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Survey on identifying a suitable financing product for farmers in the Republic of Moldova

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Abstract

This study examines farmers' financing needs, use of financial products, barriers to agricultural finance, and preferences regarding financing conditions in the Republic of Moldova. The research draws on a structured online survey of 100 respondents from the agricultural and rural sectors. The questionnaire combined closed and open-ended questions, and the responses were examined using descriptive and thematic analysis focused on access to financial products and obstacles to obtaining finance. The findings show substantial reliance on external financing, particularly bank loans and microfinance. Respondents identified complex administrative procedures, insufficient information, collateral requirements, lengthy approval processes, and borrowing costs as the main barriers. Financing is primarily required for working capital, modernisation, and agricultural machinery. Farmers place considerable value on flexible repayment schedules, advisory support, and reduced collateral requirements, while satisfaction with existing products is moderate and awareness of available programmes remains limited. The results indicate that agricultural financing should be aligned more closely with seasonal cash flows and the risk profile of farming. An integrated product combining flexible financing conditions, advisory services, simplified digital application procedures, reduced collateral requirements, and transparent information could improve access to finance. Such an approach would support investment, technological modernisation, and the long-term sustainable development of agriculture in the Republic of Moldova.

Keywords: agricultural finance; farmers; financing products; financial barriers; Republic of Moldova

Introduction

Agriculture is a fundamental sector of the economy, contributing to food security, employment, income generation, and rural development. In the Republic of Moldova, agriculture plays a particularly important role due to the country's favourable geographical and climatic conditions, fertile soils, and suitability for a wide range of agricultural activities. The sector is also an important source of income and employment, particularly in rural areas. Despite its economic and social importance, agricultural activity is associated with specific financial challenges. Farmers face seasonal production cycles, climate risks, fluctuating market prices, unstable income, and changing production costs. These characteristics may

limit their ability to obtain and manage external financing under conventional lending conditions.

Access to appropriate financial resources is therefore essential for maintaining the viability of agricultural holdings and supporting investment and modernisation. Financing may be required for working capital, agricultural machinery, technological improvements, land acquisition, and other productive activities. However, farmers may encounter difficulties related to collateral requirements, complex administrative procedures, lengthy approval processes, limited information, and the cost of borrowing.

In this context, identifying financing products that reflect the specific characteristics of agricultural activity is particularly relevant. A financing product designed for farmers should take into consideration not only the amount and cost of financing, but also repayment flexibility, seasonal cash flows, collateral requirements, access to information, and the availability of advisory support (Economie | Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, n.d.).

The purpose of this study is to analyse farmers' financing needs and financial behaviour in the Republic of Moldova and to identify the main barriers they face when accessing external financing. The study also examines the purposes for which financing is required, farmers' preferences for financial products and repayment conditions, their awareness of available financing opportunities, and their perceptions of existing financial solutions.

Based on the survey findings, the study aims to identify the main characteristics of a financing product that could better respond to the needs of farmers in the Republic of Moldova. The results are intended to provide practical insights for financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders seeking to improve access to agricultural finance and support the development and modernisation of the agricultural sector (Economie | Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, n.d.).

Materials and methods

Materials

This research is based on a survey conducted in the Republic of Moldova on a sample of 100 respondents from the agricultural and rural sectors. Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire developed on the Survio.ro platform, including closed- and open-ended questions on farmers' access to financing, experience with credit products, level of financial awareness, and perceived barriers to obtaining financial support.

Methods

The study uses an analytical approach to examine farmers' behaviour in relation to agricultural financing, considering both individual characteristics and broader economic, institutional, and social factors. The Moldovan agricultural sector is characterised by small and medium-sized farms (FAOSTAT, n.d.). Unstable incomes, high exposure to climatic risks, and limited access to formal financial services all contribute to increased financial vulnerability and influence borrowing behaviour.

A non-probability sampling method was used to ensure diversity among respondents in terms of farm size, experience, and access to financing. The data analysis followed a thematic approach, involving coding and categorisation into two main themes: access to and use of financial products, and barriers to accessing finance. Additional sub-themes included

financial literacy, trust in financial institutions, informal support networks, and previous borrowing experiences.

The main objective of the research was to assess farmers' awareness and use of financial products and to identify key obstacles affecting their access to credit in the Republic of Moldova. The findings aim to provide a better understanding of both the willingness and the actual capacity of farmers to access financial services, offering insights for the development of more appropriate financing solutions for the agricultural sector.

Results and discussion

This section analyses farmers' willingness and capacity to seek financial and credit-related support in the Republic of Moldova, based on survey responses and qualitative observations.

The main findings can be summarised as follows:

- Farmers generally show a high willingness to seek financial support when facing economic difficulties, as these are considered a normal part of agricultural activity influenced by external risks such as climate conditions, market volatility, and price instability.
- Despite this openness, discussions about financial issues remain mostly general, while detailed personal financial information is rarely shared due to sensitivity and confidentiality concerns.
- Farmers' actual capacity to access financial products is significantly more limited than their willingness, mainly due to structural barriers such as lack of time, complex procedures, limited access to financial institutions, and insufficient financial and digital literacy.
- Cultural and social factors also play an important role, including stigma related to borrowing, rural community norms, and a preference for self-reliance. However, this stigma is gradually decreasing, especially among younger farmers and women (Marina COBAN, n.d.).
- In cases of limited access to formal finance, farmers often rely on informal support networks or personal resources, which may lead to delayed or less efficient financial decisions.
- Key influencing factors include trust in financial institutions, previous experiences with credit providers, access to information, education level, and digital skills (State of Art of Agriculture in Moldova in the process of EU integration, n.d.).
- External constraints such as high costs of financial products, complex procedures, and the temporary nature of support programs further limit access to agricultural finance (GUTIUM, n.d.).
- Overall, there is a clear gap between farmers' willingness and their actual capacity to access financial support, highlighting the need for simplified, more accessible financial products and improved financial education and digital infrastructure in rural areas.

This study investigates the willingness and capacity of farmers in the Republic of Moldova to seek financial and credit-related support, as well as the factors influencing these two dimensions. Based on a survey of 100 respondents, the results show that farmers are generally more willing than able to access financial assistance.

Willingness is mainly driven by the need to maintain farm viability and is influenced by the perception that financial difficulties are a normal part of agricultural activity.

However, actual access to financial support is constrained by structural barriers such as lack of time, limited financial and digital literacy, complex procedures, and insufficient access to services, particularly in rural areas.

Key influencing factors include trust in financial institutions, previous experiences, access to information, and cultural norms such as stigma related to borrowing. Overall, there is a clear gap between willingness and capacity, highlighting the need for simplified financial services and improved rural financial infrastructure.

This chapter examines farmers' financial behaviour in the Republic of Moldova and the main barriers they face in accessing agricultural financing. Based on a survey, the study highlights the need for financing products adapted to agriculture's specific risks, such as seasonality, climate conditions, and market fluctuations.

The main focus is on identifying farmers' financing needs, their use of credit, and their perceptions of existing financial instruments. The findings suggest that farmers heavily rely on external financing, especially bank loans and microfinance, while subsidies and grants are considered supportive but insufficient for long-term development.

Access to finance is generally perceived as difficult due to complex procedures, high collateral requirements, limited information, and administrative barriers. Flexibility in repayment conditions is highly valued, and there is a growing demand for integrated financial products that combine funding with advisory services.

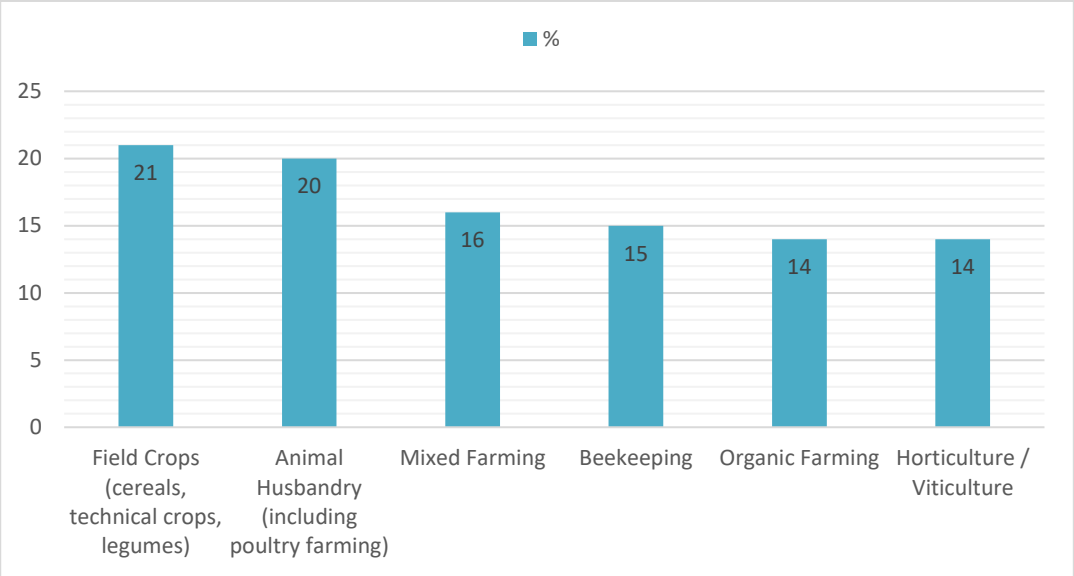
Overall, the study aims to support the development of more efficient and accessible financial solutions tailored to the needs of farmers in the Republic of Moldova.

This study analyses questionnaire results to identify farmers' financing needs in the Republic of Moldova and define the characteristics of an appropriate agricultural financial product. It also examines access to finance, barriers in cooperation with financial institutions, and farmers' preferences regarding credit conditions.

The research involved farmers from various regions and agricultural sectors, mainly small and medium-sized enterprises with different levels of experience. A structured survey was conducted among 100 farmers to gather data on financial needs and obstacles in accessing funding.

Overall, the results provide a clear basis for understanding farmers' financial requirements and for developing financial products better adapted to the realities of the agricultural sector.

Figure 1. Main types of agricultural activities undertaken by respondents

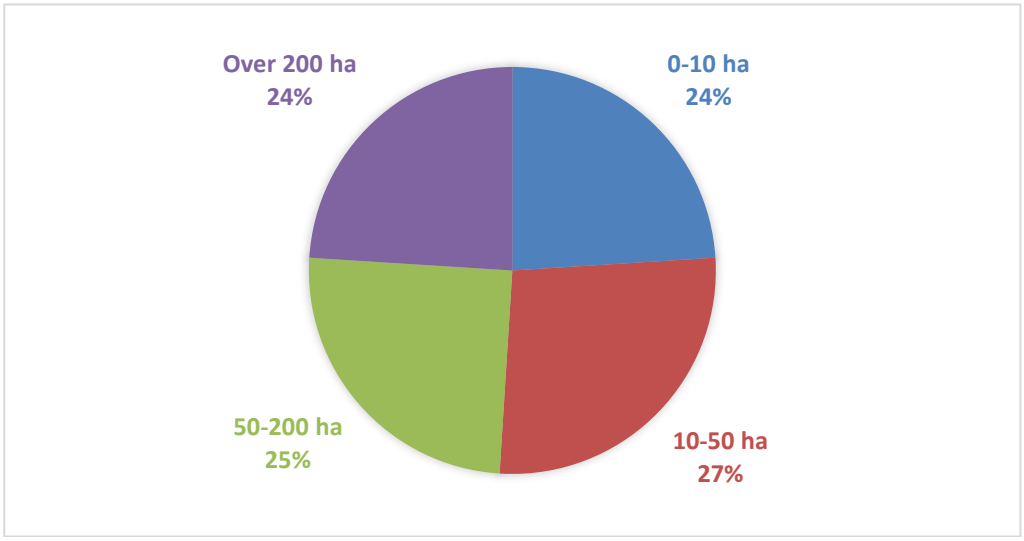


Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

The survey results from 2026 show that the agricultural sector in the Republic of Moldova is dominated by traditional activities, particularly crop production (21%) and livestock farming (20%). This confirms the persistence of a conventional agricultural model. At the same time, mixed farming, beekeeping, organic agriculture, and fruit growing/viticulture indicate moderate diversification and a gradual shift toward more sustainable and specialised practices.

Overall, Moldovan agriculture is characterised by stability, but also by a slow transition toward modern forms of development, highlighting the need for policies and financial products adapted to the specific nature of different agricultural activities (The United Nations Development Programme will support the Republic of Moldova's modernisation agenda | THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, n.d.)

Figure 2. Distribution of respondents according to cultivated land area

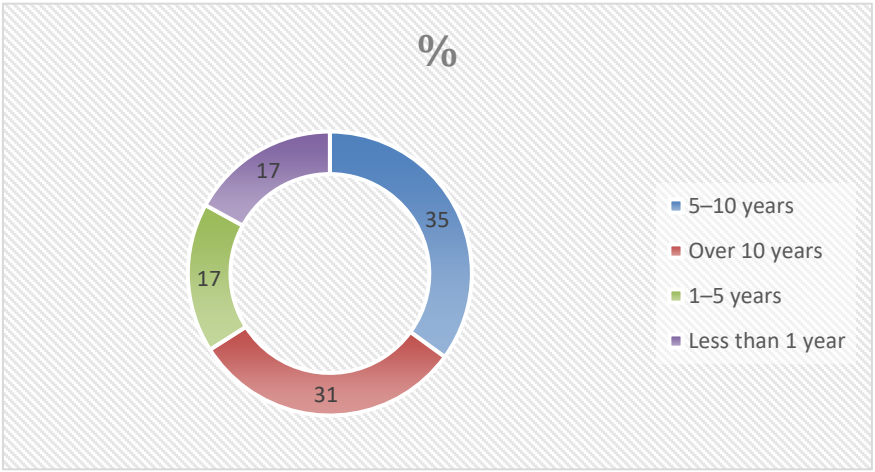


Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

Figure 2 shows a relatively balanced distribution of cultivated areas in 2026 across farm size categories. The largest share is held by farms of 10–50 ha (27%). closely followed by those of 50–200 ha (25%). Large farms of over 200 ha account for 24%, as do small farms of 0–10 ha (24%).

These results indicate a moderate fragmentation of agricultural land, with no clear dominance of a single size category. At the same time, there is a significant presence of both small and large farms, suggesting the coexistence of multiple types of farm structures within the analysed agricultural sector.

Figure 3. Respondents' experience in the agricultural sector

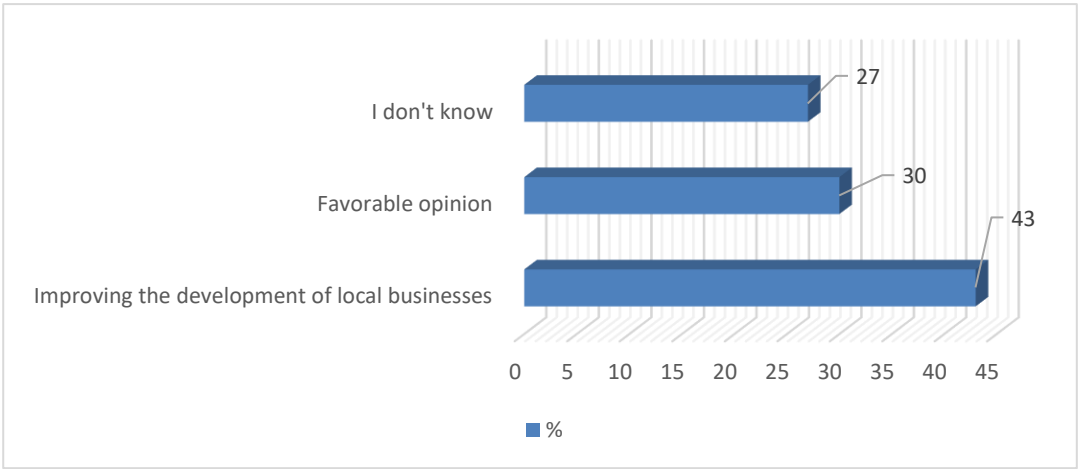


Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

Figure 3 shows that farmers with 5–10 years of experience make up the largest share (35%), followed by those with more than 10 years of activity (31%). This suggests that farmers with medium and high experience predominate in the agricultural sector.

In contrast, beginner farmers make up smaller shares: 17% have 1–5 years of experience, and 17% have less than one year. Overall, the results suggest a stable agricultural sector, where experienced farmers mainly sustain activity, while the entry of new practitioners is more limited.

Figure 4. Assessment of the economic environment for agricultural lending in the Republic of Moldova



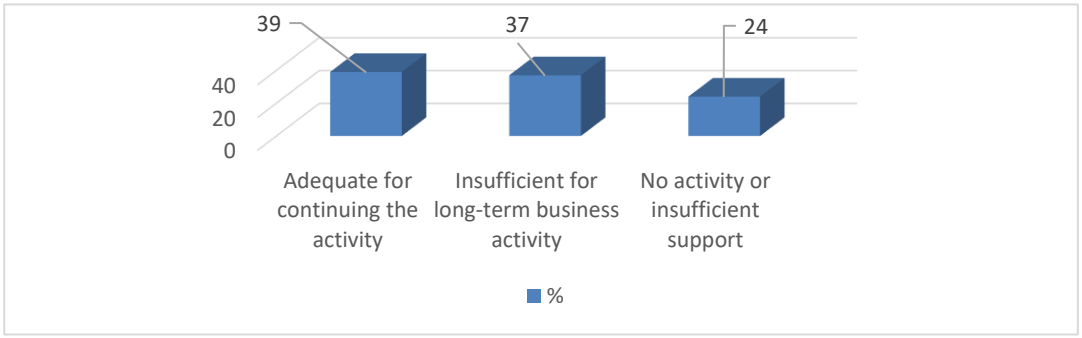
Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

The results of the 2026 survey, according to Figure 4, indicate a predominantly negative perception of the economic environment in the field of agricultural lending in the Republic of Moldova. The majority of respondents (43%) consider this environment to be an obstacle to business development, suggesting the existence of significant structural barriers, such as limited access to financing, high credit costs, or restrictive lending conditions.

At the same time, only 30% of respondents perceive the environment as favourable for starting new businesses, reflecting a moderate level of confidence in existing financial support mechanisms. Additionally, the relatively high share of those unaware of the situation (27%) highlights a lack of information and transparency in this sector.

Overall, the data reveal the need for strategic interventions to improve access to credit, simplify procedures, and increase farmers' information levels to stimulate the sustainable development of the agricultural sector.

Figure 5. Respondents' assessment of agricultural subsidy levels



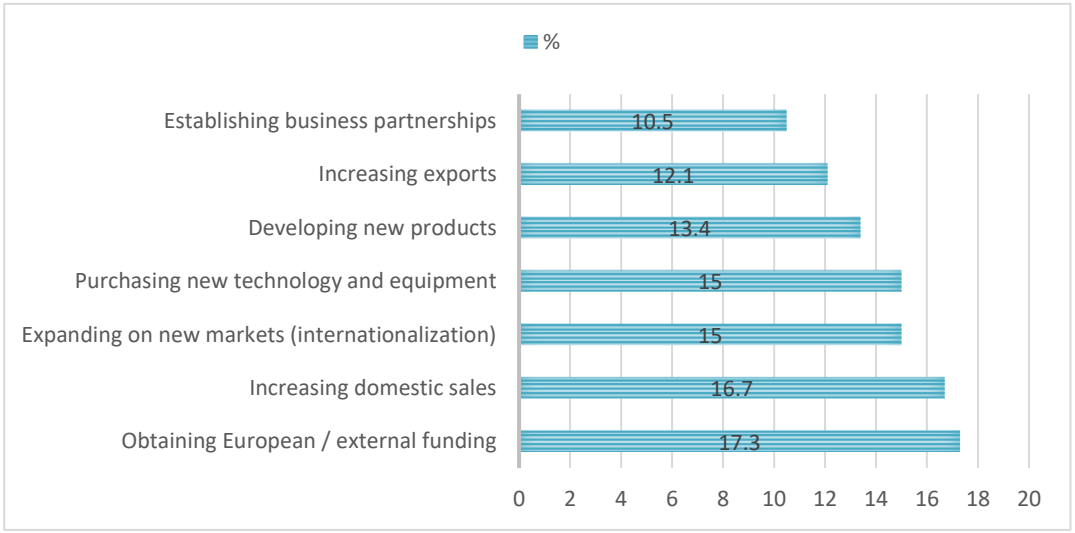
Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

The survey results in Figure 5 highlight a mixed perception of the level of subsidies in agriculture in the Republic of Moldova, although with a clear tendency toward insufficiency. While 39% of respondents consider subsidies to be adequate for continuing farm activities, an almost similar share (37%) believe that they are insufficient to sustain long-term agricultural activity.

In addition, 24% of respondents perceive subsidies as sufficient only to ensure a subsistence level, suggesting a limited impact on the development and modernisation of the agricultural sector.

Overall, the results indicate that although subsidies help maintain current activities, they are not perceived as a strong enough instrument to foster sustainable development and competitiveness in agriculture. In this context, support policies need to be revised by increasing subsidy levels and directing them toward long-term strategic investments.

Figure 6. Main business objectives of agricultural enterprises for 2026



Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

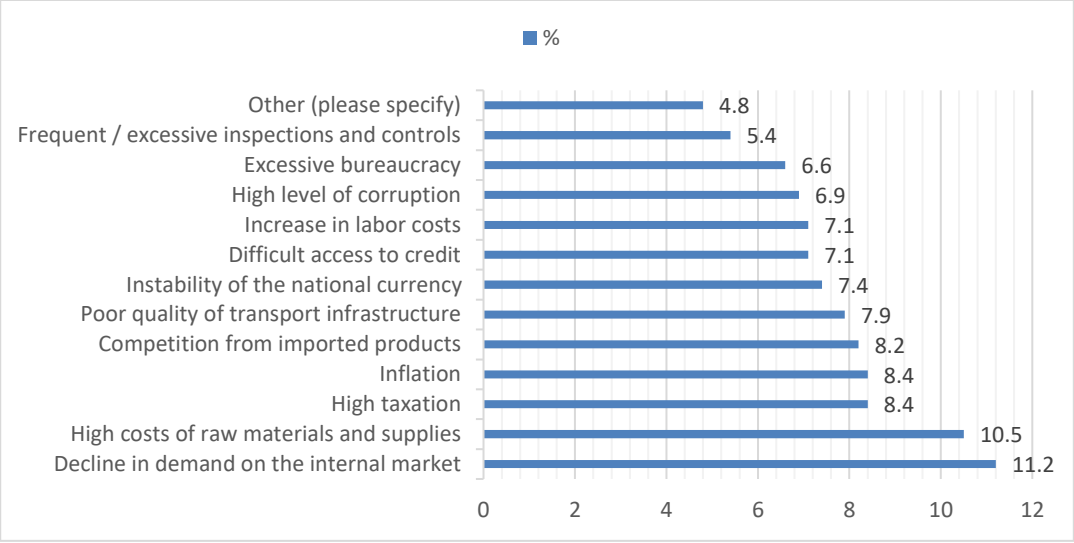
Figure 6 shows that in 2026, agricultural entrepreneurs in the Republic of Moldova primarily prioritise accessing external or European funding (17.3%), reflecting a strong dependence on external financial resources for investment and development.

Other key priorities include increasing domestic sales (16.7%). Entering new markets (15%). and acquiring modern technologies (15%), indicating a dual focus on market consolidation and modernisation.

Objectives such as product development (13.4%) and export growth (12.1%) are moderately important, suggesting that innovation and internationalisation are present but not dominant priorities. Business partnerships (10.5%) are the least prioritised, reflecting limited strategic cooperation within the sector.

Overall, the sector is mainly oriented toward financing, modernisation, and market expansion, while still showing moderate levels of innovation and collaboration, and remaining dependent on external financial support.

Figure 7. Main difficulties faced by agricultural enterprises



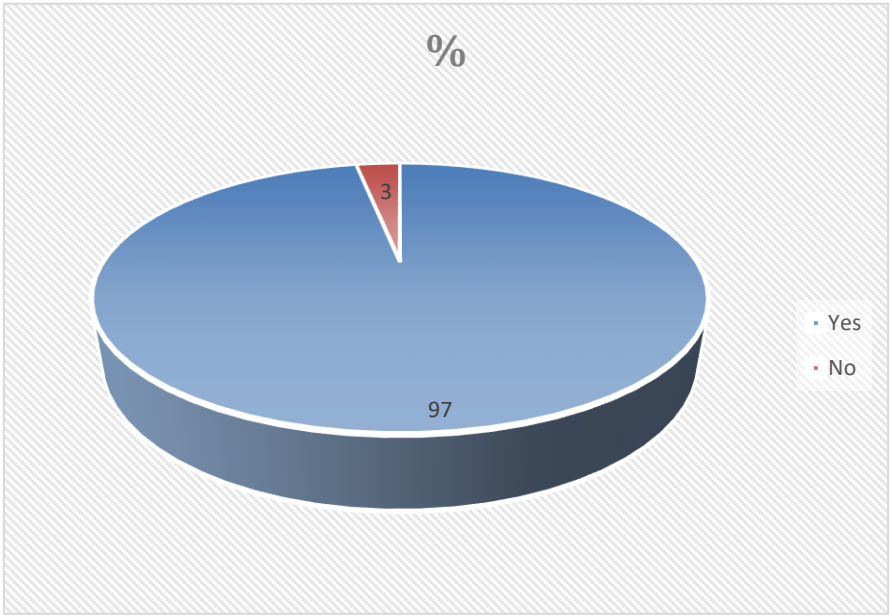
Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

According to Figure 7, the 2026 survey results show that businesses' main difficulties stem primarily from economic and financial pressures. The most significant challenges identified are declining domestic market demand (11.2%) and high financing costs (10.5%), followed by taxation and inflation (8.4% each) and competition from imported products (8.2%).

At the same time, structural issues such as underdeveloped infrastructure, currency instability, limited access to credit, and rising labour costs continue to affect business activity, having a moderate but persistent impact. Compared to these factors, corruption, bureaucracy, and inspections are perceived as less pressing problems.

Overall, the data show that over 38% of the identified difficulties are concentrated in four main issues—low demand, financing costs, taxation, and inflation—confirming that the 2026 business environment is mainly dominated by direct economic pressures and financial instability.

Figure 8. Respondents' previous access to external financing



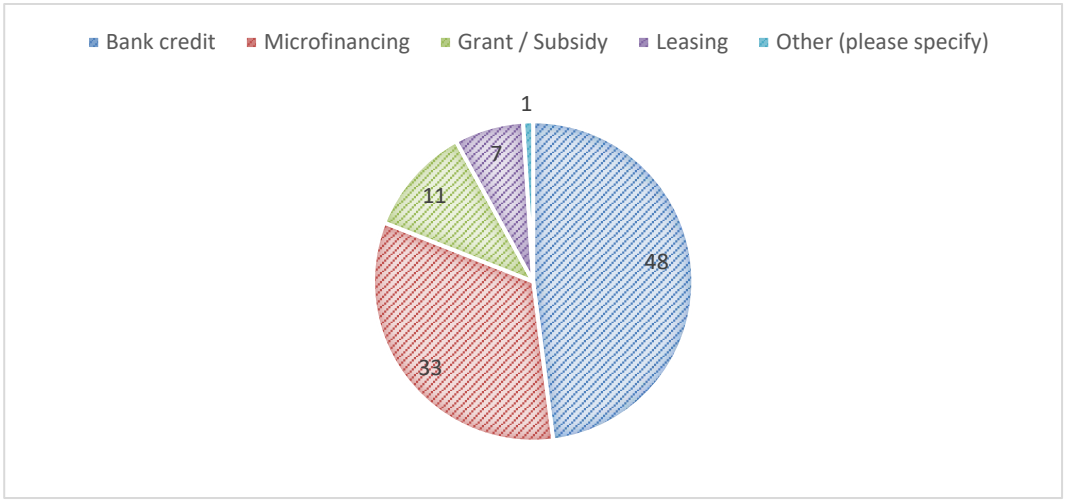
Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

The survey results show that external financing is used by an overwhelming majority of companies (97%). Only 3% of respondents have not accessed such sources. This distribution highlights the almost universal nature of external capital usage among the analysed enterprises.

The data indicate that external financing instruments—such as credit, leasing, and grants—have become an essential component for the day-to-day functioning and development of businesses. The extremely high level of usage suggests that these sources are no longer an occasional option but a structural condition of economic activity.

Overall, the analysed business environment is highly dependent on external financing, reflecting both the need to support investments and enterprises' limited self-financing capacity.

Figure 9. Types of external financing previously accessed by respondents



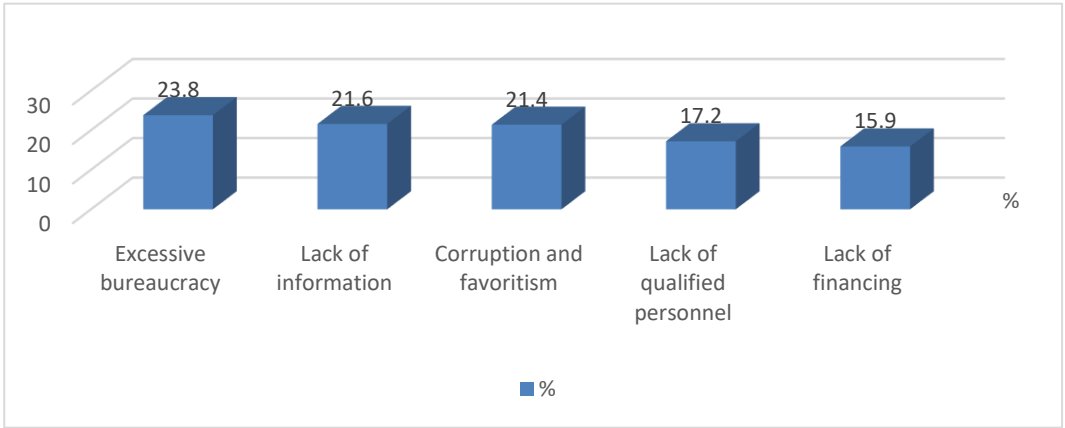
Source:(Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses

Based on the survey, the main type of financing used is bank credit (48%), followed by microfinance (33%) and grants/subsidies (11%). Leasing and other forms of financing account for a small share.

These results show that companies primarily rely on traditional financing solutions, especially bank loans, indicating a high dependence on the banking system. At the same time, the significant share of microfinance suggests that many businesses, particularly small ones, seek more accessible alternatives.

Overall, almost half of the companies prefer bank credit (48%). More than 80% of financing is concentrated in the first two options (credit and microfinance), confirming a clear orientation toward traditional sources of capital.

Figure 10. Main difficulties encountered in accessing financing



Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026 Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

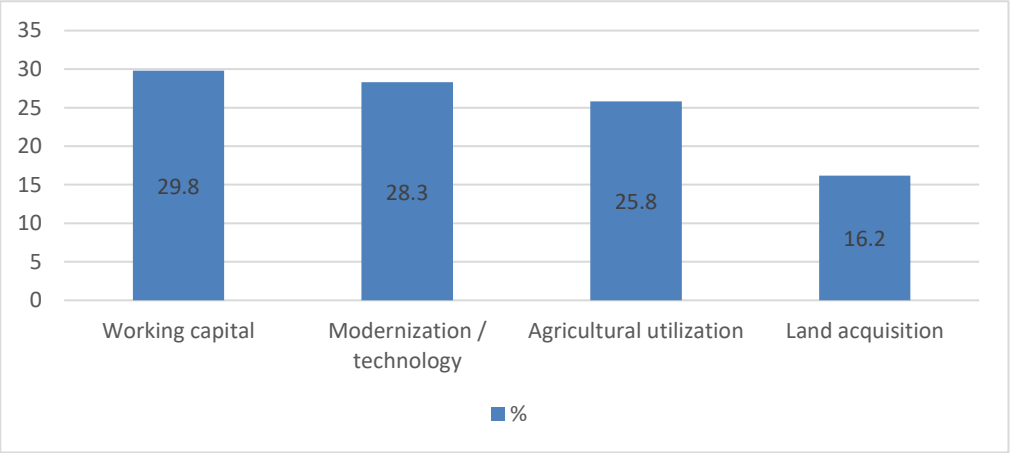
The analysis of the data presented in Figure 1.10 shows that the main barriers to accessing financing are procedural and informational in nature rather than purely economic.

The highest share is recorded for complicated procedures (23.8%), indicating a high level of perceived administrative complexity among respondents. This is followed by lack of information (21.4%) and insufficient collateral (21.4%). Both reflect structural difficulties in the relationship between applicants and financial institutions.

Further, long approval times (17.5%) and high interest rates (15.9%) are important obstacles, though less severe than the first two categories. These results suggest that, although financing costs remain relevant, accessibility and transparency in the lending process are the main issues faced by beneficiaries.

Overall, the distribution of responses indicates that improving procedures, increasing access to information, and simplifying collateral requirements could significantly facilitate access to financing. Thus, the identified barriers are mainly institutional and operational, highlighting the need for reforms aimed at increasing transparency and efficiency in the crediting process.

Figure 11. Main purposes for obtaining financing



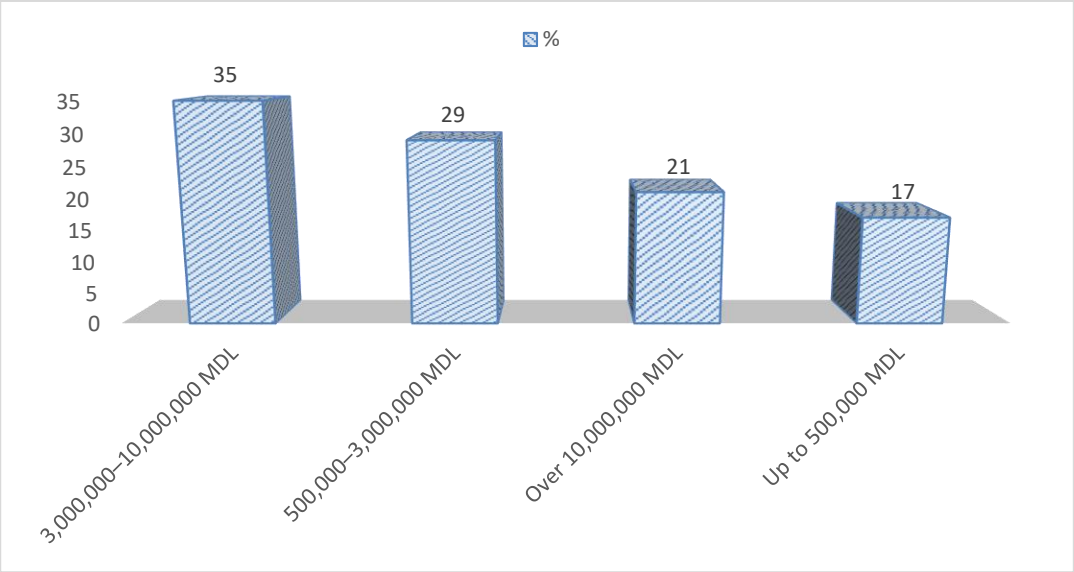
Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

Figure 11 on the purpose of financing shows that the main reason farmers request financial resources is to secure working capital (29.8%), indicating a strong need to cover current expenses for agricultural activities. This is followed by investments in modernisation and technological upgrades (28.3%), reflecting a strong interest in improving efficiency and the competitiveness of farms.

A significant share is also allocated to purchasing agricultural machinery (25.8%), confirming farmers' focus on mechanisation and improving production capacity. Land acquisition (16.2%) has a lower share, suggesting that farm expansion is a secondary priority compared to immediate operational and investment needs. The complete absence of other declared purposes (0%) indicates a clear concentration of financing demand in a limited number of essential areas.

Overall, the results show that financing is primarily requested to support current operations and modernisation investments, highlighting an agricultural sector oriented both toward operational stability and gradual technological development.

Figure 12. Distribution of respondents according to the amount of financing required



Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026 Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

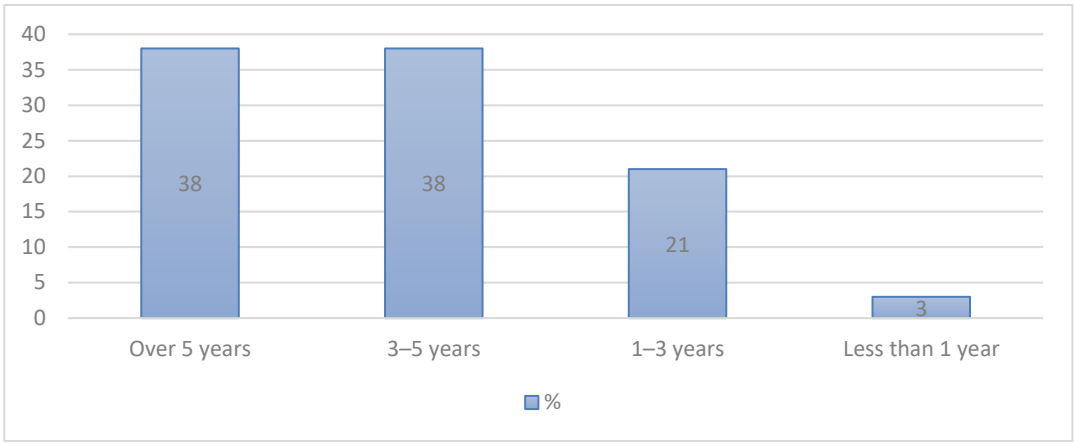
The distribution of requested amounts shows that the largest share of farmers requires financing in the 3,000,000–10,000,000 MDL range (33%), reflecting medium- to high-scale investment needs, mainly associated with the development and modernisation of agricultural enterprises.

A significant level of demand is also recorded in the 500,000–3,000,000 MDL range (29%), suggesting the predominance of medium-sized projects likely aimed at both investment activities and working capital needs. At the same time, 21% of respondents require amounts above 10,000,000 MDL, indicating the presence of a segment of large-scale farms with complex investment projects and higher development capacity.

Demand for amounts below 500,000 MDL (17%) is lower, confirming that small-scale financing needs have a limited share within the overall structure of the sector.

Overall, the results highlight a concentration of financing demand in medium and large amounts, reflecting an agricultural sector primarily oriented toward development and modernisation investments rather than small-scale financing.

Figure 13. Respondents' preferred financing repayment periods



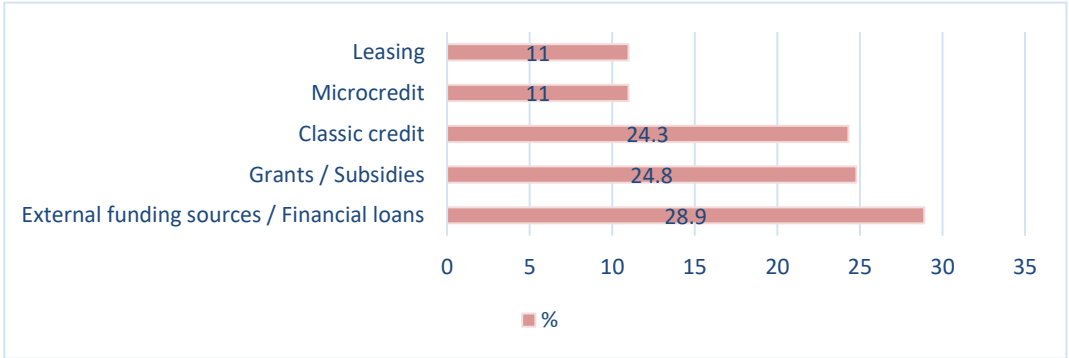
Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

The results in Figure 13 on the optimal repayment period show a clear preference among respondents for medium- and long-term financial commitments. Thus, 38% of participants consider a repayment period of over 5 years to be optimal, while an identical share (38%) opts for the 3–5-year interval. In contrast, only 21% prefer a 1–3-year period, and 3% indicate that repayment within less than one year is optimal.

These results suggest a strong preference for financing solutions that provide stability and budgetary flexibility by spreading financial obligations over a longer period. The low preference for short repayment periods may reflect both liquidity constraints and repayment capacity, as well as respondents' desire to reduce pressure from monthly instalments on current income.

From an economic and behavioural perspective, the data indicate that respondents prioritise long-term financial sustainability and predictability over accelerated debt repayment. Therefore, financial institutions and policymakers should focus on developing credit products adapted to preferences for extended maturities, while maintaining a balance between affordability of instalments and the overall cost of financing.

Figure 14. Types of financing preferred by respondents



Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

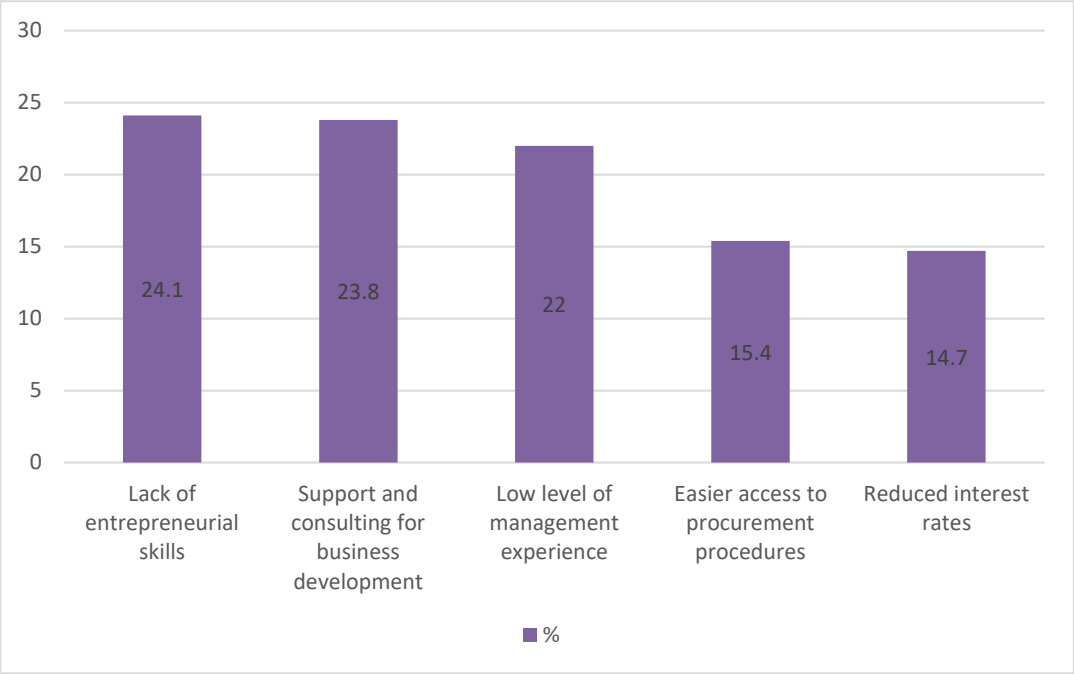
According to Figure 14, respondents show a predominant preference for external financing sources and funding programmes, selected by 28.9% of participants. This is

followed by grants/subsidies (24.8%) and traditional bank credit (24.3%). highlighting a strong interest in financing forms that provide easier access to financial resources and favourable repayment conditions. In contrast, microcredit and leasing are less preferred options, each chosen by only 11% of respondents.

The results suggest that respondents prioritise financial solutions that reduce investment cost pressures and provide greater financial security. The preference for grants and funding programmes reflects a tendency toward sources of capital with lower financial risk or a non-repayable support component. At the same time, the significant share of traditional credit confirms the important role of banking institutions in meeting financing needs.

Therefore, the data highlight the need to develop and promote diversified and accessible financial instruments, adapted to the financial capacity and requirements of beneficiaries, in order to support investment and stimulate economic development.

Figure 15. Main characteristics expected from a financing programme



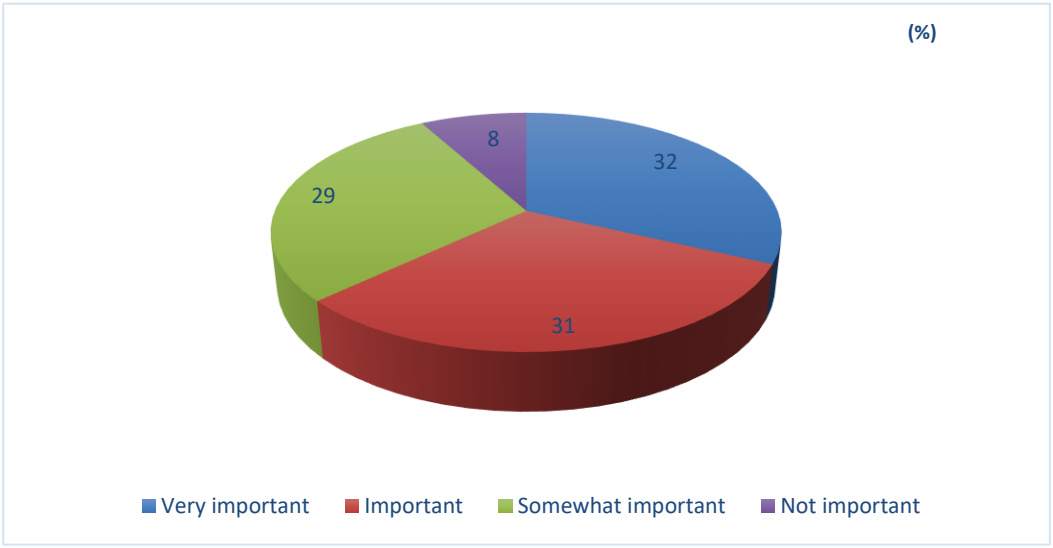
Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

According to Figure 15, the most important aspect of a financing programme is a flexible repayment period (24.1%), followed closely by support and consultancy during the financing process (23.8%) and reduced or no collateral requirements (22%). These results indicate that respondents place strong emphasis on flexibility and institutional support.

In comparison, fast access with simple procedures (15.4%) and low or zero interest rates (14.7%) are considered less important. This suggests that cost-related factors are not the main priority when selecting a financing programme.

Overall, the findings show that respondents value practical accessibility, financial flexibility, and advisory support more than purely financial advantages such as low interest rates.

Figure 16. Importance of seasonal payment flexibility



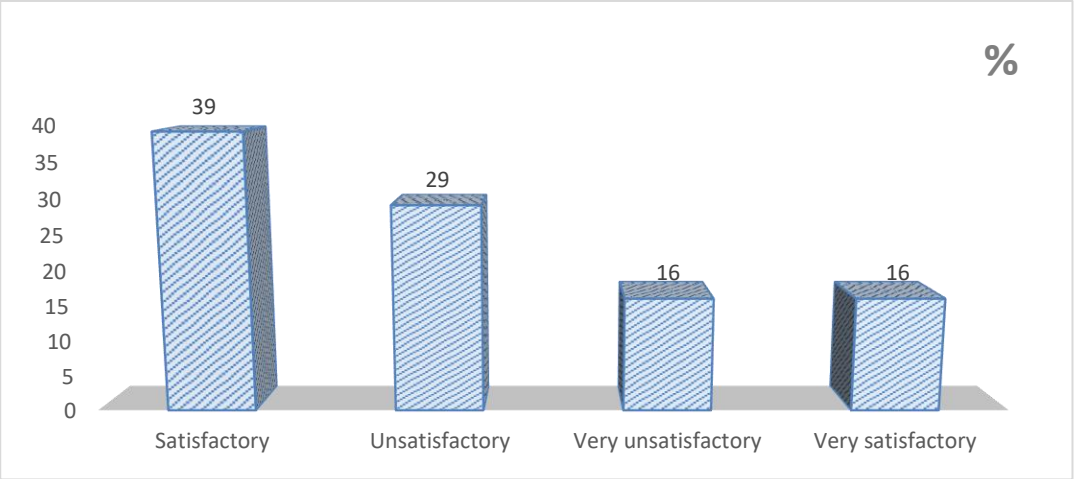
Source:(Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

The analysis of responses regarding the importance of seasonal payment flexibility shows that most respondents consider this feature relevant in the decision-making process. Specifically, 32% rated seasonal payment flexibility as "very important," while 31% considered it "important." At the same time, 29% of respondents rated it as "slightly important," and only a small share (around 8%) stated that it is "not important at all."

The results suggest that flexible payment options matter to a large proportion of users, reflecting the need to adapt financial services to income seasonality and beneficiaries' specific economic conditions (Alexandru, n.d.). At the same time, the relatively high share of respondents who consider flexibility only "slightly important" indicates differences in financial preferences and behaviour among users.

Overall, the data confirm the relevance of implementing flexible payment mechanisms to increase the accessibility and attractiveness of financial services.

Figure 17. Respondents' satisfaction with existing financial products



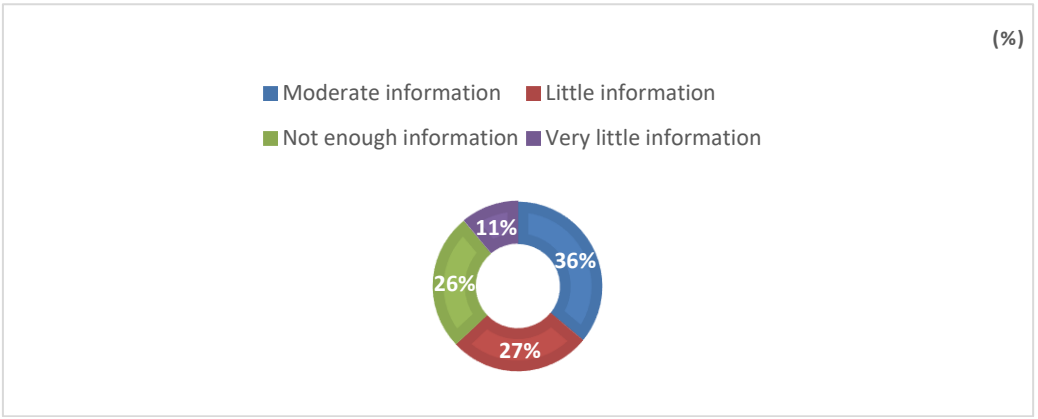
Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

According to Figure 17, the level of satisfaction with existing financial products is moderate, with relatively diverse opinions among respondents. Specifically, 39% of participants reported being "satisfied," representing the largest share of responses. Additionally, 16% stated that they are "very satisfied," indicating a segment that highly appreciates the available financial products.

On the other hand, 29% of respondents reported being "unsatisfied," while 16% were "very unsatisfied," showing that a significant proportion of users perceive limitations or shortcomings in current financial products.

Overall, the results suggest a generally moderate level of satisfaction while also highlighting the need to improve financial products by better aligning them with beneficiaries' needs and expectations (Republica Moldova: Probleme alese, n.d.).

Figure 18. Respondents' awareness of financing programmes for small farmers



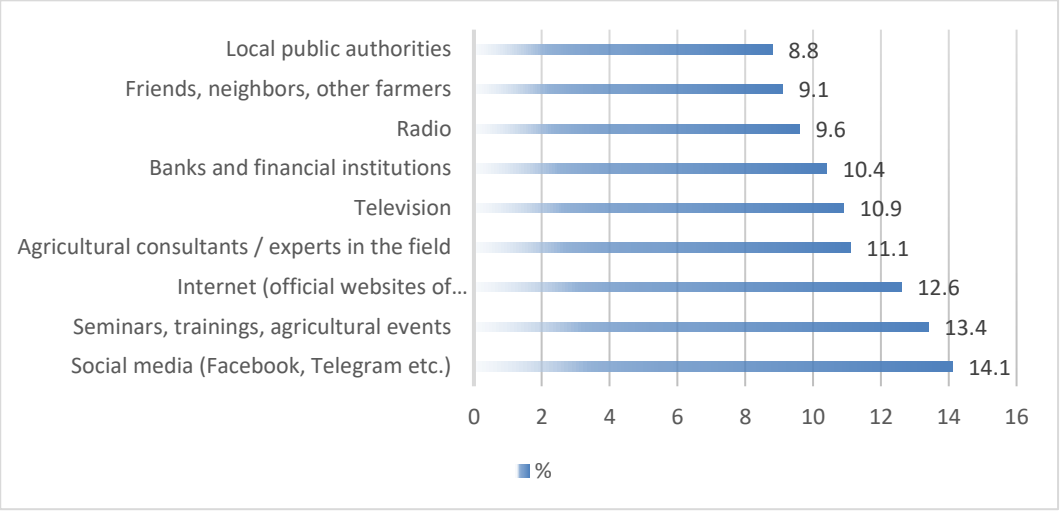
Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

According to Figure 18, respondents' awareness of financing programmes available for small farmers is predominantly moderate. Specifically, 36% of participants reported being

"moderately informed," representing the largest share of responses. In addition, 27% stated that they are "slightly informed," while 26% reported being "not informed at all," highlighting significant gaps in access to information about available financing opportunities.

At the same time, only 11% of respondents considered themselves "very well informed," indicating that a small proportion has in-depth knowledge of financial support programmes for small farmers. The results suggest the need to intensify information, promotion, and financial advisory activities in order to improve access to funding programmes and increase their utilisation (Olaru, 2014).

Figure 19. Preferred information channels for financing opportunities



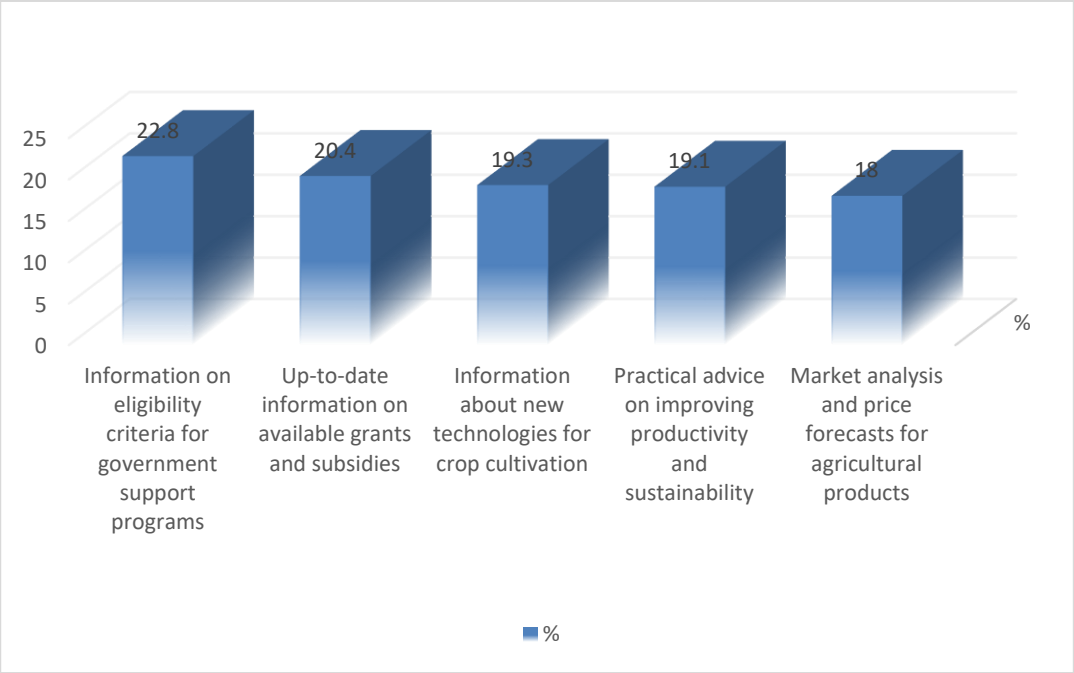
Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

The data show that farmers and agricultural stakeholders primarily prefer digital and interactive channels to obtain information about financing opportunities. Social media ranks first (14.1%). being perceived as the most accessible and fastest source of information, followed by seminars, training sessions, and agricultural events (13.4%). These offer direct interaction and clarification. Official websites of institutions and ministries (12.6%) also remain an important source, confirming the need for credible and up-to-date information.

The results also highlight the importance of agricultural consultants and experts (11.1%), suggesting that beneficiaries value specialised support in accessing financing. Traditional channels such as television (10.9%) and radio (9.6%) remain relevant, although their impact is lower compared to digital media. At the same time, recommendations from acquaintances or other farmers (9.1%) and information provided by local public authorities (8.8%) complement the information ecosystem (National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, n.d.).

Overall, the findings indicate the need for an integrated communication strategy that combines online media, specialised events, and professional consultancy to ensure effective and accessible information on financing opportunities.

Figure 20. Main obstacles to accessing European funds



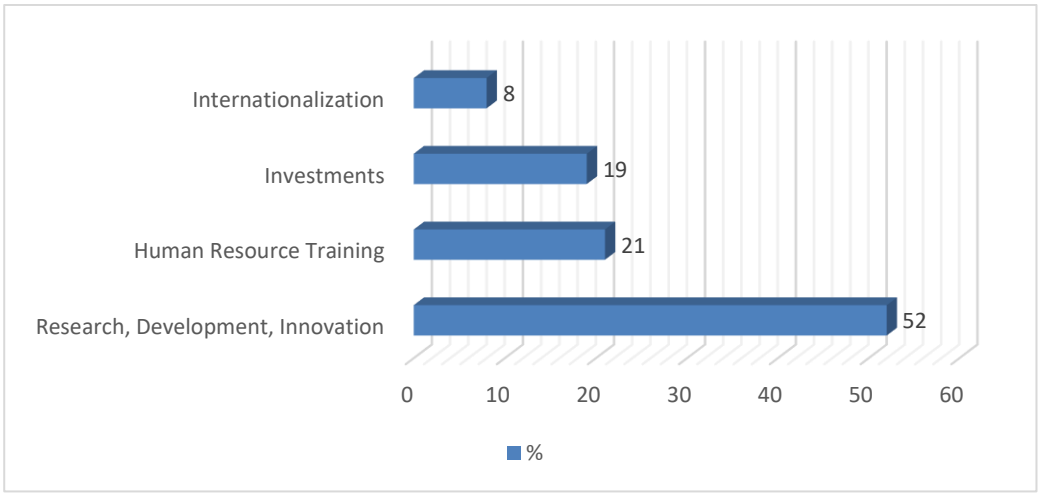
Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

The analysis of the results in Figure 20 shows that the main obstacles to accessing European funds are economic, informational, and administrative in nature. The most significant barrier is represented by eligibility criteria focused on profitability (22.5%). which highlights the difficulty for small and medium-sized farms to meet the required conditions.

Another important obstacle is the lack of information on how to access funds (20.4%), reflecting the need for more effective and accessible communication mechanisms for potential beneficiaries. In addition, insufficient financial resources for co-financing (19.3%) and excessive bureaucracy combined with regulatory instability (19.3%) significantly limit interest and capacity to access European funding (Ministerul Agriculturii și Industriei Alimentare | Guvernul Republicii Moldova, n.d.).

At the same time, limited managerial capacity of firms (18.6%) indicates difficulties in project management and implementation (Cristea et al., 2020). Overall, the results emphasize the need to simplify administrative procedures, improve access to information, and support beneficiaries throughout the process of accessing and implementing European funds.

Figure 21. Financing needs of agricultural enterprises for 2026



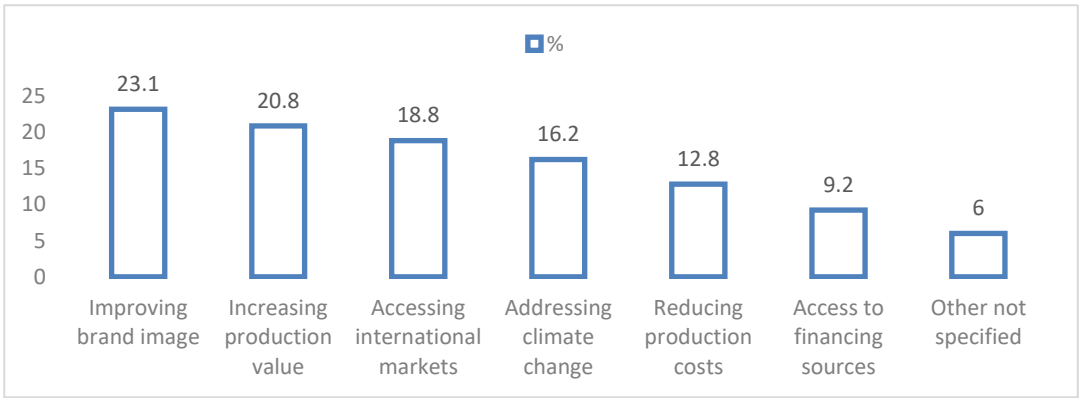
Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

According to the analysis in Figure 21, the main financing need for 2026 is research, development, and innovation (52%), reflecting companies' interest in modernisation, increased competitiveness, and adaptation to new market requirements (Marina COBAN, n.d.). This result suggests a strategic focus on technological advancement and developing innovative solutions.

The next priorities are funding for human resource training (21%) and investments (19%), indicating companies' concern for developing employee skills and strengthening operational capacity. In contrast, internationalisation (8%) records the lowest level of interest, suggesting that most companies are currently focused on developing and consolidating their internal activities.

Overall, the results highlight a clear priority for innovation and sustainable development, considered essential elements for improving firms' competitiveness in the coming period.

Figure 22. Main challenges affecting agricultural activity in the respondents' regions



Source: (Login | Survio®, n.d.). 2026. Total responses represent the sum of all responses selected by participants for a given question. The percentage for each option is calculated by dividing the number of responses for that option by the total number of responses.

Figure 22 highlights the main challenges encountered in agricultural activities in the region. Respondents report labour shortage as the most significant difficulty (23.1%), indicating a substantial workforce deficit in the agricultural sector. The second most frequently mentioned challenge is difficulty selling agricultural products (20.8%), suggesting problems with market access and commercialising agricultural output.

In addition, insufficient technical equipment (18.8%) and unfavourable climatic conditions (15.2%) are significant obstacles to developing agricultural activities. High production costs (12.9%) and limited access to financing (9.2%) further contribute to the challenges identified by respondents. The "Other" category received no responses, indicating that the main difficulties are already well defined.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the results indicate that agriculture in the region is primarily affected by human resource issues, agricultural product marketing, and low levels of technical modernisation. These factors significantly limit the agricultural sector's competitiveness and sustainable development.

Empirical research on a sample of 100 respondents shows that the agricultural sector in the Republic of Moldova is gradually transforming, combining traditional farming practices with increasing modernisation efforts. While crop production and livestock farming remain the dominant activities, diversification into mixed farming, beekeeping, fruit growing, and organic agriculture is becoming more evident (State of Art of Agriculture in Moldova in the process of EU integration, n.d.).

The findings indicate heavy dependence on external financing, with bank loans and microfinance as the primary funding sources. However, farmers continue to face significant barriers to accessing finance, including complex administrative procedures, insufficient information, strict collateral requirements, lengthy approval processes, and high borrowing costs. Subsidies are generally perceived as insufficient to support long-term development (Zagata et al., 2015).

Respondents mainly seek financing for working capital, modernisation, and the purchase of agricultural machinery. Flexible repayment conditions, advisory support, and reduced collateral requirements are considered more important than interest rates when selecting financing programs (Farid, 2005). At the same time, farmers report only moderate satisfaction with existing financial products and show relatively low awareness of available funding opportunities.

The research also identifies broader challenges affecting agricultural development, such as labor shortages, marketing difficulties, inadequate technical equipment, unfavorable climatic conditions, and barriers to accessing European funds, including restrictive eligibility criteria and bureaucratic procedures.

Based on these findings, the study recommends simplifying financing procedures, expanding advisory and information services, adapting financial products to the seasonal nature of agriculture, strengthening state guarantee schemes, encouraging technological modernization, promoting farmer cooperation, and facilitating access to European funding.

Furthermore, the study proposes the development of an integrated agricultural financing product that combines flexible financing, advisory services, digitalized application procedures, reduced collateral requirements, and transparent access to funding information. Such a comprehensive solution would improve farmers' access to financial resources, support investment and modernisation, and enhance the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of the agricultural sector in the Republic of Moldova.

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