Evaluation of Support to Pan London 2 ESF Projects

Executive Summary

A Report from the Learning and Skills Council London Region

September 2008
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1 The Evaluation of Support to Pan London 2 ESF Projects report assesses the quality of support given to providers during project delivery under the Learning and Skills Council London (LSC London) Pan London 2 ESF programme (Pan London 2). The assessment is based on the outcomes of a survey undertaken of Pan London 2 project providers.

2 Overall, all areas of support given to providers in relation to project delivery received a positive rating (that is, ‘satisfactory’ or above). In addition, almost all individual areas examined received the same or a better rating than in the equivalent survey undertaken of Pan London 1 projects and the responses indicate that ECOTEC have reacted positively to the recommendations made in the report following the Pan London 1 survey.

3 In particular, the survey results reveal the following highlights:

   a Contract Manager support was rated as ‘good’ in terms of ease of access, speed of response and quality of advice provided, ‘satisfactory to good’ in terms of consistency of advice provided and was ranked as the most useful support tool by 66% of projects;

   b Feedback from monitoring mechanisms was rated as ‘good’ overall and four of the six mechanisms examined individually were rated as ‘good’;

   c Project support documents were rated as ‘satisfactory’ overall, with the Provider Manual and monthly email bulletins individually rated as ‘satisfactory to good’;

   d Provider support events were rated as ‘satisfactory’ overall, with ten of the 13 events examined rated as ‘satisfactory’ or better;

   e The PDM helpline and support service was rated as ‘satisfactory’ overall, with the speed and quality of response rated as ‘satisfactory to good’;

   f The London O3 website was rated as ‘satisfactory’ overall, with the quality of information rated as ‘satisfactory to good’;

   g Support tools to help projects understand how to meet data collection requirements were rated as ‘satisfactory to good’;
h Support tools to help projects understand how to publicise their projects were rated as ‘satisfactory’; and
i Mechanisms to help projects share good practice were rated as ‘satisfactory’.

4 The report contains 14 recommendations, which have been made to seek further information about aspects of support that attracted positive feedback or high levels of satisfaction as well as to address aspects attracting a level of negative feedback or relatively low levels of satisfaction. LSC London will ask ECOTEC to respond to the recommendations through a final report they prepare on the programme management. LSC London will use this report, as well as feedback gained from this evaluation, to consider improvements it can make to its own systems for managing future ESF project delivery.

5 LSC London is asking for good practice to be highlighted in:
   a Contract management;
   b Use of monitoring mechanisms;
   c Support documents, particularly the usefulness of the documents employed and how they supported projects with beneficiary and evidence requirements; and
   d Supporting projects with data collection, publicity and sharing good practice.

6 LSC London has also made recommendations seeking feedback on:
   a Concerns raised by some projects about the consistency of advice given by Contract Managers with other advice;
   b Comments made about issues with Monthly Monitoring Returns and confirmation that any issues with individual projects that resulted in delays in payment have been resolved;
   c Comments made about areas support documents did not cover and about support documents in general;
   d Lessons learned from using events to support project delivery, including highlighting any good practice and analysing why some events were seen as useful and others were not;
   e Concerns raised about the timing of events and the relatively lower satisfaction expressed with launch events compared to Pan London 1;
   f Concerns raised by some projects about the PDM support service (particularly the speed of response, availability of support and its usefulness in assisting projects understand data collection requirements) and about duplication of information;
   g Lessons learned from the operation of the London O3 website as a tool for supporting project delivery.
   h Comments made about obstacles projects felt prevented them from publicising their projects effectively;
   i Lessons learned from the operation of the Pan London User Group as a way of engaging with projects; and
   j Comments made about ECOTECS role compared to that of the LSC London in managing the programme.