



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills

Final Report

**EVALUATION OF SEEDA'S
ESF PROGRAMME
2007-2010**

**South East England
Development Agency**

August 2011



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MARK MORRIN

T: 07802 676245

ROSE-MARIE SMITH

T: 07973 909729

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary.....	1
2. Introduction.....	4
3. Background and context	8
4. Outputs and performance	12
5. Outcomes and impacts: analysis of the beneficiary survey.....	30
6. Programme delivery and strategic added value	47
7. Conclusions and recommendations	54
Appendices:	
Case Study 1: Gateway to SusCon	1
Case Study 2: South Eastern Enterprise Development (SEED)	7

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

This report presents the key evaluation findings of the South East England Development Agency's (SEEDA) European Social Fund Programme 2007-2010. SEEDA's ESF Programme aimed to fund projects that will reduce the effects of social disadvantage and promote economic inclusion across the South East, at a regional and sub-regional level.

1.2 Programme outputs

The overall number of participants on the programme has fallen some way short of original targets. However, Priority 1 has greatly exceeded its targets for the number of unemployed and economically inactive participants while Priority 2 has over performed in recruiting participants with basic skills and low level qualifications.

In terms of the results achieved there was mixed success. Priority 1 exceeded the target for the engaging economically inactive participants in jobsearch activity or further learning, although it did not meet its target for the number of participants in employment on leaving the programme. In Priority 2 the number of participants achieving a part qualification greatly exceeded the target; however, only a small number of participants achieved a full level 3 qualification.

Overall the programme succeeded in meeting its equality targets for the recruitment of participants aged 50+ as well as participants from ethnic minorities, particularly in Priority 1. However, both Priority 1 and 2 failed to meet their targets of recruiting participants with a disability or health condition and recruiting female participants, with Priority 2 particularly falling well short of these targets.

1.3 Outcomes and impacts

The survey findings provide evidence of sustained outcomes and impacts which have been achieved by SEEDA's ESF programme, despite the prevailing economic conditions in which projects have been delivered.

Priority 1: The large majority (80%) of beneficiaries in priority 1 have been helped in finding employment. At the time of the survey, 54% of respondents were employed (including self employment) while around 27% of beneficiaries were seeking work, up from 51% and 22% respectively when beneficiaries completed their project. These figures suggest that the reported increase in self confidence, motivation and other soft skills was not short-lived among beneficiaries.

Priority 2: Almost three quarters of beneficiaries in priority 2 believe that the support they received has helped improve the skills needed for their job. The most common outcome was improved job security with 70% of beneficiaries achieving this. Taking on higher skilled work as well as responsibility for managing or supervising people was achieved by more than half. In these cases, over half of those that achieved the outcomes attributed at least some of the outcome to their ESF course.

Further, over 41% of beneficiaries experienced increased wages since taking the course, although only a quarter believed that the course helped them achieve this. Against the wider economic backdrop of redundancies and wage cuts these are impressive results.

1.4 Programme delivery and strategic added value

Delivery partners have acknowledged SEEDA's *strategic leadership and influence* in helping projects to focus on regional need and providing innovative solutions. This has been particularly felt in the areas of environmental sustainability which has had a strong *catalytic effect* in helping to fast track activity in this area. Stakeholders also recognise the *synergies* between the ESF programme and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and particularly the objective of 'smart growth', which aimed to improve economic activity in the South East.

SEEDA's ESF programme has *added value* by addressing some of the identified 'gaps' in mainstream provision. For example, support was directed towards those incapacity benefit claimants not targeted by the Pathways to Work programme and other long term unemployed claimants with multiple needs beyond the scope of the New Deal programmes.

In terms of *programme management* delivery partners report very good working relationships with SEEDA, although some projects would like more engagement, for example, in utilising wider contacts and networks. Programme *monitoring* has been fully compliant with ESF requirements. However, the ESF team at SEEDA recognise that finer grained monitoring of outcomes could have been achieved with an automated system. Unnecessary duplication of manual monitoring processes could have been avoided had SEEDA handed over more of the monitoring responsibilities to the projects from the outset.

The support of a Jobcentre Plus has been vitally important in *engaging and referring* participants, however, an over reliance on mainstream agencies can deter inactive groups furthest from the labour market. Most projects have revealed particular challenges with engaging employers, heightened by the effects of the recession.

SEEDA ESF programme has provided an opportunity to innovate, leaving a legacy within the project delivery partners. There is, however, concern over the *sustainability* of this activity. Nevertheless, there is the possibility that the capacity which SEEDA has helped to create across the South East could provide a legacy through mainstream provision.

1.5 Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** LEPs via their Employment and Skills Boards should provide a strategic steer for the delivery of ESF provision across their patch to ensure that ESF provision meets local need and effectively dovetails with mainstream provision.
- **Recommendation 2:** ESF provision should be aligned with local authority support, particularly for vulnerable families and households. Local authorities should provide an important role in identifying families with multiple problems and in engagement activities and events, where possible.

- **Recommendation 3:** The iterative process of project design and development, which SEEDA initiated for this programme should be adopted by other CFOs, moving forward.
- **Recommendation 4:** Providers should put in place robust and effective systems to track the outcomes of ESF participants. This will take on even greater prevalence for mainstream providers with the move to an outcomes-based payment system.
- **Recommendation 5:** There are a number of areas where gaps in provision may emerge and which the ESF programme should target, including:
 - Those economically inactive and outside of the benefits system. This group should continue to be a priority for the programme since they will not be addressed by the Work Programme.
 - Those aged 24 and above and looking to gain an NVQ level 2 and those aged over 25 looking to seek a NVQ level 3 should be supported. Plans to remove the entitlement to free training should be addressed by the ESF programme, particularly those in low paid work least able to afford training.
 - NEET groups. ESF could enhance new plans to replace the withdrawn Education Maintenance Allowance with a new bursary fund.
 - Families with multiple problems.
- **Recommendation 6:** Projects like Gateway to SusCon and EnviroSkills should be encouraged to help build the capacity amongst employers in the South East to respond to the business opportunities which the Green Deal presents in the developing Environmental Technologies sector.
- **Recommendation 7:** Skills Academies in the South East should be aligned with ESF to maximise mainstream delivery of skills training in the Green Economy, including the Green Deal and Off Shore renewable energy.
- **Recommendation 8:** Greater synergy between projects across priorities is required in order to strengthen both recruitment and retention by equality groups, particularly in sectors which may be under-represented (e.g. environmental technologies).
- **Recommendation 9:** Priority 2 projects will need to proactively promote courses to equality groups. For example, Environmental Management Systems and generic courses within the construction industry are thought to be of more interest to women.

2. Introduction

This report presents the key evaluation findings of the South East England Development Agency's (SEEDA) European Social Fund Programme 2007-2010.

2.1 Overview of the European Social Fund

The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the Structural Funds designed to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union. The current programme runs from 2007 to 2013 and covers England and Gibraltar. The programme supports EU, national and regional strategies to tackle weaknesses in the labour market. These include: low employment rates and high inactivity rates amongst disadvantaged groups; and, poor basic skill levels and a high number of individuals who lack level 2 qualifications. The overall strategic objective of the programme is to support sustainable economic growth and social inclusion in England by contributing to policies to increase the employment rate and to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce.

ESF is delivered as a single programme in England with three priorities for Regional Competitiveness and Employment funding. These priorities focus on:

- **Priority 1:** extending employment opportunities for unemployed and inactive people
- **Priority 2:** developing a skilled and adaptable workforce
- **Priority 3:** technical assistance

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has overall responsibility for ESF funds in England. While each region has its own ESF allocation to fund projects to address its regional jobs and skills needs. These are set out in the regional ESF Framework.

The 2007-2013 England ESF programme is investing £5 billion over seven years of which £2.5 billion is from the ESF and £2.5 billion is national funding. The South East region received £188 million in ESF funding which is distributed by Co-financing organisations (CFOs). SEEDA is one of four Co-financing organisations. The other CFOs include the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) which replaced the Learning and Skills Council from April 2010; DWP/Jobcentre Plus; and, the National Offender Management Services (NOMS) which became a CFO in 2009.

2.2 SEEDA's ESF Programme

SEEDA's ESF Programme aimed to fund projects that will reduce the effects of social disadvantage and promote economic inclusion across the South East Region, at sub-regional and/or regional level.

Particular attention has been paid to: key target groups most disadvantaged in the labour market and at risk of social and economic exclusion; the most deprived geographical areas (271 of the lowest Super Output Areas nationally fall within the South East) and key sectors all of which are highlighted in the South East ESF Framework.

2.2.1 Priority 1

The objective of Priority 1 is to increase employment and to reduce unemployment and inactivity. It is intended to help tackle barriers to work faced by disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities and health conditions¹, lone parents and other disadvantaged parents², older workers³, ethnic minorities, and people with low or no qualifications. It also aims to help young people make a successful transition to the world of work, in particular those not in education, employment or training (NEET), or at risk of becoming NEET.

SEEDA has specifically focused ESF funding under Priority 1 to provide support to extend employment opportunities through enterprise start-up, self-employment and social enterprise. SEEDA's allocation of ESF Funding in this priority is £2.4 million.

2.2.2 Priority 2

The objective of Priority 2 is to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce by: reducing the number of workers without basic skills; increasing the number of workers qualified to level 2 and, where justified, to level 3; reducing gender segregation in the workforce; and developing managers and workers in small enterprises. There is a particular focus on the low skilled and on addressing skills shortages.

SEEDA's focus for ESF funding under Priority 2 is to provide training at levels 3+ to specific priority sectors in the form of enhanced 'packages' of support, aligned with specific industry skills needs that bring together mainstream provision with ESF support. SEEDA ESF Funding is approximately £4.4 million in priority 2.

2.2.3 SEEDA's ESF Projects

The SEEDA ESF Programme consists of seven projects:

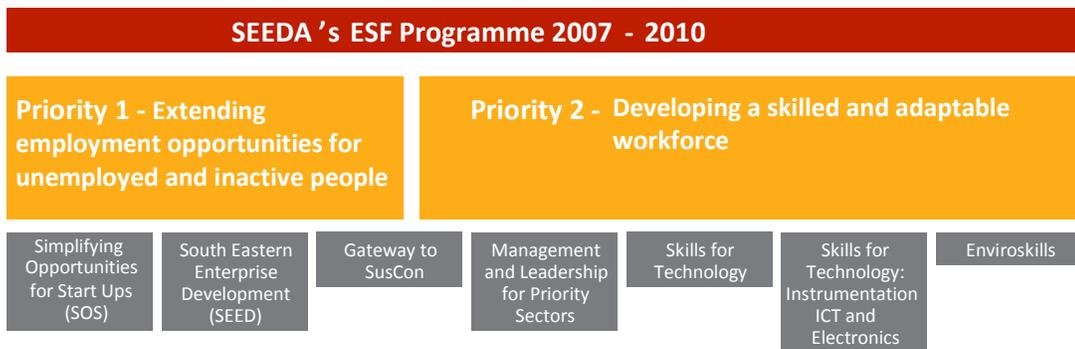
- Simplifying opportunities for Start Ups (Priority 1)
- South Eastern Enterprise Development (Priority 1)
- Gateway to SusCon (Priorities 1 and 2)
- Management and Leadership for Priority Sectors (Priority 2)
- Skills for Technology (Priority 2)
- Skills for Technology: Instrumentation, ICT and Electronics (Priority 2)
- Enviroskills (Priority 2)

¹ All references to people with disabilities include people with mental health conditions and learning difficulties or disabilities.

² Disadvantaged parents include unemployed and inactive parents other than lone parents, who face barriers to work

³ 'Older workers' are people aged 50 and over

Figure 2.1: Programme and Projects



2.3 Evaluation aims and objectives

This Evaluation will report on the performance of SEEDA's ESF Programme including the seven projects that have been co-financed by the Regional Development Agency between 2007 and 2010.

The Evaluation activity will measure the impact of SEEDA's ESF programme and:

- Evaluate the progress of the projects towards delivering their targets and activities as set out in the projects' Schedules 4 and 5, highlighting challenges and successes
- Evaluate the progress of the SEEDA ESF Programme 2007-10 towards delivering the targets and activities set out in the CFO Plan
- Evaluate the extent to which the programme has achieved alignment between the CFO Plan and domestic employment and skills programmes
- Evaluate the effectiveness of ESF in engaging with the changed economic and labour market conditions since the ESF Framework 2007-10 and CFO Plan were written
- Identify any lessons learnt and opportunities for improvement to inform future provision.

Alongside this activity, the funded evaluation activity represents an opportunity to:

- Identify examples of good practice
- Prepare qualitative case studies
- Highlight opportunities to mainstream successful approaches funded by ESF in assisting individuals to secure employment and improve their skills
- Capture the impact of the ESF programme on regional and local labour markets and participant groups
- Capture the impact of the Cross-cutting themes on the project delivery and programme
- Assess project sustainability in light of the future public spending constraints.

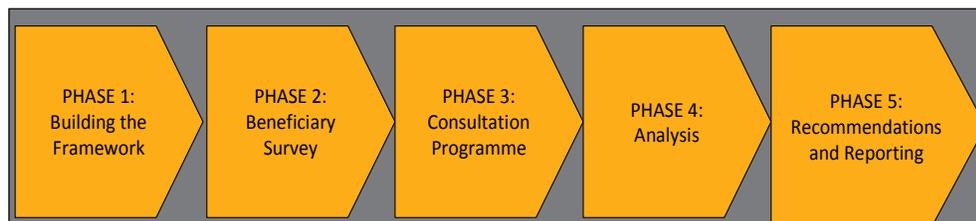
2.4 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was carried out using the following methods:

- Quantitative analysis of participant management information to assess programme outputs
- A telephone survey on a sample basis of programme participants to assess progression towards and achievement of programme outcomes
- Interviews with the project management staff involved in delivering ESF as well as the SEEDA ESF Team and match-funding projects
- Project case studies, including site visits, interviews with managers and focus groups with ESF participants.

An overview of the five-phase methodology for conducting the evaluation is shown in figure 2.2 below. The approach was underpinned by the Impact Evaluation Framework (IEF) guidance. A 'project logic chain' was developed during phase 1, as well as an evaluation framework which set out precisely what evaluation activity would take place.

Figure 2.2: The approach



3. Background and context

3.1 Overview of the South East economy

The South East is one of the UK's most successful and prosperous regions, with strong potential for further growth. In 2006 regional GVA was £164bn, second only to London both in terms of size and GVA per head. A highly skilled workforce attracts high-value businesses to locate in the South East, providing sustained employment growth yielding high average incomes. Low unemployment and high vacancy rates suggests a dynamic labour market that serves the region's population well.

However, region-level analysis hides significant intra-regional variations in industrial and occupational structure. This leads to income inequality, which, if left unchecked, is likely to become more pronounced. The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) for the South East 2006-2016, 'A Framework for Sustainable Prosperity' identifies three broad economic 'contours'. The Inner South East, bordering London, is generally wealthy and accounts for much of the South East's strong economic performance. The Rural South East accounts for 80 per cent of the region's land mass, a third of its business base and a quarter of its population. Dispersed pockets of deprivation can be found in this area, although developments in ICT could encourage remote working and business in rural locations; spreading regional income more evenly. Finally, the Coastal South East is characterised by a string of distinctive coastal cities and towns which attract visitors from around the UK and abroad. However, it is an area which has been in persistent economic and social decline and accounts for 85 per cent of multiple deprivation in the region.

3.1.1 Worklessness

At 79 per cent, the overall employment rate in the South East in 2007 was the highest in the country. Claimant unemployment was 1.6 per cent in 2007, although the ILO measure, which includes those actively seeking work but not claiming benefits, was 4.5 per cent in 2007⁴. Some 184,000 residents across the region were seeking work but unable to find a job or unwilling to fill the vacancies available. Worklessness disproportionately affects groups such as the lowest qualified, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, lone parents and older workers.

There are also considerable intra-regional disparities in employment rates which is partly the result of demographic characteristics but also relate to spatial factors which alter individuals' chances of employment depending on where they live. Geographical 'hotspots' for worklessness include: Gosport, Portsmouth, Southampton, Test Valley, Reading, Folkestone, Swale, Thanet, Brighton & Hove and Hastings.

3.1.2 Skills

In 2005 the National Employers Skills Survey suggested that businesses have problems in finding people with the relevant skills. Although the South East had the highest proportion of people employed in knowledge based sectors, where

⁴ Annual Population Survey, 2007

graduates made up more than 40 per cent of the workforce, there were still significant basic skill needs across the region with one million people possessing poor literacy skills and 900,000 with poor numeracy skills. Although the growth of the knowledge economy has increased overall prosperity in the region, there was a trend towards increasing polarisation of skill levels which threatened to hinder labour market progression.

3.2 The impact of the recession

3.2.1 Context

The delivery of the ESF programme coincided with a global financial crisis and subsequent downturn in the real economy. The UK economy went into recession in the second quarter of 2007 and continued to contract for six consecutive quarters until the final quarter of 2009 - the longest period since quarterly figures were first recorded in 1955. The UK economy is still operating below its pre-recession and trend levels of output.

The impacts of the recession have been felt throughout the UK and the South East is no exception to this. GVA in the South East fell by 4.7% during 2009 – marginally higher than the UK-wide decline of 4.6%. Despite this, the region escaped with a 2.4% fall in resident employment; lower than the 2.7% decrease nationwide. The higher average skill levels of the South East's workforce helped to resist higher decreases in employment, with firms hoarding labour to a greater extent in anticipation of the recovery. Manufacturing and construction were the sectors hardest hit by the recession, with employment falling by around 10% in both sectors.⁵

However, the recession did not impact on all areas, or demographic groups, of the South East equally. Differences in industrial structure and the skill levels of local residents are both factors that will affect the spatial distribution of the recession. Areas that have existing economic weaknesses are often hit the hardest by downturns, as are disadvantaged demographic groups. Between 2007 and 2009, the percentage of those all those in employment that hold no qualifications fell from 7.4% to 5.7%; the respective figures for those qualified to NVQ4 or above rose from 34.2% to 36.8%⁶. As noted above, it is these areas and demographic groups that were targeted by ESF funding.

3.2.2 Programme effects

The recession has had a major impact on the ESF Programme on the whole and SEEDA's ESF projects in particular. There have been fewer job opportunities available (affecting Priority 1) while businesses have been less willing to invest in training budgets or release staff for training (affecting Priority 2). The recession has inevitably impacted upon employer engagement, with employers, and SMEs in particular, being in 'survival mode'.

The unprecedented scale of the economic downturn has therefore impacted on the priorities and outcomes for the ESF programme. This has necessitated a change in

⁵ All data in section 2.8 is from Oxford Economics

⁶ Annual Population Survey

focus by partners in order to respond to the challenges of the recession. There have been challenges to ensure that the focus remains on the most deprived, rather than the recently unemployed – often higher skilled professional workers which have accounted for a growing proportion of new JSA claimants. The long term economically inactive and equality groups have been placed at greater risk of exclusion from the labour market in the face of increased competition for fewer vacancies. Project partners have therefore needed to maintain a dual focus on those most disadvantaged in the labour market while supporting those individuals who have recently lost their jobs.

The recession and slow economic recovery has clearly had a greater negative impact on some sectors which are important to the region and to SEEDA's economic development strategy. Construction is one such sector that has been affected by the down turn. SEEDA has sought to utilise ESF funding under priority 1 and priority 2 to kick start-training as part of an Industry led Sustainable Construction Skills Academy.

3.3 The changing political and policy context

As the UK economy started to stabilise towards the end of 2009, there was a widespread consensus that action needed to be taken to reduce the size of the structural public sector budget deficit. The formation of a coalition government in May 2010 led to the target of eliminating the structural deficit by 2014-15. Significant reform in virtually all areas of public spending is required to achieve this, including employment and skills. Cuts to public spending could also affect match funding for ESF programmes in the UK.

Train to Gain, has been replaced with the SME skills programme; shifting more responsibility on to employers to take responsibility for workforce development. The Government also plans to remove the entitlement to free training for a first level two qualification that currently exists for those aged over 25. Support for basic skills training in numeracy in literacy will continue, although the funding of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for people not in settled communities will be abolished in 2012.

There is, however, now a greater emphasis on apprenticeships. The recent budget (March 2011) provided £180 million for up to 50,000 additional apprenticeships over the next four years. The Government will create 40,000 new apprenticeship places targeted on young people not in employment, education or training through progression from the work experience programme. To address the specific barriers faced by SMEs in accessing apprenticeships, the Government will support business consortia to stimulate 10,000 new Higher Level Apprenticeships schemes, supported by grants.

Prime Contractors have now been appointed for the new Work Programme in the South East. This is the Government's flagship programme, which aims to provide a coherent support package for those out of work. However, it will be accompanied by stricter conditions for out-of-work benefit claimants, with support being removed for those who refuse jobs they are offered or those who miss interview appointments with support providers. In addition, those on Incapacity Benefits are to be required to attend a Work Capability Assessment. The likely outcome is that

many of those who currently claim Incapacity Benefit will no longer be eligible to do so.

The DWP has a Framework Agreement for the provision of employment related support services including the new Work Programme and the next round of ESF contracts. It is likely that Prime Contractors (and their appointed supply chains) will be responsible for the delivery of co-financed ESF provision in the region. There will be a need to continue to monitor the potential impact of national welfare to work policy changes on future ESF programme performance.

An important institutional change is the move from Regional Development Agencies to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). It is early days for the emerging LEPs and their potential role in relation to either mainstream or European funded programmes is not clear. However, it is reasonable to assume that they will have a strategic interest in the provision of employment and skills services.

3.4 Implications for ESF provision in the South East

Economic output continues to be sluggish as the global debt crisis continues to exacerbate volatile financial markets threatening economic recovery. The Office of Budgetary Responsibility has already revised down its figures for economic growth (1.7 per cent growth in 2011, down from 2.1 per cent) while revising up its forecasts for public sector net borrowing. In terms of the macro economic context it is unlikely that conditions will improve markedly over the remainder of the current ESF programme.

Economic forecasts suggest that the South East will recover more quickly than other regions, though falling significantly short of growth achieved in recent years. Recovery of employment levels is expected to lag behind productivity, with a slow return to pre-recession levels of employment. However, recent evidence suggests that in some parts of the region vacancy levels are increasing slowly, although redundancy notifications and access to finance continue to remain a problem. This is likely to continue to impact on the ability of the programme in the South East to achieve its targets.

As such the priorities for intervention are likely to remain the same. The need will continue to support both long term and newly unemployed people and to help stimulate recruitment and training initiatives within sectors and communities where the labour market is most vulnerable. This will mean ensuring that ESF helps to develop new provision for which there would not otherwise be sufficient funding.

The Governments decision to close all Regional Developments Agencies and thus removing one of the key Co-Financing Organisations will have consequences for the remainder of the programme. Responsibility for economic development and regeneration in England is being passed onto successor bodies, including LEPs which will not act as CFOs. SEEDA has provided a level of flexibility in enabling ESF to meet both demand and supply side factors in addressing market failure across the South East. It will be more challenging for central Government departments and national agencies to respond to local needs.

4. Outputs and performance

4.1 The performance framework

The Regional Framework is a high level document which outlines how the European Social Fund (ESF) Programme will contribute to addressing employment and skills priorities in the South East. These regional priorities are an expression of those contained in the ESF Operational Plan for England.

The Framework provides the indicators against which targets are set and outputs are measured. It also provides the framework for how Co-Financing Organisations will develop and implement their ESF plans. SEEDA's targets and outputs are an apportionment of national and regional targets and detailed in their ESF Co-Financing plans.

4.2 Programme outputs

The information presented in this section is sourced from the ESF Output database consisting of data collected by SEEDA throughout the duration of the programme. Where possible we compare the outputs data to targets set out in ESF Supplementary Co-Financing plan 2008-10. However we also present additional outputs and outcomes achieved for which there were no targets.

4.2.1 Headline outputs

Overall there were 1,859 participants taking part in the Priority 1 projects (Gateway to SusCon, SOS and SEED).

- Priority 1 greatly exceeded its targets for the number of unemployed participants, with almost three quarters of participants being classed as unemployed before starting the programme
- The target for the recruitment of economically inactive participants was also exceeded, to a lesser extent
- The Priority 1 target for recruiting participants aged 14 to 19 and NEET was not quite met

Figure 4.1: Priority 1 recruitment outputs

Indicator	Actual outputs		Targets		Variation
	Number	%	Number	%	%
Total number of participants	1,859	-	2,930	-	-
Participants who are unemployed	1,357	73.0	710	24.2	+48.8
Participants who are inactive	422	22.7	585	20.0	+22.7
Participants who are 14-19 NEET	12	0.6	26	0.9	-0.3

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011

In terms of the results achieved by the Priority 1 projects, there was mixed success. The headlines for the results outputs are:

- Priority 1 did not meet its target for the number of participants in employment on leaving the programme
- The target for the number and percentage of participants in employment six months after leaving the programme was also not met; however this is only based on SOS and SEED participants
- The Priority 1 projects exceeded their target for the proportion of participants who were previously economically inactive being engaged in jobsearch activity or further learning on leaving the programme
- A small proportion of participants who were unemployed or economically inactive before the programme were in education or training on leaving the programme; no targets were set for this indicator
- The target for 14-19 NEETS to be in education, employment or training was not met, as none of the participants previously classed as NEET achieved this
- Just over one in ten Priority 1 participants upskilled during the programme, by achieving a part or full qualification at a higher level than that of which they held before the programme; no targets were set for this indicator.

Figure 4.2: Priority 1 results outputs

Indicator	Actual outputs		Targets		Variation
	Number	%	Number	%	%
Participants in work on leaving	381	20.5	1,071	36.6	-16.1
Participants in work six months after leaving*	359	21.9	1,303	44.5	NA
Economically inactive participants engaged in jobsearch activity or further learning**	188	44.5	252	43.1	+1.4
Participants going into education or training on leaving***	17	1.2	NA	NA	NA
14-19 NEETS or at risk in education, employment or training on leaving	0	0.0	12	46.1	-46.1
Participants that upskilled during the programme****	205	11.0	NA	NA	NA

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. * This data was only collected for SOS and SEED, therefore the % is calculated from the 1,640 participants from SOS and SEED. ** Calculated from the number of participants who were economically inactive before the programme who were then classed as unemployed or in education on leaving the programme. *** Calculated from the number of participants who were unemployed or economically inactive before the programme. **** Calculated from the number of participants that gained a part or full qualification at a higher level than that which they held before the programme

Overall there were 4,327 participants taking part in Priority 2 projects (EnviroSkills, Skills for Technology: Instrumentation, ICT and Electronics, Gateway to SusCon, Skills for Technology and Management and Leadership for Priority Sectors).

- Priority 2 exceeded its target for the proportion of participants without basic skills, as it did not target to recruit any however one in ten Priority 2 participants had no qualifications
- The targets for both the recruitment of participants without level 2 qualifications and the recruitment of participants without level 3 qualifications were both exceeded

Figure 4.3: Priority 2 recruitment outputs

Indicator	Actual outputs		Targets		Variation
	Number	%	Number	%	%
Total number of participants	4,327	-	6,722	-	-
Participants without basic skills*	440	10.2	0	0	+10.2
Participants without level 2 qualifications	542	12.5	300	4.5	+8.0
Participants without level 3 qualifications	1,609	37.2	2,199	32.7	+4.5

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. * Calculated from the number of participants with no qualifications

In terms of the results achieved by the Priority 2 projects:

- No participants gained basic skills; this was the target from the outset
- The target for the number of participants achieving a part qualification, i.e. gaining a unit or module of level 2 or above, was greatly exceeded, with the vast majority of Priority 2 participants achieving a part qualification
- Only a small number of participants that previously had a qualification of level 2 or below achieved a full level 3 qualification, far below the targeted number
- Over a third of Priority 2 participants upskilled during the programme by achieving a part or full qualification at a level higher than that of which they held before the programme; no targets were set for this indicator

Figure 4.4: Priority 2 results outputs

Indicator	Actual outputs		Targets		Variation
	Number	%	Number	%	%
Participants gaining basic skills	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Participants gaining level 2 qualifications (part qualifications at level 2 and above)*	3965	91.6	900	13.4	+78.2
Participants gaining level 3 qualifications (who were previously without a level 3)	3	0.2 ⁷	548	24.9	-24.7
Participants that upskilled during the programme**	1529	35.3	NA	NA	NA

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. * Calculated from the number of participants that gained a unit or module of level 2 or above. ** Calculated from the number of participants that gained a part or full qualification at a higher level than that which they held before the programme

⁷ This only includes participants who achieved a full level 3 qualification (who previously had less than level 3). However, a large number of participants gained a unit or module of a level 3 qualification, however these are not included here.

4.2.2 Headline equalities data

Overall Priority 1 had mixed success in meeting its target for recruiting participants from minority groups. The headlines for the Priority 1 equalities targets are:

- Priority 1 fell slightly short of its target for participants with a disability or health condition
- The target for participants aged 50 and over to take part in Priority 1 projects was exceeded
- Priority 1 significantly exceeded its targets for recruiting participants from ethnic minorities
- The target to achieve a 50:50 gender balance across all participants in Priority 1 was not met

Figure 4.5: Priority 1 equalities outputs

Indicator	Actual outputs		Targets		Variation
	Number	%	Number	%	%
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	348	18.7	-	22	-3.3
Participants who are lone parents	NA	NA	-	12	NA
Participants aged 50 or over	433	23.3	-	18	+5.3
Participants from ethnic minorities*	461	24.8	-	11	+13.8
Female participants	798	43.0	-	51	-8.0

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011* Ethnic minorities classed as non-White British participants

Priority 2 succeeded in meeting half of its targets in relation to recruiting participants from minority groups, however it significantly failed to meet the other half of its targets. The headlines for the Priority 2 equalities targets are:

- Priority 2 significantly underachieved in recruiting participants with a disability or health condition
- The target to have one in five Priority 2 participants aged 50 or over was met and exceeded
- Priority 2 met and slightly exceeded its target for recruiting participants from ethnic minorities
- The target to have females represent half of Priority 2 participants was not met, with a sizeable shortfall

Figure 4.6: Priority 2 equalities outputs

Indicator	Actual outputs		Targets		Variation
	Number	%	Number	%	%
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	93	2.1	-	15	-12.9
Participants aged 50 or over	1000	23.1	-	20	+3.1
Participants from ethnic minorities*	433	10.0	-	9	+1.0
Female participants	868	20.1	-	50	-29.9

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011* Ethnic minorities classed as non-White British participants

Overall both Priority 1 and 2 succeeded in meeting their targets for the recruitment of participants aged 50 and over and participants from ethnic minorities, particularly Priority 1. However, both Priority 1 and 2 failed to meet their targets of recruiting participants with a disability or health condition and recruiting female participants, with Priority 2 particularly falling well short of these targets.

4.3 Priority 1 projects

This section provides more detailed outputs for the individual projects within Priority 1. Where possible, outputs have been reported against targets set at the start of the project, with comparisons being made between the targets and the actual results.

4.3.1 Gateway to SusCon

Gateway to SusCon was a project delivered under both Priority 1 and Priority 2. Since the targets for this project were aggregated for both priorities, this section reports on the outputs of both SusCon under Priority 1 (SusCon P1) and SusCon under Priority 2 (SusCon P2).

Overall the project recruited 1178 participants; 219 for Priority 1 and 959 for Priority 2.⁸ This was slightly lower than the original target set of 1250 recruits. SusCon P1 recruited a large proportion of unemployed and economically inactive participants; however, the overall targets for the proportion of unemployed and inactive participants recruited were not met. The targets for the proportion of recruits without relevant level 2 or level 3 qualifications were also not met.

⁸ Gateway to SusCon was a project delivered under both Priority 1 and Priority 2. Overall 1946 participants enrolled on the Gateway to SusCon project over both Priority 1 and 2. However, 768 participants did not finish the course and were therefore classed as 'early leavers', leaving 219 participants in Priority 1 and 959 participants in Priority 2.

Figure 4.7: SusCon recruitment outputs

Indicator	SusCon P1		SusCon P2		Overall		Targets	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total number of participants	219	-	959	-	1178	-	1250	-
Participants who are unemployed	116	53.0	6	0.6	122	10.4	400	32.0
Participants who are inactive	38	17.4	3	0.3	41	3.5	115	9.2
Participants who are 14-19 NEET	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	NA	NA
Participants without relevant level 2 qualifications	67	30.6	105	10.9	172	14.6	400	32.0
Participants without relevant level 3 qualifications	93	42.5	265	27.6	358	30.4	600	48.0

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. Targets sourced from SEEDA ESF Co-Financing Contract - Schedule 4 Contract Payments Profile.

For SusCon P1, results were based around the employment status of participants before and after taking part in the programme. In total eight participants were in employment on leaving the programme. Over half of the SusCon P1 participants classed as economically inactive before the programme were engaged in jobsearch activity or further learning on leaving the programme. A small number of participants who were previously unemployed or inactive went into education or training after the programme. There were no targets set at the outset of the programme for these indicators, therefore no comparisons can be made.

Figure 4.8: SusCon P1 results outputs

Indicator	SusCon	
	Number	%
Participants in work on leaving	8	3.7
Economically inactive participants engaged in jobsearch activity or further learning*	20	52.6
Participants going into education or training on leaving**	3	1.9

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. * Calculated from the number of participants who were economically inactive before the programme who were then classed as unemployed or in education on leaving the programme.

** Calculated from the number of participants who were unemployed or economically inactive before the programme.

The figure below shows the employment status of SusCon P1 participants both before and after the programme. Of the eight participants who were in employment on leaving the programme, half of them were previously unemployed, with the others in full time education or training or economically inactive.

Figure 4.9: Employment status before and after – SusCon P1

After Before	Employed	Into education or training	Unemployed	Economically inactive	Total - Before
Employed	0	1	1	1	3
Full time education or training	2	57	2	1	62
Unemployed	4	0	109	3	116
Economically inactive	2	3	17	16	38
Total - After	8	61	129	21	219

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011

The vast majority of SusCon P2 participants were in employment before the programme, as Priority 2 mainly looked at upskilling workers rather than getting participants into employment. However, of the 17 SusCon P2 participants that were not in employment before the programme, 13 of them were in employment after the programme.

In terms of qualifications achieved by SusCon P2 participants during the programme, all 959 of them achieved a unit or module of a level 3 qualification. This was higher than the target of 900 SusCon participants gaining units towards a qualification. The table below shows the qualification level of participants before the programme and also shows that 265 participants (28%) upskilled during the programme by achieving a part qualification at a level higher than that of which they held before the programme.

Figure 4.10: % that gained part qualification by previous qualification level – SusCon P2

	Gained unit or module of level 3	
	Number	% of total
None	50	100.0
Level 1 or equivalent	55	100.0
Level 2 or equivalent	160	100.0
Level 3 or equivalent	368	100.0
Level 4 or equivalent	274	100.0
Level 5 or equivalent or higher	48	100.0
Unknown	4	100.0
Total	959	100.0
Target no. of SusCon participants to gain units towards part qualification	900	72.0

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. Targets sourced from SEEDA ESF Co-Financing Contract - Schedule 4 Contract Payments Profile.

A number of SusCon P1 participants also gained a qualification during their time on the programme. Over three quarters of P1 participants (168 participants) gained a level 3 qualification. Of these 168 participants, 55 of them previously had a

qualification level of level 2 or below. This was despite the original target for SusCon overall being for no participants to get a full qualification.

The characteristics of SusCon participants against the ESF indicators can be seen in Figure 4.11 below. Targets were not available for these indicators on a project level therefore no comparisons are made. We see that almost a quarter of SusCon P1 participants were from ethnic minorities, with over one in five being female. Around three in ten SusCon P2 participants were aged 50 or over, with around one in seven being female.

Figure 4.11: SusCon equalities outputs

Indicator	SusCon P1		SusCon P2	
	Number	%	Number	%
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	15	6.8	29	3.0
Participants aged 50 or over	36	16.4	295	30.8
Participants from ethnic minorities*	53	24.2	97	10.1
Female participants	46	21.0	142	14.8

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011* Ethnic minorities classed as non-White British participants

4.3.2 Opportunities for Start Ups

Overall the Opportunities for Start Ups (SOS) project recruited 490 participants. This was slightly less than the targeted number of 492 participants, but only by a marginal amount. The vast majority of SOS participants were unemployed or economically inactive.

Figure 4.12: SOS recruitment outputs

Indicator	SOS		Target	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total number of participants	490	-	492	-
Participants who are unemployed	423	86.3	NA	NA
Participants who are inactive	52	10.6	NA	NA
Participants who are 14-19 NEET	12	2.4	NA	NA

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. Targets sourced from SEEDA ESF Co-Financing Contract - Schedule B Contract Payments Profile - Schedule 4.

Only a small proportion of SOS participants were in employment on leaving the programme. However, a large majority of the participants who were economically inactive before starting the programme were engaged in jobsearch activity or further learning on leaving the programme. The target to have over a third of participants in work six months after leaving the programme was not met.

Figure 4.13: SOS results outputs

Indicator	SOS		Target	
	Number	%	Number	%
Participants in work on leaving	15	3.1	NA	NA
Participants in work six months after leaving	81	16.5	168	34.1
Economically inactive participants engaged in jobsearch activity or further learning*	45	86.5	NA	NA
Participants going into education or training on leaving**	1	0.2	NA	NA
14-19 NEETS or at risk in education, employment or training on leaving	0	0.0	NA	NA

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. Targets sourced from SEEDA ESF Co-Financing Contract - Schedule B Contract Payments Profile - Schedule 4.* Calculated from the number of participants who were economically inactive before the programme who were then classed as unemployed or in education on leaving the programme. ** Calculated from the number of participants who were 14-19 NEET, unemployed or economically inactive before the programme.

The figure below shows the employment status of participants both before and after the programme. Almost all of the SOS participants in employment on leaving the programme were previously unemployed, with the other one being economically inactive.

Figure 4.14: Employment status before and after – SOS

After	Employed	Into education or training	Unemployed	Economically inactive	Total - Before
Before					
Employed	0	0	0	0	0
Full time education or training	0	0	3	0	3
14-19 NEET	0	0	12	0	12
Unemployed	14	1	393	15	423
Economically inactive	1	0	45	6	52
Total - After	15	1	453	21	490

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011

A number of SOS participants also gained a qualification during their time on the programme. Almost six in ten participants (284 participants) gained a level 3 qualification. Of these 284 participants, over half of them (150 participants) previously had a qualification level of level 2 or below.

The characteristics of SOS participants against the ESF indicators can be seen in

Figure 4.15 below. Targets were not available for these indicators on a project level therefore no comparisons are made. This shows that over a quarter of SOS participants were aged 50 or over.

Figure 4.15: SOS equalities outputs

Indicator	SOS	
	Number	%
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	32	6.5
Participants who are lone parents	NA	8.0
Participants aged 50 or over	138	28.2
Participants from ethnic minorities*	57	11.6
Female participants	212	43.3

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011* Ethnic minorities classed as non-White British participants

4.3.3 South Eastern Enterprise Development (SEED)

Overall the South Eastern Enterprise Development (SEED) project recruited 1150 participants; this was slightly higher than the original target of 1050. Just over seven in ten participants were unemployed, higher than the original target for unemployed recruits. However, the proportion of economically inactive participants was lower than originally targeted.

Figure 4.16: SEED recruitment outputs

Indicator	SEED		Target	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total number of participants	1150	-	1050	-
Participants who are unemployed	818	71.1	562	53.5
Participants who are inactive	332	28.9	488	46.5
Participants who are 14-19 NEET	0	0.0	NA	NA

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. Targets sourced from SEEDA ESF Co-Financing Contract - Schedule 4 Contract Payments Profile.

The results output figures show that 358 SEED participants were in employment on leaving the programme (31 per cent); this was only slightly below the target figure of 32 per cent. Almost a quarter were in work six months after leaving the programme, which was short of the target of two in five participants being in work. Over a third of participants who were previously economically inactive were engaged in jobsearch activity or further learning on leaving the programme. A small number of participants who were previously unemployed or inactive went into education or training after the programme.

Figure 4.17: SEED results outputs

Indicator	SEED		Target	
	Number	%	Number	%
Participants in work on leaving	358	31.1	336	32.0
Participants in work six months after leaving	278	24.2	420	40.0
Economically inactive participants engaged in jobsearch activity or further learning*	123	37.0	NA	NA
Participants going into education or training on leaving**	13	1.1	NA	NA

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. Targets sourced from SEEDA ESF Co-Financing Contract - Schedule 4 Contract Payments Profile. * Calculated from the number of participants who were economically inactive before the programme who were then classed as unemployed or in education on leaving the programme. ** Calculated from the number of participants who were unemployed or economically inactive before the programme.

The figure below shows the employment status of participants both before and after the programme. Almost a third of the SEED participants in employment on leaving the programme had previously been economically inactive, with the remainder being unemployed.

Figure 4.18: Employment status before and after – SEED

After	Employed	Into education or training	Unemployed	Economically inactive	Total - Before
Before					
Employed	0	0	0	0	0
Unemployed	246	8	535	29	818
Economically inactive	112	5	118	97	332
Total - After	358	13	653	125	1150

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011

The characteristics of SOS participants against the ESF indicators can be seen in Figure 4.19 below. Targets were not available for these indicators on a project level therefore no comparisons are made. This figure shows that over a quarter of SEED participants had a disability or health condition, and around three in ten participants were from ethnic minorities. Almost half of SEED recruits were female.

Figure 4.19: SEED equalities outputs

Indicator	SEED	
	Number	%
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	301	26.2
Participants who are lone parents	NA	3.8
Participants aged 50 or over	259	22.5
Participants from ethnic minorities*	351	30.5
Female participants	540	47.0

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011* Ethnic minorities classed as non-White British participants

4.4 Priority 2 projects

This section provides more detailed outputs for the individual projects within Priority 2. Where possible, outputs have been reported against targets set at the start of the project, with comparisons being made between the targets and the actual results.

4.4.1 Enviroskills

Overall the Enviroskills project recruited 1980 participants; this was almost 200 participants higher than the original targeted number. Over four in ten participants were without level 3 qualifications, with around 15 per cent being without level 2 qualifications.

Figure 4.20: Enviroskills recruitment outputs

Indicator	Enviroskills		Target	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total number of participants	1980	-	1800	-
Participants without level 2 qualifications	304	15.4	NA	NA
Participants without level 3 qualifications	839	42.4	NA	NA

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. Targets sourced from SEEDA ESF Co-Financing Contract - Schedule 4 Contract Payments Profile

In terms of qualifications achieved during the programme, overall almost nine in ten participants achieved a unit or module towards a level 3 or 4 qualification, with the majority of these being at level 3.

Figure 4.21: % that gained a part qualification

Indicator	Enviroskills	
	Number	%
Gained unit or module of level 3	1620	81.8
Gained unit or module of level 4	131	6.6
Total that gained part qualification	1751	88.4

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011

Looking at participants' previous qualification levels, we see that almost nine in ten participants who previously had no qualifications gained a unit or module of level 3 or 4.

Figure 4.22: % that gained part qualification by previous qualification level – Enviroskills

	Gained unit or module of level 3		Gained unit or module of level 4	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
None	236	81.4	21	7.2
Level 1 or equivalent	8	57.1	5	35.7
Level 2 or equivalent	438	81.9	45	8.4
Level 3 or equivalent	466	84.3	27	4.9
Level 4 or equivalent	386	79.8	26	5.4
Level 5 or equivalent or higher	74	81.3	7	7.7
Unknown	12	92.3	0	0.0
Total	1620	81.8	131	6.6

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011

From the above table, we can calculate that 780 participants (39%) upskilled during the programme, by achieving a part qualification at a level higher than that of which they held before the programme.

The characteristics of Enviroskills participants against the ESF indicators can be seen in Figure 4.23 below. Targets were not available for these indicators on a project level therefore no comparisons are made. From this data we see that almost a quarter of participants were aged 50 or over, and almost a third were female.

Figure 4.23: Enviroskills equalities outputs

Indicator	Enviroskills	
	Number	%
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	44	2.2
Participants aged 50 or over	480	24.2
Participants from ethnic minorities*	236	11.9
Female participants	643	32.5

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011* Ethnic minorities classed as non-White British participants

4.4.2 Skills for Technology: Instrumentation, ICT and Electronics

Overall the Skills for Technology: Instrumentation, ICT and Electronics (ST1) project recruited 856 participants; this was slightly below the original target of 900 participants. Over four in ten participants were without level 3 qualifications, with 9 per cent being without level 2 qualifications.

Figure 4.24: ST1 recruitment outputs

Indicator	ST1		Target	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total number of participants	856	-	900	-
Participants without level 2 qualifications	77	9.0	NA	NA
Participants without level 3 qualifications	350	40.9	NA	NA

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. Targets sourced from SEEDA ESF Co-Financing Contract - Schedule 4 Contract Payments Profile.

In terms of qualifications achieved during the programme, all 856 participants achieved a unit or module of a level 3 qualification, regardless of their qualification level prior to the programme. The table below the qualification level of participants before the programme, and also shows that 350 participants (41%) upskilled during the programme, by achieving a part qualification at a level higher than that of which they held before the programme.

Figure 4.25: % that gained part qualification by previous qualification level – ST1

	Gained unit or module of level 3	
	Number	% of total
None	58	100.0
Level 1 or equivalent	19	100.0
Level 2 or equivalent	273	100.0
Level 3 or equivalent	449	100.0
Level 4 or equivalent	35	100.0
Level 5 or equivalent or higher	21	100.0
Unknown	1	100.0
Total	856	100.0

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011

In terms of the targets set out for ST1, the project over achieved in terms of the number and proportion of individuals gaining units towards NVQ levels 3 and 4. The project hit its target for the number of individuals without level 3 prior to the programme achieving a unit or module of level 3 exactly. However, no individual gained units higher than NVQ level 4 despite targets being set for 100 participants to do so.

Figure 4.26: ST1 results outputs

	ST1 outputs		Targets	
	Number	%	Number	%
Individuals gaining units towards NVQ Levels 3 & 4	856	100.0	800	88.9
Individuals without NVQ 3 gaining unit/module of NVQ 3	350	38.9	350	38.9
Individuals gaining units higher than NVQ levels 3 & 4	0	0.0	100	11.1

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. Targets sourced from SEEDA ESF Co-Financing Contract - Schedule 4

The characteristics of ST1 participants against the ESF indicators can be seen in Figure 4.27 below. Targets were not available for these indicators on a project level therefore no comparisons are made. From this data we see that only a small proportion of participants were female or had a disability or health condition.

Figure 4.27: ST1 equalities outputs

Indicator	ST1	
	Number	%
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	10	1.2
Participants aged 50 or over	141	16.5
Participants from ethnic minorities*	41	4.8
Female participants	16	1.9

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011* Ethnic minorities classed as non-White British participants

4.4.3 Skills for Technology

Overall the Skills for Technology (ST2) project recruited 399 participants. Over three in ten of these participants did not have level 3 qualifications, with around 11 per cent not having a level 2 qualification.

Figure 4.28: ST2 recruitment outputs

Indicator	ST2	
	Number	%
Total number of participants	399	-
Participants without level 2 qualifications	45	11.3
Participants without level 3 qualifications	124	31.1

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011

In terms of qualifications gained during the programme, all 399 participants achieved a unit or module of a level 3 or 4 qualification, with the large majority of these being for level 3. The table below shows the qualification level of participants before the programme, and also shows that 128 participants (32%) upskilled during the programme by achieving a part qualification at a level higher than that of which they held before the programme.

Figure 4.29: % that gained part qualification by previous qualification level – ST2

	Gained unit or module of level 3		Gained unit or module of level 4	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
None	42	100.0	0	0.0
Level 1 or equivalent	3	100.0	0	0.0
Level 2 or equivalent	77	97.5	2	2.5
Level 3 or equivalent	117	96.7	4	3.3
Level 4 or equivalent	88	95.7	4	4.3
Level 5 or equivalent or higher	32	88.9	4	11.1
Unknown	26	100.0	0	0.0
Total	385	96.5	14	3.5

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011

The characteristics of ST2 participants against the ESF indicators can be seen in Figure 4.30 below. Targets were not available for these indicators on a project level therefore no comparisons are made. This data shows that a small proportion of the participants were female or had a disability or health condition, with just over one in ten being from an ethnic minority.

Figure 4.30: ST2 equalities outputs

Indicator	ST2	
	Number	%
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	8	2.0
Participants aged 50 or over	73	18.3
Participants from ethnic minorities*	44	11.0
Female participants	25	6.3

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011* Ethnic minorities classed as non-White British participants

4.4.4 Management & Leadership for Priority Sectors

Overall the Management and Leadership for Priority Sectors (MLPS) project recruited 133 participants, significantly lower than the original target of 390 participants.

Figure 4.31: MLPS recruitment outputs

Indicator	MLPS		Target	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total number of participants	133	-	390	-
Participants without level 2 qualifications	11	8.3	NA	NA
Participants without level 3 qualifications	31	23.3	NA	NA

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. Targets sourced from SEEDA ESF Co-Financing Contract - Schedule B Contract Payments Profile - Schedule 4.

In terms of qualifications gained during the course, around 14 per cent of participants gained a level 3 qualification and three per cent gained a level 5 qualification or higher. The table below shows the qualification level of participants

before the programme, and also shows that 6 participants (5%) upskilled during the programme by achieving a full qualification at a level higher than that of which they held before the programme.

Figure 4.32: % that gained full qualification by previous qualification level – MLPS

	Gained level 3		Gained level 5 or higher	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Level 1 or equivalent	1	9.1	0	0.0
Level 2 or equivalent	2	10.0	1	5.0
Level 3 or equivalent	7	21.2	1	3.0
Level 4 or equivalent	6	14.3	1	2.4
Level 5 or equivalent or higher	1	6.7	1	6.7
Unknown	2	16.7	0	0.0
Total	19	14.3	4	3.0

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011

The characteristics of MLPS participants against the ESF indicators can be seen in Figure 4.33 below. Targets were not available for these indicators on a project level therefore no comparisons are made. The figure shows us that while only a small proportion of participants were aged 50 or over or had a disability or health condition, almost a third of participants were female and over one in ten were from ethnic minorities.

Figure 4.33: MLPS equalities outputs

Indicator	MLPS	
	Number	%
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	2	1.5
Participants aged 50 or over	11	8.3
Participants from ethnic minorities*	15	11.3
Female participants	42	31.6

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011* Ethnic minorities classed as non-White British participants

4.5 Summary

The overall number of participants on the programme has fallen some way short of original targets. However, Priority 1 has greatly exceeded its targets for the number of unemployed (+48%) and economically inactive participants (+23%). Priority 2 has over performed in the proportion of participants without basic skills (+10%) and in recruiting participants without level 2 and level 3 qualifications.

In terms of the results achieved there was mixed success. Priority 1 did not meet its target for the number of participants in employment on leaving the programme (-16%) although exceeding the target for the proportion of participants who were previously economically inactive being engaged in jobsearch activity or further learning on leaving the programme. In Priority 2 the target for the number of participants achieving a part qualification was greatly exceeded, with the vast

majority of Priority 2 participants achieving a part qualification; however, only a small number of participants that previously had a qualification of level 2 or below achieved a full level 3 qualification, far below the target.

Overall the programme succeeded in meeting its equality targets for the recruitment of participants aged 50+ as well as participants from ethnic minorities, particularly in Priority 1. However, both Priority 1 and 2 failed to meet their targets of recruiting participants with a disability or health condition and recruiting female participants, with Priority 2 particularly falling well short of these targets.

The analysis of programme outputs identifies some areas of underperformance. It is reasonable to assert that the effects of the economic downturn have made it more difficult to achieve job output targets and higher level qualifications, as unemployment continues to rise and employers are less likely to recruit or invest in training. We will further consider these economic effects on the ESF programme in relation to wider outcomes and impacts.

5. Outcomes and impacts: analysis of the beneficiary survey

5.1 Introduction

A telephone survey was conducted with individuals who had taken part in the projects under evaluation. A separate questionnaire was used for each priority in order to assess beneficiaries' views of the programme, as well as subsequent outcomes they achieved. This section describes and analyses the survey findings.

5.2 Priority 1

5.2.1 Participants' characteristics

Out of the 568 priority beneficiaries who indicated they would be willing to take part in the survey, 230 completed it. This represents a response rate of 40% - extremely high for a telephone survey. This sample size implies a confidence interval of +/- 5% at a 95% confidence level.

Figure 5.1 below shows the age profile of clients. Around two thirds were aged between 25 and 49 upon entry in to the programme. Just under 30 per cent were over 50, with the remaining aged between 16 and 24. The average (mean) age of respondents was 43.

Figure 5.1: Age profile of respondents (all 230 respondents)

Age band	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
16-24	15	6.5
25-49	151	65.7
50+	64	27.8
average age	43	

Figure 5.2 below shows the ethnic profile of survey respondents. Over three quarters were White British, with a further 9% being White Irish. Only 4% were Asian/Asian British and 2% were Black/Black British.

Figure 5.2: Ethnic profile of respondents (all 230 respondents)

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
White British	180	78.3
White Irish	20	8.7
White other	8	3.5
Asian/Asian British	10	4.3
Black/black British	5	2.2
Other ethnic group	7	3.0

The table below shows the number of respondents who are single parents (not living with a partner and caring for a child under 16) or disabled. These are both groups

who were targeted by the ESF programme, as they typically face higher barriers in accessing the labour market. 26% of respondents had a disability and 13% are single parents.

Figure 5.3: Numbers of respondents who are disabled or a single parent

Respondents who are.....	Number	Percentage
Disabled	59	26%
Single parent	31	13%

Three projects in Priority 1 were covered by the survey – SEED, SOS and Gateway to SusCon. A breakdown of respondents by the project they took part in is provided in the table below. Just under three quarters of survey respondents took part in the SEED project, with 24% taking part in SOS. Only six respondents (3%) took part in Gateway to SusCon. The proportional split relates in part to the size of projects and the number of contact details provided.

Figure 5.4: Project taken by respondents (all 230 respondents)

Project	Number	Percentage
SEED	169	73
SOS	55	24
Gateway to SusCon	6	3
Total	230	100

5.2.2 Support received

Almost half of priority 1 survey respondents heard about the employment support projects through Jobcentre Plus, with 16.5% hearing about it through word of mouth. A further 7% saw it advertised on a leaflet or flyer. The high reliance of Jobcentre Plus in promoting and sign-posting individuals to the programme is not surprising given that most unemployed beneficiaries are in receipt of benefits. At the same time the rise in unemployment and the rapid response taken by Jobcentre Plus to assist new claimants may have increased this referral route to ESF projects. This is likely to have impacted on the programmes reach with those furthest removed from the labour market, one of the key target groups for priority 1.

Figure 5.5: 'How did you first hear about the programme?' (all 230 respondents)

Source	Number	Percentage
Job centre	102	44.3
Word of mouth	38	16.5
Advertisement (leaflet/flyer)	17	7.4
Business link	12	5.2
Shaw Trust	11	4.8
Charity	19	8.3
Internet	6	2.6
Work/college	6	2.6
Other	19	8.3

Just over half of respondents had received advice or support on becoming self employed, primarily through the SEED project. Around a third had received coaching or mentoring support, with a handful of beneficiaries also receiving training in how to look for work, information about suitable job vacancies, or contacts to aid the job search process. The type of support received was largely determined by the project taken part in.

Figure 5.6: Main type of support received (all 230 respondents, one answer only)

Type of support	Number	Percentage
Advice or support on becoming self-employed	116	50.4
Coaching or mentoring support	78	33.9
Provided training in how to look for work	15	6.5
Information about suitable job vacancies	4	1.7
Provided contacts to help you look for a job	1	0.4
Provided work experience/placement	0	0.0
Other	16	7.0

The majority of support lasted between one and four months, with 14% receiving support that lasted between four and six months and 10% between one week and a month. Some 4% of beneficiaries received day-long support, and 11% of support lasted over 6 months.

Figure 5.7: Length of support (all 230 respondents)

Length	Number	Percentage
One day	10	4.3
Two-seven days	6	2.6
One week to a month	24	10.4
1-4 months	123	53.5
4-6 months	31	13.5
6-12 months	17	7.4
12+ months	8	3.5

5.2.3 Views of the programme

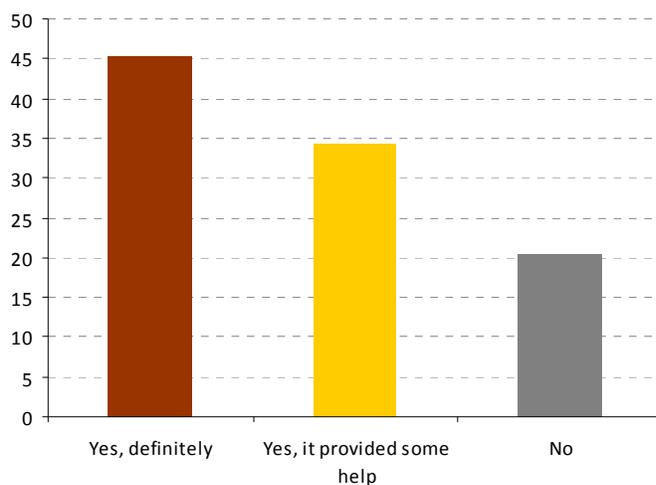
Almost three quarters of survey respondents felt that the length of support was about right for them, with the majority of the remaining respondents stating that support was too short – in some cases that may be a testament to how useful the support was. Just six out of the 230 respondents felt that the support went on for too long.

Figure 5.8: Views of appropriateness of support duration (all 230 respondents)

	Number	Percentage
Too short	54	23.5
About right	170	73.9
Too long	6	2.6

Only a fifth of beneficiaries stated that the programme provided no help in finding employment. The programme provided some help for 35% of beneficiaries, whilst 45% responded saying that the programme definitely aided them in their search for employment.

Figure 5.9: Responses to the question 'would you say the project improved your chances of employment?' (all 230 respondents)



The table below breaks down the information above by the project undertaken by respondents. The employment prospects of SOS beneficiaries appear to have been raised the most by the programme, with 51% stating that the project definitely improved their chances of finding employment and a further 36% reporting that it provided some help. SEED respondents were slightly less positive, although 78% still reported it provided some or a lot of help. Gateway to SusCon beneficiaries were equally split between 'Yes, definitely' and 'No'.

It is difficult to assess why priority 1 beneficiaries are polarised in the views about the benefits of the Gateway to SusCon project in helping them find unemployment. The Gateway to SusCon case study (Appendix 1) identifies some possible reasons, namely the need to take account of different customer needs (e.g. specific services for unemployed participants) and to link individual courses so that they can be

delivered as a complete package. It is possible that the modular approach of the Gateway to SusCon project is less beneficial to those not currently employed in the sector. However, it is also highly likely that the economic downturn in construction has meant that fewer priority 1 beneficiaries were able to access jobs in this sector than would have been realised otherwise.

Figure 5.10: 'Would you say the project improved your chances of employment?' (all 230)

Would you say the support improved your chances of finding employment?	SEED	SOS	Gateway to SusCon
Yes, definitely	43%	51%	50%
Yes, it provided some help	35%	36%	0%
No	22%	13%	50%

Respondents in each project: SEED 169, SOS 55, Gateway to SusCon 6

Figure 5.11 below shows more detail on how the various projects helped improve beneficiaries' soft skills. Self confidence was the soft skill that the projects improved the most, with 40% of respondents reporting a rise. Some 30% of beneficiaries' motivation improved as a result of the projects and around 18% became more independent as a result of the course. Almost 35% of respondents reported that none of their soft skills were improved. However, the figure above suggests that some of those that did not benefit from improved soft skills still felt that the programme improved their chances of employment.

Figure 5.11: Soft skills improved as a result of programme (all 230 respondents, more than one answer allowed)

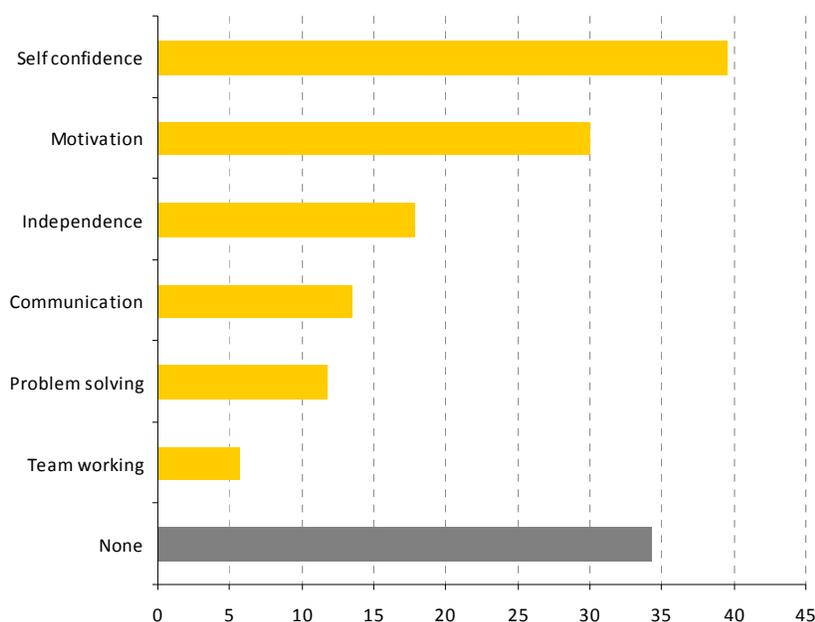
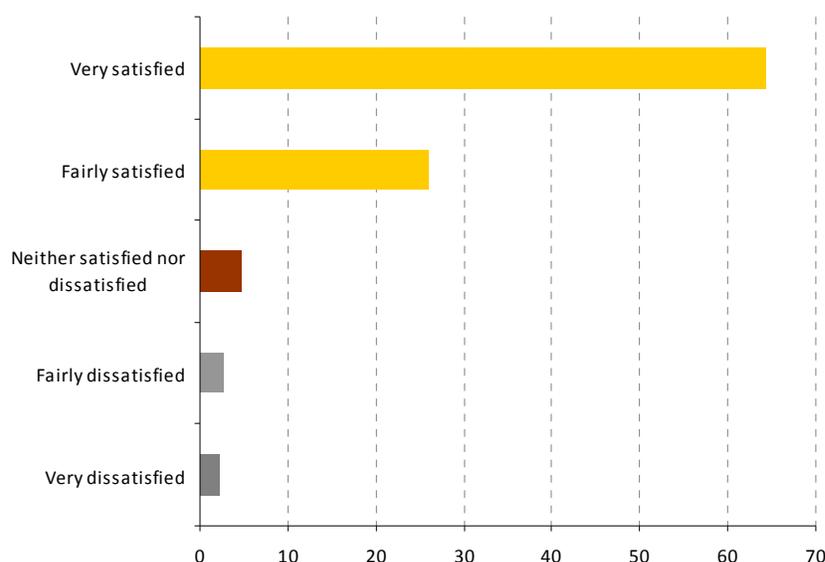


Figure 5.12 below shows how satisfied overall respondents were with the project they took part in. Nearly two thirds replied that they were very satisfied, and a quarter was fairly satisfied with the support they received. Only 4% had neutral feelings about the quality of the support, and a further 4% stated that they were either fairly or very dissatisfied with the course.

Figure 5.12: Satisfaction with support (all respondents)



All respondents who took part in the Gateway to SusCon project stated that they were very satisfied with the support they received. Of the 55 SOS respondents, 71% were very satisfied, 24% were fairly satisfied with the remaining 6% evenly distributed between neutral and fairly or very dissatisfied. Satisfaction with the SEED project was slightly lower, with 61% very satisfied and 28% fairly satisfied.

Figure 5.13: Satisfaction with support by project (all 230 respondents)

Overall, how satisfied were you with the quality of the support?	SEED	SOS	Gateway to SusCon
Very satisfied	61%	71%	100%
Fairly satisfied	28%	24%	0%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6%	2%	0%
Fairly dissatisfied	3%	2%	0%
Very dissatisfied	2%	2%	0%

Respondents in each project: SEED 169, SOS 55, Gateway to SusCon 6

Almost two thirds of respondents stated that there was no aspect of the support that could have been improved – a similar level to those who were ‘very satisfied’ with the course. The most common improvement suggested was for the support to last longer, with more follow contact and more one-to-one or in-depth advice being proposed by similar numbers of respondents. More networking opportunities, better quality of support or learning materials, and more tailoring of the difficulty of the course to beneficiaries’ ability were all suggested on several occasions. A further 25 people made suggestions that cannot easily be categorised together. Examples of these include offering evening or weekend courses and greater feedback from coaches.

Figure 5.14: Possible improvements to the support

	Number	Percentage
No	147	63.9
Longer support	15	6.5
Follow up contact	14	6.1
More one-to-one/in-depth advice	14	6.1
More networking opportunities	7	3.0
Better quality support/learning materials	5	2.2
More tailoring of difficulty	3	1.3
Other	25	10.9

The vast majority (89%) of respondents either have or would recommend the support to family/friends.

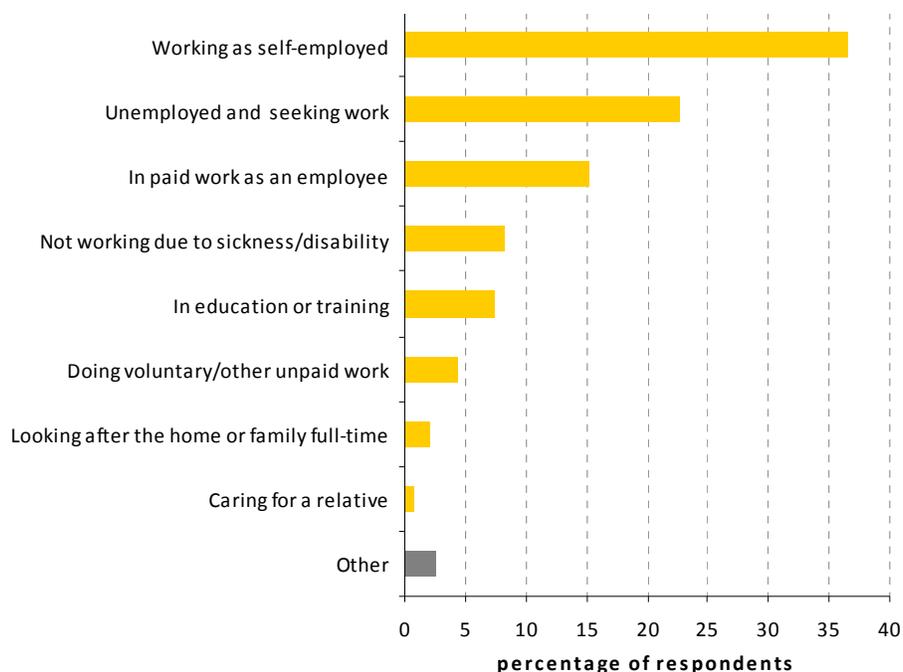
Figure 5.15: Responses to the question 'have you, or would you, recommend the support to family/friends?'

	Number	Percentage
Yes	204	88.7
No	26	11.3

5.2.4 Employment outcomes

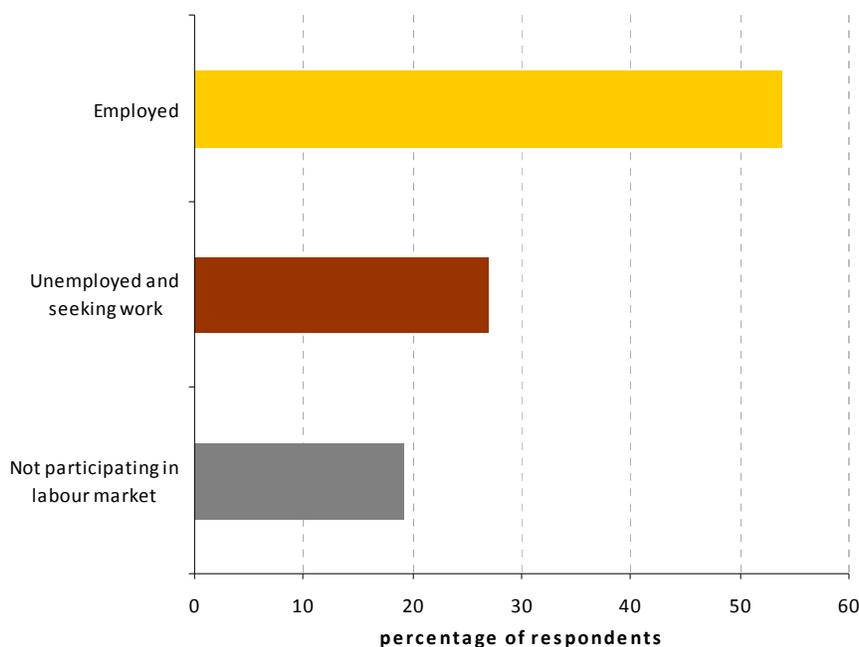
The chart below shows what beneficiaries did after completing the programme. Roughly 36% went on to work as self employed, and a further 15% went in to paid work and 7% went on to education or further training. Some 22% were unemployed and actively seeking work, and a further 8% were out of work due to sickness or disability.

Figure 5.16: Beneficiaries' status after programme



At the time of the survey, 54% of beneficiaries reported themselves as employed (including self employment), slightly up from the 51% that were in employment on leaving the project. Around 27% of beneficiaries were unemployed and seeking work, up from around 22% from when beneficiaries completed their project, with the remaining 19% are not participating in the labour market. The increase in those seeking work, as well as those that are employed is encouraging; suggesting that the increase in motivation, and other soft skills, was not short-lived among beneficiaries.

Figure 5.17: Beneficiaries' status at time of survey (mid-October 2010)



5.3 Priority 2

5.3.1 Participants' characteristics

Figure 5.18 below shows the age profile of respondents to the priority 2 survey. Two thirds were aged between 25 and 49, with 23% aged over 50 and 12% in the 16-24 age group. The average (mean) age was 41.

Figure 5.18: Age profile of respondents (all 298 respondents)

Age group	Number	Percentage
16-24	34	12
25-49	196	67
50+	68	23
Average age	41	

The table below shows the ethnic profile of respondents. Over 90% are White British.

Figure 5.19: Ethnicity of respondents (all 298 respondents)

Ethnic group	Number	Percentage
White british	271	91
White irish	5	2
White other	9	3
Asian/asian british	6	2
Black/black british	3	1
Other ethnic group	4	1

5.3.2 Support received

The priority 2 survey covered 5 projects. The majority (69%) of respondents completed the EnviroSkills course. 15% took Skills Technology for Instrumentation, ICT & Electronics (labelled skills for technology 1 below), 8% took Gateway to SusCon (a priority 1 and 2 project), 6% took Skills for Technology (labelled skills for technology 2 below) and 1% (4 respondents) took Management & Leadership for priority sectors.

Figure 5.20: Project completed by respondents (all 298 respondents)

Project	Number	Percentage
EnviroSkills	207	69
Skills for technology 1	44	15
Gateway to SusCon	24	8
Skills for technology 2	19	6
Management & Leadership	4	1
Total	298	100

Figure 5.21 below shows the length of support that beneficiaries received. Unlike priority 1, the majority (two thirds) of beneficiaries from priority 2 projects received one day of support, reflecting the more focused nature of the support. A further 19% of beneficiaries underwent between 2 and 7 days of support, with a relatively small number receiving longer support.

Figure 5.21: Support duration (all 298 respondents)

Length of support	Number	Percentage
One day	204	68
2-7 days	57	19
One week to a month	7	2
1-4 months	16	5
4-6 months	6	2
6-12 months	4	1
12+ months	4	1

5.3.3 Beneficiaries' views on priority 2

The chart below shows responses to the question 'would you say the course helped you to improve the skills needed for your job?' Almost three quarters believed that the support definitely helped, and a further 20% stated that it offered some help with their role. Only 6% did not feel that the course helped equip them with skills relevant to their job.

Figure 5.22: Responses to the question 'would you say the course helped you to improve the skills needed for your job?' (all 298 respondents)

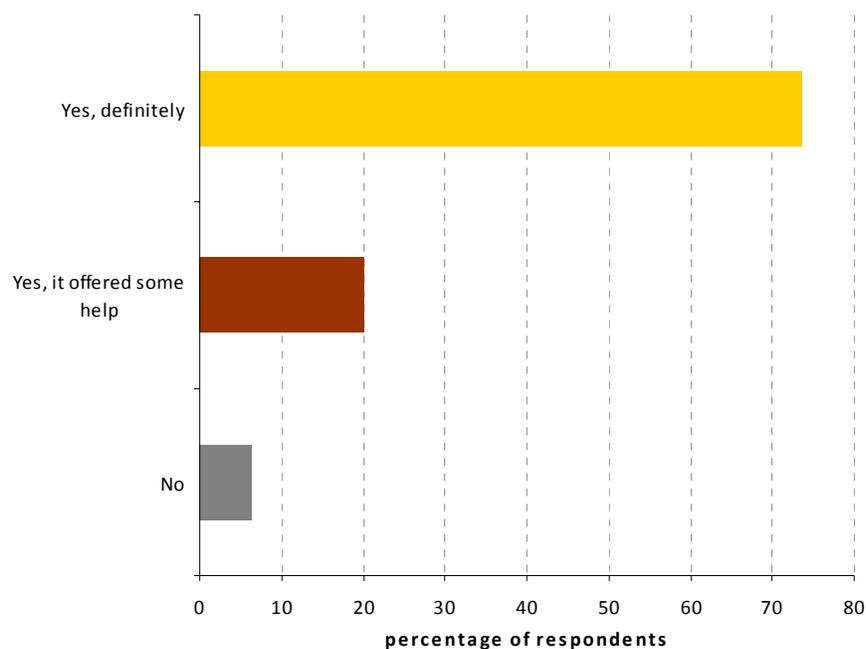


Figure 5.23 breaks the information in the chart above by project. Apart from Gateway to SusCon, the projects performed largely the same, with around three quarters reporting that the project definitely helped improve the skills needed for work, with the majority of the rest saying it offered some help and a handful stating that the project did not improve the relevant skills. 61% of Gateway to SusCon beneficiaries felt support was definitely relevant to their needs, while 13% did not believe it was at all.

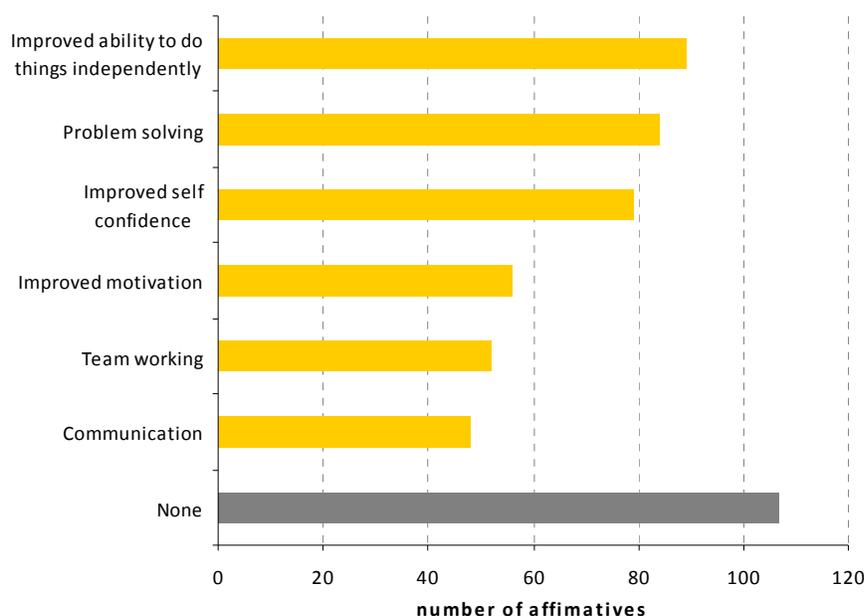
Figure 5.23: Responses to 'would you say the course helped you to improve the skills needed for your job?' by project (all 298 respondents)

Would you say the course gave support relevant to you needs?	Enviroskills	ST 1	Gateway to SusCon	ST 2	Management & leadership
Yes, definitely	74%	77%	63%	74%	75%
Yes, it offers some help	21%	16%	25%	16%	25%
No	5%	7%	13%	11%	0%

Respondents in each project: enviroskills 207, Skills for tech 1 44, Gateway to SusCon 24, Skills for tech 2 19, management & leadership 4

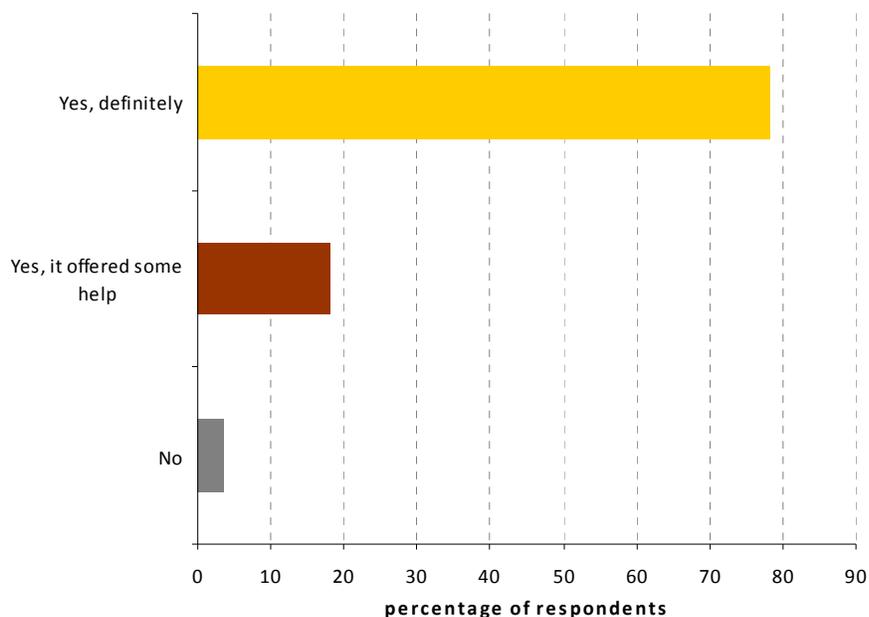
Figure 5.24 below illustrates the number of beneficiaries improving particular soft skills as a result of their project. Of the 298 respondents, 107 (36%) reported no improvement in soft skills. Although this is quite high, many of the courses which priority 2 beneficiaries undertook were aimed at increasing specific technical skills related to their industry, rather than work on general soft skills. Even so, 89 (30%) respondents increased their ability to do things independently, and 84 (28%) improved their problem solving. Beneficiaries' self confidence, motivation, team working and communication were also improved as a result of the programme.

Figure 5.24: Soft skills gained from support (all 298 respondents, more than one answer allowed)



Nearly 80% of respondents felt that the course they undertook definitely provided support that was relevant to their needs (figure 5.25). For a further 18% the course offered them some help; just 4% felt that the course was not relevant to them.

Figure 5.25: Responses to the question ‘was the support relevant to your needs?’ (all 298 respondents)



Moreover, 86% of respondents stated that the difficulty of the course was about right relative to their ability. Some 8% felt it was too basic and for 6% of respondents it was too advanced.

Figure 5.26: Appropriateness of course difficulty

Was the course....?	Number	Percentage
Too basic	24	8
about right	255	86
Too advanced	19	6

Just under 60% of respondents were ‘very satisfied’ with the course, and around a third were fairly satisfied. Of the remaining 8%, around a half were neutral about their course with roughly 4% either fairly or very dissatisfied.

Figure 5.27: Satisfaction with support received

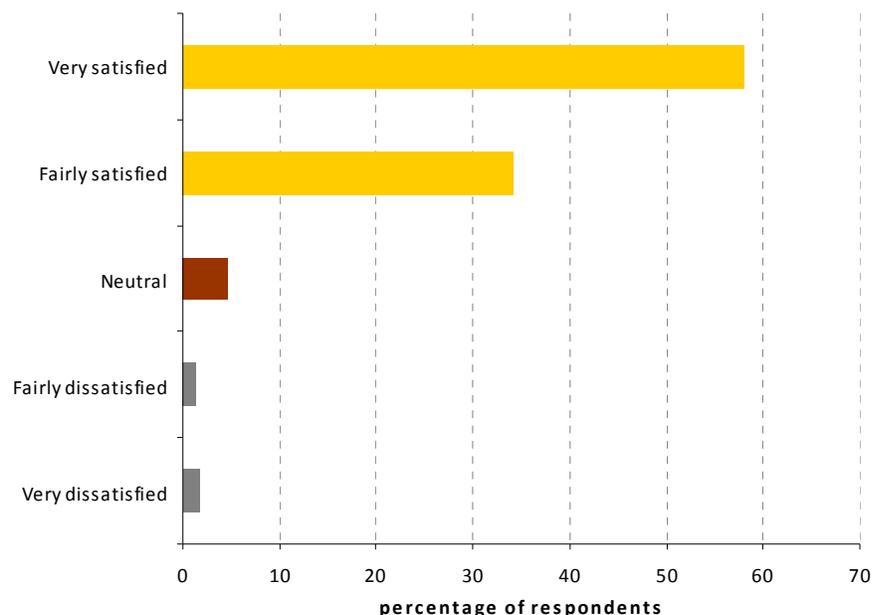


Figure 5.28 shows respondents' satisfaction with their ESF project. The Skills for Technology course run by PERA gained the highest satisfaction ratings, with 68% reporting they were very satisfied and the remaining 32% fairly satisfied. Three of the projects had no respondents who were very dissatisfied with the course and only 2% of respondents from the other two (Enviroskills and Skills for Technology 1) were very dissatisfied.

Figure 5.28: Satisfaction with support received by project

Overall, how satisfied were you with the quality of the support?	Enviroskills	ST 1	Gateway to SusCon	ST 2	Management & leadership
Very satisfied	59%	57%	50%	68%	25%
Fairly satisfied	33%	39%	29%	32%	75%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5%	0%	17%	0%	0%
Fairly dissatisfied	1%	2%	4%	0%	0%
Very dissatisfied	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%

Respondents in each project: enviroskills 207, Skills for tech 1 44, Gateway to SusCon 24, Skills for tech 2 19, management & leadership 4

The table below records possible improvements to the courses. Around three quarters of respondents stated that no aspects of the course could have been improved, with 77 reporting that some improvements could be made. Improved teaching and better organisation or administration of the course was both recommended by 13 respondents, and 11 felt longer support would have improved the course. Availability of more advanced courses was suggested by 9; the same number felt there should have been greater availability of information about the courses prior to starting. More practical/hands-on training was suggested by 7 respondents. There were 15 further comments that don't fit well in to categories. Examples include smaller classes, and provision of feedback. Included in this 15 are 3 respondents who felt that there could have been improvements but couldn't think of anything specific.

Figure 5.29: Aspects of the course that could have been improved

Suggested improvement	Count
No improvement	221
Improved teaching	13
Better organisation/administration	13
Longer support	11
More advanced courses	9
More information about course prior to start	9
More practical training	7
Other	15

5.3.4 Employment outcomes

Figure 5.30 below shows various outcomes realised by beneficiaries, along with the extent to which the course helped achieve that outcome. Data is given as a percentage of total respondents, with each row summing up to 100% (aside from rounding error). Those recorded in the 'Not applicable' column did not realise that particular outcome.

The most common outcome was improved job security; 70% of beneficiaries achieved this, with 36% attributing at least some of the outcome to the course. Taking on higher skilled work with an existing employer was achieved by more than half, as was taking on responsibility for managing or supervising people. In both cases, over half of those that achieved the outcomes attributed at least some of the outcome to the course.

Over 41% of beneficiaries experienced increased wages since taking the course, although only a quarter believed that the course helped them achieve this. 40% of beneficiaries were able to increase their working hours as a result of the course, with 38% attributing this at least partly to the course.

Figure 5.30: Post-course outcomes and level of attribution to course

Since completing the course have you....? / did the course.....?	Count (% of total in brackets)	Help a lot (as % of count)	Help a little (as % of count)	Not help at all (as % of count)
Moved from temp. to perm. Contract	57 (19%)	37%	21%	42%
Increased working hours	120 (40%)	23%	15%	63%
Increased wage	121 (41%)	12%	12%	76%
Taken on higher skilled work (same employer)	159 (53%)	34%	23%	43%
Taken on higher skilled work (different employer)	73 (24%)	17%	13%	71%
Taken on responsibility for managing/supervising people	155 (52%)	27%	25%	50%
Improved job security	208 (70%)	30%	36%	36%

102 respondents (34% of the total) took a formal qualification as part of their course. Figure 5.31 shows the types of qualification taken. City & Guild qualifications were most commonly taken with 43%, followed by NVQs with 40%. 15% of qualifications taken were BTECs, with Access to HE and GNVQs each being taken by one beneficiary. At the time of survey, 85% of beneficiaries had completed their qualification.

Figure 5.31: Formal qualifications studied for (102 respondents)

Qualification taken	Number	Percentage (of 102)
City & Guild	44	43
NVQ	41	40
BTEC	15	15
Access to HE	1	1
GNVQ	1	1

The table below shows the highest qualification that respondents held before and after they took part in the project. When we started out we aimed to use this data to calculate the additional GVA that SEEDA's ESF programme created. However, the data on those increasing their qualification level was not statistically significant, and there was a question over the reliability of the data (some respondents answers indicated they had gone down in qualification level – for the table below we have assumed that the question was misunderstood and those that indicated a lower qualification level after the programme are listed as having stayed at the same level).

Figure 5.32: Qualifications before and after (all 298 respondents)

		Highest qualification before				
		NVQ 5	NVQ 4	NVQ 3	NVQ 2	NVQ 1
Highest qualification after	NVQ 5	34	1	0	0	0
	NVQ 4		78	6	2	1
	NVQ 3		2	75	12	5
	NVQ 2				43	8
	NVQ 1					30
	Other		1			

Unlike priority 1 which targeted the unemployed, priority 2 projects generally aimed to up-skill those already in employment. This is reflected in the chart below, which shows that two thirds of beneficiaries were in paid employment after completing the course, and a further 29% were self employed.

Figure 5.33: Employment status of respondents immediately after course (all 298 respondents)

Status	Number	Percentage
Paid employment	200	67
Self employed	86	29
Unemployed and seeking work	3	1
Education/training	2	1
Voluntary	2	1
Other	5	2

The table below shows the employment status of respondents at the time of survey. The vast majority (90%) were employed in the same job. 4% worked for the same company but in a different role, and 4% had moved to a different company. 2% were unemployed and seeking work, and 1 respondent was not participating in the labour force (i.e. unemployed and not seeking work).

Figure 5.34: Employment status of respondents at time of survey (all 298 respondents)

Status		
Employed in same job	270	90
Employed by same company but in different job	11	4
Employed by different company	11	4
Unemployed	5	2
Not in labour force	1	0

5.4 Summary of findings

The survey findings provide evidence of sustained outcomes and impacts which have been achieved by SEEDA's ESF programme, despite the prevailing economic conditions in which projects have been delivered.

The large majority (80%) of beneficiaries in priority 1 have been helped in finding employment. At the time of the survey, 54% of respondents were employed (including self employment) while around 27% of beneficiaries were seeking work, up from 51% and 22% respectively when beneficiaries completed their project. These figures suggest that the reported increase in self confidence, motivation and other soft skills was not short-lived among beneficiaries.

Almost three quarters of beneficiaries in priority 2 believe that the support they received has helped improve the skills needed for their job. The most common outcome was improved job security with 70% of beneficiaries achieving this. Taking on higher skilled work as well as responsibility for managing or supervising people was achieved by more than half. In these cases, over half of those that achieved the outcomes attributed at least some of the outcome to their ESF course.

Further, over 41% of beneficiaries experienced increased wages since taking the course, although only a quarter believed that the course helped them achieve this. Against the wider economic backdrop of redundancies and wage cuts these are impressive results.

6. Programme delivery and strategic added value

6.1 Introduction

As a Co-Financing Organisation, SEEDA has been responsible for match funding and managing a programme of activity across the region. This section explores the strategic role of the Agency on the delivery of co-funded skills and employability activities in the South East.

6.2 Programme management

6.2.1 Project design

Project specifications were put together with intelligence from SEEDA and project proposals were assessed by a SEEDA Panel with some post-tender negotiations to refine activity and project focus. This iterative process is recognised by delivery organisations as helpful in project design and development.

Project proposals, were in some instances an extension interests (e.g. Skills for Technology) although clearly responding to the aims of the ESF programme and the project specifications to develop new activities. The process has also provided the opportunity to pilot ideas such as 'coaching' which evolved into the SEED project.

Some of the projects have expressed difficulties in keeping to the original rationale for project design, for example where there is a particular sector focus. The aerospace sector which has few SMEs in the region was identified as particularly challenging. Some of the projects also report that equalities targets have been too ambitious and therefore difficult to achieve. There is some concern that equality targets can constrain the performance of some projects, particularly if combined with other pressures such as a narrow sector focus.

6.2.2 Relationships with SEEDA

SEEDA's involvement with ESF project included ongoing contract management and performance monitoring as well as strategic input and advice. SEEDA representatives from relevant work areas have participated in panels at various stages of design and delivery. Partners report that SEEDA had maintained a healthy distance from the projects. SEEDA contract managers have joined project steering group meetings when required. Overall, this has worked well.

SEEDA conduct quarterly/six monthly monitoring visits with projects for two reasons. Firstly, it is an opportunity to check on the necessary paperwork and monitoring. Secondly, it is an opportunity to talk through the project and its successes/challenges. These visits have been well received by the projects and SEEDA also report finding them very useful.

Project delivery partners report very good working relationships with Contract Managers who have been very supportive. Some of the projects would like more engagement from SEEDA, for example, using their contacts with MAS, Aerospace Consortium. It would have been helpful for the Skills for Technology project to tap

into these networks. Additionally, partners would have welcomed a network, administered by SEEDA.

6.2.3 Performance management

Programme monitoring has been fully compliant with ESF requirements. There have, however, been a number of challenges not least of which has been the manual collection and collation of management information and the difficulties in reconciling ESF data with SEEDA's monitoring requirements.

The ESF team at SEEDA considered investing in a live access system but this was deemed prohibitively expensive. With hindsight an automated system may have been preferable, as manually entering the data has been onerous for all parties, with a high degree of unnecessary duplication. Projects were expected to forward records to SEEDA for processing. However, ESF Contract Managers suggested that this has caused some issues of duplication and increased complexity, and that it would have been beneficial to hand over more of the data processing responsibilities to the projects from the outset, with summaries being forwarded to SEEDA instead.

The projects do not have systems in place to measure soft outcomes including improved confidence, self esteem or aspiration. Several of the projects noted that they would like to measure these indicators but also recognise the potentially heavy burden on clients.

6.2.4 Geography and scale

Other findings in terms of programme and project management relate to geography and scale, although the lessons emerging here are not so clearly defined and difficult to mitigate.

Geography can be challenging for example where delivery partners are spread across the region (e.g. Simplifying Opportunities for Start Ups). However, it can be argued that the programme has worked well because there were fewer projects/contracts to manage. A more localised and fragmented project delivery would present a different set of challenges for programme management.

One of the key benefits of SEEDA's regionalised approach – compared to other CFO's which are driven nationally – is the ability to recognise and respond to localised situations and to take a flexible attitude to decision making and implementation.

6.3 Engagement

Many of the projects have been designed to target specific groups or specific business sectors. Most projects have revealed particular challenges with engaging employers, heightened by the effects of the recession and its impact on employer training budgets and decreasing focus on training as a business priority.

Many projects have set up the mechanisms for effective and deliberative engagement of stakeholders in the design and delivery of the projects. Some of these are highlighted below:

- Referrals have been successful with particular success around recruiting those with disabilities where mainstream agencies are involved. The support of a Jobcentre Plus 'champion' to promote the **SEED** project and generate referrals and been vitally important to this projects success.
- Local delivery has also had a huge impact, allowing projects to respond to the needs of the locality. This was highly effective in the delivery of SEED, where for example coaches have been hired from local communities to work at neighbourhood level in an informal way or in rural environments where local resources have been created (e.g. community café) to establish a hub for meetings and support.
- Engaging with clients and businesses at source is vital. **Gateway to SusCon** has been successful at taking courses to places where they are needed and targeting supply chains in the construction sector has worked well. Recruitment through events has been very successful. Gateway to SusCon got a free advert through Kent Radio. Typically the beneficiaries from Gateway to SusCon are self-employed or small businesses with less than 10 employees.
- The **Skills for Technology** project identified employer engagement as their main challenge. The project team found that a tailored approach, promoting specific courses worked best. Some of the SME's reported 'information overload' so the project was careful not to 'bombard' them with information. Using existing networks and an existing client base has also helped to raise awareness of the offer. The project also worked closely with Women in Science and Engineering 'WISE' to encourage participation. There were a lot of women who would like to take part but were not in employment therefore not eligible.
- As above, the **Skills for Technology: Instrumentation, ICT and Electronics** project found employer engagement to be challenging. The project adopted a tele-sales approach which has been effective.
- Employer engagement was also challenging for the **Enviroskills** project. Major barriers included costs of training, especially during recession. Up until March 2010, the project was working with Business Link who were not allowed to use a 'sales' approach so it was up to training providers to promote their courses.
- Dedicated 'sales teams' are highly effective in engaging customers. A small number of providers had a 'sales' person doing telesales which was successful. However, systems and process in larger organisations (e.g. marketing in Further Education establishments) can sometimes hinder decision making and action which is needed to quickly engage participants and businesses.
- The **Simplifying Opportunities for Start Ups** project has been noted by several stakeholder as an excellent example of engaging harder-to-reach beneficiaries. For example, one of the providers, Learning Links on the IoW, are good at establishing good rapport with clients by sending birthday cards to clients, for example. Their work with Action for the Blind has also been successful.

6.4 Equalities

Some stakeholders have expressed their concern that equality targets are too challenging for providers and employers to meet and that they can constrain the performance of some projects, particularly if combined with other pressures such as a narrow sector focus and the effects of recession and slow economic recovery.

It has also been suggested that some courses adapted for sectors with a higher male workforce (e.g. construction and engineering based disciplines – including advanced manufacturing) are inevitably more tailored towards men. Participant figures in Priority 2 merely reflects a gender imbalance that currently exists in a number of key sectors.

Projects are keen to attract more women to but it is clear that more needs to be done to promote some occupations and sectors to women. Clearly this is a structural issue that needs addressing much earlier through the education system and unlikely to be combated through ESF funded activity alone.

For many other projects, BAME engagement has been challenging suggesting the need for outreach into specific BAME communities.

6.5 Strategic leadership and influence

SEEDA has a key role in articulating the region's employment and skills needs. The priorities of the Regional Economic Strategy align with a number of areas within the England ESF Operational Programme. In demonstrating Strategic Influence, the Agency has led on the Regional Skills Strategy helping to set the skills agenda and thereby generating stakeholder interest and cooperation.

The process of putting together the CFO plan, designing and selecting the projects, has enabled SEEDA to focus on regional need and articulate innovative solutions. Through the delivery of the ESF programme, SEEDA has reported increased knowledge, awareness and credibility in the areas of environmental technologies and the sustainability agenda amongst stakeholders.

The Enviroskills project has been put forward for an award on the cross-cutting themes. This project, in particular, has been noted for its strong brand.

6.6 Leverage

There are limited examples of leveraged funding and the ESF programme does not have a systematic method for measuring and recording this. However, it is assumed that private sector involvement in Priority 2 will have stimulated investment in training and business development, particularly in relation to the green economy and sustainability agenda. The UK Government's flagship initiative 'the Green Deal' should begin to lever significant private sector investment for projects such as Gateway to SusCon and Enviroskills. Additionally there will be opportunities for effective linkage to ERDF Round 4, which is focusing on renewable energy.

6.7 Multiplier effects

The Enviroskills project supported a small graphic design company and a member of their staff attended the 'create your own environ system course'. As a result of the course the business completed a risk assessment to improve green and economic outputs. The business has since won a contract with Sony.

Although it is difficult to quantify, there are examples of families and networks who have benefited indirectly as a result of the programme. For example, on the SEED

project, there are examples of families, including children, whose lives have been 'turned around' as a direct result of the support received.

Skills for Technology point to the fact that there have been several cohorts from the same company and evidence of 'word of mouth' between SMEs which is testament to the wider impact that the project has achieved.

6.8 Synergy

Stakeholders recognise the synergies between the ESF programme and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and particularly the objective of 'smart growth', which aimed to improve economic activity in the South East. The ESF programme was closely aligned to the employment and skills challenges identified in the RES and by the Regional Skills for Productivity Alliance (RSPA).

Delivery partners have been able to use their project as an opportunity to build and strengthen networks with external partners. For example, EnviroSkills report that their involvement in ESF has helped to develop their working relationship with Medway Council. Projects where delivery partners had a strong partnership in place prior to the project delivery stage have been most successful. For example, it has been suggested that one of the reasons that Gateway to SusCon has worked well is due to the fact that the partnership was already in place and the ESF project gave it momentum rather than the partnership 'starting from scratch'.

SEEDA report that the ESF Programme has not necessarily led to new partnerships but has deepened existing partnerships especially with JCP and SFA. Further the ESF programme can demonstrate a close fit with the environmental and sustainability agenda and evolving policies in this area.

Synergy between individual projects has been limited and some delivery partners have identified some potential duplication. There was some concern that both Gateway to SusCon and EnviroSkills were targeting the same learners. Both projects have worked together to mitigate this problem. However, there have not been referrals between Gateway to SusCon and EnviroSkills and some stakeholders have expressed that in hindsight, it would have been useful to have put a shared referral mechanism in place.

6.9 Catalytic effects

It is difficult to isolate the specific catalytic effects of ESF funded provision and it has been argued that the recession has to some degree made it difficult to be 'catalytic'. It is, however, clear that the SEEDA ESF programme has a strong environmental theme which is contributing to fast moving agenda. Several of the projects within SEEDA's ESF Programme took place during a time when there were policy initiatives and legislation aimed at increasing awareness of environmental/sustainability issues amongst businesses. Some providers and stakeholders have suggested that the ESF Programme has been if not a catalyst for this agenda, then an important advocate that has helped to fast track activity in this area.

6.10 Sustainability

ESF has also provided an opportunity to innovate, leaving a legacy within the project delivery partners. The ESF Operational Programme saw a key role for the third sector in working with other partners to engage and retain hard to reach groups. This capacity across the South East could provide a legacy through mainstream provision such as the Work Programme. It is anticipated the Skills Funding Agency will pick up the workforce development aims in Priority 2.

6.11 Added value

SEEDA's ESF Programme has addressed some of the identified 'gaps' in mainstream provision and the significant sub-regional variations in employment and deprivation. A range of programmes designed to reduce worklessness were in operation at the time ESF funding was allocated. However, significant cohorts of unemployed and economically inactive people in the South East were not fully supported by these existing programmes. For example, support was required for existing incapacity benefit claimants not targeted by the Pathways to Work programme and some unemployed and long term unemployed people with multiple needs were beyond the scope of New Deal programmes.

In addition, there was evidence of enterprise underperformance and low business start-ups in some communities, particularly in rural and coastal locations and amongst women and BME groups. SEEDA's broad economic remit has enabled a cross cutting approach in targeting provision to support all aspects of the ESF programme including support for enterprise start-ups, self employment and social enterprise in areas where mainstream business support services were not readily taken up.

6.12 Summary

Delivery partners have acknowledged SEEDA's **strategic leadership and influence** in helping projects to focus on regional need and providing innovative solutions. This has been particularly felt in the areas of environmental sustainability which has had a strong **catalytic effect** in helping to fast track activity in this area. Stakeholders also recognise the **synergies** between the ESF programme and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and particularly the objective of 'smart growth', which aimed to improve economic activity in the South East.

SEEDA's ESF programme has **added value** by addressing some of the identified 'gaps' in mainstream provision. For example, support was directed towards those incapacity benefit claimants not targeted by the Pathways to Work programme and other long term unemployed claimants with multiple needs beyond the scope of the New Deal programmes.

In terms of **programme management** delivery partners report very good working relationships with SEEDA, although some projects would like more engagement, for example, in utilising wider contacts and networks. Programme **monitoring** has been fully compliant with ESF requirements. However, the ESF team at SEEDA recognise that finer grained monitoring of outcomes could have been achieved with an automated system. Unnecessary duplication of manual monitoring processes could

have been avoided had SEEDA handed over more of the monitoring responsibilities to the projects from the outset.

The support of a Jobcentre Plus has been vitally important in **engaging and referring** participants, however, an over reliance on mainstream agencies can deter inactive groups furthest from the labour market. Most projects have revealed particular challenges with engaging employers, heightened by the effects of the recession.

SEEDA ESF programme has provided an opportunity to innovate, leaving a legacy within the project delivery partners. There is, however, concern over the **sustainability** of this activity. However, there is the possibility that the capacity which SEEDA has helped to create across the South East could provide a legacy through mainstream provision.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 A summary of key findings

7.1.1 Outcomes and impact

In terms of results the SEEDA ESF Programme has achieved mixed success. The overall number of participants has fallen some way short of original targets although over performing in relation to unemployed and inactive participants. Some equality groups, including women and people with disabilities have also been disappointingly below profile.

However, in terms of outcomes this evaluation has identified some very positive findings. The overwhelming majority of programme beneficiaries have been very satisfied with their experience of ESF, stating that the support they received has either helped in finding a job or improved in-work skills. Importantly the overall number of participants in employment has increased since leaving the project, up from 51 to 54 per cent. Also, 85 per cent of those who started training towards a qualification have now successfully completed.

SEEDA's ESF programme has also had a strong positive effect on job security with 70% of beneficiaries feeling that this had improved. Taking on higher skilled work as well as responsibility for managing or supervising people was achieved by more than half, while over 41% of ESF beneficiaries experienced increased wages. Against the wider economic backdrop of redundancies and wage cuts these are impressive results.

This evaluation also finds that SEEDA, as the lead organisation for economic development in the region, has played an integral role combining high-level strategy with operational management in defining the nature and scale of ESF projects and investments. SEEDA's ESF programme has developed a number of innovative projects with the potential for mainstreaming.

The sustainability of projects going forward is however a concern. ESF has provided valuable 'pump priming', but the future of some ESF projects is unclear, particularly in an environment where funding is scarce, and where policy and new institutional arrangements are continuing to evolve.

7.1.2 Responding to recession

It is clear that the recession has had an impact on programme performance. There have been challenges to ensure that the focus remains on the most deprived, whilst simultaneously responding to the rising number of more recently unemployed claimants. Businesses have also been more difficult to engage as they have become more focused on survival, with a corresponding fall in demand for training and workforce development. These are significant mitigating factors which have also impacted on some very ambitious equality targets, despite the dedication and commitment of project delivery staff to try and achieve them.

SEEDA's ESF programme has demonstrated the ability to adapt to changing economic and labour market conditions. SEEDA has sought to utilise ESF funding to

kick start-training in key sectors affected by the recession, including construction and the advanced manufacturing sector.

7.2 Implications for the future ESF programme

7.2.1 Institutional change

The abolition of the Regional Development Agencies is likely to have implications for ESF delivery and focus in the future, since SEEDA will no longer act as a Co-Financing Organisation. It is anticipated that the remaining CFOs will continue to deliver the ESF programme with the DWP absorbing the slack in Priority 1 and the Skills Funding Agency in Priority 2. It is unlikely that the Local Enterprise Partnerships will have anything more than a strategic advisory role in relation to either mainstream or European funded programmes. It will, however, be important for sub-regional partners to influence and direct the ESF provision to meet identified need. Trying to achieve a more localised and flexible approach to ESF and mainstream delivery, via LEPs or other means, will present different delivery challenges. There are clearly advantages in connecting organisations and transferring knowledge and capacity across different geographical locations. It is, however, unclear how this will happen.

Local authorities will, however, continue to play an important role in the localism agenda and in tackling the problems of worklessness. Families with multiple problems are a priority for the UK Government. DWP are encouraging local authorities to identify families and households that will benefit from additional ESF support and to work with providers. This will help in accessing the most disadvantaged groups, including those out of reach of Jobcentre Plus.

7.2.2 Programme management

The complexity of new institutional arrangements will present additional problems for project design and programme management. This evaluation has identified good practice in the development of project to align with wider strategic aims for the region. It has also highlighted some challenges in measuring performance against some indicators (e.g. equality groups; qualifications achieved) which the remaining CFOs may choose to address.

7.2.3 Spending cuts

Spending cuts are also likely to impact upon programme targets and interventions, with the possibility of increased unemployment and further reductions in available job vacancies (at least in the short to medium term) as a result of public sector job losses and associated impacts in the private sector. New welfare reforms will also introduce greater responsibility on all benefit claimants to actively seek work. This will bring mainstream services closer to the most disadvantaged beneficiaries which the ESF programme has traditionally served. This questions the extent to which ESF can fill gaps in future provision or as is more likely add value to emerging mainstream delivery.

Train to Gain, has been replaced with the SME skills programme; shifting more responsibility on to employers to take responsibility for workforce development. The Government also plans to remove the entitlement to free training for a first

level two qualification that currently exists for those aged over 25. Support for basic skills training in numeracy in literacy will continue, although the funding of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for people not in settled communities will be abolished in 2012.

There will be a requirement therefore to refocus ESF to reflect the changing marketplace (i.e. the introduction of the Work Programme and the SME Programme), political change and the significant cuts in resources to reduce the threat of disadvantaged groups being at further exclusion from the labour market. ESF provision going forward should continue to be directed towards those with greatest need whilst retaining the flexibility to respond to changing economic and labour market conditions and innovate new approaches.

7.2.4 Responding to climate change

Environmental sustainability has been a successful and innovative theme in the SEEDA ESF Programme. This should continue to be supported for the remainder of the ESF programme and by mainstream delivery. The UK Governments flagship initiative, the 'Green Deal' will present significant employment opportunities in the South East. Additionally, plans to develop off-shore renewable energy sources (including wind and wave) should be supported by both ESF and ERDF.

7.2.5 Combating inequalities

Programme performance, in meeting equality targets, has been mixed. There is some concern that equality targets are too challenging for providers and employers to meet and that they can constrain the performance of some projects, particularly if combined with other pressures such as a narrow sector focus and the effects of recession and slow economic recovery.

It has been suggested that some courses are more tailored towards men, and that in Priority 2 participant taken up merely reflects a gender imbalance that currently exists in a number of key sectors. Projects are keen to attract more women to but it is clear that more needs to be done to promote some occupations and sectors to women.

7.3 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: LEPs via their Employment and Skills Boards should provide a strategic steer for the delivery of ESF provision across their patch to ensure that ESF provision meets local need and effectively dovetails with mainstream provision.

Recommendation 2: ESF provision should be aligned with local authority support, particularly for vulnerable families and households. Local authorities should provide an important role in identifying families with multiple problems and in engagement activities and events, where possible.

Recommendation 3: The iterative process of project design and development, which SEEDA initiated for this programme should be adopted by other CFOs, moving forward.

Recommendation 4: Providers should put in place robust and effective systems to track the outcomes of ESF participants. This will take on even greater prevalence for mainstream providers with the move to an outcomes-based payment system.

Recommendation 5: There are a number of areas where gaps in provision may emerge and which the ESF programme should target, including:

- Those economically inactive and outside of the benefits system. This group should continue to be a priority for the programme since they will not be addressed by the Work Programme.
- Those aged 24 and above and looking to gain an NVQ level 2 and those aged over 25 looking to seek a NVQ level 3 should be supported. Plans to remove the entitlement to free training should be addressed by the ESF programme, particularly those in low paid work least able to afford training.
- NEET groups. ESF could enhance new plans to replace the withdrawn Education Maintenance Allowance with a new bursary fund.
- Families with multiple problems.

Recommendation 6: Projects like Gateway to SusCon and EnviroSkills should be encouraged to help build the capacity amongst employers in the South East to respond to the business opportunities which the Green Deal presents in the developing Environmental Technologies sector.

Recommendation 7: Skills Academies in the South East should be aligned with ESF to maximise mainstream delivery of skills training in the Green Economy, including the Green Deal and Off Shore renewable energy.

Recommendation 8: Greater synergy between projects across priorities is required in order to strengthen both recruitment and retention by equality groups, particularly in sectors which may be under-represented (e.g. environmental technologies).

Recommendation 9: Priority 2 projects will need to proactively promote courses to equality groups. For example, Environmental Management Systems and generic courses within the construction industry are thought to be of more interest to women.

APPENDIX I

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Gateway to SusCon

About the case study

- This case study aims to explore the development of the Gateway to SusCon programme and to understand the outcomes and impacts of the programme.
- A case study visit took place on the 25th of August 2010. The following members of the Gateway to SusCon team were interviewed:
 - Sally Clarke – Business Manager
 - Stephen Choi – Training Manager
 - John Parsonage – Project Advisor from the Institute of Sustainability.
- In addition to the interviews a focus group was held with the following participants:
 - Diane Snell (Groundwork)
 - Patricia Wheeler (Groundwork)
 - Ian Patterson (FJF Groundwork employee)
 - Jackie Hopley (FJF Groundwork employee)
 - James Sweet (C4Ci)
 - Maxine White (Programme participant)
 - 2 further programme participants.

Project Background

Gateway to SusCon was formally established two years ago although the ideas and principles behind the wider SusCon project were developed over a much longer period of time. The idea behind Gateway to SusCon was to develop a way of promoting sustainable communities alongside the low carbon agenda through supporting the upskilling and education of the construction sector. As part of the overall SusCon objectives to deliver this step change to the construction industry Gateway SusCon was created.

Gateway to SusCon was funded through the SEEDA ESF Co-financing programme to deliver a number of new training packages promoting sustainable construction techniques to both existing employees and employers in the sector as well as people outside the sector, including people who are unemployed. The Gateway to SusCon partnership identified that there was no comparable provision available and that the proposed approach could fill this gap. In this way the programme complimented existing provision and did not duplicate any mainstream training already available in the sector.

The expected outcome of this programme will be the creation of a skilled and adaptable workforce who understand and can deliver sustainable construction methods to meet new developments and opportunities within the Thames Gateway. In the context of the '*New Industry, New Jobs*' Industrial Activism approach which was advocated by BERR under the previous Government; the Regional Economic Strategy and the Thames Gateway Economic Development Investment Framework

(EDIP), this workforce will be vital to the delivery of the Thames Gateway aspiration to be the first eco region and a zero carbon economy. The EDIP (Human Capital chapter) seeks to maximise the skills and employment opportunities presented by the significant public and private investment in the area. This includes ensuring that the right level of quality provision is delivered to meet demand and bring tangible benefits to businesses across the Gateway. The area also will be required to deliver major construction programmes for the 2012 Olympics, Cross Rail and The Thames Gateway Bridge. Gateway to SusCon was supported by Priority One and Priority Two funds with the total funding received being £1,999,991.

The project formally started in September 2009 and funded through ESF until March 2011. Despite a slow start to the project it has already exceeded some of the targets set for it and is close to achieving the majority of the rest.

Gateway to SusCon is delivered by North West Kent College in partnership with Dartmouth Borough Council, Prologis, Institute for Sustainability, Kent County Council, Thames Gateway and Business Link Kent. The steering group is supported by a number of businesses and groups representing the construction industry.

Engagement and Project delivery

The project was required to develop training programmes to meet industry need. The target group involves both employed and unemployed individuals and thus course development was tailored to both engage unemployed people who may be new to the industry as well as professionals who are undertaking continuing professional development (CPD). As a result of this the courses developed were generally 3 hours in length with a few extending up to five days.

The different courses that have been delivered include overview courses such as 'Carbon Literacy – climate change and CO2 footprints' as well as more specialist courses like 'Existing building retrofit for energy efficiency and LZC technologies' and 'Greywater, blackwater systems and systems integration'.

The target groups were recruited through two main routes, business contacts and working with Jobcentre Plus and other local agencies supporting unemployed people or working in the community. Different marketing materials were developed for both target markets and the results have proven successful with the unemployed participants target having already been exceeded and overall project outputs on target to be achieved.

When beneficiaries are referred to the programme they are all required to fill out enrolment forms which act as evidence to SEEDA and ESF. This process is generally straightforward although professionals attending CPD courses will often ask why so many forms need to be completed and question how the information will be used.

The programme's focus was on delivering specific training courses to meet the needs of the industry, whether the participants were currently employed within the industry or not. As such there was no employment outcomes attached to courses although IAG and job search support was offered to unemployed participants.

Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts

Outputs

To date, Gateway to SusCon has achieved the following against key project targets:

Output	Target	Achieved
Total number of participants	1250	1178 ⁹
Participants who are unemployed	400	122
Participants who are inactive	115	41
Participants without relevant level 2 qualifications	400	172
Participants without relevant level 3 qualifications	600	358
Companies engaged	280	528
Training packages developed	30	30
Participants in work on leaving	-	8
Economically inactive participants engaged in job search activity or further learning*	-	20
Number of participants to gain units towards part qualification	900	959
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	-	44
Participants aged 50 or over	-	331
Participants from ethnic minorities**	-	150
Female participants	-	188

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. * Calculated from the number of participants who were economically inactive before the programme who were then classed as unemployed or in education on leaving the programme.

** Ethnic minorities classed as non-White British participants

Outcomes and impacts

Beneficiaries reported a general increase in awareness of relevant issues and those that were unemployed at the time of the programme did express an increase in confidence with many of them looking to explore the options for further training in the field as a result of undertaking a Gateway to SusCon course. Both participants and strategic partners felt that one of the key successes of the programme was the fact that courses were grounded in facts and evidence and were objective in the way that they were delivered. This helped to increase the credibility of the training as it was not seen as being delivered as part of a 'green warrior' agenda.

Comments from course participants are generally very positive. Comments include:

⁹ Gateway to SusCon was a project delivered under both Priority 1 and Priority 2. Overall 1946 participants enrolled on the Gateway to SusCon project over both Priority 1 and 2. However, 768 participants did not finish the course and were therefore classed as 'early leavers', leaving 219 participants in Priority 1 and 959 participants in Priority 2.

“The course was useful and informative. It should be made available for every individual and compulsory for offices and industries”

“I am interested in building development – I found this training very useful as an introduction for sustainable development”

“The course was very well and clearly presented and was able to explain how to use a complex but important and valuable software package (PHPP) for designing ultra-low energy and low carbon buildings”

Participant outcomes

The overall outcomes of the programme were in line with expected outcomes but some additional partnerships and outcomes occurred that were not expected.

The overall development of the project could only have occurred through ESF funding or through industry investment. Evidence from the programme suggests that whilst the industry may have developed similar provision in time it may have taken longer. The Gateway to SusCon approach was designed to ‘pump prime’ the provision in order to enable the industry to respond and enable the model to become sustainable. Through the delivery of the programme it has become apparent that future viability is possible through the delivery of chargeable courses for industry professionals and businesses. ESF has provided a valuable ‘pump priming’ to the initiative.

Strategic Added Value

The project has led to improved partnership working. For example, joint working and delivery of training with Southampton, Portsmouth, Greenwich and Reading Universities. The partnerships with universities were developed after the commencement of the programme and are indicative of the popularity and growth of the initiative. The courses and contact base of the partnership have also grown beyond expectations with the majority of the growth attributable to word of mouth. The project has made links with government and industry which have seen interest in the model expand to other regions within the UK. This has included interest being shown by government ministers resulting in meetings with government departments and ministers to explore the ability to replicate the model in other parts of the UK.

Other

The programme developed an equality of access project plan and impact assessment to ensure that all courses were accessible to all members of the community. The programme has not encountered any significant issues around access to the courses. Considerable effort has been put into ensuring that course venues were appropriate for the training and accessible to programme participants.

Lessons Learned

The Gateway to SusCon programme has been very successful in bringing together key players in the sustainable construction field to promote techniques to the industry to help meet the emerging sustainability and climate change agenda. The programme has recruited successfully and developed a number of training programmes that have been well received by both construction professionals and potential new entrants to the industry. Despite this success there are a number of areas that emerged as lessons for future delivery:

- Due to funding regulations the project was not able to support public sector/local authority employees re-train. This resulted in only part of the sector being able to receive the training, preventing a holistic approach from being taken to the industry. Future programmes will need to consider how best to support all sectors of the market and should be structured so that courses can be chargeable.
- Although the programme did successfully engage with a number of different customer types it would be beneficial in future to develop different customer journeys to take account of different customer needs (e.g. IAG services may be offered to unemployed participants and not professionals).
- When courses are developed in future more attention should be paid to linking the courses together so that they can be delivered as a package. Currently courses are delivered in silos with participants only able to enrol on one course. This has partly come about because of the nature and structure of ESF funding.
- To ensure the future credibility of the programme it is important that Gateway to SusCon delivery remains grounded in fact and the programme does not become a 'green warrior'.
- When developing the programme the steering group understood the need to develop a plan for sustainability and undertook to devise an ongoing business plan as soon as possible. This approach to early planning has enhanced the chances of Gateway to SusCon being sustainable in the future.

Sustainability

Gateway to SusCon is in a unique position in that it has the potential to become a commercially sustainable enterprise. The model of providing training to industry as well as new entrants and the unemployed has proved to be successful. In order to take the programme forward the Gateway to SusCon steering group is finalising a business plan which will focus on further development of appropriate courses and funding of the courses through charging industry professionals and businesses for the CPD and other courses on offer. The challenge facing the programme is how to go from fully funded provision to commercially funded provision overnight. Access to transition funding would support the growth of Gateway to SusCon and reduce any risk of failure as it moves to a commercially funded model.

The UK Coalition Government has introduced a flagship programme the 'Green Deal'. This is a major energy efficiency initiative aimed at all households and businesses. It has been estimated that employment in this sector will rise from the present 27,000 to 100,000 by 2015. With the first Green Deals expected to be operational by Autumn 2012 this programme represents a major opportunity for sustaining the activity of the Gateway to SusCon project.

Example Customer Journeys

- 1) Mary was an experienced project manager working in London when she was made redundant. She has found it difficult to find new employment and she decided to explore different career options. Mary has always had an interest in sustainable development and heard about the Gateway to SusCon through some friends of hers.

Mary approached Gateway to SusCon and was invited to attend one of their introductory courses. The course really suited Mary's needs and confirmed her interest in sustainable construction. She approached Jobcentre Plus about funding for courses and to explore her options further. Currently Mary is looking to undertake a BTEC National Award in Construction. Once she has completed the course she will be looking to work in the sustainable construction sector.

Gateway to SusCon provided her with an introduction to the sector that has helped her to focus her future career development.

- 2) Sarah was approached by Groundwork to be involved in a new local training course, Green Doctor, which was taking place in her area. Sarah thought the course sounded interesting as it would help her to make her house more energy efficient and provide her with tips on how to make her home more environmentally friendly.

Following the Green Doctor House visit from Groundwork Sarah decided that she wanted to know more about sustainability issues. She felt that the time was right to look at her career options and Groundwork directed her to Gateway to SusCon.

Sarah is now enrolled on a water efficiency course and is hoping to do other relevant introductory courses through Gateway to SusCon that will lead onto higher qualifications and possibly a career in teaching, based around sustainable construction techniques.

Case Study 2: South Eastern Enterprise Development (SEED)

About the case study

The aim of this case study is to provide further depth to the evaluation. The following have been interviews to inform this case study:

- Project Manager
- Contract Manager
- Interviews with 3 coaches on Isle of Wight, Canterbury and Hastings
- Interviews with a sample of participants

Project Background

The SEED project began delivery in February 2009. The lead delivery partner is Chichester College, who have a wide network in the South East region.

The aim of the project is to help those who are economically inactive to consider setting up their own business. Recognising the variety of barriers facing the various communities in the South East, the project is designed to ensure that participants receive focused and tailored support. The project set out to 'do something different' and offer a much more 'personal' approach to coaching.

The project focuses on the areas of most deprivation in the South East. These are:

- Reading
- East Sussex Brighton and Hove
- Hampshire
- Isle of Wight
- Lewes/Newhaven
- Portsmouth
- Slough
- Southampton
- West Sussex Adur

Engagement and Project delivery

Engagement

In order to ensure a local, tailored approach, coaches were recruited into the chosen areas. Coaches were recruited through partner organisations and appointed on the basis of appropriate skills set including their local knowledge and networks.

A core value of this approach is the ability of the project to respond to local community challenges. Some examples are given below:

Figure 1: Examples of unique ways of working

Slough – the coach understands the needs of the BME community

Isle of Wight – deals with many Jobcentre Plus referrals and long term out of work people. The coach has a 'hand holding' role. Recognises the 'long term' needs of participants in an Island economy

Brighton – 2 part time coaches have been recruited to focus on different localities. They have adopted a creative approach. Very informal and word of mouth. Take up was poor at first but quickly became very busy

Canterbury – this area has a number of rural challenges. Set up a 'hub' using community café

One of the methods for referring participants to the project is through Jobcentre Plus. In Portsmouth this is working very well. However, the extent to which Jobcentre Plus is referring participants to the project differs from area to area and has been problematic in some cases, suggesting localised rather than systemic barriers to success.

The project has also actively targeted participants such as Sussex College graduates who might be exploring the possibility of self employment.

Once participants have been allocated a coach, they are invited to complete a 'Skills for Life Assessment'. This proved challenging in some areas due to the fact that the assessment highlighted areas of perceived 'weaknesses' amongst some participants.

Engagement and recruitment

- **Working with Jobcentre Plus:** organisations who worked with the potential target group, such as Jobcentre Plus, were notified that the SEED project would take place allowing them to refer those that might be suitable for SEED. Leaflets and flyers were also printed and handed out in order to raise awareness of the project.
- **Word of mouth is key to success:** Interest in the project was initially low in Hastings & St Leonards due to low awareness but this picked up as the project progressed and word-of-mouth spread. At the time of this case study a total of 42 clients had either completed or are close to completing the support process.

- **Potential to do more community engagement:** On reflection, Keir Dellar, the coach for Hastings and St Leonards, felt that recruitment would have been improved if SEED had been promoted more at community events in order to increase awareness of what the aims of the project were.
- **Working with voluntary sector works well:** A proactive approach towards recruitment worked well on the Isle of Wight. Hammie Tappenden, the delivery coach for the Island, liaised with a wide range of support providers in the public and voluntary sector to promote the SEED project, and generate a high number of referrals to SEED once the support sessions started. Hammie cited this as a key reason for the high level of interest in SEED on the Isle of Wight.

Support provided

- **Support tailored to the unique needs of the area:** The structure of support varied between areas. In Slough, each client would receive three support sessions, which would be used to discuss clients' situations, their business ideas and what the next steps should be. In contrast, the duration of support on the Isle of Wight and Hastings varied, depending on the needs of individual clients.
- **Personalised coaching:** Beneficiaries received one-to-one coaching, with the number of coaching sessions dependent on the needs of each individual. Coaching sessions were focused around helping individuals to set up their own business, and coaches would provide personalised advice as well as signposting clients to further sources of information or training. Whilst the headline aim of the SEED project was to help unemployed individuals set up their own business, the benefits to the clients who took part in the project went further than that.
- **Role of workshops:** In Hastings, Workshops, which would typically be attended by six clients were also held in order to inform and train participants on particular issues. As the workshops brought clients together, they also provided an opportunity for the beneficiaries to talk to others who have been in a similar situation, and who are also intending to start a business. This interaction proved to be an effective way of improving beneficiaries self confidence and motivation.
- **Raising awareness:** The SEED project didn't generally aim to get clients to a stage at which they could set up a business straight away. A key part of the support was talking clients through the various avenues of further training or financial assistance available to them.

Equalities

A key KPI of the project is the number of women taking part in the project. To support this, Women's Wisdom, a not-for-profit organisation based in the South East, is on the project Stetting Group.

The coaches in the Hampshire area have the skills to support people with disabilities and extending this work to other areas.

Learning lessons from delivery

The project established a coach's network which meets 4 times a year. This is a useful form for sharing good practice and sharing resource.

Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts

Outputs

The figure below outlines the output targets for the SEED projects.

Figure 2: Output targets

Output	Target	Achieved
Total number of participants	1050	1150
Participants who are unemployed	562	818
Participants who are inactive	488	332
Participants in work on leaving	336	358
Participants referred on after leaving	421	417
Participants in work 6 months after leaving	420	278
Economically inactive participants engaged in job search activity or further learning*	-	123
Number of participants gaining L2 qualifications	-	335
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	231	301
Participants aged 50 or over	189	259
Participants from ethnic minorities**	158	351
Female participants	578	540

Source: SEEDA ESF Output data, Apr 2011. * Calculated from the number of participants who were economically inactive before the programme who were then classed as unemployed or in education on leaving the programme.

** Ethnic minorities classed as non-White British participants

Outcomes and impacts

- Impacts on beneficiaries are expected to become visible in the longer term. The project has recently asked coaches to track beneficiaries for 6 months after their involvement to note any changes. At time of writing it is too soon to report any longer term outcomes.
- The project has received some interest from young people (aged 18 and below) who are unfortunately ineligible for assistance. This demonstrates a demand amongst young people, which future interventions may want to address
- There are some qualitative examples of a multiplier effect as some of the participants have set up business and recruited staff within 6 months
- The 'word of mouth' effect demonstrates the wider impact on families and friends. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the project has impacted more people 'indirectly' by raising the aspirations of participants' social networks
- There is minimal leakage – approximately 4 participants have been identified as ineligible (and are therefore not included in the figures)
- There are no other projects providing this level of support. There are other enterprise support projects but they require the participant to seek out business support and advice. The SEED project, however, is however unique in that it 'goes to' the participant and provides a personalised service, which extends further than conventional business support.

Challenges to achieving impact

- The project has taken place during a **recession** which has presented some challenges. However, the project has responded to this by promoting the opportunities associated with a recession for those who want to set up business. For example things are cheaper to buy, spaces have been cheaper to rent. The recession is thought to have impacted on the types of beneficiaries engaging with the project.
- The numbers of **equality groups** recruited to the project have fallen below anticipated targets. The numbers of female and disabled clients recruited are particularly disappointing, although ethnic minority clients are on target.
- Attracting **lone parents** and demonstrating work with lone parents has been a challenge. Chichester College have requested coaches to push to find out if the clients are lone parents. They have also tried recruiting from Sure Start.
- A number of the coaches reported problems with administering the '**Skills for Life Assessments**' among clients. Clients were required to complete an assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills during the course of the support in order for the coach to gain remuneration for their support sessions with that client. The aim of these assessments was to gauge what type of support the client needed, and what training might be particularly beneficial for them.

However, some clients were unhappy about doing the assessment and others refused to do it altogether. This put coaches in a difficult position: coach these individuals without payment from Chichester College, or refuse support.

Whilst the potential value of these assessments was recognised, coaches felt there needed to be more flexibility around these assessments. One suggestion that the assessment administered to clients should have depended on the previous qualifications of the client. This would have both reduced the length of time it would take to complete the assessment, and mean that the questions that clients were answering were more suitable to their skill levels. Another suggestion was to allow clients to take the tests online; which would give the advantage of providing instantaneous feedback on the assessment to clients.

Lessons Learned

- **Time is critical:** the project has found that the Disability Employment Advisors (DEAs) and Lone Parent officers at Jobcentre Plus are good at referring participants to the project as they have more time to spend with participants
- **Well administered:** The project has set up an internal audit of all paperwork so that all members of the project team are aware of the monitoring requirements needs- has been very successful and resulted in few queries from SEEDA's ESF team
- **Appetite amongst young people:** The fact that the project has had to 'turn away' young people under the age of 18 suggests that there is an appetite for such support amongst younger people
- **Equality:** The project is an excellent model for promoting equality and ensuring access as a result of its tailored approach. However, the challenge of engaging disadvantaged and hard to help groups should not be underestimated.

- **A professional and supportive project manager:** Chichester was praised for the professional manner in which they managed SEED. They were reported to be organised and responsive when coaches had queries – helping coaches in their role as front-line deliverers of support.
- **Appetite for a flexible payment structure:** However, it was suggested that the project could have been more flexible with regards to the payment framework they set up with coaches. In some cases this inflexibility meant that clients did not receive the support that would have benefited them most.

Sustainability

- The project has contributed to a legacy of coaching talent and lessons have been learned about engagement

Value of the SEED approach

- **Value of one to one personalised support:** All coaches consulted with emphasised the value of the one-to-one, personalised support. During the SEED project, clients had more face-time with coaches than they would generally receive in other worklessness or enterprise support programs. This allowed coaches to build a trusting and productive relationship with clients.
- **Coaches with differing skills sets works well:** In Hastings & St Leonards three coaches, each with a different set of experience and skills, were available to support participants. This complemented the one-to-one support provided, as, following an initial consultation, clients could be allocated to the coach who was best placed to help them.
- **Clients benefit from peer networks:** On the Isle of Wight, Hammie noted the positive impact that the clients' interaction with each other had. Being able to talk to people in a similar situation greatly increased motivation and self-confidence, and provided beneficiaries with additional people that they could speak to about their business ideas. Hammie believes there is potential for a peer-network to survive after the SEED project ceases operating, providing a lasting and sustainable legacy for the Island.

Beneficiary 1:

Beneficiary D took part in the SEED project in Hampshire, supported by coach Lizzie Hazzard. He had previously worked in a wide range of jobs, from truck driving to yacht rigging, but had been unemployed for six months prior to starting SEED.

Beneficiary D heard about SEED through the job centre. He was interested in self employment as a possible career path, and so thought the SEED project would be a great opportunity to pursue this.

Beneficiary D attended between 5-10 meetings with Linda. They started by discussing his ideas for a business, and from there Linda was able to help him come up with a business plan. Beneficiary D received training in business management, and Linda was able to answer many of the questions that had been preventing Beneficiary D from starting a business before. Moreover, she was able to provide him information and contacts on further aspects such as obtaining grants and

renting premises.

Before SEED, running a business seemed a daunting task. But through the project, he was able to gain the knowledge and the confidence to take his ideas to the next level.

Beneficiary D finished SEED in July 2010. He was looking to start a business that would provide decoration services for events (particularly festivals, but also corporate events), and was also looking to move in to event production as well. During the summer, he balanced a working in a contract job with conducting further research in to his business, building up a customer base, liaising with an accountant and building a website. Beneficiary D kept in contact with Linda, and has twice spoken with her for advice as well as a catch up on how his business is progressing.

Beneficiary D is now planning to start trading imminently. He strongly believes that he would not be in the same position today if it were not for SEED; there would have been too many barriers for him to overcome by himself. Furthermore, he believes that there are many more people in a similar position as he was, and who would also be able to start up their own business if they were able to take part in a project such as SEED.

Beneficiary 2:

Beneficiary Y took part in the SEED project in Brighton; her coach was Ali Gale. She was made redundant around three years ago. Prior to that she had worked in a travel agency, and before that accountancy.

Beneficiary Y heard about SEED through a networking session that aimed to provide help to mothers who wanted to start up their own business. As soon as she heard about it then she knew it could be the perfect opportunity for her – she wanted to start up her own business for some time but needed support and guidance to take her ideas further.

Beneficiary Y had around six appointments with her coach, Ali Gale. She was originally set to have five meetings, but she felt she needed a little more support and Ali was happy to schedule another meeting.

The majority of support was directly about the process of setting up and running a business – they talked through her ideas and she was set weekly goals, such as conducting market research. This helped Beneficiary Y to not only come away with business knowledge, but also improve her time management skills and give her the motivation and confidence to take her business ideas further. Beneficiary Y was also signposted to a number of contacts who could provide further help with specific aspects of business such as finance.

Having only recently finished SEED when she was interviewed, Beneficiary Y is currently conducting further market research in to her business. She hopes to launch her business early in 2011. As well as benefitting herself, she has also been able to pass on some of the knowledge to other people looking to start up a business.

The key driver of the benefits that Beneficiary Y gained from SEED was the personalised one-to-one coaching it provided. This was something she had not received before SEED. Having someone to talk to, bounce ideas off and provide

encouragement is invaluable from Beneficiary Y perspective, and she would not be in the position she is today without it.

Beneficiary 3:

Beneficiary B had been an entrepreneur prior to SEED, but she had been unemployed for a period of time before taking part in the project. Beneficiary B heard about the project from the Job Centre, and felt that the project could help her get back in to self employment.

During her meetings with her coach, Lorraine Bell, she was able to discuss her initial ideas for an events management company, and form these ideas in to a business plan she could take forward. Beneficiary B met Lorraine for six or seven meetings, during which she was able to gain technical business skills as well as build up her confidence. The structure that SEED provided her with was particularly important to encouraging her to become more pro-active in her quest to start a business.

An additional benefit of SEED was that it allowed Beneficiary B to meet other clients, who were in a similar position to her. Beneficiary B used this networking opportunity to gain contacts from the course who she still speaks to today. They have been able to support and encourage each other, and even build upon their business ideas.

Immediately after SEED, Beneficiary B found employment as a hotel manager. She stayed in this post for a few months before deciding to further pursue her business plan for an events management company that she developed during SEED. Beneficiary B is hoping to start her business in the new year.

Beneficiary B also received ongoing support from Lorraine from time-to-time since leaving SEED. Knowing that she has someone she can phone up and talk to has been a huge boost for Beneficiary B. Beneficiary B described SEED as 'brilliant'. In her view, the thing that set SEED apart from other forms of support is that the coaches would really listen to their clients – they were not simply there to talk at them.

The Canterbury experience

Design and rationale

Although Canterbury is largely a prosperous City, there are pockets of deprivation. Some of the rural population experience challenges with transportation. There are also lots of small retail businesses with little progression opportunity, so many of the professionals who reside in the City, travel outside of Canterbury for employment. There are also challenges for those who are dependent on benefits and although they may have a business idea, feel that it is '*too much of a leap*'.

The SEED project in Canterbury was designed to give one-to-one support to individuals most in need of support.

Delivery

Initially it took a while to recruit participants onto the project. However, there has been a rapid increase as success stories from the project have been disseminated informally through word of mouth. On the whole, the referral process has worked

well with appropriate individuals engaging. At its peak, the project had a waiting list. The project recruited beneficiaries on a first come first served basis and this approach has worked well.

The Canterbury coach is a trained life coach. His approach is about empowering the beneficiary and not about 'forcing people' to take training.

Many of the referrals came through Job Centre Plus. However, it has been noted that working with Job Centre Plus has been challenging, with not all personnel recognising the value of the SEED project. On reflection, it would have been better if there was a prior agreement/commitment with Job Centre Plus in order to ensure that they were actively championing the project.

The relationship with Chichester College has been very positive. Chichester College, it has been noted, have been both supportive and responsive. The SEED coach valued the network with other coaches involved in the project.

Outcomes

Many of the beneficiaries who have engaged with the project have reported challenges with confidence and aspirations with few local role models.

The project has led to a small number of successful business start ups. However, some of the most notable outcomes include:

- Social impacts: the project has successfully retained the motivation of the individuals involved. Many of the beneficiaries have demonstrated improved confidence and morale. One stated of the coach *'you are the first person who believed in me'*
- Multiplier effects: the project has worked with individuals to support them with their enterprise ideas. However, the impacts have leaked beyond these individuals, supporting their partners, children and families. The impact of the project is long-term and it is expected to contribute to significant change for a small number of family units

Some of the beneficiaries have engaged with the project and are experiencing trauma in their lives. For example, one beneficiary was homeless. The project has had an unexpected success with some of these more vulnerable beneficiaries, signposting them to relevant support agencies who are equipped to support them.

The coach has noted that the project has had most notable success with those individuals who are both willing and able to make the changes

- Communities
- Economies
- Skills
- Enterprise