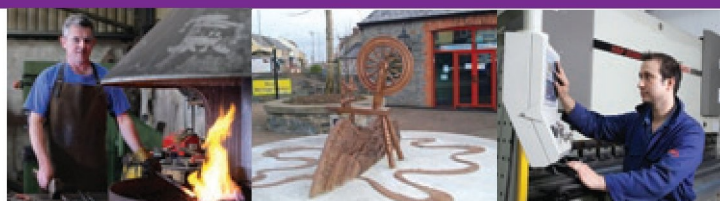


Factsheet 5

The Rural Network for Northern Ireland

June 2010



Sharing & Exchanging Information

Sharing and exchanging information is key to the work of the Rural Network for Northern Ireland. We will share and exchange information in a number of ways.

These include:-

- A dedicated website www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk
- Newsletters, publications and fact sheets
- Events, meetings and visits

This Factsheet provides information on the current mid term evaluation of the NI Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

Please Note: The information contained within this Factsheet is for information only.

Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) NI Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

Why is an evaluation required?

The European Commission has established a Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) which provides a framework for the evaluation of all rural development programmes. Under this framework, each Member State or Region must evaluate its rural development programme through ongoing evaluation activities and formal mid-term and ex-post evaluations. The evaluations will be collated by the Commission to provide an evaluation of rural development interventions across the EU.

What will the evaluation consider?

The evaluation aims to establish how well the NI RDP is delivering what it set out to deliver; test the continued relevance of the strategy and recommend any action necessary to improve quality and performance.

The MTE will:

- √ Enable DARD to demonstrate the impact of the use of its NI RDP funding allocation and its benefits to rural communities, to the rural economy and to the environment.
- √ Provide evidence to support proposals to improve or amend the provision of

support under the NI RDP. This may also contribute to the design of subsequent programme.

- √ Provide evidence on the level of EU funding needed to fully address the economic, environment and social needs identified in the programme.

Who is conducting the evaluation?

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has been commissioned from end of March 2010 as independent evaluators to undertake the mid-term evaluation.

Rural Policy Division within DARD has overall responsibility for overseeing the MTE and the process is supported by a MTE Steering Group, comprising of stakeholders engaged in planning, implementation and monitoring of the Programme.

What is involved in the evaluation process?

There are 2 key stages involved in the collation of information for the MTE:

1. Initial Research Programme:

This entails the 'document audit and review' relating to Programme documentation or previous relevant research. This will involve a socio-

economic review and will be supplemented with updated deprivation information.

2. Main research programme:
Quantitative – will entail an analysis of information gathered on the EU database and also held by DARD.

Qualitative – will entail engagement with:

- Key Informants such as the Managing Authority, Measure leaders and Programme partners such as the Rural Network. Data will be gathered through structured interviews.
- Key Stakeholders, such as the Monitoring Committee, Council clusters and other interested parties. Data will be gathered initially by written survey with an option for follow up with semi-structured interviews.
- Key Participants such as applicants, beneficiaries, farmers, organisations and businesses involved in the programme will also be included. Data will be gathered initially through a telephone survey to both successful and unsuccessful applicants and will be followed up with a case study approach.

In addition to the above the evaluation will also consider

such things as the performance and management associated with the Programme and will involve the cross cutting themes of 'Equality and Good Relations' and 'the Environment'

What work has been completed to date?

At the time of writing the following has been progressed:

- The initial research programme has been completed.
- All key informants from the Managing Authority have been contacted and structured interviews arranged.
- The key stakeholder survey for the Monitoring Committee has been designed and issued during May.
- LAG and Council clusters of Axis 3/4 contacted—written consultations being conducted with JCC/LAG chairs; focus group for JCC and LAG members to be organised (2 per LAG/JCC—including Lead Council representative).
- The key stakeholder survey for applicants and beneficiaries has been designed and will issue during June.

What are the timescales involved?

The final report must be submitted to the European Commission by 31 December 2010. In advance of this, NISRA have been issued with the

following timescales:

- Mid May 2010 – interim draft report prepared
- Mid August 2010 – final draft report prepared
- End October 2010 – agreed final draft report prepared
- Early/Mid December 2010 – agreed final report
- Early/Mid December 2010 – EU submission and copy of report sent to Minister for consideration.

Further Information

If you require any further information or have views you wish to feed into the mid-term evaluation please contact RNNI or Gordon Browne at NISRA - Gordon.browne@dfpni.gov.uk

News You Can Use

Do you have information worth sharing? Help us to contribute to the transfer of information sharing practice within and across the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme.

Contact the RNNI:-

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Email: info@ruralnetwork.org.uk
Web: www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk

The Rural Network for Northern Ireland is a member of:

UK National Rural Network:
www.uknationalruralnetwork.org.uk

And European Network for Rural Development: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/>

The Rural Network for Northern Ireland has also established links with the *National Rural Network for Ireland:*
www.rdsu.ie



The Rural Network for Northern Ireland is managed by the Northern Ireland Rural Development Council (RDC) through the Agri Rural Form as part of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development on behalf of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).

References and links to any external websites or publications shall not be taken as an endorsement by the Rural Network for Northern Ireland of the opinions expressed or services provided by those sites and publications.