

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (SEEDA)
Invitation to Tender

Evaluation of the ESF Programme 2007-10

TENDER REFERENCE NUMBER: SEEDA/ST/APR/2010/03

1. Background

As one of the EU's Structural Funds, the England and Gibraltar European Social Fund (ESF) Convergence, Competitiveness and Employment Programme 2007-13 was set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union and so help raise standards of living. It aims to help people fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects. Since 2000, the ESF has been a key part of the EU's Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs. It supports the EU's goal of increasing employment by giving unemployed and disadvantaged people the training and support they need to enter jobs. ESF also equips the workforce with the skills needed by business in a competitive global economy.

ESF is delivered as a single programme in England with three Priorities for Regional Competitiveness and Employment funding. These Priorities focus on Extending employment opportunities for unemployed and inactive people, Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce and Technical Assistance. Over the life of the programme, €2.89 billion ESF is available with the share by priority axis set out below:

- Priority 1 supports a mix of employment and skills activity for unemployed and inactive people, and also activity targeted at young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET – 62%
- Priority 2 will support skills development for people in the workforce – 34%
- Priority 3 (Technical Assistance) – 4%

The ESF funding allocated to the South East is distributed by the region's four Co-financing Organisations (CFOs) which are the Learning and Skills Council (from April 2010 this will be replaced by the Skills Funding Agency [SFA]), JobCentre Plus (DWP), NOMS (National Offender Management Services) since 2009, and SEEDA (South East England Development Agency), with the involvement of the regional partners.

SEEDA was established as a CFO in 2001 to take the strategic lead in promoting the sustainable economic development of the region. The ESF Programme for 2007-10 period managed by SEEDA selected and approved ESF projects in accordance with the EU and national procurement legislation. Additionally, match-funding projects were identified out of the eligible Single Pot projects. The selected projects contribute towards the delivery of the Operational Programme, the South East ESF Regional Framework and SEEDA's CFO Plan.

2. Project

The ESF Evaluation funding will be used to report on the performance of the 7 (seven) ESF and numerous match-funding projects contracted during the ESF Programme 2007-10. The Evaluation activity will measure the impact of the ESF programme and will:

- Evaluate the progress of the projects towards delivering their targets and activities as set out in the projects' Schedules 4 and 5, highlighting challenges and successes
- Evaluate the progress of the SEEDA ESF Programme 2007-10 towards delivering the targets and activities set out in the CFO Plan
- Evaluate the extent to which the programme has achieved alignment between the CFO Plan and domestic employment and skills programmes
- Evaluate the effectiveness of ESF in engaging with the changed economic and labour market conditions since the ESF Framework 2007-10 and CFO Plan were written
- Identify any lessons learnt and opportunities for improvement to inform future provision.

Alongside this activity, the funded evaluation activity represents an opportunity to:

- Identify examples of good practice
- Prepare qualitative case studies
- Highlight opportunities to mainstream successful approaches funded by ESF in assisting individuals to secure employment and improve their skills
- Capture the impact of the ESF programme on regional and local labour markets and participant groups
- Capture the impact of the Cross-cutting themes on the project delivery and programme
- Assess project sustainability in light of the future public spending constraints.

3. Requirement

SEEDA seeks to appoint consultants to manage the SEEDA ESF Evaluation and to produce an Evaluation Report for the ESF Programme 2007-10 period, which will include case studies, best practice, lessons learnt and recommendations to inform the delivery of the regional ESF Programme 2011-13.

The evaluation work will be carried out by the following means:

- Analysis of quantitative participant management information
- Cohort survey on a sample basis of programme participants will provide information on participant views of the support they have received together with information on the sustainability of results such as job outcomes
- Interviews with the project management staff involved in delivering ESF as well as the SEEDA ESF Team and match-funding projects.

These methods should provide information to explore:

- The contribution of the programme to EU, national and regional priorities
- Progression of ESF participants including soft outcomes, sustainability and quality of results
- Activities and targets groups not covered directly by the programme's indicators e.g. how SMEs benefit from ESF funded support
- The quality of ESF provision and its effects on systems and structures including its contribution to business performance
- Higher education and higher level skills provision.

The appointed consultants will be required to:

- Work with, and consult, the projects' delivery teams to identify a sampling of beneficiaries to participate in the evaluation activity
- Contact beneficiaries to capture their journey through the project activity
- Contact projects' delivery teams to assess the progress towards their contracted targets
- Contact the ESF Team to assess overall programme progress towards the CFO Plan
- Present a draft ESF Evaluation Report 2007-10 to a panel at SEEDA and revise the report to include comments.

The final deliverables will be:

- An Evaluation Questionnaire developed to capture the views of the projects' delivery team
- A first draft of the ESF Evaluation Report 2007-10
- The final ESF Evaluation Report 2007-10, agreed and endorsed by SEEDA ESF Team
- Three (3) hard copies and one (1) electronic copy of the final ESF Evaluation Report 2007-10.

4. Timing

May 2010	Receipt of Applications by Friday 21 May at 12.00 (NOON)
May 2010	Assessment of Tenders
28 May 2010	Start date/ Contract awarded.
3 June 2010	Engagement meeting in SEEDA
June 2010	Develop an Evaluation Strategy in consultation with the ESF Team to capture the ESF projects' needs.
July 2010	Create the Evaluation Questionnaire to capture the views of the beneficiaries and stakeholders relating to the programme's delivery.
Summer-Winter 2010	Meet the programme's stakeholders to capture views.
March 2011	Final draft Evaluation Report presented to ESF Team at SEEDA for comments.
June 2011	Final Evaluation Report.
June 2011	Project Completion to include.

5. Tender Response

Tenders should include the following:

- Completed Form of Offer
- Detailed breakdown of costs supporting the Form of Offer
- Most recent company accounts or equivalent
- Evidence of relevant experience, including ESF experience
- Reason/s why organisation is able to provide the requirement
- Method statement including time-scales
- Names of two references
- Details of key contacts/proposed consultants (CVs etc.)

Tenderers must state if any of their proposed solution requires the use of sub-contractors. SEEDA reserves the right to reject the use of any particular sub-contractor.

Please provide one bound copy, three unbound copies and one e-copy on CD-Rom of your tender.

6. IMPORTANT Instructions for Submission of Tenders

Please follow these instructions carefully as non-compliant tenders will not be accepted.

- Your tender must be returned to the Procurement Team in a plain envelope using only the label provided, and with no means of identifying the tenderer.
- Tenders must be returned no later than the due date and time above. (Tenders received after this time will not be accepted. If you are relying on couriers or the postal service, please send well in advance. No reasons will be accepted for missing the deadline.)
- Electronic submissions (email) will not be accepted.
- Fax submissions will only be accepted by arrangement with the Procurement Team (contact 01483 484200 on the morning of the due date), and must be followed by hardcopies within one working day.
- Tenders must include the signed and completed Form of Offer.

Please ensure that you have included all information requested in this specification.

7. Tender Selection

SEEDA reserves the right to exclude any tender from the evaluation which does not include all of the information requested in the **Tender Response** section above.

Tenders will only go forward to full evaluation where they can satisfy the following qualification criteria:

- Relevant ESF expertise and experience
- Capacity and capability.

8. Contract Award

The contract will be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender and will be equally weighted on the following criteria:

- Price
- Quality of proposal
- Understanding of the issues/requirement
- Approach and methodology.

9. Terms & Conditions

The contract will be awarded on the basis of SEEDA's terms and conditions of contract and a copy of this can be found on the SEEDA website at: <http://www.seeda.co.uk/Procurement/>.

SEEDA reserves the right to award the contract for all or any part of a tender, or not to award the contract. SEEDA also reserves the right to award the contract to more than one supplier.

10. Freedom of Information Act 2000

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, SEEDA must reserve the general right to disclose either information about your tender or the tender itself, including your price or range of prices, once a contract is awarded. However, you may request that certain information is not disclosed if to do so would prejudice your legitimate commercial interests.

Requests for non-disclosure must accompany your tender and include a clear and substantive justification together with a time limit when any confidential information could be disclosed – this is not normally expected to be more than 7 years. It would be helpful, if appropriate, if you could keep the areas that you consider should not be disclosed separate from the other areas of your tender.

11. Further Information

Any requests for further information regarding this tender should be made in writing, by letter or email, to:

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