

Insight

The One East
Midlands Magazine

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one
East Midlands

Inside...

Update on European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme
Overview of Reach & Impact project
Spotlight on ERDF funded VCS projects

Image: River Derwent, close to Cromford Mill in Derbyshire

Welcome



'Insight' is the perfect title for this edition of the One EM magazine; focusing mind and matter on a subject which provokes a broad spectrum of emotion.

Love it or hate it, the European Structural Funds play an important role in realising the economic growth potential of the UK and in reminding us that growth must be inclusive if it is to have real and lasting effect.

The VCS has a powerful role to play in supporting economic growth. As a sector we help build skills and knowledge, stimulate the creation of micro and social enterprises, innovate and develop new markets, support inclusion, spend money in the local economy and employ two percent of the total workforce.

This edition of our magazine focuses clearly on some of these roles - providing a detailed insight into the role and potential of the VCS in delivering and supporting the objectives of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). If part of this picture strikes a chord with your work then please get in touch with our Reach & Impact project team to find out more.

Rachel Quinn
Chief Executive

Let me introduce myself as the ERDF Reach & Impact Project Manager at One East Midlands, and to say how delighted I am to have a key role in helping to support the VCS sector to not only learn about the East Midlands ERDF programme, possibly for the first time, but to also play a crucial role in ensuring that more VCS organisations can access ERDF across the region.

My personal involvement in ERDF goes back to 2007, and I can't remember a year since then that I haven't been involved somehow in ERDF. This means that I understand first-hand the issues that have been raised by VCS organisations in some of the complexities in accessing and then managing ERDF projects. It is also why I am personally keen to ensure that the sector is given the right support to build the capacity to benefit from the opportunities that ERDF brings, especially during the tough economic conditions that we face.

I was able to see this myself when I worked with the chair of a local small VCS organisation that had a track record of supporting local residents to set up businesses and used this expertise to access ERDF funding to run a community led project, which helped other local residents become more confident in starting their own business. Yes, there were challenges along the way, but this demonstrated to me that VCS organisations can be well placed to deliver successful ERDF projects with the right support in place.

I look forward to continuing to work with the VCS in the region.

Chris Hill
ERDF Reach & Impact Project Manager

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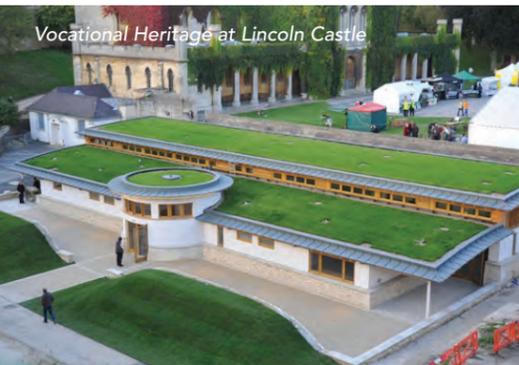
Artwork: Design by Distraction

Funded by:



Update on the current ERDF programme

By Mark Foley, Head of the Growth Delivery Team:
Midlands, Department for Communities and Local Government



European funding is often described as challenging and complicated. Both of these statements are true but it's the benefits, achievements and the impact of European funding that really tells the story. For over 10 years, the East Midlands has transformed and regenerated with the help of European funding. Through the current ERDF Programme, which runs until the end of this year, £160.8million of funding has been awarded to 214 projects, which have created just under 3,240 jobs and helped to create or support 14,895 businesses in the local area.

Budding entrepreneurs have been helped to get new business ventures and products off the ground through a host of initiatives such as Future Factory at Nottingham Trent University.

Since launching in September 2009, Leicester Business Women has helped 324 women to start a new business venture creating 119 new jobs.

We have seen the completion of a number of major developments that are helping to drive and secure the East Midlands future in innovation and cutting edge research and development, from the flagship Institute of Aerospace at the University of Nottingham, to the £4.2million ERDF supported iCon in Daventry - a state of the art national centre of excellence for sustainable construction and green technologies.

Many of our towns have benefitted, including Boston with the highly praised transformation of the market place, and the enhancement of historic buildings. Chesterfield Market Hall, originally

built in 1857 for the shelter and safeguard of market people, and featured in an episode of Heston Blumenthal's 'Fantastical Food', has been turned into modern office accommodation for local businesses, conference and function facilities, along with a revamp of the market trading area.

Funding has also helped to protect the cultural identity of Lincoln through the creation of a new Heritage Skills centre within the 900 year old walls of Lincoln Castle. Called 'Building on the Past', and as the first new building to be developed there in 150 years, this architecturally striking centre provides both workshop and classroom facilities creating a training area for new recruits to learn bygone trades.

This is all really good news and worth reflection and celebrating, but we need to remain focussed and recognise the significant challenge we still have ahead of us. We have until the end of this year to allocate the remaining balance of funding within the East Midlands ERDF Programme. Currently this stands at about 30 percent of the total programme budget. This is achievable but only with a lot of hard work over the coming few months from the Nottingham team and partners alike.

Whilst still delivering the current Programme it's only natural that we start to look towards what the future may hold. For European funding there will of course be changes to the way it currently works.

The separate 2014-2020 European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund and part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development are being brought together in a single EU

Growth Programme in England. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) will be at the heart of this new approach, performing a key strategic role to determine how money allocated to their LEP areas is invested. Back in March, the Government announced that the indicative allocation for Structural Funds for England will be 6.174 billion Euros and this is to be invested in projects and activities that focus on the areas of innovation, research and development, support for businesses, low carbon, skills, employment, and social inclusion.

Work has started in earnest in preparation of investment plans for the 2014 - 2020 Programme. The first major step was taken in April when LEP Chairs were provided with initial guidance requesting the production of local investment strategies to outline plans of how money through the new Programme would be invested in each LEP area. This was followed up with more detailed guidance in the summer. The next major milestone is fast approaching, with LEPs working with partners to develop first drafts by the start of next month. Plans will be finalised in early 2014.

So it's a busy but interesting time ahead for European funding. Many successes have already been achieved and there are many challenges ahead as we enter the final phase of the current ERDF Programme. I look forward to seeing the remaining projects deliver impressive results and benefits for the people and businesses in the local area.

Figures correct as at July 2013

Leicester Business Women: Sabina



Overview of Reach & Impact

Running from now until June 2015, the ERDF Reach & Impact project, (match funded by ERDF and the Big Lottery Fund) and located within One East Midlands, will deliver a range of support activities, primarily focused on ERDF targeted communities in the East Midlands, with the aim of increasing the understanding of reach and impact of ERDF funding.

One of the key delivery mechanisms for the Reach & Impact project will be a series of focused events to increase engagement and awareness amongst VCS organisations and the advisors that support them.

The project will utilise publicity and information dissemination to increase awareness of ERDF across VCS organisations and with other local and regional stakeholders. This activity will share knowledge and learning from the delivery of ERDF projects for the benefit of current and future applicants, with an outcome of increased economic and social impact of resulting bids and projects.

The project will also deliver workshop information and develop tools and resources for funding advisors, increasing their knowledge and awareness in order to better support and advise front line delivery groups on ERDF funding.

On the work the project has delivered so far, Tina Boddington, Bid Writer at YMCA Derbyshire, said: "As a funding adviser I have found the Reach & Impact events to be really informative as to current funding opportunities. They have been accessible, clear and well presented. I also use the website on a regular basis, which is a useful source of information to keep up to date. Both have assisted in the delivery of my role at work."

The Reach & Impact project will also target a wide range of VCS investors and funders, working with them to align their funding with ERDF priorities. These funders will receive the same awareness development delivered to VCS groups, but with follow up meetings to support how the funding alignment can be achieved.

The project team are aware that there will be a gap between the current ERDF programme, running from 2007 to 2013, and funds being made available through the new programme, running from 2014 to 2020, therefore they will also be carrying out intense work on how to unlock funding for the VCS to continue to run economic development projects as well as aligning match for the new programme.

The match funding of the Big Lottery Fund through the One East Midlands EMFAN project has enabled the Reach & Impact project to work in partnership with the East Midlands Funder Forum.

Finally, the Reach & Impact project is also working closely with the East Midlands Councils Targeted Communities Network to help develop collaborative programmes. The network will identify effective approaches in developing cross-sector projects with good examples being used in case studies and further disseminated.

Each area will be asked to identify local collaborative priorities and will then be supported with a local learning and networking event to bring together local authorities, VCS groups and funders. The Reach & Impact project will support delivery of at least one learning event in each targeted community in each year of the project.

For further information on the Reach & Impact project visit www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk/reachandimpact.

EU funding and economic development – How can the VCS demonstrate their economic impact?

By Chris Hill, ERDF Reach & Impact Project Manager

In the mid 2000s I was involved in a regional programme called Local Alchemy, which some of you may be aware of, or even have been involved in. This programme ran for about 3-4 years and was a pilot partnership economic research programme with a number of key stakeholders. The two main stakeholders were the previous Regional Development Agency (East Midlands Development Agency) and the New Economics Foundation (NEF). This was the first time I had seen economic development tools that had been designed so that communities could start to understand their economy.

We know that VCS organisations understand the needs of their communities very well, and are passionate about making a difference, especially in social inclusion and in many cases economic and social inclusion, however VCS organisations can be put off by some of the economic 'language' that is often used to describe the local economy and also some of the language used to describe the economic development programmes that are in place to tackle the economic issues faced by communities.

The Reach & Impact project isn't trying to turn target organisations and people into economists, however we would like to help the VCS and their advisers better understand local economies through user friendly tools. We also don't want to re-invent Local Alchemy, but do want to ensure that the VCS has the knowledge and information to ensure that funding applications to deliver economic inclusion projects can demonstrate both the local need and also relate this to the economic priorities of the funders.

We will be running workshops to help people better understand their local economy, and turn this knowledge into the bids that meet the needs of economic development funders including EU funding.

We also thought it would be useful to ask two VCS experts in measuring economic outcomes – **Chris Pienaar, Chief Executive of Making Spaces (CP)** and **Debbie Stewart, a partner in The Fruit Tree (DS)** – supporting the VCS to use various user friendly tools on how to identify the local economic needs.

Tell us a little about yourself and the work that you are currently doing with VCS organisations in economic inclusion/outcome measurement.

CP – I worked for six years at the NEF developing a new framework, tools and approaches to empower local people for sustainable enterprising communities delivered within the East Midlands and thereafter internationally on selected pilots.

DS – I have been working with South West Forum since December to help deliver two impact assessment initiatives as part of their Impact Hub South West initiative – one focussing on supporting a cohort of learning and skills organisations from within the region to develop impact assessment plans and the other as part of a programme of training in impact assessment.

What do you think are the main barriers to VCS organisations being able to first identify the local economic needs, and secondly in measuring the impacts of economic inclusion projects?

CP – The main barrier is complexity and lack of information. Economic information tends to be measured at a high level and is often centred around employment or national / regional production information. More detailed knowledge of local markets tends to be the preserve of big business who use the information to develop their own markets. Many of those living in local economies do not have the level of access or knowledge that might benefit them within the local economy.

DS – So many of the VCS organisations I have engaged with are finding the demand for their services is increasing whilst the means of funding them is shrinking. Although these organisations understand the importance of impact measurement, social and or economic, it is yet another challenge in terms of finding the time to do it in a meaningful way.

What do you think the funders of economic development programmes are looking for in terms of meeting their needs, especially in terms of funding applications for economic inclusion projects?

CP – It is essential for all funders that they maintain good governance. For this reason they will require measureable result - proof that the proposed impact has been achieved. The other key factor for funders is that the results are sustainable once project spending is concluded. A good understanding of how to design projects and especially the approaches and tools being used to support action is essential if sustainability is to be achieved in terms of economic, social and environmental outcomes. This is particularly the case in terms of the impact on the end user.

DS – We are seeing more and more funders looking at outcomes rather than just outputs, and I am hearing from key bodies how the stories and narrative are as important as the numbers. Case studies, which illustrate impact can be used by the funding organisations to demonstrate the difference their investment is making through the service deliverers they fund, are increasingly encouraged.

What tools and resources are available for VCS organisations to help them better understand the local economy, and how they can measure the impact of their projects on the local economy, especially in terms of inclusion?

CP – The best model for sustainable enterprising communities I have come across was NEF's sustainable enterprising communities model developed in partnership with local communities and the former East Midlands Development Agency.

DS – I would start with those tools developed by bodies specialising in this work such as NEF. They introduced Local Money Flows (LM3) and promoted Social Return on Investment (SROI) early on – both of which have a key role, even in adopting the first steps in the process of each.

What is the role of small VCS organisations in helping to deliver bigger economic development projects that often they find difficult to access?

CP – In my view VCS organisations have a strong role to play in releasing enterprising action in local communities. I believe those organisations which are interested are in an ideal position to act as enablers for local economic development. These organisations could be opening the space through economic literacy events that lead to supported and sustainable action.

DS – Their understanding of the extent of the challenges at the local level will mean that they are well placed to help co-design and shape the services which bigger organisations may have the capacity to bid to manage whilst engaging the smaller VCS organisations to provide frontline engagement and support.

How can the VCS benefit from support from regional infrastructure organisations like our Reach & Impact project in helping to access a range of economic development funding activities, including EU funding?

CP – I believe that VCS organisations that are interested in playing a more active role in local economic development can benefit from regional infrastructure organisations taking a lead in building their capacity in terms of having a strong working knowledge of economic development approaches and tools, particularly those which are top down and bottom up in nature. This support should be coupled with training and support in completing relevant funding applications

DS – Having regional infrastructure organisations to do some of the ground work and administration could be a key role for them to play, freeing up the support services to play to their strengths and get those key services to those who need them most. Providing training and support in understanding some of the most useful tools out there can assist greatly in getting these organisations taking the first steps in embedding impact assessment and helping them to demonstrate the extent of their contribution to the social and economic wellbeing of their communities.

For further information on Making Spaces visit www.makingspaces.org and for The Fruit Tree visit <http://the-fruit-tree.co.uk>



Arkwright Society's Cromford Mill



The Arkwright Society is an educational charity devoted to the rescue of industrial heritage buildings and helping to preserve the built and natural landscape in and around Cromford, Derbyshire.

After receiving ERDF and Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funding, in January 2012 the Society began work on redeveloping the largest building on the Cromford Mill site into units for new creative businesses and a ground floor visitors gateway to the heritage site.

The building redevelopment, which will cost £4.5million, had an ERDF intervention rate of 39 percent and was match funded by a variety of sources including HLF, Derbyshire County Council, the John Paul Getty Junior Charitable Trust, the Wolfson Foundation, the Pilgrim Trust, the Sylvia Waddilove Trust and individual donors.

Due to open in Autumn 2014, the building is already on track to meet its targets, including a 20 percent target occupancy rate on opening, with 25 percent of the spaces agreed to let and a further 25 percent under consideration.

When asked about the ERDF application process, Sarah McLeod, Chief Executive, said "With any complex grant application process you learn a lot more about and review your project to make sure it works. We now know our project extremely well."

In addition, Sarah provided for any VCS organisation interested in applying for ERDF funding, top tips including keeping all your information up to date; being aware of the added risks if you need to buy in capacity building services; and to bear in mind the time limits of match funding sources.

The long term goal of the Society is to redevelop the whole of the Cromford Mill site, which will cost approximately £40million, and they are looking to apply to the next ERDF programme and HLF to partly fund this.

For further information on the Arkwright Society visit www.arkwrightsociety.org.uk.



Cromford Mill

Mediaworks Trust's Peet Street Studios



Based within Derby City, the Mediaworks Trust is a community based scriptwriting and video production social enterprise who, since 2003 have been delivering workshops, training, production of short films, festivals and other projects with a range of community and youth groups.

At the beginning of 2010, the Trust received ERDF funding for a capital project under Priority 1 of the programme, to convert a derelict and disused old stables and mill building in an inner city deprived / non-affluent area of Derby into what is now known as the Nest Studios, a modern enterprise facility containing 10 studio spaces for creative businesses to develop and grow.

Due to be completed in September 2013, the total project budget was £570,320, with an ERDF intervention rate of just under 40 percent, and approximately £227,557 ERDF grant contribution. Match funding came from a building society, the Trust's own income and the building itself contributed as match.

The advice the Trust offers to other VCS organisations with ERDF funding is to be realistic about the risk involved; prudent in your use of resources; up front and honest with your contract

manager about any issues you encounter; remember the legacy of your ERDF project both from an auditing and delivery point of view; only bite off what you can chew; and remember that preparation is key.

On the impact of the project, Mab Akhter, Trust Director, said "We're enabling other organisations to become innovative and to have an edge about them that impacts on the community and their own products and services."

Looking to the future the Trust aims to let all of the studio spaces, increase the space available and offer graduate placements, exhibition spaces, hot desking, virtual studios and training in and rental of media equipment.

For further information on Mediaworks Trust visit www.mediaworkstrust.com or email mab@mediaworkstrust.com.

Canal & River Trust's Chesterfield Canal towpath



The Canal & River Trust is one of the largest charities in the UK, responsible for 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales.

In January 2011 they applied for ERDF funding to update almost 1.5km of Chesterfield Canal towpath leading into Worksop town centre, including providing an all weather surface, a shared used path, measures to encourage cycle calming and combat illegal towpath usage with minor hedgerow repairs.

The Trust's first expression of interest was submitted to ERDF in May 2011, with their application completed in September 2011 and the contract delivered in October 2012. The work itself began in January this year with the re-developed towpath officially opened on 21 June.

The final cost of the project, which had an ERDF intervention rate of 57.3 percent, was £190,000, with match funding received from the Veolia Environmental Trust, Nottinghamshire County Council and the Trust itself, who underwrote the time and risk of the project.

Lucie Hoelmer, Enterprise Manager at the Trust, advised there were a number of steps to delivering a successful ERDF project, including ensuring all funding is secure before the project starts; having a budget in place if you over spend or the work takes longer than anticipated; pay attention to the detail at the planning stage and make sure all of your organisation, including staff, trustees and volunteers, are on board.

She went on to add that once successful obtaining ERDF funding, you will need to maintain a good audit trail, remembering to work with what you have; and take responsibility to ensure you have met the ERDF requirements as the risk lies with your organisation if something goes wrong. However, the Trust also wanted to remind those who receive funding that the ERDF contract officers are on your side and are there at the end of a telephone to help you through the process.

For further information on the Canal & River Trust visit <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk>.

Local Enterprise Partnerships – Who are they, what do they do and why should you care?

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) have a rapidly expanding role in driving the local economic growth agenda. From 2014 this role will include developing investment strategies for European Structural Fund investment. In future many LEP activities will impact on the work of VCS organisations or on the people and places that VCS organisations support.

Stronger LEPs; Wider focus

So what's changed? As a consequence of policy changes between 2010 and 2012, the role of LEPs has increased to include areas of specific interest to the VCS such as:

- skills for employment;
- economic and social inclusion;
- environment and climate change;
- ICT and digital inclusion; and
- rural community and economic development.

What is the role of LEPs in EU funding?

From 2014 LEPs will be the primary vehicles for developing investment strategies around a range of EU priorities. By the end of September 2013, LEPs have been asked to develop and submit draft EU strategies which include:

The local picture

- Economic strengths and weaknesses;
- Social and environmental risks and opportunities;
- An economic vision for the LEP area.

Investment priorities

- Preferred investment priorities – rationale, evidence and potential activities;
- Indicative spend per year;
- Scope for multi-funded projects.

The plans will be aggregated to ensure that across England the proposed investment will achieve the national objectives of the individual funds and will be used to inform the negotiating position between the UK Government and the European Commission.

Although LEPs will shape investment priorities and commissioning they will not hold or be accountable for EU funds. Funds will be held by Local Growth Teams derived from each of the EU fund managing authorities (DWP, DCLG, BIS and DEFRA).

What will LEPs be looking to invest in?

Consultation undertaken by BIS in early 2012 identified a number of EU thematic objectives that were of particular relevance and priority for the UK. These objectives are summarised in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1: Investment themes

Thematic objective	Investment requirements
1. Innovation	At least 80 percent* of ERDF to be spent on these four objectives
2. ICT	
3. SME competitiveness	
4. Low carbon	
5. Climate change adaptation	Minimum of 20 percent* Low carbon
6. Environmental protection	For local prioritisation
7. Sustainable transport	For local prioritisation
8. Employment	At least 80 percent* of ESF to be spent on these three investment priorities
9. Skill	
10. Social Inclusion	Minimum of 20 percent on Social Inclusion

* Proportions more flexible in Lincolnshire due to local barriers to growth.

The local dimension – how many Euros is each LEP area worth?

There are seven LEP areas in the East Midlands; some of which overlap with each other or extend into other regions. Each has received an 'indicative' EU funding allocation:-

LEP	Indicative EU allocation (€m)
Derby and Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (D2N2): Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire counties including the cities of Derby and Nottingham	249.7
Leicester and Leicestershire (LLEP): Leicestershire County and City	126.3
Greater Lincolnshire (GLLEP): the County plus North Lincolnshire district	133.5
Northamptonshire (NEP): Northamptonshire County	55
South East Midlands (SEMLEP): Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire and boroughs / districts of Northampton, Kettering, Corby, South Northamptonshire and Daventry	88.3
Greater Cambridge-Greater Peterborough: including Rutland	75.5
Sheffield City Region (SCR): Sheffield economic area including the districts of Bassetlaw (Nottinghamshire) and Chesterfield, Bolsover, Derbyshire Dales and NE Derbyshire	203.4

Opportunities for the VCS

The changing role of LEPs requires as much of a change in thinking on the part of the LEP as it does for its stakeholders.

At this time it is vital that the VCS can make the case for what we have to offer and how we can help drive local growth. The VCS offer can be summarised as:

Structural:	Strategic:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Employs 2 percent of workforce ■ Spends £1.2bn in EM economy ■ Holds £2.5bn in assets ■ Access to volunteers ■ High level and diverse skill base ■ Geographical reach ■ Established networks and communication systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Engagement supported by EU Code of Conduct and BIS guidance ■ Access to match funding – cash, assets, volunteers ■ Co-financer relationships (e.g. SFA, NOMS) ■ Equality & Diversity outcomes ■ Reach and intelligence ■ Assessment of social inclusion, poverty and disadvantage
Operational:	Experience:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Thematic specialisms e.g. digital inclusion, skills & employability, micro & social enterprise growth, young people, health & wellbeing and environmental sustainability ■ Focus on disadvantage ■ Rural and urban coverage ■ Social innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ESF, ERDF and EAFRD experience (strategic and delivery) ■ Co-production ■ Complex funding packages ■ Successful anti- poverty and inclusion work ■ Stimulating Community Led Local Development (e.g. LEADER)

For more information about LEPs and their relationship with the VCS see our briefing at www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk/oneemleppolicybriefing.

Spotlight on a Member – Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service

Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service

What do NCVS, and in particular, your ERDF project, do?

Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service (NCVS) is the lead agency for the development of VCS organisations and volunteering in the city. We are here to improve the quality of people's lives in Nottingham by strengthening our local voluntary and community sector. We work with our communities to achieve:

- An energised VCS sector;
- Enhanced volunteering and improved capacity for social action giving;
- Greater strategic influence for the sector and enhanced partnership working.

As part of the services that we provide to community groups we have developed the Charities Enterprise Project with funding from ERDF. Commencing in January this year the service provides support to new and existing VCS groups in Nottingham who want to use enterprise to achieve their social aims. The project is funded until June 2015. Through the programme we provide startup training and support to help new social enterprises establish, one-to-one advice and a range of in-depth courses focussed on key business issues to assist established organisations to grow their trading activities, networking events and access to a range of resources. A key element of the service is preparing groups to engage in the delivery of commissioned services.



What do you think are the benefits of being a member of One East Midlands?

We gain real benefit from being part of an organisation that operates at a regional level. One EM is a valuable source of intelligence for us on both policy and practice resulting from the connections they have across the region but also through their relationships with national organisations and networks. Their strategic overview and knowledge alongside their translation of policy and their input into its formulation is important to us as an infrastructure body.

What advice would you give to other VCS organisations that have ERDF funding or are considering applying for ERDF funding when the next round opens?

ERDF Funds can provide valuable resources to community organisations to develop social cohesion in their communities by reaching, engaging and involving the most disadvantaged; by offering a means to address barriers to develop enterprise activities through building infrastructure and providing practical advice and grant assistance to social enterprises and social entrepreneurs. Our experience has been that ERDF has provided us with an albeit small resource to build the resilience of our sector, to promote its sustainability and to position itself to take advantage of new trading and contracting opportunities. We won't pretend that it is easy to engage with the programme as securing the required match is always a challenge, but we would encourage those of you that are able to at least explore the opportunities that ERDF can present to you.

How can One East Midlands ERDF Reach & Impact project benefit VCS organisations in the East Midlands?

The team have been a great resource for us at a policy level in terms of providing intelligence on the programme but also practically by being able to provide advice on programme delivery and reporting. Their role in connecting the sector to the programme and supporting the development of applications is useful in enabling the sector to engage with and benefit from ERDF.

Spotlight on a Trustee – Phil Lakin

How did you get involved in One East Midlands?

My passion is for helping local communities secure the funding they need to deliver their solutions to bringing about positive changes. For 17 years I've done this both as a paid job working for a local authority and then for a local Groundwork Trust. Now I help local faith groups in my community to fundraise as a volunteer. I specialise in EU funding.

I have been a Trustee of CEFET for over 12 years. This is a small regional support charity that helps VCS groups to access EU funding and to help represent the sector to EU grant making agencies. CEFET works very closely with One East Midlands and I have spoken and contributed to One East Midlands/CEFET events and seminars on EU funding. My job as EU Grants Manager for the National Trust has deepened my knowledge and experience of different EU grants schemes and particularly the rural and environmental programmes.

What role do you have within the Board?

My role on the Board is to contribute to help support the work of One East Midlands in responding to the challenges and opportunities arising from the new EU funding programmes. I hope to help ensure that the voice of the VCS and its ability to secure EU funding in the region is included in the new programmes as they take shape during 2013 and 2014.

What knowledge and skills do you bring to this role?

I bring to the Board my knowledge and experience of a wide range of EU funding programmes and how the VCS can access these. In particular, I have many years experience of ERDF, with the Rural Development Programme, and with some of the smaller programmes supporting culture, nature and biodiversity, lifelong learning and transnational cooperation. I can help raise the regional and local voice through my job where I sit on some national EU funding related groups.

What do you see are the benefits of One East Midlands and our ERDF Reach & Impact project and how can it support the VCS in the region?

In previous programmes the sector has accessed ERDF to deliver local regeneration projects. This has been diluted in the current programme. The Reach & Impact project is a vital element to help readdress this imbalance. It has played a crucial role in promoting and raising awareness of ERDF amongst the sector. It provides all important and necessary technical support to applicants.

What areas of work would you like One East Midlands and our Reach & Impact project to focus on?

The role of the Reach & Impact project will become more important from 2014 onwards when ERDF will be allocated by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). These cover multiple communities and sometimes more than one Shire county. The Reach & Impact project will play a key role in ensuring that LEPs and regional decision / policy makers are fully aware of the key role the VCS can play in delivering sustainable long term benefits. One East Midlands and Reach & Impact can also play a key role in enabling the VCS in the region to access other EU funding programmes, for example, the Rural Development Programme and the transnational programmes.

"I believe the VCS has shown in previous Structural Fund programmes, that it can make a serious contribution to strengthening the economy and helping those furthest from the labour market."
Tamara Flanagan,
Chair of the European Funding Network



Expert funding advice is essential for growing and sustaining VCS action in the East Midlands and strong funding advice groups can attract funding to deliver projects and services that help their communities.

With this in mind, the East Midlands Funding Advice Network (EMFAN) project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund and running from September 2009 to September 2013, was developed to ensure that VCS groups got the best possible funding advice to encourage investment in the region's VCS.

Originally managed by Regeneration East Midlands, before transferring to One East Midlands in April 2010, the regional network aimed to make sure funding advisors in the region had all the information, training and contacts they needed to do their job well by providing:

- A training and events programme focusing on current issues and trends for funding advisers delivered across the East Midlands;
- Advice and support to local funding advice networks in the region;
- Information and updates through the EMFAN bulletin and webpage;
- Tools and resources for funding advisers;
- Opportunities for local, regional and national funders and other stakeholders to engage with funding advisers; and
- A support network for funding advisers across the region.

Since the start of the EMFAN project, over 630 people have attended 20 different events and training courses organised by the project.



37 percent of survey respondents stated peer support and networking was their main reason for being part of the EMFAN project.

99 percent of surveyed EMFAN members stated local FANs were important to them.

42 percent of survey respondents thought EMFAN's events and training were the most valued services.

In March 2013, One EM commissioned South West Forum (SWF) to conduct an evaluation of the project. One EMFAN network member who fed into the evaluation explained the importance of having the regional network in place "Just having funding advisors working in isolation is not good and they need links to other parts of the sector. There are new developments and groups need support to face these challenges."

Feedback received from funding advisors on the importance of the networking opportunities EMFAN has provided included "It is good to know people are experiencing the same issues as me. It has highlighted the importance of getting groups to work together" and "What's useful is talking to others in similar roles, finding we have similar challenges and concerns."

Across the length of the project, EMFAN has consistently supported local funding advice networks (FANs) across the region, connecting with all the local groups and encouraging their development where they had not previously existed, including in Northamptonshire where thanks to the support of the project their FAN is now one of the strongest in the region.

"The EMFAN project has raised the profile of the importance of support and skills necessary for those providing funding advice and a range of valuable tools provided to funding advisors. Funders have been pleased with the impact this has had on funding applications across the region, and the ability to enable funders to engage with the sector." Gary Beharrell, Chair of East Midlands Funding Forum.

The EMFAN project has delivered a wide range of events and training sessions to meet the needs of funding advisers and to keep them up to date with current changes in the funding landscape for VCS. In addition the project has delivered OCN accredited training courses in funding advice aimed at new and existing funding advisers.

Although the EMFAN project has now come to an end, moving forward, June Gomes, EMFAN Project Officer, felt the independent evaluation of the project highlighted some very positive outcomes and provided a fair assessment of the impact the project has made, stating "There is still demand for knowledge and information and peer learning, which highlights the import role local FANs play in supporting peer learning and networking. Some legacy of the EMFAN project will continue through One East Midlands' Reach & Impact project which is funded by European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) and match funded by the BIG Lottery Fund, which supports funding advisers to increase their skills and knowledge in order to support VCS organisations access ERDF funding".

Throughout the project participant feedback on the events has been extremely positive, with 100 percent of respondents to the project evaluation, carried out by SWF, stating that they have gained new skills or knowledge from their attendance at the events, with 42 percent of those having gained significantly. 42 percent of the respondents also stated that the regional network events, accredited training and workshops organised by the EMFAN project were its most valued services, closely followed by local funding advisor meetings with 40 percent.

For further information on EMFAN visit www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk/emfan.

One East Midlands is a registered charity working with the voluntary and community sector.

One East Midlands brings together organisations that support voluntary and community groups across the region to influence and shape policy, improve services and provide a single point of contact for all stakeholders at a regional and national level.

One East Midlands is accountable to its members: voluntary and community organisations, frontline groups, public and private sector agencies. Through its membership, the sector is able to influence One East Midlands' work and ensure that the organisation does what it sets out to do.

For more information visit
www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk.

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The logo for One East Midlands, featuring the word 'one' in a large, white, cursive font, with 'East Midlands' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it.

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