



**ENGLAND AND GIBRALTAR EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
CONVERGENCE, COMPETITIVENESS AND EMPLOYMENT
PROGRAMME 2007-2013**

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR INNOVATIVE AND TRANSNATIONAL
PROJECTS**

31 OCTOBER 2008

Theme	ACTIVE INCLUSION
Regions	<p>This theme has been selected by the following regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East of England (Priority 1) • East Midlands (Priority 1) • London (Priority 1) • Merseyside (Priority 1) • North East (Priority 1) • North West (Priority 1) • South East (Priority 1) • West Midlands (Priority 1) <p>The project applicant must be from one of these regions. The application will need to demonstrate how it will address the employment and skills strategies of the region within which it is submitted (see section on regional context). The application may include partners in other regions whether or not those regions have selected the theme.</p>
<u>ESF Operational Programme priorities</u>	<p>Projects within this theme must fall within <u>Priority 1</u> – Extending employment opportunities (Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective).</p> <p>This theme will support Priority 1 by developing and delivering innovative ways of helping unemployed and inactive people make the transition from unemployment and inactivity to sustainable employment.</p> <p>All activities within Priority 1 are relevant to this theme, in particular those that target specific disadvantaged groups and people experiencing multiple disadvantages.</p>
Aim	<p>This theme will develop, test and deliver innovative active inclusion measures to integrate disadvantaged groups into the labour market, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing and testing integrated pathways to active inclusion in the labour market;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainstreaming innovative integrated approaches that add value to current practices; • disseminating and transferring good practice in promoting active inclusion across EU Member states; • tackling multiple disadvantage through integrated solutions which join-up employment initiatives and enabling social support.
<p>Eligible groups</p>	<p>Innovative approaches will focus on improving access and support to disadvantaged target groups identified in Priority 1 of the ESF Operational Programme and the relevant regional ESF framework. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people with disabilities and health conditions • lone parents and other disadvantaged parents • older workers • black and minority ethnic groups • people with no or low skills • refugees • ex-offenders • drug users • homeless people. <p>In developing projects, a number of distinctive active engagement features may emerge as being specific to these special groups, furthest from the labour market, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the multiplicity of social disadvantages; • the extensive involvement of people experiencing poverty; • the scope for ownership of neighbourhood services led by the disadvantaged; • the receptiveness to outreach approaches; • the amenability to informal intermediary services; • the responsiveness to area-based approaches. <p>The theme on Demographic Change will support innovative projects to re-engage inactive older workers and to retain older workers in employment. Therefore projects focusing solely on older workers should be submitted within the Demographic Change theme in regions where this theme is available. Projects within the Active Inclusion theme may include older workers as one of their target groups in terms of tackling labour market barriers more generally.</p>
<p>Strategic context</p>	<p>The March 2008 Spring European Council agreed guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States for 2008-2010, as part of the renewed Lisbon</p>

	<p>Strategy for growth and jobs.</p> <p>Guideline 17 is to “Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion.” It says that “raising employment levels is the most effective means of generating economic growth and promoting socially inclusive economies whilst ensuring a safety net for those unable to work....Special attention should be paid to...promoting active inclusion of those most excluded from the labour market.”</p> <p>The European Commission published a communication on active inclusion in October 2007 (‘Modernising social protection for greater social justice and economic cohesion: taking forward the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market’). The communication says that “EU financial instruments already play a key role in encouraging the development of inclusion policies based on access to the labour market. The European Social Fund provides a long-term financial framework complementing national and other sources of finance. The Commission will encourage use of the provisions of the new ESF regulation to support active inclusion measures.”</p> <p>In its response to the Communication, the UK Government recognised the importance of the EU’s commitment to make a decisive impact on poverty by 2010 and of the need to constantly review strategies to get closer to achieving that goal. Multiple disadvantage requires multiple and integrated solutions, including inclusive labour markets and enabling social support.</p> <p>The UK Government believes that work on active inclusion should focus on increasing employment opportunities for priority groups. In particular the area where more effort is needed by all Member States is on investment in human capital.</p> <p>In this context, the UK response to the Commission’s communication identified the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• focusing resources on the people and localities that are in the worst position compared to overall employment levels;• underpinning the welfare reform agenda with a framework of rights and responsibilities, extended appropriately to those who are economically inactive and receiving previously passive benefits;• combining employment <u>and</u> skills support and services, focusing not just on job-entry but also on
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	<p>retention and progression;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• using a personalised and responsive approach; and• working in partnership to make best use of expertise across public, private and third sectors and empowering regions, cities and localities. <p>The Government's approach is set out in more detail in a range of documents including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility' (July 2008) sets out a range of options to reduce welfare dependency, support more people into work, provide greater support and control for disabled people and strengthen parental responsibility.• 'Work skills' (June 2008) outlines what the Government is doing to help people take control of their skills needs, both for today and in the future and how it will support employers to get the skilled workforce they need.• 'Ready to Work, Skilled for Work: Unlocking Britain's Talent' (January 2008) sets out how government and business working together can unlock Britain's talent, ensure employers have access to the skills they need to prosper, and give millions of people the chance to realise their potential and change their lives. <p>Worklessness and Health</p> <p>The impact of health issues on worklessness is currently a focus for government attention through initiatives such as Pathways to Work. Being economically inactive can lead to higher rates of poor health, mental illness, and premature death. Poor health can affect the ability to gain and stay in employment.</p> <p>The Health Development Agency paper 'Worklessness and health – What do we know about the casual relationship?'(2005) concluded that there is a relationship between unemployment and poor health, and that "employment policy should evaluate the health impact of all its relevant interventions".</p> <p>The latest England life expectancy and infant mortality figures show that the health gap is widening still between the better off and more deprived population groups. Availability of employment and skills development is crucial to reducing the numbers of people living in deprivation and to reduce the health gap.</p>
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	<p>Recent national initiatives to join-up health and employment/skills include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Working for a healthier tomorrow’ (March 2008), Dame Carol Black’s review of the health of the working age population; • Skilled for Health which aims to address both the low skills and health inequalities prevalent within traditionally disadvantaged communities. <p>Two regions - London and the North West, now consider health to be a cross cutting theme in the ESF 2007-13 programme.</p> <p>There are many good European examples of progressive health activity, for example the Finnish experience of occupational health where older workers have been helped to stay in work through changes to jobs and lifestyle.</p> <p>ESF contribution to delivering active inclusion</p> <p>ESF has traditionally focused on employment related measures. Yet, this does not prevent the development of integrated approaches which aim to tackle the wider barriers to labour market entry, including the root causes of economic inclusion and poverty.</p> <p>To deal with multiple barriers in a holistic way, projects may join-up active labour market measures (for example, vocational education and training, counselling, development of “soft skills”, language courses), with relevant community and social support services. Partnership between public authorities, third sector and private sector is critical to delivering integrated approaches.</p> <p>ESF money cannot be used to fund health and social services, and ESF activities must be focused on supporting entry to or progression within the labour market.</p>
<p>Regional context</p>	<p>The following regions have set out regional context for the active inclusion theme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East of England • Merseyside • North East • North West

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South East • West Midlands <p>The regional context identifies specific regional issues that should be addressed by applicants. The regional context documents are available on the innovation page of the ESF website. Applicants should also take account of the relevant regional ESF framework.</p>
<p>Indicative activities</p>	<p>Projects should address one or more of the following four areas. They are not mutually exclusive. Indicative actions are set out under each area although these are not prescriptive.</p> <p>1. Inclusive labour market interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tackling barriers to work among the most disadvantaged groups in the labour market; • underpinning the welfare reform agenda with a framework of rights and responsibilities; • combining employment and skills at job entry, retention and progression; • using personalised and responsive approaches – improving the flexibility of provision and offering people the services they need when they need them; • partnership working across public, private and third sectors to empower regions, cities and localities. <p>2. Joining-up labour market interventions with other services to address barriers to work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assistance for people faced by personal challenges or barriers in the labour market; • activities to ensure that disadvantaged people reintegrate into the labour market; • activities to develop the employability and skills of offenders and ex-offenders; • activities to address specific barriers to work faced by people who are homeless, refugees or have substance abuse, alcohol or drug problems; • activities to integrate into employment people in contact with secondary mental health services, and people with learning disabilities. <p>3. Adding value to the City Strategy and Working Neighbourhood Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tackling worklessness among the most

	<p>disadvantaged groups and communities in City Strategy and Working Neighbourhoods Fund areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring provision is more attuned to the needs of local employers so individuals gain the skills and attributes they need to access the particular jobs that employers need to fill. <p>4. Worklessness and health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> activities to help people with disabilities and health problems enter and remain in work; activities to retain in employment people who become disabled or develop health conditions (including in small businesses); activities to help employers to promote the health and wellbeing of workers, and prevent the onset of ill health; sustainable approaches to mental health and employment - in particular replicable interventions that help people with mental health conditions retain work; complementing activities within the Skilled for Health initiative to improve health literacy and basic skills among specific groups with common health issues.
<p>Results</p>	<p>The primary output of projects within this theme will be the development and delivery of innovative active inclusion measures.</p> <p>This will include producing new tools, methods and service provision, and/or adapting and applying existing tools and methods to new regions, sectors or target groups. It will also include piloting these products with unemployed and inactive people, especially those experiencing multiple disadvantages. The outcomes will therefore include improving the employment prospects and skills of participants, and where appropriate helping them to achieve qualifications and sustainable employment.</p> <p>Within this theme results may also include the creation of sustainable networks to promote good practice in active inclusion in the labour market. Networks should include third sector groups of people who are disadvantaged in or excluded from the labour market.</p>
<p>Transnational working</p>	<p>Each project must include an element of transnational working. This will involve working with at least one partner from another EU Member State.</p>

	<p>The transnational dimension of projects must bring real benefits to the innovative activity by learning from, adapting or mainstreaming approaches from other Member States, and where appropriate transferring good practice to other Member States. ESF will not support transnational activities that merely seek to establish or develop partnerships with other Member States.</p> <p>Projects should allow the exchange of knowledge, experience and best practice to offer clear added value to regional objectives and targets. They should aim to achieve strategic benefits that can be widely shared rather than purely operational or organisational benefits.</p> <p>Applications should explain why the activity should be undertaken transnationally and the proposed benefits of working with the chosen transnational partners.</p> <p>Applications should identify transnational partners (which may be organisations at local, regional or national level) that have a clear track record in this theme and can support exchanges that will facilitate innovation and fresh ideas. Transnational partners may include third sector organisations drawn from people disadvantaged in the labour market. They should be willing to work collaboratively in order to share good practice and learning.</p> <p>Transnational partners do not have to be in receipt of ESF funding in their own Member State.</p> <p>Some examples of transnational working include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • networking; • thematic workshops/exhibitions; • study visits; • joint research/studies; • piloting or testing new tools, methods, approaches etc.; • work shadowing towards practice development; • events, seminars and conferences; and • new joint development initiatives.
<p>Mainstreaming</p>	<p>All applications must identify appropriate policy linkages and provide clear evidence of mainstreaming potential. As well as having dynamic links with third sector street-level organisations, they must have mainstreaming strategies showing effective engagement with decision makers in relevant Government departments, regional and local</p>

	<p>bodies, sectoral organisations, employers' organisations and other appropriate stakeholders to demonstrate how innovation, learning and best practice will influence policy development and implementation in this theme. Mainstreaming strategies should include clear methodologies for recording, evaluating and disseminating the learning and best practice, alongside the methods to be used to engage with decision makers.</p> <p>Projects covering City Strategy and Working Neighbourhoods Fund areas must have the active participation of, or strong links with, the relevant City Strategy Pathfinders or Working Neighbourhoods Fund. They should also involve appropriate employers' organisations.</p> <p>Outcomes may be disseminated through channels such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• good practice case studies;• reports capturing learning from exchanges• policy impact reports;• conferences, seminars and exhibitions;• new websites, DVDs, CDs etc. <p>Active inclusion projects may also disseminate results through networks at regional, national and transnational levels that directly contribute to the EU's Social Inclusion Open Method of Co-ordination and National Action Plan processes. These networks should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• involve people in poverty, in a systematic way;• link to local researchers in the role of 'local observatories';• integrate ESF transnational networking into preparations for the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2010. <p>Applications should describe any plans to disseminate results through networks supported by PROGRESS, the EU Programme on Employment and Social Solidarity 2007-2013.</p> <p>The work undertaken must have good visibility at street level. Progress and achievement should be seen and understood by people experiencing poverty and disadvantage both inside and outside the labour market. In particular, publicity arrangements should dovetail with those linked with the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2010.</p>
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