

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

The Spanish National Framework for rural development has been formally adopted by the European Commission on 13 February 2015, and last amended on 6 February 2018. Establishing common elements for some measures which will be implemented through the different Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) in Spain, the approval of this framework is a prerequisite for the adoption of the remaining 18 Spanish RDPs.

[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 2014-2020 period 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 general challenges and opportunities faced by Spanish rural areas are addressed through common measures defined in this framework.

1. SITUATION AND KEY CHALLENGES

Spain covers an area of 506 000 km² of which 80% is rural. Of the total area, 50% is agricultural land while forests cover 18%. The total population is 46.7 million - of which 41% live in rural areas.

Member States with regional programmes, like Spain, may submit for approval a National Framework (NF) containing common elements for the RDPs. In Spain EU rural development policy is implemented through 17 regional RDPs, each for one of the Spanish regions, and 1 national RDP. Common elements to all programmes are presented in this National Framework established at national level.

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

The EU funding comes from the EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) with a total allocation for Spain of €8.3 billion for the period 2014-2020 which will be shared between the 18 territorial RDPs. There is therefore no specific budget (and financial table) for the NF.

The adoption of this NF by the Commission is a pre-requisite for the subsequent adoption of the remaining Spanish RDPs. It lays down elements common to measures which may be implemented in the RDPs. A detailed description of each measure will be included in each specific programme. The NF also includes a mechanism for the automatic transfer of funds between RDPs to ensure a more efficient use of the EAFRD funds across regions.

The NF first outlines a coherent approach to rural development in Spain, deriving from the Spanish Partnership Agreement. It then develops further elements relevant to all 18 RDPs by describing common conditions for certain measures. If a territorial RDP, as a result of its specific SWOT analysis and needs assessment, includes one of these measures, the common elements of the framework will have to be respected.

The NF describes common elements for the following 10 measures:

- Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, and helping farmers to benefit from those services
- 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;
- Farm and business development: business start-up aid for young farmers
- Investments in the forestry sector: afforestation and creation of woodland, establishment and maintenance of agro-forestry systems, prevention and restoration of damage, improvement of the resilience and environmental value as well as the climate change mitigation potential of forest ecosystem, forestry technologies and processing, mobilising and marketing of forest products;
- 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, compensating farmers for the constraints of agricultural production in the area concerned;
- Forest environmental and climate payments for commitments going beyond mandatory requirements and promoting changes to forest practices which make a positive contribution to environment and climate; conservation and promotion of forest genetic resources;
- Support for the establishment and operation of operational groups of the EIP for agricultural productivity and sustainability; support for pilot projects and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies
- LEADER local development, supporting the design and implementation of community-led local development strategies

These measures contribute to the three cross cutting objectives of rural development policy (environment, climate change mitigation and adaptation, innovation) and cover 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 when included in one of the 18 territorial RDPs.