



D1.11 Gevgelija-Strumica Pilot 11 Regional Action Plan

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Foresight Package

0. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Gevgelija-Strumica Regional Action Plan (RAP) is to foster rural attractiveness by **improving the capacity and the model of the rural extension¹; as well as trough creating and implementing improved and new policy solutions dedicated to the young population in rural areas**. Throughout the extensive desk research of the national policies, project development efforts in a period of 25 years, as well as analysis of the current state of the rural economy, the statement of purpose is based on one main conclusion: **all development efforts in the rural ecosystem (policy, projects, NGOs, business, academia) in North Macedonia and specifically the Gevgelija-Strumica region have lack of focus on structural measures that will generate multiplicative development impact in the rural areas**. The idea of this RAP is to elaborate how two key structural measures are connected with the development streams in rural areas, as well as to show the roadmap how to achieve this. Gevgelija-Strumica region in the context of rural attractiveness, faces challenges in terms of maintaining and achieving higher level of development consistent with global trends. This can be achieved by focusing on structural reforms with wide impact in crucial areas that create rural life. Based on the results from the performed analysis, confirmed in continuous consultations with relevant stakeholders and members of the Regional Panel², the RAP focuses on two structural areas: **rural extension and young rural population**. The mission of RAP is by using structural intervention with strong multiplicative impact (economy, social inclusion, climate, young farmers, environment, awareness, technology, agricultural education, tax policy and market issues) to improve the rural attractiveness of the Gevgelija-Strumica region.

For further clarification of the identified two challenges it is important to point out that the analysis of current policies and stakeholder group members' opinion emphasizes the poor correlation between current policy measures and the real needs of the current population and potential future newcomers. Furthermore, the results have shown that the one of the core reasons for the inconsistency of current development policies is **the lack of poor channels/system of two-way communication** between policy creators and users (rural population). The need for overcoming this challenge becomes even more essential considering the requirements derived from the EU development policies (Green Deal, Farm2Fork, EU climate strategy): **climate resilience, sustainability, digitalization**. These new development trends in the time of serious economic challenges require significant technical capacity that will allow establishing two-way communication among policy level and user level. Considering the nature of the rural ecosystem and the opinion of the actors that create this system, the body that was identified as key actor in establishing, maintaining and improving this communication is the so called **rural extension**. Policy measures focused on developing strong rural extension are envisioned to be based on **multi stakeholder** involvement in the process of identifying the needs and creating the policies. This aspect covers the structural measure in the policy side of the given ecosystem and it should be aligned with consistent structural measure on the user side. Therefore, the method of the RAP considers one more structural measure on the user side focused on maintaining and fostering the process of returning young population in rural areas. The mission of the RAP in this context is to solve the challenge of aging of rural population and by that to increase the development capacities of the rural areas. In today's dynamic world for the purpose of achieving acceptable level of rural development it is essential to keep up with current technological and policy innovations where the role of the **young population** is of key importance. Youngsters are a category of population that has the highest capacity to absorb changes, especially technological changes which are crucial for rural development.

¹ Rural extension in the context of this document is used as a broader term from agricultural extension, including support operations or other economic activities and aspects that create the rural life besides the agriculture as main economic activity in the rural areas.

² Regional Panel is consisted of representatives from different stakeholder groups (policy makers, experts, farmers, newcomers)

1. Vision Statement

In the process of defining the vision statement of the Gevgelija-Strumica Pilot, two groups of challenges have been taken in consideration: **First**, the current challenges of the rural ecosystem which is characterized with political instability, vulnerable economy causing continuous inconsistency in the technical and financial capacities, having strong impact on the quality of policy creation and policy execution; **Second**, the challenge of aligning rural policies and rural economy with the need of institutional reforms, legislation adjustments and EU policies (CAP, Green Deal and flagship policies such as Farm2Fork, Biodiversity). Based on the above, the vision of the Gevgelija-Strumica pilot **is to transform the Gevgelija-Strumica region to become stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural area by 2030 for the purpose of maintaining and attracting new rural population.**

The mission translated in this RAP is based on two structural areas of interventions (measures) which have impact across all areas of action defined in the **long-term vision for the EU rural areas**³. In this regard, efficient and effective rural extension will provide credible and objective assessment of the current situation in rural areas by identifying the main challenges, that will further contribute to develop tailor-made rural policies that are consistent with the needs for good quality life for the current and returning population in rural regions, as well as consistent with the resilience and connectivity orientation of EU development policies. On the other side, measures for supporting young population in rural areas consisted of policies for employment and quality of rural life aligned with the specifics of young population behaviour, will attract more of this category of citizens to return to rural areas and to choose the available economic opportunities (not only agriculture) as their professional orientation. One of the strongest attributes of the young population which presents a key driver for dynamic rural development is the absorption capacity of this category of population for accepting new technologies, resilient and sustainable policies. Youngsters' capacities for fast adaptation to new technologies in education, communication, research combined with strong knowledge in foreign languages are key factors for success of the policy measures.

2. List of policy challenges

Based on the desk research as part of the policy evaluation activities and the discussions with the relevant stakeholders, members of the Regional panel, **the identified key policy challenges** are the following:

1. Supporting policies for rural extension

- **Low awareness** among policy creators for the capacity of the rural extension in the **policy creation**.
- Extremely poor policies for **technical and financial support** for rural extension as well as the academia and the applicative research (institutes) as consistent part of the extension.
- Absence of technical capacities within the rural extension that will enable **adaptation of the rural economy and rural life** to the new development trends of the EU policies (CAP, Green Deal, EU climate strategy).

2. Supporting policy for attracting young population in rural areas

- Insufficient **budget allocation** for young entrepreneurs in the current rural development program;
- Poor **involvement** of current young population **in policy creation** across the entire rural ecosystem (policy, business, NGOs, academia);
- Poorly diversified policy adapted to the **specific needs** of the young population in the rural areas;
- Supporting policy that exploits the **absorption capacities** of young population contributing for efficient and effective alignment with EU development trends (CAP, EU Climate strategy, Green Deal, and flagship policies such as Farm2Fork, Biodiversity).

³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas_en
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3. Policy challenge KPIs

Supporting policies for rural extension		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low awareness among policy creators for the capacity of the rural extension in the policy creation. • Extremely poor policies for technical and financial support for rural extension as well as the academia and the applicative research (institutes) as consistent part of the extension. • Absence of technical capacities within the rural extension that will enable adaptation of the rural economy and rural life to the new development trends of the EU policies (CAP, Green Deal, EU climate strategy). 		
Indicator	Current value	Desired value
<i>Allocated budget for rural extension development (quantitative indicator; source: Payment Agency⁴, MAFWA⁵, NEA⁶)</i>	<i>10 000 euros</i>	<i>100 000 euros annually till 2023; 1 500 000 euros annually in the period of 2024-2025; 300 000 euros annually in the period of 2026-2030</i>
<i>Number of trained advisors (quantitative indicator; source: NEA)</i>	<i>Regular system of training for advisors does not exist</i>	<i>120 trainees annually till 2025; 100% increase in number of trained advisors in the period of 2026-2030</i>
<i>Number of recipients of advisory services (quantitative indicator; source: NEA)</i>	<i>Average 23 600 users</i>	<i>100% increase in rural population served through rural extension services till 2025; 50% increase in rural population served through rural extension services till 2026-2030 (baseline number of users in 2025)</i>

Supporting policy for attracting young population in rural areas		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient budget allocation for young entrepreneurs in the current rural development program; • Poor involvement of current young population in policy creation across the entire rural ecosystem (policy, business, NGOs, academia); • Poorly diversified policy adapted to the specific needs of the young population in the rural areas; • Supporting policy that exploits the absorption capacities of young population that contribute for efficient and effective alignment with EU development trends (CAP, EU Climate strategy, Green Deal, and flagship policies such as Farm2Fork, Biodiversity). 		
Indicator	Current value	Desired value
<i>Allocated budget for supporting economic operations of young population in rural areas (quantitative indicator; source: Payment Agency)</i>	<i>780.000 EUR (annual)</i>	<i>100% annual increase in budget for young farmers from State budget (Program for financial support of agriculture and rural development; Program for direct</i>

⁴ Agency for financial support of Agriculture and Rural development

⁵ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy

⁶ National Extension Agency

		<i>payment-subsidies) and EU funding till 2025; 3 000 000 euros annually in the period of 2026-2030</i>
<i>Number of beneficiaries for financial support of economic operations of young population in rural areas (quantitative indicator; source: Payment Agency)</i>	<i>N/A⁷</i>	<i>100% annual increase in number of beneficiaries till 2030</i>
<i>Allocated budget for supporting newcomers in rural areas (quantitative indicator)</i>	<i>Does not exist</i>	<i>2 000 000 euros annually till 2025; 4 000 000 euros annually in the period of 2026-2030</i>
<i>Number of beneficiaries of programs for supporting newcomers in rural areas (quantitative indicator)</i>	<i>Does not exist</i>	<i>5 000 beneficiaries till 2030</i>

4. Policy challenge descriptions

Supporting policies for rural extension– Policy makers have shown poor understanding of the scope and the scale of the rural extension as one of the key stakeholders in rural development, thus, rural attractiveness. The rural extension as key actor in establishing the two-way communication between policy creators and rural population/rural economy is completely marginalized in current policies. In this context, additional policy challenges are the following:

- **Low awareness** among policy creators for the capacity of the rural extension in the **policy creation**.

The rural extension as one of the strongest mediators between the key beneficiaries (rural population/rural economy) and policy creators, has consistently been marginalized in the last three decades. Even though, structural reforms have been defined in key strategic documents, they have not been transferred in concrete actions and budgets. Additionally, current policies are recognizing only agricultural extension (National Extension Agency) where the role of the Academia in agriculture is too large extent absent. The rural extension defined as support for all other areas of rural life including the rural economy (see reference 1) is not present at all. Policy creators have not been able to effectively incorporate the multi stakeholder approach in policy creation mainly as a result of their low awareness for the capacity of the large network of stakeholders that the current extension has. Finally, one of the main hypothesis that has been proven throughout the activities of Polirural project is that the above presented situation regarding the rural extension is the main cause for poor creation (upstream) and execution (downstream) of rural policies.

- Extremely poor policies for **technical and financial support** for rural extension as well as the academia and the applicative research (institutes) as consistent part of the extension.

The current policy does not satisfy the technical and financial needs of the rural extension that are derived from the scope and the scale of the activities of this body in order to provide good quality life in rural areas. One of the bottlenecks is the narrow understanding of what rural extension stands for, as well as the absence of the Academia as generator of knowledge. Especially is important to emphasize that the production of applicative knowledge (institutes) has been left out only with basic budget for salaries and maintenance, meaning applicative research projects do not exist or are rarity. This situation results in poor transfer of

⁷ N/A in the context of this table means that the number of beneficiaries or budget cannot be still determined because the Payment agency does not have an automatic solution to extract the data for number, age and budget. To get this info more time is needed and a separate procedure regulated by the Payment Agency needs to be followed.

modern applicative knowledge throughout the rural extension, absence of modernized practical knowledge within the educational system which is also factor that has significant impact in attracting young population.

- Absence of technical capacities within the rural extension that will enable **adaptation of the rural economy and rural life** to the new development trends of the EU policies (CAP, Green Deal, EU climate strategy).

Current extension does not have a clear view of its role in implementation of the principles that are derived from the new development trends in the EU policies (CAP, Green Deal, EU climate strategy). Poor technical and financial capacities of the current rural extension contribute for low absorption of knowledge that in future can support the process of implementation of measures that are derived from these EU policies. The current policy has forgotten the value of the traditionally good status of the rural extension among the rural population and rural economy. The role of the rural extension is even stronger among the elderly population that are dominant in the rural areas and still have strong influence in the decision making. Exploiting this important factor (trust) and the strong communicational capacity of the rural extension are essential for implementation of the complex sustainability principles from the EU policies.

Supporting policy for attracting young population in rural areas – Current policies have poor capacity when it comes to attracting young population to stay or to return in rural areas. Considering the continuous decrease of young population in rural areas, as well as the number of youngsters that choose rural professions (eg. agriculture, food trading) as their career orientation it can be concluded that current measures are not sufficient. It seems that current policies have the tendencies just to satisfy the need for harmonization of the national Rural development policy with the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) by involving young population only declaratively or with poor budget amount. This shows insufficient awareness of policy creators for the important role of the young population in rural development and leaning more towards short-term political goals. In this context, additional policy challenges are the following:

- Insufficient **budget allocation** for young entrepreneurs in the current rural development program; Financial support aimed at supporting young entrepreneurs is significantly low given the importance of this category of the population in the context of rural development. Current budget does not allow capitalization of the substantial entrepreneurial and innovative capacities among the young population. Supporting policy for boosting entrepreneurship and innovations is tightly connected with the absorption capacity of the young population. Youngsters have been proven as drivers for accepting and implementing innovations in main economic sectors in rural areas (agriculture, rural tourism, food processing, etc.). Additionally, youngsters are more keen of using modern technologies and have less language barriers. Thus, developing and implementing creative and financially sufficient measures that support entrepreneurship and innovations have direct impact on attracting the young population to stay or return in rural areas and finally to contribute to the rural development and rural attractiveness.

- Poor **involvement** of current young population in **policy creation** across the entire rural ecosystem (policy, business, NGOs, academia);

The absence of multi stakeholder approach in policy creation is one of the factors that has contributed in poor involvement of young population in this process. The previous and current external project (USAID, CEDA, GIZ, etc.) support in the area of involving young people in policy creation have not given significant results. The current network of young farmers managed by National Federation of Farmers in N. Macedonia has low impact in policy creation. Additionally, youngsters are also left out in the other stakeholder groups of the ecosystem. In the business and in the academia the average age is still above 40, where in the NGO sector the situation is slightly better.

- Poorly diversified policy adapted to the **specific needs** of the young population; Policy is not adapted to the new trends of the work organization (e.g. digital nomads, online work) among young population. Absence of measures supporting digitalization, flexible educational model for pre-schooling and primary school, strong first line health support, or effective logistical solution to connect with urban school and health system, show the narrowness of current policies.

- Supporting policy that exploits the **absorption capacities** of young population that contribute for efficient and effective alignment with EU development trends (CAP, EU Climate strategy, Green Deal, and flagship policies such as Farm2Fork, Biodiversity).

Similarly like in the case of innovations, policy creators have shown low level of awareness for the importance of the young population and their absorption capacity to understand and accept the new sustainable development principles derived from the EU policies. Policy makers need to understand the significance of the absorption capacities of the young population to accept the principles of sustainability. Youngsters have higher capacity to understand the importance of the principles of sustainability as a result of less language barriers and better access to knowledge and information through today's modern technologies (social media, digital agriculture, carbon farming, etc).

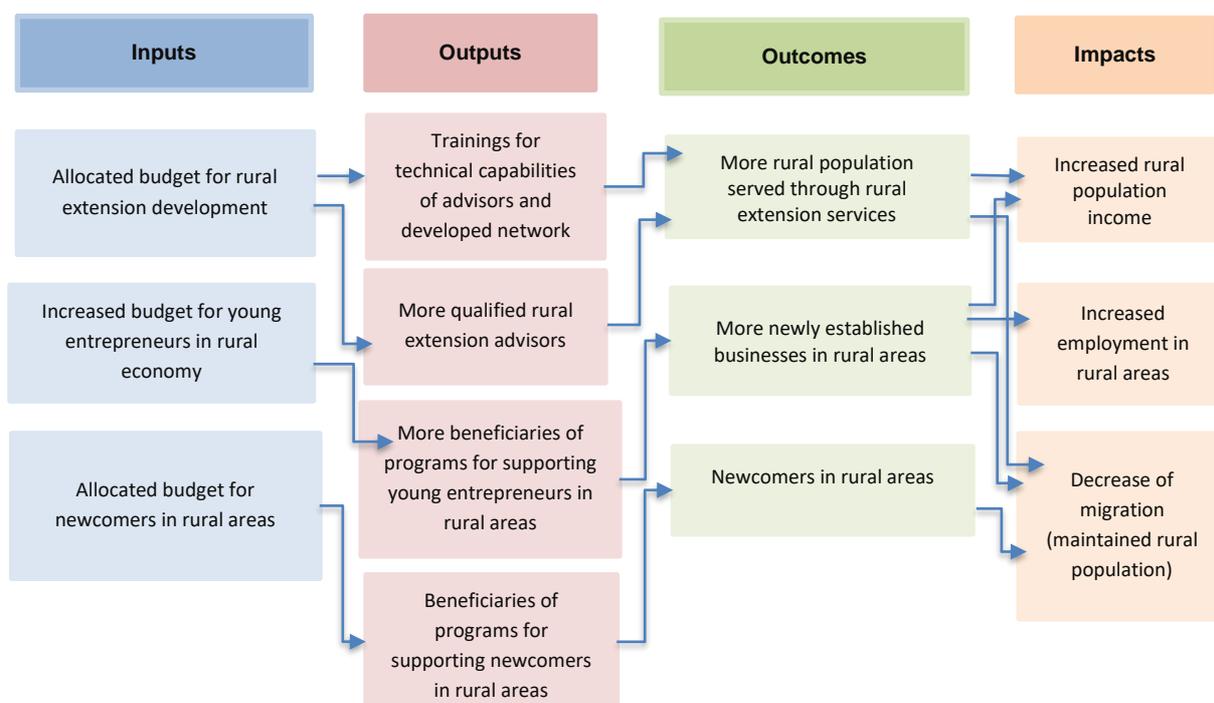
5. Policy measures

The provided actions within the 2 policy measures of interventions within Pilot 11 are list of activities that the local partners (AGFT and GGP) envision to perform in order to achieve the structural results that are believed to be reached. Special focus is put on the specific needs of rural population in context of attractiveness as well as the future development trends incorporated in EU strategic policies (CAP, Green Deal, EU climate strategy).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting policies for rural extension • Supporting policy for attracting young population in rural areas 	
1	Multi stakeholder workshop where all actors involved in rural development ecosystem will be involved in order to achieve overall consensus about the <i>current state</i> (technical and financial), the <i>capacity for change</i> and defining the key <i>areas of intervention</i> with its specifics (budget, chronology, roles of actors, and allocation of resources), and <i>expected results</i> regarding the two intervention areas in the AP.
2	Establishing a working group for structural reforms that will work on improving the organizational structure of policy development and policy execution where rural extension will have direct involvement through providing more <i>realistic insight</i> (input) for the situation in rural areas and population needs as well as providing <i>solutions for execution</i> that are consistent with the organizational and infrastructural capacities of the current implementation environment. Additionally, the working group should include representatives of the young population in rural areas and potential newcomers.
3	Developing a specific Action plan for enhancing the role of rural extension and young population in policy development and policy execution considering the future development trends within the EU policies. Action plan will be focused on exploiting the two core capacities of the rural extension which are: <i>high level of trust</i> among rural population and the <i>solid available infrastructure</i> (geographical coverage and logistics) for execution. In the context of young population, the specific action plan will be focused on capitalizing their entrepreneurial and innovative capacities.
4	Developing a plan for technical development which should determine the scope and the scale of technical improvement of the rural extension in order to overcome the challenges of policy creation and policy execution as well as the need to involve, motivate and exploit the entrepreneurial and innovative capacities of the young rural population.
5	Developing a financial plan for support of measures for rural extension and young population by taking into consideration current sources of financing as well as identifying additional sources of financing outside of the central budget. This activity will include a proposal for <i>redefining the budget and the measures</i> that currently exist in the program for rural development, <i>creating new measures</i> for institutional support where specific accent will be put on those areas of the rural extension that cover the <i>non-economic aspects of rural life</i> (schooling, health system, support for elderly people, etc).

6	The above mentioned working group will be transformed in a formal monitoring committee satisfying the multi stakeholder approach, managed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE). The scope and the scale of the activities of the monitoring body will be focused on assuring that all previously mentioned actions are delivered according to the plan and expected results are achieved.
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6. Intervention logic diagram (stages in development)



7. Intervention logic description

The AP focused on increasing the attractiveness of the Gevgelija-Strumica Pilot region is based on vision with intervention on two main structural areas. The **first** area of intervention is related to improving the policy for maintaining the current young population and attracting new. The **second** area of intervention is dedicated to the rural extension which is identified as a crucial mediating stakeholder that enables developing policies that are more efficiently and effectively correlated with the needs of the rural population.

Based on the above, the interventions as part of the measure for maintaining current young population in rural areas and attracting new are primarily focused on increasing the budget dedicated to further development of entrepreneurial activities in rural areas. Furthermore, the intervention logic considers allocating additional budgets that will be specifically focused on youngsters in urban areas that have motive to move to rural areas. The idea is to capitalize on the already recognizable trend among population in urban areas which is consisted of individuals going out of cities in more quiet and remote rural places in order to work and live for certain period of time. More precisely, the measure is focused on the trend of digital nomads. Finally, the intervention has the purpose to convert the periodical migration into permanent migration, or converting digital nomads into newcomers in rural areas. The intervention should be considered in the broad sense meaning that budget can be distributed as direct support, as well as support for creating an environment that is consistent with new young newcomers needs. The inputs explained above is expected to influence the entrepreneurial activities of youngsters in rural areas, as well as to increase the numbers of young newcomers. By creating and financially supporting measures that are focused on nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit among youngsters should result in increasing the number of new business. Additionally, the measure should be designed in a way that it will support

diverse business ideas that can be developed and maintained in rural areas. Finally, this effort is believed that will result in reducing the intensive migration of young population from rural to urban areas, increasing the employment of young population and increasing young population income.

In the context of support of rural extension, the envisioned input considers further increase of current budget of rural extension, as well as additional budget for its development. Development of rural extension is considered as process of strengthening the technical capacities of current advisors, widening the scope of already well developed network of rural extension offices and digitalization of rural extension service processes. The logic behind this inputs is to enable providing more complex services that will support rural population to develop their economical operations, to improve their standard of living and to maintain and attract new rural population. Additionally, strengthening the capacity of rural extension will play key role in more efficient and effective adaptation to the new EU development trends.

8. Contribution to key missions of the EU

The two intervention areas have strong contribution to the key missions of the EU sourced by **multiplicative effect** derived from the structural reforms.

In the context of the activities of intervention covering the issue of **rural extension**, the role and the capacity of this mediating body is essential considering the high level of **perceived trust** for the advisors among the rural population and the **strong infrastructure** which enables broad geographical coverage of rural areas and solid communication with final beneficiaries. The importance of the role of the rural extension becomes even greater when dealing with complex issues such as *sustainability, digitalization, climate change* or similar, where trust and strong technical capacities are key for the success of the policy. The ambition of the EU expressed in the Green Deal and its flagship strategies create exceptionally challenging environment for the current rural economy. This situation becomes even more complex considering the specific development challenges of North Macedonia. Considering this implementation environment of the key EU missions, it is essential to highlight the strong relationship among the advisors within the rural extension and the rural population which allows much better insight about the potential bottlenecks that can appear in the process. When specific measures in the context of Green Deal are defined on the central level, the role of the advisors within the rural extension is essential in the execution part, especially in supporting the MAFWE to understand what type of progress is achieved (**monitoring and reporting role**) and in supporting the final beneficiaries how to implement the specific measures enforced by the **MAFWE (supporting role)**. By introducing policy measures for enforcing these two roles of the rural extension the AP contributes for setting up the foundations of the process of implementation of the principles derived from the EU green policies and EU climate policies.

The main impact on EU missions by intervening in policy directed to **young population** is derived from the capacity of this category of population to understand, anticipate and accept modern and sustainable policies. Key contributor for this is the fact that younger population is more open to new technologies, have less language barriers, they have had more opportunities to travel outside of the national borders, and they are more exposed to modern digital media (social media). All these attributes present a much better environment for implementation of the demanding EU policies. Therefore, policies that enforce better economic and social life of youngsters resulting in maintaining current and attracting new young people increases the overall absorption capacity of the rural areas to accept the sustainability principles. Additionally, stimulating the entrepreneurial and innovative capacities of existing young population in rural areas and the potential newcomers increases the possibility for **diversifying the economic** activities in rural areas by incorporating environmentally friendly technologies and developing climate resilient businesses.

9. Intervention logic KPIs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting policies for rural extension • Supporting policy for attracting young population in rural areas 	
	Indicators	Target
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated budget for rural extension development • Increased budget for young entrepreneurs in rural economy • Allocated budget for newcomers in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 000 euros annually till 2023; 1 500 000 euros annually in the period of 2024-2025; 300 000 euros annually in the period of 2026-2030 • 100% annual increase in budget for young farmers from State budget (Program for financial support of agriculture and rural development; Program for direct payment-subsidies) and EU funding till 2025; 3 000 000 euros annually in the period of 2026-2030 • 2 000 000 euros annually till 2025; 4 000 000 euros annually in the period of 2026-2030
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings for technical capabilities of advisors and developed network • More qualified rural extension advisors • More beneficiaries of programs for supporting young entrepreneurs in rural areas • Beneficiaries of programs for supporting newcomers in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 series of trainings organized annually till 2025 by NEA; 4 series of trainings organized annually in the period of 2026-2030 • 120 trainees annually till 2025; 100% increase in number of trained advisors in the period of 2026-2030 • 80% digitalization of service delivery processes till 2030 • 100% annual increase in number of beneficiaries of programs for supporting young entrepreneurs in rural areas till 2030 • 5 000 beneficiaries of programs for supporting newcomers in rural areas till 2030
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More rural population served through rural extension services • More newly established businesses in rural areas • Newcomers in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% increase in rural population served through rural extension services till 2025; 50% increase in rural population served through rural extension services till 2026-2030 (baseline number of users in 2025) • 20% increase in newly established businesses in rural areas till 2030 • 5 000 newcomers in rural areas till 2030
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased rural population income • Increased employment in rural areas • Decrease of migration (maintained rural population) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% increase in rural population income till 2030 • 20% increase in employment in rural areas till 2030 • 30% decrease in migration from rural areas till 2030

10. Monitoring mechanism

Monitoring committee consisted of representatives from different stakeholders (MAFWE, NEA, academia, farmers' associations) it is one of the possible form how the monitoring and evaluation process can be performed in the AP implementation activity. Considering the fact that the key challenge in maintaining the monitoring mechanism is the financial aspect, it is crucial that the MAFWE as main institution in the rural development ecosystem can lead and maintain the Monitoring committee covering the costs for the technical and logistical support. The Monitoring committee should support and oversee the implementation of the RAP, conduct quarterly meetings to discuss progress, conduct annual ex-durante evaluation and analysis, use results from evaluation reports to adjust and improve the AP implementation.

11. Roadmap

	Action	Funding	PO	Timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting policies for rural extension • Supporting policy for attracting young population in rural areas 			
1	Multi stakeholder workshop where all actors involved in rural development ecosystem will be involved in order to achieve overall consensus about the <i>current state</i> (technical and financial), the <i>capacity for change</i> and defining the key <i>areas of intervention</i> with its specifics (budget, chronology, roles of actors, and allocation of resources), and <i>expected results</i> regarding the two intervention areas in the AP.	AGFT/GGP	MAFWE	23.08.2022
2	Establishing a working group for structural reforms that will work on improving the organizational structure of policy development and policy execution where rural extension will have direct involvement through providing more <i>realistic insight</i> (input) for the situation in rural areas and population needs as well as providing <i>solutions for execution</i> that are consistent with the organizational and infrastructural capacities of the current implementation environment. Additionally, the working group should include representatives of the young population in rural areas and potential newcomers.	MAFWE	MAFWE with support of Academia	September 2022- December 2022
3	Developing a specific Action plan for enhancing the role of rural extension and young population in policy development and policy execution considering the future development trends within the EU policies.	MAFWE	MAFWE with support of Academia	September 2022- December 2022

	Action plan will be focused on exploiting the two core capacities of the rural extension which are: <i>high level of trust</i> among rural population and the <i>solid available infrastructure</i> (geographical coverage and logistics) for execution. In the context of young population, the specific action plan will be focused on capitalizing on their entrepreneurial and innovative capacities.			
4	Developing a plan for technical development which should determine the scope and the scale of technical improvement of the rural extension in order to overcome the challenges of policy creation and policy execution as well as the need to involve, motivate and exploit the entrepreneurial and innovative capacities of the young rural population.	MAFWE, World Bank, EU funding, Development agencies funding (USAID, GIZ, SIPPO)	MAFWE with support of Academia	November 2022- March 2023
5	Developing a financial plan for support of measures for rural extension and young population by taking into consideration current sources of financing as well as identifying additional sources of financing outside of the central budget. This activity will include a proposal for <i>redefining the budget and the measures</i> that currently exist in the program for rural development, <i>creating new measures</i> for institutional support where specific accent will be put on those areas of the rural extension that cover the <i>non-economic aspects of rural life</i> (schooling, health system, support for elderly people, etc).	MAFWE, World Bank, EU funding, Development agencies funding (USAID, GIZ, SIPPO)	MAFWE with support of Academia	November 2022- March 2023
6	The above mentioned working group will be transformed in a formal monitoring committee satisfying the multi stakeholder approach, managed by the MAFWE. The scope and the scale of the activities of the monitoring body will be focused on assuring that all previously mentioned actions are delivered according to the plan and expected results are achieved.	MAFWE, World Bank, EU funding, Development agencies funding (USAID, GIZ, SIPPO)	MAFWE with support of Academia	April 2023 - 2030