

Project Title: EU Information, Intelligence & Advisory Service to Shetland Islands Council

BACKGROUND

From 1994 to 2004, AB Associates provided a comprehensive European Affairs service to Shetland Islands Council.

METHODOLOGY AND OUTPUT

The main components of the service included: -

1. Information and Intelligence Service. This involved monitoring the proceedings of EU institutions, providing briefing papers, servicing Council and other meetings, undertaking research on specific issues and disseminating information throughout the Council and to other local bodies and industries. Close links were maintained with individuals in the relevant departments and institutions.
2. Securing the maximum possible funds for Shetland. This included representing the Council on a range of committees concerning the preparation, management, monitoring and evaluation of Structural Fund programmes; also preparing funding applications and supporting cases for funding for mainstream programmes and Community Initiatives; and producing strategies. Around £40m of EU money has been levered into Shetland over this period as a result of these efforts.
3. Developing links and alliances. The main focus of work here was supporting the Council input into the CPMR, North Sea Commission and Islands Commission, plus servicing thematic groups on fisheries and maritime safety. This has involved undertaking research, preparing briefing papers, speeches for politicians, presentations at conferences and at the highest levels in Europe, e.g. on reform of the Common Agriculture Policy and Common Fisheries Policy. A further aspect of work was maintaining links with other networks, e.g. Islenet, and getting partners and funding for Interreg projects.
4. Protecting Shetland's interest. This involved supporting lobbying efforts at Scottish, UK and EU levels on a range of subjects such as regional policy, state aids, rural development, fisheries, maritime safety, and agriculture.



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