

# Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013

## Executive Summary



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig:  
Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development:  
Europe Investing in Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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## **Introduction**

The Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013 (RDP) is part of a joint Welsh Assembly Government/European Union (EU) strategy to make our country a better place to live and work. The Plan helps us all to maintain, enjoy and benefit from the unique and beautiful Welsh countryside. At the same time, it tackles specific problems such as low wages which affect many people in rural areas.

Looking after the environment and encouraging sustainable economic development are two of the most important goals in the Plan. But creating more highly skilled jobs and supporting local community projects are high priorities too. The Plan is the second RDP for Wales and will build on the success of the 2000-2006 Plan.

The Plan comes with over £795 million in funding over seven years, including £195 million from the EU's European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) - So we have money to make it work, put ideas into practice and see real change for the better in our rural communities.

In line with EU guidance we have set up systems to monitor the Plan and ensure that we learn from and share best practice with other European countries. The Wales Rural Observatory, a consortium between Cardiff and Aberystwyth Universities, will provide independent assistance with the monitoring process.

In addition, the Wales Rural Network is responsible for ensuring the exchange of expertise between everyone involved in the plan. The Network will also help to implement and evaluate rural development policy and coordinate the information flow at local, national and European level.

Separately, the Welsh Assembly Government has started a wide-ranging review of Axis 2 the section of the Plan dealing with conservation. This Axis 2 Review will consider how we may need to adjust the Plan in response to climate change and EU agricultural reform.

### **Everyone stands to gain**

Many people think that rural development applies only to things like farming and forestry. In fact, the Plan applies to everybody in rural areas and to ALL aspects of rural life, not just business and farming. For example, the Plan helps to develop new and existing services and create more training opportunities and jobs.

Crucially, the Plan supports and welcomes ideas from local people who want to take action to make their own community a better place to live. That can involve anything from a community based recycling centre to setting up local child care, crèche and day care facilities.

# 1. Competitiveness, conservation, and quality of life in rural communities

The Plan consists of four main parts, which we call Axes 1, 2, 3 and 4:

- Axis 1 is mainly about increasing competitiveness in the rural economy, especially in farming and forestry. **Budget: £89 million.**
- Axis 2 focuses on conserving our landscape and environment for the benefit of everybody. **Budget: £594 million.**
- Axis 3 also concerns everybody, since it aims to improve everyday life and diversify our rural economy. **Budget: £75 million.**
- Axis 4 is all about helping local people to develop their own communities. **Budget: £32 million.**

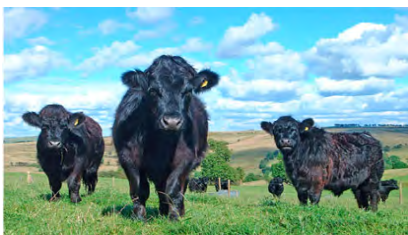
The following pages go into more detail about the four main parts (or Axes) of the Plan. We give examples of some of the changes we are helping to put into practice and explain how they benefit the people of rural Wales. At the end, we provide contact information so that you can find out more about schemes that interest you.

## Axis 1: Making farming, forestry and food processing more competitive

Farming, forestry and food are vitally important to the Welsh economy, but could be more efficient and provide more and better jobs. They could also supply higher value added goods to more markets than they do now. So, through the Plan, we help businesses to improve their performance, find new buyers for their products and diversify into new markets.

Through Axis 1 we encourage and support Welsh agri-business to modernise and innovate so that it becomes more competitive and more efficient. Some of the main themes within this part of the Plan are: more investment to fund modernisation, more training, more joint ventures, improved branding and marketing, knowledge transfer, innovation and sustainability.

Ultimately, we want to see more Welsh agricultural businesses making higher quality produce with up-to-date processes and equipment in efficient and environmentally friendly ways. Helping businesses to modernise will in turn create a more stable economy with better paid and more dependable jobs for people in rural Wales.



Schemes like Farming Connect and the Farm Advisory Service are already making farmers more market-focused and open to change. They provide expertise, training and advisory services to suit individual farmers and are usually either fully funded or subsidised. These schemes help families run their farms more efficiently and safeguard their future.

### **Support for all**

However, our vision of a stronger rural economy does not apply only to farmers and woodland owners. We work with food and drink producers and processors, timber processors and other manufacturers. The Plan is here to help everyone, including small companies and individuals operating as sole traders in these industries and markets.



Many of the schemes in Axis 1 are designed to help businesses make better quality products and raise the skill levels of their staff. As part of this drive, farmers have already applied for support under the Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme (PMG). Separately, rural businesses have applied to the Supply Chain Efficiencies (SCE) scheme for millions of pounds of funding.



One example of how schemes within the Rural Development Plan support rural industries is the Welsh Cider and Perry Producers Project. Here we are working with Welsh producers to establish a valuable Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) recognised brand for Welsh cider.

## **Axis 2: Conserving our landscape and environment**

Looking after our environment so that it will last for generations to come is vital to Wales. Sustainable management benefits the agricultural economy and the community as a whole by improving our quality of life. It creates jobs and underpins our tourism industry. Above all, caring for the environment is vital for our long term future and for our ability to adapt to climate change.

Managing the environment supports 117,000 <sup>1</sup> full time equivalent jobs, or one in six of our workforce. Activities related to the environment are worth around £9 billion a year to Wales. Cultural and historic tourism contributes a lot to our economy too, with over 1.2 million people visiting our historic monuments in 2005 alone.

For all these reasons, conservation is a central theme within the Rural Development Plan and is linked closely to Axes 1, 3, and 4. It covers a range of objectives including improving water quality, reducing pollution, halting the loss of biodiversity and preserving our farmed landscape and forests.



Farmers and others carry out much of this environmental management, such as looking after fragile landscapes and helping to sustain isolated and vulnerable rural communities. We realise that this is often on top of their daily work, so we support their conservation efforts through the following schemes.

Tir Gofal and Tir Cynnal the two main farm schemes mean that 60% of farmed land in Wales is already covered by an agri-environment agreement. We are building on this success to encourage more farmers to sign up, either to the entry level Tir Cynnal scheme or the more comprehensive Tir Gofal scheme. Around 4,500 farms have benefited from the Tir Cynnal scheme so far.

The Tir Mynydd scheme helps farmers in the so-called Less Favoured Areas (LFAs) which account for around 80% of the 1.6 million hectares of agricultural land in Wales. In particular, Tir Mynydd supports livestock production in hilly and mountainous areas so that we avoid land abandonment and rural depopulation.

Thanks to the Organic Farming Scheme, more than 5% of agricultural land in Wales is now farmed organically, up from just 0.3% in 1999. This popular scheme aims to increase organic farmland and help producers meet consumer demand for organic produce.



The RDP funds two grants, Woodland Establishment Grants and the Woodland Improvement Grant Silvicultural/Environmental, under Better Woodlands Wales. These grants provide advice, planning and funding on issues such as tree thinning, better access, fencing, invasive species and marketing forest products.

## **Axis 2 Review**

The Assembly Government is reviewing the whole of Axis 2 because of two significant developments: our understanding of climate change and reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The review will ensure that Axis 2 continues to meet the objectives set out in the Environment Strategy for Wales, Farming for the Future and Woodlands for Wales



The review involves a full public consultation and listening to the views of interested parties including farmers, environmental organisations, the national parks and the wider rural community. It will report to Ministers on the future of land management provision in 2010. At the same time, we will review all activities supported under Axes 1, 3 and 4 to ensure that they fit in with any changes to Axis 2.

Separately, we have carried out a consultation exercise in Wales to gauge response to proposed changes to the CAP generally referred to as the 2008 CAP health check process. These proposals are intended to modernise, simplify and streamline the CAP and remove remaining restrictions on farmers to help them respond to growing demand for food.

### **Axis 3: Improving quality of life and encouraging diversification**

Axis 3 affects everybody living in rural communities, since it covers everything to do with the quality of rural life. It also supports projects and initiatives which diversify our rural economy into non-farming activities. Axis 3 priorities include creating new jobs, laying the foundations for sustainable growth and meeting the specific needs of all people living in rural areas.

Improving quality of life and diversifying our rural economy go hand in hand, so Axis 3 addresses these two objectives together. By simultaneously tackling social exclusion and encouraging new businesses we are laying the foundations for stronger and more prosperous rural communities.



So, on the one hand, Axis 3 tackles broad issues such as young people moving away, lack of investment, deprivation, low incomes and social exclusion. At the same time, it is also broadening the economic base of rural communities by encouraging the creation and development of rural micro-enterprises and the expansion of tourism activities.

Making people's lives better often means building on existing strengths by, for example, developing existing businesses, building the capacity of local groups and structures and conserving and upgrading an area's unique natural and cultural features. But it also means addressing the root causes of social exclusion, such as a lack of training opportunities, basic services or poor physical environments which hold back many small towns and villages.



Key to the success of Axis 3 is local participation. We want local people to work with us through the network of Local Partnerships established around rural Wales by suggesting and working on the projects which are most likely to transform their lives and their communities. For this reason, we only consider projects proposed via the Local Partnerships, which fit in with other local strategies.

### **Sustainability and skills**

We are keen to support activities which strengthen the value and extend the length of the tourism season and to encourage joint service facilities, making better use of existing facilities available to communities.

Sustainable projects which benefit the environment are high on our agenda. These could include new energy production methods and better waste and resource management. In addition to the environmental benefits, sustainable projects which improve the landscape and benefit wildlife are often good tourist attractions too helping to boost the local economy.

We are keen to share and build on successful approaches which have worked before. Training people in rural communities to acquire new skills is important right across the Rural Development Plan for Wales. So Axis 3 supports local training to provide, for example, general life skills, business skills, key trades skills, traditional land skills and training to give people the skills and confidence to organise projects themselves.

This community based training helps people to set up and run local groups and develop or expand community-led initiatives. This aspect of Axis 3 ties in closely with the LEADER element of the Plan under Axis 4.

### **Axis 4: Implementing the LEADER Approach**

Axis 4 of the Rural Development Plan is all about enabling local people to put local ideas and projects into action for the benefit of their community and their environment. Central to Axis 4 is the LEADER approach which enables local people to develop, organise and manage projects themselves and supports them to trial innovative processes and products which can lead to successful new approaches to rural development.



Axis 4 builds on existing community skills and experience and supports new and existing networks. As mentioned above, Axis 3 and Axis 4 are closely linked in many ways. By early 2008, the 18 Local Partnerships across Wales had sent the Assembly Government plans for their areas including some 300 project proposals under Axis 3 and Axis 4. Axis 4 delivery across rural Wales is led by Local Action Groups made up of a balanced mix of people representing local interests. They ensure grass-roots involvement in all Axis 4 projects. Input from the Local Action Groups also

helps us to take account of local needs in the Assembly Government's regional and national strategies.

### **LEADER Approach**

One of the main aims of the LEADER approach is to pilot new grass-roots led initiatives that help to create a more sustainable society, economy and environment. This local approach is important because experience and research has shown that one of the best ways to improve and regenerate communities is to involve local people themselves.

As well as encouraging local people to take part, the key themes in Axis 4 are broadly similar to those throughout the Rural Development Plan. They include improving the rural environment, sustainability rural services, reversing economic and social decline and supporting the creation of more and better paid jobs. All Axis 4 projects must help to achieve the objectives of the other 3 Axes of the Rural Development Plan.

### **Co-operation**

Under Axis 4 support is available to increase co-operation between Welsh Local Action Groups and areas both within Wales and with other parts of the UK or with partners from other European Member States or third countries. Co-operation actions lead to a greater exchange of ideas, dissemination of best practice within LEADER and an increased awareness of the issues facing areas and how joint working can address them.

Joint actions will use the LEADER method to focus on an area of activity which is eligible under Axis 1-3. Joint actions can also be focussed on:

- capacity building,
- transfer of experience of local development through e.g.
- common publications,
- training seminars,
- exchanges of programme management and staff.

### **Vibrant communities**

If you have an idea which might lead to improvements in your rural community then contact your Local Action Group to let them know, they may be able to offer you advice or support.

For examples of LEADER projects funded under the previous programming period through LEADER+ please look at the following link on the Welsh Assembly Government's website:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/ruraldevelopment/ruralprogrammeinfosheetdir/?lang=en>

## **2. Working across the Axes**

Although numbered one to four, each Axis in the Rural Development Plan is important in helping to achieve our objective of improving all aspects of life in rural Wales. To really thrive, people need good facilities, training, services and transport. These basic building blocks are essential for the health of any local community and economy. Similarly, projects which enhance our environment and heritage often have positive ripple effects in surrounding areas.

So, given the contribution that each Axis makes to the success of the Plan as a whole, we encourage cross axis working wherever it makes sense. This means, for instance, that some local authorities have a single combined Axis 3 and Axis 4 Local Partnership. Similarly, Farming Connect is primarily an Axis 1 scheme, but together with the Farm Advisory Service, makes important contributions under Axes 2, 3 and 4 as well.

Cross axis working is a particular feature of Axis 4, since local initiatives supported by the Local Action Groups often impact on projects under the other three Axes. For instance, a group of farmers may set up a project under Axis 4 to fill a local gap in training not covered by Axis 1. Similarly, small scale environmental or recycling projects under Axis 2 may need a kick-start from groups established under Axis 4.

## **3. Getting involved**

We showed that we can make a positive difference to rural communities with the first Rural Development Plan (2000-2006). We are confident that the second Plan will achieve even more. So, if you live in a rural community, think about how your town or village, business or school, club or voluntary organisation could benefit. The Plan is for all of us and we want every rural community to take part and help us make Wales an even better place to live.

## **4. Monitoring**

We monitor how the Rural Development Plan is working through the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC). The Committee consists of representatives from the public sector, farming, business, environmental and land-owning organisations and the voluntary sector. Its roles are to improve programme quality and implementation and to prepare for the mid-term and final evaluations of the Plan.

The Committee meets four times a year and receives quarterly reports on the progress of the plan. It assesses the progress of measures and activities within the Plan against objectives and outcomes. The Committee conducts periodic reviews of the monitoring and evaluation processes at scheme level for Axes 1 and 2 and at project level for Axes 3 and 4.

The Monitoring and Evaluation arrangements work to a set of EU standards known as the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) when measuring schemes and projects within the Plan. The CMEF is a detailed handbook which provides a framework for monitoring and evaluating the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013.

The Welsh Assembly Government will submit an annual progress report on its implementation of the Plan to the European Commission by 30 June each year.

## 5. Contact information

A good starting point for local projects is the Rural Programmes Team at email [ruralprogrammes@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ruralprogrammes@wales.gsi.gov.uk) or on 01686 613353.

### Local Action Groups coordinators:

Anglesey	01248 725700	<a href="mailto:gerallt@mentermon.com">gerallt@mentermon.com</a>
Bridgend	01656 815207	<a href="mailto:delyth.samuel@bridgend.gov.uk">delyth.samuel@bridgend.gov.uk</a>
Caerphilly	01443 864416	<a href="mailto:phillv@caerphilly.gov.uk">phillv@caerphilly.gov.uk</a>
Carmarthenshire	01269 871600	<a href="mailto:deris@mentercwmgwendraeth.org.uk">deris@mentercwmgwendraeth.org.uk</a>
Ceredigion	01545 572254	<a href="mailto:eirlysl@ceredigion.gov.uk">eirlysl@ceredigion.gov.uk</a>
Conwy	01492 574506	<a href="mailto:Rob.Dix@Conwy.gov.uk">Rob.Dix@Conwy.gov.uk</a>
Denbighshire	01824 705802	<a href="mailto:sian.morganjones@cadwynclwyd.co.uk">sian.morganjones@cadwynclwyd.co.uk</a>
Flintshire	01824 705802	<a href="mailto:sian.morganjones@cadwynclwyd.co.uk">sian.morganjones@cadwynclwyd.co.uk</a>
Gwynedd	01286 679611	<a href="mailto:dylanrhysgriffiths@gwynedd.gov.uk">dylanrhysgriffiths@gwynedd.gov.uk</a>
Merthyr Tydfil	01685 725289	<a href="mailto:douglas.reid@merthyr.gov.uk">douglas.reid@merthyr.gov.uk</a>
Monmouthshire	01873 736032	<a href="mailto:cath@adventa.org.uk">cath@adventa.org.uk</a>
Neath Port Talbot	01639 764296	<a href="mailto:a.j.evans1@neath-porttalbot.gov.uk">a.j.evans1@neath-porttalbot.gov.uk</a>
Pembrokeshire	01834 860965	<a href="mailto:joana@planed.org.uk">joana@planed.org.uk</a>
Powys	01982 552224	<a href="mailto:rebeccaw@powys.gov.uk">rebeccaw@powys.gov.uk</a>
Swansea	01792 636858	<a href="mailto:paul.relf@swansea.gov.uk">paul.relf@swansea.gov.uk</a>
Torfaen	01633 648329	<a href="mailto:katie.gates@torfaen.gov.uk">katie.gates@torfaen.gov.uk</a>

Vale of Glamorgan 01446 724333 RRGuy@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Wrexham 01978 298380 allan.forrest@wrexham.gov.uk

**Local Partnership secretariats (where different from Local Action Group contacts):**

Anglesey 01248 752451 dianetjones@anglesey.gov.uk

Carmarthenshire 01267 242356 mrphillips@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Ceredigion 01545 572064 mikes@ceredigion.gov.uk

Denbighshire 01824 708082 mark.dixon@denbighshire.gov.uk

Flintshire 01352 702135 sharon.barlow@flintshire.gov.uk

Monmouthshire 01633 644644 lizthomas@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Neath Port Talbot 01639 686076 h.may@neath-porttalbot.gov.uk

Pembrokeshire 01437 776174 gwyn.evans@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

Powys 01597 826762 rebecca.jeremy@powys.gov.uk

**Tir Gofal farm scheme offices and phone numbers:**

Abergavenny 01873 794050

Aberystwyth 01970 231950

Bangor 01248 694000

Cardiff 02920 922250

Llandeilo 01558 694100

Llandrindod Wells 01597 828308

Mold 01352 918302

Newtown 01686 613380

Pembroke Dock 01646 624660

Penrhyndeudraeth 01766 584200

Swansea 01792 675700

Tir Cynnal, Tir Mynydd and Organic Farming Scheme Divisional Offices:

Caernarfon 01286 674144

Carmarthen 01267 225300

Llandrindod Wells 01597 823777

Farming Connect Service Centre: 08456 000813

Wales Rural Network

ruralnetwork@wales.gsi.gov.uk or on 01970 653934

Further copies of this document and the full Rural Development Plan (RDP) can be obtained from:

The RDP Management Unit  
Welsh Assembly Government  
The Old Primary School  
Machynlleth  
Powys  
SY20 8PE

E-mail: [rdp@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:rdp@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

Website: [www.wales.gov.uk/ruraldevelopment](http://www.wales.gov.uk/ruraldevelopment)  
[www.cymru.gov.uk/datblygugwledig](http://www.cymru.gov.uk/datblygugwledig)

This publication can be made available in different formats on request.

## 6. Glossary

- Axis/Axes - the Rural Development Plan is structured around four EU objectives for rural development, called "Axes".
- Axis 2 Review – Welsh Assembly Government review of Axis 2 of the Plan to take into account climate change and EU agricultural reform.
- Better Woodlands Wales – a grant scheme from Forestry Commission Wales to support good quality woodland management.
- CAP – the European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy.
- CAP Health Check process – proposals to simplify the CAP.
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) - a fund set up by the EU in June 2005 to finance rural development programmes.
- Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) – EU guidance for monitoring and evaluating Rural Development Plans across Europe.
- Environment Strategy for Wales – Welsh Assembly Government environment strategy published in 2006.
- Farm Advisory Service – helps eligible farm businesses meet cross-compliance and environmental regulations.
- Farming Connect – an integrated support, knowledge, expertise, training and advisory service for farmers.
- Farming for the Future – 2001 Welsh Assembly Government strategy to help secure a viable future for farming in Wales.
- LEADER - a community based approach allowing local communities to identify their needs and devise appropriate and sustainable solutions.
- Less Favoured Areas (LFA) - areas which are difficult to farm due to limitations such as climate, location or features of the landscape.
- Local Action Group (LAG) – a cross sector partnerships formed to drive delivery using the LEADER approach.
- Local Partnership - partnerships led by Local Authorities which award contracts for and oversee Axes 3 and 4 projects.
- Organic Farming Scheme - offers payments to farmers to help them convert to organic farming and manage their land in some additional environmentally beneficial ways.
- Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme (PMG) - helps processors and farmers become more competitive, respond to consumer demand and add value to their produce.
- Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) - committee set up by the Welsh Assembly Government to monitor and evaluate the RDP.

- Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) – a system to promote and protect regional food products within the EU. A PDO covers the term used to describe foodstuffs which are produced, processed and prepared in a given geographical area using recognised know-how.
- Rural Development Plan (RDP) - framework for a range of rural development measures and schemes run by the Assembly Government and the EU.
- Supply Chain Efficiencies (SCE) - any process which helps to improve the production, pricing, planning or shipment of products or services from the manufacturer to the consumer.
- Tir Cynnal – a scheme which helps farmers to protect areas and features of environmental importance on their land in return for payment.
- Tir Gofal - an agri-environment scheme which rewards farmers for caring for environmental, historical and cultural features on their land.
- Tir Mynydd – a scheme which supports farmers working in difficult terrain.
- Wales Rural Network – ensures that good practice and ideas are shared within Wales and with other European countries.
- Wales Rural Observatory – a consortium of universities which carries out independent research and analysis on social and economic issues.
- Woodlands for Wales – the Welsh Assembly Government’s Woodland Strategy.
- Woodland Establishment Grants - grants for creating new woodlands.
- Woodland Improvement Grant (Silvicultural/Environmental) - funds capital investment in woodlands to create, enhance and sustain an increase in the quantity and quality of public benefits delivered.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Bilborough S and Hill S (2000) Valuing our Environment: The Economic Impact of the Environment in Wales; Countryside Council for Wales.