

# European Structural Funds 2014 – 2020 Programmes

Scottish Government Consultation

Consultation response from the British Red Cross

June 2013

## Who we are

- 1 The British Red Cross helps millions of people in the UK and around the world to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, disasters and conflicts.

Our volunteers and staff help people in crisis to live independently by providing support at home, mobility aids and transport. We also teach first aid skills.

- 2 The British Red Cross is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which comprises:
  - > The International Committee of the Red Cross
  - > The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and
  - > 187 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide.
- 3 As a member of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the British Red Cross is committed to, and bound by, its fundamental principles. These are: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

As an auxiliary to government in the UK, we help the emergency services and statutory authorities to support people affected by emergencies, big or small.

- 4 In Scotland, the Red Cross has over 4,000 volunteers supported by 500 staff members who deliver our humanitarian work in communities across the country. Last year in Scotland we responded to more than 400 emergencies, trained more than 30,000 people in first aid, assisted more than 550 asylum seekers and refugees, reached more than 23,000 young people with humanitarian education and helped 32,000 people through a crisis in their daily lives by providing support at home, transport and mobility aids.

# Response

The British Red Cross welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on European Structural Funds 2014 – 2020 Programmes and would like to submit the following comments.

## 1 Strategy

We understand the rationale behind the areas outlined in the Partnership Agreement, and feel that the thematic objectives fit within the areas. We believe that it makes sense for the Scottish Government to propose thematic objectives that will help Scotland achieve the EU 2020 targets.

That said, we believe that proposal not to support sustainable transport and capacity building may have some implications on the ability to achieve social inclusion. While the Scottish Government may decide not to focus on these two areas as thematic objectives, it is critical that both of these objectives are considered within social inclusion.

## 2 Governance & Delivery

The British Red Cross would support the circulation of more detailed information at the earliest opportunity on how organisations can put forward projects. As yet, the Scottish Government has been unable to provide much clarity on what the next steps in the process will be and how potential delivery agents can get involved. This information should be extended to the whole sector, including organisations who may not have received European funding in the past. At present, there is a concern that without greater clarity and information on the next steps, it will be challenging for organisations/projects who do not currently receive European funding to engage with the process in the timescales that are being suggested.

In relation to the Scottish Themed Funds, we feel that in some cases there may be some crossover in relation to skills development between themes 1 and 3, and access to finance for SMEs in all three themes. We are concerned that the crossover may lead to confusion as to which fund best matches the objectives of the project application. While on paper the differences between the themed objectives may seem obvious, in practice this distinction may not be as clear.

We would therefore recommend greater clarity on the objectives of each of the funds. This will enable delivery partners to make an informed decision about which fund matches the objectives of the project.

We are also concerned that this duplication exists in the themed objective of social inclusion which is identified in the Structural Funds and the Rural Development Fund. In some cases it may be obvious which fund an organisation should apply to, but in others it may be unclear, particularly if the project is based in a rural area. Greater clarity on the objectives and more

guidance and support during the application stage may help organisations to make their application to the most appropriate fund.

The Red Cross believes that the whole process of European funds is working not only to a tighter timeframe but also a tighter framework with tighter restrictions. We acknowledge that given the shortcomings of the previous round of European funds, there is a need for clearer objectives and greater focus on meeting the outcomes set out in the Partnership Agreement.

However, we are concerned that this may impact firstly on the ability of organisations not currently receiving funding from European funds to engage with the process, and secondly on the ability of organisations to use European funds to meet very specific local needs or for innovative new projects.

It is important that funds are set up in such a way that enable enough flexibility to ensure delivery agents are able to meet specific local needs which fall within the strategic aims of the funds.

It is our understanding that the funds will be distributed to the Delivery Partnerships in two rounds between 2014 -2020. We understand that the process of delivering the funds can be complex and that by condensing this into two rounds this is made less burdensome.

However, European funding applications can be challenging to complete successfully, particularly in the tight timeframes that it looks likely organisations will be working to. Therefore, we recommend that while the Delivery Partnership may be allocated funding in two rounds, they have the ability to dispense the funding to delivery agents on at least a bi-annual basis. This would give organisations that had been unsuccessful with their first application the opportunity to make a second application, learning from their previous experience, within two years.

The Red Cross would welcome the use of LEADER as a model for the Delivery Partnerships to utilise in selecting the projects that they will fund with the Scottish Themed Funds.

It is our understanding from the consultation document and SCVO event that the delivery partners will have the responsibility of securing match funding for the funds. The Red Cross welcomes this commitment, however would support greater clarity on the wording to ensure delivery agents are not trying to secure match funding within the extremely tight timetable of the programme.

Finally, the Red Cross understands the proposal to include the Community Planning Partnerships on the lead partners. However, there remains a great deal of inconsistency in the effectiveness of CCPs to engage with the third sector. Furthermore, the suggestion that a voluntary sector representative becomes a lead partner in the fund for social inclusion and local development is a welcomed step forward. That said, it is important that, whoever is selected to be the representative for the third sector, they are supported, resourced and monitored to ensure that there is full engagement with the wider sector.

### 3 Concluding Remarks

The Red Cross welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on European Structural Funds 2014 – 2020.

We support the proposals to align the themed objectives to the EU 2020 targets and believe that the proposed themes reflect some of the challenges that Scotland faces in achieving these targets.

However, there has been a lack of clarity about how organisations, as delivery agents, can engage with the European Structural Funds. It seems that the timetable between agreeing the partnership agreement, bringing the delivery partners together and identifying the projects is extremely tight. This suggests that the projects, and perhaps the delivery agents, which will be supported by these funds, may to some extent already be identified. This presents a disadvantage to those organisations not currently receiving European funding as they are not engaged in the process.

For this reason the Red Cross would strongly recommend that detailed information is circulated at the earliest opportunity to all third sector organisations to enable them to engage with the Delivery Partnership should they wish to do so in a fair and equal manner.

**For further information please contact:**

**Norman McKinley**

UK director for Scotland  
British Red Cross  
4 Nasmyth Place  
Glasgow  
G52 4PR

Email: [nmckinley@redcross.org.uk](mailto:nmckinley@redcross.org.uk)

Tel: 0141 8914000

Or

**Fiona MacLeod**

Public affairs officer for Scotland  
British Red Cross  
4 Nasmyth Place  
Glasgow  
G52 4PR

Email: [fmacleod@redcross.org.uk](mailto:fmacleod@redcross.org.uk)

Tel: 0141 8914037