



Factsheet on 2014-2020 rural development programme for Wallonia (Belgium)

The Rural Development Programme for Wallonia (RDP) was formally adopted by the European Commission on 20 July 2015, outlining priorities of Wallonia for using the €650 million of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020, out of which €264 million EAFRD contribution (approximately 47% of the budget granted to Belgium).

The main priority for the Wallonia RDP is actions related to the environment with more than half of the public spending targeting actions in this area. The region aims to have 20% of the agricultural land under contract to stimulate biodiversity, 16% of agricultural land to improve water management and 14% of agricultural land to improve soil management. 80 000 ha will receive support for conversion or maintaining organic farming. The RDP aims to have nearly 100 000 hectares of agricultural land under management contracts to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse emissions from agriculture. In order to boost the farm sector's competitiveness, the programme aims to provide investment support to almost 40% of farms with an emphasis on innovation, diversification, resource efficiency, collective investments and differentiated quality products. The programme also aims to support the setting up of 570 young farmers. In order to promote social inclusion and poverty reduction in rural areas, 20% of the rural population will benefit from better services and infrastructure.

Support for [Rural Development](#) is the 2nd Pillar of the [Common Agricultural Policy](#), providing Member States with an envelope of EU funding to manage nationally or regionally under multi-annual, co-funded programmes. In total, 118 programmes are foreseen in all 28 Member States. The new [RD Regulation](#) for the period 2014-2020 addresses six economic, environmental and social priorities, and programmes contain clear targets setting out what is to be achieved. Moreover, in order to coordinate actions better and maximise synergies with the other European Structural & Investment Funds ([ESIF](#)), a [Partnership Agreement](#) has been agreed with each Member State highlighting its broad strategy for EU-funded structural investment.

This document provides a brief overview of how the challenges and opportunities Wallonia is facing are addressed by the RDP. In the annex, a table indicates the priorities and focus areas each with their specific targets, and their allocated budgets.

1. SITUATION AND CHALLENGES

In Belgium, the implementation of rural development shall be through two separate RDPs: one for Flanders and one for Wallonia.

Wallonia covers 16 800 km² and has 3 563 000 inhabitants. It is a medium populated region without major metropolitan urban centres, with 6 urban poles (Charleroi, Liège, Namur, Mons, Verviers and Tournai), some medium-sized cities and towns. More than 55% of the territory is classified as rural area, which covers 25% of the population; 60% of the Walloon population lives outside urban areas.

The regional economy is based on the tertiary sector (75% of GVA) and industry (24%) where the agri-food sector (23 000 jobs) and the processing of wood (19 000 jobs) play an important role. The primary sector is only 1% of the regional GVA and of regional employment (23 000 jobs).

The utilised agricultural area (UAA) covers 42.5% of the total land area, i.e. 715 000 ha of forests and heath 33% or 555 000 ha. Natura 2000 areas cover 221 000 hectares, or 13% of the territory of Wallonia, and cover 28% of the forest area and 5% of the UAA in Wallonia.

Walloon agriculture had 13 300 holdings in 2012, often medium-sized (54 ha). They are dependent on soil and climate conditions, and include grazing livestock farms (cattle for beef and milk, 1 213 000 cattle), arable crops (cereals, sugarbeet and potatoes) but also specialised crops (vegetables, fruit, horticulture).

Wallonia includes 10 agricultural regions corresponding to specific pedo-climatic characteristics and varied landscapes and a wide variety of biotopes despite a relatively limited territory. Agriculture plays an important role in the protection of the environment and of biodiversity, landscapes and water quality.

Some agricultural practices linked to the intensification of agriculture are still harmful to the environment. They cause, in particular, increased nitrate levels of water, high level of phosphorus in about 2/3 of Wallonian soil and the use of an important amount of phytosanitary products. In addition, biodiversity in Wallonia is in continuous decline.

2. HOW WALLONIA'S RDP WILL ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES

To address the challenges, the RDP is structured around the 6 priorities for rural development with the most important being priority 4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry.

The objectives and targets for different priorities are summarised below.

Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

To promote lifelong learning, the RDP will provide 16 000 places in training courses.

Cooperation between researchers and producers will also be promoted through support for 74 cooperation operations.

Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests

Under this priority, the programme aims to modernise agricultural holdings to improve their competitiveness. The programme intends to support almost 40% of the holdings for modernisation and restructuring. Likewise, in view of the difficulties related to setting up

a farm, the RDP aims to support generational renewal by targeting 570 start-up projects for young farmers throughout the programming period.

Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture

150 projects will receive support to improve the competitiveness of the producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain,.

Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

Under this priority, the programme will support agri-environment climate measures, organic farming, Natura 2000 payments, and payments for areas facing natural constraints, some physical investments and other types of operation.

The RDP of Wallonia aims to have 20% of the agricultural land under contract to stimulate biodiversity, 16% of agricultural land to improve water management and 14% of agricultural land to improve soil management. 80 000 ha will receive support for conversion or maintaining organic farming.

Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low CO2 emission economy and climate resilient in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors

The RDP aims to have nearly 100 000 hectares of agricultural land under management contracts to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse emissions from agriculture, and 93 000 ha of agricultural and forest land under management contracts to foster carbon sequestration or conservation of the soil.

Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

The region pays a lot of attention to the development of rural areas through Leader (5% of funding), which seeks to cover one third of the rural population through Local Development Strategies that will be developed by 18 Local Action Groups (LAGs); 75 jobs will also be created in the supported projects. The aim is also to allow 21% of the rural population to benefit from improved services or facilities.

The four **biggest RDP measures** in budgetary terms (total public funding) are:

- M 04 — Investments in physical assets: € 155 800 000
- M 10 — Agri-environment-climate: € 147 500 000
- M 11 — Organic farming: € 100 000 000
- M 13 — Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints: € 58 000 000

Annex 1: Indicative distribution of the RDP Wallonia and target indicators

Priorities and targets	Measures	Total public expenditure (EUR)	%
Priority 1: Knowledge transfer and innovation			
<u>1a:</u> Fostering innovation, cooperation, and knowledge development <u>2.69% of the resources of the RDP</u>	01. Knowledge 16. Cooperation		
<u>1b:</u> Strengthening the links between agriculture, food production and forestry and research and innovation <u>74 cooperation projects envisaged in various fields</u>	16. Cooperation		
<u>1c:</u> Training <u>16 000 participants expected</u>	01. Knowledge		
Priority 2: Viability and competitiveness of farms, sustainable forest management		174 900 000	26.7
<u>2a:</u> Modernisation, competitiveness and restructuring of agricultural holdings <u>38% of farms benefiting from support for their modernisation and development</u>	01. Knowledge	3 075 000	0.5
	04. Investments	131 000 000	20.0
<u>2b:</u> Setting up of young farmers <u>570 setting up of young farmers</u>	01, knowledge and advice	825 000	0.1
	06. Development of holdings	40 000 000	6.1
Priority 3: Food chain organisation, processing and marketing		24 800 000	3.8
<u>3a:</u> Improving competitiveness of primary producers	04. Investments	24 800 000	3.9
Priority 4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry		355 425 020	54.3
<u>4a:</u> Biodiversity <u>18.98% of agricultural area under contract</u>	01. Knowledge	2 800 000	0.4

4b: Water management <u>15.58% of agricultural area under contract</u>	07. Basic services	8 000 000	1.2
	10. AGRI, ENV, CLIMA	147 500 000	22.5
4c: Soil erosion and management <u>13.55% of agricultural area under contract</u>	11. Organic farming	100 000 000	15.3
	12. Natura 2000	39 125 020	6.0
	13. Compensatory allowances	58 000 000	8.9
Priority 5: Promoting resource efficiency...		4 915 385	0.8
<u>5c: Renewable energy</u> <u>EUR 28 000 000 investment in renewable energy production</u>	01. Knowledge	300 000	0
	06. Development of holdings	4 615 385	0.7
<u>5d: Reduction of greenhouse emissions¹</u> <u>13.95% of agricultural land under contract</u>	10. AGRI, ENV, CLIMA	0	0
<u>5e: Conservation and sequestration of carbon 1</u> <u>7.32% of agricultural and forestry land under contract</u>	10. AGRI, ENV, CLIMA	0	0
Priority 6: Economic development, social inclusion		79 593 674	12.2
<u>6a: Small businesses, job creation</u> <u>20 Jobs created</u>	06. Development of holdings	9 584 615	1.5
	07. Basic services	7 625 500	1.2
	08. Forest	4 500 000	0.7
	16. Cooperation	5 000 000	0.8
<u>6b: Local development</u> <u>31.55% of rural population covered by local development strategies</u> <u>21.03% of rural population benefiting from improved services/infrastructures</u> <u>75 jobs created (Leader)</u>	07. Basic services	16 550 940	2.5
	16. Cooperation	5 631 238	0.9
	19. Leader	30 701 381	4.7
Technical assistance		14 820 750	2.3
Total public expenditure (EUR)		654 454 829	100

¹No financial allocation shown for Priority 1 as the expenditure is distributed across other focus areas.