

# Strategic Capacity Funding Guidance

## Introduction

1. The Strategic Investment Board has agreed to make Strategic Development Funding available to diocese to help address constraints in their capacity to develop and implement strategies. This note sets out what the funding aims to achieve, how it is intended to be used, and what needs to be included in the request for support.

## Background

2. The need to develop dioceses' strategic capacity has emerged from both the "Resourcing the Future" discussions with senior diocesan teams, and those about Strategic Development Funding. More specifically, a number of dioceses have said that they need help to develop their strategies further before they would be confident of making an application for Strategic Development Funding. The expansion of this stream of funding has brought addressing the issue of strategic capacity into sharper focus.

3. The Strategic Investment Board has therefore agreed that it would be appropriate for up to £2m of the funds allocated for Strategic Development Funding to be made available to help individual dioceses to develop their strategic capacity, where they have identified this as a constraint.

## What does the support cover?

4. 'Strategic capacity' in this context includes having the right combination and depth of skills, knowledge and experience to undertake forward planning, and to develop and implement robust strategies to advance the Church's mission and growth. This can cover a range of more specific areas, but at the minimum includes:

- The ability to analyse and use data to inform decision making
- Strategy development or implementation
- Project management
- Change management

5. This is intended to supplement other work aimed at supporting strategy development in dioceses, such as the consultancy support and data work provided by the Resource Strategy & Development Unit, and the training package which has been developed for senior clergy. We are also exploring the expansion of other initiatives such as Inter-Diocesan Learning Communities to help dioceses share learning and best practice.

6. The support is aimed at helping dioceses in the short-term to acquire or develop capacity they do not currently have in specific areas, for example in terms of specific skills, expertise or experience. The aim is to fund short-term support through fixed-term posts, contract work or other forms of consultancy, or providing time-limited pump-priming for new potentially permanent posts (for example, on a trial basis), where these provide genuinely additional capacity. Dioceses will therefore need, where relevant, to have a clear end point for the work (eg to mainstream the activity - taking on financial responsibility; or the completion of an identified task).

7. Dioceses will be expected to make a financial commitment to support their proposals; national funding will supplement that which dioceses cannot afford. As the funding is designed to support relatively short-term interventions, the scale of the proposal and the amount of support sought should be commensurate with that. (We will be happy to advise on this.)

### The Application

8. The application should **describe the intervention for which support is sought**; how it will help to develop or implement a diocesan strategy or strategic plan; and how you will know whether the activity or project has delivered what you want successfully at the end of it (if this is not implicit in what you are looking to fund).

9. More specifically, the application should include a **candid self-assessment** of what is currently preventing the diocese from developing a long-term plan to advance its mission and growth (and/or delivering such a plan); how you are planning to remedy the weaknesses or constraints; how the proposed intervention fits with these plans; and how any risks to the effectiveness of the intervention will be managed.

10. The application form also includes a section to describe the **wider strategic context**, to confirm that the activity or project is part of a wider plan or drive to develop a long-term strategy, with a long-term goal in mind, rather than an ad-hoc or peripheral piece of work. It should also explain why the diocese is seeking financial support (ie why it cannot fund this work itself).

11. We will be happy to discuss the project or application before you apply if that would be helpful. Funding can be used for a variety of purposes, such as:

- Consultancy to provide specific advice, help deliver a piece of work, assist with implementation or change management, where the skills or knowledge are not readily available in the diocese.
- Additional staff – to provide capacity or specific skills.
- Development for senior teams.
- Developing the use of data to inform the strategy.

### Assessing the Applications

12. The Strategic Investment Board have agreed that applications for small-scale funding for consultancy (and where the consultant's track record has been demonstrated to the NCIs) can be submitted at any time and will be considered by the Strategy and Development Unit.

13. All other applications for support will be submitted to the Board for decision: depending on demand, we will submit these in between meetings to the Board, and hope to be able to respond within four to six weeks.

### Further help

14. If you have any queries or would like to discuss your ideas before submitting an application, please contact David Jennings in the Resource Strategy & Development Unit on 020 7898 1492 or by email at: [david.jennings@churchofengland.org](mailto:david.jennings@churchofengland.org)