



Leading learning and skills

LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL IN NORFOLK

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND OBJECTIVE 3

ROUND 5D CO-FINANCING PROSPECTUS

NOVEMBER 2006



EUROPEAN UNION
European Social Fund

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Purpose of the Prospectus

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is calling for tenders for the delivery of various activities under the European Social Fund (ESF) Objective 3.

This Co-financing Prospectus has been produced to help you tender to carry out activity that the Learning and Skills Council will fund through European Social Fund (ESF) Co-financing. In particular the Prospectus will:

- a. Introduce the LSC, the European Social Fund and co-financing.
- b. Outline the main rules and regulations on the use of the funding.
- c. Outline the timetable for this tendering round and the process through which applications will be selected.
- d. Describe the areas of activity that the LSC will support with ESF funding in this tendering round.
- e. Identify the budgets available to support activity.

If you have any questions about the contents of the Prospectus or the tendering round or would like this document to be made available in audio, large print, Braille or another language, please contact the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) on 01603 218862.

A guide to completing the Application Form, 'the Application Guidance', has been created to accompany this document and is available on the LSC website.

Introduction to the Learning and Skills Council

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 for Education and Skills. The LSC in Norfolk is one of 6 local arms of the national organisation in the East of England.

The European Social Fund

The European Social Fund (ESF) supports human resource development under 'objectives' designated by the European Union. The Objective 3 programme is available nationally and covers the entire county of Norfolk. The aims of the Objective 3 ESF Programme are:

- a. To help people along the pathway to employment
- b. To help people keep jobs that could be threatened by industrial change
- c. To help build the capacity of organisations supporting communities to work towards these goals

The Objective 3 programme has 5 policy fields (priorities) that are each divided into measures for support. The policy fields and measures are:

Policy Field 1: Active Labour Market Policies

Measure 1: to provide advice, guidance and support to prevent people moving into long-term unemployment.

Measure 2: to improve the employability of the unemployed through enhanced vocational and other key skills and remove barriers to labour market entry.

Policy Field 2: Equal Opportunities (for disadvantaged and excluded groups)

Measure 1: to widen access to basic skills provision

Measure 2: actions to improve employability

Policy Field 3: Lifelong Learning

Measure 1: supporting the key policy developments and promoting wider access and participation in lifelong learning

Measure 2: improve employability through lifelong learning that is responsive to the changing needs of employers

Policy Field 4: Adaptability and Entrepreneurship:

Measure 1: to update and upgrade employees vocational skills

Measure 2: to identify and meet emerging skills shortages

Measure 3: to encourage entrepreneurship of individuals and competitiveness of businesses

Policy Field 5: Improving the Position of Women in the Labour Market:

Measure 1: to improve access to learning and remove barriers to provision

Specific measures are referred to by the numbers relating to policy fields and measures e.g. 'to widen access to basic skills provision' is referred to as 2.1.

Co-Financing

Co-financing is a process for the distribution and management of ESF funding in the UK. It means that providers will no longer need to find 55% 'matched funding' that is required under traditional ESF, but receive 100% grants for approved activities in one funding stream.

The Government proposed that certain organisations should become co-financing bodies. Organisations eligible to become co-financing organisations include the LSC, Regional Development Agencies, Local Authorities, Business Links, Jobcentre Plus and Connexions Partnerships.

The LSC in Norfolk was approved as a Co-Financing Organisation in November 2001.

In addition to the LSC, the only other organisations that have applied and been approved to become a co-financer in Norfolk are Jobcentre Plus and the East of England Development Agency (EEDA).

The funding being Co-financed in this tendering round is in ESF Objective 3 Policy Fields 2.1 and 3.1.

Selection

Timetable

November 2006

w/c 20th Full prospectus documents made available on website.

January 2007

12:00 noon 8th Closing date for the receipt of tenders. Selection process begins

w/c 15th Results released, contract negotiations start and Co-financed activity can begin.

Selection Process

All tenders received will be subject to a thorough assessment and appraisal process, having first gone through an eligibility check. The eligibility check will be on a straight yes/no basis scoring against set criteria, tenders that fail on any one issue will not go forward for assessment.

Eligibility Check

All tenders will be checked against the following criteria:

- Was the tender submitted before the deadline?
- Has a signed original been submitted?
- Is the applicant or lead organisation a legally constituted body?
- Have all questions been answered?
- Has the applicant enclosed all documents referred to in the guidance to question 13?
- Has the applicant submitted a Delivery Plan?
- Is the response to each question less than the stipulated length noted on the application form?

Appraisal

Tenders that go forward for appraisal will be assessed against the prospectus independently by at least two people from inside or outside the LSC using the system proposed by the ESF Division (Department for Work and Pensions). The Red/Amber/Green traffic light scoring system, agreed within the East of England, will be used as the basis on which proposals are selected. The Application Guidance gives a broad indication of how the scoring will be applied for each question on the application form.

The reasons for the success or failure of a proposal to win funding will be recorded and feedback will be sent to applicant organisations.

Where necessary appraisal moderation panels will be formed to agree on the successful tenders that are to be taken forward for post tender negotiations.

All tenders will be opened and logged in the presence of two people.

At all times during the tendering and selection process, the LSC will observe the seven principles of public life (the Nolan principles). These are: selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership.

Freedom Of Information Act

Applicants are asked to note that the LSC has to comply with Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, which means that should the LSC receive an FOI request relating to this tendering round, the LSC may have to release documents that you have provided as part of your tender.

Further information on the Freedom of Information Act can be found at:

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Round 5d Priorities for Support:

Measure 2.1

Total amount of funding available: £150,000

To provide support to up to 300 individuals and result in at least 120 positive outcomes.

Aim of Measure

To widen access to basic skills through the provision of basic skills learning, directed at those groups disadvantaged, excluded from or under-represented in the workplace.

Within this measure the LSC is looking to support one or more projects meeting the following specification:

Tender Spec. Reference	Activity	Target Group(s)	Outputs/Outcomes	Funding available
R5D2.1	<p>The LSC will fund the delivery of accredited Skills for Life provision by providing the target groups with the opportunity to access educational and vocational guidance, have an assessment of Skills for Life needs, participate in accredited Skills for Life learning, to access job search support and have access to on-going learner support if and when appropriate.</p> <p>Ideally the LSC will be looking to fund projects centred on a theme such as: IT, environment, sport, parenting, personal finance, vocational.</p>	<p>Eligible beneficiaries will be non-working socially excluded individuals of working age (16+) with Skills for Life needs.</p> <p>Priority will be given to projects that focus on one or more of the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Economically inactive not eligible for New Deal •Offenders (who have a release date), ex-offenders (including those on licence) and people who are subject to Statutory Orders •Members of ethnic minority groups (EMGs) •People with disabilities (PWDs) •People with Learning Difficulties and/or Difficulties •Lone parents •Homeless •Asylum seekers with permission to work from the Home Office, and refugees •Substance misusers and those recovering from substance abuse and addiction •Young people leaving Local Authority care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of beneficiaries assessed with Skills for Life needs • Number of beneficiaries achieving recognised Skills for Life qualification. • Number of beneficiaries moving into work • Number of beneficiaries moving into other learning provision 	£150,000

Measure 3.1

Total amount of funding available: £600,000

To provide support to at least 500 individuals and result in at least 350 positive outcomes.

Aim of Measure

To promote lifelong learning and encourage groups who lack basic and key skills to take part, and to support main policy development in lifelong learning to improve numbers taking part.

Within this measure the LSC is looking to support projects meeting one of the following specifications:

Tender Spec. Reference	Activity	Target Group(s)	Outputs/Outcomes	Funding available
R5D3.1A	<p>The LSC wishes to fund projects which support alternative, innovative pathways or activities to re-engage young people who are not in education, employment or training.</p> <p>Projects should focus on personalised approaches which provide support to young people, including guidance and mentoring.</p> <p>Projects will need to deliver learning activity and result in achievements of qualifications; progression into LSC funded provision and/or movement into work.</p>	<p>Eligible beneficiaries will be young people not in employment, education or training.</p> <p>Priority will be given to projects supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• young parents or carers• young offenders• young people with mental health issues• drug and alcohol misusers• young people with learning difficulties and disabilities• young people leaving care• young people at risk of social exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of beneficiaries participating in learning• Number of beneficiaries achieving a recognised qualification.• Number of beneficiaries moving into work• Number of beneficiaries moving into other LSC funded provision.	£300,000
R5D3.1B	<p>The LSC will fund workplace based Skills for Life provision for those in employment or volunteering.</p> <p>Qualifications and accreditations supported will include ESOL, Literacy and Numeracy at Entry Level, Level 1, and Level 2.</p> <p>Projects will need to demonstrate why other funded provision is not appropriate.</p>	<p>Eligible beneficiaries will be employed or volunteers assessed as having Skills for Life needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of beneficiaries assessed with Skills for Life needs.• Number of beneficiaries achieving a recognised Skills for Life qualification.	£100,000

Tender Spec. Reference	Activity	Target Group(s)	Outputs/Outcomes	Funding available
R5D3.1C	<p>The LSC will fund a programme that will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning leading to a qualification at Entry Level 1 or 2 • Skills for Life support • basic IT training • work experience • project work, including opportunities for team work • job search support 	<p>Eligible beneficiaries will need to be unemployed adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of beneficiaries assessed with Skills for Life needs. • Number of beneficiaries achieving a recognised Skills for Life qualification. • Numbers progressing into structured learning or employment 	£100,000
R5D3.1D	<p>The LSC will fund learning programmes leading to achievement of qualifications at Level 2.</p> <p>For employed individuals in particular projects will need to demonstrate why other funded provision is not appropriate.</p>	<p>Eligible beneficiaries will be adults without a relevant full Level 2 qualification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of beneficiaries participating in learning • Number of adults achieving a recognised qualification at Level 2. 	£100,000

Programme Guidance

Who Can Apply

Any organisation that is legally formed and that has the capacity to enter in to a contract can apply for co-financed European Social Fund (ESF) in this Co-financing Round. This includes companies and groups of companies working together. The only exceptions are individuals and sole traders.

Organisations that have not previously held a contract for the delivery of training with the LSC will be also assessed against the criteria for new providers and will be required to submit additional documents with the tender. (Note – this is a change from previous practice where they were requested later). Please refer to the Application Guidance: question 13.

Existing providers may also need to supply additional documents if it is more than 12 months since they were last supplied to the LSC. Applicants should refer to the Guidance:question 13.

How Much Can Be Applied For

The maximum funding available can be found within each specification in the 'Priorities for Support' section.

Unlike 'traditional' ESF, you may apply for 100% of the cost of the activity through this prospectus. You must ensure there is no "double funding" for any activity.

A note to Voluntary and Community Organisations – if you are successful in applying for co-financed ESF, this will disallow you from applying for funding from the Norfolk Global Grants Programme for ESF 'Acorn Grants'.

How Long Can Co-Financed Activity Last

The earliest time activity can begin is January 2007. The latest time activity can end is 31st March 2008.

All activity, not just delivery, must be completed by 31st March 2008. This will include evaluation of the activity if you wish to have the costs of this included in your contract.

Number of Applications that can be Submitted

There is no limit to the number of tenders that can be submitted by an organisation. Tenders for activities under different specifications must be made on separate tender forms e.g. a tender against R5D2.1 and R5D3.1A **must** be completed on separate forms.

Each fully completed tender must be submitted in a separate envelope. Tenders should be loose-leafed or stapled; do not include front and back covers, heat-sealing, ring-binding etc.

Who Can Benefit?

The 'Priorities for Support' section explains the eligible beneficiaries for each specification.

There is no upper age limit however those tendering are reminded that ESF is a human resource development programme and therefore any beneficiary should be aiming to enter or remain in employment (including volunteering).

Geographical Areas

Where projects need to focus on specific locations this will be stated in the 'Priorities for Support' section. If there are no localities detailed for a specification, projects can support beneficiaries anywhere within Norfolk, and can also include up to 15% of beneficiaries who live and work outside Norfolk.

Eligible and Ineligible Costs

Co-financed ESF can support most revenue costs of the project activity, including:

- a. Staff costs directly relating to the co-financed activity only (inc. Gross Salary, Employer's N.I, Pension Contributions, any expected salary increase in the life of the activity, travel, taxable costs such as company cars, subsistence and any external staff training necessary for the specific delivery of the co-financed activity).
- b. Beneficiary costs (inc. travel costs and childcare/dependant care costs if reimbursed to beneficiary as part of the activity).
- c. Rent & leasing of buildings (proportioned to use by co-financed activity).
- d. Depreciation of owned buildings, equipment and I.T equipment.
- e. Small items of equipment necessary for delivery of the project activity to a maximum of £999.99 each (please note that if an item such as a computer is included in your costs, the computer, monitor, keyboard, printer etc counts as one item and therefore cannot exceed £999.99).
- f. Leasing of equipment (proportioned to co-financed activity use).
- g. V.A.T (only if your organisation cannot reclaim it).
- h. Minor adaptations to premises, repairs and maintenance for co-financed ESF purposes where this will enable disabled beneficiaries to access ESF services (providing cost is under £750).
- i. Provision of a crèche (only the eligible items of expenditure).

The following items are not eligible for ESF support:

- a. Loan and current account interest
- b. Other financial charges
- c. Consultancy fees for activities such as filling in co-financing applications, management fees or commissions
- d. Staff time spent filling in co-financing applications
- e. Buying equipment or buildings over £1,000
- f. Costs of finance leases
- g. Any expenditure that does not clearly relate to the co-financed activity

If you have any questions about what constitutes eligible expenditure please contact the LSC ESF team through the e-mail noresf@lsc.gov.uk.

Management and Administration Costs

Organisations are strongly advised to consider all the costs of delivering the activity, particularly the management and administration costs.

Organisations are advised to consider in particular the requirements of Self Assessment (page 20), State Aid (page 21), Contracting and Management Information (page 18) and Individual Learning Plans (page 19) before finalising the management costs of their project.

Applicants should note that it is a requirement of the European Commission that documentation relating to ESF projects funded in this current programme must be retained until at least 31 December 2014.

Provider Financial Assurance

All ESF contracts fall within the remit of the LSC Provider Financial Assurance team (PFA Team). The expectation is that all successful providers delivering co-financed contracts will be subject to at least one audit visit per financial year.

Added Value

Co-financed activity must demonstrate added value by providing funding for activity over and above that provided by other sources.

Successful activities will provide either more, enhanced in terms of participation or achievement, or new activity in line with the requirements of the 'priorities of support'.

Cross Cutting Themes

All applicants are required to outline in their tenders how they will ensure that the activity that they undertake will contribute to the European Union's three 'cross cutting themes' of equal opportunities, sustainable development and Information and Communications Technology.

A handbook for guidance on these themes and ESF has been produced by DTZ PIEDA Consulting on behalf of the LSC in Norfolk and is available on the East of England section of the main LSC website www.lsc.gov.uk. This guide includes promotion of good practice.

These themes are firmly embedded within the project tendering process.

Equal Opportunities gateway questions are included in the Prospectus application form.

Creative thinking will be encouraged in terms of adding value to provision aimed at disabled people and people from ethnic minorities, in particular in terms of developing more sustainable jobs, including extending and or improving support for those in work.

Sustainable development will form an objective element of the LSC in Norfolk's project appraisal and approval process. Steps will be taken to promote and support the integration of the theme and mechanisms are in place to monitor

project progress and performance with respect to sustainable development via project narrative reporting and monitoring by contract managers at project level.

Equal Opportunities

Please refer to the Cross-cutting Themes Guide.

Please consider the following questions:

- a. In developing your project, have the needs of the Equal Opportunities target groups been met?
- b. Does Equal Opportunities feature as part of beneficiary induction?
- c. Will the project be delivered at flexible times/locations?
- d. Does the project promote family friendly policies?
- e. Will the project ensure all target groups have equality of access to training?
- f. Has the project, in providing any business support advice, addressed the needs of target groups?

The Learning and Skills Council is committed to ensuring equality and diversity in all its activities and will support and manage co-financed activity in line with DWP/DfES ESF unit guidance. The Learning and Skills Council in Norfolk has addressed actions it will take to embed equality and diversity into all it does, as noted in the Annual and Corporate Plan. The strategy considers issues relating to:

- disabled people
- older people
- men and women
- ethnic minorities
- geographical access and other excluded groups

The Learning and Skills Council in Norfolk aims to be inclusive, and therefore does not consider this list to be exhaustive, but identifies the key priorities for Norfolk.

Equality of opportunity is embedded in both the new provider and project selection criteria. This includes a review of provider policies on Equal Opportunities and specific issues relating to equality of opportunity that arise from project activities. Each provider will be required to have an Equal Opportunities Policy and demonstrate how their project will contribute towards Equal Opportunities in their proposal. This information will be used in appraisal and in post-tender negotiations with approved projects.

A review of provider performance on equality and diversity is a standard part of both the provider and contract review process.

The forecasted number of people with disabilities receiving support in the Prospectus is 8% and is based on registered cohort and achievements to date on LSC funded programmes in Norfolk.

The forecasted number of people from minority ethnic groups receiving support in this prospectus is 5% and is based on registered cohort and achievements to date on LSC funded programmes in Norfolk. This forecast of 5% for Norfolk is actually high relatively speaking when comparing to the cohort size in the county to other

cohorts around the Region. **Please note that beneficiaries from the travelling community are counted as being from minority ethnic groups and for ethnicity recording purposes may be counted as “other”.**

Sustainable Development

Please refer to the Cross-cutting Themes Guide.

Sustainable development in European Social Funding terms means:

- a. providing opportunities to allow everyone to fulfil their potential (through addressing social exclusion, widening participation in learning, removing barriers and capacity building) environmental protection and enhancement through the delivery of projects (through promoting public transport, minimising waste, conserving energy, raising awareness with beneficiaries, environmentally focused projects) providing skills that business demands and requires (through addressing skill shortages, meeting future needs of businesses, providing environmental management training for business and meeting skills requirements of the growing environmental economy).

Social, environmental and economic principles should be considered. The Learning and Skills Council remit is focused on ‘maintaining high and steady levels of economic growth and employment’. This is demonstrated through the LSC’s strategic objectives to increase the demand for learning and raise skills levels for national competitiveness. The LSC is also committed to contributing to the other sustainable development regional objective; ‘progress which recognises the needs of everyone’ through its objective to ensure equality of opportunity through better access to learning. The co-financing prospectus must take these objectives forward under each measure.

The Learning and Skills Council encourages co-financed project applicants to demonstrate that they are self-sufficient and that they lead to sustainable employment and/or contribute to the formation of sustainable communities. This may mean meeting needs locally wherever possible, encouraging the participation of local people or businesses in the development of co-financed activities, improving local employment opportunities through individuals’ development and improving the competitiveness of businesses.

All tenders for co-financed activity against the plan will need to consider sustainable development issues in connection with the proposed project.

Please note the Regional Environment Strategy for the East of England “Our Environment, Our Future” (found at <http://www.eera.gov.uk/>) and the “Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England” (found at www.eastofenglandobservatory.org.uk) documents.

Further information can also be obtained from the environment agency at www.environment-agency.gov.uk.

The Regional Sustainable Development Strategy can be found at www.sustainability-east.com.

Sustainable development must be promoted in-line with guidance developed for ESF by the national sustainable development co-ordinator.

Applicants should also demonstrate that they have used the interactive Sustainable Development toolkit found on the ESF website at www.esf.gov.uk which can be used as a self-assessment tool to see how far a project is going in meeting requirements.

LSC in Norfolk is using the same questions concerning sustainable development in provider tender application forms as the ones provided on sustainable development guidance note for all CFO plans. Weighting to these questions has been applied appropriately and under the traffic light scoring system employed by the LSC in Norfolk are classed as “S” or “selection” weighting. Provider applicants that have met Prospectus criteria and have given a considered and appropriate response to the sustainable development question in their application and can demonstrate a clear commitment to additional action as a result of using guidance material above, will be prioritised over those that have not during the tender appraisal process.

Other Sustainable Development useful links are:

Providing opportunities to allow everyone to fulfil their potential:

Social Exclusion Unit (Office for the Deputy Prime Minister)

<http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk>

Equal Opportunities Commission <http://www.eoc.org.uk>

Environmental protection and enhancement through the delivery of projects:

The Carbon Trust (free advice and guidance on energy efficiency issues)

<http://www.actionenergy.org.uk/> (or Tel: 0800 58 57 94)

Envirowise (free advice and guidance on water efficiency and waste minimisation)

<http://www.envirowise.gov.uk> (or Tel: 0800 58 57 94)

Higher Education Environmental Performance Improvement (HEEPI)

<http://www.heepi.org.uk>

Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability (HEPS) <http://www.heps.org.uk/>

Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges <http://www.eauc.org.uk>

Transport Energy (best practice guidance on developing travel plans)

<http://www.est.org.uk/fleet/travelplan/>

Providing the skills that businesses demand and require – both now and in the future:

Sector Skills Development Agency

www.ssda.org.uk

World Business Council for Sustainable Development

<http://www.wbcscd.ch/templates/TemplateWBCSD4/layout.asp?MenuID=1>

Information and Communications Technology

Please refer to the Cross-cutting Themes Guide.

The nature of and the contribution made by ICT to the provision delivered against this Co-financing Prospectus will be assessed as part of the selection process for providers. Providers are requested to show:

- a. How they will identify and exploit computer based learning materials relevant to the needs of their project target groups and beneficiaries.
- b. How they will take advantage of the delivery infrastructure and provision available locally under Learndirect and UKonline branding and more generally in Norfolk based learning centres. If making their own ICT provision, providers should explain how their activity would complement that of Learndirect or UKonline.
- c. That all beneficiaries are assisted to identify IT skills needs relevant to their future progression plans and are enabled to develop those skills either as part of their in-project activities or are signposted to other provision that will enable them to meet those needs.
- d. A clear and reasoned justification when the above mentioned points cannot be addressed in delivery.

In your application you should explain how you will identify and exploit computer based learning materials relevant to the needs of beneficiaries. Proposals should also explain how beneficiaries are assisted to identify IT skills needs and enabled to develop these skills or signposted on to other provision.

UK Online is the Government's initiative that aims to increase the use of computers and the Internet by the population at large. This is being done by providing Government information and services online and by increasing access to information and communications technology through learning centres. Learning centres are being created through funding specifically earmarked as 'UK Online' and through 'Learndirect'. Learndirect has a number of learning centres that use both its own computer-based learning and other approved products throughout the country.

Where applicable, applicants should demonstrate how their projects would support and utilise the new learning centres as part of taking learning to the learner and removing barriers to access.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Successful applicants will confirm progress in achieving the outputs, outcomes, milestones and timescales profiled in the contract by completing and returning a 'Co-financing Monitoring Return', online, within 5 days of the end of each month.

The LSC will monitor and track progress, in relation to the services to be delivered, and confirm progression in relation to the outputs, outcomes, milestones and timescales as detailed in the 'Co-financing Monitoring Return'.

The agreed period of monitoring will be monthly or quarterly (to be determined after a Risk Assessment on the project) unless additional visits are required. Dates for planned visits will be agreed in writing, between the LSC and the contractor, within one month of the signing of this Contract.

Providers will be expected to provide feedback (including complaints) from the learners, with regard to the delivery of services provided.

The LSC will review activity to assess services delivered, including its quality, and to help ensure that it is of an acceptable standard. The reviews are intended to:

- a. Take regular stock of relationship between the contractor and the LSC
- b. Promote continuous improvement and raise standards
- c. Identify excellence to disseminate across the provision
- d. Identify concerns and take action to strengthen services to be delivered
- e. Inform the process of strategic planning across current and future services

The LSC will review:

- a. Delivery of the volume of services agreed
- b. Quality of education and training and the standards achieved by learners
- c. Equality of Opportunity
- d. Health and Safety
- e. Quality of the leadership and management of learning
- f. Continuous Improvement
- g. Quality of strategic planning
- h. Financial assurance
- i. Data management

Evaluation is an integral part of any co-financed activity. Successful applicants will be asked to evaluate their activity as soon as possible after the delivery has ceased. **A standard form will be available from the provider's LSC contract manager for completion.** The activity should be evaluated at all levels, from the experience of the beneficiary or 'learner', to whether the activity met the original objectives, outputs and outcomes as expressed in the application and contract.

A starting point for evaluation will always be the original application & tender form. The following questions will need to be considered:

- Did the project meet its overall aims and objectives?
- Did the project meet the aims and objectives of the organisation?
- Did you recruit the right number of beneficiaries?
- Did you recruit the target beneficiaries according to the profile in the original application?
- Did the beneficiaries stay as long as you expected?
- Were the outcomes of the project as you expected?
- What did the beneficiaries think about the programme?
- Did the beneficiaries meet their targets?
- Did the project keep within its budget?
- Did the project provide value for money?
- Did you receive the match funding you needed?
- Did all of the partners and sub-contractors deliver to specification?

- What lessons have you learned and which can help you to shape future provision?
- Did you learn any administrative lessons and how can you run projects better in the future?

Each year, the LSC will co-ordinate evaluation across activities and organisations to provide an overall evaluation of performance against each co-financed priority and measure.

Contracting and Management Information

Each successful organisation will negotiate and enter into a contract with the LSC for delivery of that activity.

Although the process of co-financing aims to reduce the level of bureaucracy for providers with regard to financial and other record keeping, it will still be necessary for the successful applicant to keep and submit certain records relating to the delivery of their activities on a regular basis. Contract payments will be based on milestones, outputs and outcomes rather than actual cost of delivery; these will need to be supported by evidence as agreed in the contract.

As already highlighted previously, providers will be required to submit a summary of delivered activity against the contract through completing the 'Co-financing Monitoring Return' on a monthly basis. The details provided will enable the LSC to ensure payments reflect the activity undertaken.

Providers will also be required as part of the 'Co-financing Monitoring Return' to provide monthly narrative reports where there is any variance from the profile of outputs agreed with the LSC.

In addition it is essential that the LSC is able to report back to Government Office each quarter with details of the types of individuals supported on Co-financed projects, and where appropriate the nature of companies assisted. The LSC will also need to be satisfied with the eligibility of beneficiaries assisted. In order for the LSC to do this providers will be required to collect information about the beneficiaries that are assisted on their projects, this information will be collected on standard forms supplied by the LSC.

There are two beneficiary forms in use and providers will only need to use one of these:

- ESF Short Record or
- Individual Learner Record

The Short Record is the main ESF beneficiary data capture form and will be used by all providers who run ESF projects, unless they currently hold a Work Based Learning (WBL) contract with the LSC in which case they can opt to use the Individual Learner Record. Details of the forms can be found on the main LSC website.

The information collected by providers on these forms will need to be provided to the LSC in electronic form on a monthly basis so internet (and broadband) access is desirable.

There may be other project specific information required. This will depend on the nature of the project. An example of this could include evidence of internal verification, external verification, copies of learners' certificates or evidence of exit interviews for learners.

Payment Arrangements

Payment arrangements for successful providers will be on a monthly profile basis agreed at the contract negotiation stage. The basis for the payments will be agreed unit prices for achievement of milestones, outputs and outcomes, and not on actual expenditure. In negotiations the LSC will agree with providers which outputs, outcomes and milestones will attract funding and the appropriate unit prices. Applicants should note that the LSC will be looking to place most funding on the key outputs and results it wishes to achieve through this co-financing round.

It will be for the provider to discuss and agree with their LSC Contract Manager the need for payments 'up front' to address any cash flow problems.

Applicants should note that regular monitoring of payments made against performance on each contract takes place and that payments may be reduced, stopped or clawed back if there is underperformance against the contract schedules.

Individual Learning Plans

All learners will need to have an Individual Learning Plan that sets out their learning goals. Providers are welcome to use their own versions of an individual learning plan as long as it includes all the details expected by the LSC. The successful applicant should contact their contract manager to ascertain whether or not their Individual Learning Plan is suitable. A template for a learning plan can be supplied by the LSC if required.

Publicity

Successful providers are required to acknowledge financial help from the ESF and LSC through co-financing. You will be asked to ensure that enough publicity is given to your co-financed activity so that beneficiaries and the general public get to know about the ESF and what it does.

Successful applicants will be expected to provide case studies for use by the LSC to promote ESF and Co-financing.

Whenever possible, literature and materials used by beneficiaries and any publicity materials and advertisements must include an acknowledgement of ESF and LSC support, making full use of the ESF logo.

The LSC must first approve any marketing undertaken by providers to promote any services to be delivered through the use of ESF.

The provider must ensure that:

- Where the use of logos in a document or other forms of communication for promotional purposes are not practicable, reference in words to the funding

bodies must read: -**'This programme is part funded by the European Union through the European Social Fund'**

- All learners are aware of the support ESF makes with regards the services delivered.
- Where applicable, any companies, as corporate beneficiaries, are also made aware of ESF support to services delivered under this Contract.

Logos can be found online at the ESF website on www.esf.gov.uk (this can be downloaded in various formats) or may be emailed direct to you by your LSC contract manager or the LSC ESF team.

Plaques for display at Provider and project premises, publicising the fact that a project is part-funded through the European Union, are available free of charge again through your contract manager; **these must be displayed.**

The provider must also ensure it complies with LSC branding guidelines and the correct use of the LSC logo.

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and Matrix Standards

When contracting with the Learning and Skills Council your organisation must ensure high quality management and delivery and continuous quality improvement. It is a requirement that contracted organisations delivering IAG to people over the age of 20 will be quality assured through the Matrix Quality Standard for any information, advice and guidance services and/or other appropriate quality standards. Organisations which are not accredited through matrix but believe that they have another appropriate standard should demonstrate how "any other appropriate standard" provides quality assurance at least as rigorous as Matrix. Organisations that are not themselves accredited through the Matrix Quality Standard for information, advice and guidance services at the time of their tender submission should be working towards accreditation commencement within 6 months from the start of any LSC contract.

Further information about the Matrix Quality Standard for information, advice and guidance services can be accessed through the matrix website: <http://www.matrix-quality-standard.com>.

Raising Standards – Quality and Self-Assessment

Applicants should be aware that learning programmes delivered through this prospectus will be subject to inspection by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). Successful applicants will be required to complete a self assessment report and development plan annually.

Full details on the scope of inspections for ESF provision can be found on the ALI website at www.ali.gov.uk (click on "About Inspection").

NOTE: Providers are required to ensure that appropriately qualified and trained staff will deliver all learning and guidance provision, and are responsible for the professional development and training of their staff.

Complaints Procedure

Any applicant who wishes to make a complaint against the LSC in Norfolk relating to any element of their treatment through the co-financing process should send it to the Contracts Director c/o the LSC office in Bedford.

State Aid

The European Commission has considerable powers to monitor, control and restrict the many forms and levels of aid (State Aid) given by all Member States to their industries. State Aid is any form of aid to a commercial undertaking through “state resources” that distorts or threatens to distort competition within the European Union. In practice it means that any co-financed funding support the LSC gives to enterprises that could be construed as giving them a competitive advantage over other enterprises in the European Union will fall under the European rules regarding State Aid.

The acid test is if all 4 tests in Article 87 (1) (EC Treaty of Rome) are met, then there is a State Aid:

- a. Is funding provided through State resources?
- b. Does funding distort or threaten to distort competition?
- c. Does funding favour certain undertakings or the production of certain goods?
- d. Does funding affect trade between Member States?

The cost of training provided to enterprises (large or small) through public funding such as ESF Co-financed contracts can be perceived as a State Aid to those companies.

Private sector training providers will not be considered as in receipt of State Aid themselves, as they have already taken part in an open, competitive tendering process for the ESF contract.

Training Provision to Employed Beneficiaries

It will be essential for all providers providing training to private companies/enterprises and their employees to consider the State Aid implications for their projects.

For full information on State Aid please refer to guidance issued by the Department of Trade and Industry, available from their website at www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/stateaid/pdfs/stateaidguide.pdf.

Small and Medium Sized Employers (SMEs)

For the purposes of ESF, a SME is an organisation that:

- a. employs fewer than 250 individuals (based on headcount expressed in Annual Working Units)
- b. has an annual balance sheet of less than Euro43m
- c. has an annual turnover not exceeding Euro50M

d. is not more than one quarter owned by another company
Companies owned and operated by large public bodies are not counted as SMEs.

Large Companies and ESF

Employed people benefiting from ESF funding will almost always be employees of SMEs. Large companies may exceptionally apply for funding if they are working in partnership with SMEs and the majority of beneficiaries are from SMEs. In special circumstances larger companies may receive ESF funding if, for instance, there is an immediate danger of large-scale redundancies which will impact upon SMEs within the local community.

Training for the Public Sector

Co-financed funding is not generally available for training individuals for permanent jobs in the public sector, although public sector employees are eligible as beneficiaries for learning up to NVQ Level 2 or equivalent if training facilitates promotion and career development and if the beneficiary is currently working in a low-skilled job. Public sector organisations can of course apply for ESF funding to support beneficiaries who are unemployed or working in another sector.

Support for Beneficiaries

You can include the costs of support for beneficiaries (including items such as childcare and transport) in the finances for activities funded through co-financing. This can only be for activity directly related to learning provision i.e. the LSC will not fund childcare or transport provision which is separate from learning provision.

Proposals will need to clearly explain what the co-financed funds are paying for and how this is helping meet the priorities identified in the areas of activity listed above.

Value Added Tax

Learning and Skills Council cannot offer advice on VAT issues. It is for providers to determine the status of their proposed activity. You should direct any specific questions to HM Revenue and Customs.

Mixing Co-financed Funds with Other Funding

Co-financed funds can be used to support part of a larger project that is funded from a variety of sources. The proposal form can make reference to the wider project but most of the proposal should be devoted to explaining the element of the project that the co-financed funds will be used for and the outputs that it will buy. The proposal will be judged on the activity that is delivered with the co-financed funding, the information about the wider project will be used for information purposes only.

Co-financed funds cannot be used to match against other European funding streams. If you are interested in using your co-financed money as match funding to draw in other UK funding you will need to obtain written permission from the LSC. Requests should be put in writing to the ESF Team at the LSC in Norfolk.

The outputs achieved with co-financed funds can only be counted once by the LSC and cannot be included in the returns required by other UK funding streams unless this is explicitly approved by the other funding body.

Sub-contracting and Partnership Delivery

It is normally expected that there will be no sub-contracting below the contract between the provider and the LSC. Any additional layers of sub-contracting must be declared clearly in the original tender application and will need to be approved by the Government Office for the East of England.

In the case of either sub-contracting or partnership delivery, organisations must specify in their tender who will be doing which elements of project activity or state that they will follow an open and competitive tendering process. Processes and procedures for monitoring and review of sub-contractors must be in place. If you are not directly delivering training this must be clearly stated in any tender application form, particularly noted under Question 9 Activity Management.

Double-Funding

In any case of sub-contracting steps must be taken to avoid any double funding at the sub-contractors level (this must be declared by the sub-contractor). This is particularly important if the sub-contractor is accessing other European funding or LSC funding for the same activity.

Skills for Life

Approved Skills for Life qualifications that can be funded under this prospectus are the Entry Level Level qualifications and the national tests at Level 1 and Level 2.

Details of the qualifications can be found on the DfES's website www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus, or in the DfES's publication Skills for Life.

Qualifications for Staff Teaching Adult Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL

In line with national requirements for post-sixteen sector teachers to hold a recognised teaching qualification there have been changes required of people delivering adult literacy and numeracy. These requirements take into account the role of the individual and expect that the qualification(s) achieved should match the requirements of the job. They are designed to ensure that all teachers of adult literacy and/or adult numeracy are equipped with the appropriate and relevant skills in their subject area.

The requirements are:

New entrants: should be working towards achievement of the following qualifications from the start of their role:

- Teachers - Cert ED / PGCE + Level 4 subject specific Certificate
- Support/Vocational Staff - Level 3 subject specific Certificate
- Volunteer/Mentor - Level 2 subject specific Certificate

Existing staff: to commit to working towards and achieving the following qualifications within 3 years:

- Tutors (928 qualified) - Level 4 subject specific Certificate
- Support/Vocational Staff (928 or awareness qualified) - Level 3 subject specific Certificate
- Volunteer/Mentor (928 or awareness trained)- Level 2 subject specific Certificate

National Qualifications Framework

The table below shows the comparable levels between different qualifications.

Level of Qualification	General	Vocational	Occupational
5	Higher Level Qualifications (e.g. Degrees)		Level 5 NVQ
4			Level 4 NVQ
3 (Advanced Level)	A Level	Vocational A Level	Level 3 NVQ
2 (Intermediate Level)	5 GCSE grade A* - C	Vocational GCSE	Level 2 NVQ
1 (Foundation Level)	GCSE grade D - G	Foundation GCSE	Level 1 NVQ
Entry Level	Certificate of (educational) achievement		