The Smallholder Initiative: Good Practice Guidelines
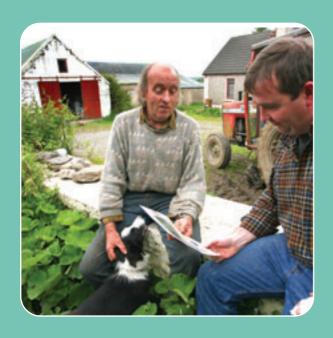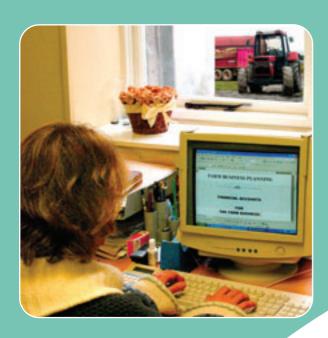
contents

(click on section headings below to link directly to required section)

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Acronyms

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
ACB	Animation and Capacity-Building
AEIDL	LEADER European Observatory (http//www.rural_europe@aeidl.be)
AWARE	National Support Agency for People Affected by Depression
BTWEA	Back to Work Enterprise Allowance
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CDB	County Development Board
CE	Community Employment
CERT	Council for Education, Recruitment and Training (now part of Fáilte Ireland)
CIC	Citizens' Information Centre
CLÁR	Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais
CLÉ	Comhar LEADER na hEireann (Irish LEADER Network)
CPN	Community Partnership Network
DCRGA	Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
DSFA	Department of Social & Family Affairs
EQUAL	EU Community Initiative seeking to identify and address fundamental forms of discrimination and inequality in the labour market, through the development of new and innovative policies and practices
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESDP	European Spatial Development Perspective
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observatory Network
EU	European Union
FÁS	Foras Áiseanna Saothair (Training and Employment Authority)
GROW	Mental Health Organisation which helps people who have suffered, or are suffering, from mental health problems
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICA	Irish Country Women's Association
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IOFGA	Irish Organic' Farmers and Growers' Association
LDP	Local Development Programme (1995-1999)
LDSIP	Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (2000-2006)
LES	Local Employment Service
MABS	Money Advice and Budgeting Service
NALA	National Adult Literacy Association
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PLANET	Partnership Local Action Network (The Partnerships' Network)
REPS	Rural Environmental Protection Scheme
RSS	Rural Social Scheme
SARD	Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development
SCOPE	Systems for Co-ordinated Programme Evaluation i.e. Performance Monitoring System developed by Pobal and Local Development Partnerships
SD	Sustainable Development
SI	Smallholders Initiative
VEC	Vocational Education Committee

Acknowledgements

Pobal wishes to thank all those who contributed to the compilation of this good practice manual. The original idea came from the bottom up; from those Development Officers working on the Initiative. Over the past few months these Officers have contributed directly to the publication. Working through their regional representatives, Brian Smith, Joe Cronin and Séamus Codd, they have ensured a practical focus that responds to the daily challenges and opportunities that arise in working with smallholders.

At local level, this Initiative is spearheaded and guided by local voluntary working groups, which include representatives from smallholders, the farming organisations, co-operatives, marts, commercial bodies, unions, Teagasc, other statutory bodies and the community and voluntary sector. These local working groups and the Boards of Directors of the Area Partnerships and Community Partnerships actively inputted into the compilation of this Manual, and many organised local workshops. As a result, the Manual refers to several issues that affect the Smallholder Initiative, and it places it in the context of broader rural development and economic diversification.

At national level a strategic working group was formed to oversee the entire consultation and drafting process. Its members, who are recognised champions of rural development, worked to ensure that the key principles that underpin good practice are emphasised. Their knowledge, representativeness and consultations with various stakeholders ensure that the Manual captures how co-ordination and collaboration can best be maximised. We would especially like to thank Carmel Fox (Ballyhoura Development), Maura Walsh (IRD Duhallow), John Whiriskey and colleagues (Teagasc), Maurice Harvey (ICOS), Seán Linnane (Community Partnership Network), and the regional representatives of the Smallholder Development Officers.

Martin Flatley, Rural Development Officer with Pobal, took the lead in bringing this Manual to fruition. He co-ordinated the consultation processes, and built on his work with the Development Officers, National Network and the Partnership managers. Other Pobal staff members involved in finalising this report were Aileen Gilchrist, Erin Cotter, Éamonn Mac an Bheatha, Patricia Jordan and Lola Brogan.

Preface

The Smallholder Initiative has emerged from the grass-roots as an innovative, flexible and people-centred response to the growing needs of smallholder families in the context of agricultural and rural restructuring. The strength of the initiative lies in that it operates through partnership structures and principles, while complementing and adding value to the work of a number of agencies. The Initiative gives effect to government and EU policy objectives, particularly in the areas of social inclusion, anti-poverty, equality and rural diversification and sustainability. The Initiative targets households that were labelled as 'unviable' or 'at risk', and puts in place a range of progression routes, while striving to maintain the farm family living and working in the rural community.

While recognising the importance of tailoring solutions to respond to local problems, this guide underscores the need for uniform systems for monitoring and recording client progression and the outputs and impacts of the Initiative. The practical illustrations in this Manual indicate how Partnerships can best ensure effective management of the programme.

Initially, the Smallholder Initiative may have been seen as a pilot or an 'add-on' to other local development initiatives. However, the experiences and the lessons from the past decade, and the challenges and opportunities currently facing rural Ireland necessitate that this kind of response continues to occupy a central role in rural development over the coming years.

The comprehensive material captured in this Manual, and the format of its presentation, which allows for additional material to be inserted, ensure that all those with in a interest in rural development and those who are committed to bettering the quality of life in rural Ireland have here a tool that is practical, useful and insightful, and which is applicable not just to the local development sector, but to the statutory sector and policy-makers as well.

Pobal

Foreword

The Smallholder Initiative is an integral part of rural and local development. It represents a unique element in a broad set of interventions and programmes in the current rural development package. The Initiative will be implemented throughout the State from 2007, by integrated, area-based local development partnerships, with a focus on developing the potential of individuals, communities and localities.

While the Smallholder Initiative is clearly very different from other interventions in rural development, it is also highly complementary to them as it complements and adds value to the other programmes operated by Partnerships. By focusing on the farm family, in addition to the head of household or farmer, the Initiative draws on the community development and youth supports that Partnerships provide. This manual demonstrates how the programme needs to transcend projects or measures, and needs to follow an integrated and multi-sectoral approach that is underpinned by teamwork and collaboration.

There is no question but that the challenges facing farmers are increasing all the time. It is also clear that the changes in agriculture and in off-farm income are not uniform throughout Ireland. Different regions, counties and localities are experiencing these changes in different ways. There is a need, therefore, to respond in a variety of ways to local needs and potentials. This principle is at the heart of Irish Government Policy on rural development. For the smallholder, there is in particular, a threefold approach. That is, through:

1. The Smallholder Initiative.

2. The development of the LEADER Programme which gives smallholders an opportunity to develop off-farm income through the development of micro-businesses.

3. The Rural Social Scheme which is focused on small to medium sized smallholders. This scheme gives farm families an opportunity to increase their earnings dramatically. Our target is to have as many farm families as possible on a minimum income at least comparable to the national average industrial wage. The Rural Social Scheme is very complementary to the Smallholder Programme, providing both income support and also involvement in local community projects, eliminating the loneliness that can often be a major challenge to modern farming. Since its inception, the Rural Social Scheme has grown steadily and the initial 2,500 places have now been filled. The number of places on the scheme has now been increased to 2,600, representing a clear statement by the Government of the importance of this scheme as a measure to improve the social and financial prospects of smallholders.

I am delighted, therefore, that this booklet on the Smallholder Initiative is now being published and I look forward to working with the various agencies involved in rural development in creating a better life for Irish farm families.

Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D., Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe & Gaeltachta

Réamhrá

Tá Tionscnamh Lucht na nGabháltas Beag mar ghné bhunúsach d'fhorbairt na tuaithe agus den fhorbairt áitiúil. Gné shainiúil í i measc ghnéithe leathana idirghabhálacha agus clár i bpacáiste na forbartha áitiúla reatha. Beidh an Tionscnamh á chur i bhfeidhm ar fud an Stáit le linn 2007 ag comhpháirtíochtaí comhtháite, limistéar-lonnaithe forbartha áitiúil, agus é dírithe ar fhorbairt chumas an duine aonair, an phobail agus an cheantair áitiúil.

Bíodh is go bhfuil Tionscnamh na nGabháltas Beag an-difriúil ó idirghabhálacha eile sa bhforbairt tuaithe, ag an am céanna, oibríonn siad le chéile mar tacaíonn sé leis agus cuireann sé breis luacha le cláir eile atá ar siúl ag na Comhpháirtíochtaí. Trí dhíriú ar theaghlach na feirme agus ar cheannaire an tí, nó ar an bhfeirmeoir, úsáideann an Tionscnamh tacaí forbartha tuaithe agus an óige atá á soláthar ag na Comhpháirtíochtaí. Léiríonn an Lámhleabhar seo conas mar is gá don gclár seo tograí agus modhanna a tharchéimniú, agus gur gá dó cur chuige comhtháite agus il-earnálach a leanúint, go bhfuil obair foirne agus comhoibriú mar bhunchloch aige.

Níl aon cheist ná go bhfuil na dúshláin atá os comhair na bhfeirmeoirí ag dul i méid i gcónaí. Tá sé soiléir, chomh maith, nach ionann na hathruithe sa talmhaíocht, agus in ioncam a ghnóthaítear lasmuigh den bhfeirm, fud fad na hÉireann. Ní mar a chéile a mhothaíonn réigiúin difriúla, contaetha agus ceantair na hathruithe seo. Mar sin, tá gá ann déileáil le riachtanais agus le féidearthachtaí áitiúla i slite difriúla. Tá an prionsabal seo i gcroílár Pholasaí Rialtas na hÉireann d'fhorbairt na tuaithe. Don sealbhóir beag tá trí shlí ann chun dul i mbun oibre. Sé sin le rá trí:

1. Thionscnamh lucht na nGabháltas Beag.

2. Fhorbairt an Chláir Leader a thugann an chaoi do lucht na ngabháltas beag ioncam a ghiniúint lasmuigh den bhfeirm trí fhorbairt mhionghnóthaí.

3. An Scéim Shóisialta Tuaithe atá dírithe ar shealbhóirí ó bheag go meán. Tugann an scéim seo an deis do theaghlaigh feirme a dteacht isteach a ardú go suntasach. Is é an aidhm atá againn ná an méid agus is féidir de theaghlaigh feirme a bheith ar íosioncam a bheadh ar aon dul leis an meánioncaim náisiúnta sa tionsclaíocht. Tá an Scéim Shóisialta Tuaithe ag teacht leis an gClár do Lucht na nGabháltas Beag ag soláthar tacaíochta ioncaim agus páirt á ghlacadh i dtograí pobail áitiúla, agus ag cur deireadh leis an uaigneas a bhíonn mar dhúshlán ollmhór go minic don bhfeirmeoireacht nua-aimseartha. Ón am a thosaigh sé tá an Scéim Shóisialta tar éis fás go leanúnach agus tá an 2500 áit, a bhí ann ó thús, líonta anois. Tá líon na n-áiteanna méadaithe anois go dtí 2600, rud a léiríonn dearcadh trédhearcach an rialtais faoi thábhacht na scéime seo mar shlí chun saol agus cúrsaí airgeadais Lucht na nGabháltas Beag a fheabhsú.

Tá áthas an domhain orm, mar sin go bhfuil an leabhrán seo ar Lucht na nGabháltas Beag á fhoilsiú agus táim ag súil le bheith ag obair leis na gníomhaireachtaí éagsúla atá páirteach i bhforbairt na tuaithe chun saol níos fearr a chruthú do theaghlaigh i bhfeirmeacha na hÉireann.

Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D., Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe & Gaeltachta

Introduction

The Smallholder Initiative is well established at the core of endogenous rural development interventions in Ireland.The initiative, which has evolved and grown since the mid-1990s, is implemented by Local Development Partnerships throughout rural areas. The overall aim of the Initiative is to maintain as many smallholder households as possible, living in economic security in rural Ireland. This involves piloting, developing and implementing support interventions that respond to the needs and potential of all the members of a smallholder household. Thus, the Smallholder Initiative represents a holistic, multi-sectoral, co-ordinated and integrated approach.

Community development and social inclusion principles underpin the Initiative, and add to its distinctiveness. To this end, local working groups, which include representatives from smallholder households, drive and guide the strategic direction of the Initiative. They also develop policies and promote linkages with agencies. In terms of social inclusion, the Initiative clearly focuses on those households that are on the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder, and draws on the range of supports that are available within local development partnerships to ensure tailored and targeted interventions. Poverty, equality and rural-proofing are reflected not just in the planning and review aspects of the Smallholder Initiative, but are explicit in its implementation.

This manual is targeted at those working on the Smallholder Initiative. The very idea for the manual came from the bottom-up; from those already working in the field. Through a process, which has been facilitated and supported by Pobal, a broad range of stakeholders have inputted directly into the compilation of this Manual. These include Development Officers, Partnership Managers, Farm Organisations, Teagasc, Local Working Groups and Boards, and by extension smallholders themselves.

THE KEY OBJECTIVES OF THIS MANUAL ARE TO:

- **Provide a guide, resource and toolkit for those who are working on the delivery of the Smallholder Initiative.** While the primary focus is on Development Officers, the manual is also relevant to their colleagues, partnership managers and the members of local working groups. The manual is pitched at a level that allows those who have considerable experience of the Initiative to continue to develop, enhance and expand their roles and it adds to the effectiveness of their work. At the same time, the manual also responds to the needs of newcomers to the Initiative, and in particular Development Officers who assume their roles in the context of new local development structures, resulting from the 'cohesion process.'

- **Enhance the focus and direction of the Smallholder Initiative,** by noting how partnerships can build on achievements to date, consolidate local working groups, refine and sharpen the skills of Development Officers and involve smallholders in maintaining the Initiative's strategic focus.

- **Assist strategic planning, review and implementation of the Initiative** through presenting series of steps and processes that enable Partnerships to record, document and highlight key achievements, outputs, impacts and learnings, so that review and evaluation become embedded as a feature of the Initiative, and contribute to constant innovation and renewal.

- **Promote the application of best-practice and adherence to local development principles,** by spelling-out the unique features of the Initiative, its commitment to bottom-up and local development approaches, and by outlining how these can be applied in practice, so that the benefits of the Initiative are maximised.

- **Further complementarity, linkages and the added-value of the Initiative,** by advocating inter- and intra-Partnership approaches that are based on teamwork, and linkages with external bodies that are based on collaboration.

- Complement the work of Pobal in supporting **networking, advocacy, information dissemination and policy development.**

TARGET AUDIENCES AND USES OF THE MANUAL

In the main, this manual focuses on meeting the information and strategic management needs of the Development Officers, who work directly in implementing the Smallholder Initiative. However, given that the Initiative encompasses an ever-broadening range of strategic interventions and supports, and in the context of cohesion and integration in local development, this manual is very relevant to all staff and management of Partnerships with rural catchment areas. The manual provides Partnership Directors and members of local working groups with a resource that places local work in a broader and strategic national and EU context.

Main Users	Potential Uses
DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS	Source of information on key principles of the initiative Resource and guidebook for new officers.
	Means of updating knowledge and skills for experienced officers.
	Conduit for promoting the transfer of knowledge and best-practice.
	Guide to enhance monitoring, review and strategic planning.
	Link to other aspects of local development – provides the wider picture.
	Back-Up when particular issues or difficulties may emerge.
	Reference for enhancing local governance and board/working group development.
WORKING GROUPS	Tool for the induction of new members.
	Resource for internal training and capacity-building.
	Stimulus to enhancement of governance structures and processes.
	Link with other Partnerships, Boards, Working Groups and Smallholders.
	Framework for guiding, supporting and directing the work at local level.
	Guide to the development of horizontal and vertical linkages, leading to collaboration and improved programme delivery.

Main Users	Potential Uses
MANAGEMENT	Means of ensuring that all staff and directors have a clear understanding and appreciation of the Smallholder Initiative, and contribute to its successful implementation.
	Reference for enhancing team-working and collaboration.
	Practical guide to the delivery of best-practice, including the application of proofing guidelines.
	Resource for designing and delivering in-house training, and inducting new staff.
	Reference for undertaking internal reviews and formulating strategic plans.
POBAL	Tool for promoting the transfer of best practice among partnerships currently implementing the Initiative.
	Means of bringing 'new entrants' up to speed relatively quickly.
	Resource for developing regional and national networks, and broadening their focus to reflect an enhanced development and sustainable set of approaches.
	Promoting best practice in terms of the uniformity and consistency of tracking and recording outputs and achievements, while simultaneously fostering local diversity and innovation.
	Document best practice, achievements and issues at local level that require strategic responses from the centre, and require new policy directions.

FORMAT

The manual is presented in ring-binder format, which allows users to add new pieces of information as these become relevant. Government, Pobal and the Partnership Networks may from time to time circulate inserts, which will enhance the potential use of the manual by updating its focus and content.

The manual seeks to be a working document, which Partnerships use on a regular and continuous basis. Therefore, it does not immerse itself in any particular issue or set of issues that are likely to change over time. Instead, the manual focuses on the key principles and approaches that underpin and guide the work, and which transcend any temporal or local issues.

The content of the manual seeks to be relevant to Partnerships in all rural locations. Therefore, while it refers to and draws on previous work by Pobal and other agencies, it does not include any specific reference to any individual Partnership. Instead, it provides and over-arching guide to good practice. In line with local development principles, the manual must not be seen as a prescriptive document, but rather as a guide to enable each partnership to optimise its own resources, respond effectively to local needs, issues and potentials and maximise innovation.

WHAT DOES THE MANUAL CONTAIN?

The manual is sub-divided into ten sections, each of which is numbered and identified by a divider. The **opening section** outlines the context in which the Initiative operates. It refers to rural re-structuring and points the user to useful sources of information on rural change and the processes at work within Irish agriculture. The modus operandi for the Initiative is set in the context of sustainable development that is based on partnership and area-based local development.

The **second section** sets out the aims and objectives of the Initiative, and in so doing, it defines the key principles that need to govern the work at local level. The **following section** defines the Initiative by describing how its key principles may be applied in practice. This third section also presents the key criteria for targeting, selecting and recruiting smallholder households. It describes what works well in engaging smallholders, and it deals with the issues of targeting and working in groups.

Section four comments on management structures and on the specific and complementary roles of Partnership Directors, local working groups and the Development Officers. It refers to local governance and discusses how Partnerships can harness the synergies created by a coming together of a range of interested stakeholders. The section on strategic planning (**section five**) takes a very hands-on and practical approach, and provides a useful guide not just in terms of the Smallholder Initiative, but also in terms of broader local development.

In describing the support interventions implemented by partnerships, **section six**, emphasises the innovative nature of the work. It notes that the Initiative involves the delivery of a co-ordinated set of responses, which transcends various measures and programmes. Thus, integration and multi-sectorality are key aspects of the Initiative. This theme is further developed in **section seven**, which deals with maximising complementarity and collaboration between partnerships and other agencies with a stake in rural development, social inclusion, economic development, service provision and/or agriculture.

Section eight notes the value of monitoring and evaluation, and describes how practices may be applied that enhance the delivery of supports, and contribute to accountability internally and externally. This is followed in **section nine** by a presentation on the key principles of proofing, and practical guides to equality, poverty, rural and environmental proofing. The **final section** in the manual concerns itself with mainstreaming and influencing policies, so that the conditions in which the Initiative operates are more conducive to innovation and that the structural barriers that prevent social inclusion and progression are overcome.

Summary Overview of the Smallholder Initiative

THE PURPOSE OF SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE IS:

To develop and implement innovative models of working with low-income farm households leading to policy and practice change, improved economic potential and quality of life for the maximum number of farm households in rural Ireland. This will be achieved through:

- local development partnerships,

- increased collaborative inter-agency arrangements, and within

- the context of community development and social inclusion principles.

OVERALL AIMS OF THE SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE

- To improve the viability (economic and social) of low-income farm families and sustain as many as possible living and working in rural areas;

- To co-ordinate a targeted socio-economic service to unviable small farm households in the most disadvantaged rural areas;

- To develop practical ways of addressing hidden unemployment, under-employment and social exclusion on small-holdings in rural Ireland;

- To influence national policy through demonstrating workable models of regenerating the rural economy.

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE

- Always complements other services

- Involves smallholders in all actions

- Is guided by a local accountable working group

- Promotes innovation at local level

- Provides holistic guidance rather than farm advice

- Involves Teamworking to provide a range of responses to the needs of smallholder households

- Draws on the supports, efforts and resources of a range of local agencies

- Provides economic and social (including socio-psychological) supports to the members of the farm household

- Emphasises the progression of clients – economically and socially, and works in partnership with agencies to support progression

- Strives to address and remove the barriers that enable progression and the realisation of individual's potential, by addressing institutional and policy issues.

Section 1
Context and Rationale

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

RURAL RE-STRUCTURING - AN OVERVIEW

a) MACRO-CONTEXT- IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE

- Sustainable Rural Development – Key Principle
- Current Local Development Responses to the Needs of Smallholders
- Economic Disadvantages and Social Exclusion Issues among Smallholders

b) PROGRAMME CONTEXT FOR THE SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE

- Overall Objectives of the Initiative 2001-2006
- Initiative Characteristics and Good Practice in Local Development
- Unique Features of the Initiative

1. Context and Rationale

Throughout Europe, rural areas have experienced profound economic, social, cultural, demographic and environmental changes over recent decades. In economic terms, the predominance of agriculture has declined rapidly, while at the same time, employment in the services sector in rural areas has grown, although this has failed to compensate for the haemorrhage of employment from the primary sector. The following table provides an overview of the structural changes that took place in Irish agriculture between 1991 and 2000 (years of the Census of Agriculture).

Fig. 1.1: Structural Changes in Irish Agriculture, 1991 - 2000

INDICATOR	1991	2000	% CHANGE
Number of farms	170,578[1]	141,527[2]	-17
Average farm size (ha)	26.0	31.4	+21
Agricultural area used (ha)	4,441,755	4,443,071	+0.03
Sole occupation farmers (%)	74	56	-24
Subsidiary occupation farmers (%)	21	30	+46
Regular farm labour force (number)	312,729	257,948	-17.5

Source: Census of Agriculture, CSO (1994, 2002)

1. Includes 323 specialised farms, which have no agricultural area, used
2. Includes 53 specialised farms, which have no agricultural area, used

The table shows a number of trends, which have evolved over recent decades and represent bleak prospects for the farming sector. Smallholders are particularly vulnerable in this scenario, as the number of large farms increase, and the number of small farms declines. Since the 2000 Census, the proportion of sole-occupation farmers has fallen below 50%, which provides a further indication of continuing pressure on farm incomes. According to statistics from the Central Bank of Ireland (2003[3]), income from agriculture, forestry and fishing grew by only 24.4% between 1990 and 2002 compared with a 200% increase in non-agricultural wages, salaries and pensions. This indicates increasing levels of poverty among the farming community, in both absolute and relative terms.

The decline of agriculture has precipitated cultural changes, as associated traditions have tended to weaken, and regional variations and styles have succumbed to standardising influences. Economic changes and public policies have generally accelerated urbanisation, leading to the depopulation of many rural areas. On the environmental front, the intensification of agriculture associated with the 'green revolution' of the 1960s and 1970s has led to the degradation of the rural environment (Norberg-Hodge, 2001), as has the abandonment of many rural areas.

While most of the commentaries on recent rural change tend to speak about structural problems and sustainability challenges, a sense of optimism is also emerging. At the EU and national levels, policies introduced since the 1990s, have sought to redress the environmental degradation caused by agricultural over-production by introducing incentives to support environmentally-friendly farming. Experiments in participative democracy, which took hold with the LEADER I Programme, have been consolidated, and now represent an integral part of the institutional and decision-making framework of most rural areas in Europe. Added and aligned to this, area-based initiatives promoted by Pobal and by Government Departments have contributed significantly to the valorisation of rural resources, and have given local communities a very real say in local decision-making (OECD, 2001). Regional and local branding is emerging as a counterbalance to globalisation, and this is having the effect of re-awakening interest in regional and local diversity, culture and language. Urban congestion is provoking a movement of population back to many rural areas, as citizens seek a better quality of life (Saraceno, 1994). Thus, while those working in rural development face a number of structural challenges, new sets of tools have emerged that offer the potential to unleash new opportunities and energies.

This section of the manual provides an overview of re-structuring processes in rural areas. It refers to the main issues and trends associated with rural re-structuring, and it includes a wide range of references, so that anybody using this manual is pointed towards how and where to access additional information.

3. Cited in Crowley (2006).

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

CHALLENGES

- ! Accelerating urbanisation, leading to a decline in services and opportunities in rural areas

- ! Persistent associations of the rural with residual, remote, backward, under-developed and decline

- ! Contracting economic base associated with agricultural/ maricultural decline

- ! Limited economic diversification, and a concentration of new economic activities in sub-urban areas

- ! Land use and resource management pressures

- ! On-going depopulation, and/or low rates of population growth

- ! Poor public service provision

- ! Limited decentralisation of services and political competencies below county level

- ! Public sector apprehensions about participative democracy

- ! Population imbalances, associated with ageing and out-migration

- ! Lower levels of investment in infrastructure, and a flight of capital

- ! Environmental pollution associated with monocultural cultivations

- ! Uncertainty due to world market pressures and trends

- ! Threats to the family farm associated with GM crops and land acquisition by the corporate sector.

OPPORTUNITIES

- ✔ Consolidation of partnership structures and processes in rural development

- ✔ Greater recognition of rural issues in national policy and practice

- ✔ Economic diversification opportunities, particularly in ecological tourism and services

- ✔ Growing appreciation of regional and local culture and heritage

- ✔ Improved transport and ICT linkages

- ✔ Transnational partnerships

- ✔ Growing citizen participation in local decision-making

- ✔ New policy initiatives at EU and national levels

- ✔ Environmental protection initiatives

- ✔ Increased political competencies at regional and sub-regional levels in most European states

- ✔ Growing capacity of the community and voluntary sector to affect change and deliver projects

- ✔ Correlation with superior quality of life – lower crime rates, better environment for families

- ✔ Traditional social networks with potential to promote social capital

RURAL RE-STRUCTURING – AN OVERVIEW

Commentators generally refer to the changes experienced by rural areas under the heading of 'rural restructuring.' (Marsden et al., 1994). Work in the Irish context (Lafferty et al., 1999; Crowley 2006) and in the international context (Ilbery and Bowler 1998; Cloke et al. 2006) reveal that such changes are occurring unevenly, and that they affect different rural territories in different ways[4].

Early economic development theories, such as structural change models (Nurkse, 1953 and Lewis, 1955) and modernisation (Rostow, 1960) tended to view the 'rural' as synonymous with underdevelopment. 'Centre-periphery' theories that were in vogue during much of the 1960s, viewed rural areas as politically dependent, economically under-developed and culturally marginal. Therefore, policies focused almost exclusively on developing urban centres, while viewing the development of rural areas as synonymous with the development of agriculture. These policies resulted in the desertification or abandonment of extensive rural areas in western industrial societies. During the 1970s, some countries such as France sought to encourage a redistributive effect in favour of rural hinterlands. They sought to establish 'growth-poles' as new or expanded urban centres, which would encourage investment and new economic activities outside of capital cities and traditional industrial regions. However, growth-poles represented an urban-model that was frequently imposed on rural areas and the growth-poles themselves tended to absorb rather than distribute resources, thus impeding rather than supporting the development of rural areas[5].

The emergence of subsequent policies can be framed in the context of a reaction against the excesses of agricultural industrialization, urbanisation and congestion or agglomeration. By the 1980s, the financial and environmental costs associated with the industrialisation of agriculture, as had been vigorously promoted through policy instruments such as CAP, forced a review of productivist approaches to agriculture, gradually ushering in a post-productivist scenario in rural areas. The decline in the emphasis on agricultural production, has added a richness and complexity to rural development, as factors such as space, access to resources, social class, power dynamics, networking and regulation have come to rival and in some contexts, supersede agriculture in terms of their relevance in rural development.

The impact of post-productivist restructuring extends beyond the domain of agriculture. Industrial restructuring, which was marked by the declining production capacity of manufacturing industries in western economies meant that rural areas could no longer expect to attract branch plants of large industries, seeking to move from urban to rural areas in search of cheaper labour supplies. National authorities faced fiscal pressures, and lacked resources to enable them to promote a significant redistributive effect between urban and rural areas, or between prosperous (central) and lagging (peripheral) regions. The popularity of exogenous econometric approaches began to wane, as bottom-up and area-based partnership approaches began to achieve very notable successes.

4. *Projects evaluating agricultural policies and their territorial impacts are undertaken by ESPON (European Spatial Planning Observatory Network) http://www.espon.eu*
5. *Maillat (1997: 12) observes, the experience of growth-pole approaches in Europe testifies to the theories put forward by Myrdal (1957) that the 'backwash' effect would be greater than the 'spread' effect in growth-centre scenarios.*

The post-Fordist crisis, as it has been termed (Todaro, 1994) calls for greater emphasis on endogenous approaches to development, and increased spatial differentiation, as it has become increasingly apparent that rural areas are becoming places of consumption, as well as places of production, and that the urban – rural dichotomy that had underpinned earlier theories is dissipating (Phillips, 1998). The Rural Typology developed by NUI Maynooth (McHugh, 2001; Walsh et al., 2006) effectively captures how rural re-structuring has impacted on different parts of Ireland. It identifies six types of rural areas:

i. Peri-urban areas
ii. Very strong rural areas
iii. Strong agricultural areas adjusting to restrictions on output
iv. Structurally weak rural areas
v. Marginal areas
vi. Diversifying areas.

The growth of Dublin over recent decades has created an extensive peri-urban zone over parts of Meath, Kildare and Wicklow. Smaller peri-urban zones are evident in the hinterlands of Cork, Galway and Limerick. Very strong rural areas tend to be concentrated in Leinster, while strong agricultural areas that are adjusting to restrictions on outputs tend to be mainly in the south and east of Ireland. In contrast, structurally weak and marginal areas tend to be located in the midlands and west, and especially in the north-west. The final classification – diversifying areas tend to be in scenic areas, such as Kerry and West Cork, Connemara and upland parts of Wicklow.

A key message emerging from the typology is that considerable variations exist among rural areas, and that a so-called 'one size fits all' approach should be avoided. Instead, a diversity of responses, tailored to local needs and potential, which is integral to area-based local development is appropriate. The classification, which the typology presents, is constructed from an extensive range of socio-economic and demographic variables. Analysis of these variables shows that within the catchments of most partnerships, considerable areas of disadvantage and social exclusion exist. The typology and other analysis (Rural Foresight, 2005) reveal that throughout the state, traditional agriculture is vulnerable, and the need for economic diversification is pressing and immediate.

Rural re-structuring has had profound implications for farming families, and for smallholder households in particular. The threshold, in terms of farm size and income units, at which a farm is considered to be economically viable continues to rise, as the gap between the rising cost of inputs and the falling value of outputs continues to widen. The infrastructural deficit experienced by rural areas and associated demographic weaknesses restrict opportunities for local economic diversification and social interaction, and threaten the quality of the natural environment. The experience of smallholder households points to the need for a holistic and integrated set of responses that deal with the totality of issues faced by rural communities in general, and low-income farm families in particular. Their experiences also highlight the need for emphasis on social inclusion, local participation and anti-poverty interventions.

A. MACRO-CONTEXT – IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE

As a result of the changes in agriculture and the rural economy over the past decade, the range and complexity of issues faced by rural partnerships in general, and Development Officers in particular has grown considerably. While the absolute numbers of persons in the state experiencing social exclusion has reduced, the number of farming households facing economic difficulties has increased. Thus, smallholders emerge as one of the few LDSIP (Local Development Social Inclusion Programme) target groups that is growing in number. In this context, the interests of the target group are best served by collaborative approaches with other agencies, and by a positive response from the statutory sector based on partnership principles.

THIS GROWTH IN THE SIZE OF THE TARGET GROUP BRINGS A NEW DYNAMIC AND NEW CHALLENGES TO THOSE INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTING SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE ACTIONS. IT BEHOVES PARTNERSHIPS TO:

✔ Maintain the focus on farmers / households on the lower-rungs of the socio-economic ladder, so that the social inclusion principles that distinguish the Smallholder Initiative from other services are adhered to;

✔ Be open to receiving new clients, including individuals and families who might previously have been considered as 'middle-ranking' farmers;

✔ Constantly review and adapt the focus and content of actions, to ensure that they keep pace with the changing needs of the target group (undertake periodic reviews and evaluations);

✔ Ensure that the full range of beneficiaries and stakeholders is represented on the Partnership's decision-making structures (agriculture working group/ services to the unemployed working group etc.);

✔ Work in collaboration with other agencies, including Teagasc and other statutory bodies, as well as the productive sector in responding to needs, sharing information and facilitating client progression;

✔ Address the structural inequalities that have resulted from rural re-structuring, so that the cycle of disadvantage and social exclusion are broken, and that inter-generational poverty is eradicated.

✔ Contribute proactively to policy formulation and development, and the transfer of good practice between agencies and territories;

✔ Be guided by the principles of sustainable rural development.

SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT – KEY PRINCIPLES

Commentators on Sustainable Development (Seitz, 1988; Adams, 1991 and 1992; Dobson, 1991; Croll and Parkin, 1992; Walsh, 1997; COMHAR 1999 & 2000) have highlighted the importance of citizen participation, empowerment, inclusion and shared decision-making in the realisation of sustainable development. They refer to the need to foster mechanisms and structures at local level that "focus on developing relationships and lines of communication across interest lines... in particular... linkages among actions and actors in different social fields. These linkages in turn, create trust and foster mutual understanding" (Bridger and Luloff, 1999: 384)

During the early 1990s, Eckersley and other advocates of sustainable development and environmental conservation argued that, "what is needed is more rather than less participation in government and greater decentralization" (1992: 16), so that the full range of issues impinging on sustainable development could be addressed. Although the context and emphasis may be slightly different, this view is also borne out in the NESC Report; New Approaches to Rural Development (1994), which identified the problems of rural areas as being 'multi-sectoral and inter-dependent.' It argued that, "it would seem appropriate and desirable now to consolidate this emergent policy framework by taking strategic decisions in regard to development organised on a spatial basis"(1994: 213) and that integrated development should be promoted, based on a pre-supposed "degree of devolution of decision-making from central administrations to local levels. According to the principle of subsidiarity, public services should be devolved to the lowest practicable administrative level" (1994: 215).

This vision of strategically tailored area-based intervention in the development of rural communities, was also captured in the European Commission White Paper 'The Future of Rural Society (1988)', which stated that:

The very idea of diversifying rural economies on the basis of their indigenous potential requires that whatever rural development programme is embarked upon, it must be based on actual local circumstances" (1988: 53),

and

"mutually consistent (integrated) regional development programmes are vital...Rural development must be both multi-disciplinary in conception, and multi-sectoral in application... Regional or rural development plans cannot succeed without the direct involvement of the interests concerned. Dialogue and partnership are all the more important because rural decline occurs in such a variety of situations, none of which can be ignored when the programmes are framed and implemented" (op cit.: 31).

In addition to promoting decision-making at the lowest administrative level, sustainable development implies achieving balance and integration between economic development, social inclusion and ecological conservation. The following model depicts how in the post-industrial (current) context, development and ecological objectives can be directed to converge in the interest of rural development.

Fig. 1.2: Divergence and Convergence Tendencies between Development and Conservation

Rather than categorise sustainable development as a stand-alone concept, this approach reflects the dynamism of development as an on-going process, which needs to be directed. It also emphasises the interdependencies between perspectives that were previously viewed as competitive.

As the following figure shows, sustainable development is a multi-dimensional concept, that involves an integrated approach; promoting complementarity (and not competition) between economic, social, cultural and environmental objectives. Sustainable development will entail integration of objectives where possible, and making trade-offs between objectives where integration is not possible.

Fig. 1.3: The Dimensions of Sustainable Development

Adapted from: Douglas, 1995; OECD, 2001.

Sustainable Development principles have particular relevance for and application in rural areas. In Ireland, 38% of the population lives in the open countryside or in a settlement with less than 2,000 people. Rural regions account for over 90% of the land area of OECD member countries, and contain one-third of the population, and as Bell and Morse (1999: 7) observe:

"Agricultural systems occupy large areas of land – far more than any other industry, with the possible exception of forestry. Therefore, what occurs within agriculture can often have major environmental effects. The end product of agriculture is often food, and we all eat!"

Although agriculture may have declined as an economic activity, agricultural practices and land use patterns continue to have significant impacts on the broader development of rural areas. In addition to producing food, rural areas contain the bulk of the world's natural resources and amenities, and much of our heritage, including cultural and built resources. Demand for these resources has increased significantly in recent years, requiring strategic management responses (Ó Nuanáin, 1999). As the OECD (1996: 32) has noted many of these rural amenities and resources have social and environmental values in excess of the price the market sets. As such, the management of rural amenities requires prominence in public policy.

Following the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in 1992, the United Nations issued Agenda 21: a set of developmental and environmental objectives, the realisation of which requires global co-operation and commitment. As the extracts quoted on the following page highlight, the Agenda 21 commitments for rural areas provide not just a template for action, but also a basis on which actions and interventions can be assessed and appraised.

"Major adjustments are needed in agricultural, environmental and macroeconomic policy, at both national and international levels, in developed as well as developing countries, to create the conditions for sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD). The major objective of SARD is to increase food production in a sustainable way and enhance food security. This will involve education initiatives, utilization of economic incentives and the development of appropriate and new technologies, thus ensuring stable supplies of nutritionally adequate food, access to those supplies by vulnerable groups, and production for markets: employment and income generation to alleviate poverty: and natural resource management and environmental protection…

This component[6] bridges policy and integrated resource management. The greater the degree of community control over the resources on which it relies, the greater will be the incentive for economic and human resources development. At the same time, policy instruments to reconcile long-run and short-run requirements must be set by national Governments. The approaches focus on fostering self-reliance and cooperation, providing information and supporting user-based organizations. Emphasis should be on management practices, building agreements for changes in resource utilization, the rights and duties associated with use of land, water and forests, the functioning of markets, prices, and the access to information, capital and inputs. This would require training and capacity-building to assume greater responsibilities in sustainable development efforts"

- Agenda 21, Chapter 14.

6. *Ensuring people's participation and promoting human resource development for sustainable agriculture. Agenda 21, chapter 14, section B.*

POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION EXIST IN RURAL AS WELL AS IN URBAN AREAS...

Studies show that levels of poverty and social exclusion are high in the rural parts of Ireland. Indeed, some two –thirds of all poor households in Ireland are situated in rural areas. This includes the towns, villages and countryside outside of the main cities.

Such poverty leads to isolation and creates a range of barriers for people and groups affected. These structural barriers serve to preclude many people in rural Ireland from taking a full part in economic and social activities and to exclude them from the decision-making processes, which affect their everyday lives.

Poverty in rural areas though widespread, is less visible because it is dispersed rather than concentrated in large "blackspot" areas. Even when grouped together (e.g. in social housing estates) its extent may be hidden to outsiders.

Furthermore, rural Ireland contains subtle social structures, which create and reinforce the structural barriers, which exist for disadvantaged people and groups.

RURAL EXCLUSION HAS DISTINCT FEATURES...

Poverty and social exclusion reduce people's opportunities, in social and economic terms.

Specific aspects of exclusion in rural areas through which this reduction in opportunities occurs are:

- the existence of isolated areas with few state services on the ground;

- the problems of distance, and transport, even in non-isolated areas. Lack of public transport prevents people from disadvantaged groups (e.g. people with disabilities or disadvantaged women) from taking part in training, employment and other activities;

- lack of good infrastructure (e.g. roads and telecommunications) in many areas;

- lack of industrial and services development, and related employment opportunities, in many areas;

- the lack of skills and capital among many low income smallholders and their families who require off-farm employment in the context of agricultural restructuring;

- depopulation of certain communities;

- limited access to supports and services, and a traditional reluctance in some instances to seek support.

PREVIOUS WORK BY POBAL AND THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS HAS NOTED THAT:

- The decline of rural areas in general will continue unless the necessary European and National policies are put in place to overcome the disadvantage and neglect that characterise these areas.

- At local level, area-based initiatives have created an awareness and fostered a sense of self-determination, in recent years.

- Insufficient attention has been paid to the plight and needs of low-income smallholders, most of whom are family operated farms. Declining farm incomes from traditional farming systems, is causing increasing poverty and disillusionment, particularly within the smallholder-farming sector – with a resultant mass migration and emigration of the able-bodied workforce from the more disadvantaged rural areas.

- Family farms are an integral part of the rural economy. Their retention in adequate numbers is vital to the stabilisation of the rural population and the creation of sustainable and vibrant rural economies and communities.

- Traditional farming will not provide viable incomes for the majority of smallholders.

- The retention of farm families and the general patterns of rural decline can only be arrested through structures and frameworks that promote the economic and social development of regions and areas on the basis of an integrated multi sectoral approach. This can only be done when we agree what it is we want to achieve.

FROM THE SMALLHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVE, THERE IS A NEED TO:

- Continue and strengthen measures and supports to improve financial profitability, and / or diversify / streamline practices, so that he/ she has the time and resources to participate in training, employment and other progression opportunities;

- Support the development of alternative enterprises at farm level and access to complementary income-generating opportunities within accessible distance of the farm;

- Provide access to accurate and objective information on the most sustainable and appropriate progression pathways for the farm and household;

- Promote additional ways to provide and deliver systematically tailored programmes and supports to specific categories of smallholder households;

- Seek the realisation of a more equitable distribution of the agricultural and other income-support mechanisms to the low-income smallholders;

- Package supports/incentives to encourage optimum utilisation and environmentally friendly use of limited natural resources.

CURRENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT RESPONSES TO THE NEEDS OF SMALLHOLDERS – ADDRESSING THE TOTALITY OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES

The opening section of this manual has demonstrated the need for rural development at local level to be integrated and holistic. It has also noted that such efforts need to be backed up by national and supra-national policies and supports, so that structural inequalities are addressed, and so that all places and individuals can realise their development potential. In this context, the Smallholder Initiative needs to address the totality of the economic and social issues facing smallholder households. Moreover, it needs to recognise the inter-connectedness between issues, and work to ensure the implementation of mainstream policies and practices that alleviate poverty and social exclusion.

ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION ISSUES AMONG SMALLHOLDERS

- Falling farm income (actual and relative) is leading to increased levels of economic and social poverty.

- The number of farmers affected by falling income is growing. Hence, the number of potential Smallholder Initiative clients is increasing.

- Socio-psychological issues, such as poor diet, isolation and mental health problems affect many smallholders. These require holistic responses on the part of Development Officers, based on collaboration with colleagues, and where appropriate, consultations with and / or referrals to other agencies.

- The widening gap between farm incomes and the average industrial wage, and consequent divergence in lifestyles and life-options is compounding a sense of fatalism among farmers in general, and smallholders in particular.

- Persistent population losses in several areas add to the isolation and loneliness experienced by smallholders.

- The negative public portrayal of farming discourages new entrants, such that many smallholders do not have a successor, or a family member to help with chores.

- The rationalisation of the agriculture sector, and the closure of facilities such as creameries, marts and farm stores have removed venues at which farmers could meet, interact and exchange advice. The depletion of this space for 'social interaction' has deprived farmers of a means of accessing information about farming. Moreover, the pub has become even more dominant as a place of social interaction, and this is not always appropriate or suitable.

- As many farming families had in the past, been relatively secure in economic terms, they are unfamiliar with supports and services, and many are reluctant to enquire about entitlements. Concerns over neighbours' perceptions may also be an inhibiting factor.

B. PROGRAMME CONTEXT FOR THE SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE

Local Development Partnerships have been providing supports to low-income farming households since the mid-1990s, and in come cases, since before then. While the decline of the agriculture sector has been a feature of the rural economy for several decades, its seriousness tended to be under-represented in popular commentary up to the early 1990s. Indeed, throughout much of the 1970s and 1980s, it was generally perceived that the European Common Agriculture Policy and associated farm subsidies were addressing the economic needs of the farming sector (Commins and O'Hara, 1999). However, by the 1990s, smaller farmers, who although they had greater economic needs, but were receiving a disproportionately small share of agriculture subsidies, began to face very severe economic and social pressures. High interest rates compounded the debts many farmers had amassed as a result of undertaking farm modernisation during the 1970s and 1980s. Production ceilings inhibited the ability of young farmers who wanted to expand their operations. As incomes fell and financial pressures increased, forestry premia became increasingly attractive, while some farmers sold land to private companies for afforestation. An increasingly negative portrayal and representation of farming discouraged new entrants, resulting in many farms succumbing to decline, and ageing of the farming population. These factors led to increasing social problems such as depression, while rural depopulation and the withdrawal of many public services from rural communities compounded isolation and loneliness. Consequently, issues of substance abuse and suicide began to become more prevalent. The retarded diversification of the rural economy, associated with a lack of balanced regional development and spatial planning in Ireland led to increased levels of out-migration from rural areas, while under-employment became a feature of several farm households.

Against this background, local development organisations began to focus on farm families in general and smallholders in particular. Although agricultural activities were not eligible for support under the LEADER Programme, Local Action Groups such as IRD Duhallow and Rural Resource Development (Clare LEADER) undertook extensive studies, which profiled farm households, their composition, economic viability and social and family concerns. Both studies recommended changes in national policy, which would balance EU and national supports in favour of smallholders. They also recommended that smallholders, and younger farmers in particular would be given greater access to quota. In terms of local and direct supports, the Clare and Duhallow studies envisaged the delivery of tailored support services to low-income farm families. As a result, a number of new pilot actions were initiated by the local development sector. Although deemed not eligible for mainstream funding or the LEADER II Programme, the local development agencies persisted with support actions, which were funded from a range of local sources such as farmers' co-operatives.

The advent of the Local Development Programme (LDP) in 1995, with its specific emphasis on tackling social exclusion, poverty, unemployment and under-employment offered a vehicle to enable the local development sector to secure resources for actions and interventions that they had been piloting. Although smallholders were not named as a target group of the LDP, Pobal (then ADM) recognised that they were affected by disadvantage and social exclusion, and were therefore eligible for direct supports under the Programme. As a result, a number of Partnerships began to employ Development Officers from the mid-1990s onwards, and to implement support actions and projects that were specifically focused on smallholder households. Initially, such actions tended to focus on farming and agricultural issues. However, as the local development sector built up greater rapport with the client groups, and gained greater experience in working with smallholders, the range of actions pursued under the Local Development Programme tended to become broader, and to focus on the entire smallholder household. The Partnerships also recognised that needs were manifest at household level, and that solutions had to be applied that were applicable to the entire household.

During the course of the Local Development Programme (1995-1999), Pobal through its Rural Development Advisory Group and Liaison Staff promoted the transfer of best practice among Partnerships, and initiated and supported networking among Development Officers. In addition, Pobal convened a number of national seminars designed to highlight the needs of smallholders, and to promote inter-agency and collaborative approaches to the provision of supports and services.

Since the advent of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme in 2001, Smallholder Households have been specifically named as a target group of the initiatives administered by Pobal, and by extension, the Partnerships. National policy concepts such as poverty- and rural-proofing provide further recognition of the need for policies and supports to target and respond to smallholders.

This section of the manual presents the aims and objectives of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme. As other programmes come on stream that are relevant to the core operation of the Smallholder Initiative, their details may be inserted at this point in the manual. In any event, the Smallholder Initiative will continue to be linked to the core aims and objectives of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme, and must continue to be underpinned by its principles.

The Smallholder Initiative emerged from the bottom-up, as a local development initiative. Its successful implementation requires a localised approach, based on partnership structures and processes.

The needs of smallholders, and the development potential of their farms and households have inter-related economic, social and environmental dimensions. Responding to their needs, and developing their potential requires holistic, integrated, multi-sectoral and collaborative approaches.

In implementing the Smallholder Initiative, Partnerships are required to proactively source programmes and opportunities that add value to core work with smallholders, so that opportunities for client progression are maximised, and so that a broad range of supports can be provided that recognise the diverse needs and potential of the target group.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SOCIAL INCLUSION PROGRAMME 2001–2006

To counter disadvantage and to promote equality and social and economic inclusion through the provision of funding and support to local development organisations that adopt a partnership approach to tackling local issues on the basis of comprehensive, integrated local development plans designed to counter social exclusion and to equitably target the opportunities and benefits of development to the most disadvantaged individuals and groups within their areas.

In delivering on the objectives, the following principles are involved:

- Targeting resources to individuals and groups who experience the most extreme poverty and social exclusion;

- Actively promoting equality and in particular equality between women and men to achieve a more just and equal society;

- Applying community development approaches and principles to achieve the participation and full involvement of disadvantaged groups and communities in planning and decision making at every level;

- Promoting meaningful partnership to increase co-operation, co-ordination and effective decision making to address needs identified;

- Supporting integrated and multi-sectoral responses to exclusion that recognise the social and economic dimensions of exclusion;

- Developing mechanisms for mainstreaming lessons learned at a local level and maximising contributions to the policy-making process.

MEASURE A: SERVICES TO THE UNEMPLOYED

The objectives of this measure are:

- To improve the options within the labour market, of the long-term unemployed and those most distanced from the labour market through specifically targeted services, including pro-active targeting and outreach to marginalised groups who require intensive support and interventions;

- To identify, nurture and support individuals, groups and communities in accessing suitable gainful and sustained employment and self-employment through education, training, work experience, job placement, enterprise and the social economy;

- To support an enterprise culture and development, including community enterprise and the development of the social economy.

MEASURE B: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The objectives of this measure are:

- To enhance the capacity of people living in disadvantaged areas to participate fully in local development opportunities and to counter social exclusion;

- To provide support for small-scale improvements to the local environmental and community infrastructure;

- To add value to the effective delivery of mainstream policies and programmes through the provision of linkage and co-ordination as they affect the long-term unemployed and the socially excluded and to put in place mechanisms to ensure local initiatives inform and strengthen policy development.

MEASURE C: COMMUNITY-BASED YOUTH INITIATIVES

The objectives of this measure are:

- To enhance the social and personal development of young people who have left school early or are at risk of early school leaving, at risk of underachieving at school or who are involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in drug misuse, criminal activity and other forms of anti-social behaviour;

- To expand the range of community based education and youth development opportunities available from early years through to early adulthood, in areas of disadvantage;

- To alert young people to the dangers of substance abuse and to equip them with the skills to make the right choices in terms of saying no to drugs.

A CROSS-CUTTING OBJECTIVE OF ALL THREE MEASURES IS:

- To add value to the effective delivery of mainstream policies and programmes through the provision of linkage and co-ordination as they effect the long-term unemployed and the socially excluded and to put in place mechanisms to ensure local initiatives inform and strengthen policy development.

LDSIP CHARACTERISTICS AND GOOD PRACTICE IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

✔ Area-based development – using natural areas of development as the basis for territorial and integrated, bottom-up development strategies

✔ Partnership-based action, with inputs from the community and voluntary sector, local beneficiaries, social partners and the statutory sector

✔ Harnessing of complementary resources provided by all those involved in partnership- based on equality and trust between partners, and open and transparent communication and decision-making processes

✔ Community Development and Social Inclusion

✔ Local solutions to local problems

✔ Target group (beneficiary) participation

✔ A holistic approach to support and progression

✔ Tackling and removing structural barriers to equality

✔ Promoting mainstreaming of local best practice and inter-agency collaboration

✔ Integration and multi-sectorality

✔ Pro-active in:
  - tackling causes
  - focused interventions

✔ Bottom-up direction and responsibility, within national guidelines.

The Smallholder Initiative is an integral part of locally-based rural development. It addresses economic and social exclusion, and the actions it promotes are associated with all the measures of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme.

Staffing funding for Development Officers has, in the main been sourced from Measure A of the Programme, as have the bulk of actions undertaken through the Smallholder Initiative. A number of actions involving information dissemination, capacity-building and tackling socio-psychological issues are generally funded from Measure B. Measure C is the main source of support for interventions targeted at children and young people in the smallholder household.

Other Programmes implemented by Partnerships, such as LEADER, the LES, Community Enterprise and EQUAL among others can also offer positive routes for progression and client development.

Therefore, the Smallholder Initiative can serve to co-ordinate a range of inputs, broker resources and add value to complementary supports, services and programmes.

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE

✔ Always complements and never competes with existing, emerging and/or potential state services

✔ Involves smallholders in identifying needs, designing programmes and delivering actions

✔ Is guided by a local working group, with representatives from the smallholders, farming organisations, state bodies and community sector, which operates under the auspices of the Board of Directors of local development partnerships

✔ Adheres to national minimum standards in best practice, while at the same time providing distinct services and supports in each partnership area, in line with local needs and potential

✔ Adopts a guidance approach that is holistic, and tailored to individual circumstances, that does not involve the provision of farm advice

✔ Involves a dedicated (Smallholder) Development Officer, working as part of a local development team, who is the interface between the client and the partnership

✔ Draws on the supports, efforts and resources of a range of local agencies to enhance the range of progression options open to smallholders and their families

✔ Provides economic and social (including socio-psychological) supports to the members of the farm household, by drawing on the extensive and complementary skills pools that reside within local development partnerships

✔ Emphasises the progression of clients – economically and socially, and works in partnership with agencies to support progression

✔ Strives to address and remove the barriers that enable progression and the realisation of individuals' potential, by addressing institutional and policy issues.

Section 2
Aims and Objectives

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Smallholder Initiative relate to:

- advancing social inclusion,

- alleviating poverty,

- providing family supports,

- supporting progression to employment,

- stimulating enterprise development,

- creating new education and training opportunities,

- retaining farm families on the land,

- projecting a positive perception of farming and a sense of confidence and well-being among smallholders,

- facilitating rural community development,

- enhancing service provision in rural areas,

- preventing cumulative and inter-generational disadvantage and social exclusion,

- improving the quality of life for low-income smallholders

- promoting practices among agencies and policies that are more favourable towards smallholders.

Among the important policy frameworks that are given effect through the Smallholder Initiative are:

- The Cork Declaration on Rural Development (1996)

- The Salzburg Declaration on Rural Development (2003)

- The EU White Paper on Rural Development (1998)

- The (Irish) White Paper on Rural Development (1999)

- The National Anti-Poverty Strategy

The goal of the Smallholder Initiative is to translate the principles and aspirations contained in these policy frameworks into action at a local level, through partnership processes and area-based approaches, that recognise diversity, meeting local needs, foster innovation and promote sustainability.

As the following graph shows, the number of households benefiting from the Smallholder Initiative is increasing.

Fig. 2.1: *Number of Clients Supported through the Smallholder Initiative 2001 - 2005*

In addition to its impressive quantitative outputs, the Smallholder Initiative has had notable qualitative achievements.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PARTNERSHIPS AND POBAL TO DATE IN RESPECT OF WORK WITH SMALLHOLDERS

✔ Created linkages and synergy between the goals of rural development and the attainment of social inclusion

✔ Increased awareness and visibility of rural development (within Pobal and externally)

✔ Provided recognition of smallholders as a category of people with particular needs

✔ Heightened awareness of the real issues facing smallholders

✔ Provided tangible supports to considerable numbers of smallholders, including income supports, family and social supports, enterprise development and diversification, new skills development, and increased self-confidence

✔ Alleviated situations of rural poverty, by providing progression opportunities for smallholders and family members, and by addressing policy and income equity issues

✔ Influenced Agency budgets in favour of smallholders and rural communities

✔ Prompted / initiated and implemented rural services including rural transport, community-based childcare and social economy/ community enterprise

✔ Promoted inter-partnership networking and the transfer of best-practice

Partnerships implement the Smallholder Initiative as part of a package of area-based initiatives that combine local knowledge and expertise, with the skills and resources of the social partners and statutory sector.

ADVANTAGES OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

✔ Ensuring that the specific and varying needs of areas (regions, counties, municipalities, neighbourhoods) are taken into account in strategic planning and development.

✔ Allowing resources to be targeted at specific issues, problems and challenges that are associated with particular places or local conditions.

✔ Identifying latent resources that may not be acknowledged by large-scale interventions.

✔ Promoting competitiveness based on local identity, branding and loyalty to products, and services.

✔ Tapping into local skills, knowledge and formal and informal networks.

✔ Ensuring flexibility, so that innovative ideas are fostered.

✔ Mobilising local citizens, so that interventions are more likely to have popular support.

✔ Having the ability to address not just exclusively economic dimensions (hardware), but also the contextual issues (socio-cultural and environmental; software) that are necessary to sustain competitiveness.

THE PURPOSE OF SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE IS:

To develop and implement innovative models of working with low-income farm households leading to policy and practice change, improved economic potential and quality of life for the maximum number of farm households in rural Ireland. This will be achieved through:

● local development partnerships,

● increased collaborative inter-agency arrangements, and within

● the context of community development and social inclusion principles.

THE SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE AIMS TO:

● Tackle the specific forms of disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by low-income farm households, with regard to economic poverty, educational disadvantage, training needs, inequalities, distance from services and psychological, social and institutional barriers;

- Focus on disadvantage and gaps in the support system and develop pilot tailored responses in a community setting;

- Facilitate and enhance local partnership arrangements and the development and co-ordination of a range of support initiatives to enhance economic potential and quality of life of the target group;

- Provide the household members with opportunities to maximise their potential both on and off-farm;

- Document existing practice and identify models of good practice through action-research to influence policy;

- To facilitate and enhance local partnership arrangements and the development and co-ordination of a range of support initiatives to enhance economic potential and quality of life of the target group;

- To focus on disadvantage and gaps in the support system and develop pilot tailored responses in a community setting;

- To contribute to action research and strategic planning actions that anticipate future issues and respond to emerging trends.

SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE PRINCIPLES:

- Target resources to those most in need and experiencing social exclusion;

- Focus on the household as a viable economic entity;

- A socio-economic approach (rather than purely agricultural);

- Identify and fill gaps in support and service provision;

- Pilot and develop actions, and work in collaboration with mainstream agencies, so that supports and services are enhanced and sustained;

- Promote equality of access and participation for the target group;

- Apply community development approaches and principles to achieve the participation and full involvement of low-income farm households in planning and decision-making;

- Mobilise local resources and relevant stakeholders in partnership arrangements with a view to increasing co-operation, co-ordination and effective decision-making to address needs identified;

- Develop integrated and multi-sectoral responses to social exclusion;

- Mainstream the lessons learned at local level and maximise the contribution to policy change.

Rather than targeting the farmer as an individual, Smallholder Initiative activities are targeted at the household as a whole. The impacts of the Initiative are spread out among all household members and contribute to the integrated development of the rural area and its community, rather than a narrower technical input focused on one individual. The aim is to move from an exclusively agricultural / technical approach to a more developmental one, combining the principles of community and sustainable development.

Thus, the Development Officer must not be seen as an agricultural advisor. Indeed, he/ she is not in a position to provide agricultural advice. That role rests with Teagasc and with private agricultural consultants. Instead, the Development Officer provides a holistic response to the needs of the smallholder household. He/ she operates in line with community development principles, and promotes multi-faceted responses, drawing on the totality of resources and opportunities that reside within the local development sector. He / she works to complement (not compete) with any existing services.

The overall aim of this initiative is to retain as many smallholder households as possible living in economic security in rural Ireland. Thus, it seeks to develop and test intervention strategies that will facilitate low-income smallholder households to make informed decisions about opportunities and obstacles, which face them in achieving viable household incomes in the future.

The interventions focus on the household unit as a viable economic entity and the optimisation of income opportunities from available (including latent and under-utilised) local resources – both on and off farm. This integrated approach is socio-economic rather than purely agricultural in nature. It challenges the household to analyse the farm, family and income situation, explore options and plan for the future based on a comprehensive situation analysis, including aspirations, family cycle, availability of relevant supports and training systems.

OVERALL AIMS OF THE SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE

✔ To improve the viability (economic and social) of low-income farm families and sustain as many as possible in rural areas;

✔ To co-ordinate a targeted socio-economic service to small farm households in the most disadvantaged rural areas;

✔ To develop practical ways of addressing hidden unemployment and social exclusion on the small- holding in rural Ireland;

✔ To influence national policy through demonstrating workable models of regenerating the rural economy.

Section 3
Defining the Initiative

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE WORK
- Progression
- Community Development
- Consultation and Participation
- Integration
- Social Inclusion and Targeting

DEFINING AND ENGAGING LOCAL TARGET GROUPS

3. Defining the Initiative

A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE WORK

The following diagram identifies the principles that guide and underpin the work of the Smallholder Initiative.

Fig. 3.1: Guiding Principles of the Smallholder Initiative

Key Principles
Progression
Community Development
Consultation
Participation
Integration
Social Inclusion
Targeting

via
Local Development Partnership

Strategic Outputs
Economic Diversification
Vibrant Rural Communities
Client Empowerment
New Opportunities
Social Cohesion
Improved Competitiveness
Environmental Conservation

THE FOLLOWING PAGES PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE KEY PRINCIPLES.

i. PROGRESSION

In the context of the Smallholder Initiative, progression refers specifically to a planned process of guiding and supporting smallholder households towards more economic and social sustainability. This involves addressing the negative aspects of economic disadvantage, isolation and social exclusion. Low-income smallholder households will invariably combine a number of progression routes, depending on their circumstances, aspirations and available resources. Progression routes can include strategies to:

- Improve on-farm efficiency

- Protect the single farm payment and avail of other schemes and incentives

- Move into further education or training

- Secure off-farm employment to supplement family income

- Develop a new business

- Maximise income from supports such as social welfare

- Improve living conditions and quality of life

- Become (more) involved in the local community, in local decision-making and in platforms that affect agriculture and rural development policy.

Progression needs to be client-centred. Approaches should be flexible, and should be adapted to the client's own needs and circumstances. Progression is largely an individualised process, and depends on one's motivation to take up opportunities and respond to challenges. Motivation may be sustained by factors outside the individual's control. Progression routes apply not just to the smallholder (farm operator), but also to his/ her spouse and their children.

Supporting Client Progression involves:

i. working with clients on a one-to-one basis

ii. working with communities and agencies to promote equality of access and the tailoring of services to respond to clients' needs.

ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORTS

Providing one-to-one supports to clients (individuals and households) requires trust, understanding and confidentiality between the client and the Development Officer. The Development Officer's listening and inter-personal skills are essential in identifying progression paths that are appropriate to the client.

Development Offices should work with colleagues to ensure that clients are presented with the maximum range of progression routes and opportunities, and have access to the broadest range of skills that Partnerships can offer. Taking a team approach to enabling client progression enhances the likelihood that a client's family and community will be more supportive of his/ her progression and development.

Progression routes should be clearly mapped, and Development Officers need to maintain records of progression. Highlighting the successes of some clients (with their collaboration) can assist in motivating others.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES AND AGENCIES

Community development associations, such as women's groups, farm discussion groups and neighbourhood/ village renewal groups can provide clients with a social outlet and can play a role in highlighting and addressing social exclusion. Developing linkages with employers, via the Partnership's Employment/ Services to the Unemployed Sub-Group can increase the off-farm employment opportunities for smallholders. Linkages with the HSE, FAS, the DSFA and other agencies are essential in providing smallholders with back-up and support in availing of progression opportunities.

ii. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development is the bedrock of local development. It involves:

- Collective action on the part of citizens to improve economic and social conditions, enhance the physical environment and/or improve the quality of a life in an area or for a cohort of persons
- Developing the capacity of communities to identify their own needs and implement development actions in response to local needs
- Fostering and supporting volunteerism
- Enabling on-going citizen participation in local decision-making (participative democracy)
- Targeting resources towards areas, communities and individuals who experience disadvantage and/ or who have been excluded from previous initiatives.

Community Development involves fostering action **from the bottom-up** (endogenous) i.e. supporting individuals in communities to take a lead in defining their own development. Local Development Partnerships are proactive in supporting endogenous development. Indeed, many Partnerships emerged directly from community development. By combining bottom-up efforts with the resources and expertise of the social partners and the state, Partnerships have elements of both; the bottom-up (endogenous) and top-town (exogenous)[7].

7. Partnerships are frequently described as neo-endogenous agents (Cloke et al., 2006).

A community development approach involves a developmental strategy, which combines both task and process. The task is the achievement of social change linked to equality and social justice and the process is the application of the principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision-making in a structured and co-ordinated way.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Community development is underpinned by a set of principles. It is:

- Participative of the groups and communities that are the target of the strategy or action
- Collective in the analysis, in the development of strategy and in the implementation of actions
- Empowering of the communities with whom it engages
- Focused on social justice and equality as an outcome
- Committed to devising strategies to combat discrimination - see LDSIP Guidelines.[8]

The following model developed by local development partnerships defines Community Development as a five-stage process.
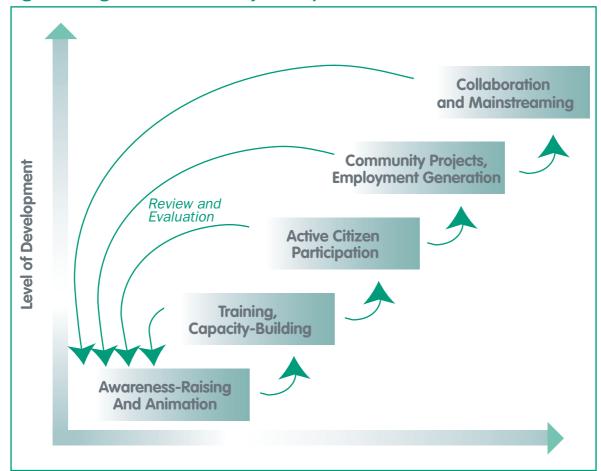
Fig. 3.2: Stages in the Community Development Process

Source IRD Duhallow, 2004: 18

This model of community development recognises that development is not a process that can happen automatically. It needs to be nurtured and guided. This is particularly the case in disadvantaged rural areas, where in order to initiate development processes, Partnerships need undertake awareness-raising and animation actions, so as to engage citizens, and to ensure local ownership from the very outset. Acquiring skills and know- how can take the form of capacity building and /or training (group/ individual levels). The range of areas covered in training needs to reflect local economic, socio-cultural and environmental needs. Access to skills and resources is a pre-requisite for active citizen participation, and for the development of projects. As with training, project activities need to encompass all the dimensions of sustainable development. Finally the development process is sustained by engaging mainstream agencies, and by the development of policy and contextual conditions that are conducive to sustainability and social inclusion. (Section nine of this Manual provides details about mainstreaming.)

As the arrows on the diagram show, the development process is not simply a linear progression. The process needs to be repeated over and over (as groups/ individuals progress to new projects) and tailored to suit the individual capacity and development needs of the individuals/ communities concerned. Moreover, the learnings from each stage in the development process are used to inform that stage and each of the preceding stages, so that they are constantly enhanced for new participants. This model incorporates the flexibility that enables more progressive elements within a community to progress more quickly to consolidation, while allowing their experiences and learnings to inform engagement by more disadvantaged groups.

iii. CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

As the previous pages indicate, consultation with citizens and beneficiaries and the active participation of the population are fundamental elements of community and local development. Indeed, one of the distinguishing features of the Smallholder Initiative is that smallholders and other farmers actively participate in its design, governance, implementation, review, evaluation and that hey advocate for it, and work on behalf of its beneficiaries. In other words, the Programme is underpinned by local ownership.

Consulting with the target group and enabling them to participate in all aspects of the Programme, require investment in community development processes (training, capacity-building etc., as outlined in the previous section). This offers notable long-term advantages in delivering the Smallholder Initiative.

8. *A number of documents prepared by or commissioned by Pobal provide useful information illustrating the practical implementation of a number of these principles.*

Targeting: The Insights Guides, a series of 23 documents compiling case studies undertaken by Partnerships and Community Partnerships over the course of the Local Development Programme, provides a range of practical insights into the theme of targeting.

Community development: The LDSIP Guidelines (P.28) set out 5 principles of community development. The Insights Case-study Guide No. 11 describes a community development approach.

Partnership: A study commissioned by Pobal and undertaken by Brian Harvey is The role of the Community Sector in Local Social Partnership.

BENEFITS OF CONSULTING AND INVOLVING SMALLHOLDERS

✔ Reaches individuals who might not be reached through formal top-down channels or the media

✔ Shapes actions, so that they are more in keeping with where people are at – build on what has been done

✔ Taps into a useful source of knowledge

✔ Ensures that targets and expectations are more likely to be realistic

✔ Harnesses volunteer inputs

✔ Publicises actions, and invites suggestions – increases possibilities for innovation

✔ Captures local goodwill, and may generate additional local support

✔ Gives greater legitimacy to decisions made

✔ Helps identify new partners and new ways of working

✔ Reduces the risk of making mistakes or meeting opposition during the implementation phase

✔ Allows for greater targeting and optimisation of resources

Good practice in consulting with and involving smallholders implies that the Partnership be promotive in reaching-out to smallholders, hold regular consultative meetings (group and individual), involve smallholders in decision-making structures within the Partnerships and encourage other bodies to be more inclusive of them. Consultation processes should not rely on inviting submissions, requiring proposals to be formally written-up, setting unrealistic deadlines or placing the onus on the target group to present ideas. Partnerships need to lead and facilitate consultation.

The following table provides a useful perspective on what participation is (and is not):

Table 3.1: Defining Participation

PARTICIPATION IS:	PARTICIPATION IS NOT:
■ A process that empowers people experiencing exclusion and poverty to take an active part in collective action and decision-making. This process contributes to longer term goals of social and economic change	■ Giving information and assuming this is enough
■ Active involvement of people, using their own experience as a basis to identify their own needs and resources and to devise potential solutions	■ Asking people what they think and then ignoring it, or deciding their opinions are neither valid nor necessary
■ A process which enables people to develop skills, knowledge and confidence	■ Deciding what is 'good' for people
■ A process which is resourced and a core element of the chosen development strategy	■ A cheaper, quicker or easier alternative to centralised planning
■ A process which requires commitment of resources and some dedication of time, effort and energy	■ Involving people in a planning process and then excluding them from the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the actions involved
■ A process which targets and identifies those who are marginalized and experience social exclusion	■ Involving people in implementation of actions and development strategies without involving them in the planning stage
■ Active involvement of end beneficiaries and users in the planning, implementation and monitoring of services	■ Just contacting local established 'visible' groups without targeting the excluded and specifically involving communities of interest as well as geographic communities.
■ Power-sharing and negotiations between different interests based on equality of status	
■ Based on the organisation of people to identify and articulate their interests within a collective policy agenda committed to eliminating exclusion and inequality.	

Source: Community Workers' Co-Operative (1997)

IV. INTEGRATION

Integration means that policies and programmes operate in a common framework, rather than as separate sectoral approaches. Integration implies that rural development includes:

- The agriculture sector
- Natural resources
- Enterprise Development and the creation of sustainable employment
- Improving the quality of life for rural citizens and communities
- Community Development
- Access to services and public goods in the rural context
- Establishing effective organisational structures that facilitate community participation
- Protection of the physical environment and the development of sustainable communities
- The strengthening and continuity of local and regional culture and identity.

These variables impact directly on the quality of life of smallholder households, and need to be addressed by ensuring a broadly-based, strategic and multi-sectoral approach to the Smallholder Initiative.

In terms of promoting social inclusion, integrated approaches deal not just with the symptoms of poverty and disadvantage; they deal with removing the causes, by involving the broader community, social partners and statutory sector in changing practices in favour of the marginalised. The integrated and multi-sectoral approaches which Partnerships apply contrast with traditional approaches, where agencies operated in just one sector. This traditional approach is often referred to as having a 'silo' mentality, and it is associated with hierarchies, inflexible systems, centralisation and limited citizen involvement in decision-making.

Promoting integration and multi-sectorality in the Smallholder Initiative requires:

- Responding to the totality of needs within the smallholder household
- Enabling members of smallholder households to join and participate in new and existing community associations
- Animating service providers to be more flexible and responsive in dealing with smallholders
- Promoting collaborative approaches among partnership staff and volunteers in supporting the members of smallholder households
- Providing smallholders with access to the maximum range of opportunities, by drawing on the resources of all Partnership programmes
- Pursuing funding streams and programmes/ initiatives that complement the core work being done through the Smallholder Initiative

V. SOCIAL INCLUSION AND TARGETING

Social inclusion acknowledges that disadvantage extends beyond having a low-income. It recognises the separation experienced by some sections of society from the benefits and opportunities that the greater part of society enjoys. Ireland's National Development Plan (2000-2006) defined social exclusion as, "cumulative marginalisation form production (unemployment), from consumption (poverty), from social networks (community, family neighbours) from decision-making and an adequate quality of life."

This definition captures the idea that social exclusion has many dimensions. The notion of 'cumulative' marginalisation makes the point that different kinds of disadvantage tend to reinforce each other, making them more difficult for individuals and groups to overcome.

'Promoting social inclusion' is a core objective of the National Development Plan, and National Anti-Poverty Strategy, and is consistent with, and complementary to the goals of sustainable rural development, which have been referred to earlier in this Manual. The Smallholder Initiative fits within these broad objectives. By specifically targeting smallholders, and delivering supports to them, the Programme represents a notable contribution to social inclusion.

In line with the principles of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme, Partnerships' work with smallholders should:

- Focus on those on the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder. This implies being promotive in identifying and targeting those most in need, as such households are frequently the least likely to seek support or assistance

- Develop strong linkages with community and voluntary associations and those involved in anti-poverty work at local level, enabling them to act as intermediaries in recruiting and animating smallholders to avail of partnership supports

- Recognising that socio-psychological issues and family circumstances can inhibit social inclusion, and that these issues need to be addressed sensitively, sometimes with external support

- Provide educational and training supports, including literacy and numeracy tuition

- Work with the younger members of the household so as to break the cycle of inter-generational disadvantage

- Support group development and encourage smallholders to join support/ voluntary groups in order to generate social gain

- Dedicating the resources and strengthening the resolve to work with those who experience the greatest levels of social exclusion

- Applying poverty- and equality-proofing to actions (These issues are dealt with specifically in section nine of this manual.)

The following table (table 3.2) presents the challenges associated with targeting, and identifies ways in which these challenges may be overcome.

Table 3.2: Targeting- Challenges and Strategies

CHALLENGES OF TARGETING

! Suspicion or reluctance may exist amongst members of the target groups concerning the benefits of participating in a Partnership programme.

! Issues of confidence frequently deter participation, with concerns amongst target groups about their capacity and ability to participate. This is often expressed as a 'not for me' opinion.

! Difficulties are regularly experienced in getting information to reach the target groups.

! A fear of a formal setting (e.g., classroom culture for a training course) can influence a decision to participate or otherwise.

! The complex nature of disadvantage means that it is unlikely that one initiative will meet all needs.

! A lack of a tradition of participation - in, for example, education, decision-making or the work-force - may result in sporadic initial involvement.

! Family or neighbour care /responsibilities can be a crucial impediment to participation – the absence of childcare, eldercare, time etc.

! Location and transport are frequent issues affecting participation, particularly in rural areas but also in urban contexts.

! Within targeting, a risk exists of only reaching those members of the target groups who already have the greatest capacity and confidence, with those experiencing the most extreme poverty and social exclusion remaining excluded.

TARGETING STRATEGIES

✔ Formal and informal encouragement is required.

✔ Target groups need to be involved in the design and delivery of programmes.

✔ To encourage involvement, indicators of success need to be set, and early achievements need to be demonstrated and celebrated. Such successes need to be celebrated and promoted.

✔ 'Taster' and introductory programmes can be an important way of building initial confidence and interest.

✔ Local capacity building and induction processes have proven valuable in overcoming issues of low confidence. Actions undertaken within any of the measures should be preceded by or accompanied by processes of community work.

✔ Targeted information campaigns are required, tailored to the needs and circumstances of the relevant target groups.

✔ Local contact points are essential for disseminating information.

✔ The choice of a non-threatening and accessible venue is essential.

✔ Creative forms of provision may be required to overcome any negative past associations.

✔ Co-ordination between measures is essential in effective targeting; e.g., it is unlikely that a stand-alone training initiative will in itself address the inequalities, which face an individual in his/her everyday life. Sustained support at a variety of different levels may be required for those who experience the most extreme poverty and social exclusion.

✔ It is likely that some flexibility may be required as a feature of delivery.

✔ Supports for accessible, affordable, quality child/ elder-care will need to be built into provision.

✔ Tailored timing of provision is important to facilitate those with caring responsibilities.

✔ Transport support and outreach must be considered in the design of programmes.

✔ Any programme committed to reaching the most excluded requires sufficient lead-in time in order to reach those who are most excluded.

✔ Where selection criteria for participation or support exist (e.g., education grants) clear criteria for assessing, approving and monitoring are required in order to ensure that the most excluded are targeted.

B. LOCAL TARGET GROUPS

IDENTIFYING THE TARGET GROUP

Defining an eligible smallholder is one of the constant challenges facing the Smallholder Initiative. Arriving at an agreed definition requires each Partnership to undertake local analysis in order to profile the faming community in their catchment area, identify the issues faced by them and the possible development opportunities and areas of action. This analysis should document the specific barriers and problems faced by those at the lower-end of the income scale among the farming community, and those households with particular forms of disadvantage. Among the variables that contribute to varying fortunes among the farming community are:

- Size and scale of operation/ holding

- Type of farming

- Location and land type

- Household structure and family circumstances

- Household income, including off-farm income

- Availability of local employment

- Debt levels and capacity to pay/ manage debt

- Access to and use of services

- Competition for resources (in-house and from external developers)

- The high costs and low returns associated with expansion

- Literacy and education/ training levels

- Distance from neighbours and social networks

- Existing facilities, equipment, technology and machinery

- Availability of finance for re-investment

Farm incomes are also affected by unpredictable factors such as the weather, animal and crop diseases, changes in agriculture policy, and world trade arrangements. Increasing globalisation and competition from third-country (non-EU) producers[9] puts downward pressures on the price of farm produce. The recent rationalisations of co-operatives and the privatisation of others, raise concerns over the ability of farmers to influence the prices they receive for their products. The experience of the privatisation of co-operatives has varied considerably. In some cases, margins have tightened, while in others savings have been made through the streamlining of processing facilities, with the benefits being passed on to farmers.

---

9. These are not peasant farmers in the 'third world' but the extensive landowners and corporations, who own land in developing countries, particularly in Latin America, and who want the EU to provide access to the internal market.

Given the range of variables that influence the definition of a smallholder household, it is recommended that tight or uni-dimensional approaches be avoided. Instead, the definition ought to reflect a range of factors, while maintaining the commitment to targeting those most affected by disadvantage and social exclusion. Indeed, Partnerships need to be committed to ensuring client progression, so that the initial cohort of clients is enabled to progress over time, and thereby allow others to access the supports available.

Based on their experience to date, the Partnerships have identified eleven qualifying criteria, which define a smallholder household. They recommended that in order to be eligible for the Smallholder Initiative, a household should satisfy at least seven of the criteria. The attached assessment sheet (annex 2) allows the Development Officer to undertake a preliminary assessment of the farm household, evaluate eligibility and identify possible aspects of the farm that need attention. In line with local development principles, Partnerships are expected to be flexible and realistic in applying these criteria. The skills and expertise of Development Officers and of Partnership Directors and members of Working Groups may be used to determine how a potential client can participate in the Smallholder Initiative.

The criteria presented here represent a combination of quantitative and qualitative dimensions. They are more holistic than an approach that is based on income-units alone, although practice has shown that the vast majority of qualifying farmers have an income level of below 100 income units. The over-riding concern associated with these criteria is that they ensure that Partnerships target and recruit households that are most affected by under-employment and inadequate income. They ensure that the focus on those on the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder is maintained, while recognising the growing number of farmers affected by falling income.

In terms of the eleven pre-assessment criteria, households and individuals eligible for the Smallholder Initiative should ideally satisfy seven of the following criteria.

1. Reside in a farm-household

2. Are in receipt of a social welfare payment, or are eligible for one

3. Have a single farm payment below the county average

4. Operate an extensive, rather than intensive farm

5. Own a holding that is smaller than the county/ regional / national average (In certain partnership areas, this factor may be measured in terms of quota, such as in dairying areas in Munster and the North East)

6. Depend on an off-farm income that is below the average industrial wage

7. Have larger than average family sizes, or are represented by an individual living alone

8. Experience a range of social problems that contribute to exclusion

9. Face difficulties dealing with debt

10. Have a low-level of educational attainment

11. Tend not to engage with the Teagasc or private advisory services.

This approach to identifying the target group is flexible, yet transparent and robust. Moreover, it takes into account the social dimensions of exclusion, and provides a baseline against which progression can be monitored.

ENGAGING THE TARGET GROUP

Having defined what constitutes a smallholder household, the next step for a Partnership should involve engaging the target group members. Engagement needs to focus not just on recruiting clients who are to benefit from the services offered by the Partnership. It needs to focus on ensuring that smallholders are engaged in decision-making. Thus, Partnership structures need to facilitate their inputs, membership of Partnership Working Groups and contributions to local development.

IN TERMS OF ENGAGING THE TARGET GROUP...

WHAT WORKS WELL

✔ Animation by members of agriculture working group and others involved with the Partnership

✔ Farmer to farmer word of mouth/recommendations, and targeted referrals from the farm organisations

✔ Collaboration among Partnership staff – joint awareness-raising and animation actions

✔ Use of local organisations and networks

✔ Local area-profiling

✔ Information-sharing among agencies, and agri-business/co-operatives.

✔ Specific events targeted at smallholders, e.g. information meetings

WHAT DOES NOT WORK WELL

! Development Officer based outside the partnership offices

! Lack of internal cohesion within the Partnership

! Over-reliance on media advertising or flamboyant publicity

! Poor agricultural knowledge on the part of the Development Officer

! Where some partnerships do not allocate sufficient resources or provide adequate support to respond to the needs of smallholders

! The absence of access to data, and limited information-sharing among agencies, and a culture of 'gate-keeping' in some organisations

Other approaches such as cold-calling to households (with or without pre-arranged appointment) can be effective, as they ensure that the farmer is met in his/ her own yard or kitchen, which can be conducive to discussion, and can assist in identifying the extent of the farmer's needs and potential. Cold-calling also gives effect to the promotive approach on the part of Development Officers. It is best undertaken when the Development Officer is accompanied by somebody who is well known to the smallholder, who can offer to build up rapport and develop a relationship between the farmer and the Development Officer. However, it can be time-consuming, particularly where Partnerships cover large rural areas, or areas with low population densities.

Using resources available from the LDSIP and other Partnership Programmes, allows the Smallholder Initiative to offer a range of actions, of which the smallholder can avail. This serves to engage him/ her in the Initiative, develop rapport with the Development Officer, gain confidence and benefit from a tangible input into his/ her farm.

Section 4
Management Structures

LOCAL WORKING GROUPS
- How Sub-Boards/Working Groups should operate
- The terms of reference for a Working Group
- The Operation of Agriculture Working Group
- Role and Functions of the Working Group
- Internal Dynamics and Operation
- Reporting to the Partnership Board of Directors

DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS
- The Roles of the Development Officer
- Attributes of Different Models of Development Officer
- Job Title
- Client Supports and Progression
- Tasks of a Development Officer
- Awareness of the social inclusion focus
- Skills of a Development Officer
- Professional Development

TEAM-WORKING AND TEAM-BUILDING

4. Management Structures

The Smallholder Initiative is implemented by Partnerships and its operation is based on principles of local development. Partnership offers advantages over conventional or top-down approaches to development in that it draws on a broader range of skills, expertise, knowledge and experience. Harnessing the energies and synergies created by partnership involves trade-offs, negotiations, team-building and careful forward planning. An OECD assessment of local development partnerships in Ireland (Sabel, 1996) described them as an experiment in local democracy. Indeed, partnerships are the most active, visible and well-established mechanism for participative democracy in Ireland.

Participative democracy processes and structures allow citizens to participate in decision-making on a continuous basis. Participative democracy involves consultation, information provision, capacity-building, inclusion, targeting (spatial and sectoral) and the creation of decision-making structures that enjoy a significant degree of autonomy, and which provide a platform for citizens to contribute to and benefit from development. This system is complementary to the well-established system of representative democracy, through which citizens elect representatives (politicians) to make decisions on their behalf.

The Boards and Sub-Boards of local development partnerships operate as agents of participative democracy. As such, they are challenged to be inclusive of relevant stakeholders, involve citizens in strategic planning, enable participation in the design and delivery of specific actions and interface with mainstream agencies in brokering resources and in advocating on behalf of specific population cohorts and/ or geographical areas. Therefore, board development and the cultivation of a culture of participative democracy are essential to the success of local development partnerships, and by extension, the Smallholder Initiative.

In the context of participative democracy, staff of local development partnerships are expected to play a role in supporting board/sub-board development. They are also required to assist the board/sub-boards in developing policies, in engaging with citizens/clients and in developing linkages with statutory and other agencies. In terms of good governance, the Board/Sub-Board is responsible for the strategic direction of the partnership/programme (e.g. Smallholder Initiative), while staff play an executive role in advising and supporting the Board/Sub-Board and in implementing and furthering Board/Sub-Board decisions.

A. LOCAL WORKING GROUPS

As the following figure shows, Working Groups need to operate within the local partnership domain. They need to be linked to the Board of Directors so that their actions are consistent with and contribute to the overall strategic direction of the Partnership. Linkages with the Board of Directors are essential in ensuring accountability, and all sub-boards need to report directly to the Board of Directors on a regular basis. In addition to fulfilling a monitoring role, the Partnership Directors in turn, provide feedback, advice, guidance and support to sub-boards, and members may collaborate on specific actions and / or in pursing particular issues. As the following diagram shows, a Working Group takes its membership from the beneficiaries, community sector and social partners; thus representing a partnership model and approach. Moreover, the membership of the Working Groups include directors of the Partnership, and in most cases the chairperson of the Working Group and some of its members are also members of the Partnership Board of Directors. Such arrangements ensure internal cohesion, accountability and consistency in the approaches pursued by Boards and their sub-committees.

Fig. 4.1: *Location of the Agriculture Working Group[10]/Sub-Board in the System of Participative Democracy through Local Development Partnerships*

The emergence and consolidation of local development partnerships is part of a larger process, which can be described as a transition from government to governance. Agriculture working groups and other working groups are vital in enabling smallholders to play a part in this transition, and to influence decision-making.

Government refers to:

- The dominance of state power

- Organisation through formal public sector agencies and bureaucratic control

- Neat dividing lines between formal government departments

Governance refers to:

- Horizontal self-organisation among mutually dependent actors (including government)

- Collective action and shared decision-making

- Strategic planning at the local, county/ regional, national and supranational levels

- Multi-sectoral and integrated policy domains

- Multi-directional dialogue (top-down and bottom-up interfaces and interaction)

The shift from government to governance has:

- Expanded policy-making space

- Broadened the range of actors involved in decision-making

- Diffused the locus of power.

The following diagram illustrates the strengths and resources that can be generated through cross-sectoral representation and participation in Agriculture Working Groups/ Working groups. Each Partnership may apply a degree of flexibility in recruiting members, so that the level of expertise on each working group is maximised.

10. Some Partnerships may have a Working Group/ Sub-Board with responsibility for Agriculture, while others may allocate responsibility for the corporate governance of the Local Development Smallholder Initiative to a sub-board for Employment, Services to the Unemployed, Natural Resources etc.. Indeed, flexibility to respond to local needs and conditions is an important characteristic of local development partnerships.

Fig. 4.2 Pooling of Resources and Expertise via Local Working Groups

Bringing Together		Awareness	Viewpoints	Interests	Abilities to Mobilise	Know-how
Partnership Approach	Partnership Approach	of the social and cultural aspects	on listening and dialogue	in people and quality of life	H.R., social capital, goodwill	co-ordination, discussion, administration
	Local Development Smallholder Programme Clients Farm Orgs. Marts and Co-ops	of the economic aspects	on the time and efficiency factors	in the markets and economic profitability	financial resources and private heritage	management and development
	Statutory Bodies	of the political and institutional aspects	on the market and research trends	in planning and providing facilities for the area	financial resources and public heritage	institutional support
Allows the following to be realised		awareness of smallholder needs and potential	new combinations of ideas	more targeted projects	a more effective implementation	sustainability of actions
		highlighting unforeseen opportunities	seeds of innovation	integrating the interests of different social groups	guaranteeing better risk management, buy-in, transparency and accountability	based on the ability to be constantly renewed

The flow-chart presented in the previous table provides a guide to inform partnerships in constituting working groups and in recruiting members. While it highlights the value of recruiting cross-sectoral representatives, it does not seek to be absolutely prescriptive. Local development involves an openness to partnerships co-opting onto working groups , persons who have a particular expertise and/ or knowledge, and who are well placed to make a positive contribution to the work.

Poverty- and equality-proofing mechanisms in the recruitment of Working Group members ensure that smallholders are adequately represented. Indeed, members of the farming organisations have recognised that smallholders tend to be under-represented among their officers. Therefore, partnerships should not equate farm organisation representatives with smallholder representatives.

Volunteer members of Boards and Sub-Boards are entitled to due support, recognition and acknowledgement.

Poverty, Equality and Rural-Proofing should influence the recruitment of Board and Sub-Board members.

Partnerships need to have in place support mechanisms to enable disadvantaged persons to participate in decision-making at Board and Sub-Board level.

Pursuing a partnership approach at working group level tends to generate synergy and added value that have the capacity to address issues that are of relevance to smallholders, but which may be beyond the direct remit of the Local Development Smallholder Programme. Harnessing this synergy and acting on the broad recommendations and strategies that arise from Working Groups, require that Development Officers work pro-actively in conjunction with management, so as to address the broader issues associated with rural re-structuring. This approach is more strategic and more sustainable than trying to deliver the Local Development Smallholder Programme as if it were a stand-alone programme. As earlier sections of this Manual have clearly illustrated, the disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by smallholder households are associated with rural re-structuring to a large degree. Therefore, Working Groups, Management and Development Officers need to be focused on the wider local rural development milieu, and the issues and opportunities that this presents.

In practical terms, most Working Groups will have a brief that includes, but extends beyond that of the Local Development Smallholder Programme. In line with the principles of integrated local development, presented earlier, the same working group should be responsible for the Local Development Smallholder Programme and agriculture development in the partnership area. Parallel or over-lapping structures are ineffective, and divorce social inclusion from the need to address structural and mainstream issues.

HOW SUB-BOARDS/ WORKING GROUPS SHOULD OPERATE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

In delegating responsibility to a working group, the Partnership Board of Directors should clearly set out in writing the terms of reference of a working group. The decision to form the working group along with the terms of reference should be minuted in the Minutes of the Board meeting.

THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A WORKING GROUP SHOULD:

- State the **title** of the working group. (Agriculture Committee, Smallholder Programme Working Group, Agriculture and Natural Resources Working Group)

- State the **membership** and composition of the working group.

- State the **purpose** of the working group.

- State the **limitations** of the authority of the working group, especially any expenditure limits. It is generally not advisable that working groups would have the power to authorise expenditure, but would make recommendations on expenditure to the Partnership's Project Evaluation(s) Working group

- State the **reporting arrangements** by the working group to the Board of Directors including format and frequency of such reports.

- State the **role of members**, emphasising that their reporting role is two-way. This implies that they bring to the working group, inputs, information, knowledge, resources, ideas, positive suggestions and advice from the 'constituency' they represent, and pro-actively seek to involve their 'constituency' in assisting with the implementation of actions agreed by the working group. In turn, they are expected to appraise their 'constituency' of the main decisions taken and actions pursued by the working group, and their own contributions.

- State the role of **staff** with regard to the working group and the relationship of any particular staff members to the committee.

- State the **requirements on members** in terms of attendance, reporting, contributing to decision-making, implementing actions, and representing the partnership. Members should be made aware of the sanctions that apply to members who deviate from the agreed roles requirements. These need to be recorded, so that decisions and actions are transparent.

THE OPERATION OF AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP

- Working groups may carry out the duties assigned to them in the terms of reference minuted by the Board of Directors.

- It is not the role of working groups to manage staff; that is the function of the Manager. Rather, they play a key role in planning, monitoring and reviewing specific areas of the work of the Partnership, liaising closely with particular staff members.

- The working groups may regulate their own procedures within parameters laid down by the Board of Directors and may appoint a Chairperson and other Officers as appropriate.

- Working groups will act at all times in the interests of the Partnership.

- It is important to ensure that the formation of a number of working groups dealing with different aspects of the programme does not stifle integration of actions.

ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE WORKING GROUP

- To advise the Board of the Partnership on issues which affect target group – low-income smallholders and their families;

- To identify and assess the needs of the target group in the area and to examine how these needs can best be served;

- To develop a local strategic plan for the identified target group;

- To support the Development Officers and oversee the implementation of the plan and ensure that the aims and objectives are advanced;

- To ensure linkage and co-ordination with relevant agencies and all Partnership programmes

- To monitor and review the implementation of the strategy at local level;

- To engage actively in the initiative in the spirit of a meaningful partnership;

- To feedback to representative organisations the issues, learning and models of good practice that have been highlighted in the programme to advance change;

- To identify and document lessons and learning and feed into relevant local and national fora.

Working groups must maintain a focus on issues that go beyond the operation of the Smallholder Initiative alone.

They must be development-led, not programme/ initiative-led.

I. INTERNAL DYNAMICS AND OPERATION

NOMINATING PROCEDURES FOR MEMBERSHIP OF WORKING GROUPS

Ideally each member of the Working Group should be nominated through some sectoral process, so that their contribution is not as an individual bringing an individual view or agenda, but should have weight and support from within the sector they represent.

In practice, this means that each individual should be nominated by a particular organisation, sectoral grouping/subset, or forum. Ideally the nominating body should support the nominee personally and practically. It should also receive

feedback periodically on the progress of the Partnership from the nominee or directly from the Partnership, as appropriate. The nominating body should be encouraged to also feed in views to enhance the work of the Partnership. While this might appear elaborate, it ensures a spread of ownership of the Programme into the different sectors, and also strengthens the mandate of the nominees working on behalf of these sectors.

The members of the Working Group generally elect the chairperson. This election usually takes place at the first meeting of the Working Group following the Partnership's Annual General Meeting, at which Directors have been presented and ratified.

ROTATION

The length of time members remain on the Working Group should be specified. It is normally 3 years, after which there is a re-nomination process. It is desirable to have rotation of Working Group membership to ensure the organisation draws in new blood, energy and ideas, and does not create a perception that it is not open or accountable to the community. A clear rotation policy should be in place for all sectors, which seeks to achieve balance between retaining vital experience and expertise, while also encouraging new inputs and perspectives.

MINUTES

One of the tasks expected of Development Officers is that of taking and circulating the minutes of Working Groups. While the style and comprehensiveness of minutes is a matter for individual companies, a record should be kept of what is 'done' by the Working Group, and not what is 'said' by the members. Minutes should, as a minimum, contain the following:

- Title of committee

- Date and venue of meeting

- Names of those present, i.e. the chairperson or secretary, or in their absence the names of their substitutes, committee members, and those in attendance, i.e. Manager, Pobal Liaison Officer, etc. (note apologies)

- A reference to the reading, acceptance and signing of minutes of the previous meeting and any matters arising.

- A record of correspondence received and dealt with at the meeting.

- A record of decisions made. When decisions necessitating actions are taken it should also be decided who will carry out the decision and within what timescale. This also should be minuted.

- Minutes can be linked to the printed agenda for the meeting.

● A recording should be made of all printed documents circulated at the meeting and of each report presented, and a note made of their acceptance or otherwise.

● Copies of important documents circulated at the meeting and documents on which decisions were based should be attached to the original copy of the minutes.

Minutes should be circulated along with a written notice giving venue, date and time of next meeting, to each Committee member and to the Partnership Manager. It is advisable to present the minutes for management approval in advance of their circulation. On acceptance by the subsequent meeting of the minutes, the original version should be signed and dated by the Chairperson of the meeting at which minutes are agreed. This signed original version should be stored in a binder, file or 'Minute Book'. In the context of the LDSIP programme the 'minute book' can be requested by an auditor to confirm decisions on expenditure.

QUORUM

A meeting cannot proceed if a quorum has not been reached. This is the number that must be present in order that business can be legally transacted. This figure will be dependent on what has been specified in the Working Group's Terms or Reference, and is likely to be in keeping with that required for the Board of Directors and other sub-committees. A quorum usually represents one third of the membership plus one other.

VOTING

While Partnerships aim to reach a consensus on all decisions, in the event that there is a need to vote, the articles of Association will dictate who shall have the casting vote in the event of an equality of votes, although this is normally the Chairperson. Partnership staff members do not participate in voting under any circumstances.

II. REPORTING TO THE PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Directors of a Partnership are entitled in the interest of accountability to request a written or oral progress report at any time. Therefore, records of meetings, decisions and progress on actions should be continuously up to date.

Each working group should have an opportunity to present a written report on the progress, recommendations and issues arising within the Local Development Smallholder Programme and other actions that come within the responsibility of the Working Group over the previous month/ quarter/ trimester. There can be different variations on the format for the reporting document chosen, but a standard format should be developed and agreed by the Board.

REFERENCE TO BUDGETS AND EXPENDITURE

It is useful to precede any report or recommendation on a particular action with a written reminder on the available budget for the action and the budget already committed to the action by the Board. This facilitates the strategic prioritisation of available budgets by the Board.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

If combining progress reports and recommendations, it may be worth considering the provision of a brief summary of recommendations at the end of the report on each Project, Action and Theme, enabling each section to be dealt with efficiently by the Board. This also facilitates the easy transfer of information (including details of proposers and seconders) to the minutes of the meeting.

CIRCULATION OF REPORTS

Once the reporting documents are prepared, they should generally be circulated, with all other relevant paper-work, at least a week in advance of the meeting.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT TO DIRECTORS

Presentation of the report by the Chair of the Working Group will increase a sense of ownership by the Board of the work being undertaken.

TO BE EFFECTIVE THE WORKING GROUP SHOULD

- have clear terms of reference with an emphasis on innovation;
- meet regularly – monthly, or at least bi-monthly;
- keep all members briefed on the principles of partnership and local development;
- ensure that new members receive adequate induction and mentoring;
- produce progress reports that are transparent and easy to follow;
- develop a team spirit and invest in training and development;
- comply with clear systems for reporting to Directors;
- (all members) have responsibility in supporting the Development Officer and implementing the Local Development Smallholder Programme strategic action plan;
- avoid micro-management and focus on strategic linkages and co-ordination;
- implement inclusive approaches, so that participation is maximised;
- be open, accountable and transparent and operate on partnership principles;
- have a Board of Directors that is supportive, and which is committed to addressing the needs of smallholders.

B. DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

The following principles underpin the delivery of actions and the provision of services in Local Development.

- They begin with the needs identified by clients/ beneficiaries themselves;
- They are available and accessible;
- They are provided free of charge;
- There is a commitment to active involvement of users/target groups in the process;
- They are flexible and locally based;
- They promote equality of opportunity, access and outcome.

A key element in all cases has been the employment of a dedicated Development Officer (formerly referred to as a Rural Resource Worker) who forms part of the public face of the Partnership in the local area and is pro-active in publicising the initiative, drawing participants in, and ensuring on-going support to smallholder households. A key role of the Development Officer involves building trust and confidence among smallholder households that participate in the Initiative. The overall direction of the Initiative at local level and the work of the Development Officer are guided by a Working Group (sub-committee of the Board of Directors). However, the Development Officer reports directly to the Partnership Manager (and / or his her team leader), and not to the Board or Working Group.

In line with the integrated approach of the Initiative, the Development Officer functions more as a 'facilitator and enabler' rather than as a technical advisor. A number of local initiatives have shifted from the recruitment of a worker with an exclusively agricultural background to one with a community development background, and / or experience in sales, marketing or business development. The Development Officer's ability to listen and build relationships with clients is a key element of the job.

THE ROLES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Rural development is a challenging, dynamic, multi-faceted and rewarding environment in which to work. Rural development practitioners are constantly required to respond to emerging ideas, trends and needs, and to anticipate and plan for future needs and potential. In approaching the job of Development Officer, one has to be willing to innovate, encourage others to be pro-active, think outside the box and contribute to the overall strategic development of the Partnership. He/ she needs to be supportive of the development, operations and capacity-building the working group(s) assigned to him / her, and to function in the interest of smallholders and of the Partnership. In 'servicing' the Working Group, the Development Officer ensures that members are appraised of progress, developments, issues and opportunities that enable members to participate in deliberations and to make fully-informed strategic decisions.

The Development Officer is responsible for delivering specific actions in response to the needs and potential of smallholder households. Increasingly, such actions tend to be resourced from multiple sources, and are not just confined to one measure of the LDSIP. In addition, to the hands-on delivery of actions and supports, the Development Officer takes responsibility for co-ordinating complementary inputs from colleagues and from other agencies. Thus, he/ she is pro-active in working with management and with the local Working Group to develop internal and external linkages, in the interest of offering smallholders the maximum range of possibilities for development and progression.

The following figure presents three broad models of development, which Partnership staff members can follow. Of the three, the 'promotive' model is preferable to the others – representative and enterprising.

Fig. 4.3: Attributes of Different Models of Development Officer

	Representative	**Enterprising**	**Promotive**
Base for Activities	Organisation	Knowledge and will to change and develop	Private, professional, cooperative organisations The Commune organisation Knowledge and will to develop
Activities	Surveillance Negotiation	Action Entrepreneurial ventures	Co-ordination Strategic Planning Educative measures Promotion Surveillance/ Monitoring Negotiation Action
Motivation	Task description – external source	Achievement Motive – internal source	Idealism and optimism Obtaining collaboration Understanding and competence by management Working Conditions and wages
Basis for evaluation	Success or failure in surveillance as determined by the organisation	Successful or unsuccessful projects	Climate for development: • Degree of joined forces in the organisation and the territory • Influence on top-down action • Appearance of bottom-up initiatives • Appearance and fate of projects

Source: Nordgreen (1993). This schema is presented and elaborated in Kearney, B., Boyle, G. and Walsh, J.A. (1995) EU LEADER Initiative in Ireland – Evaluation and Recommendations.

Of the three models of Development Officer, the first, the 'representative' officer tends to adopt a restrictive approach, that is mainly concerned with monitoring and negotiation. The second model or 'enterprising' officer uses networks and contacts with officials to drive projects. He/ she tends to be an entrepreneur, who is willing to take risks, and tends to evaluate performance in terms of projects, rather than programmes or long-term strategies. The most desirable model is the 'promotive' officer, who in addition to possessing the positive characteristics of the other types of development officer, positively engages in strategic planning. He/ she encourages entrepreneurship, acts as a local catalyst, adopts a broad perspective on what can be achieved and links with others inside and outside the Partnership and community, so that the collective skills of team members are available to clients. A critical role involves the ability to harmonise relations between those involved at different levels in the planning and implementation hierarchies.

Pursuing a promotive approach to the design, delivery and review of the Smallholder Initiative ensures more effective targeting, client-centred responses, longer-term and strategic perspectives, productive relationships with agencies and greater possibilities for client progression.

JOB TITLE

Much of the literature on the work of Partnerships refers to the Development Officers who work on this Programme as 'Rural Resource Workers.' This job title was frequently used between about 2002 and 2006. However, it was not universally applied. In the course of compiling this Manual, the staff, management and Pobal all concurred that a job-title was required that more accurately reflected the developmental nature of the work and the co-ordinating roles undertaken. Hence, they agreed that the title of 'Development Officer' is most appropriate. Partnerships may use derivatives of this, such as 'Smallholder Development Officer.'

CLIENT SUPPORTS AND PROGRESSION

The objective of the Development Officer's work with clients is to enable and facilitate their economic and social progression. This requires the Development Officer to develop with each client a strong working relationship that is based on mutual-trust and information sharing. This requirement needs to be balanced against the need for the Development Officer to maintain sight of broader programme issues. Consequently, Development Officers generally work with an average of about 100 clients in the course of a year. As some clients require more intensive supports (hand-holding) than others, partnerships may opt to classify these as 'clients', while classifying those who require fewer supports as 'beneficiaries'. Beneficiaries require fewer one-to-one supports, and may realise their progression as a result of group-based activities.

As a client or beneficiary progresses from the Smallholder Initiative, his/her progression creates a new place for another smallholder. In the interest of targeting and responding to new and emerging needs, Development Officers should seek to promote progression. This also ensures that the maximum number of smallholder households are reached and offered support.

TASKS OF A DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

- Establishing contact with the target group through individual and group meetings, seminars, workshops and promotions;

- Providing and / or convening one-to-one and group-based supports and interventions that enable the smallholder household to maximise income, access information, training, employment and family support services;

- Promoting and encouraging the target group to tangibly improve farm viability and efficiency;

- Undertaking research into the needs of smallholder households through the provision of services and formal research methods;

- Assisting the farmer to improve on-farm practices, especially enabling him/her to free-up time, so that he/ she can access training and/or off-farm employment;

- Providing an information and guidance service, not agricultural advice, but including assistance with applications, the identification of supports and facilitation of queries with other agencies;

- The promotion of an enterprise culture among farm families, and the provision of assistance with developing complementary farm enterprises;

- The advancement of client progression, through training, employment and personal development;

- The development and implementation of integrated household supports, in conjunction with Partnership colleagues;

- Acting as a mediator between clients and other agencies providing services to smallholder household;

- Enhancing household access to supports and services, including those provided by mainstream bodies;

- Supporting the operation of the Partnership's Agriculture Committee and/or other relevant working groups and Board of Directors;

- Ensuring rural-proofing of actions across the brief of the Partnership, in collaboration with colleagues;

- Contributing to area-planning, review, project evaluation and monitoring;

- Encouraging smallholders to participate in the reform of farming organisations and contribute to national policy.

AWARENESS OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION FOCUS

It is essential that the Rural Partnerships approach the Smallholder Initiative from a social inclusion perspective. The principles of targeting, equality, community development, partnership, integration and policy change/mainstreaming needs to be central to the process of the work at local level. It is this process that distinguishes the LDSIP and the work of local development partnerships from other agencies. Therefore, Development Officers need to have a good understanding of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme and in particular the scope of actions possible under the 'Services to the Unemployed Measure.' He/ she needs to be proactive in fostering team-working.

PERSONS EMPLOYED AS DEVELOPMENT OFFICES SHOULD HAVE: -

- a support system and be working to an agreed strategy

- clarity of purpose; what? why? and how? balanced with room for innovation

- local knowledge and/ or an appreciation of rural issues/constraints

- approach from a socio-economic perspective/multi –disciplinary response

- have good communication skills and empathy with the target groups

- complement and work closely with existing services and interventions operated by the Partnership

- awareness of and commitment to the multi-faceted nature of the service

---

Development Officers tend to update on a regular basis, their knowledge of schemes and services that relate to smallholders. They put themselves on mailing lists for various public service and social partner newsletters and bulletins. They attend events such as the National Ploughing Championships, Teagasc Open Days, Pobal briefings and consultative fora, briefings (regional and national) arranged by Government Departments, particularly the Department of Agriculture and Food. Development Officers study the implications for smallholders of public policies including the Budget and other measures introduced by the Department of Finance and Department of Social and Family Affairs. In conjunction with Comhairle, some Partnerships have arranged training for staff members in providing 'citizens' information.' While it is not practical that a Development Officer would be fully informed about all aspects of public policy and progression options for smallholders, it is important that he/ she know where to source relevant information in an efficient manner, and communicate this to clients.

SKILLS OF A DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

As the preceding pages have suggested, a Development Officer working to deliver the Smallholder Initiative needs to have a broad range of development skills. He/ she needs to assume a hands-on role in delivering supports at local level, while at the same time co-ordinating other inputs in the interest of the clients. Leadership and motivational abilities are therefore important considerations. He/ she ought to have the ability to empathise and communicate with people at different levels, and be able to apply his/ her knowledge of agriculture and rural development in delivering tangible and practical benefits for smallholders. The ability to innovate, anticipate trends and changes, encourage and lead entrepreneurship and be proactive in sourcing new opportunities for clients, the Partnership and the local area/ community add to his/ her effectiveness. The following are specific skills' areas that a Development Officer will use in the course of his/ her work:

Inter-personal and Communication skills, especially listening skills – in liasing with the target group, sectoral representatives and stakeholders including statutory and social partners, internal Advisory/ Management structures, and in raising awareness of and promoting Smallholder Initiative activities;

Facilitation and mediation skills – in building confidence and trust among farming families and groups: The role of the Development Officer requires an understanding of community development approaches and principles;

Networking skills – in establishing, maintaining and developing relations with both smallholders and agencies throughout the Initiative area: The role requires an extensive knowledge of the existing range of supports available through the relevant Government Departments as well as through the local agencies;

Flexibility – taking full account of the need for outreach while appreciating the time constraints on farmers and the seasonal dimension to their work;

Co-ordination skills – in administering the Initiative, and reporting on progress;

Team-working skills - so as to ensure an integrated and holistic approach to targeting and support;

Writing and Recording Skills - All Development Officers need to be able to communicate effectively with clients and with agencies. They need to be able to prepare minutes and reports for Working Groups, as well as progress reports for management and Boards of Directors. The ability to capture and present information for strategic plans, funding submissions, annual (and other) reports, and the capacity to write press statements and press releases and develop publicity material for the Initiative are absolutely fundamental.

It is also noted that, while not needing to be a qualified agricultural advisor, the Development Officer needs to have **an excellent knowledge of farming** to be able to relate to and develop a relationship with clients. Indeed, the Development Officer's ability to deal with farm viability / profitability issues is central to the clients' retention and ultimate progression.

Sustainable development principles dictate that the Development Officer respond to social (as well as economic and environmental) needs that manifest themselves among smallholder households. Given that some of the social issues that arise (such as substance abuse, domestic violence, depression etc.) require the expertise of dedicated professionals, it behoves the Development Officer to consult with relevant colleagues in the Partnership and/ or personnel in the health / social services so that appropriate interventions are made. In the cases where a Development Officer engages the support of an external agency, he/ she or a colleague from the Partnership needs to maintain contact with both the professional and the client, so that a holistic approach to client support is pursued.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional Development is essential in ensuring that Partnerships have a broad range of complementary skills in-house. It also contributes to satisfaction among employees and the retention of the best staff (Pobal and Combat Poverty Agency, 2002). The pay scales and good employment practices recommended by Pobal contribute to staff retention and the maximisation of productivity.

Staff training may be provided on an individual basis, so that Development Officers sharpen particular skills or gain specific knowledge/information. Team-building projects and training that involve all the Partnership employees allow for individual skills to be developed and refined, and at the same time promote co-operation and collaboration among staff. Such events, when properly managed by a trained and qualified facilitator/trainer can stimulate new ideas, identify new opportunities, promote new linkages and foster innovation and entrepreneurship. In arranging training days, management and staff need to work together, so that there is agreement and clarity of purpose. The external trainer/facilitator needs to be fully briefed on all issues that may arise and he/she needs to be fully committed to working with the Partnership to attain agreed objectives.

The nature of the Smallholder Initiative implies that Development Officers pay particular attention to their skills in time-management, strategic planning, entrepreneurship and writing.

Regional and National Networks of Development Officers, which have been convened by Pobal provide mechanisms for the transfer of information and good practice. They also provide a conduit through which common issues can be advocated. The networks also serve to promote and highlight the core aims and objectives of the Initiative.

This Manual has emphasised that work with smallholders transcends several programmes. Managers need to make it abundantly clear that neither the brief nor the contract of a Development Officer is tied to the life-time of the programme, through which his/her salary is being funded. He/she is a member of the Partnership staff, regardless of the funding stream, and as such needs to be offered security of tenure that is linked to the sustainability of the organisation, and not to a programme.

C. TEAM-BUILDING

This manual has emphasised throughout the importance of a holistic approach to meeting the needs of smallholders. This implies that the Development Officer with responsibility for the Smallholder Initiative work as part of a team that is pro-active in delivering on social inclusion. In terms of delivering on the specific aims and objectives of the Programme, the Development Officer is charged with assuming a leadership or co-ordinating role. Indeed, the concepts of leadership and teamwork are inextricably linked, as leadership may be defined as the ability to accomplish significant results with and through others.

The Patterns of Leadership consist of seven basic themes or patterns of behaviour that characterise the way excellent managers function when they are at their best. The seven themes of the Patterns of Leadership include:

- A joint focus on people and results
- Team-building/Team-work
- Building trust
- Confronting conflict and managing it to a win-win
- An action orientation
- Continuous improvement/and value added
- Concern for the whole

The Process of Leadership describes six steps in a process excellent managers/ co-ordinators tend to follow in managing a project, or an organisation. The six steps of the Process of Leadership are:

Step 1	Define the Strategic Vision
Step 2	Shape Team Values
Step 3	Create a Shared Vision
Step 4	Develop Shared Plans
Step 5	Lead the Action
Step 6	Evaluate Process

Without the Patterns of Leadership, the Process of Leadership can become mechanical, wooden, without life, bureaucratic. The Patterns of Leadership breathe life and energy into the process. The Process of Leadership provides a step-by-step process that provides a manager or work unit with meaningful direction. It also establishes a framework for achieving excellence through continuous improvement.

DECISION MAKING

When presented with the selection of a decision-making process, a team could assign responsibility for making the decision to:

1. the most qualified member of the team

2. a sub-group

Other available processes, inclusive of the whole team, include:

3. Combination/Consensus

4. Compromise

In gauging the appropriateness of the chosen process, the team should be aware that the process will influence *the quality, the communication and the implementation of the decision, the use of the team's resources and time as well as the commitment and support of team members.* The choice of process has direct implications for *motivational* and *team- building issues*.

Combination/Consensus involves the pooling of the best ideas and the discarding of the worst ideas of the group. While each member of a team has a right to be heard, to have his/her views considered, and questions answered, individuals will not be able to contribute equally to the decision-making process. Skills such as listening, being able to put forward ideas, and relating emotionally and intellectually to others are required, and may not be evenly dispersed among the group. While Combination/Consensus, may be a demanding process, it enables the team to reach a point where each member gains "ownership" of the final decision and consequently is in a position to commit him/herself unreservedly to its progression, even though each aspect of it may not be his/her optimal choice.

Compromise on the other hand, involves a "trade off" between holders of opposing views, where each party has to yield some elements in order to gain others. It is less difficult to secure than the Combination/Consensus process, but while it maintains harmony within the group, it has the distinct disadvantage that "both sides" may end up dissatisfied.

MANAGEMENT

Good practices show that managers should ensure that:

- Full, comprehensive initial training is provided for staff;

- Support networks are established with staff from other Partnerships and other agencies;

- Staff have regular support such as peer support, team reviews etc;

- Staff work as part of a team within the organisation and not in isolation;

- Time and resources are provided for the development and maintenance of up-to-date information and building linkages with state agencies, employers, voluntary services etc;

- Staff have ongoing tailored training in Welfare Entitlements, Employment Mediation and Guidance and Advice;

- Staff members are focused, and know when and where referral is appropriate. Staff should therefore have an awareness and understanding of other issues which face the target groups, such as alcohol dependencies, drug addiction, re-entry of ex-offenders, housing issues, financial and debt issues etc., so that they may make proper referrals internally or to the relevant agency;

- Staff have an awareness, knowledge and understanding of cultural and ethnic differences;

- Staff should be aware of equality legislation and equal opportunities issues concerning race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion etc.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND APPRAISAL

The five 'A's = the five basic needs of an employee in terms of performance management. They are:

Agree	- clear objectives
Allow	- me to do my job
Appraise	- my performance
Assist	- me through guidance training and development
Acknowledge	- my contribution

In order to ensure efficient job performance the individual should be clear about:

- overall aim of the job
- main duties and responsibilities

Objectives will need to be written **only** for the key result areas of a person's job.

Section 5
Strategic Planning

PURPOSES OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

WHAT IS STRATEGIC PLANNING?

WHAT A STRATEGIC PLAN CONTAINS

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

GOOD PRACTICE IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

5. Strategic Planning

THE PURPOSE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning represents the kernel of successful local development. A structured and strategic plan offers considerably more than a blueprint for action. It will clarify for all interested parties, including funders, local citizens, the productive sector and statutory bodies the way in which the territory will be developed over a specified period of time. It will also outline the roles and responsibilities each will play in the implementation of the plan. A good plan can be a framework for decision-making, a look into the future, a bartering document, a problem-solving initiative and a shared values document. The planning process can be described as a series of interrelated stages as follows:

- Gathering and Interpreting Information – identifying resources and potential.

- Stating the Plan – formulating a vision, set of goals and series of objectives, which provide a coherent direction for strategies and actions.

- Devising Action Strategies – setting and articulating specific jobs or actions, and allocating responsibilities to those charged with implementing the plan and/or stages thereof.

- Putting structures in place to resource and implement the plan.

- Monitoring and Evaluating the implementation of the plan – taking on board the lessons that arise and modifying actions, structures and/ or processes.

Key points to bear in mind when assessing local needs are:

- Focus on issues of need which are clearly defined and feasible to address,

- Resource the assessment study in an adequate manner, including technical support,

- Involve service providers and users in the study's design and administration.

> Planning, assessment and evaluation need to take into account the totality of the development process. They need to be viewed as complementing all facets and stages in local economic development processes, rather than as an add-on or after-thought.

Strategic planning and evaluation, and in particular, the pre-assessment of actions are in themselves tools that enable and empower those involved in local development. They strengthen the capacity of development actors to:

- identify available resources,

- mobilise new resources, and key agencies,

- garner support for strategies,

- engage citizens,

- enhance know-how and technique,

- assess local needs and potential,

- prioritise specific actions or places (if and where necessary),

- decide-on constructive aims and objectives,

- set realistic targets,

- predict outcomes and outputs,

- anticipate changes,

- respond to emerging challenges and opportunities,

- divide and/ or share tasks,

- pool skills,

- agree suitable timeframes, roles and responsibilities,

- optimise delivery mechanisms,

- establish reporting mechanisms,

- identify suitable partners,

- consolidate linkages,

- increase awareness of the locality; internally and externally,

- optimise development potential.

WHAT IS STRATEGIC PLANNING?

Planning is very much part of everyday living. Every time a decision is made on how something is going to be done, a plan is laid. There are a number of different types of planning;

- **Strategic planning** is a formalised or structured way of planning. In essence, a strategic plan is a long-term plan for action, which takes a broad overview of current activities and future activities. Strategic planning often incorporates other short- or medium- term types of planning using these to contribute to the overall plan.

- **Tactical planning** involves planning the steps to be taken to implement the strategic plan.

- **Recurrent or cyclical planning** is planning for events or activities, which occur regularly e.g. an annual conference.

- **Project planning,** as the name suggests, is planning for a specific time-limited piece of work.

- **Operational planning** deals with the organisation and team and the way they operate and function rather than what they do.

- **Day to day planning** is scheduling the specific tasks that must be done immediately.

- **Contingency planning** allows for anticipation of unforeseen circumstances.

A strategic planning scheme will probably employ some or all of these planning methods.

Using a strategic planning approach answers the questions, what do we want to do? How are we going to do it? and how do we know if we've done it right? A strategic plan answers these questions by articulating the vision and goals of the partnership, by laying down strategies and policies for achieving these goals and by building in measurable targets to assess the achievement of these goals.

WHAT A STRATEGIC PLAN CONTAINS

The following are key element of any plan – either at the level of the Partnership, Working Group or inter-agency project.

VISION STATEMENT

The first step in the planning process is the articulation of a clear and unambiguous vision statement. A vision, in essence, is the reason the partnership board has come together, their purpose and what they strive to do. It should preferably be a single sentence, which expresses the aspirations and desires of the partnership. The vision statement indicates to the partnership and those outside, the direction in which the partnership is working.

A vision statement lets the partnership;

- have a shared and written statement of the partnership's purpose

- evaluate on the basis of a shared purpose

- take account of conflicting demands both from within the partnership and from outside it

- set priorities for the work.

It is perhaps tempting to bypass this step and assume that there is already a shared vision among the partners represented. However, this may not be the case. Taking time to develop a shared vision together is important. A team without a shared and stated purpose is like a bicycle wheel without a hub. Instead of each aim and objective being connected to the central vision, a lot of activities may be taking place, which are not necessarily all contributing to the common purpose. The importance of a clear, shared vision statement cannot be underestimated.

GOALS

Goals are developed from the general vision statement and are themselves quite broad in nature. They express what the partnership hopes to achieve without stating how the partnership plans to achieve it.

Goals should:

- emanate from the vision statement

- be limited in number

- be focused

- be aspirational

- be reasonable in the time frame

- reflect critical issues

- have a series of objectives set out for each one.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives are a bridge between goals on the one hand and individual tasks on the other. Objectives express concretely what is going to be done, but do not go into the detail of tasks or quantifying of actions. For each of the stated goals, objectives should be set out. It would be usual for each goal to have a number of objectives associated with it, which would help to articulate and clarify the specific goal. It is essential that all objectives are clearly defined, concrete, realistic, achievable and measurable.

Timeframes should be outlined, and should include a commencement date, a completion date and other significant dates in progress. In addition to setting timeframes, dates for reviewing progress also need to be set. Dates or stages in the process should be identified as appropriate for reviewing the progress of particular objectives. It may be necessary after review to modify operations to take account of any significant changes, which affect the achievement of the objective. The population to benefit from the action or the target population should also be stated in the objective.

The key point about objectives is that they should define exactly what results you are expecting an individual, a group, working group or Partnership to achieve. It is commonly said that "if you don't know where you're going, you will probably end up somewhere else". Objectives should indicate where the person wants to end up, and should include measures such as quality, quantity, cost or time.

It is important that objectives are developed collectively to increase ownership on both sides but especially on that of the individual.

'SMARTen Up Your Objectives'. SMART is an acronym for making your objectives:

S	=	Specific
M	=	Measurable
A	=	Accepted/Agreed
R	=	Realistic
T	=	Time-bound

STRATEGIC PLANNING – A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

STEP 1: PROFILE THE LOCAL AREA.

Consult with the target group and with relevant stakeholders and identify problems, needs and potential (Techniques such as SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Treats analysis may be useful.)

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE BENEFICIARIES AND PARTIES INVOLVED.

Mark all of the stakeholder groups mentioned in the profile, and summarise each group on blue cards. Identify the following groups:

- the target group (those who will benefit directly from the project)
- the final beneficiaries (if different from the above)
- the implementing agency and those with which the Partnership may develop linkages / collaborate

STEP 3: IDENTIFY THE PROBLEMS TO BE ADDRESSED

Mark all of the problems mentioned in the profile with a yellow text marker and write these on yellow cards. There should be one problem per card.

STEP 4: BUILD A PROBLEM TREE

Using the problem cards prepared in the previous step, develop a problem tree.

STEP 5: IDENTIFY THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

Mark all of the objectives mentioned in the proposal with a green text marker and write these on green cards. The stated objectives should seek to redress/ overcome the problems presented in the problem tree. There should be one objective per card.

STEP 6: BUILD AN OBJECTIVE TREE

Using the objective cards prepared in the previous step, develop an objective tree.

STEP 7: ANALYSE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS, PROBLEM TREE AND OBJECTIVE TREE

Use the following as guide questions, but draw on your own knowledge and experience as well:

● Has the target group been clearly identified and described, with a gender and spatial breakdown if necessary (i.e. equality and rural-proofing)?

● Have the problems of other stakeholders important to the project's success been identified?

● Does the problem analysis describe problems of the target group, or is it only of a general nature?

● Does the problem analysis have major gaps?

● Are the casual relationships between problems sufficiently explained?

● Are all the problems addressed by objectives? Which problems are not addressed?

● Do all of the objectives have an underlying problem? Which objectives are not justified?

STEP 8: DEVISE THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SEE FIGURE 5.2)

This should specify how objectives relate to the overall vision/ mission statement of the partnership, the Programme/ Working Group mission statement and terms of reference. It begins with an over-arching aim from which sets of objectives flow. The objectives give rise to actions, which are accompanied by targets. Outputs and impacts are measured against targets.

STEP 9: ANALYSE THE RELEVANCE OF SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND PROJECTS

This involves determining the extent to which stated project objectives address the real needs of the target group, and are consistent with the Partnership's broader aims and objectives. Analyse whether the project addresses the identified needs of the target group. Use the following guide questions, but draw on your own knowledge and experience as well:

● Does the Project Purpose adequately describe sustainable benefits for the target group?

● Do the Results (the planned services of the project) meet the expressed needs of the target group?

● Does the proposal indicate how the results will meet the differing needs of men and women, and other targeted interest groups, and peripheral and disadvantaged communities?

Fig. 5.1: Getting Strategic Planning Underway – step by step

Stakeholders

Target Group — Smallholder Households

Others — DSFA

Farm Organisations

Community Groups

DCRGA

etc.

Problem Tree

Low-Income

Under-employment

Lack of Training for Employment

Limited Economic Diversification

Poor Infrastructure

Lack of State Investment

etc.

Objective Tree

More Positive Image and Perception

Increase Household Income

Farmers' Market

Product Innovation

Training in Business Development

Training in Food Production

Fig. 5.2: Outline Structure of a Strategic Plan

Mission / Vision Statement

Goals/Aims

Goals/Aims

Objectives

Objectives

Objectives

Objectives

Actions — Targets

Actions — Targets

Actions — Targets

Actions — Targets

Actions — Targets

Actions — Targets

Actions — Targets

Actions — Targets

SPECIFIC ROLES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Development Officer plays a key role in collaboration with the Working Group in the following aspects of strategic planning of the Initiative:

- Identifying the areas of the greatest disadvantage within the target area (using a combination of the Rural Typology, Census of Agriculture, GAMMA statistics and local knowledge);

- Defining smallholders and possible participants within this context;

- Identifying the needs of this defined group;

- Categorising this defined group into different sub-groups based on their needs and situation (where appropriate);

- Developing possible responses and strategies for each sub-group including the identification of progression pathways for long-term development;

- Constantly monitoring, modifying and refining strategies and interventions in response to the changing needs of participants and the changing external environment;

- Identifying and articulating local issues and opportunities;

- Promoting the Smallholder Initiative at local level and securing the supports of key stakeholders, including the farm organisations, co-ops, agri-businesses, social partners and statutory sectors.

GOOD PRACTICE IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

- The vision, goals and objectives must be clearly stated, and the major allocations or resources spelled out.

- The plan must contain policy statements, which set out a definite basis for action.

- The overall plan should be articulated through specific actions.

- Planned activities need to be specified in the form of achievable tasks and targets.

- The plan must remain open to new information and experience.

- It is essential that the plan is realistic.

- The plan must adapt continually to changes in its environment.

- The plan should be monitored and evaluated.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF PLANNING

- A strong team orientation

- Measurement and feedback

- A regular review process that emphasises:

  - problem solving

  - decision making

  - innovation

  - coordination

EFFECTIVE PLANNING TECHNIQUES

- Identify critical success factors

- Establish performance indicators

- Establish frequent periodic reviews and regular review performance

- Identify breakthrough opportunities

- Develop breakthrough objectives

Section 6
Support Interventions

TYPES OF LOCAL ACTIONS/INTERVENTIONS

PROGRESSION

INFORMATION PROVISION

6. Support Interventions

A key element of economic impact emerging from the case studies (Fitzpatrick Associates, 1999; Pobal, 2003) is the progression of Smallholder Initiative participants – the farm operator, his/her partner, and their children – from one step in the process onto further development and progress. Whilst progression is largely an individualised process and heavily dependent on household needs and circumstances, key elements include initial contacts with the Development Officer, often for advice on Farm Assist, or other income support measures, through to other means of maximising farm income and improving farming practices, and onto engaging with others through a discussion group to explore these issues of commonality. In cases where participants are interested in accessing off-farm income, progression routes include participation in relevant training programmes and moving onto either part-time or full-time employment, or starting up new businesses, either related or unrelated to the farm.

- The outreach approach of Development Officers can be useful in this context and many clients are glad of the opportunity to discuss problems in a confidential environment;

- In addition, discussion groups bring clients out of the house and into an environment where they can meet and discuss issues of commonality with their neighbours. The social importance of this is highlighted by a number of groups;

- Training provided by the Smallholder Initiative provides another outlet for clients to meet others and socialise as well as learn.

Table 6.1: Types of Actions/ Interventions at Partnership Level

Types of Interventions	Funding/Support Sources
Area-profiling/ TG Needs Analysis	LEADER Technical Assistance, LDSIP, CDB data-bases
Information Provision and Dissemination	LEADER A.C.B. LDSIP Community Development LDSIP Job Centres LES/ Job Club Inter-agency collaboration Co-Operatives Community and Voluntary Sector
Training	Services to Unemployed Measure LEADER Vocational Training VEC CERT FAS Teagasc EQUAL
Economic Diversification/ Enterprise Development	LEADER Enterprise Grants BTWEA
Debt Management	LDSIP / LEADER Recruitment MABS St. Vincent de Paul
Promoting and Encouraging the improvement of Farm Viability and Profitability via • **Milk-recording** • **Breeding schemes** • **Soil/ silage sampling** • **Farmer's Markets** • **Beef and Lamb Quality Improvement** • **Honey/ Herb Production** • **Organic Farming** • **Discussion Groups**	Development Officer Partnership Officers Agriculture Committee IOFGA Co-Operatives Private Sector ICA Farm Organisations Teagasc

Table 6.1: Types of Actions/ Interventions at Partnership Level (continued)

Types of Interventions	Funding/Support Sources
Planning	Development Officer skills Teagasc Advisor
Environmental Resource Management	NPWS Local Authorities LEADER (Natural Resources Theme)
Social Isolation and Mental Health	Partnership Staff Referrals to Agencies HSE
Maximisation of Take-Up of Appropriate Schemes (maintaining the single farm payment and optimising on-farm supports)	Development Officer
Adult Career Guidance	LDSIP EQUAL RSS DSFA FAS
Other	NALA

In 2003, Pobal facilitated a number of Partnerships in undertaking case study evaluations. The evaluations and the synthesis provide descriptions and analysis of the types of actions promoted.

The synthesis document is:

ADM (2003) *The Low-Income Smallholder Household Initiative: a Guide to Good Practice – based on the experience of the Low Income Smallholder Households Initiative under the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme.*

The following flow-chart presents the various steps in the development process, through which the smallholder and his/ her household accesses supports and progression opportunities. It highlights the need for the Partnership to maintain a promotive approach and ensure that review mechanisms are integrated into the Initiative. The importance of external linkages, and on-going investment in information dissemination are evident.

Fig. 6.1 Support, Progression and Development Trajectory for Clients of the Smallholder Initiative

Monitoinrg, Tracking, Mainstreaming

LDSP Workplan

Partnership Plan

Linkages with CPN Pobal and PLANET

Policy, Recommendations

Feedback to Board

Advisory to Working Group

Advisory to Management

SCOPE

Resources

Documentation of Trends

New Actions And Innovations

Extraction of Learnings

Review of Progression

Action and Implementation

Referral

Follow-Up and tracking

Support Actions and Intervention(s)- group and individual (listed in table 6.1)

Progression Plan

Inputs from Other Development Officers

Appraisal of Needs

Contact with Development Officer

Client feedback to peers and community

Information & Animation

Animation and Capacity-Building

Referral from Community Group Farm Organisation or Statutory Body

Awareness Raising

Self-Referral

Information Dissemination

The progression route presented in figure 6.1 mirrors the model of community development presented in section two of this Manual. Both trajectories begin with the Partnership providing information, and initiating animation and capacity-building actions. These are followed by the implementation of actions agreed between the Partnership and the client (smallholder household). The Partnership takes responsibility for monitoring and tracking the actions, so that all stakeholders benefit and learn from them. These learnings, and the promotive roles played by Development Officers, Partnership management, local working groups and Board members contribute to mainstreaming and sustainability. Mainstreaming also benefits from linkages and collaborative arrangements between Partnerships and other agencies.

INFORMATION AND ANIMATION

The likelihood of a smallholder presenting him/ herself at the office of a Partnership to request support from or participation in the Smallholder Initiative is rare. The development process usually begins with the Partnership disseminating information, through media such as newsletters, local radio adverts, public meetings, community and voluntary fora, information evenings and demonstration projects. Meetings and other events provide opportunities for Partnerships to invite/ animate smallholders, who are in attendance to 'sign-up' for the Programme, and/ or to make arrangements for the Development Officer to call to the smallholder's house.

Partnerships may also disseminate information to smallholders via local co-operatives, community groups, Church bodies / clergy, Teagasc advisors, the farming organisations or statutory bodies such as the Department of Social and Family Affairs. These bodies may advise a smallholder to contact his/ her local Partnership, or they may provide the Partnership with the contact details for a household, which they believe to be eligible for the Programme. Information dissemination and animation actions such as these, lead to contact between smallholders and development officers.

Members of Partnerships Boards and working groups are generally well positioned to carry-out aspects of information dissemination and animation actions, as they represent the Programme within their respective nominating bodies/ constituencies. Their local and sectoral knowledge can be a useful tool in referring smallholders to the Partnership and in developing linkages between Development Offices and clients.

CONTACT WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

The most common location for the first meeting between the Development Office and the smallholder is on-farm. This provides an opportunity for the Development Officer to work with the household in identifying needs and in devising an appropriate progression plan. Section three of this Manual outlines how a Development Officer confirms the household's eligibility for the Programme, appraises needs and sets targets. Section nine, outlines how he/she records baseline data and information. The development principles presented in section two

need to underpin the Development Officer's approach, so that he/ she develops rapport with the household, takes into account the totality of its needs and potential, works in partnership with the household and is empowering in devising and agreeing a workplan/ progression plan.

ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The agreed progression plan forms the basis for the implementation of a range of support actions, which the Partnership delivers. These include

- group-based activities such as information meetings, training courses, study visits to farms and demonstration projects.

- activities open to all smallholder households, which individuals/ families may access depending on needs or circumstances. Examples include milk-recording, farmers' markets, breeding schemes, producer groups etc.

- individual activities, which are tailored to respond to the specific needs of households. These include financial advice, referrals to family support agencies, literacy/numeracy tuition, assistance with form-filling, etc.

Group-based activities are open to clients and beneficiaries, while individual actions are offered to clients only.

In implementing actions, Development Offices need to:

- Focus on empowering the smallholder / household members, by ensuring that they have ownership of the development process

- Consult regularly; individually and collectively, and take feedback on board

- Avail of the full range of supports available from the Partnership, and do not restrict smallholders to one measure or programme

- Collaborate with colleagues, so as to broaden the range of skills and expertise available to smallholders

- Continuously undertake animation, capacity-building and training actions so that the maximum number of smallholders benefit from and are enabled to participate in the actions promoted

- Ensure that actions cover social as well as economic dimensions, and work with the community and voluntary sector and Partnership colleagues to promote smallholders' participation in local decision-making

- Develop and promote inter-agency linkages and pursue a collaborative approach to joint actions, based on partnership.

The needs of some smallholder households will be such that the Development Officer will opt to refer them to another agency for advice and/ or support. This generally occurs when/ where an action arising from the progression plan are not eligible under one of the programmes operated by the Partnership/ local development sector, or where the smallholder has a particular issue that relates directly to an agency (e.g. Farm Assist issues require contact with the Department of Social and Family Affairs). When referring a smallholder/ family member to an agency, Development Officers should:

- Use and build-on the current linkages between the Partnership and the agency in question (e.g. the Partnership's Training Officer is likely to have linkages with the VEC, or the Partnership's Job Club or LES will have pre-existing linkages with the DSFA, MABS and other agencies)

- Make contact with the relevant individual in the agency (either directly or in conjunction with a Partnership colleague), to appraise him/ her fully of the context and of the query/ issue

- Ensure that the client is fully informed when dealing with the agency

- Follow-up with the client to establish how he/ she benefited from the referral

- Implement any actions that result from the referral

- Acknowledge the support provided by agencies.

MONITORING, TRACKING AND MAINSTREAMING

Progression plans ought to be reviewed on a regular basis, and at least on an annual basis with the client. A review should re-appraise the baseline situation and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions implemented. This involves re-visiting the targets established with he client. In undertaking a review, a Development Officer may look at any barriers that inhibited a smallholder/ client from participating in/availing of a particular action. The review process may identify new actions both for the individual client and/or for the Programme as a whole. It also enables the Partnership to identify and extract key lessons and to document trends. Systems for monitoring and documenting trends are presented later in this manual (section eight).

Documenting the Programme outputs, achievements, trends, challenges and shortcomings allows Development Officers, management, working group members and Directors to make decisions regarding future emphasis in terms of actions and resource allocations. Monitoring also allows the Partnership to identity issues that require policy, agency and legislative changes. Inter-partnership collaboration in conjunction with Pobal and the relevant networks can lead to these issues being addressed, as well as the mainstreaming of specific actions.

As the diagram (fig. 6.1) suggests, the process described here is not strictly linear. It recognises that the delivery of actions and the documenting of key trends and Programme outputs serve to animate participation, renew the focus of actions and foster innovation.

The following matrix shows how Partnerships can apply an integrated and holistic approach to responding to the smallholders' needs. As mainstreaming develops, and as Partnerships take on responsibility for other programmes, this matrix may be added to over time.

Fig. 6.2: Partnership Responses to Meeting the Needs of Smallholders

	In-House Responses	Adequate Income	On-Farm Efficiency	Access to Information	Diversification	Off-farm Employment	Mental & Health Supports	Social Interaction	Financial Management	Training	Second Chance Education	Family Supports and Improved Living Conditions	Life-Planning
LDSIP	Measure A	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■
	Measure B						■	■				■	■
	Measure C						■					■	■
LEADER	ACB[11]			■									■
	Training & Tech Assist[12]	■	■	■	■				■		■		■
	Enterprise	■	■	■	■								
	Environment	■	■		■		■						
	Infrastructure & Community						■	■					
	Transnational			■				■		■			
Other Partnership Programmes	Millennium									■	■		
	Rural Transport							■				■	
	Community Enterprise	■				■		■					
	EQUAL/PEACE	■		■		■					■	■	■
	INTERREG							■					
	RSS[13]	■		■		■		■					
	Article VI[14]	■		■	■				■				

INFORMATION PROVISION TO SMALLHOLDERS AND OTHER LDSIP TARGET GROUPS.

As the flow-chart (fig. 6.1) illustrates, information provision and dissemination is essential in kick-starting and maintaining the Initiative. Work undertaken by Partnerships and Pobal (Insights Analysis) identifies that information should be relevant, clear, accurate, up-to-date and avoid jargon.

GOOD PRACTICE IN PROVIDING INFORMATION INCLUDES:

- Producing and distributing clear information about what individuals may expect;

- Ensuring that information / materials are accurate and up-to-date;

- Targeting appropriate information and publicity to particular groups of people;

- Taking account of the specific needs of groups such as people with disabilities, Irish language users, cultural and ethnic needs, literacy etc. For example the display of information should take account of the height of the display, computer access, TV and video locations, use of colour etc;

- Developing collaborative approaches within and between partnerships;

- Utilising network of contacts between education, employment, enterprise and outreach workers in the area as well as directories of other agencies providing services, is an essential tool for a quality service.

Information and publicity actions need to take into account the terms of legislation, such as the Official Languages Act (2003).

11. ACB: Animation and Capacity-Building
12. Training and Technical Assistance
13. RSS: Rural Social Scheme
14. Article VI ERDF (European Regional Development Fund)

Section 7
Working with Other Agencies

**PROMOTING A COLLABORATIVE INTER-AGENCY
APPROACH TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF SMALLHOLDERS**

**FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO COLLABORATION
AND WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP**

**CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE 'TRADITIONAL' AND 'NEW' APPROACHES
TO DEVELOPMENT: PROJECT SELECTION AND RESOURCE DISBURSAL**

7. Working with Other Agencies

"The success or failure of a strategy depends on how the interests and relations between players are structured, i.e. on the collective ability to examine the local situation, to define priorities and to organise available resources" (AEIDL, 2001: 14).

As the opening section of this manual has noted, the number of farming families in need of Smallholder Initiative and other support interventions is increasing. In addition, the range of issues and problems that is becoming manifest among farming households is receiving greater acknowledgement and attention. Therefore, in responding to the needs of the client group, it is essential that Partnerships and their Development Officers work in collaboration with other agencies. In line with the principles of the promotive approach presented in section five, the onus will frequently be on the Partnership/ Development Officer to initiate, foster, grow and maintain external linkages and support systems in favour of smallholders (as identified in section three of this Manual).

As Partnerships are dealing with a broad rangeof issues in respect of meeting the needs of smallholders, collaboration with several agencies is increasingly significant

Given the over-arching significance of agriculture and farming issues for the client group and the contributions which on-farm interventions can make to meeting their needs, it is important that Partnerships, Teagasc and agencies with a brief in the agriculture field work collaboratively. Although, as has been emphasised throughout this manual, Partnerships are not involved in the provision of agricultural advice, Partnership cannot ignore the needs of any client. In responding to clients who express a need for agricultural information, a Partnership may refer those clients to external advisors and/ or discussion groups. However, as such discussion groups tend to be broadly-based and are comprised of farmers from a particular sector or geographical area, rather than being targeted specifically at meeting the needs of smallholders, the Partnership may pool resources with other agencies to ensure that smallholders are best served. Consequent collaborative actions can include information seminars, leaflets, demonstrations, study visits, talks etc.. At a practical level, the Partnership may invite or contract an agency or expert to provide the professional expertise and advice that are essential to such actions. The Partnership maintains local ownership by taking responsibility for convening the action, recruiting and animating participants, arranging the logistics, recording and documenting the event(s) and enabling participants to identify future information actions. The success of collaborative actions is maximised where agencies identify a need/ needs collectively and work together to design and implement an agreed response or set of responses.

A number of Partnerships have in place local framework agreements with Teagasc, which reflect the content of a National Framework Agreement agreed between Pobal and Teagasc in 2002. These agreements govern the roles and responsibilities of each partner in respect of collaborative actions. They also lay down parameters to avoid any real or perceived duplication or overlap in the services offered. Some Partnerships have also opted to work with private agricultural consultants.

The following matrix identifies the agencies with which Partnerships can collaborate in responding to specific needs among smallholders.

Fig. 7.1: Promoting a Collaborative Inter-Agency Approach to meeting the Needs of Smallholders

Potential Partner Agencies		Smallholders' Needs											
		Adequate Income	On-Farm Efficiency	Access to Information	Diversification	Off-farm Employment	Mental & Health Supports	Social Interaction	Financial Management	Training	Second Chance Education	Family Supports and Improved Living Conditions	Life-Planning
STATUTORY	DCRGA					■							
	CIC/Comhairle			■								■	
	County Council											■	
	Teagasc	■	■	■					■	■			
	FÁS	■				■				■			
	DSFA	■		■					■			■	■
	HSE	■		■			■	■				■	
	MABS	■		■					■				■
	Dept. of Agriculture			■	■								
	VEC			■						■	■		
Non-Formal	AWARE/ GROW/ AA etc			■			■	■					■
	Farm Organisations		■	■	■								■
	Voluntary Sector	■		■					■	■		■	■
	Credit Unions	■		■	■				■			■	
	Social Economy	■		■	■	■			■				

The range of agencies with which Partnerships collaborate is extensive and growing. This collaboration needs to be underpinned by the partnership principles of equality, openness, parity of esteem, information-sharing and pooling of resources. Agency representation and participation on Boards and Working Groups ensures collaboration in devising, implementing and reviewing actions. The agencies most frequently represented on Working Groups, which have been most heavily involved in the delivery of the Smallholder Initiative are Teagasc and the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Partnerships are also developing strong linkages with FÁS and in some instances with the HSE.

TEAGASC (http//www/teagasc.ie)

Teagasc provides integrated research, advisory and training services for the agriculture and food industry in Ireland. It is a semi-state organisation, and its Board of Directors is appointed by the Minister for Agriculture and Food and has representatives from the farming organisations, the food industry, the universities, the Department of Agriculture and Food and Teagasc staff. Teagasc employs over 1,500 staff at over 100 locations throughout Ireland. Research services are provided by 200 research scientists and 300 research technicians at nine dedicated centres. There are 550 advisors and regional specialists located at regional, county and local offices.

Given Teagasc's role in providing agricultural advice, there has been considerable interaction and collaboration between Teagasc and Local Development Partnerships in delivering supports to smallholders. However, both Teagasc and the local development sector stress that the services they provide to smallholders are very distinctive, yet complementary. In order to enhance this complementarity, and to avoid any possible overlap, Pobal and Teagasc have put in place a National Framework Agreement.

As a result of this agreement, most partnerships have developed their own agreements with Teagasc at local level. Teagasc advisors input into the Smallholder Initiative by facilitating information meetings and by providing advice on farming issues that are not dealt with under the Partnership's programmes. Partnerships can also refer clients to Teagasc for various supports. In turn, Teagasc advisors refer farmers to Partnerships for economic and social supports that are broader than farm management issues. At a local level Partnerships and Teagasc may co-host various events such as information meetings and farm walks.

FÁS (http//www.fas.ie)

FÁS is the national training and employment agency, and it operates on a national and regional basis. Each FÁS region has at least one training centre, which offers a range of employment related courses, including apprenticeships. The training on offer may represent a means of progression for smallholders or household members. It is advisable that a Development Officer from the Partnership visit the local FÁS Training Centre, and keep appraised of its various activities. Arranging transport can enable smallholders and other target groups of the Partnerships to avail of FÁS and other training opportunities.

In addition to the courses in its training centres, FÁS operates a number of Community Training Initiatives, which may be run in outreach locations. Partnerships can play a role in identifying local training needs, which can be addressed through these initiatives, and may recruit trainees. Alternatively, FÁS may respond to Partnership proposals to deliver Community Training Initiatives. This may involve the out-sourcing of the training delivery directly to one partnership, or may involve a coming-together of a number of partnerships. When devising modules for Community Training Initiatives or other training programmes, Partnerships should strive for FETAC accreditation.

Collaborative ventures with FÁS can also be furthered by developing linkages with the Employment Services Officers in each region, whose brief includes the provision of mediation and guidance to those seeking training or employment.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY AFFAIRS (http//www.welfare.ie)

The Department of Social and Family Affairs has a long association with local development, and is generally well represented on Partnership Boards and Working Groups. Staff in the Department's local officers engage directly with most smallholders and other socially-excluded groups, and can play a useful role in advising people about various actions implemented by Partnerships. Some offices will include Partnership literature such as flyers or notices with correspondence being circulated to welfare recipients. Similarly, Post Offices may facilitate Partnerships by distributing information to those who collect welfare payments there.

A number of the schemes which the Department operates are relevant to smallholders. Participation on Farm Assist is necessary in order to qualify for the Rural Social Scheme. Farmers may be permitted to retain Unemployment Assistance during the set-up phase of a new enterprise. The area Job's Facilitators will be able to advise regarding the role the Department can play in supporting client progression. They may also work with the Partnership in arranging training programmes, recruiting trainees, and out-sourcing the delivery of training modules to Partnerships.

The HSE (www.hse.ie) has responsibility for a number of welfare issues, such as the allocation of medial cards. The HSE provides resources for carers' initiatives, family support services, community infrastructure (sector specific) and some home improvement initiatives. Health sector personnel such as family doctors, public health nurses and community welfare officers ought to be encouraged to work with local development partnerships in recruiting smallholders and in dealing with particular issues such as preventing loneliness or depression, overcoming substance abuse and in promoting greater social interaction for smallholders.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO COLLABORATION AND WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- Having agencies involved in the Partnership (Board / Sub-Boards)
- Reciprocal Representation
- Good communication channels
- Two-way information flows
- Mutual consultation on strategic planning (and feedback)
- Support from top-down (local agents need central support)
- Consensus on issues and actions
- Awareness of and respect for each others role(s)
- Complementary resource / skills pools
- Mutual consultation on clients/ issues
- Confidentiality
- Acknowledge the roles and contributions of all involved.

Work with agencies needs to be client-focused.
It is about complementarity, not competition.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES

- are more successful that referrals in terms of placing the response in the context of the client's overall progression

- can address structural barriers, so that other individuals benefit directly and indirectly

- avoid the need to pursue tracking associated with unlinked referrals.

Local development implies developing and maintaining linkages. Linkages within a territory enhance networking, cohesion, buy-in to development processes, information and resource-sharing and economic competitiveness. Inter-territorial and transnational linkages enhance learning, knowledge transfers and the formulation of national and supranational policies that favour local development. Vertical and horizontal linkages between organisations and institutions ensure a pooling of resources and expertise and facilitate long-term strategic spatial planning. The following table illustrates the contrast between the traditional approach to state – citizen interfacing that characterised representative democracy and exogenous-led development processes and the so-called 'new' approach that seeks to give effect to participative democracy.

CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE 'TRADITIONAL' AND 'NEW' APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT: PROJECT SELECTION AND RESOURCE DISBURSAL

A More 'traditional' approach	Concerns it can deal with	Possible disadvantages
Separation between the people who thought up the criteria and the candidates	Avoidance of interferences	Reduces mobilisation
Egalitarian conditions between the candidates	Guarantee of equality between potential candidates	Emphasises imbalances
Relatively defined and specific criteria	Avoidance of possible ambiguities and disputes	Limits the "combining" of ideas
Egalitarianism in distribution	Equality of positions	Does not target all the beneficiaries sought
Complete, sometimes sophisticated, written files	Having all components available for selection Discourages the	beneficiaries, particularly the smallest ones
Selection by an ad hoc team comprising independent experts	Independen	Independence

'New' Approach	Concerns it can deal with	Possible disadvantages
Participation of potential beneficiaries in the conception	Participation Quality of the projects chosen	Slows down the process
Introduction of differentiated criteria	Reduction of area or social imbalances	Less interesting projects as far as short term economic effects are concerned
Broad thought-provoking criteria	Wider opening to new ideas	Slower preparation procedure
Additional forms of distribution Proactive approach	Integration of the most underprivileged communities	Less interesting projects as far as short term economic effects are concerned
Simplifies the files: gives importance to speech	Mobilisation	Increased problems in the selection and monitoring of files
Participation of potential beneficiaries in the selection	Introduction of consensus, of joint references and of social cohesion	Risk of scattering of multiple beneficiaries Risk of lack of transparency for non-beneficiaries

As the table shows, adopting a more participatory approach involves much more than changes in systems of election and the decentralisation of power. It requires the state to adapt its role as an agent of development, so as to give effect to collaboration, brokerage, mainstreaming and the implementation of policies and approaches that enable effective resourcing and implementation of sustainable local development.

Section 8

Tracking Systems, Monitoring and Evaluation

8. Tracking Systems, Monitoring and Evaluation

Effective systems for tracking and monitoring client progression are essential for the success of the Smallholder Initiative. These systems need to be an integral part of Programme delivery, and must not be viewed as an administrative 'add-on.' The day-to-day work of a Development Officer benefits considerably, and is more rewarding and efficient when he/ she operates an effective and user-friendly system for tracking and monitoring work done, outputs achieved and progress made. Monitoring systems provide management, working groups and Partnership Directors with the basis for making operational and strategic decisions. The sum of the data generated by rural partnerships provides a national picture of the Smallholder Initiative, thereby affecting decisions made by Pobal, mainstream agencies and by government departments. Given the nature of the work undertaken through the Smallholder Initiative, systems for tracking and monitoring need to be able to record and generate qualitative as well as quantitative data.

While tracking and monitoring refer specifically to recording and documenting client progression and the supports provided by the Partnership, evaluation provides a more holistic picture of the Programme's inputs, processes, outputs and impacts. Evaluation identifies what is working well, and how efficient ways of working may be enhanced. It also identifies what is not working well, and what needs to be changed, modified, revised or even abandoned. Evaluation is about extracting lessons based on reviewing the work being done. Evaluation is usually done at different stages in a project or action, such as at the beginning of a specific action (ex-ante or pre-assessment), during an action (interim) or after an action has been completed (ex-poste). In the context of local development, evaluation is usually most effective when it incorporates a significant qualitative dimension, and when it combines the expertise of an external expert, with the first-hand knowledge and experience of beneficiaries (target group) and representatives from the Partnership.

TRACKING AND MONITORING CLIENT PROGRESSION

As previous sections of this Manual have demonstrated, the primary role of a Development Officer is to facilitate and enable progression of members of smallholder households. To this end, he/ she usually works with up to 100 clients in the course of a year. He/ she spends considerable time working with individuals on a one-to-one basis, facilitating group meetings, convening and organising information sessions/ seminars and promoting specific actions such as farmers' markets, and producer groups (see table 6.1). The nature of the job means that Development Officers can be under pressure to schedule time to be physically at their desks. However, it is absolutely essential that they do so, and that their team leader/ manager work with them to ensure that sufficient time is allocated each week to updating client records, reviewing outputs and making informed decisions about future actions.

The main indicators against which targets are set, and outputs recorded in SCOPE are:

- **SUE1** Individuals receiving support (caseload)

- **SUE3-6** Individuals assisted or placed in employment

- **SUE7-9** Individuals receiving enterprise support (pre start-up, new and established)

- **SUE 10-13** Individuals supported into education/training (certified, receipt of certification)

- **SUE18** Groups receiving developmental support (focus/discussion groups)

- **SUE19** Initiatives receiving support

- **SUE21** Networks/collaborations

The following secondary indicators in the SCOPE system allow client progression to be quantified and monitored:

- **A10 FE** Improve Farm Efficiency and Productivity

- **A10 AGS** Maximise Income From Agriculture-Related Schemes

- **A10 SB** Maximise income from other available supports, including early retirement and social welfare schemes etc.

- **A10** OTH Mediation on a single issue

The minimum information required for an individual in SCOPE is firstname, lastname, county, age band, employment status, education status, target group, supports, outputs/progression. In addition, the target groups available are Low Income Smallholder and Low Income Family Unit. Others can apply depending on personal circumstances (Lone parent etc.) It is important that smallholder actions are listed in the Programme of Activities and a target set for each action. In a lot of cases this does not happen for non-financial actions (outreach, information services provided by RRW). This way, outputs can be linked back to the Programme of Activities. Pobal extracts data from SCOPE on a quarterly basis for submission to NDP Evaluation Unit and Regional Assemblies.

Work done by the Pobal liaison team has ensured that the Performance Monitoring (SCOPE) returns in respect of the Smallholder Initiative provide an accurate representation of activities and outputs. The Pobal system has also been modified in order to incorporate indicators and actions that are specific to the work with smallholders. While SCOPE has the capacity to meet monitoring and tracking requirements, a preference has emerged among Development Officers for using a parallel system, the data from which is incorporated into SCOPE. The main reason why this practice has emerged is that Development Officers want to use a tracking system that is sufficiently flexible as to allow them to record observations, make notes and/or record details about the farming operation that are necessary in devising and implementing progression plans, but which exceed the level of data required for SCOPE.

TRACKING AND MONITORING IN PRACTICE

While tracking and monitoring are on-going requirements, three distinct approaches and phases apply in the Smallholder Initiative:

1. Recording the Base-Line situation when a farmer/ household is recruited to the Programme. This involves creating a profile of the client/ household.

2. Recording the supports provided (by the Development Officer, colleagues and external agencies). These can be described as 'inputs.'

3. Documenting the outputs i.e. the consequences of the actions/ inputs for client progression.

As outputs are documented, the client profile should be updated. (Some software allows for this to be done automatically for specific indicators).

RECORDING THE BASE-LINE

Recording the base-line situation for each client is necessary in order to:

- Determine if the farmer/ household is eligible for the programme,

- Decide (in consultation with the client) what supports/ interventions are appropriate,

- Have a reference against which the client's progression can be benchmarked, and

- Ascertain the client's expectations from the Partnership.

This task is usually done on-farm or wherever the Development Officer and farmer have their first meeting. Compiling the profile face-to-face with the farmer, contributes to the development of a rapport between him/ her and the Development Officer. It allows for a discussion around progression paths and options, and can provide a type of 'roadmap' for both parties. In compiling the base-line report, the Development Officer should note as much detail as is provided. While some information may not appear relevant initially, its significance may become apparent in the course of the work with the client. The farmer and the Development Officer should review the completed profile and both should sign and date it. The completed template should be held in a file created for the client, and the relevant details from it should be transferred to an electronic tracking/ monitoring system, which the Development Officer is using.

The content of the base-line (profile) template should be determined by the client selection criteria presented in section three of this Manual. This implies that it should capture the relevant data in respect of the (eleven) variables listed in that section. The following template devised by Development Officers fulfils this requirement.

Smallholder Initiative
Application Form

Name: _____ (id. _____) _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Telephone: _____ **Mobile:** _____

PPS No:
Applicant: _____ Spouse: _____

D.O.B:
Applicant: _____ Spouse: _____

Dependants:
Name: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ /

Status: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ /

D.O.B: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ /

Education Status:	Applicant:	Spouse:
Primary Education	☐	☐
Junior Certificate;	☐	☐
Leaving Certificate;	☐	☐
Other:		

Training Completed: *(Please Specify)*
Applicant: _____

_____

Spouse: _____

_____

Employment Status: *(Please tick)*

	Full Time	Part Time	Seasonal	Self Employed	RSS	CE	Other
Applicant:							
Spouse:							
Description							

Non-Farm Income:

	Employment: €	Social Welfare Payment: €	Amount: €
Applicant:	€	€	€
Spouse:	€	€	€
Family Member:	€	€	€

Notes:

Farm Details:

Owned   ha.   Rented   ha.   Land Type *(Specify):*

Suckler Cows: Other:

Cattle: Dairy Cows:

Sheep: Milk Quota:

Tillage:

Alternative Enterprises *(Specify)*:

Farm Schemes: *(Please tick)*

REPS ☐   Early Retirement Scheme ☐   Installation Aid ☐
Forestry ☐   Organics ☐   Other ☐

Specify:

Farm Income:

Single Farm Payment: €   Farm Accounts: €

Recent Farm Assist Appraisal *(derived from recent means assessment)* €

Q. Where do you get your agricultural Advice? *(Please tick)*
Teagasc ☐   Co-Op ☐   Private Advisor ☐   None ☐

Q. Would you like to attend discussion group meetings?   Yes ☐   No ☐

**Q. Have you any Business Idea on-Farm or Off-Farm that you wish to explore?
If so, please specify.**

_____

_____

**Q. Would you or other family members be interested in Training Courses
or Employment? If so, please specify.**

_____

_____

**I WOULD LIKE TO AVAIL OF THE (insert name of Partnership)
SMALLHOLDERS PROGRAMME**

**I DECLARE THAT THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS CORRECT TO THE BEST OF
MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF.**

**(Partnership Name) WILL TREAT ALL INFORMATION HEREIN AS
CONFIDENTIAL SUBJECT TO ITS RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE
DATA PROTECTION ACT AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.**

Signed: _____   Date: _____

The quantitative data, and main qualitative points captured through the template should be transferred to an electronic tracking system (usually a spreadsheet or database). Databases may be compiled using any number of applications including Access, SPSS and Excel. The tracking system begins by listing each client, his/ her contact details and baseline indicators, as the following figure (fig. 8.1) shows. This figure indicates the type of format a tracking system may adopt.

Fig. 8.1: Sample Data Base of Basic Client Profiles.

	Client S1	Client S2	Client H5	Client G2
DoB or estimate year	6/10/69	5/5/65	c1945	c1955
Persons in Household	2	6	1	3
Farm Type (primary)	Dairy	Sucklers	Dairy	Sheep
Farm Size	25ha 90k litres	22ha	30ha 82l litrs	40ha, of which 75% is mountain
Off Farm Job	No	RSS	RSS	No
Education Level	Group	Inter	Primary	Leaving
Spouse Employed	No	No	No	Yes
Farm Assist	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Etc... taken from the profiling template				
Observations	Not recording inputs costs	Children may be interested in homework club. Spouse not involved in community.	Living alone - isolated. Home improvement support req.	Interest in REPS

This format allows the Development Officer and management to gain an immediate overview and profile of those registered with the Smallholder Initiative.

The following headings are those most frequently used in the databases operated by Development Officers:

Contact Type - First Name, Address 1, Address 2, Address 3 Area, Phone, DOB, PPS, Family, Farm Type, Total Income, From Farm, From Wages, From Dept S&FA, Needs, Supports Provided, Farm Size, Group Progression, Category{Group 1< 35yrs , Group 2 = Part time employ, Group 3 = Unemployed, Group 4 = Elderly, Training, Training Completed, Employment Req., Units, OAP Teagasc, REPS, Sucklers, Spouse Name, Spouse PPS, Spouse DOB, Last Contact Live < 6mths or ,< 12mths etc.

Having gathered the baseline information from the farmer, a Development Officer may supplement the client profile with information provided by reliable sources such as local co-operatives or colleagues in the partnership who have dealt with the client previously. He/ she may add his/ her own observations. Supplementary information should be recorded separately on the client's file.

RECORDING INPUTS

The inputs (actions, support and interventions) provided by Development Officers can be said to fall into two broad categories;

● Those that are available to all clients and beneficiaries
(e.g. information meetings)

● Those that are specific to individual clients (e.g. a place on a training programme, milk-recording subsidy, session with a financial advisor etc.).

In the case of the former, Development Officers should provide a report of the event/ action that includes, its logistics (time, date, title, speakers) a list of participants/ attendees, a brief outline of the content, the main conclusions, observations, decisions (if applicable) and any recommendations. This report should specify the role and contribution of the Partnership. Development Officers should file all such reports, and use them to inform subsequent actions and to update management on a regular basis.

In the case of supports to individual clients (including those provided / accessed through group-based events/ actions), Development Officers should record these using a clear yet comprehensive database, which must be constantly updated, in order for it to be both accurate and practically useful. The table below (table 8.2) presents basic extracts from a database, which is in the format of an excel spreadsheet.

While the fields in respect of clients' details and the baseline should remain the same throughout the Programme, a new field should be added for each action that comes on stream. The list of actions should correspond to that in the Partnership's annual Programme of Activities. According as each action commences, the Development Officer should place a tick (shading or other symbol depending on the package in use) across from/ underneath the relevant client(s). The following diagram shows the basic details that a tracking template should contain in respect of supports/ inputs (additional fields [rows] for client details and baseline are not shown here).

Fig. 8.2: Basic Client Progression Matrix – Recording of Inputs.

	Client S1	Client S2	Client H5	Client G2	Total Clients Benefiting
Supplying farmers' market					2
Money Management	Nov.20	Nov.21		Dec. 1	3
Milk Recording	May 6		May 10	May 15	3
Return to work training Programme		Completed Dec. 10	Commenced Oct. 10	Completed Dec. 10	3
HGV licence training	Completed July 7			Completed July 7	2
Total 1:1 supports	4	3	2	4	
Information seminar on Natura 2000					3
Study Visit to Kildalton					3
Total Group Supports	1	2	1	2	

As the template shows,

- the clients/ beneficiaries can be allocated an identity code to protect their confidentiality

- new rows are added for new actions

- new columns are added for new clients/ beneficiaries

- dates of commencement/ completion are recorded as appropriate

- the total numbers of participants/ persons availing are computed.

The following examples provide models of tracking systems currently in use. (Additional pages may be inserted at this point in the Manual)

RECORDING AND DOCUMENTING OUTPUTS

As the following diagram shows, the template for recording inputs can also be used to record achievements and outputs.

Fig. 8.3: Basic Client Progression Matrix – Recording Outputs.

	Client S1	Client S2	Client H5	Client G2	Total Clients Benefiting
Off-Farm Employment		RSS	Social Economy		2
New Business	Furniture Making				1
Extra DSFA Benefit				Carers' Allowance	2
Dropped-Out					0
Progression Completed	1 Sept 2006	20 October 2005			2

This format allows for the client profile to be updated. It also provides a picture of the Programme's outputs, i.e. 50% of clients have gained off-farm employment, 25% have established a new business…

Each of the three database extracts presented here (fig. 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3) forms part of a single composite database that includes all the client profiles, inputs and outputs.

The database is used to record work with clients. Work with the wider beneficiaries of the Programme can be inputted directly into SCOPE.

Fig. 8.4 Steps in Client Monitoring and Tracking

6 Extract progression reports, trends & learnings.

5 Update Client Profiles, but do not overwrite originals

4 Record the Outputs and Results of the Supports provided

3 Update Client Database by recording the supports provided

2 Establish an electronic database of clients, profiling each individual

1 Gather and Record Baseline Information (paper or electronically)

GOOD PRACTICE IN TRACKING AND MONITORING CLIENT PROGRESSION

- Ensure that the tracking template/ form is workable, practical, relevant to progression issues, incorporates all the SCOPE fields, and is capable of generating (i.e. printing) clear reports that provide management, the working group and directors with accurate data.

- Print-out a monthly overview progression report for yourself (Development Officer) and tabulate the main statistics. – Do this for management and the working group every quarter.

- Allocate sufficient time to regularly update computerised records.

- Record the dates of inputs and the completion(s) of specific actions.

- Do not over rely on paper records. Paper records are useful for recording meetings (individual and group), documenting specific actions, noting information that is relevant for specific households and dealing with referrals. These should be held in clients' files. However, a standardised tracking template (electronic) is the most efficient means of quantifying progression and generating output reports.

- Record inputs, processes and outputs and note any impacts.

- Make sure that the template/ form is on a database that all members of staff can access and update as required.

- Do not overwrite existing data on any client. Always add the new data, as baseline information is essential for evaluation (and for documenting progression i.e. the before and after scenario).

- Back-up; use an electronic storage device to ensure that the data is backed-up each week.

- Confidentiality; Partnerships should treat client details and records in confidence. Details should only be passed to a third party in the case of an agreed referral, or where for legal reasons, a partnership is required to do so.

> Partnerships need to consider the implications of Freedom of Information and Data Protection Legislation.
>
> Information and updates are provided from Pobal and through government circulars.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring refers to the regular collection of information on specific aspects of a programme or initiative. Its objective is to assess its progress. The systems for tracking client progression presented here represent approaches to monitoring that focus on the Programme clients. They involve the recording and documentation of baselines, inputs and outputs, and as a result, generate data to inform strategic review, evaluation and forward planning.

The SCOPE database developed by Pobal serves to monitor the Smallholder Initiative, and the other initiatives operated through the LDSIP. SCOPE

- Records the outputs achieved locally (numbers of clients and the supports provided)

- Provides a management tool locally in terms of recording and monitoring the progression of individuals, groups, initiatives, networks and collaborations. SCOPE also has the capacity to extract reports that will support the work of staff, working groups and directors in delivering various programmes

- Generates output reports that allow for a comparison between the level of output and the targets set (in annual and multi-annual plans).

EFFECTIVE MONITORING AND TARGETING

- In order for monitoring to be effective, outputs need to be measured against targets that have been agreed between the Development Officer, Manager and Working Group.

- Targets are quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (process – how the work is done). Qualitative targets can also refer to attitudinal change, new linkages/ relationships/ networks/ collaborations or changes in practices (among the target group and the mainstream).

- Targets should be reviewed approximately every six months. The manager / team leader should guide this review process.

- Targets should be revised upwards when additional resources become available, or when additional needs/ opportunities emerge.

- Targets may be revised downwards if resources become scarce, or if initial targets were unrealistic.

INDICATORS

All strategic plans need to have sets of indicators (See Section five of this Manual). These same indicators provide the basis for monitoring and evaluation exercises. Using indicators allows for the measurement of effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of development interventions. Indicators allow for comparisons between what has been achieved and what was planned (effectiveness) and between the predicted and actual levels of resources committed (efficiency). Indicators also allow for comparison between different types and forms of intervention, and enable one to draw conclusions on the degrees of sustainability of contrasting approaches. The following table shows the complementarity between indicators and their practical relevance to strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Table 8.1: Applying Indicators in Local Development Review and Evaluation

	Indicators	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Sustainability
Operational Objective *e.g. inform farmers about pluriactivity options*	**Resource Output** *e.g. 10 farmers advised re. herb-growing*	**Actual/ planned Output**	**Output Compared to Cost**	**Contribution to each dimension of SD**[15]
Specific Objective *e.g. promote and support pluriactivity*	**Result** *e.g. 6 farmers producing 5 tonnes herbs*	**Actual/ planned Results**	**Result compared to cost**	**Changes in each dimension of SD**
Global Objective *e.g. reduce income poverty*	**Impact** *e.g. additional income for 5 smallholder households, and 2 new part-time jobs in drying and processing herbs*	**Actual/ planned Impacts**	**Impact compared to cost**	**Long-term, inter-territorial and balanced impact on the dimensions of SD**

Source: Adapted from O'Keeffe, 2006

There is an abundance of literature on evaluation indicators, as well as guidelines for good practice in evaluation[16]. These provide definitions of indicators, and point to what the characteristics of a good indicator should be. Briefly, indicators should be:

● Relevant to the purpose for which the indicator is required: issue-driven rather than data driven

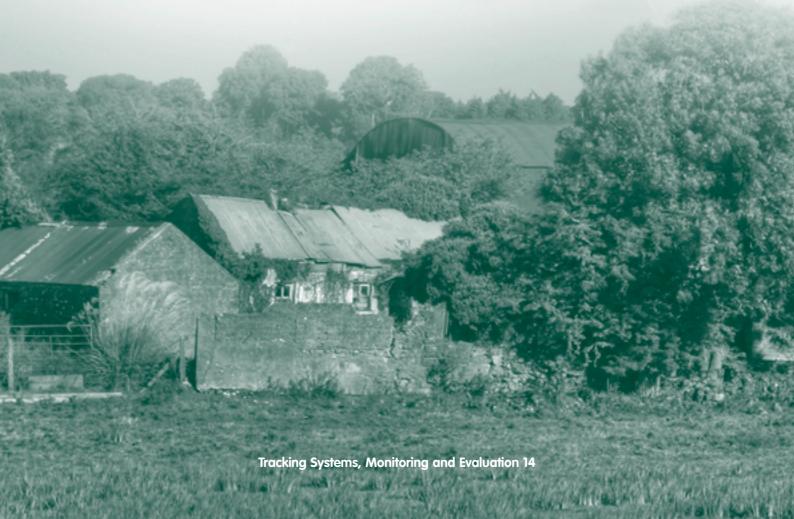● Clearly defined and easily understandable, particularly when the audience includes non-specialists

15. SD: Sustainable Development
16. ESRI 1996, CSF Evaluation Unit, 1997 and 1998, European Commission 1999, Bell and Morse 1999, ADM 2000, Mulreaney 2002, NESC 2002, Atkinson et al 2002 and 2003. Haase and McKeown 2003.

- Reliable and analytically-sound: the same measurement taken by two different people should give the same value for the indicator

- Precisely defined and measurable

- Based on accessible measurements/ data, within a reasonable time frame (the cost of collecting the information should not outweigh the usefulness of the indicator)

- Subject to on-going assessment: open to challenge, discussion and modification, to reflect new and emerging issues and improvements in techniques and access to data.

In addition to promoting these characteristics, the literature advises Development Officers and researchers to avoid long lists of indicators, and to opt instead for a manageable number.

EVALUATION

Good practice in local development requires that evaluation be an integral part of all initiatives and programmes. Integrating evaluation into the work at local level can sometimes require convincing some stakeholders of the merits and value of evaluation. Evaluation can often be associated with bad news or potential conflicts. However, these apprehensions can be overcome by ensuring that all those involved in the evaluation are kept informed, and are made aware of the benefits of on-going evaluation. It also requires ensuring that the evaluation methods used are appropriate to the local and programme context.

HOW EVALUATION CAN HELP

- Accounts for how resources have been used

- Demonstrates value for money

- Identifies what works well, how and why, and improves effectiveness

- Shows what can be replicated, transferred or mainstreamed

- Identifies areas/actions that warrant additional attention and/ or supports

- Improves systems of working within the Partnership

- Highlights any over-ambitious targets and/ or resource shortfalls

- Helps identify and understand problems and unintended consequences

- Provides information for strategic planning

- Points organisations to taking on board new ideas, new issues, new target groups and new areas of activity

- Can build teamwork, confidence and motivation

- Promotes the work of the partnership and builds local involvement

- Represents openness to funders, partners, citizens and beneficiaries/clients

Without evaluation, strategic planning becomes an academic exercise, as a partnership can never tell whether its efforts are achieving the objectives set out. In effect, strategic planning which does not incorporate evaluation becomes a waste of time and resources: there is no point in planning if no effort is made to assess the outcomes of the plan. (Combat Poverty Agency, 1995)

As the following diagram shows, evaluation is an essential and integral part of local development.
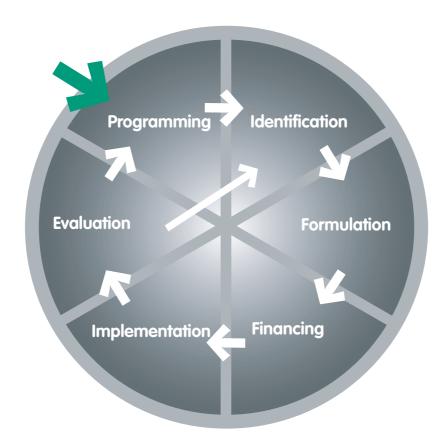
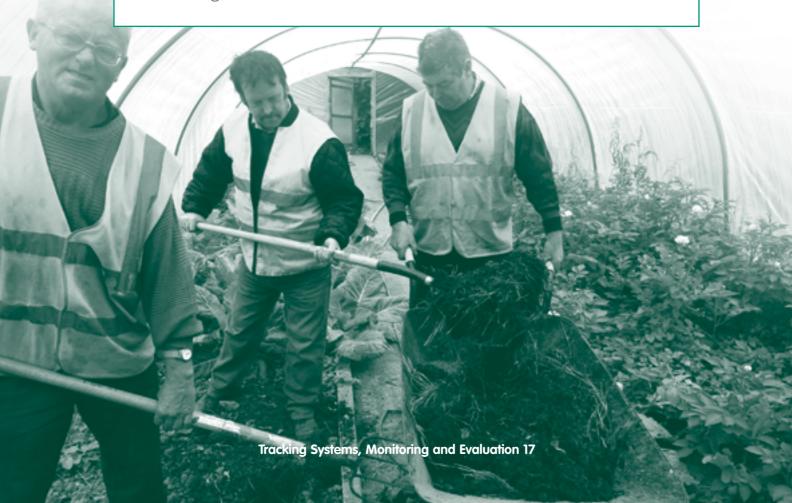*Fig. 8.5: The Role of Evaluation in Local Development Strategies*

As the cyclical representation in the diagram suggests, evaluation is relevant to all stages of the project/ programme life-cycle. Prior assessment or ex-ante evaluation allows a partnership to identify and take stock of local issues, needs and resources. This allows a partnership to formulate action plans (Multi-annual Plans and Annual Programme of Activities). Plans are then submitted to funding bodies, so that partnerships acquire the resources to implement them. Interim (mid-term/ annual/ periodic) evaluation(s) provide pointers regarding the optimisation of implementation processes. They allow for targets to be revised and the specific targeting of resources. On completion of the project/ action / programme the ex-poste evaluation allows the stakeholders to make observations, draw conclusions and extract recommendations for future actions and programmes. Integrating evaluation into the development process ensures that partnerships are plan led, and not programme led. This implies that the Smallholder Initiative is not bounded by one funding stream, but benefits from access to a range of programming supports, resources, linkages and opportunities.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Partnerships need to undertake internal evaluation of all initiatives and programmes on a continuous basis. It is recommended that periodically they work with an external evaluator, who can bring objectivity and research expertise to the evaluation of particular programmes. In evaluating the Smallholder Initiative, it is essential that an evaluator have an experience of working on social inclusion issues, and it is preferable that he/ she have a good knowledge of the farming sector.

AN EVALUATION SHOULD BE

- **Analytical:** based on recognised research techniques

- **Systematic:** involve careful planning and consistent use of the chosen techniques

- **Reliable and Objective:** such that another researcher, with access to the same data would arrive at similar findings

- **Issue-oriented:** to address issues of importance, including relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the processes and structures

- **User-driven:** such that the processes involved and the results generated will be useful for practitioners and policy-makers

- **User-friendly:** to maximise stakeholder participation and access to the findings

THE ROLE OF A SMALLHOLDER DEVELOPMENT OFFICER IN UNDERTAKING EVALUATIONS

The following table identifies some of the key tasks for which Development Officers are responsible in terms of the evaluation of the Smallholder Initiative. All of the tasks listed in respect of the internal evaluation apply to the external evaluation, in addition to those listed in the right hand column of the table presented below.

Table 8.2: Contributing to Evaluation of the Smallholder Initiative

INTERNAL EVALUATION	EXTERNAL EVALUATION
✔ Ensure that all client records are accurate and up to date.	✔ Liaise with management and the working group to select a suitably qualified evaluator.
✔ Ensure that output reports correspond to target sheets.	✔ Ensure that the evaluator is fully briefed.
✔ Ensure that qualitative reports (meetings, events etc.) are accessible and accurate.	✔ Ensure that the working group and the target group members are fully aware of the evaluation, and the importance of their contributions and participation.
✔ Reflect on processes and outputs and contribute actively to deliberations to identify learnings.	✔ Provide the evaluator with access to client databases for sampling or survey purposes, while respecting client confidentiality.
✔ Arrange for inputs from colleagues, working group and the target group.	✔ Provide the evaluator with full access to all data and information, including pointers to enable him/ her to arrange meetings with all stakeholders.
✔ Work with management to ensure that the evaluation complies with the objectives of the Partnership's evaluation actions and processes.	✔ Convene meetings or focus groups, if requested to do so by the evaluator.
✔ Document all findings accurately and discuss these with management.	✔ Ensure that colleagues, management and working group members are fully appraised of the progress of the evaluation, and are aware of its recommendations.
✔ Allow own work and approaches to be subject to critical review.	✔ Arrange for feedback (interim and final) to relevant parties including the target group.
Take on board the lessons arising from the evaluation.	

STEPS IN UNDERTAKING AN INTERNAL EVALUATION

1. Identify the aspect(s) of the Programme, which is (are) to be evaluated

2. Review the action plan(s) and extract the targets and indicators in relation to the aspect under evaluation

3. Identify the research questions to establish:
- What did we set out to achieve?
- What did we achieve/ not achieve?
- How did we achieve it?
- What remains to be done?
- Who will do it?
- When will it be done?

4. Agree a research methodology in conjunction with management and the working group

5. Consult and draw on previous work/ studies in this area/ field

6. Use tracking and monitoring systems to compare outputs with the targets specified in the plan

7. Note and account for any over/ under-achievements

8. Look at how outputs were attained – Consider what worked well and what did not work well

9. Consult with beneficiaries (smallholders) to establish their views on the outputs and the processes (use surveys and / or focus groups)

10. Consult with / survey partners (and other agencies/ stakeholders) to review processes and supports/ actions

11. Present the results of consultation processes to the working group

12. Facilitate the working group to review and discuss the results emerging from the evaluation, and review its stewardship of the action/ Programme

13. Document the questions, methodology, data/ information collection processes, survey results, deliberations, observations, conclusions and recommendations.

Section 9
Proofing

EQUALITY PROOFING

POVERTY PROOFING

RURAL PROOFING
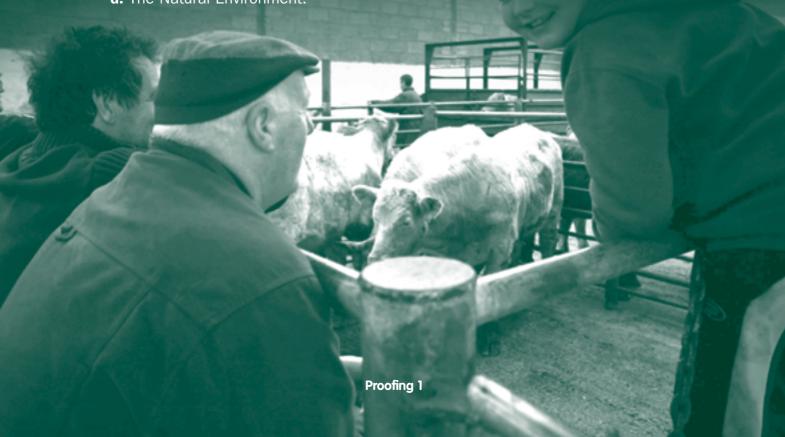
ENVIRONMENTAL PROOFING

GOOD PRACTICE IN PROOFING

9. Proofing

Like the Smallholder Initiative itself, the concept of proofing emerged to a large extent from the bottom-up. Proofing is associated with attaining equality and parity of esteem. It is about ending discrimination, and removing the barriers that inhibit or restrict certain individuals and communities in attaining their full potential. Thus, proofing sits easily with the local development partnerships. Indeed Pobal and the local development sector have been to the fore in the roll-out of proofing in Ireland.

Gender-proofing is perhaps the most well-known form of proofing. It was introduced into pubic policy in the 1990s, with a view to increasing the levels of female participation in key decision-making bodies, such as the boards of state companies. The statutory sector was encouraged to promote 'positive discrimination' in the interest of recruiting more women, thereby making organisations more representative of the population, more dynamic, and enabled to access a greater range of viewpoints, skills and expertise. Similarly, in the north of Ireland, positive discrimination in some areas of public policy has been encouraged in order to redress the socio-economic imbalances that had resulted from discrimination during earlier decades. The successes of these models in encouraging public agencies to be proactive in reaching out to previously under-represented groups of persons/ population cohorts have helped to make public bodies in general more receptive to proofing (applying positive discrimination) in respect of:

a. Equality,

b. Poverty,

c. Rural Communities and

d. The Natural Environment.

A number of organisations including Pobal, The Equality Authority, the National Womens' Council, Comhar (National Sustainable Development Partnership) and CLÉ (Comhar LEADER na hEireann) have produced position papers, good practice guidelines and recommendations in respect of proofing. These documents are updated from time to time, and it is recommended that Partnership staff consult relevant documentation, attend briefings and seminars and participate in regional and national fora that advance proofing in practice.

In this context, this Manual confines its discussion on proofing to the four dimensions listed above, and refers to their relevance to the Smallholder Initiative, while recognising that proofing guidelines and practices are evolving.

The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (2001-2006) Guidelines (annexes) provide comprehensive guidelines on gender equality-, poverty-, rural- and environmental-proofing.

Pobal has also produced a rural-proofing guidebook (2001) entitled "Rural Proofing for the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme – supporting rural communities." This has been circulated to all partnerships and relevant agencies.

A. EQUALITY PROOFING

Equality-proofing is the most far-reaching and multi-dimensional of the proofings that apply in public policy. The Equal Status Act (2000) provides a clear reference frame in defining the aspects of society to which equality-proofing refers. The Act prohibits all forms of discrimination on the basis of the following nine grounds:

- Gender

- Disability

- Age

- Religion

- Sexual Orientation

- Marital Status

- Family Status

- Race/ Ethnicity

- Membership of the Traveller Community

As a consequence of legislation, legal avenues are open to individuals who feel discriminated against on the basis of any of these grounds. Legislation is acting as a deterrent to organisations or individuals perpetrating discrimination and / or inequality, and this applies to the local development sector as well as to statutory bodies and the private sector.

Equality-proofing seeks to ensure that discrimination or exclusion on the basis of any of these nine grounds is prevented. It behoves partnerships to have in place mechanisms to ensure that minority and traditionally-excluded groups are empowered and are facilitated to participate in all programmes and in decision-making.

In the context of the Smallholder Initiative, the equality variables that arise most frequently are gender, age and disability.

Gender-proofing can be a particular challenge, given that the agriculture and fishing sectors have tended to be male dominated. The contributions of farm women have tended to be understated and under-recognised. However, women play a key role in the Smallholder Initiative, particularly in terms of sourcing information, putting forward new and innovative ideas, developing on-farm enterprises and promoting pluriactivity. A number of sociological studies suggest that mothers' influences bear strongly on the likelihood of a successor emerging from the farm household. Partnerships can encourage greater female participation in the Smallholder Initiative by:

- Inviting women's groups such as the ICA (Irish Countrywomen's Association) to provide (a) representative(s) to the working group/ Board of Directors

- Ensuring that in the case of farm partnerships, both spouses' names are included in mailing lists and databases, thereby ensuring that women have equality of access to information

- Encouraging a farmer to transfer social welfare benefits or credits to his wife where he is under-utilising them, or where she is better-positioned, or more willing to avail of training or employment opportunities that are credit-linked

- Undertaking consultation and review exercises that are targeted at women

- Convening events that respond specifically to needs identified by and affecting women

- Providing childcare, eldercare and/ or subsidies to ensure that women from low-income backgrounds can participate in events

- Profiling and highlighting the achievements of women in agriculture, so as to provide encouragement to other women to develop their ideas.

Age equality-proofing requires Partnerships to pay particular attention the needs of older and younger farmers. Older farmers (those aged 60+) frequently face multiple forms of disadvantage associated with lower-levels of educational attainment, mobility difficulties and fewer options for progression (are unable to access off-farm employment and are not eligible for a number of state-sponsored training programmes). Case studies have demonstrated that older smallholders are more likely to have poorer living conditions (damp/ cold houses) and are less aware of welfare entitlements than are farmers in general. In response, Partnerships are required to pursue a promotive approach that involves:

- Ensuring that the totality of partnership operations respond to the needs of older smallholders - Community development strategies that support the development of older people's groups and services to the elderly have a key role to play

- Developing strong working relationships with bodies such as the local authorities and HSE that have statutory responsibilities to provide services for older people

- Encouraging community and voluntary groups to be more aware and inclusive of older people, and older smallholders in particular

- Providing 'space' to enable older smallholders to be involved in Partnership working groups

- Utilising initiatives such as the Rural Transport Initiative to ensure that older smallholders can access supports, information and events.

Younger farmers (those aged under 35 years of age) also face a number of issues that may prevent their full participation in the Smallholder Initiative. Being a minority, and given the association between farming and an older age cohort, they may be reluctant to attend meetings, and have difficulty identifying with middle-aged farmers. They are more likely to be interested in off-farm employment and enterprise development activities, and have specific information and support needs as a result. In response, Partnerships are required to be more inclusive of younger farmers by:

- Ensuring their direct participation in decision-making and representation on working groups. Fostering linkages with Macra na Feirme and local youth groups, and pursuing joint actions with them

- Promoting joint actions between the agriculture and youth/ education working groups, particularly in terms of promoting a more accurate and positive perception of farming

- Recruiting young farmers to front particular promotions and events

- Documenting the achievements of younger farmers as a means of animating others to be more active in local development.

Disability/Ability-Proofing requires ensuring that persons with physical, mental and/ or sensory impairments are enabled to play a full and active role in all aspects of local development. Disability issues are increasingly prevalent among smallholders. As the farm population ages, issues of mobility and physical access become of increasing concern to smallholders. This behoves Partnerships to ensure that premises and venues are fully accessible for persons with mobility difficulties. Partnerships should also ensure that information leaflets and circulars have a font size that is easily legible, and should offer to make Braille and/ or large print versions available.

Mental disabilities are becoming increasingly manifest among smallholders. These are often associated with loneliness and physical isolation. The pressures caused by debt can often lead to undue stresses and strains on smallholder households, and can affect farm women in particular. Issues such as male and youth suicide and substance (especially alcohol) abuse are prevalent among smallholders. Therefore, Partnerships ought to:

- Make staff aware of and sensitive to the needs of people with disabilities, especially mental disabilities

- Challenge the stigma that continues to be associated with mental illness

- Encourage state service providers to develop outreach facilities in rural areas, and to engage with partnerships in health-promotion activities

- Deepen team-working within the Partnership, so that Development Officers respond collaboratively and in a holistic way to the needs of smallholders with disabilities

- Collaborate with agencies that have a brief and / or expertise in the disability sector

Equality-proofing contributes to the attainment of social inclusion. Its implementation requires that Partnerships remain proactive in researching, identifying and highlighting barriers that prevent people and communities from realising their full potential. It involves Partnerships (and by extension, the statutory sector) putting in place mechanisms and practices that prevent all forms of discrimination, and which promote equality and parity of esteem. As new issues and challenges emerge, Partnerships are obliged to undertake awareness-raising and training actions, so that staff, directors, volunteers, beneficiaries and communities are fully prepared to tackle discrimination and to promote equality.

B. POVERTY-PROOFING

In the context of social inclusion, poverty proofing refers to ensuring that strategies, actions, structures and processes impact on alleviating poverty and on diminishing the causes of poverty. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy acknowledges that:

People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living, which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources, people may be excluded and marginalised from activities that are considered the norm for other people in society.

Instances of poverty are prevalent among smallholders, and the risk of their falling into poverty traps is increasing. As the income gap between smallholders and industrial workers grows, smallholders are more susceptible to lower levels of social participation, a lack of social integration and exclusion from decision-making processes. Thus, poverty-proofing needs to take account of income-inadequacy as well as the social, emotional and cultural dimensions of poverty. The various supports and actions to which this Manual has referred (elaborated in section six) are concerned with poverty alleviation. In practice, poverty-proofing requires that these actions are targeted at and promoted to households on the lower-rungs of the socio-economic ladder. This requires partnerships to:

- Take into account the rural-specific dimensions of poverty, recognising that within partnership territories, poverty may not be concentrated in areas or neighbourhoods, but is often associated with factors such as occupation, age, education and literacy level, disability, household size, family situation, and the absence of mainstream supports and public services

- Develop and foster linkages with agencies that are working with low-income households, including the St. Vincent de Paul Society, MABS and the Department of Social and Family Affairs

- Provide subsidies to enable low-income households to avail of child/ elder-care, so that members can attend meetings and other events

- Address the multiple dimensions of poverty and seek to break the cycle of inter-generational poverty in households by implementing actions that alleviate educational disadvantage

- Respond in a holistic way to problems that may aggravate poverty, such as substance abuse, gambling, low self-esteem, low levels of voter participation in elections etc.. This requires partnership staff and volunteers to work together as a team, and to liaise with professionals and experts in providing a client-centred approach.

C. RURAL-PROOFING

The concept of rural-proofing was first articulated in Ireland in the late 1990s. When compiling the White Paper on Rural Development, the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development convened a number of consultation seminars and workshops at various locations throughout the State. Through this consultation process, rural citizens and communities expressed concerns that rural areas were losing out to urban centres in terms of accessing public resources. As a consequence, rural areas were finding it increasingly difficult to attract and sustain private sector investment and economic growth. Public services and social facilities were also tending to be located in urban centres, with the result that rural areas were losing population to urban areas, and social exclusion in rural areas was being exacerbated. In order to redress these imbalances, rural communities, together with Partnerships and LEADER Local Action Groups encouraged the Government to include rural-proofing commitments in the White Paper.

Since the publication of the Rural Development White Paper in 1999, rural-proofing is part of national policy, and it is applies to the implementation of the National Development Plan. The National Spatial Strategy[17] (2001) seeks to promote more balanced regional development in Ireland, and it identifies a number of regional 'gateways' and 'hubs' as counterbalances to the Greater Dublin Area. These hubs and gateways have an essential role to play in ensuring that growth and development are strategically dispersed to rural areas. **In line with the ESDP (European Spatial Development Perspective, 1999), the National Spatial Strategy recognises that considerable diversity exists across rural areas, and that diversity needs to be taken into account when allocating resources, designing services and implementing initiatives and programmes.** Thus, rural-proofing transcends national and EU policies and perspectives, and relates very directly to the local development context.

As the EU and national spatial strategies and other policy advancements over recent decades recognise, the promotion of development opportunities in the rural context; which is associated with rural-proofing involves:

- Developing strong networks (citizens, communities, businesses) within rural areas

- Strengthening linkages and partnerships between rural and urban areas – between towns and their hinterlands

- Pursuing a polycentric approach, such that development is not concentrated in a small number of centres, but is promoted in a network of complementary locations

- Investing in the accessibility and attractiveness of rural areas

- Strengthening inter-territorial and transnational co-operation between rural areas, especially rural areas in border zones

- Fostering the indigenous development potential of rural areas, through economic diversification, sustainable agriculture, ecological tourism and strong local identity and branding

- Maintaining basic public services in rural areas and zones with low densities

- Furthering the role of rural citizens as guardians of heritage, traditions, culture and the natural environment

17. The National Spatial Strategy can be accessed via http:/www.irishspatialstrategy.ie or the Department of Environment and Local Government.

Delivering these objectives necessitates action at multiple levels; transnational, national, regional, county, local and communal. At the local and communal level, local development partnerships are strategically positioned to co-ordinate the efforts of various bodies in delivering a spatially-balanced approach to development, that unleashes the development potential of areas that were previously classified as marginal or residual. Indeed, Community Partnerships have described one of their leading roles as that of translating national policy into local action.

The evolution of rural proofing and the attainment of balanced spatial development in the Irish context parallel the evolution of new approaches to rural development. At the core of the new approaches is the principle of area-based development. Several independent evaluations (see http.www.oecd.org) have noted the value of an integrated territorial or area-based approach to rural development. Integrated approaches are preferable to traditional sectoral approaches, where agencies operated without reference to local conditions, and where inter-agency collaboration was weak. Local development partnerships have been and are the main drivers of integrated and area-based development in Ireland. As the following figure suggests, the benefits of rural-proofing and the goals of local development are consistent and complementary.

Fig. 9.1: The Benefits of Rural Proofing

Rural-Proofing involves identifying, describing, assessing and monitoring in a structured manner the direct and indirect effects of policies, programmes and actions on different rural areas, on their resources and on different categories of people living in these areas, so as to actively ensure that spatial imbalances are redressed, eliminated and avoided, and that rural areas, communities and citizens realise their full development potential in a sustainable way.

Local Community and Economic Development

- Specific Responses to rural social exclusion
- Greater participation by all target groups
- Supports for local networks
- Supports for local economic diversification
- Fostering of territorial identity

Co-Ordination of Local and Regional Resources

- Outreach delivery of programmes and services and functional out-sourcing
- Vision planning that provides for sustainable investment in rural communities
- Enhanced perception of 'the rural'

Enhanced Public Service Delivery and Policy

- Service decentralisation and greater local autonomy
- Investment in transport networks and infrastructure
- Application of environmental safeguards
- On-going and meaningful consultations with rural citizens

In practical terms, CLÁR represents a lever through which to advance rural-proofing. CLÁR: Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais was launched in October 2001, as part of the government's response to commitments in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness to provide targeted investment in disadvantaged rural areas. Sixteen geographical areas were selected initially, with this number being expanded over subsequent years. The areas were selected on the basis that they had experienced considerable population loss, and needed new investment in order to sustain and grow their populations. The objective of CLÁR is to "fast-track National Development Plan expenditure for state services and facilities in the selected areas, and to enhance the quality of life of the people there" (Dept. of Agriculture, 2002: 54).

While overall responsibility for CLÁR rests with the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, local development partnerships, have through the LEADER Programme, been allocated specific responsibilities for delivering CLÁR. Partnerships are responsible for village and countryside enhancement and can lever funding for community facilities, and school playgrounds, and partnerships work with local authorities and the ESB to lever funding for road, water and sewage upgrades and for the installation of three-phase electricity networks.

UNDERTAKING RURAL-PROOFING IN THE SMALLHOLDER INITIATIVE

- Ensure that participants are recruited from the most disadvantaged areas, especially areas of high socio-economic disadvantage and areas characterised by poor land quality and physical isolation

- Convene events in more marginal rural areas, including CLÁR areas (Mapping can assist in identifying areas that are benefiting and/ or lagging from various programmes.)

- Address specific aspects of rural isolation, by working in co-operation with colleagues and by developing linkages with relevant bodies

- Facilitate and encourage agencies to deliver services and supports in more rural areas

- Consult with smallholders and rural communities to identify local resources and development opportunities in community development and economic diversification

- Support group development, so that smallholders are facilitated and enabled to interact and share information and experience

- Contribute to county, regional and national deliberations on rural development

---

D. ENVIRONMENTAL PROOFING

"It is likely that, in post-glacial Ireland, the peak of habitat diversity and richness of species existed, not in the canopied primal forests, but in the countryside of small, mixed farms of less than a century ago" (Viney, 2003: 7).

All agricultural production relies on the natural environment. Farming involves moulding and shaping natural elements for the production of food. During the latter decades of the twentieth century intensive farming pushed the natural environment to its limits, such that its future ability to be productive was under threat in some instances. In more recent years, public policy has advocated a less intensive approach to deriving benefits from the natural environment. This approach is often referred to as multi-functional agriculture. Schemes such as REPS (Rural Environmental Protection Scheme), EU-Life and incentives for rearing and stocking rare breeds of cattle offer opportunities to smallholders in terms of increasing income while making a positive contribution to the natural environment and biodiversity. Meanwhile, the introduction of the single farm payment reduces the onus on farmers to intensify production.

While headage and other payments that favoured intensive production are gradually being phased out at EU-level, financial supports for environmentally-friendly farming practices look more secure in the long-run. Moreover, consumer trends show tentative

signs of a growing preference for locally-produced, fresh food over mass-produced commodities. These trends represent positive developments for smallholders, and require Partnerships to promote actions that enable smallholders to avail of the income-generating opportunities. Therefore, Development Officers ought to:

- Ensure that smallholders are fully informed about the totality of the various agri-environmental schemes that are available

- Counteract the negative publicity that tends to under-state and/or detract from the benefits of agri-environmental and ecological initiatives by ensuring that the facts are presented objectively, and that smallholders are enabled to verify information

- Assist smallholders in accessing information about farm planning

- Promote linkages between smallholders and community and voluntary groups in developing ecological and conservation projects

- Work with younger farmers, youth and children to ensure that an appreciation of the natural environment is safeguarded into the future

- Collaborate with local authorities, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (formerly Dúchas) in promoting conservation, landscape management and waste minimisation strategies and actions

Partnerships ought to incorporate environmental profiling into their overall strategic plans, so that natural assets are viewed as valuable resources. As the role of the natural environment in contributing to rural development becomes more apparent and appreciated, there is merit in partnerships having environmental experts/ representatives on working groups, and in investing in environmental training for staff and volunteers.

GOOD PRACTICE IN PROOFING

- Implement proofing in practice and on a continuous basis. This involves moving from having proofing statements on paper to inculcating proofing into the thinking and actions of all those involved in the Partnership

- Record and document good examples and instances of proofing

- Be willing to share proofing experiences with other partnerships, and to encourage the state sector to proof its policies and actions

- Develop proofing-statements at working group level, and check the formulation and delivery of development plans against these statements.

Section 10

Mainstreaming and Policy Development

**MAINSTREAMING PROCESSES –
ACTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PARTNERSHIP**

APPROACHES TO MAINSTREAMING

**HOW PARTNERSHIPS CAN PROMOTE
MAINSTREAMING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

10. Mainstreaming and Policy Development

The long-term success and sustainability of actions promoted by local development partnerships are contingent on positive responses and collaboration from government and the statutory sector. The state sector is central to the partnership process at national level (National Social Partnership) and at local level, through its representation on the Boards of local development partnerships. The state is also the main paymaster of the programmes administered by partnerships and other agencies. State-led initiatives have the potential to remove structural inequalities. By the same token, shortcomings in state services and the (sometimes unintended) negative consequences of state policies can cause and/ or exacerbate disadvantage for an individual, household, community or area. Therefore, partnerships need to engage with the state on a continuous basis, so that social inclusion receives adequate resources and attention, and becomes an integral part of the raison d'être of all organisations. Otherwise, partnerships will be continuously 'fire-fighting.'

MAINSTREAMING

Mainstreaming begins with innovation at the partnership level. It seeks to ensure that actions that have been successfully piloted by partnerships, and which merit being continued, are not reliant on short-term arrangements, but are backed-up by more permanent and long-term funding and institutional arrangements. Mainstreaming can involve the transfer of activities, and can lead to changes in policy and the ways in which resources are allocated. Insofar as smallholders are concerned, visible policy change can relate to the eligibility criteria for training programmes and schemes operated by statutory bodies, or a more equitable distribution of CAP-funded supports.

Mainstreaming takes place on two levels:

Horizontal Mainstreaming may take place between two or more organisations working in the same or a familiar field.

Vertical Mainstreaming affects the policy level and leads to changes in the content, the mode of interpretation or the incentives linked to agriculture and rural development policy. It requires a concerted strategy to ensure that analysis and debate occur at strategic and/ or policy levels on the basis of project/ programme results. As mainstreaming aims to influence not only the organisations involved in delivering the Smallholder Initiative, but also the broader systemic entities e.g. Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the active involvement of different actors is required.

The following diagram illustrates the processes involved in mainstreaming.

Fig 10.1: Mainstreaming Processes - actions and implications for Partnerships

Source: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2001

As the diagram suggests, monitoring and evaluation are prerequisites for mainstreaming. Partnerships need to identify the innovative aspects of their work and document the results. Inter-partnerships networks, Pobal working groups, seminars, conferences and regional and national consultative fora such the Rural Development Forum offer vehicles through which reports, experiences, learnings, barriers, recommendations and innovations can be disseminated. Dissemination leads to the transfer of practice, both between partnerships, and from partnerships to other agencies. Changes in practice may require policy and/ or legislative changes.

The realisation of mainstreaming requires that Partnerships be actively involved in policy deliberations, formulation and review. This necessitates a promotive approach on the part of partnerships, especially the manager and directors.

Mainstreaming must not be seen as a predatory process, which tries to subsume partnership innovations into structures or agencies that remain exogenous (top-down). Innovation relates not just to new outputs. It relates very specifically to new and collaborative processes.

As the following diagram shows, mainstreaming involves ensuring that in development, partnership processes are the norm rather than the exception. Mainstreaming involves progressing from 'piloting' to 'ring-fencing' while maintaining the focus on innovation that is the hallmark of partnership.

Fig. 10.2 Approaches to Mainstreaming
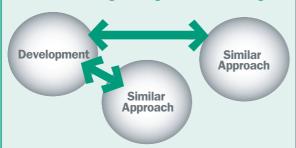
Mainstreaming through Duplication

Development programmes are reproduced; implemented by the same or similar structures, and based on the same principles.
Example: PRODER in Spain is a nationally-funded rural development programme, which extends the LEADER approach to additional rural areas.

Mainstreaming through Extension

Projects/actions, which were initially established for one purpose, were subsequently extended to take on additional activities and responsibilities. This is accompanied by additional resource transfers from the state to the partnership
Example: Area-based and Community Partnerships implement programmes in addition to the LDSIP. Successful examples include Community Services, the LES, RSS, BTWEA etc.
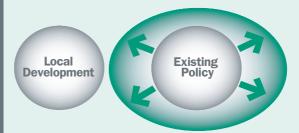
Mainstreaming through Mutual Linkages

Partnerships develop linkages with other agencies to promote sharing of principles, such as citizen participation and community development. The partnership's objective is to introduce and promote development approaches that are of mutual benefit to participating organisations.
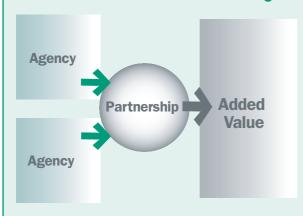*Example: As a result of linkages with local partnerships, many local authorities adopted a more*

Mainstreaming through Consolidation

Local development approaches are consolidated and reflected in policy.
Examples: CLAR represents recognition of area-based development strategies.
The National Anti-Poverty Strategy reflects social inclusion approaches developed at local level.

Mainstreaming through Out-Sourcing

Agencies provide partnerships with resources to enable them to deliver services and/or programmes that were traditionally delivered by agencies. These services are adapted to embrace partnership principles, and are generally targeted at realising social inclusion.
Examples: Health Boards have sub-contracted awareness raising actions to area-partnerships.
Partnerships deliver education and training programmes on behalf of Vocational Education Committees.

HOW PARTNERSHIPS CAN PROMOTE MAINSTREAMING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- Statutory sector representatives on the Board of Directors and on Working Groups should be fully involved in the preparation of all mainstreaming and policy proposals, and should act as facilitators in enabling contacts between partnerships and the agency or government department in question.

- Submissions should be based on reliable research – quantitative and qualitative indicators.

- Mainstreaming plans/submissions should be backed-up by extensive consultation with all the relevant stakeholders.

- Policy/mainstreaming proposals should incorporate a cost-benefit analysis, that demonstrates the economic, social and environmental benefits to the target group and to the state/government.

- Proposals should look beyond programme/project delivery, and address the related structural issues.

- Policy submissions should be specific on delivery mechanisms, targets, timeframes and budgets.

- The impact of national and EU policies should be taken into account in developing mainstreaming strategies.

- Strategies should focus on anticipating and responding to future needs and opportunities.

- Government Departments/ lead agencies should be consulted in the course of preparing mainstream plans/ submissions. A two-way dialogue between the partnership and the agency/ department allows the content of any submission to be modified and enhanced. Moreover, consultation eliminates or reduces the risk of mis-interpretation or mis-understanding.

- Involve Pobal, and work with and through Pobal when addressing structural and policy issues that affect a number of Partnerships.

References

Adams, W.M. *(1992) Green development – environment and sustainability in the third world. London, Routledge.*

AEIDL LEADER European Observatory *(1998) From strategy to action: project selection,. Brussels, LEADER European Observatory.*

AEIDL LEADER *European Observatory (1999) Territorial competitiveness – creating a territorial development strategy in the light of the LEADER experience part 1. Brussels, LEADER European Observatory.*

AEIDL LEADER European Observatory *(2000) Economic competitiveness – creating a territorial development strategy in the light of the LEADER experience, part 4. Brussels, LEADER European Observatory.*

AEIDL LEADER European Observatory *(2001) Global competitiveness of rural areas – creating a territorial development strategy in the light of the LEADER experience part 5. Brussels, LEADER European Observatory.*

Area Development Management Limited. *(1996), Employment information and guidance. services for the unemployed: a model of good practice. Dublin, ADM.*

Area Development Management Limited. *(1998), Conference report: low income smallholder households: a survival strategy. Dublin, ADM.*

Area Development Management Limited. *(2001), Strategic review: a practical guide for partnerships and community groups. Dublin, ADM.*

Area Development Management Limited. *(2003), The low income smallholder households initiative: a guide to good practice. Dublin, ADM.*

Atkinson, T., Cantillon, B., Marlier, E. and Nolan, B. *(2002) Social indicators: the EU and social inclusion. Oxford, Oxford University Press.*

Atkinson, T., Marlier, E. and Nolan, B. *(2003) Indicators and targets for social inclusion in the European Union. ESRI Working Paper Number 151. Dublin, ESRI.*

Bell. S. and Morse, S. *(1999) Sustainability indicators – measuring the immeasurable. London, Earthscan.*

Bridger, J.C. and Luloff, A.E. *(1999) "Towards an interactional approach to sustainable community development", Journal of Rural Studies, 15, 1999, 377-387*

Brunhes, B. *(2004) EU-wide evaluation of the Community Initiative EQUAL 2000-2006 mid-term report. Commissioned by the European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs. Bernard Brunhes International.*

Clarke, J. *(1997) Managing Better – a series on organisational and management issues for the community and voluntary sector. Dublin, Combat Poverty Agency.*

Cloke, P., Marsden, T. and Mooney, P.H. (eds.) *(2006) Handbook of rural studies. London. Sage.*

Combat Poverty Agency *(1995) Community participation – a handbook for individuals and groups in local development partnerships, CPA. Dublin.*

COMHAR; The National Sustainable Development Partnership *(2002) Principles for sustainable development. Dublin, Comhar.*

COMHAR; The National Sustainable Development Partnership *(2002) Setting the Ground for Local Agenda 21 – 10 years on from Rio; Seminar Report. Dublin, Comhar.*

Commission of the European Communities *(1988) The future of rural society, Com(88)501 Final. Luxembourg.*

Commission of the European Communities *(1999) Guide to the assessment of project proposals. PMC Helpdesk, Luxembourg.*

Commission of the European Communities *(1999b) ESDP European Spatial Development Perspective – towards balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the European Union, agreed at the informal Council of Ministers*

Commission of the European Communities Directorate General XVI Regional Policy and Cohesion *(1999) The new programming period 2000-2006: methodological working papers, working paper 3, indicators for monitoring and evaluation: an indicative methodology. Luxembourg.*

Community Workers' Co-operative *(1997) Strategies to encourage participation. Galway, CWC.*

Croll, E. and Parkin, D. *(1992) Bush base: forest farm – culture, environment and development. London, Routledge.*

Crowley, C. *(200) "One foot in the farm: the geography of Ireland's part-time farmers" presentation to 2006 Conference of Irish Geographers, NUI Maynooth.*

CSF Community Support Framework Evaluation Unit *(1997) Cost-benefit analysis in the Community Support Framework. Dublin, CSF Evaluation Unit.*

CSF Community Support Framework Evaluation Unit (1998) Review of ongoing evaluation function in the Community Support Framework (CSF) for Ireland 1994-1999. Dublin, CSF Evaluation Unit.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (2004) Local enterprise – a decade of support; a review of the city and county enterprise boards 1993-2003. Dublin, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Dobson, A. *(1991) The green reader: essays toward a sustainable society. San Francisco, Mercury House.*

Douglas, D.J.A. *(1995) Community economic development in Canada, volume two. Ontario, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd..*

Downey, L. and Walsh, J.A. *(2005), Rural Foresight 2025, Teagasc and National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland.*

Eckersley, R *(1992) Environmentalism and political theory: toward an ecocentric approach. State University of New York, Albany, USA.*

Fitzpatrick Associates *(1999) Review of the low-income smallholder initiative – final report. Dublin, Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants.*

Goodbody Economic Consultants. *(2001), A study on the development of baseline positions for the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme. Dublin, Area Development Management Limited*

Harvey, B. *(2002) The role of the community sector in local social partnership. Dublin, Pobal*

Haase, T and McKeown, K. *(2003) Developing disadvantaged areas through area-based initiatives – reflections on over a decade of local development strategies. Dublin, ADM*

Heanue, K. *(2002) The missing people – a strategic approach to rural repopulation. Dublin, ADM.*

Ilbery, B and Bowler, I *(1998) "From agricultural productivism to post-productivism" in Ilbery, B.(ed.) The geography of rural change. Harlow, Longman.*

Izquierdo-Vallina, J. *(2002) Manual para agentes de desarrollo rural. Mundi-Prensa Libros S.A., Madrid.*

Kearney, B., Boyle, G. and Walsh, J.A. *(1995), EU LEADER I initiative in ireland- evaluation and recommendations. Dublin, The Stationery Office.*

Lafferty, S., Commins, P. and Walsh, J.A. *(1999), Irish agriculture in transition: a census atlas of agriculture in the Republic of Ireland. Teagasc and NUI Maynooth*

Lewis, W.A. *(1955) The theory of economic growth. London: George Allen & Unwin.*

Maillat, D. *(1997) "Innovative milieux and new generations of regional policies" in McCafferty, D. and Walsh, J.A. (eds.) Competitiveness, innovation and regional development in Ireland. Dublin: The Regional Studies Association.*

Marsden, T. *(1998) "Economic perspectives" in Ilbery, B. (ed.) The geography of rural change. Essex, Longman.*

Marsden, T. *(2006) "The road towards sustainable rural development: issues of theory, policy and practice in a European context" in Cloke, P., Marsden, T. and Mooney, P.H. (eds.) (2006) Handbook of rural studies. London. Sage.*

McHugh, C. *(2001) A spatial analysis of socio-economic adjustments in rural Ireland 1986-1996, Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D., Faculty of Arts, Department of Geography, National University of Ireland, Maynooth.*

Mollison, B. and Slay, R.M. *(1991), Introduction to permaculture. Tagari, Tasmania*

Mulreany, M. (ed.) *(2002) Cost-benefit analysis readings. Dublin, Institute of Public Administration.*

Mydral, G. *(1957) Economic theory and underdeveloped regions. London: Duckworth.*

National Economic and Social Council *(1994) New approaches to rural development, NESC No. 97. Dublin.*

National Economic and Social Council *(2002) National progress indicators. Dublin, National Economic and Social Council.*

National Economic and Social Council *(2005) The developmental welfare state. Dublin, National Economic and Social Council.*

Norberg-Hodge, H. *(2000) Bringing the food economy home- the social, ecological and economic benefits of local food (report format). Foxhole, Devon: International Society for Ecology and Culture.*

Nordgreen, R. *(1993) "The promotive man: the roles of the administrative development officer", in Flognfeldt, T et al. (eds.) Conditions for Development in Marginal Regions. Oppland College, Norway.*

Nurske, R. *(1953) Problems of capital formation in underdeveloped counties. New York: Oxford University Press.*

OECD; Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development *(1996) Better policies for rural development. Paris, OECD.*

OECD; Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development *(1999) Cultivating rural amenities – an economic development perspective. Paris, OECD.*

OECD; Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development *(2001) Local partnerships for better governance. Paris, OECD.*

OECD; Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development *(2001b) The DAC guidelines- strategies for sustainable development. Paris, OECD.*

OECD; Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development *(2001c) Sustainable development and the need for strategic responses. Paris, OECD.*

O'Hara, P. and Commins, P. *(1998) "Rural development: towards the new century" in Healy, S. and Reynolds, B. (eds) Social Policy in Ireland; Principles, Practice and Problems. Dublin, Oak Tree Press.*

O'Hara, P. and Commins, P. *(2003) "Ireland and the future of Europe: a regional perspective." Paper presented to CORI Justice Commission conference Ireland and the future of Europe – leading the way towards inclusion. Dublin. CORI.*

ÖIR Managementdienste GmbH *(2004b) Methods for and success of mainstreaming LEADER innovations and approaches into rural development programmes. Final Report Executive Summary. Commissioned by: European Commission DG Agriculture, Unit G4. Vienna.*

Ó Núanáin, S. *(1999) "An integrated approach to local development" in Ahlström, E. (ed.) Cultural itineraries in rural areas. European Tourism Research Institute, Llangollen, Wales.*

Phillips, M. *(1998) "Social perspectives" in Ilbery, B. (ed.) The geography of rural change. Essex, Longman.*

PLANET *(2000) Mainstreaming for sustainable development. Gorey, Co. Wexford, PLANET.*

Rokkan, S. *(1970) Citizens, elections, parties; approaches to the comparative study of political life, 1. London: McKay.*

Rostow, W.W. *(1960) The stages of economic growth: a non-communist manifesto. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.*

Teagasc *(2002) Rural development conference signposts to rural change. Teagasc*

Pobal *(2001) Rural Proofing for the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme – supporting rural communities. Dublin, Pobal*

Sabel, *(1996), Assessment of Local Development Partnerships in Ireland. Paris, OECD*

Saraceno, E. *(1994) "Recent trends in rural development and their conceptualisation", Journal of Rural Studies, 10(4), 321-330.*

Scott, S., Nolan B. and Fahey, T. *(1996) Formulating environmental and social indicators for sustainable development. Dublin, ESRI – Economic and Social Research Institute.*

Seitz, J. *(1988) The politics of development – an introduction to global issues. Oxford, Blackwell.*

Stave, R.L. and Associates, *(1995) Team building - work materials workbook. Stave and Associates Management Centre, Salt Lake City.*

Sweeney, G.(ed.) *(1995) Regional and local development – a teaching manual produced under the Euroform Initiative. Dublin Institute of Technology and Built Environment Research Centre.*

Todaro, M. *(1994) Economic Development. Fifth Edition. Harlow, Essex, Longman.*

United Nations Agenda 21; *(1992) Ensuring people's participation & promoting human resource development for sustainable agriculture.*

Viney, M. *(2003), A living island- Ireland's responsibility to nature. Dublin, Comhar*

Watson, D., Whelan, C.T., Williams, J. and Blackwell, S. *(2005), mapping poverty: national, regional and county patterns. Dublin, Institute of Public Administration and Combat Poverty Agency.*

Walker Local Development Consultancy *(2002) Final report on south western regional network of community groups – management training programme 2001 – 2002. Cork, Walker Local Development Consultancy.*

Walsh, J.A. *(1997) Assessing sustainable rural development. Paper presented to IRD Duhallow.*

Walsh, J.A. *(1999) "Integration and exclusion in Rural Ireland" in Pringle, D., Walsh, J. and Hennessy, M. eds. (1999) Poor people, poor places - a geography of poverty and deprivation in Ireland. Dublin, Oak Tree Press in association with the Geographical Society of Ireland.*

Walsh, J.A. *(2006) "New perspectives on the geography of rural Ireland" Paper presented to the Conference of Irish Geographers, University College Dublin.*

Walsh, J.A. and Meldon, J. eds. *(2004) Partnerships for effective local development. Charleroi, Université Libre de Bruxelles.*

pobal
supporting communities

An Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta
Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

NDP
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN