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Leading learning and skills

North West Learning and Skills Councils Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing Plan 2005/08

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Introduction

General

The LSC together with its regional partners recognises the need to support the activities of the Sector Skills and Productivity Alliances (SSPAs) and other regional sector based partnerships in supporting the skills needs of priority sectors. This plan is informed by the development activity undertaken by the SSPAs over the past 12 months, but more importantly by the recent [North West Annual Statement of Learning and Skills Priorities](#).

The ten regional learning and skills priorities are:

- Tackling low skills and basic skills gaps to improve employability
- Providing entry routes for job seekers and the economically inactive to target employment areas
- Addressing the demographic challenge
- Ensuring the skills and employability needs of disadvantaged groups are addressed
- Providing the skills to meet sectoral challenges
- Tackling cross-sectoral leadership and management skills
- Developing enterprise skills
- Supporting and ensuring access to key employment growth hotspots

Underpinning Priorities

- Providing high quality, responsive support to meet the needs of both employers and individuals
- Stimulating the demand for further investment in skills

LSC National Priorities

The recently published LSC Annual Statement of Priorities sets out our national priorities. It indicates that the job of transforming learning and skills needs to be done for two reasons.

First, the productivity of our workforce lags behind that of our major competitors. The need to improve skills in order to boost productivity is the biggest challenge facing businesses.

Second, too many individuals do not have the basic skills they need for work or to achieve the quality of life they want.

Our priorities are to:

- > Make learning truly demand-led so that it better meets the needs of employers, young people and adults.
- > Ensure that all 14-19 year olds have access to high quality, relevant learning opportunities.
- > Transform Further Education so that it attracts and stimulates more business investment in training and skills development.
- > Strengthen the role of the LSC in economic development so that we provide the skills needed to help all individuals into jobs.

- > Strengthen the LSC's capacity to work effectively at a regional level – particularly with Regional Development Agencies and Regional Skills Partnerships.
- > Improve the skills of the workers who are delivering public services

The characteristics of our labour and skills markets are changing dramatically:

- people are remaining in the workforce longer
- there is a declining number of school leavers
- there are more women and ethnic minorities in the workforce
- the biggest growth is in jobs requiring higher levels of skills, and
- there are growing differences between sectors and regions.

Job vacancies are concentrated in skilled craft, professional and personal service jobs. Skills gaps, where existing employees do not have the full range of skills needed, are a bigger problem.

Replacing existing skills is also a critical business issue. Skills are naturally lost as people retire and change occupations. With the numbers of school-leavers starting to fall, employers will need to develop new approaches to recruiting, retaining and upskilling staff, looking to groups of people such as older workers and those with disabilities, whom they may previously have overlooked.

The demand for higher-level skills is with us now and will increase especially for businesses facing global competition, producing high specification products and services, or facing high levels of technological change.

Our intention through the operation of this plan is to link the LSC's priorities with the NW Annual Statement of Learning and Skills Priorities through the delivery of activity funded by the European Social Fund.

We intend to demonstrate not only how these actions will meet the priorities of the LSC that have been outlined above, but also to show how these actions will address the needs of sectors across the North West.

Co-Financing

Organisations who met certain criteria could apply to become a Co-Financing Organisation (CFO). If successful these Co-Financing organisations are permitted to apply for ESF and then in turn pass this funding onto other organisations.

Co-Financing means channeling both ESF money and the required match funding to applicant providers in a single funding stream therefore dispelling the need for applicant organisations to demonstrate their ability to attract match funding.

The five LLSCs in the North West are all recognised Co-financing Organisations and will utilise their own resources to provide match funding.

The intention is to combine this expertise to deliver and resource the proposed programme.

LSC Cheshire and Warrington will lead on the management of the Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing Plan for the NW region but all NW LSCs are CFOs and will contribute to the match funding and programme management of this plan.

This plan sets out our intentions for Co-Financing ESF with LSC match funding across 5 Measures within the Policy Fields 3, 4 and 5.

It is our continued aim to ensure that we:

- > Deliver Co-Financing in a transparent and fair manner.
- > Establish, implement and maintain an open and objective system for appraising and selecting proposals.
- > Offer feedback to all providers whether their proposals are selected or not

Plan Overview

Geographic Coverage

This plan will cover the whole of the North West (with the exception of the Greater Merseyside Objective 1 area).

Objectives of the Plan

The North West Regional Development Plan (RDP) was developed in light of the European Employment Strategy and the associated UK Employment Action Plan. Three of the five policy fields for action, identified in the North West RDP, form the basis of Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing Plan. These are as follows:

- > Lifelong learning.
- > Adaptability and entrepreneurship.
- > Improving (*women's*) participation in the labour market.

These policy fields are broken down further into measures (Table 1). It is under these measures that applications for ESF, under this plan can be requested.

Activity by Measure

Table 1 highlights the available policy fields, their strategic objectives and measures. This plan covers activities under Measures 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 5.1 of the North West RDP.

Policy Field	Strategic Objectives	Measures
3 Lifelong Learning	To widen participation in lifelong learning (LLL) so that more people continue throughout their lives to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding and improve their employability in changing labour market discrimination	1. <i>Promoting wider access and participation in LLL (especially those groups least likely to take part in LLL activities and lacking basic and key skills)</i>
4 Adaptability and Entrepreneurship	To improve the skills base and adaptability of the employed labour force in England To increase the level of entrepreneurship in England	1. <i>To update and upgrade employees' vocational skills, including basic and key skills.</i> 2. <i>To identify and meet developing skills shortages, including those at higher levels.</i> 3. <i>Encouraging entrepreneurship of individuals and competitiveness of business particularly SMEs</i>
5 Improving Women's Participation in the Labour Market	To reduce the level of disadvantage faced by women in the labour market	1. <i>To improve access to learning and remove barriers to employment.</i>

Period covered by the Plan

This plan covers the period from April 2005 to December 2008. It is intended that with the funding currently available, the bulk of activity will be completed by December 2007.

ESF applied for by Measure

The total amount of ESF funding applied for relates to the period April 2005 to December 2008 and further details relating to the breakdown of this funding over the calendar years of 2004-2006 are shown on the tables below.

Table 2a – ESF Funding applied for by measure for 2005-2008

2005-2008					
Policy field/ measure	Description	ESF Grant £	Match Funding £	Total £	ESF Grant Rate
3.1	Lifelong Learning	1,766,022	2,158,472	3,924,494	45%
4.1	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	690,123	843,484	1,533,607	
4.2	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	435,557	532,348	967,905	
4.3	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	274,576	335,593	610,169	
5.1	Women in the Labour Market	2,946,967	3,601,849	6,548,816	
	Total Funding	6,113,245	7,471,745	13,584,991	

Table 2b – ESF Funding applied for by measure for 2005

2005					
Policy field/ measure	Description	ESF Grant £	Match Funding £	Total £	ESF Grant Rate
3.1	Lifelong Learning	392,449	479,660	872,110	45%
4.1	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	153,361	187,441	340,802	
4.2	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	96,790	118,300	215,090	
4.3	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	61,017	74,576	135,593	
5.1	Women in the Labour Market	654,882	800,411	1,455,292	
	Total Funding	1,358,499	1,660,388	3,018,887	

Table 2c – ESF Funding applied for by measure for 2006

2006					
Policy field/ measure	Description	ESF Grant £	Match Funding £	Total £	ESF Grant Rate
3.1	Lifelong Learning	588,674	719,491	1,308,165	45%
4.1	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	230,041	281,161	511,202	
4.2	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	145,186	177,449	322,635	
4.3	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	91,525	111,864	203,390	
5.1	Women in the Labour Market	982,322	1,200,616	2,182,939	
	Total Funding	2,037,748	2,490,582	4,528,330	

Table 2d – ESF Funding applied for by measure for 2007

2007					
Policy field/ measure	Description	ESF Grant £	Match Funding £	Total £	ESF Grant Rate
3.1	Lifelong Learning	588,674	719,491	1,308,165	45%
4.1	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	230,041	281,161	511,202	
4.2	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	145,186	177,449	322,635	
4.3	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	91,525	111,864	203,390	
5.1	Women in the Labour Market	982,322	1,200,616	2,182,939	
	Total Funding	2,037,748	2,490,582	4,528,330	

Table 2e – ESF Funding applied for by measure for 2008

2008					
Policy field/ measure	Description	ESF Grant £	Match Funding £	Total £	ESF Grant Rate
3.1	Lifelong Learning	196,225	239,830	436,055	45%
4.1	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	76,680	93,720	170,401	
4.2	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	48,395	59,150	107,545	
4.3	Adaptability & Entrepreneurship	30,508	37,288	67,797	
5.1	Women in the Labour Market	327,441	400,205	727,646	
	Total Funding	679,249	830,194	1,509,443	

It important to note that at the time of writing this draft plan the figures above are still under negotiation with GONW. The figures may not be the same as those that are represented in the final version of this document.

Consultation

Throughout the production of this plan we have consulted with key regional and sectoral partners. Outlined below is an overview of the process employed and the timescales for consultation.

Process

The LSC has been consulting with partners on the processes and priorities for this plan since summer 2004. Approval in principle was gained from the Objective 3 Advisory Group and PMRC to pursue a plan that supported the aims of Sector Skills and Productivity Alliances within the North West region to enhance sector skills. This plan will also contribute significantly to achieving the aims of the North West Annual Statement of Learning and Skills Priorities.

At a regional level the LSC has been working with the SSPA Regional Co-ordination Group to develop the processes and priorities for this plan. The North West Co-finance Network Group, which comprises the five North West LLSCs, Jobcentre Plus, and Government Office for the North West also meet regularly to discuss Co-Financing arrangements within the North West.

The Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing team will work closely with the North West Co-finance Network Group, to ensure this plan does not duplicate activity funded elsewhere within the region.

The culmination of the development phase was the announcement of the consultation on the plan contents at the regional SSPA conference, "Raising the Bar", on 11th January 2005. This consultation has resulted in a large number of proposed activities being identified by regional partners. SSPA partners reviewed these proposed activities on 10th February 2005 for their fit with the requirements of both regional priorities and ESF Measures. A number of priority activities were provisionally agreed for each ESF Measure. This list is not exhaustive and flexibility remains within the system to recognise new development issues, which may require prioritisation of resources.

Throughout the operation of this Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing Plan, we will continue to consult with all regional sector partners, other CFOs and the regional leads for Objective 2. We intend to continue this partnership approach in all our activities on an on-going basis when the application process commences and Co-Financed activities start.

The release of Invitations to Tender will be phased to dovetail with other regional planning processes e.g. complementing the planning and funding for Sector Skills and Productivity Alliance action plans in 2006/2007.

Table 3 below, sets out the broad timescales for applications, appraisal and selection, development of proposals, publication of further documents and further public events.

Timetable for consultation

Date	North West Learning and Skills Councils Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing Plan 2005/08
January 2005	Consultation with regional sector partners on plan content
March 2005	Plan produced. Round 1 Tender specifications developed.
April 2005	Publication of on-line regional prospectus.
April / May 2005	Open briefing events for prospective providers. Appraisal training undertaken.
April / May 2005	Invitations to Tender issued.
May / June 2005	Appraisal and selection of projects
August / September 2005	Co-Financed projects begin.
Ongoing and agreed through consultation	Open briefing events for prospective providers. Additional Rounds - Tender specifications developed and issued

Table 3 – Consultation programme

Demonstration of Need

Regional Statement of Priorities

The evidence base for regional sector working is clearly defined within the

[North West Annual Statement of Learning and Skills Priorities.](#)

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/eyfem7ko76f6umkzjd3jdw63kjbohf24g4ayhamcuwakptu2gxvjuy5wklomra66nhdsaqdubomh/nwskillspriorities.pdf>

This provides the most up to date and authoritative information on skills needs within the region's priority sectors, detailing:

- Existing national and regional priorities
- Links between regional priorities and national and regional themes
- Key findings from the Regional Skills Stocktake
- Level 3 Priorities
- Sectors with significant demand for Level 4 qualifications

The Regional Statement of Priorities is set in the context of the Regional Economic Strategy, looking beyond short-term solutions, to ensure activities are focused on meeting the long-term needs of the region. To this end a clear priority within the plan will be to support projects that develop capacity and sustainability to continue beyond the lifetime of this programme of funding.

Planned Measures

Each Policy Field covers a number of priority groups, i.e. the individuals to be supported; priority occupations where the activities under each measure will help to address problems in specific occupational areas; and priority sectors which indicate sectors important to growth and / or with significant skills gaps.

The following measures will be funded through this plan.

- Measure 3.1 Promoting wider access and participation in LLL (especially those groups least likely to take part in LLL activities and lacking basic and key skills).
- Measure 4.1 Updating/Grading Basic and Key Skills.
- Measure 4.2 To identify and meet emerging skill shortages, including higher level.
- Measure 4.3 Encouraging entrepreneurship of individuals and competitiveness of business particularly SMEs
- Measure 5.1 To improve access to learning and remove barriers to employment.

This section of the Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing Plan illustrates the level of funding anticipated for each of these measures, and gives an indication of the outcomes that this level of funding should achieve. The indicated beneficiary groups, occupations and sectors, activities and outcomes should not be seen as being prescriptive; but giving direction and focus to broad themes and aspirations within the overall framework of the RDP. However Co-Financed projects within this plan must be relevant to regional needs, and should demonstrate a significant contribution towards the regional learning and skills priorities. In addition to the activities highlighted under each measure, funding will also be available to support activities directly related to Objective 2 projects and to provide the support necessary for capacity building in new providers.

The following pages detail the Policy Fields and Measures from the Regional Development Plan to which our plan is linked. For clarity the LSC has also outlined specific examples of activity and target groups that have been identified through consultation with regional sector partners, and which the LSC would aim to fund under each of the Measures within the plan.

Added Value

Each of the measures and the targets detailed in the following pages indicate what the ESF monies will provide in addition to that already provided through existing public funding. Each applicant will need to clearly demonstrate through the appraisal system how the project proposal provides additional

activity and outputs to those activities already funded or which could be funded through mainstream funding.

All outputs and results detailed in the measures shown in the following pages represent the total value of the project cost i.e. they include the required 55% public match funding. However it is our intention that, where possible, these outputs and results will be achieved in addition to any activity the LSC is currently funding or intends to fund as mainstream activity.

Impact

The following pages also detail what impact the additional activity funded through ESF funds will make for the North West. These have been taken pro rata from the Regional Development Plan and will be measured as part of the ongoing monitoring of the projects. The final project closure report will require applicant organisations to summarise the impact of their project and these details will be shared across the LSCs within the North West and with GONW.

It is important to note that these activities and target groups are indicative and are not meant to be an exclusive list. Additional project ideas that meet the criteria for the measure applied for may also be considered where the applicants can demonstrate a regional sectoral need for the activity described.

Given the broad range of projects that this funding will support, the longer-term aim is to ensure that appropriate projects are developed into mainstream provision to ensure sustainability and widen the provider base, at the same time maintaining quality.

Policy Field 3: Lifelong Learning (LLL)

PF3 Measure 1 Promoting wider access and participation in LLL (especially those groups least likely to take part in LLL activities and lacking basic and key skills).

The planned total project costs for this measure for the period April 2005 to December 2008 are **£3,924,494** at a grant rate of **45%**.

Total ESF funding available will be **£1,766,022**.

This level of funding should achieve the following outputs for this measure:

Measure 3.1 PROMOTING WIDER ACCESS

2004-2006				
Outputs	2004	2005	2006	Total
Number of individuals participating in lifelong learning and working towards a qualification.	165	659	659	1483
Number of women receiving support	82	330	330	742
Number of individuals completing their course.	140	560	560	1260
Number of trainers to be trained	46	185	185	416
Number of capacity building projects	0	2	2	4

Results				
Leavers gaining a qualification.	85	342	342	769
In work or further study on leaving (and at 6 months).	129	515	515	1159
Impact				
Net increase in lifelong learning from ESF support.	82	330	330	742

Specific projects identified through consultation with sector skills partners

- Entry Level E-learning to get people into the Health & Social C Sector
- Target Awards for the Retail sector.
- Development / adaptation of curriculum / qualification and capacity to deliver Business Improvement Techniques NVQs in:
 - > Chemicals
 - > Pharmaceuticals
 - > Food & Drink
 - > Polymers & Coatings
 - > Printing & Packaging
 - > Manufacturing

Policy Field 4: Adaptability and Entrepreneurship

PF4 Measure 1 Updating/Grading Basic and Key Skills.

The planned total project costs for this measure for the period April 2005 to December 2008 are **£1,533,607** at a grant rate of **45%**.

Total ESF funding available will be **£690,123**.

This level of funding should achieve the following outputs for this measure:

Measure 4.1 UP-DATING/GRADING BASIC AND KEY SKILLS

2005-2007				
Outputs	2005	2006	2007	Total
Number of companies helped	8	31	31	71
Number of employees helped (given ESF training)	104	416	416	935
Number of women receiving support	34	138	138	310
Number working towards a qualification	62	249	249	561
Number of trainers trained	30	121	121	272
Results				
Beneficiaries gaining a qualification	40	160	160	360
Impact				
Net number of jobs safeguarded by ESF support	5	22	22	49

Specific projects identified through consultation with sector skills partners

- Building e-learning access and support for
 - > Tourism & Hospitality
 - > Health & Social Care
- Delivering technology based training in, for example
 - > Textiles
 - > Automotive
 - > Aerospace
 - > Environmental Technology & Services
 - > Bio-Technology
- Delivering IT programmes
- Building capacity in Logistics for multi-skilled Logistics Company Trainers

PF4 Measure 2 To identify and meet emerging skill shortages, including higher level.

The planned total project costs for this measure for the period April 2005 to December 2008 are **£ 967,905** at a grant rate of **45%**.

Total ESF funding available will be **£ 435,557**

This level of funding should achieve the following outputs for this measure:

Measure 4.2 IDENTIFYING SKILLS SHORTAGES

2005-2007				
Outputs	2005	2006	2007	Total
Number of companies helped	22	88	88	198
Number of research/labour market analysis projects	1	3	3	7

Specific projects identified through consultation with sector skills partners

- Promoting industry image through effective engagement with education
- SME support for sector specific and generic skills brokerage in, for example:
 - > Creative Industries
 - > Textiles
 - > Tourism
 - > Logistics

PF4 Measure 3 Encouraging the entrepreneurship of individuals and competitiveness of business, particularly SMEs.

The planned total project costs for this measure for the period April 2005 to December 2008 are **£ 610,169** at a grant rate of **45%**.

Total ESF funding available will be **£274,576**

This level of funding should achieve the following outputs for this measure:

Measure 4.3 ENCOURAGING ENTREPRENEURSHIP				
2005-2007				
Outputs	2005	2006	2007	Total
Number of beneficiaries getting self-employment help				
Number of companies helped	19	73	73	165
Women receiving support	12	45	45	102
Number of research / labour market analysis projects	2	6	6	14
Results				
Survival rate of self-employment at 18 months				
Impact				
Net number of new businesses running after 18 months				
Net number of jobs created through self-employment				

Under this measure, ESF will:

- Support the skills development and competitiveness of micros and small enterprises
- Develop networks and brokerage services for micro and small enterprises
- Improved use of ICT based skills solutions for micro and small enterprises

Numerous project ideas were put forward against this Measure. Across the range of project ideas a number of key theme emerged.

- Coaching
- The development of Business Management skills
- Peer Group Support measures
- A focus on the use of ICT

There appears to be scope for a Multi-Sectoral approach to these aims covering:

- Creative Industries
- Environmental Technology & Services
- Financial & Professional Services
- Digital Industries (ICT Services)
- Logistics
- Retail
- Sport

- Textiles
- Tourism

Policy Field 5: Improving women’s participation in the labour market

PF5 Measure 1 To improve access to learning and remove barriers to employment.

The planned total project costs for this measure for the period January 2004 to December 2006 are **£6,548,816** at a grant rate of **45%**.

Total ESF funding available will be **£2,946,967**.

This level of funding should achieve the following outputs for this measure:

Measure 5.1 IMPROVING ACCESS TO LEARNING				
2005-2007				
Outputs	2005	2006	2007	Total
Number of beneficiaries	374	1496	1496	3366
Projects offering childcare facilities	0	0	0	0
Women receiving support (beneficiaries)	374	1496	1496	3366
Women trained in non traditional occupations	24	94	94	212
Results				
Positive outcomes for women	329	1316	1316	2962
Women with children under 5 in work 6 months after ESF	113	452	452	1016
Women setting up in business	0	0	0	0
Impact				
Net increase in female labour market participation of beneficiaries after ESF support	38	153	153	345

Added value

Under this measure, ESF will:

- be targeted towards improving women’s access to learning and removing barriers to employment;
- enable the number of women in training and working towards a recognised qualification to increase above that which current levels of funding will allow;
- support of female entrepreneurs by offering them access to self-employment support;
- focus on new and creative projects that could not be delivered from existing resources.

Examples of activity the LSC will support under this measure will include:

- Projects that support the take up, retention and progression of women and men within under-represented occupations or sectors, i.e. women

into engineering, skilled trades and senior management; men into social care, etc.

- Projects that offer flexible provision to meet the skill/qualification needs of women returning to work.
- Projects that will have a significant impact on the numbers of young women or men entering non-stereotypical occupations.

Specific projects identified through consultation with sector skills partners

- Sports coaching (increasing the participation of women)
- Logistics occupations (increasing the participation of women)
- Social Care (increasing the participation of men)

We will be supporting the progression of women into supervisory and management positions in the following sectors:

- Retail
- Sport
- Tourism
- Construction

Ongoing Consultation

During the consultation process for the Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing Plan, we will be consulting on the range of activities under each Measure, and there will be further opportunities to influence the activities to be supported by the Plan.

This process will be regularly reviewed throughout the lifetime of the plan and, where appropriate, prioritisation or additional issues will be considered.

Partners will be involved in the drawing up of the Invitations to Tender, which will also be available for further consultation.

Managing Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing

Invitations to submit proposals

In order to operate an open, transparent and competitive tendering process we will utilise a wide range of media to advertise invitations to submit proposals. This will include:

- > the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk); *exact site details to be established for new Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing on-line Prospectus*
- > the GONW website (www.go-nw.gov.uk);
- > local press, partner publications and media;
- > direct mail; and
- > meetings with appropriate groups and through various public meetings.

The Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing Prospectus, Selection Criteria, and Tender Guidance documents will be available in electronic and paper versions, and will follow the ESF guidelines on open & competitive tendering.

Application procedures

Providers seeking Co-Financed funding will be invited to submit a proposal against published tender specifications. Invitations to submit tenders will be requested against the activities included within the LSCs on-line Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing Plan Prospectus. Full details of the on-line prospectus will be disseminated through partner organisations, such as Local Authorities, Objective 2 Action Plan Partnerships, SRB Partnerships, the local Business Link Operators, SSPA partners, GONW and NWDA and the Voluntary and Community Sector, to ensure that as many organisations as possible are aware of the invitation to submit proposals.

Appraisal process

A panel of 'lead' personnel drawn from partner organisations will conduct strategic assessments of proposals. Further consultation is required to determine the make up of this group to ensure it is representative of partnership involvement. Following the panel's assessment, the LSC will contact the applicant and inform them of the panel's decision.

The LSC will provide additional support to external appraisers who will be selected based on experience and expertise in certain sector areas. This support will provide knowledge and understanding in our selection process.

The timetable for the submission of applications is detailed below in the timetable section.

Appraisal and Selection

In seeking to raise the quality of opportunities available in the North West, we intend to develop relationships with providers who:

- > Can offer high quality programmes that meet identified needs.
- > Complement other funded provision.

- > Are able to meet the criteria for funding.

We will support potential new providers in the process of developing any necessary systems, in applying for LSC funding and, over time, in systematically improving the quality of the provision that they offer.

The information the provider submits in the tender document will be assessed against standard objective criteria. Fields that determine the selection of projects are labelled 'S' (selection). The following fields fit into this grouping:

- > Linkage to the tender specification
- > Timescales.
- > Linkages to other provision.
- > Partnership arrangements
- > Added value.
- > Outcomes.
- > Activity management.
- > Financial Information.
- > Cross-cutting themes
- > Sustainability.

The fields labeled 'A' (additional) represent additional information to support the appraisal and selection of projects. These fields are:

- > Geographic area of delivery.
- > Target groups.
- > Submission to any other funding streams
- > Current contracting arrangements.

Finally, the field labeled 'O' (optional) represents optional information, which will not be used in the appraisal process. This field is:

- > Other information.

Clear guidance will be given to applicants through briefing workshops to ensure their tenders meet minimum criteria, in relation to the regional sectoral needs, matching regional learning and skills priorities and any other tender specific requirements.

The LSC will operate a minimum threshold scoring appraisal system for each of the sections described above as follows:

	S (Selection)	A (Additional)	O (Optional)
Green	7-10 (Considered)	7-10 (Considered)	N/A
Amber	4-6 (Rejected)	4-6 (Considered)	N/A
Red	0-3 (Rejected)	0-3 (Rejected)	N/A

Timetable

The timetable for submission of proposals, their appraisal and selection is as follows:

Launch Round 1 Tenders published	April 2005
Deadline for submission of tenders	End May 2005
Appraisal process completed	End June 2005
Applicants notified of outcome	End June 2005
Projects commence	August / September 2005
Launch future tendering rounds	Timings to be confirmed on completion of Round 1

Feedback Arrangements

All applicants will receive feedback on their applications and successful providers and agreed activities will be published. In the interests of openness and transparency, we will also publish headline reports on the progress of successful projects.

As part of the feedback process, we will encourage providers to work together resulting in more integrated proposals, especially where providers are proposing similar or linked projects.

Appeals

The national policy for dealing with appeals that are not resolved through structured feedback to providers submitting proposals is to invoke the complaints procedure.

Independent scrutiny

The SSPA Regional Co-ordination Group will assess and assure the selection process.

Funding

The breakdown of funding lines that LSC has available for match funding are:

- > Further education provision.
- > Work-based learning
- > Life skills.
- > Pre-16 education business links.
- > Workforce development budget.
- > Local intervention and development funds
- > Information, advice and guidance for adults.
- > Adult and community learning.

The volumes of ESF and match funding are set out in detail in tables 2a-2e.

Provider funding

Providers will be paid on a profile basis, monthly or quarterly as appropriate to the contracted activity.

Within each contract the LSC will negotiate to establish early key milestone payments to enable providers to draw down funding at the initial stages of a project delivery. This method will ensure that providers do not suffer a cash flow deficit for the project, and the total programme is managed as effectively as possible. We will continue to pay providers throughout the project and will bear any adverse cash flow until the final claim is paid.

Administrative and management costs

The administration of the LSC has been developed to ensure that the maximum level of funds is passed to providers to meet government targets.

The following table includes pay costs, additional costs and overhead costs.

Staffing	Role	2005/2008
1 FTE – ESF Senior Contract Manager	Tendering, Claims, Appraisals, Monitoring & Evaluation, Provider Support, Partnership Development	£93,725
3 FTE – ESF Contract Advisor	Project Management, Contract Preparation, Tendering, Appraisal, Monitoring & Evaluation, Provider Support	£250,350
1 FTE – 1 ESF Data and MI Admin	Monitoring & Evaluation, Provider Support, Data collection and collation	£47,725
Programme Management	Part-time Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing Plan activity across NW local LSCs.	£76,800
Audit		£10,350
Health & Safety		£10,350
Finance		£10,350
5 * 0.15 ESF Data and MI Admin		£45,650
Travel / training and subsistence		£43,000
Materials/ publicity/marketing		£54,000
Total Costs		£642,300

In relation to the proposed costs for projects across all measures the staffing and overhead costs for the LSC remain within the 5% ceiling. Additional staff costs over the 5% ceiling if incurred will be borne by the LSC core-staffing budget. The regional contract managers when appointed will be located within the Cheshire and Warrington LSC and will report to senior managers within this office.

Implementation Plan

Targets

As proposals are received each project/contract with a provider will specify start and end dates and quarterly project targets/milestones. Where payment is on a profile basis, quarterly reconciliation against outcomes and actual costs will be undertaken. The individual projects/contracts will be monitored both for expenditure and outcomes and consolidated at project level for comparison with targets and milestones.

Milestones

We will manage the process of project reconciliation throughout the life of the measure-level approval, and where necessary the life of the specific project where that might be a lesser period of time.

Providers will supply a monthly contract report. At a minimum, this will detail activity to date, outcomes in the period and cumulative as well as covering the project based ESF reporting requirements listed above (see chapter 5).

The allocated Contract Manager from the Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing team, or from one of the NW LSCs, will be responsible for four-monthly reconciliation of provider activity, reports and payments against the agreed profile. The Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing team will reconcile overall contract activity within a measure-level package, to ensure that targets are met.

Where appropriate the Contract Manager may instigate a revision of the provider profile (payments or delivery) in the light of reported activity. This may require a meeting with the provider. Equally the reported evidence may require further intervention with the provider to ensure delivery is on track. In extreme circumstances it may be appropriate for contracted activity to be reduced or terminated contractually, and for other provision to be put in place.

We will report on activity and spend to GONW on a quarterly basis. Provider information will be derived from cumulative Individual Learner Record (ILR) returns and the project review reports. This report will contain details of what has been delivered and the activities that have taken place plus a quantification of the delivery to date. It will include summary information of beneficiaries and outcomes achieved. It will also include a summary of expenditure to date on delivery and our administrative costs.

At the end of the period of measure-level activities we will submit a closure report to GONW. This will summarise activity and delivery during the period.

Milestones

Outlined below are a number of key milestones relating to the implementation of the Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing Plan

MILESTONE	ACHIEVEMENT DATE
Consultation on Regional ESF Sector Co-Financing Plan announced at "Raising the Bar" Sector Skills and Productivity Alliance (SSPA) Conference	11 th January 2005
SSPA and regional sector bodies return proposals to inform the development of Plan content	8 th February 2005
Sector Skills and Productivity Alliance Regional Co-ordination Group approve proposals meeting requirements of ESF and Regional Priorities for inclusion in Plan	10 th February
Regional Sector ESF Co-finance Plan Circulated for Consultation	28th February 2005
Co-finance Plan Approved by PM/RC	17 th March 2005
Round 1 Tenders published	April 2005
Measure Level Agreements approved by GONW	May 2005
Submission of Round 1 Tenders	June 2005
Appraisal and Review Process completed	June 2005
Applicants Notified of Outcome	Jul/Aug 2005
Contracting for Round 1 Commences	August 2005
Projects Commence Delivery	September 2005
All Round 1 Contracts Agreed	October 2005