

**LEADER+ PROGRAMME MONITORING COMMITTEE:
Monday 1st March 2004, Scottish Executive, Meridian Court, Glasgow**

Present

Jim Millard (Convenor)	Scottish Executive
Helen Betts-Brown	SCVO
Frank Burns	South Lanarkshire LAG
Tony Fitzpatrick	Dumfries & Galloway Council
John Grieve	UK Leader+ Network
Bryan McGrath	Scottish Borders LAG
Richard Robinson	Scottish Natural Heritage
Melvyn Waumsley	Highlands & Islands Enterprise

In attendance

Judith Dunbar	Scottish Executive
Michael McDermott	Scottish Executive
Joanne Roberts	Scottish Executive
Brian Wither	Scottish Executive

Apologies

Neil Ferguson	Scottish Enterprise
Frank Gaskell	Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Joyce Simpson	Cairngorm LAG
Jane Thomas	Northern Isles LAG
Tanja Viljanen	European Commission
Gill Wylie	Scottish Executive

1. Welcome and Introduction

1.1 The Convenor opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the 4th Leader+ (Scotland) PMC meeting.

2. Apologies

2.1 Apologies were received from Neil Ferguson, Joyce Simpson, Jane Thomas, Tanja Viljanen and Gill Wylie.

3. Minute of last meeting – 24 November 2003

3.1 The minute was agreed.

4. Matters arising

4.1 There were no matters arising on this occasion.

5. Programme Complement

5.1 Brian Wither advised the committee that the Commission had accepted the changes to the Programme Complement. The EC database has now been updated and it is expected that that the Commission will formally accept the Programme Complement in the near future.

6 N+2 Update

6.1 The committee was presented with the latest financial update. It was agreed that monthly updates should be provided from this point on and that consideration should also be given to include spend as a percentage of commitments in these figures. It is generally felt that although groups are making good progress towards targets a lot of progress still needs to be made in the run up to October 2004 as groups are still a long way from meeting these targets. It is important that the groups remain focused and aware of the importance of spend and committing funds.

6.2 The committee discussed reappportioning funds and the option to use funds not committed by poorer performing groups and put these to better use by the better performers. It was however agreed that not enough information was available at this stage to make firm decisions and as agreed at previous meeting the committee will consider this at the next meeting.

6.3 In working towards the 2004 N+2 targets the chair advised the committee that it is important to keep in mind exchange rates and the strengthening euro against the pound. He also suggested that groups may wish to consider over-committing but stressed that groups should be cautious when adopting this approach. It was generally felt that some level of over-commitment is required in the successful management of European Programmes. However Jim advised that this approach should only be used if assurances can be given that this will encourage spend. It was noted that it may also be necessary to revalue the amount allocated to administration.

6.4 Concerns were also raised about the integrity of programme as there is a strong feeling that too much focus is being placed on local programmes and not enough focus is placed on co-operation and networking. Jim stressed the point that strong commitments have been made to Action 2 type activity.

Action: Scottish Executive to provide monthly expenditure reports to PMC members.

7 Forward Look (Action Plan)

7.1 The committee reviewed the action plan produced following the mid-term evaluation of the programme. The following recommendations were made;

- Dates should be placed against actions taken
- Reference numbers should be allocated to each task
- Targets should be clearly identified
- Each action should be allocated to the responsible organisation and this should be clearly shown in the plan.

7.2 The committee sought clarification on the recommendations relating to training as it is felt that the level of training identified is not required.

Action: Scottish Executive to liaise with the Commission to determine whether it is necessary to convene a review meeting to formally review plan.

8 Technical Assistance request from SNH

8.1 Richard Robinson presented the committee with the Scottish Natural Heritage technical assistance proposal. Technical Assistance is being sought to assist local action groups in the delivery of natural heritage related rural development. Richard defined the need and the demand for funding and the committee agreed that approval should be granted.

8.2 In summary the technical assistance sought is £4,750. This will be matched by SNH at a rate of 50%

9 UK Leader+ Network Update

9.1 John Grieve provided the committee with an update of the work of the UK Leader+ Network.

- Chester on 4th-5th March (Directors/ LAG members Conference)
- Balloter 27th-29th April (National Event)
- Northern Ireland June 2004

10 Dates of the next meeting

10.1 It was agreed that the next meeting of the PMC would be held on 13 May 2004. The location of this meeting is still to be confirmed

Action: The Scottish Executive to advise committee members of location.

**SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE
April 2004**