



December 2023

Factsheet on 2014-2022 Rural Development Programme for the Czech Republic

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for the Czech Republic was formally adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015, outlining the Czech priorities for using the nearly € 3.1 billion of public money available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (€ 2.3 billion from the EU budget and € 769 million of national co-funding).

After the 9th RDP amendment (adopted on 28 June 2021) covering the transitional period (2021-2022), the total public contribution amounts to almost € 4.8 billion of which nearly € 3.1 billion (65%) represents EU contribution.

With the 2nd RDP amendment (adopted in June 2016), the Czech Republic increased the national contribution by which total public contribution reached more than € 3.5 billion.

With the 5th RDP amendment (adopted in December 2018), the Czech Republic cancelled measure 2 – advisory services and decided to use entirely national aid instead. The financial transfer in favour of measure 1 – knowledge transfer has been done. In addition, aid to support biogas plants has also been cancelled; renewable energy is supported only through the production of wooden pellets. Remaining budgetary allocation was transferred in favour of young farmers (measure 6.1) and equipment for wood industry (measure 8). The condition of “active farmer” (Art. 9 of Reg. 1307/2013) is not anymore applicable for RDP.

With the 6th RDP amendment (adopted in April 2019), the Czech authorities decided to repeal measure M16.6.1 “Horizontal and vertical cooperation for supply of biomass” due to its very low uptake. The budget within priority 5C (€ 730 000 EAFRD) was reallocated to measure M16.2.2 – cooperation in processing of agricultural products (priority 3A).

With the 8th RDP amendment (adopted in July 2020), the Czech managing authority proposed substantial allocation of national top-ups of total amount € 136.3 million as a response to Covid crises. This amount was redistributed within investment measures “Investment to agricultural holdings” M4.1.1 (50%), “Processing and marketing of agricultural products” M4.2.1 (25%), measure “Animal welfare” M14 (17%), measure “Forest renewal after calamity” M8.4.1 (5%) and measure “Land consolidation” M4.3.2 (3%). By this amendment, total public allocation reached € 3.68 billion (€ 2.3 billion from the EU budget).

With the 9th RDP amendment (adopted in June 2021), the validity of the RDP was extended by two years (2021-2022) and financial allocation was increased by € 760 million (€ 575 million transitional funds and € 185.5 million EURI funds). The main measures benefiting from this allocations are M13 – Areas with Natural Constraints (36% of total allocation), M10 – Agro-environment (26%), M11 – Organic Farming (16%) and M04 – Investment (13%). Above all, national top-ups were increased within measure 4.2.1 (processing and marketing of agricultural products) from € 34 to 40.2 million.

With the 10th RDP amendment (adopted in July 2022), targets were amended due to additional resources from the national top-up financing for investment measures (accounting for € 151.5 million); internal transfers of balances between measures with the aim to improve budget execution at the end of the programming period; and transfer of € 7.84 million from the first pillar to Technical assistance. As a result, the performance reserve has also been amended.

With the 11th amendment (adopted in July 2023) the Czech managing authority amended measure M01 (education) with new eligibility conditions due to the eligibility of demonstration farms for which also additional amounts were allocated within this measure. Furthermore, some investment measures (e.g., M4.3.1 - Land consolidation or M6.4.1 - Investment to non-agricultural activities) received additional allocation due to a transfer from other investment measures. Similar budgetary transfers were also carried out in the area aid measures to ensure optimal use of remaining funds by the end of the programming period. Due to the limits of the national budget, the national top-ups were decreased for around 8% (€ 15 million).

The RDP for the Czech Republic focuses mainly on ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and encouraging climate friendly farming practices, with around 25 % of agricultural land under the contract to improve soil management and prevent soil erosion and 11 % to improve water management. The second focus is to increase the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry as well as that of the food industry aiming to provide investment support to almost 7 000 farms, to 1 500 beneficiaries in processing and marketing of agricultural products and to 1 400 young farmers. The RDP will also help boosting the rural economy by creating almost 1 400 new jobs. The priorities will be completed by knowledge transfer, where more than 50 000 participants will be trained.

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, 118 programmes are foreseen in all 28 Member States. The new RD Regulation 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 that the Czech Republic 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 budget.

1. SITUATION AND KEY CHALLENGES

The Czech Republic covers an area of 78 860 km². 54% is agricultural land and 34% is forest land. Agricultural land comprises 72% arable land, 27% permanent grassland and meadows and 1% permanent crops. 50% of agricultural land is classified as affected by natural constraints limiting its production potential.

The Czech Republic is mainly uplands and highlands. 61% of its territory is 400 m or more above sea level. NATURA2000 areas cover 14% of the area. Only 14% of species and habitats are in a favourable state. 40% of agricultural land is at risk of soil erosion.

The Czech Republic has 10.5 million inhabitants, of which 33 % live in predominantly rural areas and 43% live in intermediate regions. The unemployment rate is 2.8% (2018). However, 19% of all youth is unemployed. Over 80% of rural people commute to work. This reduces the demand for products and services produced in rural areas and the feasibility of entrepreneurship in rural areas.

Czech agriculture has a dual structure: 89% of farms are small and cover only 30% of the agricultural area. The remainder (11%) are larger farms. They cover 70% of the agricultural area and 74% of agricultural land is rented. The average size of a farm is about 130 ha. Land ownership is highly fragmented with approximately 1 million farmers having farms that are, on average, only 3.65 ha in area. In the recent past, the number of farm workers has continuously fallen and this has brought about an unfavourable age structure in both agriculture and forestry. The share of agriculture in total employment is 2.4%. The average labour productivity in agriculture has been increasing, but this is still lower than the average for the EU (as is also the case for the food and forestry sectors).

2. HOW THE CZECH RDP WILL ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES

In addressing these challenges, the RDP will fund actions under all six Rural Development priorities – with a particular emphasis on Priority 4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry. The focus of each priority is explained briefly below. **Priority 1** which concerns knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas is incorporated into the remaining 5 priorities.

Priority 2: Competitiveness of agriculture and sustainable forestry

Under this priority the RDP includes support to modernise 6941 farms (16% of the total). The aim is to improve their overall performance and competitiveness. It will also support 542 land consolidation projects, which will improve the competitiveness of the farms and reduce the risk of soil erosion.

Generational renewal will be enhanced by providing start-up support to 1273 young farmers. These actions will be supported by knowledge transfer activities via vocational training, information actions and integrating knowledge from research in order to provide innovative solutions to increase the sustainability and productivity of agriculture and the food industry. Around 1000 cooperation projects, including 14 projects within EIP Operational Groups, are to be supported. The competitiveness of the forestry should be increased by building and/or modernizing 830 km of forest roads and by investing in modern technologies on around 1200 private forestry enterprises.

Priority 3: Food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture

The RDP aims to increase the added value of agricultural production by supporting almost 1565 operations in agricultural processing and marketing as well as supporting short supply chains and local markets. The RDP will also improve animal welfare on 1400 farms.

Priority 4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

Under this priority, the RDP will target more than 1 million ha to prevent land abandonment and to promote organic farming (support to either maintain or convert 551 413 ha to organic farming). This will maintain sustainable farming in areas with natural and other specific constraints. It will also bring benefits in terms of biodiversity and the environment. 868 000 ha of farmland will be subject to voluntary agri-environmental and climate-related commitments by farmers, who will receive training and advice regarding so that they can

better deliver environmental and climate-related benefits. Preventive and restorative actions will increase the resilience of forests in the face of natural disasters.

Priority 5: Resource efficiency and climate

Under this priority, the RDP will support renewable energy investments to produce wooden pellets (40 projects). It will also support the afforestation of 920 ha of agricultural land in order to increase CO₂ sequestration.

Priority 6: Social inclusion and local development in rural areas

Under this priority, the RDP aims to create 660 jobs through operations focused on investments into non-agricultural activities and agro-tourism. Within Leader itself, 160 Local Action Groups will be supported and 750 jobs created. Actions under this priority will be complemented by other ESI Funds interventions in the context of multi-funds Community Led Local Development initiatives.

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

- € 1164 million (24%) allocated to Measure 10 (Agri-Environment Climate)
- € 1151 million (24%) allocated to Measure 13 (Payments for areas with natural constraints and other specific constraints)
- € 1045 million (22%) allocated to Measure 4 (Productive investments)
- € 500 million (10%) allocated to Measure 11 (Organic Farming)

Annex 1: Indicative public support for the Rural Development Programme in the Czech Republic (ver. 12.2) – December 2023

CCI	2014CZ06RDNP001
Version	12.2

Target	Measure	Indicative public support	%	
P1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas		0,00		
1A Innovation, cooperation, knowledge		0,00		
T1: percentage of expenditure under Articles 14, 15 and 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 in relation to the total expenditure for the RDP (focus area 1A)	2,69 M01 Knowledge	0,00		
	M16 Cooperation	0,00		
1B Research & innovation		0,00		
T2: Total number of cooperation operations supported under the cooperation measure (Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013) (groups, networks/clusters, pilot projects...) (focus area 1B)	192,00 M16 Cooperation	0,00		
1C Lifelong learning and vocational training		0,00		
T3: Total number of participants trained under Article 14 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 (focus area 1C)	28.559,00 M01 Knowledge	0,00		
P2: Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests		954.684.862,94	19,95%	
2A Farm performance		Total: 2A	792.032.445,63	16,55%
T4: percentage of agricultural holdings with RDP support for investments in restructuring or modernisation (focus area 2A)	26,45 M01 Knowledge	2.526.452,20	0,05%	
	M04 Physical Investment	765.331.918,91	16,00%	
	M16 Cooperation	24.174.074,52	0,51%	
2B New farmers		Total: 2B	56.914.166,23	1,19%
T5: percentage of agricultural holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers (focus area 2B)	4,80 M01 Knowledge	199.226,00	0,00%	
	M06 Farm and business development	56.714.940,23	1,19%	
2C+ FA_2C+		Total: 2C+	105.738.251,08	2,21%
94310: Zlepšení struktury LDS - navýšení hustoty	0,23 M01 Knowledge	152.003,22	0,00%	
	M04 Physical Investment	53.212.266,73	1,11%	
	M08 Forest	52.373.981,13	1,09%	
P3: Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture		541.449.800,40	11,32%	
3A Competitiveness of producers		Total: 3A	541.449.800,40	11,32%
T6: percentage of agricultural holdings receiving support for participating in quality schemes, local markets and short supply circuits, and producer groups/organisations (focus area 3A)	0,01 M01 Knowledge	1.002.018,49	0,02%	
93730: Podíl potravinářských podniků s podporou z PRV na investice do přidávání hodnoty vůči všem potravinářským podnikům	4,42 M04 Physical Investment	226.077.884,99	4,73%	
	M14 Animal welfare	222.598.034,03	4,65%	
	M16 Cooperation	91.771.862,89	1,92%	

P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry			2.905.859.348,07	60,74%
4A Biodiversity, HNV and landscapes		Total: P4	2.905.859.348,07	60,74%
T8: percentage of forest/other wooded area under management contracts supporting biodiversity (focus area 4A)	0,12	M01 Knowledge	8.868.556,86	0,19%
T9: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes (focus area 4A)	28,75	M08 Forest	61.213.211,01	1,28%
4B Water management		M10 Agri-environment-climate	1.163.915.476,38	24,33%
T10: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve water management (focus area 4B)	15,79	M11 Organic Farming	500.279.080,39	10,46%
4C Soil management		M12 NAT 2000 & WFD	6.968.245,88	0,15%
T12: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve soil management and/or prevent soil erosion (focus area 4C)	16,82	M13 Areas with natural constraints	1.150.786.191,16	24,05%
T13: percentage of forestry land under management contracts to improve soil management and/or prevent soil erosion (focus area 4C)	0,52	M15 Forest-environment	13.828.586,39	0,29%
P5: Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors			11.892.879,85	0,25%
5C Renewable energy		Total: 5C	2.724.305,05	0,06%
T16: Total investment in renewable energy production (€) (focus area 5C)	6.572.805,61	M06 Farm and business development	2.724.305,05	0,06%
5E Carbon conservation / sequestration		Total: 5E	9.168.574,80	0,19%
T19: percentage of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration and conservation (focus area 5E)	0,02	M01 Knowledge	52.404,44	0,00%
		M08 Forest	9.116.170,36	0,19%
P6: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas			307.711.140,26	6,43%
6A Diversification, SMEs and job creation		Total: 6A	82.604.846,86	1,73%
T20: Jobs created in supported projects (focus area 6A)	657,00	M06 Farm and business development	82.604.846,86	1,73%
6B Local development		Total: 6B	225.106.293,40	4,71%
T21: percentage of rural population covered by local development strategies (focus area 6B)	66,51	M19 LEADER and CLLD	225.106.293,40	4,71%
T23: Jobs created in supported projects (Leader) (focus area 6B)	750,00			
M20 TA			38.840.000,00	0,81%
			38.840.000,00	0,81%
M113 Early retirement			23.962.157,58	0,50%
			23.962.157,58	0,50%
M341 Skills-acquisition and animation			0,00	0,00%
			0,00	0,00%
Total public expenditure			4.784.400.189,10	100,00%

Total public support per measure

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Measure	Indicative public support	%
M10 Agri-environment-climate	1.163.915.476,38	24,33%
M13 Areas with natural constraints	1.150.786.191,16	24,05%
M04 Physical Investment	1.044.622.070,63	21,83%
M11 Organic Farming	500.279.080,39	10,46%
M19 LEADER and CLLD	225.106.293,40	4,71%
M14 Animal welfare	222.598.034,03	4,65%
M06 Farm and business development	142.044.092,14	2,97%
M08 Forest	122.703.362,50	2,56%
M16 Cooperation	115.945.937,41	2,42%
M20 TA	38.840.000,00	0,81%
M113 Early retirement	23.962.157,58	0,50%
M15 Forest-environment	13.828.586,39	0,29%
M01 Knowledge	12.800.661,21	0,27%
M12 NAT 2000 & WFD	6.968.245,88	0,15%
M341 Skills-acquisition and animation	0,00	0,00%
Sum:	4.784.400.189,10	100,00%