

The Council on Competitiveness/ OECD Experts Meeting

Regional Economic Governance and Innovation Systems for the North of England

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- The English approach to regional policy
- Role and characteristics of England's Regional Development Agencies
- Promoting Innovation in this context
- Some issues and debates....

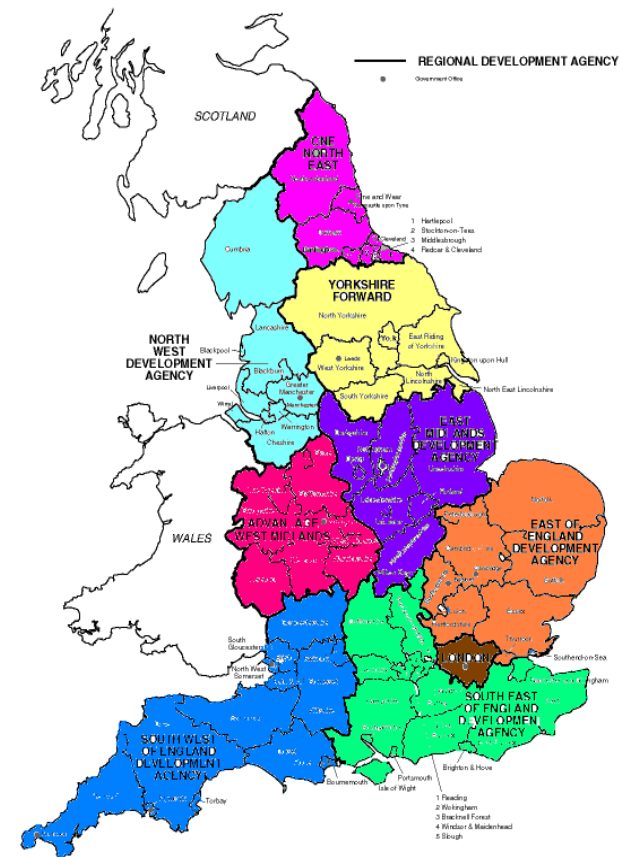
Regional Development Agencies

Established by Regional Development Agencies Act (1998) in 9 English regions.

Statutory objectives:

- further economic development and regeneration
- promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness
- promote employment
- enhance the development and application of skills relevant to employment
- contribute to sustainable development

Lead the Regional Economic Strategy



Regional Development Agencies – key features:

Total budget £2.3 billion (\$4½ billion). Arms-length agencies, led by a semi-independent (business-led) board, with regional scrutiny, but ultimately accountable to Secretary of State;

Accumulated responsibilities:

- Innovation
- Regeneration
- Inward Investment
- Access to Finance for SMEs
- Tourism and Regional Marketing
- Business Support Brokerage
- Regional Skills Partnerships
- European programme delivery
- (to come....) Integrated Regional Strategies

OECD Review of Regional Innovation

- UK a “less codified and more fluid system”
- RDAs “an increasing and lead role” in innovation.
- Spatial dimension for innovation policy is “new”, and more difficult in lagging regions
- Few mechanisms to help national / regional alignment (important role of the **Technology Strategy Board**)
- The potential of “place-based” approaches at local or city-regional level.
- Avoid a strategic over-emphasis on universities, and broaden out the definition of innovation.

Issues that arise from the English model:

- Arms-length, or directly accountable?
- Address market failures, or market opportunities?
- A comprehensive approach or a focused remit?
- Strategy or delivery?
- Regional, Sub or City-regional, or Local?
- Competition or Collaboration?
- Integration and Alignment or Experimentation and Diversity?