

Scottish Rural Network (SRN): 2019/20 Work Programme

Purpose of paper

1. To provide members of the RDOC with an overview of the draft work programme for the Scottish Rural Network (SRN); and
2. To invite members of the RDOC to provide comments/feedback on the draft work programme.

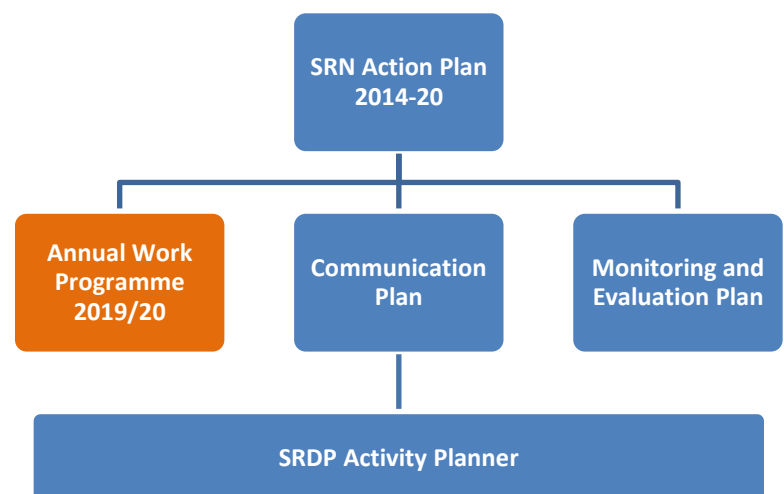
Background

The Scottish Rural Network (SRN) is funded under the SRDP Technical Assistance budget and has the following aims, as required by EU Regulations:

- Increase the involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of rural development;
- Improve the quality of implementation of the rural development programme;
- Inform the broader public and potential beneficiaries on rural development policy and funding opportunities;
- Foster innovation in agriculture, food production, forestry and rural areas.

The SRN has an Action Plan for 2014-20, which the RDOC has seen. The Action Plan sets out the purpose, governance, planning and delivery arrangements for the SRN. The 2019/20 Work Programme sits underneath the Action Plan and sets out the activities the SRN will deliver from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

The work programme is supported by a communication plan and a monitoring and evaluation plan. It also forms a vital part of the SRDP Annual Communication Strategy, with a single activity planner that sits across the SRN and all the SRDP schemes.



Development of work programme

SRN activities are driven by both the legal requirements and by stakeholder needs. It is informed by a wide range of events, workshops and meetings the SRN has delivered over the last two years, as well as an annual online stakeholder survey. Further information about the SRN can be found here: <https://www.ruralnetwork.scot/>

The RDOC is invited to note the current contents of the draft work programme and to provide any comments, feedback or suggestions to: alan@ruralnetwork.scot. The final work programme will then be approved by the Managing Authority (MA).

A more comprehensive operational plan has been developed by the SRN for period 2019-20 which has informed this document and gives a greater level of detail around individual tasks and purpose.

Priorities for 2019/20 Work Programme

Key priorities for the SRN this year include:

The SRN will deliver specific activities to support SRDP objectives including:

- Support the 'Innovation Support Service', aimed at increasing collaborative innovation in the agricultural, food and drink, and forestry sectors and promoting RISS outputs to appropriate audiences
- Increase the number of project case studies available on the SRN website and other channels to include examples from the majority of the SRDP schemes.
- Deliver a SRDP legacy document with a comprehensive set of examples and lived experiences, and positive stats/infographics to illustrate economic and social impact.
- Implement the recommendations from the website user testing with a view to improving navigation and increasing traffic, dependent on budget availability
- Improve coordination of communications across the SRDP including audit of all existing case studies across schemes in order to conduct gap analysis
- Support LEADER working groups including facilitation, communication of outputs, etc.
- Produce a series of short videos (one per month) to demonstrate the impact of SRDP funding and to promote and encourage rural development.
- In line with the Aims and Objectives of the 2020 Year of Coasts and Water, the Scottish Rural Network and the Network Support Unit will also actively seek to work in partnership with other partners, including (but not limited to) Visit Scotland, SRDP leads, Marine Scotland, local authorities and Local Action Groups in the development and delivery of activities ensuring an inclusive approach is taken throughout the Year and beyond, creating a lasting legacy
- Support other teams within Rural Economy and Communities to deliver work stream priorities e.g. Islands team (social channels set up, comms plan initiated, promotion of launch of engagement exercise, etc), National Council for Rural Advisors policy team, etc.
- Support SG policy areas to deliver objectives which require rural perspective e.g. rural housing policy, Exchequer colleagues, etc.

The SRN will also maintain a number of regular, on-going activities including:

- Producing a weekly e-newsletter to more than 1,457 subscribers.
- Maintenance of SRN website and social media feeds.
- Building relationships with and between key stakeholders.
- Collating and issuing a monthly LEADER newsletter to more than 264 subscribers

A list of activities identified to date for 2019/20 is attached at Annex A.

Feedback

We invite you to submit any comments/feedback you have on the priorities and activities for the SRN in 2019/20 to: alan@ruralnetwork.scot by 17th May.

New projects/activities

Please also get in touch if you have an idea for a project/activity that the SRN could partner with you/your organisation to deliver. It would need to fit with the aims of the SRN (see above) and you will be issued with a short form to complete to tell us more about the project/activity that the SRN could help deliver.

Annex A: Activities in 2019/20 SRN Work Programme

Listed below are all the activities the SRN aims to deliver in 2019/20. Many of the activities are already well defined, but some need further work to develop exactly what needs to be delivered. The costs and resources required to deliver each activity vary considerably. The activities are grouped under logical headings, but are not presented in any particular order.

Communications:

- Development/publication of thematic case studies linking to SRDP funded projects e.g. Islands, Smarter Villages, etc.
- Communication support to SRDP schemes including narrative on how SRDP and LEADER support the rural economy
- Develop SRDP & SRN Comms plans for review and comment by RDOC
- Produce a range of case studies to support SRDP legacy and learning and CLLD (12 films: 1 x per month and 120 written: 10 per month) featuring rural development projects/initiatives (including LEADER, RISS, etc.)
- Manage SRN website and social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)
- Support relevant celebration/awareness days/weeks e.g. Mental Health Awareness Week (13-19 May) through social media and newsletter activity
- Support coming Year of Coast and Waters activity through social media, website/newsletter channels, possible event hosting, etc.
- Support Woman in Agri including networking/bench marking events and messaging via social media channels and newsletter content
- Communicate information on relevant Brexit developments and impacts to rural stakeholders
- Hosting of LAG-only area of SRN website
- Publication: weekly SRN newsletter
- Publication: monthly LEADER newsletter
- Publication: SRN funding newsletter
- Publication: Updated SRN flyer
- Publication: SRN Highlights for financial year 2018-19
- Publication: SRDP promo flyer/material as required
- Publication: Summary of 2019 SRDP Annual Implementation Report
- Publication: SRDP legacy document with short supporting video
- Quarterly blog on SRN activities
- Stakeholder engagement post-2020 rural development support
- Photo bank of rural images (Flickr, Instagram and Google photo folder)

Events:

- Rural Inspiration Awards and Networkx Event - Lead Scottish representation at Networkx event including spotlight stage presence and content, follow up comms activity (April 2019)
- SRDP: gathering/conference – scope potential for SRDP scheme legacy event including whether separate LEADER event warranted
- Co-ordinate with ARE Comms working group regarding promotion of SRDP schemes at Royal Highland Show 2019
- Lead and deliver an EU level Workshop on Short Supply Chains (SSC)
- Organise and deliver a LDS Evaluation Workshop for FLAG's and LAG's
- Attend relevant events and produce reports for website/newsletter

- Support Scottish Enterprise Rural Leaders and Rural Youth Project initiative buy part funding a mentoring and learning initiative to Netherlands
- UK NRN: quarterly forum of UK & Ireland NRN support teams
- ENRD and EIP events: coordinate attendance from Scotland at relevant events
- ENRD and EIP events: NSU attendance and reporting

SRDP Implementation:

- Innovation Support Service: funding and support of service
- LEADER: support LAG Chairs Group
- LEADER: support LAG Staff Liaison and Management Group
- LEADER: Evaluation programme - workshop and facilitated learning as and when requested
- LEADER: Peer-to-peer learning exchange events at request of LAG's/LAG Coords
- LEADER: Co-op match-making – promote reallocation of funds
- LEADER: Communications working group – revitalise and refocus group to address challenges of scheme legacy messaging

Finance and Admin:

- Invoices/POs/Profiling
- Reconcile monthly claims for submission to MA
- Monitor SRN mailbox
- End of year finance reporting

Work programme and monitoring

- Refresh RDOC/JPMC links and SRN governance
- Monitor progress of 2019/20 work programme projects
- Compile and submit networking statistics to ENRD
- SRN contribution to 2019 enhanced annual implementation report
- Commission and independent evaluation of the NSU to inform improvement activity
- Monitoring of online and offline key performance indicators
- Stakeholder surveys and analysis
- Draft 2020/21 work programme
- Review/update 2014-20 Action Plan