



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020: 2017 Annual Implementation Report - Summary



**Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar
gyfer Datblygu Gwledig:**
Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
**European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development:**
Europe Investing in Rural Areas



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1. Overview

The Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme (WGRC-RDP) 2014-2020 is funded by the Welsh Government and the European Union ('EU') through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development ('EAFRD'). The Wales-wide Programme supports a wide range of activities designed to increase the sustainability and resilience of Wales' natural environment, land-based sector, food businesses and rural communities.

A budget of up to €971 million has been agreed for the Rural Development Programme. This is made up of approximately €652 million of EU money and €319 million of the Welsh Government's own money. The majority of activities supported through the Programme are delivered through 'schemes' and can be broadly grouped by;

	EU Budget	Total Budget	EU Spend	Total Spend
Human and Social Capital Schemes (including Farming Connect support)	€125.51m	€217.21m	€6.71m	€11.52m
Investment Schemes (such as the Sustainable Production grant)	€113.12m	€162.04m	€12.89m	€19.69m
Agri Environment-Climate Schemes (Glastir)	€314.28m	€418.59m	€92.37m	€124.24m
Local Development Schemes (including LEADER)	€78.10m	€133.30m	€4.19m	€5.58m
Other Activity (such as Wales Rural Network)	€20.58m	€38.83m	€1.09m	€2.06m
Total available under the Programme	€651.59m	€970.87m	€117.25m	€163.09m

Each scheme delivered within the Rural Development Programme is allocated a budget. Targets are set for what is expected to be delivered. These targets are monitored throughout each year by the Welsh Government. Progress towards the targets is included in the annual report sent to the European Commission (EC). This monitoring ensures that money is being spent in the way which Welsh Government planned. A copy of these reports can be found [here](#).

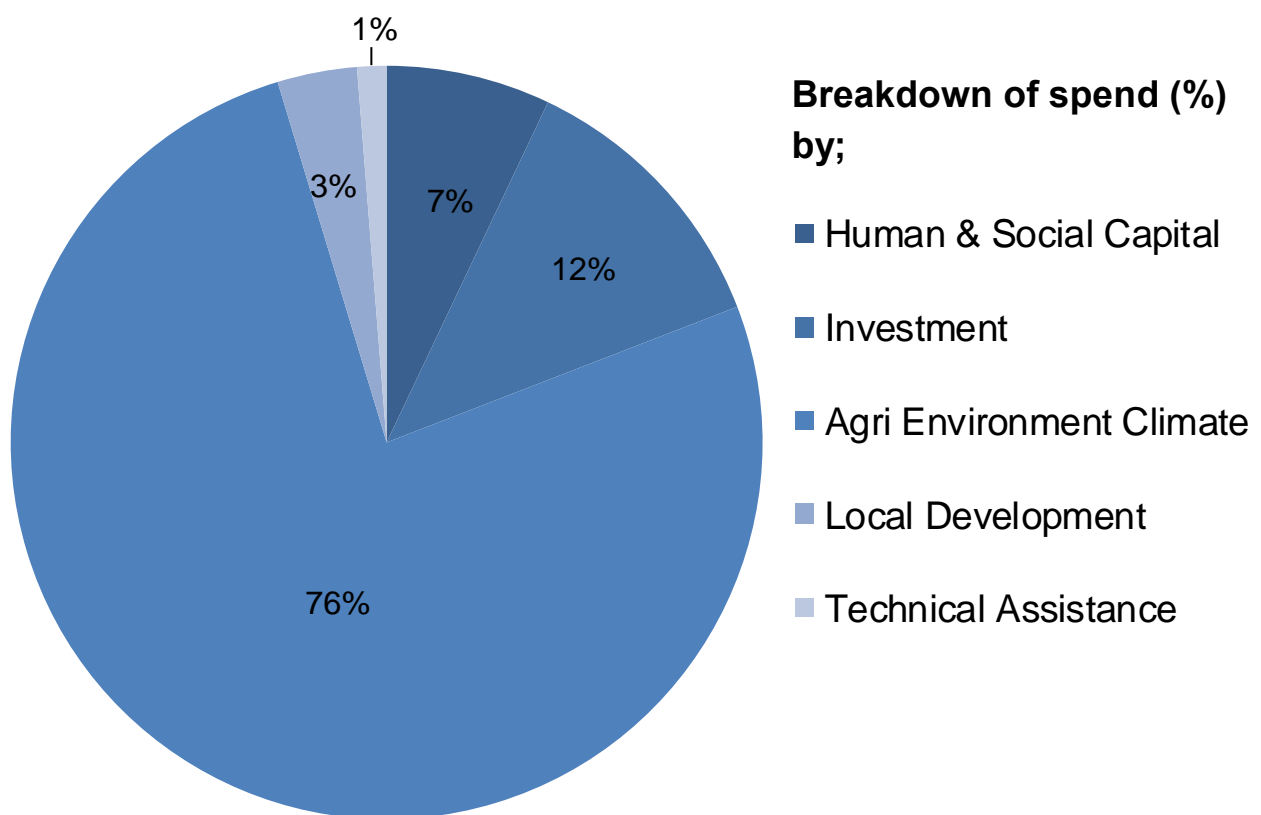
Evaluation is key part of the Programme to help assess the effectiveness of the Programme and identify areas where improvements can be made. A number of [guidance documents](#) have been published to support this work.

2. Programme Progress

Since late 2015 a total of €163.1 million has been paid out under the Programme, with €104.1 million paid during 2017 alone. The majority of the funding (€124.7 million) paid relates to land-based (agri-environment / forestry) activities. €117.3 million of the total paid since the beginning of the programme has come from European funds, of which €75.4 million comes from Pillar I transfer funding. €67.4 million of this Pillar I funding has been paid under agri-environment Schemes and the Sustainable Production Grant. Farmers and land owners also have the opportunity to apply for funding under other areas of the Programme, such as the Sustainable Production Grant and Timber Business Investment Scheme, alongside the traditional agri-environment and forestry Schemes available.

By the end of 2017 some of the key achievements to date include:

- a total of 5,021 participants had received training;
- 828 beneficiaries have received specialist advice;
- there has been almost 400 hectares of new woodland created;
- 6,105 contracts under agri-environment-climate, covering a physical area of 1,108,848 hectares;
- 526 contracts have been awarded under the Glastir Organics Scheme covering a total area of 63,499 hectares.



Further information on the individual schemes delivered through the Programme can be found below and by following the web-links for each scheme.

3. HUMAN & SOCIAL CAPITAL SCHEMES

Training and advice delivery contracts (Knowledge Transfer and Rural Business Advisory Scheme) are delivered through [Farming Connect](#). Farming Connect is central in supporting the delivery of other areas of the Programme. It forms the main mechanism for delivering an integrated package of knowledge transfer, advice and innovation support targeting rural communities within Wales.

Click [here](#) for an example of how the e-learning training support available through Farming Connect has helped to develop a family farm near Abergavenny. Another initiative under Farming Connect, Venture, is designed to help match farmers and landowners who are looking to step back from the industry with new entrants looking for a way into farming. An example of a new joint trading Venture agreement in North Wales can be seen [here](#).

Advisory services to aid Glastir delivery are also supported, along with other [Knowledge Transfer and Information Scheme](#) activities. These include grant-aided projects for sectorial and industry led, bottom-up initiatives targeting agriculture, forestry, food, other rural SMEs and land managers.

[EIP Wales](#) is the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity & Sustainability, which aims to bring a range of people and organisations together to develop innovative solutions, benefitting the wider industry in Wales and the EU. EIP is a new approach to support the development of research and innovation in agriculture and woodlands in Wales. 67 enquires were received from individuals interested in EIP during 2017. By December 2017 ten projects have been awarded funding.

The [Cooperation & Supply Chain Development \('C&SCD'\) scheme](#) supports collaboration and is designed to make new things happen. The scheme aims to achieve transformational change, supporting the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies in the agriculture, forestry and food sectors. An example of the support available can be found [here](#).

In addition the [Sustainable Management Scheme \('SMS'\)](#) provides support for a range of activities to improve the management of Wales' natural resources which will contribute to the well-being of rural communities. During 2017 three application windows opened for SMS with further windows scheduled during 2018. Nine projects are currently underway with a further 27 projects under development. A new service to support farmers and farmers apply for SMS has been launched, more information can be found on the Farming Connect [website](#).

There have been two windows for initial applications of the [Co-operative Forest Planning \('CFP'\) scheme](#). This scheme provides financial support to encourage planning for the creation of broadleaved and conifer woodland, to improve the management of natural resources and contribute to the well-being of rural communities within Wales. Full applications are expected during 2018.

There are several Tourism related support schemes available through the Programme. The [Regional Tourism Engagement Fund \('RTEF'\)](#) and the [Tourism Product Innovation Fund \('TPIF'\)](#) are delivered through Visit Wales and were launched during 2017. The aim of the schemes is to encourage development of new practises and process in small businesses to develop local tourism opportunities. During 2017 a combined total of 67 applicants were invited to submit full applications under these funds.

4. INVESTMENT SCHEMES

The Sustainable Production Grant ('SPG') is a capital investment fund to help improve both the economic and environmental performance of farms. During 2017 a total of 54 applications have been approved. The Farm Business Grant ('FBG') provides a financial contribution towards capital investment in equipment and machinery that have been pre-identified as offering clear and quantifiable benefits to farm enterprises. Over 850 applications have been received through the first two rounds of FBG requesting £5.7m in grant.

The Timber Business Investment Scheme ('TBIS') provides funding for capital investments that add value to forests by enabling woodland management activities, timber harvesting and/or timber processing. 60 applicants have been requested to submit full applications from the first two application windows; a third window opened early 2018.

The Food Business Investment Scheme ('FBIS') is designed to help primary producers of agricultural products in Wales to add value to their outputs. The scheme provides support to those businesses that do first and/or second stage processing activities. A total of 35 FBIS applications were approved by the end of 2017.

During 2017 the Rural Business Investment Scheme - Food ('RBISF') opened, complimenting other food and drink related interventions within the Programme. There have been two application windows under RBISF, with 36 initial applications received, of which nine have been successful to date.

The Micro & Small Business Fund – Rural ('MSBF') delivered by Visit Wales opened in May 2017. This scheme targets viable and sustainable private sector tourism capital projects that will support the development of priority tourism products, creating and safeguarding jobs in rural areas. By early 2018 some 204 enquires have been received with 36 invited to submit an application. 11 of these have received approval.



5. AGRI ENVIRONMENT SCHEMES

Glastir is a family of related schemes in Wales to support sustainable land management. Glastir is designed to deliver outcomes at a farm, forest and landscape level in a cost effective way.

Under the Glastir Small Grants Scheme land managers and farming businesses can benefit from maximum funding of up to £7,500 for capital works under three themes; Carbon, Water and Landscape & Pollinators. The Glastir Advanced Scheme delivers targeted financial support to farmers and land managers to deliver these objectives, delivering environmental improvements for a range of objectives including habitats, species, soil and water.

Glastir Woodland Creation ('GWC') supports land managers who wish to create new woodland and/or manage existing woodlands. The Glastir Woodland Restoration ('GWR') scheme has been developed to enable woodlands infected by *Phytophthora ramorum* to be replanted to help slow down the spread of the disease, providing the opportunity to diversify tree species to increase resilience to climate change and pests / diseases.

The Glastir Organic Scheme provides support to new and existing organic farmers and producers, both to convert to and maintain organic production. Click [here](#) for an example of the support provided through the scheme.

During 2017 the final evaluation report from the independent Glastir Monitoring & Evaluation Programme ('GMEP') was published, a summary of findings can be found at; <https://gmep.wales/resources>.

6. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

LEADER is a form of Community-Led Local Development ('CLLD'). There are 18 Local Action Groups ('LAGs') in Wales covering eligible wards in 21 Local Authority areas.

For information on your Local Action Groups and for copies of the supporting Local Development Strategy for each area please visit the [Wales Rural Network \('WRN'\)](#) pages. You can also find examples of [past LEADER projects](#) such as the collaborative support provided to the [Dyfi Biosphere Partnership](#).

The grants offered through the [Rural Community Development Fund \('RCDF'\)](#) provide investment funding for a wide range of activities to help meet local needs and strengthen communities so that they can grow and thrive. There were three funding windows during 2017. 138 first stage applications were received of which 86 moved to full application stage.

The [Tourism Amenity Investment Support Scheme \('TAIS'\)](#) opened in 2017, delivered by Visit Wales it compliments the other tourism support offered through the Programme. The scheme provides support for small-scale investment to improve signposting of tourism sites, construct and modernise tourism information centres and provide visitor information and guidance. The first funding window opened in May 2017 with 89 initial applications received of which 38 were invited to submit a full application. 26 of these have now been approved with a value of £2.47m.

7. WALES RURAL NETWORK

An essential part of the Programme is the [Wales Rural Network \('WRN'\)](#). The WRN enables networking and the engagement of stakeholders, share information, best practice and experience across Wales, UK and Europe. The Network makes a significant contribution to the Programme by helping to add value to the funding available.

During 2017 the WRN attended numerous events within Wales, the UK and Europe, such as the European seminar on Community Led Local Development ('CLLD') in Hungary and the UK National Rural Network Conference in Belfast, Northern Ireland. They also hosted sharing events such as a Co-operative Forest Planning scheme event and a live periscope event for the Rural Community Development Fund ('RCDF').

The WRN publish a regular [newsletter](#) to stakeholders covering scheme activity along with wider UK and European rural events.

8. Further Information

More information on the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme (WGRC-RDP) 2014-2020 and a list of approved projects can be found at:

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/ruraldevelopment/wales-rural-development-programme-2014-2020/?lang=en>



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