

United Kingdom-Wales

Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2012: priorities supporting RDP implementation

- An Annual Work Plan is developed by the Wales Rural Network (WRN) team, based on stakeholder consultation and subject to the consideration and agreement of the WRN Steering Group.
- The current Plan was approved in March 2012, with the key priorities listed below:



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

1. Identify Good Practice:

- Organise Thematic Meetings on key topics under the RDP.
- Contribute to Good Practice for the Next RDP Programme 2014-2019 and facilitate an event to contribute to the dissemination information on 'future directions'.
- Support networking activities by other organisations.
- Develop Document Library of examples of Good Practice, previous projects etc.

2. Communication:

- Creation of new two-page section in Gwlad (Welsh Government magazine) on "Rural Developments" to cover Axes 3 and 4 case studies.
- PR and case studies.
- Promotion of WRN activities.
- Representation and presentation of updates at RDP Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC).

3. Development of Core Tools:

- Development & maintenance of the Wales Rural Network website and projects database.

4. Information Exchange and Co-ordination:

- Planning of annual RDP conference.
- Develop cross-axis working / communications across the four RDP Axes.
- Maintain and develop contacts with UK and European networks.
- Develop some areas of work with the involvement of one or more other UK country.

5. Training and Mentoring:

- Mentoring Scheme for Transnational Co-operation.

6. Co-operation:

- Support for Development of Co-operation projects.

7. General WRN Secretariat Role:

- Provide secretariat, agree work priorities, management arrangements, update on progress / issues with the Wales Rural Network Steering Group.

8. Support RDP Pillar 2 plan for 2014 - 2020:

- Support the Pillar 2 team in developing the next period programme.

2. Thematic Initiatives launched by the Network

- The Wales Rural Network has run a number of thematic events through 2012 and at present is planning two further events to be held between January and March 2013. Whilst still in the very early stages of planning, each event will comprise Study Visits, Case Study Presentations and Workshops, the events will focus on 'Communities and Energy' and 'Ecosystems Goods and Services'.

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- Previous thematic events undertaken through 2012:
 - Farm Diversification Workshop – February 2012
 - Broadband Event – May 2012
 - Axes 3 and 4 Event – July 2012
 - Heritage Event and Study Visits – September 2012
 - Rural Development Plan for Wales (2007-2013) – October 2012
- Information about the event is available on: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/ruraldevelopment/walesruralnetwork/eventsconferences/?lang=en>.
- Within the Welsh Government, there are currently three Ministerial Working Groups comprising of experts and policy leads as follows:
 - Agri-Environment, Climate and Forestry;
 - Agriculture, Food Chain and SMEs;
 - Poverty reduction and Economic Development.
- They provide detailed consideration of Regulations and current schemes/programmes to inform an over-arching RDP Advisory Group in the provision of proposals/recommendations to the Minister with regard to the next Rural Development Programme.
- No thematic issues are specifically addressed by committees / steering groups. However, recent events (Farm Diversification and Heritage) have been jointly-organised with individual LAGs in Powys and the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Whilst not the subject of specific surveys, consultation or analysis, evaluation sheets are collected at the end of every thematic event. In this way the network team is able to gauge responses to the significance and value of the event itself and also obtain valuable information regarding which thematic issues attendees would wish covered in future events / workshops.
- Thematic issues are normally covered by a combination of seminars, seminars and workshops or seminars, workshops and study visits.

3. Relevant Experiences/Good Practices

- The Wales Rural Network promotes examples of good practice from within Wales, across the UK and from Europe via case studies presented at events, via its online Document Library, Project Database and through a dedicated section within the Welsh Government's 'Gwlad' bi-monthly magazine.
 - Links: Document Library: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/ruraldevelopment/walesruralnetwork/wrdoclibrary/?lang=en>;
 - Project Database: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/ruraldevelopment/projectsdatabase/?lang=en>;
 - Gwlad Online Magazine: <http://gwladonline.org/?lang=en>.

4. Monitoring and evaluation of networking

- A formal evaluation of the Communications of the RDP 2007-13 and of the Wales Rural Network was commissioned within 2012. The work has been undertaken by Consultation Company - Cazbah and Miller. The final draft of the report is currently under review with publication expected in the near future.
- The network provides a verbal report at the quarterly meetings of the WRN Steering Group and also to the North and South Wales RDP Officers' Groups, all of which is open to scrutiny and debate from members.
- The only other form of self-evaluation of WRN activities is made via the Evaluation Sheets returned following each thematic event.

5. Communication

- For the latest RDP Plan see Section 13 highlighting the Communication element of the Rural Development Program.
- The Communication tools considered most frequently are as follows:
 - Thematic and Ministerial Events, Workshops and Study Visits,
 - Wales Rural Network Website,
 - WRN articles in the Welsh Government's 'Gwlad' magazine,
 - Case Study Booklet,
 - Press Notices,
 - Annual Europe Day events,
 - Plaque Distribution to highlight awareness.

6. Cooperation interests of the Rural Network

- The Wales Rural Network is always keen to receive any requests which provide opportunities for Welsh LAGs and Partnerships to work in co-operation with bodies from elsewhere in the United Kingdom or Europe. Where requests are received from outside Wales, details are immediately forwarded to all rural areas for individual consideration.