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## **Factsheet on 2014-2022 Rural Development Programme for the German Land Thuringia**

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Thuringia was formally adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015 and last amended on 16 October 2024, outlining Thuringia's priorities for using the EUR 1,3 billion of public money that is available for the 9-year period 2014-2022 (EUR 928 million from the EU budget, including EUR 82 million transferred from the German envelope for CAP direct payments, and EUR 264 million of national co-funding, plus EUR 68 million of additional national funding top-ups).

The RDP for Thuringia focuses mainly on 3 priority areas. Under the first of these – restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry - 26% of agricultural land and 6% of forest or other wooded area are under biodiversity contracts. 8% of farmland and 7% of forestry land are under contracts to improve water management. To improve soil management and reduce erosion, 14% of agricultural land and 7% of forest land are placed under funded contracts. Secondly, with regard to social inclusion and local development in rural areas, 63% of the rural population is targeted for improved services and infrastructure and 80 jobs are being created. Under the third priority area of competitiveness of the agri-food sector and sustainable forestry, 12% of agricultural holdings are receiving RDP support for investments in modernisation or restructuring.

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, 118 programmes are implemented in all 28 Member States<sup>1</sup>. 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 Thuringia 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 budget.

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<sup>1</sup>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.

Thuringia covers an area of 16 201 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 53.5 % is predominantly rural and 46.5 % is classified as intermediate area. Of the total area, 57.9 % is agricultural land while forests cover 33.3 %.

There are about 3 600 farm holdings managing close to 779 160 ha of agricultural plus another 21 600 ha of non-agricultural land, much of which is forest.

Environmental challenges in Thuringia mainly relate to the decline of biodiversity.

With a population of 2.15 million inhabitants (2019), Thuringia has been confronted with a constant decline for years; demographic studies predict a further drop in the population. The region faces more and more the negative effects of depopulation and an ageing society.

It is worth mentioning that the unemployment rate has decreased in the last 10 years and was by 3.5% in 2020.

## **2. HOW THURINGIA'S RDP ADDRESSES THESE CHALLENGES**

In addressing these challenges, Thuringia's RDP funds actions under five out of six Rural Development priorities – with a particular emphasis on restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry, on social inclusion and local development in rural areas, and on competitiveness of the agri-sector and sustainable forestry. The focus of each priority is explained briefly below.

### Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

Under this cross-cutting priority support is provided for farm advisory services and training for farmers, foresters and other beneficiaries in rural areas. Support is also foreseen for cooperation projects in the framework of the European Innovation Partnership.

### Competitiveness of agri sector and sustainable forestry

More than 12,3% of farms are receiving funding for investments - focused on animal welfare, organic farming, resource efficiency and requirements to fulfil environmental and climate-related standards. The funding also covers land consolidation and agricultural access roads.

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

Under this priority 3.3 % of agricultural holdings and producer groups are intended to receive support for participating in quality schemes, local markets and short supply chains. Investments are primarily linked to organic food processing and marketing.

### Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

26% of farmland and 6% of forest or other wooded area are placed under funded contracts to enhance biodiversity. A good 8% of farmland and 7% of forestry land under contracts is improving water management; support for holdings to improve soil management and to cut erosion cover farmland area of 14% and forestry land of 7%.

### Resource efficiency and climate

The programme only allocates 0.10% of its funds to this priority. Nevertheless, support allocated to other priorities is intended to help increasing resource and water efficiency.

### Social inclusion and local development in rural areas

The programme funds Local Development Strategies drawn up by 15 Local Action Groups (LAGs) under the Leader approach. 63% of the rural population benefits from improved services. Support is also foreseen for village renewal and infrastructure. 80 jobs are expected to be created (60 via LEADER, 20 under diversification projects).

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

- EUR 324 million allocated to Measure 7 (Basic services and village renewal in rural areas)
- EUR 274 million allocated to Measure 10 (Agri-environment-climate)
- EUR 230 million allocated to Measure 13 (Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints)
- EUR 206 million allocated to Measure 4 (Investments in physical assets)

## Annex

<b>CCI</b>	<b>2014DE06RDRP023</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>11.1</b>

<b>P1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas</b>				<b>0.00</b>		
<b>1A Innovation, cooperation, knowledge</b>				<b>0.00</b>		
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)	2.37	M01 Knowledge		0.00		
		M02 Advisory services		0.00		
		M16 Cooperation		0.00		
<b>1B Research &amp; innovation</b>				<b>0.00</b>		
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)	137.00	M16 Cooperation		0.00		
<b>1C Lifelong learning and vocational training</b>				<b>0.00</b>		
T3: Total number of participants trained under Article 14 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 (focus area 1C)	8,230.00	M01 Knowledge		0.00		
<b>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</b>				<b>206,499,181.00</b>	<b>16.31%</b>	
<b>2A Farm performance</b>				<b>Total: 2A</b>	<b>206,499,181.00</b>	<b>16.31%</b>
T4: percentage of agricultural holdings with RDP support for investments in restructuring or modernisation (focus area 2A)	12.30	M01 Knowledge		2,273,550.00	0.18%	
Total investment I (public + private)	454,216,214.00	M02 Advisory services		4,084,145.00	0.32%	
Nr of holdings supported for investment in agricultural holdings (4.1)	450.00	M04 Physical Investment		189,197,024.00	14.94%	
Nr of beneficiaries advised (2.1)	2,785.00	M16 Cooperation		10,944,462.00	0.86%	
<b>P3: Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture</b>				<b>23,703,899.00</b>	<b>1.87%</b>	
<b>3A Competitiveness of producers</b>				<b>Total: 3A</b>	<b>23,703,899.00</b>	<b>1.87%</b>
T6: percentage of agricultural holdings receiving support for participating in quality schemes, local markets and short supply circuits, and producer groups/organisations (focus area 3A)	3.28	M01 Knowledge		219,287.00	0.02%	
Total investment I (public + private)	64,615,000.00	M02 Advisory services		73,360.00	0.01%	
Nr of operations supported for investment (e.g. in agricultural holdings, in processing and marketing of ag. products) (4.1 and 4.2)	59.00	M04 Physical Investment		16,977,591.00	1.34%	
Nr of agricultural holdings participating in cooperation/local promotion among supply chain actors (16.4)	120.00	M16 Cooperation		6,433,661.00	0.51%	
Nr of beneficiaries advised (2.1)	45.00					
<b>P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry</b>				<b>654,740,172.00</b>	<b>51.71%</b>	
<b>4A Biodiversity, HNV and landscapes</b>				<b>Total: P4</b>	<b>654,740,172.00</b>	<b>51.71%</b>
T8: percentage of forest/other wooded area under management contracts supporting biodiversity (focus area 4A)	5.63	M01 Knowledge		278,492.00	0.02%	
T9: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes (focus area 4A)	25.51	M02 Advisory services		1,016,117.00	0.08%	
<b>4B Water management</b>				<b>Total: P4</b>	<b>654,740,172.00</b>	<b>51.71%</b>
T10: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve water management (focus area 4B)	7.98	M07 Basic services		45,378,667.00	3.58%	
T11: percentage of forestry land under management contracts to improve water management (focus area 4B)	7.08	M08 Forest		12,397,367.00	0.98%	

<b>4C Soil management</b>		M10 Agri-environment-climate	272,423,886.00	21.52%
T12: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve soil management and/or prevent soil erosion (focus area 4C)	14.21	M11 Organic Farming	80,572,956.00	6.36%
T13: percentage of forestry land under management contracts to improve soil management and/or prevent soil erosion (focus area 4C)	7.08	M13 Areas with natural constraints	229,458,165.00	18.12%
<b>P4 All Focus Areas</b>		M15 Forest-environment	9,529,300.00	0.75%
Areas under forest environment contracts (15.1)	23,400.00	M16 Cooperation	3,685,222.00	0.29%
Area (ha) under agri-environment-climate (10.1)	263,494.00			
Area (ha) - conversion to organic farming (11.1)	22,000.00			
Area (ha) - maintenance of organic farming (11.2)	27,000.00			
Nr of beneficiaries advised (2.1)	620.00			
<b>P5: Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors</b>			<b>1,176,114.00</b>	<b>0.09%</b>
<b>5E Carbon conservation / sequestration</b>		<b>Total: 5E</b>	<b>1,176,114.00</b>	<b>0.09%</b>
T19: percentage of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration and conservation (focus area 5E)	0.02	M10 Agri-environment-climate	1,176,114.00	0.09%
Area (ha) under agri-environment-climate for carbon sequestration	300.00			
<b>P6: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas</b>			<b>352,101,156.00</b>	<b>27.81%</b>
<b>6A Diversification, SMEs and job creation</b>		<b>Total: 6A</b>	<b>1,576,738.00</b>	<b>0.12%</b>
T20: Jobs created in supported projects (focus area 6A)	20.00	M01 Knowledge	116,670.00	0.01%
Total investment € (public + private)	2,350,000.00	M02 Advisory services	37,045.00	0.00%
Nr of beneficiaries (holdings) receiving start up aid/support for investment in non-agric activities in rural areas (6.2 and 6.4)	16.00	M06 Farm and business development	591,655.00	0.05%
Nr of beneficiaries advised (2.1)	30.00	M16 Cooperation	831,368.00	0.07%
<b>6B Local development</b>		<b>Total: 6B</b>	<b>349,857,751.00</b>	<b>27.63%</b>
T21: percentage of rural population covered by local development strategies (focus area 6B)	63.05	M07 Basic services	278,116,496.00	21.97%
T22: percentage of rural population benefiting from improved services/infrastructures (focus area 6B)	63.44	M19 LEADER and CLLD	71,741,255.00	5.67%
T23: Jobs created in supported projects (Leader) (focus area 6B)	60.00			
Population benefiting from improved services/infrastructures (7.1; 7.2; 7.4; 7.5.;7.6; 7.7)	1,409,132.00			
Population covered by LAG	1,400,500.00			
Number of LAGs selected	15.00			
<b>6C ICT</b>		<b>Total: 6C</b>	<b>666,667.00</b>	<b>0.05%</b>
T24: percentage of rural population benefiting from new or improved services/infrastructures (ICT) (focus area 6C)	0.38	<b>Total: 6C</b>	<b>666,667.00</b>	<b>0.05%</b>
		M07 Basic services	666,667.00	0.05%
<b>M20 TA</b>			<b>27,840,882.67</b>	<b>2.20%</b>
			27,840,882.67	2.20%
<b>Total public expenditure</b>			<b>1,266,061,404.67</b>	<b>100.00%</b>