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Welcome

Welcome to issue 57 of the North West Network Newsletter.

In this edition, we are able to bring to you the very latest information relating to the Objective 2 Programme. Also included is a round up of the Objective 3 Programme detailing all the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC's) recent and current bidding rounds.

Other articles include the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) Consultation, Research into the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Sustainability, European Institutions' new Web Identity, Global Grants Showcase and the newest European members. In addition we have details of the ICT event, Equal goes Digital and the Building and Sustaining Infrastructure Services (BASIS) Launch.

The Volunteer Management Team has produced an update article on the Big Coaching Project. Other articles within their section include the Tameside Coaching Project, Centre for European Volunteering (CEV) England Volunteering Development Council and the Commission on the Future of Volunteering.

Also included, we have a brief up date for One North West (1NW).

As usual you will also find within this Newsletter the latest News, Training and Events, Publications and Noticeboard sections.

North West Network is looking to recruit new members to its Board of Trustees. Within this mailing you will find an information flyer, so if you feel you could contribute to the success of North West Network and provide support through the role of a trustee, then please complete the flyer and return it to us. A full recruitment pack will then be sent out to you. If you require any information surrounding trustee recruitment, please contact Jane Stanistreet on 0161 236 6493 or E-mail jane@nwnetwork.org.uk.

Please feel that you can contact us with your views and, if you have any information that you would like to submit to the North West Network Newsletter please E-mail info@nwnetwork.org.uk

Staff Profile

The Newsletter begins with a staff profile, kindly contributed by Bob Allen, North West Network Chair.

Hello to all readers,

I joined the board of North West Network in 1997 and was appointed as chair in 2000.

My role is to lead the board of trustees who have the key responsibility for providing strategic direction for the company and its staff.

As a board we have recently had a successful visioning day with the staff that will certainly help in further developing the strategic direction of North West Network. This strategic development is going to be very important for the company and its membership as we see potential changes in EU and other major funding regimes over the next 12 to 18 months.

In addition to our continuing and important role in support for EU funding applications and advice you will see evidence in newsletters of a broadening of our programme of support through 1NW, the volunteer management team offering training to volunteer managers and to volunteering infrastructure organisations and also training in outcomes focused planning. We have recently been successful in securing a major grant from the Big Lottery Fund that will support the further development of our volunteer management programme.

It will be important that we continue to renew and refresh the board of North West Network. We have had a number of board members resign due to changes in their employment and you will see within the newsletter an advertisement for new board members. If you believe you have skills that will provide strategic direction and leadership to North West Network do not hesitate to contact the office.

Whilst any time in the life of a voluntary and community organisation is both rewarding and challenging, the changes in funding regimes, decline of major grant funding through EU and public agencies and the emergence of local area agreements, commissioned services and contracts make it increasingly important that the sector is provided with continuing support across the region. North West Network will continue to provide a

range of support to the sector to ensure that we can all continue to deliver important services and projects with our local communities.

In my day job I am the Executive Director of two Groundwork Trusts - Wigan and Chorley, and Lancashire West. I have been employed within Groundwork for 15 years and prior to that was an agricultural economist for 14 years and salesman for three.

Outside of work my wife and I are trustees of a local charity in Pendle that provides services to one of the most deprived wards in the North West.

I hope all readers gain value from the work of North West Network and this newsletter. Do not hesitate to contact the staff with comments and ideas for the future.

Best wishes,

Bob Allen
Chair

Objective 2 (ERDF) Programme Performance

The Objective 2 Advisory Group at its meeting in Blackburn on 13 March 2006 received a report from the European Programme Executive at Government Office for the North West (GONW) about the performance of the Objective 2 element of the Structural Fund Programme 2000 – 2006.

The voluntary and community sector was represented at the meeting by John Hacking the Senior European Officer from North West Network and Mark Dawson from Voluntary Sector North West (VSNW).

Total spend for the programme so far is at £344.9 million which is still £50 million short of the 2006 n+2 target. For those of you who like this sort of thing n+2 is the principle by which the spend required of a programme under the Berlin Profile is calculated. N is the commitment year and +2 is the year by the end of which funds committed in N have to be spent or returned.

It was reported that GONW is taking action to ensure that the n+2 target is met and that the relatively low level of spend this year is at least in part caused by the fact that a number of plans and measures have now reached 90% of contracted spend and this means that no further payments can be processed until the final audits have been completed.

Another development which may be of interest is that guidance notes on programme closure are being produced at national level and these will soon be available to us. This will determine how programmes are to be closed down as we approach the end of this programming period (2000-2006).

The Objective 2 Advisory Group meets quarterly and is responsible for the management of the Objective 2 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) section of the Structural Funds Programme in the North West.

The next meeting will be held on 12 June 2006.

If you would like to know more about the Objective 2 Advisory Group and what it does then please contact John Hacking, Senior European Officer at North West Network on 0161 236 6493 or E-mail at john@nwnetwork.org.uk. Additionally if there are any issues you would like North West Network to take up at the Objective 2 Advisory Group on your behalf please contact John.

Objective 3 Regional Roundup

LSC Greater Manchester

LSC Greater Manchester has published their Fifth ESF Co-financing Prospectus for their 2004-2006 ESF Co-financing Programme. The total amount available across all available measures is £12 million and applications are invited for projects running between 1 October 2006 and 31 December 2007.

LSC Greater Manchester operates a two stage application to tender process. The deadline for the first stage applications to be submitted under this round was 12.00 noon 19 May 2006. The stage one results will be available on 12 June 2006, and successful applicants will be notified immediately to send a stage two form.

The deadline for the second stage applications is 7 July 2006. Final results for this prospectus will be announced on 7 August 2006.

LSC Cumbria

Learning and Skills Council Cumbria has secured further funding through the Objective 3 Programme in addition to funding through the Local Intervention and Development Fund (LID) and called a further bidding round.

The deadline under this call was 16.30 hrs 2 June 2006. Most projects under this call must run for at least one year and end no later than December 2007.

LSC Cheshire and Warrington

There are currently no open invitations to tender for Cheshire and Warrington LSC. Please refer to the North West Network website to keep updated.

LSC Lancashire

Following the launch of Lancashire Round 4 Prospectus on 6 January 2006 for ESF Co-finance monies, a total of 105 proposals seeking over £19 million ESF were received. Project appraisal and selection has now been finalised, and LSC Lancashire have published their Round 4 Results.

The project assessment and appraisal process incorporated a number of distinct stages:

- Assessment panels comprising of 2 LSC staff and wherever possible, 1 external partner scored each tender;
- The recommendations from this process were reviewed by a group consisting of LSC Lancashire's senior managers and members of the Local Intervention and Development (LID) Steering Group. North West Network is a member of LSC LID Steering Group;
- The Board of LSC Lancashire made the final approval.

105 project proposals were submitted across all sectors with 34 being submitted by the voluntary and community sector. A total of over £19 million was requested across all sectors, £4,390,266 was requested by the voluntary and community sector. Across all sectors 28 project proposals were successful, 9 of these coming from the voluntary and community sector. £5,415,510 was successfully secured in Round 4 with £785,806 coming to the voluntary and community sector. In addition three project proposals are being placed on a reserve list and will be invited to enter into contracting discussions should funding become available before the closure of LSC Lancashire's current Co-finance Plan one of which is from the voluntary and community sector.

LSC Greater Merseyside

There are currently no open invitations to tender for LSC Greater Merseyside. Please refer to the North West Network website to keep updated.

Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus North West has produced their Co-financing Prospectus for the European Social Fund Objective 3 Round 3. For further information under this call please read the separate article on Jobcentre Plus ESF Co-financing Round 3.

North West LSC Region

The North West LSC Region has published 2 invitations to tender (ITT's). The 2 invitations to tender are:

£120,000 NWLSC (0508) 3.1d

Capacity Building for Digital Aerial Installation skills

The LSC has been in dialogue with the DTI and Digital UK to establish the level and demand for skills development to meet the needs of Digital Aerial Installers, to support the number of installations anticipated through the switchover period.

£87,500 NWLSC (0508) 4.1g

Increasing Accreditation for Energy Efficiency

As part of the Government's strategy to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions, changes to Building Regulations in 2005 require that energy efficient condensing boilers must now be fitted in new buildings and as replacement for old boilers in residential settings.

The closing date for applications to be received at Cheshire and Warrington LSC is 12.00 noon Friday 7 July.

Further information and supporting documentation can be found at www.lsc.gov.uk/NR/exeres/81239C95-5B12-4900-8218-54868EF6E5CD.htm

It is important that you download the correct version of the proposal form (version 6 – issued 3 April 2006) if you are submitting an application, as the LSC will not be accepting applications that are made using previous versions.

A briefing session will be held on 14 June at 10.00 am at Cheshire & Warrington LSC. The briefing session will cover both tenders. To download the booking form please visit

www.lsc.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/ecb4vofjkwxz7iInktfanmImpn6wtkf337veg2jmlyz2l2bijb7x72krsdmfbo3dedjf2x6uahjbbp/nwr-LSCBriefingFaxBackForm-fm-14jun2006.doc

You need to return this form by 8 June to guarantee a place.

Alternative Bidding Round 13

A call for bids has been made by Government Office for the North West under the ESF Objective 3 Programme. Round 13 was open to measures 1.2, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 5.1. Applications for projects running between 1 July 2006 and 31 December 2007 were being requested under this round. The deadline for submission of completed voluntary and community sector applications to North West Network was 12.00 noon 2 June 2006. Round 13 specifically seek projects that will deliver higher level skills activity (NVQ Level 4 or above) which falls outside the remit of Co-financing organisations. The only exceptions to higher level skills activity were for projects of a research nature under Measures 2.2 and 5.1. Results for this round will become available at the end of June 2006.

If you require any information on Objective 3, Co-financing or Alternative Bidding, please contact a member of the European Team at North West Network on 0161 236 6493 or E-mail at info@nwnetwork.org.uk.

Jobcentre Plus ESF Co-financing Round 3

Jobcentre Plus North West have produced their Co-financing Prospectus for the European Social Fund Objective 3 Round 3.

The key objectives of Jobcentre Plus North West are:

- To increase the effective labour supply by helping as many unemployed and economically inactive people of working age as possible to move into jobs or self-employment and active competition for jobs by making available to them job vacancies, information, advice, training and support and encouraging employers to open up more opportunities to them.
- To help people of working age in the most disadvantaged groups and areas to move closer to the labour market, compete more effectively for and remain in work and to adjust more quickly to economic change.

Round 3 Prospectus calls for projects that start on 1 January 2007 and end by 31 March 2008. Jobcentre Plus is inviting applications from organisations across the region. Round 3 is open to Measures 1.1, 1.2, 2.2 and 4.3 in Cheshire, Warrington and Halton, 1.2, 2.2 and 4.3 in Cumbria, 1.2, 2.2 and 4.3 in Lancashire and 1.1, 1.2 and 4.3 in the Greater Manchester sub-region.

Funding allocations under this round is as follows:

	Cheshire	Cumbria	Lancashire	Greater Manchester
M1.1	£32,650	Nil	Nil	£32,650
M1.2	£1,000,000	£834,943	£1,000,000	£3,238,784
M2.2	£84,270	£41,870	£156,694	Nil
Total	£1,116,920	£876,813	£1,156,694	£3,271,434
M4.3 across all subregions	£122,988			

The closing date for return of fully completed tenders for projects is 12.00 noon 20 June 2006.

North West Network ran two training events on the Jobcentre Plus Co-financing Prospectus Round 3 aimed exclusively at voluntary and community sector organisations.

If you would like further information on Jobcentre Plus Round 3, or are thinking of putting a project proposal forward, get in touch with North West Network's European Team. We will also be offering a bid improvement service to organisations that are putting a proposal together; the deadline for bid improvement submission is 15 June 2006.

National Strategic Reference Framework Consultation May 2006

Background

North West Network recently carried out a consultation exercise as part of the UK wide consultation on the document which will largely determine the extent and nature of the next round of European funding in the North West.

The following information was circulated to over 700 voluntary and community sector groups on the North West Network database.

The draft National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) was released by the UK Government on 28 February 2006 with the consultation period ending on 22 May 2006.

The NSRF will outline the broad priorities for spending European funds in the period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013. The process of deciding how the European Structural Funds (SFs) will be spent started in 2004 when the European Commission published draft regulations. These are currently being fine tuned by the UK Government and the European Commission. In late 2005 the Commission produced a set of draft community strategic guidelines to set the broad spending priorities for Europe as a whole. Currently each member state is required to produce an NSRF for its own country and then more detailed Operational Programmes will be set up. In short, the process looks something like this:

2004

Draft Structural Fund Regulations produced. These deal with how the funds will be spent.

2005

Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG's) are produced and are consulted on. The CSG's conclude that the SFs should concentrate on three main headings; enhancing regions and cities, encouraging innovation and ICT, and creating more and better jobs (in line with what is known as the Lisbon Agenda)

2006

NSRF produced – The UK NSRF outlines the strengths and weakness of the social and economic climate in the UK and has specific chapters on England, Scotland and Wales. The main conclusions are; despite a healthy economy productivity is still low, we still have many people with low basic skills and the share of the workforce with intermediate skills is low. Compared to our

economic competitors there is relatively low participation by 16-19 year olds in education and training. Also economic activity remains high and many urban areas suffer from high levels of deprivation, social exclusion and poor environments.

2006

Operational Programme. You may be aware that the region needs to develop the Operational Programme document European Funds for the period 2007-2013.

The Operational Programme (OP) will set out the priorities, funding allocations and delivery mechanisms at the programme level. The process of developing the OP is getting underway and we will keep you informed of any opportunities for you to have your say.

The likely effect of the EU Budget deal in December 2005 for 2007-2013 on SF programmes in the United Kingdom is:

- 81.9% of the €308 billion SF spending in Europe will be on a “convergence objective” replacing the current Objective 1, for the poorest member states and regions;
- 15.7% for a “regional competitiveness” and employment objective (replacing objectives 2 and 3 for the rest of the EU);
- 2.4% for a “co-operation” objective, to support cross border and international activities;
- It is estimated that the UK will receive approximately €9.4 billion (2004 prices) compared with €16.6 billion (in 1999) in the 2000-2006 programme.

The NSRF proposes a single European Social Fund programme under Objective 2, to be run at regional level.

Two priorities are proposed:

- extending employment opportunities;
- developing a skilled and adaptable workforce.

The NSRF proposes 4 priorities for the European Regional Development Fund programme:

- promoting innovation and knowledge transfer;
- stimulating enterprise and supporting successful business;
- ensuring sustainable development, production and consumption;
- building sustainable communities.

It is proposed that SFs will be better co-ordinated ('aligned' is the jargon word) with government policy and domestic funding streams.

Outcome of North West Network Consultation

Of the organisations that responded to the consultation the following responses were recorded.

- We wish to see a greater emphasis on social inclusion actions particularly around employability. We believe that emphasis on the Lisbon Agenda ("more jobs, better jobs") should also mean support for actions relating to groups who are distanced from the labour market and who can't be considered 'work ready'.

100% of the organisations who responded agreed with the above statement.

- In line with paragraph 112 of the England Chapter of the NSRF we support the principle of technical assistance to "support partners in the non-governmental sector to participate in and deliver programmes".

92% of the organisations who responded agreed with the above statement.

- We would like to see a substantial Global Grants type programme included in the new Programmes to support smaller projects.

96% of the organisations who responded agreed with the above statement.

- A number of organisations also said they would wish to see, in line with central government policy, a strong link to the developing social enterprise sector.

Next Step

The next stage of the process is for the North West region to develop an OP which outlines in more practical detail how the new european funding will work. Government Office for the North West is commissioning consultants to develop the OP along with key partners and a first draft is anticipated by 21 July 2006. North West Network will keep you informed of developments.

Ombudsman

euro-ombudsman.eu.int

ombudsman.europa.eu

Economic and Social Committee

esc.eu.int

eesc.europa.eu

ces.eu.int

cese.europa.eu

Committee of the Regions

cor.eu.int/

cor.europa.eu

www.cor.eu.int/fr/index.htm

cdr.europa.eu

European Investment Bank

bei.eu.int/

bei.europa.eu

eib.eu.int

eib.europa.eu

For further information please visit:

europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/586&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

Update on the Research into Voluntary and Community Sector Sustainability – Post 2006

Following on from the article in our previous Newsletter (issue 56), the consortium of North West Network, Voluntary Sector North West and Merseyside Network for Europe have now appointed consultants to undertake research into the voluntary and community sector (VCS) sustainability post-2006. The consultants, URS Economics and Development, are well underway with their work to quantify the loss of funding to the sector post 2006 and to assess the impact of this on the sector.

You should have already received an e-mail directing you to an online questionnaire which will help the consultants to assess activity across the region. In addition, URS are interviewing selected VCS thematic case studies across the region, together with a range of funders and public sector bodies.

A dissemination event has also been planned for tuesday 27 June at the JJB Stadium in Wigan. This event will deliver the findings of the research to you, the wider regional VCS, and also to other key regional players and stakeholders. Research recommendations for the sector will be highlighted in order to enable us, as a sector, to plan for change and to engage with the public sector and other funding bodies in future funding delivery. We will be contacting you shortly with further details about the event. In the meantime keep your diaries clear.

Global Grants Showcase

The Global Grants programme is the small grants element of the European Social Fund (ESF).

In Lancashire, the Global Grants fund is called Grants for Growth and is a partnership programme between Lancashire County Council, Lancashire County Developments Ltd.

Lancashire's Grants for Growth is aimed at helping disadvantaged people overcome some of the barriers they face in moving towards opportunities in employment, education, training or volunteering.

Projects must help individuals or groups who are not in paid work; develop their capacity and the skills they need to move towards voluntary work, paid work or training.

North West Network along with Lancashire County Developments Ltd held a Grants for Growth Showcase event at Preston North End Football Club on Friday 3 March 2006.

This event gave organisations the opportunity to find out more about Grants for Growth, speak with deliverers of current projects and network with other organisations.

The event was extremely successful and was attended by representatives of over seventy voluntary and community sector organisations from across Lancashire.

If you would like further information about the Lancashire Grants for Growth programme please contact Collette Taylor at ctaylor@lcdl.co.uk

The Voluntary Sector and Information Technology: Opportunities and Challenges

On June 29 2006 North West Network in conjunction with the North West Regional Assembly will hold a half day event titled 'The Voluntary Sector and Information Technology: Opportunities and Challenges'. The event will take place at UCLAN, Adelphi Building, Adelphi Street, and Preston.

This free half-day event will explore some of the challenges and opportunities that Information Technology presents the voluntary sector in the North West. The event will include presentations from a range of regional ICT experts looking at why this is a crucial issue for the sector and some practical examples of success. There will also be three short workshops looking at various ICT areas in detail.

Website Basics

Are you considering developing a website or do you have a site but think you could get more out of IT? Ian McAdam will explore the basic of how to set up and run a successful site.

VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol)

VOIP is software that lets you use the Internet for telephone calls; offering voluntary sector organisations a cheap alternative to traditional telephone services.

The use of IT in Monitoring and LSC ESF Co-financed Projects

The LSC will offer an insight into how what are the requirements they require to monitor the progress of an ESF Co-financed project, particularly focusing on the requirements of ESF funding.

North West Network recently completed a mailout to all voluntary and community sector organisations across the North West region. If you have not received this booking form you can book online by visiting:

cct.nwnode.org.uk/VSIT/home.asp

European Union's New Members

In May 2004, ten countries acceded to membership of the European Union. The addition of ten countries with varying economies will have an effect on the many different aspects of employment and business in Europe; and of course on the future of European Structural Funds in the UK. In this edition we have selected three of those countries to provide an insight into the economies of those countries and how they will be affected by Structural Funds.

Czech Republic

Czech Republic is a landlocked country, lying in the central part of Europe with a total area of 78,866 sq km. The country borders with Poland, Germany, Austria and Slovakia and has a population of approximately 10.2 million people. It is a parliamentary democracy whose capital is Prague.

Recent History

Following the First World War, the closely related Czechs and Slovaks of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire merged to form Czechoslovakia. After World War II, a truncated Czechoslovakia fell within the Soviet sphere of influence.

In 1968, an invasion by Warsaw Pact troops ended the efforts of the country's leaders to liberalise communist party rule and create "socialism with a human face." Anti-Soviet demonstrations the following year ushered in a period of harsh repression.

With the collapse of Soviet authority in 1989, Czechoslovakia regained its freedom through a peaceful 'Velvet Revolution' and on 1 January 1993; the country underwent a 'velvet divorce' into its two national components, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The Czech Republic joined the European Union in 2004.

Economy

The Czech Republic is one of the most stable and prosperous of the post-communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. Growth in 2000-2005 was supported by exports to the EU, primarily to Germany, and a strong recovery of foreign and domestic investment. Domestic demand is playing an ever more important role in underpinning growth as interest rates drop and the availability of credit cards and mortgages increases.

Recent accession to the EU has given further impetus and direction to structural reform. Intensified restructuring among large enterprises, improvements in the financial sector, and effective use of available EU funds should strengthen output growth even more.

Non Government Organisations in the Czech Republic (NGOs)

The tradition of an active environmental movement in the former Czechoslovakia dates back to several years before the Velvet Revolution occurred in 1989. The struggle for a healthy environment was an integral part of the struggle for liberty and human rights, and the green movement was one of the important powers attempting to accomplish revolutionary political change in Czechoslovak society.

Before 1989, people supported the environmental movement because they were willing to think in the long term; at the same time, this support was a symbolic protest against an unpopular political regime. The environmental movement was among the few activities that were both meaningful and tolerated by the authorities; it was a shelter where talented people could make themselves useful in an environment of relative freedom.

When the political system was transformed into a democracy, the environmental movement in the Czech Republic was in a favourable position; because the public attached a high priority to environmental problems, there was a reasonable chance of influencing social progress toward permanently sustainable development. Later, however, public concern dropped off, and many skilled and competent people left the environmental movement and found positions in other areas, a situation largely due to the existing political and economic situation in the Czech Republic, and to a low level of environmental awareness.

Only two major environmental NGOs existed before 1990, the Czech Union for Nature Protection, which developed its activities under government supervision, and the Brontosaurus Movement, which was part of the Socialist Youth Organization (SSM). Since January 1990, however, many independent NGOs intent on addressing environmental problems and protecting the environment have formed. Most emerged in the post-revolutionary euphoria without setting clear goals, and many have ceased to exist, either because of a lack of interest or the absence of concrete goals. However, many organisations and groups have persisted, and they are now working hard to improve the health of the environment in the Czech Republic.

Non Government Organisations Sector Characteristics

Most NGOs in the Czech Republic are rural based with only 15% located in the capital Prague and more than half of the groups are a specialised branch of a larger organisation. Most operate at the local level (56%) or within a particular region of the country (28%). Very few operate internationally. Education and training and environmental work are the most common NGO activities within the country.

Czech NGOs are relatively financially stable with most income deriving from fees for services provided. This makes Czech NGOs much more independent than NGOs in other neighbouring countries.

Needs and Problems

The biggest problems facing Czech NGOs include insufficient funding, difficulties with official registration, general legal problems and a lack of volunteers. Support for implementing local environmental projects and building organisational capacity are the most popular types of support requested. As for training needs, Czech NGOs perceive fund raising, managing volunteers and finances, writing proposals, and project management and presentation skills as important.

Co-operation

Czech NGOs generally speaking do not show much willingness to work together. When they do they tend to co-operate more with other NGOs from their local area and less so with NGOs from other countries. The same generalisation is true with respect to co-operation with local governments versus the national government. However, NGOs see working with other Czech NGOs and government agencies as critically important to solving environmental problems.

For further information on NGOs in the Czech Republic, please refer to the following websites:

The Non Profit Sector in the Czech Republic
home.cerge-ei.cz/brhlikova/npos/Czech.htm

The NROS Foundation in the Czech Republic
www.nros.cz/

For further information about volunteering in the Czech Republic please visit www.hest.cz

Malta

Background

Malta, a crossroads between Europe and Africa and at the southern tip of the European continent, is a melting pot of civilisations in the heart of the Mediterranean.

Currency:	Maltese Lira (Lm)
Capital:	Valletta
Languages:	Maltese is the national language; English is the second official language
Area of Maltese Archipelago:	Total of 316 km ² for the 3 islands (Malta: 246 km ² , Gozo: 67 km ² , Comino: 3 km ²)
Population:	0.39 million (end 2000) 89% urban
Density:	1,234 per km ² (one of the highest in the world)
Official Name:	Repubblika ta' Malta - The Republic of Malta
Application for EU Membership:	16 July 1990 Frozen in 1996 and re-activated in 1998 Official opening of Accession Conference with Malta in February 2000

History

Malta boasts a rich legacy from its centuries-old history, from megalithic temples - unique in the world - to its capital Valletta, a jewel of baroque architecture, and its massive fortifications which witnessed the bravery of the Maltese people over the centuries. Again, in 1942, the courage and endurance of the Maltese people was recognised when the United Kingdom awarded to Malta the George Cross in 1942, which is now an integral part of the national flag.

Economy and Society

Natural resources are nearly non-existent, except for Malta's famous golden stone, and rivers are absent. Nevertheless farmers succeed to produce a wide variety of products in their small terraced fields. They even export part of their crop. Bee-keeping industry, already renowned in ancient times, is still flourishing.

Still, Malta is not only an island in the sun and an open-air museum in the Mediterranean; it is also an island looking towards the future. Apart from the tourism and manufacturing industries by now firmly established, Malta is currently developing its service economy and it also aims to become a hub for communications in the Mediterranean. For this purpose, Malta has a winning card - its human resources - a flexible labour force easily adaptable to new circumstances and having the great advantage to being multi-lingual.

Structural Funds in Malta

Development and structural adjustment in Malta is based on four priorities:

Strategic Investments and the Strengthening of Competitiveness in Malta: such as improvements in the environment sector with a strong focus on water quality and waste disposal and support to small and medium-sized enterprises in the manufacturing and tourism sectors with a community contribution of €39.5 million;

Human Resources Development: such as supporting the inclusion in the labour market of people with disability and developing life long learning with a community contribution of €8.8 million;

Rural Development and Fisheries: improvement of the processing and marketing of products, renewal and modernisation of the fleet, supporting aquaculture and fishing port facilities with a community contribution of €7million;

Special Support to the Island of Gozo: such as the upgrading of transport infrastructure, supporting the tourism sector and the upgrading of education centres with a community contribution of €6.5 million.

In addition an amount of €1.4 million will be made available for technical assistance.

Voluntary Sector in Malta

In Malta, the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) has been set up to give a more effective voice to non-governmental organisations in Malta, in particular the main social partners. But MCESD also has a committee that focuses directly on civil society.

During Malta's EU accession process, Non Government Organisations (NGOs) were directly involved through a specific committee known as the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) which brought together NGOs with the negotiating team and the key government ministries and departments involved in the process. On several occasions their input helped to shape Malta's negotiating positions during negotiations. For instance, the insistence of one trade union led to Malta scaling down its requests to introduce EU social laws over a longer time frame. As a result, Malta only requested short transitional periods on just four EU social laws out of a set of around 50 laws.

It must be said that the negotiating process itself has created a new space for NGOs that were formerly unknown, and for new ones to be created. Some of these, such as the farming lobby, the hunting organisations and the Gozitan organisations have been especially active on EU issues.

Links

EU Representation in Malta - www.delmt.cec.eu.int/
The Malta-EU Information Centre - www.mic.org.mt/

Slovenia

Slovenia is a mountainous country with thick forests. It is bounded in the north by Austria, in the northeast by Hungary, in the southeast by Croatia, and in the west by Italy. It also has a small strip of seacoast on the Adriatic.

Slovenia has two big rivers, Drava and Sava. Slovenia is the only one of the former Yugoslav republics to be in the first wave of candidates for membership of the European Union. The capital of Slovenia is Ljubljana. Maribor and Celje are also big cities.

The Slovenes constitute nearly all of the population, but there are Hungarian and Italian minorities. Slovenes are mostly Roman Catholic. The chief occupations in Slovenia are farming and livestock, fruit, grains and potatoes are the main crops. Slovenia is however the most industrialised and urbanized of all the former Yugoslav republics. Following the break up of Yugoslavia, Slovenia's economy grew and tourism increased, unimpeded by the warfare that devastated other regions.

Slovenia has always been the most prosperous region of the former Yugoslavia and has found the transition from a socialist

economy to the capitalist free market easier than most. Politically, Slovenia was the most liberal republic within the Yugoslav federation. Throughout the 1980s there was pressure from Slovenia for greater political freedom and pluralism. After independence, however, thousands of nationals of other former Yugoslav republics were removed from population records and lost residency rights. The Slovenian Parliament later passed a bill restoring their citizenship but a referendum held shortly before EU entry in 2004 overturned it by an overwhelming margin. Human rights groups expressed dismay at the move which embarrassed the leadership as it prepared to celebrate EU membership.

Structural Funds in Slovenia

The programme of structural aid for Slovenia is based on three priorities:

Promotion of the Productive Sector and Competitiveness: such as the support to start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises, the promotion of clusters and technology networks and increased support to regional tourist development with a community contribution of €129.2 million;

Human Resources Development and Employment: such as the inclusion in the labour market of people with special needs, develop life long learning and improve the quality of and access to education and training with a community contribution of €72.7 million;

Restructuring of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries: such as the improvement of the processing and marketing of products, the renewal and modernisation of the fleet with a community contribution of €25.3 million.

An amount of €10.2 million is made available for technical assistance.

For further information about the voluntary sector in Slovenia please visit www.filantropija.org/index2_eng.php

EQUAL goes Digital

EQUAL is an initiative funded through the European Social Fund (ESF). The programme tests and promotes new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market, both for those in work and for those seeking work. EQUAL also includes action to help the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers.

EQUAL operates across identified thematic fields which embrace the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy and support for asylum seekers. EQUAL funds activities implemented by strategic partnerships called Development Partnerships (DPs). Each DP addresses one thematic field.

EQUAL encourages participation and transnational co-operation through partnership building across five priority areas which are closely focused on key issues of concern in Britain. The programme helps to develop good practice that can enhance the delivery of mainstream UK and Structural Fund activity.

The Great Britain EQUAL Support Unit and EQUAL Development Partnerships, Tribal plc. and Cambridge Training and development are creating the EQUAL Digital Repository.

This online system will digitise and categorise the products from the seventy-six Great Britain DPs in Round 1. The repository will provide a source of information and guidance including direct access to training materials, promotional materials, DVDs, CDs and case studies. The repository will ensure that lessons learned from EQUAL Round 1 can continue to inform and influence both national and European Union Programme design.

How does it Work?

Data is collected from DPs via questionnaires, focus groups and interviews with DPs, liaising with Equal experts involved in EQUAL and drawing on the expertise of external evaluators. The data is then categorised and stored in a database-driven repository. The categorising and structuring of the database ensures that users can find the materials in a number of different ways on an easy-to-use website.

For further information please visit www.equal.ecotec.co.uk/

Tameside Coaching Project Update

The Tameside Coaching Project, funded by Greater Manchester Learning Skills Council (GMLSC) has achieved its targets and is in its final stages. The successes of the project so far:

“Coaching is not like anything that I have encountered before...I feel everybody should have access to coaching, especially managers or individuals who have leadership roles.” A volunteer manager

Partnership

Our partnership with Volunteer Centre Tameside enabled us to set up the project very quickly. Volunteer Centre Tameside played a valuable role of identifying volunteer managers who would benefit from coaching and pitching the project at the right level in order for the volunteer managers to see the benefit of coaching;

Coaching

Our mid-project evaluation identified that over the first five months of the project, coaching has had a positive impact on the volunteer managers involved in the project. Quotes from the mid project evaluation are featured in this article;

“Coaching has helped me to step outside my comfort zone, thus increasing confidence and competence.” A volunteer manager

Training

Volunteer Centre Tameside is also assisting us in the development of our training on how to use SAM Volunteer Management which will be offered to volunteering infrastructure organisations in the future.

Volunteer Centre Tameside has completed the first training session and is now in the process of testing SAM Volunteer Management within their own organisation before the next training session.

As described in the last Newsletter (issue 56), this project has acted as a pilot to North West Network’s Big Coaching Project by developing a collaborative way of working with local volunteering infrastructure. For more information please contact Carol or Dan on Tel: 0161 236 6493.

“(Coaching) made issues much clearer in my head which leads to a more productive thought process and therefore better planning” A volunteer manager



Big Coaching Project

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, (issue 56), North West Network (NWN) will



Supported by

The National Lottery®

through the Big Lottery Fund



soon be providing tailored coaching sessions to volunteer managers. We will also be providing training for volunteering infrastructure organisations on how to use NWN's Self Assessment Manual (SAM) Volunteer Management and outcomes training to volunteering organisations. This Big Lottery Fund project will be delivered in 5 rounds, a sub-region at a time, across the North West, over the next 3 years.

During last few months we have been evaluating the Tameside Coaching Project, taking the successes and improving areas of our coaching and SAM Volunteer Management cascade training. This is to ensure that the Big Coaching Project will provide a quality experience for North West volunteer involving and volunteering infrastructure organisations.

One of the lessons learned from the Tameside Coaching Project is that partnership works, so the next phase of the Big Coaching Project is to tell as many volunteering infrastructure organisations and volunteer managers how they can get involved. We want to build the partnerships that will enable us to roll the project out across the North West.

We would like to hear from you if you are:

A Volunteering Infrastructure Organisation who:

- Would like to get involved in an exciting new project and direct new resources that can support volunteer managers in your area;
- Can identify volunteers managers who would benefit from coaching;
- Would like an additional development tool – SAM Volunteer Management – to help you support volunteer involving organisations;
- Can provide expertise in the needs of volunteer involving organisations in your local area.

Someone who is responsible for volunteers that:

- Would like to receive one to one support to achieve goals or find solutions to problems;

- Would like to explore what you do well and recognise areas in which you can improve;
- Wants to achieve positive changes;
- Is willing to give time to your own development and try new things.

Additionally, North West Network has identified BME organisations as a target group for the Big Coaching Project and would like to hear from BME volunteering infrastructure organisations and volunteer managers.

More information will be available as by the next Newsletter we will be half way through round one, having recruited volunteer managers for coaching and volunteering infrastructure organisations for SAM Volunteer Management training.

If you are interested in this project please contact Carol or Dan.
Tel: 0161 236 6493, E-mail: carol@nwnetwork.org.uk or dan@nwnetwork.org.uk.

Centre for European Volunteering (CEV)

North West Network has been a member of CEV (Centre Européen du Volontariat), the European Volunteer Centre for two years. Markus Held, Director of CEV, has provided a brief overview of the work of CEV and seven reasons to become a member of CEV.

The European Volunteer Centre (CEV) is a European umbrella association of 40 national, regional and local volunteer centres across Europe, that together work to support and promote voluntary activity.

CEV channels the collective priorities and concerns of its member organisations to the institutions of the European Union (EU). It also acts as a central forum for the exchange of policy, practice and information on volunteerism. It supports networking among its members and organises conferences, seminars, workshops and other activities such as research.

The members of CEV represent thousands of volunteer organisations and other voluntary and community groups at local, regional and national level. Together we work to:

- Influence policy;
- Strengthen the infrastructure for volunteering in the countries of Europe;
- Promote volunteering and make it more effective.

Seven Reasons to Become a Member of CEV

1. You want to be informed about the activities of the EU and the volunteering landscape in other countries of Europe

CEV publishes CEV news, a monthly newsletter providing information on CEV activities, EU policies, CEV members' projects, events and other issues of interest to volunteer organisations. You can contribute to the newsletter and share your good practice throughout Europe. The CEV website provides up to date and on-going information on issues covered in the newsletter.

2. You want to make your voice heard at the EU and influence policy

The EU has many policy areas and funding possibilities that influence volunteering. CEV has established contacts with all of the main European institutions and you can benefit from a direct

access to policy makers at european level. Through CEV you can lobby the institutions to take volunteering into account when designing and implementing policy and funding programmes. CEV has done so on many occasions, for example when successfully lobbying for a stronger volunteer dimension in the European Active Citizenship Programme. After consultation with the CEV membership, CEV published in March 2006 its new "Manifesto on Volunteering in Europe" with 23 concrete actions to be taken at european level to recognise, promote and support volunteering and to make it more effective.

3. You want to participate at CEV volunteer conferences and meet fellow organisations all over Europe

CEV organises a General Assembly twice a year where members meet, network and discuss. Each conference focuses on a specific topic such as the Wolverhampton General Assembly in October 2005 on the Integration of Migrants through Volunteering and the Rome General Assembly April 2006 on Volunteering and Lifelong Learning Policy. CEV also co-organises conferences with its member organisations adding a european dimension to national discussions on volunteering, for example at the EUROFORUM on volunteering in an enlarged EU in Valencia in November 2005. CEV members have free access to these conferences and get preferential treatment when travel bursaries are available.

4. You want to participate in CEV-led European projects

CEV runs european projects which aim to exchange experiences, contributing to making volunteering more effective. CEV is currently managing the project "INVOLVE" on Volunteering and the Integration of Migrants. CEV has run a contact-making seminar for Volunteer Centres wanting to work with the European YOUTH Programme and has submitted projects to recognise skills and competences of volunteers at a european level. You can share your experiences, learn from other organisations and get innovative ideas on the further development of volunteering.

5. You want to build a European network of contacts and find partners and support for your own projects

CEV members have on several occasions used the CEV network to develop projects on a bilateral or european level. Others have created twinning arrangements to build capacity and to learn from one another's expertise. CEV members often get new ideas through the exchange with their colleagues in Europe to launch European projects. Furthermore, CEV has a large network of

contacts that goes beyond volunteer centres: we collaborate with research institutions, with a wide range of Non Government Organisations, with public administration at different levels and with business. CEV has privileged contacts with IAVE, the International Association for Volunteer Effort and the United Nations Volunteers. And finally, the CEV secretariat is at your disposal to advise you when applying for european grants.

6. You want to raise your profile at national, regional or local level being part of a European-wide network

Being a member of CEV raises your profile with decision makers and with general public opinion at national, regional or local level. Members report that belonging to a European-wide alliance of volunteer organisations has helped them to attract public attention and in some cases funds for projects and conferences.

7. You want to add value to the discussions on volunteering in Europe

CEV draws on diversity and gains its value through access to knowledge on volunteering in different Member States of the EU. CEV is about partnership. We all strive for better recognition and promotion of volunteering in our countries and we can do a lot to support each other in our efforts. And finally, CEV ensures that volunteering is on the political agenda of the EU, contributing to its work based on the knowledge and expertise channelled to us by the practitioners in the field – you!

You want to learn more?

Visit the CEV website www.cev.be

Consult the Manifesto for Volunteering in Europe via the website, www.cev.be/manifesto_campaign.htm

It outlines in twenty-three steps our vision for a volunteer friendly society in Europe and will guide our lobbying actions for the next months and years. We are particularly interested in achieving a European year of Active Citizenship through Volunteering.

You want to become Member?

Information concerning conditions for membership and application forms is available on www.cev.be/joincev.htm.

Contact Markus Held, CEV Director, for further information on +32 2 511 75 01 or E-mail at cev@cev.be

England Volunteering Development Council

North West Network has been invited to be a member of the England Volunteering Development Council North West (EVDC NW).

Volunteering England is the national volunteer development agency in England and as such has a responsibility to ensure the delivery of the six core functions of volunteering infrastructure as defined in the Compact Code on Volunteering and to deliver a representative function on behalf of volunteering. To facilitate this activity, Volunteering England established the England Volunteering Development Council in 2004. The England Volunteering Development Council is independent of Volunteering England's governance structure, although Volunteering England acts as the accountable body for the Council. The England Volunteering Development Council is a high-level representative mechanism for volunteering, engaging both with government and opposition parties in order to capture the collective intelligence of volunteer-involving organisations, volunteering infrastructure providers and of volunteers to provide a powerful, coordinated lobby to steer government policy and community action. The England Volunteering Development Council, which has responsibility for the monitoring and development of Building on success: strategy for volunteering infrastructure in England 2004-2014, has agreed to act as the Volunteering Hub Advisory Group, and has established a Commission on the Future of Volunteering in England, which will report in 2007.

The first meeting took place on 1 March 2006 in Preston. The meeting provided a useful opportunity to receive information about the work of the Volunteering Hub and an opportunity to feed in to priorities for the future work of the Volunteering Hub. The next meeting of the ECDV NW will take place in September 2006 and North West Network has asked if a discussion around the Regional Economic Strategy in relation to the role of volunteering and social inclusion can be included on the agenda with a briefing from the North West Development Agency.

The EVDC has determined that an independent chair should be appointed and North West Network along with two other members of the council has agreed to participate in a sub-group to take the recruitment forward.

Further information about the work of the EVDC may be obtained via the website:

www.volunteering.org.uk/aboutus/englandvolunteeringdevelopmentcouncil/regions/North+West.htm

The Commission on the Future of Volunteering

North West Network, as a member of the EVDC (England Volunteering Development Council) was invited to the launch of the Commission on the Future of Volunteering in London on 29 March 2006. The Commission on the Future of Volunteering has been established by the EVDC to develop a long term vision for volunteering in England as a legacy of the Year of the Volunteer 2005.

Scope

The Commission will consider:

- Volunteering in all sectors (not just focusing on the voluntary and community sector) and include both formal and informal volunteering within its remit;
- Specific issues relating to volunteering by hard to reach groups; by and within faith groups and black and minority communities; and in rural communities;
- The current volunteering landscape;
- Existing materials, listening to the opinion and experience of volunteers, academics, experts, and practitioners.

The Commission will:

- Publish its thinking as it develops, in order to inform and encourage wider debate;
- Develop its thinking on the future by consulting widely;
- Produce a final report that describes the state of volunteering in England as it is and as it should be ten years on; making recommendations about what is needed to make these aspirations come true, including proposals for delivering on any recommendations that are made.

The results of the commission's activity will be seen to be clearly independent of government, the corporate sector or any one agency in the voluntary and community sector, whilst retaining the confidence of all. The final report will be published in June 2007.

Further information about the work of the commission and its progress can be found at www.volcomm.org.uk/.

One North West

One North West is the North West region's black and minority ethnic (Home Office funded) regional voluntary sector network. The project was established by North West Network in 2001.

A project steering group (known as the Task Group) was recruited to provide strategic advice on the development of an independent governance structure.

In 2005 the Task Group decided that this objective could be achieved by developing a management committee, with terms of reference and with independent recruitment and selection of committee members. It will be this management committee that will provide the BME voluntary sector with its independent voice and enable the Task Group to discharge its responsibilities. North West Network will continue to deliver the project, including the development of the management committee until 31 December 2006, when current funding expires, after which, and at the request of the Task Group; North West Network will release accountability for the management of funds to a new organisation being developed by VSNW (Voluntary Sector North West) with funding from ChangeUp

One North West will, through the members of the management committee, once recruited, determine the priorities for the regional BME infrastructure project. Recruitment of members to the new committee structures is likely to take place late summer so check North West Network's website for details of the application procedure during July and August. In the interim, plans are in place to recruit a project manager to deliver the remaining objectives of the project and ensure that a strong management structure is established so that BME infrastructure provision is embedded and mainstreamed into the proposed regional and Home Office funded voluntary sector network.

North West Network will continue to deliver services to its members including specialist support to organisations seeking to engage with European Structural Funds and capacity building actions in the field of volunteer management.

For further information relating to the region's BME voluntary sector network, contact:

Emile Pinel, Chief Executive, at North West Network on 0161 236 6493 or E-mail emile@nwnetwork.org.uk.

BASIS Launch

The Big Lottery Fund recently launched one of its new programmes, 'Building and Sustaining Infrastructure Services' (BASIS).

BASIS aims to ensure that voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations throughout England have access to high-quality support that will help them to achieve their aims. It will fund projects run by infrastructure organisations to do this. BASIS will run for the next three years and will support infrastructure projects that help create expert, consistent and sustainable support to the whole range of VCS organisations across England. This will include support for small and local groups, new groups, social and community enterprises and groups that target particular communities of need, interest or identity.

BASIS will fund projects that achieve one or more of the following programme outcomes:

The outcomes that BASIS will support for projects that support other voluntary and community organisations are:

- Increased financial or other resources;
- Improved knowledge and skills, particularly in management and planning, financial management and fundraising, governance and influencing policy and practice;
- Increased influence on local, regional and national policy and practice;
- Improved learning and sharing of learning.

The outcomes that BASIS will support for projects that seek to improve infrastructure organisations themselves are:

- Improved financial stability;
- Improved skills, understanding and materials to help achieve outcomes listed above;
- Improved knowledge and skills to support groups and communities that have previously been hard to reach.

Only VCS infrastructure organisations are eligible to apply for funding from the BASIS programme. BASIS will not fund statutory authorities or organisations whose primary purpose is to make a profit.

BASIS intends to fund work that complements and adds value to work funded through Change Up. Applicants will be expected to

show how they have worked with other stakeholders, which include the Change Up consortiums. Projects will also be expected to show harmony with the plans set out for their locality by the Change Up consortium.

There is £155 million available for distribution in England over the next three years. The vast majority of this (£125million) will be distributed in the first two years. For projects working in a particular locality or region, the maximum grant size is £500,000 and grants can be for up to five years. The minimum grant available is £10,001.

The overall priority is to fund projects which help to create a consistent, expert and sustainable support service available to and meeting the needs of all voluntary and community organisations. In order to achieve this, in this first round of funding priority will be given at a local level to projects which display the following four characteristics:

- Ensure that all groups in the area will be able to benefit, taking particular account of groups that have not previously used the service;
- Meet support needs identified through consultation and research;
- Take account of good practice and experience;
- Have strong plans to sustain the work once the grant has come to an end.

At a regional and national level priority will be given to projects that:

- Help local infrastructure organisations reach the types of groups that have not previously used their services;
- Provide services directly to VCS groups where this is the most effective way of providing a service;
- Help local infrastructure organisations to improve local groups skills;
- Improve knowledge and skills in influencing and organisational learning.

Timetables and the Application Process

Application materials are now available from the website at the end of this section and the deadline for applications for funding this year will be 30 June 2006. There will be a further opportunity to apply for a BASIS grant in 2007 and a further opportunity in 2008. Each year will have a similar timetable.

The BASIS programme has a two stage application process. Organisations must fill in a first stage application form and send it to the Big Lottery Fund by 30 June 2006 if they want funding this year. Once assessed, the Big Lottery Fund may invite selected proposals to submit a second stage application to them. This second stage process will include the submission of a business plan.

The same assessment criteria is used for both stages but a more in-depth assessment will be made of the second stage applications because more information will have to be provided. It is worth noting however that if an applicant is invited to make a second stage application, it does not mean that they are guaranteed funding.

Capital and revenue funding is available through BASIS, the maximum percentage of grant that can be spent on capital and revenue costs both being 100%. However if applicants are applying for capital funding of more than £200,000, they will need to bring in 25% partnership funding for the project.

For more information, please refer to the following link:
www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/programmes/basis/index.htm
or contact the Big Advice Line on 08454 102030

Reaching Communities

Reaching Communities will fund projects that respond to needs identified by communities, and that actively involve them. These communities can be either geographic or communities with shared interests, such as people with poor mental health. The aim is to fund projects that help those most in need including those people or groups who are hard to reach. Support will be given to those projects that best meet their communities' needs.

The Reaching Communities fund aims to bring about the following changes as a result of funding through the programme:

- People having better chances in life, including being able to get better access to training and development to improve their life skills;
- Strong communities, with more active citizens, working together to tackle their problems;
- Improved rural and urban environments, which communities are better able to access and enjoy;
- Healthier and more active people and communities.

This three year programme, launched on 7 December 2005, will make up to £100 million available in 2006-2007, with future budgets being set annually.

Reaching Communities will give grants of more than £10,000 and up to £500,000, including a maximum of £50,000 for capital grants. A maximum overall project size of £750,000 and £200,000 for the total capital element within a project has been set. Projects can be funded for up to five years.

For more information please refer to the following link:
www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/programmes/reachingcommunities/index.htm

Changing Spaces

The Changing Spaces programme is making up to £234 million available to help communities in England improve their environment. The programme will have three priority areas. These will be:

- Community spaces
- Local community enterprise
- Access to the natural environment

The grant schemes are expected to be launched from late 2006. Further details, including how to apply to this programme will be published on the following website when they become available:

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/programmes/changingspaces/changing_spaces.htm

Big Lottery Funds yet to be Launched

There are yet more funds in the pipeline from the Big Lottery. Whilst not having too much information on them at the moment, we advise you to look on the Big Lottery website:

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/programmes/
at the dates indicated below:

Community Buildings

To be launched in June 2006.
£50 million available.

Research

To be launched in June 2006.
£25 million available.

Advice Plus

To be launched in August 2006.
£50 million available.

Family Learning

To be launched in September 2006.
£40 million available.

Community Libraries

To be launched in September 2006.
£80 million available.

News

Lords Approve Additionality Amendment to Lottery Bill

An amendment to the Lottery Bill, passed by the House of Lords, has given hope to charities that feared lottery funding would be directed at voluntary organisations working towards government priorities.

The amendment, put forward by Viscount Astor, means that the Big Lottery Fund, which distributes the cash collected through the weekly game, will only have to 'take account of' directions from the culture secretary rather than 'comply' with them as specified in the previous draft of the Bill.

A government amendment requiring Lottery distributors to report on additionality was also passed by the Lords.

The change was welcomed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations which campaigned to ensure government's influence over how lottery funds are distributed was limited and that lottery funding to good causes is in addition to core funding from the government.

"The new Lottery Bill limits government control over the distribution of lottery funds, ensures for the first time that lottery distributors will have to report on additionality and means that at least 60% of funding will go to the voluntary sector," said Peter Moorey, parliamentary and media manager at NCVO. "This demonstrates the determination and effective campaigning from the voluntary sector pays off."

www.charitytimes.com/frames/pages/all-of-me.htm

Charity Complaints Falling on Deaf Ears

A majority of charities have not established a formal complaints procedure and thus are failing to fully account to their service users, according to new research from the Charity Commission.

Of the 1,129 charities which responded to the Commission's survey, over two-thirds had no complaints procedure in place, and 80% of those without a procedure said they didn't need one. Of those which had established a procedure, 63% said it was beneficial to their organisation.

The Commission's director of policy and effectiveness Rosie Chapman said that a complaints procedure served a greater

purpose than putting things right for those who weren't happy with a charity's service. "It's also about accountability and transparency, and welcoming constructive feedback about people's experiences," she said.

The report cause for complaint? How charities manage complaints about their services is available on the Commission's website. Visit www.charitycommission.gov.uk

Government Unveils New Guidance for Third Sector Funders

New guidance for third sector funders has been published by the Treasury in an attempt to clarify pressing issues for charities, including full cost recovery.

The document, Improving financial relationships with the third sector: guidance for funders and purchasers, revises earlier guidelines published in September 2003. It aims to help government departments, non-departmental public bodies and other funding organisations distributing public money to the charity and voluntary sector.

It also offers advice on the timing of payments, stability in funding and reducing bureaucracy, setting out principles which are consistent with the Compact.

Meanwhile the National Audit Office has released a web-based tool to guide funders and purchasers through a structured series of decisions about the design of funding programmes, ensuring programmes achieve their objectives while also complying with the Compact funding and procurement code.

The toolkit can be found at www.nao.org.uk/better_funding

Volunteering Programmes too Formal

A third of charities think their own volunteering programmes are too formal, according to research conducted by charity sector think tank nfpSynergy.

Front line managers were more likely to feel that volunteering is over-formalised, while chief executives and board members are more likely to argue that it is not formal enough in its nature. Over half the charities surveyed had supervision programmes, job descriptions and grievance procedures in place for their volunteer staff.

To recruit new volunteers, 72% relied on an interview with character references, and 70% carried out police checks. Training and support was offered by 70% of charities to their volunteers, and 79% also provided the benefit of an expense account.

But many respondents also felt current trends were becoming too formal. Over half objected to expecting volunteers to work regular hours or shifts or to fill out outcome monitoring forms. Despite these concerns, 66% thought it was important to have a mechanism for recognising volunteer input and achievement in place.

Joe Saxton, driver of ideas at nfpSynergy, said formal volunteering programmes were only valuable if they deliver a better service for the charity's beneficiaries. "Good volunteer management does not involve imposing a workplace management model on volunteers or turning voluntary work into the equivalent of paid work – minus the pay cheque," he said. "Volunteers are giving their time and their passion to your cause for free and in exchange they may rightly expect a good degree of flexibility, creativity and autonomy."

The think tank recommends making it clear what will be expected of volunteers and giving them a say in their treatment.

Sector IT Infrastructure

A report on IT infrastructure in the voluntary and community sector has been published. It is based on an online survey run at the end of 2005, and will inform the development of Do-it's volunteering and contact management software V-Base.

www.do-it.org.uk/magazine/news/it-infrastructure.

Noticeboard

North West Network Trustee Recruitment

North West Network is currently looking to recruit new members to its Board of Trustees. We require from you a commitment of approximately one day per quarter. This position would ideally be suited to a Chief Officer or Senior Manager within an organisation who's full membership to North West Network is up to date. There are varied skills required to effectively carry out this role, and experience of high level meetings would be advantageous. We also hope that the ideal candidate will have experience and or knowledge of some of the following:

- **Financial Issues and Budget Management**
- **Charity Law**
- **Employment Law**
- **Marketing Strategies**
- **Business Support**
- **Project Management**

If you are interested in this opportunity please contact Jane Stanistreet, Operations Manager and an application pack will be sent to you. Alternatively a flyer has been included within this mailing, just complete your details where required and return it to the address provided.

Tel: 0161 236 6493 E-mail jane@nwnetwork.org.uk

Tameside's Service Information Directory (SID)

SID is the new service directory aimed at Children and Young People, their families, and those who work with them. It provides information on a range of national and local organisations, together with their contact details and how to access them. The Directory also includes voluntary organisations and groups, such as Guides and Scouts, Youth Clubs etc. and other leisure activities.

www.tameside-sid.org.uk/html/providersearch_home.asp

Training and Events

Third Sector 1st North West

12 September 2006, Renold Building ,University of Manchester
J4b is Europe's expert provider of public funding resources, conducting research into public funding and publishing grants databases. Providing technology solutions that support both grant administrators and grant applicants.

The '3rd Sector 1st North West' Conference, Exhibition and Dinner starts a series of 10 events aimed at the Third sector, the launch event being in the North West Region at the University of Manchester on 12 September 2006. Over 350 delegates, 20 plus supporting organisations and partners and 30 plus speakers will be gathering to discuss, debate and learn more about the various activities happening in the region to support third sector organisations' modernisation and upskilling.

The event is in support of various government initiatives such as Change Up and will include elements of fundraising strategy as a part of the day. It will bring together volcomm and not for profit organisations with public and private sector in what we hope will be a stimulating and challenging day.

For more information please see the event website:
www.3rdsector1st.co.uk www.3rdsector1st.co.uk

CLES Summer School 2006 Regeneration: Doing, Delivering and Devolving

10, 11 July 2006, Hulme Hall, Manchester University, Manchester - two day course

This years Summer School will focus on regeneration with a particular emphasis on doing, devolving and delivering. The programme will assess some of the challenges of regeneration and neighbourhood renewal, highlight the views of key government departments with regard to the latest policy developments, explain new forms of governance arrangements, including Local Area Agreements, showcase examples of best practice, provide opportunity to learn lessons from the latest CLES research.

For further details about the programme view the current working document and also an event flyer please visit:

cles2005.live.poptech.coop/module_images/summer%20school%20flyer.pdf

Funding Road Show

4 July, Lowry Gallery, Salford, Greater Manchester

This road show was introduced as a way of developing support for the sector's chief executives in securing additional funding and as a topical addition to ACEVO's regional programme. It allows charity leaders to meet the main fundraisers in their region and explore how they can take better advantage of statutory funding opportunities, while maintaining a balanced and sustainable fundraising strategy. The programme includes the presentation of the Cross Government Action Plan for the Voluntary Sector, an explanation of how charities will benefit from Capacitybuilders' running of ChangeUp, the latest programmes from The Big Lottery Fund and an interactive session on how to bid successfully for public sector contracts.

For further information please visit;
www.actionplanning.co.uk

E-mail: events@actionplanning.co.uk
Action Planning: 020 8642 4122

Publications

The Voluntary Agencies Directory 2006

Published by NCVO

The Voluntary Agencies Directory is the established reference guide for journalists, job-seekers, researchers, policy makers, politicians and individuals involved in the voluntary sector. Organised into a user-friendly A-Z format, the directory lists over 2000 national charities and other organisations connected to the voluntary sector. Updated annually, it includes a concise description of the charities' aims and objectives. Plus a comprehensive subject index that groups organisations by their field of interest; and the useful addresses section gives additional information on related organisations outside the voluntary sector.

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/index.asp?id=2631

Directory of NCVO Approved Consultants 2006

Published by NCVO

All of the consultants listed have passed NCVO's approval process. The directory also provides information about the consultancy process and how to get the best from your consultant.

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/index.asp?id=1475

Communities in Control. The New Third Sector Agenda for Public Service Reform

Published by ACEVO

The government's intention to make the third sector an equal partner in public service reform has been widely articulated, but not yet realised. This Acevo publication with the Social Market Foundation argues that greater third sector involvement should be driven across government, with the aim of putting the public and communities in charge of the public services they receive.

www.acevo.org.uk/main/publications.php?content=pubdescription&pid=261&category=Main+Publications

North West Network Information

North West Network was established by a consortium of voluntary organisations in 1993 as a direct response to the ever-increasing demand for clear, professional advice and information on how to access and manage funds from the European Union.

The charitable objects of North West Network are:

“To improve the efficiency of the administration of charities in direct pursuit of their objects and to further any charitable purpose in the present counties of Lancashire, Merseyside, Cheshire, Cumbria and Greater Manchester, by the provision of advice, training and information of educational value and in particular (but no so as to limit the generality of the foregoing) concerning the nature and assistance provided for charities by the institutions of the European Community.”

North West Network has developed significantly and now occupies a unique position within the region as an independent organisation.

Our strategic aims are:

- Maintaining voluntary sector confidence to access European Structural Funds;
- Support for emerging networks;
- Expansion of volunteer management and development services;
- Development of wider funding and grant support services;
- Development of wider intelligence and information dissemination on European affairs.

Our Services:

North West Network provides a comprehensive package of support services:

- Representation & Policy
- Telephone Support Service
- Website
- Information Mailings
- Training Seminars & Workshops
- Coaching for Volunteer Manager
- Monitoring, Evaluation & Auditing
- Information Provision
- Newsletter & Briefings
- Email Bulletin Service
- Individual Advice Surgeries
- Project Development
- Networking & Partnerships
- Outcomes Focused Planning