

2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment  
Funds Growth Programme

Call for Proposals  
European Regional Development Fund

**Priority Axis 4: Supporting the Shift  
Towards a Low Carbon Economy in All  
Sectors**

<b>Managing Authority:</b>	<b>Department for Communities and Local Government</b>
<b>Fund:</b>	<b>European Regional Development Fund</b>
<b>Priority Axis:</b>	<b>Priority Axis 4: Supporting the Shift Towards a Low Carbon Economy in All Sectors</b>
<b>Call Reference:</b>	<b>OC06R17P 0525</b>
<b>Local Enterprise Partnership Area:</b>	<b>Coventry and Warwickshire</b>
<b>LEP Area Indicative Fund Allocation:</b>	<b>£5,700,000</b>
<b>Call Open:</b>	<b>Friday 17 March 2017</b>
<b>Call Closes:</b>	<b>23:59, 13 May 2017</b>

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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](#).

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 4      Supporting the Shift towards a Low Carbon Economy in All Sectors**

#### **Investment Priorities:**

- 4a**      Promoting the production and distribution of energy derived from renewable resources.
- 4b**      Promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in enterprises.
- 4c**      Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector.
- 4e**      Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures.
- 4f**      Promoting research and innovation in, and adoption of, low-carbon 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 4** of the Operational Programme aims to support the shift to low carbon economy in all sectors.

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 [Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership area](#) 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 4 of the European Regional Development Fund Operational Programme and respond to the local development need set out in the [Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership area](#) European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy.

<p><b>Indicative Fund Allocation:</b></p>	<p>Indicatively, through this call the Managing Authority expects to allocate up to <b>£5,700,000</b>.</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><b>Minimum application level</b></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 £1,000,000 will not normally be supported under this call.</p> <p>Where a project under Investment Priority 4a is supporting micro generation only, the project value can have a total value of <b>£500,000</b> instead of the standard <b>£1 million</b> as the nature of the project involves the delivery of small scale renewables which require a smaller project size</p>
<p><b>Duration of project activity</b></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><b>Geographical Scope</b></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>All projects should support businesses based predominately within the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership area or with the intention of relocating to the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership area.</p>
<p><b>Specific call requirements</b></p>	<p>None.</p>
<p><b>Call Deadlines</b></p>	<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 4 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

### Local Growth Priorities:

Reducing the demand for energy can be achieved through improving buildings' thermal efficiency, ensuring that the controls on heating are smarter, improving the efficiency of lighting and other household appliances, and ensuring better use is made of hot water. Much work remains to be done within Coventry and Warwickshire. Financial savings to households come in addition to the job creation and economic growth effects of investment in capital schemes. Housing stock condition surveys for Coventry and for Rugby reveal that a significant number of measures remain to be retrofitted in order to bring private sector properties up to minimum standards of thermal comfort for residents, a scenario likely to be replicated across all of Warwickshire.

After transport, the major users of energy are industry and commerce using around 7000 GWh (giga watt hours) of energy in 2010 costing approximately half a billion pounds and adding significantly to the operating costs of companies of all sizes in the region. A report by the Carbon Trust in November 2012 aimed to identify the barriers to improving energy efficiency within the commercial and industrial sectors so as to inform the formulation of policies. It found that no single barrier could be identified but that a mix of organisational, financial and informational barriers existed to hinder the improvement of energy efficiency within businesses.

There have been acute challenges and uncertainty in the domestic and commercial retrofit sector which has led to reluctance on the part of installer firms to invest in plant/machinery to deliver on retrofit targets. A number of policy changes and amendments to funding regimes such as CERT (Carbon Emissions Reduction Target), CESP (Community Energy Saving Programme) and ECO (energy Company Obligation) have caused a widespread lack of confidence and market failure due to information failure in the sector with installer firms publicly calling for long term stability and clarity as to the targets and funding for domestic and commercial retrofit schemes. This priority will work with installers to build a local supply chain to allow building energy efficiency to be improved resulting in increased employment and subsequent uplift in gross value added.

The socio-economic analysis for the original European Structural and Investment Fund strategy reveals that the overall productivity of firms in Coventry and Warwickshire has consistently been below that of the UK since 1981 and is predicted to remain low until at least 2025. Although the reasons for this are unclear, one of the factors could be a lack of investment in energy on the part of firms. There may be many reasons for this information failure but lack of awareness of the application of appropriate technologies, lack of knowledge of the potential savings, and difficulties in accessing sources of finance are likely to be important. In the advanced manufacturing engineering sector (AME) productivity has been higher than the UK average perhaps reflecting the increased importance of environmental management to this sector resulting in systematic analysis of energy costs over a whole product life cycle.

Low carbon solutions often struggle to gain acceptance at the planning stage of new developments because of a lack of track record and a perceived high up-front cost. This is an example of a market failure due to negative externalities as developers fail to take account of their actions on future tenants and users of buildings. Alternative solutions such as district energy systems and heat recovery systems require a higher initial investment but can lead to long-term energy savings for building users as well as a degree of insulation from energy price shocks. The market failure issue is that the private sector is reluctant to invest until the entirety of the heat demand and potential customers are known. Investment would allow the crucial first pipe to be installed which then forms the backbone of the network and allows connections to be made to end users. Low carbon technology often requires a five to ten year payback period which for many businesses is not acceptable.

The uptake of electric vehicles has been much lower than expected even with huge advances in battery life and the use of a price mechanism through Government subsidies to incentivise their purchase. The careful provision of charging infrastructure when commercial developments are planned as well as increased availability of rapid chargers will be a key feature of this priority, with European Regional Development Funds potentially removing a major barrier to uptake.

Cross-Local Enterprise Partnership applications are welcomed particularly those that align activity to the growth focus of the Midlands Engine and the productivity challenge articulated by the West Midlands Combined Authority.

### **Growth Hubs**

All applicants applying for funding through Investment Priorities 4b and 4f should articulate within their application how they are going to work with and alongside the Coventry & Warwickshire Growth Hub to ensure: (i) local priorities and needs will be met; and (ii) the proactive referrals of small and medium sized enterprises to and from the Growth Hubs to enable on-going support of local small and medium sized enterprises to maximise opportunities of growth.

Growth Hubs are locally-led partnerships that coordinate business, innovation and trade support within a Local Enterprise Partnership area and make it simple for businesses to access the support they need. They should bring together all of the local bodies involved in supporting businesses – and work with national bodies to ensure that national and local, public and private business support works together in the most streamlined and effective way possible, putting the business customer at the centre of the system.

Specifically, they raise awareness of national and local business support, provide a single access point for businesses and provide a diagnostic and signposting service to make sure that businesses know what is available and can access the right support for them. Growth Hubs will deliver against the following five key principles:

- a) developing strong, inclusive partnerships with local stakeholders;
- b) putting in place robust governance arrangements to oversee growth hub activity and ensuring alignment with the Local Enterprise Partnership's strategic economic



plan;

c) ensuring plans for growth hubs are deliverable now and sustainable;

d) joining up national and local business support and simplifying the local offer;

e) applying a common evaluation framework to identify what works and measure impact.

### **Knowledge Base Institutions and Networks, including the Catapult Centres**

Where appropriate, applicants should articulate within their application how they are going to work with and alongside national and local knowledge base institutions and networks, including Catapult Centres, to ensure the provision of effective referral routes that enable small and medium sized enterprises to identify and access the most appropriate and tailored support to develop their growth capabilities and maximise opportunities of growth

Applicants will need to ensure that their proposals are adding value to existing provision/ services

### **Local Priorities:**

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

#### **ERDF Investment Priority 1 of Priority Axis 4 - Priority 4a: Promoting the production and distribution of energy from renewable sources**

Indicative actions to be supported by European Regional Development Fund could include:

- Measures to support the wider deployment of renewable heat, particularly renewable heat networks or district heating.

[The Renewable Energy Directive \(2009/28/EC\)](#) provides a definition of energy from renewable sources'. It means energy from renewable non-fossil sources, namely wind, solar, aero-thermal, geothermal, hydrothermal and ocean energy, hydropower, biomass, landfill gas, sewage treatment plant gas and biogases.

Projects will need to evidence how they will support the [UK Renewable Energy Road Map](#). This will be achieved by detailing which of the key renewable energy areas they will be supporting:

- Biomass Electricity
- Onshore Wind
- Offshore Wind
- Marine
- Solar PV

- Renewable Heat

Proposals will need to detail how the project supports the delivery of a named local carbon strategy.

**ERDF Investment Priority 2 of Priority Axis 4 - Priority 4b: Promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in enterprises**

This activity will provide support to organisations to reduce their energy use and cut their carbon emissions. This will allow sustainable local supply chains to be created and the competitiveness and resilience of organisations to be improved. This activity will prioritise the provision of support and start-up advice for individuals and small and medium sized enterprises looking to expand into the low carbon sector. This will involve help in establishing social/community enterprises, supply chain development, and a single point of contact for advice about low carbon innovation and commercialisation of ideas.

- Establishment of a vibrant Coventry and Warwickshire Green Business Support Network to provide specific, targeted advice to help firms reduce their energy use, and thereby improve their competitiveness and resilience.
- A grant scheme) to help small and medium sized enterprises invest in low carbon technology and reduce energy use.
- Supporting investment in low carbon infrastructure at key development sites in the sub-region, for example embedding heat network infrastructure or using energy more effectively in data centres at the commencement of any development.
- Support to develop the local retrofit sector and supply chain
- Establishment of community energy co-operatives and social enterprises
- Establishment of a centre of excellence for low carbon innovation in conjunction with universities with coaching and mentoring to start ups.

**ERDF Investment Priority 3 of Priority Axis 4 (Priority 4c): Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector**

Under this investment priority indicative actions to be supported by European Regional Development Fund may include, but is not exhaustive of

- Provision of advice and support to increase the use and take up of low carbon technologies and energy efficiency in housing and public buildings
- Low carbon innovation in relation to waste and re-use
- Building retrofit and energy efficiency especially whole building solutions exemplifying next phase technologies which are near to market
- Domestic energy efficiency and low carbon construction techniques

Standard retrofit projects cannot be supported as part of the call

**ERDF Investment Priority 4 of Priority Axis 4 (Priority 4e): Promoting low-**

**carbon strategies including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility.**

Under sustainable transport, key activities should include:

- Investments in actions aimed at introducing innovative environmentally friendly and low-carbon technologies (for example, alternative fuel stations or charging points);
- Cycle paths where they are part of an integrated approach to Greenhouse Gas reductions and support improved access to key employment sites.

A whole place solution is required which focuses on more than one thematic low carbon activity e.g. not just low carbon transport.

Applications should detail the baseline information from the [2011 Local Authority CO<sub>2</sub> data](#).

**ERDF Investment Priority 4 of Priority Axis 4 (Priority 4f): Promoting research and innovation in, and adoption of, low-carbon technologies**

Under this investment priority indicative actions to be supported by European Regional Development Fund may include, but are not limited to:

- Research and Development, innovation, supply chain work for low carbon technologies and materials, including carbon capture and carbon storage, wave and wind energy, smart grids, distributed generation, solar and photovoltaics, heat networks, heat pumps and low carbon heat for energy intensive industries.
- Technology centres of excellence and test facilities, including relevant Catapult centres
- Renewable technologies in the UK renewable energy roadmap
- Mitigation and adapted technologies
- Development of low carbon vehicles and fuels
- Knowledge transfer with Higher Education/Further Education and Businesses
- Low carbon technologies to build the market in Low Carbon Environmental Technologies,
- Goods and Services sector and its supply chain, focusing on goods and services with embedded low carbon technologies.

Applicants will need to reference how the project is consistent with the priorities in [England Smart Specialisation Strategy](#)

Applications will need to reference how the activity being undertaken will support the strategic framework, and the underpinning technology focus areas of the [Low Carbon Innovation Coordination Group](#).

***Applicants need to ensure and demonstrate that proposals add value to existing provision/ services.***

### 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:

<b>Investment Priority</b>	<b>4a – Promoting the production and distribution of energy derived from renewable sources.</b>
<b>Specific Objectives</b>	Increase the number of small scale renewable energy schemes in England.
<b>Indicative Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures to support the wider deployment of renewable heat, particularly renewable heat networks or district heating.</li> </ul>

<b>Investment Priority</b>	<b>4b – Promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy in enterprises.</b>
<b>Specific Objectives</b>	Increase energy efficiency in particular in Small and Medium sized Enterprises, including through the implementation of low carbon technologies.
<b>Indicative Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low carbon innovation in relation to waste and re-use within enterprises</li> <li>Energy efficiency in enterprises including industrial processes, designing out waste, recovery of ‘waste’ heat energy and CHP</li> <li>Non Domestic Low Carbon Technologies and Energy Efficiency</li> <li>Moving to renewable and low carbon fuels to generate heat, electricity and transport.</li> <li>Building retrofit and energy efficiency especially whole building solution exemplifying next phase technologies which are near to market.</li> <li>low carbon construction techniques</li> <li>The main target groups are enterprises, particularly SMEs</li> </ul>

<b>Investment Priority</b>	<b>4c – Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector.</b>
<b>Specific Objectives</b>	Increase the energy efficiency of homes and public buildings, through the implementation of low carbon technologies.
<b>Indicative Actions</b>	<p>Under this investment priority indicative actions to be supported by European Regional Development Fund may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of advice and support to increase the use and take up of low carbon technologies and energy efficiency in housing and public buildings</li> <li>• Low carbon innovation in relation to waste and re-use</li> <li>• Building retrofit and energy efficiency especially whole building solutions exemplifying next phase technologies which are near to market</li> <li>• Domestic energy efficiency and low carbon construction techniques</li> </ul>

<b>Investment Priority</b>	<b>4e – Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures.</b>
<b>Specific Objectives</b>	Increase implementation of whole place low carbon solutions and decentralised energy measures.

<b>Indicative Actions</b>	<p>Activity under this investment priority will be complementary to, and work alongside, activity under investment priority 4(a). Activity under this investment priority is based on a holistic approach to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, ensuring that actions are integrated within the framework of an overarching strategy or strategies.</p> <p>A strategic approach is particularly important in the area of low carbon transport, whether for sustainable urban mobility, or improving links between urban and rural areas, or connecting dispersed rural communities. . Examples of actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investments in actions aimed at introducing innovative environmentally friendly and low-carbon technologies (for example, alternative fuel stations or charging points);</li> <li>• Cycle paths where they are part of an integrated approach to GHG reductions and support improved access to key employment sites.</li> </ul>
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<b>Investment Priority</b>	<b>4f – Promoting research and innovation in, and adoption of, low-carbon technologies.</b>
<b>Specific Objectives</b>	Increase innovation in, and adoption of, low carbon technologies.
<b>Indicative Actions</b>	<p>Under this investment priority indicative actions to be supported by European Regional Development Fund may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R&amp;D, innovation, supply chain work for low carbon technologies and materials, including carbon capture and carbon storage, wave and wind energy, smart grids, distributed generation, solar and photovoltaics, heat networks, heat pumps and low carbon heat for energy intensive industries.</li> <li>• Technology centres of excellence and test facilities, including relevant Catapult centres</li> <li>• Renewable technologies in the UK renewable energy roadmap</li> <li>• Mitigation and adapted technologies</li> <li>• Development of low carbon vehicles and fuels</li> <li>• Knowledge transfer with Higher Education/Further Education and Businesses</li> <li>• Low carbon technologies to build the market in Low Carbon Environmental Technologies, Goods and Services sector and its supply chain, focusing on</li> </ul>

	goods and services with embedded low carbon technologies.
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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 4.

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:

<b>Investment Priority 4a</b>	
Output reference	Name
C1	Number of enterprises receiving support
C5	Number of new Enterprises supported
C30	Additional capacity for renewable energy production
C34	Estimated annual decrease of GHG

<b>Investment Priority 4b</b>	
Output reference	Name
C1	Number of enterprises receiving support
C34	Estimated annual decrease of GHG

<b>Investment Priority 4c</b>	
Output reference	Name
C31	Number of households with improved energy consumption
C32	Decrease of annual primary energy consumption of public buildings

C34	Estimated annual decrease of GHG
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<b>Investment Priority 4e</b>	
Output reference	Name
C1	Number of enterprises receiving support
C34	Estimated annual decrease of GHG

<b>Investment Priority 4f</b>	
Output reference	Name
C1	Number of enterprises receiving support
C5	Number of new Enterprises supported
C26	Number of enterprises cooperating with research entities
C29	Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products
C34	Estimated annual decrease of GHG

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.

Projects will only be supported if they demonstrate good value for money. An important consideration when assessing value for money is the level of European Regional Development Fund Outputs that the project would deliver.

The Managing Authority has not set specific output targets for this Call and does not publish average or expected unit costs.

The Local ESIF Strategy for each LEP Area includes details of the local, notional European Regional Development Fund allocation to each Priority Axis and the type and number of European Regional Development Fund outputs that are expected in return for this investment.



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 Body<sup>1</sup> has been designated, the following will apply:

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

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<sup>1</sup> This process works differently for the Greater London Authority. Please contact the Greater London Authority for further details.

- Local Strategic Fit

The Managing Authority will assess the application against the following Core assessment criteria:<sup>2</sup>

- 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 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](#).

Projects seeking funding under Priority Axis 4 with the objective of reducing Greenhouse Gas must have a transparent methodology for calculating and monitoring emissions, with actual and auditable GHG reductions in line with the Climate Change Act 2008.

## 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:  
[WM.ERDFEnquires@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:WM.ERDFEnquires@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.