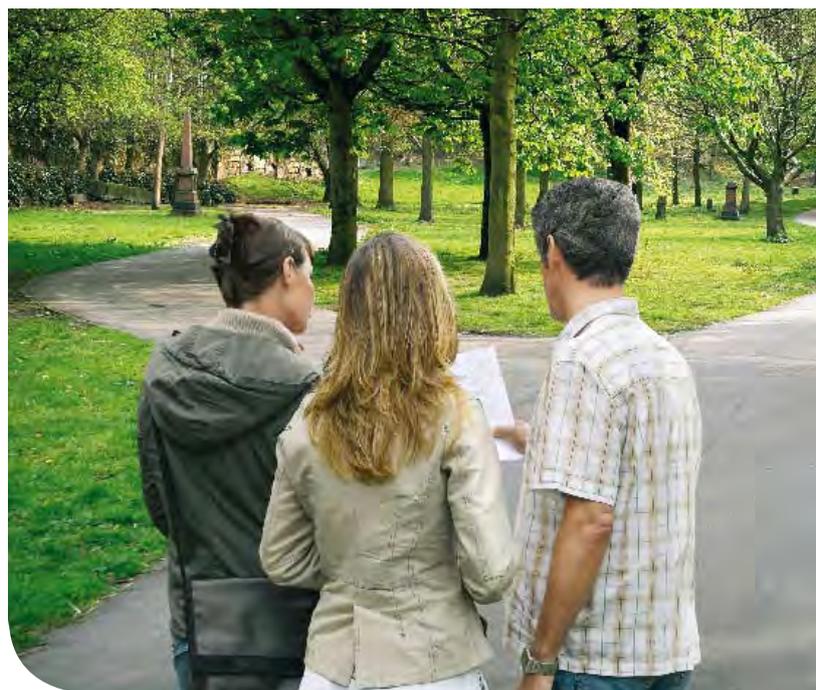


European Rural Development Policy: a (r)evolution!



European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development:
Europe invests in the rural areas



Wallonia



European Rural Development Policy: a (r)evolution!

Today, the rural development policy deals with the multiple roles of agriculture in society and challenges faced in rural areas. Grouped around four axes, the measures presented by the Walloon Region were approved in 2007 by the European Commission.

The implementation of the new Rural Development Program for the period 2007-2013, reflects a concentration of efforts on the policy of the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy. The means previously available to rural areas have been synthesized in a single program. During previous program periods we witnessed the coexistence of several plans, programs or initiatives that each dealt with one or another area or project. The objective pursued by the new Rural Development Program is to bundle and include the various projects under the second pillar for the benefit of rural areas.

One program, one region

Here is an initial overview of the provisions contained in this new program.

It is not only an instrument of agricultural development but is aimed at creating a framework for economic activities, practiced in rural areas, which is more comprehensive.

To find more information on the operation of the WRDP for 2007-2013 (in french), visit the special website at www.pwdr.be

The english summary is available at www.pwdr.be/en

Have a look at the interviews with beneficiaries (english version) at the following address: <http://www.pwdr.be/en/interviews>



Towards a CAP based on 2 pillars

Until 1999

The European Union's rural development policy has followed the evolution of the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy).

Initially this policy addressed the structural problems of the agricultural sector. Emphasis was placed on aid for investments in agricultural holdings as well as on the processing and marketing of agricultural products. Gradually attention has also turned towards human capital in the frame of early retirement and professional training.

In the 1970s a first territorial element was added with the designation of disadvantaged areas that were eligible for special measures.

In the mid-1990s, the European Union had a series of instruments at its disposal to achieve such objectives such as restructuring the agricultural sector, local and territorial development and the integration of the environment (introduction of agri-environmental measures).



The CAP's second pillar

Agenda 2000 laid down rural development policy as the CAP's second pillar in order to support pricing and market policy, the first pillar. It focuses on providing basic aid to raise farmers' incomes, while the second pillar supports agriculture as a supplier of public goods in its environment and rural functions and rural areas in their development.

The CAP's aim is increasingly to arrive at a proper balance between the two pillars. It is in this context that the reform of June 2003 underpinned rural development by introducing the principle of modulation specifically (automatic financial transfer from the 1st to the 2nd pillar).

Today rural development policy has become a policy that deals with the multiple roles of agriculture in society and the challenges that rural areas face.

The instruments of this policy have been incorporated in a more coherent framework and governed by a Council Regulation on rural development (Regulation (CE) No. 1698/2005). It proposes a menu of measures which Member States can choose from in function of the needs of their rural areas.



Rural development policy 2007-2013, changes underfoot...

a) A new Fund

One program and one single financial instrument, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), have been provided for rural development, which is an important simplification compared with the past.

This Fund is made up of several sections of the old EU budget for rural development:

- the EAGGF-Guarantee Program which funded rural development;
- the EAGGF-Guidance, which funded rural development for rural areas under Objective 1;
- the EAGGF-Guidance, which funded the LEADER + Community Initiative;

to which modulation had to be added.

The EAFRD is governed by rules similar to those of the Structural Funds, with commitment appropriations and payment appropriations and a decommitment in year N+2 (the funds committed in year N have to be paid by the end of year N+2).



b) A program in three phases

A community strategic plan

The Commission has laid down its strategic guidelines in terms of rural development for the program period (Council decision of 20 February 2006 (2006/144/CE)).

A national strategic plan

Each Member State defines its own priorities depending on the situation of its rural areas but in line with the community strategic guidelines.

The Rural Development Program

The elements underpinning the RDP are incorporated in the following community regulations:

- REGULATION (CE) No. 1698/2005 of the Council of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).
- REGULATION (CE) No. 1974/2006 OF THE COMMISSION of 15 December 2006 laying down detailed rules for the application of Regulation (CE) 1698/2005 of the Council.

The rural development program is built around four areas: three themes corresponding with the European Union's three main objectives in terms of rural development and a transverse axis based on the LEADER approach. Each axis contains a number of measures that a Member State may choose to implement or not to help achieve the axis's objectives.

The Walloon Rural Development Program 2007-2013

The first step was the development of a Walloon Strategic Plan. It was approved by the Walloon Government on 21 September 2006. This document has been incorporated, together with the Flemish Strategic Plan, as requested by the European Union, into one single document, the Belgian Strategic Plan. It was submitted to the European Commission on 7 November 2006. Although the Belgian document did not have to be formally adopted by the Commission, it has been slightly adapted in line with remarks by the Commission's services.

The Walloon Rural Development Program (WRDP) itself was then prepared in consultation with various actors in the field and submitted to the Commission on 16 May 2007. It was approved on 30 November 2007.

Among the varied catalogue of measures proposed in the Council Regulation, only the agri-environment measures were compulsory. In function of the EAFRD budget which was allocated (€ 194 million) the Walloon Region was able to choose the most appropriate measures in order to meet the strategic objectives of the Walloon plan.

In the frame of the Health Check of the CAP and the Economic Recovery Plan initiated by the European Commission, the Walloon Region chose to exclusively allocate the additional financial resources to the organic farming sector.

This choice corresponds with the Community's strategic guidelines and will help meet new challenges. It is more efficient to provide support to organic farming in order to meet the challenge of climate change (reduction of inputs and livestock), of water management (reduction of water use and release of nitrate and pesticides), of biodiversity (flora of diversified fields and rotation of long crops with pulses) and reorientation for dairy farms.

Unlike the previous programming period the WRDP covers the entire Walloon Region. To be eligible projects must meet strict conditions laid down in the program for each measure, particularly as regards the type of beneficiaries, the nature of eligible spending, the co-financing rates, and the limits of intervention.

As shown in the table below, a majority of the measures in the WRDP are aid schemes and thus are not subject to calls for tenders. For measures involving a call for tenders, the applications must be submitted to the Directorate General for Agriculture twice a year, on 15 February and 15 September respectively. A selection committee will meet after each call for tenders in order to select those projects that best meet the objectives of the measures.

Measure code	Title	Type of aid
AXIS 1: Improving the competitiveness of the farming and forestry sectors.		
111	Professional training and information campaigns	Aid scheme / call for projects
112	Setting up young farmers	Aid scheme
121	Modernisation of agricultural holdings	Aid scheme
123	Increase in added value of agricultural and forestry products	Aid scheme
132	Aid to farmers participating in food quality schemes	Aid scheme
AXIS 2: Improving the environment and the development of rural areas		
212	Compensation for disadvantaged areas	Aid scheme
213	Natura 2000 compensation	Aid scheme
214	Agri-environment measures	Aid scheme
224	Natura 2000 compensation in the forestry sector	Aid scheme
AXIS 3: Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy		
311	Diversification into non-agricultural activities	Aid scheme
312	Creation and development of micro-enterprises	Aid scheme
313	Promotion of tourism activities	Call for tenders
321	Basic services for the rural population	Call for tenders
323	Preservation and enhancement of rural heritage	Aid scheme
331	Training and information in the sectors covered by axis 3	Call for tenders
AXIS 4: Leader		
411, 412, 413, 421 and 431	LEADER: implementation of a local development strategy	Call for tenders

Axis 1

111 - Professional training and information campaigns

What are the objectives?

Support the organisation of training for people working in agriculture and forestry in view of helping to improve the performance of agricultural and forestry enterprises, encourage diversification and innovation, improve product quality and promote transformation.

For whom?

Operators of approved training courses A, B, and C, professional agricultural organisations, centres of expertise, public education bodies... and for farmers and forestry workers, young farmers and farm helpers.

To do what?

The organisation of training of types A, B and C as regards agricultural and environment techniques, development or upgrading in forestry training, training as regards the energy recovery from biomass, training in the use of IT,...

The measure also provides for support as regards the establishment of work placements in agriculture.

The information activities refer to new production techniques and growth practices, visits of test stations, awareness as regards the diversification and the implementation of agri-environment measures,

How?

Except for the organisation of courses A, B and C and the work placement which are laid down in the Decree of Vocational Training in Agriculture, all of the other activities/projects will be subject to calls for tenders.

What aid?

The public intervention amounts to 100% of all spending that are necessary and useful to the proper organisation of these actions except for the purchase of equipment and the organisation of tests.



112 - Setting up young farmers

What are the objectives?

Help young farmers who are setting up a farm while ensuring that they do so under the best conditions.

For whom?

Young farmers who are establishing their first farm as a principal farmer, who are at least 20 years old and maximum 40 years old on the date that they establish their farm and who meet the professional qualifications specified in the Decree of the Walloon Government of 18 December 2008 on agricultural aid.

To do what?

Granting financial aid for the takeover of an existing operation or the creation of a new operation.

How?

Granting of funding is subject to the elaboration of a development plan that has to be validated by a committee of experts. This plan must provide a true picture of the farm with its strengths and weaknesses and must set targets that have to be achieved within six years. The plan has to be elaborated with a certified consultant.

It may be completed with an investment plan (see measure 121).

The provisions of the implementation measures are described in full in the WRDP and have been incorporated in the decree of the Walloon Government of 18 December 2008.



What aid?

Aid is capped at € 70,000 per file submitted and is split in two investment envelopes:

- up to € 100,000, capital grant of 40%;
- from € 100,001 to € 300,000, aid to the amount of € 30,000 in the form of interest subsidy.

The Walloon Region may also grant a public guarantee up to a maximum of 75% of the amount of the eligible investments described in the plan.

In this ceiling of € 70,000 are also included:

- aid granted for the implementation and monitoring of the plan (80% of spending capped at €1,200 for the realisation of the development plan and the same aid for its monitoring);
- the calculated amount of the grant equivalent of the guarantee that may be granted.

121 - Modernisation of agricultural holdings

What are the objectives?

Support investments in agricultural holdings in view of improving their performance, specifically as regards the environment, improve working conditions and encourage diversification and innovation in operations.

For whom?

Farmers as principals or not, who have the required qualifications as laid down in the Decree of the Walloon Government of 18 December 2008. Also eligible are machinery sharing syndicates, grazing syndicates, associations and groups of dairy producing farms.

Granting financial aid for the funding of investments designed to modernise or underpin the holding's structure, for activities that are already ongoing or for investments related to diversification, protection of the environment, improvement of working conditions, compliance with EU and/or national standards, This does not include simple replacement investments.

How?

Funding is granted based on the elaboration of an investment plan. This plan must provide a true picture of the farm with its strengths and weaknesses and must set the targets that have to be achieved. The plan has to describe and justify the various investments that will be made within the three- year period that the plan is valid.

The drafting of the plan and its monitoring can be done with the help of a certified consultant.

In order to be admissible the plan has to include a minimum investment of € 15,000 with a minimum of € 5,000 per investment and a maximum of € 350,000 in equipment and/or buildings (construction and equipment). The provisions of the implementation measures are described in full in the WRDP and have been incorporated in the decree of the Walloon Government of 18 December 2008 concerning agricultural aid.

What aid?

The public aid rate is 20% with the possibility of complementary bonuses (maximum 2):

- + 5% for farmers in disadvantaged areas;
- + 10% if the plan is submitted within six years of setting up the farm by a young farmer;
- + 5% for machine sharing syndicates;
- + 2.5 % if the farmer relies on the services of a consultant;
- + 10% for any investment that is specifically designed to produce differentiated quality.

Regarding the storage capacity norms for manure there is a specific regimen with a public aid rate of 40% for investments for young farmers who make these investments within three years following the establishment of their farm.

The Walloon Region may also grant a public guarantee up to a maximum of 75% of the amount of the eligible investments described in the plan.

If a farmer uses the services of a consultant to draw up and monitor the plan then up to 80% of the eligible expenditure can be funded, with capped amounts of respectively € 800 and € 900.

The cumulation of aid granted in this frame cannot exceed the cap which is generally 40% but which can generally rise to 60% under certain conditions (cf. WRDP).

The maximum amount of aid cannot exceed € 100,000 per investment plan.



123 - Increase in added value of agricultural and forestry products

What are the objectives?

Support investment in farms and businesses in view of encouraging the processing of agricultural and forestry products, improve product quality and encourage diversification and innovation within companies.

There are two distinct components:

- investment aid;
- financial engineering.

The modalities of the implementation of these two aid schemes have been described in more detail in the WRDP.



	INVESTMENT AID	FINANCIAL ENGINEERING
FOR WHOM?	Micro-enterprises active in the sector of the initial processing of wood and companies (including agricultural cooperatives) which process agricultural products included in Annexe 1 of the Treaty.	Micro-enterprises active in the sector of the initial processing of wood and SMES which process agricultural products included in Annexe 1 of the Treaty.
TO DO WHAT?	Aid for capital investment (construction and real estate acquisition, purchase of machinery) and intangible assets (professional fees), which comply with the EU standards applicable to the investment in question. The purchase of land is excluded. Only certain sectors are eligible for aid.	Facilitate business development through access to financial capital by means of a "loan" measure as well as a "guarantee and micro credit" component. The eligible sectors are identical to those in the "investment aid" component.
HOW?	For agricultural cooperatives the implementation provisions are identical to those for measure 121. For other types of enterprises, the Decree of 11 March 2004 on regional incentives applies.	Types of interventions: - loan: subordinated loans to encourage the development of economic activities that create jobs in the timber industry; - guarantee and micro credit: component designed to enable the achievement of a leverage effect in the agri-food sector.
WHAT AID?	Agricultural cooperatives will be eligible for investment aid equivalent to 20% of the amount of eligible investments. In free zones this rate has been increased to 40%. For other companies the aid rate will be calculated according to the provisions in the Decree of 11 March 2004 to which an EAFRD complement will be added (3/7 of regional aid) for investments eligible under the EAFRD. Maximum public aid may not exceed 50% of eligible investments in convergence zones and 40% elsewhere.	The level of aid varies according to the type of intervention.

132 - Aid to farmers participating in food quality schemes



What are the objectives?

Encourage farmers to move towards a differentiated quality production in view of improving product quality, encouraging diversification and promoting the creation of added value.

For whom?

Primary farmers / growers and / or farm processors which use production methods linked to a system of differentiated quality that is recognized by the EU or by the Walloon Region.

To do what?

To support the annual fixed base costs related to certification, including the annual fixed cost of inspection and control (specifically analyses). Only costs that can be attributed to the primary grower/farmer and/or processor, whether directly or indirectly, are taken into account.

How?

Compensation for farmers is calculated according to reference amounts for each scheme and is specified in the descriptive fact sheets that have been appended to the WRDP.

What aid?

The aid granted is capped at € 3,000 per farmer per year. This aid is granted for a maximum period of 5 years.

Axis 2

212 – Compensation for disadvantaged areas

What are the objectives?

Compensate profit losses recorded in farms situated in disadvantaged zones in view of maintaining agriculture in this zone and preserving the landscape.

For whom?

Farmers who operate grazing areas in disadvantaged zones as defined since 1975 and which cover all the agricultural areas in the Haute Ardenne, Famenne, the Fagnes region, the Ardennes, the Jurassic region and part of the grasslands in the Liège region (limits set out in the Decree of the Walloon Government of 18 December 2008).

How?

The application for compensation is submitted by the farmer using the form for the declaration of surface area and application for aid.

What aid?

The annual allowance is set at € 122 per ha of grazing area in a disadvantaged zone and is capped at € 1,736 per farm per year. Complementary aid of € 122/hectare for a maximum surface area of 5 hectares may be granted subject to certain conditions.



213 – Natura 2000 compensation

What are the objectives?

To partially offset profit losses related to specific practices imposed in Natura 2000 zones by the designation orders.

For whom?

Farmers who operate agricultural parcels included in Natura 2000 zones.

How?

The application will be submitted by the farmer using the surface area declaration and aid application form and will be included in the surface area declaration form for aid payments in the first pillar of the CAP.

What aid?

Compensation is paid annually for every hectare of agricultural land that is declared to be in a Natura 2000 zone; levels vary in function of the constraints imposed:

- € 100/hectare of grassland for “habitats of species” zones which are subject to average constraints,
- € 200/hectare of grassland for “habitat” zones which are subject to strong constraints.

Compensation will only be granted from the time that the designation order for the parcel becomes applicable.

214 - Agri-environment measures

What are the objectives?

Compensate for lost income and additional costs incurred by farmers who voluntarily implement production methods that go beyond the mandatory standards established in the frame of the conditions attached to funding to which the requirements set out in the WRDP in terms of fertilizers and phytosanitary products are added.

These measures include the preservation or improvement of the environment as regards natural resources (surface and groundwater, soil and air), landscapes, biodiversity and genetic heritage.

For whom?

Farmers who make an agri-environment commitment for a period of 5 years.

To do what?

Support the implementation of at least one of the 11 agri-environment methods as set out below and described in the WRDP.

AEM 1	Preservation of elements of the ecological network and the landscape (hedgerows, windbreaks, trees, shrubs, bushes... and ponds)
AEM 2	Natural grassland
AEM 3	a) Grassed headland b) Band of extensive grassland
AEM 4	Topsoil
AEM 5	Extensive cereal crops
AEM 6	Local breeds under threat
AEM 7	Maintain low livestock numbers
AEM 8	Grassland with high biological value
AEM 9	Strip of improved parcel
AEM 10	Agri-environment action plan
AEM 11	Organic farming

How?

Each new commitment is subject to an initial application using the form to declare surface area and apply for aid.

What aid?

The level of compensation is specific to every method.

Remark: In the frame of the CAP Health Check and the Economic Recovery Plan initiated by the European Commission the EAFRD budget has been increased by € 39 million.

This choice corresponds with the Community's strategic guidelines and will help meet new challenges. It is more efficient to provide support to organic farming in order to meet the challenge of climate change (reduction of inputs and livestock), of water management (reduction of water use and release of nitrate and pesticides), of biodiversity (flora of diversified fields and rotation of long crops with pulses) and reorientation for dairy farms.



224 - Natura 2000 compensation in the forestry sector

What are the objectives?

The objective of this measure is to preserve the biological interest of hardwood stands in Natura 2000 sites in view of ensuring the sustainability of the habitats and habitats of species of EU interest.

For whom?

Private forest owners (or owners' associations) of parcels in Natura 2000.

To do what?

Guarantee and improve the potential of forests in Natura 2000 zones as habitats and habitats of species of EU interest by means of the implementation of measures made mandatory by the designation orders.

How?

An application will be sent to the Nature and Forestry Division. In order to be admissible each application will cover a minimum of 5 hectares of hardwood forest, but not necessarily contiguous acres.

What aid?

Annual compensation of € 40 per hectare of hardwood forest. The compensation becomes applicable and can be requested as soon as the designation order enters into force.



Axis 3

311 - Diversification into non-agricultural activities



What are the objectives?

Support the necessary investment in farms required to develop new non-agricultural activities.

For whom?

The beneficiaries of this measure are identical to those of measure 121

To do what?

Support for capital investments in the frame of non-agricultural activities such as agri-tourism, social and leisure infrastructure, crafts activities, development of services in a rural environment,

How? What aid?

The procedures and aid possibilities are identical to those in measure 121.

312 - Creation and development of micro-enterprises

What are the objectives?

Encourage the creation and development of micro-enterprises that operate outside of agriculture and forestry with the aim of creating employment in rural areas.

For whom?

The beneficiaries are micro-enterprises (fewer than 10 employees and an annual turnover or balance sheet total that does not exceed € 2 million), with registered office in the Walloon Region, which are not in financial difficulty and which undertake to continue the investment for at least five years.

To do what?

This measure relates to investments:

- in secondary wood processing (from the sawmill to the manufacture of finished wood products);
- in the processing of agricultural products that are not listed in annex I of the Treaty;
- in sustainable energy use;
- for the creation of rural workshops in communities with an active rural development community program.

How?

As is the case for measure 123 there are two components

Investment aid

The legal basis for granting such aid is the Decree of 11 March 2004 on regional incentives for SMEs and the Decree of the Walloon Government of 6 May 2004 implementing the provisions of the Decree of 11 March 2004.

Financial engineering

Application of the "Guarantee and micro credit" component, as in measure 123.

What aid?

Investment aid

An EAFRD competition completes regional participation but within the limits set out in the guidelines concerning regional aid for 2007-2013.

For investments to create rural workshops public aid amounts to 80% of the total eligible cost.

Financial engineering

The intervention conditions are identical to the same component of measure 123.

The modalities of the implementation of these two aid schemes have been described in more detail in the WRDP.



313 - Promotion of tourism

What are the objectives?

Support the development and dissemination of tourism services in rural areas in order to increase the quality and quantity of services as well as the dissemination and exchange of information in order to discover natural and cultural heritage in rural areas.

For whom?

Tourism operators with a trans-community dimension and who contribute to the development of regional tourism. These must be recognized by the Commissariat général au Tourisme (CGT or General Tourism Commission).

To do what?

Promote the development of innovative tourism services through diversified reception products and the development of tools related to the marketing and promotion of new tourism products.

Operational costs for the operation of the structure are not eligible.

How?

This measure is subject to a call for tenders. The selection will be based on criteria such as sustainability, respect for the environment, an integrated approach, cooperation between local operators, the use of ICT, etc.

What aid?

Public aid is set at 80% of the total eligible expenditure.



321 - Basic services for the rural population

What are the objectives?

Improve access to local services (public and private) and to information technology in rural communities.

For whom?

The Walloon rural communities with an active Rural Development Community Program and for which the relevance of creating a multi-services centre has been established.

To do what?

Equip an existing building or a bus into a multi-services centre consolidating administrative services (local office to obtain documents, forms, etc.) and other services (hotlines for the regional employment office of Wallonia, the birth and child office, public social welfare centres, etc., internet access, remedial school services, post office, local employment development agency services, etc).

Funding for the operation of such infrastructure is not supported by the measure.

How?

This measure is subject to a call for tenders. Selection is in function of such criteria as the remoteness of the town, public transport services, the age structure of the town's population, etc.

What aid?

Public aid is set at 80% of the total eligible expenditure.

323 - Preservation and enhancement of rural heritage

What are the objectives?

Enable the restoration of degraded Natura 2000 sites by favouring open areas in forests or by regenerating standing forest habitats.

For whom?

Private or public forest owners (excluding all properties belonging to the federal or regional authorities) of parcels included in Natura 2000.

To do what?

This measure has two components:

- restoration of habitats typical of certain areas in Natura 2000 such as the semi-natural areas of interest in terms of biodiversity (heaths and calcareous grasslands);
- exploitation of coniferous stands located in wetlands for the development of habitats typical of these environments

How?

Interested owners must submit an application to the Nature and Forestry Division. They must commit to a number of criteria / conditions for each of the 2 components.

What aid?

Public intervention is set at 100% of eligible costs (except for sheep shelters), with maximum amounts set for each type of works.



331 - Training and information in the sectors covered by axis 3

What are the objectives?

Support the organization of trainings for people working in the sectors eligible for axis 3 to support the development of non-agricultural activities and increase employment in rural areas.



For whom?

The agricultural and forestry operators wishing to acquire skills pertaining to diversification activities that involve products outside of Annex I to the Treaty or outside of farming and forestry.

Also eligible are persons working in the micro-enterprises eligible for measure 312.

To do what?

The organisation of training and information sessions in the areas concerned by measures 311 and 312. Particular emphasis will be on ICT and renewable energy.

How?

This measure will be subject to a call for tenders.

What aid?

Public intervention may amount to 100% for all spending that is necessary and useful to the proper organisation of these actions except for the purchase of equipment and the organisation of tests.

Axis 4

LEADER: implementation of a local development strategy

This axis incorporates the former EU LEADER+ initiative in the WRDP.

What are the objectives?

Help rural actors to develop the indigenous potential of their region by supporting the implementation of integrated local strategies.

For whom?

Funding is awarded to Local Action Groups made up of partners from the public, private and association sectors that are eager to implement local development programs.

To do what?

Support the implementation of a local development strategy in the region covered by the LAG through the implementation of various projects that are consistent with the Strategic Development Plan (SDP).

After two selection procedures, 15 LAGs were selected and are eligible for public funding of 90% of all eligible spending related to their projects.

For each, a budget of € 1.35 million was set aside. Ten percent of this amount has to be used for cooperation projects.



Technical assistance

Funding is provided in the program to cover spending related to:

1. Evaluation

The implementation of an assessment process for the WRDP is mandatory. Its objective is to improve the program's efficiency and effectiveness. It includes the ex ante (already completed) and ongoing evaluation during the entire program period with more comprehensive assessments at mid-term and at the end of the program (ex post).

After the selection procedure ADE was selected to implement the first phase of the assessment until the mid-term assessment.

2. Communication

The Member States are required to implement information campaigns and advertising as regards their strategic plan, their rural development programs and community participation.

The Walloon Region is thus in charge of informing:

- potential beneficiaries about the possibilities offered by the program and how to access funding;
- the beneficiaries of EU co-funding;
- the general public about the EU's role in the program and the results thereof.

To implement this communication campaign the Direction générale opérationnelle de l'Agriculture, des Ressources naturelles et de l'Environnement (General Operational Directorate for Agriculture, Natural Resources and the Environment) selected an external company (Tostaky s.a.) for a first phase of two years.



3. The rural network

The Member States are also obliged to establish a rural network comprising the organisations and administrations involved in rural development.

This network is intended as a platform to exchange experiences and transfer good practices among all actors involved in rural development.

Trame has been retained, following a selection process, to assure the first phase of the implementation process of this Walloon network, until the end of 2011.

Budget

Distribution of resources between the different axes (EUR):

AXES	PUBLIC EXPENDITURE (EAFRD + WR)	PRIVATE EXPENDITURE OR OTHER PUBLIC SPENDING	TOTAL COST
Axis 1	222,000,000	814,500,000	1,036,500,000
Axis 2	266,047,140	0	266,047,140
Axis 3	37,133,194	81,718,234	118,851,428
Axis 4	20,832,000	2,314,666	23,146,666
Technical assistance	9,320,640	0	10,000,000
Total	555,332,974	898,532,900	1,453,865,874

The EAFRD contribution is 30% of public expenditure for axis 1 and 50% for the other axes and for technical assistance, i.e., a total EAFRD budget of € 233,266,487 for the period 2007-2013.

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