

ERDF 2014 -2020: Low Carbon Travel and Transport (LCTT) Programme

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Frequently Asked Questions

1.0 European Structural Funds

1.1 What are these and what will be the impact of UK's referendum decision to leave the European Union?

European Structural Funds provide EU Member States and regions with financial assistance to overcome structural deficiencies, increase and strengthen competitiveness and employment. They are designed to reduce the development gap between EU regions and to create equal living standards for all EU inhabitants.

The Scottish Government (SG) is the Managing Authority for Structural Funds in Scotland and has overall responsibility for supervising the implementation, ongoing management and effectiveness of the programmes. [Programme Structure and Governance](#)

The Scottish Government has legally committed European funds to projects up until the end of 2018 and in some cases, the middle of 2019. Until it is clear how negotiations with the EU are to progress, these important projects should continue.

1.2 How are they distributed?

Highlands & Islands – includes the Highlands, Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles as well as Moray and Argyll. Challenges faced by the Highlands and Islands include low population density, a widely dispersed enterprise base and low GDP.

Lowlands & Uplands – covers areas across the central belt, including Eastern Scotland, North-East Scotland and South-Western Scotland.

The distribution of European Funds across these distinct parts of Scotland ensures a wide range of groups, communities and businesses can benefit from European funding. The ERDF intervention rates depend on the geographical region with the **maximum** available in the Highlands & Islands of 50%; and 40% in the Lowlands & Uplands area.

1.3 What is the ERDF 2014-2020 Programme?

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aims to strengthen **economic and social cohesion** in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions.

In 2011, the European Commission (EC) announced their proposals for the ERDF 2014-2020 programme. The SG Operational Programme was approved and formally adopted by the EC in December 2014 and the programme will guide strategic investments worth over €1bn across Scotland from now until 2020, with the

Commission providing €467m and the remaining funding coming from SG and partner organisations.

1.4 What is the Low Carbon Travel and Transport (LCTT) Programme?

Transport Scotland (TS) has been awarded up to £13.9m until the end of 2018 under the ERDF 2014-2020 programme to deliver a LCTT programme. This is dependent on TS delivering three operations, with total project related costs of £33.5m.

TS as 'Lead Partner' aims to deliver the following three main 'Operations' (or projects):

- Active Travel Hubs (ATH) will provide focal points for cycling and walking routes. The specifics of each Hub will be tailored to the location and based upon need but will typically include bike hire/library initiatives, safe and secure facilities for personal bikes, bike repair/maintenance facilities, improved links to public transport, local path networks, travel information and associated outreach activity.
- Low Carbon Transport Hubs (LCTH) will provide refuelling facilities for a range of alternative fuels and transport modes. We envisage that the locations and composition of these hubs will be determined by local circumstances and demand but typically are likely to include a mixture of low carbon vehicle refuelling infrastructure, such as electric vehicle charging points, hydrogen refuelling stations and gas refuelling facilities.
- National Smart Integrated Ticketing Scheme - the aim is to create a strategic and holistic approach to a National Smart Transport Card system acting as a catalyst for increased public transport use, reducing emissions and congestion from road transport as a result.

1.5a What's the timetable for delivering the LCTT programme?

TS will phase delivery of agreed operational activities for Active Travel, Low Carbon Transport and Smart Integrated Ticking until the end of 2018.

1.5b What impact, if any, will Brexit have on the funding and timeframes of the LCTT Challenge Fund?

Brexit will not impact funding or timeframes of the LCTT Challenge Fund. Funding has been secured to December 2018.

1.6 What are the overall targets for the LCTT programme?

The LCTT programme aims by **2018** to:

Deliver 6 Low Carbon Travel and Transport Hubs;

- Construct, upgrade or bring back into use up to 53km of associated path networks;
- Increase the number of low carbon vehicle registration in Scotland by 50.

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- Construct, upgrade or bring back into use up to 53 km of associated path networks;
- Increase the number of low carbon vehicle registrations in Scotland by 50: and
- Generate 20,000,000 or more additional smart public transport journeys per annum.

These outputs will go towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport and improving air quality and addressing wider 'horizontal' issues eg reducing health inequalities and improving connectivity to employment opportunities

1.7 How will the operations be delivered?

The majority of the activities for the ATH and LCTH operations will be delivered through a LCTT Challenge Fund (CF). The CF will allow organisations to apply for funding to deliver activities and/or projects for the creation of the hubs etc by submitting applications to bid for that work.

To ensure all applications for bids are assessed fairly and transparently an independent assessment panel with a membership of active travel and low carbon transport representatives will evaluate each application.

The LCTT Challenge Fund launched on the 19 December 2016 and deadline for receipt of applications is 28 February 2017. Details of the aims of the CF, eligible activity and expected results can be downloaded here; [Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund](#) . TS will be looking for the organisations bidding to deliver activities to bring match funding and to state the expected extent of this match.

The Smart Integrated Ticketing (SIT) operation will partly be delivered through the Transport Smart Ticketing Challenge Fund (LCTT STCF). The first round of LCTT STCF was launched in Oct 2016. Further information is available via the [SIT webpage](#).

1.8 National Rules on Eligibility of Expenditure

SG as Managing Authority has developed [Rules](#) in accordance with European Commission Regulation 1303/2013, in particular Article 65 Paragraph 1 which states:

“The eligibility of expenditure shall be determined on the basis of national rules, except where specific rules are laid down in, or on the basis of, this Regulation or the Fund-specific rules.”

These rules apply to all projects approved under the ERDF 2014-2020 programme and their purpose is to distinguish clearly between eligible and ineligible costs, and to ensure that only eligible activity/expenditure features in applications and ultimately claims. More information on eligible and ineligible costs is provided in the link to the SG ERDF website above.

Transport Scotland as Lead Partner must adhere with these rules and will liaise with SG to ensure that all activities and expenditure under the LCTT programme are eligible.

1.9 Roles and Responsibilities for Lead Partner and Delivery Agents?

Lead Partner?

TS as the Lead Partner is responsible for the overall implementation of a Strategic Intervention (SI). The key responsibilities are:

- Develop and submit SI Application;
- Propose Operations to the Managing Authority;
- Oversee performance of Operations and ensure that results for the Strategic Intervention are being delivered (including implementation of agreed change process);
- Collate and ensure the eligibility and robustness of claims information from Delivery Agents for submission to the Managing Authority;
- Ensure the retention and availability of all documentation with a full and complete audit trail for all activity/expenditure funded;
- Forwarding of grant to Delivery Agents. (In the event of any recovery of grant the Managing Authority will pursue the lead applicant for payment;
- Ensure that Lead Partner and Delivery Agent comply with all appropriate rules and regulations; and
- Ensure that Delivery Agents are eligible organisations (see below under 'Delivery Agent'), with the capacity and financial standing to deliver Operations.

1.10 Delivery Agent?

'Delivery Agents' can be the Lead Partner, where operations are delivered in-house, a procured contractor or the recipient of a Challenge Fund award. Delivery Agents must be eligible organisations i.e. public bodies, third sector or not for profit organisations.

Their key responsibilities are:

- Delivery of the Operations within a Strategic Intervention;
- Monitor and report on the progress and performance of operations to the Lead Partner;
- Ensure that appropriate documentation is retained to evidence expenditure and all outcomes and fulfil compliance obligations; and
- Comply with all appropriate rules and regulations.

2. Low Carbon Travel and Transport (LCTT) Challenge Fund

2.1 Application Timetable and Scale?

- **What is TS outline timetable for submitting applications?**

We have appointed the Energy Saving Trust to support the design and delivery of the LCTT Challenge Fund for development of active travel and low carbon transport hubs. The LCTT Challenge Fund launched on 19 December 2016. The application and assessment process will be complete in time to enable award of funds from late Spring 2017.

- **When must the projects be completed?**

All operational activity funded under the LCTT programme must be completed by end December 2018, and the ERDF grant claimed by 31 May 2019.

- **How much can we bid for?**

The LCTT Challenge Fund will be equivalent to £20m total project costs which will include £8m ERDF funding (and circa £12m match funding). The £8m ERDF funding includes SI and CF Management costs, so the pot available will be around £7.5 million to 2018. Depending on project location, can bid for up to 40% (LUPS) or 50% (H&I) of the eligible costs of the project.

- **Is there a minimum and maximum amount of grant available?**

We anticipate supporting projects with total project costs of £500k or seeking an ERDF grant of minimum £250k or with maximum total project cost of £2m. Amounts out with these limits may also be considered by exception, although should not be significantly higher or lower than these.

- **Is the award made for a single year or over multiple years?** Awards will be over multiple years for delivery of activity up to 31 December 2018. We will need to see a realistic timeline for the development of the hubs as part of the Challenge Fund assessment. If a bid is successful we will then agree key milestones and a forecast of spend with you which will then be kept under review. If progress is significantly delayed we may need to reserve the option of withdrawing our offer of grant but we will only do this *in extremis*.

- **How long do Hubs have to stay open for?** Hubs and associated paths which have been supported with ERDF must remain open for at least 5 years after the date of final eligible grant funded activity is complete. Closure before that date may result in the reclaiming of grant.

2.2 Eligibility?

- **What type of funding can we bid for?**

This is a capital fund. The ERDF award may also be used to support some revenue-type costs as part of the overall proposal – eg, outreach activity, marketing and promotion, community engagement and evaluation until 31 December 2018.

- What constitutes an ‘eligible organisation’ for the purposes of the fund?**
Public sector bodies, third sector and community organisations are invited to submit proposals as lead applicant. The private sector is not eligible to apply directly as lead applicant for funds under ERDF 2014-2020 programme, although they may be part of a partnership in support of a lead applicant. However, corporate or private sector funding **cannot** be accepted as match-funding. If you are not sure about the eligibility of your organisation to submit a proposal for funds, you are asked to contact TS to discuss.
- Is it a pre-requisite to have received funding through Transport Scotland’s Pre-Application Support Fund (PASF) in order to apply to the LCTT Challenge Fund?**
No. Although PASF is intended to support organisations to pursue specific ideas, establish partnerships and/or address key questions in relation to the potential for setting up active travel and/or low carbon transport hubs, receipt of this funding is not a pre-requisite for applying to the LCTT Challenge Fund.
- Can we make more than one application?**
Yes. If you do submit more than one application, you will be required to rank your proposals by your highest to lowest priority for support.
- We’re a third/ community sector organisation and need upfront cash - can we draw down grant monies in advance of need?**
Whilst these sectors can apply for support, groups will be asked to demonstrate that they have sufficient capacity to deliver, operate and sustain the overall project in the short, medium and longer term. You can contact us to discuss your individual proposals, if you are unsure about proceeding.
- Can I apply as part of a consortium?**
Yes. We’d be interested to see how a consortium approach may work. However, you will need to nominate an eligible lead partner for the application.
- Can we use grant to support feasibility studies?**
The ERDF capital funds cannot be used to support feasibility studies.
- Does staffing constitute an eligible cost?**
Yes, staff with duties related 100% to the delivery of the ERDF project (whether they are in part or full-time roles) will be regarded as an eligible cost. Staff will either be linked to the capital build or activity relating to outreach, marketing, promotion community engagement and evaluation, until December 2018.
- Can a third party project manage/deliver elements of the project?**
Yes. These services would need to be procured.
- Can we use grant to support design work for construction?** Yes. For further information on eligible costs please refer to 4.1.2 of the [National Rules](#).

- **Can we use grant to buy vehicles?**

Purchase of bikes, including electric bikes, may be eligible for support, if these are directly related to / integral to the overall project and form part of the initial 'fit out' of eligible premises for example establishing a bike library. Purchase of vehicles, for example cars to set up car clubs, will not be eligible. Ongoing repair and maintenance of the stock would not be eligible activity.

- **Do projects involving public transport (e.g. low carbon ferries/buses) fit this call?**

This will depend on the nature of the project. A key requirement is that hubs need to be available to all potential 'users' and avoid exclusivity.

- **Can we use grant to support marketing and outreach activity?**

Yes. The costs associated with the marketing, development and pre-opening of the project are eligible costs; up until the project opening and for a specified period afterwards, until December 2018.

- **What does 'additionality' mean?**

'Additionality' is one of the principles driving the ERDF programme and for LCTT Challenge Fund applicants this means that all project proposals must be for new or additional activity. This means applicants must demonstrate 'added value' i.e. that their project would not be able to go ahead, or only in a reduced form, without the requested ERDF support.

LCTT Challenge Fund applicants will be asked to provide information which demonstrates that the project proposal will bring added value and can only go ahead, or go ahead on a bigger or more ambitious scale, with the ERDF investment. Additionality is further described in the LCTT Challenge Fund guidance materials; [Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund](#)

2.3 Match-Funding?

- **Can we use private sector funding as match?** No. Private sector match will not be accepted as eligible match, though this does not prevent the potential for private sector input to the ineligible project costs i.e. on-going revenue support for the project.

- **Can we match-fund with capital and/or revenue support?**

Match funding must be either direct cash contribution or expenditure incurred in delivering the project; other Euro funds, private sector and in-kind support cannot be accepted as match.

- **Can we use match-fund from previous or future years?** No. Match-fund has to be identified within the timeframe of the delivery of the project proposal itself.

- **Can we match with other Scottish Government pots of funding?**

Yes, dependent on checking against the individual terms of reference for the grant in question.

- **Can we match with other pots of European Union funding?**
No. It is a strict requirement of the ERDF 2014-2020 programme that match funding does not come from other EU sources.
- **Would ring fenced revenue funding from an organisation be considered as match funding?**
In principle, revenue funding can be accepted as match. In terms of 'ring-fenced' revenue funding, it depends on the conditions attached. If an organisation has ring-fenced funding for general transport or active travel projects, then this would generally be acceptable. If an organisation has ring-fenced revenue funding against specific outputs, in order for this to be considered acceptable as match, the applicant would need to demonstrate the additionality that the ERDF investment would bring to the already planned project, i.e. would make it bigger, better, bring forward delivery.
- **What evidence is required at the LCTT CF application stage and/or award stage in terms of match funding being in place (e.g. supporting letter/evidence of intent)?**
A signed letter from bodies providing or intending to provide match funding confirming their intention will be required at application stage. Further evidence of that commitment would be included as a condition at grant award stage.
- **Can we use charitable funding as match?**
Yes. In principle funds from registered charities and trusts are eligible as match.
- **Are funds set up for wider community benefit eligible?**
Yes in principle. If money (e.g. from a developer or income through a local renewables scheme) has been given to a community to determine how it is best used, without conditions, this could be considered as eligible match.
- **Are Section 75 monies derived from developer contribution eligible match?**
Yes in principle, provided there are no conditions on how the money has to be used.
- **Are existing assets eligible as match funding?**
No. Existing assets cannot be used to contribute towards match funding. Match funding must be in the form of a direct cash contribution or expenditure incurred as per National Rules.
- **Can annualised cost of building rental/lease be counted as match funding?**
No. These costs would not be eligible as the ERDF award can only support the capital build and refurbishment costs of a hub.

2.4 Procurement?

- **What are the procurement requirements associated with ERDF funding?**
Information regarding procurement can be found in the [National Rules](#), section 1.8. Contracting for the provision of works, materials and/or services is eligible. Applicants should pay particular regard to and comply with the thresholds for publishing invitations to tender on the Official Journal of the EU and (Scottish) national procurement rules. Contracts must either be competitively tendered or procured in line with an organisation's standing orders and/or procurement policy to ensure value for money. Use of single source awards must have prior approval from the Managing Authority.

2.5 State aid?

- **Is ERDF funding exempt from EU state aid rules?**
No. Applicants to the LCTT Challenge Fund will have the responsibility of ensuring that their project adheres to state aid rules and applications will be assessed on a case by case basis. Public, third and community sector organisations are not exempt from EU state aid rules even if they are not-for-profit. There are 4 key tests which need to be considered to establish whether a project constitutes state aid with further information and guidance provided on the Scottish Government's State Aid Unit [website](#).
- **What happens if a project is assessed to involve state aid?**
If a project or elements of it are assessed to involve state aid then cover is available through the EU [General Block Exemption Regulation](#) (GBER). Under GBER specific Articles (e.g. 14, 17, 22, 36, 38 and 41) allows public funding to be provided for specified eligible costs, activities and aid intensities.

2.6 Horizontal Themes?

- **What is meant by 'Horizontal Themes'?**
There are three horizontal themes; **Equal Opportunities**, **Environmental Sustainability** and **Social Inclusion**. Under the ERDF 2014-2020 programme it is important to demonstrate these horizontal themes have been considered and integrated across LCTT Programme projects.

- **Do all three horizontal themes need to be demonstrated within projects?**
Applicants are expected to describe in detail how one or more of the horizontal themes fits with their project. In doing so it is important to explain how these will be taken into account, monitored, evidenced and reported on throughout the lifetime of the project. These activities will be an integral part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks and the terms and conditions of supported projects.
- **How can an applicant demonstrate Equal Opportunities has been considered?**
Applicants can where appropriate:
 - Clarify precisely how the project has taken account of, and reflected, the diverse needs of a target group in the development and delivery of the project and its activities;
 - Describe any particular focus given to one or more of the six key equality strands: (i) gender (ii) ethnic origin (iii) religion or belief (iv) disability (v) age or (vi) sexual orientation
 - Outline any potential barriers to access to participation, how these have been identified and how the project intends to overcome these barriers.
- **How can an applicant demonstrate Environmental Sustainability has been considered?**
Applicants should consider where appropriate:
 - Resource efficiency – particularly improving the efficient procurement and use of energy, water and raw materials and increasing application and use of renewable energy
 - Environmental impact – particularly the ways in which the project contributes to the enhancement or protection of the environment and seeks to minimise negative impacts (such as pollution)
 - Local sourcing – particularly support for local sourcing initiatives and activities aimed at diversification within the local economy as well as the efficient use of local public transport and local community transport services.
- **How can an applicant demonstrate Social Inclusion has been considered?**
Applicants should where appropriate:
 - Demonstrate the social inclusion aspect of the project
 - Describe how the project will reconcile a commitment to social inclusion with a focus on improving the competitiveness and economic performance of the locality
 - Describe how the project will aim to reduce inequalities between the least advantaged communities and the rest of society; and
 - Describe any potential barriers to access to participation, how these have been identified and how the project intends to address these barriers.

2.7 Types of Hub?

- **Do you have a set idea of a LCTT ‘Hub’?**
No. We’re open to discussion to potential bidders about the model and forms ‘hubs’ might take. These might focus on Active Travel or Low Carbon Transport separately, or as part of an integrated approach.
- **Do the LCTT Hubs have to be new build? Do they have to be purpose built?**
No. You will need to demonstrate requisite permissions will be in place to deliver the works within timescales, whether purpose built, refurbishment or redevelopment of existing.
- **Can we reconfigure an existing facility / redundant facilities to establish a LCTT Hub?**
Yes, providing you have a suitable lease agreement in place or own the property.
- **Can we purchase a property or land in order to create the LCTT Hub?**
Yes. The cost of real estate (i.e. purchase of land or existing buildings) are eligible up to 10% of the total eligible project expenditure (or can be 15% for derelict sites and for those formerly in industrial use which comprise buildings). The cost of the build of a new hub or refurbishment of existing buildings are up to 100% eligible.
- **Can we introduce income generating elements to hubs?**
Yes. However, if your proposal includes income generating elements and your eligible project costs are over €1M then revenue projections will be required and an adjustment made to the overall ERDF award to account for this.
- **Can ERDF funds be used to support the costs associated with retail/café space?**
No. If space for a café or retail is being included in the build, this would not be eligible to be funded under ERDF. The project costs for that element of the build would therefore need to be apportioned.
- **Is ‘mixed use’ space an eligible cost for this fund?**
Yes if the purpose can clearly be related back to attracting a crowd in order to target LCTT messages; either directly (activities promoting low carbon travel options, cycling, walking, greener, healthier lifestyles) or indirectly (activities designed to attract more numbers and widen the appeal out to different age groups and types, to visit and use the hubs regularly).
- **What about setting up a virtual Hub?** We may be prepared to test out a virtual approach to delivering against the outcomes. However, a convincing case would have to be made that the proposed model could reach the intended audience to encourage increased take-up of active travel, public transport and/ or low carbon options.

- **Can I submit a Path project application in isolation?**
No. Transport Scotland has committed to delivering 53km of associated path network through the ERDF 2014-2020 programme, as a complement to the hubs. The LCTT Challenge Fund is not available for paths-only applications.
- **What will be the key criteria for the Challenge Fund?** Key criteria for the CF are; proposal for eligible activity which demonstrates potential to deliver the aims and objectives and outcomes agreed for the LCTT SI: strategic fit (national and local priority and context); partnership working; community engagement, deliverability within timeframe, sustainability and additionality.
- **Do you have target areas and/or target groups for location?** We will consider a range of proposals which will allow us to test out approaches, appropriate to a variety of urban and rural settings – for example, they might be associated with traditional transport interchanges (rail or bus station, ferry port), new or existing neighbourhood facilities, sited within town or city centres premises or relate to edge of town business park, health or campus facilities.

2.8 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

- **What are the responsibilities for successful applicants during the course of the LCTT programme and LCTT and SIT CF's?**
 - If your application is successful and you are awarded funding you will be required to maintain regular communication with Transport Scotland.
 - Successful applicants will be expected to undertake their own project monitoring and will be expected to provide reports on their project's progress.
 - Monthly reports on project progress which will include financial forecast, update on project plan and a financial and project report within 30 days of the end of the project will be required.
- **What type of information will applicants need to monitor and evaluate?**

ERDF funding is output and outcome focussed. Applicants are expected to provide details on what information will be collected and how you will monitor and evaluate their project in terms of the LCTT programme outputs and outcomes that is intended to deliver. Such as:

 - Baseline data (or how and when baseline data will be gathered) – from which outcomes will be measured and how the baseline has been identified i.e. surveys, national data or any previous research.
 - The desired outcomes of the project and how you plan to monitor success in the medium to longer term.
 - What target population(s) this will relate to and impact upon – including influence on behaviours and attitudes.
 - What the outputs of the project will be.
 - What will be measured in order to track impact against desired outcomes.
 - How and when impacts will be measured.
 - Who will be responsible for this.

2.9 Compliance and ERDF requirements

- **What do applicants need to do to be compliant with ERDF requirements?**

Applicants must have a compliance and audit plan in place which will allow them to plan and resource requirements to meet the compliance standards needed. Such as:

 - Good Governance.
 - Maintenance of financial records and managing financial performance.
 - Change control procedures.
 - Risk identification and management.
 - Communication and engagement plan.
 - Reporting and forecasting.
 - Retention of documents.

2.10 Post- delivery?

- **How long do we need to keep project documentation?** The auditable lifetime for the 2014 – 2020 programme is potentially going to run into 2028. For operations delivered up and until 31 December 2018 of the LCTT programme, we would expect that all key documents be retained until at least 2023. Failure to do so risks grant funding being withdrawn.
- **How long do we need to run the Hub, once it has been constructed/ established, to avoid any early closure penalty or funding clawback?** At least 5 years beyond completion.

3. Enquiries

If you have any queries about the ERDF LCTT programme, or would like to discuss ideas you have before submitting an application, please send an email to the [LCTT mailbox](#) with an outline of your query and your contact details and a member of the Energy Saving Trust or Transport Scotland team will get back to you.