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Welcome to the Highlands and Islands Partnership Programme

October 2011 €bulletin >>>

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

Welcome to the October €bulletin

Pressure continues to build to achieve our N+2 targets with valid claims and prompt responses to Desk Checks playing an essential part in reaching the necessary levels of expenditure. Our colleagues in The Scottish Government have recently completed an internal re-organisation and this has allowed the deployment of additional staff in support of the ESF Programme, in particular, to assist us in our efforts to verify the expenditure that has been identified in recent claims.

In addition, there is a significant push to increase the levels of commitment under ESF, not only through the bidding Round but by increasing the “average” grant rate to 65%. This will not affect approvals but will allow a higher rate of drawdown to be made by The Scottish Government. A Written Procedure is currently underway to effect this amendment.

Our ability to achieve N+2 under ERDF and ESF is down to you. It would be brilliant if this can be achieved. As always your support will be greatly appreciated in ensuring that claims are submitted and in facilitation of the undertaking of Desk Checks,

As we go to press, we have the following shortfall in the ESF target of **£3,741,532** (at a 60% average programme grant rate) and **£2,539,220** (at 65%) of grant. The current ERDF shortfall is **£1,710,129.64** of grant.

While we remain positive that all our targets will be achieved, your help in this is critical. As indicated on a number of previous occasions, if you foresee any difficulties in meeting your projected claims, please contact us as soon as possible.

Programme Amendments

The Scottish Government is finalising amendments that have been made to the Programmes by the Programme Monitoring Committee. It is anticipated that by early December the Commission will have approved the various changes and the consequent adjustments to the financial tables. We will keep applicants informed by future bulletins.

ERDF N+2 Update

The proformas indicate that, should the claims be submitted and desk checks cleared, we should meet the ERDF target in November. We are dependent on these claims coming in so, again, please inform the IAB of any difficulties you have or, indeed, any additional expenditure you may be able to bring forward.

Commission Proposals for the Future of Structural Funds (2014-2020)

The European Commission published on 6 October its legislative proposals for the future of Cohesion Policy -

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/proposals_2014_2020_en.cfm

The proposals – in the form of draft regulations – very much reflect the key themes which have been trailed by DG Regio, and include:

- A greater focus on prioritisation of activity and associated alignment with the Europe 2020 Strategy;
- Three categories of region: more developed, transition and less developed regions, replacing Competitiveness and Convergence as we currently have;

A commitment to move from 'grants to loans' and to further develop the use of financial instruments.

These proposals will now be discussed by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament, with a view to adoption by the end of 2012, to allow for the start of a new generation of cohesion policy programmes in 2014.

We will continue to provide updates when we receive them.



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