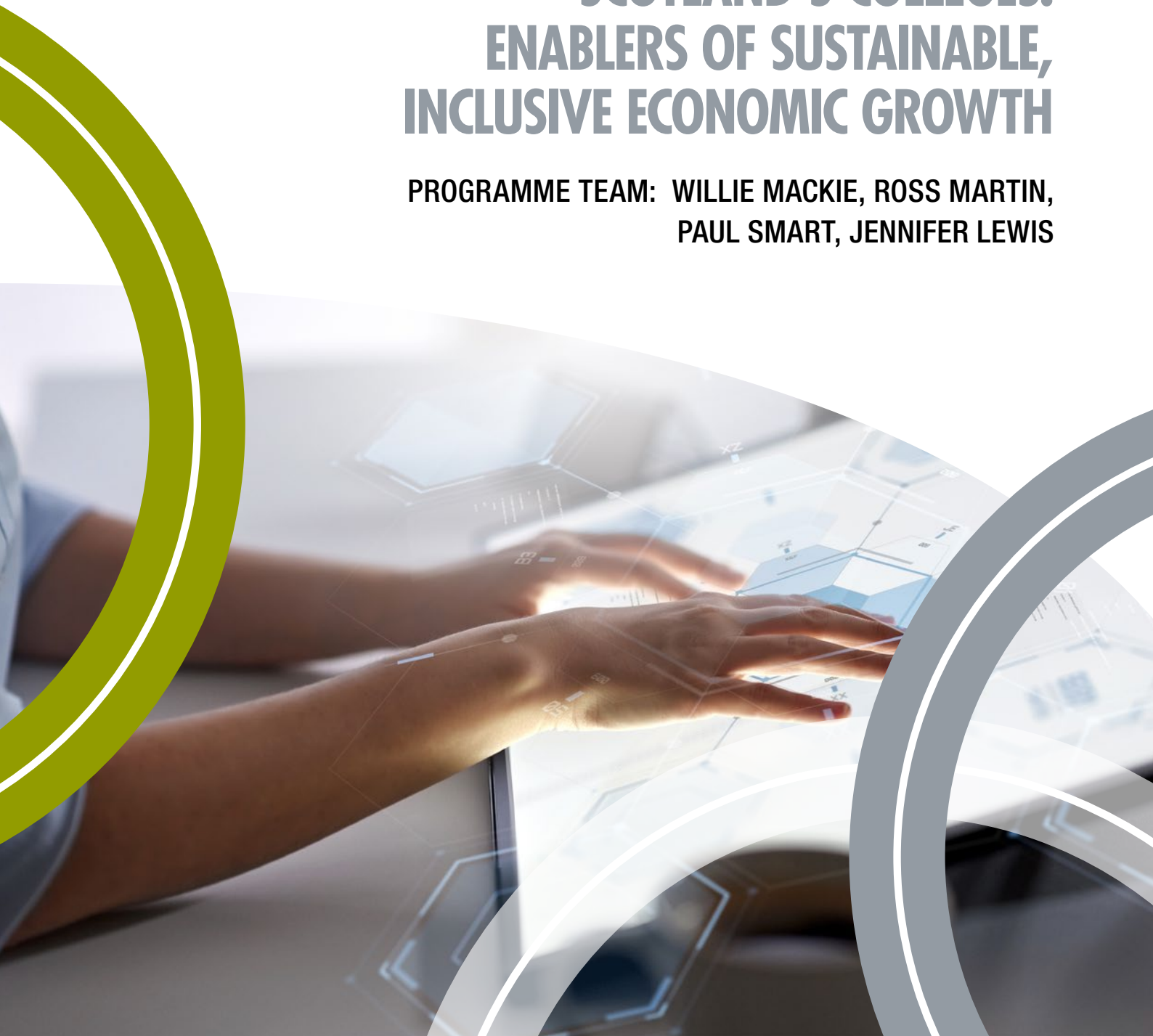


PHASE 1 SUMMARY REPORT

SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES: ENABLERS OF SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

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Summary

We agreed with CDN that the outcome of the programme should be that:

➤ **“Scotland’s Colleges are playing a leading role in the design and delivery of regional economic strategies and are enabling inclusive economic recovery and renewal by closely aligning their purpose to meeting the rapidly evolving needs of learners and employers.”**

Programme Objectives

1. Work with up to six College Regions to understand their role in supporting regional economic recovery and shaping economic renewal.
2. Facilitate College-led engagement with Regional Economic Partnerships.
3. Highlight and promote colleges’ role in design and delivery of Regional Economic Strategies.
4. Support colleges to develop impact-focussed action plans for their engagement in delivery of regional economic recovery and renewal.
5. Work with CDN to develop sector-wide best practice knowledge sharing, case studies, learning and leadership development.

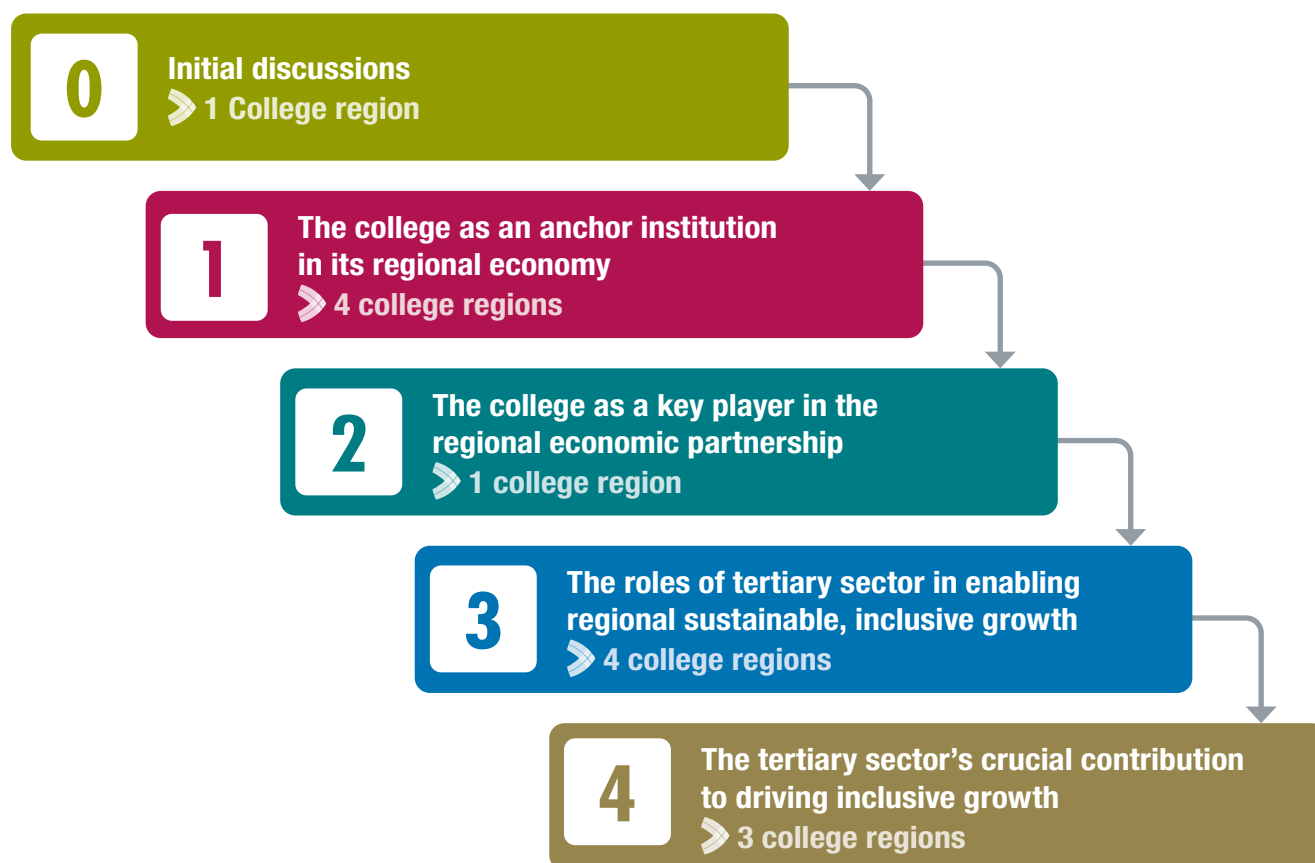
Programme Delivery

We actively engaged with all 13 College Regions working with Principals, their SLTs and in several cases their chairs and boards. We facilitated: senior leadership team workshops, Board strategy days, stakeholder mapping and engagement planning, college-led multi-agency summits.

In particular we applied lines of inquiry with colleges with the aim of promoting participant self-reflection framed by themes of our diagnostic tool, i.e. Subsidiarity; Outcomes; Consortia, to establish their understanding of their role as drivers of economic development, how they developed objectives to match this role and their level of confidence as partners in delivering regional economic strategies.

The level of our involvement with individual college regions was informed by the degree to which we had already progressed our work with them. This approach led us to develop very close working relations with five College Regions which are the subject of standalone case studies. These demonstrate the practical actions undertaken by them, drawing on our support, to progress their active involvement in regional economic renewal and transformation

We have categorised our level of involvement with each College Region by applying an ascending scale of engagement, with stages 1 and 2 being principally internal deliberations on the College’s role as a driver of economic development and stages 3 and 4 moving on to the College initiating multi-agency, cross sectoral working.



In addition to working with College Regions:

- We led the CDN Leadership and Governance Summit in April with a focus on colleges as drivers of regional economic renewal
- We worked closely with SDS as it reviewed its regional collaboration with tertiary sector and we have been developing close working relations with the SFC demonstrating the programme's alignment with its promotion of the Pathfinders.
- We continue to liaise regularly with senior Scottish Government officials in AL&S Directorate and Regional Economy Division as they develop policies impacting on our work with colleges.

Aligning the Programme with the National Context

We also conducted our work with colleges by setting out the importance of the developing national policy context within which regional economic development was taking place. Key developments included:

- National Strategy for Economic Transformation
- Resource Spending Review May '22
- Scottish and UK Governments funding for the Regions
- Scottish Government's Review of the Regional Economic Policy
- Phase 3 of SFC's review of tertiary education and SG's response

Summary Findings

There is no doubting colleges' commitment to enabling regional economic development as major players. They are demonstrating a willingness to meet changing demands for skills e.g. through agile and adaptable industrial partnerships.

Colleges are clearly demonstrating they can be catalysts/drivers/facilitators for regional multi-sector partnerships and therefore co-creators of their own operating environment. And there's a growing appetite for cross tertiary and inter-regional strategic collaboration across functioning economic geographies.

However, colleges continue to have concerns about the lack of effective region-wide strategic leadership and for the need for robust genuinely collaborative Regional Economic Strategies. There is also a commonly held view across the sector that the proliferation and fragmentation of discrete funding programmes across the operating environment continues to inhibit strategic planning for co-delivery.

There is also uncertainty about whether colleges are sitting at the right 'tables' with the attendant danger of duplication of effort and dissipation of impact compounded by constraints on organisational capacity and capability.

There remains the ongoing need to continue to deepen the appreciation by partners and stakeholders (both public, private, third sector) of our colleges' diverse contribution to economic recovery and renewal. Therefore, there is the need to build on existing active stakeholder engagement with key business players in regional economic transformation.

Next Steps

The Project now moves into Phase 2 which focuses on developing inter-regional and cross-tertiary collaboration between colleges.



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