

Rural Development Programme (RDP) of Hexagone, France

Le Programme de Développement Rural Hexagone ¹

(Hexagone Rural Development Programme)

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Other useful links:

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<http://agriculture.gouv.fr/pac-developpement-rural-feader>

National Strategy Plan (NSP):

<http://agriculture.gouv.fr/des-orientations-communautaires>

French National Rural Network (NRN):

<http://www.reseaurural.fr/>



Map of France

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General socio-economic situation in rural areas in mainland France

The Rural Development Programme of the mainland area covers the 21 French metropolitan regions, Corsica excepted, namely:

- Alsace,
- Auvergne,
- Aquitaine,
- Basse-Normandie,
- Bourgogne,
- Bretagne,
- Centre,
- Champagne-Ardenne,
- Franche-Comté,
- Haute-Normandie,
- Ile-de-France,
- Languedoc-Roussillon,
- Limousin,
- Lorraine,
- Midi-Pyrénées,
- Nord-Pas-de-Calais,
- Pays de la Loire,
- Picardie,
- Poitou-Charentes,
- Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur,
- Rhône-Alpes

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

The Hexagone entity represents a 543.126 km² area with a population of 60,43 million inhabitants. Located in western Europe (Lat: 48°50'N, Long: 002°19'E), bordering Spain, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Belgium, the rural areas of the Hexagone are divided into predominantly rural areas and peri-urban areas. The total rural area accounts for 22.8 million inhabitants (about 39% of the population) including 10.5 million in the predominantly rural areas (covering 59% of the territory) and 12.3 million in the peri-urban areas (over 33% of the territory). GDP per capita in the Hexagone area is above the national average and represents around 114% of the EU27 average. The unemployment rate was 9.4% in 2005. The tertiary sector is the largest provider of employment and value added in the rural areas. Industrial enterprises, mainly SMEs focused on traditional products, play a pivotal role in the rural economy. Tourism is well developed in rural areas.

Main challenges for rural areas highlighted by the RDP include high unemployment rate, difficulties to export products, risk of agricultural decay in less-favoured areas, insufficient modernisation of the forestry sector, natural hazards (fires and storms), low quality of water and insufficient protection of biodiversity. The RDP also highlights a number of inequalities between regions and a risk of social segregation. On the other hand, strengths of rural areas include an economically important agricultural and foodstuff sector, a demographic renewal with a dense tissue of service enterprises and numerous candidates to set up as farmers, abundant forest and water resources, an important biodiversity, a rich and diversified natural and cultural heritage and a general attractiveness.

RDP strategic objectives

The French rural development policy fundamental objective is to remedy the rural territories weaknesses by enhancing their strengths on an economic, social and environmental point of view:

- to develop a competitive economy and create jobs in the primary sector (agriculture and forestry), secondary sector (in particular agro-food industries and forest industries) and tertiary sector (services and tourism);
- to promote a territorial development by and for the populations and stakeholders of rural areas, taking into account their diversity as a whole as an asset, and ensuring a sustainable management of their cultural heritage;
- to ensure a sustainable management of natural resources, in particular with regard to water and biodiversity.

In accordance with the National Strategy Plan, the French Hexagone RDP three major objectives are:

- 1) to improve the competitiveness of the agriculture, forest and foodstuff sectors;
- 2) to preserve a diversified quality agricultural and forest environment, respecting a balance between human activities and conservation of natural resources,
- 3) to maintain and develop the economic attractiveness of rural areas in order to position them as development poles, relying on the diversity of their resources, activities and actors.

These objectives favour interventions to preserve agricultural activity in less-favoured areas; restructure and modernize the primary sector; promote innovation and entrepreneurship; promote an integrated approach between rural development axes, measures and programmes; and promote the Leader approach in rural communities.

The Hexagone area is characterized by the diversity of its 21 constituting regional contexts. Paradoxically its unity is probably to be found, behind this diversity, in the heritage left by the inter-regional exchanges that have shaped, and are still shaping the diverse regional economic identities. In order to take into account this complexity the French Hexagone RDP is based upon a two-level

planning architecture:

- at national level, a common basis of measures for the whole Hexagone area: it includes all measures that, for equity and solidarity reasons, must be identical over the whole programming area (natural handicaps payments, setting up of young farmers, national “*châblis*” plan to restore forestry potential damaged by the 1999 windstorms, access to forests to make the most of the wood resource, improvement of the economic value of forests and general in character agri-environmental payments),
- at regional level, a specific part for each of the 21 regions of the Hexagone area: established by the *Préfet de Région* in partnership with all local actors concerned this part of the planning exercise – called Regional Document for Rural Development (“*Documents Régionaux de Développement Rural: DRDRs*”) – allows to adapt the rural development policy to each specified regional context. This adaptation can be either quantitative (e.g., % of budget allocated to a specific objective) or qualitative (targeting specific issues at stake). Any DRDR relies first on a state of art, then on a strategy and a set of measures and its implementation is subject to a regular monitoring procedure associating the whole partnership through an *ad hoc* committee.

Following the CAP Health Check, and in recognition of the greater emphasis now being given to the “new challenges” facing agriculture and rural areas, the RDP was revised in 2009 to place additional emphasis on activities to tackle environmental issues namely water management, biodiversity, renewable energies climate change. As a result, greater strategic priority is being given through existing measures to initiatives that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, renewable energies (Axis 1), water and soil management and preservation of biodiversity (Axis 2). Furthermore, the revised RDP further supports activities to improve connectivity in rural areas through improved access to broadband infrastructure and for producers to respond to new market conditions (Axis 3).

Expected impact / outcomes of the policies

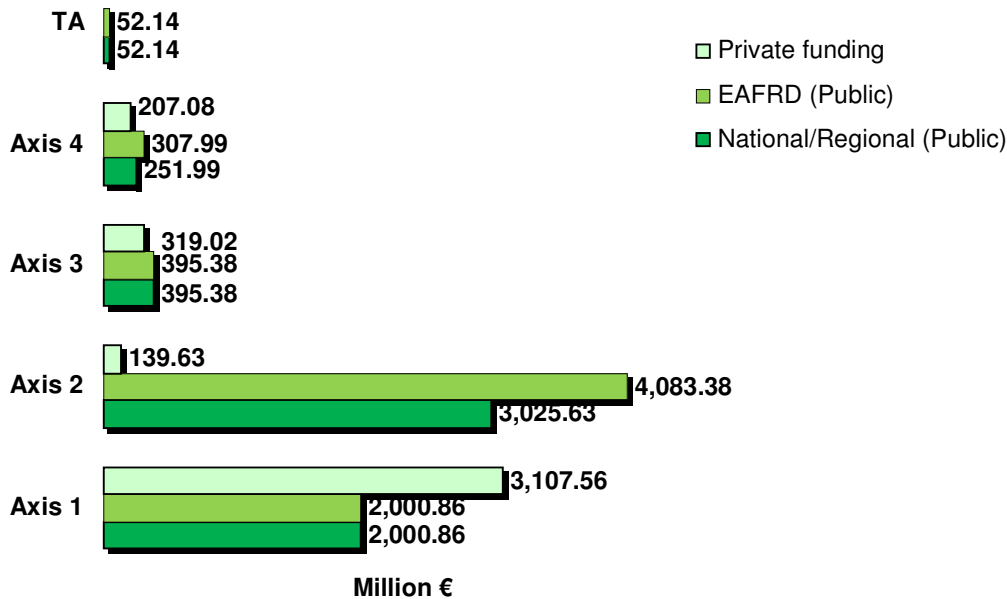
Expected impacts of the French (Hexagone) RDP will be assessed according to community impact indicators, to measure the levels reached in terms of:

- increased value and employment opportunities in the primary, secondary and tertiary sector,
- improved labour productivity in the agriculture, foodstuff and forestry sectors,
- stopped biodiversity decline (measured through indices of birds populations linked to agricultural environments),
- maintained high natural value and forested areas,
- improved water quality,
- contribution to fight against climate change, through renewable energy development.

More specifically, the French Hexagone RDP also includes impact indicators such as inter-generation renewal (maintained percentage of young farmers), maintenance of agricultural activities in less favoured areas (+1,3% of holdings in mountainous areas), increased numbers of agri-environmental measures contracted by farmers in Natura 2000 sites (+652%), increased UAA under organic farming (+200%).

Specific modifications of expected impacts have been made after the CAP Health Check. They include new expected impacts such as improved energy use efficiency, reduced CO² release and substituted fossil with renewable sources of energy using forest and agricultural biomass (measures 121, 125); reduced water pollution and enhanced conservation of multi-species vegetation types and natural meadows through soil conservation practices, extensive grazing and integrated and organic farming (measure 214); increased access to broadband in rural areas (measure 321).

RDP budget breakdown by axis: Total expenditure (including national/regional + EAFRD + private funding) of €16,339,045,161²



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 44% of the updated RDP budget in the Hexagone area is allocated to Axis 1 (€7,109.28 million), approximately 44% is allocated to Axis 2 (€7,248.64 million³), 6.8% to Axis 3 (€1,109.77 million) and 4.7% to Axis 4 (€767.06 million), with more than 0.6% available to fund Technical Assistance (€104.29 million).

Within Axis 1, national/regional public funding represents approximately 28% share of the axis funding, EAFRD 28% and private funds 44%.

Within Axis 2, national/regional public funding represents approximately 42% share of the axis funding, EAFRD 56% and private funds 2%.

Within Axis 3, national/regional public funding represents approximately 36% share of the axis funding, EAFRD 36% and private funds 29%.

Within Axis 4, national/regional public funding represents approximately 33% share of the axis funding, EAFRD 40% and private funds 27%.

Within technical assistance, national/regional public funding represents approximately 50% share of

² NB: for all budget figures presented in this document, eventual national complementary funding under the form of State Aids according to Title VIII of EC Reg. 1698/2005 are not taken into account.

³ NB: the amounts mentioned in this document for axis 2 are those exposed in the French revised RDP, taking into account specific co-financing rates for some measures of the axis 2. They differ slightly from amounts calculated with the SFC, which applies the same co-financing rate for all axes.

the technical assistance funding and EAFRD 50%.

As a consequence of the 2009 RDP amendments, the Hexagone area has been assigned a total of €1,453,800,339⁴ (including €970,421,000 EAFRD and €483,379,339 of regional/national public funds) to support “new challenges” (encourage the efficient usage of a water supply that is constantly diminishing, contribute to the restoration of a good quality water supply, contribute to the preservation of biodiversity and landscapes, protect agricultural land and soils, promote efficient energy use and fight against climate change) and support expansion of broadband infrastructure in rural areas. In addition, funds previously allocated to supporting the Common Market Organisation (CMO) for the wine sector are being reallocated from the first to the second pillar (€141,222,000).

Axis Information⁴

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

Main priorities are placed first on modernisation of agricultural holdings, with measure 121 accounting for 45% of the total Axis 1 budget. In addition, 25% is targeted to improve the added value of agricultural and forest products (measure 123) and 22% to support the establishment of young farmers (measure 112).

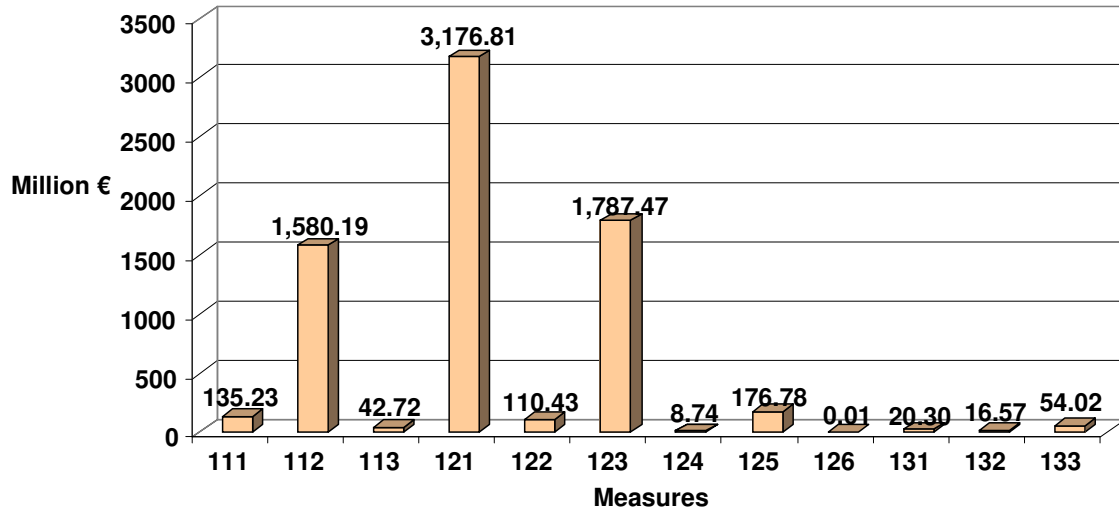
Result targets for Axis 1 include: number of participants successfully completing training activities (292 000), young farmers set up (50.000), holdings participating in food quality schemes (4300), and introducing new products an/or new techniques (10.000) ; increased value added of supported holdings (+10% for agricultural holdings, +2% for foodstuff industry), and value of agricultural production under recognised quality standards (€430 million, 1% of agricultural production).

The table below provides an indication of the RDP's axis 1 objectives.

Strategic objectives	Specific objectives
Develop the capacity of innovation and adaptation of the agro-food production chain workers	- Encourage innovation and adaptation of the agro-food production chain workers to the new contexts
Integrate the innovation and quality dimensions to agricultural and agro-food production	- Promote quality and innovation - Support foodstuff industries
Promote modernised, energy efficient and transmissible agricultural production units	- Ensure inter-generation renewal (i.e. support the setting up of young farmers and stabilise the profession) - Modernise the exploitations
Encourage the entrepreneurship of agricultural and forestry businesses and enhance inter-generation renewal	- Encourage the adaptation of agricultural holdings to their economic and environmental context
Improve the competitiveness of the forestry and wood production chain	- Improve the mobilisation and valorisation of the forest and wood resources

⁴ 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 €7,109,279,622⁵



Following the amendments to the RDP as a result of the Health Check, the total budget amount for axis 1 is €7,109,279,622 including an additional €53,322,000 (€26,661,000 EAFRD + €26,661,000 national/regional public). Specific modifications have been made to result indicators related to measures 121 and 125 in order to address specifically energetic efficiency (243 operations financially supported) and production of renewable energy from forest and agricultural biomass (51 operations financially supported).

Axis 2 objectives: Improving the environment and the countryside

The emphasis of this axis is on agri-environment payments (measure 214; 42% of total Axis 2 budget), natural handicaps payment to farmers in mountainous areas (measure 211, 41%). Other important measures are payments to farmers in other areas subject to permanent handicaps (measure 212; 8%) and restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions (measure 226; 8%).

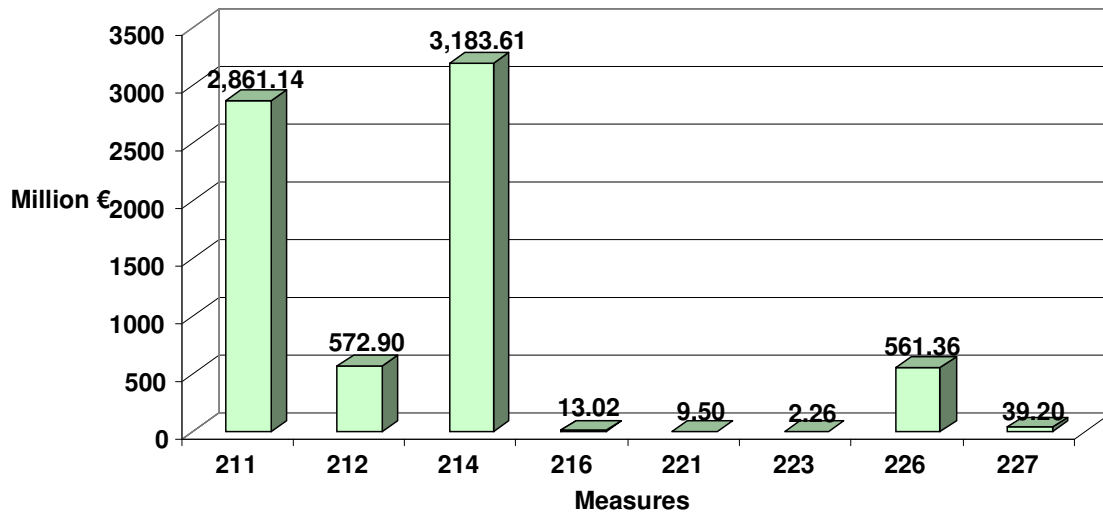
Result targets for Axis 2 include good management of areas contributing to address key environmental challenges relating to biodiversity in High Nature Values areas (4 117 000 ha), water quality (4 117 000 ha), climate change (420 000 ha), soil quality (3 747 000 ha), land marginalisation and abandonment of agricultural activities (7 402 000 ha).

⁵ Please note that for measures 114, 115, 141, 142 and 143 no private spending has been allocated.

The table below provides an indication of the RDP's axis 2 objectives.

Strategic objectives	Specific objectives
Promote well-balanced land use	- Ensure continued agricultural activities in less-favoured areas
Preserve natural resources through sustainable agriculture practices, in particular in order to reach the Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive objectives	- Improve sustainable agricultural practices - Protect remarkable biodiversity in Natura 2000 network - Implement actions targeted to preservation and restoration of water quality - Protect soils - Reduce GHG emissions
Promote forest as an instrument for sustainable land management	- Ensure sustainable production - Prevent natural risks

Axis 2 budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €7,242,983,516⁶



Following the CAP Health Check revision, more emphasis is put on Axis 2 with an additional allocation of €7.242.983 (94% of the new funds), through measure 214. In particular, major importance is given to specific measures addressing biodiversity and water quality related challenges, including support to organic farming and extensive grazing. As a consequence, new result targets have been added such as 600.000 ha converted to organic farming for a global objective (including non HC operations) of 6% of the total UAA subject to organic farming, and 3.200.000 ha under contract for extensive grazing.

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

The main priorities of Axis 3 are placed on conservation and enhancement of rural heritage (measure 323, 28% of total axis 3 budget), development of services for the economy and rural population (measure 321, 22%), diversification into non-agricultural activities (measure 311, 18%)

⁶ For measures 213, 215, 222, 224 and 225 no private spending has been allocated.

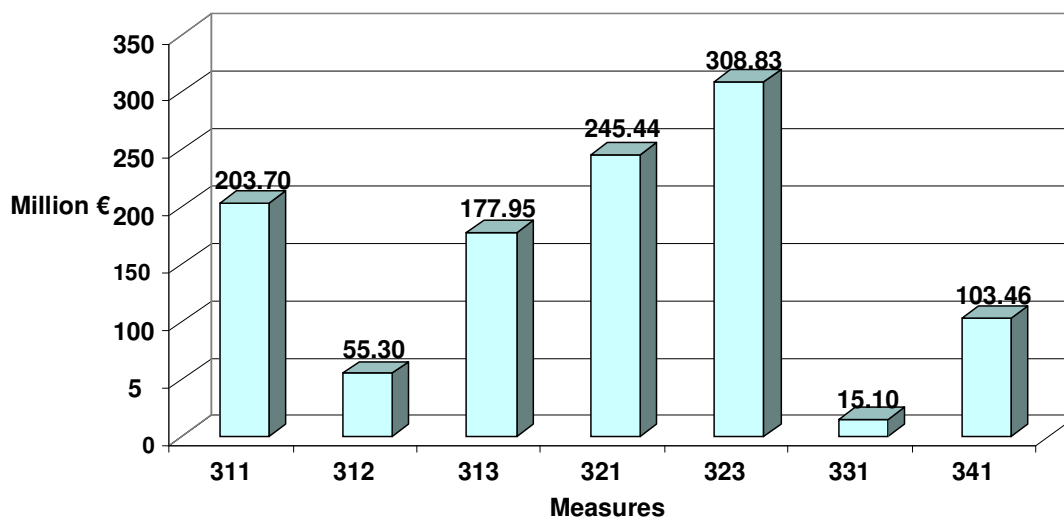
and encouragement of tourism activities (measure 313, 16%).

Result targets for axis 3 include a 40M € increase in the non-agricultural value added of subsidised SMEs, 2000 gross employment creation, a 700.000 increase in the number of touristic visits, a target of 320.000 inhabitants benefiting from improved services, an increase in internet coverage of rural areas and 58.400 people attending training courses up to satisfactory completion.

The table below provides an indication of the RDP's axis 3 objectives.

Strategic objectives	Specific objectives
Maintain and develop economic activities and support employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversify activities of agricultural holdings beyond their production role - Maintain and develop micro-enterprises - Maintain and develop tourism related activities - Ensure favourable environment to economic activities
Develop and manage residential attractiveness for populations, taking account of their diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and adapt services to populations
Manage and make the most of rural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preserve and make the most of natural heritage - Make the most of cultural heritage
Support local stakeholders' organisation through integrated and shared territorial projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Animate territories - Elaborate territorial projects - Train professional stakeholders

Axis 3 budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €1,109,773,634⁷



⁷ For measure 322 no private spending has been allocated.

Following the CAP Health Check, an additional €60,000 was allocated to measure 321 in order to improve broadband coverage (creating and improving infrastructures) in rural areas (5 supported operations). These funds will be allocated after a call for project, complementarily with other French development programme funds, to help reach to the global objective of 100% broadband coverage in rural areas in 2012 (currently 99%).

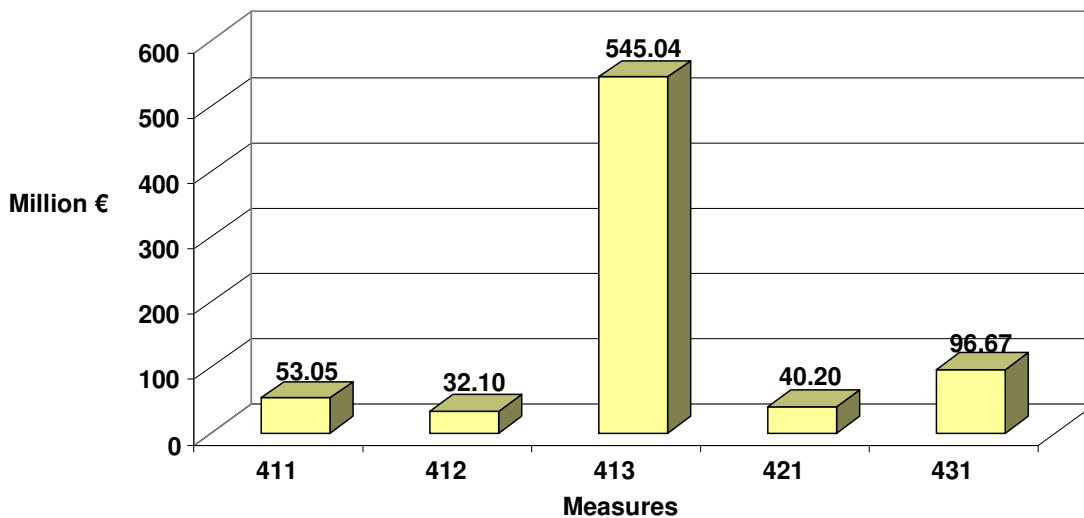
Axis 4 objectives: Leader

The main priority under Axis 4 is support for local development strategies that promote quality of life actions and diversification of rural activities (measure 413, representing 71% of total axis 4). Other support is targeted at running the LAGs, skills acquisition and animation (measure 431, 13%) and competitiveness (measure 411, 7%).

Strategic objectives	Specific objectives
Enhance the potential for local development	- Implement local strategies based on a partnership, integrated and targeted approach
Improve territorial governance	- Ensure the elaboration and animation of local strategies, in consistency with rural development as a whole

No modifications were made to Axis 4 during the 2009 RDP updating.

Axis 4 budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €767,063,636⁸



Monitoring and evaluation strategy

Monitoring and evaluation of the RDP is 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 common indicators relating to the baseline situation plus the subsequent

⁸ For axis 4 private spending has been allocated to all measures.

inputs, outputs, impacts and results of the RDP.

To track the achievement of the specific Hexagonal priorities of the programme, some specific indicators complement the CMEF ones, for instance. Some of the CMEF indicators have also been adjusted to better suit the programme priorities. For example, 'Age structure in agriculture' is used instead of 'Number of assisted young farmers'. All measures and activities will be subject to evaluation during the three phases of the programme period (ex-ante, mid-term and ex-post).

Communication and publicity

In accordance with the principles of transparency, equality and governance a single, standardised communication plan has been designed to raise awareness of the EU and the objectives, resources and results of relevant actions taken by national public authorities. This communication plan incorporates the Hexagone RDP, the Structural Funds implementation programme plus other common communication actions for other European funds carried out in the region. The communication plan has an estimated budget of €6 million from the EAFRD.

The Delegation to Information and Communication (DICOM), specialised in communication within the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries, Rurality and Territorial management, supports the implementation of the communication plan via internet, meetings, press conferences, brochures and other information materials. The National Rural Network also plays a major role in communication and publicity, ensuring connections and exchange among various rural development actors through seminars and workshops.

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 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 - 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
Axis 4 - Leader	<i>Implementing local development strategies</i>	341	Skills-acquisition and animation measure with a view to preparing and implementing a local development strategy
		411	Competitiveness
		412	Environment/land management
		413	Quality of life/diversification
		421	Implementing cooperation projects
431	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage		