



Factsheet on 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme Principado de Asturias

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Principado de Asturias was formally adopted by the European Commission on 3 August 2015, outlining Principado de Asturias's priorities for using the € 483 million of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (€ 325 million from the EU budget, and € 158 million of national co-funding).

The RDP for Principado de Asturias focuses on two main priorities. Restoring, preserving and enhancing of ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry is the first, and it plans to have 47% of farmland come under management contract to improve biodiversity. The second is to improve the competitiveness of the farm sector, to that end 2 100 farmers will get support to restructure and modernise their farms and 450 young farmers will get support to launch their businesses. More than 26% of the rural population will benefit from improved services and infrastructures and will be covered by LEADER local development strategies which are expected to create around 200 new jobs.

Support for Rural Development is the 2nd Pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy, providing Member States with an envelope of EU funding to manage nationally or regionally under multi-annual, co-funded programmes. In total, 114 programmes are foreseen in all 27 Member States along with four in the United Kingdom. The Rural Development Regulation for the period 2014-2020 addresses six economic, environmental and social priorities, and programmes contain clear targets setting out what is to be achieved. Moreover, in order to coordinate actions better and maximise synergies with the other European Structural & Investment Funds (ESIF), a Partnership Agreement has been agreed with each Member State highlighting its broad strategy for EU-funded structural investment.

This document provides a brief overview of how the challenges and opportunities Principado de Asturias is facing are addressed by the RDP. In the annex, a table indicates the priorities and focus areas each with their specific targets, and their allocated budgets.

1. SITUATION AND KEY CHALLENGES

In Spain rural development is implemented through 18 separate RDPs – one at national level and 17 regional RDPs. However, common elements to the programmes are presented in a national framework. In addition, the National Rural Network provides the funding for the networking of rural development actors in Spain.

Principado de Asturias covers an area of 10 603 km² and is home to 1.1 million people. The centre of the region is mainly urban with a concentration of the population while the rest is rural and undergoing depopulation. Of the total area, farmland covers 16.2 % and forestry 72.2 %.

Livestock is by far the most important agricultural sector in the region. With a total of 17 614 livestock farms, 85% are oriented to meat production and 15% to milk production of high quality standards. Forest activity (social, economic and environmental value), increasing economic diversification and privileged natural and cultural heritage are other strengths of this region.

Weaknesses include an unemployment rate of 10.5 % (2012), the ageing and masculinization of the rural population which, coupled with young people leaving for urban areas, may lead to land abandonment. This is considered a large problem in the region. In addition, other weaknesses include the fact that the farm sector is dominated by small livestock farms (49,7% of farms have less than 5 ha), with no or low qualified employees as well as the fact that Principado de Asturias is a very mountainous region which makes mechanisation of agriculture and forestry difficult.

2. HOW THE PRINCIPADO DE ASTURIAS'S RDP WILL ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES

In addressing these challenges, Principado de Asturias's RDP will fund action under all Rural Development priorities – with a particular emphasis on enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests as well as restoring, preserving and enhancing of ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry. The focus of each priority is explained briefly below.

Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

There will be support for 33 cooperation projects in the framework of the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability.

Competitiveness of agri sector and sustainable forestry

Besides previously mentioned support for cooperation projects, some 9 % of farms will receive funding for investments focused on restructuring and modernisation. Over 2 % of farms will receive support for young farmers to set up their businesses.

Food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture

Under this priority, 180 agro-industries will receive funding for investments in processing and marketing.

Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

Around 24 % of the allocated amount will be used for area-based payments to farmers for using environment/climate friendly management practices, including organic farming. The RDP will support the conversion or maintenance of organic farming on 30 000 hectares. More than 47% of farmland will come under management contracts to improve biodiversity, water management and soil erosion.

Resource efficiency and climate

Support allocated under this priority will mainly facilitate investments in afforestation and establishment of agroforestry systems. 300 ha will get support for establishment and maintenance of agro-forestry systems.

Social inclusion and local development in rural areas

The programme will fund Local Development Strategies (LDS) drawn up and implemented by Local Action Groups (LAGs) under the LEADER approach. More than 26%

of the rural population will be affected by these local initiatives which will also create around 200 new jobs.

The four *biggest RDP measures* in budgetary terms (total public funding) are:

- € 124 million allocated to Measure 4: Investments in physical assets
- € 102 million allocated to Measure 19: LEADER
- € 90 million allocated to Measure 8: Forestry
- € 62 million allocated to Measure 13: Payments for areas facing natural constraints

Annex 1: Indicative public support for the Rural Development Programme in Asturias

Target	Measure	€ Total public	%
Priority1: Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas¹			
1A	16 cooperation		
1B	16 cooperation		
Priority 2: Farm viability, competitiveness and sustainable forest management		125 632 075	25.99
	04 investments	77 132 075	15.95
	16 cooperation	6 250 000	1.29
2B: Generational renewal 2.51 % of holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers	06 farm / business development	42 250 000	8.74
Priority 3: Food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management		42 862 052	8.87
	04 investments	42 862 052	8.87

¹ No financial allocation shown for Priority 1 as the expenditure is distributed across other focus areas.

Priority 4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems in agriculture and forestry²		114 260 335	23.63
4A Biodiversity 47.03 % of UAA under contracts	04 investments	3 600 000	0.74
4B Water management 47.03 % of UAA under contracts	07 basic Services	2 445 849	0.51
	10 AEC	30 133 333	6.23
4C Soil erosion and management 47.03 % of UAA under contracts	11 organic farming	9 536 000	1.97
	12 NAT 2000&WFD	4 411 820	0.91
P4 All Focus Areas	13 ANC	62 133 333	12.85
	15 Forest-environment	2 000 000	0.41
Priority 5: Resource efficiency and shift to low carbon and climate resilience economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors		90 450 858	18.71
5E Carbon conservation and sequestration	08 forest	48 246 541	9.98
5F+		42 204 317	8.73
Priority 6: Social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas		101 966 500	21.9
6B Local development 26.12 % rural population in LDS 26.12 % rural population with improved services/infrastructures 200 jobs created	19 LEADER and CLLD	101 966 500	21.9
Technical Assistance		3 207 547	0.66
Discontinued measures		5 084 319	1.05
Total public expenditure €		483 454 840	100.00

² Expenditure under Priority 4 is programmed for the priority as a whole, not for individual focus areas