

## European Commission approves England's Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for England was formally adopted by the European Commission today / on 13 February, 2015. It outlines England's priorities for using the €4 056 million of public money that is available from 2014-2020 (€3 471 million from the EU budget, including €1 694 million transferred from the UK envelope for CAP direct payments, plus €495 million of national co-funding, plus €90 million of national funding top-ups).

The main objective is better management of natural resources and the wider adoption of farming practices which are climate friendly. The **aim is to protect 2.5 million hectares of farmland** through environmental land management targeted to **specific biodiversity and water** objectives. Some **14 000 hectares of woodland will be planted**. The productivity of farming and forestry will be boosted which will result in economic growth and more jobs. Support will target **tourism, broadband infrastructure and renewable energy**. The programme will promote genuine local economic partnerships and the Leader approach. More than **120 000 training places** will be created to foster innovation, co-operation, more sustainable farming practices and stronger rural businesses.

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. I am optimistic that the investment provided through the English RDP will not only help to stimulate growth and jobs in rural areas, but also encourage agri-environment schemes and other measures that will address challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss."*

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](#)