

Partnership Agreement: Delivery of Structural Funds, Rural Development Funds and Maritime and Fisheries Funds in England: Informal Consultation Document. Response Form

You may respond online or by using this response form. The online version is linked to the consultation website <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/bis-delivery-structural-funds-12-642rf>.

The Department may, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, make available, on public request, individual responses.

The closing date for this consultation is **27/04/2012**

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Please tick a box from a list of options that best describes you.

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Passenger Transport Executive Group

Question 1: Which of the Commission's objectives for the Common Strategic Framework Funds most align with your objectives and plans? (Page 9)

Comments:

The impact of public transport in delivering the objectives of the Common Strategic Framework Funds is so fundamental it is difficult to select which objective (s) are most closely aligned with our objectives and plans.

We are concerned to ensure that transport remains an eligible and central activity for structural funds in transition and more developed areas, and expect that this will play a key part in supporting the shift to a low carbon economy, and especially in promoting low carbon strategies for urban areas.

This can be done through the development of clean energy for transport, sustainable travel planning, and the promotion of public transport over private car use to reduce congestion and make the urban environment more attractive amongst others.

What is clear is that if we are to see integrated investment programmes in city areas, as proposed by the Commission, it is vital that Passenger Transport Executives form a part of any development discussions.

Question 2:**A. Are there certain Common Strategic Framework objectives which might be more suited to thematic, 'issue-based' programmes? (Page 11)**A Yes No Not sure**B. If so, why?**

Comments:

Programmes should be designed and implemented at the right spatial level, and based around existing spatial and economic strategies. This is especially true in large metropolitan areas which are also functional economic geographies, where having programmes which operate differently is very counter productive. While it might make sense to operate science and innovation policy at a national level; social inclusion, labour and employment mobility and SME competitiveness are better programmed and delivered where the appropriate governance and administration arrangements exist, for instance at city-region level, and where existing UK statutory Local Transport Plans already exist and are being implemented.

C. And what mechanisms would be required to ensure sufficient local flexibility and involvement in decision-making and strategic guidance?

Comments:

This would depend, to a certain extent, on the administrative arrangements in a given area, however where a Passenger Transport Executive exists the local administrative arrangements will usually allow for locally responsive and flexible arrangements to be put in place if they don't already exist. This would allow for building on existing arrangements rather than the creation of any new mechanisms, and would also allow for the implementation of Integrated Territorial

Investments in a limited number of cities in accordance with the requirements set out by the Commission.

Question 3:

A. Where does your organisation see opportunities for more localised place-based programmes or projects within programmes and for which Funds or combination of Funds? (Page 11)

Comments:

In city areas we can see a clear need for better alignment between ERDF and ESF, to better link employment and training opportunities, however we would also want to include some aspects of Horizon 2020 in here too, especially where this can be applied to transport research.

We appreciate that the method of delivery and level of European competition that will apply to Horizon 2020 will make this difficult to do. We would, however, welcome recognition that there is a need to perform transport research and that there is EU funding available to do this and believe that this could make programming an easier task.

We would also want to see Territorial Co-operation given some consideration here. From a transport perspective we have seen a number of benefits to using the trans-national opportunities afforded by Interreg. Not least of these is the ability to network and share experience and best practice with colleagues from across the Union, but also the opportunities to share and benefit from technological developments and advances. This helps to broaden the knowledge and experience of local actors and can at the same time develop new markets internally and externally to the EU.

B. How would this improve outcomes?

Comment:

Being able to integrate transport provision with planned ERDF developments and ESF funded schemes would give clear benefits in terms of linking areas of deprivation with economic activities and opportunities, and in developing better integrated and holistic responses to local needs.

Through the availability of LTP funding to use as match for European funds the Passenger Transport Executives would be able to bring real added value at a local level, not only financially but also in linking coherently to local strategies. For example the LSTF on Merseyside is a package of small projects which when brought together have a considerable impact on the economic growth of the area linking the private, voluntary and local authority sectors.

Being able to integrate transport provision with planned ERDF developments and ESF funded schemes would give clear benefits in terms of linking areas of deprivation with economic activities and opportunities, and in developing better integrated and holistic responses to local needs.

These points apply equally to Territorial Co-operation programmes. Transport has to remain a key feature of these programmes, effective urban transport is a vital combination of hard and soft measures and Territorial Co-operation provides an ideal forum for the development of many effective soft measures which would not be supported without European funding. The

Connecting Europe facility is too capital focused to be of benefit to developing such soft measures and geographically limited in that it does apply to intra-urban transport. No European city can claim to have mastered urban transport, but without the support of Territorial Co-operation programmes and the sharing of experience they allow we will always remain a long way from effective systems.

Question 4: What key things need to change in the way the Funds are currently used in order to reduce the administrative burden involved, whilst conforming to EU management control requirements? (Page 11)

Comments:

Having the ability to programme ERDF and ESF together would be a good step closer to reducing the administrative burden, however the major burden in managing EU funded projects comes from the audit requirements imposed on project and programme managers. We appreciate the need for stringent monitoring regimes where large amounts of public funding are involved, however in the UK we are already subject to clear accounting and reporting rules. We strongly believe that existing processes should be used, for instance district audit certification, which is sufficiently rigorous for UK purposes should also be enough to satisfy EU requirements.

This would also allow us to overcome difficulties which arise through changes in staffing and resultant different interpretations of guidance – a consistent, locally driven approval process alongside a clear and established audit regime would help to avoid some of the irregularities which can occur.

Question 5:

A. Are there specific combinations of Funds, or elements of Funds, which lend themselves to operating in joined-up programme arrangements? (Page 12)

A Yes No Not sure

Comments:

From a transport point of view we would wish to see a joining up of ERDF and ESF. We would also wish to see some consideration of how Horizon 2020 could possibly be integrated here even though it is not a CSF fund.

We would also want to see Interreg given some consideration here too. From a transport perspective we have seen a number of benefits to using the trans-national opportunities afforded by Interreg. Not least of these is the ability to network and share experience and best practice with colleagues from across the Union, but also the opportunities to share and benefit from technological developments and advances. This helps to broaden the knowledge and experience of local actors and can at the same time develop new markets internally and externally to the EU.

B. If so, what kind of complementary measures and outcomes would you want to see?

Comments:

The key focus for us would be a clear focus on a joined up approach to growth at a local (city-wide) level.

Question 6: Where does your organisation see opportunities for using some of the options proposed by the Commission to promote more localised and co-ordinated programming, such as Joint Action Plans, Integrated territorial Investments and Community-Led Local Development? (Page 11)

Comments:

Our preference would be for Integrated Territorial Investments managed at city level in a limited number of cities. This would help the UK to comply with the Commission requirement to establish a number of ITIs at city level while also providing integrated economic development programmes at an appropriate level.

Outside ITIs, we can see some scope for Joint Action Plans focused on transport activity which could be led by PTEs where appropriate, however we see this as an inferior option to the integration offered through ITIs.

Question 7: Are there any other specific points you wish to be considered which are not covered by the other questions (Page 12)?

Comments:

None at present, however we welcome the opportunity to comment at an early stage of this process and hope to be able to contribute throughout the development of the next programmes. We see a clear and key role for the Passenger Transport Executives in this.

Please use this space for any general comments that you may have, comments on the layout of this consultation would also be welcomed.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge receipt of individual responses unless you tick the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

At BIS we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be okay if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

No

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