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# **Evaluation Of The Higher Education Regional Development Fund**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Introduction**

This report presents the findings from the first year of the national evaluation of the Higher Education Regional Development Fund (HERDF). The aims of the study were to identify how, and in what ways, HERDF is:

- engaging HE more systematically in supporting economic growth and competitiveness in Government Office Regions; and
- enhancing the HE sector's contribution to the effective functioning of local and regional labour markets.

HERDF provided a £2.72 million funding envelope to Government Offices (GO) in England to support a series of regional development projects involving collaboration and partnerships between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and other economic actors, for example, TECs, Business Links and employers. Each GO was invited to tailor HERDF to reflect regional and local needs and other themes they had developed. As a result, GOs determined regional aims and objectives for HERDF in different ways, based on their previous linkages with HEIs and/or HEI/TEC networks and the aims and objectives of Regional Competitiveness Frameworks and Education Strategies. In essence, HERDF has been implemented strategically and complements other regional activities.

Close examination of the projects at the regional level has identified that while they are diverse in their responsiveness to particular regional, local or institutional issues, they address common problems and issues which are interpreted and articulated in slightly different ways. Five key themes have been identified to classify project activity and concern issues of:

- labour supply - upskilling to accommodate the needs of business;
- labour demand - assisting businesses to benefit from HE;
- curriculum development and the accreditation of key and vocational skills;
- information gathering, research and development;
- the development of strategic partnerships/networking and multi-agency approaches.

It is important to recognise that the projects supported by GOs often cut across these themes. Importantly though, the principle of partnership underpins all of the activities supported. The form of the partnerships established and ownership varies considerably across the projects although, in general, the partnerships comprise 3-5 organisations which tend to include HEIs; TECs/Chambers of Commerce, Training and Enterprise; Business Links; and/or employers (both large and SMEs).

54 projects have been supported by HERDF during 1997-98 with an average project funding of £50,990. The average intervention rate of HERDF funding as a proportion of total project funding was 55%. In-kind contributions have been significant in supporting project activity including staff time (across project partners), administrative support and overheads. Some projects levered in additional funding from other sources including TECs, internal HEI funding, the HEED National Development Prospectus, Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Some projects are continuing with funding under HERDF Round 2. Objective 4 (European Social Fund [ESF]) provides a further opportunity to sustain projects/project activities;



## Impact of HERDF

The impact of HERDF has been assessed at a number of levels:

- the impact on individuals and employers;
- the impact of products and services; and
- institutional impact and new systems established.

The impact of HERDF has been greatest at the level of the individual and the employer and early indications are that more than 900 individuals and 200 companies have accessed HERDF funded products and services.

At least 347 individuals have seen an increase in their core skills and 387 have completed work experience through participating in HERDF. So far, 50 individuals have gained a new job as a result of HERDF and a further 199 have received job offers from placement providers. Forty two individuals have gained a qualification.

The most significant impact of HERDF on employers is the development of sustainable linkages, partnerships and collaboration between HEIs and employers. At the present time linkages have been established with 832 employers. In addition, 106 companies used their involvement with HERDF to recruit graduate labour and 38 employers have used it as an impetus to review other training needs. While the numbers are fairly small, it is important to recognise that for, albeit a few employers, tangible, 'bottom line' business benefits have been derived from participating in HERDF.

A wide range of products targeting employers and individuals have been developed with HERDF monies including training products, materials for profiling skills and accrediting prior learning, paper and computer-based reference materials and promotional materials. Whilst these are replicable and transferable to other sectors and regions, the full extent of their potential impact is yet to be realised. Replicability can involve most, or specific features of, an existing tested product. HERDF projects have also developed a range of services including advisory services, skills profiling and the identification of training needs, matching services and mentoring which, again, can be replicated in other areas.

At an institutional level, the impact of HERDF within HEIs relates to the opportunity to embed methodologies to improve employability and to raise the profile of key skills across the curriculum. In addition, HERDF has assisted projects to introduce new systems, or change existing institutional or internal systems, such as student profiling, tutoring and support systems and new assessment panels. External or partnerships' systems have been developed including communication groups, project management models and systems to identify business needs. Methodologies for assessing and responding to behavioural change, for example, to monitor any changes in the conditions in which SMEs are operating, have also been established as part of HERDF.

In addition to impact, additional observations have been made concerning the value of HERDF. Importantly, HERDF has highlighted the need for close co-operation between HEIs and employers and much can be gained from sustaining and further developing such links. HERDF has also identified gaps in the provision of support services, in particular for SMEs, however HEIs and their partners have identified the need to carefully consider how to "package" support so that it is responsive to SMEs' needs. The development orientation of HERD funding has been particularly welcomed as it brings flexibility to revisit aims, objectives and target audiences during the course of

projects, in response to new and emerging findings. This has proved to be particularly helpful in terms of developing coherent, marketable products and services.

At a regional level, the scale and scope for project impact relates directly to the strategic operating context within which HERDF was implemented. Some immediate benefits are realised at the regional level from HERDF projects, in terms of the products, services and methodologies developed, but other benefits, such as business benefits or the impact of higher level skills in the economy, can only be anticipated at this stage and will not be realised until the longer term. There is potential to increase the impact on business if HERDF initiatives are replicated elsewhere.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

In summary, HERDF provided a relatively small sum of money that has levered in significant staff and financial resources across partnerships far in excess of original expectations. The combination of HERDF development money with other inputs has generated positive results in terms of the products, services, methodologies and partnerships developed and supported. The potential to share the learning gained by projects supported is also high and will minimise parallel learning during HERDF 1998-2000. Whilst total funding of £2.72m across ten GOs cannot be viewed as sufficient to affect “systematic” engagement, it has provided the necessary resources to cement existing relationships and instigate new, potentially strategic relationships between HEIs and business which can move forward in the future.

A number of recommendations arise from this study concerning the management of HERDF, maximising the impact of HERDF and promoting the systematic engagement of Higher Education in economic growth and competitiveness. These are:

- The responsibility for managing HERDF should rest with the regions but within the context of agreed national priorities, thus providing the flexibility to respond to regional and local issues with targeted solutions.
- Government Offices should consider the wider administrative and contractual resources required for the management of HERDF. The sustained success of HERDF requires organisation and sufficient programme management resources.
- HERDF needs to be more closely aligned to other programmes and policies, such as the Higher Education and Employment Development Programme, and those which are concerned with higher level skills, to maximise impact and avoid duplication.
- Government Offices should provide a continuing focus or forum to raise awareness, encourage partnerships and enhance the contribution of HE to local and regional labour markets.
- In order to maximise the impact of HERDF it is necessary to clearly articulate HERDF aims and objectives at the national, regional and local level and to ensure that objectives at these levels are SMART. In addition, it is necessary to devise and implement systematic monitoring procedures that continue after project funding comes to an end to allow longer-term impact to be assessed.
- Learning from HERDF should be taken forward and disseminated. Projects, GOs and the DfEE should exchange their experiences of HERDF and disseminate good practice.

- Government Offices should ensure that there is a clear role for Higher Education in regional economic strategy and policy and that the roles are clearly articulated, understood and potentially measurable. Clear mechanisms should be in place to engage HE in the achievement of regional aims and objectives, paying attention to the varying roles that different HEIs can play. Government offices should consider whether FE Institutions should be more widely involved in the future.
- Government Offices should promote wider and extended partnerships beyond the level of the individual in HEIs. Partnerships that bridge specialisms and sectors should be welcomed.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Higher Education Regional Development Fund Evaluation Study

This report is the final report of the National Evaluation of the Higher Education Regional Development Fund (HERDF).

### 1.2 The Higher Education Regional Development Fund

HERDF aimed to systematically develop linkages between higher education and regional economic development through improved competitiveness and economic growth. The aims and objectives, as set by the DfEE, for HERDF are outlined in Exhibit 1.1 below. Each GO was invited to tailor HERDF to reflect regional and local needs and the particular themes they had developed. The bidding criteria, intended outcomes (both issued by DfEE), funding by region and the numbers of projects supported, by region are presented in Annex A.

#### Exhibit 1.1: HERDF Aim and Objectives

Aim:

“to engage higher education more systematically than at present in supporting competitiveness and economic growth through close partnerships with employers and employer led organisations, principally Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs)”

Objectives:

1. Enabling higher education institutions (HEIs) to understand better and be responsive to the needs of employers.
2. Stimulate greater and better utilisation of graduates by employers.
3. Helping the achievement of the higher level National Training and Education Targets and promoting lifetime learning.
4. Helping individuals and companies through work on graduate retention and unemployment.

Source: Bidding Guidance for Government Offices, DfEE

### 1.3 The Aims of the Evaluation Study

The evaluation study's aims were to identify how, and in what ways, HERDF is:

- engaging HE more systematically in supporting economic growth and competitiveness in Government Office Regions; and
- enhancing the HE sector's contribution to the effective functioning of local and regional labour markets.

ECOTEC has undertaken this study for the DfEE, which is national in focus, whilst regional and project level evaluations have been commissioned separately at the local level.

### 1.4 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation study consisted of two distinct phases, the first of which was completed upon the delivery of the interim evaluation report in October 1997. The first phase focused on the implementation of HERDF from the Government Office perspective, the operating context for the Fund and the aims and objectives of the projects which received funding. The report provided an overview of the projects supported and outlined a proposed sample of projects to participate in the second phase of the evaluation. This second phase of the study consisted of:

- visits to 16 HERDF projects in November and December 1997 and follow up visits and consultations conducted during April 1998;
- a series of meetings with Vice Chancellors in the South West region concerning the wider awareness and knowledge of HERDF and other HEI business links;
- the collection of common monitoring information using a standard proforma, issued to all HERDF projects; and
- a follow up workshop/consultation with Government Offices to ascertain feedback about their experiences and perceptions of impact.

Copies of the interview guides and project monitoring proformas prepared for the study are provided in Annex B.

## **1.5 Report Structure**

The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2.0 considers the national and regional operating context for HERDF;
- Section 3.0 explores the management and implementation of HERDF, focusing on the aims, objectives, roles and responsibilities at the regional level and project funding;
- Section 4.0 discusses the projects supported by HERDF and the findings on actual and anticipated impact;
- Section 5.0 assesses the relationship between HERDF and how the programme influences and informs the current policy environment;
- Section 6.0 provides the study's conclusions and recommendations.

## 2.0 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL OPERATING CONTEXT

### KEY POINTS

- The policy and operating context at both the national and regional levels has shifted considerably since HERDF was introduced.
- The National Inquiry into Higher Education recommended that HERDF should continue beyond the original one year period of development funding.
- Significant variation exists across GOs concerning the profile of HEIs, the extent to which collaborative working was already in place (both amongst universities and with other organisations) and perceptions concerning the contribution of HEIs to the regional economy.
- HERDF was timely and has allowed GOs to continue with previous activities; provide additional funding to projects which were already taking place; and to steer activity in areas which have required action but which have not received funding in the past.

### 2.1 Introduction

This section outlines the national and regional policy and operating context for HERDF which has been subject to significant changes in emphasis during the life of the initiative.

### 2.2 National Operating Context

The policy and operating context at the national and regional levels for HERDF has shifted significantly since late November 1996 when GOs were invited to prepare and submit bids for development funding. HERDF was introduced during the last six months of the Conservative administration while the projects themselves started after the election of the new Labour Government. At the same time the National Inquiry into Higher Education had started and the then Secretary of State for Education and Employment wanted the Inquiry to take into account the fact that “HE is a major contributor to local, regional and national economic growth and regeneration” and that “learning should be increasingly responsive to employment needs and include the development of ‘general skills’ widely valued in employment”.

The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education reported in July 1997, after the selection of the HERDF projects for 1997-98, and contained a series of three specific recommendations concerning the local and regional role of higher education. These are summarised below:

- HEIs should be represented on the regional bodies which the Government establishes and FEFC regional committees should include a representative from HE;
- HERDF should continue beyond April 1998 to support human capital projects which enable HEIs to be responsive to the needs of local industry and commerce;
- HEIs and representatives from industry should examine ways of giving firms (particularly SMEs) easy and co-ordinated access to information about HEIs’ services in their area.

## 2.3 Regional Operating Context

Different regions have different HEI profiles in terms of range (presence of universities, further education colleges, higher education colleges), numbers of each type of institution, age of institutions, and connections with the economy.

In most regions some form of collaboration between HEIs, TECs/CCTEs and business was in place before HERDF was announced. There has been an increasing awareness of the links between higher education and the economy and the role it can play in regional competitiveness in all GOs although the importance placed on HE in GOs differed across the regions and was more advanced in some than others.

Some GOs identified a number of HEIs which did not see themselves as an integral part of the regional economy but rather as part of the national or global economy and this seems to have affected previous attempts to instigate collaborative activity at the local level. This is not to say, however, that a university with an international reputation has no links with its local economy but it does suggest a wider influence on the orientation of, and strategic priorities for, the institution concerned. In addition, some regions (e.g. GOL) identify themselves as net importers of graduates from around the country and thus their activity in bringing HEIs and businesses/TECs together in response to skills shortages and business needs is more advanced. On the other hand, there are other regions that are net exporters of graduates and therefore the links between higher education, local businesses and the regional economy seem to be much less clear and well established, for example, the Eastern Region. Having said this, each HEI is different and as such, some are more responsive to the needs of the regional and sub-regional economy than others in the same region. Such diversity means that there is clearly no single view concerning the role of HEIs in regional economic development. It also appears that the newer universities, and particularly ex-polytechnics, have more direct links with the local and regional labour market than the older, more traditional universities.

HERDF was timely in that it was introduced when GOs had prepared competitiveness and regional education strategies. While it is important to acknowledge that HERDF has provided additional resources to finance new projects it has, more significantly, allowed GOs to take a strategic approach in the allocation of these funds. GOs have used HERDF for three key purposes:

- to further previous activity, in terms of building on networks or partnerships;
- to provide more funding to projects which had already been developed; and/or
- to steer activity in areas which had been identified as requiring action but in which no action had been undertaken previously.

The most important driver given by GOs for participation in HERDF has been to promote collaborative working and to establish sustainable relationships. It is hoped that these will continue even if DfEE funding finishes. GOs also welcomed the regional emphasis of HERDF, and have felt that they have had strategic ownership which has resulted in projects which meet regional needs.

GOs are concerned that HERDF is now being implemented within a changing policy context especially with regionalisation and the establishment of Regional Development Agencies.

## 3.0 IMPLEMENTING HERDF

### **KEY POINTS**

- The regional dimension within HERDF has provided development money to facilitate collaborative working at the regional and local levels which may not have occurred if the development fund was a national funding stream.
- HERDF projects reflect a series of national issues which are pertinent to the priorities of GOs and institutions/partnerships.
- The call to tender for HERDF for both the GOs and the bidding institutions took place within an exceptionally short timetable.
- Regional aims and objectives, which in all cases were in line with the national objectives set by the DfEE, were influenced by GOs' previous linkages with HEIs and strategic frameworks such as their competitiveness and education strategies.
- The principle of partnership underpins all of the development activities which have been supported through HERDF and successful projects were those which built on previous experience and put forward realistic and achievable outputs.
- While selection procedures and practices have been identified as informal, given the short time period within which these were put in place, much has been learned by GOs and has influenced the approaches adopted for the HERDF 1998-2000 tendering exercise. Similarly problems and difficulties faced by projects have been taken on board by GOs which has helped to influence the refinement of guidelines issued to bidding institutions.
- Overall management responsibility for HERDF has remained within the GOs, with only one notable exception (GONW). Additional, strategic, and in some cases operational, support has been provided by the Higher Education Advisors.
- The partnerships supported take a number of different forms, although largely consisting of four main types of organisations - HEIs, TEC/CCTEs, Business Links and employers (both large and small).
- The sustainability of partnerships has been important with a number of the partnerships working hard to develop a collaborative basis for future working.
- Projects consulted valued HERDF in that a small pot of funding has facilitated activities and levered inputs far in excess of those anticipated.

## **3.1 Introduction**

This section examines the management and implementation of HERDF. It focuses on the aims and objectives, roles and responsibilities at the regional level. It is important to bear in mind the timetable and the speed at which HERDF was introduced when considering the findings from the evaluation presented in this section. Retrospectively, it is important to recognise the exceptional learning curve experienced by the ten Government Offices.

### **3.1.1 Regional aims and objectives**

GOs determined regional aims and objectives for HERDF in a number of different ways, based on their previous linkages with HEIs and or HEI/TEC networks and the aims and objectives of GO Regional Competitiveness Frameworks and Education Strategies. Where HEI/TEC networks were in place they were consulted, for example, GOEM developed regional aims for HERDF in partnership with higher education and business representatives. In other regions where such systematic linkages had not been established, the influence of HEIs and the business community



were not so apparent and HERDF was seen as a means through which regional HE strategies could be developed (e.g. GO Eastern).

In all regions, the aims and objectives of HERDF were in line with the DfEE guidelines and drew on Regional Competitiveness and/or Education Strategies and the links being drawn between HE and the economy (from research papers, LMI etc). In essence, HERDF has been implemented strategically and complements other regional activities. In Merseyside, for example, the Objective 1 plan provides the operating context for HERDF and in London compatibility with the Regional Innovation and Technology strategy was an objective of HERDF. In some Regions, there is evidence to show that a closer relationship with DTI funded activities has developed over time (e.g. GOSW). GONE have stated the intention to link HERDF more formally with other funds for the 1998/2000 HERDF programme.

The principle of partnership is important to HERDF and is evident across most of the aims, objectives and intended outcomes identified by GO regions in Exhibit 3.1. HERDF has provided an opportunity for GOs to undertake the following types of development activities:

- projects which support the growth and development of SMEs such as the portfolio of East Midlands projects which all concern SMEs in some way and the business mentoring network in London;
- projects which enhance HE's contribution to the regional labour market;
- the opportunity to set baselines (e.g. the regional credit framework in the North East) and put in place procedures for the collection or the improvement of labour market information (e.g. the regional survey for future growth and development of SMEs in the East Midlands);
- activities which establish a concern for higher level skills and lifelong learning;
- projects which explore how the supply and the demand side of the labour market can be affected to ease the transition of graduates from education into work such as the portfolio of projects supported through GONW which groups the eight regional projects as "supply" or "demand" side orientated .

## **3.2 The Project Selection Process**

### **3.2.1 Selection criteria and processes - roles and responsibilities**

Following receipt of the national guidance from DfEE concerning HERDF in November 1996, GOs determined regional aims and objectives, and in some regions, project themes, before inviting bids for HERDF funding from institutions. In the main, project criteria were included in the invitation to bid for funding issued by the GOs so that respondents were aware of the regional requirements for HERDF before putting their bids together. The GO bids for HERDF funding were submitted to DfEE during February 1997.

The selection criteria were quite broad in most cases and, as said above, were usually included in a bidding guide for institutions. Projects were expected to fit with the HERDF aims and objectives (national and regional) and importantly were to include partnerships and collaboration for 7 of the 10 GOs. Bidding institutions were encouraged to bid as partnerships although in most cases the membership of the partnership was not prescribed. HEIs were invited to bid for HERDF in all GO regions although in some regions TECs also received invitations. In the main, FE institutions were not asked to put in bids for funding, however, one of the projects supported in the South West was led by an FE institution.

Several GOs ‘tested the water’ before putting their final regional bids to DfEE and requested project outlines, rather than firm bids, from institutions before writing the regional bid which detailed HERDF themes and likely project activities. Once funding was known, institutions were then asked to firm up or refine bids in line with the set criteria. In some cases, GOs encouraged bidding institutions to establish partnerships with other institutions proposing similar work before funding was finally awarded (e.g. GOWM and GONW).

### 3.2.2 Management of the selection process

The timing of HERDF and the requirement to put in place a portfolio of projects within a short period of time led to fairly informal selection procedures in most GOs. Having said this, some selection procedures were quite sophisticated, for example GOWM and GOY&H developed assessment sheets to record project scores and assessors comments whilst the procedures in other GOs were less formal. Of course, as mentioned above, this has to be set against the very tight timescales to which GOs were working in order to respond to the DfEE and get projects up and running.

Selection criteria were based on a series of broad principles, associated with the aims and objectives of HERDF regionally and nationally, with GOs adopting some, if not all of the following principles;

- appropriateness of fit with the identified regional and national themes;
- projects should be delivered by a partnership;
- “deliverability” within the timeframe available;
- congruence with the aims and objectives of regional competitiveness framework;
- value for money, leverage and additionality;
- partner expertise and understanding of the issues;
- sustainability;
- clearly defined aims, objectives and methodology.

### EXHIBIT 3.1 Regional Aims, Objectives and Intended Outcomes

Region	Aims / Rationale	Objectives	Outcomes
Eastern Region	HERDF represents continuing commitment to developing partnerships to maximise competitiveness and prosperity in the region.	Development of regional HE strategy to update Regional Competitiveness Framework; support projects, disseminate best practice; evaluate Involve HE to increase employability through development of transferable skills; credit accumulation / APL; NVQ & key skills, assist SMEs to access graduate skills and knowledge	Regional strategy; better local links between HEIs, TECs and Business Links, better marketing of regional HEI services to business; more effective use of LMI; increase in graduate employability; promotion of lifelong learning.
East Midlands	To increase and promote the growth and development of SMEs through partnership activities involving universities, TECs and Business Links.	To initiate partnership project activity to enhance HEs contribution to the labour market.	Increase in student involvement in SMEs, Lifetime Learning, enhanced contact between SMEs and HE, more effective utilisation of Business Links within the regional network; ongoing information service linking SMEs, TECs, Business Links and Universities.
London	Build on good practice in HE/employer links/ establish new business links building on higher skills needs / priority to SMEs in wealth creation / develop partnerships between HE, L and SMEs, TECs and Business Links / to make available better information about the services and products provided by HE through improved marketing / communications.	To ensure compatibility with Regional Innovation and Technology Strategy.	Responsiveness / working with employers / preparation of students for the workplace
Merseyside	To prepare students better for work and enhance relevance of HE provision to employers.	Developing key skills, students as entrepreneurs with view to entry to SME / micro sector.	Flexible training programmes for students to enhance employability / promote entrepreneurial skills.

Region	Aims / Rationale	Objectives	Outcomes
North East	To build on the rationale to support effective projects which contribute to the GO Competitiveness Framework and Education Strategy, and the aims of the region's Universities and TECs; to actively involve a growing proportion of the region's employers in the use of HE in the recruitment and development of a workforce with higher level skills; to continue the commitment of collaboration between the region's TECS and Universities and GONE while encouraging a competitive edge in bids to lead particular projects.	To establish baseline information for a regional credit framework and develop a model for CPD award; to improve the collection, analysis and availability of graduate LMI; to identify and establish ways of developing new graduate's key skills in preparation for effective employment especially in the SME sector.	Outcomes relate to specific projects: an on-going, customised information system and report; a report on identifying skills requirements and curriculum enhancements to facilitate replication; development work and action planning on achieving progress for Lifetime Target 2 / a Credit Framework for Higher Education in the NE.
North West	Increase responsiveness of graduates to employers; increase use of HE by SMEs; strengthen partnerships between HE / employers / TECs by establishing sustainable networks.	Development of mechanisms to improve supply and demand side of labour market.	Enterprise centre ; mentoring partnership; links between engineering school and business; good practice guide to students; establishment of partnership consortium etc.
South East	Improve understanding of labour market especially in IT, Tourism and Health; graduates into business, transfer of know-how from HE to business, regional CPD and supportive frameworks.	To encourage development of partnerships between HEIs and TECs, Business Links, Careers Services, Chambers of Commerce and employers; to encourage bids from all regional areas through partnerships; to co-ordinate the dissemination of project outcomes across the region; to extend the work to other activities, sectors or organisations in future years.	Summative evaluation of GO project overall and support for evaluation of individual projects and recommendation for future work areas; a regional HEI/TEC/employer conference for dissemination of results; framework for good practice; recommendations.

Region	Aims / Rationale	Objectives	Outcomes
South West	To assist HE and business to establish better productive links and to harness activities to inward investment initiatives; main emphasis on SME sector.	To increase graduate education for employability and to apply research knowledge to business.	Increase in the level of graduate employment in the region through higher skills training and professional development; reduction in the incidence of redundancy by upskilling or reskilling of existing staff; development of transferable models.
West Midlands	Link graduates with industry; develop industry related programmes in partnership with employers; stimulate HEI employer collaborative activities.	Graduate Link: to enhance the attractiveness of graduates to SMEs and to increase awareness among SMEs of graduate potential; industry related partnerships: to facilitate career and qualification paths through specific industries; Stimulating HEI/Industry collaborations.	Increase graduate placements in SMEs, development of distance learning materials for work preparation; case studies of good practice.
Yorkshire and the Humber	To involve HE in addressing specific elements within the GO regional development framework. These elements include issues around recruitment and retention, management development esp. SMEs, work-based learning/degrees; involvement of HE to overcome low participation and achievement; placements. regional collaboration and dissemination of best practice.	Objectives are closely bound to GO aims: to enhance routes into HE provision from Modern Apprenticeships; test the feasibility of a Higher Level Training network and forum, enhance and complement CPD programme focusing on SMEs; extend existing framework of Employee Led Development (ELD) schemes; establish a professional development NVQ centre for the cultural industries sector; assist universities to become more responsive to employers; identify gaps in support to businesses and develop a co-ordinated approach.	Identified outcomes are closely tied to specific project outcomes: increase in the number of young people from MA entering HE; development of high level training forum and network; development of new CPD modules meeting identified needs of managers; network of ELD action groups and training providers; an operational NVQ centre; increased number of undergraduates completing targeted placements in SMEs; strategic partnerships, sharing of good practice and raised awareness of the role that HE can play in supporting business competitiveness.

Across regions, the membership of selection panels differed - some included only GO staff from the education team whilst others included a range of individuals drawn from the DfEE (both GO staff and HQ personnel), DTI staff from within the GO, HEIs, TECs, and external Higher Education Advisers (HEAs). The impartiality of these selection panels is open to some question as most institutions were known to GO education staff before project bids were received, and particularly to the internal HEAs. Having said this, knowledge of these institutions and their ability to deliver outcomes and work in partnership whilst perhaps being subjective, provided GOs with some security that projects would achieve their aims. GOWM overcame this issue by inviting an “impartial” assessor from the University of Sheffield to participate on their selection panel.

### **3.3 The Management of HERDF**

It was usually the GO which had overall management responsibility for HERDF with technical inputs provided by the Higher Education Adviser nominated for their region. In some cases a regional steering group guided the actions of the GO and acted as a forum to discuss project activity and assess progress against regional and national aims and objectives.

#### **3.3.1 GO and HEA responsibilities**

GOs’ role in the management of HERDF was both strategic and operational, for example, setting project criteria, selecting those projects which fitted with the regional aims and objectives, attending project steering group meetings, providing ad hoc advice and guidance as requested and contract management. Contract management was identified by GO education advisors as an area where additional support (from DfEE or from internal GO staff) would have proved useful.

The GO day to day management of projects, however, was largely hands-off but with an open-door approach. HEAs were used in an advisory or consultancy capacity, both strategically and operationally, as part of HERDF. They assisted strategically with the development of regional criteria and project selection in some GOs, while some worked at an operational level directly with projects, taking part in project steering groups and carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities.

GOs considered that HEAs played a valuable role in the strategic management of HERDF and would like to be able to use their skills more fully in the future. GOs reported the need for improved clarity concerning the availability (i.e. time inputs) and use of the HEAs in HERDF. A balance issue is important here, in that the HEAs are a strategic resource and should be used to assist the shaping of HE policy within the GOs. The HEAs should not be seen as an additional administrative or operational resource - additional administrative resources should be sourced within the GOs.

#### **3.3.2 GO support to promoters**

Resources to support HERDF in the GOs were limited to the Education Advisor with, in some cases, one other GO staff member working (usually part-time) with the projects. It was only in GONW that project management was devolved to bodies outside the GO. GOs identified that additional support, particularly in relation to contract management, within the GO would allow the Education Advisors to network and make a more strategic contribution to the projects supported.

In the East Midlands, universities and other HEIs did not have a track record of working together and HERDF provided the opportunity and legitimacy for GOEM to become involved in HEIs. GOEM therefore had very close involvement in projects and viewed this involvement as a key element of the development activity. This level of contact could not be justified in the longer term

but initially GOEM viewed it as necessary to establish the collaboration and partnership which resulted in the establishment of the Collaboration for Competitiveness Network in the East Midlands.

### 3.3.3 Communication

Communication concerning HERDF was primarily intra-regional. Key lines of communication were established (or built upon) between GO Education Advisors and the following:

- HERDF project managers;
- other GO staff with a responsibility for higher education projects/networking;
- regional vice-chancellors' networks (e.g. GONW);
- other education and or business groupings (e.g. GOSW).

There was very little communication between regions although some GOs had closer links than others (GOM and GONW, for example). Where HEI 'catchment' areas crossed regional boundaries, such as between Yorkshire and the Humber and East Midlands, more scope for communication existed. It was felt however that the regular meetings for the GO Education Advisors promoted networking across regions and that they provided a vehicle for discussing progress and disseminating good practice. Communication between GOs and DfEE was ad-hoc, on a need to know basis. The scope and level of contact was considered to have been appropriate.

### 3.3.4 Monitoring and evaluation

In addition to the national evaluation of HERDF which is the subject of this final report, each GO was required to complete a regional evaluation and the funded projects were also required to monitor and evaluate their own activities. Those responsible for the evaluations liaised as much as possible in order to maximise the benefits of the different evaluations although, with the benefit of hindsight, greater clarity of the differing roles and focus for each level of evaluation could have been provided at the outset.

Project monitoring and evaluation was largely the responsibility of projects, with few engaging external evaluators, although HEAs did have a role in some regions for monitoring projects. In reality the project steering group was the mechanism for project monitoring.

## 3.4 Partnership History, Preparation of Project Proposals and Key Drivers

### 3.4.1 Partnership History

The pre-existence of partnerships, foras for discussion between TECs and HEIs, such as the TEC/HEI network in London (mentioned as influential by both of the London projects visited) and HESIN (Higher Education Support in the North) in the North East region, provided impetus for the development of partnerships required by the HERDF bidding guidance. Indeed the regional dimension for HERDF has provided neutral money to facilitate collaborative working at the regional/local level which may not have occurred if the development fund was a national funding stream.

The short timescale within which bids for HERDF funding were required and the fixed twelve month implementation period meant that bidding organisations built strongly on their previous experience and contacts to ensure that project proposals were realistic and achievable within such a

short period of time. In most cases proposals for HERDF funding were written by lead partners, in consultation with others.

Projects awarded HERD funding tended to comprise networks of partners who knew each other, even if they had not directly worked with each other. Others such as the Manchester Mentoring Partnership built directly upon established links across the HEIs involved. Both Liverpool John Moores University and GOM reported that Objective 1 funding in Merseyside had allowed a series of projects which developed HEIs' links with SMEs and that the Graduates into Self-Employment project built upon this experience.

### 3.4.2 The Preparation of Project Proposals

The selection process required all projects to develop aims, objectives and outcomes/outputs. From an evaluative perspective, the lack of clarity between aims and objectives and the presentation of objectives which are not SMART is a concern in that measuring progress and impact is impeded.

Projects in two regions reported that the “developmental” emphasis of HERDF was being driven down and replaced by an emphasis on quantifiable outcomes (in one case they were added after funding had been awarded). This can be considered from two perspectives:

- projects consider that the “goal posts” have changed and HERDF is less developmental than originally envisaged; however
- GOs require tangible outcomes in order to facilitate drawing up contracts for individual projects.

Clearer guidelines for bidding institutions would improve the transparency of the selection process and would prevent negotiations concerning output occurring after projects have been notified that their bids have been successful.

### 3.4.3 Key Drivers

Analysis of the key drivers behind the HERDF projects indicates that they reflect a series of national issues or problems which are pertinent to the GO priorities for HERDF and the organisations involved in the local and regional partnerships. This is seen in the following examples.

- The Thames Valley University Health, Skills Shortages and Ethnicity project is built upon the under-representation of people from minority ethnic groups in the healthcare and associated professions; poor health and the low take up of preventative actions amongst particular sections of minority ethnic communities and low take up of further and higher education from these groups. This project therefore reflects a national issue - low representation of minority ethnic groups in the healthcare professions; a regional priority - the healthcare sector; and Thames Valley University's understanding of its local labour market which comprises a significant minority ethnic community.
- The Sheffield TEC project which sought to increase the number of young people in the workplace accessing higher education; raise employers' awareness of opportunities for employees; and increase HEIs awareness concerning the opportunities afforded by Modern Apprenticeship. The national issues here include lifelong learning, the development of progression routes from Modern Apprenticeships into higher education and the development of portable credit accumulation and transfer schemes; the regional dimension concerns the



competitive advantage derived from higher level skills while the project at the local level recognises the importance of IT skills across a range of traditional and non-traditional apprenticeships.

### 3.4.4 The Institutional Context and Linkages to Other Activities

How and where HERDF projects sit within their institutions has implications for the sustainability of the activities developed and the networks created. Even though HERDF funding was only allocated for a fixed term period of twelve months with no guarantee of future funding, the projects consulted reported that their HERDF activities were not isolated and that they slotted into a portfolio of existing research, development or mainstream training activities. For example:

- Nottingham Trent University was already researching work organisation;
- Harper Adams already delivers Modern Apprenticeships and NVQs in the poultry sector and the development of higher level NVQs was considered to be an extension to this work;
- Thames Valley University's three development projects Skills Match (a HEED development project from 1995) and their two HERDF projects (Mature Students Programme and Health, Skills Shortages and Ethnicity) sit within "WorkBureau".

Section 4.0 considers the issue of sustainability in terms of replicable products and services, sustainable funding channels and the extent to which HERDF activities can be disaggregated from other activities.

## 3.5 Implementing HERDF

### 3.5.1 Form of Partnerships

As outlined above, the history and origin of partnerships have been important to HERDF projects because of the time limits within which the projects have operated. The form of the partnerships established and ownership varies considerably across the projects. In general the partnerships comprise 3-5 organisations, with some consisting of only two partners. The largest partnership has in excess of 10 organisations represented. A number of different forms of partnerships have been established:

- **cascaded partnerships** - such as the devolved management approach implemented by GONW where two organisations effectively manage the eight projects in the region and the Business Mentoring Project in London where four of the HEIs involved manage separate thematic business networks;
- **regional partnerships** - for example the network of six universities and five TECs and employers steering the project to develop a Regional Credits Framework in the North East or the Liverpool John Moores University partnership which comprises the three HEIs in Liverpool and three local TECs;
- **sub-regional partnerships** - such as Learning Partnership West or groups of HEIs such as in Closing the Loop, led by West London TEC;

- **localised partnerships** - for example the project to evaluate the provision and support for Continuing Professional Development and research to establish employer demand for CPD which comprises Oxford Brookes University, Oxfordshire Trust and Oxfordshire Chamber as partners or the Brunel University project which seeks to meet the demand for new skills in the healthcare sector and comprises Thames Valley Enterprise, West London TEC and Thames Valley Technology as its other partners.

Partnerships tend to include individuals from the following types of organisations:

- HEIs - including representatives from academic and administrative departments;
- TECs/CCTEs;
- Business Links;
- employers (both large and SMEs).

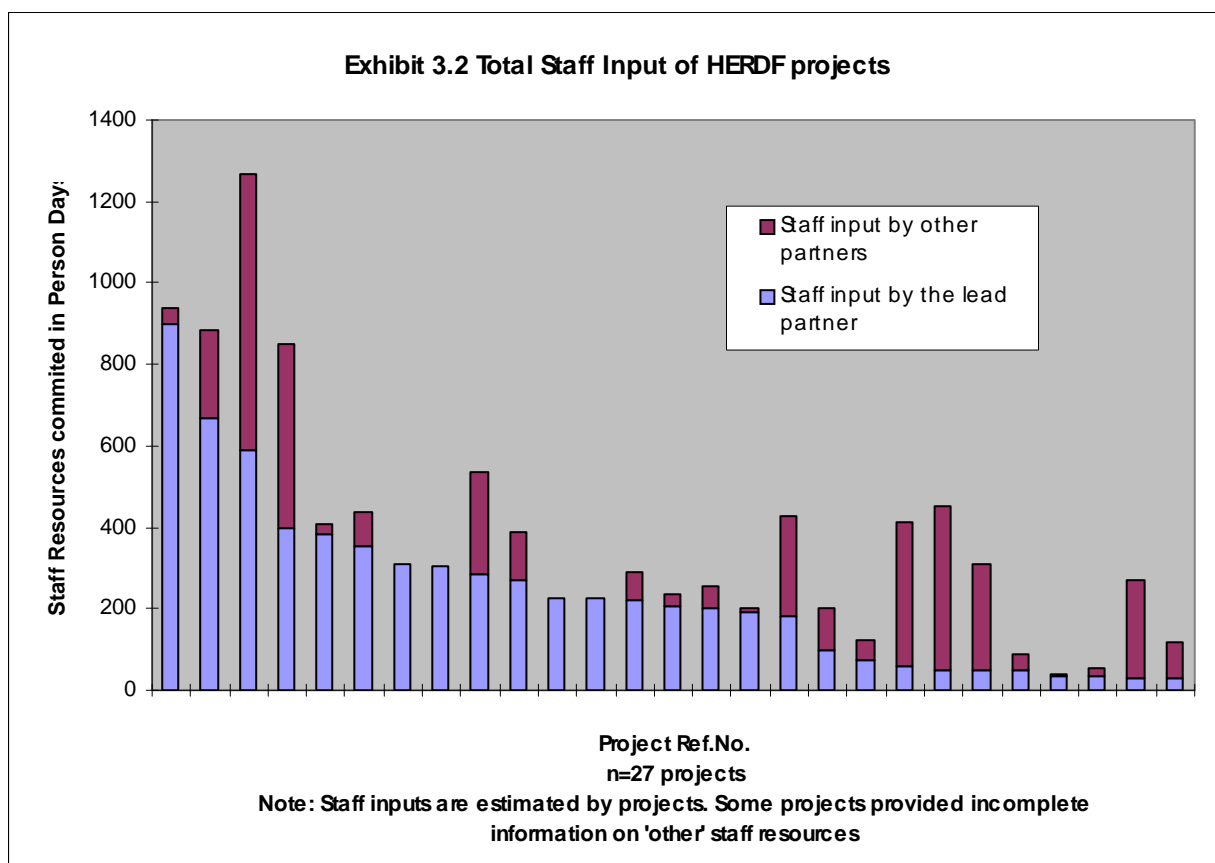
HEI representatives, as outlined above, are from a mix of academic faculties or departments (continuing education is frequently involved in the projects supported) as well as from external relations, enterprise departments, careers and HEIs' registries. In addition one project is led by a further education institution (Yeovil College in the South West) and other partners, not typical to all projects, include training providers, Industry Training Organisations, community groups and professional bodies.

Partnerships have been fluid and have changed over time beyond the original contacts. Only one project, the Health Skills Shortages and Ethnicity at TVU, is known to have lost one of their original partners. East Berkshire College withdrew from the project because they underestimated the time commitment required. A key factor in the fluidity of the partnerships relates to the turnover in project staff. A small number of projects reported two or three project managers over the duration of HERDF and one project lost their project manager just before the completion of their final report and in this lost the expertise gained over the life of the project. This high turnover impacts on the strength and coherence of the partnerships and their ability to deliver project objectives and scheduled outcomes in the given time period.

Some projects placed significant emphasis on nurturing the partnerships developed for HERDF and a distinct value is associated with sustaining these relationships (e.g. Manchester Mentoring Partnership which consolidated a loosely established network and now provides a solid basis for future collaborative working).

### 3.5.2 Day-to-Day Project Management and Implementation

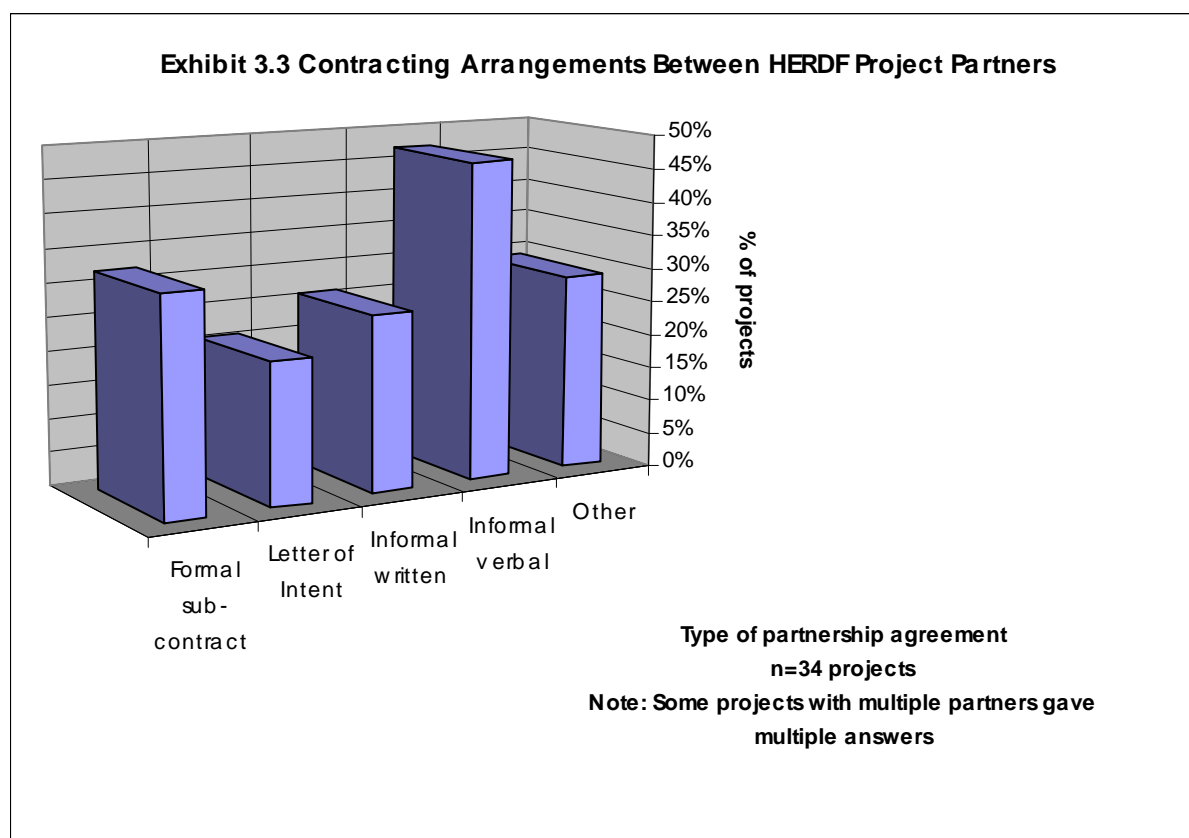
Lead partners or contractors are in place for all HERDF projects and this, to a certain extent, gives a form of institutional ownership to the individual projects. In the main, lead partners have contributed the most time, in terms of person days, to HERDF projects. Exhibit 3.2 outlines estimates of the total number of days spent on each project by lead and other partners and shows significant variation amongst the projects, with approximately half of them spending at least the equivalent of one full time individual working on the project on a consistent basis for the twelve month period. Indeed, one project spent in excess of 1200 person days (approximately five full time equivalents).



*(27 projects from the returned questionnaires answered this question).*

Discussions concerning the day-to-day roles and responsibilities have identified that lead partners appointed project managers to be responsible for the delivery of project objectives and outcomes under the guidance of the project steering group which comprised all the project partners.

### 3.5.3 Contracting Arrangements



*(34 projects from the returned questionnaires answered this question).*

Contracting arrangements across partnerships varied considerably with some projects operating on an informal basis (for example, the Harper Adams Poultry Industry project) whereas others have required a stronger degree of formality and accountability (City University used a formal sub-contract arrangement with all partners in the Business Mentoring Network project). Others reported mixed approaches, with informal arrangements across the partnership in general but formal contracts for those organisations directly involved in the delivery of project outcomes (Nottingham Trent University). The lack of a formal contracting process for one project was identified as a problem which impeded negotiations concerning partners roles and responsibilities.

Contracting arrangements and in particular cultural differences, between projects and GOs was also highlighted as a key issue in the discussions with GOs held towards the end of the evaluation study. HEIs were less used to managing the types of contracts associated with HERDF whereas colleges, TECs/CCTEs and Business Links were more familiar with the requirements of contract management having worked with GOs and the DfEE previously on fixed term contracts.

### 3.5.4 Support to Projects from GOs and Higher Education Advisors

Feedback from projects indicates that GOs and HEAs in general have played a passive or “hands off” role in the development and delivery of HERDF at the project level, although GO representatives and/or the HEAs participated on the steering groups for all projects. Only the Regional Credits project in the North East reported that the GO had a “hands on” management role while one project reported that in retrospect, that they should have made more effort to develop their relationship with the GO.

### 3.6 Issues and Problems faced by Projects

The discussion held with projects towards the end of HERDF or after projects had been completed identified a series of problems. These have been grouped under the four themes identified below:

- the implementation timetable;
- staffing;
- institutional integration;
- external operating constraints.

Recommendations relating to how these problems can be avoided or minimised in the future are presented in section 6.5 and in Annex D.

#### 3.6.1 Implementation Timetable

Four specific issues were identified concerning the implementation timetable for HERDF:

- the late start due to lengthy contracting negotiations;
- the mismatch between two operational years - the financial year and the academic year;
- the development of what can only be seen in retrospect as overly ambitious project objectives;
- the lack of development time or lead-in time to consolidate and embed working relationships before project activity starts.

#### 3.6.2 Staffing

HERDF projects required high quality project managers and projects reported difficulties concerning the recruitment and retention (in a number of cases on a short term contract basis) of high calibre staff given the short timetable. There is evidence, mentioned in Section 3.5.1 of high turnover in project managers amongst a small number of projects, although successful projects attribute part of their success to getting the right team on board.

#### 3.6.3 Institutional Integration

One project reported that their HERDF project was successful, however its dissemination potential was limited because internal strategic links had not been established to facilitate the take up of the project in the future. There was also a view that whilst it was easy to identify which institutions/organisations to involve in partnerships, it was often difficult to identify the right individuals to be involved, or how projects could be best promoted within partner organisations.

#### 3.6.4 External Barriers

External barriers have taken five forms:

- **accreditation procedures:** projects which aimed to accredit new modules or courses faced problems concerning the length of time required to secure accreditation;
- **business priorities:** in some cases employers placed business priorities ahead of HERDF's priorities;
- **processing non-mainstream funding:** was reported as a problem by one specific project promoter concerning one of their partners;

- **mismatch with partners' other priorities:** a lack of synergy between HERDF and other institutions/organisations' priorities caused problems for one project which aimed to develop an NVQ;
- **anticipating throughput:** one project "guessimated" the number of people completing Modern Apprenticeships and therefore how many people would be eligible to join their project resulting in an overestimation of the potential number of starts.

Discussions with GOs have identified that problems experienced by projects, particularly those concerning the implementation timetable and external barriers, have been addressed through the development of more prescriptive and better informed guidelines for bidding organisations for 1998-2000 development funding.

### 3.7 Funding

The Higher Education and Employment Division of the DfEE made available a total of £2.72 million to the ten Government Offices in England for HERDF. Funding allocations by region, the total number of projects supported and the average project size are outlined in Exhibit 3.4 which shows that almost one quarter of all HERDF projects are in London and the South East. Overall, the average level of match funding provided by Government Offices was just under £51,000 per project although the average project size in the North East, at £83,333 is significantly greater than the national average.

Projects were asked to provide funding information in the project monitoring form about HERDF monies from GOs and match funding (financial and in-kind). Key points to note are as follows:

- the majority of projects (58%) received £40,000 - £59,999 HERDF funding;
- the average intervention rate (i.e. HERDF funding as a proportion total project funding) was 55%;
- in-kind contributions were significant for approximately two thirds of responding projects - staff time (across project partners), administrative support and overheads are the main types of in-kind contributions mentioned;
- six responding projects (approximately 20%) levered in additional funding from other sources;
- just under half of the responding projects had secured sustainable funding from other sources including TECs (mentioned by three projects), internal HEI funding, the HEED National Development Prospectus, SRB and HEFCE. Some projects (e.g. Regional Credits Framework in GONE and the Work Organisation project in GOEM) are continuing with funding under HERDF Round 2. Objective 4 (ESF) provides a further opportunity to sustain projects/project activities.

**EXHIBIT: 3.4: Funding by GO Region, Projects Supported and Average Project Size\***

	<b>Funding Available (to a Maximum of:)</b>	<b>% Total</b>	<b>Number of Projects Supported</b>	<b>Average Project Value (£)</b>
Eastern	250000	9.08%	5	50000
East Midlands	257500	9.35%	6	42917
London	400000	14.53%	7	57143
Merseyside	139000	5.05%	2	69500
North East	250000	9.08%	3	83333
North West	300000	10.90%	8	37500
South East	332000	12.06%	6	55333
South West	265000	9.62%	5	53000
West Midlands	260000	9.44%	5	52000
Yorkshire and the Humber	300000	10.90%	7	42857
<b>Total</b>	<b>2753500</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>50991</b>

\* These figures relate to original project funding and do not take into account the additional HERDF monies made available in December 1997.

Projects consulted recognised the value of HERDF in that a small pot of funding has facilitated activities and levered inputs far in excess of those anticipated.

### **3.8 Conclusions**

#### **3.8.1 Aims and Objectives**

Regional aims and objectives for HERDF have been influenced by previous links with HEIs, for a to engage HEIs with other key regional economic actors and strategic frameworks including GOs competitiveness and education strategies. All aims and objectives set for HERDF reflect the national guidelines provided by the DfEE.

HERDF is underpinned by partnership working and the principle of partnerships for the delivery of HERDF is clear in most GOs' aims and objectives.

#### **3.8.2 Project Selection**

Institutions invited to bid for HERDF monies were provided with guidelines outlining what GOs expected from applicants in the invitation to tender. Selection criteria were broad based and with the benefit of hindsight, and time to reflect on the approaches adopted, GOs would have preferred to have developed and refined selection procedures further before inviting institutions to bid for development funding. The learning has been used to inform the development of bidding criteria and selection procedures for the 1998-2000 projects. Indeed projects would have found clearer guidelines useful in that it adds transparency to the selection process and it reduces the need for post tender negotiations.

#### **3.8.3 Management responsibility**

GOs, with the exception of GONW retained management responsibility for HERDF, with guidance in the main provided by a regional steering group and strategic/technical inputs provided

by the HEAs. The roles and responsibilities for HEAs working with some GOs has tended towards operational support whereas others have retained their strategic identity.

### 3.8.4 Partnership History and Form

Previous experience and existing contacts have proved influential given the short timescale within which projects were required to bid for funding. Partnerships where partners did not know each other, or who had not previously worked together, have experienced a steep learning curve. The form and ownership of the partnerships established has varied across the projects supported but in the main comprise representatives from HEIs, TECs/CCTEs, Business Links and employers.

### 3.8.5 Key Drivers

HERDF projects reflect a series of national issues or problems which are pertinent to GO priorities with solutions developed as a result of partnership or institutional expertise.

### 3.8.6 Institutional Context

Despite the short timescale for HERDF, projects have been implemented as a part of a broader portfolio of research, development and mainstream education and training activities. While this demonstrates a commitment to HERDF it also provides a framework within which learning and the dissemination of products, services and methodologies can be taken forward. Where partnerships have been identified as strategic, they have been nurtured on the basis that the partnership can be used as the basis of future work.

### 3.8.7 Implementation

The partnerships established have been fluid and have evolved beyond the original contacts. Contracting arrangements have been mixed, with formal agreements most likely with those organisations with specific delivery targets linked to the project outcomes.

### 3.8.8 Issues and problems

Projects identified a series of issues and problems concerning:

- the implementation timetable;
- staffing;
- institutional integration;
- external operating constraints.

While problems have been identified, many have been considered in the development of bidding guidance for HERDF 1998-2000.

### 3.8.9 Funding

Projects recognised that although HERDF was a small pot of funding, especially compared to the level of funding to HEIs overall, activities supported were far in excess of those anticipated. Other resources in cash (and in-kind) had also been levered-in from other funders, and over half of responding projects had secured further financial support to enable activities to continue.





## 4.0 PROJECTS AND IMPACT

### ***KEY POINTS***

- The impact of HERDF, is greatest at the level of the individual and employer. Replicable products and services, transferable to other sectors and regions have been developed, however the full extent of potential impact is yet to be realised.
- The extent to which impact will grow is a function of the operating context within which HERDF was implemented at the levels of the institution, partnership and region.
- Projects supported concern labour supply; labour demand; curriculum development and the accreditation of key skills; information gathering, research and development; and the development of strategic partnerships.
- Most projects reported that they had achieved their aims and objectives and had completed all of their key tasks.
- HERDF projects have developed a wide range of products targeting employers and individuals. These include training products, materials for profiling skills and accrediting prior learning, paper and computer based reference materials and promotional materials.
- Services developed as a result of HERDF include advisory services, skills profiling and the identification of training needs, matching services and mentoring.
- Information provided through the performance monitoring form indicates that 962 individuals and 213 companies have accessed HERDF funded products and services.
- 347 individuals have seen an increase in their core skills and 387 have completed work experience through participating in HERDF. So far, 50 individuals have gained a new job as a result of HERDF and a further 199 have received job offers from placement providers.
- The establishment of sustainable links with placement providers is the most common impact concerning employers with some 832 links established. However 106 companies used links to HERDF to recruit graduate labour and 38 companies have decided to review other training needs after having participated in HERDF.
- Projects are disseminating their products, services and methodologies, research conducted, curricula developments and accreditation frameworks and their final project reports to a range of audiences including TECs/CCTEs, Business Links, GOs, professional bodies and other HEIs.
- The key success factors are also summarised in paragraph 4.5.

### 4.1 Introduction

This section describes the project aims, outputs and throughputs and considers impact at the GO and project level across the 54 projects supported through HERDF. Brief descriptions, outlining projects' aims, objectives, activities and partners, of all projects are presented in Annex C.

This section draws upon the following key sources of information:

- the project descriptions identified above;
- returned performance monitoring forms;
- interviews completed with 16 projects;

- interviews with Vice-Chancellors/their representatives in the South West;
- preliminary and follow up interviews with all GOs.

The regional project portfolios reflect the selection processes that operated within the GOs as discussed in the previous section. In all cases GOs' project portfolios have been influenced by the development of regional aims and objectives, the extent of existing collaborative working between HEIs and other partners within the region (for example through the Higher Education Development Fund or HEI/TEC networks), the interpretation of the GO remit by HEIs and time and resource pressures both in terms of submitting bids and delivering activities within the available timescale. These factors have contributed to the diverse range of activities piloted within HERDF.

## **4.2 The HERDF Projects**

### *Project Aims and Objectives*

The introduction to this section refers to the selection processes and procedures and the influence these have had concerning project aims and objectives. The regional operating context, in terms of the extent and coverage of existing networks, relationships and collaborative working has been particularly influential in identifying the types of activities supported. Some GOs used HERDF as a means through which they could develop a regional higher education strategy whereas others, such as GOL and GONW sought to further existing linkages and ensure tangible outcomes in partnerships, products and services. It is within this context that such a diverse range of projects were developed and selected by individual GOs.

Early feedback from projects identified that projects viewed themselves as individual and unique in their aims and objectives and expressed reluctance to be classified as part of the bigger picture. Close examination of the projects during the preparation of the interim report identified that while projects are diverse in their responsiveness to a particular national, regional, local or institutional issue, they address common problems and issues which are interpreted and articulated in slightly different ways. This therefore supports the view that the activities undertaken by projects could be classified. From this a series of five key themes were identified in the interim report concerning issues of:

- labour supply - upskilling to accommodate the needs of business;
- labour demand - assisting businesses to benefit from HE;
- curriculum development and the accreditation of key and vocational skills;
- information gathering, research and development;
- the development of strategic partnerships/networking and multi-agency approaches.

These broad themes have been retained and developed further in relation to the achievement of aims, objectives, impact and anticipated impact and the dissemination of good practices across the projects supported. The resulting thematic framework is presented in Exhibit 4.1. While this framework appears simplistic, it is important to recognise that the projects supported cut across these themes, with partnership underpinning all of the activities supported.

Looking across the themes, the following can be identified.

- The supply and demand side is explicit and differentiated in most projects with discrete grouping evident in the projects selected, for example, in the following regions;

- GONW supported a portfolio of eight projects which comprised five supply- side projects which focused on the preparation of undergraduates for work and three demand-side projects which sought to improve business growth prospects through the effective deployment of graduate labour;
- GOM wholly focused on supply side activities developing key skills for graduate employment and promoting graduates as entrepreneurs;
- GOYH, within a broad supply side theme, developed a series of regional and sub-regional partnerships.
- Supply and demand side projects tend to integrate market research concerning the need for the products and services proposed to complement the development process. This is evident in projects such as:
  - Releasing Potential, the project managed by Prosper Group (formerly Devon and Cornwall TEC) - which updated research conducted through a previous project concerning employer access to university training;
  - the students as entrepreneurs project managed by Liverpool John Moores University which researched barriers to self employment amongst undergraduates.
- Curriculum development projects and those which sought to accredit key and vocational skills are those that, in retrospect, have experienced greatest problems and can be identified as overly ambitious given the short timetable within which HERDF has been implemented. While this is discussed later in this section, it is important to recognise that these projects may have been more successful if they had been selected under different circumstances. For example had they been selected during the second round of HERDF, after GOs had gained more experience of such development activities or projects could take place across two financial/academic years.
- A small number of projects have been supported that focus specifically on research or market research. Those that have, provide a basis for the development of new products and services which can be taken forward in the future, such as:
  - the portfolio of projects in the North East;
  - the regional survey concerning the future growth and development of SMEs managed by the University of Nottingham;
  - the evaluation of the existing provision and support frameworks for CPD and the identification of employer demand for CPD managed by Oxford Brookes University.

#### **Exhibit 4.1: Key Themes**

##### **Theme 1. Supply-side: upskilling to accommodate the needs of business**

Projects within this theme have addressed the ‘supply-side’ of the labour market by:

- developing (and in some cases accrediting) under/graduate ‘employability’ skills, particularly within the SME sector through, for example, targeted work experience opportunities, training modules (generic and customised) and open learning materials;
- promoting entrepreneurial skills to broaden opportunities in micro-enterprises and for self-employment;
- upskilling existing employees, with or without HE qualifications;
- promoting continuing professional development and raising awareness concerning skills development through promotional materials and case study examples.

These types of projects are responsive solutions to issues concerning the skills needs of the labour market. While the immediate benefits are for the individuals who participate in such projects, the longer term benefits are the application of learning in the workplace and the development of products and services which can be replicated in the future. Examples of such approaches include the development of a PGC in Professional Practice at the University of Luton and the work completed by Liverpool John Moores University concerning entrepreneurship. It is also important to recognise that some individuals require additional support and assistance to access the labour market because of external barriers or prejudices. As such, projects have targeted groups including mature students and people from minority ethnic groups (Thames Valley University Mature Students Programme and the Manchester Mentoring Partnership).

## **Theme 2. Demand side: assisting business to benefit from HE**

Demand-side activities have sought to encourage greater awareness within businesses, particularly SMEs, concerning:

- the contribution that under/graduates can make to companies;
- the products and services HEIs can offer businesses.

Such an approach acts as a “hook” to get businesses interested, with follow-on work (which can include businesses looking more broadly at workforce development) and sustainable relationships. Specific activities have included:

- the development of exchange programmes between SME and HE staff;
- awareness raising and marketing of HE products and services and how these can assist businesses;
- measures to increase HEIs responsiveness in meeting the needs of business;
- the development and delivery of short courses and open and distance learning training materials (non-accredited).

Demand-side projects, because of their specific attempt to meet the needs of businesses, tend to have a sectoral focus (Graduating for Growth - GONW which has targeted manufacturing, technology and business/commerce sectors and the City University Business Mentoring Networks which focus on the cultural industries, the environment and design businesses) or focus on a particular target group (continuing development for Modern Apprenticeships - the Sheffield TEC project or one of the City University Business Mentoring Networks which focuses on the needs of Turkish businesses). Other projects, however, place responsibility in the hands of employees, for example the Sheffield Hallam project is promoting an employee-led development scheme within L/SMEs to encourage better use of HE and FE within the region.

## **Theme 3. Curriculum Development and the Accreditation of Key and Vocational Skills**

A broad range of activities have been supported under this theme including:

- activities leading to the accreditation of key and vocational skills for both existing employees and for under/graduates ;
- the development of new education/training modules and delivery methods (work-based or open and distance learning materials) for individuals;
- replicable models which are transferable across degree discipline, sectors or occupational groups concerning mapping, developing and recognising key/core skills.

Some projects are also encouraging ‘lifelong learning’, continuing professional development and are encouraging businesses to explore the accreditation of work-based qualifications for employees.

Projects in the West Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber, are developing new sector specific qualifications (for example in the food, automotive and healthcare sectors) which have aimed to provide defined career progression routes into and through specific industries. One project in the East Midlands is developing a new generic qualification for graduates seeking to enhance their employability.

**Theme 4. Information gathering, research and development**

Research projects have been supported where key gaps in knowledge and understanding have been identified. These include:

- regional surveys to identify future growth and development opportunities (which in turn will allow HEIs to better respond to employers' and labour market needs);
- mapping existing graduate link structures to ascertain where improvements are required to increase the effectiveness of matching mechanisms;
- studies which investigate the relationships between SMEs and HEIs.

These projects tend to focus on the development of specific products such as the development of databases and information systems to increase the quality of communication between HE and business.

The graduate labour market study promoted by GONE, for example, is examining more effective ways in which graduate LMI can be collected, analysed and shared by regional HEIs, TECs, employers and the GO to facilitate effective planning. The UCL key skills project provides a strong example of a project which starts from a research base (the evaluation of existing activities) and develops into models for strategic partnerships between TECs and HEIs. Specific project outcomes under this theme demonstrate significant potential for replication across regions and at the national level.

**Theme 5. Development of strategic partnerships/networking/multi-agency approach**

The development of strategic partnerships which draw together the core competencies of a range of regional and local actors is a key theme within HERDF. Partnerships exist between:

- HEIs and/or specific functions within HEIs for example Careers Services, registries, external relations units etc.;
- TECs/CCTEs;
- Business Links;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- local businesses including L/SMEs;
- local enterprise trusts and economic development agencies;
- other professional bodies.

One project in the South East is using Business Links specifically to breakdown barriers to SME graduate employment in three sectors. Others, for example in the East Midlands, are addressing the issue of improving regional competitiveness by uniting the expertise of, and developing co-operation within, a network which includes SMEs, universities, a TEC, and two Business Links. In some instances the partnerships which have developed have consisted of similar departments within different institutions (for example the Manchester Mentoring Partnership which brought together the careers services across four HEIs with additional inputs from the Education Development Unit and Rochdale and Stockport and High Peak TECS).

### 4.3 Outputs and Throughput

Most of the projects reported that they had achieved the aims and objectives set in their original proposals (68% of all projects returned project monitoring forms). However, in retrospect, a few projects reported that the aims and objectives set were overly ambitious and unrealistic in the twelve month period. Those identified as unrealistic included projects seeking to develop new qualifications or requiring validation (such as the PGC developed by the University of Luton) or some of the projects which sought to place students in SMEs (e.g. Mature Graduates Programme, Business Mentoring Networks for SMEs) or the Sheffield TEC project which sought to recruit individuals that had completed Modern Apprenticeship onto a training programme (no Modern Apprentices had completed their training when the proposal was written, therefore it was difficult to predict the potential numbers of participants).

Three projects identified issues concerning negotiations around the achievement of aims and objectives as follows:

- one project stated that numerical targets were added to their project after they were notified that they had been awarded project funding (subsequently they reported that this was the one aspect of their project where they had failed);
- one project attempted to re-negotiate their aims and objectives when they realised that they were unlikely to achieve all of their objectives to be told that the objectives were fixed and non-negotiable (subsequently this was changed);
- one project attempted to re-negotiate their aims and objectives when they realised that they were unlikely to achieve all of their objectives to be told that the objectives were fixed and non-negotiable (subsequently this was changed);
- one project set numerical targets for take-up which, in retrospect, were unrealistic, and lowered the targets in consultation with the GO which in turn reduced the resources available to the project.

#### 4.3.1 Outputs

##### Products

The scope of the products developed by HERDF projects is vast. These include:

- training materials (customised and generic, traditional and non-traditional materials - of which some have been accredited);
- short course programmes;
- materials for accrediting prior learning and experience and accrediting company based learning schemes;
- diagnostic paper based and software systems that profile skills and competencies;
- products that allow performance monitoring;



- promotional materials that raise employers' and individuals' awareness of the opportunities available from HEIs (websites and paper based promotional materials such as newsletters, case studies and information packs);
- reference materials to aid the replication of projects' methodologies;
- research and project evaluation reports; and
- databases and other information resources which record available employment and placement opportunities and contact details.

Examples of some of the products developed by projects are presented in Exhibit 4.2.

#### **EXHIBIT 4.2: PRODUCTS DEVELOPED BY A SELECTION OF HERDF PROJECTS**

##### **Key Skills London Partnership**

Questionnaire on skills development  
 Guides to skills development  
 Career development pack  
 IT study packs/resources  
 A framework for the self diagnosis of key skills  
 Accredited modules  
 Case studies - ethics in business/guide to ethics for business students

##### **Graduate Profiling: developing a common approach identifying and using graduate skills in industry**

Graduate profiling scheme  
 Profiling achievements proforma  
 Teaching materials

##### **Development and delivery of higher level training via ICTs to local employers**

Website design  
 Learning package for remote delivery via the internet  
 Marketing and promotion of the training

##### **A virtual laboratory resource for biomedical science**

CD Rom with 40 minutes of interaction  
 Project documentation including a product booklet

##### **Partnership Degree in Engineering Technology**

Development of a new degree format/structure

*Source: Performance Monitoring Forms*

#### **Services**

Services developed by HERDF projects can be grouped under three broad themes:

- services for individuals;
- services for employers; and
- services to develop internal capability.

The types of services targeting individuals developed by HERDF include the following:

- advisory services concerning skills development (e.g. the UEA Skills Development partnership);
- skills profiling and the identification of training needs (e.g. the project on work based flexible learning programme managed by the University of Luton);
- matching services which link individuals with appropriate and relevant work placement opportunities with exit interviews/evaluation upon completion of placements and work experience (e.g. the mature students programme managed by Thames Valley University);
- peer assisted study schemes (UCL Key Skills Project);
- a mentoring programme linking ethnic minority students in their final year with representatives from industry (Manchester Mentoring Partnership);

Projects such as, Competitiveness, Work Organisation and SMEs; Accessing Higher Level skills for Graduates: Closing the Loop and Graduate Profiling: Developing a Common Approach to Identifying and Using Graduate Skills in Industry, have provided general consultancy support and advice to businesses. Other, more specialist projects have provided advice concerning the use and application of ICT (for example Developing IT and Software Engineering Capabilities for Business Competitiveness in SMEs). Another project Releasing Potential managed by Prosper (formerly Devon and Cornwall TEC) in partnership with three HEIs ran a series of 21 (of a proposed 24) practical awareness raising and training workshops across a range of subject areas such as leadership, training trainers, the use of IT, e-mail and communication systems, waste management and air quality to 171 separate organisations (some of which attended more than one event).

Services to develop internal capability take three key forms:

- those which raise awareness of needs and opportunities across the partnership such as the research projects supported in the North East;
- those which assist and develop staff to take on different roles and responsibilities such as mentoring, new learning support methods and fora for feeding back information between practitioners and beneficiaries (e.g.. UCL Key Skills); and
- projects which collect and analyse management information concerning their local operating environment (e.g. the Nottingham University survey on future growth and development for SMEs).

Whilst not directly related to project activity, there are also other spin-off benefits to come from the HERDF projects which develop internal capability. For example, the North West's mentoring project has promoted a much more in-depth understanding of equal opportunities policy in companies as mentors have been linked to ethnic minority students and have become much more aware of the issues and barriers that these students face.

## **Partnerships and Networks**

The interim report found that the partnerships generated through HERDF were the most important element of the projects supported and that HERDF provided development funding which facilitated collaborative working at the local and regional level.

All HERDF projects have a partnership, of some form, as the accountable body for the project (in many projects one partner takes lead responsibility for the partnership, whereas ownership is shared in others). In addition to the partnerships which manage and deliver HERDF projects, sustainable networks serving different purposes are also key outcomes resulting from the introduction and implementation of HERDF. These include the following:

- thematic employer networks (such as those established by the City University project and the West Midlands-based Warwick University project - Partnership degree in engineering technology with engineering business management);
- networks that broker linkages between large and small companies (for example, the University of Nottingham's project - Regional survey for future growth and development of SMEs - which also includes business support agencies as network partners);
- integrated local networks including TECs, Business Links (where separate), the Employment Service and private sector recruitment agencies (e.g. Thames Valley University Mature Graduates Programme);
- internal, cross faculty/interdepartmental networks (e.g. Oxford Brookes, for HEI staff involved with the delivery of the HERDF project).

These new networks sit along side existing networks that have been involved (for example the West Midlands Industrial Liaison Officers' network mentioned by the University of Warwick) and those which provide a context within which HERDF operates (such the HEI/TEC network in London and the Vice Chancellors network in the North West). The University College Suffolk project also mentioned the possibility of establishing a SME led benchmarking network involving more than 20 companies.

### **Work Placement Opportunities**

Of the 36 projects responding to the project monitoring proforma, 16 provided work placements (44%), providing opportunities to individuals in a broad range of large and small employers in the private, public and third sectors. The timing of HERDF has meant that not all of the placements have been completed during the HERDF year, but will be completed by October 1998 (before the start of the next academic year).

#### **4.3.2 Throughput**

Data collected from the 36 projects completing the project monitoring forms has identified that 962 individuals and 213 companies have accessed HERDF funded activities.

From the information available, key points to note concerning client characteristics are as follows:

- half of the individuals accessing HERDF were male and half were female;

- of individuals accessing HERDF were aged under 25;
- very few people with disabilities accessed HERDF funded activities - six individuals participated (less than one percent) in four projects.

Over half (65%) of the companies participating in HERDF are service sector companies with a further 26% manufacturing companies. The remainder are from the primary and construction sectors (9% in total). Small firms account for 36% of all companies participating in HERDF while those employers with 25-100 employees and 100 or more account for 29% and 35% respectively.

A total of eight projects reported drop-out amongst individuals and employers, and information concerning drop-out was provided by seven of these projects.

- individuals dropped out and approximately 50 expressed interest but did not start HERDF funded activities;
- companies dropped out and approximately 22 expressed interest in HERDF but did not start HERDF funded activities.

Reported drop-out has two forms:

- Individuals and employers who committed to HERDF, but did not start any activities. This type of drop-out was reported by the University of Luton who experienced delays in the validation of the PGC course which their project sought to develop. As a result, some individuals and companies who had originally expressed an interest in joining the project had found alternative arrangements. This meant that more than 50 individuals and 20 companies interested in the course and associated placement opportunities were unable to access this provision. A second project reported that drop-out resulted from being unable to find suitable student placements. The project also had two students who were unsuitable for placements because they lacked the necessary standard of English (although they were subsequently enrolled on an ESOL course). Company restructuring and relocation were also given as reasons why companies that had committed to HERDF projects withdrew at a later stage.
- Individuals and employers who entered a programme or a placement, but dropped out after starting. Reasons given for dropping-out from HERDF at this stage include employment outcomes (5 individuals left to take up full time jobs), individuals exercising the right to change modules, or personal reasons including a heavy work load or financial reasons. Two companies reported drop-out of this type:
  - one company recruited a graduate at the same time as taking on a HERDF placement and in retrospect decided that they could not offer both individuals the attention they required and therefore let the HERDF placement go;
  - one company purchased software to be developed by a HERDF placement from an alternative source when the student withdrew for personal reasons.

#### **4.4 Impact**

Ascertaining impact for HERDF in relation to the aims and objectives set for this study has proved problematic. In the interim report, issues concerning the ambiguity of the aims and objectives set and the varying contexts within which projects were implemented were identified as key issues which would act as a barriers to the aggregation of project outcomes. With this in mind, the study

team decided to approach all projects to collect comparable information, using a structured proforma, to generate results which could be aggregated. The results presented below consider:

- the impact for individuals and employers;
- perceptions of impact concerning the products and services which can be used in the future;
- institutional impact and new systems established;
- emerging findings and other issues.

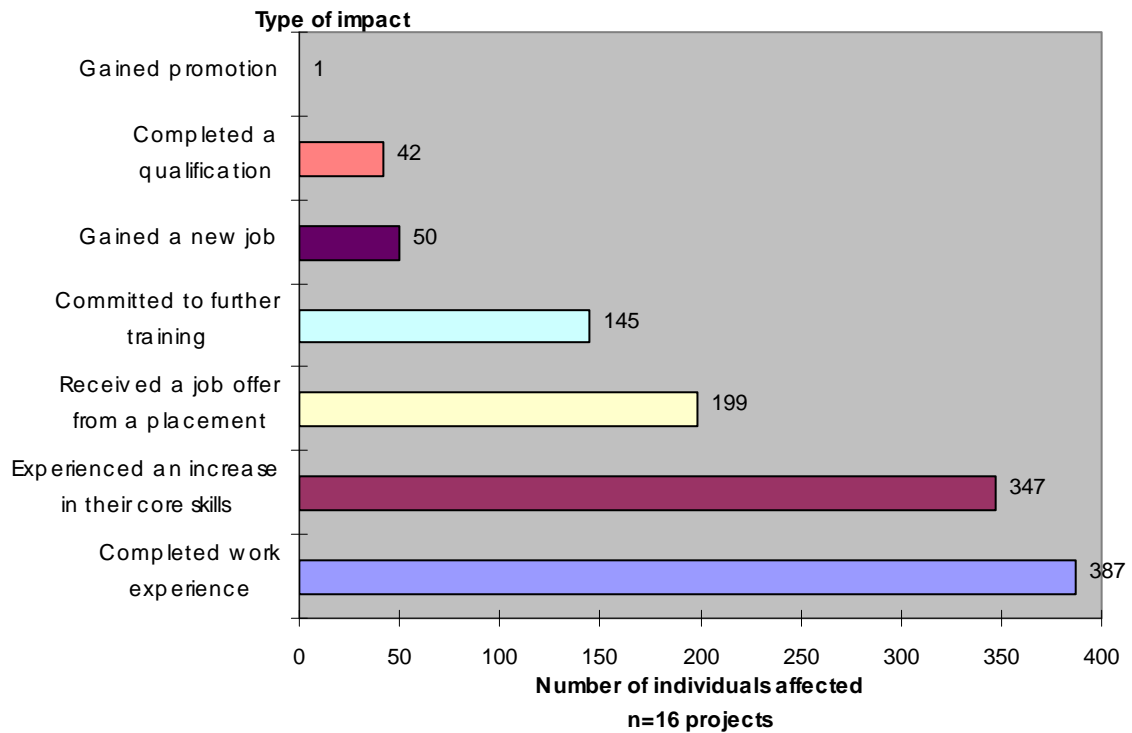
These results are supplemented by the discussions with projects upon their completion of HERDF and discussions with GOs (at a workshop attended by three GOs and one-to-one discussions with others).

#### 4.4.1 Impact for Individuals and Employers

Using data from the 36 returned project monitoring proformas, Exhibit 4.3 provides information on the numbers of individuals benefiting from HERDF whilst Exhibit 4.4 shows what impacts projects have had on individuals. 16 of the 36 projects (44%) were able to provide information concerning the impact of HERDF on/for individuals. Similarly, 16 projects provided information concerning the impact of HERDF on/for employers. With these response rates in mind, the key points to note about the impact of HERDF on individuals are that:

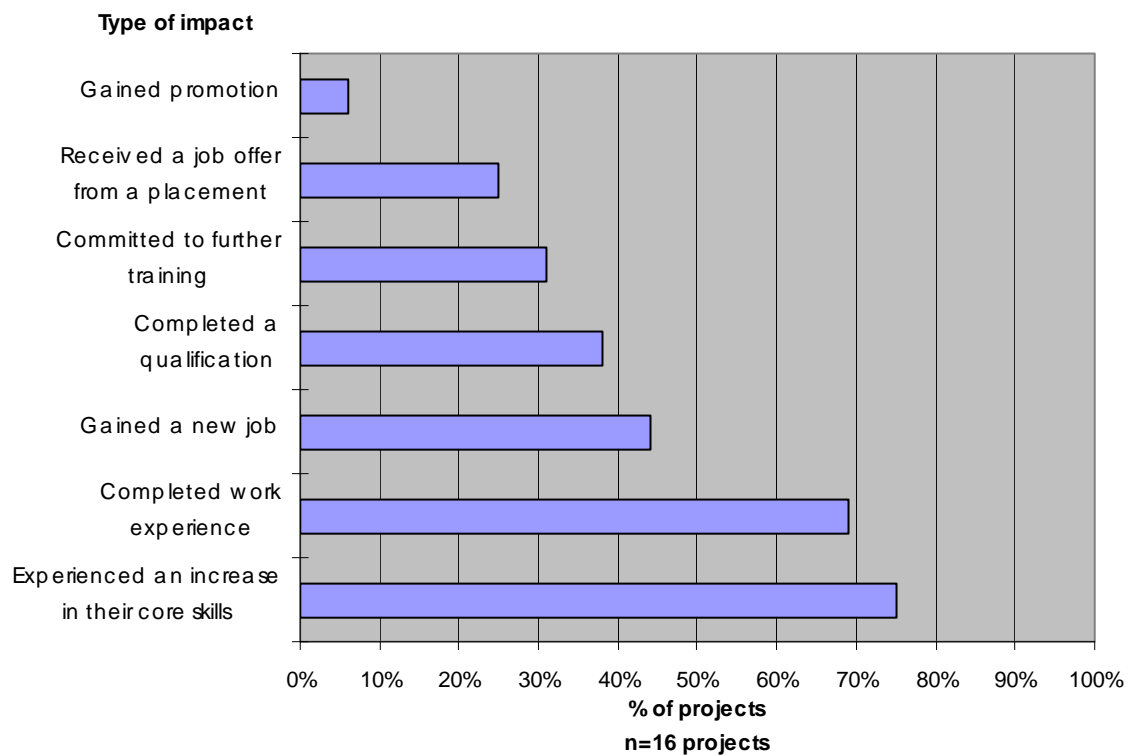
- over two-thirds of projects impacting on individuals reported an increase in core skills and completion of work experience;
- individuals had gained a new job after participating in a HERDF funded project while a further 199 individuals had received job offers from placement providers;
- Forty two individuals participating in HERDF have gained a qualification.

**Exhibit 4.3 Impact of HERDF projects on individuals**



(16 projects from the returned questionnaires answered this question).

**Exhibit 4.4 Proportion of HERDF projects, with impact on individuals**

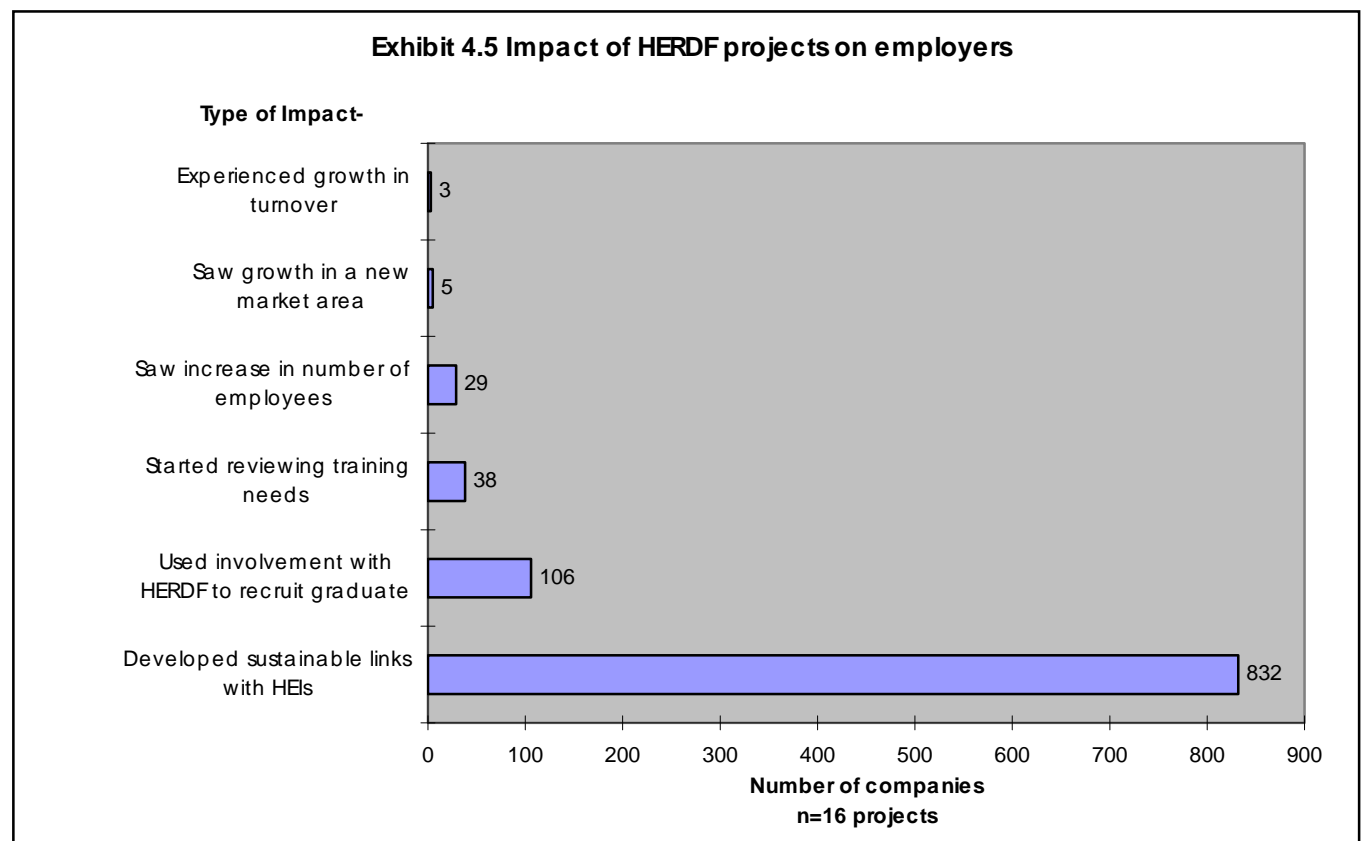


(16 projects from the returned questionnaires answered this question).

The most significant impact for HERDF projects on employers, identified through the performance monitoring forms, concerns the development of sustainable linkages between HEIs and employers (seen in Exhibits 4.5 and 4.6). Linkages have been established with 832 employers and some 82% of responding projects recorded impacts of this type. In addition, 106 companies used their involvement with HERDF to recruit graduate labour (just under one-third of responding projects) and 38 employers have used HERDF as an impetus to review their other training needs (again just under one-third of responding projects). While the numbers are small, it is important to recognise that for a very small number of employers tangible, “bottom line” business benefits have been derived from participating in HERDF:

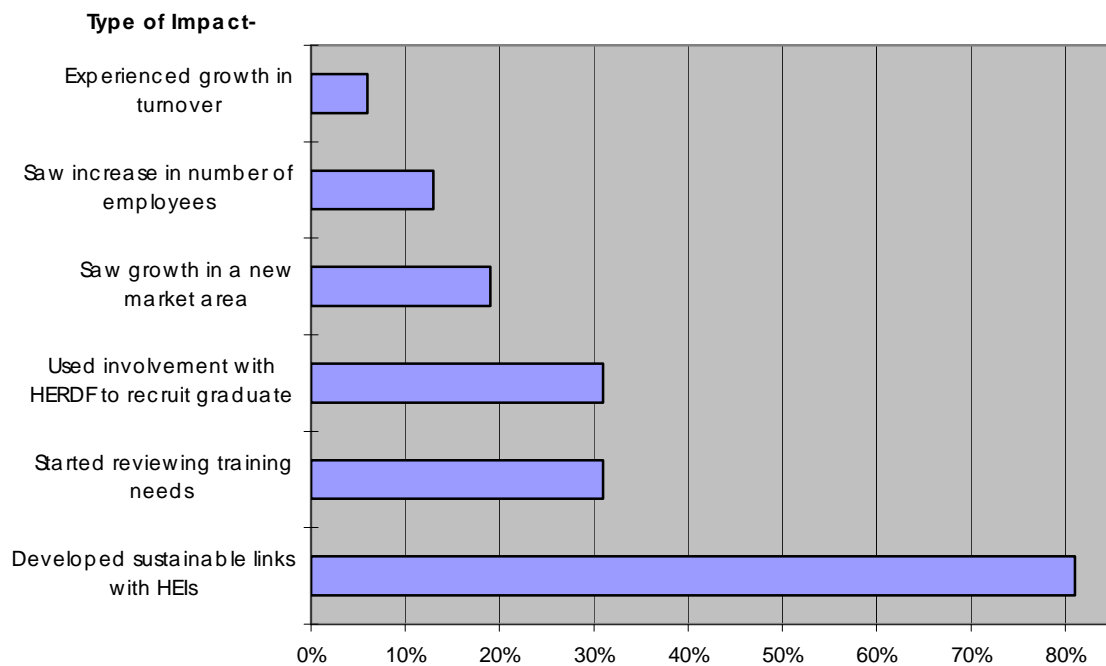
- three companies experienced a growth in turnover (through one project);
- five saw growth in new market areas (through two projects);
- companies saw an increase in staff numbers (through three projects).

It is also worth emphasising that there is potential to increase the impact on business if HERDF initiatives are replicated elsewhere.



*(16 projects from the returned questionnaires answered this question).*

**Exhibit 4.6 Proportion of HERDF projects with impact on employers**



*16 projects from the returned questionnaires answered this question).*

Discussions with and information from projects indicate that it is at the level of individuals and employers that the impact of HERDF is strongest. However, it is important to recognise that many of the projects consulted thought that it was too early to make a full assessment of impact and some projects noted (including those managed by the University of Derby and City University) that they were still waiting for their evaluation reports. Also, feedback from the Liverpool University project, - Developing key skills for employment- indicated that while they considered that direct impact is not evident as yet the outcomes from their project will be apparent in students' skills packages in the future. With this in mind impacts for individuals are considered to have included:

- increased awareness concerning the individual's own skills and competencies (key and vocational) and how these can be used in the workplace;
- increased awareness of the opportunities available to graduates in the local labour market ;
- increased employability which in the longer term is anticipated to assist reduce problems in graduate unemployment (mentioned by the University of Derby).

The examples concerning the above points tend to be inter-linked. Projects, such as the Graduate Profiling project managed by Anglia Polytechnic University, reported that participating students consider that they are now better equipped to apply their degrees in a workbased situation following a placement. They have also increased their understanding of the employment opportunities open to them. The project managed by Coventry University, which sought to develop an NVQ centre for social care and health, identified that their activities have increased employability for participants.

Increased awareness about the expertise and support that HEIs can offer SMEs was identified as a key benefit for employers, in particular, projects identified the following impacts:

- SMEs are now more aware of the opportunities and added value associated with the recruitment of graduates (mentioned by, for example, the UEA Skills Development Partnership, Exporting



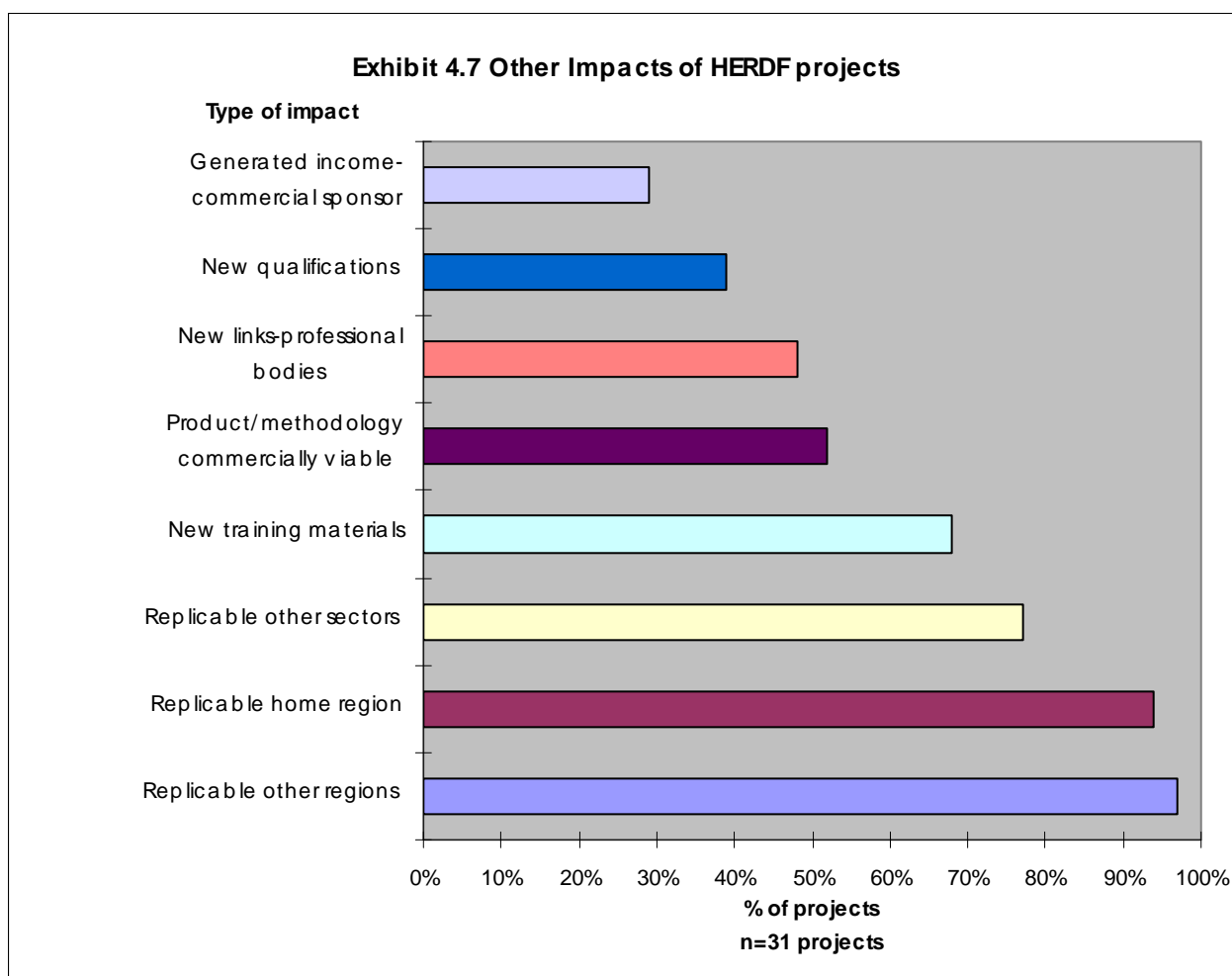
for Success, managed by the University of Derby and the Profiling SMEs and Student Skills for Employability project managed by Goldsmiths' College);

- SMEs have become more aware of the benefits derived from collaborative projects, the need for specific products and services (in this case the preparation of IT strategies - resulting from the University College Suffolk project) and the opportunities to compare themselves with other SMEs through the development of a local bench-marking club.
- SMEs are now more aware of the benefits derived from opportunities such as work placements in that students can complete discrete tasks (for example the approach adopted by the UMIST School of Engineering project or some of the placement opportunities resulting from the mature students programme managed by Thames Valley University).
- the development of sustainable linkages - the University of Brighton managed project on improving employability for new and under/graduates in the IT and communications sector has found that targeted and assessed work placements enhanced the probability that SMEs would employ graduate labour.

In summary, projects' perceptions of impact relate to the impact of projects themselves rather than an understanding of how and where individual projects fit within the broader package of HERDF projects supported by each of the Government Offices.

#### **4.4.2 Impact Concerning Products and Services**

The types of products and services developed by HERDF projects is discussed earlier in this section. Further information concerning the impact of the products and services developed was provided by 31 of the 36 projects completing the project monitoring form. Almost all projects reported that they had a replicable model which could be used in their home region or another region. Replicability can involve most of, or specific features of, an existing tested HERDF project. Over three-quarters of responding projects identified that the products, services and methodologies that they had developed could be transferred to another sector while more than one-half reported that they had a product or methodology which was commercially viable. New training materials and qualifications were also mentioned as key impacts from HERDF along with income from commercial sponsors. This is seen in Exhibit 4.7.



*(31 projects from the returned questionnaires answered this question).*

In addition to the tangible products and services which have been developed through participating in HERDF, projects have also identified additional benefits concerning the linkages which they have established geographically, sectorally and thematically which are sustainable beyond the lifetime of the individual projects. Two examples of the linkages and partnerships established as part of the HERDF project are provided below:

- the three universities in the South West region working together with Prosper (formerly Devon and Cornwall TEC) to deliver the Releasing Potential project expect to sustain this working relationship;
- the four separate thematic networks within the City University project are expected to continue as independent networks. One specifically (the cultural industries network) has grown to accommodate interest from Sadlers Wells and the Barbican and has provided the University with the leverage to become recognised as a key player in local economic development.

#### 4.4.3 Institutional Impact and New Systems Established

The extent of impact within HEIs is affected by the level and degree of cross faculty/departmental working. Specific comments about the impact of HERDF within HEIs relate to the opportunity to embed methodologies to improve employability across HEIs and approaches to raising the profile of key skills across the curriculum.

Tangible legacies are evident with replicable products and services evident for the vast majority of projects supported. In addition, HERDF has assisted projects to introduce new systems, or change existing systems such as those outlined below:

- **institutional or internal systems** - such as:
  - student profiling, tutoring and support systems and new assessment panels, identified by the Anglia Polytechnic University project, Graduate Profiling;
  - methodologies for effective bid management (Oxford Brookes University);
  - systems for monitoring and evaluation such as methodologies for improving the quality and value of work placement opportunities for individuals and employers; and
  - feedback and appraisal systems mentioned by the University of Derby project, Exporting for Success;
- **external or partnerships' systems** including:
  - communication groups (e.g. UCL Key Skills) and thematic sub-groups; project management models (HEREN, managed by Cheltenham College) and systems to identify business needs have been established by HERDF projects (the Staffordshire TEC project on stimulating business needs);
- **methodologies for assessing and responding to behavioural change** - such as:
  - the regional survey concerning future growth and development amongst SMEs which allows the partnership to monitor any changes in the conditions in which SMEs are operating;
  - the Coventry University project where one employer had contracted with them for NVQs, whereas in the past they required traditional academic qualifications.

#### 4.4.4 Impact - Emerging Findings and Other Issues Identified by Projects

The above sections provide an overview of the recorded impact of HERDF. Impact to date is partial, given that only 44% of the 36 projects responding to the request for project monitoring information had provided data concerning impact for employers and individuals. However, a significantly higher proportion of responding projects (86%) provided information about impact relating to the products and services developed. Only a few projects provided information about how their project could affect the local or regional economy, such as the University of Derby project and the Anglia Polytechnic University project where employers expect that participation will allow them to better understand the value added associated with graduate recruitment. The level of sustainable linkages reported earlier, however, suggests that the impact of HERDF is most likely to become more apparent in the future.

Additional observations, concerning the value as opposed to the impact of HERDF, include the following:

- the need for closer co-operation between HEIs and employers is apparent- much can be gained from sustaining and further developing such links;
- HERDF has identified gaps in the provision of support services, in particular for SMEs. However HEIs and their partners have identified the need to carefully consider how to “package” support so that it meets SMEs’ needs;

- the development orientation of HERDF is welcomed and projects have identified that the opportunity to revisit aims, objectives and target audiences during the course of their projects, in response to new and emerging findings from complementary market research, has proved particularly helpful in terms of developing coherent, marketable products and services;
- some projects have been much more successful than others in attracting employers: the Releasing Potential project for example provided a series of thematic workshops attended by 171 separate organisations - significantly more than their target of 100. Whilst these have proved particularly successful, it is too early to measure the extent to which the project has affected uptake of university services.

## 4.5 Regional Impact

Two key issues relate to the regional impact of projects:

- the scale and scope for project impact within the region relates directly to the strategic operating context within which HERDF was implemented;
- some immediate benefits are realised at the regional level from HERDF projects (in terms of the products, services and methodologies developed) but that other benefits, such as business benefits, or the application in the labour force of skills developed during a work placement opportunity are anticipated and will only be realised in the longer term.

In considering the scale and scope for project impact, it is important to return to the aims and rationale identified by GOs for HERDF, presented earlier in Exhibit 3.1 which provided the context within which projects were selected. The aims and objectives vary enormously from strategic to operational and from actions to improve understanding (within the GO and amongst partners) to sharing resources and building on existing links:

- GONW and GOE, respectively identified that they sought to develop mechanisms to improve the supply and demand side of the labour market and to use partnerships to maximise competitiveness and prosperity in the region;
- GOM identified that HERDF should better prepare students for work and enhance the relevance of HE provision to employers whereas GOWM identified the need for “plugging gaps” concerning curricula development in a number of different sectors;
- GOSE aimed to improve understanding concerning labour markets, particularly in IT, tourism and health as well as other practical solutions including increasing the number of graduates entering the labour market, the transfer of know-how from HEIs to businesses and supportive frameworks for regional CPD;
- GOL aimed to build on existing good practice whilst at the same time establishing new business links concerning higher level skills needs

Whilst these are partial, it is important to recognise that such variations have the potential to significantly affect, at the regional level:

- the scale and scope for impact;
- the timescale for impact;
- the extent to which impact can be measured.

A further variable which has affected the impact of HERDF at the regional level concerns the transparency of the selection procedures. Whilst some regions were objective in the selection of projects, others were less so in that they strategically picked projects to ensure geographical coverage or that they wanted to stimulate new or different partnerships. Early feedback concerning selection procedures for 1998 -2000 projects suggest that greater objectivity is evident now that bidding institutions are more familiar with GOs expectations.

In terms of immediate and longer term benefits concerning HERDF, the immediate benefits have been reported previously in this section, whilst it is too soon to comment about the longer term benefits.

From the consideration of impact it is possible to identify a series of key success factors, associated with the operating context, the projects supported, impact opportunities for employers and the potential for dissemination, which can contribute to maximising the impact of HERDF. These include the following:

- **Operating context:**

- existing partnerships and networks comprising HEIs, intermediaries (TECs, Business Links, professional bodies) and employers within which HERDF can operate;
- educated employers who are aware of the benefits which linkages with HEIs can offer in terms of a source of new labour or research and development;
- an environment where HEIs are already perceived as key economic actors;
- access to good quality labour market information which forms the basis of products and services tailored to meet employer needs;
- strong links to other regional policy and funds;
- opportunities for all types of HEIs to be involved;
- a pro-active GO with a strong understanding of issues facing HEIs;

- **Projects supported:**

- high quality, market tested products, services and methodologies which employers want and that could be transferred within the region, either to other institutions or partnerships or to other sectors;

- **Impact opportunities for employers:**

- employers, that through HERDF, have been able to raise their profile;

- **Dissemination potential:**

- products, services and methodologies which can be built into curricula;
- partnerships with the potential for sustainability;
- regional fora to maximise the dissemination of HERDF.

## 4.6 Dissemination

Two aspects of dissemination are considered here: dissemination activities planned and managed by GOs and those by the project teams themselves.

### 4.6.1 GOs and Dissemination

Dissemination activities have been and are currently being conducted and planned by GOs. These involve workshops and conferences, including sectoral based events, and also case study reports and other good practice documentation. The events vary in their content, ranging from each HERDF project making a presentation of their project and their experiences to more thematic programmes with larger audiences. Experience exchange is a key feature of dissemination. In some regions, the various networks have been used to up date projects on good practices.

Discussions with GOs concerning dissemination identified a series of different approaches and views about what should be disseminated, how and to whom. GOs suggested that there is a need for a national dissemination event which would facilitate the sharing of good practice and policy lessons and reduce parallel learning for HERDF 1998-2000 projects. To support this event a catalogue of good practice was considered to be an important tool for the organisations that had participated in the first round of HERDF and those that had been successful in the second round. GOs also identified that they were developing case study materials and dissemination approaches with individual projects about different aspects of the activities supported. Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber, for example, had commissioned consultants to prepare a series of good practice case studies on the experiences of each of the supported projects. GOs also identified the internet as a potential means of widely sharing the outcomes from HERDF - hence learning is shared internally to the region through traditional dissemination methodologies and much further afield through the use of the internet.

Dissemination activities are clearly viewed more widely as a means of building and furthering institutional developments; HERDF has provided GOs with the authority to bring practitioners together to overcome the isolation of certain HEIs.

### 4.6.2 Projects' dissemination proposals and activities

Most HERDF projects have been able to identify what they are able to disseminate as a result of their project. Only two projects reported that it was too early to consider dissemination given that their projects had only been completed at the end of March. Products, services and methodologies; research conducted; curricula development and accreditation and projects' own evaluations are the key products which are being disseminated. These are discussed in turn below:

- products, services and methodologies developed which meet the needs of employers and individuals - such as:
  - successful approaches in targeting employers - identified by Anglia Polytechnic University;
  - models for delivering and mapping CPD identified by Oxford Brookes University;
  - a regional model for the development and promotion of employee led development - identified by Sheffield Hallam University;
- research conducted including projects' assessments of their results and market research concerning employers and labour market needs; business surveys; skills profiling. Projects with research to disseminate include:

- the University College Suffolk project which has the results from an IT skills survey;
- the University of Nottingham regional business survey;
- the University of Exeter results from the survey associated with the mining industry development project;
- curriculum development and accreditation - while projects consulted reported that difficulties had been experienced in securing accreditation within the short timescale, those that responded to the performance monitoring form identified that they have developed qualifications and accreditation frameworks that can be replicated. These include:
  - accreditation services developed by the workbased/lifetime learning project managed by the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside;
  - course validation and documentation for awards in lifetime learning developed by the Regional Credit Framework project managed by the University of Northumbria;
  - the new format partnership degree in engineering technology - developed by the project managed by the University of Warwick;
- projects' own evaluations and final reports, which all projects were required to complete.

HEIs, TECs, Business Links, other HEIs and GOs are the most frequently mentioned audiences for HERDF dissemination activities. Employers, both large and small are also mentioned along with Chambers of Commerce, professional bodies and specific industrial sectors (healthcare, IT, engineering and manufacturing and the poultry sectors were all mentioned by projects). A small number of projects mentioned individuals as audiences for their dissemination activities (e.g. the Exporting for Success project managed by the University of Derby and the Mature Graduates into Employment project managed by Thames Valley University). The pitch or level for dissemination also shows that projects have considered the transferability of their experiences at the local, regional, national and less frequently, international levels.

Events, such as, workshops/seminars, conferences, and presentations, which include those organised by projects themselves as well as those arranged by the GOs are the most frequently mentioned dissemination method (18 projects). The publications which are anticipated include project reports, newsletters, websites and press releases.

The approach to when dissemination should take place is varied - some projects have sought to disseminate their learning on a continuous basis, whereas others have a more traditional view of dissemination in that it should be scheduled as projects are completed. Such an approach may prove problematic in the longer term, if project managers are lost because of short term contracts of employment.

## **4.7 Conclusions Concerning Impact**

### **4.7.1 Project aims and objectives**

HERDF projects have succeeded in responding to both national and regional issues, on the one hand meeting a national need to address graduate employability and improve national competitiveness, whilst on the other hand the projects have specifically tailored responses which provide a solution to how these issues impact at the local or institutional levels.

Projects tended to be oriented towards labour supply or labour demand, gaps in institutions' knowledge and understanding of how higher education interacts with the regional economy, and the development and provision of qualifications to demonstrate employability. A partnership approach underpinned all project activity.

#### 4.7.2 Outputs

Inevitably, organisations were optimistic in their aims and objectives and outcomes. The timescale, however, was a major influence on achievements particularly for those projects which sought to develop new qualifications and methodologies to demonstrate employability. Nevertheless, the vast majority of projects achieved their set objectives and have developed discrete outputs.

#### 4.7.3 Products and services

A wide range of products and services targeting individuals and employers have resulted from HERDF. The vast majority of projects consider that they have developed transferable products, services and methodologies.

#### 4.7.4 Partnerships and networks

HERDF has been influential in creating and maintaining sustainable partnerships and networks. As well as HERDF being delivered by partnerships, networks are also an outcome of HERDF projects. Networks, as outcomes, comprise a number of different forms (thematic, integrated and internal institutional networks) in response to local and regional needs.

#### 4.7.5 Throughput and Drop-out

From the information received so far, 962 individuals and 213 companies have accessed HERDF funded activities. Service sector companies have been more frequently involved and companies of all sizes have participated in HERDF. 65% of companies involved with HERDF had less than 100 employees.

Drop out amongst individuals and employers was reported by eight projects, which represents just over one fifth of the projects responding to the project monitoring form. In general, the level of drop-out was fairly low.

#### 4.7.6 Impact for individuals and employers

The key benefits for individuals participating in HERDF are increases in core skills and access to work experience opportunities. Jobs (actual and intended) and qualifications outcomes were significant, given the short timescale within which HERDF operated.

Establishing linkages between HEIs and employers is a key outcome from HERDF. The linkages established by far outweigh the numbers of employers actually participating. Involvement with HERDF has been used by those involved to recruit graduate labour and encourage employers to review other training needs.

#### 4.7.7 Impact concerning products and services

Replicable models, products or methodologies have been developed by virtually all projects and in many cases projects consider that these have a commercial value.



#### 4.7.8 Systems established

Tangible legacies are evident for a large number of projects, either as a product, service or methodology or as a partnership to take forward HERDF funded or other activities.

#### 4.7.9 Geographic and institutional impact

Projects have focused on service delivery and the achievement of their objectives and output targets where set. Projects' perceptions of impact have focused on these priorities at the expense of spatial impacts.

There are two types of impact for HEIs: internal impacts where products, services and methodologies are shared across departments, and external impacts where approaches are shared between HEIs and their partners.

#### 4.7.10 Dissemination

Projects are disseminating the products and services developed, research conducted and self-evaluation either independently or in conjunction with the Government Office. Different methods are being used to disseminate learning and good practice.

## **5.0 THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Section 2.0 recognised that the policy and operating context for HERDF has shifted since GOs were invited to bid for HERDF funding in November 1996. This section acknowledges and explores the national and regional policy environment within which HERDF has been implemented, and the extent to which HERDF offers the potential to inform the policy environment. The section starts by looking at the national policy environment and the role of HERDF within it, given its regional focus and concerns.

### **5.2 HERDF and the national policy environment**

HERDF, in comparison with other funding for HE Development Activities (e.g. HEED Development Prospectus) is a relatively small, targeted fund. However, it is influenced by many policy arenas. This has highlighted the need for HERDF to be more fully integrated within the broader education and training policy environment which includes:

- the implementation of the Dearing recommendations;
- the competitiveness agenda - employers and individuals;
- widening participation and the links between FE and HE;
- integration, synergy and complementarity;
- regionalisation, which adds a spatial dimension to the policy agenda.

Taking each of these in turn, we can summarise the national policy links with HERDF as follows

### **5.3 The implementation of the Dearing recommendations**

HERDF has demonstrated that HEIs can be tied into the strategic and operational aspects of regional and local labour markets. HERDF has supported and will continue to support human capital projects which are enabling HEIs to be responsive to the needs of local industry and commerce. HERDF has assisted SMEs to have a higher profile within their local labour market by establishing new partnerships, and extending existing partnerships, so that information about HEIs services can be better accessed, and that the skills required by SMEs are better understood by HEIs. The sustainable relationships, between HEIs and businesses identified in the previous section suggests that the full impact of HERDF is yet to be realised and that these relationships provide a solid basis for future working.

### **5.4 Linking into the competitiveness agenda**

The policy drive to achieve greater competitiveness sets an agenda for employers, individuals and HEIs. The key issues for each stakeholder are:

#### 5.4.1 Employers: innovation, efficiency and partnership

For employers of all sizes, achieving competitiveness is an increasing concern which puts pressure on them to raise their profile and to innovate.

HERDF is contributing to improved competitiveness by:

- influencing the functioning of internal labour markets by providing more effective and efficient management skills;
- enabling a greater understanding of the labour market and the opportunities it provides;
- identifying the networks and partnerships that can assist employers' competitive position;
- identifying training needs within companies and addressing these needs

In addition it is important to bear in mind issues regarding the coherence of various initiatives to assist employers to increase their competitiveness. Where other mainstream and development activities exist and are managed through other Government Departments, HERDF should fit with these policy objectives.

HERDF projects have furthered relationships with SMEs and have developed new partnerships with SMEs. The direct results of HERDF in terms of products, services and methodologies have proved significant, particularly for individuals. TECs and Business Links have acted to cement and extend these partnerships, as have lead industry and professional associations. The key learning is that these relationships are well worth nurturing, providing the quality products that appeal to employers.

#### 5.4.2 Individuals: key skills, employability and Lifelong Learning

There are many variables that determine employability. Both mature graduates and young graduates may require additional support to improve employability; other factors may exacerbate the need for this support such as disability and ethnicity. The traditional focus of some subjects has less emphasis on employability as an outcome of HE therefore curriculum development and content is paramount. Some institutions have addressed this issue more than others and dissemination of their approaches is recommended.

Key points to note:

- access to mainstream funding for key and core skills to improve employability is becoming more problematic for HEIs;
- employer awareness and understanding of the transferability of key skills across degree disciplines and their application in the workplace is also important to allow the penetration of non-traditional graduates into the labour market; some SMEs will only take graduates with qualifications that are traditionally known to them whereas others may never recruit graduates;
- the increasing commercial pressure to be able to make an instant contribution to the profitability of the organisation (hit the ground running);
- sectoral and occupational differences need to be understood.

The supply-side theme was a main feature of HERDF during 1997-98 and the opportunity to take forward the learning from these projects provides the basis for some of the activities proposed for HERDF 1998-2000. The extended timescale for HERDF 1998-2000 provides the opportunity to take forward issues concerning the accreditation and assessment of core skills which have only been partially addressed during the first round of HERDF.

Greater understanding of key skills, employability and the significance of Lifelong Learning provides individuals with awareness and understanding about how they can enter and remain in a fluid labour market. Lifelong learning places the emphasis and responsibility for learning on individuals. Using their degree and other initial education and training, HERDF provides a platform for lifelong learning, which can be embedded through continuing professional development and career management.

#### 5.4.3 HEIs: their relationships with the labour market and regional economy

There is a need to explore and recognise the differences between HEIs in terms of how they perceive their relationships with the labour market and the regional economy (e.g. as an educator, an employer/business, and/or a skills provider). This affects how the learning, through HERDF can be taken forward and the extent to which project activities can, in turn influence the regional labour market and economy.

The key influences for HEIs include:

- the issue of intellectual ownership of project ideas and outcomes;
- traditional commercial position and internal priorities (aims and objectives);
- pressures on student numbers;
- student fees;
- the role and importance of the careers service within institutions in preparing graduates for employment;
- the role of other key units and practices, such as industrial liaison units and work placement policies;
- graduate retention within the local/regional labour market;
- scope and scale of mature student entry.

Two further points should also be considered:

- culturally HEIs work vertically on an individual departmental basis; horizontal integration within universities is not common and therefore the opportunities for dissemination within the institution are few. Measures to improve horizontal integration should be encouraged;
- characteristics of the local labour market may act as the key influence behind institutional collaboration e.g. the tight London labour market and institutional specialisms drive a collaborative approach as the most effective means of supporting competitiveness.

#### 5.5 Widening Participation and the links between FE and HE

HERDF addressed this issue in many regions, either because there are already strong links between higher education and further education institutions, and these are key features of the existing service delivery within the local labour market (as in London), or because the issue of HE/FE links was a

matter for debate. Practices in some areas, in terms of involving FE in HERDF, have changed as a result of HERDF I, whereas the second round bidding has explicitly invited the FE sector (although FE involvement was not a feature in all regions). HERDF clearly furthered this debate although it was not possible to judge, in the course of this evaluation, the implications of FE participation for particular groups of employees or potential employees. These issues are worthy of closer examination, especially those projects where FE and HE are collaborating. Involvement of HEFCE was also significant for future debates to ensure complementarity with other development activities.

## **5.6 Integration, synergy and complementarity**

The evaluation provides evidence of the integration of HERDF with some other GO responsibilities such as Modern Apprenticeships (MA's), where HERDF has provided a progression route for MA completers. GOs reported that as the implementation of HERDF progressed, interaction within the GO improved to bring together expertise from DTI, European Office, and Skills and Enterprise directorates. However, while progression has been made, more connections need to be made at the GO level so that HERDF can be better linked to mainstream education and training policy within the GO.

Significant strategic or tactical partnerships have resulted from or been strengthened by, HERDF and as mentioned previously some of these partnerships pre-existed HERDF, whereas others have developed or expanded because of HERDF. The sustainability of the partnerships indicates that a rationale or need for future collaboration is evident for the majority of projects supported. GOs have a role to play in influencing the form, content and strategic direction of such partnerships. The involvement of particular agencies, and the strength of partnerships, were key issues for HERDF performance. The contribution of TECs and Business Links was identified as an influence on positive outcomes.

## **5.7 Regional impact and regionalisation**

The roles and responsibilities of Regional Development Agencies are still under discussion however responsibility for HERDF are likely to be part of their remit.

Understanding, awareness and expertise concerning the HERDF 1998-2000 projects and how they fit within the regional operating context, over the next twelve months will rest with the GOs who remain responsible for the selection and management of the 1998-2000 projects.

## **6.0 CONCLUSIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This section draws a series of conclusions concerning the implementation of HERDF and the extent to which:

- *HERDF is engaging HE more systematically in supporting economic growth and competitiveness in Government Office Regions; and*
- *enhancing the HE sector's contribution to the effective functioning of local and regional labour markets.*

### **6.2 Implementation**

HERDF provided a relatively small sum of money that has levered in significant staff and financial resources across partnerships far in excess of original expectations. The combination of HERDF development money with other inputs has generated positive results in terms of the products, services, methodologies and partnerships developed and supported. The key individuals and agencies which have been involved in co-ordinating and/or leading on HERDF projects have varied across regions, although in general, projects have comprised a core of institutions including HEIs, TECs/CCTEs and Business Links. Other organisations have been engaged, such as professional associations or lead industry bodies, where they can add a sectoral or thematic insight from the employers' perspective. This has resulted in a range of different products, services and methodologies across the 54 projects supported.

The experimental and development nature of HERDF projects have related to three factors:

- development activities - the products, services and methodologies which have been developed (and in some cases the piloting of these);
- implementing and testing products, services and methodologies at the local or regional level in response to identified needs;
- the partnership approach used to deliver project activities.

HERDF was timely, both for GOs and for projects. The contribution of the above actions to regional economic development is strongest where Government Offices had a clear perception of HERDF and its strategic significance, and where GOs agreed precise aims, objectives, targets and indicators with projects so that the connections to the regional economy were explicit. Such an approach has proved important in a fluid policy and operating context which has shifted significantly since HERDF was first conceived and will shift further, particularly at the regional level, with the introduction of RDAs.

While HERDF covered the 1997-98 financial year, some of the projects did not actually start until the summer or in a small number of cases even later. This means that products, services and methodologies have been developed in less than the twelve months initially envisaged. Despite this short timescale, the vast majority of projects have developed replicable products, services and methodologies, some of which have been market tested whereas others remain at the pilot stage. The evaluation has identified some 962 individuals and 213 employers (this figure excludes the 171 employers attending the Releasing Potential workshops which took place in the South West) that

have participated in HERDF. Some 250 of the individuals participating in HERDF have secured employment (or the promise of employment) resulting from their participation. In general, however, the main outcomes for individuals have been improvements in key skills and work experience. For employers, using HERDF as a means of securing graduate labour is a key tangible outcome, whereas HEIs see the development of sustainable links as a significant and positive outcome.

As outlined above HERDF has resulted in a series of products, services and methodologies with a high potential for replication. The potential to share the learning gained by projects supported is also high and will minimise parallel learning during HERDF 1998-2000.

### **6.3 Systematic engagement of higher education**

The existence of links between higher education and other key regional economic actors prior to the introduction of HERDF has proved an important strategic influence on the development of aims and objectives at the regional level. The different starting points from which GOs have put in place HERDF and the total value of HERDF monies has influenced the extent to which HERDF facilitates or furthers the engagement of HE in supporting economic growth and competitiveness. A fund totalling £2.72m across ten GOs cannot be viewed as sufficient to affect “systematic” engagement, however, it has provided the necessary resources to cement existing relationships and instigate new, potentially strategic relationships which can move forward in the future.

The neutrality of the HERDF monies, in that it was given to partnerships rather than single institutions, has been particularly significant in securing collaboration and providing a focus for joint working across the different types of organisations involved. HERDF has provided a focus for sharing common problems relating to employability, competitiveness, new qualifications and market research concerning gaps in knowledge and understanding of regional and sectoral performance.

The shifting policy environment, within which HEIs operate, and in particular the Dearing recommendations concerning the local and regional role for HEIs, provides the context for behavioural shifts within HEIs concerning the opportunities available to them and their ability to respond to the needs of the regional economy. Traditional systems and methods of working within HEIs have been challenged by the need to respond to shorter time scales, wider involvement, and the external labour market. In this, HEIs have been encouraged to be visionary in developing innovative solutions to national, regional and local problems.

### **6.4 Higher education’s contribution to local and regional labour markets**

The extent to which HERDF has enhanced HEIs’ contribution to local and regional labour markets is, at this point in time, impossible to measure. HEIs are unique establishments that contribute in different ways to local and regional labour markets. HEIs are educators, trainers, providers of research and development, facilities managers and employers themselves that operate at local, regional, national and international levels. On this basis the extent of HEIs’ integration within their local and regional labour markets is dependent on their origin; institutional aims, objectives and orientation; funding sources; catchment area (for students and research); and market presence. Perceptions of HEIs by external institutions are governed by the contact, awareness and understanding that individuals have had with individuals and or departments within HEIs.

Different types of HEIs have different roles to play in the local and regional labour market and as such, institutional strengths must be recognised so that they can be effectively harnessed. These differences are seen in the various approaches to the development of products, services and methodologies supported by HERDF which respond, in the main, to common problems concerning employability and competitiveness. Within HERDF, GOs have an important strategic role to play in relation to which HEIs have participated, and to the nature of such involvement. Indeed GOs have ensured that some HEIs have worked together to respond to common labour market problems where similar proposals were submitted (GONW and GOWM).

HERDF has also significantly informed GOs about the differences between HEIs within their regions and the best ways of building strategic partnerships and harnessing individual, departmental and institutional expertise. Regional intelligence on these issues varied considerably and affected what was supported and how GOs allocated resources and time.

HERDF has demonstrated that HEIs can develop products, services and methodologies which, if replicated more widely amongst different types of employers and institutions, can contribute to improving regional economic performance. Products, services and methodologies cannot be replicated in their entirety, but specific features could be used elsewhere. It is too soon to say whether this wider replication will happen or the extent to which the actions supported under HERDF will ensure that the contribution that HEIs can make to the regional economy is increased.

## **6.5 Recommendations**

There are a number of operational and strategic recommendations arising from this national evaluation of the Higher Education Regional Development Fund. These concern:

- the management of HERDF;
- maximising the impact of HERDF; and
- promoting the systematic engagement of Higher Education in economic growth and competitiveness.

A Good Practice Guide has been devised for use by the DfEE, Government Offices, projects and partners. This should be read in conjunction with the study recommendations and is contained in Annex D.

### **6.5.1 The management of HERDF**

The responsibility for managing HERDF should rest with the regions but within the context of the agreed national priorities, thus providing the flexibility to respond to regional and local issues with targeted solutions. However, there is a clear need for a well-structured and articulated framework that identifies roles and responsibilities for DfEE, Government Offices, HEAs, projects and partners. In addition, it is important that information and good practice is exchanged: on an ongoing basis, both within and between regions; to maximise impact and achievements and to avoid 'reinvention of the wheel'.

Government Offices need to consider the wider administrative and contractual resources required for HERDF and what is available to them and move towards a position to draw on internal resources within the GO as and where appropriate, for example, assistance concerning contract



management. The sustained success of HERDF requires organisation and sufficient programme management resources.

HERDF needs to be more closely aligned to other programmes and policies, such as the Higher Education and Employment Development Programme, and those which are concerned with higher level skills, for example, MA and European Programmes, in particular ADAPT and ADAPT UFI to maximise impact and avoid duplication. This is necessary at a national policy level and also within the regional structure to ensure that the links between higher education and the economy are more deeply embedded. At the regional level, HERDF and the networks developed as a result of HERDF, may play an influential role in shaping the higher level skills actions of RDAs.

### 6.5.2 Maximising the impact of HERDF

Government Offices should provide, if not provided already, a continuing focus or forum to raise awareness, encourage partnerships and enhance the contribution of HE to local and regional labour markets.

In order to maximise the impact of HERDF it is necessary to:

- clearly articulate HERDF aims and objectives at the national, regional and local level;
- ensure that objectives at these levels are SMART;
- devise and implement systematic monitoring procedures that continue after project funding comes to an end to allow longer-term impact to be assessed.

The learning from HERDF should be taken forward and disseminated. Projects, GOs and the DfEE should exchange their experiences of HERDF and disseminate good practice. The dissemination network is multi-layered, for example, between DfEE and GOs, between projects within and outside of the region (and programme), between GOs and between projects and other audiences. Government Offices, in particular, should work with projects at the regional level to put in place a dissemination framework that evolves during the life of the project. Dissemination is an ongoing medium for the exchange of learning, methodologies and good practice.

### 6.5.3 Promoting the systematic engagement of Higher Education in economic growth and competitiveness

Government Offices should ensure that there is a clear role for Higher Education in regional economic strategy and policy and that the roles are clearly articulated, understood and potentially measurable. Clear mechanisms should be in place to engage HE in the achievement of regional aims and objectives, paying attention to the varying roles that different HEIs can play, including FE Institutions. Government Offices should consider whether FE Institutions should be more widely involved in the future.

Government Offices should promote wider and extended partnerships beyond the level of the individual in HEIs. Partnerships that bridge specialisms and sectors should be welcomed.

## **ANNEX A**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE: BIDDING CRITERIA, INTENDED OUTCOMES**



Bidding guidance provided by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) to the Government Offices, outlined the eleven “intended outcomes” of the HERDF.

***HERDF - Intended Outcomes***

1. Effective local and regional higher level labour market information systems based on the development of a common LMI infrastructure between HE, TECS and others (including FE).
2. Greater flexibility in the HE curriculum to meet identified and agreed needs amongst local and regional employers (both large and small). This might be whole course development or the enhancement of the key skills elements within the existing provision.
3. Information about HE provision and services identified, collated and presented to employers and relevant agencies such as TECs and Business Link.
4. Work based learning programmes developed by universities or colleges of higher education in association with local and regional employers or groups of employers
5. Support for undergraduates who wish to develop the skills necessary for employment in SMEs and self-employment
6. Encouraging more work experience and for it to interact with learning
7. Upskilling from technician to professional level. This might involve: sectoral work with SMEs, large companies and suppliers, developments with professional bodies; liaison with individual employers; and access through FE.
8. Progressing better and more effective arrangements for continuing professional development in HE.
9. Developing coherence in the use of the NRA between schools, FE, HE and employment.
10. Assisting HE institutions to become approved assessment centres for NVQs.
11. Helping create partnerships between HE and relevant agencies (including FE) to achieve the NETTS. especially Lifetime Target 2.



## **ANNEX B**

### **RESEARCH TOOLS**



## NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

### Topic Guide for Initial Interviews with Government Offices

Overall aims of study: to identify how and in what ways the Higher Education Regional Development Fund is:

- engaging more systematically in supporting economic growth and competitiveness in Government Office Regions; and
- enhancing the HE sector's contribution to the effective functioning of local and regional labour markets.

A range of key personnel will be interviewed in each Government Office in order to gain an understanding of the GO's policy context for HERDF. GOs have been asked to identify key personnel, including the Director of Skills and Enterprise, to participate in the discussions.

Before the interview, all available literature should be reviewed (in some cases the only available information will be the Schedule 1, unless GO and project bids have been received in advance). Try to clarify any issues or gaps during the interview. The discussion is based around four themes, context, content, implementation and impact. Please use the following questions to inform the discussion.



## 1. CONTEXT

Aim of the HERDF: *‘to engage higher education more systematically than at present in supporting competitiveness and economic growth through close partnerships with employers and employer-led organisations, principally Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs).’*

HERDF’s objectives are:

- *enabling HEIs to understand better and be responsive to the needs of employers;*
- *stimulate greater and better utilisation of graduates by employers;*
- *helping the achievement of the higher level NETTs and promoting lifetime learning;*
- *helping individuals and companies through work on graduate retention.*

**Why is HERDF important to the region?**

**In relation to the aim and objectives, what were the three key factors influencing the introduction of HERDF at the regional level?**

*Prompt, if necessary, using the following:*

- *HE and HEIs expertise in the region;*
- *GOs existing links with the region’s HEIs;*
- *the relationship between HE and other education and training provision in the region;*
- *existing relationships between HEIs and employers;*
- *graduate recruitment patterns (regional retention rates, types of employers recruiting and more general attitudes in relation to the recruitment of graduates);*
- *the skills base of the regional labour force.*

**What information did the GO use to inform the decision making processes about the HERDF in the region?**

**How would you describe the status of higher education within the GO?** *Explore whether HE has a high or low status, whether HE is considered as an important element of education and training provision in the region; whether the status of HE and its role in the regional economy has changed/ altered since the bids for HERDF funding was prepared and whether the GO expects the status of HE to change in the future. What information is available to support the answer given?*

**What is the policy and operational context for the HERDF within this region?** *Explore the GO's links (synergy and complementarity) with:*

- *the Competitiveness framework;*
- *Education Strategy,*
- *links with other GOs;*
- *other education and training activities, HEI/ employer links at the regional level.*

## **2. CONTENT**

**What choices did GOs make in relation determining the activities which are being supported by HERDF in their region?** *Explore what bids were received, how many bids were received, whether the selection was difficult and what type of bids were rejected.*

**What aims and objectives have been set for the HERDF at the regional level?** *Is there a sectoral, geographical or occupational dimension to the aims and objectives?*

**How were the selection criteria for HERDF projects developed?** *Explore how the selection criteria relate to the regional competitiveness framework and education strategy; the profile of the HEIs across the region etc.*

**When were the selection criteria of HERDF projects developed?** *Were the selection criteria in place before the GO invited bids?*

**Who was involved in the development of the selection criteria for HERDF funded projects in the region?** *Did this involve internal GO staff and/ or representatives from HEIs, TECs or other bodies?*



### 3. IMPLEMENTATION

**How would you describe the GO's current roles and responsibilities in relation to the delivery and management of HERDF?**

**How would you describe the DfEE's roles and responsibilities in relation to the delivery and management of HERDF?**

**How have the GO's roles and responsibilities, concerning HERDF, changed over time?**  
*Please explore the GOs roles - are they promoting HERDF, is their role one of policing/ monitoring?*

**How has the GO used the support available from the Higher Education advisers?** *Has the support been for the GO or has it extended to support for projects/partnerships and do the GOs know what support individual project receive from the HEAs?*

**How has the HERDF been tailored to meet the needs of the region?**

**Does the GO consider that they have taken ownership of the HERDF, or is the fund seen as something which the DfEE is implementing?** *Explore whether the GO think that they have ownership of the HERDF and whether the GO want ownership of HERDF?*

**Who are the key actors involved in the management and implementation of HERDF?** *Within the GO, at the regional level and at the project level*

**Which institutions are represented on the Regional Steering Group?**

**What are the Steering Group's aims and objectives?**

**Please can you describe the form and make-up of the partnerships for the individual projects in your region?** *Please explore who leads the projects, whether the project leader is expected to gain the most benefit from participation and whether partners, in each case have an active or passive roles?*

**How was the GO involved in the establishment of the HERDF project partnerships?** *Explore whether the GO was responsible for establishing or brokering partnerships, whether partnerships were already in place and HERDF facilitated activities and whether the Go is considered as a partner in individual projects.*

**What support does the GO and/or the HE advisers provide to individual project partnerships?**

**What channels of communication, concerning HERDF, exist between:** *Are communication channels formal, informal or both?*

*GOs and projects? -*

*GOs and other GOs?*

*GOs and DjEE?*

**In relation to the above how do the HE advisers contribute to the development of channels of communication between the different actors?**

**Did this communication exist before HERDF, or has it been established in response to the Fund?**

**How successful are the communication channels?** *Explore in relation to projects, partnerships, GOs and DjEE and whether any problems have arisen*

**Has there been any interest from other education and training suppliers in relation to HERDF?**



#### 4. IMPACT

**What are the intended outcomes and outputs of the HERDF for the GO and for the individual projects?**

*GO's outcomes and outputs*

*Project outcomes and outputs*

**What short term and long term performance indicators have been established to demonstrate or measure the impact on or contribution to the regional economy?** *How well established are the performance indicators (here we want to know about the coherence between the activities which are being supported and whether the projects are complementary or a series of disparate activities - this has implications for impact at the regional/ national level)*

*Short term*

*Long term*

**How will impact be measured / monitored?** *Quantitative activities (students/trainers), results (qualifications / appropriateness) qualitative measure of economic effects (job outcomes, increase in efficiency?), indirect effects (societal values, technological change?)*

**How do the anticipated outcomes relate to the suggested project outcomes specified in the terms of reference for HERDF?**



**What, if any, unscheduled outputs and outcomes are now anticipated?**

**Can you identify any successes to date, associated with the content and implementation of HERDF?**

**Can you identify or foresee any barriers associated with the content and implementation of HERDF?**

**How will outcomes feed into the development of regional HE/economic policy?** *Explore whether mechanisms are in place to facilitate this*

**What are your perceptions / expectations of the intended impact of HERDF in relation to:**

- *the development of strategic partnerships reflecting national/ regional/ local priorities for competitiveness eg business links*
- *the transferability of ideas, methodologies;*
- *the development of products and services;*
- *sustainability of the impact after the funding period is over - what, why and how?*
- *the potential for the mainstreaming of new ideas developed through initiatives - what and why?*
- *the potential policy impact;*

- *the relationship between project aims and objectives and regional aims and objectives.*

**How is the GO tackling the regional evaluation of the HERDF?** *What has the GO done; have they issued a specification for the evaluation; have they appointed consultants; do they need any help? In relation to help - do not offer too much - identify needs and we can discuss these with the DJEE.*

**How is the regional evaluation addressing the following issues:**

- *the implementation and management of HERDF?*
- *the types of projects and activities which are being supported?*
- *the identification of performance indicators appropriate to the individual projects?*

## 5. Future

**How far do you think the initiative will involve HE more systematically in supporting economic growth and competitiveness?**

**How far do you think the initiative will enhance the HE sector's contribution to the effective functioning of local and regional labour markets?**

**Have you any comments in relation to:**

- *emerging/ anticipated good practice?*
- *improvements for the future learning based on experiences to date?*
- *the GOs perceptions concerning commitment to, sustainability and mainstreaming of HERDF?*

*Any other comments about the HERDF?*

## **TOPIC GUIDE - GO FOLLOW-UP WORKSHOP**

The purpose of this contact is to reflect on the current round of HERDF activities and identify the learning for GOs and their partners which can be built upon for the operation of HERDF in 1998/2000. There are five key areas which we would like to explore:

- the policy context
- the management and implementation of HERDF
- the content of the programme
- the impact of HERDF
- the future

### **THE POLICY CONTEXT**

Reflecting on the contact that GOs have had with HERDF projects, how has HERDF developed to meet the current needs of:

- the region?
- local issues?
- institutions?

Looking forward, how can you see HERDF evolving to meet local regional and institutional needs over the next two years?

What measures have been put in place to ensure that HERDF is integrated into the GOs' strategic objectives?

Has the importance of HERDF changed over the operating period?

Has the status of HE within the GO changed as a result of HERDF?

How do GOs see HERDF in relation to HEFCE's regional actions

### **MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HERDF**

There are five aspects of management which we want to explore with GOs:

- ownership
- GO roles and responsibilities
- HEA roles and responsibilities
- lessons learned and good practice;
- dissemination

#### **Ownership**

Are projects taking ownership sufficiently so that project aims and objectives are being met?

Is ownership shared by all project partners?

Have the channels of communication, concerning HERDF facilitated organisations to take ownership of HERDF? (Explore in relation to the different relationships - GOs and projects;

GOs and other GOs; GOs and DfEE).

## **GO Roles and Responsibilities**

How would you describe the GOs' roles and responsibilities in relation to the delivery and management of HERDF? (Explore - is the GO role strategic or operational? Was the GOs role front loaded?)

Discuss the following themes:

- project selection (active/passive? time spent? added value?)
- capacity building (differentiate - pre/post tendering - HERDF organisations? other organisations - HEIs, TECs, BL, colleges and other regional partners?)
- advice to bidding organisations (management of the bidding process, form and content of bids)
- monitoring and evaluation (project/regional levels)
- management and ongoing support (strategic or operational? delivered by whom - GO staff, HEA?)
- impact and disseminating good practice (internal/external? networking? products, services, partnerships?)

## **DfEE and HEA Roles and Responsibilities**

How would you describe the DfEE's roles and responsibilities, during this operating year, in relation to the delivery and management of the HERDF?

- project selection?
- capacity building?
- advice to bidding organisations?
- monitoring and evaluation?

How has the GO used the support available from the Higher Education Advisers? (Explore in relation to the points outlined above and consider whether HEA's inputs have been strategic or operational input and with hindsight, what would GOs have done differently with their HEA?)

## **Learning**

Looking back:

What would you have done differently had more time been available concerning:

- project selection
- capacity building
- advice to bidding organisations
- monitoring and evaluation
- management and ongoing support
- impact and disseminating good practice

What are the good practice lessons in terms of the management of HERDF which can be shared with other GOs?

How should the DfEE's roles and responsibilities concerning the management and implementation of the HERDF change in the future?

How should the HEA's roles and responsibilities concerning the management and implementation of the HERDF change in the future?

Are all of the key regional actors on board? (Within the GO, at the regional level and at the project level)

### **Dissemination**

What plans for dissemination have the GOs drawn up?

What activities have been proposed? (Explore what type of organisations are being targeted and the extent to which inter regional dissemination have been considered)

Who contributed to the dissemination plans?

### **CONTENT**

How well have GOs performed in relation to the aims and objectives set for the HERDF at the regional level?

In retrospect, how realistic were the aims and objectives set by projects in delivering the GOs aims and objectives?

Looking back what would you do differently in selecting new HERDF projects?

### **IMPACT**

There are two aspects of impact to be considered, discussed in turn below:

- direct/indirect impact
- GOs roles in affecting impact

#### **Direct/Indirect Impact**

How well are the HERDF projects performing in relation to their intended outcomes and outputs of the HERDF?

How does this compare with your initial expectations?

What short term and long term performance indicators have been established to demonstrate or measure the impact on or contribution to the regional economy?

How does/will the Regional evaluation report address impact?

Is there any evidence to demonstrate unexpected outputs and outcomes? What are these?

How is HERDF:

- contributing to the development of strategic partnerships reflecting national/regional/local priorities for competitiveness
- ensuring the transferability of ideas, methodologies;
- developing products and services;
- providing sustainable outputs and outcomes - what, why and how?
- contributing to the mainstreaming of new ideas developed through initiatives?
- ensuring a policy impact;
- contributing to the realisation of project and regional aims and objectives.

Has there been any interest from other education and training providers and other key actors in relation to HERDF?

### **GOs roles in affecting impact**

What measures will you put in place to ensure that HERDF will integrate into GO strategic objectives?

Have linkages with other elements of the GO resulted or strengthened through the introduction of HERDF?

Has understanding of operational priorities and policy increased as through HERDF?

### **FUTURE**

How will you ensure that HERDF is developed strategically in the future?

Is funding such that HERDF is viewed strategically?

How will outcomes feed into the development of regional HE/economic policy?

What does this mean in terms of the following:

- partnerships (equality in the partnership base, any gaps in terms of representation - eg. FE)
- products/materials
- networks (capacity building, strategically allocating projects to partnerships)
- work placement opportunities
- other resources
- meeting business needs (sectors or occupational groups)
- lifelong learning
- transferability of good practice (within and across regions)

How far do you think the initiative will involve HE more systematically in supporting economic growth and competitiveness?

How far do you think the initiative will enhance the HE sector's contribution to the effective functioning of local and regional labour markets?

What can be done to improve HERDF's impact in the future?





## **TOPIC GUIDE - GO FOLLOW-UP**

The purpose of this follow-up is to reflect on the current round of HERDF activities and identify the learning for GOs and their partners which can be built upon for the operation of HERDF in 1998/2000. There are five key areas which we would like to explore:

- the policy context
- the management and implementation of HERDF
- the content of the programme
- the impact of HERDF
- the future

### **THE POLICY CONTEXT**

Reflecting on the contact that GOs have had with HERDF projects, how has HERDF developed to meet the current needs of:

- the region?
- local issues?
- institutions?

What measures have been put in place to ensure that HERDF is integrated into the GOs' strategic objectives?

How do GOs see HERDF in relation to HEFCE's regional actions

### **MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HERDF**

There are five aspects of management which we want to explore with GOs:

- ownership
- GO roles and responsibilities
- HEA roles and responsibilities
- lessons learned and good practice;
- dissemination

#### **Ownership**

Are projects taking ownership sufficiently so that project aims and objectives are being met?

#### **GO Roles and Responsibilities**

How would you describe the GOs' roles and responsibilities in relation to the delivery and management of HERDF?

#### **DfEE and HEA Roles and Responsibilities**

How would you describe the DfEE's roles and responsibilities, during this operating year, in relation to the delivery and management of the HERDF?

How has the GO used the support available from the Higher Education Advisers?

### **Good Practice**

What are the good practice lessons in terms of the management of HERDF which can be shared with other GOs?

What support do GOs require from the DfEE's and the HEAs?

### **Dissemination**

What plans for dissemination have the GOs drawn up?

### **CONTENT**

How well have GOs performed in relation to the aims and objectives set for the HERDF at the regional level?

In retrospect, how realistic were the aims and objectives set by projects in delivering the GOs aims and objectives?

### **IMPACT**

There are two aspects of impact to be considered, discussed in turn below:

- direct/indirect impact
- GOs roles in affecting impact

#### **Direct/Indirect Impact**

How well are the HERDF projects performing in relation to their intended outcomes and outputs?

How does this compare with your initial expectations?

What key performance indicators have been established to measure the impact on or contribution to the regional economy?

How is HERDF:

- contributing to the development of strategic partnerships reflecting national/regional/local priorities for competitiveness;
- ensuring the transferability of ideas, methodologies;
- developing products and services;
- providing sustainable outputs and outcomes;
- contributing to the mainstreaming of new ideas developed through initiatives?
- ensuring a policy impact;
- contributing to the realisation of project and regional aims and objectives.

Has there been any interest from other education and training providers and other key actors in relation to HERDF?

### **GOs roles in affecting impact**

What measures will/have you put in place to ensure that HERDF will integrate into GO strategic objectives?

Have linkages with other elements of the GO resulted or strengthened through the introduction of HERDF?

Has the importance of HERDF changed over the operating period?

Has the status of HE within the GO changed as a result of HERDF?

### **FUTURE**

Looking forward, how can you see HERDF evolving to meet local regional and institutional needs over the next two years?

How will outcomes feed into the development of regional HE/economic policy?

How far do you think the initiative will involve HE more systematically in supporting economic growth and competitiveness?

How far do you think the initiative will enhance the HE sector's contribution to the effective functioning of local and regional labour markets?

What can be done to improve HERDF's impact in the future?

## **PROJECT MONITORING PROFORMA**

**Project Name:**

## **PERFORMANCE MONITORING INFORMATION**

### **Basic Data: Funding**

1. What was the total value of Higher Education Regional Development Fund monies which you received from your Government Office?

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Please can you complete the following table:

Name of Matched Funder	Total Financial Input	Total Value of in-kind contributions and nature of the contribution

2. Have you received funding from any other sources?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, who has provided additional funding and how much did they provide?

Name of Funder	Amount of funding provided

### **Basic Data: Partnership**

3. How many partners are working with you on this project? (*Please include your own organisation in this figure*).

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4. Please can you provide *an estimate* of the total staff inputs (in person days) associated with your project in the table provided below:

Organisation	Staff resources committed in Person Days

5. Which of the following best describes the contracting arrangements between your self and your partners:

- ☐ Formal sub-contract arrangement
- ☐ Commitment through a letter of intent
- ☐ Informal, written partnership agreement
- ☐ Informal, verbal agreement
- ☐ Other, please specify

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### **Delivery, Outputs and Dissemination**

6. Did you meet all of your objectives?

- ☐ Yes                      ☐ No

7. Did you complete all of the tasks scheduled in your workplan.

- ☐ Yes                      ☐ No

8. Please complete the following table, outlining what types of products, services, materials etc. your project has produced.

Products/Materials	1. 2.
Services	1. 2.
Networks	Involving whom?
Work placement opportunities	How many and in what types of companies?
Other resources (Please specify)	1. 2.

9. The following asks about your dissemination activities.

What are you disseminating? <i>(Products, methodologies, services, evaluation etc.)</i>
Who is the audience for your dissemination activities? <i>(Local, national or international, HEIs, TECs, Business Links, Government Offices or other key actors)</i>
How are you disseminating your project?
When are you/do you plan to disseminate the outcomes from your project?

### Throughput

10. If this information is reasonably available, please complete the following table which asks about the characteristics of your client group(s).

	Number	Number
<b>Individuals (eg. Students, trainees or employees)</b>	Male	White European
	Female	African/Caribbean
		Asian
		Other
<b>Individuals (eg. Students, trainees or employees)</b>	Under 25	Total number of people with disabilities accessing training
	Over 25	
<b>Companies</b>	Primary	1-25 employees
	Manufacturing	25-100 employees
	Construction	100+ employees
	Services	

11. Did anyone drop out?

☐ Yes                      ☐ No

12. If yes:

How many dropped out? ***Please write in the number in the box below.***

*Individuals:*

*Companies:*

13. Why did they dropout?

*Individuals:*

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*Companies:*

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## Impact

14. In examining the impact of HERDF on individuals and employers please can you answer the following questions:

### ***Impact concerning individuals***

- (a) How many people have started a new job as a result of support from your project?
- (b) How many of people have gained a promotion as a result of support from your project?
- (c) How many people have a job offer in place when they complete their current course?
- (d) How many people have completed a qualification as a result of support from your project?
- (e) How many people have committed to undertake further training or education courses as a result of support from your project?
- (f) How many people have completed work experience as a part of your project?

### **Numbers**




- (g) How many people have seen an increase in their core/key skills as a result of participating in HERDF? 

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- (h) Other *(please specify)*

**Impact concerning companies**

- |   | Numbers |
|---|---------|
| (a) How many companies have experienced a growth in turnover as a result of participating in HERDF?         |         |
| (b) How many companies have seen growth in a new market area as a result of participating in HERDF?         |         |
| (c) How many companies have developed sustainable links with HEIs as a result of participating in HERDF?    |         |
| (d) How many companies have used their involvement with HERDF as a means to recruit graduate labour?        |         |
| (e) How many companies have started a review of other training needs as a result of participating in HERDF? |         |
| (f) How companies have seen an increase in the number of employees as a result of participating in HERDF?   |         |
| (g) Other <i>(please specify)</i>   |         |

15. For the following please tick all which are appropriate to your project

**Other Impact**

- |  | Tick all appropriate |
|--|----------------------|
| (a) Has your project generated new training materials ?  |                      |
| (b) Has your project developed any new qualifications?   |                      |
| (c) Has your project developed a model which can be replicated by other partnerships in your region?   |                      |
| (d) Has your project developed a model which can be replicated by other partnerships other regions?  |                      |
| (e) Has your project developed a model which can be replicated by other partnerships in other sectors?                                       |                      |
| (f) Have you developed a product or methodology which is commercially viable?  |                      |
| (g) Have you generated any other income from employers as a result of HERDF? (eg. sponsorship, research projects or consultancy assignments) |                      |
| (h) Have you established any new links with professional bodies as a result of participating in HERDF?                                       |                      |
| (i) Other <i>(please specify)</i>  |                      |

16. Have you identified any new, sustainable channels of funding for your HERDF activities?

☐ Yes ☐ No

17. If yes: what funding channels have you identified?

18. Has your project generated any revenue?

☐ Yes                      ☐ No

If yes:  
How much?

From what sources?

19. Have any new systems been established as a result of your HERDF project? (***For example contracting arrangements, project management arrangements***)

☐ Yes                      ☐ No

20. If yes, what systems have been established?

21. Please describe how you think your project has impacted on the local and/or regional economy.

22. If you have any comments which you would like to add concerning the implementation and management of your project which you consider will inform the national evaluation study, please outline them in the box provided below.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION**

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PROJECT VISITS**



## **DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PROJECT VISITS**

### **CONTEXT**

- 1 Any previous experience of HE national development projects or other similar projects? If yes, briefly explore previous activity (partnership approach, organisation, funding, operational context, outcomes, sustainability etc.?)
- 2 What is the labour market justification for the project?
  - national
  - regional
  - local
  - research
- 3 Other driving factors:
  - industrial structure
  - economic performance
  - occupational structure
  - recruitment issues
  - existing partnership(s)
  - other
- 4 Were they aware, when putting in the project bid, of opportunities for:
  - capacity building
  - mainstreaming
  - influencing policy development
- 5 Who led on the bid? Which organisation? Why? What is the rationale for participation in HERDF?
- 6 Project's view of the policy environment and the appropriateness of HERDF
- 7 Are there any linkages being made with other activities/projects in the region/local area or perhaps nationally?

### **CONTENT**

- 1 Project aims
- 2 Project objectives
- 3 Are these SMART?
- 4 Are the project objectives changing over time? In response to what factors?
- 5 What/who are:
  - Products
  - Services
  - Beneficiaries (e.g. SMEs, graduates etc.)

- 6 Is project on target to meet its objectives?
- 7 Is the project running as anticipated. Is it expanding or downsizing?
- 8 Is the project reaching the target group?
- 9 What are the key successes so far in terms of:
  - products
  - services
  - beneficiaries
  - partnerships
  - other successes
- 10 What are the barriers to success?
- 11 Improvements for the future? Is there anything that DfEE, GO could improve for next time?

## IMPLEMENTATION

- 1 Did the partnership(s) exist before HERDF? In what way and why?
- 2 Is it a new partnership? How did it come about? Strategic or operational driver?
- 3 Membership of the partnership (how many partners, what institutions etc.)
- 4 Is GO or the HEA represented in the partnership? Is their role proactive/reactive?
- 5 What are the partnerships' aims and objectives, if any?
- 6 What are the partnerships' policy goals, if any?
- 7 How does the partnership fit within a broader strategic operating context i.e. does it have a bigger agenda?
- 8 Please can you describe the partnership's institutional context i.e. is it institutions, departments or individuals that make up the partnership?
- 9 How would you describe the form of your partnership? Is it:
  - **Hub and Spoke** - a formation whereby a lead partner co-ordinates the programme of work in the partnership and assumes sole responsibility for management.
  - **Consortium** - all of the participating organisations share project management - specific duties and responsibilities may be allocated by a designated steering group.
  - **The Ad Hoc Model** - an 'inner' group or sub-set of partners work together on a particular project, however some of the partners may liaise on a one to one or bi-lateral basis, with other less involved organisations in key sectoral or thematic areas, for example.
- 10 What are partners' roles and responsibilities? Are the roles shared equally?

- 11 How did you decide partner's roles and responsibilities?
- 12 Who leads the partnership?
- 13 What contracting arrangements have been established between partners?
- 14 What communication arrangements have been established between partners?
- 15 Has the partnership changed over time (membership, working arrangements, focus, scope, ownership)?
- 16 What time inputs have partners put into the project?
- 17 How would you assess the quality of your partnership?
- 18 Is there cohesion within the partnership?
- 19 Relevance of partners?
- 20 What makes the partnership successful/unsuccessful? Personalities and individuals? Effective management?
- 21 Is the partnership sustainable without a HERDF project?
- 22 Is there a network through which outputs can be cascaded?

**Management of project:**

- 23 Is there a full time project manager? If not, who leads and manages the project?
- 24 How is the project organised (organogram)
- 25 Are roles and responsibilities allocated? If yes, how?
- 26 Is there a (development) plan for the project?
- 27 Are milestones set out in the plan?
- 28 Is plan being followed?
- 29 Who is on the project Steering Group? Is GO or the HEA represented?
- 30 Is this arrangement successful?
- 31 What improvements could be made to the project's partnership and management arrangements in the future? What lessons have you learned?
- 32 Could GO or the DfEE have done more?

## IMPACT

- 1 What is the scale or size of the project? Has this influenced the development of the project in any way? Has it enhanced or hindered project outcomes?
- 2 What match funding has the project secured and from whom? Has this affected the development and outcomes of the project? Will funding continue/would it continue without HERDF money?

### **General information about the project:**

- 3
  - Beneficiary characteristics - individuals, employers, intermediaries
  - Beneficiary experiences and satisfaction
  - Unforeseen facilitators e.g. inputting institutions not included in partnership
  - Length of intervention to achieve outcomes
  - Retention
  - Dropout
- 4 What are the project's (anticipated) outputs:
  - qualifications
  - employment, destinations (if known)
  - key skills accreditation
  - networks and partnerships formed
  - funding channels established, sponsors found
  - new systems installed
  - self-sufficient projects established
  - new businesses established
- 5 What are the negative outputs/outcomes?
- 6 How will performance be measured in relation to the project's aims and objectives?
- 7 What scope exists for a multiplier effect? What, if any, are the restrictions? Can the project be replicated across the region or in other parts of the country?
- 8 Is the project (i.e. service or product etc.) commercially viable?
- 9 Does the project have the potential to self-fund in the future?
- 10 What is the sustainability of project in the future, in terms of:
  - products
  - services
  - partnership
- 11 What are the longer-term outcomes from the project? Is there a project legacy?
- 12 Do you have any plans for follow-on work?
- 13 What is the longer-term (anticipated) economic impact of the project?



- 14 What is/was the role of the National Record of Achievement, if any?
- 15 What has been the opportunity cost of participating in HERDF, if any?
- 16 What have projects achieved which could not have been achieved without HERDF monies? How do projects propose to measure this additionality?
- 17 How will VFM be assessed? Do you have any calculations on costs per beneficiary, employer, job and/or qualification etc.
- 18 What do you consider to be good practice on:
- Attracting the target group
  - Content
  - Implementation
  - Management
  - Other
- 19 Do you have any plans for the dissemination of project findings?
- 20 What are the main lessons from HERDF?

**ANY OTHER COMMENTS**



## **ANNEX C**

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS BY REGION**



GO Region/Project	Contact Details	Aims and Objectives	Activity	Partners
<b>Eastern Region</b>				
1. Development Centre for Owners and Graduate Managers of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises	Professor Bob Ryan , University of Hertfordshire, 45 Grosvenor Road, St. Albans AL1 3AW	Demonstration of the value, relevance, accessibility and flexibility of national standards as a route to increased competitiveness; promotion of the importance and value of personal and management development; application of learning experience in future methods and services; creation of new long-term client relationships; creation of peer groups and networks of graduates / managers to develop future work.	Establishment and operation of a Management Development Centre focusing on the needs of graduate managers and the owner / managers of SMEs (a development centre in this context is a process involving a number of people and exercises rather than a physical space, and historically, has been available to managers in large companies).	University of Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire TEC.
2. The UEA Skills Development Partnership.	Paul Greatrix, University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ	To establish a skills development partnership which will provide the incentive and means for undergraduate and post graduate students, employees and the unemployed in the region to develop effective personal and employment skills and the qualities which encourage life-long learning.	Activities include; identifying skills requirements; graduate survey analysis; training new academic staff and post graduate teaching assistants; developing skills modules; building a resource base; development of new work-based learning programmes and the provision of learning opportunities for non-graduates.	UEA, University College Suffolk; Norfolk and Waveney TEC; local employer organisations (esp. SMEs).
3. Graduate Profiling; Developing a common approach to identifying and using graduate skills in industry.	Mick Betts, Centre for Accreditation and Negotiated Awards, Anglia Polytechnic University, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford CM11 1LL	To work with employers to increase graduate recruitment, especially in SMEs and to maximise utilisation of graduate skills in employment; to build a partnership involving the TEC and industry; piloting of a credit rated undergraduate profiling system.	Activities focus on testing the conceptual model and involving employers in development and endorsement; building a direct action research link between academic activities and the workplace; joint co-ordination of the elements of the project to ensure maximum 'value added' for participants.	Anglia Polytechnic University, Essex TEC
4. The Development and Piloting of a Post-graduate, Work-based, Flexible Programme to Facilitate the Employment of Graduates by SMEs.	Gordon Weller, University of Luton, Centre for External Affairs, The Spires, 2 Adelaide Street, Luton LU1 5DU	The project aims to develop a new qualification to serve as a bridge between undergraduate experience and employment. No generic post-graduate qualification is currently available to graduates who wish to enhance their employability skills. The project also aims to address the reluctance of SMEs to recognise the value and relevance of training in the workplace	Development of appropriate workshop materials for the initial preparation period; recruitment of small and medium sized companies to the project from four categories; automotive supply chain; environmental and waste management; manufacturing; non-sector specific SMEs.	Uni. of Luton, Bedfordshire TEC, Business Link & Chamber of Commerce; Luton EDU.
5. Developing Information Technology and Software Engineering Capabilities for Business Competitiveness in SMEs.	Richard Boniface, University College Suffolk, Rope Walk, Ipswich, IP4 1LT	To enable SME organisations to improve their strategic planning, incorporating planned information strategy; to assist SMEs in obtaining wider access to graduate skill and knowledge base; to facilitate network opportunities for SMEs to share research and practice through benchmarking of information strategies.	'Brokerage' of supply of graduate skills to SMEs; identification of potential projects within SMEs; joint supervision of IT projects by SME manager and academic; formation of forum to assist in broader dissemination of findings.	University College Suffolk, Suffolk TEC; Suffolk Business Link.

GO Region/Project	Contact Details	Aims and Objectives	Activity	Partners
<b>East Midlands</b>				
1. Work-based Learning / Lifetime Learning within SMEs (and its accreditation).	Dr. Margaret Noble, University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, Cottingham Road, Kingston upon Hull, HU6, 7RT	To improve and build on links to strengthen partnerships between higher education and SMEs; to encourage employees and employers to take up higher education opportunities through offering work-based routes to higher education; to explore ways in which the development of focused short accredited programmes of continuing professional development (CPD) can provide routes to education and training for employing organisations.	Awareness raising in the SME sector of the potential of accreditation of work-based learning through use of learning contracts; establishment of partnerships; development of clear guidelines for AP(E)L and work-based learning in SME sector; exploration of potential for linking academic and vocational routes; piloting of accredited short courses with strong work based focus; promotion of networking in SME sector to share good practice; provision of support for employees wishing to engage in work-based learning.	Uni. of Lincs & Humbs, Lincs. TEC & Business Link. Includes inputs from Lincolnshire Business Development Centre and EPI Centre
2. Competitiveness, Work Organisation and SMEs in the East Midlands	Prof. Peter Totterdill, The Nottingham Trent University, Burton Street, Nottingham NG1 4BU Tel: 0115 948 6539	To build active collaboration and sharing of expertise in work organisation among the Universities of the East Midlands, including creation of common database and protocol for co-operation with Business Links and TECs in the provision of services to SMEs; to raise SME awareness of new forms of work organisation; to build a strong bridge between university work organisation expertise and the provision of SME support by Business Links / TECs.	Creation of an East Midlands Work Organisation forum comprising University experts and TEC/Business Links representatives; appointment of a specialist business advisor; creation of pilot 'change networks' of SMEs in each TEC/BL area; identification of market opportunities to ensure sustainability of network and production of strategic business plan.	Universities of Loughborough, Nottingham and Nottingham Trent, Gtr. Nottingham TEC; Gtr. Not'ham & South Derbys. Business Link;.
3. Exporting for Success - Graduates into SMEs	Ms. Berni Dickinson, University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB Tel: 01332 622240	To assist the development and growth of SMEs in export markets; to promote collaboration between HEI and local development agencies; to enable SMEs to benefit from graduate skills and knowledge whilst on business driven placements.	Development of export strategies for SMEs through graduate placement and mentoring; to facilitate networking events for SMEs to support development of export strategy; provision of framework of linguistic and cultural support to SMEs and graduates; provision of graduate work placements.	Uni. of Derby, S. Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce, Business Link & TEC.
4. Regional Survey for Future Growth and Development of SMEs	Dr. Martin Binks, The Enterprise Centre, Sch. of Management and Finance, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 3RD Tel: 0115 951 5274	To design a permanent information service 'business barometer' for SMEs business support services and universities in the East Midlands, to establish a live model to act as a demonstrator.	In depth interviews to ascertain the information needs and scope for information provision by SMEs, business support services and universities; use of existing networks to identify existing information, needs and provisions; design of instrument for information collection and analysis; establishment of small, live working model on the EMNET.	Nottingham & De Montford Universities; Gtr. Nottingham Business Link; Leicester Business Link.

5. Encouraging Greater Involvement of HEI Students and Graduates within SMEs Contribution towards Work Based Training and Trading Places.	Mr. Ray Holmes, North Derbyshire TEC, St Mary's Court, St Mary's Gate, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 7TD Tel: 01246 551158	To improve competitiveness of SMEs; to improve the range and quality of placement activity to positively affect attitudes within SMEs towards graduate employment; to prepare HE students for the world of work.	Extension in range and scope of under/graduate placements; improvement in capacity of students to benefit from and contribute to SMEs through preparation and piloting of materials; development of support packages for SMEs in specific sectors; piloting and evaluation of models of student placement.	Nth. Derbyshire & Nth Nott'shire TECs; Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam, Nottingham, Nottingham Trent & the Open Universities; Nth Derbyshire Business Link.
6. Encouraging Greater Involvement of HEI Students and Graduates within SMEs within Work Based Learning/Lifetime Learning Within SMEs.	Ms. Sue O'Hara, Leicestershire TEC, Meridian East, Meridian Business Prk, Leicester, LE3 2WZ Tel: 0116 265 1515	To increase and encourage HE links with SMEs through the development of a series of project / work based learning models designed to accommodate the 'multifarious' needs of SMEs; to develop a training module which will enable under/graduates to acquire the 'employability' skills required by SMEs.	Development of student/graduate skills and flexible approaches to work-based learning; production of case studies; improvement of graduate retention rates; cultivation of mutual understanding and links between academic and SME cultures; development of relationship between HEI Careers Services and SMEs; incorporation of lessons learned into future models.	Leicestershire & Lincolnshire TECs; De Montford, Loughborough and Leicester Universities.

GO Region/Project	Contact Details	Aims and Objectives	Activity	Partners
<b>London</b>				
1. Mature Graduates into employment	Sue Thurston, Director of Further and Continued Education, Thames Valley University, University House, The Green, Ealing, West London, W5 5ED	To support SMEs in the employment of mature graduates. The objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to encourage SMEs in the London area to employ more graduates;</li> <li>• to develop relationships between HEIs and SMEs that are mutually beneficial by helping HEIs to be more responsive to the needs and problems of SMEs</li> <li>• to enhance mature students work related skills and knowledge in a workplace environment</li> </ul>	The development and design of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning materials</li> <li>• a communication infrastructure</li> <li>• diagnostic tools</li> </ul> The provision of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• training for Careers Service staff</li> <li>• placements,</li> </ul> and the identification of employer projects.	Thames Valley University, HEIs, SMEs
2. PLUS - Promoting Linkages between Universities and SMEs	Claire Codling, North West London TEC, Kirkfield House, 118-120 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2RL.	To assist the University of Westminster develop its role in supporting local competitiveness and economic growth through partnership with business. Objectives are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to help the university become more responsive to local needs;</li> <li>• to encourage the greater utilisation of graduates by employers (particularly SMEs);</li> <li>• to develop greater understanding of, and responsiveness to, SMEs by the university;</li> <li>• to help the achievement of higher level National Targets</li> </ul>	Specific activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recruitment and implementation of SMEs and students</li> <li>• accreditation of key skills</li> <li>• dissemination</li> <li>• embedding university/business links</li> <li>• development of a website</li> <li>• student support services</li> </ul>	NWLTEC; University of Westminster, EBP, Business Link, TEC



GO Region/Project	Contact Details	Aims and Objectives	Activity	Partners
3. Profiling of SMEs and students skills for employability	Cindy Barlow, Student Support Office, Goldsmiths College, M124, New Cross, London SE14 6NW.	To identify the needs of SMEs in the local area to enhance the employability of students by matching their key and transferable skills with the demands of the local economy and hence their capacity for lifelong learning. The project's objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to create a database of SMEs with the potential of employing graduates;</li> <li>to analyse student placements, employment and career destinations</li> <li>to identify key skills criteria in relation to SMEs and HE</li> <li>to develop a network of partnerships;</li> <li>to develop an IT recording achievement system</li> </ul>	Specific activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>production of reports on HEIs as suitable partners for SMEs and</li> <li>key skills;</li> <li>pilot projects identified;</li> <li>production of a draft handbook for SMEs;</li> <li>proposals for developing a network</li> <li>production of disk based materials on recording achievements and key skills</li> <li>guidance manual and final report</li> </ul>	University of Greenwich, Goldsmiths College, SMEs
4. UCL Key Skills	Sue Cross, Department for Continuing Education, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT.	To extend and evaluate the collaboration initiated by the CENTEC Higher Education Forum to promote strategic partnership between the TEC and its HEIs for the benefit of the local and national economy. The project's objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to sustain and evaluate the partnerships of 8-10 HEIs with FOCUS Central London;</li> <li>to enable HEIs to enhance key skills provision;</li> <li>to understand innovation in key skills in the labour market context and further develop employer-HEI dialogue.</li> </ul>	Specific activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collating the outcomes from the current key skills projects</li> <li>establishing an electronic mailbase</li> <li>development of institutional projects</li> </ul>	University College London, CENTEC, Westminster University, Focus Central London
5. Business Mentoring Networks for SMEs	Caroline Leigh, Department of Continuing Education, City University, Northampton Square, London EC1V OAB	To support local competitiveness and economic growth through making identified resources of the HEIs available to selected SMEs and facilitating the relationship as it develops. The project's objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to develop greater awareness amongst SMEs of the resources and expertise in HEIs and their graduates;</li> <li>to increase HE responsiveness by brokering relationships between SMEs and HEIs;</li> <li>to identify business needs and match with the relevant university resources;</li> <li>to share expertise in fostering employability and entrepreneurial skills in graduates, work based learning and assessment and facilitate use of the internet;</li> <li>identify and evaluate best practice</li> </ul>	Specific activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish 4 networks of SMEs</li> <li>Set up a website</li> <li>study concerning the feasibility of developing an ongoing database;</li> <li>Advice on curriculum development</li> <li>Best practice report</li> </ul>	City University, HE, SMEs

<b>GO Region/Project</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>	<b>Aims and Objectives</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Partners</b>
6. Managing Transition for Innovation and Entrepreneurship - a programme for graduate employment and entrepreneurship with SMEs.	Dr. Barbara Page, University of North London EDU, 236-250 Holloway road, London N7 6PP.	To assist London HEIs to develop their role in supporting local competitiveness and economic growth through the effective application of graduate and sandwich year students to SMEs, in close partnership with TECs, Business Links and employer led organisations. Specific objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to help HEIs develop entrepreneurship and innovation studies;</li> <li>• to encourage the more effective utilisation of graduates by SMEs, particularly in growth sectors.</li> </ul>	Specific activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the formation of project groups and development of research action plan;</li> <li>• the piloting of training programmes;</li> <li>• the development of information resources;</li> <li>• the development of curriculum for entrepreneurship;</li> <li>• a final report and evaluation.</li> </ul>	University of North London, TECs, Business Links and employer led organisations.
7. Accessing Higher Level Skills and Graduates: Closing the Loop	Ben Charles, Education Manager, West London TEC, 15-21 Staines Road, Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 3HA	To establish an infrastructure within which HEIs can make an improved strategic response to the needs of business, in particular, SMEs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing SMEs with information about HE expertise and services;</li> <li>• enhance job-brokering role of HEIs in increasing graduate employment into SMEs;</li> <li>• strengthening links between SMEs and HEIs;</li> <li>• positioning HEIs as providers of higher level skills training for SMEs;</li> <li>• piloting of new strategies for communicating with SMEs</li> </ul>	Specific activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• targeting of participating companies;</li> <li>• establishment of appropriate systems and products;</li> <li>• piloting of infrastructure and delivery systems;</li> <li>• review, evaluation and dissemination.</li> </ul>	HEIs, SMEs, WLTEC

GO Region/Project	Contact Details	Aims and Objectives	Activity	Partners
<b>Merseyside</b>				
1. Developing Key Skills for Employment	Anne Merry, Development Officer, Centre for Careers and Academic Practice, Student Services Centre, 150 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L69 3GD	The project aims to prepare students to be effective employees and to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enhanced accessibility and relevance to employers of HE provision;</li> <li>the achievement by students of the key skills application of number, communication and IT to at least level 3.s</li> </ul>	Specific activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the development and piloting of the support programme</li> <li>piloting a profile system</li> <li>staff development concerning effective implementation</li> <li>wider applications / implementation</li> </ul>	University of Liverpool; GO Merseyside, HEED, HEIs, local TECs, SMEs.
2: Students as Entrepreneurs	Chris James, Liverpool John Moores University, St Nicholas Centre, Off Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5YD	The project aims to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>research attitudes and barriers to self employment amongst undergraduates and</li> <li>develop a series of workshops, seminars, work experience and mentoring activities designed to promote entrepreneurial skills and develop the skills necessary for entry into the SME sector (in particular micro SMEs).</li> </ul>	Activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>preparation and piloting of workshop materials</li> <li>survey of “Business Bridge” participants</li> <li>marketing campaign</li> <li>workshop delivery</li> <li>web pages on self employment</li> </ul>	Liverpool John Moores University; GO Merseyside, HEED, HEIs, local TECs, SMEs.

GO Region/Project	Contact Details	Aims and Objectives	Activity	Partners
<b>North East</b>				
1. North East Graduate Labour Market Study	Dr. Richard Firth, Director of Careers Service, University of Newcastle NE1 7RU Tel: 0191 222 6000	To examine ways in which graduate labour market information in the North East can be better collected, analysed, shared and used by universities, employers, TECs and the GO.	Analysis of available information on the supply of graduates and on graduate recruitment; to develop a better understand graduate careers and the changing requirements of employers; identification of improved mechanisms for data collection; exploration of the influence regional LMI might have on the planning processes of universities in the region.	University of Newcastle, University Careers Services, the Region's TECs, NE Chamber of Commerce and HESIN.
2. Key Skills for New Graduates	Dr. Graham Best, Corporate and Commercial Development Unit, University of Teeside, Middlesbrough, TS1 3BA Tel: 01642 218 121	To identify and establish ways of developing key skills which leave new graduates ready for effective employment particularly in SMEs which have limited resources and experience of graduate employment.	Evaluation of outputs of current research into graduate employability in respect of SMEs; development of materials to allow SMEs to understand how to better use placements and prepare employers for the permanent employment of graduates; investigation of the establishment of an SME self-support network; investigate how alumni can be used to support students and graduates working for SMEs; project evaluation.	University of Teeside; University College Stockton and Teeside TEC.
3. Regional Credit Framework	Dr. Freda Tallantyre, University of Northumbria at Newcastle, Sutherland Building, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 8ST Tel: 0191 232 6002	To develop a regional mechanism for linking work-related education at higher levels into a national credit framework and to develop a model for a regional CPD awards at the higher levels in collaboration with employers.	Desk research of national developments; identification of employers engaged in CPD; research CPD methods used by employers; development of model for CPD award; testing of model on employers; consultation on validation of CPD award; staging of regional event to disseminate findings.	NE Region TECs, Universities of N'bria, Durham, Newcastle, Sunderland, Teeside and the Open University.

GO Region/Project	Contact Details	Aims and Objectives	Activity	Partners
<b>North West</b>				
1. Graduating for Growth: Undergraduate Preparation for Work (supply side)	Sean Mackney, Assistant Director, CONTACT, Enterprise House, Manchester Science Park, Lloyd Street North, Manchester M15 6SE	GO North West is funding eight projects under two themes. Overall strategy seeks to create a more responsive supply of graduates to employers; galvanise greater use of HE by the SME base and strengthen partnerships between HE, employers / TECs by establishing sustainable networks.	Five projects are focusing on the collection and interpretation of available data relating to student destinations, inter and intra regional boundary flows, graduate perceptions and the development and accreditation work-based assignments and modules including key skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enterprise Centre;</li> <li>• Manchester Mentoring Partnership;</li> <li>• Manchester School of Engineering;</li> <li>• Graduate Gateway;</li> <li>• Graduates for Greater Manchester.</li> </ul>	HEIs, TECs and SMEs
2. Graduating for Growth: Use of Graduate Resources for Business Growth (demand side)	David Bagley, University Business School, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE.	As above.	Three projects focus on a number of small employers working with clusters of supply chain companies organised on a sector-specific basis, notably manufacturing, technology, business and commerce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UCL / LAWTEC / ELTEC</li> <li>• BIHE</li> <li>• SECTEC / MMU</li> </ul>	HEIs, TECs and SMEs

GO Region/Project	Contact Details	Aims and Objectives	Activity	Partners
<b>South East</b>				
1. A virtual laboratory resource for biomedical science	Dr Jeremy Miles, Media Development Centre, The Rotunda, Museum Road, Portsmouth PO1 2QQ Tel: 01705	To demonstrate the benefits of flexible learning materials; to develop independent and flexible learning materials accessible in the work place; to improve the employability of new entrants to the workforce by enhancing the diagnostic skills of recent biomedical scientist graduates and to test comprehension of Health and Safety considerations in practice-based context of medical microbiology; to demonstrate how these materials can be incorporated within the undergraduate curriculum, thereby improving their employability skills.	Provision of work-relevant or work-based opportunities for graduates to develop and appraise employability skills, including production of interactive CD-ROM and programmes and video-based reference guides; development of methodologies which ensure that the process leads to the enhancement of relationships between HEIs and employers and opportunities to transfer know-how; clarification of the needs of employers and individuals for CPD; development and piloting of CPD provision which meets the needs of employers and individuals vis-a-vis content and mode of delivery..	University of Portsmouth; Medical Laboratories; Institute of Biomedical Science; Hampshire TEC.
2. Health, Skills Shortages and Ethnicity; Progression Routes into Qualifications and Employment	Andrew Ward, Head of Corporate Relations, Thames Valley University, Wellington Street, Slough SL1 1YG Tel: 0181 231 2387	To meet the skills shortages that inhibit the competitive growth and public service delivery of employers in the health care sectors through developing an educational progression route (including a job brokering service) for social groups who are currently under-represented or under-employed in occupations requiring relevant higher level skills.	Research and development of activities necessary to establish new progression routes into health care occupations. A key innovation of the project is the Work Bureau, matching employer needs with graduate profiles.	Thames Valley Enterprise, Ch. of Comm. & Ind. Business Link and Economic Part'p; Windsor and Slough EBP; Berkshire NHS Trust; Slough Borough Council; East Berkshire College; Schools.
3. Evaluation of existing provision and support frameworks for CPD and establishment of employer demand for CPD.	Dr. Darryl Bibby, Centre for Continuing Education, Oxford Brookes University, Gypsy Lane Campus, Headington, Oxon OX3 0BP Tel: 01865 484 871	To audit and evaluate existing CPD provision and support frameworks; to survey employer demand.	Activities in two phases: 1. an audit of existing CPD provision which will be critically evaluated; 2. a survey of employers to establish demand for CPD.	Oxford Brookes University; Oxford Trust; Oxfordshire Chamber

4. Meeting the Demand for New Skills in the Healthcare Sector.	Chris Chapman, Tools for Living, Brunel University, Uxbridge UB8 3PH Tel: 01895 271206	The majority of students involved will be engineers; the project aims to provide enhanced contact with SMEs for undergraduates.	Development of modules on healthcare design technology for engineering, design and health science undergraduates	Brunel University, TVE; West London TEC; Thames valley Technology;
5. Growth at the Interface; Higher Education and SMEs - 2000 and Beyond.	Dr. John Hobrough, Education Liaison Centre, University of Surrey, Guildford GU2 5HX Tel: 01483 259376	To improve employability skills of undergraduates and new graduates and to break down barriers to SME graduate employment using Business Link in three sectors: IT and Communication; Tourism and Health and Medicine.	The project will identify and communicate the gap of understanding in relation to Graduate Employment within SMEs and develop potential training for SMEs and graduates in the understanding of skills required and expected for employability. Results will be disseminated throughout the area and region.	Surrey TEC, Royal Surrey, Holloway, Brunel Universities, Business Links, Surrey County Council; Surrey Research Park
6. Improving Employability Skills of Under / New Graduates with particular reference to the IT & Communications Sector.	Maggie Deacon, Director of Finance, University of Brighton, Mithras House, Lewes Road, Brighton BN2 4AT Tel: 01273 600900	To investigate whether benefits to employers of having students on placement could be enhanced by the added value of NVQs.	Allowing students the opportunity to exercise, develop and appraise their employability skills within the workplace whilst attaining a qualification; permitting University staff and company personnel to benefit from training in NVQ assessment; activities associated with relationship strengthening.	University of Brighton; Business Link; Sussex Enterprise

GO Region/Project	Contact Details	Aims and Objectives	Activity	Partners
<b>South West</b>				
1. Mining Industry Development Project	Sean Fielding, Business Relations Officer, University of Exeter, Northcote House, The Queen's Drive, Exeter EX4 4QJ Tel: 01392 263 263	To develop a profile of the mining and minerals processing industry in the South West region in order to determine the range of activities, current contribution to the region's economy and potential for further diversification.	Activities include work towards a mining consultancy database of SMEs and self-employed consultants; a materials processing database constituting companies from the operational and technology aspects of the industry; production of report summarising results of training needs analysis, graduate employment opportunities, economic performance, networking opportunities, student projects and collaborative HE / Industry projects.	Cornwall County Council; Business Links, the Restormel Local Enterprise Trust, industrial partners, Devon and Cornwall TEC.
2. Releasing Potential	Liz Clark, Devon and Cornwall TEC, Third Floor, Sterling House, Dix's Field, Exeter EX1 1QA Tel: 01392 438 711	To focus the resources of the partnership on a specific geographical area in order to improve the competitiveness of indigenous companies and to provide a realistic assessment of the impact of HE on business. The project aims to develop a model for collaboration between HEIs in the South West to respond to the needs of business.	Development and implementation of planned marketing communications strategy; exploration of the depth and potential for support required by business from HEI; development of HEI products and services including CPD; evaluation and transfer of model to other centres; publication and dissemination of results.	Devon and Cornwall TEC / Employer Access to University Training (EAUT); Universities of Exeter, Plymouth, University College of St. Mark and St. John; Business Link Devon and Cornwall.
3. Grad. Link West: improving the competitiveness of SMEs through graduate involvement.	Steve Brooking, Learning Partnership West; 4 Colston Avenue, Bristol, BS1 4ST Tel: 0117 987 2031	To work collaboratively among partners with the aims of developing stronger links between HEIs and SMEs in the project region.	Expansion of the number of HE student placements in SMEs; Development of HE provision to meet the needs of graduates in SMEs; raising the awareness of graduates about the opportunities available in SMEs and the awareness of SMEs about the advantages of employing graduates.	Bath College of HE; Universities of West England, Bath, Bristol; Open University; Business Link West; Learning Partnership West; Western Dev't Partnership



4. HE Responding to Employer Skills Needs (HEREN).	Malcolm Richards, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of HE Central Bids Unit, Fullwood Park Limited, Francis Close Hall, Swindon Road, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ Tel: 01242 543 562	To enhance the links between HEIs and key local partners to develop more effective ways of deploying placement students and employing graduates to help meet local skills needs; to promote more effective knowledge and good practice to develop take-up of graduates by employers; to support locally diverse projects in benefiting from good practice; to disseminate outcomes regionally and nationally	Planning and undertaking seminars; identifying and recommending systems; identifying and adapting materials; mapping key projects; production of good practice case studies; feasibility study for local skills match programme; extend APL for local employment; mapping of undergraduate placements within SMEs; working closely with SMEs and students to define and develop model programmes; running regional seminars and contributing to newsletters, journals and discussion groups.	Uni. Coll. of St. Mark and St. John, University of Plymouth; Bath College of HE; TECs, Business Links, Chambers of Commerce, professional organisations and FE colleges.
5. Development and delivery of higher level training via Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to local employers.	Brenda Pyle, Yeovil College, Hollands Campus, Mudford road, Yeovil, Somerset, BA21 4DR Tel: 01935 423 921	To produce, test and evaluate learning resources which will enable employees in L/SMEs to undertake HE learning via the use of ICT.	Enhancement and development of relationships with SMEs through involvement of Somerset TEC and Somerset Economic Partnership; development of collaborative relationships; raising of awareness of SMEs to the benefits of high level learning through local delivery; making available modules through distance learning; fostering of partnership relations between HE and development agencies.	Somerset TEC; Business Link; South Somerset District Council; Bournemouth University; Yeovil College; local employers.

GO Region/Project	Contact Details	Aims and Objectives	Activity	Partners
<b>West Midlands</b>				
1. Graduate Link	Dr. Ken Marshall, Birmingham TEC, Chaplin Court, 80 Hurst Street, Birmingham B5 4TG	To develop a regional approach by mapping existing regional graduate link structures, developing a regional model and ensuring a local presence	Enhancing information flows between graduates and SMEs, increasing the effectiveness of matching mechanisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student training course</li> <li>• Develop distance learning</li> <li>• Increased work placements</li> <li>• Increase graduate placements</li> </ul>	Birmingham TEC, UCE.
2. Higher level qualifications for the poultry industry	Nigel Hill, Harper Adams Agricultural College Newport Shropshire TF 10 8NB	To enable employers to provide clearly defined career and qualification path to new entrants, existing workers and managers in the poultry sector. Enable employers, TEC/CCTE and HEIs to work in partnership to achieve common objective	Develop a framework of industry-recognised qualifications at a higher level Contribute to establishment of national centre for industry skills training	Harper Adams College, University of Warwick and Coventry University.
3. Partnership Degree in Engineering technology with engineering business management.	Dr Jonathan Nicholls, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL	To develop existing industry specific model for wider application focusing on West Midlands manufacturers in supply chain for automotive and aerospace sectors to develop new degree package.	Development of multi-company partnership and structure and instructional support for new degree, to be operational by September 1998.	University of Warwick, West Midlands manufacturers.
4. NVQ centre for social care and health	Bill Loach, Coventry University, Priory Street Coventry CV1 5FB	To promote development of NVQs in social care, health and allied areas with Independent SME sector; provision of advice to organisations seeking to develop NVQ training; recruitment and training of NVQ assessors; promotion of lifelong learning	Establishment of a centre for sectoral NVQs at Coventry University; achieve NVQ assessment centre status; pilot NVQ higher level training as a partnership between University and local employers; obtain ESF Objective 3 funding to continue work post-project period.	Coventry University, Coventry / Warwickshire TEC, and local employers.
5. Stimulating HEI/industry collaboration	Lesley Rollason, Staffordshire TEC, Festival Way, Festival Park, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 5QT	To encourage businesses to improve business performance by drawing on HEI resources and capabilities Identify and promote good practice	Provide a marketing campaign to underpin the award scheme Encourage industry to fund projects in HEIs Present awards	Staffordshire TEC, Staffordshire Companies, HEIs in the West Midlands.

GO Region/Project	Contact Details	Aims and Objectives	Activity	Partners
<b>Yorks. and the Humber</b>				
1. Enhancing HE's Contribution to increasing competitiveness of business and to develop understanding of SME's in the region.	Margaret Noble, University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, Milner Walk, Cottingham, Hull HU6 7RT	To encourage businesses to develop their competitiveness strategies and to employ highly skilled and competent graduates;	Assessment and evaluation of research into the market needs of SME sector; research graduate retention in Humber sub-region; share and disseminate good practice concerning place of key skills in the curriculum; provision of placement; raising awareness; production of promotional material; development of database; networking and sharing of best practice.	University of Hull; Humberside TEC; FE Colleges; Chambers of Commerce; EDUs; Business Links.
2. Employee-led Development (ELD) Schemes with SMEs and LMEs.	Rob Harrison, Sheffield Hallam University, City Campus, Pond Street, Sheffield S1 1WB	To encourage SMEs and LMEs to make better use of HE and FE in the region; to widen the framework already established in Sheffield and disseminate good practice; to develop a network of new partnerships other FEIs/HEIs, TECs, employers and employees.	Establishment of regional networks of ELD action groups, and education training providers to support ELD; raising awareness of / promoting ELD schemes in SMEs / LMEs; dissemination of information on upskilling of technicians to professional level via FE/HE provision; development of potential of extending HE provision and accreditation services with SMEs and LMEs.	Sheffield Hallam Uni.; Barnsley / Doncaster & Rotherham TECs; Northern, Wakefield and Rotherham Colleges.
3. Developing Effective Management in SMEs.	Andrew Choi, Business Development Manager, Bradford TEC, Mercury House, 4 Manchester Road, Bradford BD5 0QL	To improve the economic performance and competitiveness of local SMEs via flexible, module based training in management skills.	Enhancement of relationship between management performance at individual level and improved performance at business level to improve competitiveness; advancement of TECs Lifetime Learning Strategy and support achievement of national targets for education and training; achievement of return on investment in management development for participating SMEs.	BICC; Bradford Chamber of Commerce and Business Link; University of Bradford.
4. Encouraging HEIs to work with Employers.	Leander Sanderson, Sheffield TEC, St Mary's Court, St Mary's Road, Sheffield S2 4AQ	To pilot a model route for progression into HE, explore the approach, the way it works, the relevance of existing materials and scope for improvement; to develop the model for replication / expansion into other areas.	Research and preparation, promotion and advisory sessions; student enrolment; introductory workshops; delivery of 'Living with Technology' course; provision of additional support workshops ; guidance sessions; a final examination	Sheffield, Rotherham and Barnsley / Doncaster TECs; the Open University.

5. A regional distributed centre of excellence in higher level training for the packaging and associated industries.	Prof. Christine Leigh, YHUA, School of Geography, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT	To develop a high level of skill and expertise training partnership between employers, employer-led organisations and the Higher Education Sector, through which training needs can be articulated and the supply of training through appropriate mechanisms can be mobilised to support international competitiveness in the regional print and packaging industry.	Development of pilot project; establishment of high level training forum and building high level training network supported by information management and directory systems; planning for training provision; establishment of connections to other regional and national initiatives; development of business planning process to sustain project through second / third year; evaluation and dissemination.	Leeds, Sheffield and North Yorkshire TECs; key companies including SMEs; Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York, Pira International.
6. Professional Development NVQ Centre for the Cultural Industries in Key Skills Programme	Andrew Tatham, Bretton Hall College, West Bretton, Wakefield WF4 4LG	To establish a Professional Development and Key Skills NVQ Centre for the Cultural Industries which will develop and deliver high quality assessment and training, to a wide range of customers in the Arts and Education, whilst ensuring its own profitability.	Development of full range of products to meet needs of external customers in a cost effective manner; development of flexible approach in meeting needs of client group in locations convenient to them; to make available a broad range of NVQs; establishment of customer base; delivery of training and assessment; development of client base paying special attention to SMEs; establishment of an integrated Key Skills programme.	Wakefield TEC, University of Leeds
7. Supporting the Development of Sustained Economic Growth and Competitiveness through a collaborative approach.	Joan Palmer (Angus Bustin) Head of Education and Training, North Yorkshire TEC, TEC House, 7 Pioneer Business Park, Amy Johnson Way, Clifton Moor, York, YO3 8TN	The project aims to identify how the higher education sector is currently and could in the future, meet the needs of businesses in Yorkshire; to develop a co-ordinated approach to share good practice; to build coherence with other regional strategies to enhance activities through regional collaboration and dissemination.	Audit of present practice within HEIs and TEC in contacts with and services for business; analysis and evaluation of current provision; identification of gaps in support available to businesses and in development of employability skills of undergraduates; sharing of good practice; formulation of recommendations for overall co-ordination and coherence of HE business support activities in region.	University College Ripon and York St John; University College Scarborough North Riding College; University of York.

## **ANNEX D**

### **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE**

## **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE**

This guide has been designed to assist all those involved in planning and delivering projects under the Higher Education Regional Development Fund. It identifies good practice for HE:QE at the DfEE, Government Offices, and others who are involved in organising and managing projects including Higher Education Institutions and TECs/Business Links. The ideas presented here are by no means prescriptive or exhaustive. They are, however, based on the findings from the evaluation of HERDF and incorporate the views of DfEE, GOs, Higher Education Advisers, Higher Education Institutions, TECs and other project partners.

### **DfEE (HE:QE)**

#### ***Implementation***

The DfEE should allow a realistic lead-in time to enable GOs to determine their regional policy aims and (SMART) objectives. Sufficient time should also be allocated for GOs to:

- publicise HERDF;
- invite project applications;
- prepare project selection criteria; and
- implement other management and administrative procedures.

Guidance should be available to GOs on contractual and budgetary arrangements including clear guidelines on what can and cannot be funded under HERDF. A succinct guidance note on contract management may also be required by GOs from DfEE for staff with limited experience of direct contracting. Indeed, GOs should be actively encouraged to draw upon staff with appropriate contracting expertise where possible.

Clear guidance should be available from DfEE on the roles and responsibilities of HEAs in relation to the scale and scope of their support at both GO and project levels.

The DfEE should set minimum monitoring requirements for GOs in order to track delivery, outcomes and impact from HERDF.

### **GOVERNMENT OFFICES**

#### ***Partnerships***

A wide range of partners and partnerships should be encouraged by GOs to deliver HERDF projects and existing university and business partnerships can be extended to incorporate new players, including further education and other higher education institutions. HERDF has demonstrated a range of experience and the arguments for involving the widest institutional base, in terms of developing active involvement in regional development, are strong.

GOs should encourage and support TECs/Business Links to form partnerships with HEIs/FEIs for more effective regional development. This could be facilitated by a series of GO-hosted events to promote networking.

## ***Project Selection***

GOs should establish and implement transparent project selection criteria in order that projects clearly understand what is expected of them. There may be a need to rank and group criteria given that regional objectives may require both thematic and geographically focused projects.

It may be more effective for GOs to assess and select from outline bids in the first instance which can then be followed by fully worked-up bids. This should reduce wastage of effort and ensure an efficient bidding practice. GOs, with an initial overview of likely project activity, may also be able to extend partnerships and encourage greater collaborative working across institutions presenting similar ideas and approaches.

GOs and projects should be clear on, and agree, the precise activity which is being funded, paying particular attention to SMART objectives, targets, outputs, outcomes, and monitoring indicators.

GOs should agree clear monitoring, reporting and payment schedules with projects to ensure robust accountability against stated targets and outputs.

## ***Project Support***

Government Offices/HE:QE should provide support and guidance to projects on:

- the role of steering groups, including the role of HEAs and GO within projects
- the role and use of advisory groups
- sub-contracting arrangements
- partnership contracting
- project management
- monitoring
- evaluation
- mainstreaming and dissemination

A quality management system should be implemented as simply as possible by GOs to manage projects efficiently and to ensure that planned outputs are tracked and delivered.

GOs should be encouraged to have regular steering groups which draw all projects in the region together to discuss progress and issues arising.

GOs should explore linkages and synergies between HERDF and other funding regimes such as ESF.

## **PROJECT LEVEL**

### ***Implementation***

Individuals from each of the partner organisations should be identified at an early stage to ensure that the most appropriate people are involved in the project. All partners should be involved in the development of the project bid as much as possible and should be consulted about the key elements of the project at the earliest stage. Agreements should only be entered into when all partners are clear of the aims and objectives of projects and their roles and responsibilities.

## ***Partnerships***

Effective partnership depends on communication between the partners and projects should organise regular meetings to review progress and issues arising. It is important, however, to recognise that overly frequent meetings between partners is a drain on resources. Other methods of communication, for example, e-mail, can then be used to keep partners informed of activities and progress and for sharing information.

## ***Networking***

Projects should be encouraged to network with other projects undertaking similar activities within the region and in other regions. This may be facilitated by GOs and HE:QE who have the overview. This helps in the exchange of good practice and information and may prevent parallel learning.

HEI partners should involve other specialisms/departments within their institution to further partnerships and improve information dissemination. Intra-organisational co-operation could be encouraged, for example, by formal or informal involvement in the project and/or partnership, or through the mainstreaming or dissemination of project learning and outcomes.

## ***Project Delivery***

Projects should aim to secure the support of senior personnel within the partner organisations to ensure that the project has a high profile.

The clear allocation of roles and responsibilities between partners is particularly important when the partners represent a range of organisations and expertise/interests.

Where projects are reliant on particular partners to provide information or to undertake specific tasks - without which the success of the project would be in jeopardy - formal contracts should be drawn up which stipulate the roles to be taken by each partner.

It is useful to agree the format and objectives for project steering group meetings including identifying their purpose, membership and frequency. It is also important that distinctions are made between the roles of steering groups and advisory groups to avoid confusion.

Full-time project managers can ensure that projects have a dedicated resource acting as a single point of contact for each of the partners. In this way, project managers can support not only the delivery of project outcomes, but also the operation of an effective partnership. It is important that time is available within the development phase of the project, for example, between the award of funding and starting the project, to appoint project managers and to allow them to familiarise themselves with the project requirements, partnerships etc.

## ***Dissemination***

It is important that projects make plans for mainstreaming and disseminating project findings, products and services in order that the wider messages from HERDF are promoted. Plans for mainstreaming and dissemination should be included in project bids, drawing especially on the formal or informal networks which are already available through the partnership.



Dissemination activities, both formal and informal, should be considered throughout the life of the project. These can be used effectively to present emerging findings and promote an ongoing exchange of information with others outside of the project/institution.

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

Projects should ensure that systematic monitoring and self-evaluation is put in place at the start of activities. Projects should arrange for their work to be independently evaluated over the whole project period.