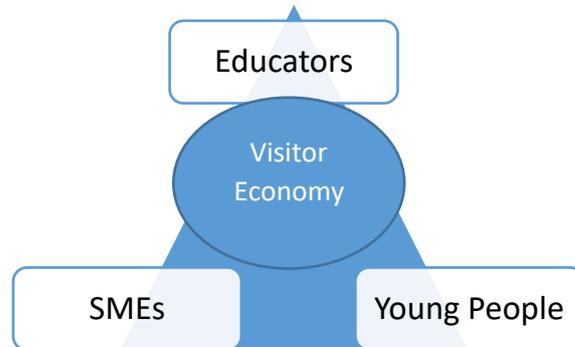


VENI - Visitor Economy ESF Skills Bid

Introduction

VENI is the **Visitor Economy Network Initiative** that will bring educators and SMEs closer together and at the same time create opportunities for young people to develop work-ready skills and participate in, and learn more about, their local visitor economy.



Four key strands provide the framework for project activity. These are: developing the Visitor Economy workforce; supporting young people through a Visitor Economy Youth Pledge; encouraging SMEs to get involved through business networks; and creating a package of exciting events across the region, which galvanise local communities; engage local colleges; and promote the region to visitors.

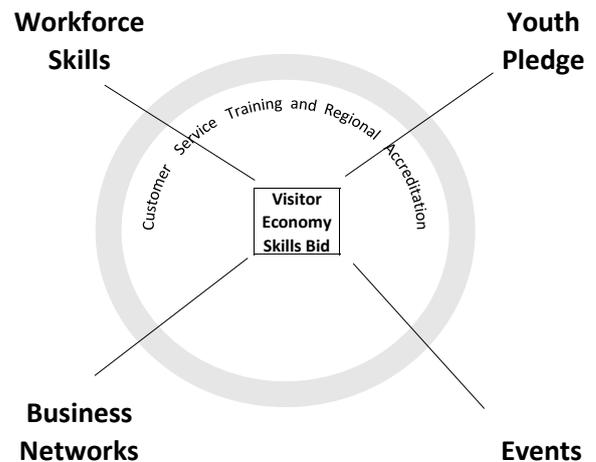
Four strands offer a comprehensive approach to skills development in the Visitor Economy and provide sufficient breadth to positively affect the culture sector and creative industries.

The Youth Pledge is primarily aimed at young people but it is also about influencing the curriculum and the way that educators prepare young people for careers in the sector. So the youth pledge is a starting point for the project - it connects educators, students and local SMEs - and ensures that industry relevance is top of the agenda.

The Workforce Skills strand builds on this - providing a package of skills activity for people working in the sector. This includes skills competitions, masterclasses, workshops and career building courses.

The Business Network strand is an essential part of the overall project in that it ensures businesses are fully engaged and a consistent message is communicated across the sector. Working through business networks across the region is a good way to build industry confidence and expand the number of business that colleges currently engage with. The business network strand will provide a sounding board for industry initiatives and events that can be delivered through this project.

Finally the **Events** strand will encourage colleges to get involved in the planning, marshalling, delivery and participation in fayres, festivals and functions unfolding in their local communities. Events are a powerful way to bring the community together and to provide a multi-skills framework for further education.



Strategic Context

This project has been developed in response to the recent call for proposals from the European Social Fund Managing Authority in England. The project has been developed as part of the New Anglia LEP Visitor Economy Sector Skills Group's core work and is the result of numerous discussions and consultation across the LEP region.

VENI is aligned to strategic priorities of the region, and is also part of the preparatory work for a Tourism Zone in the East, an initiative which itself will transform the way the Visitor Economy delivers skills, jobs and careers in the region. The LEP's ESIF strategy has highlighted the need to "develop pathways either to employment or progression within our growth sectors" and it also refers to "the concerns of employers about the readiness of work of young unemployed people"; both of these issues are taken on board in this project which aims to break down some of the structural barriers that exist between employers, FE colleges and young people. The project is based on the successful ESF delivery framework developed by PLACE 21.

VENI builds on the recent report from The Independent Commission on the College of the Future (October 2020). In this report, the idea that colleges should be "at the heart of their community" is reiterated and collaboration between colleges encouraged. The report's emphasis on lifelong learning opportunities for all; a focus on industry relevance and business responsiveness; and a non-competitive environment within which a highly productive skills system can be developed are all themes supported by, and explored through, this project. The report suggests that "Employers will see the college network as a key source of strategic support – as a place they turn to as they seek to innovate and develop." This aspiration will hopefully become a reality for the Visitor Economy in our region; VENI will provide a framework for exciting collaboration between colleges and businesses from the sector. A key recommendation from the report is that colleges are seen as "anchor institutions within the wider local and regional ecosystem" and this is certainly something VENI seeks to bring about.

Finally, it is not possible to provide strategic context without mentioning COVID-19. The destructive impact that the pandemic has had on the Visitor Economy and related industries cannot be overstated. Not only has the pattern of demand simply vanished but many businesses are struggling to survive in the short term. Whilst this project is unlikely to be able to save businesses, it can provide a solid platform for recovery centred on developing industry relevant skills and high quality customer service.

In summary, VENI will encourage educators in further education to find out more about their local industry and the project will enable them to reach out to local SMEs and develop exciting learning projects. At the same time, VENI will have a significant influence on the curriculum both through SME participation and through educators making their courses more industry relevant and sector friendly. These developments will have a significant impact on young people in further education - giving them the confidence and 'know-how' to pursue careers in the regional visitor economy.

The Four Strands of VENI

Youth Pledge	
Level 2 & 3 Courses - related to Visitor Economy - e.g. Culinary Arts, Tourism, Heritage, Performing Arts, Media as well as Curriculum Initiatives – providing extra curricula activity	VENI will bind together existing courses with new curriculum initiatives to create a Youth Pledge offer which is both industry relevant and exciting. It will include innovative 'skills convergence' initiatives and encompass tourism service sectors, culture and creative industries.
Industry placements, internships, apprenticeships	A range of ways in which colleges facilitate industry engagement with skills.
HE Courses (short and long) - from Level 4 to Level 6 - Heritage Management; Hospitality; Events; Sustainability; Destination Marketing	Higher level courses for the workforce, and the workforce
ICANBEA - developments	Further developments for ICANBEA - so that they are able to offer a comprehensive sector based brokerage.
Schools engagement & sector promotion	Promoting careers in the sector - engaging with school teachers and influencing the curriculum

Workforce Skills	
Short courses	Short courses for the workforce - across the sector - but especially relating to customer service.
Specialist courses - e.g. Culinary Arts; Heritage; Events etc..	Funding to help colleges develop taster courses based on demand - and with a view to mainstreaming in the future.
Workshops Masterclasses	For colleges and/or others to further develop their competitions involving masterclasses and workshops from industry professionals.
Management Development Training	Management training across the sector

Business Networks	
Promoting the sustainability agenda – looking at waste; eco-travel & development of eco holiday offers, etc.	Ensuring that we get the sustainability message out to SMEs (sustainability is a key ESF cross-cutting theme). Could involve workshops, campaigns, roadshows, links to tourism zone activity.
Working Groups	Facilitating working groups and sector based special interest groups - involving people from industry rather than just public sector.
Best Practice sharing	Planning and hosting events and producing project publications to share experiences and success stories.
Collaboration; working with Colleges; Industry Talks & Demonstrations	Developing collaborative sector based initiatives and a robust college network for the sector - led by VEE and aligned to the objectives of the aspirant Tourism Zone.

Events	
Skills for Promoting Destinations	Encouraging colleges to get involved in events happening around the region - providing workforce, skills, work experience etc. Expansion or adaptation of City Hosts Programme for smaller destinations?
Linking up tourism offers	VEE to work across the region to bring together fragmented parts of the industry. Connecting to the proposed Tourism Zone, helping create new jobs as well as supporting improvements in transport connections.
Community engagement	Supporting community engagement – especially linked to the planning, delivery and participation in local events.
Linking up curriculum areas (e.g. performing arts; events management...)	Encouraging colleges to link up different curriculum areas – that could support events, (e.g. music, performing arts, design, marketing business, hospitality etc.)
Celebrating Best Practice Events	To stage events celebrating the various successes of the Programme.

Proposed Budget over two years (September 2021 – August 2023)

ESF - Visitor Economy £2.6M Project 2021-2023							
Over Two Years	Funded By:						
	Budget	VEE/ local authorities and other support organisations in the region	FE Colleges	ESF	Total	Total Match	
Youth Pledge	1,340,000	-	900,000	440,000	1,340,000	900,000	
Workforce Skills	260,000	60,000	-	200,000	260,000	60,000	
Business Networks	310,000	160,000	-	150,000	310,000	160,000	
Events	330,000	80,000	-	250,000	330,000	80,000	
Management	140,000	20,000	-	120,000	140,000	20,000	
Admin & Claims	90,000	-	-	90,000	90,000	-	
Marketing, Online & Comms	150,000	90,000	-	60,000	150,000	90,000	
						-	
Total Expenditure	2,620,000	410,000	900,000	1,310,000	2,620,000	1,310,000	

Outputs, Impact and Results

VENI will make a significant impact on the way the sector is perceived, the manner in which young people are prepared for careers across the sector; and the opportunities that will result from a more joined up approach within the further education sector and among businesses and business networks. VENI is a 'call' to visitors, businesses and communities to come together to support the Visitor Economy in East Anglia. From humble cafes and local fayres to award winning restaurants and major cultural festivals, VENI calls for all the sectors that have an impact on the visitor experience to work together, to demonstrate career pathways; and to develop the skills set which will embed great customer service throughout the region.

Regarding IP2.1 ESF outputs, this project proposes to work with 1000 participants, including people from ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, older people (over 50), and people who are part of single parent households. From these participants, 200 will gain a level 2 qualification or below (excluding basic skills); and 400 will gain a level 3 qualification or above. We will also improve the labour market status of 350 women through this project.

For IP2.2 we propose to work with 175 businesses of which 77% will successfully complete collaborative projects.

ESF Call	£2.5M (For Investment Priorities 2.1 & 2.2 combined)
VENI	1.31M 52%

2.1 OUTPUTS

		ESF CALL		Participants will be over 50 will be from ethnic minorities will have disabilities. will live in a single adult household with dependent
Of whom:		100%	1720	
		20%	350	
		15%	258	
		10%	175	
		5%	83	

		VENI		Participants will be over 51 will be from ethnic minorities will have disabilities. will live in a single adult household with dependent
Of whom:		58%	1000	
		57%	200	
		58%	150	
		57%	100	
		60%	50	

2.2 OUTPUTS

		ESF CALL	
		100%	295

Number of SMEs & Micros supported

		VENI	
		59%	175

Number of SMEs & Micros supported

2.1 RESULTS

		ESF CALL	
No. of participants achieving a unit or qualification at Level 2	20%	344	
No. of participants achieving a unit or qualification at Level 3	40%	688	
Employed females gaining improved labour market status	35%	602	

		VENI	
No. of participants achieving a unit or qualification at Level 2	20%	200	
No. of participants achieving a unit or qualification at Level 3	40%	400	
Employed females gaining improved labour market status	35%	350	

2.2 RESULTS

		ESF CALL	
SMEs successfully completing projects	75%	1290	

		VENI	
SMEs successfully completing projects	77%	135	