

## Rural Development Programme (RDP) of Murcia, Spain

**Programa de Desarrollo Rural de la Región de Murcia – *To be inserted*<sup>1</sup>**  
(Rural Development Programme of the Region of Murcia)

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<http://www.carm.es/cagric>

**Other useful links:**

Rural Development Programme (RDP):

<http://www.mapa.es/es/desarrollo/pags/programacion/programas/programas.htm>

National Strategy Plan (NSP):

[http://www.mapa.es/es/desarrollo/pags/programacion/plan\\_estrategico/plan\\_estrategico.htm](http://www.mapa.es/es/desarrollo/pags/programacion/plan_estrategico/plan_estrategico.htm)

Spanish National Rural Network (NRN):

<http://www.mapa.es/es/desarrollo/pags/RedRuralNacional/Presentacion/presentacion.htm>



**Map of Murcia**

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### General socio-economic situation in rural areas in the Murcia region

Murcia is located in the southeast of the Iberian peninsula, at the very centre of the peninsular Mediterranean arc and has a total surface of 11,314 km<sup>2</sup> (2.2% of the Spanish surface). The RDP provides baseline figures for Murcia in 2005 and these state that: the region has a population of 1.3 million inhabitants and a population density of 118 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>, while rural areas occupy 83% of the regional territory with 36% of Murcia's population living there.

Socio-economic strengths include a relatively high GDP per capita (78.5% of the EU-27 average), dynamic rural areas that manage to retain their population and also attract young people, the fact that it is highly competitive in terms of a large aspect of agrarian activity and the agri-food industry (the latter accounts for 15% of the regions' GDP), consolidated commercial structures in the EU and other improved capacities for new farmers, and increased economic diversification in rural areas. The primary sector is important in the region, employing 11% of the population (as opposed to 4.8% in Spain generally), while the population employed in agriculture has slightly increased from 1999 to 2006. The region produces agricultural products known for their quality (e.g. cheese, wine, rice, peppers, etc.)

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

while fruit and vegetables account for more than 80% of agricultural production. 58% of total exports for the region are fruit, vegetables and agri-food products - many of which are produced in greenhouses.

Weaknesses include a relatively high unemployment rate (7.91% in 2006), affecting more women (10.74%) than men (6.06%), a lack of soil for transformation activities, poor availability of services and accessibility in rural areas, combined with a lack of IT infrastructures and a scarcity of qualified human resources.

In terms of the environment, the forest surface is rising with the 'Natura 2000' areas covering 39.5% of the territory, including 47 Sites of Community Interest and 22 Special Protection Areas. However, there are insufficient water resources in a region with high aridity indices, further worsened by erosive processes and contamination from nitrates in certain areas.

The RDP was revised in 2009 following the CAP Health Check, in recognition of the greater emphasis now being given to the 'new challenges' facing agriculture and rural areas. As a result, additional emphasis was placed on the improvement of energy efficiency. One of the strengths of the region is its fruit and vegetable production, the bulk of which is produced in greenhouses. Given the socio-economic importance of greenhouse crops and the high energy consumption required for greenhouse cultivation, the region has decided to focus on the improvement of heating structures and systems with the objective of achieving energy savings.

## **RDP strategic objectives**

The main strategic objective of RDP Murcia consists of developing rural areas by increasing their sustainability, so that rural areas become a uniting element of the territory and a source of economic and social growth for the region. The overall aim is to strengthen competitiveness, develop a sustainable use of natural resources and improve the global attractiveness of rural areas through interventions that integrate the development of the agricultural and forestry sectors, environment, bio-energy, rural tourism and services.

In conformity with the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG), the National Strategy Plan and the Spanish National Framework, Murcia pursues three specific objectives:

- 1) Increasing the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector;
- 2) Improving the environment and rural areas;
- 3) Increasing the quality of life in rural areas and promoting the diversification of the rural economy.

These objectives respond to identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the region. As a consequence, agriculture is a fundamental factor for the development of the region, while the importance of the integration of agriculture with the conservation of the environment is also emphasised.

Taking into account the additional financing in the revised RDP and the socio-economic situation in rural areas, greater strategic priority is now given to the improvement of energy efficiency (greenhouses). This is in line with the National Strategy Plan, which has defined the "importance of the agro-industry" as a strategic priority to promote at national level. The

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<sup>2</sup> Detailed information on the individual measures can be found in Annex I.

new investments promoted in Murcia for the promotion of energy savings are expected to contribute to achieving goals set at national level. Furthermore, additional emphasis is also placed on the support of 'technical assistance', which also corresponds with the Spanish National Framework.

### **Expected impact / outcomes of the policies**

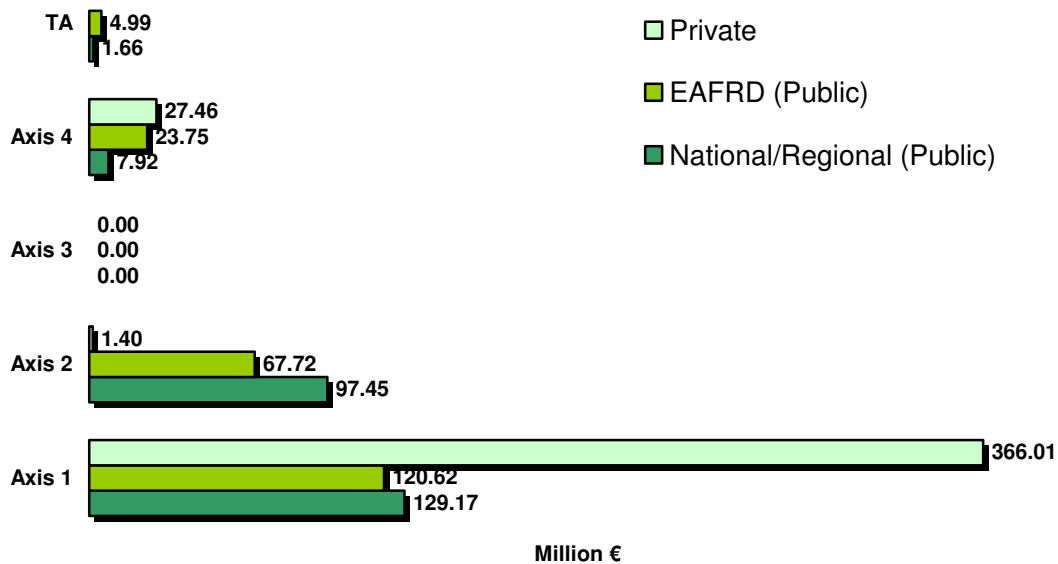
Expected socio-economic outcomes include: increased economic efficiency of the primary sector and the regional agri-food industry; new employment opportunities for the population resident in rural areas as well as for newcomers; an increased number of local micro-enterprises; and improved tourism development. Expected environmental outcomes include: the recovery and maintenance of biodiversity; improvements in the fight against erosion; the establishment of less aggressive production techniques in terms of the environment; increased use of forest surfaces as a tool to be used in the fight against erosion desertification and climate change; and the definition of new concrete actions on those natural spaces that have a higher environmental value. A key outcome is that the programme is expected to benefit a variety of target groups comprising agriculture and forestry professionals, the rural population, local micro-enterprises and other beneficiaries such as the so-called "neo-rural" population (i.e. new population in rural areas, especially the young).

Expected impacts include:

- economic growth (€47,975,000 per year in terms of purchasing power parity)
- employment creation and maintenance (1,166 additional full-time employment posts)
- increases in labour productivity (€6.7 of gross value added per worker per year for the whole economy)
- reduction of biodiversity deterioration (17.1% change in the declining trend)
- maintenance of agriculture and forest areas of high natural value (HNV)
- improvement in the quality of water (reduction in the balance of nitrates by more than 25% in areas where organic farming and integrated production are implemented)
- contribution to the fight against climate change (reduction in CO2 emissions, improved energy efficiency).

Expected impacts from 2009's RDP amendment relate to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the adaptation of agriculture to climate change. Furthermore, the allocation of additional funding to 'technical assistance' is expected to lead to an improvement of the Managing Authority's activities. Changes to output and result indicators are presented below under each axis.

## RDP budget breakdown by axis: Total expenditure (including national/regional + EAFRD + private funding) of €848,157,229



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 73% of the updated RDP budget in Murcia is allocated to axis 1 (€615.80 million); approximately 20% is allocated to axis 2 (€166.57 million), 0% to axis 3 and 7% to axis 4 (€59.13 million), with almost 0.1% available to fund 'technical assistance' (€6.65 million).

Within axis 1, National/Regional public funding represents an approximate 21% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 20%; and private funds 59%.

Within axis 2, National/Regional public funding represents an approximate 58% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 41%; and private funds 1%.

There were no RDP budget allocations within axis 3.

Within axis 4, National/Regional public funding represents an approximate 13% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 40%; and private funds 47%.

Within 'technical assistance', National/Regional public funding represents an approximate 25% share of the technical assistance funding and EAFRD 75%.

As a consequence of the RDP revisions in 2009, the Murcia region has been assigned an additional budget totalling €14,137,642 (including €11,725,265 of EAFRD and a further €2,412,377 of Regional/National public funds) focused on energy efficiency (axis 1) and on 'technical assistance'. In relation to 'technical assistance', this reinforcing is justified because

the original amount allocated for this measure was low but can now allow: a) tackling the reinforcement of the control actions of agro environmental measures; and b) reinforcing the actions to improve the management of the programme (more coordination meetings, improved evaluation and continuous monitoring, specific software development and results dissemination). Other small modifications to the programme are mainly of a technical nature and intend to improve the implementation of the programme as well as the understanding of the measures by the beneficiaries, and to update legal references.

## Axis Information<sup>2</sup>

### ***Axis 1 objectives – Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector***

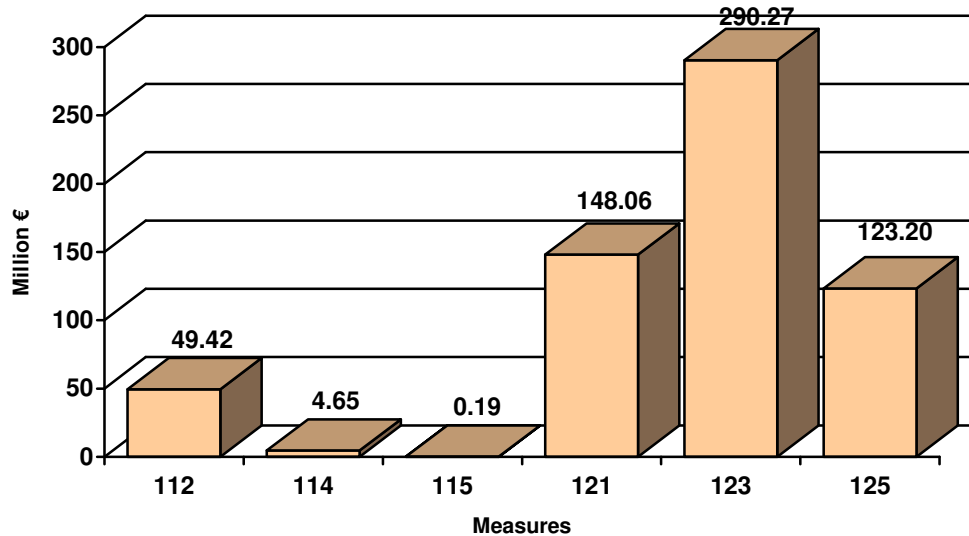
The emphasis of this axis is on 'adding value to agricultural and forestry products' (measure 123; 47% of total budget for axis 1), the 'modernisation of agricultural holdings' (measure 121; 24%), the 'cooperation for development of new products, processes, and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and in the forestry sector' (measure 124; 20%) and the 'setting up of young farmers' (measure 112; 8%).

Result targets for axis 1 include a 3% to 20% increase (depending on the measure) in gross value added (GVA) of supported agricultural holdings and an increase of 13% to 64% (depending in the measure) of agricultural holdings that have introduced new products and/or techniques.

New output and result indicators are included under this axis corresponding to a new sub-measure created in order to address energy efficiency objectives. These comprise output targets in relation to the number of supported companies (10) and total volume of investments (€24,934,090) and result targets in relation to environmental indicators, namely, thermal KW recovered per year (20,000,000) and Tm of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction captured (3,000). In qualitative terms, with the new co-generation technology, existing greenhouses will be able to include heating, lighting and the use of CO<sub>2</sub> to increase their productivity, contribute to their sustainability and keep their emissions to a minimum. The exhaust gases of gas-fuelled co-generation modules contain an important percentage of CO<sub>2</sub>. The consumption of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions resulting from the co-generation increases production via photosynthesis. The use of the energy generated will allow for the heating of the greenhouses, which is essential during the winter, and is directly related to achieving better (in quality and quantity) productions. Therefore, besides improving the economic efficiency of the holdings, the new sub-measure contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and to the adaptation of agriculture to climate change.

Strategic objectives	Specific objectives
Increase the competitiveness of the agriculture and forest sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reinforce human capital and promote knowledge in favour of agricultural and forest competitiveness.</li> <li>- Increase and develop the physical potential of agricultural holdings.</li> <li>- Strengthen the elements of the value chain of agrarian production</li> </ul>

**Axis 1 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €615,798,998**



Following the 2009 RDP update, the total budget for axis 1 is €615,798,998, including an additional €7,480,227 (€6,732,204 EAFRD + €7,480,227 Regional/National public funds) targeted at a new sub-measure 121.2 "Modernisation of agricultural holdings – improvement of energy efficiency in greenhouses". The new sub-measure intends to improve the energy efficiency of existing fruit and vegetable greenhouses of Murcia, by using co-generation with natural gas as a fuel source. Fruit and vegetable greenhouses in Murcia have a high level of productivity and this will contribute to their modernisation, by improving their energy efficiency and reducing their environmental impact, whilst simultaneously reducing their costs. Types of operations include investments made in existing greenhouses of Murcia, which will decrease emissions adversely affecting the environment and influence climate change.

Other changes to this axis relate to changes in aid intensity (no financial modifications involved) under measure 123. Local Action Groups (LAGs) implement axis 3 of the Murcia RDP and can also implement measure 123, as far as microenterprises in their rural areas are concerned. In order to ensure a more coherent aid strategy for all types of micro-enterprises in rural areas (in the non-agricultural sector – axis 3 – and in the agricultural sector – measure 123), the level of aid available for micro-enterprises in rural areas in measure 123 is increased from 23% to 50%.

**Axis 2 objectives - Improving the environment and the countryside**

The emphasis of this axis is on 'agri-environment payments' (measure 214; 64% of total axis 2 budget), 'first afforestation of agricultural land' (measure 221; 13%) and 'restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions' (measure 226; 7%).

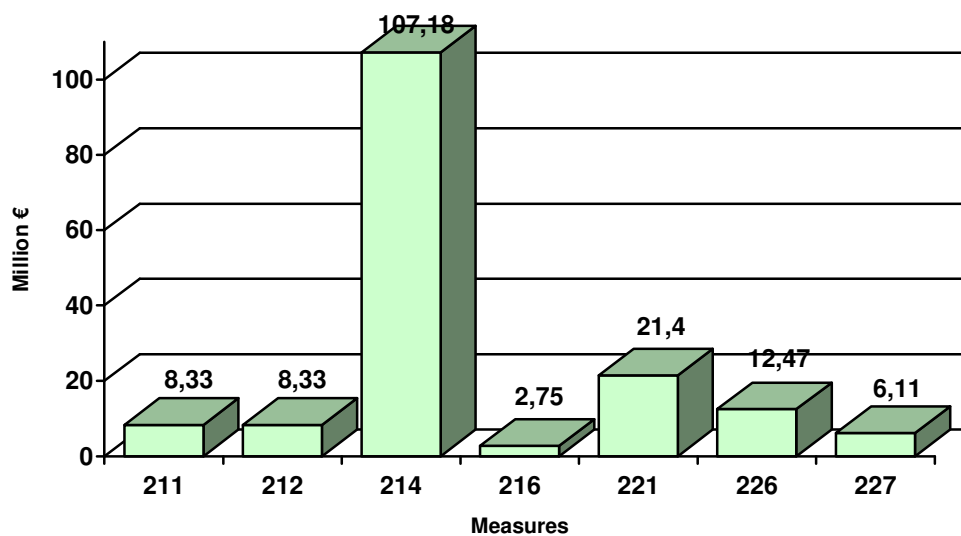
Result targets for axis 2 include a surface of 240,444 ha contributing to an improvement of biodiversity and agriculture with HNV, 26,368 ha contributing to an improvement of water quality, 57,927 Ha contributing to combating climate change, 54,252 ha contributing to an improvement of soil quality and 39,958 ha contributing to the avoidance of land

marginalisation and abandonment.

There were no modifications to axis 2 indicators following the RDP update in 2009.

Strategic objectives	Specific objectives
Improve the natural and rural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make agricultural activity compatible with the sustainable use of natural resources.</li> <li>- Improve the sustainable use of forestry holdings.</li> </ul>

**Axis 2 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €166,574,283**



There were no financial modifications in relation to axis 2 following the 2009 RDP update.

**Axis 3 objectives - The quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy**

Axis 3 activities will be implemented by 'leader' (axis 4). There is therefore no budget allocated specifically to axis 3. The objectives of axis 3 will be met through the implementation of axis 4.

Result targets for axis 3 include a 5% increase in non agricultural GVA in subsidised enterprises, 480-1,020 (depending on the measure) employment posts created, 700 additional tourist/visitors, in terms of rural population 5,000 people are to benefit from improved services, 22,156 people to benefit from increased internet access, and 300 participants to have successfully completed training activities.

Strategic objectives	Specific objectives
Increase quality of life in rural areas and promote diversification of the rural economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contribute to the diversification of the rural economy.</li> <li>- Increase the quality of life in rural areas.</li> </ul>

There were no changes to indicators or any financial modifications in relation to axis 3 following the 2009 RDP update.

#### **Axis 4 objectives - Leader**

Axis 4 finances the activities of axis 3. The vast majority of the budget for this axis goes to 'quality of life and diversification' (measure 413; 81 % of total budget for axis 4). Two other measures are also worth mentioning in terms of the allocated share of funds – the emphasis on 'competitiveness' (measure 411; 12%) and 'running the local action groups, skills acquisition, animation' (measure 431; 6%).

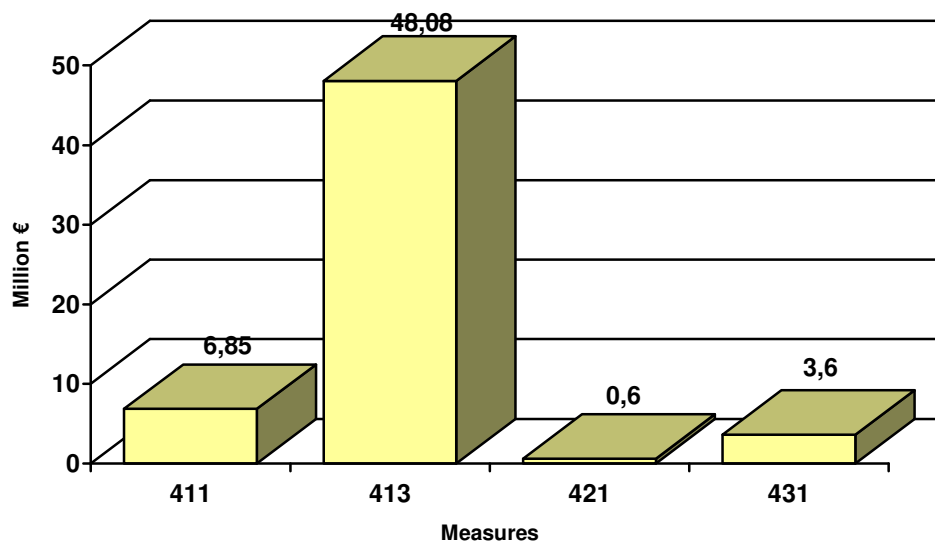
The main objectives of axis 4 are to improve the quality of life and promote diversification in rural areas by supporting business creation and development, providing basic services for the economy and the rural population, encouraging tourism activities and preserving and upgrading the rural heritage.

Since axis 4 finances the implementation of axis 3 activities, result targets for axis 4 are the same as for axis 3.

The number of LAGs operational in the RDP areas as of March 2010 was four.

There were no modifications to axis 4 indicators following the RDP update in 2009.

#### **Axis 4 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €59,126,534**



There were no financial modifications in relation to axis 4 following the 2009 RDP update.

### **Monitoring and evaluation strategy**

The RDP's monitoring of the programme is based on a limited number of common output and result indicators whose evolution is presented in the annual monitoring reports together with



the evolution of the financial monitoring of the programme. The Monitoring Committee uses this information to propose necessary amendments of the RDP for subsequent years.

The evaluation strategy comprises a continuous evaluation system which includes an interim and an ex-post evaluation. The continuous evaluation is composed of three principal elements: continuous evaluation activities culminating in annual evaluation reports (which in 2010 and 2015 constitute the interim and ex post evaluation respectively); thematic evaluation activities on issues such as the 'leader approach', the integration of the horizontal principle of the environment, the agri-environmental measures, other issues that the Monitoring Committee deems necessary; and an evaluation network and support service towards Member States and their regions, promoted by the Commission (help-desk concept). The evaluations use the output, result and impact indicators, defined by the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF).

## **Communication and publicity**

The overall objective of the Communication Plan is to guarantee the dissemination of the RDP amongst target groups. In addition, it aims to guarantee transparency during the implementation of the RDP, disseminate information on the content of the RDP in relation to the EAFRD contribution and its objectives, disseminate information that facilitates the correct utilisation of designated financial resources, and inform public opinion on the role of the European Union in favour of the actions foreseen in the programme.

To achieve the above objectives, the communication plan addresses three target groups:

- Potential beneficiaries, professional organisations, economic, social and environmental agents, organisations that promote equal opportunities, NGOs;
- Actual beneficiaries; and
- The general public.

The communication strategy consists of two components:

- A publicity plan aimed at potential beneficiaries and the general public, to inform them of the start up of the programme and the financial opportunities available;
- A dissemination plan aimed at potential and actual beneficiaries and the general public, to inform them of the implementation and results of the programme.

Information to target groups will be distributed through presentations, the elaboration of triptychs and leaflets, electronic means (e.g. the website of the Managing Authority, CD-ROM of the programme), seminars, workshops, periodical meetings and information sessions with relevant stakeholders (programme managing and monitoring authorities, local/regional authorities, professional organisations, social partners, NGOs, etc.), publication of articles and information notes, the installation of signs/plaques/posters in beneficiary premises and LAGs including the use of the European flag with the sentence "European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe invests in rural areas".

## Annex I – measure

Measures selected by the RDP	Measures selected by the updated RDP
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<b>Axis 1 - Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector</b>	<i>Promoting knowledge and improving human potential</i>	<b>111</b>	Vocational training and information actions
		<b>112</b>	Setting up of young farmers
		<b>113</b>	Early retirement
		<b>114</b>	Use of advisory services
		<b>115</b>	Setting up of management, relief and advisory services
	<i>Restructuring and developing physical potential and promoting innovation</i>	<b>121</b>	Modernisation of agricultural holdings
		<b>122</b>	Improvement of the economic value of forests
		<b>123</b>	Adding value to agricultural and forestry products
		<b>124</b>	Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and in the forestry sector
		<b>125</b>	Infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry
	<i>Quality of agricultural production and products</i>	<b>126</b>	Restoring agricultural production potential
		<b>131</b>	Meeting standards based on EU legislation
		<b>132</b>	Participation of farmers in food quality schemes
	<i>Transitional measures</i>	<b>133</b>	Information and promotion activities
		<b>141</b>	Semi-subsistence farming
<b>142</b>		Producer groups	
<b>Axis 2 - Improving the environment and the countryside</b>	<i>Sustainable use of agricultural land</i>	<b>143</b>	Providing farm advisory and extension services
		<b>211</b>	Natural handicap payments to farmers in mountain areas
		<b>212</b>	Payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas
		<b>213</b>	Natura 2000 payments and payments linked to Directive 2000/60/EC
		<b>214</b>	Agri-environment payments
		<b>215</b>	Animal welfare payments
	<i>Sustainable use of forestry land</i>	<b>216</b>	Non-productive investments
		<b>221</b>	First afforestation of agricultural land
		<b>222</b>	First establishment of agroforestry systems on agricultural land
		<b>223</b>	First afforestation of non-agricultural land
		<b>224</b>	Natura 2000 payments
		<b>225</b>	Forest-environment payments
<b>Axis 3 - Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy</b>	<i>Diversify the rural economy</i>	<b>226</b>	Restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions
		<b>227</b>	Non-productive investments
		<b>311</b>	Diversification into non-agricultural activities
	<i>Improve the quality of life in rural areas</i>	<b>312</b>	Support for business creation and development
		<b>313</b>	Encouragement of tourism activities
		<b>321</b>	Basic services for the economy and rural population
		<b>322</b>	Village renewal and development
		<b>323</b>	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
<b>Axis 4 - Leader</b>	<i>Implementing local development strategies</i>	<b>331</b>	Training and information
		<b>341</b>	Skills-acquisition and animation measure with a view to preparing and implementing a local development strategy
		<b>411</b>	Competitiveness
		<b>412</b>	Environment/land management
<b>Axis 4 - Leader</b>	<i>Implementing local development strategies</i>	<b>413</b>	Quality of life/diversification
		<b>421</b>	Implementing cooperation projects
		<b>431</b>	Running the local action group, skills acquisition, animation