

'AGRIBUSINESS – INCUBATOR', BRAGIN, REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG) Pioneer Project



PROJECT FACTSHEET

The project in a nutshell

Timeframe: 2018-2021

Budget: EUR 625,552 (EU contribution - EUR 561,996)

Partners: the Bragin District Executive Committee, the local 'Eco-innovation' Foundation for Supporting Entrepreneurship and Rural Development, 9 large farm holdings and 270 smallholdings

Geographic coverage: Bragin district (Gomel region, Belarus) and 5 village councils of the district, as well as the neighbouring Khoiniki and Loev districts

Target groups: Local rural entrepreneurs, small and medium rural businesses, farmers, the employees of non-governmental organizations, vulnerable rural populations (young people, women, large families, disabled and retired persons), residents of remote rural settlements, the community at large

CONTEXT



The Bragin District covers an area of 1.97 km², and borders upon two other districts of the Gomel region as well as the Chernihiv and Kyiv regions of Ukraine. The population of the Bragin district is around 12,300 inhabitants, of whom 5,100 are employed.

The Bragin district's economic base is agriculture—notably livestock breeding and crop farming—involving 7 open-stock companies and 17 peasant farms. Over 1,000 district family farms generate up to 50% of their income from the sale of potatoes and vegetables. Agro-

ecotourism is also popular in the Bragin district.

PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The Project's main goal is to promote the development of rural entrepreneurship in the Bragin district through the establishment of an Agribusiness Incubator (ABI). The Project will aim to achieve the following **three objectives**:

- 1) To develop a **Rural Business Development Programme** in the Bragin district;
- 2) To establish an **ABI** equipped and operating as a social enterprise and as a 'support centre for entrepreneurship';
- 3) The ABI will provide **over 35 kinds of services** to the Project's target groups—including information and advice, education, equipment leasing, storage and processing, etc.

PROJECT ACTIONS

Over 100 entrepreneurs in the district will be involved in discussing the Rural Business Development Programme. An ABI Supervisory Board will then monitor the Programme's implementation and will become a Public Council for the Development of Entrepreneurship in the Bragin District. Around 15 leaders will be delegated to draw up a business plan for the ABI. Once the ABI is set up and equipped by the local 'Eco-Innovation' foundation, it will become an independent social enterprise.



Income from the ABI's activities will be used to support vulnerable rural groups and to develop start-up projects for young people. The ABI will also provide different kinds of services, such as legal support, leasing of machinery and equipment, advice and outsourcing. No less than 25% of total services will be provided to different vulnerable groups.

The Project's actions also include:

- 1) Educational programmes on the basis of the ABI through a *rural entrepreneurship school*, a *school of horticulture*, a *rural tourism school*, a *marketing and fundraising workshop* (marketing, sales and fundraising for development), a *cooperative school* (how to reduce production costs and generate extra revenues), and a *start-up school for young entrepreneurs*;
- 2) Two business support programmes based upon individual coaching (personal informational and advisory support) and group coaching programmes (interaction between local entrepreneurs);
- 3) Support for rural entrepreneurs in promoting their goods and services on domestic and foreign markets; facilitating access to machinery and equipment and using advanced technologies; diversifying business lines (combination of agro-tourism and farming, etc.);
- 4) Study trips for entrepreneurs and local authorities to agribusiness incubators and rural development centres in other regions and neighbouring countries;
- 5) **A Tomato Festival** to strengthen networking between rural entrepreneurs and to support their integration into the district's rural economy.

ESTIMATED RESULTS

- The ABI's services will be used by up to **1,000** people annually (60% of whom to be women);
- Over **350** people will be successful in their local businesses (vegetable, fruit and livestock farming);
- Over **2,000** local entrepreneurs will take part in the ABI's educational programmes;
- The efficiency of small farms, smallholdings and local enterprises will be increased **by 30%** thanks to new production technologies and product sales services;
- The range of different goods and services supplied by rural entrepreneurs will expand **from 60 to 100**;
- At least **2,000** residents will believe that conditions for rural entrepreneurship in their district have significantly improved.

In terms of outcomes, the Project will develop the economic capacity of rural entrepreneurs and will create the conditions for self-employment in the district. The ABI will become a private-public partnership platform for education and sharing best practices in the agricultural sphere. The Project will also increase the role of local rural businesses in the district's sustainable economic development, and will improve the image of rural entrepreneurship.

The pioneer project "Agribusiness-Incubator" is being implemented in Belarus as part of the Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG) Initiative. The M4EG Initiative began to operate in January 2017 within the Eastern Partnership framework. Its overall goal is to help mayors and municipalities in Eastern Partnership countries to become active facilitators for economic growth and job creation at local levels. For more information, please visit www.m4eg.eu.



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