

SUMMARY

FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

For the implementation of the Programme in 2014–2024, nearly EUR 2.85 billion was allocated, of which EAFRD funds accounted for almost EUR 2.1 billion, EURI funds – EUR 139.9 million, and national co-financing – EUR 609 million. During the period 2014–2024, the total amount of contracted support under the Programme reached nearly EUR 2 813 million, which represents 99 % of all funds allocated for the implementation of the Programme (EUR 165 million or 6 percentage points more than in 2014–2023). The largest share of support funds was approved under focus area 2A, as well as under focus areas contributing to the fourth priority.

In 2014–2024, the amount of paid support under the Programme reached almost EUR 2 587 million, i.e., 91 % of the funds allocated to the Programme (EUR 208 million or 7 percentage points more than in 2014–2023), of which EAFRD, national co-financing (NCF), and additional national funding (ANF) accounted for nearly EUR 2 499 million, and EURI funds – EUR 87.6 million. During the same period, EUR 2 393 million of support funds were declared to the European Commission (hereafter –Commission), which makes up 84 % of the Programme's allocated funds (EUR 220 million or 8 percentage points more than in 2014–2023), of which EAFRD, NCF, and ANF amounted to EUR 2 308.4 million, and EURI funds – EUR 84.5 million.

The highest share of paid support in relation to the allocated amount was under focus area 6C – 100 %. Under Priority 4, the share of paid support reached 99 %, and under focus area 2B – 97%. The lowest financial implementation levels were achieved under focus areas 5C (53 % of allocated support paid) and 3A (59 % of allocated support paid).

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMME'S PRIORITIES AND FOCUS AREAS

Priority 1. Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

In 2014–2024, the amount of contracted funding for Priority 1 reached EUR 57.7 million (91 % of the funding allocated to this priority), the paid support amounted to EUR 49.9 million (78 % of the allocated funding), and the amount of support declared to the Commission was EUR 47.1 million (74 % of the allocated funding). Compared to 2014–2023, the level of contracted support increased by 7 percentage points (EUR 2.6 million), disbursed support by 11 percentage points (EUR 6.3 million), and support declared to Commission by 14 percentage points (EUR 8.1 million).

By the end of 2024, 37 projects related to professional training had been completed (with 6 still under implementation), 8 of which were completed in 2024. These projects involved a total of 66 254 training participants (15 thousand participants in 2024 alone). In addition, 63 projects supporting demonstration projects and information activities were completed (8 are still ongoing), with 9 completed in 2024. Under measure M02, advisory services were used by 10 601 beneficiaries (including 557 in 2024), the majority of whom received consultations in the field of agri-environmental issues, contributing to the implementation of Priority 4.

Between 2014 and 2024, 52 projects supporting the activities of European Innovation Partnership (EIP) operational groups were implemented, of which 34 were completed (13 in 2024). Moreover, during 2014–2024, 216 projects aimed at cooperation among small farms

and the development of short supply chains were implemented under sub-measures 16.3 and 16.4, with 29 of them completed in 2024.

Priority 2. Competitiveness of the agricultural sector and sustainable forestry

In 2014–2024, the amount of contracted funding under Priority 2 amounted to EUR 1.13 billion (98 % of the funding allocated for the implementation of this priority). The amount of paid funds reached EUR 998.5 million (87 % of the funding allocated for this priority), while the amount of support declared to the Commission amounted to EUR 931.1 million (81 % of the allocated funding). For completed projects, EUR 895.4 million was both paid and declared to the Commission, representing 78 % of the funds allocated to the priority. Compared to 2014–2023, the level of approved support increased by 10 percentage points (EUR 121 million), paid support by 11 percentage points (EUR 134.9 million), and support declared to Commission by 11 percentage points (EUR 133.2 million).

In 2014–2024, a total of 4 850 agricultural holdings received support for implementing farm restructuring and modernization investment projects (166 holdings were supported in 2024). 51 farm modernization projects are being implemented with EURI funds, of which 6 projects have already been completed. Additionally, support was provided for 2 094 young farmers' establishment projects (322 of which were completed in 2024), and for 9 395 small farms (977 supported in 2024), aiming to enable them to participate more actively in the market. Investments were also made in infrastructure related to the development, modernization, or adaptation of agriculture and forestry. In this area, 436 agriculture-related projects were implemented, for which nearly EUR 122.1 million was paid and declared to the EC. Furthermore, 19 projects aimed at improving forest infrastructure were implemented, with paid support totalling EUR 1.5 million. Under Priority 2, support was also provided for the introduction of technologies for forest harvesting, roundwood and wood biofuel production, as well as for the restructuring of young forest stands and scrubland. In this area, by the end of 2024, 260 projects were implemented (20 of them completed in 2024), with paid and declared funds amounting to nearly EUR 20.8 million.

In response to high demand for funding and the changed economic situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a decision was made in 2020 to create a financial instrument aimed at financing loans that support the objectives of sub-measure 4.1. From the start of the RDP financial instrument's implementation until 31 December 2024, the financial intermediary signed 68 loan agreements with final beneficiaries (4 of these in 2024). The total amount of loans issued reached EUR 6.596 million, of which EUR 3.435 million was funded through the RDP financial instrument. From the beginning of the instrument's implementation until 31 December 2024, loan recipients repaid EUR 948.3 thousand to the financial intermediary. As of the end of the reporting period, the amount of funds returned to the Fund amounted to EUR 545.5 thousand.

Priority 3. Promotion of food chains

In 2014–2024, the total amount of contracted funding under Priority 3 reached EUR 171.8 million (92 % of the funding allocated for the implementation of this priority). The amount of paid funds totalled EUR 119.9 million (65 % of the allocated funding), while the amount of support declared to the Commission reached EUR 119.3 million (64 % of the allocated funding). For completed projects, nearly EUR 112.7 million was both paid and declared to the Commission, accounting for 61 % of the funds allocated to the priority. Compared to 2014–2023, the level of contracted support increased by 3 percentage points (EUR 6.6 million), paid

support by 10 percentage points (EUR 16.8 million), and support declared to Commission by 9 percentage points (also EUR 16.8 million).

In 2014–2024, under Focus Area 3A, a total of EUR 86.3 million was paid and declared to the Commission for completed projects. A total of 165 projects were implemented, receiving support for investments in agricultural holdings and in the processing and marketing of agricultural products (20 projects were completed in 2024). Support was also paid to 395 agricultural holdings (32 more than in 2014–2023) for participating in quality schemes, short supply chains, and producer organizations. Under measure M03, support was granted to 162 holdings for continued commitments from the 2007–2013 RDP, 102 holdings for new applications under the 2014–2020 RDP, 43 holdings for completed projects contributing to sub-measure 16.4, 88 holdings participating in supported producer groups (measure M09). Under Focus Area 3B, aimed at encouraging agricultural holdings to participate in risk management systems: EUR 22.1 million was paid and declared to the Commission under measure M17, benefiting 2 155 farms (17 more than in 2023), EUR 4.4 million was paid under measure M05, benefiting 64 agricultural holdings (5 more than in 2014–2023).

Priority 4. Environment protection – biodiversity restoration and improvement of water and soil

To achieve the objectives of Priority 4, three horizontal measures (M01, M02, and M16), two investment measures (M04 and M08), and five compensatory area-based measures (M10, M11, M12, M13, and M15) were implemented. In 2014–2024, the amount of contracted funding reached just over EUR 917.2 million (99 % of the funds allocated for the implementation of this priority). The amount of paid support reached EUR 902.2 million (99 %), while the amount declared to the Commission was EUR 827.7 million (91 % of the total funds allocated for this priority). Compared to 2014–2023, the level of approved support increased by 3 percentage points (EUR 19.9 million), paid support by 2 percentage points (EUR 19 million), and support declared to Commission by 3 percentage points (EUR 18.9 million). The financial implementation level of the priority is high.

In 2024, support was provided for 40 897 ha of agricultural land (17.2 thousand ha less than in 2023) and 31 936 ha of forest land (3.5 thousand ha more than in 2023) covered by management contracts related to biodiversity and landscape protection. To improve water management, 5 556 ha were supported in 2024 (almost 2 thousand ha less than in 2023). Additionally, 18 258 ha of agricultural land were supported in 2024 (251 thousand ha less than in 2023) for activities related to soil management improvement and soil erosion prevention. These areas mainly included agricultural activities in Natura 2000 areas, organic farming, and farming that meets higher-than-mandatory environmental requirements under the M10 “Agri-environment-climate” measure. As for forest areas, these were supported under M08 “Investments in forest area development and improvement of forest viability.”

It should be noted that the target indicators for supported areas are annual, and some values decreased because previously assumed commitments ended. In 2024, support applications were accepted only for commitments made in previous years, as similar Strategic Plan measures had already begun to be implemented.

Priority 5. Support for effective resource management

In 2014–2024, the amount of contracted funds under Priority 5 was EUR 107.5 million, which is 92 % of the total funds allocated for this priority. The amount of support paid and declared

to Commission reached approximately EUR 98.1 million, or 84 % of the total allocated funds for this priority. Compared to 2014–2023, the level of approved support increased by 4 percentage points (EUR 3.9 million), while support paid and declared to Commission increased by 9 percentage points (EUR 10.1 million).

In 2014–2024, 4 projects were implemented that contribute to the goal of the 5C focus area, "Support for Biogas Production." Additionally, in 2024, support was disbursed for 2 597 applications, under which actions were carried out to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ammonia emissions from agriculture. Furthermore, 852 holdings received support for forest establishment, aiming to contribute to carbon dioxide retention and sequestration in forestry (38 more holdings than in 2023). The area of agricultural land involved in management contracts aimed at reducing greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions amounted to 18 137 ha (15.5 thousand ha less compared to 2023), while the area of agricultural and forestry land involved in management contracts related to carbon sequestration and retention totalled 41 040 ha (17.4 thousand ha less compared to 2023). As with the 4th priority, the target indicators for supported land areas are annual, so some values decreased due to the expiring commitment period.

Priority 6. Promotion for social inclusion, poverty reduction and promotion of economic development in rural areas

In 2014–2024, the amount of contracted funds under Priority 6 totalled EUR 328.2 million (102 % of the allocated funds for this priority), while the paid support amounted to EUR 306.7 million (96 % of the allocated funds for this priority). The amount declared to Commission was EUR 277.3 million (86 % of the allocated funds for this priority). For completed projects, EUR 287.6 million (90 % of the allocated funds for this priority) was paid. Compared to 2014–2023, the level of contracted support increased by 4 percentage points (EUR 6.2 million), paid support increased by 8 percentage points (EUR 19 million), and the support declared to Commission increased by 9 percentage points (EUR 21.8 million).

In 2014–2024, 2 152 projects aimed at developing non-agricultural business activities in rural areas were implemented (with 47 projects completed in 2024), resulting in the creation of 3 790 jobs (with 164 jobs created in 2024). Additionally, 8 296 projects were implemented to improve services and infrastructure (including cultural and natural heritage) in rural areas (with 2 projects completed in 2024). By the end of 2024, the number of residents benefiting from better services and infrastructure reached 348 531 people, or 33% of all rural residents.

In 2024, 49 local development strategies were implemented (46 rural area strategies and 3 dual-sector strategies, funded by EAFRD and EMFF). The number of residents covered by Local Action Groups (LAGs) is 1 075 726 people, encompassing all individuals living in rural areas of Lithuania. From 2014 to 2024, 2 349 jobs were created through the implementation of measure M19 (with 454 jobs created in 2024).

Overview of support for investment in the agricultural sector

An analysis of investment support in the agricultural sectors focused on the contribution of investment sub-measures 4.1, 6.1, and 6.3 to the development of key agricultural sectors. The largest share of support—EUR 529.3 million or 57.4 %—was contracted for investment projects in the livestock sector. By the end of 2024, 9 458 projects had been implemented in this sector, with EUR 454.3 million paid (56.7 % of the total support paid under the analysed

sub-measures). Next follows the crop sector, where 3 115 investment projects were implemented. The contracted support for these projects amounted to nearly EUR 170.7 million (18.5 % of total investment support), and nearly EUR 152.2 million (19 %) was paid. In the horticulture sector, 3 331 investment projects were implemented, with EUR 151 million (16.4 %) in contracted support and almost EUR 128.6 million (16.1 %) paid. Investment support is also provided under sub-measure 4.2, aimed at processing and marketing. In 2014–2024, nearly EUR 127 million was contracted under this sub-measure. The most projects (60) were implemented in the processing of crop, with nearly EUR 19.1 million paid. This is followed by support for dairy processing (25 projects, EUR 19.1 million paid) and meat processing (32 projects, EUR 15 million paid).

ACTIONS AIMED AT IMPLEMENTING THE REQUIREMENTS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND PUBLICITY OF THE PROGRAMME

In 2014-2024, support for Technical Assistance is provided under three activities: 1) Implementation of the Programme (first activity); 2) Information and publicity of the Programme (second activity); 3) Lithuanian Rural Network (third activity).

Slightly more than EUR 98.1 million is allocated for the implementation of the Technical Assistance measure. 146 projects were being implemented under Technical Assistance measure in 2014-2024, of which 6 projects are continuous. During 2014-2024, for all these projects EUR 97.5 million was paid (99 % of the total amount assigned to Technical Assistance), and almost EUR 77.6 million was declared to the Commission (79 % of the total amount assigned to Technical Assistance).

3 continuous projects are implemented under the first activity (by all three possible beneficiaries – Ministry of Agriculture, National Paying Agency and Agricultural Data Centre). These projects ensure the smooth implementation of the Programme, the staff is recruited from project funds to carry out the functions assigned to each of the institutions in connection with the implementation of the Programme. 2 continuous projects are implemented under the second activity (by both possible beneficiaries – Ministry of Agriculture and National Paying Agency). During the implementation of these projects, information about the Programme was disseminated. Under the third activity, 1 continuous project is implemented by Lithuanian Rural Network Secretariat. Remaining 140 projects are being implemented by members of Lithuanian Rural Network. The members of the Lithuanian Rural Network implement two types of projects: projects for the implementation of event communication measures and projects for the implementation of electronic communication measures. In 2024, 54 projects (63 %) for the implementation of event communication tools were completed, and 53 projects (95 %) for the implementation of electronic communication tools were completed. While implementing the Action Plan of 2024, the Lithuanian Rural Network Secretariat organized and contributed to the organisation of events (22 events in total, 18 of them were thematic events of “The Lithuanian Rural Network Workshop” format), periodically participated in meetings organized by the EU CAP Network, also participated in virtual meetings of representatives of the *Nordic-Baltic* rural network secretariats, published 10 periodical newsletters “The Lithuanian Rural Network News” and carried out other activities.