



Department
for Work &
Pensions



European Union
European
Social Fund

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:	Skills Service Phase 2 – Leeds City Region OC20S19P1365
LEP Area:	Leeds City Region
Call Opens:	10 April 2019
Call Closes:	5 June 2019
Document Submission	Completed Full Applications must be submitted to ✉: 2014-2020.ESFAPPLICATIONS@DWP.GOV.UK

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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.

The Government has confirmed that it will guarantee funding for ESF projects that are contracted by the end of 2020. Whatever the outcome of the EU negotiations, this guarantee will stand. This ensures that UK organisations, such as charities, businesses and universities, will continue to receive funding over a project's lifetime if they successfully bid into EU-funded programmes before the end of 2020, even in the event of a no-deal. Details of the guarantee can be found at the following [website link](#).

All contracted ESF projects must be completed by the end of the programme period in 2023. Each application for ESF will be required to demonstrate that it delivers good value for money and domestic strategic priorities.

European Structural and Investment Funds are managed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local 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 appraisal of each Full Application.

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 proposal sets out the requirements for any applicants to consider before applying. Applications against this call will be appraised as part of a single-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 a Full 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 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.

Local Priorities:

Through this call the ESF Managing Authority is seeking to deliver provision and support to address the skills issues of SMEs and their employees in sectors which present the greatest opportunities for economic and employment growth in the Leeds City Region.

Local Economic Context

Leeds City Region is the biggest city region economy in the country, with an annual output of £69.6bn representing 5% of the English total. It hosts 119,000 businesses, 3 million residents and a workforce of 1.4m. Nine Higher Education institutions and 14 Further Education Colleges are based in the City Region, which is home to a student population of around 230,000.

Despite the City Region's undoubted economic strengths and assets, it is not realising its full potential. The decline of heavy industry has left a legacy of pockets of serious deprivation and an economy that is less productive than those in many other parts of the country.

The revised vision for the City Region is to be a globally recognised economy where good growth delivers high levels of prosperity, jobs and quality of life for everyone. This revised vision places a greater emphasis on "good growth", where a radical uplift in growth, productivity and business success goes hand in hand with quality jobs that connect all people and places to opportunity and improved quality of life. Achieving the vision will mean that the Leeds City Region economy becomes stronger, more dynamic and resilient, and will be on course to consistently improve performance compared to national averages and international competitors over time. The original Leeds City Region Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) was agreed in 2014, and has been updated to reflect the new focus on good growth and to account for economic change since the initial publication. The following thematic priorities were set out in the revised SEP:

PRIORITY 1: Growing Businesses

PRIORITY 2: Skilled People, Better Jobs

PRIORITY 3: Clean Energy and Environmental Resilience

PRIORITY 4: Infrastructure for Growth

Local priorities

The City Region has undertaken targeted and relevant research to establish the requirements as detailed below.

This programme of activity aims to address the challenges set out in the Leeds City Region's 2014-2020 ESIF Strategy as well as within the Leeds City Region Employment and Skills Plan, which sets out priorities to build workforce skills and attract talent and at the same time to provide workers with the skills that they need to progress in the workplace and fulfil their potential.

The Leeds City Region labour market analysis 2018/19 contains a range of evidence that demonstrates the importance of stimulating demand for training among local business and working to ensure that available training provision is demand-responsive.

The Leeds City Region has a relatively weak skills base. Using formal qualifications as a proxy, 34% of the local working age population are qualified at level 4 compared with a national average of 38%. Moreover, 25% are qualified below level 2 (the level typically associated with basic employability) and 10% (equivalent to around 200,000 people) have no formal qualifications at all; both figures are in excess of the respective national averages.

This matters because analysis shows that there is a strong correlation between the performance of local areas on skills and their productivity performance. The City Region's deficit of people with higher level skills is reflected in its below-average productivity level.

There are also significant skills gaps and shortages in the City Region. In some sectors, like construction, around one third of vacancies are difficult to fill due to a lack of candidates with the required skills. For specific occupations at professional level and within skilled trades, where a strong element of technical skills is required, the proportion can be much higher. Particular examples of areas of acute shortage include high level digital occupations, an area of rapid growth and fast-changing skill requirements, and professional engineering roles.

Skills gaps are another form of mismatch and come about when existing employees are not fully proficient in their job and are not able to make the required contribution to the achievement of business objectives. There were 53,000 skills gaps in 2017, equivalent to approximately 4% of total employment in the City Region, with around 14% of employers affected. The pattern of skills gaps provides a useful indication of employers' needs for workforce development. Employers are most likely to report skills gaps in respect of sales and customer service staff, administrative staff and lower skilled elementary staff. However, it is notable that a significant proportion of employers who report skills gaps say that management level staff are affected.

Many skills gaps are due to a deficit of technical skills including job-specific skills and operational skills, such as knowledge of the organisation's products and services. But digital skills at both basic and advanced levels are associated with more than a third of gaps, whilst a lack of complex analytical skills is associated with more than 40% of gaps.

Lack of the required soft skills is a more common cause of skills gaps. Broad categories include self-management skills (like time management), management and leadership and sales and customer service. For managers as an occupation, the skills that need improving include core management skills, complex problem-solving skills, as well as operational skills.

With availability of talent a major factor in determining where businesses will locate, it is essential that skills gaps and shortages are addressed and that businesses are encouraged to play their part in upskilling the workforce.

Only two thirds (65%) of employers in the City Region invest in training in a given year with 59% of employees taking part in training, as compared with respective national averages of 66% and 62%.

Analysis shows that around two-fifths of employers acknowledge that they under-invest in training. The main reasons for this under-investment are the costs of training and the time commitment involved in staff undertaking and delivering training. This demonstrates the importance of making the case for training based on the bottom-line benefits it can generate for business.

The proportion of employers in the City Region offering externally-provided training to their staff is also low at 43%. And relatively few businesses in the City Region engage with institutions in the further and higher education sectors in order to address their skills needs. Only 9% draw on support from further education with 5% engaging with higher education (source: Employer Perspectives Survey, 2016).

Responsiveness and relevance of available provision is a significant barrier to take-up. The main reasons that employers cite for using private provision in preference to FE and HE provision is a perceived lack of relevance to their business needs.

Call outline

This call invites 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 Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership Area European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy.

This call aims to address the identified shortfalls listed in the Local Development Need section above, specifically:

- Identification of business training needs, development and delivery of bespoke solutions for employees of individual firms or groups of companies in order to directly address employees' skills needs and create a more highly skilled workforce, thereby enabling employers to achieve their growth ambitions.

- Support for employed individuals to develop the skills needed to progress at work, including leadership & management development.
- Targeting priority sectors where skill shortages persist or forecasts indicate significant growth e.g. engineering, software engineering, digital and civil engineering/construction professions linked to capital investments in rail/other transport/housing regeneration.
- Provision of grant funding towards the cost of learning for employees (primarily accredited but also, where relevant a limited amount of non-accredited learning).

Activity should not duplicate or undermine national policy, including policy on grants of loans; ESF should not be used to fund course fees where a loan is available. Rather, ESF should be used to add value.

Additional requirements:

Successful providers should:

- Demonstrate a strong track record of identifying businesses' skills and training needs and developing and delivering appropriate training solutions.
- Demonstrate strong knowledge of the Leeds City Region labour market and the (current and future) needs of local businesses, particularly in priority growth sectors.
- As part of avoiding duplication - as well as to create a more balanced, integrated and less confusing provision to end users, avoiding proliferation in the market place - all projects funded through this Call would be expected to explicitly undertake to working collaboratively with other local providers to minimise fragmentation in delivery and identify the best overall solution for participants. In particular, proposals must demonstrate how they will align with and engage the Leeds City Region LEP Growth and Skills Service in the delivery of the programme.
- Work in conjunction with other LEP and ESIF ESF programmes and activity to reduce the number of repeat approaches to business.
- Ensure the programme maximises mainstream provision and provides additionality to the marketplace by working in partnership with other new and/or existing providers
- Demonstrate excellent partnerships and referral mechanisms with other skills and training providers (including colleges, universities and private/VCS training providers).

We are seeking **one** programme which must deliver across the whole of the Leeds City Region

Details of the Leeds City Region ESIF Strategy can be found at <http://www.the-lep.com/LEP/media/New/ESIF%20docs/Leeds-City-Region-ESIF-FINAL.pdf>

Consortia/Partnership Applications

Applications are encouraged from consortia or other similar types of partnership arrangements. In each such case the application must be submitted by a lead organisation on behalf of the partnership/consortia and the lead applicant must have the financial capacity to meet the required Due Diligence criteria.

1.3 Scope of activity

This call invites Full 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 Leeds City Region 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:	<p>Indicatively, through this call the Managing Authority expects to allocate approximately £ 7.0m ESF</p> <p>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.</p>
Minimum application level	<p>European Social Fund investment is intended to make a significant impact on local growth. Applications are expected to demonstrate appropriate scale and impact.</p> <p>The Managing Authority does not intend to allocate less than £1,750,000 of ESF to any single project.</p> <p>Applications requesting an ESF amount below the ‘Minimum Application Level’ will be rejected</p> <p>It is important to ensure a range of activity is supported as detailed in the call and also the need for coherence. Therefore, the MA favours a small number of projects being delivered.</p>
Duration of project approvals	<p>Projects must be completed no later than 3 years and 6 months after the proposed project start date; however, the Managing Authority reserves the right to vary the maximum duration in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>All ESF Projects must be completed by 31st December 2023. Project costs cannot be incurred beyond this date.</p>

	NOTE: Delivery of activities and associated costs can be incurred up to and including 31 st December 2023, with the full and final claim expected no later than February 2024.
Geographical Scope	All interventions should be focused on activity and beneficiaries within the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership area.
Specific call requirements	This is a call for ESF activity.
Call Deadlines	For this specific call, applications will be appraised 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 offer ESF funding where a project complements other activity or provides niche activity to target groups within the ESF Operational Programme.
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. 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.
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	<p>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.</p> <p>Examples of activities that may be supported include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skills shortages or needs in particular sectors or local areas which are not currently being addressed by employers or individuals; • leadership and management training in Small and Medium size Enterprises (up to 250 employees); • 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. <p>Activities which are not specifically applicable should be removed.</p>

Results Table

ID	Result Indicator	Minimum Target value for this call
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

ID	Output Indicator	Total Minimum target value for this call	Men minimum target value	Women minimum target value
O1	Participants	7156	3578	3578
O4	Participants over 50 years of age	1431	-	-
O5	Participants from ethnic minorities	1145	-	-
ESF - CO16	Participants with disabilities	572	-	-
ESF - CO14	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	1288	-	-

Outputs and Results Rationale

Applicants must explain in detail in their Full Application how they have estimated each of the outputs and results for their project, demonstrating clearly how each of the proposed outputs and results directly link to their specific project activities and objectives.

Applicants must also explain their approach for forecasting each deliverable; including the specific base-lining/research they have undertaken to ensure their projected profiles are realistic and achievable and any assumptions they have made which impact on their forecasts.

Where an applicant is proposing one or more output or result figures below the expected minimum target value for this call, an explanation must also be provided by the applicant in their Full Application.

ESF Outputs and Results Indicator Definitions Guidance is available on GOV.UK [here](#).

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 Leeds City Region 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.

European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) are governed by European regulations and national rules. Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with the relevant documentation listed in the 'Document Checklist' section prior to submitting a Full 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%. This means ESF can contribute up to 50% of the total eligible project costs, subject to State Aid regulations. The remaining 50% or more must come from other eligible sources. For all full 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 Full 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

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."

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.

4.6 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.

4.7 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:

- 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.

4.8 Retrospection

There will be no retrospection for applications made against this call.

For organisations applying for ESF funds through the Single-Stage Application process, the effective date for incurring eligible ESF expenditure will be the day after the relevant open call closing date. Any expenditure incurred by an ESF Direct Bid project prior to this date is ineligible.

However, any expenditure incurred by an ESF applicant, up to and including the date on which an ESF Funding Agreement is fully executed, will be at the applicant's own risk.

5. Application Process & Prioritisation Methodology

The ESF application process is a single-stage process – Full Application only. Applicants must fully complete the Full Application Form (section 9 refers). Guidance is available on the [European Growth Funding](#) website pages. 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 Operational Programme 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 appraisal 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 appraisal 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 may be subject to due financial diligence checks. 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.

If, following the appraisal process, an applicant is not satisfied with the ESF funding decision for their project, they can submit an appeal in writing to the ESF Managing Authority.

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 Full Application prior to the call closing date. 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.gov.uk

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

7. Key Documents

- Full Application Form
- Full Application Form Guidance
- Financial Annex
- Indicator Annex
- Local Enterprise Partnership area's ESIF strategy
- ESF Eligibility Rules

8. Document Checklist

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

1. Fully completed **Full Application Form** (Note that Sections 2.7 and 2.8 of the Full Application Form will not be applicable as this is a “one stage” application process);
2. **Financial tables** (if the application is against more than one Category of Region, a financial table for each Category of Region);
3. **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);
4. A **visual, high level customer journey** document e.g. flow chart;
5. **Confirmation of match funding** from each funder (confirmation must be in place by the point of formal approval);
6. **Detailed Granular budget breakdown** (All costs must be itemised, eligible, appropriate for the project and profiled across the project period. The granular budget should also include all hourly rate figures, per job role, for staff working part-time or part of their time on the ESF Project – calculated using the 1720 hour rate calculation set out in the [ESF Programme Guidance](#) on GOV.UK. This includes match-funded staff roles);

7. **Equality and Diversity Policy and Sustainability Policy** (Applicant is responsible for ensuring that Delivery partners also hold relevant policies);
8. **Independent state aid advice** (if applicable);
9. **Job Descriptions and Organogram** (covering all staff, including any delivery partner and/or match-funded staff posts);
10. **Applicants procurement policy** (if applicable);
11. **Draft SLA with Delivery Partners** (if applicable)
12. **Project level risk register** (this should cover areas such as financial risk, output risks, delivery risks etc. please ensure that the register covers how these risks will be managed and mitigated);
13. **Anti-Fraud Statement** (a statement on how you will deal with suspected fraud in your organisation and if appropriate, with your sub-contractors); and

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

- three years financial accounts
- Proof of existence - Certificate of Incorporation, Charities Registration , VAT Registration Certificate or alternate form of incorporation documentation;
- 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;
- Completed FVRA 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 Full Applications must be submitted to

✉: 2014-2020.esfapplications@dwp.gov.uk

10. Timescales

Launch of Call advertised on GOV.UK	10 April 2019
Deadline for submission of Full Application	5 June 2019

Full Application forms not received by the deadline will not be appraised.

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 Full 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