

Newsletter 50: 3rd October 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 3 October 2008.

CONVERGENCE PROGRAMMES' POSITION AS AT 3 OCTOBER 2008

All monetary figures are £ Million	TOTAL	ERDF Programme	ESF Programme
Programme budget	£500.2m	£347.0m	£153.2m
Value of investments contracted	£84.3m	£15.8m	£68.5m
Value of investments endorsed (not contracted)	£15.5m	£15.0m	£0.5m
Actual project spend to date	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0
N+2 spend target by end 2009	£43.2m	£30.0m	£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 3/10/08, 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.

ERDF CONVERGENCE INVESTMENTS CONTRACTED

The following European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Convergence investments have been contracted.

Truro Falmouth Branch Line	£4.67 million investment in improved public transport giving access to workplaces and the Combined Universities in Cornwall at Falmouth, Penryn and Truro. Details are available at www.objectiveone.com/client/media/media-1400.htm .
Peninsula Dental School	More than £4.7 million investment to help develop a state-of-the-art dental education and research facility in Truro. Details are available at www.objectiveone.com/client/media/media-1417.htm .
Business Support	Specialist business support to boost business productivity and competitiveness on a national and international level and to help increase the economic prosperity of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Support will be accessed through Business Link and will receive investment of £4.6 million from the ERDF Convergence Programme. Further details can be found at www.objectiveone.com/client/media/media-1430.htm .
Watson-Marlow Pumps Group	Falmouth pump manufacturer Watson-Marlow has announced a £7.3 million expansion having secured £1 million of investment from the ERDF Convergence Programme and the South West Regional Development Agency. The company is building a new silicone tubing plant to support its core pump business and a growing global market for food, beverage and biopharm tubing. Further details can be found at www.objectiveone.com/client/media/media-1433.html .

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 a Scilly. Proposed individual investments within the SIFs will then be appraised and, if suitable, endorsed for investment.
Proposed Frameworks	Strategic Investment Frameworks are being developed for the following areas: Bodmin, Falmouth, Newquay and St Columb Major, Penzance and the Isles of Scilly, St Austell and the Clay Country, and Truro. To date two SIFs have been established:
Bodmin	The overall aim for the Bodmin Strategic Investment Framework is to develop Bodmin as an economic growth pole while retaining its distinctive heritage.
Camborne, Pool and Redruth	The Strategic Investment Framework for Camborne, Pool and Redruth provides a framework for investments to increase the number and range of jobs, support business growth, stimulate innovation and enterprise and to boost skills levels.

ESF CONVERGENCE INVESTMENTS CONTRACTED

European Social Fund Convergence investments which have been contracted are described below.

Investments managed by Department for Work and Pensions/Jobcentre Plus

Cornwall Works Plus	This investment aims to help unemployed people overcome barriers to work by improving their skills and employability.
Cornwall Works for Social Enterprise	An investment to provide inspirational and high quality developmental experiences and sustainable work for jobless people through social enterprises.
Cornwall Works for Learning Disabilities	This investment aims to provide a pathway to sustainable employment for people with learning disabilities.
Further information	More details about all three Cornwall Works investments can be found at www.objectiveone.com/client/media/media-1422.html .

Investments managed by the Learning and Skills Council

The following investments, aiming to raise skills levels, have been contracted by the Learning and Skills Council.

ACE	ACE will invest in developing and delivering vocational teaching and learning resources and personalised programmes, enabling young people who are not in education, employment or training to access appropriate learning, training and/or employment. The project aims to make learning relevant, to raise aspirations, maximise potential, build confidence and embed lifelong learning and progression.
EMBARK	This investment focuses on raising aspirations and participation levels among employees in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, who, as members of minority groups, face multiple barriers to education and employment opportunities. The investment also focuses on increasing employers' awareness of the needs of the target groups.
Partnership Works	The aim of this activity is to enhance Cornwall Works and Skills for Jobs opportunities in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. It will provide employability skills to help prepare adults to be job ready.
Equator	This project aims to raise aspiration and participation levels of people who are not in employment and, because of their minority status, face multiple barriers to accessing education and employment opportunities.
Vocational Routeways	Vocational Routeways has been developed to help create sustainable economies and communities by linking the employment needs of local employers with unemployed people in disadvantaged communities. It aims to deliver tailored vocational training and support packages that will equip participants to enter employment.
Key Sectors	This partnership project works with 13 sector organisations, the Skills Brokerage Service and providers to engage businesses in workforce development activity.

Capacity Building Works	This investment is being made to enhance the ability of voluntary/community sector organisations and social enterprises to contribute to the Convergence Programme. It will carry out organisational 'health checks', encourage employees to gain skills for life qualifications and promote volunteering.
The Progressive Isles	The Progressive Isles investment focuses on enabling individuals, organisations and businesses to fulfil their ambitions and potential on the Isles of Scilly by offering Level 2, Level 3 and Basic Skills qualifications.
Workforce led Programme	Eleven partners will combine to address the development of individuals within the workforce. Through raising aspirations, widening access to training and empowering individuals to contribute at higher levels, employees will be more productive and have the skills to contribute to workforce success.
Skills for Work	The Skills for Work programme will deliver Continuing Professional Development training to the Skills for Life workforce. It also aims to encourage more people to take Skills for Life qualifications.
Freestyle: Best Start for Young People	This investment will provide activities and specialist support for young people aged 14-19 years within the target groups who are not in education, employment or training or at risk of becoming so. It will help them to engage in learning in an informal setting with individually tailored learning plans with a view to moving them towards employment, training or further education.
Freestyle: Equality and Diversity	This project aims to provide activities and specialist support to young people in disadvantaged and hard to reach groups so as to remove barriers to learning and help them engage with and remain in learning. Raising awareness of equality and diversity issues is also a key part of the project.
Freestyle: Extended Learner Fund	The Extended Learner Fund will provide financial assistance for a broad range of target groups to make it possible for them to continue their learning.
	Investments managed by Government Office for the South West
	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.
Graduate Placement Scheme	This project, which will place graduates with businesses in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, has received approval for a £4.25 million investment from the European Social Fund Convergence Programme. Further details are available at www.objectiveone.com/client/media/media-1418.htm .

PARTNER'S PERSPECTIVE

INTELLIGENT COMMISSIONING - Mark Yeoman, Convergence Partnership Office for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

“There are a number of key differences between the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Convergence Programme and previous European structural fund programmes:

Focus

“Firstly in terms of economic focus: the mission of the ERDF Convergence Programme is to help build a rebalanced more knowledge based economy. The ERDF Convergence Programme will focus on business support, modern economic infrastructure and increasing business orientated innovation and research. And – the fish and rural programmes are now mainstreamed with specific budgets for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The Convergence European Social Fund is part of a separate national programme and aligned at a local level with ERDF Convergence.

“Turning programme strategy into delivery has always been a challenge and the gap between the aspirations of the programme and delivery on the ground can be large. So...

Testing and developing investment ideas

“Secondly, programme partners have agreed to take a more proactive approach to securing the ERDF Programme’s mission through a way of working that aims to make relatively few strategic investments. This is commissioning – overseen by the Cornwall County Council, Government Office for the South West and the South West Regional Development Agency on behalf of the Joint Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) – and is the process of testing, developing and, if appropriate, procuring potential investments for ERDF Convergence.

Evidence based approach

“To ensure that the testing and developing of investment propositions is as robust as possible information and evidence will be gathered from the public and private sectors locally, regionally and further afield to help ensure that the best possible information and good practice are brought to the Programme.

“Once this has been done, the entire investment proposition in the shape of a fully worked up business plan – detailed guidance is available from the South West RDA and the appropriate RDA commissioning managers – is appraised by the separate specialist team within the RDA, using the criteria approved by the PMC. All investments must comply with the public procurement Regulations so far as they are applicable.

PMC agreed appraisal criteria

“After any issues arising from this rigorous process have been satisfactorily dealt with the proposition is submitted to the Endorsement Advisory Group – an advisory group to the Programme Monitoring Committee - for partnership sign-off.

“When approved, the difficult work begins – delivering the investment designed to meet the aspirational agenda of the ERDF Convergence Operational Programme!

“A future Convergence Newsletter will look at the important work of the Strategic Investment Frameworks in channelling potential investments to both European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund Convergence and other sources of investment.”

Mark Yeoman
Deputy Director
Convergence Partnership Office for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

RELATED EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ENGLAND

Local Action The official launch of Local Action in the South West took place on 24 September. Local Action groups will develop projects which benefit their local communities. Ideas being explored range from developing community facilities to improvements in food processing capacity or projects designed to mitigate climate change to sustainable tourism packages. The groups will be finalising plans during the autumn with a view to ‘opening for business’ in 2009.

More information can be found in the RDPE Update at:
www.sw-ruralgateway.info/downloads/document.asp?lang=&documentid=2039&.

Accessing the Rural Programme The Rural Development Programme 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, www.objectiveone.com/O1htm/01-convergence/post2006_faq.htm#Q4 and www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/eafrd/introduction.shtm.

EUROPEAN FISHERIES FUND PROGRAMME FOR THE UK

European Fisheries Fund Operational Programme approved The European Commission has now agreed the UK Operational Programme for the European Fisheries Fund. The scheme is to help secure a sustainable and profitable fisheries industry. The Operational Programme contains a detailed analysis of the fisheries industry, the strategy and objectives, the summary of an ex-ante evaluation, details on each priority axis, the finance available and the implementing provisions.

Types of investments In Convergence Cornwall there is over £7m available up to 2013 for types of project such as modernising fishing vessels so long as the capacity to catch fish is not increased, improving product quality, improvements to port and processing facilities, pilot projects, development of sustainable fisheries. A facilitation service is provided by Steve Bailey on 07876 035733, 01503 240384 or s_bailey@seafish.co.uk.

Open for applications The scheme is now open for applications and further details are at www.mfa.gov.uk.

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

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