

EUROPEAN FUNDING IN LONDON

Benefiting London with European Funding

July 2003 Issue 1

Welcome to European Funding in London, a quarterly newsletter designed to provide an overview of the latest information about the London Objective 2 and Urban II Programme and the London Objective 3 Programme.

Inside this first issue we will provide a short overview of each programme, two news articles featuring the Fast Forward Grants Celebration Event and the Ministerial Visit to the Wyn Garrett Tenants' Participation Project in Tower Hamlets.

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OBJECTIVE 3

The Programme Explained

Objective 3 is a national programme funded through the European Social Fund (ESF). It is managed centrally by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) but administered regionally by the Government Office for London (GOL). It is one of several Structural Funds operating in the UK.

The Objective 3 Programmes aims primarily to tackle barriers to labour market participation experienced by the unemployed and the socially excluded. Support is available for work to enhance adaptability, develop entrepreneurship and promote lifelong learning. There is also the opportunity to provide some support for young people within the schools system.

Progress by Co-financing Organisations (CFOs)

All CFOs held tendering rounds in late 2002 and early 2003 and most have now published the outcomes of these rounds. GOL is commissioning a review on the extent to which targets in Co-financing Plans and the Regional Development Plan are being met by CFOs in London, with recommendations on where improvements to delivery could be made.

The outcome of GOL's review will assist in reaching decisions on whether revisions need to be made to the RDP in order to inform Co-financing Plans for 2005-2008, which will be drafted in early 2004. The new Plans will also reflect the outcome of the second evaluation by Fraser Associates on the extent to which co-financing in England is achieving its' objectives and, more widely, the outcome of DWP's mid-term review of the programme.

Proposed increases to allocations for current Co-financing Plans

GOL has been successful in securing additional funds from DWP essentially from programme under-spends on national and centrally funded projects managed directly by DWP. This helped enable the Objective 3 Support and Advisory Group, which met on 19 June, to endorse an additional £41m funding for some of the current Co-financing Plans. This will enable further projects to be supported from recent heavily over-subscribed tendering rounds and enable some CFOs to run further rounds.

CFO Contact and future tendering round details can be found on the GOL website at www.go-london.gov.uk

Capacity Building

GOL has offered six months extended funding to 9 capacity building

organisations and is continuing to assess the position on capacity building in London, making recommendations on a way forward which takes account of issues arising from the outcome of research undertaken by partner organisations and from findings emerging from the mid-term review.

Global Grants

Greater London Enterprise recent application round has attracted around 750 applications. Decisions on projects to be supported were made by the London Global Grants Partnership Committee on 25 June.

Technical Assistance

In both the Objective 2 and Objective 3 Programmes there is provision for Technical Assistance (TA) funding to support programme implementation, management, evaluation and information/publicity. Each programme has around £3.5m for TA. Examples of projects include:

- Support for the voluntary and community sector (projects and policy) and the LA sector
- Reviewing the RDP with the London Development Agency.
- Support for Objective 2 Area Partnerships.
- Support for Objective 3 Co-financing Organisations
- Support for a project to look at and improve equal opportunities and ensure that good practice is mainstreamed throughout both Objective 2 and 3.
- Research into ethnic minority led businesses to help target the Objective 2 Programme.

The priorities for funding with guidance can be found at www.go-london.gov.uk/europeanprogramme/objective3.sp

Work and Pensions Select Committee

In February 2003 the Work and Pensions Select Committee announced an inquiry to examine the effectiveness of DWP's administration of ESF in the UK. This includes the role of DWP and Government Offices in administering ESF; the European Commission's role in setting the amounts and priorities within the Structural Funds; the effect on DWP's departmental budget and priorities; and the selection, administration and monitoring of programmes.

The inquiry began in early May and the Committee has been hearing evidence. For Government Offices, GO-Y&H and GO-SW submitted oral evidence to the inquiry on 21 May, which had been prepared in consultation with other GOs. It is not currently known when the Committee will report.

Mid-term review of Objective 3 Operational Programme for England

The mid-term review of the England Programme is due to start soon. It will consist of a number of inter-related elements and include the mid-term evaluation of the programme; mid-term verification of additionality; and programme performance. The European Commission's Guidelines for the review are expected to be published shortly. The review must be submitted to the European Commission by 31 Dec 2003. The England Programme is on target in terms of spend and achievement of beneficiary outputs.

Partners and Government Offices are being approached for contributions to the mid-term evaluation, which is being carried out partly in-house by DWP and partly by consultants. Elements of the evaluation include the Objective 3 Leavers' Survey; programme management and administration arrangements; co-financing and cross-cutting themes. The Objective 3 England Programme Monitoring Committee will consider the findings of the evaluation in early autumn.

FASTFORWARD CELEBRATION EVENT

The Objective 3 programme for 2000 - 2006 aims to develop a global grants programme. Fast Forward Grants (formerly called Global Grants) seeks to increase the stock of social capital in local communities to improve economic and social cohesion through small, locally developed and locally managed projects that tackle problems of unemployment, employability and exclusion. The maximum funding per project is £10,000.

There is flexibility about the kind of activities that can be funded, but all must demonstrate progress towards the labour market. Projects should include:

- basic skills training and confidence building aimed at difficult to reach target groups
- development of enterprise and the social economy
- development of social cohesion.



Fast Forward Roger Whitfield (right)

The Event

Fast Forward Grants' Roger Whitfield opened the celebration with a big thank you to all the participating projects. Commenting on the fact that much of the work is voluntary he praised their boundless enthusiasm, which has been instrumental to the programme's success. He was also keen to stress the important role played by the Greater London Enterprise (GLE) and GOL. The European Social Fund, administered by GOL, provides 45% of the total.

The programme's success is reflected by the increasing number of funded projects, which rose to 304 by March this year. The event focused on project presentations that outlined their aims and achievements.

The African Refugees Project

This project provides basic IT training. African Refugees learn how to produce a newsletter and write articles. Designed to help participants secure employment they are taught desktop publishing, are encouraged to improve their communication skills and increase their confidence and ability to seek out local news stories. The project has successfully enrolled all its trainees on GVNO courses at Camberwell College and one trainee has gained full time employment.

Allegresse Theatre Company

Allegresse seeks to address issues of race and diversity in communities, and provides around six hundred school workshops every year. Running since 1992, the theatre company holds special dance and acting workshops for local adults who have the talent to break in to the entertainment industry. The intensive four- week course offers trainees increased confidence, discipline and a chance to experience other cultures. Trainees have been able to find employment in the dance/theatre industry.



Buzz groups in action

The day was rounded off with buzz groups allowing for an opportunity to share experiences and gain knowledge from one another. Everybody was chatting away with one another and it proved quite difficult for Roger to break up the discussions! In all it was a successful day and a great opportunity to network.

MINISTERIAL VISIT TO WYN GARRETT TENANTS' PARTICIPATION PROJECT

Minister for London Tony McNulty received an enthusiastic welcome when he officially opened the Wyn Garrett Tenants Resource Centre in Tower Hamlets on the 28th May.

Wyn Garret is an innovative project which focuses on empowering local residents, by enabling them to improve their employment skills. It also encourages lifelong learning and greater tenant participation in community issues. Consulting tenants and giving people the opportunity to be involved in making decisions affecting their homes is key to the effective delivery of decent housing services.

The centre is part funded by Objective 3 of the European Social Fund, receiving around £145,000 from the fund, an amount matched by £180,000 from Tower Hamlets Council. This funding is crucial to the running of the centre. In total



Tony McNulty (far left) outside the Wyn Garrett Centre

the Objective 3 programme provides London with around £420 million between 2000 and 2006.

After unveiling the centre's new plaque, Tony congratulated the first candidates to complete their training before presenting them with their certificates. He emphasised the importance of participation by all age groups in lifelong learning, commenting that "it used to be the case that peoples' opportunities were scuppered if they left school at 14" but now there is much greater scope for individuals to develop their skills. He went on to say "as a former teacher I really appreciate the value and immense satisfaction that learning can bring to individuals and how they can use their newly developed skills to enhance their own lives and to encourage others."

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-Tony McNulty
Minister for London

The ceremony was rounded off with a tour of the centre, which the Minister found fascinating.



Presentation ceremony

OBJECTIVE 2

The Objective 2 Programme aims to achieve economic and social cohesion in London. Areas that have been awarded Objective 2 status are able to gain financial assistance through access to European Structural Funds. The Structural Funds can support certain activities which support the Programme's aim.

There are just over 853,000 people living in the Objective 2 area, which covers 95 wards of 13 London Boroughs. It is broken down into the following four sub groups:

- West London
- Upper Lee
- Inner East
- Outer Thames Gateway

There are two types of funding available in London, European Regional Development (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF). While ERDF is used mainly for improvements in infrastructure, productive investment, local development, and the environment, ESF is used to finance training activities and resource development.

The Programme is broken down into three Priorities.

- Priority 1 – Community Economic Development
- Priority 2 - Business Development and Competitiveness
- Priority 3 – Infrastructure, Premises, and Environment

The Objective 2 program runs from 2000 – 2006 and recently underwent a Mid-Term Evaluation (please see following article). In light of the MTE and in connection with the London Development Agency, Business Link for London, and our consultation with the Area Partnerships, GOL is currently involved in many exciting developments within the Programme.

The Priority One Bidding Guidance has recently been issued. The Bidding Guidance will enable the Area Partnerships to begin their Priority 1 bidding rounds shortly. At the moment, we're working closely with Business Link to develop a forward strategy for Priority 2. We're also collaborating with The London Development Agency to formulate a Priority 3 strategy for the remainder of the program.

For more information on the objectives, vision, and strategy of Objective 2, please visit our website at

www.go-london.gov.uk/europeanprogramme

MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE LONDON OBJECTIVE 2 PROGRAMME 2000-2006

The mid-term evaluation of the 2000 – 2006 London Objective 2 programme is a requirement by the European Commission.

What will it do?

The mid-term evaluation will establish how well the programme is delivering what it set out to deliver, test the continued relevance of the programme strategy and recommend any action necessary to improve programme quality and performance for the second half of the Programming period.

The evaluation will allow a judgement to be made on progress which is being made towards the achievement of key programme output and spend targets. Achievement of the output targets will result in more

money being allocated to the Programme by the European Commission.

The mid-term evaluation will give us the knowledge to recommend changes, if any, to the administration of the London Objective 2 Programme. It also gave us the opportunity to find out what yourselves, other partners and projects really thought of the Programme and act upon the evaluation and advice as far as possible.

The evaluation will also inform Government, on how well the Objective 2 programme is performing

Who Has Been Appointed?

Following a tender process last year, ECOTEC Research & Consulting Limited was appointed

Where Are We Now

We have received the final report of the Mid – Term Evaluation of Objective 2, which was put forward to the London European Programmes Committee on the 8th of July to accept the report and discuss the recommendations.

In turn, this will then be sent to the European Commission in September/October time for acceptance. Look out for an update in our October issue.

THE LONDON EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES COMMITTEE

The London European Programmes Committee (LEPC) advises the Government Office for London (GOL) on the overall direction of the Objective 2 and 3 Programmes. It ensures that there is strategic coherence between London's Structural Fund Programmes and other pan London, local and sub-regional strategies in order to promote joined-up working and to maximise the impact of the funds on the capital.

It is the Programme Monitoring Committee for the Objective 2 and Regional Committee for Objective 3.

The LEPC meet once a quarter to discuss and advise on various issues for both programmes. A full list of members can be found on the GOL website under the European Structural Funds section.

