



Icons Branding

Objectives

The 'Icons Branding' project brings together a partnership representing 'The Moffat Centre' – Lead Partner (Glasgow Caledonian University), South Lanarkshire Council, East Lothian Council and Napier University. The project will target new businesses within rural South Lanarkshire and East Lothian and develop cultural tourism to enhance regional GDP and new business activity. The project will assess whether and how local and national iconic features can be identified, valued and adapted effectively to support new business development.



Activities

- Appointment of a Project Officer
- Development of a suitable methodology to research the potential use of iconic branding in the business development process that is transferable to other European areas
- Recommendation of whether or not icons representing each area can be used to develop businesses and improve their survival rate, and to increase levels of entrepreneurship and market businesses to the local and wider community
- Identification and development of suitable businesses in each council area to participate in training and other development opportunities
- Assessment of the existing performance of these businesses and setting of individual indicators of assessment to facilitate measurable evaluation
- Customising a business development programme to integrate the findings from the icons branding research
- Delivering appropriate group and one-to-one training sessions to these new businesses and monitoring their impact
- Undertaking project assessment in consultation with project partners and participating businesses.



Outcomes

- Development of a methodology for the potential use of iconic branding in the business development process that is transferable to other European areas
- Testing this methodology as a potential tool to develop businesses and improve their survival rate, increase levels of entrepreneurship and market businesses to the local and wider community



Strategic Significance and Mainstreaming

This research based project has potential significance for Scotland and the wider European Community in working to develop a technique to stimulate business creation in areas of disadvantage. Findings are being shared with transnational partners in Germany and Spain.





Findings to date

New small businesses located in distressed rural areas face particular challenges that threaten profitability and sustainability. Poor area image can overshadow positive aspects of the locality and hinder market potential. For this reason marketing and promotion have significant roles to play in raising the profile of the area and helping improve business performance. For small businesses a collective effort through partnership working can offer significant business opportunities to help achieve economies of scale.

Progress to date

The first phase of the project set out to define what was meant by 'heritage icons' and to explore in detail both regions to identify which unique heritage icons had greatest marketing potential and relevance. Research also identified that 'icons' have been used by businesses located in other rural settings.

Ten tourism related businesses located in South Lanarkshire have been working with the Icons Branding team to test whether local heritage icons can be used to help improve their business performance. One-to-one business review interviews have been carried out and group activities have taken place. These involved a learning journey including a presentation focusing on local heritage, and tours of two major iconic sites in South Lanarkshire (New Lanark World Heritage Site and Chatelherault Country Park and Visitor Centre). The group also discussed how the project intends to progress and how icons can facilitate a range of partnership working opportunities between the businesses themselves and with the iconic heritage sites which will continue to be included as part of the training programme.

