What is the Rural Development Programme 2014-2022?

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) is part of the Common Agricultural Policy (or CAP). The EU's CAP is a partnership between agriculture and society, and between Europe and its farmers.

The CAP is split into two Pillars:

**Pillar 1** supports both direct payments to farmers and market management measures

**Pillar 2** covers multi-annual rural development measures which include those that have beneficial impacts on the environment and climate change.

Pillar 2 in Ireland takes the form of the 2014-2022 Rural Development Programme. The RDP is co-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), European Union Recovery Instrument (EURI), and the national exchequer.

The original RDP was set at a seven-year lifecycle: RDP 2014-2020. Under the CAP transitional regulation (adopted on 23 December 2020), RDPs have been extended for 2021 and 2022.

From 2021, with the introduction of the 10th amendment to the RDP, EU support from the EAFRD amounts to €2.88 billion and from EURI amounts to €190 million. The EU funding contribution is supplemented by exchequer funding bringing the total available budget under the RDP from €4.1 billion to just over €5.6 billion. The RDP has been modified eleven times, the most recent being in September 2021.

The EURI funding was introduced as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic to aid the green and digital recovery. These transitional arrangements aim to provide certainty to farmers and other beneficiaries. These additional funding resources ensure ongoing support to farmers and rural communities and maintain the environmental and economic benefits accruing from the programme in these challenging times.

The amendments covering the transitional period have ensured the continuation of existing RDP measures including: Areas Facing Natural Constraints (ANC), Green Low-carbon Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS), Beef Data & Genomics Programme (BDGP), Sheep Welfare Scheme (SWS), Organic Farming Scheme (OFS), the Burren Programme, support for setting up Beef Producer Organisations (BPOs), Targeted Advisor Service for Animal Health and Welfare (TASAHW), GLAS Traditional Farm Buildings (GTFB), TAMS II, EIP-Agri projects, Collaborative Farming and CPD for Advisors.

In addition, the RDP has introduced a host of new initiatives aimed at addressing biodiversity, climate and environment challenges, and the promotion of economic and social development in rural areas. Examples of these new initiatives include the Straw Incorporation Measure, the Farm Environment Study, the Soil Sampling Programme, cooperation under the EIP-AGRI structure on innovative approaches to farm safety, rewetting and locally-led schemes and an agri-environment training scheme. Also included in the suite of new initiatives is a results-based agri-environment pilot project (REAP) that aims to test the feasibility of scaling up the lessons learned from the current Rural Development Programme. This project rewards
farmers for good agricultural practices and includes a results-based payment system with higher rates paid to those achieving higher environmental outcomes.

Under the EU Rural Development Regulation that governs the RDP there are six priorities for spending:

- **Priority 1**: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas.
- **Priority 2**: Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable management of forest.
- **Priority 3**: Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture.
- **Priority 4**: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry.
- **Priority 5**: Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors.
- **Priority 6**: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reductions and economic development in rural areas.

Ireland's percentage drawdown for EU funding, EAFRD & EURI stood at 68.67%, at end of September 2021, against the EU average of 60.95%.

**What is an Annual Implementation Report?**

Each year the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), the managing authority for the Irish RDP, must send an Annual Implementation Report (AIR) to the European Commission setting out our progress on delivering the Programme. The annual report sets out the progress for the previous calendar year. The citizen’s summary explains the report for the general public.

A copy of the full AIR report can be found [here](#).

**How is progress measured?**

Ireland has designed its Rural Development Programme (RDP) based on the six priorities for spending and from a selection of measures set out in the EU Rural Development Regulation. The result is a programme based on specific needs identified for our rural area.

For each of the measures selected in the RDP a budget is allocated and targets are set for the priorities under which schemes are programmed. These targets are monitored throughout each year and their progress is included in the AIR which is sent to the European Commission. This monitoring helps DAFM to make sure it spends the money in a way which delivers the best outcomes for Ireland, as detailed in the approved RDP programme document.
A copy of the approved RDP can be found [here](#).

Due to the overlapping nature of EU programmes, data on the 2007-2013 RDP has been included in the cumulative totals for Measures 4, 10, 12 (Natura 2000 payments) and the Early Retirement Scheme. Measures 10 and 12 reported residual expenditure for 2021, and this has been included in the 2021 AIR.

Image Credit: National Rural Network (NRN)
What progress has been made in implementing the Programme?

**PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY PRIORITY**

- **KNOWLEDGE**
  - Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas. **OVERARCHING PRIORITY**
  - €273.4M*

- **FARM VIABILITY**
  - Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests.
  - €111.32M*

- **FOOD CHAIN**
  - Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture.
  - €178.9M**

- **ECOSYSTEMS**
  - Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry.
  - €3,338M**

- **EFFICIENCY**
  - Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate-resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors.
  - €459.5M**

- **SOCIAL INCLUSION**
  - Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.
  - €178.9M**

*P1 results are captured in the outcomes of other priorities.
**Cumulative Expenditure 2014-2021 (including EURI expenditure)

Forestry actions are not covered under the RDP 2014-2022.
PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

522 traditional buildings restored with GLAS Traditional Farm Buildings Grant scheme

98,000 farmers supported in area’s facing natural constraint in 2021

€187.3m paid to GLAS beneficiaries in 2021

28,331 beneficiaries supported in TAMS from 2014-2021

Two new EIP Peatland projects approved in 2021: Green Restoration Ireland and FarmPeat

Almost 37,500 hectares supported under the Straw Incorporation Measure

Over 4,900 approvals for Results Based Environment Agri Pilot Programme

15,500 farmers applied to participate in Soil Sampling Scheme
The following is a summary of the progress that has been made in implementing Ireland’s RDP up to 31 December 2021.

**Measure 1 – Knowledge Transfer and Information Actions**

This measure consists of:

- Sub-measure 1.1: support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions – Knowledge Transfer (KT) Groups; and

- Sub-measure 1.1: support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions training delivered in support of Measure 10 (Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP) and the Green Low-carbon Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS))

**Knowledge transfer discussion groups for beef, sheep, dairy, equine, poultry and tillage sectors.**

This measure involves interaction between farmers and qualified advisors in a group setting for the purpose of sharing knowledge and experience on competitiveness and sustainability issues affecting individual holdings and sectors. The purpose of KT meetings was to provide a suitable forum for learning.

The 3-year KT Scheme concluded on 31st July 2019 with approximately 18,557 farmers active in circa 1,164 groups facilitated by circa 479 advisors. Only residual payments issued in respect of 2021. Residual payments of €57,512.83 were paid to participating farmers for attendance at meetings and completion of farm improvement plans in respect of all 3 years of the scheme, including correcting payments on foot of completed payment appeals. Participants were paid for attendance at a combination of 5 meetings and/or approved national events and for completion of a farm improvement plan for their specific enterprises relevant to the KT Sector they are participating in.

**Training for farmers in the BDGP and GLAS**

BDGP training sessions and GLAS training sessions were completed in 2019. Total expenditure on these training schemes (including some outstanding liabilities arising from training undertaken during the previous RDP) amounted to €22.2m at the end of 2021. No residual payments were issued in 2021 for training on either scheme. At the end of the reporting period, all active scheme participants had attended the general element of BDGP training and over 99% of GLAS participants had attended the compulsory one-day training course for that scheme.

To date over 25,000 farmers attended BDGP training sessions with almost 24,000 carbon navigators completed. Cumulative expenditure on Measure 1 schemes amounted to €82.5m at the end of 2021.
**Measure 2 – Advisory Services**

This measure includes support for the use of advisory services (sub-measure 2.1) and support for the training of advisors (sub-measure 2.3).

- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Agricultural Advisors.
- Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health and Welfare (TASAHW)
- Advisory Services to Beef Producer Organisations

**CPD for Agricultural Advisors**

There are four separate strands of support for farmer advisory services:

- CPD to train farmers on using the carbon navigator for the BDGP and/or KT;
- CPD for KT meeting facilitation skills;
- CPD for the provision of a Farm Health and Safety Training Programme;
- CPD for training of dairy farmers on the Somatic Cell Check workshop

No advanced facilitator training for agricultural advisors was funded under this heading in calendar year 2021. Cumulative expenditure on CPD until the end of 2021 was €157,877.

**TASAHW training and advice**

- Sub-measure 2.3: Animal Health & Welfare – Training for advisors; and

This scheme aims to limit the costs associated with certain animal diseases. Animal Health Ireland is responsible for setting up and organising the provision of an advisory service to farmers on the control and prevention of diseases falling within the scope of the scheme which include Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD), Johne’s Disease (JD), Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR), TB and mastitis in dairy herds.

In 2021, €396,850 was paid for the provision of on-farm advice and the training of PVPs. A total of 1,383 herd health investigations were conducted, principally for BVD cases.
Advisory Services to Beef Producer Organisations

- Business advice/training provided by approved facilitators to Producer Organisations (POs)
- Legal advice/training provided by approved facilitators to POs

Business advice and training

A facilitator providing business advice and training must ensure at least one of the below outcomes is met by a Producer Organisation for Beef:

- Ensure that production is planned and adjusted to demand, particularly in terms of quality and quantity
- Concentration of supply and the placing on the market of the products produced by its members, including through direct marketing
- Optimise production costs and returns on investments in response to environmental and animal welfare standards, and stabilising producer prices
- Carry out research and develop initiatives on sustainable production methods, innovative practices, economic competitiveness, and market developments
- Promote, and provide technical assistance for, the use of environmentally sound cultivation practices and production techniques, and sound animal welfare practices
• Develop products with a protected designation of origin, with a protected geographical indication or covered by a national quality label;

• Contribute to the sustainable use of natural resources and to climate change mitigation

• Develop initiatives in the area of promotion and marketing

• Provide the necessary technical assistance for the use of the futures markets and of insurance schemes.

**Legal advice and training**

A facilitator providing legal advice and training must ensure at least one of the below outcomes is met by a Producer Organisation for Beef:

• Guidance on the application of rules adopted by the producer organisation relating to production reporting, production, marketing, and protection of the environment

• Guidance on how to amend the rules of a PO

• Guidance on rules that allow producer members to work together in a democratic manner

• Guidance on penalties for infringement of obligations under the statutes, particularly for non-payment of financial contributions, or of the rules laid down by the producer organisation

• Guidance on the rules on the admission of new members, and in particular the minimum period of membership which may not be less than one year

• Guidance on the accounting and budgetary rules necessary for the operation of the organisation.

In 2020, the first payments of this scheme occurred. €4,500 was paid to two facilitators for advisory services provided during the formal establishment of two Producer Organisations in 2019. In January 2021 an additional payment of €1,500 was made to a facilitator for work involved in establishing a new PO in 2020. The Department has approved three Beef POs since the scheme began.

Cumulative expenditure on Measure 2 schemes amounted to €2.17m at the end of 2021.

**Measure 4 – Investments in Physical Assets**

This measure consists of:

- Sub-measure 4.1: support for investments in agricultural holdings – Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme (TAMS II); and

- Sub-measure 4.4: support for non-productive investments which are potentially available through the GLAS and Burren schemes. As the underlying logic of this sub-measure is intrinsically linked to the achievement of agri-environment objectives, funding is allocated under Measure 10.
TAMS II

TAMS II will make €507m available to Irish farmers for investment in infrastructure, facilities and equipment under the suite of seven measures (listed below) which are opened for applications in rolling three-month tranches.

- Young Farmers Capital Investment Scheme;
- Dairy Equipment Scheme;
- Organic Capital Investment Scheme;
- Animal Welfare, Safety and Nutrient Storage Scheme;
- Low Emissions Slurry Spreading;
- Pig and Poultry Investment Scheme; and
- Tillage Capital Investment Scheme.

Of the €67.1m, of which €2.7m was EURI, expended on Measure 4 in 2021, TAMS grants were paid to 6,040 farm enterprises and supported more than 6,596 investments worth €138.4m. The overall number of TAMS beneficiaries at the end of 2021 was approximately 28,331. The main expenditure items for TAMS 2 were the Young Farmers Capital Investment Scheme, the Dairy Equipment Scheme and the Animal Welfare and Nutrient Storage Scheme at €29.8m, €11.6m and €9.5m respectively.

Cumulative public expenditure on all Measure 4 investments in physical assets amounted to €347.7m, of which €2.78m is EURI, at the end of 2021.

Safety items funded under TAMSII

The above represents some of the health and safety investment items which are eligible for grant aid under the Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme (TAMS II).

For further information visit: www.groic.ie/en/service/targeted-agriculture-modernisation-schemes/

Image Credit: NRN
Measure 7 – Rural Services and Renewal

Sub-measure 7.6: support for investments associated with the maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the cultural and natural heritage of villages and rural landscapes – GLAS Traditional Farm Buildings Scheme

This scheme provides once-off grant aid for approved conservation work to traditional farm buildings and associated structures that are now used for agricultural purposes or available for such use. It ensures that traditional farm buildings and other structures are restored and conserved for practical agricultural use and is administered by the Heritage Council on behalf of DAFM. Participation in the GLAS is a primary eligibility condition for entry to the scheme.

In 2021, €1.076 m was paid to support the restoration of 86 traditional farm buildings, 8 walled gardens/orchards, a courtyard and one gate restoration on 73 farms. When private funding is taken into account, the total amount invested in these operations was €1.663 m. Total scheme spend, including private investment, at the end of 2021 was approximately €8.172 m with grant aid comprising approximately 69% of that figure.

Image Credit: NRN

Measure 10 – Agri-environment-climate


The table below provides a breakdown of all the schemes contributing to spending under Measure 10. The total spend for this measure in 2021 was €222.8m comprised mainly of current RDP schemes (that is the GLAS, BDGP, Straw Incorporation Measure and the Burren Programme in order of expenditure incurred) and just over €10,000 in transitional spending related to the previous RDP.
GLAS
GLAS promotes agricultural production methods with environmental benefits related to climate change mitigation, improving water quality and the preservation of priority habitats and species through 5 -year contracts. Scheme payments totalled €187.3m on 47,500 contracts in 2021 and the total scheme spend at the end of 2021 was approximately €1,132m (excluding training). The majority of GLAS participants are located along the western seaboard, particularly Galway, Mayo and Donegal. Farmers have delivered significant benefits for biodiversity through tree planting, planting and management of hedgerows, habitat creation and food sources for birds, bees and other species. Fencing of watercourses from livestock protects water quality.

Image Credit: NRN

BDGP
The BDGP requires participating farmers to undertake a range of actions designed to accelerate genetic improvement in the beef herd resulting in climate benefits associated with lower greenhouse gas emissions. In 2021 under the BDGP Scheme €34m was paid to 17,882 beneficiaries. The total scheme spend at the end of 2021 was approximately €284m.

The Burren Programme
The Burren Programme is focused specifically on the conservation of the unique limestone landscape of that region in counties Clare and Galway. It promotes a particular farming model that couples traditional farming practices with scientific assessment of environmental health at field level.

Public expenditure of €1.47m was paid on 11,158 hectares (ha) to 320 farmers in 2021. Total scheme spend at the end of 2021 was approximately €6.2m.

Transitional payments for REPS / AEOS totaled €1,755 for 4 residual contracts in 2021. Cumulative expenditure on Measure 10 schemes amounted to €1.746m at the end of 2021.
Straw Incorporation Measure
Straw Incorporation Measure was launched in 2021 to encourage tillage farmers to increase soil organic carbon levels by chopping and incorporating straw derived from cereal crops, back into the soil. This action will sequester carbon in tillage soils, thereby reducing GHG emissions. The incorporation of straw will also have a positive impact on soil biology and soil workability. This will further improve the environmental sustainability of the tillage sector.

Public expenditure of €7.6m was paid on 37,492 hectares (ha) to over 2,132 farmers in 2021.
**Measure 11 – Organic Farming**

Measure 11 consists of:

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

The Organic Farming Scheme aims to encourage farmers to convert from conventional to organic farming methods and to maintain those methods after the initial two-year conversion period.

Public expenditure of €7.8m, of which €442k was EURI, was paid in respect of almost 77,534 hectares (ha) on 1,753 holdings under the Organic Farming Scheme in 2021. The total scheme spend at the end of 2021 was approximately €49m. There was no minimal residual spend issued in transitional money in 2021, as is reported under Measure 10 in the current Programme.

*Image Credit: NRN*
**Measure 12 – Natura 2000 payments**

Sub-measure 12.1: Compensation payment for Natura 2000 agricultural areas.

Natura 2000 is an EU-wide network of protected areas designated as being of special value and importance for the endangered animals, plants and habitats that they contain. These sites comprise both Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for habitats and species. Some sites are designated as both an SPA and an SAC.

The measure is programmed solely to provide for ongoing commitments from the 2007-2013 RDP as Natura sites are targeted under Measure 10 GLAS in the current RDP. The scheme supports farmers in dealing with specific disadvantages arising from the conservation of natural habitats and the effective management of those ecologically important sites. It thus contributes to the appropriate environmental management of farmed Natura sites in compliance with EU rules. A sum of €6,765 was spent on supporting the management on 3 holdings in 2021. Total scheme funding in the current programming period has so far amounted to just over €44.7m.

**Measure 13 – Areas facing natural or other specific constraints**

The measure consists of the following two sub-measures:

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

Support under these two sub-measures is disbursed nationally under a single Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) scheme. It is the largest RDP support available to farmers. The scheme provides important environmental and social benefits by compensating farmers for additional costs and income foregone related to constraints on agricultural production in the areas concerned. A separate category of support is available to compensate island farmers in recognition of the specific constraints on agricultural activity in those locations.

Total public expenditure of €246.8m, including additional national financing of €1.6m was paid to 98,200 farmers in respect of 2.21m ha under Measure 13 in 2021. This brings total ANC payments in the current programming period to €1,785m.
**Measure 14 – Animal Welfare**

**Payment for animal welfare – Sheep Welfare Scheme**

- The objective of the Sheep Welfare Scheme is to develop the Irish sheep production system. It contributes to improved animal welfare in the areas of lameness control, parasite control, flystrike control and appropriate supplementation. Sheep farmers with breeding ewes can apply for payment based on two actions of their choice from a menu of options appropriate to their flock type (i.e. hill or lowland). Payment under the scheme is based on the number of eligible breeding ewes in an individual flock.

- In 2021, total public expenditure of €17.9m – including additional national (i.e., non-co-funded) financing of €9m – was paid to 18,000 farmers in respect of almost 281,000 livestock units (based on the number of eligible ewes held by participants).
**Measure 16 – Co-operation**

This measure is comprised of the following elements:

- **Sub-measure 16.1:** support for the establishment of **European Innovation Partnership (EIP)** operational groups for agricultural productivity and sustainability.
  - General EIPs
  - Locally Led Hen Harrier & Freshwater Pearl Mussel Projects
  - Locally Led Environmental & Climate Projects

- **Sub-measure 16.3:** Co-operation among small operators in organising joint work processes and sharing facilities and resources – **Collaborative Farming Grant Scheme.**

**European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs)**

**EIP Operational Groups** are clearly linked to supporting innovation and best practice. Specifically, they will be intended to address some or all of the following:

- promoting a resource efficient, productive and low emission agricultural sector, working in harmony with the essential natural resources on which farming depends,
- improving processes to preserve the environment and agricultural landscapes, address biodiversity challenges, enhance water quality, adapt to climate change, and mitigate it, and
- creating added value by better linking research and farming practice and encouraging the wider use of available innovative practices.

There are two funding streams for EIP groups depending on the themes they seek to address in their project proposals.

- The general stream which focuses on projects relating to farm viability, economic performance, sustainable forest management and innovative technologies and;
- The locally-led stream focusing on projects dealing with environmental, biodiversity and climate change.

The Hen Harrier Programme was launched in 2017 and will run for five years. Its main area of focus is farmers managing the habitats in the six designated hen harrier SPAs. In 2021 payments of over €4.1 million issued to farmers.

The Pearl Mussel Project (PMP) commenced in May 2018 and the project will run until December 2023. The aim of the project is to develop a results-based agri-environmental programme to ensure the long-term co-existence of freshwater pearl mussel populations and farming in the top eight freshwater pearl mussel catchments in Ireland. In 2021 over €2.3 million issued to farmers.
Approximately €302,500 was paid to three general EIP groups, involving 44 partners, in 2021 to enable them to implement their project plans.

In 2021, approximately €12.5 million was paid to 25 locally led groups with most expenditure absorbed by the Hen Harrier and Fresh Water Pearl Mussel projects as described above.

The two new Peatland projects, approved in 2021, look at targeting climate action on peatland under agricultural management with the objective to engage with farmers to develop sustainable land management options for farms at catchment level. The projects are called:

- Green Restoration Ireland
- FarmPeat
More details on the EIP-AGRI Operational Groups can be found on the National Rural Network website.

Collaborative Farming Grant Scheme

Collaborative approaches to farming can address some of the structural challenges facing Irish agriculture such as limited land availability and intergenerational transfer. This scheme is specifically aimed at encouraging the formation of new farm partnerships by contributing up to 50% of vouched legal, accounting and advisory costs incurred in drawing up a partnership agreement, subject to a maximum payment of €2,500.

In 2021, approximately €463,000 was paid towards costs incurred in establishing 315 farm partnerships – 254 of these were to facilitate generational renewal and 61 to facilitate mergers. A cumulative sum of €2.4m was paid to support the creation of 1,775 registered partnerships in the period to the end of 2021.

Cumulative expenditure on all Measure 16 schemes amounted to €34.18m at the end of 2021.
**Measure 19 – LEADER**

There are 4 sub-measures to LEADER:

- Sub-measure 19.1: Preparatory support.
- Sub-measure 19.2: Support for implementation of operations under the Community-led Local Development strategy.
- Sub-measure 19.3: Preparation and implementation of co-operation activities of Local Action Groups; and
- Sub-measure 19.4: Support for running costs and animation.

LEADER aims to address local needs under the broad themes of economic development, social inclusion and rural development. Local communities direct where this funding is provided through their participation in Local Action Groups (LAGs) and the implementation of Local Development Strategies (LDSs) formulated by the LAGs. 29 LAGs have been selected in all 28 sub-regional areas covering a population of 3.1m rural dwellers and funding agreements signed with all groups.

LEADER expenditure in 2021 exceeded €54m. Substantial increases in the number of projects approved for funding in 2021 continued. Consequently, project payments have increased considerably reaching €41.8 million in 2021 compared to €35.4m in 2020. Given the growing pipeline of project approvals it is anticipated that the momentum now evident in LEADER will ensure a full drawdown of the available funding over the programming period.

The LEADER Programme has continued to operate throughout the COVID-19 crisis period with LAG and Implementing Partner (IP) staff working remotely. DRCD has issued a number of circulars to the LAGs to guide and assist, in the context of COVID-19. These include a number of administrative flexibilities such as permitting Evaluation Committee and LAG Decision Making Meetings to be held via telephone or video conference facilities and the use of electronic signatures on forms to assist with processing of payment claims. In addition, and where necessary, the use of photographic evidence in lieu of the Capital Site visit is permitted. The impact of these initiatives is evidenced by the number of project applications approved, and claims paid during the crisis period. This year’s report will also include the Transitional LEADER Programme (which commenced in April 2021) and the EURI funding (under the Transitional LEADER programme from 30 July 2021).
Measure 20 – Technical Assistance

- Sub-measure 20.1: Support for technical assistance (other than the National Rural Network (NRN)).
- Sub-measure 20.2: Support for establishing and operating the NRN.

Technical assistance (TA) supports evaluation, information, communication, and other activities that contribute to the effective management of the RDP and strengthen stakeholder capacity.

Cumulative payments of €18.55m (including VAT) were made from the TA budget in the period 2014 to 2021. A sum of just over €12.8m was paid in technical support for Programme implementation in 2021. TA is reported under two distinct categories:

- support for establishing and operating the NRN; and
- non-NRN support comprised of administrative and other costs.
The 2021 spend was split between NRN support and non-NRN support with the latter comprised mostly of payments to two new schemes (REAP and Soil Sampling & Analysis programme), administrative costs for the Burren Programme together with contract payments for the GLAS evaluation project and the Burren Programme Assessment.

The Soil Sampling and Analysis programme is a pilot scheme where soil samples are subject to a broad range of analysis including carbon, micronutrient, and e. coli status in addition to the standard soil test for pH, lime requirement, phosphorus, and potassium status. The new soil data generated can be used to differentiate and delineate different soil types, or groups of soils, that should be managed differently to achieve multiple goals, targets and objectives e.g., carbon sequestration, minimising nutrient loss to water, or assessing the soils capacity as a habitat for biodiversity. Expenditure of €1.25m EURI funding was issued in 2021.

Image credit: NRN

REAP is a 2-year pilot scheme trialing a results-based scoring and payment system on participating farms across the country with a view to identifying upscaling potential and feasibility for use of the model in the next agri-environment scheme for the CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027. The pilot aims to cover a broad geographic spread and include a wide range of farming enterprise types. The REAP pilot scheme commenced payments in December 2021 with 3,298 participants, from over 4,900 approvals, receiving payments. Payments issued in 2021 with participants paid a total of €10.8m from additional national financing.

Positive Indicators

Image Credit: NRN
NRN activities for 2021 included organising 6 consultation exercises with stakeholders, 5 meetings of thematic working groups and 58 events. It also disseminated 129 project examples as well as 49 publications in printed and electronic formats (see Section 4a2 for more detail on NRN activities in 2021).

**Measure 113 – Early Retirement Scheme**

Cumulative expenditure under Measure 113 amounted to €7.6m at the end of 2021, these are residual payments under the previous Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. No payments were made to scheme beneficiaries in 2021.

**EU/Rural Development Programme Division**

**June 2022**
Where can I find more information?

More information on The Rural Development Programme can be found on the Government website using the following link:


General queries on the Programme can be directed to:
Telephone: 01 – 607 2117
E-mail: RuralDevelopment@agriculture.gov.ie

National Rural Network

Telephone: 0906-48 2744
E-mail: info@nationalruralnetwork.ie
Website: https://www.nationalruralnetwork.ie/

LEADER

LEADER Programme Section
Department of Rural and Community Development

Telephone:
E-mail: rdp1420@drcd.gov.ie
Website: https://www.pobal.ie/programmes/leader-programme-2014-2020/
And booklet: here.

For further information on specific schemes and supports contact:

European Network for Rural Development (ENRD)

Website: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/
Email: info@enrd.eu
European Innovation Partnership - Locally Led Scheme Section

Telephone: 076 1064454
E-mail: locallyled@agriculture.gov.ie

European Innovation Partnership - General EIP-AGRI Innovation Unit

Telephone: 076 1064557
E-mail: EIP@agriculture.gov.ie

Hen Harrier Project

Telephone: 091-792865
E-mail: info@henharrierproject.ie
Website: http://www.henharrierproject.ie

GLAS

Telephone: 076 1064451
E-mail: glas@agriculture.ie

Irish Organic Association

Telephone: 090-64 33680
E-mail: info@irishoa.ie
Website: www.irishorganicassociation.ie

For more information a printable version of a blog on Maximising Organic Production Systems (MOPS) can be downloaded here

Pearl Mussel Project

Telephone: 064-6640685
E-mail: info@pmproject.ie
Website: http://www.pearlmusselproject.ie/
### Priority / Focus Area

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<th>P1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas</th>
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<td>1B) Strengthening the links between agriculture, food production and forestry and research and innovation, including for the purpose of improved environmental management and performance</td>
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<td>3A) Improving competitiveness of primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain through quality schemes, adding value to agricultural products, promotion in local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and inter-branch organisations</td>
</tr>
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<td>3B) Supporting farm risk prevention and management</td>
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<tr>
<th>P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4B) Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management</td>
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<tr>
<td>4C) Preventing soil erosion and improving soil management</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>P5: Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5A) Increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>5C) Facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy, of by products, wastes, residues and non-food raw materials for the purposes of the bio-economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>5D) Reducing greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture</td>
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<td>5E) Fostering carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry</td>
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<tr>
<th>P6: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6A) Facilitating diversification, creation and development of small enterprises, as well as job creation</td>
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<tr>
<td>6B) Fostering local development in rural areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>6C) Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas</td>
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### M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)
- **M1.1** - support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions
- **M1.2** - support for demonstration activities and information actions
- **M1.3** - support for short-term farm and forest management exchange as well as farm and forest visits

### M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)
- **M2.1** - support to help benefiting from the use of advisory services
- **M2.2** - support for the setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services as well as forestry advisory services
- **M2.3** - support for training of advisors

### M03 - Quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs (art 16)
- **M3.1** - support for new participation in quality schemes
- **M3.2** - Support for information and promotion activities implemented by groups of producers in the internal market

### M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)
- **M4.1** - support for investments in agricultural holdings
- **M4.2** - support for investments in processing/marketing and/or development of agricultural products
- **M4.3** - support for investments in infrastructure related to development, modernisation or adaptation of agriculture and forestry
- **M4.4** - support for non-productive investments linked to the achievement of agri-environment-climate objectives

### M05 - Restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and catastrophic events and introduction of appropriate prevention actions (art 18)
- **M5.1** - support for investments in preventive actions aimed at reducing the consequences of probable natural disasters, adverse climatic events and catastrophic events
- **M5.2** - support for investments for the restoration of agricultural land and production potential damaged by natural disasters, adverse climatic events and catastrophic events
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<td>M6.2 - business start-up aid for non-agricultural activities in rural areas</td>
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<td>M6.4 - support for investments in creation and development of non-agricultural activities</td>
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<td>M6.5 - payments for farmers eligible for the small farmers scheme who permanently transfer their holding to another farmer</td>
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<th>M07 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (art 20)</th>
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<tr>
<td>M7.1 - support for drawing up and updating of plans for the development of municipalities and villages in rural areas and their basic services and of protection and management plans relating to N2000 sites and other areas of high nature value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7.2 - support for investments in the creation, improvement or expansion of all types of small-scale infrastructure, including investments in renewable energy and energy saving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7.3 - support for broadband infrastructure, including its creation, improvement and expansion, passive broadband infrastructure and provision of access to broadband and public e-government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7.4 - support for investments in the setting-up, improvement or expansion of local basic services for the rural population including leisure and culture, and the related infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>M7.5 - support for investments for public use in recreational infrastructure, tourist information and small-scale tourism infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7.6 - support for studies/investments associated with the maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the cultural and natural heritage of villages, rural landscapes and high nature value sites including related socio-economic aspects, as well as environmental awareness actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7.7 - support for investments targeting the relocation of activities and conversion of buildings or other facilities located inside or close to rural settlements, with a view to improving the quality of life or increasing the environmental performance of the settlement</td>
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<tr>
<td>M7.8 - others</td>
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<td>others</td>
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<tr>
<td>M16.1</td>
<td>support for the establishment and operation of operational groups of the EIP for agricultural productivity and sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16.2</td>
<td>support for pilot projects, and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16.3</td>
<td>(other) co-operation among small operators in organising joint work processes and sharing facilities and resources, and for developing/marketing tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16.4</td>
<td>support for horizontal and vertical co-operation among supply chain actors for the establishment and development of short supply chains and local markets, and for promotion activities in a local context relating to the development of short supply chains and local markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16.5</td>
<td>support for joint action undertaken with a view to mitigating or adapting to climate change, and for joint approaches to environmental projects and ongoing environmental practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>M16.6</td>
<td>support for cooperation among supply chain actors for sustainable provision of biomass for use in food and energy production and industrial processes</td>
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<td>M16.7</td>
<td>support for non-CLLD local development strategies</td>
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<td>M16.8</td>
<td>support for drawing up of forest management plans or equivalent instruments</td>
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<td>M16.9</td>
<td>support for diversification of farming activities into activities concerning health care, social integration, community-supported agriculture and education about the environment and food</td>
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## M17 - Risk management (art 36)

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<td>Mutual funds for adverse climatic events, animal and plant diseases, pest infestations and environmental incidents</td>
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## M18 - Financing of complementary national direct payments for Croatia (art 40)

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## M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

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<td>Support for implementation of operations under the community-led local development strategy</td>
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<td>M19.3</td>
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<td><strong>M113</strong></td>
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