



Factsheet on 2014-2020 national framework for rural development in Germany

The German national framework for rural development was formally adopted by the Commission Implementing Decision C(2014) 9894 on 12 December 2014 and last amended by Commission Implementing Decision C(2024) 2119 on 25 March 2024. It defines specific elements of measures which are common to several regional Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) in Germany.

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 implemented in all 28 Member States¹. The 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 puts 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 was agreed with each Member State highlighting its broad strategy for EU-funded structural investments.

This document provides a brief overview of how the general challenges and opportunities faced by German rural areas are addressed through common measures defined in this framework programme.

1. SITUATION AND KEY CHALLENGES

Member States with regional programmes, like Germany, may submit for approval a national framework, containing common elements for the regional Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). In Germany, rural development is implemented through 13 regional RDPs broadly corresponding to the various Länder (but with two joint programmes). Common elements to the regional programmes are presented in this national framework (NF) established at federal level. A separate National Rural Network Programme provides the funding for the networking of the actors of rural development.

The EU funding comes from the EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) with an allocation for Germany, which amounts in total to roughly €13.18 billion² for the whole period. Thereof, €1.82 billion come from the transfer of the CAP direct payments in Germany and €710 million from the European Union Recovery Instrument to support the recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis. The total

¹ The UK left the Union on 31st January 2020; in accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement support under Rural Development continues to apply in the UK during the 2014-2020 programming period.

² Regulation (EU) 2020/2220 extended the duration of the 2014-2020 programming period until 31 December 2022 and provided Member States with additional budget allocations for the years 2021 and 2022. Hence, the total allocation for Germany increased from €9.45 to €13.18 billion.

financial allocation for Germany is spent through the 13 regional RDPs, with the exception of €6.5 million reserved for the National Rural Network Programme. Therefore, there is no specific budget (and financial table) for the NF.

The adoption of this programme by the Commission was a pre-requisite for the subsequent adoption of the German regional RDPs. It lays down elements common to measures, which may be implemented in the regional RDPs without a detailed description, but only with the additional information adapted to the specific characteristics of each region. Those measures should always be in line with the regional SWOT analysis and the assessment of needs.

2. HOW THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR GERMANY WILL ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES

Germany covers an area of 357 000 km² of which 88.2% is rural. Nearly 58% of the territory is agricultural land, while forests cover nearly 31%. The total population is over 83 million – of which 56% live in rural areas.

The NF programme first outlines a coherent approach to rural development in Germany deriving from the German Partnership Agreement. It then develops further elements relevant to all 13 regional RDPs by describing measures, which are implemented in at least four regional RDPs.

There are eight such measures, for which the general intervention logic as well as various types of operations are described in the NF. The eight measures are the following:

- investments in physical assets, in order to improve the overall performance and sustainability of agricultural holdings and the infrastructures related to the development of agriculture and forestry, but also the processing and marketing of agricultural products;
- restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and introduction of appropriate prevention: support for investments in preventive actions;
- farm and business development: support for investments in creation and development of non-agricultural activities, which contribute to the diversification of economic activities in rural areas;
- basic services and village renewal in rural areas: this includes for example support for broadband infrastructure and provision of access to broadband, support for studies/investments associated with the maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the cultural and natural heritage of villages, rural landscapes and high nature value sites, support for investments for public use in recreational infrastructure, tourist information and small scale tourism infrastructure;
- investments in the forestry sector: prevention and restoration of damage, improvement of the resilience and environmental value as well as the mitigation potential of forest ecosystem;
- agri-environment-climate payments for commitments going beyond mandatory requirements and promoting changes to agricultural practices which make a positive contribution to environment and climate;
- organic farming;
- payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints.

These measures contribute to the three cross cutting objectives of rural development policy (environment, climate change mitigation and adaptation, innovation) and cover all but one of the six EU priorities for rural development.

The national framework contributes to the simplification of rural policy implementation: when a measure is approved in the NF, this approval is valid for the same measure taken in different regional RDPs.