

Working Towards the Convergence Programmes

Newsletter 5: 10th November 2006

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 blue.](#)

Introduction

Dear Colleague

Consultation
Process for the
Convergence
ERDF
Operational
Programme

Within the next ten days the consultation on the draft Convergence ERDF Operational Programme (together with its Strategic Environmental Assessment) will be launched. This will give a 13 week period for people and organisations to comment on the content of the draft Operational Programme.

In addition to the draft Operational Programme being made available for comment and the consultation being launched in the press, a series of consultation meetings, led by the South West Regional Development Agency will be held with key stakeholders

The next Convergence Newsletter will go out at the launch of the consultation and contain a full pack of documents including the draft Operational Programme.

Yours sincerely

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on behalf of – Cornwall County Council, Government Office for the South West and South West Regional Development Agency

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What we know about Convergence

<i>ESF consultation</i>	On 30 th October the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) launched the consultation for the England ESF Programme 2007-13. The deadline for responses is 22 nd January 2007. Further information about the ESF consultation can be found at www.esf.gov.uk under the heading 'Future'.
<i>Convergence timetable</i>	A timetable for the Convergence Programmes and Strategy and Action can be viewed in the Towards Convergence section of the Objective One website, www.objectiveone.com .
<i>NSRF published</i>	On 23 rd October the Government published its response to the consultation on the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF), outlining broad priorities, management arrangements and funding allocations for ERDF and ESF programmes 2007-2013.
<i>What is the budget for Convergence?</i>	The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Convergence Programme will receive €579m (approx. £389m) and the Government proposes a 70:30 split between ERDF and ESF funding. However, the details of the ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes will determine the final splits.
<i>Management arrangements for Convergence ERDF and ESF</i>	The South West RDA will take the lead in the management of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's ERDF Convergence Programme and the Regional Skills Partnerships will play an important role in developing regional ESF strategies. However, the details of the management and delivery arrangements have yet to be clarified and further information will be contained within the ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes.
<i>More information</i>	More information about the NSRF and the Government's response to the consultation, can be found at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/page28796.html
<i>The current Objective One Programme</i>	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.
<i>The role of Strategy and Action</i>	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.
<i>Convergence only ERDF and ESF</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convergence will consist only of ERDF and the ESF.• In the NSRF the Government proposes to allocate 70% of Convergence to ERDF and 30% to ESF. However, the details of the ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes will determine the final splits. In Objective One 75% was allocated to ERDF and 25% to ESF.
<i>Rural and fish part of mainstream programmes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The rural and fisheries funds will become part of mainstream UK programmes.

More information about the fisheries and rural programmes

Further information about the fisheries programme can be found in the South West Regional Development Agency's Cohesion Newsletter at: <http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/policy/european-funding-pos.shtm>

And more information about the rural programme, including the latest draft of the Regional Implementation Plan, is available at: www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/european-agricultura.shtm

The Objective One website www.objectiveone.com contains more information in the 'Towards Convergence' section.

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 about Convergence

Details of the Convergence Programmes.

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 exact details of the programmes.

The recently published NSRF indicates that the South West RDA will have an important role in managing the ERDF Programme; more details are expected to be included in the ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes.

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 FIFG.

What activities will be eligible for funding?

The NSRF outlines broad priorities for ERDF and ESF in the UK, but the detailed priorities for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's will be contained in the ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes which are currently being developed and will be consulted on over the coming months.

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