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EUROPEAN FISHERIES FUND: Axis 4

Business Plan

To be completed by Lead Partner:

Lead Partner (Organisation name)	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Fisheries area	Outer Hebrides
Partnership name	Outer Hebrides Fisheries Local Action Group

Official use only:

Strategy number (serial number/code)	
Received (date)	
Approved (date)	

Form to be filled in and returned by e-mail or post to:

Susan Ewart
Marine Scotland,
Area 1B . South,
Victoria Quay,
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

1. Description of the delivery process.

Administrative and financial lead body

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is the local authority for the Outer Hebrides and will act as the accountable body for the administrative and financial management of the FLAG programme.

The Comhairle is the lead agency on Community Planning in the Outer Hebrides and brings together the public, private sector, voluntary sector partners and the community to agree priorities on the planning and provision of services ensuring the most effective delivery of services and increase the benefits to the community.

Within the Comhairle the Development Department focuses on the regeneration and ongoing development of the economy and communities of the Outer Hebrides and also has a lead role in key strategic projects. It has successfully bid for and delivered major European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF) and European Fisheries Fund (EFF) projects and is also the lead agency and secretariat for the Outer Hebrides LEADER Programme.

FLAG structure and operation

FLAG members:

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Outer Hebrides LEADER Local Action Group
Outer Hebrides Tourism Industry Association
Outer Hebrides Inshore Fisheries Group
Namara Projects

The basis of FLAG membership is representative; each member will represent the direct interest of their organisation in respect of the overall aims and objectives of the FLAG programme.

The principal responsibilities of the FLAG include strategic monitoring, promoting the programme, community engagement; overseeing management and progress; networking; liaison; and supporting the work of the staff.

Decision making body

The Comhairle as lead partner agency will propose a Scheme of Administration to ensure that there is a streamlined mechanism for assessing projects speedily, communicating FLAG decisions/approvals to applicants, effectively managing grant offer and acceptance, the release of funds and the processing of claims.

FLAG partners can also act in an advisory capacity to potential project applicants.

With the extent of potential FLAG funding and expected number of applications all project decisions will be ratified by the FLAG group.

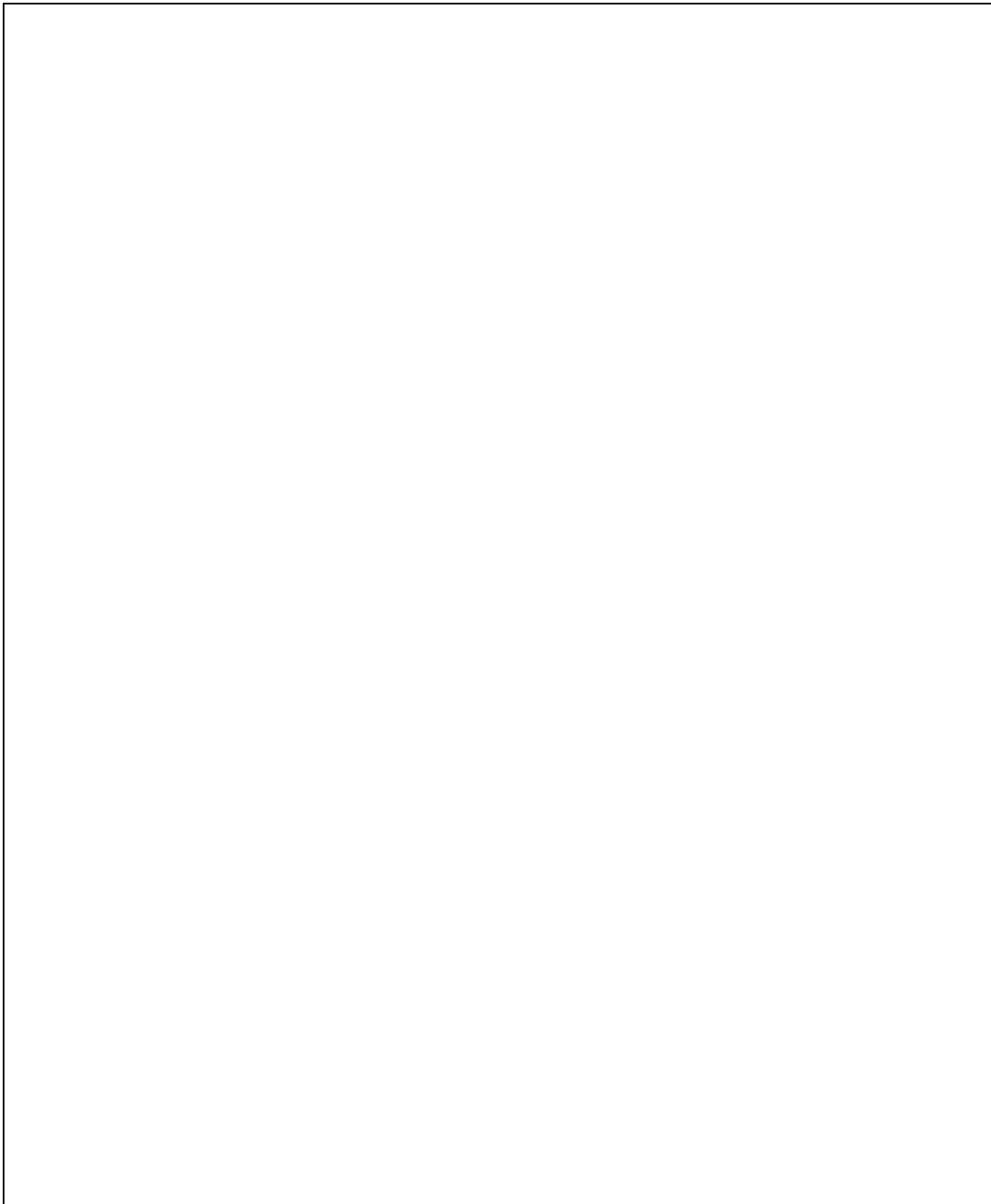
Operational complementarity

The proposed FLAG membership ensures complementarity with other programmes and other European funded initiatives such as LEADER and EFF Axes 1, 2 and 3. Members of the FLAG are also members of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership, Outer Hebrides LEADER LAG, the Outer Hebrides Inshore Fisheries Group and Western Isles Fishermen's Association.

Working with the community

Once the FLAG strategy is approved a series of public meeting information events will be arranged to launch the programme outlining its EC, Scottish and local aims and objectives. The meetings will be used to inform communities of the process to date, the strategy areas identified for development and the eligible measures and resources available to implement the strategy.

To ensure the wider community remains involved and engaged in the EFF Axis 4 process the FLAG will arrange periodic public meetings across the islands to confirm progress made to date, review strategy and incorporate feedback where required. Existing agency and community group meetings and networks will also be used to disseminate information and ensure minimum replication of meeting attendance.



2. FLAG Administration & Financial arrangements

FLAG staff

The Outer Hebrides FLAG programme is staffed by a total of 0.50 FTE employees as follows:

- 1 x 0.25 FTE FLAG Co-ordinator
- 1 x 0.25 FTE FLAG Development Assistant

The Co-ordinator is responsible for the overall management and delivery of the FLAG programme along with overseeing and processing the projects and enquiries on an island wide basis. The Development Assistant deals with all administrative duties and processes that arise from the programme together with supervising the claims process.

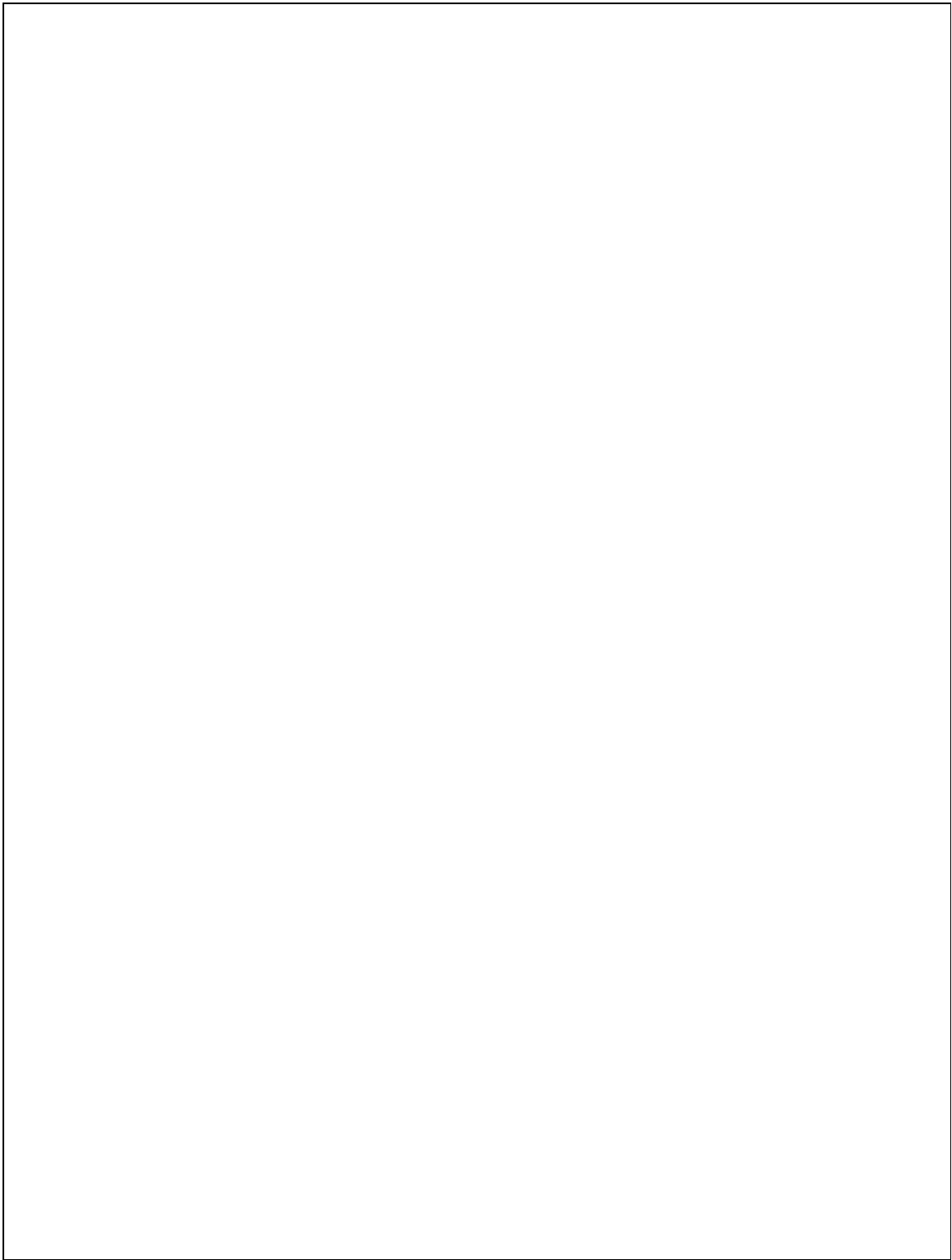
Draft job descriptions for the FLAG Co-ordinator and Development Assistant are in Appendix 2. The Development Assistant is line managed by the FLAG Co-ordinator who will be responsible to the Outer Hebrides FLAG. However on a day to day line management basis the Co-ordinator will be responsible to the Director of Development within Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. The Co-ordinator will also act as liaison between the FLAG and the Scottish Government's Fishing Communities and Inshore Management team who manage the FLAG remit on behalf of the European Commission

Finance and Administrative Structure

Finance	Administration
FLAG accountable body: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Fisheries Local Action Group Fisheries Local Action Group (responsible for delivery of EFF Axis 4 Local Development Strategy/Business Plan)
Managing Authority: Scottish Government (Marine Scotland)	FLAG Co-ordinator FLAG Development Assistant)

State Aids

Any project application under EFF Axis 4 will initially be assessed by the FLAG Co-ordinator in relation to State Aid issues. The Five State Aid tests will be applied to the project with any unresolved or uncertain issues raised with the State Aid Unit in Glasgow for final advice on project eligibility.



3. Outline of activities for further FLAG development

Establishing and growing the FLAG

Once the Outer Hebrides FLAG strategy is approved a series of briefing/capacity building meetings will be arranged for FLAG members. This will build on initial FLAG Steering Group meetings and develop from steering group stage to full FLAG operation.

From this FLAG members will review and consider organisational structure, resources and systems, staff employment and development, staff and FLAG member training, continuous improvement reviews and any partnership expansion required and capacity building and community engagement.

4. Project development, application and approval procedure

Project development

Initially the FLAG will consider three approaches to encouraging project development:

- Strategic projects initiated and/or developed by the FLAG
- Directly supporting project development in priority areas
- Open calls for project proposals

Following an initial period of six months the FLAG will revisit the approach to project development and assess whether it secures sufficient project development or whether a more focussed approach is required.

Project application

Potential applicants will complete an Initial Enquiry Form and submit to the FLAG Co-ordinator for assessment. The FLAG Co-ordinator will discuss project eligibility with the applicants and provide an initial eligibility assessment based on Initial Enquiry Form information in relation to FLAG Development Strategy and Business Plan.

Applications will be accepted from micro, small and medium sized enterprises, agencies, properly constituted community groups and local authorities.

The FLAG Development Assistant will keep a register of all enquires and set up a tracking system to monitor project progression.

Once project eligibility is confirmed applicants will complete an application form with assistance available if required from FLAG Co-ordinator.

Project approval

On submission of a completed application the FLAG Co-ordinator will prepare a Project Appraisal Report and circulate with supporting documentation and Scoring Guidelines to FLAG members. Members will score the project as appropriate providing justification for their scores and indicating project approval or rejection.

A majority of LAG members must submit their approval or rejection recommendation for the decision to be ratified.

To ensure avoidance of any potential conflict of interest:

- Those involved in project development should not be involved in project appraisal
- Staff should only undertake technical appraisals or offer technical advice on a project
- A member of the project approval group with an interest in a project should declare that interest and withdraw while the application is considered

5 Project selection criteria

All FLAG project applicants require to demonstrate that the proposed project meets the eligibility criteria. Applications are accepted from micro, small and medium sized enterprises, properly constituted community groups and third sector organisations and the public sector and will be scored against FLAG criteria identified in the Development Strategy.

Projects selection will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Strategic fit and consistent with the Outer Hebrides FLAG strategy and Business Plan
- Aligned and compatible with local strategies and plans and help to meet local, national and EU priorities;
- Evidence of partnership and community consultation and involvement;
- Demonstrate extent to which project benefits fisheries area;
- Project management experience and ability to deliver project and outcomes;
- Demonstrate complementarity with other initiatives;
- Evidence of additionality and value for money;
- Innovation and illustration of how project addresses barriers to innovation;
- Environmental impact;
- Sustainability;
- Equal Opportunities.

The above scoring exercise is an important aspect of the project development process, but prior to that stage, FLAG staff will adopt a hands on role in helping, advising and supporting potential applicants to bring forward projects that are likely to be eligible and/or capable of being funded through the FLAG.

Another key role of the FLAG team is to sign-post projects as necessary. For example, projects that are ineligible under Axis 4 may be a better fit for other agency schemes or funding sources. Projects that are declined funding are provided with concise and transparent reasoning as to why it was not supported by the FLAG in accordance with EFF Axis 4 regulations and the Scottish Government and EU guidance.

6. Planned procedures for monitoring and evaluation

The Comhairle, as lead partner, is responsible for ensuring that overall audit monitoring and evaluation of the EFF Axis 4 Programme is undertaken, although FLAG staff are responsible for ensuring that an effective system for monitoring is implemented. FLAG staff will undertake monitoring and evaluation and visits will vary from project to project; additional visits can be requested by the FLAG.

In addition to individual project monitoring, the overall Outer Hebrides EFF Axis 4 programme will also be subject to monitoring and evaluation by Marine Scotland and the Comhairle's Internal Audit Team. FLAG officers will ensure that all procedures, projects and documentation is up to date and maintained in a central filing system.

It is anticipated that ongoing programme monitoring will:

- help to identify changes in prioritisation or strategic objectives as necessary;
- assess progress to date and identify sectoral areas for new or further development; and,
- enable overall impacts across the region to be assessed.

The Outer Hebrides FLAG will provide the Scottish Government with information required on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis as outlined in Appendix 1.

Claims and payment

Initial EFF Axis 4 grant payments will be made to applicants by the Comhairle as lead accountable body. Payments by the Scottish Government will be made following receipt of quarterly FLAG reports and will be based on EFF Axis 4 grant paid and FLAG expenditure in the quarter, up to the amount approved by the Scottish Government and subject to satisfactory performance.

7. Communication, information & publicity

The Outer Hebrides FLAG communications and publicity strategy involves promoting the awareness of the EFF Axis 4 Programme to the wider community within its geographical area. The aim is to publicise the FLAG and the programme's objectives and activities in the local communities, and to encourage project applications which can impact positively in the sustainable development of fisheries communities

The Outer Hebrides FLAG communications strategy is based on the following key principles:

- An EU-funded Sustainable Development Programme 2011-2013.
- Promotion of the EFF Axis 4 FLAG as an independent local agency partnership with its own staffing, structures and procedures.
- Promotional literature/publicity materials (bilingual where required).

The Outer Hebrides FLAG programme is promoted through the following key channels: general programme publicity, media relations and the use of existing networks.

General Programme Publicity

This includes the following key elements:

- The EFF Axis 4 Business Plan is made available through a dedicated EFF Axis 4 information site on the main Comhairle nan Eilean Siar website which will be updated periodically with relevant information.
- A local FLAG information sheet, will also be made available to assist communities and prospective applicants, outlining eligibility criteria, programme measures, etc.
- Distribution of specific FLAG leaflets, newsletters and related generic information throughout the area.
- Hosting and participation in FLAG network and local awareness-raising events/publications.
- Distribution of monthly approvals listings (applicant, level of award, etc). These are made available on the website for public viewing.

Media Relations

This includes the following key elements:

- Distribution of monthly approvals in the interests of accountability and openness through displaying them on the website
- Distribution of targeted press releases on approved projects for distribution to the press including local community newspapers
- Updating of website following each FLAG meeting with updated Minutes of meetings to ensure transparency.

8. Detailed financial information

Match funding for FLAG activities

FLAG activities will be match funded on a project by project basis relying on a range of potential match funders whose funding objectives, priorities and availability match project applications e.g. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage, Crown Estate Coastal Communities Fund, National Lottery, private sector and applicant's own funds.

Financial table for FLAG programme

See annexes A,B and C

Table 1: Total eligible costs (in €)

	Eligible measures	2011	2012	2013	Total cost
		£k	£k	£k	£k
(a)	strengthening the competitiveness of the fisheries areas;		17	75	92
(b)	restructuring and redirecting economic activities, in particular by promoting ecotourism, provided these actions do not result in an increase in fishing effort;				
(c)	diversifying activities through the promotion of multiple employment for fishers through the creation of additional jobs outside the fisheries sector;				
(d)	adding value to fisheries products;		40	93	133
(e)	supporting small fisheries and tourism related infrastructure and services for the benefit of small fisheries communities;		95	160	255
(f)	protecting the environment in fisheries areas to maintain its attractiveness, regenerating and developing coastal hamlets and villages with fisheries activities and protecting and enhancing the natural and architectural heritage;				
(g)	re-establishing the production potential in the fisheries sector when damaged by natural or industrial disasters;				
(h)	promoting inter-regional and trans-national cooperation among groups in fisheries areas, mainly through networking and disseminating best practice;		10	10	20
(i)	acquiring skills and facilitating the preparation and implementation of the local development strategy;				
(j)	contributing to the running costs of the groups.		15	10	25
	TOTAL		177	348	525
	Average grant rate %				

Table 2: Sources of funding for eligible costs: Main measures Year 2011 (in €)

	Eligible measures	EFF Axis 4 funding	Other public funding	Private funding	Total
(a)	strengthening the competitiveness of the fisheries areas;				
(b)	restructuring and redirecting economic activities, in particular by promoting eco-tourism, provided these actions do not				
(c)	diversifying activities through the promotion of multiple employment for fishers through the creation of additional jobs outside the fisheries sector;				
(d)	adding value to fisheries products;				
(e)	supporting small fisheries and tourism related infrastructure and services for the benefit of small fisheries communities;				
(f)	protecting the environment in fisheries areas to maintain its attractiveness, regenerating and developing coastal hamlets and villages with fisheries activities and protecting and enhancing the natural and architectural heritage;				
(g)	re-establishing the production potential in the fisheries sector when damaged by natural or industrial disasters;				
(h)	promoting inter-regional and trans-national cooperation among groups in fisheries areas, mainly through networking and disseminating best practice;				
(i)	acquiring skills and facilitating the preparation and implementation of the local development strategy;				
(j)	contributing to the running costs of the groups.				

Table 3: Sources of funding for eligible costs: Main measures Year 2012 (in €)

	Eligible measures	EFF Axis 4 funding	Other public funding	Private funding	Total
(a)	strengthening the competitiveness of the fisheries areas;	10	3	4	17
(b)	restructuring and redirecting economic activities, in particular by promoting eco-tourism, provided these actions do not				
(c)	diversifying activities through the promotion of multiple employment for fishers through the creation of additional jobs outside the fisheries sector;				
(d)	adding value to fisheries products;	15	5	20	40
(e)	supporting small fisheries and tourism related infrastructure and services for the benefit of small fisheries communities;	37	12	46	95
(f)	protecting the environment in fisheries areas to maintain its attractiveness, regenerating and developing coastal hamlets and villages with fisheries activities and protecting and enhancing the natural and architectural heritage;				
(g)	re-establishing the production potential in the fisheries sector when damaged by natural or industrial disasters;				
(h)	promoting inter-regional and trans-national cooperation among groups in fisheries areas, mainly through networking and disseminating best practice;	6	2	2	10
(i)	acquiring skills and facilitating the preparation and implementation of the local development strategy;				
(j)	contributing to the running costs of the groups.	12	3		15

Table 4: Sources of funding for eligible costs: Main measures Year 2013 (in €)

	Eligible measures	EFF Axis 4 funding	Other public funding	Private funding	Total
(a)	strengthening the competitiveness of the fisheries areas;	45	15	15	75
(b)	restructuring and redirecting economic activities, in particular by promoting eco-tourism, provided these actions do not				
(c)	diversifying activities through the promotion of multiple employment for fishers through the creation of additional jobs outside the fisheries sector;				
(d)	adding value to fisheries products;	35	12	46	93
(e)	supporting small fisheries and tourism related infrastructure and services for the benefit of small fisheries communities;	60	20	80	160
(f)	protecting the environment in fisheries areas to maintain its attractiveness, regenerating and developing coastal hamlets and villages with fisheries activities and protecting and enhancing the natural and architectural heritage;				
(g)	re-establishing the production potential in the fisheries sector when damaged by natural or industrial disasters;				
(h)	promoting inter-regional and trans-national cooperation among groups in fisheries areas, mainly through networking and disseminating best practice;	6	2	2	10
(i)	acquiring skills and facilitating the preparation and implementation of the local development strategy;				
(j)	contributing to the running costs of the groups.	7	3		10

Table 5: Funding profile (in €)

	Eligible measures	Total eligible expenditure (a)	Proposed average rate of grant (b)	FLAG Budget (= a x b)
(a)	strengthening the competitiveness of the fisheries areas;	92	80%	74
(b)	restructuring and redirecting economic activities, in particular by promoting eco-tourism, provided these actions do not			
(c)	diversifying activities through the promotion of multiple employment for fishers through the creation of additional jobs outside the fisheries sector;			
(d)	adding value to fisheries products;	133	50%	67
(e)	supporting small fisheries and tourism related infrastructure and services for the benefit of small fisheries communities;	255	50%	128
(f)	protecting the environment in fisheries areas to maintain its attractiveness, regenerating and developing coastal hamlets and villages with fisheries activities and protecting and enhancing the natural and architectural heritage;			
(g)	re-establishing the production potential in the fisheries sector when damaged by natural or industrial disasters;			
(h)	promoting inter-regional and trans-national cooperation among groups in fisheries areas, mainly through networking and disseminating best practice;	20	80%	16
(i)	acquiring skills and facilitating the preparation and implementation of the local development strategy;			
(j)	contributing to the running costs of the groups.	25	100%	25

Appendix 1

Monthly, Quarterly and Annual Reporting by the FLAG

The FLAG will provide the Scottish Government the following reports:

Monthly

Commitment made on projects including project name, location, FLAG project reference, name and address of beneficiary including post code, date of payments. In addition it will provide:

- Total grant committed to end of month.
- Total grant committed to date.
- Total grant offers accepted to end of month.
- Total grant offers accepted to date.
- Total grant paid to end of month.
- Total grant paid to date.
- Total grant offers NOT accepted to end of month.
- Total grant not yet claimed.

Quarterly

Expenditure to date, approved expenditure to date, amount approved, amount paid, sponsor body and other bodies involved and details of match funding and the progress to date on objectives and targets, specifically:

- Number of projects completed in the quarter and accumulative.
- Number of projects approved in the quarter and accumulative.
- Number of projects in progress.
- Details of committed expenditure in quarter and accumulative.
- Details of income and outgoings in quarter and accumulative broken down by Actions, Sub Actions and Themes where applicable.
- Progress towards outcomes by projects as reported in grant claims.
- Achievements towards targets as per indicators.

Annual

Annual expenditure, approved expenditure and projected expenditure for the following year including an overview of the progress the FLAG has made in meeting its priorities and targets.

FLAG Co-ordinator Job Description

Outline Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) Coordinator Job Description

PURPOSE

To have overall responsibility for the successful implementation of the FLAG Strategy and Business Plan, supporting the FLAG and its constituent groups.

PRINCIPAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Support the FLAG to co-ordinate and manage the implementation of the EFF Axis 4 Programme.
- Implement an efficient framework of procedures for the application, evaluation, monitoring and follow-up of projects benefiting from EFF Axis 4 funding.
- Prepare required financial reporting, monitoring or evaluation information for the FLAG in line with the lead partner Service Level Agreement with the Managing Authority, including submitting quarterly grant claims and the Annual Implementation Report.
- Ensure Managing Authority communications are conveyed as relevant to the FLAG and to lead partner support staff
- Ensure that the EFF Axis 4 Programme is properly publicised and promoted, and that the Communications and Publicity Strategy is implemented.
- Provide workshops and training courses to community groups and the wider public to build awareness and understanding of the Programme, and maintain this information through newsletters, web sites etc.
- Advise and assist project applicants to develop innovative EFF Axis 4 projects.
- Facilitate the development of partnership working by the FLAG.
- Maximise funding opportunities to the Programme through identifying appropriate sources of match funding.
- Ensure that the Programme takes account of the opportunities available through establishing links with other FLAG areas within the UK, and where appropriate transnational links.
- Ensure that any target groups identified in the Programme are given priority by the FLAG.
- Ensure that the Programme ~~horizontal~~ themes including Integration of Environmental Sustainability and Integration of Innovation are addressed across the Programme.
- Contribute as appropriate to the activities of the Scottish, UK and European FLAG networks.

RESOURCE RESPONSIBILITIES:

Take responsibility for any other LEADER Programme employees or contractors if and when they are appointed.

OTHER DETAILS:

Some out of normal office hours working required, meeting with EFF Axis 4 applicants and projects. This will involve attendance at evening and weekend meetings and events, and attendance at Scottish, UK and European EFF Axis 4 network events and transnational co-operation projects.

FLAG Development Assistant Job Description

Post Title:	Outer Hebrides Fisheries Local Action Group Development Assistant	Post Number:
Department:	Development Department	Grade:
Section:	Economic Development	Date:
Location:	Stornoway	
Reports To:	Outer Hebrides Fisheries Local Action Group Co-ordinator	

Job Purpose

The Post Holder will provide administrative support to the EFF Axis 4 Fisheries Local Action Group and Project Co-ordinator ensuring the effective delivery of the Outer Hebrides Fisheries Local Action Group Programme 2011-2013.

Main Duties:

1. Providing clerical and secretarial support to the FLAG Co-ordinator including word processing, compiling and updating databases and spreadsheets
2. Developing and maintaining effective office systems and procedures.
3. Copy typing/filing/photocopying and ensuring documents and files are maintained in line with EU and Scottish Government requirements.
4. Receipt, allocation and acknowledgement of correspondence.
5. Taking telephone calls, arranging meetings and travel bookings.
6. Undertaking stock taking and ordering of stationary and consumables as needed.
7. Establishing and maintaining robust administration and recording systems. Working with complex spreadsheets and ledger systems to maintain and produce high quality financial and budgetary data.
8. Updating the Outer Hebrides FLAG information page on the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar website.
9. Maintaining robust financial records in liaison with the Comhairle's Finance and Corporate Resources Department.
10. Ensuring that all FLAG grant claims are produced to the standards and timescales required by the FLAG, Senior Management, Financial Regulations, Scottish and EU Government guidelines and other constitutional documents.
11. Liaising with internal and external contacts including project contacts regarding projects, submission of claims and eligibility of expenditure.
12. Manage and plan your own workload to ensure that all claims and tasks are accurately completed within agreed time deadlines and to the highest professional standards.
13. Carrying out specific accountancy tasks as necessary including reconciliation's, virements, journals and general accountancy support.
14. Ensuring that all duties or responsibilities are performed in a safe manner so that no risk to health or safety arises to oneself, any other employee or member of the public.
15. Ensuring action is taken to promote equal opportunities and diversity both in the workplace and in communities.

16. Any other duties or responsibilities which are compatible with the grade of the post that may need to be allocated from time to time to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.
17. This is a fixed term post until December 2014 and will be reviewed thereafter.