

Rural Development Operational Committee (RDOC) Terms of Reference

Remit

The Rural Development Operational Committee (RDOC) will be convened to undertake the role of the monitoring committee for European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) in accordance with the Regulation of the European Parliament 1303/2013 and of the Council laying down the provisions for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

- The Scottish Government, as Managing Authority, is responsible for chairing and inviting organisations to join the Committee.
- Members will be invited to join on the basis of 'one organisation, one seat'.
- The Scottish Government may invite officials to join the Committee to ensure adequate policy cover of the Programme and agenda.

Scope:

The Rural Development Operational Committee (RDOC) will:

- Monitor the quality of the implementation of the programme and monitor the programme by means of financial, output and target indicators.
- Be consulted and shall issue an opinion on the selection criteria for financed operations.
- Examine the activities and outputs related to the implementation of the evaluation plan of the programme, including suggesting any further evaluation if required and those that reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries
- Examine the implementation of the information and publicity strategy.
- Examine actions relating to the implementation of any ex ante conditionality's which are unfulfilled at the start of the Operational Programmes.
- Examine actions to promote sustainable development.
- Examine actions to promote equality between men and women, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- Review the implementation of the programme and progress made towards achieving its objectives, with regard to financial data, programme indicators, progress towards targets and milestones defined in the performance framework.

- Consider and approve the Annual Implementation Report (AIR), before they are sent to the Commission.
- Be consulted and give an opinion on amendments to the programme proposed by the Managing Authority which fall under the scope of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 Article 11(a) (ii) (changes in EU contribution rate), (b) (i) - the introduction or withdrawal of measures or types of operations), (ii) – changes in the description of measures, including eligibility conditions and (iii) – a transfer of funds between measures implemented under different contribution rates.
- Participate in the National Rural Network to exchange information on programme implementation.
- Examine implementation of major projects.
- Examine implementation of joint plans.
- Examine financial instruments.

Members:

Stakeholder Organisations:

- Community Woodlands Association
- CONFOR
- COSLA
- Highlands and Islands Agricultural Support Group (HIASG)
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)
- Local Action Groups
- National Trust for Scotland
- New Entrants
- National Farmers Union Scotland (NFU Scotland)
- Scottish 'Islands Group'
- Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF)
- Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Environment Link
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Scottish Land and Estates (SLE)
- Scottish Tenant Farmers Association (STFA)

Programme Delivery Partners:

- Scottish Natural Heritage;
- Scottish Forestry;
- SGRPID (Paying Agency).

Secretariat:

- Managing Authority (Scottish Government)

Observer

European Commission

Method of Working:

- The committee shall be called to convene twice annually, once in the spring and once in the autumn.
- Meetings will normally be held in Edinburgh
- The Scottish Government will be responsible for drawing up the agenda, preparing papers and providing the secretariat to the committee. Notice given of the meeting and transmission of documents, will be given, as a general rule, ten (working) days ahead of the meeting. The Secretariat may have to issue additional papers closer to the meeting date, if, up to date information is required to fully inform members of programme implementation issues.
- The work of the committee may be carried out by correspondence (e-mail) as well as at the formal meetings. When a document is presented via email to committee members for opinion, members shall, as a general rule, have ten (working) days to respond. No response from members will be taken as acceptance.
- In exceptional circumstances (for example, where an emergency measure has to be brought in to the programme) the Scottish Government may overrule the normal period of time offered for responses from the RDOC.
- Committee minutes shall be issued within twenty working days of meetings.
- Members may send a delegate if necessary and should advise the secretariat if they wish to do so in advance of the meeting.
- Committee members are required to consider the interests of the Programme as a whole and must declare any potential conflict of interest. It will be at the discretion of the Committee Chair to decide whether a potential conflict of interest would require the committee member to be absent for that item.
- The work of the Committee will be carried out in an open and transparent manner and papers will be made publicly available on the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) 2014 – 2020 website.
- Committee members must adhere to the data protection principles of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act.

Expenses and remuneration

- Organisations represented will not receive payment for attending meetings or carrying out other duties associated with Committee membership.