



Factsheet on 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme for the German Länder Berlin and Brandenburg

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Berlin and Brandenburg (BE+BB) was formally adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015 and last amended on 21 August 2024, outlining the priorities of Berlin and Brandenburg for using the € 1.81 billion of public funds available for the 9-year period 2014-2022 (€ 1.44 billion from the EU budget, including € 131.2 million transferred from the German envelope for CAP direct payments and € 380 million national co-funding).

The RDP for Berlin and Brandenburg focuses mainly on three priorities. Under the first - restoring, preserving and enhancing of ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry - 27% of farmland and 0.92% of forest land is placed under funded contracts to improve biodiversity, 17.5% of farmland under contracts to improve water and 17.5% of farmland under contracts to improve soil. Under the second - social inclusion and local development in rural areas - funding ensures 54% of rural population being covered by local development strategies. Under the third priority - enhancing farm viability, competitiveness and sustainable forest management - almost 17% of farms receive investment support to modernise and restructure.

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, 118¹ programmes are implemented in all 28 Member States. The RD 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 Berlin and Brandenburg are 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 budget.

¹ The UK left the Union on 31 January 2020; in accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement support under Rural Development continues to apply in the UK during the 2014-2020 programming period.

1. SITUATION AND KEY CHALLENGES

In Germany, rural development is implemented through 13 separate regional RDPs, which broadly correspond to the various *Länder* (but with two joint programmes). However, common elements to several regional programmes are presented in a national framework (NF) established at federal level. In addition to this, a National Rural Network Programme provides the funding for the networking of rural development actors in Germany.

Brandenburg covers an area of 29 656 km², of which 32.5% is defined as rural and 67.5% as intermediate area. 51.5% of the territory is agricultural area and 36.6% is forest (2018). There are 5 370 agricultural holdings in Brandenburg in total (2023). The average size is 242 ha and thus almost four times as large as the national average of 65 ha (2023). The predominant form of operation in Brandenburg is forage growing and grazing livestock. Berlin has an area of 891 km², 17.7% is forest and only 4.9% of Berlin's territory is agricultural area (2018). The average size of all 50 farms is 38 hectares with horticulture constituting the predominant form of operation. Of the combined agricultural area of Berlin-Brandenburg (1 323 200 ha in 2018), 76.9% is arable land and 22.7% is permanent grassland.

With a population of 2.58 million inhabitants, Brandenburg is a sparsely populated German Land (2023). Berlin has a population of 3.78 million inhabitants. The unemployment rate in Brandenburg amounts to 5.9% and in Berlin to 9.1% (2023). Only 6% of the combined population of Berlin-Brandenburg of 6.36 million (2023) lives in predominantly rural areas and about one-third (34.6%) live in intermediate areas, however with large differences between the centre and peripheral regions of Brandenburg.

In this context, low productivity and competitiveness in the agricultural sector, demographic change and loss of economic activities in rural areas are continuing challenges in Brandenburg and Berlin. At the same time, environmental challenges relate mainly to losses in biodiversity and climate change.

2. HOW THE RDP FOR BERLIN AND BRANDENBURG ADDRESSES THESE CHALLENGES

In addressing these challenges, the RDP of Berlin and Brandenburg funds action under all Rural Development Priorities – with a particular emphasis on **restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry, social inclusion and local development in rural areas** and **farm viability, competitiveness and sustainable forest management**. The focus of each priority is explained briefly below.

P1: Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

This cross-cutting priority is addressed mainly through measures supporting training and advisory services for people and businesses in rural areas: an expected **13 800 participants are foreseen to be trained**. There is also support for **239 cooperation projects**, including in the framework of the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability.

P2: Competitiveness of agri sector and sustainable forestry

Besides previously mentioned support for training, **16.84% of farms** receive **funding for investments** focused on restructuring and modernisation.

P3: Food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture

Restoring agricultural production potential damaged by disasters and catastrophic events and introduction of appropriate actions is supported. Under this priority, **21 885 ha** benefit from **flood prevention** measures.

P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

Around 60 % of the allocated amount is used for area-based payments to farmers for using environment/climate friendly land management practices, including organic farming. As a result, **27% of farmland** and **0.92 % of forestry land** is to be under funded contracts to improve **biodiversity**. Additionally, the RDP includes a limited number of highly targeted agri-environmental and climate measures prioritizing the most vulnerable areas: respectively **17.5% of the agricultural area** is targeted to be under contract to improve **water or soil management**.

P5: Resource efficiency and climate

The program only allocates **0.66% of its funds** to this priority. Nevertheless, support allocated under this priority helps restoring wetlands and peatlands for the sake of **carbon sequestration and conservation**.

P6: Social inclusion and local development in rural areas

The programme funds Local Development Strategies (LDS) drawn up and implemented by Local Action Groups (LAGs) under the LEADER approach. LEADER covers **54% of the rural population** creating both jobs – **374 new jobs** expected (367 via LEADER, 7 under diversification projects) - and improving living conditions.

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

- € 400 million allocated to Measure 19: LEADER
- € 344,4 million allocated to Measure 11: Organic farming
- € 256,6 million allocated to Measure 13: Payments for areas facing natural constraints
- € 186 million allocated to Measure 7: Basic services and village renewal in rural areas

Annex 1: Indicative public support for the Rural Development Programme in Berlin and Brandenburg

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Target	Measure	Indicative public support	%
P1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas		0,00	
1A Innovation, cooperation, knowledge		0,00	
T1: percentage of expenditure under Articles 14, 15 and 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 in relation to the total expenditure for the RDP (focus area 1A)	3,65 M01 Knowledge	0,00	
	M02 Advisory services	0,00	
	M16 Cooperation	0,00	
1B Research & innovation		0,00	
T2: Total number of cooperation operations supported under the cooperation measure (Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013) (groups, networks/clusters, pilot projects...) (focus area 1B)	239,00 M16 Cooperation	0,00	
1C Lifelong learning and vocational training		0,00	
T3: Total number of participants trained under Article 14 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 (focus area 1C)	13.800,00 M01 Knowledge	0,00	
P2: Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests		139.302.657,00	7,68%
2A Farm performance		Total: 2A	139.302.657,00
T4: percentage of agricultural holdings with RDP support for investments in restructuring or modernisation (focus area 2A)	16,84 M01 Knowledge	8.089.280,00	0,45%
Total investment € (public + private)	377.800.000,00 M04 Physical Investment	99.233.176,00	5,47%
Nr of holdings supported for investment in agricultural holdings (4.1)	950,00 M16 Cooperation	31.980.201,00	1,76%
P3: Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture		98.866.666,67	5,45%
3B Risk management		Total: 3B	98.866.666,67
5.1: Area protected from flood	21.885,00 M05 Restoring agricultural potential	98.866.666,67	5,45%
P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry		1.055.499.262,26	58,23%
4A Biodiversity, HNV and landscapes		Total: P4	1.055.499.262,26
T8: percentage of forest/other wooded area under management contracts supporting biodiversity (focus area 4A)	0,92 M02 Advisory services	811.716,00	0,04%
T9: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes (focus area 4A)	27,51 M07 Basic services	143.159.069,26	7,90%
4B Water management		M08 Forest	126.020.773,00
T10: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve water management (focus area 4B)	17,54 M10 Agri-environment-climate	140.402.790,00	7,75%
4C Soil management		M11 Organic Farming	344.379.640,00
T12: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve soil management and/or prevent soil erosion (focus area 4C)	17,47 M12 NAT 2000 & WFD	39.861.355,00	2,20%
P4 All Focus Areas		M13 Areas with natural constraints	256.587.241,00
Area (ha) under agri-environment-climate (10.1)	96.911,00 M16 Cooperation	4.276.678,00	0,24%
Area (ha) - conversion to organic farming (11.1)	12.170,00		
Area (ha) - maintenance of organic farming (11.2)	219.400,00		
Area (ha) - NATURA 2000 (12.1)	37.200,00		
Nr of beneficiaries advised (2.1)	518,00		

P5: Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors			12.007.044,00	0,66%
5E Carbon conservation / sequestration		Total: 5E	12.007.044,00	0,66%
T19: percentage of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration and conservation (focus area 5E)	0,04	M10 Agri-environment-climate	1.962.044,00	0,11%
Area (ha) under agri-environment-climate for carbon sequestration	1.000,00	M16 Cooperation	10.045.000,00	0,55%
P6: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas			455.603.597,00	25,13%
6A Diversification, SMEs and job creation		Total: 6A	1.509.300,00	0,08%
T20: Jobs created in supported projects (focus area 6A)	7,00	M06 Farm and business development	1.509.300,00	0,08%
Total investment € (public + private)	5.500.000,00			
Nr of beneficiaries (holdings) receiving start up aid/support for investment in non-agric activities in rural areas (6.2 and 6.4)	22,00			
6B Local development		Total: 6B	454.094.297,00	25,05%
T21: percentage of rural population covered by local development strategies (focus area 6B)	54,25	M07 Basic services	42.771.679,00	2,36%
T23: Jobs created in supported projects (Leader) (focus area 6B)	367,00	M16 Cooperation	11.250.000,00	0,62%
Population covered by LAG	1.353.945,00	M19 LEADER and CLLD	400.072.618,00	22,07%
Number of LAGs selected	14,00			
M20 TA			51.466.666,67	2,84%
			51.466.666,67	2,84%
Total public expenditure			1.812.745.893,60	100,00%