



March 2009  
**€bulletin**

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



## Welcome

Welcome to the March edition of **€bulletin**. It's been a busy period with another Round of ERDF and ESF awards, a PMC Meeting and the launch of our new website. And we're looking forward to Round 4 and project surgeries.

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## High Profile for Round 3 Announcements

First Minister Alex Salmond announced the successful ERDF projects at the Convention for the Highlands and Islands on Monday, 23 March 2009 in Arran. 16 projects were approved with 2 Community Planning Partnership Plans for Orkney Isles and Shetland Isles. Projects span a range of sectors including renewable energy, heritage, training facilities, transport and business facilities.

On Friday 20 March, Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Education and LifeLong Learning, announced the ESF approvals at the Shirlie Project in Inverness. 33 projects were approved alongside the 2 CPP plans which included ESF projects.

Many projects were provided with 3 years of funding to enable a more strategic approach and allow applicants the chance to be able to respond to the needs of clients more effectively. In addition, there is a notable number of projects focused on support for the unemployed recognising the need to provide such assistance during the current difficult economic climate.

A list of the approved projects is available under our project approvals tab **on the new website**.

### **Programme Monitoring Committee Meeting 18th February 2009**

The PMC met recently and discussed a number of issues relating to programme delivery. These included:

- Strategic Overview of the Programmes including the European Economic Recovery Plan and how the Highlands and Islands Programmes could respond to the current economic situation;
- Advisory Group recommendations on Round 3 projects;
- Commitment and expenditure figures including N+2 targets;
- New Fast tracking arrangements.

A useful discussion took place on the **current economic situation** and ways in which the programme can respond. Two Round 3 project approvals will focus on supporting businesses at this difficult time – Highland Business Growth Fund and the Harris Tweed Investment Fund.

The Committee stressed the importance of reacting quickly to project proposals outwith the application rounds if these were strategic and time critical. As a result, **fast-tracking arrangements** were agreed. The full criteria will be posted on the website as soon as possible. In the interim, any applicant that thinks their project would qualify should get in touch with HIPP for further clarification.

**N+2 targets** (expenditure) remain a challenge, especially for the ERDF Programme. Whilst it is appreciated that many applicants are still migrating Progress Report and Claims (PRCs) onto Eurosys there are indications that expenditure is lagging behind. All efforts should be made by applicants with approved projects to expend timeously and migrate all remaining PRCs onto the system as soon as possible. There is a requirement on applicants to submit regular quarterly PRCs and there is no penalty for early spend!

### **Round 4 Timetable**

As detailed in our Winter 2008 edition of FundMatters, Round 4 will take place between the end of June (for Stage 1 submissions) and late November/early December (for decisions on Stage 2 submissions).

We will publish the precise dates on the website during early April. We will be holding **Project Surgeries** across the area during May to assist applicants with any guidance and advice. These will offer individual sessions with Programme staff to discuss potential applications. Details of the dates will be posted on our website soon and applicants will be asked to make appointments as soon as possible.

### **New HIPP Website**

We are very pleased to announce that the **HIPP website** has been revamped and now provides easy access to information on both the ERDF and ESF Highlands and Islands Scotland 2007-2013 Programmes.

We hope it will be well used and that it provides the right kind of information on a range of topics for partners. The site will be regularly updated and we hope you will provide us with feedback on it and any areas you feel you would like more information on.

## Staff Changes

HIPP is delighted to announce the appointment of Jamie Dunsmore to the post of Programme Manager (ERDF/ESF). Jamie has been working over the past few years with Highland Birchwoods as a Programme Manager and will take up the post on the 6th April 2009. Jamie will be responsible for the management of challenge fund ERDF and ESF projects.

We are also pleased to announce that Scott MacIver will be joining us again as an ESF Programme Assistant to cover for Catherine MacLennan's forthcoming maternity leave. We wish Catherine well. We also welcome back Fiona Loynd from maternity leave.



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