



## RDPE: Delivering Success through Local Action 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> February 2010 Dunchurch Park Hotel and Conference Centre, Rugby

### Table Discussion 1: Linking regional and national networking activities

Recognising that there is regional variation in RDPE policy and delivery circumstances around the country the RDPE Network needs to be flexible in how it links to, works with and is used by the 8 regions and sub-regional delivery organisations and interested stakeholders. For this exercise, participants were asked to identify:

- i. what RDPE networking activities take place at a regional and sub-regional level; and
- ii. what information is shared regionally that should be shared nationally so that others could also benefit.

The following information reflects the answers provided by participants in response to the 2 questions above. It has not been interpreted and has been transcribed as it appeared on the answer sheets submitted.

#### RDPE networking activities that take place at a regional and sub-regional level

- East of England – a regional network exists, LAG chair (recent) – enabling, facility. LAG chairs meeting twice, informal inter-LAG meetings
- Northern Rural Network. In the North East LAGs organised their own meetings. RDA organise officer meetings / programme management rather than engagement, mixed with sporadic ad hoc chair meetings. Value sense of wider fit but strategic context
- North West – RDA organise regular meetings for LAGs, occasionally involve Natural England, Business Link, Forestry Commission on an ad hoc basis. Forestry Commission organise workshop – joint project with a focus on forestry projects.
- LAG managers meet but not all LAGs have a chairman meeting. Some RDAs (eg SEEDA) try to control and not listen. Need for RDAs to respond to questions promptly.

- Some LAGs deliver against axis 1 and 3, others only against axis 3 and only some measures. There is not a lot of networking with Natural England, Forestry Commission and LANTRA or across the whole RDPE – these are needed at sub-regional level
- Some LAGs are doing tourism. Some have appointed a regional coordinator.
- No where looks at the whole programme at a structural level sub-regionally.
- In some regions there are regular meetings with RDAs at which there are Q&A sessions on specific issues.
- North West – NW Regional Advisory Forum for Rural Affairs (Cumbria, but no Leader representation) and Northern Rural Network for all 3 Northern regions
- West Midlands – RDPE Partners Group (RDAs), Government Office chair it. Also have a Leader coordinator and a Chairs network run by Regen WM. A rural hub only acts as disseminator of information
- 5 Devon LAG managers meet regularly (every 2 months) to discuss progress
- South West has a Google group
- Regional meetings across RDPE happen twice yearly
- Northamptonshire/EMDA Link, West Midlands training events (RDA organised).
- Difficulty experienced in N. Hampshire with networking - excellent in theory but difficult in practice to find the balance. Emailing is very useful
- Sub regional Herts and Shrops meeting very helpful
- Bureaucracy / paperwork – address problems as we get to them.
- Overcoming obstacles gives experience to address. Speaking to Ivan last night regarding exchange visits.
- West Midlands – AWM monthly meetings, coordinator meetings
- NE and SW – meeting of RDA and LAG Chairs
- NE – Quarterly meetings of LAG managers and accountable bodies (policy and exchange)
- County based RDPE – Devon
- SW – Google group hosted by RDA
- Devon – LAG members met once
- Gloucestershire – 1 LAG and RDPE delivery bodies

- Networking focus to deal with challenges but frustrations exist because these are not dealt with.

Information shared regionally that should be shared nationally so that others could also benefit

- Need RDAs to meet to share nationally
- All regions are so different – loading onto net was too time consuming and detracted from the ability to deliver projects (too much other work to do)
- Opportunity to share projects , investment mix, successes
- Regions operating on different measure to show distinctiveness of different areas – celebrate approval of local ‘distinctiveness’ (using different measures)
- Greater sharing of ‘Regional Programme’ investments with LAGs to strengthen context
- Frustrations and paper work
- Problem sharing and solving
- Addressing claim forms would be helpful
- Sample forms from RDA - too much jargonese necessitates exchange of explanations, shared experiences, addressing problems re understanding of forms
- How to set up a small grant scheme
- How to keep things simple
- SWRDA – SW trying to get together independently of RDA. Keep LAGs network
- Coordinate meetings of LAG members and staff.
- Stuff going on a country level but Leader excluded (all axis 1 and 2), no training or support, for all training you have to fill in a form
- Would be useful to have county level meetings
- Could produce a national set of FAQ – putting these up on the discussion forum could prompt RDAs to get together, pool it and provide useful answers to LAGs about common issues

- Some shared examples between LANTRA, Natural England, Forestry Commission. Big problems with RDAs' structure and differences in approach. Others are ad hoc, no structured approach to shared information
- Programme issues / problems and solutions
- Local messages not going up to Defra
- NE not aware of national situation
- Lobbying – who/how?