



**European Union**  
**European Social Fund**  
Investing in jobs and skills



Leading learning and skills

## **LEARNING & SKILLS COUNCIL**

**ESF 2007-2010**

**Tender - South East /Other /Community Grants**

**Specification**

**April 2008**

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# Introduction to tender

## 1.1.1 Background

The South East ESF Framework is committed to making some ESF available in the form of small grants to appropriate Third Sector organisations to mobilise disadvantaged or excluded unemployed and inactive people to facilitate their progress towards employment. ESF Community Grants will support a range of activities aimed at assisting the disadvantaged or excluded to move closer to the labour market by improving their access to mainstream ESF and domestic employment and skills provision.

Activities will support participants from the target groups in the Operational Programme but because the focus will be on individuals who have difficulty in accessing ESF or mainstream provision, outcomes are more likely to be based on progression rather than achievement of jobs and qualifications. The grants will support a wide range of activities including:

- Initial help with basic skills
- Taster work experience including voluntary work
- Training, advice and counselling
- Job search assistance including the provision of equipment and other assistance necessary to secure employment
- Confidence building
- First contact engagement activities

In addition there will be limited scope (up to 10% of the ESF available to support Community Grants) for grants to provide support to small third sector organisations themselves. Such support might include:

- Training for staff and volunteers in third sector organisations on mainstream routes to employment and training;
- Actions to support the development of delivery and accreditation arrangements in-house

Grants must not be used to duplicate provision that is already available through ESF Co-financing or mainstream funding – they will provide support to the hardest to reach communities and individuals, especially those from deprived communities, to access employment or further learning and training. Small third sector organisations that access grants are likely to be well placed to reach excluded individuals facing barriers which hinder their access to mainstream provision.

The LSC will act as the Co-Financing Organisation for the South East region's Community Grants programme.

## 1.1.2 Purpose

£2,540,000 is available for Community Grants in the South East for the period 1st July 2008 to 31st December 2010, funded by the LSC's co-financing arrangements and delivered by a Grant Co-ordinating Body (GCB) selected through open and competitive tendering.

The LSC will tender for a **single partnership provider** to act as the region's GCB to implement and manage the Community Grants programme. The GCB must have a good understanding of personal and community development learning and the needs and requirements of the voluntary sector. It must have experience of working with key regional

representative Third Sector organisations and networks and have the capacity and expertise to make grants available across:

- Thames Valley (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Milton Keynes)
- Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight
- Surrey and Sussex
- Kent and Medway

### **1.1.3 Added Value**

The Community Grants Programme funded through ESF Priority 1, will focus on the engagement of workless adults in under-developed areas and communities and on individuals under-represented in the labour market. It will include a range of initial engagement activities to support transition to further learning offered through mainstream provision.

The programme will extend provision currently offered by the LSC Basic and Employability Programme and the Skills for Jobs Programme to tackle worklessness and improve social inclusion and social mobility. It will target disadvantaged individuals in deprived communities, providing access to locally tailored learning and support relevant to the specific needs of those from the hardest to reach groups.

### **1.1.4 Level of Grant Awards**

The maximum level of grant award to a small Third Sector organisation, recommended by the European Social Fund Division, is £12,000 per annum. However, the GCB may agree with the LSC a lower level of award that would apply across the region as a whole.

### **1.1.5 Evaluation**

This provision may be subject to inspection by Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services & Skills. The Grant Co-ordinating Body will be required to compile evidence of the impact of Community Grants and work with grant recipients to collect evidence related to:

- Equality and diversity: data related to the recruitment, participation, completion, achievement and progression of participants of the priority groups supported through the grant process
- Evidence of distance travelled: using RARPA principles where soft outcomes are used as measurement
- Learner satisfaction: Annual report
- Impact and sustainability: An end of programme report to identify what went well/did not go well, methods of best practice and recommendations to sustain community engagement

### **1.1.6 Contribution to regional outputs and results targets**

Whilst Community Grants will contribute to ESF objectives overall by helping individuals to move closer to mainstream activity, they will not contribute directly to the achievement of the regional participant, job and NVQ output and results targets.

### **1.1.7 Monitoring and reporting arrangement**

The Grant Co-ordinating Body will be required to collect key information on the progress of the Community Grants Programme and its contribution to the objectives of Priority 1 of the Operational Programme and the Regional ESF Framework, and submit quarterly reports to the CFO Strategic Group and the Regional Monitoring Committee in relation to:

- Number of application for grants received
- Number and value of grants awarded
- Average value of grants awarded
- Number of participants supported through grants using the ESF Short Record
- Outcomes achieved by the grant recipients including soft outcomes
- Preparation of case studies of how grants have supported specific targets groups and specific outcomes, as advised by the CFO Strategic Group
- Summary of how grants have supported regional priorities as advised by the CFO Strategic Group

### **1.1.8 Learner Data**

Providers will be required to collect participant data using the ESF Short Record.

### **1.1.9 Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development is focused on providing a better quality of life for everyone now and for generations to come. This is achieved through considering and balancing the long-term effects of social, economic and environmental issues and impacts. (Securing the Future – UK Sustainable Development Strategy, 2005)

The European Commission wishes there to be a focus on the environmental aspects of sustainability for 2007-13. The LSC will develop strategies to spread good practice from previous ESF programmes and will examine appropriate methods to disseminate environmental practice with providers.

Providers will be required to integrate sustainable development issues as far as possible across all aspects of programme design and delivery and seek to minimise travel and maximise access to provision through innovative delivery methods and the use of ICT.

<b>Community Grants Co-ordinating Bodies</b>	<b>Reference: SE/O/S01</b>
<b>Aim</b>	
<p>To establish a regional Grants Co-ordinating Body to develop, deliver and manage a Community Grants Programme across the South East region and to support people from the hardest to reach communities and individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage in accessing mainstream ESF and domestic employment and skills provision.</p> <p>Provision offered through the Community Grants programme must not duplicate provision that is already supported through existing LSC or DWP mainstream provision, or ESF Co-Financing.</p>	
<b>Service requirement</b>	
<p>The Grant Co-ordinating Body (GCB) will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, develop and manage a Community Grants Programme on behalf of the LSC, in line with the regional ESF Framework and informed by local Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) Partnerships</li> <li>• Ensure that the programme meets local needs and priorities and referenced to Local Area Agreements where available</li> <li>• Work with the LSC to implement and manage a simplified regional application process and procedure to ensure that small third sector organisations are able to apply for grants when applications are called</li> <li>• Develop and publicise an application timetable to ensure at least two calls for grant applications per year. The GCB will be required to utilise efficient promotional tools such as the regional ESF web site (<a href="http://www.ESF2008-2011-SE.org.uk">www.ESF2008-2011-SE.org.uk</a>)</li> <li>• Receive and assess applications for grants using a common set of clear and transparent criteria</li> <li>• Select successful applicants, agreeing level of approved grant and planned outcomes</li> <li>• Provide support to grant recipients to help them manage ESF funds especially in maintaining records of actual grant expenditure to ensure a full audit trail</li> <li>• Ensure that grant recipients keep financial records to support expenditure, such as invoices, bank statements, staff time sheets, job descriptions, expenses payments</li> <li>• Work with the LSC to promote the quality of provision for participants engaged in learning</li> <li>• Monitor performance and delivery of grant recipients and report on performance to the South East ESF Regional Monitoring Committee</li> <li>• Liaise and work with the regional/sub regional PCDL Partnerships and/or Laying the Foundations Learning Networks lead by the LSC regional Director Access and Progression</li> <li>• Collaborate with other regional Community Coordinating Bodies within a regional forum led by the LSC and directly or indirectly linked to the Learning Networks</li> </ul> <p>ESF Community grants will focus on hardest to reach communities and individuals who have difficulty accessing mainstream provision and/or ESF. The programme will support a range of activities that may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial help with basic skills</li> <li>• Taster work experience including voluntary work</li> <li>• Training advice and guidance</li> <li>• Job search assistance</li> <li>• Confidence building and personal development</li> </ul>	

- First contact engagement activities, e.g. to provide support to individuals overcome barriers to learning and/or employment

In addition there will be limited scope of up to 10% of the ESF available to support Community grants for grants to small VCS organisations themselves to support activities such as:

- Training for staff and volunteers in VCS organisations on mainstream routes to employment and training
- Actions to support the development of delivery and accreditation arrangements in-house
- Working with representative sector organisations to identify common capacity development needs that can best delivered in regional/sub-regional provision or by referral and signposting

### **Target groups & priority**

Unemployed people and inactive people aged 16 years and over who are from hardest to reach communities and who have difficulty accessing mainstream provision and/or ESF. Within this target group, participation of the following groups should be prioritised:

- People with disabilities and health conditions
- Lone parents
- People aged 50 and over
- People from ethnic minorities
- Females

### **Geography / area of delivery**

- Thames Valley (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Milton Keynes)
- Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight
- Surrey and Sussex
- Kent and Medway

### **Outputs**

There will be no regional participation target. However, the numbers of participants engaged will be monitored using the LSC ESF Short Record. Emphasis should be placed on the recruitment and engagement of participants from the following priority groups. Overall the programme seeks to engage with at least:

- 22% of participants with disabilities and health conditions
- 12% of participants who are lone parents
- 18% of participants who are aged 50 and over
- 11% are participants from ethnic minority groups

### **Results**

The Coordinating Body will be required to collect leaving data on individual learners upon their exit from the Community Grant programme using the ESF Short Record.

- Number of participants in work on leaving
- Number of economically inactive people engaged in job search activity or further learning

It is expected that the majority of participants upon completion of their programme will progress into further learning in mainstream provision

#### Other outcomes

- Number of applications for grants received
- Number and value of grants awarded
- Average value of grants awarded
- Number of participants supported through grants using the ESF Short Record
- Evidence of distance travelled by participants through the use of soft outcomes measured using RARPA principles
- Preparation of case studies of how grants have supported specific targets groups and specific outcomes, as advised by the CFO Strategic Group

#### Evaluation of the Impact of the Community Grants Programme

The Grant Coordinating Body will be required to work with the regional Co-Financers Strategic Group on the mid term evaluation of the impact of ESF in 2010. The Community Grants contribution will be based on participant data and other outcome.

#### Funding available:

A total of £2,540,000 is available. It is expected that grant allocations to sub regions will be as set out below.

The Grant Co-ordinating Body can utilise up to 10% of the allocation as a staff resource for the management and monitoring of the programme.

Co-ordinating Body	Community Grant Budget
Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight	£ 551,909
Surrey and Sussex	£ 798,084
Kent and Medway	£ 536,877
Thames Valley (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Milton Keynes	£ 653,158

#### Start and end dates

Start date 1st July 2008

End date 31st December 2010

#### Contracting details

The LSC wishes to issue one contract to a single partnership provider to act as the region's Grant Co-ordinating Body to implement and manage the Community Grants Programme across the south east

