What is the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020?

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

**Pillar 1** deals with direct payments to farmers and market management measures;

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

The current Irish RDP for the period 2014 to 2020 was formally adopted by the EU Commission in May 2015 and has subsequently been amended on eight occasions – the most recent being July 2020. Revised versions of the Programme are published on the RDP section of the Department’s website once they are approved by the European Commission.

Reflecting the EU policy framework set out in the governing legislation, the Programme contains a suite of schemes designed to enhance the competitiveness of the agri-food sector, achieve more sustainable management of natural resources and ensure a more balanced development of rural areas.

The RDP is co-funded by the EU’s European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the national exchequer. EAFRD support will amount to €2.19 billion and will be supplemented by exchequer funding to bring the total available Programme budget to approximately €4.1 billion over the lifetime of the programme. According to the European Commission, Ireland’s drawdown of EU funds in the 2014-2019 period represented approximately 70% of its EAFRD allocation. This was second highest rate of all 28 Member States and exceeded the EU average of 50%.

What is an Annual Implementation Report?

As the Managing Authority for the Irish RDP, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) must submit to the European Commission an Annual Implementation Report (AIR) setting out the progress made in implementing the Programme during the previous calendar year. This report must account for all active schemes supported by the 2014-2020 Programme budget. The AIR submitted in 2020, which was the fifth report for the present Programme, contained data on all operations implemented in the calendar years 2014 to 2019, including transitional funding for outstanding commitments from the previous Programme. At the end of 2019, Ireland had spent approximately €3 billion of the available budget for the current RDP.

A citizens’ summary is intended to highlight and explain for a general readership the headline information contained in the AIR. The remainder of this document outlines the progress made in the implementation of the RDP to the end of the 2019 calendar year.
How is progress measured?

Support under 2014-2020 Programme is provided through priorities and focus areas, measures and sub-measures as set out in EU Regulations 1305/2013 and 808/2014 (see Appendix 1 for more details). In some instances, schemes cut across a number of focus areas while in others a particular measure may encompass a combination of separate schemes.

For each RDP scheme, a budget is allocated, and various milestones / targets are set to quantify achievements for the priorities under which schemes are programmed. Results are monitored each year and progress towards the specified indicators is included in the annual report sent to the European Commission. Ongoing monitoring ensures that money is spent in the manner envisaged in the approved RDP.

Why has data on the 2007-2013 RDP been included?

Under the 2007-2013 Programme, DAFM entered into multi-annual agreements for agri-environment schemes which were extended into the 2014-2020 programming period. Transitional arrangements were put in place to meet these and other overlapping commitments from the previous programming period.

Accordingly, transitional expenditure is included in the figures for Measures 4, 10 and 12 (Natura 2000 payments) and for the Early Retirement Scheme for which there is no corresponding scheme in the current RDP. Separate data is also provided in respect of the Early Retirement Scheme introduced in 2007.
What progress has been made in implementing the Programme?

Table 1 below shows realised Programme expenditure by priority at the end of 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority No.</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Cumulative Expenditure 2014-2019 £m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas.</td>
<td>Overarching priority*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests.</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture.</td>
<td>74.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry.</td>
<td>2,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors.</td>
<td>319.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P1 results are captured in the outcomes of other priorities.

Taking cumulative Programme expenditure in term of priorities, the highest and lowest spending rates at the end of 2019 were recorded for P4 and P3 respectively.

At measure level, the highest expenditure rates were recorded for the various schemes that collectively contribute to agri-environment climate objectives (M10) and for the ANC (M13) as shown in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure No.</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Cumulative Expenditure 2014-2019 €m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Knowledge transfer and information actions</td>
<td>79.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Investments in physical assets</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Basic services and village renewal in rural areas</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Agri-environment-climate</td>
<td>1,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Organic farming</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Natura 2000 payments</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints</td>
<td>1,291.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Animal welfare</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Co-operation</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Support for LEADER local development</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>Early retirement</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The pie chart below represents the total cumulative expenditure 2014-2019 €m, highlighting the top six expenditures, with the remaining measures listed as ‘other measures’.

Image credit: DAFM
Ireland’s Rural Development Programme in Numbers

- 70% of RDP funds spent by 2019
- 98,000 farmers supported in area’s facing natural constraint (ANC) in 2019
- €213m paid to GLAS beneficiaries in 2019
- 15,530 beneficiaries supported in TAMS from 2014-2019
- Almost €80m funding paid on LEADER projects from 2014-2019
- Almost €7m paid to locally-led EIP groups in 2019
- €1.6m spent in 2019 to support the Collaborative Farming Grant Scheme
- 25,000 farmers trained with online support tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
The following information outlines the progress made in implementing Ireland’s RDP up to 31 December 2019.

**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))

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. Approximately 1,164 KT groups consisting of some 18,557 farmers are currently participating in the scheme, facilitated by some 479 advisors. Farmers are required to attend 5 meetings and/or approved, national events each year and to complete / update a tailored Farm Improvement Plan for their specific enterprises relevant to the Knowledge Transfer sector they are participating in.

The purpose of KT meetings is to provide a suitable forum for learning.

There are 6 types of meetings:

- Standard meetings;
- National events;
- Farm progression planning;
- Additional expertise;
- Mandatory Private Veterinary Practitioner; &
- Mandatory Farm Health and Safety

To encourage flexibility and to allow the facilitator to adapt to a group’s specific needs, there is no prescribed format to individual meetings. Facilitators are trained to identify suitable topics to be introduced as part of discussion that will most benefit individual groups at a specific point in time. A list of suggested topics suitable to each sector can be referenced, however, this list is not exhaustive and group facilitators can identify other additional topics that may be relevant for discussion to their KT groups.

Group discussions can focus on all aspects of a farm’s performance including financial management, grass management, sustainability, breeding and integrated pest management but 2 meeting topics are prescribed: one on farm health and safety and one on animal health and welfare involving a private veterinary practitioner.

In 2019, payments amounting to €22.2m issued to 17,256 beneficiaries. Approximately €12.67m was paid to participating farmers with an additional €9.4m paid to facilitators.
Training for farmers in the BDGP and GLAS

This training is provided to approved participants in the BDGP and GLAS which is programmed under Measure 10 of the RDP. It aims to optimise the implementation of the schemes and while the scheme intervention logic and contribution is linked to Measure 10, funding for this training is allocated under Measure 1. Total expenditure on these training schemes (including some outstanding liabilities arising from training undertaken during the previous RDP) was €22.1m for the period 2014 to 2019.

There are two elements to the BDGP training. The first element is a four-hour general course designed to provide participating farmers with the information and skills necessary to meet their scheme commitments and to improve their knowledge of genomics and breeding strategies. The second element consists of two hours of personalised coaching on the use of the carbon navigator – a compulsory element of the scheme that must be completed annually by each participant. The general element of BDGP training has been completed by all currently active participants i.e. 23,000 farmers in BDGP I and 1,550 farmers in BDGP II.

The carbon navigator is an online decision support tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from livestock production systems; it estimates the potential environmental and financial gains that can be made on each holding through carbon-efficient farming practices (e.g. by turning animals out to grass two weeks earlier in spring, a farmer can save on feed costs and increase herd performance by getting more grass into their diets). To date over 25,000 farmers have been trained with almost 24,000 carbon navigators completed. Over 99% of GLAS participants have attended the compulsory one-day training course for that scheme. Cumulative expenditure on Measure 1 schemes amounted to €79.9 m at the end of 2019.

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

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

In 2019, €40,425 was spent to provide facilitator training courses to 411 advisors.
Cumulative expenditure on CPD until the end of 2019 was around €157,000. Further CPD training in 2020 will be considered in response to stakeholder requests.

**TASAHW training and advice**

The Targeted Service for Animal Health and Welfare (TASAHW) 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) and mastitis in dairy herds. Specialist advice is provided on request to individual farmers by eligible private veterinary practitioners (PVPs) who have undertaken TASAHW training on the relevant disease. PVP’s are paid by DAFM for up to three hours of advice per visit.

In 2019, over €251,000 was paid for the provision of on-farm advice and the training of PVPs. A total of 907 herd health investigations were conducted. Scheme expenditure to the end of 2019 amounted to €1.26 million and 4,112 farmers benefitted from the advisory service in that period during which disease control training and advice was concentrated on BVD and JD.

Cumulative expenditure on Measure 2 schemes amounted to €1.42m at the end of 2019.

**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)**; &

- 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**

Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes (TAMS) II will make €395m 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 €76.5m expended on Measure 4 in 2019, less than €3,000 related to spending on ongoing TAMS 1 investments from a previous programme. TAMS grants were paid to 5,124 farm enterprises and supported more than 5,500 investments worth €142.7m. The overall number of TAMS beneficiaries at the end of 2019 was approximately 15,530.

The main expenditure items for TAMS 2 were the Young Farmers Capital Investment Scheme, the Animal Welfare and Nutrient Storage Scheme and the Dairy Equipment Scheme at €36.8m, €13.7m and €13m respectively. A further €6.5m was spent on funding the acquisition of Low Emissions Slurry Spreading equipment.

*Image credit: DAFM*
Non-productive investments

Transitional expenditure of approximately €50,000 was incurred in respect of non-productive investments carried out on around 84 holdings carried over from the 2007-2013 programming period.

Cumulative public expenditure on all Measure 4 investments in physical assets amounted to €205.7 m at the end of 2019.

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 2019, €1.13m was paid to support the restoration of 112 buildings on 76 farms. When private funding is considered, the total amount invested in these operations was €1.6m.

Total scheme spend, including private investment, at the end of 2019 was approximately €4.9 with grant aid accounting for more than 70% of that figure.

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 2019 was €257.1m comprised of €256.5m on current RDP schemes (i.e. the GLAS, BDGP and Burren Programme in order of importance) and €0.6m in transitional spending related to the previous RDP.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme</th>
<th>2019 Expenditure (€m)</th>
<th>2019 Total Area (ha)¹</th>
<th>2019 Number of contracts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GLAS</td>
<td>213.3</td>
<td>1,183,284</td>
<td>48,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDGP</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>323,805</td>
<td>22,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burren Programme</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>11,294</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPS / AEOS (2007-2013 RDP)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Farming Scheme (OFS) (2007-2013 RDP only)</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>3,084</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bar chart below highlights the total number of contracts awarded on Agri- Environment- Climate commitments.

Number of contracts

- GLAS
- BDGP
- Burren Programme
- REPS / AEOS (2007-2013 RDP)
- Organic Farming Scheme (OFS) (2007-2013 RDP only)

¹ Note that individual holdings may be counted under more than one scheme if different types of agri-environment contracts are being implemented on the same area of land.
The Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS) promotes agricultural production methods with environmental benefits related to climate change mitigation, improving water quality and the preservation of priority habitats and species. Scheme payments totalled €213.3m on 48,000 contracts in 2019. The total GLAS spend at the end of 2019 was approximately €742m.

The majority of GLAS participants are located in 10 counties. The largest concentrations are located along the western seaboard, particularly Galway, Mayo and Donegal. Apart from Waterford, the 10 counties with the lowest number of GLAS participants (i.e. less than 1,000 farmers each) were all in Leinster.

In an ADAS survey undertaken on GLAS beneficiaries, 75% of participants indicated that the maintenance of hedgerows, walls and ditches was fully achieved due to GLAS, and 65% indicated an increase in biodiversity on farms due to GLAS.
GLAS – The Environmental Benefits- Water Quality (as on June 2019)

**Arable Grass Margins (over 320 Km)**

When placed along a watercourse it acts as a buffer zone to intercept nutrient runoff.

**Riparian Margins (over 71km)**

Stabilise river banks and act as a buffer zone to intercept livestock nutrient runoff.

**Protection of watercourse from bovines (almost 15,000 km)**

Fencing watercourses off from bovines prevents direct contamination.
TOP 10 GLAS* ACTIONS
January 2019

1. LOW-INPUT PERMANENT PASTURE
36,747 farmers
Permanent pastures extensively grazed and managed with low inputs to sustain a greater variety of plants and wildlife.

2. PROTECTION OF WATERCOURSES FROM BOVINES
16,305 farmers
Excluding bovines from watercourses promotes biodiversity and prevents pollution and the breakdown of vegetation along the banks of watercourses.

3. BIRD BOXES
17,086 farmers
This action is helping to replace natural habitats for birds that have been removed through changes in farming practice.

4. TRADITIONAL HAY MEADOWS
15,924 farmers
This action promotes the maintenance of the traditional method of forage conservation that is beneficial to grassland flora and fauna.

5. BAT BOXES
15,816 farmers
This action helps to replace natural roost locations for bats that have been displaced because of changes in farming practice. It is helping to conserve some of the nine bat species found in Ireland.

6. CONSERVATION OF SOLITARY BEES
13,916 farmers
Ireland has 98 species, 79 of which are solitary bees. A one tonne mound of sand fenced off to protect from livestock provides habitat for these solitary bees.

7. WILD BIRD COVER (WBC)
10,684 farmers
Sowing a seed crop mix that provides a food source and winter cover for farmland birds and other fauna.

8. COMMONAGE
8,907 farmers
Ensuring that commonage lands are appropriately grazed and managed to ensure they remain in good agricultural environmental condition.

9. FARMLAND HABITAT (PRIVATE NUTRA)
8,382 farmers
The aim of natura sites is to conserve valuable and threatened species and habitats. It involves avoiding farming practices that cause environmental damage and to protect vulnerable habitats such as wetlands.

10. TRADITIONAL DRY-STONE WALL MAINTENANCE
7,625 farmers
Stone walls are an important feature in the Irish landscape. Walls offer shelter to livestock, protection to wildlife and are an important habitat for both flora and fauna.

www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmerschemespayments/glas/
www.nationalruralnetwork.ie

* The Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS) is part of the RDP 2014-2020.
BDGP

The Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP) requires participating farmers to undertake a range of actions designed to accelerate genetic improvement in beef herd resulting in climate benefits associated with lower greenhouse gas emissions. Scheme payments totalled €41.9m to over 22,136 beneficiaries in 2019, similar to 2018 figures. The total scheme spend at the end of 2019 was approximately €211m.

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 €1.35m was paid on 11,294 hectares (ha) to 322 farmers in 2019. Total scheme spend at the end of 2019 was approximately €3.5m.

Transitional payments for REPS / AEOS totalled €0.5m for 87 holdings in 2019.

Cumulative expenditure on Measure 10 schemes amounted to €1,272m at the end of 2019.
Image credit: National Rural Network

Image credit: DAFM
**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 €9.2m was paid in respect of almost 55,834 hectares (ha) on 1,494 holdings under the OFS in 2019. Total scheme spend at the end of 2019 was approximately €32.5m. Additionally, approximately €163,000 in transitional money, for 85 unexpired contracts relating to the previous period, is reported under Measure 10 in the current Programme.

**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 €0.1m was spent on supporting the management of 1,324 ha on almost 89 holdings in 2019. Total funding for this scheme in the current programming period has so far amounted to €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).

Image credit: National Rural Network

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 €248.5m, including additional national financing of €59m was paid to approximately 98,000 farmers in respect of 2.18m ha under Measure 13 in 2019. This brings cumulative ANC payments in the current programming period to €1291.1m.
**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 they choose to undertake 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 2019, which was the third year of scheme payments, total public expenditure of €17.4m, including additional national financing of €8.7m, was paid to approximately 18,580 farmers in respect of over 260,000 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 all or some 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 2019 payments over €4.3 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 2019 approximately €1m issued to farmers.
Approximately €365,000 was paid to three prospective general EIP groups, involving 44 partners, in 2019 to enable them to implement their projects.

In 2019, approximately €6.9m was paid to 18 locally-led groups of which 10 were funded for operational activities. Most expenditure was absorbed by the Hen Harrier and Fresh Water Pearl Mussel projects as described above. The other locally-led EIP operations funded in 2019 were:

- Caomhnú Árann
- Rathcroghan Resource Community
- National Biodiversity Data Centre
- FORUM Commemara Operational Group
- Lárionad Acmhainn Nadurtha Centre (LAN)
- Inishowen upland farmers
- River Allow Catchment Management Group
- Mulkear Integrated Catchment Management Partnership
- Biorefinery Glas
- Small Biogas Demonstration Group

**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 2019, approximately €600,000 was paid towards costs incurred in establishing 454 farm partnerships – 392 of these were to facilitate generational renewal and 62 to facilitate mergers. A cumulative sum of €1.6m was paid to support the creation of 1,237 registered partnerships in the period to the end of 2019.

Cumulative expenditure on Measure 16 schemes amounted to €12.7m at the end of 2019.
**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. 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 2019 exceeded €41.8m with most of this sum provided for funding of project implementation. There were substantial increases in the number of projects approved for funding in 2019. Consequently, project payments have increased considerably reaching €30.2 million in 2019 compared to €11.8m in 2018. 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.

Cumulative expenditure under Measure 19 amounted to almost €80m at the end of 2019.

LEADER 2014-2020 includes themes that reflect the overarching needs of rural Ireland. Each theme contains a number of sub-themes which are considered the key areas in need of the greatest support and have the greatest potential to promote the sustainable development of rural communities in Ireland.

The NRN website contains a LAG’s and Implementing Partners (IP’s) database which provides rural individuals, businesses and community groups interested in accessing assistance under the LEADER programme.
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 €4.5 million (excluding VAT) were made from the TA budget in the period 2014 to 2019. A sum of €1.1m was paid in technical support for Programme implementation in 2019. 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 2019 spend was split equally between NRN support and non-NRN support with the latter comprised mostly of administrative costs for the Burren Programme together with contract payments for the GLAS Evaluation Project, the Mid Term Evaluation report and an Ex Ante Evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan.

NRN activities for 2019 included organising 3 consultation exercises with stakeholders, 4 meetings of thematic working groups and 33 events. It also disseminated 91 project examples as well as 81 publications in printed and electronic formats.

Measure 113 – Early Retirement Scheme

A sum of €173,700 was paid to 54 scheme beneficiaries in 2019. This is similar to funds paid in 2018. No transitional funding was paid on this scheme during the years 2014 and 2015.

Cumulative expenditure under Measure 113 amounted to €7.m at the end of 2019.

Rural Development Division

September 2020

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Where can I find more information?

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


General queries on the Programme can be directed to:

Telephone: 01 – 607 2117
E-mail: RuralDevelopment@agriculture.gov.ie

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/

LEADER

LEADER Programme Section
Department of Rural and Community Development
Telephone: 076-1064900
E-mail: rdp1420@drcd.gov.ie
Website: https://drcd.gov.ie/about/rural/rural-development/leader/

National Rural Network

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

Under The National Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, the Green Low-carbon Agri-environmental Scheme (GLAS) allows tillage farmers choose Catch Crops as an action for their farm under the scheme.

For more information on GLAS:

GLAS

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

For more information, the National Rural Network provide a case study on a mixed livestock farmer who joined GLAS in 2015, read the full case study on Irelands GLAS Catch Crops.
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

#### P1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

1A) Fostering innovation, cooperation, and the development of the knowledge base in rural areas

1B) Strengthening the links between agriculture, food production and forestry and research and innovation, including for the purpose of improved environmental management and performance

1C) Fostering lifelong and vocational training in agriculture and forestry sectors

#### P2: Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests

2A) Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as agricultural diversification

2B) Facilitating the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and in particular, generational renewal

#### P3: Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture

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

3B) Supporting farm risk prevention and management

#### P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

4A) Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas, in areas facing natural constraints and high nature value farming, as well as the state of European landscapes

4B) Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management

4C) Preventing soil erosion and improving soil management

#### P5: Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors

5A) Increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture

5B) Increasing efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing

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

5D) Reducing greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture

5E) Fostering carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry

#### P6: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

6A) Facilitating diversification, creation and development of small enterprises, as well as job creation
6B) Fostering local development in rural areas

6C) Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas

*Image credit: National Rural Network*
### 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

### M06 - Farm and business development (art 19)
| M6.1 | Business start-up aid for young farmers |
| M6.2 | Business start-up aid for non-agricultural activities in rural areas |
| M6.3 | Business start-up aid for the development of small farms |
| M6.4 | Support for investments in creation and development of non-agricultural activities |
| M6.5 | Payments for farmers eligible for the small farmers scheme who permanently transfer their holding to another farmer |

**M7 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (art 20)**

| 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 |
| 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 |
| 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 |
| 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 |
| M7.5 | Support for investments for public use in recreational infrastructure, tourist information and small-scale tourism infrastructure |
| 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 |
| 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 |
| M7.8 | Others |

**M8 - Investments in forest area development and improvement of the viability of forests (art 21-26)**

| M8.1 | Support for afforestation/creation of woodland |
| M8.2 | Support for establishment and maintenance of agro-forestry systems |
| M8.3 | support for prevention of damage to forests from forest fires and natural disasters and catastrophic events |
| M8.4 | support for restoration of damage to forests from forest fires and natural disasters and catastrophic events |
| M8.5 | support for investments improving the resilience and environmental value of forest ecosystems |
| M8.6 | support for investments in forestry technologies and in processing, mobilising and marketing of forest products |

**M09 - Setting-up of producer groups and organisations (art 27)**

| M9.1 | setting up of producer groups and organisations in the agriculture and forestry sectors |

**M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)**

| M10.1 | payment for agri-environment-climate commitments |
| M10.2 | support for conservation and sustainable use and development of genetic resources in agriculture |

**M11 - Organic farming (art 29)**

| M11.1 | payment to convert to organic farming practices and methods |
| M11.2 | payment to maintain organic farming practices and methods |

**M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)**

| M12.1 | compensation payment for Natura 2000 agricultural areas |
| M12.2 | compensation payment for Natura 2000 forest areas |
| M12.3 | compensation payment for agricultural areas included in river basin management plans |

**M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)**

| M13.1 | compensation payment in mountain areas |
| M13.2 | compensation payment for other areas facing significant natural constraints |
| M13.3 | compensation payment to other areas affected by specific constraints |

**M14 - Animal welfare (art 33)**

| M14.1 | payment for animal welfare |
### M15 - Forest environmental and climate services and forest conservation (art 34)

- **M15.1** - payment for forest -environmental and climate commitments
- **M15.2** - support for the conservation and promotion of forest genetic resources

### M16 - Co-operation (art 35)

- **M16.0** - others
  - **M16.1** - support for the establishment and operation of operational groups of the EIP for agricultural productivity and sustainability
  - **M16.2** - support for pilot projects, and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies
  - **M16.3** - (other) co-operation among smalls operators in organising joint work processes and sharing facilities and resources, and for developing/marketing tourism
  - **M16.4** - 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
  - **M16.5** - 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
  - **M16.6** - support for cooperation among supply chain actors for sustainable provision of biomass for use in food and energy production and industrial processes
  - **M16.7** - support for non-CLLD local development strategies
  - **M16.8** - support for drawing up of forest management plans or equivalent instruments
  - **M16.9** - support for diversification of farming activities into activities concerning health care, social integration, community-supported agriculture and education about the environment and food

### M17 - Risk management (art 36)

- **M17.1** - Crop, animal and plant insurance premium
- **M17.2** - Mutual funds for adverse climatic events, animal and plant diseases, pest infestations and environmental incidents
- **M17.3** - Income stabilisation tool

### M18 - Financing of complementary national direct payments for Croatia (art 40)

- **M18** - Financing of complementary national direct payments for Croatia
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