

# Overcoming administrative obstacles in financing Croatian farmers and entrepreneurs: the policy dimension of the European Union's fund absorption

---

Šostar, Marko; Budić, Hrvoje; Škoko, Ines

Source / Izvornik: **Scientific papers. Series management, economic, engineering in agriculture and rural development, 2024, 24, 937 - 947**

**Journal article, Published version**

**Rad u časopisu, Objavljena verzija rada (izdavačev PDF)**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:277:183292>

Rights / Prava: [In copyright](#) / [Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-09-08**



Repository / Repozitorij:

[FTRR Repository - Repository of Faculty Tourism and Rural Development Požega](#)



**Volume 24, Issue 1/2024**

**PRINT ISSN 2284-7995**

**E-ISSN 2285-3952**



# **SCIENTIFIC PAPERS**

**SERIES “MANAGEMENT, ECONOMIC  
ENGINEERING IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT”**

**Publishers:**

**University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania.** Address: 59 Marasti Blvd., District 1, 011464  
Bucharest, Romania, Phone: + 40213182564, Fax: +40213182888, www.managusamv.ro

**Ceres Publishing House,** Address: 29 Oastei Street, District 1, Bucharest, 013701, Phone/Fax: +40213179023, E-mail: edituraceres@yahoo.com  
All rights reserved

**The publishers are not responsible for the content of the scientific papers and opinions published in the Volume. They represent the authors' point of view.**

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

**Editor in Chief: Prof. Ph. D. Toma Adrian DINU**

**Executive Editor: Prof. Ph. D. Agatha POPESCU**

**Members:**

Prof. Ph.D. H.C. Miguel Moreno MILLAN, University of Cordoba, Spain  
Prof. Ph.D. Doc. Svend RASMUSSEN, University of Copenhagen, Denmark  
Prof. Ph.D. Mogens LUND, Institute of Food and Resource Economics, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Associate Prof. Ph.D. Ove MADSEN, Grinsted Agricultural Academy, Denmark  
Prof. Ph.D. Pascal Anton OLTENACU, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, United States of America  
Prof. Ph.D. Rangesan NARAYANAN, University of Nevada, Reno, United States of America  
Ph.D. Patrick ANGEL, US Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining Appalachian Regional Office, United States of America  
Prof. Ph.D. Gerhard MOITZI, University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria  
Acad. Prof. Ph.D. Paolo GAJO, University of Florence, Italy  
Prof. Ph.D. Diego BEGALLI, University of Verona, Italy  
Prof. Ph.D. Alistair Mc CRACKEN, The Queen's University, Belfast, United Kingdom  
Ph.D. Hab. Stefan MANN, Research Station Agroscope, Federal Office for Economics, Tanikon, Switzerland  
Prof. Ph.D. Drago CVLIJANOVIC, University of Kragujevac, Serbia  
Prof. Ph.D. Jonel SUBIC, Institute of Agricultural Economics, Belgrade, Serbia  
Prof. Ph.D. Nebojsa RALEVIC, University of Belgrade, Serbia  
Prof. Ph.D. Mamdouh Abbas HELMY, Modern University for Technology and Information, Cairo, Egypt  
Prof. Ph.D. Tarek FOUDA, Tanta University, Egypt  
Prof. Ph.D. Christopher Ogbonna EMEROLE, Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria  
Prof. Ph.D. Vecdi DEMIRCAN, Isparta University of Applied Sciences, Isparta, Türkiye  
Prof. Ph.D. Mevlüt GÜL, Isparta University of Applied Sciences, Isparta, Türkiye  
Prof. Ph.D. Şinasi AKDEMİR, Çukurova University, Adana, Türkiye  
Prof. Ph.D. Sait ENGİNDENİZ, Ege University, İzmir, Türkiye  
Prof. Ph.D. Philippe LEBAILLY, University of Liege, Belgium  
Prof. Ph.D. Philippe BURNY, University of Liège, Belgium  
Prof. Ph.D. Hab. Dariusz KUSZ, Rzeszow University of Technology, Poland  
Prof. Ph.D. Hab. Volodymyr Anatoliiovych KOLODIICHUK, Stepan Gzhyskyi National University of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnologies, Lviv, Ukraine  
Prof. Ph.D. Rashid SAEED, University of Gujrat, Pakistan  
Acad. Prof. Ph.D. Hab. Pavel MOVILEANU, Agricultural State University of Moldova, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova  
Acad. Prof. Ph.D. Hab. Alexandru STRATAN, National Institute of Economic Research, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova  
Associate Prof. Ph.D. Veronica PRISĂCARU, Agricultural State University of Moldova, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova  
Associate Prof. Ph.D. Veronica MOVILEANU, Agricultural State University of Moldova, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova  
Associate Prof. Ph.D. Hab. Mariana DOGA-MIRZAC, Moldova State University, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova  
Associate Prof. Ph.D. Zuzana PALKOVA, Slovak University of Agriculture, Nitra, Slovakia  
Associate Prof. Ph.D. Petar BORISOV, Agricultural University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria  
Associate Prof. Ph.D. Rezear KOLAJ, Agricultural University of Tirana, Albania  
Ph.D. Cecilia ALEXANDRI, Institute for Agricultural Economics, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Gheorghe MUREŞAN, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Cluj-Napoca, Romania  
Associate Prof. Ph.D. Radu Lucian PĂNZARU, University of Craiova, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Stejărel BREZULEANU, "Ion Ionescu de la Brad" Iasi University of Life Sciences, Iasi, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Gavrilă ŞTEFAN, "Ion Ionescu de la Brad" Iasi University of Life Sciences, Iasi, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Vasile GOŞA, Banat University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Mihai I of Romania", Timisoara, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Nicoleta MATEOC-SÎRB, Banat University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Mihai I of Romania", Timisoara, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Tiberiu IANCU, Banat University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Mihai I of Romania", Timisoara, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Ioan BRAD, Banat University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Mihai I of Romania", Timisoara, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Ioan Nicolae ALECU, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Manea DRĂGHICI, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Mihai BERCA, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Gina FÎNTÎNERU, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Romeo Cătălin CREȚU, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Cristiana TINDECHE, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Hab. Elena TOMA, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Ion DONA, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Elena STOIAN, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Adelaida Cristina HONȚUŞ, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Daniela CREȚU, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Adrian TUREK-RAHOVEANU, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Alina MĂRCUȚĂ, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Liviu MĂRCUȚĂ, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. Ph.D. Silviu BECIU, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania  
Assoc. Prof. Ph. D. Dragoş SMEDESCU, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Romania

**Publishing Committee:**

**Prof. Ph.D. Silviu BECIU, Lecturer Eng. Teodora POPESCU, Lecturer Ph.D. Mariana BURCEA,  
Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Ionela VLAD, Lecturer Ph.D. Eugenia ALECU, Assistant Prof. Ph.D. Valentin ŞERBAN**

The papers belong to the following research fields: economic engineering in agriculture, management, marketing and agri-food trade, rural economy, agricultural policies, accounting, financial analysis, finance, agrarian legislation, durable development, environment protection, tourism, agricultural extension and other connected areas.

## C O N T E N T

---

### **1.IMPROVING ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY ON DEGRADED PERMANENT MEADOWS BY VARIOUS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

**Simona ACATRINEI (DUMITRIU), Mihai STAVARACHE,  
Cristian-Sorin GAVRILĂ, Elena-Manuela VACARCIUC, Ana-Maria DUDĂU,  
Daniela BOURUC, Elena STAVARACHE, Mirela PARASCHIVU,  
Călin SĂLCEANU, Stejărel BREZULEANU..... 17**

### **2.THE ATTAINMENT OF THE UNITED NATION SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL (SDG) NUMBER TWO: ASSESSMENT OF SOME INDICATORS IN NIGERIA**

**Sunday Brownson AKPAN, Ini-mfon Vincent PATRICK,  
Comfort Asuquo ESSIEN..... 25**

### **3.TREND ANALYSES AND MACROECONOMIC VARIABLE DETERMINANTS OF OIL PALM FRUIT AND ITS DERIVATIVES PRODUCTION IN NIGERIA**

**Sunday B. AKPAN, Glory E. EDET, Aniefok A. UMOERN..... 39**

### **4.TRENDS IN ROMANIA'S TRADE WITH WALNUTS IN THE PERIOD 2010-2022**

**Georgiana Armenița ARGHIROIU, Silviu BECIU,  
Maria BOBEICĂ (COLPOȘ)..... 55**

### **5.HOW DID THE RISE IN FERTILISER USAGE IMPACT ROMANIAN TRADE IN THIS PRODUCT?**

**Georgiana Armenița ARGHIROIU, Silviu BECIU,  
Maria BOBEICĂ (COLPOȘ)..... 61**

### **6.ANALYSIS OF THE SUPPLY OF THE NUMBER OF CATTLE HEADS IN THE PRODUCTION OF BEEF IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

**Slavica ARSIĆ, Nataša KLJAJIĆ, Predrag VUKOVIĆ..... 67**

### **7.NAVIGATING DIGITAL FRONTIER: FACTORS INFLUENCING SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF FRESH MILK IN PAKISTAN**

**Manan ASLAM, Zhiwen LI, Sidra NAEEM,  
Shoaib NASIR..... 75**

### **8.THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ON SESAME EXPORT COMPETITIVENESS: INSIGHTS FROM TURKEY AND UZBEKISTAN**

**Murat AYDIN, Metin TETİK..... 87**

**9.GLOBAL EVALUATION OF THE TURKISH PASTA INDUSTRY IN TERMS OF COMPETITIVENESS**

**Alamettin BAYAV, Hülya GÜL..... 97**

**10.ELASTICITY DYNAMICS AND TRADE BALANCE PERFORMANCE AS METRICS FOR FOOD SECURITY – AN ASSESSMENT OF ROMANIA'S SWINE MEAT MARKET**

**Silviu Ionuț BEIA, Marius CONSTANTIN, Elena-Mădălina DEACONU, Violeta Elena BEIA, Florea Cosmin NICOLAIE, Dragos SMEDESCU, Cosmina SMEDESCU..... 107**

**11.THE ECONOMIC PROFITABILITY OF PEPPER CULTIVATED IN SOLAR SYSTEM IN CONVENTIONAL AND ORGANIC AGRICULTURE – CASE STUDY IN ROMANIA**

**Rozi Liliana BEREVOIANU..... 117**

**12. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE YIELD AND QUALITY OF GRAIN CROPS DEPENDING ON ORGANIC AND MINERAL FERTILIZER SYSTEMS IN THE CONDITIONS OF UNSTABLE MOISTENING IN UKRAINE**

**Petro BOIKO, Nataliia KOVALENKO, Yaroslav TSYMBAL, Yelyzaveta ZADUBYNNA, Roman KULYK..... 123**

**13.ADAPTATION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ECONOMICS FOR THE STUDENTS OF "ION IONESCU DE LA BRAD" UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES (IULS) IAȘI, ROMANIA, IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGING LABOUR MARKET NEEDS**

**Carmen-Olguța BREZULEANU, Roxana MIHALACHE, Mădălina-Maria BREZULEANU, Elena UNGUREANU, Alina SIRGHEA..... 135**

**14.SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURAL WORK - OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY**

**Cristiana Silvia BUZATU, Iulian Virgil GHIULEANU, Valentina Constanța TUDOR, Nicoleta OLTENACU, George VLAD..... 147**

**15.BINARY LOGISTIC MODEL FOR THE LEVEL OF RICE PRODUCTION AND ITS SIGNIFICANT PREDICTORS**

**Leomarich F. CASINILLO, Virgelio C. DARGANTES JR..... 157**

**16. ORDINAL REGRESSION MODELING FOR THE LEVEL OF ABACA PRODUCTION IN EASTERN VISAYAS, PHILIPPINES**

**Leomarich F. CASINILLO, Karen Luz P. YAP..... 167**

**17. THE IMPACT OF MARKET ANALYSIS IN DETERMINING THE MARKET VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND IN ROMANIA**

**Silvia CHIOREAN, Iulia Diana ARION, Tudor SĂLĂGEAN,  
Mircea-Emil NAP, Elemer Emanuel ȘUBA, Alexandru COLIȘAR..... 177**

**18. PROSPECTS OF THE HOPS MARKET IN ROMANIA THROUGH THE PRISM OF COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027 FOR ROMANIA**

**Irina-Adriana CHIURCIU, Ana Maria MORNA, Aurelia-Ioana CHEREJI,  
Daniela ȚUȚUI, Andreea-Roxana FIRĂȚOIU..... 187**

**19. AGRITOURISM MARKET IN ROMANIA: POTENTIAL, CONCENTRATION, AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES**

**Mariana CHIVU, Silviu STANCIU..... 195**

**20. PROMOTING ROMANIA'S CULINARY HERITAGE. CASE STUDY: LOCAL GASTRONOMIC POINTS**

**Mariana CHIVU, Silviu STANCIU..... 203**

**21. THE CONTRIBUTION OF NATIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (NRDP) FUNDS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES FROM THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE SOUTH-WEST OLTENIA REGION, ROMANIA**

**Gheorghe Augustin CÎJMĂROIU, Natalița Maria SPERDEA,  
Marius VLADU..... 213**

**22. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF SNAGOV, ILFOV COUNTY, ROMANIA**

**Florin Cristian CIOBĂNICĂ, Elena COFAS..... 223**

**23. QUALITY ANALYSIS OF PRACTICAL TRAINING IN VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION. CASE STUDY: ILFOV COUNTY, ROMANIA, ACADEMIC YEAR 2022-2023**

**Florin Cristian CIOBĂNICĂ..... 235**

**24.THE LEADER PROGRAMME EVOLUTION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ROMANIA**

**Floriana-Bogdana CIOBANU, Marius VLADU..... 247**

**25.NAVIGATING FISCAL WATERS AND STRATEGIC SHIFTS: ASSESSING THE RISK AND IMPACT OF ROMANIA'S 1% TURNOVER TAX ON COMMODITIES TRADERS, SUPPLY CHAIN IMPLICATIONS, AND AGRICULTURAL SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY**

**Horia Nicolae CIOCAN, Agatha POPESCU, Reta CONDEI, Ionela Mițuko VLAD, Valentin ȘERBAN..... 253**

**26.DESIGN AND CREATION OF A COMMERCIAL WEBSITE – PRACTICAL SOLUTION FOR ELECTRONIC COMMERCE**

**Elena COFAS..... 265**

**27.RESEARCH ONTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECOLOGICAL LABEL IN AGROTOURISM**

**Romeo Cătălin CREȚU, Ioan Iulian ALECU, Dragoș RĂDUCAN, Petrică ȘTEFAN..... 275**

**28.COST AND PROFITABILITY ANALYSIS IN CARNATION PRODUCTION: THE CASE OF ISPARTA PROVINCE, TÜRKİYE**

**Asli DALGIC, Vecdi DEMIRCAN, Arif POLICE, Ahmet Selcuk ONDER..... 281**

**29.OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH AI-BASED DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES USAGE FOR AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES IN NIGERIA**

**Olanike Fasilat DEJI, Michael FAMA KINWA, Ebunoluwa Oyindamola FANIYI, Toyin Femi OJO, Aanuoluwapo Oladipupo OPA YINKA..... 287**

**30.ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF RAINBOW TROUT CAGE FARMS DIFFERING IN SIZES**

**Vecdi DEMIRCAN, Gurkan DIKEN, Deniz SARICA, Asli DALGIC..... 295**

**31.FOREIGN EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPING SCIENTIFIC AND INTELLECTUAL POTENTIAL OF THE AGRIFOOD COMPLEX**

**Elena DERUNOVA, Marianna VASILCHENKO ..... 305**

**32.ASSESSMENT OF THE DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INVENTIONS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY**

**Elena DERUNOVA, Marianna VASILCHENKO, Anton VORONOV..... 311**

**33.FACTORS AFFECTING THE FORMATION AND USE OF SCIENTIFIC AND INTELLECTUAL POTENTIAL OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY**

**Elena DERUNOVA..... 321**

**34.AN ALGORITHM FOR ORGANIZING AND GROUPING DATA RELATED TO THE EXPENDITURES BY EDUCATION LEVELS**

**Delyana DIMOVA..... 329**

**35.COMPONENT OF MARKETING IN AUTHENTIC ROMANIAN RURAL TOURISM**

**Carina Andreia DOBRE, Maria STOIAN, Adelaida Cristina HONTUS,  
Irina Adriana CHIURCIU, Elena SOARE..... 335**

**36.INCREASING PROFITABILITY OF MEAT PROCESSING UNITS BY ADDING VALUE FOR MEAT TRIMMINGS**

**Olga DRĂGHICI..... 341**

**37.IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY IN CHOOSING FERTILISER AGGREGATES**

**Anișoara DUMA COPCEA, Nicoleta MATEOC SÎRB,  
Casiana MIHUȚ..... 345**

**38.ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY OF THE MECHANISATION TECHNOLOGY IN MAIZE**

**Anișoara DUMA COPCEA, Casiana MIHUȚ,  
Teodor MATEOC SÎRB..... 353**

**39.EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF AGRICULTURE-BASED INVESTMENTS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: YOZGAT PROVINCE SAMPLE, TURKEY**

**Nizamettin ERBAS..... 363**

**40.STOCHASTIC ANALYSIS OF ALLOCATIVE EFFICIENCY OF UPLAND RICE PRODUCTION SYSTEM IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA**

**Eshey Samuel ESHEYA..... 373**



|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>41.DISCRIMINATE THE SHORTAGE OF FERTILIZATION AND IRRIGATION FOR LEAFY PLANTS BY USING ALTERNATIVE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE RGB COLOR MODEL</b> |     |
| Tarek FOUDA, Eltaher MADY, Nouri AL BAY, Shimaa SALAH.....   | 381 |
| <b>42.DISTINGUISHING HEAVY METALS CONCENTRATION IN GREEN LEAFY VEGETABLES BY USING THE RGB COLOR MODEL</b>                                       |     |
| Tarek FOUDA, Eltaher MADY, Nouri AL BAY, Shaimaa SALAH.....  | 395 |
| <b>43.FINITE ELEMENT ANALYSIS AND TOPOLOGY OPTIMIZATION OF FABA BEAN METERING PLATES</b>   |     |
| Tarek FOUDA, Abeer ABDELSALAM, Atef SWILAM,<br>Mohamed El DIDAMONY.....  | 407 |
| <b>44.USING HEATING AND VACUUM AS A NEW SYSTEM TO ACHIEVE SHORT COOKING TIME FOR PRODUCING BLACK HONEY</b>                                       |     |
| Tarek FOUDA, Ali HASSAN, Mohamed GEASA.....  | 417 |
| <b>45.DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF RAISED BED MACHINE TO SUIT FABA BEAN PLANTING</b>  |     |
| Tarek FOUDA, Abeer ABDELSALAM, Atef SWILAM,<br>Mohamed El DIDAMONY.....  | 427 |
| <b>46.USING FINITE ELEMENT METHOD AND FATIGUE ASSESSMENT OF SINGLE - SCREW FISH OIL EXTRUDER</b>   |     |
| Tarek FOUDA.....   | 443 |
| <b>47.USING HYPERSPECTRAL DATA FORMONITORING AND OBSERVATION OF FABA BEAN CROP GROWTH</b>  |     |
| Tarek FOUDA, Abeer ABDELSALAM.....   | 453 |
| <b>48.SUBSIDIES AND PROFITABILITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR: EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP IN BULGARIA</b>   |     |
| Vanya GEORGIEVA.....   | 465 |
| <b>49.PRODUCTIVITY OF SOME SUNFLOWER HYBRIDS - COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS</b>  |     |
| Marinel Nicolae HORABLAGA, Ciprian BUZNA, Florin SALA.....   | 475 |

**50.ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF OIL PALM PROCESSING IN OLA OLUWA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OSUN STATE, NIGERIA**

**Kaothar Modupe IDRIS-ADENIYI, Ahmed Olugbenga BUSARI, Afusat Adunni ALABI, Khadijat Olaitan OLANREWaju, Munir Karounwi Adegoke WAHAB, Sekinat IGE..... 485**

**51.ANALYSIS OF SEASONAL FLUCTUATIONS IN EGG PRICES IN TÜRKIYE**

**Mehmet IŞIK, Mevlüt GÜL..... 491**

**52.THE ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY OF SOME CEREALS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGES IN THE CENTRAL AREA OF MOLDOVA, ROMANIA**

**Simona-Florina ISTICIOAIA, Alexandra LEONTE, Matei GHEORGHE, Lorena – Diana POPA, Vera CARABULEA, Paula – Lucelia PINTILIE, Andreea ENEA, Andreea – Sabina PINTILIE, Valentin VLĂDUŢ, Florin NENCIU..... 501**

**53.MICRO ENTREPRENEURS’ ADOPTION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT) FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT: EVIDENCE FROM SMALL SCALE POTTERY BUSINESS OF KUALA KANGSAR, MALAYSIA**

**Khairul Hisyam KAMARUDIN, Mohamad Fadhli RASHID, Muhamad Azri SHAARI..... 511**

**54.ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ON THE LEVEL OF DIGITAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS OF AZERBAIJAN**

**Inga KHAN-KHOYSKAYA..... 521**

**55.BIOLOGICAL FEATURES AND GENETIC VALUE OF THE LEBEDYN BREED IN THE NEED FOR ITS PRESERVATION ON THE TERRITORY OF UKRAINE**

**Leontii KHMELNYCHYI, Ihor KOMPANETS, Tetiana KUCHKOVA..... 531**

**56.ANALYSIS OF OPTIONAL QUALITY TERM (OQT): MOUNTAIN LABEL FROM PRODUCER’S PERSPECTIVE: STUDY OF MOUNTAINOUS COUNTIES SURROUNDING BRAŞOV, ROMANIA**

**Kiran MAINALI, Felix H. ARION, Cătălina ROGOZAN..... 537**

**57.CONSUMER UNDERSTANDING AND PERCEPTION OF MOUNTAIN LABEL  
IN THE CITY OF BRAȘOV, ROMANIA**

**Kiran MAINALI, Felix H. ARION, Cătălina ROGOZAN..... 551**

**58.APPLICATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TECHNOLOGIES IN  
VITICULTURE**

**Simona-Ioana MĂRCULESCU, Alexandru BADEA,  
Răzvan Ionuț TEODORESCU, Mihaela BEGEA, Mihai FRÎNCU,  
Iuliana Diana BĂRBULESCU..... 563**

**59.BIBLIOMETRIC STUDY ON THE IMPORTANCE OF USING CREATIVE  
ACCOUNTING IN FINANCIAL REPORTING**

**Alina MARCUTA, Delia RADOI, Alina Cristina NUTA, Florian Marcel NUTA,  
Liviu MARCUTA..... 579**

**60.ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTION OF ROMANIAN CONSUMERS  
REGARDING THE PRACTICE OF CREATIVE TOURISM AND ITS ROLE IN  
SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Liviu MARCUTA, Agatha POPESCU, Cristiana TINDECHE,  
Cosmina SMEDESCU, Dragos SMEDESCU, Alina MARCUTA..... 589**

**61.CONSUMPTION OF MILK AND DAIRY PRODUCTS IN ROMANIA (2017-  
2019)**

**Dragoș Mihai MEDELETE, Radu Lucian PÂNZARU,  
Mariana-Cristina GRECU..... 599**

**62.THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGES ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN  
THE SÂNNICOLAU MARE AREA, ROMANIA**

**Casiana MIHUT, Anisoara DUMA COPCEA, Adalbert OKROS,  
Vlad MIRCOV..... 607**

**63.ASSESSMENT OF THE PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY OF AGRICULTURAL  
LANDS FOR THEIR SUSTAINABLE USE**

**Casiana MIHUȚ, Lucian NIȚĂ, Anișoara DUMA COPCEA,  
Alexandru RINOVETZ..... 619**

**64.THE ROLE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN THE REPUBLIC  
OF MOLDOVA**

**Natalia MOCANU, Andrei BOTEZATU, Andrei MULIC..... 627**

**65.THE INFLUENCE OF THE VENTILATION SYSTEM IN THE ROOM FOR REARING PIGS AND THE TYPE OF FEEDING ON THE INDICATORS OF MICROCLIMATE AND PRODUCTIVITY OF PIGS**

**Oleksandr MYKHALKO, Mykola POVOD, Bogdan GUTYJ, Olga KORZH, Olena MIRONENKO, Tatiana KARUNNA, Vasyl BILOKOPYTOV, Nadiia KREMPA..... 635**

**66.IMPACT OF BT. COTTON PRODUCTIVITY ON FARMERS' INCOME IN SOUTHERN PUNJAB, PAKISTAN**

**Nasir NADEEM, Umar Ijaz AHMED, Choudary Ihtasham ALI, Sami ULLAH, Mohsin RAZA, Muhammad Arqam IQBAL, Maryam TAHIR..... 653**

**67.THE CONSUMERS' ACCEPTANCE OF PURPLE-FLESHED POTATO ON THE MARKET IN ROMANIA**

**Alexandra-Mihaela NAGY, Maria-Mihaela ANTOFIE, Camelia SAVA SAND..... 661**

**68.CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING CIRCULAR ECONOMY STRATEGIES IN ROMANIA**

**Ana Irina NICOLAU, Sorin IONITESCU, Simona MOAGĂR-POLADIAN, Doina Maria TILEA, Ana-Maria DINU..... 669**

**69.A STATISTICAL STUDY ANALYSIS ON EXPLORING CONSUMPTION PATTERNS REGARDING FOOD LOSS AND WASTE**

**Daniel NIJLOVEANU, Victor TIȚA, Nicolae BOLD, Dragoș SMEDESCU, Alexandru FÎNTÎNERU,Valentina TUDOR, Cosmina SMEDESCU, Emanuela JERCA..... 685**

**70.RESEARCH ON THE INFLUENCE OF FEED RATION ON THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE HOLSTEIN-FRIESIAN BREED IN INTENSIVE FARMS IN SOUTH-EASTERN ROMANIA, CASE STUDY**

**Nicoleta OLTENACU..... 695**

**71.ANALYSIS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIORS OF GREENHOUSE VEGETABLE FARMERS: A CASE STUDY IN TÜRKİYE**

**Mustafa ÖZGÜR, Sait ENGİNDENİZ, Gökhan CİNAR, Farrukh RAHİMLİ..... 703**

**72.ELEMENTS OF PRODUCTIVITY AND FIBER QUALITY IN INDUSTRIAL HEMP, *Cannabis sativa* L.**

**Anca PANDA, Marinel Nicolae HORABLAGA, Florin SALA..... 715**

**73.FRUIT CONSUMPTION IN ROMANIA (2017-2019)**

**Radu Lucian PÂNZARU, Dragoş Mihai MEDELETE,  
Diana Marina SORA..... 725**

**74.THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY (CASE OF UKRAINE AND SLOVAKIA)**

**Nataliia PARKHOMENKO, Lucia VILČEKOVÁ, Peter ŠTARCHOŇ..... 733**

**75.IMPACT OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS ON FISHERS' CATCH  
PRODUCTIVITY AND INCOME: A PROPENSITY SCORE MATCHING  
ANALYSIS**

**Mary Cris F. PLEÑOS..... 743**

**76.REVIVAL OF TOURISM DEMAND IN THE POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC  
PERIOD - A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW IN ROMANIA**

**Agatha POPESCU, Cristina TINDECHE, Alina MARCUTA,  
Liviu MARCUTA, Adelaida HONTUS, Mirela STANCIU,  
Daniela-Mirela PLESOIANU..... 751**

**77.LAND USE - AT THE GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN UNION LEVEL IN THE  
PERIOD 2000-2021**

**Agatha POPESCU, Toma Adrian DINU, Elena STOIAN,  
Horia Nicolae CIOCAN, Valentin ŞERBAN..... 761**

**78.NEW TRENDS IN THE GLOBAL SILK PRODUCTION IN THE PERIOD 2011-  
2022**

**Agatha POPESCU, Valentin ŞERBAN,  
Horia Nicolae CIOCAN..... 775**

**79.THE DEPENDENCE OF PIGLET PRODUCTIVITY ON THE METHOD OF  
FEED PREPARATION AND THE FEEDING OF PIGLETS**

**Mykola POVOD, Oleksandr MYKHALKO, Bogdan GUTYJ,  
Tetyana VERBELCHUK, Halyna KALYNYCHENKO, Lina VYSLOTSKA,  
Mariana IVAKHIV..... 787**

**80.GROWTH INTENSITY AND FEEDING EFFICIENCY OF SURGICALLY AND  
IMMUNOLOGICALLY CASTRATED MALE PIGS ON A LIQUID TYPE OF  
FEEDING**

**Mykola POVOD, Oleksandr MYKHALKO, Bogdan GUTYJ,  
Valeriy BORSHCHENKO, Tetyana VERBELCHUK, Oksana LAVRYNIUK,  
Hennadii SHOSTIA, Ivan SHPYRNA..... 799**

**81.FROM CHALETS TO COMMERCE: EXPLORING HOW THE STRASBOURG CHRISTMAS MARKET IS AMPLIFYING LOCAL PRODUCERS' PRESENCE IN ALSACE, FRANCE**

Alexandru-Florin PREDA, Romeo Cătălin CREȚU..... 811

**82.SHORT FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS: KEY CONCEPTS, BENEFITS, RISKS, EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORT, MODELS FROM ROMANIA, STRATEGIES OF DEVELOPMENT**

Florin PUIU, Adrian TUREK-RAHOVEANU..... 819

**83.RESEARCH ON THE EVOLUTION OF EXPENDITURE WITH AGRICULTURAL LAND FERTILIZATION BY ECONOMIC SIZE CLASSES IN ROMANIA DURING THE PERIOD 2007-2021**

Raluca Alexandra RĂDOI, Diana Maria ILIE, Manea DRĂGHICI..... 829

**84.ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF NEOINDUSTRIALIZATION FACTORS ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RUSSIA AGRICULTURAL SECTOR**

Ivan SANDU, Vasily NECHAEV..... 837

**85.CHEMICAL FERTILISER AND PESTICIDE USAGE PREFERENCES IN AVOCADO PRODUCTION FARMS: A CASE OF ANTALYA PROVINCE, TÜRKİYE**

Deniz SARICA, Bahadır Yasin AYDEMİR..... 845

**86.DYNAMICS OF FORMATION OF THE LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE RURAL POPULATION OF UKRAINE: A CASE STUDY OF VINNYTSIA REGION**

Volodymyr SARIOGLO, Liudmyla LEVKOVSKA, Tetiana KOTENKO,  
Yuliia HOREMYKINA, Olena DIDKIVSKA, Mykhailo ROZBYTSKYI,  
Tetiana SHMATKOVSKA..... 857

**87.RESEARCH ON STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN PROTECTING THE LOCAL BRAND AS A SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION**

Mădălina ȘERBAN, Adrian TUREK RAHOVEANU,  
Laura Constanța ZUGRAVU, Petruța TUREK RAHOVEANU,  
Maria Magdalena TUREK RAHOVEANU..... 867

**88.THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE CONSUMPTION OF BEE PRODUCTS IN IZMIR PROVINCE, TURKIYE**

Gökhan SEZGİN, Muhsin ATAK, Buket KARATURHAN,  
M. Çağla ÖRMECİ KART..... 879

**89.ASPECTS REGARDING THE IMPACT OF POLLUTION ON THE HEALTH OF THE INHABITANTS OF WESTERN REGION, ROMANIA**

**Oana Maria SICOE-MURG, Teodora MATEOC-SÎRB, Camelia MĂNESCU, Nicoleta MATEOC-SÎRB..... 889**

**90.COMPARATIVE INSIGHTS INTO LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY TRENDS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S AGRI-FOOD SECTOR**

**Dragoş SMEDESCU, Valentina TUDOR, Marius Mihai MICU, Liviu MĂRCUȚĂ, Alina MĂRCUȚĂ, Cosmina SMEDESCU..... 899**

**91.EMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN EUROPEAN UNION'S MEAT PROCESSING COMPANIES: A TEN-YEAR PERSPECTIVE, 2011-2020**

**Dragoş SMEDESCU, Gina FÎNTÎNERU, Valentina TUDOR, Cosmina SMEDESCU, Alexandru FÎNTÎNERU, Silviu BEIA..... 909**

**92.STUDY ON THE WORLDWIDE PORK MARKET FOR THE PERIOD 2015-2021**

**Elena SOARE, Irina-Adriana CHIURCIU, Cristina-Elena APOSTOL, Paula STOICEA, Carina-Andreea DOBRE, Adina- Magdalena IORGA, Aurelia-Vasilica BĂLAN, Andreea-Roxana FIRĂȚOIU..... 923**

**93.A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW ON THE PRODUCTS CERTIFIED WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL QUALITY SCHEMES IN ROMANIA'S 8 DEVELOPMENT REGIONS**

**Alexandra Gabriela ȘOMÎCU, Marius VLADU..... 929**

**94.OVERCOMING ADMINISTRATIVE OBSTACLES IN FINANCING CROATIAN FARMERS AND ENTREPRENEURS: THE POLICY DIMENSION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S FUND ABSORPTION**

**Marko ŠOSTAR, Hrvoje BUDIĆ, Ines ŠKOKO..... 937**

**95.ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY OF PRODUCTION OF PLUM AND CHERRY ON FAMILY HOLDINGS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

**Zorica SREDOJEVIĆ, Danilo GAZDIĆ, Boško GAJIĆ, Nevena ČULE..... 949**

**96.A MODEL OF GOOD PRACTICES IN SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM FROM THE MOUNTAIN AREA - A CASE STUDY "GURA RAULUI", SIBIU COUNTY, ROMANIA**

**Mirela STANCIU, Agatha POPESCU, Sorina CORMAN..... 957**

**97. CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAND RELATIONS IN BULGARIA**

**Teodora STOEVA, Violeta DIRIMANOVA ..... 969**

**98. YIELD AND PROFITABILITY OF SOYBEAN CROP**

**Paula STOICEA, Mirela Elena DUŞA, Adrian-Gheorghe BĂŞA..... 973**

**99. PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFICIENCY OF MAIZE (ZEA MAYS) FARMERS IN ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA**

**Abdu Karniliyus TASHIKALMA, Dengle Yuniyus GIROH..... 979**

**100. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FOR THE PRODUCT GINGERBREAD, A STUDY REGARDING THE INFLUENCE OF DOUGH MATURATION TIME AND OF THE AERATION FORMULA ON THE PRODUCT'S TEXTURAL CHARACTERISTICS**

**Anca TULBURE, Cristina-Anca DANCIU..... 991**

**101. MARKETING AND INNOVATION IN THE ROMANIAN WINE MARKET**

**Maria Magdalena TUREK RAHOVEANU,  
Adrian TUREK RAHOVEANU..... 999**

**102. REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS: A KEY FACTOR FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ALBANIA**

**Gjokë ULDEDAJ, Edlir ORHANI, Maksim MEÇO..... 1013**

**103. CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS OF MANAGEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGRIFOOD COMPLEX**

**Marianna VASILCHENKO, Elena DERUNOVA, Sergey ANDRYUSHCHENKO,  
Victor SHABANOV..... 1021**

**104. TECHNICAL-ECONOMIC COMPARISONS AND HYBRIDIZATION OF GANJA-110 COTTON VARIETY WITH DIFFERENT COTTON VARIETIES: A CASE STUDY FROM AZERBAIJAN**

**Aytan ZEYNALOVA, Sait ENGINDEINIZ..... 1031**





## OVERCOMING ADMINISTRATIVE OBSTACLES IN FINANCING CROATIAN FARMERS AND ENTREPRENEURS: THE POLICY DIMENSION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S FUND ABSORPTION

Marko ŠOSTAR, Hrvoje BUDIĆ, Ines ŠKOKO

Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Tourism and Rural Development in Požega, 17, Vukovarska Street, Požega, E-mail: msostar@ftrr.hr, hbudic@ftrr.hr, iskoko@ftrr.hr

*Corresponding author:* msostar@ftrr.hr

### *Abstract*

*The research aims to analyze the EU funding for agriculture as well as the administrative obstacles of the national public bodies in using these funds for Croatian family farms/entrepreneurship and the role of policymakers in increasing the efficiency of absorbing funds from this source. Administrative barriers that appear at the national level were analyzed, with an emphasis on those that arise in procedures when applying for EU fund competitions, the financial approval process, and the criteria and conditions of the competitions themselves. The data used in the empirical analysis included 284 respondents who were surveyed through a questionnaire. The respondents were private consultants working on the preparation and implementation of projects funded from EU funds and were surveyed based on their many years of experience. Consultants from all regions in Croatia were covered to ensure more reliable results. The results show that delays in the preparation of national strategic documents significantly affect the reduction of efficiency in the use of EU funds. The most significant impact on the reduction of efficiency in the absorption of funds from EU sources is due to unreliable publication plans, prolonged project application assessments, frequent changes to competition documentation, and competition misalignment with the possibilities and needs of potential applicants. In contrast, less influence comes from unclearly defined competition conditions and the way (model) competitions are announced. The research aims to assist national authorities and provide guidelines to reduce administrative barriers, making it easier to finance projects for companies, public institutions, and other potential applicants.*

**Key words:** administrative challenges, EU funds, absorption, policy makers, family farms

### INTRODUCTION

EU funds serve as a key driver for the development of both member states and countries in the process of negotiating EU accession. The aim of these funds is to reduce regional, national, and local disparities between different geographic areas and individuals. By providing equal opportunities for all individuals, companies, and organizations that can access non-repayable grants from EU funds, the EU seeks to balance development. One of the EU's major challenges is its agricultural policy, which needs to have clear development directions and to finance actual needs on the ground. The ultimate goal in this entire process is to facilitate access to these funds by financing the development projects of organizations and individuals. However, we are aware of the

numerous obstacles at all levels in absorbing these resources.

In certain cases, political elites are not willing to decentralize the governance system and powers, leading to significant administrative barriers [44]. Digitalization is essential in reducing corruption and administrative constraints in public services, where structural changes and strategic planning play a key role [57]. The research by Schedler et al., 2019 shows that the main administrative barriers to the functioning of higher levels of public administration can be summarized as legal foundations, technical infrastructure, cost-benefit relationships, innovativeness, legitimacy, and policy coherence [46]. Public administration could take advantage of the possibilities offered by the new digital age, which would significantly ease communication and collaboration with target groups [45]. According to the research by Ng

et al., 2022, one of the main factors affecting the reduction in public administration efficiency is technical challenges and public resistance to change [41].

Marcu et al., 2020 highlight that information, transparency, implementation, and relationship with beneficiaries are key factors that public administration needs to work on to utilize funds more effectively from EU sources [34]. The European Commission encourages significant simplification of administrative barriers and prioritizes the importance of overcoming gaps and overlaps between different EU fund instruments [29]. The 2017 study by Breznitz and Ornston indicates that Poland's innovation system is hindered by various challenges, including poor governance, limited collaboration, human capital constraints, and regulatory obstacles [7]. Considering the changes that have occurred in the United Kingdom and their exit from the EU, a sharp decline in the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in EU projects has been observed. A stable framework for participation and clear rules from the EU is needed regarding the possibilities for third countries to participate in project funding [8]. After negotiations between countries and the European Council, the focus on rule-of-law requirements is primarily aimed at corruption associated with the use of funds, rather than on fundamental rule-of-law standards [15]. In their 2019 study, Pirvu et al. conclude that there needs to be a shift in cohesion policy. They recommend moving away from traditional investments in infrastructure and social aid for underdeveloped regions, and instead focusing on innovation as well as social and environmental strategies [43]. The 2021 research by Domorenok et al. indicates that a combination of knowledge-based, political, and financial resources can effectively contribute to the development of specialized administrative capabilities. These are essential for executing integrated policy frameworks, which are encouraged by international policy agendas without the need for a centralized control mechanism [18].

In the Republic of Croatia, the inefficiency of the public system is most linked to corruption.

According to the Corruption Perceptions Index for the year 2022, the Croatia falls into category B, which means that it is doing very well in combating corruption (Transparency International, 2023). [53]. Croatia has made significant strides in reducing the avenues for corruption and limiting discretionary powers in public decision-making (OECD, 2023) [42]. Croatia is focusing on advancing digitalization in the public sector with the aim of establishing online processes and electronic services, as well as enhancing the efficiency of public administration (European Commission, 2022) [19]. Clientelism is deeply ingrained in nearly every aspect of Croatian society. It is particularly evident in public administration employment practices and in the country's territorial structure, which is divided in a way that serves the political agenda of the ruling elite [27]. In its National Reform Program, Croatia has identified one of the key challenges in attracting funds from EU sources, ranging from simplifying application procedures and project implementation to introducing an e-system for project applications (Government of Croatia, 2020) [20].

According to Iova et al., 2023, it is extremely important to invest efforts in the development of human resources and digitalization for the more effective utilization of EU funds [24].

The 2023 study by Manolache et al. demonstrates that the agricultural sector serves as a model for other domestic economic sectors in terms of European fund absorption, revealing a strong correlation between effective utilization of European Structural Funds and net national investments in agriculture [33]. In their 2023 study, Chiurciu and Văruțoiu emphasize the need to devise new funding programs for rural development, as existing ones do not cover all essential areas of development [10]. The 2022 study by Matei et al. demonstrates that European funding boosts the number of new farmers and increases agricultural entrepreneurial income, providing valuable insights for public decision-makers on the financial needs and economic significance of the agricultural sector [36]. Effective agricultural policy, when aligned with the

appropriate utilization of resources, encourages investment, and helps to shrink the budget deficit [21].

The primary benefit of EU funds lies in their nature as non-repayable financial resources, contributing directly to the economic growth of a given country [56]. Effective management and strategic planning are the cornerstones of success; there's no room for political maneuvering and self-promotion in projects and development [49]. Charasz and Vogler (2021) emphasize the long-term effect of EU funds on both local and state capacities and suggest that these funds contribute to the reduction of bureaucracy [9]. Mugambi et al. (2021) point out that energy efficiency in spending is not evenly distributed across regions in Spain, and this is directly linked to the EU funding allocation criteria [39]. Attitudes towards EU institutions can potentially reduce the number of applications for EU-funded projects, although Crepez and Hanegraaff (2022) argue that this influence is almost negligible [11]. Crescenzi et al. (2020) show that affection for the EU cannot be bought, exemplified by the UK's exit from the EU despite significant EU fund contributions to their development [12]. Crucitti et al. (2023) note that research should focus not only on the number of financial resources absorbed but also on how these resources are allocated [13]. In his study, Hagemann (2019) underscores the importance of capacities, stating that poor capacities severely impact the ability to absorb funds and reduce regional disparities [22]. In their research, Maleković et al. (2018) and Šostar et al. (2018) highlight the strong influence of EU funds on regional development in Croatia [32, 50]. The allocated funds have expedited the adaptation processes of institutions and individuals to European legislation and capacity-building, although there are visible administrative barriers that lead to partial funding losses. In the study by Bańkowski et al. (2022), administrative obstacles are also noted as a bottleneck in the absorption of EU funds [3]. The fact that more projects don't necessarily equate to higher economic growth for a specific region should be considered; it's

crucial to properly allocate EU funds to areas that contribute most to growth [16].

Human resources are a vital asset for any country's success, particularly in the planning and execution of regional policies, focusing on EU funds [17, 55]. Studies by Lutringer (2023) and Van Wolleghem (2022) identify the barriers to the optimal absorption of EU fund resources, pointing to factors such as time, accounting mechanisms, administrative and financial capabilities, as well as the intrinsic nature of the funds themselves [30, 54]. Kersan-Škabić and Tijanić (2017) suggest that the key to effective fund absorption lies in investing in human capital, decentralization, investment frameworks, and infrastructure development [26]. Medve-Bálint and Šćepanović (2020) note that a significant portion of EU funds is absorbed by foreign companies, which then repatriate the capital [37]. Multiple studies have established a link between the quality of public administration and the capacity for absorbing EU-funded projects [6, 51]. Mendez and Bachtler (2022) argue that regional governance has no impact on the administrative efficiency of EU funds [38]. In contrast, Baschieri (2021) highlights how Poland's evolving approach to EU funds over time has been supported by institutional capacities and effective management, resulting in a high level of fund absorption [5]. According to a study by Jagódka and Snarske (2023), all regions in Poland have focused on human capital and innovation, significantly enhancing the effectiveness of EU funds [25]. Murzyn (2018) observes a notable increase in smart growth in Polish regions due to the utilization of EU funds [40]. Marcu et al. (2020) conducted a study in Romania, emphasizing initial capacity shortcomings when accessing EU funding due to a lack of expertise, though the situation improved over time [35]. This improvement was attributed to increased knowledge, experience, transparency, and advancements in information and communication systems. The rapid formation of a new region in Hungary in 2020 (Budapest and Pest County region) led to unforeseen changes that directly affected the absorption rates of EU funds

[47]. Moreover, the role of national governments is significant in the absorption of EU funds, with a focus on human resource investment and quality project development [4, 2].

According to Šostar (2021b), the capacities required for attracting and utilizing EU funds are divided into three categories: administrative, financial, and macroeconomic. The administrative capacity mainly involves both the system and individual stakeholders' ability to perform tasks related to EU fund management [48].

Țigănașu et al. (2018) show that high-quality institutional governance positively impacts the absorption rate of EU funds [52]. Aivazidou et al. (2020) suggest that less successful local governments should shift their strategic focus to strengthening administrative capacities rather than solely focusing on increasing fund absorption [1]. Given the limitations of capacities, Madeira et al. (2021) emphasizes the importance of following a smart specialization strategy [31]. Research by Darvas et al. (2019) explores the importance of curbing corruption within a country to facilitate easier access to EU funds and to ensure that these resources are allocated appropriately [14].

Lădaru and colleagues (2018) highlight disparities in the operational programs that issue calls for EU funding [28]. These disparities manifest as varying levels of efficiency in absorbing funds, suggesting flawed planning at higher levels, often misaligned with the actual needs on the ground.

Incaltarau and associates (2020) present an intriguing study that underscores the role of government in reducing corruption to improve the absorption of EU funds, which has a direct impact on the regional development of specific areas [23].

In this context, the aim of this research is to analyze the administrative limitations of national authorities (decision-makers) that restrict the utilization of EU funds in the agriculture and entrepreneurship sectors.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to set up this research, seven key variables have been identified that limit and reduce efficiency in using these funds: delays in developing national strategic documents, unreliable tender publication plans, unclearly defined tender conditions, the manner of tender publication as a "continuously open call," lengthy evaluation of project applications, frequent changes to tender documentation, and misalignment of tenders with the capabilities and needs of potential applicants.

For the purposes of the research, hypotheses related to the identified variables have been set and presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Hypothesis of the study

|    |   |
|----|---|
| H1 | All administrative limitations equally affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds   |
| H2 | Delays in the development of national strategic documents significantly affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds                        |
| H3 | Unreliable tender publication plans significantly affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds  |
| H4 | Unclearly defined tender conditions significantly affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds  |
| H5 | The manner of tender publication as a "continuously open call" significantly affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds                  |
| H6 | Lengthy evaluation of project applications significantly affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds                                      |
| H7 | Frequent changes to tender documentation significantly affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds   |
| H8 | Misalignment of tenders with the capabilities and needs of potential applicants significantly affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds |

Source: Author's hypothesis.

Materials and methods used for accepting/rejecting the hypotheses were based on the study of existing data and scientific literature in the field of EU funds absorption and the limitations that occur in this process, as well as survey methods through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was conducted on 284 respondents. The respondents were private consultants who work on the preparation and implementation of projects funded by EU funds, and their attitudes were examined based on long-term

experience. Consultants from all counties in Croatia were included to make the results more reliable, and they were selected randomly by researching websites of development agencies, entrepreneurial incubators, private consulting firms, and project departments of local and regional governments from all regions in Croatia. The questionnaire was conducted in 2023 via the respondents' email. A total of 400 emails were sent out, and 284 respondents replied. The obtained results were analyzed, and the normality of the distribution was tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, as well as the Spearman correlation

coefficient, to examine the relationships between the observed variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the analysis of the obtained data, we can see the results of the set hypotheses.

Looking at the data for the question regarding how delays in the development of national strategic documents by employees in public bodies responsible for the preparation and implementation of EU policies affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds, it can be observed that the arithmetic mean is 4.20, with a standard deviation of 1.01 (Table 2).

Table 2. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the posed questions

|  |                            | N   | %      | $\bar{x}$ | Sd   |
|--|----------------------------|-----|--------|-----------|------|
| Delays in the development of national strategic documents by employees in public bodies responsible for the preparation and implementation of EU policies affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds | I completely disagree      | 7   | 2.5%   |           |      |
|  | I disagree                 | 21  | 7.4%   |           |      |
|  | Neither disagree nor agree | 18  | 6.3%   |           |      |
|  | I agree                    | 101 | 35.6%  |           |      |
|  | I completely agree         | 137 | 48.2%  |           |      |
|  | Total                      | 284 | 100.0% | 4.20      | 1.01 |
| Unreliable tender publication plans affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds   | I completely disagree      | 20  | 7.0%   |           |      |
|  | I disagree                 | 17  | 6.0%   |           |      |
|  | Neither disagree nor agree | 13  | 4.6%   |           |      |
|  | I agree                    | 89  | 31.3%  |           |      |
|  | I completely agree         | 145 | 51.1%  |           |      |
|  | Total                      | 284 | 100.0% | 4.13      | 1.19 |
| Unclearly defined tender conditions affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds   | I completely disagree      | 99  | 34.9%  |           |      |
|  | I disagree                 | 94  | 33.1%  |           |      |
|  | Neither disagree nor agree | 17  | 6.0%   |           |      |
|  | I agree                    | 43  | 15.1%  |           |      |
|  | I completely agree         | 31  | 10.9%  |           |      |
|  | Total                      | 284 | 100.0% | 2.34      | 1.37 |

Source: Author's own calculations based on the current research.

For the question about how unreliable tender publication plans affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds, the arithmetic mean is 4.13, with a standard deviation of 1.19.

For the question regarding how unclearly defined tender conditions affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds, the arithmetic mean is 2.34, with a standard deviation of 1.37 (Table 2).

Examining the data for the question regarding how published tenders in the form of "permanently open calls" affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds, it can be observed that the arithmetic mean is 2.22, with a standard deviation of 1.23. For the

question about how the lengthy evaluation of project applications affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds, the arithmetic mean is 4.31, with a standard deviation of 0.96.

For the question regarding how frequent changes in tender documentation affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds, the arithmetic mean is 4.00, with a standard deviation of 1.24.

For the question about how the misalignment of tenders with the capabilities and needs of potential applicants affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds, the arithmetic mean is 4.20, with a standard deviation of 0.92 (Table 3).

Table 3. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the posed questions

|   |                            | N   | %      | $\bar{x}$ | Sd   |
|---|----------------------------|-----|--------|-----------|------|
| Published tenders in the form of "permanently open calls" affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds                            | I completely disagree      | 105 | 37.0%  |           |      |
|   | I disagree                 | 87  | 30.6%  |           |      |
|   | Neither disagree nor agree | 27  | 9.5%   |           |      |
|   | I agree                    | 55  | 19.4%  |           |      |
|   | I completely agree         | 10  | 3.5%   |           |      |
|   | Total                      | 284 | 100.0% | 2.22      | 1.23 |
| Lengthy evaluation of project applications affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds  | I completely disagree      | 9   | 3.2%   |           |      |
|   | I disagree                 | 10  | 3.5%   |           |      |
|   | Neither disagree nor agree | 17  | 6.0%   |           |      |
|   | I agree                    | 97  | 34.2%  |           |      |
|   | I completely agree         | 151 | 53.2%  |           |      |
|   | Total                      | 284 | 100.0% | 4.31      | .96  |
| Frequent changes in tender documentation affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds   | I completely disagree      | 24  | 8.5%   |           |      |
|   | I disagree                 | 20  | 7.0%   |           |      |
|   | Neither disagree nor agree | 13  | 4.6%   |           |      |
|   | I agree                    | 101 | 35.6%  |           |      |
|   | I completely agree         | 126 | 44.4%  |           |      |
|   | Total                      | 284 | 100.0% | 4.00      | 1.24 |
| The misalignment of tenders with the capabilities and needs of potential applicants affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds | I completely disagree      | 8   | 2.8%   |           |      |
|   | I disagree                 | 11  | 3.9%   |           |      |
|   | Neither disagree nor agree | 17  | 6.0%   |           |      |
|   | I agree                    | 129 | 45.4%  |           |      |
|   | I completely agree         | 119 | 41.9%  |           |      |
|   | Total                      | 284 | 100.0% | 4.20      | .92  |

Source: Author's own calculations based on the current research.

In the following, we present the testing of normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests to determine how the observed factors in the study are distributed. Based on this, it will be decided whether parametric or non-parametric tests will be applied. From the provided significance levels in Table 4, it can be observed how the significance levels of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests are

distributed. Specifically, if the significance for a particular category is greater than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ), it indicates a normal distribution. If the significance is less than 0.05, the distribution is different from normal. Since the significance level for all observed variables is not greater than 0.05, it can be said that the mentioned distributions do not follow a normal distribution in all observed categories.

Table 4. Testing the normality of distribution

|  | Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup> |     |      | Shapiro-Wilk |     |      |
|--|---------------------------------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|
|  | Statistic                       | df  | Sig. | Statistic    | df  | Sig. |
| Delays in the development of national strategic documents by employees in public bodies responsible for the preparation and implementation of EU policies affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds | .268                            | 284 | .000 | .748         | 284 | .000 |
| Unreliable tender publication plans affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds   | .279                            | 284 | .000 | .714         | 284 | .000 |
| Unclearly defined tender conditions affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds   | .278                            | 284 | .000 | .817         | 284 | .000 |
| Published tenders in the form of "permanently open calls" affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds   | .246                            | 284 | .000 | .827         | 284 | .000 |
| Lengthy evaluation of project applications affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds   | .296                            | 284 | .000 | .704         | 284 | .000 |
| Frequent changes in tender documentation affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds  | .298                            | 284 | .000 | .745         | 284 | .000 |
| The misalignment of tenders with the capabilities and needs of potential applicants affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds  | .289                            | 284 | .000 | .741         | 284 | .000 |

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Source: Author's own calculations based on the current research.

To better examine the relationships between the observed variables, Spearman's correlation coefficient was used. The value of this test ranges within the interval  $-1 \leq r \leq +1$ , where a negative sign indicates negative (inverse) correlation, and a positive sign indicates positive correlation. The higher the value of Spearman's correlation coefficient, the stronger (more significant) the correlation between the variables. From Table 5, it can be observed that very weak correlations were recorded only between the question of delays in the development of national strategic

documents by employees in public bodies responsible for the preparation and implementation of EU policies affecting the efficiency of using EU funds and frequent changes in tender documentation affecting the efficiency of using EU funds ( $r=0.135$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), and unreliable plans for publishing tenders affecting the efficiency of using EU funds and published tenders in the form of "permanently open calls" affecting the efficiency of using EU funds ( $r=-0.118$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

Table 5. Spearman's correlation coefficient

|  |   | 1     | 2      | 3     | 4             | 5     | 6            | 7     |
|--|---|-------|--------|-------|---------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| Delays in the development of national strategic documents by employees in public bodies responsible for the preparation and implementation of EU policies affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds | R | 1.000 | .057   | .054  | .038          | -.010 | <b>.135*</b> | .050  |
|  | P | .     | .342   | .369  | .522          | .868  | .023         | .400  |
|  | N | 284   | 284    | 284   | 284           | 284   | 284          | 284   |
| Unreliable tender publication plans affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds   | R | .057  | 1.000  | .004  | <b>-.118*</b> | .072  | .006         | .051  |
|  | P | .342  | .      | .952  | .046          | .226  | .914         | .391  |
|  | N | 284   | 284    | 284   | 284           | 284   | 284          | 284   |
| Unclearly defined tender conditions affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds   | R | .054  | .004   | 1.000 | -.010         | .075  | -.026        | .029  |
|  | P | .369  | .952   | .     | .863          | .209  | .667         | .624  |
|  | N | 284   | 284    | 284   | 284           | 284   | 284          | 284   |
| Published tenders in the form of "permanently open calls" affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds   | R | .038  | -.118* | -.010 | 1.000         | .018  | .072         | -.005 |
|  | P | .522  | .046   | .863  | .             | .761  | .226         | .940  |
|  | N | 284   | 284    | 284   | 284           | 284   | 284          | 284   |
| Lengthy evaluation of project applications affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds   | R | -.010 | .072   | .075  | .018          | 1.000 | -.042        | .114  |
|  | P | .868  | .226   | .209  | .761          | .     | .480         | .055  |
|  | N | 284   | 284    | 284   | 284           | 284   | 284          | 284   |
| Frequent changes in tender documentation affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds  | R | .135* | .006   | -.026 | .072          | -.042 | 1.000        | -.017 |
|  | P | .023  | .914   | .667  | .226          | .480  | .            | .775  |
|  | N | 284   | 284    | 284   | 284           | 284   | 284          | 284   |
| The misalignment of tenders with the capabilities and needs of potential applicants affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds  | R | .050  | .051   | .029  | -.005         | .114  | -.017        | 1.000 |
|  | P | .400  | .391   | .624  | .940          | .055  | .775         | .     |
|  | N | 284   | 284    | 284   | 284           | 284   | 284          | 284   |

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's own calculations based on the current research.

Even though the research results do not show a significant relationship between variables, the analysis of the survey questionnaire in Tables 2 and 3 indicates that certain variables have a direct impact on the application and absorption of EU fund resources. Based on this, hypotheses H1: All administrative limitations equally affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds; H4: Unclearly defined tender conditions significantly affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds; and H5: The manner of tender publication as a "continuously open call" significantly affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds, are **REJECTED** and are not supported by the

obtained results. Furthermore, hypotheses H2: Delays in the development of national strategic documents significantly affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds; H3: Unreliable tender publication plans significantly affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds; H6: Lengthy evaluation of project applications significantly affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds; H7: Frequent changes to tender documentation significantly affect the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds; and H8: Misalignment of tenders with the capabilities and needs of potential applicants significantly affects the reduction of efficiency in using EU funds, are



**ACCEPTED** and have an impact on the project applications by potential applicants, in the sense that they agree that these variables limit them.

## CONCLUSIONS

EU funds are one of the main drivers of regional development and the reduction of inequalities between and within countries. Non-repayable financial resources from the European Union finance development projects in the fields of agriculture, entrepreneurship, and tourism with the aim of stimulating economic activities, macroeconomic and microeconomic stability, as well as tangible benefits for public and private organizations and individuals. Opportunities for various competitions encompass the possibility of financing projects according to the actual needs and development priorities of each country. Like every system has its administrative limitations, it is evident that in the Republic of Croatia there are various obstacles that limit the absorption and use of EU funds, thereby directly affecting the rural and regional development of a particular region.

The set hypotheses, to a greater or lesser extent, prove the stated claims, but they do not have an equal impact on the absorption of EU funds and an individual's decision to apply for a project. A greater impact is evident in the delays in the adoption of strategic documents at higher levels, which limits the public sector in project applications. Furthermore, the announcement of calls for funding of certain projects is not in line with the annual plan of the body publishing the call. This leads to financial and timing planning issues for the applicants. If a project application does occur, the long time it takes for the project to be evaluated, approved, and contracted is demotivating. The project becomes outdated after a prolonged period due to daily changes in technology development and progress. It should also be noted that there's a visible issue with frequent changes to the call documentation. Specifically, during the period when the call is open for applicants, the tender

documentation and conditions are known to change several times, leading to project planning problems. Project applicants often apply for a project, and afterward, the documentation and conditions change. There is often also a problem of mismatch between the actual needs on the ground and what is considered an acceptable investment in a project.

Alternatively, the documentation or project application system is too complicated, deterring potential applicants.

We can conclude that there are many administrative challenges in financing projects from EU funds in the Republic of Croatia.

State authorities should take into account the conclusions of this study and simplify the entire project application system to facilitate potential applicants in realizing their projects.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Aivazidou, E., Cunico, G., Mollona, E., 2020, Beyond the EU Structural Funds' Absorption Rate: How Do Regions Really Perform?. *Economies*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3390/economies8030055>
- [2] Andrić, B., Šostar, M., Bodegrajac, T., 2018, Impact of EU Funding on Rural and Regional Development. *Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development*, 18: 17–21. [https://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.18\\_2/Art2.pdf](https://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.18_2/Art2.pdf), Accessed on 19.08.2023.
- [3] Bankowski, K., Ferdinandusse M., Hauptmeier S., Jacquinet P., Valenta V., 2021, The Macroeconomic Impact of the Next Generation EU Instrument on the Euro area. *Occasional Paper Series*, 255. Frankfurt: European Central Bank (ECB). <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3797126>
- [4] Barković, D., Šostar, M., 2013, Structural Funds in the Function of Reducing Regional Disparities. *Interdisciplinary Management Research*, 9: 825–34. <http://www.efos.unios.hr/repec/osi/journal/PDF/InterdisciplinaryManagementResearchIX/IMR9a67>, Accessed on 15.05.2023.
- [5] Baschieri, E., 2021, The Effectiveness of the EU Cohesion Policy in Poland: The Role of Institutional Factors: Comparative Case Study Analysis between Dolnośląskie and Śląskie. Master's Thesis, Economic History with specialization in Global Political Economy (Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden). <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1562408/FULLTEXT01.pdf> Accessed on 11.08.2023.

- [6]Baun, M., Marek, D., 2017, The limits of regionalization: The intergovernmental struggle over EU Cohesion Policy in the Czech Republic. *East European Politics and Societies: And Cultures*, 31: 863–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0888325417720717>
- [7]Breznitz, D., Ornston, D., 2017, EU financing and innovation in Poland. *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, 198. <https://www.ebrd.com/publications/working-papers/eu-financing-and-innovation-in-poland>, Accessed on 17.08.2023.
- [8]Cavallaro, M., Lepori, B., 2021, Institutional barriers to participation in EU framework programs: contrasting the Swiss and UK cases. *Scientometrics*, 126: 1311–1328. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-020-03810-0>
- [9]Charasz, P., Vogler, P. J., 2021, Does EU funding improve local state capacity? Evidence from Polish municipalities. *European Union Politics* 22: 446–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14651165211005847>
- [10]Chiurciu, I., Văruțoiu, M., 2023, European Funding within Sub-Measure 6.1. Case Study Applied in Hunedoara County, Romania. *Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development*, 23(1): 147-152. [https://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.23\\_1/volume\\_23\\_1\\_2023.pdf](https://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.23_1/volume_23_1_2023.pdf), Accessed on 10.09.2023.
- [11]Crepaz, M., Hanegraaff, M., 2022, (Don't) bite the hand that feeds you: Do critical interest organizations gain less funding in the EU? *European Political Science Review* 14: 315–32. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773922000145>
- [12]Crescenzi, R., Di Cataldo, M., Giua, M., 2020, It's not about the money. EU funds, local opportunities, and Euroscepticism, *Regional Science and Urban Economics* 84. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2020.103556>
- [13]Crucitti, F., Lazarou J. N., Monfort, P., Salotti, S., 2023, Where does the EU cohesion policy produce its benefits? A model analysis of the international spillovers generated by the policy. *Economic Systems*, 47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecosys.2023.101076>
- [14]Darvas, Z. M., Mazza, J., Midões, C., 2021, European Union Cohesion Project Characteristics and Regional Economic Growth. *Open JSTOR Collection*. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep50990>, Accessed on 15.06.2023.
- [15]De la Porte, C., Jensen, D. M., 2021, The next generation EU: An analysis of the dimensions of conflict behind the deal. *Social Policy and Administration*, 55(2): 249-402. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12709>
- [16]Devčić, A., Šostar, M., 2012, Models for measuring the real effects of the European Union funds on economic development (Modeli mjerenja realnih učinaka fondova Europske Unije na gospodarski razvoj). In Croatian language. *Ekonomski vjesnik: Review of Contemporary Entrepreneurship, Business, and Economic Issues* 25: 133–44. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/126286>, Accessed on 17.04.2023.
- [17]Devčić, A., Šostar, M., 2015, Regional development of European Union funds: Opportunities and Challenges (Regionalni razvoj i fondovi Europske unije: Prilike i izazovi). In Croatian language. *Požega: Veleučilište u Požegi*. <https://www.croris.hr/crosbi/publikacija/knjiga/746494>, Accessed on 19.08.2023.
- [18]Domorenok, E., Graziano, P., Polverari, L., 2021, Policy integration, policy design and administrative capacities. Evidence from EU cohesion policy, *Policy and Society*, 40(1): 58–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14494035.2021.1930697>
- [19]European Commission, 2022, Country Report – Croatia. Commission Staff Working Document, 613-640, 2022. [https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-05/2022-european-semester-country-report-croatia\\_en.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-05/2022-european-semester-country-report-croatia_en.pdf), Accessed on 03.09.2023.
- [20]Government of the Republic of Croatia, National Reform Programme 2020, 2020. <https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/Europski%20semestar%202020/National%20reform%20programme%202020.pdf>, Accessed on 10.07.2023.
- [21]Gut, S., 2022, Benefits of Implementing the Common Agricultural Policy in the European Union in the Period 2014–2020 and its Future. *Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development*, 22(1): 249-257. [https://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.22\\_1/volume\\_22\\_1\\_2022.pdf](https://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.22_1/volume_22_1_2022.pdf), Accessed on 10.09.2023.
- [22]Hagemann, C., 2019, How politics matters for EU funds' absorption problems—A fuzzy-set analysis. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26: 188–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2017.1398774>
- [23]Incaltarau, Cristian, Gabriela Carmen Pascariu, and Neculai-Cristian Surubaru. 2020. Evaluating the Determinants of EU Funds Absorption across Old and New Member States—The Role of Administrative Capacity and Political Governance. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 58: 941–61. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12995>
- [24]Iova, A. R., Crețu, D., Crețu, R. O., 2023, Impact of Rural Development Programs Implementation on the Economic and Social Evolution of the Rural Communities in Călărași County, Romania, *Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development*, 23(2): 325-332. [https://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.23\\_2/volume\\_23\\_2\\_2023.pdf](https://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.23_2/volume_23_2_2023.pdf), Accessed on 10.09.2023.
- [25]Jagódka, M., Snarska, M., 2023, Should We Continue EU Cohesion Policy? The Dilemma of Uneven Development of Polish Regions. *Social Indicators Research*, 165: 901–17. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11205-022-03048-8>
- [26]Kersan-Škabić, I., Tijanić, L., 2017, Regional absorption capacity of EU funds. *Economic Research* 30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2017.1340174>
- [27]Kotarski, K., Petak, Z., Bartlett, M. B., 2022, Sustainable Governance Indicators 2022: Croatia Report. *Sustainable Governance Indicators*, 2. <https://www.sgi->

- network.org/docs/2022/country/SIG2022\_Croatia.pdf, Accessed on 01.05.2023.
- [28]Lădaru, G. R., Marin, F., Diaconu, I. I., 2018, The Situation of the Absorption of European Structural and Investment Funds in Romania during the Programming Period 2014–2020. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences*, 8: 45–52. <https://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARAFMS/v8-i3/4451>
- [29]Laffan, B., De Feo, A., 2020, EU Financing for Next Decade: Beyond the MMF 2021-2027 and the Next Generation EU. European University Institute. <https://doi.org/10.2870/750252>
- [30]Lutringer, C., 2023, The Puzzle of ‘Unspent’ Funds in Italy’s European Social Fund. *International Development Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.4000/poldev.5192>
- [31]Madeira, P. M., Vale, M., Mora-Aliseda, J., 2021, Smart Specialisation Strategies and Regional Convergence: Spanish Extremadura after a Period of Divergence. *Economies*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3390/economies9040138>
- [32]Maleković, S., Puljiz, J., Keser, K., 2018, The Impact of Cohesion Policy on Croatia’s Regional Policy and Development. POLO-Cro28 Policy Paper. <https://polocro28.irmo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/The-Impact-of-Cohesion-Policies-on-Croatia%E2%80%99s-Regional-Policy-and-Development.pdf>, Accessed on 03.09.2023.
- [33]Manolache, S. B., Manolache, C., Stanciu, S., 2023, European Structural Funds in Romania: Absorption and Impact on the Agricultural Sector. *Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development*, 23(2): 421-426. [https://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.23\\_2/volume\\_23\\_2\\_2023.pdf](https://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.23_2/volume_23_2_2023.pdf), Accessed on 10.09.2023.
- [34]Marcu, L., Kandzija, T., Dorotic, J., 2020, EU Funds Absorption: Case of Romania. *Postmodern Openings*, 11(4): 41-63. <https://doi.org/10.18662/po/11.4/222>
- [35]Marcu, L., Kandzija, T., Dorotic, J., 2020, EU Funds Absorption: Case of Romania. *Postmodern Openings*, 11: 41–63. <https://doi.org/10.18662/po/11.4/222>
- [36]Matei, C. A., Mădescu, M. B., Onofrei, M., 2022, Financial Management of European Funds for Romanian Agriculture. *Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development*, 22(2): 489-493. [https://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.22\\_2/volume\\_22\\_2\\_2022.pdf](https://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.22_2/volume_22_2_2022.pdf), Accessed on 10.09.2023.
- [37]Medve-Bálint, G., Šćepanović, V., 2020, EU funds, state capacity and the development of transnational industrial policies in Europe’s Eastern periphery. *Review of International Political Economy* 27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2019.1646669>
- [38]Mendez, C., Bachtler, J., 2022, The quality of government and administrative performance: Explaining Cohesion Policy compliance, absorption and achievements across EU regions. *Regional Studies*, 0: 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2022.2083593>
- [39]Mugambi, P., Blanco, M., Ogachi, D., Ferasso, M., Bares, L., 2021, Analysis of the Regional Efficiency of European Funds in Spain from the Perspective of Renewable Energy Production: The Regional Dimension. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18094553>
- [40]Murzyn, D., 2018, Smart growth in less developed regions—The role of EU structural funds on the example of Poland. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 33: 96–113. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2019.1611418>
- [41]Ng, S., Yeatman, H., Kelly, B., Sankaranarayanan, S., Karupaiah, T., 2022, Identifying barriers and facilitators in the development and implementation of government-led food environment policies: a systematic review. *Nutrition Reviews*, 80(8): 1896–1918. <https://doi.org/10.1093/nutrit/nuac016>
- [42]OECD, Fair Market Conditions for Competitiveness in the Adriatic Region: Croatia Country Profile, 2023. <https://www.oecd.org/south-east-europe/programme/Croatia-country-profile.pdf>, Accessed on 28.07.2023.
- [43]Pîrvu, R., Drăgan, C., Axinte, G., Dinulescu, S., Lupănescu, M., Găină, A., 2019, The Impact of the Implementation of Cohesion Policy on the Sustainable Development of EU Countries. *Sustainability*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11154173>
- [44]Rafique, Z., Habib, S., Rosilawati, Y., 2021, Legal, Political and Administrative Barriers to Citizen Participation in Local Governance: An Inquiry of Local Government Institutions. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 46(4): 256-268. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2021.1993908>
- [45]Ravšelj, D., Tomaževič, N., Aristovnik, A., 2020, Case Study e-Government and Administrative Simplification for Businesses: Challenges and Opportunities for Central and Eastern European Countries. *Zavod 14*. [https://zavod14.si/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Knji%C5%BEica\\_Challenges-and-Opportunities\\_A4\\_2.pdf](https://zavod14.si/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Knji%C5%BEica_Challenges-and-Opportunities_A4_2.pdf), Accessed on 15.08.2023.
- [46]Schedler, K., Guenduez, A. A., Frischknecht, R., 2019, How Smart Can Government Be? Exploring Barriers to the Adoption of Smart Government. *Information Polity*, 24(1): 3-20. <https://doi.org/10.3233/IP-180095>
- [47]Szabó, P., Józsa, V., Gordos, T., 2021, Cohesion Policy Challenges and Discovery in 2021–2027 the Case of Hungary. *Deturope—The Central European Journal of Regional Development and Tourism*, 13: 66-100. <https://www.deturope.eu/pdfs/det/2021/02/06.pdf>, Accessed on 12.07.2023.
- [48]Šostar, M., 2021b, Real Impact of EU Funding—Quality Versus Quantity. In *Economic and Social Development*. Edited by Ana Aleksic, Vlatka Ruzic, Zoltan Baracskaiołtan. *Varaždin*, 99-105. <https://www.bib.irb.hr/1112444>, Accessed on 15.07.2023.

[49]Šostar, M., 2021a, Utilization of EU funds: Impact on development. In Tenth International Scientific Conference Employment, Education and Entrepreneurship. Edited by Zorana Nikitovic, Mirjana Radovic-Markovic and Sladjana Vujcic. College of Business Economics and Entrepreneurship, Belgrade, 196–201. <https://www.bib.irb.hr/1262597>, Accessed on 02.08.2023.

[50]Šostar, M., Nikić, M., Jeleč, R., 2018, Analiza utjecaja indeksa razvijenosti na apsorpciju fondova EU. Proceedings of 6th International Conference “Vallis Aurea” Focus on Reseach and Innovation. <https://www.bib.irb.hr:8443/1110042>, Accessed on 13.08.2023.

[51]Terracciano, B., Graziano, R. P., 2016, EU Cohesion Policy implementation and administrative capacities: Insights from Italian regions. *Regional & Federal Studies*, 26: 293–320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2016.1200033>

[52]Țigănașu, R., Incaltarau, C., Pascariu, C. G., 2018, Administrative Capacity, Structural Funds Absorption and Development. Evidence from Central and Eastern European Countries. *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, 18. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3296925>, Accessed on 11.06.2023.

[53]Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index, 2022. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022>, Accessed on 23.07.2023.

[54]Van Wolleghem, G. P., 2020, Does administrative capacity matter? The absorption of the European Fund for the integration of migrants. *Policy Studies*, 43: 640–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2020.1770209>

[55]Veron, P., Sergejeff, K., 2021, Reinvigorating Human Development in EU External Action. ECDPM Discussion Paper, 296. <https://ecdpm.org/application/files/6816/5546/8580/Reinvigorating-Human-Development-EU-External-Action-ECDPM-Discussion-Paper-296-2021.pdf>, Accessed on 12.08.2023.

[56]Vukašina, M., Kersan-Škabić, I., Orlić, E., 2022, Impact of European structural and investment funds absorption on the regional development in the EU-12 (new member states). *Equilibrium. Quarterly Journal of Economics and Economic Policy* 17: 857–80. <https://doi.org/10.24136/eq.2022.029>

[57]Wilson, C., Mergel, I., 2022, Overcoming barriers to digital government: mapping the strategies of digital champions. *Government Information Quarterly*, 39(2). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2022.101681>