

REGIONAL SELECTION OF THEMES FOR INNOVATION

Introduction

1. This paper invites the committee to select the regional themes for innovative and transnational activity for 2007-2010 by written procedure by 30 September 2008. An introductory discussion will be undertaken at the meeting on 11 September.

Background

2. The ESF Operational Programme states that within Priorities 1, 2, 4 and 5, there will be a limited amount of funding available to support a small range of dedicated innovative activities. Priorities 1 and 4 will include support for developing and delivering innovative ways of helping unemployed and inactive people make the transition from unemployment and inactivity to sustainable employment. Priorities 2 and 5 will include support for developing and delivering of innovative activities to raise skills levels. There will also be a limited amount of funding available to support transnational or inter-regional activities.

3. Following discussions in the innovation, transnationality and mainstreaming sub-committee and with the European Commission, it has been agreed that:

- all dedicated innovative projects will have a transnational or inter-regional dimension (i.e. at least one partner from another EU Member State);
- innovative and transnational activity will be delivered through direct bidding outside of Co-financing;
- up to 2% of regional Priority 1, 2, 4 and 5 allocations for 2007-2010 will be available for innovative and transnational activity; and
- there will be up to three innovative and transnational projects per region or Convergence/phasing-in area in 2007-2010.

ESF funding will contribute up to 50% of the costs of each project. It is expected that up to around £1 million ESF funding will be available per project. Applicants must provide at least 50% match funding .

4. The innovation, transnationality and mainstreaming sub-committee has developed a menu of six themes for innovative and transnational activity in 2007-2010. The sub-committee's discussions were informed by the innovation sections of regional ESF frameworks.

5. The six themes are annexed to this paper as follows:

- A. Active Inclusion (Priorities 1 and 4)
- B. Engaging with Employers (Priorities 1, 2, 4 and 5)
- C. ICT and the Digital Divide (Priorities 1, 2, 4 and 5)
- D. Meeting New Challenges – Skills for Climate Change and Sustainable Development (Priorities 2 and 5)
- E. Meeting New Challenges – Demographic Change (Older Workers and Migration) (Priorities 1, 2, 4 and 5)
- F. Social Enterprise (Priorities 1, 2, 4 and 5)

6. Regions are invited to select themes from this menu. The Operational Programme priorities in which the themes may operate are shown in brackets.

7. ESF Division plans to launch the call for proposals for innovative and transnational projects at the end of October. Projects will be regional and each project must address one of the themes for the region within it is submitted. GOs/LDA will appraise applications and regional committees will be invited to endorse the selection of projects.

8. ESF Division is in the process of selecting a Co-ordinating Body to assist with the co-ordination of innovative and transnational activity. The tasks of the Co-ordinating Body will include:

- developing guidance for innovative and transnational activity;
- supporting the call for proposals including organising information meetings, responding to queries from potential applicants and receiving applications;
- co-ordinating the appraisal process by sending applications to GOs/LDA for appraisal, identifying overlaps in applications across regions and providing advice to appraisers on transnational aspects of applications, collating a list of selected projects;
- setting up cross-regional thematic networks of projects, which will also involve the Managing Authority/LDA, sub-committee members, regional committee members and decision makers as appropriate;
- advising, supporting and monitoring selected projects (but not undertaking contracting and Article 13 activity which will be the responsibility of the Managing Authority/LDA).

Action for regions

9. Each region has been asked to select at least one theme within Priority 1/4, and at least one within Priority 2/5. There is no limit to the number of themes that a region can select from the menu. However, we need to bear in mind:

- the maximum amount of ESF funding available for innovative and trans-national activity in 2007-2010 in the South East is £ 1,226,763 in Priority 1 and £ 672,741 in Priority 2;
- there will be no more than three projects per region in 2007-2010;; and
- there will usually be up to around £1 million ESF funding per project.

10. We have the flexibility either (a) to specify a small number of themes, or (b) to select a larger number of themes but with the proviso that it will not be possible to support projects within all of those themes. The choice of themes from the menu is a matter for the region. ESF Division and the Co-ordinating Body will not intervene in the regional decision.

11. Please note that four of the themes are available in both Priorities 1/4 and Priorities 2/5. It is possible to select the same theme within both priorities. For example, we could select engaging with employers as a theme in both Priority 1 and Priority 2. In this case, it would count as one theme in Priority 1 and one in Priority 2. On the other hand we could select it as a theme in Priority 2 only, in which case applications under the engaging with employers theme could be submitted only in Priority 2 in our region.

12. We also have the option to give:

- a steer on the amount of funding available per theme in our region;
- some brief regional context for the theme which might set out specific regional issues and needs drawn from our regional ESF framework.

If we opt to provide these steers, they will be included in the call for proposals.

13. In order to allow for maximum discussion amongst regional partners GOSE has not opted to make a recommendation themselves but invite the regional committee to make the decision.

Recommendation

14. The committee is invited to consider and agree the selection of regional themes from the menu. In doing so, the committee will want to take account of the regional ESF framework's section on innovation (at annex G of this paper).

15. The committee is also invited to give a steer on whether indicative financial allocations should be set for each theme, and on whether information on the regional context, drawn from the regional ESF framework, should be included in the call for proposals.

16. The Government Office/LDA must inform ESF Division of the selection of themes no later than 15 October so that they can be included in the call for proposals.

ANNEX A

Theme	ACTIVE INCLUSION
Regions	<p>This theme has been selected by the following regions:</p> <p>[List of regions to be added, stating which priorities apply and indicative allocations if applicable.]</p> <p>The project applicant must be from one of these regions. The application will need to demonstrate how it will address the employment and skills strategies of the region within which it is submitted (see section on regional context). The application may include partners in other regions whether or not those regions have selected the theme.</p>
ESF Operational Programme priorities	<p>Projects within this theme must fall within one of the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1 – Extending employment opportunities (Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective); and • Priority 4 – Tackling barriers to employment (Convergence Objective). <p>Projects within Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will be submitted within Priority 4. Other projects will be submitted within Priority 1.</p> <p>This theme will support Priorities 1 and 4 by developing and delivering innovative ways of helping unemployed and inactive people make the transition from unemployment and inactivity to sustainable employment.</p> <p>All activities within Priorities 1 and 4 are relevant to this theme, in particular those that target specific disadvantaged groups and people experiencing multiple disadvantages.</p> <p>[References to Priority 4 to be removed if this theme is not selected in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly]</p>

<p>Aim</p>	<p>This theme will develop, test and deliver innovative active inclusion measures to integrate disadvantaged groups into the labour market, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing and testing integrated pathways to active inclusion in the labour market; • mainstreaming innovative integrated approaches that add value to current practices; • disseminating and transferring good practice in promoting active inclusion across EU Member states; • tackling multiple disadvantage through integrated solutions which join-up employment initiatives and enabling social support.
<p>Eligible groups</p>	<p>Innovative approaches will focus on improving access and support to disadvantaged target groups identified in Priorities 1 or 4 of the ESF Operational Programme and the relevant regional ESF framework. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people with disabilities and health conditions • lone parents and other disadvantaged parents • older workers • black and minority ethnic groups • people with no or low skills • refugees • ex-offenders • drug users • homeless people. <p>In developing projects, a number of distinctive active engagement features may emerge as being specific to these special groups, furthest from the labour market, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the multiplicity of social disadvantages; • the extensive involvement of people experiencing poverty; • the scope for ownership of neighbourhood services led by the disadvantaged; • the receptiveness to outreach approaches; • the amenability to informal intermediary services; • the responsiveness to area-based approaches. <p>The theme on Demographic Change will support innovative projects to re-engage inactive older workers and to retain older workers in employment. Therefore projects focusing solely on older workers should be submitted within the Demographic Change theme in regions where this theme is available. Projects within the</p>

	<p>Active Inclusion theme may include older workers as one of their target groups in terms of tackling labour market barriers more generally.</p>
<p>Strategic context</p>	<p>The March 2008 Spring European Council agreed guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States for 2008-2010, as part of the renewed Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs.</p> <p>Guideline 17 is to “Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion.” It says that “raising employment levels is the most effective means of generating economic growth and promoting socially inclusive economies whilst ensuring a safety net for those unable to work....Special attention should be paid to...promoting active inclusion of those most excluded from the labour market.”</p> <p>The European Commission published a communication on active inclusion in October 2007 (‘Modernising social protection for greater social justice and economic cohesion: taking forward the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market’). The communication says that “EU financial instruments already play a key role in encouraging the development of inclusion policies based on access to the labour market. The European Social Fund provides a long-term financial framework complementing national and other sources of finance. The Commission will encourage use of the provisions of the new ESF regulation to support active inclusion measures.”</p> <p>In its response to the Communication, the UK Government recognised the importance of the EU’s commitment to make a decisive impact on poverty by 2010 and of the need to constantly review strategies to get closer to achieving that goal. Multiple disadvantage requires multiple and integrated solutions, including inclusive labour markets and enabling social support.</p> <p>The UK Government believes that work on active inclusion should focus on increasing employment opportunities for priority groups. In particular the area where more effort is needed by all Member States is on investment in human capital.</p> <p>In this context, the UK response to the Commission’s</p>

communication identified the following priorities:

- focusing resources on the people and localities that are in the worst position compared to overall employment levels;
- underpinning the welfare reform agenda with a framework of rights and responsibilities, extended appropriately to those who are economically inactive and receiving previously passive benefits;
- combining employment and skills support and services, focusing not just on job-entry but also on retention and progression;
- using a personalised and responsive approach; and
- working in partnership to make best use of expertise across public, private and third sectors and empowering regions, cities and localities.

The Government's approach is set out in more detail in a range of documents including:

- 'No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility' (July 2008) sets out a range of options to reduce welfare dependency, support more people into work, provide greater support and control for disabled people and strengthen parental responsibility.
- 'Work skills' (June 2008) outlines what the Government is doing to help people take control of their skills needs, both for today and in the future and how it will support employers to get the skilled workforce they need.
- 'Ready to Work, Skilled for Work: Unlocking Britain's Talent' (January 2008) sets out how government and business working together, can unlock Britain's talent, ensure employers have access to the skills they need to prosper, and give millions of people the chance to realise their potential and change their lives.

Worklessness and Health

The impact of health issues on worklessness is currently a focus for government attention through initiatives such as Pathways to Work. Being economically inactive can lead to higher rates of poor health, mental illness, and premature death. Poor health can affect the ability to gain

and stay in employment.

The Health Development Agency paper 'Worklessness and health – What do we know about the casual relationship?' (2005) concluded that there is a relationship between unemployment and poor health, and that "employment policy should evaluate the health impact of all its relevant interventions".

The latest England life expectancy and infant mortality figures show that the health gap is widening still between the better off and more deprived population groups. Availability of employment and skills development is crucial to reducing the numbers of people living in deprivation and to reduce the health gap.

Recent national initiatives to join-up health and employment/skills include:

- ['Working for a healthier tomorrow'](#) (March 2008), Dame Carol Black's review of the health of the working age population;
- [Skilled for Health](#) which aims to address both the low skills and health inequalities prevalent within traditionally disadvantaged communities.

Two regions - London and the North West, now consider health to be a cross cutting theme in the ESF 2007-13 programme.

There are many good European examples of progressive health activity, for example the Finnish experience of occupational health where older workers have been helped to stay in work through changes to jobs and lifestyle.

ESF contribution to delivering active inclusion

ESF has traditionally focused on employment related measures. Yet, this does not prevent the development of integrated approaches which aim to tackle the wider barriers to labour market entry, including the root causes of economic inclusion and poverty.

To deal with multiple barriers in a holistic way, projects may join-up active labour market measures (for example, vocational education and training, counselling, development of "soft skills", language courses), with relevant community and social support services. Partnership between public authorities, third sector and

	<p>private sector is critical to delivering integrated approaches.</p> <p>ESF money cannot be used to fund health and social services, and ESF activities must be focused on supporting entry to or progression within the labour market.</p>
Regional context	<p>Applications in [names of region] should take particular account of the following regional issues identified in the regional ESF framework.</p> <p>[To be added for each region which selects this theme.]</p> <p>[Links to be added to relevant regional ESF frameworks on ESF website.]</p>
Indicative activities	<p>Projects should address one or more of the following four areas. They are not mutually exclusive. Indicative actions are set out under each area although these are not prescriptive.</p> <p><u>1. Inclusive labour market interventions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tackling barriers to work among the most disadvantaged groups in the labour market; • underpinning the welfare reform agenda with a framework of rights and responsibilities; • combining employment and skills at job entry, retention and progression; • using personalised and responsive approaches – improving the flexibility of provision and offering people the services they need when they need them; • partnership working across public, private and third sectors to empower regions, cities and localities. <p><u>2. Joining-up labour market interventions with other services to address barriers to work</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assistance for people faced by personal challenges or barriers in the labour market; • activities to ensure that disadvantaged people reintegrate into the labour market; • activities to develop the employability and skills of offenders and ex-offenders; • activities to address specific barriers to work faced by people who are homeless, refugees or have substance abuse, alcohol or drug problems;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities to integrate into employment people in contact with secondary mental health services, and people with learning disabilities. <p>3. Adding value to the City Strategy and Working Neighbourhood Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tackling worklessness among the most disadvantaged groups and communities in City Strategy and Working Neighbourhoods Fund areas; • ensuring provision is more attuned to the needs of local employers so individuals gain the skills and attributes they need to access the particular jobs that employers need to fill. <p>4. Worklessness and health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities to help people with disabilities health problems enter and remain in work; • activities to retain in employment people who become disabled or develop health conditions (including in small businesses); • activities to help employers to promote the health and wellbeing of workers, and prevent the onset of ill health; • sustainable approaches to mental health and employment - in particular replicable interventions that help people with mental health conditions retain work; • complementing activities within the Skilled for Health initiative to improve health literacy and basic skills among specific groups with common health issues.
Results	<p>The primary output of projects within this theme will be the development and delivery of innovative active inclusion measures.</p> <p>This will include producing new tools, methods and service provision, and/or applying and adapting existing tools and methods to new regions, sectors or target groups. It will also include piloting these products with unemployed and inactive people, especially those experiencing multiple disadvantages. The outcomes will therefore include improving the employment prospects and skills of participants, and where appropriate helping them to achieve qualifications and sustainable employment.</p>

	<p>Within this theme results may also include the creation of sustainable networks to promote good practice in active inclusion in the labour market. Networks should include third sector groups of people who are disadvantaged in or excluded from the labour market.</p>
<p>Transnational working</p>	<p>Each project must include an element of transnational working. This will involve working with at least one partner from another EU Member State.</p> <p>The transnational dimension of projects must bring real benefits to the innovative activity by learning from, adapting or mainstreaming approaches from other Member States, and where appropriate transferring good practice to other Member States. ESF will not support transnational activities that merely seek to establish or develop partnerships with other Member States.</p> <p>Projects should allow the exchange of knowledge, experience and best practice to offer clear added value to regional objectives and targets. They should aim to achieve strategic benefits that can be widely shared rather than purely operational or organisational benefits.</p> <p>Applications should explain why the activity should be undertaken transnationally and the proposed benefits of working with the chosen transnational partners.</p> <p>Applications should identify transnational partners (which may be organisations at local, regional or national level) that have a clear track record in this theme and can support exchanges that will facilitate innovation and fresh ideas. Transnational partners may include third sector organisations drawn from people disadvantaged in the labour market. They should be willing to work collaboratively in order to share good practice and learning.</p> <p>Transnational partners do not have to be in receipt of ESF funding in their own Member State.</p> <p>Some examples of transnational working include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • networking; • thematic workshops/exhibitions; • study visits; • joint research/studies; • piloting or testing new tools, methods, approaches etc.; • work shadowing towards practice development; • events, seminars and conferences; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new joint development initiatives.
Mainstreaming	<p>All applications must identify appropriate policy linkages and provide clear evidence of mainstreaming potential. As well as having dynamic links with third sector street-level organisations, they must have mainstreaming strategies showing effective engagement with decision makers in relevant Government departments, regional and local bodies, sectoral organisations, employers' organisations and other appropriate stakeholders to demonstrate how innovation, learning and best practice will influence policy development and implementation in this theme. Mainstreaming strategies should include clear methodologies for recording, evaluating and disseminating the learning and best practice, alongside the methods to be used to engage with decision makers.</p> <p>Projects covering City Strategy and Working Neighbourhoods Fund areas must have the active participation of, or strong links with, the relevant City Strategy Pathfinders or Working Neighbourhoods Fund. They should also involve appropriate employers' organisations.</p> <p>Outcomes may be disseminated through channels such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good practice case studies; • reports capturing learning from exchanges • policy impact reports; • conferences, seminars and exhibitions; • new websites, DVDs, CDs etc. <p>Active inclusion projects may also disseminate results through networks at regional, national and transnational levels that directly contribute to the EU's Social Inclusion Open Method of Co-ordination and National Action Plan processes. These networks should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve people in poverty, in a systematic way; • link to local researchers in the role of 'local observatories'; • integrate ESF transnational networking into preparations for the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2010. <p>Applications should describe any plans to disseminate results through networks supported by PROGRESS, the EU Programme on Employment and Social Solidarity 2007-2013.</p>

	<p>The work undertaken must have good visibility at street level. Progress and achievement should be seen and understood by people experiencing poverty and disadvantage both inside and outside the labour market. In particular, publicity arrangements should dovetail with those linked with the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2010.</p>
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Theme	ENGAGING WITH EMPLOYERS
Regions	<p>This theme has been selected by the following regions:</p> <p>[List of regions to be added, stating which priorities apply and indicative allocations if applicable.]</p> <p>The project applicant must be from one of these regions. The application will need to demonstrate how it will address the employment and skills strategies of the region within which it is submitted (see section on regional context). The application may include partners in other regions whether or not those regions have selected the theme.</p>
ESF Operational Programme priorities	<p>Projects within this theme must fall within one of the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1 – Extending employment opportunities (Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective) • Priority 2 – Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce (Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective) • Priority 4 – Tackling barriers to employment (Convergence Objective) • Priority 5 – Improving the skills of the local workforce (Convergence Objective) <p>Projects within Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will be submitted within Priorities 4 or 5. Other projects will be submitted within Priorities 1 or 2.</p> <p>Projects within Priorities 1 and 4 will focus on developing and delivering innovative ways to help workless people gain skills for employability and integrate into the workplace.</p> <p>Projects within Priorities 2 and 5 projects will focus on developing and delivering innovative ways of meeting employers' skills needs.</p> <p>[References to Priorities 4 and 5 to be removed if this theme is not selected in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly]</p>

Aim	<p>This theme will develop, test and deliver new ways of engaging employers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enable ESF target groups to improve their employability and skills, and so access, retain and make progress in employment; and • address employers' skills needs.
Eligible groups	<p>All target groups defined in the ESF Operational Programme Priorities 1, 2, 4, and 5, and Regional ESF Frameworks, are potentially eligible for support.</p>
Strategic context	<p>The world of work, and the way we work, is changing. This is resulting in the need for an improved skills base – one that is capable of taking advantage of the opportunities offered, and of facing the challenges presented by the changing economic environment.</p> <p>Globalisation, technological progress, the growth of emerging economies (India, China) and climate change are key issues affecting the employment landscape. An ageing society and global migration will also have an effect on employment patterns. Companies will need skilled workers to keep up with these changes, develop new products and markets, and maximise profitability and performance. For certain skills needs, firms are looking abroad to fill vacancies, but immigration and migration impacts are not a reliable long term solution. The domestic labour force needs to be able to provide the appropriate skills base for the needs of industry.</p> <p>Workers also face challenges, and must be prepared to learn new skills to meet changing employer needs, and also to be able to move between employers. Those with low skills will find job opportunities harder to come by as forecasts show that the demand for intermediate and higher level skills will increase.</p> <p>European context</p> <p>In 2005 the European Union's Lisbon Strategy was revised to ensure a more focused approach to the development of sustainable growth, and the creation of more and better jobs. This informed the European Employment Strategy, which sets out agreed EU level guidelines, against which Member States co-ordinate their efforts to promote employment. Skills development is at the heart of this.</p>

The gender pay gap, a major EU concern, is an issue that has an impact on growth and the economy. In July 2007 the European Commission issued a report setting out how the EU can bridge the gap. Across the EU women earn an average of 15% less than men. In the UK the gap is narrowing, but still stands at 12.6% (2006-2007, National Statistics Online). In the UK reducing the gender pay gap forms one of the Government Equalities Office's current strategic objectives.

National context

In the UK several reports have explored how education and training opportunities can deliver the skills needed to ensure continued growth and competitiveness.

The most recent of these, ['Work Skills – Unlocking talent'](#) (DWP/DIUS, June 2008), outlines support for people to take control of their skills needs, and how employers can get the skilled workforce they need. It states that “We need to give people the skills that will be required in both today's and tomorrow's labour market. That will make British businesses more profitable and will make our society fairer and ensure everyone can gain from future prosperity”.

In November 2007 a DWP/DIUS report ['Opportunity, Employment and Progression: Making Skills Work'](#) set out the principles of welfare and skills reform. It champions the development of a “truly integrated employment and skills system” and states that “this will require a major culture change, boosting employer commitment to, and investment in, learning and higher skills”, and highlights the need for appropriate guidance, advice, and training to move people into sustainable employment.

In July 2007, the Government set out its response to, and plans to achieve, the recommendations of the Leitch Review of Skills in ['World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England'](#). The Leitch Review, in December 2006, set out how the UK should raise its game on skills, and sets stretching objectives for 2020 to ensure the UK regains its position as a world leader on skills.

The Leitch ambition – which the Government is committed to – is that by 2020:

- 95% of working age adults have functional (level 1) literacy and (entry level 3) numeracy skills.
- More than 90% of working age adults are qualified to level

	<p>2, with a commitment to achieve 95% as soon as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 68% of working age adults are qualified to level 3.• There are 400,000 apprenticeships in England.• Over 40% of working age adults are qualified to level 4 and above. <p>Leitch also stresses the need to strengthen the employer voice in the skills agenda to ensure that education and training meets employer needs.</p> <p>‘Taking Stock’ - the CBI Education and Skills Survey 2008 found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 53% of firms are concerned that they may not be able to find sufficient skilled individuals to meet their future recruitment needs.• STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) related jobs will dramatically increase (2.4 million jobs by 2014) as the UK responds to the challenges presented by climate change. Overall the green sector will expand significantly. Many of these jobs will be in new and emerging fields, and skills will need to develop to meet these demands.• Only around a third of employer training leads to recognised qualifications, so a significant proportion of employer investment in skills goes unrecognised, and the skills and abilities of UK employees are therefore likely to be underplayed. <p>‘The National Employers Skills Survey 2007’ showed that a relatively small proportion of employers are affected by hard-to-fill vacancies (7 per cent) and skill-shortage vacancies, defined as those proving hard-to-fill because of a shortage of candidates with the required skills, qualifications or experience (5 per cent). The proportion reporting these recruitment problems is slightly down from 2004 (each by one percentage point).</p> <p>In terms of skills gaps, that is the skills of existing employees: fifteen per cent of establishments in 2007 reported that they employed staff whom they considered not fully proficient, amounting to fewer than 1.4 million workers or 6 per cent of the total workforce in England. The proportion of establishments reporting that they employ staff lacking proficiency has fallen year on year from the 2001 figure of 23 per cent to the current 15 per cent.</p> <p>The National Employers Survey also highlights the</p>
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following skills as essential to growth and development:

- technical and practical
- oral and written communication
- customer handling
- problem-solving
- team-working
- written communication
- management and leadership
- literacy
- numeracy
- office/administration
- IT professional skills
- foreign languages
- general IT user skills.

Transferable skills and emerging skill needs for new products and new markets are also important areas for development, as are approaches to monitoring and evaluation.

Soft skills underpin and enhance the way people put their skills and qualifications into practice in the workplace. Mainstream training, for a variety of reasons, concentrates on qualifications, and the development and recognition of soft skills is now needed to meet employer demands. In addition to the above, work undertaken through the Equal programme identifies the following soft skills as development areas:

- flexibility and change
- efficiency – how to reach goals
- independence
- planning and organisation
- taking a pro-active approach
- stress resilience
- finding and managing information.

Ensuring that the potential of the workforce is fully utilised does not just depend on the skills factor, it is also about how the world of work is organised, that is working smarter. In January 2007 the Equal Opportunities Commission produced a report '[Working outside the box: Changing Work To Meet The Future](#)'. This highlighted the drivers of change faced by employers and the changing workforce, and concluded that a transformation of work itself is needed to face up to future developments. In particular it found that "innovation and technology provide the potential to re-define the way we work so that businesses can operate longer, and achieve better results

	<p>faster in more varied ways – and with a modern, flexible and productive workforce. New and exciting models of work are appearing for different types of businesses in different sectors”.</p> <p>Regionally and locally there are major developments concentrated around employment and skills development. This is a cornerstone of all Regional Economic Strategies, against which regional skills priorities and frameworks have been developed. Other developments include the City Strategy which aims to tackle worklessness in the most disadvantaged communities – many of which are in major cities and other urban areas.</p> <p>So at all levels – European, national, regional and local, there is an emphasis on developing skills to enhance competitiveness.</p>
Regional context	<p>Applications in [names of region] should take particular account of the following regional issues identified in the regional ESF framework.</p> <p>[To be added for each region which selects this theme.]</p> <p>[Links to be added to relevant regional ESF frameworks on ESF website.]</p>
Indicative activities	<p>Indicative ESF innovative activities are set out below for Priorities 1 and 4, and for Priorities 2 and 5. These are not prescriptive. As the object is to develop innovative ways of addressing the skills and employment agenda, applicants may propose other activities within the scope of the Operational Programme and regional ESF frameworks.</p> <p>ESF innovative activities should complement and not duplicate activities set out in the Government’s response to the Leitch Review and in other recent Government policy papers.</p> <p>Priorities 1 and 4: Working with employers to improve the employability and skills of ESF target groups</p> <p>Activities may focus on one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • testing new ways of working with employers to help ESF target groups find, retain and make progress in employment; • developing innovative approaches to short pre-employment training specifically designed to meet

	<p>employers needs (for example, in the context of Local Employment Partnerships, City Strategy Pathfinders or the Working Neighbourhoods Fund);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring provision is more attuned to the needs of local employers so individuals gain the skills and attributes they need to access the particular jobs that employers need to fill; • encouraging employers to have a voice at the local level in order to influence employment and skills services. The challenge here is how to motivate employers, especially SMEs, to work with Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council, training providers and others to produce a service at the local level that meets their needs. <p>Priorities 2 and 5: Working with employers to address skills needs in the workforce</p> <p>Innovative ways of helping employers to tackle skill shortages or gaps, and to overcome recruitment and retention difficulties. The focus may, for example, be on one of more the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initiatives to ensure the supply of skills is demand-led and relevant to employers' needs; • sectors where there are regional skills shortages; • sectors with weak training records; • transferable and soft skills essential to business growth and development; • emerging skill needs for new products and new markets; • tackling gender gaps and segregation in the workforce (e.g. training women to enter and make progress in traditionally male occupations); • encouraging employers to have a voice at the local level in order to influence employment and skills services. The challenge here is how to motivate employers, especially SMEs, to work with Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council, training providers and others to produce a service at the local level that meets their needs;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouraging the employee voice, particularly where employers may be reluctant to engage in training; and • activity to promote STEM career routes and the sector to potential recruits.
Results	<p>The primary output of projects within this theme will be the development and delivery of innovative measures to engage employers in improving the employability and skills of ESF target groups and to ensure the supply of skills is relevant to employers' needs.</p> <p>This will include producing new tools, methods and service provision, and/or applying and adapting existing tools and methods to new regions, sectors or target groups. It will also include piloting these products with ESF target groups. The outcomes will therefore include improving the employment prospects and skills of participants, and where appropriate helping them to achieve qualifications and enter sustainable employment.</p>
Transnational working	<p>Each project must include an element of transnational working. This will involve working with at least one partner from another EU Member State.</p> <p>The transnational dimension of projects must bring real benefits to the innovative activity by learning from, adapting or mainstreaming approaches from other Member States, and where appropriate transferring good practice to other Member States. ESF will not support transnational activities that merely seek to establish or develop partnerships with other Member States.</p> <p>Projects should allow the exchange of knowledge, experience and best practice that can offer clear added value to regional objectives and targets. They should aim to achieve strategic benefits that can be widely shared rather than purely operational or organisational benefits.</p> <p>Applications should explain why the activity should be undertaken transnationally and the proposed benefits of working with the chosen transnational partners.</p> <p>Applications should identify transnational partners (which may be organisations at local, regional or national level) that have a clear track record in this theme and can support exchanges that will facilitate innovation and fresh ideas. Transnational partners should be willing to work collaboratively in order to share good practice and</p>

	<p>learning. Transnational partners do not have to be in receipt of ESF funding in their own Member State.</p> <p>Some examples of transnational working may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thematic workshops; • study visits; • joint research/studies; • piloting or testing new tools, methods, approaches etc; • work shadowing towards practice development; • events, seminars and conferences; and • new joint development initiatives.
<p>Mainstreaming</p>	<p>All applications must identify appropriate policy linkages and provide clear evidence of their mainstreaming potential. They must have mainstreaming strategies showing effective engagement with decision makers from relevant Government departments, regional and local bodies, sectoral organisations, employers' organisations and other appropriate stakeholders, which demonstrate how innovation, learning and best practice will influence policy development and delivery in this theme. Mainstreaming strategies should include clear methodologies for recording, evaluating and disseminating the learning and best practice, alongside the methods to be used to engage with decision makers.</p> <p>Results may be disseminated through channels such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good practice case studies; • reports capturing learning from exchanges; • policy impact reports; • conferences, seminars and exhibitions; and • new websites, DVDs, CDs etc. <p>Where proposals concern skills development in particular sectors they must set out links to, and plans to engage with, relevant Sector Skills Councils and employers' organisations.</p>

Theme	ICT AND THE DIGITAL DIVIDE
Regions	<p>This theme has been selected by the following regions:</p> <p>[List of regions to be added, stating which priorities apply and indicative allocations if applicable.]</p> <p>The project applicant must be from one of these regions. The application will need to demonstrate how it will address the employment and skills strategies of the region within which it is submitted (see section on regional context). The application may include partners in other regions whether or not those regions have selected the theme.</p>
ESF <u>Operational Programme</u> priorities	<p>Projects within this theme must fall within one of the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1 – Extending employment opportunities (Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective) • Priority 2 – Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce (Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective) • Priority 4 – Tackling barriers to employment (Convergence Objective) • Priority 5 – Improving the skills of the local workforce (Convergence Objective) <p>Projects within Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will be submitted within Priorities 4 or 5. Other projects will be submitted within Priorities 1 or 2.</p> <p>Projects within Priorities 1 and 4 will focus on developing and delivering innovative ways to improve the ICT skills of workless people to help them find, retain and make progress in employment.</p> <p>Projects within Priorities 2 and 5 projects will focus on developing and delivering innovative ways to improve ICT skills in the workforce to support both business growth and individual progression.</p> <p>[References to Priorities 4 and 5 to be removed if this theme is not selected in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly]</p>

<p>Aim</p>	<p>Innovative projects will develop, test and deliver approaches to help widen participation in employment and learning through, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving access to information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and learning; • providing advice and guidance on local learning opportunities; • developing learning content through ICT; • undertaking research and development to improve the quality of ICT skills provision, share knowledge and ideas, and encourage good practice and innovation; • designing new ways of improving ICT skills; • upskilling the workforce; and • understanding employers needs and enhancing local/regional partnership approaches and effective links to business.
<p>Eligible groups</p>	<p>All target groups identified in the ESF Operational Programme Priorities 1, 2, 4 and 5, and regional ESF frameworks, are potentially eligible for support.</p> <p>In particular, there should be a focus on disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities and health conditions, lone parents, older workers, black and ethnic minority groups, and the low skilled.</p>
<p>Strategic context</p>	<p>We live in an increasingly connected society, with the rapid advance of information and communication technology (ICT) in business and in the home. But not everyone has joined in the digital age. There is a clear divide between small and large businesses, while in the home, ICT ownership and use is closely linked to household income.</p> <p>The ‘digital poor’ are in most cases, the poorest in society as a whole. The digital divide therefore follows some existing divisions of inequality in our society. Digital inclusion is not a simple issue; it involves not only physical access to technology but also concerns such as confidence, motivation, relevance, age, skills, content and trust. The aim of this theme is to use ESF to test new ways of reducing the disparity between the digital rich and poor in order to improve access to and progression within employment.</p>

Advances in ICT are changing the ways in which people work and the skills they need to secure and progress in employment. But not everyone is benefiting. There are particular issues for some small businesses and for individuals in terms of access and skills.

Falling costs of digital equipment, rapid increases in functionality and features, improving user friendliness, increases in Internet and mobile access speeds, the take up of broadband and an increased focus on ICT in schools, have all contributed in expanding the number of people who use and more importantly make good use of information technology. Many examples exist where IT is enabling people to lead more active and fulfilling lives. However there are issues about the quality of delivery of ICT skills. For example ICT for adults has the highest take up, but the lowest achievement and retention.

A survey by the OECD in March 2006 showed that the UK passed Japan and the US in broadband penetration during the first quarter of 2006. The UK's faster growth rate propelled it to second place in the G7, behind first place Canada. A quarter of Britons online come from households with £50,000 in annual income, and finance and travel-related sites tend to be those with the greatest concentration of wealthy UK visitors.

There is however a flip side to the benefits that ICT and low cost Internet access have brought to many in society. Research carried out in the EU on [eInclusion and eAccessibility](#), has identified these themes as particularly important in relation to employment, work and online services. This research concludes that those who may be at most significant risk of disaffection in our society, now face additional barriers in terms of 'learning the language and use ICT'.

This is highlighted by an [Office for National Statistics](#) study in March 2007 which found that in the richest ten per cent of households, ninety per cent have Internet access, a home computer and mobile phones and eighty per cent receive a digital television service. By contrast, of the poorest ten per cent, only a fifth has Internet access, thirty per cent have a computer, forty per cent have a digital television service and just over half have a mobile phone. There is therefore, a need to invest in the training and support of those at most risk of being left behind in the

	<p>digital revolution to create a fair and inclusive society.</p> <p>In the workplace, technical advances, particularly the development of ICT, have allowed workers to be far more productive, but productivity gains have been strongly biased towards those with the skills to adapt to and utilise new technology. As a result, high-skilled workers are in increasing demand by employers, and even low-skilled workers are increasingly expected to use ICT.</p> <p>Research by e-skills UK (the Sector Skills Council for IT and telecoms) suggests that within the current workforce there is a need for up to 7.6 million people to up-skill over three years – with around 60% of this up-skilling up to level 2 and 40% at level 3 and above.</p> <p>ICT has a major role to play as a means of initially engaging people or bringing them back into education and training. For example research has shown that improving your ICT skills carries much less stigma than studying other basic skills, specifically literacy and numeracy and has proved particularly successful for engaging the hardest to reach learners.</p> <p>The Government’s strategy is intended to equip people with the skills they need to function effectively in an increasingly ICT-mediated society, in both work and leisure. This will contribute to economic productivity and help provide those at risk of social exclusion with the ICT skills and understanding they need.</p> <p>From 2008, ICT is a basic skill alongside literacy, and numeracy within the Skills for Life strategy.</p> <p>In autumn 2008, the Government will publish its digital equality action plan. ESF innovative projects will be well placed to complement and add value to the implementation of the plan.</p>
Regional context	<p>Applications in [names of region] should take particular account of the following regional issues identified in the regional ESF framework.</p> <p>[To be added for each region which selects this theme.]</p> <p>[Links to be added to relevant regional ESF frameworks on ESF website.]</p>
Indicative	<p>Innovative projects should address one or more of the</p>

<p>activities</p>	<p>following areas. The bullet points set out indicative activities. These are not prescriptive, and applicants may propose other activities within the scope of the Operational Programme and regional ESF frameworks.</p> <p>Improving access to ICT skills (Priorities 1 and 4)</p> <p>Engaging those without access for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring the role of mentors, champions and role models in accessing ICT skills; • exploring and removing the barriers for specific ESF target groups (e.g. people with disabilities, older workers, ethnic minority groups); • exploring the role of informal support networks for improving accessibility to ICT skills (e.g. family, community and social networks). <p>Widening access to all types of ICT to increase labour market participation (Priorities 1 and 4)</p> <p>Engaging ESF target groups with some access to ICT but who do not benefit fully by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring the methods for providing advice guidance and support; • exploring the support of mentors, champions and role models in utilising ICT more effectively; • embracing all new technologies (e.g. mobile, broadband). <p>Supporting ICT skills development (Priorities 1 and 4 or 2 and 5)</p> <p>Improving the effective use of ICT in supporting the development of people's skills by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring how ICT is used to support the creation of new content and delivery methodologies for skills development and learning; • exploring how ICT content is enabling the inclusion of specific groups who are at most disadvantage in the labour market; • enabling and training the trainers to support the effective use of ICT; • exploring the innovative uses of ICT in supporting basic skills. <p>Understanding employers' needs and upskilling the workforce in SMEs (Priorities 2 and 5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring how effective use of ICT skills can
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	<p>increase the growth and competitiveness of small and medium enterprises;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding the skills needs of SMEs to ensure their engagement and benefit of rapidly changing ICT; • exploring and understanding the link between the supply of skills and labour and the actual demands of businesses; • exploring how ICT skills can support SMEs in emerging high growth sectors; • exploring and developing innovative methods and content for upskilling a 21st century workforce; • exploring how more effective use of ICT skills can create opportunities and open up new markets.
Results	<p>The primary output of projects within this theme will be the development and delivery of innovative measures to improve ICT skills so as to enhance employability and meet both individual and employer needs.</p> <p>This will include producing new tools, methods and service provision, and/or applying and adapting existing tools and methods to new regions, sectors or target groups. It will also include piloting these products with ESF target groups. The outcomes will therefore include improving the employment prospects and skills of participants, and where appropriate helping them to achieve qualifications and enter sustainable employment.</p>
Transnational working	<p>Each project must include an element of transnational working. This will involve working with at least one partner from another EU Member State.</p> <p>The transnational dimension of projects must bring real benefits to the innovative activity by learning from, adapting or mainstreaming approaches from other Member States, and where appropriate transferring good practice to other Member States. ESF will not support transnational activities that merely seek to establish or develop partnerships with other Member States.</p> <p>Projects should allow the exchange of knowledge, experience and in particular best practice that can offer clear added value to regional objectives and targets. They should aim to achieve strategic benefits that can be widely shared rather than purely operational or organisational benefits.</p> <p>Applications should explain why the activity should be undertaken transnationally and the proposed benefits of</p>

	<p>working with the chosen transnational partner(s).</p> <p>Applications should identify transnational partners (which may be organisations at local, regional or national level) that have a clear track record in this theme and can support exchanges that will facilitate innovation and fresh ideas. Transnational partners be willing to work collaboratively in order to share good practice and learning.</p> <p>Transnational partners do not have to be in receipt of ESF funding in their own Member State.</p> <p>Some examples of transnational working may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thematic workshops; • study visits; • joint research/studies; • piloting or testing new tools, methods, approaches etc; • work shadowing towards practice development; • events, seminars and conferences; and • new joint development initiatives.
Mainstreaming	<p>All applications must identify appropriate policy linkages and provide clear evidence of their mainstreaming potential. They must have mainstreaming strategies showing effective engagement with decision makers from relevant Government departments, regional and local bodies, sectoral organisations, employers' organisations and other appropriate stakeholders, which demonstrate how innovation, learning and best practice will influence policy development and delivery in this theme. Mainstreaming strategies should include clear methodologies for recording, evaluating and disseminating the learning and best practice, alongside the methods to be used to engage with decision makers.</p> <p>Outcomes may be disseminated through channels such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good practice case studies; • reports capturing learning from exchanges • policy impact reports; • conferences, seminars and exhibitions; and • new websites, DVDs, CDs etc. <p>Proposals should set out links to, and plans to engage with e-skills UK, Becta, Ufi/learndirect and other relevant organisations and initiatives.</p>

ANNEX D

<p>Theme</p>	<p>NEW CHALLENGES – SKILLS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</p>
<p>Regions</p>	<p>This theme has been selected by the following regions:</p> <p>[List of regions to be added and indicative allocations if applicable.]</p> <p>The project applicant must be from one of these regions. The application will need to demonstrate how it will address the employment and skills strategies of the region within which it is submitted (see section on regional context). The application may include partners in other regions whether or not those regions have selected the theme.</p>
<p>ESF Operational Programme priorities</p>	<p>Projects within this theme must fall within one of the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 2 – Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce (Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective) • Priority 5 – Improving the skills of the local workforce (Convergence Objective) <p>Projects within Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will be submitted within Priority 5. Other projects will be submitted within Priority 2.</p> <p>Projects will focus on developing and delivering innovative ways of improving skills for climate change and sustainable development in the workforce. In particular, they will focus on training in environmental management and protection skills and in eco-friendly technologies, including training which supports renewable energy sectors, energy efficiency and recycling.</p> <p>Sustainable development is also one of the cross-cutting themes within the ESF programme.</p> <p>[References to Priority 5 to be removed if this theme is not selected in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly]</p>
<p>Aim</p>	<p>This theme will develop, test and deliver new ways of addressing skills for climate change and sustainable development. It will develop more effective ways of</p>

	<p>influencing and implementing skills and employment policy priorities, and meeting ESF target group and employer needs. The outcomes should lead to further developments in mainstream delivery.</p>
Eligible groups	<p>This theme will focus on opening up opportunities for target groups in Priority 2 to develop new skills needed to address the challenges and opportunities presented by climate change and sustainable development.</p>
Strategic context	<p>The ESF programme operates within the framework of the EU's strategy 'Sustainable Europe for a Better World' which was proposed at the Gothenburg European Council in 2001. In 2006 the EU adopted its renewed Sustainable Development Strategy.</p> <p>In 2005, UK Government launched its third sustainable development strategy 'Securing the Future'. The strategy sets out five principles for policy making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • living within environmental limits; • ensuring a strong, healthy and just society ; • achieving a sustainable economy; • promoting good governance; • using sound science responsibly. <p>It also set out four priority areas for action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable consumption and production; • climate change and energy; • natural resource protection and environmental enhancement; • sustainable communities. <p>The UK Sustainable Development Strategy identifies the need for skills for sustainable development and 'sustainability literacy'. It states that the UK needs to improve its knowledge and skills base in order to achieve a major shift in resource efficiency and the delivery of new products and services with lower environmental impacts.</p> <p>This New Challenges initiative will concentrate on the skills needed to address climate change and sustainable development.</p> <p>The focus is now on sustainable economic development to enable people to satisfy their basic needs, and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising that of future generations. Strategic programmes of environmental investment, protection and innovation are being developed</p>

to ensure continued economic growth. To enable this to succeed the behaviour of people and businesses will need to change. There are over 1,300 pieces of environmental legislation affecting UK business and utility costs are rapidly rising. As a result the environment is now firmly on the business agenda, which will impact on the workforce skills needed as new processes are developed to deal with:

- renewable energy;
- carbon emission reduction/working towards a low carbon economy (Government targets are set at reducing carbon emissions by 60% by 2050);
- intelligent energy;
- increasing energy efficiency;
- waste minimisation and recycling;
- sustainable construction;
- sustainable production;
- development of sustainable communities;
- nuclear decommissioning/new nuclear power;
- timber and forestry/rebuilding;
- biodiversity; and
- environmental protection and enhancement (e.g. reclamation of derelict and underused land).

Other areas of employment development are:

- sustainable procurement (from office supplies to building products). There will be increased opportunities for procurement professionals within the development of sustainable supply chains;
- the development of R&D and technology commercialisation; and
- the development of green businesses especially the environmental technologies sector.

There are strategic skills gaps and shortages in each sector of the economy. These are more acute in some than in others. There is also a need to deliver generic skills in sustainability in all sectors, at all levels, including in management and leadership, in order to bring about the culture change required to manage the transition to a resource efficient economy successfully. Sector-specific and cross-sector effort is needed.

The Government is working with Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and the [UK Commission for Employment and Skills](#) to ensure that there is a rapid and collective SSC effort to raise the quality and quantity of the skills needed for the transition to a low carbon economy. It is expected that this work will be taken forward in partnership with the

	<p>Sustainable Development Commission, and with employers already working at the cutting edge of Skills for Sustainability, with a view to responsibility transferring ultimately to the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils.</p>
Regional context	<p>Applications in [names of region] should take particular account of the following regional issues identified in the regional ESF framework.</p> <p>[To be added for each region which selects this theme.]</p> <p>[Links to be added to relevant regional ESF frameworks on ESF website.]</p>
Indicative activities	<p>The key area for action identified in the Operational Programme is: training in environmental management and protection skills and in eco-friendly technologies, including training which supports renewable energy sectors, energy efficiency and recycling.</p> <p>As the object is to develop innovative ways of addressing the new challenges, applicants may propose other actions relevant to this theme. All actions must be within the scope of Operational Programme and regional ESF frameworks.</p> <p>The ideas coming forward to address the climate change and environmental agenda will need the development of new and different skills sets to support these areas, some of which are outlined in the strategic context section. In particular the environmental technologies and services sector is one of the key growth areas.</p>
Results	<p>The primary output of projects within this theme will be the development and delivery of innovative measures to develop skills for climate change and sustainable development.</p> <p>This will include producing new tools, methods and service provision, and/or applying and adapting existing tools and methods to new regions, sectors or target groups. It will also include piloting these products with managers and employees. The outcomes will therefore include improving the skills of participants and, where appropriate, helping them to achieve qualifications.</p>
Transnational working	<p>Each project must include an element of transnational working. This will involve working with at least one partner from another EU Member State.</p>

	<p>The transnational dimension of projects must bring real benefits to the innovative activity by learning from, adapting or mainstreaming approaches from other Member States, and where appropriate transferring good practice to other Member States. ESF will not support transnational activities that merely seek to establish or develop partnerships with other Member States.</p> <p>Projects should allow the exchange of knowledge, experience and best practice that can offer clear added value to regional objectives and targets. They should aim to achieve strategic benefits that can be widely shared rather than purely operational or organisational benefits.</p> <p>Applications should explain why the activity should be undertaken transnationally and the proposed benefits of working with the chosen transnational partner(s).</p> <p>Applications should identify transnational partners (which may be organisations at local, regional or national level) that have a clear track record in this theme and can support exchanges that will facilitate innovation and fresh ideas. Transnational partners should be willing to work collaboratively in order to share good practice and learning.</p> <p>Transnational partners do not have to be in receipt of ESF funding in their own Member State.</p> <p>Some examples of transnational working may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thematic workshops; • study visits; • joint research/studies; • piloting or testing new tools, methods, approaches etc; • work shadowing towards practice development; • events, seminars and conferences; and • new joint development initiatives.
Mainstreaming	<p>All applications must identify appropriate policy linkages and provide clear evidence of their mainstreaming potential. They must have mainstreaming strategies showing effective engagement with decision makers in relevant Government departments, regional and local bodies, sectoral organisations, employers' organisations and other appropriate stakeholders, which demonstrate how innovation, learning, and best practice will influence policy development and delivery in this theme. Mainstreaming strategies should include clear methodologies for recording, evaluating and disseminating</p>

	<p>the learning and best practice, alongside the methods to be used to engage with decision makers.</p> <p>Where projects concern skills development in particular sectors they should set out links to, and plans to engage with, the relevant Sector Skills Councils and employers' organisations.</p> <p>Results may be disseminated through channels such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• good practice case studies;• reports capturing learning from exchanges• policy impact reports;• conferences, seminars and exhibitions; and• new websites, DVDs, CDs etc.
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Theme	NEW CHALLENGES – DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE (Older Workers/Migration)
Regions	<p>This theme has been selected by the following regions:</p> <p>[List of regions to be added, stating which priorities apply and indicative allocations if applicable.]</p> <p>The project applicant must be from one of these regions. The application will need to demonstrate how it will address the employment and skills strategies of the region within which it is submitted (see section on regional context). The application may include partners in other regions whether or not those regions have selected the theme.</p>
ESF <u>Operational Programme</u> priorities	<p>Projects within this theme must fall within one of the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1 – Extending employment opportunities (Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective) • Priority 2 – Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce (Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective) • Priority 4 – Tackling barriers to employment (Convergence Objective) • Priority 5 – Improving the skills of the local workforce (Convergence Objective) <p>Projects within Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will be submitted within Priorities 4 or 5. Other projects will be submitted within Priorities 1 or 2.</p> <p>Projects within Priorities 1 and 4 will focus on developing and delivering innovative ways to prolong working lives by re-engaging inactive older workers or retaining older workers longer in employment.</p> <p>Projects within Priorities 2 and 5 projects will focus on (a) developing and delivering innovative ways of training older workers in order to update their qualifications and skills and prolong their working lives and/or (b) innovative ways of integrating migrant workers into the workforce to address employers' skills needs.</p>

	[References to Priorities 4 and 5 to be removed if this theme is not selected in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly]
Aim	This theme will develop, test and deliver new ways of addressing the employment and skills dimensions of demographic change. It will test out new methods in order to develop more effective ways of influencing and implementing skills and employment policy priorities, tackling worklessness, and meeting ESF target group and employer needs. The outcomes should lead to further developments in mainstream delivery.
Eligible groups	<p>This theme will focus on older workers within Priorities 1, 2, 4 and 5, and migrants within Priorities 2 and 5. It should open up opportunities for participants to develop new skills needed to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the ageing labour market and migration.</p> <p>Within the England ESF Operational Programme ‘older workers’ are people aged 50 and over.</p> <p>Activities to tackle barriers to work faced by refugees will be supported under the Active Inclusion theme.</p>
Strategic context	<p>In recent years the world economy has been confronted by rapid change which is having a dramatic effect on competitiveness and employment opportunities. It presents many new challenges for both employers and the workforce. This “New Challenges” theme will concentrate on the following aspects of demographic change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age management and older workers; and • migration and integration. <p>Age Management and Older Workers</p> <p>Demographic change has become a major topic on international, European, national and regional agendas. Europe is getting older, and population is declining in many Member States (although currently increasing in the UK due to migration). The proportion of people over 55 in the EU is rising, due to low fertility rates, the “Baby Boomer” cohort coming up to retirement, and rising life expectancy.</p> <p>“Age Management” has been defined as “the various dimensions by which human resources are managed within organisations, with an explicit focus on ageing, and</p>

more generally, to the overall management of the workforce ageing via public policy or collective bargaining” (Walker, 1999). A report by [The Age and Employment Network](#), ‘Defining Age Management – Information and Discussion paper’ sums it up as “age management can encompass attitudes towards the older worker or the older worker’s attitude to work and career”. It says that the focus can be at the level of the individual, the labour market or the organisation, and that there is pressing need to address the organisational aspects of age management.

The March 2008 Spring European Council agreed [guidelines](#) for the employment policies of the Member States for 2008-2010, as part of the renewed [Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs](#).

Guideline 18 is to promote a lifecycle approach to work including through support for active ageing. The EU has a target of achieving an average employment rate of 50% for older workers [55 to 64 year olds] by 2010. The UK exceeds this target with an employment rate for older workers of 57% but the average across the EU is only 42.5% (Eurostat, 2005).

As well as featuring in the Lisbon and European Employment Strategies, the EU green paper ‘[Confronting Demographic Change](#)’ in March 2005, and the EU communication ‘[The Demographic future of Europe - from challenge to opportunity](#)’ in October 2006 highlighted the importance of tackling Demographic Change. Following on from this a recent EU report ‘[Europe’s Demographic Future: Facts and Figures on challenges and opportunities](#)’ shows that Europe’s potential growth rate could decline at a time when significant additional resources will be required to meet the needs of an increasing number of elderly people, as well as severe global pressures.

As far as the UK is concerned, the [Office of National Statistics](#) forecasts that nearly a third of the labour force will be over 50 by 2020. The over 50s currently create a quarter of the country’s economic wealth, with the potential to create even more. ‘[The Economic Contribution of Older People](#)’ (Age Concern 2004) report showed that GDP is between £12 billion and £30 billion lower than it might otherwise be due to the under employment of older people. Age legislation is now in place to underpin the need for businesses to understand the benefits of a

diverse workforce.

It is also important to recognise that the demographic changes present opportunities as well as challenges, in particular the recognition of the buying power of the over 50s. The ageing population offers new opportunities for businesses – new markets will open up for products and services to cater for older people's needs resulting in more job creation.

The [UK Government](#) is committed to investing in older workers. Its welfare reform measures aim to help make the labour market fairer for jobseekers over 50. The Government has aligned employment support for long-term unemployed people aged 50-59 with those in their 30s and 40s. In addition, it will be improving back-to-work support for jobseekers over 50 and their partners. Pilots are being set up to test ways of providing information to help people make decisions about work, training and retirement. The Government is also working with employers to help them to realise the business benefits of employing older workers as part of a mixed age workforce and to encourage them to extend flexible working and retirement arrangements.

On 1 October 2006 [age discrimination legislation](#) came into force. The legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of age in employment and vocational training. It also introduced a default retirement age of 65. Employers are unable to force people to retire below this age unless, in their particular case, they can objectively justify a lower age. Employees also gained the right, and a formal procedure, to request working past their employer's retirement age, which the employers have a duty to consider. A review of the default retirement age will be carried out in 2011.

The main emerging issues are:

- a need for accurate data;
- promoting and developing older people's capacity to continue to work and learn, and to be seen as economic contributors;
- engaging employers and adopting good practice in age management (e.g. redesigning of workforce activity for more flexible arrangements);
- tackling barriers and discrimination (e.g. overcoming negative employer attitudes to older workers);
- maintaining the skills base (e.g. via flexible retirement arrangements); and

- developing an entrepreneurial mindset in the over 50s.

Migration and Integration

Since 2004, 743,000 Eastern and Central Europeans have registered for work in the UK, and if self employment is taken into account this figure rises to around 900,000. The issue is Europe-wide, as Member States are affected in different ways by varying levels of migration, both inward and out. UK Government departments have addressed migration in reports such as CLG's '[Review of Migrant Integration Policy](#)' (June 2008) and DWP's '[The Impact of Free Movement of Workers from Central and Eastern Europe on the UK Labour Market](#)' (February 2006). BERR has recently set up a Business Environment Unit to work across government, and this unit is currently working on a project to help identify evidence of the regional and sectoral impact of migration.

[Regional Development Agencies](#) are also addressing the subject. Some examples of this are:

- [East of England Development Agency](#) produced the report 'Migration: linking strategy and delivery at local, regional and national level' in July 2007.
- [East Midlands Development Agency](#) has undertaken research on migrant workers.
- [Northwest RDA](#) is currently developing policy on the topic of migrant workers' contribution to the region's economic growth.

Many local authorities are also developing strategies to address migrant issues in their areas.

The main emerging issues are:

- a need for accurate data;
- clarity on the national/regional context of migration;
- the impact of migrant workers in key sectors;
- the contribution to economic growth;
- addressing the problem of appropriate use of migrant worker skills – they are very often over skilled and under employed;
- how migrant workers can assist in support for internationalisation – e.g. development of transport and trading links with country of origin;
- impact on services and cohesion; and
- encouragement to set up businesses via enterprise activity.

The new [Migration Advisory Committee](#) (UK Border

	Agency) will be publishing shortage occupation lists in the next few months, which will inform the migration agenda further.
Regional context	<p>Applications in [names of region] should take particular account of the following regional issues identified in the regional ESF framework.</p> <p>[To be added for each region which selects this theme.]</p> <p>[Links to be added to relevant regional ESF frameworks on ESF website.]</p>
Indicative activities	<p>Indicative activities that may be supported are set out below. These are not prescriptive. As the object is to develop innovative ways of addressing new challenges, applicants may propose other actions relevant to this theme. All actions must be within the scope of the Operational Programme and regional ESF frameworks.</p> <p>Age Management and Older Workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities to prolong working lives by re-engaging inactive older workers or retaining older workers longer in employment, including workers who become disabled or develop health conditions (Priorities 1 and 4); • improving access to care for elderly dependents where caring responsibilities are a barrier to labour market participation by older workers (Priorities 1 and 4); • ways to encourage employers to take on/retrain/develop older workers to reach their potential (Priorities 1, 2, 4 and 5); • training older workers in order to update their qualifications and skills and prolong their working lives (Priorities 2 and 5); • changes in workplace culture to help employers provide flexibility to meet older worker needs e.g. approaches to retirement (Priorities 2 and 5); • training care workers to address regional skills gaps in the care sector (Priorities 2 and 5); • developing links between older and younger workers to secure social cohesion (Priorities 2 and 5); • entrepreneurship opportunities outside of business start up, e.g. using professional skills to mentor SMEs (Priorities 2 and 5).

	<p>Migration and Integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing schemes to allow easy reference between UK and foreign qualifications (Priorities 2 and 5); • helping migrant workers adapt to the labour market in England and meet employers' skills needs (Priorities 2 and 5).
<p>Results</p>	<p>The primary output of projects within this theme will be the development and delivery of innovative measures to address the employment and skills aspects of demographic change.</p> <p>This will include producing new tools, methods and service provision, and/or applying and adapting existing tools and methods to new regions, sectors or target groups. It will also include piloting these products with older workers and migrants. The outcomes will therefore include improving the employment prospects and skills of participants, and where appropriate helping them to achieve qualifications and enter or remain in sustainable employment.</p>
<p>Transnational working</p>	<p>Each project must include an element of transnational working. This will involve working with at least one partner from another EU Member State.</p> <p>The transnational dimension of projects must bring real benefits to the innovative activity by learning from, adapting or mainstreaming approaches from other Member States, and where appropriate transferring good practice to other Member States. ESF will not support transnational activities that merely seek to establish or develop partnerships with other Member States.</p> <p>Projects should allow the exchange of knowledge, experience and best practice that can offer clear added value to regional objectives and targets. They should aim to achieve strategic benefits that can be widely shared rather than purely operational or organisational benefits.</p> <p>Applications should explain why the activity should be undertaken transnationally and the proposed benefits of working with the chosen transnational partner(s).</p> <p>Applications should identify transnational partners (which may be organisations at local, regional or national level) that have a clear track record in this theme and can support exchanges that will facilitate innovation and fresh</p>

	<p>ideas. Transnational partners should be willing to work collaboratively in order to share good practice and learning.</p> <p>Transnational partners do not have to be in receipt of ESF funding in their own Member State.</p> <p>Some examples of transnational working may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thematic workshops; • study visits; • joint research/studies • piloting or testing new tools, methods, approaches etc; • work shadowing towards practice development; • events, seminars and conferences; and • new joint development initiatives.
Mainstreaming	<p>All applications must identify appropriate policy linkages and provide clear evidence of their mainstreaming potential. They must have mainstreaming strategies showing effective engagement with decision makers in relevant Government departments, regional and local bodies, sectoral organisations, employers' organisations and other appropriate stakeholders which demonstrate how innovation, learning, and best practice will influence policy development and delivery in this theme. Mainstreaming strategies should include clear methodologies for recording, evaluating and disseminating the learning and best practice, alongside the methods to be used to engage with decision makers.</p> <p>Results may be disseminated through channels such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good practice case studies; • reports capturing learning from exchanges • policy impact reports; • conferences, seminars and exhibitions; and • new websites, DVDs, CDs etc.

Theme	SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
Regions	<p>This theme has been selected by the following regions:</p> <p>[List of regions to be added, stating which priorities apply and indicative allocations if applicable.]</p> <p>The project applicant must be from one of these regions. The application will need to demonstrate how it will address the employment and skills strategies of the region within which it is submitted (see section on regional context). The application may include partners in other regions whether or not those regions have selected the theme.</p>
ESF <u>Operational Programme</u> priorities	<p>Projects within this theme must fall within one of the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1 – Extending employment opportunities (Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective) • Priority 2 – Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce (Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective) • Priority 4 – Tackling barriers to employment (Convergence Objective) • Priority 5 – Improving the skills of the local workforce (Convergence Objective) <p>Projects within Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will be submitted within Priorities 4 or 5. Other projects will be submitted within Priorities 1 or 2.</p> <p>Projects within Priorities 1 and 4 will focus on developing and delivering innovative ways of providing advice and support for social enterprise to unemployed and inactive people.</p> <p>Projects within Priorities 2 and 5 projects will focus on developing and delivering innovative ways of promoting skills for social enterprise within the workforce.</p> <p>[References to Priorities 4 and 5 to be removed if this theme is not selected in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly]</p>

<p>Aim</p>	<p>The aim of this theme is to support innovative actions in social enterprise to develop skills and employment opportunities in order to promote their growth and development.</p> <p>To underpin the EU's socio-economic model of growth (mapped out by the Lisbon Strategy), particular emphasis must be placed on the creation of a vibrant culture of social enterprise. It can play a vital role in creating a diverse and socially cohesive economy.</p> <p>Social enterprises are profit-making businesses established to tackle social or environmental issues. Using entrepreneurial practices in the pursuit of public benefits, they produce many examples of social and behavioural innovation. These include fresh delivery models which can be more responsive to needs, address multiple needs simultaneously and implement technology more effectively. Examples which mitigate the social and environmental consequences of global challenges include renewable energy, social and health care, community recycling and regeneration.</p> <p>By offering training and jobs to people who have struggled to break into the labour market, social enterprises can help meet the Government's skills agenda. As businesses, social enterprises are a route to employment in themselves. They can help disadvantaged people bridge the gap between unemployment or inactivity and longer term opportunities, particularly those experiencing multiple disadvantages or located in areas experiencing particular problems.</p>
<p>Eligible groups</p>	<p>Innovative approaches will focus on improving access and support to target groups identified in the ESF Operational Programme priorities and regional ESF frameworks. The focus of projects in Priorities 1 and 4 will be on unemployed and inactive people. The focus of projects in Priorities 2 and 5 will be on the workforce, particularly managers and workers within existing social enterprises.</p>
<p>Strategic context</p>	<p>There remain considerable barriers preventing social enterprises from flourishing in the market place, despite growing evidence to show how they can help to meet government objectives including: increasing employment opportunities for the most disadvantaged; improving the</p>

business environment; developing innovative products, services or processes; and encouraging energy efficiency.

Support for, and interest in, social enterprise at government level can be seen in the work of a variety of departments. The Cabinet Office houses the [Office of the Third Sector](#) and in 2006 launched the [Social Enterprise Action Plan](#) building on the Government's 2002 Social Enterprise Strategy. The [Department of Health](#) and [Communities and Local Government](#) have created social enterprise units and funding streams. Other departments have developed or are developing third sector and social enterprise strategies.

Despite this increased awareness and understanding of social enterprise, there is still much to do. A number of factors and challenges threaten the growth of social enterprise.

1. Access to Business Support

The availability of appropriate, high quality and readily available business support is crucial to the success of social enterprises. As businesses, social enterprises share many business support needs with private sector businesses. However, research undertaken by infrastructure and support organisations indicates there is a need for specialist social enterprise support because of the distinct needs that mainstream business support does not adequately meet.

Over and above the need for good multi-skilled managers, extra demands are placed on social enterprises given the participatory culture of the organisation as well as the need to balance financial sustainability against social and/or environmental considerations (the triple bottom line).

Changes to business support in England are having a significant impact on the growth of social enterprises. In particular, the Government's [Business Support Simplification Programme](#) which aims to channel business support through the [Business Link](#) gateway. The standard Business Link offer needs to be augmented with services that meet the specific skills needs of social enterprise leaders and employees.

2. Access to Finance

A lack of access to appropriate finance can be a significant barrier to growth. While the range of finance and

	<p>investment vehicles has increased in recent years more needs to be done to develop the right skills within the social enterprise movement to access that finance.</p> <p>A common challenge to all sectors within social enterprise is being able to understand, manage and communicate the value created. Being able to measure and represent the 'blended return' of financial, social and environmental investment may also increase the opportunities to access finance. Interest in one particular model, Social Return on Investment (SROI), has been growing and in May 2008, the Cabinet Office announced plans to undertake development work on the model, in particular to standardise and improve how SROI is measured. With increased support to extend testing of the approach, there is much to do in the way of training social enterprises how to apply the tool and use the results.</p> <p>3. Public Procurement</p> <p>There remains a lack of awareness among public sector commissioners of social enterprise, their potential role in delivering public services, and the added social benefits they bring.</p> <p>In tandem, many social enterprises still find it difficult to identify opportunities to win public contracts. The development of social enterprise consortia to generate sufficient scale to manage public contracts and thereby generate further employment opportunities would help to address this challenge.</p>
Regional context	<p>Applications in [names of region] should take particular account of the following regional issues identified in the regional ESF framework.</p> <p>[To be added for each region which selects this theme.]</p> <p>[Links to be added to relevant regional ESF frameworks on ESF website.]</p>
Indicative activities	<p>All activities will need to be within the scope of the ESF Operational Programme, and have a clear link to either extending employment opportunities or developing skills for social enterprise.</p> <p>Innovative actions in this theme are defined as relating to 'value for society' (social innovation) and new, or new combinations of, strategies, concepts, ideas and</p>

	<p>organisations that meet social and/or environmental challenges, for example in the areas of employment, education and training, community development, health and climate change. Social innovation is vital to improving both our quality of life and our economy.</p> <p>The 2000-2006 EU Community Initiative 'Equal' included a theme on the social economy. This provided a resource to carry out action research in areas where the social economy (the third sector) could play a greater role, for example in the delivery of public services. It also enabled experimentation with approaches to capacity building and aimed to deepen understanding about what is needed in fields such as public procurement, impact measurement, social inclusion, business support, workforce development, access to finance and other key policy areas. Innovative actions in the new ESF programme should build on learning from the Equal social economy theme where appropriate.</p> <p>The following is an indication of the areas in which projects could be supported. However as the object of this theme is to support innovative actions, they are not prescriptive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups or those removed from the labour market; • developing leadership and management skills, for example governance, business planning, marketing and communications; • developing impact measurement skills, for example in SROI; • training in new approaches to business growth, for example social franchising; • developing finance and operations skills; • identifying public sector contract opportunities and developing consortia - skills in partnership development; • promoting and fostering careers in social enterprise.
Results	<p>The primary output of projects within this theme will be the development and delivery of innovative ways to build skills and create employment in social enterprises.</p> <p>This will include producing new tools, methods and service provision, and/or applying and adapting existing tools and</p>

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	<p>methods to new regions, sectors or target groups. It will also include piloting these products with participants. The outcomes will therefore include improving the employment prospects and skills of participants and where appropriate helping them to achieve qualifications and enter sustainable employment.</p>
<p>Transnational Working</p>	<p>Each project must include an element of transnational working. This will involve working with at least one partner from another EU Member State.</p> <p>The transnational dimension of projects must bring real benefits to the innovative activity by learning from, adapting or mainstreaming approaches from other Member States, and where appropriate transferring good practice to other Member States. ESF will not support transnational activities that merely seek to establish or develop partnerships with other Member States.</p> <p>Projects should allow the exchange of knowledge, experience and best practice that can offer clear added value to regional objectives and targets. They should aim to achieve strategic benefits that can be widely shared rather than purely operational or organisational benefits.</p> <p>Applications should explain why the activity should be undertaken transnationally and the proposed benefits of working with the chosen transnational partner(s).</p> <p>Applications should identify transnational partners (which may be organisations at local, regional or national level) that have a clear track record in this theme and can support exchanges that will facilitate innovation and fresh ideas. Transnational partners should be willing to work collaboratively in order to share good practice and learning.</p> <p>Transnational partners do not have to be in receipt of ESF funding in their own Member State.</p> <p>Some examples of transnational working may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thematic workshops; • study visits; • joint research/studies; • piloting or testing new tools, methods, approaches etc; • work shadowing towards practice development; • events, seminars and conferences; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new joint development initiatives
Mainstreaming	<p>All applications must identify appropriate policy linkages and provide clear evidence of their mainstreaming potential. They must have mainstreaming strategies showing effective engagement with decision makers in relevant Government departments, regional and local bodies, sectoral organisations, employers' organisations and other appropriate stakeholders, which demonstrate how innovation, learning and best practice will influence policy development and delivery in this theme.</p> <p>Mainstreaming strategies should include clear methodologies for recording, evaluating and disseminating the learning and best practice, alongside the methods to be used to engage with decision makers.</p> <p>Results may be disseminated through channels such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good practice case studies; • reports capturing learning from exchanges; • policy impact reports; • conferences, seminars and exhibitions; and • new websites, DVDs, CDs etc.

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

	Activity	Deadline	Lead Responsibility
1	Circulate action note and theme templates to regions	By 15 August 2008	Central MA
2	PMC consider appraisal criteria	8 October	Central MA
3	Select regional themes and provide regional context	By 15 October	Regional MA/LDA
4	Develop guidance for innovative and transnational activity (for use by applicants, appraisers and projects)	By 15 October	Co-ordinating Body
5	Finalise call for proposals and application form	By 24 October	Central MA with input from Co-ordinating Body
6	Issue and publicise call for proposals and guidance	By 31 October	Central MA supported by Co-ordinating Body
7	Three information meetings on call for proposals (North, Midlands & South)	By 14 November	Co-ordinating Body, with input from central and regional MA and LDA
8	Applicants submit proposals to Co-ordinating Body	By 12 December	Co-ordinating Body
9	Workshop for appraisers (Sheffield)	8 January 2009	Central MA with input from Co-ordinating Body
10	Appraise and select proposals	By 30 January	Regional MA/LDA supported by Co-ordinating Body
11	Contract with successful applicants	By 27 March	Regional MA/LDA
12	Two workshops for new projects (North & South)	April/May	Co-ordinating Body
13	Set up thematic networks	By 30 June	Co-ordinating Body

Annex H Innovation

Extract from SE ESF Framework on innovation

A menu of innovative 'themes' will be agreed by the ESF National Monitoring Committee, taking into account regional priorities. This section sets out background to innovation in ESF and some suggested themes for the South East.

What is Innovation in ESF?

Innovation may be a feature of any activity, and could take a number of forms. There will also be dedicated innovative activity. As part of Equal, the ESF innovation programme for 2000-06, innovation was defined as being process, goal or context-oriented¹. For this programme, dedicated innovative activity will be delivered through separate tender specifications by CFOs, with an emphasis on outcomes to be achieved. Innovative activity will also be encouraged to have an element of co-operation with one or more other Member States.

Innovation in the South East

The South East has an excellent track record in innovation and participation in trans-national ESF activity. This a number of projects under the Equal programme. In taking these experiences forward and responding to the challenges of the new programme, Box 5.1 below sets out suggested themes for innovation for the South East.

Suggested Themes for Innovation in the South East

- ***Addressing multiple issues faced by disadvantaged participants accessing the labour market through flexible and personalised packages of support.***
- ***Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the re-integration of economically inactive women and older people, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services.***
- ***Sustaining employment and promoting new multi-disciplinary roles in the workplace for older people by applying the experience of previous ESF / Equal projects.***
- **Developing targeted delivery methods to minimise travel and maximise SME access to training, either in the workplace, through learning networks or the adoption of cluster-based approaches.**

¹ 'Measuring and Sustaining Innovation, A Guide for Development Partnerships' www.equal.ecotec.co.uk