

Moray LEADER



LOCAL ACTION GROUP ANNUAL REPORT 2009/2010



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



The Scottish
Government

Chairman's Introduction to the Moray LEADER Local Action Group Report 2009/2010

'Revitalising communities' and developing a 'progressive rural economy' are the twin themes of the Moray LEADER Local Action Group Business Plan. The communities come forward with ideas, the partners who form the Local Action Group then have the challenging task of matching the ideas with the guidelines and allocating the funds.

Mediating this process is the Programme Manager David Watson whose experience is invaluable in helping the applicants to understand the complexity of the LEADER process and in explaining the detail of the applications to the LAG members. He is ably supported by Lindsay Grant in the Moray LEADER office.

Key to the success of LEADER is the local knowledge and strategic approach of the members of the Local Action Group. The Moray Council is the Lead Partner, the other partners represent a mix of the private, public and voluntary sector. The approach is to encourage innovative ways of working that produce sustainable outcomes. 'What makes us different makes us interesting, what makes us interesting makes us marketable'. Applicants are encouraged to adopt a co-operative approach, making links within and between communities both locally and internationally.

During the year the Local Action Group has reviewed and refined the Business Plan and discussed how to improve the strategic direction undertaken by the LAG. We were pleased to welcome Jenni Kinnaird who chairs the Grampian Regional Advisory Committee for the Scottish Rural Development Programme to that particular meeting. LEADER is a key element of this Programme.

I should like to say thank you to all the Partners involved in the LAG and especially to the Vice Chairman Paul Timms of SNH who chairs the Decision Making Body that meets more frequently than the full LAG meeting.

As you can probably tell from reading this, it is not an easy process. Hopefully for the 24 projects who have benefitted to date it has been worthwhile. We hope that their success will give confidence and inspire others to come forward and grasp opportunities during the life of the Programme that closes on December 31st 2013.

With good wishes
Priscilla Gordon-Duff
Moray LEADER LAG Chairman

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1. Introduction

LEADER is a key element within the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP) 2007-2013. LEADER in Moray aims to increase capacity of rural community and business networks through projects and initiatives that deliver community benefit and reflect one or both overarching LEADER themes, namely Revitalising Communities and Progressive Rural Economy.

LEADER is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the Scottish Government with match funding from the public and private sectors.

The Moray Local Action Group (LAG) which delivers the programme was formed in 2008. The LAG prepared a bid for LEADER funds which was submitted to the Scottish Government. In September 2008 the Moray LAG was awarded LEADER funds of £1,837,500 and the programme was launched in January 2009 and will close on 31st December 2013.

Four funding rounds have been undertaken in the first year's operation of the Moray LEADER programme. 24 projects have been approved to 31st March 2010 across Moray with a total grant commitment of £608,831.

2. Local Action Group

2.1 LAG Partnership

The LAG is a partnership of 16 member organisations with a mix between the public, private and voluntary sectors. A list of LAG member organisations is attached as Appendix 1 of this report.

Moray Council is the lead partner in the LAG and the Council acts as banker for the LAG through drawdown of EAFRD and domestic funds and disbursement of LEADER grants. A Service Level Agreement between the Scottish Government and Moray Council sets out the roles and responsibilities of the lead partner.

2.2 Coherent LAG Area

The area covered by the Moray LAG is the Moray Council area excluding Elgin and the area within the Cairngorms National Park. The total eligible population is 65,370 covering an area of 1858.21 km². Within this there is a split between the area to the west of the county which falls within the Highlands and Islands Convergence area and the area out with this designation. The Convergence area extends to some 1044.88 km² representing 56% of the proposed LEADER area and has a population of 21,799 representing 33% of the proposed LEADER population.

The area is diverse in character in terms of its landscape, environment, economy and social structures. It ranges from the remote upland areas

adjacent to the National Park to coastal areas with distinctive communities and habitats; it includes notable river catchments of national importance. Agriculture ranges from intensive arable production in the lowlands to extensive livestock in the hills. Economic activity includes large scale and modern operations such as the RAF bases, food processing businesses, the traditional whisky distilling of Speyside and the angling and sporting activity with its high profile and value but relatively small employment scale.

2.3 Population and Economy

The LAG area is estimated to be 1858.21 sq km which includes around 30 settlements with populations ranging from 192 in Archiestown to around 9200 in Forres. Elgin is excluded from the Moray LEADER area as it has a population of greater than 10,000 and therefore is not considered to be “rural” in LEADER terms.

Traditionally the LAG area has been economically dependent upon the primary sectors including agriculture, forestry and fishing, with value added activity generated through processing activities related to the primary sector.

Tourism is important economically for communities throughout the LAG area. The area’s appeal is based on the high value environment, the landscape, heritage, culture and people. There is an opportunity through LEADER to market the overall tourism product and up-skill the workforce enhancing employment opportunities and stimulating rural business networks.

In recent years the number of rural facilities in Moray has fallen across most areas with significant decline in shops, post offices and petrol stations. Reduction in these services is seen as critical in terms of impact on quality of life and maintaining the viability of self-contained rural communities. LEADER has a pivotal role to identify and deliver innovative solutions for rural communities.

3. LAG Strategy

3.1 Strategic Objectives

The Moray LAG strategy was developed taking account of the European Commission's three main axes within the Rural Development Regulation (1698/2005):

- Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors
- Improving the environment and countryside through land management
- Improving the quality of life through diversification of economic activity

And also the priority outcomes for the SRDP:

- Improved business viability
- Enhanced biodiversity and landscape
- Improved water quality
- Tackle climate change
- Support thriving rural communities

3.2 Moray Key Priorities

LEADER in Moray focuses on two overarching themes, namely:

- Revitalising Communities
- Progressive Rural Economy

The priorities the LAG strategy is focusing on are:

- Sustainable communities
- Sustainable energy
- Innovative value added products and markets
- Sustainable tourism development
- Innovative micro enterprise
- Versatile rural workforce
- Conservation of the rural environment

3.3 Strategic Links

The LAG strategy aligns well with National, Regional and Local strategies and in particular with Moray's Community Planning Partnership themes of Greener, Healthier, Safer and Stronger, Smarter and Wealthier and Fairer.

3.4 Delivery of LAG strategy and Business Plan

From launch of LEADER in Moray to March 2010 it is evident that the LAG strategy is being delivered, demonstrated by:

- 100% of projects approved in the period relate to one or both of the overarching themes: Revitalising Communities and/or Progressive Rural Economy.
- 100% of the projects approved relate to one or more of the key priorities the LAG strategy is focusing on.
- The LAG partnership is strong, supportive and cohesive and not averse to taking bold decisions on innovative projects.
- Continuing demand and capacity of participants to bring forward new projects.

4. Programme Delivery

4.1 Year 1 : March 2009 to March 2010

Applications are assessed in quarterly cycles. Once submitted, applications are checked for eligibility and links to the LEADER Strategic themes and priorities. The applications are considered in full by the LAG and scored against a set of criteria selected by the LAG.

DMB (Decision Making Body) representation, a sub group of the LAG, has delegated authority to approve projects with applications up to £10k.

One of the positive outcomes of the application and approval process is the strong buy-in and partnership towards projects. This is clearly demonstrated in the level of match funding that has been levered in. The maximum LEADER intervention rate on total eligible projects currently stands at 50%. A table summarising the range of match funders is attached as Appendix 2. Approved projects are listed in Appendix 3.

To deliver the programme, Scottish Government made a 7% advance payment of the budget to the LAG. These funds are held by Moray Council. Two claims have been processed to 31st March 2010 totalling £1424. Three claims to 31st March 2010 totalling £19,898.95 relating to administration costs and project grant payments have been submitted to the Scottish Government for further drawdown of LEADER funds.

4.2 Summary of activities in Year 1

Total number of applications	33
Total number of approvals	24
Total amount of LEADER funding	£608,831
Total amount of public match funding	£549,042
Total amount of private match funding	£395,183
Average Intervention rate	36%
Total number of projects withdrawn	1
Total value of LEADER funding for projects withdrawn	£10,000

4.3 Projected Employment generation in projects approved to 31st March 2010

Project Reference	Project Name	Number of jobs created
ML0002	Moray Firth Partnership	1 FTE x 2 years
ML0004	Moray Council on Addiction	1 FTE x 3 years
ML0006	Moray Towns Partnership	8 FTE
ML0008	NGR Foundation	1 FTE x 3 years
ML0011	Moray Art Centre	2.5 FTE
ML0012	Knockando Woolmill	9 FTE
ML0013	The Loft	4.5 FTE
ML0015	Wild Things!	2 FTE
ML0022	Archiestown Village Council	1 FTE
ML0023	Moray Cricket Association	1 FTE
ML0030	Moray Council - Football Development	2 FTE x 3 years
ML0032	Grampian Partnership Against Wildlife Crime	1 FTE

5. Promotion and Publicity

5.1 Promotional Events

LEADER has been promoted across Moray at a series of rural funding community events and specific LEADER seminars including the following:

- Moray Council Tourism Steering Group
- Moray Council Funding Seminar
- Moray Federation of Village Halls and Associations
- Joint Community Councils of Moray
- Turriff Show
- Buckie Regeneration Group
- Business Gateway (Moray) Opening
- Scottish National Rural Network - Moray event

5.2 Promotion of Projects

One of the key features of LEADER is transferability, networking and exchange of ideas with other participants and LAG areas. To facilitate this, case studies have been used at promotional events. LEADER participants have also made a positive contribution to promoting LEADER through presentations made at LEADER seminars.

5.3 Publicity

LEADER has been widely publicised at National Events e.g. Scottish National Rural Gathering and through the Scottish National Rural Network. Moray's LEADER projects have received good coverage in local and regional press.

6. Website

6.1 Management of Website

The Moray LEADER website (www.morayleader.org.uk) was launched at the end of November 2009. The website contains details on the LAG partnership, the LAG's strategic priorities, the application process, approved projects, news items and links to partner organisations and other LAG areas.

The website is updated on a regular basis and has been found to be a useful resource for applicants in accessing information.

7. Looking Ahead

7.1 Calendar for 2010

It is proposed the quarterly cycle of LAG meetings continue in 2010. A timetable for LAG meetings in 2010/11 can be downloaded from the website.

7.2 Budget Monitoring

Analysis of budget commitment, grant disbursement, drawdown of LEADER funds from Scottish Government and balance of funds available will continue.

7.3 Project Monitoring

As the number of projects completing increases, project monitoring will be undertaken in 2010. This will feed into monitoring of outputs and outcomes which will be required by Scottish Government.

7.4 Future Rural Development Policy

Looking to the future (2014 to 2020), there is a need for LAGs to be involved and participate in the discussion process with the European Commission and the Scottish Government in relation to delivery methodology for future Rural Development Funding Programmes. Experience at present in Moray suggests that local and regional delivery based on a partnership approach such as LEADER is a useful approach to adopt.

Partners in the Moray Local Action Group

Moray Voluntary Service Oranisation
Moray College
NHS Grampian
Drummuir Estate
The Joint Community Councils of Moray
REAP
Grampian Police
Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
Moray Forum
Moray Business Women
Moray Chamber of Commerce
The Moray Council
HIE Moray
The Moray Confederation of Community Halls and Associations
Scottish Natural Heritage
Forestry Commission

Moray LEADER Programme

Project Match Funders

Awards For All
BBC Children in Need
Cricket Scotland
Fairer Scotland Fund
Forest Education Initiative Partnership
Forestry Commission
Gordon and Ena Baxter Foundation
Grampian Police
Grampian Venture Capital Fund
Heritage Lottery Fund
HIE
Joint application funding
JP Getty Jr Charitable Trust
Moray Council
NHS Grampian
Own contribution
Private contribution
Scottish Gov Enterprise Fund
Scottish Government
Scottish Natural Heritage
Scottish Football Association
Third Sector Fund
Walkers of Aberlour
WM Grant Foundation

Moray LEADER Programme

Approved Projects

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>TPC (£)</u>	<u>LEADER (£)</u>	<u>Public Match Funding</u>	<u>Private Match Funding</u>
The Moray Council	Homecoming Scheme	25000	10000	10000	5000
Forres In Bloom	Entente Florale Europe	12700	3600	5700	3400
Moray Firth Partnership	Moray Firth Gansey Project	98472	13000	76000	9472
Moray Council on Addiction	Development Officer	92944	43297		49647
Moray Council - Towns Partnership	Development of Forres, Buckie, Lossie & Keith	88192	44096	44096	
NGR Foundation	Developing Opportunities Through Sport	185384	75509		109875
Burn O'Fochabers Woodlands Trust *	Aeolian Harp	22540	10000		12540
Moray Spirit of Brass	Workshops with Moray Schools	1505	750		755
Moray Art Centre	Growth and Development/Branding and Marketing	118460	47384	65153	5923
Knockando Woolmill Co Ltd	Knockando Woolmill Business Start Up	223445	76585	78135	68725
The Loft Youth Project	Refurbishment and Upgrade	51600	21000	20000	10600
MVSO	SE Development in Moray	29130	14565		14565
Wild Things!	Sustainable Social Enterprise on the Wild Front	73368	36684	12684	24000
The Milton Drive Community Project	Cathcart Grove - Feasibility Study	21000	9950	10000	1050
Speyside High School	Rural Skills	9475	4500	4975	
JCC*	Awareness Raising	13685	6500	6500	685

The Moray Way Association	Establishing the Moray Way	17000	8500		8500
Archiestown Village Council	250th Commemoration	43385	21692	10847	10846
MFCHA	Portable Appliance Testing	2700	1000		1700
Moray Cricket Association	Community Cricket Development	54960	27360	9200	18400
The Moray Council	Renewable Energy Festival	2500	1000	1500	
Scottish Wildlife Trust	Building Community Links at Spey Bay	89818	42366	47452	
The Moray Council	Football Development in Moray	107895	53895	33000	21000
Kinloss Community Hall Committee	Kinloss Community Hall	36680	18180		18500
Grampian Partnership Against Wildlife Crime	Wildlife Crime Education Officer	140000	26200	113800	

* Project since withdrawn

Photographs



Forres in Bloom won a **Gold medal** in Entente Florale Europe 2009.



Moray Firth Gansey Project



Moray Energy Efficiency Fair

