

## Skills, Worklessness and Employment - May 2010

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

#### 1. ESF Third Sector Consortium

South West Forum is working with stakeholders to develop a third sector consortium around skills and learning. The early objective of the consortium is to bid for an ESF contract, through the Skills Funding Agency. [Here](#) is a link to a 'Self Assessment Tool'. All organisations wishing to be considered as delivery partners in the consortium are invited to complete and return the tool to [debra@southwestforum.org.uk](mailto:debra@southwestforum.org.uk) by Friday 28 May.

#### 2. ESF Roadshow

As reported in the previous bulletin, a 'roadshow' of 7 events will spell out the broad opportunities that ESF will offer in the up-coming tendering window. The Skills Funding Agency, Department of Work and Pensions, and the National Offender Management Service will all go through the key headings of their spending plans, but it is unlikely that a full picture of the tender specifications will be available at this point.

The Voluntary Value project understands that the timetable for delivering ESF in the region could be delayed, and that this could unfortunately limit the content of the events. As such, a second round of events is likely later in the summer in which fuller detail on the project specifications will be announced.

Nonetheless, the dates for the first round of events remain as they were – at the time of writing at least! They are:

07 June	Comwall – 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 or contact LSN Events on 0207 492 5000 or [registrations@snlearning.org.uk](mailto:registrations@snlearning.org.uk)

#### 3. 2010 ESF Tendering Window

Summer 2010 will present big funding opportunities for those hoping to draw down ESF support. Indications are that we will not see funding for discrete sub-regions in the South West. There is also a possibility of slippage against the timetable set out, but no confirmation has yet been received of this.

The next Voluntary Value bulletin will include a 'checklist' for small organisations wanting to be bid ready for sub-contracting opportunities.

#### 4. Opportunity to be a sub-contractor on ESF NOMS contracts still there

Small organisations that want to be involved in the NOMS ESF funding programme – Enhancing Employment for Offenders- can still register their interest in becoming a sub-contractor, by completing <http://procurement.hmprison.service.gov.uk/assets/documents/10004A7AContactdatabaseNOMSForm.xls>

NOMS has assured the Voluntary Value project that when a provider details the sub-contractors that will be part of delivery at the bid stage, that providers honour this commitment during delivery.

#### 5. The NOMS ESF Evidence Base

'Employability Skills: A research and policy briefing' provides an evidence base for those interested in the NOMS ESF funding opportunity. The report, by UK Commission for Employment and Skills, provides a review of recent research on the theme of employability and skills, explores the evidence base and recent policy trends and initiatives. See <http://www.ukces.org.uk/reports/employability-skills-a-research-and-policy-briefing>

#### 6. Future Jobs Fund and ESF not compatible

Prime providers have heard that they cannot use the Future Jobs Fund as match funding for their ESF projects. This is because the ESF Operational Programme does not allow ESF to support wage subsidy schemes. Confirmation of this has been received from Government Offices.

#### 7. Third sector ESF organisations championed in the Big Issue

As reported in last month's Voluntary Value bulletin, the third sector organisations which triumphed at the inaugural ESF Awards ceremony recently received coverage in the Big Issue – see the issue that was published in the week beginning 26 April.

#### 8. ESF Framework Refresh: the final document

Voluntary Value stakeholders helpfully contributed to the consultation in the refresh of the ESF Framework in late 2009. And the final Framework document has now been published here: <http://library.swresb.co.uk/library/detail.php?id=309&catID=52>