



June 2009
€bull€tin

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



Welcome to the June €bull€tin

We provide an update on Programme Monitoring Committee discussions on 03 June 2009 in Fort William. The meeting was held just ahead of the Mountain Bike World Cup 2009 in Fort William, the return of an event which epitomises the successful work undertaken by the ERDF supported Outdoor Capital of the UK project. **Our Round 4 deadline for Stage 1 applications is Friday, 26 June 2009** and we would encourage all eligible projects to submit by 17:00 hours on this date.

Programme Monitoring Committee

Four key issues which may affect future funding arrangements were discussed by the Programme Monitoring Committee at its meeting in Fort William on 03 June 2009. These comprise:

- strategic transport infrastructure;
- energy efficiency measures;
- tourism infrastructure; and

- revenue generation in community-led projects.

Nothing has been finalised as yet and further discussions with Commission colleagues are imminent. Please keep an eye on the website.

The Committee also considered how Commission initiatives JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) and JEREMIE (Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises) might be deployed in the Highlands and Islands. These matters will be progressed by colleagues in the Scottish Government so more news in later bulletins.

N+2 was also discussed and members, whilst content that progress is at last being made, urged colleagues to ensure projects are implemented on the timescales approved.

Overall significant progress has been made over the last few months and hopefully the next few weeks will see various matters firmed up allowing us to inform you of any proposed programme amendments.

Round 4 Project Surgeries

With Stage 1 applications due in for the 26 June 2009, the IAB has been hosting project surgeries throughout the programme area. These informal surgeries have proved to be very popular, with over 55 project ideas coming forward and requiring extra appointments to be made available, even into the final weeks.

The main purpose of the project surgeries is for applicants to get initial feedback on ideas, to ask questions about the programme and for the IAB to get more information on the types of projects that might come into Round 4 and give guidance on basic eligibility and potential fit within the Programmes. There was a good representation of both ERDF and ESF proposals and, although there is limited information on project values, we are optimistic that Round 4 will demonstrate a good uptake of available funding.

Applicant Guidance Update

The Scottish Government envisages reissuing the National Rules and the Notes for Applicants, which will contain guidance on completion of the Progress Report and Claim forms, over the summer and in time for applicants working on their Stage 2 submissions for the end of August. Please use the HIPP website to keep up to date with any new guidance.

Monitoring and Control

The Scottish Government is close to finalising arrangements for the monitoring and control of projects. While the final details remain to be agreed with the European Commission, plans are well in hand for the proposed combination of desk checks and monitoring visits. They are designed to take account of:

- experience of audit in previous programmes;

- ensure robust record keeping through a clear audit trail; and
- ensure due diligence with regard to eligibility of activities and expenditure; and
- be reasonable in terms of the administrative burden on project sponsors.

Desk checks are expected to require applicants to provide evidence to the IAB to support 20% of expenditure claimed based on a random selection of entries in the supporting transaction lists. Payments will still be processed on receipt of a valid progress report and claim form. However, payment of any subsequent claim will be dependent on satisfactory completion of the desk check for the preceding claim.

Monitoring visits (Article 60b) will be made to all ERDF projects and all ESF applicants by a team comprising representatives of the Scottish Government and HIPP.

Economic Recovery Programme

The Scottish Government has published an updated version of its Economic Recovery Programme.

The update to the Economic Recovery Programme builds on the many actions already underway and focuses on three key areas:

- jobs and communities;
- education and skills; and
- innovation and industries of the future.

We are pleased to attach the link here.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/275465/0082606.pdf>

Scottish Rural Development Programme Update

The Scottish Government has unveiled a package of new measures to support agriculture and the rural economy. Speaking in the Scottish Parliament, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs Richard Lochhead announced:

- £15 million over two years to support hill farmers through changes to the Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (LFASS);
- The appointment of Brian Pack to lead a review of the Single Farm Payment (SFP) scheme to ensure it is delivering support where it is needed;
- Increase in payments for slurry schemes and further support for greener farming; and
- Additional support for new entrants and community facilities.

Mr Lochhead also announced that there would be some further operational improvements to the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP)'s Rural Priorities including greater simplification of the online application process. Mr Lochhead explained that "The detailed, wide-reaching package I am announcing today will set the tone for how we support Scottish agriculture in the short term and looks forward to the sort of changes we will need to make in the longer term with big

changes in the Common Agricultural Policy likely after 2013. This should be seen as a real landmark in delivering the best possible support for rural Scotland and forms a significant part of Scotland's economic recovery.”

The full news release is available through:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2009/06/10120837>



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