

European Structural and Investment Funds in D2N2 2014-20:

Questions & Answers (Updated 26th January 2015)

In 2013 the Government invited Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) across England to submit a strategy for using ESF, ERDF and EAFRD known as a European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) strategy, for the 2014-20 programme period.

This Q&A is updated on a regular basis to reflect the latest position on the 2014-20 ERDF and ESF programmes.

Contents

Overview	Pages 1-4
Applying for funding	Pages 5 -8
Governance	Pages 9-10
ESF specific	Pages 11-13
ERDF specific	Pages 14-18
Further advice	Pages 19-20

Overview

1. How much ESIF does D2N2 have?

The Government has notionally allocated £214 million to the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership but until agreement is reached between the Government and EC the amount is subject to change. Also, as the programme operates in Euros, the Sterling amount will vary as the exchange rate fluctuates.

The LEP has proposed that the funding is allocated in the following ways

- £104.4million for ERDF
- £104.4million for ESF
- £5.5 million for EAFRD

2. Where can I find the D2N2 draft European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) strategy and ESIF Local Implementation Plan?

D2N2's strategy can be found here: <http://www.d2n2lep.org/EUFunding>

D2N2s's draft ESIF Local Implementation Plan which builds upon the ESIF strategy can be found here <http://www.d2n2lep.org/EUFunding>

These documents set out the types of activities that D2N2 are seeking to support using the main programmes of European Social Funding (ESF) and European Regional Development Funding (ERDF).

In addition D2N2 has an allocation from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The EAFRD contributes to improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry; the environment and the countryside; and the quality of life and the management of economic activity in rural areas.

This document and the ones cited are subject to change as they are dependent on the UK Government agreeing England – wide Operational Programmes with the European Commission (EC). This isn't expected to occur until later in the year (2015).

Access to ESF funds will be, for the most part, co-financed by national 'Opt-in' organisations including the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and Big Lottery Fund.

Access to ERDF is largely expected to follow an open, competitive bidding process.

3. Has D2N2 consulted on the 2014-20 ESIF strategy and Local Implementation Plan?

Yes. We received over 45 responses from partner organisations to our consultation on the Local Implementation Plan which closed in November 2014. We are using these responses to refine both our approach to implementing our ESIF strategy to ensure the ESIF programme has the maximum impact in supporting businesses, individuals and communities across the D2N2 area.

The high level findings from the consultation on the ESIF Local Implementation Plan will be posted here when agreed by the ESIF Programme Board www.d2n2lep.org/EUFunding/Governance

4. When will the new ESF, ERDF and EAFRD programmes launch?

Once the Government and European Commission have concluded their negotiations on the content, budget, outputs, results and governance of the England-wide Operational Programmes, they can launch. At the moment we can't provide a specific date.

D2N2 intends to open its programme at the earliest permitted opportunity. .

Once the Government publishes guidance then we will share it on our web site.

We will update this Q&A paper available on our web site with the latest information when it is known.

5. So does this mean the programmes will be launching over one year late?

Yes. However all programmes in England are starting late.

The ESI funding will be rolled forward, but it means there will be less time to commit the funds to projects and less time for projects to spend it.

6. Will the pre-election period (or ‘purdah’) preceding the General Election on 7th May 2015 delay the start and/or implementation of the programmes?

We are awaiting guidance from the Government.

(What is the pre-election period? It is the period of time from when an election is announced until after the election is held. Guidance is issued to civil servants on the principles that they should observe in relation to the conduct of Government business in the run-up to elections).

7. What is an Opt-In?

Opt-in organisations are national public bodies who offer to deliver locally tailored activities that reflect the requirements of D2N2 and their own organisation’s main responsibilities.

They will draw down ESIF monies from the D2N2 allocation and provide the match funding needed from their own national funding programmes. The opt in model allows D2N2 and their partners to join with national organisations or programmes to implement shared policy priorities.

By opting in to a service offer from a national organisation or programme, D2N2 commits part of its ESIF allocation to the programme. In return D2N2 accesses match funding and administrative support.

D2N2 are currently in negotiations with the following opt-in organisations and will provide more information when these discussions are finalised.

- Big Lottery (ESF)
- Skills Funding Agency (ESF)
- Department for Work and Pensions (ESF)

8. I have received funding under the 2007-13 programme; can I obtain funding under the new programme?

For ERDF all applicants will need to follow the same England-wide application procedures managed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). DCLG not the LEP will enter into contract with successful applicants

For ESF programmes delivered through Opt-in organisations, applications will go through the organisation’s own procurement procedures. The selection process will follow the Opt-in organisations own published selection criteria, which must comply with open and competitive tendering rules. The Opt-in organisation, not the LEP, will enter into contract with successful applicants.

All applicants will need to ensure proposals fit with the 2014-2020 ERDF, EAFRD and ESF programmes. The new programmes are not a straight read-across from 2007-13.

The track record of previous recipients of ERDF/ESF/ EAFRD in Derbyshire / Nottinghamshire / East Midlands will be taken into account. This includes management and delivery performance.

Applicants in previous receipt of ERDF, EAFRD or ESF funding will be expected to illustrate the results of any evaluation for comparative activity.

9. Will there be a gap between my 2007-13 funding coming to an end and applying for funding under 2014-20?

Yes, this may arise. The delay in approving the national Operational Programmes will have a knock-on effect for some organisations.

Although an organisation may have previously received funding under the 2007-13 programmes, either directly as a Grant Recipient or as a partner, it does not mean the organisation will be successful under the new 2014-20 programme.

If the D2N2 ERDF programme or particular elements of it are launched in early 2015, Funding Agreements are unlikely to be issued before summer 2015, with first ERDF payments made to organisations in autumn 2015.

10. Will there be minimal bureaucracy in the new programmes?

Government is working to ensure that the rules and processes are clear for the new programme so that applicants know what to expect; it won't necessarily be less complex.

Organisations interested in applying for ESF and/or ERDF funds may wish to speak with previous or existing recipients of funding, to discuss, first-hand, the ins and outs of running a project. External training courses are also available on managing European funds, delivered by private organisations.

Applying for funding

11. I have an idea for an ESIF project; who can I contact?

D2N2 is very interested in hearing from partners who are developing ideas for future ESIF funded projects and programmes.

Please feel free to send us your initial thoughts for projects using our 'Big Idea' template which can be found on our website at <http://www.d2n2lep.org/EUFunding/Ideas>

Please return your completed templates to Richard Kirkland at richard.kirkland@d2n2lep.org.

All Big Idea templates submitted will be treated in strictest confidence.

We're not able to advise which projects will or won't be successful, but we can provide some initial advice and pointers to possible ways forward.

However please note that until the England-wide programmes have been agreed by the EC, matters are subject to change.

12. When can I submit an application for funding?

Once the Operational Programmes have been agreed by the European Commission then we anticipate the Government will allow us to launch. We don't plan to delay launching.

For ESF programmes delivered through Opt-in organisations, applications will go through the Opt-in Organisations who will be responsible for procuring ESF activity.

13. How to prepare for these opportunities

Although the first call for projects will not be until later in 2015, it can take some considerable time to pull together a project with multiple partners and confirm match funding where applicable. So any organisation who wishes to apply for ESIF in the future should now consider:

- Reviewing project fit with the D2N2 ESIF Strategy and Consultation Draft Local Implementation Plan.
- Starting negotiations with potential partners, whether they are delivery, referral or funding partners.
- Identifying and bidding for sources of match funding as appropriate.
- Discussing ideas with the D2N2 team.

14. What is a call?

A call is an open invitation for applicants to submit proposals against a published specification. The use of calls enables the LEP ESIF Programme Board to specify what they wish to fund and how they wish to fund it, but not who will deliver it. Inviting applications via calls can bring forward a range of ideas and innovative solutions, as well as helping to ensure that the process for selecting grants is open, transparent and consistent.

The first round of calls will be published by the Managing Authority as soon as possible after the national programmes have been agreed by the European Commission (It is anticipated that this will be in summer 2015).

Using information gleaned from the ESIF Local Implementation Plan consultation D2N2 has already begun the process of considering the nature of our first calls in 2015

15. Will I need to provide match funding and at what rate?

In most instances, European money has to be 'matched' with other funds from the public or private sector. Sources of match funding could be from opt in organisations or the applicants' own funds dependent upon the nature of the call. This rule is used to lever in maximum value from other partners, and reassures the EC that projects enjoy genuine commitment from local partners.

As a whole, the ERDF and ESF programmes must achieve the match funding proportions of 50%. Therefore as a rule of thumb, we will be expecting applicants to demonstrate that they have the right level of match funding available to resource the project

16. Will I be able to apply for funding retrospectively?

In other words, seek funding from a 'start date' prior to submitting an application? We are awaiting confirmation from Government if this will be possible. For ERDF projects and ESF directly-funded projects, it is unlikely. Separate rules are likely to apply for match funding used by ESF Opt-in Organisations

17. Where can I find an application form?

These are not yet available. The Government is finalising the applications forms. Applying for ERDF will be done by completing fields online, rather than via a paper-based application form; and will be accessible via the Government's [website](#). We expect online access to the application forms to be available once the Operational Programme has gone live.

There will be two stages to the ERDF application process: Outline Application and Full Application.

Guidance and forms for ESF Opt-in organisations will be found on the websites of the relevant organisations. For the majority of activity procured under the Skills

Funding Agency organisations must be registered on the *register of training organisations*. You can register here: <https://www.gov.uk/skills-funding-register-for-opportunities-to-tender>

18. Will there be one application form for both directly-funded ESF and ERDF projects?

Yes. Applications will be made online. We understand that an applicant will be able to select 'ESF', 'ERDF' or both, and the relevant, tailored questions will appear on the screen.

19. How are the 2014-20 programmes different from 2007-13?

The ESF and ERDF programmes are both England-wide programmes for 2014-20.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (including D2N2) and partners are playing a significant role in the new programmes. LEPs have been allocated notional sums of ERDF/ESF/EAFRD money for 2014-20.

As a result the activities that will be supported by the new programmes are not a straight read-across from 2007-13;

D2N2 will focus our work on four strategic priorities for supporting enterprises. These priorities are relevant to all businesses in the D2N2 area but have particular significance to the high growth businesses that are responsible for the bulk of private sector job creation. They are:

- Innovation
- Business support and access to finance
- Infrastructure for economic growth
- Employment, skills and social inclusion

20. What outputs and results are projects required to deliver in return for receiving funding?

A key requirement of any organisation receiving ERDF, EAFRD and ESF is the delivery of targets. The Government is working through its proposals for the suite of Outputs and Results, including targets, with the EC as part of its Operational Programme negotiations.

The EC and Government will be paying close attention to the achievement of Outputs. EC Regulations for 2014-20 state that a Member State's ESIF allocations can be adversely affected by under-performance of Outputs (i.e. funds taken away from a Local Enterprise Partnership allocation).

For ERDF it is expected that the suite of Outputs will be consistent across the 39 LEP areas, although each LEP area will deliver against the most appropriate Outputs. The [D2N2 ESIF Local Implementation Plan](#) (Appendix D page 67) sets out the expected targets to be achieved, but these are not set in stone: the range

of Outputs, definitions and targets is likely to change in the coming months. However, Appendix D on page 67 provides a useful 'initial view'

For ESF there will be a suite of Output and Result indicators. The primary indicators for ESF are not expected to be largely different from the previous programming period. The core results will look at the number of participants into education, employment and/or training. Once again Appendix D on page 67 of the [D2N2 ESIF Local Implementation Plan](#) gives a view on the number of output requirements.

Note: we are awaiting guidance from Government on Outputs, Results and definitions which may change over the coming months.

21. If the European Commission is now more interested in a results orientated, output measured programme, will applicants be encouraged to reference payments-by-results models

We are not expecting the Government to introduce payments-by-results-type methods for ERDF.

22. What are the output indicators for the new ERDF programme?

Please find a [link](#) to the ERDF regulations from the European Commission. The output indicators are listed on pages 11/12.

The Government is currently negotiating which of these common output indicators should be used in the English ESIF programme.

We are awaiting clarification on:

- Which of these ERDF outputs will be applicable
- How the output indicators relate to the ERDF Investment Priorities (page 6 of the regulations)
- The output evidence requirements and guidance

This list should not be seen as exhaustive as the Government may include additional outputs to those set out by the European Commission.

Governance

23. What is the role of LEPs?

The UK Government has set out that Local Enterprise Partnerships will play a role in the delivery of the next round of ESIF for the period 2014 - 2020. LEPs will receive an allocation of ESIF for the full seven year programme period. LEPs and their partners will oversee the on-going strategic development and delivery of the ESI Funds, while Government Managing Authorities will undertake the management and administration of the fund.

Government states that Local Enterprise Partnerships will provide strategic oversight of the ESIF strategy's implementation and delivery. Government is tasking each LEP with establishing a sub-group of the national, EC-regulatory Programme Monitoring Committee.

In D2N2 we have established an ESIF Programme Board which will play a key role in determining which projects receive funding. The ESIF Programme Board will work alongside the DCLG and other opt in agencies in this process. The ESIF Programme Board will have a key role in monitoring the delivery of projects.

The D2N2 ESIF Programme Board will operate in a "shadow" status until the Operational Programmes have been agreed by the European Commission

24. Can you provide some understanding of who sits on the ESIF Programme Board and how we can engage with them?

You can view a list of the members of the D2N2 ESIF Programme Board and their contact details <http://www.d2n2lep.org/EUFunding/Governance>

25. Who will decide which projects in D2N2 receive funding?

The ESIF Programme Board is expected to play a key role in determining which projects receive funding working with the Managing Authority and opt in partners.

For ERDF projects, the DCLG will enter into contract with successful applicants.

For ESF programmes delivered by the Opt-in organisations, the selection process will follow the Opt-in organisations own published selection criteria, which must comply with open and competitive tendering rules. The Opt-in organisation will enter into contract with successful applicants.

26. Will there be an appeals process?

The Government has decided that there will be no appeals process at the Outline or Full Application stage. If an applicant is unsuccessful then, providing a similar

call for proposals is launched in the future, it is conceivable that an applicant can re-apply.

D2N2 staff will be happy to give feedback on unsuccessful Outline Applications to those applicants which request it.

Applicants successful at the Outline stage will also receive feedback which should be taken on board for developing a Full Application.

27. Do you envisage any change in status or role of LEPs as preferred partners of Government if there is a change of Government this year?

We assume that the LEP role will continue; but cannot predict possible governance changes by any incoming Government.

ESF-specific questions

28. Are there any plans for an ESF briefing session?

ESF is primarily accessed via open and competitive processes run by Opt-in organisations that provide match funding (Skills Funding Agency, Department for Work and Pensions, Big Lottery Fund). We intend to host joint briefing events with the Opt-in partners when we have greater clarity regarding the Operational Programmes and the procurement processes.

29. How can ESF providers prepare themselves for upcoming tendering rounds?

ESF providers are encouraged to enlist onto the Skills Funding Agency's (SFA) Register of Training Organisations. Organisations that are eligible for funding from the SFA are listed on the Register. These organisations can be invited to compete in tenders by the SFA, but appearing on the register does not guarantee a contract. Any organisation wishing to provide education and training services on behalf of the SFA are required to apply to enter the register. Further information about the register can be found here; <https://www.gov.uk/skills-funding-register-for-opportunities-to-tender>.

30. What contracting geographies will be used for ESF?

The LEP is committed to ensuring that contracts are let at the geographical level that allows the most effective delivery.

31. What groups will the ESF programme target?

The ESF programme is currently being developed; progress to date has established that it will be split into 3 broad priority areas;

- Additional support for young people aged 15-24 including those not in education, employment or training (NEET),
- Adult employment and adult skills provision. (The adult employment strand will also have an emphasis on targeted provision for disadvantaged groups furthest away from the labour market.
- Targeted support for disadvantaged groups furthest away from the labour market. The D2N2 Social Inclusion Framework (October 2014) identifies the following 5 priority thematic groups
 - Older long term unemployed people with barriers to work
 - Young people including 'hidden NEETS'
 - Women 'returners'
 - People with multiple and complex needs
 - The financially excluded both in and out of work

32. What is the Youth Employment Initiative for Nottingham

In addition to the main ESF allocation, D2N2 has received an additional allocation of £3.2m for the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) targeted at areas that have a youth unemployment rate of 25% or above. In D2N2 the YEI will be focussed on the Greater Nottingham area (Nottingham City plus some areas of Gedling, Broxtowe, Rushcliffe and Ashfield)

The allocation has to be matched equally from within the D2N2 ESF allocation, with an additional local match required for the ESF funds. D2N2 will work with the SFA, DCLG and DWP and other appropriate partners to identify ways to maximise ESF match funding to enable full draw down of the potential YEI match funding.

33. If I want to apply for funding, do I have to provide match funding?

Yes and No depending on the nature of the call

The majority of ESF will be matched at source mainly through opt-in organisations such as the SFA, DWP and Big Lottery and they will provide the match funding, similar to the 2007-13 programme.

However we intend to release some ESF via open calls and it may be that partners and providers will have to provide match funding at 50% to be successful in applying for these calls

The D2N2 ESIF Local Implementation Plan consultation document found [here](#) gives more information on the programmes we intend to release via ESF open calls principally in the following sections of that document

- 8.4 Youth Employment Initiative for Nottingham
- 10.3 Higher Skills Development
- 10.4 Develop Sector Growth
- 10.6 Enterprise, Innovation and Pathways

34. I am an ESF supply chain provider delivering services to the unemployed under the 2007-2013 programme would we come to you concerning transition arrangements if any.

There will be no 'transition arrangements': the 2007-13 and 2014-20 programmes are separate.

35. How long can an ESF project last for?

For ESF, the LEP will agree with the Opt-in organisations the length that it wishes the provision to be contracted for.

However we envisage the majority of projects lasting 3 years from commencement of contract to align with the current government timescale

35. I have an idea for an ESF project; who can I contact?

D2N2 is very interested in hearing from partners and providers who are developing ideas for future ESIF funded projects and programmes.

Please feel free to send us your initial thoughts for projects using our 'Big Idea' template which can be found on our website at <http://www.d2n2lep.org/EUFunding/Ideas>

Please return your template to Richard Kirkland at richard.kirkland@d2n2lep.org.

All Big Idea templates will be treated in strictest confidence.

We are not able to advise which projects will or won't be successful, but we can provide some initial advice and pointers to possible ways forward.

However please note that until the England-wide programmes have been agreed by the EC, matters are subject to change.

ERDF-specific questions

36. Which organisations can apply for ERDF?

The ERDF Eligibility rules are currently being drafted by the Government and we expect they will be available in 2015. However, it is worth noting that ERDF does not fund businesses directly; rather it funds organisations which can, in turn, provide support (such as business, technical, finance (loans/equity)) to SMEs to help them grow. Organisations that apply must be robust financially and have the skills and expertise to undertake the running of a project.

37. How can I get experience of ERDF or managing EU projects?

One of the best ways to gain experience is to speak to existing or previous recipients of ERDF funding. A list of organisations funded under the 2007-13 ERDF programme that supported business development in the East Midlands can be found at the following link; you may like to approach one or more of them.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389685/East_Midlands_ERDF_Business_Support_Guide_v3_Updated_191214.pdf

38. Can charities be beneficiaries of ERDF if they are also registered companies and meet SME criteria?

Applicant organisations for ERDF don't have to be SMEs themselves; for example local authorities and universities are likely to apply for ERDF. We are awaiting guidance on which organisations can apply but we expect it to include:

- local authorities
- statutory or non-statutory public funded bodies
- voluntary/community organisations
- private sector organisations

39. Can ERDF projects support SMEs that are social enterprises?

Yes, as long as the social enterprises conform with the SME eligibility requirements, which will be published in due course by Government.

40. How much ERDF can an organisation apply for?

This hasn't been determined yet, but there is likely to be a minimum threshold

41. Is there a minimum turnover limit for an organisation aiming to bid as a lead partner?

An organisation will have to provide evidence of whether they would be able to repay the grant in the event of any claw back situation – which could include the whole of the grant.

42. How long can an ERDF project last for?

For ERDF, this has not been determined yet but guidance will be issued later this year - 2015.

Match funding

43. If I want to apply for funding, do I have to provide match funding?

Yes for ERDF. Applicants will need to secure eligible match funding. Usually half of a project's funding comes from ERDF, the other 50% from other sources. D2N2 are still in discussion with Opt-in organisations providing ERDF activity and they will provide the match funding, similar to the 2007-13 programme.

44. Can match funding be in-kind or cash money only?

We await guidance from Government, but we expect the rules will replicate the 2007-13 ERDF programme; namely that contributions in-kind such as the provision of volunteer time or the discounted sale of equipment will **not** be eligible to be used as match funding.

However, where applicable, the donation of land and/or buildings can be eligible where specific conditions are met. The contribution of staff time as match funding may only be included if the employing organisation is either the lead applicant or a named delivery partner in the application.

45. Can projects be co-match funded with fees from the businesses its supports?

We await guidance from Government. High-level information has been published here: [England 2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth programme](#)

46. How might other funds under the scope of the LEP be used to match fund ERDF applications?

Other funds under the scope of the LEP could be used as match funding subject to a project meeting the relevant funding criteria

47. Will guidance to help applicants calculate value for money (VFM) be available?

We understand the Government is currently reviewing VFM principles and that details will be available in due course.

48. How strong is the focus on linking Horizon 2020 with ERDF?

The European Commission has suggested that European Structural and Investment Funds and other Commission Funds (e.g. Horizon 2020 – funds

which are accessed direct to the EC) can be linked in the new programming period 2014-20. However, it appears that different EU funds cannot be used as match against one another, so the linkage could only be at the strategic level. Projects using ESIF 2014-2020 and H2020, for example, would have to be careful not to cross fund elements of their project.

49. Can ERDF projects be developed to address each of the investment themes described in the ESIF strategy; the most innovative and high impact projects may address more than one theme. How will the assessment of bids address this?

We are awaiting confirmation from Government whether applicants can submit an application that straddles more than one investment theme.

50. For ERDF, are there any excluded sectors e.g. retail?

Until the Government and EC conclude their Operational Programme negotiations, and the Government publishes its guidance we are unable to answer.

51. Can you explain how might the SME equity / loan fund work?

If we make ERDF funding available for equity and/or loan funds, this will be done through professional fund managers, which we will procure. Once the fund managers are in place they will receive and assess applications for funding directly from SMEs.

52. Will those loans for SMEs have to be given at the same 50% intervention rate and the rest be counted as match from private sector?

No. If we set up a loan fund, the match funding will be secured before investments are made in SMEs.

53. Are there any current businesses that are willing to work with SMEs in securing small contracts?

There has been support for supply chain projects under the 2007-13 programme. The managers of these projects may be able to support in this regard. You can find a list of projects at the following link

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/297942/East_Midlands_ERDF_Business_Support_Guide_version_3.pdf

54. How are you defining "research infrastructure"?

We are waiting for further guidance from DCLG on this, including the outputs and evidence requirements.

55. Are the disadvantaged urban areas defined?

There are no specific disadvantaged urban areas defined in the D2N2 ESIF strategy.

56. Can you elaborate on what elements you are looking for in workspace and incubator projects?

We are awaiting confirmation from Government that workspace/incubation projects will be eligible for ERDF.

Please find the link to European Court of Auditors report on incubators, which sets out recommendations to the EC for incubator projects for the 14/20 programming periods:

http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR14_07/SR14_07_EN.pdf

57. For an incubator centre, what can be used for match funding? Can rental income be used? Will existing buildings introduced be based on valuation of the building or the discounted rent....or any other?

We await guidance from Government, but the kinds of activities that are likely to be used as match funding are:

- Purchase of land capped at 10% of project eligible cost,
- independent assessed value of the land/building,
- lead applicant cash funds, time of 100% project manager,
- private sector partner cash funds (where applicable, the donation of land and/or buildings may be eligible where specific conditions are met which is considered contributions in kind.

ERDF administration

58. Is there a formula to work out the admin resource requirement for an ERDF project? Is it based on project volume or types of outcomes?

No, there is no formula as this depends on the complexity of the project, the outputs, the resources held by the lead applicant and delivery partners. Based on experience of projects we recommend there is a dedicated 100% project manager **and** dedicated 100% admin resource as a minimum.

59. Will the DCLG prioritise paying claims submitted on time over those which aren't, and if not why not?

DCLG will aim to review all claims within 20 working days.

60. Why can't the payment of claims be more efficient to help projects with their cash flow?

Claims are processed as quickly as possible, normally within 20 days.

If a project is experiencing cash flow issues they should discuss this with the DCLG Project Manager to discuss timescales for submission of claims and

processing as we do seek to prioritise projects who notify us of specific cash flow issues.

61. Given that there is a focus on promoting innovation, digitisation and efficiency - will the programme administration and management reflect this i.e. claims processes, record keeping?

The Application and claims process will be online. Certified true copies of claims / financial documentation is acceptable and will be stored on the ERDF online IT system.

62. What is the Audit Authority?

The designation of an Audit Authority (AA) is an EU requirement. In England, it comprises auditors within Government who provide an additional check on expenditure after it's incurred; and also check other aspects of programme eligibility.

63. I have an idea for an ERDF project; who can I contact?

D2N2 is very interested in hearing from partners and providers who are developing ideas for future ESIF funded projects and programmes.

Please feel free to send us your initial thoughts for projects using our 'Big Idea' template which can be found on our website at <http://www.d2n2lep.org/EUFunding/Ideas>

And return to Richard Kirkland at richard.kirkland@d2n2lep.org.

All Big Idea templates will be treated in strictest confidence.

We're not able to advise which projects will or won't be successful, but we can provide some initial advice and pointers to possible ways forward.

However please note that until the England-wide programmes have been agreed by the EC, matters are subject to change.

Further advice

64. Where can I find further information

The ESIF programme is not expected to open until later this year 2015 but more information and guidance on who can apply and how to apply is available at the following link

<https://www.gov.uk/england-2014-to-2020-european-structural-and-investment-funds-growth-programme>

If you want to keep up-to-date with progress, you will be able to sign up for alerts which will be available through the Gov.uk website at the following link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/making-european-funding-work-better-for-the-uk-economy/activity>

You can also sign up to receive the 'New Programme Partner Update Circular' which is available by emailing esif@communities.gsi.gov.uk

The Government plans to publish detailed information on the ESF and ERDF programmes on the gov.uk website when possible.

European Funding in England

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/making-european-funding-work-better-for-the-uk-economy/supporting-pages/european-structural-and-investment-funds-growth-programme>

ESF Websites

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=62&langId=en>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-social-fund-2014-to-2020-plans/european-social-fund-2014-to-2020-plans>

ERDF

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/european-regional-development-fund-operational-programme-2014-to-2020>

65. When will more detailed information be available?

Once the Government publishes definitive guidance then we will be able to share it on the D2N2 website at <http://www.d2n2lep.org/EUFunding>

In the meantime, we will continue to update this Q&A regularly until the programmes launch in 2015.

The European Commission has produced a guide which explains how

- a) to access and use the European Structural and Investment Funds and

b) how to exploit complementarities with other instruments of relevant Union policies. See

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/newsroom/detail.cfm?LAN=en&id=1819&lang=en