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# REGIONAL POLICY PERSPECTIVES ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Rural areas are increasingly in the focus of policy and over the past few years, many countries have taken steps to address rural issues and concerns, developing new strategies, plans or policies.

While all countries implement some form of rural development policy (RDP), there is no common understanding of it. Some countries emphasise the RDP's territorial focus and others its thematic orientation. In recent times, it became increasingly widespread to take a territorial perspective on RDP.

In EU countries, European RDP can play an important and sometimes dominating role. In some countries, the EAFRD is the most important source of explicit RDP funding.

RDP is usually integrated in agricultural policies and often biased towards agricultural themes. At the same time, rural territories are also explicitly or implicitly targeted by policies that are not necessarily labelled as RDP. This includes regional policy, which can be specifically directed at rural areas. Yet, in most countries, RDP is largely separate from regional policy.

Inevitably, there is a risk that boundaries between RDP and regional policy become

fuzzy, resulting in the need to manage their relationship.

Steps to encourage a synchronised relationship between the two policies are usually either part of spatial development or wider territorial policy concerns or derive from EU policy requirement in the context ESI Fund delivery.

They include a number of established approaches, which aim at coordination through governance arrangements, such as commissions, networks or platforms (Austria, France, Switzerland).

Some more recent measures focus instead on the coherence of policy measures with rural policy objectives. Examples include overarching strategies (Poland, Switzerland), rural proofing and strengthening the rural dimension of sectoral policies (Sweden, United Kingdom), rural contracts (France) or advice to potential beneficiaries (Austria, Germany).

Yet, it appears that setting up a system for coordination or coherence between RDP and regional policy requires some form of pressure – be it from outside (e.g. EU requirements) or from inside (e.g. demands from rural stakeholders).



# 1 INTRODUCTION

Rural areas are increasingly in the focus of policy, not least due to recent political results in regions sometimes referred to as “places that don’t matter”.<sup>1</sup> These places are often rural or at least away from the centres of dynamic economic activity. Over the past few years, many countries have taken steps to address rural issues and concerns. These include, for instance:

- the National Strategy for Internal Areas in Italy (2014);
- the Federal Policy for Rural and Mountainous Areas in Switzerland (2015);
- the Master Plan for the Future of Rural Areas in Austria (2017);
- the Bill for Coherent Rural Development Policy in Sweden (2018);
- the Commission on Equivalent Living Conditions in Germany (2018); and
- a "rural agenda" addressing concerns of rural stakeholders currently being developed in France.

Territorial policies have traditionally focused strongly on rural areas. This was done either explicitly in the form of a specific rural development policy (RDP) or more implicitly as part of a territorially broader regional policy. The distinction between RDP and regional policy is partly due to their origins, with the latter having their roots in agricultural policies. This is still visible in separate institutional responsibilities, both at national levels and at EU-level. In most European countries, separate government bodies are in charge of the two policy areas, and this is replicated at the EU level with separate DGs – AGRI and REGIO – responsible for different funding sources and implementation systems.

Yet, what constitutes RDP depends on the individual country context and there is no common understanding of it. Some countries emphasise the RDP's territorial focus and others its thematic orientation. Sometimes, RDP appears simply to be what governments do under this label. Inevitably, there is a risk of boundaries to regional policy becoming fuzzy, resulting in the need to manage the relationship between the two policies.

This note aims to contribute to the debate by:

- discussing what RDP means in different countries and at the EU level;
- presenting approaches of different countries to manage the relationship between RDP and regional policy; and
- synthesising the main messages.



## 2 RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY – AN ELUSIVE CONCEPT

### 2.1 Definition and changing paradigms

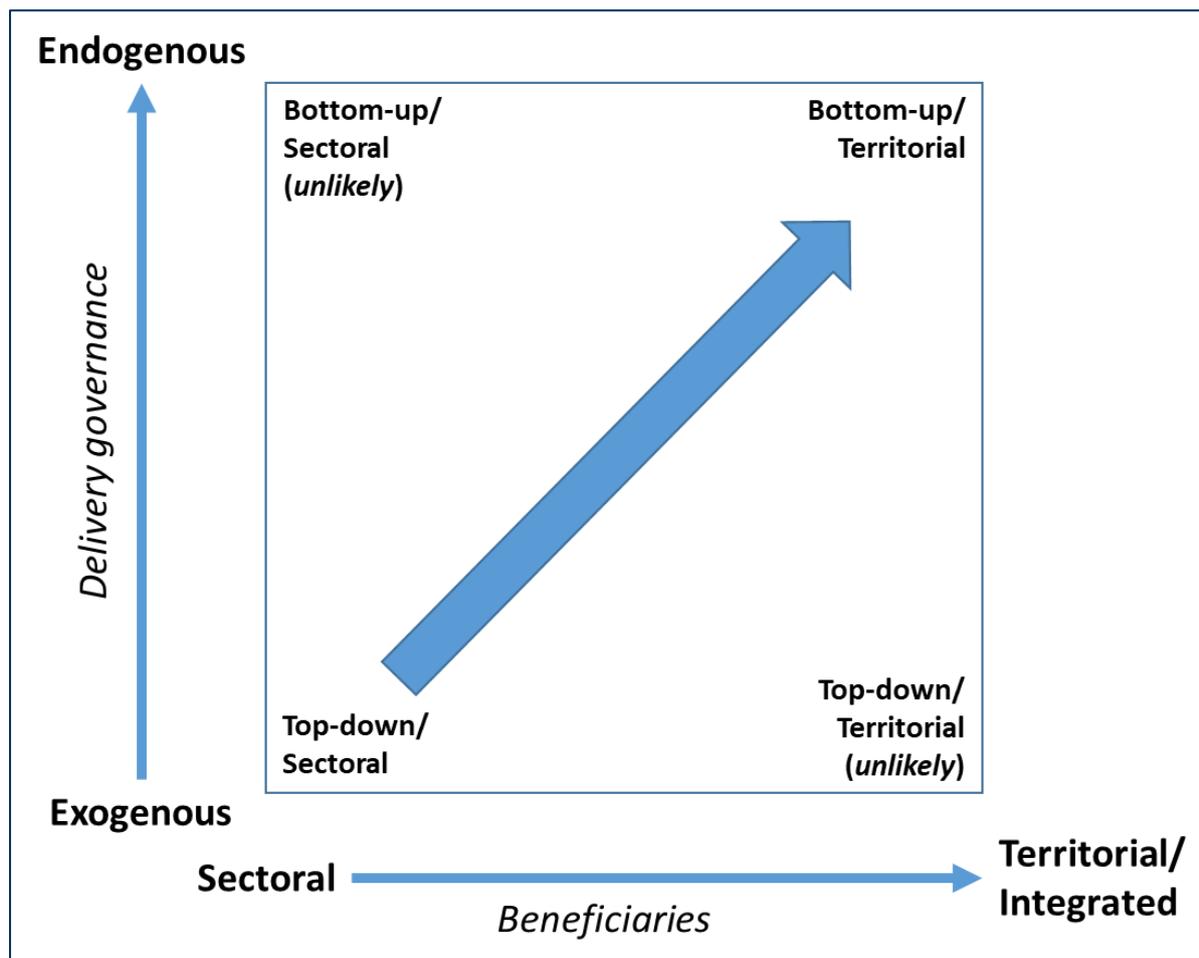
Suitable definitions of RDP are hard to find. Usually, these either focus on developing countries or take an EU perspective, concentrating on EU approaches and tools. A more general attempt puts quality of life and economic well-being at the centre, while emphasising its strong links to agriculture and forestry:

*Rural development is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in rural areas, often relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. Rural development has traditionally centred on the exploitation of land-intensive natural resources such as agriculture and forestry.<sup>2</sup>*

Traditionally, RDP was **defined by its thematic instead of its spatial orientation**. “Rurality” was associated to land-based activities and accordingly, rural development essentially meant supporting these activities.

In recent times, it became **increasingly widespread to take a territorial perspective** on RDP, focussing on the geographical, economic and cultural characteristics of the targeted territories. Rurality brings a series of particular challenges that derive from these characteristics. These are often connected to remoteness and low density, such as “more costly manufacturing inputs, tenuous connections to business networks, absence of agglomeration advantages, poor access to, or increased cost of, services, narrower employment opportunities, poorer choice of entertainment and cultural activities.”<sup>3</sup> In order to respond to these challenges, an integrated and place-based approach is necessary, something that has been labelled “New Rural Paradigm” by the OECD in 2006. At the same time, the governance and delivery of the policy moved from a top-down to a more bottom-up approach, exemplified by the growing role of the EU instrument LEADER and similar domestic endogenous development frameworks. This shift in rural development paradigms is illustrated in Figure 1. It illustrates that the traditional top-down, sectoral (agriculture-based) RDP has been developing into a **territorially defined policy with some bottom-up elements**. The recognition of RDP’s territoriality makes it particularly important to coordinate it with other place-based policies, especially regional policy.<sup>4</sup> One could argue that RDP is progressively developing into a form of regional development policy that is concentrating on rural areas and that has its own thematic orientation.

Figure 1: Shifts in Rural Development Paradigms



Source: based on Copus A and Dax T (2010).<sup>5</sup>

In 2018, the OECD published its policy note on “Rural Policy 3.0” (Table 1).<sup>6</sup> It builds on the New Rural Paradigm and aims to support national governments by offering specific mechanisms for the implementation of effective RDPs. Rural Policy 3.0 increases the emphasis on the integrated aspect, recommending a wide spectrum of tools and the involvement of multiple policy domains.





**Table 1: Characteristics of different RDP paradigms**

	Old Paradigm	New Rural Paradigm (2006)	Rural Policy 3.0 (2018)
<b>Objectives</b>	Equalisation	Competitiveness	Well-being considering multiple dimensions of: i) the economy, ii) society and iii) the environment
<b>Policy focus</b>	Support for a single dominant resource sector	Support for multiple sectors based on their competitiveness	Low-density economies differentiated by type of rural area
<b>Tools</b>	Subsidies for firms	Investments in qualified firms and communities	Integrated rural development approach – spectrum of support to public sector, firms and third sector
<b>Key actors and stakeholders</b>	Farm organisations and national governments	All levels of government and all relevant departments plus local stakeholders	Involvement of: i) public sector – multi-level governance, ii) private sector – for-profit firms and social enterprise, and iii) third sector – non-governmental organisations and civil society
<b>Policy approach</b>	Uniformly applied top down policy	Bottom-up policy, local strategies	Integrated approach with multiple policy domains

Source: OECD (2018) Rural 3.0. A framework for rural development, <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/regional-policy/Rural-3.0-Policy-Note.pdf>

However, in spite of continuous revisions to concepts of RDP, the sectoral, agriculturally based focus persists in many countries and at EU level. European RDP is (still) heavily influenced by agriculture, defining its three main objectives as improving the competitiveness of agriculture, achieving sustainable management of natural resources and climate action and balanced territorial development of rural areas.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.2 Rural development policy in selected European countries

Across a range of selected European countries<sup>8</sup>, some form of RDP is being implemented in all cases, although their domestic version is often limited. In Poland and Portugal, for instance, RDP is heavily dominated by European funding, i.e. EAFRD. Other countries have a **distinct and separate RDP, usually under the responsibility of agricultural ministries**, RDPs are often agriculture-based, but address wider regional development issues, too, albeit to varying degrees (e.g. Austria, Finland, Germany, Switzerland).

In Switzerland, the **Projects for regional development** (*Projekte zur Regionalen Entwicklung, PRE*)<sup>9</sup> are managed by the Federal Office for Agriculture and delivered jointly with the cantons.

PRE provide annual investments of about €5 million, but are part of wider measures for the improvement of rural structures, worth c. €140 million a year. PRE aim to a) support the creation of value added in agriculture and other sectors of key importance in rural and mountainous areas, such as tourism, manufacturing and forestry, and b) strengthen intersectoral cooperation along the agricultural supply chain. These projects need to be bottom-up, place-based and collaborative – there is no support to individual firms or farms – and they need to be integrative, i.e. all aspects of sustainable development have to be considered. Put into the overall context, PRE have limited relevance. In some case, they are well integrated with other, regional policy projects, but they mostly remain marginal.

In Germany, the **Joint Task for the Improvement of Agricultural Structures and Coastal Protection** (*Gemeinschaftsaufgabe Agrarstruktur und Küstenschutz, GAK*) is the main national support instrument for the "vitality of rural areas", funded jointly by the federal level and the *Länder*. In its current funding period 2019-22 alone, it provides €1.38 billion of funding to rural and coastal areas. However, only €236 million of these are explicit RDP, covering a variety of topics ranging from local strategy development to broadband infrastructure and regional management structures.<sup>10</sup>

Looking at different paradigms explained earlier, different RDPs can be located in different points along the continuums of the diagram shown in **Error! Reference source not found..** They can display a mix of the characteristics shown in Table 1, but are still dominated by the old paradigm in many cases. It can be argued that the two main characteristics of RDP are its **a) territorial orientation on rural areas** and its **b) thematic orientation on rural themes**. These are not mutually exclusive and, in practice, all RDPs are likely to show elements of both.

The more traditional approach puts the **thematic orientation** of RDP at the centre. In many countries, rural development is strongly associated with themes related to economic activities that are intrinsically linked to agricultural activities (e.g. Italy, Netherlands, Poland). These links are often historical and rooted in the governance of RDP. Although farming only contributes very little to the rural economy directly, it can be argued that many businesses in rural areas can only exist because of the farming base. Increasingly, the **territorial orientation** of RDP is emphasised. RDPs are development policies operating in rural areas, which, however, are defined differently in different countries.

In some cases, specific types of predominantly **rural territories are implicitly targeted in policies that are not necessarily labelled as RDP:**

- **Peripheral areas (Poland):** In Poland, there is a dedicated Strategy for the Socio-economic Development of Eastern Poland (SPRW). It is a domestic strategy, but it depends on funding from the specific ERDF OP for the Development of Eastern Poland.
- **Internal areas (Italy):** The National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI) from 2014 is a place-based, multi-sectoral strategy. Italy's inner areas are rural areas characterised by their distance from the main centres for services such as education, health and mobility. NSIA aims at improving essential services and fostering local development in 72 pilot



areas. Investments of c. €1 billion until 2020 will be supported by domestic funds as well as by all four available ESI Funds.

- **Islands (Scotland):** The National Islands Plan will be addressing the challenges faced by islands and their communities. It builds on positive experiences with measures implemented already in Scottish islands. A consultation about the plan closed in July 2019 and its launch is expected by the end of the year.

In some cases, **regional policy also specifically targets rural areas** (Norway, Switzerland). However, the themes (e.g. SME support, innovation) and delivery tools (e.g. business loans) are usually associated more with regional policy. Examples include the New Regional Policy in Switzerland, which explicitly targets rural (and mountainous) areas. In its forthcoming funding phase 2020-23, the New Regional Policy will include a specific “Programme for Mountainous Areas”. In Norway, the approach to regional policy is perceived to be a form of RDP, in spite of the existence of an explicit, agriculture-based RDP managed by the Ministry of Agriculture. This is the result of the territorial characteristics of the country. With exception of the Oslo area and a number of medium-sized towns, Norway is widely rural.

As the governance of RDP tends to be dominated by ministries or departments of agriculture or related bodies, a **pragmatic definition of RDP is to look at institutional responsibilities**. RDP is then understood as those policies with a territorial dimension or regional development impact that are governed by government bodies in charge of agricultural themes. However, in spite of quite distinct policy “silos” in many countries, the **boundaries between RDP and regional policy remain fuzzy in practice**, particularly for potential beneficiaries or “end-users”.

A further difficulty in trying to capture RDP, is the **role of subnational levels**. Particularly in federal countries (Austria, Germany, Switzerland), large parts of what can be considered RDP is carried out at the subnational levels, i.e. *Länder* and cantons. Also in the Netherlands, main actors of for RDP are not located at the national level. Instead, the provincial governments are responsible and their activities are overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.

## 2.3 The EU dimension of rural development policy

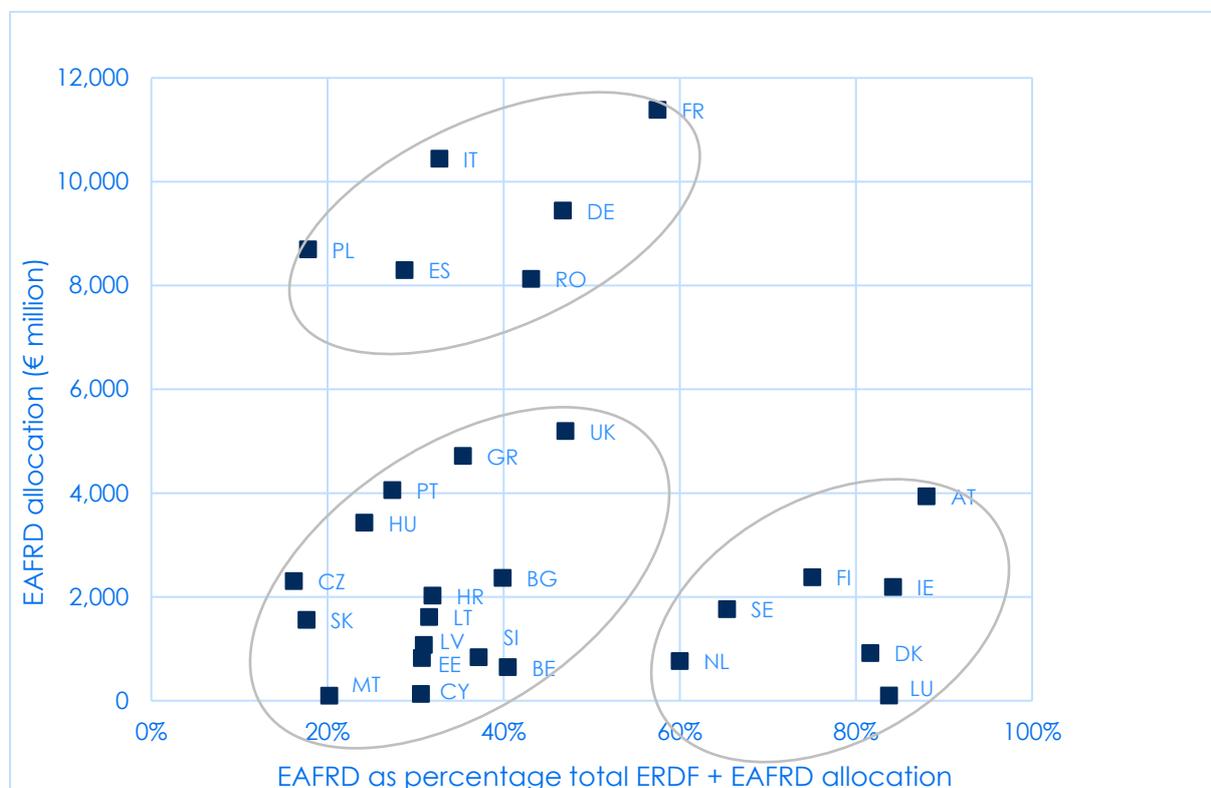
Demarcation between RDP and regional policy at EU level appears to be clear: RDP is the Second Pillar of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy, co-financed by one of the five ESI Funds, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). It is designed to support rural areas of the EU and meet a wide range of economic, environmental and societal challenges.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, Cohesion policy, via the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and – to a lesser extent – the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund, addresses many issues similar to those dealt with by the EAFRD. In theory, the different ESI Funds should work in synergy, using their diversity to respond to diverse needs, address different themes and make use of complementary intervention forms. In practice, there can be overlaps and unclear responsibilities, often exacerbated by silo mentalities in Member States, mirroring those at the level of the European Commission.

In some countries, the EAFRD is the most important source of explicit RDP funding and it has therefore a comparatively high profile. Although absolute EAFRD allocations are very high in a number of countries, e.g. over €11 billion in France and over €10 billion in Italy, their relative importance in relation to EU regional policy funding – ERDF – varies significantly. In Austria, for instance, the relation of EAFRD to ERDF is over 7 to 1, while, at the other end of the scale, there is between 4 and 5 times more ERDF funding than EAFRD funding available in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland.<sup>12</sup> Figure 2 puts the size of EAFRD in relation to its relative weight compared to ERDF. It shows **three clusters of countries**:

- countries with high EAFRD allocation, but medium to low relative weight (for example, Germany, France, Italy, Poland);
- countries with low EAFRD allocation and low relative weight (Portugal, United Kingdom); and
- countries with low EAFRD allocation, but relatively high weight (Austria, Finland, Netherlands, Sweden).

The countries in the last group are comparatively small and are highly developed. Their high GDP per capita is partly a reason for their low ERDF allocation. However, the relative importance of EAFRD funding means that RDP has a high profile in some of these countries, at least in its EU-funded version.

**Figure 2: EAFRD funding versus relative importance of EAFRD compared to ERDF (in € million)**



Source: EPRC based on European Commission data.





The 2014-20 programme period introduced a number of crucial changes that gave reason for cautious optimism in terms of coherence and synergies. EU RDP and EU Cohesion Policy have been brought closer together at the European level, with the introduction of a Common Provisions Regulation and the Partnership Agreement, providing some degree of regulatory and strategic coherence. Partnership Agreements are national strategies covering not only Cohesion Policy programmes (ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund), but – for the first time – also rural development (EAFRD) and maritime and fisheries policies (EMFF). At the same, on the ground, the well-established tool to deliver funding in a bottom-up way via local development initiatives, LEADER, was re-coined Community-led Local Development (CLLD). CLLD was opened up to all areas of the EU and included all ESI Funds and 727 CLLD strategies (out of 3312) combined with EAFRD with ERDF. While strategic integration via Partnership Agreements was obligatory, the use of ESI Funds other than EAFRD and EMFF for CLLD remained optional. Yet, it was arguably rather successful, being taken up in more than half of the EU Member States.<sup>13</sup>

### 3 MANAGING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RDP AND REGIONAL POLICY

There are different ways of encouraging a synchronised approach between actors involved in RDP and other territorial development policies, particularly regional policy. Several countries apply rather traditional forms of managing the relationship between different policies (e.g. Austria, France, Switzerland) by coordinating through governance arrangements. Other countries use more indirect approaches, focusing on the coherence of policy measures with rural policy objectives (e.g. France, Sweden, United Kingdom).

#### 3.1 Coordination through governance arrangements

Only in a limited number of cases, responsibility for regional and rural development is located **within the same ministry** (e.g. Austria, France, Sweden). In Sweden, it is the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation that oversees both policies. In France, the Ministry for Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Sub-National Authorities (*Ministère de la Cohésion des territoires et des Relations avec les collectivités territoriales*) is responsible for a number of different policies, including rural development. Finally, in Austria, regional policy tasks as well as the responsibility for rural development were integrated into the newly created Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism in January 2018, which should facilitate policy coherence.

In most countries, the **governance of regional policy and RDP is strictly separate**, with different ministries overseeing the different policy areas. This creates the need to manage the relation of the policies and there are **coordination bodies or platforms at national level** in a number of countries. However, as, for instance, in Austria, these are set up as spatial development or planning platforms, covering a wide range of policies with territorial impacts, but not necessarily focussing on RDP.



In Austria, the **Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning** (*Österreichische Raumordnungskonferenz, ÖROK*) oversees spatial development at the national level. It is the coordinating body between the domestic and the European level for ESI Funds and acts as managing authority for the Austrian ERDF programme. In the context of ÖROK's role in overseeing the Austrian Spatial Development Concept, it also addresses rural issues in the form of so-called implementation partnerships, e.g. through the partnerships "Strategies for regions with population decline" or "Strengthening regional levels". In these, rural actors at different levels, including the agricultural ministry, are regularly actively involved.

In Switzerland, there is a **Federal Network for Coherent Spatial Development** (*Bundesnetzwerk kohärente Raumentwicklung Stadt-Land, BN KoRE*), which coordinates policies in rural areas. It consists of the federal main bodies for regional policy (SECO), spatial planning, environmental policy and RDP – the Federal Office for Agriculture. Coordination is also a dedicated pillar in the Swiss regional policy, including with RDP. In addition, the Conference for Spatial Planning (*Raumordnungskonferenz, ROK*) serves as a forum for inter-ministerial coordination. Looking at the specific RDP instrument of Projects for Regional Development, coordination mainly takes place at the level of cantons. This is mostly case-based, although some have formal arrangements (e.g. Graubünden, Valais).

Also in France, in addition to the already overarching responsibility of a single ministry, there is a body aiming to ensure coherence between different territorial policies. The **General Commission for Territorial Equality** (*Commissariat Général à l'Égalité des Territoires, CGET*) is in charge of implementing major funding programmes and coordinating place-based contracts co-implemented with sub-regional authorities, This includes supporting the development and implementation of rurality contracts (see below). Based on a law from July 2019, CGET will soon be integrated into a new National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (*Agence nationale de la cohésion des territoires, ANCT*), which will establish coordination mechanisms with a series of agencies responsible for territorial policies.

In many other countries, coordination remains weak and sporadic. In EU countries, coordination between RDP and regional policy takes mainly place **in the context of ESI Fund requirements**. For the 2014-20 programme period, the European Commission introduced the need for each EU Member State to prepare a Partnership Agreement for all ESI Funds. This national-level document covers regional policy as well RDP programmes, which meant that the responsible bodies for the different policy areas had to coordinate their activities. The guidance on the contents of the Partnership Agreement even requires each country to describe their plans to ensure coordination during the implementation of the programmes.<sup>14</sup> Coordination was not only required in the planning stages, but actors need to get together regularly to prepare joint reports about the progress with programme implementation.

To what extent these external requirements also **triggered increased coordination of domestic policies** is difficult to assess. However, there are some indications that it brought actors closer together and helped establishing frameworks such as the Austrian implementation





partnerships. Although there is no causal relationship, one could argue that this facilitated an easier exchange of experiences.

## 3.2 Coherence: strategies, proofing, contracts and advice

In traditional ways of managing the relationship between RDP and regional policy, policy-makers interact with each other to exchange information, delimitate their fields of activity and avoid overlaps. Instead of these forms of coordination, a number of countries have developed more indirect approaches that aim at **ensuring coherence of existing policies without creating new platforms or bodies**. This can be done, for instance, via overarching strategies (Poland, Switzerland), rural proofing (England, Finland, Norway) and strengthening the rural dimension of sectoral policies (Sweden), contracts at the level of rural regions (France) or advice to potential beneficiaries (e.g. Austria, Germany).

### 3.2.1 Strategies

In Switzerland, the **Federal Policy for Rural and Mountainous Areas** from 2015 is an overarching strategy, which is intended to feed into various place-based sectoral policies. It was produced after increasing concerns about the future role of regions outside the main agglomerations, voiced mainly by representatives of mountainous and rural areas. It does not operate its own instruments, but rather has the character of a strategy.

In Poland, the **Strategy for Responsible Development (SRD)** from 2017 covers a number of territorially based strategies, including the new National Strategy for Regional Development (NSRD) and the Polish Rural Development Strategy. The SRD sets out a number of strategic projects, one of which is the Pact for rural areas. The Pact does not only support the implementation of the Rural Development Strategy, but also identifies other projects and activities aimed at the development of rural areas and the agri-food sector. It ensures that rural development is a prominent part of the new, integrated strategic development framework being put in place in Poland.

### 3.2.2 Rural Proofing

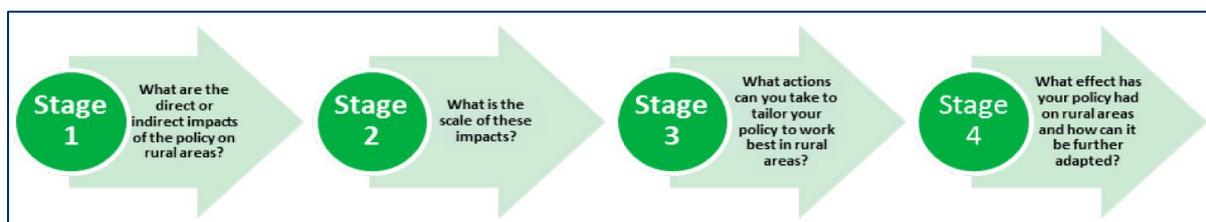
A system of **Rural Proofing** has been implemented in a number of countries since the early 2000s (Finland, Norway, United Kingdom). In the United Kingdom, this was started in England in 2000, then subsequently picked up within the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, who set up similar systems. Rural proofing is an attempt to ensure that all policy areas take into account rural issues. All government departments should:

- consider whether their policy is likely to have a different impact in rural areas, because of particular rural circumstances or needs;
- make a proper assessment of those impacts, if these are likely to be significant; and

- adjust the policy, where necessary, with solutions to meet rural needs and circumstances.<sup>15</sup>

**Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.** illustrates the stages of rural proofing in England. In recent years, the concept has received increased attention by the EU and there are plans to implement an impact assessment tool that allows measuring the policy impact on rural areas.<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 3: Rural proofing in England**



Source: DEFRA (2017) *Practical guidance to assess impacts of policies on rural areas*, March 2017.<sup>17</sup>

In Sweden, a similar approach is based on a **Bill for Coherent Rural Development Policy** that came into force in 2018. Until recently, rural development issues have not been sufficiently represented in the regional growth policy and rural policy has consisted of a “bundle of different measures”. The new approach of ensuring coherence in RDP involves a range of sectors and policy areas with the aim of strengthening their rural dimension. However, there appears to be some degree of overlap between rural and regional growth policy. This is especially visible at the level of the county councils, which coordinate regional growth work for the entire territory (rural and urban). While funding decisions for regional growth policy are largely in the hands of the regions, rural policy has more diverse approaches, such as the largely centralised national rural policy and EU rural policy, which includes bottom-up initiatives such as CLLD.

### 3.2.3 Contracts

Some forms of ensuring coherence are **implemented at the regional level**. In France, **Rurality Contracts** (*Contrats de ruralité*) were developed in 2018 and aim to provide a single framework for different forms of support. They are strategic territorial strategies for economic and social development and are built on the model of the established City Contracts. Rurality contracts are signed between cooperation structures of rural municipalities (*Pôle d'équilibre territorial et rural*, PETR) and the central government. They aim to coordinate the implementation of funding sources and policy measures. 485 rurality contracts are in place and in 2018 these contracts received €446 million in government funding for investment and capacity building.<sup>18</sup>

### 3.2.4 Advice

Finally, coherence can be ensured **on the ground, for the potential beneficiary of support**. Different forms of policy coordination at higher levels of policy delivery are of little practical relevance to “end-users” in rural areas. Potential beneficiaries are usually not interested in the



source of the support, but they still have to engage with separate policy frameworks and delivery structures. In response to this, policy-makers have been producing guidance about available support for rural areas. A recent example comes from Germany, where the national rural network published a guidance document in 2018. This comprehensive handbook is targeted at potential beneficiaries and presents 48 federal domestic schemes that are relevant for rural actors, including EU co-funded measures. For each of schemes, the guidance lists eligibility requirements and supported activities, and provides a comparative overview of the various funding options. It covers RDP as well as regional policy and other, related policy areas.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, many countries attempt to provide one-stop-shops for end-users in the form of regional development agencies, e.g. regional management offices in Austria. In many cases, these cover both RDP and regional policy, although there are circumstances in which these agencies are linked to either rural or regional development policy domains and their ability to cover different policy areas is limited.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

There is no common definition of RDP. In different countries, RDP can cover a variety of policies, some of which are defined thematically and others more territorially. In most countries, RDP is largely separate from regional policy. RDP is usually integrated in agricultural policies and – in EU countries – often strongly driven by EU RDP. In most cases, the RDP is strongly biased towards agricultural themes.

Their territorial dimension intrinsically links rural development and regional development. Yet, managing the relationship between the two is difficult. Formal arrangements of countries can mostly be found either in the context of EU policies or as part of wider spatial development arrangements. As alternatives, countries turned to a variety of forms to ensure coherence of policies with rural relevance – including RDP: overarching strategies, rural proofing of sectoral policies, rural contracts or advice to potential funding beneficiaries on the ground. Yet, it appears that setting up a system for coordination or coherence between RDP and regional policy requires some form of pressure – be it from outside (e.g. EU requirements) or from inside (e.g. demands from rural stakeholders).

## Notes

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- <sup>7</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/themes/rural-development/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/rural-development/)
- <sup>8</sup> For countries covered, see list of EoRPA Consortium Members.
- <sup>9</sup> <https://www.blw.admin.ch/blw/de/home/instrumente/laendliche-entwicklung-und-strukturverbesserungen/laendliche-entwicklung/projekte-zur-regionalen-entwicklung.html>
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- <sup>12</sup> It is important to note that the extent to which the EAFRD is used for actual rural development measures rather than different forms of agricultural support varies by country or even EAFRD programme (which can be regional rather than national).
- <sup>13</sup> Kah (2019) Implementing Cohesion Policy Funds through multi-Fund CLLD, LDnet article, July 2019, <https://ldnet.eu/implementing-cohesion-policy-funds-through-multi-fund-clld/>
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## EoRPA RESEARCH

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