

LEADER + (SCOTLAND)
PROGRAMME MONITORING COMMITTEE
Wednesday 17 May 2006, Grand Hotel, Lerwick

Present

Brian Wither (Convener)	Scottish Executive
Frank Burns	South Lanarkshire LAG
Bryan McGrath	Scottish Borders LAG
Iain Matheson	Scottish Executive
Richard Robinson	Scottish Natural Heritage
Joyce Simpson	Cairngorm LAG
Jane Thomas	Northern Isles LAG
Melvyn Waumsley (for Frank Gaskell)	Highlands & Islands Enterprise

In attendance

John Grieve	UK Leader+ Network
Neil Bain	European Commission
Lynsey Morgan	Scottish Executive

Apologies

Neil Ferguson	Scottish Enterprise
Tony Fitzpatrick	Dumfries and Galloway LAG
Frank Gaskell	Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Jim Millard	Scottish Executive
David Stewart	SCVO

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Convener opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the Grand Hotel. The Convener welcomed Iain Matheson and informed members that he replaces Sheila Scobie as SEERAD representative on the Leader+ PMC.

1.2 The Convenor thanked John and Susan Grieve, Lynsey Morgan and The Northern Isles LAG for their support in organising the PMC, PMC/LAG and coordinators meeting in Shetland.

1.2 The Convener noted apologies from David Stewart, Tony Fitzpatrick, Jim Millard, Neil Ferguson and Frank Gaskell, but welcomed Melvyn Waumsley.

2. Minutes of last meeting

2.1 The minute was agreed.

3. Matters arising

3.1 (3.2) Jane Thomas sought clarification about the PMC agreement not to write to LAGs thanking them for their contribution in meeting the N+2 target for 2004 and 2005. The Convener confirmed that the PMC agreed instead to include confirmation that N+2 had been reached in letter to LAGs regarding the review of allocations.

3.2 (6) The Convener confirmed that the MTEU had been submitted to the Commission by the deadline.

3.3 (9.2) John Grieve informed members that proposals to support the Scottish Rural Communities Network had been met with an indifferent response from LAGs. He informed the SRNC of the outcome of discussions but is unsure of any further progress.

3.4 (10) John Grieve thanked Jane Thomas for her support in obtaining residual LEADER II funds to support the joint PMC/LAG meeting in Shetland.

4. N+2 update

4.1 A paper was tabled summarising LAG performance against N+2 up to 31 March 2006.

4.2 The Convener informed the meeting that progress on N+2 had been strong and the indications are that the target will be met before the September deadline. The PMC agreed that all LAGs should be reminded that their total allocation must be spent by the end of the Programme, as detailed in the recently issued letter outlining the timetable for Programme closure.

4.3 The Convener clarified the key deadlines for commitment, expenditure and the submission of claims:

31 December 2006 - all funds committed;
31 December 2007 - all projects completed;
30 June 2008 - final date for **defrayed expenditure**; and
31 July 2008 - final claim and report to be with the Scottish Executive

4.4 The Convener confirmed that ETLLD will continue to manage and close the current Programme and that there will be no crossover with SEERAD who will develop and manage the new Programme.

5. Financial update

5.1 A paper was tabled detailing financial progress up to 31 March 2006.

5.2 Lynsey Morgan gave an overview of financial progress to 31 March 2006. The paper tabled showed that LAGs increased their expenditure through the last 2 quarters of 2005 and made significant progress on the group and cumulative N+2 targets for 2006.

5.3 Lynsey Morgan confirmed that Lomond and Rural Stirling have informally accepted the offer of additional Action 1 funds and that the Scottish Executive are awaiting formal written acceptance.

5.4 The Convener confirmed that LAGs can agree to fund new projects after December 2006 if projects are ready to start immediately and complete project expenditure by December 2007.

5.5 Members expressed concern about the potential impact on the closure of the Programme in cases where the co-ordinator post ends before the close of the Programme. The Convener informed members that a number of LAGs had requested virement of funds from their allocation for administration to allow them to fund further projects. These requests were only granted where LAGs provided assurances that provisions have been made for continued financial monitoring and the closure of the Programme.

5.6 The PMC agreed to write to LAGs outlining the importance of retaining expertise (ideally the co-ordinator posts) after 2006, requesting details of the provisions in place for the closure of the Programme and supporting LAG involvement in developing business plans for the LEADER element of the Rural Development Regulation post 2006.

Action point - Jim Millard to write to LAG Chairs and Lead Partners on behalf of the PMC.

6. Mid Term Evaluation Update – Response

6.1 The Convener outlined the response to the MTEU recommendations and sought comments from PMC members.

6.2 The PMC agreed that future meetings should be held more regularly and involve more discussion around Programme outcomes and results to enable them to more accurately measure progress.

Action Point – Email comments to Lynsey Morgan by Friday 26 May 2006.

Action point - Lynsey Morgan to prepare paper around outcomes and results for next PMC

7. Annual Implementation Report

7.1 A draft of the AIR was sent to members on 9 May 2006. The Convener asked that members consider the draft and make further comments by 26 May 2006.

7.2 Members discussed the socio-economic analysis included in the draft. The Convener confirmed that this section was taken from the Mid Term Evaluation Update. It was agreed that a additional qualification was needed to reflect the impact of out migration on the labour market figures.

Action Point – PMC to email comments to Lynsey Morgan by Friday 26 May 2006.

Action point – Lynsey Morgan to circulate revised version week beginning 29 May 2006 for approval by written procedure.

8. UK Network

8.1 John Grieve informed members that he had been involved in a number of pieces of work, including pulling together information for Best Practice publications and working with LAGs around preparing for the new Programme.

8.2 He noted that there has been a consistently strong representation from Scottish LAGs at UK Network events.

8.3 Previous events:

Edinburgh – Seminar - Needs of young people's employment and youth enterprise in rural areas

The event was well attended and very positive feedback has been received from participants.

Llandudno – Conference – Leader+ Programme outputs – 29 – 31 March 2006

Very positive feedback has been received but there was a limited involvement from Scottish LAGs.

8.4 Forthcoming events:

Northern Ireland – National event – October 2006

Nairn – National event – November 2006

Progress has been made in the planning of the national event to be held in Nairn later this year.

9 Leader post 2006 – update

9.1 Iain Matheson updated the PMC on progress in the development of Leader post 2006. The programme of stakeholder events have been useful in enabling SEERAD to identify a number of possible delivery models. He assured members that no decisions on the structure of the Programme had been made.

9.2 Jane Thomas asked if decisions had been made about the level of resources that will be allocated to Leader under the new Programme. Iain confirmed that SEERAD intend to allocate a full time manager as well as additional support staff.

9.2 Iain Matheson informed the meeting that the SRDP consultation ends on 29 June 2006. The PMC agreed to meet in June to develop a group response to the consultation.

9.3 The PMC discussed at length the issue of the retention of capacity during the transition period to the next Programme. The Committee note the potential problems that could arise as a result of the lack of Managing Authority continuity from ETLLD to SEERAD. It was agreed that a clear commitment must be given to new LAGs to ensure that

they receive the support and training necessary to enable them to adapt to the Leader method and approach.

9.4 The PMC agreed that a workshop should be arranged to consider their response to the current SRDP. John Grieve agreed to facilitate the workshop and work with Frank Burns and Bryan McGrath to prepare appropriate questions for consideration.

9.5 It was also agreed to bring forward the October meeting to September to further consider the position 2006, the meeting should be held in Stornoway with a joint PMC/LAG meeting and David Middleton and Ingrid Clayden invited to outline their aspirations for the SRDP and to discuss options for LEADER.

Action Point – John Grieve, Frank Burns and Bryan McGrath to produce series of questions and discussion points for workshop.

Following the meeting the workshop was confirmed for Thursday 22 June 2006 in Glasgow.

10 AOCB

10.1 It was agreed to approve the revised SPD changes which sought to vire €336,000 from the 2006 Action 3 allocation to Action 1 and €170,314 from the Action 2 to Action 1.

10.2 Bryan McGrath expressed his thanks to the Scottish Executive, LEADER+ Network and Northern Isles LAG for arranging the event in Shetland, allowing members to see one of Scotland's most rural and peripheral areas.

10.3 The PMC thanked Brian Wither for his involvement and work on LEADER+ and wished him well in his new post.

Action point: Scottish Executive to submit revised SPD Financial table to the Commission for approval.

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