

Client

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Project

Review of Leader Methodology in Northern Ireland

Division

Appendices FINAL – August 2013

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1 CONSULTEES

1.1 Consultees – DARD and other rural stakeholders

Meetings and telephone consultations were undertaken with DARD and other rural stakeholders – identified in the table below.

Table 1: Consultees

Stakeholder	Role	Organisation
Strategic Stakeholders		
Conor Heaney	Special Advisor	DARD
Gerry Lavery	Senior Finance Director	DARD
David Small	Deputy Secretary, Service Delivery Group	DARD
Keith Morrison	Director of Food, Farm & Rural Policy	DARD
Pauline Keegan	Director for Rural Development Division	DARD
Gareth Evans	Head of Rural Development Division North & Axis 3 Manager	DARD
Vince McKeivitt	Head of Rural Development Division South & Axis 3 Programme Management	DARD
Gerard O'Neill	Deputy Programme Manager for the ARC and SWARD clusters (Axis 3)	DARD
David Barr	Head of Corporate Services, Rural Development Division	DARD
Elizabeth Steele	Programme Compliance Unit, Rural Development Division	DARD
Kevin Murphy	Head of European Services Branch	DARD
Pat McMenamin	European Services Branch, Rural Development Division	DARD
Lorraine Lynas	Head of Rural Development Programme Management Branch	DARD
Steven Millar	Axis 1	DARD
Michael McClean	Axis 1	DARD
Gerard Rainey	Axis 1	DARD

Stakeholder	Role	Organisation
Review of LEADER Steering Group Members		
Paul Carr	European Programmes	DETI
Henry McArdle	Joint Secretariat	DSD
Martin Tyrrell	Head of North South Policy and Programmes Unit	DFP
Patricia Devlin	LAG Social Partner	SOAR
Rural Network NI		
Teresa Canavan	Network Team	Rural Network NI (Also: Deputy Chief Executive of RDC and Member of NIRDP Monitoring Committee)
Eamonn McMullan	Project Officer	Rural Network NI
NIRDP Monitoring Committee¹/ Rural Development Stakeholders		
Clarke Black	Chief Executive Officer	Ulster Farmer's Union (UFU) Member of NIRDP Monitoring Committee
Michael Hughes	Chief Executive Officer	Rural Community Network (RCN) Member of NIRDP Monitoring Committee
Majella Murphy	Project Co-ordinator	Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network (NIRWN) Member of NIRDP Monitoring Committee Member of SOAR LAG (Social Partner)
Other		
Peter Millen	European Division	Department of Finance and Personnel
Sally Shortall	Economic and Social Research Council Knowledge Transfer Research Fellow	Queen's University Belfast

¹ Organisations currently involved in the Monitoring Committee: Council for Nature Conservation and Countryside (CNCC); Disability Action; National Trust; NI Leader Network; Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA); Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network (NIRWN); Rural Community Network (RCN); Rural Development Council (RDC); Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB); Ulster Farmer's Union (UFU); Ulster Wildlife Trust (UWT); World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

Source: www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-dard-rural-development/nirdp_2007_-_2013_monitoring_committee.htm

1.2 Consultees – JCCs, LAGs and Programme Managers

At a meeting with the Cluster Networking Group, it was agreed that a meeting would be held in each Cluster area. Attendance at these varied per Cluster – in total there were 60 attendees across the 7 Clusters. Attendees included representatives of JCC members, LAG members, Programme Management staff and Council Economic Development staff - see Table 2. In addition a meeting was held with 6 Programme Management staff – see Table 3.

Table 2: LEADER Practitioners – Cluster Meetings

Stakeholder	Role	Council	Cluster Meeting
Jenny Irvine	Social Partner (LAG Chair)	Not specified	SWARD (4 attendees)
Terry Scullion	Programme Manager**	Cookstown District Council*	
Claire Linney	Corporate Strategy & Policy Officer	Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	
Anne Quinn	Economic Development Officer	Fermanagh District Council	
Vera McWilliam	Social Partner (LAG Chair)	Not specified	GROW (10 attendees)
Brian Duffin	Social Partner (LAG Vice Chair)	Not specified	
Kelli Bagchus	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Not specified	
Sam Crowe	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Not specified	
Dean Coulter	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Not specified	
Roy Kennedy	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Not specified	
Emma Stubbs	Development Manager – Rural Programmes**	Antrim Borough Council*	
Paul Kelly	Assistant Director of Development	Antrim Borough Council*	
Nicole Mulholland	Development Manager (Economic)	Carrickfergus Borough Council	
Gail Kelly	Development Assistant	Carrickfergus Borough Council	
George Savage	Councillor (JCC Chair)	Craigavon Borough Council*	SOAR (11 attendees)
Dr Charles Neville	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Craigavon Borough Council*	
Jim Speers	Councillor (LAG Member)	Armagh Borough Council	

Stakeholder	Role	Council	Cluster Meeting
Majella Murphy	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Armagh Borough Council	
John Robinson	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Armagh Borough Council	
Andy Moffett	Councillor (LAG Member)	Newry & Mourne	
Patricia Buckley	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Newry & Mourne	
Miceal McCoy	Social Partner (LAG Chair)	Newry & Mourne	
Elaine Cullen	Programme Manager**	Craigavon Borough Council*	
Godfrey McCartney	Community and Economic Manager	Armagh Borough Council	
Jonathan McGilly	Assistant Director of Development (Economic Development & Regeneration)	Newry and Mourne District Council	
Allan Rainey	Councillor (JCC member)	Omagh District Council*	
Mary Hunter	Social Partner (LAG member)	Derry City Council	
Alison McCullagh	Senior Officer (Development and Leisure Services)	Omagh District Council*	
Declan O'Loan	Councillor (JJC Member)	Ballymena Borough Council*	North East Region (14 attendees)
Jack Johnston	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Ballymena Borough Council*	
Angela O'Hagan	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Ballymoney Borough Council	
Barney Fitzpatrick	Councillor (JJC Member)	Coleraine Borough Council	
Tommy Collins	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Coleraine Borough Council	
Patsy Bradley	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Coleraine Borough Council	
Winston Fulton	Councillor (JJC Chair)	Larne Borough Council	
Edna Walmsley	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Larne Borough Council	
Edwin Crawford	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Larne Borough Council	
Maureen Morrow	Councillor (JJC Member)	Coleraine Borough Council	

Stakeholder	Role	Council	Cluster Meeting	
William Graham	Councillor (JJC Member)	Moyle District Council		
Robert McIlroy	Councillor (JJC Member)	Moyle District Council		
Seamus Blaney	Councillor (JJC Member)	Moyle District Council		
Andrew McAlister	Strategy Manager**	Ballymena Borough Council*		
Alderman Robert Gibson	Councillor (JJC Member)	Ards Borough Council*	DRAP (9 attendees)	
Deborah Girvan	Councillor (JJC Member)	Ards Borough Council*		
Dermot Curran	Councillor (JJC Member)	Down District Council		
Alderman Alan Graham	Councillor (JJC Chair)	North Down Borough Council		
David Kerr	Social Partner (LAG Chair)	Not specified		
Nicholas McCrickard	Social Partner (LAG Chair)	Not specified		
Marguerite Osborne	Rural Development Programme Manager**	Ards Borough Council*		
Brian Dorrian -	Acting Director of Development	Ards Borough Council*		
Margaret Quinn	Project Development Manager	Down District Council		
Uel Mackin	Councillor (JCC Member)	Lisburn Borough Council*		Lagan Rural Partnership (9 attendees)
Andrew Ewing	Councillor (JCC Member)	Lisburn Borough Council*		
Margaret Tolerton	Councillor (LAG Member)	Lisburn Borough Council*		
Jenny Palmer	Councillor (LAG Member)	Lisburn Borough Council*		
Desmond Meredith	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Castlereagh Borough Council		
Padraic Murphy	Rural Development Manager**	Lisburn Borough Council*		
Paul McCormick	Assistant Director of Environmental Services (Economic Development)	Lisburn Borough Council*		
Yvonne Burke	Clerical Administrative Officer	Castlereagh Borough Council		
Ruth Rea	Economic Development Officer	Belfast City Council		
<p>Note:</p> <p>* indicates lead Council.</p> <p>** Prog. Mgt staff listed against name of Lead Council although they serve the whole cluster area</p>				

Table 3: Leader Practitioners – Programme Managers’ Meeting

Stakeholder	Role	Lead Council	Cluster
Terry Scullion	Programme Manager	Cookstown District Council	SWARD
Emma Stubbs	Development Manager – Rural Programmes	Antrim Borough Council	GROW
Elaine Cullen	Programme Manager	Craigavon Borough Council	SOAR
Claudine McGuigan	Rural Development Programme Manager	Omagh District Council	Arc North West
Andrew McAlister	Strategy Manager	Ballymena Borough Council	North East Region
Marguerite Osborne	Rural Development Programme Manager	Ards Borough Council	DRAP

1.3 Consultees – Local Government: Local Economic Development Staff, Elected Members and NILGA

All Councils had the opportunity to take part in the Cluster meetings (in each Cluster area) – in some cases, Elected Members (representing JCCs or LAGs) and Economic Development staff attended these meetings (see Table 2).

Staff in 26 Councils were also invited to take part in telephone consultations: Economic Development staff from 20 Councils took up this opportunity - see Table 4.

In addition, as 15 of the 26 Councils were not represented by Elected Members at the meetings held in each Cluster, representatives of these Councils were offered a further opportunity to take part in consultation: 3 Councillors availed of this – see Table 5.

We also consulted with **Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) – Chief Executive - Derek McCallan**. (Note: he is also a member of NIRD Monitoring Committee).

Table 4: Local Economic Development Staff – Telephone consultations

Stakeholder	Role	Council	Cluster
Adrian McCreesh	Acting Chief Executive	Cookstown District Council*	SWARD
Tony Monaghan	Senior Economic Development Officer	Derry City Council	
Anne Quinn	Economic Development Manager	Fermanagh District Council	
Paul Kelly	Assistant Director Development & Leisure Services	Antrim Borough Council*	GROW

Stakeholder	Role	Council	Cluster
Nicole Mulholland	Economic Development Manager	Carrickfergus Borough Council	
Carol Shane	Economic Development Project Officer	Newtownabbey Borough Council	
Nicola Wilson	Head of Economic Development	Craigavon Borough Council*	SOAR
Jonathan McGilly	Assistant Director of Economic Development	Newry & Mourne District Council	
Paul Beattie	Development Services Manager	Limavady Borough Council	ARC North West
Ester Mulholland	Director of Development Services	Moyle District Council	
Alison McCullagh*	Head of Development	Omagh District Council**	
Kieran McCrory*	Economic Development Manager	Omagh District Council**	
Aidan Donnelly	Economic Development Officer	Ballymena Borough Council*	North East Region
Elizabeth Johnston	Head of Corporate Services	Ballymoney Borough Council	
Linda Williams	Economic Development Manager	Coleraine Borough Council	
Ken Nelson	Economic Development Consultant	Larne Borough Council	
Therese Rafferty	Head of Regeneration	Banbridge District Council	DRAP
Margaret Quinn	Project Development Manager	Down District Council	
Jan Nixey	Economic Development Manager	North Down Borough Council	
Colin McCabrey	Economic Development Manager	Castlereagh Borough Council	Lagan Rural Partnership
Paul McCormick	Assistant Director of Environmental Services (Economic Development)	Lisburn Borough Council*	
Note: * indicates lead Council ** Joint consultation with both present			

Table 5: Elected Representatives – Telephone consultations

Stakeholder	Role	Council	Cluster
Mark Cosgrove	Councillor (JCC Member)	Newtownabbey Borough Council	GROW
Seamus Doyle	Councillor (LAG Member)	Banbridge District Council	DRAP
Anne Marie Beattie	Councillor (JCC Chair)	Castlereagh Borough Council	Lagan Rural Partnership

1.4 Consultees – LEADER workshop 21st August 2012

Table 6: Workshop – 21 August - Attendees

Name	Role	Organisation	Cluster
Conor Corr	Social Partner (LAG Chair)	Not specified	SWARD
Terry Scullion	Programme Manager	-	
Anne Marie Logue	Councillor (JCC Member)	Antrim Borough Council*	GROW
Vera McWilliam	Social Partner (LAG Chair)	Not specified	
Emma Stubbs	Development Manager – Rural Programmes	-	ARC North West
Michael J. Clarke	Social Partner (LAG Vice Chair)	Omagh District Council*	
Claudine McGuigan	Rural Development Programme Manager	-	North East Region
Robert McIlroy	Councillor (JCC Member)	Moyle District Council	
Patsy Bradley	Social Partner (LAG Member)	Coleraine Borough Council	
Andrew McAlister	Strategy Manager	-	DRAP
Des Clayton	Deputy Rural Development Programme Manager	-	
Ann Marie Beattie, MBE	Councillor (JCC Chair)	Castlereagh Borough Council	Lagan Rural Partnership
Jack Beattie	Alderman (JCC Member)	Castlereagh Borough Council	
Peter Shortt	Rural Development Officer	-	
Keith Morrison	Director of Food, Farm & Rural Policy	DARD	-
Niall Heaney	Sustainable Rural Communities	DARD	-

Name	Role	Organisation	Cluster
	Branch		
Mark McCullough	Sustainable Rural Communities Branch	DARD	-
Paul Donnelly	Head of Rural Development Division West	DARD	-
Vince McKeivitt	Head of Rural Development Division South	DARD	
Kevin Murphy	Head of European Services Branch	DARD	-
Derick Jenkins	Team Leader for EU Verification Unit	DARD	-
Teresa Canavan	Network Team	Rural Network NI	-
Note: * indicates lead Council			

DRAFT

2 SURVEY RESULTS - PROJECT PROMOTERS (LEADER)

2.1 Preliminary question

Table 7: Q1. Have you made an application under Axis 3 of the NI Rural Development Programme 2007-2013? Tick one.

Response	N	%
Yes	111	93.3%
No	8	6.7%
Total	119	100%
Base = 119		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

2.2 Section 1: About you/your organisation – A) All

Table 8: Q2. Are you currently involved in your local LEADER group? Tick one.

Response	N	%
Yes-Local Action Group Member-Councillor	0	0%
Yes-Local Action Group Member-Social Partner	4	3.6%
Yes-Joint Council Committee Member	2	1.8%
No-never been involved in local LEADER group	104	93.7%
No-but former Local Action Group Member-Councillor	0	0%
No-but former Local Action Group Member-Social Partner	1	0.9%
No-but former Joint Council Committee Member	0	0%
Total	111	100%
Base = 111		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 9: Q3. In which District Council Area is your organisation based? Tick one.

District Council Area	N	%
Antrim Borough Council	12	10.8%
Ards Borough Council	4	3.6%
Armagh City and District Council	6	5.4%
Ballymena Borough Council	6	5.4%
Ballymoney Borough Council	2	1.8%
Banbridge District Council	3	2.7%
Belfast City Council	2	1.8%
Carrickfergus Borough Council	3	2.7%
Castlereagh Borough Council	0	0%
Coleraine Borough Council	6	5.4%
Cookstown District Council	4	3.6%
Craigavon Borough Council	4	3.6%
Derry City Council	4	3.6%
Down District Council	8	7.2%
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	2	1.8%
Fermanagh District Council	2	1.8%
Larne Borough Council	4	3.6%
Limavady Borough Council	3	2.7%
Lisburn City Council	5	4.5%
Magherafelt District Council	4	3.6%
Moyle District Council	8	7.2%
Newry and Mourne District Council	4	3.6%
Newtownabbey Borough Council	7	6.3%
North Down Borough Council	0	0%
Omagh District Council	5	4.5%
Strabane District Council	3	2.7%
Total	111	100%
Base = 111		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 10: Q4. Which of the following best describes your group / organisation? Tick one.

Group/organisation description	N	%
Sole Trader	38	34.2%
Voluntary/Community Organisation	21	18.9%
Limited Company	19	17.1%
Registered Charity	14	12.6%
Business Partnership	8	7.2%
Other Public Sector Agency	5	4.5%
Government Department/Agency	1	0.9%
Trade Union	0	0%
Co-operative	0	0%
Other	5	4.5%
Total	111	100%
Base = 111		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Other” responses included:

- Limited by guarantee charitable status (x1);
- Manufacturing based company (x1);
- Partnership (x1);
- Private Yacht Club (x1); and
- Voluntary/Community Organisation & registered as a charity (x1).

2.3 Section 1: About you/your organisation – B) Community/Voluntary Groups only

Table 11: Q5. What is the main focus of your group’s work? *Tick one.*

Main focus of group’s work	N	%
Community Development	14	40.0%
Environment/Conservation/Heritage	7	20.0%
Sport/Recreation	4	11.4%
Youth Work	3	8.6%
Rural Development	3	8.6%
Health/Social Care	2	5.7%
Social Club/Activities	1	2.9%
Older People	0	0%
Education/Training	0	0%
Advice and Information	0	0%
Other	1	2.9%
Total	35	100%
Base = 35 (i.e. all those who selected “Registered Charity” and “Voluntary/Community Organisation at Q4.)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Other” responses included:

- Tourism (x 1)

Table 12: Q6. What is the legal status of your group? *Tick one.*

Legal status of group	N	%
Constituted Group registered as a charity with HMRC	15	42.9%
Company Limited by Guarantee registered with Companies House	14	40.0%
Other	6	17.1%
Total	35	100%
Base = 35 (i.e. all those who selected “Registered Charity” and “Voluntary/Community Organisation at Q4.)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Other” responses included:

- Constituted Group (x3);
- Local Community Group (x1);
- Registered charity (x1); and
- Voluntary group (x1).

Table 13: Q7. What was the approximate income of your group in the last financial year?
Tick one.

Approximate income	N	%
< £5,000	11	31.4%
£5,001- £10,000	5	14.3%
£10,001-£20,000	3	8.6%
£20,001-£50,000	7	20.0%
£50,001 to £100,000	2	5.7%
£100,001-£500,000	5	14.3%
£500,001+	2	5.7%
Total	35	100%
Base = 35 (i.e. all those who selected "Registered Charity" and "Voluntary/Community Organisation at Q4.)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 14: Q8. How was the majority of your group's income raised in the past financial year?
Tick one.

Methods of raising income	N	%
Own fundraising	14	40.0%
Public sector grants	9	25.7%
Social economy enterprise - generating income from provision of services	5	14.3%
Loan finance	2	5.7%
Community Trusts (e.g. Big Lottery, CFNI, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, etc.)	1	2.9%
Others	4	11.4%
Total	35	100%
Base = 35 (i.e. all those who selected "Registered Charity" and "Voluntary/Community Organisation at Q4.)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

"Others" responses included:

- Business rentals (x1);
- Membership (x1);
- Ulster Scots Agency (x1);
- Vast majority of our income throughout the UK is via individual supporters (x1);

2.4 Section 1: About you/your organisation – C) Private Businesses Only

Table 15: Q9. What sector is your business based in? Tick one.

Business Sector	N	%
Tourism – Accommodation / hospitality / visitor facilities, events, activities	13	28.3%
Light engineering	6	13.0%
Craft manufacture/retail	4	8.7%
Renewable energy	3	6.5%
Equestrian facilities	3	6.5%
Waste/Recycling	2	4.3%
Childcare	1	2.2%
Other	14	30.4%
Total	46	100%
Base = 46 (i.e. all those who selected “Sole Trader” or “Business Partnership” at Q4.)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Other” responses included:

- Farming (x3);
- Pet Care (x2);
- Advice centre (x1);
- Allotments (x1);
- Conservation Architect (x1);
- IT Software development and Training (x1);
- Landscaping (x1);
- Service (x1);
- Storage (x1);
- Translation (x1); and
- Wooden boat building / restoration (x1).

Table 16: Q10. What was the approximate turnover of your business (excluding farm income) in the last financial year? Tick one.

Approximate turnover	N	%
< £50,000	30	65.2%
£50,000 - £99,999	9	19.6%
£100,000 - £249,999	5	10.9%
£250,000 - £499,999	2	4.3%
£500,000 - £999,999	0	0%
£1,000,000 - £2,499,999	0	0%
£2,500,000 - £4,999,999	0	0%
£5,000,000 +	0	0%
Total	46	100%
Base =46 (i.e. all those who selected "Sole Trader" or "Business Partnership" at Q4.)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

2.5 Section 1: About you/your organisation – D) All

Table 17: Q11. How many full-time employees does your organisation have? Tick one.

Full-time employees	N	%
0	46	41.8%
1-10	54	49.1%
10 – 49	4	3.6%
50– 99	1	0.9%
100 – 149	0	0%
150 – 199	0	0%
200 – 249	0	0%
250+	5	4.6%
Total	110	100%
Base = 110		
Note: 1 respondent did not provide an answer for this question.		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 18: Q12. How many part-time employees does your organisation have? Tick one.

Part-time employees	N	%
0	48	43.6%
1-10	54	49.1%
10 – 49	3	2.7%
50– 99	3	2.7%
100 – 149	1	0.9%
150 – 199	0	0%
200 – 249	0	0%
250+	0	0%
Total	110	100%
Base = 110		
Note: 1 respondent did not provide an answer for this question.		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

2.6 Section 2: Applying for Funding

Table 19: Q13. How did you become aware that funding was available through the NIRDP?
Tick all that apply

Awareness of available funding through NIRDP	N	%
Press advert	37	33.3%
TV advert	36	32.4%
DARD	16	14.4%
Local Action Group information event	10	9.0%
Word of mouth	10	9.0%
Local Cluster website	6	5.4%
Rural Network NI website	6	5.4%
Local Action Group member	5	4.5%
Rural Development Council website	4	3.6%
Invest NI	3	2.7%
Joint Council Committee member	3	2.7%
Rural Support Network information event	3	2.7%
DARD Rural Enterprise Advisors	2	1.8%
Community organisation	0	0%
Other	12	10.8%
Total Respondents	111	100%
Base = 111		
Note: Respondents could provide more than 1 response so total number of responses may be greater than the total number of respondents and the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100%		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Other” responses included:

- Internet (x3);
- Local Action Group sent information (x2);
- Ballymena Business Centre (x1);
- Bank Manager (x1);
- Local Councillor (x1);
- Local Enterprise Agency (x1);
- Local MLA(x1); and
- Ulster Farmer's Union (x1).

Table 20: Q14. How many times have you applied for funding under Axis 3 of NIRD? Tick one.

How many times have you applied	N	%
1	65	55.9%
2	32	28.8%
3 or more - <i>Please specify</i>	17	15.3%
Total	111	100%
Base = 111		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Of those who specified “3 or more” responses included:

- 3 (x4);
- 4 (x2);
- 5 (x1);
- 10+ (x1);
- 12 (x1); and
- Not specified (x8).

Table 21: Q15. Thinking about your most recent application, when did you apply? *Please write in.*

Date of most recent application	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
January	-	-	-	-	1	0.9%	3	2.7%	2	1.8%	3	2.7%	9	8.2%
February	-	-	-	-	1	0.9%	2	1.8%	4	3.6%	1	0.9%	8	7.3%
March	1	0.9%	1	0.9%	4	3.6%	1	0.9%	4	3.6%	7	6.4%	18	16.4%
April	-	-	-	-	1	0.9%	-	-	5	4.5%	2	1.8%	8	7.3%
May	-	-	-	-	2	1.8%	3	2.7%	4	3.6%	2	1.8%	11	10.0%
June	-	-	-	-	1	0.9%	-	-	4	3.6%	9	8.2%	14	12.7%
July	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1.8%	-	-	9	8.2%	11	10.0%
August	-	-	-	-	1	0.9%	-	-	2	1.8%	2	1.8%	5	4.5%
September	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3.6%	3	2.7%	-	-	7	6.4%
October	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.9%	4	3.6%	-	-	5	4.5%
November	-	-	1	0.9%	1	0.9%	4	3.6%	-	-	-	-	6	5.5%
December	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4.5%	-	-	5	4.5%
Not specified	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.9%	2	1.8%	-	-	3	2.7%
Total	1	0.9%	2	1.8%	12	10.9%	21	19.1%	39	35.5%	35	31.8%	110	100.0%

Base = 110
 Note: 1 respondent did not provide an answer for this question.
 Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012

Table 22: Q16. Thinking about your most recent application, under which measure of the NIRDP Axis 3 did you submit an application? *Tick one.*

Submission of application under NIRDP Axis 3 measures	N	%
Measure 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities	29	26.1%
Measure 3.2 Business creation and development	30	27.0%
Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	21	18.9%
Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	20	18.0%
Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development	6	5.4%
Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage	5	4.5%
Total	111	100%
Base = 111		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 23 Q17. Thinking about your most recent application, which Local Action Group (LAG) did you apply to? *Tick one.*

Local Action Group applications	N	%
North East Region	24	21.6%
GROW - Generating Rural Opportunities Within South Antrim	22	19.8%
ARC North West	17	15.3%
Down Rural Area Partnership	15	13.5%
SOAR - Southern Organisation for Action in Rural Areas	15	13.5%
SWARD - South West Action for Rural Development	13	11.7%
Lagan Rural Partnership	5	4.5%
Total	111	100%
Base = 111		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

**Table 24: Q18. Thinking about your most recent application, what did you seek funding for?
 Please write in.**

Measure	Reason for seeking funding (Grouped Responses)	N	%
Measure 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities	Building / facility	13	11.7%
	Renewable energy	5	4.5%
	Equipment	5	4.5%
	Business development	2	1.8%
	Marketing / promotion	1	0.9%
	Equipment and Marketing / Promotion	1	0.9%
	Technical assistance	1	0.9%
	Not specified	1	0.9%
	TOTAL – Measure 3.1	29	26.1%
Measure 3.2 Business creation and development	Equipment	19	17.1%
	Building / facility	3	2.7%
	Business Development	2	1.8%
	Equipment and improving facilities	2	1.8%
	Marketing / promotion and Equipment	2	1.8%
	Equipment and facilities	1	0.9%
	Improving facilities	1	0.9%
	TOTAL – Measure 3.2	30	27.0%
Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	Developing facilities	9	8.1%
	Marketing / promotion	4	3.6%
	Tourism Development	2	1.8%
	Not specified	2	1.8%
	Heritage	1	0.9%
	Equipment	1	0.9%
	Events	1	0.9%
	Sustainable Tourism	1	0.9%
TOTAL – Measure 3.3	21	18.9%	
Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	Building / facility	13	11.7%
	Research / Consultancy	2	1.8%
	Website	2	1.8%
	Equipment	1	0.9%
	Service provision	1	0.9%
	Not specified	1	0.9%
	TOTAL – Measure 3.4	20	18.0%
Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development	Village Renewal	2	1.8%
	Regeneration and Tourism Project	1	0.9%
	Equipment and Marketing / Promotion	1	0.9%
	Regeneration	1	0.9%
	Community facilities	1	0.9%
	TOTAL – Measure 3.5	6	5.4%
Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage	Heritage	2	1.8%
	Building / facility	2	1.8%
	Refurbishment	1	0.9%
	TOTAL – Measure 3.6	5	4.5%
Total		111	100%
Base = 111			
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012			

Table 25: Q19. Thinking about your most recent application, what outcomes do you expect to achieve? Tick all that apply.

Outcomes expected to achieve	N	%
Maintain or increase the income of farm households	24	21.8%
Create employment opportunities	61	55.5%
Develop/expand existing farm diversification enterprise	16	14.6%
Create new farm diversification enterprise	15	13.6%
Provide tourism/visitor facilities	40	36.3%
Develop/expand existing community business	17	15.5%
Create new community business	24	21.8%
Generate renewable energy	9	8.2%
Attract visitors to rural areas in Northern Ireland	48	43.6%
Improve or maintain living conditions and welfare of those living in rural areas	30	27.3%
Increase the attractiveness of rural areas through the provision of more and better services	36	23.7%
Increase local access to Information Communication Technologies	9	8.2%
Enable and encourage residents of villages and surrounding areas to create a vision and an integrated action plan to ensure the potential of such areas is achieved	12	10.9%
Support village initiatives which promote cross-community development and regeneration	19	17.3%
Preserve and upgrade Northern Ireland's rural heritage	22	20.0%
Other	13	11.8%
Total Respondents	110	100%
Base = 110		
Note: 1 respondent did not provide an answer to this question.		
Note: Respondents could provide more than 1 response so total number of responses may be greater than the total number of respondents and the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100%		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Other” responses (grouped) include:

- Services (x5):
 - Expand services and opportunities for disabled users
 - Improve information dissemination in a scattered rural area
 - Support the development of healthy family life in the rural community.
 - Provision of health and well-being programmes to vulnerable young people in an area where social isolation is a problem.
 - To build capacity/improve service delivery
- Facilities (x3):
 - Alternative form of heating. Use less oil and electricity for heating.
 - Create new community hall
 - Provide a well-resourced community facility
- Business growth / employment (x3):
 - Better efficiencies and new work

- Provide employment for myself having been made redundant from the health service
- This will be key to the growth of the business

Table 26: Q20. Thinking about your most recent application, how much did you apply for? Tick one.

Funding applied for	N	%
Up to £5,000	13	11.8%
Over £5,000 up to £10,000	18	16.4%
Over £10,000 up to £20,000	7	6.4%
Over £20,000 up to £30,000	7	6.4%
Over £30,000 up to £40,000	13	11.8%
Over £40,000 up to £50,000	21	19.1%
Over £50,000 up to £100,000	12	10.9%
Over £100,000 up to £150,000	5	4.6%
Over £150,000 up to £200,000	3	2.7%
Over £200,000 up to £250,000	4	3.6%
More than £250,000 (strategic projects only)	7	6.4%
Total	110	100%
Base = 110		
Note: 1 respondent did not provide an answer to this question.		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 27: Q21. Thinking about your most recent application, how much match funding did you have to secure? Please write in

Match funding needed (grouped responses)	N	%
Up to £5,000	14	12.7%
Over £5,000 up to £10,000	14	12.7%
Over £10,000 up to £20,000	12	10.9%
Over £20,000 up to £30,000	10	9.0%
Over £30,000 up to £40,000	8	7.3%
Over £40,000 up to £50,000	11	10.0%
Over £50,000 up to £100,000	18	16.4%
Over £100,000 up to £150,000	4	3.6%
Over £150,000 up to £200,000	3	2.7%
Not specified/cannot remember/not processed yet	3	1.8%
Respondent listed a percentage	14	12.7%
Total	111	100%
Base = 111		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 28: Q22. Thinking about your most recent application, where did you access this match funding from? Tick all that apply.

Match funding source	N	%
Bank loan	29	26.4%
Contribution in kind	20	18.2%
From within the business	64	58.2%
Another funder(s)	19	17.3%
Other	23	20.9%
Total respondents	111	100%
Base = 111 Note: Respondents could provide more than 1 response so total number of responses may be greater than the total number of respondents and the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100% Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 29: Q23. Please specify “Another funder(s)” and “Other”

	Another funder(s)	Other
Awards for All	1	-
Council	4	1
Family	3	4
Own funds / own fundraising	-	9
NIHE	2	-
Credit Union	1	-
DRAP	1	-
Heritage Lottery Fund	1	-
MacMillan	1	-
NIEA	1	-
Northern Ireland Tourist Board	1	-
RDA	1	-
SOS Village	1	-
Sports NI	1	-
Telegraph Fund	1	-
Ulster Garden Villages	1	-
Church	-	2
Cash reserves	-	1
Work in kind	-	1
Share Holiday Village	-	1
Not specified	2	4
Total responses	23	23
Base (Another Funder) = 19 ; Base (Other) = 23 Note: Respondents provided more than 1 response so total number of responses may be greater than the total number of respondents Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 30: Q24. Thinking about your most recent application, have you secured this match funding yet? *Tick one.*

Match funding secured	N	%
Yes	96	87.3%
No	14	12.7%
Total	110	100%
Base = 110 Note: 1 respondent did not provide an answer to this question. Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

2.7 Section 3: Support with Funding Application

Table 31: Q25. Thinking about your most recent application, did you need any support with your application for funding? *Tick one.*

Funding application support needed	N	%
Yes	60	54.6%
No	50	45.5%
Total	110	100%
Base = 110 Note: 1 respondent did not provide an answer to this question. Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 32: Q26. Thinking about your most recent application, did you ask for any support with your application for funding? *Tick one.*

Funding application support asked for	N	%
Yes	48	80.0%
No	12	20.0%
Total	60	100%
Base = 60 (i.e. all those who responded "Yes" to Q25) Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 33: Q27. Thinking about your most recent application, did you receive any support with your application for funding? *Tick one.*

Funding application support received	N	%
Yes	43	89.6%
No	5	10.4%
Total	48	100%
Base = 48 (i.e. all those who responded "Yes" to Q26) Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 34: Q28. Please indicate the type of support with your application that you got from Local Action Group (LAG) Project Officers? Tick one on each row.

Type of support received	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1-to1 meetings / advice	34	79.1%	9	20.9%	43	100%
Advice and guidance on completing the application form	33	76.7%	10	23.3%	43	100%
Other support	12	27.9%	31	72.1%	43	100%
Base = 43 (i.e. all those who responded "Yes" to Q27)						
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012						

“Other support” responses included:

- Specific feedback on support from LAG (x8):
- The bank needed assurance that the grant would be forthcoming
- Excellent support from GROW officer in terms of legals, charges, preparation of application, financial opportunities for support and much else
- Fantastic support offering guidance and their experience, made the process extremely easy and not at all off putting to apply
- Help in how to apply as I did find [it] challenging
- Help with the submissions for drawdown
- Help with any questions we had on how to progress the management of the application
- Support at every step of the process
- Very helpful advice / information on further funders. excellent help from the local officer

Table 35: Q29. Please indicate who provided any other support with your application and the nature of this support? *Tick all that apply.*

Type of support received	DARD Rural Enterprise Advisors		Rural Support Networks		Enterprise Agency		Own accountant		Private consultant		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1-to-1 meetings / advice	18	43.9%	10	24.4%	1	2.4%	5	12.2%	7	17.1%	41	100%
Advice and guidance on the completing the application form	18	52.9%	10	29.4%	1	2.9%	0	0%	5	14.7%	34	100%
Research to demonstrate evidence of need	9	34.6%	5	19.2%	1	3.8%	0	0%	11	42.3%	26	100%
Completing financial projections for project	10	34.5%	2	6.9%	2	6.9%	5	17.2%	10	34.5%	29	100%
Completing the application form	11	40.7%	7	25.9%	1	3.7%	1	3.7%	7	25.9%	27	100%
Other	3	37.5%	1	12.5%	1	12.5%	3	37.5%	0	0%	8	100%

Base = 43 (i.e. all those who responded "Yes" to Q27)
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012

“Other” responses included:

- Compliance with Green Book Economic Appraisal (x1);
- General advice on the processes involved in the application (x1);
- Gmail support; (x1); and
- Where to place the wind monitor (x1).

Table 36: Q30. If you got support with your application from any other organisations or individuals, please provide details of who provided this and what support they provided? Please write in.

Other organisations providing support	Support provided	N
Private consultant	Application Business plan Claim form	4
Village Renewal Officer	1-to-1 meetings / advice Advice and guidance on the completing the application form Completing financial projections for project Completing the application form	4
Grow South Antrim	Support and guidelines on completing the paperwork	2
Architect	Not specified	1
Aveen McMillian	Constant support and guidance through business smart	1
Building control	Not specified	1
Council member	Letters of support	1
Friends	Assist with the development of the project.	1
local community groups	Letters of support	1
MLA	Support and advice	1
NIE	Not specified	1
Planning service	Not specified	1
Youth clubs	Letters of support	1
Not specified	Advice on topics to ensure compliance with Green Book Economic Appraisal	1
Total responses		21
Base = 43 (i.e. all those who responded "Yes" to Q27)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

2.8 Section 4: Outcome of Funding Application

Table 37: Q31. Thinking about your most recent application, approximately how long did it take from submitting your application until you were notified of the outcome? Tick one.

Length of time between application being sent and notification of outcome	N	%
Withdrew application – before it was assessed (prior to decision)	5	4.5%
Awaiting outcome	24	21.6%
Up to 3 months	37	33.3%
4-6 months	16	14.4%
7-9 months	9	8.1%
10-12 months	8	7.2%
Other	12	10.8%
Total	111	100%
Base = 111		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Other” responses included:

- Over 12 months (x3);
- 16 months (x1);
- 17 months (x1);
- 18 months (x2);
- 19 months (x1); and
- 20 months (x2).

Table 38: Q32. Thinking about your most recent application, what was the outcome? Tick one.

Outcome of most recent application	N	%
Successful – awaiting Letter of Offer	9	11.0%
Successful – received Letter of Offer	64	78.0%
Withdrew application – after Letter of Offer received	4	4.9%
Unsuccessful	5	6.1%
Total	82	100%
Base = 82 (i.e. all those who responded “ Up to 3 months”, “4-6 months”, “7-9 months”, “10-12 months” and “Other” to Q31)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 39: Q33. Please indicate if there are any specific reasons why you have not received a Letter of Offer yet? Tick one

Reasons Letter of Offer has not been received yet	N	%
Awaiting planning permission	2	22.2%
Awaiting DARD Business ID	1	11.1%
In the process of setting up a limited company	1	11.1%
Other	5	55.6%
Total	9	100%
Base = 9 (i.e. all those who responded “Successful – awaiting Letter of Offer” at Q32)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Other” responses included:

- Awaiting approval from JC (x1);
- Have to provide some final numbers and legal charge info (x1);
- LoO Pending (x1); and
- More forms to be completed (x1).

2.9 Section 5: Successful Applicants Only –A) Funding Awarded

Table 40: Q34. Thinking about your most recent application, how much funding were you awarded by the Local Action Group (LAG)? Please write in.

Funding awarded by LAG (grouped responses)	N	%
Up to £5,000	10	15.6%
Over £5,000 up to £10,000	10	15.6%
Over £10,000 up to £20,000	6	9.4%
Over £20,000 up to £30,000	5	7.8%
Over £30,000 up to £40,000	8	12.5%
Over £40,000 up to £50,000	14	21.9%
Over £50,000 up to £100,000	3	4.7%
Over £100,000 up to £150,000	2	3.1%
Over £150,000 up to £200,000	2	3.1%
Over £200,000 up to £250,000	2	3.1%
Not specified/cannot remember/not processed yet	1	1.6%
Respondent listed a percentage	1	1.6%
Total	64	100
Base = 64 (i.e. all those who responded “Successful received Letter of Offer” at Q32)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 41: Q35. Thinking about your most recent application, have you drawn down the grant from the Local Action Group (LAG) yet? *Tick one.*

Grant drawn down	N	%
Yes	39	61.0%
No	25	39.0%
Total	64	100
Base = 64 (i.e. all those who responded "Successful received Letter of Offer" at Q32)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 42: Q36. Thinking about your most recent application, how long did it take from the submission of your claim until you received payment?² *Tick one.*

Length of time between submission and receiving payment	N	%
Up to 3 months	29	74.4%
4-6 months	4	10.3%
7-9 months	4	10.3%
10-12 months	1	2.6%
Other	1	2.6%
Total	39	100%
Base = 39 (i.e. all those who responded "Successful received Letter of Offer" at Q32) and all those who responded "Yes" Q35)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

"Other" responses included:

- Delay was due to us extending the offer

² All claims must be submitted within 28 days of the project end date. Timescales for payment depend on accuracy and completeness of documentation submitted and meeting Letter of Offer conditions.

Table 43: Q37. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of the application and award process. Tick one on each row.

Aspects of application and award process	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neither / Nor		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied		Not Applicable		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Time between application being submitted & decision being notified	18	28.1%	20	31.3%	7	10.9%	15	23.4%	4	6.3%	0	0%	64	100%
Time between notification of award & receipt of funding	14	22.0%	18	28.1%	6	9.4%	6	9.4%	4	6.3%	16	25.0%	64	100%

Base = 64 (i.e. all those who responded "Successful received Letter of Offer" at Q32)
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012

Table 44: Q38. Please rate the following documents/forms in terms of clarity / simplicity / ease of understanding? Tick one on each row.

Clarity of forms used	Very Clear		Clear		Neither / Nor		Complex		Very Complex		Not Applicable		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Application form	5	7.8%	39	60.9%	9	14.1%	8	12.5%	3	4.7%	0	0%	64	100%
Letter of Offer	9	14.1%	38	59.4%	6	9.4%	7	10.9%	4	6.3%	0	0%	64	100%
Claim draw down form	5	7.8%	33	51.6%	6	9.4%	1	1.6%	5	7.8%	14	21.9%	64	100%
Equality Monitoring Questionnaire	12	18.8%	36	56.3%	7	10.9%	0	0%	2	3.1%	7	10.9%	64	100%

Base = 64 (i.e. all those who responded "Successful received Letter of Offer" at Q32)
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012

2.10 Section 5: Successful Applicants Only –B) Support with Draw Down of Funding

Table 45: Q39. Thinking about your most recent application, have you been able to draw down the funding awarded? Tick one.

Funding drawn down	N	%
Yes	37	58.7%
No – please explain below	26	41.2%
Total	63	100
Base = 64 (i.e. all those who responded “Successful received Letter of Offer” at Q32); Note: 1 respondent did not answer Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“No” explanations included:

- Project / Work not yet started or recently started / Not ready to draw down claim (x11)
 - Project recently started (x2)
 - Works not yet started
 - No expenditure yet
 - Not ready to claim funding
 - Not ready yet.
 - We are only at the start of the process and have just appointed an Architect
 - We have just sent out our quotations and so have not paid for anything yet to draw down funding.
 - We are still awaiting to do this ourselves and suitable machinery has not been selected
 - Still waiting for the contractors to be chosen
 - The market conditions were against us. This is now changing towards our favour. We hope to use the funding soon
- Project / Work not yet complete (x4)
 - Work not completed
 - Job not complete
 - Project not completed
 - Project not finished - it took so long to get the funding for the materials testing that we developed other means and have not felt it necessary to invest in the sophisticated equipment we originally wanted - current lo tech suffices. the requirement to specify and get four quotes for the website/marketing etc. is burdensome and I don't have time to do it, so that has been delayed
- Paperwork / Terms & Conditions attached to funding (x4)
 - A lot of paperwork to be completed and checked
 - Due to a mix up paperwork
 - We haven't been able to draw down all the funding awarded due to rigid conditions regarding reallocating funds between budget categories. Also when tendered externally costs came in under those forecast.
 - We have made at least returns and we are still waiting for an outcome and money to be paid into our account. The process was so complex no community organisation

could consider it. It clearly was a most difficult process and proved to be very expensive with regard to time, staff costs, paper costs etc. [Examples cited include lack of clarity about:

- Cash payments being unacceptable even when a receipt was kept as proof of purchase.
- Tendering process / number of tenders required.]
- Have not submitted claim form yet (x3)
 - Application not away
 - Have not submitted claims yet
 - Will do soon
- Drawing down funding in phases (x2)
 - Applying in phases
 - Part. We applied for interim funding once 50% of project was complete. The second claim is being processed.
- Other (x2)
 - Awaiting funding coming through
 - Due to delay of invoices from consultant

Table 46: Q40. Thinking about your most recent application, did you need any support with drawing down funding? *Tick one.*

Was support needed	N	%
Yes	24	38.7%
No	38	61.3%
Total	62	100%
Base = 64 (i.e. all those who responded “Successful received Letter of Offer” at Q32) Note: 2 respondents did not provide an answer Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 47: Q41. Thinking about your most recent application, did you ask for any support with drawing down funding? *Tick one.*

Was support asked for	N	%
Yes	19	79.2%
No	5	20.8%
Total	24	100%
Base = 24 (i.e. all those who responded “Successful received Letter of Offer” at Q32 and all those responded “Yes” to Q40) Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 48: Q42. Thinking about your most recent application did you receive any support with drawing down funding? *Tick one.*

Was support received	N	%
Yes	17	89.5%
No	2	10.5%
Total	21	100%
Base = 19 (i.e. all those who responded “Successful received Letter of Offer” at Q32) and all those responded “Yes” to Q41) Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 49: Q43. Please indicate the type of support to draw down funding that you got from LAG Project Officers? *Tick one on each row.*

Type of support to draw down funding	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1-to-1 meetings / advice	17	100%	0	0%	17	100%
Advice and guidance on the completing the claim form	17	100%	0	0%	17	100%
LAG seminar / information meeting on meeting LOO terms & conditions	10	58.9%	7	41.2%	17	100%
LAG seminar / information meeting on completing claim forms	10	58.9%	7	41.2%	17	100%
Guidance on procurement processes	6	35.3%	11	64.7%	17	100%
Other support	4	23.5%	13	76.5%	17	100%
Base = 17 (i.e. all those who responded “Successful received Letter of Offer” at Q32 and all those responded “Yes” to Q42) Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012						

“Other support” responses included:

- Any questions/concerns I had, I either telephoned or emailed.
- General advice given on all aspects of the process
- North East RDP Staff were very helpful throughout our application.
- Have not reached draw down stage - I have ticked yes as I anticipate using any help available if needed

Table 50: Q44. Please indicate who provided any other support with your claim and the nature of this support? Tick all that apply.

Who provided other support and the nature of this support	Rural Support Networks		Enterprise Agency		Own accountant		Private consultant		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1-to-1 meetings / advice	7	77.8%	0	0%	2	22.2%	0	0%	9	100%
Advice and guidance on completing the claim form	7	70.0%	1	10.0%	2	20.0%	0	0%	10	100%
Guidance on procurement processes	8	80.0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	20.0%	10	100%
Completing the claim form	7	87.5%	1	12.5%	0	0%	0	0%	8	100%
Other	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%

Base = 17 (i.e. all those who responded “Successful received Letter of Offer” at Q32 and all those responded “Yes” to Q42)
 Note: not all respondents answered all parts of this question
 Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012

“Other” responses included:

- Advice from local council;
- Help with business plan;
- In-house finance officer assisted with claim form; SOAR project officer assisted with all aspects of the process i.e. procurement, claim process etc.

Table 51: Q45. If you got support with your claim from any other organisations or individuals, please provide details of who provided this and what support they provided? Please write in.

Details of other support (who provided this and what support they provided)
None specified

Base = 17 (i.e. all those responded “Yes” to Q42) – most did not have any further information to add here.
 Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012

2.11 Section 5: Successful Applicants Only –C) Impact of Funding

Table 52: Q46. Thinking about your most recent application, have you achieved the outcomes that you expected? Tick one.

Achievement of expected outcomes	N	%
Yes – already achieved	25	39.7%
Not achieved yet – but expect to	36	57.1%
No – have not achieved the expected outcomes	2	3.2%
Total	63	100

Base = 64 (i.e. all those who responded “Successful received Letter of Offer” at Q32)
 Note: 1 respondent did not provide an answer
 Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012

Table 53: Q47 (Part 1). Thinking about your most recent application, please provide details of outcomes achieved or that you expect to achieve – quantifying these where possible? Please write in

Outcomes	Measure 3.1 Diversification into non agricultural activities	Measure 3.2 Business creation and development	Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development	Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
Outcomes already achieved						
Maintain or increase the income of farm households	2	6	1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Create employment opportunities	5	2	2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Develop/ expand existing farm diversification enterprise	2	1	2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Create new farm diversification enterprise	3	1	2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Provide tourism/visitor facilities	1	1	4	n/a	n/a	1
Develop/ expand existing community business	n/a	n/a	1	1	n/a	n/a
Create new community business	1	n/a	1	1	n/a	n/a
Generate renewable energy	1	n/a	2	1	n/a	n/a
Attract visitors to rural areas in Northern Ireland	1	1	4	1	n/a	1
Improve or maintain living conditions and welfare of those living in rural areas	1	n/a	n/a	3	n/a	n/a
Increase the attractiveness of rural areas through the provision of more and better services	1	n/a	1	3	n/a	1
Increase local access to Information Communication Technologies	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1
Enable & encourage residents of villages & surrounding areas to create a vision & an integrated action plan to ensure potential of such areas is achieved	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1	n/a
Support village initiatives which promote cross-community development and regeneration	1	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	1
Preserve and upgrade Northern Irelands rural heritage	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	n/a	1
Outcomes not yet achieved but expect to						
Maintain or increase the income of farm households	2	6	n/a	n/a	1	n/a
Create employment opportunities	5	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Develop/ expand existing farm diversification enterprise	2	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Outcomes	Measure 3.1 Diversification into non agricultural activities	Measure 3.2 Business creation and development	Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development	Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
Create new farm diversification enterprise	3	1	n/a	n/a	2	n/a
Provide tourism/visitor facilities	1	1	3	1	1	1
Develop/ expand existing community business	n/a	n/a	1	n/a	1	n/a
Create new community business	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Generate renewable energy	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Attract visitors to rural areas in Northern Ireland	3	1	4	1	n/a	1
Improve or maintain living conditions and welfare of those living in rural areas	3	n/a	n/a	3	n/a	n/a
Increase the attractiveness of rural areas through the provision of more and better services	1	n/a	1	3	n/a	1
Increase local access to Information Communication Technologies	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1
Enable & encourage residents of villages & surrounding areas to create a vision & an integrated action plan to ensure potential of such areas is achieved	1	n/a	n/a	1	1	n/a
Support village initiatives which promote cross-community development and regeneration	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	1
Preserve and upgrade Northern Irelands rural heritage	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	n/a	1
Base: 25 respondents who indicated they had already achieved the outcomes they expected to Base: 36 respondents who indicated they had not yet achieved the outcomes but did expect to Source: RSM McClure Watters, October 2012						

Table 54: Q47 (Part 2). Thinking about your most recent application, please provide details of outcomes achieved or that you expect to achieve – quantifying these where possible? Please write in

Outcomes	Measure 3.1 Diversification into non agricultural activities	Measure 3.2 Business creation and development	Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development	Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
Outcomes already achieved						
Maintain or increase the income of farm households	Yes (x2)	Yes (x2) Yes we took on a marketing exe to promote our new products which we could now offer from purchasing the equipment 5 full time jobs created 2 new positions created Extra work hours for part time staff Yes, we have employed four persons since Sales figures increasing	Sales figures increasing	n/a	n/a	n/a
Create employment opportunities	Yes (x4) create and sustain employment (x1)	Yes (x2)	I aim to create employment opportunities current recession is hindering progress Have been able to employ a second full time instructor	n/a	n/a	n/a
Develop/ expand existing farm diversification enterprise	Yes (x2)	Yes (x1)	Already completed project Building brand - Team Build Ireland	n/a	n/a	n/a
Create new farm diversification enterprise	Yes (x3)	Have had visiting boats (x1)	Complete May be interested in the future to expand offering	n/a	n/a	n/a
Provide tourism/visitor facilities	Yes (x1)	Yes we now can offer the local business community a service	Visitor facilities created and enhanced	n/a	n/a	Catering facility for apple blossom tours

Outcomes	Measure 3.1 Diversification into non agricultural activities	Measure 3.2 Business creation and development	Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development	Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
		which before was not available by us.	<p>New visitor facility provided</p> <p>I have a top class facility for creating ceramics and providing classes</p> <p>Increased course numbers and visitors working with outdoor NI attracting more visiting clients</p>			
Develop/expand existing community business	n/a	n/a	Greater company awareness, increase in enquiries leading to bookings	New groups using the hall	n/a	n/a
Create new community business	Yes (x1)	n/a	Working with other rural community business	New groups using the hall, small businesses benefit	n/a	n/a
Generate renewable energy	£65,000kwh	n/a	<p>Refurbishment included renewable energy generation</p> <p>We already had [illegible] panels to try of offset electricity costs</p>	Yes	n/a	n/a
Attract visitors to rural areas in Northern Ireland	Yes	Boats from S. Ireland and Spain	<p>Increase in visitor numbers demonstrated</p> <p>Additional 1000 per yr</p> <p>I already have had visitors from Ireland, Scotland, England, Norway, Holland, Canada and America</p> <p>Signpost visitors to the Glens of Antrim</p> <p>Increased course numbers and visitors</p>	Yes through website and offering activities	n/a	Historical Society to provide information on locally important historical events for visitors to the area

Outcomes	Measure 3.1 Diversification into non agricultural activities	Measure 3.2 Business creation and development	Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development	Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
Improve or maintain living conditions and welfare of those living in rural areas	Yes	n/a	n/a	More people using the hall and attending classes Consultancy identified needs of rural families & produced a report analysis. Play park has become main focal point for local community	n/a	n/a
Increase the attractiveness of rural areas through the provision of more and better services	Yes	n/a	I think that building fits in beautifully past traditions and now meets my needs today	Yes More people using the hall and attending classes More family support services create a more appealing rural community for family life. Provided quality space for children to play	n/a	Hope to provide education classes for seniors
Increase local access to Information Communication Technologies	No	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a
Enable & encourage residents of villages & surrounding areas to create a vision & an integrated action plan to ensure potential of such areas is achieved	No	n/a	n/a	Demonstrating the possibly of a successful business	Community plan developed and auctioning the plan under way	n/a
Support village initiatives which promote cross-community development and	Yes	n/a	n/a	Yes fully supports cross- community Play area is a neutral space	n/a	Provided a focal point for a disadvantaged rural hamlet

Outcomes	Measure 3.1 Diversification into non agricultural activities	Measure 3.2 Business creation and development	Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development	Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
regeneration						
Preserve and upgrade Northern Irelands rural heritage	No	n/a	Vernacular building preserved for future generations Made a huge contribution in this area. Neighbours & people in the local community know of my existence through (i) Good PR in local press (ii) Leaflet drops in surrounding area (iii) word of mouth (iv) Personal involvement with other groups in this community	n/a	n/a	Conserved an important listed building
Outcomes not yet achieved but expect to						
Maintain or increase the income of farm households	To generate additional farm income and sustain the farm business we hope to increase farm income after capital costs are covered by approx. Â£30,000 per year We hope to increase our income with this business	n/a	n/a	n/a	1full time in 3 years	n/a
Create employment opportunities	We hope that the extra income will allow us to invest in our farm business and so create more employment We hope to be able to employ someone in the near future Extra part time staff member recruited	Plan to create more jobs on set of playgroup will employ 3 staff We hope to generate some jobs 2 x part time (supported by a team of volunteers)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Outcomes	Measure 3.1 Diversification into non agricultural activities	Measure 3.2 Business creation and development	Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development	Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
Develop/ expand existing farm diversification enterprise	Additional livery space now available	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Create new farm diversification enterprise	Planning permission achieved We hope to create a renewable energy enterprise	n/a	n/a	n/a	1 visitors centre opened Yes - more parking	
Provide tourism/visitor facilities	n/a	Tea room for visitors Our private rooms have been very successful this summer, many wonderful comments and reviews left by guests Construction of two self-catering units plan to provide more visitor facilities set up of a heritage centre for the community Create a base for walkers etc. to drop in	Tea room for visitors Our private rooms have been very successful this summer, many wonderful comments & reviews left by guests Construction of 2 self-catering units	By adding a working kitchen expect to have the Hall used more often	1 new business created Yes through Website	n/a
Develop/ expand existing community business	n/a	More part time staff employed and being trained up in the village, Plan to expand community business Increase services available to a rural community and addressing need	More part time staff employed and being trained up in the village,	n/a	1 new business created	will link in with existing & proposed initiatives in the area
Create new community business	Yes	Set up of playgroup	n/a	n/a	n/a	The refurbishment of this site will complement existing community business

Outcomes	Measure 3.1 Diversification into non agricultural activities	Measure 3.2 Business creation and development	Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development	Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
Generate renewable energy	Planning permission achieved We hope to generate hydroelectric power	Solar and air/heat extraction	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Attract visitors to rural areas in Northern Ireland	n/a	Website up and running	Increase visitor interest and awareness of the area	250 visitors in Yr 2 Yes promote our bags/website	Will be an attraction for visitors in terms of heritage and language Maximise potential of rural tourism in the area with focus on exploration of cultural and industrial heritage	n/a
Improve or maintain living conditions and welfare of those living in rural areas	Yes	n/a	Through education dissemination of information on health and wellbeing	Outdoor opportunities for residents	n/a	n/a
Increase the attractiveness of rural areas through the provision of more and better services	Yes	n/a	Encouragement of greater voluntary participation in community led projects Yes	Outdoor pursuits available Yes less plastic bags & promote business	n/a	n/a
Increase local access to Information Communication Technologies	n/a	Using online platform to let SMEs undertake website development, email marketing via single platform.	Plan to provide computer facilities	n/a	n/a	n/a
Enable & encourage residents of villages & surrounding areas to create a vision & an integrated action plan to ensure potential of such areas is achieved	n/a	n/a	We are a rural area and a town land but we hope to achieve this and have went a long so far through our cluster Yes	Village plan developed Yes - getting the community involved	Involvement of the local community in the exploration of social history of the region with the use of oral history workshops to inform the development of interpretative facilities at the site.	n/a
Support village initiatives which	n/a	n/a	Yes	n/a	Local community working together	n/a

Outcomes	Measure 3.1 Diversification into non agricultural activities	Measure 3.2 Business creation and development	Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development	Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
promote cross-community development and regeneration					with a common aim will naturally encourage cross-community development. Regeneration of derelict site has potential to act as catalyst for future regeneration both in the community and within the region.	
Preserve and upgrade Northern Irelands rural heritage	Yes	Website up and running	Uses a method of attracting and making available information on historical material Hall was built in 1886 and is nearly fully restored	New facilities in village	Will make permanent townland information Preservation of site & artefact for appreciation & enjoyment of future generations. Only remaining housed beam engine in Ireland, unique e.g. of Ireland's industrial heritage	n/a
Base: 25 respondents who indicated they had already achieved the outcomes they expected to Base: 36 respondents who indicated they had not yet achieved the outcomes but did expect to Source: RSM McClure Watters, October 2012						

Table 55: Q48. Thinking about your most recent application, if the NIRDP Axis 3 funding had not been available to you, would you have been able to proceed with developing your project anyway? Tick one.

Able to proceed without NIRDP Axis 3 funding	N	%
Would have gone ahead with the project, with same result	0	0%
Would have gone ahead with the project, but over a longer timescale	10	15.9%
Would have gone ahead with the project, but on a smaller scale	3	4.8%
Would have gone ahead with the project, but over a longer timescale and on a smaller scale	9	14.3%
Probably would not have gone ahead with the project	22	34.9%
Definitely would have not have gone ahead with the project	19	30.2%
Other	0	0%
Total	63	100
Base = 64 (i.e. all those who responded "Successful received Letter of Offer" at Q32) Note: 1 respondent did not provide an answer Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 56: Q48 (cont'd). Thinking about your most recent application, if the NIRDP Axis 3 funding had not been available to you, would you have been able to proceed with developing your project anyway? Tick one.

Able to proceed without NIRDP Axis 3 funding	Registered Charity		Voluntary/Community Organisation		Sole Trader		Business Partnership		Other Public Sector Agency		Limited Company		Other*		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Would have gone ahead with the project, with same result	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Would have gone ahead with the project, but over a longer timescale	3	42.9%	1	7.7%	2	9.5%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	3	25.0%	0	0.0%	10	15.9%
Would have gone ahead with the project, but on a smaller scale	1	14.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	25.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	4.8%
Would have gone ahead with the project, but over a longer timescale and on a smaller scale	2	28.6%	0	0.0%	2	9.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	33.3%	1	25.0%	9	14.3%
Probably would not have gone ahead with the project	0	0.0%	6	46.2%	10	47.6%	1	25.0%	0	0.0%	3	25.0%	2	50.0%	22	34.9%
Definitely would not have gone ahead with the project	1	14.3%	6	46.2%	7	33.3%	2	50.0%	0	0.0%	2	16.7%	1	25.0%	19	30.2%
Other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	7	100.0%	13	100.0%	21	100.0%	4	100.0%	2	100.0%	12	100.0%	4	100.0%	63	100.0%

Base = 64 (i.e. all those who responded "Successful received Letter of Offer" at Q32)
 Note: 1 respondent did not provide an answer
 Note: Other includes: Ltd by guarantee charitable status (x1); Manufacturing based company (x1); Partnership (x1); Vol/Comm Org & registered as a charity (x1)
 Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012

Table 57: Q49. Thinking about your most recent application, if the NIRDP Axis 3 funding had not been available to you how would you have gone about this?

Able to proceed without NIRDP Axis 3 funding (grouped responses)	N
<p>Longer timescales and/or smaller scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over a longer timescale and on a smaller scale • Doing a lot extra work myself over a longer timescale and when I could afford to • Much smaller scope of project • Work at it bit by bit • Used quiet time in the business (winter months) to do it. • Possibly but not in the scale and form envisaged • With great difficulty. Would have taken me longer to arrange finance • Would have replaced pontoons over a long period of time. This would have meant scaling down the existing business as the old pontoons needed replaced. We would not have put power/water onto the pontoons nor would we have created a shower room or upgraded customer area. Nor would we have created a visitors berth. • We would have adopted a phased approach, developing the project as and when pots of funding became available. This would mean project objectives would be significantly delayed and the site would have constant disturbance. • A smaller less powerful server would have been installed to cut down capital cost. The software package would then have been purchased in stages over a period of years after the server was paid for. 	10
<p>Seek funding from elsewhere (and in some cases longer timescales / smaller scale)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would have had to apply for funding from elsewhere. • We would have seen how to have generated the money internally before going to the bank. Then we would have approached the bank. However we would have been approaching the bank knowing that this was going to be difficult. Definitely looking at a smaller scale and a longer time frame would have been considered. This probably would have had an effect on our business due this extension on the project • Self-financing over a period of 2-3 years, rather than the period of 6 months with the support from SWARD. • Further bank loan • We would have had to make approaches to other funders and some more fundraising as well as pushing our council to act as well. • Sought alternative funding e.g. Big Lottery • We would have gone slower and had to borrow more money from elsewhere. • Researched other sources of funding • Would have to have self-fund 100% of project 	9
<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site would have been developed/upgraded as part of the Council's play development programme. • Would have had a small website in place in October last year, rather than waiting 	3

<p>months to hear if it was funded and more months trying to get quotes, etc. and do the paperwork necessary to get the funds - I would probably have been better off not going for the funding!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I feel I could have used the money we spent on this much more effectively and efficiency if I had used local expertise and workers. The process did not enhance community development in any way in fact it had the opposite effect where people did not understand the process and did not apply to take part in our project. There was far too much red tape surrounding all of the issues and our local community could not comprehend the process which limited local participation and ultimately did not develop the local community. Therefore we did not achieve the results expected 	
Total	22
<p>Base = 22 (i.e. all those who responded "Successful received Letter of Offer" at Q32 and all those who responded "Would have gone ahead with the project, with same result", "Would have gone ahead with the project, but over a longer timescale", " Would have gone ahead with the project, but on a smaller scale", "Would have gone ahead with the project, but over a longer timescale and on a smaller scale" at Q48) Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012</p>	

2.12 Section 6: Unsuccessful Applicants Only

Table 58: Q50. Thinking about your most recent application, what reason was given by the Local Action Group (LAG) when the decision was taken not to award funding to your application? Tick all that apply.

Reason for rejection	N	%
Unsuccessful – Ineligible	1	20.0%
Unsuccessful – Did not meet minimum project score (pass mark)	2	40.0%
Unsuccessful – other reason	3	60.0%
Total respondents	5	100%
Base = 5 (i.e. all those who responded Unsuccessful” at Q32.)		
Note: Respondents could provide more than 1 response so total number of responses may be greater than the total number of respondents and the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100%		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Unsuccessful – other reason” responses included:

- I await proper explanation.
- Told I did not meet scoring even though my target was Antrim population I was grouped with similar business in West Belfast and Lisburn and told that my business unsustainable!
- Too many staff

Table 59: Q51. Thinking about your most recent application, did the Local Action Group (LAG) provide detailed feedback on why your application was rejected? Tick one.

Did the LAG provide detailed feedback	N	%
No	2	40.0%
Yes	3	60.0%
Total	5	100%
Base = 5 (i.e. all those who responded Unsuccessful” at Q32.)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Yes” responses included:

- The Local Action Group felt that the demand would not there, despite numbers having gone up by 20% per year from we started to expand from 2008
- Said key indicator did not see need for respite

Table 60: Q52. Thinking about your most recent application, have you been able to secure funding from elsewhere for your project? Tick one.

Able to secure funding from elsewhere	N	%
Yes	4	80.0%
No	1	20.0%
Total	5	100%
Base = 5 (i.e. all those who responded Unsuccessful” at Q32.)		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Yes” responses included:

- Loan from Family as I had no other alternatives to get my business off the ground.
- We have received donations in kind which has progressed the project a little

Table 61: Q53. Please indicate level of satisfaction with the following aspects of the application and award process. Tick one on each row.

Level of satisfaction with	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neither / Nor		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied		Not Applicable		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Time between application being submitted & decision being notified	0	0%	1	20.0%	1	20.0%	1	20.0%	2	40.0%	0	0%	5	100%
Feedback provided on application	0	0%	0	0%	1	20.0%	0	0%	4	80.0%	0	0%	5	100%
Base = 5 (i.e. all those who responded Unsuccessful" at Q32) Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012														

Table 62: Q54. Please indicate level of satisfaction with the following aspects of the application and award process. Tick one on each row.

Level of satisfaction with	Very Clear		Clear		Neither / Nor		Complex		Very Complex		Not Applicable		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Application form	0	0%	3	60.0%	0	0%	1	20.0%	1	20.0%	0	0%	5	100%
Feedback letter	0	0%	2	40.0%	0	0%	1	20.0%	1	20.0%	1	20.0%	5	100%
Base = 5 (i.e. all those who responded Unsuccessful" at Q32) Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012														

2.13 Section 7: Withdrawn Applicants Only

Table 63: Q55. Thinking about your most recent application, please indicate the reason(s) for withdrawing your application? Tick one on each row.

Reasons for withdrawal	Yes		No		Not Applicable		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Unable to provide documentation required to support application form	0	0%	3	42.9%	4	57.1%	7	100%
Timescales from submitting application to being notified of decision too long	2	25.0%	2	25.0%	4	50.0%	8	100%
Unable to secure planning permission	0	0%	3	42.9%	4	57.1%	7	100%
Unable to secure match funding	2	28.6%	2	28.6%	3	42.9%	7	100%
Procurement requirements	0	0%	3	42.9%	4	57.1%	7	100%
Monitoring requirements	1	14.3%	1	14.3%	5	71.4%	7	100%
Claims process for drawing down funding	1	14.3%	1	14.3%	5	71.4%	7	100%
Timescales from funding awarded to being able to access funding too long	0	0%	2	28.6%	5	71.4%	7	100%
My/Our Circumstances changed	2	28.6%	2	28.6%	3	42.9%	7	100%
Other reason for withdrawing application	4	57.1%	0	0%	3	42.9%	7	100%

Base = 9 (i.e. all those who responded “Withdrew application – before it was assessed (prior to decision)” at Q31 and all those who responded “Withdrew application – after Letter of Offer received” at Q32) – but not all respondents answered each question.
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012

“Other reasons for withdrawing application” responses included:

- Very difficult and time consuming application process, forms geared towards businesses rather than voluntary groups. Forms and advice not clear. Did not have the finances to pay for event whilst waiting for decision and payment from funders. Too risky to fork out so much money without definite answer being given on funding until after the event.
- Family reasons – owing to family illness, applicant had to support father on farm - & didn't have the 100% time to devote to the new business in order for it to get off the ground
- Rates were excessive therefore project was aborted; will be resubmitted when business is found which will not be rated.
- Rules given to applicant after offer was made: the need for stickers all over the self-catering application was off-putting to the applicant and he felt - lacked common sense (“wanted to put a plastic sticker on the outside of a hot wood burning stove”). Applicant also noted same

process was followed regardless of amount of funding sought – and this did not make sense to him.

Table 64: Q56. Have you been able to secure funding from elsewhere for your project? Tick one.

Securing funding elsewhere	N	%
Yes	5	62.5%
No	3	37.5%
Total	8	100%
Base = 9 (i.e. all those who responded “Withdrew application – before it was assessed (prior to decision)” at Q31 and all those who responded “Withdrew application – after Letter of Offer received” at Q32) – 1 of these did not respond to this question Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

For those who responded “Yes”, details of sources and amounts provided include:

- At the time the bank said yes & it matched DARD offer & my family put up the rest, but after it was all worked out there was no working capital to have or to play with or to help in the 1st few months
- Own funds.
- Local council

2.14 Section 8: Strengths and Areas for Improvements

Table 65: Q57. Please indicate level of satisfaction with the following aspects of the Local Action Group (LAG) programme team? Tick one on each row.

Level of satisfaction with	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neither / Nor		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied		Not Applicable		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Level of advice and assistance provided	51	54.8%	26	28.0%	7	7.5%	5	5.4%	4	4.3%	0	0%	93	100%
Knowledge, skills, experience of staff	48	51.6%	30	32.3%	10	10.8%	3	3.2%	2	2.2%	0	0%	93	100%
Speed of response	38	40.9%	28	30.1%	11	11.8%	9	9.7%	7	7.5%	0	0%	93	100%
Communication with Local Action Group (LAG) staff	47	50.5%	25	26.9%	13	14.0%	3	3.2%	5	5.4%	0	0%	93	100%
<p>Base = 93 Note: 18 respondents did not answer this question. Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012</p>														

Table 66: Q58. Would you consider making an application to NIRDP Axis 3 in future? Tick one and explain your answer.

Would you consider applying to NIRDP Axis 3 in future?	N	%
Yes (Please explain)	71	76.3%
No (Please explain)	22	23.7%
Total	93	100%
Base = 93		
Note: 18 respondents did not answer this question.		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Yes” explanations included:

- Supports business expansion / improvements to facilities (x20)
- To keep expanding the business (x15)
- Continue to improve facilities (x5)
- Positive feedback on LAG (x6)
- Excellent staff service (x4)
- Good experience in the past (x2)
- Fit with local needs / beneficiaries (x4)
- Meets the aims of the company (tourism) (x1)
- Funding suits development planned for area (x1)
- To meet local needs (x1)
- Fit the profile for recipients (x1)
- Dependence on NIRDP funding (x3)
- Rely heavily on the funding (x2)
- Limited funding opportunities (x1)
- Other (x10)
- Allows to progress projects (x3)
- If there was an appropriate project (x1)
- If more funding was available (x1)
- If the process was revamped (x1)
- Helps with long term projects (x1)
- Only for a capital project (x1)
- Worthwhile and good outcomes (x1)
- Wouldn't rule it out (x1)

“No” explanations included:

- Dissatisfaction with process (x17)
- Took too long (x5)
- Too much administration / paperwork / “red tape” (x4)
- Too much hassle (x2)
- Application process (x1)
- Found the verification process “intimidating” (x1)
- Made to feel business idea was not worthy (x1)
- Process too confusing (x1)

- Procurement process (x1)
- Unhappy with the scheme management (x1)
- Other (x3)
- All funding already allocated (x1)
- Everything (x1)
- Work is complete (x1)

Table 67: Q59. Would you recommend NIRD Axis 3 as a source of funding to other groups / organisations similar to yours? Tick one and explain your answer.

Would you recommend NIRD Axis 3 as a source of funding	N	%
Yes (Please explain)	71	76.3%
No (Please explain)	22	23.7%
Total	93	100%
Base = 93 Note: 18 respondents did not answer this question. Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Yes” explanations included:

- Resources / benefits (x23)
- Valuable resource (x13)
- Good for business development (x10)
- Recommendation – but with caveats (x13)
- Caveat - time (x7)
- Caveat – administration (x4)
- With many caveats (x1)
- Even more so, if DARD were out of the equation (x1)
- Process and support (x 8)
- Straightforward process (x5)
- Well managed good guidance and advice (x1)
- Good support (x1)
- Staff very good (x1)
- Other (x8)
- Anyone (x2)
- Definitely (x1)
- To other small holdings (x1)
- If there was an appropriate project (x1)
- Depending on what they wish to do (x1)
- Helps to justify the project (x1)
- I have already done so and I know that they have been successful (x1)

“No” explanations included:

- Level of input required by applicant (x7)
- Not suitable for small community groups (x2)
- Too time consuming (x2)

- Lack of support (x1)
- Lot of work (x1)
- Unless I thought they were very IT literate (x1)
- Dissatisfaction with process (x5)
- Complex and rigid process (x2)
- Process too difficult (x2)
- Avoid the unnecessary scrutiny. (x1)
- Other (x5)
- Waste of time (x2)
- Could not recommend LAG in any way whatsoever. Totally unprofessional in my opinion. (x1)
- Had to apply again and again (x1)
- Would be up to other groups to try for themselves (x1)

**Table 68: Q60. What aspects of the funding programme should be maintained for the future?
 Please write in.**

Aspects maintained for the future (grouped responses)	N	N
All Measures	2	28
Measure 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities*	4	
Measure 3.2 Business creation and development *	11	
Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities*	5	
Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population*	2	
Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development*	2	
Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage*	2	
All aspects		21
Staff / LAG - help & advice & support, local knowledge		11
Level of funding available (overall / for rural communities)		9
Match funding (% of assistance offered)		5
(Funding for) Community Groups		3
LAG		2
Flexibility		2
Range		2
Site visits		2
Base = 93 Note: 18 respondents did not answer this question. Note: Several other responses were provided – none of these were mentioned by more than 1 respondent Note: * respondents' comments related to this Measure Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 69: Q61. What improvements to the application and award process would you recommend? Please write in.

Improvements for applications and award processes (grouped responses)	N
Simpler	32
Faster turnaround	21
Help & advice & support	10
Procurement process	7
Higher % of grant assistance	5
Knowledge & skills of staff	4
Communication	2
Longer timescale to spend	2
Base = 93	
Note: 18 respondents did not answer this question.	
Note: Several other responses were provided – none of these were mentioned by more than 1 respondent	
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012	

Table 70: Q62. If you/your group was to apply to NIRD Axis 3 in future which of the following types of support would help you through the application process? Tick all that apply.

Support for application process	N	%
Advice and support in completing the application form	62	66.7%
Advice and support to determine project finances	48	51.6%
Advice and support with raising match funding	38	40.9%
Help to understand the programme procurement guidelines	58	62.4%
Help with cash flow projections	36	38.7%
Help with determining need	29	31.2%
Help with preparation for the assessment visit	34	36.6%
Help with understanding the legal status	26	28.0%
Other	16	17.2%
Total Respondents	93	100%
Base = 93		
Note: 18 respondents did not answer this question		
Note: Respondents could provide more than 1 response so total number of responses may be greater than the total number of respondents and the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100%		
Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Other” responses – support and advice that would help - included:

- Easy to follow, consistent guidance in plain English (or Irish) and recognition that projections are just estimates and therefore should not be used as accurate predictions.
- As a charity run by volunteers, we would welcome help on all of the above on a regional basis
- We have managed programmes before - we are familiar with all the above. The process needs to change.

- some groups have more expertise than others therefore it is important to examine the weaknesses within a group applying for funding and therefore match the support to this group
- Better understanding of various planning requirements
- Especially the procurement guidelines
- Need the process to change to exhibit some level of trust and common sense
- Need staff to be patient with and have a friendly attitude to those undertaking projects
- Information on future waves of funding to enable group to plan accordingly

Table 71: Q63. Who would be best placed to provide the type of support you/your group would need to submit an application? *Tick all that apply.*

Best support provider for submission of applications	N	%
LAG Employee / Animator* (assist with application paperwork but not involved in assessment or claims to avoid conflict of interest)	55	59.8%
Rural Support Networks	25	27.2%
DARD Rural Enterprise Advisors	41	44.6%
Enterprise Agency	12	13.0%
Own accountant	20	21.7%
Private consultant	15	16.3%
District Council staff	21	22.8%
Community networks	8	8.7%
Specialist support group	11	12.0%
Other	3	3.3%
Total Respondents	97	100%
<p>Base = 92 Note: 19 respondents did not answer this question. Note: Respondents could provide more than 1 response so total number of responses may be greater than the total number of respondents and the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100% Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012</p>		

“Other” responses included:

- We have used on line information from most of the above; we have contacted selected on an informal basis;
- Invest NI.

Table 72: Q64. If you/your group was to apply to NIRD DP Axis 3 in future which of the following types of support would help you through the claim draw down process? Tick up to 3

Best type of support for the claim draw down process	N	%
1-to-1 meetings / advice	73	79.3%
Advice and guidance on completing the claim form	51	55.4%
Guidance on procurement processes	49	53.3%
Completing the claim form	38	41.3%
Other	12	13.0%
Total Respondents	92	100%
Base = 92 Note: 19 respondents did not answer this question Note: Respondents could provide more than 1 response so total number of responses may be greater than the total number of respondents and the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100% Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Other” responses included:

- Advice is not really required, someone to carry the actual tasks out would be ideal
- An initial meeting with advice on where to go next for help
- They should get their own systems in place first and get rid of red tape- that way we would not need advice and support!
- Competent staff within the LAG
- Process should not be time bound as this does not encourage good practice, groups proceed at a different rate and when it is a building/renovation programme no one can be prepared for the hurdles that occur along the way.
- Clear (no jargon) consistent guidance in plain day-to-day terms

Table 73: Q65. Who would be best placed to provide the type of support you/your group would need to draw down a claim? Tick all that apply

Best type of support	N	%
Local Action Group (LAG) Employee	53	57.0%
Rural Support Networks	21	22.6%
DARD Rural Enterprise Advisors	43	46.0%
Enterprise Agency	11	11.8%
Own accountant	14	15.1%
Private consultant	12	12.9%
District Council staff	19	20.4%
Community networks	9	9.7%
Specialist support group	10	10.8%
Other	3	3.2%
Total Respondents	93	100%
Base = 93 Note: 18 respondents did not answer this question Note: Respondents could provide more than 1 response so total number of responses may be greater than the total number of respondents and the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100% Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

“Other” responses included:

- I think that more information should be put on the form on where to seek help

Table 74: Q66. Please indicate your preference for each of the following aspects of grant-making under NIRDPA Axis 3. Tick one.

Preference for grant making assessment	N	%
Strong preference grant applications assessed by local people (e.g. Local Action Group (LAG))	35	37.6%
Preference for grant applications assessed by local people (e.g. Local Action Group)	31	33.3%
No strong preference either way	17	18.3%
Preference for grant applications assessed centrally	7	7.5%
Strong preference for grant applications assessed centrally	3	3.2%
Total	93	100%
Base = 93 Note: 18 respondents did not answer this question. Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 75: Q67. Please indicate your preference for each of the following aspects of grant-making under NIRDPA Axis 3. Tick one.

Preference for grant making claims	N	%
Strong preference for grant claims processed locally	41	44.0%
Preference for grant claims processed locally	29	31.2%
No strong preference either way	18	19.4%
Preference for grant claims processed centrally	2	2.2%
Strong preference for grant claims processed centrally	3	3.2%
Total	93	100%
Base = 93 Note: 18 respondents did not answer this question. Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 76: Q68. Please indicate your preference for each of the following aspects of grant-making under NIRDPA Axis 3. Tick one.

Preference for grant making process/values	N	%
Strong preference for common process for all grant values	10	10.8%
Preference for common process for all grant values	17	18.3%
No strong preference either way	16	17.2%
Preference for different processes for different value (e.g. fast track for small grants, in-depth for larger grants)	23	24.7%
Strong preference for different processes for different value (e.g. fast track for small grants, in-depth for larger grants)	27	29.0%
Total	93	100%
Base = 93 Note: 18 respondents did not answer this question. Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 77: Q69. Please indicate your preference for each of the following aspects of grant-making under NIRDP Axis 3. Tick one.

Preference for grant making process/target beneficiaries	N	%
Strong preference for common process for all grants (for farm families, businesses, community/voluntary groups)	15	16.3%
Preference for common process for all grants (for farm families, businesses, community/voluntary groups)	18	19.6%
No strong preference either way	21	22.8%
Preference for different processes for grants targeted at different groups (farm families, businesses, community/voluntary groups)	21	22.8%
Strong preference for different processes for grants targeted at different groups (farm families, businesses, community/voluntary groups)	17	18.5%
Total	92	100%
Base = 92 Note: 19 respondents did not answer this question. Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 78: Q70. Please indicate your preference for each of the following aspects of grant-making under NIRDP Axis 3. Tick one.

Preference for grant making support with applications	N	%
Strong preference for support available to help with application from several providers	20	21.5%
Preference for support available to help with application from several providers	14	15.0%
No strong preference either way	26	28.0%
Preference for support available to help with application from single provider	23	24.7%
Strong preference for support available to help with application from single provider	10	10.8%
Total	93	100%
Base = 93 Note: 18 respondents did not answer this question. Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

Table 79: Q71. Please indicate your preference for each of the following aspects of grant-making under NIRDP Axis 3. Tick one.

Preference for grant making support with claims	N	%
Strong preference for support available to help with claim from several providers	18	19.6%
Preference for support available to help with claim from several providers	15	16.3%
No strong preference either way	21	22.8%
Preference for support available to help with claim from single provider	26	28.3%
Strong preference for support available to help with claim from single provider	12	13.0%
Total	92	100%
Base = 92 Note: 19 respondents did not answer this question Source: RSM McClure Watters September 2012		

3 LEADER - NIRDP 2007-2013 – OUTPUTS TO DATE

3.1 Targets / Outputs and Results (MTE December 2010)

Table 80: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

Measure 3.1 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of beneficiaries	155*	600
	Total volume of investment	£946,412.80**	€62.9m
Result	Increase in non-agricultural GVA in supported businesses	Nil	12357
	Gross number of jobs created	Nil	600
Measure 3.1 indicative additional programme specific indicators with quantified targets			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Result	Number of new businesses created	Nil	400
	Potential volume of energy generated from RDP funded renewable energy projects expressed as kilowatt hours per annum	Nil	750,000 kilowatt hours
* based on letters of offer issued at 30 June 2010 - Total value of grant offered £4.141 million ** based on total project costs incurred by farm diversification projects in receipt grant payments up to 30 June 2010. Source: <i>Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 (NISRA, 2010)</i>			

Key findings from MTE (Dec 2010)

- Measure 3.1 at a very early stage
- The Measure was late to open and had encountered challenges to date, with research pointing to areas such as the general economic climate (difficulty in securing match funding) and initial confusion around eligibility.
- Beneficiaries highlighted that rules and requirements such as the need for full planning permission and accounting rules were off-putting
- Reasonable level of interest in the measure
- Little evidence of impacts on employment and quality of life.
- Some concern from Measure leaders in relation to attaining targets set – there is a perception that diversification activity may be reaching saturation levels in NI.

Table 81: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 3.2 Business Creation and Development

Measure 3.2 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of micro enterprises supported:	157 *	1,200
	Total volume of investment	£1,171,058.84	** €40.5m
Result	Increase in non-agricultural GVA in supported businesses	Nil	12357
	Gross number of jobs created	-	500
Measure 3.2 indicative additional programme specific indicators with quantified targets			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Result	Potential volume of energy generated from RDP funded renewable energy projects expressed as kilowatt hours per annum	Nil	300,000 kilowatt hours
<p>* based on letters of offer issued at 30 June 2010 - Total value of grant offered £3.887 million</p> <p>** based on total project costs incurred by micro-business projects in receipt grant payments up to 30 June 2010.</p> <p>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 (NISRA, 2010)</p>			

Key findings from MTE (Dec 2010)

- Measure 3.2 at a very early stage
- The Measure was late to open and had encountered challenges to date, with research pointing to areas such as the general economic climate (and impact on applicants' capability to raise the necessary match funding)
- High level of interest in the measure
- Little evidence of impacts on employment and quality of life.

Table 82: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities

Measure 3.3 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of tourism actions supported	18 *	300
	Total volume of investment	£100,960	€24.3m
Result	Additional number of tourist Visits	Nil	10% increase
	Gross number of jobs created	Nil	50
	Increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses	Nil	3,600
Measure 3.3 indicative additional programme specific indicators with quantified targets			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Result	Number of new tourism businesses created	Nil	60
	Potential volume of energy generated from RDP funded renewable energy projects expressed as kilowatt hours per annum	Nil	200,000 kilowatt hours Per annum
<p>* based on letters of offer issued at 30 June 2010 - Total value of grant offered £534k</p> <p>** based on total project costs incurred by tourism initiatives in receipt grant payments up to 30 June 2010.</p> <p>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 (NISRA, 2010)</p>			

Key findings from MTE (Dec 2010)

- Measure 3.3 at a very early stage
- Research shows it has been impacted by the economic downturn (and impact on applicants' capability to raise the necessary match funding)
- Reasonable level of interest in the measure
- Little evidence of impacts on improving the rural economy and quality of life.

Table 83: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population

Measure 3.4 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of supported actions	7*	60
	Total volume of investments	Nil	€26.2m
Result	Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	Nil	350,000
	Gross number of jobs created	Nil	10
Measure 3.4 indicative additional programme specific indicators with quantified targets			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Result	Potential volume of energy generated from RDP funded renewable energy projects expressed as kilowatt hours per annum	Nil	300,000 kilowatt hours Per annum
	Number of rural businesses with access to improved broadband services	Nil	19,000
	Projects benefiting children and young people in the rural community	Nil	10
<i>*based on letters of offer issued at 30 June 2010 - Total value of grant offered almost £197k. (Not including Broadband funding)</i> <i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 (NISRA, 2010)</i>			

Key findings from MTE (Dec 2010)

- Measure 3.4 at a very early stage
- Research shows there has been a degree of uncertainty as to what the Measure aims to deliver. Two further sets of guidance have been issued.
- Little evidence of impacts on improving or maintaining the living conditions and welfare of those living in rural areas (and hence quality of life)

Table 84: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 3.5 Village Renewal and Development

Measure 3.5 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of villages where actions took place	4*	50
	Total volume of investments	£6,667.67	€24.3m
Result	Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	Nil	300,000
	Gross number of jobs created	Nil	10
Measure 3.5 indicative additional programme specific indicators with quantified targets			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Result	Number of community groups supported to undertake rural development within their communities	Nil	50
	Projects supported to encourage good cross community relations	Nil	20
	Number of funded projects undertaken by RDP supported community groups	Nil	50
<p>* based on letters of offer issued at 30 June 2010 - Total value of grant offered £258k ** based on total project costs incurred by village renewal initiatives in receipt grant payments up to 30 June 2010. Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 (NISRA, 2010)</p>			

Key findings from MTE (Dec 2010)

- Measure 3.5 at a very early stage
- Research shows there has been a degree of misunderstanding in relation to the Measure - in terms of what village renewal means as well as processes for securing funding
- RNNI has facilitated a thematic working group, sharing best practice and study visits
- Clear objectives now established to produce strategic village renewal plans incorporating an integrated cross community element
- On-going challenges and early misconceptions have hindered implementation. Clarification has been provided and progress now taking place.

Table 85: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage

Measure 3.6 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of rural heritage actions supported	2*	20
	Total volume of investments	Nil	€8.1m
Result	Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	Nil	100,000
<i>* based on letters of offer issued at 30 June 2010 - Total value of grant offered £50k</i> <i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 (NISRA, 2010)</i>			

Key findings from MTE (Dec 2010)

- Measure 3.6 at a very early stage
- Low level of interest from the rural community

Table 86: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 4.1 Implementation of Local Development Strategies

Measure 4.1 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of Local Action Groups (LAGs) supported	7	7
	Total size of LAGs area	13613.85 Km2	13613.85 Km2
	Total population in LAG area	1,759,148	1,759,148
	Number of beneficiaries	n/a	6,860
	Number of projects financed by LAGs	343	2,030
Result	Gross number of jobs created	Nil*	1,170
	Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity	Nil	50
* LOOs issued at 31 March 2010 set targets for creation of 67 full-time and 123 part-time jobs Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 (NISRA, 2010)			

Table 87: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 4.2 Inter-territorial and Transnational Cooperation

Measure 4.2 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of Supported cooperation Projects	Nil	7
	Number of Cooperating LAGs	Nil	7
Result	Gross number of jobs created	Nil	14
Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 (NISRA, 2010)			

Table 88: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 4.3 Running Costs, Acquisition of Skills and Animation

Measure 4.3 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of actions supported	n/a	150
Result	Number of Participants that successfully ended a training activity	n/a	500
Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 (NISRA, 2010)			

3.2 Targets / Outputs and Results (MTE Update April 2013)

Table 89: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 3.1

Measure 3.1 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: Dec 2011	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of beneficiaries	323*	600
	Total volume of investment	£ 9,588,596**	€62.9m
Result	Increase in non-agricultural GVA in supported businesses	Not Implemented	12357 ***
	Gross number of jobs created	45	600
Measure 3.1 indicative additional programme specific indicators with quantified targets			
Indicator		Position Reported: Dec 2011	Target 2007 2013
Result	Number of new businesses created	38	400
	Potential volume of energy generated from RDP funded renewable energy projects expressed as kilowatt hours per annum	5,712 kilowatt hours	750,000 kilowatt hours
<p>* based on letters of offer issued at 31 December 2011 ** based on total project costs verified for payment of grant claims paid at 31 December 2011. Includes promoter private eligible contribution and grant paid. *** As advised by the Commission GVA increase is calculated as an average of the projects GVA achievements over a minimum of a 3 year period. Progress towards this target will not be available until 2012. Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 - Update (NISRA, 2012)</p>			

Table 90: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 3.2

Measure 3.2 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: Dec 2011	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of micro enterprises supported:	290 *	1,200
	Total volume of investment	£ 8,939,183	** €40.5m
Result	Increase in non-agricultural GVA in supported businesses	Not Implemented	12357
	Gross number of jobs created	67	500
Measure 3.2 indicative additional programme specific indicators with quantified targets			
Indicator		Position Reported: Dec 2011	Target 2007 2013
Result	Potential volume of energy generated from RDP funded renewable energy projects expressed as kilowatt hours per annum	100 kilowatt hours	300,000 kilowatt hours
<p>* based on letters of offer completed and those in progress at 31 December 2011</p> <p>** based on total project costs as verified for payment of grant claims paid at 31 December 2011. Includes promoter private eligible contribution and grant paid.</p> <p>*** As advised by the Commission GVA increase is calculated as an average of the projects GVA achievements over a minimum of a 3 year period. Progress towards this target will not be available until 2012.</p> <p>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 - Update (NISRA, 2012)</p>			

Table 91: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 3.3

Measure 3.3 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: Dec 2011	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of tourism actions supported	129 *	300
	Total volume of investment	€4,679,938**	€24.3m
Result	Additional number of tourist visits	964	10% increase
	Gross number of jobs created	3	50
	Increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses	Not Implemented	3,600 ***
Measure 3.3 indicative additional programme specific indicators with quantified targets			
Indicator		Position Reported: Dec 2011	Target 2007 2013
Result	Number of new tourism businesses created	3	60
	Potential volume of energy generated from RDP funded renewable energy projects expressed as kilowatt hours per annum	Not Implemented	200,000 kilowatt hours Per annum
<p>* based on letters of offer completed and those in progress at 31 December 2011.</p> <p>** based on total project costs as verified for payment of grant claims paid at 31 December 2011. Includes promoter private eligible contribution and grant paid.</p> <p>*** As advised by the Commission GVA increase is calculated as an average of the projects GVA achievements over a minimum of a 3 year period. Progress towards this target will not be available until 2012.</p> <p>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 - Update (NISRA, 2012)</p>			

Table 92: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 3.4

Measure 3.4 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: Dec 2011	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of supported actions	104*	60
	Total volume of investments	€2,127,101**	€26.2m
Result	Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	1541	350,000
	Gross number of jobs created	2	10
Measure 3.4 indicative additional programme specific indicators with quantified targets			
Indicator		Position Reported: Dec 2011	Target 2007 2013
Result	Potential volume of energy generated from RDP funded renewable energy projects expressed as kilowatt hours per annum	Not Implemented	300,000 kilowatt hours Per annum
	Number of rural businesses with access to improved broadband services	Not Implemented	19,000
	Projects benefiting children and young people in the rural community	21	10
<p><i>*based on letters of offer completed and those in progress at 31 December 2011.</i></p> <p><i>** based on total project costs as verified for payment of grant claims paid at 31 December 2011.</i></p> <p><i>Includes promoter private eligible contribution and grant paid.</i></p> <p><i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 - Update (NISRA, 2012)</i></p>			

Table 93: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 3.5

Measure 3.5 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: Dec 2011	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of villages where actions took place	49*	50
	Total volume of investments	€1,061,364	€24.3m
Result	Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	Not Implemented	300,000
	Gross number of jobs created	1	10
Measure 3.5 indicative additional programme specific indicators with quantified targets			
Indicator		Position Reported: Dec 2011	Target 2007 2013
Result	Number of community groups supported to undertake rural development within their communities	26	50
	Projects supported to encourage good cross community relations	6	20
	Number of funded projects undertaken by RDP supported community groups	6	50
<p>* based on letter of offer completed and those in progress at 31 December 2011. ** based on total project costs as verified for payment of grant claims paid at 31 December 2011. Includes promoter private eligible contribution and grant paid. Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 - Update (NISRA, 2012)</p>			

Table 94: NIRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 3.6

Measure 3.6 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: Dec 2011	Target 2007 2013
Output	Number of rural heritage actions supported	51*	20
	Total volume of investments	€185,161**	€8.1m
Result	Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	501	100,000
<p>*based on letters of offer completed and those in progress at 31 December 2011. ** based on total project costs as verified for payment of grant claims paid at 31 December 2011. Includes promoter private eligible contribution and grant paid. Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 - Update (NISRA, 2012)</p>			

3.3 Targets / Outputs, Results and Impacts (March 2012)

Table 95: Measure 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities

Targets	Strategy	Implementation Plan 30/6/11	LoO Targets set as recorded on Database	Targets recorded as Achieved on the database 31.3.12	Variance (Strategy v LoO Targets Database)	Variance (Implementation Plan v LoO Targets Database)
Number of beneficiaries	752	618	350	156	-402	-268
Total Volume of Investment	8110000	32503945.76	22617074.42	6860868.53	14507074.42	-9886871.34
Increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses	14.94	451.66	5971577.84	91601.8	5971562.9	5971126.18
Number of participants that successfully ended a bespoke training activity	0	56	685	5	685	629
Gross number of jobs created (headcount)	515	386	944.5	45.25	429.5	558.5
Number of new businesses created	491	361	118.75	44	-372.25	-242.25
Number of existing businesses supported	0	0	180	64	180	180
Potential volume of energy generated from RDP funded renewable energy projects expressed as kilowatt hours per annum	694500	579715	399859	5712	-294641	-179856
Number of people benefitting from ICT initiatives	0	0	30	7	30	30
Number of people benefitting from improved mobility	0	0	11	6	11	11
Number of people benefitting from cultural	0	0	10001	0	10001	10001

initiatives						
Number of people benefitting from socio-economic initiatives	0	0	3	0	3	3
Projects benefiting children and young people in the rural community	133	75	37	8	-96	-38
Number of supported new businesses which are still in existence two years after final funding	199	603	112.5	8	-86.5	-490.5
Agricultural labour units reallocated to non-agricultural activities	0	82	82.5	10	82.5	0.5
New jobs still in existence at least two years after funding	0	0	309	1	309	309

**Note: It is recognised that the method of calculating the GVA has been amended and is giving false readings on this table.
 LOO targets and database achieved are taken from a report at the start of April 2012.
Grey shaded cells correspond to “Impacts” as per NIRDP Programme Document
 Source: Summary of DARD Targets Achieved as of 31.3.12*

Table 96: Measure 3.2 Business Creation and Development

Targets	Strategy	Implementation Plan @ 30/6/11	LoO Targets set as recorded on Database	Targets recorded as Achieved on the database @ 31.3.12	Variance (Strategy v LoO Targets Database)	Variance (Implementation Plan v LoO Targets Database)
Number of micro enterprises supported	1548	1161	555.5	170	-992.5	-605.5
Total volume of investment	9555000	45680306	17058814.8	5610807.06	7503814.76	-28621491.24
Increase in non-agricultural gross value added (GVA) in supported businesses	11.65	177	9453326.56	0	9453314.91	9453149.56
Number of participants that successfully ended a bespoke training activity	3.5	78	3008922.89	38.5	3008919.39	3008844.89
Gross number of jobs created (headcount)	782	670	630.5	53	-151.5	-39.5
Potential volume of energy generated from RDP funded renewable energy projects expressed as kilowatt hours per annum	255925	213689	1362	106	-254563	-212327
Number of people benefiting from ICT initiatives	52500	50000	199	78	-52301	-49801
Number of people benefitting from improved mobility	0	0	368	24	368	368
Number of people benefitting from cultural initiatives	0	0	39	11	39	39
Number of people benefitting from socio-economic initiatives	0	0	68	16	68	68
Projects benefitting children and young people in the rural community	0	91	23	3	23	-68

Number of supported new businesses which are still in existence two years after final funding	35	911	114.5	0	79.5	-796.5
New jobs still in existence at least two years after funding	0	0	484	1	484	484
<p><i>*Note LOO targets and database achieved are taken from a report at the start of April 2012.</i></p> <p><i>It is recognised that the method of calculating the GVA has been amended and is giving false readings on this table.</i></p> <p>Grey shaded cells correspond to “Impacts” as per NIRDP Programme Document</p> <p><i>Source: Summary of DARD Targets Achieved as of 31.3.12</i></p>						

Table 97: Measure 3.3 Encouragement of Tourism Activities

Targets	Strategy	Implementation Plan @ 30/6/11	LoO Targets set as recorded on Database	Targets recorded as Achieved on the database @ 31.3.12	Variance (Strategy v LoO Targets Database)	Variance (Implementation Plan v LoO Targets Database)
Number of tourism actions supported	370	357	144	42	-226	-213
Total volume of investment	5175000	21972319	13498194.6	2118512.39	8323194.6	-8474124.4
Additional number of tourist visits	43.1	169.17	206986.05	5150	#VALUE!	206816.88
Number of participants that successfully ended a bespoke training activity	0	44	68	0	68	24
Gross number of jobs created (headcount)	127.5	136	77.5	5	-50	-58.5
Number of new tourism businesses created	111	118	19.5	3	-91.5	-98.5
Potential volume of energy generated from RDP funded renewable energy projects expressed as kilowatt hours per annum	225200	179662	0	0	-225200	-179662
Number of people benefiting from ICT initiatives	0	0	8	3	8	8
Number of people benefiting from cultural initiatives	0	0	5176	5150	5176	5176
Number of people benefiting from socio-economic initiatives	0	0	20	0	20	20
Project is delivered by a social economy enterprise	29	42	67	13	38	25
Number of supported new businesses which are still in existence two years after final funding	19	17	32.5	3	13.5	15.5

New jobs still in existence at least two years after funding	5	75	11.5	1	6.5	-63.5
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**Note: It is recognised that the method of calculating the GVA has been amended and is giving false readings on this table.
 LOO targets and database achieved are taken from a report at the start of April 2012.
Grey shaded cells correspond to “Impacts” as per NIRDP Programme Document
 Source: Summary of DARD Targets Achieved as of 31.3.12*

Table 98: Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population

Targets	Strategy	Implementation Plan @ 30/6/11	LoO Targets set as recorded on Database	Targets recorded as Achieved on the database @ 31.3.12	Variance (Strategy v LoO Targets Database)	Variance (Implementation Plan v LoO Targets Database)
Number of supported actions	139	1455167	100	39	-39	-1455067
Total volume of investment	3030000	18847971	13411635.8	928785.75	10381635.8	-5436335.2
Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	7580	39526	98989	1541	91409	59463
Number of participants that successfully ended a bespoke training activity	0	299	497	0	497	198
Gross number of jobs created (headcount)	18	53	57.5	2	39.5	4.5
Potential volume of energy generated from RDP funded renewable energy projects expressed as kilowatt hours per annum	324800	322267	0	0	-324800	-322267
Projects benefiting children and young people in the rural community	54	78	340	21	286	262
Project is delivered by a social economy enterprise	0	0	32.5	3	26.5	26.5
New jobs still in existence at least two years after funding	0	0	16.5	0	16.5	16.5
<p><i>* Note It is recognised that the method of calculating the GVA has been amended and is giving false readings on this table. LOO targets and database achieved are taken from a report at the start of April 2012. Grey shaded cells correspond to "Impacts" as per NIRDP Programme Document Source: Summary of DARD Targets Achieved as of 31.3.12</i></p>						

Table 99: Measure 3.5 Village Renewal and Development

Targets	Strategy	Implementation Plan @ 30/6/11	LoO Targets set as recorded on Database	Targets recorded as Achieved on the database @ 31.3.12	Variance (Strategy v LoO Targets Database)	Variance (Implementation Plan v LoO Targets Database)
Number of villages where action took place	86	191	194	61	108	3
Total volume of investment	4150000	16528040	2816966.5	477820.69	-1333033.5	-13711073.5
Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	120600	190509	35001	0	-85599	-155508
Number of participants that successfully ended a bespoke training activity	25	43	3	1	-22	-40
Gross number of jobs created (headcount)	41	51	8	6	-34	-44
Number of community groups supported to undertake rural development within their communities	39	34	60	6	21	26
Projects supported to encourage good cross community relations	66	167	57	26	-9	-110
Number of funded projects undertaken by RDP supported community groups	19	42	63	6	44	21
New jobs still in existence at least two years after funding	18	27	26	6	8	-1

**Note It is recognised that the method of calculating the GVA has been amended and is giving false readings on this table.*

LOO targets and database achieved are taken from a report at the start of April 2012.

Grey shaded cells correspond to “Impacts” as per NIRDP Programme Document

Source: Summary of DARD Targets Achieved as of 31.3.12

Table 100: Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage

Targets	Strategy	Implementation Plan @ 30/6/11	LoO Targets set as recorded on Database	Targets recorded as Achieved on the database @ 31.3.12	Variance (Strategy v LoO Targets Database)	Variance (Implementation Plan v LoO Targets Database)
Number of rural heritage actions supported	48	64	51	11	3	-14
Total volume of investment	1500000	5994086	5815356.7	94022.94	4315356.7	920879.7
Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	61800	112512	24352	501	-37448	-88160
Number of participants that successfully ended a bespoke training activity	0	58	720	0	720	690
Population enjoying access to amenity land/nature or conserved rural heritage sites as a result of assisted actions	3330	7935	67371	2	64041	59436
<p><i>*Note: It is recognised that the method of calculating the GVA has been amended and is giving false readings on this table. LOO targets and database achieved are taken from a report at the start of April 2012. Grey shaded cells correspond to "Impacts" as per NIRDP Programme Document Source: Summary of DARD Targets Achieved as of 31.3.12</i></p>						

4 NIRDP 2007-2013 - OVERVIEW

4.1 NIRDP - Axes and Measures

The NIRDP 2007-2013 was developed from the occurrence of reform of the Common Agricultural Policy in 2003 and 2004³. Within the NIRDP, there are axes (4 in total); each contains measures aimed at improving rural development (see table below):

- Axis 1: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector;
- Axis 2: Improving the environment and the countryside;
- Axis 3: Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy; and
- Axis 4: Delivery of the LEADER approach.

Table 101: Measures within NIRDP Axes

Axis	Measures
1: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector	1.1: Vocational Training and Information Actions
	1.2: Adding Value to Agricultural and Forestry Products and Improving Marketing Capability
	1.3: Modernisation of Agricultural Holdings
	1.4: Supply Chain Development Programme
2: Improving the environment and the countryside	2.1: Less Favoured Areas Compensatory Allowances Scheme
	2.2: Agri-Environment Programme
	2.3: First Afforestation (forest expansion)
	2.4: Forest Environments
3: Improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy	3.1: Diversification into non-agricultural activities
	3.2: Business creation and development
	3.3: Encouragement of tourism activities
	3.4: Basic services to the economy and the rural population
	3.5: Village renewal and development
	3.6: Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
4: Delivery of the LEADER approach	4.1: Implementation of Local Development Strategies
	4.2: Inter-territorial and Transnational Co-operation
	4.3: Running costs, Acquisition of skills and Animation
<i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2007-2013 Final Report November 2010.</i>	

³ These reforms meant the introduction of a financial instrument and a single programme: the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

4.2 NIRDP – Delivery Mechanisms

4.2.1 Delivery Methods in the NIRDP

In the delivery of the axes, there are three ‘groups’ of structured delivery methods. These are:

- Secondary Delivery Body;
- DARD ‘in-house’ Delivery; and
- LEADER Approach delivery.

Axis 1 is delivered mostly through the secondary delivery body and Axis 2 through DARD in-house delivery. The LEADER approach is used to deliver most of axis 3 and is used for the delivery of Axis 4 completely. More specifically, the only element of Axis 3 that is not delivered through LEADER is Measure 3.4: Basic Services for the economy and rural population (specifically, the next generation broadband scheme).

4.2.2 NIRDP – Delivery by Measure

The following table demonstrates who is responsible for and who delivers each of the measures in the NIRDP:

Table 102: Roles and Responsibilities within the NIRDP

Axis	Measures	Delivered By	DARD Division Responsible
1	1.1: Vocational Training and Information Actions	Delivery Agent (Countryside Agri-Rural Partnership)	Rural Development Division
	1.2: Adding Value to Agricultural and Forestry Products and Improving Marketing Capability	DARD	Rural Development Division
	1.3: Modernisation of Agricultural Holdings	Delivery Agent (Countryside Agri-Rural Partnership) and Forest Service	Rural Development Division and Forest Service
	1.4: Supply Chain Development Programme	Delivery Agent (Countryside Agri-Rural Partnership)	Rural Development Division
2	2.1: Less Favoured Areas Compensatory Allowances Scheme	DARD	Rural Payments and Inspection Division (Policy Branch)
	2.2: Agri-Environment Programme	DARD	Rural Payments and Inspection Division (Countryside Management Unit)
	2.3: First Afforestation (forest expansion)	Forest Service	Forest Service
	2.4: Forest Environments	Forest Service	Forest Service

Axis	Measures	Delivered By	DARD Division Responsible
3	3.1: Diversification into non-agricultural activities	Local Action Groups/Joint Council Committees	Rural Development Division
	3.2: Business creation and development		Rural Development Division
	3.3: Encouragement of tourism activities		Rural Development Division
	3.4: Basic services to the economy and the rural population	Local Action Groups/Joint Council Committees (except rural broadband scheme delivered by DARD)	Rural Development Division
	3.5: Village renewal and development	Local Action Groups/Joint Council Committees	Rural Development Division
	3.6: Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage		Rural Development Division
4	4.1: Implementation of Local Development Strategies	Local Action Groups/Joint Council Committees	Rural Development Division
	4.2: Inter-territorial and Transnational Co-operation		Rural Development Division
	4.3: Running costs, Acquisition of skills and Animation		Rural Development Division

Source: DARD: Annex A: Delivery of NIRDP, 14 September 2009.

4.3 Intensity of Aid by Measure (Axis 3 and Axis 4)

The intensity of aid per measure is demonstrated in the table below:

Table 103: Aid Intensity Per Measure

Measure	Level of funding	Activity	Level of Support	Maximum funding
3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities	Total fund £ 20 million Max. funding per application £50,000	Grant aid towards capital and resource costs	Up to 50%	£50,000
		Marketing Support: Bespoke training intrinsic to individual applications which is not on offer from any other provider and is part of the funded project	Up to 50%	£5 000 in any one of the activities, or as a composite of two or three
		Marketing Support: Technical support to help new businesses become established and to help existing businesses to consolidate and expand		
3.2 Business creation and development	Total fund £ 20 million Max. funding per application £50,000	Grant aid towards capital and resource costs	Up to 50%	£50,000
		Marketing Support: Bespoke training intrinsic to individual applications which is not on offer from any other provider and is part of the funded project	Up to 50% for the private sector Up to 75% for social economy enterprises, including Community/Voluntary Groups	£5 000 in any one of the activities, or as a composite of two or three
		Marketing Support: Technical support to help new businesses become established and to help existing businesses to consolidate and expand		
3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	Total fund £12 million. Max. funding per application: Private sector £50,000 Social Economy Enterprises £250,000 (including Community /Voluntary Groups), Non Departmental Public Bodies and Local Councils	Grant aid towards capital and resource costs	Up to 50% for the private sector	£50 000
			Up to 75% for social economy enterprises, including Community / Voluntary Groups.	£250 000
			75% for non-departmental public bodies and local councils	£250 000
		Marketing Support: Bespoke training intrinsic to individual applications which is not on offer from any	Up to 50% for the private sector Up to 75% for social economy enterprises, including	£5 000 in any one of the activities, or as a composite of two or

Measure	Level of funding	Activity	Level of Support	Maximum funding
		other provider	Community/Voluntary Groups	three. Exception: Marketing will be available up to a max of £200,000 for strategic bodies and local councils. Full consultation with NITB must take place prior to approval.
		Marketing Support: Technical support to investigate project potential or consolidate a project/business.		
3.4 Basic Services for the economy and rural population	Total fund £12 million. Max. funding per application: Private sector £50,000 Social Economy Enterprises £250,000 (including Community /Voluntary Groups), Non Departmental Public Bodies and Local Councils	Grant aid towards capital and resource costs	Up to 50% for the private sector	£50 000
			Up to 75% for social economy enterprises, including Community /Voluntary Groups.	£250 000
			75% for non-departmental public bodies and local councils	£250 000
		Marketing Support: Bespoke training intrinsic to individual applications which is not on offer from any other provider	Up to 50% for the private sector Up to 75% for social economy enterprises, including Community/Voluntary Groups Up to 75% for non-departmental public bodies and local councils	£5 000 in any one of the activities, or as a composite of two or three.
3.5 Village Renewal and Development	Total fund £12 million. Max. funding per application: Private sector £50,000 Social Economy Enterprises £250,000 (including Community /Voluntary Groups), Non Departmental Public Bodies and Local Councils	Grant aid towards capital and resource costs	Up to 50% for the private sector	£50 000
			Up to 75% for social economy enterprises, including Community /Voluntary Groups.	£250 000
			75% for non-departmental public bodies and local councils	£250 000
		Marketing support to create awareness of the funded project	Up to 50% for the private sector Up to 75% for social economy enterprises, including	£5 000 in any one of the activities, or as a composite of two or
		Bespoke training intrinsic to individual		

Measure	Level of funding	Activity	Level of Support	Maximum funding
		applications which is not on offer from any other provider	Community/Voluntary Groups Up to 75% for non-departmental public bodies and local councils	three.
		Technical support to investigate project potential or consolidate a project/business.		
3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage	Total fund £4million Max. funding per application: Private sector £50,000 Social Economy Enterprises £250,000 (including Community/Voluntary Groups), Non Departmental Public Bodies and Local Councils	Grant aid towards capital and resource costs	Up to 50% for the private sector	£50 000
			Up to 75% for social economy enterprises, including Community /Voluntary Groups.	£250 000
			75% for non-departmental public bodies and local councils	£250 000
		Marketing support to raise awareness of environmental and cultural heritage	Up to 50% for the private sector Up to 75% for social economy enterprises, including Community/ Voluntary Groups	£5 000 in any one of the activities, or as a composite of two or three.
		Bespoke training intrinsic to individual applications which is not on offer from any other provider	Up to 75% for non-departmental public bodies and local councils	
	Technical support to investigate project potential or consolidate a project/business.			
4.1 Implementation of Local Development Strategies	-	-	-	-
4.2 Inter-territorial and Transnational Co-operation	Total fund available is 5% of the total allocation.	-	-	-
4.3 Running Costs, Acquisition of Skills and Animation	Total fund available: up to 20% of EU and National funding expended in the programme.	-	-	-
<i>Source: NIRDP Axis 3 and 4 Operating Rules</i>				

4.4 NIRDP - Roles and responsibilities

4.4.1 NIRDP - Monitoring Committee

To oversee the NIRDP, a Monitoring Committee was established as required by Articles 77-79 of EU Regulation 1698/2005. As the Managing Authority, DARD is responsible for 'chairs and providing the secretariat for the NIRDP Monitoring Committee. It draws up annual progress reports and, after approval by the NIRDP Monitoring Committee, submits them to the European Commission'. They are required to meet at least twice a year.

(Source: DARD; http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-dard-rural/development/nirdp_2007_-_2013_monitoring_committee.htm).

Monitoring and evaluation is paramount to ensure that the NIRDP is 'implemented in an efficient and effective manner through the regular assessment of progress against targets'. This monitoring is guided by the Commission's Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF). This allows progress to be followed and monitored;

"against the common indicators relating to the baseline situation as well as the inputs, outputs, results and impact of the programme. The common indicators will be supplemented, where relevant, with additional indicators specific to the Northern Ireland programme".

(Source: Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, Programme (Version 5) – approved by the European Commission January 2010).

Main duties include the responsibility to:

- consider the criteria for selecting operations eligible for financing under each axis (within four months of NIRDP approval);
- consider the action plan for the National Rural Network
- monitor delivery of the programme
- consider and approve the annual progress reports for the Programme before submission to the Commission
- consider and approve proposals to amend the NIRDP.
- periodically review progress made towards achieving the specific objectives of each of the programme measures;
- monitor progress towards achieving the targets set for the programme, particularly at the mid-term point;
- propose to the Managing Authority adjustments to improve the implementation of the programme; and
- ensure that equality considerations underpin the delivery of the Programme and that where the Programme contributes to the delivery of Government equality strategies the relevant targets are regularly reviewed.

The Monitoring Committees principles are to:

- Thoroughly prepare for and attend meetings of the Committee;
- Participate actively to support in the work of the Committee;
- Listen to and respect the views and contribution of other Committee members and observers;

- Be objective in your views, basing decisions on an analysis of the evidence and its relevance to the overall programme;
- Respect the confidentiality of the issues discussed at the Committee and the views expressed by other members of the Committee;
- Participate in proceedings in an open and transparent manner;
- Balance their individual and organisational views against the collective objectives and needs of the Committee; and
- Be mindful of the equality issues related to the Programme and the equality responsibilities of the Committee and its members' mission approval for any proposed amendments to the programme.

Organisations that are members of the committee are as follows:

- Council for Nature Conservation and Countryside (CNCC) (Peter Archdale);
- Disability Action (Monica Wilson);
- National Trust (Diane Ruddock);
- NI Leader Network (Miceal McCoy);
- Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) (Cllr Sean Clarke and Cllr Roger Burton);
- Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network (NIRWN) (Louise Coyle);
- Rural Community Network (RCN) (Michael Hughes);
- Rural Development Council (RDC) (Teresa Canavan);
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) (James Robinson);
- Ulster Farmer's Union (UFU) (Wilbert Mayne and Sharon Porter);
- Ulster Wildlife Trust (UWT) (John Faulkner); and
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

(Source: DARD; http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-dard-rural-development/nirdp_2007_-_2013_monitoring_committee.htm).

4.4.2 NIRD - Management and Control Structures

Managing Authority

DARD (specifically, the Rural Development Programme Management Branch) are the Managing Authority for NIRD and this makes the Department responsible for the 'efficient, effective and correct management and implementation of the N.I. Rural Development Programme funded under EAFRD'.

The Managing Authority's main responsibilities and duties are as follows:

- To ensure that operations selected for funding are in accordance with agreed criteria;
- To make sure there is an IT system to record and maintain data for monitoring & evaluation;
- To make beneficiaries and others know their obligations and maintain a separate accounting system or use adequate accounting codes for all transactions under the NIRD;
- To make certain that programme evaluations are carried out within required time limits and conform to the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework;
- To guarantee that EC publicity requirements are met as per EC Regulation 1974/2006 Annex VI; and

- To ensure that the Paying Agency receives all necessary information on procedures and controls.

(Source: Delivering the 'Leader approach' across the UK, McCullough, M. 2012).

Member State

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has 'overall responsibility for fulfilling the role of Member State in accordance with Article 74 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005'.

(Source: Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, Programme (Version 5) – approved by the European Commission January 2010).

This means that DEFRA are responsible for designating all bodies previously mentioned, as well as the following:

- To ensure that all legislative, statutory and administrative provisions in accordance with Article 9(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 are adopted to ensure effective protection of the Community's financial interests;
- To ensure that the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme has the relevant management and control systems in place to ensure separation of functions between the Managing Authority and other bodies; and
- To ensure that the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme's management and control systems function effectively throughout the programme period.

(Source: Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, Programme (Version 5) – approved by the European Commission January 2010).

Accredited Paying Agency

DARD is the only accredited Paying Agency in N.I., and as such they must ensure that 'compliance with community rules have been checked before it authorises, executes and accounts for payments'. DARD must ensure that:

- The eligibility of requests as well as their compliance with Community rules, are checked before payment is authorised;
- Accurate and exhaustive accounts are kept of the payments made;
- The checks laid down by Community legislation are made;
- The requisite documents are presented within the time-limits and in the form stipulated by Community rules; and
- The documents are accessible and kept in a manner which ensures their completeness, validity and legibility over time, including with regard to electronic documents within the meaning of Community rules.

Their key role as the Paying Agency is:

- Approving payments by Implementing Divisions;
- Fulfilling payments via the GAS in Orchard House;

- Accounting for payments by EC Finance Division; and
- Recognition of debts by EC Finance Division.

(Source: Delivering the 'Leader approach' across the UK, McCullough, M. 2012).

Co-ordinating Body

The co-ordinating body for NIRDP is the UK Co-ordinating Body. They are designated by the Member State in accordance with Article 6(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 and are 'responsible for collecting the information to be made available to the Commission, sending that information and promoting harmonised application of Community rules'.

(Source: Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, Programme (Version 5) – approved by the European Commission January 2010).

Certification Body

The certification body for NIRDP is the Northern Ireland Audit Office, designated by the Member State in accordance with Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 to 'certify the truthfulness, completeness and accuracy of the accounts of the Accredited Paying Agency' (DARD).

(Source: Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, Programme (Version 5) – approved by the European Commission January 2010).

Body responsible for validation of costings associated with compensation for costs incurred or income foregone

The Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP), specifically, the Public Expenditure, Economic Research and Briefing Branch, is responsible for 'validations of costings associated with compensations for costs incurred or income foregone'.

Key objectives for DFP in this role are:

- To provide economic input to policy development for the public sector and regional economy;
- To provide professional economic advice, guidance and support to customers and stakeholders of the Branch; and
- To develop and implement pay policy.

(Source: Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, Programme (Version 5) – approved by the European Commission January 2010).

Summary of Management and Control Structure

There are a number of bodies responsible for the implementation of the NIRDP, through effective management and control procedures; these are:

- The Department for Agriculture and Rural Development;
- The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs;

- The Department of Finance and Personnel;
- The UK Co-ordinating Body; and
- The Northern Ireland Audit Office.

The table overleaf provides a summary of these bodies and their roles in managing and controlling the programme:

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Table 104: Management and Control of NIRDP

Body	Role/s	Responsibilities
Department for Agriculture and Rural Development	Managing Authority Accredited Paying Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that operations selected for funding are in accordance with agreed criteria; • To make sure there is an IT system to record and maintain data for monitoring & evaluation; • To make beneficiaries and others know their obligations and maintain a separate accounting system or use adequate accounting codes for all transactions under the NIRDP; • To make certain that programme evaluations are carried out within required time limits and conform to the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework; • To guarantee that EC publicity requirements are met as per EC Regulation 1974/2006 Annex VI; • To ensure that the Paying Agency receives all necessary information on procedures and controls; • To ensure eligibility of requests as well as their compliance with Community rules, are checked before payment is authorised; • To ensure that accurate and exhaustive accounts are kept of the payments made; • To ensure the checks laid down by Community legislation are made; • To make certain the requisite documents are presented within the time-limits and in the form stipulated by Community rules; and • To make documents are accessible and kept in a manner which ensures their completeness, validity and legibility over time, including with regard to electronic documents within the meaning of Community rules.
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Member State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that all legislative, statutory and administrative provisions in accordance with Article 9(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 are adopted to ensure effective protection of the Community's financial interests; • To ensure that the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme has the relevant management and control systems in place to ensure separation of functions between the Managing Authority and other bodies; and • To ensure that the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme's management and control systems function effectively throughout the programme period.
Department of Finance and Personnel	Body responsible for validation of costings associated with compensation for costs incurred or income foregone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide economic input to policy development for the public sector and regional economy; • To provide professional economic advice, guidance and support to customers and stakeholders of the Branch; and • To develop and implement pay policy.
UK Co-ordinating Body	Co-ordinating Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for collecting the information to be made available to the Commission, sending that information and promoting harmonised application of Community rules.
Northern Ireland Audit Office	Certification Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must certify the truthfulness, completeness and accuracy of the accounts of the Accredited Paying Agency.
Source ???		

4.5 LEADER – Roles and Responsibilities

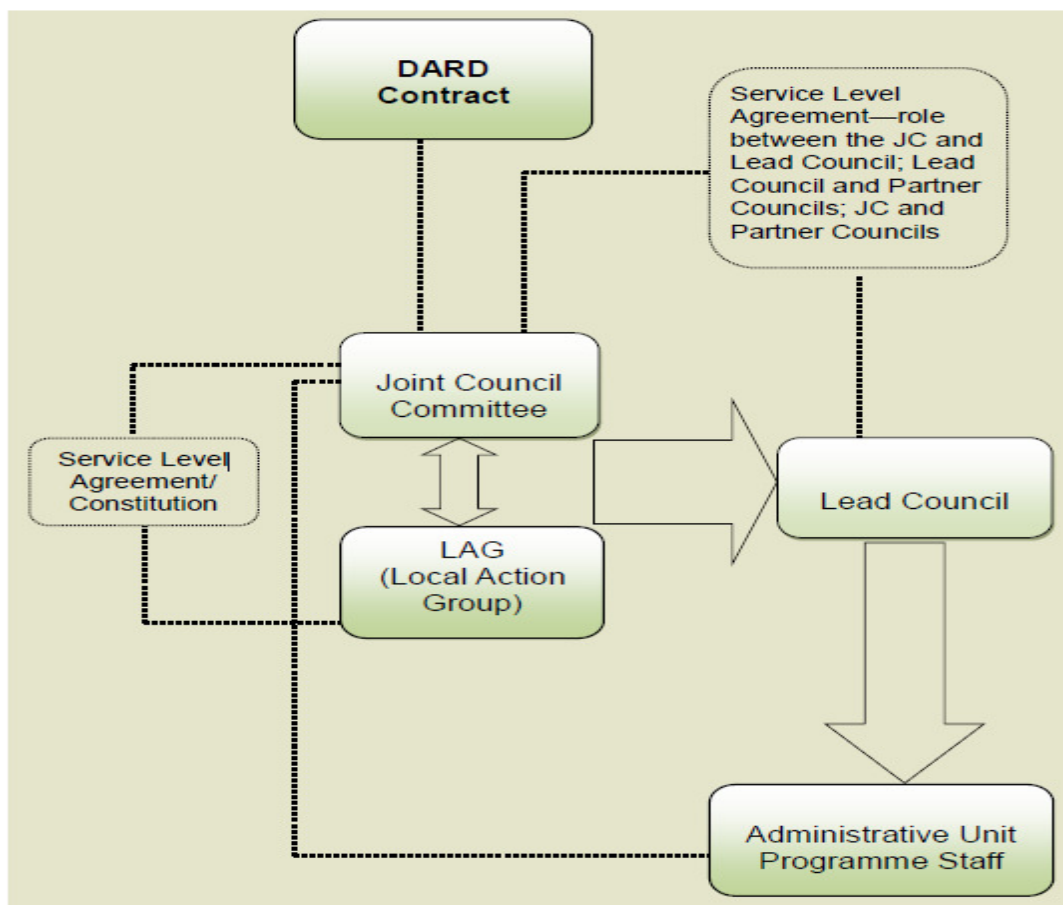
Table 105: LEADER Roles and Responsibilities

Body	Role/s	Responsibilities
Joint Committee	Administrative and financial lead actor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration of public funds Enter into a contract for funding with DARD to enable implementation of the agreed strategy Quality assure and consider the LAG proposals in relation to financial assistance towards projects Issue Letters of Offers and rejection
Local Action Group	Strategy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the strategy Issuing calls for applications Designate members to act as the assessment panel for applications Recommending projects for approval / rejection by the JC Designate a review panel to deal with any appeals Co-operation – undertake joint actions with other LAGs or similar groups in other regions or member states Ensure the composition and balance of the LAG is maintained and any vacancies are filled in a transparent manner Participate in Regional, National and European Networks
Lead Council	Responsible for ensuring that those involved in the delivery of the strategy have the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their duties/roles competently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verification of payments Management of staff
Staff	Work to agreed programme operating procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day to day management of the programme Guidance and advice to potential project promoters Assisting applicants to develop projects Preparation of assessment / appraisal documents for assessment panels Monitoring project progress Maintenance of EU grants database Monitoring spend in support of agreed financial targets Report to LAG, Joint Council and Lead Council on the implementation and delivery of the strategy and associated action plans

Source: Rural Network NI Main Roles and Responsibilities within Axis 3 and 4 Delivery Structures

It is important to note that, compared to the previous programme in 2000-2006, the reporting structure for Local Action Groups (LAGs) is more complex, as they must report to the Joint Council Committee (JCC).

Figure 106: Key features of delivery structure



Source Rural Network NI

4.5.1 Joint Council Committees (JCCs)

The table below shows the composition of the Joint Council Committees within each of the Local Action Group areas:

Table 107: Joint Council Committees

Name	Population	Area (km2)	Councils	Lead Council	JCC Composition	LAG Composition
SWARD (South West Action for Rural Development)	134,000+	3,855 sq km	Cookstown District Council Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council Fermanagh District Council Magherafelt District Council	Cookstown District Council	8 councillors (2 x 4 council areas)	32 LAG members consisting of: - 16 Councillors (4 x 4 Councils) - 16 Social Partners (4 x 4 Councils).
GROW (Generating Rural Opportunities Within South Antrim)	37,386	653 sq km	Antrim Borough Council Carrickfergus Borough Council Newtownabbey Borough Council	Antrim Borough Council	9 councillors (3 x 3 council areas)	22 LAG members consisting of: - 9 Councillors (3 x 3 Councils) - 13 socio-economic representatives
SOAR (Southern Organisation for Action in Rural areas)	107,337	1,950 sq km	Craigavon Borough Council Armagh City and District Council Newry and Mourne District Council	Craigavon Borough Council	12 councillors (4 x 3 Council areas)	33 LAG members consisting of: - 12 Councillors (4 x 3 Councils) - 21 socio-economic representatives (7 social partner representatives x 3 councils)
ARC North West	94,250	3,000 sq km	Derry City Council Limavady Borough Council Omagh District Council Strabane District Council	Omagh District Council	16 councillors (4 x 4 council areas)	32 LAG members consisting of: - 16 Councillors (4 x 4 councils) -16 social partners (4 x4 Council)
North East Region	90,190	2,080 sq km	Ballymena Borough Council Ballymoney Borough Council Coleraine Borough Council, Larne Borough Council Moyle District Council	Ballymena Borough Council	15 councillors (3 x 5 Council areas)	30 LAG members consisting of: - 15 Councillors (3 from e-ach of the 5 councils) - 15 social partners (3 x 5 councils)

Name	Population	Area (km2)	Councils	Lead Council	JCC Composition	LAG Composition
Down Rural Area Partnership	107,337	1,950 sq km	Ards Borough Council Banbridge District Council Down District Council North Down Borough Council	Ards Borough Council	8 councillors (2 x 4 council areas)	24 LAG members consisting of: - 8 Councillors (2 x 4 Council areas) - 16 social partners (4 x 4 council areas)
Lagan Rural Partnership	40,350	647 sq km	Lisburn Borough Council Castlereagh Borough Council Belfast City Council	Lisburn Borough Council	11 councillors (7 x Lisburn Council, 3 x Castlereagh Borough Council and 1 x Belfast City Council)	22 LAG members consisting of: - 11 Councillors (7 x Lisburn Borough Council, 3 x Castlereagh Borough Council and 1 x Belfast City Council) - 11 social partner representatives (7 x Lisburn Borough Council, 3 x Castlereagh Borough Council, and 1 x Belfast City Council)

Source: www.sward.org.uk, www.growsouthantrim.com, www.soarni.org, www.arcnorthwest.com, www.northeastrdp.com, www.downruralareapartnership.com, www.laganruralpartnership.com and Rural Network NI Local Action Groups Summary Information Sheets

4.5.2 Local Action Groups (LAGS)

Local Action Groups were established to allow for effective delivery of NIDRP at a local level, and were identified at consultation as being paramount in aiding the delivery of axis 3 at a local level to allow for the use of the LEADER approach.

(Source: Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, Programme (Version 5) – approved by the European Commission January 2010).

There are seven LAGS in total, and these are detailed in the table above:

Memberships within each LAG is voluntary and members must be:

- locally based;
- a balanced and representative selection of partners drawn from different socio-economic sectors;
- a balanced representation of men and women; and
- a fair representation of equality across Section 75 groups.

As a result, equality monitoring of the LAG composition must be also routinely carried out, and at decision-making level:

“the economic and social partners and associations must make up at least 50% of the local partnership. This means that the LAG must not have more than half its members drawn from the public sector, including elected councillors, MLAs, council officers, civil servants and the representatives of statutory bodies. This balance must be maintained throughout the delivery of the programme.”

In additions, the operating rules for axis 3 and 4 recommend that office bearer positions are swapped every three years and the Chairperson should interchange each year.

(Source: NIRDP Axis 3 and 4 Operating Rules).

4.5.3 Programme Management Staff

Table 108: Programme Management Staff

Name	Councils	Lead Council	Programme Management Staff, Roles & Location
SWARD (South West Action for Rural Development)	Cookstown District Council, Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council, Fermanagh District Council and Magherafelt District Council	Cookstown District Council	SWARD Administrative Unit Administration Unit staff are employees of Cookstown District Council. There are 11 staff in total Based in Cookstown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Manager • Assistant Programme Manager • Administrative Officer • Project Officer • Monitoring Officer Based in Dungannon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Officer

Name	Councils	Lead Council	Programme Management Staff, Roles & Location
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting Monitoring Officer Based in Magherafelt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Officer • Monitoring Officer Based in Fermanagh <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting Project Officer • Monitoring Officer
GROW (Generating Rural Opportunities Within South Antrim)	Antrim Borough Council, Carrickfergus Borough Council and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Antrim Borough Council	GROW Staff Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Manager • Funding Services Manager • Project Implementation Officer • Project Implementation Officer • Administrative Assistant
SOAR (Southern Organisation for Action in Rural areas)	Craigavon Borough Council, Armagh City and District Council and Newry and Mourne District Council	Craigavon Borough Council	SOAR Administrative Unit Craigavon Borough Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Manager • Deputy Programme Manager • Project Officer • Project Officer • Verification Officer • Administration Officer Armagh City and District Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Officer • Project Officer • Administration Office Newry & Mourne District Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Officer • Project Officer • Administration Office
ARC North West	Derry City Council, Limavady Borough Council, Omagh District Council and Strabane District Council	Omagh District Council	North West Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Development Programme Manager • Finance & Verification Officer • Clerical Officer • Clerical Officer Derry Local Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Development Project Officer • Project & Business Support Officer Limavady Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Development Project

Name	Councils	Lead Council	Programme Management Staff, Roles & Location
			<p>Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project & Business Support Officer <p>Omagh Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Development Project Officer Rural Development Project Officer Project & Business Support Officer <p>Strabane Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Development Project Officer Project & Business Support Officer
North East Region	Ballymena Borough Council, Ballymoney Borough Council, Coleraine Borough Council, Larne Borough Council and Moyle District Council	Ballymena Borough Council	ARC North West Administrative Unit Administration staff are employees of Ballymena Borough Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy Manager Finance Officer Project Officer Project Officer Project Officer Claims & Monitoring Officer Claims & Monitoring Officer Clerical Officer
Down Rural Area Partnership	Ards Borough Council, Banbridge District Council, Down District Council and North Down Borough Council	Ards Borough Council	Down Rural Area Partnership Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Development Programme Manager Principal Finance & Project Monitoring Officer Rural Project Development Officer Rural Project Development Officer Rural Project Development Officer Renewal Support Officer Senior Administrative Officer
Lagan Rural Partnership	Lisburn Borough Council, Castlereagh Borough Council and Belfast City Council	Lisburn Borough Council	Lagan Rural Partnership Administrative Unit Administration staff are based in Lisburn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Development Manager Rural Business Administration Officer Rural Business Administrative Assistant

Name	Councils	Lead Council	Programme Management Staff, Roles & Location
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Development Officer • Rural Development Officer • Rural Development Officer
<p>Source: www.sward.org.uk, www.growsouthantrim.com, www.soarni.org, www.arcnorthwest.com, www.northeastrdp.com, www.downruralareapartnership.com and www.laganruralpartnership.com.</p>			

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5 NIRD 2007-2013 - PROJECT INSPECTION AND AUDIT

5.1 EU Regulation

Project Inspection and Audit (EU Regulation 1975/2006)

- Article 33 Supervision of JCCs – Monitoring Inspections
- Article 26 Administrative Inspections
- Article 27 On-the-Spot Checks
- Article 30 Ex-Post Checks
- Article 32 Control Checks
- Inspections by Other Independent Audit Bodies

In the delivery of Axis 3 and 4 by LAGs, DARD created operating rules as means of guidance. It also contains documents to be used and referred to throughout the delivery of Axis 3 and 4 such as:

- Documentation Checklist;
- Article 26 Checklists; and
- Article 33 Checklists.

5.2 Programme Compliance

DARD's Programme Compliance Unit carries out checks to provide assurance that the programme is being delivered as expected. This has included providing support through preparation of checklists and procedures – particularly for Axis 3.

Initially the role has been “hand-holding” / testing of procedures, but has now moved to Article 33 checks.

The PCU seeks to work in partnership with the LAGs / Monitoring Officers to resolve issues.

The level of checking has reduced as the programme has progressed: Article 33 checks are carried out every 6 months for the first 2 years (across all claims); now reduced to annual checks and in some cases the proportion checked is down to 20%.

5.3 Current Audit Requirements

5.3.1 European Court of Auditors

The European Court of Auditors is body charged with giving a statement of assurance on EU spending. It carries out audits of expenditure in various Member States and may issue reports on specific subjects.

The ECA has qualified the accounts every year for about 15 years – chiefly because of errors in agricultural spending by Member States - so it is uncertain that monies have been spent according to scheme rules.

This puts pressure on the EU Commission and Member States to tighten controls.

The Commission is determined to achieve an unqualified statement of assurance on the EU accounts from the ECA and often use this argument to resist Member States attempts to simplify controls or weaken audit provisions.

5.3.2 UK Government /Member State

The UK as a Member State through and subsequently DFP must provide the necessary match funding to the EU contributions. Government funding must adhere to “Managing Public Money NI”.

Public funding is subject to a series by the **National Audit Office**.

5.3.3 Competent Authority and Certifying Body

Under EU legislation, CAP funded EAGF and EAFRD payments can only be made by accredited Paying Agencies (e.g. DARD). Within each Member State, a Paying Agency must be accredited by the Competent Authority, as meeting certain criteria laid down in governing legislation. The accounts of each of the Paying Agencies are subject to audit by the Certifying Body (in the UK, the Certifying Body, as appointed by the UK Competent Authority, is the NAO acting in a lead capacity on behalf of a consortium including the Northern Ireland Audit Office, NIAO); the NIAO must:

“Certify the truthfulness, completeness and accuracy of the accounts of the accredited paying agency, taking account of the management and control systems set up. It must produce a certificate (an attestation) stating whether it has gained reasonable assurance that the accounts are true, complete and accurate and that the internal control procedures have operated satisfactorily, together with a report of its findings”.

On the basis of such audit, the Commission can propose “clearance” of the relevant Paying Agency accounts; this is on an annual basis.

Clearance is subject to guarantee that accepted audit recommendations on improvements required within Paying Agencies are implemented within agreed timescales. This is overseen by the UK Co-ordinating Body, which acts as Secretariat to the UK Competent Authority.

5.3.4 UK Co-ordinating Body

The UK Co-ordinating Body must report to the Competent Authority on these annual certifications and recommendations and findings must be addressed through these reports.

5.3.5 DARD

DARD draws down substantial EU funding through the EAFRD. The Permanent Secretary as Accounting Officer provides Parliament and the public with assurance that public controls are in place. The Permanent Secretary has to account to the ARD Committee and Public Accounts Committee on DARD’s management of EU Programmes.

5.3.6 Managing Authority

Rural Policy as the MA is responsible for the efficient, effective and correct management and implementation of the NIRD. Rural Policy has to provide assurances to the Commission that expenditure is in accordance with the Regulations.

5.3.7 Role of the Accredited Paying Agency

DARD is the only accredited Paying Agency in Northern Ireland and is responsible for authorising, executing and accounting for all payments of eligible expenditure under the NIRDP. DARD must thus guarantee:

- Eligibility of request is checked before payment is authorised;
- The procedure for allocating aid is checked before payment authorised;
- Compliance with EC rules is checked before payment authorised;
- Accurate and exhaustive accounts are kept of payments made;
- Checks as per EC legislation are made and controls are in place; and
- Documents are presented within the time-limits and in the form required by EC rules.

The Paying Agency must be accredited as having an administrative organisation and a system of internal controls which comply with strict criteria. The Paying Agency is accredited by the Competent Authority (Ministers).

The key role of the Paying Agency includes authorisation of payments comprising administrative controls (involving pre-payment and post-payment check, checking and authorising of claims based on established checklist and segregation of key functions, often enforces under computerised systems) and on-the-spot controls including on-the-spot checks, and the examination of claimant and producer records).

An annual Statement of Assurance must be submitted by DARD to the European Commission recording any reservations surrounding the propriety or regularity of payment.

The Paying Agency (DARD) is also subject to an annual audit by the NIAO, audits by the Commission and scrutiny by the UK Coordinating Body.

The NIAO, as Certifying Body, may undertake site visits to Council Clusters and examine a sample of claims.

5.3.8 Verification Unit

In addition to these audits and clearances etc., there is a Verification Unit (VU) responsible for a range of on the spot verifications on the expenditure declared by beneficiaries of EAFRD aid.

The objectives of the VU checks are set out in Articles 27, 28 of Commission Regulation (EC) 1975/2006 (Note these are pre-payment checks). Specifically, these are as follows

On the spot checks (Articles 27/28)

The objectives of the on the spot checks are to verify the following:

- That the payments made to the beneficiary (i.e. the supplier of goods or services to the project) can be supported by accounting or other documents held by the bodies of firms carrying out the operations supported;
- For an adequate number of expenditure items, that the nature and timing of the relevant expenditure comply with Community provisions and correspond to the approved specifications of the operation and the works actually executed or services delivered;
- That the use or intended use of the operation is consistent with the use described in the application for Community support;

- That the publicly funded operations have been implemented in accordance with Community rules and policies, especially the rules on public tendering and relevant mandatory standards established by national legislation or established in the rural development programme.

Selection of claims for on the spot checks

Under legislation, the VU is obliged to check at least 4% of the public expenditure declared to the Commission each year and at least 5% of public expenditure declared to the Commission over the whole programming period.

The sample of approved operations to be checked must take into account:

- The need to check an appropriate mix of types and sizes of operations;
- Any risk factors which have been identified following national or Community checks;

The need to maintain a balance between the axes and measures.

The VU Check on claims

These are scheduled for payment on a weekly basis by RDD Central Payments Unit (CPU). They advise VU of claims received who then select the appropriate number of claims to check using both Random and Risk Based sampling methodologies.

VU visits for projects and running cost claims

When claims are selected for checking, the VU contact the appropriate Council and arrange for the TRIM link to be sent to the Verification Officer. The claim review entails scrutiny of all documentation held on TRIM relating to the claim i.e. claim form, timesheets, invoices, bank statements, etc. The site visit is normally arranged for a couple of days after selection of the claim as it is essential to minimise payment delays. At the site visit all original documentation is viewed and checklist completed.

Reporting

The VU completes a draft report and forward to RDD Measure Manager and copied to Rural Branch Managers. If there are recommendations being made, VU will issue the report in draft form and await RDD management responses (within one week).

Under Art 34, VU are also required to provide an annual report to the EU Commission detailing the amount of public expenditure declared in respect of each of the Axes in the RDP plan and the value of checks conducted therein. This is subject to NIAO certification.

The time schedule for VU checks/reports on both administration and delivery are:

- First Day: Each Friday RDD CPU provide payment schedule to VU;
- First Day: VU select claim within half day of notification by CPU;
- Second Day: VU visit Council and review claim file;
- Third Day: VU prepare/update checklist;
- Fourth Day: VU visit project (if appropriate)
- Fifth Day: VU draft report; if there are no material findings, VU advise CPU to release payment. If there are material findings, VU cannot authorise release of payment (queries must be resolved to a satisfactory standard);
- Sixth/Seventh Day: VU report is issued to RDD Measure Manager and Rural Branch Manager for consideration.

The above is dependent upon RDD/Council Cluster facilitating a site visit on the day following selection of the claim by VU. The release of payment is also dependent on a prompt visit to the project.

In addition to these VU checks already mentioned, the VU are required to undertake Article 30 checks (ex post). The objectives of the Art 30 checks are to:

- Verify that the project does not undergo a "substantial modification" within 5 years of the Letter of Offer (LoO). These are changes which:
 - Affect its nature or implementation conditions;
 - Results either from a change in the nature of ownership of the grant funded items; and/or
 - The cessation or relocation of a productive activity.
- Verify the reality and finality of the payment made by the applicant; and
- To ensure that the project has not been financed in an irregular manner from different national or Community sources (double-funded).

These Art 30 (ex post) checks cover at least 1% of eligible expenditure each calendar year on projects who have received their final payment in the preceding year.

5.3.9 Summary

The checks undertaken by DARD are mandatory as set out in the EU Regulations;

- Councils, LAGs and DARD staff have been advised of control checks that need to be undertaken;
- There are a limited number of checks undertaken to try and maintain/create a positive working relationship; and
- As a Paying Agency DARD, has achieved a high standard and this needs to be maintained.

5.4 European Commission Guideline on Legality and Regularity

The European Commission's Guideline on Legality and Regularity (The Guideline for the Reinforcement of Assurance as to the Legality and Regularity of Transactions at the Level of Financial Beneficiaries: Part 1 – Audit Strategy, European Commission (2010)) has been applied by DARD to Single Farm Payment 2011. This document was produced to provide a guideline to assist the "Certifying Bodies (CBs) or other external control bodies appointed by the Member States, in the establishment of their audit strategy".

In 2010, the European Commission issued a new guideline (AGRI/ D(2010) 248617Rev1) 'for the reinforcement of assurance as to the legality and regularity of transactions at the level of final beneficiaries'. This guideline proposes that the Member States arrange for an audit to be carried out and reported to the European Commission in September each year following the claim year.

Whilst the guideline is voluntary DARD has given a commitment to implement it, for the first time, in respect of the Single Farm Payment population for scheme year 2011. The Department has appointed the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) as the Northern Ireland Certifying Body, to carry out this work. The NIAO will submit their first Report to the Commission via the UKCB in September 2012.

No other UK Paying Agency is engaged in this exercise.

To date the NIAO has submitted an Audit Strategy to the Commission and tendered for a contractor to assist in them in the technical areas of the process. KPMG has been appointed by the NIAO as the contractor. The contract is between the NIAO and KPMG. DARD is not a party to the Contract.

Whilst the NIAO will retain overall responsibility for the audit a project team appointed by NIAO will co-ordinate, direct and report on an independent sample of re-performance testing of farm inspections. A member of the NIAO audit team will attend a sample of re-performance visits with the project team and a DARD inspector. The DARD Inspector will not be the Inspector who undertook the initial SFP visit.

The accompanying DARD inspector will carry out re-performance work which will be controlled by the project team who will provide challenge where necessary. The DARD inspector will also provide support and appropriate clarification with regard to SFP land eligibility scheme rules and interpretation of the original inspection results.

Based on a control assurance of 30%, 57 re-performance inspections have been undertaken across Northern Ireland. These re-performance inspections were selected by the NIAO from the random sample and farmers were notified in advance of the visit. The NIAO undertook their inspections on a regional basis and staff in Countryside Management Compliance Branch Support Unit, Ballymena collated the necessary papers on file for the NIAO.

After the re-performance visit the NIAO will produce a Report which will be issued to Kevin Murphy European Services Branch (ESB) and Richard Crowe Compliance Division. While the Report is the property of the NIAO Compliance Division will be given the opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the Report. ESB will monitor the number of visits undertaken.

Re-performance visits commenced in early October and were completed by December 2011. The NIAO will collate and analyse the information, thereafter this will form part of the NIAO report as Certifying Body.

Subsequently the NIAO will undertake an analysis of their findings and compare these to the outcome of the initial DARD visit. The NIAO will then trace payments through the GAS system. Where variances occur the NIAO will calculate the payments which they deem should have been made.

Having checked the payments the NIAO will then undertake an inspection of the control statistics and error rates. As the control statistics under Art 84 are submitted to the Commission in July 2012 the NIAO will have a small window of opportunity to check these.

The Report will be sent to the Commission via the UKCB by the deadline of 1 September 2012.

The Commission's "Reporting" Guideline states:

The report should concisely present the evidence gained, together with clear statements regarding the following:

1. A conclusion as to whether the amounts found eligible for payments as established by the PA, recorded in its database/records and paid are free from material misstatements.
2. A conclusion as to whether the control statistics reported to the Commission are correctly compiled and reconciled to the database by the PA, and are free from material misstatements.

DARD has taken a decision to repeat this exercise for SFP 2012.

There are indications from the Commission that from 2013 / 14 that the legality and regularity audit may be extended to cover funding drawn down under EAFRD.

The Department awaits formal notification of the Commission's intentions.

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6 RURAL NETWORK FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

6.1 Support for JCC & LAGS (RNNI Annual Report 2011)

The Rural Network for Northern Ireland (RNNI) was set up in 2008 “as an integral element of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (2007 – 2013)”. The annual report 2011 details the work of RNNI for the period up to December 2011 in the following areas:

- Training;
- Information exchange;
- Identifying and sharing practice; and
- Supporting co-operation; and
- Website and database.

RNNI delivered **training**; through a tailored programme ‘Getting on with the Business- Preparing for Assessment’, covering mandatory training sessions on Corporate Governance and Assessment Panel Training were delivered to fifty and fifty-two people respectively. In 2011, there were ten sessions in total and a number of these were organised as a ‘direct response’ to train newly elected LAG members.

In **facilitating information exchange**, RNNI aimed to do this across the axes of the NIRDP, LAGs and regions of the UK and Ireland through a number of activities including:

- Participation in 4 teleconferences and 1 face to face meeting with the UK National Rural Network;
- Organisation of a Networking residential for Axis 3 LAG members to enhance networking and sharing of experiences across the Clusters;
- Production of factsheets relating to the topics of interest across the Programme;
- Continued promotion of formalised Network membership and distribution of monthly eZines and bulletins to registered members;
- Engagement with social networking through the establishment of a Facebook page;
- Facilitation of the Cluster Networking Forum;
- Continued representation as required on the Equality and Good Relations Sub group of the Programme Monitoring Committee;
- Dedicated meetings with DARD Axis 1 and Focus Farms representatives, to update on the purpose, role and actions of the Network to date and to also share information on what is happening across the other Axes of the Programme;
- Facilitation of a meeting between Axis 1 Delivery body, Countryside Agri-Rural Partnership and representatives from the Rural Support Networks;
- Establishment of a Communications Working Group to enhance communications of the NIRDP;
- Completion of the ‘Barriers to Axis 3 Progress and Solutions’ report;
- Co-ordination of attendance and support to a delegation of Axis 3 representatives presenting to the ARD Committee; and
- Attendance at other relevant events such as Ireland NRN Annual Conference, Social Economy conference and Village SOS road show.

In **identifying and sharing practice**, RNNI carried out a number of activities that included seminars, dissemination of information from relevant publications and a number of thematic activities.

In relation to **co-operation**, RNNI:

- ENRD presented on the opportunities for Co-operation at the Networking residential and a Co-operation corner was established at this event to promote partner searches from across Europe;
- Continued promotion of a partner search facility to assist identification of cooperation opportunities, with approximately 20 partner searches distributed via Co-operation working group, website and email updates;
- Continued facilitation of a NI Co-operation working group, which met on 3 occasions and engaged members from across each of the clusters;
- Continued liaison with ENRD in order to facilitate information sharing at a European level;
- Direct linkages maintained with the ENRD partner search facility through the Rural Network;
- website;
- Supporting LAGs in the consideration of co-operation activities with targeted support provided to 5 LAGs; including Down Rural Area Partnership, with attendance at 3 meetings of their Cooperation subgroup;
- Links established and meetings attended with DARD appointed representative on Co-operation; and
- Facilitation of Co-operation event between SWARD and Rural Support Networks in the delivery of an ideas generation workshop.

Website & Database

- The Network website (www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk) provides information about the programme at the local, national and EU levels
- It is updated regularly with news from across the Programme, updates from other organizations and a calendar of events
- During the period over 230 news items were uploaded and 12 monthly eZines issued. A total of 7,302 visits to the site were recorded from 44 countries. This represents a 36% rise in site visitors from the 2010 reporting period.
- A projects directory has been established on the Network website – www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk/DIRECTORY which aims to collate information on projects funded across the NI RDP.
- 15 projects have been highlighted to date with a system established for further population of the database.
- Links to similar directories in England, Scotland and Wales are navigable from the site along with a link to the projects directory of the ENRD.

Working Relationships at UK Level and Engagement with UK National Rural Network

- Good working relationships continue with the UK National Rural Network and individual networks represented within Scotland, England and Wales. Following successful hosting of the first UK NRN networking event, Rural Network NI continues to play an active role across the UK.
- Following the decision to cease the UK National Rural Network website, links have been maintained with the individual country websites.
- A system of regular contact is maintained via email, regular telecons and face to face meetings. This has involved:
 - participation in 4 teleconferences and 1 face to face meeting;
 - knowledge shared on programme delivery across the UK;
 - knowledge shared to secure speakers at events;

- co-ordination of UK attendance to the ENRD Co-ordination Committee and representing the UK NRN as necessary at European meetings;
- distribution of publications across the UK NRN.

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7 LEADER 2007 - 2013 – KEY ISSUES

7.1 RDP Departmental Briefing Paper, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development – Official Report (Hansard) (April 2012)

This report details the minutes of a meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development attended by DARD officials (Pauline Keegan, Director of Rural Development, Gareth Evans, Principal Officer, and Lorraine Lynas, Head of Rural Development Programme Management). Within this meeting there are a number of issues and challenges discussed relating to the Rural Development Programme and the LEADER approach. The main issues raised were:

- That there is a fear that some LAGs are being held back, or side-lined, so that more strategic spending will take place by councils;
- Reports that competitive calls have been withheld in some LAGs and that they have not been allowed to open or spend because of that;
- That expenditure is too slow;
- Some businesses have been excluded due to them having an urban postcode; there is a grey area that within which people do not fall under either urban or rural and this is causing problems;
- There is a need for increased flexibility in relation to these grey areas;
- There is an issue surrounding the CAP reform: one in relation to the transition rules, which apply at the end of the programme; and the other is in relation to what will happen if the regulation is not agreed in time; and
- Issues were raised surrounding what DARD was doing internally to prepare for the Rural Development Programme and the possible period of transition.

These issues were addressed with the responses that:

- The strategic issue in relation to councils, there was a recognition that the LAGs need to relay these concerns directly so they can be addressed; the aim was to get councils involved in strategic projects to allow for bigger spend;
- The refocus with strategic projects of up to £1 million is an opportunity to allow bigger, broader spend and more spend. However, the six measures have to be spent as well;
- Implementation plans from the LAGs are paramount in addressing the issue of encouraging more strategic spending;
- In relation to the grey areas, if a project is sitting outside a rural area but has an impact within the area, it can be considered to be eligible for spend. This has been done previously however it is open for discussion with the Department for Social Development;
- DARD is continuing through the working groups on the rural development negotiations in regards to the CAP reform. There has also been discussion with DARD ROI colleagues to discuss the new programme development and the issues that might arise if the programme cannot be implemented. Spend will continue for axis 1 and axis 3 up to 2015; and
- Internally, DARD is preparing for the Rural Development Programme and possible period of transition by holding consultations and developing a programme; there has been no agreement on the proposals and they do not have the implementing regulations, however they have set up high-level policy groups to consider policy areas based on the six key areas within the rural development proposals. There will also be a review of the LEADER approach that will be completed by September and will aid DARD in informing future LEADER structures.

7.2 Barriers to Progress: Solutions (Draft Report on Findings, June 2011)

This paper was produced with the objective of providing recommendations for overcoming barriers in delivering Axis 3 of the RDP 2007-2013. The five key issues that recommendations were provided for include:

- Issues associated with spend and the claims process;
- Match funding/grant rates including Cash in Kind contributions for private sector measures;
- Self-implementation;
- Structure/best practice; and
- Preparatory co-operation projects to full application.

There were 56 recommendations made in total relating to these 5 areas; the most significant recommendations made included:

- There needs to be stock take exercise carried out;
- More accurate profiling and managing of accruals is needed;
- Localised opportunities should be a priority;
- Some form of business plan needs to be introduced that can assist the assessment process and support applicants in match funding;
- The threshold for Company status should be between £30,000 and £50,000 but be dependent upon size, nature of project, duration and degree of risk;
- The Access to Services Measure should be reviewed;
- There is a need to apply the principle of commensurate effort in all aspects of delivery;
- Operating rules should be reviewed to take account of small projects, with necessary adjustments made to the assessment process, economic appraisal, audit and procurement requirements;
- The procurement process needs reviewed;
- Rules for Cash in Kind need developed for the community sector;
- Staff require further training on applying State Aids;
- Consideration needs given to distinguishing between business creation and development in the new programme;
- Benefits of Cash in Kind need considered against its' disadvantages (such as complexity of administering it);
- The feasibility of financial engineering needs evaluated for the new programme;
- There is a need to consider increasing the funding threshold for measures 3.1 and 3.2;
- A collective assessment should be carried out by LAGs in addition to needs identified at a local level;
- The Managing Authority and Local Government should support LAGs to secure match funding for strategic interventions;
- Clarity needs to be given to the value and role of LEADER;
- The Rural Network for Northern Ireland should host a LEADER networking residential;
- Clusters should make their own decision on whether membership of the LAG and JCC should overlap;
- The administrative functions of LAGs need reviewed;
- LAGs should be made aware of their networking budget; and
- Co-operation procedures need to be closely monitored and barriers to applications addressed.

In relation to LEADER specifically, the following general observations were made in the report:

- More work is required in relation to the LEADER approach;
- Article 38 (1) of Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006 states that the participation of LAG staff and members in the meeting of the National and European Networks should be an eligible expenditure, as networking is one of the seven LEADER principles;
- The LEADER approach, and the delivery of Axis 3 of RDP, involves “shared management”⁴; whilst this works on a theoretical basis, it works less well in practice;
- LEADER is a bottom-up approach; however in delivery so far, through RDP, has been largely top down. This is not unique to Northern Ireland;
- This top down approach has made LEADER easier to control, however it has limited the scope for LAGs to work at a local level and has limited the potential added value that LEADER can provide;
- There is a need for Audit to understand the LEADER approach more clearly; and
- Criteria and rules that are too strict and rigid can hinder the LEADER approach.

7.3 Barriers Response and Action Plan (2011)

This document was devised as a result of the issue of the draft report (see Section 7.2) and subsequent DARD Strategic Forum meeting on the 27th June 2011; within this document, a number of strategic actions were made as a consequence of recommendations from the report and meeting. These are summarised as follows:

- **Recommendation 1: Stock take exercise related to strategies and strategic Interventions including leverage**
- Resulting Action/s: gap analysis of strategies, list of examples, development of themes and working mechanisms by 30th September 2011 by DARD and DARD working Group.
- **Recommendation 2: Business plan**
- Resulting Action/s: agree process and consider support mechanisms for signposting by 30th September 2011 to be actioned by Gareth Evans (DARD) and the Managers Forum.
- **Recommendation 3: Commensurate effort (small projects)**
- Resulting Action/s: review current thresholds and administration levels for small projects to make the process more efficient by 30th September 2011 by Gareth Evans (DARD).
- **Recommendation 4: Grant rates**
- Resulting Action/s: further assess the possibilities for increasing grant threshold for private sector within current programme by 30th September to be actioned under advice from Gareth Evans (DARD).
- **Recommendation 5: LEADER Review**
- Resulting Actions: request further information on the review, terms of reference, timescales and cluster involvement to inform future actions by 30th September 2011. To be actioned by Gareth Evans (DARD) and DARD Policy Branch to provide further information.
- **Recommendations 6: Communications**
- Resulting Action/s: collective action required to promote the programme, greater clarity of roles and support being offered and better communication links particularly in relation to RCN and

⁴ European Court of Auditors, Special Report No 5 (2010), Implementation of the LEADER approach for Rural Development, as referenced in ‘Barriers to Progress: Solutions, Draft Report on Findings’, Rural Network NI, June 2011

RSN roles and wider support outside of the Community Voluntary Sector. To be actioned by Gareth Bannon (DARD Press Officer) and DARD.

- **Recommendation 7: Strategic Forum**

- Resulting Action/s: Consider the potential for the Strategic Forum to be strengthened by involvement of rural policy – the absence of a rural policy forum is considered a gap in the programme structure and would add significant value. To be actioned by Pauline Keegan/Keith Morrison.

- **Recommendation 8: New Programme**

- Resulting action/s: Time bound plan for detailing how the new programme will be developed and consulted on to ensure maximum stakeholder involvement and lessons learned incorporated to be actioned by DARD Rural Policy.

7.4 Joint Cluster document on Axis 3 & 4 Delivery (November 2010)

7.4.1 Barriers, Impacts and Solutions

Joint Cluster document highlights the barriers, impacts and some solutions to these in relation to the delivery of Axis 3 and 4 of the RDP; specifically, it highlights issues that clusters had with the “over administration and micro management of the programme”.

The barriers identified through this document were:

- The volume of audit is too large;
- Audit is carried out in an adversarial manner rather than as a constructive approach to improving the working of the programme;
- There is a lack of local LEADER type involvement; there is no local decision making, discretion or flexibility;
- The delivery process is too cumbersome and bureaucratic;
- There is low morale amongst staff and members due to the level of audit, process and adversarial audit;
- There is a lack of project development resource; and
- There is an inability to undertake certain actions, such as training and self-implementation projects.

Solutions, or recommendations, offered include:

- Level of DARD audit should be reduced to no more than 20% by end of March 2011;
- Staff should be allowed to deal with minor issues in a partnership approach;
- There needs to be less processes and an ability for action on a local level;
- Quotes up to the value of £30,000 should be accepted by email or fax;
- Workshops should be provided for staff in relation to Contribution in Kind etc.;
- There should be a focus on the outcome of the project rather than the process;
- LAGs and JCCs should be allowed to determine the eligibility of projects and spend against the Operating Rules;
- Permitted flexibility for projects should be 10% of the entire project;
- There should be more of a bottom-up approach;
- There needs to be quicker decision times;
- There is a need for an Animation Programme within RDP;
- Currently, self-implementation programmes are not allowed; this needs to be reviewed;

- Training needs addressed.

7.4.2 Timeframe for Commencement of RDP

In this Joint Cluster Document, Appendix 4 sets out a schedule of key dates during the initial stages of the programme.

“Whilst the programme was approved by the European Commission in July 2007, the first Letter of Offer to be issued to a project promoter was mid-September 2009. Some key dates to note during this time frame are:

- Press release from Ministers office on 20th September 2007 announcing the Ministers intention to form entirely new LAGs and for Councils to have a more formal role in the delivery of the programme.
- DARD issued letter to lead councils on 23rd November 2007 to set up partnership arrangements between cluster Councils and to request that LAGs be put in place and strategies developed.
- Contract between DARD and lead Council for animation funds issued by DARD on 10th January 2008.
- All LAGs set up as informal groupings (DARD's advice at this time was that no formal structure needed to be put in place) around end April 2008.
- Request for LAGs in conjunction with lead Councils to submit strategy for the area by 31st July 2008. Request issued by DARD on 7th May 2008.
- DARD requested revision to strategies on 15th August 2008 to be resubmitted by 12th September 2008. After negotiations with clusters, the submission date was agreed as 30th September 2008.
- Rural Network appointed in October 2008.
- Clusters notified of first tranche of funding (50% of budget based on population & deprivation of area) on 12th December 2008. Total budget notified to clusters on 21st January 2009. This was 5 1/2 months after the strategies were originally submitted and 31/2 months after receiving the revisions.
- Legislation to set up of JCC's as Body Corporate was initiated by DARD in October 2008 and received formal approval on 14th February 2009. The need for legislation for Joint Committees to operate was identified by DARD as early as September 2007.
- Near final draft' contract issued by DARD to JCCs and administrative councils on 23rd February 2009, although at this stage most of the Annexes were missing, e.g. Operating Rules, Service Level Agreement templates etc. At this stage, DARD was still stating that LAGs did not need to be a legal entity.
- Draft Operating Rules issued in March 2009 with 8 of the 14 chapters.
- Neither Councils nor the Local Government Auditor had not been consulted during the drafting of the contract by DARD, so Councils agreed to get one legal opinion on behalf of all 7 clusters to speed the process up. Letter sent to DARD on 24th March 2009 requesting copy of all annexes and schedules to the contract in order to get full legal opinion.
- Councils expressed difficulty during the period from April to June 2009 in contacting DARD and setting up meetings with both legal representatives to resolve the contractual issues.
- Another draft of Operating Rules issued in early June 2009, still missing at least 1 chapter and associated appendices. This draft included the Project Assessment form which clusters had been requesting for a number of months, as at least 3 LAGs had already called for applications (one as early as January 2009) before the assessment form was complete. At least 2

assessment panels had to be cancelled as the scoring template was not yet available. LAGs had been encouraged to call for applications to start getting commitment to the programme.

- Representatives of administrative Councils met with DARD to discuss contract and only on 4th June 2009 was it agreed that the LAG would need to set up as a legal entity and the relationship between the LAG, JCC and administrative councils were finally defined. Council legal representatives agreed to draft the formal agreements between the bodies to be complete by end June 2009.
- Final version of contract and Operating Rules issued on 30th June 2009. Final annexes to the contract issued by Council legal representatives on 31st July 2009, after the drafts had been considered, by DARD. Clusters unable to sign and return until LAG set up as a Limited company or Limited Liability Partnership.
- LAG's set up as legal entities and the contract and all annexes agreed with LAGs, JCCs and all Councils during summer of 2009, with first contracts signed and returned to DARD in mid-September 2009. LOO could not be released to applicants until this contract was in place.
- Templates for Letters of Offer, including terms and conditions between JCC's and project promoters were only provided in late August 2009, with the final template issuing in September 2009. It should be noted that this was part of the Operating Rules which clusters were asked to accept when signing the contract for funding."

7.5 Rural Development Programme – ARD Stakeholder Event

This event gathered feedback about the Rural Development Programme stakeholders, split into four groups. The feedback and opinions were given in relation to three topics:

- Informing the development of the next Rural Development Programme;
- Examples of good practice and lessons learned to date; and
- Other.

In relation to each topic, the following issues were the most common and significant points raised:

- Informing the development of the next Rural Development Programme;
- Too audit heavy (can cause delays) and bureaucratic;
- Confusion over definition of urban and rural; not enough clarity;
- Confusion over who has responsibility and what for;
- Communication issues;
- Lack of information for first time applicants;
- The problem of needing to provide 50% of the revenue for a project; many programmes turned down because of this and there is an issue in the current economic climate with accessing funding and loans;
- Basic services in communities not addressed by funding;
- Not enough emphasis on community development;
- Good practice from previous programmes not carried over;
- Lack of flexibility;
- High dropout rate;
- No process in place to monitor causes of dropouts;
- Local Government perspective – Programme as sold to council in design stage and what is there now is radically different;

- ROI – RDP funded at 75% threshold for private businesses – disadvantage for NIRDP applicants; and
- Lack of match funding.
- Examples of good practice and lessons learned to date;
- Fundamentally been a good programme.
- Quick decisions possible when JCC and LAGs meet on same nights;
- MEPs and MLAs very supportive of the programme.
- In one area the programme employed a village renewal officer to provide applicants with support and this was found to be beneficial;
- Need for a more bottom-up approach; within which the mentoring aspect should be utilised more;
- Volunteers were beneficial;
- New RDP in Action is a useful document;
- RDP funding allows some projects to occur that otherwise could not;
- Programme supports jobs in the community and can support local businesses;
- The Strategic projects concept has been a good idea and the experience so far is positive – has taken the greyness out of operating rules;
- Guidance and regulation is too prescriptive and should be relaxed; and
- Scrutinising applicants finance. This can be seen this as intrusive by the applicant and is potentially off-putting: too audit heavy.
- Additional Comments
- Need frontline people to deal with the design of the programme. People who have experience form previous programmes;
- There should be a rolling scale of auditing so that someone applying for a small amount does not have the same conditions as someone applying for a larger grant;
- Department needs to be more responsive to stakeholders and develop communication with them;
- The LAGG and JCC should be combined to be one entity. Local Government Act would need to be amended to accommodate this;
- 7 LAGGs and JCCs should be meeting with DARD on a monthly basis;
- Representative form DARD present at LAGG meetings;
- There should be direct discussions with the youth on the programme;
- Elected representatives should be promoting programme;
- More innovation and animation in future programme;
- More consistency;
- More cohesion between DARD and LAGs;
- Simplification of the processes involved;
- Less audit;
- Access to wider funding sources e.g. Atlantic Philanthropies; and
- More trust and autonomy needs to be devolved to a local level.

7.6 Barriers to Participation for Community Groups in the NIRDP 2007-2012 (2011)

This research was carried out by the Rural Community Network in 2011 and commissioned by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) as one specific output of DARD's Community Development Advice and Support Contract.

The rationale for this research was a wide spread concern that there were “significant issues for community groups trying to access funding through the Rural Development Programme”.

Other concerns noted about the RDP include:

- the complexity of the application process;
- the difficulties with raising match funding; and
- delays in processing applications and problems with procurement after funding has been awarded.

Thus, this research was commissioned to attempt to identify the specific barriers and issues that rural community groups were experiencing to help them achieve successful applications within RDP. From this a number of recommendations were made:

- Locally based, independent community support, such as that offered by the Rural Support Networks, should continue to be a fundamental support for community groups to assist them to make successful applications to the NIRDP;
- Investment in capacity building/development support is vital to enable groups to develop better project ideas and submit better applications to facilitate more effective spend down of NIRDP measures;
- Future capacity building/training for prospective applicants to NIRDP should be tailored based on whether or not applicants have been through the application process in the past. Groups will have different learning needs depending on their previous experience of the Programme;
- Future capacity building/training for prospective applicants to the NIRDP should include elements on completing the application form, raising match funding, determining need and building a business case, understanding the programme procurement guidelines and, where appropriate, detailed feedback on previous RDP applications;
- Further animation and capacity building work is required with groups to encourage applications to Measure 3.2 - Business Creation and Development, particularly in relation to the development of the social economy in rural areas;
- DARD and LAGs should consider offering a more in depth initial funding workshop for prospective applicants to raise awareness of issues before groups start to develop their applications;
- A community mentor programme, where successful applicants who have been through the process and know the practicalities on the ground could be established to enhance the programme of workshops and engagement with prospective applicants;
- Further research and analysis should be undertaken with groups who have been turned down for NIRDP funding to explore their experience and identify further support for groups;
- Groups who haven't made a previous application to the NIRDP should be supported to work through the implications of changing their legal status to meet the requirements of the programme before they submit an application;
- DARD, LAGs and community support organisations must continue to promote awareness of the NIRDP and disseminate information on the relevant measures to groups to encourage applications to the Programme;
- LAGs need to clearly communicate to prospective applicants all stages of the process they are expected to go through and an indicative timescale from application submitted to funding draw down;

- DARD, LAGs, community support organisations and successful applicants need to systematically promote and publicise the successes the Programme is achieving to encourage other groups to consider making an application;
- DARD, LAGs and independent community support organisations should continue to come together several times a year to reflect on the challenges they face and share learning about what has worked to support groups in making successful applications and drawing down NIRDP funding;
- LAGs need to monitor and record the assistance they have offered groups that has helped them to successfully submit applications and draw down funding and disseminate the learning;
- Assistance with procurement for groups that have submitted successful applications is vitally important. If the Programme fails to offer more support to groups to help them adhere to procurement procedures, a higher proportion of expenditure groups incur will be deemed ineligible which will contribute to higher underspend and lead to penalties from Europe in future;
- The next Rural Development Programme should consider using the first year of the next Programme as preparation time. The first year should be used to allow community groups learn, generate ideas and develop plans. The Programme should not open any Measures in the first year. Although this will mean slower spend, the end result should be much better quality applications and projects thus enhancing the overall spend profile across the duration of the Programme; and
- To meet NIAO recommendations DARD should at this time invest in the development and trialling of a less regimented process, with less stringent audit requirements to enable not only the establishment of a small grants programme within the NIRDP but also to ensure that future audit functions are commensurate with the grant awarded and the risk status of the group receiving the award.

8 LEADER IN NORTHERN IRELAND SINCE 1994

8.1 LEADER II (1994-1999)

8.1.1 Introduction

In this section, we set out key information relating to LEADER II in terms of:

- **Long term economic and social impact** of the LEADER approach – including an examination of:
 - the extent to which it has been an effective policy instrument in NI for:
 - empowering local communities to address local problems in line with national strategy objectives;
 - delivering national policy objectives identified in local development strategies;
 - giving more added value to rural development delivery compared with other approaches such as top down implementation;
 - the suitability of LEADER to different rural development actions such as quality of life, economic development, sector specific interventions (i.e. agri-food, forestry, environmental measures) and other EU programmes.
- **Value for money** of the LEADER approach
 - Comparing costs and achievements / impacts of the LEADER model
- **Lessons learnt and best practice** from the LEADER approach (taking into account the areas in which recommendations for the application of LEADER in the next RDP are to be made – see Terms of Reference 5).

8.1.2 LEADER II (1994-1999) – Long Term Economic and Social Impact

8.1.2.1 Economic Impacts

The Ex-Post Evaluation of the LEADER II Programme provides evidence of outcomes achieved – based on survey returns from the LAGs and OCBs which delivered the programme.

The programme exceeded expectations on a range of indicators relevant to these objectives and demonstrated evidence of positive economic and social effects. In particular, the Groups claimed to have created 750 jobs and helped to maintain a further 450. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the Groups contributed positively to the LEADER II outcome objectives.

It is important to note, however, that at the time the Ex-Post Evaluation was undertaken, insufficient time had elapsed for the full impact of spend to take effect. In addition – particularly with regard to job creation, it can be difficult to establish the precise contribution of LEADER II where the project supported by the LEADER II grant is a component of a larger project. Finally, the extent to which impacts were sustained is not taken into account.

The outcome objectives focused on:

- Enhancing training provision and improving access to local labour markets.
- Creating new jobs.
- Diversifying sources of farm income.

- Increasing tourism and leisure expenditure in rural areas.

Evidence of impacts in these areas from the Ex-Post Evaluation is presented below – quantified and reported against indicators and also based on qualitative feedback from LAGs and OCBs.

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Table 109: Outcome indicators

Area	Outcome Indicator	LAGs	OCBs	All	Main impacts reported by LAGs & OCBs
Training & improved labour market access	No. of participants receiving training	3,070	335	3,405	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in skills base, especially amongst farmers; Increase in IT literacy skills amongst individuals in rural areas.
	% with accreditation	60%	51%	59%	
	Man days of training	27,668	1,350	29,018	
	Average days per participant	9.0	4.0	8.5	
Diversifying sources of farm income	Actual no. of farm diversification projects assisted*	-	-	327	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers' increased levels of awareness and confidence re: sourcing alternative enterprises; More farmers involved in business start-ups, with a large number continuing to farm on a part-time basis. Provided many farmers with supplementary incomes; Contributed to creation of new jobs and businesses as well as securing existing jobs and businesses; Created an impetus to further develop business ideas; Encouraged innovation, e.g.: Monitor Farm Programme, Sheep Recording Scheme, and Marketing Initiative for Blackface Sheep Breeders; and Led directly to formation of sectoral groups⁵
Tourism	No. of tourist beds created*	n/a	n/a	886	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of new amenities to the area – gives tourists additional reasons to stay in the area; Establishment of first quality provider of self-catering accommodation in the area; Additional number tourist bed spaces; Better marketing of attractions and providers;
	No. of tourist attractions created*	n/a	n/a	102	
	No. of tourist attractions upgraded*	n/a	n/a	39	

⁵ e.g.: farmed & wild venison, exotic milks & products, amenity horticulture, Irish border food, interfood and progressive lean pigs

Area	Outcome Indicator	LAGs	OCBs	All	Main impacts reported by LAGs & OCBs
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence building - given local promoters confidence to invest and consider new projects; Development of local products – branding of the area; Brought local hospitality providers together; and Establishment of new accommodation type in the area – camping barns. Creation and consolidation of employment in the area
Job Creation and Maintenance	Actual no. of permanent jobs created	-	-	Approx. 750	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raised profile of rural economy; Establishment and consolidation of substantial no. of small businesses and creation of new sustainable jobs in rural areas; Expansion of existing businesses, including building new premises, providing workspace for rural businesses and increases in employment; Encouraged business networking and collaboration and provided export marketing opportunities; Encouragement of private sector investment; Led to creation of new relationships with other funding bodies, such as LEDU and local authorities; Establishment of local development centres which have created local training and development opportunities as well as full-time and part-time jobs; Members of farming and rural communities have been able to increase and/or supplement their income resulting in tangible improvements in the quality of life in rural areas; and Assistance to Craft businesses has provided networking opportunities and assistance in finding retail opportunities and other practical support.
	Actual no. of additional temporary jobs generated	-	-	Approx. 450	
	Actual no. of jobs consolidated			Approx. 640	
	Actual no. of small firms assisted	851	77	928	
	New business created	-	-	250	

Source: Ex Post Evaluation of Leader II Programme (based on survey returns from LAGs and OCBs except * sourced from DARD)

In summary therefore, LEADER II yielded the following quantitative outcomes:

- **Training and improved labour market access:** Overall, the total number of persons receiving some form of training or skills development through LEADER II (3,405) far exceeded the targeted figure of 500. Almost 60% of these received training with accreditation; the average number of days per participant was 8.5.
- **Diversifying sources of farm income:** Overall, by December 2000, 327 farm diversification projects had been assisted across LAGs and OCBs.
- **Tourism:** LEADER II supported activity resulted in 886 tourist beds being created, 102 tourist attractions being created and 39 tourist attractions being upgraded.
- **Job Creation and Maintenance:** LAGs and OCBs assisted 928 small firms through the LEADER II Programme and 250 businesses created. It is estimated that over 750 full-time equivalent jobs have been created as a result of LEADER II funding in NI (including staff employed as a direct result of LEADER II funding of 76 full-time and part-time posts) In addition, over 450 temporary jobs, in person years, have been created as a result of the LAG and OCB activities, whilst around 640 jobs have been consolidated.

In addition to the quantitative and qualitative outcomes and impacts identified in the table above, from the Ex-Post Evaluation, we also note the following impacts:

- **Leverage:** LEADER II has been quite effective in 'pump-priming' investment for rural regeneration and revitalisation, with an estimated £2 of funding levered per £ of LEADER II funding. This is felt to somewhat overstate the leverage achieved due to some element of deadweight in the Programme and that in some instances LEADER has operated as a source of 'top-up' funding.
- **Economic Multiplier Effects and Additional Jobs:** Calculated on the basis of 570 net new jobs directly created through LEADER II, the total economic multiplier effect of jobs indirectly created is estimated at 150 jobs. This comprises:
 - 57 additional jobs due to linkage effects, that is, where an assisted enterprise increases orders from its suppliers on such a scale that new jobs are created in these supplier companies, thus creating further or 'knock-on' employment opportunities.
 - 94 net new jobs created from income multiplier effects, generated when new jobs are created due to the increase in demand and spending within the regional economy resulting from wages and salaries of persons recruited to jobs created by assisted enterprises.
 - Based on this, the estimated total of net new jobs created is 718. Reflecting the uncertainty surrounding the multiplier effects, this should be treated as an indicative estimate.

8.1.2.2 Social Impacts

The Ex-Post Evaluation identifies a range of social impacts as follows:

- **Building Capacity and Confidence:** Contribution to building capacity and confidence within rural communities (facing a period of transition).
- **New TSN (skewing resources to individuals, groups and areas as being in greatest need):** LEADER II has contributed to a modest degree to the New TSN initiative: LAGs operating in District Council areas classified as disadvantaged received a financial allocation of £19 per capita, 26% above the per capita allocation to other LAGs, indicating a skewing of resources at overall

programme level. A number of LAGs and OCBs were also able to identify projects or activities that had benefited disadvantaged groups, including farmers with small holdings of land as well as women and unemployed people.

- **Quality of Life / Social Issues:** A high level of participation in activities supported by the LEADER II Programme is reported. This important attribute of the Programme provides a mechanism for reaching disadvantaged groups and areas and enabling projects to stimulate new relationships between individuals and communities. This participatory dimension to the Programme has ensured that the quality of life and social impacts are widely felt across the rural community of NI.

8.1.2.3 Effectiveness as a Policy Instrument in Empowering Local Communities to address local Problems in line with national strategy objectives

One of the strategic objectives of the LEADER programme was *to enable local* communities to develop and implement integrated rural development strategies. Meeting this objective depended critically on the effectiveness and suitability of the processes, structures and delivery mechanisms for LEADER II. The Ex-Post Evaluation paints a broadly positive picture in terms of the effectiveness of the delivery mechanisms. It highlights that LEADER II enabled local communities to develop and implement integrated rural development strategies (through 24 LEADER groups).

Each group had to develop an operational plan which was approved by DANI; these plans were scored against various criteria including contribution to LEADER II and RDP – hence linking local actions and national strategy objectives.

The use of spatially based LAGs for programme delivery represented an important innovation in the implementation and delivery of rural development policy in NI in the LEADER II programming period. The relatively dispersed model adopted was valuable in facilitating a diversity of models and experiences and also in promoting wider awareness of and engagement in rural development planning and projects.

The main advantage of this more dispersed model was around the enhanced accessibility of the Programme, opening up avenues for local participation and involvement both in the process and on the project side.

The LEADER Groups showed considerable attention to, and gained benefit from, the adoption of a bottom-up approach. The main benefits from the bottom-up approach were:

- Use of local and regional knowledge, local community networks, and grass roots organisations to facilitate Programme delivery.
- The increase in local confidence resulting from local participation and consultations.
- Sense of independence 'on the ground' from the availability of an accessible local funding source.

8.1.2.4 Effectiveness as a Policy Instrument Delivering National Policy Objectives identified in local development strategies

See Section 8.1.2.3 – local plans were linked to national objectives – this was one area in which plans were scored. In addition, the impacts achieved (see Sections 8.12.1 and 8.1.2.2) provide evidence of effectiveness.

8.1.2.5 Effectiveness as a Policy Instrument in giving more Added Value to Rural Development

The LEADER Groups themselves, both LAGs and OCBs, directly contribute to the strategic aims and objectives of the LEADER programme. They are not simply a cost, but rather should be viewed as part of a process that itself adds value in terms of, for example, building capability within the rural communities that they serve. Further, as the LAGs were an innovation in the Northern Ireland context, so their successful formation has made a direct contribution to the strategic aim of the LEADER II initiative.

The Ex-Post Evaluation suggests that the decentralised approach adopted for LEADER II did in fact realise a number of additional benefits that added value in meeting the strategic aims and objectives of the Programme:

- **Local knowledge** – the delivery structures, namely the LAGs and OCBs have encouraged and drawn in a number of rural actors who collectively have a combined knowledge and experience that has an intrinsic value.
- **Leverage of Voluntary Inputs** – the valuable time investment of the voluntary Boards and sub structures that supported the LEADER staff across Northern Ireland in project selection approval and on-going support. All LAG and OCB Board members provided their time, expertise and local knowledge on a voluntary basis. It is estimated that across the LAG and OCB structures between 220 and 390 people were involved in the board structures of LEADER II. Over the Programme period it was estimated that the Board members and sub group members contributed in excess of 8,000 hours of volunteer time. Using an arbitrary £6 per hour figure, this equates to some £48,000 of volunteer time.
- **Enhanced relationships** – the LAG Boards in particular have provided a nurturing ground for the cementing of relationships between private, voluntary, community and statutory sectors
- **Accessibility** - the Programme has attracted a large number of applications and generated a substantial number of projects
- **Awareness** – LEADER II raised awareness at all levels for development in rural areas. LEADER II publicised the fact that rural development is very much a multi-disciplinary concept and does not just involve agriculture.
- **Networking/Transnational Transfer** - the emphasis in the strategic aims and objectives on both networking and the transfer of knowledge/shared learning across borders presented an opportunity for the first time for many areas within Northern Ireland to lift their focus beyond the local area and consider what was happening and working well in both an ROI and European context.
- **Distinctiveness** – with their local and sectoral bases, complementary economic focus and an emphasis on the use of relatively small grants for seed funding, the LEADER Groups established a niche for themselves in what was a very crowded funding arena. This was important in helping to give rural development an enhanced visibility.

8.1.2.6 Suitability of LEADER to different rural development actions

The sectoral pattern in the rural innovation programmes was analysed with reference to the financial commitments by Measure and Sub-measure. The overall pattern clearly illustrates the primarily economic thrust of the LEADER Groups' operational plans.

Within the LAGs the largest volume of support was for **rural tourism** and **support for small firms, crafts and local services**. Both of these Sub-measures account for close to one-quarter of the total commitments made by LAGs. The volume of support for **local exploitation of AFFF products** was in the region of 17%, with the **training and environmental measures** attracting relatively low levels of commitments.

The emphasis on supporting productive activity is illustrated by the large share of commitments (over 60%) accounted for by the ERDF. Though a shortage of skilled sectoral training was identified as one of the gaps in LEADER I, the ESF has not been much used in LEADER II, accounting for less than 8% of commitments. Nonetheless, the emphasis on **raising productive capacity** does tend to give LEADER II a degree of distinctiveness that is likely to complement other EU programmes.

8.1.3 LEADER II (1994-1999) – Value for Money

The Ex-Post Evaluation highlights the difficulty in assessing value for money in a programme such as LEADER II where qualitative dimensions such as innovativeness, networking and capability building are core elements of the strategic aims and objectives. However a number of points are made in assessing the value for money of LEADER II.

- Deadweight was estimated to be about 27% in the financial support to projects ‘on the ground’; this was reported as reasonable when benchmarked against programmes such as Peace and Reconciliation.
- Given the estimated level of deadweight, direct job creation is estimated to be in the region of 570. This equates to a cost per job of around £25,000, based on the total allocation of £14m. (This is about in line with the inflation-adjusted cost per job figures presented in the NIERC (1993) evaluation of LEDU’s job creation activities. Since LEDU is specifically tasked with job creation, whereas the LEADER Groups pursued multiple objectives, this is a favourable comparison. As it not possible to say how long the LEADER jobs will be sustained, it would not therefore be reasonable to assess value-for-money solely on that basis.)
- It is evident that a range of relevant outcomes both quantitative and qualitative, have been achieved as summarised in Table 6 below.

Table 110: Summary benefits of LEADER II

	Examples of the positive contribution made by LEADER II
Economic Regeneration	Assisted local businesses and contributed to job creation and consolidation.
	Enabled local people to establish innovative small enterprises in rural economy
	Assisted rural economic regeneration
Community cohesion / empowerment	Involved ‘local’ people in planning and managing the development of their area
	Participation contributed to acceptance, co-operation and prospects for success of projects
	Local dynamic partnership and community owned approach
	Groups networked to create a more innovative approach to community development and encouraged local innovative ideas

	Managed locally
	Enabled and equipped local people with skills and resources
	Local decision making process and genuine bottom up approach adopted – autonomy
Rural Development	Raised awareness at all levels for development in rural areas
	Created businesses and jobs in rural disadvantaged areas
	Encouraged rural diversification
	LEADER II publicised the fact that rural development is very much a multi-disciplinary concept and does not just involve agriculture

Source: Ex Post Evaluation of Leader II Programme

In light of the above, therefore, the Ex-Post Evaluation concludes that the programme has performed reasonably in terms of value for money. Deadweight was not excessive and tangible outcomes relevant to the objectives of the programme can be demonstrated across a range of impact areas.

From the Ex-Post Evaluation, we also note that: displacement is more difficult to assess. It is reported that the LAGs and OCBs were able to demonstrate that they have in place a range of procedures designed to keep displacement as low as possible.

8.1.4 LEADER II (1994-1999) – Lessons Learnt and Best Practice

The table below presents an overview of LEADER structures etc. After the table we comment on each of the areas from the Terms of Reference.

8.1.4.1 Overview of LEADER II

Table 111: LEADER II – NIRDP 1994-1999

Characteristic	NIRDP 1994-1999 – LEADER II
Name of Programme	LEADER II Programme (The RDP 1994-1999 incorporated the entire LEADER II programme as well as other EU funding for rural development including: SPARD, PEACE, INTERREG II and PESCA and also funding from the International Fund for Ireland.)
Managing Authority	Department of Agriculture for NI (DANI), now DARD

Characteristic	NIRDP 1994-1999 – LEADER II
<p>Aims of funding</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Figure 3.1 LEADER II objectives framework</p> <p>Measures delivered by LEADER II:</p> <p>Measure A Acquisition of Skills;</p> <p>Measure B Rural Innovation Programmes;</p> <p>Measure C Transnational Co-operation; and</p> <p>Measure D Networking.</p>
<p>No. of partnerships / delivery groups</p>	<p>24 (15 LAGs⁶, 9 OCBs⁷.) - collectively responsible for animating, administering and actively pursuing the implementation of LEADER II in NI.</p>
<p>Size of area / population covered</p>	<p>The area-based approach within LEADER II has been taken forward on a broad geographical scale, as the 15 LAGs cover most of rural NI.</p>
<p>Budget in total and per partnership</p>	<p>Total allocation of finding: £13.9m £10.8m across 15 LAGs and £3.1m across 9 OCBs</p>
<p>How funding is awarded to the partnerships</p>	<p>DANI invited applications for funding – these were in the form of a business plan. The plans were scored against various criteria including contribution to LEADER II and RDP. DANI entered into contracts with the successful groups.</p> <p>As groups generally were awarded less funding than they requested, there was some scaling back of proposed activities. Time had to be invested by the LAGs in revising the plans and approval for the revised plans was sought</p>

⁶ Armagh District LAG, Canal Corridor LAG, COLLAGE, Cookstown LEADER Ltd, Craigavon Rural Development Ltd, Fermanagh LAG, Lower Bann LAG, Magherafelt Area Partnership, North Antrim LEADER, RAPID, Roe Valley LEADER, Rural Down Partnership, South Down / Armagh LAG, South Tyrone Area Partnership, West Tyrone 2000 Ltd

⁷ Developing Rural Enterprise, Family Farm Developments, NI Horse Board, PIMS Consortium, Rural Cottage Holidays, Rural Development Services, Rural Innovation & Research, SEDIRA, Ulster Beekeepers

Characteristic	NIRDP 1994-1999 – LEADER II
	from the LAG Boards and DANI.
Links with Local Government	<p>Each of the 15 LAGs selected operated as independent development companies (company limited by guarantee) with an appointed voluntary Board of directors, In order to obtain financial assistance from LEADER, prospective LAGs were required to prepare business plans setting out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of LEADER group; • Socio economic background and description of area concerned: and <p>Linkages in the form of working relationships (existing or proposed) between the LEADER group and relevant Government departments, Local Government bodies and other relevant statutory bodies. [Note: some of the LAGs had closer links with local District Councils and/or District Partnerships than others.]</p>
Structure of each partnership	<p>In general, each LAG and OCB was established as a company limited by guarantee with an appointed voluntary Board of Directors. The Board was responsible and accountable for the proper implementation of the Programme in line with the requirements of DARD and the EU.</p> <p>LAGs and OCBs were established as companies limited by guarantee with an appointed voluntary Board of Directors. Considerable care was taken by LAGs and OCBs to ensure that the Management Boards were representative of their local areas and sectors. The LAGs in particular were also able to broaden the base of participation by forming thematic sub-groups, clearly engaging local interest in decision-making processes. The main weakness to be addressed in terms of achieving a broad balance was the under-representation of women.</p>
Level of delegated authority / responsibility	The autonomy given to the delivery mechanisms within LEADER II, was clearly highly valued by those involved in administering the Programme on the ground. Such autonomy contributed to the feeling of responsibility and empowerment in rural communities.
Control, monitoring and audit requirements	Large volumes of data are collected, but there is insufficient attention paid to evaluation and feedback amongst the delivery mechanisms.
How are administration costs calculated / paid out	<p>The majority of administrative costs arising under LEADER II relate primarily to the staff resources of LAGs and OCBs.</p> <p>Staff resources provided by DARD, are provided 'in kind' and are not met from the LEADER II budget.</p> <p>As noted in the Ex Post Evaluation, the role of DARD and specifically the staff within its Rural Development Division has been crucial to the successful implementation of the Programme. At its maximum the number of administration staff involved in the programme was 13 showing the commitment of the department to the ensuring the success of the programme. The majority of LAGs and OCBs commented on the supportive and unobtrusive nature of the relationship with staff from within the Rural</p>

Characteristic	NIRDP 1994-1999 – LEADER II
	<p>Development Division.</p> <p>Responsibilities of LAG and OCB staff, include but are not limited to, the submission of claims and the drawdown of funding from DARD, which manages the centralised payments function.</p> <p>Administrative costs accounted for an estimated 21% of total funds allocated, representing a unit cost of £0.27 per £1 of grant delivered ‘on the ground’.</p>
<p>Resources allocated per partnership – costs / staffing structures</p>	<p>As part of the selection process, LAGs and OCBs were required to describe the structure and membership profile of their proposed organisation and Board of directors/management.</p> <p>Inputs from the Board and sub-groups/committees were voluntary and most met quarterly or in some instances more regularly when required.</p> <p>A Project/Programme Manager ran each LAG and OCB. Within most LAGs and OCBs the manager was supported either by field officers, administration staff and/or assistant project officers. The LAG/OCB manager played a crucial liaison role between the operational aspects of the LEADER II Programme and the voluntary Boards.</p> <p>In almost all cases a delivery ‘infrastructure’ had to be put in place. In the case of the LAGs, administrative costs account for an estimated 21% of total funds allocated, representing a unit cost of £0.27 per £1 of grant delivered ‘on the ground’. These costs are offset to some extent by the leverage of voluntary contributions from Board and sub-group participants.</p> <p>According to the Ex Post Evaluation, the numbers of staff employed within each LAG was relatively low with high reliance on 1 or 2 key members of staff.</p> <p>OCBs are essentially projects in their own right with only three OCBs operating grant schemes. Administrative costs associated with OCBs were not centrally monitored on an on-going basis as often the entire OCB allocation related to administrative costs (salaries).</p>
<p>Skills / capacity / training to ensure partnership is effective</p>	<p>The precise requirements of a Board member in terms of time commitments, competencies and experience were identified over the course of the Programme and as such there was a definite learning curve to climb for individual LAGs and their respective Board members.</p>

Source: Ex Post Evaluation of Leader II Programme

8.1.4.2 Lessons from LEADER II

What aims a Leader model should be used to deliver

- The Ex-Post evaluation recommended that the focus on Farm Family support should be continued and reinforced across LEADER+ particularly given the characteristic small farm holdings across Northern Ireland and the continued pressures on the sector.

Number of LAGs and territory covered

- As the number of LAGS established was higher than expected, funding allocations had to be more thinly spread than might have been intended, and delays were incurred in adjusting business plans to the resources made available. The number of LAGs also increased the administrative burden and cost, making it difficult to co-ordinate activities across Northern Ireland.
- Advantages of more dispersed model: enhanced accessibility of the Programme, opening up avenues for local participation and involvement both in the process and on the project side.
- Disadvantages of the dispersed model: higher administrative costs derived from the need to replicate administrative structures at a multiplicity of locations. That is, there is a trade-off between delivery costs and the extent of decentralisation to local areas. More fundamentally, perhaps, the more dispersed the approach, the greater the risk that limited funds may be too thinly spread both across and within local areas.
- Clearly, there is a cost associated with pursuing a decentralised area based, bottom up approach to delivery. The more decentralised the approach (more delivery bodies), the smaller will be the average scale of each Group and the larger will be the unit costs as fixed costs are incurred by each Group. Whilst the decentralised approach delivers benefits for local communities and achieves leverage through engaging voluntary participation by local interests, these additional costs will be offset to some extent. A balance needs to be struck between generating sufficient value and benefit from a bottom up approach and managing the Programme and incurring an acceptable level of administrative costs.
- The Ex-Post evaluation also recommended an Area Based focus for LEADER+ - focusing on areas of natural synergy and moving away from both administrative and geographic boundaries. However, it also noted that the introduction of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) which would be District Council based and therefore administratively bounded will make the implementation of this recommendation difficult.

Role of local authorities/timing and potential impact of the Reform of Local Government

- No specific lessons

Role of partnerships established under other EU programmes

- The Ex-Post Evaluation highlighted the need for strategic integration – given the establishment Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) across the 26 District Council areas of Northern Ireland. The new LSPs aimed to create the necessary infrastructure to facilitate strategic integration across European Union funding lines. The Ex-Post Evaluation noted the importance of integrating at a strategic level the objectives and focus of LEADER+ to ensure that duplication of effort, resources and activities is minimised. It also recommended that the distinctiveness of the LEADER initiative should be pursued particularly in the light of increased development activity at a local level across NI.

Level of delegated authority/responsibility

The Ex-Post Evaluation made recommendations concerning:

- Reinforcing both Autonomy and Accountability of LAG Structures – the former contributed to the feeling of responsibility and empowerment of rural communities. This is balanced with the need to reinforce the accountability of structures across Northern Ireland. In particular, the public accountability of the LAG boards to ensure funding is targeted and fully committed and spent within an area is a crucial issue for the next round of funding.

- Contribution from Voluntary Boards - recommending that voluntary directors being nominated to serve on Local Action Group Boards are made aware of the time commitment required to effectively serve on the LAG board as well as their legal, financial and other responsibilities associated with membership of the LAG Board.

Control, monitoring and audit requirements

The Ex-Post Evaluation made recommendations concerning:

- Setting Quantifiable Objectives at project programme and LAG / OCB level – given that many operational objectives were not quantifiable, measurable and in some cases merely aspirational.
- Monitoring and Evaluation - recommending that a standardised and systematic process of monitoring and evaluation be developed in advance of the launch of LEADER+. To streamline and ease the collation and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data on an on-going basis.
 - Job Creation Measurement - recommending that clear and early guidance is provided on the definition of a job, how it should be measured, when it should be recognised and by whom.

Administration models (including models of funding disbursement);

- No specific lessons

Costs

- See discussion above on Number of LAGs - the issue of higher costs associated with decentralised approaches –which needs to be balanced against added value.

Extent to which LEADER strategies can (or cannot) include funding streams/directives beyond the current EAFRD LEADER programme (i.e. other European funds, other national government programmes.), taking account of the new EU regulations (including the finance and regulatory controls)

- No specific lessons

Training and skills sets required to ensure groups have sufficient capacity to deliver using the LEADER methodology;

The Ex-Post Evaluation made recommendations concerning:

- Programme Management Experience and Training – recommending that at the initial stages of the new LEADER+ Programme, careful consideration is given to the requirement to ensure that individuals involved in the operational administration of the Programme are experienced in **both** rural development and overall Programme Management.
- Maintain Capacity Building Dimensions – recommending that the capacity building dimension of the LEADER Initiative is maintained and strengthened. Relying on other funded Programmes to facilitate capacity building and the generation of quality innovative projects is a strategy, which does not promote the continued control and influence of individual LAGs.

Continuity from one European funding period to the next

The Ex-Post Evaluation highlighted as weaknesses:

- the short timescale available for formation of delivery structures, subsequent approval and the practical implementation of the Programme in terms of actual achievement of commitment and spend combined to affect a 'rush' to allocate and draw down funding. In a Programme which ran from 1995 to 1999, many of the LAGs were approved in 1996 and did not actually proceed to full operational status until well into 1997;
- The time lag and funding gap between the end of LEADER II and the commencement of LEADER+ were considered detrimental to some LAGS.

The Ex-Post Evaluation recommended that in terms of an Exit Strategy - early consideration should be given to transitional or future arrangements (if any) to be put in place at the close of LEADER +. It noted that gaps in funding had created a degree of disillusionment, particularly amongst farmers and the farming community who have only recently been animated/become involved in LEADER II following their exclusion from LEADER I.

DRAFT

8.2 LEADER+ (2000-2006)

8.2.1 Introduction

In this section, we set out key information relating to LEADER + (in the same format as for LEADER II and see structure described more fully in Section 8.1.1) i.e.:

- **Long term economic and social impact** of the LEADER approach;
- **Value for money** of the LEADER approach; and
- **Lessons learnt and best practice** from the LEADER approach.

This is mainly based on the Mid Term Evaluation RDP 2001-2006, the Mid Term Evaluation of LEADER+, the Mid Term Evaluation Update of LEADER+ and the Review of LEADER+ Administrative Support.

8.2.2 LEADER+ (2000-2006) – Long Term Economic and Social Impact

8.2.2.1 Economic Impacts

The Mid Term Evaluation RDP 2001-2006 includes evidence of significant progress made in relation to most of the LEADER+ key outputs and results indicators. The majority had achieved 40% of their target (based on Sept 2005 data and in the context of 33% expenditure). This represented good progress given delays in the LEADER+ programme getting underway – although, in effect, this represents progress after only 2 years of operation.

Table 112: Key outputs in relation to the Leader+ funding stream (after 2 years)

Indicator		Target	Progress	% target achieved
Key outputs	Micro-businesses receiving financial support	1,070	474	44%
	Micro-businesses receiving advice / support	1,000+	1,176	118%
	New micro-businesses created / assisted	230	50	22%
	Training, advice or employment programmes	18	21	116%
	Individuals supported	40	4	10%
	Buildings restored or improved	62	6	10%
Key results	New full-time jobs created	900	569	63%
	Existing full-time jobs safeguarded	930	1,007	108%
	Participants in training	2,400	1,581	66%
	Restored buildings used by trading businesses	60	4	7%
Key impacts	Supported businesses still in existence after 2 years	930	6	1%
	New micro-businesses still in existence after 2 years	160	0	0%
	New full-time jobs still in place after 2 years	650	11.5	6%
	Restored buildings still used by businesses after 2 years	46	0	0%

Source: *Mid-term evaluation of the NIRDP 2001-2006*

In the Update of the MTE of LEADER+, the following was reported:

- Action 1 - good progress: overall there have been 569 full-time jobs created, 1,581 persons trained and 50 micro-businesses created. So, on average each project resulted in 1.3 FTE jobs created, 3.6 persons trained and an estimated one in every ten LEADER+ projects resulted in a new business being created. Given the time lag involved, no data had been captured (in the MTE or update MTE) for many of the impact indicators at this stage (e.g. new full-time jobs still in place after 2 years).
- Actions 2 & 3 - some progress but not as successful as Action 1. However, these two Actions only represent approximately 11% of the overall LEADER+ budget.

The LEADER+ programme has also made substantial progress towards the four priority themes (3 of which relate to economic impacts) – evidenced from illustrations of LEADER+ funded projects as follows:

- **Increased competitiveness through use of new know-how and new technologies (Measure 1.1);** this includes the purchase of hi-tech equipment such as fruit processing machinery, ICT equipment and live shellfish storage;
- **Adding value to local products (Measure 1.3);** the projects funded range from glass design, bespoke laser engraving, cookery, turf and iron crafts, kitchen designs, restoration of stables, garden product design to mobile nail and footcare projects and farmers markets; and
- **Making best use of natural and cultural resources (Measure 1.4);** this includes tree recycling, organic fruit production, embroidery services, renewable energy and specialised joinery services.

8.2.2.2 Social Impacts

There are a range of impacts emerging from the LEADER+ programme to date:

- **Locally based 'bottom-up' approach**
 - The LAGs have provided valuable local input into the LEADER+ programme and ensured that boards can readily identify areas of need and make appropriate developmental responses;
 - By including a range of different representatives in each board, the LAGs created a forum for engagement and harnessed expertise at the local level from local councillors and the statutory, business and agricultural sectors.
 - Wider stakeholder participation in development processes;
 - Broadened the accessibility of the programme;
 - The bottom-up approach and outreach work has led to large numbers of individuals accessing EU funds for the first time under LEADER+. 71% of those surveyed by PwC (as part of the Update MTE of LEADER+) accessed EU funds for the first time under LEADER+. In addition 95% of those surveyed said that they would 'recommend LEADER+ to others', a very positive signal.
 - Satisfaction with the locally based programme management and delivery structures adopted is reflected in the views of project promoters. Most (over 80%) respondents in a survey of LEADER+ project promoters (as part of the Update MTE of LEADER+), were quite or very satisfied with the service provided by their LAG – evidence of high quality local delivery in LEADER+ and the effectiveness of a 'bottom up' approach in providing a customer focused service that is responsive to local needs. In addition,

project promoters were very positive about the accessibility, local knowledge and expertise provided by the LAGs and referred to the 'hands on advice' provided by them.

- **Building business and social capacity and confidence in rural areas**
 - By providing business and financial support, the programme has worked to improve ICT capacity, encourage entrepreneurialism, and expand business products and networks.
 - By promoting a locally based approach, the LEADER+ programme has increased the skills and capacity of project promoters who have not been involved in previous EU or government initiatives.
 - In terms of capacity building and social cohesion, 73% of project promoters surveyed (part of Update MTE of LEADER+) said they had become more involved in local rural development as a result of their project.
- **Creating local synergy**
 - LEADER+ has broadly complemented other enterprise/small business capacity building programmes.
 - LEADER+ has offered scope for 'synergies' with existing enterprise/small business support in NI (addressing issues raised in MTE about the risk of overlap and displacement).
 - Whilst concerns regarding duplication have been raised at the strategic level given the range of programmes and initiatives focused on rural development and / or local business growth, evidence suggests that the LAGs have broadly contributed towards creating complementarity and synergies at the local level. By including a range of sectoral expertise within the boards such as representatives from local councils, local enterprise agencies and Invest NI, the LAGs have worked together during the project assessment phase to reduce the potential for duplication and share information on projects to develop an integrated approach.
 - In addition, LAGs have also successfully applied to deliver projects under other EU funding initiatives including Peace II, BSP, INTERREG, Lottery and Community Safety Programmes.
- **Networking and information sharing**
 - Emerging evidence for Action 2 highlighted that the LEADER+ programme has contributed towards facilitating some valuable networking between micro-businesses.
- **Improving quality of life in rural areas**
 - The LEADER+ programme has made substantial progress towards the four priority themes (1 of which relate to social impacts) – for example Improving quality of life in rural areas (Measure 1.2); this includes educational, health and leisure initiatives such as healthcare projects, open farms and a riding school project.
 - A survey conducted as part of the Update of the MTE of LEADER+, asked if the project funded had helped to improve the quality of rural life and over 80% of project promoters stated that it had. Likewise 91% stated that their project provided a vital service to the rural community.

8.2.2.3 Effectiveness as a Policy Instrument in Empowering Local Communities to address local Problems in line with national strategy objectives

The “bottom-up” approach provided the means by which local communities would be empowered to address local problems. Evidence of the success of this approach in LEADER+ is provided in Section 8.2.2.2.

The preparation of local strategies and business plans by each LAG provided a means to link local need with national strategy objectives, although there were some weaknesses in the overall rationale in the LEADER+ programme document. The MTE of LEADER+ noted that DARD had allowed the LAGs to use a broad interpretation of the micro-business focus enabling them to meet a wide range of local needs.

Therefore, LEADER+ was effective in providing a mechanism to empower local communities to address local problems; each LAG linked local need with national strategy objectives through its strategy and business plan. However the MTE highlighted some misgivings about the national strategy objectives (as per the LEADER+ programme document) in how the rationale was set out.

8.2.2.4 Effectiveness as a Policy Instrument Delivering National Policy Objectives identified in local development strategies

Each LAG was required to develop a strategy and a business plan – this two-stage process adopted by DARD required each LAG to produce a strategy to inform the selection process and then subsequently a business plan setting out their plans for delivery of LEADER. These strategies and plans were informed by national policy objectives as set out in the overall LEADER+ programme document.

However, the MTE of LEADER+ highlighted a weakness in the LEADER+ programme document in how it set out the rationale for the programme and established the need for the micro-business focus. (This was felt to be lacking in detail in terms of analysis of the need, examination of existing small business intervention and identification of the gap in order to differentiate LEADER+ from other interventions and provide greater clarity for LAGs). This had led to some uncertainty about what was eligible for support.

The assessment of LAG strategies as part of the MTE of LEADER+ noted that all have attempted to link their measures to contextual elements of local need (social, economic, territorial, etc.) to some extent. However, within the strategies the directness of linkage between identified local need and programme structure varies. The MTE of LEADER+ also made recommendations in terms of LAGs updating their strategies including: improving their description of the rationale and demonstrating how their programmes complement other supports for micro-businesses.

The MTE of LEADER+ noted concerns from LAGs relating to the development of the wider strategy for rural areas:

- that the current Rural Development Strategy was lacking in detail and failed to provide a clear blueprint for the development of rural areas;
- that (according to some consultees), the current strategy was too limited in scope and that a much broader strategy for rural areas which looked at the totality of Government and private sector activity in rural areas was required. More specifically the strategy would be cross-departmental

and would focus all of the resources of Government in rural areas on the development of sustainable rural communities.

- an overall impression with regard to strategy development that a lack of clarity within the programme document has led to confusion with regard to the type of activities LAGs should engage in.

8.2.2.5 Effectiveness as a Policy Instrument in giving more Added Value to Rural Development

Some positive findings from the survey of project promoters (part of the Update MTE of LEADER+) show that LEADER+ funding provided “added value” in that it enabled:

- **Projects to start up quicker;** of those surveyed, 92% stated that the LEADER+ grant enabled them to set up or expand quicker than otherwise would have been possible.
- **Better quality projects;** of those surveyed 92% said they were able to set up a better quality project than in the absence of funding.
- **Self-sustaining;** the majority of project promoters surveyed (76%) stated that their projects are now self-sustaining or have achieved their objectives and would not require further public funding assistance. This is particularly welcoming given the fact that the majority of those supported had received EU funding for the first time. Monitoring data for 435 projects show that:
 - 1.3 FTE jobs created on average per project;
 - 3.6 persons trained on average per project; and
 - One in every ten projects resulted in a new business being created.
- **Private sector leverage;** for every £1 of LEADER+ funds, approximately 80 pence has been leveraged from the private sector.
- **Additionality:** A survey of project promoters also asked about what would have happened in the absence of LEADER+ funding, in order to test a counterfactual scenario:
 - the majority (53%) stated that their project would have gone ahead at a lower level;
 - 22% stated that the microbusiness development idea would have been abandoned;
 - 20% stated the project possibly would have proceeded anyway; and
 - 5% stated that it would definitely have proceeded.

These findings raise a question over the level of ‘true additionality’ from the LEADER+ programme. In the majority of cases (78%), the LEADER+ funding is likely to have accelerated outputs, which may have arisen anyway. That said, it is evident that LEADER+ support may have contributed to better quality projects, which in turn should have an impact on the realisation of ‘better quality impacts’ in due course.

The Update MTE of LEADER+ also demonstrates that LEADER+ funding provided “added value” in that it enabled:

- **Leverage of voluntary time:** LAGs have been able to leverage a significant contribution of voluntary time from board members (estimated to be valued at around £334k over the life of LEADER+ which is 2% of the overall £21m budget within the programme.)

8.2.2.6 Suitability of LEADER to different rural development actions

The Update MTE of LEADER+ concluded that the singular focus on micro-enterprise development in the private sector was appropriate and broadly complemented other interventions in rural areas (e.g.:

through PEACE II, BSP, and Invest NI). It also indicated an opportunity for a broader focus in the future – set within a strengthened “outward looking” dimension and informed by other policy developments – in particular in relation to ‘on farm diversification, rural tourism, the social economy sector and the voluntary and community sector. Looking ahead, it proposed:

- A widespread focus on micro-business development reinforcing the importance of the private sector for the future ‘health’ of rural economies and the ability to fund projects with a ‘softer’ social inclusion remit perhaps restricted to LAGs servicing more marginal or peripheral rural areas;
- The potential for rural tourism to be supported under a future LEADER approach; and that the environment should remain a key secondary objective of a LEADER approach in future;
- Intervention in rural areas on social / community grounds should be in the ‘enablement’ space to avoid any overlap with any future role of the Rural Support Networks in maintain / developing community infrastructure in rural areas;

8.2.3 LEADER+ (2000-2006) – Value for Money

The previous evaluations of LEADER+ provide information on cost per job and cost per positive outcome, and leverage; they do not, however, provide a definitive statement on value for money.

8.2.3.1 Cost per positive outcome

Cost per job (job creation measures only)

The primary aim of the RDP 2001-2006, is to promote and advance the sustainable development of rural areas. However, although not primarily a job-creation programme, within the RDP 2001-2006, some of the measures do have a job creation element. In the MTE of the RDP 2001-2006, 13 measures were identified within the Programme which had some emphasis on job creation and job creation targets. So the table below sets out cost per job figures for the BSP and Leader+ funding streams (the relevant Peace II and INTERREG IIIA measures were excluded from this analysis because of low levels of actual expenditure at the time of the research).

Table 113: Examples of cost per job created – BSP and Leader+*

Funding Stream	Measures with job creating elements	Jobs created to date	Target job creation*	Forecasted job creation cost	Actual spend £m (at time of monitoring data collection)	Actual cost per job £'s
BSP	6	58	210	134,760	7.548	130,000
Leader+	4	569	900	16,936	7.273	12,700

***calculated by dividing the total funding allocation for the measure by the job-creation target*

Source: NI RDP Mid Term Evaluation (Table 5.3)

As shown in Table 9 the cost per job created to date within the BSP funding stream has been relatively high. However, the forecast cost per job is also relatively high. This is perhaps an inaccurate picture to present, given that the funding allocation for these Measures creates outputs beyond jobs, which cannot be easily ‘disaggregated’ from the funding associated with job-creation. These additional outputs are detailed further overleaf, to ‘balance’ the analysis.

It is evident from Table 9 that the Leader+ funding stream has performed strongly, evidenced by the fact that the cost per job created is around £4,000 less than forecast. Furthermore, within Leader+, it is also less than the cost-per-job created figure under LEADER II, which is an indication of the success of focusing on private sector micro-business development, where typically projects mobilise quickly and achieve employment outputs quickly.

Other outputs associated with job-creating measures

In the context of cost effectiveness, it is important to provide visibility of the other outputs associated with measures within the RDP 2001-2006 that have a job-creation component. The table below sets out some of the other outputs arising to date again focusing only on the BSP and Leader+ funding streams. So, it is not entirely appropriate to calculate cost per job measures by dividing the total measure allocation by the total jobs created to date. That said, it is also not possible to robustly 'disaggregate' which portion of the funding within the measure resulted in training outputs and which portion created a job.

Table 114: Other outputs associated with RDP 2001-2006 job-creating measures with BSP and Leader+ funding streams

Funding Stream	Measures with job creating elements	Jobs created to date	Businesses created	People Trained	Environmental Projects Supported
BSP	6	58	5	2,046	11
Leader+	4	569	50	1,581	n/a

Source: NI RDP 2001-2006 Mid Term Evaluation (Table 5.4)

Cost per positive outcomes (other than job created)

The Programme has created a wide range of outputs reflective of the varying focus of the measures within it. The table below provides a 'snapshot' of the cumulative outputs and outcomes arising from the Programme to date. It aims to 'aggregate-up' common output/outcome indicators across the RDP 2001-2006. However in doing so it is important to highlight that this 'aggregating up' exercise excludes a number of other outputs that are very specific to individual measures and which are much harder to capture when reviewing the Programme in its entirety.

Table 115: Outputs and Outcomes associated with RDP 2001-2006 to date

Funding Stream	Jobs created to date	Environmental projects supported	People trained	Business created
BSP	58	69	2,046	5
Peace II	4.5*	75	1,984	0
Leader+	569	0	1,581	50
Interreg IIIA	0	0	0	0
Total	631.5	144	5,611	55

Source: NI RDP 2001-2006 Mid Term Evaluation (Table 5.5)

Furthermore it is not possible to dis-aggregate outputs to particular funding allocations within Measures to arrive at a cost per positive output/ outcome, because many of the outputs are inter-

related. For example, Action 1 of Leader+ has 14 output, impact and result targets, which are impossible to separate out from each other to isolate the cost of one individual output.

8.2.3.2 Leverage of matched funding and voluntary input

In considering cost-effectiveness it is important to consider the leverage dimension – which is articulated in the MTE of RDP 2001-2006:

- There is the potential for leverage of funding from non EU sources, such as the International Fund for Ireland, private funding including bank loans and community fund raising. With an estimated £21.5 m of leveraged monies against a £65m of commitment at the time of writing the MTE, **it is assumed that the level of matched funding could increase to £30m by the end of the Programme;**
- A high-level estimate of the value of voluntary time leveraged by the Programme is at least £10.5 million throughout the life of the Programme including:
 - the value of voluntary time, particularly from projects led by the community and voluntary sector. Using information captured by the RDC in relation to the average number of people active on boards, the amount of time spent on project activity and the number of successful applicants, it is estimated that the value of voluntary time contributed by community and voluntary groups to the programme is around £2.1m per annum. **This annual figure is ‘aggregated’ up to £10.5m for the life of the RDP 2001–2006.**
 - Another example of voluntary contribution to the Programme is the time spent by the board members on each of the Leader+ LAG boards. A conservative estimate (based on attendance at Board meetings – and not taking into account time involved in attending assessment panel meetings, preparing for meetings and signing cheques) yielded 3,343 hours over 6 months. Based on an hourly rate of £10, this represents £67k of voluntary input per year or £334k over the life of the programme which is 2% of the overall £21m budget within the programme.

8.2.4 LEADER+ (2000-2006) – Lessons Learnt and Best Practice

The table below presents an overview of LEADER structures etc. After the table we comment on each of the areas from the Terms of Reference.

8.2.4.1 Overview of LEADER+

Table 116: LEADER+ – NIRDP 2000-2006

Characteristic	NIRDP 2000-2006 – LEADER+
Name of Programme	Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2000-2006 (The RDP 2000-2006 incorporated the entire LEADER+ programme and elements of PEACE II, INTERREG IIIA and the BSP Programme.)
Managing Authority	DARD
Aims of funding	The primary aim of the RDP 2001-2006 is to promote and advance the sustainable development of rural areas The objective of LEADER+ is: “to increase the economic and employment contribution that very small businesses, including small

Characteristic	NIRDP 2000-2006 – LEADER+
	<p>farms, make to the rural economy by encouraging local partnerships to test out new approaches to micro-business development and where beneficial, to work in collaboration with similar partnerships in other rural areas”.</p> <p>It is solely targeted towards micro-businesses.</p> <p>LEADER+ has 3 Key Actions (with sub-measures & themes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 1: Territorial Rural Development Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1.1: Use of new know-how and new technologies - 1.2: Improving the quality of life in rural areas - 1.3: Adding value to the local products - 1.4: Making the best use of natural resources - 1.5: Acquisition of Skills (New LAGs only) - 1.6: Administration costs of LAGs - 1.7: Publicity & Promotion of Activities of LAGs • Action 2: Co-operation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2.1: Inter-territorial co-operation - 2.2: Inter-territorial co-operation with groups in Rol - 2.3 Transnational co-operation - 2.4 Transnational co-operation with groups outside EU • Action 3: Networking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3.1: Contribution to the UK LEADER+ Network and associated activities
No. of partnerships / delivery groups	Under the NI LEADER+ Community Initiative, 12 LAGs ⁸ developed and implemented local development strategies that addressed the needs and potential for microbusinesses in their areas
Size of area / population covered	94% of the total eligible area and 43% of the NI population,
Budget in total and per partnership	Overall, the RDP 2001-2006 has an overall level of funding of around £80m The budget for LEADER+ is approx. £20m
How funding is awarded to the partnerships	LAGs were required to submit strategies and business plans to DARD. Many of the LAG applicants however reported that the process was long and cumbersome with significant overlap in the 2-stage application process - between the submissions for the initial strategies and the subsequent business plans. It was suggested that it would be more efficient to have undertaken one single process involving both selection and business plan approval. According to the MTE of LEADER+, LAG consultees generally

⁸ Coleraine Local Action Group for Enterprise Ltd, Craigavon and Armagh Rural Development (CARD), East Tyrone Rural, Fermanagh Local Action Group, Magherafelt Area Partnership Ltd, Newry and Mourne Local Action Group Ltd, North Antrim LEADER+, Roe Valley LEADER Group Ltd, Rural Area Partnership in Derry, South Antrim Local Action Group, The Rural Down Partnership, West Tyrone Rural Ltd

Characteristic	NIRDP 2000-2006 – LEADER+
	<p>indicated that the selection process was open, but not particularly competitive and rigorous, (although this may reflect a level of miscommunication between DARD and the LAGs). The bid was competitive in that a certain quality threshold had to be passed to be selected as a LAG (as evidenced by DARD’s rigorous selection scoring mechanism and the fact that several applications were not successful). However, most LAG consultees felt that the quality of the bid did not significantly influence the overall level of funding allocated, and that once the list of successful bids was finalised, the actual allocation was decided using criteria including geographic area, population and relative deprivation. DARD indicated that the funding allocation followed a formula where the quality of bid had a 60% weighting, whilst there was a 40% weighting for geographic area, population and relative deprivation..</p>
<p>Links with Local Government</p>	<p>LEADER+ is delivered by 12 LAGS, five of which physically reside 'in Council'; the remaining seven operate autonomously in separate premises.</p>
<p>Structure of each partnership</p>	<p>Each LAG included social partners, local businesses and elected representatives The LAG was the decision-making body. Each LAG was supported by Programme Management staff.</p>
<p>Level of delegated authority / responsibility</p>	<p>See below</p>
<p>Control, monitoring and audit requirements</p>	<p>The control environment is dictated by the operational guidelines developed by DARD. Key controls include: economic appraisals, LAG Board approvals, site visits / compliance with Letters of Offer, claim authorisation procedures and monitoring visits. DARD stipulates 100% checking for Article 4 and Article 6. Quarterly monitoring process reporting to DARD which is held in the DARD “mini” central database.</p>
<p>How are administration costs calculated / paid out</p>	<p>As noted in the PWC Update Evaluation of the MTE of LEADER+, the administration budget for each LAG within the context of LEADER+ and DARD support is 15% of their overall award (i.e. Action 1 and 2 budgets). In absolute terms this varies from £151k to £269k per LAG. These administration funds are designed to cover staff costs and other operational expenditure of the LAGs such as financial monitoring, project developmental and appraisal work and general overheads. DARD, in line with European Commission guidelines, request that the 15% is ‘tagged’ to actual expenditure incurred by each LAG, meaning that it can only be drawn down in line with operational expenditure. The 15% administration budget refers only to the DARD allocation, and in many cases LAGs receive cash and/or in kind funding from their relevant Council(s). More specifically ten of the LAGs are in receipt of a financial contribution from their local Council(s). The level of financial support provided by the Council(s) to each LAG ranges up to £60k per annum. Roe Valley LAG receives in-kind support from their local Council which is in the form of use of office facilities, stationery,</p>

Characteristic	NIRDP 2000-2006 – LEADER+
	consumables, access to printing and payroll services. In most instances there is a one-to-one support relationship between the LAG and the relevant Council,
Resources allocated per partnership – costs / staffing structures	See above Numbers of staff vary across the LAGs; some have a mixture of FTE posts and SLAs with Councils to provide services).
Skills / capacity / training to ensure partnership is effective	No specific issues identified

Source: Mid Term Evaluation of LEADER+ and Update of MTE of LEADER+

8.2.4.2 Lessons from LEADER+

What aims a Leader model should be used to deliver

The Update MTE of LEADER+ concluded that the singular focus on micro-enterprise development in the private sector was appropriate. It indicated an opportunity for a broader focus in the future sector. Looking ahead, it proposed:

- A widespread focus on **micro-business development** reinforcing the importance of the private sector for the future ‘health’ of rural economies and the ability to fund projects with a ‘softer’ **social inclusion** remit perhaps restricted to LAGs servicing more marginal or peripheral rural areas;
- The potential for **rural tourism** to be supported under a future LEADER approach; and that the **environment should remain a key secondary objective** of a LEADER approach in future;
- Intervention in rural areas on **social / community grounds should be in the ‘enablement’ space** to avoid any overlap with any future role of the Rural Support Networks in maintain / developing community infrastructure in rural areas;

Number of LAGs and territory covered

- LEADER+ operated across 12 LAGs – some covered just one Council area; some covered more than one Council area.

Role of local authorities/timing and potential impact of the Reform of Local Government

- Local government had a role to play on the LAG; however LAGs were separate entities. There were also variations in that in some cases, LAGs were physically based in Council premises, but this was not the case for all LAGs.

Role of partnerships established under other EU programmes

- The Review of LEADER+ Administration Support (PwC, January 2006) noted that some of the LAGs had staff who delivered other EU funded programmes e.g.:
 - 6 LAGs (CARD, COLLAGE, MAP, N&M, RAPID, Roe Valley) had staff who were involved in delivering projects funded by BSP; at least 2 had separate staff funded by

BSP to deliver this. Another LAG (WTRL) planned to get involved in the delivery of a BSP funded project.

- 4 LAGs (COLLAGE, MAP, RAPID, Roe Valley) had staff who were involved in delivering projects funded by Peace;
- 1 LAG (MAP) had staff who were involved in delivering projects funded by Community Safety Programmes;
- 1 LAG (RAPID) had staff who were involved in delivering projects funded by Lottery funding;
- 1 LAG (FLAG) had plans for staff to be involved in delivering projects funded by INTERREG.
- 4 LAGs (ETR, North Antrim, REAP, Rural Down) did not have staff who were involved in delivering projects funded by other programmes.

Level of delegated authority/responsibility

- The MTE of LEADER + states: “The basic rule of thumb, in any bottom-up approach, should be to provide the maximum degree of autonomy, while at the same time ensuring probity and accountability”
- The MTE of LEADER+ highlights the underlying issue of trust and accountability, which is by no means unique across NI Government.
 - Decentralised mechanisms such as the LAGs are intended as a means of devolving decision making and accountability to a local level, which in turn requires a dilution in the control and influence that Government has on the activities and outcomes of such bodies. However, on a number of occasions Government Departments, in the shape of their Accounting Officer or Permanent Secretary, have been held responsible for the activities of decentralised mechanisms under the aegis of their Department.
 - This suggests that it is not possible to devolve accountability even to bodies such as LAGs, with non-executive boards. Consequently Government Departments are left to impose even more rigorous accountability requirements on them because of the fact that they are decentralised.
 - [Note: this issue as highlighted in the MTE of LEADER+ is by no means unique to that programme. As Managing Authority, DARD must ensure appropriate controls are in place to ensure accountability for public money. Ultimately, the Department will be held responsible and that often towards the end of programmes, management and administration staff will have left their posts due to the fixed-term nature of their employment].
 - However one of the best ways to improve accountability and reduce risk is to improve the communication channels between the Department and the LAGs.
 - Ultimately, there are only two options, either DARD builds up a level of trust with the LAGs whereby they can make decisions at a local level, or else DARD needs to vet all of the decisions taken by the LAG. Clearly the former approach would ensure both the benefits of the bottom-up approach and at the same time free DARD staff to undertake the strategic development work.

Control, monitoring and audit requirements

- As noted in the table above, the control environment is dictated by the operational guidelines developed by DARD. It is the responsibility of the Managing Authority (DARD) to ensure that all rules set out in relation to the use of public monies are adhered to by all LAGs. This included

taking into account relevant European Regulations⁹ and any other relevant guidance available at the time that LEADER+ was in operation (the current guidance that has been in place since 2008 is: Managing Public Money NI (DFP, 2008)).

- The MTE of LEADER+ reported that a number of LEADER+ LAG managers felt that audit requirements and activities by DARD were more onerous and time consuming than similar audits undertaken by other public bodies. The example given (in the MTE of LEADER+) was of the SEUPB whom it argued took a quarter of the time, required by DARD, to undertake their audit and verification visits. It was suggested that DARD and the LAGs should review this process to identify ways in which the process might be streamlined.
- Financial controls and procedures were explored in detail in the Review of LEADER+ Administration Support. The main issues raised which are of relevance are as follows:
 - The auditing process places no reliance on the LAG control environment;
 - All of the LAGs expressed concerns regarding the extensive level of auditing performed on the LEADER+ programme - viewed as disproportionate to the size of grants being distributed, a potential deterrent for applicants, and often de-motivating for LAG staff; and
 - The review noted that the working relationships between DARD and the individual LAGs varied and also that there are differing and often inflexible practices used across DARD's regional offices, particularly in respect to claims processes and issue resolution. [Note: the reported "inflexibility" most likely to be due to the need to ensure compliance with audit requirements]. Accordingly, it was suggested that DARD could review the claims processes at its regional offices to promote consistency and ensure that the arrangements promote good working relationships.
 - The feasibility of a more 'proportionate' approach to the financial/claims processes depends on the balance of EU and mainstream monies.

Administration models (including models of funding disbursement)

The MTE of LEADER+ highlights that:

- Administration arrangements vary considerably across the LAGs with some integrated with local authorities while others are stand-alone.
- The use of bottom-up methods implies greater up-front costs in return for greater future impacts due to better targeting and greater participation from the wider local community;
- The LAGs had to fund their participation in networking events through their admin budgets which would appear to be a disincentive to participate.
- LAGs were concerned about the level of funding for programme administration (capped at 15% of overall allocation) relative to the additional workload that they feel the increased accountability requirements placed upon them.

⁹ such as:

- Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 of 21 June 1999 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds;
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 438/2001 of 2 March 2001 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 as regards the management and control systems for assistance granted under the Structural Funds;
- Council Regulation (EC) No. 1257/1999 on support for rural development from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, etc.

- The PEACE II MTE recommended an increase in the administrative budgets of the Local Strategy Partnerships to 20%. These are similar organisations to the LAGs with the same requirement to develop bottom-up approaches.
- Each additional pound of administration expenditure reduces what is available to final beneficiaries, although it could also be argued that better support for projects and promotion of the programme might boost impacts.

According to DARD, those in the private sector and politicians called for the maximum allocation towards projects as opposed to administration expenditure. Given the contrasting perspectives of the LAGs and others, and also taking into account the additional costs associated with the “bottom-up” approach, it is important to strike a balance in the allocation of funding (projects vs administration).

The Review of LEADER+ Administration Support noted:

- All LAGs have sufficient levels of administration funding to oversee the remainder of the main aspects of the implementation of LEADER+ in their areas.
- Whilst all LAGs reported that their funding was sufficient, many implied that it has been and would be ‘tight’. (LAGs have worked within the perceived ‘tightness’ of the 15% administration cap through a variety of means including economies of scale with implementing other projects and varying LAG models (e.g. ‘in-Council’, which can leverage considerable extra expertise / support))
- Some LAGs indicated that the budget only enabled them to do the ‘minimum’ in terms of administering LEADER+. For example, there was no scope for support for networking between LAGs within NI and beyond NI, as there was no separate resource for the mandatory networking, which was to be resourced from the LAGs administration budgets.
- Some LAGs, due to their administration budget situation, implied that they would have to close slightly earlier than they would ideally like.

Costs

- No specific lessons

Extent to which LEADER strategies can (or cannot) include funding streams/directives beyond the current EAFRD LEADER programme (i.e. other European funds, other national government programmes.), taking account of the new EU regulations (including the finance and regulatory controls)

- No specific lessons

Training and skills sets required to ensure groups have sufficient capacity to deliver using the LEADER methodology;

- The MTE of LEADER+ highlighted the benefits of experience being carried over from one LEADER period to the next. It states that: “The Northern Ireland LEADER+ Initiative had a firm basis on which to develop the new programme. There is substantial evidence to suggest that the NI LAGs have benefited significantly from their experience in Leader I and Leader II. LAG consultees indicated that the majority of NI LEADER+ board members have served under previous phases of the programme. This brought clear benefits in terms of well-established relationships and linkages between LAG members and other local development organisations, and has also made the establishment of effective administrative systems much easier. It has also

meant that awareness of local need was relatively well developed from the outset of LEADER+, should have helped to make the strategy development process more straightforward.”

Continuity from one European funding period to the next

- No specific lessons

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8.3 LEADER (2007-2013)

8.3.1 Introduction

In this section, we set out key information relating to LEADER + (in the same format as for LEADER II and see structure described more fully in Section 8.1.1) i.e.:

- **Long term economic and social impact** of the LEADER approach;
- **Value for money** of the LEADER approach; and
- **Lessons learnt and best practice** from the LEADER approach.

8.3.2 LEADER (2007-2013) – Long Term Economic and Social Impact

8.3.2.1 Economic and Social Impacts

At this stage in the lifetime of the NIRDP, insufficient time has elapsed for the full extent of impacts to be realised. Many projects have still to be completed and others are still undergoing assessment. At August 2012, 444 projects are categorised as “completed”, this is a small proportion (8.2%) of all applications on DARD’s database. Overall, from DARD’s database of applications, up to August 2012, 5,407 applications had been received. However, of these a large proportion will not yield any impacts: around 30.1% (1,628) had been rejected and a further 30.4% (1,646) had been withdrawn. The remaining 39.6% of applications are categorised as:

- 4.5% (242) acknowledged;
- 2.4% (131) approved;
- 8.2% (444) completed;
- 13.1% (708) LoO accepted;
- 1.6% (84) LoO issued;
- 3.2% (174) submitted;
- 3.9% (210) terminated; and
- 2.5% (137) under appraisal.

However available information to date includes the following:

- **The Mid Term Evaluation RDP 2007-2013 (Dec 2010)** – sets out evidence of progress made in relation to outputs and results indicators, although due to the timing of the MTE (in December 2010 when contracts with LAGs, JCCs and all councils agreed in summer 2009 and first contracts signed in September 2009), relatively little progress had been made. Whilst some outputs and results are reported, overall there was little evidence of the impact of the programme (on the rural economy or quality of life) at that time (see Appendix 3).

The MTE highlights difficulties in the economic climate (and hence on accessing match funding) as having a bearing on progress (Measures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3); also confusion around what some of the measures were intended to achieve (Measure 3.4 and Measure 3.5), and some of the rules and requirements being off-putting (e.g. Measure 3.1 planning permission and accounting rules); there was also a low level of interest in Measure 3.6 at that time.

In fact, the MTE noted concerns with the progress of Axis 3 overall stating:

“there is clearly a need for the Department to ensure that Axis 3 is progressed as a matter of urgency. This is especially true of the quality of life measures, which have yet to show any progress of note. In future programmes it may be prudent for the Managing Authority to hold back some of these Measures, such as the quality of life measures, to be delivered outside of the LEADER approach. The evaluators believe that delivery at this regional level may facilitate a more coordinated approach, and may enable more timely implementation.”

These concerns informed the conclusions and recommendations within the MTE, one of which was a recommendation to carry out a review of the LEADER approach in NI – the subject of this report. Issues around delivery are considered in more detail in the conclusions and recommendations of this report.

The Mid Term Evaluation Update RDP 2007-2013 (April 2013) – sets out further evidence of progress against each of the targets under Measures 3.1 to 3.6. Whilst progress has been made since the MTE, the current performance is still some way off the targets and the MTE Update highlights that some targets may not be achieved.

- **Monitoring information from Rural Development Divisions.** More recent information on outputs and results has been provided by RDD, DARD. This provides an overview of progress to March 2012 (see Appendix 3) – again mainly outputs and results, although some impacts are included. Broadly, whilst this demonstrates that some progress has been made, it is evident that:
 - Progress against targets in LoO has still some way to go – with the exception of a small number of metrics, the targets achieved are less than 50% of those set (and in many cases considerably less)
 - The targets from LoOs are, in many cases, some way behind the targets from the strategy or Implementation Plans.
 - Considering the “impact” measure: Number of supported new businesses which are still in existence two years after final funding, the values reports for Measure 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 respectively are 8, 0 and 3.
- **Feedback from survey of project promoters:** A survey of project promoters was undertaken (this is described in more detail in Section 6 in the report and Appendix 2). This included questions on impacts of the funding. Over half of respondents (57.1%) had not yet achieved the outcomes that they expected to, but 39.7% indicated that they had already achieved the outcomes they expected to – details in Table 13.

Table 117: Outcomes Achieved

Outcomes	Measure 3.1 Diversification into non- agricultural activities	Measure 3.2 Business creation and development	Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development	Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
Maintain or increase the income of farm households	2	6	1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Create employment opportunities	5	2	2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Develop/ expand existing farm diversification enterprise	2	1	2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Create new farm diversification enterprise	3	1	2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Provide tourism/visitor facilities	1	1	4	n/a	n/a	1
Develop/ expand existing community business	n/a	n/a	1	1	n/a	n/a
Create new community business	1	n/a	1	1	n/a	n/a
Generate renewable energy	1	n/a	2	1	n/a	n/a
Attract visitors to rural areas in Northern Ireland	1	1	4	1	n/a	1
Improve or maintain living conditions and welfare of those living in rural areas	1	n/a	n/a	3	n/a	n/a
Increase the attractiveness of rural areas through the provision of more and better services	1	n/a	1	3	n/a	1
Increase local access to Information Communication Technologies	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1

Outcomes	Measure 3.1 Diversification into non- agricultural activities	Measure 3.2 Business creation and development	Measure 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	Measure 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	Measure 3.5 Village renewal and development	Measure 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
Enable & encourage residents of villages & surrounding areas to create a vision & an integrated action plan to ensure potential of such areas is achieved	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1	n/a
Support village initiatives which promote cross-community development and regeneration	1	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	1
Preserve and upgrade Northern Irelands rural heritage	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	n/a	1
Base: 25 respondents who indicated they had already achieved the outcomes they expected to Source: RSM McClure Watters, October 2012						

The most up to date information (to March 2013) from DARD's Rural Development Division shows that the following progress has been made:

- **Axis 3 — Commitment**

- At the end of February 2013 Axis 3 had spent/committed over £67.4 million in grant assistance to 1,471 projects. That includes an investment of £1.5 million for rural broadband to improve access and download speeds for rural businesses and rural dwellers. A further 91 applications worth £10 m were approved by JCCs to receive offers of funding.
- In addition the JCCs are progressing 309 applications (seeking grant of over £23m) through the assessment and appraisal process. This includes applications for strategic projects to re-focus the Axis 3 measures.
- Taking account of the value of actual commitment achieved and projects approved for letter of offer together with applications received which are currently undergoing assessment the programme is on track to achieve full commitment by the end of 2013.
- Despite the level of commitment achieved spend has been slow and DARD contract managers continue to closely monitor progress and assist JCCs and LAGs as necessary ensure that the programme can be delivered for the benefit of rural communities as projected.

- **Spend so far**

- To date a total there has been a total of **£39m** Axis 3 expenditure since the start of the programme. This is made up of **£29.2m** project spend and **£9.8m** Councils' admin spend. An additional £1.5 million has been spent on rural broadband.

- **Benefits achieved as a result of the projects in receipt of grant payments to date**

- Despite the economic climate Axis 3 has assisted over 294 farm businesses to diversify providing much needed additional income to the farm household and the local rural economy. Additionally investments have supported 238 micro-enterprises and created almost 319 new jobs providing further economic and quality of life stimulus in rural communities. Tourism is important to the rural economy and so far 89 tourism actions have been supported which will have an impact on tourist spend thereby generating additional income for other businesses in the investment area.
- Through the more community orientated measures projects have been supported to purpose build or adapt facilities in community halls and villages which provide much needed access to improved services for older members of the community, women and youth. Investments predicated upon developing social capital have seen projects directly benefitting children and young people receive over 15% of the total grant assistance.

8.3.2.2 Effectiveness as a Policy Instrument in Empowering Local Communities to address local Problems in line with national strategy objectives

Evidence from the MTE and from consultation with the JCCs and LAGs highlights the importance of the bottom-up approach in delivering Axis 3 and the benefits of involving local people in addressing

local needs. The “bottom-up” approach provides the means by which local communities would be empowered to address local problems.

The main benefits from the bottom-up approach were felt to be:

- Use of local and regional knowledge, local community networks, and grass roots organisations to facilitate Programme delivery;
- Helping to bring people together;
- The increase in local confidence resulting from local participation and consultations.
- Availability of an accessible local funding source to address local needs.

However, it is important to recognise the significant voluntary contribution which makes this approach possible. In addition, there is a widespread view that the current 3-tier structure hinders rather than helps in terms of the effectiveness of delivery; also that the current process does not allow for a “true” implementation of LEADER as the level of control and bureaucracy detracts from this.

The structures and delivery mechanisms for the delivery of Axis 3 of the NIRDP through LEADER provided for local communities to develop and implement integrated rural development strategies (through 7 LEADER groups). The preparation of local strategies by each LAG provided a means to link local need with national strategy objectives. Each group had to develop a strategy which was approved by DARD; these were scored against various criteria including assessment of need and strategic fit – hence linking local actions and national strategy objectives.

Therefore, LEADER was effective in providing a mechanism to empower local communities to address local problems; each LAG linked local need with national strategy objectives through its strategy.

However, it is important to note that in general, since the strategies were developed, they had not been revisited or updated to take into account changes in the wider environment. Therefore in order to enhance effectiveness in this regard, it would be important to build in such a review in any future programmes so that the strategy is a “live” document. The MTE of NIRDP made a recommendation that strategies should be reviewed. The issue of strategies not having been revisited and hence becoming “out of date” was also identified in recent consultation.

8.3.2.3 Effectiveness as a Policy Instrument Delivering National Policy Objectives identified in local development strategies

Each LAG was required to develop a strategy setting out their plans for delivery of Axis 3 Measures in their areas using LEADER. These strategies were informed by national policy objectives as set out in the overall RDP programme document.

As noted in Section 8.3.2.2, the MTE of NIRDP also made recommendations in terms of LAGs updating their strategies.

8.3.2.4 Effectiveness as a Policy Instrument in giving more Added Value to Rural Development

In terms of added value to rural development, the key areas in which evidence has been found include:

- **Access to local knowledge and experience in membership of LAG;**

- **Leverage of voluntary Inputs** – the valuable investment of the LAG members in providing their time, expertise and local knowledge on a voluntary basis.
- **Building relationships** – this applies in particular to the LAG members – building relationships between the public, private and voluntary / community sector; also between partner Councils. The MTE of the RDP noted that: “the LEADER approach has enabled a multi-sectoral approach and has facilitated good levels of co-operation. The current structure adopted has brought local government involvement directly to the Programme, while the LAG members have a wealth of knowledge from their respective backgrounds;”
- **Additionality:** In a survey of project promoters, the majority of respondents (65.1%) stated that without the funding they probably (34.9%) or definitely (30.2%) would not have gone ahead with the project. However, the remainder (34.9%) would have been able to go ahead with the project over a longer timescale and/or on a smaller scale. Thus LEADER has enabled many projects to go ahead that otherwise would not.

8.3.2.5 Suitability of LEADER to different rural development actions

In this programming period (2007-2013), the LEADER approach has been used to support a broad range of measures covering the public and private sectors, also the voluntary and community sector. The six measures and the funding allocation to each are:

- 3.1: Diversification into non-agricultural activities (£20m)
- 3.2: Business creation and development (£20m)
- 3.3: Encouragement of tourism activities (£12m)
- 3.4: Basic services to the economy and the rural population (£12m)
- 3.5: Village renewal and development (£12m)
- 3.6: Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage (£4m)

Up to 31 March 2012, spend overall was around £27.8m (including £7.9m on administration), although it is projected to reach target level spend by 2015 (£99.8m including £16.3m on administration). Measures 3.5 and 3.6 appear to be particularly slow in terms of spend. (see Table 14 below).

Based on limited information on impacts to date, it is difficult to comment on the effectiveness of the LAGS across the 6 Measures. However in terms of suitable measures, consultees expressed a range of views:

- there was little appetite from the LAGs to “give up” any of the Measures they currently deliver;
- an alternative approach would be to keep the LAGs delivering the same types of Measures but with a focus on small scale, local projects; with DARD also delivering under the same Measures but on large scale strategic projects;
- some measures were felt to have a good fit with local government and could therefore be best delivered “in-house” by Councils (e.g. Village renewal);
- the “one size fits all” approach offering the same process for different types of grants to different target groups (from farmers to voluntary / community groups) was not favoured by all. There is also a view that different skills / approaches required to work with private sector and community/voluntary sector applicants.

Table 118: LEADER – NIRDP 2007-2013 – Spend to 31/3/12 and targets (based on Cluster Implementation Plans July 2012)

	Total Spend to 31/3/12 + forecast spend per Cluster and per Measure							Actual Spend to 31/3 (incl. verified accruals)	Total Implementati on Plan Targets (Incl spend to 31/3/12)	Measure Allocation	Variance
	GROW	NER	LRP	DRAP	SOAR	ARC	SWARD				
3.1	£1,364,475.18	£2,500,000.36	£1,855,290.16	£1,541,563.91	£3,549,708.81	£3,645,613.45	£3,819,999.69	£5,518,934.73	£18,276,651.56	20,000,000	1,723,348
3.2	£1,046,243.87	£1,447,429.05	£991,973.34	£1,090,146.62	£2,429,276.76	£3,336,413.94	£1,974,864.56	£5,227,416.30	£12,316,348.14	20,000,000	7,683,652
3.3	£1,953,398.13	£3,192,052.22	£1,840,167.79	£4,255,046.49	£2,393,435.85	£1,996,874.25	£3,718,394.34	£4,275,370.07	£19,349,369.07	12,000,000	-7,349,369
3.4	£1,260,165.65	£2,077,999.23	£1,055,165.76	£1,707,972.09	£2,975,554.72	£2,966,377.90	£4,344,991.85	£3,298,253.02	£16,388,227.20	12,000,000	-4,388,227
3.5	£1,468,281.10	£1,667,502.16	£1,289,999.37	£2,189,944.00	£1,929,051.38	£2,330,211.12	£2,129,899.69	£869,804.82	£13,004,888.82	12,000,000	-1,004,889
3.6	£282,009.66	£100,000.00	£273,982.50	£461,716.16	£666,170.64	£1,240,156.18	£1,113,116.75	£621,861.89	£4,137,151.89	4,000,000	-137,152
Total	£7,374,573.59	£10,984,983.02	£7,306,578.92	£11,246,389.27	£13,943,198.16	£15,515,646.84	£17,101,266.88	£19,811,640.83	£83,472,636.68	80,000,000	-3,472,637
Admin	£1,456,987.51	£2,196,315.34	£1,355,425.37	£2,247,026.21	£2,788,641.50	£2,866,647.67	£3,420,027.80	£7,937,423.40	£16,331,071.40	20,000,000	3,668,929
Total	£8,831,561.10	£13,181,298.36	£8,662,004.29	£13,493,415.48	£16,731,839.66	£18,382,294.51	£20,521,294.68	£27,749,064.23	£99,803,708.08	£100,000,000	£196,292
Alloc- ation	8,890,899	13,181,300	8,691,556	13,498,066	16,731,839	18,484,112	20,522,227		99,999,999	100,000,000	1

Source DARD – [2 Axis 3 Imp Plans Final at 31-7-12 revised to take account of strategic projects.xls] based on Cluster Implementation Plans reviewed by Clusters July 2012; includes spend to 31/3 and projections for 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15

8.3.3 LEADER (2007-2013) – Value for Money

In light of the limited information on impacts available to date, it is not possible to make a definitive statement on Value for Money.

8.3.4 LEADER (2007-2013) – Lessons Learnt and Best Practice

The table below presents an overview of LEADER structures etc. After the table we comment on each of the areas from the Terms of Reference.

8.3.4.1 Overview of LEADER

Table 119: LEADER – NIRDP 2007-2013

Characteristic	NIRDP 2007-2013 - LEADER
Name of Programme	Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Axis 3: Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy; and Axis 4: Delivery of the LEADER approach.
Managing Authority	DARD
Aims of funding	Under Axis 3 there are 6 Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities 3.2 Business creation and development 3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities 3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population 3.5 Village renewal and development 3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage Under Axis 4 there are 3 Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1: Implementation of Local Development Strategies 4.2: Inter-territorial and Transnational Co-operation 4.3: Running costs, Acquisition of skills and Animation
No. of partnerships / delivery groups	7 Local Action Groups deliver Axis 3 – these are aligned to the proposed 7-Super-Council areas under RPA (this model did not go ahead)
Size of area / population covered	Population per LAG area ranges from 37,000 to 134,000 approx. Size of LAG areas range from 647 km ² to 3,855 km ²
Budget in total and per partnership	Overall the 7 LAGs are responsible for delivering funding of £100m (allocation ranges from £8.6m to £20.5m per Cluster)
How funding is awarded to the partnerships	Funding was awarded to each Cluster on the basis of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% on rural population and deprivation 50% on quality of strategy submitted by each Cluster

Characteristic	NIRDP 2007-2013 - LEADER
	100% of funding was allocated to each Cluster at the outset
Links with Local Government	Each of the 7 Clusters covers 3 - 5 Council Areas DARD contracts with 7 Lead Councils for delivery of Axis 3 In each Cluster, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all Councils have Elected Members who sit on the Joint Council Committee • all Councils have Elected Members who sit on the Local Action Group • Programme Staff are employed by the Lead Council (and in some cases by Partner Councils) Each JCC has Service Level Agreements and/or Partnership Agreements with the Lead Council, Partner Councils and the LAG.
Structure of each partnership	In each Cluster, there are 3 tiers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Council Committee (consists of Elected Members from each of the Partner Council). Its role is to influence areas such as financial control and selection, recruitment and management of staff. It is the decision-making body. • Local Action Group (consists of Elected Members from each of the Partner Councils and Social Partners (min. 50%)). It is responsible for assessing need in its area, assessing applications and making recommendations for funding. • Programme Management Staff. These support application, assessment and claims processes. Local Action Groups work alongside the Joint Council Committees. The LAGS, in delivering NIRDP are responsible for assessing need in their respective areas and assessing applications whilst JCCs influence financial control and selection, recruitment and management of staff. The lead councils are responsible for all administration duties associated with the delivery of axis 3 and 4 through the LEADER approach, and for managing how business of the JCC is conducted. Roles and Responsibilities for all stakeholders involved in LEADER are set out in Appendix 4.4 and 4.5.
Level of delegated authority / responsibility	The control environment is dictated by the operational guidelines developed by DARD. As noted below, DARD and LAGs must ensure compliance with requirements set out in EU regulations 1975/2006 and 885/2006, also Managing Public Money NI (DFP, 2008)). Roles and Responsibilities for all stakeholders involved in LEADER are set out in Appendix 4.4 and 4.5.
Control, monitoring and audit requirements	Requirements for audit and inspections are set out in EU regulations 1975/2006 and 885/2006. These include a range of audit and compliance checks. (See Appendix 5). These can involve DARD Programme Compliance Unit, DARD Verification Unit, DARD Internal Audit, and NIAO. As funding is also

Characteristic	NIRDP 2007-2013 - LEADER
	delivered through JCCs (within Councils), there is also potential for the Local Government Auditor to consider spend under RDP.
How are administration costs calculated / paid out	<p>Costs of administration are capped at 20% of spend in each Cluster.</p> <p>Admin costs are drawn down throughout the programme but there is a risk to councils that if spend does not increase and clusters do not meet their targets there will be a clawbacks of admin costs.</p> <p>In relation to funding, there is a maximum grant rate of public funding that applies to all axes 3 and 4 projects. However, in accordance with the 'de minimis' rule (Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1998/2006), the overall limit of 'de minimis' aid from all such sources to a beneficiary shall not exceed €200,000 over any three-year period, subject to State Aid rules.</p> <p>An amount not greater than 20% of the total actual eligible amount expended on projects (the amount expended on projects is that portion of the funding paid out in grant to project promoters) or a lesser amount set out in the accepted strategy provided for the local action groups administration costs incurred in implementing the approved strategy.</p>
Resources allocated per partnership – costs / staffing structures	<p>Programme Management staff numbers – typical structure includes: Programme Manager, Project Officers, Monitoring Officers, etc. Staff are typically based in the Lead Council (and in some cases in Partner Councils). They report in to the (Economic) Development Department.</p> <p>See Appendix 4.5 for staff levels in each LAG.</p>
Skills / capacity / training to ensure partnership is effective	<p>Measure 4.3 (Running Costs, Acquisition of Skills and Animation) aims to ensure that Local Action Groups are resourced adequately to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>The key groups involved in the delivery of Axis 3 (and the method of recruitment) are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JCC members – Elected Members nominated by each Council • LAG members – Elected Members nominated by Councils and for Social Partners, there were various approaches to recruiting – mainly through public meetings • Staff recruited as per job descriptions. <p>For JCC and LAG members, there were no specific skills / capacity criteria thresholds set.</p> <p>RNNI provide training to JCC and LAG members on a wide range of areas of relevance to their roles including: Governance and Assessment Panel Training.</p>

8.3.4.2 Lessons from LEADER 2007-2013

What aims a Leader model should be used to deliver

- See Section 8.3.2.5

Number of LAGs and territory covered

- The number of LAGs was established to mirror the proposed RPA Council structure (which did not go ahead).
- Some of the partner Councils had worked together in other partnerships or fora previously.
- There were some concerns about the size (and implications for travelling to / from LAG meetings) and different priorities (e.g. tourism vs microenterprise) in some of the larger LAGs.

Role of local authorities/timing and potential impact of the Reform of Local Government

- The LAGS were set up in a fluid environment with regards to the Reform of Local Government. Initially, it was understood (by DARD) that “rural development “ was being transferred to local government; this subsequently became the transfer of a range of “functions” including rural development. This caused confusion on roles and responsibilities.
- The MTE notes that LAGs were to be responsible for assessing need in their area and assessing applications, while JCCs were to influence areas such as financial control and selection, recruitment and management of staff. At the outset it was felt this approach would be cost effective and implement a regional approach to develop and integrate the Programme with other regeneration strategies. In the intervening years RPA moved towards implementing an 11 council model rather than the proposed 7, and subsequently in June 2010 the proposed reforms stalled when the Northern Ireland Executive was unable to reach agreement on the way forward. The uncertainty over the RPA has caused obvious difficulties in the establishment of the Leader structure for the NIRDP.

Role of partnerships established under other EU programmes

- No specific lessons

Level of delegated authority/responsibility

- In the MTE of the RDP, it was noted that the majority of individuals associated with the Programme are not in favour of the current 3 tier structure. Although widespread support was evident for the LEADER approach, there is a perception that the system (structure) in place is not enabling a more efficient application process, but on the contrary is slowing down the process. The system is described by some interviewed as ‘ad hoc and inflexible’ with a general belief that the multi-tier nature makes it difficult to keep everyone together. [Note: Section 6 (in the report) of this review includes feedback from DARD staff and from JCC and LAG members and staff – this illustrates that the Strategic and Operational fora provided a mechanism by which all parties came together and issues could be raised and solutions sought. In addition – as highlighted in Section 6 (and included in detail in Appendix 7), several papers were produced to highlight specific issues and seek solutions

to these including: Joint Cluster Document on Axis 3&4 Delivery (November 2010); Barriers to Progress: Solutions (Draft Report on Findings, June 2011) and Barriers Response and Action Plan (2011). The MTE Update (April 2013) also highlights that in response to an initial request from CEOs in Lead Councils to DARD, in December 2011, the Minister advised that she was refocusing expenditure towards larger and more strategic projects.]

- The 3-tier model has caused some frustration and some delays are attributed to this – due to the need for all decisions to go through the JCC (so for example a LAG might put forward recommendations to award funding but these awards could not be made until the next meeting of the JCC – in some cases, on the same day, in other cases, there could be some delay until the meeting is held. However, a number of the LAGs noted that delays were minimised by ensuring that LAG and JCC assessment panels met on the same day.
- While there is evidence from the MTE that the system in place is not operating as is desired, there is **not** wide spread support for de-constructing the Programme at this early stage of implementation. The following recommendations are made with a view to moving Axis 3 forward:
 - A specific task-force could be established involving DARD, JCCs, and LAGs to investigate where more flexibility and common ground can be found. This is specifically in relation to drawdown procedures, open calls, and the level of audit requirements.
 - Strategies should be reviewed as a priority with a view to moving forward. This is especially in relation to the quality of life measures (i.e. basic services) due to guidelines changing since the strategies were devised. Areas such as 'renewable energy' clearly also require guidance in the short term.
 - DARD should revisit animation / facilitator roles within LAGs / JCCs. There is strong evidence that this is currently required to aid Programme Implementation.
 - Communication to be addressed. Due to the complex structure that exists it is necessary that communication is timely and user friendly. All parties to seek to move this aspect of the delivery structure forward.
 - Active Networking between LAGs / JCCs. It is widely regarded that not enough networking is taking place between LAGs, compared with previous Programmes. This could possibly be facilitated further by the Rural Network.
 - Ensure that Systems 2007 is fit for purpose. This is a necessary aspect of the ability of LAGs and JCCs to manage their projects effectively and efficiently and as such should be rectified as soon as possible.
 - Increase timeliness of Processing of Projects. There is evidence that by LAGs and JCCs sitting on the same day to assess projects that the timeframes are considerably improved, with queries minimised. This could be rolled out to all areas.

Control, monitoring and audit requirements

- Audit requirements are mandatory. As noted in the table above (in Section 8.3.4.1), DARD and LAGs must ensure compliance with requirements set out in EU regulations 1975/2006 and 885/2006, also Managing Public Money NI (DFP, 2008); further details are included in Appendix 5. This includes details of project inspection and audit:
 - Article 33 Supervision of JCCs – Monitoring Inspections

- Article 26 Administrative Inspections
 - Article 27 On-the-Spot Checks
 - Article 30 Ex-Post Checks
 - Article 32 Control Checks
 - Inspections by Other Independent Audit Bodies
- Feedback from the JCCs and LAGS indicates a degree of frustration with the level of audit and there are some concerns about proportionality. However, the level of audit and inspection are not optional and are required to be completed as per the regulations governing the funding.

Administration models (including models of funding disbursement)

- The overall level of funding available for administration is capped at 20% by EC Regulations.
- Under the current programming period, the 7 LAGS have responsibility for £100m (which is a significant increase on previous LEADER initiatives). Releasing the full budget to each LAG at the outset has limited DARD's ability to be flexible in reallocating money between Measures or Axes in the event that there is significant underspend.

Costs

- No specific lessons

Extent to which LEADER strategies can (or cannot) include funding streams/directives beyond the current EAFRD LEADER programme (i.e. other European funds, other national government programmes.), taking account of the new EU regulations (including the finance and regulatory controls)

- No specific lessons

Training and skills sets required to ensure groups have sufficient capacity to deliver using the LEADER methodology

- There is evidence from MTE and more recent consultation that the support has increased the capacities of LAGs, especially in respect of training and support afforded to them by the RNNI. However concerns and issues have been highlighted by individuals around the structure adopted for the current programming period. There is evidence that the capacities of LAGs have been hindered somewhat by this structure.
- In the MTE of the RDP, it was noted that the Joint Council tier is perceived to have a lack of capacity, and as such can be delaying projects. This was a view shared by some consultees in this review primarily DARD) and not generally shared by consultees in the JCCs, LAGs, etc. (see Section 6 in report for more information on feedback from consultees)
- The slowness of LAGs to spend, the lack of linkages between current activities and LAG strategies and the limited monitoring and evaluation information available (with a focus on spend rather than outputs, results and impacts) also point to areas in which training and development may be required.

Continuity from one European funding period to the next

- Feedback from consultation highlighted the benefits of experience being carried over from one LEADER period to the next (e.g. in terms of LAG membership, Programme Management staff, etc.).
- There was also recognition of the need to allow adequate lead in time to prepare for any funding programme; and this is even more important if there are changes in boundaries that groups work within.

DRAFT

9 LEADER IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, WALES AND IRELAND

9.1 RDPE 2007-2013 Summary Information

9.1.1.1 RDPE 2007-2013 – LEADER – Overview

Table 120: LEADER –RDPE 2007-2013

Characteristic	RDPE 2007-2013 - LEADER
Name of Programme	Rural Development Programme (England) 2007-2013
Managing Authority	LEADER was initially delivered through 8 Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). However Defra are now responsible for the delivery of LEADER following re-organisation.
Aims of funding	LEADER can be used to fund the majority of actions under Axis 3 measures but also contributes to Axis 1 to a smaller degree.
No. of partnerships / delivery groups	64 Local Action Groups deliver Axis 1 and 3 covering 70% of rural areas. The majority of actions take place in under Axis 3, however some regions have focused more strongly than others in delivering Axis 1 measures.
Size of area / population covered	Population per LAG areas in England is 7,100,000 Size of LAG areas in England is 200,000Km ²
Budget in total and per partnership	The total LEADER Budget is £133m with £109m programme money and £24m M&A. Of the £109m LEADER programme budget, £93.4m is from Axis 3 and £14.3m from Axis 1. LAG budgets range of £700k - £5m and an average of just over £2m. Approximately 70% of the budget is delivered through Axis 3 and 10% through Axis 1. Defra forecast approximately 18% for admin costs.
How funding is awarded to the partnerships	<p>English LAGs were selected competitively. Each Regional Development Agency (there were 8 RDAs with responsibility for RDPE Axes 1,3 and 4 at the time) invited applications from prospective LAGs in their area. Often this involved a two-stage process where each group was required to submit an Expression of Interest and then subsequently a full LDS application. In all cases, RDAs provided some pre application support, either through workshops and/or funding to build capacity to develop partnerships and to identify the needs of the area.</p> <p>The selection criteria were in part based what the Commission required of the MA with additional criteria set by the Managing Authority for example, LEADER bids were assessed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of the partnership; • Coherence of the area; • Quality of the Local Development Strategy; • Financial and administrative capacity • Fit with National Programme objectives; • Integration of sustainable development principles; • Commitment to integration across the objectives of Axes 1, 2 & 3; • Commitment to co-operation. <p>Each region set up a panel comprising representatives of the relevant Regional Development Agency, Natural England and the Forestry Commission. Government Office also sat on the panel to oversee the process was conducted appropriately.</p>

Characteristic	RDPE 2007-2013 - LEADER
Links with Local Government	Each Local Action Group has an accountable body to provide local checks and balances, ensure proper financial controls and assist with M&A and the running of the LAG. Typically these are Local Authorities (be they District, County or Unitary) although we also have some National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty who provide this function. In some cases
Structure of each partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAGs must involve at least 50% non-public sector representation. The LAG has a number of roles which they are expected to perform locally to deliver the LDS. Its key roles are to: • Co-ordinate the LEADER partnership including holding regular meetings (minimum quarterly), and liaising with all partners on key decisions. • Develop the capacity of the partnership to lead a LDS. • provide strategic direction through the development and subsequent annual review of a LDS. • Deliver the LDS on behalf of the partnership through stimulating and supporting appropriate projects to deliver the LDS. • Establish a panel to consider and select projects to be funded by the LAG • Publicise locally the role of RDPE and LEADER in supporting projects. • The accountable body works on behalf of the LAG to: • Monitor all the projects which are funded locally under the LEADER approach and keep appropriate records on project performance, outputs and expenditure. • Provide the link between the local area and the Defra delivery team (previous to 2011, this would have been the RDA). • Provide an audit trail to meet EU, Defra (and RDA) requirements for all expenditure and administrative procedures associated with the operation of a LEADER project.
Level of delegated authority / responsibility	<p>The amount of funding any LAG could award to a project was set by the RDAs and this resulted in some variation across the country. For example, SEEDA initially required LAGs to limit their awards to £50,000 per application whereas EEDA set no upper limit.</p> <p>LAGs select projects for approval, which are then forwarded to Defra for formal sign off. Defra's role is not to consider the desirability of the application, but they do check that the project is eligible for funding.</p> <p>The RDAs did not enter into agreements with ABs that fully passed down all risk of disallowance, therefore the sign off of all projects by Defra is necessary to reduce programme risk.</p>
Control, monitoring and audit requirements	<p>The control, monitoring and audit requirements for RDPE are extensive and are largely dictated by the regulations with some local arrangements for monitoring performance against targets.</p> <p>LAGs/ABs contribute to quarterly reports to the Rural Payments Agency, annual Attestation reports, are subject to Compliance Monitoring, Audit etc. The ABs are expected to comply with the Key and Ancillary Controls which demand exhaustive checks on all application and claims.</p>
How are administration costs calculated / paid out	<p>Costs of administration are capped at 20% of spend in each LAG.</p> <p>M&A are claimed through the Paying Agency, an 'arms length' division of Defra.</p>
Resources allocated per partnership – costs /	<p>Programme Management staff numbers – typical structure includes: Programme Manager, Project Officers and admin support,</p>

Characteristic	RDPE 2007-2013 - LEADER
staffing structures	Staff are typically based in the Lead Partner's office. They report in to the Local Action Group.
Skills / capacity / training to ensure partnership is effective	There are a number of networks across the country including networks that offer peer support to LAG/AB staff and their Chairs, sharing good practice and tackling common issues. These networks often identify and are used to deliver common training needs (e.g. EU administrative procedures, project appraisal training and audit requirements).

9.1.1.2 RDPE 2007-2013 – LEADER – Evaluation: Key findings related to the delivery structure

A report entitled 'Delivering LEADER across the UK' recently identified the following strengths and weaknesses with delivery of LEADER in England.

Strengths:

- The justification for LEADER's additional costs and management structures is the added value that flows from bottom up, partnership working — such as better identification of local needs and solutions, more engagement and empowerment on the part of stakeholders and greater scope for innovation.
- Delivering funding via the LEADER approach can help to address inequities at a local level in allowing local circumstances to dictate local activity that in many cases goes across or beyond pre-determined administrative boundaries.
- A flexible partnership approach does allow for localism and big society type activity, bringing together a breadth of interests and in some cases joining up different funding streams and programmes to deliver a community vision and strategy that extends beyond the bounds of the RDPE.
- The LEADER approach also has access to a comprehensive network of peers, both within England, the UK RDPE network and also across the EU27 through trans-national co-operation. This brings many benefits including the sharing of best practice, innovation ideas and procedural efficiency.

Weaknesses:

- A report for the European Court of Auditors found that compared with traditional methods of funding the LEADER approach can often involve higher direct and indirect costs and risks. This is often owing to additional layers of implementation and bureaucracy from giving the control of the EU budget to a multitude of local partnerships (LAGs). The UK Mid-Term Evaluation suggests LEADER programmes were relatively slow to take-off until the end of 2009. Building local capacity and self-empowerment is a lengthy process, trust has to be built and relationships developed and this takes time compared to delivery through established, constituted bodies.
- It can also produce inequities in that there may not be complete geographic coverage. Some Local Action Groups will receive more local support and will have the capacity to

develop and to deliver more activity than others, so creating a patchwork of delivery. The approach of some LAGs can be seen as “parochial” and it is often difficult for new actors and projects to become part of the process, considered in some areas a ‘closed shop’, where individual’s interests often take primacy. A continuation of similar groups from one programme to another can account for a lack of diversity both in terms of LAG participants and projects delivered.

- Displacement and deadweight do occur, where LEADER funding may be used to support projects that probably would have happened anyway, or where funding is used to backfill cuts in the budgets of local municipalities and deliver their responsibilities for them.

9.1.1.3 RDPE 2007-2013 – LEADER – Evaluation: Progress to date

RDPE 2007-2013 – Axis 1 and 3 Measures

Axis 1 and Axis 3 Measures

Axis 1 and Axis 3 measures are delivered and reported in conjunction with other schemes in the RDPE. As such it is not possible to identify what outputs and results relate to LEADER and which relate to other schemes. There is variation between the 8 RDAs on what measures are delivered through LEADER and what through other schemes.

Table 121: RDPE 2007-2013 – Measure 41

Measure 41 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators				
Indicator		Actual: December 2009	Forecast: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of Local Action Groups (LAGs) supported	65	65	65
	Total size of LAGs area	200,000 km ²	200,000 km ²	200,000 km ²
	Total population in LAG area	7,100,000	7,100,000	7,100,000
	Number of beneficiaries	66,628	4,070,619	Not yet developed
	Number of projects financed by LAGs	68	521	Not yet developed
Result	Gross number of jobs created	53.75	303.35	Not available
	Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity	0	-	Not available

Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPE 2007-2013 (Hyder Adas, 2010)

Table 122:RDPE 2007-2013 – Measure 421

Measure 421 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators				
Indicator		Actual: December 2009	Forecast: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of Supported cooperation Projects	0	16	Not yet developed
	Number of Cooperating LAGs	0	22	Not yet developed
Result	Gross number of jobs created	Not available	Not available	Not available

Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPE 2007-2013 (Hyder Adas, 2010)

Table 123: RDPE 2007-2013 – Measure 431

Measure 431 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators				
Indicator		Actual: December 2009	Forecast: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of actions supported	65	65	65
Result	Number of Participants that successfully ended a training activity	Not available	Not available	Not available

Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPE 2007-2013 (Hyder Adas, 2010)

9.2 SRDP 2007-2013 Summary Information

9.2.1.1

SRDP 2007-2013 – LEADER – Overview

Table 124: LEADER – SRDP 2007-2013

Characteristic	SRDP 2007-2013 - LEADER
Name of Programme	Scotland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013
Managing Authority	Scottish Government
Aims of funding	<p>Under Axis 3 there are 2 Measures implemented by LEADER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 321 Basic services for the economy and rural population • 341 Skills acquisition, animation and implementation of local development strategies <p>Under Axis 4 there are 5 Measures implemented by LEADER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 411 Implementing local development strategies – competitiveness • 412 Implementing local development strategies – environmental/land management • 413 Implementing local development strategies – quality of life/diversification • 421 Implementing co-operation projects

Characteristic	SRDP 2007-2013 - LEADER
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 431 Running the local action group, acquiring skills and maintaining the territory as referred to in article 59
No. of partnerships / delivery groups	20 Local Action Groups deliver LEADER which covers 95% of the area of rural Scotland.
Size of area / population covered	Total Population covered by the LAGs is 1,509,709. The size of area covered by the LAGs is 73,692 km ² . There are four LAGs wholly in the Highlands and Islands Convergence area, three are partially in the Convergence area and the balance are wholly in Lowland Scotland
Budget in total and per partnership	Total LEADER Budget: £52 million + an additional £19 million for convergence area (Highlands & Islands)
How funding is awarded to the partnerships	Funding was awarded on a competitive bidding process and was based on the Local Development Strategy and Business Plans submitted.
Links with Local Government	Local Authorities are represented in all LAGs, usually by Council officers, rather than elected officials. In the 19 out of 20 cases the Local Authority is the Lead Partner, 1 is through the National Park. In the main there is only one Local Authority involved per LAG, however one LAG has three Local Authorities in its area. In the majority of cases the Local Authority is also the Lead Partner. The Paying Agency (Scottish Government) contracts with the Lead Partner, who has financial accountability for the programme, through a Service Level Agreement. LAG staff are usually employed by the Lead Partner, which in most cases is the LA.
Structure of each partnership	<p>Structures vary between LAGs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Action Group consists of representatives of the interests in the local area, (50 / 50 public sector and private, community and voluntary sectors). It is responsible for delivering its Local Development Strategy (LDS), assessing applications and approving funding for projects. Programme Management Staff. These support the application and claims processes and report progress to Scottish Government.
Level of delegated authority / responsibility	In Scotland all the LAGs have full delegated authority to manage the LEADER funding and to make decisions on which projects it supports. In some LAGs there are smaller Decision Making Bodies (DMB) who are put in place to make decisions on which projects are supported. These DMB must be representative of the fuller LAG. In a number of LAGs there are projects similar to Small Grants Schemes, where grants may be awarded to a certain level, without full consultation of the Decision Making Body or the full LAG.
Control, monitoring and audit requirements	<p>Local Council Auditor - xxx</p> <p>Scottish Government – Internal Audit - xxx</p> <p>EC regulations set out requirements for Article 26 & Article 33 checks – xxx (Note: level of audit set out in EU regulations 1975/2006 and 885/2006) xxx</p> <p>Scottish Government - Programme Compliance – xxx</p>
How are administration costs calculated / paid out	Costs of administration are capped at 20% of spend in each LAG programme. This is claimed quarterly and paid <i>retrospectively</i> .
Resources allocated per	Programme Management staff numbers – typical structure includes: Programme

Characteristic	SRDP 2007-2013 - LEADER
partnership – costs / staffing structures	<p>Manager and Administrative support</p> <p>The majority of LAGs have only 2 members of staff, which may be 1.5 FTEs. The largest LAG employs X staff.</p> <p>Staff are often based in the Lead Partner offices. They report in to the Local Action Group.</p>
Skills / capacity / training to ensure partnership is effective	<p>LAG members – various approaches to recruiting – local relevant organisations identified in LDS and representatives from these organisations invited to join the LAG.</p> <p>Skills required include local knowledge, expertise in specialist area and good network of contacts.</p> <p>Training is carried out at individual LAG level, this may include training on assessing applications etc.</p> <p>Staff recruited as per job descriptions – no specific training</p>

9.2.1.2 SRDP 2007-2013 – LEADER – Evaluation: Key findings related to the delivery structure

The Mid-Term Evaluation of SRDP 2007-2013 (Rural Development Company, 2010) highlighted that in relation to the LEADER approach:

- LEADER LAGs are active in monitoring their performance and the performance of the projects supported and a number of LAGs are monitoring against the delivery of their strategies.
- The extent, level of detail and standard of monitoring and reporting appears to vary considerably between LAGs as does the extent of strategic monitoring against quantified measurable objectives. Some LAGs are clearly gathering significantly more performance monitoring data than are required by the SG claims and reporting system. Guidance on this activity is also in need of improvement and updating.
- The case studies show that LAGs are achieving a wide range of quality of life outcomes through their supported activities.
- LAG staff and members and, to an extent project holders perceive an increased administrative burden in relation to programme finances which appears to be compromising aspects of the LEADER approach. This is a common issue in LEADER at an EU level arising from the introduction of the initiative to the RDP and the effect of the way in which financial controls have been implemented by Payment Agencies.
- There are two main aspects which give cause for concern. The accessibility of support to beneficiaries is being limited by the transactional costs associated with financial requirements. Administrative tasks are reported to be taking an increasing proportion of LAG manager/coordinator time and local accountable body resources and this is compromising animation activity.
 - A number of recommendations were made in relation to Implementation and Delivery Structures. The MTE recommended that the following areas are addressed for the remainder of the current Programme.
- The Scottish Government and LAGs should work together to address performance monitoring issues. Where not already in hand LAGs should review and update their strategies, in

particular this should address the relevance of their objectives, targets and the extent to which they can be measured. This recommendation is supported by the recent European Court of Auditors report which considered the LEADER+ delivery approach and made a number of recommendations which appear to be pertinent to Scottish LAGs under this programme.

- A clearer and more consistent approach to performance reporting should be developed and implemented by the Scottish Government and LAGs, this should relate more directly to the suite of Axis 3 output and result indicators. This must be practically oriented however and development work should directly involve practitioners. Where existing LAG good practice exists this should be incorporated.
- The Scottish Government and LAGs should consider on-going monitoring of quality of life benefits as a wider indicator of strategic impact at the local level.
- Clear and consistent guidance and guidelines should be developed by the Scottish Government to support the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation approach should be developed and adopted by LAGs.
- The LAGs and Scottish Government managers should continue to work together in reviewing the requirements and the associated procedures (at both LAG and SG levels) with a view to streamlining these further where possible to minimise the impact on staff, accountable body and project holder resources.

9.2.1.3 SRDP 2007-2013 – LEADER – Evaluation: Progress to date

SRDP 2007-2013 – Axis 3 Measures

Measure 321 and 341

Measures 321 and 341 previously delivered by other schemes within SRDP. As of August 2010 the Measures are delivered through LEADER LAGs and subsequently there were no outputs or results delivered through LEADER at the mid-term evaluation stage.

Table 125: SRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 411 - check the date

Measure 411 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of Local Action Groups (LAGs) supported	20	20
	Total size of LAGs area	73,692 Km ²	65,000 Km ²
	Total population in LAG area	1,509,709	900,000
	Number of beneficiaries	26,457	17,500
	Number of projects financed by LAGs	101	2,000
Result	Gross number of jobs created	n/a	1,920
	Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity	n/a	5,056

Source: Mid-term evaluation of the SRDP 2007-2013 (Rural Development Company, 2010)

Table 126: SRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 421

Measure 421 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of Supported cooperation Projects	n/a	600
	Number of Cooperating LAGs	n/a	20
Result	Gross number of jobs created	n/a	100
There is no recorded activity under this Measure at the point of this Mid Term Evaluation. <i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the SRDP 2007-2013 (Rural Development Company, 2010)</i>			

Table 127: SRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 4.3

Measure 431 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: June 2010	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of actions supported	n/a	400
Result	Number of Participants that successfully ended a training activity	n/a	300
<i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the SRDP 2007-2013 (Rural Development Company, 2010)</i>			

9.1 WRDP 2007-2013 Summary information

9.1.1.1 WRDP 2007-2013 – LEADER - Overview

Table 128: LEADER – WRDP 2007-2013

Characteristic	WRDP 2007-2013 - LEADER
Name of Programme	Wales Rural Development Plan 2007-2013
Managing Authority	Welsh Government
Aims of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Axis 3: Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy; and Axis 4: Delivery of the LEADER approach
No. of partnerships / delivery groups	18 Local Action Groups deliver LEADER in Wales
Size of area / population covered	Population in LAG areas is 1,176,488 which equates to 92% of the rural population in Wales LAGs cover areas with very different scales of rural coverage ranging from the whole of the Local Authority area being classified as rural to an LA area only having 2 rural wards. Size of area covered by LAGs in Wales is 19,033km ²
Budget in total and per partnership	The Axis 4 LEADER budget is £44,709,999 (Measure 41 £30,590,001; Measure 421 Co-operation £5,177,999; Measure 431 Running Costs £8,942,000)
How funding is awarded	Funding was awarded on a Project by project through Business Plans that were

Characteristic	WRDP 2007-2013 - LEADER
to the partnerships	submitted as part of the Local Development Strategies. Approval of the LDS led to LAG status. In the first round of Business Planning (BP1) projects were submit to the Welsh Government for approval on a project by project basis. This was not seen to work well and so in Business Plan 2 LAGs submitted one Axis 4 project, with a number of sub project to the Welsh Government for approval. In the 14 incorporated LAGs the Lead Body pays the LEADER claims and is paid retrospectively by the Welsh Government.
Links with Local Government	There are 18 Local Action Groups in Wales. 4 areas have incorporated LAGs, 14 have unincorporated LAGs with terms of reference and have elected the Local Authorities in their areas to act as their lead bodies.
Structure of each partnership	In Wales strategic Local Partnerships were selected or created, one for each of 18 Local Authority areas, to oversee the delivery of Axis 3 and Axis 4 activity under a joint Local Development Strategy (with an Axis 3 and Axis 4 section). The Local Partnerships are formed on a 1/4s principle of private, voluntary, community and public sector representatives and are intended to cover the geographical and sectoral interests of the area and to integrate the activity of the LAGs and Axis 3 work with the rest of the economic, social and environmental activity in the area.
Level of delegated authority / responsibility	In Wales, the LAG acts as a delivery organisation, commissioning or facilitating projects for which there is a demonstrated local need. Parallel local partnerships, made up of local stakeholder organisations, set the strategic direction for LAG activity, while the LAGs themselves lead on the commissioning of specific projects. Both the LAGs and the local partnerships are made up of a broad range of representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors. However, the partnerships tend to consist of representative organisations (such as a tourist board) whereas the LAG itself tends to consist of individual businesses/ individuals. The local partnerships have set the strategic direction for LEADER under Axis 3 and 4, whereas the LAGs role is more towards the day-to-day approval of individual projects.
Control, monitoring and audit requirements	There is an overarching legal document called a Funding Agreement between the Welsh Government and the LAGs which sets out the “terms of engagement” without specifying monetary amounts. A project funding letter is then issued as the legal document pledging funding and setting out agreed performance targets and any special conditions for each project (including Measure 431 LAG running costs). This has been a changed mid-Programme to delegate further responsibilities to those LAGs with Local Authority lead bodies with regard to processing claims and this is managed by each lead body having their own Control Plan, approved by Welsh Government on a pre-set template. This does not extend to the Measure 431 costs or to incorporated LAGs.
How are administration costs calculated / paid out	Costs of administration are capped at 20% of spend for each LAG.
Resources allocated per partnership – costs / staffing structures	Programme Management staff numbers – typical structure includes: Programme Manager, Project Officers, Monitoring Officers, etc.
Skills / capacity / training to ensure partnership is effective	Staff recruited as per job descriptions – no specific training Leader bodies do training – varies from area to area – really ad hoc – new vs old

9.1.1.2 WRDP 2007-2013 – LEADER – Evaluation: Key findings related to the delivery structure

The Mid-Term Evaluation of WRDP 2007-2013 (Adas et al, 2010) highlighted that in relation to the LEADER approach:

- At interview it was generally regarded that the LEADER approach (including previous LEADER programmes) has had a beneficial effect on governance of rural development efforts.
- It was observed at interview that the impact of previous programmes would have been greater if there had been fewer operational changes between LEADER programmes and if there had been not been a long gap between programmes being implemented locally. Both these factors resulted in loss of experience through staff leaving because funding was insecure or not forthcoming. Some of the new LAGs formed for the current programme have been short on know-how and experience.
- A major concern evident from the case study interviews is that Axis 4 has become much harder to operate than in previous LEADER programmes as a result of administrative problems. There are four main points made:
 - That the lack of advance payments makes it very hard to implement the LEADER approach.
 - That there is more paperwork associated with projects and less flexibility, some of which is not EU driven.
 - That the claims procedure has become much more onerous, again not all EU driven.
 - That the system of penalties is a further disincentive to participation, especially by community groups.
- As implemented in Axis 4 of the current RDP the previously flexible and innovative LEADER approach is seen to have become very difficult to operate because of administrative requirements.
- To summarise, a genuine initiative has been made to mainstream the LEADER approach in Wales. Major concerns exist about the difficulty of operating Axis 4 and this is associated with a slow start to project delivery, spending and achievement of targets.
- The possibility for either combining Axis 3 and Axis 4 within a local authority, or running some projects to cover more than one local authority area should be examined. There has been a major effort in Wales to mainstream the LEADER approach with 18 out of 22 local authorities now having a LAG. In Wales, most of Measure 41 LEADER activity has been related to Axis 3. This means there are in each local authority area two bodies largely dealing with Axis 3 – the Local Partnership and the LAG.
- The administrative difficulties of running Axis 3 and Axis 4 have been emphasised by stakeholders. The administrative burden of running two organisations implementing a Local Development Strategy in each local authority area is considerable.
- **Recommendation:** There should be an evaluation of the success of Axis 3 and 4 arrangements in developing human capital for mainstreaming the LEADER approach with a view to evolving current arrangements to lessen the administrative burdens for the RDP due to start in 2014.

9.1.1.3 WRDP 2007-2013 – LEADER – Evaluation: Progress to date

Table 129: WRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 41

Measure 41 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: 31 December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of Local Action Groups (LAGs) supported	18	18
	Total size of LAGs area	19,033Km ²	17,060Km ²
	Total population in LAG area	1,176,488	985,000
	Number of beneficiaries	379	200
	Number of projects financed by LAGs	83	90
Result	Gross number of jobs created	58	15
	Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity	Nil	150

Source: Mid-term evaluation of the WRDP 2007-2013 (Adas et al, 2010)

Table 130: WRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 421

Measure 421 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: 31 December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of Supported cooperation Projects	3	18
	Number of Cooperating LAGs	3	36
Result	Gross number of jobs created	Nil	10

Source: Mid-term evaluation of the WRDP 2007-2013 (Adas et al, 2010)

Table 131: WRDP 2007-2013 – Measure 431

Measure 431 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: 31 December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of actions supported	82	18
Result	Number of Participants that successfully ended a training activity	24	150

Source: Mid-term evaluation of the WRDP 2007-2013 (Adas et al, 2010)

9.2 RDPI 2007-2013 Summary information

9.2.1.1 RDPI 2007-2013 – LEADER - Overview

Table 132: LEADER – RDPI 2007-2013

Characteristic	RDPI 2007-2013 - LEADER
Name of Programme	Rural Development Plan Ireland 2007-2013
Managing Authority	Department of Environment
Aims of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Axis 3: Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy; and • Axis 4: Delivery of the LEADER approach
No. of partnerships / delivery groups	36 Local Action Groups deliver LEADER in Ireland through Integrated Local Development Companies
Size of area / population covered	Size of area covered by LAGs in Ireland is 69,357km ²
Budget in total and per partnership	LEADER delivers Axis 3 and 4 in Ireland with total LAG budgets of €400 million. LAG budgets range from €4.6 million to €17million.
How funding is awarded to the partnerships	<p>Funding was awarded following submission of Local Development Strategies. The strategies were scored against the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. quality of area profile and needs analysis - 30% 2. quality of the proposed programme - 30% 3. LAG capability and systems - 20% 4. Compliance with Departmental Guidelines on Governance in relation to the composition of board membership and objects of the LAG - 20%
Links with Local Government	There are no formal links between LAGs and Local Government in Ireland, apart from representatives on the Boards. The informal links vary from LAG to LAG, with a spectrum of relationships ranging from very strong to difficult.
Structure of each partnership	<p>To become a LAG Partnership in Ireland a Company must have the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It must be a public company, limited by guarantee without a share capital, incorporated under the Companies Acts. • The liability of the Company's members can be limited by guarantee • The Company's Members and the Company's Directors should be the same people and no person who is not a Director should be a Member and vice versa. • The Company should operate on a not-for-profit basis and should meet the Revenue Commissioners' requirements to qualify for charitable tax exempt status. • Maximum number of Directors is 23, made up of the following maximums per sector Local Government 5, National Social Partners 4, Community and Voluntary (NSP) 8 and Statutory Sector 6. • Some LAGs operate sub groups to look at specific sectoral issues. LAGs have separate Evaluation Committee, typically made up of six members, who score project applications against set criteria. Recommendations to fund or not are then offered by the Evaluation Committee to the full LAG

Characteristic	RDPI 2007-2013 - LEADER
	who make the final decision.
Level of delegated authority / responsibility	LAGs have full delegated authority of Article 26. At the beginning of the RDP LAGs were given a budget, split by measure, Recent programme changes have allowed for more flexibility to move budget between measures both at LAG and Programme level.
Control, monitoring and audit requirements	The Inspection Services Division (ISD) handles all claims, carrying out a risk assessment on each one. Claims are processed every 2 weeks (or sometimes weekly due to high levels of claims). ISD carries out 5% pre and post payment checks. LAGs have fully delegated Article 26 authority and so they are responsible for administration checks. LAG is responsible for capturing and reporting all CMEF outputs and results. Aren't able at present to capture anecdotal evidence.
How are administration costs calculated / paid out	Costs of administration are capped at 20% of spend for each LAG. Administration costs are paid quarterly basis in advance, based on the previous quarters expenditure.
Resources allocated per partnership – costs / staffing structures	LEADER is only one of the Programmes delivered through the Integrated Local Development Companies (ILDC) in Ireland. Each ILDC will have a CEO and a financial/admin controller. There are usually 2 or 3 Project Officers who work as animateurs for LEADER (each with a sectoral expertise) and one or two admin staff handling claims etc.
Skills / capacity / training to ensure partnership is effective	MA concentrates on providing training for Admin and Project Officers of LAGs. Each LAG has money in their budget to train board members, however this varies from area to area.

9.2.1.2 RDPI 2007-2013 – LEADER – Evaluation: Key findings related to the delivery structure

A case study examined the experience of implementation of Axes 3 and 4 of the RDPI and, in particular, the LEADER approach. It identified that there was a challenge at this juncture in identifying the results and outcomes from the LEADER-implemented Axis 3 measures, given the late commencement of activities in 2009. However, a number of aspects of the experience of the LEADER approach and of the project supported under Axis 3 measures are highlighted in the case study. The key findings are summarized below:

- The very limited quantitative evidence available at this juncture suggests that relatively significant outputs and results are evident in the case of the Basic Services, Business Creation and Tourism measures, but in general given the recent commencement of activities and the time lags involved, significant achievements are not visible in the case of the majority of schemes under Axis 3 and there is significant variation between measures. The examples of successful projects outlined in the study illustrate the myriad of ways in which Axes 3 and 4 are currently delivering tangible results for rural areas. In particular, the funding available is providing a method for existing businesses to innovate, expand or link with others to ensure their survival and growth in tough economic circumstances and for new ideas to be developed and nurtured into successful enterprises.
- The qualitative assessment outlined many of the challenges to the successful implementation of Axes 3 and 4 measures. These include the excessive time and energy spent on red tape

(irrespective of project size), the issue of access to matching funding, cash flow difficulties and pre-financing of projects, the lack of LAG and external agency (Planning Authorities, Enterprise Boards etc.) coordination and inflexible regulations.

- It would appear worthwhile for the Managing Authority to undertake a review of the administrative and operational consequences of these two processes, learning from best practice in other countries which have faced similar challenges for the current programming period, and seeking to minimise the negative impacts of change upon the established strengths of the Irish Leader network and its considerable practical experience in ‘bottom-up’, integrated and sustainable rural development.
- The main challenges facing the Local Action Groups will be in attracting significant project applications during the current economic recession and in ensuring that the resources and infrastructure are in place to facilitate the rapid acceleration in expenditures that will be required if programme targets are to be attained.

The Mid-Term Evaluation of RDPI 2007-2013 (Indecon, 2010) made the following recommendations in relation to Axis 3 and 4:

- Careful monitoring of the spending on Axes 3 and 4 should be undertaken in view of the later than anticipated start and the small level of expenditure made to date, and proactive measures taken as required. It is recommended that if by mid-2012 a significant acceleration of expenditure under Axes 3 and 4 is not evident, consideration should be given to reallocating funds between measures within these axes.
- Adjustments are required in relation to operating rules governing the Local Action Groups to support more efficient and effective delivery of supports under Axis 3. Any adjustments must however ensure compliance with EU regulations and adherence to best practice approaches to governance and accountability.
- The potential for increased co-funding for entrepreneurs/project promoters to undertake professional feasibility studies and business plans as part of LAG-supported programmes should be considered. This would aid the professionalism and ultimate viability of projects supported.
- Increased mentoring and sharing of best practice should be supported between Local Action Groups. The evidence indicates that some of the LAGs are performing well while in other cases progress is very slow. We recommend increased mentoring and sharing of best practice between LAGs to assist in addressing this issue. The potential for secondments between LAGs should also be considered.

9.2.1.3 RDPI 2007-2013 – LEADER – Evaluation: Progress to date

Table 133: RDPI 2007-2013 – Measure 311

Measure 311 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of beneficiaries	21	800
	Total volume of investment	£427,000	€30.16m

Result	Increase in non-agricultural GVA in supported businesses	n/a	Using 2006 as a baseline figure and plotting annual increment subsequently
	Gross number of jobs created	11	1,250
<i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPI 2007-2013 (Indecon, 2010)</i>			

Table 134: RDPI 2007-2013 – Measure 312

Measure 312 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of micro enterprises supported:	60	7,200
	Total volume of investment	n/a	Using 2006 as a baseline figure and plotting annual increment subsequently
Result	Increase in non-agricultural GVA in supported businesses	n/a	n/a
	Gross number of jobs created	58.5	7,000
<i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPI 2007-2013 (Indecon, 2010)</i>			

Table 135: RDPI 2007-2013 – Measure 313

Measure 313 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of tourism actions supported	104	1,225
	Total volume of investment	1.663m	69m
Result	Additional number of tourist visits	112,169	20,000
	Gross number of jobs created	26	1,500
	Increase in non-agricultural gross value added in supported businesses	n/a	n/a
<i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPI 2007-2013 (Indecon, 2010)</i>			

Table 136: RDPI 2007-2013 – Measure 321

Measure 321 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of supported actions	148	1,500
	Total volume of investments	3.876m	66m
Result	Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	634,582	56,000
	Increase in internet penetration in rural population	n/a	n/a

Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPI 2007-2013 (Indecon, 2010)

Table 137: RDPI 2007-2013 – Measure 322

Measure 322 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of villages where actions took place	72	2,840
	Total volume of investments	993,000	72m
Result	Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	103,864	2.5m

Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPI 2007-2013 (Indecon, 2010)

Table 138: RDPI 2007-2013 – Measure 323

Measure 323 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of rural heritage actions supported	45	2,500
	Total volume of investments	549,000	74m
Result	Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	257,807	2.5m

Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPI 2007-2013 (Indecon, 2010)

Table 139: RDPI 2007-2013 – Measure 331

Measure 331 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of economic actors supported	3,301	32,400
	Number of days of training received by participants	2,306	64,800
Result	Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity	2,306	30,000
<i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPI 2007-2013 (Indecon, 2010)</i>			

Table 140: RDPI 2007-2013 – Measure 341

Measure 341 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of skills acquisitions	n/a	1,200
	Number of participants in actions	20,150	30,000
Result	Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity	2,916	50,000
<i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPI 2007-2013 (Indecon, 2010)</i>			

Table 141: RDPI 2007-2013 – Measure 413

Measure 413 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of Local Action Groups (LAGs) supported	36	36
	Total size of LAGs area	69,357km ²	69,476km ²
	Total population in LAG area	100% of rural population	100% of rural population
	Number of beneficiaries	n/a	n/a
	Number of projects financed by LAGs	465	21,505
Result	Gross number of jobs created	n/a	n/a
	Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity	n/a	n/a
<i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPI 2007-2013 (Indecon, 2010)</i>			

Table 142: RDPI 2007-2013 – Measure 421

Measure 421 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of Supported cooperation Projects	14	360
	Number of Cooperating LAGs	36	36
Result	Gross number of jobs created	n/a	n/a
<i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPI 2007-2013 (Indecon, 2010)</i>			

Table 143: RDPI 2007-2013 – Measure 431

Measure 431 indicative quantified targets for EU Common Indicators			
Indicator		Position Reported: December 2009	Target 2007-2013
Output	Number of actions supported	n/a	n/a
Result	Number of Participants that successfully ended a training activity	n/a	n/a
<i>Source: Mid-term evaluation of the RDPI 2007-2013 (Indecon, 2010)</i>			