

## **Objective 2 ESF bid (measure 1.5) on behalf of LE**

### **1.5 Short description of project**

This application will provide a delegated ESF grant scheme which will be administered on behalf of Lincolnshire Enterprise (LE). The grant scheme will enable organisations who have their own match funding to apply to for ESF to deliver activity in the Objective 2 area which contributes to the vision of the Lincolnshire Agenda –to make Lincolnshire an economically successful and accessible county, comprising a network of inclusive communities with an enviable quality of life, which is an integral part of its wider region.

The project is based on a sectoral approach to supporting the development of skills, enterprise, and business in Lincolnshire’s Objective 2 area. The main sectors that this project will support are as follows:

- Food production and related sectors (eg technology, distribution)
- Manufacturing and engineering
- Financial and business services
- Tourism, hospitality, sports and leisure
- ICT and media

The key emphasis on this project will be to provide training and employment support that is additional to existing provision. The delivery of ESF projects which encourage self-employment and which lead to qualifications will be prioritised; it is anticipated that 333 beneficiaries will be supported into self employment and that 64% of all beneficiaries will gain a qualification.

### **2.2 Equal opportunities**

Lincolnshire County Council, as the accountable body for this application, has a comprehensive Equal Opportunities policy which is entitled “It’s Only Fair”. All projects carried out or supported by the County Council should be undertaken in the context of this policy which states that everybody should be treated fairly regardless of gender, ethnicity, or disability.

In addition, LE has established an audit sub-group which seeks to ensure that the activities of the Partnership are carried out in a way which demonstrates integrity and fairness. This sub-group is chaired by a member of LE and receives –and comments on- regular reports on progress of the Partnership from this perspective.

### **2.3 Fit with SPD**

The SPD outlines the importance of a sectoral approach to human resource development in the context of Objective 2. It also outlines that there are four elements of Objective 2 ESF intervention- management development, higher level training, targeted supply of labour, and business start up.

Only projects which directly contribute to the points that are outlined in the SDP will be supported. In particular, LE has a clear focus on increasing economic opportunities in the county through a sectoral approach.

One important aspect of this sectoral approach is that LE have organised a symposium to consider the most appropriate way of engaging with the most important sectors of the local economy. This symposium will provide a structure within which activity will be targeted into each sector. For example, there is generally considered to be a shortage of higher level skills in the food production sector and it would be appropriate to work with universities and the Food and Drink Forum to promote training at these skills levels and to find alternative ways of delivering that training.

The Lincolnshire action plan also embraces a sectoral approach to using ERDF, and the action plan has set out a series of matrices which cross reference the achievement of LE's priorities (as set out in the Lincolnshire Agenda) with ESF and ERDF activity. For example, under the priority of "Enterprise and Employment" it is clearly set out that ESF should be used to grow employment in identified sectors such as financial and business services, tourism, retail, and other services.

## 2.5 Links to government programmes

This application has no direct links to government programmes.

However, LE has been created to add value to the delivery of existing organisations and partnerships. With that in mind, LE will ensure that no application will be supported which is not complementary to current provision. In particular, it is important that activity under this application is additional to government training programmes such as Modern Apprenticeships and Adult Training as well as complementary to business support activity such as the Investors In People process.

Complementarity will be ensured because applications will be considered by LE's Learning and Skills theme group which comprises a wide range of organisations who have an interest in education and training.

## 2.8 Publicity

Opportunities to apply for funding through this application will be publicised to organisations as part of the general LE approach to publicity. LE has a detailed list of partner organisations and will seek to extend that list by discussing any gaps in that list with GOEM's European Secretariat and with CEFET. LE's Programme Manager will then write to these organisations, outlining the priorities of this application and the funding available under it. The priorities that are outlined in this application form will have been further refined by LE's Learning and Skills theme group. Applicants will then submit applications to LE and these applications will be considered through a scoring and appraisal process which has been developed for several funding programmes by LE.

All organisations who are allocated funding will be obliged to put an acknowledgement of ESF support on all beneficiary forms and on course literature. They will also be expected to produce a press release about their project.

ESF support will be acknowledged in LE's annual review document.

## 2.9 Evaluation

Organisations who receive funding will be expected to undertake an evaluation at project level to ascertain whether their project should receive funding in future years. This evaluation should consider the impact of the project on beneficiaries and on the companies that they work with.

At a higher level, LE undertakes an annual evaluation of its activities as part of its contract with the East Midlands Development Agency. This evaluation will consider the impact of all of the work that LE facilitates on the local economy.

## 2.10 Links to ERDF

There are two main ways in which this application links to ERDF –by supporting those sectors that are being enhanced through ERDF activity, and by funding projects which are being delivered in facilities supported by ERDF.

On the first point, ERDF is being used to support IT development, finance to businesses (eg a Quality Assurance grant scheme to the tourism industry), business advice on a sectoral basis (eg the project that is being developed by the County Council to support cluster development), and the provision of sites and premises. ESF applications will be given priority if they can demonstrate that they are providing training which complements these activities and can demonstrate that the delivery organisation has put a plan in place to make links between their project and relevant ERDF delivery agents.

On the second point, ERDF has funded facilities in which learning could be delivered –not only training institutions but also IT access points, factories, and multi-use centres. Priority will also be given to projects which can demonstrate that they will be delivered at those facilities.

## 3.1 Additionality

Applicant organisations will be expected to demonstrate additionality at project level. Only projects which can demonstrate additionality will be funded.

Additionality is seen as either a project that would not go ahead without ESF support or a project which would go ahead on a bigger, faster, or better scale as a result of ESF support.

## 4.1 Purpose of the project

This application will provide a delegated grant scheme to meet the aims of the Lincolnshire Agenda and the Single Programme Document.

In particular, it will seek to encourage projects which meet the following priorities:

Lincolnshire Agenda: to protect and strengthen existing employment sectors such as engineering and food; to grow employment in sectors such as finance/business, tourism, retail, and other services; to enhance the culture of continuing education through improving mobility and flexibility; to develop transferable skills which are appropriate to new employment opportunities; and to link the socially excluded to local jobs.

SPD: to assist companies in securing the benefits of support from ERDF by supporting management development, providing higher level training, assuring a targeted supply of labour, and encouraging business start up.

The strategic objectives of this project are:

- To raise skills levels in Lincolnshire's most important sectors
- To provide support to people wishing to start their own business
- To increase the number of employed people in Lincolnshire accessing learning
- To encourage training suppliers to develop ways of training that are accessible to all

The project will operate as follows:

The LE Learning and Skills theme group will refine the priorities as outlined above. Organisations will then be encouraged to apply for funding, bringing their own match funding to the project.

LE will then assess which projects to support and will provide them with grant as appropriate.

Projects will then run and will provide LE with feedback on achievements and progress.

#### 4.2 Need for project

The priorities of this project are set out in the previous answer. In summary, the project will provide training to key sectors, encourage the take-up of training, and develop flexible skills that are relevant to employers.

Drivers For Change 2002, Lincolnshire Development's economic assessment, provides clear information on why these three activities are needed:

Key sectors:

Without support, employment in the food sector will decrease at 1.6% per year. The food production sector in Lincolnshire is particularly large. Whilst it is generally considered that food production is focused in the South Holland transition area, it should be understood that the sector is important throughout the county.

Without support, 1800 jobs will be lost in the engineering industry by 2006. The engineering sector is particularly important in Lincoln, but there is also an increasing number of manufacturers in market towns throughout the county. Engineering businesses have adapted to new technology, and there are some cutting edge businesses operating around Lincoln. Nonetheless, technology is rapidly changing

and it is important to provide ongoing support to help employees respond to the skills needed to keep up to date with technological advances.

The finance/business sector is forecast to be the fastest growing sector until 2006. Again, this sector is notably centred on Lincoln, but it is prevalent in towns around the county. It should also be noted that this sector provides a good opportunity for self employment at a higher level, and the attraction of people with higher level skills is an important priority to Lincolnshire partners.

Subject to investment in new attractions, employment in tourism is forecast to grow. The tourist industry is focused on the Lincolnshire coast, but ERDF supported projects such as “Tastes of Lincolnshire”, “Investigate”, and “Lincoln Drill Hall” will each broaden the geographical distribution of job opportunities in this sector.

Training take-up:

Only 18% of people in Lincolnshire are currently undertaking training although 63% of employers feel that there is a need for increased skills in the county.

Relevant skills for employers:

More than 50% of employers believe that their employees need to improve their personal, communication, and IT skills

#### 4.3 Who project is aimed at

This project is aimed at employees of businesses and people aiming to start up in business.

#### 4.4 Project design

This project has been developed as a result of ESF availability and the impact that the ESF can make on skills needs in Lincolnshire’s Objective 2 area.

The specific priorities of the project will be refined by LE’s Learning and Skills theme group. This group comprises a range of organisations with a specific interest in education/training, both from a policy and delivery perspective. The members of the theme group will have a clear understanding of the needs of learners.

LE is a part-funder of the economic assessment which was outlined in question 4.2. This economic assessment was used to set out the priorities of this application and, indeed, a previous years version of the assessment was used as the Lincolnshire contribution to the building up of the strategic priorities for ESF in the SPD.

All organisations who are likely to apply for funding from this project will be contacted by letter to explain how they could become involved in delivery. LE already has a substantial list of organisations but this will be shared with the lists of GOEM’s European Secretariat in order to ensure that as many organisations as possibly are made aware of it. A workshop will be held for potential applicants.

It is anticipated that all projects will be able to demonstrate some element of long-term financing/exit strategy before they receive approval from LE.

At this stage, there are few indicative projects outlined. This is because partners have focused on delivering the ERDF programme and on working with Objective 3 ESF cofinancing. However, the type of indicative activities that are likely to be funded under this programme include skills needs analyses, advice/guidance, basic skills training, promotional campaigns to encourage learning, training, and advice to business start ups.

It is likely that the type of organisation that will deliver ESF activity in this project will include educational institutions, private training providers, enterprise agencies, business support agencies, and local authorities.

#### 4.5 Results of project

513 companies will be supported.

333 beneficiaries getting help into self-employment

33% of the beneficiaries supported will be women.

64% of people receiving training will be working towards qualifications.

These results reflect Lincolnshire's aspirations to deliver elements of the SPD. Projects will be made aware of these targets and only those that contribute at a relevant value-for-money level to the achievement of those targets will be supported.

LE's Monitoring Officer and the accountable body will be responsible for reviewing project progress on a quarterly basis and if projects do not appear to be achieving their targets, corrective action will be agreed. Where projects are not meeting their objectives by some way, recourse will be made to LE's Learning and Skills theme group and potentially the project will not be allowed further monies.

#### 4.6 Equal opps

Lincolnshire County Council, as the accountable body for this application, has a comprehensive Equal Opportunities policy which is entitled "It's Only Fair". All projects carried out or supported by the County Council should be undertaken in the context of this policy which states that everybody should be treated fairly regardless of gender, ethnicity, or disability.

In addition, LE has established an audit sub-group which seeks to ensure that the activities of the Partnership are carried out in a way which demonstrates integrity and fairness. This sub-group is chaired by a member of LE and receives –and comments on- regular reports on progress of the Partnership from this perspective.

All projects that are supported will be expected to provide details of their individual equal opportunities policy.

#### 4.7 Sustainable development

The managers of all projects that are supported by this application will be expected to attend a “horizontal issues” workshop which will help them to understand the sustainable development aspects of their project.

Correspondence, where possible and appropriate, will be done via electronic means in order to reduce the amount of paper used.

Some projects may come forward which provide training to managers in waste reduction and other sustainable development principles.

#### 4.8 ICT

Correspondence, where possible and appropriate, will be done via electronic means in order to reduce the amount of paper used.

The accountable body will use an electronic systems for recording payments and maintaining a database of project achievements.

The benefits of this approach will be quicker correspondence and easier access to project management information .

#### 4.9 Local initiatives

LE, Lincolnshire’s strategic sub-regional partnership, will have overview management of this application. LE comprises representatives from the public, private, and “third” sector and was approved by the East Midlands Development Agency as one of their first wave SSPs. The detailed input from LE will come via their Learning and Skills sub-group.

LE has been created to add value to the delivery of existing organisations and partnerships. With that in mind, LE will ensure that no application will be supported which is not complementary to current provision. In particular, it is important that activity under this application is additional to government training programmes such as Modern Apprenticeships and Adult Training as well as complementary to business support activity such as the Investors In People process.

The project’s links with the Lincolnshire Agenda and the SPD have been outlined above. However, it should also be noted that the project will play an important role in the delivery of EMDA’s Skills Action Plan, particularly because it will have one focus on the take-up of learning and this will provide a useful complement to EMDA’s “Learning Pays” initiative.

#### 4.10 Delivering specific objectives of this measure

Only projects that are delivered to beneficiaries who live or work in the Objective 2 area will be supported.