



ENRD workshop

The Transition Regulation, EURI and the Extension of RDPs

Highlights report

The workshop discussed the practical implications of the [transitional provisions adopted in December 2020](#) extending the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) until the end of 2022 with related funding, as well as possible approaches for the use of additional resources for rural development from the [European Union Recovery Instrument \(EURI\)](#).

The event attracted a large number of national and regional RDP Managing Authorities and Paying Agencies representing all 27 EU Member States, as well as European Commission representatives.

Participants exchanged views and ideas on the RDP operations to be implemented during the years 2021-2022 that could better contribute to the green recovery and the digital transition of rural areas.

Event Information

Date: 1 February 2021

Location: Online event

Organisers: ENRD Contact Point

Participants: RDP Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies, EU institutions.

Outcomes: Exchange of views regarding the main challenges expected for the transition period as well as concrete ideas on the use of the additional resources for the RDPs made available by the 2021-27 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the EURI

Web page: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/transition-regulation-euri-and-extension-rdps_en

The transition period 2021-2022 and the EURI

The transitional provisions extending RDPs to cover 2021 and 2022

[Beata Adamczyk](#) from the European Commission's DG AGRI opened the workshop by presenting key provisions regulating the transition period in the area of rural development, resulting from the adoption in December 2020 of [the Transitional Regulation extending the RDPs to cover 2021 and 2022](#), as well as the integration in the RDPs of additional resources for rural development from the [EURI](#) (circa €8.5 billion). Managing Authorities need to submit requests to amend RDPs in order to programme the 2021 and 2022 allocations from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), as well as from the EURI. Key amendments brought about by the Transitional Regulation are as follows i) As of 2021, multiannual commitments for the agri-environment-climate measure (AECM), organic farming and animal welfare have to be signed for shorter periods of between one and three years, while as of 2022, a further extension will be possible only once for one extra year; ii) degressive payments for Areas with Natural Constraints (ANC) phasing out of the ANC category are still possible in 2021 and 2022, provided the entire duration of such payments does not exceed four years and the maximum threshold of €25/ha is respected; iii) the Covid-19 measure (M21) has been extended (the deadline for approval of applications is set for 31 June 2021, while the deadline for payments is set for 31 December 2021). Support granted under M21 cannot exceed 2% of the total 2014-2020 European EAFRD allocations, however, Member States (MS) can use 2021 allocations to make payments under this measure.

EURI

The additional resources for rural development from the EURI have been made available to address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in agriculture and rural areas and to help facilitate a resilient, digital, and environment friendly economic recovery. The EURI resources will be rolled out through the RDPs and in principle, will be subject to the implementation rules applicable to the EAFRD. The exceptions to these rules are: i) the EURI resources will have to be programmed and monitored separately; ii) they will not be subject to the performance framework; iii) EURI-specific ring-fencing requirements apply. The EURI resources can be deployed through all RDP measures contributing to the economic recovery, provided the following EURI-specific ring-fencing requirements are respected: i) the non-regression principle (at least the same overall share of the EAFRD must be reserved for the environmental and climate measures referred to in Article 59(6) of the Rural Development (RD) Regulation); ii) at least 37% must be reserved for green investments (M4), forestry (M8 and M15), AECM (M10), organic farming (M11), animal welfare (M12), ANC (M13), and LEADER (M19); iii) at least 55% must be reserved for the following measures contributing to the economic and social development of rural areas, and to a resilient, sustainable and digital economic recovery: investments (M4), farm & business development (M6), basic services (M7) and cooperation (M16). It is of note that the minimum ring-fencing for LEADER and for the environmental and climate measures referred to in Article 59(6) do not apply to the EURI resources.

Next Generation EU and rural development: deploying EURI funding

[Gaëlle Marion](#) from the European Commission's DG AGRI provided some examples of types of operations that could be supported by EURI funding. These target a sustainable recovery of the EU focusing on green and digital transitions as well as some of the longer-term challenges that have been identified and translated into EU long-term goals and strategies, including the European Green Deal. The green transition in agriculture and rural areas can be supported through types of operations such as: sustainable soil management; organic farming; investments in renewables and energy efficiency; 'carbon farming'; afforestation; peatland/wetland restoration and sustainable management; bio-based activities; and research activities piloting related innovation. Support for improving the digitalisation of rural areas can include: investments in broadband infrastructure and digital services; knowledge transfer; innovation; cooperation projects; and development of social capital. Digital solutions in food production, processing, marketing and distribution offer opportunities for food security and rural business developments.

Main outcomes of the workshop's group discussions



Group 1: Green recovery

- The two-year transition period can be regarded as a unique opportunity. It can provide Managing Authorities with a laboratory for the next period, to test approaches under the RDPs in preparation for future interventions in the CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs).
- Some MS already have clear ideas for types of operations they will focus on to support a green recovery of the EU during the years 2021 and 2022: Finland for instance expects to focus more on renewables and bio-based initiatives.
- AECM support contributing to climate change mitigation and to the conservation of the environment, could serve as immediate options for deploying the EURI funds. If existing EAFRD AECM intervention are used for this purpose, the added value of the EURI funds must be demonstrated.
- Knowledge transfer and advisory services can be useful for supporting the uptake of sustainable practices contributing to a green recovery. For the years 2021-2022, these could be further supported through the regular EAFRD resources.



Group 2: Digital recovery

- MS during the transition period are considering focusing on investments in infrastructure and equipment as well as the development of soft skills in order to go beyond small-scale operations and lead to a digital transition.
- There are two options for the years 2021-2022: 1) using existing RDP measures and adapting them to emerging needs; and 2) planning new measures in the scope of the current RD Regulation. In both cases, a key question is how to demarcate the new or amended measures according to a definition of 'digital'. A clearer understanding and definition of what is digital (and what it is not) is required in order to help ensure effective demarcation.
- MS representatives shared their views regarding RDP measures that could be used to support the digital transition in 2021 and 2022. The potential from support for young people (including young farmers) was acknowledged and advocated. The cooperation measure and the focus of Operational Groups could be more targeted and adapted to emerging needs. LEADER could provide digital solutions to local challenges. Some MS are planning to invest significantly in basic services to fill broadband gaps. New opportunities exist in online marketing for short supply chains.



Group 3: Synergies with the Recovery and Resilience Facility Plans

- Coordination efforts are needed to optimise complementarity and synergy between different funding tools available such as RDPs, other European Structural & Investment Funds, the EURI funding and the Recovery & Resilience Facility (RRF). This is especially the case for managing and resolving possible overlaps between the priorities of the green recovery and the digital transition.
- In terms of complementarity between the different available funding tools, some MS are considering concentrating on specific types of operations. For instance, resources from the transition period and the EURI could be predominantly used to support green measures. Other MS are planning to apply a complementarity principle based on the scale of intervention. These include smaller-scale digital support being funded by the EURI resources and larger-scale support, such as digital infrastructure, being supported by the RRF.
- Some MS favour using the EURI resources to target areas with natural constraints that have suffered worse from the pandemic than other territories. The EURI may provide options for more rapid responses in cases where the RRF plans are not yet operational.