

'APPLICATIONS GUIDE (Last Updated February 2007) - Guidance for applicants'

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Applications Guide - Foreword (Last updated April 2006)



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There are two routes for applying for European Social Fund (ESF) support, co-financing and alternative bidding. This guidance applies to applicants seeking ESF through the alternative bidding process. You should consult the co-financing guidance if you are applying for ESF through the co-financing (CFO) route. The vast majority of ESF activity will be funded through the co-financing method.

Co-financing

Since 2001 a system of co-financing has been introduced. Co-financing brings together ESF and domestic match funding such as funding from Learning and Skills Councils or Jobcentre Plus in a single 'pot' to produce a single funding stream. Organisations managing these funds are called CFOs. Major CFOs include the Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus, together with some local authorities, Connexions Partnerships and Business Links. Since April 2003, the great majority of ESF funds has been channelled through CFOs.

This means that where activity falls within the remit of a CFO, proposals for ESF funding must be made to the appropriate CFO, rather than by a direct bid to the Government Office as described in this guidance. CFOs will assess applications using a simple process of open and competitive tendering.

Government Office websites give details of the CFOs in each region, together with information on which measures and activities CFOs will be co-financing.

Alternative bidding

This is the method of accessing ESF used before co-financing was introduced. You will only be allowed to use the alternative bidding process in exceptional circumstances. You must contact your Government Office before considering using the alternative bidding process.

ESF guidance for alternative bidders

We designed this guidance to help you apply for ESF for Objectives 1, 2 and 3. It contains general information about ESF and how it applies in England and Gibraltar only. The Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government provide their own guidance.

Government Offices provide guidance and a regional development plan which you will need to read before you apply for ESF.

This guidance:

- provides information to help you apply for ESF;
- explains the Objectives, Policy Fields, Priorities and Measures in England and Gibraltar; and
- explains the funding requirements and general ESF rules which you must meet.

You will also find information about the selection process and general information about how to complete the application. You must apply for funding using the interactive application form which is in your application pack.

Specific information to help you complete the application form is contained on the help menu of the interactive software and on the ESF website;

Changes to this Guidance

All changes to this Guidance will be notified on the ESF website. ESF Division will update the website every three months highlighting any policy or regulatory changes. You will be bound by any changes we notify on the ESF website.

Objectives and Policy Fields

Introduction

This section contains general guidance on the European Social Fund (ESF) and how it applies in England and Gibraltar.

The ESF is one of four Structural Funds which are targeted at achieving the following three Objectives.

Objective 1

Objective 1 support is directed at the most deprived areas. These are Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, South Yorkshire, and Merseyside. It aims to develop and promote development of these regions where it is lagging behind.

ESF support concentrates on developing human resources to help people to join and stay in a difficult labour market. This includes:

- actions to overcome the barriers met by particular groups such as young people who do not have opportunities for learning and employment;
- childcare initiatives to support access to work; and
- support for learning and opportunities for women.

Individuals, families and communities will also be given openings through education and the opportunities created by encouraging new businesses to develop. Support will be given for general education, including curriculum development, and for the transition from education to work. Objective 1 will also support higher-level skills training and encourage new skills in those industries facing decline.

Objective 2

Objective 2 supports areas facing structural difficulties. Objective 2 regions include:

- rural areas in decline;
- urban areas in difficulty;
- depressed areas which depend on fisheries; and
- areas going through changes to their society and economy in the industrial and service sectors.

Objective 2 supports projects which develop human resources. This will make sure everyone has the opportunity to be part of their local community and to be employed. This includes preparing people for working life, providing basic skills, encouraging local partnerships and business initiatives based on supply chains and networks. It focuses on developing entrepreneurs, supporting an increase in employment and self-employment, identifying new skills that are needed, and anticipating changes in the labour market and new ways of working. Objective 2 also supports getting people back to work through better childcare facilities, family-friendly policies at work and help for lone parents who want to join the labour market.

Particular emphasis will be placed on Objective 3 projects in Objective 2 areas. This brings together developing human resources and employability with local capacity building and regeneration. All ESF activity must fit in with the other Structural Funds.

You can get more information on Objective 2 in your region from your Government Office.

Objective 3

Objective 3 aims to support adapting and modernising policies and systems of education, training and employment. Support will be split between the five Policy Fields and technical assistance will help put the programme in place.

The Policy Fields are subdivided into Measures. Each Policy Field and Measure describes the type of activity that can be funded under that Policy Field and Measure. Further details of the Policy Field and Measures are explained later in this guidance.

Objective 3 funding is available in all areas except Objective 1 areas.

Links to the European Employment Strategy and the UK National Reform Programme (Last updated April 2006)



[Document showing all changes to this page](#)

ESF supports the European Employment Strategy, and the UK's National Reform Programme (formerly the Action Plan for Employment and the UK Employment Action Plan).

The five Policy Fields of the ESF and their measures link closely with the 15 Employment Guidelines of the European Employment Strategy (EES). The broad relationship is highlighted below (there is some overlap between Policy Field and guidelines).

Policy Field	EES Guidelines (GLs)
Active labour market policies	GL1 Active and preventative measures for the unemployed and economically inactive. GL5 Increase labour supply and promote active ageing. GL8 Making work pay through enhancing work attractiveness and incentives.
Equal opportunities for all	GL5 Increase labour supply and promote active ageing. GL7 Promote integration of, and combat discrimination against, people who are disadvantaged in the labour market.
Lifelong learning	GL4 Promote development of human capital and lifelong learning. GL5 Increase labour supply and promote active ageing.
Adaptability and entrepreneurship	GL2 Job creation and entrepreneurship. GL3 Address change and promote adaptability and mobility in the labour market. GL5 Increase labour supply and promote active ageing.
Improving the role of men and women in the labour market	GL5 Increase labour supply and promote active ageing. GL6 Gender equality.

Structural Funds' support for United Kingdom priorities are based on a number of principles which take account of regional and employment policies. Emphasis must be placed upon the following.

- Sustainable development, which is commonly defined as development which meets the needs of the present generation without stopping future generations meeting their needs. Structural Funds must contribute towards long-term economic growth, social inclusion and protecting the environment.
- Support for local development, including local employment initiatives and territorial employment pacts.

- The social and labour market skills of the Information Society. By developing policies and programmes designed to promote equal access to the facilities and benefits of the Information Society, everyone's skills will be developed.
- Creating equal opportunities for women and men.

A number of factors will be taken into account when deciding ESF support for UK policies within each of the priority areas. These are:

- a broader definition of equal opportunities;
- the need to take account of the effect the Information Society has on the labour market;
- increased emphasis on local development, delivery methods and broad partnerships;
- the need to let older people participate in learning and employment which they enjoy;
- the potential to develop links between work, education and research establishments to develop human resources and promote opportunities for employment;
- meeting the challenge of an innovative and global economy;
- the need to remove barriers to employment associated with childcare or other dependants;
- the need for outreach work to identify opportunities for mothers of young children; and
- the ability to work together with other EU-funded programmes.

The provision for the second half of the programme (2003-2006) should reflect the priorities identified in the mid-term review of the Objective 3 programme. Key factors in deciding ESF support will include:

- support for beneficiaries who are economically inactive or 50+;
- more support for disabled people - and the support should be more relevant to jobs which can be sustained;
- more pro-active support for parents and carers;
- more support for minority ethnic groups - particularly in job search and sustainable employment;
- promoting equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market, including helping them enter non-traditional occupations and by supporting initiatives which tackle pay gap ; and
- support for companies should target those who are less likely to train their staff.

ESF policy fields

1 - Active labour market policies

The main areas for European Social Fund support are:

- developing and promoting active labour market policies to fight unemployment;
- preventing both men and women, including those from disadvantaged groups, from moving into long-term unemployment;
- helping the long-term unemployed back into the labour market;
- supporting young people entering the labour market, and those returning to it;
- tailor-made help to find employment using interviews, personal action plans, career counselling and work trials; and

- help for modernising and improving the efficiency of Jobcentre Plus.

Examples of activities which apply to this Policy Field include:

- developing basic and intermediate skills among young people, adults and older people, including those who are unemployed;
- widening access to basic skills and to information and communication technology systems;
- providing ways for everyone to improve basic skills not just those who lack confidence;
- making sure that support reaches individuals in the most disadvantaged communities and those at risk at work;
- supporting wider access to, and provision for, adult and community education;
- getting unemployed people back to work, especially in areas of high, long-term unemployment;
- targeting available resources more flexibly and effectively on individuals;
- developing local partnerships to build up their ability to deliver projects; raising the skill levels, motivation and confidence of unemployed people, so they can compete more effectively for employment and self-employment opportunities;
- integrating young people into working life; helping people, including those who are not working, to achieve their full potential and compete effectively in the labour market;
- helping unemployed people, and those wanting to return to work, make informed choices about their employment and training needs;
- working out a personal programme to help each unemployed person find work;
- supporting the actions of Jobcentre Plus; and
- developing integrated childcare and early education services for children whose parents are looking for access to education, training and employment.

We expect that many of these activities will work to promote UK policy aims by complementing and reinforcing the key government policy initiatives. You will find examples of current policy initiatives which could provide match funding for ESF in the section on Policy Fields and Measures for Objective 3.

2 - Equal opportunities for all and promoting social inclusion

The main areas for European Social Fund support are:

- promoting access to the labour market for those excluded or at risk of not being given opportunities;
- an effective and comprehensive approach for including everyone, and looking at reasons why people are excluded; and
- supporting and setting up local groups and their projects.

Examples of activities which apply to this Policy Field include:

- helping to overcome obstacles and improving employment opportunities and employability;
- supporting concentrated programmes of vocational guidance, training and employment support measures so target groups can reach levels of basic employability;
- providing integrated packages of support;
- providing relevant careers information, education and guidance;
- smoothing the transition between education, training and employment;
- widening access to basic skills and to information and communication technology systems;

- promoting equal opportunities in the labour market;
- encouraging the social and professional integration of disadvantaged groups;
- promoting changes in the way that work is organised, and welcoming different solutions to fit local circumstances, so everyone has the same opportunities; and
- training relating directly to labour-market opportunities.

The above activities can apply to any of the following potentially excluded groups:

- people with disabilities;
- people with mental-health difficulties;
- people with learning difficulties or severe literacy and numeracy problems;
- people with low self-esteem and no motivation;
- people from ethnic minority groups and those with English as their second language;
- refugees;
- older people;
- carers;
- people living in rural communities;
- people with substance abuse, drug and alcohol problems;
- the homeless and rough sleepers;
- ex-offenders;
- lone parents and teenagers with children;
- partners of unemployed people and households where nobody is working; and
- 13- to 17-year-olds who have dropped out of the educational system.

We expect that many of these activities will promote UK policy aims by complementing and reinforcing the key government policy initiatives. You can find examples of current policy initiatives which could provide match funding in the section on Policy Fields and Measures for Objective 3.

3 - Lifelong learning

The main areas for European Social Fund support are:

- promoting and improving access to training, education and counselling;
- improving and sustaining employability and promoting job mobility;
- equipping young people with the ability to adapt and fit into the labour market through education and training systems;
- identifying and promoting ways to open up access to learning for those least involved with the education system;
- providing individuals with basic skills, specifically literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) so making sure those with inadequate skills do not fall behind; and
- improving skills through basic education and training systems which reflect improvements in the labour market and the individual's chances of employment.

Examples of activities which apply to this Policy Field include:

- supporting further development of the idea of a University for Industry;
- recognising achievement through learning at work;
- developing effective ways of improving information, advice and guidance;
- increasing the number of people taking up higher education;
- making learning opportunities for employed people more flexible, including those people with poor basic skills;
- dealing with present, and recognising future, skills shortages;
- improving and supporting information, advice and guidance for adults;

- widening access to basic skills and information and communication technology systems;
- making sure that support reaches individuals in the most disadvantaged communities and those at risk at work;
- promoting learning in the community to help self-improvement, active citizenship, economic regeneration and individual wealth;
- providing opportunities for individuals and communities to take part in learning activities, particularly for those who are least represented at present;
- strengthening links between higher education and employers;
- expanding what can be achieved in research, science and technology;
- developing qualifications which can be gained in the workplace;
- supporting organisations which acknowledge the achievements of their workers by awarding recognised certificates;
- sharing responsibility for investing in learning;
- helping individuals to be responsible for their own learning; and
- putting learners' needs first, using information and communications technology to break down barriers.

We expect that many of these activities will work to promote UK policy aims by complementing and reinforcing the key government policy initiatives. You can find examples of current policy initiatives which could provide match funding in the section on Policy Fields and Measures for Objective 3.

4 - Adaptability and entrepreneurship

The main areas for European Social Fund support are:

- promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce and helping people adjust to change brought about by new technology and new market conditions;
- promoting new ideas and adaptability in how work is organised;
- developing entrepreneurship and making it easier to create jobs;
- improving skills and expanding what can be achieved in research, science and technology.

Examples of activities which apply to this Policy Field include:

- making people more effective in a work setting;
- activities that support developing the idea of a University for Industry;
- providing relevant, up-to-date information, advice and guidance;
- supporting strategies to identify and meet the need for basic skills and for new types of skills;
- identifying and adapting qualifications to meet the challenge of worldwide competition;
- supporting a growth in employment including self-employment;
- recognising future changes in the labour market at national, regional and local level;
- building knowledge-driven economies;
- tackling change through developing the workforce;
- reinforcing solutions to changes in the way work is organised;
- supporting training for trainers, mentors and teachers of adults;
- working with employers to make sure training is relevant to current labour market needs;
- helping the workforce adapt to technological and economic changes by adding to and updating their skills;
- widening access to basic skills and to information and communication technology systems;

- supporting economic development within communities, including developing social enterprises and self-employment; and
- improving access to adult education, training and confidence-building activities for parents of young children.

We expect that many of these activities will work to promote UK policy aims by complementing and reinforcing the key Government policy initiatives. You can find examples of current policy initiatives which could provide match funding in the section on Policy Fields and Measures for Objective 3.

5 - Improving the role of women in the labour market

The main areas for European Social Fund support are:

- improving the role of women in the labour market;
- promoting career development;
- improving women's access to new job opportunities and to entrepreneurship; and
- reducing all inequality in the labour market based on a person's sex.

Examples of activities which apply to this Policy Field include:

- providing support for the needs of learners;
- supporting the national childcare strategy;
- providing relevant careers information, education and guidance;
- drop-in centres and other services to develop opportunities for mothers of young children;
- supporting training for careers advisers so they recognise how a person's sex can affect their job prospects;
- strengthening qualifications and training to support mothers with young children;
- improving the prospects for lone parents; and
- widening access to basic skills and to information and communication technology systems.

We expect that many of these activities will work to promote UK policy aims by complementing and reinforcing the key government policy initiatives. You can find examples of current policy initiatives which could provide match funding in the section on Policy Fields and Measures for Objective 3.

Objective 1

Objective 1 programmes should meet the economic development needs, including structural adjustments, of the region or area. Developing human resources through Structural Funds' support in these regions and areas should seek to make the most of economic growth by developing the whole workforce and creating jobs. This will increase equal opportunities for everyone including disadvantaged groups.

It is intended that the five Policy Fields described earlier will act as a lever to promote consistency between ESF support and the National Action Plan for employment. It is not intended to place unnecessary limits on regional and local partnerships' ability to decide on priorities to meet specific, identified needs.

Objective 1 funds can only be used to support beneficiaries who live or work in an Objective 1 area. This means that the address of the person assisted, or the address of the workplace in the case of support to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and

their staff, must be in the Objective 1 area.

Objective 2 and 3 funding is not available in the Objective 1 areas. Objective 1 funding will be able to provide the full range of support available in Objective 3 areas, in addition to adapting the programme to the needs of the Objective 1 areas.

You should read the Single Programming Document for your area which is available from your Government Office.

Objective 2 (Last updated April 2006)



[Document showing all changes to this page](#)

Objective 2 supports developing human resources across all groups in society, through guidance for training and business support. This will include:

- developing basic skills;
- identifying labour market changes and new ways of working; and
- encouraging entrepreneurship.

It is intended that the five Policy Fields described earlier will act as a lever to make ESF support and the National Action Plan for Employment more consistent. It is not intended to place unnecessary limits on how regional and local partnerships decide on priorities to meet specific, identified needs.

Objective 2 ESF projects need to be linked to Objective 2 ERDF activity. You must clearly show the relationship between the ESF and ERDF activity.

Objective 2 funds can only be used to support beneficiaries from an Objective 2 area. This means that the address of the person assisted, or the address of the workplace in the case of support to SMEs and their staff, must be in the Objective 2 area.

Further information on Objective 2 in your region is available from your Government Office.

You should read the Objective 2 Single Programme Document for your area which is available from your Government Office.

Objective 3 (Last updated April 2006)



[Document showing all changes to this page](#)

The role of the Community Support Framework (CSF), Operational Plan (OP), Regional Development Plan (RDP) and guidance to Regional Selection.

The Great Britain Objective 3 CSF provides an explanation of how European Union (EU) money is used to support national policies. This is in line with both the European and the National Employment Agenda and provides a detailed analysis of labour market needs. There are separate Operational Plans for England, Scotland and Wales. The Operational Plans provide a more detailed description of how ESF will be used in each country.

Objective 3 is delivered on a regional basis in England. Each Government Office region has produced a Regional Development Plan (RDP), based on the regional development

strategy of the local Regional Development Agency. These plans set out the priorities for ESF action and support. While the priorities for support will differ between regions, the RDPs are in line with the broad structure and content of the England OP.

One of the main purposes of the RDP is to provide information to help the regions select projects. The national scoring framework sets out the questions and related criteria (points), which you have to answer, as well as setting a national minimum quality threshold. Regions will be able to 'weight' scores in the selection criteria for each question and explain in their regional guidance what they expect from you in your answers to the questions and related criteria. This means regions can weight scores on those criteria which are most relevant to that specific region or RDP. (Regions will not be able to change the weighting of scores between main questions because this is fixed nationally.) The priorities for support, identified in the RDP, will help to weight the scores on the criteria points. The region's RDP will also affect how applications are assessed and help to make sure that projects are selected on the needs of the area. Projects selected for support must demonstrate that they provide an economic benefit to the programme area.

Each region produces its own guidance on the appraisal and assessment procedure within the region. Applicants should refer to this guidance.

Objective 3 - Policy Fields and Measures

Most ESF support is allocated to Objective 3. The support is split between the five European Social Fund Policy Fields and the technical help needed to put the programme into place.

Under each Policy Field there are two or three Measures which describe the areas where ESF support will be concentrated. This makes sure that EU funds have the greatest effect and are consistent with the policy aims of the country.

You must make applications for ESF support at Measure rather than Policy Field level. You must show how the project meets the aims of the specific Measure you are making the application under.

The following section describes the types of activity that can be funded under each of the Programme Measures. Eligibility is specific to each Policy Field and Measure. Applicants should make sure that all beneficiaries and activities are eligible under the Policy Field and Measure they are seeking support for. This is particularly important where a Measure is restricted to employed or unemployed people. Individual regions are able to adjust the national strategy to focus on their regional needs.

Objective 3 funds can only be used to support beneficiaries who live or work in an Objective 3 area. This means that the address of the person assisted, or the address of the workplace in the case of support to SMEs and their staff, must be in the Objective 3 area. The English Objective 3 programme covers all of England except South Yorkshire, Merseyside and Cornwall which have Objective 1 status.

You should read the Regional Development Plan which is available from your Government Office.

Economically inactive

Policy Fields 1, 2 and 3 in particular provide support for people who are economically inactive.

People who are economically inactive are:

- of working age;
 - not employed;
 - not self-employed; and
 - not actively seeking work.
-

Objective 3 - Policy Field 1 - Active labour market policies

Aims

- To reduce long-term unemployment by using active labour market measures and to help the unemployed and economically inactive back into employment.
- To reduce the drift into long-term unemployment through the use of active labour market measures targeted at those recently unemployed or about to become unemployed.

The main areas for ESF support are:

- improved advice and guidance at the start of unemployment;
- improved job skills for the long-term unemployed;
- wider access to adult basic skills;
- stronger partnerships between local organisations; and
- removing barriers to getting back into the labour market.

Measure 1

To provide advice, guidance and support to help people to develop active and ongoing job-search plans and prevent them from moving into long-term unemployment or economic inactivity.

Types of action include the following:

- Supporting additional measures to improve the UK's comprehensive active benefits regime.
- Improving advice, guidance and community education through innovative systems and approaches.
- Promoting links between businesses and schools to encourage employability and motivation.
- Early interventions, including advice and guidance, using new forms of IT.
- Training for Jobcentre Plus and Connexions Service staff to deliver improved modernised services.
- Improving the balance between job supply and demand.

Measure 2

To improve the chances of work for the unemployed, particularly the longterm unemployed, returners, those inactive in the labour market and young people of working age, through targeted involvement to improve vocational and other key skills and to remove external barriers to entering the labour market.

Types of action include the following:

- Providing support through integrated approaches, including the provision of vocational, social and key skills.
- Encouraging unemployed and economically inactive people of working age to start their own businesses.
- Encouraging local partnership approaches to Intermediate Labour Market projects to assist unemployed people and economically inactive people of working age into the open labour market.
- Support to improve the capacity for community development, where this leads to improved access to the labour market for those excluded from the labour market.

We expect that many of these activities will help promote UK policy aims by complementing and reinforcing the key government policy initiatives. Some policy initiatives will be co-financed centrally and so will not be available as match funding for ESF, so it is important that applicants are able to confirm the status of the funding.

Examples of current policy initiatives which could provide match funding for activities under this Policy Field include the following:

- Connexions;
- Education Business Links;
- Employment Service Programme Centres;
- Information, advice and guidance partnerships;
- Specialist help provided by Jobcentre Plus;
- Youth Support Services;
- National Childcare Strategy;
- Employment Zones;
- The Jobseeker's Allowance regime;
- National traineeships;
- The Neighbourhood Support Fund;
- New Deals;
- ONE;
- Specialist Jobcentre Plus schemes;
- Teaching Company Scheme;
- Work Based Training for Adults;
- Modern Apprenticeships;
- National Childcare Strategy;
- Short Job Focused Training;
- Longer Occupational Training;
- Self-employment support;
- Advisor Discretion Fund;
- Step UP;
- Ambition;
- Work Trials; and
- Ethnic-minority support schemes.

Objective 3 - Policy Field 2 - Equal opportunities for all and promoting social inclusion (Last updated April 2006)



[Document showing all changes to this page](#)

Aims

- To reduce the impact of disadvantage faced by excluded groups, especially economically inactive people of working age, and support their integration into the labour market through target group or area based approaches and basic training.
- To promote equality through research into direct and indirect discrimination in the labour market and to support follow-on actions to fight the institutional aspects of discrimination.

The main areas for ESF support include:

- widening access to basic skills;
- removing barriers to entering the labour market;
- developing local responses to local needs;
- fighting discrimination; and
- tailoring services to individual needs.

Measure 1

To widen access to basic skills provision: through developing of new, creative and effective ways of promoting and providing basic skills, directed at those groups disadvantaged, excluded from or under-represented in the workplace.

Types of action include:

- supporting intensive interventions to meet the needs of the client group through vocational guidance, training and employment support measures with an emphasis on developing basic and key skills; and
- research into providing basic skills for people at a disadvantage in the labour market.

Measure 2

To develop local and area-based responses to assist individuals with multiple disadvantages, especially economically inactive people of working age, who face the risk of exclusion from the labour market.

To provide help to improve the employability and remove barriers to entering the labour market for those groups disadvantaged in the labour market, including economically inactive people of working age, with particular emphasis on combating race, disability and age discrimination.

Types of action include:

- providing intensive support to enable target groups to reach levels of basic employability;
- delivery through 'Pathway' approaches;
- supporting pre-entry training related to identified labour-market needs;
- providing integrated packages which meet the needs of lone parents and returners;
- customised training related to labour-market opportunities;
- capacity building actions to ensure that ESF reaches those groups in greatest need and to encourage local development and delivery of ESF activities within the community;
- area-based approaches to complement ERDF activities in Objective 2 and Objective 2 phasing-out areas;
- initiatives to encourage young people from disadvantaged communities and groups to progress to higher education;

- researching into institutional discrimination and follow-on actions to combat discrimination and supporting initiatives to improve recruitment and promotion systems to eliminate institutional discrimination; and
- helping 13-to 17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training or who are at risk of dropping out of or being removed from education, employment or training (Measure 2.2 only).

Measure 3

Note: Following the Mid-Term Review in 2004, activities under this Measure will be funded through Measure 2.2.

To fight discrimination in the labour market, in particular to combat race, disability and age discrimination and improve the chances of employment for these groups.

Types of action include:

- researching into institutional discrimination and follow-on action to combat discriminations; and
- supporting initiatives to improve recruitment and promotion systems to eliminate institutional discrimination.

We expect that many of these activities will help promote UK policy aims by complementing and reinforcing the key government policy initiatives. Some policy initiatives will be co-financed centrally and so will not be available as match funding for ESF, so it is important that applicants are able to confirm the status of the funding.

Examples of current policy initiatives which could provide match funding for activities under this Policy Field include:

- Adult and Community learning fund;
- Careers service;
- learndirect help-line;
- Learning Gateway;
- The Neighbourhood Support Fund;
- University for Industry;
- Skills for Life (Adult Basic Skills);
- Work Based Learning for Adults;
- Ethnic minority support schemes;
- ConneXions;
- Employment Zones;
- Millennium Volunteers;
- New Deal for 50plus;
- New Deal for Communities;
- New Deal for Lone Parents;
- New Deal for the Disabled;
- Playing for Success;
- Specialist support provided by Jobcentre Plus;
- Youth Advocates;
- Youth Support Service;
- Skills for Life (Adult Basic Skills);
- Aimhigher;
- Work Based Learning for Adults;
- Action Teams for Jobs;
- English for speakers of other languages training ; and
- Specialist support provided by Jobcentre Plus.

Objective 3 - Policy Field 3 - Lifelong learning

Aims

To increase the number of people taking part in lifelong learning so that more people, including economically inactive people of working age, can continue to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding and improve their chances of employment in a changing labour market.

The main areas for ESF support include:

- helping those without basic skills to acquire them;
- improving the basic skills of people of working age with particular emphasis on school leavers and older workers;
- helping those in work to stay in work, either in their current job or a new job, by encouraging them to maintain, improve and update basic skill levels on a long-term basis; and
- making sure that the learning provided reflects the changing needs of business.

Measure 1

- Promoting wider access and participation in lifelong learning especially for those groups least likely to take part in lifelong learning activities and lacking basic and key skills, including economically inactive people of working age.
- Supporting the main policy developments in lifelong learning to improve the numbers taking part.

Types of action include:

- supporting joint action through Learning and Skills Councils, Local Learning Partnerships, further and higher education establishments and through SMEs;
- providing individuals with information and communication technology (ICT) skills;
- providing individuals with basic and key skills and reducing the risk of those with poor skills falling behind;
- extending access through more new and creative means, including community and family schemes, and through helping individuals to develop and manage their own learning ; and
- identifying and promoting ways which can open up access to learning for those adults least likely to be part of the education system ; and
- initiatives to widen participation in higher education as part of lifelong learning strategies.

Measure 2

Improving the employability of those in work through lifelong learning which develops their skills and helps them meet the changing needs of employers, such as in the fields of IT, management and the environment.

Types of actions include the following:

- Training for employees, especially in SMEs. Skills forecasting and ensuring that skills training relates to the RDA regional economic strategy. **This may include**

training in higher-level skills where this is justified by national or regional skills needs.

- Lifelong learning for public sector workers employed in traditionally low-skilled work who need career development in their current posts.

We expect that many of these activities will help promote UK policy aims by complementing and reinforcing the key government policy initiatives. Some policy initiatives will be co-financed centrally and so will not be available as match funding for ESF. So it is important that applicants are able to confirm the status of the funding.

Examples of current policy initiatives which could provide match funding for activities under this Policy Field include:

- Adult Learning Grant (Level 2 Entitlement);
- Aimhigher;
- Business Education Links;
- College-Business Partnerships;
- Education Action Zones;
- Employer training pilots;
- Employee development schemes;
- European computer driving licence;
- Family literacy and family numeracy programmes;
- ICT learning centres;
- Investors in People;
- Learning Partnerships;
- Level 2 Entitlement (and Adult Learning Grant);
- Local Learning and Skills Councils;
- Modern Apprenticeships/National Traineeships;
- National Skills Task Force;
- IT for all;
- Learning Cities;
- Local authority Lifelong Learning Plans;
- Local Lifelong Learning Partnerships;
- National and area business promotion;
- National Learning Targets;
- National Traineeships;
- Skills for Life (Adult Basic Skills);
- The Neighbourhood Support Fund;
- Teaching Company Scheme;
- Time Off for Study;
- Union Learning Fund;
- University for Industry and the learndirect help-line ; and
- Virtual Automotive University and College.

Objective 3 - Policy Field 4 - Adaptability and entrepreneurship

Aims

- To improve the skills of the employed labour force and make it more adaptable.
- To increase the level of entrepreneurship.

The main areas for ESF support include:

- updating and upgrading employees' vocational skills, including basic skills;
- identifying and meeting developing skills shortages, including higher level skills;
- encouraging entrepreneurship;
- encouraging businesses to become more competitive; and
- helping businesses, especially SMEs, to become more competitive through the skills of their workers.

Measure 1

To support companies, especially SMEs to upgrade their employees' vocational, basic and key skills.

Types of actions include:

- supporting business by equipping the workforce with the right skills;
- promoting employee development by updating and upgrading vocational skills, while considering new methods of delivering basic skills;
- providing advice and guidance and training trainers and managers;
- promoting the effective use of ICT in SMEs;
- equipping workers threatened with redundancy with training and funding to turn good ideas into viable businesses and supporting innovation and creativity;
- forging links between businesses and support networks;
- working with the social partners to improve work-based training;
- improving skills in micro-firms which are least likely to develop and train their employees, including through clusters being sponsored by RDAs; and
- supporting regional initiatives to improve skills and productivity.

Measure 2

Research to identify emerging skills shortages and follow-up actions.

Types of actions include:

- identifying skill shortages within all sectors in each region, including new skills emerging from the knowledge-driven economy;
- providing training to meet identified skills shortages, including new and creative methods of training delivery;
- promoting effective investment in training by employers and improving teachers' awareness of identified skill shortages;
- involving the Social Partners in developing ways to identify and meet emerging skills shortages; and
- research into new forms of work organisation.

Measure 3

To encourage entrepreneurship of individuals and companies and competitiveness of businesses particularly SMEs.

Types of actions include:

- supporting SMEs to help them innovate, to expand and create new employment opportunities;
- research into new forms of work organisation, including introducing and improving flexible working practices (with consideration given to work - home balance);

- strengthening the links between employers and educational and training institutions, especially in the fields of science, technology and research;
- capacity building for social partners to encourage dialogue on work organisation and training;
- supporting individuals setting up their own businesses with, for example, advice on regulations, recruitment and business planning; and
- supporting regional initiatives to improve skills and productivity.

We expect that many of these activities will help promote UK policy aims by complementing and reinforcing the key government policy initiatives. Some policy initiatives will be co-financed centrally and so will not be available as match funding for ESF. So it is important that you are able to confirm the status of the funding.

Examples of current policy initiatives which could provide match-funding for activities under this Policy Field include:

- Adult and Community Learning Fund;
- Advanced skills teachers;
- Community access to lifelong learning fund of the New Opportunities Fund (NOP);
- College-Business Partnerships;
- Employer training pilots;
- Employee development schemes;
- Employee development skills;
- Graduate Enterprise;
- Information Society Initiative;
- IT learning centres;
- Investors in People;
- Level 2 Entitlement;
- Adult Learning Grant;
- LINK;
- Modern Apprenticeships/National Traineeships;
- National Grid for Learning;
- Sector Skills Councils;
- Skills for Life;
- Small Business Service;
- Teacher training in ICT;
- SMART;
- STEP;
- University for Industry; and
- Young Enterprise.

Objective 3 - Policy Field 5 - Improving the role of women in the labour market (Last updated April 2006)



[Document showing all changes to this page](#)

Aims

To reduce the level of disadvantages faced by women in the labour market and to improve equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market.

The main areas for ESF support include:

- improving access to learning;
- removing barriers to employment;
- removing the barriers that prevent women from entering the labour market;
- reducing the barriers that prevent women from progressing within the labour market; and
- researching into issues related to pay, isolation, promotion and discrimination in employment.

Measure 1

To improve access to learning and remove barriers to employment.

To research issues related to gender discrimination in employment such as recruitment, pay, segregation, and progression.

To support follow-up activities arising from the research.

Types of actions include:

- improving the quality and flexibility of local training including participation in lifelong learning partnerships;
- improving the relevance of skills training to local employment needs and opportunities;
- tackling barriers, such as childcare and other caring responsibilities, raising awareness and promoting family-friendly policies;
- providing vocational training, **mentoring and related support services to help women and men to enter occupations where they are under-represented to break down gender segregation** (that is women in occupations which are traditionally male, and men in occupations which are traditionally female);
- developing entrepreneurs, especially among those who have been out of the labour force;
- training men and women care workers;
- providing gender diversity and equal opportunities training to employers, managers and trainers;
- preparing women prisoners to enter the labour market and helping to integrate them into the labour market; and
- researching and developing practical recommendations to combat occupational segregation, gender stereotyping and institutionalised discrimination on recruitment, pay, progression and other aspects of employment.

Measure 2

Note: Following the Mid-Term Review in 2004, activities under this Measure will be funded through Measure 5.1.

To research issues related to gender discrimination in employment such as recruitment, pay segregation and progression and to follow-up activities arising from research.

Types of action include:

- researching and developing practical recommendations to fight occupational segregation, gender stereotyping and institutionalised discrimination on recruitment, pay progression and other aspects of employment; and
- activities to put into place the recommendations arising from the above research.

It is expected that many of these activities will help promote UK policy aims by complementing and reinforcing the key government policy initiatives.

Some policy initiatives will be co-financed centrally and so will not be available as match funding for ESF. So it is important that you are able to confirm the status of the funding.

Examples of current policy initiatives which could provide match funding for activities under this Policy Field include:

- children's centres;
- Fair Play Consortia;
- Local learning partnerships;
- New Deal;
- New Deal for 50plus;
- New Deal for Lone Parents;
- New Deal for Partners;
- National Childcare Strategy;
- Work of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Objective 3 - Technical assistance

You should consult your Government Office about Objective 1 and Objective 2 technical assistance.

Background

In the programmes for 2000-2006 agreed between the UK and the EC, technical assistance for managing programmes and promoting ESF has been approved. It is the task of the Monitoring Committees to decide the range of this technical assistance. This guidance is for those organisations applying for ESF technical assistance.

Application form

We have provided a separate application form for technical assistance although the rules governing technical assistance projects are the same as for other ESF projects. The application form does not need all the information other ESF applications do and irrelevant questions have been cut out.

Interactive help is available on the technical assistance application form.

You must set out applications for technical assistance on the interactive form.

Applications will not be accepted on any other form. This form is only available from your Government Office, or the DWP ESF Division if you are a National Partner. You will find the technical specification of the computer you will need to use for the interactive form in the main application guidance.

You can find guidance on completing the technical assistance application form in the main guidance.

When you prepare an application for technical assistance, you will see that the only option for the Policy Field in section 1.1 is 'Technical Assistance'.

The Policy Field number will be determined automatically and will depend on which programme you want technical assistance for. Other than this, the main guidance is relevant to the technical assistance application form.

You will need to select the Measure which you are applying under. The Measure you select will depend on the activities that you are carrying out.

You can select one of two Measures, and you should be guided by the eligible activities below.

Eligible activities

The Operational Programme sets out a number of activities which technical assistance is available for. These fall under one of two Measures.

Measure 1 - Activities to support the effective delivery of the programme including:

- administration;
- communication; and
- representation.

Measure 2 - Other activities including:

- publicity and promotion;
- evaluation;
- labour market research; and
- identification, promotion and dissemination of good practice.

Match funding

Technical assistance applications are subject to the same rules as any other ESF application. You will need match funding and the ESF intervention rate is usually no more than 45%. This means that you must find the other 55% of the eligible costs from elsewhere. You can find the guidance on match funding in the main application guidance.

Match funding certificates are required for technical assistance applications.

Technical assistance at regional level

It is for regional committees to decide which partners should help them with managing and promoting the programme in their region. The most common use of technical assistance at regional level will be to support effective delivery. The other activities may be supported with technical assistance, for example, producing good practice guidance, but for Objective 3, regions must make sure they do not duplicate assistance. They should check they are not duplicating assistance with the ESF Division before applications are approved.

Regional responsibilities

Government Offices will be responsible for the following aspects of effective delivery. They may choose to involve regional partners when:

- preparing regional development plans;
- preparing regional applications and helping applicants;
- selecting projects;
- managing applications;
- scoring and selecting applications;
- preparing programming documents;
- developing and maintaining the business process;

- communicating advice and guidance;
- steering the programme at regional level through regional committee and sub-groups;
- doing other development work;
- preparing publicity and promotion; and
- monitoring and evaluating the programme.

Objective 3 technical assistance at national level

The England monitoring committee will check applications. The members of the committee will receive written details of applications. If the applications are approved, the approval will be recorded in the minutes of the England monitoring committee.

Objective 3 national responsibilities are:

- preparing programming documents;
- developing and maintaining the business process;
- national publicity and promotion; and
- monitoring and evaluating the programme.

Applying for technical assistance

Applications for technical assistance will be invited from applicants. These applications are treated in the same way as other applications for ESF, and are subject to the same rules. So it is important that you are familiar with the guidance pack.

You should submit your application to your Government Office, or DWP ESF Division, who will process it, and if approved, issue a contract letter. If there are any changes to your application after you have submitted it, you must notify these in writing immediately.

You will need to provide profiles in the same way that profiles are provided for other ESF applications. ESF will not be paid until we have these profiles.

Objective 3 - Details of eligible activities (Last updated April 2006)



[Document showing all changes to this page](#)

Activities to support the effective delivery of the programme

This Measure (Measure 1 effective delivery) relates to activities that take place mainly at regional level. Representation activities, though, can take place at both regional and national levels. The main activities include the following. Administration

Checking applications:

- Setting and enforcing deadlines for receiving applications.
- Checking applications to make sure the organisations, projects and costs are all eligible.
- Checking you have provided enough details.
- Giving you advice and making sure that all documents, such as match funding certificates, are received and correct.
- Providing feedback on your scores and how they were reached.

Checking final claims:

- Setting and enforcing deadlines for receiving final claims.
- Taking part in selecting projects.
- Providing advice and guidance on how to complete final claims.
- Liaising with you to make sure all documents are received and correct.

Changes to projects:

- Making sure you understand what a 'significant change' is and the importance of notifying these promptly.
- Making sure that your applications are on the appropriate forms and you have submitted them under the correct Policy Field.
- Correcting all omissions and errors with you.
- Considering notified changes in terms of continued value for money and against the original selection criteria.

Communication:

- Carrying out follow-up exercises to make sure you are submitting project progress reports promptly and correctly.
- Providing you with general advice and guidance through help lines, seminars and visits where necessary.
- Acting as the first point of contact for you to correct errors and omissions and answer questions.
- Keeping Government Offices and the ESF Division informed of possible problems.
- Providing examples of good practice and how issues and developments are affecting you.
- Carrying out monitoring visits to projects in line with the business process and audit recommendations.
- Distributing guidance and applications.
- Sending out revised and new information to applicants and potential applicants throughout the programme, through seminars and training events if necessary.
- Liaising between you and Government Offices and the ESF Division as needed.

Representation:

- Sitting on regional committees and subgroups.
- Attending meetings and taking part in the work of subgroups to make sure that committees and subgroups are carrying out their objectives and responsibilities as described in their terms of reference.
- Providing information so programme annual reports can be completed on time.
- Providing information on an 'ad hoc' basis, as and when requested by Government Offices.
- Representing their regions and organisations by being involved with new developments. These activities may include system testing or commenting on proposals.

Other activities:

- Publicising calls for ESF applications as and when required by Government Offices.
- Providing literature and mailshots on a regular basis to make sure you know about all new developments.
- Buying items and equipment to publicise ESF.
- Producing national newsletters and other publicity material at the request of the ESF Division.

Research into the local labour market:

- Carrying out research studies to identify where ESF can be used to best effect. These studies need to be agreed with the ESF Division and are likely to be agreed only when existing research is not suitable or not available.

Evaluation:

- Evaluating ESF-delivered activity to measure how effective it is and how well the programme performed.
- A significant amount of evaluation activity takes place at national level.
- Regions may also use technical assistance (TA) to support regional evaluation of ESF activity but should consult their ESF Division before commissioning work so they do not duplicate activity already taking place.
- The independent evaluators carrying out national evaluation work will not need to make separate applications for national TA. Officials within the DWP will prepare the TA applications and match funding will be paid to the independent evaluators when they have finished the contract work as agreed with the Department.

Global Grants

Global Grants are designed to provide targeted support to the most disadvantaged areas and groups. All supported activities should lead towards the labour market as a key theme. In addition, a Global Grant should only be awarded if a mainstream ESF application is not appropriate.

A Global Grants programme is managed in each region by one or more intermediary bodies. Each potential intermediary body needs to submit a standard ESF application and provide the required match funding. The intermediary bodies then make small grants available to non-governmental organisations, generally without requiring them to provide any match funding themselves.

You can find full details about Global Grants and intermediary bodies in a separate guidance booklet which can be downloaded from the ESF website at www.esf.gov.uk or obtained from your Government Office. If you want to become a Global Grant intermediary body, you **must** contact your Government Office before submitting an application.

Capacity building - improving capacity for community development

Capacity building activity is intended to improve the capacity of organisations to provide a route to the labour market for the most disadvantaged groups including the economically inactive.

The prime focus for capacity building in Objective 3 is Policy Field - 'Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion for All'. The Operational Programme forecasts that Policy Field 2 will support 195 capacity-building projects each year. However, capacity building can be supported in other priorities, particularly Policy Field 1 'Active Labour Market Policies', where such activity can support eligible disadvantaged groups to access the labour market.

The types of capacity building that can be supported in Objective 3 fall into two broad categories:

Type 1 - Actions that help organisations to apply for and manage prospective ESF projects to assist those at greatest need in the labour market and the economically inactive.

You cannot claim consultancy fees for activities such as filling in applications or other ESF forms, management fees or commissions.

Type 2 - Actions that use ESF to develop the capacity of organisations that are targeting disadvantaged groups or communities of the disadvantaged, excluded or economically inactive themselves to find ways of overcoming the barriers between them and labour market activity. Experience shows that these capacity building activities are effective when targeted groups or communities are actively engaged in the process. In some regions this will build on experience using Global Grants to involve excluded communities in running ESF projects directly.

It is expected that type 2 actions will operate mainly in Policy Field 2 with type 1 actions being supported in other priorities. Regions may consider building on good practice capacity building work carried out through Policy Field 4 of the last programme, and Social Capital development work carried out under current Global Grant programmes.

It is expected that capacity building activities will be delivered largely by Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Organisations who are well placed to access and support disadvantaged groups. However delivery should not be restricted to the VCS. Organisations from other sectors can apply to deliver capacity building where they can demonstrate that ESF will add value to their plans to help disadvantaged groups.

Capacity building supported through ESF must aim to help disadvantaged individuals and communities back into the labour market.

Capacity building is not intended to provide indefinite support for organisations so applications should:

- be linked to delivering ESF actions within a fixed time period; and
- have an exit strategy for when ESF funding ends. The expectation is that ESF funding will not be renewed for similar organisational capacity building. Organisations seeking continued ESF support after capacitybuilding projects end should do so through mainstream ESF or seek alternative sources of funding.

Capacity building is intended to support the most disadvantaged groups in the labour market and the economically inactive.

Target groups for capacity building support will include:

- disabled people, including those with learning disabilities;
- ethnic minorities;
- 13-17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET;
- ex-offenders;
- refugees;
- homeless people;
- lone parents and others with caring responsibilities;
- people experiencing drug and alcohol abuse;
- people from rural areas experiencing exclusion; and
- people who are economically inactive, especially those receiving sickness and incapacity benefits.

In addition to activities related to the needs of specific target communities, a range of activities will be needed to develop organisational capacity to help disadvantaged groups and communities in the labour market.

Capacity building projects are likely to include a mix of these activities including:

- assisting organisations to apply for ESF money and developing their capacity to manage and deliver ESF projects;
- developing the capacity of organisations and communities to access and support disadvantaged groups;
- developing outreach;
- mentoring activities;
- providing information, advice and signposting services;
- small-scale research to help identify the needs of target groups and how to engage them;
- supporting the use of specialist staff and functions such as translation services to assist with English for speakers of other languages;
- working with employers and teaching organisations to address discrimination and stereotyping;
- skills training to improve organisational capacity;
- providing childcare where this is a barrier to participation in the labour market; and
- helping people with disabilities to access training and jobs.

Soft outcomes (Last updated April 2006)



[Document showing all changes to this page](#)

Traditionally, monitoring projects has focused on quantitative outcomes (the numbers of beneficiaries getting jobs or qualifications). But you should also look at other ways of measuring the success of projects. For example, it is important to measure beneficiaries' progress in getting closer to employment with improvements in their self-confidence or motivation.

Many projects have developed their own systems for measuring these 'soft' outcomes. We commissioned some work to look at the types of systems already in place and to develop some good practices on measuring 'distance travelled'. This good practice is now available on the [ESF website](#).

As well as producing a good practice guide, the researchers also produced some recommendations for the Monitoring Committee on how to develop this work. One of the recommendations was to establish a working group to explore the issues in more detail and to consider the possibility of developing a national system to monitor soft outcomes. Updates on progress made on this will be added to the website.
