

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE EDC 03-01(p5)

14 FEBRUARY 2001

UPDATE ON EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDS PROGRAMMES

Objective 1

The Objective One Programme Monitoring Committee met on 5 February, to complete the business held over from the previous meeting in December. The meeting's discussions included the following points:

- The members of the Policy Group had now been appointed;
- The members of the Strategy Partnerships would also be selected by a sub-group of the PMC, to be functioning by March;
- The remaining unallocated population under Priority 3 was allocated to the St James ward in Caerphilly county borough;
- In principle, partnership members from the private and voluntary sectors would be eligible for travel and subsistence supported by Technical Assistance, but match funding would have to be provided by lead bodies.
- Next meeting of Objective 1 PMC 19th March

As at 9 February, a total of 88 projects had been approved with Structural Funds support of £72.5 million. A list of approved projects identifying match funding will be provided for the next meeting of the Committee: the latest list (not identifying match funding) is available on the WEFO website.

The Single Programming Document identifies a profile for commitments which need to be spent within two years of the end of each calendar year. Projections are that £22 million will be spent under ERDF by the end of March 2001. WEFO has received approximately £54 million in advances from the European Commission, which scores against the spending targets.

The recommendations of the Task and Finish Group, which reported to the December meeting of the Programme Monitoring Committee, have been taken forward by the implementation sub-group and now the Policy Group. The members of the Policy Group, chosen by a sub-committee of the PMC, are:

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| Hilary Davies | W Wales Chamber of Commerce | Neville Davies | Carmarthenshire County Council |
| Graham Benfield | Wales Council for Voluntary Action | Bill Goldsworthy | National Farmers Union |

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| Damien O'Brien | European Affairs Division | Sheila Potter | Conwy County Borough Council |
| Grenville Jackson | Mid Wales TEC/ CETW (from 1/4) | Michael Lawley | Cooke Arkwright |
| Lynne Thomas | Antur Teifi | | |

The first meeting of the Policy Group was chaired by Christine Chapman AM and its second meeting took place on 12 February.

Objective 2

The Objective 2 SPD was agreed by the Commission's ERDF Committee on 19 December. It will be formally signed off by Commissioner Barnier later this month without any further changes. I will be making public my appointments to the new Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) very shortly and expect that it will hold its first meeting within the next few weeks. The PMC will be constituted on the "three thirds" basis of equal public, private and voluntary sector representation.

Work on the Programme Complement has already started and I expect a full draft to be available at the first meeting of the PMC.

The first meeting of the PMC will also have the opportunity to discuss the proposed arrangements for implementation of the programme developed by the East Wales Partnership, Assembly officials and WEFO

It is currently estimated that the programme will formally start in April once the PMC has had the opportunity to fully discuss the Programme Complement before giving its final approval.

Objective 3

The first round of applications (the September round) have been appraised . All applicants have been told the status of their application. Project approvals as at 9 February had reached a total of 93 projects with ESF funding of £10.9 million. A further 42 projects that failed to meet the quality threshold were improved and the revised applications are awaiting validation by DfEE during week beginning 12 February. WEFO will issue approvals as soon as the validation is complete.

The second round of applications is underway. The projects will need to fit into an approved action plan and be supported by the relevant Partnership. Prior to the completion of full project application forms applicants have completed a proforma. Scoring panels comprising members of the Partnerships have appraised and ranked the proformas received. Each of the scoring panel members received appropriate training in the appraisal process from WEFO.

Action Plans have been submitted by the Objective 3 Partnerships and are being assessed. WEFO expects to approve the plans by 16th February .

Future action is planned as follows:

- **16-23 February** Partnerships meet to consider outcomes of the scoring panels and prioritise projects against relevant Regional/Local Action Plans
- **23rd February** Partnerships submit their prioritised list of project to WEFO. Partnerships to notify project applicants accordingly (including giving advice on appeals procedure)
- **2nd March** WEFO issues full application forms to projects whose applications have been recommended for approval by partnerships
- **12th March** Objective 3 Programme Monitoring Committee Meeting
- **16th March** Full applications to WEFO
- **19th March-6th April** WEFO undertakes the scoring process, eligibility etc
- **Week commencing 9th April** WEFO issues approvals after validation checks have been completed by DfEE

All Partnerships have indicative financial allocations for every Priority and Measure up to December 2002.