

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
SOUTH EAST ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
JOINT EUROPE COMMITTEE**

Date: 4 June 2008

Subject: **European Structural Funds 2007-13 progress reports and updates - items 7b) European Social Fund 7c) INTERREG IVa and 7d) INTERREG b/c**

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European Social Fund (ESF)

Background

£151 million is available in the SE in the period 2007-13 for the ESF programme (£276 million in 2000 - 06), there are 2 priorities:-

Priority 1- Extending employment opportunity for all (£96,453,387)
Priority 2- Creating a skilled and adaptable workforce (£ 52,893,793)

There are three CFOs associated with the programme:

CFO	Priority 1 allocation	Priority 2 allocation	Focus
LSC	£24,865,545	£24,925,920	Skills for jobs NEET Community Grants Basic Skills Level 2 Level 3
DWP	£26,202,404	na	Reducing worklessness
SEEDA	£2,406,343	£4,398,692	Extending employment through enterprise Level 3 +

Invitations to tender

The latest position on the Invitations for tender from the region's 3 Co financing organisations (CFOs) is as follows:-

SEEDA (£2,406,343 in Priority 1 and £4,398,692 in Priority 2 in 2007-10)

- All contracts for 3 specifications (Enterprise Start-up, Skills Solution: Management & Leadership for Priority Sectors and Skills Solution: Aerospace/Marine sectors in the South East) have been signed and issued, and are about to be published on the website.
- The remaining specifications are undergoing a detailed revision - process environmental technologies and bioscience (1 large spec) and a single advanced instrumentation spec. prior to the release of a second ITT in late spring / early summer 2008.

Learning and Skills Council (£24,865,545 in Priority 1 and £24,925,920 in Priority 2 in 2007-10)

- 189 tenders were received and evaluated and 100% of the budget allocated.
- All applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful, have now been informed of the outcome of their tender.
- 42 providers have been offered a total of 50 contracts.
- Contracts have predominantly been offered to multiple cross-sector partnerships.
- The Third Sector has the most contract awards, with the most contracts in NEET and the least in employer/employed.
- Meetings with new contractors/suppliers are now being concluded and activity is either underway or will be shortly.
- There were no successful tenders for Community Grants (the replacement for Global grants a successful feature of the 2000-6 programme), which was reissued on 1 April along with the Leadership and Management specification.

Department for Work and Pensions (£26,202,404 in Priority 1 in 2007-10)

- Preferred bidders were announced on 31 March with contracts expected to be signed by 9 May.
- 6 organisations have been selected as preferred bidders covering the South East region.
- Activity is scheduled to commence on 23 June 2008.

Monitoring Arrangements

1. GOSE will provide reports to the Regional Skills Productivity Alliance on programme spend including progress towards N+2 targets (allocation needs to be spent within 2 years) – first target at 31 December 2009 is £20,298,241.

2. Members will also receive updates on progress towards the regional outputs and result targets contained in the SE ESF Regional framework..

3. GOSE will be reporting the above information on a quarterly basis with 6 monthly face to face presentations, as well as to the ESF Regional committee.

Interreg IVa Cross Border Cooperation Programme

Cross-border programmes (along shared national borders) are for the first time part of the mainstream ERDF programmes under the “Territorial Cooperation” objective. This strand has been agreed to succeed the present INTERREG IIIA programmes established under the previous funding period 2000-2006. Members will be aware that it has been agreed to have two programmes across maritime borders:

- The 2 Seas Programme, containing the eligible areas in England, Netherlands, Flanders and the French region of Nord-Pas de Calais.
- The France (Channel) – England Programme, containing the eligible English regions and all eligible French regions except Nord Pas de Calais.

Eligible UK areas are:

Norfolk, Suffolk, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock, Essex, Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, West Sussex, Portsmouth, Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Medway, Kent, Bournemouth and Poole, Dorset, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, Plymouth, Torbay, Devon. Somerset and Wiltshire, Surrey and Cambridge are also able to benefit from the programmes under the adjacent areas rule.

The Programmes will develop cross-border economic, social and environmental activities through joint strategies for sustainable territorial development, primarily:

- encouraging entrepreneurship, in particular the development of SMEs, tourism, culture and cross-border trade;
- encouraging joint protection and management of natural and cultural resources and prevention of natural and technological risks;
- supporting links between urban and rural areas;
- reducing isolation through improved access
- developing collaboration, capacity and joint use of infrastructures in sectors as health, culture, tourism and education.

The ERDF budget will be around €170 million (£120m) for each programme.

SEEDA, the Regional Assembly and GOSE have been involved in the two working groups overseeing each programme’s development.

The Commission has confirmed that the draft Operational Programmes, submitted in November 2007, comply with admissibility criteria. Formal approval by the Commission is expected before the 2008 summer recess. Local Authorities in conjunction with the Assembly and SEEDA have now agreed representation on the Monitoring and Steering Committees, and confirmed that mechanisms are in place for ascertaining and feeding in District Council views. GOSE is currently working with CLG, SEEDA and other regional stakeholders on other delivery arrangements including the regional contact points.

The France (Channel) – England programme held a launch event in Rouen on 24 January. Of some 16 project applications in the first round, 15 involve partners in the south east – 3 as lead partner. The “shadow” Monitoring Committee is due to meet for the first time in Rouen on 21 May.

The 2 Seas programme held a launch event on 24 April 2008 in Dunkirk. The first call for projects, together with a timetable for programme activities over the next 12-18 months, will be announced shortly.

Interreg IVb/c Transnational/transregional Cooperation Programme

i) Transnational

North West Europe

The NWE second bidding round closed on 9 May with 39 new bids received. We have yet to receive details of the various bids and decisions are not due until July. We understand that a number of SE bids that were unsuccessful in the first round have been re-submitted.

To help maximise the impact of the programme a number of strategically important activity areas have been identified with the aim of having focused clusters of projects working together to address these areas. The projects will be developed jointly by relevant stakeholders, project partners and the INTERREG IVB programme secretariat.

The strategic initiatives will focus on the following thematic areas:

1. Adaptation to the expected spatial impacts of climate change
2. Production and consumption of renewable energy sources
3. Developing capacity for innovation and the knowledge based economy
4. Challenges posed by demographic change and in-migration
5. Transport and logistical chains

The first project development workshop on Promoting Sustainable Energy Production and Consumption in NWE, will be held on Tuesday 20 May 2008 in Brussels. The second is scheduled for the 17 June in Brussels and will deal with Transport and Logistical Challenges

The project ideas identified will be used as a basis for a targeted call for proposals, likely to be launched in autumn 2008.

NWE- PSC dates for 2008.

Call 2: opening 07 April, closes 09 May, with the PSC2 on 7-8 July in Luxembourg.

Call 3: opening 10 September, closes 10 October, with the PSC3 on 9-10 December in Switzerland.

The North Sea Programme (Kent eligible area)

The North Sea Operational Programme (OP) has been approved and they have had their first bidding round. The South East was not involved in any of the bids submitted. We are not aware of any bids submitted as part of the second bidding round.

The programme will be holding its' Joint Annual Conference and General Assemblies from 11 June 2008 - 13 June 2008 in Denmark. The theme of the conference will be "Towards a Sustainable Future" and the event will focus on different aspects of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas in relation to regional development in the EU and beyond.

The conference will provide stakeholders at all levels in regional development with ample opportunity to share experiences and build partnerships for future project development. It will also give an insight into the issues that project developers and decision makers in the participating countries are challenged with in relation to the Programme and EU-cooperation.

North Sea PSC dates for 2008.

Call 2: opening 18 February, closed 17 March, with PSC2 on 27-28 May in Denmark

ii) Transregional

The interregional cooperation programme INTERREG IVC has been approved and they have had their first bidding round. The first call for projects was closed on 15th January 2008 and resulted in more than 480 applications. We are currently awaiting the outcome of the bidding round. Details of future rounds have yet to be received.

Individual consultations and lead applicant seminars will be organised in the second half of 2008. The schedule will be posted online (www.interreg4c.net) as soon as the dates are confirmed.

The 2nd EU Interregional Cooperation Forum will take place on **27-28 October 2008** at the Grand Palais in Lille (FR). Over 800 national, regional and local authorities are expected to attend, alongside EU institutions.

This partner search event is a key moment for INTERREG IVC project developers to get updated on the programme changes for the second call, to finalise partnerships and to get advice on developing their application.

IV PSC dates for 2008/9.

The call will be opened during the first day of the 2nd EU Interregional Cooperation Forum, on 27 October 2008. The call will remain open until Friday 30 January 2009.

The Application Pack will be updated for the second call, therefore the documents available online are **for reference only**. The Application Pack for the second call will be available once the call is opened.

South East Interreg Group

CLG are pressing for re-establishment and re-invigoration of the various regional groups (such as that chaired by Mike Gwilliam SEERA) and which were seen as a key factor in the amount of funding awarded to UK led projects. Discussions are on-going about this group. Expected to be chaired by SEEDA and will incorporate all three strands of the European territorial cooperation objective including cross border.