

ESF 2014-20

Progress Update to the Growth Programme Board

September 2020



Department
for Work &
Pensions



European Union
European
Social Fund

ESF 2014-20

Medium-term Response to COVID-19

September 2020

ESF Medium-Term Response to COVID: Overview

This update will cover:

- ESF COVID-19 Response Update
 - OP Modifications
 - The IP 4.1 Call
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ESF Response to COVID-19

- Funding is being prioritised towards provision that directly addresses the impacts of COVID-19.
- The MA is actively working with local areas to identify how ESF can fund COVID-19 related support needs and contribute to local recovery plans.
- LEP Leads are working closely with local areas to consider how ESF can support immediate needs and to submit Call Proposals to the Reserve Fund.
- The MA has progressed the proposal to deliver digital support to ESF participants without access to the internet and on-line services utilising the EC's 100% co-financing easement.

Operational Programme Modifications

- A modified Operational Programme has been submitted to the EC.
- This revision introduces a new Priority Axis (PA) 4 “COVID-19 Response”. PA 4 will have an initial value of £10m.
- PA 4 includes a new Investment Priority (IP) 4.1, “Addressing the Digital Divide.” This new IP addresses the main issues associated with digital exclusion:
 - physical access to a device that will allow the user to access the internet;
 - provision of data allowances to enable ESF participants to get online and access information and service.

Operational Programme Modifications (continued)

The £10m will fund 2 £5m Calls:

- A National, pan-CoR “Digital Divide” Call, for all areas outside London.
- A London – specific Call, along similar lines, will provide support for that area. The GLA plan to launch this Call soon after the National Call.

The IP 4.1 Call

- The Call will seek applications to run short-term projects to provide the device and data allowance (through a data dongle) to ESF participants who are currently unable to access on-line services.
- Support will include some initial set-up of the device and making sure the participant is able to access the internet. Any further help needed should be delivered as part of the individual's existing ESF support.
- Projects will be delivered using the Lump Sum Simplified Cost Option (SCO). The lump sum will cover all project costs, including equipment/data, the human resources needed to establish and manage the project, recording and distributing equipment and supporting participants with the initial 'set up' of equipment.
- Under the terms of the SCO, claims can only be paid once the minimum number of outputs, as set out by the project in its application and Funding Agreement, are achieved.

The IP 4.1 Call (continued)

- Following our clarification of the removal of the upper limit to project values, and feedback received from PDR members, we have not set either a lower or upper value limit to projects delivering under this call.
- All activity for this call needs to be completed by 31 December 2020, with claims submitted by 5 February 2021.
- The call will close on Funding Finder at 23:59 on 30 September 2020.