

Brussels, 21 November 2007

Rural Development Plan for Wallonia (Belgium)

Region profile:

- Size: 16,844 km².
- 3.4 million inhabitants; half of them live in what are considered as rural areas.
- Unemployment rate of 17% with a high share in the age group 15-24 years
- In 2005, approximately 17,000 agricultural holdings managed 0.75 million hectares of cultivated land or 45% of the total Walloon surface. A further 32% of the surface is covered by forests.
- The cultivated land can roughly be split into two parts: 57% are fodder crops, 38% arable crops.
- Around 19% of all farms are managed on part-time basis.
- Some 37% of the UAA is classified as less-favoured area. Natura 2000 sites cover some 13% of the total Walloon territory; 30% of the forest area and 5% of the UAA is under Natura 2000 status.
- The food sector is very diversified; its main components are bakery products, meat, drinks, dairy products and sugar. Organic farming only represents a minor share of the agriculture output (around 1%).

Chosen strategy corresponding to the profile

The overall objectives were chosen in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG) and the National Strategy Plan and are:

- Towards a more competitive agriculture sector by responding to market fluctuations and society's expectations and by encouraging added value,
- Reinforcing the complementarity between agriculture/forestry and environment and encouraging the multifunctionality of agriculture activities,
- Stimulating dynamic and lively rural areas and making them more attractive as places to live and to work,
- Local capacity building for developing the endogenous development of rural areas.

Total Budget and EU funding

Axis	Total Public Expenditure (in €)	Share of EAFRD* in Public expenditure in %	EAFRD Contribution (in €)
Axis 1	222,000,000	30	66,600,000
Axis 2	188,114,000	50	94,057,000
Axis 3	37,133,194	50	18,566,597
LEADER	19,732,000	50	9,866,000
Technical assistance	10,000,000	50	5,000,000
Total	476,979,194	40.69	194,089,597

* EAFRD = European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Overall aim of the RD programme in Wallonia

- Stimulating a dynamic and innovative agriculture sector,
- encouraging sustainable production methods with a view to improving the environment,
- improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy,
- local capacity building for more employment and diversification

Axis 1: Budget allocation and main priorities:

Total public funding: € 222,000,000 – EAFRD contribution: € 66,600,000 (30 % of programme total)

Main priorities: modernisation of agriculture holdings (43.2% of total public expenditure for axis 1), setting up of farms (35.6%), adding value to agriculture products (18.0%).

Axis 2: Budget allocation and main priorities:

Total public funding: € 188,114,000 – EAFRD contribution: € 94,057,000 (50 % of programme total)

Main priorities: agro environment measure (77.7% of total public expenditure for axis 2), LFA payments (17.5%), Natura 2000 payments (3.2%).

Axis 3: Budget allocation and main priorities:

Total public funding: € 37,133,194 – EAFRD contribution: € 18,566,597 (50 % of programme total)

Main priorities: creation of micro-enterprises (32.3% of total public expenditure for axis 3), conservation and upgrading of rural heritage (24.2%), diversification (16.0%), basic services for the rural economy (10.8%), promotion of tourism activities (8.1%), training and information (8.1%).

Leader budget allocation and priorities:

Total public funding: € 19,732,000 – EAFRD contribution: € 9,866,000 (50 % of programme total)

The Leader axis will be implemented using axis 1, 2 and 3 measures, focussed on maintaining and developing the attractiveness of rural areas.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/index_en.htm