



Voluntary Value ESF Bulletin April 2010

Welcome to the twelfth European Social Fund (ESF) bulletin for Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs) in the South West Competitiveness area.¹ This bulletin summarises the opportunities for VCO engagement with ESF.

1. A Managing Agent for Third Sector Organisations in the South West

The March Voluntary Value bulletin invited participation in a consultation workshop on 6th April, the purpose of which was to discuss the feasibility of establishing a Managing Agent capacity on behalf of third sector organisations in the South West. The meeting drew together a number of third sector stakeholders throughout the region, and focussed on the up-coming ESF tenders due to be published by the Skills Funding Agency. To engage in this on-going discussion, please contact simon@southwestforum.org.uk

2. The 2010 ESF Tendering Year: Consultation

In previous bulletins updates have been provided on the tendering opportunities that will be available through ESF in the coming year. Currently, the Voluntary Value project is awaiting involvement in a consultation on the Co-Financing Plans to be issued by the organisations who set the funding priorities.

The Skills Funding Agency, Department and Work and Pensions, and the National Offender Management Service have submitted their plans for how they intend to spend all their ESF money in 2011-2013. The Voluntary Value project has been asked to provide feedback on these plans. If you would like to take part in this consultation, email simon@southwestforum.org.uk

3. Be Part of the ESF Funding Plans

All organisations with an interest in bidding for ESF projects are invited to the launch of the Co-Financing Plans in June. The events are aimed at organisations

¹ The Competitiveness area serves all of the South West except for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, who are served by the Convergence area for ESF.

who are interested in bidding as a provider or sub-contractor. They will highlight the funding themes, geographical breakdown, timescales and processes relevant to the bidding process. The dates and locations of the events are as follows:

07 June	Cornwall – Alverton Manor – Truro, TR1 1ZQ
08 June	Devon – Bicton College – East Budleigh, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 7BY
09 June	Gloucester - Thistle Cheltenham Hotel, GL51 0TS
10 June	Bristol – Marriott Royal Hotel, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TA
15 June	Somerset - Lyngford House Conference Centre, Taunton, TA2 8HD
16 June	Dorset - De Vere Royal Bath, Bournemouth, BH1 2EW
17 June	Wiltshire - Lackham Countryside Centre, Chippenham, SN15 2NY

To book on contact LSN Events on 0207 492 5000 or registration@lsnlearning.org.uk

4. Third sector triumphs at the South West ESF Awards

Third sector organisations were highly recognised in the prizes at the inaugural ESF Awards ceremony last month. The Voluntary Value project is pleased that, through these Awards, third sector organisations are being acknowledged for their work in delivering employment, skills and training opportunities to combat social exclusion.

Locally, the sector was recognised in the following category:

- **2010 Competitiveness Young Achiever Award.** To Jade Bingham, supported by training from Hedley Hall, a voluntary and community organisation in Bath.

Look out for a report on the Awards in the Big Issue at the end of April, or follow this link for further details: <http://www.esf-works.com/resources/news/53-celebrating-success-and-achievement-at-the-inaugural-south-west-esf-awards->

5. ESF Should Re-Focus on the Hard to Reach

A House of Lords inquiry into the future and effectiveness of ESF states that 'hard to reach' individuals should be placed at the centre of ESF policy in the future. The Voluntary Value project contributed to submissions to the enquiry, and is pleased to see this statement. The project would now like to see regional policy documents re-focus on those 'furthest from the labour market', and not simply on those 'outside the labour market'.

The enquiry's recommendations are as follows:

- Priority should be given to safeguarding the ESF's role of making the hardest to reach and the least skilled employable
- Contractually require delivery bodies to demonstrate they are delivering to the hardest to reach
- The Government and the Commission should ensure that the Third Sector is encouraged to participate to the best of its ability

- Reconsider rigid approach of withholding payment on failure to achieve job outcome and retention (failure to secure a job does not indicate a flaw in activity)
- Government and Commission explore other measures to record progress amongst those furthest from the labour market – collect data on soft and hard outcomes alike
- Government to assess effect of Co-financing on administrative burden faced by providers
- Green skills across the economy, in terms of greening of existing jobs and developing new skills, should be supported by priorities for the European Social Fund programme period 2014 – 20.

The full report is available at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldselect/ldeucom/92/92i.pdf>

6. Skills, Employment and Worklessness bulletin

Voluntary and Community Organisations in the South West who find this bulletin useful will be interested in South West Forum's broader Skills, Employment and Worklessness bulletin. Sent out monthly, this bulletin is specifically aimed at third sector colleagues.

- The content of the April bulletin is at:

http://www.southwestforum.org.uk/index.php?content=nw_theme&news_theme_id=22

- Ensure you receive the bulletin directly to your inbox in the future by completing this link:

http://www.southwestforum.org.uk/index.php?content=ir_ebulletin

This bulletin was prepared by Simon Charters, Regional Coordinator (SWF), and enabled through support from the ESF and South West Regional Development Agency. Your feedback on the style and content of the bulletin are very welcome – please contact Simon directly on simon@southwestforum.org.uk / 01392 823758.