

# NHS European Office

## NHS European Office

### EU Consultation for Energy Efficiency in Buildings

#### Background

The National Health Service (NHS) is the largest publicly funded health care system in the world providing the majority of healthcare in England. The NHS is committed to the principle of universal access to healthcare which is free at the point of use. Every 36 hours the NHS sees over one million patients who make use of a wide range of health services ranging from primary care, in-patient care, long term health care, ophthalmology and dentistry. The NHS is a major employer in Europe with 1.3 million people on its payroll.

The NHS Estate consists of around 600 NHS organisations owning 3,000 buildings with an overall surface area in the region of 25 million square meters. Buildings within the estate range from the Victorian era to state of the art modern developments. The NHS engages in activities to upgrade and guarantee the energy efficiency of its buildings and welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the shape of future EU funding streams in this area.

This response has been coordinated by the NHS European Office<sup>1</sup> in consultation with NHS organisations.

#### Response

General awareness of EU level financial tools to improve the energy efficiency of buildings is scarce or non-existent amongst NHS organisations in spite of a need and a willingness on the part of such organisations to develop energy efficiency measures.

This lack of knowledge may be overcome through better marketing and advertising of EU-level funding in this area and more information on how to apply for funding and how to put a bid together.

The European Commission should consider representation at Energy/Sustainability exhibitions at Member State level to promote existing EU funding opportunities. However, it should also consider where it may be more effective to move away from centrally-managed EU funding in this area, and to offer EU funding via a delegated national or regional authority in addition to opportunities which already exist under the European Regional Development Fund. More should be done to equip organisations at local and regional level to take advantage of EU funding opportunities and this should include more opportunities to allocate funds via a regional authority. Centrally-managed resources can be perceived as being too far away from the point of delivery to be relevant to the immediate needs of organisations at grass roots level and too onerous in their application procedures, and as a result organisations are deterred from applying.

Furthermore, technical assistance, such as regional energy efficiency managers could be offered at local, regional and national level to assist with project development. This already takes place to a certain extent for national and regional funding streams and could be expanded to include EU funding opportunities.

---

<sup>1</sup> The NHS European Office represents the English National Health Service. Its role is to inform the NHS of EU issues and to ensure that the NHS makes a positive contribution to EU developments.

## NHS European Office

Where finance is concerned, long term framework agreements and partnership working could be used to improve private financing for energy efficiency projects. This approach could also be applied to the use of public funding but with the additional support of enabling mechanisms such as low cost or interest-free loans and risk-sharing initiatives.

NHS organisations recognise the importance of and support the EU's 2020 energy savings targets. We consider the coordination of Union and national funding as an important opportunity to assist organisations at all levels to make changes which will reduce energy consumption across the EU and we welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

For further information:

[Jenny-lee.spencer@nhsconfed.org](mailto:Jenny-lee.spencer@nhsconfed.org)