

# Using the results of evaluation to inform ESF programming :

## ESF in England – a case study

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European Union  
European Social Fund  
Investing in jobs and skills

**DWP** Department for  
Work and Pensions

## Aim of presentation

- To use the English ESF Programme 2007-2013 as a case study to illustrate examples of how evaluation is used in programming
- To consider the less obvious benefits and wider uses of evaluation
- To contribute to the wider discussion on the utilisation of evaluation results

# Overview of presentation

- Contextual information
- Background on programme / stakeholders / evaluation set-up
- Role of evaluation in informing development of programmes
- ( mid –term update and ex-ante)
- Role of evaluation during life of programme
- Summary of uses
- Wider Uses
- Wider benefits

# England and Gibraltar ESF Programme 2007-13

## ➤ **Supports:**

- (i) Convergence Objective ( regions lagging behind)
- (ii) Regional competitiveness and employment objective

## ➤ **2 main priorities:**

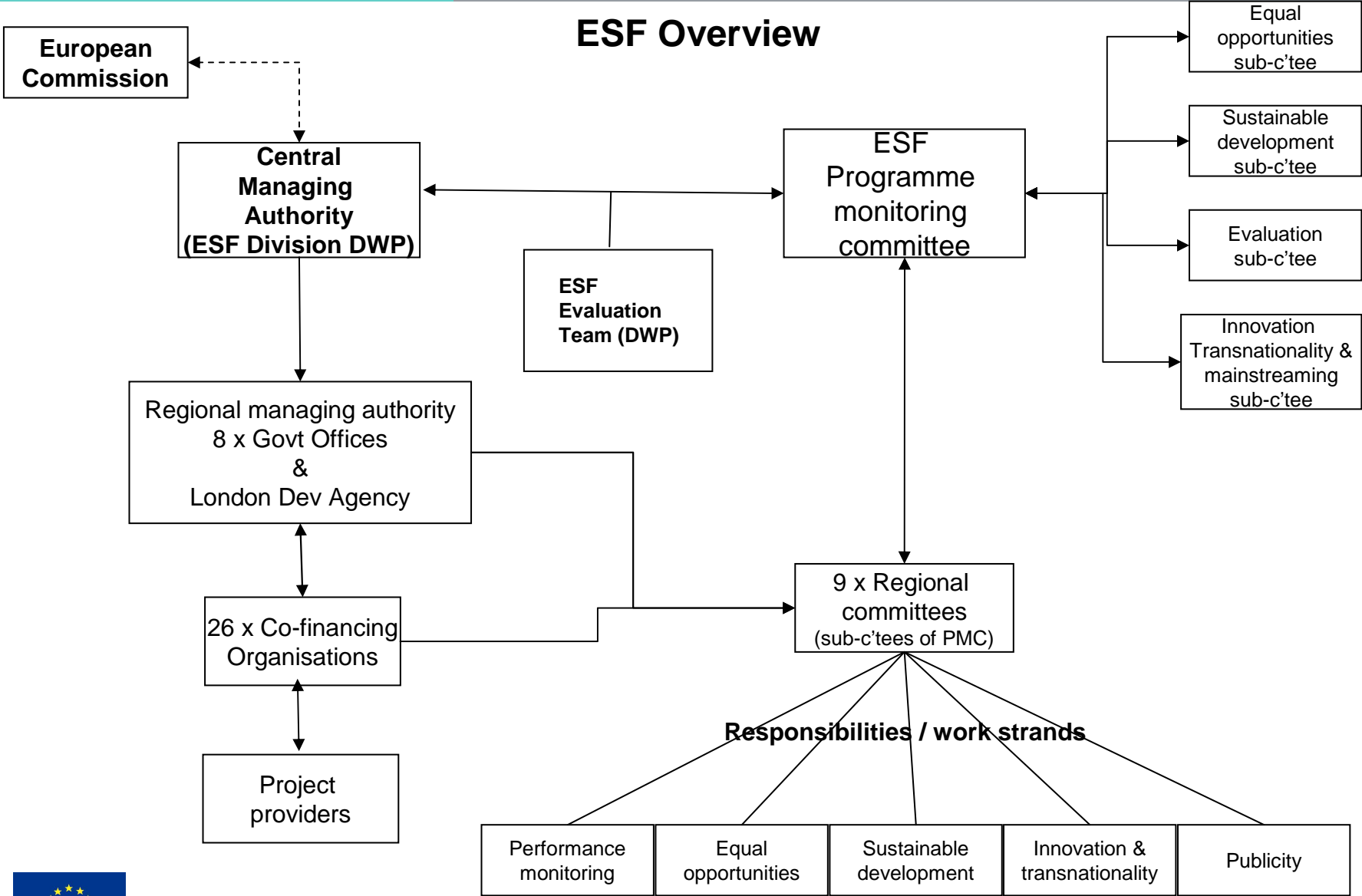
Priority 1 : Extending employment opportunities

Priority 2 : Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce

## ➤ **Total value of ESF**

£2.3 billion ( approx)

# ESF Overview



## Main sources of evaluation data ( up to 2007)

- Management information database – drawing upon administrative data on participants / projects
- Follow-up survey data on sample of participants – gathered at 6 month and 18 month stage
- Data from companies surveys
- Ad-hoc research

## What things contribute towards the content of ESF programme?

- Regulations
- Community Strategic Guidelines
- National Strategic Reference Framework
- Update to the mid term evaluation
- Ex-Ante Evaluation
- Internal stakeholder consultations
- Public Consultations etc.

# Update to the Mid Term Evaluation 2006

## ➤ Aimed to:

- (i) assess impact since mid term and
- (ii) inform 'early thinking' for the 2007-2013 programme

## ➤ Identified 4 main priorities / themes

- (i) support for people who are people who are disabled / people with health problems
- (ii) lone parents;
- (iii) small grants for local organisations helping disadvantaged people;
- (iii) support for an adaptable workforce

## Purpose of ex-ante evaluation : 2007-2013 Programme

- Optimise the allocation of budgetary resources
- Improve programme quality
- Identify disparities / gaps / potential for development
- Identify goals and expected results
- Community added value
- Lessons learned from previous programming
- Quality of the processes for implementation, monitoring evaluation and financial management

## How did we use ex-ante?

- Iterative and interactive process of developing the ESF programme – encouraged close co-operation within and between departments ;
- To check relevance of objectives / priorities ( SWOT / Labour market assessment)
- To assess programme priorities against Community and domestic policies;
- To assess the extent to which ESF programme is likely to be delivered effectively

## How did we use ex-ante ? Continued.....

- To consider lessons learned from ESF – good practice
- Allocation of resources
- Quantification of Objectives / Priorities – Targets
- Assess likely quality of implementation systems etc
- Inform Equal Opportunities Impact Assessment ( legal requirement)
- Inform screening report for Strategic Environmental Assessment

## Our approach to on-going evaluation during 2007-2013— some key characteristics

- Recognises **regulatory requirements** & EC guidance
- **'On-going'** – strategic and operational
- Includes coverage of some **generic themes**
- Builds upon previous research
- Aims to improve **linkage** between on-going monitoring and evaluation
- Help **meet needs** of decision makers
- **Flexible** / non-prescriptive – needs to respond to yet unknown needs
- Appropriate **scope** – synthesis report at mid point and end of programme rather than large-scale interim and interim update

# Methodology

## ➤ Three main sources of information:

- (i) ESF database / MI
- (ii) Cohort survey
- (iii) Thematic research – operational and strategic

## ➤ Other sources of information:

- (i) CFO evaluations
- (ii) AIR reporting system – including qualitative reporting
- (iii) Any other research by DWP, LSC etc on employment or skills programmes used for 'match funding' etc.

## Overview of Research studies and timing of synthesis reports

	Key Data Sources ( Ongoing ) <span style="float: right;">→</span>			Evaluation
Year	ESF MI Database	Participant Follow-Up Studies (cohort survey)	Research Studies (approx 2 - 3 per year) Indicative list	Evaluation Reporting
<b>2008</b>	Regular reporting		For example: ➤ Cross-cutting themes ➤ In-work training ➤ Higher level training for convergence region ➤ Regional ESF Frameworks	<b>1<sup>st</sup> evaluation synthesis report</b>
<b>2009</b>	Regular reporting	Cohort study Wave 1		
<b>2010</b>	Regular reporting	Cohort study Wave 2		
<b>2011</b>	Regular reporting		Research studies yet to be decided	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> evaluation synthesis report</b>
<b>2012</b>	Regular reporting			
<b>2013</b>	Regular reporting	Second cohort study reports		

## Summary of uses in programming

### ➤ **Making judgements / assessments (past and future)**

e.g. ex-ante evaluation – checking rationale, likelihood of meeting needs, assessing likely future impact, likely effectiveness, informing negotiations , likely value added / cost benefit etc

### ➤ **Facilitating improvements during life of programme (real-time feedback)**

e.g. on-going monitoring and evaluation strategy checks  
implementation issues such as REFs, CCTs , mainstreaming etc  
Case studies / good practice identified / brought forward

### ➤ **Generating knowledge**

e.g. with stakeholders during consultation, dissemination etc

## Wider uses of evaluation

- **Summative evaluation** – e.g. individual programme evaluations assessed at pan-European / macro level, assessing extrinsic value to European Union policy – informing major decisions about future of Structural Funds etc,
- **'Accumulated wisdom'** – knowledge, lessons learned and good practice informs wider policy development – ideas and arguments that have their basis in research can be very influential on policy makers – **what works best? what ideas and practices can we transfer to new initiatives?**

## Wider benefits

- Can help highlight issues – the act of evaluating can `flag' or raise importance / profile of a topic / issue
- Encourages partnership working / civil society– e.g. involving partners in steering groups helps share knowledge and developing a common understanding on issues
- If results are presented and disseminated effectively – can help motivate people involved in programme – encourage comparisons of performance
- Partnership in evaluation can help manage expectations

## Wider benefits

- Evaluation results can have many uses and multi-level users— from briefing Ministers and senior officials to sharing good practice with training providers
- Case study evaluations have been used in England to identify publicity case studies for publicity purposes
- Encourages `learning through doing`.

## Contact / website

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