

**Mclsaac C (Cathy)**

**From:** kmccruden@assetskills.org  
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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?

***Question 2: Do the proposed priorities for the 2007-2013 ERDF programme in Lowlands & Uplands Scotland address the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the region?***

Question 3: Do the proposed priorities for the 2007-2013 ERDF programme in Lowlands & Uplands Scotland show appropriate coherence and concentration?

***Question 4: Do the proposed priorities for the 2007-2013 ESF programme in Lowlands & Uplands Scotland address the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the region?***

Asset Skills welcomes this opportunity to comment on the next round of Structural Funding in Scotland. As a UK wide Sector Skills Council, Asset Skills has the benefit of working directly with the Scottish Executive on several key strategic policy documents, among these the refresh of the Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (ALNIS) report due in Spring 2007. The organization has also developed and delivered projects in Scotland which could not have taken place without the support of Structural Funds. Asset Skills vision is to see “A skilled workforce successfully engaged in transforming businesses, communities and their property assets to achieve sustainable development.” As many of the key challenges identified within the 3 Priorities of the Future Structural Funds programme compliment the objectives of Asset Skills, this document will dwell on the following questions of the consultation; Question 4 – Do the proposed priorities for the 2007-2013 ESF programme in Lowlands and Uplands Scotland address the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the region? In setting out the key challenges; targeting particular groups and areas and helping those furthest from the labour market as Priority 1 Asset Skills believe this strategy should positively build on the progress of the previous round of funding and allow the continuation of projects supporting these vulnerable members of the community. More importantly for an organization which is employer led, Priority 2, with its focus on targeting the low waged/low skilled, addressing the gender pay gap and developing entrepreneurial and social enterprise skills will lead to improved learning systems and culture within workplaces and innovation of more productive methods of workplace development which will benefit both staff and employers. The support of Lifelong Learning will help engender the encouragement of active aging among the workforce and allow new skills development and adaptability to change to flourish. Widening the access to post school training for key client groups, notably rural communities will allow parity with urban areas in Scotland where access to lifelong learning provision is more easily managed.

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?***

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?

CPP's are best placed to exploit the vagaries in need between the geographical areas which these bodies represent. Each has a broad range of stakeholders and in so a definite clear picture of the development needs its community. Widening the partnership working between CPP's and Sector Skills Councils would allow significant sharing of information in terms of project development and employer engagement, especially in very deprived areas which would allow a more focused spend on Priorities 1, 2 and 3. The probability of LEC and employer support in matched funding would also be increased as community, employer and economic priorities can be met with less chance of duplication of effort and more innovative solutions to meet societal needs as a whole.

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

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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