

Working Towards the Convergence Programmes

Newsletter 1 – 20 September 2006

Introduction

Dear Colleague

why this newsletter?

This is the first of a fortnightly series of newsletters that will help explain the process and progression towards the Convergence programmes for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

This newsletter will contain the most up to date information about Convergence as it evolves over the coming months.

the role of Strategy and Action

Work is well underway on the development of 'Strategy and Action' – the overarching economic development strategy for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, 2007-2015. Strategy and Action will encompass the full range of economic regeneration activity necessary for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly – part of which will be appropriate for investment from the Convergence programmes and parts of which will be appropriate for other programmes, both UK and European.

rural and fish part of national programmes

Although the exact details of the Convergence programmes have yet to be finalised it is already clear that it will be different from Objective One. Rural and fisheries investment will be part of mainstream UK programmes.

There will be two funds working towards Convergence for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

ESF part of national programme

The European Social Fund (ESF) will be part of a national programme with a ring-fenced budget for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

ERDF Convergence specific to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Convergence Operational Programme will be specific for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The ERDF programme is likely to be more focussed on economically transformational activity looking specifically for significantly higher levels of sustainable wealth creation.

more information available

More detailed information, links to key organisations and websites can be found in the Towards Convergence section of the Objective One website www.objectiveone.com

Regards

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Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Partnership Office

on behalf of -- Cornwall County Council, Government Office for the South West, and South West Regional Development Agency
20 September 2006

What we know:

the current Objective One Programme

The investment cycle of the Objective One Programme runs until 31 December 2006. This will be followed by European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) Convergence programmes for the period 2007-2013. The purpose of the Convergence programmes will be to speed up the economic development of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

the role of Strategy and Action

Strategy and Action – the overarching economic regeneration strategy for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly -- will inform the ERDF and ESF Convergence programmes. The Convergence programmes will not be able to do everything that is included in Strategy and Action. They will be able to invest in some of it.

There will be a number of differences between the Objective One Programme and the Convergence programmes.

Convergence only ERDF and ESF

- Convergence will consist only of ERDF and the ESF
- It looks as though the financial split between ERDF and ESF could be as high as 50:50.

Rural and fish part of mainstream programmes

- The rural and fisheries funds will become part of mainstream UK programmes.

the Lisbon Agenda

European and UK economic regeneration policy is increasingly being driven by the Lisbon Agenda where the EU set itself the goal of becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world. It has been written by the EU and Member States in response to intensified competition from around the world.

Lisbon targets

The Convergence programmes will need to clearly show how they are contributing to the Lisbon Agenda – this will mean a significant increase in emphasis on business competitiveness and productivity, innovation and a more knowledge based economy.

There will be a target of at least 60% of the Convergence programmes to meet the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda.

What we don't know:

<i>who will manage the Programmes?</i>	<p>Although we know that there will be ERDF and ESF Convergence programmes for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly – the decision was made when the European Union's Member States agreed the EU budget in December 2005 – we still do not know the details of the programmes or the management arrangements. For Objective One, the role of Managing Authority for ERDF, ESF and EAGGF has been Government Office for the South West and the Marine Fisheries Agency for FIG.</p> <p>The Government's decisions are likely to be known in mid October when the responses to the consultation on the National Strategic Reference Framework are published.</p>
<i>what is the budget for Convergence?</i>	<p>As yet the details of the exact splits at a UK regional level are unclear however it does appear, from initial estimates, that Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will get a European budget of about one third more than the ERDF and ESF funds in the 2000-06 Objective One Programme.</p>

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