

European Commission approves the Netherlands' Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020

The Dutch Rural Development Programme (RDP) was formally adopted by the European Commission on 13 February 2015. It outlines the Netherlands' priorities for using the € 1.3 billion of public funding that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (€ 607 million from the EU budget and € 449 million of national co-funding, plus € 256 million of additional national funding top-ups).

The Dutch RDP has a strong environmental angle and aims to have 6% of the agricultural land under contract to stimulate biodiversity and improve water and soil management. In order to enhance the viability and competitiveness of the farm sector, the programme has a strong focus on stimulating innovative, sustainable investments, targeting 4% of all farms including those of young farmers. The programme also includes an all-weather insurance scheme which targets 2% of farmers. 11 000 farmers will receive training and 155 cooperation projects will be supported. The programme aims to create 250 new jobs in rural areas through the local development strategies developed by LEADER Local Action Groups that will cover 65% of the rural population. The local development strategies will also aim to strengthen the relationship between the rural areas and the cities.

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. The Netherlands has opted for efficiency by programming a relatively small number of measures covering 5 priorities. The Dutch programme is clearly focussed on two major issues, stimulating innovative investments and cooperation, and improving environmental sustainability."*

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.

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