

Four Spanish Rural Development Programmes for 2014-2020 approved by European Commission

A further 4 Spanish Rural Development programmes for the 2014-2020 period have been approved by the European Commission today.

Welcoming today's approval, EU Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Phil Hogan stated: *"Having previously approved the Spanish National Framework, I am pleased to see the approval of the first Spanish programmes today – as well as the National Programme, we see the regional programmes for Aragon, La Rioja, and Pais Vasco. The others will follow in the coming months. One of the great strengths of our Rural Development concept is that we have core priorities, but Member State or regions have flexibility to design their programmes to suit their situation. And we see good examples of this today where measures to encourage inter-regional producer organisations are covered within the national programme, whilst the regional RDPs put forward different ways of boosting competitiveness and addressing environmental concerns.*

National Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020 approved by European Commission

The National Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Spain was formally adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015, outlining Spanish priorities for using nearly € 435 million of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (€ 238 million from the EU budget and € 191 million of national co-funding, plus € 6 million of additional national funding top-ups).

The National RDP for Spain focuses on 3 priority areas. The most important priority is enhancing economic performance and the competitiveness of agricultural cooperatives. To this end, the RDP will provide support for setting up producers' organisations representing 5% of Spanish farmers, and for improving the competitiveness of 20 supra-regional agricultural cooperatives. The second priority consists on promoting an efficient use of natural resources, combating climate change and preserving rural heritage. The RDP also envisages to have almost 2 000 hectares of farmland switching to more water efficient irrigation systems, to introduce forest fire preventive actions on 3 000 forest hectares, as well as the creation of 590 kilometres of new greenways. The third priority is to foster innovation and collective approaches in the agricultural sector, with almost 200 cooperation projects to be funded under the RDP.

Aragon Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020 approved by European Commission

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Aragon was formally adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015, outlining Aragon's priorities for using the € 907 million of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (€ 467 million from the EU budget, and € 269.5 million of national co-funding, plus € 170.6 million of additional national funding top-ups).

The main objectives of the RDP for Aragon are to boost the viability of farms and forestry and promote a better management of natural resources. To this end, 4 400 farms will get investment support to restructure and modernise and 1 400 young farmers will receive support to develop their businesses. Almost 16% of the region's farmland will come under management contract to improve biodiversity and 20 000 hectares of irrigated land will switch to more efficient irrigation systems. As regards knowledge transfer and innovation, nearly 18 000 people will receive training and the region aims to support 330 cooperation projects in the framework of the European Innovation Partnership. Around 9% of the funds will be used for local initiatives, aiming to create 1 800 new jobs and to improve living conditions for the rural population, with almost one tenth of the rural population getting access to better infrastructure and services.

La Rioja Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020 approved by European Commission

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for La Rioja was formally adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015, outlining La Rioja's priorities for using the € 201.6 million of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (nearly € 70 million from the EU budget and € 70 million of national co-funding, plus € 61.6 million of additional national funding top-ups).

The main objective of the RDP is to enhance the viability of farming and forestry and the region will therefore give investment support to modernise and restructure around 18% of the farms in La Rioja. In addition, 4% of farms will receive start up aid for young farmers to launch their businesses. Almost 13 000 places will be made available in training courses and 30 cooperation projects will receive support. The RDP will also promote conservation and the protection of the environment, including more efficient use of resources and contribution to climate change reduction. Some 28% of irrigated farmland will receive support to improve water efficiency, 38% of the agricultural land will be under management contract to prevent soil erosion and desertification and 36% to protect biodiversity. Local Action Groups under LEADER will develop local initiatives affecting nearly 86% of the rural population and creating 50 new jobs. An estimated 42% of the population in rural areas will benefit from improved basic services and infrastructures.

País Vasco Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020 approved by European Commission

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for País Vasco was formally adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015, outlining País Vasco's priorities for using the € 292 million of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (€87.1 million from the EU budget, and € 51.4 million of national co-funding, plus € 153.4 million of additional national funding top-ups).

The RDP for País Vasco focuses mainly on three priority areas. In order to improve the competitiveness of the farm sector, 19% of farmers will get support to restructure and modernise their farms and almost 3% of farms will get support for young farmers to launch their businesses. Some 2 350 farmers will receive will receive funding to participate in quality schemes, local markets and short supply chain distribution and the region will support training for more than 22 000 participants. Restoring, preserving and enhancing of ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry-is also considered important with 13% of farmland and just above 1% of forestry land to come under management contract to improve biodiversity. Nearly 53% of the rural population will be covered by a LEADER local development strategy and these strategies are expected to create around

530 new jobs. In addition, the entire population of País Vasco will benefit from new or improved ICT services or infrastructure.

Background

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 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.