

European Commission approves 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme for Flanders

The Flemish [Rural Development Programme](#) (RDP) was formally adopted by the European Commission on 13 February 2015. It outlines Flanders' priorities for using € 916 million of public funding that is available for the period 2014-2020 (€ 384 million from the EU budget plus € 288 million of national co-funding, plus € 247 million of additional national top-ups).

With increased sustainability of agriculture as its main objective, the RDP will support around half the region's farms to restructure and modernise. Better management of natural resources and more climate-friendly farming practices represent the second major focus of the programme. It will support 3 000 farm investment projects related to **environment/climate friendly and resource efficient farming**, around **6 000 investments** aiming at a better **energy efficiency** and **5 000 investment projects aiming at reducing GHG emissions**. For several years, the number of farms in Flanders has been decreasing. To address this issue, the programme will support 1 400 young farmers. A novelty for Flanders in its rural development programme is the all-weather insurance scheme that targets 5% of farms. Further measures aim to boost innovation, provide training opportunities and enhance the vitality of rural areas and strengthen their relationship with cities.

Quote from EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan: "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 Flemish programme is aiming to provide support to enhance farm viability and competitiveness, to encourage environmental and climate-friendly farming practices and to stimulate innovation."

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 [details in Dutch](#)