



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills



European Social Fund in England and Gibraltar 2007 to 2013

Investing in jobs and skills

Introduction

The European Social Fund (ESF) was set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union (EU) and so help raise standards of living. It aims to help people fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects.

As one of the EU's structural funds, the ESF aims to reduce differences in wealth across the EU and improve economic and social inequality. So although ESF funding is spread across the EU, most money goes to those countries and regions which are less economically developed. The other main structural fund is the European Regional Development Fund, which was set up to encourage economic development in the least wealthy regions of the EU.

Since 2000, the ESF has been a vital part of the EU's strategy for growth and jobs. It supports the EU's aim of increasing employment by giving unemployed and disadvantaged people the training and support they need to enter jobs. By focusing on the people who need help the most, it contributes to policies to reduce inequality and build a fairer society. The ESF also gives the workforce the skills businesses need to compete in a worldwide economy.

Over the past seven years from 2000 to 2006, the ESF has helped over four million people in England and Gibraltar. The case studies in this booklet provide examples of the projects that the ESF has supported.

In 2007, the EU is putting in place a new round of ESF programmes for the next seven years to 2013. The following questions and answers are designed to help you understand the new 2007 to 2013 ESF programme for England and Gibraltar, how it works and where to find more information.

Case study: Wheels in Motion



The Wheels in Motion project in Manchester is aimed at women aged 21 and over who are looking for a career in the road haulage and logistics industry. It provides opportunities for women to enter this traditionally male-dominated business.

Wheels in Motion is jointly funded by the ESF and the Learning and Skills Council, and gives employed and unemployed women the skills to move into higher-level and more skilled positions in driving, transport office and management jobs. It provided a range of Level 2 qualifications in areas such as large goods vehicles (LGV), warehousing, and forklift-truck-driving. The learners have also received help with reading, writing and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

A marketing campaign called 'Girls in Gear' – featuring a pink large goods vehicle with the campaign slogan written on it – is used to attract women to the training, together with direct marketing, radio adverts, roadshows and awareness seminars. The project has made successful links with Sure Start, single-parent groups and local employers in Manchester, Salford, Trafford and Stockport.

Kathy Barlow, who runs the project, says: "It is estimated that the logistics industry currently requires around 50,000 new LGV drivers to meet existing demand. Over 90% of existing LGV drivers are male (according to the Skills for Logistics Survey 2005). The project has helped to attract women into the sector making them aware of employment opportunities and plugging the skills gap."

Your questions answered

What are the objectives (aims) of the ESF for 2007 to 2013?

The **Convergence Objective** aims to develop areas where the economy is lagging behind the rest of the European Union. In England, only Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly benefit from ESF funding under the Convergence Objective.

The **Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective** covers all areas outside of the 'Convergence Objective'. The whole of England and Gibraltar is covered by this objective, except Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Within this objective, Merseyside and South Yorkshire – as former Objective One regions in 2000 to 2006 – benefit from a higher level of funding until 2010.

How is ESF money shared out?

A total of £2 billion of ESF money is available in England and Gibraltar from 2007 to 2013. Each region is awarded ESF money to fund projects. The amount each region gets is based on regional employment and skills needs – for example, the numbers of people who are not in work and who do not have good qualifications.

ESF amounts regions have been awarded for 2007 to 2013

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly	£134 million
East of England	£152 million
East Midlands	£164 million
Gibraltar	£2 million
London	£324 million
Merseyside	£138 million
North East	£157 million
North West (not including Merseyside)	£222 million

South East	£151 million
South West (not including Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly)	£95 million
South Yorkshire	£122 million
West Midlands	£246 million
Yorkshire and the Humber (not including South Yorkshire)	£142 million

These amounts show the EU financial contribution from the ESF. They are matched with a similar amount of national funding. The ESF and national match funding combined comes to about £4 billion across England and Gibraltar.

What are the ESF priorities?

The priorities are designed to target the ESF money at specific activities and make sure that it reaches people who most need support.

There are two priorities:

- Priority 1 is 'Extending employment opportunities'. It supports projects to tackle the 'barriers' that unemployed and disadvantaged people face in finding work. About £1.2 billion of ESF money is available for this priority for 2007 to 2013.
- Priority 2 is 'Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce'. It supports projects to train people who do not have the basic skills and qualifications needed in the workplace. About £670 million of ESF money is available for this priority for 2007 to 2013.



There are similar priorities in the Convergence Objective area of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, where about £50 million of ESF money is available to tackle barriers to employment, and £80 million of ESF money to improve the skills of the local workforce for 2007 to 2013.

Case study: Fifteen Cornwall



The ESF is being used to transform the lives of disadvantaged young people at Fifteen Cornwall, the restaurant inspired by Jamie Oliver. The restaurant's charity, Cornwall Foundation of Promise, is working with Jobcentre Plus to recruit, train and support young people working

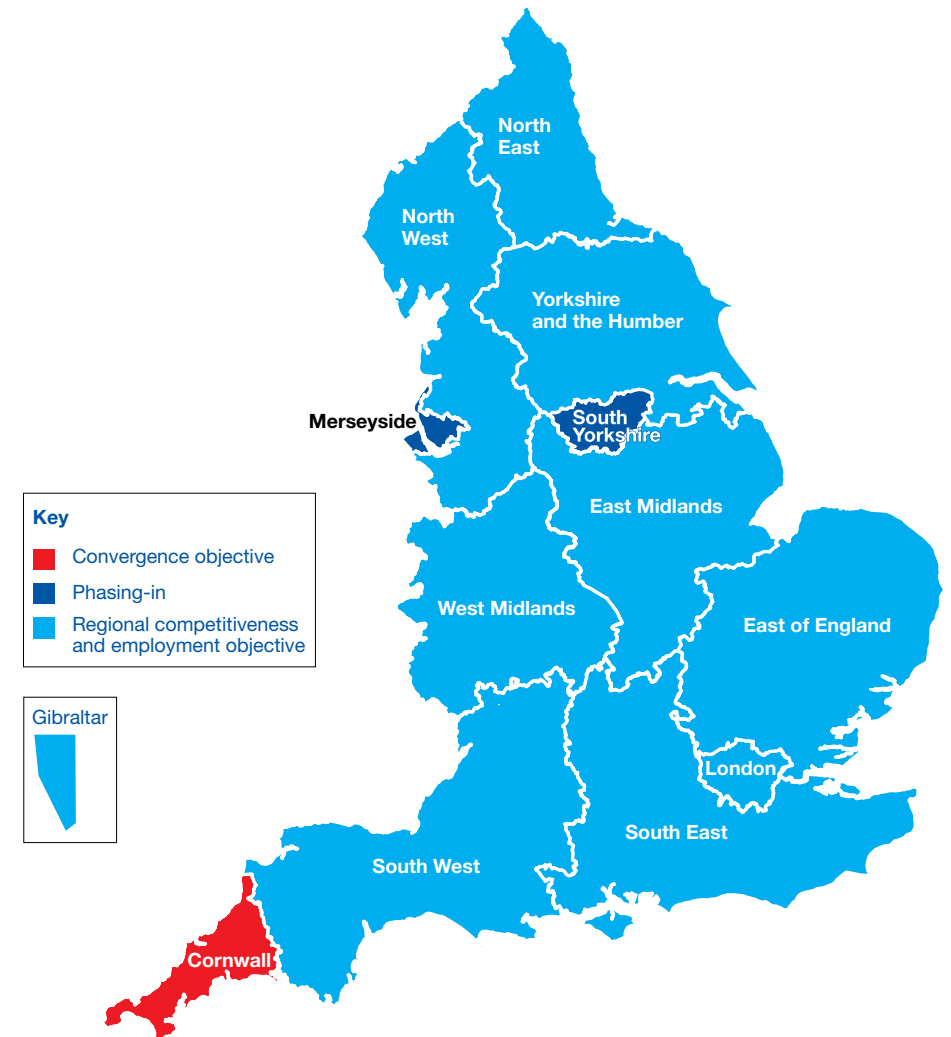
in the hospitality industry. The project is contributing to the economic redevelopment of the area and is helping 21 disadvantaged young people to learn new skills and enter employment.

The course involves a combination of studying at Cornwall College, taking part in work-experience placements in top restaurants, and cooking at Fifteen Cornwall under the guidance of professional chefs. The trainees also have access to general counselling, and help with accommodation or transport.

The people taking part are aged between 16 and 24 and not in full-time education or employment when they apply to join the programme. The trainees spend their first 12 weeks at college working towards NVQ Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications. They then take part in a four-week work-experience placement at a top Cornwall restaurant, followed by a 52-week apprenticeship. Trainees who successfully complete the course are helped by the Fifteen Foundation to find work.

Ami, one of the trainees, said: "To have an opportunity like this that will take you on no matter what your background is, and train you up in something that you can use, wherever you go, it's just an amazing feeling. Now I've passed the course I've got my NVQ1 and my NVQ2 so I'm really happy."

European Social Fund 2007 to 2013



Who is the ESF helping?

In Priority 1, the fund aims to help people who are unemployed or have not worked for a long time. It particularly focuses on people who are most likely to face disadvantage or discrimination. The main target groups include:

- people with disabilities and health conditions;
- single parents;
- people aged over 50;
- people from ethnic minorities;
- people without good qualifications; and
- young people who are not in education, employment or training.

In Priority 2, the fund aims to help people in the workforce who lack basic skills or good qualifications. It particularly focuses on people who are least likely to receive training. It also supports training for managers and employees in small firms. Priority 2 aims to help people gain the relevant skills and qualifications they need to make progress in their careers and help businesses and the economy to grow.

Who manages the ESF?

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has overall responsibility for ESF money in England. The DWP manages the ESF programme across England and consults with the European Commission in Brussels.

Each region has its own ESF money to fund projects to meet its needs for jobs and skills, within the framework of the two priorities in the England ESF programme.

At the regional level, ESF funds are awarded through public agencies such as the Learning and Skills Council and the DWP. These agencies are known as 'co-financing organisations'. Their role is to bring together ESF money and other funding for employment and skills so that the ESF works alongside their national programmes such as Train to Gain and the New Deal.

The co-financing organisations agree contracts with the organisations or 'providers' that put ESF projects in place on their behalf.

Who can apply?

Any public-sector, private-sector or third-sector organisation that has been set up legally and is able to provide ESF services can apply for funding. Individuals and sole traders **cannot** apply for ESF.

Case study: Fair Cities



Fair Cities is an employment initiative running in Bradford, Birmingham and the London Borough of Brent. The project is a partnership between Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council, with the support of the European Social Fund. It aims to increase the number of

disadvantaged ethnic minority residents who gain employment by:

- meeting employers' demands for candidates who are ready to do the job;
- encouraging employers to have fair and effective processes for recruiting and promoting employees;
- helping the employment and skills system to respond more effectively to the needs of businesses and ethnic minorities;
- testing the effectiveness and value for money of the approach to tackling disadvantage and discrimination in the workforce; and
- making sure the most important and successful parts of the Fair Cities trial and the lessons learned from it are built into standard employment schemes.

In Birmingham, ESF funds Fair Cities pre-employment courses to help people from ethnic minorities to apply for jobs and prepare for interviews. One of the people taking part is Manjit. Manjit had taken time out from work to have children and contacted Fair Cities after seeing an advert in the local free newspaper. After an initial discussion with the Fair Cities employer engagement manager, Manjit took part in a pre-employment course. Fair Cities then arranged an interview for her with a local building society. Manjit was successful at the interview and joined the building society permanently. Manjit said "I don't think I would have been working today if it hadn't been for Fair Cities, it gave me a doorway, a gateway into work."

How do we apply?

You apply to a co-financing organisation in your region. Co-financing organisations make ESF money available through a process of open and competitive tendering (in other words, inviting organisations to apply for funding against set conditions). If you are successful, you do not have to find your own 'match funding' (where being awarded ESF funding relies on you matching the amount yourself), as co-financing organisations are responsible for both the ESF money and match funding.

The Learning and Skills Council and the DWP are co-financing organisations in every region of England. In some regions, regional development agencies and some local authorities are also co-financing organisations.

Information on how to contact co-financing organisations in your region is available from the national ESF website at www.esf.gov.uk or from your regional Government Office. In London information is available from the London Development Agency (see the contact details at the back of this booklet).

Organisations in Gibraltar should apply to the EU Programmes Secretariat of the Government of Gibraltar (see the contact details at the back of this booklet).

How long does the support last?

Projects are usually supported for up to three years.

How is the money paid to approved projects?

If you are successful in getting funding for a project through a co-financing organisation, it will agree the arrangements for making payments with you.

When can we apply?

You should contact co-financing organisations in your region for details.

What are ESF Community Grants?

These are small grants of up to £12,000 for voluntary and community organisations to help them reach disadvantaged people who are not working.

Is there any more information about the ESF in England?



You can get more information on the national ESF website at www.esf.gov.uk. This includes the 'Operational Programme', which sets out in detail the priorities and target groups for ESF support.

Also, Regional Skills Partnerships have developed regional ESF frameworks for each region in England. These

frameworks describe how the ESF will help meet the employment and skills needs of that particular region. You can also find the regional ESF frameworks on the ESF website.

The ESF in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own ESF programmes and you should look on their websites for more information. The contact details are at the back of this booklet.

Case study: Blueprint



The Blueprint project receives ESF funding from Jobcentre Plus in North Yorkshire. Beaumont Street Studios designed the project and leads a partnership of organisations that have proven track records in helping people with mental or

physical disabilities, and providing careers advice, skills training or job coaching. Blueprint aims to move people who are on incapacity benefits into long-term employment.

Blueprint's approach is centred around its clients and involves a range of methods which makes sure that each client receives support in the most appropriate way. These methods include one-to-one coaching and mentoring, group training sessions, occupational training, and developing clients' confidence. Blueprint also offers a wide range of employment opportunities, including jobs in retail, administration, creative writing, art and music.

One of the people taking part was David, who was suffering from anxiety and depression and found it difficult to be around groups of people. After some discussions with David, his Blueprint advisor Sheelagh found out that David's passion was exotic plants and pets. After working with David over several sessions she found him a work-experience placement with the local council and within weeks he was ready for job interviews. David did volunteer work at a local exotic pet shop and the owners were so impressed with his enthusiasm and commitment that they offered him a permanent job. He is managing his illness and is very happy at work.

David said: "I could never imagine going back to the way I was. I feel so much better and I'm looking forward to the future."

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