

European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-20

With the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) Operational Programmes (OPs) close to final agreement with the European Commission, the Government has now been able to launch the first call for projects. SMEs and a low carbon economy will be eligible for support, along with investment in broadband, climate change and the environment. Defra has also negotiated the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) OP which was [formally adopted](#) on 13 February 2015.

On 20 March 2015 calls were launched for ERDF against Priority Axes 2 (enhancing access to, and use and quality of ICT) and 4 (supporting the shift to a low carbon economy), which will be followed by calls for Priority Axes 1 (promoting research and information) and 3 (enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs). In addition calls will shortly be launched covering priorities in the OP which are relevant to business support and the Business Growth Service (including Growth Accelerator and the Manufacturing Advisory Service) and UK Trade & Investment (UKTI). DWP also published calls against the ESF OP, covering employment, social inclusion and skills on 24 March 2015. There are also two Technical Assistance calls covering both ERDF and ESF which invite applications from projects looking to operate at both a local and national level to support the delivery of the ERDF and ESF OPs. Defra has also published locally-specific calls for projects in a number of LEP areas – including South East Midlands and Greater Lincolnshire - worth a total of £3.3million, which will focus on business development grants for small and micro-businesses in rural areas and on capital investment support for the food processing sector.

All the calls can be found on the [European Structural and Investment Funds \(ESIF\) Funding Finder](#).

Click on the live links below to go to the calls of most relevance to the East Midlands.

- [Access to employment: project call in Nottingham](#) Closing 22 May 2015
- [Business support: call in Greater Lincolnshire](#) Closing: 19 June 2015
- [Business support: call in South East Midlands](#) Closing: 19 June 2015
- [Low Carbon: call in Greater Lincolnshire](#) Closing: 20 May 2015
- [Low Carbon: call in Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough](#) (includes Rutland). Closing: 20 May 2015
- [Low Carbon: call in Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire](#) Closing: 20 May 2015
- [Low Carbon: call in South East Midlands](#) Closing: 20 May 2015
- [Information and Communications Technology: call in Greater Lincolnshire](#) Closing: 6 May 2015
- [Information and Communications Technology: call in Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough](#) (includes Rutland). Closing: 6 May 2015
- [Technical Assistance: call in England](#) Closing: 30 October 2015
- [Technical Assistance - Smart Specialisation: call in England](#) Closing: 30 June 2015

To support the calls a number of [assessment and selection documents](#) and [project requirements guidance](#) have been published on the GOV.UK website including:

- ERDF State Aid Law Requirements
- ERDF Eligibility Rules
- ESF Eligibility Rules
- ERDF/ESF Selection Criteria
- ERDF/ESF Branding and Publicity Requirements
- ESIF Logos and Publicity Templates
- ERDF/ESF Technical Assistance Guidance and timesheet example
- ERDF/ESF Outline Application Form and Guidance

All applications for ERDF and ESF will be made on-line and applicants will need to register to submit their applications. Details on how to register and the information to provide can be found on the GOV.UK via the [Funding Finder](#) on each call page. Applications for EAFRD funding through the Growth Programme will need to be made using a PDF application form, available online, which must be submitted by email. Details regarding this are also available on the EAFRD call pages found via [Funding Finder](#).

Next steps

After the initial round of project calls in March, further project calls will be developed on an on-going basis to address the range of development needs set out in the OPs and supporting ESIF strategies.

For EAFRD, further calls will be made from the summer onwards and will also cover support for tourism, renewables and rural broadband projects. The LEP areas and local partners will advise the Rural Payments Agency's Rural Development Directorate (RDD) on the focus of their local calls, based on local evidence-based needs as set out in their local ESIF strategies. In addition to calls, RDD will commission localised provision of business advice and skills in response to the needs identified in individual local areas. The RDD will receive and assess applications, taking advice from LEP areas and local partners on the strategic fit of funding applications received based on local ESIF strategies.

The Government will continue to work with the core cities on the next stages of developing plans for Sustainable Urban Development (SUD), expected after completion of revised strategies in the summer. The Government will also issue a call for Local Development Strategies for Community Led Local Development in the summer.

On ESF, the Managing Authority will be undertaking appraisals of Opt-in applications in late March and early April and will seek advice from local ESIF Committees on the strategic fit of applications, and then similarly for responses to non opt-in calls for proposals as they close. A second round of activity will be launched in the summer covering all investment priorities in the ESF OP. This will include further opportunities to undertake opt-in activity and launch calls for proposals to respond to local priorities.

Once the ERDF and ESF OPs are formally adopted by the commission, the Government will be

formalising the Growth Programme Board as the formal Programme Monitoring Committee for these OPs as soon as possible.

ERDF Financial Instruments are expected to follow towards the end of the year.