



SCOTTISH INNOVATIVE ACTIONS PROGRAMME

**REPORT TO THE INNOVATIVE ACTIONS STEERING GROUP MEETING
WEDNESDAY 2 AUGUST 2006**

FUTURE ACTIVITY PLAN

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report provides the Steering Group with an outline of the key activities planned for the remainder of the Programme under the following headings:
 - Programme Working Groups
 - Claims and Monitoring
 - Communications
 - EU Networking
 - Reporting

PROGRAMME WORKING GROUPS

Action Line Development Groups

2. One of the recommendations of the joint development group meeting on 6th March was that we hold further joint meetings with members of the different development groups, focussed on specific issues, for example engaging SMEs. The next joint meeting is planned for October 2006.

Evaluation Group

3. The evaluation group will continue to meet with SQW Ltd at intervals throughout the evaluation process to monitor progress. The date of the next meeting will be scheduled after the Steering Group meeting when SQW Ltd will present the next stage of the evaluation and proposed case study approach.

CLAIMS AND MONITORING

4. The Programme Manager will continue to ensure quarterly claims for all projects are submitted and processed on time. It will be important to identify any slippage in timescale or under spend for projects as the Programme enters its final phase.
5. Monitoring visits will continue until the end of the Programme for the remaining projects approved through the Programme. Regular contact will be maintained with all project sponsors to receive regular updates on project progress. Copies of the monitoring reports are available to the Steering Group on request.

FOR INFORMATION

COMMUNICATIONS

6. Communication activities for the remainder of the Programme will focus principally on the following areas;
 - General marketing and communications activity to raise awareness of the importance of innovation and the Programme's role in stimulating new approaches to innovation support and support mechanisms for Scottish SMEs
 - Meetings, seminars and events to disseminate the learning gathered from pilot projects funded through the Programme to relevant intermediaries, organisations and SMEs
7. The communications activities will be targeted at a wide range of business intermediaries and appropriate SME groups. Promotional materials will be produced for general dissemination on the outcomes of the Programme and also to promote the advantages of innovation.

General Marketing and Communications Activity

8. After undergoing a re-structuring, the web site will be regularly updated with Programme and project progress and ongoing EU networking activities. The monthly newsletter will continue to be supplemented by relevant and timely emails to inform sponsors and interested parties of IA Programme outcomes and relevant innovation activities.
9. A tendering process has started to appoint a marketing / PR company for the IA Programme. The appointed marketing organisation will prepare and execute a marketing plan that will highlight dissemination of project outcomes and promote innovation in the broadest sense. The focus will be on *effective* promotional activities and materials.

Meetings, Seminars & Events

10. It is proposed to carry out a series of learning dissemination workshops and seminars during the remainder of the Programme. These will be targeted at intermediaries and specialist organisations working with innovating companies. A programme of events will be organised and members of the Steering Group and Development Groups will be consulted on the content of this programme of events.
11. The Programme Manager will maintain contact with other PMEs over the coming months to discuss a range of activities with them that are relevant to their areas and the needs of their areas. These might include participation in joint events, newsletter articles, and reciprocal web site links. The visits to date have provided valuable suggestions on how best to incorporate the learning gathered from the projects into the PMEs' mainstream Objective 1, 2 and 3 Structural Fund Programmes.

Delivery

12. It is proposed to engage a marketing / PR company to assist with the marketing and communications activity. The tender has been issued and it is hoped that a contract will be awarded by the end of August to provide services on an ongoing basis during 2006 and 2007.

FOR INFORMATION

EU NETWORKING

13. EU networking continues to be a key priority for the remainder of the Programme and will focus principally on the following areas:
- Project sponsor initiated activities
 - Study visits
 - Networking events
 - International conferences & seminars

Project Sponsor Activities

14. Several project sponsors enquired if the EU networking budget could be used for dissemination and learning activities for their pilot projects supported through the Programme. This was clarified with the EC as an eligible use of the EU networking budget. After clearing this with the EC, an email was issued with the aim of eliciting such requests from all project sponsors. It is anticipated that a number of requests will be received from project sponsors over the next few months.

Study Visits

15. It is proposed that three more study visits are organised to other European Regions during 2006 and 2007. Invitations to participate in the study visits will be issued to members of the Steering and Development Groups, other representatives of the organisations involved in these groups, and where appropriate, representatives of project sponsors and participating SMEs. The details and dates of the visits will be agreed and circulated to Programme partners as soon as possible to give sufficient time for forward planning.
16. This activity will be focussed on exchanging experiences and introducing good practices from other regions and countries across the EU into Scotland. This will also enable participating individuals and organisations to establish links with organisations in other regions.

Networking Events

17. The EU places significant importance on networking and exchanging good practice between Innovative Actions programmes across Europe. There are a number of ongoing events organised within the Innovative Actions network (ERIK) and the Innovating Regions in Europe network (IRE), some on a thematic basis, others based on geography. The Programme Manager will continue to issue invitations to Programme partners for these networking events during 2006 and 2007.

International Conferences and Seminars

18. The Programme Management Team through its membership of the ERIK and IRE networks are advised of forthcoming international conferences and seminars themed on relevant innovation topics and will continue to promote these to partners.
19. At the last Steering Group meeting a number of future activities to utilise the remaining EU networking budget were discussed. These included the possibility of organising a conference in Scotland focussed on sharing international / European experience and good practice and a second possibility of engaging an external organisation to develop EU networking activities. A decision on these other activities will be taken

FOR INFORMATION

once we are clear on the budget remaining after processing all funding requests from project sponsors and Programme partners.

REPORTING

20. The interim payment claim and accompanying progress report on implementation will be prepared in partnership with the Scottish Executive and submitted to the European Commission during August 2006 to draw down the second 40% ERDF payment from the European Commission. Meetings have taken place with the Scottish Executive to discuss the preparation required and timescales for submission of the interim payment claim and report.
21. Progress reports will be submitted to the Programme Monitoring Committees of the four PMEs across Scotland and the European Structural Funds Liaison Group as requested.

RECOMMENDATION

22. The Steering Group is invited to discuss and comment upon the key activities planned for implementation during the remainder of the Programme.