional governments (as external actors) is generally average; (5) in some cases the relationship with the project managers is valued as very important; (6) the influence of local authorities varies considerably, depending on the case, but for the majority of the interviewees it is valued from moderate to very significant; (7) for most projects, the national government has little influence; (8) non-public actors do not have significant influences on projects, thus, projects depend primarily on the network of internal actors, including partners on which the project's operations are based, external dependencies being mostly directed to public actors from due to administrative ties, public financing and other public policies supporting projects (Tab.1.11).

**Table 1.11. Perception of actors' influence on projects**

	Average influence	Frequency by level of influence, %				
		No influence -0	Low Influence -1	Medium influence-2	High influence-3	Very high influence-4
Project (internal)	3.3	0	13	0	38	50
Regional administration	2.4	0	22	44	0	33
Local administration	1.8	22	33	11	11	22
National administration	1.1	67	0	0	22	11
Other projects	0.8	44	33	22	0	0
Other Companies	1.1	22	56	11	11	0
Associations, NGOs	1.4	11	56	22	0	11



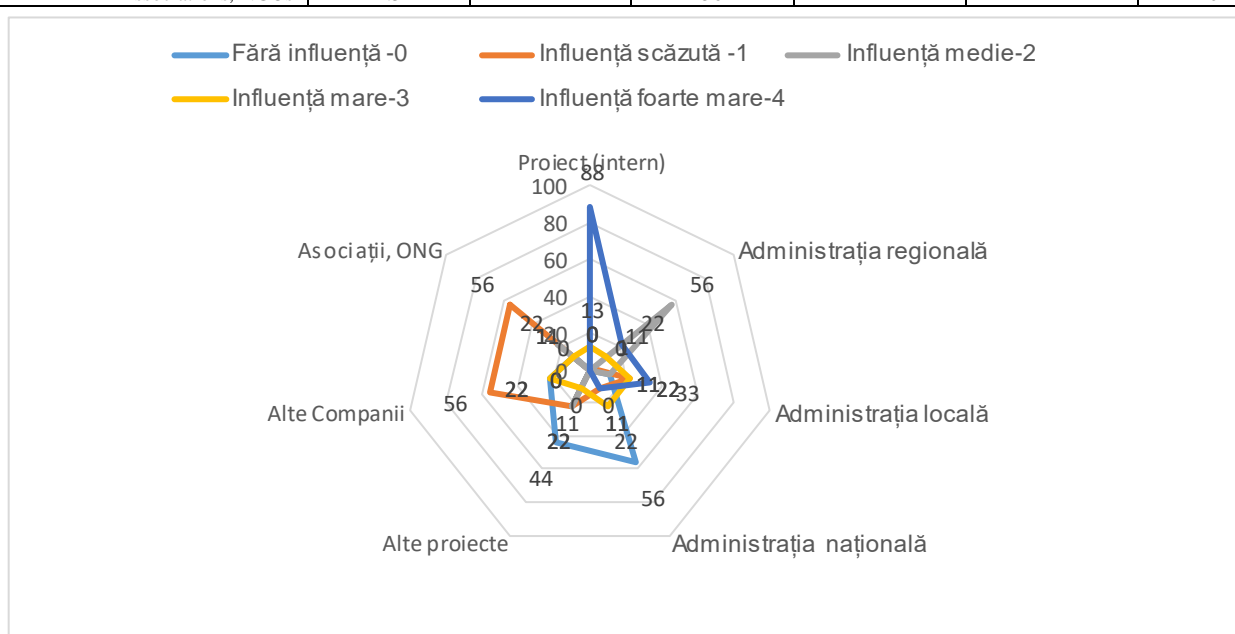
Source: Developed based on case study investigation

For projects at the local or regional level, the strong effort to ensure self-sustainability is specific, along with the need for external support, predominantly public. The analysis of the role of the actors in the promotion and implementation of the initiatives shows that their presence varies according to the project development stage, noting that once the projects are developed and consolidated, they tend to offer external services that contribute to their sustainability, especially for enterprises with services oriented to the private sector, for example, trading in agricultural products, and enterprises operating on the basis of public-private partnerships, for example, energy management advisory services. Because the relationships between actors and projects also have the opposite direction, we analyzed the impact of projects on actors and stakeholders, assuming that the achievement of the project's objectives has a positive impact on the actors directly involved and strong multiplier effects on other "external" actors.

The results of the analysis show that: (1) *the most significant impact is on the local and internal actors directly involved in the project*; (2) *there is an initial network of actors through which relationships of mutual influence are very strong*; (3) *the impact-benefit perception for external actors is as high as for public actors in the network of secondary actors (regional and local governments)*; (4) *some projects have a "return", understood as a high, including political, profit for public actors and other actors involved*; (5) *there is a third group of external actors with less intense connections and less influence, which refers to collective associations and NGOs, other projects with which intense relations are maintained or private companies with which commercial transactions are negotiated* ( Table 1.12).

**Table 1.12. Perception of the influence of projects on actors**

	Medium influence	Frequency by level of influence, %				
		No influence - 0	Low Influence -1	Medium influence-2	High influence-3	Very high influence-4
Project (internal)	3.9	0	0	0	13	88
Regional administration	2.4	0	1	56	11	22
Local administration	12.4	11	22	11	22	33
National administration	1.2	56	11	0	22	11
Other projects	1.0	44	22	22	11	0
Other Companies	1.2	22	56	0	22	0
Associations, NGOs	1.3	11	56	22	11	0



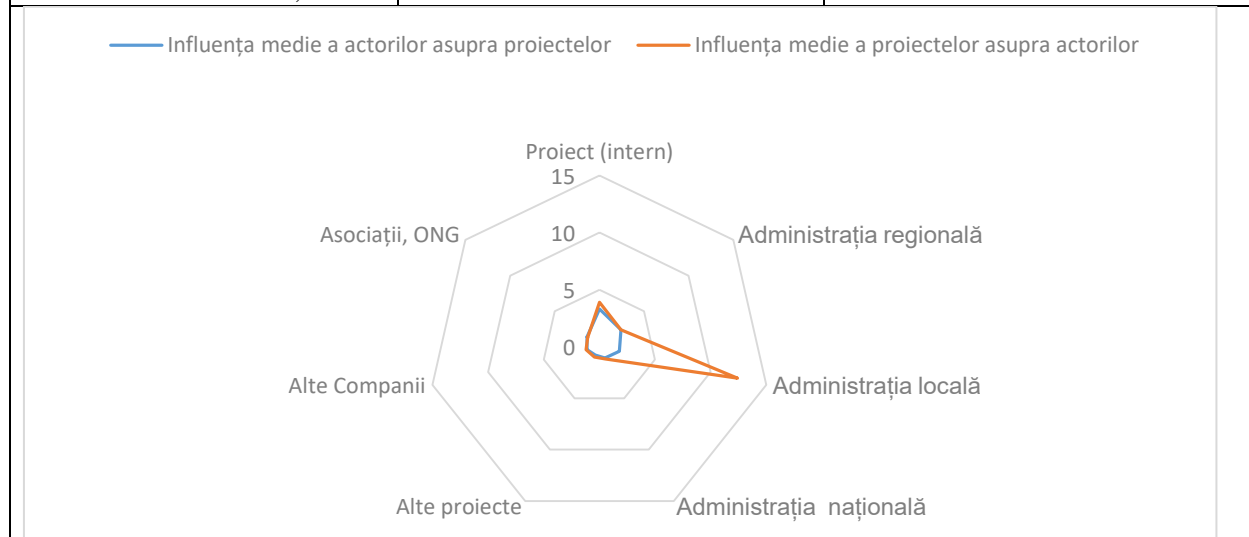
Source: Developed based on case study investigation

We note that the impact or benefits of the projects on the actors are appreciated and perceived more than the reverse - the impact of the actors on the projects (Tab.1.13).



**Table 1.13. The average influence of the projects-actors relationship**

	Actors' average influence on projects	Average influence of projects on actors
Project (internal)	3.3	3.9
Regional administration	2.4	2.4
Local administration	1.8	12.4
National administration	1.1	1,2
Other projects	0.8	1.0
Other Companies	1.1	1,2
Associations, NGOs	1.4	1.3



Source: Developed based on the investigation in the Neamț case study

For the empirical analysis of vernacular expertise, we analyzed the sources of knowledge of actors, who use vernacular expertise in their project realization activity, and professional experts, who develop, test and disseminate vernacular expertise in the consultation process of project realization, by interviewing 65 people (Tab.1.14) for 6 days regarding the perception of the expertise of rural practitioners.

**Table 1.14. Interviews**

Areas of expertise	Agriculture	Ecological agriculture	Trade in agricultural products	Rural tourism	agri tourism	science environmental	Regenerative energy Rabil	Financial management	Rural business	Logistics
expert	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Beneficiaries of funded projects	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x

Source: Author's data from case study interviews [14], [15]

The interview data show that vernacular expertise has a hybrid essence, it is a combination of knowledge, generated by the concrete field of the project, experiences, skills and local and extra-local knowledge, adapted to the context and specific objectives of the project, and the strengthening of the actors' expertise is more effective in their perception by co-producing knowledge, creating networks for the exchange of expertise and equipping local actors with methods and tools to use to develop and apply their own expertise, and at the same time, to

manage specialist -non-specialist/expert-non-expert communication skills as a two-way, trust-based exchange process within the project .

In recent years, several studies have been developed that analyze the impact of public intervention on economies using input-output techniques, where public intervention is considered exogenous within an input-output model and its impact on real variables and prices is verified. The evaluation models of the impact of European funding on territories, in particular, rural areas, used up to now both in the ex-ante and ex-post evaluation phase have presented significant limitations due to either the excessive generality of the results or a excessive cost of the evaluation system, or the excessive use of evaluation methodologies based on quantitative models that are not very suitable to the counterfactual approach imposed by the recent European indications.

The use of the matrix method as a model for determining the impact of public interventions does not differ from this fundamental and typical approach of input-output analysis, although it sometimes allows to "endogenize" part of the financial intervention activity. The resulting advantages, compared to the traditional use of the simple cross-sectional table, are threefold: the first advantage emphasizes a greater internal consistency of the model than the traditional input-output scheme, the second and third highlight the greater complexity of the model in terms of instruments considered and evaluated effects [9]:

- 1) the model can be closed in the endogenous part with greater precision in terms of income distribution, which derives from the inclusion of relationships that allow the connection functional distribution - sectoral distribution or primary distribution - final distribution, while a model based only on the cross-sectoral table has a the only relationship between domestic consumption and GDP of the territory or some of its components, by which the transition from domestic income to national income can be achieved, distributed among the various institutional sectors that then use them to make consumption investments, real or financial;
- 2) the model makes it possible to analyze the effects of rural policies by placing on the output side, next to the usual bearer of the public share both in the current account and in the capital account, the transfer carrier and identifying the impact on the rural economy, on the public debt, so that vectors of current account and capital transfers "from" and "to" be the beneficiaries of funding (in particular, PA, NGO, SME), thus allowing the specific consideration of all interventions and benefits, which previously they were excluded from the input-output approach;
- 3) the type of results offered by the model are attributable to a vector composed of four blocks: the first refers to the activation of internal production, the second refers to the creation and distribution to the factors of GDP, the third to the sectoral distribution of total incomes transiting within the system economic in question, and the fourth - to the impulses "broadcast" in the rest.

**We propose a model for recording and evaluating the impact of European funds on the socio-economic development of rural areas, based on the social accounting matrix method**, which, under certain assumptions, can be used as a general economic balance model, as well as a prerequisite for impact analysis financial intervention in the implementation of policies.

The matrix is structured in such a way that it is divided into two parts, one defined as endogenous and the other exogenous, when the level of production and income depend, on the one hand, on the impulses induced by the exogenous part, and, on the other hand, on the characteristics "structural" of the endogenous part (3.1 and 3.2).

The endogenous part  $X_n = A_n X_n + Y_n \rightarrow X_n = (I - A_n)^{-1} \cdot Y_n$

The exogenous part  $X_l = A_l X_n + Y_n \rightarrow X_l = A_l \cdot (I - A_n)^{-1} \cdot Y_n$

This construction of the matrix is based on the input-output (or resources-uses) technique, developed in the economic literature. The model allows the integration of economic indicators

with demographic and social statistics, depending on the goals and the possibility of obtaining related information. The new approach from the theory of economic growth (New Growth Theory) considers that progress is generated endogenously through development activities, GDP being the most appropriate measure of economic development at county level (NUTS3 level), and investments from European funds reflected in the foreign direct investment indicator being the best information available at the county level, representing the endogenous variables (Tab.1.15).

**Table 1.15. Model variables**

variables	Description
regional GDP	Gross Domestic Product at regional level, rural area (RON)
gdp	Gross Domestic Product at county level, rural area (RON)
Capital - K	Foreign direct investments at county level, rural area (RON)
Work - L	The population employed in the county economy, rural area (people)
Research and development - R	Research and development expenses of the county, rural area (RON)

*Source : [ 33 ]*

Within the proposed model, two aspects can be noted:

- in the balance sheet, the outputs that pass through the economic circuit are classified, using the information from the Intersectoral Economic Table, according to their sectoral origin (domains, branches), as well as territorial (urban-rural, by localities), the distribution of production and income being divided into 3 logical phases that make it up: from the functional distribution, i.e. to the primary factors of production and typical of the input-output table, the sectors owned by the factors, modified to take into account all the transfers that take place between sectors (Tab.1.16 and 1.17);
- factor incomes, i.e. functional distribution, and wage incomes are distinct because different policies operate on them.

**Table 1.16. Model 1 input-output table at county level**

The product	The field (sector) of economic activity				Total production at basic prices per product	Total resources at base prices	Output per product at purchase price
1							
2							
...							
m							
Total production per field at basic prices							

**Table 1.17. Model 2 input-output table at county level**

The field (sector) of economic activity	The field (sector) of economic activity				Total intermediate uses per branch	End uses at basic prices			Total uses
	1	2	...	m		Consumption	Fund investment	sale	
1									
2	cross-industry transactions					end uses			
...									
m									
Value added to base prices per branch	primary inputs								
Total output (production by domain at basic prices)	available resources								

*Source: Developed by the author based on [32]*

The assumptions of the model can be formulated as follows:

- all predicted relationships are linear: they are based on assumptions of fixed technical coefficients, idle production capacity and constant returns to scale, as well as average rather than marginal slopes;
- reports only allow comparative static analyses;
- prices are considered constant;
- there are problems of arbitrariness in the identification of exogenous versus endogenous elements and of sensitivity of the results.

Thus, the high degree of disaggregation makes possible analyzes capable of improving the understanding of economic phenomena in rural areas and providing clear indications for rural policies, oriented towards endogenous growth approaches, the theory of endogenous growth being understood as a self-sustaining phenomenon through the accumulation of important factors: physical, technological, human and public capital, when investments represent the fundamental determinant of economic growth, identified in neoclassical and growth models endogenous, with transitory impact or permanent effects respectively [33].

The standard model for assessing endogenous growth may take the form:

$$PIB_i = AK_i^\alpha L_i^\beta R_i^\delta,$$

where:

GDP represents output (Y),

$\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are the elasticities of production with respect to capital K and labor L ( $\alpha, \beta > 0$ ), A is constant, and R reflects endogenous progress.

The analysis of the data obtained using the given model, in the end, would allow the grouping of the rural localities in the county according to the index of the value of financing from European funds as the ratio between the value of the financing and the increase of the global product at the county (rural) level, determined by this financing. However, the application of the model requires transparency on the part of the Rural Project Management Authority in providing data on expenditure and resource use and maintaining a system of up-to-date and comprehensive cross-sectoral tables of the economy at the regional and local levels. Because currently these conditions are not ensured and the integral model is not applicable in practice, partial applications can be useful, even if they have no predictive value providing an additional view of the studied phenomenon.

Human capital plays an important role in the local-rural economy. At the matrix level, human capital is an endogenous indicator and is used to determine the level of development or explain economic growth. The increased interest in investing in human capital is also a concern of the OECD, for economic growth through projects specific to the educational field. In the end, those who benefit from the development of human capital are public and private society [40]. The technical infrastructure represents the support for the development of any activities undertaken by the inhabitants of the rural area. Due to the poor state of local roads, and because the measures focus on collaboration - communication - information transfer, between raw and finished materials - between locations located at variable distances, local administrations must be interested in its improvement. Policies in the field must be correlated with: policies regarding the environment, poverty alleviation, infrastructure, education and health, defense, etc., with those regarding the provision of basic services of general interest.

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## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the research carried out within the thesis, the established objectives were achieved that ensured the achievement of the proposed goal.

Carefully studying the theoretical aspects regarding rural development and the analysis of empirical data about the impact of European funds on the development of rural areas, we deduced that: *i*) the notion of rural development is insufficiently detailed or incomplete in the specialized literature, the concept of rural development, as well as other concepts related, based on various aspects of the rural space; *ii*) there are numerous classification typologies of rural areas depending on the state or classification bodies; *iii*) discussions on the nature of changes in rural economies and rural policy approaches have as their predominant topic the change from an approach focused on the agricultural sector to one focused on rural territories and more diversified economic activity; *iv*) rural areas play different roles in the national economy; *v*) theoretical discussions on the effects of support can be reduced to discussions on the effects generated by different levels and ceilings of support and the socio-economic efficiency of the costs of European programs to support investments in rural development, if it emerges from differences in the behavior of the beneficiaries of support financial, which are affected both before and after the support, the level of competitiveness of the UAT and the region, the support being intended to cover the costs related to different types of investments.

From the perspective of theoretical analysis, it can be stated that support programs have both positive and negative effects, but it is difficult to determine the aggregate effect of different levels of support. At the same time, empirical studies that explicitly study levels of support and their role in support effects are few and reflect highly conflicting effects of support.

With reference to the Territorial Development Strategy of România 2035, from the perspective of the evaluation activities that compare the achievements from certain moments of the implementation of the strategy with the previously drawn objectives, including the implementation of specific policies, it was concluded that the monitoring system includes 3 main components: ( *i* ) monitoring territorial dynamics, (*ii*) monitoring the degree of achievement of the measures, activities and projects established at the SDTR level, (*iii*) monitoring and evaluating the territorial impact of investment programs on components: a) monitoring national programs; b) monitoring of operational programs.

In the context of the objective of evaluating the impact of EU-funded projects, the practical aspect shows us that there is no universally accepted measure for evaluating rural development that reflects the multidimensional character of the state of the rural space, each evaluation method being used according to the purpose of the measurement , and the assessment of rural development going through a substantial process of definition and systematization, including strong standardization, during the different programming periods.

From the research results, we deduce that there are numerous studies that have addressed the tools and indicators related to rural development, but the data differ greatly depending on the level of development of the country and the region, which generates the possibility of using different indicators specific to the rural community.

The estimation of the impact of the European funds on the development of the rural area determined the following conclusions: (1) the most significant impact is on the local and internal actors directly involved in the project; (2) there is an initial network of actors through which relationships of mutual influence are very strong; (3) the impact-benefit perception for external

actors is as high as for public actors in the network of secondary actors (regional and local governments); (4) some projects have a yield, understood as a profit, including political, high for public actors and other actors involved; (5) there is a third group of external actors with less intense connections and less influence, which refers to collective associations and NGOs, other projects with which strong relationships are maintained or private companies with which commercial transactions are negotiated.

At the same time, the obtained results confirmed the hypothesis of the possibility of rural development by increasing the impact of European funds. This, in turn, implies the knowledge and awareness of the fact that both the rural areas of Neamț County in România and the Strășeni District in the Republic of Moldova face a series of common challenges with those of rural areas in the European Union, from connectivity lower and lack of services to less employment opportunities, however, demonstrating some particularities.

Thus, taking into account that rural projects face common challenges, such as: bureaucracy, delay in financing, widespread mistrust among local communities, difficulty in finding qualified personnel at the necessary levels of project implementation, lack of functional markets for land and local products from the mazăreant household, the excessive fragmentation of land, we concluded it necessary to examine and argue the changing relationship between scientific, professional and non-professional expertise in rural development, covering a wide spectrum of programming processes - planning, implementation mechanisms and models of rural development and would represent an effective way of solving them by applying a *new concept of vernacular expertise*.

At the same time, the obtained results emphasize and highlight the problems related to the implementation of rural development programs and the impact factors based on the measurement of perception for the case of Neamț County, which directly allowed the determination of the level of absorption of European funds at the level of rural areas. *The simulations and surveys carried out contributed to determining the impact of European funds on the socio-economic development of rural areas, based on the social accounting matrix method. From here derives the importance of applying impact factors and vernacular expertise in order to increase the impact of the management of the efficiency of European funds related to rural development.*

The results obtained confirm and demonstrate the possibility of increasing the impact of European funds on rural development, through the lens of impact factors and vernacular expertise, based on the Neamț County case study.

In this vein, the following **recommendations** associated with the effectiveness of European funds related to rural development are formulated:

- 1) *strengthening the capacities and responsibilities* of the actors involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of European funds, in order to strengthen the absorption capacity of the funds intended for rural areas;
- 2) *the continuous analysis of the specific impediments* of rural areas, through the global and renewed territorial perspective, which would generate mutual relations of development;
- 3) *the correlation of agricultural, food and rural policies* to the standards achieved in other more developed European countries;
- 4) *ensuring a permanent connection* between the rural and urban sectors, taking into account the fact that they complement each other;

- 5) *the choice of appropriate measures* for the pursuit of strategic priorities must be adopted by the program management authority and not upstream in the European Union guidelines or general regulations;
- 6) *improving interest in the technical infrastructure* that supports the development of any activities undertaken by the inhabitants of rural areas,
- 7) *territorial approach a the concept of competitiveness* , to combine production techniques, values, relations between rural enterprises and institutional actors, the image of the territory, culture and local heritage, which, in the end, allow agri-food competitiveness on the global market;
- 8) *implementation and use the vernacular expertise* in identifying the problems specific to each area of the rural space, which will allow the improvement of all rural development processes;
- 9) *the application* of indicators for local properties and indicators for rural communities to measure rural development, taking into account the fact that each area has its specific problems, which must be studied in detail;
- 10) *extensive use of the proposed model , based on social accounting matrix method* . The matrix is structured in such a way that it is divided into two parts, one defined as endogenous and the other exogenous, when the level of production and income depend, on the one hand, on the impulses induced by the exogenous part, and, on the other hand, on the characteristics "structural" of the endogenous part;
- 11) *continuing to identify management solutions for the evaluation process*, with an active involvement of actors to improve evaluation procedures and practices between evaluators and public administrations and increasing the impact of investments from European funds on the development of rural areas.

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**List of scientific works on the topic of the thesis**  
**"IMPACT OF EUROPEAN FUNDS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ROMÂNIA ",**  
**of Ms. Silvia MAZĂRE, Senior Advisor, Payments and Intervention Agency for**  
**Agriculture, Romanian Local Center, Neamț County, România**

**ware in scientific journals**

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1. **Silvia mazăre.** *Rural development evaluation measures.* In: World Science, Warsaw, Poland, 2022, No 5(77) . Magazine indexed in the international database DOAJ, Index Copernicus, Google Scholar, BASE, RePEc, OpenAIRE. Print ISBN: 2413-1032; e-ISSN 2414-6404.
2. **Silvia mazăre.** *Methodological Aspects In The Evaluation Of Romanian Rural Development .* In: International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Economy, International Scientific Journal, 2022, No 3(39), Poland . Magazine indexed in the international database DOAJ, Index Copernicus, Google Scholar, BASE, RePEc, OpenAIRE, EconPapers. Print p-ISSN: 2412-8368; e-ISSN: 2414-1305
3. **Silvia mazăre.** *European funds help Romanian agriculture .* In: World Science, Warsaw, Poland, 2020, N.9(61), pp.93-96. Magazine indexed in the international database DOAJ, Index Copernicus, Google Scholar, BASE, RePEc, OpenAIRE. Print ISBN: 2413-1032; e-ISSN 2414-6404.

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4. **Silvia mazăre.** *European money in the Romanian village. Case study .* In: Moldoscopie Magazine. Chisinau, 2020, no. 4(91), p. 56-62. ISSN 1812-2566 , *Category B.*
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6. **Silvia mazăre .** *Analysis of operational programs implemented in România .* In: International scientific conference "Science and the challenges of the 21st century " , from 10 November 2022, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova (in the process of publication).
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10. **Silvia mazăre.** *Procedural and administrative solutions and mechanisms applied by AFIR to streamline the management of European PNDR 2020 funds .* In: Journal of the International Symposium "Health through Education", România, Vol. V, 2020 Fifth Edition. Ed. Stagira. ISSN 2559-5636, ISSN-L 2559-5636, ISBN 978-606-9665-05-3.

## ADNOTARE

### la teza de doctor în științe economice

„Impactul fondurilor europene asupra dezvoltării rurale în România”, autor Silvia MAZĂRE,  
specialitatea: 521.03. Economie și management în domeniul de activitate, Chișinău, 2023

**Structura tezei:** introducere, trei capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, 140 de pagini de text de bază, bibliografie din 341 de titluri, 27 figuri, 48 tabele, 68 anexe. Rezultatele obținute sunt publicate în 8 lucrări științifice și confirmate prin 4 certificate de implementare.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** fonduri europene, agricultură, forță de muncă, resurse financiare, piața muncii, fonduri alocate, investiții în agricultură, mediu, dezvoltarea rurală.

**Domeniul de studiu:** Științe economice.

**Scopul lucrării:** Evaluarea impactului fondurilor europene și elaborarea recomandărilor de sporire a impactului și managementului eficienței fondurilor europene în vederea dezvoltării spațiului rural din România.

#### Obiectivele cercetării:

1. Identificarea impactului fondurilor europene pe piața forței de muncă din mediul rural;
2. Evaluarea impactului proiectelor finanțate de UE;
3. Analiza efectelor produse pentru a determina nivelul de îndeplinire a obiectivelor scontate;
4. Determinarea impactului fondurilor europene asupra dezvoltării spațiului rural prin utilizarea metodologiei Eurobarometru;
5. Examinarea indicatorilor statici și dinamici a dezvoltării endogene a zonelor rurale, sub impactul fondurilor europene;
6. Aprecierea nivelului de absorbție a fondurilor europene destinate zonelor rurale;
7. Stabilirea mecanismelor de sporire a impactului fondurilor europene din perspectiva dezvoltării spațiului rural.

**Noutatea și originalitatea științifică.** În premieră s-a realizat un studiu științific privind: fundamentarea teoretică și sinteza studiilor empirice a impactului diferitelor dimensiuni ale programelor de sprijin din fonduri europene asupra dezvoltării rurale; analiza metodelor folosite în evaluarea dezvoltării rurale românești pentru diferite nivele NUTS; realizarea și aplicarea metodologiei Eurobarometru privind identificarea problemelor în implementarea programelor de dezvoltare rurală și a factorilor de impact în baza măsurării percepției pentru cazul Județul Neamț; argumentarea unei abordări strategice în managementul investițiilor din fonduri europene pentru dezvoltarea spațiului rural prin introducerea *noțiunii de expertiză vernaculară*; ajustarea modelului de evidență și evaluare a impactului fondurilor europene asupra dezvoltării social-economice a zonelor rurale, *bazat pe metoda matricei contabile sociale*.

**Problema științifică soluționată.** Au fost obținute date originale privind sporirea impactului și managementul eficienței fondurilor europene asupra dezvoltării rurale, prin intermediul expertizei vernaculare și aplicarea metodei matricei contabile sociale.

**Semnificația teoretică** constă în identificarea unor modele și soluții de impact care vor contribui la sporirea managementului eficienței fondurilor europene, în vederea transferului acestor performanțe asupra dezvoltării spațiului rural din România.

**Valoarea aplicativă.** Prin această lucrare, susținem că analiza impactului proiectelor este necesară pentru a verifica dacă acestea produc efectele dorite, dacă contribuie, în mod corespunzător, la îndeplinirea obiectivelor programelor și politicilor europene. Cunoștințele dobândite prin evaluările de impact sunt utile, beneficiarilor de finanțări europene, dar și instituțiilor responsabile de implementarea programelor și proiectelor europene, precum Organismele intermediare, Autoritățile de management, Guvernul României și Comisia Europeană. Cercetarea se adresează și populației de rând, care, într-o accepțiune generală, reprezintă un grup extins al beneficiilor generate de proiectele implementate din finanțări comunitare. În particular, mediul academic și sectorul consultanței reprezintă o categorie aparte de diseminare a rezultatelor cercetării doctorale.

**Implementarea rezultatelor științifice.** Principalele rezultate științifice au fost diseminate prin intermediul conferințelor naționale și internaționale, cât și în articolele publicate în revistele de specialitate. Recomandările propuse, întru sporirea impactului fondurilor europene asupra dezvoltării spațiului rural au fost valorificate prin 4 certificate de implementare.

**ANNOTATION**  
**for the doctoral thesis in economic sciences**  
**"The impact of European funds on rural development in România", author Silvia Mazăre,**  
**specialty: 521.03. Economics and management in the field of activity, Chisinau, 2023**

**Structure of the thesis :** introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, 140 pages of basic text, bibliography of 341 titles, 27 figures, 48 tables, 68 appendices. The results obtained are published in 8 scientific papers and confirmed by 4 implementation certificates.

**Key words :** European funds, agriculture, workforce, financial resources, labor market, allocated funds, investments in agriculture, environment, rural development.

**Research area :** Economics.

**The purpose of the research :** Evaluating the impact of European funds and developing recommendations to increase the impact and management of the efficiency of European funds in order to develop the rural space in România.

**The objectives of the research :**

1. Identifying the impact of European funds on the rural labor market;
2. Evaluation of the impact of projects financed by the EU;
3. Analysis of the effects produced to determine the level of achievement of the expected objectives;
4. Determining the impact of European funds on the development of rural areas by using the Eurobarometer methodology;
5. Examining the static and dynamic indicators of the endogenous development of rural areas, under the impact of European funds;
6. Assessment of the level of absorption of European funds intended for rural areas;
7. Establishing mechanisms to increase the impact of European funds from the perspective of rural development.

**Novelty and scientific originality .** For the first time, a scientific study was carried out regarding: the theoretical foundation and synthesis of empirical studies of the impact of different dimensions of support programs from European funds on rural development; analysis of the methodologies used in the evaluation of Romanian rural development for different NUTS levels; realization and application of the Eurobarometer methodology regarding the identification of problems in the implementation of rural development programs and impact factors based on the measurement of perception for the case of Neamt county; arguing for a strategic approach in the management of investments from European funds for the development of rural space by introducing the *notion of vernacular expertise* ; adjusting the model for recording and evaluating the impact of European funds on the social-economic development of rural areas, *based on the social accounting matrix method* .

**Scientific problem solved .** Original data were obtained on increasing the impact and efficiency management of European funds on rural development, through vernacular expertise and the application of the social accounting matrix method.

**The theoretical significance consists** in the identification of models and impact solutions that will contribute to increasing the management of the efficiency of European funds, in order to transfer these performances to the development of the rural space in România .

**The applied value of the paper .** Through this work, we argue that impact analysis of projects is necessary to verify if they produce the desired effects, if they contribute, appropriately, to the fulfillment of the objectives of European programs and policies. The knowledge acquired through impact assessments is useful to the beneficiaries of European funding, but also to the institutions responsible for implementing European programs and projects, such as Intermediate Bodies, Management Authorities, the Government of România and the European Commission . The research is also addressed to the common population, which, in a general sense, represents an extended group of the benefits generated by the projects implemented from community funding. In particular, the academic environment and the consulting sector represent a separate category for the dissemination of doctoral research results.

**The implementation of the scientific results .** The main scientific results were disseminated through national and international conferences, as well as in articles published in specialized magazines. The proposed recommendations, in order to increase the impact of European funds on the development of rural areas, were capitalized through 4 implementation certificates.

**АННОТАЦИЯ**  
**на докторскую диссертацию по экономическим наукам**  
**«Влияние европейских фондов на развитие сельских районов Румынии»,**  
**автор Сильвия МАЗЭРЕ, специальность: 521.03. Экономика и менеджмент в сфере**  
**деятельности, Кишинев, 2023 г.**

**Структура диссертации:** введение, три главы, общие выводы и рекомендации, 140 страниц основного текста, библиография из 341 наименований, 27 рисунка, 48 таблиц, 68 приложения. Полученные результаты опубликованы в 8 научных работах и подтверждены 4 свидетельствами о внедрении.

**Ключевые слова:** европейские фонды, сельское хозяйство, рабочая сила, финансовые ресурсы, рынок труда, аграрная политика, выделенные средства, инвестиции в сельское хозяйство, окружающая среда, сельское развитие.

**Область исследования:** Экономика.

**Цель исследования:** Оценка влияния европейских фондов и разработка рекомендаций по увеличению воздействия и управлению эффективностью европейских фондов для развития сельского пространства в Румынии.

**Научно-исследовательские задачи:**

1. Определение влияния европейских фондов на сельский рынок труда;
2. Оценка воздействия проектов, финансируемых ЕС;
3. Анализ производимых эффектов для определения уровня достижения намеченных целей;
4. Определение влияния европейских фондов на развитие сельских территорий с использованием методологии Евробарометра;
5. Изучение статических и динамических показателей эндогенного развития сельских территорий под влиянием европейских фондов;
6. Оценка уровня освоения европейских средств, предназначенных для сельской местности;
7. Создание механизмов для увеличения воздействия европейских фондов с точки зрения развития сельских районов..

**Научная новизна и оригинальность.** Впервые было проведено научное исследование относительно: теоретического обоснования и синтеза эмпирических исследований воздействия различных аспектов программ поддержки из европейских фондов на развитие сельских районов; анализ методологий, используемых при оценке развития сельских районов Румынии для различных уровней NUTS; реализация и применение методологии Евробарометра в отношении выявления проблем в реализации программ развития сельских районов и факторов воздействия на основе измерения восприятия на примере округ Нямец; отстаивание стратегического подхода в управлении инвестициями европейских фондов развития сельского пространства путем *введения понятия народной экспертизы*; корректировка модели учета и оценки влияния европейских фондов на социально-экономическое развитие сельских территорий на основе *матричного метода социального учета*.

**Решенная научная проблема.** Были получены исходные данные о повышении воздействия и эффективности управления европейскими фондами на развитие сельских районов за счет народной экспертизы и применения матричного метода социального учета.

**Теоретическая значимость заключается** в выявлении моделей и решений воздействия, которые будут способствовать повышению эффективности управления европейскими фондами, чтобы перенести эти показатели на развитие сельского пространства в Румынии.

**Ценность работы.** В рамках этой работы мы утверждаем, что анализ воздействия проектов необходим для проверки того, производят ли они желаемые эффекты, вносят ли они соответствующий вклад в достижение целей европейских программ и политик. Знания, полученные в результате оценки воздействия, полезны для бенефициаров европейского финансирования, а также для учреждений, ответственных за реализацию европейских программ и проектов, таких как промежуточные органы, органы управления, правительство Румынии и Европейская комиссия. Исследование также адресовано простому населению, которое, в общем смысле, представляет собой расширенную группу выгод, генерируемых проектами, реализуемыми за счет средств сообщества. В частности, академическая среда и сектор консалтинга представляют собой отдельную категорию для распространения результатов докторских исследований.

**Внедрение научных результатов.** Основные научные результаты распространялись на национальных и международных конференциях, а также в статьях, опубликованных в специализированных журналах. Предложенные рекомендации, чтобы увеличить влияние европейских фондов на развитие сельских районов, были капитализированы через 4 сертификата внедрения.

**SILVIA MAZĂRE**

**THE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN FUNDS ON RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN ROMÂNIA**

**521.03. Economy and management in the field of activity**

**Summary of the doctoral thesis in economics**

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