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New Assessment / Scoring Procedures for Equality and Sustainable Development in ESF

Who

ESF Applicants, ESF Managing Authority, Greater London Authority

What

The ESF Managing Authority is introducing new, more robust guidance for the assessment, appraisal and scoring of the Cross-Cutting Themes questions for direct bid applicants.

These changes will apply to all new ESF applications received in direct response to calls published on or after 21st May 2018.

Annex 1 sets out the considerations which will be applied at each stage for the Gender Equality & Equal Opportunities Cross-Cutting Theme.

Annex 2 sets out the considerations which will be applied at each stage for the Sustainable Development Cross-Cutting Theme.

Annex 3 provides some additional, non-prescriptive examples of good practice for Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities in ESF projects.

This guidance will not impact the total overall scores that can be awarded for each theme, nor will there be any resulting changes to the ESF Scoring Framework.

Applicants and existing ESF Grant Recipients should also note that the "ESF Cross-Cutting Themes" guidance published on GOV.UK has also been updated. ESF Projects must continue to adhere to this key guidance throughout the application process and any subsequent project delivery.

Cleared

Mark Self / Steve Spendlove

Action

Applicants responding to ESF open calls on or after 21st May 2018 are encouraged to take this Action Note into account when developing their applications, to reduce the risk of their proposed project not meeting the required standards.

Contact

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Annex 1

Outline Application Stage

Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities

If an organisation is making a public commitment to promote equality in line with Equality Act 2010 – the Managing Authority expects to see that reflected in key aspects of delivery.

The ESF Scoring Framework allows 3 possible scores for this theme at Outline Application stage:-

6.2 Does the application demonstrate that the applicant will take positive measures to contribute towards the gender equality and non-discrimination cross cutting theme?	Fully (5) ☐
	Partially (3) ☐
	Not at all (0) ☐

To achieve a Score of 5 at outline application stage, a project may be considered to fully meet the requirements if it:

- Has given full commitment to promote equality in line with the Equality Act 2010 /Public Sector Equality Duty legislation and regulations and offered some initial account of how equality will be embedded / mainstreamed into delivery arrangements.
- **Confirms that it will have a project-specific Equality Policy and Implementation plan ready by Full Application stage. These products are non-negotiable and applicants must be clear that these products cannot be treated as optional bolt-ons.**

To achieve a Score of 3 at outline application stage, a project may be considered to partially meet the requirements if it:

- **Confirms that it will have project-specific Equality Policy and Implementation plan ready by Full Application stage. Again, these products are non-negotiable and applicants must be clear that these products cannot be treated as optional bolt-ons.**

Note: All applicants will be expected to comply with regulatory and legal requirements concerning equality if they are successful – so an applicant scoring 3 or 5 will still need to provide fuller information at full application and PIV stages about how equality considerations will be embedded into delivery.

These requirements include, for example:

- Encouraging female participation
- Providing childcare support where childcare acts as an obstacle to ESF participation (i.e. beyond any offered under Universal Credit / tax credits)
- Supporting access for disabled people
- Providing specialised / flexible / tailored support (including disabled people) where necessary.

(See Annex 3 for examples)

A Score of '0' may be awarded if the applicant gives little or no information or evidence is overly generic, suggests that insufficient consideration has been given by the applicant, or is not specific to the project.

Full Application Stage

Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities

At full application stage there is a maximum score of 7 for Equal Opportunities. The following scores are possible:

- Applications that fully meet requirements scores = 5
- Applications that fully meet requirements with additional assurances = 7
- Applications that mostly fail to meet requirements =1
- Applications that fail to meet requirements score = 0

Achieving a score of 5: Equality Policy and Implementation Plan Meet Requirements

In order to achieve a score of 5 *all of the criteria listed in the Tables 1 and 2 below must be met by the applicant.*

Table 1: Policy (or policy aspect if policy and plan are presented as one single document)

Element No.	Element to be covered	What to look for
1.	Provides a clear public commitment to promote equality in line with Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	Written statement of commitment to promote equality in line with legislation
2.	The policy is publicly endorsed by senior figure /	The policy is `signed off' by a named senior manager / CEO / manager /

Element No.	Element to be covered	What to look for
	manager or a committee within the organisation	committee or similar. An actual signature is not necessary.
3.	Policy is clearly and specifically linked to ESF provision. See published guidance on what is acceptable in terms of generic policies	Name of ESF provision on policy/plan and plan cross -referencing to the specific project. (The link between policy and project may be an annex or addendum if linked to an existing acceptable policy – see published guidance)
4.	Policy covers staff and participants alike, including Delivery Partner staff.	Policy explains that equality will be promoted to staff and participants
5.	Policy will be communicated to staff and participants	Policy states that it is aimed at staff and participants & gives a commitment to be aimed at both groups
6.	Policy gives a commitment that equality will be monitored and reviewed	Written details on monitoring and review arrangements
7.	Clear revision history	Dated policy and plan or version control number (ideally both)
8.	Policy commits provider to ensuring that any sub-contractors appointed promote equality in-line with legislation	Written statement confirming how sub-contractors will be required to comply with PSED – e.g. contractual requirement etc.
9.	Policy is also committed to supporting an anti-harassment / anti-bullying policy	Anti-harassment policy / anti bullying policy in place or a link is incorporated into policy

Table 2: Implementation Plan (or plan aspect of policy and plan if these are presented as one single document)

	Element to be covered	What to look for
10.	A SMART implementation plan	A clear implementation plan stating aims / objectives (**what** action will be taken) **by whom** and **when?**
11.	Staff training and development on equality –related issues	Plan describes **what action will be taken** to ensure staff receive equality training.
12.	Equality embedded in personal development / staff appraisal processes	Plan describes **what action will be taken** to embed equality in personal development and staff appraisal process – key steps, who will be involved, etc.

	Element to be covered	What to look for
13.	How policy and plan will be communicated to staff and participants	Plan describes **what action will be taken** to communicate the policy/plan to staff and participants alike?
14.	Annual monitoring of staff by characteristics (sex, race, age, disability)	The plan describes **what action will be taken in** order to help monitor staff equality characteristics and what action will be taken to put review arrangements in place and when reviews will be held (they also need to cover representation)
15.	Monitoring and review arrangements	The plan describes <u>**what action will be taken**</u> to set up and implement monitoring and review arrangements for the policy and plan itself
16.	Monitoring project performance and action to take if underperforming against the Equality policy/plan.	The plan describes **what action needs to be taken** to monitor project performance and action to take if underperforming against the Equality policy/plan.

Achieving a score of 7: Equality Policy and Plan meets requirement with additional assurances

In order to score 7 the applicant will need to have fully covered the elements 1 – 16 in Tables 1 and 2 above AND have covered two or more of the elements A - H
See table 1 above and table 2 below.

Table 3: Policy and Plan meets requirement with additional assurances (score = 7)

	Additional assurance	What to look for
A.	Equality awareness training covered in participant training as well.	Commitments and objectives covering equality awareness training for participants – either integrated into course work or as part of induction (for example) or as a separate module etc.
B.	The implementation plan also covers specialised equality issues that may be pertinent to one or more of the groups being targeted	Reference to specialised equality issues relating to target groups – often these may be around recruitment or access issues (ag equipment / software for disabled) as well as objectives in terms of setting up specialised support arrangements etc.
C.	Policy describes or covers the importance of diversity in the workplace and how it will aim to achieve diversity	Policy commitment to promoting diversity – usually lined to staff recruitment policies etc.
D.	Policy / plan give a commitment to embedding equality across a range of HR / personnel related	Policy commitment to promoting equality across a range of HR processes – these may be pre-existing or may need to be

	Additional assurance	What to look for
	policies for staff and provides specific examples , **for example :** pay and benefits; terms and conditions of employment; dealing with grievances and discipline; leave for parents; requests for flexible working; recruitment; promotion; training and other developmental work. (this is not a prescriptive list and not all need be covered)	set up (if the latter, they should also be covered in the implementation plan).
E.	Appointment of an equality champion within the organisation	This could be in policy and also an objective in the implementation plan.
F.	Aspects of project delivery which relate to equality integrated or built into implementation plan	E.g. recruitment / outreach arrangements , publicity etc.
G.	Ensuring that any monitoring and review of equality is discussed at board level or similar within the organisation at least annually	Commitment for high level review at board level – this will need to be explained in any description / objectives for project review
H.	The implementation plan covers other aspects of equality not already covered in the templates above which provide reassurance.	Other equality aspects covered providing further reassurance. .

Achieving a score of 3: Equality Policy and Implementation Plan "Mostly meets the requirement"

In order to obtain a score of `3' between 8- 15 elements (in total) from Tables 1 and 2 must be covered – but conditions must be set in the funding agreement for any elements not covered.

Achieving a score of 1: Equality Policy and Implementation Plan "mostly fails the requirement"

If only 1-7 elements in Table 1 are satisfactorily covered, the application will be rejected.

Achieving a score of `0': Equality Policy and Plan "fails to meet the requirement"

If none of the elements (1-16) in Table 1 are satisfactorily covered, the application will be rejected.

Annex 2

Outline Application Stage

Sustainable Development

The ESF scoring framework allows 3 scores for this theme at Outline Application stage:-

6.1 Does the application demonstrate that the applicant will take positive measures to support the sustainable development theme?	Fully (5) ☐
	Partially (3) ☐
	Not at all (0) ☐

To achieve a Score of 5 at outline application stage, a project may be considered to fully meet the requirements if it:

- Has given full commitment to promote environmental sustainable development in- line with legislation and regulations and offered some initial account of how sustainable development equality will be embedded / mainstreamed into delivery arrangements which have a specific environmental focus (e.g. qualifications that integrate environmental protection / participant job placements with an environmental focus / deliver activities that support environment whilst also promoting jobs / training etc).
- **Confirms it will have a Sustainable Development Policy and Implementation Plan ready by Full Application stage. These products are non-negotiable and applicants must be clear that these products cannot be treated as optional bolt-ons.**

To achieve a Score of 3 at outline application stage, a project may be considered to partially meet the requirements if it:

- **Confirms it will have a Sustainable Development Policy and Implementation Plan ready by Full Application stage. Again, these products are non-negotiable and applicants must be clear that these products cannot be treated as optional bolt-ons.**

Note: All applicants will be expected to comply with regulatory and legal requirements concerning Sustainable Development if they are successful – so an applicant scoring 3 or 5 will still need to provide fuller information at full application and PIV stages about how Sustainable Development is being supported by the project through its Policy and Plan and, if the project has a specific environmental focus, through its course content / delivery

A Score of '0' may be awarded if the applicant gives little or no information or evidence is overly generic, suggests that insufficient consideration has been given by the applicant, or is not specific to the project.

Full Application Stage

Sustainable Development

At full application stage there is a maximum score of 7 for Sustainable Development. The following scores are possible:

- Applications that fully meet requirements scores = 5
- Applications that fully meet requirements with additional assurances = 7
- Applications that mostly fail to meet requirements =1
- Applications that fail to meet requirements score = 0

Achieving a score of 5: Sustainable Development Policy and Implementation Plan Meet All Requirements

In order to achieve a score of 5 *all of the criteria (all 12 elements) listed in the table 4 and 5 below must be met by the applicant* - see Tables 4 and 5 below.

Table 4: Policy (or policy aspect if policy and plan are presented as one single document)

Element No.	Element to be covered	What to look for
1.	Provides a firm commitment to promote sustainable development whilst delivering ESF activities and provides an assurance that sub-contractors and Delivery Partners will also support sustainable development. (The plan should list sub-contractors and Delivery Partners to be used if known at application stage)	Written statement of commitment to promote sustainable development
2.	Policy statement confirms that each organisation involved in delivering the contract i.e. Provider, Delivery Partners and any	Written statement confirming that waste will be disposed of in-line with legislative requirements (as described in adjacent column)

Element No.	Element to be covered	What to look for
	sub-contractors will (a) dispose of waste using a registered waste collector and (b) say something about WEEE or remove from original guidance?	
3.	Policy is clearly and specifically linked to ESF provision. If `generic', should meet `generic' requirements specified in guidance.	Name of ESF provision on policy/plan and plan cross - referencing to the specific project. If generic, there should be an annex or addendum to existing policy explaining ESF coverage and listing ESF projects it covers etc. (refer to guidance). Sub-contractors and Delivery Partners used are identified and cross-referred to on the policy document (this could be via a weblink inserted in policy).
4.	Policy covers staff and participants alike, including Delivery Partners	Policy explains that sustainable development will be promoted to staff and participants, including Delivery Partners
5.	Policy will be communicated to staff and participants, including Delivery Partners	Policy states that it is aimed at staff and participants & gives a commitment to be aimed at both groups
6.	Policy gives a commitment that the sustainable development implementation plan will be monitored and reviewed	Written details explaining monitoring and review arrangements
7.	Clear revision history	Dated policy and plan or version control number (ideally both)
8.	Policy commits provider to ensuring that any sub-contractors appointed promote sustainable development in-line with legislation	Written statement confirming how sub-contractors will be required to comply with SD – e.g. contractual requirement etc.

Table 5: Implementation / Action Plan (or plan aspect of policy and plan if these are presented as one single document)

Element No.	Element to be covered	What to look for
9.	A SMART implementation/ action plan.	A clear implementation / action plan stating aims / objectives (**what** action will be taken) **by whom** and **when?**
10.	The implementation plan explains what specific action each organisation involved in delivering the contract will take in order to : (a) Minimise waste (b) Minimise energy consumption (c) Minimise use of travel and promote use of public or green transport where travel is unavoidable	Aims and objectives showing what the provider will be doing with a description of what any sub-contractors will be doing to minimise waste and energy consumption and use of transport.
11.	The implementation / action plan should refer to the use of simple environmental baselines against which the provider will measure its impact in terms of waste minimisation; recycling and energy consumption. These baselines may take some time to be established if based on measuring `average usage'. **The guidance allows for generic action plans** where organisations delivering multiple ESF projects in the same	Reference to aims and objectives relating to: (i) identifying or developing simple environmental baselines; and (ii) making use of simple environmental baselines – in order to assess progress over time.

Element No.	Element to be covered	What to look for
	building / sharing same resources would make it difficult to apportion environmental performance measurements. **Projects with existing Environmental Management Systems** (these are usually accredited e.g. ISO standards) can be accepted so long as they meet ESF requirements and have an annex or addendum listing ESF project(s) covered (see guidance). **Projects that hire rooms to deliver their projects for temporary / limited periods of time** can have a more limited range of baselines/measurements. – see published guidance. This is because they may have a lack of control over some of the `environmental' aspects of their delivery. In these situations the project should at least check with the organisation they are using to hire the rooms / facilities from that they will be using a an authorised waste disposal company / organisation to get rid of any of the project's waste	

Element No.	Element to be covered	What to look for
	(they need to keep a copy of the letter / email(s) they use to check for this as well as any responses they receive. Also, as a minimum, the action plan should explain the delivery arrangements of the project and set out some measureable objectives which it could pursue to reduce waste being created in the first place and also and promote use of public or green transport / reduce transport use age. They should still have a simple base lining and reporting mechanism for these two aspects of environmental performance.	
	12. The implementation plan should provide details of how staff and trainee awareness of sustainability will be increased / improved in order to support the policy and plan.	Aims and objectives relating to communication of the plan plus any developmental activity as required to help support the implementation of the plan.

Achieving a score of 7: Policy and Plan meets requirement with additional assurances

In order to score 7 the applicant will need to have fully covered the elements 1 – 12 in Tables 1 and 2 above AND have covers one or more of the elements A - E in table 6 below.

Table 6: Policy and Plan meets requirement with additional assurances (score = 7)

	Additional assurance	What to look for

A.	Environmental sustainable development awareness training covered in participant training as well.	Commitments and objectives covering equality awareness training for participants – either integrated into course work or as part of induction (for example) or as a separate module etc.
B.	Appointment of a sustainable development champion within the organisation	This could be in policy and also an objective in the implementation plan.
C.	Aspects of project delivery which relate to environmental sustainable development integrated or built into implementation plan	E.g. developing environmental modules / coursework for participants, identifying environmentally focussed placements / partners to work with etc.
D.	Ensuring that any monitoring and review of environmental sustainable development is discussed at board level or similar within the organisation at least annually	Commitment for high level review at board level – this will need to be explained in any description / objectives for project review
E.	The implementation plan covers other aspects of environmental sustainable development not already covered in the templates above which provide reassurance.	Other aspects of environmental sustainable development covered providing further reassurance.
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Achieving a score of 3: ESF Environmental Sustainable Development Policy and Implementation Plan "Mostly meets the requirement"

In order to obtain a score of `3' between 6- 11 elements (in total) from Tables 4 and 5 must be covered – but conditions must be set in the funding agreement for any elements not covered.

Achieving a score of 1: ESF Environmental Sustainable Development Policy and Implementation Plan "mostly fails the requirement"

If only 1-5 elements in Table 1 and Table 2 are satisfactorily covered, the application will be rejected.

Achieving a score of `0': ESF Environmental Sustainable Development Policy and Plan "fails to meet the requirement"

None of the elements (1-12) From Tables 1-2 are satisfactorily covered the application will be rejected.

Annex 3

Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities

Non-prescriptive examples of good practice / action that can be taken in response to regulatory requirements for ESF projects.

(i) Encourage female participation on the programme. (NOTE: This requirement will be checked at the Project Inception Visit (PIV) stage)

Promote female engagement through recruitment processes – including any innovative recruitment processes?

- encouraging women to take part in the programme, (and, where relevant, encourage employers to enable female staff, including part-time workers to have equal access to support)
- female-friendly publicity
- advertises in local newspapers / libraries / children's centres / schools
- uses positive images of women in publicity
- promotes project via word of mouth
- uses social media to promote project
- good history of working with employers / employer engagement
- can sell the benefits of recruiting / training women to employers
- can explain typical barriers and issues arising in recruitment and explains how they will be overcome

Promote female engagement through recruitment processes – including any innovative recruitment processes

- recruitment via outreach e.g. outreach via school gates / shopping malls / children's centres / GP surgeries / local community centres etc.
- recruitment via informal activity such as coffee mornings ad taster sessions
- work with referral agencies – will the project explain to referral agencies the need to recruit women as well as men?
- research barriers

Ensure that the structure and content of activities provided are gender-sensitive?

- provision is gender sensitive – e.g. sensitive to language used
- provision aims to help build up confidence of female participants
- female- only classes provided where required / if necessary;
- provides initial assessment / advice to identify women's needs and barriers
- guidance is offered throughout the course;
- mentoring and buddies offered;

- workplace / work experience preparation for women on placement   (especially in non –traditional occupations / sectors)

(ii) Provide childcare support where this acts as an obstacle to ESF participation beyond Universal Credit / tax-credits. (NOTE: This requirement will be checked at the Project Inception Visit (PIV) stage)

- will childcare support be clearly advertised in recruitment material?
- explanation as to what issues / barriers is lily to exist and how will they be overcome?
- will project provide support in conjunction with other projects?

(iii) Support access for disabled people. (NOTE: This requirement will be checked at the Project Inception Visit (PIV) stage)

- ensure buildings / facilities are accessible to people with disabilities through building audits / surveys / consultation with project staff and participants

(iv) Provide / gives a commitment to offer specialised, tailored, or flexible support to meet the needs of individuals where necessary including for disabled people where necessary. (NOTE: this requirement will be checked at the Project Inception Visit (PIV) stage)

- initial assessment to identify needs
- action planning;
- on-going assessment;
- specialist support
- ensure suitable / specialised software is available where required
- ensure specialised equipment / adaptations to equipment where
- necessary
- encourage disclosure of disability when recruiting
- flexible support / coaching and one-to-one support where necessary;
- flexible provision
- suitable referral arrangements;
- ensure that provision is flexible (time / location etc.)?
- encourage flexible employment / work placements for disabled people (where appropriate)?
- offer assistance with transport support where appropriate (especially disabled)?
- tailor support to meet the needs of the individual (as far as possible).