



**Department
for Work &
Pensions**



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To:	Growth Programme Board
From:	Malcolm Nicholls Head of ESF Evaluation Team
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ESF Programme Evaluation 2014-2020 – Update

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) process evaluation

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) process evaluation was completed in December 2016.

The evaluation aimed to assess the strategic fit, design and early implementation of the YEI in England. The YEI was evaluated using a combination of primary and secondary data collection and analysis. The evaluation began with a document review, followed by telephone interviews with stakeholders.

The final report of the process evaluation of the YEI was published on the 12th October 2017. Publication was scheduled for April 2017 but had to be postponed due to publication restrictions around the General Election. The published report can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-employment-initiative-process-evaluation>

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) Impact Evaluation

The ESF Managing Authority (MA) is required to conduct an impact evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative and to report findings by the end of 2018. This evaluation was commissioned through a competitive tender exercise in April 2017, with the contract awarded to Ecorys UK Ltd. The evaluation will report in mid-2018, in line with the deadline set by the European Commission.

The aims of the YEI impact evaluation are:

- To assess the extent to which the YEI has achieved its objectives (sustainable integration into the labour market of young people not in employment, education or training, including those at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities);
- To evaluate how efficient the YEI has been (in terms of achieving its objectives at the minimum cost and without duplicating existing provision) and which elements of the programme were most cost-effective;

- To gather evidence on the impact of the YEI and the extent to which observed outcomes can be considered an effect of the programme.

The YEI impact evaluation is due to finish an initial fieldwork stage at the end of November 2017. The fieldwork consists of high level interviews with ESF Division and European Commission representatives and project-level case study visit interviews. The first draft of an early findings report is expected in early December. The evaluation is currently in a testing phase for the counterfactual impact evaluation element, which will be run in the first half of 2018 and will also include analysis of Management Information, leavers' surveys and cost benefit analysis of YEI.

ESF Impact Evaluation: Design and Scoping project

ESF evaluation requirements also include a programme-level impact evaluation, to assess to what extent the objectives under each Priority Axis have been achieved.

Following a competitive tendering exercise, Ecorys UK Ltd were awarded the contract for an Impact Evaluation Design and Scoping project

The aims of the research project are:

- To develop and refine an intervention logic model(s) for the ESF 2014-20 Programme (covering both Priority Axis 1 and Priority Axis 2);
- To provide advice on the feasibility of impact evaluation design options, including: the possible scope of the evaluation, the evaluation questions it should seek to answer, and possible outcome measures;
- To outline the methodological approaches which could feasibly be used to conduct an impact evaluation and the pros, cons, requirements and risks of each method.

The outputs of this project will enable the ESF evaluation team to design a robust and cost-effective impact evaluation for the ESF programme.

We are expecting to receive the draft report of the scoping study in December 2017.

ESF / YEI Participant Leavers Survey 2016-2018

The ESF Leavers' Survey 2016-18 was externally commissioned. The contract was awarded to IFF Research Ltd, via a competitive tender process in summer 2016.

The primary aim of the ESF Leavers' Survey 2016-18 is to collect the data required for the ESF & YEI LTRI (Longer-Term Results Indicator) data. The survey will ask about participants' situation 6 months after they have left ESF/YEI provision. The secondary aim of the survey is to produce data on the effectiveness of ESF and YEI provision, including participants' perspectives.

The research approach and methodology has been agreed with the contractor. A pilot has been conducted, which included cognitive testing of the questionnaire; and waves 1 and 2 of the main stage fieldwork have been completed. Wave 3 of the survey commenced in September 2017.

Fieldwork will continue on a rolling quarterly basis, with 10 waves of fieldwork to be completed in total. Initial indicator results are likely to be available in early 2018. YEI LTRI data will first be reported in AIR 2018 (calendar year 2017).

DWP administrative data feasibility study

The European Commission encourage the use of administrative data or official registers to collect LTRIs and a number of other member states already do so.¹

The ESF Evaluation Team have begun to carry out a feasibility study to fully explore the possibility of making more use of administrative data to monitor and evaluate ESF. To date, the feasibility study has looked into what needs to be collected, where this information could be found in administrative data and whether there would be any gaps in coverage. We have also begun conducting some tests to explore the extent to which it is possible to match ESF participants to administrative data sources from the data on ESF participants that we currently collect.

The study will go on to explore the process of using administrative data in more detail and identify any issues for potential discussion with the European Commission. This will inform a decision in 2018 on commissioning of a leaver's survey for the second half of the current ESF programme.

¹ Sweden, Estonia and the Netherlands currently use registers. Lithuania are planning to start. We are in contact with all these member states and are looking into whether any others are using or hope to use admin data.