



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:	2.2 Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems
Call Reference:	Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems – OC34S19P1353
LEP Area:	Tees Valley
Call Opens:	2 April 2019
Call Closes:	25 June 2019
Document Submission	Completed Full Applications must be submitted to ✉: 2014-2020.ESFAPPLICATIONS@DWP.GOV.UK

Contents

1. Call Context
 - 1.1 National Context
 - 1.2 Local Development Need
 - 1.3 Scope of Activity
2. Call Requirements
3. Required Deliverables
4. General Information
 - 4.1 Compliance and Eligibility
 - 4.2 Intervention Rate & Match Funding
 - 4.3 Applicants
 - 4.4 Cross Cutting Themes
 - 4.5 State Aid
 - 4.6 Funding Agreement
 - 4.7 Procurement
 - 4.8 Retrospection
5. Application Process & Prioritisation Methodology
6. Support
7. Key Documents
8. Document Checklist
9. Document Submission
10. Timescales
11. Appendix A – Common output indicators

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 - Investment Priority: 2.2 Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems** as set out in the ESF 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 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 of the ESF regulation (see Appendix A). This will be in addition to the requirement to report on the 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 2.2 - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes

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 these Investment Priorities 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 promote improvements in the labour market relevance of skills provision through active engagement with relevant institutions and employers, particularly SMEs and Micro businesses.	The additional support from this investment priority will enable the design of skills provision which will help individuals gain skills and qualifications relevant to the needs of the labour market

1.2 Local Development Need

Projects must deliver activity which directly contributes to the objectives of Priority Axis 2, Investment Priority 2.2 of the Operational Programme, and which meets the **local development need** expressed in the text and table below.

Local Priorities:

The Tees Valley LEP area covers 3,300 square miles across the five boroughs of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees. The area has a working age population of 415,600¹, and offers over 274,440 jobs² across some 17,200³ businesses. The majority (99.5%) of businesses in Tees Valley are SME's, including around 15,000 micro businesses employing between 0-9 people; 1,600 small businesses, employing between 10 and 49 people; and 330 medium sized businesses, with between 50 and 249 employees.

Tees Valley has a world-class reputation across its key sectors with an established infrastructure and supply chain in the offshore, advanced manufacturing and engineering, chemicals and process, and logistics sectors. There are also a number of emerging sectors including life sciences, digital, energy and renewables, and business services, alongside sectors with forecast high jobs growth including health and social care, culture and leisure, and construction. All of these sectors are key to the economic development of the area and are all seeing growth and significant investment.

The area has many advantages. Not only is it a cost-competitive location, it is also ripe for investment, with exciting new opportunities on the South Tees Development Corporation site, the new Tees Advanced Manufacturing Park and Central Park, a major hub for healthcare and life sciences businesses.

The Tees Valley Combined Authority is driving forward an ambitious agenda for growth as set out in the [Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan \(SEP\)](#), the [Tees Valley Sector Action Plan \(Dec 2017\)](#), and a clear strategy '[Inspiring Our Future](#)' focusing on transforming Education, Employment and Skills in the area with an aim to make 133,000 jobs available in Tees Valley by 2024, including 17,000 new jobs and 116,000 replacement jobs.

The Tees Valley SEP, published in December 2016, set out an even more ambitious growth target of creating 25,000 net new jobs over the next decade, aiming to develop a skilled workforce that meets the needs of current and future businesses. This will be essential in facilitating the creation of new and replacement jobs over the lifetime of the plan, and ensuring a vibrant, diverse economy that is inclusive for all.

High growth and/or high-volume replacement is anticipated in, but not exclusive to, the key sectors identified above. Over half of the new jobs created will require higher level technical, science and digital skills, with 45% of these considered to be in more senior and managerial roles, while it is anticipated that replacement jobs will be across a range of levels including entry level, part-time posts, and apprenticeship opportunities.

A key constraint to economic growth, reported by many employers, is the lack of access to skilled workers. The 2017 DfE Employer Skills Survey states that 27% of

¹ ONS Population Estimates (2017)

² ONS Annual Population Survey (June 2018)

³ ONS Business Count (Oct 2018)

all job vacancies in Tees Valley were skills shortage vacancies, compared to 22% nationally. This figure varies by sector with the Information and Communication sector reporting that 89% of all vacancies are skills shortage vacancies - compared to 27% nationally (64% construction, 43% education, 38% manufacturing, 27% logistics, 22% health & social care, 17% business services, 12% retail, 4% hotels and restaurants).

While many employers believe that the overall training and skills environment has improved recently, costs are still seen as a significant barrier to providing training for employees. Other barriers include the availability of relevant training, quality of provision, and the 'off-the-job' time required.

The proportion of Tees Valley residents with a qualification at NVQ level 3 or above at 50%, is behind the national average of 57%, and has fallen by 2.7 percentage points over the last 12 months, compared to a rise of 0.3% nationally. 12% of Tees Valley residents have no qualifications, compared to 7.7% nationally.

The Tees Valley ESIF Strategy (April 2016) provides synergy between our European aims, our agreed City Deal, Devolution Deal and Growth Deal – and the funds we have at our disposal through the Tees Valley Investment Fund, Local Growth Fund and local partners' investment.

Call Outline

Through this call, the Managing Authority is seeking a **single project** that will support SMEs operating in the Tees Valley priority, high demand, and replacement demand sectors, to better meet their current and future skills needs. Taking a sector skills routeways approach, the focus of this call would be to work with employers in target sectors to undertake training needs analyses (TNA), develop skills plans, and support collaboration between employers / sector bodies and education providers to inform curriculum design, developing new, or refining existing provision to meet the skills needs of the local economy.

SMEs (including cooperative enterprises, and enterprises of the social economy) will be supported to identify relevant training, either via an existing funding programme, or via new or bespoke provision. Where relevant employers / sector bodies and education providers will be encouraged to collaborate to ensure provision is relevant, and the skills offer in Tees Valley is able to meet current and future skills needs at all levels e.g. from entry level to NVQ level 4. Activity supported under this call will help to: improve the evidence base, working with employers in target sectors to undertake training needs analyses and develop skills plans identifying current and future skills needs to support growth; increase and strengthen collaboration between employers, sector bodies and education providers; and inform the development of 'sector skills routeways', incorporating access to existing provision, alongside the development of new and bespoke activity designed to meet identified employer skills needs.

Geography:

The project must be delivered across all five of the Tees Valley Local Authority areas: Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on Tees.

Target Groups:

Support will be focused on meeting the current and future skills needs of Tees Valley SMEs, (including cooperative enterprises, and enterprises of the social economy) operating in the priority, high demand, and replacement demand sectors, as identified in the Strategic Economic Plan (i.e. advanced manufacturing; process, chemicals and energy; logistics; health and biologics; digital and creative; culture and leisure; business and professional services; health and social care; construction; services, manufacturing and education).

While it is expected that projects will work with employers operating across a broad range of sectors, as a minimum, projects must engage with the **health and social care, construction, and logistics sectors**.

Projects should also focus on **engaging with employers that have not previously engaged with the education and skills system in Tees Valley**.

Interventions:

Projects should address some or all of the following:

- Establish and deliver an independent and impartial advisory service to match SME's to skills provision. This will include undertaking a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis (TNA) for the employer or a cluster of employers, and support about how to access existing skills, and qualification support / provision.
- Work with employers to identify options to address skill shortages including e.g. transference of skills; mentoring programmes; recruitment of new talent into the organisation via internship, placement, or Apprenticeship opportunities; or upskilling existing workers to support career progression.
- Support collaboration between employers / sector bodies and education providers, to inform and develop 'sector skills routeways' that will meet the current and future skills needs of Tees Valley employers in priority, high demand, and replacement demand sectors.
- Develop a mechanism to gather feedback from the employers on the appropriateness and relevance of the support provided.
- Work with employers to provide placements or internships that enable students to gain industry-relevant, high quality, experience and skills, or for educators to improve their industry relevant experience.
- Build capacity in employers to provide placement and internship opportunities, particularly for those who face particular disadvantage or are from a disadvantaged group.
- Develop mechanisms to involve employers in the design and / or delivery of skills provision.
- Support clusters of companies to work together to address the challenges of recruiting / supporting employees to undertake a higher level/degree apprenticeship at NVQ Level 3 or above

- Support for intermediate and high-level vocational skills for career progression, with a particular focus on higher level apprenticeships (where provision is not currently available in Tees Valley).
- Develop the skills / capacity within SMEs to create apprenticeship opportunities, and to manage / support apprentices.

This is not an exhaustive list. The ESF Managing Authority welcomes applications from projects with additional innovative or creative proposals to help achieve the aims of this call.

Alignment:

All activities must complement and avoid duplication with other provision, thereby adding value to Education and Skills Funding Agency, Apprenticeships, Local Authority, and Tees Valley Combined Authority (including devolved AEB provision for Tees Valley residents from August 2019) provision. The successful applicant will be required to ensure that the project will clearly add value and not duplicate any provision that can be arranged locally through existing mainstream institutions. In addition, the successful applicant will be required to work closely with existing or future Tees Valley business support services delivered under ERDF to ensure an integrated offer to Tees Valley SMEs, this could include using the agreed Tees Valley branding; and to effectively collaborate with the successful applicants under the Tees Valley open calls for Investment Priorities 1.1 and 2.1, to share information about skills needs, helping to influence future delivery.

Applicants should ensure the programme maximises mainstream provision

Consortium/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.

Details of the local ESIF Strategy can be found at: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/TV-CA-ESIF-Strategy-Doc-Update-DCLG-April-16.pdf>

1.3 Scope of activity

This call invites Full Applications which support the delivery of Priority Axis 2, **Investment Priority 2.2 Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems** of the European Social Fund Operational Programme and responds to the local development need set out in the Tees Valley 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.

<p>Indicative Fund Allocation:</p>	<p>Indicatively, through this call the Managing Authority expects to allocate approximately £3,093,357m 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>
<p>Minimum application level</p>	<p>European Social 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 £773,000 of European Social Funding to any single project.</p> <p>While the preference is to allocate a single contract, it is important to ensure a range of activity is supported, as detailed in the call. Therefore, the MA will consider a small number of projects being delivered, if appropriate.</p> <p>Applications requesting an ESF amount below the 'Minimum Application Level' will be rejected.</p>
<p>Duration of project approvals</p>	<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>
<p>Geographical Scope</p>	<p>All interventions should be focused on activity within the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership area.</p>
<p>Specific call requirements</p>	<p>This is a call for ESF activity</p>
<p>Call Deadlines</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Application selection</p>	<p>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.</p>

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.
Operational completion	Operations must be completed no later than 3 years and 6 months after the proposed project start date.
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 (delete if not appropriate)	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	2.2 Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems
Specific Objectives	To promote improvements in the labour market relevance of skills provision through active engagement with relevant institutions and employers, particularly SMEs and micro businesses.
	ESF will not support activities that duplicate or replace existing support within national programmes, but may be used to support

Indicative Actions	<p>additional activities, including provision co-designed with local partners.</p> <p>Examples of activities that may be supported include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support for collaborative projects, placements, internships or other activities with SMEs that enable students and graduates to gain industry-relevant experience and skills; • building capacity in SMEs to provide project/placement/ internship opportunities and enhance the contribution of advanced skills to SME growth, including programmes to specifically engage the most disadvantaged groups or those who face particular local disadvantages in utilising advanced skills; • brokering opportunities to encourage and increase work experience, work placements, traineeships, apprenticeships, and graduate placements particularly through wider employer engagement and involving supply chains; • promoting apprenticeships (especially at advanced levels in manufacturing and other priority sectors) by developing a supportive environment for employer engagement; • developing better links with business to equip students with the skills to start and grow a business to meet local business needs.
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Results Table

ID	Result Indicator	Minimum Target value for this call
R9	Small and Medium Enterprises successfully completing projects (which increase employer engagement; and/or the number of people progressing into or within skills provision)	75%

Outputs table

ID	Output Indicator	Minimum Target value for this call
CO23	Number of supported micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	359
O1	Total number of participants	There is no target value for this call however applicants will be expected to provide a total number of participants the project is aiming to support in both the application and associated Indicators Annex.

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 Tees Valley 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.

In addition, applicants applying for ESF funds under I.P 2.2 will be expected to complete a short annex, along with the standard application Full Application form. This is to ensure that full consideration is being given to the 'Value for Money' (VFM). The [Annex for ESF IP 2.2](#) funding calls can be located on the European Growth Funding website pages.

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 60% (depending on category of region). This means ESF can contribute up to 60% of the total eligible project costs, subject to State Aid regulations. The remaining 40% 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.⁴ Grant funding to any economic undertaking which is state

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."

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.

4.6 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
- 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 and control
- Deliverability
- Procurement / tendering
- 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
- LEP area's ESIF strategy
- National ESF Eligibility Rules
- [Annex for ESF IP 2.2](#).

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.

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. Fully completed [Annex for ESF IP 2.2](#);
3. **Financial tables** (if the application is against more than one Category of Region, a financial table for each Category of Region);
4. **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);

5. A **visual, high level customer journey** document e.g. flow chart;
 6. **Confirmation of match funding** from each funder (confirmation must be in place by the point of formal approval);
 7. **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);
 8. **Equality and Diversity Policy and Sustainability Policy** (Applicant is responsible for ensuring that Delivery partners also hold relevant policies);
 9. **Independent state aid advice** (if applicable);
 10. **Job Descriptions and Organogram** (covering all staff, including any delivery partner and/or match-funded staff posts);
 11. **Applicants procurement policy** (if applicable);
 12. **Draft SLA with Delivery Partners** (if applicable)
 13. **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);
 14. **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	02 April 2019
Deadline for submission of Full Application	25 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

Common output indicators for **entities** (Investment Priority 2.2) are:

number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations
number of projects dedicated at sustainable participation and progress of women in employment
number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level
number of supported micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)