

## European Commission approves 2014-2020 Rural Development Programmes for the Azores and Madeira

### **Azores**

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Azores, Portugal was formally adopted by the European Commission on 13 February, 2015, outlining the Azores' priorities for using the € 340 million of public money that is available for the 7 year period 2014-2020 (€ 295 million EUR from the EU budget and € 45 million EUR of national co-funding).

The main objective is to improve the sustainability of the agro-forestry sector by increasing the competitiveness of local agricultural production, whilst reinforcing the preservation and restoration of the environment and traditional landscapes. The RDP aims to provide **investment support to modernise and restructure to around 1 000 farms**. Nearly **1 700 people will receive training**. As regards the management of natural resources, the RDP aims to have nearly **70 000 hectares under contract to improve soil management and/or prevent soil erosion**. Around 7% of the funds will be used for local initiatives, aiming to **create 80 new jobs** and to improve living conditions for the rural population.

### **Madeira**

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Madeira Portugal was formally adopted by the European Commission today / on 13 February 2015, outlining Madeira's priorities for using the € 207 million of public money that is available for the 7 year period 2014-2020 (€ 179 million from the EU budget and € 25 million of national co-funding).

The main objective is to increase the sustainability of the agro-forestry sector in the region of Madeira by boosting the competitiveness of the local agricultural production and restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems. Almost **20% of the agricultural land will be under contract for biodiversity, 30% for water management and 30% for soil management**. Around **1 000 farmers will get support to modernise and restructuring** their farms, and **2 000 farmers will receive training**. The RDP will also use around 7% of funds for local initiatives, aiming to create more than **100 new jobs** and to improve the living conditions of the rural population of the region.

*Quote from EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan: "I am pleased to announce the official approval of the other two Portuguese RDPs, from Madeira and Azores, after the approval of the Mainland programme last December. These regional programmes are tailor-made to take up at regional level the specific challenges faced by their rural areas. They will bring a high contribution to the revitalisation of those areas – restoring, preserving and enhancing traditional landscapes and ecosystems as well as promoting local development."*

Support under [Rural Development](#) (RD) is the 2nd Pillar of the [Common Agricultural Policy](#). It provides Member States with an envelope of EU funding to manage, at either national or regional level, multi-annual, co-funded programmes. In total, 118 programmes are foreseen in all 28 Member States. The new [RD Regulation](#) for the 2014-2020 period addresses six economic, environmental and social priorities. Programmes contain clear targets setting out what is to be achieved. To better coordinate actions 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.

For [more details, including of the mainland Portugal RDP](#)