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## EU Funding: the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

There are several EU funds available to help site managers to finance their work. The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) is one of them. This is the financial instrument of the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Rural Development. The legal basis of the fund is the Rural Development Regulation<sup>1</sup>. The fund provides support for sustainable rural development in the EU via national or regional rural development programmes. The last programmes have been adopted in the beginning of 2008 and project applications can be (soon) submitted to the managing authority of the rural development programme in your country.

This factsheet focuses on the rural development programmes.

### Rural Development Policy

The rural development policy and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development are set out in the Rural Development Regulation<sup>1</sup>. The objectives of the rural development policy are:

- Improving the competitiveness of farming and forestry sectors;
- Improving the environment and the countryside;
- Improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy.

Member States have developed a national rural development strategy plan to outline the national and EU priorities for rural development. The strategies will be implemented through a set of measures, put down in the national or regional rural development programme(s). The measures in the programmes are divided into 4 axes. Axis 1, 2 and 3 are in accordance with the objectives of the rural development policy. Axis 4 is the leader community initiative. The “Leader approach” to rural development involves highly individual projects designed and executed by local partnerships to address specific local problems<sup>1</sup>. Typically this would include a participative, bottom up approach involving local action groups of public and private stakeholders.

Within the 4 axes there are 40 measures eligible for funding<sup>2</sup>. Not all measure are included in all of the programmes, this varies per country / region. To get an overview of what can be funded in your country you can check the following website: [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/countries/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/countries/index_en.htm).

## General information

The following points apply for all the programmes:

- All the programmes are adopted for the financial period 2007 - 2013 but can change during this period, to be up to date, it is relevant to check the programmes every now and then to see if new measures have appeared in the programme.
- The total budget of the EAFRD for the period 2007-2013 is: 88 billion Euro<sup>3</sup>.
- The level of EU support from the EAFRD varies per axis and country. All programmes are also funded via national funds<sup>4</sup>. For some measure private funding is also required. See [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/countries/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/countries/index_en.htm) for more details in your country.
- All countries/ regions need to spend at least 10% of requested funds under axis 1 and 3, at least 25% of requested funds under axis 2 and at least 5% under axis 4<sup>1</sup>.
- Every rural development programme will be administered by a Managing Authority, which will be steered by a monitoring committee. The monitoring committee should include civil society and NGOs. Check the programme and the managing authority website in your country, which you can find via the website [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/countries/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/countries/index_en.htm) for more information on the programme in your country.

## Funding possibilities for site managers

Examples of measures / projects eligible for funding and of relevance to site managers include<sup>5</sup>:

- Payments to farmers to compensate for the cost incurred and forgone in managing Natura 2000 sites on their land;
- Support to private forest owners or forestry associations to cover the cost and income forgone resulting from restrictions aimed at safeguarding Natura 2000 sites;
- Agri-environment and forest environment payments to farmers / landowners;
- Encouraging of tourism activities through the provision of information centres, signposting and access to natural areas;
- Measures to raise environmental awareness.

See for [http://www.natura-international.org/europefund\\_resource.html](http://www.natura-international.org/europefund_resource.html) more examples.

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## References

- 1 Rural Development Regulation: Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural fund. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32005R1698:EN:NOT>
- 2 Measures are described in the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006 of 15 December 2006 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) , available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32006R1974:EN:NOT>. The list of measures is available in the annex.
- 3 Breakdown by Member State of Community support for rural development, in 2007 prices. Commission Decision 2007/283/EC available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:142:0021:0022:EN:PDF>
- 4 The ceiling of the EAFRD contribution per programme is in case of Axis 1 (competitiveness) and axis 3 (diversification and quality of life), 75% of the eligible public expenditure in the regions under the convergence objective, which are the least developed regions in Europe, and 50% of the eligible public expenditure in other regions. In case of axis 2 (improving the environment and country side) and axis 4 (Leader) 80% of the eligible public expenditure in the regions with the convergence objective and 55% in other regions will be the ceiling of the EAFRD contribution.
- 5 See: IEEP guide to the rural development fund (EAFRD)v.2.doc at [http://www.natura-international.org/europefund\\_resource.html](http://www.natura-international.org/europefund_resource.html)

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