

Summary - Single Programming Document (SPD)

The Objective One Programme for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

Objective One programmes are designed to reduce differences in social and economic conditions within the European Union by regenerating weak economies and increasing wealth.

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly were designated as an Objective One area because its economy was identified as being at less than 75% of the European average.

The programme for the region was brought about as the result of efforts by a local partnership, set up to draw together a wide range of sectors and interests represented in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

This partnership includes local authorities, the private sector, community and social partners, and important specialist sectors such as agriculture, education, fisheries, heritage and the environment. It also includes representatives of the European Commission, the Government Office for the South West (GOSW), other UK Government departments and the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWERDA).

Together they prepared a strategy document called the Single Programming Document or SPD – the full text of which is on the Objective One website at www.objectiveone.com.

The vision driving this SPD is to use Objective One investment to bring about “a prosperous Cornwall and Scilly where all people and communities share in an improving quality of life”.

This document was approved in July 2000 by the European Commission and in effect forms a contract between the UK Government and Europe, indicating how the allocation of approximately £300 million in EU investment will be spent.

The European investment supporting Objective One

All European money for Objective One comes from four EU budgets – known as Structural Funds – that provide grant aid to support a range of projects that will deliver the aims and objectives of the programme. These are:

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which promotes sustainable economic development and employment whilst protecting and improving the environment.

European Social Fund (ESF) which assists the implementation of European and national employment strategies through training, with a focus on disadvantaged groups within the labour market.

European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) which can assist the production, processing and marketing of agricultural and forestry products and the developmental of local potential in rural areas.

Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) which assists the balance between fish stocks and fishing.

The priorities for investment

The Single Programming Document or SPD contains five Priorities - key areas for investment through which the Structural Funds will be allocated. These are:

1. *Priority one – SME and Micro Business Support*

To help Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) by providing new or improved business premises, advice and information, small grants, loan and venture capital schemes, support for agricultural product processing and marketing, encouraging new business start ups and the development of business with growth potential and providing employees with training and new skills.

2. *Priority two – Strategic Spatial Development*

To invest in key towns, industrial sites, communications and transport infrastructure that will aid the growth and development of both large and small businesses and create more employment opportunities.

3. *Priority three – Developing People*

To invest in learning and training opportunities to help people increase their skill levels, become more employable, find a job or make progress within their existing employment. It will particularly help those groups who are currently disadvantaged in the labour market and will increase the participation of women.

4. *Priority four – Community Economic Development and Rural Structural Assessment*

To help social inclusion and provide support for communities with high numbers of jobless people through improving community facilities in towns and villages, training, capacity building and support for community businesses. It will also assist the adjustment and adaptation of communities dependent on agriculture and fishing.

5. *Priority five – Regional Distinctiveness*

To help develop economic benefits from the arts, cultural and heritage industries and the natural environment of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. It will also help finance the development of new higher education and learning opportunities in the area and help Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly take advantage of the knowledge-driven economy.

Eligible activities

Each Priority is further sub divided into a number of Measures. These identify a range of specific activities that need to take place in order to achieve the aims of the Priority.

These activities are what the programme can invest in. The Measures are crucial, therefore, in identifying what type of projects may be eligible for grants.

Details of the expected outputs – and the amount of investment available – for each Measure are contained in the SPD's Programme Complement, the full text of which is also on the web-site www.objectiveone.com.

Cross cutting themes

As well as the Priorities, there are also three Cross Cutting Themes which must be taken into account in all project applications. These are:

- *Environmental Sustainability* – making sure that the environment is protected while taking advantage of the benefits it offers; increasing awareness of and promoting positive environmental policies.
- *Equal Opportunities* – ensuring that the opportunities created by the programme are made available to everyone regardless of their race, colour, disability, age, gender etc, increasing opportunities for women and the number of women taking advantage of them, encouraging employers to develop and adopt equal opportunities and family friendly policies.
- *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* – raising awareness and the potential use of ICT by both the public and businesses as a means of accessing training and information and increasing competitiveness.

Match funding and eligibility

European grants can only provide a percentage of the funding required for projects that support the five SPD Priorities. It is up to the project applicant to secure match funding.

In general, half or more of the funding will have to come from other sources – such as UK Government programmes, government agencies, local authorities, National Lottery funds, charities, voluntary sector organisations and the private sector, i.e. local businesses and industry.

Every project must also contribute to at least one Measure within the programme Priorities. In addition, activities that receive investment must be additional or provide added value to existing activities in the area.

How to apply for Objective One investment

Currently, each of the four European Structural Funds requires a different application form – EAGGF, ERDF and ESF are administered through GOSW in Plymouth and FIFG by DEFRA, based in London.

To obtain an application form and appropriate guidance notes you should get in touch with the relevant contact shown below. Application forms, business plans and other supporting documents should be returned to the office that issued them.

There will also be a range of individuals within the Objective One partnership who can provide advice and guidance either by phone or in person – contact the Helpline or visit the website for further details.

Help will also be available to develop project ideas and make applications from organisations within the programme partnership – for example the Economic Development Offices of the Local Authorities – and from private consultants. There may be charges for this service depending on the degree of expertise and organisation involved.

Submission and assessment

Each project application will go through a similar approval procedure, which will include an eligibility check, appraisal and scoring.

A technical appraisal will assess whether the project provides good value for money. The application will also undergo a 'peer assessment' by a Priority Management Group. This will determine how well the project fits the aims and objectives of the programme and the Priority and Measure under which it was submitted.

The Priority Management Groups (PMGs) are drawn from the Objective One Partnership and comprise individuals with the necessary knowledge and expertise to enable them to make a proper assessment.

When a project application successfully completes the technical and peer group assessment it will be recommended for approval to a Working Group. The role of this group, which will be made up of PMG members, is to ensure that projects coming forward from each of the seven PMGs are of a consistent standard and effectively address the three 'cross cutting' themes described earlier.

Following endorsement by the Working Group, the project will receive an offer letter or contract. Once this has been accepted and signed, the project will have the formal go-ahead allowing it to start.

Applicants for projects that are not considered suitable for funding as a result of either of the technical or peer assessments will be notified and offered advice on how to improve it for re-submission. Applications that are not eligible for support will be notified as soon as possible after receipt.

The process is designed to be fair and transparent. It also has to be thorough. This means that for some projects it can take a while for applications to be considered but applicants will be kept informed about the progress of their application.

Other routes to investment – Gateway Funds

It is important to note that not everyone with a project idea will have to apply directly to Objective One.

A range of Gateway Funds is also being established. These are delegated grant funds set up to support specific sectors or particular needs. An individual Gateway Fund could, therefore, support a range of small projects with a similar theme such as farm tourism, film-making, training grants or business start-ups.

These funds will be Objective One projects in their own right and as such, will generally – although not always – already have match funding in place when set up. They may also be able to provide grants of up to 100%.

Applying to a Gateway Fund may also be quicker and simpler than making direct applications to the European Structural Funds contributing to Objective One.

After investment has been approved

Once the Working Group has approved an application, an offer letter or contract will be issued. This is a binding legal agreement, laying down the terms and conditions under which the grant can be paid and includes the outputs and benefits that the project must deliver.

No activity or expenditure should be undertaken until the offer letter or contract is received. This will usually take about three months from receipt of application but can take longer.

Grant payments are usually made every three months, after the money has been spent and on submission of a claim form. However, arrangements can be made to pay grants on a monthly basis particularly for voluntary sector organisations. Claim forms should be accompanied by a progress report that will include information about the project's activities and the outputs achieved.

For further information and advice

The **Objective One Partnership Office** has been set up to provide support and assistance for the programme. This includes supporting the Task Forces representing the different interests identified within the SPD.

The Objective One office's **Helpline** is the first point of contact for inquiries about the programme. The Helpline provides a signposting service to direct potential applicants towards the appropriate expert for guidance on eligibility etc.

Contact the Helpline on 0800 0280120 (information inquiries only).

The Objective One **website** provides regularly updated news on the programme and all significant developments connected with Objective One. It also contains a guide to the programme giving information on: eligibility; programme priorities and measures; cross cutting themes; how to develop projects; and contact details for potential match funding sources. (Hard copies of extracts from the website can also be provided via the Helpline.)

Visit the website at [**www.objectiveone.com**](http://www.objectiveone.com)

The **Task Forces** will advise on project development, and develop strategies to guide investment for their own special interest sectors – farming, fishing, tourism, the arts, heritage, culture, business, education and training, our social well-being and transport infrastructure.

Contact the Objective One Partnership Office at the address below – please use the office telephone number for administrative inquiries, not the freephone Helpline.

Information about the Objective One Programme, the four European Structural Funds, application forms and various guidance notes can be found on the **Government Office for the South West** website – www.gosw.gov.uk.

Specific information and advice about the individual funds is also available from:

European Structural Fund contacts

EAGGF, ERDF and ESF: European Secretariat, Mast House, 24 Sutton Road, Plymouth PL4 0HJ. Tel: 01752 635000 Fax: 01752 635090

FIFG: Fish 1B, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Room 310, East Block, 10 Whitehall Place, London, SW1A 2HH. Tel: 0207 270 8044 Fax: 0207 270 8019



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