

Appendix A: ESF Co-Financing Programme Evaluation Specification

Evaluation of the GLA's ESF Co-financing Programme - DRAFT

1. Overview

The Greater London Authority (GLA) is seeking a contractor to deliver a mixed methods evaluation of the European Social Fund (ESF) Co-Financing Programmes 2014-20 and 2019-23. The evaluation is expected to commence in April 2020 and must be completed by the end of September 2023. Primarily, the GLA would like to evaluate the impact of ESF activities on Londoners over the lifetime of the combined programme to inform future regional skills and employment delivery.

This is principally an impact evaluation however we would like evaluators to capture insights on a yearly basis with a view to informing ongoing project delivery, future programme design and future funding decisions. In addition, and consistent with the GLA's commitment to transparency and value for money, the evaluation will also need to provide summative insights via an interim report delivered in February 2021, and a final report.

The GLA will provide the contractor with relevant data subject to a data-sharing agreement. We expect the evaluation to involve predominantly secondary data analysis, although this may be supplemented by primary data gathering, as appropriate. The GLA's European Social Fund (ESF) Co-Financing Programmes 2014-20 and 2019-23 will collectively comprise approximately 65 projects. The projects aim to increase employment by giving unemployed, low paid Londoners and businesses the training and support they need to enter jobs and to provide the skills needed by employers in a competitive, global economy.

Table 1. Overview of ESF Co-Financing Projects

Name of project	Description	Value (£)	Key outputs and outcomes
Care Leavers into Work	To support 16-24-year-old Care Leavers who will access a variety of work experiences, to help them gain the skills to move into, and remain in work.	299,643	Priority Axis 1.2 Primary Results Target: 51 people supported into sustained employment, education or training for 26 weeks.
Getting Back on Track	To provide immediate support to young people who have recently dropped out of school or college. Through a personal development programme, they will be supported to progress into work or return to education or training.	425,000	Priority Axis 1.2 Primary Result Target: 125 people supported into employment, education or training for 26 weeks.

Haringey Higher Level Skills	Project will provide residents, aged 18+ who are either unemployed, economically inactive or in low paid employment living in Haringey Borough with access to integrated accredited National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 training within the construction, health, engineering and childcare sectors and employment support.	900,000	<p>Priority Axis 1.2</p> <p>Primary Result Target: 105 people supported into employment for 26 weeks.</p> <p>63 people supported to progress in employment.</p>
Higher Level Digital Skills	The Digital Grid Partnership is funding collaborative activities between start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and higher-level digital skills providers. The collaboration will help co-design the digital skills qualification of the future and effectively shape the staff force with high-level digital skills and industry-specific experience.	1,000,000	<p>Priority Axis 2.2</p> <p>400 SMEs participating 125 students benefiting.</p>
Forces for London	To support Veterans, or Early Service Leavers, aged 18 plus to access a variety of Team London volunteering opportunities. This will help build work experience and employability skills, so they progress	402,000	<p>Priority Axis 1.1</p> <p>Primary Result Target: 127 people supported into employment, education or training for 26 weeks.</p>

	into and remain in education or work.		
Digital Talent	To support 16-24-year old's into and remain in work, education and/or training in the digital sector. This will help to plug a growing talent gap in digital, technology and creative entry-level jobs with diverse, 'home-grown' talent.	500,000	<p>Priority Axis 1.2</p> <p>Primary Result Target: 136 people supported into employment, education or training for 26 weeks.</p>
Digital Pathways	To support 16-24-year old's into and remain in work, education and/or training in the digital sector. This will help to plug a growing talent gap in digital, technology and creative entry-level jobs with diverse, 'home-grown' talent.	600,000	<p>Priority Axis 1.2</p> <p>Primary Result Target: 106 people supported into employment, education or training for 26 weeks.</p>
Start Up Step Up London	To provide Londoners with the skills to access entrepreneurship and/or grow their business. It will focus on supporting underrepresented groups, particularly women, disabled people and ethnic minorities, to help reduce the employment gap amongst those who face labour market disadvantages.	500,000	<p>Priority Axis 1.1 and 2.1</p> <p>Primary Result Targets: 70 people supported into self-employment or employment for 26 weeks.</p> <p>Primary Result Targets: 70 employed people (of which at least 49 female) gaining an improved labour market status.</p>
N17 Creative Callings	To support employees of businesses in the Tottenham Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ) to upskill and progress in work,	500,000	<p>Priority Axis 2.1 and 2.2</p> <p>130 employees (of which at least 65 female) gaining an improved labour market status.</p>

	and to help creative businesses and education organisations collaborate on creative training programmes and improve pathways into the industry.		38 SMEs/Micro-SMEs supported to complete projects which provide work placements /opportunities that enable students/graduates to gain industry relevant experience/skills.
Head 2 Work	Head 2Work engages young people by focusing on their needs and interests, empowering them to make informed decisions and develop pathways which are right for them. Head 2Work aims to develop young people's communication, leadership and team working skills. The project will enable young people to gain experience and skills they can demonstrate when applying for jobs and attending interviews, and in the long-term can help to lead to a sustained and fulfilling working life.	794,000	Priority Axis 1.2 Primary Result Targets: 200 Sustained Education, Employment and Training (EET) outcomes through engagement with a social action project.
All 19-23 projects	XXX	XXX	XXX

Please note that there will be an estimated **XX** additional projects to be included following the completion of procurement rounds 2 and 3. The GLA are unable to provide details of these at this stage.

In delivering the ESF programme in London, the GLA seeks to work closely with stakeholders, tailoring the programme to respond to feedback from stakeholders and participants, and to consider lessons from the evaluation. As such, the GLA expects contractors to be able to work flexibly and collaboratively over the life of the evaluation.

European Social Fund and Co-financing Status

The GLA was awarded Co-Financing (CFO) status in 2016. For both the 2014/20 and 2019/23 ESF delivery period the GLA has developed a suite of ESF eligible projects and programmes that align with GLA statutory responsibilities and Mayoral Priorities. The projects are

commissioned and managed by the GLA Skills & Employment Unit, with a combined programme value of £96m.

The projects are designed to help unemployed people and low paid workers to gain the skills they need to find jobs and progress in their careers. The projects work with communities, businesses, charities and educators to do this supportively with a focus on helping people who face barriers, to overcome them.

The projects have been developed to respond to the priorities identified within the [London Economic Action Partnership's](#) (LEAP) European [Structural Investment Fund strategy](#), the Mayor's [Skills for Londoners Strategy](#) and other Mayoral priorities.

For further information on LEAP and the projects currently funded under the GLA's Skills and Employment Co-Financing please see section 7, additional information, for links to the relevant websites.

2. Research Questions

This section presents four overarching research questions (RQ) and associated sub-questions. This is followed by a table (Table 1: PICO table for ESF evaluation), presenting more detail on the populations, programme activities (intervention), potential comparisons and controls and outcomes of interest.

RQ1. What is the impact of provision funded through the co-financed ESF on Londoners, in particular disadvantaged groups, employment support/training providers, employers and the wider community? (approximately 40% of time requirement)

This is the key, overarching research question for the whole evaluation. Within this, we have identified the following sub-questions:

- 1.1 How well have the projects met their intended goals, and delivered the outcomes set out in their bids for ESF funding?
- 1.2 Who were the participants, were these the intended target groups?
- 1.3 How does the ESF provision differ from the other provision offered by the providers?
- 1.4 Who are the providers? Are there any innovative partnerships?
- 1.5 What was the impact of the provision on individual participants?
- 1.6 How does impact vary across different types of provision and participants with particular characteristics, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) learners? *See also RQ2.*
- 1.7 How did actual impact compare to anticipated impact among different stakeholder groups? *See also RQ2.*
- 1.8 What is the impact of different elements of the programme on project outputs and outcomes, including:

- the GLA's approach to provider management including dedicated provider managers;
- the GLA's approach to engagement during the specification development, including the perspective of stakeholders (EPMU, providers and sponsors), usefulness of events and the impact of the engagement on shaping project proposals and ultimately delivery;
- the move from grant-funded provision to procured provision (contracts). *See also RQ2 2.4.*;
- the introduction of a new contract management system (GLA OPS) – to be introduced in 2020;
- ESF reporting requirements; and
- the GLA's payment structure/outcome-based payments?

1.9 With a view to informing future skills and employment programmes, how can the following be improved?

- Programme effectiveness;
- Programme efficiency; and
- Programme reach.

1.10 How sustainable is provision funded through ESF (in relation to continuity of interventions beyond the ESF funding period)?

RQ2. Where variation in project impact and performance occurs, why is this the case? (approximately 20% of time requirement) *See also 1.2*

The GLA is keen to explore how performance varies amongst different groups of learners. As part of addressing RQ2, the evaluation should also consider the following sub-questions:

- 2.1. Participant Background: How do participant outcomes vary amongst different demographic groups (gender, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic group etc.) and across different targeted disadvantaged groups (e.g. lone parents, ex-offenders, Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEETs), Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) etc)?
- 2.2. Geography: How do learner outcomes vary across different sub-regions and London boroughs?
- 2.3. Provider Type: How do learner outcomes vary by different types of provider such as Further Education (FE) colleges, local authority providers, independent training providers, sixth form colleges and universities?
- 2.4. Funding Structure: Is there any difference between the impact associated with procured provision, compared to grant-funded provision? How well did contracted providers achieve learning and employment aims and volumes compared to profile? *See also RQ1 1.3.*
- 2.5. Provision type: What variation is there across different types of provision? This could, for example include variation across sector subject areas or across different modes of delivery.

RQ3. What is the economic impact of provision funded through the GLA's ESF Co-Financing Programme? (approximately 20% of time requirement)

The GLA is committed to understanding the economic impact of its programmes. As part of addressing RQ3, the evaluation should also consider the following sub-questions:

- 3.1. Did the ESF programme offer value for money? Overall, did the benefits exceed the costs?
- 3.2. What are the costs and benefits of different elements of the programme? Were some types of provision more cost-effective than others?
- 3.3. What are the costs and benefits of provision funded through ESF compared to other employment and skills provision (where comparators are available)?

RQ4. What are the views and experiences of Londoners, in particular disadvantaged groups, employment support/training providers, project sponsors, businesses and the wider community in respect of ESF provision? (approximately 20% of time requirement)

Ensuring London's residents have high-quality provision is at the heart of the Mayor's Skills for Londoners Strategy. It is therefore essential that this evaluation explores the views and experiences of sector stakeholders in the capital. As part of addressing RQ4, the evaluation should also consider the following sub-questions:

- 4.1 To what extent is the GLA's ESF provision meeting the needs of different participants and other stakeholders?
- 4.2 How did ESF funded provision impact on employers?
- 4.3 Is the GLA's ESF provision complementing and adding value to existing delivery?
- 4.4 How could provision be improved through the GLA's skills and employment programmes?

Table 2. PICO table for ESF evaluation

Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• London residents participating in ESF funded provision• Education, training and employment support providers funded through the ESF• London's employers• Wider skills and employment stakeholders e.g. other European Programmes Management Unit (EPMU), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and project sponsors.
Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ESF Co-Financed activities.
Comparison	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision funded through ESF compared to provision funded through non-ESF funding streams, where comparisons can be made.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and employment outcomes achieved by participants compared to non-participants, in so far as is possible.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant outcomes to include, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access to, and participation in, employment related skills and activities - achievement rates - progression rates into education, training or sustainable employment • Employer-related outcomes to include, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rates of in-work progression - rates of staff retention - changes to business practices - diversity of workforce • Provision-related outcomes to include, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - quality and standards of provision - provider financial stability - robustness and effectiveness of provider systems • Wider social outcomes (where available) to include, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - physical health, mental health and wellbeing - levels of social integration - violence reduction - participation in culture - family learning • Economic outcomes

3. Indicative Deliverables

a. Analysis of quantitative data

Subject to the successful contractor entering into a Data Sharing Agreement with the GLA, we will provide evaluators with ESF Programme management information and administrative data for analysis. The detail of this data will be confirmed but may include, for example, anonymised participant data, outputs data and financial data.

The successful contractor will be responsible for obtaining the necessary permissions for any other dataset which they propose using.

b. Collection and analysis of qualitative data

Evaluators should collect and analyse appropriate qualitative data, relevant to the key research questions, and synthesise this with findings from quantitative analysis. This data might include, for example, evidence of stakeholder and learner perspectives; it could be generated via interviews, focus groups or other appropriate methods.

c. Reporting

We would expect the successful contractor to:

- attend regular progress meetings – dates to be agreed at project start.
- prepare an interim evaluation report setting out findings and actionable insights on lessons learned from delivery to date, to include:
 - a draft report and presentation;
 - a final interim evaluation report; and
 - a summary of key findings, in an engaging format, for sharing with a range of external audiences, format to be agreed.
- prepare a final evaluation report summarising the impact and lessons learned from the 2014-2023 ESF Programme, to include:
 - a draft report and presentation;
 - a final evaluation report;
 - a slide pack for use with external audiences; and
 - a summary of key findings, in an engaging format, for sharing with a range of external audiences.
- co-deliver up to three presentations of findings to audiences of GLA stakeholders (to be confirmed).

Bidders are welcome to provide suggestions and examples of their preferred format for the evaluation summary and supporting documents.

4. Criteria for assessment of tenders

The proposals received will be evaluated against the following criteria – please ensure these are addressed within your proposal.

Table 3. Evaluation Criteria

Technical	Methodology	35%
	Delivery Resources and Expertise	40%
	Project Management	10%
Commercial	Fee proposal	15%

Each requirement will be given a score out of 4, where 4 is the highest mark available and 0 is the lowest mark achievable.

Table 4. Scoring Definitions

Score	Explanation
0 – Unacceptable	Demonstrates lack of evidence or understanding of the requirement.
1 – Poor	Does not completely meet the minimum requirements and acceptability is doubtful.
2 – Fair	Shows some evidence of understanding of the requirement but provides a limited or inadequate response.
3 – Good	Demonstrates satisfactory understanding of the requirement – meets minimum expectations.
4 – Excellent	Full and accurate understanding of the requirement with some innovation/added value.

Bidders must provide the following information in their tender responses:

- i. **A methodology statement** which sets out:
 - Your understanding of the aims and objectives of the evaluation;
 - The approach that will be used to deliver the requirements of the evaluation;
 - A detailed delivery plan with milestones for each stage of the project; and
 - An understanding of the ethical issues involved in project delivery and how these will be addressed.

We encourage applications that show how researchers will demonstrate additionality and deal with the counterfactual (or absence of a counterfactual), for example, through quasi-experimental approaches. Given the wide-ranging nature of the projects, we are also keen to understand how researchers will typologise and/or sample project and programme data.

ii. **Delivery resources and expertise** to include:

- details of relevant experience in delivering similar projects and identification of where project staff will add value;
- a full CV of all the project staff that will work on the project; and
- an itemised project resourcing schedule, setting out clearly defined roles for project staff.

Bidders must also demonstrate that they have experience of:

- adaptive approaches to evaluation, and flexing evaluation approaches in response to an evolving delivery programme;
- acting as a learning partner to organisations, and providing timely formative insights;
- evaluating projects, activities or interventions in the employment and skills sector; and
- analysing survey data.

iii. **Details of project management** arrangements to include:

- details of internal quality systems
- a comprehensive risk assessment covering:
 - the key assumptions underlying the proposals and the anticipated challenges that might be faced;
 - the estimated level of risk involving these assumptions /challenges; and
 - proposed contingency plans that the bidder would put in place to mitigate any occurrence of each of the identified risks, with the ultimate aim of ensuring that the evaluation is completed in a timely and credible way.

v. **Project costs** to include:

- a breakdown of the costs including daily/hourly rates, time spent on tasks, expenses, VAT; and
- confirmation that the project will be delivered on a fixed price costing.

Proposals should be submitted via the ProContract portal.

It is anticipated that a maximum of three shortlisted bidders will be invited to attend a bid clarification meeting, to be held on XXXX. However, the GLA reserve the right to award a contract without a clarification meeting if one proposal scores significantly higher than the others submitted.

5. Timescales

Table 5. Procurement Timescales

Invitation to Tender	January 2019
Deadline for submissions (40 days)	Early March 2020
Evaluate tenders (2 weeks to score/ 1 week to clarify)	March 2020
Award Contract	April 2020

Table 6. Delivery Timescales

Project Inception Meeting	April 2020
Regular progress meetings	TBC
Submit draft interim report and presentation of interim findings	February 2021
Submit revised Interim evaluation report	April 2021
Submit draft Final report and presentation of findings	July 2023
Submit revised Final evaluation report and slide pack	End of August 2023
Presentation(s) to external audiences	September 2023

6. Budget and Payment Model

Indicative total budget of up to £120,000, to be paid over four financial years (2020/21 to 2023/24).

The payment profile for the work will be agreed with the successful tenderer at contract award stage, based on the detail of the evaluation activity proposed.

7. Additional information

Background information

Table 7. Links to relevant background information

The Local Enterprise Partnership for Londoner (LEAP) - background to London's ESF priorities	https://lep.london/content/london-esf-programme-0 https://lep.london/sites/default/files/2016%2004%2025-%20FINAL%20ESIF%20Strategy.pdf
The Mayor's Skills for Londoners Strategy and	https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/skills-and-employment/skills-londoners/strategy-and-research

Skills for Londoners Framework	
GLA as an ESF Co-Financing Organisation	https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/funding/european-social-fund
GLA ESF Funding Opportunities and Projects	https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/funding/gla-co-financing-organisation

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