



Factsheet on 2014-2020 national framework for Rural Development in France

The French National Framework for rural development was formally adopted by the European Commission on 30 June 2015. Defining specific elements of measures which are common to several French Rural Development Programmes (RDPs), the approval of this National Framework is a pre-condition for the adoption of the 21 regional RDPs in mainland France ("France métropolitaine").

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 2014-2020 period addresses six economic, environmental and social priorities, and programmes contain clear targets setting out what is to be achieved. It put also emphasis on networking activities at EU and national level. Moreover, in order to coordinate actions better and maximise synergies with the other European Structural and 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 general challenges and opportunities faced by rural areas in France are addressed through common measures defined in this National Framework.

1. Situation and key challenges

Member States with regional programmes, like France, may submit for approval a national framework containing common elements for the regional Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). In mainland France rural development is implemented through 21 regional RDPs. The National Framework (NF) outlines a group of measures that will be programmed in all the regional programmes as they represent **national priorities** as reflected in the Partnership Agreement. These are: the setting-up of young farmers, implementation of agri-environment-climate measures, the management of Natura 2000 sites, the promotion of organic farming, and the support to areas facing natural constraints. Those measures should always be in line with the regional SWOT analysis and the assessment of needs. The NF contributes to improving coherence and efficiency of implementation at regional level.

A separate National Rural Network Programme provides the funding for the networking of the actors of rural development. In addition, there is a National Programme for Risk Management. The RDPs of the five outermost regions and Corsica are not concerned by the National Framework due to their specificities.

The EU funding comes from the EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) with an allocation for France which amounts in total for the period to € 11.4 billion. This amount takes into account the transfer of the first to the second pillar of the CAP of € 1.4 billion. It will be spent through the 27 regional RDPs (21 regions of France, 5 outermost regions and Corsica), a national risk management programme and the National Rural Network. There is therefore no specific budget (and financial table) for the NF.

2. How the national framework for France will address these challenges

The NF first outlines a coherent approach to rural development in France, stemming from the French Partnership Agreement. It then develops measures which will be relevant to 21 regional RDPs in mainland France.

Three objectives are set out:

- 1) to develop new production methods in order to improve the competitiveness of agricultural holdings by reducing the cost of inputs and preserving the natural resources on which farming draws,
- 2) to enable the generational renewal of farm by promoting the creation, adaptation and transfer of holdings,
- 3) to protect the natural environment by implementing actions to conserve, restore and manage natural resources

These objectives are pursued through 6 rural development measures, for which the NF describes the various types of operations which need to be implemented in all regions. These are the following:

- Setting-up of young farmers;
- Management of Natura 2000 areas;
- Agri-environment-climate payments for commitments going beyond mandatory requirements and promoting changes to agricultural practices which make a positive contribution to environment and climate;
- organic farming;
- payments to areas facing natural constraints.
- Payments in relation to Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive

These measures contribute to the three cross cutting objectives of rural development policy (environment, climate change mitigation and adaptation, innovation) and cover all but one of the six EU priorities for rural development.

The national framework highly contributes to the simplification of rural policy implementation; in such a way the approval of the NF entails the approval of the relevant measures of the regional RDPs.