



ESF CO-FINANCE TENDER PROCESS



1. TENDER DOCUMENTATION

The tender process is a one-stage process; the ESF Co-finance Tender Application Form consists of a word document and excel spreadsheet.

2. ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Tenders must be, two unbound A4 hard copies (Part A and Part B) and one electronic copy (preferably CD RoM (in Microsoft Word 2003 and Excel 2003), however other electronic media with the exception of email is acceptable) and must be delivered to reach the Procurement Northwest Team at:

Learning and Skills LSC
Procurement Northwest
9th Floor
Arndale House
Arndale Centre
Manchester
M4 3AQ

by the deadline identified in the Invitation to Tender. Tenders should be clearly marked '**Tender for Discretionary Funds**'. Unfortunately Tenders received after this deadline will not be accepted.

A map of how to get to the above address can be found at <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/Regions/NorthWest/Aboutus/Contactus/>.

Envelopes and packages containing tenders should bear no reference to the organisation wishing to tender by name; franking machines, which automatically print the company's name should not be used. Envelopes and packages should be clearly marked using the tender label provided by Procurement Northwest. Tenders must be submitted to Procurement Northwest in a sealed envelope clearly identifying which tender specification the Tender refers to (please identify the Tender Specification Reference).

Organisations who are not currently an LSC Approved Supplier must complete a separate LSC Approved Supplier pack and submit this along with the Tender Application Form.

Tenders will be received up to the time and date stated. Those received before their due date will be retained unopened until then. It is the responsibility of the organisation wishing to tender to ensure that their tender is delivered no later than the appointed time. The LSC does not undertake to consider tenders received after that time unless clear evidence of posting is available (i.e. clear postmark and/or certificate of posting).

The LSC will not automatically acknowledge receipt of tenders. Should you wish to confirm that your tender has been received please email procurementnorthwest@lsc.gov.uk.

2.1 Basic Eligibility

Upon receipt of valid Tenders, members of the Procurement Northwest team will perform basic eligibility checks on the Tenders. These basic eligibility checks will comprise of:

- Has the correct ESF Co-finance Tender Application Form been used?
- Have both parts of the ESF Co-finance Tender Application Form been submitted (Part A – Word Document and Part B – Excel Spreadsheet)?
- Have all sections of the ESF Co-finance Tender Application Form been completed (both the Word Document and Excel Spreadsheet)?
- Has Arial Font 12 been used to complete the ESF Co-finance Tender Application Form?
- Has one original copy of the proposal and one photocopy of the ESF Co-finance Tender Application been submitted (NB 2 original copies will also be accepted)?
- **Has an electronic copy comprising both the Word Document in Word 2003 and the Excel Spreadsheet in Excel 2003 been submitted on** either a CD Rom, Floppy Disk or on another form of electronic device been submitted (NB emails are not accepted)?
- Has a minimum of one original ESF Co-finance Tender Application Form containing an original signature and date been submitted?
- Has an original completed Partner Organisation Declaration been submitted? (NB This is not applicable if partner organisations have not been identified within Part A)
- Has a fully completed and signed Declaration and Conflict of Interest Proforma (Annex One of this ITT) been submitted?
- Was the ESF Co-finance Tender Application Form in a clearly marked envelope and sent in time to be received by the deadline?

ESF Co-finance Tender Applications that fail any of these basic eligibility checks will not be considered for funding.

Unfortunately, there continues to be a number of applicants who fail the basic eligibility checks, therefore to assist you in ensuring that you pass this stage of the tendering process, a Checklist has been designed and is included at Annex Two of each Invitation to Tender. Applicants do not need to submit the completed Checklist but it is strongly recommended that applicants make use of this Checklist to ensure that they pass the basic eligibility stage.

2.2 Project Assessment

Once basic eligibility checks have been completed, those areas of the ESF Co-finance Application Form marked as scored will be assessed by a panel of LSC staff and on occasion an external partner. Where external partners participate in project assessment the LSC will ensure that there are no conflicts of interest.

Providers seeking to submit Tenders for co-finance funds will be required to complete the ESF Co-finance Tender Application Form that can be secured from Procurement Northwest.

The information required in the standard ESF Co-finance Tender Application Form will be assessed against standard objective criteria. Fields that determine the selection of Tenders are labelled as 'Scored'. The following requested information corresponds to this grouping.

- Section 4 – Activity Summary
- Section 5 – Capacity and Capability
- Section 6 – Project Delivery
- Section 7 – Added Value
- Section 8 – Cross Cutting Themes
- Section 9 – Outputs and Outcomes
- Section 12 – Balance of Funding

More detailed information regarding the assessment criteria is set out in Annex One. **However, please be aware that any projects which fail meet the minimum quality thresholds set for**

Section 4 – Activity Summary and Section 5 – Capacity and Capability will not continue to be scored by the Assessment Panel.

Assessment Panels will be asked to identify whether an ESF Co-finance Tender Application Form has demonstrated an alignment to the ITT based on the information contained within Section 4 – Activity Summary. Once Tenders have been fully assessed, a ranked list of an ESF Co-finance Tender Applications will be produced and sorted into 3 categories:

Fully fits the Invitation to Tender
Partially fits Invitation to Tender
Fails to fit Invitation to Tender

The final category will not be considered to have met the quality threshold and will be rejected at this stage.

Once Tenders have been assessed and the ranked list of an ESF Co-finance Tender Applications produced, the LSC will normally review all ESF Co-finance Tender Applications deemed at fully fitting the Invitation to Tender and up to a value of 3 times the funds available for the ITT.

2.3 Strategic Decisions

A panel comprising LSC senior managers and on occasion external partners will then consider the ESF Co-finance Tender Application as identified in 2.2. The aim of this stage is to ensure that the Tenders selected will:

- Strategically fit the relevant Invitation to Tender;
- Deliver the outputs and outcomes that are required for the Invitation to Tender;
- Demonstrate value for money;
- Support and complement other activities and initiatives in the proposed geographic locations rather than cut across and duplicate existing provision;
- Provide reasonable geographical coverage, avoiding unnecessary duplication;
- Clearly provide added value with the additionality of the provision clearly evident;

In addition, where lead organisations have previously delivered ESF Co-finance activity for the LSC in the Northwest, their past performance will also be taken into consideration.

Please note that Tenders are not guaranteed to receive funding at the level applied for. This will be dependent upon the fit of the Tender to the relevant programme specification.

2.4 Feedback Arrangements

On conclusion of the appraisal process, the LSC will contact all applicants. Applicants will be notified of successful Tenders and unsuccessful applicants will be given feedback on why their Tender was unsuccessful.

As it is envisaged that a large number of Tenders will be received, it is not possible for the LSC to notify applicants via telephone as to whether their Tender has been successful in being invited to enter into contracting discussions. Therefore all organisations applying for ESF will be notified of the outcome of the tendering round in writing.

Feedback will be issued to the individual identified as the named contact in the ESF Co-finance Tender Application Form.

In the interests of openness and transparency the LSC will publish a full list of Tenders received identifying whether or not they have been invited to enter into contracting discussions. In addition we will also publish summary details of those Tenders that have been invited to enter into contracting discussions. Both documents will be posted on our website and that of GONW.

2.5 Appeals Process

The LSC will not be operating an appeals procedure for its co-financing activity. In the event of a Tender being unsuccessful, should the organisation, after receiving feedback feel that there has been demonstrated bias against their proposal or that a decision has been reached that no reasonable person would make, the organisation may invoke the Learning and Skills LSC's Complaints Policy. This policy will be posted on the LSC's national website, the address of which is: www.lsc.gov.uk. Any complaints should be forwarded to Procurement Northwest.



ESF CO-FINANCE SCORING CRITERIA



Section 4 – Activity Summary

A total of 15 points are available for this section, a minimum quality threshold has been set for this section and therefore projects are required to achieve 9 in this section to be considered for funding.

The points available for this section will be awarded based on your ESF Co-finance Tender Application's ability to clearly demonstrate and evidence:

- i) How the project meets the activities to be supported and additional requirements section of the relevant Invitation to Tender (ITT). **(Points Available = 10)**
- ii) How the project will support the target groups identified for the relevant ITT. **(Points Available = 5)**

Section 5 – Capacity and Capability

A total of 45 points are available for this section, a minimum quality threshold has been set for this section and therefore projects are required to achieve 30 in this section to be considered for funding.

The points available for this section will be awarded based on your ESF Co-finance Tender Application's ability to clearly demonstrate and evidence:

- i) How the quality of the provision will be ensured. **(Points Available = 10)**
- ii) That the lead organisation and its staff have a track record of managing similar projects and that the organisation has the capacity to manage a project of the size proposed. **(Points Available = 18)**
- iii) That the organisations involved in delivering this project have a track record of working in the proposed geographic locations. **(Points Available = 7)**
- iv) That the organisations involved in delivering this project have a track record of working with the target groups identified. **(Points Available = 10)**

Section 6 – Project Delivery

A total of 40 points are available for this section; no minimum quality threshold has been set for this section.

The points available for this section will be awarded based on your ESF Co-finance Tender Application's ability to clearly demonstrate and evidence:

- i) How the activities to be delivered by the project will deliver the project's aim and objectives. **(Points Available = 10)**
- ii) How the proposed activities will engage with and meet the needs of the target group. **(Points Available = 10)**
- iii) A clear programme of the key stages of the project which indicate how they will deliver the activities of the project, with appropriate timescales and milestones. **(Points Available = 8)**
- iv) The contribution that all partners will make to the delivery of the project, ensuring that their contributions are appropriate to the project. **(Points Available = 4)**
- v) That effective management arrangements are in place. **(Points Available = 8)**

Section 7 – Added Value

A total of 30 points are available for this section; no minimum quality threshold has been set for this section.

The points available for this section will be awarded based on your ESF Co-finance Tender Application's ability to clearly demonstrate and evidence:

- i) How the project fits with local strategies and plans including any specified in Additional Requirements. **(Points Available = 6)**
- ii) How the project will add value to other activities operating in the geographic locations identified for the project. **(Points Available = 6)**
- iii) How the project will add value to other activities available for the proposed target groups. **(Points Available = 6)**
- iv) Why the activities of this project would not take place without ESF funding. **(Points Available = 6)**
- v) Value for money. **(Points Available = 6)**

Section 8 – Cross Cutting Themes

A total of 30 points are available for this section; no minimum quality threshold has been set for this section.

The points available for this section will be awarded based on your ESF Co-finance Tender Application's ability to clearly demonstrate and evidence:

- i) That the project will contribute towards the Equal Opportunities Cross Cutting Theme. **(Points Available = 8)**
- ii) That the project will contribute towards the Information Communication Technologies Cross Cutting Theme. **(Points Available = 8)**
- ii) That the project will contribute toward the Sustainability Cross Cutting Theme. **(Points Available = 8)**
- iv) That the project has a clear and appropriate exit strategy. **(Points Available = 6)**

Section 9 – Outputs and Outcomes

A total of 10 points are available for this section; no minimum quality threshold has been set for this section.

The points available for this section will be awarded based on your ESF Co-finance Tender Application's ability to clearly demonstrate and evidence:

- i) That the project makes an appropriate contribution towards the outputs required by the relevant ITT. **(Points Available = 5)**
- ii) That the project makes an appropriate contribution towards the outcomes required by the relevant ITT. **(Points Available = 5)**

Section 12 – Balance of Funding

A total of 5 points are available for this section; no minimum quality threshold has been set for this section.

The points available for this section will be awarded based on your ESF Co-finance Tender Application's ability to clearly demonstrate and evidence:

- i) That there is an appropriate balance between the level of monies expended on delivery and those incurred on management and administration. **(Points Available = 5)**