



# 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

Managing Authority:	Department for Communities and Local Government
Fund:	European Regional Development Fund
Priority Axis:	Priority Axis 4: Supporting the Shift Towards a Low Carbon Economy in All Sectors
Call Reference:	OC05R17P 0549
Local Enterprise Partnership Area:	Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
Area Indicative Fund Allocation:	£1,950,000
Call Open:	Monday 3 July 2017
Call Closes:	23:59 on Sunday 29 October 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.

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:**

Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector.

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 <u>European Regional Development Fund Operational Programme</u>.

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 <u>Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly</u> Integrated Territorial Investment 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 Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Integrated Territorial Investment Strategy.

Indicative fund allocation:	Indicatively, through this call the managing authority expects to allocate up to £1,950,000.  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.  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.
Minimum application level	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 £625,000 will not normally be supported under this call.

# **Duration of project** activity

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.

# Geographical scope

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.

Revenue projects should predominantly support businesses based within the local enterprise partnership area of this call.

# Specific call requirements

It is expected that either a single funding agreement or multiple funding agreements will result from this call. This will depend on the activity(ies) proposed.

Applicants must ensure fit with the <u>England European</u> <u>Regional Development Fund operational programme</u> and the Priority Axis 4 guidance.

Applicants will need to present an ambitious set of outputs demonstrating good value for money. Outputs contained in the European Regional Development Fund operational programme are the absolute minimum to be achieved. Applicants are advised to review the investment priorities and associated output indicators.

Applicants seeking funding for activities which could be interpreted to be agricultural or primary processing — including the production of biomass fuels — should be aware that European Regional Development Funds cannot be used to fund agricultural or primary processing activities whether this support takes the form of advice to primary producers or direct financial support. If in doubt, applicants should consult the Department for Communities and Local Government before submitting an application.

As a Less Developed Region, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly may fund sustainable transport activities, including alternative fuel infrastructure, under the operational programme Priority Axis 7. For the avoidance of doubt, these activities are excluded from this call.

Please note: Value for Money and alignment with Strategic Domestic Priorities will form a key part of the assessment and appraisal of all applications. Therefore proposals should clearly articulate and demonstrate how

	activities align with domestic strategic priorities and offer good value for money.
	Proposals which require an ERDF contribution rate of more than 50% (up to the maximum contribution rate of 80% for the Less Developed Region) will only be considered where they can demonstrate exceptional value for money.
Call deadlines	For this specific call, applications will be assessed after the close of the single deadline.
	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 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:

# **Energy efficiency in housing and public buildings**

This call focuses on Investment Priority 4c of the European Regional Development Fund operational programme and Strategic Priority 1: Future Economy - Objective 2 of the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Integrated Territorial Investment Strategy, which seeks "to invest in activities with growth potential that develop Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly as a 'green and marine' region".

The United Kingdom has set incremental statutory climate change targets which aim to achieve an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, when compared to 1990 levels.

A major contributing factor to greenhouse gas emissions in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is the existing built environment, and improving the energy efficiency of housing and public buildings provides a means to reduce these emissions.

The traditional approach to improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings has been through the retro-fitting of simple measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation, as well as encouraging behaviour change. However, there are potentially more effective options for improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings. Combining next phase, innovative or smart technology and materials with new, digital or direct consumer interactions could change behaviours and reduce emissions.

Individual households, housing developers, social landlords, and building managers

often lack the budget and/or risk appetite to invest in untested technologies and materials. As a result, new and innovative energy efficient options are yet to demonstrate commercial viability or scalability.

The <u>Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Thematic Objective 4 evidence base</u> provides contextual information on the poor energy efficiency of much of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly housing stock, which includes a high proportion of hard-to-treat properties and households reliant on higher carbon heating sources. Retrofitting such properties with innovative approaches and/or energy efficiency measures, supported by behaviour change, has the potential to yield higher reductions in carbon emissions. There is also an opportunity to achieve economic growth through innovation-based technologies, and demonstrator activities which lead to radical, ultra-efficient energy efficiency. This in turn can stimulate economic growth in business activity, particularly through small and medium sized enterprise supply chains.

This call seeks to invest in testing innovative energy efficiency solutions and interventions that target existing housing stock and/or public buildings in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Whilst all types of housing can be covered, the focus will mainly be on social housing and on areas where other publicly funded schemes are not addressing the need.

The inclusion of standard retrofit technologies can be an eligible part of a project which incorporates either innovation or a whole place approach to the retrofit of domestic properties.

#### **Local priorities:**

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

- Improvements to the energy efficiency of housing (with a focus on social housing) and public buildings in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly as part of a whole building or place solution:
- A focus on hard to treat properties and the use of innovative technologies and applications to address challenges affecting the energy efficiency of the local building stock, including measures which encourage behaviour change to achieve demonstrable savings in greenhouse gas reductions;
- A demonstration of clear additionality to the existing, complex domestic energy policy and funding landscape;
- A demonstration as to how delivery will be extended to the Isles of Scilly, remote and rural areas of Cornwall;
- The embedding of the inclusion (for Cornwall:
   <a href="http://inclusioncornwall.co.uk/about-us/strategy/">http://inclusioncornwall.co.uk/about-us/strategy/</a>) and environmental growth (for Cornwall: <a href="http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environmentalgrowth">http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environmentalgrowth</a>) strategies outlined in the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Integrated Territorial Investment Strategy. In addition, the principles of inclusion and sustainable environmental growth need to be articulated with specific reference to the Isles of Scilly.

Overall, activities proposed should bring about an increase in energy efficiency and smart energy management in the housing stock or public buildings in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly which result in carbon savings and improved Standard Assessment Procedure ratings.

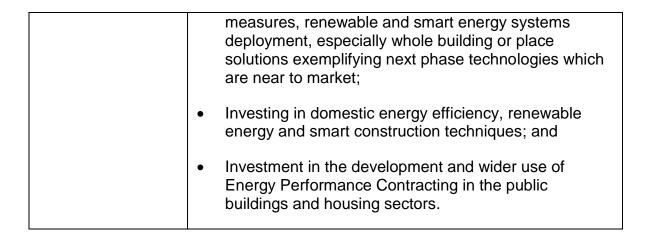
# Local priorities should not:

Local priorities should not duplicate existing provision.

# 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	4c – Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector.
Specific objectives	Increase the energy efficiency of homes and public buildings, through the implementation of low carbon technologies.
Indicative actions	<ul> <li>Under this investment priority indicative actions to be supported by European Regional Development Fund may include:</li> <li>Provision of advice and support to increase the use and take up of low carbon technologies, energy efficiency measures, renewable energy technologies and smart energy systems in housing stock and public buildings;</li> <li>Supporting low carbon innovation in relation to the integrated 'whole place' energy management approach including energy waste and re-use;</li> <li>Standard retrofit can be an eligible part of a project when used in conjunction with innovative technology or as part of a whole place approach which can include the way combined retrofit technologies are used to deliver the whole place approach</li> <li>Investing in building retrofit, energy efficiency</li> </ul>



# 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 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:

Investment Priority 4c		
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 greenhouse gases	

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 European Structural and Investment Fund strategy for each local enterprise partnership 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 and 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 <u>outline application</u> which will be assessed by the managing authority against all of the national <u>selection criteria</u> 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:

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; and
  - o 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; and
- Deliverability.

Having assessed projects against these criteria the relevant local enterprise 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

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

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 <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/complaints-procedure">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/complaints-procedure</a>.

Access to the Programme – Any potential applicants wishing to pursue funding under this call can make use of the Access to the Programme Team. This free resource will provide advice and support to potential applicants, specialist support in the early stage design and development of complex projects, and promote and integrate the cross cutting themes within projects to ensure that applicants can develop projects that make the most effective use of all European Structural and Investment Funds. For more information, please contact the team at: accesstotheprogramme@cornwalldevelopmentcompany.co.uk

# 6. General Information

# 6.1. National Eligibility Rules

When developing an application, applicants must refer to the <u>National Eligibility</u> <u>Rules</u> setting out the requirements of the 2014 to 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 <u>National Eligibility Rules</u> sets out who is eligible to apply. Financial Due Diligence checks will be undertaken on non-public sector applicants that are successful at the outline application stage. Checks will be carried out following notification of a successful outline application and may exclude applicants from further consideration. These checks will include assessment of the applicant's financial standing including ability to deal with cost overruns, the ability to cash flow a project in arrears and absorb a financial irregularity.

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 and 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 80% of the total eligible project costs subject to State Aid regulations.

The remaining 20% 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 EU 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 80% 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'.; and
- 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 <u>European Regional Development Fund Operational Programme</u>.

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 and 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'. <u>Guidance for grant recipients</u>, 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 <u>Public Procurement Regulation 2015</u>) and EU 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; and

Maintain competitiveness and fairness across the EU.

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: <a href="mailto:SW.ERDFenquiries@communities.gsi.gov.uk">SW.ERDFenquiries@communities.gsi.gov.uk</a>.

# 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; and
- 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; and
- 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 <u>European Growth Funding</u> website pages.