ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE (EQ) QUESTIONS

Application (Eligibility Questionnaire)

Q. I was previously an Engagement Gateway and ILM supplier – do I have to re-apply to become an Approved Beneficiary for Active Inclusion?

A. The Active Inclusion funds are part of a new initiative, separate to earlier projects such as the Engagement Gateway or the ILM and so to be eligible for funding, organisations must successfully complete the eligibility questionnaire in order to be invited to apply for grant funding opportunities.
Q. We already receive ESF funding - can we apply for Active Inclusion funding?

A. Yes

Q. What if we apply for North Wales areas but want to add other areas later on? Do we submit a new EQ? Or update/refresh our old one?

A. There will be opportunities to submit a new EQ. You can use the same answers from your previous application, but you will need to submit a new form. There is a video tutorial which will guide you through this process: http://wcva.adobeconnect.com/p1xwa0s5mre. Please see the timetable of indicative grant rounds and EQ deadlines on this link: http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/wcva-funding/active-inclusion-fund

Q. What is the definition of ‘Social Exclusion’?

A. Below is an excerpt from the WEFO ‘Cross Cutting Themes Glossary:

'It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole.'

Q. How will new organisations be able to evidence how they tackle poverty and social exclusion?

A. New organisations should focus on the experience of their employees, trustees or directors if the organisation itself has not run previous activities. If the organisation was created with an aim to tackle poverty there will have been justification for the need of the activities in the business plan and research.

Q. Can we work in partnership with other groups/as a conglomerate?

A. Yes, but any grant award will be made to a single legal entity. So if the partnership is not itself a legal entity, one of its members, which would have to be on the Approved Beneficiaries List (ABL), would be entirely responsible for all aspects of the project, even if it enters into an agreement with partners to deliver some aspect of the project. We cannot transfer or award any monies to partner groups, just the named provider. If a partner group wishes to receive funding they will have to apply themselves via the Eligibility Questionnaire, then if successful by completing an ITA. *Note* if a partner group does not perform to your expectation, as the named provider you are held responsible.

Q. Is Active Inclusion open to private companies?

A. Private companies can apply for Active Inclusion funding and are encouraged to if they fit with the aims and objectives of the fund.

Q. What if we see a discrepancy between Active Inclusion Fund guidance and WEFO guidance? To which one do we defer?

A. Active Inclusion Fund guidance has been produced in line with guidance issued by WEFO. If you see a discrepancy, please contact us to alert us to this and we will ensure this is corrected.
Q. Is there a word limit for EQ application answers?

A. Answers are limited to 2000 characters on the etenderwales system.

Q. How long will it take for me to find out the outcome of my EQ application and how will I find out?

A. It can take around a month after the deadline to assess applications, quality check applications, prepare outcome correspondence and receive decisions from our panel before organisations are notified. The timeframe can vary depending on the workload of our team and volume of applications. You will find out through a message on the etenderwales system and a signed letter in the post.

Supporting documentation

Q. Are policies submitted with EQs quality checked?

A: Yes - if the policies do not meet our required standards your organisation will fail our eligibility checks.

Q. Are there guidance documents available to help me prepare policies?

A. There is a page on the WCVA website that will help you with the preparation of policies such as the Health and Safety policy, Data Protection policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and the Welsh Language policy, which can be found here: http://www.wcva.org.uk/advice-guidance/running-your-organisation.

With regards to other policies, such as the Anti-Bribery Policy or Code of Conduct Policy, copies of the WCVA policies are available on request to give you an idea of the type of content that we expect.

You may also find these other links on the government website useful:


Q. How will we know if our EQ documents are acceptable? Will you let us know?

A. If you submit your EQ in plenty of time before a closing date for assessment, we will try to let you know if there are any problems with the supporting documents that you have uploaded. We can’t guarantee this, as it depends on how many EQs there are to assess, but the earlier you submit, the better your chance of having the opportunity to amend your documents.

Q. Can my policies/governing documents be in any format?

A. They should be submitted in an un-editable format, preferably PDF.
Q. Can I use electronic signatures on policy documents?

A. It is acceptable to use digital signatures as long as they are not simply an image of a signature pasted into a document. This is because images/pictures/bit-maps of a ‘pen and ink’ signature are usually presentational only and there is no evidence that a secure authentication system is in place to indicate that a user is aware their signature has been used.

Advanced electronic signatures are permitted by the EC (see EC directive 1999/93/EC) and can be used as an alternative to ink signatures. If you have a PDF document, you can follow a digital signature process using Adobe that ensures it can only be digitally signed by the approved person. This is because the digital signature set up is password protected for each user, ensuring security of signature use.

Q. My policy documents are too large to upload to the system? What do I do?

A. Upload your documents in a compressed zip folder or scan the documents in a lower resolution or in black and white as opposed to colour. If in doubt, contact the Active Inclusion team by email or through the etenderwales system.

Q. Our governing document is actually two documents, the memorandum and articles of association. There’s only space to upload one: which should it be?

A. You should upload all documents that form your governing documents as one: either as a scanned continuous single document or as a compressed or ‘zip’ file.

Q. I was advised through etenderwales that my documents were insufficient, but I didn’t see the message in time. How can you avoid this happening in future?

A. If you submit your EQ with plenty of time to spare, there will be more time for the initial appraisal of supporting documents. The etenderwales system will send automatic updates, including notification of messages, to the email address that you have entered as a contact, although we find that many people choose to disable these updates. After submitting an application, it would be advisable not to have this facility turned off.

Finance

Q. What do we do if our most recent accounts have not been audited, but we have the previous 2 years of audited accounts?

A. For organisations that do not have their most recent accounts audited, respond to question 1.6 as ‘no’ and upload your most recent draft accounts and the previous 2 years full audited accounts. Respond to questions as below:
Draft accounts - 1.9.1
Managements accounts - 1.10.1

Q. What do we upload if we have only been running for 2 years and only have 1 year of audited accounts? Should we upload the one set of audited accounts and our draft accounts?
A. Please provide your last full audited accounts, draft accounts and/or forecast accounts for the current year.

Respond to questions as below:
Draft accounts - 1.9.1
Managements accounts - 1.10.1
Forecast accounts (new organisations only) - 1.11.1

Q. What are draft accounts?

A. These are detailed accounts for the most recently completed financial year that may still be awaiting year-end adjustments and have not been signed off by the board/directors. Once any year-end adjustments have been completed and agreed by the board/trustees, the accounts become final. The accounts remain final accounts until they have been fully verified by an appropriate person such as a chartered accountant, at which point they become audited. Not all organisations will be required to have an audit; in these circumstances organisations will only have final accounts.

Q. What are management accounts and what would you expect to see in these documents?

A. Management accounts are a set of summarised accounts (that are often prepared and presented every month, fortnight, or week) specifically for an organisation’s management board. Management accounts provide key financial information required by managers to make day to day and short-term decisions and allow them to measure financial performance for the current financial year. Management accounts should provide a summary of the income and expenditure for the period that they management accounts cover. Typically this will include a breakdown, by period of spend to date and forecast figures by period for the remaining months of the current financial year. This will often include an analysis against budget but that is not required for WCVA’s purposes.

Participants

Q. How do you choose our participants?

A. You will identify your own participants, ensuring that they meet the eligibility criteria set for the fund. As part of the EQ you will be asked to choose the target groups you feel your organisation can demonstrate the ability to work with. For each target group you select you will be asked to demonstrate the understanding you have of the barriers faced by that group and what provision you will put in place to meet their needs.

Q. Can I work in a small part of a geographical area if approved on the EQ or approved to receive a grant?

A. If you submit an EQ with the aim of being approved to work in a county and you are successful, you would be approved to work with participants from the whole of this county, providing that the participants are eligible. When you choose to recruit participants for a project, you can recruit from just a specific part of the county if you wish. Please remember that if there are Communities First areas within the county you must be mindful not to recruit from them.

Q. How extreme/limiting does WLH have to be?
A. This does not need to be defined by your organisation. A person has a work limiting health condition if they consider themselves to face barriers to employment due to a condition that limits their ability to participate (including substance or alcohol misuse). This should be self-reported by the participant - participants should be asked whether they face barriers to employment due to work limiting health conditions and endorsed by a referral or confirmation from an appropriate organisation.

INVITATION TO APPLY (ITA) QUESTIONS

Application (Invitation to Apply)

Q. Can we apply for a pilot project and, if successful, can we apply for further funding?

A. Yes you can apply for a pilot project and apply for further funding to run a similar project if the pilot is deemed a success. You will need to be aware of the closing dates for different rounds of funding to ensure the timing allows you to do so. Please see the timetable of indicative grant rounds and EQ deadlines on this link: http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/wcva-funding/active-inclusion-fund

Q. Can the grant be used to fund existing work? What if an activity/project will duplicate current provision, but this is necessary because the current provision cannot engage with everyone wishing to use the service?

A. A grant could fund existing work if you can show that it would add value or widen the scope of current work - you would need to demonstrate this in your application. You could not fund existing work that has already been funded by another provider nor could you use it as replacement funding for work begun under a different grant scheme; however you could use it to add scope, outputs and value to an existing project, so long as records were kept to show that it was not double funding and that any existing funding used as match was not also derived from European funding sources.

If the project will provide added value rather than duplication, for the benefit of the target participant group and the community, then explain this in your answer, also addressing how you will work to complement the same provision already running by working cooperatively with the other organisation.

Q. How many applications can you submit per ITA round?

A. You can submit one application in response to each invitation to apply (ITA) in each grant round.

Q. Is there a maximum number of grants an organisation can apply for - or a value?

A. There is not a maximum number of grants an approved beneficiary may apply for over the lifetime of the fund; however, in each grant round, approved beneficiaries may only apply for one grant per ITA. There is no limit on the number of ITAs a beneficiary responds to. Approved beneficiaries will only be invited to apply for rounds they are approved for at the EQ stage.
If organisations apply for multiple grants, either within one round, or at intervals over the lifetime of the fund, WCVA will cross-reference to the finance information supplied at the EQ stage and/or current project performance, to assess financial capacity to deliver.

Please note: if your organisation has been approved for funding up to a level, for example, level 1 (£25,000), this is the maximum funding for which it will be considered. So if you are successful in being awarded one grant up to your maximum level, and wish to apply for more, you should follow the process for re-submitting an EQ and include your most up-to-date financial information and/or indicate the higher level of funding for which you wish to be approved.

If you haven’t been approved yet, it is worth considering, when selecting the level, whether you hope to run one project at that level or a number of smaller ones totalling the same amount.

Q. How long will projects be able to run for?

A. Projects will be able to run for up to 2 years, however this is dependent on when the application round is released and when the project can start. The later the start date the shorter the project will have to be. For example Strand 1 projects final end date end December 2017, Strand 2 end January 2018. Each ITA will clearly state the specific dates.

Q. If we are successful with our application to deliver the project in two geographical areas, are we able to deliver the programmes separately (i.e one starting November and then one starting in April) or do they have to both areas have to start at the same time?

A. You can deliver the project in this way.

Please make sure that your project profile marries with the narrative describing how your project will be run and make sure that the narrative contains detail of the activities in both areas.

We would still consider the activity in both areas to fall under one project, despite the difference in the areas and periods of activity and so total figures profiled to us should take into consideration the activities in both areas combined.

Q. Can I run an Achieve and Include project at the same time?

A. Yes - this is not a problem and can be beneficial for referral purposes. You would have to apply for each strand separately and be awarded two separate grants, rather than running a single project that incorporates both strands.

Q. If our organisation hasn’t delivered a similar project but has delivered for another organisation on a similar project can we use this experience?

A. Yes, if your organisation has never run a project like this before you can use any related experience your organisation has and you can also use the experience of your staff members, to evidence your capability.

Q. Please could you advise if there is a template required for the letters of support requested in 1.7.3, and if not what are the minimum requirements, e.g on headed paper, signed and scanned etc. Do these need to be from those external to your organisation?
A. There is no standard format or minimum requirements as such, but any letter of support should clearly identify the organisation or person that it is from and it should be in a pdf (un-editable) format.

It will strengthen your case if the letters of support are from organisations other than your own.

Q. What if the letter of support only confirms the funding received and when? Statutory bodies do not give more information and will not be more descriptive.

A. We understand that many organisations do not provide more information than what funding was awarded, when the project was run and how much was paid, but it will still demonstrate links in the community and previous experience. Ensure that in the narrative you link to the letters of support and provide further detail if required.

Q. What happens if we cannot obtain references?

A. It is beneficial for you to have letters of reference, as it will lead to a higher score on the questions where this information is requested, but it is not a mandatory requirement for you to upload these and so it will not mean that you fail on this question just because you do not provide them.

Q. 'Making the connections' - because we can upload a separate sheet for the geographical areas section does that mean we then have more characters in which to write our answer?

A. Yes, you have 2,000 characters per county indicated in your application.

Q. If all applicants’ activity were similar within the same area would that affect the competition, for example if everyone chose ‘arts and craft’ as their main activity?

A. Selecting up to 3 project activity categories is a tool that will be used for producing reports and publicity and to support collaboration between projects. The project’s activity will not be used to select applications, awarding grants will be based on the overall project score and meeting the grant specification requirements. We will avoid duplication when awarding grants to projects, but just providing activities or employment in the same category would not in itself count as duplication.

Q. Can we state that having spoken with other Active Inclusion Approved Beneficiaries we know that we will not be duplicating services?

A. Yes but we would also like to know about other current / planned activities in your area that are not part of Active Inclusion to show an in depth knowledge of the geographical area. Duplication could be with other services, not just those provided by Active Inclusion projects, nor just those provided through European funding.

Q. When identifying the appropriate risks to the project should these be different types of risk or could you mention three financial based risks?

A. The risks identified need to be relevant to your project. For example, if your project is heavily reliant on donations of goods and services from external organisations, then
financial risks may be the most appropriate; however a project delivering outside during winter might be expected to refer to inclement weather potentially affecting the activities and attendance.

Q. What is a service requirement?

A. Service requirements are the specific aims that projects need to work towards. These are specified within the grant specification for each invitation to apply. Projects need to be designed with the service requirements at the heart of them.

Q. What is meant by ‘supported employment’?

A. The provision of internally and externally sourced paid employment placements for disadvantaged clients, which are combined with intensive mentoring and tailored support activities (such as essential skills training, job searching, qualifications and financial management training). The aim is to overcome barriers such as lack of confidence, poor literacy/numeracy and digital exclusion and to progress them into unsupported employment.

Q. Can you tell me what would be classed as further education? Does it need to be an accredited course or can it be other learning provided by us or an external organisation? How formal is "further education"?

A. Further learning can include formal academic or vocational education as well as less formal skills development training in other projects or schemes.

If the further learning will be provided internally then it will need to be clearly demonstrated that the learning builds upon the participant’s development so far.

Q. What are milestones?

A. These are key points during your project’s lifetime that can be used to determine whether achievements are being met and the project is running to plan. For example, a milestone could be to have recruited 3 staff members to the project by week 8. Whether this milestone is met is a good indication of project progress and can help to implement good management practices.

Q. What are the expected progression rates?

A. These are listed in the outputs section of the grant specification for each round.

Q. Is there a cap as to how many participants can be transferred to jobs within my own organisation?

A. Strand 1 Include - There are no limits on progressing participants into employment participants in your organisation as long as it is meaningful employment of no less than 16 hours per week.

Strand 2 Achieve - There could be a cap on the numbers of participants progressing into employment within your organisation. Restrictions will be in the grant specification if applicable.
Q. If successful will we have to use WCVA project tracking form?
A. Yes you will have to use WCVA mandatory tracking forms that will be provided.

Q. Is there a cap on delivery partner numbers?
A. The number of delivery partners allowed who are on the ABL or who are not on the ABL will be specified in each ITA specification.

Q. How long will it take for me to find out the outcome of my application and how will I find out?
A. It can take around a month after the deadline to assess applications, quality check applications, prepare outcome correspondence and receive decisions from our panel before organisations are notified. The timeframe can vary depending on the workload of our team and volume of applications. You will be notified via etenderwales in the first instance.

Q. What is the update with Ceredigion?
A. The Active Inclusion fund for over 25s in West Wales and the Valleys has no specific provision for Ceredigion. Our targets approved by WEFO were arrived at by looking at population data and previous results from the Engagement Gateway and Intermediate Labour Market. This does not prevent organisations based in Ceredigion from joining the Approved Beneficiary List, nor participants from Ceredigion from being accepted onto strand 1 (Include) projects primarily targeting those from Carmarthen or Pembrokeshire. Over the lifetime of the fund, we are predicting that approximately 50 strand 1 participants will be resident in Ceredigion, but the targets for Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire are around 530 and 370 respectively, so it can be seen that this is a very small proportion. There are no strand 2 (Achieve) targets for Ceredigion participants.

However, the Active Inclusion (Youth) fund is expected to have specific provision for Ceredigion through both strands (Include and Achieve) and it is hoped that this fund will be approved by WEFO very soon.

**Project Data System (PDS)**

Q. What is PDS? Can I monitor my project through PDS?
A. PDS stands for Project Data System. It will be used to digitally store, report and monitor all financial and participant data for your project.

Originally PDS was designed to record participant information only; all projects that have been funded through either Engagement Gateway or ILM since 2012 have used the system.

In designing Active Inclusion we decided to further develop the system to fully record projects’ finances.

Q. How much time should you profile for PDS administration?
A. The amount of time allocated to PDS admin should reflect the level of project funding applied for, which will depend on the number of participants to be supported. The higher the number of participants, the higher the level of financial and participant evidence will be required. Each item of evidence for both participant and finances will need to be scanned and uploaded to PDS, following specific instructions and requirements. This can be a lengthy process and if it appears that insufficient time has been profiled this will be queried with organisations prior to recommendations being made to panel. Ideally administration staff should be in place from the project set up right the way through to project closure.

Q. Who is liable for PDS? What if software becomes out-of-date/obsolete before the end of the project?

A. PDS is owned and operated by WCVA and the organisation ensures accurate data is added to the system. The system has been built with a lifespan which exceeds any European requirements and regular maintenance will be carried out in consultation with external ICT specialists to make sure that the system remains fit for purpose and does not become obsolescent.

**Cross cutting themes**

Q. How should I complete the Cross Cutting themes section on the profile sheet at ITA stage? Can you clarify how you are expecting cross cutting themes to be incorporated into a project?

A. To complete the profile sheet you need to type in a specific outcome that we will measure you against, for example: ‘Participants will complete a part unit qualification in environmental management’ and then profile the number of outcomes under each month you would expect to achieve them.

It is really important that you think about how you are going to monitor the milestones you set yourself here, as you will be expected to report on them at progress reviews.

Remember to refer to the questions around CCTs in the main body of the application and make sure what you enter in the profile reflects the answer you have given.

Fully read the guidance on those questions to make sure you are providing us with the correct type of milestone. These outcomes don’t affect the value for money score but if you do not profile at least one outcome under each heading your application would be deemed ineligible.

Examples:

**Equal opportunities** - you could tailor the marketing of the project to encourage participants from a wide range of target groups, use project venues that are easily accessible for wheelchair users or those using public transport, provide training/information sessions on equality and diversity for participants, utilise external specialist support services to enable participants with mental/physical or language barriers to take part in project activities.

**Sustainable development** - you could provide participants with environmental/nature awareness training, facilitate progression opportunities into volunteering or employment in the sustainable/‘green’ energy sector, carry out ‘up-cycling’ activities with participants.
Active Inclusion

Tackling poverty and Social exclusion - you could promote digital inclusion amongst participants (the following web- links provide further information http://digitalcommunities.wales and http://www.digitalinclusionwales.org.uk/wiki ), provide a ‘barrier’ fund for transport or childcare costs (Achieve projects only), facilitate access to food banks or benefit advice services, provide budget planning training.

It is up to you; just remember that you’ll need to retain evidence to demonstrate your contribution.

Q. Under the Sustainable Development cross cutting theme question do organisations have to focus on environmental sustainability?

A. Sustainable development is defined by WEFO as; “Ensuring economic activity will not adversely impact on the environment and the promotion of the environment as an economic driver”: answers provided should specifically address this definition.

Finance

Q. Is there a different profile spreadsheet for Strands 1 & 2?

A. There are slight differences. For example, on the strand 2 profile there is no section to enter supported employment progression outcomes and on the strand 1 profile there is no section to record participant salary costs.

Q. If an organisation is running multiple Active Inclusion projects does each project have to use the same simplified cost option?

A. No, each grant award can use either of the simplified cost options. Once a simplified cost option has been selected for a project then it cannot be changed during the project.

Q. What is a good value for money score?

A. Please note, the value for money score accounts for 30% of the overall score for an application and so is not the main determining factor of why an application succeeds or fails. Your written explanation of the participant group you would like to engage and how complex their needs are and the support you will be providing also affects the overall project value. Any project profile should be realistic and achievable. This will need to be supported in the narrative on your application. The cost per head can be used as a guide to what would be considered good value for money. Each ITA specification details the overall amount to be awarded in that round and the number of participants hoped to be engaged. Using these figures you can use the cost per head as a guide.

Q. Is the cost of a participant’s passport eligible?

A. No, it would be a personal financial benefit to the participant.

Q. Strand 2 - Do we have to pay a percentage of participant’s salaries?

A. You will be expected to pay the full cost for participant’s time on a placement at national minimum wage - you will be reimbursed on your claim submissions at the approved
intervention rate. All participants must be employed for either 16 weeks or 26 weeks and between 16 and 35 hours per week. Any participant costs that contravene these rules will be ineligible.

Q. If working 100% on the project is a timesheet necessary?

A. Staff working on an EU project full-time, or a fixed number of regular hours, are not required to record their working hours in a time sheet as a basis for justifying the costs. However, the individual’s job description, letter of secondment, employment contract, or similar document (e.g. correspondence from HR department) must verify that the role relates to work on the specific EU project(s), whether full-time or fixed number of regular hours.

Q. Will we be able to build administration time into our projects and how?

A. Yes we are encouraging organisations to build in administration time. You will not need to address this until you complete the budget section in your ITA.

Q. How do you factor in a staff member on a zero hour contract within the budget?

A. You will need to predict the amount of time the employee will be needed to support the project and then calculate the cost of this time for the duration of the project.

Q. ‘Other’ staff time - could this be a treasurer?

A. No - ‘other’ staff costs on the profile refers to eligible costs such as travel and subsistence incurred by direct staff working on the project.

Q. Will there be full cost recovery for costs incurred on our projects?

A: There will be two simplified cost options offered to approved beneficiaries; you will select the appropriate method for your organisation (see below). At the ITA stage we will provide full information and guidance on both simplified cost methods before you submit your application. You should account for all approved costs but please note you will also be required to supply match funding up to 50% in cash or in kind.

All projects will be expected to use one of two simplified cost mechanisms, both of which are eligible for ESF funded operations and projects:

- staff costs plus a flat rate of 40% for all other costs or
- staff costs plus a flat rate of 15% for indirect overheads

For further information you can refer to WEFO documents: ‘Eligibility rules and conditions for support from the European Structural Funds 2014 -2020’ and ‘Detailed Guidance on using simplified costs’.

Please note that for the purposes of the simplified costs calculations, participants’ wages under strand 2 do not count as ‘staff costs’.

Q. Will we have to evidence all our costs?
A. This will depend on the simplified cost method you choose for your project. More details and guidance will be provided at the ITA stage.

Q. Are capital costs eligible?

A: Yes but we would not expect to see large amounts of expenditure on capital items within an ESF funded project. Small items of moveable equipment are eligible costs as long as they are for the sole use of the ESF funded project.

Q. Are CRB costs direct or indirect? Are these costs eligible?

A. Disclosure and Barring Service checks would be direct costs if they relate to staff members who will work solely or for a fixed amount of hours on the project, and the project itself requires the use of DBS checks in order to operate safely and legally.

Q. Can we factor in storage costs into our grant application?

A. These can be included as direct costs on your profile if a direct link between the cost and the EU supported activities can be demonstrated and easily quantified without the need to consider arbitrary apportionment methodologies. If storage costs are shared across your whole organisation, they would be considered to be part of your indirect costs.

Q. Will there be upfront payments?

A. Yes there will be advance payments of 10% of the grants awarded for Strand 1 but none for Strand 2.

Q. Would staff time for staff based in England working on a project be eligible (e.g. finance based in a head office outside of Wales)?

A. Staff costs are eligible where time is recorded and evidence provided in line with funding requirements and there is a clear link to the project.

Q. Does the funding constitute State Aid?

A. An individual state aid assessment will be carried out on each successful application. If this flags any potential issues this will be discussed on an individual basis with the organisation, however it is believed that this will be very unlikely. If you would like to carry out a State Aid test prior to submitting an eligibility questionnaire please contact Judith Stone, WCVA’s European Brokerage and Partnership Coordinator by emailing jstone@wcva.org.uk.

**Match funding**

Q. What match funding is required for East Wales grants? Does it vary to West Wales and the Valleys or between strands?

A. The intervention rate for all Active Inclusion funds will be stated in the grant specification for each Invitation to tender.
Currently, the following rates apply, but these could be subject to change: always check the grant specification.

Over 25s, West Wales and the Valleys, Include / Strand 1 projects will need to provide match funding at the following rates:

- **Level 1** – 10%
- **Level 2** – 25%
- **Level 3** – 35%

These rates may well change for future rounds, as the fund develops.

Over 25s, West Wales and the Valleys, Achieve / Strand 2 projects will need to provide match funding of 30%

For over 25s, East Wales, both Include and Achieve projects will need to provide match funding of 50%.

Q. Does match funding need to be confirmed and secure at the time our ITA response is submitted, or is it only required to be confirmed when a grant is offered by you?

A. Match will need to be ‘clean’ money (not derived from another European funded source) and this will be confirmed on award of a grant and verified at visits from the WCVA staff.

During the ITA stage there is no need to identify where match is coming from as the project profile will automatically calculate match on a total project cost depending on the profile, but you will need to satisfy yourself that your organisation has the capacity to provide the amount of match funding that it indicates.

Q. Does match funding have to be provided in a specific timeframe on an Active Inclusion project?

A. We expect you to pay the full costs of your project, for which we will reimburse you at the approved intervention rate, which could be anything between 50% and 90%. Therefore you will be providing match funding on an ongoing basis from the start, at a rate of between 10% and 50%. We will ask you to provide evidence of where the match funding has come from before the end date of your project.

Q. If an employee privately donates a piece of equipment can that be counted as match?

A. Yes, any donations to support the project may be counted as in kind match funding and appropriate evidence provided to demonstrate how its value has been calculated.

Q. How would you evidence a private donation as match?

A. If you receive a donation from a private individual that has no conditions attached then this would just be part of your organisation’s own funds, from which it will draw to meet the match funding requirements of the project. There is no need to account for it separately: match will shown by evidencing that you have paid the project’s costs in full and only received ESF funding in part; and by showing through your accounts that the amount needed to make up the difference has not been obtained from other European funding.
Q. If a plant hire company provided the free hire of equipment can that be used as match and how would you evidence it?

A. This would be in kind match funding and would be evidenced by the company’s published hire fees for each item of equipment. Confirmation would also need to be provided by the hire company that the equipment was not originally purchased with EU funding.

Q. Can volunteer time be used as match funding on my strand 1 or 2 projects?

A. This will depend on the simplified cost mechanism you choose:

- **Staff costs plus a flat rate of 15% for indirect overheads**

Volunteer time can be used as match on both Strand 1 and 2. Volunteer time will need to be evidenced using timesheets and an hourly rate appropriate to a volunteering role will be used. The volunteering rates are determined by WEFO can be found in ‘Eligibility rules and conditions for support from the European Structural Funds 2014 -2020’.

- **Staff costs plus a flat rate of 40% for all other costs**

Only evidence for staff costs will be required and 40% will be applied for all other costs.

Q. How do I decide which volunteer rates to use when creating my financial profile?

A. When accounting for volunteer (‘in kind’) time, WCVA will expect projects to use the rates approved by WEFO in its eligibility guidance. As it says, the rate used should be that appropriate to the role, and it would be helpful to draw up a description of that role now, as it could then be used to justify the rate you choose, if you are successful in being awarded an Active Inclusion grant.

Q. If another organisation provides a staff member to support the project for a few hours per week is this volunteering or direct staff time?

A. Staff time provided and paid by an external organisation for the project is a donated cost. This means that it should be profiled in your application under ‘In kind costs’. The evidence requirements are the same as your own staff time, for example timesheets, contracts of employment and payroll reports.

Q. Can an organisation use the value of an appropriate apportionment of its’ own overheads to meet some, or all, of the match funding requirement for either Strand 1 or Strand 2 grants?

A. All grants are based on a total project cost with organisation being paid on an intervention rate with the remainder being matched.

All indirect or ‘shared / apportioned’ overheads would automatically be included in either the 15% or the 40% uplift: there is no need to detail them separately.
RUNNING A PROJECT

**Participant eligibility**

**Q. Will WCVA vet participants before registration for eligibility**

**A.** It will be the responsibility of the approved beneficiary to ensure all their participants are eligible to be engaged on the project. All approved beneficiaries must evidence that participants are economically inactive or unemployed and provide proof of residence/address. Please see the participant eligibility rules (general criteria) provided by WEFO. Additional eligibility requirements will be based on which participant group the approved beneficiary engages with. Guidance will be provided with each ITA. WCVA will verify this evidence when received.

**Q. Where can I find WEFO eligibility guidance?**


**Q. What will be needed to evidence whether a person is a carer, from a jobless household, has a work limiting health condition, has low skills or is over 54?**

**A.** Please see the participant eligibility rules (general criteria) provided by WEFO: ‘Eligibility rules and conditions for support from the European Structural Funds 2014 -2020’.

The beneficiary/provider must check compliance with these rules before the ESF support begins. Documentary proof to demonstrate that the criteria were assessed must be retained with the project records for future inspection during audits and verifications.

The core requirement is that the project’s audit trail must include suitable justification of an assessment of participant’s fulfilment of the entry conditions for receipt of ESF grant.

If a participant cannot provide this evidence, the deliverer must obtain sufficient assurance from independent/third party sources then they can make a risk-based judgement to accept the participant but must clearly document the assessment and decision. The records must explain why the participant was unable to provide any of the evidence and why the provider was satisfied with the alternative evidence provided.

Suggested evidence for these particular groups would be:

- Carer - letter/confirmation from a reputable organisation e.g. charity, Social Services, proof of Carer’s Allowance
- Jobless household - evidence from DWP, confirmation from reputable organisation
- Work limiting health condition - confirmation from reputable organisation
- Low skills - self-certification if no other evidence available
- Over 54 - birth certificate

Further guidance on participant eligibility and required evidence will be issued with each ITA.

**Q. If someone is employed as a personal assistant, not a registered carer, are they eligible?**
A. If someone is in employment they will not be eligible for assistance through Active Inclusion.

Q. Is there a minimum amount of hours someone must be a carer before being eligible to participate in AI?

A. There is no minimum number of hours specified, but in accordance with WEFO guidance, the participant should be the primary carer and being a carer is defined as ‘anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support’.

Q. Is a log sheet from Job Centre Plus sufficient evidence to show that a participant is unemployed?

A. Confirmation from Job Centre Plus that a participant is unemployed is appropriate evidence.

Q. Can a transcript of a phone call with Job Centre Plus be used to evidence that a participant is unemployed?

A. No, written evidence must be provided in the form of either a signed letter or an e-mail which is clearly from a Job Centre Plus Advisor.

Q. Can participants access multiple ESF projects?

A. Where participation in another ESF project does not affect eligibility and activities are clearly different. The outcomes claimed must be different and only one ESF project can claim each outcome.

Q. How many hours does a participant have to work to be considered as progressed into employment?

A. The participant must be working over 16 hours to be claimed as entering employment. Zero hours contracts are not eligible as progression into employment, even if full time hours can be evidenced later.

Q. Can a participant undertake two jobs to make up the mandatory 16 hours?

A. The status of a participant needs to change from unemployed to employed and must be over 16 hours per week.

Q. Can I delegate a participant to work in a supported employment role on the social enterprise arm of my organisation whilst engaged on my Strand 2 project?

A. Supported employment placements can either be internal or external to your organisation; however, there may be caps on the number of internal placements which will be determined in each ITA for Strand 2.

Q. How can I find out where Communities First areas are?
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A. The definition applies to cluster areas and Lower Super Output areas. We have no definitive list yet, but there are these web pages available that you may find useful:


Q. If a participant moves to a Communities First postcode during the project can you no longer work with them?

A. Eligibility is determined at the point of entry - when the individual first attends each individual ESF project/first received support. If a series/programme of support has been approved for an eligible participant consisting of a number of inter-related interventions, eligibility can continue until the end of the agreed support plan even if the individual moves address or changes their employment/study status. Where an individual begins a new, separate ESF project, even if it is within the same fund or operation, eligibility must be assessed again at the point of entry to the new project.

Q. Even though those within Communities First areas are not eligible for Active Inclusion - could Communities for Work refer on to the Active Inclusion project therefore making individuals eligible?

A. Individuals who live in a Communities First area are currently ineligible for support from an Active Inclusion project, however we are in discussions with WEFO and Welsh Government to attempt to clarify this situation.

Q. Are Communities First areas on a cluster basis or a ward basis? e.g. All RCT and Merthyr have clusters. Can we have a postcode list of all that are eligible?

A. All designated Communities First areas i.e. all clusters and all wards are currently ineligible for the Active Communities Fund. We will advise if this situation changes.

Q. Will you be informing Communities First locality teams of who is successful for projects in their area to help communication and referrals?

A. A list of successful Active Inclusion projects will be published on the WCVA website.

Qualifications

Q. Do all qualifications have to be full qualifications?

A. No, but all qualification targets must be accredited qualifications. A qualification would be defined as being within the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales (CQFW). Work relevant certification could be units towards a full qualification or unaccredited training which is necessary for work e.g. a CSCS card or a food hygiene certificate. The types of training should be outlined in your ITA and project profile and agreed in advance with WCVA.

Q. The specification says the level of qualification needs to be above level 2?
A. To report a full qualification as being achieved by a participant it needs to be level 2 or above, a level 1 qualification would be reported as a part qualification.

Q. Can you clarify exactly what is classed as a part qualification?

A. A part qualification is a unit or credit towards a full accredited qualification that is formally recognised by an awarding body. We also include accredited qualifications that are below NFQ level 1, such as entry level qualifications, in this category.

Work relevant certification could be units towards a full qualification or unaccredited training which is necessary for work e.g. a CSCS card or a food hygiene certificate. The types of training should be outlined in your ITA and project profile and agreed in advance with WCVA.

Q. Where can I find a list of accredited qualifications?

A. Further information regarding accredited qualifications can be found -
http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/qualificationsinwales/creditqualificationsframework/?lang=en
http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/Qualification

Q. Work relevant certificates - can these relate to unaccredited courses? Can they be either internal or external?

A. Work relevant qualifications can be non-accredited certificates such as CSCS cards or qualified first aider certificates that can increase the participant’s employability. They can be delivered internally or externally. They can also be units towards a full qualification.

Q. Can ESF funded training be used for essential skills for Strand 2 projects?

A. Upon recruitment of participants to a strand 2 project, the beneficiary will be required to provide all participants with an initial assessment that includes both Essential Skills Assessment and Soft Skills Questionnaire. From this assessment the participant will get a tailored plan of activities, work placement matching and training programme, depending on what stream of the project they are entering and this will provide a baseline analysis upon which to track their individual progress during the time they are engaged.

If the ESF funded training identified as part of the tailored plan for a participant is provided by another organisation’s project, this would be eligible as part of the package of support but care would have to be taken that participants’ hours, expenses, etc, were only being claimed by one project.

Q. If a participant has a degree, can we claim an NQF level 1 qualification for them?

A. You cannot claim for qualifications gained by a participant if they are superseded by qualifications already held and declared on their enrolment form, with evidence provided. If the NQF level 1 qualification enhances the participant’s employability, it could evidence a ‘positive outcome’.
Q. Can a group running an Active Inclusion project send their participants on a CF run training session? If they did can they claim outcomes arising?

A. There is no reason why Active Inclusion participants should not take part in a Communities First facilitated training session. Care should be taken to ensure that they were not ineligible for your project through living in a Communities First area; or ineligible for the training through not living in a Communities First area. Outcomes arising solely from the course should be claimed by the course provider.

Q. To claim a participant moving onto volunteering how many hours do they have to do?

A. To claim an entering volunteering output the participant must be entering a meaningful opportunity. For example a participant may be working in a local charity shop for five hours per week. A participant carrying out a one-off, two hour experience would not be considered a meaningful progression route.

Evidence

Q. How are WCVA ensuring that scanned documentation will be accessible in the future as technology moves so fast?

A. WCVA will be responsible for ensuring that all documentation uploaded to the Project Data System (PDS) is accessible even with changing technologies. Organisations must ensure that original, hard copy documents and on-line records are retained and accessible.

Q. Audits/Verification Visit - Will there be a verification visit during the project and will the WCVA be conducting these prior to the end of the project so that retained money can be released?

A. Within regards to verifications WEFO will carry out the ‘on the spot’ visits (previously called verification visits or audits). The Active Inclusion team will undertake a pre-visit meeting with you to make sure everything is in order for your review by WEFO. Also, Active Inclusion officers will undertake regular monitoring meetings throughout the lifetime of your project and will be available to help if you need any ad hoc support. Finally, as you submit claims we will be verifying the costs and results you submit.

Q. In previous grants, tracking participants has been a problem. How do we tackle/target this?

A. Organisations are required to have plans in place to track participants post project. These plans should include effective methods of keeping in contact evidenced by experience of working with the participant group.

Claiming costs

Q. If we contract a participant on a strand 2 project for 26 weeks but they leave at 20 weeks, what will Active Inclusion pay us?

A. We will only be able to reimburse eligible costs relating to the participant whilst they are engaged on your project. Any costs after or before engagements are ineligible.
Q. What happens if my wage increases and I have been profiled as a direct staff cost on my project?

A. Make sure the amount that you claim from us reflects this and notify your designated WCVA staff member of the changes. Please make sure that you have the necessary evidence in place to verify the changes - this could be in the form of an updated contract, wage slips, a letter detailing the changes from HR etc. You could also supply any internal policies that support the pay increase.

Q. We have a member of staff who works one day per week and volunteers for 3 days per week - how do we claim for this person's time on the project?

A. If a person works directly on the project you can claim for these costs, but if they volunteer to work extra hours on the project unpaid these hours cannot be claimed as volunteer time against the project.

Q. Can we claim for Maternity/Paternity leave payments?

A. If in line with the employer’s general policy or written into an employment contract, statutory maternity and paternity benefits (including paid adoption leave) are eligible, as is the cost of replacement staff to cover for an employee temporarily away from the workplace on maternity / paternity.

Q. How does the defrayal with staff costs work when, for example, the staff member gets paid for September but the pension and NI aren’t defrayed until October?

A. WEFO will still accept this as an eligible cost.

Q. What happens if you don’t pay pension contributions for a staff member?

A. Employer Pension contributions have to be included only if you make these payments.

Q. Do all staff contracts of employment need to be submitted? How specific does the contract of employment need to be? Would a letter suffice?

A. There are no rigid or specific requirements. We can accept the individual’s job description, letter of secondment, employment contract, or similar document (e.g. correspondence from HR department) as long as we are able to verify that the role relates to work on the specific EU project(s), whether full-time or fixed number of regular hours. Documents can be verified with a WCVA staff member early on in the project at implementation or monitoring visits to ascertain whether they are sufficient.

Q. Timesheets - do you have to provide a description of activities?

A. Staff working on an EU project full-time or a fixed number of regular hours are not required to record their working hours in a time sheet as a basis for justifying the costs.

Staff costs for variable hours are eligible if a time registration system is in place, completed by the worker and verified by their supervisor or another more senior colleague who is able
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to confirm the accuracy of the information. The time records must cover 100% of the contracted working time of the employee.

Mandatory timesheets will be provided to projects and this will capture all information required.

Q. Can I use electronic signatures on evidence?

A. It is acceptable to use digital signatures as long as they are not simply an image of a signature pasted into a document. This is because images/pictures/bit-maps of a ‘pen and ink’ signature are usually presentational only and there is no evidence that a secure authentication system is in place to indicate that a user is aware their signature has been used.

Advanced electronic signatures are permitted by the EC (see EC directive 1999/93/EC) and can be used as an alternative to ink signatures. If you have a PDF you can follow a digital signature process using Adobe that ensures it can only be digitally signed by the approved person. This is because the digital signature set up is password protected for each user ensuring security of signature use.

Q. We only use e-banking, is a printed bank statement acceptable?

A. If all bank statements are electronic then it is eligible to store them in an electronic format and upload them to the WCVA Project Data System (PDS).

Q. Will there be retention at the grant payable? If so, what is the percentage that will be paid before retention?

A. There will be retention of monies at the end of the project; this is set at 10% and will be paid following verification of the final claim.

Delivery arrangements

Q. If you identify a potential partnership or sub contracting arrangement mid contract can you then work with them if it wasn’t identified at application stage?

A. It is unlikely that any significant delivery arrangement changes will be approved mid project, however the Active Inclusion team will look into this on a case by case basis and assess whether the change is for the benefit of the participant group.