

Rural Development Programme (RDP) of Abruzzo, Italy

**Programma di sviluppo rurale 2007-2013–
2007IT06RPO001¹**
(Rural Development Programme for Abruzzo
2007-2013)

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Rural Development Programme (RDP):
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/country-
information/programming/en/programming_home_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/country-information/programming/en/programming_home_en.cfm)

National Strategy Plan (NSP):
<http://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/1145>

Italian National Rural Network (NRN):
<http://www.reterurale.it>



Map of Abruzzo
(© European Commission)

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

Abruzzo, located in southern Italy, has an area of 10,794 km² and 1,299,272 inhabitants (82% in rural areas). According to the RDP of November 2008, in the 1990s, Abruzzo left the “convergence” regions, but its GDP per capita is still 90.8% of the average in the EU-25 and employment rate 43.5% in 2004. Agriculture and forestry account for 3.9% of the Gross Value Added (GVA). 78,687 farms with 23,000 employees operate 432,000 ha of Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) (42% arable, 38.5% pasture, 19% permanent crops). Holdings have shrunk by 22% (-17% of UAA) since 2000 and sectoral employment is declining.

The RDP indicates that the agricultural and agri-food sectors suffer from fragmentation of production systems, low levels of cooperation amongst the various stakeholders, lack in distribution and market promotion, and are not sufficiently counterbalanced by a wide range of high quality products. Forestry is fundamental for biodiversity and maintenance of the soil and represents an economic opportunity. Hydro-geological risks and scarcity of infrastructure and services are problems in the areas D and C (inner hills). Intensive livestock farming contributed to worsen the environmental conditions in some areas B, but water quality is not critical and Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ) account for only 1.1% of the territory.

RDP strategic objectives

Within the framework of the priorities defined at EU and National level, the RDP strategy focuses on three general objectives:

- creating a strong agri-food and forestry sector through improved knowledge, modernization,

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

innovation, consolidation of the quality and a closer integration in the agri-food and forestry production chains;

- protecting and enhancing natural resources and landscape in rural areas through actions concerning some key priorities: biodiversity, development of agricultural and forestry systems with high natural value and preservation of traditional agricultural landscape, sustainable water management and action on climate change;
- improving the quality of life in rural areas, promoting diversification of the economic activities and creation of jobs through development of skills and expertise and promotion of new business (paying attention to the needs of women, youth and older workers) and improvement of villages (services and renovation of buildings for social, touristic, and cultural activities).

Following the CAP Health Check, 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 further emphasis on all issues, including the availability of broadband services in rural areas. The modifications do not concern the introduction of new priorities but the reinforcement and/or the alteration of existing ones as well as the introduction of new operations to meet any such issues.

Taking into account the additional financing provided by the CAP Health Check, the European Economic Recovery Package and Modulation/CMO Wine, greater strategic priority is given to initiatives that contribute to biodiversity (which received 64% of the additional funds) and broadband infrastructure in rural areas (36%).

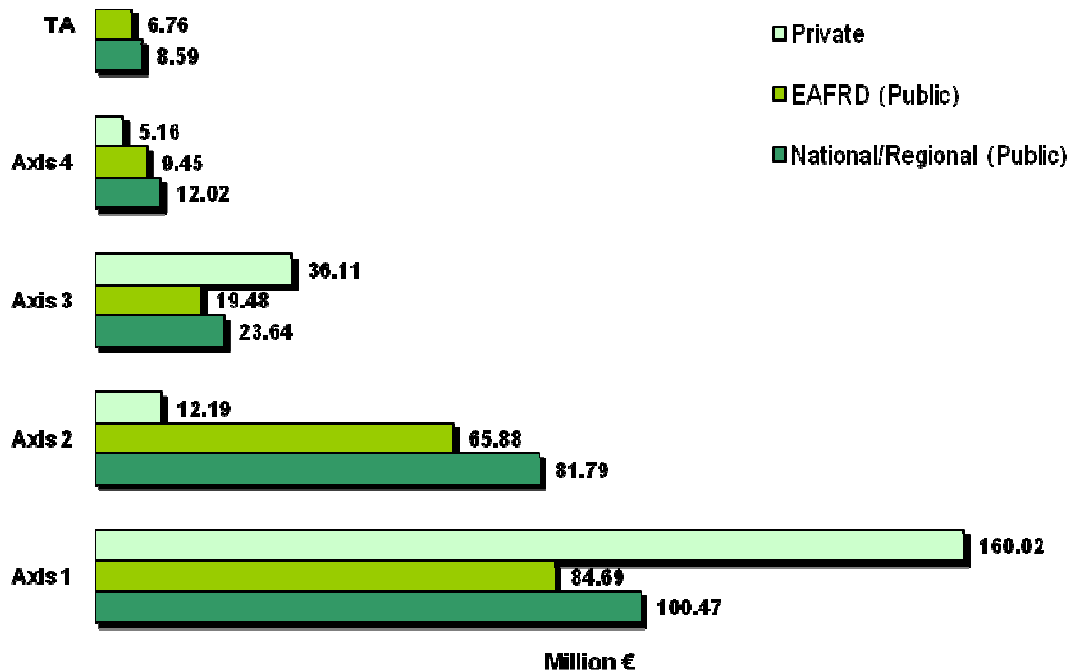
Expected impact / outcomes of the policies

The main targets for 2015 are:

- Economic growth: Gross additional value added: €268.9 million, +18.5% (Agriforestry €130.9 million, Agri-food €103.2 million)
- Employment creation: Net additional Full Term Employment (FTE) jobs created 0, as a result of a decrease in Agriforestry (-1,800 FTE), and an improvement in the Agri-food sector (+1,800)
- Labour productivity: Change in gross added value per labour unit (GVA/FTE) +20.9%
- Reversing biodiversity decline: Change of biodiversity trend (% of selected farmland birds population) +5%
- Maintenance of high natural value farming and forestry areas: Change in high nature area +100% (from 2.75 to 5.50%)
- Improvement in water: Change in gross nutrient balance: -30% (Nitrogen (N) from 11 to 7 kg/Ha, Phosphorus (P) from 0.3 to 0.2 kg/Ha)
- Contribution to combating climate change: Increase in production of renewable energy +1,441 TOE

Specific modifications to impact indicators have been made to take account of the alterations to the RDP, as a result of the CAP Health Check, the European Recovery Package and Modulation of certain funds between Pillar 1 and 2 of the CAP to be targeted at biodiversity by improving the management of Natura 2000 sites and improving broadband connectivity in especially C and D rural areas of the region. Detailed information on impact indicators for individual measures is provided in the RDP indicator tables.

RDP budget breakdown by axis: Total expenditure (including national/regional + EAFRD + private funding) of €626,256,843



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 55% of the updated RDP budget in Abruzzo is allocated to axis 1 (€345,17 million); approximately 26% is allocated to axis 2 (€159.87 million), 13% to axis 3 (€79.23 million) and 4% to axis 4 (€26.63 million), with 2% available to fund technical assistance (€15.36 million).

Within axis 1, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 29% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 25%; and private funds 46%.

Within axis 2, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 51% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 41%; and private funds 8%.

Within axis 3, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 30% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 25% and private funds 45%.

Within axis 4, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 45% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 35%; and private funds 20%.

Within technical assistance, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 56% share of the technical assistance funding and EAFRD 44%.

As a consequence of the 2009 RDP amendments, the Abruzzo region has been assigned a total of €28,901,666 (including €17,341,000 EAFRD and €11,560,666 of regional/national public funds). Out of the additional EAFRD contribution, €5,282,000 is aimed at addressing new challenges in rural areas and improved broadband infrastructure. Furthermore, €12,059,000 stems from Modulation/CMO Wine.

The overall balance resulting from the new allocations is as follows: Axis I, with 45,5% of the total budget. Axis II represents 35,5% of the total programme's budget and axis III 10,5%. Leader accounts for 5%. Finally, 3.5% of the resources will be devoted to technical assistance.

Axis Information²

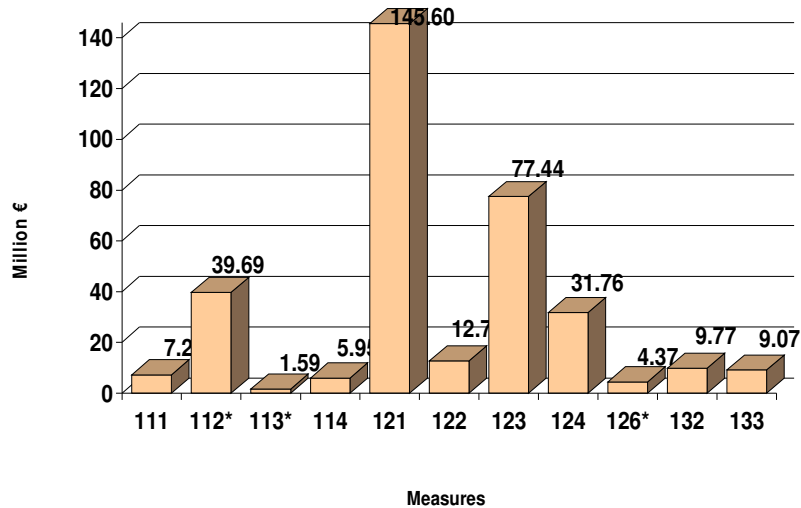
Axis 1 objectives: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector

The objective of improving competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector is based on: 1) Modernization, farm innovation and closer integration in forestry and agri-food production chains; 2) Consolidation and development of the quality in agricultural and forestry production; 3) Improvement of the entrepreneurial and professional capacities and generational turnover. The resources allocation gives more emphasis to actions for modernisation of agricultural holdings, to add value to agricultural and forestry products and a high percentage of resources goes to support setting-up of young farmers. Result targets include the number of participants that successfully completed training activities related to agriculture and/or forestry to 90%; increase in agricultural gross value added in supported holdings by 15%; number of holdings/enterprises introducing new products and/or new techniques to 1,000; value of agricultural production under recognized quality label/standards to €150 million.

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

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 €345,171,822³



Following the 2009 RDP update, the total budget allocation under axis 1 is €345,171,822.

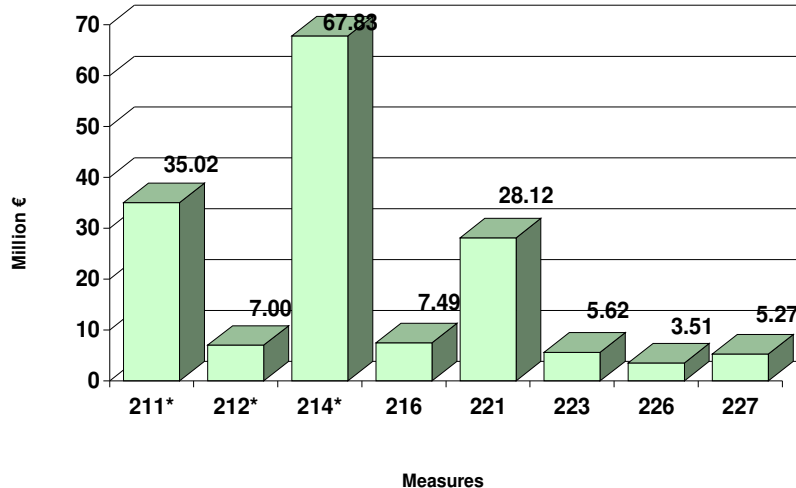
Axis 2 objectives: Improving the environment and the countryside

The programme will address: 1) Conservation of the biodiversity and protection of the High Natural Value forestry and agricultural traditional landscapes; 2) Farming and forestry practices compatible with the qualitative and quantitative safeguard of surface water and groundwater, 3) Increase of energy production by biomass and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, 4) Safeguard of the territory and protection from erosion and loss of fertility. The strategy is aimed at strengthening the role of the agri-forestry activities in the improvement of the environmental quality in rural areas. In the resources allocation, two measures have the highest rate: environmental actions on agricultural land and compensatory allowances for natural handicaps in mountain areas, followed by environmental action on forest land and first afforestation. Result targets include: supported surface contributing to biodiversity and high nature value farming/forestry, water quality, mitigating climate change, improving soil quality and avoiding marginalisation and land abandonment: 100,000 Ha.

Specific modifications to result indicators have been made to take account of the amendments to the RDP as a result of the Health Check, the European Economic Recovery Package and Modulation including further impeding loss of biodiversity in the RDP region. More specifically, the area under improved soil management is an additional 4,500 ha by supporting 100 farm holdings. Activities include reduction of N₂O and CH⁴ emissions, carbon sequestration and biodiversity protection (measure 214). For further information on specific indicators please refer to the indicator tables in the RDP.

³ Please note that for measures 112, 113 and 126 no private spending has been allocated.

Axis 2 budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €159,872,128⁴



Following the 2009 RDP update, the total budget allocation under axis 2 is €159,872,128, including an additional €5,641,667 (€3,385,000 EAFRD plus €2,256,667 of national/regional public funds). The additional EAFRD contribution supports biodiversity under measure 214 (€3,385,000)

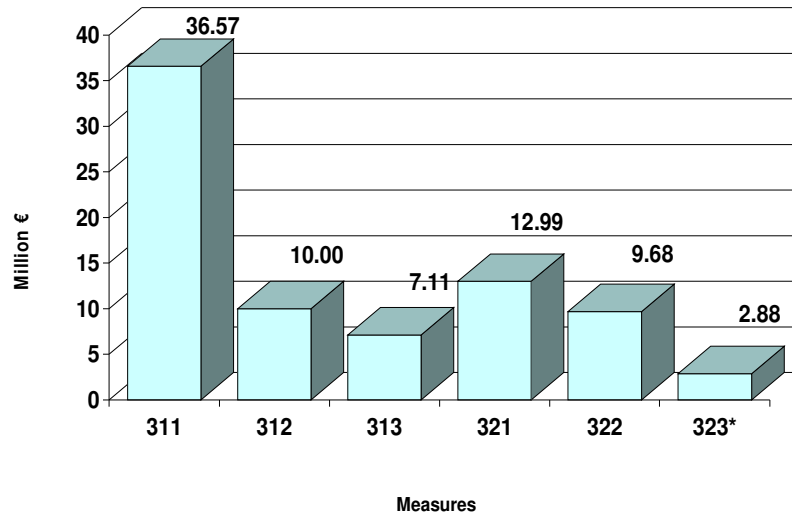
Axis 3 objectives: Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy

The support of axis 3 is focused on C and D rural areas to answer the needs of revitalization of the productive tissue and improvement of quality of life in rural villages. The priorities are the improvement of attractiveness for people and the business sector, and the maintenance and/or creation of the new jobs in rural areas. In terms of financial allocation, diversification into non-agricultural activities originally absorbed nearly half of the axis budget, followed by upgrading of the rural heritage and improvement of basic services. The main result targets include: increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses: +10%; gross number of jobs created: 180; additional number of tourists: +10%; population in rural areas with improved services: 250,000; increase in internet penetration in rural areas: 15%.

Specific modifications to result indicators have been made to take account of the amendments to the RDP as a result of the Health Check, the European Economic Recovery Package and Modulation/CMO Wine including further development and completion of the broadband infrastructure especially in C and D rural areas. More specifically, 15 additional actions are supported to improve the accessibility by the population in rural areas to broadband internet (measure 321). For further information on specific indicators please refer to the indicator tables in the RDP.

⁴ For measures 211, 212 and 214 no private spending has been allocated.
For measure 323 no private spending has been allocated.

Axis 3 budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €79,225,972



Following the 2009 RDP update, the new total budget allocation for axis 3 is €79,225,972 including an additional €3,161,667 (€1,897,000 EAFRD plus €1,264,667 of national/regional public funds). The additional EAFRD contribution improved broadband connectivity in rural areas through measure 321.

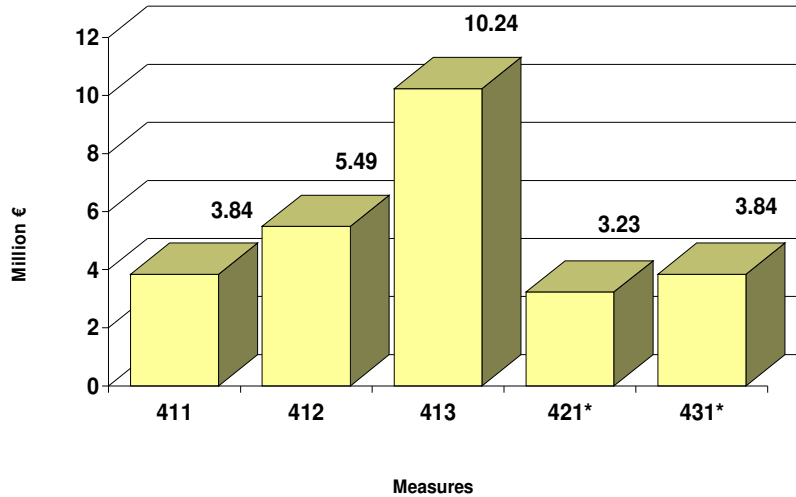
Axis 4 objectives: Leader

In axis 4, identified priorities refer to: 1) strengthening local capacity of programming and management development policies and actions; 2) the integration of the local development policies with the sectoral strategies; 3) the valorisation of the local resources. It will be possible to implement Leader strategies on rural areas C and D. Municipalities located in B areas could be also included in the Leader territory. Overall, the area covered by the Leader approach is 9,200 km² and the population is about 600,000 inhabitants. Resources are allocated to running the Local Action Groups (LAGs), training, reinforcing cooperation between different stakeholders, mainly at national level. It is expected to support 7 LAGs and finance 250 local projects.

Number of LAGs envisaged in the RDP areas as of March 2010 was 6.

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

Axis 4 budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €26,631,374⁵



Following the 2009 RDP update, the total budget amount for axis 4 is €26,631,374.

Monitoring and evaluation strategy

The monitoring and evaluation system has been established in accordance with the provisions of Title VII Chapter II of Regulation (EC) 1698/2005, EC guidelines, and take into account the National Monitoring and Evaluation System. Monitored data is updated and transferred at regular intervals (quarterly financial monitoring; biannual procedures monitoring; annual physical monitoring). All the CMEF indicators are used and the baseline data and outputs, result and impact indicators are populated. Whenever data is available, the impact indicators have been compared with the regional level NUT 1 (Macroregion southern Italy, including Abruzzo in Eurostat system), and also with Central Italy; therefore, not only with regions covered by the Objective 1.

Communication and publicity

The information plan involves potential beneficiaries such as regional, local and other public authorities, professional and business organizations, economic and social bodies, NGOs, promoters of projects and the public in general.

The information plan has three measures and several actions:

A) information to potential beneficiaries: Publication and distribution of the RDP (call centre, information desk and help desk, institutional websites), Publishing call for RDP measures (media advertising, leaflets, brochures, posters, tools for operators and intermediary organizations, information services through articles in the local newspapers radio, television and teletext); Customers; Publications of best practices;

⁵ For measure 431 no private spending has been allocated.

B) Information to beneficiaries on: Administrative and selection procedures (information desk and help desk), Requirements for applicants (brochure); Implementation and updates on administrative process (e-mail, newsletter);

C) Information for public in general: Communication activities (newsletter); Information on RDP implementation (dossier).

All beneficiaries are informed of the EAFRD assistance and there will be an acknowledgement of the EU contribution in all related publicity over the implementation period.

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 - 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
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	