

Rural Development Programme (RDP) of Saarland, Germany

Plan zur Entwicklung des Ländlichen Raums im Saarland – To be inserted¹
(Rural Development Plan in Saarland)

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<http://www.saarland.de/21198.htm>

Other useful links:

RDP - Rural Development Programme (RDP):

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/country-information/programming/en/programming_home_en.cfm

National Strategy Plan (NSP):

http://www.bmelv.de/clin_163/SharedDocs/Standardartikel/Landwirtschaft/Laendliche-Raeume/KonzepteStrategien/natStrategieplan.html?nn=310134

German National Rural Network:

<http://www.netzwerk-laendlicher-raum.de/>



Map of Saarland
(© European Commission)

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

Saarland is the smallest German region, apart from the metropolitan regions. The total area is 2,640 km². A total 1,043,167 inhabitants live in Saarland making one of the highest population densities of Germany (410 people/km²). GDP per capita in 2007 was €28,782, slightly below the national average of €29,465 per capita. In January 2010 the unemployment rate was 8.1%. Economic growth in the last decade is below the German average due to decline in the secondary sector (however, higher growth rates have recently been observed). The primary sector of coal and secondary sector of steel has seen drastic structural shifts in the last years. Agriculture and forestry make up 0.4% of total production, below the German average (1%). About 29% of the land is utilized for agriculture and there are around 1,900 agricultural holdings.

New and rewarding opportunities for increased employment in rural areas can be found in many diversification projects and in the tourism and recreation sector, however the rural areas generally continue to experience on-going structural and demographic changes such as population loss. Although in the vicinity of urban areas, the rural areas are mainly perceived as providing a high quality of life (good environmental quality, low cost of living, attractive landscape and residential locations).

¹ Latest updated RDP, following the adoption of the Health Check and European Recovery Package and additional funds from Modulation (i.e. adjustments between Pillar 1 (Agriculture) & 2 (Rural Development) of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)).

Following the CAP Health Check, the revised Saarland RDP highlights the “new challenges” facing agriculture and rural areas of climate change, renewable energies, water management, biodiversity and support for the dairy sector. The additional funds available will be used for a new measure 114 – “Training and use of advisory services in relation to climate change”; the existing measure 214 (Agri-environment payments), and; a new measure 215 – “Animal welfare payments”.

RDP strategic objectives

The main goal of the Saarland RDP is to stabilise the economy of the rural areas, as well as to strengthen it by creating new jobs. This is seen in the light of both the Lisbon strategy, emphasizing growth and employment, and the Gothenburg strategy emphasizing sustainability. Axis 1 aims to improve the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry; Axis 2 to improve the environment and landscape, and; Axis 3 concerns the quality of life and diversification of the economy. Axis 4 applies the Leader approach/methodology.

The Saarland RDP has five operational goals: 1) Stabilisation of agricultural incomes; 2) Improvement of human capacity (qualifications); 3) Improvement of land management; 4) Increased tourism-related services and an improvement in their quality, and; 5) Attractive infra-structure facilities in residential and tourism locations.

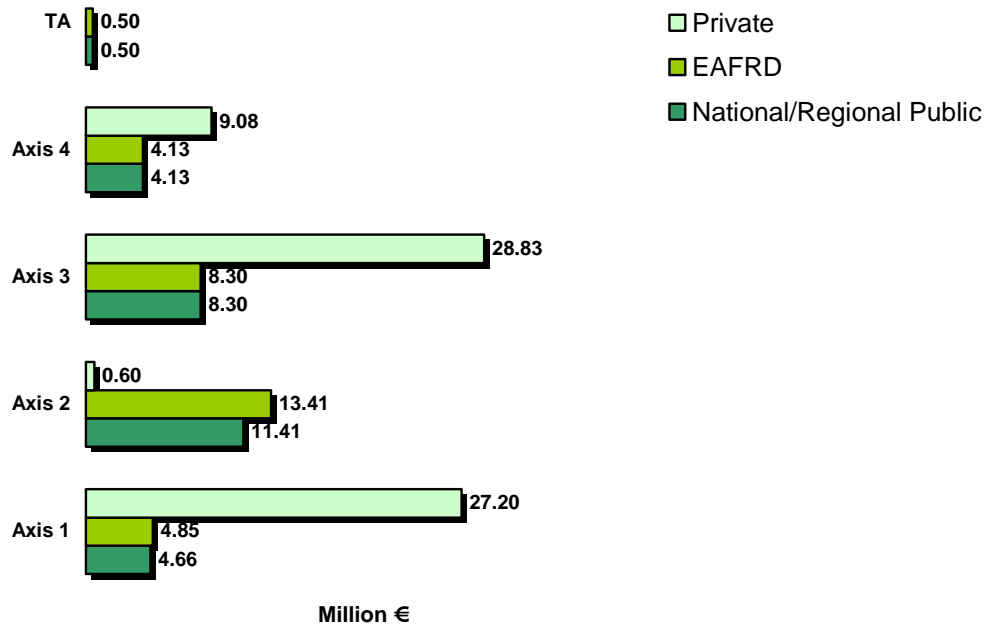
The RDP strategy has been updated with regards to the new challenges highlighted in the CAP Health Check. The existing measures already address these challenges to some extent, however the additional funds available will be used to reinforce these efforts by contributing to water management (36.5%), biodiversity conservation (36.5%), climate change mitigation and adaptation (9%), plus the restructuring of the dairy sector (18%).

Expected impact / outcomes of the policies

This relates to economic growth, productivity, reducing the loss of biodiversity, improved water quality and contributions towards fighting climate change. Further positive outcomes are expected in line with the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies.

Expected impacts from the RDP amendments made in 2010 are described separately for each amendment included within the axis information. Specific adaptations to input, output and result indicator targets for measures have been introduced. Detailed information on the indicators for individual measures is provided in the RDP’s indicator tables.

RDP budget breakdown by axis: Total expenditure (including national/regional + EAFRD + private funding) of €125,891,583



The RDP budget allocations are broadly divided into four main areas of expenditure, known as axes (namely: axis 1-Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector; axis 2-Improving the environment and the countryside; axis 3-Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy; and axis 4-Leader). Approximately 29% of the overall RDP budget including private expenditure in Saarland is allocated to axis 1 (€36.71 million); approximately 20% is allocated to axis 2 (€25.42 million), 36% to axis 3 (€45.43 million) and 14% to axis 4 (€17.33 million), with less than 1% available to fund Technical Assistance (€1 million).

Within axis 1, national/regional public funding represents approximately 13% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 13%, and; private funds 74%.

Within axis 2, national/regional public funding represents approximately 44% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 53%, and; private funds 2%.

Within axis 3, national/regional public funding represents approximately 18% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 18%, and; private funds 63%.

Within axis 4, national/regional public funding represents approximately 24% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 24%, and; private funds 52%.

Within technical assistance, national/regional public funding represents approximately 50% share of the technical assistance funding and EAFRD 50%.

Following amendments to the RDP, Saarland was allocated an additional €4.39 million from the EAFRD within the framework of the Health Check and European Economic Recovery Plan. This was reduced to €3.29 million through the deduction of €374,389 from the allocated EAFRD finances due to a correction in the distribution of the existing modulation money among the German *Länder* (Measure 121: decrease of €187,195; Measure 214: decrease of €187,194).

Additionally, €400,000 from the EAFRD has been transferred from measure 312 to measure 227, and €600,000 EAFRD from measure 312 to measure 311 to adjust funding to the level of demand recorded for the measures. Measure 341 has been taken out of the RDP and is now financed 100% nationally. Thus, €597,000 from the EAFRD was transferred from measure 341 to 322.

Axis Information²

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

In line with the German National Strategic Plan and the EC strategic guidelines, axis 1 aims to improve the competitiveness of the agriculture and forestry sectors and the related marketing of agricultural and forestry products. A key goal is to maintain or enhance the competitiveness of the remaining agricultural holdings with investments related to the welfare of animals and the quality of animal products. In relation to development of the forestry sector it is also important to: a) support the utilization of wood as a renewable resource for local and regional use, and; b) to create additional processing capacity. Consequently, measure 121 (Modernisation of agricultural holdings) takes up more than 80% of the axis 1 budget.

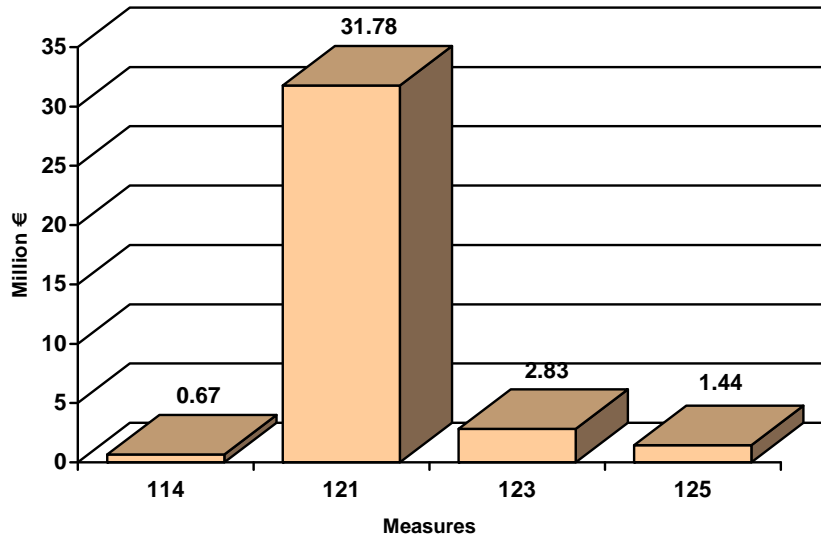
Also important are measures 123 (Adding value to agricultural and forestry products) and 125 (Infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry) which aim respectively to: a) increase the value added for agricultural products by 10%, and b) use improved infra-structure to support the on-going development and adaptation of the agricultural and forestry industries.

A new measure 114 – “Use of farm advisory services” - is introduced in the amended RDP. It is anticipated that the availability of comprehensive, professional environmental advisory services will improve the sensitivity of farmers to climate change, biodiversity, NATURA 2000, the Water Framework Directive and the uptake of agri-environment measures (measure 214). Consequently the ecological status of water, air, soil, flora and fauna should improve.

Following amendment of the RDP, the aid intensity of 25% now applies to all farmers participating in measure 121, regardless of the age of the applying farmer. For further information on specific result indicators please refer to the indicator tables in the RDP programme.

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

Axis 1 budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €36,713,096)



Following the RDP amendments in 2010, the total budget amount for axis 1 was increased to €36,713,096, which includes an additional €0.29 million from the EAFRD budget. The additional funds were allocated to measure 114 and targeted at the use of agricultural advisory services in relation to climate change as noted above.

Axis 2 objectives: Improving the environment and the countryside

The aim of axis 2 is to promote agriculture and forestry working more in harmony with the environment and nature protection. There is particular emphasis in the Saarland RDP upon conserving the varied and attractive landscape of the region, as well as securing biodiversity, natural living conditions and important nature areas in a good and cost efficient manner through tailored land management schemes.

The majority (88.2%) of axis 2 funds are therefore allocated to measure 214 (Agri-environment payments) with targets for organic farming, biodiversity, high nature value farmland, water and soil quality on a total of 21,000 ha. Measure 227 (Non-productive investments) accounts for 7.5% of the axis 2 funds.

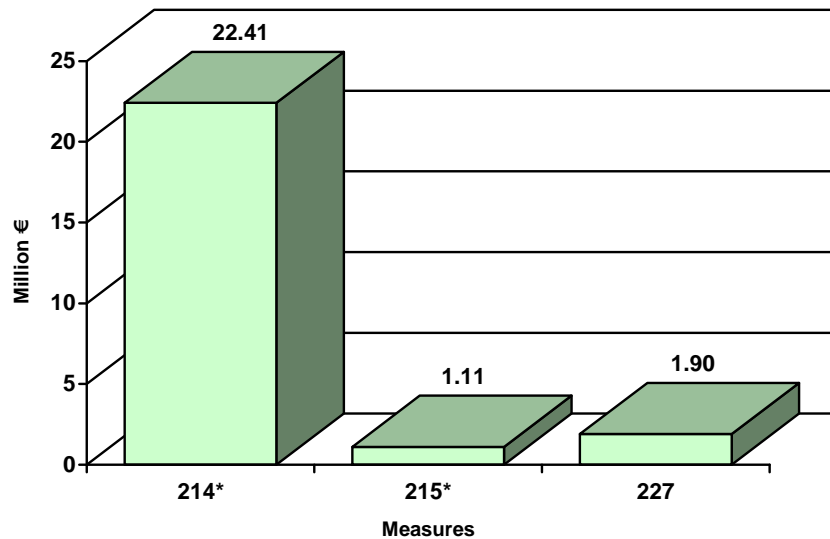
Encouraging the conversion of “whole farms” from conventional to organic farming is a special priority in Saarland. The amended RDP therefore includes an increased payment rate for the first two years of organic conversion under sub-measure 214(1) – “Introduction of organic farming”. This change is targeted particularly at the creation of single, contiguous areas under organic management. Large areas under continuous organic management will contribute more effectively to achieving the positive effects upon biodiversity, soil, surface and ground water, climate change and air that are highlighted by the “new challenges” of the CAP Health Check.

Following the RDP amendments, the periods of commitment for sub-measures 214(1) and 214(2) – “Extensive use of permanent grassland with maximal 1.4 LU/ha of main feeding

area” - is prolonged for two years for management agreements starting from 2007 onwards resulting in a commitment period of up to 7 years. This change aims to enhance the positive effects of both sub-measures, including the preservation of resources; reduced agro-chemical inputs; increased biodiversity, and; long-term impacts upon the soil, surface and ground water, climate and air.

Funding for a new measure 215 – “Summer grazing of cattle” - aims to enhance animal welfare and environmental performance in the dairy sector. Large, modern dairy farms in Saarland rarely graze their animals due to economic reasons and rely instead upon the automation of feeding and milking technologies. The new measure aims to improve animal welfare by enabling dairy cows to display their typical behavioural patterns and therefore enjoy a better well-being. At the same time the measure will contribute to the preservation of landscape and more extensive agriculture.

Axis 2 budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €25,420,978³



Following the RDP amendments in 2010, the total budget amount for axis 2 was increased to €25,420,978 which includes an additional €3.0 million from the EAFRD budget.

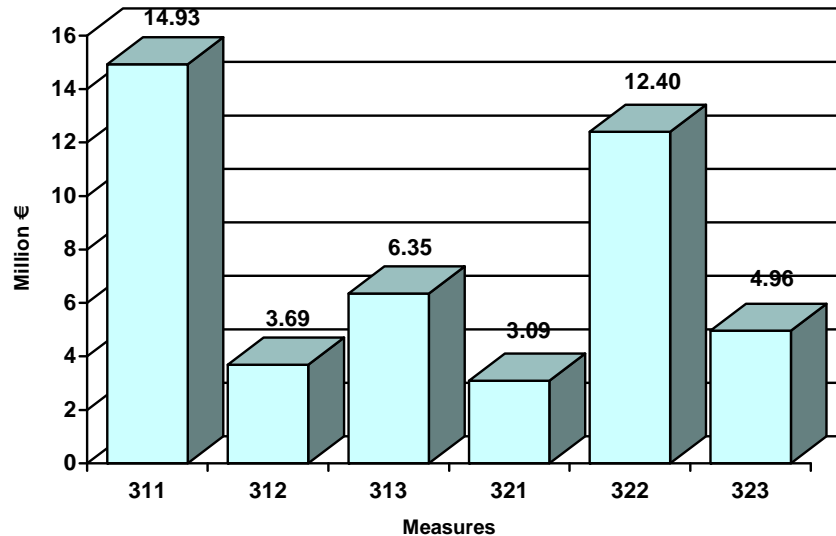
Axis 3 objectives: Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy

Recent demographic changes in the rural areas of Saarland have been alarming and the axis 3 measures of the RDP aim to rebuild and promote villages in the region as more viable living and working areas. In line with the Lisbon strategy for growth and employment the key issue is to stabilize and strengthen the rural economy and to provide help to farmers looking for alternative income sources. There are a total of 6 measures under axis 3, including measure 311 (Diversification into non-agricultural activities) with an expected 10% increase in non-

³ For measures 214 and 215 no private spending has been allocated.

agricultural businesses; measure 312 (Support for business creation and development) which aims to create 55 new jobs via support for the tourism industry, encouragement of tourism activities, basic service facilities for the rural businesses and population, village renewal and development (expected to benefit half of the rural population), and preservation and improvement of the rural heritage.

Axis 3 budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €45,427,506



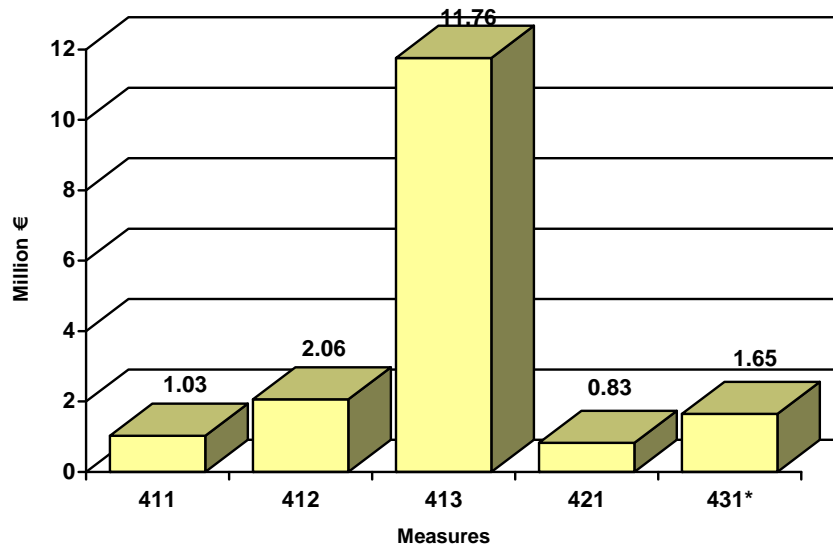
Axis 4 objectives: Leader

The Leader approach aims to contribute to an improvement in the situation of the rural areas by enhancing local governance and decision-making through the establishment of local public-private partnerships known as Local Action Groups (LAGs). The LAGs will develop and implement strategies for exploiting the endogenous development potential of the rural areas, including possibilities for innovation, growth and jobs as foreseen in the Lisbon Strategy. With almost 14% of the RDP funds allocated to axis 4, Saarland is the number 1 region in Germany regarding financial allocations to the Leader approach.

Specific measures in axis 4 relate to implementation of local development strategies in the areas of competitiveness, environmental protection, quality of life and diversification - as well as measures for cross-border and transnational co-operation, running costs, competence development and sensitization.

The number of LAGs operational in the Saarland area as of March 2010 was three.

Axis 4 budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €17,326,003⁴



No modifications were made to axis 4 during the 2010 RDP update.

Monitoring and evaluation strategy

The Ministry of Economics and Science is co-ordinating the monitoring and evaluation of the Saarland RDP and delivers yearly reports about the programme progress. All procedures are based upon the guidance contained in the EU's Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) and aims to measure the progress and performance of the programme against both common (EU-wide) and a number of programme specific output, result and impact indicators which have been identified for the measures.

A monitoring committee is established, chaired by the Ministry of Economics and Science and composed as a partnership including internal and external authorities and business, social and environmental partners.

Evaluation of the RDP will be undertaken by independent evaluators in the form of the ex-ante, mid-term and the ex-post evaluations. The aim of the evaluation is to assess the extent of the use of the funds, the effect and efficiency of the programme focus as well as the socio-economic impacts in accordance with the priorities of the EU. In this way the quality, efficiency and impact of the Saarland RDP will be improved.

⁴ For measure 431 no private spending has been allocated.

Communication and publicity

The communication strategy adopted to support the Saarland RDP aims to: 1) secure goal-oriented and efficient use of funding through information about the content and the possibilities the RDP provides; 2) inform about the role of EU in relation to the programme; 3) activate and involve actors in rural areas; 4) create networks between different beneficiaries of support; 5) create acceptance for the support for rural areas, and; 6) inform about the results of the measures.

The communication plan is divided into 4 phases including a planning phase, a starting phase, an implementation phase and a phase focusing on results. The main target groups are the potential beneficiaries of support, business unions, economic and social partners, gender equality institutions, non-governmental organisations and environmental organisations. The main communication tools and actions are press releases, internet, brochures and information folders, workshops and network services. Because of the small size of the Saarland area, an adequate level of information dissemination is relatively easy to achieve.

Annex I – Measures

Measures selected by the RDP	Measures selected by the updated RDP
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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 EU 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 - The quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy	<i>Diversify the rural economy</i>	311	Diversification into non-agricultural activities
		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 LAG, skills acquisition, animation