



European Union

European Structural
and Investment Funds

**European Structural and Investment Funds
2014 - 2020**

Growth Programme for England

ESI Funds Growth Programme Board

Smart Specialisation National Sub-committee

Purpose:

To update the Growth Programme Board on the first meeting of its Smart Specialisation National Sub-committee on 15 February 2016.

Recommendation(s):

That the Growth Programme Board:

- Notes the discussion that took place at the first meeting of sub-committee
- Agrees the description of its role within the remit of the Terms of Reference for the National Sub-committees (Annex A) and;
- Asks the Managing Authorities to provide to the sub-committee a list of data being collected on project spend and to work with the sub-committee to consider how this data can best be used to consider performance of the innovation parts of the programme.

Summary:

- The sub-committee agreed its terms of reference (generic sub-committee ToR already discussed and agreed by the GPB).
- The sub-committee noted progress to date in implementation of the Growth Programme.
- The sub-committee emphasised the importance of using data to inform the GPB's strategic considerations around innovation and R&D.
- The sub-committee heard an update on the early work of the Smart Specialisation Hub.
- The sub-committee agreed work to be undertaken before the next meeting.

Attendees at the GPB Smart Specialisation sub-committee meeting (15 Feb)

Chair

Charlotte Heyes, Deputy Director, Business Innovation Directorate, BIS

Sub-Committee Members

Professor John Goddard

Professor Stephen Roper

Alexandra Jones, Centre for Cities
Stian Westlake, Nesta
Professor Joe Sweeney
Gillian Docherty, The Datalab
Professor Roy Sandbach

Apologies: Jane Elliott, ESRC

Guest attendees

Julia Sweeney, Director, European Programmes
Tim Courtney, Deputy Director European Reform, BIS
Sue Dunkerton, Director, Knowledge Transfer Network
Aphrodite Korou, Assistant Director European Innovation, BIS

Note of discussion

1. The Innovation and Smart Specialisation ESIF Sub-Committee met for the first time on 15 February 2016. At this first meeting, the Sub-Committee deliberated on its role and debated how best to positively influence the alignment of policy, strategy and investments at local and national level.
2. Sub-Committee members were asked to identify any conflict of interest which might impinge on their deliberations with regard to Smart Specialisation. None was raised.
3. The Sub-Committee recognised the importance of Smart Specialisation and felt that they were well placed contribute to the debate around national innovation targets and priorities and their alignment with Local Enterprise Partnerships' Smart Specialisation priority areas. They noted that the provision of accurate data and analysis was vital in understanding which initiatives, investments and activities generated the best outputs and spillovers. The Growth Programme Board should satisfy itself that it has the right data on project spend to inform its thinking (e.g. breakdown of numbers of applicants by sector). The Sub-Committee was interested to know more about the level of collaboration on innovation projects across England and how this is incentivised. They also remarked on the importance of defining innovation as a more delivery-based process. .
4. The Sub-Committee agreed a description of its role within the remit of the National Sub-committee Terms of Reference. These are attached at Annex A. The Sub-Committee has also agreed to offer expert views on other innovation priorities outside the auspices of the ESIF governance structure.
5. **Tim Courtney, Deputy Director European Reform, BIS** and **Julia Sweeney, Director European Programmes, DCLG** outlined the present position with regard to ESIF innovation investment priorities, and reflected on the opportunities to align the funding programme with domestic policy.

6. The Sub-Committee welcomed this update, and asked that more information be prepared ahead of the next meeting to better inform their discussion, namely:

- mapping of Local Enterprise Partnership spend on projects;
- the scoring mechanism used to assess ESIF candidate projects;
- all available data on how and where investments through ESIF are supported.

7. **Sue Dunkerton, Director, Knowledge Transfer Network** then updated the Group on the early work of the Smart Specialisation Hub, including ongoing engagement currently being undertaken with local partners, in pursuit of the Hub's priorities. The Sub-Committee noted this update and looked forward to receiving further information in due course.

8. The Sub-Committee asked that more frequent meetings be convened than the mandated two per annum, at least while the Committee was establishing itself; BIS has undertaken to schedule the next meeting in the coming months. The Sub-Committee Secretariat will apprise the Growth Programme Board of the dates of future meetings.

7 March 2016

Andrew Basu-McGowan, Innovation Directorate, BIS

Annex A

Formal Role of the ESIF Smart Specialisation (Innovation) National Sub-Committee

1. Review implementation of the Smart Specialisation Strategy for England and advise the Managing Authority in overseeing the work of the Smart Specialisation Hub.
2. Focus and provide strategic direction on the performance of the Thematic Objective of 'Research, Development & Innovation'.
3. Provide the Growth Programme Board (GPB) with specialist advice and expertise on Smart Specialisation issues.
4. Undertake analysis into specific thematic/policy related issues on behalf of the GPB, and report findings back to the GPB.