



LEGI update report



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The findings in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Communities and Local Government.

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1 Executive summary

This report was commissioned by Communities and Local Government to provide up-to-date information about the performance of the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) partnership programme, in order to inform decisions taken as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. This report provides insights into early achievements in the first full year of the programme and indicates the general direction of progress. The Department will continue to monitor and evaluate the performance of the programme, including through a comprehensive evaluation.

Round One (R1) LEGI partnerships were independently reviewed to assess progress. The original R1 LEGI partnerships developed 10 year plans to deliver a step change in the entrepreneurial dynamism in their target areas. Initial funding has been provided for their first three years of operation (2006/7 – 2008/9).

Year One Outputs. Despite differences in monitoring, the R1 LEGI partnerships have in aggregate delivered some numerically high outputs in their first year of operation. These are reported by the LEGI partnerships as: the creation of over 1,900 jobs; over 10,000 people/young people being involved in enterprise experiences; support being provided to just under 5,000 firms; and over 1,100 new firms being started. These figures are gross and un-audited and there are wide variations in performance between different LEGI areas.

Expenditure. The spend across the R1 programme in Year One was in excess of £20 million at an average of about £2.4 million in each LEGI area. There are significant variations in LEGI budget per working age resident (from £15 to £214) and LEGI budget per business (from £1,400 to £7,400).

Expected Year Two Outputs. Outputs in Year Two are expected to be higher than in Year One and there is evidence of accelerating delivery. Total Year Two output is expected to be: over 17,000 people/young people involved in enterprise experiences, just under 4,300 firms supported, just under 4,200 jobs created and over 1,200 new firms started. One R1 LEGI expects to increase their targets in Year Three due to accelerating delivery.

Impact of LEGI. Positive impacts were found in four of the eight R1 LEGI partnerships reviewed. These included LEGI areas experiencing a reduction in household income gaps (Case Study 4), increasing VAT registrations (Case Study 5 and 8) and improving employment rates (Case Study 9). Additionally, outputs achieved in Year One in four LEGI partnerships could be seen to support progress towards their impact targets. What impact additionality and causality finally attributed to LEGI could only be ascribed after sufficient delivery activity and a full evaluation. A small number of LEGI partnerships have been slow to finalise their impact targets and others are awaiting the publication of national statistics to be able to report on progress.

Delivery progress. The majority of LEGI partnerships appear to be making reasonable delivery progress when assessed using a qualitative performance

scorecard. Output targets as set are generally being achieved where activity has commenced. Milestones where they have been set are generally being achieved on profile. Impacts are expected against top level metrics. However a number of LEGI partnerships could improve their explicit demographic targeting.

There are **three typologies** of R1 LEGI partnerships in terms of performance to date. Firstly, LEGI partnerships which have very genuinely used Year One as the initial development phase of a 10 year programme but are now delivering outputs (about 30 per cent to the case studies). For example this has involved developing new ways of community engagement with enterprise (eg effective outreach, addressing diversity issues). Secondly, LEGI partnerships which have also used Year One as a development phase but have now run into delivery barriers (40 per cent). These barriers have often been related to capital expenditure/property issues allied with slow recruitment and decision-making processes. And lastly, LEGI partnerships which have reported very high outputs in Year One where a more detailed understanding of performance is required (30 per cent).

Value Add is occurring in a number of areas. Qualitative improvements necessary for longer term effects are evident (eg development of joint understanding and improving capacity in the third sector). Partners are gaining a better understanding of the barriers to enterprise and the main challenges from the new evidence base. New or more intensive joint working on the enterprise agenda at a local level is occurring. The importance of tackling the local enterprise gap has been raised up the local agenda, particularly with Local Authorities. New approaches especially in terms of enterprise outreach work into disadvantaged communities are being supported. LEGI has led to some more innovative approaches to enterprise support. There have been improvements in quality between Round 1 and Round 2 LEGI bids.

Challenges. The genuine extent of integration has varied most notably with the 4th block of Local Area Agreements. Some processes for recruitment of LEGI staff and commissioning of work packages have been slow, delaying delivery activity. Some LEGI bids were extremely optimistic in their design, resulting in some departure from the original focus during delivery. The more complicated the delivery partnerships (eg multi-area) the slower the delivery. Property and capital spend projects have tended to be slower to progress. Impacts are often being measured through gap closing with regional and national averages which is problematic when comparator areas would be more meaningful.

Outlook. With a 10-year planning horizon much of the investment in Year One can be considered as a sunk cost. However there is evidence to suggest that the returns to this investment are increasing as delivery is scaled up. Increased payback is also likely with a longer operational period (ie beyond Year Three).

2 Introduction

This rapid report was commissioned by Communities and Local Government to provide up-to-date information about the performance of the LEGI programme, in order to inform decisions taken as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Regeneris and Innovacion worked closely with Communities and Local Government to review the most recent reporting information and to obtain further details through discussion with individual LEGI Managers. The aim was to obtain more fine grained information about activity and delivery outcomes. It was agreed that the focus should be Round One LEGI projects which started in April 2006 rather than Round Two projects which had been operational for a maximum of only eight months. It was assumed that Round One projects would have been operational for long enough (16 months) to start showing early outcomes.

The research study involved the following stages:

- (a) **Inception.** The study aims were finalised and background information collected from Communities and Local Government.
- (b) **Analysis of Monitoring Reports.** Year One (2005/6) and Q1 Year Two (2007/8) monitoring reports for R1 LEGI bids were reviewed (where available) and analysed to assess progress. These were compared to original bid documents and delivery plan interviews completed by Regeneris as part of the National Baseline work. As these were voluntary monitoring documents its was known at the outset that there were likely to be differences in scope and detail of their content. Local Area Agreement (LAA) monitoring reports from Government Office were also examined for additional commentary on LEGI performance and impacts. LEGI partnerships tend to appear as part of the 4th block of activity.
- (c) **Questionnaire and Survey Design.** This stage involved collaborative development of the questionnaire with Communities and Local Government and agreeing the survey approach.
- (d) **Interviews.** Project Managers or equivalent at each of the R1 LEGI projects were interviewed over the telephone to obtain a picture of progress to date in terms of delivery. Eight of the ten R1 LEGI partnerships were interviewed in the available time:

1. Alliance – 23 August
2. Barking and Dagenham – 23 August
3. Coventry – 23 August
4. Croydon – 28 August
5. Durham – 24 August
6. Great Yarmouth – 21 August
7. Hastings – 24 August
8. St Helens – 20 August

(e) **Reporting.** The final stage involved production of the progress report.

This update report draws from the National Baseline study, and was supplemented by a review of recent LEGI and LAA performance reports and detailed interviews with eight of the ten R1 LEGI projects. This was completed independently by consultants Regeneris and Innovacion in August 2007. Results from questionnaires, interviews and case studies are anonymised.

3 Year One outputs

The LEGI programme has in aggregate delivered some numerically high outputs in its first year of operation.

Due to its voluntary nature the approach to reporting has varied widely between LEGI partnerships, leading to inconsistency. Making conclusions about overall programme impacts is therefore problematic. A number of R1 LEGI partnerships have still not set top level impact targets despite being operational for over 15 months.

By summing the most recent reporting data provided by R1 LEGI partnerships for key indicators, we estimate that the return on investment could have been as much as: the creation of over 1,900 jobs; over 10,000 people/young people being involved in enterprise experiences; support being provided to just under 5,000 firms; and over 1,100 new firms being started. These figures are gross and un-audited.

The range of outputs is so wide between different LEGI partnerships that these figures should be viewed with caution. For example two R1 LEGI partnerships with similar levels of spend in Year One claim the creation of 16 jobs and over 1,000 jobs respectively, the latter over 62 times higher.

Total expenditure in the first year of operation across the 10 R1 LEGI areas was in excess of £20 million at a rate of about £2.4 million per area.

Figure 1: Average outputs in year one						
Up to	R1 LEGI	Young people/ adults involved in enterprises experiences	New firms started	Firms supported	Jobs created	Year One Spend
Q1 07/08 or Q4 06/07	Total	4,114–10,313	1,128	3,506–4,894	1,908	£19,500,000*
	Average	500–1,300	110	350–490	273	£2,400,000*

Source: Regeneris/Innovacion review of monitoring reports. Note. Very large outputs given as ranges in absence of audit of additionality/double counting. Totals and averages across all 10 R1 LEGI partnerships where reported.

*Year One spend total and average across 8 LEGI partnerships.

4 Estimated Year Two outputs

While second year outputs are expected to be quantitatively similar to the first year there is some evidence of accelerating delivery.

By extracting performance targets for key indicators for Year Two it is possible to estimate likely outputs. Total Year Two outputs are expected to be greater than Year One: over 17,000 people/young people involved in enterprise experiences, just under 4,300 firms supported, just under 4,200 jobs created and over 1,200 new firms started. One R1 LEGI partnership did report that they would be increasing their targets in Year Three.

Figure 2: Gross estimated outputs for year two (2007/08)

R1 LEGI	Young people/adults involved in enterprises experiences	New firms started	Firms supported	Jobs created
Total	17,030	1,203	4,296	2,186
Average	1,703	120	430	219

Source: Regeneris/Innovacion review of monitoring reports. Note. A number of individual totals have been estimated by annualising self employment outputs and projecting from Year One performance.

5 Progress towards impacts

At this stage it is not possible to fully report and attribute impacts in target areas due to the activities of R1 LEGI partnerships. Some LEGI partnerships are still finalising their impact targets and some have not completed enough activity to be able to make an impact. Some await the national data which they are using for independent monitoring of impact. In other areas the LAA/LEGI impact indicators have been moving both positively and negatively when delivery activity would not have been high enough to expect causality. This illustrates the need to separate LEGI impacts from other external drivers such as market adjustments.

A summary of the progress towards impact monitoring is shown below for each of the R1 LEGI areas on an anonymised basis. This shows that about 80 per cent of R1 LEGI partnerships have set impact targets of some type though their form and linkage to outputs varies.

Positive impacts were found in four of the eight case studies. These included LEGI areas experiencing a reduction in household income gaps (Case Study 4), increasing VAT registrations (Case Study 5 and 8) and improving employment rates (Case Study 9). Outputs achieved in Year One in four LEGI partnerships would support progress towards their stated impact targets. The impact additionality that could be finally attributed to LEGI would require a full evaluation.

Figure 3: Summary of progress towards impact achievement by R1 LEGI partnerships

LEGI Case Study	Progress towards Impacts
1	Outcome and impact targets were not set in original bid and are still being developed. Some have been proposed in the LAA but there are concerns about appropriateness (eg measuring firms with turnover below VAT threshold). Other targets are being developed by workstreams but are still not finalised.
2	Impact targets have been set for entrepreneurial levels, young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), average earnings and new/additional businesses. A range of outputs from Year One support achievement of these impacts (eg new firms created) and Board monitoring occurs every two months to drive progress.
3	Impact targets have been set for employment rates, claimant counts, additional business income and new/additional businesses. LAA targets for jobs created and people into employment have been achieved. However worklessness remains a key priority and LAA indicators are not on target in a number of areas: closing the employment rate gap; VAT registrations per 10,000 head of population: business start ups; and self employment.
4	LAA targets are used and are showing movement in the absence of substantial LEGI activity. Self employment levels rose and then fell in 2006/7 but the gap between levels of household income between the city and the LEGI area improved during the period.
5	Targets set in LAA are much broader than the scope of LEGI and are being addressed by many activities making attribution problematic. LAA targets for 2005/6 were missed for working age related benefit claimants, skills and incapacity benefit. Rates of BME JSA claimants also increased by 8 per cent. Specific initiatives have been developed to tackle these areas. The VAT measure of business numbers is now believed to be moving in the right direction (2005 data).
6	Impact measures, partially unquantified, have been identified for entrepreneurial activity, entrepreneurial young people, employment rates, productivity and VAT registration rate. Still awaiting baseline work to allow development of linkages to LAA stretch targets.
7	Impact targets set for entrepreneurial young people, unemployment rates, adults lacking basic skills, improvements in NVQ level 3, deprivation, earnings, VAT registrations, social enterprise formation and business crime. A range of outputs from Year One support achievement of these impacts (eg new firms created).
8	Impact targets set for JSA claimant rates, working age population in employment, enterprise share and enterprise share by SOA linked to output targets. A range of outputs from Year One support achievement of these impacts (eg new firms created) but some baseline targets have been met due to declines in the comparator area rather than target area. However VAT registrations are now exceeding deregistrations for the first time in the LEGI area.
9	Impact targets set for self employment rate, employment rate, VAT and Barclays business stock, GVA per employee and VAT registrations per 10,000 population. In 2006 LAA employment rate improved from 65 per cent to 68 per cent and some Year One outputs would support this uplift (eg jobs created). Year 10 self-employment and Year 3 VAT stocks targets both appear to have been reached by Year One.
10	Impact targets set for self employment rate, employment rate and business stock and linked to output targets. Progress not yet able to be reported as it is dependent on the release of officially collected statistics.

Source: Regeneris/Innovacion review of monitoring reports and interviews. Round One LEGI partnerships anonymised.

6 Performance scorecard

Qualitatively the majority of LEGI partnerships appear to be making reasonable delivery progress. Due to the lack of performance data and the wide differences in reporting a simple more qualitative performance scorecard was devised. This was completed for the eight R1 LEGI partnerships during a detailed telephone interview. The programme-wide results are shown in Table 2. At August 2007 outputs targets as set are generally being achieved where activity has commenced. Milestones where they have been set are generally being achieved on profile. Some impact is expected against the top level metrics but what will be attributable to LEGI investments is likely to be unclear without substantially improved evaluation activity. However a significant number of LEGI partnerships are not undertaking demographic targeting and monitoring.

Figure 4: Performance scorecard summary

Overall progress of eight R1 LEGI partnerships at August 2007			
<i>Output targets</i>	1/8 (13 per cent) Being exceeded	5/8 (62 per cent) Generally being met (where activity started)	2/8 (25 per cent) Not being met
<i>Targeting of Groups</i>	1/8 (13 per cent) Extensive targeting of groups	4/8 (50 per cent) Some explicit targeting	3/8 (37 per cent) Limited targeting (not enough delivery/limited target setting and monitoring)
<i>Milestones</i>	1/8 (13 per cent) Being achieved ahead of schedule	6/8 (83 per cent) Being achieved on profile (with some exceptions)	1/8 (13 per cent) Not being achieved
<i>Impact measures</i>	1/8 (13 per cent) Likely to be fully achieved	6/8 (83 per cent) Likely to be have some impact (but chain of causality often weak)	2/8 (25 per cent) Unlikely to impact

Source: Regeneris/Innovacion ranking of 8 R1 LEGI partnerships.

7 Performance context

From Regeneris's National Baseline work and our interviews with eight of the R1 LEGI partnerships plus our experience of enterprise support initiatives in England over the last 20 years we have highlighted a number of issues to provide a context for these performance figures and as an explanation of overall progress to date.

1. There appear to be **three typologies** of R1 LEGI partnerships in terms of performance to date:
 - (a) **LEGI partnerships which have very genuinely used Year One as the initial development phase of a long term 10 year plan to achieve a step change in local enterprise performance but are now delivering outputs.** For example this has involved setting up new and effective community engagement approaches. These LEGI partnerships tend to show good levels of outputs in Q1 of Year Two as their new delivery approach is bedding down. About 30 per cent of R1 LEGI partnerships would appear in this category and a case study example is given below.

Case Study A

This R1 LEGI had a successful first year of operation which ensured the consistency of projects and allowed the thorough piloting of new delivery approaches. Specialist advice was taken about diversity issues for delivery and detailed monitoring of delivery to target groups is now occurring by both beneficiary and ownership of business. All projects are now formally approved and the Management team are so confident about meeting their targets that they plan to increase their Year Three stretch targets. The Board providing oversight has been helped to move from a project approval to a more strategic commissioning approach. Positive impacts are evident on top level metrics (eg VAT registrations exceeding deregistrations for the first time).

- (b) **LEGI partnerships which have also used Year One as development phase of a 10 year plan to achieve a step change in local enterprise performance but have now run into delivery barriers.** These barriers have often been related to capital expenditure/property issues allied with slow recruitment and decision-making processes. Correspondingly actual outputs are still limited in the most recent reporting data. About 40 per cent of R1 LEGI partnerships would appear in this category and a case study example is given below.

Case Study B

This R1 LEGI partnership has suffered some delays to project design work and building their baseline evidence which has now been completed after independent research. The bid was unrealistic in expecting 22 strands of activity to all commence in April 2007. Agreeing a procurement process across four Local Authorities has been virtually impossible especially during a review of Local Government. Problems with capital expenditure have led to investment being directed to existing property outside the LEGI target area. However the management team remain optimistic, are making pragmatic progress and have been hitting most milestones. The delay to the baseline work has prevented reporting of progress against impact targets.

- (c) **LEGI partnerships which have reported very high outputs in Year One.** The outputs are so high and/or involve volume activity (eg measurement of event attendance) that is difficult to envisage the additional benefit that LEGI will bring. How the volume activity will convert to outputs and impacts is also yet to be clear (eg relative conversion rates). About 30 per cent of R1 LEGI partnerships would appear in this category and a case study example is given below.

Case Study C

This R1 LEGI partnership has exceeded its performance targets for eight of nine KPIs in Year One and shows very high outputs. There have been few delays (with the exception of staff recruitment) to delivery as the main agency was a joint bidder thus avoiding time consuming OJEU procurement processes. Detailed milestones in the original bid have been achieved. Targeting is occurring spatially (SOAs) and for two groups (women, economically inactive). Active outreach has been developed into disadvantaged communities but the partnership expects delivery to become more challenging after "picking the low hanging fruit". The release of official statistics and independent consultant review is awaited to report overall impacts.

2. The National Baseline¹ work shows that there have been **improvements between Round 1 and Round 2** LEGI bids as both bidders and programme managers moved up the learning curve (eg better consistency, using proven best practice, better research). Even failed bidders report benefits in terms of improved partnering, expanded enterprise networks and increased Senior Officer involvement.
3. The genuine extent of **integration** has varied widely (eg with the 4th block of LAA). The degree of connection between LEGI partnerships and their LAAs and associated targets has also varied. Some targets were passed from LEGI to the LAA (bottom-up). On other occasions the reverse occurred (top-down). It is not

¹ Communities and Local Government (2008) LEGI: National baseline: A final report

obvious in all cases that the LAA governance and monitoring structures have been able to ensure top level LEGI stretch targets are set and that outputs show a direction of travel towards their achievement.

4. There is a wide variation of **progress in delivery** between different areas. For many LEGI partnerships there is evidence from Q1 07/08 of a significant increase in outputs following a year of genuine development. Overall the R1 LEGI partnerships expect Year Two to be much better in terms of numerical outputs. A small number of R1 LEGI programmes are exceeding their targets and one is planning to increase their Year Three targets as a result.
5. For many R1 LEGI partnerships Year One was genuinely a period of **set-up** as they are planning for 10 years of delivery. To make the transformational change they outlined in their bids they are trying to do things differently rather than just chase output numbers using current approaches. For example this has included developing new ways of strengthening community engagement with enterprise (eg effective outreach, addressing diversity issues).
6. Year One also has involved the delivery of a range of **softer, qualitative improvements** which are more difficult to measure but necessary for longer term effects (eg development of joint understanding, changing delivery approaches, improving capacity in VCS, helping business support agencies grasp their new role in LEGI).
7. The main **barriers** to delivery were reported as:
 - (a) Recruiting LEGI team members has been slow. A number of partners have had to use partner bodies to undertake recruitment rather than work through Local Authorities.
 - (b) Commissioning and tendering processes for some projects and getting the active engagement of delivery bodies have been slow.
 - (c) Turning a broader, thematic bid into an actionable delivery plan has been challenging.
 - (d) Getting meaningful engagement with RDAs has taken time.
 - (e) Second tier authorities with County-wide LSPs and multi-authority projects have had more challenges in making progress due to the increased consultation necessary and slower decision making.
 - (f) Working across authorities in multi-authority bids has been resource intensive.
 - (g) Capital expenditure has tended to be more problematic. Some property projects are coming forward slowly and may only be operational in Year Three.
8. There have been **wide variations in reporting and target setting** in R1 LEGI partnerships. Some LEGI partnerships have still not finalised targets and top level metrics despite nearing the midway point of the initial three year delivery period. Remedial work could include detailed delivery outputs against standard measures profiled over the remaining six quarters to 2008/9. There is also some evidence of **creeping departure** from the original bid strategy and projects, often due to the delivery barriers encountered.

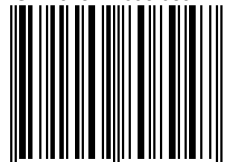
9. **Targeting varies widely.** The extent to which LEGI areas and types of projects in areas are targeting either geographically or by client group type (eg ethnic group) varies widely. Some areas have a strong focus on target SOAs; others are largely, or wholly, Local Authority-wide. There is a wide range of approaches to **targeting by different groups** of residents, or “communities of interest”. Common sub-divisions used are age, gender, ethnicity, financial exclusion, levels of disability and health, benefit claimants, social enterprises, ex-offenders and migrants. A small number of LEGI partnerships have taken a more thorough approach suggesting it is not an impossible task. The majority of LEGI programmes identify **target areas**, often based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation of Super Output Areas (neighbourhoods), in which projects are focused in the most deprived communities. These LEGI partnerships are assuming, not unreasonably, that an SOA focus will deliver these beneficiaries.
10. There is a **wide variation in the quantitative outputs** achieved in first five quarters of operation which is not obviously related to the level of spend in Year One. The extent of variation suggests a clear need for an audit of claimed outputs (eg exact status of new firms created). By way of illustration, the additional business tax revenues from the highest performing LEGI area would suggest that the programme could have the potential to become self-funding (eg if the 550 new firms formed in Year One each started paying only £2,000/annum in additional business tax revenues this would produce more than £1 million/annum in additional tax take).
11. **More challenging delivery is expected in the future.** A number of LEGI partnerships expect that outputs may become more and not less difficult to achieve in the future. Activity to date is seen as “picking the low hanging fruit”.
12. The National Baseline identifies a number of areas where LEGI appears to be **adding value**:
 - (a) a better understanding of the barriers to enterprise and the main challenges faced in areas as a result of the development of a new evidence base (eg entrepreneurial attitudes among young people rather than analysis of VAT statistics).
 - (b) new or more intensive joint working on the enterprise and business support agendas at a local level.
 - (c) pushing enterprise up local agendas.
 - (d) adding value to existing activity with the LEGI process encouraging areas to build on what is already happening.
 - (e) filling gaps and supporting new approaches especially in terms of outreach work in disadvantaged communities on the enterprise agenda.
 - (f) some innovation in approaches.
 - (g) some increased engagement of the private sector, although this varied widely in Round One bids.
13. The National Baseline shows gaps between some top metrics and their targets actually closing before any impact could be sensibly be attributed to LEGI activities suggesting a need to look at **deadweight public investment**. Wider

economic trends could be addressing the main challenges in the absence of LEGI suggesting the possibility of reduced activity in the future.

14. The National Baseline review noted that outcomes/impacts are often being measured through **gap closing** with regional and national averages. Performance against comparator areas would be more meaningful.
15. **LEGI budget per person is highly variable** in LEGI Round 1 areas (based on the area of relevance ie target area or Local Authority) ranging from £15 per working age resident to £214 per working age resident. Similarly there is large variation between **LEGI budget per business** across the Round 1 LEGI areas. This ranged from £1,400 to £7,400.
16. In Year One many R1 LEGI partnerships focused on set-up with delivery profiled into Years Two and Three. Therefore much of the investment in Year One can be considered as a sunk cost. It is not unreasonable to expect that the **returns to this investment will increase** now that delivery is scaling up, and this is supported by Q1 2007/08 performance data from a number of the R1 LEGI partnerships. Increased payback is also likely with a longer operational period (ie beyond Year Three).

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