

Governance Structure of the Wales Rural Network

The WRN Steering Group

Context

The Wales Rural Development Programme (RDP) is designed around sustainable development and the following three EU RDP priorities:

- Fostering the competitiveness of agriculture;
- Ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and climate action
- Achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities, including the creation and maintenance of employment.

WRN – that aims to improve the implementation of the RDP - is governed by a Steering Group (SG). The WRN Steering group membership has been agreed and meet for the first time in June 2016.

Role of the Steering Group

- The role of the SG is to **direct activities, identify priorities and to advise** / assist developing a work-plan for the Wales Rural Network.

Members of the SG

- In accordance with the RDP document, a Wales Rural Network Steering Group (SG) of up to **twelve members** was established. In addition to these 12 stakeholder members of the SG, the WRN Support Unit Manager is a member of the SG, and Welsh Government in its capacity as Managing Authority, has appointed a senior official to represent its interests on the SG.
- Membership of the SG was drawn from the **full range of rural development interests** forming the Wales Rural Network and the Programme Managing Authority.
- Nominations and/or applications were invited from all stakeholders to represent one or more of the RDP priorities on the SG. There was also potential for stakeholders representing each 'activity area' to come together to provide suitable nominations.
- Taking account of appropriate geographical and gender balance, four members from the wider WRN were selected by an independent panel to represent each of the three RDP priority areas.
- The SG also has the power to invite **additional members**, as required on a task and finish basis to undertake specific items of work.
- A commitment of approximately twelve hours per quarter is envisaged to cover preparation, travel and meetings, including presentations by funded projects and study visits. Members will be expected to serve for an initial period of two years although re-election will be allowed once, subject to satisfactory review as determined by the Chair and managing authority.

Chair

- The Chair must be able to provide **strategic direction** for the SG and be committed to delivering the agreed work-plan. S/he will be selected from within the membership of the Steering Group but will not be a Welsh Government employee.
- The Chair need not necessarily be drawn from the membership of the Programme Monitoring Committee for European Structural and Investment Funds but it is essential that s/he is able to represent the interests of the SG and maintain good relationships with that body.

Secretariat: Secretariat functions will be provided by Wales Rural Network Support Unit (WRNSU).