National Impact Assessment of LEADER

The Story of LEADER in England

October 2010

Contents

1   Introduction

1.1   This report presents the 'story of LEADER' since its inception in 1991, when LEADER was introduced as a pilot in England and Europe to engender a "bottom-up" and innovative approach to rural development. As such, the report reviews the way in which LEADER has been managed and delivered and, importantly, the types of activity that LEADER has supported. The review is part of the wider impact assessment of LEADER, and other reports are being produced as part of this study. The other parts of the work include:

- The impact of LEADER, a report drawing on primary research with end beneficiaries of LEADER funding, focusing principally on current LEADER and the most recently completed phase 2000-2006, given the availability of data;
- A review of best practice in the Devolved Administrations, reviewing the management, delivery and impact or LEADER over the same period since 1991; and
- A review of EU best practice in LEADER, reviewing the effectiveness of different approaches to LEADER developed in EU Member States.

1.2   This 'story' has not been evolutionary and each successive phase of LEADER has had its own objectives and context, albeit with strong common themes running throughout. These changes in context between phases have perhaps been more pronounced in England than in Europe where there has been a far more seamless transition from one phase to the next. LEADER in Europe has developed in line with other funds; even so, its transition from an EU Community Initiative to an approach as part of the larger scale remodelling of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been a big and significant step.

1.3   The review therefore considers the types of project activity that LEADER has supported and how this has related to the objectives and approach of each phase. The report also describes the process of establishing a classification of LEADER interventions, which has been the basis of assessing the impact of LEADER over time and which is covered in the main impact report produced separately.

Background to LEADER

1.4   Rural development approaches prior to the early 1990s were typically sectoral, focusing primarily on farmers and aiming to encourage structural change within agriculture. They used 'top down' approaches, with support schemes decided at national or regional level. An area-based and bottom-up approach, involving local communities and adding value to local resources, gradually came to be seen as a new way of creating jobs and businesses in rural areas. LEADER was therefore conceived as an as an innovative approach to the EU's rural development policy and has involved the following phases:

- **LEADER I (1991-93):** As a pilot phase, this was introduced as one of 13 Community Initiatives financed under the EU Structural Funds and operated in England in parts of the South West alone;

- **LEADER II (1994-99):** LEADER II was based on the Commission's decision of the 15th June 1994, communicated through the Notice to Member States on 1st July 1994 (94/C 18O/12);

- **LEADER+ (2000-2006):** The Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 reduced the number of Community Initiatives to four and the Commission notice of 14th April 2000 (OJ C 139, 18.5.2000) lay down guidelines for the Community Initiative for rural development (LEADER+).

- **LEADER 2007-2013:** The legal requirements concerning the LEADER approach under Axis 4 of the RDPE are set out in Article 61-65 of the Rural Development Regulation (RDR) and articles 37-39 of the Implementing Regulation. These cover the 'model' itself, the size of areas, selection, and finance and administration. Accompanying guidance for Member States was also produced[1].

1.5   During the first three phases of LEADER, Member States and regions had stand-alone LEADER programmes with separate financing set aside at the EU level.   In England these were administered by national government and Government Offices in the regions.

1.6   From 2007 onwards, the so called 'LEADER approach' has been integrated within the operation of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), as a delivery method for CAP Pillar 2 measures, and is therefore no longer a distinct programme. European Community Council Regulation No. 1698/2005[2] stated the LEADER approach should be implemented more widely in mainstream rural development programming. This followed CAP reforms in 2003 and 2004 which introduced the EAFRD as a financial instrument and a single programme. In England there is no separate national allocation for LEADER; LEADER groups are allocated funds to deliver Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) measures from the main programme on the basis of approved Local Development Strategies. This funding is currently administered at the regional level by Regional Development Agencies (RDAs).

1.7   The definition of the LEADER approach set out in the Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 states the LEADER approach shall comprise at least the following elements:

- area-based local development strategies intended for well-identified sub-regional rural territories;
- local public-private partnerships (hereinafter local action groups);
- bottom-up approach with a decision-making power for local action groups concerning the elaboration and implementation of local development strategies;
- multi-sectoral design and implementation of the strategy based on the interaction between actors and projects of different sectors of the local economy;
- implementation of innovative approaches;
- implementation of cooperation projects;
- networking of local partnerships.

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[1] Guide for the application of the LEADER axis of the Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013, EC 2007
[2] COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (50)   *"The LEADER initiative, after having experienced three programming periods, has reached a level of maturity enabling rural areas to implement the LEADER approach more widely in mainstream rural development programming. Provision should therefore be made to transfer the basic principles of the LEADER approach to the programmes building a specific axis in them, and provide a definition of the local action groups and measures to be supported, including partnership capacity, implementation of local strategies, cooperation, networking and acquisition of skills".*

1.8   LEADER has therefore remained and slightly strengthened as a feature of the CAP[3]. LEADER takes into account the diversity of rural areas and landscapes, rich local identities and the increasing value society puts on a high-quality natural environment.

1.9   These variations in scale and delivery are part of the story of LEADER over time and are discussed in detail in the following chapters of this report. The operation of LEADER at a European level is explored in depth within the EU best practice paper[4]. Table 1.1 summarises the key characteristics of each LEADER phase since 1991.

Table 1.1: Key Characteristics of the Phases of LEADER	
LEADER I (1991 – 1993)	▪ A pilot programme ▪ Marked the start of a new approach to rural development policy which was area based, integrated and participative ▪ Funding: £1m.
LEADER II (1994 – 1999)	▪ Supported the principles of LEADER I ▪ Designed to disseminate the successful approaches developed under the pilot programme more widely and vigorously. ▪ Built on LEADER I methodology through: a European Network to facilitate exchange of knowledge and experience; the development of joint working and the process of levelling up; and a local action programme built around three complementary and in some cases sequential Measures. ▪ Funding: £20m.
LEADER+ (2000 – 2006)	▪ Developed as a separate programme in parallel to the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP); ▪ Built upon the two preceding programmes and continued to focus on innovative, local area based development plans implemented by local people working in partnership. ▪ Funding: £112m.
LEADER (2007 – 2013)	▪ LEADER approach has now been 'mainstreamed' as a delivery mechanism for the RDPE and is no longer a separate programme. ▪ Introduces RDAs to the management and implementation of the LEADER Approach bringing an enhanced economic focus. ▪ To be account for a minimum of 5% of EAFRD spend.

Report Structure

1.10   The report is structured around the following chapters:

- Chapter 2: LEADER I (1991 – 1993) and LEADER II (1994 – 1999);
- Chapter 3: LEADER+ (2000 – 2006);
- Chapter 4: LEADER (2007 – 2013);
- Chapter 5: LEADER Project Activity – Change Over Time;
- Chapter 6: LEADER Project Activity – Responding to Local Need; and
- Chapter 7: Conclusions.

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[3] The LEADER Approach: A basic guide. EC 2006.
[4] European best practice paper, ekosgen 2010

2   LEADER I (1991-1993) and LEADER II (1994-1999)

2.1   This chapter provides an overview of LEADER in England 1991-99. It reviews the objectives of LEADER I and II and considers the scale and geographical area covered by each programme and the management operations in place to administer the programme. Where the information is available an overview of the programme expenditure and predominant types of project activity supported is provided. This applies mainly to LEADER II which was larger in scale and subject to a full ex-post evaluation.

LEADER I - Defining the 'LEADER Approach'

2.2   Following its launch in 1991 the LEADER programme sought to provide rural communities in the EU Member States[5] with a method for engaging local partners in shaping the future development of their area. The analysis of the 1980's suggested limitations in the sectoral and top down policies which resulted in an approach which almost exclusively targeted rural agricultural production through modernisation and intensification. Moving away from this narrow approach is also one that has been advocated by the OECD[6].

2.3   **LEADER I in England was very much a pilot programme** which followed the same policy emphasis as the rest of the EU. The total funding allocated to the programme was €1.5m (£1m). The Programme covered the North Tamar, Devon and West Cornwall areas, the two groups were selected for funding. The Programme was run on a global grant basis which meant that the funds were administered by the Rural Development Commission who acted as Programme manager for the two groups.

2.4   The selection of group representatives was based upon directly linking those responsible for interventions and the potential beneficiaries through a new partnership mechanism (the **Local Action Group, the 'LAG'**) and by putting programme administrators in direct contact with the "field". The intention was to shorten decision-making cycles and to provide customised support and guidance for projects and project promoters through locally based practitioners who could co-ordinate the work locally. The EC intervened directly in the selection of the LAGs through an initial call for tenders and by requesting certain LAG characteristics (e.g. having management capacity). The ex-post evaluation of LEADER I heralded the LAGs as the programme's "most relevant distinctive feature"[7].

2.5   The second component lay in establishing links between development stakeholders, activities, sectors and areas seeking to move away from the previous more vertical or top down delineated support (sectoral, geographical, service-based, beneficiary-based). Through proactive partnership working between public administrations, local authorities, the private sector and the civic and voluntary sector, links between sectors of activity, players and rural areas were encouraged[8]. There was an explicit attempt under LEADER to ensure policies and projects were very locally tailored and developed with beneficiaries and stakeholders involved.

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[5]The EU of 15 Member states in 1991 prior to enlargement to 25 Member States in May 2004.
[6] See for example the New Rural Paradigm: Policies and Governance http://www.oecd.org/ document/7/0,3343,en_2649_33735_37015431_1_1_1_1,00.html
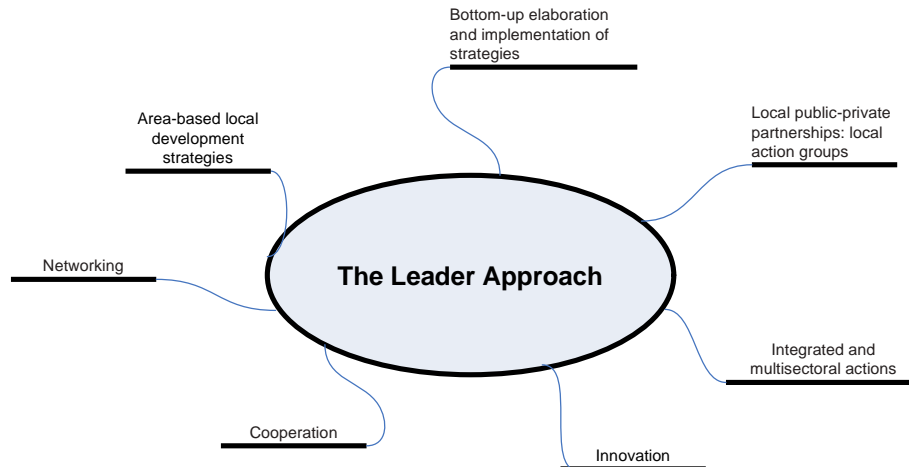[7] Ex-post evaluation of LEADER I Summary
[8] ODPM National Assembly for Wales Ex-Post Evaluation of the LEADER II community initiative 1994-99 in England and Wales.

2.6   The difference between LEADER and more traditional rural policies was that it indicated 'how' to proceed rather than 'what' needed to be done. In delivering the approach five essential principles were identified, specifically:

- a Local Action Group or partnership;
- a local action plan;
- the active seeking of links;
- match funding of the LEADER funds; and
- networking between areas.

2.7   **LEADER I in England marked the start of a new approach to rural development policy which was area based, integrated and participative.** It was seen as an innovative tool for rural development given its ability to respond to old and new rural problems acting as a 'laboratory' for building local capabilities and testing out new ways of meeting the social, economic and environmental needs of rural communities via a 'bottom up' approach. The focus of LEADER I was as much about encouraging community engagement in the development process and undertaking/developing interventions within an overall policy stimulating rural development[9].   This innovative approach stipulated that the involvement of the community and other local participants was mandatory and the key to the development of local strategies and delivery. This distinctive methodology has come to be known as the 'LEADER Approach' and, despite some major institutional and policy variations since the start of LEADER I, these elements have been maintained across its successive phases. Seven key features define LEADER which underpin the rationale for rural development through the approach.

Fig 2.1: The seven key features of the LEADER Approach.

2.8   The Europe-wide ex-post evaluation of LEADER I[10] reflected on the diversity of areas and business plans and that the economic activities of LEADER were primarily oriented towards agriculture, with tourism the other major economic activity. It cited that in other areas, economic diversification had already been achieved. The also evaluation reflected positively on the ability of LEADER to "respond effectively to the assumed diversity of needs in rural areas". The

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[9] ODPM National Assembly for Wales Ex-Post Evaluation of the LEADER II community initiative 1994-99 in England and Wales.
[10] Ex-post evaluation of LEADER I Summary

evaluation findings did not specifically elaborate on the economic and wider impacts of LEADER, an evidence gap that the accompanying Defra-supported impact assessment is seeking to address.

LEADER II

2.9 **LEADER II firmly supported the principles of LEADER I and was designed to disseminate the successful approaches developed under the pilot programme more widely and vigorously** and integrate the approach more fully. Under LEADER II there was to be further evolution and development of the methodology building on and strengthening the area based approach, partnership and networking, stimulating greater innovation and co-operation as stronger features and disseminating or transferring this experience. This took the pilot programme principles further and embedded them in a more substantial programme of activity.

2.10 LEADER II had three distinct elements in addition to the methodology established during LEADER I. These enhanced the approach and included: a European Network to facilitate exchange of knowledge and experience; the development of joint working and the process of levelling up; and a local action programme built around three complementary and in some cases sequential Measures (detailed in Appendix 3):

- Measure A: The acquisition of skills;
- Measure B: Rural innovation programmes; and
- Measure C: Transnational Cooperation.

Scale and Geography

2.11 LEADER II was run on a considerably larger scale and a total of €32m (which equated to approx. £19.3m) was allocated to England for the period 1994 to 1999. This represented a 20 fold increase on the previous round, although over six year period rather than three. The LEADER II English Programme was divided into six sub-regional programmes, covering parts of the then Objective 5b areas, identified in Table 2.1 below. Objective 5b areas (alongside Objective 1 and 2 Programme) were regional policy Structural Fund programmes with weak socio-economic performance and characterised as having a high share of agricultural employment, low levels of agricultural income and low population density. They were larger areas than LEADER I and covered 2.8m people, or 5% of the UK population, with each individual Local Action Group a well defined rural area with a population of up to 100,000.

2.12 LEADER II was designed to be complementary to the Objective 5b programme but as the ex-post evaluation of Objective 5b[11] states *"although close strategic linkages were established with LEADER II… it was difficult to manage complementarity between Programmes, and linkages to domestic programmes were seen as not fully developed during this Programming period. Also, few internal linkages between Funds and between sub-regions of large Programme areas were reported"*. The focus on Objective 1 and 5b areas meant LEADER II was focused on more deprived rural areas, although the approach *"was not deficit-based: rather it was based on local capacity building"*[12].

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[11] Ex-post evaluation of English, Welsh and Scottish Objective 5b Programmes, 1994-1999 for ODPM, Ekos, 2005

[12] Rural Development and the LEADER Approach in the UK and Ireland, Carnegie UK Trust Research Paper, August 2010
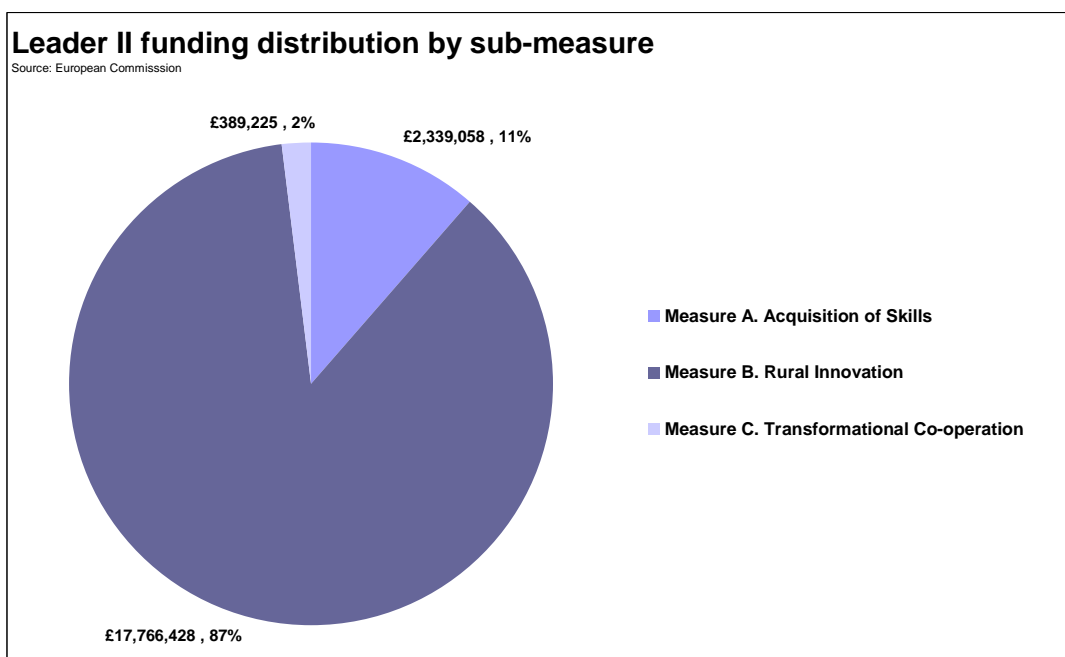
2.13   A total of twenty one LEADER II Local Action Groups were established. The majority of funding was allocated to the South West (14.2meuro) followed by the northern uplands (7.2meuro).

2.14   As with the subsequent LEADER+ arrangements, LEADER II LAGs were required (by the EU) to be a partnership of local community, business, government and other stakeholders, representative of the area, and with local organisations based there or working there. The LAG areas typically covered an area at least the size of upper tier local authorities (e.g. Cumbria Fells), although many were larger than this, and in the majority of cases the LAGs covered more than one LA area (e.g. Yorkshire Dales) or more than one regional boundary. As the Carnegie UK Trust Research paper on LEADER indicates *"not everywhere in the Objective 5b area that was eligible got its act together and submitted a bid for support",* citing a lack of LEADERship in some cases.

Table 2.1: LEADER II No. LAG's and Allocation of Funding in England		
Area	No. Groups	Total EU Funds (€m)
Northern Uplands	4	7.2
Midlands Uplands	1	0.7
Lincolnshire	2	3.4
East Anglia	3	3.9
South West	7	14.2
The Marches	4	2.6
Total	21	31.8
England LEADER + Programme, Defra 2001		

Expenditure by Project Activity

2.15   The allocation of resources across the three Sub Measures is shown in fig 2.1 with the majority of allocated resource attributable to Measure B (87%) Rural Innovation. This covered a wide range of activities including business support, training and tourism.

Leader II funding distribution by sub-measure
Source: European Commisssion

£389,225 , 2%   £2,339,058 , 11%

■ Measure A. Acquisition of Skills
■ Measure B. Rural Innovation
■ Measure C. Transformational Co-operation

£17,766,428 , 87%

eko gen

2.16   Figure 2.2 provides a more detailed breakdown and details the distribution of spend against each of the Measures and Sub-measures. **The highest amount of spend was for Rural Tourism under LEADER II** which fell under Rural Innovation and, at £4.3m, spending on rural tourism comprised 22.5% of overall spend. This was followed by relatively high levels of spend on small firms (16.5%) and technical support (15.3%), as well as training and recruitment (14.3%) and the environment (12.1%). Lower levels of spend were focused on exploitation and marketing activities (6.9%) and on transformational projects (0.8%), which were designed to encourage networking and knowledge transfer across EU member states.

Fig 2.2: Leader II Actual spend by sub-measure

Source: European Commission

Sub-measure	Spend
A Acquisition of Skills	£2,127,975
B1 Technical Support	£2,940,816
B2 Training & Recruitment	£2,753,411
B3 Rural Tourism	£4,310,257
B4 Small Firms	£3,169,051
B5 Exploitation & Marketing	£1,330,321
B6 Environmental	£2,317,526
C Transformational	£171,972
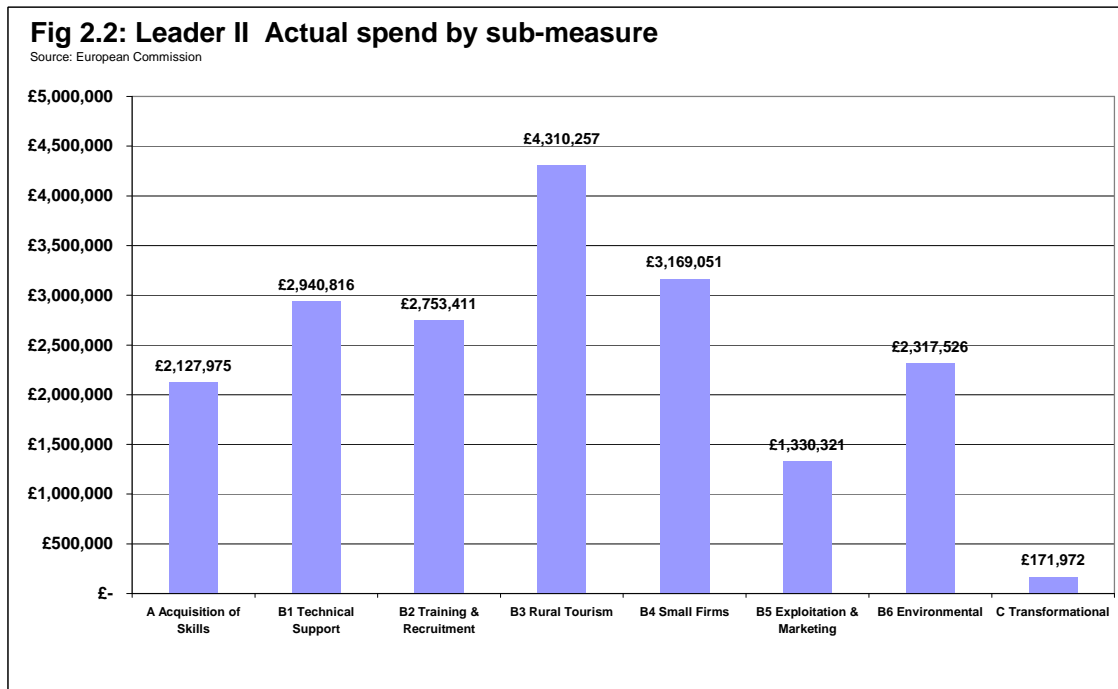
2.17   The higher level of support for tourism, small firms and training and recruitment projects was reflected in the top three priority themes for the LEADER II LAGs which are detailed in figure 2.3. The high level of spend in tourism is mirrored by the higher level of support for projects which were to *make the best use of natural and cultural resources, including enhancing the value of sites.*

Fig 2.3: LAG priority themes
Source: European Commisssion

Legend:
- Making the best use of natural and cultural resources , including enhancing the value of sites — 33%
- Improving the quality of life in rural areas — 24%
- Adding value to local products, in particular by facilitating access to markets for small production units via collective actions — 21%
- Use of new know-how and new technologies to make products and services in rural areas more competitive — 10%
- Other — 12%

Management and Administration

2.18   The arrangements for the selection of projects and Local Action Groups became much more decentralised under LEADER II with the EC no longer intervening directly in the selection of projects and beneficiaries i.e. the LAGs[13]. The management of the programme was carried out through Regional Committees which, the ex-post evaluation states *"initially appeared to reinforce local influence over implementation".* However, the same evaluation states that *"a rigid approach to administration and, in some cases, a lack of confidence within the Government Offices and MAFF regional offices constrained the flexibility over distribution of funds".* The ex-post found that given the relatively small scale of LEADER II compared to other funds (and the combination of three Structural Funds within it) that its administration became the management of spend, rather than innovative and pilot activity.

2.19   Specifically, LEADER II in England comprised seventy per cent funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with the remaining thirty per cent split equally between the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF). This made the Programme administratively complex as the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) were responsible for administering the ERDF, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) were responsible for the ESF and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) were responsible for the EAGGF. **The balance towards ERDF also gave LEADER II a more social and economic focus than an agricultural development one, given the lower funding share for MAFF.** In line with other Structural Fund programmes a 'planning and decision-making partnership' (the Programme Monitoring Committee, or PMC) was established who became responsible for the implementation of the Programme in line with Community policies and regulation, comprising funding partners and others, chaired by the Department or the Environment and then DETR. The Member State (subsequently ODPM) retained responsibility as administrative and financial lead body.

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[13] Ex-post Evaluation of the LEADER II Community Initiative in England and Wales - Fraser Associates, 2003.

2.20   The majority of LAGs in England were developed around Local Authorities, which was regarded a positive feature due to the linkages with third sector organisations. At the same time, the ex-post evaluation states that some LAGs lacked the level of innovation which its says were seen in *"those more community-based LAGs that embraced the bottom up approach, such as the innovative community-based LAG, Caradon and Shropshire"*.

Programme Impact

2.21   The ex-post evaluation of LEADER II in England and Wales observed that when translated into impact estimates, the gross effects from their project sample generally revealed a relatively low yield from the total public sector resources deployed (LEADER II and other public, table 2.2):

"At face value, while LEADER II may have been successful in engaging local communities to undertake activities that provide a social benefit, the effectiveness of the Programme as a process for changing the economic fortunes of the rural areas is not clearly demonstrated by the findings"[14].

Table 2.2 Summary of evaluation estimates of Efficiency - LEADER II					
Project Type	Total FTEs (net of displacement)	Net Additional employment (taking account of dead-weight)	Multiplier	Public Sector Cost Per Net Add'nal Job –Low Estimate	Public Sector Cost Per Net Add'nal Job –High Estimate
Technical Support	11.2 – 13.1	6.9 – 8.1	0.2 – 0.4	£97,424	£113,662
Training and Recruitment	4.8 – 5.6	3.3 – 3.8	0.2 – 0.4	£304,377	£355,107
Rural Tourism	17.6 – 20.5	14.4 – 16.8	0.2 – 0.4	£90,791	£105,923
Small Firms	123.6 – 144.2	38.1 – 44.4*	0.2 - 0.4	£44,550	£51,975
Exploitation and Marketing	2.1 – 2.4	1.0 – 1.1	0.2 – 0.4	£754,479	£880,226
Environment	17.6 – 20.6	11.2 – 13.0	0.2 – 0.4	£120,426	£140,496
Total Sample	**178.1 – 207.7**	**75.5 – 88.0**	**0.2 – 0.4**	**£94,786**	**£110,583**

Source: Ex-Post Evaluation of LEADER II – Fraser Associates
*high levels of deadweight in view of combination of additionally of LEADER funding to projects and additionally of outcome of support in assisted businesses.

2.22   The ex-post evaluation found that the **highest level of employment outcomes were concentrated in business support projects demonstrated by a lower cost per job**. In addition, a high proportion of those interviewed in relation to business development projects believed that there were impacts for which evidence was not available, although this was thought to be modest. The evaluation found that the area of greatest uncertainty among the sample was in exploitation and marketing projects, where a small number of projects were considered likely to have resulted in the safeguarding of more jobs than demonstrated through the evidence.

2.23   Tourism projects normally have a relatively high cost-per-job, particularly where these are of a scale that is unlikely to attract a significant number of additional visitors into the local area. However in the case of LEADER II they were relatively good when compared to other categories

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[14] Ex-post Evaluation of the LEADER II Community Initiative in England and Wales - Fraser Associates, 2003.

such as training and recruitment which generated a very high cost per job. This tended to be based upon the low level of direct employment generated through skills projects. Monitoring of beneficiaries would tend to focus upon the career progression routes which may have resulted in indirect future employment. Environmental projects also tended to be relatively high cost and the evaluation found that relatively few of those in the sample were focused upon commercial opportunities. The evaluation acknowledged this was because LEADER II was not exclusively an economic development programme but that other factors were also present, including the larger than intended use of resources for social rather than economic projects.

2.24   It is clear from the ex-post evaluation of LEADER II[15] that **the programme provided significant impetus to community activism in the rural areas of England**. The ex-post evaluation also suggests that:

'Findings are more convincing about the contribution of LEADER II in helping communities tackle social, environmental, or other local concerns than they are in relation to its role in promoting economic development.'[16]

2.25   Across Europe, the view was generally more favourable and that LEADER II was efficient, in being adaptable to all socio-economic and governance contexts, mobilising voluntary work and being suited to small-scale area-based activities. The evaluation also found LEADER II Europe-wide to be effective, concluding[17] *"it closed the gap between a top-down programme and the local people, their needs, aspirations and potential"*. The evaluation found that responsibility was given to local partnerships and that this *"contributed by re-linking public and private, profit-making and non-profit activities, as well as infrastructural and entrepreneurial activities"*. It should be borne in mind that the Europe-wide evaluation was based itself based on a synthesis of Member State evaluations and a limited number of LAG interviews rather than widespread primary research data.

2.26   Economically, the European evaluation found that the leverage effect on private funding turned out to be *"higher than expected almost everywhere"* and that it had a positive effect on employment, particularly in less structured and less diverse rural areas, although it was not able to quantify these effects. It stated that new employment, and also more visitors and more value added from local products, successfully generated more income and increased the local entrepreneurs' readiness to invest locally.

2.27   Other impacts identified were the sustainability of development processes at the local level (local capacity building), integrating environmental concerns into social and economic goals strategically and its contribution to agricultural adjustment and diversification.

Summary

2.28   The original intention of LEADER I was to provide rural communities in the EU Member States with a method for engaging local partners in shaping the future development of their area. This policy emphasis has been applied in England and focuses upon the social, economic and environmental regeneration of rural communities to be delivered through a 'bottom up' approach. LEADER I, developed under LEADER II, introduced the concept of local partnerships with strong

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[15] Ex-post Evaluation of LEADER II Community Initiative in England and Wales - Fraser Associates, Sept 2003.
[16] Ibid
[17] http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eval/reports/LEADER2/sum_en.pdf

community representation alongside government, business and other stakeholders. The ex-post evaluation of LEADER I across Europe claimed that the Local Action Groups established were the *"most relevant distinctive feature"* of LEADER and that without them *"it is unlikely that the other aspects of the LEADER package would have been attractive or efficiently implemented."*

2.29   LEADER I provided the introduction needed to implement LEADER across the rest of the country through LEADER II, which built upon lessons learned in the pilot programme and which represented a significant increase in investment. The highest amount of spend under LEADER II was on Rural Tourism which fell under Measure B: Rural Innovation, and at £4.3m, spending comprised 22.5% of overall spend. Overall, the higher level of support for tourism, small firms, and training and recruitment projects was reflected in the top three priority themes for the 21 LEADER II LAGs. This also partly reflected the ERDF funding available to LEADER II, the majority of the EU funds, which favoured economic development objectives.

2.30   The management and administration of LEADER II was complex due to the three various Structural Funds coming together under LEADER II and their respective managing authorities nationally and the relationship between these and the regional Government Offices and the Local Action Groups.

2.31   The ex-post evaluation of LEADER II observed that while the programme may have been successful in engaging local communities to undertake activities that provided social benefit, the effectiveness of the programme as a process for changing the economic fortunes of rural areas was not clearly demonstrated. At the same time, the economic contribution of LEADER II, whilst not quantified, was regarded as favourable by the Europe-wide evaluation.

3   LEADER + (2000-2006)

3.1   The next phase of the LEADER 'story' was LEADER+ which operated from 2000-2006, with project spend allowed till the end of 2008. As with the previous chapter, the review considers the scale and geographical area of LEADER+ and the management operations in place. A review of total expenditure and project activity is also provided.

3.2   LEADER+ in England was developed as a separate programme in its own right, however it built upon the two preceding programmes and continued to focus on innovative, local area based development plans implemented by local people working in partnership. More emphasis was placed upon co-operation (both within the UK and Europe) and learning from others' experiences.

3.3   The LEADER+ programme appeared to be more rounded in its objectives than LEADER II which had much more of a socio-economic focus. Other elements were introduced into LEADER+ including improved quality of life, enhancing the natural and cultural environment and improving the skills of rural communities. This reflects that the programme ran in parallel to the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) which was linked to LEADER+ through its administrative body, Defra. The Commission notice to the Member States laying down guidelines for the Community Initiative for rural development (LEADER+), OJ C 139, 18.5.2000 stated the following objectives (8)[18]:

The new initiative will complement the mainstream programmes by promoting integrated schemes conceived and implemented by active partnerships operating at the local level. The aim of LEADER+ is to encourage and help rural actors to think about the longer-term potential of their area. It seeks to encourage the implementation of integrated, high-quality, original strategies for sustainable development designed to encourage experimenting with new ways of:

- *enhancing the natural and cultural heritage;*
- *reinforcing the economic environment, in order to contribute to job creation,*
- *improving the organisational abilities of their community.*

'Cooperation' in the broad sense of the term will be a fundamental component of LEADER+. The Commission will provide support for the establishment of quality partnerships between the various actors. Cooperation must be created within rural areas, between such areas in the same Member State, between rural areas in several Member States and even beyond if necessary. As a result, LEADER+ will continue its role as a laboratory which aims to encourage the emergence and testing of new approaches to integrated and sustainable development that will influence, complete and/or reinforce rural development policy in the Community. Member States are asked to participate in this experimentation effort when presenting their proposals. These new rural development models will be exploited and disseminated through a major networking exercise.

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[18] http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/LEADERplus/pdf/library/methodology/139_en.pdf

Scale and Geography

3.4   In terms of geography, under LEADER+ the number of Local Action Groups increased from 21 in LEADER II to 26[19]. Details of the groups that were involved in the programme in England during LEADER+ are included in Appendix A. Each region had at least one LAG, and the South West contained the most with six. LAGs varied in geographic coverage from relatively small rural Districts (e.g. Penistone, in West Barnsley Borough, Yorkshire and the Isle of Wight Rural Action Zone), through to large rural areas such as the East Riding of Yorkshire and North Pennines. Again, some LAGs spanned local authority and regional boundaries, such as the Peak District Rural Action Zone.

3.5   LEADER+ funding was sourced from primarily EU funding in the form of EAGGF (£29.5m), £11.7m was Defra funding, £28.7m was Other Public match funding and £22.1m was private sector match funding (which is also a considerable level of private investment). In total £111.7m was spent during the LEADER+ phase which represented an increase of £92.4m on LEADER II levels. The **significant increase in the scale of LEADER in the 2000-2006 phase demonstrated the EC's commitment to the principles of the LEADER approach in support of locally-based strategies developed from the 'bottom up'**. There were 2,887 projects supported under LEADER+, and a large number (some 1,617) were 'delegated' for delivery e.g. community chest activity involving small scale grants totalling £19.7m from all funding sources, including £6.98m from the private sector.   Applicants applied to the LAG for non-delegated projects, whereas for 'delegated funds' an additional stage existed, where the community groups, for example, were granted funding (or bid into) a community chest which itself supported a large number of small projects. The total value of the 1,226 non-delegated projects was £92m, approved over the 6 years of the Programme.

Table 3.1: LEADER + Funding Sources 2000-2006		
Source	**Non- Delegated Funds**	**Delegated Funds**
EAGGF	29.5m	5.67m
Defra	11.7m	2.53m
Public Match funding	28.7m	4.20m
Private Sector Match Funding	22.1m	6.98m
Totals	**92m**	**19.7m**
Source: Defra		

Management and Administration

3.6   Implementation of the LEADER+ programme in England was simplified from the LEADER II programme and was based upon a three way partnership between Defra (Managing Authority), Government Offices and the LAGs in each region. The England LEADER+ network was part of the UK LEADER+ network and was managed by LRDP (a London consultancy business). The network was introduced to encourage networking between LAG managers and partners and became well developed with a number of informal networks developing as a result.

3.7   As with LEADER II, the LEADER+ Local Action Groups were required to be a partnership of local community, business, government and other stakeholders who came together to apply for LAG funding from LEADER+. Typically LAGs included a large group of individuals and

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[19] ADAS Consulting Ltd and SQW Ltd – Mid-Term Evaluation of the LEADER + Programme Dec 2003.

organisations that reflected the make up of the local area. Defra guidance at the time[20] sought to set out the representation and attributes of the LAG membership, which whilst prescriptive was arguably helpful in reflecting the benefits of having locally based and capable individuals involved in the decision-making. LAG membership was to be:

- Balanced and representative of the area - the partners needed to be able to represent effectively the interests of the different community and economic sectors in the local area. Local authorities and government agencies could play a role, however there was a need to demonstrate that the plan and its implementation involved a genuine empowerment of the local community.

- Locally based, with partners needing to be either living in or have a significant work interest in the LAG area; and

- Individuals chosen to reflect their personal strengths and ability adequately to represent their organisations and community's interests.

3.8   The LAG selection process commenced with an introductory roadshow by Defra, Government Offices and with support from the Countryside Agency, who all co-operated to provide potential LAG applicants with an understanding of the process and eligibility. The LAG manager's first contact was with the Government Office.

3.9   There were two substantial and very significant external factors around this time that delayed the start of the programme, namely i) the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2001, and ii) the transition from MAFF to Defra, a major institutional change.

Expenditure by Project Activity

3.10   Figure 3.1 shows how the 1,266 LEADER+ delegated projects were distributed across 10 categories[21]. In total, half of all LEADER+ projects were in the two categories of tourism and rural heritage or training, skills and social inclusion:

- There were 339 projects in 'tourism and rural heritage', accounting for 27% of all projects.
- There were 307 projects in training, skills and social inclusion (24% of all projects).
- Business support accounted for 130 projects (10% of projects).
- Development and support of agricultural and forestry activities also accounted for 10% of projects.

3.11   The LEADER spend associated with projects largely mirrored the number of projects. Tourism and rural heritage projects accounted for the most LEADER spend (£26.13m, which was 28.3% of the total), while training, skills and social inclusion accounted for 22% of spend. Development of agriculture and forestry activities and business support projects also received a significant level of funding (12.3% and 11.8% respectively).

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[20] LEADER+ Programme for England – Notes for Guidance - Defra

[21] 10 Categories identified based upon ekosgen's classification of the LEADER+ fields of intervention to best fit the current LEADER Approach categories based upon RDPE Axis 1, 3 and 4.

Fig 3.1: Leader+ projects and spend by category
Source: Defra
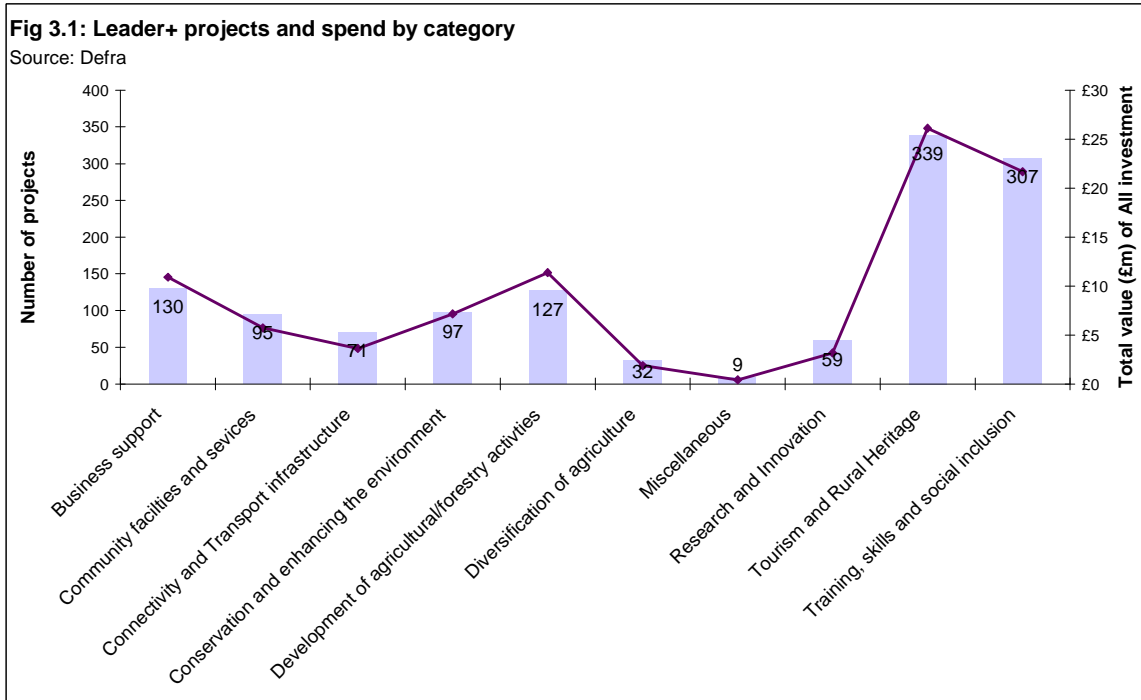
3.12   Analysis of expenditure on Delegated and non- Delegated projects (Fig 3.2) highlights the number of delegated projects that tended to be much lower value. The line represents the number of projects whereas the bars represent total project value.

Fig 3.2 Delegated and Non-Delegated Total Funds and Projects
Source: Defra
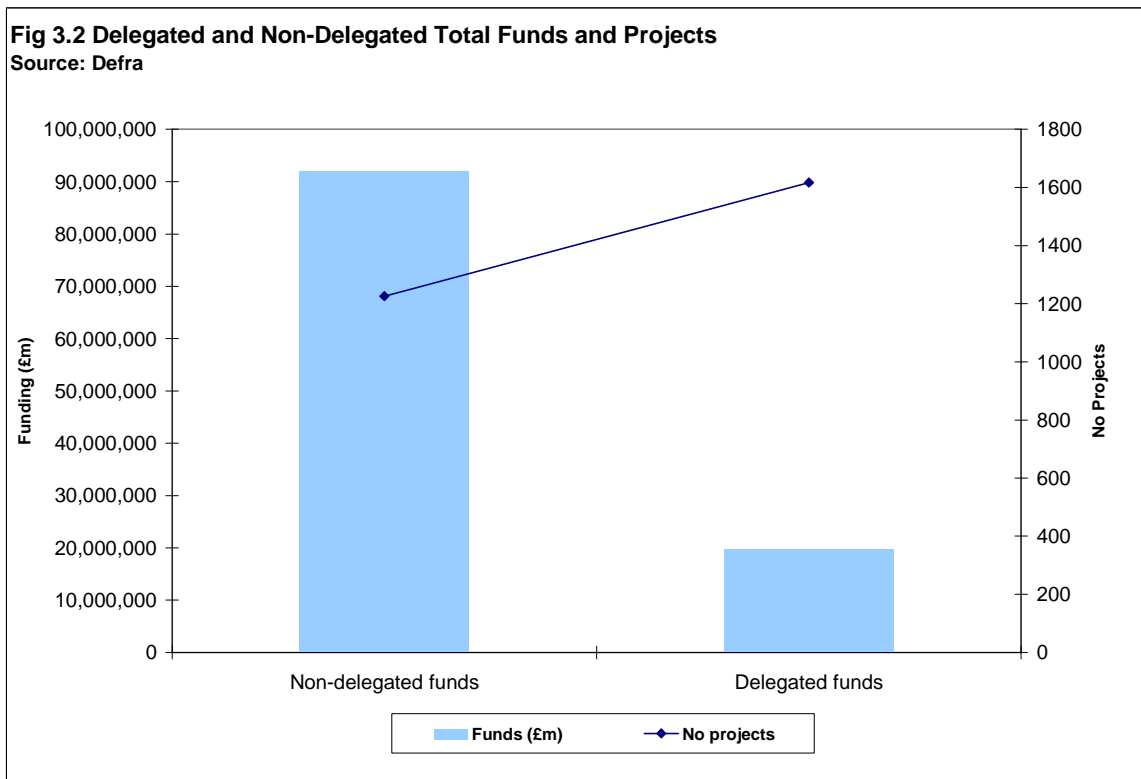
3.13   The delegated projects were highly varied and typically very small in nature, responding to a local community requirement. Grants of around £1,000 to £10,000 accounted for 82% of

spend and were distributed to local trusts, societies and others. A small number of grants above £100,000 were awarded under delegated powers which increased the mean value of projects to around £12,000. Taking a median project value of £2,285 better demonstrates the large number of small delegated projects.

Table 3.2: Grant Size £ – Delegated Projects		
	Number of projects	**% of projects**
Less than 1000	342	21%
1000-2000	292	18%
2000-3000	220	14%
3000-5000	229	14%
5000-10000	251	16%
More than 10000	283	18%
Total	1617	100%

3.14   Fig 3.3 shows the average value of projects by category and the average value of funding from each source.

- On average, projects involving development of agricultural and forestry activities were largest, with an average total value of £90,000, and average Defra investment of £15,000. These projects also had the highest contribution from private sources. These were typically specialised agriculture and forestry projects to increase the competitiveness of the sector.

- Business support projects were the next largest, with an average value of £90,000 (with an average private sector contribution of £26,000).

3.15   In general, more of the variation in average project value was accounted for by variable private sector investment. Projects that received the smallest proportion of private investment were those that related to the provision of community facilities and services and connectivity and transport infrastructure. These projects will tend to generate little, if any income and tend to be more unsustainable without public sector investment and may require ongoing maintenance and revenue to keep the project active, although the extent to which exit strategies and future project sustainability was factored into decision-making will have varied. The higher levels of private sector investment were in business support and in the development of agricultural and forestry activities, indicating greater levels of commitment to projects directly contributing to business competitiveness.

3.16   In terms of public sector investment, there was relatively little variation between projects in different categories. Tourism and rural heritage projects were on average the largest in terms of public investment (at just over £60,000), and this is accounted for by significant investment from 'other' (i.e. non DEFRA/ EAGGF) funding, including a large contribution from local authorities. This raises the question over the sustainability of investment in some tourism activities and the requirement upon the public sector to reinvest in projects that require repeat funding compared to projects that have more longevity attached to their investment and which tend to receive higher private funding such as agricultural and forestry activities.

Fig 3.3: Average project expenditure
Source: Defra
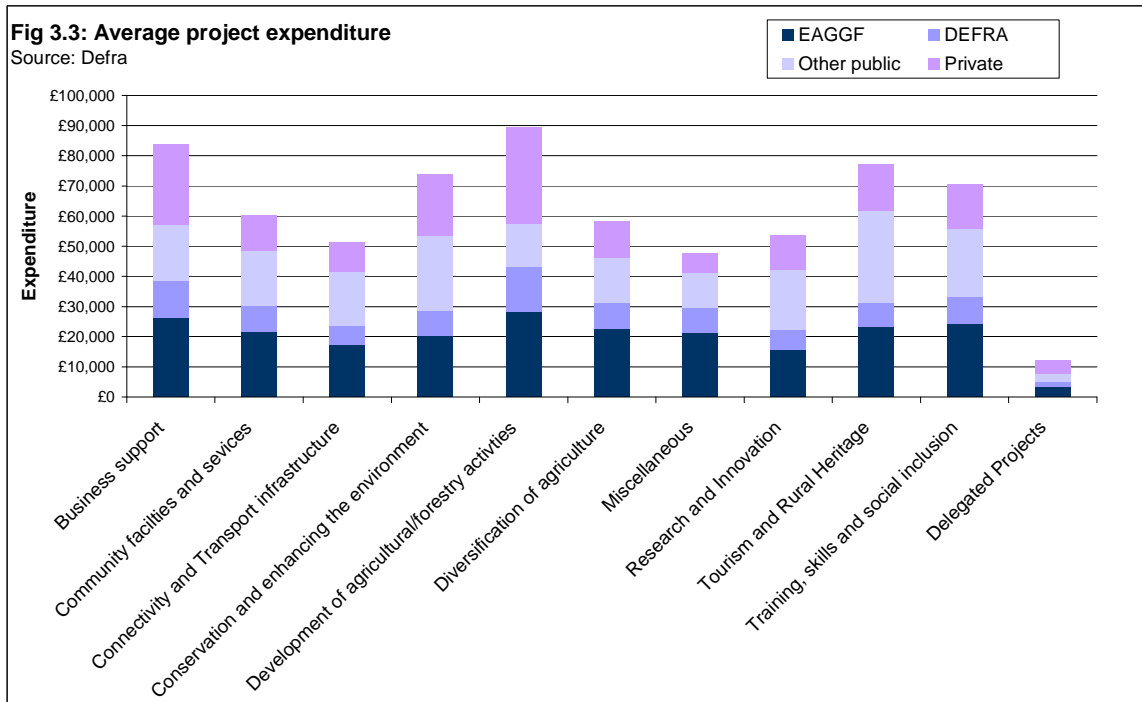
3.17   Delegated projects were typically very small and had a median value of £2,285 (although the average was £12,000 given a few large projects). Of this, the majority of investment came from the private sector who invested £4,300 on average per project. The smallest amount of investment in delegated projects tended to be from Defra who invested £1,500 on average per project.

Summary

3.18   LEADER+ in England was a distinct programme although it built upon the two preceding programmes and continued to focus on innovative, local area based development plans implemented by local people working in partnership. More emphasis was placed upon networking and learning from others experiences.

3.19   LEADER+ was considerably larger than the previous two phases, with a total of £112m over the programme. The total value of projects was £92m for non-delegated projects with an additional £19.7m for delegated projects, the sub-contracted/umbrella projects typically supporting a very large number of smaller community investments. The number of LAG groups also increased by 5, to 26.

3.20   LEADER+ spend associated with non-delegated projects largely mirrored the number of projects. Tourism and rural heritage projects accounted for the most LEADER spend (£26.1m, which was 28.3% of the total spend), while training, skills and social inclusion accounts for 22% of spend. Business support accounted for 10% of all (non-delegated) spend, lower than the proportion under LEADER II.

3.21   The distribution of expenditure under LEADER+ indicates a similar outcome to LEADER II in that it was successful in engaging local communities to undertake activities that provide social benefit, however the effectiveness of the programme as a process for changing the economic fortunes of rural areas has not been as clearly demonstrated. The profile of spend was broad

across many activities (and this varied considerably by LAG in response to local conditions) which reduced its greater socio-economic focus under LEADER II.

3.22   Projects that received the smallest proportion of private investment were those that related to the provision community facilities and services and connectivity and transport infrastructure. These projects are less likely to generate income and may be not be sustainable without public sector investment and may require ongoing maintenance and revenue to keep the projects active. Whilst there is a evidence of LEADER+ supporting many innovative projects, their ability to become self-financing and continue longer-term will be the greatest test of lasting impact.

4 LEADER 2007-2013: The LEADER Approach to delivery of the RDPE

4.1 This chapter provides analysis of the current LEADER 'phase' in place for 2007 -2013. As per the previous chapters it includes a review of scale and geography, spend and project activity. It should be noted that the project and expenditure data provides a view at this point in time (mid 2010), and more LEADER project funds are being approved and committed over time as the RDPE matures.

4.2 **The key difference with the new current financial arrangements is that LEADER has now been 'mainstreamed' as a delivery mechanism for Rural Development Programmes and is now termed the 'LEADER Approach'.** In England, this is the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) which has a 5 Axis structure. It is no longer a separate Programme. This has represented the single biggest change to the implementation of LEADER since the start of LEADER I and introduced Regional Development Agencies (RDA's) to the management and implementation of the LEADER Approach in England for the first time. Given the RDA's role to stimulate economic development, the RDA's involvement is likely to have brought a greater economic focus to the LEADER Approach more akin to LEADER II than LEADER+, although a wide range of activity has been supported.

4.3 The LEADER approach is funded through Axis 4 of the RDPE which is used to support the management and administration of LEADER Groups and Strategy development. The LEADER approach should be used to deliver a minimum of 5% of the EAFRD (as well as the Health Check/Recovery Package) and the expectation is that the LEADER approach will be used to deliver a proportion of Axis 3 and Axis 1 activity (Axis 2 is delivered through the Forestry Commission and Natural England). Under Axis 3, RDPE focuses on encouraging private enterprise and entrepreneurship, improving services and infrastructure at a local level, encouraging tourism activities, village renewal, upgrading rural heritage and training and information for economic actors. The five Axes of the RDPE and the individual measures under each Axis are included in Appendix B.

4.4 The 5% of EU funds for LEADER was an estimated at £105m at the start of the programme[22]. Thre is, however flexibility for regions to spend more and to determine the balance between Axis 1 and 3 as contributors to LAG budgets and these flexibilities are built into the regional allocations.

4.5 The seven key features of LEADER (see chart 2 Fig 2.1) identified at the European level continue to be relevant under RDPE Axis4 activity, however the scope and individual actions under each element will be wide ranging and geared towards the broader rural economy. Local actions will need to focus on fulfilling the objectives of the national RDPE programme in a locally tailored way to be delivered through Local Action Groups. There is also a desire to develop the capacity of LAGs to that they can deliver other programmes and projects within their area, which may fall outside the Rural Development Programme, although in reality this may be restricted to a small number of cases.

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[22] Rural Development Programme (England) 2007-2013 – Notes on the Implementation of LEADER, Defra, July 2007.

Scale and Geography

4.6   Table 4.1 details the *profiled* expenditure by region from the RDPE and the LEADER allocation identified from the regional RDPE budgets identified in Regional Implementation Plans (RIPs) and RDA LEADER representatives. If profiled figures can be used as an indication of the level of RDPE spending through LEADER then it is clear that the EU requirement of 5% is being exceeded to a significant degree. In all, 31.9% of RDPE funding is potentially set to be channelled through the LEADER Approach, which is £65m higher than the £105m originally profiled at the start of the programme, and considerably greater than the £112m available to LAGs under LEADER+. Even if these levels are not achieved (and this level of funding via the LEADER approach is not expected), LEADER funding through this phase are expected to be higher than in any previous programme.

Table 4.1 2007-2013 RDPE Profiled Expenditure By Region including LEADER Allocation			
Region	LEADER Allocation from RDPE Budget (£millions)	Total RDPE regional Budget (£millions)	LEADER allocation as a proportion of Regional RDPE Budget (%)
North East	6.9	47.7	14.5
North West	27.6	74.9	36.8
Yorkshire and Humber	17	65.9	25.8
West Midlands	11	55	20.4
East Midlands	32	60.5	52.7
East of England	21.1	65.8	32.1
South West	33.1	101.8	32.5
South East	22	64.4	34.1
Totals	**170.8**	**536**	**31.9**
Source: Defra (http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/rdpe/secta.htm#q) & RDA LEADER Budget allocations			

4.7   Under the current 'phase' of LEADER, the LAGs have changed in geography across the regions and significantly increased in numbers, reflecting the increased funding allocation. Only 11 LAGs out of 26 that were operational under LEADER+ have continued in the current LEADER Approach under the same name (although not necessarily in the same form) and there are a further 8 former LEADER+ LAGs that have continued under slightly different arrangements or geographical boundaries. Under the current LEADER approach there are now 65 LAGs in operation in England, and Appendix A details the LAGs operational in LEADER+ in each region and how this has changed under the LEADER Approach in 2007-2013. This is a **significant increase in LAG numbers and represents a significant challenge for the RDA's in managing the increased volume of groups** at a time when they themselves are acting as the accountable bodies for the first time.

Expenditure by Project Activity

4.8   Fig 4.1 provides an indication of the level of spending by project category for projects which had committed funding, including any closed projects, through the LEADER Approach as of May 31st 2010. These have been disaggregated under the categories developed for this study. The average grant size to date under current LEADER is £28,500 which is higher than in LEADER+ (£7,000 - £10,000). It should be noted that there are no delegated grants in current LEADER and therefore all projects at the community level are accounted for in the current LEADER analysis.

Fig 4.1: Current Leader Projects and Spend by Category
Source: LAG project data
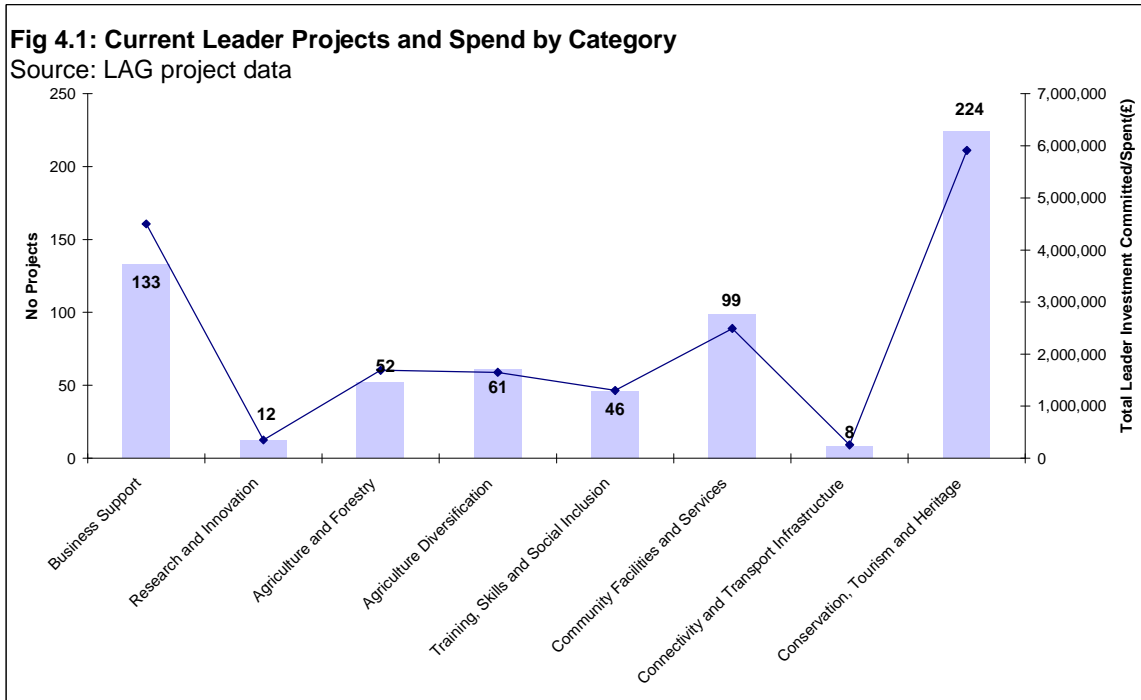
4.9   **By a considerable degree the highest amount of expenditure committed to date has been for Conservation, Tourism and Heritage projects (£6m)** and it is clear from this initial analysis that there remains a strong level of expenditure for this category as there has been in previous programmes. A typical projects was the Pennine Inheritance described below.

Pennine Inheritance – South Pennines LAG (Conservation, Tourism and Heritage Project)
Total Value: £42,425 (£25,700 Leader grant)

To promote, interpret and celebrate the unique landscape, history and cultural heritage of the South Pennines through the establishment of a series of "hubs" (or visitor centres), each linked to a network of "spokes" (or interpretive trails) which can be explored on foot or by public transport

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4.10   Of particular note is the **high level of expenditure for business support which (although fewer in project number) is significant** at £4.35m. Typical business support projects include Speedwell Mill in Winksworth (see below). There are also a high level of community facilities and services projects being recorded in current LEADER totalling £2.49m to date.

eko gen

Speedwell Mill, Winksworth, Derbyshire Dales – Peak District Rural Action Zone LAG (Business Support Project)
Total Value: £54,319 (£25,000 Leader grant)

Woodworking business established for 19 years, the firm specialises in environmental conservation and preservation and designs and manufactures, installs and repairs bespoke furniture and joinery. The grant awarded by LEADER will enable them to expand and invest in other areas such as machinery, work space and environmental issues. This will also help the business provide training facilities in conservation joinery and building training. The Mill will incorporate a bio-mass heating system to provide hot water and heating using waste off-cuts and coppiced timber, already available on site. The aim is to achieve efficiencies and a 10% reduction in costs in the core business, a 20% increase in profitability, and provide for one more skilled employee.

Management and Administration

4.11   At the national level LEADER is managed by Defra under the RDPE. It will be the role of Defra, as the Managing Authority for the RDPE, to ensure that the application of LEADER across England conforms to the requirements specified in the relevant EU regulations, including that the minimum spend requirement of 5% is met over the programming period.

4.12   The RDAs are now responsible for the delivery of Axes 1, 3 and 4 of the RDPE, and this includes that delivered through the LEADER approach (there are other Axis 1 and 3 activities not managed by the RDAs and not delivered through LEADER). RDAs are the lead partners (alongside Natural England and the Forestry Commission) working with LAGs at the local level. Close working relations are required among partners to ensure an integrated approach to rural development across all Axes of the RDPE but particularly through LEADER which is designed to respond at the local level across economic, environmental and social spheres.

4.13   From the start, Defra were **particularly keen to see appropriate flexibility through the LEADER approach[23] at the local level with attention being paid to local circumstances and priorities.** In the first instance this flexibility was given to RDAs to reflect the strengths and weaknesses of their particular region. There were six main areas where regional flexibility has been afforded in order to reflect regional diversity:

- the total spend on LEADER – i.e. how much beyond the minimum spend will be delivered through LEADER;
- the extent of geographical coverage within the region;
- the size of the LEADER areas;
- precise partnership arrangements with local authorities and others;
- how LEADER will contribute to meeting regional priorities for the programme, as set out in the Regional Implementation Plans (RIPs); and
- eligible axes and measures.

4.14   Secondly, the flexibility of the LEADER approach to respond to local circumstances and priorities was stated as being achieved though effective development and engagement of LAGs by regional partners in ways that complement local and sub-regional governance arrangements,

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[23] An update to the England LEADER+ Mid Term-Evaluation – Request for Quote - Defra 2005

building in particular on the previous Government's 'place-based' agenda for communities. This was designed to bring the regional spending and strategic priorities together within local communities. The local agenda for each LAG was to be expressed through Local Development Strategies which articulate the aims and objectives of the community and prioritise the types of project activity required in that area. Regional partners are encouraged to work with the LAGs to help build their capacity as well as encourage strategies that address environmental as well as socio-economic objectives.

4.15   The current LEADER approach continues the bottom-up approach to local development through the EU's requirement for 50% of LAG members to be from non-public sectors to generate a range of public, voluntary and private sector representatives. The Peak Rural Action Zone LAG provides one such example of a LAG profile in table 4.2:

Table 4.2: RAZ Group Profile
High Peak Borough Council representing Derbyshire Local Authorities   *Staffordshire Moorlands District Council representing Staffordshire Local Authorities*   *Peak District National Park Authority*   *East Midlands Business (membership to rotate every two years with West Midlands Business Link)*   *Farming ~Life Centre (Charity)*   *Derbyshire Association of Local Councils*   *University of Derby College Buxton*   *Arts in the Peak (artist led membership organisation promoting the arts and rural creative industries)*   *National Farmers Union (Peak District farmer);*   *Derbyshire Dales CVS representing Peak Partners for Rural Action (VCS rotational every two years between Derbyshire and Staffordshire)*   *Derby & Derbyshire Economic Partnership*   *Peak District Farm Holiday Group (Tourism micro-business)*   *Princes Trust*   *Natural England*   *Peak District Sustainable Energy Group representative (rotational every two years / Sustainable Youlgrave (local community group) to sit on LAG initially).*

Summary

4.16   The current LEADER approach represents the single biggest change to the implementation of LEADER since the start of LEADER I. The key difference being that the LEADER approach has now been 'mainstreamed' as a delivery mechanism for the RDPE.

4.17   LEADER is no longer a separate Programme and introduces RDAs to the management and implementation of the LEADER Approach in England for the first time. The involvement of RDAs is likely to have introduced more of an economic focus to the current LEADER approach in 2007-2013.

4.18   The current LEADER approach continues with the original theme from LEADER I to develop the rural economy from the bottom up, developing the approach to increase the capacity of LAGs to deliver other programmes and projects within their area, which fall outside the RDPE.

4.19   A significant proportion of RDPE funding is being channelled through LEADER (estimated at 31.9% of total regional RDPE budgets totalling £170.7m, although this overstates the true

level), and even if the actual level is much less than this then overall LEADER spend is still likely to be higher than in any previous phases. The number of LAGs has increased considerably, which in part reflects the increased funding allocation through LEADER, from 26 groups in LEADER+ to 65 groups. This has represented a significant challenge to the RDAs in terms of management and administration.

4.20   Conservation, Tourism and Heritage projects continue to account for the highest level of LEADER expenditure (£4.54m to date) and the highest number of projects. However sitting closely behind this category is expenditure in business support (£4.35m), which although spread across fewer projects, has increased considerably under the current LEADER approach.

5 LEADER Project Activity - Change over Time

5.1   Whilst there have been many changes to LEADER since 1991 there have been continuous 'threads' of activity supported. This section therefore considers the types of project activities that have occurred since the start of LEADER in its various forms in England. Understanding how the types of activity have changed over time will have a bearing on the impacts achieved (although these will not be the sole factor).

5.2   The key areas of activity analysed are those which have been the focus of programme objectives since LEADER I/II which can therefore be compared over time. These include business support, tourism and heritage, training and skills, community facilities, agriculture diversification and research and innovation, although the latter three are being compared across LEADER+ and current LEADER only.

Changing Project Activity in England

Business Support

5.3   Business Support (fig 5.1) has grown since LEADER II (16.4% of spend) to 25.3% of spend to date under the current LEADER programme. It should be noted however that there was a dip in activity under LEADER+ where the programme objectives were broader than economic ones and where the EU funding was EAGGF (with stronger links to environment/agricultural activity). The role of the RDAs generally in promoting and facilitating economic activities may explain the rise in business support activity under the current approach to the 25% of overall spend to date.

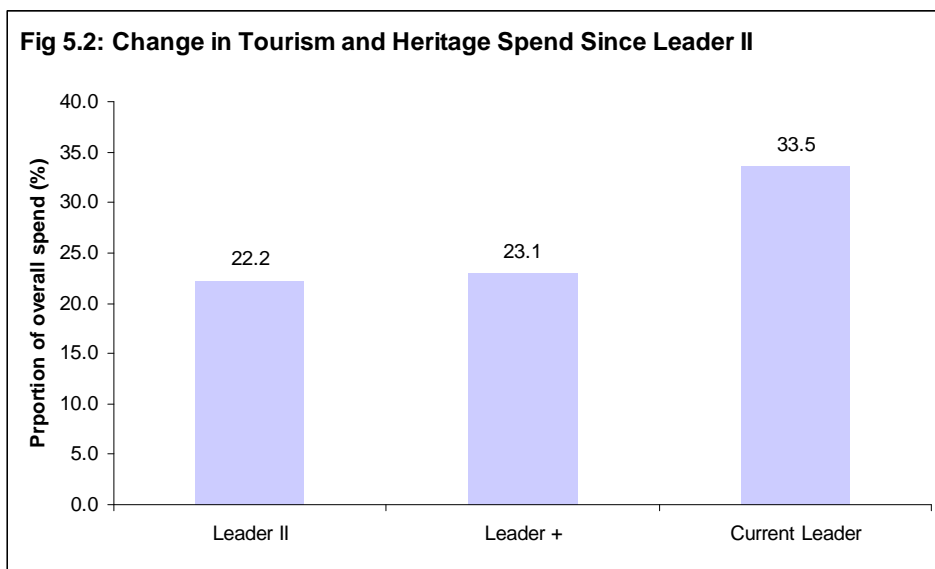**Fig 5.1 Change in Business Support Spend Since Leader II**
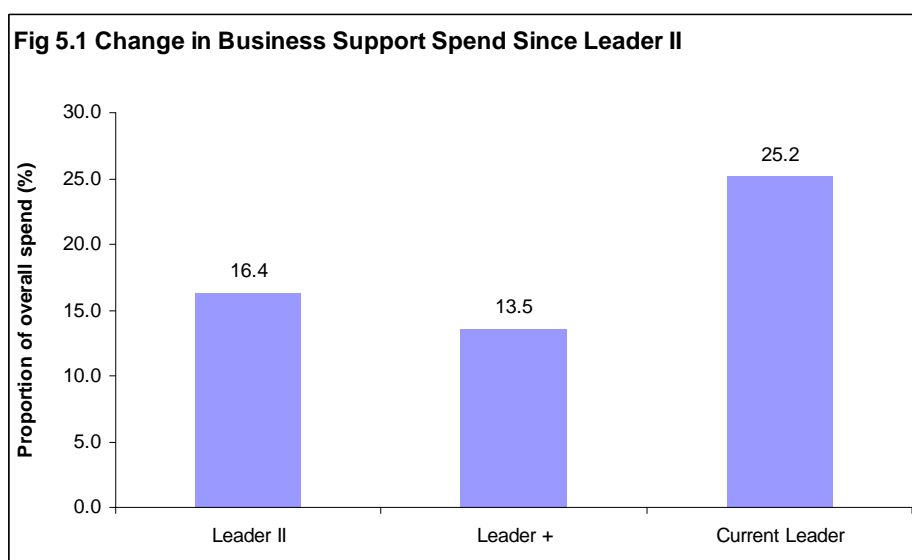
5.4   Business support was a significant feature under LEADER II, given the high proportion of ERDF in the programme which had a strong economic focus. **It is interesting to note, however, that the proportion of expenditure on business support type activities has increased under the current LEADER approach (to date) to a proportion higher than for LEADER II**, although the current LEADER situation may also reflect that spend on other activities such as community projects is coming forward more slowly. Current activities include a considerable level of rural business networking and enterprise support projects as well as more traditional rural business-

specific interventions. The final proportion of current LEADER approach spend on business support activity may however reduce from this 25% level as other types of project activity with a longer-lead time (e.g. infrastructure projects) are developed and delivered.

Tourism

5.5   Tourism expenditure has grown with the various rounds of LEADER, and now comprises some 33.5% of all expenditure in the current LEADER Approach. The data for current LEADER may slightly over-state the level of spend given the category includes environmental projects with a conservation/visitor element (e.g. community woodland) which were previously categorised under conservation. However, even with this caveat, **the level of expenditure on tourism and heritage as a proportion of the LEADER total has increased over time, and the overall level of LEADER resources has also increased over time**.

5.6   Over successive phases of LEADER, tourism and heritage spending has brought forward a wide range of activity, from signage, trails, and visitor information, to local history, new and improved visitor facilities and tourism marketing. These will have varying levels of impact; and those most likely to have the greatest economic impact are those that bring visitors from outside the local area and those with higher levels of associated visitor spend.

Fig 5.2: Change in Tourism and Heritage Spend Since Leader II

Proportion of overall spend (%)

|	
Leader II	22.2
Leader +	23.1
Current Leader	33.5

Training and Skills

5.7   There has been a reduced proportion of expenditure on training and skills projects since LEADER II 1994-1999, where the proportion of spend was 25.2% (fig 5.3). This dropped slightly to 22.8% under LEADER+ and appears to have dropped significantly under the current LEADER approach, to just 7.5% of expenditure. This decrease may be partly attributable to the changing delivery routes under the current RDPE which sees more sector based training for agriculture and forestry delivered regionally through Landskills (measure 1.1) rather than through LEADER as may have been the case previously. The current LEADER approach expenditure also excludes training and skills development in Local Action Group members, although this is also the case for the previous phases of LEADER.

Fig 5.3: Change in Training and Skills Spend Since Leader II
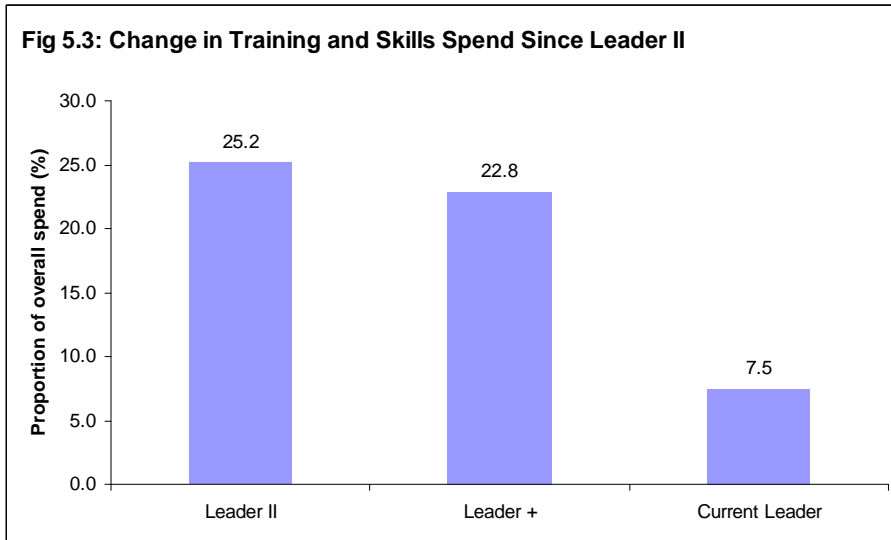

Community Facilities

5.8　　Expenditure on community facilities has increased considerably since LEADER+ (data is not available for LEADER II) illustrating a strong link to the original LEADER objectives for the delivery of projects to be "bottom up" and community-focused. The increase may also reflect the national objectives for flexibility in the approach to project delivery at the local level and which build upon the previous government's 'place based' agenda in the current LEADER approach. Support for community facilities did not feature as highly on the agenda in LEADER+, perhaps as a result of the wide range of supported activities generally, including support for the environmental and agricultural objectives.

Fig 5.4: Change in Community Facilities Spend Since Leader +
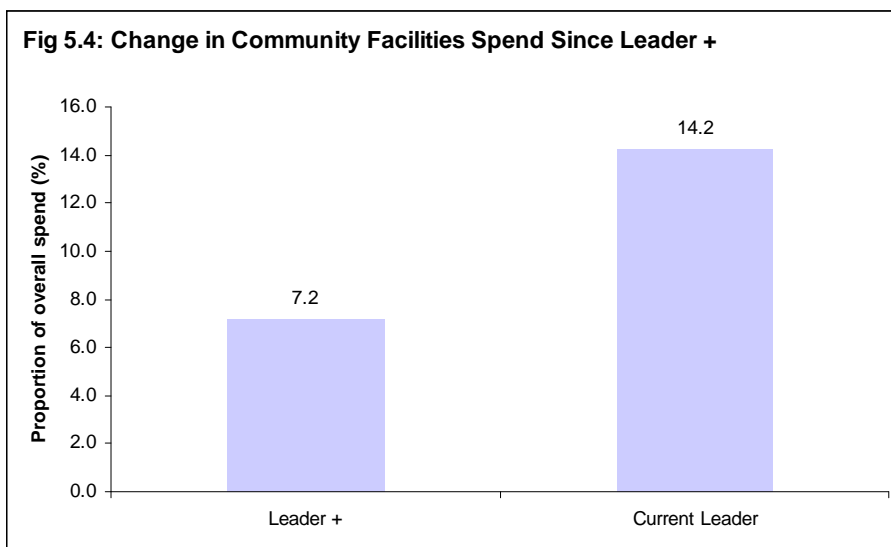
Agricultural Diversification

5.9　　There has been a considerable increase in the proportion of agricultural diversification spend during the current LEADER programme to date, and this may reflect the flexibility of the mainstreaming of the LEADER approach to deliver across all the Axes of the RDPE which includes key objectives to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector as well as diversification of the rural economy. These objectives were in existence under LEADER+ although

they do not appear to have been given the same emphasis as they currently receive under the RDPE Axes (Appendix C). Current LEADER also delivers additional spend under Axis 1 which has broadened the LEADER influence further in agricultural areas.   The impact assessment report accompanying this review comments on the impact of agricultural diversification through the LEADER approach.

Fig 5.5: Agriculture Diversification Spend Since Leader +
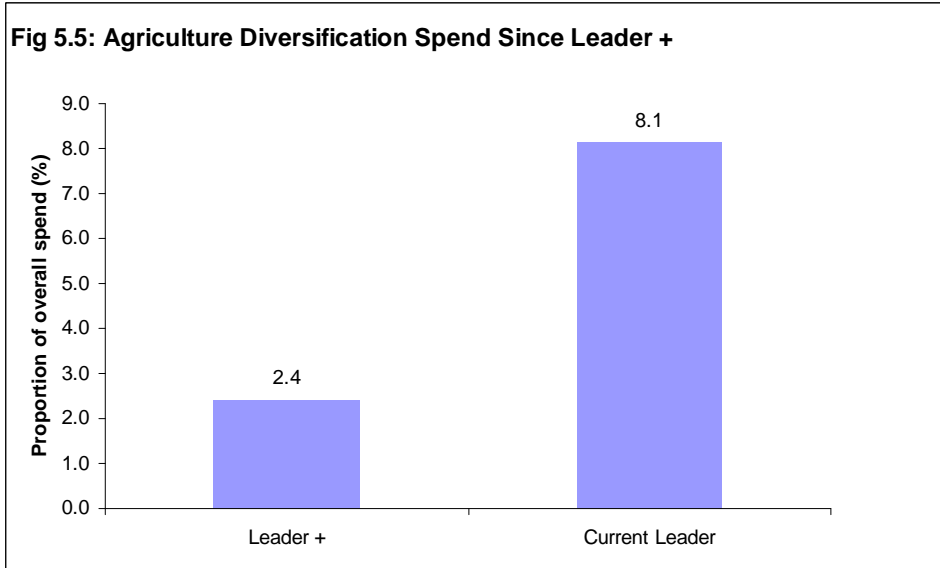
Research and Innovation

5.10   Conversely, research and innovation projects have received a proportionately lower level of spend in current LEADER compared to LEADER+, and this may be due to the identification of specific research and innovation activities under LEADER+ including research projects in universities and research institutes as well as innovation and technology transfers and the establishment of networks between business and research institutes. These activities are less clearly defined under the current RDPE Axes although there are a number of projects that relate to research and innovation activities under the current LEADER approach (grouped in with other categories under Axis 1 and 3 of the RDPE – see appendix B). It should also be noted that there may be more projects in the pipeline under the current LEADER approach that are yet to be recorded given the long lead-in time required to develop research and innovation projects.

Fig 5.6: Research and Innovation Spend Since Leader+
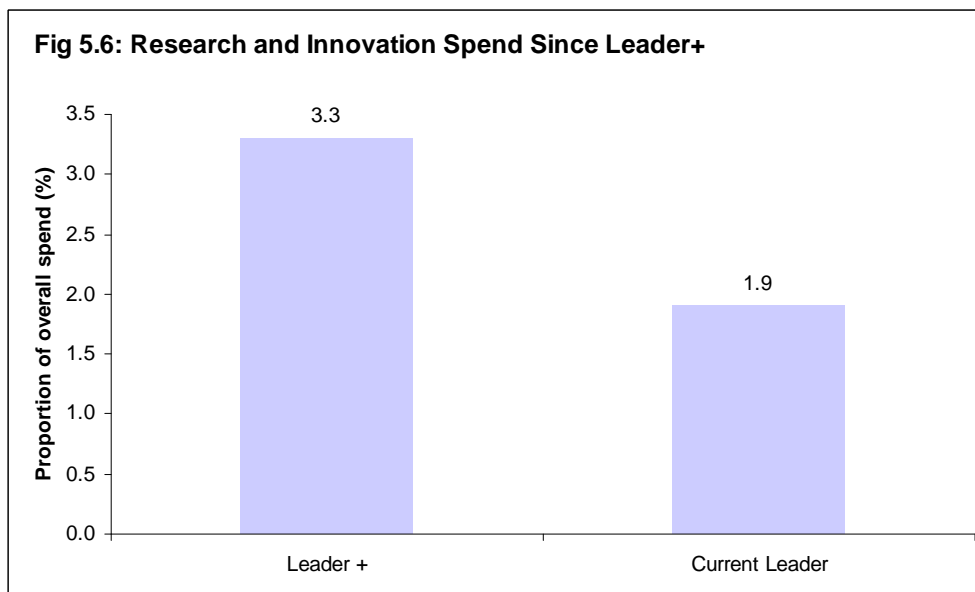
Summary

5.11   Expenditure in business support has grown over time to 25.3% of spend under the current programme, which may partly be explained by the involvement of the RDAs who have more of an economic focus and rationale and the focus of the current LEADER approach on Axis 3. Business support accounted for 13.5% of total spend under the LEADER + programme where the programme supported a broader range of activity.

5.12   Tourism expenditure has been the highest proportion activity of expenditure over each of the last three 'phases'. It has continued to more than one third of all spend (33.5%, based on spend to date) again reflecting the LEADER approach focus on Axis 3. Spending on community facilities has also increased considerably since LEADER+, as has agricultural diversification which may reflect the flexibility of mainstreaming the current LEADER approach to deliver across all Axes of the RDPE.

5.13   Conversely spend on training and skills projects has reduced since LEADER II, when this was the highest proportion of funding spent. This is due at least in part to the changing delivery routes for training and skills projects.

5.14   Spend on research and innovation projects has also decreased in the current LEADER approach when compared to LEADER+, although this is again based on spend to date. Increased levels of expenditure in this area may be seen over the lifetime of the RDPE, given the time taken for these projects to come to fruition.

6   LEADER Project Activity – Responding to Local Need

6.1   In order to assess the ability of LEADER to respond to local needs and requirements this section considers the project activities of a selection of Local Action Groups (LAGs) in LEADER+ and the current LEADER approach to identify any localised characteristics in relation to project activity.

6.2   The continued objective through LEADER in its various forms has been the empowering of local communities focused on delivering innovative, local area based development plans implemented by local people working in partnership. Analysis is provided to illustrate the response of LAG's in meeting local needs through project activity and how this relates to objectives set out in Regional Implementation Plans and Local Development Strategies.

LEADER+ Local Level Project Activity

6.3   Although tourism and heritage, and skills and training, accounted for the majority of projects nationally in LEADER +, there was significant variation in the distribution of projects in different LAGs under the programme.

Cumbria Fells LAG: High Agriculture Development & Business Support

6.4   Out of the 86 projects in the Cumbria Fells LEADER+ LAG, 30 were in business support and 30 were in support for agriculture and forestry, with only 13 projects (15%) in tourism and heritage. The highest amount of funding was spent on projects that developed and supported agriculture and forestry at £3.5m (52% of the total LAG spend).

Fig 6.1: Leader +: Cumbria Fells - Project Activity and Investment
Source: Defra
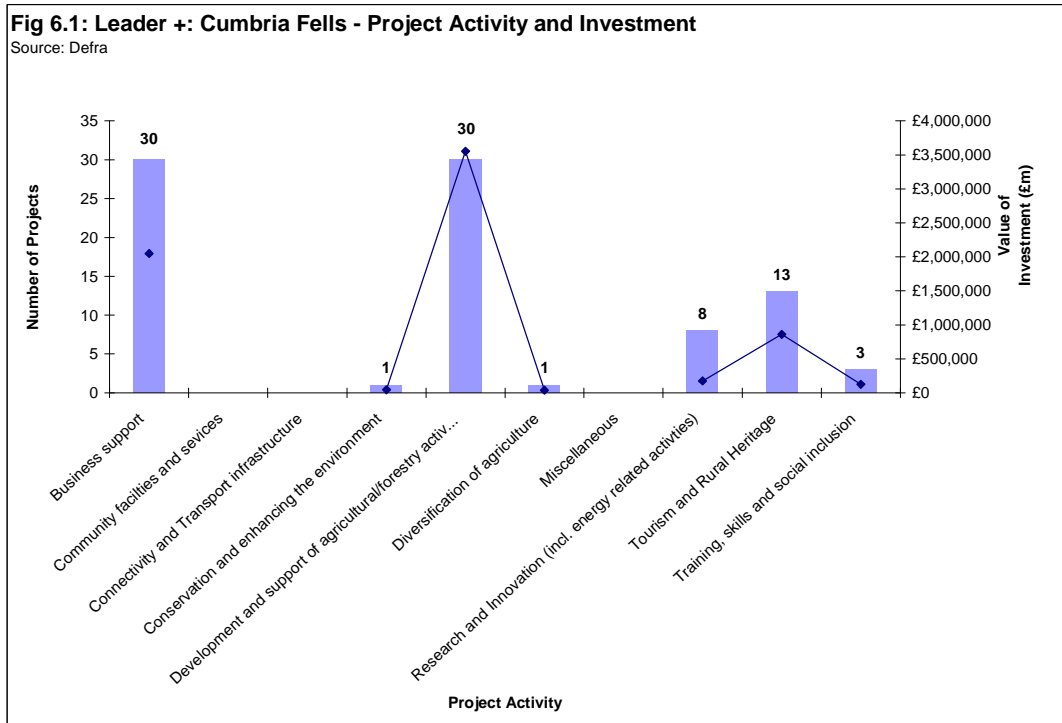
6.5   This balance of project activity reflected the LAG's objective to provide support to farmers and local producers who were seeking new and different ways in which they could 'add value to local products' to respond to a decline in farm incomes and agricultural employment, both of which were severely impacted upon by the outbreak of Foot and Mouth. LEADER+ programmes

were assembled in the immediate aftermath of the 2001 outbreak of Foot and Mouth, in which Cumbria was one of the worst affected areas, and demonstrates LEADER's capacity as a responsive fund with ability to adapt to local circumstances and meet local need.

Dorset Chalk & Cheese LAG: High Tourism and Agriculture

6.6   In the Dorset Chalk and Cheese LAG the profile of expenditure was very different. The LAG had 57 projects, the majority of which were in tourism and heritage (35%). Training and skills accounted for 12 projects (21%), while there were only 9 agricultural and forestry projects and one business support project. This balance of activity partly reflected the overall aims of the programme which sought to *'add value to local products and diversify the main economic base of the area while maintaining a prosperous agriculture division as that which shapes the landscape'* (its main target groups were identified as being rural businesses and workers affected by restructuring and women). Some of these objectives, such as the retraining of women may also have been achieved through the training skills and social inclusion projects.

Fig 6.2: Leader +: Dorset Chalk and Cheese: Project Activity and Investment
Source: Defra
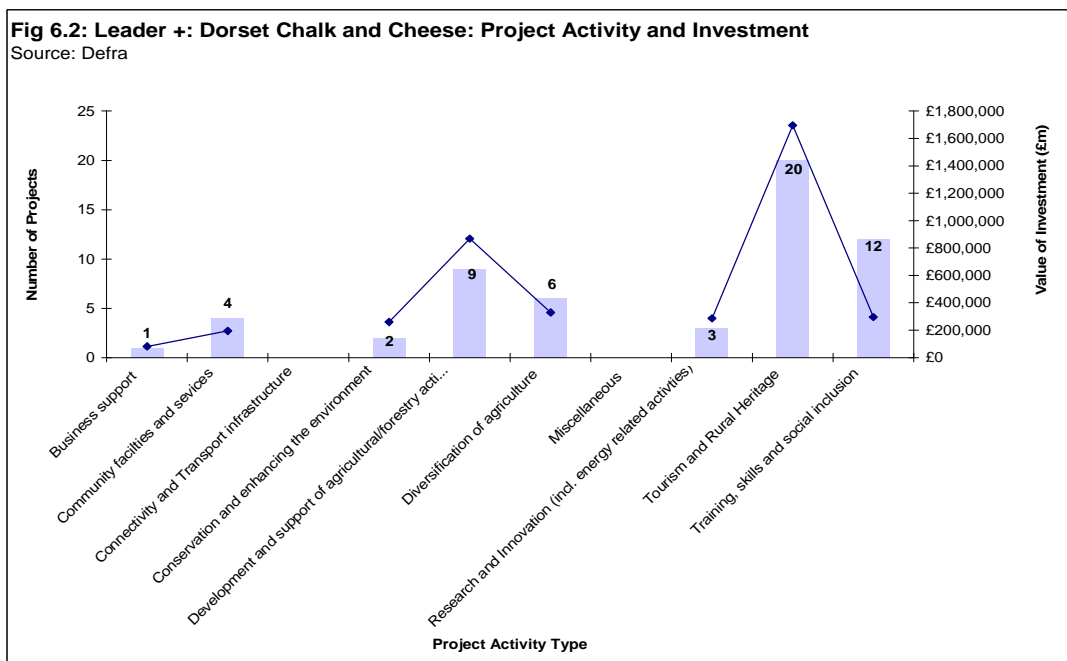
Sustain the Plain LAG: High Tourism and Training, Skills and Social Inclusion

6.7   With a similar pattern of project activity the Sustain the Plain LAG supported 12 tourism and heritage projects (34%) and 11 projects that support training, skills and social inclusion (32%). There was only 1 business support project. The training, skills and social inclusion projects reflected the key objective of the programme to support young people aged 12-25 and women in isolated situations. Sustain the Plain also supported 4 community facilities and services projects (11%) which reflected the aim to promote activities associated with the military and civilian communities working together.

Fig 6.3: Leader +: Sustain the Plain - Project Activity and Investment
Source: Defra
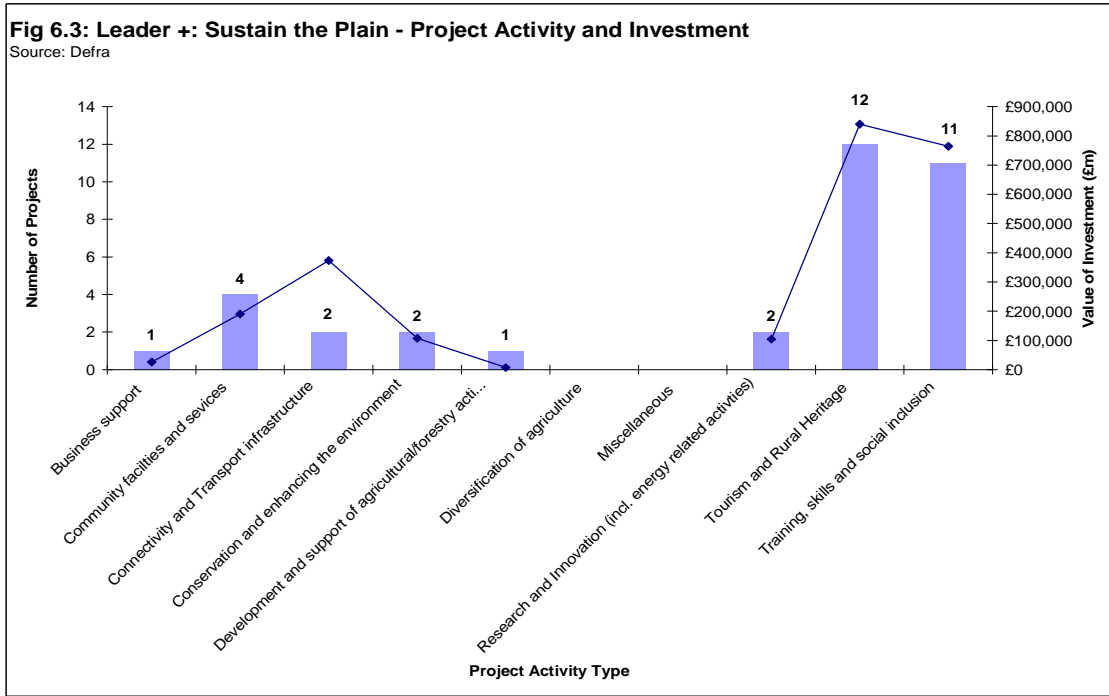
Fenlands LeAP LAG: High Training, Skills and Social Inclusion

6.8   For the Fenlands LeAP LAG, the balance of activity differs again, where 27 of 46 projects (58.6%) were in training, skills and social inclusion, 11 projects (24%) were in business support, and only 3 projects were in tourism. The Fenlands LeAP LEADER+ programme had the vision of *'helping rural communities to help themselves'.* Projects were encouraged where they improved the quality of life and economic prosperity of the local area which reflected the high proportion of training, skills and social inclusion projects followed by business support projects.

Fig 6.4: Leader +: The Fenlands LeAP - Project activity and investment
Source: Defra
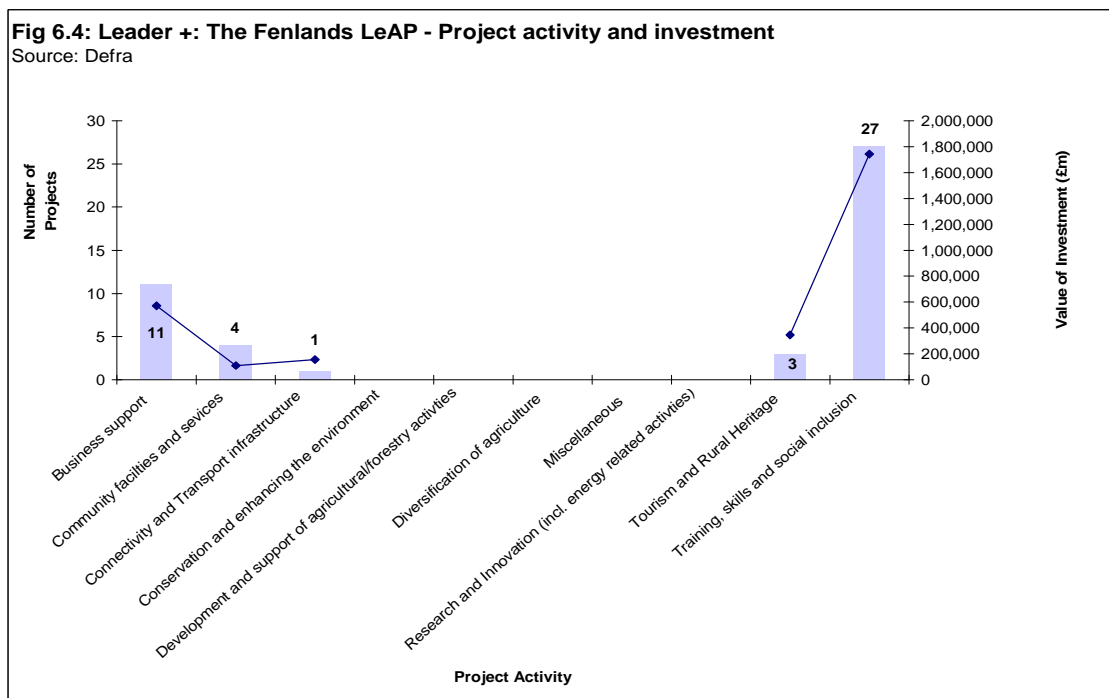
## Current LEADER Local Level Project Activity

6.9   Nationally the project activities to date in the current LEADER approach are more concentrated in tourism and heritage and business support. As with the previous section the variations in project activity at the local level are discussed below, using four LAG examples. It should be noted that the project activity for current LEADER is partially complete as the RDPE does not end until 2013.

Northumberland Coast and Lowlands LAG: High Community Facilities and Services

6.10   The Northumberland Coast and Lowlands LAG has approved **projects** across a range of categories (fig 6.5) with the highest proportion being in community facilities and services (29%) followed by tourism development (25%). However the highest proportion of **spend** to date has been equal, split between community facilities and services and agriculture and forestry at, 37%. Development of these areas of activity reflect the characteristics of the local area which is described as '*an area with strengths in enterprising people, a distinctive local culture and a high quality natural environment but has poor access to services, and has suffered greatly from the restructuring of traditional industries - agriculture, fishing and mining*[24]'. The broad spread of activity identified in fig 6.5 reflects the range objectives of the LAG to improve the delivery of rural services, support networking between community groups and social enterprises, promote local produce, improve the visitor offer, support new business start ups and micro businesses, promote the cultural heritage, increase agricultural competitiveness, production and supply chains and promote traditional skills development.

Fig 6.5: Current Leader - Northumberland Coast and Lowlands - Project Activity
Source: Northumberland Coast and Lowlands Local Action Group

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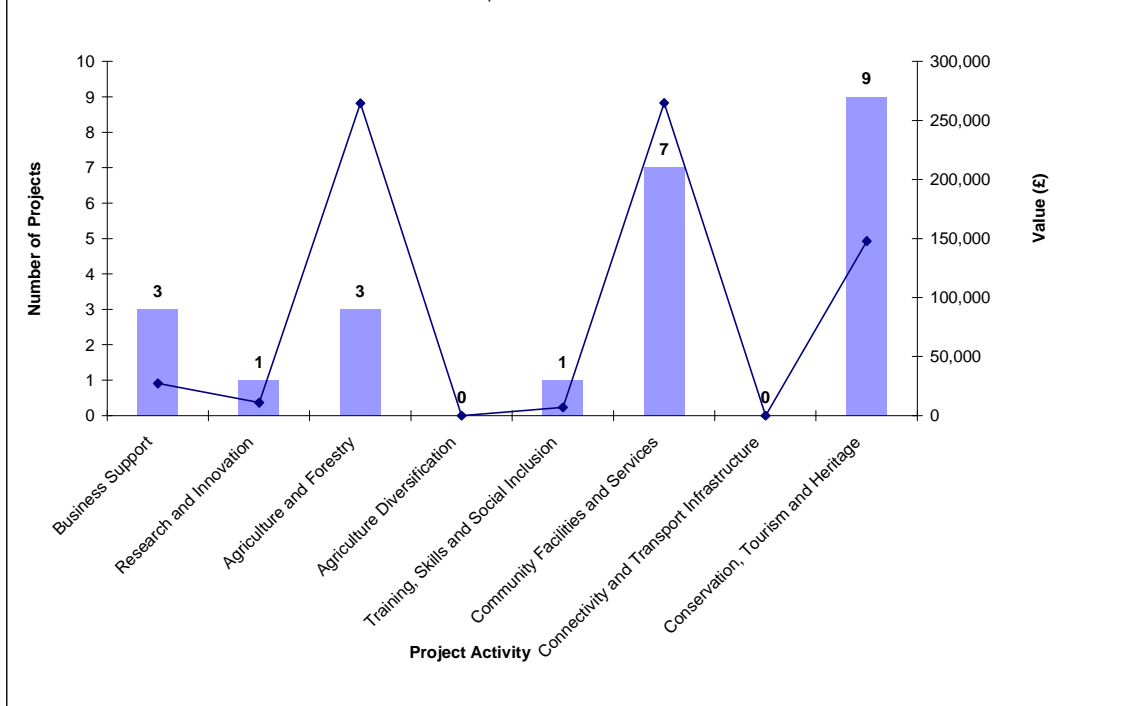
[24] Northumberland Coast and Lowlands LAG Local Development Strategy

South Pennines LAG: High Conservation, Tourism and Heritage

6.11   The South Pennines LAG presents a different pattern of project activity (fig 6.6). The highest proportions of project activity in the LAG to date are focused in tourism development and conservation tourism and heritage (14 projects each), however the highest proportion of spend to date has been allocated to conservation, tourism and heritage projects (50.7%). Project activity in the South Pennines LAG appears to respond to the four main aims of the programme to: '*promote the cultural heritage and landscape of the area, to develop communities' sense of place, assist in the promotion and development of the tourism and recreational economy and improve quality of life through provision of sustainable community facilities*[25].

Fig 6.6: Current Leader - South Pennines LAG Project Activity
Source: South Pennines LAG
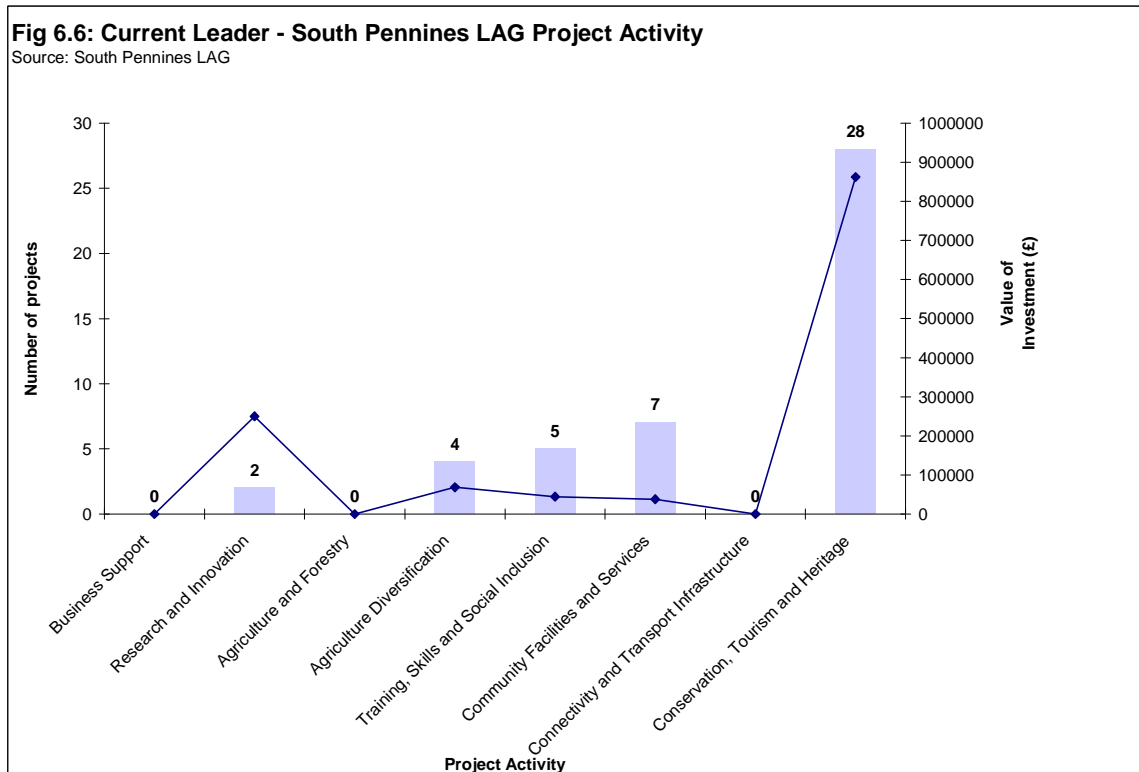
Peak District Rural Action Zone LAG: High Business Support

6.12   The Peak District Rural Action Zone (PRAZ) LAG presents a very contrasting picture of project activity (fig 6.7), weighted heavily towards business support which represents 82.6% of projects and 87.1% of expenditure. There are only 4 other projects approved, 2 in training skills and social inclusion, 1 in connectivity and transport and 1 in conservation, tourism and heritage. The pattern of activity reflects the aims of the first round of the LEADER approach in the PRAZ to focus upon:

- Improving the economic viability of land-based business through support for diversification into non agricultural activities and local added value initiatives; and
- Supporting new micro-enterprise activity and helping existing micro-enterprises to develop new projects involving the development and/or promotion of local products and services.

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[25] South Pennines LEADER themes**:** http://www.pennineprospects.co.uk/LEADER/what-sort-of-projects-are-we-looking-for

Fig 6.7: Current Leader - Peak Rural Action Zone LAG - Project Activity
Source: Peak Rural Action Zone LAG
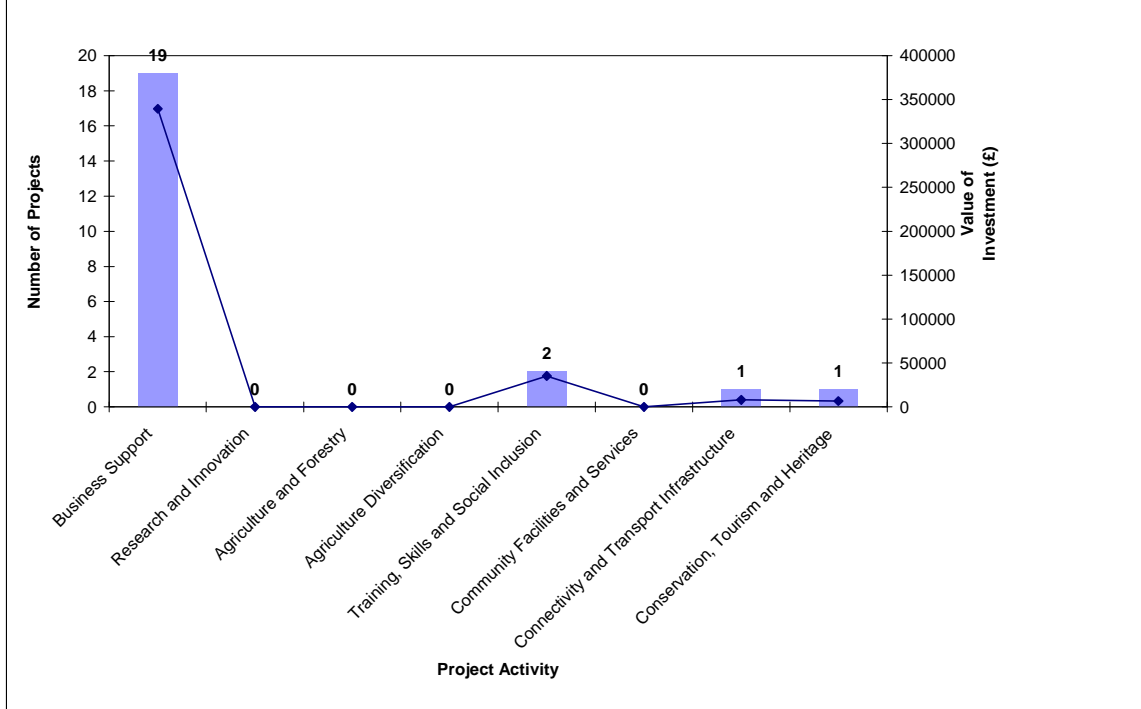
Making it Local LAG: High Business Support

6.13   Project activity in the Making it Local LAG (formerly Blackdown Hills) in the South West is focuses around training, skills and social inclusion with 48.8% of expenditure for 4 projects. Conservation, tourism and heritage projects make up 21% of expenditure for 5 projects and community facilities and services make up 6.6% of expenditure for 5 projects. The aim of Making it Local is '*to use the outstanding landscapes and local skills as a springboard for healthy and lasting development*[26]*.* This will be achieved through the delivery of three strategic objectives:

- Raise business performance and local employment;
- Communities and connections; and
- Make the most of local resources,

6.14   The training and skills focus reflects the overall aim of the LAG to utilise and develop skills to ensure sustainable change. Other project activity is also being developed to specifically support the three objectives beneath this overall aim.

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[26]Making it Local: http://www.makingitlocal.org/

Fig 6.8: Current Leader - Making it Local LAG : Project Activity
Source: Making it Local LAG
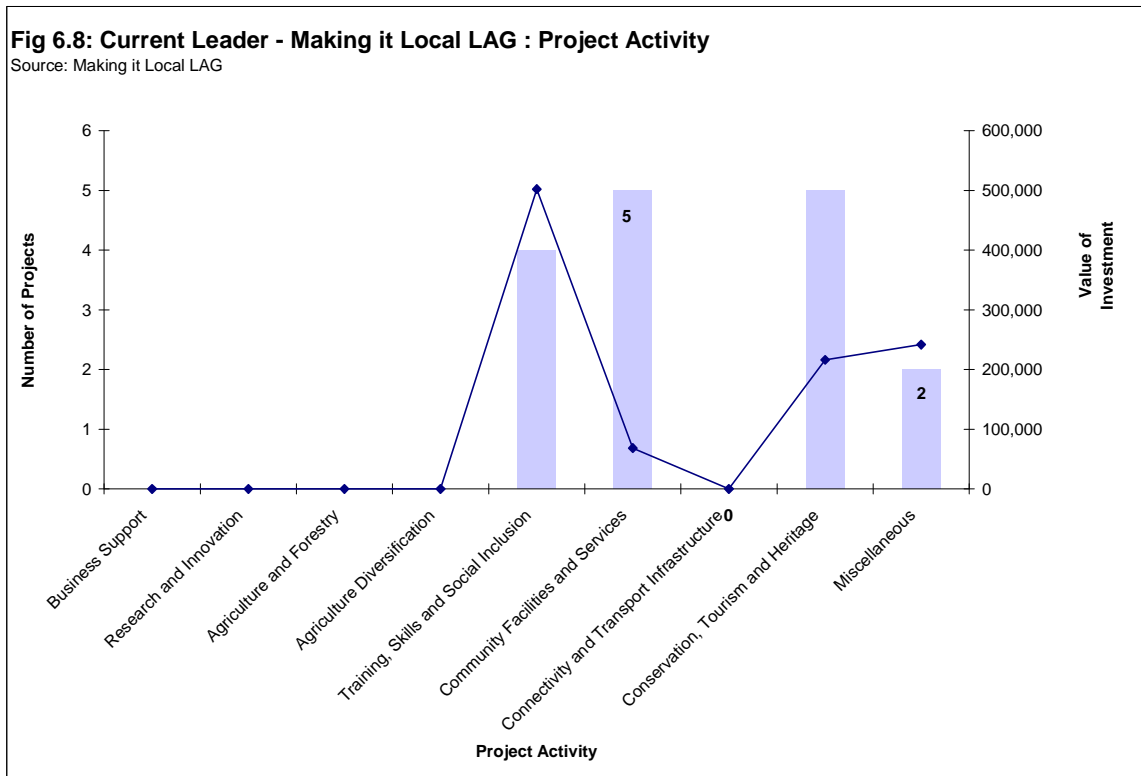
Summary

6.15   The review of spend at the local level reveals that there considerable variations in project activity locally that respond to the aims and objectives of the local area articulated through Local Action Groups. This is the case for both LEADER+ and to date under the current LEADER approach. The considerable challenges facing the agricultural sector in Cumbria, for example, as a result of the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001 and its aftermath resulted in a very tailored LEADER+ responses, with more than 50% of LAG spend on projects to support the agricultural sector.

6.16   There has and continues to be clear variation in the focus of activities, depending on the local objectives. This has been the case in both the phases of LEADER examined in this Chapter. For example, the specific objectives in the Peak District Rural Action Zone under the current LEADER approach to increase the economic viability of land-based businesses and to develop the micro-enterprise base are the reasons why 87% of spend of spend committed and defrayed to date have been on business support.

6.17   In terms of impact, the context, quality of projects and the inter-relationship between projects (and how well they are aligned behind the local objectives), will all be crucially important. However, it is clear that there are quite significant variations in both the aspirations and types of activity supported in different local areas.

7   Conclusions

7.1   This final chapter provides an overview of the key messages that have been drawn from this brief analysis of the story of LEADER in England. The conclusions draw out the changes over time in terms of objectives, scale and management/administration and the ways in which this has impacted on the different range and balance of interventions supported.

Resources and Coverage

7.2   **Since the implementation of LEADER in England in 1991, the geographic coverage and level of resources with each successive phase has increased** and in many phases significantly so. The LEADER I pilot in the South West provided the introduction needed to implement LEADER in other parts of the country through LEADER II, which built upon lessons learned in the pilot programme and which represented the 20 fold increase on the previous round and which reflected the perceived success of the pilot programme .

7.3   The LEADER+ programme was considerably larger than the previous two phases, and at £112m was six times larger than LEADER II. This included £20m for delegated projects focused on very local activities. The number of LAG groups also increased by 5 groups to 26. The European Commission were keen to extend LEADER+ to as many rural areas as possible, and not just to deprived rural areas, and continued to view LEADER as an important and valuable Community Initiative.

7.4   The current LEADER approach is set to increase resources further, potentially by as much as £60m and this is indicative of the desire to see the LEADER approach mainstreamed into rural programme delivery. The number of LAGs has increased considerably again, reflecting this intention and the increased funding. The current phase has seen a rapid and significant growth in the infrastructure, which has represented a major challenge to the RDAs as the new accountable bodies in terms of both management and administration.

Changing Management and Administration

7.5   LEADER I, II and LEADER+ were all developed as stand-alone 'programmes' of investment, with their own allocation of EU Structural Fund resources and their own arrangements for match-funding of public and private sector investment. LEADER II was regarded as particularly complex in terms of its management and administration, due to the various accountable bodies and managing authorities in place at the European and national level and the varying Structural Funds involved (ERDF, ESF and EAGGF). The process of administration was simplified under LEADER+ in England with the assignment of Defra to manage the programme via regional government offices as the accountable bodies and the concentration of Structural Funds through EAGGF as a single Fund rather than the three under LEADER II.

7.6   **The current LEADER approach is a major departure from previous Community Initiative 'programmes' to a mainstreamed delivery mechanism for rural development.** Following CAP reforms in 2003 and 2004, and the introduction of the EAFRD as a financial instrument, the LEADER approach is now the delivery mechanism for the Rural Development

Programme for England (RDPE). It is still administered at the national level by Defra however at the regional level RDAs are now the accountable bodies. LEADER no longer has a separate programme budget, rather it is expected that the approach delivers activity under Axis 3 relating to rural quality of life improvements and Axis 1, improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector,

The 'Bottom up' Approach and Innovation

7.7   There have been common threads running through LEADER since its inception in 1991 through to the present. **The overall policy emphases of the "bottom-up", community partnership-based approach and the desire for project and process innovation at the local level have remained explicit LEADER objectives.** The commitments from LEADER I onwards to focus on the social, economic and environmental regeneration of rural communities through a "bottom-up" approach have remained, although the delivery and funding arrangements have varied over time.

7.8   The 2000-2006 LEADER+ in England was a separate programme, however it built upon the two preceding programmes and continued the focus on innovative, local area based development plans implemented by local people working in partnership. Significant emphasis was placed upon networking and learning from others' experiences in LEADER+.   This feature has continued into the current LEADER approach. Europe-wide, early evaluations of LEADER indicated significant levels of innovation (in projects and delivery) and there was evidence of innovation in LEADER+, for example through trans-national co-operation between LAGs. Under the current phase, evidence to date of innovation is more limited (through the project expenditure analysis) although this innovative projects will take longer to be developed and implemented.

The Changing Balance of Spend

7.9   The review has focused on the changing patterns of investment through LEADER over time. This helps to provide a backdrop to the economic impact assessment in the main report and the two good practice reviews produced alongside this analysis. **There have been quite substantial changes to the balance of spend between social, economic, environmental and agricultural objectives** between the successive phases.

7.10   LEADER II, for example, with 70% of the EU resources through ERDF, was more focused on economic development objectives, and the current LEADER approach managed by the RDAs also has a stronger economic remit and rationale. These have supported more business-focused activity compared to the 2000-20006 LEADER + which supported a broader range of objectives. This is not to say that these two phases generate greater economic impact – the business support may duplicate existing provision for example which would reduce net impacts. Nonetheless, it is clear support for the rural business community is a key feature of current LEADER.

High Levels of Tourism Project Support

7.11   The levels of LEADER spend on tourism and heritage interventions have been high since the start of LEADER. **From LEADER II onwards, spend on tourism and rural heritage has represented the greatest proportion of total expenditure**.

7.12   In LEADER II, tourism expenditure comprised 22.5% of overall spend. Tourism was also amongst the top priority themes for the 21 LEADER II LAGs who sought to make the most of natural and cultural resources including enhancing the value of sites. Support for tourism and rural heritage was also strong under LEADER+, where spend accounted for £26m, or 28.3% of total LEADER spend.

7.13   The trend is continuing under the current LEADER approach. Tourism and heritage projects (which include conservation projects such as community woodland) continue to account for the highest level of LEADER expenditure (£4.54m to date) and the highest number of projects. At 33.5% of the spend to date, this is the highest proportion of LEADER spend to date on these interventions. **Overall, LEADER appears to lend itself well to the support and development of local tourism and heritage related interventions, often with strong involvement from the local authorities**.

Growing levels of Business Support

7.14   **The proportion of LEADER spend on business support is higher now than at any time previously, accounting for 25% of all LEADER spend to date**. This follows LEADER+ where the proportion of spend on business activities fell to levels significantly below those in LEADER II which also had quite a strong business support focus. Given the likely increase in overall LEADER resources under the current RDPE, this would appear to represent a considerable increase in financial support for the local rural business base.

7.15   A higher proportion of spend on business support does not necessarily equate to higher economic impacts. The ex-post evaluation of LEADER II observed that while the programme may have been successful in engaging local communities to undertake activities that provide social benefit, the effectiveness of the programme as a process for changing the economic fortunes of rural areas was not clearly demonstrated. Although the level of economic development impact was less marked under LEADER II there was nonetheless a good level of project support for small firms. Conversely, the distribution of expenditure under LEADER+ appears much broader, hence the lower levels of support to businesses, although the programme may have provided more holistic or rounded levels of support.

Lower Training and Skills support through Current LEADER

7.16   **Spend on training and skills projects has reduced since LEADER II** which saw the highest proportion of funding spent in this category of all the LEADER phases (26%). The proportion of LEADER spend on training and skills to date under current LEADER has fallen to 7.5% (for LEADER+ it was 23%). This fall may well be attributable to changing delivery routes for training and skills projects at the regional level, with more sector specific training channelled through Axis 1 and not through the LEADER approach. The full scale of this apparent reduction cannot be fully assessed until the end of the programme when all funding allocations have been spent as there may be more skills projects proposed in the remaining years up to 2013.

Other Spending Changes

7.17   There are a number of other areas of spend increasing under current LEADER. Spend on community facilities has increased considerably since LEADER+ (from 7.2% of all spend) to 14.2% of spend on community facilities and related activities. This may partly reflect that LEADER+ supported a number of community facilities through the small delegated grants, which would in effect has increased the level of spend on this activity. The other area of growth in expenditure is agricultural diversification which has increased from 2.4% of spend in LEADER+ up to 8.1% of spend under the current LEADER approach, which may reflect the mainstreaming of LEADER in to the RDPE.

7.18   In general, these growth areas may reflect the flexibility of mainstreaming the approach to deliver across all axis of the RDPE which enables Axis 1 (improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector) projects to be delivered via the LEADER approach. The current arrangements provide flexibility to deliver agricultural-related and other support through the LEADER approach at the local level.

Flexibility to Respond to Local Needs

7.19   The review of spend at the local level revealed that there have been considerable variations in the balance project activity at the LAG level in each of the LEADER phases. To a large extent, this reflects the ability of LEADER to respond to local priorities and objectives. A number of the LAG spend profiles show the balance of projects and resources towards one or two key areas of intervention, for example tourism/heritage or support to the businesses base, or support to develop local skills. What is not clear, and it will be for the impact assessment to add commentary on this (along with the mid-term evaluation of the RDPE for current LEADER), is the extent to which the priorities have truly been shaped by the local communities, the degree to which they match local strategic priorities and the extent to which the priorities have been more influenced by local or regional government

Concluding Remark

7.20   LEADER over time has been an important source of funding for some rural communities and Local Action Groups have been a feature of LEADER-supported rural development from the mid 1990's in many areas. The approach has sought to give local communities the opportunity to influence and shape local priorities within a formalised structure. The analysis of interventions over this time, however, indicates shifts in the balance of LEADER activities depending on the phase of LEADER and management and wider programme influences.

7.21   The balance of interventions, and the way in which LEADER has been delivered, are both likely to be factors influencing the economic impacts of the activities. It is likely there are a number of key factors that determine economic and wider impacts, including: the quality of the project interventions; the way in which the projects link together and support local policy/development strategy objectives; the amount of non-public sector investment and income; as well as factors influencing the sustainability of impact and 'ownership' i.e. who is involved and committed to the sustainability of rural communities over the longer-term. There are also considerable time and resources required to implement the LEADER approach. Nonetheless, it is evident LEADER has enabled a wide variety of activities to be supported which respond to a wide range of differing local rural circumstances.

Appendix A: Local Action Groups: LEADER + programme and the current RDPE LEADER Approach

LEADER +

Region/LAG
North East
North Pennines
North Northumberland
North West
Northern Marches
Cumbria Fells
Lancashire
East Midlands
Peak District RAZ
Rockingham Forest
Lincolnshire Fenland Action
Yorkshire
Penistone
Selby District
East Riding
South West
Somerset Levels and Moors
Dorset Chalk and Cheese
Blackdown Hills
North West Devon
Sustain the Plain
Teignbridge
East of England
The Broads and Rivers
The Fenlands LeAP
West Midlands
Herefordshire Rivers
South East
Isle of Wight RAZ
Mid Kent
New Forest
Wealden and Rother RR
West Oxfordshire Network
New Forest
Source: ADAS Consulting Ltd and SQW Ltd – Mid-Term Evaluation of the LEADER + Programme Dec 2003.

LEADER Approach 2007-2013

Region/LAG
North East
North Pennines
East Durham
North York Moors, Coast and Hills
Northumberland Coast and Lowlands
Northumberland Uplands
North West
Northern Marches
Cumbria Fells and Dales
Mersey
North Lancashire
Pennine Lancashire
West Lancashire
Solway, Border and Eden
East Midlands
Peak District Rural Action Zone
Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood
Bolsover and North East Derbyshire
Coastal Action Zone
Lindsey Action Zone
Wash Fens
North Northamptonshire
Yorkshire
Coast, Wolds, Wetlands and Waterways
East Peak Innovation Partnership
North York Moors, Coast and Hills
Northern Lincolnshire
South Pennines LEADER
Yorkshire Dales
South West
Somerset Levels and Moors
Dorset
Blackdown Hills and East Devon (Making it Local)
Torridge and North Devon
Plain Action
Clay Country
East Cornwall
Forest of Dean
Greater Dartmoor LEAF
Isles of Scilly
North Dorset and Wilts
North Wessex Downs

eko gen

South Devon Coastal
West Cornwall
Western Somerset
East of England
Chilterns
Eastern Plateau
Greensand Ridge
Norfolk Coast and Broads
The Brecks
The Fens Adventures
Waverney Valley
West Midlands
Central Warwickshire
Herefordshire
North Warwickshire
Northern Marches
Peak District Rural Action Zone
Shropshire Hills
Staffordshire
Worcestershire
South East
Isle of Wight RAZ
New Forest
Wealden and Rother RR
Aylesbury Vale and Rural Milton Keynes
Chilterns
Fieldfare Winchester and East Hampshire
Kent Downs and Marches
Loddon and Eversley
North Wessex Downs
South Oxfordshire
Surrey Hills
Sussex Downs and Low Weald
Three Harbours and a Coastal Plain
West Kent

Source: RDPE Network

Notes

LAG dis-continued in LEADER 2007 -2013
Name change/altered geography in LEADER 2007-2013
Newly formed action group for LEADER 2007
LAG established in LEADER+ and continued into LEADER 2007

Appendix B: RDPE Axis and Measures [27]

Measure/Axis
Axis 1: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector
111- Vocational training and information for agricultural, food and forestry sectors
114 - Use by farmers and foresters of advisory services
115 - Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services
121- farm modernisation
122- Improving the economic value of forests
123- Adding value to agricultural and forestry products
124- Cooperation for the development of new products
125- Infrastructure
Axis 2: Improving the environment and the countryside
212 – payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas
214 – agri-environment payments
215 – animal welfare
216 – support for non-productive investments
221 – first afforestation of agricultural land
223 – first afforestation of non-agricultural land
225 – forest environment payments
227 – support for non–productive investments (forestry)
Axis 3: Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy
311 - Diversification into non-agricultural activities
312 - Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises
313 - Encouragement for tourism activities
321 - Basic services
322 - Village renewal
323 - Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
331 - Training and information for economic actors
341 - Skills acquisition for preparation/ implementation of local development strategies
Axis 4: Implementation of the LEADER Approach
41 – local development strategies
411 - competitiveness
413 – quality of life
421 – transnational and inter-regional cooperation
431 – running the local action group
511 Technical assistance

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[27] Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005, 20th Sept 2005.

Appendix C: LEADER+ fields of Intervention

LEADER + Fields of Intervention[28]	
161	Investment in physical capital (plant and equipment, co-financing of state aid)
162	Environment-friendly technologies, clean and economical energy technologies
163	Business advisory services*
164	Shared business services**
166	Services in voluntary/third sector (providing care for dependants, health and safety, cultural activities)
167	SME- and craft-specific vocational training
171	Physical investment (information centres, tourist accommodation, catering, facilities)
172	Non-physical investment (development and provision of tourist services, sporting, cultural and leisure activities, heritage)
173	Shared services for the tourism industry (including promotional activities, networking, conferences and trade fairs)
22	Social inclusion
23	Developing educational and vocational training not linked to a specific sector (persons, firms)
24	Workforce flexibility, entrepreneurial activity, innovation, information and communication technologies (persons, firms)
25	Positive labour market actions for women
323	Services and applications for the citizen (health, administration, education)
324	Services and applications for SMEs (electronic commerce and transactions, education and training, networking)
354	Maintenance and restoration of the cultural heritage
36	Social and public health infrastructure
1309	Development and improvement of infrastructure connected with the development of agriculture
127	Improving and maintaining ecological stability of protected woodlands
128	Forestry-specific vocational training
322	Information and communication technology (including security and safe transmission measures)
353	Protection, improvement and regeneration of the natural environment
1304	Marketing of quality agricultural products
1305	Basic services for the rural economy and population
1306	Renovation and development of villages and protection and conservation of the rural heritage
1310	Encouragement for tourist activities
1312	Protection of the environment in connection with land, forestry and landscape conservation as well as with the improvement of animal welfare
1305-5	National networks (Action 3)
1307	Diversification of agricultural activities and activities close to agriculture, to provide multiple activities or alternative incomes
113	Agriculture-specific vocational training
114	Improvement of processing and marketing of agricultural products
333	Energy efficiency, cogeneration, energy control
414	Innovative actions
153	Business advisory services (including internationalisation, exporting and environmental management, purchase of technology)
319	Intelligent transport systems
123	Promoting new outlets for use and marketing of forestry products
415	Information to the public

[28] Annex IV of Commission Regulation (EC) No 438/2001.

181	Research projects based in universities and research institutes
182	Innovation and technology transfers, establishment of networks and partnerships between businesses and/or research institutes
111	Investments in agricultural holdings
1311	Encouragement for craft activities related to farms
1313	Restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and introducing appropriate prevention instruments
1314	Financial engineering
122	Improving the harvesting, processing and marketing of forestry products
332	Renewable sources of energy (solar power, wind power, hydroelectricity,biomass)
174	Tourism-specific vocational training
1303	Setting up of farm relief and farm management services
318	Multimodal Transport
1305-1	LAG overhead costs
413	Studies
316	Waterways
3123	Cycle Tracks
21	Labour Market Policy

Appendix D: LEADER II Sub-measures

LEADER II Sub-measures
Measure A: the acquisition of skills – *This provided for the analysis of local needs, engaging people in the development process and providing them with relevant skills, developing the local partnership and strategy and securing match funding.*
Measure B – Rural Innovation programmes – *Provided for support for local action and investment which should have three key features:* • *Innovation* • *Capability of serving as models of good practice.* • *Transferability*   *These features were implemented as eligibility criteria for projects to be eligible for LEADER II support. The activities eligible for support were specified under six sub-measures: these were:*
B1 – technical support for rural development, *covering technical assistance for those running projects, for small firms, awareness raising about the area's potential and operational expenditure associated with running the programme.*
B2 – training and recruitment assistance, *covering training for those involved in delivering the programme and projects, development training, the involvement of colleagues and trainers in the process and integrating people into working life.*
B3 – rural tourism *covering small scale innovative investment including development of new products, small scale infrastructure, historic buildings and sites and promotion and marketing*
B4 – small firms, craft enterprises and local services, *including access to a range of business development services, the establishment of new services, innovative investment, teleworking and business start ups.*
B5 – local exploitation and marketing of agricultural, forestry and fisheries products *including market studies, various support for the development, promotion and marketing of local products and various forms of agricultural diversification.*
B6 – preservation and improvement of the environment *and living conditions including, protection and rehabilitation of the natural and cultural environment, support for development and promotion of culture and cultural products and recycling and energy production.*
Measure C: Transnational co-operation – *designed to support projects involving beneficiaries in at least two member States. The intention was to support the joint design, production and marketing of goods or services in any area of rural development; the innovation was to lie in the co-operation. This activity was not to be mandatory but was expected to emerge and develop as the EU Network developed.*