

## **Sweden's Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020 approved by European Commission**

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Sweden was formally adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015. It outlines Sweden's priorities for using nearly € 4.3 billion of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (€ 1.8 billion from the EU budget, including € 18 million transferred from the 2014-2015 envelope for CAP direct payments, and € 2.5 billion of national co-funding, plus € 2.9 million of additional national funding top-ups).

The RDP for Sweden focuses on restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry. More than 28% of agricultural land will come under contracts for biodiversity and around 33% for better water management. Responding to the need for innovation in rural areas, Sweden will implement the European Innovation Partnership and plans to create around 170 000 places on training courses. The programme will invest in local development with more than 50% of the rural population helped by local development strategies which will be carried out by 50 Local Action Groups across the country. Around € 387 million will be devoted to broadband and 43% of the rural population can expect better access to services and infrastructure. Sweden is also expecting the RDP to support the creation 3 400 rural jobs outside the agricultural sector.

Welcoming today's approval, EU Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Phil Hogan stated: *"One of the great strengths of our Rural Development concept is that we have core priorities, but it is up to each Member State or region to design programmes which suit their situation. And we see good examples of this today where the Swedish programme puts particular emphasis on environmental concerns, promoting innovation and encouraging local initiatives."*

Support for [Rural Development](#) is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar of the [Common Agricultural Policy](#), providing Member States with an envelope of EU funding to manage nationally or regionally under multiannual, 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, and programmes contain clear targets setting out what is to be achieved. It put also emphasis on networking activities at EU and national level. 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.