

## Newsletter 27: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2007

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This is part 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. The newsletters will contain the most up to date information about Convergence as it evolves over the coming months. **Updated information will appear in bold blue type.**

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**Dear Colleague**

### **UPDATE FROM THE MANAGING AUTHORITY**

- Positive feedback** Discussions with the European Commission on the revised draft of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Convergence Operational Programme continue – with informal feedback over the last week having been very positive and further formal feedback expected soon. In a parallel stream of work the national Implementing Provisions are in the process of being agreed between the department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the European Commission.
- Approval expected** Allowing for further minor redrafting, the Operational Programme is expected to be formally re-submitted to the European Commission, via CLG, in mid-October. (This draft will be made available on [www.southwestrda.org.uk](http://www.southwestrda.org.uk) and [www.objectiveone.com](http://www.objectiveone.com).) We anticipate that this will result in the Programme receiving formal approval at the end of November.
- Successful workshop** A successful workshop on the Programme's commissioning processes was held last week. We will be providing feedback over the next few weeks and this will also be made available in the 'Towards Convergence' section of the website [www.objectiveone.com](http://www.objectiveone.com).

**Phil McVey**  
**Director of European Programmes**  
**South West Regional Development Agency**



## WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT CONVERGENCE

<b>ERDF Operational Programme update</b>	<b>Following negotiations the Convergence ERDF Operational Programme for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly has been informally re-submitted to the European Commission, awaiting feedback. It is expected to be formally submitted for approval in mid-October and approved in late November. The draft Operational Programme can be found at <a href="http://www.objectiveone.com">www.objectiveone.com</a> under 'Towards Convergence'.</b>
Report on ERDF Convergence consultation	A report collating responses to last year's consultation on the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) Convergence Operational Programme has now been published. The responses informed the final draft of the Operational Programme which was submitted to the European Commission in May for negotiation. The consultation report can be found at <a href="http://www.objectiveone.com">www.objectiveone.com</a> under 'Towards Convergence'.
Management arrangements for Convergence ERDF	The South West Regional Development Agency will carry out Managing Authority tasks for the ERDF Convergence Programme. A 'shadow' Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) and 'shadow' Partnership Delivery Board (PDB) have been established.
Commissioning	To achieve a smaller number of more strategic investments, some will be commissioned. The commissioning process is being developed by the Partnership Delivery Board and the Programme Monitoring Committee.
Match Funding	Public sector match funding for the ERDF Convergence Programme is expected to come from a combination of local, regional and national sources.
ESF Operational Programme approved	The national ESF (European Social Fund) Operational Programme – which was submitted to the European Commission in May - has now been agreed. It includes a ring-fenced allocation of ESF investment and specific priorities for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The final version of the ESF Operational Programme can be found at <a href="http://www.esf.gov.uk">www.esf.gov.uk</a> .
<b>Management arrangements for Convergence ESF</b>	<b>The Managing Authority for the ESF Programme in England will be the European Social Fund Division (ESFD) of the Department for Work and Pensions supported in the region by Government Office for the South West. It has been agreed that a joint ESF / ERDF Programme Monitoring Committee will review the strategy and delivery of the Programme in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Delivery of ESF Convergence will take place at local level through the ESF Frameworks and co-financing plans overseen by the Regional Skills Partnership.</b>
Convergence ESF Framework	Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's ESF Convergence Framework has been developed by partners in Cornwall, including the South West Regional Development Agency, Cornwall County Council, the Learning Partnership, Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Economic Forum, the Trades Union Congress and the private sector. This Framework reflects the needs of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and has been informed by Strategy and Action and aligned with the Cornwall Local Area Agreement.  The final European Social Fund (ESF) Framework for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, outlining more detailed plans for ESF investment in the region, can be found at <a href="http://www.swrsp.org.uk">www.swrsp.org.uk</a> .

ESF Co-financing, tendering and procurement

Co-Financing Organisations' Plans had to be submitted to Government Office for the South West by the end of September for approval by October. Full details on the tendering and procurement processes can be found on the South West Learning & Skills Council and Department for Work & Pensions (Jobcentre Plus) websites; including dates and, in due course, the full tender specifications.

[www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/what\\_we\\_buy/notice\\_to\\_providers.asp](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/what_we_buy/notice_to_providers.asp)  
[www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/esf/esfupdates/](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/esf/esfupdates/)

European investment in the Convergence Programmes

	£	€
ERDF	c. £311.4 m	c. €458 m
ESF	c. £133.3 m	c. €196 m
Total investment	c. £444.7 m	c. €654 m

There is a 70:30 split between ERDF and ESF funding. In Objective One 75% was allocated to ERDF and 25% to ESF.

The Objective One Programme

The Objective One Programme ran until 31 December 2006 and will be followed by Convergence Programmes for the period 2007-2013. Their purpose will be to speed up the economic development of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Differences between Convergence and Objective One

- Convergence will consist only of ERDF and the ESF.
- The rural and fisheries funds will become part of mainstream UK programmes with ring-fenced allocations for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

NSRF published

The Convergence Programmes are underpinned by the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) which outlines broad priorities, management arrangements and funding allocations for ERDF and ESF Programmes 2007-2013. It can be found at: [www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/page28796.html](http://www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/page28796.html). The NSRF has now been approved by the European Commission and further information can be found at:

[www.europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1195&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en](http://www.europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1195&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en)

The role of Strategy and Action

Strategy and Action – the overarching economic regeneration strategy for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly - informs the ERDF and ESF Convergence Programmes, which will not be able to do everything in Strategy and Action, but will be able to invest in some of it.

**Rural Programme**

**The draft Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), outlining European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) investment 2007 to 2013, has been submitted to the European Commission for negotiation and can be found at [www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/rdp07\\_13/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/rdp07_13/index.htm). The rural programme in England has a budget of approximately £3.9bn and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly has an allocation of c. £55m (EU investment plus match-funding from Defra).**

**The revised Regional Implementation Plan, detailing investment plans for the South West and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, will soon be available from the South West Regional Development Agency's website, [www.southwestrda.org.uk](http://www.southwestrda.org.uk).**

**Pre-commissioning work has started to identify potential projects and, in**

**Cornwall, sector meetings have been arranged to ascertain industry needs and opportunities and to discuss potential support through the Rural Development Programme for England.**

**Axis 4 of the rural programme focuses on local action to improve quality of life and economic prosperity. An event to mark the launch of Local Action is scheduled for 1 November 2007 at Lanhydrock Golf and Country Club. For further information, please refer to: [www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/eafrd/community-led-develo.shtm](http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/eafrd/community-led-develo.shtm).**

**Additional information about the rural programme can be found at [www.objectiveone.com](http://www.objectiveone.com) under 'Towards Convergence'.**

**Fisheries Programme** Work is underway in the Marine Fisheries Agency (MFA) to develop a European Fisheries Fund (EFF) Operational Programme which will be subject to consultation before approval by the EU. A 'Convergence' allocation will guarantee a level of funding for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

**Further information** The European Cohesion Policy Update covers all Programmes: [www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/policy/european-funding-pos.shtm](http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/policy/european-funding-pos.shtm).

**Rural Programme:**  
[www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/eafrd/introduction.shtm](http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/eafrd/introduction.shtm)  
and [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk) under Rural Affairs.

**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, in response to intensified competition.

**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. The draft Operational Programme submitted to the European Commission suggests a target of c. 80% of the Convergence Programmes to meet the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda.

#### **WHAT WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT CONVERGENCE**

**What activities will be eligible for funding?** Detailed priorities for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are contained in the ERDF Operational Programme, which is in the final stages of development and negotiation with the European Commission.

**More detailed information about Convergence, links to key organisations and websites can be found in the 'Towards Convergence' section of the Objective One website [www.objectiveone.com](http://www.objectiveone.com).**