

## Cash for Cohesion

Ray Phillips

**The final weeks of the year are seeing the launch of various bidding rounds and invitations to tender, which begin the allocation over 7 years of nearly £300 million under the European Social Fund. The London budget is the highest regional allocation in the UK. Voluntary/community sector training and service providers are being asked to tread carefully and nimbly through the different application requirements of the four Co-Financing Organisations.**

At the same time, preparations are now quickly advancing on the new London Programme under the European Regional Development Fund, which will release a further £100 million over 7 years "to promote sustainable, environmentally efficient growth, capitalising on London's innovation and knowledge resources with a focus on promoting social inclusion through extending economic

opportunities to communities, in areas where this is most needed". Approval from the European Commission is expected by December and this will set in motion the first stages of the opening round based on direct bidding from providers with their own matching funds. See page 3 for further details.

The regional stakeholder committees for each of the above Programmes met in November and were chaired by the Mayor's office. In the case of ESF, the London Regional Committee acts as a sub-group of the national England & Gibraltar Programme Monitoring Committee; whilst the ERDF Regional Committee has direct responsibility for the London Programme.

Even whilst the 2007-2013 Programmes are getting underway, the European Commission has begun the big debate about the future of the European Structural Funds, after 2013. The 4th Cohesion Forum, held in Brussels at the end

of September, considered the Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion ~ "Growing Regions, Growing Europe" as the first step in this major review. More recently, the Commission has re-launched a public consultation on Active Inclusion which focuses on the needs of those furthest from the labour market and on how the Funds can help. In turn, this will sharpen policies around tackling poverty as we approach 2010, the European Year of Combating Poverty & Social Exclusion. ■

### Mayor's Board Launches Consultation

**At the end of October, the Mayor's London Skills & Employment Board initiated a 12-week Consultation with employers, Londoners and other partners on strategic proposals outlined in their document "Skills and Employment in London". This public exercise is set against the Board's background evidence on the regional economy, published earlier in the year as "The London Story."**

The Consultation Document acknowledges that "despite London's success as a world city it continues to suffer unacceptably high levels of deprivation and social exclusion". From the outset, the Board rejects incremental change and identifies 5 challenges for action:

1. A fundamental change to the employment and skills support available for Londoners
2. An ambitious new Employer Programme for London employers
3. A new level of responsiveness from learning and skills providers to ensure that skills provision is focused on meeting genuine needs
4. An integrated skills and employment infrastructure
5. Public funds for skill and employment in London

In these ways, the Board is setting out: to increase London's employment rate from below 70% to 72% by 2013; to close the gap for those people that have low levels of participation; to reduce the proportion of Londoners with no qualifications to 11% by 2013; and to increase participation in training of those in work to 15% by 2013.

The Consultation closes on 21 January 2008. Responses may be made:

online via the website [www.london.gov.uk/lseb](http://www.london.gov.uk/lseb)

or by letter to the Board  
FREEPOST SEA 12430,  
Thornton Heath CR7 7XT

or by e-mail ~ [lsebconsultation@london.gov.uk](mailto:lsebconsultation@london.gov.uk) ■

### Mayor's foreword

*London has the highest rate of worklessness in the United Kingdom. Too many London residents, especially those from disadvantaged areas of the city and some ethnic minority communities, face multiple barriers in accessing training and employment opportunities.*

*Yet London is also a leading world city, with a highly successful economy. London is full of opportunities, and it is London's people, their skills and knowledge, and their creativity that are the key to sustaining London's economic growth. We must work to tackle the barriers to success that get in the way of so many people so that every Londoner has the chance to fully share in their city's prosperity.*

*London's economy makes a major contribution to the UK economy and to the economy of the European Union as a whole. London will play a leading role in working towards the targets set by the Lisbon Agenda: to make Europe the most dynamic knowledge based economy in the world.*

*London has received substantial investment from the European Social Fund (ESF) to help address some of the skills, training and employment challenges we face. The 2000 – 2006 European Social Fund programme helped almost 700,000 people to access employment or training.*

*The Government has asked me to set the strategic direction for the new 2007-2013 ESF Programme to make sure that the funding available properly addresses London's specific needs. I look forward to working with regional*



The Mayor visits Stockwell Green Community Services

*stakeholders to deliver the new programme, building on what we have learned from past funding rounds and ensuring that ESF really does add value to existing provision and existing strategies for action.*

*Over the summer the LDA consulted on a draft London European Social Fund Regional Framework 2007 – 2010. We have incorporated valuable feedback from stakeholders in the final version of the Regional Framework and, over the next few months, we will be working closely with London's co-financing organisations, social partners, and Londoners themselves to launch the new programme.*

*Finally, I would like to give particular recognition to the expertise and experience of the voluntary and community sector in engaging with London's diverse communities. My office is working with the ESF co-financing organisations to make sure they understand and take full advantage of this expertise. ■*

## Supporting Diversity & Capacity Building

*The terms 'diversity' and 'capacity building' can both be tricky to understand. Most people often think of racial and ethnic background when they hear the term diversity. Diversity may refer to an array of things from ethnicity and racial background to religion and geographical background. In cultural terms, London is unique because of its vast array of diverse people, groups and organisations. This multi-cultural synthesis is rich in its diversity, which presents groups with different issues.*

*Diversity comes with a lot of challenges for ethnic minority groups and organisations, therefore the need for capacity building then becomes paramount. Recognising the diverse population of the UK, significant funding has been injected by different types of funding bodies [including ESF and the Community Fund] into capacity building, for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) groups and organisations.*

*BAMER groups and organisations vary in their size and purpose and they are supported by complex organisational structures, therefore the term capacity building means different things to different organisations. Traditionally, capacity building is often thought of as skills development and strengthening internal structures of organisations to make them become effective. Capacity Building can also be seen as working together in partnerships to enable organisations to have a real influence over how decisions are made which affect BAMER organisations.*

*LVSTC, as one of the leading capacity building organisations in the London region, recognises the need for diversity and has developed the Community Economic Enhancement Project (CEEP) to support and build the capacity of BAMER organisations across the 33 boroughs in the London Region.*

*The impact of the project's activities which include one to one support visits, training of key staff, telephone surgeries, workshops and seminars on various management & ICT topics and publications & briefing notes has been significant. These include:*

- Good governance structures have been strengthened to aid effective decision – making and bringing about transparency.
- The importance of long term strategic planning has been accepted by most organisations and a planning culture has been developed for future survival.
- Through its networking programmes it has enabled organisations to form strategic alliances and partnerships to share skills, expertise and broaden funding options.

**For more information contact the CEEP team on 0845 262 2006 / 020 7538 4309. ■**

## Getting ready for ESF!

Stewart Goldring

**The London ESF Regional Committee has now approved the ESF Co-Financing Plans of the 4 funding bodies in London, namely; London Councils, London Development Agency (LDA), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).**

**These Plans cover the period from 2007 to 2010 and detail the main objectives of each programme and the scope of expected outcomes.**

### London Councils

The Programme launched in November 2007 and the application period ends on 11 January 2008. Project start dates will be from 1 April 2008.

London Councils Plan will operate in Priority 1 of the Programme only, and addresses the 3 London Economic Development Strategies identified in the Mayor's London Regional ESF Framework.

- Tackle barriers to employment
- Address the concentration of disadvantage,
- Reduce disparities in labour market outcomes between groups.

Tenders should cover personalised support, basic skills, ESOL, life skills and employability training, job search, Information Advice and Guidance (IAG), work experience placements, job brokerage, support for disabled and long term unemployed (LTU) into employment, support for childcare and dependant care for job seekers, support for ethnic minorities. Tenders will also be targeting specific sub-groups in the Programme including disabled parents, people recovering from alcohol or drug abuse, homeless, refugee and asylum seekers, older people, and women from specific BAME communities.

Beneficiaries must be drawn from at least 2 boroughs and this Programme is ring-fenced to the third sector including not-for-profit companies.

Funding from the London Councils will be £2.8m in 2008, £3.7m in 2009 rising annually to £4.7m in 2013 - to a total of £22.8m for the programme.

### London Development Agency

LDA launched their Programme in November and aim to close their first application round in January 2008. Delivery should start in June 2008 and their second round prospectus will be available from September 2008.

LDA aim to cover 3 measures in their Programme;

- 1.1 Improving employability, [£36.45m]
- 1.3 Community Grants, [£6.16m]
- 2.1 Basic skills – for skills for life provision in the workplace. [£6.45m]

LDA recognise the importance of end-to-end support providing a broad range of interventions leading to the employment of beneficiaries and this will be reflected in their tender specifications.

Target groups include Refugees, BAME, and low income households with children, carers, disabled and recent migrants. LDA seek to fund models of activity including outreach, engagement and progression - for all beneficiaries, training, and support and in measures 1.1 and 1.3 – small grants for community and voluntary sector organisations.

LDA will focus on Skills for Life provision under Measure 2 targeting refugees, BAME groups, disabled people and recent migrants with the right to work. Unlike DWP and LSC – LDA will not be using a pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) and will be using open and competitive tendering. Further information on 'gateway questions' and the tenders will be published in the Prospectus.

### Learning and Skills Council

LSC have already launched their PQQ and prospective delivery organisations should have completed this first stage. Nationwide, over 5,000 were received and the LSC assessed them before issuing Invitations to Tender on in November. Submission will be in December with a view to start projects at the end of February 2008.

The LSC plan addresses priorities;

- 1.1 Improving Employability
- 1.2 NEET – young people Not in Education, Employment or Training
- 2.1 Basic skills provision and ESOL – employment sectors targeted to include logistics, manufacturing, health and care, retail, transport.
- 2.2 Upskilling workers not eligible under 'Train to Gain' including self employed people to level 2
- 2.3 Skill gaps in employment sectors identified in the plan to level 3/4

The London Region LSC has allocated £25.4m a year for Priority 1 and £28.2m a year for Priority 2 projects in London.

### Department for Work and Pensions

PQQs were assessed in November and Invitations to Tender forwarded to successful PQQ completers in December. Tender responses are to be returned by 4 February 2008 and delivery could start by 23 June 2008.

The DWP will deliver Priority 1.1 – employability support and have received 50% of available funding for this measure in London. They aim to support a wide range of measures including;

- Job search, mentoring, basic skills
- Entrepreneurial development, customised training
- Specific industry support including the Security instance
- Self employment support
- ESOL – British Citizenship programme
- Homeless client support
- Lone parent engagement and support

Target groups will include; disabled people, lone parents and carers, BAME, ex offenders, long term unemployed and 50 plus with no qualifications.

Jobcentre Plus districts are used for geographical targeting purposes and the published specifications arise from these locations.

A total of £94.8m will be available to fund these objectives from 2007 to 2010. ■

## ESF Partnership Portal opens!

Stewart Goldring

LVSTC has one of the most comprehensive databases of voluntary and community sector providers in the region and we have been exploring ways in which we can exploit this technology for all organisations wishing to access the European Social Fund.

In the coming months, new alliances must also be forged, especially with the private sector playing a major role as 'prime contractors' in the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) CFO Programme. Prime contractors are also being informed by DWP and Ministers of the importance of the third sector in the programme, and their ability to reach and serve those who are both hard to reach, and often hard to help.

The new programme 2007 – 2013 has stressed the importance of collaborative and partnership working, as it is envisaged that projects will be larger than in the previous Programme, resulting in the need for well-organised and sustainable partnerships and consortium. Our new Partnership Portal will offer an essential system whereby organisations from all sectors can target prospective providers, ensuring closer cooperation, greater reach and improved cross-sector involvement.

As yet, no contracts have been awarded in the new Programme and we still have everything to play for. Partnership development can offer both prime and sub contractors, added value to beneficiary outcomes through enhanced geographical reach, broader and more flexible provision, and more coherent and joined-up provision leading to sustainable employment. You are able to sign up and access the Partnership Portal, and search the database of provider partners to deliver ESF projects from 14 November 2007. Prime contractors have already signed up and will be searching for prospective partners. You can then simply either contact your prospective partner yourself, or ask LVSTC to make initial enquiries on your behalf.

We will provide support for organisations, consortia, partnerships or other collaborative arrangements resulting from its use. For help and information about the ESF Partnership Portal, contact the ESF Unit at LVSTC on 0845 262 2006 / 020 7538 4309. ■

## ERDF Focus Group & LDA Bidding Timeline

Steve White

LVSTC has been holding ERDF focus groups every month with voluntary community sector providers who are in the current Programme and/or looking to engage with the new ERDF programme 2007-13. We held a focus group on Friday 26 October 2007, and Stuart Scott from the LDA attended to hear project ideas and answer questions on the new Programme.

The focus group was well attended with 21 representatives from voluntary sector providers. A number of participants did presentations on their project ideas for the new programme based on the draft ERDF Operational Programme to the LDA.

The Mayor is currently waiting for the final approval by the European Commission of the new Programme.

There are three main Priorities in which eligible activities appear in the draft ERDF Operational Programme 2007-13:

- Priority 1: Business innovation and research & promoting eco-efficiency (27.5%)
- Priority 2: Access to new markets and access to finance (28.5%)
- Priority 3: Sustainable places for business (40%)

Subject to Commission approval of the Operational Programme, the LDA is hoping to launch the first bidding round with a Prospectus at the beginning of December.

Expressions of Interest will be invited by mid-January with invitations to proceed to Full Application announced in mid-February 2008. The expected date for submission of Full Applications will be at the end of March with contract negotiations and offer letters underway from May.

The new JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) loans fund initiative will feature in the new programme. JESSICA is an initiative of the Commission in cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), in order to promote sustainable investment, and growth and jobs, in Europe's urban areas.

The TESA (Transactional ERDF and State Aid) system currently coming on line for projects in this ERDF programme will be adopted by the LDA for the new programme. This is a much simplified system to submit claims for ERDF online.

LVSTC has regular monthly focus group meeting. The next meeting is planned for 10.00am on Tuesday 11 December 2007 at Bromley Hall. If you would like to attend please contact either Steve White on [stevegw@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:stevegw@lvstc.org.uk) or Angela Heap on [angelah@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:angelah@lvstc.org.uk). Given the high level of interest in these meetings we regret we can only allow one member per organisation to book. Please be reminded that failure to book a place will mean that you will not be admitted on the day, this is due to space restrictions. ■

## TESA – the new online ERDF Claim system

Angela Heap

**Do you have an ERDF project? If so you may already be aware that the old ERDF system for claiming monies on your project has now been replaced by a new 'online' claiming system. The new system Transnational ERDF and State Aid, or TESA has been live since August 2007 in London and is compulsory for all ERDF projects across England. London is the last region to go 'live' so teething problems and gremlins within the system have been identified in other regions and hopefully been ironed out for London TESA users!**

The Government Office for London (GOL) and TESA suggest that you 'swot up' on how to use TESA by using the E-Learning package, available at: <http://tesa.kshelper.com/>. This is only available once you have your usernames and passwords from GOL.

If you prefer a more hands on approach, LVSTC have been running a series of TESA training sessions for all sectors to help project managers and other staff running ERDF projects get to grips with TESA. This type of workshop is delivered using LVSTCs IT suite and enables managers to master the new system in a less pressured and focused

environment. We have received very positive feedback and have enabled people to learn to use the system very quickly with the added bonus of hands on assistance to questions that crop up along the way.

If you have not been contacted from LVSTC regarding TESA training and would like to take part in the training we would encourage you to contact the ERDF Unit. Please note that we will only run these sessions when we have adequate numbers.

This training is free to VCS organisations. If you are not in the VCS sector, join LVSTC as an Associate which will give you access to LVSTC services at a cost of £250 per year.

For further details contact Angela Heap [[angelah@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:angelah@lvstc.org.uk)] or Steve White [[stevegw@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:stevegw@lvstc.org.uk)] ■

### LVSTC Members Only Page

on our website  
**Launches in January 2008**  
 all current Member will be sent their password

## Fast Forward Grants 2007-2008

Ian Foster

The 2007-2008 Fast Forward Grants (FFG) round has now been finalised and the decisions made to issue 68 grants to small voluntary and community sector organisations. Of the 68 successful applicant organisations, 36 were SKEIN members who are over 50%, an impressive figure.

The grants are targeted at those who face the most difficulty in entering the labour market, particularly people with disabilities, lone parents, ex-offenders, black and ethnic minority groups and refugees and the grants awarded this year have reflected these priorities strongly. Projects funded include ESOL and sewing classes for BAME individuals in Tower Hamlets, book keeping

training in Southwark, table tennis coaching qualifications in Newham and creative writing skills for lone parents in Hammersmith & Fulham. Full details on all projects can be found at <http://www.gle.co.uk/services/Programmes/FFG-ProjectSummaries07-08.htm>

In total, 530 applications were made to the GLE which shows that the need out there in the sector for smaller grants is as strong as ever, and LVSTC has been lobbying hard for the position of Global Grants in the new ESF Programme.

Please do keep your eyes on Euroscene as we will publish information about next year's Fast Forward Grants programme as soon as we receive it.

LVSTC is keen to keep championing the cause for small groups at every possible opportunity with all key actors in London, and to ensure we are continually being fully representative, LVSTC is reducing its membership fees for a limited time to

give small groups, with more limited resources, a valuable opportunity to become a part of LVSTC.

LVSTC is inviting SKEIN members who have a turnover of less than £150,000, to become full members of LVSTC. The rate is normally £50 for the calendar year, but we are offering membership at £25 through to the end of December 2008. You will be getting two months free!

Membership entitles you to a whole range of services, many of which are listed on this web page here, <http://www.lvstc.org.uk/membership>. At this time of increased activity around European funding, one of the key factors is that you will receive priority for advice surgeries from our advisers, even at the busiest times.

This offer is limited for the next two weeks, so if you are interested, do get in touch quickly. You can fill out the membership form that is found at the bottom of this page: <http://www.lvstc.org.uk/membership> or contact me directly on [ianf@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:ianf@lvstc.org.uk)

## Business Use of Renewable Energy Technology

Sam Waite

Since March 2006 the North East London Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (NELEEAC) has successfully run the Business Use of Renewable Energy Technology (BRET) project. The project is worth £1 million, 43% of which was funded by the ERDF and the rest matched by the public, private and voluntary Sector. The measure is Environmental Technology in the designated ERDF Objective 2 Area.

BRET is pan London and NELEEAC is delivering the Project with two steering partners Energy Solutions and Thames and Central Energy Efficiency Advice Centre. When the Project ends in December 2007 over 250 businesses in London will have been assisted and over 600 advised on innovative means of energy efficiency.

48 companies have been targeted so as to obtain energy from renewable sources. The Courier Same Day Service Ltd for example, is now filling up their vehicle fleet on 300-400 litres of Bio Diesel a week. This is collected from Pure Fuels Ltd, who collect waste vegetable and animal fat from restaurants and take away outlets and generates it into pure diesel.

The BRET project provides up to five days free assisted support including an on site energy audit and includes the following:

- Heating and Insulation
- Lighting upgrades
- Machinery and appliances

- Impartial advice on billing tariffs
- Products and processes through the supply chain
- Renewable Technology

The Project has looked specifically at using innovative means of improving businesses operations and incorporating an energy management system. This has been achieved by providing a tailored service which meets the production process of each business. As a result over 10 new jobs have been created.

For further information please call Sam Waite on 0208 509 4361 email [sam@lessenergy.co.uk](mailto:sam@lessenergy.co.uk)



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### lvstc contacts

#### ERDF

Steve White, Unit Co-ordinator - [stevegw@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:stevegw@lvstc.org.uk)  
Wayne Deane, ESF Technical Adviser - [wayned@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:wayned@lvstc.org.uk)  
Angela Heap, Regeneration Senior Adviser  
- [angelah@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:angelah@lvstc.org.uk)

#### ESF (inc CEEP)

Stewart Goldring, Deputy Director / Unit Co-ordinator - [stewartg@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:stewartg@lvstc.org.uk)  
Misbah Javed, ESF Senior Adviser - [misbahj@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:misbahj@lvstc.org.uk)  
Kwasi Ofei, CEEP Co-ordinator - [kwasio@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:kwasio@lvstc.org.uk)  
Karin Podschun, Training Adviser - [karin@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:karin@lvstc.org.uk)  
Jacqueline Black, IT Officer - [jacquib@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:jacquib@lvstc.org.uk)

#### Directorate (inc SKEIN)

Ray Phillips, Director - [rayp@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:rayp@lvstc.org.uk)  
Bill Burke, Finance Officer - [billb@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:billb@lvstc.org.uk)  
Ingrid Babcock, ICT Co-ordinator - [ingridb@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:ingridb@lvstc.org.uk)  
Humera Gondal, Information & Publicity Officer  
- [humerag@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:humerag@lvstc.org.uk)  
Geoff Robinson, Senior Communications Adviser  
- [geoffr@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:geoffr@lvstc.org.uk)  
Ian Foster, Adviser - [ianf@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:ianf@lvstc.org.uk)

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London Voluntary Sector Training Consortium  
Bromley Hall, 43 Gillender Street, London E14 6RN  
Tel: 0845 262 2006/ 020 7538 4309 Fax: 0845 262 2005/ 020 7005 0275  
Web: [www.lvstc.org.uk](http://www.lvstc.org.uk) Email: [info@lvstc.org.uk](mailto:info@lvstc.org.uk)  
Company No: 2433659 Charity No: 80307

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"The London voluntary and community sector in partnership with Europe to promote social inclusion."

