"National Rural Networks: How to show their benefits"

Scottish National Rural Network

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Scottish Government

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Context:

5.2 million population with almost
1 million in rural areas

Nearly 800 islands with just
under 100 permanently inhabited

Devolved Government & Parliament

Rural Development Programme
for Scotland

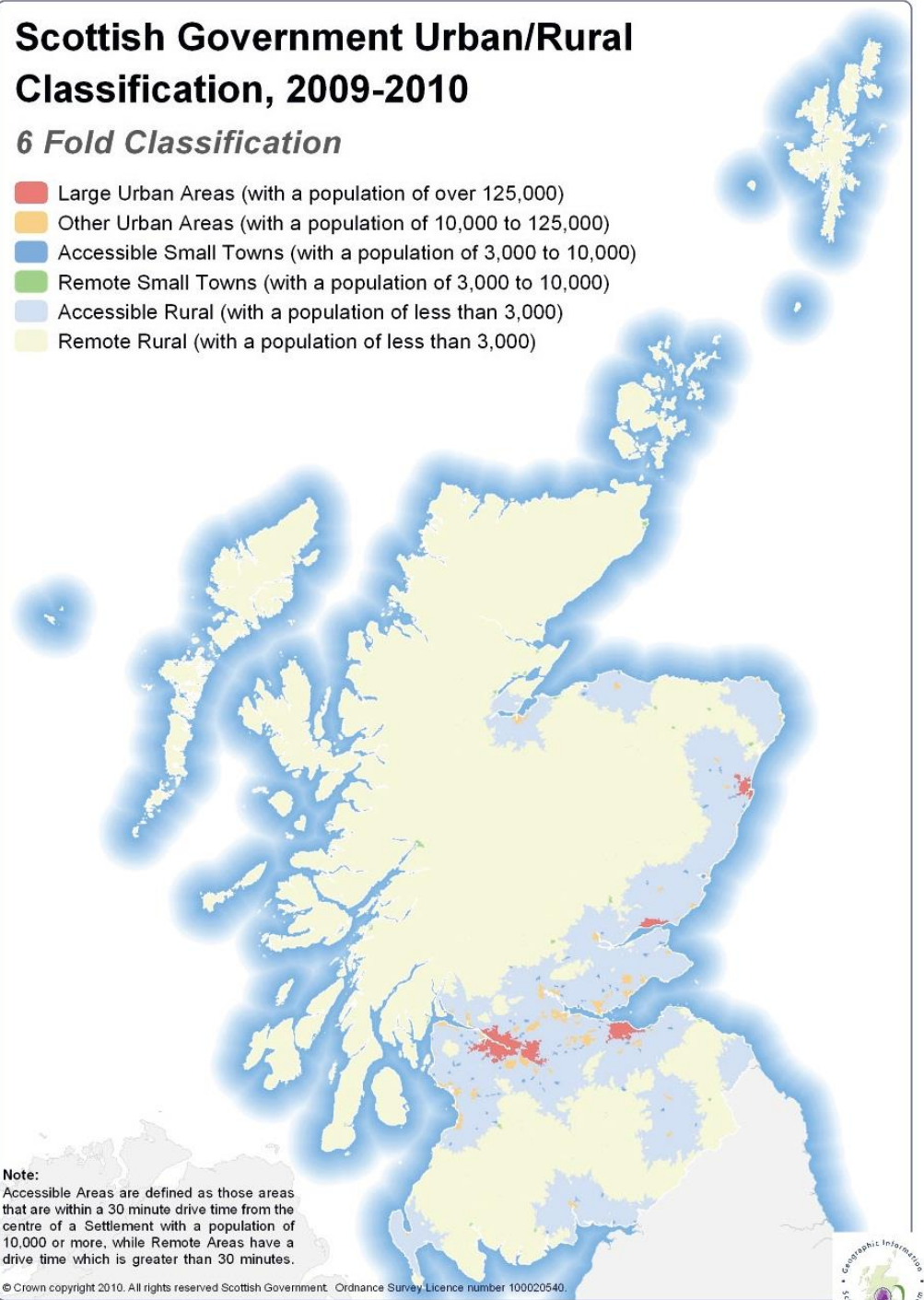## Scottish Government Urban/Rural Classification, 2009-2010

6 Fold Classification

- Large Urban Areas (with a population of over 125,000)
- Other Urban Areas (with a population of 10,000 to 125,000)
- Accessible Small Towns (with a population of 3,000 to 10,000)
- Remote Small Towns (with a population of 3,000 to 10,000)
- Accessible Rural (with a population of less than 3,000)
- Remote Rural (with a population of less than 3,000)

Note:
Accessible Areas are defined as those areas that are within a 30 minute drive time from the centre of a Settlement with a population of 10,000 or more, while Remote Areas have a drive time which is greater than 30 minutes.

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Scottish Government GI Science & Analysis Team, August 2010, Job 4623 - KT

Scottish NRN: 2008-13

Overarching aim is "*to connect rural Scotland in all its diversity to promote economic growth and community development*".

Scottish NRN:2008-13

Action Plan:

- Operational Phase 1: Nov 2008 - May 2009
- Operational Phase 2: June 2009 - October 2011
- Operational Phase 3: November 2011 – 2013

Key activities:

Website Regional events National events

Budget: £250 -£300k per annum

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Scottish NRN: 2008 -13

No baseline, No targets, however….
Key Performance Indicators developed:

Website: visits, % new visits, user submissions, user registrations, newsletter opt-ins, support incidents raised, projects added, new consultations, social media activity, content, countries.

Regional events: number of events, numbers attending, sectoral spread, demographics, user registrations, event delivery and evaluation.

National events: Numbers attending, event evaluation,

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Scottish NRN: 2008 -13

Website and social media:

- 310,000 visits to the website since launch in 2009 (5,300 per month)
- 8,000 separate items of news and information published
- 5,000 channel views on YouTube
- 2,800 Twitter followers
- 2,500 subscribers to weekly newsletter

Events and visits:

- 20 regional events in 2009/10 involving 1,005 participants
- 17 project visits with 149 people
- National networking events on 10 separate themes with 800 people
- Involvement and support at various other events, such as the annual Scottish LEADER conference

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Scottish NRN: 2008-13
SRDP Mid term evaluation

- very considerable problems with the availability, accessibility, consistency and quality of financial and physical monitoring and reporting data across the SRDP and its constituent elements to support the process of on-going evaluation.

- a lack of a coherent, comprehensive, systematic or adequately resourced approach.

- impacts on the evaluator's ability to…draw meaningful evidence based conclusions and recommendations.

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SNRN Evaluation

Commissioned early 2013, Rural Development Company awarded contract.

" to determine how effective the existing SNRN…activities have been in achieving their aims and objectives in meeting key stakeholder needs"

"Stronger focus on the SNRN and its role in the 2014-20 SRDP"

- Desk-based analysis – review of key info, including the NRN Action Plan, quarterly reports, web statistics and Key Performance Indicators for both SNRN contracts.
- In-depth Interviews – 11 SG staff, 26 external stakeholders 6 reps from other UK and European Networks.
- Online survey - 346 responses received from broad range of rural constituents including community groups, third sector organisations, LAGs and businesses.
- Workshop - wide range of rural stakeholder explored different delivery models that could be used in the future.

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SNRN evaluation Lessons learnt

- Planning – where am I now, where do I want to be?
- Governance – strong leadership from a range of rural actors
- You are not alone – co-create, co-operate and liberate
- Legacy – its about outcomes
- Money – makes things possible
- Its about humans not hits?

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Thank You!

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- **SRDP Mid Term evaluation:**
  http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/21113609/12
- **Summary report: www.ruralgateway.org.uk/en/node/8510**
- **Independent evaluation:**
  www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00439469.pdf
- **Scottish RDP public consultation:**
  www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0044/00440079.pdf **(pages 86-90)**

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