



Factsheet on 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme Principado de Asturias

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Principado de Asturias was formally adopted by the European Commission on 3 August 2015, outlining Principado de Asturias's priorities for using the € 561 million of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (€ 325 million from the EU budget, and € 174 million of national co-funding plus € 62 million of additional national funding top-ups).

The RDP for Principado de Asturias focuses on restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry, and it plans to have 37% of farmland under management contract to improve biodiversity. In order to improve the competitiveness of the farm sector, 2 100 farmers will get support to restructure and modernise their farms and 450 young farmers will get support to launch their businesses. In addition, the region will support training for more than 7 500 participants. Nearly 27% of the rural population will benefit from improved services and infrastructures and will be covered by LEADER local development strategies, which are expected to create around 150 new jobs.

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 Principado de Asturias 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 KEY CHALLENGES

In Spain rural development is implemented through 18 separate RDPs – one at national level and 17 regional RDPs. However, common elements to the programmes are presented in a national framework. In addition, the National Rural Network provides the funding for the networking of rural development actors in Spain.

Principado de Asturias covers an area of 10 603 km² and is home to 1.1 million people. The centre of the region is mainly urban with a concentration of the population, while the rest is rural and undergoing depopulation. Of the total area, farmland covers 16.2% and forestry 72.2%.

Livestock is by far the most important agricultural sector in the region, with a total of 17 614 livestock farms. 85% are oriented towards meat production and 15% to high-

quality milk production. Forest activity (social, economic and environmental value), increasing economic diversification and privileged natural and cultural heritage are other strengths of this region.

Weaknesses include an unemployment rate of 10.5% (2012). The ageing and masculinization of the rural population, coupled with young people leaving for urban areas, may lead to land abandonment and is considered a large problem in the region. In addition, other weaknesses are that the farm sector is dominated by small livestock farms (49,7% of farms have less than 5 ha) with no or low qualified employees, as well as the fact that Principado de Asturias is a very mountainous region which makes mechanisation of agriculture and forestry difficult.

2. HOW THE PRINCIPADO DE ASTURIAS'S RDP WILL ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES

In addressing these challenges, Principado de Asturias's RDP will fund action under all Rural Development priorities – with a particular emphasis on enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture, and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests as well as restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry. The focus of each priority is explained briefly below.

Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

This cross-cutting priority will be addressed mainly through measures supporting training: more than 7 500 participants will be trained. There will also be support for 33 cooperation projects in the framework of the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability.

Competitiveness of agri sector and sustainable forestry

Besides previously-mentioned support for training, some 9% of farms will receive funding for investments focused on restructuring and modernisation. Nearly 2% of farms will receive support for young farmers to set up their businesses.

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

Under this priority, 150 farms will receive funding to participate in quality schemes, local markets and short supply chain distribution.

Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

Around 37.5% of the allocated amount will be used for area-based payments to farmers for using environment/climate friendly management practices, including organic farming. The RDP will support the conversion or maintenance of organic farming on 40 000 hectares. Nearly 38% of farmland will come under management contract to improve biodiversity, water management and soil erosion.

Resource efficiency and climate

Support allocated under this priority will mainly facilitate investments in afforestation and the establishment of agroforestry systems. 3 500 ha will be afforested and 1 200 ha will get support for the establishment and maintenance of agro-forestry systems.

Social inclusion and local development in rural areas

The programme will fund Local Development Strategies (LDS) drawn up and implemented by Local Action Groups (LAGs) under the LEADER approach. Nearly 27% of

the rural population will be affected by these local initiatives which will also create around 150 new jobs.

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

- € 180 million allocated to Measure 4: Investments in physical assets
- € 106 million allocated to Measure 8: Forestry
- € 70 million allocated to Measure 19: LEADER
- € 66 million allocated to Measure 13: Payments for areas facing natural constraints

Annex 1: Indicative public support for the Rural Development Programme in Asturias

Target	Measure	€ Total public	%
Priority1: Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas¹			
1A: Fostering innovation, cooperation, knowledge base 5.19% of RDP expenditure	01 knowledge		
	16 cooperation		
1B: Strengthening links (with research etc.) 33 cooperation projects	16 cooperation		
1C: Training 7 500 participants trained	01 knowledge		
Priority 2: Farm viability, competitiveness and sustainable forest management		155 306 604	27.69
2A: Economic performance, restructuring & modernisation 8.78% of holdings with RDP support	01 knowledge	2 250 000	0.40
	02 advisory services	7 603 774	1.36
	04 investments	102 452 830	18.26
	16 cooperation	19 250 000	3.43
2B: Generational renewal 1.88% of holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers	06 farm / business development	23 750 000	4.23
Priority 3: Food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management		66 320 755	11.82
3A : Competitiveness of producers	03 quality schemes	4 716 981	0.84
	04 investments	61 603 774	10.98

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

Priority 4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems in agriculture and forestry²		145 547 170	25.94
4A Biodiversity 37.17% of UAA under contracts	04 investments	16 333 333	2.91
4B Water management 37.17% of UAA under contracts	07 basic Services	7 547 170	1.35
	10 AEC	38 666 667	6.89
4C Soil erosion and management 37.17% of UAA under contracts	11 organic farming	16 333 333	2.91
	13 ANC	66 666 667	11.88
Priority 5: Resource efficiency and shift to low carbon and climate resilience economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors		105 930 818	18.88
5E Carbon conservation and sequestration 0.53% of UAA under contract 25 000 ha will get support for fire prevention operations	08 forest	105 930 818	18.88
Priority 6: Social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas		70 000 000	12.47
6B Local development 26.12% rural population in LDS 26.12% rural population with improved services/infrastructures 150 jobs created	19 LEADER and CLLD	70 000 000	12.48
Technical Assistance		8 490 566	1.5
Discontinued measures		9 433 962	1.7
Total public expenditure €		561 029 875	100.00

² Expenditure under Priority 4 is programmed for the priority as a whole, not for individual focus areas