

Highland LEADER Programme 2014-2020

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Programme Manager

LEADER Overview

- **L**iaison **E**ntre **A**ctions de **D**éveloppement de l'**E**conomie **R**urale or “links between actions for the development of the rural economy”
- An EU Fund to promote economic and community development specifically within rural areas
- Looks for new projects delivering new outcomes (‘additionality’). Won’t fund continuation projects or ‘wear and tear’
- Community led fund: decision making on local development priorities taken by local action groups (and LAPs in Highland)
- Eligibility for funding LEADER projects is determined by:
 - Scottish Government Guidelines which detail specific activities that are eligible for funding
 - Local priorities set by LAGs and LAPs

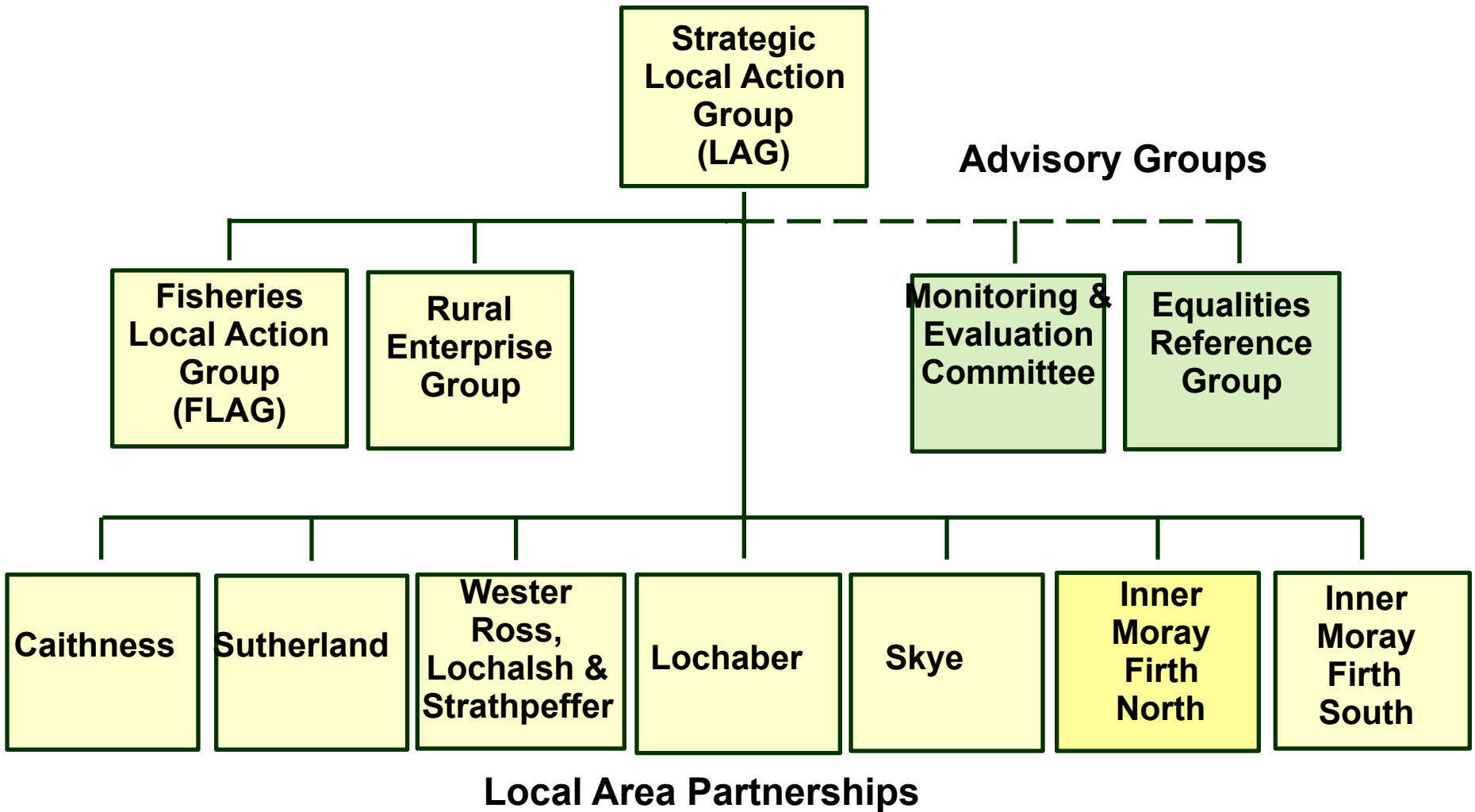
2007-2013 LEADER Programme

- 371 projects funded across the Highlands
- £15.39m – value of grants awarded (£8.64m LEADER/£6.75m Convergence)
- £30,625,084 total project expenditure
- 11 Local Area Partnerships
- 295 (79%) of projects were approved by LAPs

Highland LEADER Structure

- Strategic Local Action Group for Highland (Strategic LAG)
 - strategic overview of programme, assessment of “Highland wide” projects and reporting to Scottish Government
- Seven Local Area Partnerships for Highland (mix of public and private/community/voluntary sector representatives)
 - devolved LEADER budgets
 - responsible for local grant awards
 - promotion and development of programme
 - network with other areas in Scotland UK & Europe
- Administered by Highland Council as the Accountable Body
- Supported by LEADER Team (Programme Manager, Local Development Officers, and Administration Team)

Highland LEADER Structure

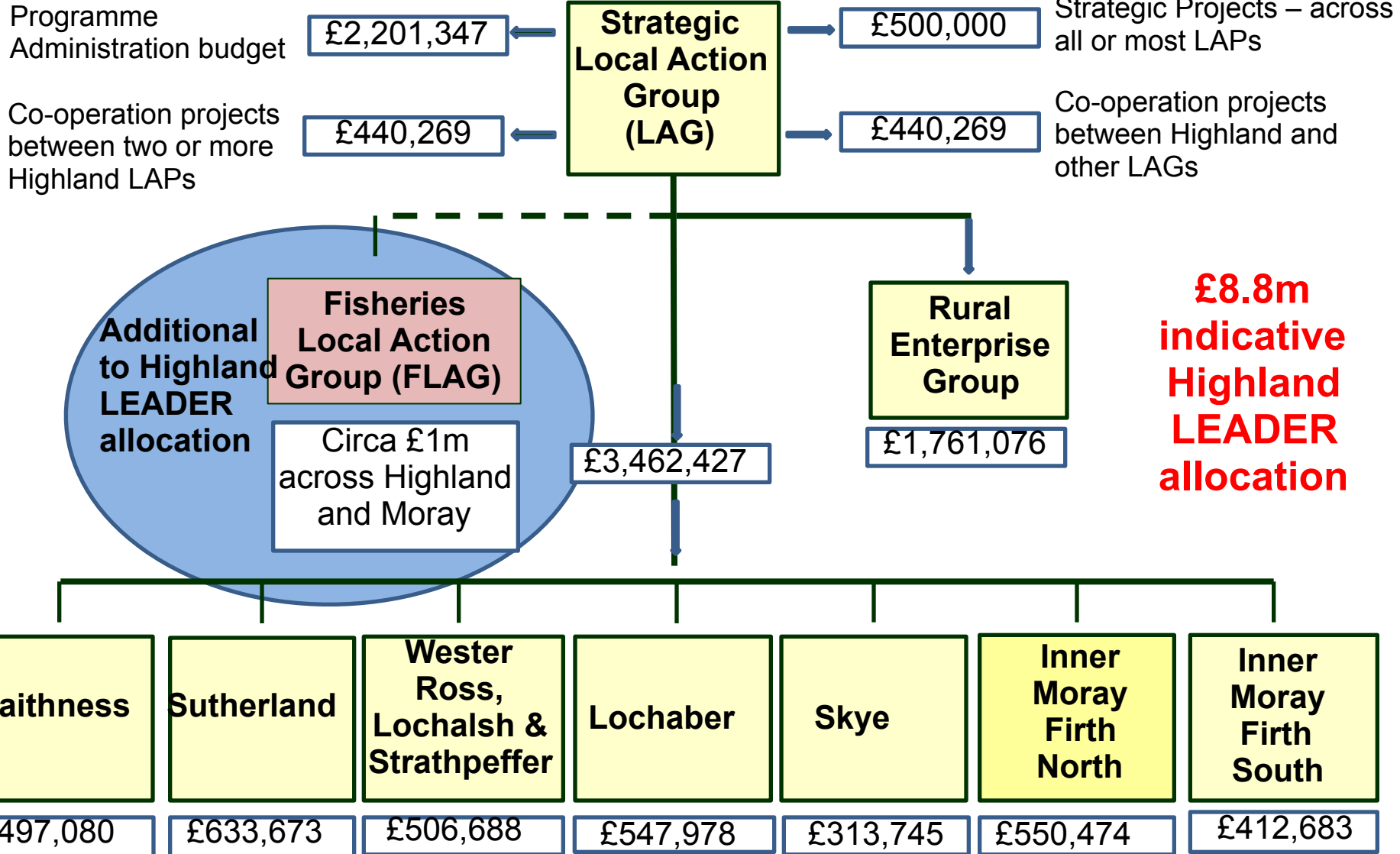


Highland LEADER: Programme Development

- Community consultation and evaluation of 2013 – 2007 Highland LEADER Programme to inform development of new Programme
- Strategic LAG in place
- Highland Local Development Strategy approved in principle by Scottish Government:
 - based on delivery of four key themes, five cross cutting themes and 10 outcomes
- Highland Financial Strategy approved (based on indicative allocation)
- Highland LEADER team in place
- Process for setting up LAPs agreed and currently being implemented

- Five areas now have a LAP and approved Local Area Action Plan
- Early Enquiries being recorded
- Scottish Government website open for Expressions of Interest, but Highland unable to follow up at this stage
- Awaiting Scottish Government Guidance and IT system
- Aiming for soft launch of Highland LEADER Programme April 2016

Indicative Funding Allocation



The 2014-20 LEADER Programme

- Significantly reduced funding for Highland due to removal of convergence funding and minimum £2million allocations to all Scottish LAGs – indicative allocation £8.8m
- Separate budgets with Highland allocation for Rural Enterprise, Farm Diversification and Co-operation Projects
- Need for more strategic focus and clearer evidence of outputs, with tighter eligibility criteria to be set by local areas and reflected in Local Area Action Plans (LAAPs)
- Important to consider what can be met by other funds – clarity for potential applicants at an early stage
- New application and claims process supported by a new online system
- Two stage application process following Expression of Interest
 - to avoid form filling for applicants where projects are not eligible,
 - to focus resources on supporting and advising those applicants with projects which are most likely to meet local priorities
- More structured approach to project delivery – milestones to be set and delivery evidenced before claims processed

Strategic Vision and Aim

The overall vision and aim of the Highland LDS is twofold:

- Stronger communities leading to improved quality of life for those who live in them
- Growth and diversification of the local economy

Underpinning this vision are 4 themes

Themes

- Stronger and more resilient communities
- A growing and diversified economy that promotes sustainability
- Increased and sustained local services and activities
- Enhanced cultural, natural and heritage assets

▶ Fairer Highland – advancing equality (addresses equality issues or benefits people in groups that are under-represented or disadvantaged)

▶ Innovation (a new or different approach is proposed within the area)

▶ Sustainability/Legacy (the project outcomes will continue beyond the life of the project)

▶ Carbon Clever (the project can demonstrate a positive impact on the environment)

▶ Skills Development (the project aims to expand the skills of those involved in implementing the project and/or on its participants)

Outcomes

- Impact of funded projects can be better demonstrated leading to increased capacity to secure future funds
- Increased community ownership/control of assets and services/activities
- People feel better supported to undertake volunteering opportunities
- Increased partnership working between groups (within and across areas, including intergenerational partnerships)
- Increased employment opportunities locally through new business start-ups and existing business diversification/ development
- Increased income from local produce through adding value
- Improvements in the visitor experience
- People have better access to local services and activities
- Improved access for residents and visitors (physical and knowledge based) to cultural, natural and heritage assets.
- Improved management/conservation/sustainability of cultural, natural and heritage assets

QUERIES/CONTACT

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