



2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme

Call for Proposals European Social Fund

Priority Axis 1: Inclusive Labour Markets

Managing Authority	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
ESI Fund	European Social Fund
Priority Axis:	Priority Axis 1 : Inclusive Labour Markets
Investment Priority:	1.1: Access to Employment for Jobseekers and Inactive People.
Call Reference:	Wheels to Work - OC34S16P0448
LEP Area:	Tees Valley
Call Opens:	25 October 2016
Call Closes:	06 January 2017
Document Submission:	Completed Outline Applications must be submitted to ⊠: <u>2014-</u> <u>2020.ESFAPPLICATIONS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</u>
	Applications received after the published call close date will not be considered.

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1. Call Context

The 2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) bring the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF) and part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) together into a single European Union (EU) Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) Growth Programme for England supporting the key growth priorities of innovation, research and development, support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), low carbon, skills, employment, and social inclusion.

European Structural and Investment Funds are managed by the Department for Communities and Government (ERDF), Department for Work and Pensions (ESF) and the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (EAFRD). In London, the Greater London Authority acts as an Intermediate Body for the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund programmes. Unless stated otherwise, the term "Managing Authority" will apply to all these organisations. These Departments are the Managing Authorities for each Fund. The Managing Authorities work closely with local partners who provide:

- Practical advice and information to the Managing Authorities to assist in the preparation of local plans that contribute towards Operational Programme priorities and targets;
- Local intelligence to the Managing Authorities in the development of project calls (decided by the Managing Authorities) that reflect Operational Programme and local development needs as well as match funding opportunities;
- Advice on local economic growth conditions and opportunities within the context of Operational Programmes and the local ESIF Strategy to aid the Managing Authority's assessments at outline and full application stage.

This call is issued by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to commission ESF Funded projects that will support the **Priority Axis 1 of the Operational Programme: Inclusive Labour Markets** and **Investment Priority: 1.1 Access to Employment for Jobseekers and Inactive People** as set out in the Operational Programme.

All applications will need to be eligible under the European Social Fund Operational Programme for England 2014 to 2020. The <u>ESF Operational Programme</u> is available for applicants to read.

This call for proposal sets out the requirements for any applicants to consider before applying. Applications against this call will be assessed as part of a two stage appraisal process and successful applicants will enter into a funding agreement with the DWP. Further information is given in sections 4 to 10.

All ESF applicants will need to be aware of the requirement to collect and report data on all participants as per Annex 1 (see Appendix A). This will be as well as the

requirement of reporting on output and result indicators referred to in section 3 of the call for proposal.

1.1 National Context

This priority axis aims to increase participation in the labour market and thereby improve social inclusion and mobility. It will support activities through:

Investment priority: 1.1 - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility

ESF will not fund activity that duplicates or cuts across national policy on grants and loans for tuition for skills activities. Exemptions to this principle will be considered only where a local specific need and/or market failure has been demonstrated and where the activity falls within the scope of the Operational Programme.

Full details of what can and cannot be supported under this Investment Priority are set out in the Operational Programme. Details of the specific objective relating to this call is reproduced below.

Specific Objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
To improve the employability of long-term unemployed people, so that they can compete effectively in the labour market.	This specific objective is focused on those who are long-term unemployed and who are less likely to move back into work than people who have been unemployed for less time. The additional support from this investment priority will help long-term unemployed people to tackle their barriers to work and move into sustainable employment. The main result target focuses on moving participants into employment (including self-employment) on leaving. There will be a quantified result target set for this result indicator in each category of region.

1.2 Local Development Need

Projects must deliver activity which directly contributes to the objectives of Priority Axis 1, Investment Priority 1.1 of the Operational Programme, and which meets the **local development need** expressed in the text and table below.

Call outline

The Tees Valley LEP area covers the boroughs of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton.

Effective transport connectivity is crucial to the future development of the Tees Valley as it will stimulate, support and be a driver for economic growth. Overcoming barriers to get businesses and people moving, trading, working, learning and exporting is therefore essential to achieving the economic aims for the Tees Valley. This highlights two key issues; maintaining and enhancing business connectivity to markets; and maintaining and enhancing connections to enable residents to access jobs and training.

The Tees Valley has two key rural areas, East Cleveland which borders North Yorkshire, and Darlington which borders with County Durham. Access to individual transport is particularly important for people living in isolated rural communities where public transport is inadequate or only available during business hours.

Much of the Tees Valley business base is centred around a variety of industrial estates. Some are extensive but not on regular bus routes, and others are particularly isolated, albeit within the Tees Valley urban areas e.g. Teesport, Wilton, Seal Sands, Belasis business park and areas of Preston Farm.

Many industries in the Tees Valley LEP Area operate on a shift based system, including 24 hour/7 days working arrangements. Even if they are on a bus route, local transport services do not operate the same 24/7 pattern.

For many people seeking training or employment opportunities a lack of awareness and understanding about their travel options is a major barrier. With poor literacy levels, a lack of knowledge about travel options, low incomes and gaps in transport provision, for instance in rural areas, there is a need to coordinate information and provide advice and support.

i. Indicative Activities

This call invites applicants to provide targeted, personalised and bespoke advice and support for unemployed participants in the Tees Valley LEP Area.

The successful bidder should provide personalised travel planning and advice for each individual to give them improved access to training and employment opportunities. Travel training may also be included.

Proposals may include eligible, practical transport solutions for individuals, for example:

- Bicycles, electric bicycles or basic scooters that individuals can borrow/hire for up to 6 months.
- Compulsory Basic Training
- Safety equipment e.g. helmet, jacket, gloves and lock
- Support routes into employment for local people through sustainable transport measures

However, applicants should ensure that their proposals, including any hire and lease of equipment or purchase of small items of equipment, including vehicles, are compliant with the ESF National Eligibility Rules before submitting an application.

ii. Target Groups

This programme is primarily aimed at unemployed or inactive residents who are unable to afford their own transport, who find that they do not have any way of travelling to/from employment or training opportunities and where there is no direct public transport link between their home and their employment/training destination.

The scheme should be available to eligible individuals who meet the criteria for ESF Investment Priority 1.1 across the Tees Valley LEP Area. Applicants should also explain in their application of how they will address the particular issues faced by young people and people living in rural areas within the Tees Valley LEP Area.

iii. Alignment

Applicants must ensure that activity does not duplicate or undermine regional skills provision (such as that delivered by Jobcentre Plus or on behalf of the LEP) or national policy, including policies on other grants and loans.

Local priorities

The Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan 2014 (SEP) sets out its ambition for Tees Valley to become a high-value, low-carbon, diverse and inclusive economy creating 25,000 new private sector jobs by 2022. This growth will be driven by start-ups, existing businesses and new investors. The Tees Valley has experienced private sector growth, with a net increase of over 8,000 jobs since 2011.

Key sectors for growth include chemical, digital, advanced manufacturing, health care and logistics. However we have significant skills shortages in these areas, and industries such as chemical and advanced manufacturing have bases in out of town industrial sites which are difficult to access by public transport, therefore significantly disadvantaging individuals who do not have access to their own transport. Similarly, within our urban areas, there are some business parks which have very poor transport links.

The working age population in Tees Valley is just over 400,000 with 3.8% claiming JSA (compared to 1.5% nationally) and 24% who are economically inactive (compared to 22.5% nationally). We have persistently high rates of youth unemployment and our current NEETs (16-18 year olds) stand at 7.8% against a national figure of 4.7%. Therefore we remain statistically, as one of the worst areas in the country.

The Tees Valley aims to develop a skilled workforce that meets the needs of current and future businesses which is essential in facilitating 25,000 net jobs over the decade, filling the gaps left by an ageing workforce (some 120,000 replacement jobs over the next decade) and ensuring a vibrant, diverse economy that is inclusive for all.

Details of the local ESIF Strategy can be found at: <u>https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/tees-valley-unlimited/what-we-are-delivering/strategic-investment/european-structural-and-investment-funds/</u>

1.3 Scope of activity

This call invites Outline Applications which support the delivery of Priority Axis 1, **Investment Priority: 1.1 Access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people** of the European Social Fund Operational Programme and responds to the local development need set out in the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership Area European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy.

This call aims to address the identified shortfalls listed in section 1.2 Local Development Need above.

2. Call Requirements

All applications are competitive.

Indicative Fund Allocation:	Indicatively, through this call the Managing Authority expects to allocate approximately £450,000 ESF in total.
	The Managing Authority reserves the right to decrease or increase the indicative allocation, or support more or fewer projects subject to the volume and quality of proposals received.

Minimum application level	European Social Fund investment is intended to make a significant impact on local growth. Applications are expected to demonstrate appropriate scale and impact. The Managing Authority does not intend to allocate less than £50,000 of European Social Funding to any single project.	
Duration of project approvals	Projects should be for a maximum of three years; however the Managing Authority reserves the right to vary the maximum duration in exceptional circumstances.	
Geographical Scope	All interventions should be focused on activity and beneficiaries within the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership area.	
Specific call requirements	This is a call for ESF activity.	
Call Deadlines	For this specific call, applications will be assessed following closure of the call. Applications received after the published call close date will not be considered.	
Application selection	All applications will be scored in line with the ESF scoring criteria, but the MA reserve the right to invite projects to full application stage where they complement other activity or provide niche activity to target groups within the OP.	
Applicant proposals	These can only contain activities which are eligible for ESF	
Eligible match funding	Applicants will need to have eligible match funding for the balance of costs, which must be from a source other than the European Union. For all outline applications proof of match funding will need to be supplied as part of the assessment. The intervention rate in the Tees Valley LEP Area is 60% as it is a Transition area, so 40% of match funding must be provided by the applicant in this Transition area.	
Operational completion	Operations must be completed no later than 30 th June 2020.	
Procurement	All procurement must be undertaken in line with EU regulations.	
State Aid law	Applicants must demonstrate compliance with State Aid law	
Audit/ Compliance	All expenditure and activities will be subject to rigorous audit and non-compliance may lead to financial penalty.	
Calls listing multiple activity (delete if not appropriate)	The applicant is required to list each activity they plan to deliver, supported by a clear breakdown of costs. Expected outputs and results per activity should be provided.	

ESF cannot be used to duplicate existing activities or activities that do not address market failure. ESF can only be used to achieve additional activity or bring forward activity more quickly. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that proposals are additional to activity that would have occurred anyway or enables activity to be brought forward and delivered more quickly than otherwise would be the case in response to opportunity or demand.

3. Deliverables required under this Call:

Applications will be expected to achieve the minimum indicative level of Programme Deliverables by contributing to the following Investment Priority. The definitions of which can be accessed at the <u>ESF Operational Programme</u>.

Investment Priority	1.1 Access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people
Specific Objectives	To help those who are disadvantaged but still relatively close to the labour market to tackle their barriers to work, and enter and sustain employment.
Indicative Actions	 ESF will not support activities that duplicate or replace existing support within national programmes, but may be used to support additional activities or target groups, including provision co-designed with local partners. Examples of actions which may be supported for all unemployed and inactive people include:
	 providing access to transport where this is a barrier to taking up a job; The investment priority will focus on providing extra support for long- term unemployed people, including those who have completed the Work Programme. When a person is still unemployed after many efforts to help them, innovative solutions are required, including new approaches to work experience and training, intermediate labour market activity and volunteering opportunities.

Result Targets

ID	Result Indicator	Target value for this call
R1	Unemployed participants into employment (including self-employment) on leaving	22% Transition
R2	Inactive participants into employment, or job search on leaving	33% Transition
ESF-CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	34% Transition

Output Targets

ID	Output Indicator	Total target value for this call	Men target value	Women target value
01	Participants	485	238	247
ESF –CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	485	-	-
ESF – CO03	Inactive	121	-	-
O4	Participants over 50 years of age	184	-	-
O5	Participants from ethnic minorities	25	-	-
ESF - CO16	Participants with disabilities	50	-	-
O6	Participants without basic skills	N/A	N/A	N/A
ESF - CO14	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	19	-	-

Applicants will be required to demonstrate how they will achieve the deliverables within their proposal along with any methodology that will be used to record achievement. Applicants will also need to ensure robust systems are in place, and be able to describe them, to capture and record the targets and to report quantitative and qualitative performance across the Tees Valley LEP area. All operations will be required to collect data and report progress against the deliverables with each claim. Where an operation underperforms against their deliverables they may be subject to a performance penalty.

There must be a fully evidenced audit trail for all contracted deliverables.

4. General Information

Essential information to support the drafting of an application and delivery of a successful ESF funded project is available at the <u>European Growth Funding</u> website pages.

4.1 Compliance and Eligibility

When developing an application, Applicants should refer to <u>guidance</u> on eligible Applicants, activities and costs. These are for guidance only and Applicants should take their own specialist advice if in doubt. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the rules and guidance are adhered to both at application stage and following approval.

European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) are governed by European regulations and national rules. Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with the relevant documentation listed in the 'key documents' section prior to submitting an Outline application. If successful, Applicants will enter into the standard Funding Agreement and must abide by the standard terms and conditions contained therein. Applicants are therefore strongly advised to read these terms and conditions to ensure that they would be able to enter into such an agreement prior to responding to the call. Once a Funding Agreement has been issued it should be signed and returned within a short timescale.

4.2 Intervention Rate & Match Funding

ESF is funding used where no other funding can be obtained (the funder of last resort) and the maximum ESF intervention rate for the operation is 60%. This means ESF can contribute <u>up to</u> 60% of the total eligible project costs, subject to State Aid regulations. The remaining 40% or more must come from other eligible sources. For all outline applications proof of match funding will need to be supplied as part of the assessment.

ESF is not paid in advance and expenditure must be defrayed prior to the submission of any claims. Applicants may be asked to demonstrate how they are able to cash flow the operation.

4.3 Applicants

Applicants must be legally constituted at the point of signing a Funding Agreement, and be able to enter into a legally binding Funding Agreement. The Applicant will be the organisation that, if the application is successful, enters into a contract for ESF and therefore carries the liability for ensuring that the terms of the ESF Funding Agreement are met by them and to all delivery partners. If there is more than one organisation applying for the funds, a lead organisation must be selected to become the Applicant. It is this organisation that carries the responsibility and liability for carrying out a compliant project.

The Managing Authority will consider the Applicant's track record, both positive and negative. If the Applicant has been involved in the delivery of previous European grants and any irregularities with this (these) grant(s) have been identified, the Managing Authority will look into these and expect to see how and what steps have been taken to ensure that these have been addressed to mitigate the risk of further irregularities in the future. It is acknowledged that some organisations will be new to ESIF funding and will not have a track record.

4.4 Cross Cutting Themes

All applications received under this Call should demonstrate how the Cross Cutting Themes have been addressed in the project design and development. Cross cutting themes for ESF are 'gender equality and equal opportunities' and 'sustainable development'.

For ESF, the project applicants will be required to deliver their services in-line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (as defined in the Equality Act 2010). All projects must have a gender and equal opportunities policy and implementation plan which will be submitted at full application stage and in-line with Managing Authority guidance. Project applicants will also be required to answer a number of ESF-specific equality questions which will be set out in both the full application form and the related guidance.

For ESF, all projects will also be required to submit a sustainable development policy and implementation plan (in-line with guidance produced by the Managing Authority).

The ESF programme particularly welcomes projects that have an environmental focus that can meet the strategic fit at local and programme level whilst also adding value by:

- supporting environmental sustainability; and/ or
- complementing the environmental thematic objectives of other programmes such as ERDF; and/or
- using the environment as a resource to help motivate disadvantaged people

Further information is available in the ESF Operational Programme

4.5 State Aid & Revenue Generation

Applicants are required, in the Outline Application, to provide a view on how their proposal complies with State Aid law. Applicants must ensure that projects comply

with the law on State Aid.¹ Grant funding to any economic undertaking which is state aid can only be awarded if it is compatible aid, in that it complies with the terms of a notified scheme or is covered by the De Minimis Regulation. Guidance for grant recipients, explaining more about State Aid, is available; it is important that Applicants take responsibility for understanding the importance of the State Aid rules and securing their full compliance with them throughout the project, if it is selected into the Programme.

The Managing Authority is not able to give legal advice on State Aid. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the operation is State Aid compliant.

Where the Applicant does not perceive that there is any State Aid, it should state whether or not it considers Articles 61 and 65(8) of regulation 1303/2013 to apply. This revenue should be taken into account in calculating eligible expenditure. Article 61 refers to monitoring revenues generated after completion of the project, and Article 65(8) how to deal with differences in the forecast and actual revenues at the end of the operation. The details of this will be tested at the full application stage.

4.6 Funding Agreement

The Funding Agreement is a standard, non-negotiable and legally binding document. Any successful Applicant will be subject to the terms and conditions contained within this agreement. Applicants are strongly advised to seek their own advice to ensure that they would be able to enter into and abide by the terms of the Funding Agreement.

Failure to meet any of the conditions of the agreement or the commitments within the application will result in claw back of funding.

Applicants should be aware that additional provisions and securities may be included within the Funding Agreement to protect the investment. These will be further discussed if relevant following the Full Application stage.

4.7 Procurement

All costs delivered by the Grant Recipient (the applicant) and/or delivery partners must be delivered on an actual cost basis. Other costs must be procured in line with EU regulations. The most common error identified during audit has been failure to comply with relevant procurement regulations and crucially to maintain a full audit trail to prove that they have complied with the relevant regulation. Robust and transparent procurement is required to ensure that Grant Recipients:

¹ Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides that: "Save as otherwise provided in the Treaties, any aid granted by a Member State or through state resources in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods shall, in so far as it affects trade between Member States, be incompatible with the internal market."

- consider value for money;
- maximise efficient use of public money; and
- maintain competitiveness and fairness across the European Union.

It is recommended that applicants seek their own legal advice pertaining to their procurement and requirements to publicise any tendering opportunities.

The Managing Authority is not able to give legal advice on procurement. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the project is compliant in this respect.

4.8 Retrospection

There will be no retrospection for applications made against this call, other than in line with the general policy on retrospection which allows costs to be potentially eligible between outline and full application stage, but only where the full application is approved.

5. Application Process & Prioritisation Methodology

There are two stages to the ESF application process; Outline Application and if successful, Full Application. Applicants must fully complete the Outline Application Form (section 9 refers). Guidance is available on the European Growth Funding website pages. Acceptance of an Outline Application to progress to full application stage does not in any way indicate or constitute an offer of European Social Fund grant. Applications will be subject to a Gateway Assessment undertaken by the Managing Authority under the following criteria:

- Applicant eligibility;
- Activity and expenditure eligibility; and
- The fit with the ESF OP and the call.

Proposals that pass the Gateway Assessment will move into the Core Assessment which consists of the following:

- Strategic fit;
- Value for money;
- Management & control;
- Deliverability;
- Procurement / tendering; and
- State Aid compliance.

The Managing Authority will seek advice from partners when considering applications to ensure its assessment is informed by local economic growth conditions and opportunities within the context of Operational Programmes and the local ESIF Strategy. This will include the relevant LEP Area ESIF Committee and other partners deemed relevant to the application.

The assessment and any prioritisation will be undertaken using only the information supplied as part of the application process. The Managing Authority cannot accept further detail outside this process.

Non-public sector Applicants who are successful at the Outline Application stage may be subject to due financial diligence checks by the Managing Authority, prior to submission of a Full Application. Applicants will be required to submit accounts, and to clarify financial or other organisational information. New Applicant organisations may be required to provide details of a guarantor.

6. Support

Please note that this is a competitive call and to preserve impartiality we are unable to enter into correspondence with applicants over their Outline application. Details of where guidance can be found are contained throughout this calls document. In exceptional circumstances, if there are issues with accessing this guidance, please contact:

ESF.2014-2020@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

No applications are to be sent to this email address. Completed Outline applications must be sent to the email address provided in Section 9 – Document submission.

7. Key Documents

- Outline Application Form;
- Outline Application Form Guidance;
- Local Enterprise Partnership area's ESIF strategy; and
- National ESF Eligibility Rules.

8. Document Checklist

The assessment will be undertaken on the basis of documentation received at the point of closure of the call. Applicants should provide the following documentation.

Outline Stage:

- fully completed Outline Application;
- financial tables (if the application is against more than one Category of Region, a financial table for each Category of Region);
- Outputs, Results and Indicators tables (if the application is against more than one Category of Region, a Outputs, Results and Indicators table for each Category of Region); and

• three years financial accounts (if private or voluntary and community sector).

Failure to provide the above documentation could result in the application being rejected.

9. Document Submission

Completed Outline Applications must be submitted to

⊠: 2014-2020.ESFAPPLICATIONS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK

10. Timescales

Launch of Call advertised on gov.uk.	25 October 2016	
Deadline for submission of Outline Application	6 January 2017	

Outline Application forms not received by the deadline will not be assessed. Outline Applications which are not fully completed will be excluded.

For this call applications will normally be required to **commence delivery/activity within three months** of the award of contract.

Any changes related to the deadline for the submission of the Outline Application form will be notified on the <u>European Growth Funding</u> website pages.

11. Appendix A – Common output indicators

Appendix A – extract from Annex 1 of the ESF regulation

Common output and result indicators for ESF investments

(1) Common output indicators for participants

"Participants" refers to persons benefiting directly from an ESF intervention who can be identified and asked for their characteristics, and for whom specific expenditure is earmarked. Other persons shall not be classified as participants. **All data shall be broken down by gender.**

The common output indicators for participants are:

unemployed, including long-term unemployed
long-term unemployed
inactive
Inactive, not in education or training
employed, including self-employed
below 25 years of age
above 54 years of age
above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long-term unemployed,
or inactive not in education or training
with primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)
with upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4)
with tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)
participants who live in jobless households
participants who live in jobless households with dependent children
participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children
ethnic minorities
Participants with disabilities
other disadvantaged
homeless or affected by housing exclusion
from rural areas

Common immediate result indicators for participants are:

inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving
participants in education/training upon leaving
participants gaining a qualification upon leaving
participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training,
gaining a qualification, in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving

Common longer-term result indicators for participants are:

participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving

disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving