

# European Focus

The Newsletter of Yorkshire and Humber's ERDF Programme 2007-2013

## YorkshireEurope moves into new Brussels Office

YorkshireEurope is the region's voice amongst the European policy makers and institutions in Brussels that is managed by Yorkshire Forward on behalf of the region.

It has just moved into new premises in  
International House  
4th Floor  
Rue du Commerce 45  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium  
Tel: 00 322 504 0750

We are sharing premises with Kent County Council and the South East England Brussels Office. Co-locating with others delivers real benefits:

- ▶ our hosts Kent CC and SEEDA have built considerable experience of European competitive bidding opportunities that will be very useful to the region as we move forward beyond 2013 where access to Structural Funds is likely to be limited at best

- ▶ reduced premise costs
- ▶ shared back office functions including dedicated Office Manager
- ▶ video conferencing facilities
- ▶ large conference room on site for rent
- ▶ enhanced opportunities for collaboration and joint working

The office has hot desking facilities and a dedicated room for Yorkshire and Humber partners to use at no cost for small meetings (approx 4-6 people). Larger meeting rooms and catering are available at reasonable cost.

Recruitment of the permanent Brussels-based posts is expected to be underway shortly once the necessary approvals are in place. Before then, regional partners who wish to use the facilities you should contact Sophie Robinson on 0113 394 9599 or email: [sophie.robinson@yorkshire-forward.com](mailto:sophie.robinson@yorkshire-forward.com)

## LIFE+ European Seminar

Yorkshire Forward's Europe team is hosting an information seminar for regional partners and stakeholders on the European LIFE+ Funding Programme.

LIFE is the European Union's financial instrument to support environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU. A Call for proposals was issued by the Commission's DG Environment on 15th May. Up to €250 million is available for co-financing projects under three headings:

- ▶ nature and biodiversity
- ▶ environment policy and governance
- ▶ information and communication

For further information on the programme and call, please use the following link: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/>

The seminar is being held at Sheffield University (Interdisciplinary Centre for Social Sciences (ICSS)) on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 10.00am - 1.30pm. The event is taking place to coincide with the third LIFE+ call for proposals which closes on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Beta Technology, the National Contact Point for LIFE+ in the UK will be providing a detailed overview of the programme alongside two case studies of previous successful LIFE 3 bids.

If you would like to attend the seminar or would like further information contact Sophie Robinson on 0113 394 9599 or email [sophie.robinson@yorkshire-forward.com](mailto:sophie.robinson@yorkshire-forward.com)



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If you would like to receive European Focus each month or if you no longer wish to receive it, please email [richard.holmes@yorkshire-forward.com](mailto:richard.holmes@yorkshire-forward.com)

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# Organisation Sought to Deliver Access Fund for Third Sector

Yorkshire Forward, is seeking to invest £400,000 in an Access Fund to provide assistance to Third Sector organisations in the Yorkshire and the Humber to bid for European Regional Development Funding (ERDF).

Yorkshire Forward is seeking to appoint, through a competitive process, a suitable organisation to oversee the delivery and administration of a Third Sector ERDF Access Fund. A Fund of up to £400,000 will be established. The fund must be fully spent by March 2012.

The purpose of the Fund will be to provide grants to Third Sector organisations to assist them with bidding for ERDF under the Yorkshire and The Humber ERDF Operational Programme 2007-2013. The Fund will provide funding towards the costs incurred by Third Sector organisations and partnerships to:

- ▶ develop appropriate governance arrangements for partnership bids
- ▶ undertake initial scoping exercises such as feasibility studies
- ▶ generate new ideas
- ▶ incur preliminary costs such as applications for planning permission and legal and other professional costs

There is no requirement that the applicants to the Fund provide match funding.

This invitation to tender is for a single organisation to manage the Fund on behalf of Yorkshire Forward. The funding available for management costs is limited, up to a maximum budget of £125,000 excluding VAT.

The Fund Manager will be responsible for distribution of the fund to suitable third sector organisations. This will involve establishing an open and competitive application process, supporting third sector organisations to engage with the application process, assessing applications for funding, making payments to successful applicants and compiling fully auditable evidence that the funds have been spent on ERDF eligible activity and in accordance with the aims of the Fund, to enable Yorkshire Forward to recoup spend from European Regional Development Fund Technical Assistance.

The Fund Manager will be provided with adequate forward funding to ensure that claims from applicants for assistance from the Fund can be reimbursed in a timely manner. All Fund management costs will be reimbursed monthly in arrears on the basis of defrayed actual expenditure.

The Fund Manager will be required to establish suitable methodologies for determining a fair and equitable distribution of the Fund within the confines of the total Fund value and subject to approval of the methodology by Yorkshire Forward.

Success of the fund will be measured through the number of third sector organisations supported to make bids for ERDF funding. There will be no requirement that these bids are successful, but the selection methodology for Fund applications should take into account the likelihood of a successful application resulting from the work supported.

Tenders should be no more than two sides of A4 paper and address the following criteria for selection in the order they appear here:

- ▶ Experience and knowledge of Third sector organisations' issues in accessing ERDF (20%)
- ▶ Previous experience of ERDF funded projects (5%)
- ▶ Experience of audits/inspections for European Funded schemes (5%)
- ▶ Organisational infrastructure and capacity to deliver on a region-wide basis (20%)
- ▶ Yearly management costs to include staff and general running costs (10%)
- ▶ Marketing budget (5%)
- ▶ Number and types of organisations assisted (15%)
- ▶ Size and type of grants to be awarded (this should indicate the intended grants to be made in South Yorkshire and the Rest of the Region) (20%)

Tenders from suitably qualified and experienced organisations are invited. The tender should be in writing, and clearly marked:

## **DO NOT OPEN - Third Sector ERDF Access Fund Management**

and sent for the attention of:

P Shelley, Yorkshire Forward, Victoria House, Victoria Place, Leeds, LS11 5AE.

Closing date for receipt of tenders is **12 noon Monday 22 June 2009**. Applications received after this time and date will not be considered. All tenders will be opened and assessed the following week and the successful organisation will be notified on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009.



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# Community Development Finance Institution-Operator Sought

Yorkshire Forward, is seeking to invest around £10 million from the European Regional Development Fund and Single Pot funding in a Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) loan fund to cover Yorkshire and the Humber.

Yorkshire Forward is seeking to appoint, through a competitive process, a suitable organisation to oversee the delivery and administration of a Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) loan fund. A loan fund of around £10 million will be established.

This **time limited call** is in response to the Yorkshire and The Humber Operational Programme's Priority Prospectus **Priority 3, Objective 2: To increase economic activity and entrepreneurship within communities**

**Indicative activity:** Support to foster a dynamic enterprise culture including access to finance

**Priority for action:** Regional access to finance initiatives with local delivery where appropriate will be supported provided they meet the ERDF regulations for financial engineering. A regional Community Development Finance Initiative scheme is currently in development which will be subject to open procurement.

The Fund Operator will be responsible for the successful delivery of a Single Pot and ERDF funded project, ensuring compliance with all requirements in relation to delivering this type of project. It is envisaged that the Fund will make investments within communities up to a maximum amount of £25,000 per investment. The Fund Operator will be tasked with tendering for Fund Managers to deliver the project's objectives and identifying suitable investment opportunities within disadvantaged communities.

The successful Fund Operator will work closely with Yorkshire Forward to develop a Single Pot/ERDF application to capitalise the fund. The successful organisation will be expected to lead on an application for Single Pot and ERDF. Assistance with the entire application process will be provided by dedicated Yorkshire Forward staff. It is anticipated that the fund will be in full operation and ready to make the first investment by 1 November 2009.

The CDFI Fund will be aimed at disadvantaged communities and under represented groups who have a viable business idea but cannot access mainstream finance, due to poor credit history or lack of assets against which to secure a loan.

Expressions of Interest should be no more than two sides of A4 paper and cover the following topics:

- ▶ Experience of fund management and previous engagement with disadvantaged communities in a similar field or equivalent
- ▶ Track record of delivering funds
- ▶ Experience and knowledge of the disadvantaged communities/under-represented group's issues in accessing finance, or equivalent
- ▶ Structure of organisation (constitution) legal structure registration number etc
- ▶ Registration with professional bodies, CDFA, FSA membership or equivalent
- ▶ Previous experience of ERDF funded projects, in the CDFI loan field, or equivalent
- ▶ Experience of audits/inspections for European Funded schemes
- ▶ Commitment from organisation
- ▶ Model for operating the fund that will deliver regional access and linkages to finance
- ▶ Proposal for legacy fund
- ▶ Outline costs for four year's investments, management costs to include staff and general running costs, three year managing out costs to cover staff and general running costs.
- ▶ Marketing and branding ideas and associated budgets
- ▶ Outputs, number and size of investments envisaged over a four year period. The outputs should be based on a maximum funding pot of £10m. The outputs should indicate the intended investments to be made in South Yorkshire and the Rest of the Region.
- ▶ Experience/knowledge of Public Contract Regulations 2006

Expressions of interest, from suitably qualified and experienced organisations are invited. The expression should be in writing, and clearly marked:

## DO NOT OPEN - CDFI Fund Operator Application

and sent for the attention of:

G Pearce, Yorkshire Forward, Renaissance House, Adwick Park, Wath-upon-Deerne, Rotherham, S63 5NB.

Closing date for receipt of applications is **12pm Monday 22 June 2009**. Applications received after this time and date will not be considered. All applications will be opened and assessed the following week and successful organisation/s will be notified on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009.



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## Introducing Linda Sproge

Linda Sproge is the European Commission's link with Yorkshire and The Humber's ERDF Programme. Linda is from Latvia, one of the three Baltic States. She is the desk officer at the Commission's Directorate General for Regional Policy (DG Regio in Eurospeak) and is a member of the Programme Monitoring Committee. [European Focus](#) spoke with Linda to find out more about her role and to understand the person behind the role a little better.

Linda is the desk officer who deals with Operational Programmes in Yorkshire & the Humber and South West of England (Objective 2 and Competitiveness programmes) as well as Urban programmes in both regions. She also looks after some horizontal tasks for her unit including Lisbon strategy, Innovation, Research and Information Society. Linda provides the initial contact point for the region in the European Commission. Her main responsibilities are to participate in PMC meetings, ensure that EU legislation is respected, processing payment claims, answering questions from regions, assessing major projects and examining regional reports.

Linda outlined her career to date: "I come from a village 30km outside Latvia's capital, Riga. I went to university in Riga and subsequently studied for a Masters in Economics in Denmark. I worked for Latvia's Central Statistical Bureau for eight years, then was seconded in 2004 to Luxembourg to work for the Commission in DG Eurostat. After three years and a lot of studying I succeeded in becoming a European civil servant and secured a position with DG Regio in Brussels.

Linda continued: "I like my job because you get to see tangible results relatively quickly. I've seen many projects in the region that have used ERDF successfully. Projects to develop world-leading research centres, for example, others that provide unique services for businesses. High-growth business start-ups have been encouraged because the region has invested ERDF in excellent business centres and support services. It is impressive to visit a city, like Sheffield, where ERDF has helped the whole city centre to be transformed. And importantly, behind all these developments, there are many citizens directly benefiting from the opportunities being created. It is very satisfying to be able to advise the region on how best to use the opportunities that are offered by the EU to move forward and improve things for local people."

Speaking of the challenges she faces, Linda said: "Regional policy offers enormous opportunities but it also has many legal acts and regulations. Those have to be respected and in order to respect them, you have to know them. This involves lots of reading and preparation, I need to ask many different people for advice and learn a lot

each day in a never-ending process. Working with people from other countries, with different attitudes and culture is stimulating. I find British people very diplomatic, while Latvians tend to be rather direct. Sometimes it is not easy to really understand what British people mean, for example when they say something is very interesting they really mean that it is clearly nonsense, when they say I almost agree, they mean they do not agree at all!

"I learnt about England in school, but knew little about Yorkshire apart from the fact that the Bronte sisters came from here. When I started working in DG Regio I started to learn more about England and its regions little by little. I like the region very much, I like the people there and their attitude. You have great cities like Leeds and Sheffield, while York is very distinctive and very, very beautiful. Your region's biggest asset, however, is its people who are passionate about the work they do. People in your region are very creative, be it in research centres or working with European funds."

Linda speaks excellent English which she first learnt at school and also French, German and Russian as well as her native Latvian. Linda explained; "I work with native English speakers daily and they help by correcting any mistakes. I do not learn foreign languages easily; I have to make an effort and invest a lot of time on foreign languages. It's like with everything else in order to succeed

you really have to work hard."



*DG Regio's Linda Sproge, our first point of contact at the European Commission*



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## Investment in Energy Efficiency Measures for Housing

The Call for Proposals issued on 31st of March 2009 included innovative measures for energy efficiency in low-income housing. Proposals are requested by a deadline of 30 June 2009.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is proposing to restrict these energy efficiency measures in housing to “social housing” only. This differs from the advice in our Priority Prospectus as the Commission’s regulation change says “low income housing”. Although this is yet to be agreed we are alerting partners to this interpretation as the deadline for enquiries is only just over a month away.

DCLG’s draft guidance identifies social housing as eligible for these interventions and uses the definition in Article 68 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 which defines social housing as

- (a) low cost rental accommodation and
- (b) low cost home ownership accommodation

In the case of (a), accommodation is low cost rental if:

- ▶ it is made available for rent
- ▶ the rent is below the market rate, and

the accommodation is made available in accordance with rules designed to ensure that it is made available to people whose needs are not adequately served by the commercial housing market

In the case of (b), accommodation is low cost home ownership accommodation if two conditions are satisfied:-

- ▶ The accommodation is occupied, or made available for occupation, in accordance with shared ownership arrangements, equity percentage arrangements, or shared ownership trusts.
- ▶ The accommodation is made available in accordance with rules designed to ensure that it is made available to people whose needs are not adequately served by the commercial housing market.

The Commission has indicated that it will be looking for ERDF to support good quality, innovative schemes for implementing energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy, rather than the provision of basic measures, such as loft insulation or double glazing in individual properties.

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## Guidance Update

Some new guidance has been published and can be viewed and downloaded from Yorkshire Forward’s website.

The new guidance covers the following subject areas:

- ▶ Retrospection policy
- ▶ Apportionment of overheads
- ▶ Revenue-generating projects
- ▶ Clarification on the difference between project partners and subcontractors

Some existing guidance has been updated and new versions are available:

- ▶ Document retention
- ▶ Technical Note of Combined Indicators for RDA Single Budget and ERDF Programme 2007-13 (For Use when applying for Yorkshire Forward Single Pot and ERDF funds)

- ▶ Local Annex for ERDF indicators (to be read in conjunction with the Technical Note listed in the previous point).

Project developers are encouraged to refer to the website for the latest available versions rather than rely on what may be outdated file copies.

Guidance is available from:

<http://www.yorkshire-forward.com/about/our-funding/erdf/applying-for-funding/guidance>



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## Cross Cutting Themes Consultancy Support for Projects

Yorkshire Forward is committed to integrating the principles of sustainable development and equalities and diversity into all its project activities supported through ERDF. This means using expertise and knowledge on these issues to add value to and shape projects developed by Yorkshire Forward and its partners.

To ensure that these principles are embedded into projects, consultants have been appointed by the ERDF programme, to provide one-to-one project development support as appropriate for projects once approved at Outline Business Plan stage.

We are pleased to announce that following successful tender process, Lancaster Consulting has been appointed to provide support for the Equality and Diversity Cross Cutting Theme. Global2Local consultants already provide support for the Environmental Good Practice Cross Cutting Theme.

If you are currently developing a project which has not yet reached approval, information on the themes is available at <http://www.yorkshire-forward.com/about/our-funding/erdf/applying-for-funding/guidance/cross-cutting-themes-guidance>. Any further questions should be directed to the Thematic Impacts Manager, Eleanor Marshall on 0113 394 9962 or email: [Eleanor.Marshall@Yorkshire-Forward.com](mailto:Eleanor.Marshall@Yorkshire-Forward.com)

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## Barca Report on the Future Direction of Cohesion Policy

To inform the debate on the future of the EU's cohesion policy Commissioner Danuta Hübner asked Dr. Fabrizio Barca (Director General of Italy's Ministry of Economy & Finance) to prepare an independent report assessing the effectiveness of cohesion policy to date as well making proposals of how cohesion policy, post 2013, could be reformed.

Dr. Barca organised eight hearings and seminars with academic experts and policy makers, over the last year. The results of these discussions, those of ten working papers prepared for the report and a review of the economic literature and empirical evidence served as the basis for

drawing up the findings of the report.

The report discusses the economic rationale and motivation of an EU place-based development policy and provides an assessment of EU cohesion policy. In addition, it identifies a limited number of core priorities on which to focus cohesion policy. Finally, it presents recommendations on key pillars of cohesion policy governance pinpointed for reform.

The Barca report is available from: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/policy/future/barca\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/future/barca_en.htm)

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## Interreg Seminar

Yorkshire Forward's Europe Team is arranging a workshop in Leeds on 16th July 2009 for regional Interreg projects. The seminar will discuss how they can best communicate their benefits.

The Project and Communications Unit Manager and

the Head of Communications for Interreg's North Sea Programme will speak along with representatives from the UK Contact Point and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

If you would like to attend the seminar or would like more information please contact Sophie Robinson on 0113 394 9599 or email [sophie.robinson@yorkshire-forward.com](mailto:sophie.robinson@yorkshire-forward.com)

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## Europe Team news

John Boanas has been appointed to the new Capital Project Development Manager role. John is part of the South Yorkshire team based in Yorkshire Forward's Wath office.

He reports to South Yorkshire Implementation Manager, Peggy Haywood, but John's role as a capital project expert is not restricted to South Yorkshire but supports Capital projects across the region.



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