



**EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND**  
European Union

**Learning and Skills Council Norfolk**

**ESF Co-financing**

**Cross-Cutting Themes Guide**



**Learning+Skills Council**

## **Applying for project funding from the ESF?**

Equal Opportunities, ICT and Sustainable Development are important for the scoring of your applications.

Your chances of scoring well will improve if you show how your project will help to achieve the ESF Equal Opportunity, Sustainable Development and ICT objectives.

**This guide provides you with help in achieving this by:**

- Explaining the rationale and key requirements; and,
- Giving examples of good practice.

**This guidance relates specifically to projects submitting their applications for ESF Objective 3 Co-financing to LSC Norfolk.**

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# **1. Introduction**

## **Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Norfolk**

- 1.1 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is a non-departmental public body, which has been given responsibility for the planning and funding of all post-16 education and training (excluding Higher Education) by the Secretary of State.
- 1.2 LSC Norfolk is one of 6 local arms of the national LSC organisation in the East of England and was approved as an ESF Co-financing Organisation (CFO) in November 2001.

## **European Social Fund (ESF)**

- 1.3 The European Social Fund (ESF) has been set up to help reduce differences in living standards between regions of the European Union (EU).
- 1.4 ESF funding in the UK is administered through three Objective Programmes, Objective 1, Objective 2 and Objective 3.
- 1.5 Objective 1 is for developing currently under-developed regions and is operational in Merseyside, South Yorkshire, West Wales and the Valleys, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Objective 2 is for renewing industrial, urban, rural and fisheries areas in decline, and is operational in specific areas of East of England, East Midlands, London, North East, West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber and South West.

1.6 The Objective 3 Programme is available throughout all of Great Britain (apart from Objective 1 areas), and covers the entire county of Norfolk. The Objective 3 Programme aims to:

- Tackle long-term unemployment;
- Help young people and those at risk from not being able to find work;
- Improve training, education and counselling for lifelong learning;
- Encourage entrepreneurship and adaptability in the workplace; and
- Promote equal opportunities and improve the role of women in the workforce.

1.7 The programme supports activities in five policy fields between 2000 and 2006.

1.8 These are:

- Active Labour Market Policies;
- Equal Opportunities;
- Lifelong Learning;
- Adaptability and Entrepreneurship; and
- Improving the Position of Women in the Labour Market.

## Co-financing

- 1.9 Co-financing is a process used for the distribution and management of ESF funding in the UK. Co-financing means:
- Channelling both ESF money and the required match funding to providers in a single funding stream; and
  - Providers receive 100% grants from Co-financing Organisations for approved activities;
- 1.10 CFOs acquire their ESF money from the Government Office and one of the pre-requisites of becoming a CFO is that the organisation must be a public body.

## Cross-Cutting Themes

- 1.11 It is a requirement of the EU Funds Regulation that the ESF programme and the projects it funds contribute to the 3 Cross- Cutting Themes (CCT) of:
- Equal Opportunities;
  - Information and Communications Technology (ICT); and
  - Sustainable Development
- 1.12 **Mainstreaming** of CCT's means that in order to improve the chances of a successful application, irrespective of the nature of the project, **you must demonstrate that all the above themes are an integral part of your proposed project.**

- 1.13 In order to ensure that the best projects are chosen, all the application forms for ESF funds are reviewed and scored. The scoring depends on the content of the responses and whether the applicant has fully, partly, or not at all, answered the appropriate questions. This includes questions on the 3 Cross-Cutting Themes.
- 1.14 The following sections provide detailed information on each of the three themes, checklists and best practice to help you ensure that you are appropriately addressing the 3 themes, where; Section 2 focuses on Equal Opportunities; Section 3 on ICT; and Section 4 on Sustainable Development.

## 2. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

### Overview

2.1 The rationale for mainstreaming equal opportunities is simple. Policies, programmes and services should:

- Ensure that there is no discrimination at any level of dealings with people; and,
- Proactively deal with barriers to participation, progression and success.

2.2 Equal Opportunities (EO) is not limited to just gender but includes promoting equal opportunities for all priority groups in Norfolk, including:

- Minority ethnic groups;
- People with disabilities;
- Lone parents;
- Ex-offenders;
- Young people aged 14-19 not in education, training or employment.

### EO and Your Application

2.3 Equal Opportunities principles need to underline:

- The **Project** you are applying for - design, implementation and monitoring of the project;
- Your **Own Organisation**; and
- Your **Partner Organisations**, if you are delivering the project with other organisations.

2.4 To demonstrate that Equal Opportunities is an integral part of your project and organisation, you will need to ensure that key systems and processes are in place within your organisation and have been taken into account for your project. These are described below.

### **Checklist**

#### ***EO and your project***

2.5 To demonstrate that Equal Opportunities is embedded in your project you may find it useful to use the following checklist:

#### **Design and Preparation of the Project**

- √ Identify the groups that your project is targeting. Remember that this is not limited to just gender but includes promoting equal opportunities for all excluded groups that are targeted in your region and locality (see paragraph 2.2).
- √ Remember that ESF is primarily aimed at people who are available to work in the job market<sup>1</sup>.
- √ Obtain relevant and up-to-date data for the area, theme and target groups that you are dealing with. The Norfolk page of the LSC website provides useful background information ([www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)).

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<sup>1</sup> All levels of refugees, if they have the right to work, are also able to take advantage of ESF supported training. Asylum seekers do not have access to the labour market and it is therefore important that their participation in ESF projects must not involve activities leading to access to the British labour market. However, they may benefit from pre-vocational activities such as English language training.

- √ On issues of gender equality, proposals for projects could cover either gender (men or women).
- √ Be clear about expected results and outputs (usually quantitative) and outcomes (more qualitative). Clear targets will also help assessment of distance travelled i.e. progress made over time.
- √ It is not necessary to undertake own research, but if other research material is used, ensure that analysis is included and that linkages with the project proposals are made.
- √ Involve target groups in the preparation of the project, for example, pilots if possible.

### **Delivery of the Project**

- √ Remember that the way you deliver solutions to your target disadvantaged group should be relevant to the target group's needs, preferences and lifestyles. Your project material and events will also need to be appropriate, relevant to and reachable by the targeted groups. For example, your checklist should cover:
  - **Accessibility of Venues in terms of Location.** Ideally, premises and facilities should be accessible by public transport.
  - **Accessibility of Premises and Facilities in terms of Interior.** These should include access to all floors via lifts, sufficiently wide corridors and aisles to facilitate wheelchair access, the provision of easily accessible alarms and the use of

accessible Braille markings (e.g. within the lifts) and the provision of suitable toilets for people with disabilities.

- **Accessibility of Provision and Events in terms of Time.** Consideration should be given to the timing. For example, those with childcare responsibilities are likely to find it difficult to attend events that start very early in the morning or finish late in the day. Ideally there should be a range of choices, including exploring the possibility for running the projects online.
- **A Safe Environment.** In designing both the internal and external features of capital projects, consideration should be given to providing an environment in which individuals can feel safe at all times of the day, but particularly after dark.
- **The Provision of Childcare Facilities.** Lack of childcare support can act as a major constraint to individuals taking up opportunities generated by ESF. Although many ESF supported training projects offer support for the costs of childcare, this is by no means universal.
- **Promotion to Target Groups.** This should include the provision of publicity material in other languages, the distribution of material to additional centres or specialist networks representing target groups and the preparation of tailored publicity and exhibition materials for events specifically for target groups.

## **Monitoring of the Project**

- √ Propose systems to monitor progress and achievements against your targets - and also remember to investigate low or no participation in the project i.e. why is it not working?
- √ Assess whether, for example, the project meets the needs of the relevant groups? Review approach and delivery methods with input from beneficiaries.
- √ Consider what actions need to be taken at the end of the project. For example, the project should consider ways in which the target groups can be tracked after the project has been completed. This should involve putting in place mechanisms for tracking beneficiaries following completion of the course, perhaps as part of a broader 'after care' service. Therefore, it would be useful to explore whether there is a need for provision of mentoring and/or ensuring linkages with organisations/agencies that provide careers/employment guidance.

## **EO and your organisation**

2.6 As an applicant you need to have a number of Equal Opportunities processes and procedures in place. Your checklist should include:

- √ An **EO statement**. This should outline your organisation's commitment and policy with evidence of strong and visible support from top management.
- √ An **EO Implementation Plan**. This should include:
  - Organisational profile to cover breakdown by gender, ethnicity, various jobs and levels within the organisation;
  - Objectives and ultimate aim of the policy, including targets;
  - Activities and tasks regarding recruitment and selection, training and development and progression. These should include 'standard' practices, but also preventive and remedial actions, grievance procedures and positive action;
  - Milestones for activities and tasks;
  - Performance measures and indicators; and
  - Assigned responsibilities for implementation and monitoring.
- √ **EO guidance**. This should be provided regularly to managers and supervisors involved in key personnel management decisions, such as recruitment, training and development, promotion, pay and conditions of employment, discipline and retirement issues.

- √ **Evidence of monitoring EO issues** and taking appropriate preventive and remedial action if necessary. Questions to ask to ensure that monitoring is covered include:
- Can you provide gender/ethnicity/age breakdown of relevant data by job level within your organisation?
  - What about distance travelled, i.e. progress made since implementation of policy and impact data?
  - How often do you review the policy?
  - What do you do with the information?
  - Do you produce monitoring and progress reports?
- √ Compliance with the **EO legislation**. This includes anti-discrimination legislation relating to gender/sex, race, disability, ex-offenders, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Please see references for further details.
- √ If you are delivering the project with other partner organisations, you need to provide evidence demonstrating their commitment to EO.

## **Case Study – Reaching the Target Group**

2.7 The “Childminding Matters”<sup>2</sup> project provided childcare training for Portuguese women in Thetford to become Registered Childminders to care for children in their own community. The project successfully promoted training to the target group and supported the beneficiaries via:

- Promotional leaflets made available in Portuguese;
- Distributing leaflets to community centres;
- Making a translator available during information sessions and training as required by Ofsted to become registered; and
- Using a translator for translating completed written course work assignments into English.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.childmindingmatters.org.uk](http://www.childmindingmatters.org.uk)

## References - Equal Opportunities

### Examples/toolkits

[www.diversity-whatworks.gov.uk](http://www.diversity-whatworks.gov.uk)  
(gender/ethnicity/general best practice)

[www.agepositive.gov.uk/toptips.cfm](http://www.agepositive.gov.uk/toptips.cfm) (age)

[www.disabilityaware.org](http://www.disabilityaware.org) (disability)

### Key legislation

[www.pfc.org.uk/legal/sda.htm](http://www.pfc.org.uk/legal/sda.htm)  
(Sex Discriminations Act 1976)

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/racerel1.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/racerel1.html)  
[www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000034.htm](http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000034.htm)  
(Race Relations Act 1976 and Amendment 2000)

[www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/Ukpga\\_19950050\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/Ukpga_19950050_en_1.htm) (Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

### 3. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

#### Overview

- 3.1 ICT is about the convergence of:
- Information Technology (IT); and
  - Communications Technology.
- 3.2 E-learning, the application of interactive technologies and communications systems in teaching and learning environments includes: **distance learning through the Internet, and the use of CD-Roms and video-material, either in the classroom or by the individual learners.**
- 3.3 The aim of mainstreaming ICT in ESF is to:
- Increase awareness of the potential offered by ICT;
  - Increase the number of people receiving high quality ICT related skills training;
  - Increase business competitiveness in the region by supporting increased use of ICT applications;
  - Reduce the negative effects of peripherality by increasing the use of ICT by those living in more isolated areas.

## **ICT and Your Application**

3.4 ICT will need to cover:

- Your project including delivery of the project and impact on beneficiaries; and
- Your organisation

3.5 To demonstrate the above, you will need to ensure that key systems and processes are in place within your organisation and have been taken into account for your project. These are described below.

### **Checklist**

#### **ICT and Your Project**

##### **Design of the project**

- √ Highlight what the current take-up level of ICT applications/services is by the proposed beneficiaries of the project.
- √ Discuss how the existing ICT capacity and/or projects in the area can be used to deliver the proposed project, or is there a gap that the project proposes to fill?
- √ Highlight evidence of demand for the project's services in ICT format.
- √ Describe any barriers to using ICT and how the project can develop its activities in ways that tackle some of these barriers. For example, if there is a lack of ICT skills, can the project liaise with another local ICT initiative that will contribute to overcoming this barrier?

### **Delivery of the project**

- √ Indicate how the proposed ICT will assist in increasing the take-up of ICT.
- √ Discuss the benefit for the beneficiaries.
- √ Consider the possibility of including ICT systems for recording data to help monitor project progress.
- √ Consider using the web to make information available, increase awareness and disseminate good practice.

### **ICT and your organisation**

3.6 The following is an indicative checklist to demonstrate that ICT is an integral part of your business:

- √ A clear statement of commitment to ICT use, improvement of the technologies currently used, and an increase of take-up. Evidence of strong visible support for ICT from top management.
- √ Provision of regular ICT training and guidance provided for managers and supervisors involved in key personnel management decisions.

## **ICT Case Study – Using ICT to facilitate the assessment of learning**

- 3.6 BREAK Charity uses ICT to facilitate the assessment of learning, making the process quicker for both the candidate and the assessor. ICT is made available around the County and in rural areas.
- 3.7 The two ICT tools that have been widely used by the charity in Norfolk are:
- Tablet PC, a PC that has a touch screen with the main method of input being handwriting recognition; used by assessors when visiting candidates to write up observations immediately. This enables candidates to see the results as soon as they have finished the tasks. The assessors can also sign off information to be included in the candidate's portfolio, saving on time and administration.
  - MP3 Player, a portable device for recording, storing and playing digital audio files; used by assessors to record question and answer (Q&A) sessions. Recording quality is more than sufficient if placed fairly close to the participants and the technology makes recording sessions easier and more reliable than having to rely on notes taken by the assessor. It also makes the process more interactive for the candidate as the assessor is able to focus on listening.

## References – ICT

### Existing provision

[www.learndirect.co.uk](http://www.learndirect.co.uk) (Learndirect online courses and Learndirect centres)

### Toolkits/examples

[www.aclearn.net](http://www.aclearn.net) (community learning resource)

[www.e-skillspassport.com](http://www.e-skillspassport.com) (web-enabled self assessment tool)

[www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR523new.pdf](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR523new.pdf) (use of ICT with disaffected pupils)

## 4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

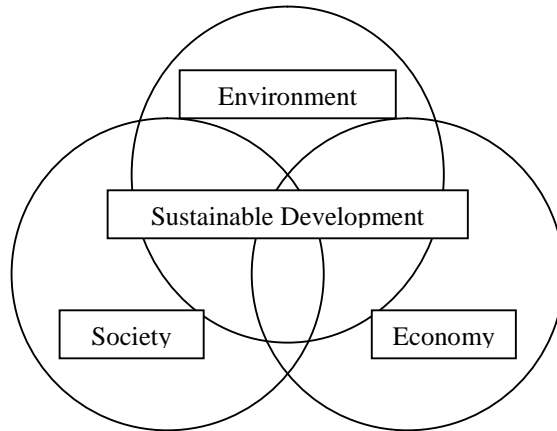
### Overview

- 4.1 In Objective 3 Round 4 applicants **need to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable development.**
- 4.2 Sustainable Development is about recognising that **economic, social and environmental goals cannot be pursued independently.** Focusing on just one area can lead to negative impacts on others, or at the very least, missed opportunities.
- 4.3 Please note that the extent to which a project addresses sustainable development is used as a deciding criteria in the scoring of two otherwise equal projects.
- 4.4 Sustainable Development within Objective 3 is about **equipping all those who manage, deliver and benefit from the Programme, with the necessary knowledge, values and skills to live, act and work sustainably so as to help improve the quality of life for all, both now and in the future.**<sup>3</sup>
- 4.5 There are three basic elements to sustainable development as illustrated in the following diagram:

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<sup>3</sup> D.Hill (2003) Sustainable Development & The European Social Fund: Towards a Common Understanding

**Figure 1: Elements of Sustainable Development**



4.6 You should seek to address these three elements simultaneously through:

- Providing **opportunities to allow everyone** to fulfil their potential;
- Environmental **protection and enhancement** through the delivery of projects; and
- Providing the **skills that businesses both demand and require – now and in the future**

4.7 You will note from the above that sustainable development touches on elements of the other Cross-Cutting Themes: Equal Opportunities and ICT.

## Checklist

- 4.8 In your application you **must** demonstrate that you have used the national interactive Sustainable Development toolkit ([www.esf.gov.uk](http://www.esf.gov.uk)). This toolkit was developed by European Social Fund Division (ESFD) in partnership with the Environment Agency and Groundwork.
- 4.9 The following indicative checklist draws on this toolkit and lists items that will demonstrate that sustainable development is an integral part of your organisation and project.
- 4.10 This checklist has been divided into three sections corresponding to the elements of sustainable development: Environment, Society and Economy.
- 4.11 Please note that this checklist applies to both:
- Your **project** including design and delivery of the project and impact on beneficiaries; and
  - Your **organisation**
- 4.12 You should remember that if a project cannot address all of the thematic issues in design, it certainly could in delivery.

## **ENVIRONMENT - Environmental Sustainability**

- √ An Environmental Policy. This should apply equally to your organisation and project, and may include a green procurement policy.
- √ Minimise the use of private cars and promote public transport where available. Availability of transport may be a barrier to attending training to some beneficiaries.
- √ Consider delivering all or part of the skills and training using distance learning methods, reducing the need for beneficiaries to travel. This has the potential to significantly reduce traffic generation and associated environmental impacts.
- √ Reduce waste and recycle any waste materials that are produced. For example, you can recycle paper and seek to distribute documents electronically where possible. This should apply both to project activities and to your organisation.
- √ Review content of training to see if environmental/sustainable development issues could be incorporated. Please note that environmental/sustainable development issues need not be the main focus of the training provided.

- √ Consider whether training is delivered in buildings that are energy efficient. Energy efficiency in buildings can, for example mean good insulation, efficient boiler systems and energy efficient lighting. Introducing efficiency measures can reduce running costs in the long-term and the project can benefit from an enhanced environmental profile.
- √ Explore the potential for the project to use equipment that has a high-energy efficiency rating. Consider energy efficiency when buying any new equipment.
- √ Raise awareness of environmental issues and sustainable development within beneficiaries, and identify practical actions that beneficiaries can take. Practical actions could include behavioural changes, such as reducing the amount of waste produced by a household, introducing paper and bottle recycling and minimising the use of water and electricity.
- √ Highlight meeting sector-specific environmental skills needs through your training where applicable. Environmental skills needs are particularly relevant for sectors such as construction, hospitality and retail.
- √ Explore whether the project can improve life skills and employability, particularly of disadvantaged target groups, by a focus on environmental activities. Environmental activities can be used as a 'hook' to engage participants in further learning and education.

## **SOCIETY – Sustainable communities**

- √ Target individuals who are disadvantaged or socially excluded. Provide opportunities to allow everyone to fulfil their potential (see paragraph 2.2 for the broad target groups).
- √ Encourage the participation and involvement of excluded groups. Excluded groups or organisations representing such groups should be consulted in the development of projects where possible.
- √ Address or help overcome social barriers to participation. Projects that consider accessibility issues such as timing, location and walking, cycling and public transport links minimise barriers to people attending.
- √ Overcome economic barriers to participation. Learners may, for example, be supported by reimbursing travel costs.
- √ Link the project with other similar initiatives in the area to help provide an integrated service to those in most need.
- √ Help build capacity in local communities to help them address their own needs. You should consider what will happen to beneficiaries and the area once the project has finished and how the improvements can be developed and sustained in the long-term.
- √ Address and help overcome gender stereotyping, including encouraging non-traditional patterns of training and employment.

## **ECONOMY – Sustainable economies**

- √ Undertake research and help to address the generic skills shortages in the local labour market. Labour market intelligence should be used as much as possible to inform learning and skills provision.
- √ Consider and address the skills requirements that businesses will face in the near future. The environmental economy, for example, is a growing sector in the region and sector-specific environmental skills are increasingly required.
- √ Raise awareness of the importance of sustainable development for business performance and survival in the future. Highlight that economic development need not be in conflict with the environment.
- √ Provide environmental management training for businesses/employees. This training can help to cut costs, reduce future risk and improve investment potential.
- √ Promote and encourage practical actions that employers and employees can undertake to address sustainable development, raising awareness of the link between our everyday use of natural resources and the environmental impacts.

## **Sustainable Development Case Study – Using environmental activities as a focus for basic skills training**

- 4.13 The Garden Science Trust<sup>4</sup> seeks to promote the education of persons with learning difficulties and others, through the arts and sciences of garden land and through the use of such arts and sciences to improve their opportunities for both enjoyment and employment.
- 4.14 Part of a course run by the Garden Science Trust at the CSV Vocal in Downham Market has focused on sustainable development and recycling, with students carrying out a wide range of learning activities designed to enhance their understanding of the concepts of area and volume, whilst learning how to measure things.
- 4.15 The activities have thus improved the students' basic skills, and at the same time increased their awareness of sustainable development and recycling.
- 4.16 Norfolk Waste Partnership have awarded the Garden Science Trust a 'Certificate of Recognition of Achievement' for this work on Recycling at CSV Vocal.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.gardensciencetrust.co.uk](http://www.gardensciencetrust.co.uk)

## References – Sustainable Development

### Strategic documents

[www.eelgc.gov.uk](http://www.eelgc.gov.uk) (Regional Environmental Strategy for East of England)

[www.sustainability-east.com](http://www.sustainability-east.com) (Regional Sustainable Development Strategy)

### Guidance and toolkits

[www.go-east.gov.uk/Funding/Environmental\\_Sustainability/](http://www.go-east.gov.uk/Funding/Environmental_Sustainability/)  
(East of England Environmental Guidance Note for Skills & Training Projects)

[www.esf.gov.uk](http://www.esf.gov.uk) (National Interactive ESF Sustainable Development Toolkit)

### Further information

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk) (Environment Agency)

[www.forumforthefuture.org.uk](http://www.forumforthefuture.org.uk) (Forum for the Future Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability)

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This guide was launched in Norwich on September 09 2004 and is also available on the Norfolk page of the LSC website [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)

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For further information on European Social Fund please go to: [www.esf.gov.uk](http://www.esf.gov.uk)

