



Factsheet on 2014-2022 Rural Development Programme for Liguria

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Liguria was formally adopted by the European Commission on October 6th 2015, outlining Liguria's priorities for using more than € 414 million of public money that is available for the 2014-2022 period (about € 186 million from the EU budget, € 13.5 of which from the NextGenerationEU recovery instrument and € 228 million of national co-funding).

Liguria's RDP puts particular emphasis on actions related to improving the competitiveness of the farm and forestry sectors and on restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems. The 19.76% of the agricultural land is expected to come under management contracts supporting better water management, 19.76% of the agricultural land will be under contracts to improve soil management and more than 21.76% of agricultural land will come under management contracts supporting biodiversity. To improve the competitiveness of farmers, over 2 378 farms will receive support to restructure or modernise their farms and around 758 young farmers will be granted business start-up aid. In this regard, particular emphasis is put on innovation when selecting operations and more than 4% of RDP public expenditure is earmarked to actions that foster innovation, cooperation and the development of the knowledge base. Liguria will also implement the European Innovation Partnership to help deliver innovative solutions to the farm sector. Finally, Liguria's RDP will contribute to social inclusion and economic development in rural areas with over 79% of the rural population covered by local development strategies, and it will provide better broadband access to more than 16% of the rural population in less developed rural area. The region will reduce the administrative burden for beneficiaries by using a simplified standard cost system to declare expenditure under certain investment measures. In addition, the Region is supporting the beneficiaries most hit by the consequences of the COVID 19 health crisis with a dedicated measure as well as through the funds stemming from the 100 % co-financed recovery instrument NextGenerationEU.

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 multi-annual, co-funded programmes. In total, 118 programmes are foreseen in all 28 Member States. The new 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 Liguria 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 budgets.

1. SITUATION AND KEY CHALLENGES

In Italy, rural development is implemented through 22 RDPs – one at national level and 21 regional RDPs (including "less developed", "transition" and "more developed" regions). In addition, the National Rural Network Programme provides the funding for the networking of rural development actors in Italy.

Liguria is a region located in the North-West of Italy, classified as a more developed region. It covers a total area of 5 420 km² of which agricultural land covers 16% (8% UAA) and forestry more than 60%. In the region almost 94% of the total area is classified as rural, almost 90% of which is currently considered Less Favoured Areas. Liguria has more than 1.5 million inhabitants of whom 54.2% live the rural area. The unemployment rate is 9.9% (2013) and there is a high rate of elderly in the population (28%).

In Liguria the farm sector is facing structural changes. The average size of the more than 20 000 farms is 2.6 hectares and only less than 3% of farms are over 10 hectares. The regional Utilised Agricultural Area is around 44 000 hectares, 50% of which is covered by grassland and pastures. Farmers mainly produce flowers and pot plants (counting for more than 70% of the agriculture gross marketable production of the region), vegetables, olive oil, wine, and animal products.

More than 40% of the energy produced by the region is from renewable sources, but energy production from biomass is very limited even if constantly increasing.

Nature is very important in Liguria. There are 104 Natura2000 sites covering 25.8% of the regional area. The main environmental challenges to be tackled are landslides, soil erosion and forest fires.

2. HOW LIGURIA'S RDP WILL ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES

In addressing these challenges, Liguria's RDP will fund operations under all six Rural Development priorities, with a particular emphasis on *Improving the competitiveness of the farm and forestry sectors* as well as *Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry* and *Promoting social inclusion and economic development in rural areas*. The focus of each priority is explained briefly below.

Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

The Region attaches importance to this priority, allocating more than 4% of the budget to this priority. It aims to boost interest in training and advisory initiatives. Knowledge transfer will address the training, coaching, information and advisory needs of the agricultural, food and forestry sectors as well other land holder and SMEs in rural areas, in particular related to sustainable agricultural and forestry practices, regulatory issues, innovation and technology, quality products and diversification. Over 4 600 places will be made available in training courses.

Innovation is also an important element: 83 projects will be supported to strengthen the link between agriculture, food and forestry sectors and research and the programme will implement the European Innovation Partnership.

Competitiveness of agri sector and sustainable forestry

Given the ageing farmer population and the very small size of farms, the RDP will support the start-up of 758 young farmers and investments and modernisation in almost 2 400 farms, with a specific emphasis on innovation as a means to increase competitiveness. The sustainability of agricultural production is taken into account also

by promoting a rational use of water resources and an efficient use of renewable energy resources through investments.

Finally, a temporary and exceptional support is granted to farmers affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

Food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture

Under this priority, Liguria will support the promotion of quality products and the participation of farmers in quality schemes: the RDP is expected to support 871 farms to participate in quality schemes. The RDP will also support the development and strengthening of supply chains, including short supply chains and local markets, in order to enlarge the market for regional products and ensure a higher added value to the farmer's production resulting in a higher income for the farmer. Cooperation and supply chain projects will also be financed for this purpose.

Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

Under this priority, Liguria will focus on environment-friendly farm investments and management procedures, with a particular emphasis on quality of water: the 19.76% of agricultural land will be under contracts to improve water management. The problem of water erosion will be tackled by placing 19.76% of the agricultural land and more than 340 hectares of forest land under management contracts combating soil erosion. Moreover more than 21.7% of agricultural land and 7 241 hectares of forestry land will be under management contracts supporting biodiversity.

About 13% of the allocated EAFRD amount will be used for area-based payments to farmers for using environment/climate-friendly land management practices, including organic farming, support to areas facing natural constraints and support to areas under Natura2000 management. Almost 2 500 hectares of farmland will receive support to either convert or maintain organic farming.

Resource efficiency and climate

Under this priority, RDP Liguria will pursue carbon conservation and sequestration mainly by supporting the prevention and restoration of damage to forest, the improvement of the resilience and environmental value of forest ecosystems, as well as their conservation, also by encouraging environmentally and climate friendly forest conservation services.

The region also expects investments of almost € 2.16 million of public and private funds in renewable energy production.

Social inclusion and local development in rural areas

RDP Liguria pays particular attention to social inclusion and economic development in rural areas, promoting it through support for farm and business development including also technological and ITC activities and services, and through the provision of basic services and village renewal in rural areas, including welfare and social care services. In this context, broadband investments in less developed rural area is given priority.

Moreover, Local Development Strategies will be implemented through 5 LEADER Local Action Groups and will cover almost 79 % of the rural population.

Thanks to the operations programmed under this priority, 94 additional jobs will be created, and 16.5% of the rural population in rural areas will benefit from new or improved broadband services/infrastructures.

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

- € 143 million allocated to measure 4 (Investments in physical assets)

- € 63 million allocated to measure 8 (Investments in forest area development and improvement of the viability of forests)
- € 37.5 million allocated to measure 7 (Basic services)
- € 34 million allocated to measure 6 (Farm / business development)

Annex 1: Indicative public support for the Rural Development Programme in Liguria

Target	Measure	€ Total public	%
Priority1: Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas¹			
1A: Fostering innovation, cooperation, knowledge base 4.44 % of RDP expenditure	01 knowledge		
	02 advisory		
	16 cooperation		
1B: Strengthening links (with research etc.) 83 cooperation projects	16 cooperation		
1C: Training 4 614 participants trained	01 knowledge		
Priority 2: Farm viability, competitiveness and sustainable forest management		147 384 521.38	35.58
2A: Economic performance, restructuring & modernisation 11.77 % of holdings with RDP support	01 knowledge	1 975 000	0.48
	02 advisory	660 000	0.16
	04 investments	93 316 813	22.53
	06 farm / business development	13 207 708	3.19
	08 forest	6 025 000	1.45
	16 cooperation	6 577 000	1.59
	21 Covid-19 crisis	6 193 000	1.49
2B: Generational renewal 3.75 % of holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers	01 knowledge	265 000	0.06
	02 advisory	215 000	0.05
	06 farm / business development	18 950 000	4.57
Priority 3: Food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management		35 766 655	8.63
3A: Improving competitiveness of primary producers 4.31 % of agricultural holdings receiving support for participating in quality schemes, local markets and short supply circuits, and producer groups/organisations	01 knowledge	510 000	0.12
	02 advisory	240 000	0.06
	03 quality schemes	3 245 000	0.78
	04 investments	18 686 655	4.51
	09 producer groups / organisations	800 000	0.19
	14 animal welfare	2 980 000	0.72
	16 cooperation	1 800 000	0.43
3B: Farm risk prevention and management	01 knowledge	85 000	0.02

¹ No financial allocation shown for Priority 1 as the expenditure is distributed across other focus areas.

% of farms participating in risk management schemes	02 advisory	90 000	0.02
	05 restoring agric. potential	7 330 000	1.77
Priority 4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems in agriculture and forestry²		120 095 461	28.99
4A Biodiversity 21.76% of agricultural land under contracts 1.93 % of forest/other wooded area under contracts	01 knowledge	1 400 000	0.34
	02 advisory	930 000	0.22
	04 investments	13 895 000	7.51
4B Water management 19.76 % of agricultural land under contracts	07 basic services	3 980 000	0.96
	08 forest	21 740 000	7.06
4C Soil erosion and management 19.76 % of agricultural land under contracts 0.09 % of forestry land under contracts	10 AEC	10 130 000	2.45
	11 organic farming	10 170 000	2.45
	12 NAT 2000 and WFD	2 120 000	0.51
	13 ANC	30 170 000	7.28
	16 cooperation	850 000	0.21
Priority 5: Resource efficiency and shift to low carbon and climate resilience economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors		34 465 000	8.32
5C Renewable energy Total investment in renewable energy production € 2 160 000	01 knowledge	320 000	0.80
	02 advisory	75 000	0.02
	06 farm / business development	1 080 000	0.26
5E Carbon conservation / sequestration 2.07 % of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration and conservation	01 knowledge	155 000	0.04
	08 Forest	13 105 000	6.80
	10 AEC	2 470 000	0.60
	11 organic farming	1 365 000	0.33
	16 Cooperation	845 000	0.20
Priority 6: Social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas		62 518 045	15.09
6A Diversification, SMEs and job creation 28 Jobs created in supported projects	01 Knowledge	875 000	0.21
	02 advisory	530 000	0.13
	06 farm / business development	860 000	0.21
	M07 Basic services	20 475 325	4.94
6B Fostering local development <u>78.93 %</u> of rural population covered by local development strategies <u>66 jobs</u> created (via LEADER)	19 LEADER and CLLD	26 692 720	6.44
6C Access to and quality of ICT 16.46 % of rural population benefiting from new or improved services/infrastructures (ICT)	07 basic services	13 085 000	3.16
Technical Assistance		13 942 980	3.37

² Expenditure under Priority 4 is programmed for the priority as a whole, not for individual focus areas

Discontinued measures (measure 113)		100 000	0.02
Total public expenditure €		414 272 663	100