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## **Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014 – 2020**

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Promoting access to  
employment, social inclusion  
and skills for growth

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**Northern Ireland  
European Social Fund  
Programme 2014 – 2020**

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2014UK05SFOP004

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**Executive Summary  
Abbreviations and  
Acronyms**

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## Executive Summary

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### European Social Fund 2014-2020 Northern Ireland

#### Main Objectives

**The Strategic Aim of the ESF Programme 2014-2020 in Northern Ireland is to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce.**

The Programme will fund activity to enhance and extend employment opportunities, in particular, for those groups at a disadvantage in the labour market who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or economically inactive.

There will also be a focus on supporting young people aged 16-24 who are not in employment, education or training and on people with a disability.

In addition, through the Apprenticeships and Youth Training Programme, we aim to increase the number of people in employment skilled at level 2 and 3-8 in line with employers' needs and the needs of the economy.

This activity addresses the recommendations made to the UK through country-specific recommendations in relation to reducing the number of young people with low basic skills, and addressing skills mismatch through more advanced and higher level skills provision, and furthering the apprenticeship offer.

Specific issues related to youth unemployment and reducing the risk of social exclusion referred to in the country position paper are also being addressed.

The Northern Ireland Operating Programme is also in line with the EU 2020 Strategy for Jobs and Growth in relation to the areas reflected in targets 1 and 5 relating to employment and social inclusion and the flagship initiatives - An Agenda for new Skills and Jobs and the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

Activity being funded also supports the Executive's own Programme for Government objectives of "Growing a sustainable Economy and Investing in the Future" and "Creating opportunities, tackling disadvantage and improving health and well-being".

## Funding Priorities

The aim of the ESF programme will be realised through the implementation of Thematic objectives 8 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility, 9 - Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and any discrimination and 10 - Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning. The intervention rate is 40% with a national counterpart of 60%.

Thematic Objective 8 has been allocated 28.5% (€146.3m) of the total ESF fund. Unemployed, including long-term unemployed and economically inactive people will be targeted through this objective in order to address the significant challenges around the number of unemployed and economically inactive people in Northern Ireland as compared with the rest of the UK and Europe. There is also support for young people not in education employment or training (NEET) in line with DEL's *Pathways to Success strategy* through which we aim to identify the needs of this group and provide young people with opportunities to meet those needs.

ESF funding complements significant funding already provided through existing DEL strategies, policies and programmes in these areas.

Thematic Objective 9 has been allocated 30% (€154m) of funding to support 2 distinct groups of people – people with a disability and people aged 16 and over who are not in employment education or training in families receiving Community Family Support. There is a regulatory requirement for at least 20% of the total ESF funding to be allocated to thematic objective 9 within this priority axis. DEL, in conjunction with partners and stakeholders, has decided that 30% of funding will be allocated to this priority. This has been determined on the basis of the costs for supporting people with a disability under the 2007-2013 ESF programme and the costs of providing the pilot Community Family Support programme

Thematic Objective 10 has been allocated the largest proportion of funding at 40% (€205.4m) Funding is aimed at increasing the proportion of people in employment skilled at levels 2 and 3-8 through apprenticeships and youth training. This reflects the importance attached to upskilling the workforce, and ensuring the future skills needs of the Northern Ireland economy are met. DEL will provide the full 60% match funding for this priority with no input required from other bodies.

**Expected Impacts** - The expected impacts are as follows:

### **Thematic objective 8**

28,000 **Unemployed (including longterm unemployed) people** will be supported.

3,850 will be in employment upon leaving;

5,250 will be in employment 6 months after leaving.

12,000 **Economically Inactive People** will be supported.

1,650 will be in employment upon leaving;

2,250 will be in employment 6 months after leaving;

2,500 will be in education/training upon leaving.

25,000 **Young People (aged 16-24) not in employment education or training** will be supported.

3,000 will be in employment upon leaving;

8,750 will be in education/training upon leaving.

## Thematic Objective 9

13,000 **People with a disability** will be supported.

1,300 will enter employment upon leaving;

650 will still be in employment 6 months after leaving;

1,950 will enter education/ training upon leaving.

4,200 **targeted families receiving “Community Family Support”**

12,600 **NEET Participants aged 16 and over in Families receiving “Community Family Support”** will be supported.

6,300 will be engaged in job searching upon leaving;

2,520 will enter education/training upon leaving;

2,500 will gain a qualification upon leaving;

1,260 (10%) will be employed upon leaving.

## Thematic Objective 10

42,000 **employed Participants** will be supported.

(56%) will achieve targeted Level 2 qualifications<sup>1</sup>;

(53%) will achieve targeted Level 3 qualifications or above<sup>2</sup>.

### NI ESF 2014 – 2020 Programme - Financial Allocation

	€ ESF 40%	€ Match Funding 60%	€ Total	% of Total Allocation
<b>Priority Axis 1 (thematic objective 8)</b>	<b>58,525,631</b>	<b>87,788,446</b>	<b>146,314,077</b>	<b>28.5%</b>
<b>Priority Axis 2 (thematic objective 9)</b>	<b>61,605,927</b>	<b>92,408,890</b>	<b>154,014,817</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Priority Axis 3 (thematic objective 10)</b>	<b>82,141,236</b>	<b>123,211,854</b>	<b>205,353,090</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Priority Axis 4 Technical Assistance</b>	<b>3,080,296</b>	<b>4,620,445</b>	<b>7,700,741</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

1 In addition to participants embarking on a Level 2 or Level 3 framework, there is potential for registration for Level 2/3. In this scenario, apprentices are pursuing an NVQ Level 2 en route to the achievement of targeted Level 3 framework qualifications. There is therefore some overlap in the figures

2 These figures are based on provision in the 2007-13 ESF programme and are likely to change following the outcome of the Review of Apprenticeship and Youth Training currently underway in Northern Ireland. At this time it is not possible to predict the final outcome of the review or the impact that it is likely to have on the numbers undertaking apprenticeship and youth training. Revised information will be made available when the new apprenticeship and training model is put in place.



## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CFSP</b>	Community Family Support Programme
<b>DARD</b>	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>DE</b>	Department of Education
<b>DEL</b>	Department for Employment and Learning
<b>DETI</b>	Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment
<b>DFP</b>	Department of Finance and Personnel
<b>DHSSPS</b>	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
<b>DOE</b>	Department of Environment
<b>DRD</b>	Department for Regional Development
<b>DSD</b>	Department for Social Development
<b>DWP</b>	Department for Work and Pensions
<b>EAFRD</b>	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
<b>EC</b>	European Community
<b>EMFF</b>	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
<b>ERDF</b>	European Regional Development Fund
<b>ESF</b>	European Social Fund
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FE</b>	Further Education
<b>GCE</b>	General Certificate of Education
<b>GCSE</b>	General Certificate of Secretary Education
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>HMT</b>	Her Majesty's Treasury
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>IFI</b>	International Fund for Ireland
<b>ISCED</b>	International Standards Classification of Education
<b>JSA</b>	Jobseeker's Allowance
<b>LTU</b>	Long Term Unemployed
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Education, Employment or Training
<b>NISRA</b>	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
<b>NRP</b>	National Reform Programme
<b>NVQ</b>	National Vocational Qualification
<b>OFM/DFM</b>	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
<b>PMC</b>	Programme Monitoring Committee
<b>PfG</b>	Programme for Government
<b>R&amp;D</b>	Research and Development
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Sized Enterprise
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UKPA</b>	United Kingdom Partnership Agreement



# 1. Strategy for the Operational Programme's Contribution to the Union Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth and the Achievement of Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion

## 1.1 Strategy for the operational programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

1.1.1 Description of the programme's strategy for contributing to the delivery of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and for achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

### Introduction

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) is the designated Managing Authority for the 2014-2020 European Social Fund (ESF) in Northern Ireland and as such has been in the lead on the development of the ESF Programme for 2014-2020.

It is proposed that a single ESF programme will operate for the region, as part of a wider set of European Structural Funds programmes, encompassing the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) INTERREG V and PEACE IV programmes.

The aim of Northern Ireland's ESF Programme 2014-2020 is: "to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity, and increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce". This aim will be realised through the thematic objectives and investment priorities detailed in Table A.

**Table A: Programme Priorities**

Priority Axis	Thematic Objective	Investment Priority
Priority Axis 1	(8) Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	(i) Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility.  (ii) Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.
Priority Axis 2	(9) Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and any discrimination.	(i) Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
Priority Axis 3	(10) Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning	(iv) Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work and strengthening vocational education and training (VET) systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes.

## **Socio-Economic Analysis of Northern Ireland**

A socio-economic assessment of Northern Ireland (which can be accessed through the following link: [www.detni.gov.uk/final\\_socio\\_economic\\_analysis](http://www.detni.gov.uk/final_socio_economic_analysis)) was published in January 2013 to inform the development of the region's Operational Programmes for both the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for the period 2014-2020. The report highlights the needs and challenges to be addressed through the ESF Programme and these are:

- Unemployment/Long term unemployment
- Economic inactivity
- NEETs
- Combating poverty by increasing economic activity
- Upskilling the workforce

Through the three thematic objectives of the 2014-2020 Programme, ESF funding will be focussed on addressing these identified areas of need.

Development needs in respect of unemployment, economic inactivity and young people who are not in employment education or training (NEET) will be addressed through ESF activity in Thematic objective 8. The needs in relation to people with a disability will be addressed through thematic objective 9. The NEET issue will also be addressed through activity in thematic objective 9 which targets families where at least one family member is NEET or in danger of falling into the NEET category. The needs identified around education and skills will be addressed through activity in thematic objective 10.

## **Identified Needs**

Northern Ireland has been severely impacted by the global economic downturn and there are concerns that the recovery here is lagging behind the rest of the UK.

As a result of the recession, the majority of private sectors in NI have experienced significant reductions in output, with the construction sector particularly affected. Output has fallen by 30% since the start of 2008 and by 37% since its peak at the beginning of 2007. Other sectors have also experienced reductions, with business & financial services contracting by around one quarter (26%) since 2008. Retail and manufacturing have also reported large reductions in output, although this pattern is not universal. For example, some sectors, most notably the agri-food sector, have reported increases in output during the downturn.

## Development needs relevant to Thematic Objective 8

### Unemployment

- The slowdown in the private sector has had a significant impact on the NI labour market, with the number of people in employment falling by almost 35,000 since the employment peak in June 2008 until September 2012. The construction and manufacturing sectors have experienced the largest overall reductions in job numbers. Retail has accounted for the largest decrease within the service sector, followed by business & finance (where the job losses have not been of the same order of magnitude as the decline in output).
- The scale of total job losses in NI – equivalent to 4.9% of workforce jobs in June 2008 – has been reflected throughout the UK, with Scotland and Wales also reporting significant reductions of 5.7% and 3.2% respectively. The situation has been less acute in the English regions where the average reduction in the numbers of people in employment is 2.0%.
- The job losses in NI have resulted in a significant rise in the number of persons claiming unemployment benefits. Since February 2008, Northern Ireland has seen the largest increase in the number of claimants of unemployment benefits compared to all other UK regions (equivalent to a 152% increase to December 2013<sup>3</sup>. At 7.4%, the October-December 2013 Northern Ireland ILO seasonally adjusted unemployment rate<sup>4</sup> is above the UK average at 7.2%, though below the RoI (15%) and EU averages (10.5%).

### Economic Inactivity

In addition to the very obvious impacts of the recent recession, Northern Ireland continues to face a range of structural challenges that hamper the region's economic performance. These issues are long standing and have been widely documented – most recently in the Northern Ireland Executive's Economic Strategy 'Priorities for Sustainable Growth and Prosperity' (2012) which states:

“...a disproportionately large percentage of the population is registered as economically inactive, with social exclusion levels well above other parts of the UK”

There was a sharp rise in the level of economic inactivity at the beginning of the downturn, with a high percentage of women in this position. Whilst the rate has subsequently fallen back, Northern Ireland has the highest rate of economic inactivity across all UK regions - 26.9% of the working age (16-64) population compared to the UK average which is 22.1%. However, the differential between the NI and UK economic

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3 [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

4 Labour Force Survey October-December 2013

inactivity levels has reduced over the past two decades, due mainly to fewer persons being unavailable for work because of long term illness, a disability, or family/ caring responsibilities. Long-term unemployment as a proportion of the total unemployed (July - September 2013) is also higher in Northern Ireland (50.7%) than the UK (35.2%) and EU (47.9%) averages<sup>5</sup>.

## Lone Parents

A baseline analysis of economic inactivity in Northern Ireland<sup>6</sup> which was undertaken as part of the development of the Northern Ireland Inactivity strategy(2013), highlighted two inactive groups as the key targets of the strategy: those with a work-limiting long- term illness or disability, and those with family commitments, specifically lone parents.

The analysis also found that, within the lone parents category, there is a stark gender divide between men and women, Of the 73,000 registered as inactive due to family commitments, the vast majority (approximately 60,000) are women. Seventy one percent (71%) of these women have at least one dependent child. Childcare costs will continue to be provided to those participants on ESF interventions, who require it.

## People with no Qualifications

The NI Labour Force Survey for the period October - December 2013 shows that 33.4% of economically inactive people in Northern Ireland had no formal qualifications, compared to 10.6% of the economically active population. Only 7.3% of the economically inactive had a degree level qualification compared to 26.4% of the economically active. Investment in thematic objective 8 will seek to address this situation in keeping with the aim of the NI Economic strategy which recognises the need to raise the skills level of the future workforce as well as the those currently in work.

DEL will support activity to help those furthest from the labour market overcome their barriers to employment thus enabling them to access and make progress on the skills ladder. The socio-economic analysis of Northern Ireland highlights the need to develop skills at all levels in NI. Raising the skills levels of the least skilled will not only improve employability and progress within the workplace but will also help to reduce systemic poverty and contribute to securing social inclusion.

## Young People Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)

Northern Ireland has experienced a significant rise in youth unemployment, including an increasing number of graduates. The numbers of young people who are NEET continue to rise – many of these young people have few or no qualifications and no aspirations, often facing very significant barriers to re-engagement with the labour market.

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5 Labour Force Survey October-December 2013

6 <http://www.delni.gov.uk/economic-inactivity-strategy-baseline-study.pdf>

The number of young people in the NEET category was increasing both in absolute terms and as a proportion of the 16-24 population even before the recession<sup>7</sup>. This would indicate that this has occurred because of more fundamental structural reasons and is not simply a product of the current global/regional economic difficulties. If Northern Ireland is to be successful economically and socially, there is a need to ensure that all young people have ready access to positive learning opportunities that allow them to develop the necessary vocational and life skills to make successful transitions into further and higher education training or employment.

The NI Labour Force Survey for the period October - December 2013, shows that there were 29,000 young people (aged from 16 to 24) in the NEET category. This represented 13.2% of all young people aged 16 to 24, down 2.7 percentage points from the July - September 2013 period and 3% less than the figures for the previous year. It should be noted however that this lower estimate of the number of NEETs does not represent an improvement in the position but rather, results from a UK -wide amendment in the methodology for collection of data and counting rules applying to NEETs. The NEET problem persists in Northern Ireland and still needs to be addressed.

## **Development needs relevant to Thematic Objective 9**

### **People with a Disability**

As stated earlier, the baseline economic analysis of inactivity in Northern Ireland identified people with a disability as one of the groups to be targeted through the economic inactivity strategy. The October – December 2013 Labour Force survey estimates that one in five people (20.1%) aged 16 – 64 in Northern Ireland had a current long term disability<sup>8</sup> which was higher than the UK as a whole which stood at 18.7%. The proportion of people with a disability who were economically inactive in this period was 56.2% compared with 19.3% for those without disabilities and just over a third (37.7%) were in employment compared to 75.3% of people without a disability<sup>9</sup>. The number of ESA<sup>10</sup> recipients over the period February 2010 to August 2013 increased by 433%, equivalent to an increase of 63,050 recipients.

The survey also found that only 7.4% of those with a disability held a degree or equivalent qualification, compared with 24.8% of non-disabled persons. 33% of those with a disability had no qualifications - over twice the proportion of those without a disability – 12.7%.

There will be a renewed focus in the ESF Programme on people with a disability through thematic objective 9 which places the emphasis on assisting people overcome personal barriers to social inclusion.

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7 Northern Ireland Executives Pathways to Success Strategy (2012)

8 As defined under The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995

9 Labour Force Survey October – December 2013

10 Employment and Support Allowance August 2013 [http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_and\\_research/benefit\\_publications.htm](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/stats_and_research/benefit_publications.htm)

## Community family Support

The CFSP was developed as a new approach to tackle disadvantage, social exclusion and address the significant issue of youth unemployment in Northern Ireland. The programme, which was developed by DEL, is unique in that it provides a wraparound family intervention support and employability mentoring service to help families address the health, social, economic, educational, employment and training issues that impact on their daily lives. It aims to support all family members and break the cycle of intergenerational unemployment and associated poverty in communities.

CFSP has been developed in response to the NI executive's Programme for Government 2011-2015<sup>11</sup> Priority 2 - Creating Opportunities, Tackling Disadvantage and Improving Health and Wellbeing - particularly in respect of actions around improving the participation of young people in education, employment and training leading to greater equality of opportunity in economic participation. The Northern Ireland Executive's Economic Strategy (2012) also highlights the fact that:

“..a significant number of households have experienced intergenerational poverty or joblessness and are far removed from job readiness and the labour market “

CFSP focuses on households rather than individuals as a means of preventing young people from disengaging from education and training by improving their family environment. *The Pathways to Success Strategy*<sup>12</sup> contained a commitment to developing such a programme and the Programme itself has become a signature project of Delivering Social Change.<sup>13</sup> Recruitment of families to the CFSP programme will be sought from a range of sources including the local network of Family Support Hubs, the relevant Health and Social Care Trusts and other family support agencies / organisations in the voluntary and community sectors. Families can also self-refer from within their local communities.

## Development needs relevant to Thematic Objective 10

### Education and Skills

Research completed by Oxford Economics in 2012 on behalf of DEL shows that between 2011 and 2030 under the current baseline scenario the share of workforce employment requirements for NQF 4+ qualification is forecast to rise from 33% to 45% and the share with NQF 3 qualifications from 22% to 25%;

Table B shows the qualifications of those currently in employment in the UK for the period January-March 2013.

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11 <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg-2011-2015-final-report.pdf>

12 <http://www.delni.gov.uk/del-pathways-to-success-v6.pdf>

13 <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/dsc-children-young-people-consultation-2014.pdf>



**Table B: Qualification of those in Employment by UK Regions  
Jan - Mar 2013**

	NQF4-8	NQF3	NQF2	NQF1	No Qualification	Total
<b>England</b>	40.8%	19.9%	20.4%	13.5%	5.4%	24,636,000
<b>Scotland</b>	45.2%	18.3%	18.8%	12.0%	5.6%	2,484,000
<b>Wales</b>	36.9%	22.7%	21.3%	12.7%	6.3%	1,334,000
<b>N. Ireland</b>	36.2%	18.7%	20.9%	11.8%	12.4%	780,000
<b>UK</b>	40.8%	19.9%	20.3%	13.3%	5.7%	29,235,000

This illustrates a stark difference between NI and other parts of the UK in the proportion of workers with no qualifications and therefore a need to raise the level of qualifications across the workforce as a whole. The NI Economic Strategy identifies the need to raise the skills level of the current and future workforce as critical to the competitiveness and economic success of the region. Shortage of the right skills was also identified by the European Council in June 2012 as one of the issues constraining UK growth and employment in the medium-term.

A high quality skills base provides the platform for successful innovation, an increased export focus and productivity growth. It also acts as a powerful driver for attracting high value investment opportunities, particularly Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). It is therefore important to invest in a high quality education and training system that has a very strong economic focus and which is flexible and responsive to changes in skills demand.

The Department's Skills Strategy, Success through Skills-Transforming Futures – considers the current skills base in Northern Ireland, examines the skills we are likely to need in the future to grow the Northern Ireland economy and highlights a number of areas for action.

The Skills Strategy highlights that the Northern Ireland skills profile has been improving steadily over the past number of years, however more needs to be done if we are to have the skills necessary for the economy to grow as desired. Success through Skills

– Transforming Futures outlines four strategic goals which are designed to provide a strategic, long term direction of travel for the Department and its key stakeholders up to the period 2020.

The Strategy highlights that there will be a need for:

- an increase in higher level skills;
- an increase in STEM skills;
- an increase in management and leadership skills;

The interim report and consultation document on the review of Apprenticeships<sup>14</sup> which was published by DEL in January 2014, also shows that the requirements of the NI workforce in general, including apprenticeships, are changing, with an increased demand for higher level skills across the economy. As demonstrated by DEL's most recent statistical bulletin<sup>15</sup> the current skills model needs to give sufficient recognition to the current and future skills needs of the economy, with a particular emphasis on the region's young people. Higher level apprenticeships have been identified in the review of apprenticeships, as a key pathway for the delivery of a greater volume of higher level skills to the Northern Ireland workforce.

The focus in the past of most apprenticeships being funded at Level 2 does not support skills projections for 2020 and beyond, with demand for lower level skills expected to halve and demand for higher level skills at Levels 3-8 set to increase significantly. The current apprenticeship framework only offers apprenticeships to level three and is therefore limited in its capacity to meet the needs of our economy.

The new model of apprenticeship and youth training, which will be put in place post 2016, will aim to facilitate access to quality training with greater opportunities to progress from level 2 through to level 8.

## European Strategies

In developing the proposals for the 2014-2020 ESF Programme, the priorities of EU 2020 - the European Union's ten year strategy for putting Europe's economy back on the path to growth - have also been taken into account. The objective of the strategy is for the EU to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy by 2020. The main focus of the NI ESF Programme is to contribute to the attainment of inclusive growth.

Table C shows the five targets set by the EU to be achieved through the EU 2020 Strategy and related programmes and initiatives, in the fields of employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy. Through thematic objectives 8, 9 and 10 as described above, the NI ESF programme is specifically focussed on the areas reflected in targets 1 and 5 relating to employment and social inclusion. Northern

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14 Review of Apprenticeships Interim Report and Consultation January 2014

15 Department for Employment and Learning Statistical Bulletin on ApprenticeshipsNI Statistics from September 2007 to July 2013 <http://www.delni.gov.uk/appsni-bulletin-nov-13.pdf>

Ireland’s employment rate currently stands at 67.6%<sup>16</sup>, which is 4.5 percentage points below the UK average. The Northern Ireland Economic Inactivity strategy aims to achieve a stable and competitive employment rate of over 70% by 2023 through a reduction in the proportion of the working age population classified as economically inactive – and the Northern Ireland Executive’s Delivering Social Change (DSC) agenda is focussed on reducing poverty and social exclusion. Both of these initiatives are described in more detail in Section 5.

**Table C: EU 2020 Targets**

1. Employment	75% of 20-64 year-olds to be employed
2. R&D / innovation	3% of the EU’s GDP (public and private combined) to be invested in R&D/innovation
3. Climate change/ energy	Greenhouse gas emissions 20% lower than 1990 (or even 30%, if the conditions are right); 20% of energy from renewable; 20% increase in energy efficiency
4. Education	Reducing school drop-out rates below 10%. At least 40% of 30-34 year-olds completing tertiary education
5. Reducing poverty and social exclusion	Lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion

The objectives of EU 2020 are also supported by seven ‘flagship initiatives’ providing a framework through which the EU and national authorities mutually reinforce their efforts in areas supporting the Europe 2020 priorities. The key ESF-relevant flagship initiatives at EU level are:

- Youth on the Move
- An Agenda for new Skills and Jobs
- European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion

**UK EU Policy – National Reform Programme**

The UK National Reform Programme (NRP) 2013 sets out the actions that Government is taking to address the structural reform challenges facing the UK, in line with a set of Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRec) agreed by Heads of State or Government at the European Council in June 2012. The Council identified issues constraining UK growth and employment in the medium-term and, as referred to earlier, one of those relevant to the Northern Ireland ESF Programme was a shortage of the right skills.

16 Labour Force Survey October-December 2013

## UK Country-Specific Recommendations

In the UK Country Specific Recommendations, published by the European Commission<sup>17</sup>, the Commission highlighted the UK's most pressing challenges as decreasing labour market opportunities and the increasing risk of social exclusion, and advocated that interventions should concentrate on a limited number of priorities for the 2014-2020 period which were:

- increasing labour market participation through improved labour market and education policies; and
- reducing the risk of social exclusion.

Particular emphasis, it was argued, should be placed on improving the employability of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET). In terms of specific activities, the Commission advocates that the UK should concentrate intervention by the ESI Funds on:

- enhancing access to lifelong learning, vocational training and apprenticeships;
- increasing the labour market relevance of education and training systems; and
- ensuring that these systems have sufficient focus on advanced and higher level skills.

The Commission also highlighted a particular link between employability and social inclusion by recommending that:

“In order to reduce the risk of social exclusion, the ESI funds should focus on .... integrating into the labour market people from workless households, low-skilled and inactive people moved off benefits into the labour market, disadvantaged individuals, especially those facing multiple disadvantages, lone parents with caring responsibilities”

In the UK Country-Specific Recommendations, published in June 2014, the Commission highlighted that while the United Kingdom continues to address the challenges of unemployment as well as the specific issues related to youth unemployment, there remain important challenges with equipping young people with the skills and work experience required by the labour market and increasing the supply of apprenticeships.

The recommendations paper states that the labour market suffers from skill mismatches and while the authorities are attempting to re-skill the workforce to address both unemployment and a shortage of high-quality vocational and technical skills, further work is required to improve the quality of apprenticeship programmes.

These issues are being addressed directly through activity in thematic objective 10 and through the reviews of apprenticeships and youth training underway in Northern Ireland.

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17 6th December 2012

The Commission recommends that the UK:

- Maintain commitment to the Youth Contract, especially by improving skills that meet employer needs.
- Ensure employer engagement by placing emphasis on addressing skills mismatches through more advanced and higher level skills provision and furthering apprenticeship offers.
- Reduce the number of young people with low basic skills.

As described earlier, all of the actions to be undertaken through thematic objectives 8,9 and 10 of the 2014-2020 ESF Programme, will contribute to addressing these issues. This can be summed up in the overall aim of the Northern Ireland ESF Programme for 2014-2020, described earlier, which is “to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity, and increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce”.

## **Northern Ireland Executive Policy**

This is also reflected in the NI Executive Programme for Government 2011-2015<sup>18</sup> and, in particular, the following priority area:

- Growing a Sustainable Economy and Investing in the Future; and,
- Creating opportunities, tackling disadvantage and improving health and well-being”.

The NI Executive is committed to an economic vision for Northern Ireland which is underpinned by higher value-added jobs, enhancements to productivity and competitiveness, increased skill levels and improved participation in education and training. Of particular focus within this programming period will be the economic challenges facing Northern Ireland.

To address these challenges, the Executive has developed and is implementing a number of key strategies and the Northern Ireland ESF Programme has been developed within this context and will support relevant policies within these strategies which are outlined below.

## **Economic Inactivity Strategy (2013)**

The Northern Ireland Executive’s Programme for Government includes a commitment for the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department for Enterprise Trade and Investment to develop and implement a strategy to reduce economic inactivity through skills, training, incentives and job creation. Northern Ireland has had persistently high levels of economic inactivity for over 30 years, ranging between 26% and 32% of the working age population (16 - 64 years), irrespective of changes in the economic cycle. The Economic Inactivity Strategic Framework outlines a systematic approach to addressing the key themes associated with economic inactivity in Northern Ireland.

## **Northern Ireland Economic Strategy (NIES) (2013)**

The NIES has a dual focus; to rebalance the economy to improve the wealth, employment and living standards of everyone in Northern Ireland, and to rebuild the economy by addressing the impact of the global economic downturn, particularly on employment.

## **Essential Skills Strategy**

The Essential Skills strategy and action plan sets out measures to improve literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in Northern Ireland. Given the high volume of people in Northern Ireland with no qualifications, this strategy and action plan will enable those without qualifications to access the skills ladder.

## **Delivering Social Change (DSC)**

This is a comprehensive new delivery framework developed by the NI Executive which aims to deliver the following two outcomes:

- a sustained reduction in poverty and associated issues, across all ages and;
- an improvement in children and young people's health, wellbeing and life opportunities, thereby breaking the long-term cycle of multi-generational problems. It is described in more detail in section 5 as is its signature project, Community Family Support.

## **The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland: Success through Skills – Transforming Futures (2011)**

This strategy articulates the overarching vision for the development of skills in Northern Ireland. Its key aim is to:

“enable people to access and progress up the skills ladder”, in order to:

- raise the skills levels of the whole workforce;
- raise productivity;
- increase levels of social inclusion by enhancing the employability of those currently excluded from the labour market; and
- secure Northern Ireland's future in a global marketplace.

The strategy sets out, in detail, what needs to be done by 2020, and for whom, if Northern Ireland is to compete successfully in a global market place

In order to support the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy's aim to rebuild and rebalance the economy, DEL has also identified a number of industry sectors on which it will focus its employment and skills provision. These are:

## **Rebalancing:**

- Business services (specifically ICT);
- Financial services;
- Manufacturing (including food and drink/agri-food, advanced manufacturing and advanced engineering);
- the emerging sector of Life and Health Sciences; and
- the emerging sector of Creative Industries and Digital Media.

## **Rebuilding:**

- Hotels and Catering (in support of Tourism) and,
- Retail

## **Together: Building a United Community (2013)**

- The Together: Building a United Community strategy reflects the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society. It outlines a vision based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation.
- The strategy also outlines how research demonstrates that alienation among young people is closely correlated to issues of deprivation, high levels of poverty and low educational attainment and recognises that in order to build good relations, the underlying issues that cause some of our young people to become disengaged from their community must be addressed.

## **Access to Success (2012)**

This is the Regional Strategy for Widening Participation in Higher Education that targets people from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

## **Further Education Means Business (2006)**

This strategy sets out the vision for further education and how it will play a vital role in the delivery of the economic vision for Northern Ireland, strengthening economic development, enhancing social cohesion and advancing the individual's skills and learning.

## **Preparing For Success (2009)**

The Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy and Implementation Plan, published jointly by the Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning in January 2009, aims to develop effective career decision makers leading to increased and appropriate participation in education, training and employment. Careers advice is available to all participants on ESF programmes.

## **Working for Success (2011)**

This is the strategy that underpins the delivery of DEL's Employment Service. The strategy sets out how the Service will be transformed, modernised and delivered to meet the needs of unemployed clients and employers. The strategy also includes a review of disability services to ensure that the employment needs of people with a disability are addressed.

## **Pathways to Success (2012)**

Pathways to Success is the strategy for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), which was endorsed by the Executive in May 2012. This strategy joins up actions being taken across the Executive to prevent young people falling into the NEET category in the first place with measures to also re-engage those who have left school and have not secured any other form of education, training or employment. ESF investment in this area reflects the importance attached by the Northern Ireland authorities to tackling this problem.

All of these strategies respond to identified needs in Northern Ireland while at the same time contributing to addressing the broad Objectives of EU 2020.

1.1.2 A justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities having regard to the partnership agreement, based on an identification of regional and, where appropriate, national needs including the need to address the challenges identified in relevant country-specific recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 121(2) TFEU and the relevant Council recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 148(4) TFEU, taking into account the ex-ante evaluation.

Table 1 details the justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities.



**Table 1: Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities**

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
08 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility	<p>Contributes to EU 2020 headline target to raise to 75% employment rate for men and women. Long-term unemployment (July September 2013) is higher in Northern Ireland (50.7%) than the averages for both the UK (35.2%) and EU (47.9%). Northern Ireland rate of economic activity is 26.9%. The UK average is 22.1%.</p> <p>In line with Europe2020 Flagship initiative – Agenda for new skills and jobs, CSRs(2012) to increase labour market participation, CSRs(2014) to continue address the challenges of unemployment, DEL Programme for Government commitments to develop and implement a strategy to reduce economic inactivity through skills, training, incentives and job creation. These activities will address the twin objectives of increasing employability and social inclusion. The mid-term evaluation report on the 2007-2013 ESF programme recognised the need to retain a strong focus on continuing ESF interventions on employment and skills.</p>
08 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee	<p>This investment priority will reduce the number of young people in NI who are NEET. The number continues to rise. The most recent labour Force Survey(October- December 2013) puts the number of young people in this category at 29,000.</p> <p>Activity in this area is in line with CSRs (2012) addressed by EU Commission to the UK:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to improve the employability of young people, in particular those not in education, employment or training. And CSR(2014) to</li> <li>• Reduce the number of young people with low basic skills.</li> </ul> <p>In line with NI Executive Programme for Government commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support people (with an emphasis on young people) into employment by providing skills and training</li> </ul> <p>In line with EU2020 Flagship Initiative “Youth on the Move</p> <p>Will contribute to raising to 75% the employment rate for men and women (EU 2020 headline target).</p> <p>In line with Pathways to Success Strategy(2012)</p>
09 - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability	<p>In line with Country specific recs (2012) (reducing the risk of social exclusion), EU 2020 target to reducing poverty and social exclusion and the EU2020 Flagship initiative European Platform against Poverty. Strand A will address the following issues:- Increase of 433% in number of ESA recipients over the period February 2010 to August 2013; 56.2% of people with a disability, aged 16-64, were economically inactive compared with 19.3% for those without disabilities. 37.7% of disabled persons are in employment compared to 75.3% of non-disabled.</p>

**Table 1: Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities**

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
10 - Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes	<p><b>Strand B</b> of the investment priority is in line with DEL Programme for Government commitment to Support people (with an emphasis on young people) into employment by providing skills and training and with the country-specific recommendation (2012) to continue to improve the employability of young people, in particular those who are NEET and with CSR (2014) in respect of Reducing the number of young people with low basic skills.</p>
		<p>Will facilitate provision to enhance workforce skills, including support for higher level skills. Research completed by Oxford Economics in 2012 shows that between 2011 and 2030 the share of workforce employment requirements for NQF 4+ qualification is forecast to rise from 33% to 45% and the share with NQF 3 qualifications from 22% to 25%; NI has the lowest number of people in the workforce qualified to NQF 4-8, the second lowest with NQF 3 and the highest level with no qualifications.</p> <p>In line with CSRs 201) to enhance access to lifelong learning, vocational training and apprenticeships, increase the labour market relevance of education and training systems and ensure that these systems have sufficient focus on advanced and higher level skills.</p> <p>In line with CSRs 2014 to ensure employer engagement by placing emphasis on addressing skills mismatches through more advanced and higher level skills provision and furthering apprenticeship offers.</p>

It should be noted that all other parts of the county specific recommendations that are not covered by ESF will be co-funded by the Exchequer.

## 1.2 Justification for the financial allocation

Justification for the financial allocation (Union support) to each thematic objective and, where appropriate, investment priority, in accordance with the thematic concentration requirements, taking into account the ex-ante evaluation.

Union support for the operational programme will be 40%.

Priority axis 3 – Skills for Growth – has been allocated the largest proportion of funding at 40%. This reflects the importance attached to upskilling the workforce, at levels 2-3 and 4-8, which will ensure the future skills needs of the Northern Ireland economy are met. DEL will provide the full 60% match funding for this priority with no input required from other bodies.

Priority axis 2 – Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty – has been allocated 30% of funding. There is a regulatory requirement for at least 20% of the total ESF funding to be allocated to thematic objective 9 within this priority axis however DEL, in conjunction with partners and stakeholders, has decided that 30% of funding will be allocated to this priority. This has been determined on the basis of the costs for supporting people with a disability under the 2007-2013 ESF programme and the costs of providing the pilot Community Family Support programme.

Priority axis 1 – Access to employment – has been allocated 28.5% of the total ESF fund based on equivalent spend in the current programme. ESF funding complements significant funding already provided through existing DEL strategies, policies and programmes in this area and reflects the significant challenges around the number of unemployed, long-term unemployed and economically inactive people in Northern Ireland as compared with the rest of the UK and Europe. There is significant financial support for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in line with DEL's *Pathways to Success strategy* through which we aim to identify the needs of this group and provide young people with opportunities to meet those needs.

### Technical Assistance

Technical assistance will be allocated 1.5% of the total fund allocation to support the effective management and implementation of the Northern Ireland ESF programme structures and achievement of the aim and objectives of the Programme.

Table D shows the breakdown of expenditure across the thematic objectives and investment priorities of the 2014-2020 Programme.

An overview of the Investment Strategy for the Operating Programme is provided in Table 2.

**Table D: NI ESF Programme 2014 - 2020 Total Financial Allocation €513,382,726**

	<b>Esf @ 40%</b>	<b>National Counterpart</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Of Allocation</b>
	€	€	€	
<b>Priority Axis 1</b>				
Thematic Objective 8. 1	34,139,951	51,209,927	85,349,878	28.5
Thematic Objective 8. 2	24,385,680	36,578,519	60,964,199	
<b>Priority Axis 2</b>				
Thematic Objective 9 (i) A	51,071,313	76,606,970	127,678,284	30.0
Thematic Objective 9 (i) B	10,534,614	15,801,920	26,336,534	
<b>Priority Axis 3</b>				
Thematic Objective 10	82,141,236	123,211,854	205,353,090	40.0
<b>Priority Axis 4</b>				
Technical Assistance	3,080,296	4,620,445	7,700,741	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>205,353,090</b>	<b>308,029,635</b>	<b>513,382,725</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2: Overview of the investment strategy of the operational programme**

Priority axis	Fund	Union support (€)	Proportion of total Union support for the operational programme	Thematic objective / Investment priority / Specific objective	Common and programme-specific result indicators for which a target has been set
1	ESF	58,525,631	28.5%	<p>8 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility</p> <p>8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility</p> <p>(a) - To reduce unemployment by assisting those furthest from the labour market to overcome their barriers to accessing and sustaining employment.</p> <p>(b) - To combat economic inactivity by helping individuals to make the transition towards the labour market</p> <p>8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee</p> <p>- To reduce the number of 16-24 year olds who are not in employment education or training.</p>	<p><b>[CR02, CR04, CR06]</b></p> <p>(CR04) Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving</p> <p>(CR06) Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving</p> <p>(CR02) Participants in education/training upon leaving</p> <p><b>[PSR1, PSR2]</b></p> <p>(PSR1) Participants in education/training upon leaving aged 16 - 24</p> <p>(PSR2) Participants in employment, including self employment, upon leaving aged 16 - 24</p>
2	ESF	61,605,927	30. %	<p>9 - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination</p> <p>9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability</p> <p>(a) - Enhance social inclusion by reducing unemployment in people with a disability</p>	<p><b>[PSR3, PSR4, PSR5]</b></p> <p>(PSR3) Participants with a disability in education/training upon leaving</p> <p>(PSR4 ) Participants with a disability in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving</p> <p>(PSR5) Participants with a disability in employment, including self-employment,six months after leaving upon leaving</p>

**Table 2: Overview of the investment strategy of the operational programme**

Priority axis	Fund	Union support (€)	Proportion of total Union support for the operational programme	Thematic objective / Investment priority / Specific objective	Common and programme-specific result indicators for which a target has been set
				(b) - Enhance social inclusion by reducing the number of NEET participants aged 16 and over within families receiving Community Family Support (CFSP)	<p><b>[PSR6, PSR7, PSR8, PSR9]</b></p> <p>(PSR6) NEET participants aged 16+ within families receiving Community Family Support engaged in education/training</p> <p>(PSR7) NEET participants aged 16+ within families receiving Community Family Support engaged in job searching</p> <p>(PSR8) NEET participants aged 16+ within families receiving Community Family Support engaged in gaining a qualification</p> <p>(PSR9) NEET participants aged 16+ within families receiving Community Family Support engaged in employment, including self employment, upon leaving</p>
3	ESF	82,141,236	40%	<p>10 - Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning</p> <p>10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes</p> <p>- To increase the proportion of people in employment skilled at levels 2 and 3-8 through apprenticeships and youth training</p>	<p><b>[PSR10, PSR11]</b></p> <p>(PSR10) - *56% of participants will achieve targeted Level 2 qualifications</p> <p>(PSR11) - *53% of participants will achieve targeted Level 3 qualifications or above</p>
4	ESF	3,080,296.00	1.5%	4 - To support the effective management and implementation of the Northern Ireland ESF programme structures and achievement of the Programme's aim and objectives.	

**In delivering ESF funded operations in Northern Ireland, the following should be taken into account.**

## **EU Public Procurement Rules**

When spending ESI funds by means of public contract/concessions, national authorities will have to respect EU public procurement rules and in particular (i) Directives 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC, (ii) Directives 2014/23/EU, 2014/24/EU and 2014/25/EU once transposed into national legislation, (iii) Directive 2007/66/EC (amending Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC), and (iv) the general public procurement principles derived from the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

## **State Aid**

The Commission also draws attention to the fact that the Decision approving the OP is without prejudice to the Commission position regarding compliance of any operation supported under that programme with the procedural and substantive State aid rules applicable at the time when the support is granted.

The granting of State aid falling within the scope of Article 107(1) TFEU, granted under aid schemes or in individual cases, requires prior approval by the Commission under Article 108(3) TFEU, except where the aid is exempted under an exemption regulation adopted by the Commission under Council Regulation (EC) No 994/98 of 7 May 1998 on the application of Articles 92 and 93 to certain categories of horizontal aid and its amendments<sup>19</sup> or under Commission Decision of 20 December 2011 on the application of Article 106(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to State aid in the form of public service compensation granted to certain undertakings entrusted with the operation of services of general economic interest<sup>20</sup> or granted as general *de minimis aid*.

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<sup>19</sup> OJ L 142, 14.5.1998, p. 1-4 and OJ L 204, 31.07.2013, p. 11

<sup>20</sup> OJ L 7, 11.01.2012, p.3-10





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## 2. Priority Axes

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### 2.A Description of the Priority Axes

#### 2.A.1 Priority axis 1

<b>ID of the priority axis</b>	1
<b>Title of the priority axis</b>	Access to Employment

#### 2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

This is not applicable to Northern Ireland.

#### 2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Category of region</b>	<b>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)</b>	<b>Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)</b>
ESF	Transition	Public	N/A

#### 2.A.4 Investment priority

<b>ID of the investment priority</b>	8i
<b>Title of the investment priority</b>	Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility

## 2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

<b>ID of the specific objective</b>	1(a)
<b>Title of the specific objective</b>	To reduce unemployment by assisting those furthest from the labour market to overcome their barriers to accessing and sustaining employment.
<b>Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support</b>	<p>We will support a total of 28,000 unemployed, including long term unemployed participants through this investment priority and would expect the following results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3,850 (13.75%) participants in employment upon leaving and;</li> <li>- 5,250 (18.75%) participants in employment 6 months after leaving.</li> </ul>
<b>ID of the specific objective</b>	1(b)
<b>Title of the specific objective</b>	To combat economic inactivity by helping individuals to make the transition towards the labour market
<b>Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support</b>	<p>We will support a total of 12,000 inactive participants through this investment priority and would expect the following results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1,650 (13.75%) participants in employment upon leaving and;</li> <li>- 2,250 (18.75%) participants in employment 6 months after leaving;</li> <li>- 2,500 (13.75%) participants in education/training upon leaving</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region)**

Investment priority : 8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility												
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value		Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)		Source of data	Frequency of reporting
						Total				Total		
CR02	participants in education/training upon leaving	Transition	Number	inactive, not in education or training	13.75%	Total	Number	2014	2,500	Total	Monitoring data collected by project providers	Annual
CR04	participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Transition	Number	unemployed, including long-term unemployed	12.78%	Total	Number	2014	3,850	Total	Monitoring data collected by project providers.	Annual
CR04	participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Transition	Number	inactive	12.78%	Total	Number	2014	1,650	Total	Monitoring data collected by project providers	Annual
CR06	participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	Transition	Number	unemployed, including long-term unemployed	14.75%	Total	Number	2014	5,250	Total	Follow up survey	Annual
CR06	participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	Transition	Number	inactive	14.75%	Total	Number	2014	2,250	Total	Follow up survey conducted	Annual

## 2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

### 2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries.

<b>Investment priority</b>	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
<p>Projects funded under this investment priority will support participants to enhance job search skills, improve confidence and acquire the necessary skills to access sustainable employment. This will entail both classroom and workplace activity. Participants will also have the opportunity to attain recognised qualifications.</p> <p>The activities are complementary to those already being undertaken through regional economic, employment and social inclusion strategies referred to in Section 1. They will address the dual objectives of increasing employability and social inclusion as advocated by the European Commission in the UK Country Specific Recommendations and are in line with the objectives of Europe 2020 Flagship Initiatives, 'An Agenda for new skills and jobs' and the 'European Platform Against Poverty'.</p> <p>In keeping with the approach taken in the NIESF programme 2007 – 2013, and taking account of the particular needs of lone parents in accessing training opportunities, the cost of childcare will be provided to participants.</p> <p>Example of Actions to be supported under Investment Priority 1. Specific actions in support of this investment priority may include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed assessment of needs taking into account personal barriers to employment, family and social circumstances, work based skills, social problems</li> <li>• Preparation of an individual action plan to provide participants with support, training advice, work placement or employment</li> <li>• Help, advice and guidance with job-search</li> <li>• Personal advice and mentoring where appropriate, to assist clients into employment</li> <li>• Pre- vocational and access training, community based activities such as volunteering and environmental activities</li> <li>• Acquisition of soft skills such as improved confidence and motivation</li> <li>• Acquisition of work skills and workplace skills such as team-working</li> <li>• Vocational training and qualifications for employability</li> <li>• Advice and support for self employment and business creation</li> <li>• Employer liaison to identify suitable work placements/job opportunities</li> </ul>	

### 2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

<b>Investment priority</b>	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
<p>The following overarching principles will underpin project selection across all investment priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All project activity must adhere to the horizontal principles of equality and non discrimination and the values of sustainable development.</li><li>• All planned activity should focus on enabling participants to access sustainable employment.</li><li>• All interventions and skills support should be designed to support individuals to achieve this goal.</li><li>• Skills interventions where needed will aim to assist participants to achieve up to NVQ Level 1 and encourage progression.</li><li>• For those furthest from the labour market, activities should be tailor made and measures of success that encompass soft outcomes such as improved self esteem and increased confidence may be used.</li><li>• The use of models such as social enterprises, where possible, is to be encouraged.</li><li>• Actions should be flexible and responsive to labour market fluctuations utilising labour market information which identifies skills needs and future trends in Northern Ireland, in order to ensure employment supply meets employment demand.</li><li>• Activity should demonstrate clear added value when compared with other ways of supporting and delivering policy.</li><li>• There should be clear identification of the specific target group, their needs and how actions will address those needs at national regional or local level, as appropriate.</li><li>• Clear exit strategies that fully consider the role of the third sector and private sector, build social resilience and tackle poverty within communities, promote equality, and achieve legacy effects.</li></ul>	

**2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments** (where appropriate)

<b>Investment priority</b>	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
<b>Planned use of financial instruments N/A</b>	

**2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects** (where appropriate)

<b>Investment priority</b>	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
<b>Planned use of major projects N/A</b>	

**2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region**

**Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region)**

ID	Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility						Frequency of reporting
		Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Target value (2023) Total	Source of data	
CO01		unemployed, including long-term unemployed	Number	ESF	Transition	28,000	Monitoring data collected by project providers.	Annual
CO03		inactive	Number	ESF	Transition	12,000	Monitoring data collected by project providers.	Annual

## 2.A.4 Investment priority

<b>ID of the investment priority</b>	8ii
<b>Title of the investment priority</b>	Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee

## 2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

<b>ID of the specific objective</b>	2
<b>Title of the specific objective</b>	To reduce the number of 16-24 year olds who are not in employment education or training.
<b>Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support</b>	<p>We will support a total of 25,000 participants through this investment priority over the life of the Programme, and would expect the following results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3,000 (12%) participants in employment upon leaving</li> <li>- 8,750 (35%) participants in education/training upon leaving</li> </ul>



**Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region)**

Investment priority : 8i - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee												
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline Value		Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target Value (2023)		Source of data	Frequency of reporting
						Total				Total		
PSR1	Participants in education/training on leaving aged 16-24	Transition	Number of participants		34%		Ratio (%)	2014	8,750		Monitoring data collected by project providers	Annual
PSR2	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving aged 16-24	Transition	Number of participants		34%		Ratio (%)	2014	3,000		Monitoring data collected by project providers.	Annual

## 2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority

### 2. A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

<p><b>Investment priority</b></p>	<p>8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee</p>
	<p>Support provided under this investment priority will target young people who may not yet be ready to avail of mainstream provision. Meeting the very specific needs of young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is a priority for the Northern Ireland Executive. These activities will address the twin objectives of increasing employability and social inclusion as advocated by the European Commission in the UK country-specific Recommendations and are in line with the objectives of Europe 2020 Flagship Initiatives, 'Youth on the Move', 'An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs', and the 'European Platform Against Poverty'.</p> <p>Example of Actions to be supported under Investment Priority 8(ii).</p> <p>Specific actions in support of this investment priority may include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed assessment of needs taking into account personal barriers to employment, family and social circumstances, social problems, reasons for disengaging from education/training</li> <li>• Preparation of an individual action plan to provide participant with support, training advice, work placement or employment</li> <li>• Flexible menu of provision including: personal and social development, employability skills within a vocational context, specific tailored training, work sampling</li> <li>• Help, advice and guidance with job-search</li> <li>• Personal advice and mentoring where appropriate, to assist clients to recognise and address their personal barriers to entering education/ training or employment.</li> <li>• Pre-vocational and access training, community based activities such as volunteering, environmental activities</li> <li>• Acquisition of soft skills such as improved confidence and motivation</li> <li>• Acquisition of workskills and workplace skills such as team-working</li> <li>• Vocational training and qualifications for employability</li> <li>• Employer liaison to identify suitable work placements/ job opportunities</li> </ul>

### **2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations**

<b>Investment priority</b>	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
<b>Guiding principles for Investment Priority 8(ii) are as above for Investment priority 8(i) (See page 34)</b>	

### **2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments** (where appropriate)

<b>Investment priority</b>	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
<b>Planned use of financial instruments N/A</b>	

### **2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects**

<b>Investment priority</b>	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
<b>Planned use of major projects N/A</b>	

**Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region)**

Investment priority		8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee						
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Target value (2023)		Source of data	Frequency of reporting
						Total		
PSO01	Participants not in education, training or employment aged 16-24	Number of participants	ESF	Transition		25,000	Monitoring data collected by project providers.	Annual

## 2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

<p><b>Priority axis</b></p>	<p><b>1 - Access to Employment</b></p>
<p><b>SOCIAL INNOVATION</b></p>	
	<p>Social innovation aims to develop the capabilities of individuals enabling them to meet their needs over the longer term. The benefits of adopting a social innovation approach will be promoted and encouraged by the Managing Authority. At the application stage, applicants will be expected to demonstrate how their project will apply innovative approaches to engaging with those most at risk of disadvantage who are furthest from the labour market or who experience multiple barriers to accessing employment. This may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring alternative delivery models</li> <li>• targeting specific groups, with a view to creating new and better ways of tackling social challenges.</li> <li>• developing sustainable exit strategies through testing of new delivery models.</li> </ul> <p>This evidence-based approach is aligned to the Delivering Social Change framework which is rolling out the use of outcomes based accountability in developing and evaluating new policies and programmes.</p> <p>Opportunities for social innovation may develop as projects progress. Actions will be subject to monitoring and evaluation by the ESF Managing Authority with lessons learnt being disseminated both within projects and across Northern Ireland.</p> <p><b>TRANSNATIONAL CO-OPERATION</b></p> <p>The benefits of transnational working will be promoted by the Managing Authority in order to encourage those who wish to participate. The advantages of participation were highlighted in a review commissioned by the Managing Authority and undertaken by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) In October 2010. The review highlighted potential barriers to projects engaging in transnational working and amongst these were:</p>

## 2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	1 - Access to Employment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of awareness of what transitional working actually involved;</li> <li>• the issue of identification of potential partners; and</li> <li>• how the activity is funded within the programme.</li> </ul> <p>Taking in to consideration the key issues identified in the review, the Managing Authority will institute the following affirmative actions in respect of the 2014 - 2020 programming period;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• awareness raising activities led by projects with expertise and experience in transnational working;</li> <li>• the provision of a tool for the identification of potential partners with appropriate resources and support in place;</li> <li>• transnational working may be financed from Technical Assistance, where appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>Actions around transnational working will be targeted towards addressing specific needs within the programme area while maximising the added value that can be delivered.</p> <p>Focus will be placed on actions which offer significant opportunity to develop common solutions to common and emerging issues; to strengthen capacities to innovate, modernise and adapt to new socio-economic challenges; and to promote and share information and good practice.</p> <p>In the 2007 – 2013 Programme the ESF Managing Authority in Northern Ireland led on the Learning Network on Empowerment and Inclusion and participated in three other networks.</p>

**2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7**

<p><b>Priority axis</b></p>	<p><b>1 - Access to Employment</b></p>
	<p><b>CONTRIBUTION OF ESF TO THEMATIC OBJECTIVES 1-7</b></p> <p>ESF investments aim to support the development of a modern knowledge based economy. Investment under thematic objective 8, will contribute in a general sense to investment under thematic objectives 5 and 6 in that, prospective project providers will be expected to demonstrate at the application stage how their project will support the principles of the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy - “Everyone’s Involved”. This in turn will support the shift to a low carbon, resource efficient economy.</p> <p>Training and support activity under thematic objective 8 is based on the needs of the individual participant following assessment by the project provider and where skills gaps are identified, including basic ICT skills, these will be addressed. This will contribute broadly to the achievement of thematic objective 3 relating to ICT.</p>

## 2. A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis		1 - Access to Employment									
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)		Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate	
							Total	Total			
CO01	Output	unemployed, including long-term unemployed	Number	ESF	Transition	10,500	28,000	Monitoring data captured by project providers			
CO03	Output	inactive	Number	ESF	Transition	4,500	12,000	Monitoring data captured by project providers			
F1	Financial	Expenditure	Euros	ESF	Transition	62,706,033	€146,314,077	Project Providers	ESF and National Counterpart		
PSO01	Output	Participants not in education, training or employment aged 16-24	Number of participants	ESF	Transition	9,350	25,000	Monitoring data collected by project providers			



## Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

### 2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

**Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention**

**Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field**

Priority axis	1 - Access to Employment			€ amount
Fund	Category of region	Code		
ESF	Transition	102. Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility		34,139,951
ESF	Transition	103. Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee		24,385,680

**Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance**

Priority axis	1 - Access to Employment			€ amount
Fund	Category of region	Code		
ESF	Transition	01. Non-repayable grant		58,525,631

**Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type**

Priority axis	1 - Access to Employment			€ amount
Fund	Category of region	Code		
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable		58,525,631

**Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms**

Priority axis	1 - Access to Employment		
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	58,525,631

**Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)**

Priority axis	1 - Access to Employment		
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	08. Not applicable	58,525,631

**2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries:**

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>1 - Access to Employment</b>
	<p>The Technical Assistance Priority will cover costs in relation to the preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation, and information and control activities of the operational programme. This will include the programme’s publicity and communication strategy, support for cross-cutting themes and the development of the programme’s monitoring and evaluation systems.</p> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• programme preparation and management, including costs associated with monitoring and evaluation, control and audit. Activity around information and communication;</li> <li>• activity around networking of Programme bodies and beneficiaries;</li> <li>• activity around recruitment and selection of projects, including economic appraisals;</li> <li>• monitoring Committee and other management activities;</li> <li>• dissemination of project good practice.</li> </ul> <p>Technical assistance may also be used to promote transnational working. The amount of ESF set aside for Technical Assistance in this Operational Programme is €3m giving a total expenditure €7.7m including match funding.</p>

## 2.A.1 Priority axis 2

<b>ID of the priority axis</b>	2
<b>Title of the priority axis</b>	Social Inclusion

**2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund**  
(Not applicable)

## 2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Category of region</b>	<b>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)</b>	<b>Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)</b>
ESF	Transition	Public	N/A

## 2.A.4 Investment priority

<b>ID of the investment priority</b>	9i
<b>Title of the investment priority</b>	Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability

## 2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

<b>ID of the specific objective</b>	9(i) (a)
<b>Title of the specific objective</b>	(a) Enhance social inclusion by reducing unemployment in people with a disability
<b>Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support</b>	It is expected 1,300 (10%) of participants with a disability will enter employment upon leaving and 1,950 (15%) will enter education/ training upon leaving.
<b>ID of the specific objective</b>	9(i) (b)
<b>Title of the specific objective</b>	(b) Enhance social inclusion by reducing the number of NEET participants aged 16 and over within families receiving Community Family Support (CFSP)
<b>Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support</b>	It is expected that NEET participants aged 16 and over will be achieve the following results; - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 50% to be engaged in job searching</li> <li>- 20% to enter education/training</li> <li>- 20% to gain a qualification</li> <li>- 10% to be employed</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region)**

Investment priority : 91 - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability										
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value	Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
				Total			Total			
PSR3	Participants with a disability in education/training upon leaving	Transition	Number of participants		15%	Ratio (%)	2014	1,950	Monitoring data collected by project providers	Annual
PSR4	Participants with a disability in employment, including self employment, upon leaving	Transition	Number of participants		10%	Ratio (%)	2014	1,300	Monitoring data collected by project providers	Annual
PSR5	Participants with a disability in employment, including self employment, six months after leaving	Transition	Number of participants		50%	Ratio (%)	2014	650	Follow up survey	Annual
PSR6	NEET participants aged 16+ within families receiving Community Family Support engaged in education/training	Transition	Number of participants		20%	Ratio (%)	2014	2,520	Monitoring data collected by project providers	Annual
PSR7	NEET participants aged 16+ within families receiving Community Family Support engaged in job searching	Transition	Number of participants		50%	Ratio (%)	2014	6,300	Monitoring data collected by project providers	Annual
PSR8	NEET participants aged 16+ within families receiving Community Family Support engaged in gaining a qualification	Transition	Number of participants		20%	Ratio (%)	2014	2,520	Monitoring data collected by project providers	Annual
PSR9	NEET participants aged 16+ within families receiving Community Family Support engaged in employment, including self employment, upon leaving	Transition	Number of participants		10%	Ratio (%)	2014	1,200	Monitoring data collected by project providers	Annual

**2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority**

**2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries**

<b>Investment priority</b>	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
<p><b>Investment Priority 9(i) (a) People with a disability</b></p> <p><b>Specific objective (a)</b> within this investment priority support will be offered to people with a disability, through specialist, tailored training and employment support projects where the specific needs of the individual will be addressed. Specific actions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of opportunities to gain vocational qualifications – classroom and work placed assessments</li> <li>• Provision of opportunities to improve employability skills – classroom and work placed activity</li> <li>• Progression into mainstream education or employment programmes, such as Further Education, Steps2Success, Workable, Access to Work</li> <li>• Support to attain paid employment- Assistance with development of skills to find work.</li> <li>• Preparation of an individual action plan, to provide participant with support, training advice, work placement or employment</li> </ul> <p><b>Investment Priority 9(i) (b) Community Family Support</b></p> <p><b>Specific Objective (b)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For participants on the Community Family Support programme, The following activities may be undertaken:</li> <li>• Engagement with parents of children and young people to promote early intervention, to identify solutions to address specific needs.</li> <li>• Support to tackle a range of issues to improve parenting skills.</li> <li>• Assistance with development of skills to find work.</li> <li>• One to one employment advice and mentoring</li> <li>• Support with job search, CV writing, interview techniques and presentation skills.</li> <li>• Engagement in a wide range of activities such as stress management, confidence building, motivational and life-coaching classes.</li> <li>• The CFSP providers work closely and in partnership with other stakeholders to ensure families receive the support they need including help from specialist organisations if appropriate. Activities supported will directly assist government managed programmes and will be selected in line with procurement procedures. Participation on this programme will be by referral from the 5 Health Trusts. Detailed assessment of needs will be undertaken taking into account personal barriers to employment, family and social circumstances, work based skills, social problems.</li> </ul>	

### 2. A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

<b>Investment priority</b>	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
	<p><b>Investment Priority 9(i)</b></p> <p>In addition to the principles outlined earlier for investment priorities 8(i) and 8(ii) (see page 34) recruitment of families to the CFSP programme will be sought from a range of sources including the local network of Family Support Hubs, the relevant Health and Social Care Trusts and other family support agencies / organisations in the voluntary and community sectors. Families can also self refer from within their local communities.</p>

### 2. A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

<b>Investment priority</b>	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
	<b>Planned use of financial instruments N/A</b>

### 2. A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

<b>Investment priority</b>	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
	<b>Planned use of financial instruments N/A</b>



## 2. A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

**Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region)**

Investment priority		9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability						
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Target value (2023)		Source of data	Frequency of reporting
						Total		
CO16	Participants with disabilities	Number	ESF	Transition		13,000	Monitoring data collected by project providers.	Annual
PSO02	Targeted families	Number of families	ESF	Transition		4,200	Monitoring data collected by project providers.	Annual
PSO03	NEET participants aged 16+ within families receiving Community Family Support (CFSP)	Number of participants	ESF	Transition		12,600	Monitoring data collected by providers	Annual

## 2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	2 - Social Inclusion
<p><b>SOCIAL INNOVATION</b></p> <p>Social innovation aims to develop the capabilities of individuals enabling them to meet their needs over the longer term. The benefits of adopting a social innovation approach will be promoted and encouraged by the Managing Authority. At the application stage, applicants will be expected to demonstrate how their Project will apply innovative approaches to engaging with those most at risk of disadvantage who are furthest from the labour market or who experience multiple barriers to accessing employment. This may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring alternative delivery models;</li> <li>• targeting specific groups, with a view to creating new and better ways of tackling social challenges;</li> <li>• developing sustainable exit strategies through testing of new delivery models.</li> </ul> <p>This evidence-based approach is aligned to the Delivering Social Change framework which is rolling out the use of outcomes based accountability in developing and evaluating new policies and programmes.</p> <p>Opportunities for social innovation may develop as projects progress. Actions will be subject to monitoring and evaluation by the ESF Managing Authority with lessons learnt being disseminated both within projects and across Northern Ireland.</p> <p><b>TRANSNATIONAL CO-OPERATION</b></p> <p>The benefits of transnational working will be promoted by the Managing Authority in order to encourage those who wish to participate. The advantages of participation were highlighted in a review commissioned by the Managing Authority and undertaken by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) In October 2010. The review highlighted potential barriers to projects engaging in transnational working and amongst these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of awareness of what transitional working actually involved;</li> <li>• the issue of identification of potential partners; and</li> <li>• how the activity is funded within the programme.</li> </ul> <p>Taking in to consideration the key issues identified in the review, the Managing Authority will institute the following affirmative actions in respect of the 2014 - 2020 programming period;</p>	

**2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7**

Priority axis	2 - Social Inclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• awareness raising activities led by projects with expertise and experience in transnational working;</li> <li>• the provision of a tool for the identification of potential partners with appropriate resources and support in place;</li> <li>• transnational working may be financed from Technical Assistance, where appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>Actions around transnational working will be targeted towards addressing specific needs within the programme area while maximising the added value that can be delivered.</p> <p>Focus will be placed on actions which offer significant opportunity to develop common solutions to common and emerging issues; to strengthen capacities to innovate, modernise and adapt to new socio-economic challenges; and to promote and share information and good practice.</p> <p>In the 2007 to 2013 the ESF Managing Authority in Northern Ireland led on the Learning Network on Empowerment and Inclusion and participated in three others. These networks are currently operational and have yet to move to the position of undertaking any form of evaluation.</p> <p><b>CONTRIBUTION OF ESF TO THEMATIC OBJECTIVES 1-7</b></p> <p>ESF investments aim to support the development of a modern knowledge based economy. Investment under thematic objective 9, will contribute in a general sense to investment under thematic objectives 5 and 6 in that, prospective project providers will be expected to demonstrate at the application stage how their project will support the principles of the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy - “Everyone’s Involved”. This in turn will support the shift to a low carbon, resource efficient economy.</p> <p>Training and support activity under thematic objective 9 is based on the needs of the individual participant following assessment by the project provider and where skills gaps are identified, including basic ICT skills, these will be addressed. This will contribute to the achievement of thematic objective 3 relating to ICT.</p>	

## 2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis		2 - Social Inclusion									
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018		Final target (2023)		Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						Total	Total	Total	Total		
CO16	Output	Participants with disabilities	Number of participants	ESF	Transition	4,850	13,000	Monitoring data captured by project providers			
F2	Financial	Expenditure	Euros	ESF	Transition	66,006,350	€154,014,817	Project Providers	ESF and National Counterpart		
PSO02	Output	Targeted families	Number of families	ESF	Transition	1,550	4,200	Monitoring data collected by project providers	Families on Community Family Support Programme		
PSO03	Output	NEET participants aged 16+ within families receiving Community Family Support (CFSP)	Number of participants	ESF	Transition	4,700	12,600	Monitoring data collected by project providers	Refers to participants on Community Family Support Programme (CFSP)		

## Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

### 2. A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

#### Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

**Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field**

Priority axis	2 - Social Inclusion		
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	109. Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability	61,605,927

**Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance**

Priority axis	2 - Social Inclusion		
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	01. Non-repayable grant	61,605,927

**Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type**

Priority axis	2 - Social Inclusion		
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	61,605,927

**Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms**

Priority axis	2 - Social Inclusion		€ amount
Fund	Category of region	Code	
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	61,605,927

**Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)**

Priority axis	2 - Social Inclusion		€ amount
Fund	Category of region	Code	
ESF	Transition	08. Not applicable	61,605,927

**2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries** (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

<b>Priority axis:</b>	<b>2 - Social Inclusion</b>
<p>The Technical Assistance Priority will cover costs in relation to the preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation, and information and control activities of the operational programme. This will include the programme’s publicity and communication strategy, support for cross-cutting themes and the development of the programme’s monitoring and evaluation systems.</p> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• programme preparation and management, including costs associated with monitoring and evaluation, control and audit. Activity around information and communication;</li> <li>• activity around networking of Programme bodies and beneficiaries;</li> <li>• activity around recruitment and selection of projects, including economic appraisals;</li> <li>• monitoring Committee and other management activities;</li> <li>• dissemination of project good practice.</li> </ul> <p>Technical assistance may also be used to promote transnational working. The amount of ESF set aside for Technical Assistance in this Operational Programme is €3m giving a total expenditure €7.7m including match funding.</p>	

### 2.A.1 Priority axis 3

<b>ID of the priority axis</b>	3
<b>Title of the priority axis</b>	Skills for Growth

### 2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (Not Applicable)

### 2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Category of region</b>	<b>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)</b>	<b>Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)</b>
ESF	Transition	Public	N/A



## 2.A.4 Investment priority

<b>ID of the investment priority</b>	10 (iv)
<b>Title of the investment priority</b>	Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes

## 2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

<b>ID of the specific objective</b>	10 (iv)
<b>Title of the specific objective</b>	To increase the proportion of people in employment skilled at levels 2 and 3-8 through apprenticeships and youth training
<b>Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support</b>	<p>It is expected that 56%<sup>21</sup> of participants will achieve targeted Level 2 qualifications and</p> <p>53%<sup>22</sup> of participants will achieve targeted Level 3 qualifications or above.</p> <p>(It should be noted that participants gaining a Level 2 qualification can further obtain a Level 3 qualification or above)</p>

21 In addition to participants embarking on a Level 2 or Level 3 framework, there is potential for registration for Level 2/3. In this scenario, apprentices are pursuing an NVQ Level 2 en route to the achievement of targeted Level 3 framework qualifications. There is therefore some overlap in the figures

22 These figures are based on provision in the 2007-13 ESF programme and are likely to change following the outcome of the Review of Apprenticeship and Youth Training currently underway in Northern Ireland. At this time it is not possible to predict the final outcome of the review or the impact that it is likely to have on the numbers undertaking apprenticeship and youth training. Revised information will be made available when the new apprenticeship and training model is put in place.

**Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region)**

ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value		Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)		Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					Total				Total			
PSR10	Participants to achieve target Level 2 qualifications	Transition	percentage of participants	inactive, not in education or training	6.8%		Ratio (%)	2014	56%		Monitoring data collected by project providers	Annual
PSR11	Participants to achieve targeted Level 3 qualifications or above	Transition	Number	Percentage of participants	18.2%		Ratio (%)	2014	53%		Monitoring data collected by project providers	Annual

**2. A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority**

(by investment priority)

**2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries**

<p><b>Investment priority</b></p>	<p>10 iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes</p>
<p><b>Example of current actions to be supported under Investment Priority 10 (iv)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apprenticeship training (off-the-job) enabling learners, who have attained the minimum school leaving age and are in paid employment, to gain an industry recognised apprenticeship qualification.</li> <li>• Development of a personal training plan for each participant.</li> <li>• Training leading to level 2 qualifications.</li> <li>• Training leading to level 3 qualifications.</li> <li>• Training leading to level 3-8 qualifications for those commencing training from the introduction of the new apprenticeship model post 2016.</li> </ul> <p><b>Increase in the level of apprenticeships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An apprenticeship will be available in professional and technical occupations commencing from level 3 up to level 8. A new Strategic Advisory Forum comprising of employers, government, trade unions and providers will be established to provide oversight of apprenticeship provision. Sectoral Partnerships comprising of employers and off the job training providers will advise on the content of apprenticeships and the qualifications developed within their sectors. Higher Level apprenticeships are currently being piloted within sectors including ICT, Engineering and Finance and Accounting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support for Employers to offer apprenticeships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A project is being taken forward to pilot a funding model which will include the testing of incentives and support for small and micro businesses and the development of a financial model prior to implementation.</li> </ul>	

### **Ensuring that skills development is in line with future economy skills needs**

- A Northern Ireland Skills Barometer is in development which will support better matching of apprenticeship supply and demand, it will provide a clear indication of current and emerging and long term skills shortages. The Sectoral Partnerships will also advise on the skills needs within their sectors.

### **Assessment of apprenticeships**

- A quality assurance model is being developed to ensure high quality apprenticeship provision through inspection, rigorous assessment, established criteria for teaching and for continuous professional development and on-going performance monitoring.

### **Recognition of qualifications by the labour market**

- A single award/qualification will be developed for each occupation at each level in conjunction with the strategic advisory forum and sectoral partnerships.

The attached links below give a full list of the level 2 and 3 frameworks available within the current Apprenticeship Programme. Within these frameworks there is scope to undertake training provision in the areas of the green economy. As this a prevalent sector, green job creation is encouraged and promoted with employers. Furthermore, the Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships addresses the fact that training is led by supply and demand at sector level and can accommodate the skills requirement in the green and renewable energy sector. With regard to the ICT sector, an ICT Skills Working group convened by the Minister for Employment and Learning in January 2012 brought together business leaders, employer representatives, representatives from local colleges and universities and government officials to consider how the current and future skills needs of the ICT sector can be addressed. The group, which was Chaired by the Minister for Employment and Learning, produced an ICT Skills Action Plan, setting out the skills challenges facing the sector and a number of short, medium and long term actions required to address those challenges. One of the actions set out in the ICT Skills Action Plan, was the development of a Public/Private ICT Apprenticeship Scheme. As a result, the Department, along with the Department of Finance and Personnel and local private sector ICT employers, developed a model to recruit and train individuals for the ICT sector. This model has been implemented and will ensure that the particular needs of the ICT/digital sector sector will be met.

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/education-and-learning/14-19/starter-skills-16-18/apprenticeships/apprenticeship-qualifications.htm>

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/securing-our-success-the-ni-strategy-on-apprenticeships.pdf>

The current Apprenticeship model is under review with the new model due to be implemented by September 2016. Within this document there will be continued alignment with EU policy recommendations in the area of Vocational Education and Training.

Activities supported will directly assist Government managed programmes and will be selected through a competition for Government projects only, in line with procurement procedures.

### 2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

<b>Investment priority</b>	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes
Investment Priority 10(iv) - In addition to the guiding principles outlined earlier, participants undertaking apprenticeship training must be aged 16 or over and be in employment.	

### 2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

<b>Investment priority</b>	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes
<b>Planned use of financial instruments N/A</b>	

### 2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

<b>Investment priority</b>	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes
<b>Planned use of financial instruments N/A</b>	

## 2. A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

**Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators**

Investment priority	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes						
	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Target value (2023) Total	Source of data
PSO04	Employed participants aged 16 and over working towards an apprenticeship	Number of participants	ESF	Transition	42,000	Monitoring data collected by project providers	Annual

**2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7**

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>3 - Skills for Growth</b>
<p><b>SOCIAL INNOVATION</b>  Social innovation aims to develop the capabilities of individuals enabling them to meet their needs over the longer term and also the needs of employers. Innovative approaches will be reflected in the new apprenticeships model to be implemented in 2016.</p> <p><b>Transnational co-operation</b>  With regard to the establishment of the new apprenticeship model in Northern Ireland, DEL will put in place measures to fully utilise opportunities for international placement and exchanges for apprentices, by establishing links with partner countries across Europe, and beyond, through the use of EU programmes, such as Erasmus+. Consideration will also be given to incentives for participating employers.</p> <p><b>CONTRIBUTION OF ESF TO THEMATIC OBJECTIVES 1-7</b>  ESF investments aim to support the development of a modern knowledge based economy. Investment under thematic objective 10 will complement and combine with investment under thematic objectives 1 and 3 in order to achieve this aim.</p> <p>Thematic Objective 10 places particular emphasis on skills development in an economic context and on improving the skills levels of the Northern Ireland workforce as a key component in broader efforts to increase economic competitiveness.</p> <p>This will complement thematic objective 1 in the European Regional Development Fund Programme – strengthening research, technological development and innovation and also Thematic objective 3 – enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs. In developing the ESF programme, DEL has worked closely with DETI, the managing authority for the ERDF programme to ensure maximum impact from the Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme. Complementarity exists between these two programmes in that both are concerned with supporting the aims of the NI Economic Strategy. DEL for example has identified a number of priority sectors in the local economy where its skills and training provision will be focused in keeping with the aims of the Economic Strategy. These align closely with the Smart Specialisation key sectors on which the ERDF Programme will focus. The main companies that fall within the five identified Smart Specialisation key sectors also fall within DEL’s identified priority economic sectors and DEL will target funding on these sectors through</p>	



Priority axis	3 - Skills for Growth
<p>apprenticeship training. DEL will work with DETI to meet the future skills needs of the emerging sectors – the creative industries and renewable energy. In this way the ESF and ERDF programmes complement one another in promoting sectors that are of major importance in rebuilding and rebalancing the Northern Ireland economy.</p> <p>One of the actions set out in the Department for Employment and learning’s ICT Skills Action Plan, was the development of a Public/Private ICT Apprenticeship Scheme. As a result, the Department, along with the Department of Finance and Personnel and local private sector ICT employers, developed a model to recruit and train individuals for the ICT sector. This model has been implemented and will ensure that the particular needs of the ICT/digital sector will be met. this will also contribute to Thematic objective 3.</p>	

## 2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis		3 - Skills for Growth									
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018		Final target (2023)		Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator
						Total	Total	Total	Total		
F3	Financial	Expenditure	Euros	ESF	Transition	88,008,467	€205,353,090	Project Providers	ESF and National Counterpart		
PSO05	Output	Employed participants aged 16 and over working towards an apprenticeship	Number of participants	ESF	Transition	15,750	42,000	Monitoring data collected by project providers			

## Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

### 2. A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

#### Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

**Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field**

Priority axis	3 - Skills for Growth		
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	118. Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes	82,141,236.00

**Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance**

Priority axis	3 - Skills for Growth		
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	01. Non-repayable grant	82,141,236

**Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type**

Priority axis	3 - Skills for Growth		
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	82,141,236

**Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms**

Priority axis	3 - Skills for Growth		
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	82,141,236

**Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)**

Priority axis	3 - Skills for Growth		
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	08. Not applicable	82,141,236

**2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries:**

<b>Priority axis:</b>	<b>3 - Skills for Growth</b>
<p>The Technical Assistance Priority will cover costs in relation to the preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation, and information and control activities of the operational programme. This will include the programme’s publicity and communication strategy, support for cross-cutting themes and the development of the programme’s monitoring and evaluation systems.</p> <p>Activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• programme preparation and management, including costs associated with monitoring and evaluation, control and audit. Activity around information and communication;</li> <li>• activity around networking of Programme bodies and beneficiaries;</li> <li>• activity around recruitment and selection of projects, including economic appraisals;</li> <li>• monitoring Committee and other management activities;</li> <li>• dissemination of project good practice.</li> </ul> <p>Technical assistance may also be used to promote transnational working. The amount of ESF set aside for Technical Assistance in this Operational Programme is €3m giving a total expenditure €7.7m including match funding.</p>	

## 2.B Description of the Priority Axis for Technical Assistance

### 2.B.1 Priority axis

<b>ID of the priority axis</b>	4
<b>Title of the priority axis</b>	The technical assistance budget will support the effective management and implementation of the Northern Ireland ESF programme structures and achievement of the Programme's aim and objectives

### 2.B.2 Justification for establishing a priority axis covering more than one category of region

This is not applicable to Northern Ireland.

### 2.B.3 Fund and category of region

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Category of region</b>	<b>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)</b>
ESF	ESF	Public

### 2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results

<b>ID</b>	<b>Specific objective</b>	<b>Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support</b>
4	To support the effective management and implementation of the Northern Ireland ESF programme structures and achievement of the Programme's aim and objectives.	The Technical Assistance Priority will cover costs in relation to the preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation, quality assurance and information and control activities of the operational programme. This will include the programme's publicity and communication strategy, support for cross-cutting themes and the development of the programme's monitoring and evaluation systems.

## **2. B.5 Result indicators**

Result Indicators are not required for technical assistance as the EU support for technical assistance is below the threshold of €15m.

## 2. B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives

### 2. B.6.1 A description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>4 - The technical assistance budget will support the effective management and implementation of the Northern Ireland ESF programme structures and achievement of the programme's aim and objectives.</b>
Activities may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• programme preparation and management, including costs associated with monitoring and evaluation, control and audit;</li><li>• organisation of a communication and information event for beneficiaries each year of the programme;</li><li>• activity around networking of Programme bodies and beneficiaries;</li><li>• activity around recruitment and selection of projects, including economic appraisals;</li><li>• monitoring Committee and other management activities;</li><li>• dissemination of project good practice;</li><li>• technical assistance may also be used to promote transnational working.</li></ul>	



## 2. B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results

**Table 13: Output Indicators**

Priority axis	4 - The technical assistance budget will support the effective management and implementation of the Northern Ireland ESF programme structures and achievement of the Programme's aim and objectives.				
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) (optional)	Source of data	
				Total	
PS06	Number of Projects supported	Projects			ESF Managing Authority
PS07	N+3	Euros			Database
PS08	Annual Error Rate	%			Audit Authority
PS09	Programme Evaluations by External Consultants	Evaluations			ESF Managing Authority
PS11	Major Information Activities Reg (EU No1303/2013 Art. 155 and Annex XI refers)	Activities			ESF Managing Authority
PS12	Number of Training Events	Events			ESF Managing Authority
PS13	Number of employees (FTE's) whose salaries are co-financed by TA	FTE			ESF Managing Authority
PS14	Evaluation Plan	Plan	1		ESF Managing Authority
PS10	Communications Strategy	Strategy	1		

## 2.B.7 Categories of intervention (by priority axis)

Corresponding categories of intervention based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and an indicative breakdown of the Union support.

### Tables 14-16: Categories of intervention

**Table 14: Dimension 1 - Intervention field**

Priority axis	4 - The technical assistance budget will support the effective management and implementation of the Northern Ireland ESF programme structures and achievement of the Programme's aim and objectives.		€ Amount
Fund	Category of region	Code	
ESF	Transition	120. Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels	0.00
ESF	Transition	121. Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection	0.00
ESF	Transition	122. Evaluation and studies	0.00
ESF	Transition	123. Information and communication	3,080,296

**Table 15: Dimension 2 - Form of finance**

4 - The technical assistance budget will support the effective management and implementation of the Northern Ireland ESF programme structures and achievement of the Programme's aim and objectives.		
Priority axis	Category of region	Code
ESF	Transition	01. Non-repayable grant
		<b>€ Amount</b>
		3,080,296

**Table 16: Dimension 3 – Territory type**

4 - The technical assistance budget will support the effective management and implementation of the Northern Ireland ESF programme structures and achievement of the Programme's aim and objectives.		
Priority axis	Category of region	Code
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable
		<b>€ Amount</b>
		3,080,296



### 3. Financing Plan

#### 3.1 Financial appropriation from each fund and amounts for performance reserve

Table 17

Fund	Category of region	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		Total	
		Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve
ESF	Transition	25,963,860	1,657,267	26,483,663	1,690,444	27,013,794	1,724,285	27,554,428	1,758,793	28,105,864	1,793,992	28,668,317	1,829,895	29,241,979.00	1,866,509	193,031,905	12,321,185
Total		25,963,860	1,657,267	26,483,663	1,690,444	27,013,794	1,724,285	27,554,428	1,758,793	28,105,864	1,793,992	28,668,317	1,829,895	29,241,979.00	1,866,509	193,031,905	12,321,185

#### 3.2 Total financial appropriation by fund and national co-financing (€)

Table 18a: Financing plan

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for calculation of Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	Indicative breakdown of national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a) / (e) (2)	EIB contributions (g)	Main allocation		Performance reserve		Performance reserve amount as proportion of total Union support (l) = (i) / (a) * 100
						National public funding (c)	National private funding (d) (1)				Union support (h) = (a) - (i)	National Counterpart (j) = (b) - (k)	Union support (i)	National Counterpart (k) = (b) * (l) / (a)	
1	ESF	Transition	Public	58,525,631	87,788,446	87,788,446	0.00	146,314,077	40%	0.00	54,960,617	82,440,925.00	3,565,014	5,347,521	6.09%
2	ESF	Transition	Public	61,605,927	92,408,890	92,408,890	0.00	154,014,817	40%	0.00	57,853,282	86,779,923.00	3,752,645	5,628,967	6.09%
3	ESF	Transition	Public	82,141,236	123,211,854	123,211,854	0.00	205,353,090	40%	0.00	77,137,710	115,706,565.00	5,003,526	7,505,289	6.09%
4	ESF	Transition	Public	3,080,296	4,620,445	4,620,445	0.00	7,700,741	40%	0.00	3,080,296	4,620,445.00			
Total	ESF	Transition	Public	205,353,090	308,029,635	308,029,635	0.00	513,382,725	40%	0.00	193,031,905	289,547,858.00	12,321,185	18,481,777	6.00%
Grand total				205,353,090	308,029,635	308,029,635	0.00	513,382,725	40%	0.00	193,031,905	289,547,858.00	12,321,185	18,481,777	

**Table 18b: Youth Employment Initiative - ESF and YEI specific allocations – not applicable**

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for calculation of Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	Indicative breakdown of national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a)/(e) (2)
						National public funding (c)	National private funding (d) (1)		
Total				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%

Ratio	%
Ratio of ESF for less developed regions	0.00%
Ratio of ESF for transition regions	0.00%
Ratio of ESF for more developed regions	0.00%

**Table 18c: Breakdown of the financial plan by priority axis, fund, category of region and thematic objective**

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
Access to Employment	ESF	Transition	Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	58,525,631	87,788,446	146,314,077
Social Inclusion	ESF	Transition	Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	61,605,927	92,408,890	154,014,817
Skills for Growth	ESF	Transition	Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning	82,141,236	123,211,854	205,353,090
<b>Total</b>				<b>202,272,794</b>	<b>303,409,190</b>	<b>505,681,984</b>

**Table 19: Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives**

Priority axis	Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (€)	Proportion of the total allocation to the operational programme (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00%</b>





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## 4. Integrated Approach to Territorial Development

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Description of the integrated approach to territorial development taking into account the content and objectives of the operational programme having regard to the Partnership Agreement and showing how the operational programme contributes to the accomplishment of the objectives of the operational programme and expected results.

### 4.1. Community-led local development

The Partnership Agreement established that the Community-led local development model was not directly relevant to the ESF Operational Programme at this point in the 2014-2020 round. However, it may be re-considered at a future point during the period.

### 4.2 Integrated actions for sustainable urban development

Northern Ireland's Economic Strategy recognises Belfast and Londonderry as key drivers of regional growth. The ESF Managing Authority will continue to engage with the ERDF Managing Authority to ensure ESI funds are used to support local activity in these and other areas. ESF investment will focus on promoting access to employment, social inclusion and skills for growth to encourage growth and jobs throughout Northern Ireland.

### 4.3 Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI)

Not applicable to this operational programme.

### 4.4. The arrangements for interregional and transnational actions, within the operational programme, with beneficiaries located in at least one other Member State

#### TRANSNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

The benefits of transnational working will be promoted by the Managing Authority in order to encourage those who wish to participate. The advantages of participation were highlighted in a review commissioned by the Managing Authority and undertaken by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in October 2010. The review highlighted potential barriers to projects engaging in transnational working and amongst these was:

- lack of awareness of what transnational working actually involved;
- the issue of identification of potential partners; and
- how the activity is funded within the programme.

Taking into consideration the key issues identified in the review, the Managing Authority will institute the following affirmative actions in respect of the 2014 - 2020 programming period;

- awareness raising activities led by projects with expertise and experience in transnational working;
- the provision of a tool for the identification of potential partners with appropriate resources and support in place;
- transnational working may be financed from Technical Assistance, where appropriate.

Actions around transnational working will be targeted towards addressing specific needs within the programme area while maximising the added value that can be delivered.

Focus will be placed on actions which offer significant opportunity to develop common solutions to common and emerging issues; to strengthen capacities to innovate, modernise and adapt to new socio-economic challenges; and to promote and share information and good practice.

In the 2007 – 2013 Programme the ESF Managing Authority in Northern Ireland led on the Learning Network on Empowerment and Inclusion and participated in three other networks.

#### **4.5. Contribution of the planned actions under the programme to macro-regional and sea-basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the Member State**

Not applicable to this operational programme.

**Table 20: Integrated actions for sustainable urban development – indicative amounts of ERDF and ESF support**

<b>Fund</b>	<b>ERDF and ESF support (indicative) (€)</b>	<b>Proportion of fund's total allocation to programme</b>
Total ESF	0.00	0.00%
<b>TOTAL ERDF+ESF</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00%</b>

### 4.3 Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) (where appropriate)

The approach to the use of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs) (as defined in Article 36 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) other than in cases covered by 4.2, and their indicative financial allocation from each priority axis.

Not applicable to this operational programme.

**Table 21: Indicative financial allocation to ITI other than those mentioned under point 4.2** (aggregate amount)

Priority axis	Fund	Indicative financial allocation (Union support) (€)
1 - Access to Employment	ESF	0.00
2 - Social Inclusion	ESF	0.00
3 - Skills for Growth	ESF	0.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.00</b>

### 4.4 The arrangements for interregional and transnational actions, within the operational programme, with beneficiaries located in at least one other Member State

Not applicable to this operational programme.

### 4.5 Contribution of the planned actions under the programme to macro-regional and sea basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the Member State

(Where the Member State and regions participate in macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies).

Not applicable to this operational programme.



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## 5. Specific Needs of Geographical Areas Most Affected by Poverty or Target Groups at Highest Risk of Discrimination or Social Exclusion

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### 5.1 Geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion

The Northern Ireland socio-economic analysis shows that the region remains one of the most deprived of the UK. This is a result of a number of factors including a young population (hence higher dependency rates); low labour market participation rates; a high rate of economic inactivity; a larger share of employment in sectors of low productivity; and below average wages.

Relative poverty is defined as individuals living in households whose equivalised income is below 60% of UK median income in the same year. Absolute poverty is measured as Individuals living in households whose equivalised income is below 60% of the (inflation adjusted) GB median income in 1998/99. In 2010/11 there were 355k people in relative poverty and 232k people in absolute poverty in NI both Before Housing Costs (BHC)<sup>23</sup>. This equates to 20% and 13% of the population respectively.

In 2010/11, 21% of children (93k) were in relative poverty and 13% were in absolute poverty (59k). Relative child poverty (BHC) is now at its lowest since the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) series was introduced in NI in 2002/03. Absolute child poverty (BHC) in 2010/11 was two percentage points higher than the 'low' reached in 2006/07 (11%), although the overall trend is downwards.

Between 2009/10 and 2010/11 the proportion of working age adults in relative poverty decreased by one percentage point, from 20% to 19%, which equates to 199,000 persons. Absolute poverty for working age adults increased from 12% in 2009/10 to 13% in 2010/11 equating to 136,000 working age adults.

Working age adults have been the largest proportion of those in relative income poverty over the last decade however the numbers have decreased from 49% in 2002/03 to 47% in 2010/11. This is followed by children whose share has increased from 31% in 2002/03 to 32% in 2010/11.

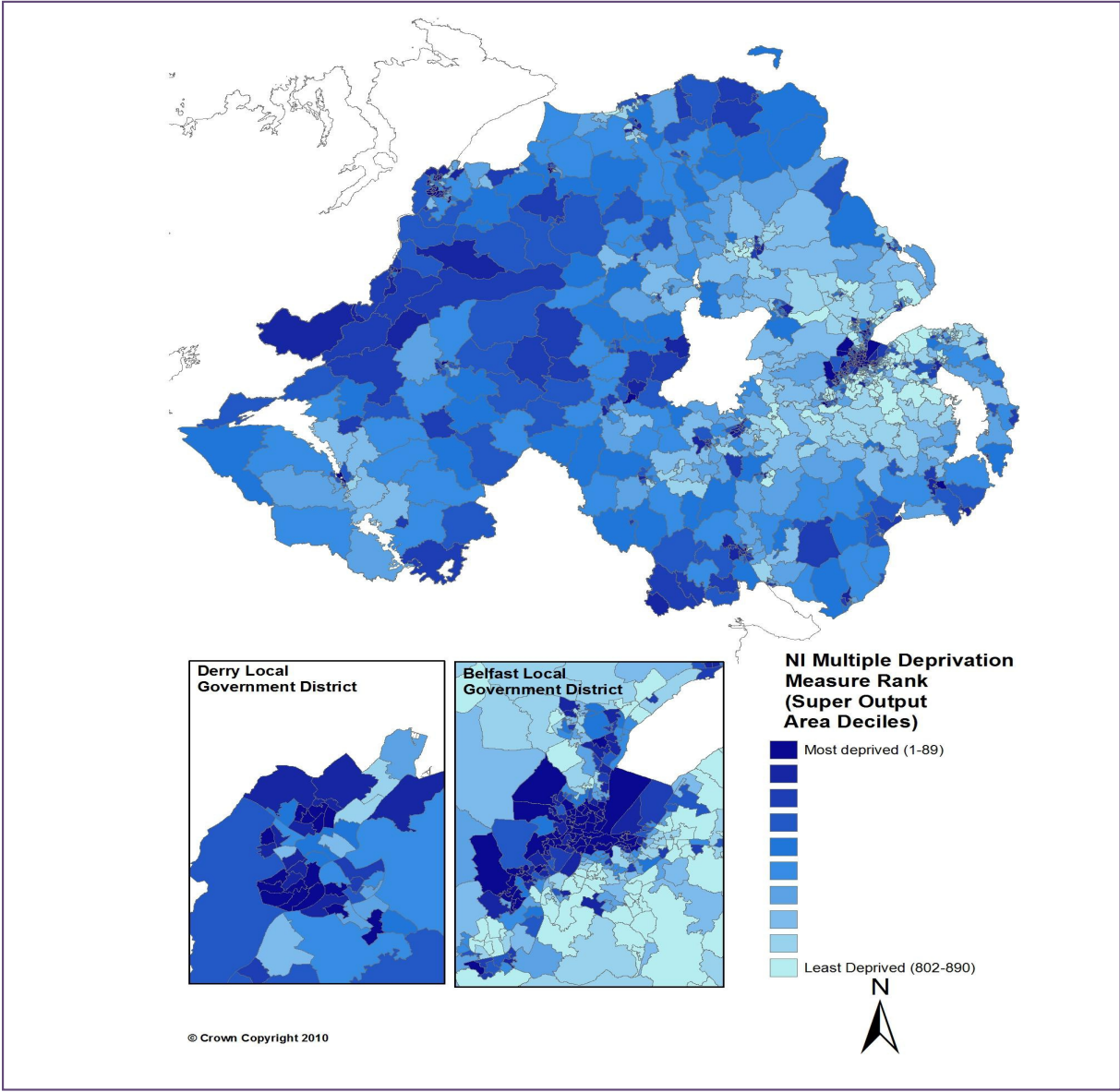
The largest proportion of working age adult poverty is in workless households (47%). This is followed by households in which only one adult is in work (36%). Even where all adults in the household are in work, poverty still remains (16%).

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<sup>23</sup> Income Before Housing Costs (BHC) includes the following main components: usual net earnings from employment; profit or loss from self-employment ; all Social Security benefits and Tax Credits; income from occupational and private pensions; investment income; maintenance payments, if a person receives them directly; income from educational grants and scholarships; the cash value of certain forms of income in kind (free school meals, Healthy Start vouchers and free school milk, and free TV licence for those aged 75 and over).

Figure A illustrates the relative levels of deprivation within NI in 2010. Despite the largest household incomes being in Belfast, some of the most deprived Super Output Areas are located in the Belfast City Council area, including Whiterock, Falls, New Lodge, Shankill and Crumlin. Other areas of high deprivation located outside of Belfast are in the Strabane, Derry, Craigavon, Newry and Mourne and Lisburn Local Government Districts. Some of the least deprived areas in NI can be found in North Down, Castlereagh and Newtownabbey Local Government Districts.

**Figure A: NI Multiple Deprivation Measure Rank (Super Output Area Deciles)**  
**Source: Social Economic Analysis Jan 2015**



A similar distribution can be seen with regard to employment deprivation across Northern Ireland, with Derry/Londonderry, Limavady, Strabane, Lisburn and Belfast containing some of the most deprived wards in terms of employment. The distribution of health and disability deprivation is also similar to the distribution of multiple deprivations. Belfast and Derry/Londonderry contain a large number of the areas in the most deprived deciles and there are clusters of deprivation in Lisburn and Craigavon. The least deprived areas tend to be in the east of NI, with clusters of low deprivation also visible in Ballymena and Coleraine.

### **NEETs by Local Government District**

As a result of the review of public administration (RPA) undertaken in Northern Ireland, a reform programme is under way which will see 11 new councils take over from the current 26.

In developing the ESF programme, we have engaged extensively with local Government representatives to identify and map needs in the new Council areas to align with potential ESF provision. It is also proposed that there will be council representation on project selection panels for the 2014-2020 Programme to ensure that local need is met.

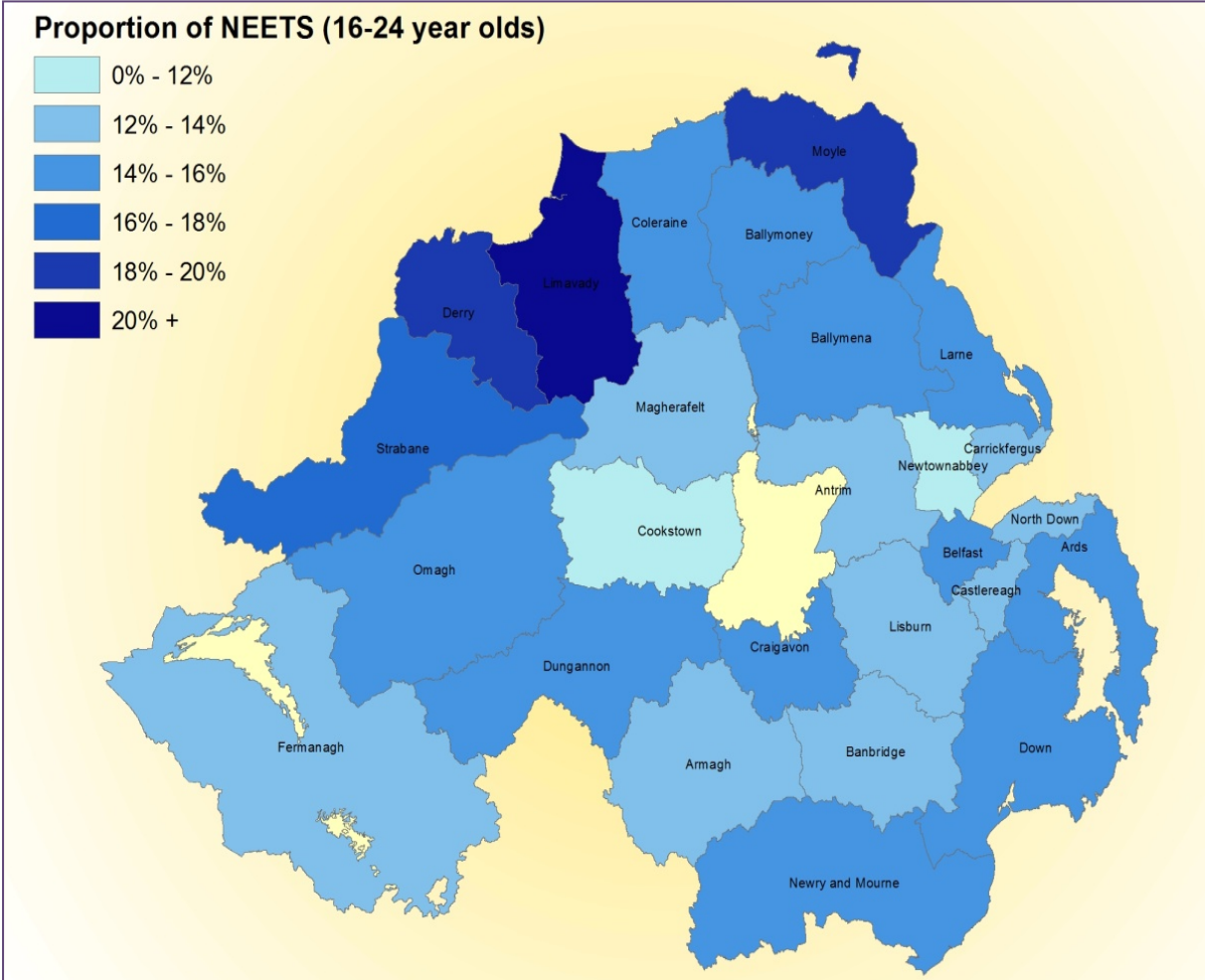
Figure B shows the distribution of young people who are NEET by current local government district, as information based on the new council districts is not yet available.

The proportion of the 16-24 population who are NEET varies across the local Government Districts from 11.2% to 21.3%, and the NI average is 14.7%<sup>24</sup>. The highest levels of NEETs are in Limavady, Derry and Moyle (21.3%, 19.1% and 18.2% respectively). The lowest levels of NEETS are in Newtownabbey, Cookstown and Castlereagh (11.2%, 12.0% and 12.3% respectively).

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24 The information is derived from Census data (2011) and shows a slight variation from the information provided earlier in the document, based on the Labour Force survey.

**Figure B: Proportion of NEETS (16-24 yr olds) Source: Census 2011**



**Main Groups Targeted for support under ESF**

The main groups of people to be supported with ESF funding are those furthest from the labour market and with significant barriers to entering employment – the unemployed, including long-term unemployed and economically inactive people.

Support under Priority 1 will also be targeted at young people aged 16-24 who are not in employment education or training (NEET).

Under Priority 2 there will be support for families, where at least one family member is NEET or in danger of falling into the NEET category. People with a disability will also be a key target group for support under this Priority.



Under Priority 3 investment in apprenticeships and youth training will ensure progression in employment thus helping to reduce in-work poverty. The review of apprenticeships aims to develop an apprenticeship model that facilitates access to quality training and greater opportunities to progress from level 2 through to level 8. The review of youth training that is currently taking place, aims to examine current provision at level 2, including opportunities to simplify the curriculum offer and progression pathways. The review also seeks to target support as effectively as possible on the needs of young people and the wider economy. Apprenticeships will include a range of measures to support participation by both genders across occupations.

ESF support will ensure that the needs of the individual are taken into account and the training and support provided will enhance employability skills and contribute to enhancing social inclusion in addition to reducing unemployment.

Commissioning of projects will be on a Northern Ireland wide basis as we recognise that there may be people in need of support who may not live in an area of multiple deprivation. We wish to address individual need wherever it occurs

## **5.2 Strategy to address the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion, and where relevant, the contribution to the integrated approach set out in the Partnership Agreement**

Promoting access to sustainable employment is seen in Northern Ireland as the best route for tackling poverty and social exclusion. By focusing on actions that encourage people to overcome barriers to employment, we will make a valuable contribution to reducing both poverty and social isolation.

Northern Ireland's approach to overcoming poverty and disadvantage is through two important strategies, Delivering Social Change (DSC) and the Economic Inactivity strategy. DSC is a comprehensive new delivery framework developed by the NI Executive which aims to deliver the following two outcomes:

- a sustained reduction in poverty and associated issues, across all ages; and
- an improvement in children and young people's health, wellbeing and life opportunities, thereby breaking the long-term cycle of multi-generational problems.

Specifically, it seeks to ensure:

- effective cross-departmental working;
- that mainstream programmes are supported by a co-ordinated initiative to help tackle the long-term problems associated with deprivation; and
- that more people join and/or remain in the work force and have the appropriate work skills to strengthen economic growth.

Delivering Social Change has been developed to provide streamlined governance for social policy across the Executive, with clear lines of accountability and a focus on delivering additional actions that can add real value and achieve measurable improvements. It complements the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy with a broad and integrated approach to tackling poverty designed to ensure that more people join and/or remain in the labour force.

The Northern Ireland ESF Programme will support relevant policies in the strategy to increase labour market participation and eliminate child poverty by helping to increase access to the labour market for parents.

DSC encompasses the NEET strategy – Pathways to Success –and the Community Family Support programme both of which focus on helping young people to overcome their barriers to entering employment, training or education. In developing the Pathways to Success Strategy for Northern Ireland, research has shown that those in the NEET category are concentrated in more deprived communities. These communities have a double challenge – they are not only having to deal with the social and economic hardships that other deprived communities across Europe are dealing with – but they are also having to struggle with the legacy of decades of conflict and division. Furthermore, they are doing this at a time when the economic and labour market conditions are far from ideal.

## **Community Family Support Programme**

The Pathways to Success strategy identified that significant support for individuals and their families would be required to enable these young people to participate in meaningful and rewarding work, education or training (or a combination of these). This led to the establishment of the Community Family Support Programme (CFSP), which has been designed to help families make life changing decisions to enhance their prospects and become full participants in society.

The programme aims to address the NEET problem in a more strategic way by targeting families where at least one member is NEET, or in the case of younger family members, in danger of falling into the NEET category. By targeting families in this way, parents and indeed grandparents benefit from the intervention and are supported in overcoming barriers to employment. Professional support workers engage and

consult with parents of children and young people to promote early intervention and high quality parenting and to identify solutions to address their specific needs. This programme links to a wider group of interventions designed to address family issues in a holistic and integrated way.

## **Economic Inactivity Strategy**

The Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government included a commitment for the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment to develop and implement a new Strategy to address economic inactivity through skills development, targeted incentives and job creation. A baseline analysis of economic inactivity in Northern Ireland has highlighted two inactive groups as the key targets of the strategy: those with a work-limiting long-term illness or disability, and those with family commitments, specifically lone parents. Of the major inactive categories, these groups represent the greatest contributors to workless households, poverty, and dependence on out-of-work benefits. Measures taken forward under the strategy will focus on re-engaging those currently facing barriers to employment, and identifying preventative measures to prevent at-risk individuals from disengaging from work.

Activity funded through the ESF programme, will contribute to the implementation of the Strategy by assisting those furthest from the labour market to overcome their barriers to employment.

The ESF programme through thematic objective 8 will support those who are furthest from the labour market and therefore more likely to experience poverty, and young people who are not in employment, education or training.

Through priority 2, thematic objective 9, the programme focuses on two distinct groups of people. The first group is people with a disability. ESF funding will support 13,000 people with a disability by providing tailored provision that will enhance their prospects by helping them overcome the significant barriers to entering employment, education or training and thereby contributing to reducing the social isolation often experienced by this particular group.

The second group is families where at least one family member is NEET or in danger of falling into the NEET category as detailed in the section on Community Family Support. Currently there are approximately 29,000<sup>25</sup> young people in Northern Ireland who are NEET - 13% of the age group. This, coupled with the high levels of economic inactivity and resultant levels of poverty, has given rise to the need for concerted effort to address the issue.

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<sup>25</sup> The information is derived from Census data (2011) and shows a slight variation from the information provided earlier in the document, based on the Labour Force survey.

Interventions in the ESF Programme will focus on individual need and ensure that provision is aligned to meet that need. In order to ensure that those most in need are identified in both rural and urban areas, proposals for project activity will be commissioned through an open call system separately for each key strand of the Programme. Selection of projects will then be made by a panel of experts which will include representatives from district councils who have first-hand experience of the particular needs at local level, as well as other statutory bodies which are potential match funders. The ESF programme will therefore be targeted to support the needs of groups most at risk of, or affected by poverty and exclusion, and those facing disadvantage through disability, unemployment or economic inactivity.

**Table 22: Actions to address specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion**

Target group/geographical area	Main types of planned action as part of integrated approach	Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Investment priority
Other groups - Unemployed/inactive people for example lone parents, people with low or no qualifications	Support for access to sustainable employment such as job search employment brokerage and/or the achievement of work relevant skills. Activities which provide access to employment opportunities by addressing identified barriers such as lack of employability skills or the need for childcare facilities. Targeted support to employers/project providers to engage for example, lone parents, women, ex-offenders.	1 - Access to Employment	ESF	Transition	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
Young people who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)	Support for young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) to gain skills and experience to access sustainable employment including self employment.	1 - Access to Employment	ESF	Transition	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
People with a disability	Support for access to sustainable employment such as job search, employment brokerage and/ or the achievement of work relevant skills. Specific support such as tailor made training and support for those with more complex barriers to employment such as work limiting health conditions. Targeted support to employers/project providers to engage/employ people with a disability.	2 - Social Inclusion	ESF	Transition	9i (a) - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
NEETs and their families	Support and advice for NEETs and their families from targeted areas to address their particular barriers to accessing employment or educational/training opportunities. Help to re-engage with education/training. Activity to help prevent younger family members from becoming NEET.	2 - Social Inclusion	ESF	Transition	9i (b) - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
Employed persons with low qualifications	Apprenticeships and actions to promote access to apprenticeships	3 - Skills for Growth	ESF	Transition	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes



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## **6. Specific Needs of Geographical Areas Which Suffer From Severe and Permanent Natural or Demographic Handicaps**

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As highlighted in the UK Partnership agreement, Northern Ireland does not fall within scope of Article 174, therefore this section is not applicable.





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## 7. Authorities and Bodies Responsible for Management, Control and Audit and the Role of Relevant Partners

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### 7.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

**Table 23: Relevant authorities and bodies**

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Managing Authority	Department for Employment and Learning	John Noble
Certifying Authority	Department for Employment and Learning	Rosemary Mulholland
Audit Authority	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	Jackie Connolly
Body to which Commission will make payments	Department for Employment and Learning	Stephen McMurray

### 7.2 Involvement of relevant partners

#### 7.2.1 Actions taken to involve the relevant partners in the preparation of the operational programme, and the role of those partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme

##### Role of Partners in Preparation of Operational Programme

The Operational programme has been developed in partnership with Government Departments in Northern Ireland and a wide range of regional stakeholders from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. The list of partners is referenced at section 12.

Ongoing engagement has been facilitated through a Consultative Partnership Group which was established in September 2012. The decision was taken to invite organisations to nominate based on membership of the 2007-2013 Programme Monitoring Committee for Competitiveness and Employment with representatives of local government, Environment Bodies, Equality Commission, Education, Higher Education, Voluntary and Community sector, Trades Unions, Business, the Agri-Rural sector and the Energy sector. In addition representatives from the European Commission (DG REGIO, EMPLOY and AGRI) were invited to attend as observers as are representatives of the Northern Ireland MEPs. Members were nominated by representative organisations identified for the 2007-2013 Monitoring Committee and alternates/deputies are also nominated to ensure participation. (A list of current member organisations of the Consultative Partnership Group is attached in section 12).

Input provided by members of the Group has been taken on board and reflected where possible in this Programme. The group met 8 times during the preparation of the programme.

In addition to considering potential content for the future ERDF and ESF Programmes, the Consultative Partnership Group provided input on Northern Ireland's contribution to the United Kingdom Partnership Agreement for the 2014-2020 programming period. The Group also provided input on what form a local government dimension of the new Structural Funds programmes might take and how it might be delivered to ensure the most efficient and effective use of resources available.

In April 2015, as part of the reform of local government in Northern Ireland, the number of Councils is reducing from 26 to 11. This will involve the transfer of some statutory functions from some Government Departments to the newly formed Councils.

Whilst none of DEL's functions will be transferring to local government, discussions are ongoing between DEL officials and local government representatives to determine how Councils may be more involved in the selection of projects, taking account of their understanding of local needs and their potential to be match funders of individual projects.

The Department for Employment and Learning will also involve other statutory bodies, particularly other potential match funders, in the selection process.

The Department of Finance and Personnel (DfP) European Division launched an informal consultation; the Northern Ireland & Europe in Partnership Reflection Exercise<sup>26</sup> – on future EU funding programming in April 2012 and the feedback from this exercise was used in developing the contents of the ESF programme.

## **Wider Stakeholder Engagement**

In considering proposed activity for inclusion in the draft ESF Programme DEL also engaged directly with a wide range of stakeholders. Informal consultation took place between the DEL and local government representatives as part of a broader process led by DFP and involving all prospective managing authorities for the next round of EU Structural Funds. DEL continues to engage with local government representatives in order to ensure their views are taken into account particularly at the application and selection stages of the implementation process.

In addition, informal and formal consultation also took place with Community and Voluntary sector representatives and feedback was received from the sector with regard to how future ESF funding could best be utilised, within the constraints of EU regulations. Engagement with NI Executive Departments was also ongoing.

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26 Northern Ireland and Europe in Partnership, Preparing for the 2014-2020 Round of European Programmes, A Reflection Exercise, Department of Finance and Personnel, April 2012

## Formal Consultation

A 12 week public consultation process, which began on 29th July 2013, ensured that as broad a spectrum as possible of opinion could be taken into account in finalising the ESF programme. An analysis of responses to the consultation was published in December 2013 on the Department's website. Partnership arrangements will continue as Programme activity is prepared, implemented, monitored and evaluated. In addition to taking account of the relevant EU national and regional strategies in developing the operational programme, the following activity was also undertaken.

## Mid –Term Evaluation of 2007-2013 Programme

The result of a mid-term evaluation of the 2007-2013 ESF Programme was taken into account and informed the development of the new programme. During the 2007-2013 programming period, the focus of activity was on helping people into sustainable employment and improving the skills levels of the NI workforce. The mid-term evaluation report and the Reflection Exercise both recognised the need to retain a strong focus on continuing ESF interventions on employment and skills.

## Changes to the Programme

In developing the 2014-2020 Programme, the views of partners have been taken into account and the following key changes have been made:

- **Inclusion of Thematic Objective 9**

The number of thematic objectives in the Programme has been increased from two to three. The original proposal was to deliver the Programme solely through thematic objectives 8 and 10, as it was felt that activity within these two objectives would also contribute to combating poverty and enhancing social inclusion. However, discussion with partners, including representatives of the Community and Voluntary sector, resulted in agreement to allocate funding for combating poverty and enhancing social inclusion to thematic objective 9. Support for this approach was evident in feedback to the consultation exercise which ran from July to October 2013 and was endorsed by the Consultative partnership group.

- **Greater Local Government involvement**

Discussions have been ongoing between DEL officials and local government representatives to identify opportunities for greater involvement in the ESF selection process. A group was established and regular meetings held to consider the possibility of identifying and mapping needs in Council areas to align with potential ESF provision.

- **More strategic Approach to Project Selection**

Project selection will be undertaken by an expert panel consisting of DEL staff with particular expertise in relevant areas, and representatives of local government and other key statutory agencies, such as potential match funders. Calls for Project activity will be based on the 3 priorities in the new Programme.

## **Ex-ante Evaluation**

An important aspect of the development of the ESF Programme is the ex ante evaluation carried out by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). This is an iterative process to ensure that the Programme responds to identified socio economic and labour market needs and reflects local, UK and EU priorities and policies. Through the Ex-ante evaluation, the programme is reviewed as it progresses to identify and appraise any disparities, gaps and potential for development. The evaluation will also ensure the coherence of the programme with the EU 2020 strategic priorities. Information provided throughout the Ex-ante evaluation is fed by NISRA into the development of the Programme by DEL.

## **Socio-economic analysis**

A socio-economic analysis of Northern Ireland is also a requirement of Programme development. This analysis has been undertaken by economists from the Department of Finance and Personnel. It provides a socio-economic assessment of Northern Ireland to inform the development of the region's Operational Programmes for both the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for the period 2014-2020. The analysis provides a detailed assessment of socio-economic need in relation to each of these themes and objectives, highlighting the region's strengths and weaknesses in this regard.

## **Implementation of the Programme**

The Northern Ireland ESF Programme will be implemented in partnership with the European Commission and with appropriate authorities and bodies in accordance with regional and national rules and practice.

At Programme level, partnership will be embodied in the Programme Monitoring Committee, which will be responsible for monitoring implementation of the programme. Reflecting the principle of partnership, its membership will be drawn from representatives reflecting the regional and sectoral interests in the programme, including the economic and social partners. The European Commission will be represented in an advisory capacity. There must be a gender balance in representation on the Committee. The Committee will set its rules of procedures with the Managing Authority within the institutional, legal and financial framework of the Member State. It is expected to meet at least twice a year.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation of the OP**

Monitoring will be carried out by the Managing Authority under the supervision of the Programme Monitoring Committee. Monitoring will ensure the quality and effectiveness of implementation through assessment of progress towards achievement of the financial and non financial indicators and those concerning qualitative aspects of implementation.

## **Annual Implementation Report (AIR)**

The Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) aims to simplify annual reporting. Annual reports for the years 2016, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022 will follow a simplified procedure. The annual report submitted in 2017 and 2019 as well as the final report of 2023 will be more strategic in nature,

The Commission will consider the implementation reports admissible only if they contain all the required information as set out in the Programme Operating Manual. The first Annual Implementation Report (AIR) is due in 2016 (CPR, Art. 44 and 101). This AIR shall cover years 2014 and 2015. The deadline for submitting this and the following AIRs is 30 April. The deadline for submitting the final report is 30 September 2023.

## **Designation of Authorities**

### **Managing Authority**

The Department for Employment and Learning is the prospective Managing Authority of the Northern Ireland ESF Programme and will be responsible for the following functions:

- Ensuring that projects are selected for funding in accordance with the criteria applicable to the operational programme and compliance with Community and National rules;
- Verifying that services are delivered and that expenditure declared by the beneficiaries for operations has actually been incurred;
- On-the-spot verifications of individual operations in accordance with Commission rules;
- Ensuring that there is a system for collecting, recording and storing data in the format required by the Commission;
- Ensuring that beneficiaries and other bodies comply with guidance regarding the implementation of operations;
- Ensuring that evaluations are carried out according to Council Regulations;
- Setting up procedures to ensure an adequate audit trail;
- Guiding the work of the Monitoring Committee and submitting to the Commission the annual and final implementation reports; and
- Ensuring compliance with information and publicity requirements.

## **Certifying Authority**

DEL is also the designated Certifying Authority for the Programme. To ensure adequate separation of responsibilities the Certifying Authority is functionally independent.

Functions include: -

- Drawing up and submitting to the Commission certified statements of expenditure and applications for payment;
- Ensuring that expenditure declared complies with applicable community and national rules and has been incurred;
- Ensuring that adequate information has been received from the Managing Authority on the procedures and verifications carried out;
- Taking account of the results of all audits carried out by or under the responsibility of the Audit Authority;
- Maintaining accounting records; and
- Keeping an account of amounts recoverable, withdrawn or cancelled.

## **Audit Authority**

The Audit Authority is required by regulation to provide the Commission with a description of the management and control systems operated by the Managing Authority for the ESF Programme, together with an opinion on the systems' regulatory compliance. The functions of the Audit Authority include:-

- Ensuring that sample audits are carried out to verify the effective functioning of the management and control systems declared by 31 December each year;
- Submitting to the Commission an annual control report setting out the findings of the audits carried out in accordance with the audit strategy of the operational programme and reporting any shortcomings found; and
- Issuing an opinion, on the basis of the controls and audits carried out.

**7.2.2 Global grants** – The ESF Managing Authority will not use global grants in the 2014-2020 programming period.

**7.2.3 Allocation of an amount for capacity building** – There will be no allocation of an amount specifically for capacity building.





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## **8. Co-ordination Between the Funds, the EAFRD, the EMFF and Other Union and National Funding Instruments, and With the EIB**

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The mechanisms to ensure co-ordination between the Funds, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and other Union and national funding instruments, and with the European Investment Bank (EIB), taking into account the relevant provisions laid down in the Common Strategic Framework.

### **Monitoring Committee**

The Northern Ireland ESF and ERDF programmes have been developed in the context of the regional strategic approach to ensure complementarity of programme spending. A single Monitoring Committee will oversee the management and implementation of both Programmes, thus ensuring future complementarity. The Monitoring Committee will be set up within 3 months of approval of the Programme. The single Monitoring Committee for both the ESF and ERDF Programmes will also include an observer from the rural development and fisheries fund programmes.

### **ESI Funds Co-ordination Committee**

As described in the Northern Ireland chapter of the UK Partnership Agreement, the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) chairs a European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) funds co-ordination committee of officials representing Programme Authorities for all ESI Funds for Northern Ireland. This committee will be responsible for promoting the strategic coordination and complementarity of ESI programmes within Northern Ireland and harmonising the interface experienced by beneficiaries of all funds as far as possible.

Responsibility for co-ordination of general EU Cohesion Policy Funding in Northern Ireland for instruments outside the European Structural and Investment Funds will be carried in part by the interdepartmental officials working group, the EU Steering Group (Working Group), chaired by DFP. This enables the ESIF programmes within the Common Strategic Framework to coordinate support with other European programmes and networks.

To ensure complementarity from the outset, the Committee has worked together to develop individual programmes in parallel to ensure that the activities funded under the individual programmes in the 2014-2020 period complement the activities proposed under the other programmes. This integrated approach to the development of all Northern Ireland EU Programmes should help maximise the impact of the limited resources available, avoid duplication and allow greater concentration/specialisation within programmes.

The Special EU Programmes Body, which is responsible for the INTERREG V and PEACE IV Programmes and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), which is responsible for the management of the EAFRD and EMFF programmes, are both represented on the EU steering group and the Consultative Partnership Group which leads the development of the programme for Growth and Jobs in Northern Ireland. In this way, complementarity with these programmes can be assured. Engagement with other Managing authorities in Northern Ireland in this way, will ensure that there will be opportunities to consider the scope for synergies in areas such as climate action or in the type of actions to be funded, as the Programmes develop. Further information on the makeup and operation of the ESI funds co-ordination committee is available at section 7.

## **Barosso Taskforce**

In May 2007 the European Commission established a Task Force to assist Northern Ireland in maximising available European funding opportunities. The Commission Task Force for Northern Ireland continues to operate for this purpose. The working group is chaired by Junior Ministers in the Office of First Minister / Deputy First Minister and currently includes four thematic working groups:

- Competitiveness and Employment;
- Innovation and Technology;
- Climate Change and Energy; and
- Social Cohesion.

## **Complementarity with DEL mainstream Provision**

Delivery of the ESF programme in Northern Ireland will complement and add value to mainstream provision. For those people with barriers to accessing employment, education or training, and who may have had negative experiences of mainstream provision, the added value from ESF funded activity lies in the flexibility afforded by providers and the ability to match provision with the particular needs of the individual.

## **The ApprenticeshipsNI Programme**

The ApprenticeshipsNI programme, which is supported by ESF funding, provides quality training in the workplace and supports off-the-job training to help build Northern Ireland's reputation as a region of highly skilled workers. As outlined in section one, DEL is currently consulting on a review of apprenticeship provision with the aim of ensuring that apprenticeships reflect the changing requirements of the Northern Ireland economy, are highly regarded by both employers and jobseekers, and offer progression pathways with equal status to academic routes.

## **Disability Employment Service**

The Disability Employment Service and the five Health and Social Care Trusts currently match fund projects throughout Northern Ireland that receive ESF support, in order to deliver training and employment services to people with disabilities.

## **Training for Success (TfS)**

This is a programme designed for young people aged 16-18 (up to 24 years for those requiring additional support) and provides a guaranteed training place to give them the tools and skills they need to get a job.

## **Youth Employment Scheme (YES)**

Announced in July 2012, in response to the major challenge of youth unemployment, YES aims to ensure that young people who are currently unemployed are provided, at

the earliest possible stage, with the skills to gain jobs, compete for jobs created in the future and retain and progress in those jobs.

## **PEACE IV and Territorial Co-operation Programmes for Northern Ireland.**

The Special EU Programmes Body manages cross-border EU Structural Funds in Northern Ireland. It is a North South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Finance in Ireland. The Northern Ireland ESF Programme has been developed in the context of the regional strategic approach to ensure complementarity of programme spending with PEACE IV.

The PEACE Programme will be primarily focussed towards those young people living in areas of disadvantage, which correlates closely with those areas most affected by the conflict. In keeping with the overall PEACE programme objectives, all interventions will have a specific focus on developing respect for diversity.

It is envisaged that all programmes of activity will be delivered on a shared basis which gives young people opportunity for sustained, purposeful interaction with others from a different background. In addition, programmes will be encouraged to include a cross-border element.

## **Avoidance of Duplication of Support**

At a regional level the SEUPB has co-ordinated the development of this programme in close consultation with the relevant authorities in Northern Ireland and Ireland who are responsible for the development of other programmes. To facilitate this process in Northern Ireland, the Department of Finance and Personnel chairs regular meetings between the respective Managing Authorities, including the SEUPB. In addition, the SEUPB attends the Consultative Partnership Group in Northern Ireland which leads the development of the programme for Growth and Jobs. In Ireland, the SEUPB is a member of the National Strategic Reference Framework Monitoring Committee that co-ordinates the development of all ESI funded programmes, including the Border Midlands and West Regional Programme. The Programme Development Steering Group for the PEACE Programmes includes representation from all the relevant national and regional bodies in the eligible region with programme planning responsibility.

All ESI funded programmes have a requirement to demonstrate focus and concentration. All programmes are based on a common list of thematic objectives, however the distinctive nature of the investment priority for the PEACE Programme ensures there is limited potential for duplication of activity. Whilst not all activities may be cross-border in nature, (Article 12 Regulation (EU) No. 1299/2013) the programme will encourage the adoption of cross-border approaches to addressing local needs. This will distinguish the programme activities from other regional programmes. Other relevant national/ regional programmes bodies and policy Departments in the eligible programme area will be consulted during project selection to ensure maximum levels of coordination with regional programmes.

The ESF funded programmes in Northern Ireland and Ireland have identified young people in need of education training and employment as a target group. The PEACE programme will co-ordinate closely with ESF funded programmes to ensure PEACE activity is additional to that provided by the ESF funded programmes. The PEACE funded initiatives will concentrate on respect for diversity and soft employment skills, with a strong focus on those individuals from the most disadvantaged areas. In this manner PEACE will complement rather than duplicate any ESF funded activity.

## **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF)**

Northern Ireland's ESF and ERDF Programmes will promote and support economic regeneration throughout the region including in urban, rural and border areas. Complementarity and coherence between actions financed by the ERDF, ESF, EMFF, EAFRD and Cross Border Co-operation Programmes will thus be ensured. The EAFRD Programme will support actions to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors, improve the environment and the countryside and improve the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy.

The EMFF policies will focus on the fishing sector, to promote sustainable and profitable development and support strong local fishing communities. The EMFF will also contribute to the effective management of the sector and be integral to wider policies for the aquatic environment. The Northern Ireland ESF Programme will not support specific sectoral activities for which other funding instruments are more appropriate.

Complementarity between ESF and EAFRD in terms of types of operations to be funded is demonstrated through the Apprenticeship programme. In developing the Government led Apprenticeship programme, the apprenticeship positions (jobs) are created by employers in line with their business needs with the off-the-job training aligned to qualifications in the apprenticeship frameworks. The current suite of apprenticeship frameworks includes a framework specifically related to Agriculture.

Apprentices must follow the relevant apprenticeship framework when completing the ApprenticeshipsNI programme – see links below.

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/education-and-learning/14-19/its-your-choice-options-after-16/apprenticeshipsni/index/information-and-services/education-and-learning/14-19/starter-skills-16-18/apprenticeships/types-of-apprenticeships/level-3-frameworks-apprenticeships](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/education-and-learning/14-19/its-your-choice-options-after-16/apprenticeshipsni/index/information-and-services/education-and-learning/14-19/starter-skills-16-18/apprenticeships/types-of-apprenticeships/level-3-frameworks-apprenticeships)

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/appni-level-3-agriculture.pdf?rev=0](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/appni-level-3-agriculture.pdf?rev=0)

The content of this framework has been agreed between the Department for Employment and Learning and Lantra – the Sectoral Skills Council for Environment and land based industries. This is the only NVQ Level 3 training in this skill acceptable for the receipt of ApprenticeshipsNI funding.

## **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**

In developing the ESF programme, DEL has worked closely with DETI, the Managing Authority for the ERDF programme to ensure maximum impact from the Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme. Complementarity exists between these two programmes in that both are concerned with supporting the aims of the NI Economic Strategy. DEL for example has identified a number of priority sectors in the local economy where its skills and training provision will be focused in keeping with the aims of the Economic Strategy. These align closely with the Smart Specialisation key sectors on which the ERDF Programme will focus.

The main companies that fall within the five identified Smart Specialisation key sectors also fall within DEL's identified priority economic sectors and DEL will target funding on these sectors through apprenticeship training. DEL will work with DETI to meet the future skills needs of the emerging sectors – the creative industries and renewable energy. In this way the ESF and ERDF programmes complement one another in promoting sectors that are of major importance in rebuilding and rebalancing the Northern Ireland economy.

## **ERASMUS+**

Erasmus+ is a competitive EU funding programme for education, training, youth and sport, which will run from 2014 – 2020. It replaces the current education, training, youth and sport programmes - the Lifelong Learning Programme, Youth in Action and other international programmes, including Jean Monnet and Erasmus Mundus - and brings them all together in one programme.

Higher Education mobility between Programme and Partner countries is a part of the Erasmus+ programme. Opportunities for student and academic mobility would fall under Key Action 1 (Learning Mobility of Individuals) which is the largest action in Erasmus+, with 63% of programme budget supporting its focus on increasing mobility and skills. All Higher Education Institutions and Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland have been awarded the new Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) which is necessary to be eligible for funding in the new programme.

With regard to the establishment of the new apprenticeship model in Northern Ireland, DEL will put in place measures to fully utilise opportunities for international placement and exchanges for apprentices by establishing links with partner countries across Europe, and beyond through the use of EU programmes, such as Erasmus+ and consider incentives for participating employers.

The Managing Authority will work closely with the UK National Agencies for the programme to stimulate links and maximise opportunities for mobility in relation to ESF funded activity, thereby building on the links developed during the 2007-2013 programming period.

## **European Investment Bank (EIB)**

As the use of financial instruments is not envisaged in the delivery of the ESF programme in Northern Ireland, the EIB will not be utilised.



## 9. Ex-Ante Conditionalities

### 9.1 Ex-ante conditionalities

Information on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities (optional).

Each of the general Ex-ante conditionalities has been fulfilled at national level, as detailed within the Partnership Agreement.

The three thematic Ex-ante conditionalities set out in Annex XI of the Common Provisions Regulation applicable to the Northern Ireland ESF Operational Programme are:

- Priority Axis 1 - Access to Employment
- Priority Axis 2 - Social Inclusion
- Priority Axis 3 - Skills for Growth

Northern Ireland will not be administering funds under the Youth Employment Initiative.

**Table 24: Applicable ex-ante conditionalities and assessment of their fulfilment**

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (Yes/No/Partially)
T.08.1 - Active labour market policies are designed and delivered in the light of the Employment guidelines.	1 - Access to Employment	Yes
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	2 - Social Inclusion	Yes
T.10.4 - The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	3 - Skills for Growth	Yes

**Table 24: Applicable ex-ante conditionalities and assessment of their fulfilment**

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.08.1 - Active labour market policies are designed and delivered in the light of the Employment guidelines.	1 - Employment services have the capacity to, and do, deliver: personalised services and active and preventive labour market measures at an early stage, which are open to all jobseekers while focusing on people at highest risk of social exclusion, including people from marginalised communities;	Yes	Employment Service Advisers deliver a tailored client-focused service which includes work readiness assessments, job preparation and search activities. Advisers also refer clients to specialist provision when appropriate.  The recently developed Youth Employment Scheme (YES), specifically targets the 18 - 24 year old age group.  Steps to Work is the main Adult return to work programme with specific strands for 18-24 yr olds and 50 year olds and over.	
T.08.1 - Active labour market policies are designed and delivered in the light of the Employment guidelines.	2 - Employment services have the capacity to, and do, deliver: comprehensive and transparent information on new job vacancies and employment opportunities taking into account the changing needs of the labour market.	Yes	In addition to the personal service provided, Kiosks are available in all offices which provide up to date information on job opportunities in NI and throughout Europe and Employment Service staff review job search activity with clients every two weeks.	
T.08.1 - Active labour market policies are designed and delivered in the light of the Employment guidelines.	3 - Employment services have set up formal or informal cooperation arrangements with relevant stakeholders.	Yes	Additional information on DEL's Services, covering all of the "detailed requirements" listed can be accessed via the following link.  <a href="http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/finding-employment-finding-staff">www.delni.gov.uk/index/finding-employment-finding-staff</a> .	
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	1 - A national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction, aiming at active inclusion, is in place that:	Yes	The Delivering Social Change framework (2012) was set up by the NI Executive to tackle poverty and social exclusion. It seeks to coordinate key actions across Government to take forward work on priority social policy areas. It aims to deliver a sustained reduction in poverty and associated issues across all ages and to secure an improvement in children and young people's health, well being and life opportunities thereby breaking the long term cycle of multi-generational problems.	
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	2 - provides a sufficient evidence base to develop policies for poverty reduction and monitor developments;	Yes	Full detail of the Delivering social change agenda can be accessed via the following link <a href="http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/delivering-social-change">www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/delivering-social-change</a>	
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	3 - contains measures supporting the achievement of the national poverty and social exclusion target (as defined in the National Reform Programme), which includes the promotion of sustainable and quality employment opportunities for people at the highest risk of social exclusion, including people from marginalised communities;	Yes	Full details available by following the link <a href="http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/delivering-social-change">www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/delivering-social-change</a>	



**Table 24: Applicable ex-ante conditionalities and assessment of their fulfilment**

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	4 - involves relevant stakeholders in combating poverty;	Yes	Full details available by following the link <a href="http://www.ofmndfmi.gov.uk/delivering-social-change">www.ofmndfmi.gov.uk/delivering-social-change</a>	
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	5 - depending on the identified needs, includes measures for the shift from institutional to community based care;	Yes	Full details available by following the link <a href="http://www.ofmndfmi.gov.uk/delivering-social-change">www.ofmndfmi.gov.uk/delivering-social-change</a>	
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	6 - Upon request and where justified, relevant stakeholders will be provided with support for submitting project applications and for implementing and managing the selected projects.	Yes	Full details available by following the link <a href="http://www.ofmndfmi.gov.uk/delivering-social-change">www.ofmndfmi.gov.uk/delivering-social-change</a>	
T.10.4 - The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	1 - A national or regional strategic policy framework is in place for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU which includes measures for the following:	Yes	The following link contains information on Northern Ireland's approach to LLL and skills development relevant to economic need. <a href="http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-successsthroughskills/skills-strategy-ni.htm">http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-successsthroughskills/skills-strategy-ni.htm</a>	
T.10.4 - The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	2 - to improve the labour market relevance of VET systems in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the strengthening of work-based learning provision in its different forms;	Yes	The following link contains information on Northern Ireland's approach to LLL and skills development relevant to economic need. <a href="http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-successsthroughskills/skills-strategy-ni.htm">http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-successsthroughskills/skills-strategy-ni.htm</a> Department for Employment and Learning	
T.10.4 - The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	3 - to increase the quality and attractiveness of VET including through establishing a national approach for quality assurance for VET (for example in line with the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training) and implementing the transparency and recognition tools, for example European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training. (ECVET).		The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), on behalf of DEL, is involved in the implementation of several of the European initiatives to support lifelong learning and mobility. Further information and guidance materials on the initiatives can be found at the following link: <a href="http://www.rewardinglearning.org">www.rewardinglearning.org</a>	

## General Conditionalities 1-7

General Applicable Ex-ante Conditionality for which national bodies are responsible	Conditionality fulfilled: (Yes/ No/ Partially)	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled Yes/no	Reference (if fulfilled) (reference to the strategies, legal acts or other relevant documents incl. reference to relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by a weblink or other access to the full text)	Explanation (where appropriate)
<p>1. Antidiscrimination</p> <p>The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union antidiscrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds</p>	Yes	<p>Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on equality in ESI fund related activities.</p>	Yes	<p>Details for the UK Equality Act 2010 can be found through the following link: <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/">http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/</a> explains the work of the EHRC</p> <p>The principle of Equality in Northern Ireland law is set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:</p> <p><a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75</a></p>	<p>The legislative framework for all equalities (Anti-discrimination, gender and disability) are contained in the UK Equality Act 2010 which is applicable in Great Britain.</p> <p>The Equality &amp; Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was formed in 2007 and fully complies with Article 13 of Directive 2000/43/EC.</p> <p>Northern Ireland has its own legislation</p>
		<p>Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union antidiscrimination law and policy.</p>	Yes	<p>NI is committed to meeting this objective.</p> <p>The principle of Equality is already embedded in Northern Ireland law and policy. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity across the full range of equalities.</p> <p>This act established an Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. All NI Departments are required to publish their Equality policies and to report annually to the Equality Commission on their implementation</p> <p>Generic training within the Northern Ireland Civil Service continues to be delivered by the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) which offers a number of equality-related training courses, including courses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Conducting an EQIA</li> <li>• Screening of Policies</li> <li>• Consultation Processes in Northern Ireland</li> </ul> <p>In addition to generic training on offer, CAL works with departments/business areas within the Northern Ireland Civil Service to contextualise any aspect of Equality training.</p>	<p>All UK Managing Authorities will ensure that arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union antidiscrimination law and policy will be put in place.</p>

## General Conditionalities 1-7

General Applicable Ex-ante Conditionality for which national bodies are responsible	Conditionality fulfilled: (Yes/ No/ Partially)	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled Yes/no	Reference (if fulfilled) (reference to the strategies, legal acts or other relevant documents incl. reference to relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by a weblink or other access to the full text)	Explanation (where appropriate)
<p>2. Gender</p> <p>The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds</p>	Yes	<p>Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for gender equality throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on gender equality in ESI Fund-related activities</p> <p>– Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union gender equality law and policy as well as on gender mainstreaming.</p>	Yes	<p>Details for the UK Equality Act 2010 can be found through the following link: <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/15/content">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/15/content</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/">http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/</a> explains the work of the EHRC</p> <p>The principle of Equality in Northern Ireland law is set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75</a></p>	<p>The legislative framework for all equalities (anti-discrimination, gender and disability) are contained in the Equality Act 2010 which is applicable across the UK.</p> <p>The Equality &amp; Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was formed in 2007 and fully complies with Article 13 of Directive 2000/43/EC.</p> <p>Northern Ireland has its own legislation</p>
			Yes	<p>Northern Ireland is committed to meeting this objective.</p> <p>The principle of Equality is already embedded in Northern Ireland law and policy. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity across the full range of equalities.</p> <p>This act established an Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. All NI Departments are required to publish their Equality policies and to report annually to the Equality Commission on their implementation</p> <p>Generic training within the Northern Ireland Civil Service continues to be delivered by the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) which offers a number of equality-related training courses, including courses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Conducting an EQIA</li> <li>• Screening of Policies</li> <li>• Consultation Processes in Northern Ireland</li> </ul> <p>In addition to generic training on offer, CAL works with departments/business areas within the Northern Ireland Civil Service to contextualise any aspect of Equality training.</p>	<p>All UK Managing Authorities will ensure that arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union gender equality law and policy as well as on gender mainstreaming will be put in place.</p>

## General Conditionality 1-7

General Applicable Ex-ante Conditionality for which national bodies are responsible	Conditionality fulfilled: (Yes/ No/ Partially)	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled Yes/no	Reference (if fulfilled) (reference to the strategies, legal acts or other relevant documents incl. reference to relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by a weblink or other access to the full text)	Explanation (where appropriate)
<p><b>3. Disability</b></p> <p><b>The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with the Council decision 2010/48/ECF<sup>1</sup></b></p>	Yes	<p>Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the consultation and involvement of bodies in charge of protection of rights of persons with disabilities or representative organisations of persons with disabilities and other relevant stakeholders throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes</p>	Yes	<p>Details for the UK Equality Act 2010 can be found through the following link: <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/">http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/</a> explains the work of the EHRC</p> <p>The principle of Equality in Northern Ireland law is set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75</a></p>	<p>The legislative framework for all equalities (anti-discrimination, gender and disability) are contained in the UK Equality Act 2010 which is applicable across the UK.</p> <p>The Equality &amp; Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was formed in 2007 and fully complies with Article 13 of Directive 2000/43/EC.</p> <p>Northern Ireland has its own legislation</p>
		<p>Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of applicable Union and national disability law and policy, including accessibility and the practical application of the UNCRPD as reflected in EU and national legislation, as appropriate</p>	Yes	<p>Northern Ireland is committed to meeting this objective.</p> <p>The principle of Equality is already embedded in Northern Ireland law and policy. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity across the full range of equalities.</p> <p>This act established an Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. All NI Departments are required to publish their Equality policies and to report annually to the Equality Commission on their implementation</p> <p>Generic training within the Northern Ireland Civil Service continues to be delivered by the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) which offers a number of equality-related training courses, including courses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Conducting an EQIA</li> <li>• Screening of Policies</li> <li>• Consultation Processes in Northern Ireland</li> </ul> <p>In addition to generic training on offer, CAL works with departments/business areas within the Northern Ireland Civil Service to contextualise any aspect of Equality training.</p>	<p>The legislative framework for all equalities (anti-discrimination, gender and disability) are contained in the UK Equality Act 2010 which is applicable in Great Britain.</p> <p>The Equality &amp; Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was formed in 2007 and fully complies with Article 13 of Directive 2000/43/EC.</p> <p>Northern Ireland has its own legislation</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/creating-a-fairer-and-more-equal-society/supporting-pages/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-disabled-people">https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/creating-a-fairer-and-more-equal-society/supporting-pages/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-disabled-people</a></p> <p>- Details the UN Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other Office for Disabilities Issues (ODI) guidance.</p> <p>DWP are responsible for collating and providing contributions for inclusion with the UK Government reports to all UN Conventions and Covenants.</p>

## General Conditionalities 1-7

General Applicable Ex-ante Conditionality for which national bodies are responsible	Conditionality fulfilled: (Yes/ No/ Partially)	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled Yes/no	Reference (if fulfilled) (reference to the strategies, legal acts or other relevant documents incl. reference to relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by a weblink or other access to the full text)	Explanation (where appropriate)
		<p>Arrangements to ensure monitoring of the implementation of Article 9 of the UNCRRPD in relation to the ESI Funds throughout the preparation and the implementation of the programmes.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Northern Ireland is committed to meeting this objective.</p> <p><a href="http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Delivering%20Equality/IMNI_CRPD_ParallelJurisdictionalReport_WorkingPaper_v1_080714.pdf">http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Delivering%20Equality/IMNI_CRPD_ParallelJurisdictionalReport_WorkingPaper_v1_080714.pdf</a> -</p> <p>A working paper has been drafted jointly by The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in furtherance of their role as the "Independent Mechanism" in Northern Ireland to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRRPD).</p> <p>Generic training within the Northern Ireland Civil Service continues to be delivered by the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) which offers a number of equality-related training courses, including courses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Conducting an EQIA</li> <li>• Screening of Policies</li> <li>• Consultation Processes in Northern Ireland</li> </ul> <p>In addition to generic training on offer, CAL works with departments/business areas within the Northern Ireland Civil Service to contextualise any aspect of Equality training.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/345120/uk-initial-report.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/345120/uk-initial-report.pdf</a> - Details the UN Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other Office for Disabilities Issues (ODI) guidance.</p> <p>DWP are responsible for collating and providing contributions for inclusion with the UK Government reports to all UN Conventions and Covenants.</p>

## General Conditionalities 1-7

General Applicable Ex-ante Conditionality for which national bodies are responsible	Conditionality fulfilled: (Yes/ No/ Partially)	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled Yes/no	Reference (if fulfilled) (reference to the strategies, legal acts or other relevant documents incl. reference to relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by a weblink or other access to the full text)	Explanation (where appropriate)
<p><b>4. Public Procurement</b></p> <p><b>The existence of arrangements for the effective application of EU public procurement law in the field of the CSF Funds.</b></p>	Yes	<p>Arrangements for the effective application of EU public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms;</p> <p>Arrangements which ensure transparent contract award procedures;</p> <p>Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds</p> <p>Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union public procurement rules</p>	Yes	<p>Public procurement policy in Northern Ireland is set by the Northern Ireland Executive. The Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy (NI PPP) sets out the policies adopted by the Executive and the organisational structures that have been established to implement them.</p> <p>The Procurement Board reports to the Executive and is accountable to the NI Assembly. The Board oversees the development and implementation of overarching policy and is supported in this activity by the Central Procurement Directorate</p> <p>(CPD) and the other Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs).</p> <p>Procurement Guidance Notes (PGNs) are the administrative means by which the NI Public Sector is advised of procurement policy and best practice developments.</p> <p>Bodies subject to NI PPP are required to follow the best practice set out in the PGNs. They must also conduct their procurement via Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with the relevant CoPE.</p> <p>CoPEs undergo periodic accreditation to ensure they are applying good practice procurement in support of the NI Executive's key priorities. The last accreditation took place in 2013</p> <p>The Head of Procurement for each CoPE is responsible for ensuring that the organisation's governance arrangements comply with NI PPP, legislation and best practice guidance (PGNs). This will be assessed during CoPE reaccreditation.</p> <p>The accreditation process assesses the ability of CoPEs to demonstrate that the procurement process is controlled by an adequate resource of qualified procurement/construction professionals.</p>	

## General Conditionalities 1-7

General Applicable Ex-ante Conditionality for which national bodies are responsible	Conditionality fulfilled: (Yes/ No/ Partially)	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled Yes/no	Reference (if fulfilled) (reference to the strategies, legal acts or other relevant documents incl. reference to relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by a weblink or other access to the full text)	Explanation (where appropriate)
<p><b>5. State aid</b></p> <p><b>The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union state aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.</b></p>		<p>Arrangements for the effective application of Union state aid rules;</p> <p>Arrangements for the training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds;</p> <p>Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union State aid rules.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Any public support under the Investment for Growth and Jobs programme must comply with the procedural and material EC State Aid rules applicable at the point of time when the public support is granted. The Member State, and in particular the Managing and Certifying Authority, are responsible for ensuring compliance with State Aid rules of all Structural Funds operations within the programme.</p> <p>In planning for and developing the Investment for Growth and Jobs programme, the intermediate bodies will be responsible for ensuring any State aid in projects, programmes or measures is identified and, when present, the Managing Authority will ensure the intermediate body has the necessary Commission approval, either by ensuring that the State aid complies fully with an existing approved scheme or a block exemption or by ensuring the aid is separately notified. This will be confirmed when the project, programme or measure is adopted / designated into the programme.</p> <p>Within Northern Ireland, DETI's European Support Unit has responsibility for providing advice and assistance to staff in the Member State, Managing Authority, Certifying Authority, Audit Authority and intermediate bodies on the 'industrial' State aid rules. When necessary, DETI's European Support Unit will also provide 'one to one' advice and assistance to ensure any State aid issues are addressed.</p> <p>Building on the experience gained during the existing programme, the Member State will also ensure that all staff in the Managing Authority, Certifying Authority, Audit Authority and intermediate bodies have a basic understanding and awareness of the State aid rules and, when necessary, that staff are signposted to appropriate training, which may be internal or external, and information.</p>	

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General Applicable Ex-ante Conditionality for which national bodies are responsible	Conditionality fulfilled: (Yes/ No/ Partially)	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled Yes/no	Reference (if fulfilled) (reference to the strategies, legal acts or other relevant documents incl. reference to relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by a weblink or other access to the full text)	Explanation (where appropriate)
<p><b>6. Environmental legislation relating to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</b></p> <p><b>The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA.</b></p>	Partially	<p>Arrangements for the effective application of EIA and SEA Directives; Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of EIA and SEA Directives; Arrangements to ensure sufficient administrative capacity.</p>	Yes	<p>NIEA webpage provides details of SEA Directives and associated Regulations; "Practical guide to the SEA Process(ODIPM Guide),Services and Standards for Responsible Authorities, SNIFFER Guidance.</p>	<p>In accordance with Statutory Rule 2004 No 28, on the environmental assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland), a determination of whether the Northern Ireland ESF Programme is likely to have significant environmental effects was conducted and a screening report was passed for consultation to Northern Ireland's designated consultation body, the Department of the Environment's Environment and Heritage Service.</p> <p>The Environment and Heritage Service responded and agreed with the Department's assessment that the ESF Programme should be screened out as there are no significant effects on the environment. A full environmental assessment was not therefore required. A copy of the screening decision can be found on the Department's website.</p>



## General Conditionalities 1-7

General Applicable Ex-ante Conditionality for which national bodies are responsible	Conditionality fulfilled: (Yes/ No/ Partially)	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled Yes/no	Reference (if fulfilled) (reference to the strategies, legal acts or other relevant documents incl. reference to relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by a weblink or other access to the full text)	Explanation (where appropriate)
<p><b>7. Statistical systems and result Indicators</b></p> <p>The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes.</p> <p>The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.</p>		<p>Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements is in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the identification of sources and mechanisms to ensure statistical validation;</li> <li>- arrangements for publication and public availability of aggregated data;</li> <li>an effective system of result indicators including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the selection of result indicators for each programme providing information on what motivates the selection of policy actions</li> <li>Financed by the programme;</li> <li>- the establishment of targets for these indicators;</li> <li>- the respect for each indicator of the following requisites: robustness and statistical validation, clarity of normative interpretation, responsiveness to policy, timely collection of data;</li> <li>- procedures in place to ensure that all operations financed by the programme adopt an effective system of indicators.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>The identification and selection of appropriate indicators, including the statistical basis for programme monitoring and evaluation, is a key component in the development and drafting of the 2014-2020 Programme, as well as in the Ex-Ante Evaluation of the proposed programme.</p> <p>The region has a strong statistical system based on both sample surveys and administrative data. Key statistics that may be relevant to the monitoring and evaluation of these programmes are routinely provided by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and, as appropriate, are submitted to the National Statistics Institute (the UK Office for National Statistics) and onwards to Eurostat. <a href="http://www.nisra.gov.uk">www.nisra.gov.uk</a></p> <p>The Programme contains a system of indicators and targets based on statistical data produced in consultation with relevant business areas within the department and NISRA.</p> <p>A system is in place to ensure timely collection of data from project providers and will be reported annually.</p> <p>An enhanced data collection system is currently under development and will be in use during 2015. The new EU database will enable the collection, storage and use of individual micro data for each participant. This will ensure conformity with article 125(2), of the Common Provisions Regulation and the guidance for ESF monitoring and evaluation.</p>	<p>Amendments have been made to the Performance framework following advice from NISRA and the Commission observations.</p>

## **9.2 Description of actions to fulfil ex-ante conditionalities (as above)**

### **Table 25: Actions to fulfil applicable general ex-ante conditionalities (as above)**

None (Conditionalities fulfilled).

### **Table 26: Actions to fulfil applicable thematic ex-ante conditionalities (as above)**

None (Conditionalities fulfilled).





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## 10. Reduction of Administrative Burden for Beneficiaries

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Summary of the assessment of the administrative burden for beneficiaries and, where necessary, the actions planned, accompanied by an indicative timeframe to reduce administrative burden.

The objective of the Northern Ireland Authorities is, where possible, to reduce the administrative burden associated with receiving ESF funding. Whilst the ESF Promoters' Operating Manual provides general guidance on how to manage ESF Funds, there are 3 main contributing factors which will reduce this burden.

### IT System

The administration burden of the 2007 – 13 Programmes was greatly reduced by the introduction of Systems 2007, a computer system designed to underpin the management of all European Union funding programmes in Northern Ireland for the period 2007-2013. Systems 2007 enabled beneficiaries to register an application for a Structural Fund grant and use the system to create and submit claims for payment direct to the ESF Managing Authority via a public website. This on line claims process enabled the designated Project Officer to conduct an earlier verification visit which in turn resulted in a more streamlined, efficient and rapid payment method which expedited actual payment to the beneficiary. The Systems 2007 model also supported all aspects of the information process and allowed for the Managing Authority to input all associated data.

The European Division (EUD) of the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) currently co-ordinates the management of all European Union Structural Funds programmes in Northern Ireland. EUD intends to build upon and further enhance the computer system mechanisms in place to provide a common management and control framework for the new European Union funding programmes in Northern Ireland 2014-2020. While Northern Ireland has made progress towards electronic data exchange, communication with beneficiaries is still mainly paper based.

The introduction of a new advanced database for the EU funding programmes in Northern Ireland during 2015 will further enhance the application process, with the application in its entirety being made through the system. This will reduce the administration burden for both applicants and the Managing Authority. The new database will also allow for the uploading of additional documents required at the application stage and throughout the programme, reducing paperwork further.

In addition, the new EU database will enable the collection, storage and use of individual micro data for each participant. This will ensure conformity with article 125(2), of the Common Provisions Regulation and the guidance for ESF monitoring and evaluation.

E-cohesion is a requirement introduced by Article 112(3) of the draft Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), according to which all Member States and programmes need to establish, by the end of 2014, an electronic data exchange system which will provide

a synchronised approach. Such a system will allow beneficiaries to communicate with programme authorities only electronically. It is hoped that, through e-cohesion, the new database will be able to “communicate” with other IT systems in operation, allowing for further reductions in paperwork and a reduction in duplication of work.

## Simplification

Indirect costs on a flat rate basis of 20% were introduced by the ESF Managing Authority in 2013 to simplify ESF arrangements. Previously, apportioned costs for overheads /central services etc. were submitted with each claim and based on actual costs supported by the relevant receipts/invoices for the claims and audit trail processes. Experience from the first 4 years of the 2007 - 2013 ESF programme had shown that the justification of indirect costs constituted a high level of risk and in turn produced a significant increase in audit error rates and a disproportionate administrative burden for the ESF Managing and Audit Authorities and ESF projects. The introduction of the simplification model reduced this burden mainly associated with financial management, control and audit, both for the beneficiaries and ESF Managing and Audit Authorities and contributed to a more efficient and correct use of ESF funding. It also brought a reduction in error rates and enabled ESF financial claims to be processed more efficiently and beneficiaries to manage cash flow better.

The European Commission values the simplification model in the 2014 – 2020 Programme as it is needed to ensure the smooth delivery of the cohesion policy and continued interest of beneficiaries. It will have a positive impact on the results of the Programme by ensuring an efficient distribution of administrative efforts required at national, regional and EU levels, cutting the time and costs of reaching the objectives and allowing a greater focus on results. Most of the expenditure supported within an ESF project relates to staff costs, which are at the heart of ESF. As a consequence, Northern Ireland intends to implement the Commission’s proposal for all non government projects by adopting the 40 % flat rate of salary costs only for indirect costs. This rate is established by Council regulation 1304/13 Article 14.2, and therefore does not have to be justified for use by national authorities. Potential non government projects funded under the ESF 2014 – 2020 will not be exposed to financial audits at the same level as under the 2007-13 programme, which will therefore reduce the administrative burden for all associated bodies. This simplification approach also eliminates the ambiguity surrounding the definition of indirect costs and in several cases will bring about a direct reduction in administrative costs.

For government projects<sup>28</sup> the simplification costs options cannot be applied as these projects were subject to public procurement - Council regulation 1304/13 Article 67.4 refers. Beneficiaries will be reimbursed eligible costs actually incurred and paid on the project under Article 67.1(a).

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28 Relates to all of Priority 3

## **Document Retention**

Under the 2007 – 2013 programme beneficiaries had to maintain and keep safely all original records, financial and otherwise. Whilst the European Commission regulations allowed for original documents to be retained electronically by storing them on a recognised data carrier or by microfiche, National Authorities' legal requirements did not permit this for audit purposes. Beneficiaries had therefore to maintain all original documentation in paper copy.

In the 2014-2020 programming period, it is anticipated that National Authority regulation will be amended to allow harmonisation between European Commission and National Authorities regulations regarding the storage of electronic documents. ESF beneficiaries will benefit from a reduction in administration and cost if this measure is implemented.





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## 11. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

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### 11.1 Sustainable development

Description of specific actions to take into account environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management, in the selection of operations.

The Northern Ireland ESF Programme will operate within the context of the EU's Sustainable Development Strategy 2006 and the review of that strategy, completed in 2009.

The NI ESF programme will also take into account the commitments contained in "Everyone's Involved – the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy," This strategy recognises that "superior sustainability performance can lead to real economic benefits for everyone and approaches which assess the full value of sustainability are needed for sustainability thinking to be successfully integrated into decision making." The Northern Ireland ESF Programme will be targeted and implemented in a manner that promotes sustainable development and creates sustainable communities and will observe the six guiding principles of the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy, which are:

- **Living within environment limits**

Respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity – to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.

- **Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society**

Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion; and creating equal opportunity for all.

- **Achieving a sustainable economy**

Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy that provides prosperity and opportunities for all, in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays) and efficient resource use is incentivised.

- **Promoting good governance**

Actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society – engaging people's creativity, energy and diversity.

- **Using sound science responsibly**

Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, whilst taking into account scientific uncertainty as well as public attitudes and values.

- **Promoting opportunity and innovation**

Innovation is the successful exploitation of new ideas; incorporating new technologies, design and best practice. Opportunities lie in the development of new markets in environmental technologies and other sustainable development related areas/fields.

The Northern Ireland ESF programme will make a particular contribution to the first two priority areas for action within that strategy, which are:

- building a dynamic, innovative economy that delivers the prosperity required to tackle disadvantage and lift communities out of poverty;
- strengthening society so that it is more tolerant, inclusive and stable and permits positive progress in quality of life for everyone.

Sustainable development has been one of the cross cutting themes of the NI ESF Programme 2007-2013, and much progress has been made in terms of activities such as the review of strategic environmental assessments, alignment of programme indicators with UK and wider EU sustainability indicators, and co-ordination of a sustainability survey.

The midterm evaluation of the 2007-2013 programme raised a number of questions in relation to the Developmental Path Analysis (DPA), a tool adopted by the Managing Authorities to monitor environmental impact of the programmes. In particular its findings indicated that further work could be done in the application of Development Path Analysis (DPA) allocations. One of the many strengths of DPA is that it focuses people to think about transforming the way we behave, it encourages people to do more than meet minimum regulations; it can encourage people to undertake activities that will do more to protect and enhance the environment at the same time as they contribute to economic development and enhancing competitiveness and employment. Work will continue on improving the application of DPA in the new programme.

## **Strategic Environmental assessment**

In accordance with Statutory Rule 2004 No 28, on the environmental assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland), a determination of whether the Northern Ireland ESF Programme is likely to have significant environmental effects was conducted and a screening report was passed for consultation to Northern Ireland's designated consultation body, the Department of the Environment's Environment and Heritage Service.

The Environment and Heritage Service responded and agreed with the Department's assessment that the ESF Programme should be screened out as there are no significant effects on the environment. A full environmental assessment was not therefore required. A copy of the screening decision can be found on the Department's website.

It should be noted that the result of the assessment of the fulfilment of the general ex-ante conditionality regarding environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA) legislation is without prejudice to the obligation to implement the CJEU judgement of 13 February 2014 (case (C-530/11) Commission v. UK).

## **11.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination**

Description of specific actions to promote equal opportunities and prevent discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the operational programme and in particular in relation to access to funding, taking account of the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination and in particular the requirements for ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities.

### **Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998**

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Northern Ireland ESF programme and all its activities are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

Section 75 is a mainstreaming approach to equality in that it makes equality central to the whole range of public policy making in Northern Ireland. The statutory duties are complementary but additional to other UK and EU equality legislation or directives. Without prejudice to the above obligations, the Northern Ireland ESF Programme is also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The ESF programme has been developed in line with Section 75 requirements. Policies on which the ESF programme is based have been subject to equality impact assessment as a normal part of the policy development process. The programme itself has been screened for equality implications and has been found to be compliant with the requirements of the Section 75 legislation.

### 11.3 Equality between men and women

Description of contribution of the operational programme to the promotion of equality between men and women and, where appropriate, the arrangements to ensure the integration of the gender perspective at operational programme and operation level.

The Northern Ireland ESF programme will operate within the framework of EU and regional legislation on non-discrimination, gender equality and equal opportunities. The programme will be compliant with and supportive of the Women's Charter (2010) and will contribute to a number of thematic priorities contained in the Strategy for Equality between Men and Women 2010-2015. This strategy builds on the experience of the Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men (2006). Of particular relevance in the new strategy is priority one, equal economic independence. Through the ESF programme we will therefore help and support more women to access the labour market, thereby addressing this important priority.

The Programme will adopt a dual approach to gender equality and promoting equal opportunities. The Programme may fund specific activities which target women and other disadvantaged groups such as people with a disability, lone parents, ex-offenders, and will integrate equal opportunities into every stage of the programme as a whole. Equality considerations will be integrated into:

- the programme design and development (for example, through support with childcare for programme participants);
- promotion of the programme;
- the application/procurement process;
- monitoring; and
- evaluation.

All eligible applicants for support under the Northern Ireland ESF Programme will be afforded equal opportunities to access funding. Where a particular need has been identified, for example, the high percentage of lone parents who are economically inactive, Projects may provide training specifically for the particular target group. Equality of participation in the Programme Monitoring Committee, working groups and selection panels shall be encouraged in accordance with the provisions of the regulations. The implementation and delivery of the ESF Programme will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that the Department for Employment and Learning's Section 75 duties and commitment to mainstream equality are met. The ESF Programme's participation or take-up rates will be monitored annually to identify any participation or take-up rates which are lower than expected, and their causes.

The Department plans and oversees a rolling programme of evaluations (updated annually) which ensures that labour market programmes and services are evaluated every five years. Equality issues are treated as an integral part of each evaluation. The ESF Programme will be included in the Department's rolling programme and it will have its own evaluation strategy that will include at least two evaluations during its lifespan. Equal opportunities, non discrimination and equality between men and women will be examined as part of the evaluation work.

The Northern Ireland ESF Programme Monitoring Committee will be invited to establish an Equality Working Group to monitor and advise the Monitoring Committee on equal opportunities and gender equality issues. The Equality Working Group will take into account the work of the Equality Working Group established under the Community Support Framework 2007-2013 and the findings of the mid-term evaluation of that programme.

In addition to the above, the Equality Working Group issued new equality guides for use by groups applying for funding, selection panels which assess project applications and for implementing bodies responsible for distributing EU Structural Funds. These guides will be updated to support delivery of the new programme.



## 12. SEPARATE ELEMENTS

### Performance Framework of Operational Programme

**Table 28: Performance framework by fund and category of region (summary table)**

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018		Final target (2023)	
						Total		Total
1 - Access to Employment	ESF	Transition	unemployed, including long-term unemployed	Number	10,500		28,000	
1 - Access to Employment	ESF	Transition	inactive	Number	4,500		12,000	
1 - Access to Employment	ESF	Transition	Expenditure	Euros	62,706,033		146,314,077	
1 - Access to Employment	ESF	Transition	Participants not in education, training or employment aged 16-24	Number of participants	9,350		25,000	
2 - Social Inclusion	ESF	Transition	participants with disabilities	Number	4,850		13,000	
2 - Social Inclusion	ESF	Transition	Expenditure	Euros	66,006,350		154,014,817	
2 - Social Inclusion	ESF	Transition	Targeted families	Number of families	1,550		4,200	
2 - Social Inclusion	ESF	Transition	NEET participants aged 16+ within families receiving Community Family Support (CFSP)	Number of participants	4,700		12,600	
3 - Skills for Growth	ESF	Transition	Expenditure	Euros	88,008,467		205,353,090	
3 - Skills for Growth	ESF	Transition	Employed participants aged 16 and over working towards an apprenticeship	Number of participants	15,750		42,000	

## Relevant partners involved in preparation of programme

The following is a list of partners involved in the preparation of the Northern Ireland ESF Operational programme.

SECTOR	Number of Reprs.	ORGANISATION
Local Government	5	Northern Ireland Local Government Association(NILGA)
Environment	1	Council for Nature Conservation and Countryside (CNCC)
Equality	1	Equality Commission
Education	1	Colleges NI
Queens University	1	Queens University
University of Ulster	1	University of Ulster
Voluntary and community	1	Northern Ireland Community and Voluntary Association(NICVA)
Trades Unions	1	Irish Council of Trades Unions (ICTU)
Business	2	Confederation of British Industry(CBI) Institute of Directors(IOD) Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce(NICC)
Agri-rural	1	Ulster Farmers Union
Energy	1	Confederation of British Industry(CBI)



## List of Common Indicators required for reporting purposes

<b>ESF 2014 - 2020 COMMON INDICATORS FOR PARTICIPANTS</b>	
<b>Common Output Indicators</b>	1 unemployed, including long-term unemployed
	2 long-term unemployed
	3 inactive
	4 inactive, not in education or training
	5 employed, including self-employed
	6 below 25 years of age
	7 above 54 years of age
	8 above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long-term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training
	9 with primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)
	10 with upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4)
	11 with tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)
	12 participants who live in jobless households
	13 participants who live in jobless households with dependent children
	14 participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children
	15 migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)
	16 participants with disabilities
	17 other disadvantaged
	18 homeless or affected by housing exclusion
	19 from rural areas
<b>Common Immediate Result Indicators</b>	18 inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving
	19 participants in education/training upon leaving
	20 participants gaining a qualification upon leaving
	21 participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
<b>Common Long-term Result Indicators</b>	22 disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
	23 participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving
	24 participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving
	25 participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving
	26 disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving

## **ESF 2014 - 2020 COMMON INDICATORS FOR ENTITIES**

### **Common Indicators**

- 1 number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-government organisations
- 2 number of projects dedicated to sustainable participation and progress of women in employment
- 3 number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level
- 4 number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)

**Further Information:**

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**The Department:**

Our aim is to promote learning and skills, to prepare people for work and to support the economy.

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