

POLAND

Agriculture

- **Policies and programmes to achieve food security and sustainable agriculture**

These strategies and programmes incorporate in the present programming period: National Strategic Plan for 2007-2013, Rural Development Programme for 2007-2013 and the following programmes implemented in the previous programming period and continued in the present one (until 2008 – pursuant to the n+2 principle): Rural Development Plan for 2004-2006 and Sectoral Operational Programme “Restructuring and modernization of food sector and rural development 2004-2006”.

Despite the fact that the objectives of the above mentioned programmes and strategies are not limited only to food safety or sustainable farming, through the implementation of objectives relating to sustainable rural development and improvement of competitiveness of the agricultural sector, contribute to the implementation thereof. Moreover, these programmes incorporate measures referring directly to food safety or sustainable agriculture.

These Measures are:

- Measure 4 of the Rural Development Plan for 2004-2006 “Supporting agri-environmental actions and increasing animal welfare” where two packages are implemented: S01 „Sustainable farming” and S02 „Organic farming”, continued in the current programming period i.e. 2007-2013 under Measure „Agri-environmental programme (agri-environmental payments)” as packages 1 and 2 (sustainable and organic farming respectively);
- Measure 1.1 of the Sectoral Operational Programme “Restructuring and modernization of food sector and rural development 2004-2006”: „Investments in agricultural holdings” (one of the main objectives of which is the improvement of the sanitary and hygiene conditions in production) and RDP 2007-2013 Measure: „Modernisation of agricultural holdings” (where financial support is granted to projects aimed at improving food safety);

Measure 1.5 of the Sectoral Operational Programme “Restructuring and modernization of food sector and rural development 2004-2006”: „Improving the processing and marketing of agricultural products” (one of the main objectives of which is the improvement of the sanitary, hygiene and veterinary conditions in production, improvement of the quality of products and introduction of new and modernisation of old production technologies) and RDP 2007-2013 Measure: “Increasing the added value of basic agricultural and forestry production” (one of the main objectives of which is the improvement of conditions of production in relation to existing or newly introduced standards);

- RDP 2007-2013 Measure “Participation of farmers in food quality schemes” aimed at the improvement of the quality of production and agricultural products intended for human consumption, increase in the level of consumption of high-quality food and support for farmers producing high-quality food.

- **Policies and programmes aimed to enhance agricultural productivity and farmers’ incomes**

These strategies and programmes include in the current programming period: National Strategic Plan for 2007-2013, Rural Development Programme for 2007-2013 and the following programmes implemented in the previous programming period and continued in the present one (until 2008 – pursuant to the n+2 principle): Rural Development Plan for 2004-2006 and Sectoral Operational Programme “Restructuring and modernization of food sector and rural development 2004-2006”.

Despite the fact that the objectives of the abovementioned programmes and strategies are not limited only to increasing agricultural efficiency and income of farmers (since, in order to increase their income, farmers are usually encouraged to diversify their activity towards non-agricultural activity), the above programmes contribute to the achievement of these strategies through the implementation of objectives relating to sustainable rural development and improvement of competitiveness of the agricultural sector, contribute to the implementation thereof.

In the new programming period, within the framework of RDP 2007-2013 all measures under Axis 1, whose aim is to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector, will contribute to increasing agricultural efficiency and income of farmers. The scope of Measures under Axis 1 covers: “Vocational training for persons employed in agriculture and forestry”, “Setting up of young farmers”, “Early retirement”, “Advisory services for farmers and forest owners”, “Modernisation of agricultural holdings”, “Increasing the added value of basic agricultural and forestry production”, “Improvement in and development of infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry”, “Participation of farmers in food quality schemes”, “Information and publicity activities”, “Agricultural producer groups”.

The same effect will come with the implementation of Axis 3 Measure “The quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy”. Under this axis the following measures will be implemented: “Diversification towards non-agricultural activities”, “Establishment and development of micro-enterprises”, “Basic services for the rural economy and population” and “Village renewal and development”

- ***Community-based and indigenous approaches to sustainable food production***

In 2004-2006 the approach based on communities was implemented under Measure 2.7 “Leader+ type measure”, where financial support was granted to:

- under Scheme I – rural and urban-rural gminas, inter-gmina associations and legal persons: foundations, associations, unions of associations or other non-governmental organisations with legal personality;

under Scheme II – Local Action Groups (LAG) identified as local public-private partnerships created under Scheme I, which was launched first. On the grounds of experience gathered during the implementation of the “Leader+ type measure”, the Leader approach was created and implemented as a separate Axis of RDP 2007-2013.

Leader is a partnership bottom-up approach implemented by the Local Action Groups (LAG) and consisting in elaboration of Local Development Strategy (LDS) by the

local rural communities and implementation of the relevant innovative projects integrating available human, natural, cultural, historical and other resources etc., as well as knowledge and skills of the representatives of 3 sectors: public, economic and social. Under Measure 4.1.3 *Implementation of the local development strategies*, projects from Axis 3 may be implemented (*Diversification towards non-agricultural activities, Establishment and development of micro-enterprises, and Village renewal and development*), along with the so-called *small projects*. Financial support for small projects covers e.g. organisation of trainings and other educational projects and workshops for the population of an area covered by a LDS, which will contribute to the improvement of environmental awareness and awareness of new food production technologies. Moreover, under small projects support is planned to be granted for the initiation of creation, development, processing, placing on the market, and improvement of the quality of products and services based on local resources, including natural raw materials and agricultural and forest products, as well as traditional sectors of economy.

- ***Actions to improve water management in agriculture (e.g., more efficient use, improved irrigation); measures to make more effective and efficient use of energy and other essential inputs for sustainable agricultural production***

The issue of activities aiming at improving the management of water resources in agriculture and measures leading to more efficient and effective use of energy was touched upon in some measures implemented under SOP “Restructuring and modernization of food sector and rural development 2004-2006”. Under Measures: 1.1 “Investment in agricultural holdings” and 1.5 „Improving processing and marketing of agricultural products” projects were supported, which lead to modernisation of production processes, introduction of new ones – less energy-consuming production technologies. Under Measure 2.6 “Development and improvement of the infrastructure related to agriculture” projects were co-financed relating to the construction or renovation of network equipment and power supply devices (connections to the existing energy, gas supply and heat network; electric installations, individual devices for producing energy from renewable sources).

Reduction of water consumption in production and services in agriculture is reflected in Measure 2.5 of the SOP “Restructuring and modernization of food sector and rural development 2004-2006” – “Agricultural water resources management”. Under this measure projects are supported in the field of water melioration influencing better use of means of production, stability and yield quality, improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of agro-technical treatment and protection of utilised agricultural area against flood.

In the new programming period the scope of measures having direct impact on the increase water and energy consumption in production and services is increasing. In the years 2007-2013 measures will be implemented, which will contribute to the reduction in energy consumption of production and services. Under Measure “Modernisation of agricultural holdings” projects covering investments in the production and use of energy from renewable resources for the agricultural production purposes will be supported. Over the first period of the Programme implementation, in order to facilitate access to funds by public entities who have so far received no support, the possibility to use the aid is limited as regards beneficiaries of the Measure “Investment in agricultural holdings” of the Sectoral Operational Programme „Restructuring and modernisation of food sector and rural development 2004-2006”. Detailed rules in that regard are specified in the national legislation. Under Measure “Increasing the added value of basic agricultural and forestry production” the production of bioethanol as an agricultural product is supported, while under Measure “Basic services for the rural economy and population” support will be granted also for the implementation of projects involving the production or distribution of energy from renewable resources, in particular wind, water, geothermal energy, solar energy, biogas and biomass. Moreover, under Measure “Establishment and development of micro-enterprises” financial support will be granted for projects involving the creation or development of micro-enterprises operating in the field of energy products from biomass.

Under Measure “Diversification towards non-agricultural activities” financial support will be granted to beneficiaries, who decide to commence or develop the activity in the field of the production of energy products from biomass.

Reduction of water consumption in production and services will be implemented indirectly through the implementation of Scheme II – “Agricultural water resources management” and RDP 2007-2013 Measure “Improvement in and development of infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry”. Aid granted under Scheme II of the Measure covers projects in the field of melioration and regulation of water relations in the soil and facilitating soil cultivation.

- ***Measures to improve and develop infrastructure to enhance distribution to markets***

Agri-food wholesale markets constitute one of the elements of the agricultural products distribution system in Poland. The creation of wholesale markets began in 1996 with the "Programme for the organisation of wholesale markets and commodity exchange to 2000" approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Economy. The undertaken measures were continued within the framework of the „Government programme for the establishment and development of wholesale markets and Warsaw Commodity Exchange – Stage I” from 1999 and the "Government programme for the establishment and development of wholesale markets – Stage II” from 2001. In the establishment of agri-food wholesale markets public funds were used. The programmes were completed in 2004. There are 30 agri-food wholesale markets in Poland, including 13 established within the framework of government programmes. They form an important link in the supply chain for city dwellers. It is estimated that 30% of trade in fruit and vegetables in Poland is taking place through wholesale markets.

The investment plans of agri-food wholesale markets include expansion in infrastructure intended for wholesaling and modernisation of existing facilities. The aim of these measures is to meet the requirements connected with food trading safety, as well as to meet the demands of the market.

- ***Improved national early warning systems for monitoring food supply and demand and household access to food; weather insurance schemes for farmers.***

National strategies of the EU Member States cover horizontal EU policy in the area of food safety and sustainable development within the framework of “EU Food Law”.

In order to provide food safety and carry out efficient food control and surveillance, the Polish government has approved document entitled “*Strategy of Food Safety*” Minister of Health performs the role of co-ordinator of the fulfilment of tasks specified in this strategy.

The main tasks of the “*Strategy of Food Safety*” are the following:

- providing food safety in the whole food chain, from primary production to the final consumer
- ensuring , through a relevant customs control, that food imported from the third countries satisfies the same or equal safety requirements as those which are fulfilled by the food produced in Poland
- harmonisation of national food law with the EU law and its effective implementation
- providing continuous and reliable information to the government and the public on food safety.