

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Question 1 – Are there other areas you think the Partnership Agreement should address?

It is positive that there will be a Scottish Chapter within the Partnership Agreement allowing the opportunity to tailor the Scottish Operational Programme and support specific priorities in Scotland. The 3 key expectations (Building business competitiveness and innovation; tackling the high proportion of the population with low level or no skills; and make the economy environmentally friendly and resource efficient) are areas that the Scottish and UK governments are trying to addressing. These areas that are to be addressed within the Partnership Agreement are all aims that East Lothian Council and partners desire to be addressed (East Lothian Community Planning Economic Development Strategy), and align with national and local policies and objectives.

Question 2 – Do you think these thematic objectives will best address Scotland's short-term and long-term challenges?

Yes - in principle these thematic objectives should address the short-term and long-term challenges of Scotland. They are cross-cutting themes and objectives that afflict all parts of Scotland. The objectives align to Scottish Government and local policies that are trying to address these challenges and by focusing extra resources on these areas progress should occur.

Question 3 – Do you think there are any other thematic objectives which should be addressed?

No - the 3 thematic objectives (building business competitiveness and innovation; tackling the high proportion of the population with low level or no skills; and make the economy environmentally friendly and resource efficient) must be addressed in order to tackle the economic challenges and by having more themes would make the programme too broad and dilute the potential to affect change in these areas that need resourcing.

Question 4 – Do you think the Scottish Themed Funds will address Scotland's key challenges?

The outline of the 3 funds would in theory address the key challenges of Scotland, e.g increase the number of people working; improve the business environment, etc. There is concern over the concentration of interventions in order to have the greatest impact; that these concentrations / focusing of resources will be in particular areas of the country and more rural smaller areas may be overlooked. Rural areas have specific issues that need to be addressed but perhaps are not viewed as on the same scale as larger city areas but nevertheless have a detrimental impact within a smaller economy. Although concentration on specific challenges will have a positive impact, equity of accessibility throughout Scotland is essential to address the key Scottish challenges.

Question 5 – How do you think the governance and delivery arrangements will impact on your sector?

We require greater clarity on the governance and delivery arrangements to assess the impact on local authorities and in particular the impact to East Lothian.

Question 6 – How do you think the governance and delivery arrangements will impact on your organisation?

East Lothian is a smaller local authority. We have concern over the resource implications and capacity to delivery and manage on the scale of other larger areas; not being able to influence the focus of programmes; and unable to access required funds to address local rural issues and challenges.

Question 7 – Are there any unidentified governance or delivery arrangements that could aid simplification of the future programmes and ensure that the Structural Funds complement each other?

Audit and compliance must be clearly defined at the outset and not altered as the programmes goes on. It will require consistency throughout the lifetime of the programme.

Question 8 – What other delivery options do you think would be feasible for delivering youth employment initiatives?

It would seem feasible for this to be delivered under the Scottish theme of competitiveness, innovation and jobs, in line with Local Employability Partnerships and other Community Planning local structures.

Question 9 – What other measures could be taken to reduce the audit and control pressures?

The introduction of the unit costs, and more use of procurement and contracting would be a significant step forward. Again consistency from the start of the programme and throughout is vital.

Question 10 – Do you have any further comments on the proposals?

