

**Mclsaac C (Cathy)**

**From:** andy.jack@forthsector.org.uk  
**Sent:** 08 January 2007 16:28  
**To:** Structural Funds Consultation Mailbox  
**Subject:** Consultation Response

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**Future European Structural Funds Programmes in Lowlands & Uplands Scotland 2007-2013****RESPONDENT INFORMATION DETAILS**

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**Questions and Answers**

Question 1: Are there any additional socio-economic factors to be considered – and which Structural Funds can address – in assessing the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of Lowlands & Uplands Scotland?

Within the ESF Operational programme the statistics show (page 14) that the most substantial workless group is the sick and disabled benefit claimants. Of these, 119,100 people in Scotland are claiming incapacity benefit for mental ill health with only 8,250 opportunities on training and employment programmes available to them. It is clear that there is a significant lack of opportunities for this group and this must be addressed if these people are to be supported to access work. As an organisation that provides work placements in social firms for people with mental health problems, Forth Sector is one of a number of organisations that

	<p>can successfully provide these services provided that funding is made available to do so. This is already recognised a socio-economic area but, given the size of the population in need and the current lack of support, it is an area that should receive a greater emphasis as a priority socio-economic factor.</p>
<p><b><i>Question 2: Do the proposed priorities for the 2007-2013 ERDF programme in Lowlands &amp; Uplands Scotland address the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the region?</i></b></p>	<p>ERDF Priority 1 is aimed at enterprise growth and represents the largest proportion of funds within ERDF. The definition of enterprise in this context must include social enterprise as well as private sector business as access to finance and RTD is as important to the third sector as any other. Investment and research into this area is important in developing the sector so that the social needs of individuals can still be met as funding for projects supporting these social areas depletes. As this will be the final structural funds programme within Scotland, the focus of much of the discussion surrounding the consultation have been about ensuring that this funding will leave a lasting legacy within Scotland. Social enterprise would be instrumental in achieving this as over a period of time organisations providing these services to disadvantaged groups can become self sustaining and will exist long after the structural funds have left Scotland. Within ERDF Priority 2 support for Social Enterprise is outlined as a key element in supporting community regeneration. This recognition is important and encouraging to those operating social enterprises, but it must take account of the distinction between the broad definition of social enterprise and the more specific definition of a social firm. Social firms provide enterprise growth, as well as increased employment to disadvantaged groups and as such are a valuable vehicle in obtaining the targets set out within the Lisbon agenda. In recognising Social Enterprise alongside other Enterprises it is important to acknowledge that the characteristics of these businesses are very different to those that operate within normal parameters. Social firms in particular are heavily resource dependent; this is mainly due to the fact that the client group that work within these businesses require significant support during their time at work. This situation ensures that social firms cannot compete against private businesses for funds under the same criteria and this should be built into the programme.</p>
<p><b>Question 3: Do the proposed priorities for the 2007-2013 ERDF programme in Lowlands &amp; Uplands Scotland show appropriate coherence and concentration?</b></p>	
<p><b><i>Question 4: Do the proposed priorities for the 2007-2013 ESF programme in Lowlands &amp; Uplands</i></b></p>	<p>Within the third sector there is an increasing move towards social enterprises as the availability of funding has become progressively reduced. Organisations are looking to Social Enterprise as a method of survival in a climate of uncertainty. Forth Sector's experience in providing support and advice to those wanting to set up and run social enterprises is that a cultural shift is</p>

***Scotland address the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the region?***

required before many charities and community groups could successfully undertake such activities. Priority 2 under ESF sets out support for social enterprise development and this should be provided in order to help charitable organisations to become more aware of the enterprise element of their activities and better able to make the transition.

Question 5: Do the proposed priorities for the 2007-2013 ESF programme in Lowlands & Uplands Scotland show appropriate coherence and concentration?

***Question 6: What are your views on the proposed balance of funding between priorities for the future ERDF programme in Lowlands & Uplands Scotland?***

Question 7: What are your views on the proposed balance of funding between priorities for the future ESF programme in Lowlands & Uplands Scotland?

***Question 8: Do the proposed priorities outlined in the draft Operational Programmes focus sufficiently on the right priorities in Scottish domestic policy?***

Question 9: What are your views on how the principle of environmental sustainability has been integrated into the Operational Programmes?

***Question 10: What are your views on how the principle of equal opportunities has been integrated into the Operational Programmes***

Question 11: What are your views on how the Operational Programmes will ensure complementarity between Structural Funds and other EU funding streams?

***Question 12: How can the challenge-fund approach be improved to make it more effective in delivering outcomes and more efficient in operation?***

Supporting projects that are partnership based in design could be a successful method of delivery in some cases and could provide a much more joined up group of services, avoiding duplication and saving money through economies of scale. Some examples of this type of approach are currently being piloted within the EQUAL programme through the Public Social Partnership approach. This approach is aimed at the development of consortia and dependent on its success may inform the future design of partnership based projects.

Question 13: What would be the most effective approach to using Community Planning Partnerships and other local partnerships for the delivery of elements of the programmes?

The Community Planning Partnership within the City of Edinburgh is still not fully up and running and may still lack the experience and capacity to manage such a large contract. Forth Sector does see a role for the CCPs in informing priorities at a local level, but does feel that the CPPs could stifle social entrepreneurship within the third sector. Forth Sector would prefer to see the formation of Development partnerships based on the EQUAL model, which would provide more of a voice for social enterprises and voluntary organisations.

***Question 14: What are your views on spatial targeting for community regeneration under ERDF Priority 2 and ESF Priority 1?***

With reference to ESF priority one, the disabled client group come from a variety of different backgrounds and cannot simply be categorised within areas of deprivation. The city of Edinburgh has a number of disabled people that would receive little support from ESF monies if funding simply reflected areas of multiple deprivation. On this basis, Spatial targeting on the basis of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation should not be considered a fair representation of the needs of Scotland as it may fail to take account of this client group.

Question 15: What are your views on spatial targeting for rural development under ERDF Priority 3?

***Question 16: Do you have any additional comments on the draft Structural Funds Operational Programmes for Lowlands & Uplands Scotland?***

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