

Newsletter 42: 23rd May 2008

This is part of a fortnightly series of newsletters that will help explain the process and progression of 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.**

PARTNER'S PERSPECTIVE

Continuing our series in which partners reflect on key topics for Convergence, Stafford Sumner, Managing Director of Jarrang a Cornwall based email marketing agency, and a British Council Digital Pioneer, reflects on the importance of digital media skills.

Digital Pioneer

Stafford was selected as a Digital Pioneer by the British Council in 2007. As a result he made several visits to Hong Kong and hosted visits to the UK from some of Hong Kong's Digital Pioneers. He now has connections with Asian businesses as well as two of Hong Kong's universities.

DIGITAL MEDIA SKILLS – Stafford Sumner, Jarrang

Vision

“My vision is to integrate business and education to get the right qualifications for the marketplace. I want to use the Combined Universities in Cornwall (CUC) to bring creativity, business and digital together.

Skills for business

“For instance, Tremough has amazing facilities and a good number of courses. The difficulty is that there are not enough ‘new media’ skills and if businesses are looking to relocate they will want a pool of new media trained employees.

Creativity

“University College Falmouth has a fantastic reputation for creativity with the ability to focus more on the digital side of things. However, there are a lot of graphic designers and artists coming through the system that are not particularly vocationally trained towards new media.

New media training

“I would like to have an input on the syllabus to introduce courses such as e-marketing and web development. There could be a whole module on digital creativity, which would mean companies don't have to lay out time and money to train the graduates. Couple this with on-the-job training through internships and talks from the digital media industry and you have a very good training package using resources that are already available.

- Practical possibility** “After this you get into other realms of practical possibility. Universities have research and development facilities with the ability to work in partnership with businesses on real projects that keep educational skills fresh and contribute to the bottom line of commercial organisations.
- Hong Kong** “My belief is that Hong Kong is some years ahead of the Combined Universities in Cornwall in terms of business and education collaboration, with Entrepreneurship being a department that spans all faculties encouraging students to start businesses in associated science and technology parks. Personally I would like the opportunity to have a base in the CUC Innovation Centre because there needs to be more liaison between education and business as part of a long term, continuous journey.”
- Stafford Sumner
Managing Director
Jarrang

CORNWALL WORKS WISE AWARDS

- Europe Day** This year we marked Europe Day, May 9th, by recognising the ongoing importance of European investment through the Convergence ESF Programme and our joint strategies to drive up employment, improve skills and enhance productivity so that the people and businesses of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly have the opportunity to reach their potential.
- Celebrating excellence** The first Cornwall Works WISE (Welfare to Work, Innovation, Skills and Employment) award event celebrated excellence in employment and skills activity in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.
- Partnership** This year it took place at the Watergate Bay Hotel on Europe Day and was organised and hosted by Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council and the Partnership Office for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. It is planned that the event will be held annually.
- Opportunities** More than 80 people attended the Works WISE event, which also looked forward to the opportunities for increasing success through the ESF Convergence Programme and the new Local Area Agreement.
- Optimism** The event celebrated the people and organisations who have really made a positive difference through activities funded by the European Social Fund. Thousands of people across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly have better prospects today because we cared, we listened and we worked together in true partnership to make this European investment the success we see today. We can now look ahead with optimism to focus on key investments through the new Convergence ESF Programme which will continue the journey of supporting personal and economic growth.
- More information** For fuller coverage please see www.objectiveone.com/client/media/media-1366.htm.
- Carolyn Webster
European Programmes Manager
Jobcentre Plus

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT CONVERGENCE

Why did Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly qualify for Convergence?	Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly gained Convergence status when the European Union's budget for 2007-2013 was decided. At that time the most up to date figures (an average for 2000-2002) showed that Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's Gross Domestic Product (GDP, a measure of wealth creation) was less than 75% of the European Union average, allowing this area to qualify for Convergence. If the measurement was done again today we would no longer qualify. The latest data shows that in 2005 Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's GDP per head was 77% of the EU average.
Focus of ERDF Convergence Programme	The ERDF Convergence Programme, which began in January 2008, will focus on business support, modern economic infrastructure and increasing innovation and research and development.
What activities will be eligible for ERDF investment?	Details of activities which will be supported can be found in the ERDF Convergence Operational Programme at www.objectiveone.com/O1htm/01-convergence/recentnews.htm under '14 December 2007'.
How can I apply for ERDF Convergence investment?	The majority of activity in this Programme will be commissioned, so there will be very limited opportunities for bidding into the Programme. If opportunities arise they will be publicised at www.objectiveone.com under 'Convergence'.
Commissioning	Commissioning teams have begun to identify and develop investments which partners believe have the potential to transform the economy. Once proposals have been tested and agreed the Programme will commission activity to implement them.
ESF Programme for England	The national European Social Fund (ESF) Operational Programme, which will invest in skills and employment, includes an allocation of c. £133m and specific priorities for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. It can be found at www.esf.gov.uk .
What activities will be eligible for ESF investment?	ESF investment will focus on tackling barriers to work, improving workforce skills, and research and graduate activity. Further details can be found at www.esf.gov.uk and www.swrsp.org.uk .
ESF Co-Financing, tendering and procurement	The Learning and Skills Council and the Department for Work and Pensions (Jobcentre Plus) have invited organisations to tender to deliver ESF investments. Successful bidders are expected to be announced during the summer. Further information can be found at www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/provider-procurement/esf-procurement/ and www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/what_we_buy/european_social_fund.asp .
Second round of Learning and Skills Council tenders	The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has released its second tranche of tender specifications for ESF Convergence investments. They include support for: area-focussed investments to complement ERDF Convergence place-based regeneration; the rural land based sector; and Higher Education. The LSC expects contracts to start in the autumn. For further details please see www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/provider-procurement/esf-procurement/ .
ESF newsletter	An e-zine, 'ESF at Work', is available at www.esf.gov.uk/news/e-zine/ .

European investment in the Convergence Programmes	European investment in the ERDF and ESF 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

Rural Programme in the South West The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) allocates Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly c. £55m (EU investment plus UK match-funding) for the socio-economic parts of the Programme.

Further information The approved RDPE Programme Document can be found at www.defra.gov.uk/rural/rdpe/progdoc.htm and additional information is available from www.defra.gov.uk/rural/rdpe/index.htm and www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/eafpd/introduction.shtm.

Accessing the Rural Programme The main portal for the Rural Programme is the Rural Development Gateway which can be found at www.sw-ruralgateway.info. Larger projects and services will be commissioned by the South West RDA. Full access to investment will be available in autumn 2008. Until then, the South West Regional Development Agency will process a small number of early investments where proposals are fully developed.

Rural Programme at Royal Cornwall Show The South West Regional Development Agency will be promoting the Rural Development Programme for England at the Royal Cornwall Show, 5 - 7 June 2008, including an event 'Supporting Rural Development – Life after Objective One'. For details see www.objectiveone.com, 'Recent News'.

European Fisheries Fund Programme The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) Programme has allocated £7.3 million to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Before the Programme begins the UK's National Strategic Plan (NSP) and Operational Programme must be approved by the European Commission. The NSP has been submitted to the Commission and can be found at www.defra.gov.uk/marine/fisheries/grants.htm.

Responses to first phase of consultation The first phase of the consultation on the EFF Operational Programme concluded on 4 April 2008. A summary of responses can be found at www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/eufishfund/index.htm.

Second phase of consultation The second phase of the consultation - 2 May to 27 June 2008 - seeks further comments, particularly regional perspectives. For information, please see www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/eufishfund%2Dphase2/.

Expressions of interest While the EFF Operational Programme is developed, the Marine Fisheries Agency is seeking expressions of interest from those who would like to access the Programme. Details are available at www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/eufishfund%2Dphase2/.

Further information For further information about the Fisheries Programme please see www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/policy/european-prog/european-programmes.shtm and www.mfa.gov.uk/.

WHAT WE DON'T KNOW

The detail of the Fisheries Programme Work is underway in the Marine and Fisheries Agency (MFA) to develop the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) Operational Programme.

More detailed information about Convergence, links to key organisations and websites can be found in the 'Convergence' section of the Objective One website www.objectiveone.com.