

# THE LEADER + SCHEME

## Helping rural communities help themselves

*New EU funding for sustainable rural communities is encouraging local involvement in social, economic and environmental issues*

EU funding of almost £33 million has been awarded to rural partnerships in England to develop small scale, innovative projects for their own communities. The aim of LEADER+ is to encourage local people to identify and address local issues in socially, economically and environmentally sustainable ways. There were nearly 50 applications and this January, the Rural Affairs Minister, Alun Michael, announced the 24 successful English groups (see list below). Separate LEADER+ programmes are being run in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

These Local Action Groups, representing a partnership of different community and economic sectors, were asked to prepare a local development plan around themes chosen from

- Using 'know how' and new technologies to make rural products and services more competitive
- Improving the quality of life in rural areas
- Adding value to local products
- Making the best use of natural and cultural resources.

Local Action Groups were also asked to identify the following target groups for their projects:

- Women
- Young people
- Older people
- Unemployed and under-employed
- Rural businesses and workers affected by restructuring.

Local Action Groups are now selecting projects to fund under their own development plan. LEADER+ is not designed to fund major capital projects, but there is scope to support new heritage initiatives. Nearly half of the selected Local Action Groups are planning to focus on activities to enhance the natural and cultural heritage.

Individuals, local communities or local organisations can become involved in LEADER+ historic environment planning and projects by:

- Representing their local community on the local action group
- Commenting on and putting forward ideas to the local action group on their development plan
- Suggesting and becoming involved in projects

*Alun Michael, Rural Affairs Minister, with Stephanie Buckingham of Mount Farm, Wadhurst, at the announcement in January of the successful Leader + groups. Stephanie Buckingham, who diversified from food production to food processing, treated guests to refreshments at the village hall in Forest Row, East Sussex*



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## The 24 Local Action Groups and what they will be doing:

### East of England region

Name	Area	Description of activities
The Broads and Rivers LEADER+ Partnership	Norfolk Broads encompassing most of the Broads National Park	Focusing on traditional rural skills and local products with projects to promote reed bed maintenance, reed products and green tourism initiatives such as electric boats using renewable energy sources
The Fenlands LeAP (Leader+ Action Partnership)	Fenland area of Norfolk and Cambridgeshire	Innovative solutions to outreach work and improving access to services, information, leisure and employment opportunities

### East Midlands region

Name	Area	Description of activities
LEADER+ in the Peak, Dales and Moorlands	Most of the area falls within the Peak District National Park	Based on the principle of 'reaching people', proposals include arts activities, career-orientated tourism, new ideas for integrated transport and developing the skills, crafts and cultural traditions special to the Peak District
Lincolnshire Fenland Action Group	The Fenland area around Spalding, south east Lincolnshire	Enhancing the competitiveness, quality of employment and community pride of the horticulture sector in the area
Rockingham Forest Local Action Group	Based on the Rockingham Forest Countryside Character Area in Northamptonshire	Actively involving local communities in the conservation and enhancement of the area's natural and cultural heritage. Developing and promoting local countryside products, services and visitor attractions in a sustainable way

### North East region

Name	Area	Description of activities
LEADER+ in North Northumberland	The Alnwick and Berwick upon Tweed districts of North Northumberland bordered to the north by Scotland	Adding value and synergy to local initiatives focusing on the cultural heritage, arts and crafts and food and drink products of the area. Extending tourism opportunities through the environmental and cultural base of the area
North Pennines	Includes Northumberland National Park and the North Pennines AONB	Supporting and encouraging rural micro-businesses, promoting an entrepreneurial culture and sustainable economic development. Encouraging local people to explore their traditions and culture through the arts

## South West region

Name	Area	Description of activities
Blackdown Hills Rural Partnership	Based on the Blackdown Hills AONB across the Devon/Somerset border	Adding value to local food and drink, forestry and woodlands, and arts and crafts products through the creation of a Blackdown Hills brand. Promoting environmental best practice and increasing social inclusion
Dorset Chalk and Cheese Local Action Group Partnership	Corresponds closely with the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase Character Area	Marketing of locally branded products through co-operatives. Developing new tourism initiatives based on assets of the area. Increasing the environmental knowledge and skills of people living in the area and among those who visit it
North West Devon LEADER+	The area between Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks, and the main Bristol Channel resorts	Encouraging rural enterprise through leadership and team working including local product marketing and biofuels initiatives. Cooperative working between agriculture and tourism
The Somerset Level and Moors LEADER+ Local Action Group Partnership	The unique low-lying Somerset Levels and Moors area	Adding value to local products. Developing tourism based on the natural and cultural resources of the area using village tourism forums to promote local sustainable tourism, events and festivals
The 'Sustain The Plain' Local Action Group	Salisbury Plain area of Wiltshire	Bringing together the diverse military and rural communities located around the Plain. Environment and heritage conservation. Tourism, recreation and business development

## West Midlands region

Name	Area	Description of activities
Herefordshire Rivers Local Action Group	The parishes around the rivers Wye and Lugg and their tributaries	Promotion of local products based on the environment and heritage of the area and the celebration of the environmental and heritage aspects of the area

## Yorkshire and The Humber region

Name	Area	Description of activities
East Riding of Yorkshire Local Action Group	Covering the wolds and coast areas of East Riding of Yorkshire to the north and east of Hull	Supporting new local enterprises drawing on the enhancement and conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the area. Strengthening market towns as a nucleus for rural restructuring
Penistone and District Community Partnership	Bordered by Barnsley on the east, the western part of the area is in the Peak National Park	Creating employment by enhancing the competitiveness of local small businesses. Promoting tourism through the rural heritage of the area. Securing rural services for local communities
Selby District Local Action Group	The most southerly district in North Yorkshire	Rural employment initiatives including support for small businesses, local products marketing and training and development

## North West region

Name	Area	Description of activities
Cumbria Fells and Dales LEADER+	The English Nature 'Natural Area' for the Cumbria Fells and Dales including the Lake District National Park	Creating a dynamic local produce economy based on the principles of sustainable development through the local selling of locally branded products, with links to the tourist market
Lancashire LEADER+ Local Action Group	North and East Lancashire	Providing a greater range of locally available services and employment opportunities. Establishing a Charter Mark to open up new market opportunities for rural products
Northern Marches - England	Located within the Cheshire and Shropshire Plains	Business support activities including training and the use of redundant buildings, and enhancing and promoting the natural and cultural assets of the area. Includes joint projects with the neighbouring Northern Marches-Cymru local action group

## South East region

Name	Area	Description of activities
Isle of Wight Rural Action Zone	Based largely on the Isle of Wight AONB	Developing tourism and economic activities based on the natural characteristics of the area. Promoting a sustainable landscape and identifying problems associated with living and working on the land slip
Mid Kent	Stretches north to south from the Isle of Sheppey and river Swale coastal marshes to Romney Marsh and Dungeness	Creating a thriving and varied business base on and off farm through the promotion of local produce and the utilisation of rural resources. Promoting sustainable environmental land management practices. Improving the provision of and access to local services
New Forest Local Action Group	Based entirely on the New Forest Heritage Area	Bringing together traditionally separate sectors within the area through the promotion of locally branded products and the New Forest pony. Also developing sustainable land management practices
The Wealden and Rother Rural Renewal LEADER+ Area of East Sussex	Based on the East Sussex Rural Priority Area, including the High Weald AONB	Local enterprise development through fostering traditional skills. Investing in local products and landscapes and maximising the human and cultural resources of the area
West Oxfordshire Network	The West Oxfordshire District area	Improving access to health, welfare and rights. Community action to address the decline in rural services and improving the physical and social infrastructure for access to services

You can find more information on LEADER+ from the DEFRA's England Rural Development Plan website at [www.defra.gov.uk/erdp](http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp) and local action group contact details are available from the Government Offices listed on [www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/leader/contacts0501.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/leader/contacts0501.htm)

For information on other EU funding for culture see Euclid's UK Cultural Contact Point website [www.euclid.co.uk](http://www.euclid.co.uk)