

Opportunities for forestry in Rural Development Programmes 2014-2020

*Information sheet for participants to the EIP-AGRI workshop
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The European Union supports the sustainable management of its forests: covering 40% of the EU territory, not only do they represent an extraordinary environmental and climate asset, they are also at the centre of socio-economic activities providing 3.5 million jobs. Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) are the EU's main instrument supporting sustainable forest management. For the programming period 2014-2020, it is planned to invest around 8.2 billion euros of public expenditure for forest related measures under RDPs.

Forest-related measures

Member States can programme a large range of measures to support forestry; the most widely used are for afforestation and creation of woodland; prevention and restoration of damage to forests from forest fires, natural disasters and catastrophic events; investments improving the resilience and environmental value of forest ecosystems and; investments in forestry technologies and in processing. The most relevant measures that may support the development of new forest value chains are:

Measure 8.6 "Mobilising and marketing of forest products"

This sub-measure provides support for investments aimed at increasing the value of forest products through: the creation and modernisation of forestry companies, participation of forest producers, new products, processes and technology and certification processes, market integration, secondary products, local supply chains, etc.

Measure 16 "Co-operation"

Support to two or more entities for forest sector activities such as: support for the establishment and operation of EIP-AGRI Operational Groups, for pilot projects and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies.

Measure 6 "Farm and business development"

Support for investments and development of non-agricultural activities can now also be provided to small-sized rural enterprises processing forest products (wood and non-wood) producing bioenergy using agricultural and forestry residues, or providing services to forest owners. Small-scale enterprises involved in forestry related to rural or green tourism may also receive support. This measure contributes to the diversification of rural activities; providing new business opportunities to farmers and other entrepreneurs in rural areas.

Requirements

In order to be eligible for support under the Rural Development Programmes, sustainable forest management should be ensured by a forest management plan or equivalent instrument. This plan consists of basic requirements for managing forests in a sustainable way. Rural Development Programmes also provide support for the preparation of these forest management plans (under measure 16.8).

Beneficiaries

Under the programming period 2014-2020, a distinction is made between the ownership of the forest on the one hand, and the identity of the beneficiary on the other - support is provided to the person/entity managing the forest. So, support is no longer limited to privately owned forests or municipalities, but can also be provided to a "holder" (who manages the forest) of state-owned forests.

More information

Rural Development Programmes reflect the needs and priorities in the sector for each Member State (or region in the case of regional programmes), so it may be possible that certain measures presented here are not supported in your country/region. You can find the contacts of the Managing Authority in your country/region and examples of successful projects on the ENRD website: <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/>.