



17. Transition of the Rural Development Programme for England in 2014

17.1 Description of the measures to be delivered during transition

1. England's package of Rural Development Programme support in the transition between programmes in 2014 reflects our desire to target funding more in the new programme and avoid building up excessive commitments. We will deliver the following measures during 2014:

17.2 Axis 1 - improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector

17.2.1 Measure 111 - Vocational training and information actions

2. The objective of this measure is to broaden the scope of training, advice, information, facilitation and diffusion of knowledge activities to all adults dealing with agricultural, agri-environment, food and forestry matters. These activities cover issues under both agricultural and forestry systems to enhance the competitiveness, sustainability and delivery of environmental benefits of their enterprises and to ensure high environmental and quality standards.

3. This measure will support strategic livestock and animal welfare, and forestry projects, Catchment Sensitive Farming and Skills. Support will not be provided for the Entry Level Scheme training and information programme.

17.2.2 Measure 114 - Use of advisory services by farmers and forest holders

4. The objective of the measure is to improve the sustainable management of neglected woodlands.

5. This measure will support strategic forestry projects.

17.2.3 Measure 115 - Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as of forestry advisory services

6. The objective of this measure is to help farmers and forest holders to adapt to changing circumstances (including market changes, environmental changes and regulatory changes), to improve and facilitate management, and to improve overall performance by further enhancing human potential.

7. This measure will support strategic livestock and animal welfare projects.

17.2.4 Measure 121 - Modernisation of agricultural holdings

8. The objective of this measure is to improve the economic performance of holdings through better use of production factors, as well as improving the environmental, occupational safety, energy efficiency, hygiene and animal welfare status of the holding.

9. This measure will support Catchment Sensitive Farming and the Farming and Forestry Improvement scheme. Energy crops will not be supported during transition.

17.2.5 Measure 122 - Improve economic value of forests

10. The objective of this measure is to improve and broaden the economic value of private forests, increase diversification of production, and enhance market opportunities, whilst maintaining sustainable management by supporting investments in forest property or machinery that will in turn help secure the public interest or enhance the provision of public benefits.

11. This measure will support the Farming and Forestry Improvement scheme

17.2.6 Measure 123 - Adding value to agriculture and forestry products

12. The objective of this measure is to improve the processing and marketing of primary agricultural and forestry products through investment in improved efficiency, renewable energy, new technologies and new market opportunities, and to improve the overall performance of the enterprise.

13. This measure will support the Farming and Forestry Improvement scheme

17.2.7 Measure 124 - Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies

14. The objectives of this measure are:

a) to ensure that the agriculture and food sector can take advantage of market opportunities through widespread innovative approaches in developing new products, processes and technologies. For this purpose, cooperation between farmers, the food and the raw materials processing industry and other parties should be encouraged.

b) to promote cooperation between producers and processors to develop innovative uses for forest products, this will in turn lead to management of woodlands, which protects their public interest and enhances the public benefits.

17.2.8 Measure 125 - Infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry

15. This measure will be used to provide support for investments in infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry.

16. This measure will support Catchment Sensitive Farming and the Farming and Forestry Improvement scheme

17.3 Axis 2 - improving the environment and the countryside

17.3.1 Measure 214 - Agri-environment payments – Environmental Stewardship – Higher Level Stewardship and Entry Level Stewardship

17. The primary objectives of Environmental Stewardship are:

- the conservation of natural wildlife (on farmland, both in protected areas and the wider countryside);
- natural resource protection (focusing on the management of soil and water).
- the adaptation of farming methods around features on farmed land, to enhance biodiversity and resource protection;
- the maintenance of landscape quality and character;
- the promotion of public access and understanding (this element of the scheme is described in measure 313);

18. In addition, the Higher Level strand will address the following as secondary objectives:

- flood management - where it contributes to wetland and coastal habitat management;
- genetic conservation.

19. In 2014, this measure will support a limited number of new Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) and Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) agreements. New 'standard' Entry Level Stewardship agreements will be limited to land coming out of expiring ERDP schemes (Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Areas) agreements that does not qualify for HLS and for underpinning new HLS agreements. New Uplands and Organic ELS agreements will however also be available, as well as renewed Organic ELS agreements. No HLS or Uplands ELS agreements are due to expire in 2014 and renewals will not be available for "standard" ELS agreements due to expire in 2014.

17.3.2 Measure 216 - Support for non-productive investments

20. The objectives of this measure are to support the objectives of the agri-environment measure by supporting essential and integral non-productive investments within the HLS and Uplands ELS elements of Environmental Stewardship.

21. This measure will support capital works for Environmental Stewardship.

17.3.3 Measure 221 - First afforestation of agricultural land

22. The objective of this measure is to contribute to the protection of the environment and to mitigate and assist in the adaptation to climate change by increasing forest cover throughout England through the first afforestation of agricultural land.

23. It is intended to use this measure to support the establishment of permanent woodland on agricultural land using the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS).

17.3.4 Measure 223 - First afforestation of non-agricultural land

24. The objective of this measure is to contribute to the protection of the environment and to mitigate and assist in the adaptation to climate change by increasing forest cover throughout England through the first afforestation of non-agricultural land.

25. It is intended to use this measure to support the establishment of permanent woodland on non-agricultural land using the English Woodland Grant Scheme. This measure will be used in a similar but complementary manner to measure 221.

17.3.5 Measure 227 - Support for non-productive investments

26. To support forest holders for non-remunerative investments where they are necessary to achieve forest-environment commitments and other environmental objectives, or to protect the public interest in the woodland and enhance the public benefits it is providing.

27. This measure will support capital works to benefit woodland.

17.4 Axis 3 - quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy

17.4.1 Measure 312 - Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises

28. Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises with a view to promoting entrepreneurship and creating employment opportunities. Given the high proportion of micro-enterprises among rural businesses, a key objective of the measure will be support for achieving the growth aspirations of small rural businesses.

29. This measure will support the Farming and Forestry Improvement scheme and the Rural Economy Grant.

17.4.2 Measure 313 - Encouragement of tourism activities

30. The objectives of this measure are to use the natural and cultural resources in England's rural areas to attract visitors and create new employment opportunities through the development of the tourism sector of the rural economy and to make rural tourism businesses more sustainable through collaboration, resource efficiency (including the management of visitor impacts) and effective use of ICT.

31. This measure will support the Rural Economic Grant scheme. For farmers participating in the Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Scheme there will be no support to promote public access and understanding of the countryside.

17.4.3 Measure 321 - Basic services for economy and rural population

32. The objective of this measure is to improve or maintain the living conditions and welfare of those living in rural areas and to increase the attractiveness of such areas through the provision of more and better basic services for the economy and the rural population.

33. This measure will support Rural Broadband.

17.4.4 Measure 331 - Training and information for economic actors operating in the fields covered by Axis 3

34. The objective of this measure is to enhance human potential required for the enhancement of the rural economy. It will support the achievement of the outcomes listed for the measures under this Axis (developing micro-enterprises, encouraging tourism etc) by developing the skills of the economic actors in the rural area.

35. This measure will deliver the Skills programme.

17.5 Axis 4/ Technical Assistance – Implementation of the LEADER approach

36. Funding from the technical assistance budget has been made available to assist all prospective LEADER groups prepare an application for the next Rural Development Programme. This includes support for those LEADER groups who have been in receipt of funding from previous programmes, as well as those new LEADER groups coming to this for the first time. The funding will support a range of actions including studies of the LEADER area, stakeholder consultation activities and the also preparation of documentation associated with their application.

37. Technical assistance will also continue to support the RDPE network during the transition period as well as on-going RDPE monitoring and evaluation work in preparation for the 2014-20 Programme.

17.6 Further Information

38. Further detail of each measure may be found in Chapter 5 of the Rural Development Programme for England 2007-2013.