



# Community Groups

European Funding Leaflet

2010 - 2013



# Introduction

Community groups play a vital role in sustaining Aberdeenshire's communities. Their activities help to improve the services and facilities available locally, creating and sustaining the best quality of life. Most groups rely on the dedication and commitment of volunteers to improve their communities and lack the financial resources to achieve all of their aspirations. Securing funding for specific projects is becoming more and more difficult, with community groups facing ever-increasing competition for dwindling resources from external funders.

An aerial photograph showing a town with a mix of residential and commercial buildings, surrounded by lush green fields and forests. The landscape is hilly and scenic, with a river or stream visible in the distance. The sky is clear and bright.

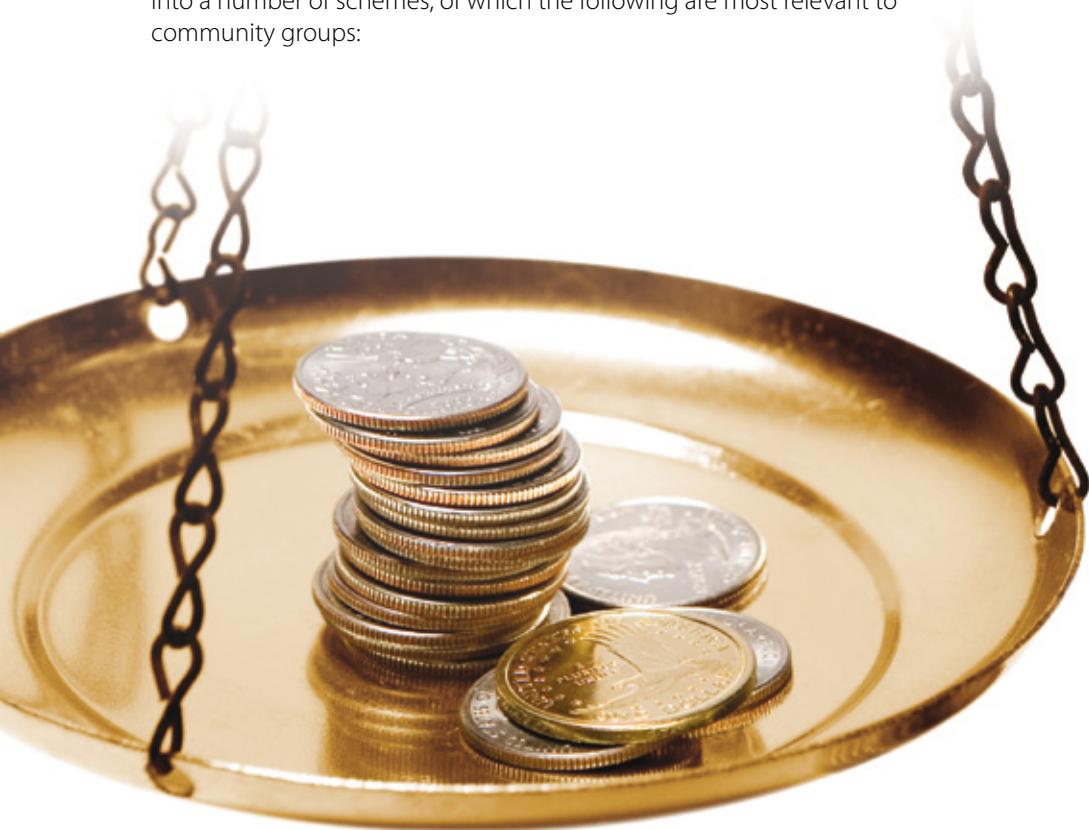
This leaflet aims to highlight funding opportunities from the European Union (EU) which are open to community groups and other organisations. It has been produced by Aberdeenshire Council's European Team, which is based in the Economic Development Service, Transportation and Infrastructure and provides advice and support for Community Economic Development.

# What Funding is available?

European funding is available through a wide range of sources and programmes, some of which are easier to access than others. Each fund focuses on a limited number of eligible activities. The main funds which may be of interest to community groups are as follows:

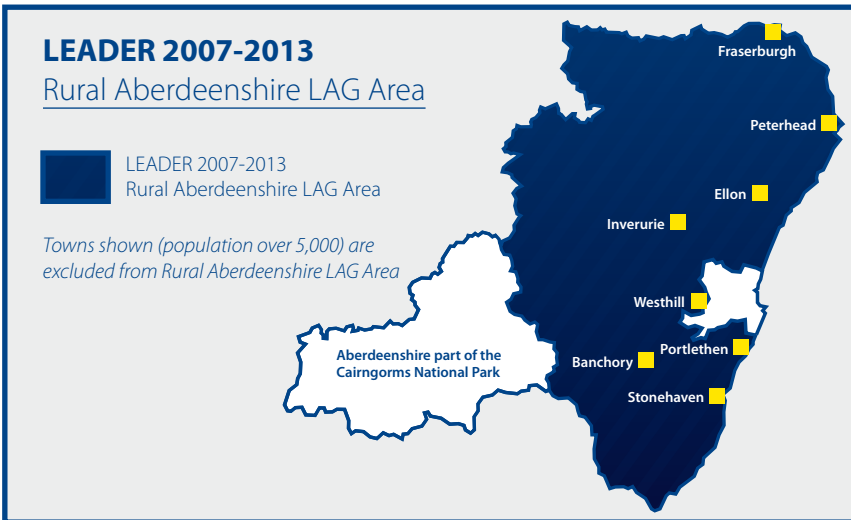
## **Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP)**

The SRDP is a £1.6 billion rural development fund which is financed by the European Union and the Scottish Government. The programme is subdivided into a number of schemes, of which the following are most relevant to community groups:



# 1 LEADER

LEADER is an innovative rural development programme which aims to improve the quality of life and economic prosperity in rural communities through locally driven rural development initiatives and projects. LEADER is delivered in Aberdeenshire through two Local Action Groups (LAGs), which are made up of representatives from community, business, land based, youth, and women's groups in the area, together with representatives from public sector organisations. The Rural Aberdeenshire LAG covers rural communities in Aberdeenshire with a population of 5,000, excluding the Cairngorms National Park area. This National Park is covered by the Cairngorms Local Action Group.



A wide range of activities can be funded through the LEADER LAGs, provided that they support the themes of revitalising communities and/or a progressive rural economy. Projects must contribute to at least one of these themes and also demonstrate support from the local community. In most cases the maximum LEADER grant rate is 50%. However, for a trial period in 2010 a grant rate of up to 90% may be possible for specific projects where need, value for money, community demand and benefit is demonstrated. The level of grant awarded is at the discretion of the LAG. Applicants apply directly to the relevant LAG, which will hold a number of assessment rounds each year.

For further information on LEADER in Aberdeenshire, please visit:

[www.aberdeenshireleader.org](http://www.aberdeenshireleader.org)

[www.cairngorms-leader.org](http://www.cairngorms-leader.org)

## 2 Forestry Challenge Funds

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Two challenge funds are managed by the Forestry Commission Scotland – ‘Woodlands in and Around Towns’ and ‘Forestry for People’. The ‘Woodlands in and Around Towns’ fund is open to land owners and provides funding to improve existing areas of woodland and recreational facilities. The aim of the fund is to regenerate the woodland environment close to centres of population and improve the quality of life for people living and working there.

The Forestry for People Challenge Fund is intended to help groups realise the potential contribution of local woodlands to the health, learning and strengthening of communities. The fund supports activities such as staff time, feasibility studies and health education projects. Grants of up to 75% of project costs are available for the Woodlands in and Around Towns fund and 90% for the Forestry for People fund.

For further information on Forestry Challenge Funds, please visit:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/farmingrural/SRDP/ChallengeFunds>

## 3 Rural Development Contracts – Rural Priorities (RDC-RP)

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The RDC-RP scheme provides support for a diverse range of activities, with priorities set at the regional level by Regional Proposal Assessment Committees (RPACs). Aberdeenshire is covered by the Grampian RPAC. Supported activities are divided into nine themes:

- **Business Viability and Competitiveness**
- **Biodiversity**
- **Landscape**
- **Built and Cultural Heritage**
- **Water and Soils**
- **Adaptations to Mitigate Climate Change**
- **Public Access**
- **Diversification of Rural Enterprise**
- **Thriving Rural Communities**

The application procedure has several stages, beginning with the optional submission of a Statement of Intent to the RPAC. A Case Officer is assigned to each Sol and will advise on whether or not your idea is eligible for funding. If the idea is to be advanced, a formal proposal is then completed and considered by the RPAC. There are usually a number of RPAC meetings each year to assess applications.

For further information on Rural Development Contracts – Rural Priorities, please visit:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/farmingrural/SRDP/RuralPriorities>

# European Fisheries Fund (EFF)

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The EFF is the financial instrument of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). It aims to stimulate the development of an economically profitable fisheries sector that is environmentally acceptable and that contributes to the well-being of the populations whose income depends on the sector. The projects it supports are mainly capital expenditure projects delivered by businesses and communities. The main areas which the programme focuses on are:

- **Aquaculture** – capital costs for the construction, extension, equipment and modernisation of new and existing aquaculture enterprises, particularly for innovation, diversification and to improve welfare and environmental standards.
- **Fishing Vessels** – support for young, new entrants to the sector, the adoption of sustainable catching methods as well as improved storage, fish handling and energy efficiency.
- **Fishing Port Facilities** - aid to projects in active fishing ports which support the activities of the catching and aquaculture industries.
- **Measures of Common Interest** – aid to enhance skills, promote competitiveness and profitability and develop new markets.
- **Processing and Marketing** - preparation of products for human consumption, the treatment of related by-products or waste, projects which will result in value being added to the produce, new and healthier products.
- **Fisheries Dependent Communities** – a bottom-up approach with the aim of supporting local groups develop a Local Development Strategy for their community with specific projects that will bring local benefits.

As with the SRDP, the EFF is part-funded and delivered in Aberdeenshire through the Scottish Government. The Fisheries Dependent Communities aspect of the

programme is set to be delivered in a similar way to LEADER through Local Action Groups, but has yet to be initiated. Intervention rates vary, but would typically be from 40-60% of project costs.

For further information on the EFF, please visit:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/Fisheries/grants-subsidies>

# Europe for Citizens

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The Europe for Citizens programme supports numerous activities and organisations promoting 'active European citizenship', ranging from town twinning to research into citizenship. The main action of interest to community groups is Action 1 – Active Citizens for Europe. This action supports:

**Town Twinning** – projects which involve or promote direct exchanges between European citizens through their participation in town-twinning activities and encourage networking and cooperation between twinned towns.

**Citizens Projects and Support Measures** - projects with an international dimension directly involving citizens which bring citizens from different horizons, who will act together or debate on common European issues, at local and European levels.

The Europe for Citizens Programme is managed directly by the European Union's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. Applicants submit applications to this agency in response to calls for proposals (there are typically between 1 and 3 of these per year, varying by priority). There are four stages to the project application and selection procedure: an eligibility check, evaluation, selection and, for successful applications, the notification of award decisions.

For further information on the Europe for Citizens programme, please visit:

[http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme-priorities/doc16\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme-priorities/doc16_en.htm)

# Youth in Action

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The Youth in Action programme is similar in scope to the Europe for Citizens initiative, but as the name suggests is more specifically targeted at younger people. It aims to increase awareness of European citizenship and build links between different European countries. It also aims to help young people to participate in the civic life of their community and the democratic process. The programme supports a number of actions:

**Action 1: Youth for Europe** – supporting international youth exchanges, youth projects on a European theme at the local, regional or national level; and youth democracy projects which encourage participation in the democratic process.

**Action 2: European Voluntary Service** – supporting voluntary work by young people throughout the world, either individually or in groups.

**Action 3: Youth in the World** – links between young people in and outside of Europe.

**Action 4: Youth Support Systems** – support to youth organisations and the European Youth Forum.

The Youth in Action Programme is co-ordinated in Brussels, but support is provided by national agencies. The British Council fulfils this role in the UK through the Connect Europe initiative. There are five application deadlines per year and guidance on the procedure is available from the British Council.

For further information on the Youth in Action Programme, please visit:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/connectyouth.htm>

# Completing an Application

Each of the funds set out in this leaflet has a different application procedure and some are more complicated than others. This section sets out some general advice on completing applications.

- 1. Read the programme guidance** – Detailed information on each programme is contained in guidance documents, downloadable from the programme’s website. It is important to read through these (often large) documents to understand what the assessors of applications will be looking for.
- 2. Think about the funder’s priorities** – Funders are under scrutiny to ensure that their funds are well spent on their priorities. This is particularly true with funding from government agencies. The programme guidance should help you to understand what the funder wants to achieve and it is important to consider how your project contributes to the programmes aims, as well as the benefits to your community.
- 3. Consider wider strategies and projects** – Funders are placing more importance on demonstrating how their money contributes to their strategies and policies. With regards to European funding, it is useful to bear in mind the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies, links to which can be found at the end of this document. There is a multitude of other strategies which may be relevant, depending on the type of project you want to carry out. Please contact the Aberdeenshire Council European Team for further advice on this.
- 4. Consider the terms and conditions of funding** – Different funds have different rules relating to what you can and can’t do with grants. This is particularly true for European projects, which can require you to keep detailed financial records and other project information. The funds highlighted in this leaflet are among the least onerous for administration, but please make sure you understand the technical rules of the programmes. Most funds will also require you to spend the money during a particular period of time and you may not receive all (or any) of the money up front.

5. **Find examples of successful bids** – These can help you to pick up tips on how to complete a successful application and get a better idea about the types of projects which can be funded. They can also give you ideas about projects which other communities are undertaking.
6. **Look into a wide range of funding sources** – Many funds require match funding as they will only provide a percentage of the project costs. You cannot match one source of European funding with another, but will instead need to find match funding from another source.
7. **Keep an eye on deadlines** – There is often a narrow window to apply for funding. Each programme has its own deadline(s) and missing these dates can delay a project significantly.
8. **Leave plenty time to complete the application** – It can take longer than expected to gather all the information required for an application. This is particularly true for background information which may be required (e.g. proof of an organisation's legal status, feasibility study, business plan etc.).
9. **Check the application** – It's easy to miss out important information on the application form. This is particularly true where the forms are several pages long and appear to ask similar questions in different sections. Pay particular attention to the financial figures – it can be difficult to change these after the application is submitted.
10. **Ask questions** – Application forms and programme documents are sometimes written in a technical way and can focus more on policies and rules which are more relevant to funding bodies than applicants. Support is available – please do not hesitate to contact the funding body if a contact is provided or Aberdeenshire Council.

# Further Information and Support

## **For information on European Funding:**

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/support/european.asp>

[european.services@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:european.services@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

## **For information on Community Economic Development:**

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/support/ced/index.asp>

[ced@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:ced@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

## **For information on the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER LAG:**

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/support/agriculture/leader.asp>

[leader@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:leader@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

## **For information on other sources of funding and Council grants:**

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/funding/index.asp>

[funding@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:funding@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

## **For information on EU Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas:**

[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/employment\\_and\\_social\\_policy/growth\\_and\\_jobs/c11325\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/growth_and_jobs/c11325_en.htm)

[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/environment/sustainable\\_development/l28117\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/sustainable_development/l28117_en.htm)