

# Selection Criteria

## 2014-2020 European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund

December 2020

# Selection of projects

1. The Managing Authorities will assess an application for funding against the programme selection criteria.
2. An operation/project will only be funded if it has successfully been appraised against both the gateway criteria and the core selection criteria. The core selection criteria can be summarised as:
  - Strategic fit;
  - Value for money;
  - Management and control;
  - Deliverability;
  - Compliance – procurement, State Aid, publicity requirements, eligibility rules;
  - Cross cutting themes;
  - Gender Equality and non-discrimination; and
  - Sustainable Development.
3. This note includes the full gateway and core selection criteria and some explanatory notes on how the Managing Authorities will apply the selection criteria.

## Background notes

4. These are standard selection criteria that apply to the selection of all European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund operations in the 2014-2020 European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund Programmes in England. European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development has similar selection criteria.
5. The intention is for the Managing Authority to make decisions in a timely manner and to avoid asking applicants to produce work that is unnecessary. There is a two stage application process – Outline Application and Full Application. The Managing Authority will therefore assess the outline application against the Gateway Assessment Criteria, which set out the minimum eligibility requirements. Applications that fail to meet any aspect of the Gateway Criteria will be rejected and will not be considered against the Core Selection Criteria.
6. Outline applications that meet the gateway criteria will be assessed against the core selection criteria. The applicant is expected to provide sufficient information at outline stage for the Managing Authority to form a judgement on the proposed activities but

is not expected to provide all the detailed information. The requirements are set out in the relevant application forms.

7. The Managing Authority will invite applicants to submit a full application with complete details of the proposed operation. These details will form the basis of the funding agreement between the applicant and the Managing Authority and therefore needs to be a detailed application as set out in the full application form and the associated guidance. The Managing Authority will conduct a full, technical appraisal of all aspects of the applications, drawing in independent expert advice where required, for example professional and technical advisors, other Government Departments or partners as required.

## Gateway criteria

8. These are the minimum eligibility requirements which must be met in order that any application is considered for European Regional Development Fund or European Social Fund support.
  - i. Project proposer must be eligible to apply for funding in accordance with the Common Provisions Regulations and the National Eligibility Rules for each Fund.
  - ii. The proposed activity and associated expenditure must be eligible for support under Regulation (European Union) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 and Regulation (European Union) No. 1301/2013 for European Regional Development Fund, and Regulation (European Union) No. 1304/2013 for European Social Fund and National European Regional Development Fund or European Social Fund Eligibility Rules.
  - iii. The project must present clear evidence that it contributes to the needs/opportunities identified in the Call for Proposals or Application Invitation to which it is responding and the achievement of the specific objectives, outputs and results of the relevant priority axes set out in the Operational Programme.

## Core selection criteria

9. The Managing Authorities will use qualitative and quantitative approaches in assessing against the selection criteria.

## Strategic Fit

- 1.1. The proposed operation contributes to the needs/opportunities identified in the Call for Proposals or Application Invitation to which it is responding.
- 1.2. The proposed operation represents an appropriate means of delivering the relevant specific objectives, outputs and results of the relevant priority axes set out in the Operational Programme.
- 1.3. The proposed operation is aligned to the local growth needs set out in the local ESIF Strategies.
- 1.4. The proposed project must add value to and not duplicate existing national provision and must not conflict with national policy.

## Value for Money

- 2.1. Applications must demonstrate a clear case that the investment will deliver relevant activities, outputs and results that would not otherwise take place.
- 2.2. The operation must represent value for money. In assessing value for money, the Managing Authority will take account of:
  - 2.2.1. Efficiency: the rate/unit costs at which the operation converts inputs to the Fund outputs.
  - 2.2.2. Economy: the extent to which the operation will ensure that inputs to the operation are at the minimum costs commensurate with the required quality.
  - 2.2.3. Effectiveness: the extent to which the operation contributes to programme output targets, results and/or significant strategic impact at the local level.

## Management and Control

- 3.1. The applicant must demonstrate:
  - 3.1.1. Appropriate expertise, capacity and capability to deliver the operation successfully
  - 3.1.2. The necessary management capacity, systems and processes in place to meet the requirements of the Fund

- 3.1.3. Capability to meet the financial requirements and liabilities that flow from the receipt of European Regional Development Fund or European Social Fund support. Any non-public sector organisation will be subject to a full due diligence assessment of the applicant organisation.

## Deliverability

- 4.1. The Managing Authority will consider whether:
  - 4.1.1. The operation is deliverable within the requirements of the fund specific Operational Programme taking account risks, constraints and dependencies.
  - 4.1.2. The operation has appropriate arrangements in place to secure the required level of match funding and at the point of formal approval has evidence that required match funding is in place.
  - 4.1.3. Evidence has shown that this type of operation is effective or where the operation is new or innovative, the risks have been considered and appropriate mitigations put in place.

## Compliance

- 5.1. In addition to the above management and control requirements the applicant must show that they have a full grasp of the compliance requirements for procurement, State Aid, European Union rules on publicity and the fund specific Eligibility Rules. Where relevant they must demonstrate that:

### Procurement

- Any procurements already undertaken as part of the operation are compliant with the European Structural and Investment Funds procurement requirements.
- Any frameworks that they intend to use must be identified and compliant.

### State Aid

- Any state aid would be lawful and that the applicant is eligible to receive grant aid at the requested level within the State Aid regulations, if applicable.
- Any aid granted through the project to third parties is permissible under and would be managed in accordance with State Aid regulations.

## Publicity

- Publicity activities undertaken as part of the operation are compliant with the European Structural and Investment Funds publicity requirements. Any publicity already undertaken must be compliant if the applicant wishes to claim that as eligible expenditure

## National Eligibility Rules

- Proposed activity and related expenditure is compliant with the fund specific National Eligibility Rules.

## Cross Cutting Themes

- 6.1. The project takes account of and contributes to the Cross Cutting themes (horizontal principles) and meets the legal obligations of each:
  - 6.1.1. Gender Equality and non-discrimination
  - 6.1.2. Sustainable Development