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A CELEBRATION OF 20 YEARS OF EUROPEAN FUNDS IN WESTERN SCOTLAND

Project Title **Environmental Improvement Key Fund**
Project Sponsor **Inverclyde Council**

PROJECT ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

Following discussions between Inverclyde Council and West Dunbartonshire Councils, it was proposed that an Environmental Improvement Key Fund should be set for the URBAN II Communities of Port Glasgow and Clydebank South. An Environmental Improvement Key Fund Sub Group was made up of representatives of Inverclyde Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire, Communities Scotland, Inverclyde Community Development Trust and West Dunbartonshire Partnership to take this proposal forward.

The URBAN II Environmental Improvement Key Fund was approved in September 2003 and ran until September 2006.

PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The project aimed to establish a grants fund which enabled community led organisations and access European Structural Funds for projects which could support economic development and regeneration through environmental activities.

Coverage of the URBAN II Environmental Improvement Key Fund

It was suggested that the following three areas should form the basis of the actions, which could be undertaken by the EIKF:

Physical Projects should include:

- Small scale, community-led improvements to the built and natural environments of the Programme area, especially those, which re-use waste materials and which expand the network of green areas
- Training, volunteering and ILM projects, which have environmental improvements as a focus for the development of skills
- The development of a network of paths which both encourage exercise, and connect residential areas with areas of economic opportunity or environmental improvement
- The development of allotments and community growing initiatives, where these contribute to healthy eating and wider public benefits.

Actions relating to Resource Use should include:

- Projects focusing on waste reduction, collection of recyclable materials, and their re-processing, including composting. Actions will also be supported with a view to increasing community participation in such schemes
- Training and ILM projects linked to energy efficiency, including actions to improve the quality of housing.

Capacity Building Actions should include:

- Training and awareness activities targeted at community groups active in the area who may benefit from being more aware of environmental issues and opportunities and how these impact on everyday life.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The project was delivered by Inverclyde Council and promoted by both Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire Councils. Inverclyde Council played a central role in managing the finances of the Fund and in the strategic co-ordination across the URBAN II communities.

The application process was designed to be straightforward, flexible and speedy. Grants of up to £100,000 were available for environmental activities, which had an economic focus. Grant payments were released in advance of anticipated expenditure and applicants were not required to source match funding.

PROJECT STRUCTURE

Both the Port Glasgow and Clydebank South communities had set up local appraisal groups to consider key fund applications from each of the areas. The local groups were made up of community representatives and local agencies. Projects were appraised against a set criterion, combined with discussion centred on local priorities and strategies.

Once the local appraisal groups had appraised projects they were then advanced to a joint Management Board, which was again made up of community representatives and local agencies. This model proved to be an effective means of sharing good practice across the two areas and enabled the EIKF to achieve a good level of consistency in its core application and monitoring documentation.

PROJECT FINANCE

Funding Partners	Inverclyde Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire, Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire, West Dunbartonshire Environment Trust
Eligible Costs (£)	£920,000
ERDF/ESF Support (£)	£460,000
Priority/Measure	Clyde Waterfront URBAN II Programme - Priority 1 - Creating Capacity, Measure 1.2 - Addressing Barriers to Participation

PROJECT PERFORMANCE

It was expected that grants would be used to support a broad range of activities, including the creation of jobs and training places through environmental improvement works in the Port Glasgow and Clydebank South areas. The first joint Management Board meeting took place in July 2004.

At the time of writing, June 2007, this project was on-going.