

# Investment guide

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## Fruit Growing Sector Romania

August 2015

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*Elaborated by Business Development Group for the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Romania*  
[www.netherlandsemb.ro](http://www.netherlandsemb.ro)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on the current situation and following the success of a reconversion program for vineyards implemented during the first programming period for EU financing 2007-2013, the local fruit producers together with the sector experts formulated a strong request towards Romanian authorities to include a specific program for the fruit production sector in the second rural development program. The program was accepted by the European Commission in May 2015 with a total allocation of **EUR 282.3 million** representing almost 3% of the total financial allocation for the rural development during 2014-2020.

In the favourable context of the thematic sub-program for the fruit growing sector within the new National Rural Development Program, the Agricultural Office of the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Bucharest commissioned Business Development Group to elaborate a guide about market access in the new context including a review of the most important rules and procedures under the dedicated financing measures, for the benefit of the Dutch companies and organizations with a strategic interest on the fruit market in Romania.

The guide is based on the provisions of the two relevant applicants' guides, respectively the applicant guide for the **Sub-measure 4.1a –Investments in orchards** and the applicant guide for the **Sub-measure 4.2a - Investments in the products of the fruits growing sector processing/ marketing**. Additionally the document includes a short analysis of the sector specific opportunities and challenges, with recommended market entry paths for the Dutch suppliers and entrepreneurs.

The main financing objectives of the approved program are the *replanting and rejuvenation of the orchards, the development of processing and warehousing capacities in the sector as well as modern irrigation techniques and protection systems (irrigation is going to be a key element for development of projects in the fruit growing sector)*. The applicant to the program has to be a Romanian juridical entity carrying out agricultural activities in the rural area as defined by the applicable EU and national legislation. The financial support is based on the *reimbursement* of the eligible expenses which means the applicant needs to provide financial resources in advance (different from the former viticulture reconversion program). As regards the intensity of the non-reimbursable financial support this starts at 50% of the total eligible expenses but the intensity can reach 90% in case of producers' associations/organisations as the new National Rural Development Program is encouraging association currently at very low level in the Romanian agriculture. The intensity of the non-reimbursable support is also growing for young people (<40 years) in order to encourage the young generation to stay in the rural area and develop commercial farms as well as in case the applicant plan to implement the European innovations proposals that is bringing an increase of 20% of the non-reimbursable support.

The main eligible expenses as well as the minimum compulsory conditions to be fulfilled are detailed further on to support a decision for application. The application procedure was revised and it is now based on a yearly session for applications and a self-calculation of the score (to estimate the score hence the chances for success of your own application). Consequently the guide details the projects selection criteria including additional explanations for a good understanding of the projects selection process.

The difficulties encountered during implementation of the previous National Rural Development Program and the suggestions for simplification received from the applicants, led to revisions of the procedures in order to simplify the access to the financing programs (detailed in the chapter 3 of the guide). One of the main problems encountered by the applicants was the access to financing sources as the commercial banks were generally reluctant to enter this market segment. In the new program improvements are expected based on cooperation protocols signed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development with several commercial banks and the acceptance of the non-banking financial institutions (IFN) involvement in providing financing for applicants to European projects.

The guide includes a short presentation of the viticulture reconversion program as regards lessons learned and used in the development of the fruit program. The program was a success not only because of the different reimbursement procedures but also due to the established capacity of the large players as well as very active sector organizations that supported their members to apply for the financing program and to implement the

European standards. The sector is a good example as regards the organisations and their importance in the common agriculture market of today.

The thematic program for the fruit growing sector is an opportunity but also a challenge not only for the applicants but also for the suppliers of inputs for whom sustained efforts will be needed for increased visibility and differentiation on a market expected to be flooded with alternative offers.

The guide includes also a brief market survey with the presentation of the main stakeholders in the sector and a data base with contacts of relevant authorities, R&D entities, nurseries and commercial companies.

## 1. THE THEMATIC SUB-PROGRAM FOR THE FRUIT GROWING SECTOR – A FINANCING OPPORTUNITY UNDER THE NATIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 2014-2020 IN ROMANIA (extract from the application guides of the sub-measures 4.1 a and 4.2 a)

Based on the success of the viticulture reconversion program and taking into consideration the existing need for rehabilitation of the fruit growing sector in Romania a dedicated program for the fruit growing sector was included in the new National Rural Development Program 2014-2020 in Romania. Due to the characteristics of the sector and the fact the orchards are high investments for a long time, the program was elaborated to accommodate as much as possible the rules of financing through the European Funds and the obligations coming from the national legislation. Therefore, some basic rules as the base principle that the non-reimbursable financing support from EU is the reimbursement of eligible expenditure done beforehand by the applicant is in place but on the other hand, to let the farmers the opportunity to select the type of orchard, the species and the inputs for investments they want it was elaborated a dedicated document- the Standard Costs for inputs and different works.

Also some general rules were changed in order to improve the application process. The procedure is now based on continuous annual sessions for applications and the applicants have to calculate their score before submitting the proposal. The submission of projects may stop before the annual deadline (*for this year 30.10.2015*) if the total public value of the submitted projects with an estimated score (self- / pre-scoring) higher than or equal to the quality threshold set for the respective month, reaches the total annual allocation value.

Submission of financing applications for these sub-measures will take place as specified in the Applicant's Guides (available in Romanian only), on-line on [www.afir.info](http://www.afir.info) on daily basis between 9:00-14:00 hours.

**The deadline for submitting project applications under the current year session for the sub-measures 4.1a<sup>1</sup> and 4.2a<sup>2</sup> is 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015, 12:00 hrs.**

The main rules and the information needed in order to apply for financing for the measures 4.1a –Investments in orchards and 4.2a - Investments in the products of the fruits growing sector processing/ marketing are presented further on.

### 1.1 Sub-measure 4.1 a: Investments in orchards

The sub-measure 4.1a" Investment in orchards", according the EC Regulation 1305/2013, art. 17, falls under the measure 4 "Investments in physical assets" contributing to the intervention domain DI 2A "Improvement of the economic performance of farms and facilitation of farms reorganization and modernization, especially with the aim to increase the participation and the orientation towards the market and agricultural diversification.

*The support granted through this sub-measure will contribute to:*

- increase of competitiveness, production diversification, increase inequality of products obtained and the improvement of general performance of fruit-growing holdings
- increase of added value of products by supporting on-farm fruit processing and direct commercialization<sup>3</sup> of the products obtained
- development of short supply chains

<sup>1</sup> extended to November 30, 2015

<sup>2</sup> extended to December 18, 2015

<sup>3</sup> Will be applied the definition for processing and marketing of the EU Guidelines regarding the state aid in the agriculture and forestry for 2014-2020

- rationalization of the production costs by promotion the production and on-farm use of energy from renewable sources and by reduction of energy consumption

**The total public contribution for the program 2014-2020: EUR 282,344,256**

**Allocation for 2015: EUR 70,586,064** (National Government contribution plus EU contribution), out of which **EUR 5,000,000** will be allocated for production of propagation material for the fruits growing sector.

The purpose of the investments supported within this sub-measure is to increase competitiveness of the fruit growing holdings by endowment with machinery and equipment, setup, modernization and/or extension of processing units, setup of fruit-growing plantations, reconversion of existing plantations and increase of fruit nurseries areas.

#### **Beneficiaries**

**Eligible applicants to the sub-measure 4.1a are farmers defined according EC Regulation 1307/ 2013, art. 4, as physical or juridical persons or a group of physical or juridical persons, regardless the juridical status that such a group and its members have according the national legislation, whose holdings are located within Romania territory and which run an agricultural activity.**

**The applicant has to meet the following criteria:**

- **to be a Romanian juridical person**
- **to act in its own name**
- **to provide stable and sufficient financial resources during project implementation**

The categories of eligible applicants that can receive non-reimbursable support funds are:

- Authorized physical persons
- Individual Enterprises
- Family Enterprises
- Partnership Enterprises
- Simple Commandite Enterprises
- Joint—Stock Enterprises
- Joint - Stock Commandite Enterprises
- Limited Liability Enterprises
- Private Commercial Enterprises
- R&D Institutes, Stations and education unit sin the fruit growing sector, with public or private juridical status
- Agricultural Cooperative Enterprises
- Agricultural Cooperatives
- Groups of Producers

There are several categories of beneficiaries restricted for financing such as those registered in the debtors data base for previous EU financing programs until complete reimbursement of the debt and corresponding interest, applicants with EU financed projects stopped at own or with trials in a court of law, applicants that failed to present co-financing proofs or technical project, applicants submitting several projects under the same call and /or under different calls of the same sub-measure that form together a unitary production and/or processing flow, etc. Also not eligible are the beneficiaries still implementing projects under the following measures of the previous rural development program 2007-2013: 141, 112, 121, 411.141, 411.112, 411.121, 6.1, 6.3.

#### **Minimum compulsory conditions for accessing the financial support:**

The applicant must be under one of the categories of eligible beneficiaries mentioned above, and the following documents need to be presented:

- documents on the legal setup
- documents proving the ownership on the land and/or buildings
- certificates proving the beneficiary has no fiscal or social debts
- the AFIR experts will verify the applicant is not in one of the applicant/beneficiaries categories of the previous program restricted for financing

**Investments must come under at least one of the eligible actions foreseen by this sub-measure:**

- (1) Investments in the modernization of fruit growing farms, including the setup or reconversion of orchards and modernization of the machinery and equipment fleet
- (2) Investments in nurseries modernization, including the increase of the area occupied by the planting material
- (3) Setup and modernization of processing units at farm level and investments in commercialization (shops at farm gate or food caravan that sell only the own products)- **ONLY as a secondary objective of the project**
- (4) Investments in renewable energy production and use, excepting the biomass (solar, wind, heat pumps geothermal), within the farm- **ONLY as a secondary objective of the project** and the energy is used only for own consumption
- (5) Investments in installations for electrical or thermal energy production by using the biomass residues resulted in the own activity- **ONLY as a secondary objective of the project** and the energy is used only for own consumption
- (6) Setup and / or modernization of access roads, including connections
- (7) Investments for European standards achievement for young farmers – according the art 17 (5) of EU Regulation 1305/2013 – the support is given for a maximum period of 24 months from the first moment
- (8) Intangible investments: acquisition or development of software and licenses, copyrights, brands according the art 45 (2) (d) of EU Regulation 1305/2013

**Attention!** *The activities under (3), (4), (5) and (8) cannot independent objectives of an investment project*

The criterion is considered fulfilled based on the correlation of the information provided in the Feasibility study, the permits issued by public authorities (EPA, and County Food Safety, Sanitary and Veterinary Department- DSVSA) and the Urbanism Certificate.

**The applicant must prove the capacity for co-financing the project.**

The information filled by the applicant in the Declaration F is verified and the co-financing capacity has to be proved before signing the financing contract. In case of application with more projects proposals, the applicant must prove the existence of private co-financing for the project or as appropriate, cumulated for all project proposals.

**The economic viability of the investment must be proven in the technical-economical documents.**

The following cumulative conditions are checked:

- (1) The financial results of the previous year should be positive /incomes should be at least equal with expenses – in case of authorized persons, individual enterprises and family enterprises (the declaration 200 together with its annexes). There are excepted the applicants that have not recorded incomes from their activity instead recoded only operational expenses and had not the needed time to close a production cycle and obtain incomes.
- (2) Economic-financial indicators have to come under the mentioned limits.

**Investment will fulfil the requirements regarding the conformation with the standards imposed by the national and European legislation, including the ones related to the environment impact; in case the investment has impact on the environment, the investment must be preceded by an environmental impact assessment** (verification of the permits issued by the County Environment Protection Agency).

**The investment has to be done only in the territorial units presented in the Annex of the National Framework for Implementation (Annex 7 of the Applicant Guide for the sub-measure 4.1a) and have to be according the suitability of the area for cultivation (excepting the strawberries in greenhouses and tunnels).**

#### **Attention!**

- for production in greenhouses and tunnels only the strawberry crop is eligible
- eligible projects are the ones implemented in locations:
  - with a natural favourability mark  $\geq 2.40$
  - with a natural favourability mark  $< 2.40$  but the improved favourability mark is  $\geq 2.40$  -these projects are eligible if an irrigation system across the entire area that will be planted is foreseen in the project

Irrigation systems have to be in function and connected to a water source with sufficient flow.

If the improved favourability mark is  $< 2.40$ , project could be eligible if the applicant present a study approved by the Research & Development Institute in the Fruit Growing Sector (ICDP) Maracineni, study that prove the location has a natural or improved favourability mark  $\geq 2.40$

For setup of a new orchard and/or for the reconversion of an orchard, **the applicant must use only certified planting material**- this will be proved by the paper received at the purchase of the fruit trees. This paper has to be submitted together with the last request for payments made by the applicant.

#### **Attention!**

**If the ICDP Maracineni notifies on the technical project that through the project there are proposed species and varieties/rootstocks that have not been scientifically tested in Romania the project is not eligible.**

**In case of nurseries, the applicant commits that the planting material resulted will have certified biological category.**

**The investment must be compliant with viable economic sizes:**

- In case of investments that involve reconversion and setup of orchards, the economic size of the agricultural holding must be minimum EUR 8,000 SO<sup>4</sup>
- In case of simple investments, that do not involve reconversion and setup of orchards, the economic size of the agricultural holding must be minimum EUR 8,000 SO
- In case of production of propagating material and fruit planting material the minimum economic size of the agricultural holding must be minimum EUR 8,000 SO

The area proposed to be planted or re-planted through the project has to be equivalent with minimum:

- EUR 7,000 SO in case of strawberry crop in the field and in tunnels (approximate 1 ha for strawberry in the field and 0.19 ha for strawberry in tunnels)
- EUR 6,000 SO in case of production of propagating material and fruit planting material (approximate 0.9 ha)
- EUR 3,000 SO for all the other species and cultivation technologies (approximate 0.9 – 1.1 ha). In this case, over 50% of the total area should be planted with one genus

In-kind contribution is eligible only if there are met the conditions presented in the art. 69 (1) of the EC Regulation **1303/2013**. **The value of the in-kind contribution should be mentioned in the application form and must be calculated according ICDP Maracineni study 'Standard Costs'. Out of the applicant contribution will be deducted the value of in-kind contribution and before the contract is signed the applicant will prove its co-financing capacity.**

In all situations when the project propose investments in irrigation systems/equipment at farm level, these are eligible only if there are met the conditions mentioned in the section

**Other relevant aspects for measure understanding** and the conditions applicable for irrigation systems / equipment are:

- the investment is in accordance with the management plan of the hydrographic basin

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<sup>4</sup> SO is the Standard Output value and differs according to crop and animal species.



- the investment foreseen the water metering

It will be checked based on National Administration Romanian Waters, National Agency for Land Improvement notifications correlated with the Feasibility Study.

**Plus:**

For improvement/modernization of an existing irrigation system, if the ground water body or the surface water body has a good status according the notification of the competent authority (the National Administration Romanian Waters- river basin administration office), the proposed investment should be ante-evaluated as offering potential water savings with a minimum value of 5% according with the technical parameters of the existing system.

If the ground water body or the surface water body have an unsatisfactory quality, according the notification of the competent authority, the investment should ensure an actual reduction of water use- both by the irrigation system and the total water use at the holding level-at least 50% of the potential water savings.

**For investments that lead to an increase of the irrigated surfaces, the project is eligible if:**

- The environmental assessment, analysed or approved by the competent authority (county Environment Protection Agency) shows that, following the investment, no significant negative impact on the environment is foreseen (this applies both to one holding or a group of holdings)
- The ground water body or the surface water body has a good quality

**In case the irrigated area will increase and the groundwater body or the surface water body has an unsatisfactory quality the project is eligible if:**

- The investment is combined with an existing installation or with an element of the irrigation infrastructure evaluated ex-ante as ensuring water savings with a minimum value of 5% according the technical parameters of the existing installation or infrastructure; the needed water come from the water savings resulted of the investment done for the existing equipment

and

- Will lead to an effective reduction of water use at the level of the irrigation system up to 50% of the potential water savings achieved with the investment in the irrigation system

**In case of products processing within the farm, both the raw material and the resulted products after processing have to be included in the Annex I of The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). In case of commercialization will be supported only products included in the Annex I of TFEU.**

**In case that the raw material will be processed at farm level, the project is eligible only together with investments in modernization/development of the farm (development of the raw material production), as a secondary component, with the aim to add extra value to the farm.**

**Attention!**

The projects planning investments in products processing/commercialization will include as a major component investment in the production (> 50% of the eligible value of the project). The base raw material must come integrally from the own orchard. Investments that foreseen warehouses for the production are taken into account as associated with the production.

**Investments in setup and/or modernization of the irrigation systems as well as investments in energy production form renewables sources are eligible only if they represent a secondary component (< 50% of the eligible value of the project) in the project.**

**Investments in installations mainly for energy production, using biomass, have to meet the requests of the art.13 (d) of the EC Regulation 807/2014 and to prove the use of a minimum percentage of the thermal energy of 10%;**

### **Attention!**

The biomass must come from the own farm and the resulted energy to be used for own consumption.

**The applicant will prove that the annual average profit (as average of the last 3 fiscal years) it not overcoming multiplied by 4 the value of the requested EU support.**

**Investment needed to adapt to the EU standards, applicable to the production realized by young farmers that are setting up for the first time in an agricultural holding, have to finalized in 24 months' time from the date of young farmer setting (according art. 17, align. 5 of the EU Regulation no. 1305/2013).**

### **Eligible costs**

Specific eligible expenditures:

- ❖ Reconversion of existing plantations, including costs for deforestation, planting materials, support systems, soil preparation, planting works, protection systems against hail and rain, irrigation systems at holding level
- ❖ Set-up of fruit-growing plantations, including costs for planting materials, support systems, soil preparation, planting works, protection systems against hail and rain
- ❖ Set-up of nurseries for propagating material and fruit planting material including costs for planting materials, support systems, soil preparation, planting works, anti-hail nets
- ❖ Set-up, extension and/or modernization of storage systems, conditioning, selection and packaging and on-farm processing units, including mobile processing units
- ❖ Purchase - including by leasing – of new machinery and equipment, including of irrigation systems, agricultural trailers, technological trailer, within the limit of market value of that good
- ❖ Purchase - including by leasing –of compact, cool transportation means, for the marketing of products within short chains, respectively:
  - Isotherm auto vehicle (with or without cold)
  - Food Campers and self-driving campers

*These transport vehicles can be used for transport of raw materials, commercialization of the primary production, of conditioned and/or processed products, under the short chain definition. The support rates for these transport vehicles is according the measure 4.2.a*

- ❖ Setup, construction, endowment of the sales areas within the farm and other marketing activities (self-driving campers, wending machines for juices and other products of the fruit growing sector)
- ❖ Setup a website for promotion and commercialization of own products, labelling - design the concept, design the brand /registered trade mark); it will be done in a limit of 5 % of the eligible value of the projects but not more than EUR 30,000. These expenses should be included in the commercialization component
- ❖ Investments that target the improvement of the environmental performances of the orchards (increase the energy efficiency of buildings, rehabilitate buildings, acquisition of installation for renewable energy production at farm level)
- ❖ Fence the area where the investment is done and exploitation road within the farm
- ❖ Fill the gaps with planting material (re-planting); the percentage of the replaced fruit trees should be foreseen in the planting project but cannot be more than 5%. If the project foreseen more than 5%, the difference is considered non –eligible expense
- ❖ Compliance with the EU standards mentioned in the art. 17 (5) or the EU Regulation no. 1305/2013;
- ❖ Acquisition or development of software and acquisition of licenses, patents, authors rights, brands, according art 45 (2) (d), Reg. 1305/2013

**The following investments cannot be financed under the sub-measure 4.1.a:**

- buildings acquisition
- construction/modernization of the house
- acquisition of agricultural licenses, of payments rights, animals, annual plants and their planting - obtaining alcoholic beverages

**Specific non-eligible expenditure:**

- ❖ expenses regarding the acquisition of goods and equipment „second hand”
- ❖ expenses done for investments that are not using the species eligible for this thematic program
- ❖ expenses done for orchard maintenance
- ❖ expenses done for tractor head acquisition
- ❖ expenses done before the contract is signed with the exception of general costs defined by art. 45 align 2 letter c) of the EC Regulation no. 1305/2013 and with the exception of expenses needed for implementation of projects that foreseen setup or reconversion of orchards that can be done after the application is sent according to the art. 60 (2) of the EC Regulation no 1305/2013
- ❖ expenses done for acquisition of transport vehicle for personal use or people transport
- ❖ expenses done with investments that are double financed for the same eligible costs
- ❖ non –eligible expenses according art. 69, align (3) of EC Regulation no nr. 1303/2013 respectively:
  - debit interest rates, except those relating to grants awarded in the form of interest rate subsidies or subsidies for guarantee fee
  - acquisition of land with or without constructions on
  - VAT, except the case it cannot be recuperated according to the national legislation for VAT and specific provisions applicable for financial instruments
  - In case of leasing contracts, other costs related: such as lessor's margin, interest refinancing costs, overheads and insurance charges

**Eligible species for the sub-measure 4.1 a**

<b>SPECIES</b>		
<b>A. Fruit Trees</b>		
Apple	Pear	Quince
Plum	Cherry	Sour-Cherry
Apricot	Peach	Nectarine
Chestnut	Almond	Nuts
<b>B. Forest Fruits</b>		
Black currant	Red currant	White currant
Gooseberry	Garden raspberry	Blueberry
Garden blackberry, Blackberry with or without thorns	Hip rose	Black elder
Rose for petals	Lonicera caerulea	Cornel tree
Sea buckthorn	Black Chokeberry (Aronia)	
<b>C. Strawberry</b>		

**Project selection criteria**

Evaluation of the projects is done on a monthly base for projects that have an estimated score (self-evaluation/pre-scoring) higher or equal with the monthly threshold mentioned in the announcement of the annual call for projects.

**The minimum threshold for project eligibility under this sub-measure is 25 points.**

**Attention!**

It is important that before you sent the application to fairly estimate the score of the project (self – evaluation, pre-scoring) and to mention it in the application, section A “Data about the project type and about the beneficiary”. In case during the project evaluation it is noticed that the applicant estimated its score with more than 20% as compared to the score established by AFIR, the applicant will enter in the selection

process in the final selection report. The final selection report is elaborated after the final monthly selection report of the annual session for applications, and consists of the evaluations of all projects that have a smaller estimated score than the last monthly threshold as well as the projects that have a not fair calculated score.

The score is calculated based on the following principles:

No	Principle	Criteria	Points
1	<p><b>The principle of the priority fruit tree species (peach, nectarine, apple, forest fruits, apricot, cherry):</b></p> <p><i>The points are given proportionally in case the priority to the species that represents the majority from the point of view of the economic size (SO) in the total economic size of orchards proposed in the project.</i></p> <p><i>To benefit of the points under this criterion, the major component of the project, as value, must be represented by investments in setup and /or reconversion of orchards.</i></p> <p><i>In case of associations, the major priority species that will be considered is the one existing at the moment of the application as within the total cumulated economic size of orchards owned by the members of the association. The investment must be for the priority major species.</i></p>	<p>The applicant apply for:</p> <p>a) Peach and/or nectarine and/or apricot</p> <p>b) Forest fruits</p> <p>c)Cherry</p> <p>d)Apple</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>4</b></p>
2	<p><b>The principle of the farm size (small farms)</b></p>	<p>The applicant own or has the right to use an agricultural farm with an economic size of <b>8.000 – 11.999</b> SO (standard production), at the date of the application.</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>
3	<p><b>The principle of the priority cultivation system (intensive, super-intensive, ecologic, under protected spaces), maximum score/principle - 15 points</b></p> <p><i>The points are given proportionally in the situation when the majority priority cultivation system is major form the point of view of the economic size (SO) in total economic size of the orchards proposed through the project.</i></p> <p><i>To benefit of the associated points of this criteria, the major component of the project, as value, must be represented by investments and/or reconversion of orchards.</i></p> <p><i>In case of associations, in order to receive the points, it will be taken into account the major priority cultivation system, from the point of view of the economic size (SO),that exist at the moment of the application, compared with</i></p>	<p>Investment is for the following cultivation system:</p> <p>a) super-intensive and/or protected spaces</p> <p>b)intensive</p> <p>c) ecologic</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>7</b></p>

	<p><i>the cumulated economic size of orchards owned by all members of the association.</i></p> <p><b>Attention!</b></p> <p><i>In case of point c) the propose investment through the project is for ecologic production.</i></p>		
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4	<p><b>The principle of integrated food chains, (investments that cover all food chains: production-conditioning - warehousing-processing – commercialization)</b></p> <p><b>Attention!</b> <i>In case of point a) the processing and/or conditioning component (eligible expenses) is minimum 25% of the total eligible value of the project, and the commercialization component (i eligible expenses) is minimum 5% of the total eligible value of the project.</i></p> <p><b>Attention!</b> <i>In case of point b) the applicant is MARD recognized OIPA<sup>5</sup> member and prove that is processing and/or conditioning and commercialize through the members of the same OIPA.</i></p> <p><i>The associated points of this criterion are given if the processing and/or conditioning and commercialization through the OIPA members represent a providing services action towards the farmer (the applicant), the last one (the farmer) having control of the products and commercialization conditions (for example: establish the final price of the product).</i></p> <p><i>The points are given also in case that the farmer owns a functional processing/conditioning unit or propose through the project investments in primary production and for the conditioning and/or processing (minimum 25% of the total eligible value of the project) and does through the OIPA members only the commercialization.</i></p> <p><i>The applicant does not depend for commercialization and conditioning/processing of the same OIPA member. The number or processing and commercialization units are not limited.</i></p> <p><i>To benefit of the associated points with this criteria it is imposed that the applicant process and/or condition and to commercialize through the OIPA members 100% of the own production.</i></p>	<p>Projects that combine at least two actions that lead to achievement of an integrated food chain as follows:</p> <p>a) primary agricultural production – conditioning and/or processing and commercialization</p> <p>b) integrate primary agricultural production – conditioning and/or processing and commercialization through the OIPA members</p>	<p>15</p> <p>10</p>
5	<b>The principle of association (investments</b>	a) Producers group or	<b>20</b>

<sup>5</sup> OIPA- is the Inter-professional Organizations of Agricultural Producers

	<p><b>done by producers groups, their members and cooperatives in the fruit growing sector)</b></p> <p>The investment is done by a group of producers, their members or by a cooperative</p>	<p>Cooperative</p> <p>b) Member of a producers group, preliminary recognized, of recognized producers group, of an producers organization</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>
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6	<p><b>The principle of the ownership (agricultural holding that own orchards for reconversion and/land for setup orchards)</b></p> <p><i>The score is calculated in accordance with the percentage of the owned compared with the total land that is for the investment land (setup and/or reconversion). The minimum percentage of owned land is 50%.</i></p> <p><i>In case of associations it will be taken into account for score calculation the percentage of the land with orchards owned by the members of the association compared with the total land with orchards. The minimum percentage of owned land is 50%.</i></p>	<p>The applicant owns the orchards for reconversion and/or the land for setup the orchards</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>
7	<p><b>The principle of qualification level (higher education in the domain of the project), maximum score /criterion 5 points.</b></p> <p><i>In case of point a) and b) the applicant must have studies in accordance with what it proposed through the project.</i></p> <p><b>Attention!</b></p> <p><i>In the case that the applicant who is a graduated of the national educational system or an equivalent education (assimilation done by the Ministry of Education), in the same domain as the activity proposed through the project, will present the diploma that certify the graduation of the adequate education.</i></p> <p><i>In case of all types of applicants it will be taken into account the training of the administrator or of the manager.</i></p>	<p>The applicant has the qualification compared with the activity foreseen through the project, as follow:</p> <p>a) higher education</p> <p>b) college studies or post-college studies</p>	<p><b>Maxim 5 points</b></p> <p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>3</b></p>
8	<p><b>The principle of the age (young under 40 years)</b></p> <p><b>Attention!</b> <i>As appropriate, it will be taken into account the age of the administrator, of the manager, of the sole associate or of the major associate.</i></p>	<p>The investment is done by a farmer whose age is under 40, at the date of the application.</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>
9	<p><b>The principle of reconversion (investments that proposed reconversion)</b></p> <p><i>The points are given proportionally to projects that foreseen as major component (over 50% of the total eligible value of the project)</i></p>	<p>The applicant apply for orchards reconversion</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>

	<p><i>orchards reconversion.</i></p> <p><i>The points are given both to the applicants that proposed deforestation through the project and to the ones who have done with maximum 3 years before the application deforestation for orchard setting, or have the land prepared for an orchard setting.</i></p>		
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10	<p><b>The principle of water saving, for projects that foreseen investments for irrigation systems modernization within the farm, by prioritizing investments that aim at large water savings</b></p> <p><i>Attention! The irrigation installations used should be plant localized irrigation</i></p>	<p>Projects that foreseen the modernization of the irrigation systems within the farm ensure, following an ex-ante evaluation, potential water savings &gt;20%</p>	5
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#### **Applicable amounts and support rates**

The non-refundable support will be granted as follows:

##### **In case of small farms 8.000-11.999 SO:**

Support rate is **50% in total eligible expenditure** and it shall not exceed:

- EUR 100,000 for simple acquisition
- EUR 300,000 in case of production activity (set-up and reconversion)
- EUR 450,000 for investments covering the entire food chain (production, processing, marketing)

##### **In case of medium-sized farms 12.000- 250.000 SO:**

The support rate is **50% in total eligible expenditure** and it shall not exceed:

- EUR 200,000 for simple acquisition investments
- EUR 600,000 in case of production activity (set-up and reconversion)
- EUR 900,000 for investments covering the entire food chain (production, processing, marketing)

##### **Production of propagation material and planting material (fruit trees)**

The support rate is **50% in total eligible expenditure** and it shall not exceed:

- EUR 600,000 in case of investments in production activity (equipment).

In case of small and medium-size farms for production of propagation material and planting material the support rate might be increased with 20 % only for the production activity but the combined support rate cannot be over 90%, for: Investments done by young farmers, age under 40 years, at the date of application (as they are defined by art. 2 of R 1305/2013 or have been installed in the last 5 years previous of the application according Annex II of R. 1305/2013)

##### **In case of large farms > 250.000 SO:**

The support rate is **50% in total eligible expenditure** and it shall not exceed:

- EUR 250,000 for simple acquisitions
- EUR 750,000 in case of production activity (setup and reconversion)
- EUR 1,050,000 for investments covering the entire food chain (production, processing, marketing)

**The non-refundable support may be increased by 20% for production activity for:**

- ❖ Operations supported by the EIP<sup>6</sup>

#### **Attention!**

The increase of the support rate in case of operation supported by EIP it will be applied only for the applicants that apply to measure 16.1 projects that target activities similar with sub-measure 4.1a and not to the applicants for sub-measure 4.1

#### **Associative groups**

The support rate is **50% in total eligible expenditure** and it shall not exceed:

- EUR 350,000 for simple acquisitions
- EUR 600,000 for production of propagation material and planting material

#### **Attention!**

**In this case the project proposal should be exclusively for production of propagation material and planting material**

- EUR 750,000 in case of investments in production activity (equipment, setup, reconversion)
- EUR 1,050,000 for investments covering the entire food chain (production, processing, marketing)

*The non-refundable support rate may be increased by 20% for production activity, but the maximum combined support rate shall not exceed 90%, in the following cases:*

- **Collective investments** (investments done by producers groups and cooperatives) and integrated projects – that target to combine at least two operations that are under **two different measures, one being the measure 4**; Combination of operation under more sub-measures of the measure 4 (for example 4.1 with 4.1a or 4.1 with 4.2 etc.) **do not represent** an integrated project.

#### **Attention!**

**For 2015 there will not be made applications for integrated projects – should be postponed due to the following reasons:**

- The sub-measures that could lead to elaboration of integrated projects were launched in stages
- Should be given equal chances to all applicants interested to submit integrated projects

#### **Attention!**

In the above situation, whether the two conditions are met (integrated projects and collective investment) or only one of those two conditions, the intensity will only increase by 20 % for:

- ❖ Operations supported by EIP

#### **Attention!**

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<sup>6</sup> EIP-European Innovation Partnership



**The increase of the support rate in case of operation supported by EIP it will applied only for the applicants that apply to measure 16.1 projects that target activities similar with sub-measure 4.1a and not to the applicants for sub-measure 4.1**

- Investments connected with the operations foreseen by the art. 28 (Agro environment) and by the art. 29 (Ecological agriculture) of the EC Regulation no. 1305/2013

- In case of ecological agriculture (art 29) is possible to obtain an increase support rate of 20% in case that the investment is done exclusively for the ecologic cultivation system **(in conversion or certified)**

- In case of art 28 (Agro environment), the supplementary increase is possible only for the equivalent value of the light equipment and of other similar investments used in case of traditional orchards in an extensive cultivation system according MO<sup>7</sup> no.619/2015 (for example: light equipment for hay mowing, spreading manure, equipment for transport hay and manure, etc.)

#### **Attention!**

In the above situation, whether the two conditions are met (integrated projects and collective investment) is fulfilled or only one of those two conditions, the intensity will only increase by 20 percentage points.

Areas that faced natural constrain and other specific constrains, mentioned in art. 32 of the EC Regulation no.1305/2013, increase with 20 % for investments integrally done in one or more localities which has mentioned ANC ZM, ANC SEMN, ANC-SPEC<sup>8</sup>- Annex 3 of the Applicant Guide

#### **Attention!**

\*the increase is given only in the case that the applicant is doing in its own holding investments along the entire food chain (production\*\*, processing and commercialization).

The applicants that implement partially the integrated food chain (for example only investment in production – commercialization or production - processing) will benefit of the amount foreseen for the production activity and not for the integrated chain.

\*\*„production” is assimilated to the primary agricultural production

In case projects include processing activities within the farm, the applicable support rates for the processing and commercialization activities of products listed in the Annex I of TFEU will be according applicable rates mentioned in the Annex II of EC Regulation no. 1305/2013 (specific to sub-Measure 4.2a).

Eligible costs per ha of orchard will meet the limits of the standard costs supplied and assumed by ICDP Maracineni. Also, the entire eligible value of the project will meet the maximum limit and intensity of the support rates.

The private contribution of the beneficiary could be represented by the in-kind contribution –as works done at own expenses that will be evaluated also based on the standard costs for works supplied by ICDP Maracineni.

#### **Attention!**

The value of in-kind contribution cannot be over the value of private contribution.

In case projects include processing activities within the farm, the applicable support rates for the processing and commercialization activities of products listed in the Annex I of TFEU will be according applicable rates mentioned in the Annex II of Reg. 1305/2013 (specific to sub-Measure 4.2a)., respectively :

- 50% in case the applicants falls under category SME
- 40% in case of large enterprise

**These support rates will not increase in any of the cases previously mentioned.** In this case will be filled in Budget and Supplementary Financial Plan

#### **Attention!**

The economic size of an agricultural holding is calculated according the point Assessment of the Farm category within the Financing Application (detailed also in the Evaluation File).

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<sup>7</sup> MO- Minister Order

<sup>8</sup> These are areas with various constrains – disadvantaged, mountain areas disadvantaged

## **Attention!**

**To the public co-financing grant must be added the private contribution of the applicant** (that can include also in-kind contribution).

### **List of documents needed for the application file - depending on the investment type:**

1. a) Feasibility study together with the Project for the orchard setup (in case of setup/reconversion of orchards), project that have to be approved by ICDP Maracineni or the R&D stations in the fruit growing sector. The project has to be submitted including for the orchard reconversion! For the simple acquisition will be filled in only the information requested for this type of investment.

1. b) The technical expertise of the existing building

1. c) The report regarding the actual status of works

2. Financial situations of the previous year the application is done (balance sheet – form 10, profit and loss account - form 20, forms 30 and 40), registered at the Local Financial Administration

3. Documents requested for:

Agricultural field:

a) Copy of the notary authenticated document certifying the ownership right on the land or a centralized situation issued by the Local Council that includes the summary of the leasing /concession contracts with minimum 15 years validity, excepting nurseries, strawberry crops, raspberry, blackberry, currant and gooseberry where the minimum validity period is 10 years from the data of application submission

b) Copy from the Agricultural Register issued by the Local Council with maximum 30 days before the application submission and that certify the ownership right or the use right for the land where is going to be realized the investment

Building (buildings and/or land) where the investments will made on:

a) The ownership paper for the building, concession contract that certify the right use with minimum 15 years validity, excepting nurseries, strawberry crops, raspberry, blackberry, currant and gooseberry where the minimum validity period is 10 years from the data of application submission

b) The document that certify the ownerships right on the land, concession contract with minimum 15 years validity, excepting nurseries, strawberry crops, raspberry, blackberry, currant and gooseberry where the minimum validity period is 10 years from the data of application

c) The document for the animals owned: extract from the Holding Register issued by the ANSVSA/DSVSA with maximum 30 days before the application is done

d) Extract of the Land Registry or Document certifying that the works for the cadastre are not completed for land where the new investments will be built or for upgrades

4. Urbanism Certificate or Construction Authorization for projects that foreseen constructions. The urbanism certificate does not need to be accompanied by the mentioned authorizations as being needed for the next phase.

5. The classification of the notification from EPA

Decision of initial evaluation stage – proves that the applicant have initiated the procedure for the environmental authorization request

or,

Decision – that specify that the project do not have to go through the procedure of environmental impact assessment

or,

Environment Authorization /Notification Natura 2000

6. Documents that certify there are no fiscal or social residual debts- these documents have to be submitted at the moment when the contract for financing is signed

7. These documents have to be submitted at the moment when the contract for financing is signed :

7.1 Document issued by the DSVSA according to the Protocol closed between AFIR & ANSVSA – published on the page [www.afir.info](http://www.afir.info)

7.2 Document issued by the County Public Health Department (DSP) according to the Protocol closed between AFIR & DSP – published on the page [www.afir.info](http://www.afir.info)

8. For the holdings that are upgrading and are authorizing according to the legislation:

8.1 Sanitary authorization / Notification issued with maximum 1 year before the application submission

8.2 Findings Note regarding the environmental conditions – for functioning units, if there is the case

9. a) The Registration Certificate issued by the National Office of Commerce Register (ONRC)

9. b) Final Court Order issued based on the Incorporation Act and the statute

9. c) Incorporation Act that certify the applicant is an agricultural holding, agricultural cooperative, etc. that is active in the fruit growing sector

9. d) Document of the establishment of the Research Institutes, of R&D centres and stations in the agricultural sector

10.1 Higher Studies Diploma in the agricultural sector

10.2 Post-secondary schools and secondary-schools graduation diploma in the agricultural sector

10.3 Vocational school graduation diploma in the agricultural sector

10.4 Extract of the General Registry of the Employees –that certify the registration of the work contract

11. In case of projects that includes investment in irrigations:

11.1 Notification of water management / notification for the start of the new investment

Or

Authorization for water management/ notification for putting into operation

11.2 Notification issued by ANIF (National Agency for Land Improvement) – if there is the case

11.3 Document issued by OUI (Organization of Water users) regarding the connection approval –if there is the case

12. Authorisation for production, processing and commercialization of seeds and planting material

13. Planting authorization

14. Deforestation authorization

15. Document that certify the quality of being OIPA member

15.1 Document issued by the OIPA that prove the applicant have the quality of OIPA member together with the Incorporation and the OIPA Statute

15.2 Pre-contracts/contracts/ with OIPA members for the own production processing /commercialization.

16. Pre –contracts closed with juridical persons for the own products commercialization

17. The registration file of producers in ecological agriculture, issued by County Agricultural Directorate (DAJ) together with the contract closed with an Inspection and Certification Unit.

18.1 Documents requested for the producers groups or cooperative

a) Registration certificate issued by the ONRC

b) Incorporation Act that certify the applicant is an agricultural holding, agricultural cooperative, etc.

18.2 Documents requested for a member of a producers group or of a producers organization

Document issued by the producer's group/cooperative enterprise/ agricultural cooperative – that certify the applicant is a member, together with the Incorporation Act and the Statute.

19. Other justify documents (will be specified according to the case)

To summarize, the needed documents per stage are the following:

Stage	Documents	Remarks
Application	<p>The application file; Documents available on AFIR web site - <a href="http://www.afir.info">www.afir.info</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financing application – Annex 1</li> <li>- Feasibility study – Annex 2</li> </ul> <p>Feasibility study should be submitted together with the project for the orchard setup (technical projects are mandatory including for the orchard reconversion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical project framework</li> <li>- Financing contract model: Annex 5</li> </ul>	<p>First check if the specie(s) foreseen by the project to be planted are eligible for the thematic sub-program for the fruit growing sector and the proposed area has a mark <math>\geq 2.40</math> for the proposed specie(s).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make the <b>technical project of the orchard</b> including the cost calculation for works needed and for inputs- Check if your costs (works &amp; inputs) are within the limits foreseen by the document „Standard Costs” – available at <a href="http://www.afir.info">www.afir.info</a></li> <li>* <b>The technical project has to be approved by the IDCP Maracineni or by one of the R&amp;D Stations in the fruit growing sector</b></li> <li>- If the project foreseen irrigation system start from ,0’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in order to obtain a water use permit there are more steps to follow depending what source of water it is going to be used:</li> <li>• for a surface water source – a hydrological study is needed- this is done only by the River Basin Management Administration</li> <li>• for a groundwater water source a geohydrological study has to done by an authorized expert, study that have to be approved by the National Institute of Water Management (INHGA). Environmental authorisation will be needed too- an authorised expert should do the documentation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- The model of the feasibility study is available at <a href="http://www.afir.info">www.afir.info</a> (Annex2) - for simple acquisitions will be filled in only the point for this type of investments</li> </ul>
Contract signing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documents proving the capacity and the source for co-financing</li> <li>- Certificates attesting the absence of tax and social debts</li> <li>- Document issued by County Department Sanitary-Veterinary and Food Safety (DSVSA)</li> <li>- Document issued by the County Department of Public Health (DSP)</li> <li>- Environmental agreement without impact study for projects not requiring environmental impact assessment</li> </ul>	<p>In order to sign the financing contract, no later than 5 working days since receiving the Notification for selection, the applicant will present himself at OJFIR (for projects without Construction + Installations) /CRFIR headquarter (for projects with C+I) with an original copy of the printed Application File and annexes, according to documentation submitted online, which will remain at OJFIR/CRFIR.</p> <p><b>To verify the copies of the documents submitted both printed and online, the original copy will be needed.</b></p>
Payments	<p>The payment file:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Request for payment in advance</li> <li>- Request for payment</li> <li>- Declaration for rescheduling the application for payment submission</li> <li>- Declaration of expenses</li> <li>- Execution Report</li> <li>- Declaration on the beneficiary own risk</li> </ul>	
Monitoring		<p>The validity of the financing contract covers the contract execution period plus five years of monitoring from the last payment made by the Contracting Authority.</p>

## **1.2 Sub-measure 4.2a: Investments in the products of the fruits growing sector processing/ marketing**

This sub-measure falls, according the EC Regulation 1305/ 2013, art.17, under the Measure 4 „Investments in physical assets „and contributes to the intervention domain **DI 3A** *“Improvements of the primary producers competitiveness through a better integration in the food chain through quality scheme, increase the agricultural products added value, promotion on the local markets, of the short chains for supply, of the producers groups and of the inter-professional organizations”* and the domain **DI 6A** *“Diversification of facilitation, of establishment and development of small enterprises and to create jobs”*.

The applications come under the two interventions domains 3A, respectively 6 A, as follows:

### **DI 3A**

Individual and /collective investments lead to development and modernization of processing units and agricultural products commercialization, compliance with the European standards, including modern technologies, innovations and new ideas, as well as facilities for the energy efficiency, the enterprises productivity and the added value of agricultural products increase, investments regarding the warehousing and packaging facilities, quality management systems, environmental friendly systems, labelling, promotion and marketing within the food chains; investments for modernization and extension of collection and conditioning systems, in conjunction with marketing activities and products quality increase.

### **DI 6A**

Investments that will contribute to the setup of new local processing units for agricultural products and to the promotion of the integrated food chains, actions that will have direct impact on jobs creation and on employment promotion.

Within this sub-measure the support is granted to enterprises for tangible and intangible assets, investments for fruits processing and fruits products marketing for:

- Modernization and setup of processing and commercialization units
- Introduction of new technologies for development of new products and technological processes
- Increase the added value of products from the fruit growing sector
- Improvement of the internal quality control
- Increase the number of jobs
- Decrease of energy consumption and of GES emissions

Also, the investments in the processing industry will take into account - to diminish the footprint on the environment by encouraging new methods for food products storage, for increased food safety, for products better adapted to the market demands, methods for waste use and waste water treatment for environment protection, buildings rehabilitation.

### ***The total public contribution:***

#### **DI 3A**

2014-2020: EUR 13,807,925

2015: EUR 3,451,981

#### **DI 6A**

2014-2020: EUR 20,711,888

2015: EUR 5,177,972

## **Beneficiaries**

Under the sub-measure 4.2a eligible beneficiaries are the enterprises (micro, small and medium according the Law 346/2004 - regarding the stimulation of setup and development of small and medium enterprises with all its following amendments as well as large enterprises), cooperatives, producers groups that make tangible and intangible investments for the agricultural products<sup>9</sup> processing and marketing.

The categories of eligible applicants that can receive non-reimbursable support funds are:

- Authorized physical persons
- Individual Enterprises
- Family Enterprises
- Partnership Enterprises
- Simple Commandite Enterprises
- Joint—Stock Enterprises
- Joint - Stock Commandite Enterprises
- Limited Liability Enterprises
- Private Commercial Enterprises
- R&D Institutes, Stations and education unit sin the fruit growing sector, with public or private juridical status
- Agricultural Cooperative Enterprises
- Agricultural Cooperatives
- Groups of Producers

There are several categories of beneficiaries restricted for financing such as those registered in the debtors data base for previous EU financing programs until complete reimbursement of the debt and corresponding interest, applicants with EU financed projects stopped at own or with trials in a court of law, applicants that failed to present co-financing proofs or technical project, applicants submitting several projects under the same call and /or under different calls of the same sub-measure that form together a unitary production and/or processing flow, etc. The groups or producers preliminary recognized and producers organizations in the sector of fruits and vegetables (they will receive support through the Common Market Organization (I Pillar). Instead, the members of these associations can be eligible applicants. Also not eligible are the beneficiaries are implementing projects under measures 123 and 411 of the previous rural development program 2007-2013 as well as beneficiary of the measure 6.1\* (until the installation), 6.3\* (until is granted the second payment for the sub-measures under which they have projects in implementation).

\* sub-measure 6.1: Installation of the young farmer is considered finalized at the moment of the right implementation of the business plan

\*\* sub-measure 6.3: the second payment of 25% out the total value of support will be granted at the moment the actions foreseen by the business plan are finalized

### **Attention!**

**For the beneficiaries of the EU funds that during the project implementation as well as during the monitoring period change the type and the size that the enterprise had at the application date, namely from micro to small or medium one, respectively from small or medium to “other enterprises “, the financing expenses remain eligible for the whole period of the project implementation and during the monitoring period.**

**The applicant has to meet the following:**

- **to be a Romanian juridical person**
- **to act in its own name**

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<sup>9</sup> Products listed in the Annex I of the TFEU, excepting fishery products

- **to provide stable and sufficient financial resources along the project implementation period**

***Minimum compulsory conditions needed for obtaining the financial support***

**Attention!**

In order to prove that you fulfil the minimum conditions the feasibility study must include all information according to the project and to present all needed documents that prove the information.

**The applicant must come under the category of eligible beneficiaries - the following documents are needed:**

- documents regarding the setup of the beneficiary
- financial situations
- documents regarding the ownership of the land and/or buildings for investments
- certificates that prove the beneficiary has no fiscal or social debts
- assimilation of obligations and commitments documents mentioned in the Declaration F
- following AFIR experts check and of the National Office of Commerce Register (NOCR) that the applicant is not on the list of beneficiaries that are impelled for financing by AFIR for 2014-2020

**Investments must come under at least one of the eligible actions foreseen by this sub-measure:**

Investments in tangible assets in the processing sector for the fruits growing sector products for:

- Setup, development and/or modernization of units that process raw materials from the fruits growing sector mentioned in the Annex I of the TFEU
- Setup, development and /or modernization of local collection networks, warehousing, conditioning, sorting and packaging facilities
- Production and use of renewable energy in own holding
- Marketing actions ( are not eligible projects that target only marketing actions);

Investments in intangible assets for:

- Organization and implementation of food quality and security management systems if they are connected with the tangible assets of the project
- Acquisition of technologies (know-how), patents and licenses for preparation of project implementation
- Acquisition of software, identified as necessary in the technical documentation of the project

The criteria are considered to be fulfilled based on the correlation of the information in the Feasibility study, the notifications from the public institutions (EPA, *county Public Health Department (DSP) and County Food Safety and Veterinary Department -DSVSA*) and the Urbanism Certificate.

**The economic viability of the investment must be proven in the technical-economical documents**

The following cumulative conditions are checked:

- (3) The financial results of the previous year should be positive /incomes should be at least equal with expenses – In case of authorized persons, individual enterprises and family enterprises (the form 200 together with its annexes)
- (4) Economic-financial indicators have to come under the mentioned limits

**The applicant must prove the investment co-financing capacity**

- Declaration F - the proof of the co-financing capacity has to be submitted before signing the financing contract

**The applicant must not be in difficulty, according to the legislation in force**

*There are checked: the online service RECOM of National Office of Commerce Register for the CAEN code and the status of the applicants, Fiscal Certificate, Juridical Certificate, financial papers of the last two years, the Acknowledgement Certificate, the notifications issued by the bank(s) that give the credit.*



**The investment has to be done only in the territorial units presented in the Annex of the National Framework for Implementation of the Sub-thematic program in the fruits growing sector.**

**The investment will fulfil the legislation in force in the area of public health, veterinary and food safety.**

*There are checked the documents issued by county Public Health Department (DSP) and County Food Safety and Veterinary Department (DSVSA).*

**The investment will be preceded by an Environmental Impact Assessment, according to the legislation in force.**

*There are checked the documents issued by county EPA*

**The support will be limited to investments in agricultural products processing; the products must be included in the list of the Annex I of the TFUE and products obtained should be also included.**

### **Attention!**

The result of the agricultural product processing can be exclusively a product included in the Annex I of TFUE. In case that the agricultural products processing result is a product non-Annex I, will be financed through the State Aid Scheme "Stimulation of regional development through investments, including in the fruit growing sector, for agricultural products processing and marketing for obtaining non-agricultural products " and only starting with the date of its entry into force.

The criterion is considered fulfilled if, the proposed project is processing raw materials part of the Annex I of TFUE and the resulted product is also part of the Annex I of TFUE; all these details have to be detailed in the Feasibility Study and should be conform with the provisions of this Annex (Annex 4 of the applicant guide).

**Investments done for production of alcoholic drinks can be done only by the beneficiaries that come under the category micro-enterprises in accordance with the Law 346/2004 with all it following amendments and /or the category of associations (producers groups and cooperatives).**

The condition is considered fulfilled based on the information in the feasibility study as well as by the category of the applicants (micro enterprise with the exception of associations (producers groups and cooperatives).

#### ***Attention! Eligible alcoholic drinks:***

- Apples cider, pears cider, wine from fruits with an alcoholic concentration over 0.5% vol (for example wine form pears, cranberries wine, etc.), mix of refined drinks with an alcoholic concentration over 0.5% vol.
- The above drinks to which were added certain percentages of distilled alcohol, water sugar syrup, flavours, colouring, and, for some of these, a cream base, that made them loose taste, smell and/or appearance of a drink made from fruits or a natural products, in other words, the characteristics of a refined drinks , **are not eligible.**
- Un-denaturized ethyl alcohol of any strength, obtained from fruits and for the human consumption. Even if it is proper for the human consumption, differs from other alcoholic products due to the fact has no aromatic substances.

Ethylic alcohol and other denaturized distillate drinks are products to which were at purpose added substances to make them unfit for human consumption but could be used for industrial purposes.

**The applicant will demonstrate that the annual average profit (as average of the last three fiscal years) is not exceeding 4 x the value of the financial support requested.**

#### ***Types of investments and eligible costs:***

The non-reimbursable funds will be granted to eligible applicants for specific tangible and intangible investments according the following list:

### **Expenses for tangible investments**

- Setup, extension and modernization of collecting, conditioning and processing units for the raw material from the fruit-growing sector covered by Annex I to the TFEU
- Constructions for one step or the entire technological flux (collection-warehousing (raw material/products)- sorting- conditioning-processing-commercialization)
- Internal infrastructure and utilities, as well as needed connections for the project
- Mobile processing units
- Acquisition, including in leasing, of new equipment, installations and specialized transport units for raw material collection

### **Attention!**

It is allowed the acquisition of equipment, installations needed for the technological flux as well as the ones used for decrease of the energy consumption and of the GES emissions.

- The specialized transport units will be eligible if they transport specific types of raw materials corresponding to the activities described in the project proposal:
  - o Auto-isotherm vehicle (have thermal insulation of the walls but no cold aggregate – used for the transport of food goods)
  - o Auto-isotherm vehicle with cold (transport for perishable products or with controlled temperatures)
  - o Specialized equipment the reception of goods: lifting, rolling, towing, handling
- Acquisition, including leasing, of specialized transport units specialized for commercialization of fruits products within the short chains will be eligible for:
  - o Auto-isotherm vehicle (have thermal insulation on the walls but no cold – used for the transport of food goods)
  - o Auto-isotherm vehicle with cold (transport for perishable products or with controlled temperatures)
  - o Food Campers and self-driving campers

Expenses with any other transportation units are not eligible.

- Investments in renewable energy for own consumption\* and/or energy efficiency, water savings systems and technologies for waste disposal in own unit.
- Expenses generated by the internal quality control improvement and conformation with the new standards\*\* imposed by the European legislation for processing and commercialization of food products. Expenses with marketing activities (for example- equipment for labelling, products packaging, shops at the gate, automat vending units).

The financial leasing is considered an eligible expense.

\* only investments in production of renewable energy solar, wind, geothermal and the one produced with heat pumps, for own consumption are eligible.

\*\* Expenses will be eligible starting with the moment the new standards for the agro-food sector are on the market, and after they are mandatory for the processing unit.

### **Expenses for intangible assets investments**

- Organization and implementation of quality and security management systems, if they are connected to the tangible investments of the project;
- Acquisition of technologies (know-how), patents and licenses for preparation of project implementation ;
- Acquisition of software, identified as necessary in the technical documentation of the project
- Expenses for the obtained products marketing :

- create a website – for promotion and commercialization of own products
- labelling (concept design);
- create trade register mark/brand

These expenses will be done in a limit of 5 % of the eligible value of the projects but not more than EUR 30,000.

**General costs of the project eligible are:**

- General costs according the art.45, align 2 letter c) of the EC Regulation no. 1305/2013, generated by the construction or rehabilitation of buildings and acquisition or purchase through leasing of vehicles and new equipment, within the market value of the good, fees for architect, engineers and consultants will be done in the limit of 10% of the total eligible expenses for projects that foresees construction and assembly, and in the limit of 5% for projects that foreseen simple acquisition.

Expenses regarding the general costs of the project are eligible if they met the provision of the art.45

Of the EC Regulation no.1305/2013 and fulfil the following conditions:

- a) are foreseen or result from the application of legislation for obtaining notifications, agreements and authorizations needed for implementation of the eligible activities of the project or they occur due to the minimum requests imposed by NRDP 2014 - 2020
- b) refer to, depending on the case: studies and/or analyses regarding the economic and environmental sustainability, feasibility study, technical project, document for notification of intervention works done according the legislation in force
- c) are necessary in the public acquisitions process for the eligible activities of the project
- d) cover coordination and supervision activities of the execution and acceptance of the construction-assembly works

**Consultancy expenses and for the project management are eligible if they meet the condition above mentioned and are deducted proportionally with the value of each payment of the project.** There are excepted consultancy expenses done for the application file drawing; these expenses can be deducted integral within the first payment.

These expenses include the support services during project implementation.

**The fairness of the prices is secured, depending on the case, through:**

- a) are under the prices thresholds from the AFIR data base**
- b) two offers for goods and services are presented in the case of a value over EUR 15,000, one offer in case of goods and services whit value lower than EUR 15,000**
- c) declaration of the designer within the Feasibility Study**

***Types of investments and not eligible costs:***

Through the sub-measure 4.2a cannot be financed the following investments:

- Buildings acquisition
- Construction and modernization of the house and offices
- Production of bio-fuels and pellets

Non-eligible expenses are:

- Expenses with acquisition of goods and equipment „second hand”
- Expenses done before the financing contract is signed excepting the general costs defined in art. 45, align 2, letter c) of the EC Regulation no. 1305/2013 that can be done before the application is submitted

- Expenses with the acquisition of transport vehicle for personal use or people transport
- Expenses with investments that are subject of double financing for the same eligible activities
- Expenses with the acquisition of the tractor head
- Expenses generate by investments for fruits species that are not eligible for the thematic sub-program for the fruit growing sector
- Not-eligible expenses according art. 69, align (3)of the EC Regulation no. 1303/2013, namely:
  - o debit interest rates, excepting those relating to grants awarded in the form of interest rate subsidies or subsidies for guarantee fee
  - o acquisition of land with or without construction
  - o VAT, excepting the case this cannot be recuperate according national legislation for VAT and specific provisions for financial instruments
- In case of leasing contracts, other costs related: such as
  - o lessor's margin, interest refinancing costs, overheads and insurance charges, including costs for maintenance and rent

**Project selection criteria**

Evaluation of the projects is done on a monthly base for projects that have an estimated score (self-evaluation/pre-scoring) higher or equal with the monthly threshold mentioned in the announcement of the annual call for projects.

**The minimum threshold for project eligibility under this sub-measure is 15 points.**

**It is important that before you sent the application to fairly estimate the score of project (self –evaluation, pre-scoring) and to mention it in the application, section A “Data about the project type and about the beneficiary”.** In case during the project evaluation it is noticed that the applicant estimated its score with more than 20% as compared to the score established by AFIR, the applicant will enter in the selection process in the final selection report. The final selection report is elaborated after the final monthly selection report of the annual session for applications, and consists of the evaluations of all projects that have a smaller estimated score than the last monthly threshold as well as the projects that have a not fair calculated score

**The score is calculated based on the following selection principles:**

No.	Principles	Selection criteria	Points
	Principle of products with high added value ( ecologic, from areas High Natural Value (HNV), quality scheme, traditional certified by MARD)	1. The investment is exclusively for ecological products.  Will be scored projects that propose exclusively investments for obtaining ecological products according provisions of the Order 181/2012 for approval of rules regarding the organization of the inspection and certification system in the ecologic agriculture.	<b>10</b>
		2. The investments is for:  a) products that take part at the systems from the agricultural products quality and are recognised at European level.	<b>Maxim 30p</b>

		Will be scored projects submitted by applicants who are located in the area covered by the documentation submitted for registration of Protected Geographical Indications (PGI) and of the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), of the Traditional speciality Guaranteed (TSG) for the products that take part at quality systems recognised at European level, as well as the use of the optional quality term ‘Mountain product’, by assuming the provisions of the Regulation 1151/2012 regarding the domains of agricultural and food products quality.	<b>30</b>
		<b>b) Traditional products</b> Will be scored the projects exclusively for investments for traditional products achievement according the regulation	<b>20</b>
		c) Food products obtained according a dedicated Romanian recipe  Will be scored projects for investments for food products obtained according a dedicated Romanian recipe according the provision of the Regulation 394/2014 regarding the certification of these products.  At least one of the product types obtained must be according a dedicated Romanian recipe that is in the category of the products the applicant will commercialize.	<b>15</b>
		d) Products from holdings located in areas HNV  Will be scored projects that foreseen the use of raw material from area HNV (can be found on the List of Administrative Units eligible for packages 1 & 2 of the measure 10 of NRDP, annex 8 of the applicant guide).	

		- the types of products mentioned above can be ecologic and so the maximum score of the project corresponding to the criterion 1 can be cumulated with the one of the criterion 2.	
	Principle of integrated food chains (investments that cover the whole food chain: collection, warehousing, conditioning, processing and commercialization);	<p><b>3. The investment cover the following steps of the food chain:</b></p> <p>a) collection – warehousing - conditioning - processing and direct commercialization;</p> <p>Will be scored projects that foreseen new investments or modernization for at least 3 components of the food chain.</p> <p>The applicant proves that it has a working processing unit or proposes through the project investments in processing.</p> <p>The applicant proves the direct commercialization capacity or foreseen through the projects commercialization component.</p>	<p><b>Maxim 40 p</b></p> <p><b>40</b></p>
		<p>b) collection – warehousing – conditioning - processing;</p> <p>Will be scored projects that foreseen new investments or modernization for at least 2 components of the food chain.</p> <p>The applicant proves that it has a working processing unit or proposes through the project investments in processing.</p>	<b>25</b>
		<p>c) collection – warehousing - conditioning - commercialization</p> <p>Will be scored projects that foreseen a new investments or modernization for at least 2 components of the food chain, out of which one is compulsory warehousing. The score will be granted only in the context or local</p>	<b>20</b>

		collection networks	
		<p>d) Operations for at least one component that fill in the integrated food chain.</p> <p>Will be scored projects that foreseen at least one component that fill in the integrated food chain, achieved through the recognized OIPA.</p> <p>The applicant is OIPA member.</p> <p>Out of the operations associated with the food chain, collection or direct commercialization can be done through the recognised OIPA members, representing services providing towards the applicant, that has control of the products and commercialization conditions (for example: establish the final price of the product).</p> <p>The applicant proves that it has a working processing unit or proposes through the project investments in processing.</p> <p>The number of OIPA members that offer services to the applicant is not limited. Operations done through OIPA members that fill in the food chain will be done 100% through them.</p> <p>Will not be granted points to projects that foresee only commercialization, even if this one is the component that close the food chain.</p>	<b>15</b>
	Principle of association (investments done by the producers groups and cooperatives in the fruit growing sector).	4. The investment is done by a group of producers or by a cooperative	<b>20</b>

### **Maximum value of the non-reimbursable funds (support intensity)**

Through the sub-measure 4.2a the non-reimbursable support rate rata will be 50% of the total eligible expenses for SME's and 40% for large enterprises.

The non-refundable support will be granted as follows:

#### **1. Micro and small enterprises (including associations):**

The support rate is **50% in total eligible expenditures** and it shall not exceed:

- ❖ EUR 600,000 for projects that do not foresee investments that lead to an integrated food chain
- ❖ EUR 900,000 for investments covering the entire food chain\*\* (collection, selection, storage, packaging, processing)

The non-refundable support may be increased by 20 percentage points in the following case:

- ❖ Operations supported by the EIP\*

#### **2. Medium-sized enterprises (including associations):**

The support rate is **50% in total eligible expenditures** and it shall not exceed:

- ❖ EUR 800,000 for projects that do not foresee investments that lead to an integrated food chain
- ❖ EUR 1,100,000 for investments covering the entire food chain (collection, selection, storage, packaging, processing)

The non-refundable support may be increased by 20 percentage points in the following case:

- ❖ Operations supported by the EIP

#### **3. Large enterprises**

The support rate is **40% in total eligible expenditures** and it shall not exceed:

- ❖ EUR 1,000,000 for projects that do not foresee investments that lead to an integrated food chain
- ❖ EUR 1,500,000 for investments covering the entire food chain (collection, selection, storage, packaging, processing)

The non-refundable support may be increased by 20 percentage points in the following case:

- ❖ Operations supported by the EIP

#### **4. Production of alcoholic drinks:**

Investments associated with production or alcoholic drinks will be supported only for micro-enterprise and association (producers groups and cooperatives) and the support will be limited as follow:

The support rate is **50% in total eligible expenditures** and it shall not exceed:

- ❖ EUR 200,000 for micro-enterprises
- ❖ EUR 300,000 for associations (producers groups and cooperatives)

The non-refundable support may be increased by 20 percentage points in the following case:

- ❖ Operations supported by the EIP

### **Attention!**

\* **The increase of the support rate in case of operation supported by EIP it will applied only for the applicants that apply to measure 16.1 projects that target activities similar with sub-measure 4.2a and not to the applicants for sub-measure 4.2.a.**



### **Attention!**

**\*\*The amount is granted only in case the applicant does through the project, in its own unit, investments along the entire food chain (collection, selection, storage, packaging, processing and commercialization);**

Excepted from the above mentioned are the local collection networks where the integrated food chain is represented by collection – selection – storage – packaging – processing – commercialization;

The applicants that achieve only partially the integrated food chain (for example only investments in collection - processing or collecting – commercialization) will be granted the support associated with projects that do not lead to an integrated food chain.

### **Attention!**

**SME's are enterprises with an average number of employees smaller than 250 and realise a net turnover up to 50 million Euro, the equivalent in RON, or own total assets under the equivalent in RON of 43 million Euro, according last approved financial situation.**

Large enterprises are those enterprise that do not cumulative met the conditions for coming under the category of SME's.

In case of integrated projects, the activities of those projects must keep to the specific rules applicable to each sub-measure of different measures of the NRDP 2014-2020, compulsory one of these being the measure 4 „Investments in physical assets", sub-measure 4.2a „Support for investments in processing/marketing of products from the fruit growing sector”.

The combination of operations under more sub-measures of the measure 4 (for example 4.2 with 4.2a or 4.2.a with 4.1 etc.) **does not represent an integrated project.**

**Based on the technical- economical documentation submitted, an integrated project must prove a better orientation of the investment and to lead to efficiency increase of the activities done together (activities must be complementary).Accordingly, the added value of activities done together compared with their application separately must be justified.**

### **Attention!**

**For 2015 applications for integrated projects will not be possible, they should be postponed due to the following reasons:**

- The sub-measures that could lead to elaboration of integrated projects are launched in stages
- Equal chances should be given to all applicants interested to submit integrated projects

### **List of documents needed for the application file - depending on the investment type:**

1. a) Feasibility study. For the simple acquisition will be filled in only the information requested for this type of investment.

1. b) The technical expertise of the existing building

1. c) The report regarding the actual status of works

2. Financial situations of the previous year the application is done (balance sheet – form 10, profit and loss account - form 20, forms 30 and 40), registered at the Local Financial Administration

3. Documents requested for:

Building (buildings and/or land) where the investments will made on:

a) The ownership paper for the building, concession contract that certify the use right with minimum 10 years validity from the data of application

b) The document that certify the ownerships right on the building, concession contract with minimum 10 years validity from the data of application

c) Extract of the Land Registry or Document certifying that the works for the cadastre are not completed for land where the new investments will be built or for upgrades.

4. Urbanism Certificate or Construction Authorization for projects that foreseen constructions. The urbanism certificate does not need to be accompanied by the mentioned authorizations they being needed for the next phase.

5. Classification of the notification

Decision of initial evaluation stage – proves that the applicant have initiated the procedure for the environmental authorization request

or,

Decision of the framing stage – that specify that the project do not have to go through the procedure of environmental impact assessment

or,

Environment Authorization /Notification Natura 2000

6! Documents that certify the capacity and the source for co-financing issued by a financial institution – to be submitted in maximum 90 days from the moment of the project selection notification

7. These documents have to be submitted at the moment of the contract closure:

7.1 Documents that certify there are no fiscal or social residual debts

7.2 Identification record for the legal representative of the applicant

8. These documents have to be submitted at the moment of the contract closure

8.1 Document issued by the County Sanitary & Veterinary Direction (DSVSA) according to the Protocol closed between AFIR & ANSVSA – published on the page [www.afir.info](http://www.afir.info)

8.2 Document issued by the County Public Health (DSP) according to the Protocol closed between AFIR & DSP – published on the page [www.afir.info](http://www.afir.info)

9. For the holdings that are upgrading and are authorizing according to the legislation:

9.1 Sanitary authorization / Notification issued

9.2 Findings Note regarding the environmental conditions – for functioning units, if there is the case.

10. a) The Registration Certificate issued by the Nation Office of Commerce Register (ONRC) ;

10. b) Act of Establishment that certify the applicant is an agricultural holding, agricultural cooperative, etc, that is active in the agricultural products processing sector

10. c) Document issued by the OIPA that prove the applicant have the quality of OIPA member together with the Establishment Act of and the Statute of the OIPA. Pre-contracts/contracts/ with OIPA members for the own production processing /commercialization.

11. Conformity Certificate for the ecologic food-products

11.1 for upgrades: conformity certificate for the ecologic food-products

11.2 for new investments:

a) registration file as processor and producer in the ecologic agriculture

b) contract with a certification and inspection unit

12. Product Conformity Certificate

13. Traditional Product Certificate

14. Certificate for the Product obtained according to a dedicated Romanian recipe

15. Own responsibility declaration that the enterprise is not in difficulty

16. Other justify document (will be specified according to the case)

\* Full text of the above applicant guides as well as additional relevant documents are available on line at [www.afir.info](http://www.afir.info)

### 1.3 Providers of financial support

Farmers' capacity to access resources for co-financing needed in the EU projects was a bottleneck in the previous programming period and many projects were cancelled. Efforts were made by the authorities to encourage financing institutions to support agricultural projects and get more involved in the sector. Connection with such institutions can also facilitate promotion for equipment and technology suppliers considering their close involvement in the development of the financing dossier.

#### o Banks

Several commercial banks signed agreements with the MARD for the project co-finance offering dedicated loan products: CEC Bank, BCR, Raiffeisen Bank, ProCredit Bank and Banca Transilvania. Additionally the intention to create a dedicated development bank to offer customized financing packages and incentives for the farmers that access European funds, was announced by the Romanian authorities.

#### o Non-banking financing institutions (IFN)

An IFN is a non-banking institution authorized to offer loans generally on short term and with interest higher than offered by the banking system. Most of the IFN's present on the Romanian market offer loans for the private persons but there is also an initiative offering support to the agricultural sector to compensate the lack of appetite of the commercial banks. Agricover started by offering loans to the large agriculture and in the last couple of years they also orientated towards the horticultural sector, including the fruits growing. The concept takes into consideration financing of the needed inputs and taking care of the production marketing and commercialization (they have created the brand "Dor de gust" for the fruits & vegetables produced by their customers). The company is very active in promoting equipment from agreed suppliers and guiding the farmers towards preferred solutions.

## 2. THE PREVIOUS RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 2007-2013, LESSONS LEARNED

The rural program was one of the most successful programs in Romania managing to access the available European financing in a high percentage. This was due to the closely monitoring by the local management authority in close collaboration with the European Commission. Various bottlenecks were identified generally due to the complicated procedures and the lack of knowledge at farmer's level. A general evaluation of the previous program for identification of administrative burdens and simplification of the procedures was performed by the Romanian authorities. The table below summarizes the main problems identified by the applicants and the simplifications already in place for the new program.

Phase	Problems identified by applicants	Suggestions	Simplifications done
<b>1. The application file</b>	The big number of documents requested including permits (environmental, DSV, Electricity, etc.) which require an extended period of time to obtain them and have limited validity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reducing the number of requested documents, especially the number of permits;</li> <li>- Introducing a one stop shop where documents can be submitted and the permits can be issued;</li> <li>- Differentiation between investment projects and equipment purchases so the environmental permit to be no longer required for equipment purchasing;</li> <li>- A shorter time for issuing permits;</li> <li>- Introducing as many standardized files as possible;</li> <li>- Online submission.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most of the permits have been moved to the next phase – if the project proposal is selected for financing only then the documents have to be submitted</li> <li>-The on-line submission was implemented</li> <li>- There are available various formats for documents so the farmers know how should look and what should contain the documents- for example- the feasibility study, the technical project</li> </ul>
	The absence of a national land register	-Updating the national register which can contribute to simplification of obtaining the document regarding the land statute	There are initiatives to update the national cadastre
		- Creating a standard project for small farms	There are available at <a href="http://www.afir.info">www.afir.info</a> more standard projects
	Lack of time for preparing the application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Longer periods of time between the applicant guide publication and submission</li> <li>- Longer period of time for submission</li> </ul>	There is now an annual session for application
<b>2. Signing the financing contract</b>	Long period of time for the file verification	-Shortening the verification period	
	Different interpretation of procedures by APDRP	-Unitary interpretation of procedures	
		-Specialized companies or independent evaluators	
<b>3. Reimbursements</b>	Reimbursement delays which caused payments of interest for the loans taken by beneficiaries	- respect the timeliness for reimbursement	
<b>4. Implementation</b>	Long period of time for endorsement of changes in projects and for endorsement of procurement files	-reducing the time periods both for endorsement of changes and for endorsement of procurement files	
		-simplification of the acquisition procedures	There were simplified
		- creating real databases with procurement prices	Already in phase of implementation by the management authorities

## The lessons learned from the viticulture reconversion program

The viticulture-wine producing sector is a complex one with very large players. The sector is represented by 3 major associations/organizations: ONIV-(National Inter-professional viticulture-wine producing Organization), PNVV (Vine and Wine National Employers Organisation) that has an important player – Murfatlar- and APEV (the Association of Producers and Exporters of Wine).

All the above mentioned organisations are very active and have supported their members to make the application and to implement the European standards in the sector. Being a developed sector, with large players that had the knowledge and the financial power to cover their contribution, the players in the sector managed to access all the funds available for the sector reconversion.

The sector benefited in the period 2007-2013 of the National Support Plan, of the Common European Market Organisation rules and the European regulations for the sector. There were 4 main lines:

- Promotion of the wines on tertiary markets (2 main achievements - introduction of the Romanian wines in Japan and Brazil)
- Restructure /Reconversion
- Insurance the crop
- Use of concentrated must for increase of the alcoholic degree
- 

The European funds were (and are going to be) distributed through APIA from the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and the intensity of the support was 75%.

The program was successful on one side due to the large players, well organised, existing already in the sector when the program for reconversion started and, on the other side, due to the fact that the procedures for financing were different. According to the interviews in the specialized press with successful applicants to the reconversion program, they first have planted the vine and installed the pillars (that represent about 70% of the total expenses), closed a protocol for the works and the expenditures done and send the protocol and the request for payments to APIA. The expenditures were reimbursed in about 2-3 weeks and there were paid the suppliers and the company which has done the works. Then it was installed the support system and it was made the final payment request and there were paid the final tranche to the suppliers and to the companies which made the works.

This system permitted the access to financing program not only of the large companies but also of the small and the medium one. *According to last press releases, in May this year, APIA introduced a new rule that the applicants have to pay the works themselves in advance and after that they will receive the funds (similar procedure with the one in place for project financed through the NRDP). This measure was strongly contested by the players in the sector and according to the last information APIA cancelled temporarily this measure until they will find a solution.*

Anyway, the viticulture-wine sector is an example for its organisation and for the importance of active associations that supported their members to access the financing programs and to implement the European standards in the sector that are very important in the today common market organisation.

### 3. THE FRUIT GROWING MARKET IN ROMANIA - OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Market Opportunities	Market Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term tradition in the fruit growing sector, including export experience</li> <li>• Favourable relief and climate for a large diversity of species</li> <li>• Many of the existing orchards aged and in need to be rehabilitated/replaced</li> <li>• Good expertise and technical skills at the level of strategic partners (knowledge providers)</li> <li>• Modern retail sector investing in promoting fruits of local origin (including creation of dedicated brands) and in encouraging local farmers to associate and upgrade their operations to build the capacity to become accredited suppliers</li> <li>• An increasing number of young and educated people returning to the rural areas and getting involved in agricultural activities</li> <li>• The existing success stories of investments in the sector driven by investors from other sectors (real estate, chemistry, infrastructure, etc.)</li> <li>• Well established local consumer market and is potential for growth also stimulated by dedicated instruments such as the <i>program for fruits in schools initiated by EU in 2009</i> aimed at reversing the trend of declining fruits and vegetables consumption by specifically addressing children Through this program the Romanian fruits producers could get contracts to supply fruits in schools (mainly apples) therefore the program and its continuity in the next programming period represent a stimulus for the fruits growers to invest in production and storage facility development. In parallel an increasing trend became visible among the supermarkets in promoting fruits of local production origin under dedicated brands. The allocation for the program in Romania in 2015 - 2016 is of 6.8 million Euro</li> <li>• The dedicated financing program for the fruit growing sector that will encourage farmers to associate, invest and become market oriented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High fragmentation of the agricultural property resulting in a big number of small farms</li> <li>• The difficulties in reconsidering the association concept based on historical experience in the agri sector in Romania</li> <li>• The increased competition from various suppliers in some segments such as fertigation, fruit trees, post- harvest (sorting, packaging, processing) and the presence of alternative financing providers (nonbanking institutions) that can influence the acquisition processes and the choice for inputs and technologies</li> <li>• Limited marketing knowledge and up-to-date information in the sector not reaching the farmer level</li> <li>• The climate and soil require adapted planting material</li> </ul>

The increased demand for local products led to an acknowledged need for sector rehabilitation resulting in a **dedicated sub-program for investments in the fruit growing sector within the new rural development program Romania will implement during 2014-2020**. The program was approved by the EU commission in May 2015 and with a total allocation of EUR 282.3 million it is expected to stimulate acquisition of high quality inputs from planting material to processing technologies for approximately 35000 ha of new and modern orchards.

In spite of the expected enthusiasm, the program implementation can be limited by the applicant capacity to plan in advance and in the frame of an integrated commercial vision, along with the limited co-financing power (especially for big projects) and the proper knowledge on the advantages of choosing high quality investment even for a higher price. The opportunity of the program existence will stimulate a diversification of the offer on the market and the potential investors/applicants for EU financing in the fruits growing sector will have to select from a variety of inputs as regards quality, performance and price. Raising awareness and guiding the farmer through the process of understanding and selecting the best technical and financial option will provide the key to market success for the interested suppliers.

A clear opportunity generated by the program is the expected demand for **certified planting material which will be mandatory in the new program**. The experts estimate *7-8 million grafted fruit trees* will be needed while the Romanian nurseries *have the capacity to produce 1.5-2 million*.

Challenges in this area will be to gain the trust of the fruit growers that planting materials from Western Europe is able to adapt to the Romanian climate and soil conditions and to overcome the existing prejudices on this matter. In this context, to offer improved varieties of quality fruit trees with increased resistance to various pests and diseases with a positive impact on the sustainable use of water and land resources as well as protection of the biodiversity by using a smaller number of treatments will be an important asset.

Equipment and modern technologies for cultivation, harvesting, post-harvest and processing are also encouraged by the program. The opportunity will stimulate the diversification of the offer and competition between suppliers. Competitive advantages will be built by offering not only equipment but an integrated approach and technical support to the farmers for project preparation and implementation as well as guidance in the operational phase.

## 4. RECOMMENDED MARKET APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FINANCING PROGRAM 2014-2020

### 4.1 Strategic partnerships

The partnership concept is the key to success on a market with recognized experience but with limited resources to assimilate innovation. Diversification and acceptance of new concepts will require strategic alliances with knowledge transfer vehicles with established paths towards the local players:

#### The ICDP Maracineni and the local R&D stations under its coordination

- This partnership is important especially when there are no local reference projects to show to the potential clients but also in general for conveying relevant information to the farmers
- The areas of cooperation can be focused on subjects such as testing fruit trees for winter/summer temperature resistances and behaviour during production, establishing the most appropriate phytosanitary scheme treatments for the Romanian climate, post-harvest testing on fruits quality, demonstrations of modern technologies and equipment
- Moreover according with the requirements of the EU financing program the advice of the research institutions on the technical project within the application file is mandatory even with a consultative value

#### The Agricultural Universities

- USAMV Bucharest and The University in Craiova have their own R&D stations in Istrita respectively in Valcea while the USAMV's in Iasi and Timisoara have farms for student practical education. Cooperation for setting up demo plots where possible, will help in testing and proving the adaptability of fruit trees and cultivation technologies in different regions of the country with different climate conditions. In the context of most of the orchards being old and in an extensive system, implementation of modern technologies and super-intensive orchards will require updated knowledge. In a demo plot setup at an agricultural university, students will have the opportunity to be trained and to learn about new developments on the market and the management of a modern orchard. A lot of students are coming from families involved in agriculture and they will return to the family business with improved and market adapted knowledge about modern orchards that will help in further dissemination of information in rural communities.

#### Suppliers of consultancy (extension) services

- Even if local experts are mainly focused on elaboration of the application file and sometimes in the management of the implementation of an EU financed project, in the development of the proposal they can often provide support promotion of products and technologies and orientate the potential users to make their choice.
- This type of activity started in the 90' since the first technical assistance programs from abroad started in Romania. A further step in the development of consultancy services was made with the pre-accession program for agriculture (SAPARD) and continued after Romania joined the EU and benefited of the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policies (CAP) and financing through the first programming period 2007-2013. Most of the applicants for the SAPARD program and for the NRDP needed the services of a consultant in order to apply for European funds due to the complex documents that have to be prepared (feasibility studies, technical projects, budget projections as well as reporting along implementation).
- In order to support farmers for the selection of consultants, the Agency for the Financing Rural Investments (AFIR) started during the first programming period 2007-2013 to publish on their website a data base with consultants and their experience in accessing EU financing . The list is currently under revision in order to optimize the information access for the farmers. Consultants can continue to register on the website of AFIR free of charge and they have the responsibility for the accuracy of the data uploaded. After validation of the information uploaded, they will appear



on the agency website. The sector is represented also by a professional association the Association of Romanian Consultants for Accessing European Funds ([www.acrafe.ro](http://www.acrafe.ro)) who also offer a data base of companies with expertise in the field.

### **The Operational Groups**

- A new measure of the rural program (cooperation) is introducing the concept of *Operational Groups* with the aim to stimulate the innovation by supplying solutions to practical problems.
- The specific objective of the measure is to support the setup and the function of Operational Groups in order to generate common research-innovation pilot projects or to develop new products, technologies and practical actions and specifically encourage the implementation of EIP AGRI recommendations.

## **4.2 Local representation and promotion activities**

For any seller of technical products it is important to ensure continuous representation on the market, speaking the language and assisting the buyer along the purchase and provide technical assistance after sales.

On the market the dealers offering various equipment deliver also consultancy services for selection of the proper solution for the buyer, they offer the design of the technological flows, delivery of equipment directly to the client, installation and bringing into operation the equipment, maintenance during the warranty period and post warranty and, especially when an equipment is expensive, they offer also flexibility for financial terms.

For any farmer willing to setup a modern orchard with automatized equipment for irrigation and anti-hail net to offer support services after goods delivery and orchard setup would enhance the trust of the farmer that he has done the right selection of the seller. Modern technologies have to be well explained so the farmers can get confidence they will manage to handle the daily management of a modern orchard.

Promotion activities are needed always- on a competitive market, on a new market or for introduction of new items on the market. Especially in the agricultural sector promotion should more sustained and more targeted as information about developments on the market, about new products or financing solutions, do not always reach the farmers.

Promotion should include activities such as:

- Participation at national and regional agricultural fairs that are becoming more and more visible in the last years combined with presentations/promotions articles in specialized media, radio and TV interviews during the agricultural shows.;
- Organization of site visits to relevant projects for knowledge sharing in the real set-up of an orchard in Romania, the Netherlands or other European countries as relevant for the promoted expertise;
- Organization of seminars, workshops and round tables:
  - open days at the R&D stations,
  - local meetings organized in cooperation with agricultural authorities (such as DADR); meetings on a specific theme identified as relevant for the potential clients in a region (ex: seasonal crop protection)
  - info days organized in cooperation with the USAMVs. Collaboration with universities and research units will have a positive impact for information transfer to potential farmers/investors.
  - organization of practical demonstrations on demo plots for the growers all year round on specific operations: winter pruning, summer pruning, crop protection winter and flowering time, fertigation, orchard management advice, etc.

### **Fairs & exhibitions**

Participation at the fairs and exhibition are important as they give the opportunity to meet farmers, potential dealers and to spot the competition. It is recommended to work with a local consultant for the organization of the participation in fair and customized matchmaking activities that will enhance the potential for identification of relevant business leads.

The most important fairs in the agricultural sector in Romania are:

- INDAGRA – the international agricultural fair that cover all agricultural branches- large agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, processing and food industry.
- AGRARIA – the most important agricultural fair in the W of Romania, a fair that was growing in the last years. It covers also all branches of the agricultural sector with a focus, up to now, on agriculture and animal husbandry but the horticultural sector is increasing.
- Expo Garden – the national spring fair for the horticultural sector, including ornamentals

Besides the above mentioned fairs, there are various regional ones that although they are smaller give the opportunity to reach more targeted the local farmers, to know the local knowledge level and to strengthen the local market awareness.

LOCALITY	DATE	EXHIBITION
Suceava	March 2016	AgroExpo Bucovina- <a href="http://www.agro-expo.ro/">http://www.agro-expo.ro/</a>
Bacau	27.03-29.03.2016	AgromExpo
Iasi	03.09-06.09.2015	Agralim- <a href="http://www.expoagralim.ro/">http://www.expoagralim.ro/</a>
<b>Cluj-Napoca</b>	<b>April 2016</b>	<b>Agraria <a href="http://www.agraria.info.ro">www.agraria.info.ro</a></b>
Bucharest	07.04-10.04.2016	Expo Garden and Flowers- <a href="http://www.expoflowers.ro/">http://www.expoflowers.ro/</a>
Fundulea	04.06-07.06.2015	AgriPlanta-RomAgroTec- <a href="http://www.agriplanta.ro/">http://www.agriplanta.ro/</a>
Alexandria	20.08-23.08.2015	Agralimex- <a href="http://agralimex.cciatr.ro/">http://agralimex.cciatr.ro/</a>
Arad	10.09-13.09.2015	Agromalim
<b>Bucharest</b>	<b>28.10-01.11.2015</b>	<b>Indagra <a href="http://www.indagra.ro">www.indagra.ro</a></b>

### 4.3 Business culture, building the trust

The Romanian market has its own specificity therefore a customized approach is necessary and investment of resources is mandatory for success.

Especially in the agricultural sector, in order to gain the trust of the potential clients it is important to actively **be visible** whether is by participation in fairs, organization of workshops and open days, setting up pilot & projects or partnership with knowledge sharing institutions and educated farmers & farmers associations. Most of the orchards in Romania are aged and developed in an extensive system. Upgrading and shifting to larger scale commercial operations will be a hard decision for the local farmers, they have to be guided to learn about new technologies and trained to understand and select the right products.

The most efficient motivation for decision making at farmers level proved to be the power of example of a neighbour or fellow colleague. The new technologies have to be explained and showed in operation so that the farmers develop the confidence that it is possible to implement it also in his environment. It is important to have **pilot projects** even at small scale that can be promoted by organization of on-site demo days. It is important to build a track record of implemented projects that can be used for further promotion including projects implemented by your company not only in Romania but also in other European countries.

A **local dealer** with good technical expertise, speaking the local language and having a strong local network would also enhance the chance for successful business development. No matter how suitable his profile is he will also need to be invested in for acquiring the knowledge and build the trust in the products he will take over in his portfolio to avoid the risk of using them only for comparison purpose.

As follows few basic recommendations for building trust with the potential clients in the local context:

- Management of expectations: take into consideration the re-development of the Romanian fruits growing sector will most probably start with small steps - intensive orchards (1250 fruit trees/ha), small surfaces (1000 sqm to 2 ha) and self-standing rootstocks. Consequently avoid selling products or equipment not compatible with the requirements of the farmer. For example, the rootstocks used in Western Europe are not always adapted to Romania climate. Or another example, the hilly area is quite important for the sector in Romania but not always suitable for a super-intensive orchard;
- A new modern orchard will need not only higher investments but also proper knowledge to manage its operation after set-up which local farmers generally do not have even if they claim to. If a farmer is willing to invest in a super-intensive orchard, you need to take into account to offer technical support

at least until the starting of the fruit production and to answer promptly to their requests and questions. A happy farmer is a very useful promotion tool.

- The farmers claim to look for products that meet their needs but not always are able to correctly evaluate their needs. Therefore, make sure to provide complete information on the features, the advantages and the limitations of the products. Using product presentations translated in the local language is recommendable.
- Take into account that prices should be fair and adapted to the local market. The financing program will stimulate a flow of offers and standard prices for major items are officially promoted by the authorities. Make sure you are aware of correct positioning of your products and accompany a price difference with additional services or financial facilities.
- Don't focus on blaming the farmer when something goes wrong in the implementation process, better focus on finding a mutual solution to fix the problem and openly explain how he should use the products or the equipment to avoid difficulties in the future.
- Do not avoid breaking bad news to the farmers. In Romania it is better to discuss openly and explain what went wrong and find together with the farmer the best solutions.
- When your competition is mentioned in a conversation with a farmer be respectful but provide specific information about the advantages and the benefits of your product.
- It might be possible to encounter situations when side deals are asked. To accept or offer bribes is not only unethical but also illegal so the line should never be crossed especially when using EU financing.

## ANNEXES

### 1. The Market

The fruits production sector has a long tradition in Romania due to a favourable climate for a wide number of species but the sector deteriorated continuously since the beginning of 90's due to reasons mainly connected with reinstating the private property in the agriculture sector and the low financial power of the small farmers.

The total existing orchards area is estimated at 145 thousand ha (2014)<sup>10</sup> with a production of fruits highly fluctuating due to aged plantations and the influence of climate change (in 2013 the total production was of 1300 thousand tons, while in 2014 decreased to 1115<sup>11</sup>). The sector is dominated by **apple** and **plum** with over 80% of the cultivated surfaces and the yearly productions.

A thorough analysis of the fruit-growing sector and the strong drive of the stakeholders at national level substantiated the need for restructuring and investments in the fruit growing sector and led to the strategic decision for a dedicated financing line of over 282 million Euro under the new rural development program 2014-2020. The results of the program are expected to impact on the overall performance of the agricultural holdings and to enhance the competitiveness of enterprises involved in increasing the added value of agricultural products and stimulation of jobs creations in rural areas.

#### 1.1 The current level

##### Planting material

The **most important suppliers of certified fruit trees** are the **Research Institute for Fruit Growing Maracineni (ICDP Maracineni)** and the local research and development stations (R&D) in the fruit growing sector (most of them coordinated by ICDP Maracineni): **Bistrita, Falticeni (Suceava), Iasi, Constanta, Baneasa (Bucharest) and Voinești (Dambovită)**. The R&D stations within the agricultural universities such as the R&D Station Iștrita (USAMV Bucharest), the R&D Station Valcea (University in Craiova) and the teaching station of the USAMV Timisoara are also suppliers of certified trees.

The above mentioned institutions are selling certified fruit trees with prices varying between 15 and 25 RON (approx. 3.4-5.7 EUR) depending on the species- apples, pears, cherries, apricots, peaches, walnuts, nuts etc.

According with the ICDP Maracineni, 14 private nurseries in Romanian are producing **certified fruit trees**. Among them the Nurseries Valcea (Valcea county) and Dinias (Timis county) are producing **virus free fruit trees** while the other private nurseries produce only **certified fruit trees** – as the PFA Roman Marius Viorel, the company Mondobal, the nursery Aiud, the nursery Hida, the nursery Csaba or the company Pomaltoi SRL. Some of the mentioned producers (PFA Roman Marius Viorel, Mondobal), have a very active presence online and already implemented projects for important players on the market.

In Romania, significant numbers of private nurseries produce fruit trees *Conformitas Agraria Comunitatis (CAC)*, a total of about 1.7 million CAC fruit trees is estimated were delivered on the market in 2012.

Importers and distributors of imported fruit trees are also present but not in a big number as sales for the small farms are generally covered via local suppliers (including garden centres and retail outlets) and the professional fruit growers are sourcing directly abroad for certified planting material. Main import countries are Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Germany.

##### Equipment

Joining the EU and accessing European financing led to improved investments in the sector and the increase of the gross fixed capital in agriculture but the fleet of agricultural machinery remains still poor as

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.madr.ro/horticultura/fructe-si-legume.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.madr.ro/horticultura/fructe-si-legume.html>

compared to other EU countries (for example: total number of tractors in 2012 is estimated at 184,446 pieces resulting in an average allocation of 50.7 ha arable area per tractor).

Overall there is a clear process of the modernization of the agriculture sector but this is visible mostly at the level of medium and large farms while the sector is still dominated by small operations.

In Romania the small farms with areas between 1 and 5 ha represent 79.9% of the total number of units in agriculture and they work 19.3 % of the used agricultural surface while the large farms (area > 100 ha) represent only 1.3% of the total number of units in agriculture and work 53.2% of the used agricultural surface.<sup>12</sup>

The specific situation of endowment in the fruit growing sector is even worse than the general situation in the agricultural sector. There are few large fruit growers who own the needed equipment (tractors, cultivators with probe, spraying equipment, etc.) but even they base their operations on manual labour, as specialized equipment is lacking or is in need of upgrading (such as platforms for pruning and harvesting).

Dealers of modern equipment are present on the local market but they are mainly focused on general equipment for the agricultural sector (modern tractors, harvesters, cultivators, seeding equipment, etc.). For example modern tractors with GPS are present on the market since 2008 but they are affordable only to large farmers. Specialized equipment is available for example for the vineyard sector since this benefited by a dedicated investment program in the previous financing period and is now more developed. Both the large agriculture and the vineyards have first developed the operations which triggered the growth of the market for specialized equipment. It is expected that development of the fruit growing sector will be a trigger too for the adjacent sectors development. The sooner the presence of relevant equipment in the processes of orchards development the better the chances for the fruit growers to be interested in further investing in them.

### **Supports, nets, pillars**

Currently it can be estimated a real market for support items such as nets and pillars is not yet developed in Romania even if there are very few companies to offer such items (ex: Lantec Industries <http://www.lantecind.ro/plantatie.php>).

The old orchards consist of fruit trees with strong, self-standing rootstocks that need no support. Also the use of nets is not in the common approach of the growers. As regards the recent investments in the super-intensive systems are using pillars but only few of them use anti-hail net. In general, the farmers use locally available solutions for supports and pillars such as those made out of acacia wood that could be easily sourced locally. Even though Romania is a strong producer of concrete, the concrete pillars are currently imported (Italy). Few of the new investments also use bamboo sticks but the feedback on the market is the regular bamboo sticks are generally not suitable for the local climate and soil (should be thicker).

### **Fertigation**

As regards the use of the fertigation systems in the fruit growing sector, they are in a process of being reconsidered in Romania mainly determined by the impact of the climate change (i.e. the changed patterns of precipitation). Some of the old orchards used to have old types irrigation systems such as ditch irrigation and sprinklers, etc., generally not functional anymore due to high costs for energy and water. The dripping irrigation market is in general quite developed a combination of good quality - reasonable prices with low quality - low prices equipment available. The new investments implemented especially after 2004 generally include (fert)irrigation systems installed by international companies present on the Romanian market either with own office (such as NaanDanJain Israel, <http://www.naandanjain.ro> or Revaho Agro Romania, <http://www.revaho.nl>) or through dealers representing various producers of horticultural inputs to include fertigation systems (such as Lantec Industries, [www.lantecind.ro](http://www.lantecind.ro)). The investments in new orchards implemented with Dutch inputs used fertigation systems (PB Techniek, Aquanet).

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<sup>12</sup> Source: <http://www.madr.ro/agricultura.html>

The knowledge institutions are good vehicles to promote and demonstrate innovative solutions. For example, the R&D Istituta has an up-to-date fertigation system buried in the soil to prevent water evaporation, the ICDP Maracineni has a demo plot with a modern drip irrigation system including soil sensors for humidity connected with a meteorological station so the irrigation system starts only when is really needed.

The irrigation is going to be a key component for future projects under the rural development program as many regions in Romania do not have the needed natural conditions and will have to manage the limited availability of water by using irrigation. The market for fertigation systems in Romania is already quite active and it is expected that the availability of the financing will stimulate diversification of the supply and facilitate introduction of new systems. The existing competition will require sustained investment for correct positioning of the new comers.

## **Post-harvest**

The first rural development program 2007-2013 financed investments in warehouses, sorting, packaging equipment and processing facilities but the implemented projects do not cover the market demand for such services.

Many fruit varieties are currently imported including the one traditionally produced locally (such as apples, pears, apricots, peaches), as due to the insufficient adequate warehousing and in the absence of appropriate transport facilities they are available fresh and only for a limited period of time. Some of the larger fruit growers and/or producer associations have invested in own warehouses and/or processing facilities (Casa Panciu, Fruits Producers Association Itesti, Andany Trading, Traian Development, but many other fruit producers have very simple warehouses or cellars where they can store for a limited period of time the fruits.

The equipment for sorting, grading, packaging and processing was generally imported from Italy but in the last years these categories of equipment came also from the Czech Republic, Poland or Slovenia.

Local distributors representing various producers are present on the market such as:

Lantec Industries([www.lantecind.ro/link.php](http://www.lantecind.ro/link.php)) , Alimtech ([www.alimtech.ro](http://www.alimtech.ro)) , Horeco ([www.horeco.ro](http://www.horeco.ro)) , Ugo Trading (<http://legume.ugotrading.ro/>), Agrarclima ([www.agrarclima.ro](http://www.agrarclima.ro)) or Damar Trading (<http://www.bizoo.ro/firma/damartrading/vanzare/cat-42432/uscatoare-legume-fructe/start-0/10/>).

## *1.2 The knowledge providers*

### **R&D Institutes**

The ICDP Maracineni is the main research and development institute in the sector in Romania.

The institute is currently coordinated by the Academy for Agricultural and Forestry Sciences Bucharest (under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) and is in progress with receiving the accreditation as 'National Institute' which will shift coordination towards the Ministry of Education expected to ensure better access to financing for investments, equipment and installations purchase.

The ICDP Maracineni is coordinating in turn the 6 research stations in fruit growing distributed around the country: Bistrita (Bistrita Nasaud), Falticeni (Suceava), Iasi, Constanta, Baneasa (Bucharest) and Voinesti (Dambovita).

The main objectives for its activity are:

- to create new varieties of fruit trees , forest fruits and strawberry as well as selection of new ornamentals varieties;
- to produce the certified planting material in the categories pre-base and base;
- to improve the cultivation technologies regarding the control of fruits load, fertilization, soils maintenance works;
- to setup an integrated systems, environmental friendly, for pest & disease control and of the weeds

- to substantiate the research on genetic amelioration and biotechnology through physiology and biochemistry issues;
- to verify the results of own research in the pilot farm and to further promote the results into production

The research activity of the institute is carried out by 4 main laboratories: genetics & species improvement, propagation, tissues cultivation in vitro and virology, techniques and technologies for phytosanitary protection and one laboratory dedicated to forest fruits and strawberries. The institute created new adapted varieties of rootstocks, fruit trees and forest fruits. They created and homologated 11 varieties of apple, 11 varieties of pear as for example varieties with scab and mildew resistance at apple and with Psylla and Pseudomonas at pear.

The institute is involved in research projects with partners from different countries. They cooperate with institutions such as EUFRIN, FAO, IAEA, IBPGR, ISHS, EUCARPIA and were involved in European projects as for example "Action SharCo (FP7) „Sharka Containment”, FP7 „Improving European berries production, quality and nutritional value”; COST 843 „Quality enhancement of plant production through tissue culture”, COST 864 – „Combining traditional and advanced strategies for plant protection in fruits growing” (2007-2011), and a bilateral project with Bulgaria - „Seed transmission of plum pox virus”.

The R&D stations, located in different regions of the country, also perform research activities at a different scale, depending on their laboratories equipment and have a long term experience in creating fruit tree varieties adapted to the region in which they are located – for example the R&D Constanta have created varieties of peaches and apricots, the ones in Bistrita and Iasi varieties of plums and cherries and Voinești varieties of apples. Also, all R&D Stations have plots for testing in production new varieties.

In 2014 ICDP Maracineni elaborated in 2014 the study on fruit tree zoning and the study on the standard costs for the fruit growing sector – both documents leading the application for European financing under the current rural development program.

The study on fruit trees zoning in Romania takes into consideration several agro-meteorological parameters and soil characteristics and, based on mathematical models recognized at international level, evaluated the agro-climatological and the pedological potential of the fruits trees species in Romania. The result was a quantitative and qualitative estimation for each locality in Romania and represented by numbers between 0 and 4. The numerical values represent the suitability of an area for various fruits & forest fruits as follows:

- the interval 0 – 0.5 is considered not favourable;
- the interval 0.5 – 1.5 is considered less favourable but plants manage to live;
- the interval 1.5 – 2.5 moderate favourable;
- the interval 2.5 – 3.5 favourable;
- over 3.5 is very (extreme) favourable but this doesn't mean cultivation technologies shouldn't be applied.

The minimum mark establishing the eligibility for financing under the thematic sub-program for the fruits growing sector for a locality and a specific fruit type (apple, pear, cherry, nuts, etc.) is 2.40. In case the area and the type of fruit of interest is marked below 2.40, the applicant can still apply based on a request for recalculation submitted towards ICDP Maracineni. The recalculation is performed by the institute against a fee of 1000 RON (approx. 230EUR) - only for recalculation- and it is based on analysis of additional climate and soil data for the specific situation that must be provided by the client.

The second study elaborated by ICDP Maracineni is establishing the standard costs for setting up a new orchard (including the deforestation of the old one). The value of the eligible expenses and of the in kind contribution within a project financed by the thematic sub-program for the fruits growing sector, will be based on a standard estimate elaborated using the standard costs as defined in the ICDP Maracineni study.

Both documents are available at <http://www.afir.info/>.

## Universities

In Romania higher expertise in the fruit growing sector is acquired studying in the Horticultural Faculties existing within the 4 Universities of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine in Bucharest, Iasi, Cluj Napoca, Timisoara and within the University in Craiova.

The USAMV Bucharest was set up 1852 covering areas such as: agronomy, biology, forestry, horticulture, husbandry, veterinary medicine, Food product engineering, civil engineering, environmental engineering, geodesy engineering, bio - technologies, applied engineering sciences, engineering and management in agriculture and rural development.

Currently, the university has 7 faculties in Bucharest, 2 branches – one in Calarasi and the other in Slatina. As facilities for education and research the university has a Centre for Integrated Pomiculture also providing consultancy services for the farmers. The university has also a R&D Station specialized in the fruit growing sector – at Istrita (Buzau) with demonstration and test plots for various species of apples, cherries and plums (for example one plot is used to test apple varieties from around the world for their behaviour in the local climate).

The other USAMVs in the country offer similar curricula and they are all involved in various degrees in national and international research projects. The USAMV Timisoara has a centre for practical stages for students in the horticultural sector including fruit tree growing, the USAMV Iasi has also an education station for students including vineyards, USAMV Cluj-Napoca has a R&D station for pastures and, according with the latest information, will take over the local R&D station in the fruit growing sector (currently having financial difficulties). The format is already used by the University in Craiova which successfully took over the R&D Station Valcea specialized in chestnuts, walnuts and nuts (at the moment the only supplier of grafted walnut trees in Romania!). Valcea Station also created and homologated in time various varieties for the above mentioned species and also for plums, peaches and elder (*Sambucus Nigra*). Valcea Station covers research areas such as: genetic analyses using molecular markers, identifying the way of transmission of different characteristics in descends -for plums and nuts- and serology analyses of main virology diseases. The station has also plots for genetic resources conservation for plums, walnuts, nuts, chestnuts, apple, *Carya* (a type of walnut), elder, pear and biomass plants (*Salix*, *Populus*, etc).

### **The Romanian National Rural Network (RNDR)**

The Romanian National Rural Development Network (RNDR) was established in accordance with the art. 68 of the EC Regulation 1698/2005 grouping the organizations and the authorities involved in the rural development process at national level.

Taking into account the main strategic directions established for the national rural development the RNDR's general objective is to stimulate participation of all actors involved in the process and to promote an effective flow of information, exchange of ideas, good practices and cooperation for creating an agricultural and forestry economy based on modernised holdings, favouring diversity and environmental preservation as well as improving the quality of life and governance at local level.

The network brings together the organisations and authorities involved in the rural development process in Romania. With currently 571 members, the NRDN is open to all rural development stakeholders, such as public authorities, universities and research institutes, local action groups (LEADER), professional associations, socio-economic organizations, actors from agriculture, forestry and agribusiness and other relevant institutions and organizations active in rural areas.

The communication channels used are a mix of on line and live instruments to include discussion forums, events at local, regional and national level (on themes of general interest or specific subjects connected with rural development projects), promotion of entrepreneurial initiatives and publication of information leaflets.

The national network is member of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD), the hub that connects rural development stakeholders throughout the European Union, generating and sharing knowledge, as well as facilitating information exchange and cooperation across rural Europe.



## 2. Successful Stories

- **Andany Trading (Giurgiu)** –company involved in infrastructure projects and low cost flights have setup in 2004 a super- intensive production orchard of 100 hectares in Adunatii Copaceni (Giurgiu), at the time the largest investment in the sector estimated at 7 million Euro. The orchard was developed based on Dutch consultancy (Adviesburo Hillebrand-van der Heide BV) and involving Dutch suppliers of inputs: equipment (Besseling Ulo Systems, Van Wamel Fa. Hol), fertilizers (Aquaned) and saplings (in a wide variety: apples, pear, cherry, peach, quince, plum, sour cherry, walnut, strawberry, raspberry and vineyard). The orchard sells its products under the brand “La Mosie”.
- **Horticola International** part of the Atlassib Holding (involved in international transport for persons, field crops, animal breeding and milk processing, education). In 2010, Horticola set up with other producers the Fruits Producers Association ‘Marul de Aur’. The association work about 596 ha orchards out of which 195 ha super-intensive.
- **Comly Buzau** located in Buzau benefited of a Dutch PSO project in 2002 in partnership with Hagé International B.V. an import & export company for fruits and vegetables in the Netherlands. The existing Comly orchard was modernized and a 5 ha demonstration field was set up. Also, within the project a three storage rooms with a capacity of 300 tons was built as well as facilities for training and dissemination. The fruits produced are sold mainly for export.
- **Frubo** is the trademark of the TRAIAN Industrial Development Company, which is also involved in the construction sector. The orchard was setup in 2007-2008 and it is located in the village Sulița, Botoșani County, Romania, in a hilly area. The fruit trees came from Holland after a prior research was done on the varieties of apples, pears and cherries compatible with the local climate and soil quality conditions. The orchard is regularly inspected by a Dutch specialist, which determines the health of the trees and sets up the necessary treatments. The company has two refrigerated warehouses for storing fruits and vegetables they produce.
- **Casa Panciu** is part of a group of companies involved in paint production (Duraziv & Fabryo). The company operates a vineyard and approximate 100 ha super intensive orchard in Tifesti Vrancea. The orchard was set up with Dutch inputs and Dutch consultancy services. The company has its own warehouse and its own processing factory for the fruits. The products, both fresh fruits and processed ones, are sold on the market under the brand “Ana are”.
- **Comcereal SA** located in Vrancea county is involved mainly in the large agriculture sector, silos, bakery, seeds, chemicals, etc. They setup a cherry orchard with Dutch inputs (fruit trees).
- **Valcea Nursery** is a Dutch- Romanian Partnership. The nursery is located in Ramnicu Valcea and it is closely collaborating with Hillebrand Tree Nursery, the Netherlands. The fruit trees are produced in Romania but the rootstocks and the scions certified as "VIRUS FREE" are coming from the Netherlands.

### 3. Useful Contacts

#### Agricultural Universities

**University of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine Bucharest - Faculty of Horticulture**

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