

RDPE Network

Action Plan 2009-2010



The European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development: Europe
Investing in rural areas.



defra
Department for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs



Commission for
Rural Communities
Tackling rural disadvantage

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1. Introduction

1.1 In line with the *RDPE Network 2007-2013 PID* and *Defra–CRC RDPE Network Contract and Technical Assistance letter dated 10th September 2008*, this document sets out:

- The activities (work programme) of the RDPE Network for the operational period 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010, as agreed by the Defra RDPE Team and RDPE Programme Monitoring Committee (Section 3);
- The constraints faced by the RDPE Network (Section 4);
- The overlaps and dependencies faced by the RDPE Network (Section 5);
- Risk log (Section 6).

1.2 The overarching policy goals to which the RDPE Network will contribute are two-fold:

- i. *'The aim of the RDPE is to safeguard and enhance the rural environment, improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors and foster competitive and sustainable rural businesses and thriving rural communities'.*
- ii. *'The RDPE 2007-2013 is successfully implemented and evaluated'.*

1.3 In line with the European Rural Development Regulation, the overall benefit that the RDPE Network intends to have secured by 31st March 2013 is:

'To support the delivery of the RDPE through the successful exchange of experience, lessons learnt and good practice on RDPE policy design, management and implementation, between comprehensive range of RDPE stakeholders at the local, regional, national and European levels.'

1.4 In compliance with the Rural Development Regulation Article 68(2) and Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1974/2006, this Action Plan will include two main groupings of activities:

- i. Those needed to run the Network structures (i.e. business and financial management);
- ii. Operational stakeholder activities (i.e. website, focused events etc.)

1.5 This Action Plan has been based on the need and requirements of RDPE stakeholders as evidenced by, the RDPE Network Market Research and Stakeholder Engagement Project, priorities set at the Leader Approach event and dialogue with the delivery bodies and key stakeholder organisations.

1.6 It should be recognised that this Action Plan is a dynamic tool that will be reviewed quarterly to capture the reality of evolving implementation. Thus, activity maybe added or reprioritised throughout the year, in order to maximise opportunities or react to changing challenges or assumptions. Any significant changes will be agreed with the Defra RDPE Team.

1.7 The funding, to deliver the work programme outlined in section 2 below, for 2009-10 is £200,000, inclusive of staff costs. A budget breakdown, outlining planned expenditure against the work programme is detailed separately to this Action Plan.

2 Background

- 2.1 The RDPE is a six year (2007-2013) funding programme, with a budget of £3.9 billion, which will implement in England the European Union (EU) Rural Development Regulation. This Regulation sets out a menu of measures which, in combination with other EU legislation, is designed to meet EU priorities for rural development through support for economic, social and environmental objectives within a common framework across all Member States. The EU's priorities for rural development, also identified as axes, include:
- Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors (Axis 1);
 - Improving the environment and the countryside (Axis 2);
 - Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy (Axis 3);
 - Building local capacity for employment and diversification (Axis 4).
- 2.2 Article 68(1) of the Rural Development Regulation, states that, '*each Member State shall establish a national rural network, which groups the organisations and administrations involved in rural development*'. Further to this and in accordance with Article 66(3) of the Regulation, Chapter 16 of the RDPE Programme Document clarifies that each region [country] of the UK will establish its own rural network. In addition to these country focused networks, the UK will establish a UK National Rural Network (UK NRN) to link the four networks being developed for the rural development programmes for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This UK NRN will also provide the interface with the European Commission and the European Network for Rural Development.
- 2.3 The RDPE Network is for everyone involved in the design, programme management and programme implementation of the RDPE. Specific stakeholders will vary according to the focus of the activity, related axes, delivery level and region.
- 2.4 Through the development of prioritised annual Network Action Plans, based on stakeholder needs, the Network delivers activities to help everyone involved in the RDPE to deliver, through benefiting from sharing the good ideas, lessons learnt and experiences that are developed, whether at policy level or by the people and organisations operating regionally and locally. Between now and 2013, this sharing of knowledge and experience will take place across the four axes and at EU, national, regional and local levels.
- 2.5 The CRC has been tasked, by Defra as the RDPE Managing Authority, to act as the Network Unit to facilitate and co-ordinate the structures necessary for the development and operation of both the RDPE Network and the UK National Rural Network.

3. Work Programme 2009-2010

Notes:

C'ers – CRC Commissioners

EN RD – European Network for Rural Development

PMC – RDPE Programme Monitoring Committee

RDPE Team - Defra RDPE Team

UK NRN SG – UK National Rural Network Steering Group

Unit – RDPE Network Unit

No.	Activity Description (What)	Who	Timescale (When)	Indicators of Achievement (How)
Output 1 – Develop and implement in partnership, RDPE stakeholder networking activities to exchange experience, lessons learnt and good practice on RDPE policy design, management and implementation.				
1.1	Receive and respond to general information enquiries. Note: A general enquiry will be responded to within 3 working days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enquiries - weekly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process general enquiries, received via telephone, e-mail and website weekly.
1.2	Work with relevant organisations to develop and deliver a programme of activities to exchange experience and practice, focused on the cross-axes working / integration in RDPE delivery between the axes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit RDPE Team Delivery bodies Others tbc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme – end August 2009. Implementation – end March 2010. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDPE Team secures commitment with delivery bodies of their input into RDPE Network, (via Defra delivery agreement) by end August 2009. Develop programme of activity by end August 2009. Implement activity by end March 2010.
1.3	Work with relevant organisations to develop and deliver a programme of activities focused on the Leader approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit LAGs RDPE Team Local Auth. RDAs Others tbc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme – end August 2009. Implementation – end March 2010. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDPE Team secures commitment with delivery bodies of their input into RDPE Network, (via Defra delivery agreement) by end August 2009. Develop programme of activity by end August 2009. Implement activity by end March 2010.
1.4	Working with relevant organisations to develop and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme – end July 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDPE Team secures commitment with delivery

	deliver a growing project practice database with search functionality, focused across the four axes and capturing good practice, lessons learnt and experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDPE Team • Delivery bodies • LAGs • Gov. Offices 	<p>2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation - end March 2010. 	<p>bodies of their input into RDPE Network, (via Defra delivery agreement) by end August 2009.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a programme of activity to deliver project practice database, e.g. via regional protocols, via LAGs, via delivery bodies, communications planning to empower stakeholders to input etc. by end July 2009. • Implement programme of activity by end March 2010.
1.5	Develop and deliver a 'networking protocol' and associated activities (identified therein, e.g. mutual support for communications, identification of practice etc.) between the RDPE Network and eight English regions, initially focusing on the RIPs and RDPE regional management groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • RDPE Team • Delivery bodies • Gov. Offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting + discussion – end July 2009. • Protocols – end Oct. 2009. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDPE Team secures commitment with delivery bodies of their input into RDPE Network, (via Defra delivery agreement) by end August 2009. • Meet with and discuss protocol with each of the 8 English regions by end July 2009. • Agree protocol with each of the 8 English regions by end October 2009.
1.6	Signpost stakeholders to general RDPE information (regional and national); RDPE delivery events (regional and national); Funding opportunities; LAG contact details; and Delivery body contact details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial information – 30/06/09 • Updates – fortnightly – 24x/yr. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information available via website by 30/06/09. • Information updated fortnightly – 24x/yr
1.7	Signpost stakeholder to general information from other UK country rural development programmes and associated networks and associated trans-national activity opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link – 29/05/09 • Highlights – fortnightly 24x/yr. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create link with relevant information on UK NRN website by 29/05/09. • Identify information of specific interest and highlight on website as a 'news' or 'what's on' item updated fortnightly – 24x/yr.
1.8	Signpost stakeholders to general information from the EN RD, European Evaluation Network and EC Rural Policy and associated trans-national activity opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link – 29/05/09 • Highlights – fortnightly 24x/yr. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create link with relevant information on UK NRN website by 29/05/09. • Identify information of specific interest and highlight on website as a 'news' or 'what's on' item updated fortnightly – 24x/yr.
1.9	National conference for RDPE Managing Authority and delivery bodies (delivered in partnership) to reflect on RDPE progress and formulate an agenda for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • RDPE Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering Group – end Oct.2009 • Conference – end 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form steering group to plan and deliver conference by end October 2009; • Deliver conference by end January 2010.

	contributing to the mid-term evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan. 2010. • Follow-up end Feb. 2010. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up activity from conference by end February 2010.
Output 2 – RDPE Network Advisory Group established, maintained and developed to set strategic direction and delivery and encourage participation and ownership in the RDPE Network.				
2.1	Identify potential members of the Advisory Group from the market research and stakeholder engagement exercise. Assess potential gaps in representation of stakeholder on the group and identify further potential members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • CRC Exec. Board • RDPE Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership list – 31/05/09 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership list drafted and agreed with CRC Executive Board and RDPE Team by 31/05/09.
2.2	Draft terms of reference to capture membership, purpose and activity of Advisory Group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • CRC Exec. Board • RDPE Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of reference – 31/05/09. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft terms of reference drafted and agreed with CRC Executive Board and RDPE Team by 31/05/09.
2.3	Provide Secretariat support for the Advisory Group – set up, co-ordinate and follow-up (via electronic exchange) the first advisory group meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st group meeting – end July 2009. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate meeting arrangements and agendas by end July 2009. • Attend meeting tbc • Contribute information to meetings, (determined by agenda) • Follow-up activity from meetings tbc at meeting.
Output 3 – Website infrastructure established and maintained to support the collation, storage, analysis and dissemination of RDPE Network information to support the exchange of experience, lessons learnt and good practice on RDPE policy design, management and implementation.				
3.1	Maintain temporary website information until new website is accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • CRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload - 08/05/09 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload emerging information by 08/05/09.
3.2	Manage design and build part of website contract to deliver go-live date of 18/05/09.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract management - 18/05/09. • Go-live 18/05/09 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract management processes delivered, including budgeting, accruals, progress reporting by 18/05/09. • Website design and build delivered by go-live date – 18/05/09.

3.3	Website hosting and maintenance contract managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring report – approx. xth day every month. • Contract management – approx. 10th day every month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly website monitoring reports received, implications considered and appropriate action taken – 11x/yr. • Contract management processes delivered, including budgeting and accruals – 11x/yr.
3.4	Website content updated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • RDPE stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content uploaded weekly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly review of website content, to ensure latest information from RDPE Network, Defra and delivery bodies incorporated by 48x/yr.
3.5	Develop and implement communications plan for RDPE Network website to increase stakeholder use of website and feedback, to develop effectiveness of website to support exchange of expertise, good practice and lessons learnt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication plan sign-off - 29/05/09 • Implementation tbc once plan developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications plan drafted by 29/05/09. • Implementation tbc once plan developed.
Output 4 – Research and develop sufficient monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the value of the RDPE Network to the implementation of the RDPE, as outlined in the RDPE Network overall outcome/benefit (see report section 1.3)				
4.1	Research options and present recommendations to RDPE Team and CRC Executive Board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • CRC Exec. board • RDPE Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations and agreement – 31/08/09. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft and discuss paper for decision to RDPE Team and CRC Exec. Board by 31/08/09.
4.2	Build recommendations into Action Plan and progress reports at Q2 review stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build in recommendations – 19/10/09 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build monitoring and evaluation mechanisms into Q3 Action Plan review by 19/10/09.
4.3	Include consideration of the RDPE Network into the specification for the RDPE mid-term evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specification information – 31/12/09. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specification information to RDPE Team by 31/12/09.
4.4	Provide information to the RDPE mid-term review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information – tbc (Q4). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information to appointed consultants (re: what and by when, country dependent) (Q4)

Output 5 – Contribute information to and participate in the UK National Rural Network Steering Group and networking activities.				
5.1	Co-ordinate and contribute RDPE Network update information to UK NRN SG as required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information – quarterly. • Update – meeting dates tbc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share strategic and operational information with UK NRN, e.g. templates, ITTs, action plan, feedback forms etc. on a quarterly basis. • Provide update at each UK NRN SG meeting / teleconferences/video conferences (dates tbc)
5.2	Contribute information to the development of the UK NRN Action Plan 2009-2010.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steer – 08/04/09. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute steer at UK NRN Steering Group by 08/04/09.
5.3	Contribute to the identification of cross-UK themes to develop cross-UK networking activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Themes identified – 07/07/09. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to theme analysis completed and prioritised by UK NRN Steering Group by 07/07/09.
5.4	Contribute to the identification of networking activity around priority theme developed – tbc following theme analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan – 07/07/09 • Implementation – following sign-off 07/07/09. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to project plan for theme activity drafted and sign-off by UK NRN Steering Group by 07/07/09 • Contribute to project plan implemented following sign-off 07/07/09.
5.5	Contribute to the development and implementation of the communications plan for activity, to maximise engagement and follow up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan – 07/07/09 • Implementation – tbc following sign-off. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to communications plan drafted and sign-off by UK NRN Steering Group by 07/07/09. • Implementation tbc once plan developed.
5.6	Attend EN RD – Based on prioritisation and agreement with UK NRN SG, prepare for, attend, feedback and action (including contacts into European database) from EN RD Network meetings (max. 2x/yr)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EN RD meeting events – tbc (max. 2x/yr): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Prepare by tbc ➢ Attend by tbc ➢ Feedback by tbc ➢ Action tbc following committee.
5.7	Develop and maintain 4 new European level stakeholder relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 per European level meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet 5 new European level stakeholders. • Add contacts to UK NRN database. • Share information between UK NRN and RDPE stakeholders.

Output 6 – Overarching ‘Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Communications Plan 2009–2013’ refreshed and mechanisms implemented to promote the work of and encourage participation in the RDPE Network.				
6.1	Update stakeholder analysis and prioritise key stakeholders, informed by market research and stakeholder engagement project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • RDPE Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder analysis – 30/07/09. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update stakeholder analysis exercise and agreed with CRC Communications Team and RDPE Team by 31/07/09.
6.2	Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Communications Plan 2009-2013 agreed to promote the work of, develop effectiveness and encourage participation in RDPE Network to support exchange of expertise, good practice and lessons learnt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • RDPE Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan sign-off – 30/07/09. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan drafted and agreed with CRC Communications Team and RDPE Team by 31/07/09.
6.3	Implementation of Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Communications Plan, e.g. link to Website Communications Plan and activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • RDPE Team • CRC Exec. Board • CRC C'ers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tbc once plan developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tbc once plan developed.
6.4	Link RDPE Network communications plan to RDPE Communications Plan, to maximise communication opportunities and ensure consistency in key messages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • RDPE Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-referencing – 31/07/08 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-referencing between RDPE Network and RDPE communications plans by 31/07/08.
6.5	RDPE Network e-mail address monitored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to website – 29/05/09 • Inbox checked daily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail address publicised on all external communications by 01/04/09. • E-mail address linked to from independent website by 29/05/09. • E-mail inbox checked daily.
Output 7 – Network Unit managed to co-ordinate the development and operation of the RDPE Network.				
7.1	Complete business planning processes, including annual and quarterly review and reporting processes. Note 1: This is to ensure that the structures, (activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • RDPE Team to sign- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report – 30/04/09 • Action Plan – 13/05/09 • Q1 review – 20/07/09 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2008-09 Annual Report completed and submitted to Defra by 30/04/09. • Action Plan 2009-10 drafted and sign-off by RDPE Team and PMC by 13/05/09

	<p>such as staffing, contract management, business and financial planning etc.) are in place to run the network, as required by the Rural Development Regulation Article 68(2) and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006.</p> <p>Note 2: The progress report will be submitted with each quarterly claim to Defra, as evidence of activity against spend.</p>	off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1 progress report – 06/07/09 • Q2 review – 19/10/09 • Q2 progress report – 06/10/09 • Q3 review – 18/01/10 • Q3 progress report – 11/01/10 • Q4 progress report – 06/04/10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1 Action Plan review + revised work programme sign-off by RDPE Team 20/07/09 • Q1 progress report completed by 06/07/09 • Q2 Action Plan review + revised work programme sign-off by RDPE Team 19/10/09 • Q2 progress report completed by 06/10/09 • Q3 Action Plan review + revised work programme sign-off by RDPE Team 18/01/09 • Q3 progress report completed by 11/01/10 • Q4 progress report completed by 06/04/10
7.2	Complete financial management processes, including annual and quarterly review and reporting processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • RDPE Team to sign-off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget – 18/05/09 • Traffic lights – approx. 10th every month. • Accruals – approx. 10th day every month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2009-10 budget drafted and sign-off by RDPE Team by 18/05/09. • Monthly CRC traffic lights report completed – 12x/yr • Monthly CRC accruals completed – 12x/yr
7.3	Secure input and agreement to the Action Plan and its 6 month review from governance structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • CRC Exec. Board sign-off • PMC sign-off • C'sers input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRC Executive Board – 28/04/09 • PMC – 13/05/09 • CRC Commissioners – 23/06/09 • PMC – 22/07/09 • PMC – 22/07/09 • PMC – 24/11/09 • PMC – tbc, Q4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Plan 2009-10 sign-off by CRC Executive Board by 28/04/09. • Action Plan 2009-10 sign-off by RDPE PMC by 13/05/09. • Action Plan 2009-10 considered by CRC Commissioners to feed into Q1 review by 23/06/09. • Update to RDPE PMC by 22/07/09 • Update to RDPE PMC by 24/11/09 • Update to RDPE PMC by tbc (Q4 meeting)
7.4	Develop human resource as necessary to meet the requirements of delivery, within resource allocation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit • CRC Exec. Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEO Induction weekly meetings x 8. • Formal HEO induction - 30/04/09. • Recruitment - 3/06/09. • EO Induction weekly meetings x 8. • Formal EO induction - 30/04/09. • WDP process – 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induct HEO post by 30/04/09, weekly meetings for first 2 months. • Complete recruitment process for EO post by 30/06/09. • Induct EO post by 31/07/09, weekly meetings for first 2 months. • Complete WDP process by 31/05/09/31/08/09, mid-year review by 31/10/09 (HEO only) and end of year review for HEO and EO posts by 31/03/09.

			31/05/09/31/08/09. • Mid-year review – 31/10/09. • End of year review – 31/03/09.	
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4. Constraints

3.1 The RDPE Network faces the following constraints; these will be reviewed on a quarterly basis:

- i. Budgetary constraints including limited budget to establish, develop and operate the Network, due to a Ministerial decision not to utilise the maximum percentage of Technical Assistance funding that could be directed towards this regulatory activity. This issue is exacerbated by the need for the Network to give consideration to the regional variation in RDPE management and implementation;
- ii. Budgetary constraints including inflexible Treasury rules not allow funding to be carried across from one year to the next;
- iii. Lack of staff resource, due to the limited budget, will impact on the ability of the Network Unit to establish the breadth of stakeholder relationships most effective to build a network;
- iv. Lack of staff resource, due to limited budget, will result in the need for the CRC to utilise consultants and contractors to deliver elements of the Action Plan. This will not provide value for money regarding the development of institutional knowledge and skills within the Network Unit to further develop the Network;
- v. Research, evaluation and practical experience has shown that the most effective way to build a sustainable and effective network is through investing in thorough market-research and stakeholder engagement at the beginning. Due to limited time and the regulatory deadline, this market-research and engagement phase has had to be significantly scaled back;
- vi. Engagement with and participation in the Network has not been made a compulsory element of the implementation agreements between Defra and the delivery organisations of Natural England, Forestry Commission and the eight Regional Development Agencies;
- vii. Engagement with and participate in the Network has not been made a compulsory element of the grants awarded to RDPE beneficiaries.

5. Overlap and Dependencies

4.1 The RDPE Network faces the following overlaps and dependencies; these will be reviewed on a quarterly basis:

- i. Existing rural development related networks - Many networks related to rural development currently operate within England. Thus, it is important to note that this Network will not duplicate existing functions but is being established in line with the Rural Development Regulation, with a clear focus on supporting the implementation and evaluation of the EU rural

development policy and thus within England the RDPE. There are close synergies and opportunities for joint working with existing networks that are being explored and will be built up as the RDPE Network is developed;

- ii. Existing communication mechanisms within the broader RDPE – Given that the Network must focus on RDPE policy design, management and implementation, the Defra RDPE Team and Network Unit should consider how it can best join up broader RDPE communications within the Network, e.g. posting agendas, minutes, meeting papers etc. onto the Network website for access;
- iii. Ensuring added value for the Network from being hosted within the CRC – Many of the CRCs policy programmes will have considerable bodies of information and good practice to feed into the Network and vice-versa, these synergies must be maximised;
- iv. Maximising stakeholder engagement via the delivery bodies – Given that the delivery bodies will have the most frequent contact with potential Network stakeholders, the Network Unit and these bodies must work closely to add value to both the Network and to existing programme delivery activity, e.g. marketing, events, provision of information etc.

6. Risk Register

- 5.1 All risks that may prevent or interfere with the successful development and operation of the Network are being identified using a risk log. This captures identified risks according to their probability and likely impact. Counter measures have been identified to show the measures in place, or those being considered, to minimise the risk being realised. Owners have been appointed to monitor and control all risks as they arise.
- 5.2 Risk management is a dynamic process. As new risks are identified, they will be added to the risk register where relevant at each quarterly review. Contingency plans and counter measures will need to be updated in response to internal and external events and the assessment of likelihood and impact will need to be reviewed. In some instances, there may be risks that become obsolete.

5.3 Risk Log:

Risk No.	Description	Likelihood	Impact	Rating	Consequence	Countermeasure	Residual Risk	Contingency	Owner
1	Rural development information exchange is not a political priority and thus the necessary resources are not made available to effectively deliver the outcome.	H	H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Network outcome will only be delivered at a very basic level, without delivering the spirit of the Rural Development Regulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all resources are priorities to focus on the delivery of the outcome; Utilise and piggy-back on stakeholder resources, e.g. events, marketing etc. 	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise this issue with the RDPE Programme Board. 	Rebecca Frost/John Allsopp
2	De-prioritisation of rural development information exchange, within context of RDPE resulting in reduced resource for implementation and reduced interest by delivery bodies.	M	M	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Network outcome will only be delivered at a very basic level, without delivering the spirit of the Rural Development Regulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CRC raises the profile of and illustrates the added value and benefits of the RDPE Network within its broader activity. 	M		Rebecca Frost / CRC Executive Board/John Allsopp
3	Lack of coherent and effective integration between the English regions, axes and delivery bodies.	H	H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents a significant challenge to the identification and exchange of information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce initial information via the market-research and engagement exercise. Use the exercise to identify interested regions and delivery bodies to address this integration through the exchange of experience and 	M		Rebecca Frost

						good practice.			
4	The Network is challenged and criticised for the priorities within the Action Plan.	M	M	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces the number of stakeholders that engage in the Network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market-research and engagement exercise will provide stakeholder with the opportunity to influence the Action Plan. The Advisory Group will provide stakeholders with the opportunity to influence the Action Plan. 	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take on board feedback and provide better opportunity for stakeholders to influence the development of the Action Plan at quarterly reviews. 	Rebecca Frost
5	Too few or too narrow representations of stakeholder agree to become members of the Advisory Group.	M	M	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice from the group becomes skewed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasise the benefit to organisations of their involvement in the Advisory Group. 	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evolve the Advisory Group membership as broader stakeholder engagement develops. 	Rebecca Frost
6	Engagement with and participation in the Network has not been made a compulsory element of the implementation agreements between Defra and the delivery organisations of Natural England, Forestry Commission and the eight Regional Development Agencies.	H	H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery bodies do not participate in the Network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the participation of the delivery bodies in the Network, within their implementation agreements with Defra. 	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with those regional sections of the delivery bodies that are keen to engage. 	John Allsopp
7	Engagement with and participate in the Network has not been made a compulsory element of the grants awarded to RDPE beneficiaries.	H	H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant beneficiaries do not participate in the Network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the participation of recipients in the Network, within their grant conditions. 	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with those beneficiaries who are keen to engage. 	John Allsopp

8	The establishment, development and operation of the Network is being managed and delivered by a staff resource of 1.8fte.	H	H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unplanned sickness or special leave will delay the delivery of key outputs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage risk register and issues log appropriately; Ensure that all programme and project management activity is clear and up to date, enabling alternative staff resource to take over if appropriate. 	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Rebecca Frost / CRC Executive Board
9	Stakeholders perceive the Network as simply a continuation of the LEADER + Network, rather than a Network that engages across axes 1-4.	H	H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of broader stakeholder engagement in addition to the LAGs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear communications planning and activities. 	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage the LAGs and build on this stakeholder base. 	Rebecca Frost
10	Network fatigue among stakeholders.	H	H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too few stakeholders engage in the Network to develop the critical mass necessary for the Network to operate effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market-research and engagement exercise; Advisory Group; Clear communications plan implemented. Reduce any potential barriers to stakeholder participation; Develop synergies and cross-working with existing networks that relevant stakeholders are already engaged with. 	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Rebecca Frost

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