



**UHI MILLENNIUM INSTITUTE  
STRATEGIC DELIVERY BODY**

**ANNUAL UPDATE**

**2010**

**HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS ERDF & ESF CONVERGENCE PROGRAMMES  
2007-2013**



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## I PROGRESS TO DATE

The SDB Phase 1 ERDF and ESF programmes have continued to deliver key strategic outputs for over the past year, supporting economic development in the Highlands & Islands as well as contributing towards the development of a new university for the region, with a decision on full university title imminent.

Many EU targets have already been achieved or are well on their way to completion; the vast majority will be reached during 2011. There are 41 Phase 1 SDB projects in total, of which 24 are now complete; a small number of activities will continue into 2012.

Phase 1 projects will be largely completed during 2011; a comprehensive account of the achievements and impacts will be provided in the next Annual Report.

There have been continuing queries over eligibility and compliance in a number of areas, which has affected the spend profile in ESF in particular, however useful progress has been made in terms of managing the process.

It has also been difficult to adapt to the new system and phasing of desk checks alongside audit visits to fit in with the progress report and claim cycle, but the process is easing as time goes on, with many lessons learnt feeding into development of Phase 2 plans.

On geographical coverage, there are SDB projects supporting every UHI academic partner across the Highlands & Islands, with many of the learning centres in more remote and island communities also benefiting.

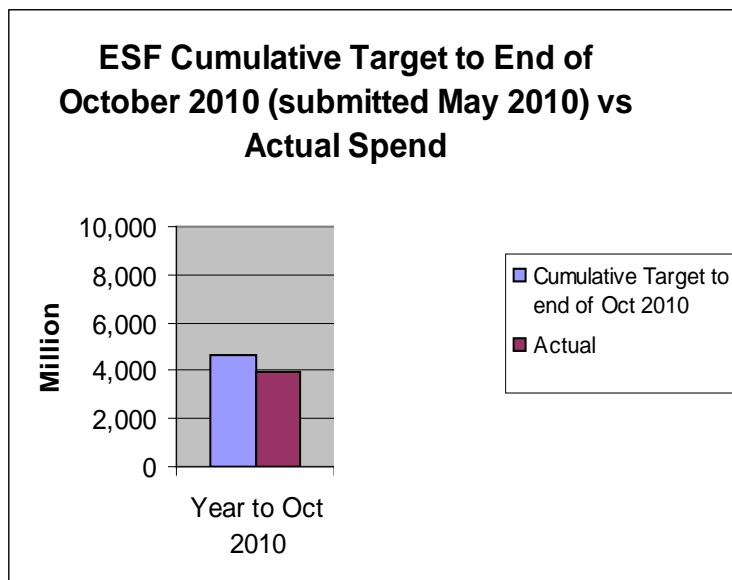
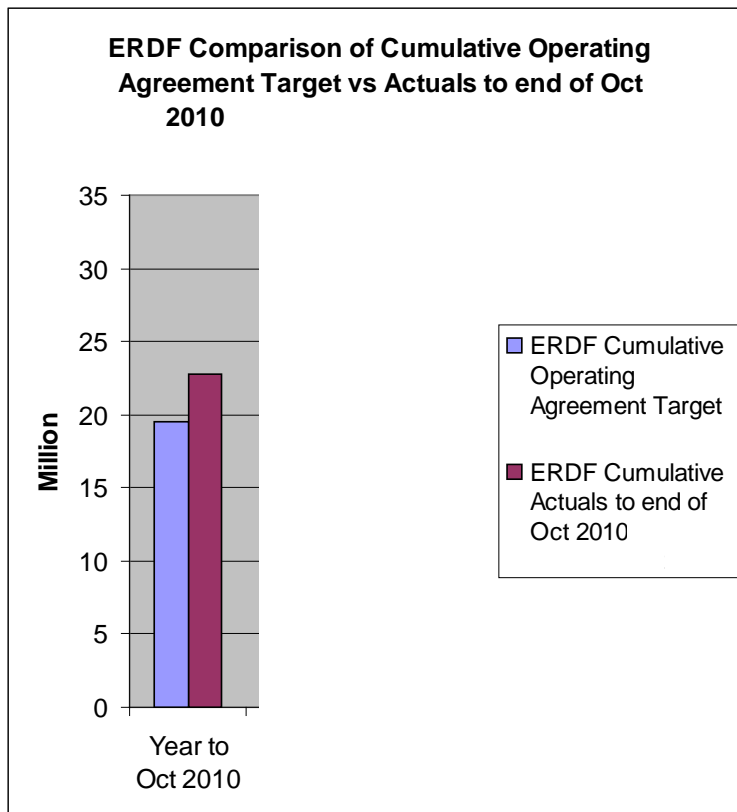
Increased participation and disability access have been particularly evident in curriculum development and learner support projects, whilst the new infrastructure projects have adopted high standards in terms of environmental sustainability and energy efficiency.

## II FINANCE

All Phase 1 funding was committed to individual projects during the first 2 years of the SDB. However, spend has lagged behind commitment due to delays with match funding, on-going queries on eligibility of activities and compliance.

	<b>TOTAL SPEND TO DATE</b>	<b>GRANT CLAIMED TO DATE</b>	<b>PHASE 1 ALLOCATION</b>
<b>ERDF</b>	£22,836,112	£9,134,000 (40% intervention rate)	£12,293,000
<b>ESF</b>	£3,916,740	£1,958,000 (50% intervention rate)	£4,098,000

ERDF spend is ahead of current target, whereas ESF remains behind target:



(Note – these figures are based on the most recent information available and represent the total amount in the system at present for Claim 13, Aug-Oct 2010, but are subject to further internal UHI and HIPP desk checks.)

### III ERDF PROJECT PROGRESS

The SDB ERDF Plan operates through the following programmes:

- Research capacity
- Learning infrastructure
- IT infrastructure

The **Research capacity programme** is generally making good progress, with some developments of international significance.

Some outstanding results have been achieved in the four energy projects. Greenspace has created a first class facility for numerical and physical modeling of energy systems related to low carbon buildings and communities. The Maree project at the Environmental Research Institute (ERI) in Thurso is now starting to gain momentum after a relatively late start, and much has been achieved in short time. Wave and tidal modeling, based on newly acquired data from the Pentland Firth and from a newly established weather station on the Island of Stroma, is now developing well. These two teams are now able to work together to support Hebridean and Highland renewable energy developments and are close to achieving some national funding success in marine energy among others. Closely related to these projects, ERI and the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) are delivering not only a new cadre of trained supervisors and PGRAs in marine energy, but also a high quality programme of research in the Supergen project. The Renewable Energy Co-ordination Unit is providing excellent knowledge and market support, and strong business development leadership.

In life sciences, the Lipidomics team is now well established and has already attracted attention nationally and internationally. Their state of the art facilities are second to none in the UK, and now complete an integrative physiology capability in UHI, which in combination with the Highland Clinical Research facility, form a real national asset for biomarker and diagnostics research in diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular diseases. The expanded team at the Centre for Rural Health continues to deliver world class research in rural health care, and is now able to create not only highly respected theory and evidence for policy support, but also practical and tested options for innovative community delivery grounded almost uniquely in strong community engagement.



New mass spectrometer in use for the Lipidomics project

Lastly the Environmental Geophysics project is making good progress in a range of applications of their new capabilities, covering assessments prior to windfarm and transmission cable installations, sites threatened by coastal and dune system erosion, sites of international renown such as Iona Abbey and WW2 naval sites. The unit is integrating well with the wider archaeology research at Orkney College and together form an outstanding academic and commercial capability.

Phase 1 of the ERDF funding for **learning infrastructure** is now in the final stages of delivery. Overall, the programme of activity has delivered all outputs on time and on budget. The two very large construction projects at Dunstaffnage and Oban, Argyll and in Thurso are due for completion by end of November 2010.

The new enlarged teaching building for Argyll College in Oban was completed and opened for the new academic year 2010/11 providing a showcase for UHI in terms of the facilities and technology available for students to support their learning.

The SAMS teaching laboratories at Dunstaffnage are nearing completion and will provide best in class facilities for teaching students at both undergraduate and post graduate levels. These facilities will allow SAMS to develop excellence in teaching linked to the world class research in marine science already carried out by the institution.



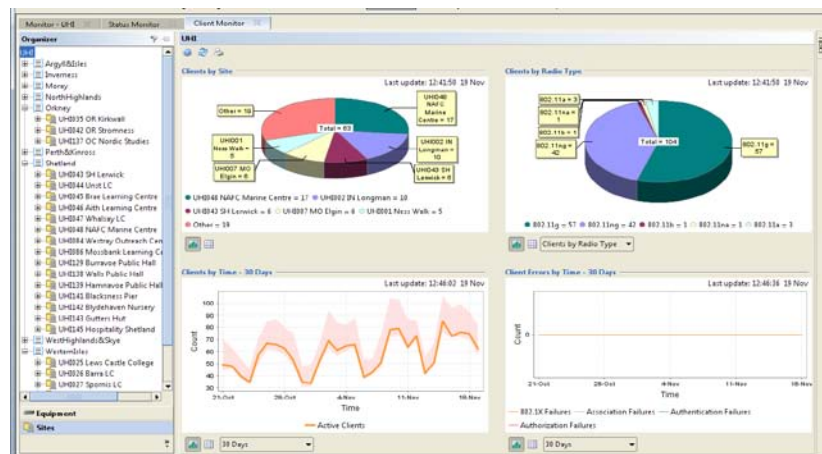
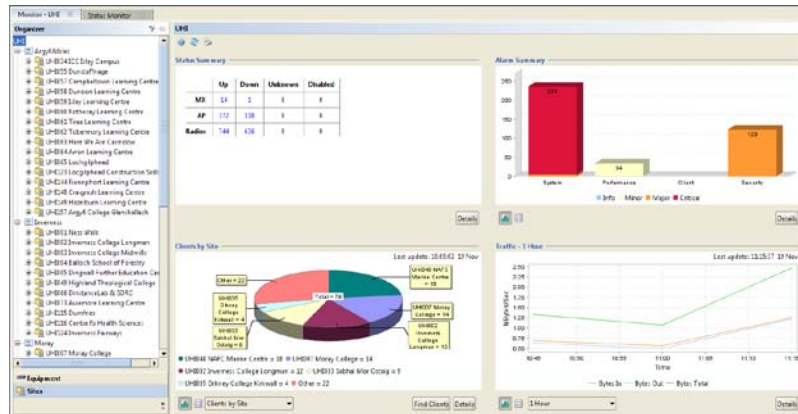
The facility, to be called the Sheina Marshall building (pictured above), is due to be opened by HRH Duke of Gloucester on Monday, 29 November 2010 and will be immediately in use for a major conference on marine science that afternoon!

Similarly the Centre for Energy and Environment at Thurso will facilitate leading research based on the increased activity in the renewable energy sector in the Highlands, especially in the Pentland Firth. This facility will be an exemplar in environmental sustainability as it is expected to achieve the highest BREEAM rating achieved by a building in such a northerly location.

Tremendous progress has been made in the **IT infrastructure programme**, which is almost complete, improving the quality and capacity of IT connections and facilities for teaching and support purposes. This project has already made a significant difference to staff and students in all partner colleges and learning centres.

For example, the new UHI NGN Wi-Fi system, supplied by Trapeze Networks and installed by QoLcom Ltd, provides ubiquitous and consistent access to Wi-Fi for staff, students and visitors throughout the UHI estate.

A single online Trapeze RingMaster management console allows the whole UHI Wi-Fi system to be efficiently monitored and managed, just as if UHI were a single campus.



The Wi-Fi system uses Trapeze wireless access points. Over 600 of these units are deployed at over 100 sites throughout the UHI network.

UHI NGN sites range from larger campuses down to the smallest learning centres, all connected by the UHI NGN data network.

Users can roam between access points within a campus, and can access the system at any campus.

The ubiquitous Wi-Fi network increases the capacity of the physical estate, for example allowing students to use the refectory as a study area out with mealtimes, or to access learning materials as easily from lecture theatres and seminar rooms as from the learning resource centre – or even to study under a tree in the grounds!

## IV ESF PROJECT PROGRESS

The SDB ESF Plan operates through the following programmes:

- Academic development
- Wider access
- Culture & heritage

**Academic development** projects consist of developing new course materials for the curriculum offer across the UHI network, building up the amount of courses available online at a greater number of colleges and learning centres, as well as providing substantial added value for the staff involved in their development.

There are 18 new course development projects involved and the following have been completed as at the end of October 2010:

- Gaelic & Related Studies
- BA Tourism and Hospitality Practice
- BA Business Management
- BA Adventure Tourism Management
- Business Streams & Enterprise
- BSc Oral Health Science
- MA Health & Wellbeing
- MSc Infection Control & Medical Devices Decontamination
- HNC Social Care
- HNC Health Care
- Health Self Management No Level Available
- BA Childhood Practice
- MSc Sustainability Studies
- BSc Sustainable Construction

The following will complete at end November 2010:

- BSc Psychology
- Engineering Scheme

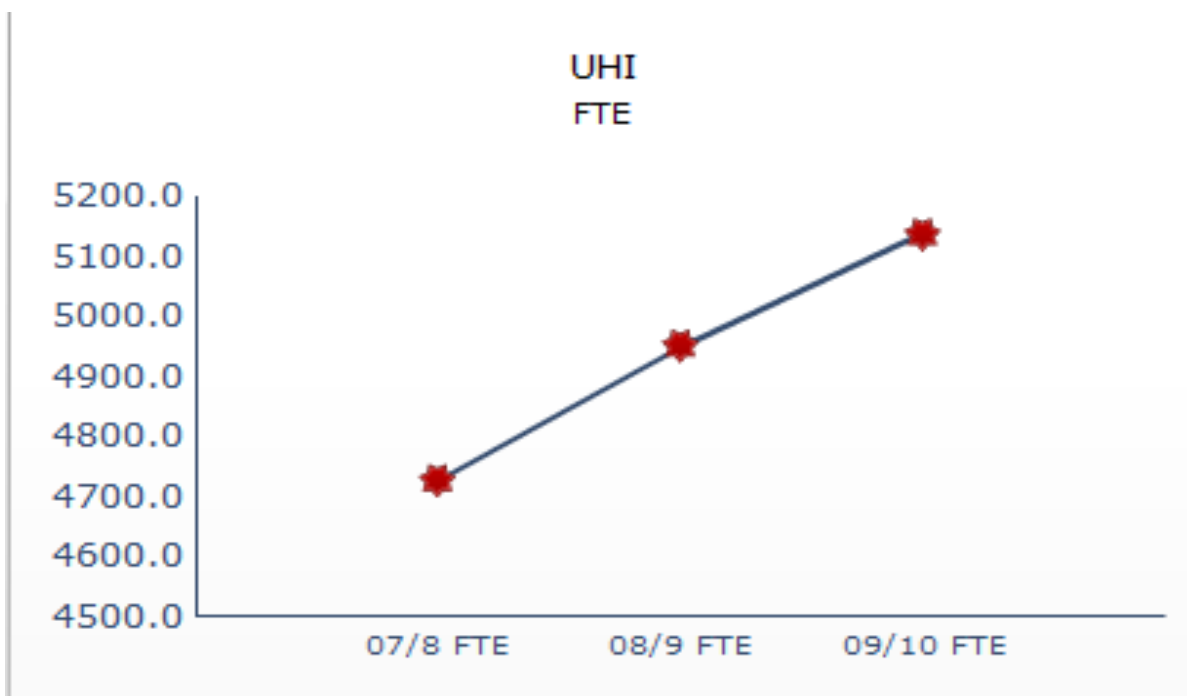
All are going through or have completed the validation process, which must be completed before a course may be offered to students; the net result of the SDB investment is a considerable increase in the curriculum offer already available across the UHI network.

Once all courses have been fully developed and validated, detailed analysis of the impact on student numbers will be undertaken and documented in the SDB Annual Plan 2011.

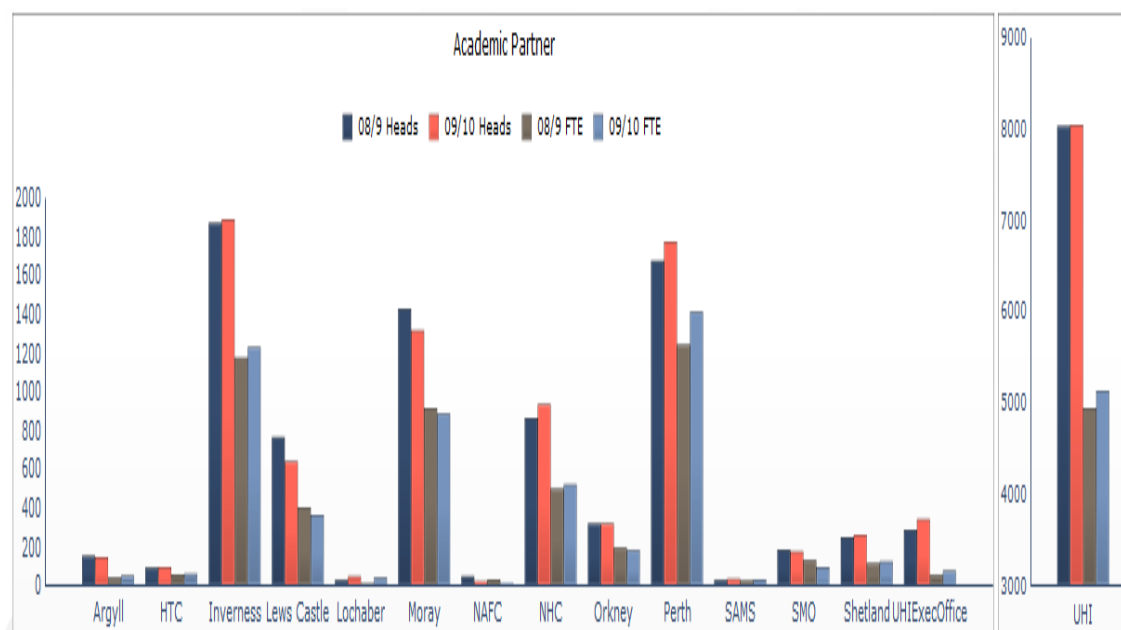
However, the impact of new course provision is already being demonstrated in increased student numbers across the network, leading to a better-qualified labour market and stronger viability for UHI longer-term.

Numbers in terms of head count and FTEs for higher education participation have been rising steadily since the start of the SDB, due in part to increase course provision, learner support, wider access promotion and improvement of IT connectivity, all funded through the SDB:

Academic Partner	2008/9		2009/10	
	Heads	FTE	Heads	FTE
Aravll	157	45.1	151	54.9
HTC	96	60.6	99	63.0
Inverness	1871	1176.8	1890	1231.5
Lews Castle	767	406.3	645	367.7
Lochaber	31	15.6	52	45.8
Morav	1431	918.9	1320	891.0
NAFC	52	36.0	25	17.0
NHC	867	501.7	939	525.2
Orknev	322	199.7	324	186.0
Perth	1677	1246.4	1776	1413.2
SAMS	31	30.5	38	36.5
SMO	189	133.8	180	99.6
Shetland	252	118.2	266	126.8
UHExecOffice	293	58.6	346	80.2
<b>UHI</b>	<b>8036</b>	<b>4948.0</b>	<b>8051</b>	<b>5138.2</b>



These increases can also be demonstrated at individual academic partner level:



In **wider access**, there has also been a considerable amount of activity during the year, with all project posts now recruited and much work underway to catch up on targets.

The Widening Mainstream and Career Confidence projects have met all target milestones and outcomes and do not anticipate any slippage occurring before completion over coming months.. Specific areas of development have included 19 members of staff being trained as career coaches from across the network, undertaking one to one sessions with students, ensuring that students in the more remote areas receive an equitable service.

A new e-guidance service is now in place and available through the Career Centre website; this includes access for graduates up to one year after completion of studies.

Continuing professional development sessions have been run at Lewis Castle College, North Highland College and at the LEARN Conference, which provided an opportunity for staff from across the network to meet and discuss new learning methodologies.

In Widening Mainstream, a series of sessions will be held over the coming months at each academic partner. The progression and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) materials being developed have been tailored towards under represented groups. The progression booklet under development has specific sections on progressing from college further education courses, while the RPL materials encourage those without formal qualifications to apply for entry to UHI using experience gained in the workplace.

The student mentors received their training in Inverness in August and a total of fifteen mentors have now been trained.

These figures are extremely encouraging and represent a good level of engagement for a new project. Looking beyond the numbers, it is encouraging to see the level of commitment and enthusiasm from both mentors and mentees. The group of mentors are very enthusiastic about helping their fellow students, while many of the mentees have said they are grateful that this kind of support has been made available.

The retention and progression special interest group continues to meet on a regular basis; in addition the monthly news email to staff has also been further developed with a more professional format and an increased distribution list.

**Culture and heritage** has also seen further activity throughout the year at the UHI Centre for History and Centre for Centre for Nordic Studies, concentrating on the economic impact through the relationship with the emerging creative industries sector.

## **V SDB PHASE 2 DEVELOPMENT**

Discussions have taken place with the IAB and Managing Authority on the second phase of the SDB, in a scenario substantially different to that for Phase 1.

The economic context is vastly changed, less money is available due to the front-loading of the SDB programme and valuable lessons have been learnt in managing the SDB process.

A new approach will be adopted for Phase 2, focusing attention on a smaller number of strategic priority areas.

For ERDF, activities will be limited to support for the new Beechwood Campus in Inverness, providing services for tertiary education across the UHI network, and limited activity to build up numbers studying at post graduate level to further research capacity in priority regional sectors.

In ESF, there has been detailed negotiation over the current spending constraints which have resulted in slow progress towards SDB spend targets, resulting in a re-focusing of activity around greater networking across the region, so that greater numbers of courses will be available at a larger number of sites. All Phase 2 ESF activity will be in this area, under one comprehensive project – ‘Curriculum for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (C21C).

SDB Phase 2 ESF activity will align with the UHI Challenge Fund Priority 2 project, delivering courses which have been developed with ESF SDB Phase 1 investment. This project (UHI; Investing in Recovery) was developed in conjunction with a similar initiative in the LUPS area being lead by the Scottish Funding Council and negotiations are underway to develop a funding methodology which will simplify structures and reporting procedures for large initiatives of this kind. Both are in response to economic recovery plans to support greater numbers of students through the next few years, when job opportunities will be scarce, as well as preparing a better-qualified labour market for the future economic up-turn.

Lessons learnt from the experience of the first phase of the SDB will also inform discussions on simplification for future programming post 2013.