

£149M REGIONAL FUND GRANTS TO UNITED KINGDOM

Fourth allocation of grants, 1983

The European Commission has approved grants from the European Regional Development Fund to 2732 investments for an amount of 1536 million ECU. This brings the total since the Fund began operations in 1975, to 9361 million ECU.

Of the investments which benefit from the fourth allocation of 1983, 620 are in the United Kingdom, attracting grants totalling £ 149 million. £ 113 millions has been granted for infrastructure investments and £ 36 million for investments in the industry and service sector. As a result of the latter, more than 15 000 jobs will be created or maintained. The fourth allocation 1983 brings Regional Fund grants to the United Kingdom to £ 1296 million since the Fund began operations in 1975.

A number of projects, noteworthy in view of their importance to the regions concerned, are outlined below.

In the North West, aid of £ 6.6 m has been granted to a collection of infrastructure investments in the Merseyside area, including new digital telephone exchange equipment at various locations, a new mail distribution centre at Liverpool airport, the construction of a new ferry terminal in Liverpool docks, new dock machinery at Alfred River Entrance and Eastham dock and new and improved sewerage works at seven other locations in Merseyside.

Also in the North-West, a grant of £ 1.8 m has been made to the Merseyside Maritime Museum for the refurbishing, equipping and modernisation of one of the Albert Dock Warehouse in Liverpool South Docks. This museum and maritime complex forms a key development for tourism in the Merseyside region.

In the North, a contribution of £ 2.3 m has been granted to a global infrastructure investment in the following areas: Tyne & Wear (new bus servicing facilities at High Spennings bus depot), Washington (reinforcement of gas supplies and road works at various locations), Jarrow (provision of grain handling facilities at Tyne Dock), Newcastle (new extension to Newcastle Mechanized Letter Office and installation of new sorting equipment to handle increased mail traffic.)

In Northern Ireland, aid of £ 5 m has been granted to a collection of 20 infrastructure investments, including reshaping and strengthening of the subsidiary operational runway at Belfast Airport; improvements to Northern Ireland Railways' track network at various locations throughout Northern Ireland together with modernisation of several level crossings; extension of Newcastle promenade to provide improved access for tourists; provision of additional cranes facilities at Belfast Harbour and Londonderry port; Harbour improvement works at Killough, Ballycastle and Warrenpoint; provision of a wet weather recreational complex at Irvinestown, Co. Fermanagh and road development and improvement works at various locations throughout Northern Ireland.

The West Midlands area has received a contribution of £ 3.8 m to a global infrastructure in the following areas: industrial estate works (Wolverhampton and Birmingham); a new "park and ride" railway station on the site of Oldbury Station on the Birmingham - Wolverhampton railway line; provision of modern telecommunications services (Coventry, Birmingham). These facilities respond to the need felt throughout this area for investment in serviced industrial land, communications and other infrastructure to encourage new industry and create a more diverse industrial base.

In Yorkshire & Humberside, a collection of infrastructure investments has been aided by a grant of £ 3.1 m, covering various road improvements, the provision of a new railway station at Saltaire, industrial estate services, improvements to the sea wall in Scarborough (Royal Albert Drive and Gunney Hole) to protect existing tourist infrastructures and, in the same town, the conversion of the Victorian Spa Building into conference facilities and delegate accomodation to cater for the increasing numbers of conference delegates visiting the area.

In Wales, United Paper Mills Ltd. at Shotton in Clwyd has received aid of £ 3.2 m. This new pulp and newsprint mill has a planned capacity of 180 000 tonnes per year of high quality newsprint suitable for modern printing processes. At full production some 270 jobs will be created in the Shotton steel closure area, currently suffering over 20% unemployment, with a further 850 jobs arising in supply and ancillary activities. Telecommunications have a vital role to play in the economic recovery of industrial South Wales: to this end aid has been granted to the development of new "System X" telecommunications systems in Cardiff (£ 2 m) and Swansea (£2.2 m). The provision of these technologically advanced facilities will meet the demand for modern telecommunication infrastructure from the widening range of manufacturing and service industries in South Wales.

In Scotland Sinclair Research Ltd. at Dundee have received aid of £ 1.1 m for a project to mass produce flat cathode ray tubes and miniature TV sets. Although the project will initially create some 1 000 jobs, it is thought that the maximum number of jobs arising from the project could be as high as 1 500. Elsewhere in Scotland a grant of £ 3.9 m has been made to Stage I of the East Fife Regional Road (section Halbeath to Cowdenbeath): this Road together with other proposed improvements to the inter-urban road system will ensure that the whole of the Fife Region but particularly the Glenrothes and east Fife areas have adequate connections to the national motorway system.

Torbay in the South West Region has benefited from aid of £ 975 000 to the Rosetor Conference Centre: this multi purpose facility will cater also for Exhibition and Leisure purposes and, as well as complementing the existing tourism industry in the locality, will enhance the area's attraction as a venue for the conference market.

In the Corby area of East Midlands a contribution of £ 2.9 m has been granted to a global infrastructure investment covering road and bridge works at various locations and the provision of infrastructure on the Weldon and Willowbrook East industrial estates. The Corby area has suffered high rates of unemployment following the closure of the local steelworks: these Regional Fund grants will assist the essential restructuring of the local economy through the provision and servicing of new industrial sites.

Many regions have also benefited from aid to Workshop Units. The Regional Fund is prepared to assist Councils, Local Authorities and similar bodies with the cost of converting redundant premises (e.g. disused factories) into small workshop units, or to aid their new construction. Typically such units will share common services (power, light, heat) but at the same time provide a flexible framework for the start up and progressive development of individual small businesses. Demand for such units in several areas exceeds supply and the Regional Fund intends to encourage their future development as economic "pump-primers" especially important in those areas suffering the decline of traditional industries but where the level of acquired industrial skills remains high.

Community grants in respect of investments in industry are paid to the UK authorities in line with national expenditure on the projects concerned.

Grants towards investments in infrastructure are passed on in full to the local and other public authorities concerned, thus reducing the sums they have to raise by borrowing or from other sources.

	Industry, Tourism		Infrastructure		Totals in fm	
	4th tranche 1983	Total 1975-83	4th tranche 1983	Total 1975-83	4th tranche 1983	Total 1975-83
North England	1.43	77.13	17.30	169.19	18.73	246.32
N.W. England	3.95	72.85	28.07	112.17	32.02	185.02
Yorkshire & Humberside	0.54	6.35	5.39	74.84	5.93	81.27
East Midlands	1.10	2.52	3.03	10.74	4.13	13.26
S.W. England	0.17	3.27	6.26	34.88	6.43	38.15
Scotland (1)	15.27	72.99	26.01	261.27	42.04	348.92
Wales	12.13	67.55	9.50	152.67	21.63	220.25
N.Ireland (2)	1.43	54.58	13.21	102.47	14.64	158.96
West Midlands	-	-	3.84	4.19	3.84	4.19
	36.02	357.24	112.61	922.42	149.39	1296.33

(1) Includes £14.63m for mountain region infrastructure 1975-83

(2) Includes £ 1.82m for mountain region infrastructure 1975-83

\*\* NOTE: A more detailed breakdown of grants in particular areas is available from this office on request.

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STUDIES

In addition to the regular series of allocations the Regional Fund has assisted since early 1983, 19 studies, providing a total contribution of £ 1 261 897.

The studies investigate various technical, feasibility and special interests of projects, proposals and areas in many parts of the UK. They may lead to investments which will be eligible for Fund assistance.

Assistance has been provided to studies in England

- possibility of land reclamation in Humberside
- comprehensive evaluation of an industrial park in Cumbria
- development of a proposed leisure complex in Doncaster
- research into making certain areas of Devon and Cornwall part of the London Telephone Exchange
- examine the options to secure the effective and integrated development of a Middlesborough industrial area
- examine the potential of Hartlepool for commercial, tourism and recreational development
- evaluation and preparation work for the construction of a replica of the Endeavour at Whitby
- development and planning work prior to the construction of a centre to assist the introduction of computer aided design to small firms in Cleveland
- development of a 5 year programme for the economic regeneration of Shildon
- examine the general economic development potential of Whitby.

Assistance has been provided to studies in Scotland

- determine the route for submarine electricity cables between some of the Western Isles
- design of a main drainage scheme in Kirkcaldy
- chemical analysis of the waters of Beaully and Inverness Firths
- examine the potential for a new ski development in the Highlands
- evaluate the suitability of a parcel of land at Kirkcaldy for industrial development
- consider the potential for a tourism strategy in Biggar and New Lanark.

Assistance has been provided to studies in Wales

- two studies into providing new road access across a river and a railway line complex to the Deeside Industrial Park.

Assistance has been provided to studies in Northern Ireland

- consider the options for future electricity generation in Northern Ireland.

Assistance from the Regional Fund can be granted at the request of Member States to studies closely linked to the work of the Regional Fund. ERDF grants for studies can amount up to a maximum of 50% of the cost.