

2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment
Funds Growth Programme

Call for Proposals
European Regional Development Fund

**Sustainable Urban Development Strategy:
Greater Birmingham and Solihull**

Managing Authority:	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Fund:	European Regional Development Fund
Priority Axis:	PRIORITY AXIS 4 PRIORITY AXIS 6
Call Reference:	OC12R20S 1048
Local Enterprise Partnership Area:	GREATER BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL (GBS LEP)
Sustainable Urban Development Strategy	Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Sustainable Urban Development Strategy
Indicative Fund Allocation(s)	PRIORITY AXIS 4 £5,359,000 PRIORITY AXIS 6 £4,428,000
Call Open:	Friday 24 January 2020
Call Closes:	23:59 on Tuesday 30 June 2020

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1. Introduction

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

The Government has confirmed that it will guarantee funding for ERDF projects that are contracted by the end of 2020.

All contracted ERDF project activity must be completed by the end of the programme period, 30 June 2023. Each application for ERDF will be required to demonstrate that it delivers good value for money and domestic strategic priorities.

The Funds are managed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the European Regional Development Fund, Department for Work and Pensions for the European Social Fund and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. These Departments are the Managing Authorities for each Fund. In London, the Greater London Authority acts as an intermediate body for the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund programmes.

Birmingham City Council has been designated as an intermediate body for the [GBSLEP Sustainable Urban Development Strategy](#) to perform the following tasks:

1. Input into project calls in respect of local development needs (with reference to the local European Structural and Investment Funds strategy and Sustainable Urban Development strategy); and
2. Assessment of applications against certain selection criteria in relation to fit with local priorities in respect of the European Regional Development Fund.

The managing authorities and intermediate bodies work closely with local partners on ESI Funds sustainable urban development sub-committees in each local enterprise partnership area. Partners on these sub-committees provide:

1. Practical advice and information to the managing authorities to assist in the preparation of local plans that contribute towards operational programme priorities and targets;
2. Local intelligence to the intermediate body in the development of project calls that reflect operational programme and local development needs as well as match funding opportunities; and

3. Advice on local economic growth conditions and opportunities within the context of the operational programme and the local European Structural and Investment Funds strategy to aid the intermediate body's assessments at outline and full application stage.

This call is issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and invites outline applications in respect of the European Regional Development Fund for England 2014 to 2020.

2. Call Context

On behalf of the national Growth Programme Board, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (the Managing Authority) invites applications seeking European Regional Development Fund investment to support delivery of the GBS LEP Sustainable Urban Development strategy. Applications are invited under the priority axis of the European Regional Development Fund operational programme set out in the tables below.

N.B Under this call an application can be made for a project:

- That would be funded from one of the investment priorities set out below – projects need not meet the requirements of all of the priority axis; and
- That would be funded from more than one of the priority axis set out below.

Applications made under more than one priority axis should be for a coherent project that clearly links concurrent or sequential activities under each priority axis. Please note the limits on project duration set out in section 6.4 when considering whether to apply under more than one priority axis, particularly if the activities under the priority axis are sequential.

Investment Priorities

Priority Axis 4

4a. Promoting the production and distribution of energy derived from renewable sources

4b. Promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in enterprises

4c. Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including public buildings, and the housing sector

4e. Promoting low carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaption methods

4f Promoting research and innovation in, and adoption of, low-carbon technologies

Priority Axis 6

6d. Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystems services, including through Natura 2000 and green infrastructure.

6f. Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution

The **European Regional Development Fund operational programme for England 2014 to 2020** sets out how the European Regional Development Fund will focus on investment to support economic growth and job creation.

The UK Industrial Strategy identifies infrastructure as the essential underpinning of our lives and work, and that having modern and accessible transport infrastructure is essential to our future growth and prosperity. Priority axis 7 of the operational programme aims to support sustainable transport in Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly.

Any application for funding will be required to clearly demonstrate that it provides good value for money and supports domestic strategic priorities, including those set out in the 2017 [UK Industrial Strategy](#). Applications must meet the requirement of, and make a meaningful contribution to, the delivery of the relevant Priority Axis of the [European Regional Development Fund operational programme and where appropriate should reflect how such support will aim to improve productivity levels within small and medium sized enterprises](#).

In addition, applications will be expected to meet identified local development needs, as expressed in the scope of this call and as set out in the [GBS LEP](#) European Structural and Investment Funds strategy and the [GBS LEP](#) Sustainable Urban Development Strategy.

Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with the detail of the operational programme, local European Structural and Investment Funds strategy, GBS LEP Sustainable Urban Development strategy and the relevant documentation listed in sections 5 through to 8 **prior to** submitting an outline application.

3. Scope of the Call

1. Scope

This call invites outline applications which support the delivery of priority axes 4 and 6 of the European Regional Development Fund operational programme and respond to the local development needs set out in [GBS LEP](#) European Structural and Investment Funds strategy and [the GBSLEP Sustainable Urban Development strategy](#).

Please note that projects will only be selected if they contribute to the delivery of the GBS LEP Sustainable Urban Development strategy. Projects that do not support this strategy will not be selected even though they may support the wider European Regional Development Fund operational programme or the GBS LEP European Structural and Investment Funds strategy

<p>Indicative fund allocation:</p>	<p>Indicatively, through this call the managing authority expects to allocate up to:</p> <p>Priority Axis 4 £5,359,000</p> <p>Priority Axis 6 - £4,427,368</p> <p>The managing authority reserves the right to invite to full application (and subsequently approve) projects that have a cumulative value that is higher or lower than this indicative allocations, subject to the volume and quality of proposals received.</p> <p>There is no indicative allocation of European Regional Development Fund funding between capital and revenue activity, both capital and revenue is eligible dependent on the nature of activities / investment priorities set out in the call.</p>
<p>Minimum application level</p>	<p>European Regional Development Fund investment is intended to make a significant impact on local growth. Applications are expected to demonstrate appropriate scale and impact. The managing authority does not intend to allocate less than £250,000 European Regional Development Fund to any single project. Consequently projects with a total value of less than £500,000 will not normally be supported under this call. Applications for less than £250,000 ERDF for extensions to existing projects will be considered.</p> <p>If multiple priority axis: For applications made under more than one priority axis the total amount of European Regional Development Fund requested will be assessed against the values above There is no minimum requirement at priority axis level.</p>
<p>Duration of project activity</p>	<p>Projects should plan to complete delivery of project activity by the end of June 2023; however, the managing authority reserves the right to vary this date.</p>
<p>Geographical scope</p>	<p>The England European Regional Development Fund operational programme operates on a National basis. All eligible European Regional Development Fund expenditure</p>

	<p>must benefit organisations located in England.</p> <p>Revenue projects should predominantly support businesses based within the local enterprise partnership area of this call.</p>
Specific call requirements	<p><u>PLEASE NOTE</u> that for the purposes of this call the minimum European Regional Development Fund grant values for Priority Axes 4 & 6 vary.</p> <p>Priority Axis 4 will have a minimum European Regional Development Fund grant value of £500,000 or £250,000 for existing projects.</p> <p>Priority Axis 6 will have a minimum European Regional Development Fund grant value of £250,000.</p> <p>Please note: Value for Money and alignment with Strategic Domestic Priorities will form a key part of the assessment and appraisal of all applications. Therefore proposals should clearly articulate and demonstrate how activities align with domestic strategic priorities and offer good value for money.</p>
Call deadlines	<p>For this specific call, applications will be assessed after the closure deadline, 30 June 2020.</p> <p>Applications received after the published call close date will not be considered.</p>

2. Local development need

Projects must deliver activity which directly contributes to the objectives of Priority Axis 4 and / or Priority Axis 6 of the operational programme, one or more of the relevant Investment Priorities and meet the local development need expressed in the table below.

Local Development Need
<p>Local growth priorities:</p> <p>The GBS LEP area Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) strategy is aligned to maximise the economic impact of the High-Speed Rail line (HS2) arrival in the area. This means making the very best use of the land and economies of scale that can be achieved through aligning the planning, design and investment in infrastructure and development to ensure optimal levels of sustainable developments that make the most of the investment going into HS2 as a new high capacity public transport network. Innovative site engineering including sustainable urban drainage systems, energy and environmental grids will ensure the optimal development, environmental and sustainability outcomes in the growth of new business, service centres and residential communities around the key investment nodes along the route in the Core</p>

City area i.e. Curzon terminus station (supported through the Eastside Masterplan); Washwood Heath Rolling Stock Maintenance Depot; and HS2 Interchange Station (supported through the UK Central Hub Growth and Infrastructure Plan, which you can download using this link –

<http://www.ugcsolihull.uk/downloads.>).

Improvements / Projects will not be restricted to these 3 new key investment nodes. While the SUD Strategy is strongly aligned to the delivery of projects with a focus on the areas named in the strategies above and the HS2 rail corridor linked to them, in practice we will consider projects from the whole of the Birmingham and Solihull geography that contribute to these.

The SUD Strategy allocation is provided from Priority Axis 4 and 6 of the European Structural and Investment Fund. This is a natural fit with HS2 as the delivery of this has limited funds for such measures and recognises European Regional Development Fund SUD investment as a key fund to achieve some of its aims stated in the local HS2 Environmental and Landscape Prospectus (ELP). The SUD funds will focus on the added value it can bring to the mainstream HS2 work through innovative actions under PA4 and PA6. This strategy will in particular seek to align European Regional Development Funds to support the innovative development of emerging technologies to conserve biodiversity and the natural environment

The Sustainability Appraisal of the Birmingham Development Plan Revised Sustainability Report (the 'Sustainability Appraisal') (2015) as direct evidence of the opportunity to add value to the environmental and climate change aspects of the HS2 Growth Strategy through application of a list of 13 potential sustainability characteristics of the area.

There are two particular environmental themes which are of critical importance, a working group has been established to develop and deliver an environmental prospectus. The partners that are represented include Birmingham Airport, the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP, Groundwork, Environment Agency, the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority, Canals & Rivers Trust and HS2 Ltd amongst others.

The HS2 Environmental and Landscape Prospectus (ELP) first theme is focused around the natural environment. The HS2 stations will become major gateways into the region and the city centre. Harnessing local assets will be critical, particularly through the development of innovative approaches.

The second key theme running through the HS2 ELP is the focus on sustainability and pollution. This covers both the natural and the built environment.

Under the built environment the ambition is to promote the innovative actions from European Regional Development Fund Priority Axis 4 to impact on the production and distribution of energy, on its energy efficiency including renewables and promoting low carbon strategies including sustainable urban mobility. The Zero Emissions Cities initiative (led by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development) for the Smithfield area adjacent to the HS2 terminus at Curzon is a clear example of the ambitions we have for this type of work.

<http://www.wbcds.org/work-program/sustainable-cities/zec/zeroemissionscities.aspx>
Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership has a strong

environmental strategic grounding on which to build; combining ambitious targets in Birmingham's Green Commission Carbon Roadmap, with important scoping of the building retrofit challenge in the Mini-Stern Review for Birmingham and the Wider Urban Area and other key Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership documents such as the 'Delivering Growth' Spatial Plan which is aligned to the Strategic Economic Plan.

The Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership has commissioned a Low Carbon Transport and Mobility Strategy and a Low Carbon Energy Plan which can be found on its website -

<http://centrefenterprise.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/GBS-LEP-Low-Carbon-Energy-Plan-Summary-Report.pdf>; and

<http://centrefenterprise.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Low-Carbon-Transport-and-Mobility-Strategy-Final-March-2016.pdf>

The natural environment proposals include work to address the protection and restoration of biodiversity, ecosystems and innovative technologies that can assist in improving environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil conditions and air pollution. The HS2 ELP contains both a strategy on the approach to these issues but also lists potential projects that may assist in delivering such objectives. Protection and restoration projects will be brought forward as part of the Priority Axis 6 aspects of this strategy, contributing to the European Structural and Investment Funds output for improving hectares of land supported on nature and biodiversity.

This HS2 ELP also includes the water courses in the area that are intersected by the HS2 route. The Canals and Rivers Trust and the Environment Agency are represented on the HS2 ELP and will be a critical partner for the programme moving forward. The proposed route of the High Speed Rail Network will change the waterway landscape significantly, affecting 20 canals, four river navigations and four waterways planned for restoration. This presents us with an exciting opportunity to work together to develop innovative approaches to ensure we improve the quality and enjoyment of the canals network and mitigate against the loss of habitats and disturbance to wildlife

Birmingham is ready to capitalise on the opportunities that HS2 will bring with a range of investment and development opportunities.

The arrival of HS2 with Birmingham Curzon Station provides the opportunity to unlock a range of development sites and accelerate regeneration. We have identified some 'places for growth' located across Eastside, Digbeth and the Curzon Street basin, the stations location brings opportunities for all major economic and growth sectors within the City Centre.

ARRIVAL: Birmingham Curzon will be the first completely new station built in the city centre in over 100 years. Becoming one of the city's largest structures it will need to provide efficient passenger connections that will enable the regeneration and growth of the city. It will become an international visitor/traveller hub. As a gateway to Digbeth new pedestrian routes will open up the regeneration potential of Digbeth bringing activity and investment to Enterprise Zones.

CREATIVE: Digbeth has the ingredients to become one of the most distinctive vibrant quarters in Europe with HS2 providing the opportunity to realise future

growth. Digbeth has several Enterprise Zone sites which will boost opportunities and strengthen the area's economic activity.

BUSINESS: Birmingham's office district is set to expand eastwards as Birmingham Curzon will attract companies wanting immediate access to the high-speed network.

VISIT: At the heart of Eastside's regeneration Millennium Point and the new East Side City Park draw visitors into the quarter providing the catalyst for surrounding development and a key gateway from HS2. The opportunity for Eastside's future as a visitor destination will be transformed with the arrival of HS2. Entrances to Birmingham Curzon Street station for both domestic and potentially international arrivals, places Eastside City Park and Millennium Point at one of the Cities best gateways.

LEARNING & RESEARCH: The canal side setting, next to the new Birmingham City University campus and Aston University, is ideal for a mix of high-tech, research, learning and business developments, presenting a high quality attractive location. Key principles include the development of mixed use neighbourhoods complementary to the surrounding learning and business activity. With plots ready for development companies who make the most of this space will be amongst the first to benefit from improved metro/sprint links as a further boost to the attractiveness of the area.

Local priorities:

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

- The Low Carbon Transport and Mobility Strategy and Low Carbon Energy Plan as well as the Smithfield Zero Emissions Cities initiative which outline the key incentives that the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership wish to focus on relating to Priority Axis 4. The Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership also consider there is potential for consideration of both in a 'whole place' response.
- The Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership encourage projects where possible to be of suitable scale.
- **The** HS2 Environmental and Landscape Prospectus (ELP) for the local area lists the types of activities and the geographical focus needed for successful projects, but these are not restricted to the SUD area as they also have a wider West Midlands Combined Authority remit. The focus centres on the route of the HS2 rail line, the stations and depot along the route and the green and blue infrastructure affected by its introduction; but the focus is by no means restricted to the corridor and the new nodes. Themes that provide a local context within the Environmental and Landscape Workstream Board include rivers and waterways, creating new space, improving corridors, green urban centres, education, skills and businesses.
- Projects are encouraged to collaborate where appropriate to achieve synergy of operation and to avoid duplication.
- Local Low Carbon Energy Supply: The Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership area currently imports almost all its energy requirements

from outside the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership area, resulting in an outflow of £3.38bn. This represents 10% of the area's gross value added. As a result, there is a need to understand other potential sources of energy to deploy across the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership area and to encourage decarbonised local energy generation, building on our research strengths, with pilot projects testing different approaches across a range of renewable technologies. Lack of market growth in goods and services in the emerging green supply chains in the GBS LEP area, and the lack of uptake of eco innovation for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction and other associate benefits

Other priorities include:

- Energy from renewable sources
- Energy efficiency in enterprises
- Energy efficiency and management in public infrastructure, public buildings and housing.
- Promoting sustainable multi-mode travel.
- Adoption of low carbon technologies
- Protect and restore bio diversity – includes rivers and green spaces.
- Promote technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in waste.

If applicants wish to learn more about the European Structural and Investment Fund Strategy and how their potential projects can contribute to it, they may find it helpful to contact the European Regional Development Fund technical assistance project for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership via their dedicated inbox at esif@solihull.gov.uk

3. Operational programme investment priorities

Applications must specify the activities to be delivered and must directly contribute to **one or more** of the following Investment Priorities:

Priority Axis 4 - Supporting the Shift towards a Low Carbon Economy in All Sectors

Investment Priority 4a – Promoting the production and distribution of energy derived from renewable sources.

Specific Objectives – Increase the number of small scale renewable energy schemes in England.

Indicative Actions - Projects will support micro-energy installations, off-grid energy productions, renewable heat networks and ground and air source heat pumps. Under this investment priority, indicative actions to be supported by European Regional Development Fund may include:

- Measures to support increased production of renewable fuels and energy, in particular wind energy, solar and biomass

- Support to build capability and capacity for supply chains in renewable energy
- Demonstration and deployment of renewable energy technologies
- Measures to support the wider deployment of renewable heat, including micro-generation, geothermal, renewable heat networks or district heating, ground source and air source heat pumps. Also including biomass systems with associated heat off-take and heat distribution networks along with recycling processing reprocessing and remanufacturing facilities, and
- Anaerobic digestion plants and other biomass or landfill gas schemes.

Investment Priority 4b – Promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy in enterprises.

Specific Objectives - Increase energy efficiency in particular in Small and Medium sized Enterprises, including through the implementation of low carbon technologies.

Indicative Actions - The main target group is Small and Medium Sized Enterprises. Under this investment priority indicative actions to be supported by European Regional Development Fund may include:

- Enhanced advice, support, information and action to promote innovation in businesses and how they operate, in order to deliver best practice in energy management. This will include innovation in energy efficiency and energy cost reduction to improve businesses' competitiveness and resilience
- Support to SME's can deliver CO₂e savings through direct energy saving and savings through water, waste, transport and embodied energy in materials etc.;
- Support to businesses to undertake 'green' diagnostics or audits of energy efficiency and potential for renewable generation and energy use, which will be followed by provision of energy efficiency information and guidance, tailored energy action plans and support to implement them
- Investing in energy efficiency measures, processes and renewable generation capacity to improve a business' or building's environmental performance or its resilience to the impacts of climate change
- Investing in measures to stimulate cost-effective deep renovations of buildings, including staged deep renovations
- Supporting an increase in energy efficiency in enterprises including an emphasis on 'whole place' especially through improving industrial processes, designing out waste, recovery of 'waste' heat energy and combined heat and power
- Supporting increased Small and Medium Sized Enterprises access to national and local government procured contracts for energy efficient goods and services
- Developing low carbon innovation in relation to energy efficiency within enterprises, including through technologies and engagement practices
- Building retrofit and energy efficiency measures, especially whole building solutions to exemplify, and support the commercialisation of next phase technologies, which are near to market, and low carbon construction techniques to improve the energy efficiency of buildings.

Investment Priority 4c – Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector.

Specific Objectives - Increase the energy efficiency of homes and public buildings, through the implementation of low carbon technologies.

Indicative Actions - Under this investment priority indicative actions to be supported by European Regional Development Fund may include:

- Provision of advice and support to increase the use and take up of low carbon technologies, energy efficiency measures, renewable energy technologies and smart energy systems in housing stock and public buildings
- Supporting low carbon innovation in relation to the integrated 'whole place' energy management approach including energy waste and re-use
- Investing in building retrofit, energy efficiency measures, renewable and smart energy systems deployment, especially whole building or place solutions exemplifying next phase technologies which are near to market
- Investing in domestic energy efficiency, renewable energy and smart construction techniques • Investment in the development and wider use of Energy Performance Contracting in the public buildings and housing sectors.

Investment Priority 4e – Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures.

Specific Objectives - Increase implementation of whole place low carbon solutions and decentralised energy measures.

Indicative Actions - Activity under this investment priority will be complementary to, and work alongside, activity under investment priority 4(a) and is based upon a holistic approach to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, ensuring that actions are integrated within the framework of an overarching strategy or strategies. In order to promote such strategies, examples of actions to be supported by European Regional Development Fund may include:

- investments in local/regional smart grid demonstration projects, including validation and solving system integration issues
- sustainable energy action plans for urban areas, including public lighting systems, smart metering and distribution through smart grids
- Investments in combined heat and power from renewable sources
- Investments to encourage the adoption of renewable technologies. A strategic approach is particularly important in the area of low carbon transport, whether for sustainable urban mobility, or improving links between urban and rural areas, or connecting dispersed rural communities.
- Examples of actions include:
- investments in actions aimed at improving the capacity at local level to develop and implement integrated and sustainable transport strategies and plans (including for example actions related to modelling data collection, integrated transport management, operations and services, public consultation etc.) to reduce transport related air pollution, in particular retrofit or replacement

programmes for bus fleets, incentive schemes for cleaner transport, improved public transport infrastructure and alternative forms of transport

- investments in actions aimed at introducing innovative environmentally-friendly and low-carbon technologies (for example, alternative fuel stations or charging points)
- investments in actions aimed at developing innovative and multi-modal transport services (for example, intelligent transport systems for travel information and planning, traffic and demand management, smart ticketing, multimodal integrated datasets or cooperative systems)
- innovative transport pricing and user charging systems
- cycle paths, walkways and waterways only where part of an integrated approach to greenhouse gas reductions.

Investment Priority 4f – Promoting research and innovation in, and adoption of, low-carbon technologies.

Specific Objectives - Increase innovation in, and adoption of, low carbon technologies.

Indicative Actions - Under this investment priority indicative actions to be supported by European Regional Development Fund may include:

- Research and Development, innovation and supply chain work for low carbon technologies and materials, including; wave and wind energy, smart grids, distributed generation, solar and photovoltaics, heat networks, heat pumps and low carbon heat for energy intensive industries
- Research underpinning carbon capture and storage, taking account of the restrictions laid down in Article 3.3.b of the European Regional Development Fund
- Technology centres of excellence and test facilities, including relevant Catapult centres
- Renewable technologies in the United Kingdom renewable energy roadmap
- Research, development, demonstration and adoption of technologies and systems that support low-energy transport and accelerate the establishment of new technologies such as low emissions vehicles (electric, hybrid and hydrogen)
- Knowledge transfer with Higher Education/Further Education institutions and Businesses
- Supporting low carbon tech start-ups and greater commercialisation of low carbon products and processes • Developing financing methods that encourage the adoption of proven low carbon technologies and generate long-term financial savings • Demonstration and deployment of decentralised renewable energy technologies
- Research, development and innovation and supply chain development for low carbon and resource efficient technologies and materials (including small scale pilot programmes that test the market with new low carbon solutions and the use of secondary materials).

Priority Axis 6 – Protecting the Environment and Promoting Resource Efficiency

Investment Priority 6d – Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure.

Specific Objectives - Investments in Green and Blue infrastructure and actions that support the provision of ecosystem services on which businesses and communities depend to increase local natural capital and support sustainable economic growth

Indicative Actions - Activity supported to achieve this specific objective will focus on investment in Green Infrastructure; definitions are set out in the National Planning Policy and in Natural England's Green Infrastructure guide 1. Blue Infrastructure is a sub-set of this and refers to the water-related features (rivers, ponds, lakes etc.) that play a crucial role in providing benefits to people and wildlife. Activity can include site clearance, soil de-sealing, decontamination and land remediation, but only where these directly contribute to an area's Green and Blue Infrastructure/ natural capital, which are the primary objective of the interventions. Sustainable drainage can be a design function incorporated within Green Infrastructure. It can also make a contribution to the provision of Green Infrastructure, where natural solutions are used to provide such a function. Furthermore the volume and quality of water that flows into blue infrastructure, such as rivers, ponds and lakes, has a fundamental impact on their health and condition. Sustainable drainage can help improve this. Under this investment priority, indicative actions to be supported by European Regional Development Fund may include:

- Investment in green and blue infrastructure such as green corridors in urban areas and waterways
- Sustainable drainage to improve water quality and, in some cases, local air quality.

Investment Priority 6f – Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution.

Specific Objectives - Investment to promote the development and uptake of innovative technologies, in particular in resource efficiency, in order to increase the resilience and environmental and economic performance of businesses and communities.

Indicative Actions - The aim is to help businesses optimise the use of resources in ways that improve business performance in terms of resilience, profitability and competitiveness while at the same time contributing to the protection and preservation of the environment. Under this investment priority indicative actions to be supported by the European Regional Development Fund may include:

- Provision of support and advice for businesses in the adoption of innovative technologies and processes for the management and reuse of energy, materials, water and waste (including recycling and recovery)
- Provision of support for the piloting and demonstration of innovative technologies to promote resource efficiency in order to encourage their greater take-up.

4. Required Outputs under this Call

Applicants will need to demonstrate how the eligible activity, funded by the European Regional Development Fund will achieve the programme-level outputs for Priority Axes 4 and 6.

For projects proposing to deliver activity against more than one priority axis or more than one investment priority within a single priority axis, all appropriate outputs should be selected. Outputs should not be selected if funding is not being requested under the relevant investment priority. If approved projects will be required to report on, and evidence, eligible expenditure separately under each priority axis and the achievement of the outputs separately under each investment priority.

For projects coming forward under this call the expected outputs and results are:

Priority Axis 4: Supporting the Shift Towards A Low Carbon Economy In All Sectors		
Investment Priority	Specific Objective	Output Indicator
4a : Promoting the production and distribution of energy derived from renewable sources	4.1 Increase the number of small scale renewable energy schemes in England	C1 - Number of enterprises receiving support C5 - Number of new enterprises supported C30 - Additional capacity of renewable energy production C34 - Estimated annual decrease of GHG
4b: Promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in enterprises	4.2 Increase energy efficiency in particular in small and medium-sized enterprises, including through the implementation of low carbon technologies	C1 - Number of enterprises receiving support C34 - Estimated GHG reductions
4c : Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector	4.3 Increase energy efficiency in homes and public buildings, including through the implementation of low carbon technologies	C31 - Number of households with improved energy consumption C32 - Decrease of annual primary energy consumption of public buildings C34 - Estimated GHG reductions
4e : Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for	4.4 Increase implementation of whole place low carbon solutions and decentralised	C1 - Number of enterprises receiving support

urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures	energy measures.	C34 - Estimated GHG reductions
4f : Promoting research and innovation in, and adoption of, low-carbon technologies	4.5 Increase innovation in, and adoption of, low carbon technologies	C1 - Number of enterprises receiving support C5 - Number of new enterprises supported C26 - Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions C29- Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products C34 - Estimated GHG reductions
Priority Axis 6: Preserving and Protecting the Environment and Promoting Resource Efficiency		
Investment Priority	Specific Objective	Output Indicator
6d- Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure	6.1 Investments in Green and Blue infrastructure and actions that support the provision of ecosystem services on which businesses and communities depend to increase local natural capital and support sustainable economic growth	C22 - Total surface area of rehabilitated land C23 - Surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status
6f - Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution	6.2 Investment to promote the development and uptake of innovative technologies, in particular in resource efficiency, in order to increase the resilience and environmental and economic performance of businesses and communities.	C1 - Number of enterprises receiving support C5 - Number of new enterprises supported C29 - Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products

The managing authority expects the level of outputs proposed within outline applications to be realistic and achievable and to deliver good value for money. The application should clearly state the methodology used to determine the levels of outputs proposed.

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

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

The local European Structural and Investment Fund strategy for the local enterprise partnership area and the [GBSLEP](#) Sustainable Urban Development strategy include details of the local, notional European Regional Development Fund allocation to each priority axis and the type and number of European Regional Development Fund outputs that are expected in return for this investment.

All operations will be required to report regularly on progress toward achievement of targets. This will need to include both quantitative and qualitative data relevant to the appropriate geographical areas. Applicants will need to explain how they will collect and record this information to maintain a fully evidenced audit trail. It should be noted that if an operation fails to deliver contracted outputs, a performance penalty may apply.

5. Application Process and Prioritisation Methodology

There are two stages to the European Regional Development Fund application process:

- Outline application and, if successful; and
- Full application.

Acceptance of an outline application to progress to full application stage does not in any way indicate or constitute an offer of European Regional Development Fund grant.

Applicants must fully complete the [outline application](#) which will be assessed against the national [selection criteria](#). The intermediate body will undertake the assessment against the selection criteria in relation to fit with local priorities.

Applicants submitting applications for projects seeking support from more than one priority axis should note that:

- The project will be assessed against the requirements of all of the priority axis from which funding is requested;
- The application must demonstrate how the project would address the requirements of each of the priority axis from which funding is requested;

- Projects seeking funding from more than one priority axis may add an additional 100 words to sections 2.6 and 3 of the outline application for the second and each subsequent priority axis from which funding is sought;
- The outline application financial table's annexe must clearly identify the percentage of expenditure allocated to each priority axis. Section 6.5 of the outline application should be used to clarify the allocation of costs between priority axis and investment priorities.
- Section 8 of the outline application should be used to clarify the number of outputs shown in the application deliverables annexe associated with each priority axis.

outline applications will be assessed in two stages, Gateway assessment and Core assessment.

The Gateway assessment is undertaken by the Managing Authorities and considers:

- Applicant eligibility;
- Activity and expenditure eligibility; and
- Fit with the National operational programme and the local development need set out in section 2.

Applications that fail the Gateway assessment undertaken by the Managing authority will be rejected.

Applications which pass the Gateway assessment will then be assessed by the intermediate body and Managing authority in relation to all Core assessment criteria.

The intermediate body will assess the application against the Local strategic fit assessment criteria.

The intermediate body will also provide advice to the managing authority to assist the managing authority to make its assessment against the following Core selection criteria:

1. Value for money; and
2. Deliverability.

Having assessed projects against these criteria the relevant local enterprise partnership area European Structural and Investment Funds Sustainable Urban Development sub-committee will advise the intermediate body on the contribution to local economic growth conditions and opportunities within the context of the operational programme and local European Structural and Investment Funds strategy.

Having concluded their assessments the managing authority and the intermediate body will prioritise the applications they wish to proceed based on their assessment against their respective selection criteria. Only projects that the managing authority

and the intermediate body each agree should proceed, based on their respective core selection criteria, will be invited to submit a full application. Subsequently only those full applications that the managing authority and the intermediate body each agree should proceed, based on their respective selection criteria, will be approved.

Please note that the managing authority's decision is final and there are no appeals. If you wish to complain about the calls and application process, please follow the procedure set out at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/complaints-procedure>.

Potential applicants / applicants may wish to take advantage of information and support services funded through European Regional Development Fund Technical Assistance and available to assist the design and development of compliant projects / applications for the European Regional Development Fund. Details of your local Technical Assistance funded project can be found on the [Technical Assistance website page](#).

6. General Information

1. National Eligibility Rules

When developing an application, Applicants must refer to the [National Eligibility Rules](#) setting out the requirements of the 2014 to 2020 European Regional Development Fund programme. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the National Eligibility Rules are adhered to both at application stage and following approval. Failure to do so can lead to financial penalties leading to recovery of up to 100% of the grant value. If in doubt on any of the requirements, applicants are strongly advised to seek specialist advice.

European Regional Development Fund eligibility rules apply to **all** project spend within the eligible costs, including match funding.

The European Regional Development Fund is governed by European regulations and national rules. Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with the relevant documentation, (section 8 Key Document refers) prior to submitting an outline application. If successful at the full application stage, applicants will enter into [a Funding agreement](#) and must abide by the standard terms and conditions contained therein. Once a Funding agreement has been issued it should be signed and returned within 30 days, unless otherwise agreed with the managing authority. Applicants are therefore strongly advised to read these terms and conditions to ensure that they are able to enter into such an agreement prior to responding to the call.

2. Eligible applicants

Section 4 of the [National Eligibility Rules](#) sets out who is eligible to apply. Financial Due Diligence checks will be undertaken on non-public sector applicants that are successful at the outline application stage. Checks will be carried out following notification of a successful outline application and may exclude applicants from further consideration. These checks will include assessment of the applicant's financial standing including ability to deal with cost overruns, the ability to cash flow a project in arrears and absorb a financial irregularity.

Applicants must be legally constituted at the point of signing a Funding agreement. If the application is approved the applicant organisation will enter into a legally binding Funding agreement and therefore will carry the liability for ensuring that the terms and conditions of the Funding agreement are met.

If there is more than one organisation applying for the funds, a lead organisation must be selected to become the applicant (and grant recipient) with the remaining organisation(s) acting as delivery partner(s). In this situation the applicant would be responsible and liable for the delivery partner(s) and ensuring the project is operating compliantly.

During the application process the managing authority will consider the applicant's track record, both positive and negative. If the applicant has been involved in the delivery of previous European grants and any irregularities have been identified, the managing authority will expect to see what steps have been taken to ensure that the risk of further irregularities in the future is mitigated. It is acknowledged that some organisations will be new to European Structural and Investment Funds funding and will not have a track record.

3. Contribution rate and match funding

European Regional Development Fund investment must not be used to replace existing funding sources. European Regional Development Fund investment must enable activity to take place that would not otherwise happen or to increase the scope, scale or intensity of activity. The level of European Regional Development Fund awarded will be the minimum in order for the project to proceed

The maximum contribution rate is 50% of the total eligible project costs subject to State Aid regulations.

The remaining 50% or more must come from other eligible sources as specified under section 6 of the National Eligibility Rules. During the application process applicants will need to satisfy the managing authority that they have, or are able to put in place eligible match funding for the balance of costs. Other EU funds cannot be used as a source of match funding.

European Regional Development Fund investment is limited by State Aid regulations and where the award of European Regional Development Fund would constitute State Aid the European Regional Development Fund grant rate may fall below the 50% maximum.

European Regional Development Fund is paid quarterly in arrears and expenditure must be defrayed prior to the submission of any grant claims. Applicants may be asked to demonstrate how they are able to cash flow the operation.

4. Project timescales

Projects approved through this call will normally be expected to:

1. Submit a detailed and complete full application within three months of formal selection at outline stage. Projects which fail to meet this deadline may be deselected;
2. Commence delivery within the agreed timescale as stated in the Grant Funding Agreement; and
3. Have completed the delivery of project activity by the end of June 2023.

5. Project extensions

Existing grant recipients whose projects:

1. Do not involve the direct development of premises or infrastructure;
2. Addresses the priorities set out in section 2

May apply for a second phase of delivery – this will be expected to be in the same form as the current project (i.e. a genuine continuation of activity) but may reflect improvement/some change to reflect experience of the first phase of the project. The application must be made using the standard outline application form. Where changes to the first phase of the project are significant, these should be presented as a new application. The relevant Growth Delivery Team will apply judgment in considering the significance of any change.

Applications in respect of the development of premises or other infrastructure should be presented as new projects, this includes applications that have a link to an existing European Regional Development Fund project e.g. further phases of the development of sites or premises.

Please note - extensions to existing projects will be assessed against the criteria set out in this call in the same way as 'new' projects. There is no guarantee that extensions will be selected. Extension requests that do not meet the requirements set out in this call will be rejected. The applicant's track record and the performance of existing contracts will be taken into account during the assessment process.

6. Capital projects

In developing the budget for the outline application, applicants seeking European Regional Development Fund to support a capital project should note that:

1. New build projects will normally be expected to achieve the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating of 'excellent'; however BREEAM 'very good' will be accepted where this is the maximum feasible standard;
2. Refurbishment projects will normally be expected to achieve the BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'; and
3. Infrastructure projects will normally be expected to achieve the Civil Engineering Environmental Quality Assessment rating of 'Very Good'.

7. Cross Cutting Themes / Horizontal Principles

All applications selected as a result of this call will be required to demonstrate how the Cross Cutting Themes have been addressed in the project design and development. Cross Cutting Themes for European Regional Development Fund are 'equality and anti-discrimination' and 'sustainable development'. Further information is available in section 11 of the [European Regional Development Fund operational programme](#).

Projects seeking funding under priority axis 4 with the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions must have a transparent methodology for calculating and monitoring the savings; with actual and auditable GHG reductions in line with the Climate Change Act 2008.

8. Additionality, duplication and displacement

Additionality is a core principle of European Regional Development Funding. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that the activity paid for out of European Regional Development Funding adds value to new or existing activity.

European Regional Development Funding cannot support activities that duplicate existing provision / services within the region.

Applications need to identify and evidence how the beneficiaries will use the service and demonstrate that the project does not displace other activity available in the market place.

9. State Aid and revenue generation

Applicants are required, in the outline application, to provide a view on how their proposal complies with State Aid law. Applicants must ensure that projects comply with the law on State Aid. Grant funding to any economic undertaking which is State Aid can only be awarded if it is compatible aid, in that it complies with the terms of a notified scheme under the General Block Exemption Regulation (EU) 651/2014.

Only if this is not possible should applicants use the De minimis Regulation or 'no aid'. [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.

10. Procurement

All costs claimed by the applicant (grant recipient and / or delivery partner(s)) must be recovered on an actual cost basis. Other costs must be procured in line with National (including [Public Procurement Regulation 2015](#)) and EU regulations. Procurement will be subject to audit and verification and any irregularity will result in a financial penalty of up to 100% of the grant paid. Robust and transparent procurement is required to ensure that grant recipients:

- (i) Consider value for money;
- (ii) Maximise efficient use of public money; and
- (iii) Maintain competitiveness and fairness across the EU.

It is **strongly recommended** that applicants seek and follow legal advice in respect of procurement requirements. Procurement irregularities remain the most substantive cause of error and clawback of grants.

7. Support

Please note that this is a competitive call and to preserve impartiality the managing authority and, where appropriate, staff from the intermediate body involved in the assessment process are unable to enter into correspondence with applicants over their outline application. Details of where guidance can be found are contained throughout this call document. In exceptional circumstances, if there are issues with accessing this guidance, please contact: wm.erdfenquiries@communities.gov.uk.

8. Key Documents

- European Regional Development Fund operational programme;
- Outline application form;
- Outline application form guidance;

- Local enterprise partnership area's European Structural and Investment Funds strategy;
- GBS LEP Sustainable Urban Development strategy;
- Eligibility guidance;
- Output definitions; and
- Funding agreement (revenue and / or capital).

9. Document Checklist

Incomplete applications will be rejected. Please ensure the following information (documents) are submitted.

Outline stage:

- Fully completed outline application;
- Financial tables; and
- Outputs and indicators tables.

10. Document Submission

Completed outline applications must be submitted via **email** to the address in section 7.

Outline application forms not received by the call closure deadline will not be assessed.

Outline applications which are not fully completed will be excluded.

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

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