



Fonds européen agricole pour le développement rural :
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PETR
du Pays du Bocage



«Pays du Bocage» LEADER Local Action Group

An Invitation to International Cooperation

International cooperation - LAG Pays du Bocage 2014-2020

Location

Pays du Bocage is a LEADER Local Action Group situated in the south-west of the Region of Normandy and west of the Orne Local Council (*Département*). The administration of the LAG is supported by the public organisation PETR Pays du Bocage.

Our LAG has extensive experience in local development initiatives, as well as in the management of previous LEADER programmes.

The Pays du Bocage's candidature for the 2014-2020 programme was selected with a fund of **2.5 million €** attributed for projects focused mainly on innovation.



The organisation and characteristics of our region

- ❑ Comprising **94 communes**, the **LAG Pays du Bocage** has approximately **93,800 inhabitants and measures 1,651 km² (~637.46 mi²)**. These communes are gathered together into 5 Local Authorities named *Communautés de Communes*. The region is mainly rural with a population density of 56 inhabitants per km² (0,39 mi²).
- ❑ The Pays du Bocage is characterised by its geographical position, which also has an impact on its economic development. The **absence of a good transport infrastructure** keeps it afar from the main economic and administrative centres of Normandy (only 2 train stations and highway not on the territory but near to its boundaries).
- ❑ The **three main commercial and industrial centres** are the cities of Flers (~16,000 inhabitants), La Ferté-Macé (~6,000) and Domfront (~4,000). There are other smaller, mostly rural, centres. This geographical structure makes local services to be prioritised.

Economy & Employment

- ❑ The LAG territory has **a strong manufacturing tradition**, principally textile, due to the presence of water resources. The crisis in the textile industry has brought about the conversion to mechanical industry.
- ❑ Despite these changes, the manufacturing sector employs 25% of the workforce. The main categories are the **automobile industry**, **precision engineering** and **metal processing**, and **food-processing**. The local economy is characterised by the presence of both international groups and a large number of small and medium-sized enterprises.
- ❑ The tourism industry employs only a small number of people. However, **transport and logistics**, **the service industry**, **banking** and **insurance are growth sectors** and, within the last 10 years, have created a certain number of new jobs.

Economy & Employment

- ❑ **Agriculture is important for the region, and has direct connections with the local food-processing industries.** It is also responsible for shaping the local landscape, with the presence of hedgerows giving structure and identity to the area. Food processing, an industry originally linked to local farm production, is very diverse. Today, it regroups numerous activities and employs 17% of the population. The region's main production is dairy, meat, cider and *poiré* (pear cider). There are 3 main employers who employ 60% of the workforce in this sector, another 8 companies have a staff of more than 100 persons.
- ❑ Compared to other territories in Normandy, the Pays du Bocage has managed to retain many of its **small village shops and local services**, and it will continue to encourage their presence on the territory.
- ❑ The Pays du Bocage is responsible for more than half of the Orne Département's production (55% of the GDP) and the city of Flers and its surroundings is the **3rd largest industrial center** of the former Region of lower Normandy after Caen et Cherbourg.

Our Natural and Cultural Heritage

- ❑ If the term **bocage** is used to describe the territory of our LAG, it does not resume the variety of its landscapes. The south-west of Domfront is characterised by pear orchards, to the north there is an area known as “Little Switzerland” due to its hilly landscape and rivers flowing through its deep valleys, and in the south there is the Andaine forest and the Natural Park “Maine-Normandie”.
- ❑ The landscape of the Pays du Bocage is characterised by **hedgerows**. In addition to giving the area its identity, hedges are also an essential part of the preservation of the countryside and its renewable energy source: wood. Some parts of the countryside are protected and are part of the Natura 2000 european network.
- ❑ **Historical sites** are also worthy to mention: the medieval town of Domfront, the “Notre Dame sur l’Eau” church, the abbey at Lonlay, the Bonvouloir tower, Flers castle, the villas in the thermal town of Bagnoles de l’Orne, which date from the *Belle Époque*, as well as many privately-owned manor houses and castles.



An example of the local hedgerow.



La Roche d'Oëtre, and its human profile at Saint-Philibert-sur-Orne.



The tour du Bonvouloir at Juvigny-sous-Andaine.



Norman houses in Domfront.

Our Strategy for 2014-2020

The leading theme for this period is **"Innovation"**. Under this global heading we find the following fields of innovation:

- ❖ **Social.**
- ❖ **Technological.**
- ❖ **Territorial.**
- ❖ **Environment and Energy.**

The mains development axes for this programming period are:

- ❖ **Economy and Employment.**
- ❖ **Public services and quality of life.**
- ❖ **Environment and Energy.**
- ❖ **Cooperation.**

Our Strategy for 2014-2020

For this period, the project have to fill one of the following **14 objectives**:

- ☐ Facilitate the installation of new enterprises;
- ☐ Support social economy.
- ☐ Develop local commerce.
- ☐ Enhance the territory through tourism.
- ☐ Support agro-food sector and short food supply chains.
- ☐ Diversify the sport's offer.
- ☐ Develop leisure activities.
- ☐ Facilitate the access to culture.
- ☐ Encourage the fulfilment of young people.
- ☐ Promote sustainable and environment friendly living conditions.
- ☐ Improve mobility.
- ☐ Develop sustainable and renewable energies related to local resources.
- ☐ Preserve water and biodiversity.
- ☐ Promote international cooperation.

International cooperation

The Pays du Bocage has decided to dedicate part of its LEADER programme to the implementation of international cooperation projects.

Below are the main areas of cooperation that the Pays du Bocage wishes to develop:

➤ **Support business and the creation of enterprises**

The creation of new businesses and the continuation of the existing one are themes of great importance to the LAG du Pays du Bocage. The objectives for the cooperation projects are:

- Engendering the spirit of business creation.
- Mentoring entrepreneurs.
- Optimising access to available funding.
- Offering support to businesses wishing to diversify and commercialise new products.

➤ Villages renewal and revitalization

Is essential in order to retain small village's shops and local services and to attract new residents in addition to maintain rural heritage. The case of the medieval town of Domfront is a good example of this need.

The town is of great architectural interest, but it continues to lose services, businesses and inhabitants. It is necessary to invest in the renovation of the commercial and residential property in order to offer accommodation more adapted to modern living, to create tourist accommodation and to revitalise commercial businesses.

➤ Public services, especially culture

The Pays du Bocage has chosen to address the question of local services as the major part of its economic development policy since it is essential to retain the existing population and to attract new inhabitants.

We would like to focus in particular on the cultural offer: creation of new cultural facilities and events etc. and coordination of cultural projects.

The development of partnerships between cultural structures may be one possible action.

International cooperation - LAG Pays du Bocage 2014-2020



➤ **Biodiversity and development of local resources**

In terms of biodiversity, also the landscape of the Pays du Bocage, with its fields and hedgerows, plays a major role in preventing soil erosion and protecting water resources. Possible areas of cooperation could include projects such as :

- Diversify renewable energies offer and search for alternative energy sources.
- Support the implementation of innovative energy-producing systems that respect the environment.
- Set up energy information centres in order to raise awareness about environmental and energy issues.

➤ **Development of local products**

To promote local food and drink and to develop short supply chains.



Contacts

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