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**EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND**  
**SOUTH WEST REGION – COMPETITIVENESS & EMPLOYMENT**  
**PROGRAMME**

**LEARNING & SKILLS COUNCIL – SOUTH WEST REGION**

**ESF CO-FINANCING PLAN 2007 - 2011**

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## **PART 1: INTRODUCTION**

This Co-Financing Plan has been prepared by the South West Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The Plan covers ESF co-financed provision identified in the South West ESF Framework approved by the Regional Skills Partnership (RSP). The Plan covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2007 to 31st March 2011 and will support the employment and skills needs of the target groups living and/or working in the South West region. The region includes:

- Devon
- Somerset
- Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole
- Gloucestershire
- Wilshire & Swindon
- West of England (Bristol)

The LSC will align its ESF funds 2007-2011 to add value to its national and regional priorities and key actions as described in its national ESF 2007-2013 Commissioning Strategy and the South West Regional Commissioning Plan 2007/08. The Plan is informed by LSC national priorities published in 'Raising Our Game, Annual Statement of Priorities for 2007/08' and the economic, social and environmental challenges of the South West Region articulated in the Regional Economic Strategy.

The LSC Plan has been strategically developed in response to the South West ESF Framework to ensure alignment and integration with regional and local employment and skills priorities and targets consistent with the ESF Operational Programme. ESF will be used to add value to, enhance and fill gaps in mainstream skills and employment services by providing enhanced packages of support and extending eligibility. The Plan will reflect the guiding principles and recommendations of the regional Framework and will address the key employment and skills issues identified. The Plan will target ESF resources and achieve maximum impact by combining a focus on particular groups, industrial sectors and specific geographic locations.

The Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus have worked very closely in developing the proposed interventions and route-ways. This highly effective joint working has built on, and benefited from the experience gained in developing a joint approach to co-financing under Objective Three where the LSC and Jobcentre Plus produced a Joint Co-financing Plan. Because of the changes to CFO status to DWP for the new Programme a formal joint Plan was not possible for Competitiveness but, notwithstanding, the same approach was taken in the joint working that led to the development of both DWP and Jobcentre Plus activities. This will ensure a joined up approach for learners, less confusion in the market place and overcome any potential for overlap or duplication in the two approaches..

Economic Development Managers and ESF staff in the Local Area Partnerships worked with District level colleagues from Jobcentre Plus, together with appropriate partners (particularly the local authorities) to produce templates for interventions that arose from an identification of sub-regional need. Regional Jobcentre Plus and LSC staff then met to review the approaches and ensure proposed delivery was joined up and that there no overlaps.

Regional colleagues then sought input in the process to ensure that the regional context was addressed.

National Office also offered guidance on approach through a Commissioning Paper which identified the kinds of activities around the mainstream that were likely to arise from the new Programme.

The recommendations in this Plan were therefore put together on the basis that:

- Sub-regional need had been identified with partners and would be addressed within the context of the Framework and the CFO remit
- Linkages should be established wherever possible to ERDF investment delivered through the RDA – for example 30% of ERDF funding is likely to be targeted at Torbay, Bristol and Plymouth
- Regional contexts had been taken into account particularly in relation to the focus identified for the South West within the Frameworks
- Beneficiary route-ways should form part of the process ensuring no overlap with mainstream or other ESF interventions
- Fee remission/comparable offer to mainstream/national priority guidelines (e.g. ESOL) must be taken into account. ESF cannot be used to fund interventions at odds with national policy.

Measure Level Applications will be submitted following the approval of the Plan.

## PART 2: CONTRIBUTION OF THE PLAN TO THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME AND THE SOUTH WEST FRAMEWORK

The activities identified within the Plan have been considered in the light of the re-launch of the Lisbon Strategy with a focus on jobs and growth. In addition the proposed interventions support the UK response to the re-launch of Lisbon, expressed in the UK National Reform Programme which identifies:

- The quality and quantity of skilled labour available in an economy is a key driver of economic performance and productivity growth. As well as increasing the productivity of individuals, a highly skilled workforce also enables businesses to improve working practices and products and services faster, making the economy more flexible and competitive. This is particularly important in responding to the challenges of demographic and technological change and the shifts in the balance of global economic activity.
- Skills acquisition is central to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) overall PSA aim, to “help build a competitive economy and inclusive society by: creating opportunities for everyone to develop their learning; releasing potential in people to make the most of themselves; achieving excellence in standards of education and levels of skills”, and corresponds closely to the Lisbon goals of promoting lifelong learning and better adapting the skills base to the needs of a knowledge society.
- The Government is committed to ensuring that all young people reach the age of 19 equipped to enter higher education or skilled employment, and aims to raise participation in education and training from 75 per cent today to at least 90 per cent at age 17 by 2015.
- The Government’s strategy for adult skills aims to support individuals in seeking sustainable and better-paid employment, by ensuring that every adult has the opportunity to acquire new skills and develop their existing skills throughout their working life. By creating a flexible, demand-led training system that has the involvement of all social and economic partners, the Government aims to tackle market failures and help those with low skills in particular.
- The 2005 National Reform Programme (NRP) set out the UK’s labour market policy framework. These measures are designed to move away from a culture of welfare dependency, and towards a welfare state that enables and encourages people to participate in the labour market throughout their working lives.
- A flexible and efficient labour market must enable people to adjust to change, and support them at times when they may not be able to work, thereby creating opportunity for all. The *National report on strategies for social protection and social inclusion*,<sup>1</sup> part of the UK’s integrated approach to the Lisbon goals, gives details of such support.
- Helping certain groups into work means recognising and tackling specific obstacles to participation. Removing barriers to entry into the labour market is embodied in the DWP PSA targets “to increase the employment rates of disadvantaged groups” and “to further improve the rights of disabled people and remove barriers to their participation in society”, which correspond closely to the Lisbon employment targets for priority categories and the goal of strengthening equal opportunities for the disabled. The Government’s commitment to removing barriers to access extends to a number of groups, including people with disabilities; lone parents; ethnic minorities; people from deprived areas and older workers.

Page 26 of this document identifies, where possible at this stage, the linkages with ERDF investment. However, in view of the differing timescales it is important that effective partnership linkages are developed in order that emerging ERDF initiatives can benefit from and add value to the proposed ESF interventions. For example, providers who are moving workless adults into employment in an area targeted for re-generation through ERDF need to be aware of the ERDF investment and the likely knock on effects further down the skills escalator in order that ESF delivery is able to take up any new opportunities for learner engagement. Contracted ESF delivery needs to be sufficiently flexible to react to these opportunities as they arise during the lifetime of a contract to ensure the complementarity of ERDF and ESF investment in the economic development of the region.

The Plan will contribute to Priority 1 and Priority 2 of the Operational Programme and will:

- Increase employment and reduce unemployment and inactivity
- Tackle and prevent worklessness and improve social inclusion and social mobility
- Increase employment and reduce unemployment and inactivity and help young people make a successful transition to the world of work
- Contribute to the skills strategy, by helping unemployed and inactive people gain the skills they need for employability
- Develop a skilled and adaptable workforce by reducing the number of people without basic skills
- Increase the number of people qualified to levels 2 and 3

The Plan will contribute to the regional ESF Framework by providing interventions to support employment and skills needs in respect of:

Priority 1

1. Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), including young people at risk of becoming NEET.
2. Workless adults (unemployed and inactive)

Priority 2

Young people and adults aged 16 years and over who require relevant qualifications at an appropriate level to support their current and continuing and future employment needs:

- Basic Skills
- Relevant Qualifications at level 2
- Relevant Qualifications at level 3

This Plan requests the following ESF funding under the stated priorities.

Note: These figures are prior to a deduction in each category to support the admin at 5% of total Programme value (admin figure £). The deduction is based on the methodology that up to 5% of the Programme value is available to meet administration cost but that only evidenced actual cost will be claimed.

2007-2011	Total Allocation to Region	LSC Allocation	LSC % of regional total
<b>Priority 1</b>			
NEET & at Risk Neet	£7,985,337	£7,983,658	100%
Workless adults	£24,303,199	£8,091,091	33%
Community Grants	£867,971	£673,000	78%
<b>Total Priority 1</b>	<b>£32,288,536</b>	<b>£16,747,749</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Priority 2</b>			
Basic Skills	£6,663,599	£6,663,599	100%
Level 2	£6,663,599	£6,663,599	100%
Level 3	£5,330,879	£5,330,879	100%
<b>Total P2</b>	<b>£18,658,077</b>	<b>£18,658,077</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total P1 &amp; P2</b>	<b>£50,946,613</b>	<b>£35,405,826</b>	<b>69%</b>

The figures detailed in the table above have been updated to reflect the slight change in split of funding that the LSC originally proposed. It includes an review of the specifications published in our Phase 1 and 2 rounds and now reflects a true position of allocation within the Priority.

## Key Participant Groups

The Plan reflects the principles of the regional Framework in order to target ESF resources and achieve maximum impact in respect of activities in Priority 1 and Priority 2 and deliver the targets identified for each participant group outlined in the Framework.

<b>Priority One</b>
Young people aged 14-19 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or are risk of becoming NEET
People who are unemployed or economically inactive
People with Disabilities including learning disabilities and health conditions
Lone Parents and Carers
Older People (aged 50+)
Ethnic Minorities
Females
Offenders and Ex-Offenders
<b>Priority Two</b>
People with basic skills needs
People without relevant Level 2
People without relevant Level 3
People with disabilities including learning disabilities and health conditions
People aged 50 and over
Ethnic minorities
Females

## Funding Allocations

The rationale for the allocation of funding across the region is based on:

- Numbers of NEETS
- Numbers of unemployed/economically inactive
- Numbers of employed

The details are:

	<b>NEET Number</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>	<b>Funding Allocation</b>
WoE	1664	21.04	£1,511,786
BDP	1234	15.61	£1,121,624
Glos	780	9.87	£ 709,188
Som	601	7.61	£ 546,801
W&S	1225	15.49	£1,113,002
Dev	2402	30.38	£2,182,891

*Note: Statistics as at January 2007 provided by LPP*

	<b>Workless</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>	<b>Funding Allocation</b>
WoE	134	22.71	£1,381,219
BDP	95	16.10	£ 979,199
Glos	69	11.70	£ 711,592
Som	68	11.53	£ 701,252
W&S	73	12.37	£ 752,341
Dev	151	25.59	£1,556,379

**Note: A “top-slice” of £480,000 has been set aside for a regional specification for Offender Learning and Skills work (OLASS)**

*Note: Statistics from the August 2007 Labour Market Statistics (National Statistics Office) quoting information in ‘000’s as at December 2006  
Workless equals total of unemployed and economically inactive.*

	<b>Employed</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>	<b>Funding Allocation</b>
WoE	510	23.09	£3,877,946
BDP	349	15.39	£2,584,737
Glos	288	13.04	£2,190,057
Som	234	10.74	£1,803,773
W&S	322	14.58	£2,448,699
Dev	512	23.16	£3,889,703

*Note: Statistics from the August 2007 Labour Market Statistics (National Statistics Office) quoting information in ‘000’s as at December 2006*

Targets and outcomes will be pro-rated in line with the sub-regional allocation on the following basis:

<b>Priority One Outputs and Results - LSC First Round</b>										
	Regional	OLASS	WoE	BDP	Glos	Som	W&S	Devon	Torbay	Plymouth
<b>Funding (£)</b>										
NEETs	7,185,292		1,511,786	1,121,624	709,188	546,801	1,113,002	1,179,106	320,464	683,321
Worklessness	6,801,982	£480,000	1,381,219	979,199	951,592	701,252	752,341	937,842	195,839	422,698
Community Grants	605,700									
<b>Outputs</b>										
Participants who are unemployed/inactive	3038	223	639	453	329	325	348	434	91	196
Participants aged 14-19 who are NEET	2514		529	392	248	192	390	412	112	239
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	22%									
Participants who are lone parents	12%									
Participants aged over 50	18%									
Participants from ethnic minorities	7%									
Female participants	51%									
<b>Results</b>										
Participants in work on leaving	22%									
Participants in work six months after leaving	26%									
Economically inactive participants engaged in jobsearch activity or further learning (distance travelled indicator)	45%									
Participants aged 14-19 NEETs in education, employment or training on leaving	45%									

Priority Two Outputs and Results – LSC First Round

	Regional	WoE	BDP	Glos	Som	W&S	Devon	Torbay	Plymouth
<b>Funding</b>									
Basic Skills	£5,997,463	£1,384,814	£923,010	£782,069	£644,127	£874,430	£930,806	£157,134	£301,073
Level Two	£5,997,463	£1,384,814	£923,010	£782,069	£644,127	£874,430	£930,806	£157,134	£301,073
Level Three +	£4,799,989	£1,108,318	£738,717	£625,919	£515,519	£699,839	£723,550	£125,760	£240,959
<b>Total</b>	<b>£16,794,915</b>	<b>£3,877,946</b>	<b>£2,584,737</b>	<b>£2,190,057</b>	<b>£1,803,773</b>	<b>£2,448,699</b>	<b>£2,606,570</b>	<b>£440,028</b>	<b>£843,105</b>

**Outputs**

Participants with basic skills needs	4800	1108	739	626	515	700	745	126	241
Participants without relevant L2	4800	1108	739	626	515	700	745	126	241
Participants without relevant L3	1430	330	220	186	154	208	222	37	73
<b>Total</b>	<b>11030</b>	<b>2546</b>	<b>1698</b>	<b>1438</b>	<b>1184</b>	<b>1608</b>	<b>1712</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>555</b>

Participants with disabilities or health conditions	15%
Participants aged 50 and over	20%
Participants from ethnic minorities	4%
Female participants	50%

**Results**

Participants who gained basic skills	45%
Participants gaining full L2 qualifications	40%
Participants gaining full L3 qualifications	30%



## Activities To Be Supported

The activities proposed in this Plan reflect the guiding principles of the region's Framework in order to increase access to and participation in learning and skills leading to sustainable employment and to raise skills levels of those in the workplace. Activities of the Plan feature:

- Specific and targeted interventions
- Flexible and tailored provision relevant to the needs of the priority groups
- Support towards sustainable outcomes and the Skills Escalator through progression into mainstream programmes and employment progression
- Additionality by supporting access to mainstream provision

The LSC will use its ESF allocations to add value to, enhance and fill gaps in its mainstream skills and employment services by providing enhanced packages of support and extending eligibility. There will be a strong emphasis on engaging 'hard to reach' groups, supporting skills development, progression into employment and job retention.

Provision in Priority 1 for workless adults will include initial engagement activities, work readiness programmes and support in the transition to employment and job retention with particular focus on recruitment in under-developed areas and communities and of individuals under-represented in the labour market. ESF activity will extend provision currently offered by the LSC Skills for Job Programme. Also, potential route-ways to employment offered through volunteering (taking advantage of opportunities arising from the 2012 Olympics and through interventions incorporating elements of entrepreneurship, self employment and social enterprise training.

Tailored transition programmes for the NEET group and those at risk of becoming NEET will prepare vulnerable young people for working life, further learning and training and will complement and extend activity to support the NEET client group including FE, and Sixth Form provision and that offered by Apprenticeships, Entry to Employment, the School Engagement Programme and Young Apprenticeships.

Provision in Priority 2 will support the re-skilling and up-skilling of individuals to improve labour market mobility and reduce labour and skill shortages. Provision will extend the eligibility of mainstream employment programmes offered through Train to Gain by offering enhanced packages of support and will target employees who do not have a current or relevant qualification at level 2 and 3. Provision will address entry level Basic Skills issues in the workforce and will complement and extend existing offers through FE colleges, private training providers and others delivering mainstream programmes including Skills for Life entitlement and Train to Gain. Employers receiving support at level 3 will be expected to make a significant and increasing contribution to the overall costs of training.

In addition, interventions will seek to address initiatives by social partners to promote lifelong learning in the workplace. This will be enhanced through the evolving specification identifying the delivery interventions under the Community Grants element of the funding.

The LSC in the South West will develop regional Invitations to Tender (ITT) around the key headline areas of the ESF Programme

- 14-19 NEETs (and those at risk of becoming NEET)
- Worklessness (under the Skills for Jobs banner)
- Workforce Development (Incorporating Skills for Life and Qualifications)
- OLASS

Underlying the Regional ITTs (other than OLASS) will be detail around the need established for each sub-regional area in line with the funding methodology for the allocation of funding.

This will enable applicants to bid for separate elements, a mix of elements or all elements within each ITT.

As targets have been allocated pro-rata with the funding, the ITT detail from each sub-region area will identify how they intend to meet the needs of those targets, particularly around:

- Participants with a disability or health condition
- Lone parents
- Participants aged 50+
- Participants from ethnic minorities
- Female participants (and how proposed activities will tackle gender segregation)

Core elements will be incorporated within the ITTs around:

- Skills for Life
- Sectors (For example the delivery of preferred vocational qualifications arising from the work of the Sector Skills Councils)
- Equality and Diversity (Including learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities)

These core elements will be embedded within each sub-regional approach to ensure consistency across the region and delivery of the ESF outputs.

In addition, the sub-regions will identify, within their priorities for action what outcomes they wish to see delivered for those participants who do not gain a positive outcome of a job, further learning or a qualification. This will identify within the ITT such elements as:

- Distance travelled
- Bespoke training not leading to a qualification (including Leadership/Management and Entrepreneurial Skills)

## **Approach to sub – regional demand**

Each sub-region was tasked with identifying those areas which they considered priority for ESF interventions. In doing this they were asked to work with Jobcentre Plus and Local Authority colleagues to ensure fit with DWP and Local Area Agreement approaches.

The headlines arising from this exercise are detailed below. The Invitations to Tender will detail how each sub-region will address the pro-rated targets for their area. This will fill any gaps not identified through the exercise (for example Level Two delivery in Dorset and Somerset)

## **Priority One**

### **Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), including young people at risk of becoming NEET.**

The regional steer for interventions is:

*Priorities for the 14-19 age group are driven by the PSA targets relating to this age group, namely the achievement of a first Level 2 qualification by age 19 and increasing participation in learning. Whilst the South West Region held an enviable reputation on both counts, progress in other regions has accelerated during the last year or two and is more rapid than within this Region. ESF proposals should therefore target those*

- *who remained in learning immediately following the end of compulsory schooling but left during the subsequent year*
- *who experienced difficulty (or are likely to experience difficulty) during the transition to post-16 learning for whom additional support would make a difference to the likelihood of their retention in learning until the age of 18*
- *for whom self-employment is or could become a realistic option either by the age or 19 or subsequently*
- *for whom voluntary work is or could become a route into or back into learning*
- *who would benefit from but cannot currently access practical vocational learning (either in the form of short “taster” sessions or more prolonged courses that lead directly or indirectly to qualifications)*
- *where the LSC would wish to be part of a wider support package for young people who, for whatever region, are on the margins of the learning society.*
  
- **West of England NEETs – In line with West at Work Priority One**
  - Supporting providers in the development of a fully integrated Foundation Learning Tier with clear progression pathways – a tier that will embrace current pre E2E provision, E2E and sub level 2 programmes in colleges
  - Supporting additional E2E provision where there are currently gaps
  - Providing mentors and brokers for particularly at risk young people to help them in dealing with training providers and employers

- Community led enterprise programmes to develop the enterprise and self employment skills of young people up to the age of 25

- **West of England NEETs**

- To increase the numbers of young people and adults who are able to move into sustainable employment or volunteering which acts as a bridge to employment
- Provide mentoring, job search, employability skills training, work experience and in work job coaching
- Establish a network of employers willing to offer employment opportunities and to provide support for those employers in disability awareness training and buddying/mentoring in the workplace

*Note: This activity is split across NEETs and Worklessness.*

- **West of England – Work Related Learning**

- Designed to provide additional learning opportunities to young people undertaking vocationally oriented provision to help them in preparing for employment and reduce the risk of them becoming NEET building on the work undertaken through the Bristol Key stage Four Engagement Project and the Bristol WRL Project.

- **Gloucestershire/Wiltshire/Swindon**

- Involve beneficiaries in personal action planning and decision making
- Provide a flexible and personalised range of support (confidence building, communication, literacy and numeracy, employability skills)
- Provide relevant vocational learning and work experience
- Provide accreditation
- Provide IAG that enables beneficiaries to make positive choices in education, employment and training
- Provide coaching and mentoring, including in the workplace for some beneficiaries
- Provide support for employers that recruit beneficiaries

- **Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole**

- To engage beneficiaries in group activity and 1:1 activity
- To engage local training providers and employers in offering young people experience in the workplace
- To improve employability and life skills
- To give IAG with hands on experience of institutions and other provisions
- Identify and address Skills for Life issues

- **Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole**

- To give broader offer to young persons who have underperformed at school and prepare for progression to an apprenticeship, remove barriers to learning and undertake relevant technical certificates.
  - To deal with any key skills and basic skills issues
- **Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole**
    - To reduce NEET figures by engagement with Care Leavers – ensuring that they are better placed for entry into a mainstream programme.
    - Activities such as IAG, potential group work, basic skills, employability skills
- **Somerset**
    - To reduce NEET figures through engagement with 400 beneficiaries
    - Thorough Initial Assessment resulting in development of Individual Learning Plan for all participants
    - Identify and address Skills for life issues
    - Register and start all participants on C&G certificate of Self Development Through Learning
    - Improve Employability and life skills
    - Give IAG to aid progression
- **Devon (Including Torbay and Plymouth)**
    - Strong IAG element
    - Life Skills, Learning Skills and Work Attitude balance
    - Possible 1:1 qualification based personal development activity
    - It will be for providers to describe the exact programme content given their and their partners current programmes

## **Employability**

The LSC seeks to put out one regional specification that will deliver under the Skills For Jobs umbrella. However, all activity will be defined at a sub-regional level in line with the allocations and targets defined above.

All interventions have been discussed with Jobcentre Plus and proposed activities from both organisations compared to ensure that there are no overlaps and that there is complementarity with mainstream programmes

Additionally, the opportunities afforded by the Olympics 2012 particularly around volunteering will be built into the menu of possible route-ways for individuals moving into sustainable employment.

- **West of England – West at Work**
  - Target group – workless adults from settled and migrant communities where English is not the first language and represents a real barrier to work

- Assist the target group in being appropriately skilled to meet employer need in Bristol (Cabot Circus, Temple Quarter) Bath (Southgate) and Weston (Locking Parklands and Weston Park)
  - Recruit and train programme delivered as part of West at Work
  - Access routes to mainstream ESOL
  - Access employment opportunities
  - Access other mainstream learning opportunities
- **West of England – Training for Career Change and Business Restructuring**
    - To help adults move into or remain in sustainable employment when faced with a need to significantly change their career orientation or skill set
    - Second relevant L2 or L3 qualifications

*Note: This approach is primarily about delivering workforce qualifications at L2 and L3 for both employed and unemployed. In that context it will be split across Priority 1 and Priority 2 with the Priority One outcomes being the move into sustainable employment.*

- **West of England – West at Work Partnership**
  - Acquisition of Skills/Job Preparation
  - Employability skills particularly retail and hospitality
  - Address employers skills needs
  - Link people jobs and training (with partners in West at Work)
  - Engage individuals from disadvantaged communities
  - Stimulate demand for investment in skills from employers and individuals
  - Provide public sector responsive support to meet local priorities
  - Assist the beneficiaries in being appropriately skilled to meet employer need in Bristol (Cabot Circus, Temple Quarter) Bath (Southgate) and Weston (Locking Parklands and Weston Park)
- **Swindon – Employability and Skills Programme for people with LDD**
  - To provide supported but real environment in which people with LDD can experience an authentic workplace with a range of activities which will support their learning and enable them to develop strategies and skills which can be transferred to employment
- **Wiltshire and Swindon**
  - To offer a range of services, opportunities and activities to those unemployed in Wiltshire and Swindon so that they can develop their skills and employability options
  - Within 5 deprived wards in Swindon
  - Army dependents in Wiltshire supporting the development of Super Garrisons
  - Community areas in Wiltshire where benefit claim count is high
  - For offenders in the community

- **Bournemouth Dorset and Poole**

- To ensure that more people from marginalised groups access LSC funded provision and enter work placements, work trials and employment
  - Identify and set up partnerships with organisations who have access to target group
  - Skills assessment, including literacy and numeracy.
  - IAG and mentoring
  - Training to meet individuals requirements
  - Linkages to support progression
  - Employability skills/NVQ training to meet employer demand
- **BDP – Recruitment to the Care Sector**
    - To increase recruitment into the care sector by training Ambassadors focusing on those individuals who wish to follow an a-typical career, career changers, adults returning to employment etc
    - Identify locations/partners with access to those wishing to move to a career in care
    - Identify and train Ambassadors to promote sector
    - Hold events to promote and recruit
    - Short courses linked to care
    - Link with Care employers to offer work placements
- **BDP & Somerset**
    - Support individuals with learning/physical/mental health disabilities to move into sustainable employment
    - Set up partnerships
    - Define programme
    - Develop network of employers – ensuring demand led provision
    - Engage with carers
    - Post employment mentoring and support
    - Progression route-ways to mainstream
- **Plymouth, Torbay and Devon**
    - To reduce the level of economic inactivity, address the skills needs of local employers by providing sustainable labour
    - Contribute to social inclusion agenda
    - Vocational and sector focused provision responding to areas skills shortages and growth sectors
    - Progression linkages to Train to Gain

***Note: Gloucester has developed a joined up approach to worklessness and workforce development which they will lead for Jobcentre Plus too. This is included in the Workforce Development section below.***

## **Community Grants**

To establish a regional/sub regional Grants Co-ordinating structure to develop, deliver and manage a Community Grants Programme across the South West Competitiveness region and to support people from the hardest to reach communities and individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage access mainstream ESF and domestic employment and skills provision.

### **Priority Two**

#### **Workforce Development – Incorporating Skills for Life**

We propose developing a region wide specification around workforce development incorporating the sub regional focus identified below.

Olympics proposals will be embedded within all relevant sub regional interventions where applicable.

Generic core elements will be included in all sub-regional interventions where there is a cross cutting theme. For example; Skills for Life, Sectors and ESOL.

- **West of England – Post Employment Support**
  - Post employment support through mentoring
  - Skills for Life assessment and training if applicable
  - Progression routeways to further training
- **West of England – Increase in Employer Engagement with Train to Gain**
  - Research into employer engagement
  - Support groups for providers
  - Aim is to improve take up and delivery of mainstream Train to Gain
- **West of England – Training to give businesses the skills to diversify into Environmental Technology and Renewable sectors**
  - Creation of L2 courses fro construction, electrical and waste management enabling movement to identified sectors
  - Second relevant qualifications offered
  - Business and Individual Training Needs assessments
  - Mentoring and Coaching
- **West of England – improve the productivity of Micro Businesses to meet current and future skills needs**
  - Targeted business skills support
  - Development of business specific L2,3 and 4 training
  - Referral to Train to Gain
  - Second relevant qualifications at L2+
  - Embedded Skills for Life

- Mentoring and Coaching
- On and off job assessment
- **Gloucestershire – The City Employment Plan**
  - Regeneration project through the Gloucester URC
  - Joint activity with JC+ led by LSC
  - Employer Engagement – co-ordination of agencies around vacancies skills and after care services
  - Employer Offer – Skills Pledge, bespoke recruitment and training support, progression through Skills for Life, Train to Gain, second relevant qualifications
  - Client Offer – pre and post employment support, tailored training, progression routes for training and employment
  - Neighbourhood engagement – outreach to hard to reach communities through co-ordination of appropriate agencies/organisations

*Note: This proposal covers both priorities and represents a cohesive and joined up approach to delivery of regeneration in Gloucester. The LSC would lead the bid and manage the contract. This will establish good links to LAA agenda's and to ERDF.*

- **Gloucester – Park Life**
  - Working on 15 business parks across the area
  - Support SMEs through Skills Pledge to upskill workforce through mainstream or second relevant qualifications
  - Provide environmental management and protection skills
  - Upskill workforce to meet employer need
  - Improve SME performance – development of strategic business plan
- **Gloucester – Creative Skills**
  - Research of participants needs
  - Vocationally relevant L2 qualifications
  - Core TTG
  - L3 and key skills
  - Growing sector in the sub-region with recognised skills shortages
- **Gloucestershire and Wiltshire – Market Towns support**
  - To improve low skills of the workforce in market towns
  - Development of local Learning Plans – working in partnership with local community organisations and groups
  - Basic Skills assessments
  - First L2 through mainstream
  - Retail and customer service, hospitality catering and tourism
  - Environmental Skills
  - Adult Care

- **Glos/Wilts/Swindon - Leadership and Management Training for Small Enterprises**
  - To give business leaders the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills to maximise their business operations
  - L3 and L4 outcomes
- **Wiltshire and Swindon - Supporting Employer Demand Led Skills Needs**
  - To enable employees who already possess a L2 to obtain a qualification appropriate to their employment such as basic skills, second L2 or 3
- **Dorset - Responding to the Skills Needs of 2012 – Key Workers and Sectors – Paul Pettigrew**
  - To upskill employed staff in a range of sectors prior to the event to enable them to meet the skills demands of the event and in order to leave a lasting legacy.
  - Responsive package of certificated learning brokered via Businesslink planned well in advance for companies needing to raise their skills game to provide top class good and services for 2012
- **Dorset and Somerset - Improve the higher level skills of those employed within the local economy**
  - To increase the number of individuals employed within an SME who holds a L3 or L4 qualification. Focus on Health, Social Care, Retail, Hospitality and Tourism. Brokerage via Train to gain. Employer contribution expected
- **Somerset - Increase productivity of SMEs through Leadership/Management/Supervisory skills –**
  - L3 outcomes
  - Particular emphasis on Health, Social Care, Retail, Hospitality and Tourism.
  - Emphasis on SMEs in deprived wards.
- **Somerset - Increase opportunities for disadvantaged groups to access skills training**
  - Aim to secure more sustainable employment
  - Personalised support
  - Progression routes identified
- **Somerset - Increase productivity of SMEs through updating outdated skills of workforce**
  - Second relevant L2 to meet business need
  - Emphasis on ex JCP customers who have moved into employment.

- **Devon (Including Torbay and Plymouth) - Basic Skills/ Second Relevant L2**
  - To improve the skills of the local workforce and meet the needs of employers through L1 learning with progression to mainstream Train to Gain (with support and ongoing mentoring) and ongoing progression.
  - Provision of relevant 2<sup>nd</sup> L2 where need established
  
- **Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay) - Management and Leadership Skills at L3 and 4**
  - To deliver a programme that will improve the leadership, intermediary management skills of managers and workers in small enterprises at L3 and 4

## Planned Outputs Priority 1

Planned Outputs Priority 1	2008	2009	2010	2011 to 31st March	Total
Total Number of Participants	3,331	4,442	2,776	555	11,104
Number of Participants who are unemployed economically inactive	1003	1336	835	167	3341
	820	1094	684	137	2735
%					55%
Number of Participants aged 14-19 who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET	1,508	2,011	1,257	251	5,028
%					45%
Number of Participants with Disabilities or Health Conditions	733	977	611	122	2,442
%					22%
Number of Participants who are Lone Parents	400	533	333	67	1,332
%					12%
Number of participants who are Aged 50+	599	799	500	100	1,998
%					18%
Number of Participants from Ethnic Minorities	233	310	194	39	776
%					7%
Number of Females	1,699	2,265	1,416	283	5,662
%					51%

## Planned Results

<b>Planned Results Targets Priority 1</b>	2008	2009	2010	2011 to 31st March	Total
Number of Participants who are in work after leaving	733	977	611	122	2,442
Number of Participants who are in work after 6 month of leaving	866	1,155	722	144	2,887
Number of Economically Inactive Participants who are engaged in Job Search or Further learning	820	1,094	684	137	2,734
Number of 14-19 NEET Participants who are in Education, Employment or Training on Leaving	679	905	566	113	2,262
<b>Planned Results Targets Priority 2</b>	2008	2009	2010	2011 to 31st March	Total
Number of Participants Gaining Basic Skills	1,296	1,728	1,080	216	4,320
Number of Participants Gaining Level 2 Qualifications	1,152	1,536	960	192	3,840
Number of Participants Gaining Level 3 Qualifications	257	343	215	43	858

## **Contribution To Other Regional Targets**

### **South West Regional Economic Strategy (RES)**

Activities funded through LSC co-financing aim to contribute to:

#### *Strategic Objective One – Successful and Competitive Business*

##### 1B Encourage New Enterprise

- 1B.1 Develop a culture of enterprise
- 1B.2 Encourage the creation of new enterprises
- 1B.3 Support new social and community enterprises
- 1B.4 Promote enterprise in disadvantaged areas
- 1B.5 Promote enterprise in rural areas
- 1B.6 Encourage wider participation in enterprise

##### 1C Deliver Skills for the Economy

- 1C.1 Encourage an efficient and adaptable labour market
- 1C.2 Develop workplace skills and training
- 1C.3 Inspire people to improve their employability skills
- 1C.4 Ensure high quality and flexible training provision

#### *Strategic Objective Two – Strong and Inclusive Communities*

##### 2A Improve Participation in the Economy

- 2A.1 Raise individuals' skills and aspirations for work and enterprise
- 2A.2 Ensure that there is equality of access to work, training and business advice
- 2A.3 Strengthen the voluntary and community sector as a catalyst for economic inclusion

##### 2B Regenerate the Most Disadvantaged Areas

- 2B.1 Support areas with the greatest concentrations of multiple deprivation
- 2B.2 Support communities of greatest need in rural areas

##### 2C Plan Sustainable and Successful Communities

- 2C.1 Promote the renaissance of the region's largest cities
- 2C.2 Secure a sustainable future for rural areas

In support of the above, the Plan will provide specific targeted interventions to:

- Develop the employment skills of workless young people and adults, people with disabilities and learning difficulties, women of all ages, minority ethnic groups, older people
- Raise skills levels of those in work who have no relevant qualifications or whose skills levels are out of date or inadequate for sustainable employment
- Improve ICT skills for workers in industries with rapidly changing technology

- Target disadvantaged young people and adults in deprived communities to access sustainable employment through locally provided tailored employment and skills training opportunities
- Develop the skills of people entering or currently employed in sectors that are key to the preparation and legacy of the London 2012 Games, particularly in Dorset

**European Regional Development Programme (ERDF)**

The South West Competitiveness ERDF programme is focused on four Priorities

- Innovation and Knowledge
- Enterprise and Growth
- Urban Enterprise
- Technical Assistance

ESF seeks to support ERDF investment by meeting increased demand for labour arising from infrastructure development through the Skills for Jobs route-ways to sustainable employment.

ESF interventions will also provide training to meet the skills needs of employers and in delivering flexible provision as it evolves through the work of the Sector Skills Councils.

Whilst ERDF Commissioning has yet to flow through, examples can be found in the proposed ESF interventions in the West of England where activity in Cabot Circus supports the proposed entrepreneurial interventions arising from ERDF.

Skills for Jobs interventions will contribute to the ERDF objective of reducing worklessness, sharing the focus on Bristol, Plymouth and Torbay (where over 30% of the ESF funding will be allocated). ESF delivery will seek to enhance and integrate with ERDF models.

A further example would be the proposed activity through Park Life in Gloucester where sub-regional partnership working in developing the ESF intervention was endorsed by the RDA Area Team.

The proposed interventions in Somerset and Dorset were developed in consultation with partners, including the RDA.

**LSC Regional Priorities 2007/08**

The Plan will contribute to LSC regional priorities identified in its Regional Commissioning Plan 2007/08, the strategic context of which was published by the LSC in ‘Raising Our Game, our Annual Statement of Priorities 2007/08’, which set out the key national priorities and targets and outlined how the LSC will invest its funding to meet them.

ESF Priority		LSC Regional Priority	LSC Regional Priority Relevance
1	NEET & at Risk Group	More and better opportunities for young people	ESF will be used to meet the personal and work-related needs of disadvantaged young people who are not yet ready to access Entry to Employment (E2E) or Level 1 provision

	Workless Adults	Raising the skills of the nation	ESF will be used to meet the needs of workless adults to help them gain and sustain employment with particular emphasis on those most disadvantaged in the labour market and those from deprived communities
2	People with Basic Skills Needs	Raising the skills of the nation	ESF will be used to increase provision for adult learners through programmes leading a relevant level 2 and 3 qualifications and other training in order raise skills and develop new skills, in order to sustain employment opportunities
	Level 2		
	Level 3		

### Complementarity with other CFO provision

The Plan has been developed in consultation with the Local Authorities and Jobcentre Plus (on behalf of the Department for Work and Pension as the co-financing organisation for workless adults). The collaborative planning of the programme elements will ensure there will be targeted activity across the region, with no duplication or competing provision. The specific activities of each CFO will complement those of others, providing maximum access leading to further learning, jobs and sustained employment. The Learning and Skills Council contribution is within its legislative remit as stated within its Co-financing status application.

Implementation of the Plan will adopt the principle of Business Support Simplification. Through the contract management process the LSC will ensure that ESF providers are linked in to wider business support activity.

The Implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan will continue to be a collaborative process between CFOS working jointly through the region's established CFO Steering Group.

## PART 3: FUNDING AND ADDED VALUE

Funding Priority 1						
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
ESF	£40,000	£3,333,550	£6,667,100	£6,667,100	£40,000	£16,747,749
Match	£1,196,268	£4,785,071	£4,785,071	£4,785,071	£1,196,268	£16,747,749
Total	£1,236,268	£8,118,621	£11,452,171	£11,452,171	£1,236,268	£33,495,498

Funding Priority 2						
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
ESF	£40,000	£3,715,615	£7,431,231	£7,431,231	£40,000	£18,658,077
Match	£1,332,720	£5,330,879	£5,330,879	£5,330,879	£1,332,720	£18,658,077
Total	£1,372,720	£9,046,495	£12,762,110	£12,762,110	£1,372,720	£37,316,154

### Match funding and Priority by year

#### Priority 1

**Entry to employment (E2E)** – E2E will provide a substantial element of matched funding for priority one and four. The national budgets for E2E are in excess of £230m per year.

**OLASS** – OLASS has national budgets in excess of £9m per year available for training offenders in the community. A further £120m is available for offenders in detention.

**Skills for Jobs** – Currently Skills for Jobs is an umbrella term used to describe several stages of funded activity. Many of these may be ESF eligible and would therefore be a potential match source. One such fund under the SfJ umbrella is the skills delivery for JC+ clients, a potential matched funding source, representing an additional £23m of eligible activity.

**In the South West £18.5m per annum is available from the E2E and OLASS Budget lines. An approximate match requirement per annum would be around the £7m mark over a 6 year period**

**Total figures in the CFO plan have been updated to reflect the alterations under Priority 1. The figures above include all specifications published in Phase 1 and 2 including the revisions to the Gloucestershire area following DWP and LSC joint working and also the inclusion of Community Grants.**

## Priority 2

**Train to Gain:** This programme has £400m nationally of delivery aimed at employed individuals and will therefore provide the bulk of priority two and five match.

**Apprenticeships:** could also be used where required, these budgets are in excess of £200m nationally.

The above funds are annual budgets, subject to review and we reserve the right to identify appropriate match programmes and utilise them as required.

**In the South West £30m per annum is available from the Train to Gain and Apprenticeships budget lines. An approximate match requirement per annum would be around the £5m mark over a 6 year period.**

### Added value of ESF

The LSC will operate ESF via a new approach in the new programme. The LSC has an endorsed commissioning strategy, which has been cleared by ESFD. This strategy details how ESF should be targeted by the LSC to ensure complementarity and enhance the added value of ESF. An extract from the document is as below.

1. The purpose of the proposed commissioning strategy is to ensure that ESF truly adds value and enhances national strategies.
2. The key issues for the strategic direction of ESF in the new programme are that the LSC must ensure that ESF supports its main policy directions. These will include:
  - a) fee remission amounts (which can/will change annually);
  - b) Funding Policy decisions such as changes to ESOL provision regulations;
  - c) the support of Sector Skills Council approved qualifications;
  - d) the procurement of only high quality provision;
  - e) alignment with the demand led approach; and
  - f) full integration with the Business cycle including commissioning.
3. The Commissioning Strategy needs to ensure that:
  - g) sufficient regional flexibility is retained to meet regional skills needs
  - h) appropriate contract lengths are sought for ESF provision (including use of short contract periods where policy change is expected);
  - i) ESF can still achieve its full programme targets; and
  - j) ESF is actively used to inform mainstream development/approaches

## Priority 1

### Foundation Learning Tier (including Entry to Employment)

The Foundation Learning Tier is a programme of work to develop a more focussed and strategic approach to Entry Level and Level 1 in order to raise participation, achievement and progression at these levels.

The Foundation Learning Tier will incorporate a range of programmes that will consist of a coherent offer of units and qualifications drawn, in time, from the Qualifications and Credit

Framework (QCF). The units and qualifications will be combined into validated progression pathways that will propel learners towards Level 2 or other positive outcomes; they will be delivered through learning programmes which emphasise personalisation alongside access to accreditation. By 2010, the QCF will be populated and a full set of programmes with robust progression opportunities will be in place across Entry Level and Level 1 in the new framework; phased implementation of the Foundation Learning Tier will begin from September 2007 ESF should focus on supporting progression pathways in the following ways:

- Access – working with young people to encourage them to start on E2E, or appropriate pathway.
- Support activities – improve retention and success rate through extra support activities, for example, extra parenting support and long term mentoring
- Post activities – focusing on re-establishing contact with non successful candidates, extra support for positive destination beneficiaries i.e. employed / in education / employed with training ex-pathway candidates.

### **Schools Engagement Programme (Key Stage 4)**

This programme works by identifying 14-16 year olds who are at risk of becoming Pre-NEET. The programme has a limited budget; ESF may be focussed on this to enhance the provision.

### **The Young Apprenticeship Programme 14-16**

This programme is specifically aimed at 14 -16 year old young people in full time education who would benefit from early opportunities to develop their vocational skills in particular occupational sectors leading as a route into further learning or employment with training in mainstream programmes.

### **Skills for Jobs**

Skills for Jobs (SfJ) is an emerging response to Leitch, to support the integration of skills and employment, targeting a range of workless and low skilled individuals, who are not New Deal for Skills eligible. Emerging strategic direction for this approach is that SfJ will focus on improved engagement of the client base and employers (via brokers and partners) and that delivery would rest with the foundation learning tiers (FLT) appropriate pathways. There are still funding issues for SfJ activities; however as the provision will rest with the foundation learning tier, ESF will focus on supporting FLT delivery. SfJ is relying on a substantial amount of support from ESF in order to deliver its aims. Regional approaches to SfJ are being developed now and if ESF is to be the majority of the new money included in these approaches then the activities supported by these proposals must be ESF eligible and help meet the ESF targets.

### **OLASS**

The offender learning and skills service (OLASS) is responsible for the learning and skills for offenders in custody and serving their sentences in the community in England. It currently offers skills for life at Entry Level 1 all the way to higher education access level qualifications. Half of the clients have skills for life needs and recent research shows that a

third have learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD). This suggests a natural focus on these candidates in particular both in the community and in their last 2 years of custody. The OLASS budget is particularly under pressure for activities to support learners in the community. It is proposed that ESF is used to enhance activities with selected clients starting with initial assessment, careers advice; mentoring and job guarantee activities which align with skills for jobs will also be supported. There may be a focus on adapting appropriate provision to suit LLDD learners with specific needs. As with SfJ these activities should align with the foundation learning tier provision available and not replace mainstream funding where available.

At present significant ESF funding, from a variety of sources, is supporting a substantial range of activity with this target group involving a number of organisations. The South West ESF Framework has identified a continued need to support the above target groups who currently do not access this mainstream provision and for whom ESF will provide additional interventions to increase participation and access.

## **Priority 2**

### **Train to Gain**

Train to Gain is a national programme, which utilises brokers to facilitate access to training to support the needs of employers. ESF provides additionality by funding the gaps in the existing provision, i.e. funding additional basic and entry level qualifications leading to Level 1 qualifications, second level 2 qualifications where needed and level 3 and above where appropriate.

### **Apprenticeships 16-24 and 25+**

The apprenticeship family delivers a range of programmes to both adults and young people. Focussing on NVQ delivery with supporting key skills and technical certificates these programmes target Level 2 and Level 3. There are limited pilots for adults at level 4 called professional apprenticeships. The majority of provision has sufficient funding available, so ESF should focus on the following priorities.

- **Additionality** – We will procure more adult provision where this better meets the needs of employers. At Level 4 (only to SME's) ensuring that the offer aligns with current pilots.
- **Enhancements** – Activities that support a higher success rate in delivery of mainstream programmes, or activities that promote progression, or enhancements that generate and support additional entry onto these programmes
- **Gaps** – For example, individuals needing a second Level 2 to secure/sustain employment or who need additional support to effectively progress to Level 2.

## Planned Administrative Costs

Administration and management costs will be restricted to a maximum of 5% of the total costs of the Plan. This means that 5% of the project total is eligible for claiming under the total project value. Claims will be based on evidenced actual eligible costs.

The total management and administration costs for this Plan are based upon an assessment of the staffing requirements for the Plan and previous experience of implementing ESF within a regional structure from September 2006, as described in the LSC CFO status application 2008-2013.

The LSC has systems (TS2000) to record staff time against a particular dossier. Evidenced actual eligible costs will be incorporated with the interim claims where expenditure has been incurred.

Administration costs have been reviewed to reflect the updated total project cost alterations made under Priority 1.

	2007 from 1st October	2008	2009	2010	2011 to 31st Mar	Total
Administration Cost	£80,000	£1,126,861	£1,126,861	£1,126,861	£80,000	£3,540,583
Administration & Management Functions	Regional management and implementation of Co-Financing Plan					
	Management where ESF and match provision is managed in area and/or regional teams					
	Procurement and contract preparation					
	Provider contract management and monitoring					
	Financial control, monitoring and profiling					
	Preparation of interim claims					
	Data collection, analysis and reporting					
	Marketing and publicity					
	Health and safety assessment of providers					
	Financial risk assessment of providers					
	Mid-term evaluation of the impact of ESF - contribution to regional model					
	Support for new providers and Third Sector organisations (quality assurance, preparing for inspection and exit strategies)					
	Annual and Closure Audit					
	Communications – LSC national and regional strategic and operational forums					
Communications – External partners and stakeholders						
Project Closure						

## **PART 4: PROJECT SELECTION AND TENDERING ARRANGEMENTS**

### **Procurement**

The LSC is introducing competitive tendering to open up the learning and skills market by enabling the best colleges and providers to extend their range of provision and by attracting new providers into the system to increase diversity, improve quality and to stimulate innovation in the market.

When appraising bids and considering different elements of delivery, consideration will be given to varying costs of intervention for similar delivery in diverse geographical locations. For example, the potential for higher costs in funding interventions for those living and working in areas of rural isolation or inaccessibility.

All LSC ESF provision, and that which will be used as match funding, will be procured through an open and competitive tendering process. ESF provision for the 2007/13 programme will align with the procurement timetable for LSC mainstream provision and regional commissioning plans. The LSC has moved to an E-procurement (OCT) process which will simplify the processes for applicants to one single standard approach for the whole LSC. In line with the LSC new procurement processes our intention is to use an electronic portal 'Bravo Solutions' which is approved by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC). This should also encourage ESF providers to access the additional delivery opportunities that procured mainstream funding can offer. The LSC intend to procure activity to start delivery early in 2008 to ensure that "N+2" can be met. In order to attain this, the procurement activity will need to be started as soon as possible in 2007

Organisations seeking to undertake activities funded by ESF (or match) will be required to successfully complete a two phase process. The Pre Qualification stage (PQQ) and the Invitation to Tender stage (ITT).

The use of the E-tendering system and the two stage process will ensure that both Governmental and European law is adhered to. The National Audit Office (NAO) also approves this product for the tendering of Government business.

### **Stage 1: Pre Qualification Questionnaire**

Organisations seeking to deliver ESF (or match funded programmes) will be required to complete an on line Pre Qualification Questionnaire and successfully complete an assessment of their capacity and capability to deliver ESF and LSC funded programmes. This first phase is an assessment of the providers Quality procedures, Health and Safety measures and Financial Health as well as the Providers capacity to deliver the proposed training needs.

### **Stage 2: Submission of Tenders**

All successful organisations are then invited to tender for the provision they initially applied for. This bid (tender), once submitted electronically to the managed web host will be appraised using agreed criteria, once again using trained evaluators. Following assessment a moderation process will take place.

## Publicising Invitations to Submit Tenders

To ensure that the LSC conducts an open, transparent and competitive tendering process, an extensive range of media will be utilised to advertise invitations to submit tenders. The range of media to be used is outlined below.

- The Learning and Skills Council website ([www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk));
- Government Office website
- Press adverts
- Press releases to local and regional newspapers, trade publications, local BBC radio and local commercial radio stations;
- Direct mail.
- E-mail alerts to the regional LSC database
- E-mail alerts to network organisations for onward cascade

All of the proposed methods will be employed concurrently to ensure that as many organisations as possible are made aware simultaneously of the two stage process. The LSC will make a special effort to contact voluntary and community sector organisations; in particular we will be contacting organisations and groups that have previously bid to ESF.

## Support and Advice

The LSC's will run briefing events open to all potential applicants. The LSC will be able to respond to questions via an E-portal and this may include compiling a frequently asked questions section. All support and advice offered will align with OCT guidelines.

Co-financing will continue to provide a much more level playing field for current and potential providers from all sectors as:

- applicants will have a clear statement of intent from the local LSC as to the type of interventions sought;
- co-financing will remove the problems encountered by many potential providers of sourcing match funding;
- co-financing will reduce the need to become expert in European bid writing; and
- the LSC will use a common application process.

In taking this approach the LSC will seek to ensure that new providers, from all sectors, can compete openly and effectively.

## Timetable

The LSC plans to operate a single annual procurement process with two smaller mini competitions which will operate between March and August each year.

### Provisional Timetable

#### *Stage 1*

PQQ Regional Guidance Event	28 <sup>th</sup> August
Publish Invitation for Stage 1 PQQ	31 <sup>st</sup> August
Deadline for submission of PQQ	28 <sup>th</sup> September

Applicant organisations informed	9 <sup>th</sup> November
<i>Stage 2</i>	
Invitation to tender issued	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2007
Deadline for submission of tenders	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2007
Appraisal and review process completed	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2008
Applicants notified of outcome	30 <sup>th</sup> January 2008
Standstill period ends	9 <sup>th</sup> February 2008
Projects start	Mid February 2008 onwards

### **Feedback Arrangements**

The LSC will employ a fully transparent appraisal process with all applicants receiving an overview of the appraisal process. All organisations applying for ESF from the LSC will be notified of successful applications and the LSC will ensure that all proposals receive feedback on their proposal. Where a proposal is unsuccessful, the applicant will be informed as to the reason. All feedback will be provided via the LSC E-Tendering portal.

In the interests of openness and transparency we will publish summary details of successful project applications; these will be posted on our website and that of the Government Office for the South West.

### **Arrangements for Dealing with Provider Complaints**

In the event of a proposal for funding being unsuccessful, should the organisation, after receiving feedback, feel that they have cause for complaint the organisation may invoke the Learning and Skills Council's Complaints Policy. This policy will be posted on the LSC's national website: [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)

## **PART FIVE: PROVIDER FUNDING AND MONITORING**

### **Contract Costs**

- Contract costs will be established through a joint agreement between the provider and the regional LSC. The National LSC ESF Team have defined a set of standard deliverables for the new ESF programme and each one will be given an associated cost suggestion that will form a basis for the unit cost used in the contract and the subsequent profile payments. The regional LSC will manage the unit cost per deliverable through a contract clarification process based on the provider's application and the monthly delivery. Agreements on unit costs will be contained within the agreed delivery profile which the LSC will monitor monthly.
- In some circumstances it may be necessary for the LSC to increase initial costs (for beneficiary starts) to assist in the start up costs for small providers or those in the voluntary and community sector and to assist in their cash flow in the early days of the project. Where delivery does not take place but payment has been made on profile, the LSC will reclaim this money from the provider. The sum of the unit cost and volumes of the deliverables will make up the full contract value.

### **Payment Arrangements for Providers**

- Providers will be paid by the LSC based on agreed monthly payment profile which will form part of the contract between the LSC and providers. Payments will be generated through a Contract Management Application (CMA) which will feed into the LSCs payments system. Payments will be made to the provider via BACS on an agreed date in the month (based on the number of working days elapsed).
- Providers will be required to make monthly monitoring returns to the LSC to report on activity carried out in the previous month. The return will be based on both the Individual learner record (ILR) returns and returns for non ILR based delivery via a Statement of Delivery. These returns will feed into the LSCs CMA which will perform automatic reconciliation on a quarterly basis. This reconciliation will make adjustments to subsequent payments based on profile payments made against each activity that the provider has not carried out.

### **Actual Costs**

- The LSC does not intend to pay providers on an actual costs basis. All contracting will be through open and competitive tendering and will be based on contract costs (Note: The LSC reserves the right to pay providers by other eligible methods if required in exceptional circumstances)

### **Arrangements for Monitoring ESF providers**

- Contracts are assigned a contract management member of staff and a relationship management member of staff at inception stage. Contract financial profiles are inextricably linked to delivery; therefore, monitoring of financial performance is centred on appropriate and suitably evidenced delivery.
- Contractors will return learner data electronically to the LSC along with a monthly or quarterly report of all deliverables within the contracts combined with additional

narrative reports. The required evidence to support these deliverables is identified within the contract and the evidence is held by the provider and will be retained in line with ESF requirements.

- Performance monitoring of individual projects is undertaken in accordance with the frequency detailed in the contract. The monitoring process includes a pre-determined and reviewed, schedule of provider visits and evidence checks by LSC staff.

Contracts are monitored against:

- the objectives of the contract;
- the timely and accurate return of records and reports to the LSC;
- delivery of the agreed outputs, outcomes and results (as documented in the contract);
- the evidence of delivery (utilising a predetermined sample size);
- beneficiary eligibility (as documented in the contract); and
- where possible, learner records will be automatically monitored electronically using the ILR Dbase and the ensuing financial variance addressed.

The agreed variance for under/over performance of contracts is: +/-15% or +/-£50,000 for ESF only providers or +/-25% or +/-£250,000 for LSC mainstream providers. Where variances are greater than this a business case is required to be authorised at Director level.

Where indicated, underperforming contracts will have payments halted and/or claw backs enacted, re-profiling will occur based on actual delivery to date and a newly agreed future delivery profile.

The Regional LSC will keep an overview on expenditure and outputs to ensure that Co-financed activity is performing within acceptable parameters and in line with the funding profiles submitted to GO.

### **Project Delivery and Outcomes**

The establishment of nine regional contracts teams has provided the opportunity to bring some consistency in how the LSC monitors/manages contract performance, drawing on existing best practice previously identified.

The nationally driven procurement process, alongside the use of the new Contract Management Application system, will ensure the consistent use of a range of robust outcomes – the contract schedules will be completed using this information and an agreed profile against each outcome will be agreed.

The contract/provider will be risk assessed to determine the frequency of monitoring needed e.g. a new provider delivering new provision would be classed as higher risk to start with, whilst a known provider with a good track record of delivery would be classed as lower risk.

The contracting team will look at the performance data submitted by the provider on a regular basis (in line with risk rating) and will identify any under or over performance in the

delivery of the expected outcomes. Obvious causes of performance variance such as data issues will be investigated and eliminated in the first instance.

A performance report detailing the under/over performance, highlighting the key areas for concern, any trends, and any impact on key dependencies will be sent to the “partnership advisor” who is responsible for the relationship with that provider (at a local office). That advisor will then discuss the project and performance variance with the provider and submit a report back to the regional contracts team – that report may include an agreed variation to the profile. Other LSC staff may also have important roles in reviewing performance and strategic direction of funded delivery.

The contracting team will note any follow-up actions and will re-issue a variation to contract if necessary. Frequency of monitoring will be adjusted if appropriate as part of the process. Payments will be reconciled and adjusted as necessary and if warranted, payments will be placed on hold whilst the performance issues are addressed.

### **Quality Standards**

All LSC providers are required to comply with rigorous quality standards, including minimum performance levels as set out in our Planning for Success framework which covers planning and quality. Providers are also subjected to inspection through OfSTED. This ensures that local communities have access to relevant and high quality learning opportunities; individuals of all ages and backgrounds acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them to realise their potential, improve their life chances, and contribute to economic growth, and so that employers are able to recruit and develop the skilled and qualified workforce they need for business success. Inspection will be within the scope of the Common Inspection Framework – and eventually the Framework for Success. We are intent on excellent provision for the benefit of employers and learners alike, as a route to excellence:

### **Financial Assurance**

Regional Provider Financial Assurance (PFA) teams include ESF in their annual work plans. The teams endeavour to audit each contract at least once during the life of the contract. PFA will contact the relevant contract/relationship staff before the audit commences to obtain contract details, and will keep these staff members informed throughout the audit.

The audit approach places significance on the assessment of risk and the key controls providers can be expected to have in place for administering LSC contracts. Emphasis is given to advising providers on how their controls can be improved, and the sharing of good practice identified by PFA from previous ESF audits. Where control weaknesses are identified, recommendations for improvement will be based on diagnostic work that pin-points the reasons for errors occurring. This consultative approach should lead to a reduction in recurring errors and greater added value from the audit process.

The assurance approaches are tailored to reflect the differences in actual costs and beneficiary contracts.

Audit opinions are given on providers' use of funds and internal controls. The assurance report, including details of any funds at risk relating to the contract, will be discussed with the contracting and relationship staff involved.

### **Management Information**

Management Information will be sourced from the LSC's ILR Management Information databases for learner information and from the ESF Contract management Application for financial reporting and some learner summary reporting.

Regional LSCs will have access to both a standard set of management information reports from the ESF MI as well as access to our regional planning and performance team who can produce a range of ad hoc reports.

### **Reporting performance to Regional ESF Committee and the RSP**

Summary level reporting based on performance will be made available to the Regional ESF Committee and the RSP in line with mutually agreed requirements. These will be produced and made available on a periodic basis and will represent regional subsets of the data that is submitted to ESFD. Data supplied will meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

### **Audit**

All sub-contracted provision will be subject to local audit processes within a national framework. Our Provider Financial Assurance (PFA) team will audit each project as a minimum once during its lifetime. The purpose of these audits will be to ensure that payments to providers have been used in ways that are materially consistent with the purposes for which the payments were made and that the provider has materially complied with the conditions of their contract,

The Regional Director will be responsible for the production of a statement of internal control about the effectiveness of local internal controls and this opinion will be based, to a large extent, on the level of assurance provided by PFA function.

In addition, the LSC's internal processes and controls are reviewed on a regular basis by a national team of internal auditors based in Coventry. National processes and controls are similarly subject to review by the National Audit Office (NAO) and can include further reviews at local level.

## **PART SIX: CROSS CUTTING THEMES**

### **Equality and diversity**

Action to promote equality and diversity is an integral part of the LSC's business objectives. It can only realise its vision of creating a world-class workforce if it removes barriers, eliminates discrimination, addresses disadvantage, and raises the aspirations of both present and potential learners.

The LSC Single Equality Scheme shows how it will put this into practice. By incorporating its individual schemes for race, disability and gender equality into one overarching scheme, it creates a coherent framework for promoting equality and diversity within the LSC and across the learning and skills sector. Its objectives are aligned with its national priorities, so that it will operate strategically, in the mainstream of our work.

The Programme contributes specifically to the following key actions:

- **Skills**

Ensure that all young people and adults of all ages in the region have access to effective vocational and work-based learning opportunities and that LSC funding reaches those most in need

including economically inactive people who want to work

- **Employment**

Work with employers to provide vocational training and support a range of learning styles to allow employees at all levels to progress within their occupations

- **Sustainable Prosperity**

Reduce the proportions of young people not in education, employment or training.

The Plan supports the Equal Opportunities Cross Cutting theme described in the region's ESF Framework and will integrate equal opportunities in all aspects of programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The activities proposed in the Plan which specifically address equal opportunities issues include:

- Addressing high levels of economic inactivity amongst people with disabilities including people with learning difficulties
- Addressing the significant number of economically inactive older people excluded from the labour market
- Improving qualification levels of older people, in particular in relation to basic skills and Level 2
- Improving the skills and qualifications of people at work to sustain their current and future employment
- Helping disadvantaged ethnic minority groups gain access to employment.

LSC contractors will be required to maintain their duty to promote equal opportunities and projects will have to take account of the needs of people with disabilities and ensure all activity and information is accessible to all groups. Equal Opportunities issues are included in the LSC quarterly contract monitoring process and forms a key part of the provider's self assessment process.

The Plan will contribute to the outputs and results targets related to:

- Participants with disabilities and health conditions
- Lone Parents
- Young People in the NEET and at risk group
- Participants aged 50 and over
- Participants from ethnic minorities
- Female Participants
- People without basic skills and a relevant qualification at levels 2 and 3

Additionally, all projects applicants will be required to identify how they will address the requirement of the cross cutting theme and this will be built into project scoring at appraisal stage, form an element of the contract and will be monitored and reported on as part of contract management process. Each project will also be required to provide an independent evaluation assessing the impact of the intervention, including Equality and Diversity.

### **Sustainable development**

Competitiveness will build on the successful work and good practice established under the Objective Two and Three Programmes. We wish to build cross cutting horizontal support activities including, where appropriate, environmental management training for business linked to ERDF strategic drivers.

All projects applicants will be required to identify how they will address the requirement of the cross cutting theme and this will be built into project scoring at appraisal stage, form an element of the contract and will be monitored and reported on as part of contract management process. Each project will also be required to provide an independent evaluation assessing the impact of the intervention, including Sustainable Development.

Sustainable development is focused on providing a better quality of life for everyone now and for generations to come. This is achieved through considering and balancing the long-term effects of social, economic and environmental issues and impacts. (Securing the Future – UK Sustainable Development Strategy, 2005)

The European Commission has expressed concern that projects in the last ESF programme addressed mainly the social aspects of sustainable development. There is, therefore, a renewed focus on the environmental aspects of sustainability for 2007-13.

The LSC will encourage specific environmentally focussed projects where these clearly link to regional skills priorities (e.g. renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management etc.) and at the same time begin mainstreaming the environmental aspects of sustainable development through working with providers. The LSC will develop strategies to spread good practice from previous ESF programmes and will examine appropriate methods to disseminate environmental practice with providers.

The Plan will promote recommendations of the South West Framework and integrate sustainable development issues as far as possible across all aspects of programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Specifically the Plan will seek to develop provision that:

- Minimises travel and maximises access to provision through innovative delivery methods and the use of ICT.

- Supports skills and jobs identified in LANTRA's Sector Skills Agreement (Environmental Conservation Industry)
- Identifies skills needs in key sectors driving economic growth in the region which are likely to have a positive impact on the environment

## PART SEVEN: IMPLEMENTATION 2007 - 2008

### Key Milestones Tendering and Contracting

2007	August	Provider Support Events re E-Tendering (28 <sup>th</sup> ) Match programmes start (31 <sup>st</sup> )
	September	Pre Qualifying Questionnaire (PQQs) opened (31st August) PQQ closed (28th)
	October	Evaluation and moderation of PQQs PQQ results communicated to applicants
	November	Invitation to Tenders issued (ITT) (12th)
	December	ITTs returned (7th) ITTs evaluated 17 <sup>th</sup> Dec – 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan '08)
2008	January	ITTs moderated Contract approvals by LSC Regional Commissioning Board ITT results communicated to applicants
	February	Contract negotiations with providers Contracts prepared and issued ESF programme delivery begins
	March	Contract Management Application and ILR training for new providers

## PART EIGHT: FINANCE TARGETS

Funding Priority 1						
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
ESF	£40,000	£3,333,550	£6,667,100	£6,667,100	£40,000	£16,747,749
Match	£1,196,268	£4,785,071	£4,785,071	£4,785,071	£1,196,268	£16,747,749
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,236,268</b>	<b>£8,118,621</b>	<b>£11,452,171</b>	<b>£11,452,171</b>	<b>£1,236,268</b>	<b>£33,495,498</b>

Funding Priority 2						
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
ESF	£40,000	£3,715,615	£7,431,231	£7,431,231	£40,000	£18,658,077
Match	£1,332,720	£5,330,879	£5,330,879	£5,330,879	£1,332,720	£18,658,077
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,372,720</b>	<b>£9,046,495</b>	<b>£12,762,110</b>	<b>£12,762,110</b>	<b>£1,372,720</b>	<b>£37,316,154</b>

## Annex 1: Outputs and Results Targets

<b>Planned Output Targets Priority 1</b>	2008	2009	2010	2011 to 31st March	Total
Total Number of Participants	3,331	4,442	2,776	555	11,104
Number of Participants who are unemployed economically inactive	1003 820	1336 1094	835 684	167 137	3341 2735
%					55%
Number of Participants aged 14-19 who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET	1,508	2,011	1,257	251	5,028
%					45%
Number of Participants with Disabilities or Health Conditions	733	977	611	122	2,442
%					22%
Number of Participants who are Lone Parents	400	533	333	67	1,332
%					12%
Number of participants who are Aged 50+	599	799	500	100	1,998
%					18%
Number of Participants from Ethnic Minorities	233	310	194	39	776
%					7%
Number of Females	1,699	2,265	1,416	283	5,662
%					51%

## Annex 1: Outputs and Results Targets cont.

<b>Planned Output Targets Priority 2</b>	2008	2009	2010	2011 to 31st March	Total
Total Number of Participants	6618	8824	5515	1103	22060
Number of Participants with Basic Skills needs	2880	3840	2400	480	9600
%					44%
Number of Participants without Level 2 Qualifications	2880	3840	2400	480	9600
%					44%
Number of Participants without Level 3 Qualifications	858	1144	715	143	2860
%					12%
Number of Participants with Disabilities or Health Conditions	992	1324	827	165	3308
%					15%
Number of participants who are Aged 50+	1323	1765	1103	221	4412
%					20%
Number of Participants from Ethnic Minorities	264	353	221	44	882
%					4%
Number of Females	3309	4412	2758	551	11030
%					50%

## Annex 1: Outputs and Results Targets cont.

<b>Planned Results Targets Priority 1</b>	2008	2009	2010	2011 to 31st March	Total
Number of Participants who are in work after leaving	733	977	611	122	2,442
Number of Participants who are in work after 6 month of leaving	866	1,155	722	144	2,887
Number of Economically Inactive Participants who are engaged in Job Search or Further learning	820	1,094	684	137	2,734
Number of 14-19 NEET Participants who are in Education, Employment or Training on Leaving	679	905	566	113	2,262
<b>Planned Results Targets Priority 2</b>	2008	2009	2010	2011 to 31st March	Total
Number of Participants Gaining Basic Skills	1,296	1,728	1,080	216	4,320
Number of Participants Gaining Level 2 Qualifications	1,152	1,536	960	192	3,840
Number of Participants Gaining Level 3 Qualifications	257	343	215	43	858