



Department of  
**Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine**  
An Roinn  
**Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara**



An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta,  
Gnóthaí Réigiúnacha, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta

Department of Arts, Heritage,  
Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

# Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

## Annual Implementation Report 2014-2015 Citizens' Summary



Ireland's European Structural and  
Investment Funds Programmes  
2014-2020

Co-funded by the Irish Government  
and the European Union



The European Agricultural Fund  
for Rural Development: Europe  
investing in rural areas.



## **What is the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020?**

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) is part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), a common set of objectives, principles and rules through which the European Union (EU) coordinates support for European agriculture. The CAP is structured around two complementary pillars:

- Pillar 1 deals with direct payments to farmers and market management measures;
- Pillar 2 covers multi-annual rural development measures which include those that have beneficial impacts on the environment and climate change.

Ireland's RDP was formally adopted by the EU Commission on 26 May 2015 and has been twice modified – most recently on 25 January 2017. Amended versions of the Programme are published on the RDP section of the Department's website.

Consistent with the EU policy framework, the RDP contains a range of schemes and supports designed to enhance the competitiveness of the agri-food sector, achieve more sustainable management of natural resources and ensure a more balanced development of rural areas.

## **How much is the Rural Development Programme worth?**

The RDP was formulated taking account of available financial resources and EU regulatory requirements. It is based on a thorough analysis of sectoral needs and priorities identified during an extensive process of consultation with stakeholders.

The Programme is co-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the national exchequer. EAFRD support for the RDP will average €313 million annually or an aggregate sum of €2.19 billion over the seven-year lifespan of the Programme. This EU funding will be supplemented by exchequer funding to bring the total budget for RDP schemes to some €4 billion for the period. The allocation of funding will be phased over the Programme period in line with the requirements of measure design and budgetary resources.

Transitional arrangements have been put in place for the period between the expiration of the previous RDP and the coming into force of the current RDP.

## **What is an Annual Implementation Report?**

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is the Managing Authority for Ireland's RDP. Each year, DAFM must submit to the European Commission an Annual Implementation Report (AIR) setting out the progress made in implementing the RDP during the previous calendar year. This report must detail all active measures supported by the 2014-2020 Programme budget. The AIR submitted in 2016, being the first report for the present programming period, covers all operations supported in the calendar years 2014 and 2015 including funding for transitional measures.

The citizen's summary is an abridged version of the AIR; its purpose is to communicate to a general audience the key data on Programme performance as set out in the narrative section of the implementation report.

## **How is progress measured?**

For each RDP measure, a budget is allocated and targets are set to quantify achievements. These targets are monitored throughout each year through the collection of various indicator data and progress towards them is included in the annual report sent to the European Commission. Ongoing scheme monitoring ensures that public money is spent in the manner planned in the approved RDP.

## **Why has data from the 2007-2013 RDP been included?**

Under the 2007-2013 RDP, DAFM signed multi-annual agreements for agri-environment schemes that extend into the 2014-2020 programming period. Due to the overlapping nature of EU programmes, this type of expenditure is known as transitional expenditure.

Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 featured three highly successful and popular measures namely: M212 the Less Favoured Areas Scheme (LFAs); M214 the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS); and M213 Natura 2000 linked to the REPS scheme.

Following on from the Health Check of the CAP in 2009, two further schemes were launched in 2010; the Agri-Environment Options Scheme (AEOS) (incorporating M216 Investments linked to AEOS) and a second Natura 2000 scheme linked to AEOS.

Funding for these old programme commitments (Measures 212, 213, 214 and 216) was exhausted by 1 January 2014 and the schemes were subsequently funded using transitional monies until the end of 2015.

Other than for LFAs, which is an annual scheme, no further new commitments were undertaken in 2014 for these measures; so only ongoing commitments were paid. In addition, there are a number of schemes from the previous Programme which will have continuing commitments in the new programming period after 2015. EU legislation provides that these schemes can also be funded from the 2014-2020 budget allocation. The schemes include:

- M113 – the Early Retirement Scheme (ERS);
- M121 – the Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme;
- M213 – AEOS Natura;
- M214 – AEOS (incl. M216).

### **What progress has been made in implementing the Programme?**

The following information outlines the progress made in implementing the RDP in force at 31 December 2015. This synopsis primarily concerns those schemes activated and funded during the period from January 2014 to December 2015.

Public expenditure refers to declared funding from the EAFRD and national sources for scheme operations completed in the reporting period. Operations are completed when the last payment is made except for multi-annual commitments (e.g. agri-environment-climate schemes), for which intermediate completion is the basis for an annual payment to beneficiaries.

#### **Measure 1 – Knowledge transfer and information actions**

This measure consists of:

- Sub-measure 1.1 – support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions – Knowledge Transfer (KT) Groups;
- Sub-measure 1.1 – support for vocational training and skills acquisition delivered in support of two Measure 10 schemes (i.e. the Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS) and the Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP)).



Total public expenditure of approximately €59,000 reported under Measure 1 to the end of 2015 relates to transitional money for REPS 4 training. No expenditure was incurred for knowledge transfer groups or for GLAS / BDGP training during the reporting period.

## **Measure 2 – Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services**

This measure consists of the following elements:

- Sub-measure 2.3 – Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Agricultural Advisors.
- Advisory Service on Animal Health and Welfare incorporating:
  - Sub-measure 2.1 – support for the use of advisory services; &
  - Sub-measure 2.3 – support for the training of advisors.

No expenditure was incurred in respect of CPD during the reporting period. Public expenditure of approximately €13,000 was spent on arranging training courses for private veterinary practitioners in connection with the rollout of the Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service – the first phase of which commenced in 2016 with the provision of specialist on-farm advice in relation to the treatment of Bovine Viral Diarrhoea.

## **Measure 4 – Investments in physical assets**

Measure 4 consists of:

- Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme (TAMS) II with various strands of support for investments in agricultural holdings programmed under sub-measure 4.1; and
- A number of non-productive investments (sub-measure 4.4), which are linked nationally to the achievement of agri-environment-climate objectives. Since the logic underlying this sub-measure is intrinsically linked to Measure 10, funding is allocated under that measure.

No payments were made for TAMS II supports during the reporting period. All Measure 4 spending, amounting to €19.4m, related to the funding of ongoing commitments from the previous Programme under TAMS I and AEOS non-productive investments.

## **Measure 7 – Basic services and village renewal in rural areas**

Sub-measure 7.6 – GLAS Traditional Farm Buildings Scheme

The scheme only became operational in 2016. Consequently, no expenditure was incurred in respect of this measure during the reporting period.

### **Measure 10 – Agri-environment-climate**

There are currently two schemes under sub-measure 10.1 providing payments for agri-environment-climate commitments:

- the Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS); and
- the Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP).

Public expenditure payments of €11.5m and €29m were incurred in respect of the GLAS and the BDGP respectively during the reporting period. Additionally, the sum of €263.2m was spent on legacy schemes (i.e. REPS and AEOS) from the previous Programme.

Locally-led schemes under Measure 10 promote local solutions to specific issues and complement the national and more broadly-based GLAS scheme supported under the RDP. Following approval of the first RDP amendment in June 2016, the expansion of the Burren conservation scheme is the first such locally-led scheme to be activated with initial recruitment starting in 2016.

### **Measure 11 – Organic farming**

Measure 11 consists of:

- Sub-measure 11.1 – payment to convert to organic farming practices and methods; and
- Sub-measure 11.2 – payment to maintain organic farming practices and methods.

The general structure, administration and implementation of the previous Organic Farming Scheme (OFS) are continued in the 2014-2020 RDP. Public expenditure of €1.84m was incurred in respect of the OFS for the present programming period and €10.63m in transitional money relating to the previous period is reported under Measure 10 in the current Programme.

### **M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments**

- Sub-measure 12.1 - compensation payment for Natura 2000 agricultural areas.

This measure does not form part of the 2014-2020 RDP, as Natura areas are targeted through Measure 10. It is instead programmed exclusively to provide for ongoing commitments from the 2007-2013 programming period. Transitional monies amounting €37.3m were spent on REPS and AEOS in respect of 13,434 holdings during the reporting period.

### **Measure 13 – Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints**

This measure consists of the following two sub-measures:

- Sub-measure 13.2 - compensation payment for other areas facing significant natural constraints; and
- Sub-measure 13.3 – compensation payment to other areas affected by specific constraints (referring to offshore island farming).

Support under these two sub-measures is disbursed nationally through the Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) Scheme based on the previous Less Favoured Areas and the Disadvantaged Areas schemes pending the mandatory delineation of new ANC areas under EU legislation. The objective of the ANC scheme is to compensate beneficiaries for lower returns linked to constraints on productive farming in the areas concerned. A separate category of support is available to compensate island farmers in recognition of the specific challenges faced by beneficiaries in those areas. Total public expenditure of approximately €402m was reported under Measure 13 to the end of 2015.

### **Measure 16 – Co-operation**

Measure 16 consists of:

- Sub-measure 16.1 – Support for European Innovation Partnerships (EIP); and
- Sub-measure 16.3 – Support for collaborative farming.

No public expenditure was incurred in respect of support for EIPs during the reporting period. EIPs aim to create greater linkages between research and on-farm implementation with open calls for projects likely in 2016. Payments totalling €80,000 were made in respect of the Collaborative Farming Grant Scheme which became operational in 2015. This scheme supports the formation of new farm partnerships through a contribution of 50% towards the vouched costs of legal, accounting and advisory expenses involved in setting up the partnership (up to a maximum payment of €2,500). These collaborative farming arrangements can address

infrastructural issues such as a lack of a land availability and farm size, the development of farming skills / knowledge base and intergenerational transfer.

**Measure 19 – Support for LEADER local development**

A sum of approximately €0.77m was paid in respect of support for the preparation of Local Development Strategies. The selection of Local Action Groups (LAGs) to deliver LEADER Local Development Strategies in 28 sub-regional areas is nearing conclusion and it is expected that contracts will be issued to successful LAGs on a phased basis from late June 2016.

**Measure 20 – Technical Assistance**

Payments of approximately €65,000 (excluding VAT) were made from the Technical Assistance budget. No public expenditure was incurred in respect of setting up and running the National Rural Network (NRN) during the reporting period. The NRN for the previous Programme ceased operations in December 2013 and the NRN for the current RDP was selected in January 2016.

**Rural Development Division,  
April 2017**