



## Factsheet on 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme for Saarland

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Saarland was formally adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015 and last amended on 17 January 2023, outlining Saarland's priorities for using the 83.5 million of total public contribution that is available for the 9-year period 2014-2022 (€ 47.7 million from the EU budget, including € 7.7 million transferred from the envelope for CAP direct payments, and € 32 € million of national co-funding plus € 3.8 million of additional national top-ups)

The RDP for Saarland focuses mainly on three priority areas. To enhance the competitiveness of the agri-sector, and sustainable forestry, 6.8% of agricultural holdings are intended to receive support for investments in restructuring or modernisation. Further, to restore, preserve and enhance ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry, 31% of agricultural land will be placed under management contracts for supporting biodiversity, improving water management and preventing soil erosion. Finally, to promote social inclusion and local development in rural areas, 96.2% of the rural population is intended to be covered by local development strategies and 17.5% should benefit from improved services/infrastructure.

Rural Development is the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 States<sup>1</sup>. The RD Regulation for the period 2014-2020 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 Saarland 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

In Germany rural development is implemented through 13 separate regional RDPs, which broadly correspond to the various *Länder* (but with two joint programmes). However, common elements to several regional programmes are presented in a national framework (NF) established at federal level. In addition to this, a National Rural Network Programme provides the funding for the networking of rural development actors in Germany.

Saarland is, apart from the German City States, the smallest German Federal Land in terms of area and population. It covers an area of 2 571 km<sup>2</sup>. Of the total area,

<sup>1</sup>The UK left the Union on 31 January 2020. In accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement, support under Rural Development continues to apply in the UK during the 2014-2020 programming period.

agricultural land covers 40.8 % and forestland 40.4%. 32.7% of the population - out of 994.000 inhabitants (2019) - live in intermediate areas and 67.3% in urban areas.

A key challenge for the 1 210 agricultural holdings (which have an average size of 64 ha) is to improve their economic and environmental performance.

Of the total utilized agricultural area (nearly 75 000 ha) 53.7% is permanent grassland and 45.8% is arable land. Key challenges related to agricultural land are erosion and abandonment, pressures on biodiversity and pollution of surface and ground waters.

Rural areas in Saarland are affected by demographic change and loss of business activity. The unemployment rate is 3.7% (2019). Key challenges in this context are creation of businesses and opportunities for local development and improvement of infrastructure.

## **2. HOW SAARLAND'S RDP WILL ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES**

In addressing these challenges, Saarland's RDP has been funding action under four out of six Rural Development Priorities – with a particular emphasis on restoring, preserving and enhancing of ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry as well as on social inclusion and local development in rural areas. The focus of each priority is explained briefly below.

### Competitiveness of agri sector and sustainable forestry

This priority is addressed through investments in physical assets and forestry infrastructure. 6.8 % of agricultural holdings are intended to invest in enhancements of their overall economic and environmental performance.

### Restoring, preserving and enhancing of ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

31% of farmland is intended to be managed with agri-environment-climate contracts to improve biodiversity, water management and soil management. There is also compensation for the additional costs incurred and income foregone due to the requirements of organic farming and the management obligations for Natura 2000 areas.

### Resource efficiency and climate

1.5% of agricultural and forestland is intended to be managed with contracts to foster carbon sequestration and conservation.

### Social inclusion and local development in rural areas

96.2% of the rural population is intended to be involved in local development strategies for actions to increase the competitiveness of the area, and 17.5% is intended to benefit from improved or expanded infrastructure. This priority is addressed through LEADER projects, investments in the creation of non-agricultural activities, basic infrastructure and village renewal.

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

- € 17.7 million allocated to Measure 7: Basic services and village renewal
- € 16.3 million allocated to Measure 11: Organic farming
- € 12.7 million allocated to Measure 13: Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints
- € 10.8 million allocated to Measure 19: LEADER and CLLD

## Annex 1: Indicative public support for the Rural Development Programme of Saarland

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Target	Measure	Indicative public support	%	
<b>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</b>		<b>8.377.792,00</b>	<b>10,03%</b>	
<b>2A Farm performance</b>	<b>Total: 2A</b>	<b>8.377.792,00</b>	<b>10,03%</b>	
T4: percentage of agricultural holdings with RDP support for investments in restructuring or modernisation (focus area 2A)	6,82 M04 Physical Investment	8.377.792,00	10,03%	
Total investment € (public + private)	27.457.140,00			
Nr of holdings supported for investment in agricultural holdings (4.1)	90,00			
<b>P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry</b>		<b>42.393.471,00</b>	<b>50,77%</b>	
<b>4A Biodiversity, HNV and landscapes</b>	<b>Total: P4</b>	<b>42.393.471,00</b>	<b>50,77%</b>	
T8: percentage of forest/other wooded area under management contracts supporting biodiversity (focus area 4A)	0,03 M07 Basic services	369.328,00	0,44%	
T9: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes (focus area 4A)	31,03 M08 Forest	600.000,00	0,72%	
<b>4B Water management</b>	M10 Agri-environment-climate	7.730.136,00	9,26%	
T10: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve water management (focus area 4B)	27,05 M11 Organic Farming	16.302.440,00	19,52%	
<b>4C Soil management</b>	M12 NAT 2000 & WFD	4.727.314,00	5,66%	
T12: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve soil management and/or prevent soil erosion (focus area 4C)	27,05 M13 Areas with natural constraints	12.664.253,00	15,17%	
<b>P4 All Focus Areas</b>				
Area (ha) under agri-environment-climate (10.1)	6.065,00			
Area (ha) - conversion to organic farming (11.1)	4.500,00			
Area (ha) - maintenance of organic farming (11.2)	12.000,00			
Area (ha) - NATURA 2000 AG land (12.1)	3.200,00			
<b>P5: Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors</b>		<b>462.928,00</b>	<b>0,55%</b>	
<b>5E Carbon conservation / sequestration</b>	<b>Total: 5E</b>	<b>462.928,00</b>	<b>0,55%</b>	
T19: percentage of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration and conservation (focus area 5E)	1,51 M08 Forest	462.928,00	0,55%	
<b>P6: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas</b>		<b>29.276.169,67</b>	<b>35,06%</b>	
<b>6A Diversification, SMEs and job creation</b>	<b>Total: 6A</b>	<b>1.110.000,00</b>	<b>1,33%</b>	
T20: Jobs created in supported projects (focus area 6A)	5,00 M06 Farm and business development	1.110.000,00	1,33%	
Total investment € (public + private)	4.000.000,00			
<b>6B Local development</b>		<b>Total: 6B</b>	<b>28.166.169,67</b>	<b>33,73%</b>
T21: percentage of rural population covered by local development strategies (focus area 6B)	96,18 M04 Physical Investment	0,00	0,00%	
T22: percentage of rural population benefiting from improved services/infrastructures (focus area 6B)	17,49 M07 Basic services	17.349.503,00	20,78%	
T23: Jobs created in supported projects (Leader) (focus area 6B)	7,00 M19 LEADER and CLLD	10.816.666,67	12,95%	
Population benefiting from improved services/infrastructures (7.1; 7.2; 7.4; 7.5; 7.6; 7.7)	60.000,00			
Population covered by LAG	330.000,00			
Number of LAGs selected	4,00			
<b>M20 TA</b>		<b>2.994.734,00</b>	<b>3,59%</b>	
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<b>Total public expenditure</b>		<b>83.505.094,67</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	