

Participant Guidance



An updated version of the Participant Guidance is due to be published on the ESIF website in March 2018

- Participant Guidance - key document for Lead Partners to refer to in conjunction with the Commission's *Monitoring & Evaluation Guidance*
- Employability FAQ - additional resource to share questions raised by Lead Partners. Lead Partners should note that an updated version of this document is scheduled to be published on the ESIF website in the next few months
- Common sense approach should be applied by Lead Partners

Overview of Changes

- Clearer and easier to use
- Clarification about definition of ‘certified’
- Definition of ‘Supported/Unsupported’ Participants
- Highlight importance of Project Worker Assessments
- Inclusion of new Barriers / Disadvantages
- Additional instances of self-certification
- Social Inclusion & Poverty target group definitions
- Identifying ‘Common Indicators’
- Inclusion of Annex A

Definition of 'Certified'

The Participant Guidance states that:

“Information extracted from and certified via statutory public registers (e.g. DWP, SEEMIS, SQA) is acceptable for evidence requirements as long as the information is correctly certified (by the issuing institution) or sent via their dedicated mailbox.”

For the purposes of verification, certified means:

- On Headed Notepaper: the document must be signed and dated
- Not On Headed Notepaper (e.g. referral form): the document must be stamped (by the issuing institution) and dated

Supported / Unsupported Participants

- Simple Definition:

Supported Participants - count towards Outputs & Results reported by the Managing Authority to the Commission

Unsupported Participants - do not count towards Outputs & Results reported by the Managing Authority to the Commission

- Concept of '**Grand Total**': includes those participants whose basic data relating to the Common Output Indicators either could not be collected or is incomplete.

Monitoring & Evaluation Guidance (page 10)

Monitoring & Evaluation Guidance: Annex D (page 15)

Project Worker Assessments

- Extremely important that these assessments are undertaken during the Registration process - particularly in instances where self-certification by the Participant has been deemed acceptable.
- The assessments should confirm that the Project Worker has clarified that the information being provided by the Participant is accurate and that the correct definitions (e.g. for Employment Status, Barriers etc) is being applied.
- In addition, assessments must clearly outline the link between the needs / barriers of the Participant and the positive outcome that it is anticipated ESF assistance will generate.
- Project Worker notes should continue to keep and retain notes about the Participant's progress throughout their ESF intervention

Barrier / Disadvantages

Three new barriers have been added to the Participant Guidance

- ‘At risk of becoming NEET’ (employability & social inclusion & poverty only)
- Material Deprivation
- Low Income (social inclusion & poverty only)

Common Errors - General

- Format of evidence: documents not being correctly labelled in line with the naming conventions provided by the Managing Authority
- Evidence not being provided in line with Managing Authority timescales - Lead Partners should note that where items are not made available at verification, they may be rejected from the claim

Common Errors - Costs

- Description of cost on EUMIS - not being recorded in line with MA Guidance

e.g. Staff Cost - should include the individual's Name / Staff Number, Basic Salary, National Insurance, Pension and Net Pay
- BACs - does not provide a clear link between the cost and the bank statement
- Defrayal Date - does not provide evidence of actual defrayal (e.g. a payment being sent to the bank for authorisation)
- Defrayal Information - not clearly legible (care should be taken when redacting information)

Common Errors - Costs

- Costs being apportioned by the Lead Partner without prior agreement with the Managing Authority
- Wage Subsidy costs - not complying with minimum wage requirements

Common Errors - Achievements

- incorrect interpretation of definitions relating to a participant's employment status or barriers to employment e.g.

'Registered Unemployed' versus 'Economically Inactive'

On a number of registration forms, the individuals has been recorded as 'Registered Unemployed' - however, on closer inspection of the form it has become apparent that these individuals should have an employment status of 'Economically Inactive' as they are not in receipt of JSA or ESA (Work Related Activity Group).

'Underemployed'

On a number of registration forms, the barrier of 'Underemployed' has been selected - however these individuals are also recorded as 'Registered Unemployed'. The definition of 'Underemployed' within the Participant Guidance clearly states that this barrier relates to 'Employed' participants only as it relates to 'an employment situation that is insufficient in some important way for the worker'.

Common Errors - Achievements

- Barriers / Disadvantages selected inconsistent with other information recorded in the registration documents e.g. Employment Status, other Barriers etc
- Information recorded on EUMIS does not match the information recorded on Registration Forms
- No ESF logos on documentation or incorrect logos used
- Referral Forms (that are being relied upon to provide evidence e.g. DWP Referral Form evidencing Employment Status) not being correctly certified
- Activity taking place before the Registration Form has been signed
- Registration Forms not signed by Participant and / or Project Worker
- No Project Worker Assessments provided to support elements of self-certification by the Participant

Common Errors - Achievements

- Individuals must be registered with an intervention before being placed in a wage subsidy scheme
- Not providing evidence of employment status e.g. if a participant is registered unemployed, documentation should be provided to evidence that they are in receipt of JSA or ESA (Work Related Activity Group)
- Insufficient documentation being provided to evidence specific milestones
- No Action Plan provided
- Action plans only contain generic activity
- Identification Documents (e.g. passports) not current and / or valid
- Disclosure Forms being submitted as evidence

Correction of Errors

Where errors are identified on a Participant's Registration Forms, the Lead Partner must take steps to rectify this

- The Lead Partner should identify whether the Participant is still engaging with the intervention
- If the Participant is still engaging - the Lead Partner should ask the Participant to correct the errors and initial /date these revisions to the form. In addition, a file note should be added to the Participant Record documenting the error and the steps taken to rectify the error
- If the Participant had exited the intervention - the Lead Partner should not attempt to alter the form. A file note should be added outlining the error and confirming the correct information
- In all cases, the Lead Partner's MIS and EUMIS must be updated to reflect the correct information

DWP Referral / Data Collection Form

- DWP (in consultation with the Managing Authority and Lead Partners) has drafted and issued a template Referral / Data Collection Form that can be used by Lead Partners to evidence various aspects of Participant eligibility by receiving data directly from DWP.
- The form contain the follow key areas:
 - Name
 - Address
 - National Insurance Number
 - Employment Status
 - Length of Employment Status
 - Details of any benefits being claimed
- Provided the form is certified correctly by DWP (or received from a DWP dedicated email address) - this is an easier and more straight-forward method of evidencing participant eligibility

Any Questions?