

Guidance

European Social Fund FAST-CARE Eligibility Rules

Priority Axis 5: Promoting the Socio-economic Integration of Third Country Nationals – Flexible Assistance for Territories - Cohesion’s Action for Refugees in Europe (FAST-CARE) and Investment Priority 5.1 (IP5.1)

Support for the facilitation of the reception, welcoming and integration of people fleeing the war in Ukraine

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Background

Priority Axis 5 (PA5): The socio-economic integration of Third Country Nationals – Flexible Assistance for Territories - Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe (FAST-CARE).

PA5 aims to address the migratory challenges resulting from the military aggression by the Russian Federation in Ukraine and to support the socio-economic integration of third country nationals. It will help to facilitate the reception, relief and welcome of people fleeing the war in Ukraine.

PA5 supports the following Investment Priority:

- **Investment Priority 5.1 (IP5.1) Support for the facilitation of the reception, welcoming and integration of people fleeing the war in Ukraine**

This document sets out:

- the Eligibility Rules for projects delivering PA5 and IP5.1
- the arrangements made for ESF funding under the 2014-2020 ESF Programme in compliance with [EU FAST-CARE regulations](#) published by the EU
- what is eligible and ineligible for ESF support under PA5
- call specific Eligibility Rules

All applications will need to be eligible under the European Social Fund Operational Programme for England 2014 to 2020 and the eligibility rules set out in this guide.

The existing eligibility rules and programme guidance remain in place, but may not all apply. This guide explains the specific PA5 eligibility rules and should only be used by Grant Recipients (GRs) for the delivery of PA5.

All GRs receiving ESF must comply with the eligibility rules, as failure to do so can incur financial penalties of up to 100%.

To attract ESF support, expenditure incurred by ESF project's claims must be made based on the specific PA5 Eligibility Rules.

The published Operational Programme does not yet contain the PA5 Fund specific rules. Therefore, GRs funded under PA5 should also refer to Action Notes, Frequently Asked Questions, and other products specific to PA5 and the associated Investment Priority.

Priority Axis 5: Key features

The following PA5 key features make it different from other general ESF Priority Axes:

- projects and activity may have already completed. The eligibility of expenditure for projects which are physically completed or fully implemented, is being funded retroactively where they have provided support to address the consequences of the migratory challenges, resulting from the military aggression by the Russian Federation in Ukraine
- a single Flat Rate unit cost has been introduced to reduce the administrative burden
- Match Funding is not applicable for PA5 - Funding will be delivered using 100% ESF
- costs eligible for support can relate to adults and children under the age of 18
- the reduction of the administrative burden on beneficiaries (and Managing Authorities) in the context of addressing migratory challenges. No direct reporting of individual refugees to the ESF Managing Authority (MA) is required

Eligible Activities - Specific objectives of IP5.1

Specific Objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
5.1 Support for the facilitation of the reception, welcoming and integration of people fleeing the war in Ukraine	<p>The additional retroactive financial support from this Investment Priority will support and facilitate measures such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short term first reception and immediate relief activities, such as providing food, basic material assistance, accommodation, transport, immediate healthcare, information, and translation services • welcome and orientation measures such as accommodation, and accommodation and staff costs for running the facilities and integration activities • healthcare, psychological care, community-based support, childcare, social housing, access to the labour market, education, and training

Eligible 'Refugees'

Eligible 'Refugees' are third country nationals fleeing the war in Ukraine. These are referred to as 'Refugees' throughout PA5 specific guidance.

'Refugees' are:

- adults

- children under 18 years of age

Other refugees and migrants from other parts of the world are not eligible as they do not fall within the scope of this set of eligibility rules.

Match Funding

Match-funding is not needed for PA5 projects.

Call Specific Eligibility Information

Key Call Features

PA5 has been made available to Upper Tier Local Authorities. It is possible for other delivery partnership arrangements, for example, Local Co-Financing Organisations, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), Combined Authorities (CA), to lead a consortium bid for several Upper Tier Local Authorities.

The Grant Recipient (GR) will be the only contact route for the MA. The GR will be:

- Upper Tier Local Authority if not part of a consortium or
- lead organisation for the consortium. The lead for the consortium needs to liaise with the consortium counterparts to ensure relevant information and evidence is provided through the lead

The ESF MA will enter into a separate Funding Agreement (FA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for each successful bid.

The maximum value of support available for each Upper Tier Local Authority Area is shown in Appendix 1 for this Call. How this was calculated is shown in the [Call Specific Funding Model](#) section

The definition of Eligible 'Refugees' is covered in the section above. The number of eligible 'Refugees' is based on data held on the DELTA system. Information about [The DELTA system](#) is published on GOV.UK.

Call Specific Eligibility period

The distribution of funding for this call is based upon the number of 'Refugees' arriving in England under the Homes for Ukraine (HfU) scheme and registered with Local Authorities between 24 February 2022 to 31 August 2022. When submitting applications, applicants should ensure the number of refugees being claimed for, and declared to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), remains correct. Where applicants believe these numbers are no longer correct, then the numbers of refugee arrivals being claimed for should be revised down to reflect the correct position.

ESF granted under Priority Axis 5 is not directly awarded for the continued support of 'Refugees' or supporting the needs of additional individuals who may flee Ukraine at a future date. Once paid, there are no special conditions or restrictions applied to how the ESF granted under the Call is spent. The ESF MA may be in a position to provide additional funding for those who have arrived from 1 September 2022. This will be confirmed at a later date.

Who can apply for funding through The Call?

The Call explains that the funding is available for English Upper Tier Local Authorities. The consortia bid approach is described in the Call documents in more detail. Please see Appendix 1 for this Call for the list of Upper Tier Local Authorities.

Call Specific Funding Model

The Call arrangements explain the criteria under which a bid must be submitted. Payment of ESF Grant will be based on the number of eligible refugees declared to the DLUHC via the DELTA system, under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, as new registrations, during the period 24th February 2022 to 31 August 2022, where Tariff Payments were made.

Please see Appendix 1 for this Call

Payment for each refugee will be made at a flat rate unit cost of £84.00 per week.

Each refugee will be eligible for support for a period of 19 weeks. The indicative value of support available for each Upper Tier Local Authority Area is calculated as shown in the following table.

Upper Tier area	Q1	Q2	Total
An example	388 (as per published data)	257 (as per published data)	645
	£619,248.00	£410,172.00	£1,029,420.00

This means that in this example, 645 eligible starts give an indicative sum of £1,029,420.00 (645 x £84.00 x 19). The MA 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.

Once paid, there are no special conditions or restrictions applied to how the ESF granted under the Call is spent.

Location of Operations and Grant Recipients specific to

All ESF 2014-2020 programme project activity must be delivered in England. PA5 includes London (The Greater London Authority areas). The location of where the activity is or was being delivered determines where the ESF support is counted as occurring.

Call Specific Eligible Expenditure

As described in the [Call Specific Funding Model](#), eligible expenditure for the Call is derived from the number of people registered on the DELTA system who fled from the Russian Federation's aggression in Ukraine.

Eligible activity includes the support and facilitation of the reception, welcoming and integration of people fleeing the war in Ukraine such as but not limited to:

- providing food, basic material assistance, accommodation, transport, immediate healthcare, information, and translation services
- welcome and support orientation measures such as accommodation, and accommodation and staff costs for running facilities and integration activities
- healthcare, psychological care, community-based support, childcare, social housing, access to the labour market, education, and training

Any queries about the eligibility of costs should be addressed with the MA.

Data Needed

Data containing the names and dates of birth of each person receiving support ('Refugees') is not required to be routinely reported to the MA. However, an audit trail of this data is needed.

Verification and Audit

Data about 'Refugees' is needed for audit purposes and should be retained by GRs. An audit trail should be based on data already held by the GR, that has already been reported to national bodies, for example the Home Office (HO), DLUHC. The data may be sourced for example from:

- information locally held on 'Foundry' (DLUHC system)
- other local copies of records

GRs must ensure that a complete audit trail is maintained to demonstrate the effective and compliant implementation of the programme and the eligibility of claims made. All relevant records and documents should be made available on request to facilitate verification and audit.

Documents can be electronic (digital records, records that originate in digital form or hard-copy documents converted into digital form) or paper records (a 'hard-copy') that contain relevant information or data.

Verification checks are undertaken by the MA on every project. These could be 'desk-based' checks performed remotely from MA offices or involve visits to where records are kept and, if different, where the project activities take place.

National audits are undertaken by the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) being the designated programme Audit Authority for the EU Structural Funds programmes. These audits involve visits to where records are kept and, if different, where the project activities take place. Audits may also be undertaken by the European Commission.

Document and Record Retention

As stated in Article 140 of (EU) Regulation 1303/2013 all documents and records relating to the project and its implementation must be retained in an acceptable format, so they can be inspected when necessary. These documents and records are needed to evidence that:

- refugees were eligible for PA5 funding
- publicity requirements were met
- project documents covering for example the initial application against the Call, documents covering the scope and value of the claim(s) and other specific documents required in the Call such as the Anti-Fraud statement

These must be kept either in the form of the originals, certified true copies of the originals, on commonly accepted data carriers including electronic versions of original documents or documents existing in electronic version only.

Where documents exist in electronic form only, the computer systems used shall meet accepted security standards and can be relied on for audit purposes.

All projects delivered as part of the ESF 2014-2020 Programme must ensure they keep all documents and records as in the ESF guidance on [document retention](#) published on GOV.UK. This is to ensure documents are made available to the European Commission and European Court of Auditors upon request.

Electronic Data Storage

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires the ESF MA and all delivery partners who have access to or store or otherwise process personal customer information to adhere to a set of data and security requirements.

For the purposes of the ESF 2014 to 2020 Programme, the DWP MA is defined as the Data Controller and any organisation delivering provision on behalf of DWP is defined as the Data Processor.

For Direct Bid organisations, details of the role and responsibilities of the Data Processor and information regarding data storage requirements are contained in the FA with the MA.

Electronic signatures

The use of electronic signatures on ESF documentation is permissible. Regulations make provision for signature evidence to be held electronically and for “wet” signatures to be digitised. All such documentation should be retained. For the purposes of the ESF programme an electronic signature is the electronic equivalent of a written signature.

Revenue Generating Projects

Article 65 of CPR 1303/2013 relates specifically to revenue generating projects, these are not permitted in the ESF 2014-20 programme. Therefore, Article 65 does not apply to ESF projects.