

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

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

The Partnership Agreement should note the significant inequalities in Scotland, and commit to narrowing these inequalities (including health, income, employment, social and educational inequalities).

Inequalities undermine Scotland's potential for growth. 'Equity' is one of 6 Strategic Priorities in the Government Economic Strategy which recognises that the Scottish Government's efforts to reduce inequalities are "not just an aim in themselves, they are also key to securing faster sustainable economic growth". Tackling inequalities must be a key part of any inclusive growth strategy.

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

There needs to be awareness raising in Scotland's public and third sector about structural funds and the thematic objectives.

Social inclusion and capacity building are intrinsically linked, so difficult to prioritise the former, but not the latter (as proposed in the consultation paper).

The Europe 2020 goals of smart, sustainable and **inclusive** growth emphasise the need for investment to promote social inclusion as part of a growth strategy in both the short and long-term. The consultation document (p9) highlights that in Scotland there remain "pockets of severe and prolonged deprivation, including complex inter-linkages between health, housing, education and income". It is imperative, therefore, that the social inclusion thematic objective is prioritised and that there is sustained investment to promote social inclusion as part of any growth strategy for Scotland.

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

Addressing inequalities cuts across all the thematic objectives. A way of recognising this would be to ensure that the selection process for funding asked proposals to demonstrate how the project would reduce inequalities. Explicit recommendation to use SIMD data to target funding would be helpful.

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

Generally, yes, but health and wellbeing should be explicitly mentioned under social inclusion and local development. The Government Economic Strategy recognises that improving Scotland’s health record is both an essential driver of growth and a key outcome of economic success.

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

Health appears to only be an indirect partner (through Community Planning). I think Health Boards should have a specific responsibility to contribute to the thematic objectives. Already, knowledge about Structural Funds and their application is patchy in the NHS, but the work done with Equity Action demonstrates that reducing health inequalities can positively impact on EU aims to reduce disparities of income, wealth and opportunity.

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

Linked to 5 above, a strengthened role for Community Planning could link Health better into the process.

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?

I'd like to see stronger links to existing Scottish Government policies like Equally Well, Early Years Framework and Achieving our Potential.

And a strengthened role for the third sector (again Community Planning partnerships could help this).

Question 8 – What other measures could be taken to reduce the audit and control pressures?

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

It is important not to deter partners/projects from seeking multiple funding sources so flexibility around reporting/audit is essential. Outcomes may be partially achieved using structured funds, but other funds may also contribute. Using an established partnership route like Community Planning may simplify the process. This has been used to allocate funding in the past e.g. Fairer Scotland Fund and Change Fund for Older People.

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

I would reiterate that the ‘inclusive’ element of the Europe 2020 goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ should be strengthened in the proposals in recognition of the significant inequalities in Scotland and that a commitment should be made to narrowing these inequalities. This is consistent with the Scottish Government’s Economic Strategy and would support the Purpose – *“To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, **with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish**, through increasing sustainable economic growth.’*