



SOUTH EAST ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND CO-FINANCING PLAN

1st JANUARY 2008 – 31st DECEMBER 2010

SUPPLEMENT



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills

Introduction

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) has to present a Supplement to its Co-financing Plan 2007-2010, which has been endorsed by the Regional Committee.

This document sets out the realignment of ESF Level 3 activity funded under Priority 2, as described in the Plan (section 2.3).

With the recent revision in the eligibility rules for the Train to Gain Level 3 offer, the focus of SEEDA's activities under Priority 2 has to be realigned. The change currently affects the pilot programme and then the national employer offer in 2008/9.

Background

Since the commencement of the Train to Gain Level 3 Trials, introduced in August 2006, the importance of this provision has been elevated through the publication of the Leitch Review of Skills and subsequent response by Government.

The Level 3 Trials will now concentrate on increasing employer investment in Level 3 as part of a broader package of skills. Current restrictions have been revised for the 2007/08 academic year and will be evaluated and the findings used to inform a national Level 3 Train to Gain offer in 08/09

The Level 3 revisions include:

- Employers of all sizes are now eligible to participate in Train to Gain
- Participation in the Trials is no longer restricted to learners without a full Level 3
- Self-employed learners will be eligible to participate in the Trial through collective sector action (i.e. through their Sector body. This will be subject to separate Sector Action Planning Guidance to be issued later).

Realignment of ESF Level 3 Priority 2 activity

ESF activity outlined in SEEDA's Co-financing Plan was designed in part to support those employees who are now eligible within the revised mainstream Level 3 programme. The effect of the policy change to the Train to Gain Level 3 offer has placed part of SEEDA's planned ESF activity at Level 3 in potential conflict with the mainstream funding offer and would contravene SEEDA's commitment to the region's guiding principle of additionality, as set in section 3.3 the South East ESF Framework 2007-2010.

SEEDA will continue to utilise its ESF Level 3 funding to add value to mainstream provision, for example Training Pools, RRCS and the Train to Gain Programme, by up-skilling employees of small and medium sized organisations in priority sectors and providing an enhanced range of opportunities at Level 3, to encourage progression into further learning offered through mainstream provision. This removes full width qualifications at Level 3 from the ESF funded provision and avoids duplicating Train to Gain. The focus on units/modules at Level 3 as well as more generalised CPD at Level 3 will be strengthened.

This realignment of activity have been discussed and agreed with the LSC, which shares the contribution to this aspect of the regional ESF Framework.

It has been agreed that no changes will be made to the output and results indicators included in the LSC and SEEDA Co-financing plans at this time. However, SEEDA will not use ESF funding to seek full width qualifications at Level 3. It is also clear that the revisions to Train to Gain will mitigate against SEEDA funding full width qualifications at Level 3 under the match element of the programme, beyond any already contracted. The LSC match funding element will provide the majority of Level 3 full width qualification results for the regional programme.

SEEDA requests that the Regional Committee approves this Supplement to its Co-financing Plan 2007-2010.