Support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) 2007-2013

2004/0161(CNS) - 15/12/2006 - Implementing legislative act

ACT: Commission Regulation 1974/2006/EC laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation 1698/2005/EC on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

CONTENT: the purpose of this Commission Regulation (an implementing act), is to lay down detailed rules for the application of Regulation 1698/2005/EC as regards:

i) principles and general rules for rural development support;

ii) specific and common provisions for rural development measures; and

iii) eligibility and administrative provisions (other than provisions on controls).

The main provisions of the Regulation, in summary, are as follows:

- to provide rules concerning updates for national strategy plans, in terms of: content, procedures and timing;

- to set the deadlines for the submission of rural development programme and their subsequent approval by the Commission, in order to allow a speedy and efficient implementation of the new programming framework;

- to lay down detailed rules regarding the presentation of rural development programmes and their revisions;

- to lay down common rules for the structure and content of these programmes;

- to allow the Commission to make amendments involving significant changes in programmes, shifts in EAFRD funding among axes within a programme; and changes to the EAFRD co-financing rates;

- to allow for the electronic transfer of national programming documents;

- to specify the conditions for supporting young farmers and to set out the detailed rules regarding young farmers' business plans;

- to set conditions for early retirement support in cases where a holding is transferred by several transferors or by a tenant framer. Thus, any non-commercial activity of the transferor will not be eligible for support under CAP;

- to specify the resources required from the authorities for providing farm advisory services;

- to establish the methodology for management, relief and advisory services;

- to fix the date by which investments for the modernisation of agricultural holdings can be made, in order to allow for compliance with new standards;

- to define plans concerning investments in improving the economic value of forests;

- to fix a date for complying with new standards concerning investment in forestry products that increase their economic value;

- to define the eligible costs for the development of new products, process and technologies;

- to specify support for farmers who participate in a food quality scheme;

- to set detailed requirements regarding support for the promotion of quality products;

- to specify support for semi-subsistence farming as well as to specify the content of the business plans;

- to make provisions that prevent any overlap between support to young farmers, on the one hand, and the Natura 2000 payments, on the other;

- to set minimum requirements concerning support for agri-environment and animal welfare;

- to detail operations eligible for support under the conservation of genetic resources in agriculture programme;

- to define non-productive investments targeting the sustainable uses of agricultural land;

- to set a common definition of forests and wooded areas – in line with the definition used by the UN's FOA;

- to set out detailed conditions for supporting the forestation of agricultural land;

- to define maximum densities of forest plantations;

- to establish a common approach concerning the definition of preventative actions against forest fires;

- to provide that forestation, which is harmful to biodiversity or that causes other environmental damage, should be avoided;

- to set a comprehensive definition of the member of the farm household;

- to lay down detailed conditions regarding support for public-private partnerships;

- to establish clear and transparent selection procedures for local action groups to ensure that pertinent and high quality development strategies at local level are selected for support;

- to limit the costs of local action groups in order to allow for as much implementation of local strategies as possible;

- to establish a co-ordinated procedure between the Commission and the Member States in order to facilitate the selection of transnational co-operation projects;

- to establish detailed options and deadlines regarding national rural networks under the rural development programmes that cover regions eligible under the Convergence Objective;

- to take the necessary steps ensuring that Member States put in place adequate provision to ensure that all rural development measures are both verifiable and controllable;

- to lay down detailed rules on interest rate subsidies for loans and certain forms of financial engineering, where applicable;

- to lay down conditions applicable to managing authorities relating to standard costs and contributions in kind as eligible expenditures – in order to ensure efficient and homogenous management;

- to establish a set of common rules defining “eligible” expenditure;

- to establish common rules for cases where the national authorities decide to pay advances to those benefiting from investment support;

- to lay down specific provisions for certain co-financed measures by the EAFRD and additional national financing to ensure compliance with State Aid rules;

- to specify the content plan of publicity and information concerning the rural development activities that benefit from EAFRD support;

- to publish, annually, the list of beneficiaries; the names of the operations and the amount of public funding, that is allocated to operations; and

- to establish a secure electronic information system for the exchange of data between the Member States and the Commission.

REPEALED: Regulation 817/2004/EC, although it will continue to apply to measures approved before 1 January 2007.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 24 December 2006. It shall apply to Community support concerning the programming period staring on 1 January 2007.