

Scotland Rural Development Programme: Overview

A Brief Guide for Community Woodland Groups

Introduction

The Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP) is a £1.6 billion programme of economic, environmental and social measures designed to develop rural Scotland over the next six years. It brings together a wide range of formerly separate support schemes including those covering the farming, forestry and primary processing sectors, rural enterprise and business development, diversification and rural tourism. It includes measures to support and encourage rural communities and delivers the LEADER initiative for local innovation in rural areas.

Around 70% of the funding for the SRDP comes from the Scottish Government, with the remainder from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and “voluntary modulation”, a mechanism by which a small proportion of Single Farm Payment (direct subsidy to farmers for being farmers) is redirected to contribute to rural development programmes (targeted support for positive action).

SRDP measures are delivered through 8 funding streams (“delivery mechanisms”). Each of these has different eligibility criteria, payment rates and systems, and match funding rules – indeed, even within each scheme there are widely varying terms and conditions. Additionally, the structure of some elements has been recognized as unworkable and these are already subject to review. On the other hand, many operations that you might want to carry out in and around your woods could be funded by more than one of these mechanisms – so all-in-all, despite the rhetoric of simplification, it is a very complex picture.

4 of the Schemes are likely to be of relevance to many Community woodland groups.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| * Rural Development Contracts | Land Managers Options (RDC: LMO) |
| * Rural Development Contracts | Rural Priorities (RDC: RP) |
| * LEADER | |
| * Forestry Challenge Funds (FCF) | Woods In and Around Towns (WIAT) & Forestry for People (F4P) |

We are producing more detailed briefings for these 4 schemes, these will be circulated to CWA members and available from the CWA website.

The other 4 schemes are:

- * Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (LFASS)
- * Food Processing, Marketing and Co-operation Grant Scheme (FPMC)
- * Crofting Counties Agricultural Grant Scheme (CCAGS)
- * Skills Development Scheme (SDS)

These 4 schemes are discussed briefly in this document, but we will not be producing any detailed guidance. However, if you feel that your group may be eligible for funding please contact CWA staff, who will be ready to assist with your application or connect you with more specialist advice from other organizations.

To access most of SRDP it is necessary to complete and submit a [Land and Business Change Form](#) to register your organization, and where appropriate, any land you manage. You will be assigned a Business Reference Number (BRN) and each block of land managed will be assigned a Land Parcel Identifier (LPID) – these are required for application to most elements of the SRDP. The form isn't very user friendly, but CWA staff can help guide you through it.

Funding is not distributed equally between the schemes, and it is worth noting that about 20% of the £1.6 billion will be spent on existing commitments to “legacy” schemes which SRDP has replaced, such as the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme (SFGS) and the Rural Stewardship Scheme (RSS). A further 26% is allocated to LFASS, which is a direct subsidy based on historic entitlement, so arguably only 54% of the total is actually open for application. Of this c. £835m, three-quarters will be disbursed through Rural Development Contracts, and most of this will be through Rural Priorities.

SRDP breakdown by Funding Mechanism

| Scheme | Budget | % |
|--|--------|-----|
| Legacy (pre SRDP) schemes | £330 | 20% |
| LFASS | £427 | 26% |
| Rural Development Contracts (RP + LMO) | £624 | 41% |
| Other SRDP schemes | £211 | 13% |

Overlaps between SRDP delivery mechanisms

There are a number of potential overlaps between the various SRDP funding streams, some projects could be funded by two or three different streams – and given the regional variations in both Rural Priorities and LEADER it will be impossible to make a precise delineation between them.

One golden rule is that grants from different funding streams cannot be used to fund the same project – you will need to decide which programme best fits your project, and should seek guidance from CWA staff, or from RDC Case Officers and the LEADER Coordinator before submitting an application.

However you can apply to more than one SRDP funding stream **as long as these applications are all for different operations**: e.g. Land Managers Options could pay for creating access routes for harvesting, Rural Priorities can contribute towards forest management operations such as restocking or conversion to a continuous cover system, you could apply to the Forestry for People Challenge Fund for help to establish a volunteer group, and a LEADER grant might contribute towards car parking and interpretation costs.

CWA staff can help you identify appropriate sources of funding for all of your projects if you get in touch. Staff contacts: <http://www.communitywoods.org/index.php/staff/>

It is important to note that each of the eight schemes is administered separately, with different processes, rules and regulations. The table shows the basic administrative structure for the various funding streams. (Note LFASS cannot be applied for, so has not been included)

| Name | Competitive? | Application | Assessment by | Allocation by |
|----------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| RDC: LMO | No | Single application | Administered by SGRPID | |
| RDC: RP | Yes | 2 stage application | Regional (11 RPACs ¹) | Minister |
| LEADER | Yes | Single application ² | Regional (20 LAGs ³) | Regional (20) |
| FCF | Yes | Single application | National - FCS | National - FCS |
| SDS | Yes | Single application | Administered by SGRPID | |
| CCAGS | No ⁴ | Single application | Administered by SGRPID | |
| FPMC | Yes | Single application | SNFPAC ⁵ | SGRPID |

1: Regional Proposal Assessment Committee

2: Some LEADER areas require the submission of a pre-application enquiry form

3: Local Action Group

4: Eligibility for CCAGS restricted to crofters and certain others in the Crofting Counties

5: Scottish National Food Project Assessment Committee

Rural Development Contracts: Land Managers' Options

Rural Development Contracts: Land Managers' Options (LMO) is administered **nationwide** by SGRPID, is **non-competitive**, and has a **single** application form.

All registered land managers, including community woodland groups, have a **maximum yearly allowance** based on the area of land under their control: £75 a hectare for the first 10 hectares; £30 a hectare for the next 90 hectares; £1 a hectare for the next 900 hectares; 10p a hectare for any hectares over 1000. Thus for 5 ha the maximum allowance is £375/year, 10 ha: £750/year, 20ha: £1050/year, 50ha: £1950/year, 100ha: £3450/year, 250ha: £3600/year, 1000ha: £4350/year, 10000ha: £5250/year.

Land Managers can choose to “spend” this allowance on one or more of the 22 “options” covered by the scheme; these range from small scale woodland creation to summer hill grazing for cattle, and each has its own eligibility criteria, payment rates, terms and conditions etc. The CWA briefing note on LMO covers 9 of these options in detail, picking out the key features, eligibility criteria and payment rates of the options most likely to be of interest to community woodland groups.

Skills development (Training), Business audit, Management of genetically appropriate tree stocks for seed production, Modernisation through electronic data management for Forestry, Access creation for sustainable forest management, Small scale woodland creation, Management of small woodlands, Improving access, Management of archaeological or historic sites.

LMO “homepage”: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Rural/SRDP/Land-Managers-Options>

Rural Development Contracts: Rural Priorities

Rural Development Contracts: Rural Priorities (RP) is administered **regionally**, by 11 Regional Project Assessment Committees (RPACs) comprising staff from SGRPID, FCS, SNH, SEPA and in some cases Local Authorities, etc. The scheme is **competitive**, and has a 2 stage applications process: potential applicants must submit a **Statement of Intent (SOI)**, intended to provide a brief outline of their proposal, before submitting a fully fledged application.

RP can appear quite complex, as applicant must refer to regional priorities and packages, but essentially there are 75 “options” covering everything from “manure / slurry storage” to “improve the economic value of forests” & “management of archaeological or historical sites”. The CWA briefing notes on RP will cover the 6 Options most relevant to woodland creation, woodland management & recreation provision, and also references the various business development options, e.g. for the development of renewable energy supply chains.

Contact CWA staff for more details of the scheme and for help with navigating the application process!

RDC:RP is by far the largest of the biddable elements of SRDP, both in terms of budget and scope of activities eligible for funding. Not surprisingly therefore, it is also the most complex, and has also been the most controversial, attracting considerable early criticism. A recent report by Confor ([Dec 08](#)) contains a number of recommendations for improvement – hopefully these can be implemented rapidly. A number of changes are in progress already, and regular updates are posted on the SRDP website.

RP “homepage”: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Rural/SRDP/RuralPriorities>

Full list of Options: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Rural/SRDP/RuralPriorities/Options>

LEADER

LEADER is administered **regionally** by 20 Local Action Groups (LAGs) who between them cover almost all of rural Scotland, including towns up to a population of 10,000. It is **competitive**, and has a **single** application form, although some areas may require applicants to complete an initial enquiry form

The LAGs are made up of representatives from the local council, public agencies, business people, voluntary action groups & community groups; all LAGs must be comprised of at least 50% non-public sector representatives.

Unlike most of the SRDP delivery mechanisms, LEADER doesn't have a specific list of eligible projects or operations. Instead, each LEADER group has drawn up Area-based Local Development Strategies; these outline the main themes, target groups and desired outcomes of the local LEADER programme — the onus is generally on applicants to make a case for how their project meets the development outcomes of the local plan.

The CWA briefing note on LEADER covers the basic eligibility and funding rules, and gives contact details for LEADER programme managers in each of the 20 LAG areas, as well as web addresses where known.

LEADER "homepage": <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Rural/SRDP/LEADER>

Forestry Challenge Funds

The Forestry Challenge Funds are **competitive**, and administered **nationally** by Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS). Scheme guidance notes, details of scoring criteria and application forms are all available from <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7epeed>

Two funds are available: **Woods In and Around Towns (WIAT)**, and **Forestry for People (F4P)**. There are **two** judging rounds for applications each year, with deadlines for submission of **31st March** and **30th September**.

The WIAT Challenge Fund aims to bring urban woodland into sustainable management and improve recreation facilities. The funding is targeted at ***woods within 1 km of settlements with a population of over 2000 people*** (the WIAT area). The aim is to regenerate the woodland environment close to centres of population, improving the quality of life for people living and working there. The WIAT Challenge Fund is not available for work on Forest Enterprise Land.

Eligible projects might include: woodland management plans, silvicultural work to improve woodland structure and condition & construction of new or improved recreation facilities including footpaths.

The F4P Challenge Fund is intended to help groups realise the potential contribution of local woodlands to the health, learning and strengthening of communities. The minimum woodland size is 0.25ha. F4P funding ***covers all Scotland***, including the WIAT area, and is available on ***both private and Forest Enterprise land***.

Eligible projects might include: setting up walking initiatives, developing natural play areas, delivering rehabilitation programmes in woodland, developing continuous professional development (CPD) programmes for teachers, establishing volunteer groups & developing not-for-profit initiatives such as green exercise projects

Less Favoured Area Support Scheme

The Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (LFASS) makes annual area-based payments to eligible farmers and crofters who farm in the most disadvantaged areas of Scotland (in practice this means most of Scotland). Payment is historic-based and tied to the land and the business – there is no scope for new entry and it does not cover woodlands.

Food Processing, Marketing and Co-operation

The Food Processing Marketing and Co-Operation Scheme (FPMC), administered by SGRPID, is open to anyone involved in the production chain, e.g. primary producers, processors, retailers, and food service operators, with the co operation element supporting involvement with scientific research or academic institutions.

The scheme is competitive and includes three elements:

- Capital Grants: Provides for assistance towards the construction of buildings and purchase of plant and equipment.
- Non-capital Grants: Provides for assistance with a range of projects including market research and consultancy, product development and consumer education material.
- Co-operation Grants: Provides for support to aid co-operation, collaboration and development within the food chain.

Further details, guidance and applications forms at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/08/05125327/0>

Crofting Counties Agricultural Grant Scheme

The Crofting Counties Agricultural Grant Scheme (CCAGS), administered by the Crofters Commission, provides assistance towards improving the viability of rural business on crofts and similar scale agricultural holdings in the Crofting Counties, and to achieve other benefits such as improved animal health and welfare. Woodland creation is possible in the guise of shelterbelts.

Eligibility is limited to Croft tenants, subtenants, and crofting groups. Croft owners and small farmers in the Crofting Counties of a similar status to tenants may also participate. Grants of up to £25,000 for individuals and up to £125,000 for eligible groups in any 2-year period may be available. Grants are normally paid at 50% of eligible costs in Less Favoured Areas and 40% in other areas.

Further details, guidance and applications forms at:

<http://www.crofterscommission.org.uk/documents.asp?intent=details&did=39>

Skills Development Scheme

The Skills Development Scheme (SDS) offers support towards the development and delivery of group skills development initiatives for land managers (including farmers, crofters and foresters). It is aimed at bodies that represent farming, forestry and other land management industries, or are closely involved with promoting the development of land and business management skills within these industries.

CWA has secured funding through SDS to support a two year programme of training events, which will include two regional seminars and at least 6 local events to be hosted by member groups.

Contact CWA staff for more details of our training events, or if you have specific training needs that you feel we could address within our programme. <http://www.communitywoods.org/index.php/staff/>