

**Consultation Response Form**

**Consultation closing date: 5.00pm on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2014**  
**Your comments must reach us by that date and time**

**2014 to 2020 European Structural and  
Investment Funds Growth Programme in  
England: Consultation on European  
Regional Development Fund Operational  
Programmes**



European Structural and Investment Funds  
Growth Programme for England (2014-2020)

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.</b> |  |
| Reason for confidentiality:   |  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Name:  |   |
| Please tick if you are responding on behalf of your organisation.    | x |
| Name of Organisation (if applicable): Nottinghamshire County Council |   |

Please mark the box that best describes you as a respondent.

|                                     |                               |                          |                       |                          |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | LEP                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Private Business      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Opt-In Organisation   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Local Authority               | <input type="checkbox"/> | University            | <input type="checkbox"/> | Core Cities           |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Civil Society                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Further Education     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chambers of Commerce  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Growth Programme Board Member | <input type="checkbox"/> | Social Partner        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rural Community Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Local Action Group            | <input type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Partner | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other                 |

Please specify if marked as 'Other':

## **ERDF Operational Programme Questions**

1. What priorities and activities should the European Regional Development Funds focus on to deliver local growth and jobs?

Comments:

Those which are included in the local LEP EU-SIF, namely:

- Innovation
- ICT
- SME competitiveness
- Low Carbon

The County Council is implementing a broadband plan as part of the BD-UK national programme, with support from ERDF in the current programme. Improving digital connectivity is important particularly for the rural parts of our County in enabling them to compete effectively in the global market place. The current broadband plan seeks to put in place fast connections for 90% of county premises. We would like to see broadband included as an eligible activity in the next programme within the ICT heading. This would provide ongoing opportunities to enhance the BD-UK programme, for example through demand stimulation work with businesses, and so we welcome its inclusion in the Consultation document.

Nottinghamshire County Council is also supportive of the priorities included in the D2N2 EU-SIF around transport, environmental protection and climate change. All of these factors impact on the overall climate for business growth and are thus important issues for economic development.

Vulnerability to localised flooding threatens the resilience of some local businesses, while pinch points in the local transport network will act as barriers to growth if left unaddressed, with potential to impact on trade and commuting flows. Development of green and blue infrastructure, whilst it contributes widely to economic growth, can be costly and such costs are difficult to recover from inclusion in the price of goods and services. A sustainable environment, protected from negative impacts such as flood risk and well-connected in terms of transport offers many benefits to the business community, affecting both inward investment opportunities and indigenous company expansion and growth.

2. What are the key needs and opportunities that should underpin the Operational Programme to meet what is needed locally?

Comments:

The national strategy refers to industrial hinterlands: areas outside of major cities but with urban centres historically associated with industry. Nottinghamshire would largely fall into this category, although there are also more rural parts of the County containing small market towns such as Newark and Retford. Industrial change has affected Nottinghamshire like the rest of the UK, but the county continues to have a sizeable proportion of manufacturing industry. Recent high profile cases like the imminent closure of UK Coal's last remaining Nottinghamshire colliery point to an ongoing need for restructuring and support for enterprise development and growth, in order to bring replacement and additional job opportunities.

Of concern generally is that the business base of the area is relatively small given the size of its population. Entrepreneurial activity is generally low, particularly in the north of the County, and so the focus of the both the D2N2 EU SIF and the National Operational Programme on support for SME start-up and growth is welcome.

Innovation is seen as comparatively low with a low proportion of employment in knowledge intensive industries. The County Council as a partner in three innovation centres is playing its own part in encouraging the spread of innovation amongst Nottinghamshire companies. We also recognise the opportunities provided by the two major Higher Education institutions in Nottinghamshire: the University of Nottingham and Nottingham. The map in the OP on page 19 does not reference either of these institutions in the top 20 list of universities with SME interactions and we would be keen to see them develop this role in the next programming period, with the implications that brings for improving the proportion of employment in knowledge intensive industries and thus increasing the quality of jobs.

Identified opportunities also include growth in some particular sectors, especially the low carbon economy, which is referenced as a key sector in the D2N2 EU SIF. We note that the European thematic objective on low carbon lends itself well to support for growth in this sector. There are forecasts for increased global trade, partly associated with anticipated growth at East Midlands airport, and increased use of ICT connections and technologies to improve and expand both products and services and client reach. This is another reason why Nottinghamshire County Council supports the inclusion within the ERDF Operational Programme of broadband infrastructure, particularly for focus on enabling SMEs to make the most of newly available technologies to extend activities and reach.

3. How can the European Regional Development Fund be used alongside other European and national funds to achieve economic growth?

Comments:

The D2N2 LEP, in which the County Council is a partner, is already working on joining up its Single Growth Fund to work with the EU funds where possible. We are also committed in principle to nearly all of the opt-in offers available, subject to being able to agree local priorities with the opt-in providers.

Specific projects developed out of joint working with the LEP via the SEP such as the Growth Hub development will see a co-ordination of business support activity and intelligence and will see a shared understanding of and responses to business needs locally.

It is useful to take account of existing relationships within local LEP areas and key delivery organisations, such as the Universities, to facilities cross-theme working and project-level collaborations.

4. How do you think we could effectively promote and demonstrate the performance of the Programme and impact of the European Regional Development Funds?

Comments:

Collect data on the following:

Jobs created

Enterprises supported

New enterprises (start-ups) supported

Business births rate (increasing) and deaths rate (decreasing).

Survival rates, growth rates

SME-University collaborations

Productivity improvements / improvements in performance in individual companies

Private sector investment

GVA growth.

Tools for promotion and demonstration: case studies, preferably showcasing success of individuals, to make the programme real for others. We have seen this done by the Prince's Trust with regard to their business support programmes with good effect, and which also had the outcome of generating further referrals / clients for their programmes. Nottinghamshire Business Venture also has some good case studies available.

We would like to see regular updates that were also targeted at business audiences, e.g. via the Notts Business Engagement Group, on what the overall programme is achieving. This will also help to generate further engagement with the business community in programme-type activities aimed at that sector.

5. How do you envisage implementing the cross cutting themes locally?

Comments:

We would envisage a consideration of the cross cutting themes of equalities and environmental sustainability as part of the assessment of every proposal to be funded using the ERDF.

Recording of assistance to people from disadvantaged groups should be a standard part of monitoring.

Growth aspirations can impact on environmental conditions, for example through increased energy demands and increased commuter flows into major cities. Inclusion of activities focused on ICT, and opportunities for mitigation through the environmental protection and transport themes, will be factors in addressing this.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Please acknowledge this reply.</b> |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|

|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| E-mail address for acknowledgement: |
|-------------------------------------|

Completed responses should be sent to the details below by **5.00pm on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2014.**

Send by post to:

ERDF Operational Programme Consultation  
2014 to 2020 European Programme Team  
Department for Communities and Local Government  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5DU

Send by email to:

[esif@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:esif@communities.gsi.gov.uk)