

# FLAG Cooperation in the UK

## **Introduction**

Cooperation is organized differently in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales - at Regional level in Scotland and England, while Wales and Northern Ireland leave cooperation up to the FLAGs to organize. The programme authorities are keen that cooperation projects come from the bottom up so, along with the fact that there is little experience in FLAG cooperation in the UK, they foresee that any cooperation projects are likely to emerge later in the programming period.

In Scotland, the **priority is for inter-territorial cooperation**, with Northern Ireland favoring projects within the UK or Republic of Ireland but is open to projects from any MS as long as the case is made.

In terms of themes, no specific areas have been pre-identified and FLAGs will be open to propose projects that they consider most relevant to enhancing their local development strategies.

At present, only Scotland has identified a cooperation budget (**€100,000 for its 8 FLAGs**), which will be held centrally by the Intermediate Body. England foresees a very limited budget for cooperation, which will also be managed centrally. Cooperation budgets in Wales and Northern Ireland are incorporated into FLAG budgets but there is no stipulated percentage or amount 'ring fenced' for cooperation.

The UK Operational Programme has a target of 14 cooperation projects, indicating that not all FLAGs will be involved in cooperation projects.

Number of FLAGs expected in the UK: 19

## **Organising Cooperation**

- In England and Scotland, the Intermediate Body will hold cooperation funds centrally
- In Northern Ireland and Wales, cooperation is organised by the individual FLAGs which can choose to allocate part of their individual FLAG budgets to cooperation projects.
- The UK is still in the process of developing the guidance on cooperation which will provide further details on delivery process, including when calls are issued and approval stages.

## **Possible Partners**

- Cooperation projects across the whole of the UK can be implemented by the FLAGs, LEADER LAGs or other NGOs.
- All UK FLAGs can cooperate with partners from CLLD groups funded by all European Structural and Investment Funds and/or with non-EU funded CLLD-type public-private partnerships.
- Welsh and Northern Irish FLAGs will be able to cooperate with partners within the EU and beyond, while Scottish FLAGs will only be able to cooperate with partners within the EU. The details of who English FLAGs can cooperate with have yet to be defined.

## **Eligibility and Financing Rules**

- Cooperation projects are subject to the same financing rules as any other FLAG project
- Details on preparatory support for cooperation projects will be included in the final guidance.

## **For any further information or assistance for cooperation in Ireland...**

There is currently no National Network in the UK but the four Intermediate Bodies are available for additional information.

England: [graeme.high@marinemanagement.co.uk](mailto:graeme.high@marinemanagement.co.uk)

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