

Brussels, 20 December 2007

England's Rural Development Plan

Country profile:

- Size: 130,410 km²; 0% of the total land surface is alpine land (mountain area).
- 50.76 million inhabitants; with a population density of 382 inhabitants per km².
- Under the OECD definition, 0% of the land and 0% of the population are in rural areas. But under England's own rural definition, around 19% of the population live in rural areas.
- Over 70 per cent of the total England land area is under agricultural uses. In 2005/2006 approximately 120,000 farms managed this area.
- Forestry and woodland cover is around 9%.
- Around 17% of English agricultural land is designated as Less-Favoured Area
- In 2005/2006 around 60,000 farms were of a size that would occupy a farmer for at least half-time. Of these, in 2005-06 around 50% received income from diversification activities.
- Around 2.5% of farmland in England is organic.
- In 2004, the agriculture, hunting and forestry sector accounted for 2.6% of total employment in predominantly rural areas.
- Unemployment rate is 4.6%, which is among the lowest in the EU.

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:

- To build profitable, innovative and competitive farming, food and forestry sectors, that meet the needs of consumers and make a net positive contribution to the environment
- To improve the environment and countryside
- To enhance opportunity in rural areas, in a way that harnesses and builds upon environmental quality.

Budget over and share of EU funding

Axis	Public contribution			
	Total public	EAFRD contribution rate	EAFRD amount (note)	% of EAFRD total
Axis 1	447,545,140	77.06%	344,877,727	10.7%
Axis 2	4,182,903,442	58.36%	2,441,251,501	75.9%
Axis 3	334,334,942	80.46%	269,018,937	8.4%
Axis 4 ¹	219,516,713	73.29%	160,894,083	5.0%
Technical Assistance	2,844,767	50%	1,422,384	0.0%
Total	5,187,145,003	62.03%	3,217,464,632	100%

Note : EAFRD amount includes a total of € 2,124,613,072 resulting from the application of voluntary modulation decided by the UK for the England programme.

Overall aim of the programme:

- To build profitable, innovative and competitive farming, food and forestry sectors, that meet the needs of consumers and make a net positive contribution to the environment
- To improve the environment and countryside
- To enhance opportunity in rural areas, particularly in relation to developing quality employment opportunities, in a way that harnesses and builds upon environmental quality.

Axes 1 budget allocation and main priorities:

Total public: €447,545,140; EAFRD amount: €344,877,727.

Support will help to develop a greater awareness of, and a greater ability to exploit, market opportunities, particularly in relation to renewable energy and added-value products. The Programme will focus on promoting and co-operation, improving industry uptake of technology and entrepreneurial skills, and increasing opportunities for knowledge transfer and skills enhancement.

Axes 2 budget allocation and main priorities:

Total public: € 4,182,903,442; EAFRD amount: € 2,441,251,501.

The evidence has shown that agri-environment schemes under the previous Programme in England have delivered positive environmental developments, but that there are still challenges to address. There is therefore a strong focus on the agri-environment measure, which provides support for land managers to manage their land in a way which delivers a range of environmental benefits, including for biodiversity, resource protection and traditional landscapes. Given the importance of the uplands environment, use will also be made of the Natural Handicap measure. The sustainable use of forestry land is another important objective of the Programme, but given the relatively small size of the woodland and forestry areas in England, it is lower in the hierarchy of measures selected.

¹ Axis 4 expenditure will be split between Axis 1 and 3 in the proportions set out above. Therefore the total percentage share for axis 1 is 10.7%+0.3%=11% and for Axis 3 is 8.4%+4.7%=13.1%.

Axes 3 budget allocation and main priorities:

Total public: €334,334,942; EAFRD amount: €269,018,937.

Support will help to supporting innovative rural-based business development and enterprise, including diversification out of agriculture and encouraging sustainable tourism particularly in areas of economic underperformance and for individuals experiencing disadvantage.

Leader budget allocation:

Total public: €219,516,713; EAFRD amount: €160,894,083

The Leader delivery approach will be used to mobilise the development potential of rural areas in a way that stimulates innovation to the benefit of the local area.

Over the course of the Programme, and across all the axes, England will look to further develop the role that the Programme can play in helping rural areas mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts.