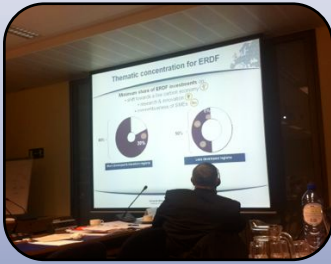


Network for Europe



Newsletter

November 2011

Welcome!

Welcome to the November edition of Network for Europe's newsletter, reporting on European issues relating to the Voluntary Sector.

Social Business

Social Enterprise, Social Economy, Social Business. In the midst of the banking and financial crisis, many of us are convinced there are better ways to live and want a fairer, inclusive world where we consider the well being of everyone, rather than just GDP. In the last few years the European Commission, working with SIX, Euclid and others, has been developing a closer understanding of the role of Social Business. The Social Innovation launch was last March and on 18 November there was an all-day launch for Social Business with eight hundred people attending. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission gave a barnstorming speech supporting the essential role of civil society, describing the importance of Social Business and support measures that are being brought in now and planned for the next programme. Mercedes Bresso from the Committee of the Regions spoke out in support together with a government minister from Poland (current Presidency) and Denmark (next Presidency). Nick Hurd, the UK Minister for Civil Society gave a strong positive speech about the benefits of supporting Social Business, supporting localism and challenged the Commission to do what it says and cut red tape for the next programme. (See our other reports for more information).

Strategic Partners - Europe

As part of the UK Government's Strategic Partners Programme for voluntary sector support organisations, we have been working closely with NCVO and Euclid. On 21 November the first of three seminars was held in London. This was an afternoon event for over a hundred people, addressed by Nick Hurd, Minister for Civil Society. Network for Europe delivered a presentation on ERDF and looking at the next programme and there was discussion around sources of European Funding. Further seminars will take place at the beginning of next year on Volunteering and on Social Business. In addition, we all took part in an online guardian discussion on Social Business on 24 November.

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

The Third Sector European Network (TSEN) which used to work with the English voluntary sector regional support organisations through ESF Technical Assistance has closed down. Former Chief Executive Sandra Turner is now employed by NCVO. We have been working closely with NCVO and with Euclid to make this transition a success. The first full meeting of the new advisory group was held in Birmingham on 4 November, and the next will be held in Birmingham in January.

BiNGO

Network for Europe have been working with Centrum PISOP in Poland since 2005 with a signed co-operation agreement between our two boards. Centrum PISOP is a regional support organisation, like Network for Europe, working with the Voluntary Sector around European funds. Their latest project is for three years and is designed to support voluntary sector organisations (Non-Governmental Organisations, NGOs) to become more effective. They are looking in particular at finance, human resources, PR and management and will be preparing and testing training materials before mainstreaming this training. Their initial transnational research visit was co-ordinated by Network for Europe and covered visits to North Wales and Liverpool. A return visit next year is planned.

City Employment Strategy

The Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Steering Group met on 7 November with a special meeting to look at spend and delivery for the Merseyside ESF complementary strand programmes. There was general agreement that the projects would need to be extended, but there would need to be a close eye kept on delivery. The next meeting is arranged for 12 December.

Merseyside Brussels Office

Network for Europe continue to work with Merseyside Brussels Office (MBO). They have now moved to dramatically cheaper premises and at last their offices are now fully accessible. Network for Europe is looking forward to continuing to work closely with MBO in the future.

ERDF PMSC

The Performance Monitoring sub-committee met on 9 November. It deferred two projects (Media Factory under Priority 1 (P1) and Eco-Centre under P2) and endorsed two projects (£1.7m for a nano investigation centre at Liverpool University (P2) and £0.4m Enterprise 4 All project for parts of Lancashire and Manchester (P4)). It also considered three projects which were about to go out for endorsement by written procedures. It supported the recommendation for an extra £2.5m to a Media Enterprise Centre (P1), a £7m proposal for North Manchester (P3). It supported £3.3m for support to start-ups and social enterprises in Merseyside (P4), although it did not support £1.6m for the same in the rest of the North West. There was an update on the programme, and a report on project outputs and results. A project development report took a detailed look at each priority and progress with all of them, including the bids for almost £50m for superfast broadband from four sub-regions (Merseyside did not bid). The next meeting will take place on 24 January.

ERDF - new calls



It is expected there will be new calls for projects under Priority Four and possibly other headings. While these could be announced in December it is most likely the announcement will be early January with a short deadline and perhaps approvals soon afterwards.

ERDF Strategy Group

The second meeting of the ERDF Strategy Group took place on 23 November. There was an update from David Read, Head of the North West ERDF Secretariat. It was expected that the sub-regional partners would have finished their review of ERDF sub-regional projects by the end of November and that we would soon have a more informed idea of how much money is likely to be spent and what outputs and results should be delivered. This will then inform the re-quantification (changing what the programme was planned to deliver) with the European Commission which has to take place to modify the ERDF

programme. It is likely that this will lead to some short term opportunities for new bidding very early in January (probably in Priorities 1 and 4). A quarter of the whole programme has gone to JEREMY and JESSICA (Venture Capital Funds and Property Funds) but spend on some of these has been very slow. There was considerable discussion about the ending of support to start-ups in the rest of the North West when funding for ISUS ends in December. It was hoped that this unexpected gap would end perhaps in Easter once a strategy was in place and a bidding round announced - but it did seem to rely on the ERDF Secretariat processing bids in a few weeks (it has generally taken much longer - sometimes from six months to a year). Partners offered support to the ERDF Team. There was a proposal for a new bidding round to spend the funding to support food and drink enterprises, now that the current project has been closed. It was decided not to do this as it was more important to get general enterprise support in place. The next meeting is arranged for 15 December.

ESF Community Grants Events

Network for Europe staff have been part of the team launching the ESF Community Learning Grants at a series of 6 events across the North West. Events were held in Manchester, Liverpool and Lancaster. Each event was attended by over 50 people representing small voluntary sector organisations. For further information on the Community Learning Grants please visit the North West WEA website at:

<http://nw.wea.org.uk/>



The photograph shows one of the events in Lancaster.

ERDF Technical Group

The Merseyside Technical Group met on 29 November. It considered membership of the Phasing In sub-committee and had a presentation from St Helens Chamber on their Priority 4 project which supports businesses to create jobs and link to the worst-off areas. Discussion on Food and Drink bids would be deferred to a future meeting, while the successful Access to Finance bid (from Manchester Skills Solutions) was looking for match funding for its work in Merseyside. There was discussion on projects under Priority 2 and 4, as well as further consideration of the P1 workshop scheduled for 8 December. There was some discussions of the spreadsheets giving information on outputs. The next meeting will take place on 20 December.

ESF Skills Support for Redundancy

The Skills Funding Agency has recently published a list of Redundancy Support Providers in the North West Region. The full list is available to download from the Network for Europe website, here:

<http://tinyurl.com/cx3l84w>

Discussion meetings

Network for Europe is holding a series of small discussion meetings to look at lessons from the current ESF and ERDF programmes and thoughts for the next. The first of these was held on 22 November. For more information, or to arrange one of your own, please contact Network for Europe on 0151 237 3972 or email:

info@networkforeurope.eu

Guardian Online Debate on Europe and Social Business



Network for Europe's Senior European Officer, John Hacking, recently took part in an online debate on the EU's proposals for supporting social business and social enterprise. The debate took place on the Guardian's website. With a panel of experts drawn from across Europe John addressed the issue of what the future proposals mean for social businesses and communities here on the ground in the North West.

To view the debate as it unfolded visit the Guardian website, here:

<http://tinyurl.com/cwlszcl>

Please send any comments or views to:

john.hacking@networkforeurope.eu

Structured Dialogue



As part of links with Euclid, on 16 November we were invited by DG Regio (the department within the European Commission which deals ERDF) with other voluntary sector partners to comment on and discuss progress towards the next programme (which will run from 2014 to 2020) and lessons learnt from the current programme. A further meeting will take place in the new year.

Social Business Conference

On 18 November, a conference took place in Brussels entitled:

"Together to create new growth" - "Social entrepreneurship & social economy: Developing a European ecosystem to unlock social innovation, growth and jobs".

Over 1000 participants followed the Conference live or online.

The videos of the entire conference are now available online and can be viewed at:

<http://tinyurl.com/d6tpbfd>

Further information on the speeches delivered during the Conference, the results to the questionnaire and other materials, can be found on the Social Business website at:

<http://tinyurl.com/bn5lw5v>

Also, a short video clip about Social Business is now online on YouTube, at:

<http://tinyurl.com/czcuojt>

The important work begins now on turning all the ideas into tangible benefits for the social businesses and the citizens of Europe.

Membership of Network For Europe

We are offering free membership (for six months) for voluntary organisations in the North West. Email info@networkforeurope.eu for details.

Network For Europe on ESF-Works

The work that Network for Europe has been doing, and will continue to do, to support the North West's Voluntary and Community Sector to access and use the ESF programme has been featured on a national ESF website.

The website 'ESF Works' is the showcase and forum for policy and practice lessons from the 2007-13 European Social Fund in England.

To view the full story on ESF Works please visit:

<http://www.esf-works.com/projects/short-reviews/projects/402592>

What can Europe do for you?

Network for Europe are working with Voluntary Sector North West to arrange a seminar to discuss the current ESF and ERDF programmes and new opportunities for funding, as well as thinking about the next programme.

European funds still account for many millions of pounds that reach voluntary and community sector organisations every year. In tighter economic times it is more important than ever to maximise these. This event will consider practical lessons learned from the use of European funds in the UK and highlight how the sector can make better use of these, including ESF, ERDF and other major European programmes.

The event will look to identify potential opportunities in the next EU Programme which starts in 2014 whilst providing practical support for organisations, for

now and the future.

The event will include a look at many aspects of EU funding, including:

- How to maximise the use of European Structural Funds
- Structural Funds at a cross-roads
- 5th Cohesion Report
- Proposed regulations for 2014-2020 Programmes
- EU Open Days
- Social Business

This is an opportunity to understand the key European funds available and is accessible to all voluntary and community sector organisations interested in applying for European funding and European funding policy.

The event is arranged for 18th January and will take place in Manchester.

You can book online for this free event at:

<http://eufunds.eventbrite.com>

For further information, please contact Network for Europe on:

T: 0151 237 3972

E: info@networkforeurope.eu

Coming up...

A series of discussion events will take place in January to look at lessons from the current ESF and ERDF programmes and thoughts for the next. These have been arranged in partnership with SENW (and have been put back from December). Further information will follow.

What Can Europe Do For You? 18 January 2012, Manchester. <http://eufunds.eventbrite.com>

Several NCVO-Euclid events will take place in January and February of 2012.

Contact Us

If you would like further information about any of the subjects covered in this newsletter or if you have any feedback or suggestions please contact Paul Avis on 0151 237 3972 or email paul.avis@networkforeurope.eu



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