

2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment
Funds Growth Programme

Call for Proposals
European Regional Development Fund

Priority Axis 1: Promoting Research and
Innovation

Managing Authority:	Department for Communities and Local Government
Fund:	European Regional Development Fund
Priority Axis:	Priority Axis 1: Promoting Research and Innovation
Call Reference:	OC19R16P 0439
Local Enterprise Partnership Area:	Lancashire
LEP Area Indicative Funding Available:	£12,500,000
Call Open:	Friday 16 December 2016
Call Closes:	23:59 17 February 2017

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Call Context.....	4
3.	Scope of the Call	5
3.1.	Scope.....	5
3.2.	Local Development Need.....	7
3.3.	Operational Programme Investment Priorities.....	9
4.	Required Outputs under this Call	13
5.	Application Process & Prioritisation Methodology	15
6.	General Information.....	17
6.1.	National Eligibility Rules.....	17
6.2.	Eligible Applicants.....	17
6.3.	Contribution Rate & Match Funding	18
6.4.	Project Timescales.....	18
6.5.	Capital Projects	19
6.6.	Cross Cutting Themes/Horizontal Principles.....	19
6.7.	Additionality, Duplication and Displacement	19
6.8.	State Aid & Revenue Generation	20
6.9.	Procurement.....	20
7.	Support.....	20
8.	Key Documents	21
9.	Document Checklist.....	21
10.	Document Submission.....	21

1. Introduction

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

The Government has confirmed that it will guarantee EU funding for structural and investment fund projects signed before the UK's departure from the EU, even when these projects continue after we have left the EU.

As a result, British businesses and other organisations will have additional certainty over future funding and should continue to apply for EU funding while the UK remains a member of the EU.

Funding for projects will be honoured by the government, if they meet good value for money and are in line with domestic strategic priorities. Each government department will take responsibility for the allocation of money to projects in line with these conditions and the wider rules on public spending. The full detail of the announcement can be found at the following website link: <http://tinyurl.com/h977fw4>

The Funds are managed by the Department for Communities and Local Government for the European Regional Development Fund, Department for Work and Pensions for the European Social Fund and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. These Departments are the Managing Authorities for each Fund. In London, the Greater London Authority acts as an Intermediate Body for the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund programmes. In some other areas, Intermediate Bodies are being designated by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department for Work and Pensions to perform the following tasks:

- Input into project calls in respect of local development needs (with reference to ESI Funds Strategies); and
- Assessment of applications against certain selection criteria in relation to fit with local priorities in respect of the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund.

The Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies work closely with local partners on ESI Funds sub-committees in each Local Enterprise Partnership area. Partners on these sub-committees 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 (or Intermediate Bodies where designated) in the development of project calls that reflect Operational Programme and local development needs as well as match funding opportunities; and
- Advice on local economic growth conditions and opportunities within the context of the Operational Programme and the local European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy to aid the Managing Authorities' (or Intermediate Bodies where designated) assessments at outline and full application stage.

This call is issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government/Greater London Authority and invites Outline Applications in respect of the European Regional Development Fund for England 2014 to 2020.

2. Call Context

On behalf of the national Growth Programme Board, the Department for Communities and Local Government (the Managing Authority) invites applications seeking European Regional Development Fund support under:

Priority Axis 1 Promoting Research and Innovation

Investment Priorities:

- 1a** enhancing research and innovation infrastructure and capacities to develop research and innovation excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest.
- 1b** promoting business investment in research and innovation;
 - developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the Higher Education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation;
 - and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advance manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies.

The **European Regional Development Fund Operational Programme for England 2014 to 2020** sets out how the European Regional Development Fund will focus on investment to support economic growth and job creation. **Priority Axis 1** of

the Operational Programme aims to improve how Small and Medium Sized Enterprises commercialise research and how they collaborate with research institutions.

Any application for funding will be required to clearly demonstrate that it meets the requirement of, and makes a meaningful contribution to, the delivery of the relevant Priority Axis of the [European Regional Development Fund Operational Programme](#).

In addition, applications will be expected to meet identified local development needs, as expressed in the scope of this call and as set out in the [Lancashire](#) European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy.

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.

3. Scope of the Call

3.1. Scope

This call invites Outline Applications which support the delivery of Priority Axis 1 of the European Regional Development Fund Operational Programme and respond to the local development need set out in the [Lancashire](#) European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy.

Indicative Fund Allocation:	<p>Indicatively, through this call the Managing Authority expects to allocate up to £12,500,000 - Twelve million five hundred thousand pounds.</p> <p>The Managing Authority reserves the right to invite to full application (and subsequently approve) projects that have a cumulative value that is higher or lower than this indicative allocation, subject to the volume and quality of proposals received. The Managing Authority may also decide to place some projects submitted through this call on a reserve list and invite them to proceed at a later date, subject to the availability of funding.</p> <p>There is no indicative allocation of European Regional Development Fund funding between capital and revenue activity, both capital and revenue is eligible dependent on the nature of activities/Investment Priorities set out in the call.</p>
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<p>Minimum application level</p>	<p>European Regional Development 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 £500,000 European Regional Development Fund to any single project. Consequently projects with a total value of less than £834,000 will not normally be supported under this call</p>
<p>Duration of project activity</p>	<p>Projects should plan to deliver activity for a maximum of three years; however the Managing Authority reserves the right to vary the maximum duration, upwards or downwards.</p>
<p>Geographical Scope</p>	<p>The England European Regional Development Fund Operational Programme operates on a National basis. All eligible European Regional Development Fund expenditure must benefit organisations located in England.</p> <p>Revenue projects should predominantly support businesses based within the Local Enterprise Partnership area of this call.</p>
<p>Specific call requirements</p>	<p>This call for projects for capital and revenue projects with revenue support</p> <p>For capital build or refurbishment, the following should be noted:</p> <p>applicants will need to demonstrate at Outline Application that proposals are deliverable. Should an application progress to Full Application stage on submission applicants will need to demonstrate :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That they own the project site or have an agreement in place to purchase it; • Have secured full planning permission; • Have advanced project costs and designs to a minimum of RIBA Stage 3. <p>Failure to achieve this is likely to result in the Full Application being rejected</p> <p>Applicants will have the option to attend a Bid Development Workshop, please check the LEP website for further details.</p> <p>Good value for money and alignment with domestic</p>

	strategic priorities will form a key part of the assessment and appraisal of all applications. Proposals should therefore ensure that these two conditions are fully and robustly demonstrated.
Call Deadlines	For this specific call, applications will be assessed after the close of the single deadline on 23:59 17 February 2017 . Applications received after the published call close date will not be considered. All applications will be assessed following closure of the call.

3.2. Local Development Need

Projects must deliver activity which directly contributes to the objectives of Priority Axis 1 of the Operational Programme, one or more of the relevant Investment Priorities and meet the local development need expressed in the table below.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT NEED
<p>Local Growth Priorities:</p> <p>Lancashire is one of the largest economies in the north of England, generating £25.5bn of GVA and supporting over 617,000 jobs. It has a large and diverse economic base with over 51,000 enterprises, (the majority of which are SMEs), a growing number of world class companies and key strengths in aerospace and advanced engineering and manufacturing.</p> <p>Although Lancashire has experienced sustained economic growth the area's economic performance consistently lags behind UK and neighbouring competitor locations, with Lancashire's GVA per head only 74% of the UK average. To address this GVA deficit compared to the rest of the UK Lancashire needs to generate high value economic growth, promoting the growth of SMEs, supporting innovation, including the dissemination and adoption of new technologies, and the exploitation of higher-value growth sectors where Lancashire has real competitive strengths or potential.</p> <p>With insufficient levels of research and development in the Lancashire SME base to support knowledge based growth, Lancashire needs to capitalise on local innovation and R&D assets to maximise innovation, promote R&D, invest in research and innovation infrastructure and share innovations with commercial potential to promote higher value economic growth.</p> <p>Specific support is required to develop Lancashire's innovation assets, in specific identified sectors and including appropriate premises and infrastructure, and to secure access to these resources by Lancashire's SMEs to increase investment in research and innovation in the local business base.</p>

Lancashire's HEI's are already engaged in a wide range of initiatives designed to engage with SMEs and boost productivity, business growth and employment. Lancashire's academic institutions are committed to working with the business community to exploit their research, knowledge, skills and talent for the benefit of the economy.

Lancashire wants to enhance the concentration of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and their key role in supporting SMEs to strengthen research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and productivity.

HEIs are a crucial component of Lancashire's, and the UK's, knowledge base and, as such, contribute to innovation and enhanced productivity through knowledge exchange and skills provision.

Lancashire's HEIs engage with business in a number of ways to drive innovation, including through collaborative and contract research & development; consultancy; the commercialisation of intellectual property; opening access to university facilities and equipment, including co-location; the provision of continuing professional and educational programmes; and gaining advantage from their international reach and networks.

Local Priorities:

Proposals should demonstrate alignment with local development need and priorities including:

As identified in the Lancashire Strategic Economic Plan and the European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy the Health sector is already a major employer in Lancashire with activities ranging from high level research and medical product manufacture, through to employment in the NHS, and a significant and growing health and social care workforce which is increasingly migrating from the public to private sector.

Digital and telehealth products and services are set to become a major part of medical delivery in the future and are already having a significant impact on the shift from hospital-based care to a focus on patient centric diagnosis, treatment and monitoring.

The spin offs from health related research and innovation can also be used to support other sectors in Lancashire whether they be digital related, involve developments applicable to advanced manufacturing and/or facilitate sectoral cross over activity.

Activity proposed under this call should complement health sector business support activity in order to maximise the impact for the Lancashire economy. It is envisaged any proposals coming forward under this call will include both capital and revenue elements to ensure, as well as the growth of the innovation base in Lancashire, they contribute to the development of knowledge exchange and innovation with the health focused SME base.

Proposals should demonstrate alignment with local development need and priorities including:

- how proposals will contribute towards delivery of the Lancashire ESIF Strategy through the promotion of economic growth and SME productivity within Lancashire;
- demonstrate the local market failure and the need for public intervention;
- demonstrate how the proposals align with England Smart Specialisation Strategy;
- how proposals will work with existing and planned local business support provision, including the Lancashire Growth Hub (Boost);
- priority to be given to projects with a lower ERDF intervention rate (maximum intervention rate is 60%) and that deliver Lancashire-wide activity.

Examples of activities include:

- Capital developments to enhance research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop research and innovation (R&I) excellence.
- Activities to increase investment in research and innovation by Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), targeting and embedding the technologies and sectors identified through Smart Specialisation.
- Activities to increase the number of SMEs engaged in knowledge exchange, collaborative and contract research and innovation with research institutions in order to help them bring new products and process to the market.

3.3. Operational Programme Investment Priorities

Applications must specify the activities to be delivered and must directly contribute to **one or more** of the following Investment Priorities:

<p>Investment Priority</p>	<p>1a – Enhancing research and innovation infrastructure and capacities to develop research and innovation excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest.</p>
<p>Specific Objectives</p>	<p>Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest.</p>

Indicative Actions

The purpose of support under this investment priority will be to build or enhance infrastructure that in due course will contribute to the greater commercialisation of products, services and processes.

Under this investment priority indicative actions to be supported by the European Regional Development Fund may include:

- Specialist infrastructure/facilities/centres linked to smart specialisation including enhancements to science parks and to improve access to these facilities through digital and physical links.
- Investment in the development and upgrading of innovation space, with capability to serve as a platform or host for innovation and innovative relationships.
- Improved incubation space to enable research and development and innovation.
- Shared use research laboratories and facilities, particularly targeted at the Eight Great Technologies as set out in “Smart Specialisation in England”.
- Development of enterprise, innovation and technology hubs and centres of excellence, in line with the approach set out in “Smart Specialisation in England”.
- Development and upgrading of appropriate test facilities and deployment infrastructure.

In all cases, actions will include provision of appropriate equipment and staff resources.

Activity under this specific objective will also underpin activity under the other specific objectives within this priority axis, by enabling investment in infrastructure, facilities and equipment. This will contribute to the wider goal of improving the commercialisation of new products, services and processes by Small and Medium Sized Enterprises.

Investment Priority	<p>1b – Promoting business investment in research and innovation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the Higher Education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation; • Supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advance manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies.
Specific Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase investment in research and innovation by Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in sectors and technologies identified through smart specialisation. • Increase the number of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises engaged in knowledge exchange, collaborative and contract research and innovation with research institutions, public institutions or large enterprises in order to help them bring new products and processes to market.
Indicative Actions	<p>Under this investment priority indicative actions to be supported by the European Regional Development Fund may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for smart specialisation collaborative and contract research and development including initiatives stimulating and facilitating productive innovation partnerships.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the commercialisation of new products and business processes and initiatives, particularly targeted to aid innovation in the Eight Great Technologies as set out in “Smart Specialisation in England”. • Collaborative and contract research and development programmes. • Applied research programmes, particularly targeted at sectors and technologies set out in “Smart Specialisation in England”. • Innovation vouchers for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises. • Innovation support programmes for product design and development and systems integration. • Initiatives simulating the demand for new or improved services, processes and products including business-led and public procurement programmes. • Schemes providing practical, financial and material support for the innovation process within businesses. • Schemes stimulating and enabling graduate start-up and spin out from universities, colleges and research institutions. • Technology support programmes and demonstrator projects and programmes for current and future technologies. • Knowledge transfer programmes, particularly linked to priority growth sectors and the technologies set out in “Smart Specialisation in England”. • Support to engage more businesses in knowledge transfer and innovation, develop links to wider Higher Education institutions and research institutions and demonstrate the benefits of working with knowledge base partners. • Support for innovation ecosystems including business-
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	<p>led networks and open innovation ecosystems that reduce the complexity of interaction within and between organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities promoting a smart specialisation approach and initiatives that develop the supportive environment for innovation in Small and Medium Sized Enterprises including the promotion of networks and industry groups in key sectors. <p>The focus of activity under this priority axis is improving commercialisation of new or enhanced products or services by Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, whether through increased investment or better collaborations, but this requires the involvement of a much wider group including larger firms in cooperation with their supply chains and other Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, Higher Education institutions, public sector institutions and research centres, Catapult Centres and other centres of excellence.</p> <p>Projects under this investment priority, including pilot or demonstrator activity, may include capital spend where this is integral to their delivery. This may include enhancements to premises or new build, equipment and facilities. Where new premises are to be built, then there must be clear evidence that demand is not met by existing supply.</p>
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4. Required Outputs under this Call

Applicants will need to demonstrate how the eligible activity, funded by the European Regional Development Fund will achieve the ERDF programme-level outputs for Priority Axis 1.

For projects proposing to deliver activity against more than one Investment Priority, the appropriate outputs should be selected. Project will be required to report on, and evidence, the achievement of the outputs separately under each Investment Priority.

For projects coming forward under this call the expected outputs and results are:

Investment Priority 1a	
Output	Name

reference	
C25	Number of researchers working in improved research facilities Minimum 26
P2	Public or commercial buildings built or renovated

Investment Priority 1b	
Output reference	Name
C1	Number of enterprises receiving support Minimum 523
C2	Number of enterprises receiving grants Minimum 521
C3	Number of enterprises receiving financial support other than grants - Minimum 38
C4	Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support
C5	Number of new enterprises supported
C6	Private investment matching public support to enterprises (grants) - Minimum £630k
C7	Private investment matching public support to enterprises (non-grants) Minimum £995k
C8	Employment increase in supported enterprises Minimum 35
C26	Number of enterprises co-operating with research institutions Minimum 355
C28	Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products Minimum 43
C29	Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products Minimum 34
P2	Public or commercial buildings built or renovated Minimum 321 square metres

The Managing Authority expects the level of outputs proposed within outline applications to be realistic and achievable and to deliver good value for money. The application should clearly state the methodology used to determine the levels of outputs proposed.

All operations will be required to report regularly on progress toward achievement of targets. This will need to include both quantitative and qualitative data relevant to the appropriate geographical areas. Applicants will need to explain how they will collect and record this information to maintain a fully evidenced audit trail. It should

be noted that if an operation fails to deliver contracted outputs, a performance penalty may apply.

5. Application Process & Prioritisation Methodology

There are two stages to the European Regional Development Fund application process:

- (i) Outline Application and, if successful
- (ii) Full Application.

Acceptance of an Outline Application to progress to full application stage does not in any way indicate or constitute an offer of European Regional Development Fund grant.

Applicants must fully complete the [Outline Application](#) which will be assessed by the Managing Authority against all of the national [Selection Criteria](#) except where an Intermediate Body has been designated to assess against some of the selection criteria. Where an Intermediate Body has been designated to undertake delegated tasks, the Intermediate Body will undertake the assessment against the selection criteria in relation to fit with local priorities.

Outline Applications will be assessed in two stages, Gateway assessment and Core assessment.

The Gateway assessment is undertaken by the Managing Authorities and considers:

- applicant eligibility;
- activity and expenditure eligibility; and
- fit with the National Operational Programme and the local development need set out in section 2.

Applications that fail the Gateway assessment undertaken by the Managing Authority will be rejected. Applications which pass the Gateway assessment will then be assessed by the Managing Authority in relation to all Core assessment criteria.

In areas where an Intermediate Body¹ has been designated, the following will apply:

The Intermediate Body will assess the application against the following Core assessment criteria:

- Local Strategic Fit

¹ This process works differently for the Greater London Authority. Please contact the Greater London Authority for further details.

The Managing Authority will assess the application against the following Core assessment criteria:²

- National Strategic Fit
- Value for money
- Management and control
- Deliverability
- Compliance
 - Procurement
 - State Aid
 - Publicity requirements
- Cross cutting themes
 - Environmental sustainability
 - Equal Opportunities

The Intermediate Body will also provide advice to the Managing Authority to assist the Managing Authority to make its assessment against the following Core selection criteria:

- Value for money
- Deliverability

Having assessed projects against these criteria the relevant Local Economic Partnership area European Structural and Investment Funds Sub-Committee will advise the Managing Authority or Intermediate Body as relevant on the contribution to local economic growth conditions and opportunities within the context of the Operational Programme and local European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy to aid the Managing Authority's assessments (at outline and full application stage).

Having concluded their assessments the Managing Authority and the Intermediate Body will prioritise the applications they wish to proceed based on their assessment against their respective selection criteria. Only projects that the Managing Authority and the Intermediate Body each agree should proceed, based on their respective core selection criteria, will be invited to submit a full application. Subsequently only those full applications that the Managing Authority and the Intermediate Body each agree should proceed, based on their respective selection criteria, will be approved.

Please note that the Managing Authority's decision is final and there are no appeals. If you wish to complain about the calls and application process, please follow the procedure set out at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/complaints-procedure>

Potential applicants / applicants may wish to take advantage of information and support services funded through ERDF Technical Assistance and available to assist the design and development of compliant projects / applications for ERDF. Details of your local Technical Assistance funded project can be found on the [Technical Assistance website page](#).

6. General Information

6.1. National Eligibility Rules

When developing an application, Applicants must refer to the [National Eligibility Rules](#) setting out the requirements of the 2014-2020 European Regional Development Fund Programme. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the National Eligibility Rules are adhered to both at application stage and following approval. Failure to do so can lead to financial penalties leading to recovery of up to 100% of the grant value. If in doubt on any of the requirements, Applicants are strongly advised to seek specialist advice.

European Regional Development Fund eligibility rules apply to **all** project spend within the eligible costs, including match funding.

The European Regional Development Fund is governed by European regulations and national rules. Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with the relevant documentation, (Section 8 Key Document refers) prior to submitting an Outline Application. If successful at the full application stage, Applicants will enter into [a Funding Agreement](#) and must abide by the standard terms and conditions contained therein. Once a Funding Agreement has been issued it should be signed and returned within 30 days, unless otherwise agreed with the Managing Authority. Applicants are therefore strongly advised to read these terms and conditions to ensure that they are able to enter into such an agreement prior to responding to the call.

6.2. Eligible Applicants

Section 4 of the [National Eligibility Rules](#) sets out who is eligible to apply. Financial Due Diligence checks will be undertaken on non-public sector Applicants successful at the Outline Application stage.

Applicants must be legally constituted at the point of signing a Funding Agreement. If the application is approved the Applicant organisation will enter into a legally binding Funding Agreement and therefore will carry the liability for ensuring that the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement are met.

If there is more than one organisation applying for the funds, a lead organisation must be selected to become the Applicant (and Grant Recipient) with the remaining organisation(s) acting as Delivery Partner(s). In this situation the Applicant would be responsible and liable for the Delivery Partner(s) and ensuring the project is operating compliantly.

During the application process 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 have been identified, the Managing Authority will expect to see what steps have been taken to ensure that the risk of further irregularities in the future is mitigated. It is acknowledged that some organisations will be new to European Structural and Investment Funds funding and will not have a track record.

6.3. Contribution Rate & Match Funding

European Regional Development Fund investment must not be used to replace existing funding sources. European Regional Development Fund investment must enable activity to take place that would not otherwise happen or to increase the scope, scale or intensity of activity. The level of European Regional Development Fund awarded will be the minimum in order for the project to proceed

The maximum Contribution Rate is 60% of the total eligible project costs subject to State Aid regulations.

The remaining 40% or more must come from other eligible sources as specified under section 6 of the National Eligibility Rules. During the application process applicants will need to satisfy the Managing Authority that they have, or are able to put in place eligible match funding for the balance of costs. Other European Union funds cannot be used as a source of match funding.

European Regional Development Fund investment is limited by State Aid regulations and where the award of European Regional Development Fund would constitute State Aid the European Regional Development Fund grant rate may fall below the 60% maximum.

European Regional Development Fund is paid quarterly in arrears and expenditure must be defrayed prior to the submission of any Grant claims. Applicants may be asked to demonstrate how they are able to cash flow the operation.

6.4. Project Timescales

European Regional Development Fund funding will normally be approved for three years, however the Managing Authority reserves the right to extend the contract term in exceptional circumstances.

Projects approved through this call will normally be expected to:

- Submit a detailed and complete full application within three months of formal selection at outline stage. Projects which fail to meet this deadline may be deselected,
- Commence delivery (defraying European Regional Development Fund eligible costs) within three months of formal approval. Projects which fail to meet this deadline may be deselected, and
- Be closed by June 2023.

6.5. Capital Projects

In developing the budget for the Outline Application, applicants seeking European Regional Development Fund to support a capital project should note that:

- new build projects will normally be expected to achieve the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating of 'excellent'; however BREEAM 'very good' will be accepted where this is the maximum feasible standard.
- Refurbishment projects will normally be expected to achieve the BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'.
- Infrastructure projects will normally be expected to achieve the Civil Engineering Environmental Quality Assessment rating of 'Very Good'.

6.6. Cross Cutting Themes/Horizontal Principles

All applications selected as a result of this call will be required to demonstrate how the Cross Cutting Themes have been addressed in the project design and development. Cross Cutting Themes for European Regional Development Fund are 'equality and anti-discrimination' and 'sustainable development'. Further information is available in Section 11 of the [European Regional Development Fund Operational Programme](#).

Projects seeking funding under Priority Axis 1 will be expected to demonstrate measures that promote greater female participation in associated sectors.

Physical infrastructure such as incubation space must take into account the needs of disabled people as regards access and use. Buildings must meet minimum accessibility requirements. Where possible, accessibility toolkits and undertaking pre- and post-build access audits should be used to add quality to investments.

6.7. Additionality, Duplication and Displacement

Additionality is a core principle of European Regional Development Funding. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that the activity paid for out of European Regional Development Funding adds value to new or existing activity.

European Regional Development Funding cannot support activities that duplicate existing provision/services within the region.

Applications need to identify and evidence how the beneficiaries will use the service and demonstrate that the project does not displace other activity available in the market place.

6.8. 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. 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 under the General Block Exemption Regulation (EU) 651/2014.

Only if this is not possible should Applicants use the De Minimis Regulation or 'no aid'. [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.

6.9. Procurement

All costs claimed by the Applicant (Grant Recipient and/or Delivery Partner(s)) must be recovered on an actual cost basis. Other costs must be procured in line with National (including [Public Procurement Regulation 2015](#)) and European Union regulations. Procurement will be subject to audit and verification and any irregularity will result in a financial penalty of up to 100% of the grant paid. Robust and transparent procurement is required to ensure that Grant Recipients:

- Consider value for money;
- Maximise efficient use of public money;
- Maintain competitiveness and fairness across the European Union.

It is **strongly recommended** that Applicants seek and follow legal advice in respect of procurement requirements. Procurement irregularities remain the most substantive cause of error and clawback of grants.

7. Support

Please note that this is a competitive call and to preserve impartiality the Managing Authority and, where appropriate, the Intermediate Body are unable to enter into correspondence with applicants over their Outline Application. Details of where guidance can be found are contained throughout this call document. In exceptional circumstances, if there are issues with accessing this guidance, please contact: NW.ERDFENQUIRIES@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

8. Key Documents

- European Regional Development Fund Operational Programme;
- Outline Application Form;
- Outline Application Form Guidance;
- Local Enterprise Partnership area's European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy;
- Eligibility Guidance;
- Target Definitions;
- Funding Agreement (Revenue and/or Capital).

9. Document Checklist

Incomplete applications will be rejected. Please ensure the following information (documents) are submitted.

Outline Stage:

- Fully completed Outline Application;
- Financial Tables;
- Outputs, Results and Indicators Tables.

10. Document Submission

Completed Outline Applications must be submitted via **email** to the address in Section 7.

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 a Funding Agreement.

Any changes related to the deadline for the submission of the Outline Application form will be notified on the [European Growth Funding](#) website pages.