



Factsheet on 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme País Vasco

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for País Vasco was formally adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015, last modified on September 2022, outlining País Vasco's priorities for using the € 300 million of public money that is available for the 9-year period 2014-2022 (119 million from the EU budget (7.5M of EURI), 59.7 of national financing, and 120M of additional national financing). The most recent modification extended the programming period for 2-years, to 31 December 2022 and included two annual EAFRD allocations as well as the EU financed recovery funds (EURI).

The RDP for País Vasco focuses mainly on three priority areas. In order to improve the competitiveness of the farm sector, 19% of farmers will get support to restructure and modernise their farms and almost 3% of farms will get support for young farmers to launch their businesses. Around 1.000 farmers will receive funding to participate in quality schemes, local markets and short supply chain distribution and the region will support training for more than 20.000 participants. Restoring, preserving and enhancing of ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry-is also considered important with 16% of farmland under management contracts supporting biodiversity and landscapes. Nearly 53% of the rural population will be covered by a LEADER local development strategy and these strategies are expected to create around 530 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, there are 118 programmes in all 28 Member States¹. The RD Regulation for the period 2014-2022 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 the Basque country 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 Programme provides the funding for the networking of rural development actors in Spain.

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

País Vasco covers an area of 7 234 km², of which 70 % is rural. The region is home to 2.2 million people or 8 % of the Spanish population. Of the total area, farmland covers 30 % and forestry 55 %. The Basque region consists of three historical territories or provinces. There are significant differences between the more urbanised coastal provinces (Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia) and Alava, which is very rural. Given the geography of the region, its rural areas are closely linked to urban areas.

A key socio-economic strength is the fact that although agriculture and forestry represent only 0.5% of the total regional GDP, the two sectors play a key role in conserving the environment and landscapes, cultural heritage as well as the strategic agri-food sector.

The unemployment rate was 9.73% in 2012. The ageing of the population which, coupled with young people leaving for urban areas, may lead to land abandonment is considered a large problem in the region. In addition, other weaknesses include the fact that the farm sector is dominated by farms with no employees, low qualification levels in rural areas, as well as the fact that País Vasco is a very mountainous region that makes mechanisation of agriculture and forestry processes difficult.

2. HOW THE PAIS VASCO 'S RDP WILL ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES

In addressing these challenges, País Vasco'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

This cross-cutting priority will be addressed mainly through measures supporting training: more than 20.000 participants will be trained. There will also be support for 140 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 training, some 19 % of farms will receive funding for investments focused on restructuring and modernisation. Nearly 3 % 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, more than 4% of farms (around 1000 farms) will receive funding to participate in quality schemes, local markets and short supply chain distribution.

Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

Around 29% of the allocated amount will be used for area-based payments to farmers for using environment/climate friendly management practices, including organic farming. Nearly 16% of farmland will come under management contracts to improve biodiversity.

Resource efficiency and climate

Support allocated under this priority will mainly facilitate the supply and use of renewable sources of energy. There will be funds for farmland and forest land with the aim to contribute to fostering carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry.

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. Nearly 53% of the rural population will be affected by these local initiatives which will also create around 530 new jobs. In addition, the entire population of País Vasco will benefit from new or improved ICT services or infrastructure.

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

- € 107 million allocated to Measure 4: Investments in physical assets
- € 49.7 million allocated to Measure 13: Payments for areas facing natural constraints
- € 47.7 million allocated to Measure 19: LEADER
- € 26.7 million allocated to Measure 10 : Agri-environment-climate
- € 22 million allocated to Measure 8: Forestry

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

Target	Measure	€ Total public	%
Priority1: Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas²			
1A: Fostering innovation, cooperation, knowledge base 6.59% of RDP expenditure	01 knowledge		
	16 cooperation		
1B: Strengthening links (with research etc.) 140 cooperation projects	16 cooperation		
1C: Training 19.053 participants trained	01 knowledge		
Priority 2: Farm viability, competitiveness and sustainable forest management		78.030.198	25.98
2A: Economic performance, restructuring & modernisation 18.41 % of holdings with RDP support Number of holdings: 3.058	01 knowledge	393.018	0,13
	04 investments	60.965.435	20.30
	16 cooperation	300.000	0.10
2B: Generational renewal 2.81% of holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers Number of beneficiaries: 465	01 knowledge	1.275.244	0.42
	06 farm / business development	15.096.501	5.03
Priority 3: Food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management		62.114.966	20.68
3A: Improving competitiveness of primary producers 4.39 % of agricultural holdings receiving support for participating in quality schemes, local markets and short supply circuits, and producer groups/organisations	01 knowledge	158.993	0.05
	03 quality schemes	4.305.189	1.43
	04 investments	45.188.042	15.05
	09 producer groups	2.430.000	0.81
	16 cooperation	10.000.000	3.33
3B: Farm risk prevention and management	01 knowledge	32.742	0.01

² 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 forestry		85.574.509	28.50
4A Biodiversity	01 Knowledge	397.542	0.13
5.04 % of forest/other wooded area under contracts	04 Investments	1.527.166	0.51
15,75 % of agricultural land under contracts	08 Forests	2.804.690	0.93
4B Water management	10 AEC	24.146.908	8.04
0.51% of agricultural land under contracts	11 Organic farming		
0.76% of forestry land under contracts	13 ANC	5.472.710	1.82
4C Soil erosion and management	16 Cooperation	49.782.686	16.58
0.51% of agricultural land under contracts			0.48
0.76% of forestry land under contracts		1.442.807	
Priority 5: Resource efficiency and shift to low carbon and climate resilience economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors		24.957.812	8.31
5A Water efficiency	01 Knowledge	63.704	0.02
7.34% of irrigated land switching to more efficient irrigation systems	10 AEC	1.490.471	0.50
	16 Cooperation	150.000	0.05
5B Energy efficiency	01 Knowledge	10,227	0.00
	16 Cooperation	1.000.000	0.33
5C Renewable energy	01 Knowledge	71.027	0.01
56 321 373 euros investment in renewable energy production	08 Forest	15.611.281	5.20
	16 Cooperation	1.300.000	0.43
5D Reducing GHG and NH3	01 Knowledge	10000	0.00
	10 AEC	5.000	0.00

	16 Cooperation	150.000	0.05
5E Carbon conservation and sequestration	01 Knowledge	10.000	0.00
0.14 % of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration or conservation	08 Forest	3.712.999	1.34
	10 AEC	1.073.103	0.36
	16 Cooperation	300.000	0.10
Priority 6: Social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas		48.955.708	16.30
6A Diversification, creation of small enterprises and jobs	01 Knowledge	149.975	0.05
1014 of beneficiaries of related training activities	16 Cooperation	100.000	0.03
6B Fostering local development	01 Knowledge	44.874	0.01
52.59 % rural population under local development strategies			
530 jobs created (via LEADER)	16 Cooperation	300.000	0.10
	19 LEADER and CLLD	47779788	15.91
6C Access to and quality of ICT	01 knowledge	581071	0.19
100 % of rural population benefiting from new or improved services/infrastructures (ICT)			
520 beneficiaries of related training activities			
Technical Assistance		679 245.28	0.23
Total public expenditure €		300.312.438,28	100