



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions



**European Union**  
European  
Social Fund

## 2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme

### Call for Proposals European Social Fund

### Priority Axis 2: Skills for Growth

<b>Managing Authority</b>	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
<b>ESI Fund</b>	European Social Fund
<b>Priority Axis:</b>	Priority Axis 2 : Skills for Growth
<b>Investment Priority:</b>	2.2: Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems.
<b>Call Reference:</b>	Employment Hub OC21S16P0388
<b>LEP Area:</b>	Leicester and Leicestershire
<b>Call Opens:</b>	9 November 2016
<b>Call Closes:</b>	18 January 2017
<b>Document Submission</b>	Completed Outline Applications must be submitted to ✉: <a href="mailto:2014-2020.ESFAPPLICATIONS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">2014-2020.ESFAPPLICATIONS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>

# Contents

1. Call Context
  - 1.1 National Context
  - 1.2 Local Development Need
  - 1.3 Scope of Activity
2. Call Requirements
3. Required Deliverables
4. General Information
  - 4.1 Compliance and Eligibility
  - 4.2 Intervention Rate & Match Funding
  - 4.3 Applicants
  - 4.4 Cross Cutting Themes
  - 4.5 State Aid
  - 4.6 Funding Agreement
  - 4.7 Procurement
  - 4.8 Retrospection
5. Application Process & Prioritisation Methodology
6. Support
7. Key Documents
8. Document Checklist
9. Document Submission
10. Timescales
11. Appendix A – Common output indicators

# 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 2 of the Operational Programme: Skills for Growth** and **Investment Priority: 2.2 Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems** as set out in the ESF Operational Programme.

All applications will need to be eligible under the European Social Fund Operational Programme for England 2014 to 2020. The [ESF Operational Programme](#) is available for applicants to read.

This call for proposals 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.

Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with the detail of the Operational Programme, local European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy and the relevant documentation listed in sections 5 through to 8 **prior to** submitting an Outline Application.

All ESF applicants will need to be aware of the requirement to collect and report data on all participants as per Annex 1 of the ESF regulation (see Appendix A). This will be in addition to the requirement to report on the output and result indicators referred to in section 3 of the call for proposal.

## 1.1 National Context

This priority axis aims to support skills for growth. It will support activities through:

**Investment Priority 2.2** - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes

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 objectives have been reproduced below.

Specific Objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
To promote improvements in the labour market relevance of skills provision through active engagement with relevant institutions and employers, particularly SMEs and Micro businesses.	The additional support from this investment priority will enable the design of skills provision which will help individuals gain skills and qualifications relevant to the needs of the labour market

## 1.2 Local Development Need

Projects must deliver activity which directly contributes to the objectives of Priority Axis 2, Investment Priority 2.2 of the Operational Programme, and which meets the **local development need** expressed in the text and table below.

## Local Economic Context:

The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) was established in May 2011 and serves the City of Leicester and the County of Leicestershire.

The LLEP's vision is to ***“create a vibrant, distinctive and attractive place with highly skilled people making Leicester and Leicestershire the destination of choice for successful businesses.”***

By 2020 the LLEP's aim is to have:

- Created 45,000 new jobs
- Leveraged £2.5 billion of private sector investment
- Increased Gross Value Added (GVA) by £4 billion from £19 billion to £23 billion

To support the development of the local economy, the LLEP has identified eight key growth sectors where there is the potential for further local economic growth. These are:

- Advanced manufacturing and engineering
- Creative industries
- Food and drink
- Logistics and distribution
- Low carbon
- Professional and financial services
- Textiles
- Tourism and hospitality

In addition, other important sectors for the local economy include sport, health and social care and construction.

The LLEP has identified four transformational priorities that will provide Leicester and Leicestershire with a global competitive advantage and create over 19,000 of our 45,000 planned new jobs by 2020. These are:

- Leicester Waterside
- East Midlands Gateway Strategic Rail Freight Interchange
- Loughborough University Science & Enterprise Parks (LUSEP)
- MIRA Technology Park Enterprise Zone

Further information is available in the LLEP's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)

[http://www.llep.org.uk/content/uploads/2015/03/SEP\\_-\\_summary.pdf](http://www.llep.org.uk/content/uploads/2015/03/SEP_-_summary.pdf)

A second Enterprise Zone will also be created across Loughborough and Leicester to support local businesses and build on the area's strengths in science and research.

It is imperative to equip this and the next generation with the relevant skills and experience to secure the job opportunities that will be created at our enterprise zones and transformational priorities. The ESF programme provides a vital resource to enable the LLEP to promote improvements in the labour market and ensure the relevance of skills provision to meet the needs of the employers located at these sites.

The numbers of apprenticeships in the LLEP area have slightly increased from 5.4% in 2011-12 to 6.1% in 2014-15. There is still a lack of apprenticeship starts when compared to other LEP areas and particularly in Leicester, where uptake in the city (3.5%) is significantly lower than in the surrounding county (9.1%).<sup>1</sup>

Larger employers in the LLEP area are more likely to offer apprenticeships than small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Of the 37,860 businesses in the LLEP area approximately 150 are large businesses employing over 250 people. We have a higher than national average number of small businesses that employ 10 to 49 people (10%) and medium businesses that employ 49 to 249 people (1.7%). 88% of our business are micro businesses employing up to 9 people.<sup>2</sup>

Evidence shows that not enough good quality apprenticeship opportunities are being offered by our small and medium businesses employing 9 to 249 people.<sup>3</sup> It is these 4,410 businesses that the Employment Hub will target. The focus of the Employment Hub will be to stimulate demand for apprenticeships and traineeships and to support SMEs to recruit young talent through the national programmes. The Hub will be expected to engage with local SMEs and promote apprenticeships as a means to grow their businesses, fill existing skills gaps and develop their workforce for the future.

Youth unemployment has reduced by over 50% since the City Deal was developed in 2013.<sup>4</sup> Therefore our focus now to provide high quality opportunities for young people leaving the education system and a key component of this will be the creation of the Employment Hub that will drive up demand for apprenticeships, traineeships and other national employment schemes through effective employer engagement and SME support.

The Employment Hub will work alongside the Further Education sector, Higher Education sector, LLEP Business Gateway, apprenticeship training agencies and

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<sup>1</sup> Skills Funding Agency Data Cubes, Leicester and Leicestershire Final Learner Postcodes (2016)

<sup>2</sup> Office of National Statistics, UK business Count – Enterprises (2016)

<sup>3</sup> Skills Funding agency Data Cubes, Leicester and Leicestershire 2014/15 Final Learner Postcodes (2016)

<sup>4</sup> Office of National Statistics, NOMIS Local Authority Profile, Leicester, Claimant Count by Age (2016)

private training providers to ensure additionality in expanding the take up of apprenticeships and improving coordination. It will support all sectors of the economy, but will focus on the LLEP's priority sectors and those experiencing recruitment difficulties and skills problems.

Further information about the LLEP's strategies can be found at the following links:

- European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy – <https://www.llep.org.uk/strategies-and-plans/esif/our-esif-strategy-2014-2020/>
- Leicester and Leicestershire City Deal – <https://www.llep.org.uk/strategies-and-plans/the-leicester-and-leicestershire-city-deal/>
- Skills Needs Assessment – <https://www.llep.org.uk/investing-in-our-people/skills-strategies/skills-needs-assessment/>
- Strategic Economic Plan - <https://www.llep.org.uk/strategies-and-plans/our-strategic-economic-plan-sep/>

### **Local Priorities:**

The purpose of this call is to establish a new Employment Hub in Leicester and Leicestershire to undertake a range of activities to drive up demand for the full range of national and local employment and training opportunities. The Employment Hub will work directly with local businesses (especially SMEs) to increase demand for apprenticeships, traineeships and work placements. It will also add capacity to and complement the work of the National Apprenticeship Service and local apprenticeship training agencies.

In line with Investment Priority 2.2, the Employment Hub will make education and training provision more responsive to the needs of the local economy so that employers' skills needs are more effectively met and individuals receive better designed skills provision which equips them for the world of work.

To tackle the supply and demand issues surrounding apprenticeships, traineeships and work placements, the Employment Hub will need to deliver the following activity:

### 1. *Marketing and Promotion*

To make the case for apprenticeships, the Employment Hub will raise awareness of the benefits reported by other employers. This will include the delivery of events, the production of promotional material, generating positive PR and using positive case studies to demonstrate tangible business benefits. The Employment Hub will also promote sector based initiatives in areas of skills shortages and the LLEP's eight growth sectors. To ensure effective marketing to businesses, the Employment Hub will coordinate its marketing activities with the LLEP Business Gateway.

### 2. *Employer Engagement*

To drive up the local demand for apprenticeships, traineeships and work placements, the Employment Hub will recruit and host dedicated employer engagement specialists who will add capacity to and complement the work of the National Apprenticeship Service and local apprenticeship training agencies. These specialists will be a part of the business support landscape and will promote these services in their interactions with business. They will also be expected to be a source of, and a receiving point of, referrals from the LLEP Business Gateway, and will work with the Gateway to develop joined up and consistent messages to promote the uptake of services that will support individuals and support businesses to grow.

### 3. *Case Studies*

To promote the benefits of apprenticeships, traineeships and work placements to local employers and people, working with local partners the Employment Hub will gather together positive new stories and case studies.

### 4. *SME Demand Stimulation and Support*

To increase and stimulate the demand for apprenticeships from SMEs in sectors or areas where there is currently a poor offer. The Employment Hub will provide information and guidance to SMEs through targeted sector and geographically focused events. Our Skills for the Future Study will highlight future occupational and skills needs across the LLEP area and could be used to inform this activity. The Employment Hub will also support employers through the apprenticeship recruitment process to make this easier for them.

### 5. *Large Employer Support*

To encourage and support local large employers to offer apprenticeships, traineeships and work placements, the Employment Hub will provide an account management service.

### 6. *Higher Education Engagement*

To improve graduate retention and increase the uptake of graduate internships and higher apprenticeships, the Employment Hub will work with the three universities



located within the LLEP area (De Montfort University, Loughborough University and the University of Leicester).

#### 7. *Supply Chains*

Where the Employment Hub is working with businesses that have a large supply chain it will use this network to engage these businesses and deliver supply chain events in order to promote and stimulate demand for apprenticeships, traineeships and work placements. Where there are large development projects being delivered the Employment Hub will work with the local authorities to ensure that clauses are inserted into the contract that would require the contractor to offer apprenticeship opportunities to local people.

#### 8. *LLEP Business Gateway Engagement*

The Employment Hub must work closely with the Business Gateway to ensure coordinated engagement with business and provide a strong referral point for receiving and generating business support enquiries. It will also work with the Business Gateway to identify new opportunities for the provision of apprenticeships, traineeships and work placements where employers are looking to grow their business. The Employment Hub will be required to sign up to the partnership working protocols of the Business Gateway. [Click here to access.](#)

#### 9. *Virtual Support*

To advertise local opportunities, the Employer Hub will develop and maintain a dedicated website.

#### 10. *Aftercare Monitoring*

To ensure the quality of the support that is offered to local employers, the Employment Hub will undertake effective aftercare monitoring by maintaining contact with local employers after they have taken on an apprentice or trainee. This will enable the Employment Hub to understand the employer's experiences of the process, identify good and bad practice lessons to improve and inform future Hub activities.

### **1.3 Scope of activity**

This call invites Outline Applications which support the delivery of Priority Axis 2, **Investment Priority 2.2 Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems** of the European Social Fund Operational Programme and responds to the local development need set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire 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.

<p><b>Indicative Fund Allocation:</b></p>	<p>Indicatively, through this call the Managing Authority expects to allocate approximately <b>£2m ESF</b>.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p><b>Minimum application level</b></p>	<p>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 <b>£50,000 of European Social Funding to any single project</b>.</p>
<p><b>Duration of project approvals</b></p>	<p>Projects should be for a maximum of three years, however the Managing Authority reserves the right to vary the maximum duration in exceptional circumstances.</p>
<p><b>Geographical Scope</b></p>	<p>All interventions should be focused on activity within the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership area.</p>
<p><b>Specific call requirements</b></p>	<p>This is a call for ESF activity.</p>
<p><b>Call Deadlines</b></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Application selection</b></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Applicant proposals</b></p>	<p>These can only contain activities which are eligible for ESF.</p>
<p><b>Eligible match funding</b></p>	<p>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.</p>

<b>Operational completion</b>	Operations must be completed no later than 30 June 2020
<b>Procurement</b>	All procurement must be undertaken in line with EU regulations.
<b>State Aid law</b>	Applicants must demonstrate compliance with State Aid law.
<b>Audit/ Compliance</b>	All expenditure and activities will be subject to rigorous audit and non-compliance may lead to financial penalty.
<b>Calls listing multiple activity</b>	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 [ESF Operational Programme](#).

<b>Investment Priority</b>	<b>2.2 Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems</b>
<b>Specific Objectives</b>	To promote improvements in the labour market relevance of skills provision through active engagement with relevant institutions and employers, particularly SMEs and micro businesses.
<b>Indicative Actions</b>	<p>ESF will not support activities that duplicate or replace existing support within national programmes, but may be used to support additional activities, including provision co-designed with local partners.</p> <p>Examples of activities that may be supported include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support for collaborative projects, placements, internships or other activities with SMEs that enable students and graduates to gain industry-relevant experience and skills;</li> <li>• building capacity in SMEs to provide project/placement/internship opportunities and enhance the contribution of advanced skills to SME growth, including programmes to</li> </ul>

	<p>specifically engage the most disadvantaged groups or those who face particular local disadvantages in utilising advanced skills;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brokering opportunities to encourage and increase work experience, work placements, traineeships, apprenticeships, and graduate placements particularly through wider employer engagement and involving supply chains;</li> <li>• promoting apprenticeships (especially at advanced levels in manufacturing and other priority sectors) by developing a supportive environment for employer engagement;</li> <li>• developing better links with business to equip students with the skills to start and grow a business to meet local business needs.</li> </ul>
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<b>ID</b>	<b>Result Indicator</b>	<b>Target value for this call</b>
R9	Small and Medium Enterprises successfully completing projects (which increase employer engagement; and/or the number of people progressing into or within skills provision)	75%

<b>ID</b>	<b>Output Indicator</b>	<b>Target value for this call</b>
CO23	Number of supported micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	199

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 Leicester and Leicestershire 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.

In addition applicants applying for ESF funds under I.P 2.2 will be expected to complete a short annex, along with the standard application Outline Application form. This is to ensure that full consideration is being given to the 'Value for Money' (VFM). The [Annex for ESF IP 2.2 funding calls](#) can be located on the [European Growth Funding](#) website pages.

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 [European Growth Funding](#) website pages.

### 4.1 Compliance and Eligibility

When developing an application, Applicants should refer to [guidance](#) 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.

ESIFs 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 50%. This means ESF can contribute up to 50% of the total eligible project costs, subject to State Aid regulations. The remaining 50% 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.

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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."

## 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:

- 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](mailto: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;
- [Annex for ESF IP 2.2 funding calls](#)
- Outline Application Form Guidance;
- LEP 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](mailto:2014-2020.ESFAPPLICATIONS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK)

## 10. Timescales

Launch of Call advertised on gov.uk.	9 November 2016
Deadline for submission of Outline Application	18 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 [European Growth Funding](#) website pages.

## 11. Appendix A – Common output indicators

### Appendix A - extract from Annex 1 of the ESF regulation

Common output indicators for entities are:

number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations
number of projects dedicated at sustainable participation and progress of women in employment
number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level
number of supported micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)