

2 November 2007

Dear Colleague,

## **SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO INTERREG IVa SOUTH PROGRAMME**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Operational Programme. As you will be aware we are represented on the Programme working group by Anke Seidler, our joint appointment with SEEDA. We hope the input she has provided has helped you in shaping the programme so far. Having considered the draft Programme at our Executive Committee in October, please find comments below in response to the consultation.

### **Analysis of programme area**

In section 311.2 in paragraphs 3 and 4 we suggest that social exclusion and the relative deprivation of the coastal areas of the South East be mentioned more explicitly. We suggest something along these lines: Apart from London, the South East is the most prosperous region in England, but also contains some of the widest range of disparities in terms of social deprivation and economic performance particularly in the coastal areas.

### **Strategic Framework**

Broadly we feel the priorities and issues identified are right, given the large are covered by the Programme, and reflect the needs of the South East. We view the breadth of possible project areas as being beneficial, providing flexibility for a range of projects to come forward reflecting identified needs.

However, while we welcome the broad theme and scope of the programme, the overall strategic objective of the programme appears a fairly theoretical concept. We feel the vision could be focused more concisely on cooperation, social inclusion, sustainable development and economic competitiveness.

### **Programme Priorities**

We are not convinced that there is a need for the first priority as it does not demonstrate any added value in relation the overall strategic objective.

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Whilst it is suggested this priority could be used to fund facilitation, we are not convinced this would be practical as it would be quite difficult to align facilitation done through projects with work performed by 'official' facilitators.

We are broadly happy with the second priority. We welcome the contents of priority 3 and its focus on rural, and peri-urban and coastal areas, and the specific objective to jointly seek solutions to social inclusion problems.

We are happy with priority 4, but stress the importance of sustainable development as a cross cutting theme throughout the Programme and in projects.

### **Implementing Provisions and Programme Delivery**

We are particularly concerned to ensure there is appropriate accountability built in to the management of this Programme, and emphasise the need for local government and stakeholders to be closely involved. We have discussed this issue, and ask that an approach be taken which looks at representation across the North and South Programmes together. We recommend the following composition for the six seats which are currently unallocated on the North and South Programme Monitoring Committees (PMC) and Programme Steering Committees (PSC) in the South East:

- 2 x County Council representatives
- 1 x Unitary Council representative
- 1 x District Council representative
- 2 x Stakeholder representatives

It would be for each of these representative groupings to agree approaches to identify suitable representation on the groups. We suggest that this could be done through the Assembly.

We feel that the location of facilitators should be decided by local partners as facilitators need to work at the local level where projects are generated and run.

We feel that the intention to set the intervention rate for the Programme at 50% could inhibit participation of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). We would therefore suggest that the intervention rate be raised to 75% or be flexible in order for the VCS to be able to participate more easily.

If you have any queries please contact Nick Woolfenden ([nickwoolfenden@southeast-ra.gov.uk](mailto:nickwoolfenden@southeast-ra.gov.uk)) or Anke Seidler ([ankeseidler@seeda.co.uk](mailto:ankeseidler@seeda.co.uk)).

Yours faithfully,

**Cllr Keith Mitchell, CBE**