

**STEERING GROUP
FOR CONSULTATION ON THE REPLACEMENT FOR European Structural
Funds**

10:00-12:00 Thursday 21 November 2019

**Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Mansfield Traquair Centre, 15
Mansfield Place, Edinburgh, EH3 6BB**

MINUTES OF MEETING

Attendees

Professor David Bell (Chair) - University of Stirling
Lorna Gregson-MacLeod (on behalf of Robin Clarke) – Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Dr. Councillor Steven Heddle – COSLA (via video link)
Anna Fowlie – Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
Martin Wight (on behalf of Douglas Colquhoun) – Scottish Enterprise
Hilary Pearce (on behalf of Richard Rollison) – Scottish Government
Julie Ann Airens (on behalf of Dominic Munro) – Scottish Government
Karl Johnson (on behalf of Gary Gillespie) – Scottish Government
Malcolm Leitch – Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development

Secretariat

Karen McAvenue – Scottish Government
Fiona Loynd – Scottish Government
Sean Jamieson – Scottish Government
Hannah Reid – Scottish Government

Apologies

John Bachtler – European Policies Research Centre, University of Strathclyde
Robin Clarke – Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Douglas Colquhoun – Scottish Enterprise
Gary Gillespie – Scottish Government
Dominic Munro – Scottish Government
Uzma Khan – Scottish Government
Richard Rollison – Scottish Government
Russell Griggs – South of Scotland Enterprise

1. Welcome and Introductions

1. The chair of the group opened the meeting by thanking attendees for coming to the third steering group session to discuss the consultation on the replacement for the European Structural Funds (ESIF) in Scotland.
2. The chair made members aware that despite the current European Social Funds programme now under suspension, this would have no impact on the remit of the Group and would not be a topic of discussion during this session.

2. Minutes and Update on Actions from the Previous Meeting

3. The Chair asked if the Group was content with the proposed Minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.
4. With no objections from the Group, the draft Minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 25 October 2019 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.
5. Discussing the current progress of the Action Log, a Scottish Government (SG) colleague advised the Group that all actions have been completed with the exception of action 2.7 which is still being considered.
6. Providing further clarity on Action of 2.11, SG colleague noted that Scottish Government colleagues have sought advice regarding pre-election guidance in respect of the consultation process and are evaluating the manifestos as they became available.
7. A member raised two concerns: about undertaking stakeholder events during the pre-election period; and about a lack of clarity within the consultation paper on achievements from the current 2014-20 Scottish Programmes They also noted difficulty accessing the printing function of the electronic sharing system implemented as part of action 2.9 of the Action Log.
8. Scottish Government colleagues responded to the member's concerns, noting that the key aims are outlined in section 2.1 of the consultation and any statistical information is constantly changing so difficult to include. Despite this, it was agreed that case studies at a local level will be utilised during future stakeholder engagement to highlight the successes of European Structural Funding in Scotland.

ACTION 1: Scottish Government colleagues to test the accessibility of ERDM Connect, ensuring printing documents are available.

ACTION 2: Scottish Government colleagues to outline key achievements for the European Structural Funds in Scotland during future stakeholder events.

3. Consultation Update

9. Scottish Government colleague gave a presentation to the Steering Group which provided them with:
- the current status of the consultation;
 - the current timeline;
 - the key objectives for the procured consultants (to carry out response analysis and support stakeholder engagement);
 - proposed future stakeholder engagement;
 - an analysis of the consultation responses thus far (7 in total);
 - Ministerial engagement with the consultation.
10. The chair thanked SG for their presentation before enquiring how to garner an optimal number of consultation responses in future and if members had received any poor feedback from stakeholders regarding the framing of the consultation.
11. Members confirmed that they have received no negative feedback thus far regarding the consultation questioning.
12. One member suggested that many responses will be received towards the end of the consultation period and future stakeholder events may offer a chance to gain and stimulate interest. They also wondered if the workshops may result in respondents keen to review and revise their original submission.

ACTION 3: Scottish Government colleagues to confirm with the Steering Group if consultation responses can be reviewed and revised following initial submission.

13. Scottish Government reiterated this point, by suggesting that, following the pre-election period, further awareness will be promoted with stakeholders. One member of the group agreed and suggested that a more active social media approach should be adopted following this period of restriction. This view was shared by another, who suggested that local bodies could also be utilised to disperse the consultation and stakeholder invitations.

ACTION 4: Scottish Government to release further documentation and increase social media engagement following the pre-election period.

14. The chair thanked members for their contributions, before confirming that the successful consultant will attend future meetings to update members of the current engagement with stakeholders and analysis of responses.

ACTION 5: Scottish Government colleagues to invite the consultation consultant to attend future meetings of the Steering Group following their appointment.

4. Future Engagement Plan

15. The chair introduced the last substantive agenda item by enquiring if members had any views on:
- the proposed timeline for stakeholder engagement
 - members' participation in future stakeholder events

- the geographical dispersal of these events
- the thematic nature of future stakeholder engagement

Proposed Timeline

16. There was agreement amongst the group that this timeline was realistic. However, it might be challenging considering the time of year and the looming deadline for consultation responses. It was suggested that provisional dates be agreed as soon as possible to ensure strong attendance and to enable logistical preparation.
17. SG noted that due to general election, festive period, and closure of the consultation, the timeline to hold these events is restricted to around 7 weeks.
18. It was generally agreed by members that these events should be closed events as outlined in the paper and should be carried out in daytime especially given the time of year.
19. Due to the time of year, it was agreed by members that the event calendar should be given to all stakeholders to allow them to decide on a location and date that is appropriate for their requirements. This would have the added benefit of allowing certain events to be rearranged or cancelled depending upon uptake.

ACTION 6: Steering Group Secretariat to create an EventBrite invitation for all events to allow stakeholders to note their preferences.

Steering Group Participation at Events

20. It was agreed that the following members would host at the following locations:
 - Scottish Enterprise – Dundee
 - SCVO – Edinburgh (with the potential of using Scottish Government buildings)
 - COSLA – Kirkwall
 - Highlands and Islands Enterprise – Inverness (with the potential of working in partnership with Business Gateway to host the Stornoway event)
 - European Policies Research Centre, University of Strathclyde – Glasgow

ACTION 7: Steering Group Secretariat to request members to provide their availability to host stakeholder events in order to provisionally book dates.

21. It was agreed that the consultants should be utilised to facilitate and promote discussion during these events. However, Group members did pledge to have as much involvement during their hosted event as possible.

Geographical Location of Events

22. There was agreement amongst members that the locations chosen were widely spread and offered stakeholders from all over Scotland a chance to participate.
23. A member noted the lack of north-east representation and suggested an event be held in Aberdeen. Similarly, another member also raised concern for engagement with the Ayrshire region but agreed that the Glasgow event could accommodate this.

ACTION 8: Scottish Government colleagues to add Aberdeen as a proposed location for future stakeholder engagement.

24. A member of the group raised concerns that Shetland had been overlooked in engagement however agreed that Orkney colleagues could act as proxy on their behalf if necessary. The Group came to the consensus that, with the inclusion of Aberdeen, the proposed dispersal of engagement events is sufficient.

Audience of Stakeholder Events

25. The chair enquired into any focus on innovation and skills as an area of focus at stakeholder events.

26. A member noted that stakeholders should not be unwittingly excluded and that innovation was an important sector for discussion. Suggesting that these views would be key developing any programme to ensure economic growth.

27. Another member suggested that employer organisations and business organisations such as Confederation of British Industry, the Federal of Small Business, and other social partners of the STUC should be included in any business focused event.

28. Members agreed, suggesting that the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) be approached to carry out a potential role in a thematic skills focused event.

ACTION 9: Scottish Government colleagues to seek advice from Skills Development Scotland as to a potential skills focused stakeholder engagement event.

29. A sub for a member enquired into the inclusion of the agricultural and marine sectors in future stakeholder discussion.

30. A member agreed with this notion of including these parties, by noting that the old constructions of funding should not limit future development.

31. Scottish Government agreed that agriculture was an important theme due to its impact upon rural communities. However they noted that the lack of understanding regarding future implementation made it difficult to include this within the Group's remit. Despite the consultation not being seen as sector-based by Ministers, it was agreed that the involvement of LEADER stakeholders should be included in future events.

ACTION 10: Scottish Government colleagues to consider how to include LEADER stakeholders in the consultation events.

32. The chair suggested that an academic event should also take place as a useful addition to the suggested groups targeted.

ACTION 11: Scottish Government colleagues to add an additional academic focused stakeholder engagement event.

33. SG noted that as part of the internal engagement, agencies will be consulted to ensure their views will be included. It was suggested that members provide the Secretariat with a potential list of external stakeholders to be included and a final engagement outline be provided to the Steering Group.

ACTION 12: Steering Group Secretariat to update members with an event register of all internal and external engagements with stakeholders.

34. A member raised concerns regarding General Data Protection Regulation rules in relation to guest lists for events. It was agreed that members themselves would approach contacts once a list of organisations had been agreed with the Secretariat.

35. SG asked that members provide the Secretariat with a list of suggested stakeholders to be invited to these engagement sessions to ensure full inclusion.

ACTION 13: Steering Group Secretariat to request members to provide suggested stakeholder lists for any future events in which they host.

Thematic/General Focus of Events

36. Scottish Government opened the discussion by suggesting that regional and themed events should be held to ensure that varied participation and discussion is achieved.

37. The Steering Group generally agreed with this approach however one member raised concerns that all relevant themes needed to be discussed to ensure all voices across the country could be included.

38. Another member suggested the use of webinars for themed events could allow participation from a wide, geographically spread audience.

ACTION 14: Scottish Government colleagues to consider the option of offering web links to any themed stakeholder events.

39. Steering Group members agreed that general events would be held across Scotland in the following locations:

- Aberdeen
- Dumfries Dundee
- Edinburgh
- Glasgow
- Inverness
- Kirkwall
- Stornoway

40. With additional themed events taking place in the central belt focused on the following themes:

- Skills and Innovation
- Academic

- Voluntary sector
41. This approach was suggested to offer stakeholders the ability to decide which event would be applicable for them and that web services should be adopted to ensure no stakeholder would be excluded due to geographical constraint.
42. A member asked that the events be conducted in a similar manner and results from each should be gathered uniformly to ensure consistency.
43. SG advised that the information gained from these events will be fed into the analysis of the written consultation responses to develop the final report.
44. Another member suggested that it would be beneficial to set some context for attendees regarding the challenges facing the Scottish economy and labour market. It was agreed by other members that a short paper should be produced to outline Scotland's economic development to reinforce discussion at future stakeholder events.

ACTION 15: Scottish Government analytical colleagues to provide an outline of the challenges facing the Scottish economy and labour market.

5. AOB and Future Meeting Dates

45. The chair thanked members for their contributions which provided a stimulating discussion on the consultation before inviting members to raise any additional business items.
46. With no additional business raised, Chair concluded the meeting by thanking SCVO for hosting and asked if other members could consider hosting any future meetings of the Steering Group:
- Wednesday 15 January 2020
 - Wednesday 26 February 2020
47. Date of the next meeting is Wednesday 11th December at Zero Waste Scotland offices in Stirling.

Future Funding Secretariat

10 December 2019

Action Log

Meeting 2

2.7 Scottish Government colleagues to provide the Steering Group greater insight into the current European Structural Funds Programme and its relation to the National Performance Framework.

Meeting 3

3.1 Scottish Government colleagues to test the accessibility of ERDM Connect, ensuring printing documents are available.

3.2 Scottish Government colleagues to outline key achievements for the European Structural Funds in Scotland during future stakeholder events.

3.3 Scottish Government colleagues to confirm with the Steering Group if consultation responses can be updated and reviewed following submission.

3.4 Scottish Government to release further documentation and increase social media engagement following the pre-election period.

3.5 Scottish Government colleagues to invite the consultation consultant to attend future meetings of the Steering Group following their appointment.

3.6 Steering Group Secretariat to create an EventBrite invitation for all events to allow stakeholders to note their preferences.

3.7 Steering Group Secretariat to request members to provide their availability to host stakeholder events in order to provisionally book dates.

3.8 Scottish Government colleagues to add Aberdeen as a proposed location for future stakeholder engagement.

3.9 Scottish Government colleagues to seek advice from Skills Development Scotland as to a potential skills focused stakeholder engagement event.

3.10 Scottish Government colleagues to consider how to include LEADER stakeholders in the consultation events.

3.11 Scottish Government colleagues to add an additional academic focused stakeholder engagement event.

3.12 Steering Group Secretariat to update members with an event register of all internal and external engagements with stakeholders.

3.13 Steering Group Secretariat to request members to provide suggested stakeholder lists for any future events in which they host.

3.14 Scottish Government colleagues to discuss the option of offering web links to any themed stakeholder events.

3.15 Scottish Government analytical colleagues to provide an outline of the challenges facing the Scottish economy and labour market.