



Rural Services Network

RDPE Network: Discussion on Integrated Delivery

8th July 2009

1. Introduction

This paper has been developed through joint discussions between officers of the RDPE (Rural Development Programme for England) Network and the Rural Services Network (RSN).

The paper will provide a brief introduction on the RDPE Network but is primarily focused on generating discussion around your perspective, experiences and views of integrated delivery of the RDPE and what further practical role the RDPE Network can play in the future, to support this approach.

2. Background to the RDPE Network

The RDPE is a six year (2007-2013) funding programme, with a budget of £3.9 billion, which will implement in England the European Union (EU) Rural Development Regulation. This Regulation sets out a menu of measures which, in combination with other EU legislation, is designed to meet EU priorities for rural development through support for economic, social and environmental objectives within a common framework across all Member States. The EU's priorities for rural development, also identified as axes, include:

- Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors (Axis 1);
- Improving the environment and the countryside (Axis 2);
- Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy (Axis 3);
- Building local capacity for employment and diversification (Axis 4).

Annex 1 provides a breakdown of the measures that can be applied under each of these axes.

Article 68(1) of the Rural Development Regulation, states that, *'each Member State shall establish a national rural network, which groups the organisations and administrations involved in rural development'*. Further to this and in accordance with Article 66(3) of the Regulation, Chapter 16 of the RDPE Programme Document clarifies that each region [country] of the UK will establish its own rural network. Thus, within England a RDPE Network must operate between 2008 and 2013.

In this context, the purpose of the RDPE Network is:

'To support the delivery of the RDPE through the successful exchange of experience, lessons learnt and best practice on RDPE policy design, management and implementation, between a comprehensive range of RDPE stakeholders at the local, regional, national and European levels.'

Whilst the development and operation of the RDPE Network is compulsory it is important to recognise that many sub-national structures and networks relevant to RDPE already exist. Thus, the RDPE Network is operating by working with and through these existing organisations and structures, in order to avoid duplication and support and add value to existing arrangements. Further to this, in recognition of the regional variation in RDPE policy and delivery circumstances, the Network must develop to be flexible to different regional RDPE needs, e.g. how it links to, works with and is used by, the eight regions and sub-regional organisations and interested stakeholders. Indeed, the Network is currently looking to develop regional 'networking protocols', to ensure that the regions/sub-regions can benefit from and contribute effectively to the activities of the RDPE Network.

In addition to these country focused networks, the UK has also established a UK National Rural Network (UK NRN) to link the four networks being developed for the rural development programmes for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This UK NRN will also provide the interface with the European Commission and the European Network for Rural Development.

The CRC has been tasked, by Defra as the RDPE Managing Authority, to act as the Network Unit to facilitate and co-ordinate the structures necessary for the development and operation of both the RDPE Network and the UK National Rural Network.

3. RDPE Network Progress

Some headline examples of activity include:

- Establishment of the Network Unit within the CRC to manage the establishment, development and operation of the Network;
- Development and delivery of an RDPE Network market research and stakeholder engagement project, to enable approximately 400 stakeholders from across the four axes and between the eight regions to inform and influence the function, structure and activities of the Network;
- Development of a temporary and independent website infrastructure to support the collation, storage, analysis and dissemination of networking information – www.rdpennetwork.org.uk;

- Event focusing on the integration of ‘the Leader approach’ across the four axes. This event engaged 130 stakeholders from across the four axes and between the eight regions.

4. Integration in RDPE

In the context of promoting integrated rural development, the RDPE Network market research and stakeholder engagement project (March 2009) specifically highlighted that those organisations and individuals with an interest in RDPE would like to see the Network supporting them to promote discussion and experience in securing better integration in the RDPE, including:

- i. Practical programme management within (sub-regional) and between regions;
- ii. Implementation of integrated projects developed across the four axes and between administrative boundaries.

Integration in the RDPE to advance integrated rural development has different connotations depending on the context, individual or organisation concerned. Some examples might include:

- Developing and funding projects that deliver more than one axes priority, e.g. the Isle of Wight Local Action Group utilising the Leader approach to deliver projects under Axis 1 (measure 123), including an organic free range egg packing project and an organic flour mill project;
- Developing and funding projects that deliver more than one regional RDPE policy priority. Annex 2 provides a summary of the regional RDPE priorities as identified in the Regional Implementation Plans (RIPs) ;
- Developing projects that cross regional boundaries;
- Sharing policy and practical delivery approaches between devolved RDPE RIPs and delivery and sub-regional delivery bodies, e.g. joint working through secondments between RDAs and the Forestry Commission to identify projects that deliver policy priorities across axes 1 and 2;

There is anecdotal evidence to practically demonstrate that integration is taking place on a piecemeal basis around England both within the programme management, as well as project delivery of RDPE.

The role of the Network is to work with RDPE stakeholders to identify this experience and practice and promote its exchange to encourage further integration as the programme is implemented. In response, the RDPE Network is currently working up a programme of activities to support integration in RDPE and is interested to understand your experiences and views to inform this work programme.

5. Questions for Discussion

The RDPE Network is keen to explore the following areas of discussion with this group of the RSN:

- What are your interests in and/or role within the RDPE?
- What does integration in the RDPE mean to you?
- Are there specific RDPE related themes that you are particularly interested in sharing expertise and good practice around?
- What practical examples or experience could you share with others, how can the RDPE Network formally link to this?
- What practical RDPE Network activities would be of most value to you?

Rebecca Frost
15th June 2009

For further information or to discuss issues raised:

w: www.rdpenetwork.org.uk

e: rdpenetwork@ruralcommunities.gov.uk

t: 01242 534054

Annex 1: Measures against Axes

Axis	Measure	
1: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors	111	Vocational training and information for agricultural, food and forestry sectors
	114	Use by farmers and foresters of advisory services
	115	Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services
	121	Farm modernisation
	122	Improving the economic value of forests
	123	Adding value to agricultural and forestry products
	124	Cooperation for the development of new products
	125	Infrastructure
2: Improving the environment and the countryside	212	Payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas
	214	Agri-environment payments
	216	Support for non-productive investments
	221	First afforestation of agricultural land
	223	First afforestation of non-agricultural land
	225	Forest environment payments
	227	Support for non-productive investments (forestry)
3: Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy	311	Diversification into non-agricultural activities
	312	Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises Encouragement for tourism activities
	313	Basic services
	321	Village renewal
	322	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
	323	Training and information for economic actors
	331	Skills acquisition for preparation/implementation of local
	341	development strategies
4: Building local capacity for employment and diversification	41	Local development strategies
	411	Competitiveness
	413	Quality of life
	421	Transnational and inter-regional co-operation
	431	Running the local action group

Annex 2: Summary of priorities/themes identified in the RDPE Regional Implementation Plans

Region	RIP Themes/Priorities
East of England	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business efficiency 2. New markets and products 3. New businesses and enterprises in the rural economy 4. Resource protection 5. Conservation of the natural, built and historic environment 6. Access and recreation 7. Rural community capacity
East Midlands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conserving and enhancing the environment and countryside 2. Competitiveness, collaboration and diversification 3. Enhancing opportunity and quality of life in rural areas 4. Skills development
North East	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Micro-enterprise development 2. Bio energy 3. Sustainable farming and forestry 4. Natural and cultural assets 5. Sustainable communities 6. Tourism and recreation
North West	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making agriculture and forestry more competitive and sustainable 2. Conserving and enhancing the environment and countryside 3. Enhancing opportunity and quality of life in rural areas 4. Developing skills, knowledge transfer and capacity building
South East	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meeting UK biodiversity targets 2. Mitigating and adapting to climate change 3. Quality food sales 4. Adding value to forestry products 5. Rural tourism 6. Skills development 7. Innovation, entrepreneurship and collaboration 8. Assisting the livestock sector 9. Leader approach
South West	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Skills development 2. Sustainable rural tourism 3. Biodiversity and landscape 4. Social enterprise 5. Business support 6. Community led development 7. Supply chain and adding value 8. Resource management
West Midlands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhancing the value of the countryside 2. Developing a diverse and dynamic business base 3. Learning and skills improved 4. Creating the conditions for growth 5. Achieving fair access to services for all 6. Securing vibrant, active, inclusive and sustainable communities <p>'Cluster priorities' for AWM Axis 1 and 3 spending (environmental technologies; food and drink; tourism and leisure; livestock industry development)</p>
Yorkshire and the Humber	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rural Business Start-up 2. Rural Enterprise Investment Programme 3. Land Skills Programme 4. LEADER 5. Enhancing the value of the countryside