

South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategy (SALDS) Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

1) Introduction

This document sets out the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the SALDS. Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out in three areas:

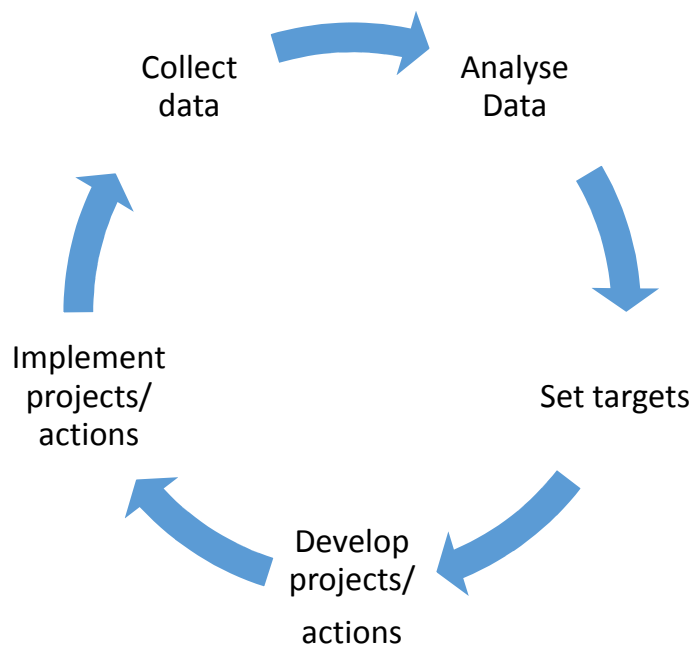
- i) Implementation of the Local Development Strategy
- ii) Implementation of projects
- iii) Governance of SALDS

The objectives of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan are to:

- i) Quantify outputs, outcomes and results from project to strategy level
- ii) Demonstrate the contribution of funds to wider local, national and European policy objectives
- iii) Assess the effectiveness of interventions and the overall strategy
- iv) Provide an evidence base upon which to review and revise the strategy
- v) Provide the LAG/FLAG with the information required to ensure that the strategy is delivered
- vi) Contribute to the wider evaluation of the Scotland Rural Development Programme

2) Governance and Co-ordination

The implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be the responsibility of the South Aberdeenshire Local Action Group (SALAG) and North East Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG). At an operational level, the Plan will be co-ordinated by the Lead Partner's Team Manager – European Policy and Programmes. Regular reports will be given to SALAG and NESFLAG on the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and a wide range of stakeholders will be involved in the monitoring and evaluation process including SALAG members, secretariat staff and applicants. The Monitoring and Evaluation Process will be as follows:



Collect Data

This will be the responsibility of the Lead Partner, who will collect baseline data from a variety of sources.

Local Development Strategy – initially data will be collected from direct engagement with communities/businesses (workshops, surveys etc.); and desktop research into strategies and statistical sources undertaken by independent consultants. As the LDS is implemented, data will be updated and expanded to take account of the results of projects/actions and evaluation of the effectiveness of LAG governance structures. Direct engagement with LAG members, project sponsors and other key stakeholders will also be facilitated through surveys and workshops.

Projects/actions – data will initially be collected from project sponsors through application forms, business plans and supporting documentation. The information contained in these documents is likely to come from direct engagement with communities/businesses; strategies and statistical sources. As projects are implemented, additional data will be collated through progress reports supplied by project sponsors and monitoring visits undertaken by the SALAG and NESFLAG Co-ordinators and Scottish Government Officials. Data will be assessed to ensure that it is realistic, equitable and objective.

LAG Governance – data will be based on direct engagement with SALAG and NESFLAG members and other stakeholders (e.g. through surveys, workshops etc.).

Analyse Data

This will be the responsibility of the Lead Partner and LAG Members.

Local Development Strategy – initially data will be analysed to identify themes and priorities for the LDS by independent consultants. The outcomes of projects/actions and changing circumstances in the LAG area will be analysed by the Lead Partner to assist the LAG to revise/reorientate the LDS and/or funding allocations where appropriate.

Projects/actions – the online data capture system and spreadsheets maintained by the Lead Partner will be used to analyse quantitative data from project progress reports. Qualitative data, collated through monitoring visits undertaken by the SALAG and NESFLAG Co-ordinators will be analysed to identify any themes not captured through project reports.

LAG Governance – Feedback from LAG members, Auditors and other stakeholders will be analysed to identify ways to improve LAG governance structures.

Quarterly reports on the implementation of projects/actions and their contribution to the wider LDS will be prepared by the Lead Partner for SALAG and NESFLAG. A more detailed annual report will also be produced by the Lead Partner which will also take into account governance issues. A more thorough mid-term review of the LDS will be undertaken by 2018.

Set Targets

This will be the responsibility of the Lead Partner and LAG Members.

Local Development Strategy – based on available data, SALAG and NESFLAG will set initial targets for each LDS priority, taking into account the indicative budget for the LDS. Progress towards reaching these targets will be presented to the LAG by the Lead Partner through quarterly and annual reports which will assist the LAG to focus attention/commission activity to meet certain targets or revise/reorient targets as and when appropriate.

Projects/actions – analysis of project outcomes will be used to help SALAG and NESFLAG to agree and set realistic targets for individual project/actions. Targets will be agreed between project sponsors and SALAG/NESFLAG and set out in offer of grant letters.

LAG Governance – targets will be identified to improve the functioning of the LAG as and when appropriate.

Develop Projects/Actions

This will be the responsibility of the LAG and external stakeholders.

Local Development Strategy – a range of projects/actions will be supported which fit the aims and objectives of the South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategy. The anticipated outcomes of projects/actions on LDS targets will be analysed and

highlighted to the (F)LAG by the Co-ordinator when decisions are made on funding allocations.

Projects/actions – The development of these projects/actions will initially be undertaken by external stakeholders who will apply for grants to the SALAG or NESFLAG. Any areas where LDS targets are not being met by externally-led projects alone will be highlighted to the LAG through regular monitoring reports. SALAG/NESFLAG may then wish to develop and commission its own projects/action to ensure that targets set out in the Local Development Strategy are met or encourage further applications

LAG Governance – where a need is identified to amend or improve (F)LAG governance structures, the (F)LAG will identify actions which should be taken forward to achieve this.

Implement Projects/Actions

This will be the responsibility of external stakeholders/contractors.

Local Development Strategy – the anticipated outcomes from project plans/applications will be cross referenced with actual performance data provided through quarterly progress reports and monitoring visits. This information will be presented to the SALAG/NESFLAG to help identify any areas which require intervention.

Projects/actions – data will be collected on the outcomes of projects/actions through quarterly progress reports and monitoring visits. Evidence of outcomes will also be collated. Monitoring of projects will be carried out in line with Managing Authority guidance and requirements.

LAG Governance – projects/actions undertaken to improve (F)LAG governance structures will be evaluated on completion.

3) Specific Themes

Monitoring and Evaluation will be carried out on the following themes:

i) SMART Objectives

- Number of projects supported
- Number of individuals benefiting from projects
- Number of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises benefiting from projects
- Number of new or enhanced facilities supported
- Number of new products/services created
- Number of new companies established
- Number of new jobs created

- Number of new training initiatives supported
- Number of people receiving training and/or developing new skills

ii) Qualitative Outcomes

- Better connected communities
- More competitive economic sectors and businesses
- More sustainable and energy efficient communities
- Healthier people who are more engaged in the cultural fabric of their communities
- More innovative and knowledgeable communities
- Strong, resilient and empowered communities and businesses

ii) Cross-cutting Themes

- Innovation
- Sustainability
- Equal Opportunities
- Community Empowerment and Social Capital

iii) Financial Performance

- Budget commitment
- Budget spend
- Irregularities

iv) (F)LAG Governance

- Participation of (F)LAG Members in decision-making/meetings
- Satisfaction of (F)LAG Members with operational issues
- Satisfaction of project applicant with operational issues
- Time taken to process/pay project claims
- Rating of (F)LAG and Accountable Body performance by Managing Authority (Scottish Government)

4) Data Requirements

The following data will be required:

- Statistical information on the South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategy area, which will be collated during the preparation of the LDS using official Government statistics.
- LDS targets, which will be set during the preparation of the LDS and may be revised throughout the implementation of the programmes.

- Anticipated project/action outcomes and spend which will be supplied and evidenced by sponsors/contractors carrying out projects through applications/project specifications.
- Actual project/action outcomes and spend which will be supplied and evidenced by sponsors/contractors carrying out projects through quarterly progress reports and monitoring visits.
- Records of participation of LAG Members in meetings/project scoring activities, which will be collated by the Secretariat.
- Performance information on the processing of project claims, which will be collated by the Secretariat.
- Opinions of LAG Members, the Managing Authority and other stakeholders, which will be collated through surveys, workshops etc.

5) Tools and Methods

The following tools and methods will be used to support Monitoring and Evaluation:

- i) **Progress Reports** will be submitted quarterly by project applicants/contractors and will provide updates on outcomes as well as expenditure.
- ii) **Monitoring Visits** will be carried out by the Lead Partner and the Managing Authority (Scottish Government) on projects/actions in line with Managing Authority guidance and procedures
- iii) **Quarterly Reports** will be prepared by the Lead Partner and presented to the (F)LAG on the performance of projects/actions and the overall delivery of the Local Development Strategy. This will be based on progress reports and monitoring visits.
- iv) **Periodic Reports** will be prepared by the Lead Partner and submitted to the Managing Authority as per their guidance, requirements and templates.
- v) An **Annual Report** will be prepared by the Lead Partner and presented to the LAG on the overall delivery of the Local Development Strategy and (F)LAG Governance issues. This will be based on progress reports, monitoring visits, audits and stakeholder engagement.
- vi) A **Mid-term Review** of the delivery of CLLD programmes in the South Aberdeenshire area will be undertaken by the end of 2018. This will be based on data collated through progress reports, monitoring visits, audits and stakeholder engagement. It will aim to assist the SALAG and NESFLAG to update and revise the LDS if required.
- vii) A **Final Review** of the delivery of CLLD programmes in the South Aberdeenshire area will be undertaken by the end of 2020. This will be based on data collated through progress reports, monitoring visits, audits and stakeholder engagement. It will aim to highlight the strengths and weaknesses

of the programme and provide evidence to support the use of the CLLD model of delivering funds.

6) Timeline and Milestones

| Year | Quarter | Activity |
|------|---------|---|
| 2015 | | |
| | 2 | Milestone - Finalisation of LDS, including compilation of baseline data and selection of indicators and targets Milestone - Approval of LDS Milestone – approval of Monitoring and Evaluation and Communications Plans |
| | 3 | Milestone - Launch of programme (F)LAG Quarterly Report Reports to Managing Authority |
| | 4 | Milestone – 1 st Application Round LAG Quarterly Report Reports to Managing Authority |
| 2016 | 1 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Annual Report |
| | 2 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority |
| | 3 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority Internal audit and certification |
| | 4 | Project progress reports LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority Milestone – commitment of 45% of budget Milestone – spend of 26% of budget Milestone – achievement of 20% of LDS outcomes Annual satisfaction survey |
| 2017 | 1 | (F)LAG Annual Report Project progress reports Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority |
| | 2 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority |
| | 3 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report |

| | | |
|------|---|---|
| | | Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority Internal audit and certification |
| | 4 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority Milestone – commitment of 65% of budget Milestone – spend of 45% of budget Milestone – achievement of 40% of LDS outcomes Annual satisfaction survey |
| 2018 | 1 | (F)LAG Annual Report Project progress reports Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority |
| | 2 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority |
| | 3 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority Internal audit and certification |
| | 4 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority Milestone – annual commitment of 85% of budget Milestone – annual spend of 65% of budget Milestone – achievement of 60% of LDS outcomes Milestone – Programme mid-term review |
| 2019 | 1 | (F)LAG Annual Report Project progress reports Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority Milestone – revision of LDS |
| | 2 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority |
| | 3 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority Internal audit and certification |
| | 4 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority |

| | | |
|------|---|---|
| | | Milestone – annual commitment of 100% of budget Milestone – annual spend of 85% of budget Milestone – achievement of 80% of LDS outcomes Annual satisfaction survey |
| 2020 | 1 | (F)LAG Annual Report Project progress reports Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority |
| | 2 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority |
| | 3 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority Internal audit and certification |
| | 4 | Project progress reports (F)LAG Quarterly Report Monitoring visits Reports to Managing Authority Milestone – annual spend of 100% of budget Milestone – achievement of 100% of LDS outcomes Milestone – programme closure Milestone – programme final review |

7) Communication

The outcomes of the Monitoring and Evaluation plan will be disseminated both within and beyond the LAG/FLAG through the mechanisms set out in the Communication Plan. A range of communication methods will be used to gather, analyse and disseminate the results of the plan, such as:

- i) Data capture system to record project outputs and expenditure
- ii) Quarterly and Annual reports to the (Fisheries) Local Action Group
- iii) Periodic reports to the Managing Authority
- iv) Direct engagement with stakeholders through events, meetings and project monitoring
- v) Mid-term and final evaluations which will be disseminated electronically to key stakeholders
- vi) Meetings and workshops with (F)LAG Members and/or other stakeholders
- vii) Participation in Scottish Government networks (e.g. Co-ordinators, Chairs)
- viii) The use of websites and social media
- ix) Engagement with the National Rural Network

8) Resources

The resources required to implement the Monitoring and Evaluation plan are set out in the Administration Budget for the SALDS. These are summarised as follows:

| Item | Estimated Cost |
|------------------------|---|
| Staffing | 20% of staff time = £124,829 (South) |
| Travel and subsistence | 50% of staff travel & subsistence = £6,300 (each) + 10% of catering for meetings = £900 (each) |
| Premises & overheads | 10% of rental of meeting rooms = £900 (each) |
| Marketing | 50% of publications = £1,688 (each) 10% of events = £900 (each) |
| Consultancy | 100% of consultancy = £20,000 (each) |
| Total | £155,517 (South) |