

Helping rural communities  
to access funding

RuralDirect 

**Update Number 7**  
**April 2010**

**0845 838 8598**

[www.ruraldirect.org.uk](http://www.ruraldirect.org.uk)

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**Rural Priorities**

**Dates of 2010 RPACs announced**

The Scottish Government has announced the timetable for the remaining Rural Priorities Assessment Committee (RPAC) rounds in 2010.

**Summer 2010**

Submission deadline - 1st June (4pm)

Commit deadline - 5th July (4pm)

The RPACs will meet between 16th and 27th August

Following the RPAC meetings recommendations for approval will be forwarded to the Cabinet Secretary for endorsement

**Autumn 2010**

Submission deadline - 2nd August (4pm)

Commit deadline - 6th September (4pm)

RPAC meetings - between 18th and 29th October

Further information on the application process can be viewed here:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/farmingrural/SRDP/RuralPriorities/HowItWorks/Q/editmode/on/forceupdate/on>

**Collaborative Local Development Strategies**

**CLDS option removed from Rural Priorities**

The Scottish Government has announced that, with immediate effect, this option is no longer available under Rural Priorities and that separate guidance will be available shortly about support from the LEADER delivery mechanism. Further information will be made available from Rural Direct and through the Rural Network website [news pages](#).

**The Scottish National Rural Network (SNRN)**

**Regional Events Programme continues apace**

The initial programme of regional events of the [Scottish National Rural Network](#) continues through to the end of May. Having kicked off in Aberdeenshire last November we have travelled from Kelso to Berneray and Fochabers to Lockerbie. Each of the events have proved

extremely popular with all who have attended, and each has had a distinctive character and buzz of its own. Reports, presentations and photographs from the events can be viewed here: <http://www.ruralgateway.org.uk/en/taxonomy/term/1781>  
Details of future dates and venues (including the rescheduled Tayside event) can be viewed here: <http://www.ruralgateway.org.uk/en/rural-development/regional-events>

## Have you received Rural Priorities funding?

- **Are you involved with a community group or voluntary organisation that has been successful in securing Rural Priorities funding?**
- **Would you like to help us help other communities access funding?**
- **Then we'd like to hear from you.**

The Rural Direct team are compiling a series of case studies from organisations that have applied for Rural Priorities funding and we'd love to hear about your projects and what you think about the whole application process.

In particular, we'd like to hear from those of you who might like to join us at one of the SNRN events (locally or in another region) to talk about your project and maybe even help "demystify" the SRDP application procedures.

If you would like to tell us more about your project please give us a call on 0845 838 8598 or email us at [info@ruraldirect.org.uk](mailto:info@ruraldirect.org.uk)

## State Aid

Increasingly applicants for Rural Priorities funding are being alerted to issues around State Aid. "State Aid" is a European Commission term which refers to financial assistance from any public bodies, or publicly-funded bodies, with the potential to "distort competition and affect trade". Any community organisation with an element of commercial activity within their funding application **may** be subject to State Aid considerations. Further information can be reviewed at the [State Aid, Scotland website](#).

There are [five key questions](#) relating to the relevance of State Aid regulations for community organisations. In discussing your application with your case officer you may wish to be aware of these.

We are continuing to assess the implications of the State Aid regulations and will publish further guidance in due course. In the mean time, if you are encountering difficulties on this subject please do not hesitate to [contact any member of the team](#).

## Rural Priorities

### Budgeting, Claims and Payments

Unlike many other grants, Rural Priorities payments are made retrospectively, on the basis of claims for paid invoices. No advance payments are made and final payments are only made following submission of final invoices (including retentions). This can lead to severe financing

problems and can cause significant charges to accrue. We are currently preparing briefing notes on these matters and making representations to reduce the resultant burdens on community organisations. If you have aware of any specific issues around this subject please contact [any of the team members](#).

## **Rural Priority 31 - The Community Test**

A number of community group applicants to Rural Priorities have been advised that their proposal is targeted at visitors and tourists rather than directly improving a service of facility for the benefit of members of the local community. This assessment can result in the application being moved from P31 (Community Services and Facilities) to one of the other Priorities. In turn, this will mean a reduction in the available level of grant and different assessment criteria. At the very least, a definitive test of "community benefit" needs to be established [[see "Additional Eligibility Criteria" here](#)]. We are currently seeking further advice on this matter from Scottish Government officials.

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## **Contact the Rural Direct team**

**We are here to help constituted community groups across rural Scotland**

Do not hesitate to [contact us](#) if you need any support relating to Rural Priorities funding, from your initial ideas through to the submission of claims. Remember, you can contact us at **any** point in the process.

[Barbara Love](#) co-ordinates the service and is responsible for the Highlands and Islands.

[Sheila Fraser](#) supports communities in Fife, Forth Valley, Lothian and Borders

[Ian Mathieson](#) works with communities in Argyll, Ayrshire, Clyde Valley, and Dumfries & Galloway

[Eleanor Morris](#) works with communities in Grampian, Moray and Tayside.

[Barbara Robertson](#) at Voluntary Action Orkney and [Wendy Hand](#) at Voluntary Action Shetland are the local contacts in the Northern Isles.

Other team members are Rural Development Officer [Sandra Hogg](#) and Rural Direct Administrator [Liz Syred](#). The service is managed by SCVO's Head of Rural Policy [Norman MacAskill](#).

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