



## **Factsheet on 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme Principado de Asturias**

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Asturias was formally adopted by the European Commission on 3 August 2015, and last modified on 3 September 2021. It outlines the Principado de Asturias's priorities for using the € 616 million of public money that is available for the 9- year 2014-2022 period (€ 447 million from the EU budget, out of which 28 million EURI, and € 197 million of national co-funding). 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 Principado de Asturias focuses on two main priorities. Restoring, preserving and enhancing of ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry is the first, and it plans to have 47% of farmland come under management contract to improve biodiversity. The second is to improve the competitiveness of the farm sector, to that end 2 500 farmers will get support to restructure and modernise their farms and 683 young farmers will get support to launch their businesses. More than 26% of the rural population will benefit from improved services and infrastructures and will be covered by LEADER local development strategies which are expected to create around 500 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, 114 programmes are foreseen in all 27 Member States along with four in the United Kingdom. The Rural Development 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 the Principado de Asturias 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 the national level and 17 regional RDPs. However, common elements to the programmes are presented in a national framework. In addition, the National Rural Network provides the funding for the networking of rural development actors in Spain.

Principado de Asturias covers an area of 10 603 km<sup>2</sup> and is home to 1.1 million people. The centre of the region is mainly urban with a concentration of the population while the rest is rural and undergoing depopulation. Of the total area, farmland covers 16.2 % and forestry 72.2 %.

Livestock is by far the most important agricultural sector in the region. With a total of 17 614 livestock farms, 85% are oriented to meat production and 15% to milk production of high quality standards. Forest activity (social, economic and environmental value), increasing economic diversification and privileged natural and cultural heritage are other strengths of this region.

Weaknesses include an unemployment rate of 10.5 % (2012), the ageing and masculinization of the rural population which, coupled with young people leaving for urban areas, may lead to land abandonment. This is considered a large problem in the region. In addition, other weaknesses include the fact that the farm sector is dominated by small livestock farms (49,7% of farms have less than 5 ha), with no or low qualified employees as well as the fact that Principado de Asturias is a very mountainous region which makes mechanisation of agriculture and forestry difficult.

## **2. HOW THE PRINCIPADO DE ASTURIAS'S RDP WILL ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES**

In addressing these challenges, Principado de Asturias'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

There will be support for 33 cooperation projects under the cooperation measure.

### Competitiveness of agri sector and sustainable forestry

Besides previously mentioned support for cooperation projects, some 10 % of farms will receive funding for investments focused on restructuring and modernisation. Over 2 % 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, 187 agro-industries will receive funding for investments in processing and marketing.

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

Around 33 % of the allocated amount will be used for this priority through, for example, area-based payments to farmers for using environment/climate friendly practices, including organic farming. The RDP will support the conversion or maintenance of organic farming on 30 000 hectares. More than 47% of farmland will come under management contracts to improve biodiversity, water management and soil erosion.

### Resource efficiency and climate

Support allocated under this priority will mainly facilitate investments in afforestation and establishment of agroforestry systems. 500 ha will get support for establishment and maintenance of agro-forestry systems.

## 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. More than 26% of the rural population will be affected by these local initiatives which will also create around 500 new jobs.

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

- € 134 million allocated to Measure 4: Investments in physical assets
- € 111 million allocated to Measure 19: LEADER
- € 106 million allocated to Measure 13: Payments for areas facing natural constraints
- € 90 million allocated to Measure 8: Forestry

## Annex 1: Indicative public support for the Rural Development Programme in Asturias

Target	Measure	€ Total public	%
<b>Priority1: Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas<sup>1</sup></b>			
1A: Fostering innovation, cooperation, knowledge base 0.71 % of RDP expenditure	16 cooperation		
1B: Strengthening links (with research etc.) 33 cooperation projects	16 cooperation		
<b>Priority 2: Farm viability, competitiveness and sustainable forest management</b>		<b>153 910 378</b>	<b>24.97</b>
2 A: Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation	04 investments	90 339 623	14.66
10.46 % of agricultural holdings will receive support for investments in restructuring or modernisation	16 cooperation	4 375 000	0.71
	M21 COVID-19 Crisis	11 320 755	1.84
2B: Generational renewal 2.86% of holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers	06 farm / business development	47 875 000	7.77
<b>Priority 3: Food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management</b>		<b>39 088 468</b>	<b>6.34</b>
3A: Competitiveness of producers	04 investments	39 088 468	6.34
<b>Priority 4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems in agriculture and forestry<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>204 973 544</b>	<b>23.11</b>
4A Biodiversity 47.03 % of UAA under contracts	04 investments	5 400 000	0.88
4B Water management 47.03 % of UAA under contracts	07 basic Services	8 259 057	1.34
	10 AEC	58 233 333	9.45
	11 organic farming	22 202 666	3.60
4C Soil erosion and management 47.03 % of UAA under contracts	12 NAT 2000&WFD	4 078 487	0.66
	13 ANC	106 800 000	17.33
<b>Priority 5: Resource efficiency and shift to low carbon and climate resilience economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors</b>		<b>90 727 083</b>	<b>14.72</b>

<sup>1</sup> No financial allocation shown for Priority 1 as the expenditure is distributed across other focus areas.

<sup>2</sup> Expenditure under Priority 4 is programmed for the priority as a whole, not for individual focus areas

5E Carbon conservation and sequestration 0.04% of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration and conservation	08 forest	49 145 660	7.97
5F+ Improve forest usage 0.5% of forest surface affected by M08.1, M08.2 and M08.6	08 forest	41 581 423	6.75
<b>Priority 6: Social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas</b>		<b>115 490 085</b>	<b>18.74</b>
6B Local development 26.12 % rural population in LDS 94,99 % rural population with improved services/infrastructures 500 jobs created	07 Basic services	3 773 585	0.61
	19 LEADER and CLLD	111 716 500	18.13
<b>Technical Assistance</b>		7 059 498	1.15
<b>Discontinued measures</b>		5 075 471	0.82
<b>Total public expenditure €</b>		<b>616 324 527</b>	<b>100.00</b>