



· INSTITUTE · OF · HISTORIC ·
BUILDING · CONSERVATION

Making Heritage Work

Communities and Local Government
Committee
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London
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Dear Sirs

INQUIRY INTO EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) is the professional body of the United Kingdom representing conservation specialists and historic environment practitioners in the public and private sectors. The Institute exists to establish the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment, and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the historic environment for all.

Thank you for inviting us to participate in this consultation. We do not have any explicit evidence to offer but would like to comment on two of the terms of reference of the Inquiry.

1. How, and on what, is ERDF spent?

Among the many applications of ERDF funds has been its contribution to town centre and other civic schemes aimed at restoring urban quality and historic character to regenerate failing places. We believe this has been an effective use of the funds with many good examples in the Regions. But as many of the schemes were strongly supported by RDAs this type of scheme has become much harder to promote since their abolition. Nevertheless, along with "Lottery" funds, it remains one of the few high level funding sources for this sort of project. We would wish to see such projects be eligible for ERDF funding.

2. Is the taxpayer in England obtaining value for money from the ERDF?

The Institute is not expert in the field of value for . However, the physical evidence of the many successful urban renewal schemes funded in the past decade with RDA sponsored schemes supported by ERDF money are there to be seen and are almost invariably viewed as beneficial by their communities from the point of view of the local economy as well as building on the "sense of place" inherent in the schemes' locations.

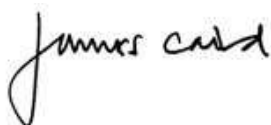
3. Could the funds contributed to, and paid out on, regeneration through ERDF be spent more effectively by repatriating ERDF to the Government in London?

We do not have sufficient expertise to contribute to this issue.

4. With the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies responsibility for ERDF in England passes to DCLG. What effects are these changes having on the administration, assessment and payment of ERDF?

The processes for accessing ERDF have been notoriously complex. We would like to see any new regime provide simplified processes. This is particularly important as, increasingly, locally delivered projects will have their roots in locally sponsored organizations, through the Localism movement, and complex processes are not the friend of successful community generated projects. We would like ERDF money to be available to support process of bringing forward regeneration schemes through local communities as well as funding the project's construction.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Caird". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

James Caird
Consultant Consultations Co-ordinator