

Newsletter 55: 12th December 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 next Convergence Newsletter will be circulated on 9 January 2009 when we will move to a monthly distribution.

[Season's greetings from the Convergence Partnership Office;
we look forward to working with you in 2009.](#)

The Convergence Programmes are investing in a higher value, more knowledge based economy. The table below summarises the value of Convergence investments as at 12 December 2008.

CONVERGENCE PROGRAMMES' POSITION AS AT 12 DECEMBER 2008

All monetary figures are £ Million	TOTAL	ERDF Programme	ESF Programme
Programme budget	500.2m	347.0m	153.2m
Value of investments contracted	111.1m	42.6m	68.5m
Value of investments endorsed (but not contracted)	14.19m	7.57m	6.62m
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 12/12/08, 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.

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.

ERDF CONVERGENCE INVESTMENTS CONTRACTED

Pool Innovation Centre An investment of almost £9 million from the ERDF Convergence Programme has been agreed for the creation of an innovation centre in Pool. The centre will provide high quality, flexible managed workspace to start up businesses with potential for growth and high productivity across all sectors. An additional £2.9 million will be provided by the South West Regional Development Agency.

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 led 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. For more information please see

www.convergencecornwall.com/what-is-convergence/media-releases.php?id=203

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 St Austell, St Blazey and the Clay Area. The framework sets out a range of proposals for developing workspace and improving skills.

Information about other SIFs which have been established - for Newquay and St Columb Major; 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, 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

VALUING OUR HERITAGE: THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION IN CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY - Ian Morrison, Heritage Lottery Fund

Key to success As any experienced business analyst will tell you, the key to the success of a new business venture is to identify its unique selling point, its brand. What will help guarantee success and secure future investment and economic returns? Cornwall's response to this challenge has been innovative, challenging and inspirational.

Unique cultural heritage It was well-recognised that Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly possessed an outstanding asset in its unique, rich and valuable cultural heritage: its natural resources, the landscape, coastline and biodiversity, but also its historic assets, buildings, gardens, industrial remains, archaeology, language and traditions. From the outset encouragement was given to a wider recognition of the outstanding quality of Cornwall's historic environment and its contribution to the region's quality of life, its popularity as a place to live, work and visit, and, as a result, its contribution to the region's economic vitality.

Protecting our historic environment

A series of measures were introduced to ensure the region's unique sense of identity was not eroded through insensitive development as seen in many of England's historic market towns in recent times. Cornish towns would remain distinctly Cornish, its historic landscapes would not be blighted by a plague of insensitively designed 'tin-sheds', and the conservation of locally distinctive features, such as the granite paving in Penzance or the opes in Falmouth, would be achieved. But perhaps of equal significance has been the inclusion of a commitment to invest in the historic fabric, to use it as a mechanism for stimulating economic growth and prosperity. The Objective One Programme played a key role in this - in total over £17.5 million was invested in conservation and heritage-led regeneration projects, which levied over £28 million from the public and private sectors. Examples of projects supported include rural diversification schemes, community centres in refurbished listed buildings, public realm enhancement schemes, and a series of projects which ultimately led to the successful bid for international recognition of Cornwall's industrial legacy, with the award of World Heritage Site status for Cornish Mining.

Heritage-led regeneration

The term heritage-led regeneration is now synonymous with high quality urban investment programmes and the transformation of underperforming areas. Many of the projects supported by Objective One focussed on sensitive improvements to the built fabric and public realm. In Cornwall eight such schemes received a total of £3.8 million investment from Objective One, which generated an additional £8.6 million from the public and private sector, including over £2.9 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £1.1 million from English Heritage. Evaluation of some of these schemes by both the Regional Development Agency and the Heritage Lottery Fund has demonstrated the significant economic improvements: more jobs, affordable housing, new community facilities, and increased private investment and consumer confidence leading to greater spend. The intangible benefits are more difficult to measure, but there is strong evidence to suggest that an improved built environment can stimulate a greater sense of personal well-being, improve community cohesion and help to reduce crime.

Creating a positive climate for investment

Let us be clear, Cornwall's heritage will not provide all of the solutions for its deep rooted economic problems, but it can play a vital role as part of a wide variety of measures designed to create a positive climate for investment. The Objective One Partnership should be congratulated for demonstrating how it is possible to harness Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's unique historic environment and turn into a powerful force for economic growth. Heritage-led regeneration is now a main stream activity carried out across the county.

Ian Morrison
Head of Historic Environment Conservation
Heritage Lottery Fund

RELATED EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ENGLAND

Launch of farming Innovation Fund An Innovation Fund is being launched to help farmers and growers develop new and more profitable ways of dealing with resources such as nutrients, water, energy and waste. The Innovation Fund will support on-farm investments in innovative technologies as well as research and training. For more information, please contact the South West Rural Enterprise Gateway on 0845 600 9966 or visit www.sw-ruralgateway.info.

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 freephone helpline on 0800 028 0120.