



European Agricultural  
Fund for Rural Development:

Europe investing  
in rural areas



**RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMME FLANDERS  
2014-2020**

**RDP III**

**FLEMISH GOVERNMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES**

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# COLOPHON

This is a publication of the Flemish Government, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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## **COORDINATION AND FINAL EDITING:**

Coordinating Cell European Rural Policy

## **PRINTING COMPANY:**

Drukkerij Geers Offset Gent  
Visuals: Agriculture and Fisheries policy area, unless otherwise specified  
Legal deposit: D/2015/3241/098  
Use of the texts is permitted with acknowledgement of the source.

The brochure can be downloaded freely from the website

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[www.lvvlaanderen.be/nl/landbouwbeleid/plattelandsontwikkeling/publicaties](http://www.lvvlaanderen.be/nl/landbouwbeleid/plattelandsontwikkeling/publicaties)

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**FLEMISH  
RURAL  
NETWORK**

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# European rural development framework

RDP III defines the implementation of the European policy on rural development for Flanders, i.e. the second Pillar of the European Common Agricultural Policy (**CAP**).

From the 2014-2020 period on, RDP III will be part of the overarching Belgian Partnership Agreement streamlining the various European funds.

## PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS

On 29 October 2014, the European Commission adopted the Belgian partnership agreement establishing the strategy for the optimal use of the European Structural and Investment Funds for Belgium. This partnership agreement is the implementation of the European Common Strategic Framework (**CSF**) which defined 11 thematic objectives on a European level (also see 'Summary interaction between the common objectives of the CSF and EAFRD').

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) as well as the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (**EAFRD**) will play an important role. EAFRD is the basis of RDP.

As far as the period 2014-2020 is concerned, ESF and ERDF will provide 2,28 billion euros for investments in Belgium. Moreover, Belgium will be able to use 551,8 million euros for the benefit of rural development (EAFRD) and 41,7 million euro for the maritime and fisheries sector (EMFF). Belgium has to use these resources in the fight against unemployment, the enhancement of competitiveness and economic growth. Other goals are the promotion of innovating activities, the fight against social exclusion and the contribution to an environment- and climate-friendly economy based on resource efficiency.

EUROPE 2020 is working on a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy based on 5 major goals:

Employment

Research and innovation

Climate change and energy

Education

Poverty and social exclusion



**The Common Strategic Framework (CSF) is based on 11 common goals:**

1. Research, technological development and innovation
2. Access to and, use quality of information and communication technologies
3. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, the agricultural sector and the fisheries and aquaculture sector
4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors
5. Promoting climate change adaptation and risk prevention and management
6. Protecting the environment and promoting resources efficiency
7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures
8. Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility
9. Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty
10. Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning
11. Enhancing institutional capacity and ensuring an efficient public administration

COHESION FUND

ESF

ERDF

EMFF

**EAFRD**

**Horizontal goals: innovation – environment – climate change mitigation and adaptation measures:**

EAFRD priority 1:	EAFRD priority 2:	EAFRD priority 3:	EAFRD priority 4:	EAFRD priority 5:	EAFRD priority 6:
Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas	Enhancing competitiveness of all types of agriculture and enhancing farm viability	promoting food chain organisation and risk management in agriculture	restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry	promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in the agriculture and food sectors and the forestry sector	promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

Figure Summary interaction between the common goals of CSF and EAFRD

## COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

As far as the Common Agricultural Policy is concerned, Europe is investing both in the first Pillar (direct support and market measures), and in the second Pillar (rural development). The second Pillar is financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

On a European level, six priorities have been defined in the second Pillar:

- ▶ EAFRD priority 1: Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
- ▶ EAFRD priority 2: Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable management of forests
- ▶ EAFRD priority 3: promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture
- ▶ EAFRD priority 4: restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry
- ▶ EAFRD priority 5: promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in the agriculture and food sectors and the forestry sector
- ▶ EAFRD priority 6: promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

In addition, three horizontal goals have been set; i.e. innovation, environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

Each Member State has to translate these priorities and goals into its own programme. As far as Belgium is concerned, this is done at a regional level. Flanders has now elaborated its third Rural Development Programme. EAFRD has allocated a budget amounting to 551.790.759 euros to Belgium for the period 2014-2020. Flanders will be granted 287.758.881 euros.

More information on the CAP and EAFRD can be found at:

- ▶ European Commission
  - > [www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-post-2013](http://www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-post-2013)
  - > [www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020/](http://www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020/)
- ▶ Flemish authority
  - > [www.vlaanderen.be/pdpo](http://www.vlaanderen.be/pdpo)
  - > [www.lvvlaanderen.be/nl/landbouwbeleid/landbouwbeleid-eu/gemeenschappelijk-landbouwbeleid-glb-2020](http://www.lvvlaanderen.be/nl/landbouwbeleid/landbouwbeleid-eu/gemeenschappelijk-landbouwbeleid-glb-2020)
  - > [www.ruraalnetwerk.be](http://www.ruraalnetwerk.be)

## FLEMISH RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2014 – 2020

Preparations for RDP III in Flanders started in 2010. The Flemish Government officially adopted the programme on 24 January 2014. It has been given the green light by The European Commission on 13 February 2015.

A comprehensive survey was organised allowing the development of a solid and shared programme. Furthermore, a SWOT and needs analysis, an environmental analysis as well as an ex ante evaluation were carried out.

The Flemish government subsequently defined four strategic goals:

- ▶ Investing in young farmers and the future of the Flemish agricultural sector
- ▶ Investing in innovation and education
- ▶ Focussing on the increase of viability and sustainability of the agricultural sector, both economically and ecologically
- ▶ Enhancing the vitality of the countryside through a qualitative embedding of the strong evolving Flemish agricultural sector

These four strategic goals were used as guideline for the development of the RDP III measures. Flanders has been allocated 287.758.881 euros for the implementation of EAFRD and will invest the same amount of money itself. As a result, all measures will be paid for by Europe and by Flanders, every entity accounting to 50%.

In addition to the EAFRD budget that was initially allocated, Flanders will from 2016 onwards, also transfer 96.007.000 euros from the first Pillar (direct support) to the second Pillar. Flanders' total budget regarding RDP III will then amount to 671.524.762 euros.





# Structure of RDP III

RDP has a similar structure to other funds allowing its follow-up and management. A number of its bodies are of a general nature and are dealing with Flemish funds within the Partnership Agreement. Every fund also has its own structure. Here you can find the RDP III structure:

## THE MONITORING COMMITTEE (MC)

The RDP III Monitoring Committee presided by (a representative of) the Minister of Agriculture, ensures the efficient implementation of EAFRD. Several Flemish ministers attend the meetings of the Monitoring Committee, as well as all relevant stake holders and the Flemish public entities dealing with this issue.

## THE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (IC)

The Implementation Committee RDP III regularly meets in order to have the programme carried out in an efficient and proper way. It brings together all actors dealing with the implementation of the EAFRD, i.e. the CCPS Management Council, the Paying Agency, all management services, all people dealing with monitoring and evaluation, the Flemish Rural Network, the internal audit.

The progress of the RDP III measures with respect to content and finance is discussed by the Implementation Committee. They also report on other meetings, as well as on the European political decision making process. Monitoring and evaluation are always on the agenda. The Flemish Rural Network also gives an overview of the past and future activities.

## THE COORDINATING CELL EUROPEAN RURAL POLICY (CCEP)

CCEP has been appointed as Managing Authority for the RDP and is part of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. It is responsible for the drawing up of the programme and the daily monitoring. It also functions as secretariat of the Implementation Committee and the Monitoring Committee and deals with the promotion of EAFRD in close cooperation with the Flemish Rural Network. Finally, it also reports on the monitoring and evaluation activities.

## **THE FLEMISH RURAL NETWORK**

The Flemish Rural Network has been set up within the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. It deals with all communication activities, the exchange of information and the setting up of a network on RDP III. For this purpose, all four strategic goals of RDP III combined with the goals imposed by Europe are translated into Flemish goals: to involve and inform stakeholders in a more intensive way about RDP III, to provide a (more) appropriate coordination between RDP III and the Flemish countryside, to inform the general public about RDP III and rural development and to promote innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas. This is developed into annual action plans. The Flemish Rural Network also stays in touch with the rural network of other European Member States, the European Network and the Flemish EIP network. More information can be found at [www.ruraalnetwerk.be/welcome](http://www.ruraalnetwerk.be/welcome).

## **THE FLEMISH PAYING AGENCY**

The Flemish Paying Agency is the certified authority responsible for the actual payments by the Flemish authorities in the framework of the European Agricultural Policy. It also offers the required guarantee with respect to checks, registration and the disclosure and storage of data.

## **THE INTERNAL AUDIT**

The internal Audit of the Flemish Paying Agency checks the measures regarding agriculture and rural development on a regular basis. It also coordinates the annual external certification of the Paying Agency.

## **THE CERTIFYING BODY**

The certifying body certifies the management, monitoring and control systems introduced by the Paying Agency as well as the annual accounts of the Paying Agency in an independent way. The certifying body is generally appointed for several years by means of a public procurement procedure. The certifying body performs audit activities on a yearly basis. The results of the audit activities are included in interim and annual reports.

The certifying body also monitors the information security within the Flemish Paying Agency.

## **MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

Management services are the authorities managing or carrying out individual measures. They also monitor these measures. These services are situated in various departments and do have regular meetings (e.g. in the Implementation Committee)

# Contact details

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## **FLEMISH PROVINCES**

Province of Antwerp: [www.provincieantwerpen.be](http://www.provincieantwerpen.be)

Province of Limburg: [www.limburg.be](http://www.limburg.be)

Province of East-Flanders: [www.oost-vlaanderen.be](http://www.oost-vlaanderen.be)

Province of Flemish Brabant: [www.vlaamsbrabant.be](http://www.vlaamsbrabant.be)

Province of West-Flanders: [www.west-vlaanderen.be](http://www.west-vlaanderen.be)

More information on communication obligations for beneficiaries can be found at: [www.lv.vlaanderen.be/nl/landbouwbeleid/plattelandsontwikkeling/communicatieverplichtingen-begunstigden](http://www.lv.vlaanderen.be/nl/landbouwbeleid/plattelandsontwikkeling/communicatieverplichtingen-begunstigden)

**OVERVIEW MEASURES**

**RDP III**

# Support for training activities on agriculture (training and refresher courses)

## DESCRIPTION

As a farmer or horticulturist, it is not always easy to stay informed on changing regulations and the most recent techniques. The agricultural and horticultural sector is changing frequently. Therefore, various training and refresher courses are offered to all people involved in agriculture and horticulture (farmers, horticulturists, contract workers, gardeners ...). This allows to increase the viability of their business and to create a sustainable, ecological business by e.g. working the soil and using fertilizers and pesticides in a well-considered way.

Moreover, not every beginning farmer has received full-time agricultural education. But a certificate of professional competence can be obtained through starter courses. These programmes include both courses and internships and go deeper into the technical aspects but also deal with business management, regulations, environment and animal welfare.

Every year, a call for proposals is addressed to the agricultural training centres. These accredited centres can apply for grants by submitting a yearly programme of their training activities. These training activities are assessed on the basis of established and objective criteria. It is established on the basis of these assessments which training activities are eligible for funding. After approval, the selected centres are allocated a training budget for their training activities and/or apprenticeships. The planned activities are notified in advance in order to make checks possible.

## BENEFICIARIES

- ▶ Accredited general training centres for agriculture
- ▶ Accredited regional training centres for agriculture

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

Flat-rate grant:

- ▶ Remuneration of the teacher:
  - > 51,69 euros/one hour class
  - > 31,01 euros/day of apprenticeship
- ▶ Operational costs
  - > 77,53 euros/one hour class on theory
  - > 109,84 euros/one hour class on practice
  - > 77,53 euros/day of apprenticeship

## MORE INFO

[Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)







# Demonstration projects

## DESCRIPTION

Often, the latest technologies or innovations can best be shown outside of a classroom, e.g. on a field or on a farm. Therefore, demonstration projects in agriculture and horticulture are eligible for support.

The aim of this measure is to make farmers and horticulturists aware of new opportunities in the field of sustainable practices and techniques on the one hand, and to introduce these practices within our Flemish agricultural businesses on the other hand. We attach great importance to the feasibility of these new insights. For this purpose, we organize these demonstrations with agricultural businesses serving as an example or with groups meeting on a farm.

At regular intervals, an appeal defining particular themes is launched. A committee of experts assesses all the proposals which have been introduced. The best projects are eligible for support. Demonstration projects run up to two years.

## BENEFICIARIES

Associations accredited as a centre for more awareness of a sustainable agriculture

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

The amount is determined for each call separately. The eligible amount represents 100% of the costs proven.

## MORE INFO

[Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)

# KRATOS – individual advice

## DESCRIPTION

KRATOS offers business advice to farmers and horticulturists on various topics:

- ▶ business plan
- ▶ management advice
- ▶ eligibility criteria for direct support
- ▶ greening criteria for direct support
- ▶ biodiversity
- ▶ climate
- ▶ water
- ▶ soil
- ▶ safety at work
- ▶ processing of primary agricultural products

Farmers can seek advice on one or several topics of their choice.

## BENEFICIARIES

The beneficiaries are the farmers and horticulturists seeking for business advice. Farmers and horticulturists do not have to pay a single penny of the advisory cost. The management service chooses the company delivering advisory services by means of a public procurement. The management service then orders the advice requested by the farmers, and settles the amount due to the company delivering the advisory service.

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

The management service settles the total advisory cost to the company delivering the advisory service on the basis of the bid delivered by the company delivering the advisory service. The advice is free for every farmer and horticulturist.

## MORE INFO

[Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)

[www.vlaanderen.be/landbouw/kratos](http://www.vlaanderen.be/landbouw/kratos)



# Support to investments at the farm

## DESCRIPTION

Farmers and horticulturists continuously face developments affecting the viability and management of their business. This goes from new regulations on the environment, hygiene, animal welfare or quality of the products to new technologies, changing commercialization and distribution structures, fluctuating prices of raw materials and finished products and the reorientation of EU agricultural policy.

Farmers and horticulturists must therefore invest to adjust their business structures sufficiently to changing circumstances. Investments increasing resilience or sustainability of the agricultural or horticultural business are eligible for support. Public authorities will perform a selection of all applications received from time to time. On the basis of a number of objective and measurable criteria, the most sustainable investments will be selected and thus can receive support.

## BENEFICIARIES

- ▶ Farmers as established by VLIF (Flemish Agricultural Investment Fund)
- ▶ Agricultural smallholdings and trade companies that have the appropriate objectives and whose management is carried out by farmers who own at least 25% of the capital
- ▶ Groups of farmers

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

The support rate depends on the nature of the investment and amounts to 15% or 30%. The score on the sustainability criteria of the selection determines whether 15% support (a low score) or 30% support (a high score) is allocated.

The total amount of supported investments in the period 2014-2020 amounts to a maximum of 1.000.000 euros per company or - in case of relocation of two companies that cease to exist - to 2.000.000 euros per company.

## MORE INFO

[Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)





# Support for innovation projects in agriculture

## DESCRIPTION

This measure promotes innovation required in agricultural and horticultural businesses. It complements the support for usual investment in case the most recent innovations are not listed as eligible investments.

The measure aims at realizing innovative ideas and concepts in the field of production, processing and marketing of agricultural products through capital contributions for movable or immovable innovative investments, studies, the costs of pilot plants, the cost of software development and management programs and the cost of external counsellors and experts. Experience has shown that innovation, especially in the early stages, needs a 'trigger' and often a professional advisor as well. Therefore, advisory costs are also listed as eligible costs.

At regular intervals, a call is launched for farmers or groups of farmers to submit a project creating innovation at the production, the (pre) processing and / or marketing of agricultural or horticultural products. Those projects offering the best quality are selected through a selection procedure.

## BENEFICIARIES

- ▶ Farmers

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

The support rate amounts to 40% of the eligible costs.

## MORE INFO

[Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)



# Support for the processing and marketing of agricultural and horticultural products

## DESCRIPTION

The processing and (co-operative) marketing is the most important distribution channel for the Flemish agricultural and horticultural production. Existing support measures for the industry do not always meet with the specific needs of the manufacturing sector in relation to agriculture and supplied agricultural and horticultural products (food safety and food quality, quickly perishable raw materials, short delivery times, regional unity ...).

This measure provides an additional support for investments in the processing and marketing of agricultural and horticultural products.

Its goal is to improve food quality, food safety and the added value of agricultural and horticultural products on the one hand and to strengthen the synergy between agriculture and the processing / marketing aspects on the other hand.

Investments in the processing and marketing of agricultural and horticultural products are eligible for support if they have a direct and positive impact on the farmer, as well as on the supplied agricultural and horticultural products. This measure essentially relates to the first stage of the processing and marketing process and to the quality of agricultural and horticultural products: transport and delivery; classification and quality control; preparation of the processing process...

## BENEFICIARIES

- ▶ Processing agricultural businesses dealing with meat products, fruit and vegetables, potatoes, flax and dairy products, with a few exceptions
- ▶ Agricultural and horticultural co-operatives dealing with the processing and marketing of goods and the service industries
- ▶ Groups or partnerships (with legal personality) of farmers
- ▶ Partnerships made up of two or more of the previous groups

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

The support rate amounts to 30% of the eligible costs.

## MORE INFO

[Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)





# Support to non-productive investments at the farm

## DESCRIPTION

A farmer lives and works in the midst of the open space and makes use of soil and water. He can choose to make investments contributing to a better biodiversity, landscape, soil and water quality, ... These investments mainly affect nature and landscape. They require some efforts to the farmer but they are no source of income. Investments on erosion control and water management are also eligible, from which not so much the individual farmer, but rather the local residents, society itself or the ecosystem benefit. In order to encourage farmers to make these investments, support is offered.

Examples are the planting of hedges, the setting up of small-scale water infrastructure and erosion dams, ... The investment should be adapted to the geographical location of the relevant agricultural plot and fit within the existing views on land use for the area where the plot is situated.

## BENEFICIARIES

- ▶ Active farmers
- ▶ Agricultural smallholdings and trade companies that have the appropriate objectives and whose management is carried out by farmers who own at least 25% of the capital
- ▶ Groups of farmers

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

The support rate amounts to 100% of the eligible costs.

## MORE INFO

[Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)

# Take-over support for young farmers

The number of starting farm businesses in Flanders has fallen under 200 per year. In order to keep the agricultural sector viable, more beginning farmers are needed. The reasons for the low number of beginning farmers are multiple: an insufficient number of economically viable businesses to take over, an insecure and low income, legal uncertainty, increasing social demands, a less favourable image...

This requires a comprehensive approach. In addition to specific training, business advice and investment support, RDP III also provides setting-up support. Financial compensation is often necessary for the farmer to start up a viable farm business meeting all regulations. The financial burden should not be too heavy and not take a too long period of time, as the financial resources are preferably used for investments aimed at structural improvements in case quickly changing environmental conditions occur.

A young farmer is entitled for setting-up support if he establishes himself on an existing farm and if everything is well-planned. He/she may settle in the capacity of farmer-natural person or the capacity of a legal farmer representative.

Setting up as a young farmer requires that all actions necessary for the start-up of the business are described, but also that all related business activities are carried out in a well-organised way.

## BENEFICIARIES

Skilled farmers under 40 when the application has been introduced if they establish as an independent farm manager for the first time. The farmer must also meet the VLIF (Flemish Agricultural Investment Fund)-definition of farmer. The aid is granted only to small and micro enterprises.

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

A flat-rate grant is paid. There are three categories: depending on the gross farm income, the amount is 40.000, 50.000 or 70.000 euros.

Payment is made in instalments over a period of up to 5 years. The final instalment is paid only if the business plan has been carried out correctly.

## MORE INFO

[Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)



# Support for the development of small agricultural businesses

## DESCRIPTION

In addition to the measure 'take-over support for young farmers' Flanders also wishes to support small farmers wanting to extend their small agricultural business.

The conditions to benefit from the take-over support for young farmers or investment support are quite difficult for certain types of businesses and sub-sectors. Often, these businesses grow new varieties; develop an alternative form of production and marketing structure. Or they are active in a business run as a complementary activity or linked to various forms of diversification. As these businesses and business models score well on sustainability and diversification of activities in the countryside, this new measure is included in RDP III.

## BENEFICIARIES

- ▶ Active farmers, with certain criteria applied regarding production type, sub-sector, production and marketing methods
- ▶ Agricultural smallholdings and trade companies that have the appropriate object and whose management is carried out by farmers who own at least 25% of the capital if they carry out the activity mentioned above
- ▶ Groups of farmers if they carry out the activity mentioned above

This support measure only applies to small businesses and micro businesses.

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

A flat-rate amount of support is paid.

There are three categories:

- ▶ The standard support amounts to 7.000 euros ;
- ▶ If the gross agricultural income amounts to at least 30.000 euros at the beginning stage of the business, the amount is increased by 4.000 euros ;
- ▶ As far as specialized organic stock farms or organic stock farms combined with arable farming are concerned, the support is increased by 4.000 euros.

As a result, the total amount of the support is 7.000 euros, 11.000 euros or 15.000 euros.

Payment is made in instalments over a period of up to 5 years. The final instalment is paid only if the business plan has been carried out correctly.

## MORE INFO

[Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)







# Site development in the framework of Natura 2000

## DESCRIPTION

Flanders must ensure that habitats and species, that are vital to European biodiversity, are kept alive. This is called a 'favourable conservation status of a habitat or a species'. In order to restore or to maintain this conservation status, Flanders has established conservation goals (CG). These CG give an indication of the final destination of a certain area. The initiatives being taken in the area must fit within these goals.

The measure 'site development in the framework of the Natura 2000' supports investments required for the maintenance, restoration or strengthening of the natural features of an area. It can involve site development such as the creation of sods, the restoration of marshes or ponds, development of a water management system, activities avoiding a negative impact on agriculture or leisure activities, ...

This measure provides for four types of support:

- ▶ Project grants for nature

This grant can only be used once for the development of a site in case the farmer wants to achieve the conservation goals and if it's within the framework of the execution of the integrated nature conservation. At regular intervals, a call is launched.

- ▶ Natural site development

Support is granted to natural site development projects carried out by the Flemish Land Agency (VLM) in order to set up areas so they can meet the conservation goals. It is mainly about larger areas where multiple owners and land users are involved.

- ▶ Nature project agreement

In areas where a nature vision plan was drafted, a grant may be given to projects implementing this plan,

provided that the project contributes to the conservation goals. Every year, all applications are assessed.

- ▶ Exceptional single site development in a protected nature reserve

A grant for single site development activities in a protected nature reserve can be obtained if they develop to the implementation of the conservation goals. Every year, all applications are assessed.

The submitted applications are evaluated by a selection committee. This evaluation is used to select the best projects that are eligible for a subsidy.

## **BENEFICIARIES**

- ▶ Project grants for nature  
Local administrations, legal person governed by private law and individuals
- ▶ Natural site development  
Flemish Land Agency
- ▶ Nature project agreement  
Legal person governed by public law, legal person governed by private law and individuals
- ▶ Exceptional single site development in a protected nature reserve  
Legal person governed by private law and individuals. Public authorities are not entitled for support.

## **AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT**

- ▶ Project grants for nature

The support rate is 50 to 90% of the eligible amount, depending on the type of nature management plan. If the project concerns the Programmatic Approach to Nitrogen, the percentage is higher. The call for projects imposes a minimum amount and can also impose a maximum amount for the grant.

- ▶ Natural site development

100% of the eligible costs proven

- ▶ Nature project agreement

Support will amount to 50% of the total project costs for legal persons governed by public law and 90% for

legal persons governed by private law and individuals

If funding is also received through other channels, the funding rate may be reduced

- ▶ Exceptional single site development in a protected nature reserve

The support rate amounts to 80% of the eligible costs. If funding is also received through other channels, the funding rate may be reduced. The minimum amount is 2.250 euros.

## **MORE INFO**

[Agency for Nature and Forests](#)

# Enhancing the environmental quality and vitality of the countryside

## DESCRIPTION

The countryside is facing a rapid evolution due to changes in the Flemish agricultural sector (fewer but larger agricultural businesses, diversification, part-time farming, changing views on landscape and buildings ...). These changes could also have a strengthening effect on the quality and vitality of the Flemish countryside and could focus on the beauty, development and the quality of the countryside in all its aspects (buildings, roads, small landscape elements, water, heritage, nature ...). As a result, the countryside will play its role as a “reservoir area” and offer residents and visitors all possible opportunities. Moreover, it could be a solution to social problems, such as poverty resulting from changing conditions in the agricultural sector.

This could be reached through projects of non-profit organizations, public authorities and other organizations. This measure is guided at a provincial level by the Provincial Management Committee (PMC). The choices they make, must be in accordance with the provincial rural policy plans.

This measure comprises 5 sub-themes:

- ▶ To give every chance possible to the amenity value of the countryside with respect for regional identity, focusing on heritage, tradition and tourism
- ▶ To preserve and to develop the open space, with a focus on multi-functionality
- ▶ To focus on vulnerable population groups at the countryside, including poverty policy
- ▶ Attractive villages combining the multi-functionality of built-up and non-built-up areas
- ▶ To develop a functional road system at the countryside, including mobility issues

## BENEFICIARIES

Following categories are entitled for public support:

- ▶ Local authorities, municipal autonomous agencies, intermunicipal partnerships, local Social Services and autonomous agencies of the Social Services
- ▶ Provinces and provincial autonomous agencies

- ▶ Non-profit organizations
- ▶ Foundations
- ▶ Certain legal persons governed by public law

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

The maximum project cost amounts to 1.000.000 euros and the percentage is 65% at the most. The maximum percentage might be increased in case special circumstances occur.

## MORE INFO

[Flemish Land Agency](#)

Flemish provinces



# Enhancing the environmental quality and vitality of the countryside through cooperation

## DESCRIPTION

This measure ties in with the measure 'Enhancing the environmental quality and vitality of the countryside through investment'. The emphasis is on cooperation. Project promoters can work together on 8 topics.

- ▶ Pilot themes, limited to the following topics :
  - > environment and biodiversity ;
  - > climate (sustainable energy and climate adaptation) ;
  - > poverty among the agriculture and countryside community ;
  - > socio-economic projects linked to agriculture ;
  - > touristic projects linked to agriculture.
- ▶ Cooperation between small-scale operators with a view to organizing common work processes and to sharing facilities and resources, as well as to developing tourist information points for agritourism  
**Only** micro-enterprises will be accepted as a beneficiary!
- ▶ Horizontal and vertical cooperation among supply chain actors for the establishment and the development of short supply chains and local markets and promotion activities
- ▶ Common action with a view to achieving climate mitigation and climate adaptation as well as common approaches of environmental projects and current environmental practices, including an efficient water management, use of renewable energy sources and the maintenance of the agricultural landscape
- ▶ Horizontal and vertical cooperation among supply chain actors in the sustainable provision of biomass for use in food and energy production and industrial processes
- ▶ Diversification of farming activities into activities concerning health care, social integration, community-supported agriculture and education about the environment and food
- ▶ Cooperation on heritage
- ▶ Cooperation on poverty

## BENEFICIARIES

- ▶ Local authorities, municipal autonomous agencies, intermunicipal partnerships, local Social Services and autonomous agencies of the Social Services
- ▶ Provinces and provincial autonomous agencies
- ▶ Non-profit organizations
- ▶ Foundations
- ▶ Companies and profit organizations
- ▶ Certain legal persons governed by public law

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

The maximum project cost amounts to 1.000.000 euros and the percentage is 65% at the most.

## MORE INFO

[Flemish Land Agency](#)

Flemish provinces





# Afforestation

## DESCRIPTION

Through the afforestation measure, the Flemish government wants to encourage the expansion of the forest area. The afforestation measure is expected to contribute to the achievement of the conservation goals (CG) and can simultaneously reduce the impact of these CG on agriculture. Each hectare of forest expansion, which is being realized through this measure, makes a contribution to the realization of the CG and has not to be sacrificed by the farmers. Moreover, the climate also benefits from the expansion of forests and the associated storage of CO<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, this measure promotes good forestry practices.

The afforestation measure applies to an area of 0,50 hectare at the least or 0,25 hectare if the plot of land lies next to an existing forest. The created afforestation area must be maintained for at least 25 years.

The afforestation support can be divided into three categories:

- ▶ Planting support

This support measure is applied for the planting of mixed forests with suitable native species or poplar with a suitable native lower plant layer. This support can be increased when protection against wildlife damage is included. Support for wildlife protection can also be obtained in case management works only are performed to realize forest restocking in order to obtain a successful afforestation with native species.

- ▶ Income compensation support

Farmers obtaining a planting support or realizing forest restocking in order to obtain a successful reforestation, are entitled to receive a twelve year support for the loss of income they face as a result of the conversion from farmland to forest.

- ▶ Maintenance support

Farmers obtaining an income compensation support for the first twelve years, also receive support for the maintenance of the afforestation area.

From time to time, a review committee will assess the applications on the basis of a number of objective and measurable criteria and rank them according to a point system.

## BENEFICIAIRES

- ▶ Afforestation - planting support: public law entities owning land, except for the Belgian federal State, the Flemish Region; private law entities owning land; private landowners; and their associations
- ▶ Afforestation – income compensation support: private law entities owning land; private landowners being active farmers; and their associations
- ▶ Afforestation – maintenance support: private law entities owning land; private landowners being active farmers; and their associations

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

### Afforestation - planting support

- ▶ Planting: 3.500 euros/hectare
- ▶ Wild protection: 350 euros/100 meter fence and 0,65 euro/item individual protection
- ▶ If recommended origin: additional support of 250 euros/hectare

### Afforestation – income compensation support

- ▶ 800 euros/hectare/year

### Afforestation – maintenance support

- ▶ First five years: 185 euros/hectare/year
- ▶ From the sixth up to the twelfth year: 75 euros/hectare/year

## MORE INFO

[Agency for Nature and Forests](#)



# Reforestation

## DESCRIPTION

This measure aims at realizing an ecological improvement of the existing forests and an evolution towards more mixed indigenous forests contributing to the achievement of the conservation goals set in the framework of Natura 2000. Each hectare of forest expansion which is being realized through this measure, does not have to be realized through forest enlargement. This will allow reducing the impact of the conservation goals on agriculture. At the same time, this measure promotes good forestry practices.

The reforestation measure applies to an area of 0,50 hectare at the least. Only the transformation of existing forests to mixed forests with suitable native species are eligible for support. This support can be increased when protection against wildlife damage is included. Support for wildlife protection can also be obtained in case management works only are performed to realize forest restocking in order to obtain a successful reforestation with native species.

From time to time, a review committee will assess the applications on the basis of a number of objective and measurable criteria and rank them according to a point system.

## BENEFICIARIES

Public law entities owning land, except for the Belgian federal State and the Flemish Region; private law entities owning land; private landowners; and their associations

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

- ▶ Planting support: 3.000 euros/hectare
- ▶ Wild protection: 235 euros/100 meter fence and 0,45 euro/item individual protection
- ▶ If recommended origin: additional support of 250 euros/hectare

## MORE INFO

[Agency for Nature and Forests](#)

# Agroforestry

## DESCRIPTION

Agroforestry is a system of land management involving the simultaneous cultivation of farm crops and trees. This combination allows both wood yield and agricultural production on the same plot. If the farmer is able to make a reasoned choice on the sort of trees and if the planting is well prepared, he can obtain a result that is greater than the individual crop production.

Agroforestry provides both an ecological and economic value as it attracts natural enemies for pest control, increases biodiversity and retains nutrients released after leaf fall for the next crop, increases the organic component in the soil and protects crops against strong winds. Contrary to the negative effects of these trees, such as the seizure of the land and reduced crop yields near the trees by the shadow effect, agroforestry also allows a saving on external input and a higher yield when cutting down the trees.

Flanders financially supports the costs of planting the trees on agricultural land in order to get agroforestry adopted more quickly.

Beneficiaries may receive a grant for a plot of at least 0.5 ha. The agroforestry plots contain a minimum of 30 and maximum of 200 trees per hectare. The trees must be evenly planted over the whole plot. The cultivation of conifers, low trunk fruit trees, half-standard fruit trees, black cherry, oak and Acacia is not eligible for support. The trees planted must be kept for at least 10 years. Plants for windbreak and rows of trees at the plot edge are not eligible for support.

New candidates are chosen on the grounds of previously communicated well-defined selection criteria and a point system with minimum score.

## BENEFICIARIES

Private land owners, local public authorities and their associations.

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

- ▶ 80% of the costs proven by invoice as far as planting material, consolidation and protection material, staff costs and use of tools (e.g. rental costs)
- ▶ 200 euros/hectare as labour costs if the farmer carries out the planting activities himself

## MORE INFO

[Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)



# Support for the development of producers' organizations

## DESCRIPTION

The negotiating position of farmers throughout the food chain can be reinforced by supporting the creation of producers' organizations. An individual farmer is in fact a price taker having little say in the delivery conditions. Through the creation of a producer organization (PO) farmers can improve their negotiating position resulting in better prices and conditions.

Producers' organizations that have recently been created and registered by the Flemish authorities can, once a call is made, submit an application to receive a start-up support for five years following the date of their registration. To this end, the producers' organization should develop a business plan outlining the goals for the next five years. The aim is to strengthen the market position of farmers in the food chain by encouraging them to cooperate and to market their products jointly.

Support is granted on the basis of the yearly production realized by the producers' organization or on the sum of the production of the individual members, on the condition that they negotiate jointly but not market their products jointly.

## BENEFICIARIES

- ▶ The organization making an application is a SME and comprises active farmers
- ▶ The producers' organization is not involved in the marketing of a product from the fruit and vegetables' sector or the tobacco sector
- ▶ The producers' organization has been registered later than 01/01/2014

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

The support goes from 5% (first year) to 2% (fifth year) of the yearly production.

If the value of the yearly production exceeds 1.000.000 euros the support goes from 2,5% (first year) to 1% (fifth year).

The maximum amount per year for each organization is established at 30.000 euros.

## MORE INFO

[Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)





# Agro-environmental climate measures

## DESCRIPTION

The introduction or continued implementation of environment-, climate- and nature-friendly farming practices often requires additional efforts of the farmers. The positive impact on the environment or the climate can be substantial if applied on a large scale. Agro-environmental climate measures aim to promote the implementation of some of these agricultural practices.

There are two types of agro-environmental climate measures: the agro-environmental measures of the Flemish Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the management agreements of the Flemish Land Agency.

In the management agreements, the plots are generally well-defined for the entire period of the agreement. Plots where an agro-environmental measure is performed, can be changed annually.

In order to obtain support for agro-environmental climate measures, the farmer must meet all criteria of the definition of an 'active farmer' as established by the European Common Agricultural Policy. In addition, the farmer must also meet all legal requirements for the use of fertilizers and pesticides.

Certain combinations of agro-environmental climate measures can be used on the same plot allowing the farmer to meet the environmental or natural goals in a more efficient way.

Agreements always start on the 1st of January and are generally concluded for a period of 5 years.

## FLEMISH AGRO-ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES

In Flanders, there are five agro-environmental measures for which a five-year agreement can be concluded in order to obtain support. A minimum area for which the agro-environment commitment is given, is required to be eligible for the area-based support measures. The commitment area, for which the agro-environment commitment is given, is chosen by the farmer and defines the minimum area on which the measure is to be applied for five years.

### ► Cultivation of papilionaceous flowers

This measure provides support for the cultivation of at least 0,5 hectare of the following papilionaceous flowers: red clover, grass-clover, lucerne, grass-lucerne, field peas or field beans. This measure aims for a more profound diversification of the roughage production in Flemish cattle farming. This way, Flemish cattle farms are less dependent on external sources of protein, such as soya. In addition, papilionaceous flowers also offer a number of environmental advantages compared to other animal forage.

- ▶ Cultivation of fibre flax and fibre hemp using less fertilizing substances

The cultivation of flax and hemp for fibre production reduces the environmental burden and increases biodiversity. Furthermore, it also actively contributes to the fixation of carbon and is characterized by an extremely limited use of pesticides. The environmentally friendly nature of these crops is further enhanced by the additional prohibition to apply any nitrogen. At least 0,5 ha of hemp or 1 ha of fibre flax grown without any nitrogen-fertilizing substances, is required to be entitled for support.

- ▶ Mechanical weed control

In Flemish agriculture and horticulture, most crops are kept free from weeds with the help of pesticides. However, it is possible to keep certain crops weed-free via mechanical weed control. The elimination of pesticides has an immediate positive effect on the quality of the soil, on the ground and surface water and on the biodiversity of the plot and of its surroundings. Mechanical weed control is eligible for support if it is applied on a plot of at least 0,5 hectare.

- ▶ Mating disruption technique in fruit cultivation

The biological control of codling moth and leaf rollers through pheromone confusion can significantly diminish the use of pesticides in the fruit cultivation sector. The mating disruption technique has to be applied on a plot of 1 ha at the least in order to obtain supply.

- ▶ Preservation of local cattle breeds

The preservation of genetic diversity of traditional animal breeds is a basis for the preservation of diversity in the countryside. Moreover, a living gene bank is also important to breed in specific characteristics in existing breeds. This support allows the preservation of local cattle breeds and sheep breeds in danger of extinction. The animals eligible for support have to be registered in a herd-book or a breed register, which is kept by an acknowledged organization.

## MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS

There are 34 existing management agreements (MA). A number of management agreements can only be concluded in limited areas having the highest impact. Other management agreements can be concluded anywhere in Flanders.

Flanders is offering management agreements relating to:

- ▶ **Botanic management** by developing or maintaining species-rich grassland :  
MA development species-rich grassland / MA preservation species-rich grassland

- ▶ **Species protection** by improving the habitat of field birds and meadow birds as well as of Natura 2000 species:  
MA wildlife management grassland postponed mowing date / MA wildlife management grassland grazing 20 May / MA wildlife management grassland continuous grazing 15 June / MA wildlife management grassland chick meadow/ MA creation and maintenance fleeing strip 22 June / MA wildlife management arable area food crop / MA creation and/or maintenance of a mixed grass strip plus /MA creation and maintenance of a lucerne strip bird meadow/ MA creation and maintenance grass strip bird meadow/ MA creation and maintenance of a lucerne strip hamster/ MA hamster-friendly follow-on crop
- ▶ **Erosion control** by the creation of grass strips and grass dams on arable areas susceptible to erosion and the creation of grass land on strategic plots:  
MA creation and maintenance of grass strips / MA creation and maintenance of erosion dam / MA creation and management of strategic grassland / MA creation of maintenance grass strip 15 June / MA creation and/or maintenance mixed grass strip / MA creation and/or maintenance of a mixed grass strip plus
- ▶ Creation and maintenance of **field margins** to buffer vulnerable elements of nature such as a stretch of forest, a water course or a hollow road, to increase pollen and nectar and to create a favourable habitat for all sorts of animals:  
MA creation and maintenance grass strip 15 June / MA creation and/or maintenance mixed grass strip / MA creation and/or maintenance of a mixed grass strip plus / MA creation and maintenance of a stretch of land covered with flowers
- ▶ The maintenance of **small landscape components** such as hedges, woodland edges, hedge rows and pollard trees:  
MA maintenance of hedges / MA maintenance felling hedges / MA maintenance hedge rows / MA maintenance woodland edges 75%/50%/25% / MA maintenance pollard tree hedges / MA conversion into woodland edges / MA maintenance woodland edge hedge row
- ▶ The improvement of the **water quality** by choosing crops implying little risk. The risk profile of a crop is determined by the sensitivity of the crop to nitrate leaching, erosion sensitivity of the crop and the intensity of the organic carbon developed by the crop:  
MA water quality
- ▶ The realization of **the Natura 2000 goals** by applying no fertilization at all on grasslands and fields and phosphorous mining through mowing, specific crops and a well-defined NK fertilization:  
MA reduced fertilization arable area (100% reduction) / MA reduced fertilization grassland (100% reduction) / MA phosphorous mining

## BENEFICIARIES

Active farmers

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

### Flemish agro-environmental measures (annual support)

Cultivation of papilionaceous flowers	field peas and broad beans: 600 euros/ha
	others (clover, grass clover, lucerne, grass lucerne): 450 euros/ha
Cultivation of fibre flax and fibre hemp using less fertilizing substances	fibre flax: 240 euros/ha
	fibre hemp: 140 euros/ha
Mechanical weed control	260 euros/ha
Mating disruption technique in fruit cultivation	210 euros/ha
Preservation of local cattle breeds	sheep: 25 euros/animal
	cattle (with MPR): 175 euros/animal
	cattle (without MPR): 150 euros/animal

### Management agreements (annual support)

Developing species-rich grassland	881 euros/ha
Maintenance species-rich grassland	1.174 euros/ha
Wildlife management grassland postponed mowing date	698 euros/ha
Wildlife management grassland grazing 20 May	116 euros/ha
Wildlife management grassland continuous grazing 15 June	661 euros/ha
Wildlife management grassland chick meadow	761 euros/ha
Creation and maintenance fleeing strip 22 June	1.616 euros/ha
Wildlife management arable area food crop	1.931 euros/ha
Creation and maintenance of a lucerne strip bird meadow	1.764 euros/ha

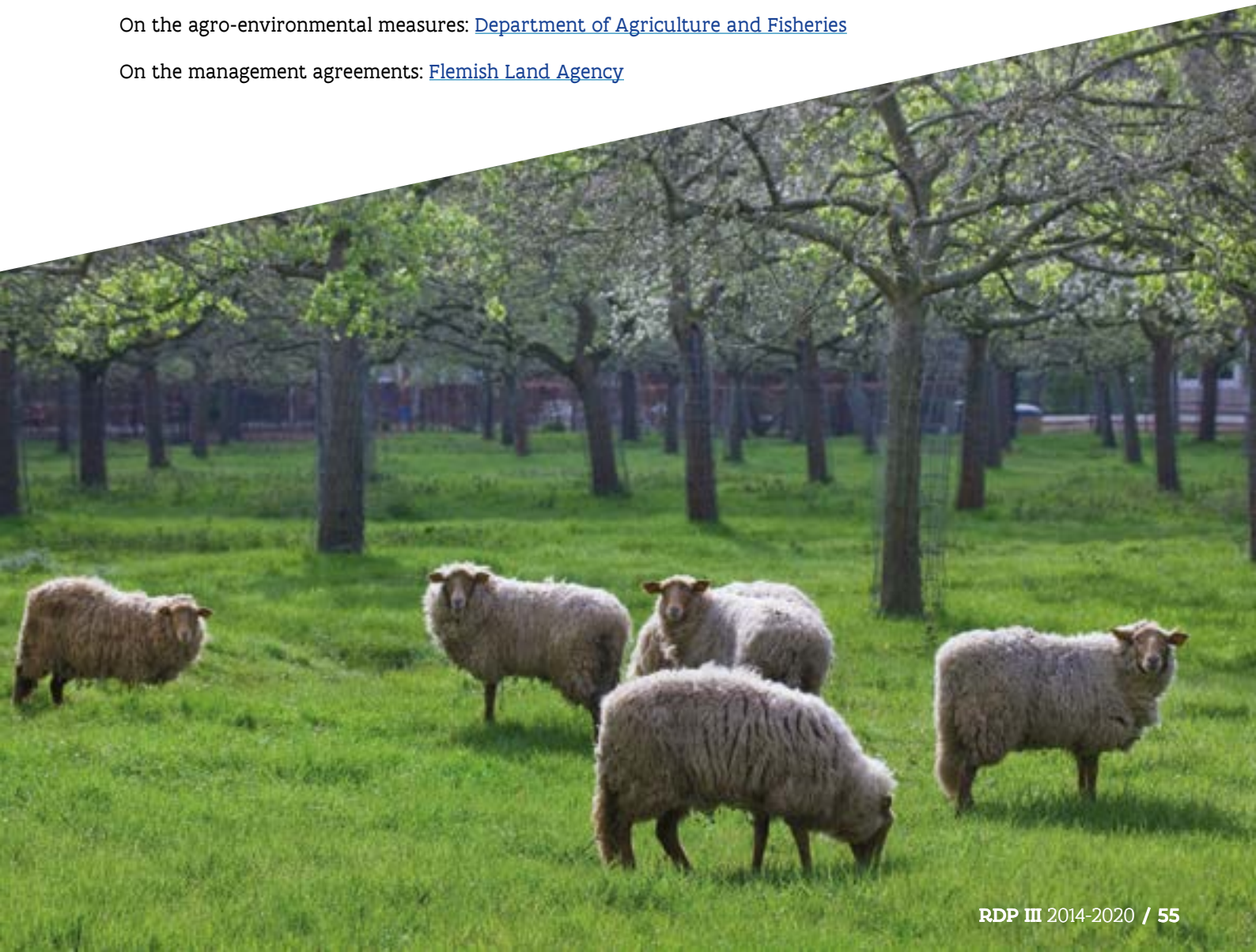
Creation and maintenance grass strip bird meadow	2.247 euros/ha
Creation and maintenance of a lucerne strip hamster	1.871 euros/ha
Hamster-friendly follow-on crop	584 euros/ha
Creation and maintenance of a grass strip	1.047 euros/ha
Creation and maintenance of erosion dam	12,86 euros/m
Creation and management of strategic grassland	619 euros/ha
Creation and maintenance grass strip 15 June	1.317 euros/ha
Creation and maintenance of a mixed grass strip	1.812 euros/ha
Maintenance mixed grass strip	1.700 euros/ha
Creation and maintenance of a mixed grass strip plus	2.108 euros/ha
Maintenance of a mixed grass strip plus	1.996 euros/ha
Creation and maintenance of a stretch of land covered with flowers	1.972 euros/ha
Maintenance hedge	1,87 euros/m
Maintenance hedgerows	1,51 euros/m
Maintenance hedge	2,76 euros/m
Maintenance 75% woodland edge	40,1 euros/acre
Maintenance 50% woodland edge	26,8 euros/acre
Maintenance 25% woodland edge	17,8 euros/acre
Maintenance pollard trees	2,83 euros/tree
Maintenance woodland edges	45,4 euros/acre
Conversion into woodland edges	80,9 euros/acre
Water quality	245 euros/ha
Phosphorous mining arable area	704 euros/ha
Reduced fertilization arable area	1.391 euros/ha
Reduced fertilization grassland	1.036 euros/ha

Due to the ban on the double financing of projects, the support amount may be reduced in case a combination of agro-environmental measures is applied on the same plot, in case agro-environmental measures are combined with greening conditions or in case of an overlap with the cross-conditions related to erosion control.

## MORE INFO

On the agro-environmental measures: [Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)

On the management agreements: [Flemish Land Agency](#)



# Support per hectare for the conversion/continuation of the organic production method

## DESCRIPTION

The organic production method is an overall system combining the best environmental practices with a high level of biodiversity and the preservation of natural resources, applying high standards of animal welfare and implementing a production method based on natural substances and processes.

The number of active organic producers in Flanders amounted to 370 (figures end of 2015). Together, they represented 5.343 ha being 0,9% of the entire Flemish agricultural area.

In order to encourage organic production in Flanders, we try to abolish the market handicap during the conversion period and in the period following the conversion period. Due to the specific requirements organic farmers have to meet, the cost of producing organic products is often higher than the production cost of conventional products. During the conversion period, organic farmers often face the inability to recover these additional costs. Even after the conversion period, it is not always possible to include the additional costs in the price.

As a result, organic farmers are entitled for support per hectare during the conversion period and afterwards. The support compensates the costs incurred, the loss of income and the transaction charges.

## BENEFICIARIES

Active farmers and associations of active farmers

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

Amount of yearly support per cultivation	Conversion (euros/ha)	Continuation (euros/ha)
Annual arable farming and roughage production	480	260
Annual fruit and vegetable production and herbs	850	400
Cultivation of protected crops	1320	400
Grassland and multiannual roughage production	300	120
Multiannual fruit and vegetable production and herbs	860	210

## MORE INFO

[Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)





# Support for the creation and activities of the EIP operational groups

## DESCRIPTION

This measure aims to stimulate the interaction between research and practice. EIP stands for “European Innovation Partnership” and applies to various fields (including agriculture). By bringing research and practice closer together, EIP wants to achieve more innovation activities with a view to economic growth and competitiveness.

Farmers, consultants, researchers, entrepreneurs and/or other actors dealing with a particular topic, meet in operational groups, seek solutions and work together on specific innovations. The farmer and his/her question are at the very centre of the process. The knowledge within the operational group will provide new insights and ideas and will transform existing tacit knowledge into useful solutions. The involvement of farmers and horticulturists has the advantage that research will provide an answer to practical questions, that there is more interaction between farmers and growers. Researchers also learn how their results are used in practice. As a result, farmers and horticulturists being a member of the operational group, become co-owners of the process rather than an object of study.

Multiple calls will be launched over the programme period allowing the creation of operational groups around a specific issue. In order to maintain enough focus and to respond to current events, some calls may deal with specific subjects.

## BENEFICIARIES

All parties (such as farmers, scientist, consultants, and companies involved in agriculture or in the food industry) who are contributing to the achievement of the EIP goals.

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

- ▶ 90% of the proved and eligible costs
- ▶ The maximum grant per approved operational group for a maximum period of two years is determined per call

## MORE INFO

[Department of Agriculture and Fisheries](#)

[Flemish EIP network](#)



# Rural development by cooperation with the urban environment

## DESCRIPTION

The Flemish countryside is highly urbanized. It is not only characterized by a high population density and a highly fragmented landscape, quite often the relationship between the countryside and the urban environment is also very strong. The countryside and the urban environment are becoming increasingly intertwined in a geographical, practical and cultural way. The present communication and transport facilities favour economic, social and cultural interaction. As a result, differences are shrinking: the urban environment is an attraction pole for employment, services, education and entertainment. But city dwellers rely on the surrounding countryside for ecosystem services, such as a green area, calmness and recreation. As far as food production, water resources, energy and biodiversity are concerned, rural areas provide important services to the whole society, including the urban environment. Because of the strong linkage between the countryside and the urban environment, dynamics in the rural area are partially determined by the urban environment.

This measure offers opportunities to rural actors willing to work together with the neighbouring city or cities to encourage these dynamics. Cooperation between actors located in different regions or Member States is also eligible for support.

Cooperation based on local food supplies and renewable energy is possible within this measure.

## BENEFICIARIES

- ▶ Local authorities, municipal autonomous agencies, intermunicipal partnerships, local Social Services and autonomous agencies of the Social Services
- ▶ Provinces and independent provincial agencies
- ▶ Non-profit organizations
- ▶ Foundations
- ▶ Agricultural cooperatives and management groups, (not) including farmers
- ▶ Certain legal persons governed by public law

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

- ▶ Creation of a development strategy: 100 % of the costs for drafting the strategy, with a maximum of 20.000 euros per approved project
- ▶ Giving a boost to the area: 65% of the approved project cost, with a maximum of 80.000 euros per approved strategy and global action plan. In some cases, derivation from this support percentage is possible.

## MORE INFO

[Flemish Land Agency](#)

Flemish provinces





# LEADER

## DESCRIPTION

LEADER was created in the early 90s at the European level as an innovative method to invest in rural policy. An area-based vision for the long term is to be developed and implemented through a bottom-up approach. Local public-private partnerships, called Local Action Groups (LAGs), create the local development strategies and carry them out. This means that they are co-responsible for the selection of the projects, the supervision of promoters, the financial and substantive monitoring of the implementation of the local development strategy, information and publicity. LAGs are expected to work cross-sectoral, making collaboration and networking possible. Flanders has participated into the LEADER programme since it was created.

Four sub-measures were created within the framework of LEADER:

- ▶ Creation of local development strategies

This sub-measure comprises the preparation, development and selection of LEADER areas based on area-oriented policy plans. A well-defined procedure is to be followed. Local Action Groups therefore have to include innovation, sustainable development and the added value for the chosen area in their proposal of local development strategy. They can focus on maximum three topics in a choice list. By approving the local development strategy, the provincial management committees also approve the LAG and the LEADER area.

- ▶ Implementation of local development strategies

This measure focusses on the implementation of the projects within the chosen LEADER areas. Projects have to be carried out within the LEADER framework and aim at putting the local development strategy into practice.

The call and selection of the projects is carried out by the Local Action Group which is assisted by a technical working group. The LAG checks whether the local development strategy is reflected in the project proposals. The daily monitoring of the project is done by the secretariat of the Local Action Group.

- ▶ Cooperation projects

This measure focuses on cooperation within the previously established local development strategy. Such cooperation may include both trans-area projects (between areas within the same Member State) and transnational projects (between regions of different States within and outside the EU). If an area is not recognized as a LEADER area, cooperation is possible if the used methodology is similar to the LEADER methodology (public-private partnership, local strategy, etc.). The project implementation is done by the LAG itself, by a public-private partnership in Flanders or may be delegated to a promoter in that particular area. One partner (Lead partner) coordinates the activities for that particular cooperation project.

- ▶ Operation of the Local Action Groups

This measure provides support for the operational costs of the Local Action Group, the building of expertise and the reviving of the area.

During the programme period, members of the LAGs have to acquire the expertise required to implement the Leader methodology adequately in their area. They take part in training seminars, outdoor activities and other activities.

LAG members should dedicate themselves actively to the implementation of the development strategy by sharing knowledge, approaching rural actors in an active way, developing project ideas, ...

The coordinator of the Local Action Group has to be physically present in the area so that contacts with the local actors run as smoothly as possible.

## **BENEFICIARIES**

- ▶ Drafting of the local development strategies

The Local Action Groups having introduced a local development strategy.

- ▶ Implementation of local development strategies

Differs from area to area: the selected beneficiaries are to be mentioned in the local development strategy.

Possible beneficiaries are: municipalities, municipal autonomous agencies, intermunicipal partnerships, local Social Services and autonomous agencies of the local Social Services, provinces and provincial autonomous agencies, non-profit associations, foundations, certain legal persons governed by public law, natural persons, companies and profit making associations, de facto partnerships.

- ▶ Cooperation projects

The local groups, local public-private partnerships in Flanders and the project promoters meeting the criteria of the local development strategies.

- ▶ Local groups

The local groups whose local development strategy has been selected and approved in the framework of the measure 'Drafting of local development strategies'.

## AMOUNT OR % PUBLIC SUPPORT

- ▶ Creation of local development strategies: maximum 20.000 euros per admissible strategy (based on the costs)
- ▶ Implementation of local development strategies: maximum 65% of the approved project costs
- ▶ Cooperation projects: maximum 95% of the approved project costs. Investment costs are only eligible for 65%. A set budget of 125.000 euros per LAG is provided for this measure.
- ▶ Local Action Groups: maximum 100 % of the expenses made (based on the actual costs)

## MORE INFO

[Flemish Land Agency](#)

Flemish provinces



# Technical assistance

Each programme is allowed to use a part of the EAFRD-budget (maximum 4%) for the preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, promotion, networking, surveillance, ... of the program. This part is called technical assistance.

In order to spend as much as possible of the planned budget on the programme itself, Flanders has decided only to use 1,5% of the total EAFRD budget for technical assistance.

Two thirds of the budget for technical assistance amount is used for staffing costs, for the monitoring and legally required RDP III evaluations, the interim evaluations of the individual measures, the general or measure-based communication, the operational costs of the paying agency, ... All these costs have to be clearly linked to the implementation of RDP III.

One third of the budget for technical assistance is spent on the Flemish Rural Network, responsible for communication, exchanging information and building a network around RDP III. Both the operational costs and the costs involved in the implementation of the action plan are supported.



FLEMISH  
RURAL  
NETWORK

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