2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme

Call for Proposals
European Social Fund

Priority Axis 2: Skills for Growth

Managing Authority	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
ESI Fund	European Social Fund
Priority Axis:	Priority Axis 2 : Skills for Growth
Investment Priority	2.1: Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning
Call Reference:	Digital Skills North East OC25S17P0809
LEP Area:	North East
Call Opens:	27 July 2017
Call Closes:	23 October 2017
Document Submission	Completed Outline Applications must be submitted to ✉: **2014-2020.ESFAPPLICATIONS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK**

Contents

1. Call Context

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

European Structural and Investment Funds are managed by the Department for Communities and Government (ERDF), Department for Work and Pensions (ESF) and the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (EAFRD). In London, the Greater London Authority acts as an Intermediate Body for the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund programmes. Unless stated otherwise, the term "Managing Authority" will apply to all these organisations. These Departments are the Managing Authorities for each Fund. The Managing Authorities work closely with local partners who provide:

- Practical advice and information to the Managing Authorities to assist in the preparation of local plans that contribute towards Operational Programme priorities and targets;
- Local intelligence to the Managing Authorities in the development of project calls (decided by the Managing Authorities) that reflect Operational Programme and local development needs as well as match funding opportunities;
- Advice on local economic growth conditions and opportunities within the context of Operational Programmes and the local ESIF Strategy to aid the Managing Authority's assessments at outline and full application stage.

This call is issued by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to commission ESF Funded projects that will support the **Priority Axis 2 of the Operational Programme: Skills for Growth** and **Investment Priority: 2.1 Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning** as set out in the Operational Programme.

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

This call for proposals sets out the requirements for any applicants to consider before applying. Applications against this call will be assessed as part of a two stage appraisal process and successful applicants will enter into a funding agreement with the DWP. Further information is given in sections 4 to 10.

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

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

1.1   National Context

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

Investment priority: 2.1 - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences

ESF will not fund activity that duplicates or cuts across national policy on grants and loans for tuition for skills activities. Exemptions to this principle will be considered only where a local specific need and/or market failure has been demonstrated and where the activity falls within the scope of the Operational Programme.

Full details of what can and cannot be supported under this Investment Priority are set out in the Operational Programme. Details of the specific objectives have been reproduced below.

Specific Objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
To address the basic skills needs of employed people, particularly in SMEs and micro businesses.	The additional support from this investment priority will help employed people to gain basic skills. It will also improve the capacity of SMEs and micro businesses and support business growth. We have set an output target for the number of participants without basic skills and a result target for participants gaining basic skills.
To increase the skills levels of employed people from the existing level to the next level up, to encourage progression in employment.	The additional support from this investment priority will help employed people to progress at work through achieving higher skills, and it will drive growth in their organisation by improving productivity. We have set result targets for participants gaining qualifications or units – separate targets for level 2 and level 3.
To increase the number of people with technical and job specific skills, particularly at level 3 and above and into higher and advanced level apprenticeships, to support business growth.	The main result that will be achieved is that more participants will have gained a qualification or a unit of qualification. This investment priority will also support business growth through the development of a more highly skilled workforce. We have set a result target for participants gaining qualifications or units at level 3 or above.
To increase the skills levels of employed women to encourage progression in employment and	The additional support from this investment priority will support women in raising the level of their skills, helping them to progress in

help address the gender employment and wage gap.	employment or self-employment and achieve higher earnings. There is a result target about progression in work. This investment priority will also contribute to supporting business growth through the development of a more highly skilled workforce.

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1.2   Local Development Need

Projects must deliver activity which directly contributes to the objectives of Priority Axis 2, Investment Priority 2.1 of the Operational Programme, and which meets the **local development need** expressed in the text and table below.

Call outline

The North East Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan sets out the growth ambitions for the next 10 years providing a clear focus on realising the potential of the whole of the North East. It also links to the European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) Strategy. More information about the NE LEP area strategic plans can be found at:

http://www.nelep.co.uk/whatwedo/refreshing-the-strategic-economic-plan/

http://www.nelep.co.uk/funding/european-funding-2/

A skilled workforce is central to sector-led growth and investment in skills will drive the increased productivity of the North East. To support 'more and better jobs' we need to ensure there is a supply of appropriate skills available at all levels to meet employer demand.

The North East LEP area has the infrastructure to deliver world-class skills and has a strong reputation for responding to the opportunities presented by a growing and changing economy. Indeed, the area boasts the highest proportion of apprenticeships and the highest number of employers taking on apprentices in the UK.

However, the region also faces key skills challenges that inhibit business growth. These include a low skilled workforce with insufficient numbers of employed people qualified to level 3 and above and an ageing demographic creating replacement demand particularly within skilled and technical occupations that underpin priority industries. Indeed, only 29% of the working age population have a level 4+ qualification as opposed to the national average of 36%.

Furthermore, there is pronounced mismatch between supply and demand in the labour market, with digital skills being a key gap for North East employers. This is particularly concerning to note when it is expected that over 90% of jobs will require some digital proficiency over the next two decades, yet over 23% of adults (10 million

people) lack basic digital skills (House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, 2016; Ipsos Mori, 2015).

This is holding back economic growth, productivity and social mobility. As the *'Digital Skills for the UK Economy'* report states (2016), significant value can be added to the economy and society through better investment in digital skills; this not only relates to job creation but also firm productivity and scaling-up markets for companies including SMEs.

Indeed, the shortage in digital skills represents a key bottleneck for industry and is linked to one in five of all vacancies.   Currently 72% of large companies and 49% of SMEs are suffering digital skill gaps and there is a clear mismatch in the types of skill offered by the labour market and those demanded which is holding back the growth of tech and non-tech companies alike.

There is also a lack of awareness of career opportunities within the digital sector. This reflects the skill and gender stereotypes around the types of roles available and the barriers that exist; particularly for women who are underrepresented within the industry as a whole.

However, while there are digital skills needed for 'digital jobs', there are wider challenges faced by business and industry as a whole.

Many businesses are not effectively maximising the potential of new technologies or the talents of their employees. As a result, opportunities are missed and performance is not maximised. Digital skills must improve continuously to ensure businesses can maximise their competitive potential by the application of existing and new digital technologies.   This will require the workforce to constantly up-skill or re-skill its digital capabilities to meet demand and to exploit new opportunities and markets.

The supply of digital skills support from the education sector is also crucial. However, at present the provision of digital skills is variable and inconsistent. While IT is extensively used in education establishments there still is much to be done to ensure that it is effectively used in teaching and learning and to ensure our educators are digitally skilled, that gender stereotypes are overcome, and that learners are motivated to acquire digital skills through an awareness of the career potential they bring – for the learners, their parents and for the educators doing the teaching.

As stated in the *'Digital Skills for the UK Economy'* report, it is important that digital skills are embedded into the education and training system, enabling individuals to participate fully in the modern digital economy, whether as tech specialists, leaders of digitally-enabled businesses or workers in digitally-enabled jobs across the economy.

The report goes on to state that **employers** should take ownership of digital skills development to future proof their workforce and to set the minimum standards they expect their workforce to acquire (including digital skills) and update when necessary to keep pace with development by fostering a lifelong learning culture with its employees. This could involve a mixture of vocational on-the-job training and employer led short courses with academic accreditation.

The **education sector** should develop and adapt their offer to meet the changing demand for digital skills in the wider economy. This should include working collaboratively with businesses to build digital skills capacity with industry-relevance and provide tech students with the business and interpersonal skills they need to be effective in the workplace. It should also motivate and inspire young people, particularly females, to consider digital careers, making it an attractive proposition compared to traditional vocations, and better promote the advantages of vocational routes (such as degree apprenticeships) in addition to traditional higher education routes.

Local partnerships and networks must also share best practice and knowledge of successful digital skills training and education programmes and training schemes across all sectors in their geographical areas.

This call is seeking projects which will address the digital skills challenges and opportunities detailed above for the North East LEP area.

Local priorities

Proposals will be expected to support digital skills development within the digital / tech sector and/or across the general workforce where this enhances opportunities for job progression and development.

Proposals should focus on addressing the specific digital skills gaps experienced by employers.

It is also expected that applicants will demonstrate how they will work with the LEP and partners to ensure activity is complementary and adds value to existing digital skills activity in the North East LEP region.

Proposals can either deliver one or both elements but should clearly show demonstrable experience in the elements they propose to support. These elements are detailed below:

<u>**ELEMENT 1:**</u> **Digital Skills for Digital Jobs**

Proposals will be expected to support more people into the digital / tech sectors and provide opportunities to up-skill and reskill those already working in the sector to enhance opportunities for job progression and development.

Proposals should also focus on addressing the specific skills gaps experienced by employers in the digital/tech sectors. Proposals which may cover the following activities:

- Raise the profile of digital careers with educators, young people and within communities to improve understanding of careers in the digital/tech sector;

- Promote the advantages of vocational training as alternative routes to digital skills development (for example; degree apprenticeships);

- Share best practice and success stories to promote digital careers;

- Develop and provide taster courses and work based access courses which are innovative and focussed on promoting the uptake of the new digital curriculum;

Support should be focussed on the following groups:

- Support the progression of those already employed in digital/tech firms who need up-skilling/re-skilling to progress at work;
- Support for part time tech workers, most of whom are female, who want to improve their digital skills in order to access jobs/careers which offer longer hours or other job progression routes;

ELEMENT 2: Deliver activity to support wider digital skills development across industries

Proposals will be expected to address digital skills gaps experienced by employers to provide opportunities to support business growth and to up-skill and reskill existing employees to enhance opportunities for job progression and development.

Proposals which may cover the following activities:

- Provide support to enhance general social media/website/etc skills where this supports a gap with the employer;

- Provide specialist industry specific digital skills where this supports a gap with the employer (i.e.: engineering programmes/accountancy programmes, etc.);

Support should be focussed on the following groups:

- Support the progression of those already employed who need up-skilling/re-skilling to progress at work;

- Support for part time workers, most of whom are female, who want to improve their digital skills in order to access jobs/careers which offer longer hours or other job progression routes;

Proposals must be of a suitable size and scale to demonstrate significant regional impact whilst also demonstrating that delivery is embedded in local communities.

Proposals must demonstrate strong strategic alignment to the SEP and ESIF

priorities.

Proposals must show strong cross sector/partnership integration and collaboration at a regional level.

Activities must clearly build and complement other mainstream funded and other existing activity currently funded by the European Programmes. In particular, full regard should be given to the SFA contracts which support skills development in businesses and which currently run up to July 2018.

Proposals must also demonstrate a thorough understanding of the North East's education system and business base.

PLEASE NOTE: The North East Technical Assistance Partnership is available to provide support to potential applicants. To access support please refer to the contact in your area. These can be found on the LEP website:

http://www.nelep.co.uk/funding/european-funding/

1.3   Scope of activity

This call invites Outline Applications which support the delivery of Priority Axis 2, **Investment Priority 2.1 Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning** of the European Social Fund Operational Programme and responds to the local development need set out in the North East Local Enterprise Partnership Area European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy.

This call aims to address the identified shortfalls listed in section 1.2 Local Development Need above.

2. Call Requirements

All applications are competitive.

Indicative Fund Allocation:	Indicatively, through this call the Managing Authority expects to allocate approximately **£20,000,000 ESF**
	Approximately - £5,000,000 allocated to the Transition Region
	Approximately - £15,000,000 allocated to the More Developed Region
	The Managing Authority reserves the right to decrease or increase the indicative allocation, or support more or fewer projects subject to the volume and quality of

	proposals received.
Minimum application level	European Social Fund investment is intended to make a significant impact on local growth. Applications are expected to demonstrate appropriate scale and impact. Applications would be expected that request a minimum of £500,000 of ESF: however, mindful of the expected call value in the Transitional Region, smaller proposals would be considered if their main focus of activity is Durham.
Duration of project approvals	Projects should be for a maximum of three years; however the Managing Authority reserves the right to vary the maximum duration in exceptional circumstances.
Geographical Scope	All interventions should be focused on activity and beneficiaries within the North East Local Enterprise Partnership area.
Specific call requirements	This is a call for ESF activity.
Call Deadlines	For this specific call, applications will be assessed following closure of the call. Applications received after the published call close date will not be considered.
Application selection	All applications will be scored in line with the ESF scoring criteria, but the MA reserve the right to invite projects to full application stage where they complement other activity or provide niche activity to target groups within the OP.
Applicant proposals	These can only contain activities which are eligible for ESF
Eligible match funding	Applicants will need to have eligible match funding for the balance of costs, which must be from a source other than the European Union. At outline application stage the applicant will need to provide information to demonstrate that the operation is likely to have the required level of match funding in place at the point of formal approval. The intervention rate in the North East LEP Area is 50% in the More Developed areas and 60% in the Transition areas, so 50% of match funding must be provided in the More Developed areas and 40% of match funding must be provided in the Transition areas
Operational completion	Operations must be completed no later than 30th April 2021.
Procurement	All procurement must be undertaken in line with EU regulations.
State Aid law	Applicants must demonstrate compliance with State Aid

	law
Audit/ Compliance	All expenditure and activities will be subject to rigorous audit and non-compliance may lead to financial penalty.
Calls listing multiple activity	The applicant is required to list each activity they plan to deliver, supported by a clear breakdown of costs. Expected outputs and results per activity should be provided.

ESF cannot be used to duplicate existing activities or activities that do not address market failure. ESF can only be used to achieve additional activity or bring forward activity more quickly. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that proposals are additional to activity that would have occurred anyway or enables activity to be brought forward and delivered more quickly than otherwise would be the case in response to opportunity or demand.

3. Deliverables required under this Call:

Applications will be expected to achieve the minimum indicative level of Programme Deliverables by contributing to the following Investment Priority. The definitions of which can be accessed at the ESF Operational Programme.

Investment Priority	2.1 Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning
Specific Objectives	Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
Indicative Actions	ESF will not support activities that duplicate or replace existing support within national programmes, but may be used to support additional activities or target groups, including provision co-designed with local partners. Examples of activities that may be supported include: • skills shortages or needs in particular sectors or local areas which are not currently being addressed by employers or individuals; • training and support for people at all levels, in particular addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups in and out of the workplace; • access to learning; information about learning and skills; • brokerage of opportunities between learners and employers.

Results Table - More Developed

ID	Result Indicator	Minimum Target value for this call
R3	Participants gaining basic skills	11%
R6	Participants gaining level 2 or below or a unit of a level 2 or below qualification (excluding basic skills)	25%
R7	Participants gaining level 3 or above or a unit of a level 3 or above qualification	8%
R8	Employed females gaining improved labour market status	35%

Results Table - Transition

ID	Result Indicator	Minimum Target value for this call
R3	Participants gaining basic skills	11%
R6	Participants gaining level 2 or below or a unit of a level 2 or below qualification (excluding basic skills)	25%
R7	Participants gaining level 3 or above or a unit of a level 3 or above qualification	8%
R8	Employed females gaining improved labour market status	35%

Outputs Table – More Developed

ID	Output Indicator	Total Minimum target value for this call	Men minimum target value	Women minimum target value
O1	Participants	17,857	8928	8929
O4	Participants over 50 years of age	3928		-

O5	Participants from ethnic minorities	893		-
ESF - CO16	Participants with disabilities	1428		-
ESF - CO14	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	1071		-
O6	Participants without basic skills	3036		-

Output Table - Transition

ID	Output Indicator	Total Minimum target value for this call	Men minimum target value	Women minimum target value
O1	Participants	2976	1488	1488
O4	Participants over 50 years of age	655	-	-
O5	Participants from ethnic minorities	149	-	-
ESF - CO16	Participants with disabilities	238	-	-
ESF - CO14	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	178	-	-
O6	Participants without basic skills	506	-	-

Applicants will be required to demonstrate how they will achieve the deliverables within their proposal along with any methodology that will be used to record achievement. Applicants will also need to ensure robust systems are in place, and be able to describe them, to capture and record the targets and to report quantitative and qualitative performance across the North East LEP area. All operations will be required to collect data and report progress against the deliverables with each claim. Where an operation underperforms against their deliverables they may be subject to a performance penalty.

There must be a fully evidenced audit trail for all contracted deliverables.

4.   General Information

Essential information to support the drafting of an application and delivery of a successful ESF funded project is available at the European Growth Funding website pages.

4.1   Compliance and Eligibility

When developing an application, Applicants should refer to guidance on eligible Applicants, activities and costs. These are for guidance only and Applicants should take their own specialist advice if in doubt. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the rules and guidance are adhered to both at application stage and following approval.

ESIFs are governed by European regulations and national rules. Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with the relevant documentation listed in the 'key documents' section prior to submitting an Outline application. If successful, Applicants will enter into the standard Funding Agreement and must abide by the standard terms and conditions contained therein. Applicants are therefore strongly advised to read these terms and conditions to ensure that they would be able to enter into such an agreement prior to responding to the call. Once a Funding Agreement has been issued it should be signed and returned within a short timescale.

4.2   Intervention Rate & Match Funding

ESF is funding used where no other funding can be obtained (the funder of last resort) and the maximum ESF intervention rate for the operation is 50% in the More Developed area and 60% for the Transition area. This means ESF can contribute up to 50% of the total eligible project costs, in the More Developed area and 60% in the Transition area, subject to State Aid regulations. The remaining 50% or more in More Developed areas or 40% or more in Transition areas must come from other eligible sources. For all outline applications, the applicant will need to provide information to demonstrate that the operation is likely to have the required level of match funding in place at the point of formal approval.

ESF is not paid in advance and expenditure must be defrayed prior to the submission of any claims. Applicants may be asked to demonstrate how they are able to cash flow the operation.

4.3   Applicants

Applicants must be legally constituted at the point of signing a Funding Agreement, and be able to enter into a legally binding Funding Agreement. The Applicant will be the organisation that, if the application is successful, enters into a contract for ESF and therefore carries the liability for ensuring that the terms of the ESF Funding Agreement are met by them and to all delivery partners. If there is more than one organisation applying for the funds, a lead organisation must be selected to become

the Applicant. It is this organisation that carries the responsibility and liability for carrying out a compliant project.

The Managing Authority will consider the Applicant's track record, both positive and negative. If the Applicant has been involved in the delivery of previous European grants and any irregularities with this (these) grant(s) have been identified, the Managing Authority will look into these and expect to see how and what steps have been taken to ensure that these have been addressed to mitigate the risk of further irregularities in the future. It is acknowledged that some organisations will be new to ESIF funding and will not have a track record.

4.4   Cross Cutting Themes

All applications received under this Call should demonstrate how the Cross Cutting Themes have been addressed in the project design and development. Cross cutting themes for ESF are 'gender equality and equal opportunities' and 'sustainable development'.

For ESF, the project applicants will be required to deliver their services in-line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (as defined in the Equality Act 2010). All projects must have a gender and equal opportunities policy and implementation plan which will be submitted at full application stage and in-line with Managing Authority guidance. Project applicants will also be required to answer a number of ESF-specific equality questions which will be set out in both the full application form and the related guidance.

For ESF, all projects will also be required to submit a sustainable development policy and implementation plan (in-line with guidance produced by the Managing Authority).

The ESF programme particularly welcomes projects that have an environmental focus that can meet the strategic fit at local and programme level whilst also adding value by:

- supporting environmental sustainability; and/ or
- complementing the environmental thematic objectives of other programmes such as ERDF; and/or
- using the environment as a resource to help motivate disadvantaged people

Further information is available in the [ESF Operational Programme.](#)

4.5   State Aid & Revenue Generation

Applicants are required, in the Outline Application, to provide a view on how their proposal complies with State Aid law. Applicants must ensure that projects comply

with the law on State Aid.[1] Grant funding to any economic undertaking which is state aid can only be awarded if it is compatible aid, in that it complies with the terms of a notified scheme or is covered by the De Minimis Regulation. Guidance for grant recipients, explaining more about State Aid, is available; it is important that Applicants take responsibility for understanding the importance of the State Aid rules and securing their full compliance with them throughout the project, if it is selected into the Programme.

The Managing Authority is not able to give legal advice on State Aid. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the operation is State Aid compliant.

Where the Applicant does not perceive that there is any State Aid, it should state whether or not it considers Articles 61 and 65(8) of regulation 1303/2013 to apply. This revenue should be taken into account in calculating eligible expenditure. Article 61 refers to monitoring revenues generated after completion of the project, and Article 65(8) how to deal with differences in the forecast and actual revenues at the end of the operation. The details of this will be tested at the full application stage.

4.5   Funding Agreement

The Funding Agreement is a standard, non-negotiable and legally binding document. Any successful Applicant will be subject to the terms and conditions contained within this agreement. Applicants are strongly advised to seek their own advice to ensure that they would be able to enter into and abide by the terms of the Funding Agreement.

Failure to meet any of the conditions of the agreement or the commitments within the application will result in claw back of funding.

Applicants should be aware that additional provisions and securities may be included within the Funding Agreement to protect the investment. These will be further discussed if relevant following the Full Application stage.

4.6   Procurement

All costs delivered by the Grant Recipient (the applicant) and/or delivery partners must be delivered on an actual cost basis. Other costs must be procured in line with EU regulations. The most common error identified during audit has been failure to comply with relevant procurement regulations and crucially to maintain a full audit trail to prove that they have complied with the relevant regulation. Robust and transparent procurement is required to ensure that Grant Recipients:

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[1] Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides that: "Save as otherwise provided in the Treaties, any aid granted by a Member State or through state resources in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods shall, in so far as it affects trade between Member States, be incompatible with the internal market."

- consider value for money;
- maximise efficient use of public money; and
- maintain competitiveness and fairness across the European Union.

It is recommended that applicants seek their own legal advice pertaining to their procurement and requirements to publicise any tendering opportunities.

The Managing Authority is not able to give legal advice on procurement. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the project is compliant in this respect.

4.7 Retrospection

There will be no retrospection for applications made against this call, other than in line with the general policy on retrospection which allows costs to be potentially eligible between outline and full application stage, but only where the full application is approved.

5. Application Process & Prioritisation Methodology

There are two stages to the ESF application process; Outline Application and if successful, Full Application. Applicants must fully complete the Outline Application Form (section 9 refers). Guidance is available on the European Growth Funding website pages. Acceptance of an Outline Application to progress to full application stage does not in any way indicate or constitute an offer of European Social Fund grant. Applications will be subject to a Gateway Assessment undertaken by the Managing Authority under the following criteria:

- Applicant eligibility;
- Activity and expenditure eligibility; and
- The fit with the ESF OP and the call.

Proposals that pass the Gateway Assessment will move into the Core Assessment which consists of the following:

- Strategic fit;
- Value for money;
- Management & control;
- Deliverability;
- Procurement / tendering; and
- State Aid compliance.

The Managing Authority will seek advice from partners when considering applications to ensure its assessment is informed by local economic growth conditions and opportunities within the context of Operational Programmes and the

local ESIF Strategy. This will include the relevant LEP Area ESIF Committee and other partners deemed relevant to the application.

The assessment and any prioritisation will be undertaken using only the information supplied as part of the application process. The Managing Authority cannot accept further detail outside this process.

Non-public sector Applicants who are successful at the Outline Application stage may be subject to due financial diligence checks by the Managing Authority, prior to submission of a Full Application. Applicants will be required to submit accounts, and to clarify financial or other organisational information. New Applicant organisations may be required to provide details of a guarantor.

There is no appeal process for applicants whose Applications are rejected at Outline Application stage, Full Application stage or for failing to satisfy the MA's Financial Due Diligence checks.

6.   Support

Please note that this is a competitive call and to preserve impartiality we are unable to enter into correspondence with applicants over their Outline application. Details of where guidance can be found are contained throughout this calls document. In exceptional circumstances, if there are issues with accessing this guidance, please contact:

✉**:** ESF.2014-2020@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

No applications are to be sent to this email address. Completed Outline applications must be sent to the email address provided in Section 9 – Document submission.

7. Key Documents

- Outline Application Form;
- Outline Application Form Guidance;
- Local Enterprise Partnership area's ESIF strategy; and
- ESF Eligibility Rules.

8. Document Checklist

The assessment will be undertaken on the basis of documentation received at the point of closure of the call. Applicants should provide the following documentation.

Outline Stage:

- fully completed Outline Application;
- financial tables (if the application is against more than one Category of Region, a financial table for each Category of Region);
- Outputs, Results and Indicators tables (if the application is against more than one Category of Region, a Outputs, Results and Indicators table for each Category of Region); and

To enable the Managing Authority to complete the required Financial Due Diligence checks (if private or voluntary and community sector), applicant to provide:

o three years financial accounts
o Proof of existence - Certificate of Incorporation, Charities Registration , VAT Registration Certificate or alternate form of incorporation documentation;
o Proof of trading - Financial Accounts/Statements for the most recent two years of trading including, as a minimum, Profit and Loss Account and Balance Sheets;
o Completed Financial Viability and Risk Assessment Applicant Template (for applications requesting annualised funding of greater than £1m)

Failure to provide the above documentation could result in the application being rejected.

9. Document Submission

Completed Outline Applications must be submitted to

✉: 2014-2020.ESFAPPLICATIONS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK

10. Timescales

Launch of Call advertised on gov.uk.	27 July 2017
Deadline for submission of Outline Application	23 October 2017

Outline Application forms not received by the deadline will not be assessed. Outline Applications which are not fully completed will be excluded.

For this call applications will normally be required to **commence delivery/activity within three months** of the award of contract.

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

11. Appendix A – Common output indicators

Appendix A - extract from Annex 1 of the ESF regulation

Common output and result indicators for ESF investments

(1) Common output indicators for participants

"Participants" refers to persons benefiting directly from an ESF intervention who can be identified and asked for their characteristics, and for whom specific expenditure is earmarked. Other persons shall not be classified as participants. **All data shall be broken down by gender.**

The common output indicators for participants are:

unemployed, including long-term unemployed
long-term unemployed
inactive
Inactive, not in education or training
employed, including self-employed
below 25 years of age
above 54 years of age
above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long-term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training
with primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)
with upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4)
with tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)
participants who live in jobless households
participants who live in jobless households with dependent children
participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children
ethnic minorities
Participants with disabilities
other disadvantaged
homeless or affected by housing exclusion
from rural areas

Common immediate result indicators for participants are:

inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving
participants in education/training upon leaving
participants gaining a qualification upon leaving
participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving

Common longer-term result indicators for participants are:

participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving
participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving
participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving
disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving