

Coast to  
Capital

# ESF Calls January 2021

18 January 2021



# Coast to Capital Strategic Documents

**The following documents will provide detailed local information and context for potential applicants:**

- Skills Strategy and Action Plan, September 2020
- Skills and Labour Market Impact Assessments, September 2020 and January 2021

These can be found on our website [here](#)

Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how activity in their application supports one or more of the priorities identified in the Skills Strategy and Action Plan.



# Call 1: Support Into Employment

- Investment Priority 1.1: Access to Employment for Jobseekers and Inactive People
- Call window closes at midnight on 15 March 2021
- Total commitment = £1,000,000 ESF
- Minimum application level = £250,000 ESF
- Total participants 1100
- Project completion date = 31st December 2023
- **Full specification [here](#)**

# Call 2: Skills for the Future of Your Workforce

- Investment Priority 2.1: Equal Access to Lifelong Learning
- Call window closes at midnight on 15 March 2021
- Total commitment = £1,000,000 ESF
- Minimum application level = £250,000 ESF
- Total participants 1200
- Project completion date = 31st December 2023
- **Full specification [here](#)**

# ESF Application Process



# Top Tips

## Register early for e-claims

Applications for funding must be completed and submitted using the ECLAIMS IT system. Applications submitted via any other method will not be accepted.

## Narrative should be clear, simple & focused

To properly appraise applications DWP need to be able to easily understand it.

Keep the language general. No jargon. Explain acronyms.



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# Top Tips

**Check eligibility of activity** - Eligibility guidance is available on GOV.UK

## **Demonstrate 'additionality'**

Applications should show:

- How proposal will assist people to move further toward the labour market and/ or drive up skills levels
- That proposal will deliver innovative and responsive skills provision (both accredited and non-accredited training)



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# Top Tips

## Value for money

Provide informed rationale for setting the Output levels. Unit cost is set per area/Call and the proposal will not be able to stray too far from these without robust justification around how it will positively impact the local area/economy.

## Local Strategic fit

Links to strategic documents will be on the Call specification.



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# Top Tips

## Clean match funding

i.e. not 'recycled'. Can be cash or staff time. Guidance available on GOV.uk

## Management and Control

Be clear about who will deliver the project, their role and cost



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# Top Tips

## Granular budget breakdown

The Financial Annex only provides the MA with a summary of budget costs. The MA will require a granular break down showing detail of how the project will be spending both its ESA and Match funding. This is to check eligibility and to show the project has thought carefully about the amount of funding required to provide their service.



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# Top Tips

**Be careful about State Aid (de minimis/GBER), procurement and publicity**

**Think about future audits and how to retrieve the audit trail easily**

**Top top tip - use all the guidance available on Gov.uk**

This is the basis for the appraisal process. If the application deviates from guidance it will at best cause delays to the appraisal process.

If any help is needed to decipher the guidance applicants should e-mail ESF.2014-2020@dwp.gov.uk



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# Process from Call to Funding Agreement

- Full Application
- Gateway assessment
- Appraisal
- Maximum three rounds of questions
- Decision letter
- Funding Agreement
- Delivering 'at risk'



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# Process from Call to Funding Agreement

**Applications MUST be received by midnight on the day of Call closing.** Late applications will be rejected.

At the end of 2018 ESFA MA introduced a one stage application process to reduce the time between Call and contract

On receipt of an application the appraiser will undertake a 'gateway assessment'.

This is an automatic knock out stage if applications fail any of the following checks:

- Eligibility to apply for funding in accordance with Common Provisions Regs and National Eligibility rules
- Activity and expenditure eligible for support within Regulatory Frameworks and Eligibility Rules
- Present clear evidence that it contributes to the needs/opps identified in the Call and the OP

If it passes Gateway, the application will then move to appraisal where up to three rounds of questions will be raised with the applicant.

At these stage or when all questions have been answered the MA will make a decision based on the information given and a decision letter sent. The project is not legally contracted until the subsequent Funding Agreement has been signed by both parties.

A project may start delivering 'at risk' earlier, but this must be declared to the MA and any eligible expenses will not be reimbursed until Funding Agreement is in place.

A project should expect a delay of 6mths plus before claims will be paid as the MA needs to conduct activities such as a Project Inception Visit and signed off report before it can pay Grant Recipients.



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# Appraisal – Core Selection Criteria

- Strategic Fit – advice from Sub-Committee
- Value for money – advice from Sub-Committee
- Deliverability
- Management and Control
- Compliance
  - Procurement
  - State Aid
  - Publicity
- Cross Cutting Themes
  - Sustainability
  - Equality and Diversity



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# Appraisal – Core Selection Criteria

Each section will be awarded points from the appraiser. Applications must hit a minimum score in each section and overall to be approved so if any area does not come up to scratch (after the 3 rounds of questions) the application will be rejected.

If the application is one of a number applying for the same Call the process may become a competitive one and even if an application passes in each section the application with the highest score will be the one that will be approved.

The MA wants applications to gain funding where ever possible and will work with applicants to make this happen where ever we can as we recognise writing and appraising applications which are later rejected is a waste of everyone's time, however projects **MUST** be eligible in every way or irregularities and issues will come to light later and money may be clawed back, which is also in no ones interest.



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# ECLAIMS Application Resources

- **ESF Online Full Application Guidance** – Step by step guidance on how to get access to ECLAIMS and complete the Full Application.
- **ESF Financial Annex** – Can be used by applicants as a working document to develop their financial information before recording this directly into their ECLAIMS online application.
- The new **ESF Granular Budget** – Sample Template that can be used by applicants. If used, this must be submitted as a supporting document as part of an online application in ECLAIMS.
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-social-fund-online-full-applications>





# Match Funding

There are 3 essential criteria match funding must meet to be considered eligible:

- The match funding must be related to the project and deemed eligible within the ESF Operational Programme
- The match do not contain any EU funding
- It is auditable



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# Types of Match Funding

- Cash Match
- Staff Time
- Volunteer Time
- Programme Costs
- Employer Contributions
- Apprenticeship Levy



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# Match Funding – Employer Contribution

- Defined as financial contribution made by an employer towards support put in place by the ESF project
- Must contribute towards the total eligible costs of the project.
- It is accepted that written evidence/letters of intent will not be in place at the time the project is approved, but the Full Application will need to demonstrate that the level of demand for the service stacks up in terms of expected employer contributions.
- Two Worked examples – Subsidised training & training provision



# Match Funding – Apprenticeship Levy

- Money received from the government, paid from an employer's Apprenticeship Levy digital account can be used as match funding.
- Applications need to provide detail of what they expect to deliver in relation to provision for apprentices, how much income this is expected to bring and also that there is a demand for the delivery to apprentices
- Must detail the 'additional' eligible activities the ESF contribution will bring to the project.



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