



EUROPEAN UNION
Investing in Your Future
European Regional
Development Fund 2007-13



NORTH EAST ENGLAND ERDF COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME 2007-13

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

January 2012 – December 2012

Communications planning Jan 2012 to Dec 2012

1.) Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with the Programme's Communications Strategy submitted to the European Commission in 2008.

Its purpose is to identify key vehicles and milestones to map out communication activity over the period January 2012 to December 2012. This is to ensure that the ERDF 2007-13 Competitiveness Programme is meeting its publicity and information requirements.

2.) Objectives

External audiences

- To improve and extend the existing service in the provision of ERDF related information, updates and programme news to the existing ERDF practitioner network.
- To encourage additional project applications by engaging with a wider range of external audiences/contacts/ organisations which may be eligible for ERDF.
- To continue extending the practical network of ERDF practitioners with access to training and development information through workshops, bulletins, news alerts and website.
- To assist the ERDF team with communications about the provision of more comprehensive, bespoke support mechanisms for those actively involved in the development, delivery and management of ERDF funded projects.
- Provide information on opportunities for networking and accessing information including workshops, visits and presentations.
- Continue to disseminate information on ERDF project approvals and programme news in line with publicity requirements.

Internal audiences

Since transferring to DCLG a national ERDF Communications Network has been established consisting of a representative from each ERDF Programme Delivery Team (PDT) and is led by the Department's Communications, Local Economies Regeneration and European Programmes Directorate.

The Network is an advisory body to ensure the Department discharges its Managing Authority responsibilities in relation to information and publicity ensuring compliance with EC Regulations.

The National Communications Network will meet quarterly with weekly teleconferences to ensure effective delivery of communication activities.

Continuing to keep staff in the PDT team fully informed with requisite, accurate and up to date information coming out of DCLG.

3.) Target audiences

External audiences

The external target audiences for ERDF communications fall into three categories:

- existing ERDF database of 477;
- ERDF practitioner contacts totalling 275; and
- new targets for potential project development.

Target groups identified in the ERDF communications strategy include:

- Local authorities;
- Universities;
- Trade & industry organisations;
- Non-governmental organisations/agencies;
- Businesses; and
- Voluntary & community organisations.

There is scope to explore further opportunities for the development of ERDF projects by engagement with the following in more detail:

- **Local authorities**

Middlesbrough & Stockton Councils
Newcastle and Sunderland City Councils
North and South Tyneside Councils
Northumberland & Durham County Councils

- **Universities for the North East**

Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Teesside and Sunderland.

- **Centres of excellence**

CPI
CELS
Codeworks
NEPIC

- **Innovation connectors**

Wilton Innovation Centre
National Renewable Energy Centre (Narec)
NETPark
DigitalCity
Sunderland Software City
Design Centre for the North
Newcastle Science City

- **Enterprise agencies or membership organisations**

CBI
Business & Enterprise North East
Local Enterprise Growth Initiatives
Federation of Small Businesses
North East Chamber of Commerce
Northumberland Strategic Partnership
Tees Valley Unlimited
County Durham Development Company
Northumberland Enterprises Ltd
Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership
North Eastern Local Enterprise Partnership
Homes and Community Agency
Voluntary & Community Sector
EFSVON
Environment Agency
Equality & Diversity Commission

Internal audiences

- Intranet
- LEREP newsletter

4.) External methods of communication

Developing the database

Since 2007, the regional ERDF database has been a key communication tool and was successfully developed to comprise two lists to target specified and relevant information to Stakeholders and/or Practitioners.

There are currently 477 Stakeholders, of which 275 also belong to the Practitioners Network (December 2011). These are reduced figures as a direct consequence of the data cleanse that was carried out during transfer from One North East which required the permission of members to transfer data. During this process, some people opted out of the network as they no longer work on ERDF related projects and staffing changes within organisations also led to people opting out.

New contacts continue to be added through requests from the ERDF e-mail inbox and through new projects coming on stream.

Practitioner Network services

The development of the database is now growing, allowing us to improve the service to ERDF Practitioners. There is no interactive section available on the DCLG website but is something that is being explored.

E-bulletins will be sent out on a monthly basis following each PEG meeting detailing relevant information to help keep Practitioners fully informed and receive information regarding ERDF advisory and guidance sessions.

E-alerts will be sent out on an ad-hoc basis as and when there are workshops announced, new documentation or technical guidance information.

ERDF news bulletins and event/training alerts

The usual ERDF external news bulletins will continue but will now be sent on a quarterly basis following LMC meetings (scheduled for Feb/June/October) featuring key issues and decisions affecting the Programme, the work of the LMC as well as highlights of project approvals and publicising calls for projects and whenever there is valuable ERDF programme news to communicate. These bulletins will continue to be distributed to the full ERDF database.

Website

All relevant information has now been transferred to the DCLG website and will be reviewed quarterly. Any changes to documentation or additions to content will be uploaded accordingly and communicated through the usual ERDF news bulletins, with appropriate signposts and weblinks.

Partner meetings & roadshow events

There is scope, if resource and management diaries allow, for the ERDF team to undertake further partner meetings and 'roadshow' type events and presentations on eligibility to elicit additional project applications.

The first planned 'roadshow' will take place in January 2012 in order to communicate the Programme Modification. There will be two events, one in the Tees Valley and the other in Citygate offices in Newcastle in order to attract practitioners from across the region.

Press & media

We will continue to provide regional and European media contacts with ERDF programme news and project approvals information.

There is also scope to use press and media to widen the net of potential ERDF applicants, provided that wording clearly states the requirement to test eligibility through the guidance on the website.

Annual event/publication

As per the European Commission requirements for ERDF, we will organise and host an ERDF event to help promote the fund, as well as an annual publication to publicise programme news and successes.

In the absence of marketing funding, Touchstone is no longer a viable option to promote the role of European funding in economic development throughout the region.

Case studies

Developing a case study presence on the internet will be further explored with options including feeding into the website www.the-eu-and-me.org.uk or if not possible expanding the current DCLG website.

Case studies will be examples of the positive effects/results of ERDF investment in the North East for people/area/businesses.

5.) Internal methods of communication

ERDF staff bulletins

Members of the PDT team will be kept up to date with all e-bulletins issued. Relevant local information should also be fed into the LEREP newsletter wherever possible to raise awareness of the North East PDT team.

Intranet

Adding information regarding ERDF to DCLG's intranet is a collective aim of the ERDF Communications Network.

6.) Costs and resources

The completion of most of the above proposed tasks will primarily involve staff time and resources as opposed to actual budget spend. There will however be direct, specified indicative costs for certain activities, including:

Creation/printing of programme brochure to reflect transferral to DCLG
Roadshow events
Annual event/activity
Annual promotional publication **£5,000-£10,000**

7.) Action plan & timeline

There follows a schedule of communication activities and team actions to engage with key stakeholders:

Month:	Task:	Resourced by:
January 2012	Programme Modification Roadshow and bulletins/reminder alerts	Alison Laggan/Jeff McCloud/Raffaela Ebani/Iain Derrick/ Chris Taylor
	Practitioner network event alerts/database updates	Alison Laggan
	Practitioner network events: Claims +: January 10 and 19 Audit and verification: January 16	Karolyn Gregg/Alison Laggan

	Low Carbon Energy Demonstration Press Notice	Alison Laggan
	Graduate SME Internships Press Notice	Alison Laggan
	Live Theatre Press Notice	Alison Laggan
	NeST2 Press Notice	Alison Laggan
	Quarterly website & intranet content check	Alison Laggan
February 2012	ERDF Stakeholder e-bulletin	Lesley Calder/ Alison Laggan/Jeff McCloud
	Practitioner network event alerts/database updates	Alison Laggan
	Website & intranet updates	Alison Laggan
	News releases x 3	Alison Laggan
March 2012	ERDF Practitioners e-bulletin	Lesley Calder/ Alison Laggan/Jeff McCloud
	Practitioner network event alerts/database updates	Alison Laggan
	Website & intranet updates	Alison Laggan
	News releases x 2	Alison Laggan
April 2012	ERDF Practitioners e-bulletin	Lesley Calder/ Alison Laggan/Jeff McCloud
	Practitioner network event alerts/database updates	Alison Laggan

	Quarterly website & intranet content check	Alison Laggan
	News releases x 2	Alison Laggan
May 2012	Practitioners e-bulletin	Alison Laggan/Jeff McCloud
	Practitioners network event alerts/database updates	Alison Laggan
	News releases x 2	Alison Laggan
	Website & intranet updates	Alison Laggan
June 2012	ERDF stakeholders e-bulletin	Lesley Calder/Jeff McCloud/Alison Laggan
	Practitioner network event alerts/database updates	Alison Laggan
	News releases x 2	Alison Laggan
	Case study development	Alison Laggan
July 2012	<u>ERDF WEEK/MONTH</u>	Lesley Calder/ Jeff McCloud/ Alison Laggan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • associated bulletins/ workshops 	
	Database updates	Alison Laggan
	News releases x 2	Alison Laggan
	Quarterly website & intranet content check	Alison Laggan
	Case study development	Alison Laggan
August 2012	ERDF practitioners e-bulletin	Lesley Calder/Jeff McCloud/ Alison Laggan
	Practitioner network event alerts/database updates	Alison Laggan
	News releases x 2	Alison Laggan
September 2012	ERDF practitioners e-bulletin	Lesley Calder/Jeff McCloud/ Alison Laggan

	Practitioner network event alerts/database updates	Alison Laggan
	News releases x 2	Alison Laggan
	Case study development	Alison Laggan
October 2012	ERDF Stakeholders e-bulletin	Lesley Calder/Jeff McCloud/ Alison Laggan
	Practitioner network event alerts/database updates	Alison Laggan
	News releases x 2	Alison Laggan
	Case study development	Alison Laggan
	Quarterly website & intranet content check	Alison Laggan
November 2012	ERDF Practitioners e-bulletin	Alison Laggan/Jeff McCloud
	Practitioner network event alerts/database updates	Alison Laggan
	News releases x 3	Alison Laggan
	Case study development	Alison Laggan
December 2012	ERDF Practitioners e-bulletin	Alison Laggan/Jeff McCloud
	Practitioner network event alerts/database updates	Alison Laggan
	News releases x 4	Alison Laggan
	Case study development	Alison Laggan

Alison Laggan
ERDF communications advisor