



## European Structural Funds

Update (April 2007)

### 1 What are they?

- Tools for addressing social and economic disparities
- Available to eligible areas across the EU
- Set job creation as the primary concern
- Organised into programme rounds: 1994-99, 2000-06 and 2007-2013.

### 2 2007-2013 programmes

The European Commission's structural funds policy for 2007-2013 is organised around three objectives: a **Convergence** objective for Europe's poorest regions; a **Regional Competitiveness and Employment** objective for all other regions, and a **Co-operation** objective to facilitate joint projects between the EU's regions.

The Programmes will be based on broad priorities set out in each Member State's **National Strategic Reference Frameworks** (NSRFs). The [UK NSRF](#) was sent to the Commission for approval on 23 October 2006.

Eligibility for structural funds programmes has been determined on the basis of average GDP statistics for the period 2000-02. This means that the GDP of West Wales and the Valleys will be under 75% of the EU average and therefore qualifies as a full "**Convergence** region" and as an Article 87.3.a region under the regional aid guidelines. The whole of East Wales is eligible for **Competitiveness** funding. The **Ireland-Wales Cross-border Co-operation** programme covers the NUTS III regions of Dublin, Mid East and South East in Ireland and Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire.

The Community Initiatives (see page 3) have been incorporated into the mainstream Structural Fund programmes<sup>1</sup>.

The Assembly Government will continue to administer the Structural Funds.

#### **Convergence programme**

This is to support sustainable growth and jobs, in line with the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas. **€1.85bn** (£1.27bn) is available for West Wales and the Valleys (similar to the amount previously available under Objective 1). Key aspects of the Convergence programme include:

<sup>1</sup> 'Leader' principles have been incorporated into the RDP 2007-2013.







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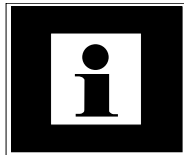
There were also several smaller programmes called “Community Initiatives”, which usually involved working on projects with other EU regions. Wales participated in all of these: Interreg III cross-border (West Wales – East Ireland) for transnational and interregional co-operation; Urban II for urban areas (only Wrexham in Wales); Leader+ for sustainable development of rural areas (there were 7 Leader areas in Wales); and Equal, focusing on combating discrimination and inequality in the labour market (there were 42 projects in Wales).

Wales was eligible for the following main programme support in 2000-06:

Programme	Coverage	EU Grant
Objective 1 (ERDF, ESF, EAGGF, FIFG)	West Wales and the Valleys	€1.85bn
Objective 2 (ERDF, ESF, EAGGF, FIFG) <sup>11</sup>	Parts of East Wales	€126.4m
Objective 3 (ESF)	East Wales	€138.0m

Project expenditure from the 2000-06 programme period can continue into 2008 so projects will come to the end of their funded life in a phased way. Therefore there will be an overlap between the 2000-06 and 2007-13 programme periods.

In 2008 the European Commission plans to take stock of the results delivered by the 2000-06 programmes.



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<sup>11</sup> Includes transitional Objective 2 for areas eligible under the 1994-1999 programme.