

Newsletter 54: 28th November 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. [New information will appear in blue.](#)

The Convergence Programmes are investing in a higher value, more knowledge based economy. The table below summarises the value of Convergence investments as at 28 November 2008.

CONVERGENCE PROGRAMMES' POSITION AS AT 28 NOVEMBER 2008

All monetary figures are £ Million	TOTAL	ERDF Programme	ESF Programme
Programme budget	500.20m	347.00m	153.20m
Value of investments contracted	102.13m	33.63m	68.50m
Value of investments endorsed (but not contracted)	10.75m	10.25m	0.50m
Actual project spend to date	1.08m	1.04m	0.04m
N+2 spend target by end 2009	43.2m	30m	13.2m

NB. The Programmes' budgets are given in Euros in the European Regional Development Fund Convergence Operational Programme and the European Social Fund Operational Programme for England and Gibraltar. The pound sterling figures above are estimates, as at 28/11/08, and will vary due to changes in the exchange rate during the life of the Programmes.

GLOSSARY

- Contracted:** Contracts signed by both the applicant and the organisations managing the Programmes (South West Regional Development Agency for ERDF and Department for Work and Pensions for ESF).
- Endorsed:** Investments awaiting final exchange of contracts.
- Spend:** Money claimed from the European Union by projects for work in progress.
- N+2 spend target:** The amount of money the Programmes must spend on a yearly basis. The first target is for 2009.

NEWS

- Convergence website launched** The new website for the ERDF and ESF Convergence Programmes is now online. Containing information about the Programmes' aims, vision and investments it can be found at www.convergencecornwall.com.
- Register to receive invitations to tender from the LSC** The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has launched its Qualified Providers Framework to enable training and education providers who wish to deliver LSC investments to pre-qualify at any time. They will then receive invitations to tender from the LSC as they arise. Any provider that wishes to be included in the LSC's tendering round in January 2009 needs to ensure that they apply to pre-qualify by 10th December 2008. More information can be found at www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/commissioning/qualifiedproviderframework/
- Call for proposals – innovation and transnationality** The European Social Fund (ESF) innovation and transnationality call for proposals was launched on 31 October 2008. The call focuses on supporting a range of projects to develop and deliver new ways of extending employment opportunities and raising workforce skills. More information is available at www.esf.gov.uk/innovation_transnationality. The deadline for applications is 16.00 hrs on Wednesday 17 December 2008.
- Business Support – call for expressions of interest** The South West Regional Development Agency is seeking organisations who can deliver business support packages for the ERDF Convergence Programme. The first stage in this process invites interested organisations to make an expression of interest. Further details can be found at

www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/policy/european-prog/open-call-for-expres.shtm.

ERDF CONVERGENCE INVESTMENTS CONTRACTED

- Higher Education expansion in Penwith** Truro Penwith College is to receive a £4 million investment from the ERDF Convergence Programme as part of an £8 million improvement scheme. The expansion is being lead by Truro and Penwith College and will involve new and refurbished buildings. It is part of a £32 million master plan to support Further and Higher Education in Penwith.
- ERDF Convergence investments** Information about other contracted European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Convergence investments in the Truro-Falmouth branch line, the Peninsula Dental School, business support and Watson Marlow Pumps Ltd can be found at www.convergencecornwall.com/convergence-investments/.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FRAMEWORKS ESTABLISHED

- Definition** Strategic Investment Frameworks (SIFs) provide a framework and justification for potential Convergence investments in specific areas in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Proposed individual investments within the SIFs will then be appraised and, if suitable, endorsed for investment.
- Established investment frameworks** The latest Strategic Investment Framework to be established is for Newquay and St Columb Major. Information about the SIFs which have been established for Bodmin and Camborne, Pool and Redruth can be found at www.convergencecornwall.com/what-is-convergence/news.php?year=2008.
- Proposed frameworks** Strategic Investment Frameworks are being developed for: Falmouth, Penzance and the Isles of Scilly, St Austell and the Clay Country, and Truro.

ESF CONVERGENCE INVESTMENTS CONTRACTED

Investments managed by Dept for Work and Pensions/Jobcentre Plus

Helping people into work Three ESF Convergence investments to help people overcome barriers to work have been contracted: Cornwall Works Plus, Cornwall Works for Social Enterprise and Cornwall Works for Learning Disabilities. For details, please refer to www.convergencecornwall.com/what-is-convergence/news.php?id=22.

Investments managed by the Learning and Skills Council

Investing in skills A range of ESF Convergence investments focussing on raising skills levels have been contracted by the Learning and Skills Council. Details can be found at

www.convergencecornwall.com/what-is-convergence/media-releases.php?id=92
www.convergencecornwall.com/convergence-investments/search-results.php?funder=ESF
and www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/.

Investments managed by Government Office for the South West

Higher Education investments The Graduate Placement Scheme is the first element of Higher Education investment contracted by the Convergence Programmes. Other investments in research, enterprise, higher level skills and raising aspirations are being developed. More detailed information can be found at

www.convergencecornwall.com/what-is-convergence/media-releases.php?id=138.

PARTNER'S PERSPECTIVE

PROPOSED ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE IN CORNWALL Stephen Bohane, South West Regional Development Agency

Environment and Sustainability Institute commissioned At its November meeting, the Partnership Delivery Board commissioned a proposed institute in Cornwall specialising in the environment and sustainability. This is a possible major investment under Priority Axis 1 of the ERDF Convergence Programme, which aims to build research capacity in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, and use it to benefit business and develop high value jobs.

So what is it, and how did we get there?

Research undertaken The University of Exeter has been working on plans for such an institute for a while. On behalf of Convergence partners, the South West Regional Development Agency commissioned consultants to take a step back from the Exeter proposal and test the whole idea. We asked them in particular to take a high level look at the research agenda, the competitive environment, and commercial opportunities from such an investment. A range of national and international 'experts', and local stakeholders, were consulted and involved in testing ideas.

Opportunities The consultants concluded that although the ground is crowded, there is room in Cornwall for a niche institute, working with other 'islands of excellence' in the region, such as, PriMaRe, Wave Hub and Eden. The institute will need to build a clear and strong identity grounded in, and of relevance to, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Potential opportunities exist in marine and tidal energy,

ground source energy, materials technology, sustainable construction and transport, and policy advice.

Next stage The next stage will be for these ideas to be worked up (including input from partners) and development of a business plan before the investment can be appraised and approved.

Lead partner The consultants concluded that the University of Exeter should lead the development of the investment in close partnership with others as above.

Stephen Bohane
Head of Business Development
South West Regional Development Agency

RELATED EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ENGLAND

Farm resource management A farm resource management Innovation Fund is to be launched on 5 December 2008. Full details will be available in due course.

Processing farm produce An application for investment towards processing farm produce was received in late October by the South West Regional Development Agency (who are managing the socio-economic aspects of the Rural Programme). The application is currently under appraisal.

Accessing the Rural Programme The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) can be accessed through the Rural Development Gateway which provides advice about project proposals. They can be contacted by telephoning 0845 600 9966 or at www.sw-ruralgateway.info. For more information please see www.defra.gov.uk/rural/rdpe/index.htm and www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/eafrd/introduction.shtm.

EUROPEAN FISHERIES FUND PROGRAMME FOR THE UK

Fisheries investments approved Eight investments in the English fishing industry, with a value of approximately £1 million, were approved by the first European Fisheries Fund Selection Panel in November 2008. The investments cover safety at sea, the development of an adaptive management protocol for shell fisheries, and the collection of scientific data by fishermen using innovative technologies. Details can be found at www.mfa.gov.uk/news/press/081120.htm.

Fisheries Programme In Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly there is over £7m available through the European Fisheries Fund for investments which help secure a sustainable and profitable fishing industry. The scheme is now open for applications and facilitation service is provided by Steve Bailey on 07876 035733, 01503 240384 or s_bailey@seafish.co.uk. Further details are at www.mfa.gov.uk.

More detailed information about Convergence, links to key organisations and websites can be found at www.convergencecornwall.com.

Information is also available from the Convergence Partnership Office's helpline on 0800 028 0120.