



Factsheet on 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme Cantabria

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Cantabria was formally adopted by the European Commission on 20 July 2015, as last modified on 5 January 2017, outlining Cantabria's priorities for using the € 247.2 million of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (€ 98.8 million from the EU budget, and € 53.4 million of national co-funding plus € 95.0 million of additional national funding top-ups).

The RDP for Cantabria focuses mainly on four priority areas. In order to improve the competitiveness of the farm sector, nearly 8% of farmers will get support to restructure and modernise their farms and support for young farmers to launch their businesses will be provided for an estimated number of 300 beneficiaries. The region will support training for more than 7 000 participants through different knowledge transfer and information actions. Restoring, preserving and enhancing of ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry is also considered important with 13% of farmland to come under management contract to improve biodiversity. In addition, support will be made available for the conversion of nearly 2 000 farms into organic farming. More than 17% of the rural population will be covered by a LEADER local development strategy and these strategies are expected to create around 60 new jobs. Nearly 100 000 inhabitants of Cantabria will benefit from these local initiatives.

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 Cantabria 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 Programme provides the funding for the networking of rural development actors in Spain.

Cantabria covers an area of 5 321 km², of which more than 90% is rural. Of the total area, farmland covers 40.5% and forestry 51%. The region is home to 588 568 people or 1.2% of the Spanish population. Cantabria has total of 102 municipalities, with the 7 biggest municipalities covering 25% of the surface but only gathering 1% of the

population. This gives an idea of the marked rural character of the region and explains the uneven distribution of the population, with a density of just 110 inhabitants per square km.

Cantabria consists of three main and clearly differentiated geomorphological areas: the northern coastal area, the inland mountains, and the milder southern valleys. Relief strongly conditions land use in Cantabria and makes mechanisation of agriculture and forestry processes difficult. Nearly 40% of the land is above 700 meters of altitude and around 33% presents steep slopes of 30%, though significant differences may be observed between the more urbanised coastal municipalities and the rural and mountainous inland.

A key socio-economic strength is the fact that although agriculture and forestry represent only 2% of the total regional GDP, the two sectors play a key role in conserving the environment and landscapes, cultural heritage as well as the strategic agri-food sector). Farms in Cantabria are of relatively small dimensions, with an average surface of just 24.5 hectares, though 79% of the holdings have less than 20 hectares. Livestock is by far the most important agricultural sector in the region. With a total of 34 816 livestock farms (4.14% of Spain's total livestock farms), nearly 32 500 farms are oriented to meat production whereas just over 2 000 farms are oriented to milk production. Corn production for animal feeding is also remarkable in the region, with nearly 10 900 hectares devoted to this culture.

The unemployment rate in the region is 17.7% (2012). The ageing of the population which, coupled with young people leaving for urban areas, may lead to land abandonment is considered a large problem in the region, the average age of active farmers in Cantabria is 49 years.

2. HOW THE CANTABRIA'S RDP WILL ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES

In addressing these challenges, Cantabria's RDP will fund action under five 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 of 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 7 000 participants will be trained.

Farm viability, competitiveness of agri sector, promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable forest management

This priority will be addressed mainly through measures supporting some investments in physical assets as 7.7% of farms will receive funding for investments focused on restructuring and modernisation. Nearly 3% 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

Public support allocated under this priority will provide funding for farmers to participate in quality schemes, local markets and short supply chains. This will enhance the competitiveness of local producers and keep people in the rural areas.

Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

Around 48% of the amounts allocated by the RDP will be used for area-based payments to farmers for using environment/climate friendly management practices, including organic farming. Nearly 31 400 hectares of farmland will come under management contracts to improve biodiversity. In addition nearly 2 000 farms in Cantabria are expected to convert into organic farming by the year 2023.

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 100 000 inhabitants in rural areas will benefit from these local initiatives which will also create around 60 new jobs. Moreover, 10 000 inhabitants in rural areas will also directly benefit from new or improved services or infrastructure.

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

- € 63.4 million allocated to Measure 13: Payments for areas facing natural constraints
- € 50.1 million allocated to Measure 4: Investments in physical assets
- € 28.0 million allocated to Measure 19: LEADER and CLLD
- € 24.9 million allocated to Measure 10: Agri-environment and climate

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

Target	Measure	€ Total public	%
Priority 2: Farm viability, competitiveness and sustainable forest management		76 134 198	30.80
2A: Economic performance, restructuring & modernisation 7.73 % of holdings with RDP support	01 knowledge	412 500	0.17
	04 investments	32 735 849	13.24
	14 animal welfare	20 535 849	8.31
	16 cooperation	450 000	0.18
2B: Generational renewal 2.90 % of holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers	06 farm and business development	22 000 000	8.90
Priority 3: Food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management		17 377 358	7.03
3A: Improving competitiveness of primary producers 60 agricultural holdings receiving support under measure 4.2	04 investments	17 377 358	7.03
Priority 4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems in agriculture and forestry¹		114 722 611	46.41
4A Biodiversity 13.35 % of agricultural land under management contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes	08 Forests	24 223 864	9.80
	10 AEC	24 908 600	10.08
	11 Organic farming	2 195 480	0.89
	13 ANC	63 394 667	25.65
Priority 6: Social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas		29 183 019	11.81

¹ Expenditure under Priority 4 is programmed for the priority as a whole, not for individual focus areas

6B Fostering local development 17.27 % rural population under local development strategies 1.73 % rural population with improved services/infrastructure 60 jobs created (via LEADER)	07 Basic services	1 183 019	0.48
	19 LEADER and CLLD	28 000 000	11.33
Technical Assistance		775 471	0.31
Discontinued measures		8 998 000	3.64
Total public expenditure €		247 190 657	100