

European Structural and Investment Funds Update – September 2014

There have been a number of developments recently as we get close to the approval of the new ESIF programmes.

It is now expected that the Partnership Agreement will be approved by the Commission in October, allowing the Scottish Government to progress with plans to start the Programmes from January 2015. As we know already, plans are currently being developed for each of the Strategic Interventions and the Scottish Government held a workshop for lead body representatives at the beginning of September which gave an indication on how things will move forward after approval.

Those Strategic Interventions that are more time critical and/or further forward in development will be invited to submit first stage applications during November. This will include Local Authorities submitting their plans for employability pathways. The applications will go through a series of checks including consideration by national scrutiny panels and it is hoped that offers of funding will be issued by the end of year. Lead bodies will then need to go through their own processes to agree local pathway programmes and will require to submit more information as part of a second stage application process at the beginning of the year. This second stage however, should not lead to any delays in implementation. Approvals will be for 2015 – 17 in the first instance with subsequent offers subject to a mid-term review.

Other Strategic Interventions will be invited to submit their proposals on a rolling basis from the start of 2015.

A new Management Information System is being developed for ESIF Programme – EUMIS. This will go live for applications on 14th January so we will have to enter the information after approval for the employability intervention. Thereafter the claims side will go live from 23rd April and it will be the end of June before the web interface is in place for beneficiary and milestone date to be transferred via the xml schema. Fife has offered to help test the system prior to going live.

One of the key changes in delivery of the ESIF for this programme is the introduction of simplified cost methodologies. From the range of options that are possible the Scottish Government has now given some guidance on which can be used and for what types of costs. In relation to employability pathway activities the flat rate cost model can only be used for lead body management costs. All delivery costs must use either a procurement model or a scale of unit cost model. In Fife, we will therefore be using the scale of unit cost model for the programme start in 2015.

Work has still to be undertaken to finalise the scale of unit cost model for pathway activities and the local authorities will be taking part in a workshop at the beginning of October to finalise the model for consideration by the Scottish Government and their auditors.

It is intended to run a workshop for Fife Projects in early November to provide a further update and to present more information on the simplified cost methodologies.