

ESF Objective 3 - Co-financing opportunity across the region and in County Durham specifically

An invitation to tender to deliver activity in line with the following project specifications has just been published (March 19th) by the Learning and Skills Council (Regional). The deadline for submission of applications is 12.00 pm Monday 16th April 2007.

Regional specification

Policy field 3.1

Project Specified: to promote wider access and participation in Life Long Learning for offenders (i.e. subject to pre and post custodial license; offenders sentenced to unpaid work in the community). Connects to LSC remit for funding and delivery of Offender's Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) and is in line with Government's Next Steps Strategy to reduce re-offending through skills and employment. This has two key strands: employer engagement working with employers to design and implement new models of training and preparation for jobs; and, focussing on skills and

Jobs in prisons and on probation using unpaid work in the community and work opportunities in prisons. If you think your organisation has the potential to contribute to these objectives then contact ESFVON and we will see if is possible to steer you to sub-contracting opportunities.

It is obvious that to bid directly you will need to be either a developed consortium or high capacity specialist provider (the specification anticipates a single collaborative bid or a restricted number of bids aligned to the Probation Service Areas).

Key parameters:

Expected number of outputs: 1500

Resource: £1,778,835 (£1186 per beneficiary)

Timescale: no earlier than 1st April 2007, and no later than June 2008

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Sub-regional County Durham only

Policy Field 1.2

Project Specified: Interventions to progress individuals out of welfare dependency are at the forefront of this specification. It is therefore very much about meeting the Government's policy on 'worklessness', and indeed reflects the LSC's desire to re-align itself with the whole employability agenda. This may be why this specification has a distinctly JCP feel about it. (i.e. qualifications and training are secondary to progress to the labour market as such).

Although this is a 1.2 it is definitely not a case of people '..who require to make modest progress to become competitive in the labour market'; at the heart of this scenario is very much the difficult route back to employment for those who have grown accustomed to, and dependent on inactive benefits as the staple of their lives. The inputs to facilitate progression are consequently the natural ingredients of Policy Field 2 i.e. overcoming significant and major barriers for 'sick and disabled, ... older workers, ... lone parents, ... people in deprived communities, ...' ..etc; 15 major barriers are listed by way of example!



These will not be unfamiliar to organisations that would contemplate bidding. In which case, the output expectations are no easy ride (60% into work for example), and the inputs will be challenging; and, at £913 per beneficiary, the project is not all that well funded either.

A broad consortia or partnership is anticipated and targeted to bid. Single bids outside of this are most unlikely to be successful. If, however, you feel your organisation may contribute by way of sub-



contracting to this consortium contact ESFVON we will steer you to the most likely candidate. Note again this is for delivery across County Durham only.

Key parameters:

Expected number of outputs: 1500

Resource: £1,370,715 (£913 per beneficiary)

Timescale: no earlier than 1st April 2007, and no later than June 2008

Relevant documentation, including full tender specification, Bidding Guidance, and Application Form is available from the LSC and may be downloaded from the following:

www.lsc.gov.uk - click local view/ and homepage of North East LLSCs.

Further advice and an application pack is available directly by ringing 0191 492 6342 or 0191 492 6343. You also may wish to speak to Alan Payne at ESFVON on 0191 2749886, alan.payne@esfvon.org.uk

Good organisations need good evaluation

It is increasingly necessary for organisations to enlist the objectivity and expertise of an external evaluation of their work. Perhaps a funder expects it, or you may want a new perspective on internal purposes perhaps to chart a plan for change and the future. Whatever the reason, ESFVON's bespoke evaluation service may well be appropriate. In particular, we specialise in targeting evaluations on future options and on project/organisation sustainability.

ESFVON has an established track record of more than fifteen years delivering support and consultancy in the European context to third sector organisations in the North East. Since offering its long-standing evaluation experience on a commissioning basis, it has been entrusted to evaluate a composite of significant project initiatives to a value in excess of £1.5 million

We aim to be relevant and to the point in meeting the needs of voluntary sector organisations in a climate of change and diminished grant funding. Increasingly, the emphasis is shifting to 'contracted' services. One of ESFVON's key roles at the present time is to 'broker' middle sized or small providers into European contracts under the rules of Co-financing. It is in this context of 'sub-contracting', whether co-financed or mainstream funded, that a pertinent evaluation of the organisation and its potential is so critical.

Clearly, an evaluation provides a potentially valuable 'retrospective' on what a project has achieved. ESFVON is keen to show, however, where it can also offer scope to demonstrate fitness for purpose regarding future opportunities. Through this kind of 'forward evaluation' an organisation is, as it were, priming its 'readiness to go' when opportunities do in fact present themselves.



undertaking an evaluation process to actively inform your planning agenda, might well be your priority too.

If you feel your organisation would benefit from an evaluation carried out by an organisation steeped in the funding and contracting relevancies of the sector, whilst meeting all the requirements of a 'traditional' evaluation, then we would be happy to hear from you. We can then provide you with a detailed written response to the following key questions you will want to ask:

Why do we need an evaluation?

Do we really 'want' an evaluation?

How do we know that the evaluator will be sympathetic to what the project is about?

How is it that an evaluation could possibly tell us what we don't already know?

What are the reasons for commissioning an evaluation that are of real importance to us as a project or organisation?

It was mentioned on the ESFVON Web page that it offers a unique evaluation service to VCS organisations; how does it substantiate such a claim?

Our organisation delivers wonderfully across so-called 'soft' outcomes and to the community needs agenda. Traditional outputs evaluations do not do justice to what we do. Would an ESFVON evaluation be any different? How would it work? And how could it be orientated to future sustainability?

What would be the expected procedure in asking ESFVON to tender for an evaluation?

How much would a typical evaluation cost?

 Want to know more?

ESFVON Evaluation Services can be downloaded from our website www.esfvon.org.uk

If you wish further discussion about your needs or would like to get detailed information about this service please contact Alan Payne at ESFVON on 0191 2749886 or alan.payne@esfvon.org.uk

Future European funding 2007-2013 events

As mentioned in the last edition of ESFVON News (January 2007) events are planned to inform organisations on the latest position of the European Programmes and potential funding opportunities.

Although, initially planned for March they are now scheduled for early May when we will have a clearer insight of what the implications might be for the voluntary and community organisations in the region.

Further information on the events including dates and venues will be circulated in due course.

If you need any more information do not hesitate to contact ESFVON on 0191 2749886.



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New ERDF60 audit form for local authority ERDF

In November 2006 Community and Local Government issued the new version of ERDF60 audit form for local authority projects.

The amended ERDF60 form replaced the ERDF60 issued in November 2004. The form should be used by local authority projects for an annual and the final audit. Non-local authority projects (the VCS projects) which require an annual (projects receiving an ERDF grant of £250,000 or more) or the final audit (projects receiving an ERDF grant of £20,000 and more) should still be using ERDF80.

A copy of the new ERDF60 form can be ordered from ESFVON, tel. 0191 2749886

Transaction checklists for ERDF Projects

From the 1st of January 2007 all the Objective 2 ERDF projects should be submitting the ERDF transaction checklist along with their interim and the final claim.

The ERDF transaction checklist is a template where the projects can provide information about project costs included in the claim: type of costs, dates of defrayment, invoice numbers and dates. Community and Local Government (CLG) requires those checklists for ERDF grant claims from projects in order to ensure that the declarations to the Commission for expenditure recorded in grant claims received from 1st January 2007 are all supported by this information. Those projects which have not submitted the lists should use them with their next claim.

A copy of the transaction checklist template can be downloaded from Government Office website: www.europeanfundingne.co.uk ('what's new on site' section) or ESFVON website: www.esfvon.org.uk