

**Bulletin March 2009**

**Survey on the experience of Co-financing across the voluntary sector: the Third Sector European Network (TSEN) Survey**

**Further updates:**

**£45m NOMS ESF funding stream announced**

**‘Cross cutting themes’:**

- **Equal Opportunities and Gender Equality**
- **Sustainable Development**

**Publicity Requirements**

**Update on ESF call for submissions under Innovative and Transnational initiative**

**The new ESFVON Website**



## **Survey on the experience of Co-financing across the voluntary sector: the TSEN Survey**

ESFVON is a member of The Third Sector European Network (TSEN), the representative body for the Third Sector on the national Programme Monitoring Committee for the European Social Fund - the governing body for the programme.

TSEN is carrying out a survey to learn about the experience of Third Sector organisations in accessing ESF co-financed funding from the Learning and Skills Council to run activity in 2008/09. We are approaching VCS organisations in our network – *whether or not* you have been involved with Co-financing in the current programme to ask for your participation in the survey. Later this year we will also have the chance to feed in the experience of the sector of tendering in the current ESF programme (2007 - 2013). The information you give us will help to improve the remainder of the programme.

This survey is to test experience in the first LSC tendering round of the current programme. In most cases this began with Pre Qualification Questionnaires in Autumn 2007, and was followed by the Tendering Round (which concluded in early 2008), decisions (which were made in March / April 2008), and contracting negotiations and sub-contracting arrangements (lasting through summer 2008 and in some cases later).

We would be grateful if you could complete the survey by **FRIDAY 29 MAY**

It should take only a few minutes to complete, and you can skip questions that don't apply to you and go back to change any of your answers if necessary before you finish.

Your responses and comments will remain confidential but we may telephone you to clarify any issues.

The survey is accessible via this link [Access to ESF through the LSC Survey](#)

Many thanks for your help - we really appreciate it.

## **£45m for NOMS (National Offender Management Scheme) ESF funding stream**

<http://procurement.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/about/procurementinitiatives/esfprogramme200713/>

This funding opportunity will be of particular significance to VCS organisations as it is a large amount of money, and the procurement model is designed to be inclusive for small, local organisations.

**The deadline for submitting a PQQ was Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March, however, the Third Sector European Network has arranged for any third sector provider who wishes to submit a PQQ but did not have time to meet the deadline, to contact Tony Challinor (NOMS Head of International and Business Development Group) [Tony.Challinor@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Tony.Challinor@justice.gov.uk).**

Additionally, however, a PQQ is not required if you are not a primary bidder and there is still the potential opportunity to contribute as a sub contractor. The overall intention is to broker the most inclusive package of delivery and interested organisations are invited to submit a Network Contact Proforma, available on the above website. Regional events for potential applicants / sub contractors are planned within the next few weeks.

Below you will find full details, approved by NOMS, on the ESF funding round, and details of how to apply.

## **FULL DETAILS**

### **NOMS ESF Co-financing Programme**

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) has recently announced a major programme to improve the employability of offenders. As a co-financing organisation NOMS is able to use ESF funding to design a programme specifically tailored to meet the complex needs of offenders and the related barriers they face in getting into the labour market.

### **Priority Groups**

Priority groups include women, substance misusers, people with disabilities and other health conditions, people with learning disabilities and those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

### **Underlying Principles**

The underlying principle informing the programme is to provide added value to existing services and support offenders to access mainstream employment and skills services. This is in recognition of the evidence that a great many offenders require significant support if they are to take up opportunities in main stream services delivered by Job Centre Plus, colleges and other learning and skills providers.

### **Delivery Model**

Three key elements in delivery are:

- a. Co-ordination;
- b. Preparation;
- c. On-going support.

The programme will take a holistic approach and recognise the wider barriers to employment including debt, substance misuse, family relationships, accommodation and related issues as well as skill development and job search related activity. Other approaches to improving offenders' employability may include mentoring support, use of arts, media and creative enterprise.

This will be a national programme but delivered through regional contracts in all 9 English regions. Directors of Offender Management (DOMs) and other regional stakeholders will play a key role in aligning the provision.

Models of contracting will focus on what is best for effective delivery in each region and will include:

- a. prime contractor/sub contractor;
- b. partnership;
- c. consortium

There is an expectation of significant involvement of Third Sector providers with strong local engagement and capacity to reach excluded groups. NOMS intends to ensure that such providers are treated fairly within the contract regime.

The bulk of the programme will focus on community based services or ‘through the gate’ provision. Therefore, links with local probation area will be essential.

### **Funding Regime**

A significant proportion of funding will be linked to ‘distance travelled’ and other soft outcomes, with less emphasis on hard employment outcomes. The programme will be structured to encourage engagement with the ‘hard to reach’ and there will be disincentives to ‘cherry pick’ those individuals who are most easily moved into main stream provision.

### **Programme Duration**

The funding will run until December, 2011 with a strong possibility of a further tranche of funding extending to 2015.

### **Value**

The current programme value is £44.4 million over 2 years.

### **Procurement Timetable:**

- 30<sup>th</sup> March – Pre Qualification Questionnaires submitted, and all qualified providers notified.
- April/May – stakeholder engagement/regional model development and facilitated provider events
- June – 1<sup>st</sup> Invitation to Tender (ITT) issued, and open dialogue followed by final ITT
- July – ITT closes, scoring and decisions
- August - contracts
- September - Mobilisation

Procurement will be via the Bravo Solutions online tendering portal at:

[www.homeoffice.bravosolution.co.uk/web/login.shtml](http://www.homeoffice.bravosolution.co.uk/web/login.shtml)

You will need to register your details, if you haven’t already done so, to use this site. This is a 5 minute process.

### **Next Steps**

A series of regional events are planned in week commencing 24 April to provide an opportunity for providers to network and establish potential partnerships in advance of responding to the ITT. More details will be made available via the Bravo Solutions website and other routes.

## **Cross cutting themes:**

### **Equal Opportunities and Gender Equality**

Equal Opportunities and Gender Equality is a regulatory cross-cutting theme across all of the European Structural Funds.

The ESF Programme 2007 – 2013 has a dual approach to mainstreaming gender equality and equal opportunities.

Firstly, it will ensure that equality of opportunity is taken into consideration and actively promoted by providers when they deliver their services.

Secondly, ESF will be used to fund equality specific providers or projects where this is appropriate to do so.

Further information on gender equality and equal opportunities in the ESF Programme can be found at:

[www.esf.gov.uk/info\\_for\\_cfo\\_and\\_projects/gender\\_equality\\_and\\_equal\\_opportunities.asp](http://www.esf.gov.uk/info_for_cfo_and_projects/gender_equality_and_equal_opportunities.asp)

## **Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development is also a regulatory cross-cutting theme across all of the European Structural Funds.

It can be defined as:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Brundtland Commission Report “Our Common Future” 1987)

The design and delivery of projects are required to integrate sustainable development, creating a balance between economic, social and environmental concerns.

Further information on sustainable development in the ESF Programme 2007 – 2013 can be found at:

[www.esf.gov.uk/info\\_for\\_cfo\\_and\\_projects/sustainable\\_development.asp](http://www.esf.gov.uk/info_for_cfo_and_projects/sustainable_development.asp)

## **Publicity Requirements**



One of the conditions of receiving funding from the European Social Fund is that organizations must acknowledge the financial help received from the Fund and the European Union.

Co-financing Organisations, and other ESF beneficiaries, have included specific publicity requirements in agreements with providers.

The main requirements for ESF beneficiaries, projects and others publicizing the European Social Fund include:

- The ESF logo and references to financial support from the European Union must be displayed when activities and achievements are publicized.
- All information and publicity materials, including websites, correspondence and literature, should include the logo and acknowledgement of support
- Projects must display an ESF plaque – (this will be provided by the Co-financing Organisation)
- All participants are informed of the contribution of the ESF to the project.

Further information on ESF publicity requirements, and a downloadable ESF logo, can be found at:

[www.esf.gov.uk/publicity/publicity\\_requirements.asp](http://www.esf.gov.uk/publicity/publicity_requirements.asp)

## **Update on ESF call for submissions under Innovative and Transnational initiative:**

### **Background**

The ESF innovative and transnational call for proposals was launched on 31 October 2008 and resulted in six applications from the North East region. Up to three applications can be supported in the region across the following themes:

#### **Priority 1:**

Active Inclusion – 3 applications received

Engaging with Employers – 2 applications received.

#### **Priority 2:**

Demographic Change – 1 application received.

Applications from the North East were appraised by ESF regional Managing Authority staff in the Government Office using the appraisal and selection criteria agreed by the ESF Programme Monitoring Committee.

All applicants have now been informed of whether or not they have been successful.

The following applications were successful in the North East region:

<b>NORTH EAST</b>		
<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Theme</b>
The Virtual Jobs Hub	Talent Recruitment Ltd	Engaging with Employers
Employer Engagement and Leadership	Tyne and Wear City Strategy Partnership	Engaging with Employers
Changing People	University of Sunderland	Demographic Change

The full list of all 32 projects that were funded nationally can be access through the ESF web site

[www.esf.gov.uk/innovation\\_transnationality/](http://www.esf.gov.uk/innovation_transnationality/)

Projects are expected to start from 1 April 2009

## **The new ESFVON Website**

ESFVON has launched a *new* website on the European Social Fund (ESF) specifically designed to meet the needs of voluntary and community organisations in the North East of England.

[www.esfvon.org.uk](http://www.esfvon.org.uk)

The website whilst focusing on ESF, has other significant changes from the “old” website, not only in content but with new features making it easier navigating and searching for information, as well as the use of much sharper images to aid in visualisations.

The principal aim of the new website is to bring together in one portal, all the information which organisations might require in developing project ideas and / or participating in project delivery. Information will be provided in plain English with links to other websites where more specific or technical information is required.

All Co-financing tender opportunities for ESF will be posted on the site.

The website will also develop areas of good practice for organisations such as Publicising of ESF, Equal Opportunities and Sustainability.

The website also incorporates Google Translate.

Note: The “old” ESFVON website contained a lot of historical information and we have archived all of this information. It can still be accessed however from the new site.