

The Following Paper is an amended version of Phase II of the 10–year strategy which was presented to the Europe & International Affairs Panel meeting in December 2004.

The Amendments made by Panel are highlighted in Italics.

EAST OF ENGLAND

EUROPEAN STRATEGY

PHASE II

2004-07

Reviewed December 2004



Foreword by the joint chairs of the East of England Europe & International Affairs Panel

This document, which has been prepared by the East of England European Partnership, updates the East of England European Strategy approved by the Partnership in November 2001 and reviewed in 2003.

Recently there have been unprecedented changes to the region's strategic framework, including the development of a new Integrated Regional Strategy, a new Regional Economic Strategy, the East of England Plan, which will be the region's Spatial Strategy and a new International Business Strategy for the region. This provides us with an opportunity to assess what we have achieved to date and to agree how we will take the European agenda forward in light of this new strategic framework.

Kathy Pollard
EERA
March 2005

Prof. Leo Murray
EEDA

1. Why have a European Strategy for the East of England?

- To create a forward-looking framework for the European activities of a wide range of stakeholders and partners in the Region
- To highlight development needs
- To inform and support other Regional Strategies

2. The Vision

'A region playing a full part in Europe for all its citizens'

3. Context

3.1 Regional Context

This strategy operates within a regional framework. Key partners for the region are described below:

The East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) is the designated voluntary regional chamber established under the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998. Part of the Assembly's role is to promote the social, economic and environmental interests of the region through a partnership of indirectly elected representatives from local government and community stakeholders representing a wide range of social, economic and environmental interests. This particular strategy is overseen by the East of England Europe & International Affairs Panel.

The East of England Development Agency (EEDA) has a remit to support economic growth and prosperity and to improve the quality of life for those who live and work in the region. The promotion of economic development is underpinned by principles of sustainable development and good business practice in EEDA's Regional Economic Strategy. These principles include economic growth, social inclusion and access to opportunities, safeguarding and enhancing the region's natural and built environment, using sustainable resources, learning from best practice and corporate social responsibility.

The Government Office for the East of England (GO-East) is part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which also covers regional and urban policy, local government, planning, housing and regeneration. Other Departments with a stake in GO-East are the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department for Transport (DfT), the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Home Office (HO), and the Department for Culture Media & Sport (DCMS). GO-East also works closely with the public health teams from the Department of Health (DOH). Government Office is responsible for the administration of the European Structural Funds within the region.

In reviewing this strategy towards the end of 2004, the following key developments in the region's strategic framework have been taken into account:

- The development of an Integrated Regional Strategy for the East of England, which will identify priorities for the region from analysis of existing regional strategies
- The preparation of "A Shared Vision" - a new Regional Economic Strategy in 2004

- The development of the “East of England Plan”, the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England, which covers the period to 2021
- The publication of an International Business Strategy for the East of England

Brief details of these strategies, which in the main are still in draft form at the time of writing , are given below:

Integrated Regional Strategy

Drawing primarily on existing regional strategies, the Integrated Regional Strategy presents a vision and a series of high level aims for the East of England.

Vision – to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives or works in the East of England

High level aims:

1. To maintain and enhance the region’s exceptional knowledge base and to sustain a dynamic economy
2. To provide opportunities for everyone to contribute to – and benefit from – the region’s economic dynamism
3. To encourage strong, inclusive and culturally rich communities
4. To ensure that the region is recognised for the quality and diversity of its natural and built environment
5. To achieve a quality of development which enhances the region’s existing assets and attractions

In striving towards the vision and the high level aims, the five priorities identified for the East of England are as follows:

1. Achieve sustainable outcomes in Growth Areas and other parts of the region facing growth pressures
2. Harness fully the region’s strengths in science, research and development and in the surrounding commercialisation processes
3. Address the causes and implications of persistent deprivation and social exclusion in both buoyant parts of the region and areas facing economic decline
4. Effect a step change in the efficiency of resource use
5. Harness effectively the region’s international gateway and national transport corridor functions

A Shared Vision – the Regional Economic Strategy for the East of England

The vision for the region is “...a leading economy, founded on our world-class knowledge base and the creativity and enterprise of our people, in order to improve the quality of life of all who live and work here.”

The goals of the Regional Economic Strategy are listed below:

1. A skills base that can support a world-class economy
2. Growing competitiveness, productivity and entrepreneurship
3. Global leadership in developing and realising innovation in science, technology and research
4. High quality places to work, live and visit
5. Social inclusion and broad participation in the regional economy
6. Making the most from the development of international gateways and national and regional transport corridors
7. A leading information society
8. An exemplar for the efficient use of resources

The RES recognises that the East of England economy operates within an international context and the region will be more successful in achieving its vision if it enhances its role in Europe and on the wider international stage.

East of England Plan – the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England

The Spatial Planning Vision for the East of England is to sustain and improve the quality of life for all people who live in, work in, or visit the region, by developing a more sustainable, prosperous and outward-looking region, while respecting its diversity and enhancing its assets.

The strategy’s objectives in order to achieve this vision are as follows:

1. Increase prosperity and employment growth to meet identified employment needs of the region, and achieve a more sustainable balance between workers and jobs
2. Improve social inclusion and access to employment and services and leisure and tourist facilities among those who are disadvantaged
3. Maintain and enhance cultural diversity while addressing the distinctive needs of different parts of the region
4. Increase the regeneration and renewal of disadvantaged areas
5. Deliver more integrated patterns of land use, movement, activity and development, including employment and housing
6. Sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres
7. Make more use of previously developed land and existing buildings, and use land more efficiently, in meeting future development needs
8. Meet the region’s identified housing needs, and in particular provide sufficient affordable housing
9. Protect and enhance the built and historic environment and encourage good quality design and use of sustainable construction methods for all new development
10. Protect and enhance the natural environment, including its biodiversity and landscape character
11. Minimise the demand for use of resources, particularly water, energy supplies, minerals, aggregates, and other natural resources, whether finite or renewable, by encouraging

efficient use, re-use, or use of recycled alternatives, and trying to meet needs with minimum impact

12. Minimise the environmental impact of travel, by reducing the need to travel, encouraging the use of more environmentally friendly modes of transport, and widening choice of modes
13. Ensure that infrastructure programmes, whether for transport, utilities or social infrastructure, will meet current deficiencies and development requirements; and that the responsible agencies commit the resources needed to implement these programmes and co-ordinate delivery with development; and
14. Minimise the risk of flooding

International Business Strategy for the East of England

The vision for the East of England included in the International Business Strategy reflects closely that of the Regional Economic Strategy and is “to make the East of England a world-class economy, renowned for its knowledge base, the creativity and enterprise of its people and the quality of life of all who live and work here” while the strategy’s mission is “to enhance the capability of the East of England to engage in global markets in order to improve the competitiveness and productivity of the region’s businesses”.

The strategy has three high level objectives:

1. To expand the trading activities of the region’s businesses in overseas markets
2. To enhance the level and quality of foreign investment into the region
3. To build the international business skills base in the region, and encourage businesses to benefit from technology, innovation and international research

and five strategic priorities to achieve these objectives:

1. to raise awareness of the opportunities and benefits of engaging in international business, and of the support available across the region
2. to ensure the region’s businesses are equipped with the skills and expertise needed to engage effectively in international markets
3. to improve the targeting of public sector resources for companies engaged in international business, so that support is focused on improving regional productivity most effectively
4. to promote the region as an attractive inward investment destination, and encourage further investment from foreign-owned companies in the region
5. to establish greater co-ordination between organisations in the region that support, encourage and promote international business opportunities

Other key regional strategies

Those mentioned in detail above are not the only regional strategies. Others which are considered to be in the “premier league” of regional strategies are:

- Regional Sustainable Development Framework
- Regional Environment Strategy
- Regional Housing Strategy
- Regional Social Strategy
- Regional Cultural Strategy
- FRESA
- Regional Health Strategy (in preparation)

3.2 EU Context

The strategy also operates against a developing European background. Key elements of this are summarised below:

Enlargement – The recent enlargement of the European Union to 25 Member States has meant an unprecedented widening of economic disparities within the Union. It has also brought a whole range of opportunities for UK companies in doing business in the new parts of the Union.

Structural Fund reform - Agenda 2000, the previous review of the Structural Funds, set out the system until 2006. Debate is now focusing on how the Structural Funds should operate in the period 2007-13. The recent enlargement of the EU is an important factor which will need to be taken into account.

A summary of the European Commission's proposals follows:

- The budget should be 336.1bn euro (0.41% of EU-GDP)
- *18 % of this budget will go to a new competitiveness and employment strand with all Member States receiving some form of support.*
- *An enlarged Territorial Cooperation Strand will be.*

The UK Government's views on Structural Fund reform are as follows:

UK Reform Objectives

- EU regional policy should support our domestic regional development agenda
- Simpler, more flexible and proportionate delivery arrangements
- EU regional policy should actively support the revised Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas
- Concentrate the EU's limited financial and administrative resources on the poorest Member States
- Ensure that expenditure on EU regional policy achieves a fair budgetary deal for the UK taxpayer

Initial UK reactions to the European Commission's proposals

- Welcome greater strategic focus for EU regional policy
- Welcome establishment of principles of subsidiarity
- Welcome proposals to build on Interreg where EU intervention has an added value
- Oppose expansion of EU budget
- Oppose focus of funds on richer Member States
- Want more simplification, subsidiarity and proportionality

CAP reform – EU farm ministers have adopted a fundamental reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) according to which the vast majority of subsidies will be paid independently from the volume of production. These new "single farm payments" will be linked to respect for environmental, food safety and animal welfare standards. The single farm payment will enter into force in 2005. If a Member State needs a transitional period due to its specific agricultural conditions, it may apply the single farm payment from 2007 at the latest. Revisions to the market policy of the CAP relating to the milk, cereals, rice, durum wheat, nuts, starch potatoes and dried fodder sectors were also agreed.

4. Strategic Objectives 2001-2010

The following strategic objectives for the East of England European Strategy were agreed in 2001:

- ◆ *To promote the region's interests and influence future EU policy and strategy*
- ◆ *To optimise the benefits of membership of the EU for all stakeholders in the region*
- ◆ *To create new opportunities for the region's businesses in an enlarged Europe*

5. Priorities For Phase II, December 2004-December 2006

It was agreed that the Strategy would be delivered in three phases (2001-2004, 2004-2007, 2007-2010).

The priorities for Phase I were:

- Introduce 'mainstreaming' and 'de-jargonise' Europe
- Build capacity to influence and to deliver
- Establish a Regional Alliance with other appropriate regions
- Provide support for trade development

Activity during Phase II will build on the work already undertaken and will aim to deliver the priorities identified in the Integrated Regional Strategy. Appendix 1 gives some examples of achievements made to date.

The priorities for Phase II of the European Strategy will, therefore, be:

- To continue to promote the region's interests at the European level and to promote the success of European work throughout the region and beyond. All partners need to work to raise the profile of the region in Europe and to influence key policy fields. Of particular importance to this region currently are CAP reform, Cohesion Policy reform and regional aid guidelines, sustainable development and the Lisbon agenda
- To achieve greater recognition of the European dimension in key policy areas. *The region will accrue maximum benefit from membership of the EU if the opportunities and influence of the membership are better recognised in all policy areas. All partners can contribute to the mainstreaming of European issues into policy areas of concern to the region by ensuring European information is collected and disseminated in a targeted way, and that the European dimension is highlighted on specialist panels*
- To develop regional expertise and knowledge through Regional Alliances *where these add value to sub-regional activity.*

The benefits of regional alliances include the development of international business opportunities, exchange of best practice and opportunities to benchmark and compare.

Regional alliances should build on the opportunities created by existing sub-regional relationships, or develop a key strategic relationship based on complementarity's or synergy between regions and have clear benefits and outcomes. It will be important to identify the relationships between strategic economic alliances based on promotion of international business opportunities, and alliances promoted for wider cultural, social, political and economic reasons.

- To support *regional businesses in their engagement with the development of International Business opportunities in a global marketplace.*

Appendix 2 outlines the structures available within the region to deliver the strategy.

6. Action Plan for December 2004-December 2006

Activity	Action	Output	Partner responsible	Outcomes
Promote the region's interests				
Effective Lobbying	Meeting key decision makers at the right time	As appropriate	European Partnership as advised by the Brussels Office coordinated by EERA	<i>Regional Positions are reflected in new EU and UK policy.</i>
Respond to consultations organised by the European Commission, UK Government or European networks	Draft Position Paper in Consultation with Partners	As appropriate	European Partnership, co-ordinated by EERA	<i>Regional Positions are reflected in new EU and UK policy.</i>
Attend key network meetings and contribute to debates e.g Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, North Sea Commission, European Officer Network, European Rural Exchange	Attendance at Meetings as appropriate	10 per year	EERA on behalf of the European Partnership	<i>East of England views are reflected in network position papers.</i>
Develop and implement a structure to build a regional case for Structural Funds post-2006	<i>Using the RES as guidance European Officers to identify key facets of funding.</i>	2005	European Partnership	<i>A future Scoping with regional European funding priorities identified</i>
Achieve greater recognition of the European dimension in key policy areas				
Tailored newsletters	Gather Information for dissemination to the wider region	10 per year	Brussels Office	<i>Greater awareness about European issues amongst regional partners</i>
Tailored briefings/seminars	On an as and when basis	4 per year	European Partnership	<i>Greater awareness about European issues amongst regional partners</i>

European issues on specialist <i>EERA and EEDA</i> Panels/group agendas	Individual European issues to be considered by other EERA Panels	4 per year	EERA	<i>Greater awareness about European issues amongst other Regional Assembly Members</i>
Non-specialist secondments to the Brussels Office		5 per year	Brussels Office	<i>Greater awareness about European issues amongst regional partners</i>
Develop regional expertise and knowledge				
Arrange exchange of experience meetings/visits with Regional Alliance <i>partners For example in business development, renewable energy etc</i>	To develop concrete alliances with meaningful outcomes	4 per year	European Partnership	<i>Increased knowledge exchange</i>
Involvement in the PRAXIS INTERREG IIIC project	From October 2004 EERA to attend PRAXIS meetings and input into project	<i>Draw down of €40,000 into the region</i>	Co-ordinated by Essex (ExDRA) with EERA, EEDA and regional partners	<i>Greater knowledge and understanding of best practice in rural strategy across Europe.</i>
Support trade development				
Trade missions	Incl. China	1/2 per year	<i>East Of England International</i>	<i>Increased business growth for East of England companies</i>
<i>Review the International Business Strategy</i>	EEDA to lead	1 st quarter 2005	EEDA	<i>Increased business growth for East of England companies</i>
Encourage business participation in the Brussels Office	Papers to European Panel and increased involvement of the office	Mid - 2005	<i>Brussels Office</i>	<i>Increased intelligence for the regions companies</i>

Appendix 1 - What has been achieved so far?

The following are examples of what has been achieved between October 2001 and the current time:

Promoting the region's interests and influencing future EU policy and strategy

- ◆ Regional views have been fed into consultations by the European Commission, the UK Government, and European networks for example on:
 - ◆ European Governance and European consultation processes
 - ◆ the Cohesion Debate (the future and management of the Structural Funds)
 - ◆ the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and
 - ◆ the Future of Europe
- ◆ Regional views have been included in national and European level debates on the above issues
- ◆ Regional alliance partnerships are being developed which are expected to lead to joint lobbying on issues of common concern
- ◆ Regional stakeholders are kept up to date with key issues at member level through the Regional Assembly and the Europe & International Affairs Panel and at officer level through the European Officer Group and specialist contact lists
- ◆ The region has joined European networks such as the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions and the North Sea Commission, EURADA and the European Rural Exchange which has led to a significant increase in the regions influence.

Optimising the benefits of membership of the EU for all stakeholders in the region

- ◆ Regional partners manage the delivery of approximately £300m through the current Structural Funds programmes (Objectives 2 and 3, plus Community Initiatives).
- ◆ The region has also played a key part in the draw down of Interreg funds through developments such as setting up the Interreg Operating Group.
- ◆ Regular information is provided to members and officers through the Regional Assembly and the Europe & International Affairs Panel, EEDA Board, the European Officer network and the involvement of staff from the East of England Brussels Office in specialist networks within the region.
- ◆ Short-term secondments are offered by the East of England Brussels Office to contributing organisations
- ◆ Contacts have been made with potential partners for a regional alliance including in the Czech Republic, Poland, Rheinland Pfalz and Norway. Such partnerships can be used for projects where the region exchanges experience and best practice
- ◆ The region has committed to the PRAXIS network and Interreg IIIC project set up by Essex County Council/ExDRA. This is also expected to enable the region to exchange experience and best practice with partners *particularly in the area of rural development in which EERA is leading on examining how rural strategy is dealt with across the 15 European partners.*
- ◆ Events promoting the region in Brussels were held in November 2002 and March 2003

Creating new opportunities for the region's businesses in an enlarged Europe

- ◆ Communication and information of business opportunities for businesses with regards to EU funds, joint partnerships and networking opportunities
- ◆ Established a point of contact for the business community in the East of England
- ◆ Regular business updates on policy developments to help the business community participate and influence EU policy-making
- ◆ Seminar on 6th Framework Programme for Research and Development (6FP) opportunities for SMEs organised in Brussels
- ◆ Proposal for regional participation in 6FP to facilitate business access to R&D information, support structures and best practice (Being prepared)
- ◆ Organisation of several fact finding visits to Brussels for business community and wider sponsorship
- ◆ A series of meetings with Member States and Candidate Country regions were held and representatives brought to various visits from the East of England to speak about regional co-operation and business opportunities.
- ◆ A guide on EU funds for businesses was published in September 2002
- ◆ A guide to EU Research & Development funds for businesses
- ◆ Participation of several representatives from Brussels-based organisations at various East of England events
- ◆ Regular assistance to sponsors on funding opportunities, programmes and projects at a European level
- ◆ Developed East of England Brussels Office website to provide better and quicker access to EU policy that affects businesses in the East of England and funding opportunities. Also used to help the marketing of the East of England as a region and a brand
- ◆ Co-ordinated fact-finding visit from North Milan/Lombardy Development Agency to the East of England in order to try and develop permanent relations with this high-tech, high-growth region.

Appendix 2 How will the Strategy be delivered?

Resourcing for the Strategy will largely depend on making the most of existing resources and assets.

The structures which are in place to ensure that the Strategy is delivered are as follows:

East of England Europe & International Affairs Panel

The Panel, which is jointly chaired by the Assembly and EEDA, is made up of representatives of local government and community stakeholders and involves the region's MEPs and its Committee of the Regions members, will oversee the implementation of the Strategy. It will receive reports at its quarterly meetings related to the actions proposed therein.

East of England Regional Assembly

The Panel's mainstreaming agenda should ensure that the whole membership of the Regional Assembly is aware of the European context to major regional decisions.

East of England Development Agency

As a key partner in addressing regional funding priorities and with a role as the co-chair of the Panel it is essential that the region's development agency plays a strategic, active and ambitious role in the Panel's work.

East of England European Officers' Group

This group brings together European specialists from the region's local authorities and other partners. The group supports the Europe & International Affairs Panel and is a key network for regional co-operation.

East of England European Partnership Brussels Office

The Brussels Office represents the interests of a broad range of partners from across the region and is the region's key route into the European institutions and an invaluable source of information and advice.

Specialist Networks

These networks of specialist officers from across the East of England partnership are available to provide support to members, MEPs and Committee of the Regions members as required. They are also able to provide input into consultations on their areas of expertise.

Structural Funds groups

A range of groups has been established by the regional partnership to help with the implementation and management of the Structural Funds within the region.