

Rural Development Programme (RDP) of Sicily, Italy

Programma di sviluppo rurale Sicilia 2007/2013¹

(Rural Development Programme for Sicily 2007-2013)

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Other useful links:

Rural Development Programme (RDP):

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/rural-development-policy/country-](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/rural-development-policy/country-information/italy/en/italy_home_en.cfm)

[information/italy/en/italy_home_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/rural-development-policy/country-information/italy/en/italy_home_en.cfm)

National Strategy Plan (NSP):

http://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/Serv_eBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/1145

Italian National Rural Network (NRN):

<http://www.reterurale.it>



Map of Sicily

(© European Commission)

General socio-economic situation in rural areas in the Sicily region

Sicily, located in Southern Italy and the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, has a surface of 25,703 km² and a population of 5,018,000 inhabitants. Nearly 45% of territory and 40% of population fall under Intermediate Rural areas (C) and 39% and 15% in areas with development gaps (D). According to the RDP of December 2008, the region is in "Convergence Objective" (Gross Domestic Product/capita €15,850 and 16.2% of unemployment with disparities related to age and gender). Agriculture with 113,000 employees accounts for 4.2% of regional Value Added. Farms are nearly 250,000 but only 30% of them can be defined as "professional". Better organization, chain integration and technical assistance would enhance the value of quality products

The RDP highlights a high degree of biodiversity, discrete water quality, landscape values that represent regional environmental strengths, however characterised by several weaknesses (geological instability, landscape degradation, erosion, forest vulnerability to fire). More than 7% of the soil is at risk of desertification, 10% is affected by salinisation. In Rural areas C and D, rate of employment and development of services and infrastructures are low, but rural heritage is significantly high, with many historical and natural features.

¹ Latest updated RDP, following the adoption of the Health Check and European Economic Recovery Package and additional funds from Modulation.

RDP strategic objectives

The strategy of the RDP has been identified based on the results of the SWOT analysis and by adapting the priorities of the NSP to the regional context. The strategic objectives are:

- to increase the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry by encouraging investment in human capital, restructuring and developing physical capital, innovating and enhancing the products quality;
- to improve the quality of the environment through protection and/or conservation of the landscape, increase hydro geological security, spread agricultural and forestry sustainable practices and promote environmental/economic benefit for rural communities.
- to improve the quality of life in rural areas and the diversification of economic activities, in order to create or consolidate employment opportunities. Both targets are intended to slow down or stop the decline and related abandonment of rural areas by the population that massively relocates in urban and coastal areas, causing their congestion.
- to reinforce bottom-up rural development strategies and to fully use endogenous resources in a sustainable way.

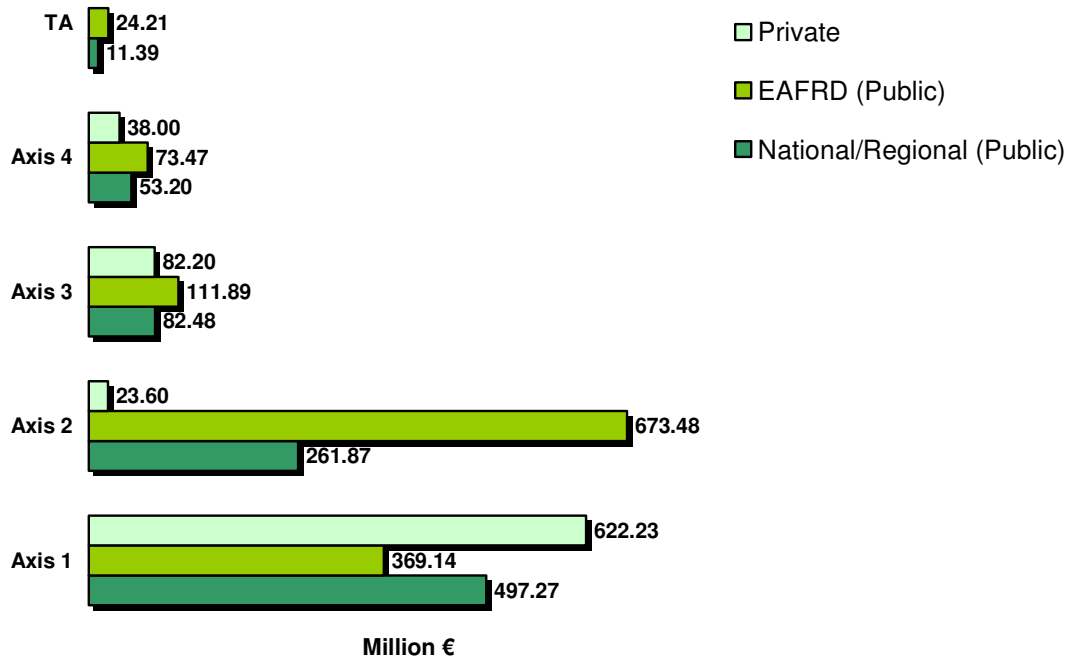
Following the CAP Health Check, in recognition of the greater emphasis now being given to the issues facing agriculture and rural areas, the RDP was revised in 2009 to place further importance on climate change adaptation and mitigation actions, development of renewable energies, water resources, increasing biodiversity, forest fire risks, and improved availability of broadband infrastructure in rural areas. The modifications do not concern the introduction of actions or operations (with the exception of broadband), but the reinforcement and/or the alteration of existing ones.

Taking into account the additional financing provided by the CAP Health Check, the European Economic Recovery Package and Modulation/CMO Wine, strategic priority is given to initiatives that contribute to fighting climate change (which received 25% of the additional funds), biodiversity (25%), and broadband (50%). The restructuring of the dairy sector is a priority for Sicily; however, it is financed by additional ordinary resources. With regards to innovation in connection to the first four challenges, the region considers it to be already present as a horizontal priority throughout the approved RDP.

Expected impact / outcomes of the policies

Programme result and impact targets were revised to take account of 2009's RDP amendments and new targets were set. These included e.g.: increasing economic growth outputs from €286.72 million to €294.62 million; creating Full Time Equivalent jobs (from 3,466 to 3,712); increasing labour productivity in GVA per full time equivalent (from €2,016 to €2,019); maintaining high nature value farmland and forests (from 11,495 ha to 30,895 ha); and strengthening of climate change actions by increasing the production of renewable energy from 6.75 Kton to 7.31 Kton.

RDP budget breakdown by axis: Total expenditure (including national/regional + EAFRD + private funding) of €2,951,456,544



The RDP budget allocations are broadly divided into four main areas of expenditure, known as axes (namely: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector; Improving the environment and the countryside; Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy; and Leader). Approximately 51% of the updated RDP budget in Sicily is allocated to axis 1 (€1,515.64 million); approximately 33% is allocated to axis 2 (€958.95 million), 9% to axis 3 (€276.58 million) and 6% to axis 4 (€164.68 million), with 1% available to fund Technical Assistance (€35.61 million).

Within axis 1, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 33% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 26%; and private funds 41%.

Within axis 2, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 27% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 70%; and private funds 3%.

Within axis 3, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 30% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 40% and private funds 30%.

Within axis 4, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 32% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 45%; and private funds 23%.

Within technical assistance, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 32% share of the technical assistance funding and EAFRD 68%.

As a consequence of the 2009 RDP amendments, Sicily has been allocated a total of €113,396,667 (including €68,038,000 EAFRD and €45,338,667 of regional/national public funds). Out of the additional EAFRD contribution, €30,588,000 is aimed at addressing new challenges and broadband in rural areas. Furthermore, the resources originated by Modulation (€37,450,000) reinforce the budgets of axes 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Axis Information²

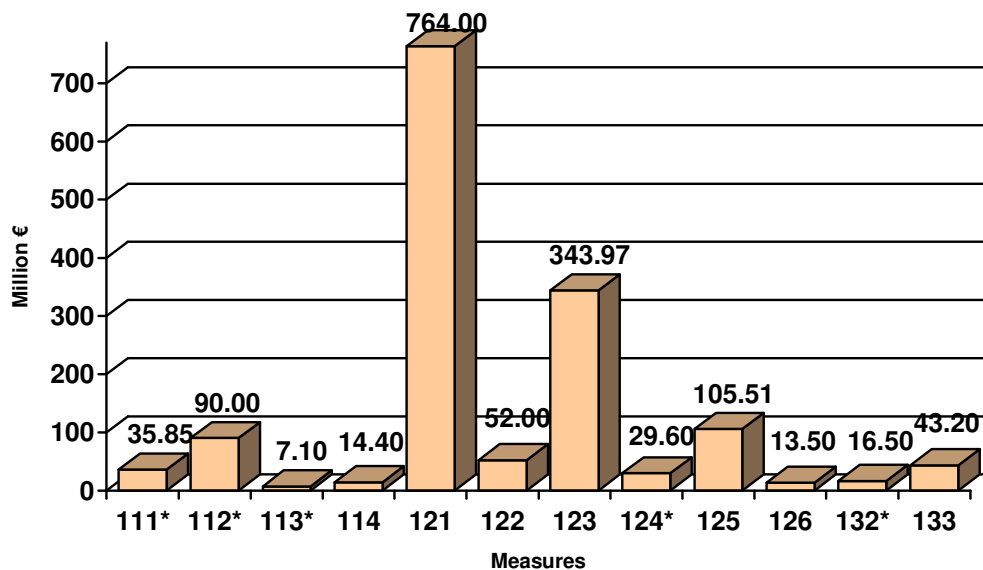
Axis 1 objectives: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector

The priorities of axis 1 (improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry) are the following: 1) to enhance the entrepreneurial capacities of the agricultural and forestry workers, and to promote generational turnover, 2) to promote the modernisation of competitive holdings, 3) to develop physical infrastructures, 4) to promote quality products.

Result targets include the number of participants that successfully ended training activities related to agriculture and/or forestry 13,902; young farmers 1,750; increase in gross value added in supported holdings/enterprises from €254.12 million (ante health check) to €255.04 million (post health check); number of holdings/enterprises introducing new products and/or new techniques 855; value of agricultural production under recognized quality label/standards €8.1 million.

No further modifications were made to axis 1 during the 2009 RDP update.

Axis 1 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €1,515,637,000³



Following the 2009 RDP update, the total axis 1 budget is €1,515,637,000.

² A full list of the RDP measures can be found in Annex I.

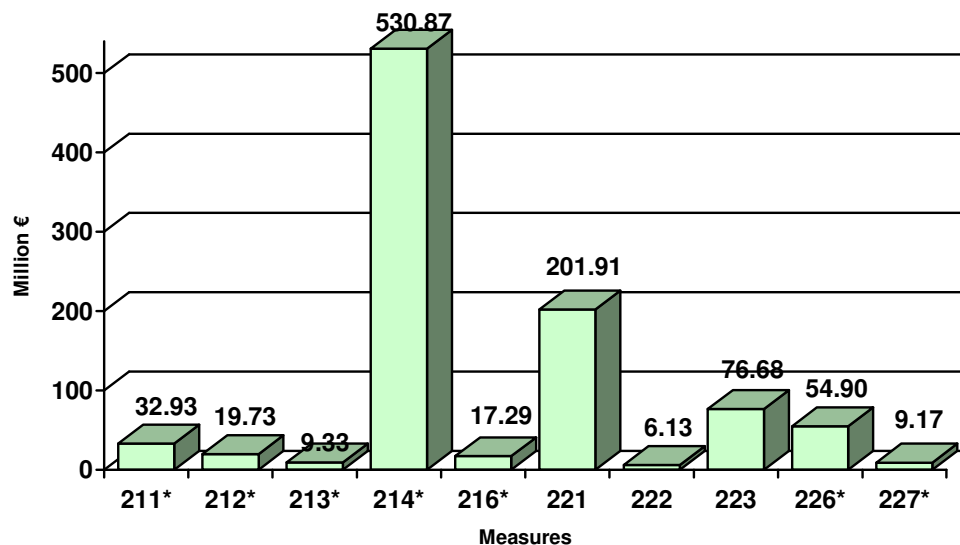
³ Please note that for measures 111, 112, 113, 124 and 1132 no private spending has been allocated.

Axis 2 objectives: Improving the environment and the countryside

The priorities of axis 2 are: 1) the conservation of biodiversity and the protection of agricultural and forestry areas with high environmental value 2) the protection of water resources 3) the reduction of greenhouse gasses 4) the safeguard of landscape and countryside 5) the protection of soil. The territorialisation of axis 2 will be related to the environmental problems emerged from the context analysis. In general, there will be a concentration towards Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, areas at risk of erosion or desertification, and Natura 2000 areas.

A number of key axis 2 targets were amended in 2009 to reflect the new funds and this led to an increase in anticipated outputs for areas under successful agricultural land management contributing to biodiversity (which is planned to rise from 217.12 ha to 237.05 ha); and areas under successful forestry land management contributing to: improved water quality (from 81,291 ha to 82,041 ha); improved soil quality (from 81,316 ha to 82,066 ha); climate change mitigation areas (from 81,291 ha to 82,041 ha); biodiversity (from 48,983 ha to 49,733 ha); and, decreasing land marginalisation and land abandonment (from -48,983 ha to -49,733 ha). For further information on specific result and output indicators please refer to the indicator tables in the RDP.

Axis 2 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €958,954,215⁴



Following the 2009 update of the RDP, the total budget allocation under axis 2 is €958,954,215, including an additional €25,571,667 (€15,343,000 EAFRD plus €10,228,667 national/regional public). Alterations to funding under the axis include €5.59 million of further EAFRD support for Natura 2000 payments, under 213, and €2.16 million of additional EAFRD support for agri-environmental payments, under measure 214.

Axis 3 objectives: Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy

The objectives of axis 3 are: 1) to improve the attractiveness of rural areas for population and enterprises 2) to create employment and income in rural areas 3) to support competences

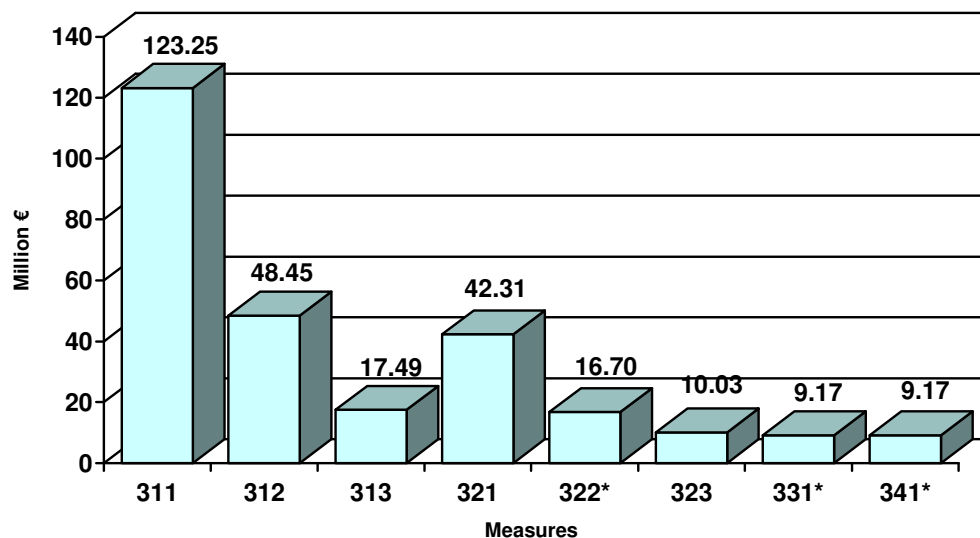
⁴ For measures 211, 212, 213, 214, 216, 226 and 227 no private spending has been allocated.

acquisition.

The main result targets include: increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses: €8.3 million; gross number of jobs created: 589; additional number of tourists: 900; population in rural areas with improved services 118,060; increase in internet penetration in rural areas: 2,000; number of participants that successfully ended a training activity 2,834.

Several axis 3 targets were amended in 2009 to reflect the new overall RDP priorities and this led to an increase in anticipated outputs including: an increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses from €7.24 million to 9.55 million; number of jobs created (from 829 to 1,001); the number of inhabitants in rural areas benefiting from improved services (which rose from 130,310 to 222,457); and, the number of persons connected to the Internet in rural areas (from 2,000 to 94,147). For further information on specific result and output indicators please refer to the indicator tables in the RDP.

Axis 3 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €276,579,766⁵



Following the 2009 update of the RDP, the new total budget allocation for axis 3 is €276,579,766, including an additional €25,408,333 (€15,245,000 EAFRD plus €10,163,333 national/regional public). Alterations to funding under the axis include further support for measure 321 (basic services for the economy and rural population), which received €15.25 million of new EAFRD contributions to meet the broadband priority.

Axis 4 objectives: Leader

The objectives of axis 4 (Leader) are: 1) to reinforce the participation of local communities in the definition of the rural development strategies 2) to fully use the endogenous resources of the rural areas in a sustainable way. The Local Action Groups (LAGs) implement the measures envisaged by axis 3 through the resources of measure 413 – Quality of life/diversification. The operations will have to comply with the conditions of the measures 312, 313, 321, 323 and 331, but it is possible to implement Leader actions, other than those foreseen in these measures, for the achievement of the

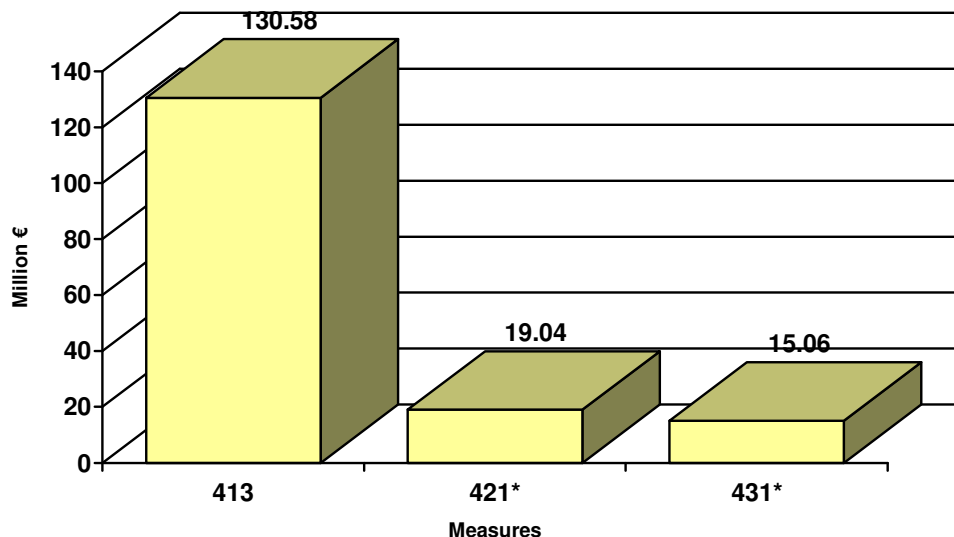
⁵ For measures 322, 331 and 341 no private spending has been allocated.

objectives of axis 3. In relation to the territorial priorities, those are concentrated in the rural areas C and D. Inter-territorial and trans-national cooperation will be also financed. The gross number of jobs created is 240 (result target).

The number of LAGs envisaged in the RDP areas as of March 2010 was 15.

No modifications were made to axis 4 during the 2009 RDP update.

Axis 4 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €164,675,318⁶



Following the 2009 revision of the RDP the new total budget allocation for axis 4 is €164,675,318.

Monitoring and evaluation strategy

The monitoring and evaluation process will be carried out according to the EC regulations and to the guidance set up in the NSP. Therefore, the Managing Authority will provide the Regional System of Monitoring (SRM) with the flow of data needed to analyse the quality of the programme implementation. The SRM includes the implementation of an updated and efficient system of monitoring, the preparation of annual reports and the establishment of an independent evaluation system. The monitoring system will use all the common indicators set up at Community level. Generally, there are only the CMEF indicators but in few cases there are additional regional ones. For Action 214 / 2 A «Preservation of biodiversity: public centres of conservation», output indicators are numbers of public centres of conservation, number of landraces and local varieties identified, number of "agricoltori custodi" (farmers caretakers), number of fields collection.

Communication and publicity

The communication plan addresses the potential beneficiaries: farmers, agribusiness and forestry companies, local authorities and other public bodies, professional and business organizations, consortia, non-profit associations, LAGs and their partners. The main actions foreseen are: a)

⁶ For measures 421 and 431 no private spending has been allocated.

Meetings, seminars and workshops; b) A specific Internet site, the Official Regional website and newsletter; c) Press releases and advertising (magazines and newspapers); d) Front office activities (at the regional level, to provide advice to local authorities and private operators on the use of funds) and local help desks; e) Promotional literature (brochures, flyers, posters, CD etc.); f) Common logos and slogans, billboards and plaques. In addition, specific information activities for the economic players in the fields covered by Axis 3, such as diversification, tourism, better use of rural areas resources, sustainable development in rural areas, quality of life, will be under measure 331. The results of the information activities are expected to be evaluated by collecting data from interviews and questionnaires.

Annex I – Measures

Measures selected by the RDP		Measures selected by the updated RDP	
Axis 1 - Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector	<i>Promoting knowledge and improving human potential</i>	111	Vocational training and information actions
		112	Setting up of young farmers
		113	Early retirement
		114	Use of advisory services
		115	Setting up of management, relief and advisory services
	<i>Restructuring and developing physical potential and promoting innovation</i>	121	Modernisation of agricultural holdings
		122	Improvement of the economic value of forests
		123	Adding value to agricultural and forestry products
		124	Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and in the forestry sector
		125	Infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry
		126	Restoring agricultural production potential
	<i>Quality of agricultural production and products</i>	131	Meeting standards based on Community legislation
		132	Participation of farmers in food quality schemes
		133	Information and promotion activities
	<i>Transitional measures</i>	141	Semi-subsistence farming
		142	Producer groups
143		Providing farm advisory and extension services	
Axis 2 - Improving the environment and the countryside	<i>Sustainable use of agricultural land</i>	211	Natural handicap payments to farmers in mountain areas
		212	Payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas
		213	Natura 2000 payments and payments linked to Directive 2000/60/EC
		214	Agri-environment payments
		215	Animal welfare payments
		216	Non-productive investments
	<i>Sustainable use of forestry land</i>	221	First afforestation of agricultural land
		222	First establishment of agroforestry systems on agricultural land
		223	First afforestation of non-agricultural land
		224	Natura 2000 payments
		225	Forest-environment payments
		226	Restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions
		227	Non-productive investments
		Axis 3 - Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy	<i>Diversify the rural economy</i>
312	Support for business creation and development		
313	Encouragement of tourism activities		
<i>Improve the quality of life in rural areas</i>	321		Basic services for the economy and rural population
	322		Village renewal and development
	323		Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
	331		Training and information
	341	Skills-acquisition and animation measure with a view to preparing and implementing a local development strategy	
Axis 4 - Leader	<i>Implementing local development strategies</i>	411	Competitiveness
		412	Environment/land management
		413	Quality of life/diversification
		421	Implementing cooperation projects
	431	Running the local action group, skills acquisition, animation	