



December 2009

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> regeneration > sustainability > innovation > commitment



Welcome to the Highlands and Islands Partnership Programme

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... prosperous, inclusive and self-sustaining communities, where the unique cultures, traditions and environments are enhanced ...

Programme Monitoring Committee

At its recent meeting in Nairn on 09 December, the Monitoring Committee recommended the approval of a range of applications with a total grant request of over £16.5 m. Details of projects approved will be finalised in the near future with an announcement from the Minister in due course.

This is fantastic news for the respective Programmes increasing levels of commitment substantially and hopefully resulting in an increase in the rate of expenditure throughout 2010. Well done to all concerned but a gentle reminder to ensure that you keep as close to your implementation schedule as possible.

On a different note, the Committee was informed that over £70m remains to be allocated in support of projects. In percentage terms the rate of commitment is slightly lower than at the equivalent stage in the previous programme, however the committee does see this as an opportunity to look again at the need to focus on strategic investments possibly with more in the

way of commissioning, and with some tweaks to extend the scope of the Operational Programmes.

Consideration will start in the early part of the New Year with the intention of providing the Monitoring Committee with a comprehensive set of proposals at its June meeting.

N+2

The news on N+2 is not great. A shortfall against our 2009 target is predicted under both funds. Our colleagues in Lowlands and Uplands Scotland (LUPS) Programme have achieved their N+2 target thanks to substantial commitment from Scottish Enterprise to Financial Engineering Schemes, but elsewhere in Europe, many Programmes are experiencing a situation similar to our own.

Current advice is to continue making claims on your existing schedule. The Commission may bring forward arrangements to alleviate the situation, but we will not know until early in the New Year.

Tourism

A “heads-up” for those operating in the tourism field. Amendments to the ERDF Operational Programme have been proposed which will help clarify the demarcation between the Scottish Rural Development Programme and the Mainstream Programme which may allow some leeway to support one or two key strategic tourism infrastructure projects. Guidance will be drawn up in due course that will help define eligibility. It should be made clear that this is not an open call for tourism investment but it will provide opportunities to support, for example, investments supporting “World Heritage” sites. More of this in due course.

Festive Season

On behalf of all your colleagues both within HIPP and the Scottish Government, can I take this opportunity to wish you all the best for Christmas and a happy New Year. HIPP offices will shut on Thursday, 24 December 2009 and re-open on Tuesday, 05 January 2010.

