

European Union Structural Funds and Priority 3 “Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development” of the Estonian National Development Plan



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As a member state of the European Union (EU), Estonia will have the opportunity to participate in the regional policy of the Community and to receive financial assistance from the EU budget. The principles of EU Structural Funds assistance and its use and application procedures are described in The Estonian National Development Plan for the Implementation of Structural Funds – Single Programming Document 2004–2006 (SPD). SPD is the basis for cooperation between Estonia and the EU in enhancing social and economic development.

According to the needs of Estonian economy, four priority areas have been chosen for Estonia:

- Human resource development;
- Competitiveness of enterprises;
- Agriculture, fisheries and rural development;
- Infrastructure and local development.

Priorities are divided into measures. Each project funded from the EU Structural Funds must comply with the SPD and the specific application requirements developed for the conditions of the respective measure by the Implementing Agency responsible for the measure. In addition, projects must comply with all the basic criteria listed below:

- The project has to comply with the SPD strategy and the objectives of the measure and priority under which funding is applied for;
- The project has to be relevant and up-to-date – meeting research results, development plans or clearly proved needs;
- The project must be economically efficient and effective;
- The project must be sustainable, creating a permanent or long-term added value;
- The applicant must be able to implement the project.

This brochure focuses on Priority 3 of the SPD – Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development. The brochure will help to find answers to such general questions as the objectives of the Priority, eligible applicants, supported activities and costs, etc.

Please note that the brochure does not list precise conditions for applicants and applications or deadlines for submission of applications. Rather, it contains a description of general guidelines to explain the objectives of the given Priority, the general application conditions and activities that may be potentially supported.

For more information about specific application submission conditions please refer to the Implementing Authority, the Ministry Agriculture, or Implementing Agency, Agricultural Registers and Information Board (ARIB), of each measure. County development centres can assist and advise in project drafting. The list of county centres is given in Annex 1 of the brochure. On the ARIB homepage www.pria.ee you can find contact details for consultants who have had specific training in this field.

Priority 3 of the Estonian National Development Plan Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development priority aims to ensure balanced and sustainable economic and social development in rural areas. Under this priority, Estonia will use the opportunities offered by the Common Agricultural Policy and Fisheries Policy of the EU.

The primary goal is to ensure sustainable development in rural areas. The following is promoted to achieve this goal:

- Increasing the competitiveness of traditional agricultural production by promoting technological progress and achieving a sufficient income level compared to that of the European Union, which in its turn will preserve employment in agriculture and traditional cultural landscapes;
- Promoting for agricultural producers and other rural entrepreneurs the creation of additional rural livelihood opportunities in agriculture (horticulture, apiculture) and in alternative non-agricultural activities;
- Improving the attractiveness of living environment by increasing local activity and developing a non-profit sector;
- Promoting the development of internationally competitive and sustainable fisheries sector in Estonia in order to ensure improvement of the living standard and stable employment in the fisheries sector.

It is important to enhance the competitiveness of the whole food processing chain from producer to processing industry through support to respective investments. In the years 2004–2006 such projects will be supported that will ensure fulfilment of the EU hygiene, environmental protection and animal welfare standards.

Alongside the modernisation of traditional agricultural production, support will be given to the diversification of agricultural production, development of product quality, improvement of environmental situation, development of sustainable forestry, renovation and development of villages, creation of new non-agricultural economic activities and creation of jobs in rural areas. The opportunities related to the enhanced use of the local natural environment and cultural heritage will be addressed in the development of the non-agricultural economic activities. The priority criteria for developing non-agricultural economic activities is the preservation of jobs or creation of new jobs to provide employment for people leaving or going to leave agriculture and utilisation of local resources rural tourism, handicraft, etc.

Besides direct investments into main production areas the priority will support the modernisation of agriculture and forestry by the maintenance of depreciated amelioration systems. Specialised systems for farm advisory and extension services aimed at improving the skills and knowledge of agricultural producers as well as other rural economy entrepreneurs will be set up within the framework of this priority.

The primary focus of fisheries measures is the development and modernisation of the links in the fish-handling chain (vessels, ports, industries). The respective objectives are:

- Improvement of handling (hygiene, quality and environmental requirements) of fish and fish products in fishing ports, bringing all the fishing ports in conformity with the international food processing requirements in order to increase the competitiveness of the fish coming from Estonian ports in the global and European markets;
- Improvement of the conditions of fish reception and renovation of infrastructure (fish landing sites, quays, buildings) in the ports;
- Modernisation of and bringing the food processing and technical conditions of fishing vessels in conformity with international standards;
- Modernisation of fish and crayfish breeding technologies and establishing new environmentally friendly hatcheries.

One of the goals is to increase the sustainability of the fisheries sector. The related objectives are:

- Preservation and development of coastal life and fishing culture;
- Creating social safeguards for fishermen and development of the fisheries sector;
- Development of energy conserving and resource saving fishing in coastal and inland bodies of water;
- Balancing the capacity of the fishing fleet and the fish stocks available.

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development priority is financed from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) and the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG).

During the funding period 2004–2006, 97,2 million euros will be allocated under Priority 3 of the Estonian National Development Plan Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development, of which the co-funding of EAGGF and FIFG will amount to 69,3 million euros and the Estonian match funding to 27,9 million euros.

Measure 3.1: Investment in Agricultural Holdings

Objectives of the Measure

- Increasing the competitiveness of agriculture through raising the level of technology and improving the quality of products;
- Developing an environmentally sustainable agriculture that meets veterinary, phytosanitary, animal welfare and hygiene standards;
- Maintaining employment in agriculture;
- Sustaining traditional cultural landscapes.

Supported activities

- Milk production;
- Construction and reconstruction of animal barns and structures;
- Purchasing of animals;
- Crop protection, manure spreading and seed propagation;
- Crop cultivation;
- Diversification of agricultural production;
- Construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of land improvement systems;
- Construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructure;
- Processing of agricultural products.

Applications may be submitted by:

- Agricultural producers.

Financial Plan 2004–2006

During the funding period 2004–2006, 32,2 million euros will be allocated under this Measure, of which the co-funding of EAGGF will amount to 22,5 million euros and the Estonian match funding to 9,6 million euros.

Application Procedure

Applications are received and processed at ARIB Centre¹ or regional offices located in each county.

¹ No more applications will be received in 2004, and due to meeting the objectives of several activities under this Measure, the number of activities to be supported may be decreased in 2005.

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Measure 3.2: Investment Support for Improving Processing and Marketing of Agricultural Products

Objectives of the Measure

- Bringing the processing of agricultural production into conformity with new market requirements, finding new markets for agricultural products and improving the functioning of marketing channels;
 - Improving the conditions or the efficiency of processing;
 - Providing agricultural producers with profit;
 - Improving the quality of agricultural produce, more efficient utilisation of the by-products gained in the process of manufacturing;
 - Ensuring the conformity with environmental and energy conservation requirements;
 - Facilitation of innovative investments.

Supported activities

- Processing of milk and production of dairy products listed in Annex I to the EC Treaty;
- Processing of veal, pork, lamb, beef, game, poultry, rabbit and production of veal, pork, beef, game, rabbit, lamb and poultry products listed in Annex I to the EC Treaty;
 - Processing of cereals (mills) listed in Annex I to the EC Treaty;
 - Processing of fruit, vegetables and berries listed in Annex I to the EC Treaty.

The conditions for application are listed in ARIB homepage www.pria.ee

Applications may be submitted by:

- Processors of agricultural products.

Financial Plan 2004–2006

During the funding period 2004–2006, 11,4 million euros will be allocated under this Measure, of which the co-funding of EAGGF will amount to 7,9 million euros and the Estonian match funding to 3,4 million euros.

Application Procedure

Applications are received and processed at ARIB Centre or regional offices located in each county.

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Measure 3.3: Diversification of Economic Activities in Rural Areas

Objectives of the Measure

- Supporting activities of non-agricultural small enterprises in rural areas;
- Developing of small enterprises that are using local resources/materials or offer services in rural areas.

Supported activities

- Tourism development;
 - Small craft industry;
 - Services for rural economy and population;
 - Food processing.
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Applications may be submitted by:

- Agricultural producers who start non-agricultural business activities in rural areas;
- Entrepreneurs diversifying or expanding activities.

Financial Plan 2004–2006

During the funding period 2004–2006, 8,6 million euros will be allocated under this Measure, of which the co-funding of EAGGF will amount to 6,1 euros and the Estonian match funding to 2,6 million euros.

Application Procedure

Applications are received and processed at ARIB Centre or regional offices located in each county.

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Measure 3.4: Integrated Land Improvement

Objectives of the Measure

- To reduce the risks introduced to agricultural production by unfavourable water regime;
- To increase forest productivity;
- To create conditions for purposeful use of land;
- To safeguard the good state of surface water within the land improvement systems;
- To improve physical access to agricultural land.

Supported activities

- Land improvement;

- Development and improvement of the infrastructure related to agricultural development.

Applications may be submitted by:

- Entrepreneurs in rural areas, holding profit yielding land and civil law partnerships established by entrepreneurs in rural areas, holding profit yielding land;
- Non-profit associations constituted by land owners or land users of the targeted system, road or profit yielding land, provided the eligible activity of the measure corresponds to the goal set out in the articles of association of the non-profit association.

Financial Plan 2004–2006

During the funding period 2004–2006, 10,2 million euros will be allocated under this Measure, of which the co-funding of EAGGF will amount to 7,7 million euros and the Estonian match funding to 2,6 million euros.

Application Procedure

Applications are received and processed at ARIB Centre or regional offices located in each county.

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Measure 3.5: Renovation and Development of Villages

Objectives of the Measure

- Encouraging local initiative and willingness to co-operate, strengthening social relations;
- Developing social infrastructures;

- Conserving natural and architectural heritage of villages and improving the outlook of settlements;
- Improving access of village population to several services.

Supported activities

- Construction, reconstruction and furnishing of buildings, intended for public use and related to joint activities of rural population, development of village culture and maintenance of natural and historical values;
- Construction, reconstruction and furnishing of information centres with Internet connection, intended for public use;
- Preparation and implementation of village development plans;
- Development and preservation of village culture and cultural traditions.

Applications may be submitted by:

- Non-profit associations;
- Entrepreneurs.

Financial Plan 2004–2006

During the funding period 2004–2006, 6,4 million euros will be allocated under this Measure, of which the co-funding of EAGGF will amount to 5,1 million euros and the Estonian match funding to 1,3 million euros.

Application Procedure

Applications are received and processed at ARIB Centre or regional offices located in each county.

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Measure 3.6: Local Initiative Based Development Projects

Objectives of the Measure

- To develop the institutional network and the skills base necessary to stimulate the endogenous potential of rural actors and communities through the programs targeted for community development;
- To build a model of local rural development type approach, represented by effective functioning Local Action Groups representing diverse rural interests important on the local level;
- To carry out projects and studies in the framework of Local Action Group pilot strategies;
- To promote networking and exchange of information and experience.

Supported activities

- Acquisition of skills: building and developing local action groups (information and training of the population and technical support for building local action groups); drawing up integrated development strategies (including technical support for studies of the local area and territory diagnosis, preparation of project applications); cooperation between both the internal and international rural regions (exchange of knowledge);
- Integrated rural area development strategies: implementation of the development strategies; co-operation between both the internal and international rural regions and participation in the trans-European rural development networks.

Applications may be submitted by:

- Local action groups (NGOs);
- Institution responsible for the coordination of activities.

Financial Plan 2004–2006

During the funding period 2004–2006, 1,8 million euros will be allocated under this Measure, of which the co-funding of EAGGF will amount to 1,5 million euros and the Estonian match funding to 368 770 euros.

Application Procedure

Applications are received and processed at ARIB Centre or regional offices located in each county.

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Measure 3.7: Forestry

Objectives of the Measure

- Sustainable forest management and development of forestry;
- Maintenance and improvement of forest resources conditions;
- Improving of forests economic, ecological and social values;
- Establishment of new opportunities for the utilisation and marketing of products of forest origin and investments aimed at improving the efficiency of processing and marketing forest and wood products;
 - Establishment of associations of forest owners for more sustainable and efficient forest management;
 - Restoration of forest production potential resultant by natural disasters and forest fires and introducing appropriate prevention instruments.

Supported activities

- Restocking of woodlands damaged by natural disasters and fire, including the preparation of soil with the purpose of contributing to natural regeneration and purchase of plants;
 - Restocking of woodlands and tending of young stands to encourage ecological diversity of species and to add value to the remaining trees;
 - Purchase of forest management and timber processing (prior to industrial processing) equipment and forest plant protection products (excl. chemicals);
 - Development projects that create new opportunities for using wood and forest products and investments into improving and rationalising the processing and marketing (prior to industrial processing).

Applications may be submitted by:

- Private forest owners;
- Non-profit and profit making associations of private forest owners.

Financial Plan 2004–2006

During the funding period 2004–2006, 4,7 million euros will be allocated under this Measure, of which the co-funding of EAGGF will amount to 3,3 million euros and the Estonian match funding to 1,4 million euros.

Application Procedure

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Measure 3.8: Support for Setting up and Provision of Farm Advisory and Extension Services

Objectives of the Measure

- Supporting the setting up of farm advisory service system;
- Supporting the provision of farm advisory and extension services.

Supported activities

- Setting up and supporting farm advisory service system - general costs related to the creation of a new organisation providing advisory services, such as office supplies, training of advisors, development of computerized systems, etc.;
- Individual advisory service for agricultural producers (e.g. assistance in

making applications for rural development, advice related to respect of Good Farming Practice);

- Information seminars on national and county level and group advisory events.

Applications may be submitted by

- Support to an agricultural advisory centre may be received by legal persons in the field of advisory, extension and training services;
- Support to individual advisory service may be received by accredited advisory centres, i.e. such legal persons in the field of advisory, extension and training services that have been accredited as advisory centres or whose application for support to create an advisory centre has been satisfied *;
- Support to organise national and county information seminars and group advisory events may be received by legal persons in the field of agricultural advisory, extension and training services.

**A special committee under the Ministry of Agriculture checks the applications and decides who is eligible for the status of advisory centre.*

Financial Plan 2004–2006

During the funding period 2004–2006, 3,3 million euros will be allocated under this Measure, of which the co-funding of EAGGF will amount to 2,6 million euros and the Estonian match funding to 659 728 euros.

Application Procedure

Applications are received and processed at ARIB Centre or regional offices located in each county.

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Measure 3.9: Adjustment of Fishing Capacity of the Fishing Fleet

Objectives of the Measure

To balance the capacity of fishing fleet with the available fish resources.

Supported activities

- Compensation for scrapping of fishing vessel;
- Compensation for permanent reassignment of vessel (for training, research, tourism purposes and for preserving history, etc.).

Applications may be submitted by:

- Owners and operators of fishing vessels

Financial Plan 2004–2006

During the funding period 2004–2006, 2,5 million euros will be allocated under this Measure, of which the co-funding of FIFG will amount to 2 million euros and the Estonian match funding to 507 459 euros.

Application Procedure

Applications are received and processed at ARIB Centre or regional offices located in each county.

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Measure 3.10: Modernisation and Renewal of Fishing Fleet

Objectives of the Measure

Improving technical conditions of fishing vessels, fish handling conditions, working conditions and occupational safety; promoting the introduction of selective fishing.

Supported activities

- Modernisation and renewal of fishing vessels;
- Rationalisation of fishing operations, especially for applying more selective fishing technologies and methods on vessels;
 - Improving the quality of fish caught and preserved on board vessels, applying better catching and preserving methods and implementing legal and regulating norms;
 - Improvement of working and occupational safety conditions.

Applications may be submitted by:

- Owners and operators of fishing vessels.

Financial Plan 2004–2006

During the funding period 2004–2006, 3,2 million euros will be allocated under this Measure, of which the co-funding of FIFG will amount to 2,9 million euros and the Estonian match funding to 319 558 euros.

Application Procedure

Applications are received and processed at ARIB Centre or regional offices located in each county.

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Measure 3.11: Investment Support Measures for Fisheries Production Chain

During the funding period 2004–2006, the total of 11,4 million euros will be allocated under this Measure, of which the co-funding of FIFG will amount to 6,6 million euros and the Estonian match funding to 4,9 million euros.

Sub-measure 3.11.1: Investment Support for Processing of Fish and Aquaculture Products

Objectives of the Measure

The overall aim of the sub-measure is development and modernisation of processing and marketing of fish and aquaculture products.

The specific objectives of the sub-measure are:

- Improvement of processing conditions of fish and aquaculture products;
- Introduction of modern technologies;
- Stimulation of product development;
- Reduction of environmental load resulting from processing.

Supported activities

- Construction or renovation of production facilities (incl. storage and freezing facilities);
- Purchase and renovation of machinery, equipment, furnishing and technological processing lines (including waste treatment equipment, water supply systems, energy supply systems and packaging lines employing environment-friendly technologies, fork lifters, vehicles with cooler/refrigerator units) necessary for bringing the production of fish products into conformity with the respective requirements;
- Implementation of quality control systems;
- Development of new products and increasing added value;
- Securing of the implementation of environmental requirements, decreasing of the pollution to environment, waste treatment, waste elimination, production that meets energy conservation requirements and better utilisation of by-products.

Applications may be submitted by

- Entrepreneurs.

Sub-measure 3.11.2: Investment support for aquaculture

Objectives of the Measure

The overall aim of the sub-measure is the development and modernisation of aquaculture.

The specific objectives of the sub-measure are the following:

- Modernisation of the aquaculture production facilities;
- Improving of the quality of the production to meet the requirements of processing industry;
 - Decreasing the pollution load on the environment;
 - Increasing of the production output volumes.

Supported activities

- Establishment and renovation of fish and crayfish ponds, net cages and related equipment;
 - Purchase of new machinery and equipment, including the purchase of integrated information technology (computer hard- and software);
 - Construction and renovation of hatcheries;
 - Assessment of environmental impact;

Applications may be submitted by:

- Entrepreneurs intending to start with aquaculture or already involved in the business.

Sub-measure 3.11.3: Modernisation of Fishing Ports

Objectives of the Measure

The overall aim of the sub-measure is the improvement of the facilities and renovation of infrastructures (quays, buildings) used for receiving of the fish in the ports and fish landing sites.

The specific objectives are to:

- Improve the hygiene and working environment conditions in fish landing and handling facilities;
 - Improve the services provided for fishing vessels in the ports;
 - Improve marketing of fisheries products.
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Supported activities

- Improvement of the conditions for landing, handling, storage and marketing of the fish and fishery products;
- Supporting the activities carried out by the fishing vessels (supply of fuel, ice and water, repair and maintenance of the vessels);
- Improvement of the conditions of jetties of the ports with the purpose of improving food safety during unloading or storage.

Applications may be submitted by:

- Port owners;
- Port users;
- Public administration.

Sub-measure 3.11.4: Investment Support for Inland Fisheries

Objectives of the Measure

The general objective of the sub-measure is to facilitate investments in inland fisheries.

The specific objective of the sub-measure is to support the renewal and modernisation of inland fishing vessels in order to improve working and safety conditions on vessels and the quality of caught fish.

Supported activities

- Modernisation and renewal of inland fishing vessels.

Applications may be submitted by

- Owners and operators of inland fishing vessels.

Application Procedure

Applications are received and processed at ARIB Centre or regional offices located in each county.

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Measure 3.12: Other Fisheries Related Measures

During the funding period 2004–2006, the total of 1,2 million euros will be allocated under this Measure, of which the co-funding of FIFG will amount to 993 187 euros and the Estonian match funding to 248 297 euros.

Sub-measure 3.12.1: Social Measures Accompanying the Restructuring of the Fisheries Sector

Objectives of the Measure

To support fisherman in case of permanent cessation of fishing activities.

Supported activities

- Individual premiums to fisherman, whose vessel is scrapped or re-assigned for other purposes than fishing.

Applications may be submitted by

- Fishermen who have worked on vessels subject to cessation of fishing activities in the framework of Measure 3.9.

Sub-measure 3.12.2: Promotion of New Market Outlets

Objectives of the Measure

The overall aim of the sub-measure is to find new market outlets for fish and fisheries products.

The specific objectives are:

- Promotion of consuming fisheries products and promotion of new products;
 - Finding new market outlets.
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Supported activities

- Market promotion campaigns
- Consumer and market surveys
- Participation in fairs and exhibitions;

Applications may be submitted by

- Fisheries organizations;
- Public administration.

Application Procedure

Applications are received and processed at ARIB Centre or regional offices located in each county.

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This publication is supported by the European Union.

