

ESF Co-financing 2004-07
Invitation to Tender
Prospectus and tendering guidance

LSC Suffolk
Round 4g February 2007

Part A - Guidance



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Section 1. CO-FINANCING

1.1 INTRODUCTION

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

The other LSC local offices, EEDA (the Regional Development Agency), Jobcentre Plus or the local authority co-financing organisations may also run further rounds during 2006/7.

This prospectus and tendering guidance outlines the process to be used for responding to invitations to tender for co-financed activity, as issued by the LSC. Included in the prospectus and tendering guidance are details of the Co-financer's timetable for tendering, tender assessment and appraisal criteria, as well as details of the process. The prospectus consists of Part A (guidance) and Part B (detailed specifications).

The prospectus has been designed to help applicants structure their tenders to deliver activities which address the priority areas identified in the Co-financing plan. Examples of the contract documents are on the main LSC website.

Information on the tender deadline is contained in Section 4, the address for submission of tenders will appear at the front of the tender form and the tender pack includes a reply label.

1.2 WHAT IS IT?

In January 2001, ESF Co-financing was introduced to deliver Objective 3 ESF programmes in England. This means that ESF funding and domestic match funding can be channelled to applicants as a single funding stream by Co-financing organisations such as the Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus, EEDA and some local authorities.

Co-financing offers a more strategic use of ESF, alongside UK public and other funds involving the management and planning of ESF at measure level, rather than project level. This has been agreed with the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East).

The broad aims of co-financing are:

- better value for money;
- added value to the delivery of government programmes;
- innovation and creativity at local and regional levels;
- greater coherence, co-ordination and targeting of provision;
- Reduction of bureaucracy.

Section 2. THE OBJECTIVE 3 EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PROGRAMME

2.1 ESF OBJECTIVE 3 – OVERVIEW

The European Social Fund (ESF) is an important source of funding for activities to develop employability and human resources, in line with the European Employment Strategy. It is used to add value to policies introduced to make a reality of the Government's vision for an inclusive society.

The ESF covers every part of Great Britain under one or more of three objectives:

- Objective 1** covers areas that are economically disadvantaged: Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Cornwall, West Wales and the Valleys, Highlands and Islands of Scotland;
- Objective 2** covers areas that are adjusting to changes in their industrial and service sectors, rural areas in decline, urban areas in difficulty, and economically depressed areas that depend heavily on fisheries
- Objective 3** operates everywhere except Objective 1 areas.

The European Social Fund (ESF) Objective 3 programme in the UK is managed by local Government Offices. The Government Office for the East of England (GO-East) has set out the strategies and priorities for the use of Objective 3 ESF in the East of England 2000 – 2007.

The Objective 3 Programme aims to tackle barriers to labour market participation experienced by the unemployed and socially excluded. Support is also available to promote lifelong learning and to enhance adaptability, targeting employees and employers, as well as gender inequality.

2.2 ESF POLICY FIELDS

The Objective 3 Programme has five policy fields, with each of these being broken into a range of measures.

Policy Field 1 – Active Labour Market Policies - Developing and promoting active labour market policies to combat and prevent unemployment.

Policy Field 2 – Equal Opportunities and Social Exclusion - Promoting equal opportunities for all, especially those experiencing social exclusion.

Policy Field 3 – Lifelong Learning - Addressing individual learning needs of employees to improve employability and promote job mobility.

Policy Field 4 – Adaptability and Entrepreneurship - Promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce in response to the needs of SMEs.

Policy Field 5 – Improving the position of Women in the Labour Market - Specific measures to improve women's access to and participation in the labour market.

Section 3. THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL

3.1 NATIONAL REMIT AND PRIORITIES

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was established under the Learning and Skills Act 2000. It is a unitary body with 47 local councils and replaces the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) and the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). The LSC is responsible for the funding of all post-16 education and training below higher education including:

- Further education sector colleges
- School sixth forms
- Work-based training for young people
- Workforce development
- Adult and community learning
- Information, advice and guidance for adults
- Education Business Links
- Entry 2 Employment
- Working with offenders in the community

3.2 NATIONAL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The key national priorities are to:

1. Ensure that all 14 – 19 year olds have access to high quality, relevant learning opportunities.
2. Making learning truly demand led so that it better meets the needs of employers, young people and adults.
3. Transform the learning and skills sector - the Agenda for Change.
4. Strengthen the role of the LSC in economic development so that we provide the skills needed to help all individuals into jobs and lifelong employability.
5. Improve the skills of workers who are delivering Public Services.
6. Strengthen the capacity of the LSC to lead change nationally, regionally, and locally.

3.3 THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL FOR SUFFOLK

Suffolk LSC is one of the six local LSCs within the East of England; the others are in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire and Norfolk. Suffolk LSC is based at Felaw Maltings by the River Orwell and Ipswich Docks.

Suffolk LSC is responsible for taking forward the national LSC agenda ensuring that the strategic approach fully reflects priorities within Suffolk. The local plan therefore contributes towards national objectives and targets and ensures that learning provision fully meets local needs. The three key aims of the LSC are:

3.4 TARGETS FOR SUFFOLK

The following targets have been published in our Annual Plan 2006-07 which is available on our website late at: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/suffolk>

Suffolk's contribution to the national targets

Under priority 1, for young people

- increase the proportion of 19 year-olds who achieve at least level 2 by 3 percentage points between 2004 and 2006, and a further two percentage points between 2006 and 2008, and improve attainment at level 3.

Nationally we need an additional 31,000 young people to gain a level 2 in 2005/2006 compared to 2003/2004 and a further 22,000 in 2007/2008 compared to 2005/2006.

In Suffolk to meet the target we need 180 more young people to gain a level 2 qualification in 2005/2006 compared to 2004/2005, and a further 200 in 2006/07 and 220 in 2007/2008.

Under priority 2, for adults

- reduce by at least 40 per cent the number of adults in the workforce who lack an NVQ level 2 or equivalent qualifications by 2010.

Nationally, in 2006/07 we need to increase the numbers of full level 2 achievements through further education and work-based learning to 117,000 (N.B. excludes NES and NETP elements.) In addition the roll out of the National Employer Training Programme will increase the LSC contribution to this target.

In Suffolk, we plan to deliver 1,200 full level 2 achievements through further education and work-based learning in 2006/07 that is an increase of 160 compared to 2005/06.

In addition, we will also deliver 350 first full level 2 achievements through NETP.

Under priority 2, for adults

- improve the basic skills of 2.25 million adults between 2001 and 2010, with a milestone of 1.5 million in 2007.

In Suffolk, in 2006/07, we need 4,200 Suffolk learners to achieve Skills for Life qualification.

Underpinning priorities 1 and 2, for Apprenticeships

- the LSC has agreed a new performance indicator for Apprenticeships. The aim is for 75 per cent more young people to complete their Apprenticeship in 2007/08, compared to 2002/03.

Nationally we aim to raise the number of framework completions to 70,000 in 2006/07 supporting the achievement of level 2 and level 3 qualification targets.

In Suffolk we aim to raise the number of framework completions (all ages) to 1,161 (a 4 per cent increase) in 2006/07.

We also work with key partners to contribute to the following targets

- Increase the proportion of young people and adults achieving a level 3 qualification
- Reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training by two percentage points by 2010
- Increase participation in higher education towards 50 per cent of those aged 18 to 30 by 2010.

Young people – target position

16-18 participation

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06 Planned
FE	4,906	5,184	5,372	6,200	6,261
Work-based learning*	2,158	2,018	1,802	1,961	2,026
Sub-total	7,064	7,202	7,174	8,161	8,287
Schools	6,052	5,980	6,025	6,185	6,573
TOTAL	13,116	13,182	13,199	14,346	14,860

* Excludes E2E

Source: LSC data –Actuals FO5, WBL pd12, PLASC Planned, Annex A/AMPS

Level 2 at 19 cohort analysis

2004/05 (actual)	FE		WBL		Total	
	Nos.	% of all	Nos.	% of all	Nos.	% of all
16-18 All Learners	6008		1758		7766	
16-18 Full Level 2 Learners	1281	21.3%	1308	74.4%	2589	33.3%
16-18 Full Level 2 Achievements	845	14.1%	535	30.4%	1380	17.8%
2005/06 (Planned)						
16-18 All Learners	6261		2031		8292	
16-18 Full Level 2 Learners	1520	24.3%	1514	74.5%	2822	34.0%
16-18 Full Level 2 Achievements	1018	16.3%	568	28.0%	1586	19.1%
2006/07 (Planned)						
16-18 All Learners	6458		1980		8438	
16-18 Full Level 2 Learners	1773	27.4%	1476	74.5%	3249	38.5%
16-18 Full Level 2 Achievements	1223	18.9%	587	29.6%	2877	34.1%

Level 2 at 19

	Number of learners who have reached the level 2 threshold by age 16 (i.e. by the end of 2000-01)	Number of learners who have reached the level 2 threshold by age 17 (i.e. by the end of 2001-02)	Number of learners who have reached the level 2 threshold by age 18 (i.e. by the end of 2002-03)	Number of learners who have reached the level 2 threshold by age 19 (i.e. by the end of 2003-04)
Suffolk	4,522	5,049	5,432	5,669
Percentage of cohort	56%	62%	67%	70%

LSC matched data set 2004

Young people (16-18) in Suffolk leaving Entry to Employment (2004/05)

No of leavers	Leavers into positive destinations	% of leavers into positive destinations
524	197	38%

Source: LSC data – WBL pd12

Young people (16-18) in Suffolk not in employment, education or training (NEET)

	Nov 2004 %	Nov 2004 volume	Nov 2005 %	Nov 2005 volume
NEET Suffolk	7.8%	1,562	8.2%	1,683
Not known Suffolk	5.1%	1,077	4.7%	1,018
NEET East of England*	6.5%	11,194		
Not known East of England*	5.7%	10,424		

* November 2005 regional data not currently available

Source: Suffolk Connexions

Success rates (age 16-18)

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
FE				
All Programmes		62%	60%	68%
Long Programmes		60%	57%	66%
Short Programmes		76%	79%	83%
WBL (all-age)				
NVQ		46%	50%	57%
Full Framework		33%	37%	47%

Source: LSC data FO5, WBL pd12

Adults – target position

Adult learner numbers

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05 actual
FE participation	28,163	30,756	28,020
WBL participation	1,536	1,597	1,378
Level 2 (FE & WBL only)	5,589	6,535	7,197
Level 3 (FE & WBL only)	4,991	5,021	4,888

Source: LSC data, FO5, WBL pd12

Suffolk position against Skills for Life targets

	Total to 2004	Achievements 2004 to Sept 2005	Target for 2007	% of target achieved
National	746,987	331,610	1,513,300	71%
East of England	63,645	29,216	158,346	59%
Suffolk	7,460	4,490	11,206	64%

Source: LSC data FO5 Skills for Life data release Sept 05

Success rates (age 19+)

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
FE All programmes		74%	67%	72%
Long programmes		52%	52%	61%
Short programmes		91%	86%	88%
Skills for Life (all-ages) Number	1248	1635	3399	4490
Percentage against milestone	37%	49%	102%	120%

Source: LSC data FO5 Skills for Life data release Sept 05

Please see our Annual Plan 2006-07, our Co-financing Plan, the East of England Development Agency's 'East of England 2010 Prosperity and Opportunity for All' and the Regional Development Plan for details of the local economic context within which our local targets have been framed.

3.5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT MEASURES (EDIMs)

In this fourth co-financing plan we will be continuing to addressing issues relating to gender (56%), disability (15%), and ethnicity (8%). Projects should consider how they will delivery activity that will contribute to the achievement of the LSC's Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) for 2006/07.

1. For WBL/FE increase the number of young men into Health, Social Care and Public Services by 3%

Health, Social Care and Public Services

Ave. in learning 2003/4		Ave. in learning 2004/5		Variance		Target 2005/6 + 3%*		Target 2006/7 + 3%**	
WBL	FE	WBL	FE	WBL	FE	WBL	FE	WBL	FE
37	306	29	270	-22%	12%	30	278	31	286

* 3% on 2004/5

** 3% on 2005/6

2. For WBL/FE increase the numbers of young women into ICT and Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing by 3% in each sector

ICT

Ave. in learning 2003/4		Ave. in learning 2004/5		Variance		Target 2005/6 + 3%*		Target 2006/7 + 3%**	
WBL	FE	WBL	FE	WBL	FE	WBL	FE	WBL	FE
9	1042	11	1284	+22%	+23%	12	1322	12	1362

* 3% on 2004/5

** 3% on 2005/6

ETM

Ave. in learning 2003/4		Ave. in learning 2004/5		Variance		Target 2005/6 + 3%*		Target 2006/7 + 3%**	
WBL	FE	WBL	FE	WBL	FE	WBL	FE	WBL	FE
18	33	13	16	-27%	-51%	14	17	14	17

* 3% on 2004/5

** 3% on 2005/6

3. Increase number of BEM learners on WBL programmes by 10%

Ave. in learning 2003/4	Ave. in learning 2004/5	Variance	Target 2005/6 + 10%*	Target 2006/7 + 10%**
64	63	-2%	69	75

* 10% on 2004/5

** 10% on 2005/6

3.5 CONSULTATION

The development of our annual plan involved extensive consultation with partners and stakeholders across Suffolk.

Partners and stakeholders consulted include:

- East of England Development Agency
- Local Learning Partnership
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- Jobcentre Plus
- Connexions Suffolk
- Learning institutions (schools, FE colleges, adult education institutions, and work based learning providers)
- Community and voluntary organisations
- Other national and regional Learning and Skills Councils.

Section 4. SUBMITTING A TENDER

4.1 ORGANISATIONS' ELIGIBILITY

4.1.1 Who can submit a tender?

All organisations or partnerships that are actively working in education, training or learning focusing on people over 16 are eligible unless specified otherwise in the tender. Organisations submitting a tender must be legally constituted. However, ESF Regulations prevent sole traders and individuals delivering ESF co-financed activity. Organisations submitting a tender must ensure all partnership requirements of the specification are fully met and substantiated.

4.1.2 Collaborative partnerships

The LSC is particularly interested in encouraging voluntary organisations and employers to be involved in co-financing projects as part of collaborative partnerships.

However, the LSC will contract with only one lead partner who must be a legal body. As they will then be responsible for the quality of provision and the progress and performance of the contract on behalf of other partner organisations, we will expect them to enter into formal arrangements with their partners.

4.1.3 Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

The Learning and Skills Council for Suffolk has changed the way it funds the provision of IAG for its ESF beneficiaries. All new projects where IAG is a required outcome will be required to deliver and pay for the IAG from within the project budget. The involvement of a Matrix accredited partner will therefore be compulsory at tender stage. Suffolk IAG can advise with regard to Matrix accredited providers if necessary, but if an appropriate partner is not substantiated at tender submission stage, it could render the tender invalid.

4.1.4 Provider capacity

Tenders should summarise any experience or track record the organisation has had in delivering projects with public funding, stating any particular relevance to the specification being addressed. The Co-financing Organisations are committed to raising the quality and standards of learning provision and will favour proposals from organisations with a sound quality record with no serious concerns. The track record of partners should also be included if relevant to the tender. The information provided should be detailed, accurate and relevant.

4.1.5 Existing providers

Existing providers should provide full details as above, but any tenders from those where there are a number of major concerns in specific areas in their Provider Review or ALI/OFSTED Common Inspection Framework assessment are not likely to be successful.

4.1.6 New providers

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 the required documents with the tender. In addition new providers will be required to work towards the quality criteria of the Common Inspection Framework and within the first contract year

complete a self assessment and development plan.

As part of the New Provider Process, all new providers will need to produce the following supporting documents and submit them with the tender (**Note – this is a change from previous practice where they were requested later**)

- Health and safety policy
- Equal opportunities policy
- Audited accounts/independent review of the previous 2 years

These will also need to be submitted with the tender by existing providers if it is more than 12 months since they were last supplied to the LSC. To complete the new provider documentation successfully, applicants should ensure that they are able to supply evidence to support the different headings, e.g., management systems, leadership and management. The latest version of the LSC New Provider Process is available on the main LSC website – www.lsc.gov.uk

After your organisation has completed the LSC New Provider Process and been awarded a contract, you will need to work towards the quality criteria of the ALI/OFSTED Common Inspection Framework.

ESF provision is subject to inspection by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). The ALI inspections focus on the experiences and expectations of individual learners through the evaluation of the key principles set out in the Common Inspection Framework. Successful tender organisations will be required to carry out self-assessment against these principles, in order to identify strengths and areas for improvement to be incorporated in ongoing development plans by providers.

Providers will be required to provide all reasonable co-operations with representatives of the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and to allow access to premises and participants for the purposes of inspection.

4.1.7 Equality and diversity

All organisations that the Co-financing Organisations contract with are required to have an Equal Opportunities Policy that covers all the relevant government legislation on inequality and discrimination:

- The race relations Act 1976 and amendments
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and amendments
- The Disability Discrimination Act Parts 1-4
- The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

Legislation covers both the internal practices of the project and its staff, as well as the manner in which the project activities are carried out. More detail on legislation can be found on the Department of Trade and Industry website www.dti.gov.uk and On the websites for the Equality Commissions www.eoc.org.uk, www.cre.gov.uk and www.drc-gb.org.uk

Projects should also be aware of the legislation on age discrimination and should be committed to age equality within policy and practice. The government's campaign materials on age related discrimination can be found at www.ageposition.gov.uk

Organisations will need to demonstrate that their Equal Opportunities Policy is reviewed on an annual basis, signed and dated by the Chief Executive (or equivalent), is monitored, evaluated and implemented.

As well as the equal opportunities for staff the following should be included for beneficiaries:

- Equal opportunities targets for recruitment, retention and achievement
- Effective recruitment systems that promote equality of opportunity to access and participation in learning
- Support to learners who are disadvantaged through learning difficulties, disabilities and/or who have basic skills needs
- Methods for dealing and responding to potential difficulties
- Promotion of equal opportunities and associated responsibilities to staff and learners
- Clear lines of accountability
- Review systems and procedures

Furthermore, as one of the three “Horizontal Themes” in ESF Objective 3, tender proposals will have to demonstrate the criteria in the tender application form, similar to the above, reflecting the wider ESF requirements that providers meet an equal opportunities standard. However, proposals will not be penalised if they are unable to meet this standard, but they will be expected to agree a development plan as part of contract negotiation if successful, in order to implement improvements.

It is important that the LSC works with organisations that are committed to breaking down barriers, and that everyone who wishes to engage in the project is empowered to do so. You need to describe how you will promote access to the project, in a manner sensitive to target groups’ needs (individuals or organisations as applicable). You should briefly describe how your project will deal with the following groups who suffer from discrimination and may be represented within the target group you have identified for your project activities:

- Men or women (or both)
- Black and ethnic minority groups and those who are discriminated against because of their ethnicity
- People with a disability
- Lesbians and gay men
- People who are discriminated against because of religious belief
- Other excluded groups such as refugees, ex-offenders, people addicted to drugs and alcohol and travellers

All projects should plan to actively encourage participation by people from these groups, even if not expressly required by the specification.

Please also describe the needs of, and barriers faced by, your beneficiaries and how these will be dealt with, and how your project plans to empower its beneficiaries. Support measures for the specific needs of all beneficiaries should be described, including translation and interpretation, crèche facilities, physical access to buildings, aids and adaptations to disabled people and other means through which you will enable beneficiaries to fully participate in project activities.

You must demonstrate your experience of delivering services to your target groups. It may be appropriate for you to involve organisations that have considerable experience in working with the particular target groups as described in your partnership to ensure targeted and appropriate

provision. If you are going to incur further costs, please include them in the project budget.

4.1.8 Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is another of the three “Horizontal themes” in ESF Objective 3, and the same approach is taken regarding the need to demonstrate in your tender proposal how you meet the criteria.

Questions will cover the following areas:

- How does your project provide the opportunities for everyone to fulfil their potential?
- How does your project ensure environmental protection and enhancement?
- How does your project provide the skills that the economy needs now and in the future?

Sustainable development is a process that seeks to ensure a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come, by integrating social, environmental and economic considerations equally into everything we do. It recognises that social, economic and environmental issues are interdependent and therefore activity in one of these areas should not be pursued in isolation but with consideration for each of the other areas as well.

Sustainable development is being increasingly integrated into Government policy, legislation and decision-making to help deliver a better quality of life for everyone. To guide this process the UK Government has developed the UK’s Strategy for Sustainable Development “A better Quality of Life” (<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk>)

There is also an increasing recognition of the need to integrate sustainable development within education and skills provision, to equip people with the skills and knowledge they need to integrate sustainable development into their work and home lives. Please refer to the Department for Education and Skills “Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education & Skills” (www.dfes.gov.uk/sd/docs/Sdactionplan.pdf).

The Objective 3 Programme has taken the three elements of sustainable development and defined them as follows:

- Social: Providing the opportunities for everyone to fulfil their potential
- Environment: Environmental protection and enhancement through the delivery of projects
- Economic: Providing the skills that businesses both demand and require – now and in the future

To fully integrate sustainable development in the spirit of ESF, you must consider all three of its elements. Please use the guidance on the proposal form to help you when designing your project and answering this question. For further advice on the implementation of sustainable development within your project, please refer to the ESF sustainable development toolkit (http://esf.gov.uk/s_development/toolkit.asp.) Further explanation on each element is given below.

Social: Providing the opportunities for everyone to fulfil their potential

This focuses on tackling social exclusion, widening participation in education and training, and helping to overcome the various barriers (be they social, economic or cultural) that prevent people becoming involved. You should research and analyse the particular needs and issues relevant to your target group, such as socially excluded or long-term unemployed, and identify the steps or actions you need to take to engage with these groups. A diverse range of approaches may be required, and partnerships with other organisations may be necessary to enable effective and targeted intervention.

Environmental: Environmental protection and enhancement through the delivery of projects

There are two main areas where you can contribute to the environment as part of your project:

- Consider how you address environmental issues in your organisation especially in the areas of energy, water, waste, procurement and transport and how will this influence the delivery of your project. For example, promote use of public transport and minimise car use, use energy efficient equipment, reduce waste through increased use of ICT and reduce the impact of your resource use by buying environmentally friendly goods.
- Integration of environmental issues into course content to raise the general level of awareness and understanding of environmental issues and how they can be addressed. For example, including information on sustainable design and construction techniques on construction courses; developing social, practical and team working skills through enhancement of a local green space or a river clean-up.

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

This involves ensuring that labour supply meets demand by addressing the generic and specific skill shortages that exist in the labour market, and ensuring an adaptable and flexible labour market. It also includes a focus on the future skill needs of businesses by identifying growth sectors and highlighting the increasing importance of addressing sustainability and environmental management within business. You should also consider how environmental management issues could be integrated into training provision aimed at employers and employees.

For many Objective 3 projects, the social and economic elements of sustainable development are likely to be primary focus of your project. Use this section to demonstrate what you are doing to address these elements and how you can address environmental issues in delivering your project.

As part of our commitment to sustainable development, you may be asked to participate in a small number of workshops aimed at helping your organisation and project improve its understanding of and contribution to sustainable development.

Alternatively you may be given a sustainable development toolkit to work through.

Project managers will discuss this with successful projects as part of the contracting process.

4.1.9 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The third “Horizontal Theme” in ESF Objective 3 is Information and Communication Technology, aiming to integrate ICT skills into all types of activity, including, for example, actions to develop basic and key skills. Questions in the tender application form will relate to:

What ICT will you use in the project?

How will you use the ICT?

What are the expected benefits and outcomes of using the proposal ICT?

4.1.10 Health and safety

All organisations that the Co-financing Organisations contract with are required to have a Health and Safety Policy that covers all the relevant government legislation pertinent to the organisation and the activities undertaken. Organisations should be able to demonstrate that the policy is reviewed on an annual basis, signed and dated by the Chief Executive (or similar),

is monitored, evaluated and implemented.

The content of a Health and Safety Policy should include:

- A planned approach to health and safety, and organisational risk assessment
- The promotion of safe working and supervision within all learning programmes
- Systems to check adequate supervision and safe learning environments
- Systems to inform staff and learners about health and safety arrangements, entitlements and responsibilities
- Accident and incident reporting procedures
- Accident prevention and re-occurrence

The tender also needs to describe how health and safety will be monitored both at the contractor and partner premises.

4.1.11 Quality standards

Successful providers will have to ensure the quality of the service and provision they offer and the primary responsibility will fall with them. If they are working in a collaborative partnership, they will be responsible for the quality of provision from the other members. Quality standards will form part of the project monitoring arrangements.

Programmes of learning activity that fall within the scope of OFSTED are subject to inspection by the Adult Learning Inspectorate. Providers will be required to work towards a self-assessment and development plan as part of the Common Inspection Framework within the first twelve months of delivery. New providers will be supported throughout this process.

The tender needs to describe its quality management processes, their relevance to the project activity, and what support will be given to partners.

4.1.12 Financial viability

Contractors will be required to demonstrate that they have sufficiently robust financial procedures and systems to manage the finances of the approved project. They will be expected to employ appropriately experienced staff to facilitate this.

New providers will be required to submit audited accounts or management accounts for the previous two years.

4.1.13 Value for money

Applications should show how they will ensure maximum effectiveness, promote excellence and high quality delivery and avoid unnecessary bureaucracy.

Project costs should be realistic, relevant, detailed and based on actual costs.

4.2 THE INVITATION TO TENDER

The Learning and Skills Council is required to follow standard procurement procedures when selecting Co-financed projects.

4.2.1 Projects in more than one specification

Your project must deliver activities as stated within each LSC specification. If you wish to tender for an activity under more than one specification you will have to submit a separate tender form for each specification. You should also note that there can be no guarantee that two linked tenders related to different specifications will be selected.

4.2.2 Length of projects

The funding period for tenders is set out on each specification. The LSC will consider tenders for a funding period that covers a shorter period within these dates. Tenders for periods outside these dates will not be eligible. Please note that all your expenditure and activity must be both incurred and defrayed within the period of your project. All outputs must be completed within the length of time set out in the specification. Any outputs, outcomes or milestones falling outside the set period will be deemed ineligible.

4.2.3 Tender documents

The tender documents will be posted on the LSC website from 5 February 2007. Potential applicants will be advised when the documents are available on the website through mail shots and other publicity. **See Section 7 – Contacts** for individual LSC website addresses / links.

The documents on the LSC local web pages (www.lsc.gov.uk/suffolk) will be:

- Prospectus and tendering guidance – Part A Guidance for tendering and completion of the form
- Prospectus and tendering guidance – Part B Specifications (note, specifications will also be available individually from the website)
- Tender proposal form
- Tender return label

Please note – the tender form has changed. We are trying to significantly reduce the time between submission and project start and have therefore asked for more detailed information at submission stage. Please ensure all information has been provided.

The documents on the main national LSC website are:

- Sample LSC Contract
- New Provider Guidance
- Individual Learner Record / Short Record forms

If you do not have a computer, please write to the ESF team at the LSC who will send you a pack of information including a disk with the blank form and a label to put on the envelope containing your Tender Proposal. However, interested parties should note that they will need to have access to computer and internet facilities if they are successful.

4.3 PREPARING A TENDER

When preparing your tender, you should:

Ensure that the ESF tender meets/exceeds the LSC specifications in terms of:

- Target group (eligibility and quantity)
- Their needs
- Outcomes to be achieved (quantity and level/type)
- Total number of beneficiaries involved in the tender

- Funding available

Involve all interested parties at any early stage, well in advance of the date you have to submit the tender. Partner organisations will then be aware of the objectives and content of the project and the capacity and expertise required to deliver it successfully. This will demonstrate a real and active partnership to strengthen the tender.

Read and adhere to the Guidance Notes that accompany the tender.

4.3.1 Filling in your tender

When completing the **ESF Tender Proposal Form**, tender applicants must ensure that responses within the text boxes are no more than 1 page of A4 for each entire question, including the words of the question, in Arial, font size 10. Any additional information will be disregarded to ensure fair comparison between applications. Paper copies are available if the applicant has no computer although an electronic copy will need to be submitted with the tender. More information on completing the tender document is available in the Tender Guidance Notes at section 9 of this guidance.

Please ensure you have the latest version of the Tender Proposal Form (dated February 2007) as this has been changed from previous Tender rounds.

4.4 SUBMISSION

4.4.1 Invitation to Tender

All tenders must be submitted using the ESF Tender Proposal Form. This is available on the LSC website. **The original** completed tender must be submitted. Only typed/word-processed forms will be accepted in hard copy format (**no email or faxed versions will be accepted**). The original Tender Proposal should be sent with **original and marked “original” signature** (on the last page of the Tender Proposal) – not a computer-generated signature. Two photocopies of the signed form must also be included (marked “copy”). Note – copies of new provider documentation are NOT required (one original only). A copy of the proposal on floppy disk or a CD Rom must also be submitted.

All Partnership Declaration Forms need to be signed and submitted with completed Tender Proposal Form. These must be signed originals, on the partners’ own headed paper. Faxes, copies, emails or late submissions are NOT acceptable and the partner will be disregarded. If this is crucial to the requirements of the specification, it may render your tender ineligible.

Proposals should be returned to the relevant Co-financing Organisation at the address generated on the proposal form and on the reply label and should be clearly marked with the words:

ESF TENDERS 2005-07

- **You must use the label provided by the LSC on their local website**
- **You must not use a company franking machine as this is a sealed tendering process. Envelopes must be stamped and posted or hand delivered so they remain anonymous. PLEASE USE SUFFICIENT STAMPS FOR THE WEIGHT OF YOUR TENDER.**
- **The tendering deadline is 5pm on Monday 12 March 2007. ALL tenders must be received before this deadline. Tenders arriving at the LSC after this deadline WILL**

NOT be considered. We recommend posted tenders are sent by Guaranteed Delivery. Proof of postage will not be accepted for late tenders.

- **Please allow for postal delays over the bank holiday period and note that Partnership Declarations that are missing, faxed or emailed will not be accepted and the partner will be excluded.**

All Tender Proposals will remain sealed until after the deadline. They will then be opened at the same time, logged and witnessed by two independent people who are not involved in the assessment process.

Acknowledgement of receipt of tenders will be sent out by email or post as appropriate during the week following the deadline date.

SUMMARY OF THE TENDER SUBMISSION PROCESS

LSC Invitation to Tender Proposal, Prospectus and tendering guidance, Contracts, New Provider Processes, etc, will all be on the LSC website from **5 February 2007**. Tender Applicants will be able to download the final documents from the website address provided from 5 February onwards. If any organisation cannot access the Internet, ask the LSC to email it to you or send you a hard or disk copy.

Co-financing prospectus and tendering guidance to be read by the interested organisations to understand the process and the specifications that the different Co-financing organisations are inviting tenders for.

If interested organisations consider that they are able to deliver against a particular specification, they should complete the Tender Proposal making sure they remember the following:

- Read through the Tendering Prospectus
- Follow the Guidance for the Tender Proposal
- Meet or exceed the Specification requirements

Send the completed original signed Tender Proposal with two copies to the LSC's Felaw Maltings address

BY THE DEADLINE OF 5pm Monday 12 March 2007

Please remember to SIGN the proposal and if you post it, put on enough STAMPS!

NO FRANKING!

Depending on the number of tenders received, we hope to be able to follow the schedule below for approval:

Week commencing 19 March 2007	1 st stage assessment
Week commencing 9 April 2007	Appraisal and selection of projects
Week commencing 30 April 2007	Applicants notified of the outcome*
From 8 May 2007	Contract negotiation
Mid May	Projects start

* Note – if we receive large number of tenders, this notification date will be delayed. Please be patient as large numbers of queries will delay the notification even further.

Section 5. ASSESSMENT AND APPRAISAL

5.1 THE SELECTION PROCESS

All tenders received will be subject to a thorough assessment and appraisal process, having first gone through an eligibility check.

5.1.1 Eligibility check

All tenders are checked against set criteria on a straight yes/no basis. Any tender that fails one or more items of the eligibility checklist will not be passed for assessment (except where stated).

- Was the tender submitted before the deadline?
- Has a signed original been submitted?
- Is the tender signed and dated (original signature)?
- Are all signed, original Partnership Declarations included? (If “no”, project will proceed to assessment based on those that are substantiated.)
- Is the lead organisation a legally constituted body?
- Does the lead organisation have all required policies (as per list on tender form)?
- Have all questions been answered? (If “no”, project will proceed to assessment based on the information supplied. No additional text will be requested.)
- Is the response to each question less than one page of A4 in length? (If “no”, additional text will be crossed out and proceed to assessment accordingly.)

5.1.2 Assessment

The purpose of the assessment is to establish whether or not the tender has responded to the specification and to eliminate speculative bids. It is also to establish whether there is sufficient relevant information provided to enable fair and objective comparison at appraisal. Tenders that have passed the initial eligibility checks will be assessed independently against the tender by two people from inside or outside the LSC. They will be assessed against the sections in the tender proposal and marked on a scale that relates to whether they fit the specification, is unclear, or do not meet. Where the information provided is unclear or inconsistent it will result in that section being graded “unclear” or “does not meet”.

All sections listed below will be graded to feed into the overall grade. However, some sections are considered more important (known as “killer ratings”) and their grade can over-rule the others. If a tender is graded “does not meet” at one or more of the sections in bold, the overall grade will default to “does not meet” and the tender will not proceed to appraisal. Where one

highlighted section plus any other (highlighted or not) is graded “unclear”, the overall grade will default to “unclear” or “does not meet” and the tender will not proceed. Otherwise, the overall grade depends on the balance. Only those tenders graded overall as “meets specification” will proceed to appraisal. The sections graded at assessment are listed below – those in bold are the areas deemed “killer ratings”.

- 2a **Fit to specification (objectives)**
- 2a **Fit to specification (target group)**
- 3a **Project management** (especially partner management)
- 3b Sustainability
- 3c Track record
- 3d **Project delivery plan** (check whether the spec wants recruitment or achievement, or both and the relevant quantities)
- 3e Equality of access
- 3f Quality
- 3g Health and safety
- 4a Beneficiary targets
- 4b **Project costs (fit to specification – budget)**

5.1.3 Appraisal

The role of the appraisal panels is to ensure that a balanced package of projects is approved to support the priorities for the LSC Specifications and the requirements of the Objective 3 ESF Regional Development Plan. They will appraise the requirements of the Specifications and compare any areas of risk identified at assessment.

The appraisal criteria are listed below. The Appraisal Panel will select the tenders that best enable delivery of the specification, provides best value for money, and will provide the best quality experience for the beneficiaries and sectors concerned; and will be taken forward to post tender negotiation. Please note that any ‘lobbying’ of Panel members will not be accepted and will result in automatic disqualification of a tender.

All sections listed below will be graded (sliding scale from “Significant Added Value” through to “Significant Risk”) to feed into the overall recommendation. However, some sections are considered more important although unlike the assessment “killer ratings” they do not rule a project out by default. There are a total of eight sections to be appraised, so where there is an even spread of “meets requirements” or “risk”, the three most important areas of fit to specification, delivery arrangements/management and value for money are considered and the balance of these three will impact on the overall grade and recommendation. Sections graded are listed below, and the sections in bold are those deemed to be the “top three”

- **Fit to specification** (including beneficiaries and delivery plan)
- **Delivery arrangements/management** (including partners)
- Sustainability /sustainable development
- Track record (relevance and breadth)
- Equality of access (proactive approach)
- Quality of provision (relevance, partners and breadth)
- Health and safety (proactive approach)
- **Value for money** (relevant, detail, proportion of funding reaching the learners, State Aid, match to delivery plan/specification – “are we paying for what we want?”)

Only tenders graded as “Meets Requirements” or higher will be recommended for post tender negotiation. If there are more projects graded “Meets Requirements” or higher than are required, the panel will consider them against each other and use the ratings, the “top three” categories and any areas of concern to select the final project(s) to proceed to post tender negotiation. It is therefore possible that a project graded as “Meets Requirements” may still not proceed if there is an alternative tender considered to deliver the specification in a better way.

5.2 TENDER OUTCOMES AND FEEDBACK

All tendering organisations will receive a letter providing them with the outcome for their own proposal. This will take the form of either a letter inviting them to enter into Post Tender Negotiation (PTN), or a letter informing them that they have not been successful on this occasion. All organisations will be informed of the results in writing, and on the same day. No prior information will be supplied, given verbally at any time, or supplied to bodies other than the named contact. The results will normally be posted within 10 working days of the last appraisal panel sitting and may be up to ten working weeks after the tender deadline in a large round (we hope that for round 4g this will be by the end of April 2007).

Where tenders have not been selected, detailed feedback is provided. The feedback is intended to help to clarify the reasons for the decision and also to enable the organisation to submit a more appropriate proposal on future occasions.

The LSC will conduct post-tender negotiations with the chosen project(s) and subject to the satisfactory conclusion of these and viability checks will proceed to contract. The LSC reserves the right to withdraw from post-tender negotiations if these are protracted beyond 30 working days of the date of the initial post-tender negotiations meeting or written request for response to panel queries.

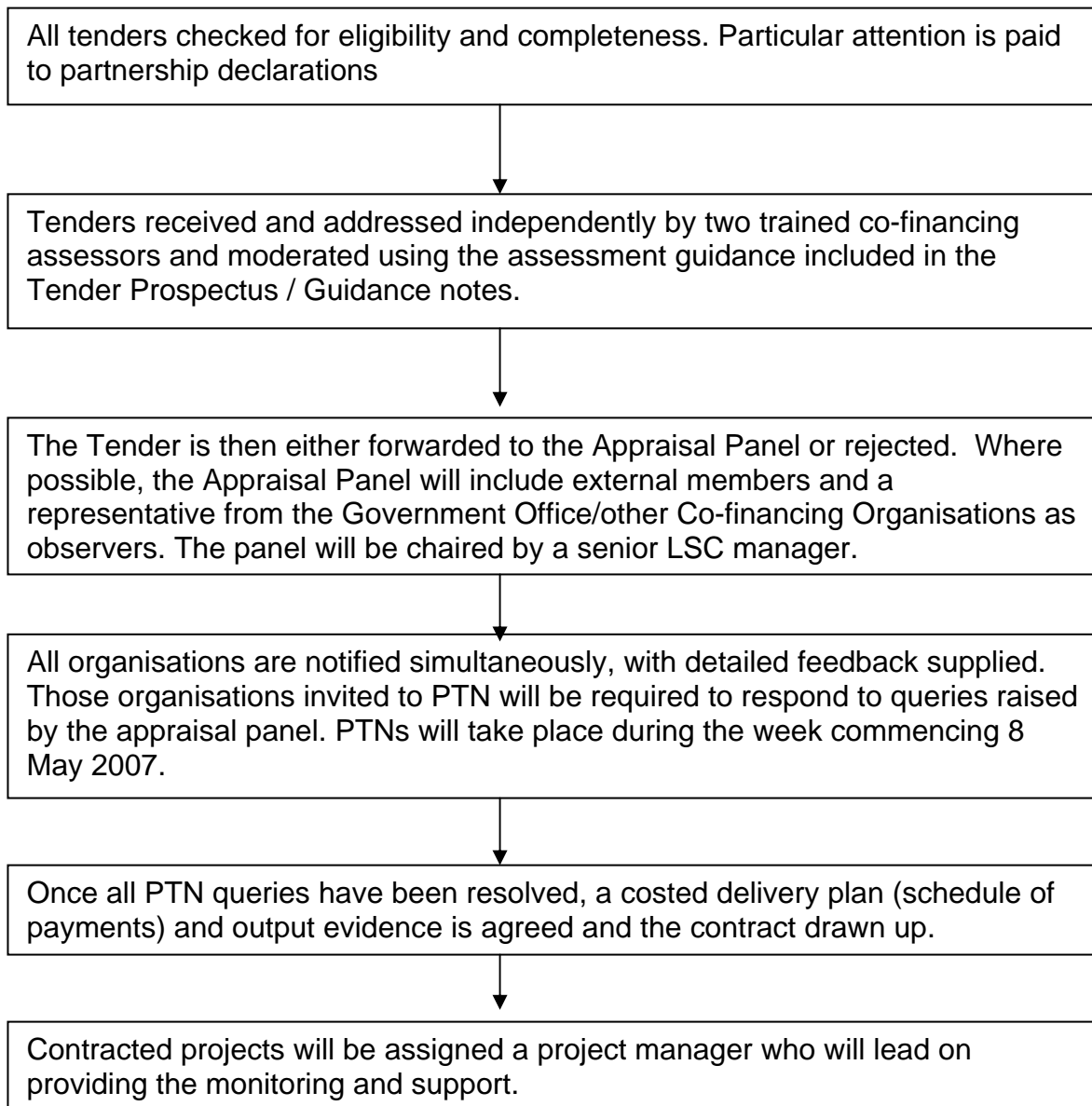
All approved projects will be publicised on the LSC’s and GO-East’s websites -see **SECTION 7 – CONTACTS** for web addresses

5.3 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

In the event that an applicant feels the assessment of their proposal has been mismanaged and that the resulting decision is improper, then a complaints procedure is available from each LSC local office. There is NO APPEALS process under Open and Competitive Tendering.

This will not overturn selection of the appropriate project(s) but may instigate a review of procedures.

SUMMARY OF THE ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS



Section 6. CONTRACTING

Organisations whose tenders are selected for the delivery of the activity as described in the specification(s) will be offered LSC contracts. The contract lays out the terms and conditions and the specific activity as described in the proposal.

A copy of the LSC contract is on the LSC National Office website – www.lsc.gov.uk.

6.1 PAYMENTS

Payments will be made according to contract costs and to a mutually agreed payment profile that sets out agreed payments for specific milestones, outputs and outcomes. Management information to support the delivery will be monitored monthly. Where there is an absence of evidence or continuous underperformance, payment may be reduced, stopped or clawed back from the provider.

6.2 MONITORING

Contracts will be monitored on a regular basis with a quarterly review of progress against targets and the LSC's quality standards by the local LSC office. Where necessary, delivery and payment schedules may be re-profiled to take account of experience of running the project. The local LSC will expect monthly returns from the provider and full training and support will be provided by the LSC.

6.3 BENEFICIARY DOCUMENTATION

One of the conditions of the LSC contract is that where learning delivery is involved, the contractors must use the LSC Individual Learner Record (ILR) or Short Record (SR) documentation in order to identify the beneficiary eligibility, background, activity being undertaken, start and finish dates. Contractors are not permitted to replace the LSC ILR or SR with their own paperwork unless agreed in writing by the LSC. All learner data must be entered onto the LSC online beneficiary management system, even if the provider's own paperwork is used.

Contractors will be required to maintain comprehensive beneficiary attendance records as part of the proof of hours received by beneficiaries. The ILRs or SR must be completed online and submitted to the LSC National Office electronically. Organisations need to identify this administration cost into their budget/payment profiles to cover this and be aware that under-delivery will result in a reduction in payments that could impact on management and administration costs.

As a guideline to administration costs related to the collation and submission of individual learner records, providers need to consider the following costs.

- Training of staff to use the system
- Inputting information onto the system – staff time and online use
- Access to Broadband – if available

Copies of the records you will be using are available from the LSC website for information.

As part of the contract you will be required to demonstrate the following:

- Beneficiaries are aware of the source of the funding that supports their project;
- There is a completed ILR or SR for each person who benefits from the project (i.e. a beneficiary in a programme). This form captures key information on the person which is essential for LSC data capture requirements);
- Attendance records are completed for all beneficiaries;
- Evidence of successful completion of programmes;
- Records of support payments paid to beneficiaries (e.g. childcare, travel, etc).

Section 7. CONTACTS

7.1 OTHER CO-FINANCING ORGANISATIONS

The Open and Competitive Tendering process of Co-financing will not allow LSC staff to provide guidance or advice regarding the content and completion of the Tendering Proposals. This ensures that no single applicant organisation is given help or assistance over others. Contact names and phone numbers are available on each LSC website for general information. Only the designated contact in the LSC is permitted to respond to tender queries, which must be submitted in writing or by email. For Suffolk, the central email address for ESF tender queries is SuffolkESFTeam@lsc.gov.uk

All queries and answers will be posted on the website www.lsc.gov.uk/suffolk . The other co-financing organisations' website details are:

Jobcentre Plus

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/partners/index.html

East of England Development Agency (EEDA)

www.eeda.org.uk

Government Office for the East of England

www.go-east.gov.uk

7.2 THE OBJECTIVE 2 PROGRAMME

The Objective 2 programme is supported through the European Regional Development Fund. It aims to address structural difficulties in specific parts of the region and aims to create and maintain economic growth leading to greater economic and social cohesion.

Lowestoft is the designated Objective 2 area in Suffolk – contact the Objective 2 local facilitator at Waveney District Council for further information on 01502 523501.

7.3 GLOBAL GRANTS

New small employment and training projects and initiatives (worth between £500 and £10,000) led by community or voluntary groups can apply for Objective 3 funds via the Global Grants scheme. This scheme provides 100% grants and a maximum grant of £6,000 for a year's project is allowed, or £10,000 over 2 years. Further information can be found at www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/singlegateway .

Global Grants office – Katrina Copping
Email Katrina.copping@socserv.suffolkcc.gov.uk
Tel 01473 264654

For further information on ESF co-financing, please contact:

Suffolk ESF Team
Learning and Skills Council for Suffolk
Felaw Maltings
42 Felaw Street
Ipswich
IP2 8SJ

Email suffolkesfteam@lsc.gov.uk

Section 8. ESF REGULATIONS

Please read the relevant sections of the ESF rules and regulations below carefully to ensure ineligible activity and costs are not included in your proposal.

8.1 Capital expenditure

Please note that ESF is **not** a capital programme - therefore any expenditure for items of equipment must be kept to an absolute minimum, must be relevant to the project and the cost of any individual item must **not** exceed the ESF guideline figure of £1000 per individual item.

8.2 Training for the public sector

ESF is **not** usually available for training individuals for permanent jobs in the public sector, as the Commission believes that direct training of public employees should be supported by the Member State.

However, there are some exceptions: These are:

- Training people to allow them to work in the public or private sector
- If the public sector contracts out work to private sector, the training activity delivered to the private sector contractor would be eligible
- Support for public sector workers who have either been given or are threatened with redundancy that requires them to carry out vocational training to fit them for a new post
- Lifelong learning for public sector workers employed in traditionally low skilled work that need career development in their current post
- Training Jobcentre Plus staff working on modernising or providing activity that is additional to normal Jobcentre Plus activity
- Funding teachers for activity beyond the standard support available to help the teachers meet the needs of stated ESF client groups (i.e. to help them work with disabled or vulnerable beneficiaries). Funding for teachers/tutors to deliver training is **not** eligible other than for skills for life provision.

The following are considered to be part of the public sector:

ESF Co-financing 2004-07
Part A – Prospectus and tendering guidance (revised February 2007)

- Central Government
- Local authorities
- The Armed Forces
- NHS trusts and GP fund holders
- Grant maintained schools
- FE Colleges

8.3 Publicity

All projects receiving ESF (the European Social Fund) must publicise the contribution these funds have made and make all beneficiaries aware of the ESF support. This is a condition of the co-financing organisations' contracts.

8.4 State aid

The European Union encourages actions to strengthen the competitiveness of the regional economy and recognises the important part that the provision of State Aid to companies can play in this respect. However, such aid is considered to distort competition between companies and poses a threat to the operation of the internal market. European Union rules on state aids limit the support which may be provided by the public funding to assist projects involving the commercial sector.

Companies benefiting from state aid will be asked to make a contribution of up to 50% depending on the size of the organisation. Those specifications affected by the state aid rule will contain details of contributions and are available on the local LSC websites.

A worksheet addressing the calculation of employer contributions has been included in the proposal form guidance. If state aid is incorrectly calculated in the tender, it may result in the total funding requested being more than the specification value and may therefore render the tender ineligible.

Further guidance on state aid will be provided to organisation(s) to whom the LSC awards the contract(s) for the delivery of training to employed people. This guidance will be provided during the post-tender negotiation stage.

8.5 Eligible costs

Applicants are required to identify how the costs of their proposal have been calculated. Please remember that the full costs of the delivery **must** be identified as the Co-financing. Organisations will provide 100% eligible funding for those projects that are approved less any revenue or employer costs collected under state aid.

If your organisation is registered for VAT, you must include this in your budget. We will not be able to add it on later.

8.6 Definitions of employment and unemployment

Within certain measures ESF can only be used to support either unemployed or long-term unemployed beneficiaries. If you apply under these measures you must make sure that the beneficiaries meet these criteria and you should be able to show that they meet them.

For ESF purposes unemployment is a period where a person is not in paid employment (subject to certain exceptions). Registration with Jobcentre Plus is not needed as evidence of unemployment.

The following are considered as periods of unemployment. Time spent:

- On Invalidity Benefit
- On Sickness Benefit
- On Severe Disablement Allowance
- In custody (within certain criteria)

The following conditions **do not affect** qualifying periods of unemployment for beneficiaries:

- Periods of unpaid work.
- Casual or temporary work of not more than four weeks.
- Part-time work of less than 16 hours a week in total, provided that the skills needed for the work will not lead to greater involvement in the labour market.
- Time spent on an earlier ESF project where the current project will develop the previous one. Where you cannot clearly show this, the beneficiaries will need to serve the qualifying period again, beneficiaries may only continue to work on the current project if you agree.

The following **do not count** as periods of unemployment (if targeting the long-term unemployed, but are acceptable if short-term or “only recently” unemployed people are the target group):

- Time spent on work-related Government programmes such as New Deal where people are considered to form part of the workforce.
- Days for which Statutory Sick Pay or Statutory Maternity Pay have been claimed.
- Time spent in compulsory education.
- Time spent on training or education courses that last longer than four weeks (however, a full-time student recruited on to an ESF project addressing retention issues, is classified as being “unemployed less than 6 months”.

The longest continuous period an individual may benefit from an ESF project is three calendar or academic years.

8.7 Employment

An employed person is:

- Someone who works under a contract of employment, which can be written, verbal or implied, but must be paid.
- A self-employed person (registered with the Inland Revenue as self-employed and paying Class 2 National Insurance Contributions)

8.8 Volunteers

Beneficiaries working as volunteers or are doing unpaid work may not be counted as employed for the purposes of ESF.

8.9 Asylum seekers

Asylum Seekers are not generally eligible for ESF support but refugees are (linked to the Home Office “leave to remain” status). There are exceptions for this for pre-vocational activities (not vocational guidance) training.

Allowable activities are:

- Initial English for speakers of other languages, other basic skills (literacy, numeracy and ICT) where they are not part of provision that leads to employment.
- Orientation provision to raise awareness of the rights and responsibilities of asylum seekers and labour market needs; provision of information about further education and voluntary work in which they can participate; general advice about what awaits those given leave to remain in Britain (information about law, culture, housing, welfare, health, education and employment).
- Involvement in voluntary activity with the asylum seeker community.

8.10 Small or Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

For ESF purposes “Small or Medium Enterprises” (SMEs) are defined as follows:

- Medium Enterprises are organisations which employ fewer than 250 employees but more than 50 at the time the application is made including part-time, seasonal and temporary staff.
- Small enterprises are organisations that employ less than 50 employees.
- Has either a balance sheet at their accounting date with assets, less liabilities, worth no more than 27 million Euros, or an annual turnover of not more than 40 million Euros.
- Are not more than one quarter owned by firms that do not qualify as SMEs under the above requirements.

Voluntary organisations can be regarded as SMEs for ESF purposes. Note, if a voluntary organisation benefits from a project providing activity liable to state aid regulations, the voluntary organisation is only liable if it has a commercial element which will be advantaged by the project. It does not affect the voluntary organisation core business.

Section 9 GUIDANCE NOTES FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE TENDER PROPOSAL FORM

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in the East of England is concerned that any proposal meets the requirements of their specifications in order to comply with Open and Competitive Tendering. Project descriptions should relate to the learner or target group, how they will be recruited and how their needs will be identified, how the project will meet the outputs and outcomes of the tender specification.

We will also need to establish the track record that your organisation has in terms of successful work in this area of provision or an explanation of how your organisation has the capacity to deliver the project.

Note 1 - Responses within the text boxes have a maximum of no more than a page of A4 for each question, including the text. **The form must be completed in Arial font size 10 or above.**

Note 2 - No additional documentation should be included in the response to tender. Any additional information will be disregarded during assessment with the exception of the new provider assessment process. Existing providers may need to update the information already held by the LSC.

Note 3 – All sections must be completed in full.

Technical information

The tender proposal form has been produced using Word and the text boxes have been created using tables. To put in additional row(s) to allow more partners in the table in Section 1 use the tab key to create them. The delivery plan in section 3 and the budget in section 4 can also be expanded in this way.

Tender form Section 1 – Project summary and application details

1A	Project summary	
	Lead organisation or accountable body	If you are submitting a tender proposal you must be legally constituted – as a charity, company, not-for-profit organisation, etc. If you are the lead partner, then your organisation is contractually responsible for the quality of provision and the performance of the other partners. You will be required to demonstrate how you will manage your partners.
	Main delivery organisation	(If different from above)
	Project title	Self-explanatory
	Co-financing organisation you are submitting a tender to?	Self – explanatory
	Tender specification	Please state which specification you are applying against (number & title)
	Project summary	A brief description of your project with all the main points using a maximum of 150 words. This may be used for publicity purposes
	Geographical coverage	Please state which areas your project will cover.
	Target beneficiaries and companies	These figures should be brought forward from section 4A and must be the same. If there is a discrepancy the lower figures will be used and may render your project ineligible.
	Financial summary	These figures should be brought forward from section 4B and must be the same. A discrepancy will render your project ineligible as it will be impossible to judge the value of the tender.
1B	Applicant details	
	Main contact for the Applicant	The name of the person who wrote the tender or will manage the project and their position in the organisation. This should be the best person able to answer technical queries on the tender.
	Your organisation status	Please select your legal status from the list on the form.

	<p>Is this a partnership, consortium or sole delivery project? Why is this approach relevant to your project?</p>	<p>A partnership / consortium project – a number of organisations with a lead organisation. Why is this delivery suitable for your project and your target groups? Please give a brief description. What benefits will working in partnership bring to your project?</p> <p>A sole delivery project – project carried out by a single organisation. If your project is a sole delivery project, please explain why this is appropriate and what expertise you have to enable you to deliver the project effectively and achieve the outcomes.</p> <p>Each partner in your proposal must complete and sign a separate partner declaration form. These must be submitted with the tender proposal and must be a signed original on the partners' headed paper. Faxes, emails, photocopies or late entries are not acceptable and the partner will be disregarded.</p>
	<p>Who is involved in your projects and their role?</p>	<p>Please complete the table if your project is a partnership / consortium one. Please give a brief description of the partners' roles.</p>
	<p>Other ESF tender proposals?</p>	<p>Please give details of other tenders / direct bids you are submitting to other Co-financing organisations or the Government Office for the East of England. The CFOs and Government Office will be sharing information so failure to declare other tenders / bids will result in disqualification.</p>
	<p>New provider information</p>	<p>You will need to fulfil the requirements of the new provider process if you are successful. Please explain if you don't have any of them – for example if your organisation is less than two years old, etc. You will need to include the required supporting documentation with your tender (one original copy only. This information also needs to be submitted if you last supplied it to the LSC more than 12 months ago.</p>

Tender form Section 2 – Project details

Any Tender Proposal that does not meet the requirements of the tender specification in whole or part or does not include a compulsory element will not proceed to the appraisal stage.

2A	Fit to specification	
	Describe your project and demonstrate how your project delivers the objectives and outputs set out in the tender specification.	<p>Your project must deliver all, or part of the tender specification.</p> <p>Please demonstrate how and where the project will deliver the outputs and activities set out in the tender specification.</p> <p>For example, you may wish to consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promotion of project ➤ Recruitment of beneficiaries ➤ Guidance ➤ Assessment ➤ Learner experience
2B	What barriers do the target group have and what are the particular features of your project that make it most appropriate to their needs?	<p>Please describe what barriers your target group face? What steps will you take to overcome them? How will the target group be recruited? Please provide the rationale for breakdown of beneficiaries, especially for ethnicity and disability included in section 4 – Target groups.</p> <p>Are there any special support measures such as childcare, translation or access equipment? Can they get to the delivery point or home afterwards? How will you reach those beneficiaries if they won't / can't go to a local provider? How are the outcomes appropriate to the target group? Are there any additional resources or staffing costs needed to address the needs of the target group?</p> <p>This question covers the Department of Works & Pensions (DWP) Equal Opportunities gateway questions 1 and 2 – understanding barriers, your previous experience, the needs of the target group and how your project will be designed and delivered. For more information, see the equal opportunities section in the tender prospectus.</p>

Tender form Section 3 – Management and delivery arrangements

	Management	
3A	Describe the key personnel involved in your project; their role in the management process and their experience	Where will the project be delivered and who will be involved? If in post, what experience do they have? If new staff will be recruited, what are you looking for? What are the delivery arrangements? What processes do you have and how will you ensure that your systems can track and monitor payments and beneficiaries? If existing staff will be working on your project, how will they be released and the relevant costs calculated?
3B	How will you manage and monitor your partners to ensure they deliver the expected outcomes at an appropriate standard?	This question only applies if you are submitting a partnership or consortium tender. You will need to describe the management and monitoring systems you will put in place to run the tender effectively and ensure partners deliver outcomes at an appropriate standard.
3C	What ICT equipment, training, internet working, analysis etc will be used in the delivery and management of the project and what is its relevance?	How will your beneficiaries make use of ICT? Is this an integral part of the project or if not, why not? What ICT will you use as the applicant in delivering the project? (Don't forget you will be required to input beneficiary information online.)
	Project sustainability	
3D	As ESF should only be used as start-up, targeted project or pilot funding, state how you envisage this project developing after the lifetime of the funding.	What will happen at the end of your project to the beneficiaries? What progression routes are there so that they can move on to further training or employment? Do you intend your project to become part of the mainstream provision and if so, how do you expect this to happen and what will you do to take this forward? If this is a one-off project, please explain why this is appropriate.
	Sustainable development	
3E	Sustainable development involved considering how best to achieve a combined range of social, environmental and economic goals.	<p>Please consider and describe the extent to which your project will address the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Providing opportunities to allow everyone to fulfil their potential ➤ Environmental enhancement and protection through project delivery ➤ Providing the skills that businesses both demand and require, both now and in the future <p>If you feel that one or more of the elements are not relevant to your project, you should explain why.</p>

	Track record	
3F	Which projects have you been involved in during the last 3 years?	Please give details of all projects (not just ESF funded) that you have run during the last three years, with particular attention to those relevant to the tender. Please explain any underperformance. The LSC reserves the right to check the details. Please say if you were the lead organisation of the project or a partner. If the tender is for a partnership or a consortium proposal, as the lead organisation, you will be responsible for the other partners. If partner experience is relevant, please also describe this here.
	Project delivery plan	
3G	Outputs, Outcomes and Milestones:	Please see Example 1 in these guidance notes. This includes the type of evidence that will be required by the LSC if you are successful. The outputs, outcomes and milestones should include as a minimum, those set out in the specification.
	Equality of access	
3H	How will you ensure that your project is accessible at all stages by all eligible people? Organisation and what steps will you take to monitor this?	<p>Please outline your beneficiary recruitment process and how you will ensure equality throughout the delivery stages of your project. What systems will be integrated into all aspects of planning and delivery of your project?</p> <p>This question answers the DWP's Equal Opportunities gateway questions 3 and 4, looking at how you will apply your Equal Opportunities policy to the project, staff and beneficiaries plus how you will market and publicise the equal opportunities elements of your project. See the tender prospectus for more information.</p>
	Quality	
3I: i	State any recognised standards that you and your partners hold or are working towards and its relevance to this project?	Please list any relevant standards and grades your organisation and/or partners hold or are working towards and how they are relevant to the tender activity. See examples on the tender proposal form. If you do not have any of these standards, please explain how you intend to ensure quality / work towards these standards?
3I: ii	What is your action plan for the project to ensure the quality of provision you are planning?	What steps will you take to make sure your beneficiaries will receive quality training and support? If the project is not delivering training, how will you measure and monitor the quality of the product offered?
3I: iii	How will you ensure the quality of partnership provision?	If you are the lead organisation, you will be responsible for the quality of provision delivered by your partner organisations. What systems do you have in place to manage and monitor this?

	Health and safety	
3J	How will you ensure that your organisation and all your partners meet health and safety legislation?	If you are the lead organisation, you will be responsible for the health and safety of beneficiaries on the parts of the project delivered by your own organisation and partner organisations. What measures will you take to ensure health and safety issues are addressed and all partners meet health and safety legislation?

Tender form Section 4 – Target groups

4A	Beneficiary targets	<p>We appreciate that this information will be your “best estimate” at the time you submit the tender. You should however, ensure that you can comfortably accommodate the targets outlined in the specification against which you are tendering within your estimates as, if successful, you will be contracting on this basis.</p> <p>Quantitative and qualitative information on how the project addresses the targets required by the specification should be outlined in section 2A – project details. Your targets must meet those set out in the specification and may enhance or exceed it. They may fulfil all or part of the specification as directed in the specification.</p>
	Gender	Please complete the beneficiary target tables listed. These must fit the tender specification.
	Employment status	Figures may be estimates for tender purposes but must fit the tender specification that you are responding to. For example, under some specifications you can only assist employed people. If this is the case, ALL beneficiaries should be employed.
	Age groups	All beneficiaries must be eligible and fit the tender specification.
	Minority ethnic groups	Individual specifications may set out particular target groups. All beneficiaries must fit the specification. You may complete “unknown” if you really can’t tell but your project should try to reflect the make-up of your target community.
	Disability	These are the types of disability as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act and are being used by some CFOs to target activity. Please specify if known or select “unspecified” or “none” if appropriate. Must fit the tender specification. Where your beneficiaries may have more than one disability you may either select the primary disability or “multiple”. Please note, this table is based on self-assessment.
	Business size (employed beneficiaries only)	This information is necessary to see if your project falls into a state aid category and eligibility for support from ESF. See the tender specification and prospectus for more information.
	Sector focus	This must meet the specification requirement. If appropriate please enter which sector/s your project addresses.

4B	Project costs	
	Budget	<p>See example 2 for guidance.</p> <p>Please note that ESF can only fund revenue expenditure. Where appropriate small items of equipment can be included, up to a maximum value per item of £1000.</p> <p>Your budget should only include costs that are directly related to the delivery of this project. Notional or college based costs will not be accepted.</p> <p>You should provide as much breakdown as possible of your proposed budget items (including the purpose); so that it is clear that all costs are eligible, based on actual rates and relate directly to the delivery or management of the project. You should take care to point out any additional costs incurred through managing a partnership project.</p> <p>If your organisation is registered for VAT, these costs must be included in your budget.</p> <p>State aid – where a specification provides training to individuals in employment and the employers meets the European regulations, they may need to make a cash contribution (employee release time is counted as “in kind” and is therefore not acceptable). See the relevant specifications and example 2 of this guidance for details. Employer contributions must be deducted from the total tender value.</p> <p>If you intend to charge businesses/individuals for training, you must declare the amount you expect to get under Revenue. Also income/other funding from other sources including core funding for qualifications where applicable.</p> <p>Percentage costs are not eligible, especially management costs.</p>

Tender form Section 5 – Declaration

Please read the declaration carefully, tick the boxes and sign it. The person signing should be the person who will also sign the contract, if the tender is successful.

EXAMPLE 1 – PROJECT DELIVERY PLAN

	Q1 Mar 05	Q2 Jun 05	Q3 Sep 05	Q4 Dec 05	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Suggested Evidence
Outputs								
Trainers recruited	10						10	Letter of employment
Mentors recruited from disability groups		30	10		40	20	100	Disability self-assessment
Beneficiaries (male) recruited			20	20	80	40	160	Short Records completed (provided by the LSC)
Beneficiaries (female) recruited			20	20	80	40	160	Short Record completed
Beneficiaries from disadvantaged groups			4	30	100	50	184	Short Record completed
Learners attending taster courses			40	40	160	80	320	Short Record completed
Learners progressing to formal learning				20	30	50	100	Copy of enrolment form
Learners achieving OCN qualification				35	100	100	235	Confirmation from awarding body
Outcomes								
Staffing profile and job descriptions	1						1	Copy of job descriptions
Quarterly progress report	1	1	1	1	4	4	12	Written reports
Interim and final evaluation				1	1	1	3	Written reports
Network events held		1	1		3	3	8	Copy of invite list, attendance list and agenda for event
Training days held		4	4	4	20	20	52	Agenda / programme
People attending information sessions		25	25		100	100	250	Attendance sheets
Milestones								
Recruitment/confirmation of staff		1					1	Copy of job advert and offer letter
Dissemination activities				1	1	1	3	Publicity leaflets etc
Identification of training venues	4	3					7	Invoices

Example 2 – Budget

STAFF COSTS

Full description / item	Cost	Purpose
Project manager	£15,558	0.25 fte for 3 years to oversee project delivery, provide line management and report to management board / steering group, to be appointed
Administration staff	£36,000	1 fte for 3 years to provide admin support, including learner registration, SR input and timetable co-ordination. Current staff to be re-deployed and replaced by new recruitment
<i>Short course tutors</i>	£2,640	120 tutor hours for delivery of 3 hour short courses (additional pt hours)
<i>NVQ tutors</i>	£10,800	360 tutor hours for delivery of NVQ courses (increase in hours)
<i>Workplace assessors</i>	£21,600	180 days workplace assessment for NVQ, including travel and subsistence costs (increase in hours)
TOTAL STAFF COSTS	£86,598	

BENEFICIARY COSTS

Childcare for beneficiaries	£6,000	600 hours of childcare provision for beneficiaries on short courses and NVQ provision
Travel costs for disabled beneficiaries	£500	Based on 10 return taxi journeys each for 5 disabled beneficiaries
TOTAL BENEFICIARY COSTS	£6,500	

OTHER PROJECT COSTS

<i>Registration for beneficiaries</i>	£1,250	50 NVQ registrations
<i>Certification for beneficiaries</i>	£450	45 NVQ certificates
Recruitment	£750	To include advert in local paper and interview expenses
Advertising and promotion	£2000	To include newspaper advertising, leaflet production and distribution
Phone / fax	£900	Extra phone / fax usage due to project work
Evaluation costs	£2,500	Engaging external organisation to conduct mid project and final evaluation and produce written reports
<i>Venue hire for short courses</i>	£8,000	Venues for 40 short courses at ½ day each

<i>Course materials – core text books for NVQ</i>	£2,500	Text Book each for 50 NVQ registrations
<i>Course materials – handouts</i>	£2,000	Handouts for 400 short course beneficiaries and support material for NVQ
TOTAL OTHER COSTS	£20,350	

SUMMARY OF COSTS

STAFF COSTS	£86,598	
BENEFICIARY COSTS	£6,500	
OTHER COSTS	£20,350	
TOTAL ALL COSTS	£113,448	
Less LSC / other funding		Note – although other funding is permitted, it will have to be intensively audited. It is better to enter “nil cost to project” next to the item instead
Less any revenue		
Less any state aid contributions from employers (see Prospectus for details)	*£12,072	Employers will make £100 contribution for each employee on NVQ course
FUNDING REQUESTED (balance)	£101,376	This must be less than or equal to the specification value

*CALCULATION OF EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS WHERE REQUIRED FOR STATE AID

Cost of the TRAINING PROVISION (see budget items in italics)

Short course tutors	£ 2,640
NVQ tutors	£10,800
Workplace assessors	£12,600
Registration	£ 1,250
Certification	£ 450
Venue hire for training	£ 8,000
Course materials (books)	£ 2,500
Course materials (h/o)	£ 2,000
TOTAL TRG COSTS	£40,240

What size are the companies and is the training vocational or employer specific?

e.g.	SME		Large employer
General/vocational training	30%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	50% <input type="checkbox"/>
Training specific to the employer	65%	<input type="checkbox"/>	75% <input type="checkbox"/>

Based on the above information, the total **minimum** employer contribution required is 30% of £40,240 (= **£12,072**) which must be deducted from the total tender cost to

arrive at the amount of funding requested. Employer contributions can be greater if appropriate. The employer will need to be invoiced and the provider will be required to show evidence that this contribution has been paid.