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## Action 6: Use of Rural Development Programme instruments

### What is the content?

The European Commission strongly recommends Member States to make full use within their rural development programmes of the instruments available to support organic farming, for example by developing national or regional action plans focussing on:

- stimulating the demand side by using the new quality schemes;
- actions in order to preserve the benefits for the environment and nature protection on the long term;
- developing incentives to organic farmers to convert the whole instead of part of the farm;
- organic farmers having the same possibilities for receiving investment support as non-organic farmers;
- developing incentives to producers to facilitate the distribution and marketing by integrating the production chain by (contractual) arrangements between the actors;
- support to extension services;
- training and education for all operators in organic farming, covering production, processing and marketing;
- Targeting organic farming as the preferred management option in environmentally sensitive areas (without restricting organic farming to these areas).

### What has been done? What was achieved?

In 2006, the Commission carried out several awareness raising actions with members states, particularly in the context of SCOF meetings.

The Community strategic guidelines for Rural Development programmes make specific reference to organic farming, in particular 3.2. (iv) "consolidating the contribution of organic farming with respect to environment and animal welfare" and the reference to the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming in the context of cross-axis synergy.

Several national/regional Rural Development programmes are now in the process of negotiation with the European Commission. Most national and regional programmes (at least a hundred so far) contain specific measures for supporting organic farming, although with varying levels of intensity and financial resource. The main measures used to support organic farming relate to quality and agri-environmental policy. The first programmes were approved in June 2007 and most of the remainder were approved by end 2007.

First amendments were made in 2008 (e.g. Bavaria has increased payments for organic under the environmental measure).

## Comment

The role of RDPs in supporting national action plans is particularly relevant. Some Member States have started in 2006 to make new national organic action plans (Estonia) or to revise their action plans again (The Netherlands, Sweden, Andalusia, Belgium): Denmark has included an organic farming chapter in RDP.

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Should the publication of corrigenda becomes necessary, there will be posted at the project website [www.organic-revision.org](http://www.organic-revision.org).

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