



European Union
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Investing in jobs and skills



Leading learning and skills

LEARNING & SKILLS COUNCIL

ESF 2007-2010

Tender - Community Grants / Other

Project Specifications

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Introduction to tender

1.1.1 Background

The regional ESF Framework is committed to making 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.

The grants will support a community empowerment approach which proved successful in the previous ESF programme at engaging those furthest from the labour market through delivering support at grass roots level by community based organisations in particularly focussed on community based mobilisation and community based employability projects.

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
- 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 region's Community Grants programme.

1.1.2 Purpose

- The LSC will tender for one or more Grant Co-ordinating Bodies to implement Community Grants in the region. Tenders may be submitted by individual organisations or lead bodies on behalf of partnerships or consortia, to act as a Grant Co-ordinating Body

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 or ESF provision.

The programme will extend provision currently offered by the LSC Employability Skills Programme and the Skills for Job 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. Grant Co-ordinating Bodies may agree with the LSC a lower level of award that would apply across the region as a whole, in order to support more organisations.

1.1.5 Evaluation

This provision is subject to inspection by Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services & Skills. Providers will be required to complete for LSC monitoring purposes:

- A quarterly equality and diversity report 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
- A bi-annual qualitative report of learner satisfaction
- 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

The Community Grants Programme activity will provide a mix of opportunities as a planned initial entry point towards learning and employment and will be expected to contribute to the ESF regional participation target.

Whilst not directly delivering jobs and national vocational qualifications, projects will be required to identify a range of softer outcomes that identify distance travelled by individuals.

1.1.7 Monitoring and reporting arrangement

Co-ordinating Bodies will be required to collect key information on the progress and contribution of the Community Grants Programme 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. The co-ordinating body/bodies will perform an administrative service to enter learner data to the LSC provider on-line system (IPOL). Summary reports related to participation and completion will be required by the European Social Fund Division, the regional Co-Financers Strategic Group and the regional Monitoring Committee.

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 maximises access to provision through innovative delivery methods and the use of ICT.

Community Grants Co-ordinating Bodies	Reference: East Midlands/ Other
<p>Aim</p> <p>To establish a regional Grants Co-ordinating structure to develop, deliver and manage a Community Grants Programme across the region to support people from the hardest to reach communities and individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage access 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>	
<p>Service requirement</p> <p>Grant co-ordinating bodies will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Ensure that the programme meets local needs and priorities and referenced to Local Area Agreements • Work with other Co-ordinating Bodies within the East Midlands region to develop, instigate 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 • Involve the LSC in the application assessment process. • Develop and widely publicise an application timetable • Receive and assess applications for grants using a common set of clear and transparent criteria • Select successful applicants, agreeing level of approved grant and planned outcomes • Provide support to grant recipients to help them manage ESF funds especially in maintaining records of <u>actual grant expenditure</u> to ensure a full audit trail • Ensure that Grant recipients keep financial records such as invoices to support expenditure, bank statements, staff time sheets, job descriptions, expenses payments • Work with the LSC to promote the quality of provision for participants engaged in learning • Monitor performance and delivery of grant recipients and report on performance to the Regional Monitoring Committee • Liaise and work with the regional/sub regional Voluntary and Community Sector Consortia and sub regional PCDL Partnerships • Collaborate with other regional Community Co-ordinating Bodies within a regional forum <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"> • Initial help with basic skills • Taster work experience including voluntary work • Training advice and guidance • Job search assistance • Confidence building and personal development • 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 other Grant Co-ordinating Bodies within a regional forum 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

Delivery should focus on areas of multiple deprivation and where there are high concentrations of individuals on inactive benefits and this will include:

- Leicester, Derby and Nottingham cities
- East coast of Lincolnshire
- Corby and other pockets in Northamptonshire

Outputs

It is expected that the Community Grants programme will support 1500 learners. 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

Coordinating Bodies 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 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
- 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

Coordinating Bodies will be required to work 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

Amount of Funding available for Community Grants is **£1,304,442.00**

A Co-ordinating Body can utilise up to 10% of its allocation as a staff resource for the management and monitoring of the programme in its area.

Start and end dates

Start date 1st April 2008

End date 31st March 2010

Contracting details

Whilst the LSC would prefer one contract to include the whole of the East Midlands, it is recognised that in order to ensure coverage across the area this may result in more agreements.