

Objective 2 ESF bid (measure 3a3) on behalf of Lincolnshire Enterprise

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.

This project is concerned with using ESF to create a network of sustainable and enterprising communities. It will provide funding support to community led initiatives which ultimately lead to increased skills for individuals.

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 positive outcomes will be prioritised; it is anticipated that 353 beneficiaries will be supported by ESF and that 63% will achieve a positive outcome.

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 providing skills development in Community Economic Development areas. In particular it considers that it would be beneficial to provide human resource development alongside the community development activities that are supported in other elements of priority 3.

In particular, the SPD demonstrates that there is limited access to opportunities in these areas and that there is a need for capacity building for individuals in these areas in the first stages of this project but that during the life of the programme the emphasis should shift to more employment-focused activity. Projects which do this – by encouraging learning in the first instance and then by developing more specific advice, guidance, and job seeking activities in the longer term- will be prioritised.

The Lincolnshire action plan is focused primarily on ERDF activity. However, it does provide a matrix of how the various measures of the Objective 2 programme will be used to achieve the four themes of the Lincolnshire Agenda (LE's vision for the future economic development of the county). Above all, ESF is seen as a way of supporting the development of vibrant and cohesive communities and as a way of promoting better quality of life for all.

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 tackling disadvantage and social exclusion through focused work in specific communities.

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. 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.

Because of the importance of engaging communities effectively in ESF projects, it is likely that publicity will need to go beyond more "mainstream" ESF publicity. Workshops will be held with Local Strategic Partnerships, and an appropriate approach to engaging voluntary groups in the process will be explored with key organisations such as VOCAL (the Lincolnshire voluntary sector network) and CEFET.

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

ERDF has been used in Lincolnshire for geographically targeted initiatives in Lincolnshire's CED areas. This has been particularly, but not exclusively, in Lincoln through organisations such as Urban Challenge and the Lincoln Community Development Project. Another important project is RACOL –this will provide a network of community development officers who will help communities to develop bottom up responses to local need. These community development officers will be able to promote ESF and the courses that are funded through it as one solution for communities.

Only ESF activity that can demonstrate a direct link to ERDF activity, for example through working with community groups that have been facilitated by ERDF or through promoting employment opportunities in industrial sites that have been developed using ERDF, will be supported.

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: developing vibrant and cohesive communities by promoting the retention of job opportunities and maintaining a minimum level of services in communities and by promoting a better quality of life for all by placing lifelong learning at the heart of education provision.

SPD: increasing employment and incomes in targeted communities by providing guidance and support to increase skills

At this stage there are no projects specifically identified for support. However, the strategic priorities of this project are:

- To provide equality of access to employment to people living in Lincolnshire's disadvantaged communities
- To increase the number of people living in disadvantaged communities gaining employment
- To foster a strong relationship with training providers so that there is ongoing employment provision for people living in disadvantaged communities

The project will operate as follows:

LE's Sustainable Communities 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

Whilst no specific projects have been identified at this stage, an indicative project list includes skills need assessments, an emphasis on locally delivered guidance/advice, promotional campaigns, and basic skills training.

4.2 Need for project

The priorities of this project are set out in the previous answer. In summary, the project will provide training and employment opportunities in target communities across the county's Objective 2 area.

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

- The East Coast of Lincolnshire and Lincoln have concentrations of the most deprived wards in the East Midlands. The problems are exacerbated on the East Coast by issues of seasonality. "Hidden deprivation" is a problem in Lincolnshire's more remote communities.
- West Lindsey has a higher than regional average of long term unemployed people. Conversely, the number of bottom up initiatives coming from that district is very low, and this has led to the district being a priority in the Objective 2 Regional Development Plan and in the Community Fund's recent "Countryside Communities" initiative.
- Lincolnshire has 25 of the top 150 most deprived wards in the East Midlands.
- 76% of unemployed people could identify a barrier to their finding work. This will help providers to identify activity that is "owned" by beneficiaries and that is they will therefore subscribe to more readily.

4.3 Who project is aimed at

This project is aimed at unemployed people living in the target wards of Lincolnshire's community economic development areas.

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.

4.5 Results of project

1131 people will benefit from ESF

42% of the beneficiaries supported will be women

63% of the beneficiaries will progress into full or part time work or volunteering

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 employment opportunities in environmental enhancement projects, particularly in the context of Intermediate Labour Market activity.

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 in the Objective 2 community economic development area will be supported.