



Leading learning and skills

**ESF Co-financing 2004-07**

**Invitation to Tender – January 2007**

**Prospectus and tendering guidance**  
**(LSC Hampshire and the Isle of Wight)**

**Part A - Guidance**



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# **Section 1. CO-FINANCING**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

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

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, Jobcentre Plus and SEEDA. 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 has been designed to help applicants structure their tenders to deliver activities which address the priority areas identified in the different organisations' Co-financing plans. Although the processes have been harmonised by the Co-financing Organisations, the prospectus does not cover all organisational differences in contracts and contracting. Examples of the different contract documents will appear on each Co-financer's 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 and SEEDA.

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 South East (GOSE).

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 South East (GOSE) has set out the strategies and priorities for the use of Objective 3 ESF within the Regional Development Plan for the South East 2000 - 2006

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.

### **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. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SOUTH EAST CO-FINANCING ORGANISATIONS**

Listed below are the broad objectives of the LSC, SEEDA and Jobcentre Plus. You need to bear these in mind when designing your project.

#### **3.1 THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL**

Set up in 2001, the LSC is responsible for planning and funding of all post-16 education and training in England, other than the university sector. There are five local offices in the South East region (Thames Valley, Kent and Medway, Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire and the Isle of Wight).

##### **LSC Funding Budgets**

The LSC’s budgets include those of:

- > Further Education colleges
- > School sixth forms
- > Work-based learning for young people
- > Workforce development including Investors in People
- > Adult and community learning
- > Information, advice and guidance for adults
- > Education business links
- > Offender Learning and Skills Service.

##### **LSC Aims and Objectives**

The Learning and Skills Council’s strategic objectives are detailed in the Corporate Plan. They were defined at the national level:

- > To raise participation and achievement by young people;
- > To increase demand for learning by adults;
- > To raise skills for national competitiveness;
- > To raise the quality of education and training delivery;
- > To equalise opportunities through better access to learning;
- > To improve effectiveness and efficiency.

##### **LSC National Targets**

The following targets have been set at national level:

- > To raise participation in post-16 learning, measured by the proportion of 16-18 year olds engaged in structured learning
- > To raise achievement of young people aged 19, measured by the proportion attaining a Level 2 qualification and participants in structured learning
- > To raise achievement of young people aged 21, measured by the proportion attaining a Level 3 qualification.

- > To raise achievement of the entire adult population, measured by the proportion attaining a Level 2 qualification, and the proportion lacking the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
- > To raise the quality and effectiveness of the education and training that we support, measured by external inspection grades and by structured feedback from learners, employers and training providers

## **3.2 SOUTH EAST REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (SEEDA)**

### **SEEDA's Role and Objectives**

SEEDA was set up by the Government in 1999 as the lead strategic body for economic development in the South East region. SEEDA's mission is to work with its partners to make the South East of England a World Class region, achieving sustainable development and enhanced quality of life, as measured by economic prosperity, environmental quality and social inclusion - ensuring opportunities and meaningful employment for all.

SEEDA's five statutory objectives under the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998 are:

- to further economic development and regeneration;
- to promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness;
- to promote employment;
- to enhance the development and application of skills;
- to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK

SEEDA's and partners aims and objectives for the region from 2002-2012 are set out in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) under 5 headings:

- Competitive Businesses
- Successful People
- Vibrant Communities
- Effective Infrastructure
- Sustainable use of natural resources

These objectives are reflected in the 18 priorities for action published in the SEEDA Corporate Plan, to be taken forward in the period 2003-2006.

## **3.3 JOBCENTRE PLUS**

### **Jobcentre Plus Role and Objectives**

Jobcentre plus is an executive agency of the Department of Work and Pensions. The Department was created in June 2001, with a simple aim: "to promote opportunity and independence for all". Jobcentre Plus will contribute to the Government's aim of tackling poverty, reducing unemployment, prompting growth and opportunity, and modernising Government.

The objectives of Jobcentre Plus are:

- To increase the effective labour supply by helping unemployed and economically inactive people of working age move into jobs or self-employment and making available to them job vacancies, information, advice, training and support, and encouraging employers to open up more opportunities to them
- To provide high quality and demand led services to employers to fill job vacancies quickly and effectively with well-prepared and motivated employees
- To help people of working age in the most disadvantaged groups and areas to move closer to the labour market, to complete effectively for and remain in work and to adjust more quickly to economic change
- To ensure that people receiving working age benefits fulfil their responsibilities and are offered high quality help and support appropriate to their needs, while protecting the position of those in greatest need
- To pay people of working age the correct amount of benefit to which they are entitled at the right time and throughout the period of their claim, and to protect the benefit system from fraud, error and abuse
- To improve continuously the quality, accessibility and delivery of services to all working age customers, respecting their individual differences and achieving the best possible outcome for each of them
- To increase Jobcentre Plus' overall productivity, efficiency and effectiveness.

## **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 Provider capacity**

Tenders should summarise any experience or track record the organisation has had in delivering projects with public funding, stating any particular relevant 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.

#### **4.1.4 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.

#### **4.1.5 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, eg, 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](http://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-operation with representatives of the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and to allow access to premises and participants for the purposes of inspection.

#### **4.1.6 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
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

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](http://www.dti.gov.uk) and On the websites for the Equality Commissions [www.eoc.org.uk](http://www.eoc.org.uk), [www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk) and [www.drc-gb.org.uk](http://www.drc-gb.org.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 LSCs work 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.

#### **4.1.7 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](http://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](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 how you deliver 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.

#### **4.1.8 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?

#### **4.1.9 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.

#### **4.1.10 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.

#### **4.1.11 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.

#### **4.1.12 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 Length of projects**

**The funding period for tenders is set out on the 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.

## 4.2.2 Tender documents

The tender documents will be posted on the LSC website from 22 January 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 regional web pages ([www.lsc.gov.uk/Regions/SouthEast](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/Regions/SouthEast) under “Latest Publications”) will be:

- Prospectus and Tendering Guidance – Part A Guidance and Part B Specification
- Tender proposal form and Tender return label

The documents on the main national LSC website ([www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)) 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 contact at the LSC who will send you a pack of information including 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 your 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. Handwritten forms must be legible.

More information on completing the tender document is available in the Tender Guidance Notes attached to the Tender Proposal Form.

**Please ensure you have the latest version of the Tender Proposal Form (dated January 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).

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:

**LSC TENDERS 2005-07**

- **You must use the label provided by the LSC on their regional 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 Friday 23 February 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 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 22 January 2007. Tender Applicants will be able to download the final documents from the website address provided from 22 January onwards. If any organisation cannot access the Internet, ask the LSC to email it to you or send you a hard 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 the Specification requirements as closely as possible

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

**BY THE DEADLINE OF 5pm Friday 23 February 2007**

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

**NO FRANKING!**

## **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 7 this will be by 9 March 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.

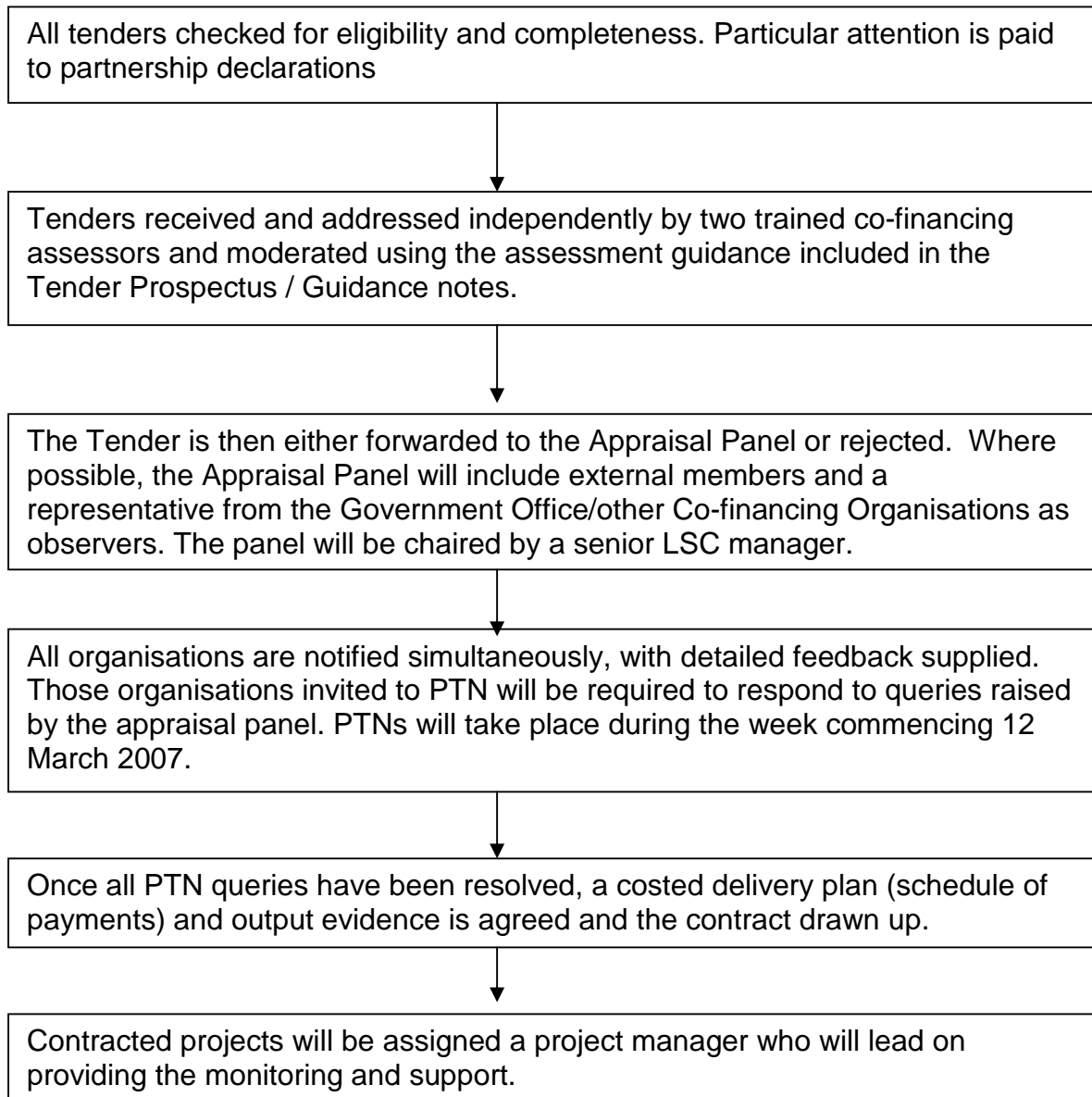
All approved projects will be publicised on the LSC’s and GOSE’s websites -see **SECTION 7 – CONTACTS** for web addresses

## **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](http://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 or stopped.

### **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 (ie 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**

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 Hampshire, the central email address for ESF tender queries is [hamstrategicresourcing@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:hamstrategicresourcing@lsc.gov.uk)

All queries and answers will be posted on the regional website <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/Regions/SouthEast> .

The other co-financing organisations' website details are:

Jobcentre Plus

[www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

SEEDA

[www.seeda.co.uk](http://www.seeda.co.uk)

## **Section 8. OTHER FORMS OF ESF FUNDING**

### **8.1 ALTERNATIVE BIDDING**

Co-financing through the Learning and Skills Councils, SEEDA or Jobcentre Plus is not the only route to receiving ESF funding. Where an area of activity is not covered by any of the Co-financing Organisations' specifications, it is possible to bid direct to the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) if your project meets their criteria.

For all policy fields and measures, even where there is a co-financing organisation, it is still possible to bid to the Government Office as 20% of funding is held back for direct bids depending on the criteria published in GOSE's Regional Guidance.

The policy fields are listed in the section of ESF Objective 3 at the beginning of the prospectus but more information on the policy fields and the measures is available in the Regional Guidance. If you wish to apply for ESF funding via this route, you will still have to provide 55% match funding and complete a full application form.

GOSE, the Government Office, will produce Regional Guidance Notes for applicants specifying which activities they are looking to fund under each policy field and measure. A new version will be available on their website when GOSE have another funding round.

**GOSE does not have any further direct bidding rounds planned. Please check their website – [www.go-se.gov.uk](http://www.go-se.gov.uk) - regularly for future updates.**

### **8.2 GLOBAL GRANTS**

If you are looking for a small grant for your organisation of up to £10,000, then going to the organisations who look after Global Grants in the South East would be the best route for you. Funding is available for any charities, voluntary and community groups or social enterprises, particularly smaller, local groups that have strong links with the people they are supporting. The group must not have received European funds before and individuals cannot apply.

The Global Grants programme is organised across the South East following the LSC boundaries. If you are interested in this sort of funding, please contact GOSE for Global Grants in your area on the following number:

Phil Read – ESF Division – 01483 882535  
Email: [pread.gose@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pread.gose@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk)

## Section 9. 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.

### 9.1 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.

### 9.2 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 (ie 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:

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

### 9.3 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.

### 9.4 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.

### 9.5 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.**

### 9.6 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.

## 9.7 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)

## 9.8 Volunteers

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

## 9.9 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.

## 9.10 What is a “Small or Medium Enterprise” (SME)?

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.

# **ESF Co-financing 2004-07**

## **Invitation to Tender – January 2007**

### **Prospectus and tendering guidance (LSC Hampshire and the Isle of Wight)**

#### **Part B - Specification**



There is one specification being released in January 2007. The Tender will need to describe how all the required objectives of the specification will be fulfilled.

All tenders must arrive at the LSC for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight no later than 5pm on Friday 23 February 2007.

Spec number	Specification title	Indicative funding	Number of projects required	State aid
<b>Measure 4.1</b>				
41007	Support for Learning, ESOL and IAG for the Migrant Community in the Southampton Area	£300,000	1	No

<b>PRIORITY AREA</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>Sector Skills</b>
<b>TENDER SPECIFICATION REF</b>	<b>41007</b>	<b>Support for Learning, ESOL and IAG for the Migrant Community of the Southampton Area</b>
<b>ACTIVITY TO BE SUPPORTED</b>		
<p>The Learning and Skills Council for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight wishes to support one collaborative project to develop a learning infrastructure in Schools, Colleges and Providers to support the Migrant Community within the City of Southampton and surrounding areas. This project must work in partnership with the Skills for Life provider network and the Essential Skills Support Unit (ESSU).</p> <p><b>Project specification</b></p> <p>At the moment the South East of England migrant population is expanding, many from Central Europe, the vast majority of which are men. Many economic migrants have difficulty in accessing our welfare support when settling into our local communities. They often take low paid, unskilled jobs to meet their accommodation and other living needs.</p> <p>The migrants tend to fill job vacancies in the retail, hospitality, health service and construction sectors, and the project will need to offer embedded ESOL courses that cover their employment and essential skills needs, especially if this is to lead to achievement at level 2.</p> <p>The LSC wishes to maximise the impact of the support to date, and to increase the number of adults taking part in Skills for Life education. Where appropriate, beneficiaries will be expected to gain nationally recognised qualifications. The support needed is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESOL provision to build up adequate levels of language skills and up skill the beneficiary from entry level to level 2 (where possible)</li> <li>• The ESOL provision to be specific to the beneficiaries needs, circumstances, delivered at convenient times and locations (e.g. during the day and after working hours)</li> <li>• Activities that will engage those at work e.g. vocational embedded ESOL</li> <li>• Working with employers to enable the beneficiaries to access education regularly.</li> </ul> <p>The project will also need to show evidence of planned progression routes to accredited outcomes, and to fully integrate IAG Services into the offer to learners.</p> <p>Due to the limited delivery time available applicants will need to demonstrate that they have the experience and position in the field to commence delivery to beneficiaries very quickly rather than need lead-in time for planning and preparation. Priority will be given to proposals which could deliver Embedded ESOL Programmes.</p> <p>Start date: 01 April 2007                      End date: 31 March 2008</p>		

BENEFICIARY GROUPS/SECTORS TO BE TARGETED		TARGET LOCATIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All beneficiaries must be 18+ and be in employment (part or full time)</li> <li>It is anticipated that the majority of beneficiaries will come from Central European countries but all must come from black and minority ethnic groups, which include refugees (not asylum seekers).</li> </ul>		City of Southampton and surrounding areas	
ACTIVITIES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ESOL, IAG and orientation learning</li> <li>Training and support in technical language skills</li> <li>Transfer of existing skills (including those that could lead to progression within employment or employment in another area of work)</li> </ul>			
OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>200 people to be engaged</li> <li>100 people receiving IAG</li> <li>100 people achieving ESOL Qualifications (Entry Level 3 to Level 2)</li> <li>25 people progressing into further accredited learning (mainstream funded)</li> </ul>			
POLICY FIELD AND MEASURE		4.1	FUNDING AVAILABLE
			£300,000