



EUROPEAN FUNDING

a funding information leaflet from *funderfinder*

The European Union provides financial support to promote economic development and social inclusion through a series of inter-related funds known as Structural Funds. They account for over one third of the European Union budget and are used to tackle regional disparities and support regional development through actions including developing infrastructure and telecommunications, developing human resources and supporting research and development.

The European Union has been a major funder of voluntary and community groups through two of the Structural Funds - the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) - although many groups have found European funding bureaucratic and difficult to access. A new round of investment for 2007-2013 has now been agreed and with the increase in membership of the European Union, and the more pressing needs of new member states, the richer nations, including the UK, will receive considerably less funding than previously. It is estimated that the UK will receive approximately €9.4 billion (2004 prices) for the 2007-2013 period, as compared with the €15.85 billion available in 2000-2006.

The delivery of the structural funds is the responsibility of the country governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England the Communities and Local Government (CLG) department and Regional Development Agencies are responsible for ERDF funds; and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and regional agencies such as the Learning and Skills Council are responsible for ESF funds. These agencies are known as 'Co-financing Organisations' and they contract with the organisations or 'providers' that deliver ESF projects on the ground.

ESF funds

The 2007-2013 ESF programme has two primary objectives:

Convergence Objective

This replaces Objective 1 and aims to develop areas where the economy is lagging behind the rest of the European Union. The UK will receive about €2.6 billion for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, West Wales and the Valleys and the Highlands and Islands.

Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective

This replaces Objectives 2 and 3 and will support projects to increase competitiveness, employment and skills in regions not eligible for the Convergence Objective. The UK will receive about €6.2 billion to cover all of the UK, outside Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, West Wales and the Valleys and the Highlands and Islands. South Yorkshire and Merseyside qualify for ring-fenced 'phasing-in' funding. This is to provide transitional support for regions that received Objective 1 funding in 2000-2006, but no longer qualify because their economies have grown.

The priorities in the 2007-2013 ESF programme are designed to focus spending on specific activities and to ensure that it reaches people in most need of support. For

example, in England priorities are: extending employment opportunities and developing a skilled and adaptable workforce. Each region has an allocation of ESF money to fund projects. Allocations are based on regional employment and skills needs - for example, the numbers of people not in work and who do not have good qualifications.

Organisations can apply for ESF funding to a Co-financing Organisation (CFO). The CFOs make ESF available through a process of open and competitive tendering. You do not have to find your own 'match funding' as CFOs are responsible for both the ESF and match funding.

Small grants programmes

In England, ESF Community Grants have replaced 'Global Grants' and are small grants of up to £12,000 for voluntary and community organisations to help them reach disadvantaged people who are not working. Application arrangements are simplified and the grants will focus on progression towards the labour market, but will not duplicate provision that is available through public funding or mainstream ESF activity.

In Scotland the small grants programme, called Direct Grants, has ended and it is not yet clear whether there will be a replacement fund. Check SCVO's website for more information: www.scvo.org.uk/direct_grants/default.htm

In Wales, the small grants programme was called the Social Risk Fund, but it also has come to an end.

More information

The best place to start for further information about future European funding is with your regional voluntary sector European Office:

English Regional Offices

Central:

CEFET, 114 Mansfield Road, Nottingham NG1 3HL, tel: 0115 911 0419, website: www.cefet.org.uk

London:

LVSTC, Bromley Hall, 43 Gillender Street, London E14 6RN, tel: 020 77538 4309, website: www.lvstc.org.uk

Northern:

ESFVON, 391 West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 7PY, tel: 0191 274 9886, website: www.esfvon.org.uk

North West:

North West Network, 2nd Floor, Albert House, 17 Bloom Street, Manchester M1 3HZ, tel: 0161 236 6493, website: www.nwnetwork.org.uk

South East & West:

SAVAGE, 21 Norfolk Road, Margate, Kent CT9 2HU, tel: 01843 282488, and East Reach House, East Reach, Taunton TA1 3EN, tel: 01823 250817, website: www.savage-europe.org.uk

Yorkshire & the Humber:

The Humber, West & North Yorkshire:

The Regional Forum, Suite D10, Joseph's Well, Hanover Walk, Leeds LS3 1AB, tel: 0113 394 2300, website: www.regionalforum.org.uk

South Yorkshire:

South Yorkshire Open Forum, The Ladder, Maltkiln Street, Rotherham S60 2HY, tel: 01709 519 100, website: www.syopenforum.org.uk/

Wales

Wales Council for Voluntary Action, Baltic House, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FH, tel: 029 2043170, website: www.wcva.org.uk

Scotland

East of Scotland:

East of Scotland European Partnership, Suite 3, Forth House, Burnside Business Court, North Road, Inverkeithing, Fife KY11 1NZ, tel: 01383 413141, and Centrum Building, 38 Queen Street, Glasgow, G1 3DX, tel: 0141 241 6150, website: www.esep.co.uk

Highlands and Islands:

Highlands and Islands Partnership Programme, Jubilee Lodge, 12c Ness Walk, Inverness IV3 5SQ, tel: 01463 279500, and 23 Keith Street, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis HS1 2JA, tel: 01851 703581 and c/o Shetland Islands Council Economic Development Unit, 6 North Ness Business Park, Lerwick ZE1 0LZ, tel: 01595 744929 website: www.hipp.org.uk

South of Scotland:

South of Scotland European Partnership, Jubilee House, Dumfries Enterprise Park, Tinwald Downs Road, Heathhall, Dumfries DG1 3SJ, tel: 01387 251360 and St Mary's Mill, Level Crossing Road, Selkirk TD7 5EW, tel: 01750 725104, website: www.sosep.org

Strathclyde:

Strathclyde European Partnership, 94 Elmbank Street, Glasgow G2 4DL, tel: 0141 572 4400, website: www.wsep.co.uk

Northern Ireland

NICVA, 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast BT15 2GB, tel: 028 9087 7777, website: www.nicva.org

Books

A Guide to European Union Funding, pub. ECAS, 14th ed., 2008, 2 vols, €60 (£40) for both volumes, ISBN 978 2 87451 008 3 (vol 1), 978 2 87451 009 0 (vol 2). Distributed by Directory of Social Change.

Websites

www.ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/ - the European Commission Representation in the UK website.

www.europa.eu/index_en.htm - EU website.

www.esf.gov.uk/ - the government's European Social Fund website.

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