

Rural Development Programme (RDP) of Valle d'Aosta, Italy

Programma di Sviluppo Rurale 2007-2013 / Programme de Développement Rural 2007-2013¹

(Rural Development Programme for Valle d'Aosta 2007-2013)

Relevant Contact Details

Address: loc. grande Charrière, 63 11020 Saint Cristophe, Italy

Telephone number: + 39 0165 275410

Other useful links:

Rural Development Programme (RDP):
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/rural-development-policy/country-information/italy/en/italy_home_en.cfm

National Strategy Plan (NSP):
<http://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/1145>

Italian National Rural Network (NRN):
<http://www.reterurale.it>



Map of Valle d'Aosta
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General socio-economic situation in rural areas in Valle d'Aosta

Valle d'Aosta, located in the North of Italy, has an area of 3,263 km² and a population of 122,868 inhabitants. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is 135% of the average EU-25. The entire territory is mountainous, and according to the classification of the National Strategy Plan, the 74 regional communes are all classified as category D – i.e. “rural areas with comprehensive development problems”. Furthermore, it is also classified as a disadvantaged area, except for 671 ha in the commune of Aosta. 54,250 Ha are Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA); and, there are 5,100 agricultural holdings with an average of 10.6 ha per holding. There are predominantly meadows and pastures (98% of UAA and 40% of the total surface) given that breeding represents the principal production of the region (three quarters of the regional agricultural production). Other cultures include fruit trees (1.7%) and arable crops (0.3%). Forests cover 27% of the region. Service industries including commercial services represent 81% of value added, whereas agriculture represents 1.4%. The unemployment rate is 3%.

The RDP indicates that weaknesses in the region include limited cultivation choices; small top soil depth; reduced cultivation cycle; high risks of landslides; and, high water consumption in agriculture. On the other hand Valle d'Aosta also has a variety of eco-agrosystems; still a vital rural space; national and regional parks of protected areas; Natura 2000 sites occupy 30% of the regional territory; good water quality; reduced agricultural pollution; limited ammoniac emissions thanks to extensive agricultural practices; low-impact cultivation methods including reduced chemical inputs; and, efficient protection of forests.

¹ Latest updated RDP, following the adoption of the Health Check and European Economic Recovery Package and additional funds from Modulation.

RDP strategic objectives

In accordance with the National Strategy Plan, the objectives of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) of Valle d’Aosta are to strengthen the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors; improve rural areas; and, promote quality of life and diversification of the rural economy. Moreover, the region aims to maintain regional agricultural production by improving environmental standards, the quality of products and services. Furthermore, Valle d’Aosta will continue its objective from the previous programming period, 2000–06, by namely maintaining and improving the system of mountainous rural development. At the same time the region has introduced new specific objectives in order to respond to new challenges – e.g. to maintain farming in a fragile mountainous region, and especially, develop and diversify rural areas in a sustainable manner.

Following the CAP Health Check, in recognition of the greater emphasis now being given to the “new challenges” facing agriculture and rural areas, the RDP was revised in 2009 to better focus on issues such as the environmental priorities (biodiversity, water management and climate change) and renewable energy. The modifications do not concern the introduction of new priorities but the reinforcement and/or modification of existing as well as the introduction of new operations to meet any such issues.

Taking into account the additional financing provided by the CAP Health Check, the European Economic Recovery Package and Modulation/CMO Wine, greater strategic priority is given to initiatives that contribute to biodiversity (which received 56% of the additional funds) and renewable energy (44%).

Expected impact / outcomes of the policies

The expected results are to increase economic growth by €16 million. The net additional value added expressed in Purchasing Power Standard (PPS) is expected to be 16,411, new employment opportunities will be created; labour productivity will increase by €2,500/Full time equivalent (FTE), the reduction of the decline in biodiversity will be by 5% for the farmland bird index; High Nature Value farmland and forestry will be maintained and improved by 51,000 ha/year for the prevention of marginalisation and abandonment of agricultural land and 48,500 ha/year for improving the territory; the quality of water and the balance of nutrients will be maintained by less than 20 kg/ha of nitrogen; 0.45 mg/l in surface waters and 5-10 mg/l in deep waters for nitrates, and a possible increase of pesticides however not exceeding 0.02 µg/l; and, the contribution to combating climate change by decreasing the negative effects of CO₂ emissions by 5% through an increase of afforestation in the region will take place.

Specific modifications to impact indicators have been made to take account of the update of RDP, as a result of the CAP Health Check, the European Recovery Package and Modulation of certain funds between Pillar 1 and 2 of the CAP to be targeted at economic growth (revised to €18.58 million), biodiversity (6.2%) and maintenance of High Nature Value farmland and forestry. Detailed information on impact indicators for individual measures is provided in the RDP indicator tables.

² A full list of the RDP measures can be found in Annex I.

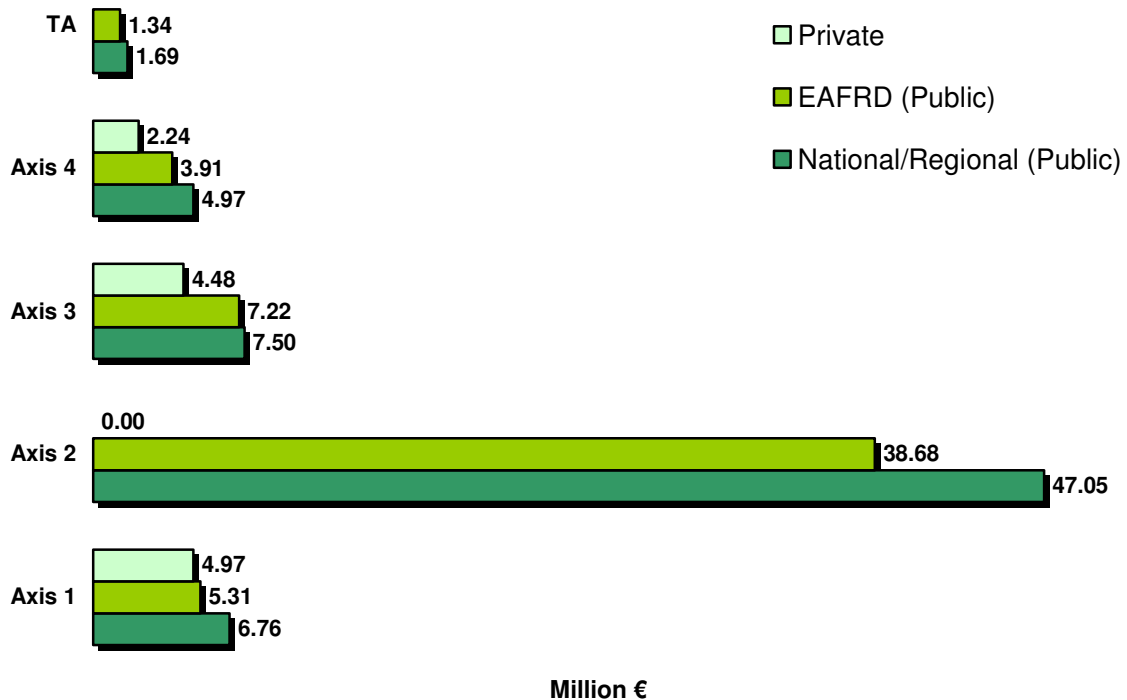
³ Please note that for measures 112, 113 and 132 no private spending has been allocated.

⁴ For measures 211, 212, 214, 215 and 216 no private spending has been allocated.

For measures 313 and 322 no private spending has been allocated.

⁵ For measures 421 and 431 no private spending has been allocated.

RDP budget breakdown by axis: Total expenditure (including national/regional + EAFRD + private funding) of €136,122,757



The RDP budget allocations are broadly divided into four main areas of expenditure, known as axes (namely: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector; Improving the environment and the countryside; Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy; and Leader). Approximately 13% of the updated RDP budget in Valle d'Aosta is allocated to axis 1 (€17.03 million); approximately 63% is allocated to axis 2 (€85.73 million), 14% to axis 3 (€19.21 million) and 8% to axis 4 (€11.12 million), with 2% available to fund technical assistance (€3.03 million).

Within axis 1, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 40% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 31%; and private funds 29%.

Within axis 2, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 55% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 45%; and private funds 0%.

Within axis 3, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 39% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 38% and private funds 23%.

Within axis 4, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 45% share of the axis funding; EAFRD 35%; and private funds 20%.

Within technical assistance, National/Regional public funding represents approximately 56% share of the technical assistance funding and EAFRD 44%.

As a consequence of the 2009 RDP amendments, the Valle d'Aosta region has been assigned a total of €7,050,000 (including €4,230,000 EAFRD and €2,820,000 of regional/national public funds). Out of the additional EAFRD contribution, €4,118,000 is aimed at addressing new challenges in rural areas and improved broadband infrastructure. Furthermore, €112,000 stems from Modulation/CMO Wine. The priority of restructuring dairy sector will be met using financial resources from state aid and regional laws (21/01, 3/02 and 32/07), while the broadband infrastructure in rural areas will be developed using other EU and national funds (with the objecting of 100% coverage by 2011). The funds stemming from the European Economic Recovery Package will be therefore used for biodiversity and renewable energy.

Axis Information²

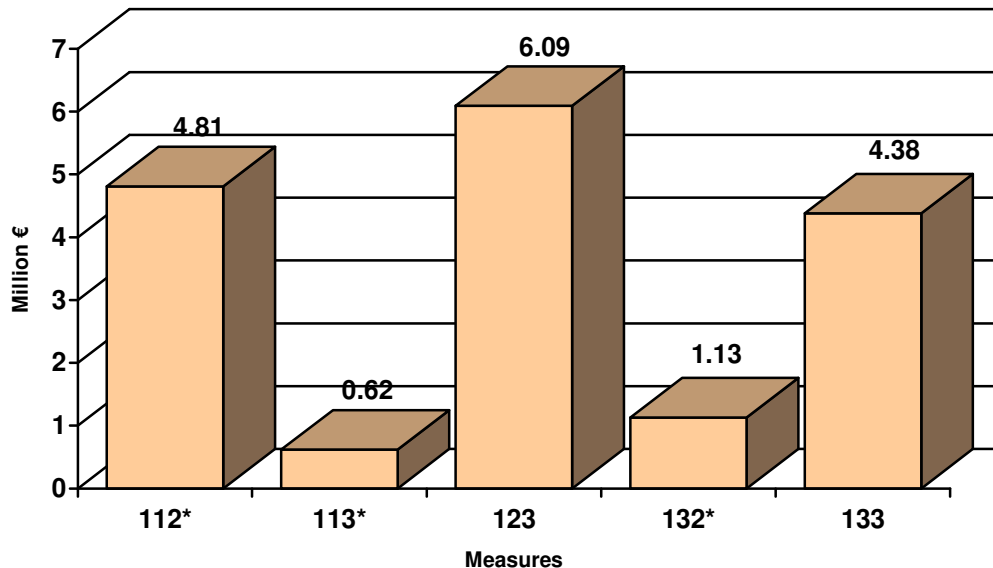
Axis 1 objectives: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector

The table below provides an indication of the RDP's axis 1 priorities.

Strategic objectives	Specific objectives
Improve entrepreneurial and professional skills of agricultural and forestry businesses and enhance generational renewal	- Favour generational renewal and human resource development - Conversion and/or restructuring of existing agricultural holdings
Improve physical and telecommunication infrastructures	- Conversion and improvement of the quality of agricultural and food products
Promote modernisation and innovation of businesses and integration of the production chain	
Develop the quality of agricultural and forestry production	

Result targets include an increase in Gross Value Added (GVA) in supported holdings/enterprises by €0.5 million; the number of holdings/enterprises introducing new products (35); and, the value of agricultural production under recognised quality label/standards (€80 million).

Axis 1 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €17,033,021³



Following the 2009 RDP update, the total budget allocation under axis 1 is €17,033,021.

Axis 2 objectives: Improving the environment and the countryside

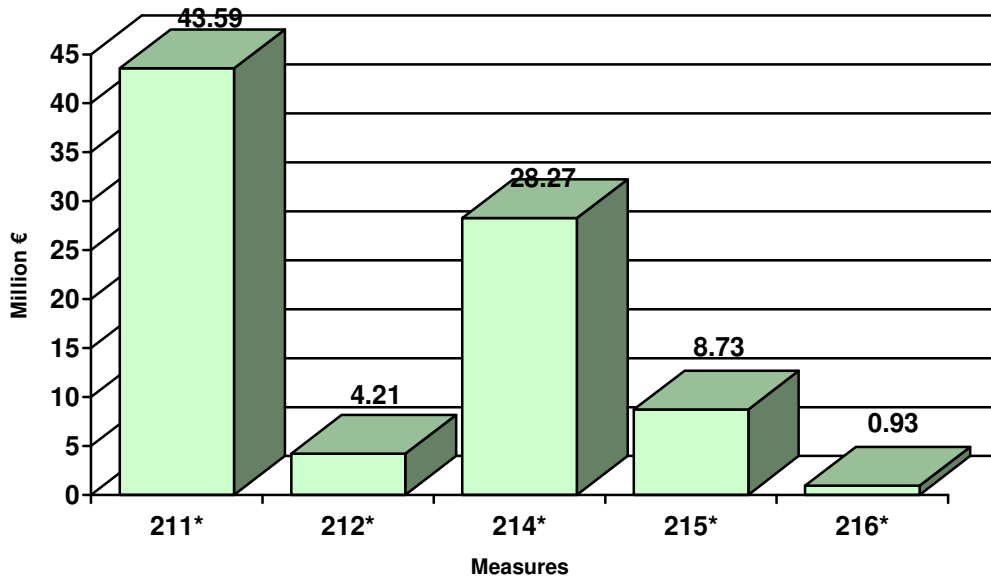
The table below provides an indication of the RDP's axis 2 priorities.

Strategic objectives	Specific objectives
Conservation of biodiversity and agricultural and forestry areas of high environmental value	- Protection of the territory through agricultural practices
Protection of water resources (in terms of quality and quantity)	- Conservation of good environmental conditions
Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions	
Protection of the territory	

Result targets include: areas under successful land management that contribute to the avoidance of marginalisation and land abandonment by 51,000 ha/year and soil quality by 43,000 ha/year.

Specific modifications to result indicators have been made to take account of the amendments to the RDP as a result of the Health Check, the European Economic Recovery Package and Modulation including further impeding loss of biodiversity in the RDP region. More specifically, the area under improved biodiversity and high value farming has been extended to 51,155 ha. Activities include management of biotopes/habitats within Natura 2000 sites by supporting between 200 and 400 farm holdings (measures 213 and 216). For further information on specific indicators please refer to the indicator tables in the RDP.

Axis 2 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €85,731,016⁴



Following the 2009 RDP update, the total budget allocation under axis 2 is €85,731,016, including an additional €3,090,667 (€2,318,000 EAFRD plus €772,667 of national/regional public funds). The additional EAFRD contribution supports biodiversity under measures 213 (€1,898,000) and 216 (€420,000).

Axis 3 objectives: Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy

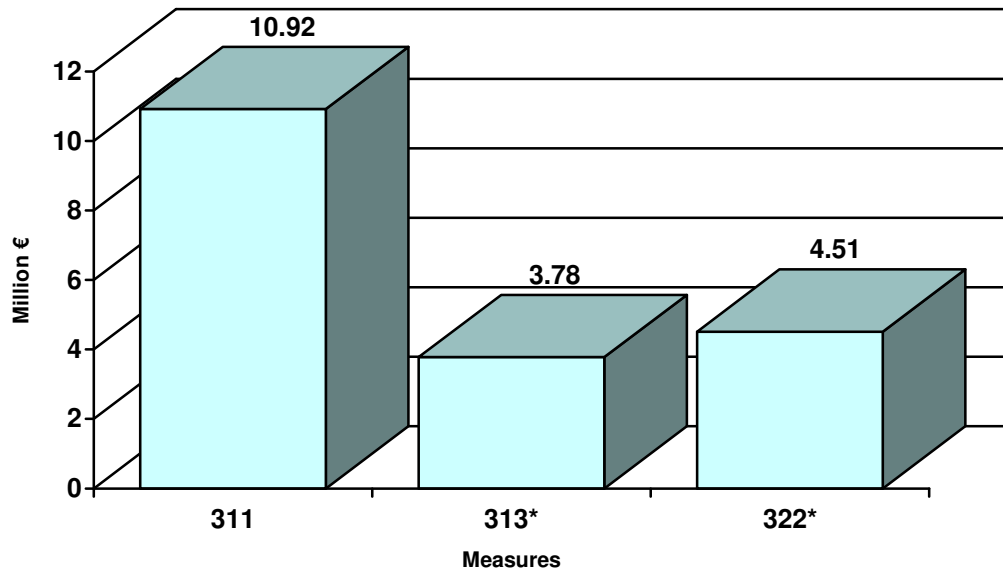
The table below provides an indication of the RDP's axis 3 priorities.

Strategic objectives	Specific objectives
Improve the attractiveness of rural areas for inhabitants and enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diffusion of diversification processes - Improve quality of life
Maintain and/or create employment opportunities and income in rural areas	

Result targets include an increase in non-agricultural GVA in supported businesses by €0.6 million; gross number of jobs created (40); additional number of tourists (3,000); population in rural areas benefiting from improved services (5,000); and, number of participants that successfully ended a training activity (500).

Specific modifications to result indicators have been made to take account of the amendments to the RDP as a result of the Health Check, the European Economic Recovery Package and Modulation/CMO Wine including further use of renewable energy. More specifically, 20 additional actions are supported to substitute fossil fuels by installing and/or build infrastructure for renewable energy (measure 311). For further information on specific indicators please refer to the indicator tables in the RDP.

Axis 3 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €19,207,127



Following the latest revision of the RDP the new total budget allocation for axis 3 is €19,207,127 including an additional €2,400,000 (€1,800,000 EAFRD plus €600,000 of national/regional public funds). The additional EAFRD contribution finances renewable energy production through measure 311.

Axis 4 objectives: Leader

The table below provides an indication of the RDP's axis 4 priorities.

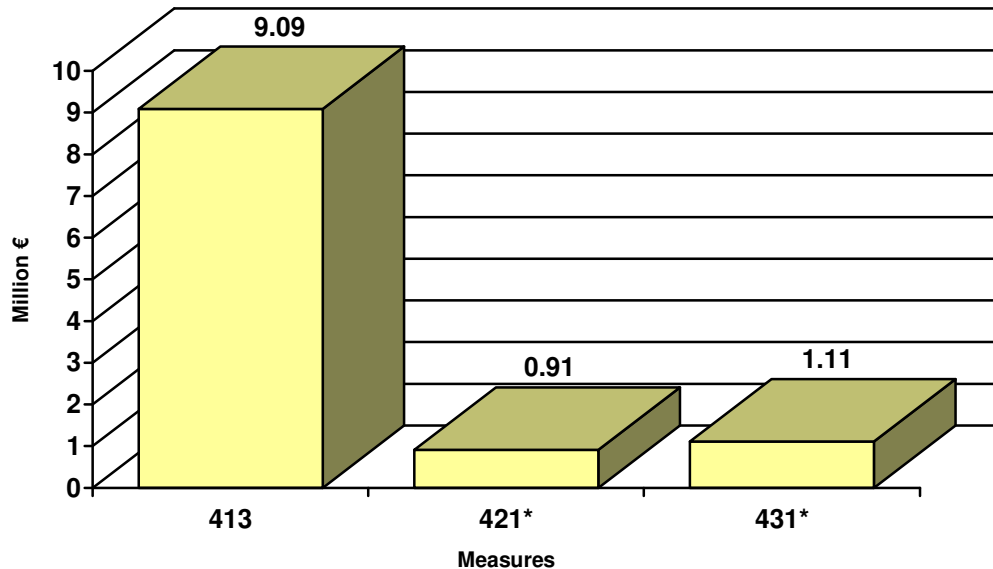
Strategic objectives	Specific objectives
Strengthen local project and management capacities	- Consolidate local partnerships - Promotion of local project abilities
Utilisation of endogenous resources in the territory	

Result targets include the adaptation of the Leader approach to define the quantities of the population in rural areas benefiting from improved services, increase in Internet penetration in rural areas and the number of participants that successfully ended a training activity. In addition, the following supplementary indicators are used: increase of tourists (5,000); number of trained users (500) and number of users that have received new services (3,000). Overall, measures under Axis 3 will be used through local partnerships.

Number of LAGs envisaged in the RDP areas as of March 2010 was four.

No modifications were made to axis 4 during the 2009 RDP update.

Axis 4 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €11.117,500⁵



Following the 2009 RDP update, the total budget amount for axis 4 is €11,117,500.

Monitoring and evaluation strategy

The Managing Authority (MA) is responsible for the collection and transmission of data with regards to financial control and product indicators. Concerning the results indicators, the MA may choose to use the ongoing evaluation to ease the collection of data; however, the MA is responsible for the transmission of the data. The responsibility to estimate the impact, including the interpretation and adaptation of initial indicators and planned surveys, lies with the evaluators. The System for fund management in the European Community (SFC) 2007 control and coordination system is used. At regional level the MA sends data to IGRUE (Ispettorato Generale per i Rapporti finanziari con l'Unione Europea – General Inspectorate for the financial relationships with the EU) that registers the information in the SFC. Final beneficiaries are obliged to provide the MA with monitoring data. The monitoring system is made more efficient by extending the degree of computerisation; coherently organising and codifying the information held in databases; completing the process of integrating existing databases; and, strengthening coordination activities. A database for evaluating agricultural policies is foreseen. It will include primary data (synthesis information from the regional agricultural information system (SIAR, Sistema Informatico Agricolo Regionale – Regional Agricultural Computer System); other primary data obtained from, for example, surveys; and, secondary data.

Communication and publicity

Actions aim to inform potential beneficiaries, professional organisations, economic, social and environmental sectors, equality organisations and NGOs about what the RDP has to offer and the conditions about how to receive financing. The communication plan was designed with the objective to reach every beneficiary by using every communication tool available. Examples of tools include: press releases and conferences; organisation of five meetings with the general public;

publication of articles in the regional bulletin; publication of the programme on the website of the region; publication of an article in the bimonthly "l'informatore agricolo – l'informateur agricole"; and, production of a booklet in cooperation with Local Action Groups (LAGs) on how to start up an agricultural business. The target groups are agricultural entrepreneurs and workers; young farmers; businesses specialising in transforming and commercialising agricultural and forestry products; associations of quality production; rights organisations; LAGs; rural interest groups; other organisations such as NGOs; and, local agencies.

Annex I – Measures

Measures selected by the RDP Measures selected by the updated RDP

Axis 1 - Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector	<i>Promoting knowledge and improving human potential</i>	111	Vocational training and information actions
		112	Setting up of young farmers
		113	Early retirement
		114	Use of advisory services
		115	Setting up of management, relief and advisory services
	<i>Restructuring and developing physical potential and promoting innovation</i>	121	Modernisation of agricultural holdings
		122	Improvement of the economic value of forests
		123	Adding value to agricultural and forestry products
		124	Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and in the forestry sector
		125	Infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry
	<i>Quality of agricultural production and products</i>	126	Restoring agricultural production potential
		131	Meeting standards based on Community legislation
		132	Participation of farmers in food quality schemes
	<i>Transitional measures</i>	133	Information and promotion activities
141		Semi-subsistence farming	
142		Producer groups	
Axis 2 - Improving the environment and the countryside	<i>Sustainable use of agricultural land</i>	143	Providing farm advisory and extension services
		211	Natural handicap payments to farmers in mountain areas
		212	Payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas
		213	Natura 2000 payments and payments linked to Directive 2000/60/EC
		214	Agri-environment payments
		215	Animal welfare payments
	<i>Sustainable use of forestry land</i>	216	Non-productive investments
		221	First afforestation of agricultural land
		222	First establishment of agroforestry systems on agricultural land
		223	First afforestation of non-agricultural land
		224	Natura 2000 payments
		225	Forest-environment payments
		226	Restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions
		227	Non-productive investments
Axis 3 - Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy	<i>Diversify the rural economy</i>	311	Diversification into non-agricultural activities
		312	Support for business creation and development
		313	Encouragement of tourism activities
	<i>Improve the quality of life in rural areas</i>	321	Basic services for the economy and rural population
		322	Village renewal and development
		323	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
		331	Training and information
Axis 4 - Leader	<i>Implementing local development strategies</i>	341	Skills-acquisition and animation measure with a view to preparing and implementing a local development strategy
		411	Competitiveness
		412	Environment/land management
		413	Quality of life/diversification
		421	Implementing cooperation projects
431	Running the local action group, skills acquisition, animation		