

Annex C

Draft England European Social Fund Operational Programme Proposal 2007-2013

Strategic Environmental Assessment screening report

**Department for Work and Pensions
Department for Education and Skills**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Regulatory requirements

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (England) Regulations 2004 require an environmental assessment to be undertaken for any plan or programme which relates either solely to England, or to England and any other part of the UK and which also meets the criteria for determining significant effects on the environment (Schedule 1 Regulations 9(2)a and 10(4)a).

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (England) Regulations 2004 transposes into English law the Directive 2001/42/EC “Assessment of the effects of certain plans on the environment”.

This screening report has been produced in order to help determine whether the England ESF Operational Programme (2007-2013) is likely to have a significant environmental impact.

It has been sent to the following English consultation authorities - ref: Regulation 4 paragraph 1 (a) (b) (c) (d)) (please refer to contacts given at Annex 1)

A determination on whether an environmental assessment of the draft programme is required will be issued - based on views of the consultation authorities and the responsible authority as described in Regulation 9 paras (1) and (2) . If the responsible authority determines that the programme is unlikely to have significant effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), it shall prepare a statement of its reasons for the determination as set out in Regulation 9 (3).

1.2 Contact details

This screening report has been compiled by the European Social Fund Division of the Joint International Unit of the Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Education and Skills.

The contact for this report is:

Duncan Carnie
ESF Division
N2
Moorfoot
Sheffield
S1 4PQ

E-mail: duncan.carnie@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: 0114 267 7293

2 Background and key information relating to the proposed England ESF Operational Programme 2007-2013

2.1 Background

The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the EU's Structural Funds, which were set up to reduce differences in prosperity and living standards and help areas of Europe which, for one reason or another are suffering difficulties. This is usually referred to as 'promoting economic and social cohesion'. To do this, the ESF spends EU money on the achievement of the goals agreed in the European Employment Strategy. This strategy is bringing together the 25 Member States to work at increasing Europe's capacity to create good jobs, and providing people with the skills to fill them.

The European Social Fund (ESF) helps people improve their skills and job prospects. Created in 1957, the ESF is the EU's main source of financial support for efforts to develop employability and human resources. It helps Member States combat unemployment, prevent people from dropping out of the labour market, and promote training to make Europe's workforce and companies better equipped to face new, global challenges.

The ESF channels its money into strategic, long-term programmes in Member States and regions across the EU, particularly those where economic development is less advanced. Seven-year programmes are planned by Member States, in partnership with the European Commission, and are then implemented through a wide range of organisations, both in the public and private sector.

In the period 2000-2006, the ESF granted some €70 billion to people and projects across the EU. This money comes on top of Member State funding from public and/or private sectors in the country concerned.

2.2 The new structural fund regulations

In 2007, a new seven-year programming period for the ESF will begin. This will be governed by a new set of EU regulations.

On 14 July 2004, the European Commission adopted proposals for five new regulations governing the Structural Funds in 2007-13. The proposals include a draft regulation laying down a common set of rules for all Structural Funds, and draft regulations for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund. In addition, the Commission has suggested a new regulation to establish a European grouping of cross-border co-operation (EGCC). Further information on the proposals is available on the Europa website at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/debate/forum_en.htm

The Council reached political agreement on the texts of the draft regulations on 5 May 2006. It is expected that the regulations will be adopted and come into force by the end of July 2006.

2.3 The strategic focus of the new ESF operational programme for England

The new Structural Fund Regulation will **strengthen the strategic focus of the Structural Funds**, ensuring that they support the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas for growth, jobs and sustainable development.

This strategic approach would be established in three-stages:

- First, the Member States and the European Parliament agree a set of Community Strategic Guidelines (see below) for cohesion policy.
- Secondly, each Member State draws up an National Strategic Reference Framework setting out its main priorities for spending the Structural Funds.
- Thirdly, the Member States draw up more detailed Operational Programmes, outlining their plans for spending the Funds in specific regions. The European Social Fund Division of the DWP, the designated Managing Authority for ESF in England, is proposing a single ESF Operational programme for England during 2007-2013.

ESF programmes will be expected to focus funds in line with:

- The European Employment Strategy. In recent years, the Employment Recommendations to the UK, emerging from this Strategy, have focused on the need for the UK to improve the employment prospects of disadvantaged people and tackle low skills in the workforce.

- The UK Lisbon National Reform Programme. This sets out the Government's strategy of increasing employment opportunity for all, in particular by helping disadvantaged groups move from unemployment and inactivity into work. It also sets out the Government's strategy for developing the skills of young people and adults.

The European Commission's draft Community Guidelines were published in July 2005 and they identified three overarching priorities linked to the Lisbon Strategy for future structural fund programmes:

- making Europe a more attractive place to invest and work;
- knowledge and innovation for growth; and
- more and better jobs.

ESF will focus on supporting the third priority of more and better jobs.

Copies of the draft guidelines can be found at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2007/osc/index_en.htm

2.4 The draft proposal for a new European Social Fund programme for England

The NSRF proposes a new European Social Fund (ESF) programme for England in 2007-13, with separate ESF programmes in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In line with the strategic approach required by the new regulations, the ESF programme for England will be developed with reference to the NSRF. The NSRF explains that in England, ESF spending will:

“reflect DWP and DfES PSA targets to increase the employment rates of disadvantaged groups and to raise the skills levels of the relevant EU employment recommendations to the UK. In recent years, these recommendations have focused on improving the employment prospects of disadvantaged people and on tackling low skills in the workforce”.

The European and domestic employment and skills strategies are therefore the key strategic drivers for the ESF programme in England.

The NSRF proposes two main priorities within a single ESF programme for England:

Priority 1: Extending employment opportunities

The purpose of this priority will be to increase employment and thereby promote social inclusion. Examples of actions that may be supported include:

- developing the employability and skills of unemployed and economically inactive people;

- overcoming barriers to work faced by disadvantaged groups (for example, people with disabilities and health conditions, lone parents, older workers, ethnic minorities and young people amongst others), including where appropriate helping with caring responsibilities and working with the health sector; and
- supporting community projects to mobilise disadvantaged and excluded people and facilitate their integration into the labour market.

Priority 2: Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce

This priority will focus on raising levels of skills in the workforce in order to increase productivity, enterprise and competitiveness. Examples of actions that may be supported include:

- improving basic literacy and numeracy skills among adults and supporting progression from foundation to level 2 learning;
- tackling the skills deficit in the workforce (for example, by helping workers to gain level 2 and 3 qualifications, especially workers who face redundancy, low skilled workers, and workers in sectors with weak training records and, where appropriate, supporting health and safety training);
- training men and women who want to enter occupations or sectors where they are underrepresented; and
- training managers and workers in small businesses who need to develop skills to compete in a knowledge-based economy.

All of England will be eligible for funding within these priorities, except Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly which will receive Convergence ESF funding within separate but similar priorities. There will be ring-fenced funding for the two areas – Merseyside and South Yorkshire – which had Objective 1 status in 2000-06 but will not qualify for the Convergence Objective in 2007-13. The programme will also incorporate Gibraltar.

Regional Skills Partnerships will advise on regional employment and skills needs within the framework of England's ESF programme.

2.5 Delivery arrangements for the new ESF operational programme for England

The Government's aim is for future ESF spending in England to be closely aligned to domestic policy priorities. It believes that ESF support for employment and skills should be strategically aligned to domestic employment and skills funding, which is currently deployed primarily through Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Councils.

The RDAs, Learning and Skills Councils and Jobcentre Plus have developed Regional Skills Partnerships in each of the English regions, in order to ensure that national employment and skills objectives are aligned with priorities identified in regional strategies. Although ESF will be a national programme, there will be a regional dimension to delivery, and the Regional Skills Partnerships will be able to inform priorities for funding within the overall context of national employment and skills policy.

The Government is keen to ensure that ESF delivery is administratively simple and that EU requirements on public match funding do not prevent organisations from accessing ESF. By aligning ESF and domestic funds, organisations will be able to access a single funding stream and will not need to find their own match public funding.

Project providers will be selected through open and competitive tendering processes in line with EU regulations and rules.

ESF will fund activities which support the key priorities of helping people find work and improve their skills. Typically, it will fund training courses, advice, guidance and counselling activities as well as provide intensive on the job and off the job support – especially for disadvantaged groups. **In the course of delivering these key activities** ESF will promote sustainable development (see text below).

ESF will not fund capital expenditure, for example, on building new buildings/training centres. Most support will take place in existing buildings – for example in colleges, training centres, workplaces or voluntary sector buildings. Although it is possible that ESF may help fund transport for beneficiaries who have severe mobility needs (for example, funding taxis) no new transport systems will be introduced as a result of ESF activity.

2.6 What does the draft Operational Programme say about mainstreaming sustainable development and what can this mean for delivery? (A copy of the draft Operational Programme can be found at Annex 2.)

The key strategic drivers for the operational programme have already been explained. Sustainable development will be a cross-cutting theme within the England ESF Operational Programme along with promoting equal opportunities. These themes will need to be taken into account and promoted through the activities of ESF projects whilst they seek to achieve their main aims – helping people find work and improve their skills.

In line with the commitment in the UK National Strategic Reference Framework, the implementation of the programme will take account of environmental concerns and respect the principles of sustainable development. The programme will build on

work undertaken in the 2000-06 ESF Objective 3 programme. This recognised that social, environmental and economic issues are inter-related. It promoted the following three issues for putting sustainable development into practice:

- providing opportunities to allow everyone to fulfil their potential;
- environmental protection and enhancement through the delivery of projects; and
- providing skills that businesses both demand and require – now and in the future.

A national sustainable development working group will be established to promote sustainable development in the programme. The working group will be chaired by the Managing Authority and will draw upon the expertise of relevant key partners and agencies. It will advise the Managing Authority on mainstreaming sustainable development, drawing upon the principles set out in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy and the lessons learned in the previous programme. The Managing Authority will report progress to the Programme Monitoring Committee at key stages during the life of the programme.

The main approach of the sustainable development working group will be to 'lead by example'. The group will promote good and innovative practice in such a way that it helps providers understand what they need to do, in practical terms, to embed sustainable development into their activities. This will include promoting environmental protection. Project providers will be encouraged to think across all three issues of social inclusion, skills support for the economy and environmental protection when they are designing and delivering their activities.

There may be some scope for vertical integration of environmental protection, for example by using ESF to support environmentally-based projects which offer good quality skills training or employment support for local people (for example in waste-management, recycling or conservation work), subject to those projects meeting ESF rules and the criteria and requirements set out in tendering rounds.

In most cases we envisage a horizontal integration whereby projects consider ways of promoting environmental protection, along with the other components of sustainable development, through the way they deliver course and possibly in course content. One example may be promoting environmental protection to micro-businesses as part of training for managers or through 'greening' of course delivery/content where this appropriate.

Promotional activities will include a national ESF Sustainable Development Award. This will recognise projects that are taking effective action to promote sustainable development.

The sustainable development working group will work closely with colleagues in other UK Structural Fund programmes to share ideas and good practice.

2.7 Next steps

The new ESF programme for England for 2007-13 will be prepared during 2006. It is planned to submit the programme to the European Commission in autumn 2006, with a view to the Commission approving the programme in spring or summer 2007.

Project activity funded by the current 2000-06 programme will continue until 2008. There is therefore likely to be some overlap between the two programmes during 2007 and 2008 while the current programme runs down, and the new programme starts up.

2.8 EU Financial Perspective 2007-13 and the likely scale of England ESF Operational Programme in terms of the number of projects and participants

In May 2006, the Council and the European Parliament reached an Inter-Institutional Agreement on the EU Financial Perspective for 2007-13, including Structural Funds spending.

The Inter-Institutional Agreement provides for a Structural Funds budget of €308 billion for 2007-13. This is an increase of 31% or around €73 billion in comparison with the current Structural Funds budget for 2000-06. The budget will enable the EU to address priorities in new Member States, while still maintaining some funding for richer Member States, in particular their poorest regions.

It is estimated that the UK will receive a total of approximately €9.4 billion (in 2004 prices) from the 2007-13 Financial Perspective, in comparison with €16.6 billion (in 1999 prices) now. The European Commission will make indicative allocations to Member States following the adoption of the Structural Fund regulations.

The UK National Strategic Reference Framework will establish allocations to individual Structural Fund programmes including the England ESF programme. The DTI is responsible for this framework. Following an external consultation which ended on 22 May, DTI expects to produce the final version of the framework by 22 August.

Although precise funding details are not currently known, it is likely that the level of ESF funding in England will be significantly lower than the £4 billion in 2000-06. It is expected that most or all of this funding will be allocated among the nine English regions and Gibraltar.

Project delivery will mostly be in existing colleges, training centres and also workplaces. In rural areas, distance learning (e.g. through use of broadband / internet) is encouraged in order to provide access to learning in remote rural communities.

The lasted evaluation of the 2000-06 England ESF Objective 3 programme showed that the average cost of each ESF Objective 3 project was just under £19,000. As at March 2005, 4,500 projects had been supported by ESF Objective 3. Assuming another 1,000 projects have joined since 2005 will bring the total to 5,500. In view of the reduction in ESF funding in 2007-13, **an estimate of 2,700 projects being funded during 2007-2013 would seem reasonable, however this will depend on the outcome of competitive tendering processes and on the size of projects. Projects are likely to vary in duration from about 1 to 3 years.**

3 The extent to which the draft ESF programme is likely to have a significant effect on the environment

3.1 Introduction

This section firstly considers how the criteria listed in the flowchart in table 1 relate to the proposed draft ESF Operational Programme.

The second half of this section focuses on the extent to which the programme is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. This analysis is provided in tabular form (see tables 2 and 3)

3.2 SEA criteria (please refer to flowchart in Table 1 below)

(i) Is the PP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))

The programme is subject to preparation by a national authority - the Department for Work and Pensions/Department for Education and Skills ESF Division which will prepare the programme proposals and negotiate the programme with the European Commission. ESF Division will act as the managing authority for the programme in England.

(ii) Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))

An operational programme is required under the new General Regulation of the Structural Funds.

Article 2 of the new General Regulation defines the 'operational programme as:

"a document submitted by the Member State and adopted by the Commission setting out a development strategy using a coherent set of priorities, to achieve with the aid from a Fund".,

(iii) Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2(a))

No. None of the above is applicable.

(iv) Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))

No. ESF will not have any detrimental effect on any Natura 2000 sites.

(vi) Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)

The ESF Operational Programme for England will set out broad indicative activities and target groups. These will provide the framework within which agencies such as Jobcentre Plus and the LSC will select projects for ESF funding using open and competitive procedures. Projects will either provide employment support or skills training or a combination of both.

Beyond the indicative activities and target groups, the operational programme will not define in detail what types of project or activity should be funded. There are many different types of activity or measure which can support employment or skills training. All activity and expenditure will need to be eligible as described in the Structural Fund and ESF Regulations.

The programme will not provide a framework for future development in terms of planning for, or construction of, new buildings or infrastructure development. These activities are not eligible for ESF.

*8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)**

The ESF Division of DWP does not believe that the proposed programme will have a significant effect on the environment (please see table 2). This report has been copied to appropriate environmental bodies for their consideration and comment.

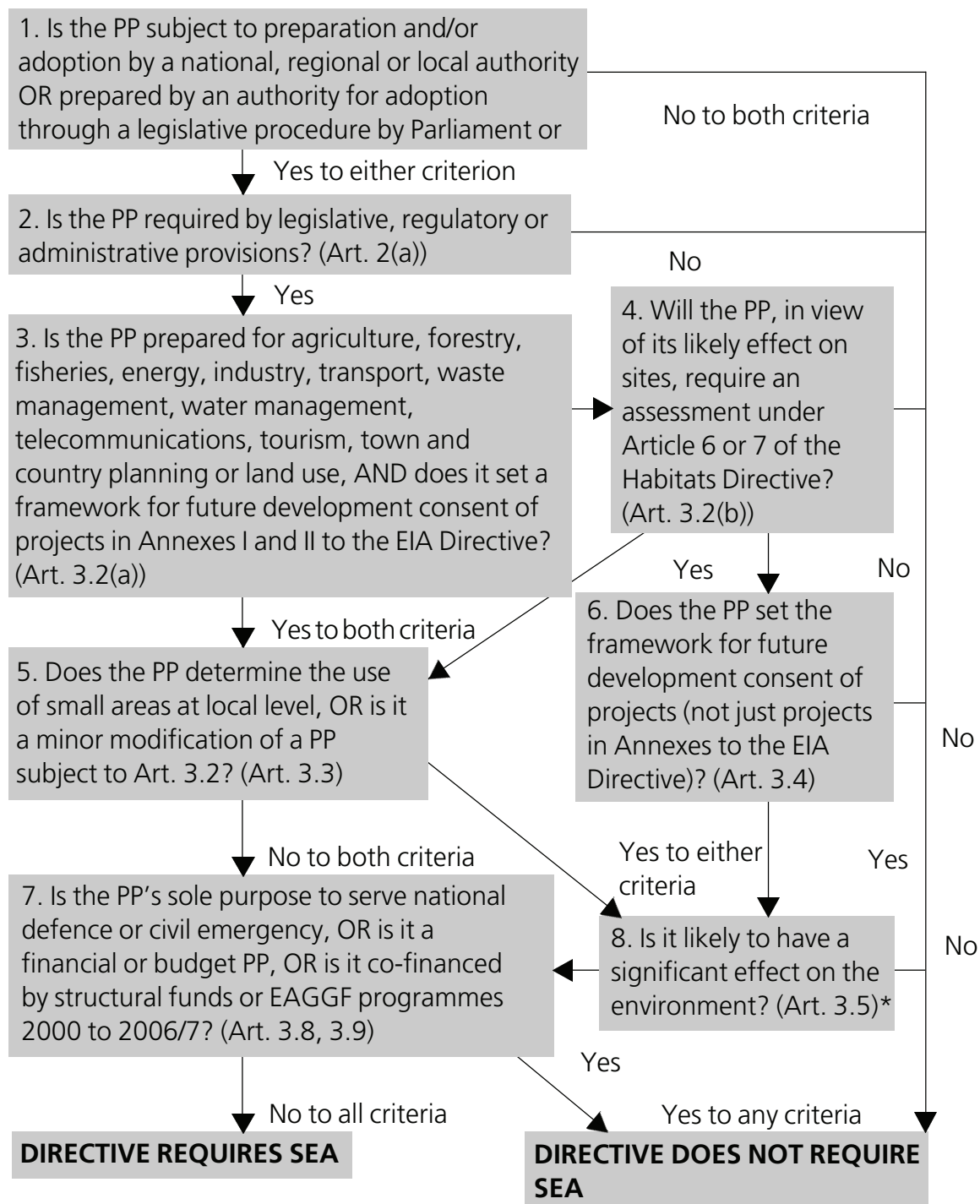
*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

Table 1 SEA Criteria flowchart

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

Criteria for Application to Plans and Programmes

This diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs). It has no legal status.



Annex 2 of the SEA directive sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects as described in article 3 para 5 :

Article 3 para 5

“Member States shall determine whether plans or programmes referred to in para 3 and 4 are likely to have significant environmental effects either by case by case examination or by specifying types of plans or programmes or by combining both approaches. For this purpose member States shall in all cases take into account relevant criteria set out in Annex II, in order to ensure that plans and programmes with likely significant effects on the environment are covered by this directive.”

The criteria for determining the likely significance of effects as described in article 3 para 5 are broken down into:

- the characteristics of plans and programmes; and
- the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.

These characteristics are discussed in turn in the table below.

Table 2 The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular to:

Significant environment effect criteria	ESF context	Potential environmental issues
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.</p>	<p>The draft ESF OP for England will be an enabling document. It does not prescribe specific location, measure level activity or size of projects. It sets out high level, key national priorities. The OP will not prescribe funding levels for individual projects.</p> <p>The OP will have a general, high level influence. Within the framework of the OP, regions will develop their own ESF plans. These regional ESF plans, will also be informed by regional economic strategies and regional skills partnerships.</p> <p>The Operational Programme will encourage complementarity between ESF and ERDF programmes where this is desirable and where it meets national and regional needs. Although complementarity may be desirable it is not a key driver for the programme.</p>	<p>The Operational Programme explains how Sustainable Development, which incorporates environmental protection, will be promoted during the life of the programme (see further comments in 3rd row of this table below).</p> <p>The operational programme will not have, and is not required to have, any direct strategic influence on regional environmental plans.</p> <p>The OP is an enabling document and there may be some scope for supporting a number of environmental-specific projects which can offer good quality and appropriate skills training or jobs and which support environmental protection at regional level. This possibility will be subject to compliance with EU rules and competitive tendering arrangements.</p>
<p>The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.</p>	<p>The structural funds general regulation requires ESF projects to operate within the framework of sustainable development and the goal of protecting and improving the environment. The draft ESF Operational Programme explains how this regulatory requirement will be addressed. This is one of many requirements laid down in the regulations. It is important but is not a key strategic driver for the programme.</p>	<p>The ESF definition of Sustainable Development does incorporate the promotion of environmental protection into the delivery of the programme. There will be scope to promote sustainable development, including environmental protection, in the new ESF programme – especially through horizontal integration such as the use of websites, publicity material, and guidance for project applicants in terms of how they can integrate sustainable development into their activities. The competitive tendering arrangements for project applicants will take sustainable development and equal opportunities into account.</p>

Continued

Table 2 Continued

Significant environment effect criteria	ESF context	Potential environmental issues
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	<p>The Operational Programme for ESF does not aim, and is not required, to tackle specific environmental problems.</p> <p>The Operational Programme aims to promote skills and jobs – so there may be some scope to support environmental projects which aim to tackle skills shortages, should there be any in the environmental sector - and assuming this is considered to be a priority for support in regional ESF plans.</p>	Some regions may have local skills shortages in environmental sector.
The relevance of the plan or programmes for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to the waste-management or water protection).	<p>This plan is unlikely to be directly relevant to Community legislation on the environment.</p>	Any project funded by ESF is expected to comply with the law of the land (including UK and EU agreements).

Table 3 Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard in particular to:

Significant environment effect criteria	ESF context	Potential environmental issues
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<p>Given the socio-economic focus, the geographically dispersed nature of project delivery and the small-scale nature of most ESF projects, the programme is unlikely to have a significant beneficial or adverse effect on the physical environment. Most activities will take place in existing colleges, training centres or workplaces and projects will vary in duration.</p>	<p>Identifying beneficial or adverse changes to environmental baselines as a result of delivering the ESF programme would be extremely difficult.</p>
The cumulative nature of the effects	<p>The programme will last for 7 years – although the individual projects will last for varying amounts of time – usually 1, 2 or a maximum of 3 years. Most ESF projects will be delivered in existing colleges and training centres.</p> <p>Any businesses that will be assisted are likely to be micro or small businesses. The support offered to micro and small businesses will typically be about upskilling the workforce or the managers/ owners of the business. Training packages might include environmental protection issues as part of management training for micro or small businesses. For example, this could be done as a training module or through distance learning pack.</p> <p>Beneficial or adverse cumulative effects are likely to be difficult to measure and are, in any event, likely to be minimal.</p>	<p>Unless projects relate to jobs or skills relevant to the environmental sector, the programme is unlikely to have direct environmental impacts. Vertical integration of environmentally –specific projects in the new ESF programme is likely to be minimal.</p> <p>Given the nature of most of the ESF projects, beneficial or adverse cumulative environmental effects are likely to be minimal.</p> <p>Until the precise nature of businesses supported is known it is impossible to predict effects. Given that the businesses supported will be small-scale in nature it is unlikely that any effects will be significant.</p>
The trans-boundary nature of the effects	<p>The Operational Programme for England is a national programme, within which project activity will take place at regional or local level.</p>	<p>The programme is unlikely to have a trans-boundary effect, in terms of environmental protection, on other EU Member States.</p>

Continued

Table 3 Continued

Significant environment effect criteria	ESF context	Potential environmental issues
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	ESF does not fund mandatory Health and Safety training due to regulations requiring ESF to add value. However, these issues are likely to arise as part of general upskilling of workforce so ESF should have a positive effect.	The programme provides the opportunity to decrease human health and environmental risks by improving the skills and knowledge of workers involved in ESF training/upskilling
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Precise funding details are not currently known – but the level of funding is likely to be significant less than the £4 billion ESF funding available in England in 2000-06. Project delivery will mostly be in existing colleges, training centres and also workplaces. In rural areas, distance learning (e.g. through use of broadband / internet) is encouraged in order to provide access to learning in remote rural communities.	Precise funding allocations have yet to be calculated, but funds will be spread as fairly as possible. Factors such as scale of unemployment and regional skills needs will be taken into account.
	The update evaluation of the current programme showed that the average cost of each ESF project was just under £19,000. As at March 2005 there were 4500 projects had been supported by ESF. Assuming another 1000 projects have joined since 2005 will bring the total to 5500. There will be significantly less ESF funding in the new programme, so an estimate of 2700 projects being funded during 2007-2013 would seem reasonable, but this will depend on the outcome of competitive tendering exercises and size of projects.	
	These projects will vary in duration from 1 to 3 years at most. The projects will be spread across all 9 regions of England, and Gibraltar. We would expect the vast majority to be based in existing colleges and training centres in towns and cities and existing workplaces.	

Continued

Table 3 Continued

Significant environment effect criteria	ESF context	Potential environmental issues
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special natural characteristics; • cultural heritage; • exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; • intensive land use 	<p>There may be scope to use some ESF to complement other EU Funds such as ERDF. For example, it may be possible to use ESF to train some people to work in the tourism industry or to help some beneficiaries work in the environmental sector or supporting biodiversity or cultural sites. We would expect that any such training will have a direct or indirect beneficial effect on environmentally sensitive or cultural sites.</p>	<p>Training can lead to a better understanding of environmental effects / sites for people working in those sectors which affect those sites most.</p>
<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>Training and development should help raise awareness of these issues where this is considered a priority.</p>	<p>Any effects will be through training or employing people that are directly involved in projects which operate in such areas. We would not expect many of our projects to fall under this category. Given that most projects will operate through the existing network of colleges and training providers.</p>

4 Conclusion

The European Social Fund Division of the DWP does not believe that the England ESF Operational Programme should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment due to the socio-economic focus of the programme. Although the programme will promote sustainable development – including environmental protection – the strategic focus of the programme along with its scale and method of delivery means that it only has a limited potential to impact on the environment. An assessment should not, therefore, be conducted.

Annex 1

This screening report has been produced in order to help determine whether the ESF Objective 3 Operational Programme (2007-2013) is likely to have a significant environmental impact. It has been sent to the following English consultation authorities - ref: Regulation 4 paragraph 1 (a) (b) (c) (d)) :

Lucia Susani
Environmental Assessment Policy and Process Manager, **Environment Agency**
Kings Meadow House, Kings Meadow Road, Reading RG1 8DQ
Tel: 0118 953 5457
Lucia.Susani@environment-agency.gov.uk

Ian Smith
Head of Development & Regional Policy, Environmental Impacts Team, **English Nature**
Northminster House, Northminster, Peterborough PE1 1UA
Tel: 01733 455215
Ian.Smith@english-nature.org.uk

Kathleen Covill
Senior Policy Adviser, Landscape, Access and Recreation, **Countryside Agency**
20th Floor, Portland House, Stag Place, London SW1E 5RS
Tel: 0207 932 5905 mob: 07900 608194
Kathleen.Covill@countryside.gov.uk

Charles Wagner
Head of Planning and Regeneration, **English Heritage**
23 Savile Row, London W1S 2ET
Tel: 020 7973 3826
Charles.Wagner@english-heritage.org.uk

