

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Question 1 - The table in part 5 provides an overview of the proposals under each of the EU 2020 headings – Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive – matched against the relevant thematic objective and investment priorities. Do you think the investment priorities are the most appropriate ones for the activity suggested?

Please see general response at question 6.

Question 2 – Section 6 sets out the linkages between Structural, Rural and Fisheries Funds as well as linkages to other EU Funding Programmes. We would welcome stakeholder comments on these linkages in order to help us develop this thinking further

Please see general response at question 6.

Question 3 - Do you think the new proposals will have a positive or negative impact on the protected characteristics and wider issues of inclusion and participation?

Please see general response at question 6.

Question 4 - If you think there will be a negative impact on the protected characteristics or inclusion and participation please provide suggestions as to what could be done differently to diminish this impact.

Please see general response at question 6.

Question 5 - Please provide your views for improving the process for design, procurement, delivery, monitoring and evaluation to strengthen delivery of sustainable development.

Please see general response at question 6.

Question 6 – Do you have any further comments on the proposals outlined in this document?

As a small organisation focused on developing women's enterprise across Scotland, Women's Enterprise Scotland (WES) regrets missing the opportunity to feed into the public consultation on the ESI last May. But we are taking this opportunity to highlight the importance of women's contribution to the economic future of Scotland and to reflect a growing international recognition that pro-active efforts have to be made to maximise this contribution – and that the forthcoming European Structural Funds Programme can play a key role in ensuring that Scotland is an exemplar for women's enterprise and economic development in Europe.

Scotland's Framework and Action Plan for Women's Enterprise

Promoting women's enterprise has never been more important to the development of the Scottish economy. Through research we know that there is a potential £7.9 billion opportunity to be realised if rates of women-led businesses equalled those of men in Scotland and in 2013, WES took some critical steps towards facilitating the changes required to help achieve that goal.

Working with the Scottish Government, and many other stakeholders operating within the Scottish enterprise eco-system including all the relevant public sector agencies, we prepared the draft Scottish Framework and Action Plan for Women's Enterprise. Facilitated and supported throughout by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth, the draft has been finalised after a consultation period which ran from May to September 2013. The final document will be launched in early March and will dovetail with the forthcoming 'mainstream' Entrepreneurship and Innovation Framework for Scotland Action Plan.

The document focuses on four main areas - Networking & Mentoring, Role-modelling, Markets & Finance and Gender Specific Support, and these have been broadly supported by stakeholders and many women entrepreneurs. The actions arising from each of these areas will involve co-ordinated activities and support for women across the spectrum of support that is required.

Through this process, WES has formed new relationships with groups and networks representing women who may have been marginalised by traditional business support mechanisms (ethnic minorities, remote and rural, social enterprises), such as African Forum Scotland, Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO), Workers' Educational Association (WEA), and Women Onto Work (WOW). Their engagement in various processes, such as the development of the Framework for Women's Enterprise, is essential to ensuring the needs of those communities are met through policy and action planning. This is also critical in ensuring that funding programmes such as ESI are implemented effectively.

A key strength in developing a way forward for women's enterprise in Scotland has always been our policy focus, which is underpinned by research from the UK and beyond. In early 2013, for example, WES helped to facilitate a launch event for the Enterprise Research Centre (ERC) at Strathclyde University. WES continues to work with UK and European groups to develop women's enterprise strategy and policy, including the UK Women's Enterprise Policy Group (WEPG) and the European Women's Entrepreneurship Platform.

Specific comments on the consultation

We would support concerns already voiced about how women's employment opportunities (p5) are

going to be promoted and supported by the new programme - and we have a particular concern about how the increased numbers of women who have become self-employed since 2008 will be supported and helped to grow. Research identifies that this is a particular issue for women in rural areas.

Although the move to larger more strategic projects is understandable, small organisations providing support to women may be disproportionately disadvantaged when seeking funding for initiatives. Women's organisations tend to be smaller and more poorly resourced despite the need for their projects and outcomes delivered across the country.

As has been made clear by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth in recent months, and as research suggests, the role of women in delivering sustainable economic growth in Scotland is a significant one. It is therefore of great importance that the detailed delivery of the key themes of this new programme reflect this and there are organisations, including WES, that are well placed to advise on specifics.

In terms of the thematic objectives set down (page 12), a focus on women's enterprise development should be included in the 'SME Competitiveness' objective.

In Part 5, 'Potential Strategic Interventions', there are no specific references to women throughout. The areas of particular focus on women should include:

SMART GROWTH: Competitiveness, Innovation and Jobs - Developing Scotland's Workforce, Business Competitiveness, Innovation, Financial Engineering Instruments.

INCLUSIVE GROWTH: Enhanced Employability Pipelines & Youth Employment, Poverty and Social Inclusion

It has been noted that the Horizontal Themes (including gender equality) were not treated seriously enough with the last programme and it's essential that this is addressed in the new programme.

The report published by Women in Scotland's Economy (WiSE) Research Centre at Glasgow Caledonian University "The Legacy of Gender Mainstreaming with the Scottish Structural Funds Programme 2007-13" (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/resource/0043/00434671.pdf>) delivered the following findings:

Application Procedures and Understanding of Gender Mainstreaming:

There was quite a wide variation in the extent to which the projects understood the concept of gender mainstreaming... There was a consensus that the level of support and guidance available in the 2007-13 period to ensure projects took cognizance of the equal opportunities agenda was significantly less than that available in the 2000-06 period.

Access and Monitoring:

There was a distinct lack of systematic data gathering across all of the projects which would facilitate a gender analysis of the impact of the projects.

Impact of the Recession:

The great recession had an impact on projects both in terms of increasing the difficulty of attracting matched funding due to public expenditure reductions as well as resulting in increasing demand for those projects which had an employability dimension due to the rise

in unemployment particularly amongst young people.

The Legacy of these Projects in terms of Gender Mainstreaming:

In terms of legacy, there were concerns from the equal opportunities focused projects that this objective would be further downgraded in the 2014-20 funding period. Though on the positive side there was some evidence to suggest that there was some spill over from the funded project to the organisation as a whole in relation to gender mainstreaming.

The report went on to make the following recommendations, which are supported by Women's Enterprise Scotland.

1. Resources need to be committed to providing leadership and oversight of horizontal themes, in particular gender issues.
2. Projects require clearer guidance on what is involved in gender mainstreaming.
3. The establishment of an Equality Forum with a strong gender equality focus.
4. Encourage projects to gather gender disaggregated data and indicators.
5. Greater prominence for the objective of equal opportunities in the 2014-20 funding period.
6. More robust appraisal of projects to ensure equal opportunities objectives are met.
7. A longer development phase between the first stage and second stage applications in order to afford projects more time to assimilate best practice in relation to the horizontal themes.
8. The provision of awareness raising workshops on gender mainstreaming at the pre-application stage.
9. Specific and targeted funding for gender mainstreaming projects.
10. The establishment of Equality Champions within the programme managing authorities and strategic delivery partners.
11. Earlier evaluation (Article 60B) visits to monitor the application of the horizontal themes.
12. The establishment of equal opportunities action plans for the Strategic Delivery Partnerships.
13. Projects should be encouraged to make better of the existing legal framework particularly the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED).
14. Recognition that gender is a spectrum and that issues relating to transgender are also important.

Future contribution

Women's Enterprise Scotland is in a unique position in terms of knowledge, research and action-based learning supporting women's enterprise activity and opportunities in Scotland. As an integral

part of the enterprise eco-system, we are well placed to offer advice and support in ensuring programmes and initiatives are appropriate and effective in meeting the needs of self-employed women and female entrepreneurs. We would welcome the opportunity to further contribute to the shaping of this and other future programmes, and request that we are included in relevant correspondence and/or consultation.