

2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment
Funds Growth Programme

Call for Proposals
European Regional Development Fund

Priority Axis 6: Preserving and Protecting
the Environment and Promoting Resource
Efficiency

Managing Authority:	Department for Communities and Local Government
Fund:	European Regional Development Fund
Priority Axis:	Priority Axis 6: Preserving and Protecting the Environment and Promoting Resource Efficiency
Call Reference:	OC20R16P 0424
Local Enterprise Partnership Area:	Leeds City Region
LEP Area Indicative Fund Allocation:	£2,472,896
Call Open:	Friday 16 December 2016
Call Closes:	23:59 17th February 2017

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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 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 6 Preserving and Protecting the Environment and Promoting Resource Efficiency

Investment Priorities:

- 6d** Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure

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 6** of the Operational Programme aims to preserve and protect the environment and promote resource efficiency.

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 [Leeds City Region](#) 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 6 of the European Regional Development Fund Operational Programme and respond to the local development need set out in the [Leeds City Region](#) European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy.

Indicative Fund Allocation:	<p>Indicatively, through this call the Managing Authority expects to allocate up to £2,472,896.</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>
Minimum application level	<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 £1,000,000 will not normally be supported under this call</p>
Duration of project activity	<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>
Geographical Scope	<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>

	Revenue projects should predominantly support businesses based within the Local Enterprise Partnership area of this call.
Specific call requirements	<p>Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with local ESIF Technical Assistance support to assist with the development of their Application(s). Technical Assistance support is available in Leeds City Region through a partnership led by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.</p> <p>Applications are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Complement and add value to existing local and national provision and other ESIF projects as they become operational in Leeds City Region, paying particular attention to the Leeds City Region priority sectors set out in the Leeds City Region ESIF Strategy ii) Proposals must integrate with the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership Skills and Growth Service. Applicants are therefore encouraged to consult with the Local Enterprise Partnership prior to submitting an application <p>Applicants should note that a complimentary Call for Proposals under ERDF Priority Axis 5, (Promoting Climate Change Adaptation, Risk Prevention and Management) is also live in Leeds City Region.</p> <p>Good value for money and alignment with domestic 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.</p>
Call Deadlines	<p>For this specific call, applications will be assessed after the close of the single deadline.</p> <p>Applications received after the published call close date will not be considered. All applications will be assessed following closure of the call.</p>

3.2. Local Development Need

Projects must deliver activity which directly contributes to the objectives of Priority Axis 6 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>Leeds City Region is the biggest city region economy in the country, with an annual output of £62.5bn representing 5% of the English total. It hosts 119,000 businesses, 3 million residents and a workforce of 1.4m. Nine Higher Education institutions and 14 Further Education Colleges are based in the City Region, which is home to a student population of around 230,000.</p> <p>Despite the City Region's undoubted economic strengths and assets, it is not realising its full potential. The decline of heavy industry has left a legacy of pockets of serious deprivation and an economy that is less productive than those in many other parts of the country.</p> <p>The LEP's revised vision for the City Region is <i>to be a globally recognised economic powerhouse that creates good growth, jobs and prosperity</i>. This revised vision places a greater emphasis on "good growth", where a radical uplift in growth, productivity and business success goes hand in hand with quality jobs that connect all people and places to opportunity and improved quality of life. Achieving the vision will mean that the economy becomes stronger, more dynamic and resilient, and will be on course to consistently improve performance compared to national averages and international competitors over time.</p> <p>The original Leeds City Region Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) was agreed in 2014, and was recently updated to reflect the new focus on good growth and to account for economic change since the initial publication. The SEP continues to be based on the four inter-connected strategic investment priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PRIORITY 1: Growing Businesses• PRIORITY 2: A Skilled and Flexible Workforce• PRIORITY 3: Clean Energy and Environmental Resilience• PRIORITY 4: Infrastructure for Growth <p>Green infrastructure is identified as a key action area within both Priority 3 and 4. High quality green infrastructure is critical to the resilience of the Leeds City Region, providing protection to homes, businesses and utilities from the risks of flooding. Green infrastructure also provides benefits to the wider economy by supporting inward investment, higher staff retention and improved health outcomes.</p> <p>The following priorities have been identified within the Strategic Economic Plan and ESIF Strategy to ensure that green infrastructure is delivered: i) refresh and deliver the Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy; ii) Plan and deliver whole catchment area investments that mitigate flood risk and improve the resilience of the City Region economy.</p>

To support the delivery of the priorities on green infrastructure the LEP is currently undertaking a refresh of its approach to the delivery of multi-beneficial green infrastructure through the development of a refreshed Green Infrastructure Strategy and a Green Infrastructure Investment Plan for Water and Flood Resilience. These are due to be completed by May 2017.

The Leeds City Region covers some of the UK's impressive areas of natural beauty and landscape, which has created a strong regional identity. Wide areas across the north and west of the City Region have been recognised for their significant landscape and recreational value. Almost all of the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies within Leeds City Regions' boundary, along with a significant proportion of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The eastern extent of the Forest of Bowland (AONB) and northern limits of the Peak District National Park also lie within the City Region.

The challenge

Flooding and its impacts are a real concern for businesses and residents within the City Region. This was especially true in the aftermath of the devastating flooding events that struck the region towards the end of 2015. Green infrastructure has a key role to play e.g. slowing the flow, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, alongside, or as an alternative to, harder flood defence measures, in protecting key economic areas of the City Region from future flooding impacts.

Invasive species have been shown to have multiple negative impacts on the economy, environment and society, including a contribution to increasing flood risk through soil erosion and the destabilisation of river banks. Invasive species also contribute to a reduction in the recreational value of accessible zones, reducing local community health and well-being benefits. As an indicator each year in Europe invasive species are estimated to cost €19 billion.

Poor air quality within our urban areas contributes to premature deaths and illness among the resident population. Hospital admissions within the West Yorkshire area for asthma, coronary obstructive pulmonary disease and heart conditions are considerably higher than for England and Wales as a whole. Green infrastructure measures e.g. street trees have the ability to absorb significant quantities of gaseous pollutants that contribute to health issues.

Whilst many of the rural areas within the Leeds City Region are spectacular assets there is significant scope to increase green infrastructure in urban areas, creating a high quality setting for investment. Centuries of industrialisation have also, as would be expected, had a detrimental effect on certain assets, particularly watercourses and tree cover.

Although the biological water quality of the rivers is increasing, there are still significant shortfalls, particularly in the urban area where industrial pollution has a negative impact.

Since 2006 the EU Water Framework Directive has formed the framework for

assessing the overall health of the river environment. There are four tiers of assessment to judge the ecological status of the river environment (Poor, Moderate, Good and High) with UK plc to set the target of achieving a 'Good' status in all river catchment areas where technically this is possible by 2027. Despite Leeds City Region performing slightly better than others, the analysis shows that the area faces a significant challenge to meet the 2027 target set by the EU Water Framework Directive.

Local Priorities:

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

- Priority 3 of the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) - Clean Energy and Environmental Resilience and specifically Key Action Area D – Green Infrastructure.
- This call is particularly relevant to the priority to plan and deliver whole catchment area investments that mitigate flood risk and improve the resilience of the City Region economy.
- Under Priority 3 of the SEP, there is the intention to deliver an outcome which increases the quality and extent of green infrastructure, including climate and carbon sequestration benefits related to tree cover.
- The integration of green infrastructure into the City Region's spatial priority areas and the catchments they relate to are of specific interest within Priority 3 with clear links into Priority 4 Infrastructure for Growth.
- Leeds City Region commissioned the Green Infrastructure Strategy in 2010 to ensure that future growth is underpinned and supported by high quality green infrastructure. An updated version of the Strategy is being completed; in the meantime, applicants should use the 2010 version as a steer for the types of projects that will be supported through this call. The Strategy outlines investment priorities and strategic priority projects which, alongside social and environmental objectives, have important economic outcomes such as.
 - **Addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation** by using tree planting for natural air cooling and CO2 absorption. Sound investment now will contribute to the health and well-being of residents and lower the burden on future generations to address economic and environmental problems.
 - **Tackling flood alleviation and water management** by installing sustainable urban drainage systems, permeable surfaces and open spaces in urban areas and up-stream water catchment management techniques in the wider countryside. Urban flooding costs £270 million a year in England and Wales and the cost of environmental damage from polluted urban wash-off has been estimated at £150 - £250 million. Coordinated action in urban and rural areas, using cost effective interventions such as Sustainable Urban

Drainage Systems, will improve the resilience of cities, towns, villages and farmland to cope with the increased threat of flooding.¹

- **Increasing land and property values** by creating attractive environments around new and existing residential, commercial and employment areas. Sustained investment in green infrastructure now will lower long term development costs, raise land values and stimulate further economic investment. 95% of real estate developers and consultants across Europe believe that open space adds value to commercial property. Before the development of the High Line Park (New York), properties in the surrounding area were valued 8% less than the median in Manhattan. Between 2003 and 2011 the values near the park increased by 103% surpassing the New York average.²
- **Sustaining economic growth and investment.** High quality environments also offer comparative location advantages to attract and retain business and a pool of skilled labour.
- **Improving labour force productivity.** High quality environments where people live and work can inspire higher productivity and lower absenteeism amongst workforces. Schemes such as Glasgow Green generated almost £8 million in terms of additional wage and salary payments, as well as 35 full time equivalent jobs. The increase in jobs in the area was 28% between 1998 and 2006. The increase in employees in other parts of the city for the same period was 13%.³
- **Increasing tourism** by improving the 'tourism offer' through widespread environmental improvements, and targeted activity to improve the setting, functionality and accessibility of key destinations. £15 million investment in Glasgow Green attracted visitors who spent £30 million net additional worth of sales in the wider economy.⁴

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:

Investment Priority	6d – Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure.
Specific	Investments in Green and Blue infrastructure and actions

¹ Natural England, *Microeconomic evidence for the benefits of investment in the environment* (2012)

² Eftac, Sheffield Hallam University, DEFRA, *Green Infrastructure's contribution to economic growth: A Review* (2013)

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Objectives	that support the provision of ecosystem services on which businesses and communities depend to increase local natural capital and support sustainable economic growth
Indicative Actions	<p>Activity supported to achieve this specific objective will focus on investment in Green Infrastructure; definitions are set out in the National Planning Policy and in Natural England's Green Infrastructure guide⁵. Blue Infrastructure is a sub-set of this and refers to the water-related features (rivers, ponds, lakes etc) that play a crucial role in providing benefits to people and wildlife.</p> <p>Activity can include site clearance, soil de-sealing, decontamination and land remediation, but only where these directly contribute to an area's Green and Blue Infrastructure/ natural capital which are the primary objective of the interventions.</p> <p>Sustainable drainage can be a design function incorporated within Green Infrastructure. It can also make a contribution to the provision of Green Infrastructure, where natural solutions are used to provide such a function. Furthermore the volume and quality of water that flows into blue infrastructure, such as rivers, ponds and lakes, has a fundamental impact on their health and condition. Sustainable drainage can help improve this.</p> <p>Under this investment priority, indicative actions to be supported by European Regional Development Fund may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in green and blue infrastructure such as green corridors in urban areas and waterways • Sustainable drainage to improve water quality and in some cases local air quality.

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 6.

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.

⁵ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35033?category=49002>

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

Investment Priority 6d	
Output reference	Name
C22	Total surface area of rehabilitated land
C23	Surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status

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 Body⁶ has been designated, the following will apply:

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

- Local Strategic Fit

The Managing Authority will assess the application against the following Core assessment criteria:⁷

- 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

⁶ This process works differently for the Greater London Authority. Please contact the Greater London Authority for further details.

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](#).

For calls under Investment Priority 6d, please note:

All Green Infrastructure projects are required to make a contribution towards biodiversity priorities (especially relating to national objectives to increase the provision of water, grass and woodland habitats) and in addition proposals will need to clearly show how they deliver at least one of the socio-economic benefits of Green Infrastructure below:

- Flooding alleviation and Water Management.
- Pollution management/ control/ regulation (water and air)
- Economic growth and Investment (new market opportunities)
- Health, well-being, Recreation and Leisure (linked to a growth benefit).
- Provision of products from the land.
- Climate Change adaptation and mitigation

In determining which projects should be eligible for funding reference should be made to the relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework relating to the environment and Green Infrastructure; Green Infrastructure priorities set out in Local Plans; the Natural Environment White Paper (2011); Biodiversity 2020 (2011); and Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance.

The UK's National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to “set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure”.⁸ Investments in Green Infrastructure should look to complement the priorities for multi-functional green space as set out in the relevant Local Plans.

Where an investment is planned for a site that is designated as part of the Natura2000 network, or sits in proximity to such a site, reference should be made to the Prioritised Action Framework to ensure any proposed interventions complement the designated site's objectives

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.

⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60777/2116950.pdf

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 50% of the total eligible project costs subject to State Aid regulations.

The remaining 50% 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 50% 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](#).

Green Infrastructure projects seeking funding under Priority Axis 6 require both a wider strategic overview to ensure maximum benefits, and a future management plan.

Applications for projects delivering carbon savings will need to include a coherent and transparent methodology for measuring the savings.

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: YH.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 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 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.