

## 'CO-FINANCING GUIDE (Last Updated February 2007) - Guidance for applicants - Part 1A'

### Contents

- Introduction and Overview (Last updated April 2006)
- Objectives and Policy Fields
- Links to European Employment Strategy and UK National Reform Programme (Last updated April 2006)
- ESF policy fields
- Objective 1 (Last updated April 2006)
- Objective 2 (Last updated April 2006)
- Objective 3
- Objective 3 - Policy Fields and Measures
- Objective 3 - Economically inactive
- Objective 3 - Policy Field 1 - Active labour market policies
- Objective 3 - Policy Field 2 - Equal opportunities for all and promoting social inclusion (Last updated April 2006)
- Objective 3 - Policy Field 3 - Lifelong learning
- Objective 3 - Policy Field 4 - Adaptability and entrepreneurship
- Objective 3 - Policy Field 5 - Improving the role of women in the labour market (Last updated April 2006)
- Objective 3 Technical Assistance

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### Introduction and Overview (Last updated April 2006)



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

This guidance replaces the co-financing guidance issued in April 2003. It brings together the rules, regulations and procedures that apply to all European Social Fund (ESF) applicants contained in the 'ESF guidance for applicants' and the 'Consolidated co-financing guidance'. The guidance recognises that co-financing provides the main route to access ESF.

#### **This guidance is divided into two sections.**

Section one provides general guidance on ESF including the rules and regulations that apply to all applicants. Section two details co-financing procedures. This section is for both Government Offices and co-financing organisations.

#### **Changes to this guidance**

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

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## 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 will concentrate on developing human resources to help people to join and stay in a difficult labour market. This will include:

- 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 will focus 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. Objective 2 ESF projects need to be linked to ERDF activity. The relationship between ESF and ERDF activities must be clearly shown.

Objective 2 funding is not available in Objective 1 areas.

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.

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### Links to European Employment Strategy and 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 Plan (formerly the National Action Plan for Employment UK Employment Action Plan). ESF supported activity will help to promote UK policy aims by complementing and reinforcing key Government initiatives which increase participation in employment, increase skills and the supply of labour in the labour market and promote competitiveness. ESF also promotes social inclusion by helping to bring people closer to the labour market.

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.<br>GL5 Increase labour supply and promote active ageing.<br>GL8 Making work pay through enhancing work attractiveness and incentives. |
| Equal opportunities for all       | GL5 Increase labour supply and promote active ageing.<br>GL7 Promote integration of, and combat discrimination against, people who are disadvantaged   |
| Lifelong learning                 | GL4 Promote development of human capital and lifelong learning.<br>GL5 Increase labour supply and promote active ageing.   |
| Adaptability and entrepreneurship | GL2 Job creation and entrepreneurship.<br>GL3 Address change and promote adaptability and mobility in the labour market.   |

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|--|---|
|  | 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.<br>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 proactive support for parents and carers; and
- more support for minority ethnic groups - particularly in job search and sustainable employment.

ESF should also promote 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 ESF support for companies should target those who are less likely to train their staff.

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## **ESF policy fields**

### **1 Active labour market policies**

The main areas for European Social Fund (ESF) 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.

### **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 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.

### **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.

## **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.

## **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.

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### **Objective 1 (Last updated April 2006)**



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

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.

Co-financing operates in Objective 1 areas. 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.**

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## **Objective 2 (Last updated April 2006)**



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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.

Each Objective 2 Monitoring Committee should produce co-financing criteria which they use to decide whether or not co-financing will be advantageous in their Programme. You can get more information on Objective 2 in your region from your Government Office.

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

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## Objective 3

### **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), which highlights the priorities for ESF support in the region. The Regional Development Agencies' Frameworks for Skills and Employment Action (FRESAs) help decide the RDPs priorities along with the mid-term evaluation and mid-term review of the programme. Although the priorities for support will differ between regions, they will all be consistent with actions and target groups identified in the Operational Programme agreed with the European Commission.

CFO plans should show they will include the appropriate priorities identified in the Regional Development Plans. These priorities will be considered during the provider application process.

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## Objective 3 - Policy Fields and Measures

Co-financing is available for the whole of the Objective 3 Programme. 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 Measure-level application 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.**

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## **Objective 3 - 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.

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## **Objective 3 - Policy Field 1 - Active labour market policies**

### **Aims**

To reduce long-term unemployment in England by using active labour market measures and to help the unemployed and economically inactive back into employment.

To reduce the flows into long-term unemployment in England 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 enable people to develop active and continuous job search strategies 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 job brokerage to enable a better match between supply and demand.

## Measure 2

To improve the employability of the unemployed, particularly the long-term unemployed, returners, those inactive in the labour market and young people through targeted intervention to improve vocational and other key skills and removing 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 labour market access 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.

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## 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 through basic skills training.
- To promote equality through research into direct and indirect discrimination in the labour market and support follow-on actions to combat 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 innovative 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, in the labour market who face the risk of exclusion.

To provide help to improve the employability and remove barriers to labour market entry 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 the following:

- 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 community delivery of ESF activities;
- 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;
- supporting initiatives to improve recruitment and promotion systems to eliminate institutional discrimination;
- assistance to 13- to 17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training or who are at risk of becoming not in 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 combat discrimination in the labour market, in particular to combat race, disability and age discrimination and improve the employability of these groups.

Types of action include:

- researching into institutional discrimination and follow-on actions to combat discrimination; 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

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## **Objective 3 - Policy Field 3 - Lifelong learning**

### **Aims**

To widen participation in lifelong learning so that more people, including economically inactive people of working age, continue throughout their lives to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding and improve their employability 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 key policy developments in lifelong learning to improve participation.

Types of action include:

- supporting collaborative 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 inadequate skills falling behind;
- extending access through more innovative means, including community and family schemes, and through helping individuals to develop and manage their own learning;
- identifying and promoting ways which can open up access to learning for those adults currently least engaged with 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 provision 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.

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### **Objective 3 - Policy Field 4 - Adaptability and entrepreneurship**

#### **Aims**

To improve the skills base and adaptability of the employed labour force. 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 update and 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;
- the provision of 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 workable 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 throughout each region, including new skills emerging from the knowledge driven economy;
- providing training to meet identified skills shortages, including innovative methods of training delivery;
- promoting effective training investment by employers and improving the awareness of identified skill shortages with teachers in schools;
- involving the Social Partners in developing ways to identify and meet emerging skills shortages; and
- research into new forms of work organisation.

## Measure 3

Encourage entrepreneurship in individuals and competitiveness in businesses, particularly SMEs.

Types of actions include:

- supporting SMEs to help them 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) and 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 discussion on work organisation and training;
- supporting individuals setting up their own businesses with, for example, advice on regulatory aspects, 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 applicants are able to confirm the status of the funding.

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



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Following the Mid-Term Review of Objective 3, it has been agreed that there can be limited recruitment of men to Policy Field 5 where activities support men in non-traditional occupations. For CFOs, matching no longer needs to be limited to women-only beneficiaries. Match-funded provision can be on mixed gender courses, were the course is tackling gender issues in areas or sectors where women or men are traditionally under-represented. The training or support must meet the broad objective of helping men or

women to overcome barriers in the employment market, so that they can gain employment, maximise their position in the labour market, and develop successful careers.

## **Aims**

To reduce the level of disadvantage 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 in which 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; 34
- training men and women care workers;
- providing gender diversity and equal opportunities training to women and men employers, managers and trainers; and
- preparing women prisoners to enter the labour market and helping to integrate them into the labour market.

## **Measure 2**

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

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

Types of action include:

- research and development of practical recommendations to combat occupational segregation, gender stereotyping and institutionalised discrimination on recruitment, pay, progression and other aspects of employment; and.
- activities to implement 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 applicants are able to confirm the status of the funding.

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## **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. Co-financing organisations can apply for Technical Assistance in line with the regional strategy to carry out activities which tackle wider programme issues. Technical Assistance cannot be used to support activity that the CFO is required to carry out as a final beneficiary - this includes administration costs. It is the task of the Monitoring Committees to decide the range of this technical assistance. The following guidance is for those organisations applying for ESF technical assistance.

### **Application form**

We have provided a separate application form for technical assistance. Alternative bidders and co-financing organisations will both use the same form. The application form does not need all the information other ESF applications do and irrelevant questions have been cut out. Interactive help is 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 submitting a national technical assistance application. You will find the technical specification of the computer you will need to use for the interactive form available on the ESF website ([www.esf.gov.uk](http://www.esf.gov.uk)).

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:
    - communication; and
    - representation.
  - Measure 2 - Other activities including:
    - publicity and promotion;
    - evaluation;
    - labour market research; and
    - identification, promotion and dissemination of good practice.
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