SAC Consulting are seeking applicants to apply for a place on the Scottish Enterprise Rural Leadership Programme. This updated Information Note provides the general information plus additional detail on the programme events.

We are holding three information evenings for potential applicants, and from past experience can pretty well guarantee that when you hear from graduates you will be hooked and keen to obtain a place on the programme. Dates and venues are:

All meetings 7.30 – 9.30pm

• Thursday 25th February – Pentland Suite, Queensferry Hotel (north side of Forth Road Bridge), KY111HP

• Wednesday 2nd March – Glen Garioch Room, Thainstone Centre, nr Inverurie, AB515X2

• Thursday 3rd March - Fenwick Hotel, near Kilmarnock, (Junction 8, M77), KA36AU

Who should apply?

• Are you an ambitious farmer, rural business manager or employee involved in running or working in a small to medium sized business in Scotland?

• Are you looking to develop your leadership skills and grow your business?

• Do you want to do something to help develop your sector?

• Are you too busy to take time off to develop your skills?

If your answers are yes, then Scottish Enterprise’s Rural Leadership Programme is absolutely right for you. Join us by applying for a place on the ninth run of a programme that will have a total of 424 graduates by March this year.

Previous applicants have included farmers, farm managers, farm shops, tourism enterprises, outdoor activities, estate managers, renewables businesses, auctioneers, vets, supply trade, feed companies, meat processors, food supply chain, machinery rings, agricultural consultants, chartered surveyors, solicitors, accountants and many more. This diversity of participants adds an extra dimension to the programme and leads to fantastic networking opportunities.
Feedback and benefits

Feedback on recent programmes has been excellent and impact of this group of highly motivated rural leaders has been recognised by government and other rural institutions. However the real impact has been the significant transformation of many graduates businesses.

Here are some of the benefits reported by participants:
- gaining the confidence to make bold decisions
- taking a step back to concentrate on leading as well as managing
- changing roles and delegating to others
- resolving family issues that hold businesses back
- taking on an important role within the sector
- lobbying parliament to change legislation

It is all about unlocking your potential and building your capacity to help you be the best you can be.

The Programme

SAC Consulting and First Eclipse Consulting are facilitating the 2015-16 SERLP and are looking to recruit 45 applicants for 13 days of activities between late October 2016 and March 2017. These include;
- Leadership coaching workshops
- One to one Business Focus Sessions
- Team working on “Apprentice style” innovation projects
- Effective Communications workshop to sharpen up your media skills
- Learning journeys to Edinburgh, Brussels and London parliaments
- A fantastic opportunity to network with other like-minded, ambitious people during the programme and through joining previous graduates at events.

Applications, eligibility and costs

We are looking for a total of 45 applicants across the Scottish Enterprise area initially forming 3 regional groups around North East, East and South East and South West Scotland, then joining one large group for the Innovation Workshop and Learning Journeys.

Eligibility – applicants should be based and work in the Scottish Enterprise area (excludes Highlands and Islands). Priority will be given to those involved in small to medium sized rural enterprises.

Places may be available for those working for larger organisations for a higher entry fee.

Participants fee – the bulk of the costs are covered by Scottish Enterprise with participant fees set at £820+VAT. (Described by many programme graduates as “the best £800 we have ever spent”). We have had to make a small increase to the fee for 2016-17 to cover rising costs.

To apply for this year’s Programme, or to have a discussion about eligibility, please contact Elspeth Burnie, SAC Consulting on 01738 636611, or e-mail elspeth.burnie@sac.co.uk

Applications must be submitted by 10th September 2015.

Previous programmes have been oversubscribed and we find we are continually raising the bar in our selection process.
Detailed Programme Information

Programme Format
The programme will be delivered through a series of modules and learning journeys starting in the last week of October 2016 and finishing with a final Awards Conference in March 2017. Each of the three groups will have their own dedicated facilitator who will act as a point of contact throughout the programme. Your first three meetings will be delivered to regional groups of 15 participants with the whole group meeting up for subsequent events. Dates are currently provisional and will be firmed up by September.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Format and Duration</th>
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<tr>
<td>Welcome and Introduction</td>
<td>1 One day workshop – late October</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership Skills Workshop</td>
<td>1 Two day workshop – November</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective Communications</td>
<td>1 One day workshop – early December</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Innovation Workshop</td>
<td>1 Two day workshop – mid January*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edinburgh and Scottish Parliament</td>
<td>1 Two day workshop – late January*</td>
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<td>Learning Journeys to Brussels and Westminster</td>
<td>1 Three day visit – early February or early March trips*</td>
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<td>Coaching – organised locally</td>
<td>3 Individual (60min) sessions with coach</td>
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<td>Closing Conference and Awards Ceremony</td>
<td>1 One day conference – early March</td>
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*This event involves an overnight stay – attendance is compulsory

Introductory workshop
A welcome from Scottish Enterprise and the facilitators and an opportunity for group members to get to know each other in a relaxed and informal environment. We will present an overview of the Scottish Rural Economy. The day will also includes an introductory session from facilitators and David Pike, First Eclipse Consulting, where you will be encouraged to think about your ambitions, aspirations and audacious goals for you and your business!

Leadership Skills Workshops
This workshop is designed to identify your leadership strengths and build on them to become a leader who makes a significant contribution to rural Scotland. This 2 day workshop includes creating clear and concise goals that align your talents to a leadership style that really makes a difference. These two days will help you discover what you believe about your own capability, look at what is limiting your potential and develop your emotional intelligence. The workshop is challenging fun and innovative while at the same time being practical and highly focused. You will learn how to get successful outcomes for you and your business by gaining personal confidence, having those challenging conversations, influencing others and increasing your ability to lead people and work effectively with others. There is also an opportunity to build your network with previous participants over dinner.

Rural Innovation Workshop
An inspiring and creative two day workshop focusing on key economic opportunities for growth in the rural sector. You will be allocated a team in an “Apprentice Style” format and will be asked to develop a project idea that adds value to the energy, tourism or food and drink sectors, which you will pitch to a “Dragons Den” type panel. This years overall winner was “Mobile Milk” a mobile milk processing service, with runners up “Energy One Scotland” a biomass renewable project, and “Inside Out” a rural activity park with disabled facilities. We also have a strong team working theme running through this workshop.
Learning Journey to Holyrood, Edinburgh
The journey to Holyrood and Edinburgh will comprise a tour of the Scottish Parliament, meetings with MSPs relevant to your area, members of committees and successful lobbyists. You will gain an understanding of how the Parliament and the Scottish Government works and learn how easy it is to interact with MSP’s for the benefit of your business or sector. The workshop also provides an opportunity to meet with senior officials from Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish Government and discuss the opportunities and challenges faced by the rural economy in Scotland. An engaging two days meeting some of the key players in public office.

Learning Journey to Brussels and Westminster
The three day, two night, learning journey to Brussels and London is for many a highlight of the programme and sees participants fly from Edinburgh to Brussels for visits organised by Scotland Europa to gain an insight into the workings of MEPs, the European Parliament and Commission, as well as presentations from several organisations representing Scotland’s and the UK’s interests in Brussels. The group then travels to London to visit the Houses of Parliament, meeting MPs and representatives of the House of Lords. Again the outcome is to gain an understanding of how parliaments work and how individuals or groups can influence decision making. The travelling time and overnights provide an excellent opportunity to get to know your fellow participants and learn about their businesses.

Effective Communications
This one day workshop incorporates two key areas – Media and Social Networking. We start with a newspaper journalist and learn how to use the press to advantage and follow this with a discussion on best use of social media which is becoming an increasingly important business promotion tool. Our TV and radio media session is led by former BBC presenter Ken Rundle, now Senior Communications Officer with SRUC and the session will prepare participants with the knowledge required to deal effectively with the media. Participants will be asked to prepare for interviews on a subject of their choice and get feedback on how they performed.

Individual Coaching Sessions
One-to-one coaching with First Eclipse is undertaken confidentially and provides participants with the leadership skills they need to succeed and take clear, courageous, confident steps to reach their objectives. These conversations are focused, targeted to your circumstances and significantly accelerate leadership development. They are not a cosy chat! rather a exploration with your personal leadership coach into accelerating your growth as a leader. These sessions have been very successful in giving participants the encouragement and knowledge they need to reach their goals.

Personal Growth Ambitions
A key strand throughout the programme – from beginning to end – will be an individual action plan containing an audacious goal developed alongside the Leadership workshop with input from First Eclipse Consulting. Your action plans will focus on specific areas around personal, organisational, business and wider rural engagement focusing on individual ambitions and aspirations.