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Leading learning and skills

LEARNING & SKILLS COUNCIL

ESF 2008-2010

Tender – East of England/Employers Project Specifications

September 2008

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Introduction to tender

The importance of rapidly enhancing the skills base of those in employment has been emphasised in the Leitch Review of Skills. The Review recommended that for the UK to become a world leader in skills by 2020, a number of targets would need to be achieved including: 95% of adults with functional literacy and numeracy skills, 90% of adults with at least a level 2 qualification, 1.9million more level 3 attainments and 500,000 more apprenticeships in the UK.

Small and medium sized businesses dominate in the East of England, with 85% of businesses employing 10 people or less. Significantly, these businesses account for only a quarter of total employment in the region, whilst businesses with over 100 employees account for just under two fifths of employment. Banking, finance and insurance businesses account for the largest share of businesses in the region (31%), followed by distribution, hotels and restaurants (27%), construction (12%) and manufacturing (8%).

Workforce development continues to be an issue in the region. One in three businesses in the East of England do not undertake any training or development for their staff, with the figure rising to 50% for businesses with 2-4 employees¹.

Train to Gain is a national programme, which utilises brokers to facilitate access to training and to support the needs of employers. Significant new flexibilities in the scheme offer more opportunities to employers. In the East of England there is a need to improve assessor capacity in order to realise the benefits of the flexibilities.

In this tendering round the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in the East of England is looking to support one or more projects that will increase the numbers of assessors in the region and thus support the expansion of employer responsive provision.

Construction is a sector experiencing skill shortages, which are anticipated to worsen as a result of the additional activity forecast for the Olympic & Paralympic Games in 2012.

Despite the stated skills shortage, the demand for apprenticeship and other training placements in the sector is much greater than their availability. Many construction workers are either self-employed or work in smaller businesses whose margins are under downward pressure as bottom tier suppliers within a very cost-conscious supply chain. These factors, along with a lack of administrative and management capacity in these small enterprises, are stated to be strong contributing factors to the sector's difficulties in creating the skills it needs to meet future demand.

In this tendering round the LSC is looking to support a project that will set up and operate a number of managed employer training networks in the East of England to address this demand.

¹ National Employers Skills Survey, 2005

Skills for Olympics and Paralympics (ESF) – Supporting new approaches to developing construction skills	Reference: EE/E/S03
Aim	
<p>The Learning and Skills Council in the East of England is seeking a single tender to set up and operate a number of managed employer training networks at appropriate locations in the East of England. These networks will enable employers to collaborate to jointly organise, arrange and deliver training for their existing workers and to recruit and develop additional new entrants. As a result, the current and future construction workforce in the East of England will be assisted to obtain the on-the-job experience and the qualifications they need to get and keep jobs in the sector and to meet employer needs for a competent and productive workforce.</p>	
Service requirement	
<p>The service to be delivered is focused on creating a team of people that will assist geographically-based networks of employers to work together to develop a qualified and productive workforce by qualifying under-skilled workers and new entrants as per the appropriate apprentice framework. It is anticipated that the service will support workers and new entrants of all ages.</p>	
<p>The activities to be delivered by the service will be:</p>	
Direct delivery:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund and deliver a L2 craft training scheme for adult employees where upskilling or training is a key element of their development pathway; 	
Supporting Services:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up, administer, manage and support a number of geographically based employer networks; • Provide an account management service to sector businesses that will assist them to recruit to and qualify their workforces and provide human resource services where needed; • Assist sector businesses to access Train to Gain and Business Link services that will increase their ability to manage and finance the upskilling of their workforces; • Develop and operate a model of flexible training and assessment that will support and enable unqualified and part qualified individuals to achieve the missing elements they need to achieve a full apprenticeship framework; and, • Build up a network of training providers who can work flexibly to meet the needs of employers and individuals and who can access public and private funding streams to fund training activity. 	
<p>It is expected that the successful tenderer will have strong knowledge and contacts with sector businesses and will be able to demonstrate experience in working with self-employed and smaller businesses to help them through the barriers they face in recruiting, employing and developing apprentices. It is also anticipated that there will also be opportunities to work with the workforces of the Asset Skills (Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the property, housing, facilities management, cleaning and parking industries - http://www.assetskills.org) and SummitSkills (Sector Skills Council for Building Services Engineering - http://www.summitskills.org.uk/) footprints where similar skills shortages are anticipated.</p>	
<p>It is also anticipated that the service will work with and have the support of sector organisations and trade associations and will work with existing employer and provider networks such the National Skills Academy Construction and CITB Construction Skills. Employer facing roles within this service will work collaboratively and actively with employer-facing roles in the Train to Gain service, the National Skills Academy for Construction and those arising from the forthcoming Construction Sector Compact.</p>	
<p>All training and qualifications outcomes delivered will be those recognised by CITB Construction Skills, the Sector Skills Council for Construction, as being necessary for individual progression in the Construction sector or of value to employers for those seeking to achieve or develop an employed status role in the sector. This same stricture will apply for qualifications relating to skills covered by Asset Skills or SummitSkills Sector Skills Councils.</p>	
<p>In order to facilitate recruitment into the sector and into the service offered under this specification, it is anticipated that the successful tenderer will link with Job Centre Plus delivery and associated ESF-funded activity to create a</p>	

pathway for unemployed entrants into construction employment

It is expected that all proposed delivery partners will be named in the tender and will have given prior agreement to their inclusion.

Target groups & priority

Target groups identified under ESF Priority 2;

- SMEs employing construction workers and self-employed construction workers.

Geography / area of delivery

Delivery across the region is anticipated with attention paid to the needs of geographical areas associated with high deprivation indices and/or clusters of construction employers.

Outputs

Direct outputs:

- 100 adult employees to be trained to NVQ Level 2;

Associated outputs facilitated by this service:

- One or more geographically-based employer training networks;
- Recruit up to 50 adults or young people employed in the sector to undertake an apprenticeship;
- Recruit up to 50 adults or young people who already possess a few elements of the apprenticeship framework to undertake an apprenticeship;
- Recruit up to 50 part-qualified employees/self-employed/new entrant adults or young people to achieve a full framework; and;
- Ensure that all employers/self-employed engaging with the programme are supported to engage with the Train to Gain, Business Link and Sector Skills Councils services and provision.

Results

- 75% of those participating will achieve a full qualification;
- All employers/self-employed workers will be introduced to the services of Train to Gain, Business Link and the Sector Skills Councils.

Other outcomes

- Those employed in the sector have sector recognised qualifications which enable them to progress their careers;
- SME employers of construction skills will be aware of the service and the wider support for skilling and upskilling their workforce;
- Improved channels of communication will be in place between employers and service partners leading to an appropriate and improving offer;
- There will be a network of providers working collaboratively and responsively to meet employers needs;
- Employers will be able to access skills solutions rather than product offers;
- A significant cohort of employers will develop the skills and capacity to work together with partners to meet their skills requirements;
- Large and medium sized companies will work collaboratively within the employer networks with smaller suppliers to mutually develop their existing and incoming workforces;
- Employers and training providers will be able to work together to ensure that employees and new entrants can access the range of work experience needed to become competent and qualified to work in the sector; and,
- Smaller employers will be able to access a portfolio of HR services.

Funding available

Up to £600,000.

Start and end dates

January 2009 to 31 Dec 2010 or any period between.

Contracting details

The Learning and Skills Council intends to contract the activity within this tender specification against a set of deliverables, these are defined in the Outputs and Results section of this Tender Specification. Each key deliverable will be assigned a unit cost and the LSC will pay against this profile of activity. Successful applicants will be required to submit regular learner and performance related information to the LSC and the LSC will reconcile contracts on an agreed regular basis, which may affect future profile payments, or involve recovery of funds where necessary.

Title: East of England - Assessor Training & Support

Reference: EE/E/S04

Aim

The aim of this project is to deliver additional assessor qualifications within the East of England region to support the expansion of employer responsive provision through to 2010.
Contracts may be awarded on a sub-regional basis or alternatively for the whole of the East of England.

Service requirement

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for the East of England is seeking one or more projects to deliver assessor qualifications to employees of organisations in all sectors, including the public sector and voluntary sector, to develop organisational capability to deliver in-house training and staff development. Tenders must describe how the delivery will take place and should detail the provider's track record in delivery of these qualifications.

Table 1 provides examples of qualifications that the LSC considers applicable for this programme. In addition, literacy, numeracy, communication and industry relevant qualifications will be considered where learners need to meet the requirements of the NVQ assessment strategy written by Sector Skills Council for the NVQ they wish to assess.

Table 1

New Unit Reference	Old Unit Reference	Unit Title
A1	D32 and D33	Assess candidates using a range of methods
A2	D32	Assess candidates performance through observation

Flexibility in delivery

In order to ensure delivery of skills which meets the needs of working individuals, tenderers must describe how delivery will be flexible around learner's working hours or dependant support activity (i.e. children or carer activity) and with the full permission and co-operation of employers where applicable.

Learners must have access to the required number of NVQ candidates to assess or employees to train. The tenderer must outline how this will be achieved.

Please note that all deliverable activity identified in this specification must be funded by the European Social Fund.

Target groups & priority

Participants will be:

- Employees who do not already hold the qualifications described above.

(Note: assessors and verifiers already holding the former D units do not need to re-qualify).

These may be employees in any sector (including the public and third sector) and in any size of organisation, who live or work in the East of England

Geography / area of delivery

The LSC seeks proposals which will support participants who either reside in, or are employed by organisations located in, the East of England.

Outputs

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

- 1000 learners registered for assessor qualifications with the relevant awarding body.

Results

The results which are required are detailed below:

- A minimum of 80% of learners achieving an assessor qualification and qualifications directly related to learners meeting the requirements of the NVQ assessment strategy written by Sector Skills Council for the NVQ they wish to assess.
- Achievement of industry relevant qualifications
- Achievement of Skills for Life qualifications

Applicants should outline in their tenders the type and number of these other qualifications and outcomes they expect to deliver.

Other outcomes

Other outcomes will include:

- Number of companies assisted
- Number of additional learners enrolled on Employer Responsive funding courses

Funding available

The overall funding available for this Tender Specification is £800,000.

Start and end dates

The project should commence in January 2009 and be completed by 31 December 2010.

Projects must not recruit individuals if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve the outcomes of the project.

Contracting details

The Learning and Skills Council intends to contract the activity within this tender specification against a set of deliverables, these are defined in the Outputs and Results section of this Tender Specification. Each key deliverable will be assigned a unit cost and the LSC will pay against this profile of activity. Successful applicants will be required to submit regular learner and performance related information to the LSC and the LSC will reconcile contracts on an agreed regular basis, which may affect future profile payments, or involve recovery of funds where necessary. Please note that all deliverable activity identified in this specification must be funded by the European Social Fund.

The LSC will only contract for activity that has a minimum contract value of £250,000 over the 2 years.

Where providers choose to deliver in a particular sub-region, they will be required to ensure that they only support companies or individuals in that sub-region.

Within this specification the guide funding rates range from £500 for upskilling on Skills for Life /communication skills, £575 for assessor units and up to a maximum of £2,500 for delivery of industry standard qualifications (dependant on qualification).

All contracts within this specification will be offered funding at the same rates for equivalent activity.