

## **European Update 31st August 2017, from Network for Europe Cheshire, Cumbria, G Manchester, Lancashire, Liverpool CR**

### **Headlines**

EAFRD, ERDF and ESF calls  
Sustainable Urban Development SUD  
Community Grants  
Value for Money  
Second half of the Programme  
ERDF Summative Assessments

### **EAFRD**

These calls are still open. Additional funding of £45m has now been announced, covering the three categories of Business Development, Food Processing and Rural Tourism, but this will need to be worked up in detail for each LEP area.

### **ERDF**

ERDF calls around the North West are still open, with deadlines of 8th and 15th September, and 31st October. This includes the ERDF-SUD calls for Manchester and Liverpool.  
Further calls are currently planned for 22nd September and 17th November (timings may change).

### **ESF**

ESF calls have been going out since 26th July. There is now more time to return proposals (generally 2-3 months), with current deadlines of late September/early October. Minimum bids vary between 50k and 500k of ESF. The only call for the North West is for Lancashire (Developing Leadership and Management), with a deadline of 10th October.

### **Lancashire ESF Call “Developing Leadership and Management Skills for Succession”**

This is Priority 2 (employed people). £4.95m ESF is available, individual projects should be for at least £500,000 ESF. Match is 60:40 (so 500k ESF would require a contribution of 334k match).

Projects can last up to three years.

The focus is on -

Support for Progression in work

- support the career progression of women to leadership/management

- support for vocational provision for career progression (leadership and management roles)

Tackling disadvantage

- increased participation where there are current or predicted skills shortages

Support for wider careers choices

- additional advice & guidance eg targeted advice to women on important career choices

- initiatives to promote participation by women in STEM, and progression - leadership/mgt

Anticipated that activity will be targeted at Lancashire’s priority sectors, especially Creative and Digital, Visitor Economy, and Financial/Professional services.

Full details -

<https://www.gov.uk/european-structural-investment-funds/lancashire-developing-leadership-and-management-oc19s17p0833>

### **SUD Sustainable Urban Development**

Both Manchester and Liverpool have calls for ERDF through SUD.

Liverpool is primarily around greener routes to industrial sites, and other transport and travel support. Manchester is around innovation and moves to low carbon, with opportunities for third sector involvement.

## **Social Capital - Community Grants**

Liverpool City Region has now had three rounds of bidding as part of the ESF Community Grants project, run by the WEA, and has committed all the ESF agreed by the Liverpool ESIF Committee. We are working with others in Cheshire and Warrington, and in Greater Manchester, to see what would be possible for a call for Community Grants in both areas.

## **Certainty**

The Treasury has stated that those projects signed and approved before England leaves the EU will be guaranteed full funding. Since projects typically last for three years, and leave will be not until end of March 2019 (or later), then this means projects can continue to 2022.

## **Value for Money**

As part of the Treasury Guarantee, projects need to demonstrate Value for Money. Initially, there was some concern that this might encourage cheap projects that struggle to deliver. After considerable work, it is now understood that VfM is more clearly defined, and this will mean appropriate funding for projects. So for example more funding where needed to tackle particular inclusion issues, or where there are better outputs (and less for more generic training). Further guidance is expected shortly.

## **ERDF - next steps**

Generally speaking, ERDF commitments are now substantial, in particular for capital projects. This could be due to the effect of the LEP area committees, which focus attention on locally relevant projects. While each LEP area is different, it is understood that some have approached 75% commitment. Meanwhile, ERDF revenue funding is generally for three years, often expiring in 2018. This means that across the country there are growth hubs supporting enterprise, including startups and community enterprises, where European funding is coming to an end. Work is proceeding so that calls for European ERDF Funding for the second half of the programme can go ahead, to support actions around the growth hubs. It is hoped that calls will go out in the next few months, so that bids can be appraised, to give enough time for activities to continue.

## **ESF - next steps**

ESF, as a revenue only programme is different to ERDF. As we approach the mid point of the Programme, about 44% of ESF funds are committed (although this varies across the LEP areas). Plans are being developed for committing the other half of the programme.

A review of progress is being completed by the Managing Authority (DWP), with a report expected to be approved by the Programme Monitoring Committee (Growth Board) in September. Calls will continue to be released, likely with priority for those LEP areas that have got behind in their commitments.

When the English ESF Programme was being developed, it was thought that about 70% would be through the Co-Financing Organisations (NOMS, SFA, DWP and BLF), but it is now expected to be around 60%, primarily due to ESFA losing match with the devolution plans. Consequently, there will be more local calls, with applicants providing their own match. This could be an opportunity for some third sector organisations (as other sectors are likely to have even less match than we do). It will also increase the workload at the LEPs and DWP, rather than offloading it to ESFA. It may be that ESFA will be able to do some more co-financing, but currently it is just looking to extend existing contracts (time and cash) for a short period.

It is not know whether the Big Lottery Fund has decided to open for new projects for the second half of the programme, but if it was able to provide its own funds again as real match (and simplify processes), this would be most welcome.

Devolution is generally happening more slowly than had been expected. The only new Co-Financing Organisation is Greater Manchester, while the pipeline for more CFOs apparently only has a few groups from London.

## **Evaluations**

Information on the Summative Assessment required for each ERDF project is now available (guidance and appendices).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-european-regional-development-fund-2014-to-2020>

## **LEP level ESIF meetings**

G Manchester held their last meeting 21st July, next meetings October and November.

Cheshire and Warrington held their last meeting on 25th July, next meeting in October.

Lancashire held their last meeting on 27th June, next meeting in September.

Liverpool last meeting was 30th March, next meetings September and January.

## **Future**

Discussions continue around the possible UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This has been suggested to replace the loss of funding once the current programme runs out. It is looking in particular at replacing the ESF Inclusion funding, and a Green Paper is expected shortly. (The current ESF programme - just for England - is around £3 billion).

## **Feliks**

NFE continues to work with our Polish colleagues with their project on franchising to support the development and scaling up of social enterprises in Poland. We recently hosted a visit to discuss with projects in Lancashire and Liverpool.

## **ERDF Practitioner Network**

The August Update has been sent out by DCLG. This notes latest guidance (mainly on summative assessments), and changes to Priority 4 (supporting the shift to a low carbon economy). This should encourage more P4 bids - for example standard retrofit insulation can now be used (typically for match) for innovation projects.

To subscribe to the updates, email [esif@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:esif@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

## **ESIF Programme Bulletin**

The August update is available. It gives an update on ESF spend, EAFRD calls (including the extra funding now available), ERDF Summative Assessment, and their ERDF continuous improvement survey.

Email [esif@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:esif@communities.gsi.gov.uk) and subscribe direct for your own copy of the Bulletin.

## **Network for Europe**

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**European Union**

European Structural  
and Investment Funds