



# Scottish Borders LEADER

Encouraging innovation in rural areas

## INFORMATION NOTE

### What is LEADER?

LEADER is a European Union and Scottish Government funded programme to assist rural communities to improve quality of life and economic prosperity in their local area. It funds local partnerships (known as Local Action Groups) in rural areas to support **innovative** and **sustainable** local rural development projects.

LEADER funded projects are likely to be small scale and of a pilot nature, addressing local rural development issues in economically, environmentally and socially sustainable ways.

**“LEADER encourages rural territories to explore new ways to become or remain competitive, to make the most of their assets, and to overcome the challenges they face.”** (European Commission, 2006)

### Who can apply?

The Local Action Group is keen that the LEADER Programme is as accessible as possible to organisations, businesses, community groups and the wider public.

Applications for financial assistance will be accepted from:

- Constituted community groups
- Public organisations and agencies
- Partnerships, trusts and other non-governmental organisations
- Social enterprises
- Collaborative business/ community organisations (constituted groups).

Although individual businesses and individuals can not apply directly to the Programme they should discuss other routes to support with the LEADER Co-ordinator. The majority of support to the private sector will be through schemes operated by intermediaries such as Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Borders Council.

Please note that projects in Hawick and Galashiels are not eligible for LEADER funding unless the project will result in significant benefits for the surrounding rural area.

Scottish Borders LEADER Programme, c/o Planning and Economic Development, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0SA  
Tel: 01835 826661  
Fax: 01835 825158  
e-mail: [scotbordersleader@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:scotbordersleader@scotborders.gov.uk)



## **What financial support is available?**

Grants are available up to a maximum of **50% of the total 'eligible' project costs**, up to an indicative maximum grant of £125,000. For schemes (projects which give out small grants), a maximum of 50% of the eligible grant scheme costs is available, up to an indicative maximum grant of £125,000.

The remainder of the project's funding must be 'match funded' using non-EU public funding, and/or private money. For non-public sector led projects, a minimum of 5% funding must be contributed from the applicant's own resources. This can be made up of in-kind contributions. An in-kind contribution is a non cash input which can be given a cash value, e.g. a consultant who donates their time to the project, or a construction company which donates materials at no cost.

Cooperation Projects developed in partnership with other LEADER areas in Scotland, the UK, and other areas in the EU are also encouraged. These 'Transnational' projects developed in partnership with other areas in the EU are eligible for a higher rate of up to 70% grant support.

## **What type of project can be supported?**

In order for a project to be eligible for LEADER funding it must:

- Contribute to the LEADER Programme's main themes and priority areas
- Be innovative (a new project development in the Scottish Borders) and sustainable, and involve the local community
- Assist the LEADER target groups (women, young people, small businesses, the under-employed and people in more remote rural areas or with accessibility difficulties).

The LEADER Programme Themes and Target Groups are outlined below.

### **Main Themes**

Following widespread consultation, the Scottish Borders LEADER Local Action Group has chosen to adopt the following two main themes for the LEADER Programme:

#### **Progressive Rural Economy**

#### **Revitalising Rural Communities**

### **Innovation Areas**

In order to join up the activities supported by the LEADER Programme, all eligible activities are clustered into six 'innovation areas' within these two themes:

#### **Progressive Rural Economy**

- **Diverse and Sustainable Rural Businesses**
- **Inclusive Rural Economy**
- **Distinctive Local Products.**

## Revitalising Rural Communities

- **Enhanced Natural, Built and Cultural Environment**
- **Cohesive and Sustainable Rural Communities**
- **Innovative and Integrated Community Services.**

**Annex A** lists the types of activities which can be supported by LEADER under each of these 'innovation areas'. Each LEADER project proposal must show how it relates to these activities to help achieve the aims of the LEADER Programme.

### **Horizontal Themes**

In addition to the Programme Themes and Innovation Areas outlined above, there are five 'Horizontal Themes' that are key guiding principles for all LEADER projects. These are:

- Innovation
- Community Involvement
- Sustainable Development
- Equality and Diversity (equal opportunities)
- 'Transferability' (sharing best practice).

Each LEADER project proposal coming forward to the Local Action Group must demonstrate how it will deliver against the Horizontal Themes.

### **Target Groups**

A number of priority groups have been identified that will be specifically targeted for LEADER Programme support. These are:

- Young people
- Women
- Micro enterprises
- Under-employed
- People in more remote rural areas or with accessibility difficulties.

Projects must demonstrate how they assist any or all of the target groups above.

The two main types of project which can be funded by LEADER are:

**Capital Projects** – which comprise physical infrastructure works which result in the improvement of an existing asset/ facility, or the provision of a new asset/ facility e.g. environmental improvements, creation of a new visitor centre, conversion of a disused office into a craft workshop.

**Revenue Projects** – which encompass the provision of services and support activities, largely in the areas of developing small enterprise, community services, tourism and cultural activities e.g. production of a brochure on local visitor attractions, grants to rural businesses to attend a training course, support for an arts festival.

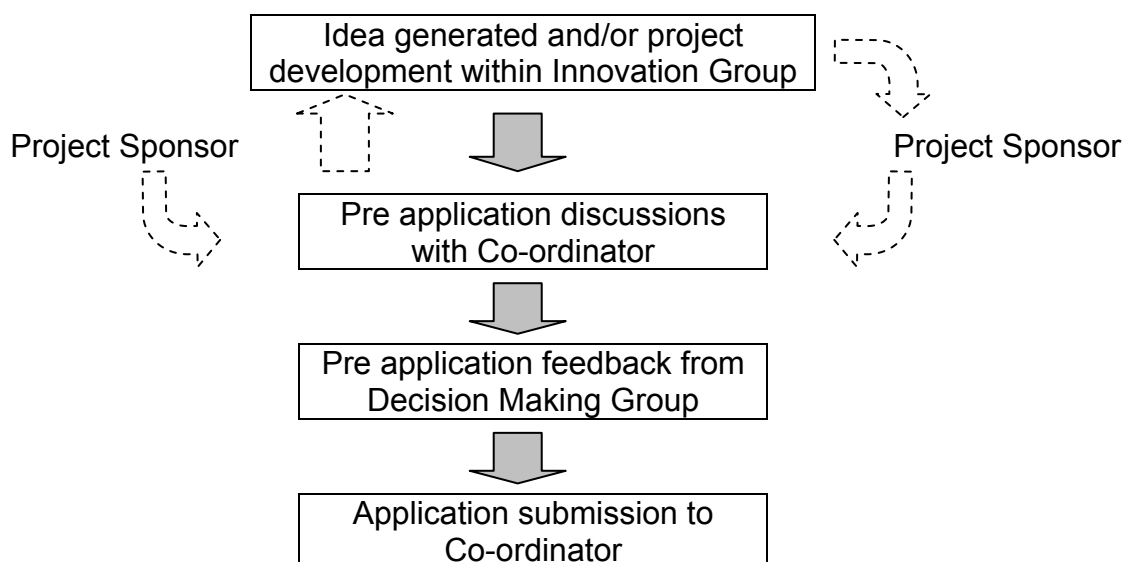
There are general conditions and funding restrictions relating to both capital and revenue projects which are summarised on page 5. A more detailed list of eligible and non-eligible costs is provided in the application form guidance note.

## How can we apply?

Anyone wishing to apply for funding should discuss their idea with the LEADER Co-ordinator before making an application. Assistance with developing the project idea and with completion of the application form will be given. Completed forms should be returned to the Scottish Borders LEADER Co-ordinator (see page 5 for contact details).

At a later date Innovation Groups will be organised. These Groups will be formed to develop new LEADER project ideas. There will be Innovation Groups for each of the Innovation Areas. These groups will consider, develop and recommend projects to the Decision Making Group.

### The application process:

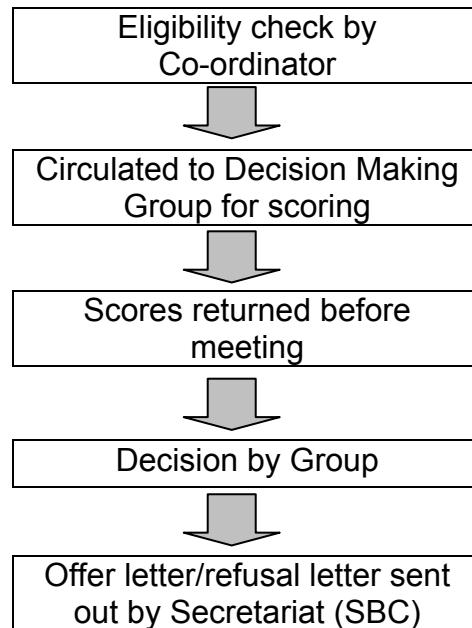


### What is the assessment process?

On receipt of your completed application, an initial eligibility check will be carried out by the LEADER Co-ordinator. If there are any gaps in information or if the project is ineligible you will be contacted for further discussions/additional information. Once the Co-ordinator is satisfied that your project is eligible it will be presented to the next meeting of the LEADER Decision Making Group for scoring and discussion.

Formal offer letters with conditions of grant will be sent out by the Programme Secretariat (Scottish Borders Council) as soon as possible after the Decision Making Group has met. On receipt of the signed grant acceptance form, grant claim forms and guidance notes will be sent out to the applicant. Where projects are refused, the Secretariat will write to unsuccessful applicants outlining the reasons for refusal and where appropriate make suggestions as to how the project may be adapted to make it more likely to be approved.

**The assessment process:**



**General Conditions**

1. all awards will be conditional on the applicant securing all relevant statutory consents and confirmation of partnership funding
2. work must not commence before confirmation by written agreement of the award offer
3. awards are not available for work already started or completed
4. payment of grants is retrospective on production of receipted original invoices and a completed grant claim and progress report form.

**Funding Restrictions**

1. projects with eligible costs of less than £1000 will not normally be funded
2. existing core staff costs are not eligible for grant support
3. general running costs of an organisation are not eligible for grant support
4. no funding will be granted for statutory activities
5. prize money and gifts are not eligible for grant support
6. grant funding for professional fees is normally restricted to 10% of total project costs
7. grant funding for purchase of land and buildings is restricted to 10% of total project costs
8. fixtures and fittings are generally ineligible, unless deemed essential to the delivery of the LEADER project.
9. projects eligible for SRDP Rural Development Contract – Rural Priorities are not normally considered eligible for LEADER support. This includes sports, leisure and recreational facilities, unless these are linked to wider tourism benefits. Village hall renovation projects are also not normally considered eligible for LEADER support. Further guidance is available from the LEADER Coordinator.

**Enquiries about the Scottish Borders LEADER Programme should be made to:**

LEADER Coordinator, Planning and Economic Development, Scottish Borders Council  
Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA  
Tel: (01835) 826661, [scotbordersleader@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:scotbordersleader@scotborders.gov.uk)  
[www.scottishbordersleader.co.uk](http://www.scottishbordersleader.co.uk)

## **Eligible LEADER project activities**

### **1. Progressive Rural Economy**

#### **Innovation Area: Diverse and Sustainable Rural Businesses**

**Aims:** A more inclusive approach to business development opportunities, involving a greater and wider range of small and micro businesses and social enterprises, focused on the delivery of clear economic benefits for the local area. Better cooperation between businesses, and between sectors. Better utilisation of local natural, cultural and community assets while fostering an entrepreneurial approach to take advantage of all of these opportunities. Focus on quality services and products.

#### **Activities:**

- Facilitation, commissioning and/or funding support for the development and implementation of creative business support initiatives leading to sustainable economic benefits
- Support for the development of business connections and networking, including links between sectors
- Support for the development and provision of access to local market intelligence and business information, including new business opportunities (with a particular focus on women and young people)
- Facilitation, commissioning and/or funding support for specific youth engagement and rural entrepreneurship initiatives. Examples might include
  - promoting youth enterprise projects
  - widening youth horizons
  - developing post school continuity/business interface
  - the provision of support through a youth business or entrepreneurship fund
  - mentors from industry and agencies to support young people on a one-to-one basis.
- Rural business hubs providing accommodation, services, peer support and a basis for networking for small and micro rural businesses (where possible making use of underused facilities)
- Initiatives encouraging the uptake or adoption of new technology e.g. through the proactive use of examples or demonstration sites
- Training and skills development support of various forms such as
  - Classes in business development and management for social enterprises
  - Facilitating child care or mobile child resources – allowing parents to go to training / business development meetings
  - Specific support for rural skills acquisition for school-leavers upwards (including mentoring)
  - Skills development support for key industry sectors.
- Facilitation support for rural communities, businesses and landowning estates to work together to identify new enterprise opportunities
- Specific support for networking and developing the tourism sector and other key industries to make better links to range of local assets, to local businesses and community interests, including support for partnerships that capitalise on the sustainable development of local natural and cultural assets
- Support for the development and use of renewable energy technology, and for waste minimisation and recycling, including
  - Support for new skills acquisition in renewable energy applications
  - Support for community capacity building to enable community-owned renewable energy installations to be realised.

## **Innovation Area: Inclusive Rural Economy**

**Aims:** Making the Scottish Borders a more attractive place to live, learn and work, and promoting that more widely, to encourage the young to stay and come back, and attract economically active incomers, ultimately creating a broader working age demographic.

### **Activities:**

- Encourage and support the development of creative solutions to housing related issues breaking down barriers and creating opportunities (but not direct support for housing provision or development)
- Encourage and support the development of innovative community based approaches to securing and managing funding and managing finances within the community (including the strategic use of wind farm contributions)
- Support the investigation and implementation of creative ways of developing community assets
- Provide support and encourage new approaches to local skills transfer building on the capital which exists within the rural community e.g. through new approaches to mentoring, apprenticeships, learning journeys etc
- Support for activities that develop pride in place (young people)
- Initiatives supporting the development or supply of new technology which maintains the modern and current work and business environment
- Support for projects that make rural areas more accessible and attractive to live and work
- Skills development and training (including capitalising on the skills of older people)
- Support for the creation of 'computer learning environments', providing hubs for skills training in rural areas.

## **Innovation Area: Distinctive Local Products**

**Aims:** Development and strengthening of product quality and marketability, and through this the range of products produced locally. Strengthening linkages and understanding between businesses which produce and supply regionally distinctive products.

### **Activities:**

- Support for new product development, market research and market testing
- Specific support for the development and implementation of business co-operation for product development and marketing particularly to address issues of scale which may constrain development potential
- Support for collaborative working to develop supply chain linkages
- Support for group activity around particular products or processes to share knowledge and information and feed in to network development or formal collaborative working.
- Support for network development and cross sectoral working within the regional and local product context
- Support for local product branding and collective marketing activity
- Support for local produce markets, and the development of better links between local producers and consumers.

## 2. Revitalising Rural Communities

### **Innovation Area: Enhanced Natural, Built and Cultural Environment**

**Aims::** Securing positive changes in the way in which these assets are identified and valued in the community. Realising the full potential of these assets. Building on this to develop new approaches to capitalise on these assets for economic and community benefit.

#### **Activities:**

- Facilitation, commissioning and/or funding support for action to undertake audits of these resources in local areas
- Animation or facilitation support to initiate follow up action in local areas and funding support for such activity
- Research and feasibility studies to test the viability of new ideas that capitalise on natural, built and cultural assets
- Support for collective action, including the development of environmental or cultural plans
- Assisting with provision of, or improvements to, access, recreation, interpretation, signposting, exhibitions, etc in relation to elements of the natural, built and cultural environment
- Proactive support for the development of creative business networks and their activities to drive innovation in capitalising on these assets
- Support for the development and delivery of events or activities which contribute to the sustainability of local natural and cultural facilities, or which add value to local natural and cultural assets
- Support for innovative transport solutions to facilitate participation in cultural events and activities
- Support for the conservation, restoration or improvement of valued assets to enhance their potential contribution to the socio economic and environmental wellbeing of the area (including LBAP priorities)
- Support for education and awareness raising activity
- Support for marketing activity to promote the natural, built and cultural environment
- Specific support for developing and strengthening local cultural activity and identity
- Support for the development of community owned and managed natural, built and cultural assets.

### **Innovation Area: Cohesive and Sustainable Rural Communities**

**Aims:** Provision or enhancement of community facilities, support for civic and community involvement, participation and engagement resulting in positive and sustained attitude change re community involvement and community confidence.

#### **Activities:**

- Further development of youth oriented activity building on what's been learned to date e.g. through projects such as Youth Chex and a Voice of My Own
- Support for the development of community woodlands and other community owned assets (including NGO/ voluntary sector owned assets), and particularly for supporting community involvement in their management and utilisation
- Support for capacity building activity to increase community skills

- Community leadership development through training and other innovative forms of skills transfer e.g. by undertaking 'Learning Journeys' exploring experience and best practice in other areas
- Provide financial and enabling support for initiatives for migrant workers linking them to the community (where possible this should involve local business employers). Ideas here should be explored with and directly involve migrant workers themselves including their ability to contribute to the overall initiative
- Community based initiatives which focus on developing employability
- Support for the provision of independent youth advice and other initiatives which help to give young people ownership of the issues and the solutions. Examples of such activities include
  - Youth cafes
  - Involving older people as mentors
  - Developing buddy systems.
- Business or community initiatives which seek to strengthen local identity and pride in place
- Support for projects which increase and encourage dialogue and joint activity between older people and young people
- Support for projects which increase the involvement of women in the local economy
- Support for projects which develop community leadership
- Support for opportunities for disadvantaged young people to become involved in rural activities.

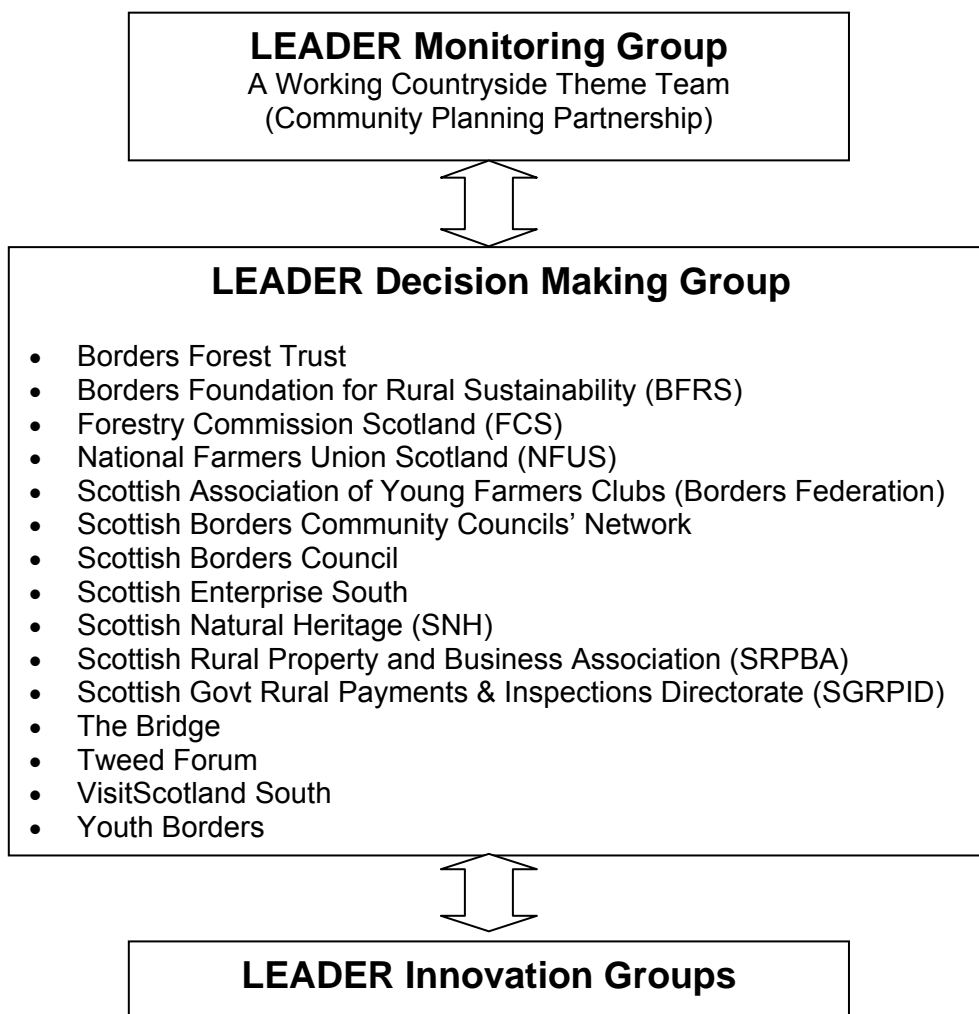
### **Innovation Area: Innovative and Integrated Community Services**

**Aims:** Organisational culture change which recognises and focuses on the need to find ways to improve service delivery and broaden access.

**Activities:**

- Encouraging and supporting the undertaking of service audits which explore the way in which services are provided within a local area or the way in which a particular service is provided across the rural area
- Encouraging and supporting local action planning i.e. developing locality based plans for the delivery of services
- Developing innovative solutions to the service and access issues and plans identified e.g. through piloting rural service hubs, supporting video conferencing and supporting communities in developing the means to convince service providers
- Encouraging the development of sustainable rural services by communities, social enterprises and the voluntary sector
- Encouraging the innovative use of village halls and other community assets.
- Support for the development of mobile services.

**Scottish Borders LEADER Local Action Group**



The LEADER **Monitoring Group** has overall responsibility for the delivery of the LEADER Programme in the Scottish Borders. This group consists of 25 local partners (listed in **Annex A**) that represent a wide range of rural community, business, public sector and environmental interests. The group is responsible for the development and implementation of the LEADER Programme Strategy and Business Plan and for programme level monitoring.

The LEADER **Decision Making Group** undertake the key day-to-day decisions and aim to ensure integration of ideas and projects coming forward for LEADER funding. They assess project applications, add value to projects where possible, and monitor the financial and output progress of the Programme.

The LEADER **Innovation Group** will involve a wider range of individuals and organisations in the development of new project ideas. These groups will consider, develop and recommend projects to the Decision Making Group. Their key role is to identify appropriate project ideas and encourage project sponsors to submit applications to the Programme.

**Scottish Borders LEADER Local Action Group Partners:**

- Berwickshire Community Councils' Forum
- Borders College
- Borders Forest Trust
- Borders Foundation for Rural Sustainability (BFRS)
- Borders Machinery Ring (BMR)
- Buccleuch Estates
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)
- Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS)
- National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS)
- RSPB
- Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs (Borders Federation)
- Scottish Borders Access Forum
- Scottish Borders Community Councils' Network
- Scottish Borders Council
- Scottish Borders Environment Partnership (SBEP)
- Scottish Enterprise South
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate (SGRPID)
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
- Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA)
- Southern Uplands Partnership
- The Bridge (Scottish Borders Community Development Company)
- Tweed Forum
- VisitScotland South
- Youth Borders

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