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SUPPORT TO CAPACITY BUILDING ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PILOT PROJECTS

April 2020

SDGs:



Countries:

Republic of Moldova

Project Codes:

TCP/MOL/3607

FAO Contribution:

USD 363 000

Duration:

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Contact Info:

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Implementing Partners

The Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment (MARDE).

Beneficiaries

Staff from the MARDE, administrative staff from pilot communities, members of the pilot demonstration communities, local entrepreneurs and the rural population in the Republic of Moldova.

Country Programming Framework

Regional Initiative 1 (Empowering Smallholders and Family Farms for Improved Rural Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction).



BACKGROUND

Agriculture is a pillar of the Republic of Moldova's (RoM) economy and serves as the primary source of income in rural areas. Approximately 1.9 million people, or 58 percent of the country's population, live in rural areas, while one quarter of the employed population works in the agriculture sector. Generally, however, the sector has low productivity and a high level of informal employment. Additionally, over 94 percent of private households in the RoM possess less than 3 hectares of land, which is reflective of the land reforms that occurred during the 1990s. Notwithstanding, agriculture, together with the food processing industry, accounted for USD 1 billion, equivalent to 15 percent of the national GDP, and 30 percent of total exports in 2015.

Unemployment affects two thirds of the rural population, while relatively low wages exist in the agriculture sector. These factors have both contributed to the pockets of poverty that persist in the country. Moreover, wages for rural women are only 76 percent of those of men (on average), further complicating this matter. Farmers continue to face several challenges in the advancement of agriculture, including underdeveloped rural infrastructure, poor access to markets and susceptibility to extreme weather events (especially droughts).

In 2015, labour out-migration accounted for 25.7 percent (33 percent of men and 18.3 percent of women) of the RoM's economically active population. This trend has more serious implications for rural areas, where remittances do not necessarily translate into investments and returning migrants find it difficult to re-enter the labour force. Out-migration is also driving an ageing population. More specifically, according to a 2011 census, about 46 percent of farms were being managed by people of pre-retirement (55-64 years) or retirement (65 and older) age.

In 2017, the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) supported the RoM's Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment (MARDE) (at the time known as the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry) in building capacity both in rural development and in the formation of rural development policy, under TCP/MOL/3605/C4. A key output from the project was the development of an additional TCP project designed to strengthen the support provided to the MARDE in the area of rural development.

Providing ongoing support to the MARDE is crucial because it is the responsible ministry for the implementation of the National Strategy on Agriculture and Rural Development during the 2014–2020 period. Importantly, the strategy underpins the Government's commitment to recognizing agriculture and food processing as critical elements for the development of the economy, the creation of employment opportunities and the improvement of living conditions throughout the country, especially in rural areas. The general objectives of the strategy are to increase the competitiveness of the agrifood sector through modernization and market integration; to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources in agriculture; and to improve the standards of living in rural areas. These objectives also ensure that the national strategy is aligned with the objectives of Pillar II of the EU Common Agricultural Policy.

The MARDE primarily focuses on job creation through diversification of income-generating opportunities, as well as the mobilization of local resources through the involvement of stakeholders and rural dwellers in policy development and implementation. Additionally, the MARDE pays attention to ensuring that men and women benefit equitably from their interventions by promoting gender mainstreaming. In general, before making decisions, an analysis of their effects on men and women is carried out, while the participation of women at all levels of decision-making is supported.

This TCP project was designed with a dual focus that addresses central capacity development at the MARDE, as well as capacity development in three selected rural communities. As such, coordination with partners and stakeholders throughout the country was expected to be crucial to the project's success. By focusing on community development, the project was expected to not only improve livelihoods and reduce poverty, but also strengthen social inclusion, with a focus on vulnerable populations. The project was designed to better integrate the preparation and implementation of rural development policy at the national, rayon and community levels. Given the limited experience in the formulation of community development plans (CDPs) prior to the project, local CDPs were generally not in place throughout the country.

IMPACT

The project aimed to sustainably improve livelihoods and increase incomes in rural areas of the RoM as a long-term result of developing both national and local capacity in rural development and community development planning.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

Output 1: Capacity of the MARDE and other relevant staff related to rural development policy and community development planning improved

To facilitate the implementation of the project, a national inception workshop was held on 25 January 2018 and a rural development technical working group was established, comprising members of the MARDE and relevant stakeholders. Members of the technical working group participated in trainings and workshops at the national level throughout the life of the project. Prior to workshops and trainings, needs assessments were carried out to ensure the suitability of training topics and materials for participants. Capacity building workshops and trainings were held for groups of at least 20 participants on an assortment of topics, including (i) rural development practices in the EU, (ii) the FAO community development process, (iii) the implementation of policy at local and national levels and (iv) the monitoring and evaluation of agricultural and rural development strategies and programmes. Additionally, two members of the MARDE participated in the Conference on Integrated Territorial and Landscape Approaches for Poverty Reduction and Sustainability held on 10–12 December 2019 in Rome.

Seven representatives from the RoM also participated in a study tour in Hungary. The study tour involved field visits to two farms near Kecskemét, where the Rural Development Department of the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture delivered presentations on (i) the implementation of the LEADER Programme and the ongoing community-led local development in Hungary and (ii) the implementation of rural development policy in Hungary during the period of 2014–2020. In addition, two Hungarian farmers discussed good practices in rural tourism, rural accommodation and short value chains. Finally, the roles of the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture in rural development and the Hungarian National Rural Network in the servicing of rural areas was explored at the closing event of the study tour.

Output 2: A community development plan and an action plan developed in three pilot rural communities through a participatory and inclusive process

The “Criteria for Selection of the Three Pilot Communities” document was prepared by the FAO REU project team. Subsequently, the selection of pilot communities was carried out by the National Agency for Rural Development (ACSA) and the MARDE, in consultation with the FAO country office and relevant national authorities. In each pilot community, three workshops were organized in close collaboration with the ACSA, along with focus group discussions and individual interviews to gain a more in-depth understanding of the local situation. The ACSA assisted in the identification of key stakeholders at the local level and in the formation of local stakeholder committees, which served as focal points throughout the project. The ACSA selected individuals for the interviews and for participation in focus group discussions, while the workshops were open to all residents of the pilot communities. The information gathered from these initiatives was essential for the situation analysis in each community, which ultimately formed the basis of the community development plans (CDPs) formulated under the project.

The preparation of the CDPs required the formation of specific focus groups in each community. A focus group involving farmers and local entrepreneurs, and another involving representatives of the social and administrative sectors, were developed in the three communities. Specific questionnaires were developed for each group, and group members were subsequently interviewed to support the ongoing situation analysis, as well as a SWOT analysis.

The project team, which included the ACSA, the International Consultant on Community Development and relevant staff from the MARDE received training on the FAO REU integrated community development process and its practices, while pilot administrative staff and rayon-level representatives received training on local community development. The three pilot communities selected were Lalova (Rezina rayon), Tescureni (Ungheni rayon) and Meleseni (Calarasi rayon). Local stakeholders and authorities were brought together to prepare, discuss and validate CDPs in a participatory manner. Each CDP included an action plan for community investments, while also serving as a basis for the application for additional funding.

Based on the pilot experiences, a concept note entitled “Strengthening Smallholders and Family Farms and Enhancing Integrated Local Development Through Small-scale Rural Investments, Promotion of Innovative Climate Smart Technologies and Integration into Value Chains” was prepared. The concept note includes a discussion on community development planning that can be harnessed for policy dialogue at the national level. Moreover, the concept note can be utilized in efforts to secure additional funding to scale up project results.

Output 3: Implementation of community development plans supported

Two training workshops were organized in each pilot community for local administrative staff, farmers and entrepreneurs on the previously identified training needs. These included accessing financial resources, agro-tourism, the production of vegetables in greenhouses, beekeeping and honey production.

Pilot communities were supported in mobilizing resources for the implementation of CDPs largely through the action plans developed, which proposed an implementation period and responsible agency for future investments. As mentioned above, the actions plans could also be adapted in a manner that would allow for their use in funding applications.

An investment needs assessment was conducted in each of the pilot communities through calls for expression of interest in supporting small-scale demonstration projects based on the priorities identified in CDPs. Across pilot communities, equipment for the maintenance of necessities in the agriculture sector and public infrastructure was a clear priority. As a result, one skid steer loader (bobcat) was procured for each pilot community, which was made available for public use and can also be employed as a capacity building tool.

Capacity development activities and coaching were provided to all potential beneficiaries prior to the formulation of their project proposals and submission of their applications. The potential beneficiaries were able to contact national and local focal points during the application process. The scoring was performed by the selection board, which was comprised of a representative from the MARDE, representatives from the mayoralties (*primarias*) in the pilot communities, the ACSA Regional Representative, a national FAO representative and a local stakeholder committee representative (the focal point). Scoring was performed as described in the call for applications. On-site checks were carried out for the selected applicants to ensure the relevance of the information they provided and to compare the on-site situation to that described in the application and during interviews.

The demonstration projects were to be implemented following the physical transfer of procured equipment from the supplier to local public authorities in the pilot communities. The mayoralties and supplier signed and stamped an official document to confirm receipt of the equipment. An official handover event was held on 6 February 2020 for the procured equipment, which was attended by the Minister of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment and a representative from the FAO country office.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN

Challenges were experienced in following the original project work plan and timeline. From the experience gained under the project, it was clear that the formulation of CDPs was a more time-consuming process than anticipated, as was the identification of investment needs. Additionally, delays were experienced in the procurement of small-scale equipment, which required more strategic planning than originally envisioned. In spite of these challenges, project activities were carried out within the originally planned budget, with a no-cost extension being approved to account for the challenges experienced in following the original work plan.



Potential risks were monitored throughout project implementation. The high involvement of the MARDE and local administrations ensured the commitment of administrative staff to project activities. As such, the identified risk of a lack of human resources at the local level did not manifest. The risk of capacity building activities overlapping with those of other projects did not have any negative impacts on project results. Most importantly, the risk of additional funding not being available to support investment projects under the CDPs was addressed through the formulation of a concept note that can be used to secure funding beyond the project. Ideally, the concept note will continue to support the scaling up of project results.

FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

As all project activities were fully achieved, no specific follow-up actions have been recommended for the project. More generally, however, pilot communities will benefit from ongoing support that helps secure funding for the scaling up of project results, particularly for the investment needs identified under their CDPs.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The RoM is currently implementing its National Strategy on Agriculture and Rural Development for the period of 2014–2020. Within this context, the MARDE plays a central role in rural development by aiming to improve living conditions in rural areas through job creation, the diversification of income generating opportunities and the mobilization of local resources through the involvement of stakeholders and rural dwellers in policy development and implementation. Importantly, the project addressed an urgent need to enhance the capacity of MARDE staff and other relevant stakeholders on rural development at the national, rayon and community levels so that these goals can be better achieved.



A rural development technical working group comprising representatives from the MARDE and other relevant staff was established under the project. Members of the technical working group participated in national-level workshops, which facilitated the strengthening of national capacity in rural development. Key stakeholders were identified at community level too. In each of the three pilot communities, a local stakeholder committee was established, and its members served as focal points during the life of the project. Two focus groups were formed in each community, one comprising farmers and entrepreneurs and the other comprising employees from the administrative and social sectors. Local stakeholder committees are expected to sustain the efforts made under the project by implementing the actions plans developed in the CDPs.

The project brought together a wide range of stakeholders in rural development that were all involved in the formulation of CDPs and project implementation as a whole. These groups included the MARDE, administrative staff from pilot communities, the rural population of pilot communities, as well as local resources and entrepreneurs. The ongoing partnership between these stakeholders will be essential to the sustainability of project results.

2. Gender equality

Gender mainstreaming was ensured throughout the project cycle in a manner that was in line with FAO policy requirements, the FAO Regional Gender Equality Strategy for Europe and Central Asia and Action Plan 2016–2017, the TCP manual and general FAO environmental and social management standards. The needs of rural women were identified and addressed, ensuring a transformative approach towards gender equality. Research and analyses were conducted using gender-disaggregated data (depending on their availability).

Project activities were guided by the commitment of the RoM to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the SDGs and the national strategies and action plans for gender equality. In addition to collecting gender-disaggregated data, gender mainstreaming was central to the project. At least 50 percent of the participants attending national and local workshops were women. Additionally, the CDPs and other final documents were reviewed by the Gender Mainstreaming Specialist (GMS). The GMS also attended the focus group discussions in all three pilot communities, promoting gender equality during these events.

3. Environmental sustainability

The project followed FAO environmental standards. During the workshops and trainings, environmental sustainability was mainstreamed, thus enhancing the knowledge of national stakeholders and smallholder/family farmers on relevant issues.

4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

The human rights-based approach was considered throughout the project cycle. The creation of CDPs directly aims to sustainably improve the livelihoods and increase the incomes of the rural population the RoM.

5. Technological sustainability

At the national level, capacity was strengthened on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of rural development strategies and programmes. Moldovan participants also attended a study tour in Hungary, where they were exposed to good practices being utilized in other countries in the region.

At the local level, strengthening capacity in community development planning was key to the project. Specific training needs were also identified in all three pilot communities. Training was delivered on financial tools for agriculture and rural development in all three communities, while specialized training on rural tourism was delivered in Lalova, and tailored training sessions on beekeeping and protected field vegetable production were delivered in Tescureni.

The small-scale equipment (skid steer loader) procured under the project is expected to contribute to long-term capacity building at the community level, ultimately facilitating better maintenance of both public and agricultural infrastructure.

At the national level, the capacity built under the project will support the implementation of the National Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy and the management of national agricultural and rural development support schemes. At the local level, beneficiaries are now able to apply for additional funding using the action plans developed for the CDPs. These applications may be strengthened by the training received under the project in specific technical areas of agriculture.



6. Economic sustainability

FAO provided additional MDF funding to support the participation of four extra Moldovan participants at the Regional Workshop on Integrated Community Development (23–24 October 2019, Budapest) and the participation of two MARDE staff at the Workshop on Integrated Territorial and Landscape Approaches for Poverty Reduction and Sustainability: Innovation and Challenges from Country-led Implementation (10–12 December 2019, Rome).

Securing ongoing funding for the agriculture sector in the RoM will also be supported by utilizing the concept note prepared under the project. The concept note was designed to attract additional funding and aid the MARDE in scaling up project results.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ Criteria for selection of the three pilot communities. 2019. 2 pp.
- ❑ Community Development Plan for Lalova village, Rezina district (2019–2024) and its associated Action Plan. Lalova (village), Rezina (district). 2019. 47 pp.
- ❑ Community Development Plan, Meleseni community (2019–2024) and its associated Action Plan. Meleseni (village), Calarasi (district). 2019. 62 pp.
- ❑ Community Development Plan, Tescureni community (2019–2024) and its associated Action Plan. Tescureni (village), Ungheni (district). 2019. 44 pp.
- ❑ Guiding document for the Call for Application for Small-scale Investments to Strengthen the Quality of Life in Rural areas in Lalova, Tescureni and Meleseni. 2019. 13 pp.
- ❑ Final Report. The National Agency for Rural Development (ACSA). 2019. Chisinau. 31 pp (and 15 annexes).
- ❑ Concept note on EU grants Moldova. FAO REU. Budapest. 2020. 8 pp.
- ❑ Annex for the Concept Note on EU grants Moldova. FAO REU. Budapest. 2020. 2 pp.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	The project will contribute to enhanced capacities in the MARDE related to rural development. Furthermore, capacities in local community development will be enhanced in three selected local pilot communities. The enhanced capacities will lead to improved sustainable livelihoods and incomes in rural areas of the Republic of Moldova	
Outcome	Awareness has been increased on rural development and community development planning in MARDE, at rayon level and in selected pilot communities	
	Indicator	Training of MARDE and local administrative staff.
	Baseline	0
	End Target	100 staff members.
Comments and follow-up action to be taken	The indicator was fully achieved. No follow-up actions are required.	

Output 1	Capacity of MARDE and other relevant staff related to rural development policy and community development planning improved		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Training of MARDE and other relevant staff	20 staff members trained	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	The indicator was fully achieved. No follow up actions are required.		
Activity 1.1	National inception workshop organized		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The inception workshop was held on 25 January 2018.	
Activity 1.2	A rural development technical working group composed of MARDE and other relevant staff established		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A rural development technical working group was established, which consisted of staff from the MARDE and other relevant stakeholders. Members of the working group participated in the national level workshops and trainings throughout the project.	
Activity 1.3	Training needs assessment conducted and training programme prepared on rural development policy		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Before each training workshop, training needs assessments were performed by the project team to identify key topics of interest in order to deliver presentations that could be used by participants in the planning and implementation of rural development policies.	
Activity 1.4	Training and capacity development conducted		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Capacity building activities were conducted for relevant staff of the MARDE and other agencies (at least 20 people per training) on (i) rural development practices in the EU; (ii) the FAO community development process; (iii) the implementation of policy at local and national levels; and (iv) the monitoring and evaluation of agricultural and rural development strategies and programmes, among other measures. In addition, two members of the MARDE participated in the Conference on Integrated Territorial and Landscape Approaches for Poverty Reduction and Sustainability on 10-12 December 2019 (Rome), which was funded by FAO.	
	Study tour organized on community and rural development for selected national administrative staff (three people)		
	Achieved	Yes	
Activity 1.5	Comments	Within the framework of the project, a study tour was successfully organized in Hungary, which included a field visit to two farms near Kecskemét for seven Moldovan participants. In addition to the three participants originally envisaged, FAO provided funding to support the attendance of four more Moldovan participants. During the study tour, presentations were delivered by the Rural Development Department of the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary on (i) the implementation of the LEADER Programme and the community-led local development taking place in Hungary and (ii) the implementation of rural development policy in Hungary during 2014–2020 (the Rural Development Strategy, the Rural Development Programme and support measures). Two Hungarian farm owners spoke about good practices in rural tourism, rural accommodation and short value chains. The participants were also invited to attend the Regional Workshop on Integrated Community Development, which was held on 23-24 October 2019 in Budapest. As the closing event of the combined study tour, a half-day session was organized to present the roles of the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture in rural development and the Hungarian National Rural Network in the servicing of rural areas.	
	Final national workshop conducted to share experiences on rural development especially on community development with regional participation		
Activity 1.6	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The final workshop took place on 17 December 2019. The event was attended by around 30 participants from the MARDE, the Agency for Intervention and Payments in Agriculture (AIPA), academia and members of the three pilot communities. Project experiences and potential follow-up activities were discussed, including the Concept Note for potential donor funding.	

Output 2	A community development plan and an action plan developed in three pilot rural communities through a participatory and inclusive process		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Training of local administrative staff in three rural communities. – Community development plans in three pilot communities prepared and discussed with local authorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 10 staff members trained. – 3 plans developed. 	Yes
Baseline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 0 – 0 		
Comments	Both indicators were fully achieved. No follow up actions are required.		
Activity 2.1	Elaboration of the selection criteria for the three pilot communities		
	Achieved	Yes	
Activity 2.1	Comments	A set of selection criteria (entitled Criteria for Selection of the Three Pilot Communities) was prepared by the FAO REU project team to identify three potential pilot communities. The selection was performed by the service provider (the ACSA) in coordination with the MARDE. The FAO Moldova country office, the MARDE and relevant national authorities were consulted prior to selection.	
	A series of three to four community workshops conducted in each of the three pilot communities.		
Activity 2.2	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A series of three community workshops were organized in each of the three pilot communities. The workshops were conducted in close cooperation with the ACSA. In addition to the workshops, focus group discussions and individual interviews were also conducted, which allowed for a more in-depth analysis of the situation during the pilots.	
Activity 2.3	Identification of main stakeholders and focal points at community level and establishment of community stakeholder committee		
	Achieved	Yes	
Activity 2.3	Comments	The ACSA assisted in identifying the main local stakeholders and in establishing the local stakeholder committee in each of the three pilot communities. The members of each committee acted as focal points during the project. The participants in the focus group discussions, as well as the individuals interviewed, were selected by the ACSA. The community workshops were open to all residents of the pilot communities, with the aim of better integrating men, women, youths and vulnerable groups, leaving no one behind.	
	Situation analysis (baseline assessment) through desk research and interviews of stakeholders		
Activity 2.4	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Forming the basis of the three CDPs, a situation analysis was conducted through data analysis and from the inputs of community workshops, focus group discussions and individual interviews.	
Activity 2.5	Identification of main technical areas and establishment of focus groups based on these main technical areas (e.g. land tenure, fruit production, wine, etc.)		
	Achieved	Yes	
Activity 2.5	Comments	In order to prepare the CDPs, specific focus groups were identified and established. In each of the three pilot communities, two focus groups were established, one involving farmers and local entrepreneurs and the other comprising representatives from the social and administrative sectors. Specific questionnaires were created for both groups, with attention being paid to the integration of all social groups into the discussion. The members of the focus groups were interviewed, and their input was incorporated into both the situation analysis and a SWOT analysis.	
	Training conducted for project team and government staff at national, rayon and local level on local community development and on the preparation of community development plans, including discussion on the scenarios and vision		
Activity 2.6	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The project team, which included the ACSA, the International Consultant on Community Development and relevant staff from the MARDE, were trained on the FAO REU integrated community development process and its practices. The training took place on 2 October 2018. Local administrative staff for each of the pilot communities and representatives from the rayon level were trained on local community development and were also involved in the CDP preparation process.	

Activity 2.7	Community development plans and action plans for each pilot communities are formulated, validated and finalized		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	In each of the three pilot communities – Lalova (Rezina rayon), Tescureni (Ungheni rayon) and Meleseni (Calarasi rayon) – CDPs were prepared, discussed and validated by local authorities and stakeholders. Importantly, the CDPs were prepared in a participatory manner that involved local stakeholders. Each CDP includes an action plan that covers the planned investments for the community. The CDPs also serve as a basis for further funding applications to potential donors.	
Activity 2.8	Discussion paper prepared for policy dialogue at national level on community development planning based on pilot project experiences		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The discussion paper was prepared as part of the concept note for potential donor funding (Activity 2.9) and was also discussed at the final national workshop.	
Activity 2.9	Concept note formulated for potential donor funding for scaling up the project based on pilot experiences		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A concept note entitled “Strengthening Smallholders and Family Farms and Enhancing Integrated Local Development Through Small-scale Rural Investments, Promotion of Innovative Climate Smart Technologies and Integration into Value Chains” was prepared for potential donor funding opportunities and the scaling up of project results based on the pilot experiences.	
Output 3	Implementation of community development plans supported		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mobilization and training of local resource persons through local community development activities. – Demonstration projects are implemented in the three selected communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 90 people trained. – 6 demonstration projects implemented. 	Yes
Baseline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 0 – 0 		
Comments	<p>Within the framework of the project, six training workshops were organized (two in each community) in the selected communities for local administrative staff, farmers and young entrepreneurs based on the previously identified training needs – accessing financial resources, agro-tourism, the production of vegetables in greenhouses, beekeeping and honey production.</p> <p>From the community consultations it was concluded that investments allowing for the greatest part of the community to benefit were preferred. Therefore, three relatively large small-scale investments were formulated under the project budget. The investments resulted in the procurement of three skid steer loaders – one for each pilot community.</p>		
Activity 3.1	Support pilot communities in mobilizing resources for the implementation of the prepared community development plans		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	As part of the CDPs, action plans were prepared for each of the three pilot communities. The action plans covered future investments within communities, as well as their proposed implementation year and responsible agency. The action plans could also serve as a basis for applications for national and international donor funding. The planned investments were discussed and validated at community workshops.	
Activity 3.2	Based on the priorities of the community development plans, investment needs assessment conducted in the three pilot communities through call for expression of interest for supporting small-scale demonstration projects.		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	An investment needs assessment was conducted in each of the three pilot communities through a call for expression of interest in supporting small-scale demonstration projects. The priority identified in each of the three pilot villages was equipment for the maintenance of necessities in the agriculture sector and local public infrastructure. One skid steer loader (bobcat) was procured for each of the three pilot communities, fulfilling the above-mentioned needs. The procured equipment can be used as a capacity building tool for locals and is accessible to the wider public.	

Activity 3.3	Capacity building and coaching of potential beneficiaries of the demonstration projects organized on formulating and implementing small-scale rural development projects	
	Achieved	Yes
Activity 3.3	Comments	Based on the investment needs assessments, both an expression of interest for small-scale rural development projects and a call for applications were launched in the three pilot communities. The scoring was performed by the selection board. Members of the selection board included: a representative from the MARDE; representatives from the mayoralities in the pilot communities (Lalova/Tescureni/Meleseni); the ACSA Regional Representative; a national FAO representative; and a local stakeholder committee representative (focal point). The applications were scored according to the scoring system described in the call for applications. Capacity development activities and coaching were provided to all potential beneficiaries prior to the formulation of their project proposals (applications). The potential beneficiaries could contact focal points at national and local levels at any time during the application process if they had questions.
	Selection of demonstration projects to be funded and implemented	
Activity 3.4	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	A detailed selection board protocol was developed for the selection of investments. On-site checks were carried out for selected applications to verify the relevance of the information provided in the application. The on-site check included a comparison of the on-site situation and the information provided in the application and during the interviews with applicants.
Activity 3.5	Implementation of demonstration projects	
	Achieved	Yes
Activity 3.5	Comments	The ACSA organized the physical transfer of procured equipment from the supplier to local public authorities in Tescureni (2 January 2020), Meleseni (2 January 2020) and Lalova (03 January 2020). The mayoralities and the supplier signed and stamped an official document for the delivery and receipt of the equipment. On 6 February 2020, an official handover event took place for the equipment procured for the three pilot communities. The event was held in Meleseni (Calarasi rayon). The Minister of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment, as well as a representative from FAO Moldova, were present at the event.

Partnerships and Outreach

For more information, please contact: Reporting@fao.org

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