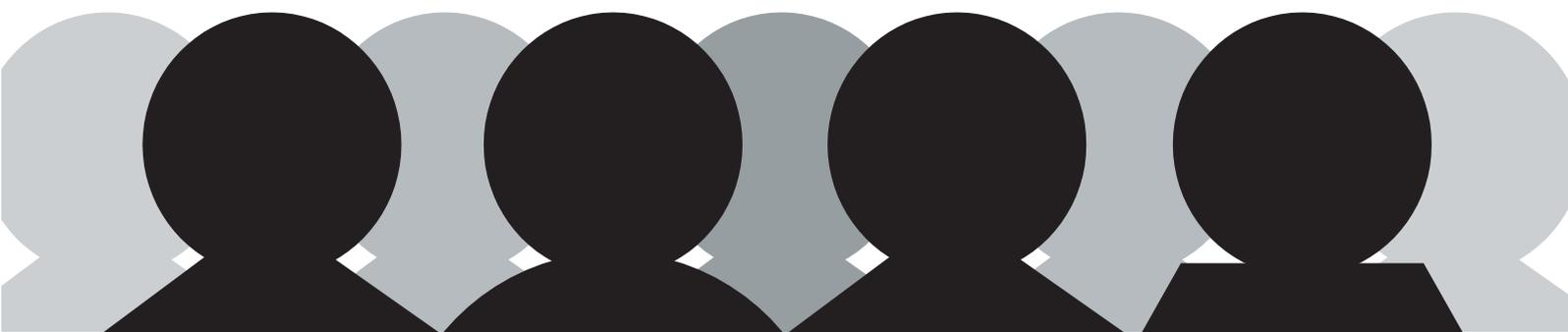


MAYOR OF LONDON



GLA ESF 2014-2020 CO-FINANCING PROGRAMME

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Start Up Step up London – w/c 25 February 2019



European Union

European
Social Fund

This document is a 'live' document that will record all of the questions submitted during the open tendering period for the GLA's "Start Up Step Up London" ESF project, and the responses to the submitted questions.

Please read the questions and responses prior to submitting a new question. Responses will not be provided for questions that are repeated.

This document will be the only document published in relation to the "Start Up Step Up London" ESF project, and will be updated and published each Friday until the period for Q&A comes to an end on 27 February 2019. The Prospectus indicates a deadline for weekly submissions of questions as 16:00 hours on the Wednesday of each week, and questions submitted by the deadline will be responded to in this publication. However, where a question is submitted after the deadline but prior to publication the GLA will endeavour to include a response, rather than waiting a full week. To confirm the reasoning for this; (i) the publication will be available to all applicants at the same time, so no organisation will be disadvantaged, and (ii) the questions will be answered at the earliest possible publication date in order to assist all applicants and give them the maximum amount of time to consider responses. If further clarification is required that prevents the GLA from providing a response by the Friday following a Wednesday submission, the GLA reserves the right to publish an updated version of this document prior to the next publication deadline. The final date for the submission of questions is 27 February 2019.

Individual questions will not be responded to directly, but will appear in this published document so that all potential applicants receive a response at the same time to ensure that no advantage is given to any one bidder.

Questions will be printed in full, although the GLA reserves the right to amend wording to improve clarity if necessary, and to split questions which include more than one request into multiple questions. Questions will include a date on which they were submitted, but will be published in an anonymized format.

Where questions relate specifically to the "Start Up Step Up London" project, they will be published under that project heading.

Where question are generic or can be considered as generic, they will be published under the "Generic Questions" heading.

The GLA reserves the right to publish questions that are asked about a specific project, but which can be considered as generic, under the "Generic Questions" heading.

You are strongly advised to read both the generic questions and answers and those for the project for which you are applying before you submit your application.

Generic questions and answers will be republished in the Q&A document for any future opportunities funded via the GLA ESF 2014-2020 programme, although the GLA reserves the right to make amendments to responses if circumstances change or additional information is made available.

Generic Questions

Generic questions 1 to 16 are replicated from those published during the recent GLA grant award Q&A periods.

**Q1. What is the minimum turnover for bidding as lead for the <project title> tender?
(18 November 2016)**

A1. *The GLA does not require a minimum turnover from organisations bidding as Lead Delivery Partners. The GLA's Due Diligence process will look at a variety of areas, as described in the Prospectus, and they will collectively be considered prior to GLA Finance making a recommendation of whether to support an application. The GLA Finance recommendation will be risk based and may include suggested mitigations if risks are considered high but manageable. The GLA Finance recommendation will be considered alongside additional information requested within the application, and a decision will be made at moderation. Organisations should take a sensible approach when considering whether to apply as a Lead Delivery Partner, and should consider whether they have the financial stability and knowledge to manage a project of any particular value and complexity in terms of partnership.*

**Q2. To aid greatly with preparing our responses could you possibly provide the approximate maximum character counts for each of the response boxes in Part C of the application form?
(24 November 2016)**

A2. *No character limit has been published because the response boxes in Part C of the application form have been set up to be size-restricted so that all applicants have the same space for their response in the required font (Arial 10 point).*

**Q3. We are interested in becoming involved in the delivery of your <project>, but we feel we might not be successful if we submit a bid as a Lead Partner and we are therefore considering joining a partnership. Can you provide any information about the organisations that you know are bidding to become Leads?
(25 November 2016)**

A3. *Unfortunately the GLA will not know who intends to submit a bid as a Lead Delivery Partner until the deadline. However, we have put up an option for people to join our Mailing List on our website, and this asks whether people would like to be put on a Partnership Database.*

If you would like to access our Mailing List, please fill your details in [here](#).

If you would like to view the Partnership Database, please download it [here](#).

Q4. I have downloaded the Partnership Database from the ESF pages on the GLA website, but it is not clear whether an organisation wants to be a Lead Partner or a Sub-Partner. Can you let me know how I should find out?

(25 November 2016)

A4. The early version of the Mailing List included a Yes/No option for this question, but it has now been updated. We have written to the organisations on the Partnership Database to let them know that they can update this information, and we will continue to republish an updated version of the Partnership Database on our website on a regular basis.

Q5. As part of Due Diligence bidders are required to provide financial regulations unless legally unable. Our finance department are uncomfortable about this as it is an internal document and feel our audited Annual Report should provide sufficient assurance, are there any alternatives to that particular document and will not providing it mean we fail the Due Diligence?

(25 November 2016)

As a follow on to my Financial Regulations question, would our Procurement Policy suffice?

(29 November 2016)

A5. In order to aid the Due Diligence process and obtain a clear understanding of an organisation's capacity, processes and risk regarding financial exposure, the GLA has requested a number of documents. The Prospectus allows a relaxation of the requested documentation provided there is a legal reason. In this instance we do not believe that there is a legal reason to withhold the documentation. Furthermore, it being an internal document gives us greater insight into the procedures and processes related to the financial areas of your business. Whilst we appreciate the offer to substitute the Financial Regulations documentation with your audited Annual Report and Procurement Policy, these documents will not provide the breadth of information that the Financial Regulations will provide. We therefore confirm that we require the documentation and that if you fail to supply it we reserve the right not to assess your application or consider it for an award of funding.

The GLA will review the Due Diligence process and documentation requirements, and may amend this as future Specifications are published.

Q6. Please can you confirm whether or not someone could be on the SFA ESF Youth Programme at the same time they are on the GLA ESF Programme. Will there be the same opportunity to refer between Strands?

(25 November 2016)

A6. A participant may be on both the SFA and GLA ESF programmes at the same time, provided that the projects are delivering different outcomes or results. For example, if an activity identified during client assessment could

be delivered via an SFA project, and would not be reported or claimed from both, the participant could access both streams of funding. Applicants should note however that care should be taken where the end result for the participant is the same on both programmes, as it would not be able to be reported to and claimed from both organisations, regardless of whether the activity was delivered by more than one organisation or not.

**Q7. The Payment Trigger Calculator asks how much additional funding bidders could absorb to deliver additional outcomes at the same unit price – is there an upper limit for funding available?
(1 December 2016)**

A7. The question in the Payment Trigger Calculator is not related to current budget availability, but is intended to verify the value of project that an organisation could accommodate if additional budget did become available and the GLA wished to invest additional funding into this project.

**Q8. We are looking at the <project> application, and would like to know in more detail how the scoring mechanism works in practice. We have already referred to the information in the Application Form, as well as in the Prospectus on ‘How GLA will score your application’ but we would like clarity on how the scoring of each section of the application is going to work. So for example what is the maximum and lowest score for a question with say 6% weighting or 20% weighting? I also assume the scoring will work in the same manner for the <other GLA ESF projects>. I look forward to your feedback.
(8 December 2016)**

A8. The final section of the application (usually Part F) will indicate the values that each question will be scored from, (usually 0 to 3), and the percentage weighting for each question. Therefore, if a question is worth 6%, and score of 3 would mean that the application answer has contributed 6% to the overall score, with a 2 achieving 4%, a 1 achieving 2%, and a 0 achieving 0%. The question weighting therefore indicates the overall importance of the question.

**Q9. Please could you confirm whether an apprenticeship can be claimed as an employment outcome for GLA ESF co-financed projects?
(13 December 2016)**

A9. Participants who commence an apprenticeship will also have a contract of employment, and the preferred supplier will therefore be able to satisfy the evidence requirements for a claim for entry to employment for GLA ESF co-financed projects.

**Q10. We are currently considering a bid, but would prefer to engage with the programme as a subcontractor. I am aware that there is an ESF Partnership Database, but am not sure how to access it. Could you confirm this please?
(1 February 2017)**

A10. The link to access the Partnership Database is [here](#) and can be found in the response to Q3 above. The database is updated every week and the updated version is published on Friday of each week.

**Q11. Would a Young Person's participation in this programme affect their entitlement to JSA or other out-of-work benefits in any way?
(2 February 2017)**

A11. Applicants should note that although individuals in receipt of JSA or ESA are eligible for the Programme, they may be mandated onto Department for Work and Pensions (DWP's) Work Programme. This would result in participants being required to exit the project prior to completion and prior to results being achieved, therefore meaning that the GLA would be unable to make further payments in relation to the mandated participant. However, at their discretion, Jobcentre Plus (JCP) advisors may be able to defer mandatory Work Programme entry for a period of up to 12 months to allow a client to engage with alternative provision, and the GLA therefore advises that if JSA or ESA clients are recruited, successful Applicants should liaise with the individual's JCP advisor to confirm deferment at the earliest instance.

**Q12. If we submit an application, can you confirm when we will find out if we are successful (or not)?
(3 February 2017)**

A12. The Prospectus confirms that, whether successful or not, all applicants will be notified at the same time, (within one week of a decision being made by the GLA). A table which indicates provisional dates for various milestones is included at the end of the Specification.

**Q13. In a previous answer you have indicated that there is no minimum turnover for organisations submitting a tender, but that the financial tests in the prospectus will be followed. Are you able to provide more detail about what the thresholds are for pass/fail on the measures indicated in the prospectus so that we can make an assessment about whether we will meet these requirements?
(15 February 2017)**

A13. *The GLA Due Diligence process looks at a number of indices in order to determine whether they feel that there is sufficient risk appetite for us to make an investment. As each area reviewed impacts on all others, there are no thresholds that are set as either pass or fail. A generally poor score throughout could result in a recommendation that we do not invest, as could a good score throughout but with one area reviewed scoring particularly poorly.*

**Q14. Is there a minimum number of hours per week that someone needs to be in employment or training for this to count as an outcome?
(15 February 2017)**

A14. *The Evidence Handbook confirms the minimum number of hours per week that someone needs to be in employment for this to count as an outcome. There is no minimum threshold for either education or training.*

**Q15. Is there a minimum period of time that someone needs to have been out of education, employment or training before they are eligible for this programme?
(15 February 2017)**

A15. *The Specification confirms that participants must be either unemployed or inactive on entry to the project. Eligibility for the “Digital Skills Training” project also includes ‘At Risk’. Please refer to the Evidence Handbook for a definition.*

**Q16. I'm writing with a query regarding the <Project Name> ESF Prospectus, we are considering submitting a bid as part of a <organisation status> consortium. As part of the due diligence process we have been requested to submit our Financial Regulations. This document is for internal use only and contains potentially sensitive information that could leave us open to the risk of fraud if we allow our risk management processes and controls to be shared externally. Please could you confirm if an abridged version of our Financial Regulations would be sufficient (removing sensitive information)?
(21 February 2017)**

A16. *Further to the response to Q5 (above), the GLA are prepared to accept a ‘desensitised’ version of an organisation’s Financial Regulations, but applicants should ensure that the documentation provides sufficient information for the GLA to carry out their checks, and the GLA reserve the right to approach the applicant for additional information if it is required. However, the GLA would wish applicants to consider whether there is a need to submit a desensitised document, as the GLA would not share the document further and it would only be used internally for our review and checks.*

Questions relating specifically to the “Start Up Step Up London” project

Please note that a revised Application Form (v1) was published on 8 February 2019, with amendments made to the Output/Results table in Q2.1 on page 40. Please ensure that you use Application Form v1 with your submission.

The revised table is below:

Output/Results	Volume	As a percentage of ‘Starts’
Number of people commencing on the Project.		100%
Number of people attending at least 5 mentoring sessions.		%
Number of people who move into self-employment or employment (with a minimum of 50% entering self-employment).		%
Number of people (minimum of 70) achieving sustained self-employment or employment for 26 (out of 32) weeks (of which at least 50% to sustain self-employment).		%

Please note that a revised ESF Equality Policy was published on 1 February 2019, updated to reflect that the Policy should be read alongside Inclusive London; the Mayor’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/communities/mayors-strategy-equality-diversity-inclusion>.)

No questions were received in the w/c 28 January 2019.

Q1. Would you be able to clarify who this fund is aimed at please? I’m not clear on who the anticipated applicants are /who can apply – is it business support providers, colleges etc?

A1. Please refer to section 5 of the Prospectus which provides detail of the form of application which can be made, that is as a sole lead applicant, sole deliverer or consortium. The GLA will consider how an application proposes to achieve the desired programme outcomes and results; any type of organisation can apply although it may be appropriate for some to incorporate elements of partnership working in order to achieve all programme objectives.

Q2a. I note the Step Up element of the offer requires training accredited to Level 3 - which is not part of our delivery. Is it acceptable if we only apply for the Start Up element of the programme (£300K)?

The project objective is to deliver both the **Start Up** and the **Step Up** elements therefore a successful bid will address both. You may wish to review the ESF Partnership Database at <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/funding/european-social-fund/gla-co-financing-organisation/esf-partnership-database> . This is a regularly updated list of organisations who are interested in ESF Procurement and have agreed for their details to be published to allow potential partners to contact them.

You can add your organisation to this database by signing up to the GLA Co-Financing Organisation Mailing list and choosing 'yes' as your response to the question 'Do you want your details published to allow potential partners to contact you? *'. You can sign up at <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/funding/european-social-fund/gla-co-financing-organisation/gla-co-financing-organisation-mailing-list>

Q2b. We have 5 year's experience of delivering <courses>. Our courses are not accredited. Is it acceptable for us to propose non-accredited start-up training as a part of our Start Up proposal?

A 2b. There is no requirement for the **Start Up** training programme to be accredited; equally, training to support Participants to secure employment or self employment as part of the **Start Up** programme does not need to be accredited.

The Business Support Sessions delivered for the **Step Up** programme do not necessarily all need to be leading towards an accredited qualification, however please note that payment of 30% of the grant awarded for **Step Up** will only be triggered by people gaining at least 2 units of a relevant level 3 or above accredited qualification, and that this is a programme objective.

Q3. Please could you confirm if the activities of the two elements of this programme can be combined in one application as it's not clear from the specification if you are expecting an application for each element or one for both to cover the £500k

A3. The project objective is to deliver both the **Start Up** and the **Step Up** elements as a combined programme. The Application Form and Payment Trigger Calculator incorporate questions and details relating to both projects and it is expected that applicants will submit one application which will cover both **Start Up** and **Step Up**.

Q4. Is this something start ups can apply for?

A4. This is for potential bidders to apply to **deliver** a £500k entrepreneurship training programme to Londoners; please see the website [here](#) for further information. We hope to launch the project in Summer 2019 and potential

Participants who wish to benefit from joining the programme and who fit the eligibility criteria would be welcome to apply at that point.

Q5. I am completing my application and having problems with the Payment Trigger Calculation form. All of my figures in tab 3 and 5a match but it is not recognising the Programme total for Participants sustaining employment (not self-employment) figures and therefore it is flagged in red. See the attached screen shots. This is then flagged in the Project Income in tab 6. Is there an error on the form?

A5. The calculations underlying the Payment Trigger Calculator (PTC) spreadsheet in tab 5a are correct, however row headings for A12, A22, A31 and A40 should include numbers of Participants sustaining Employment AND Self Employment for 26 weeks out of 32. Whilst we do not consider this to be a material error, we have published a revised PTC (version 1) on 15 February which splits out Participants who are Sustaining Self Employment and Employment for Start Up on tab 5a. The GLA will accept either Original or Version 1 PTC submissions; should the successful bidder have submitted an Original PTC this will be converted by the GLA to Version 1 for inclusion in the Grant Agreement.

Q6a. Can you please confirm if the costs of the evaluation and the external evaluators is going to be covered by the GLA separately or is this funded from the £500,00 available for this project?

A6a. The GLA can confirm that the external evaluation will be commissioned by the GLA and will not be funded from the £500k available for this project; it is expected that the successful bidder will complete interim and final self-evaluation for the Project which should be included by the bidder as part of the cost of delivering the Project.

Q6b. Can you please confirm if the percentages in the Payment Triggers tables (page 19 of the Specification document) are correct as they add up to 100%?

A6b. Both the Payment Triggers tables on page 19 of the Specification total 110%. The tables include an advance payment of 10% of the grant which is then subsequently recovered against grant earned for people moving into self-employment or employment for **Start Up**, and recovered against grant earned for employed people gaining qualifications for **Step Up**.

Q7. In reference to your Start Up, Step Up London current open call, is it possible to segment the Start Up from the Step Up and just apply for one of the components, or does an applicant have to apply for both?

A7. Please see the answers to Q2a and Q3 of the section headed 'Questions relating specifically to the "Start Up Step Up London" project' on page 11 of

this document.

Q8. As part of the due diligence checks we have to submit the following: “Budgeted allocation of funding within the project or a budget detailing which activity within the recipient’s organisation will be funded. The budget should contain line details of proposed expenditure e.g. staffing costs, stationery and publicity”. Can you please provide more information on this budget and confirm what is this referring to? Will this information be provided as part of the Payment Trigger Calculator or is this something additional and if it is, is there a template we can use?

A8. This is referring to your proposed anticipated expenditure for the project. This information will be provided as part of the Payment Trigger Calculator. It should be entered in the Tab named ‘1. Cost Delivering Project’.

Q9. Can you please clarify how to calculate the Participant Cost and Participant Allowance as required for the Payment Trigger Calculator (Cost Delivering Project tab) and what is the difference?

A9. Participant Costs: This covers any costs you anticipate where participants are reimbursed for their expenses, such as subsistence, travel or registration fees.
Participant Allowances: This covers any costs you anticipate where participants are given an allowance or incentive of some kind to assist them to attend.
There is no specific methodology for calculating these. Just enter your anticipated costs in the Cost Delivering Project sheet, cells E20/21 and G20/21

Q10. In the Step up element of the call, the specification states that the primary results are; ‘Minimum of 70 employed people (of which at least 70% female) gaining an improved labour market status’. Within the payment triggers it then suggests that payments will be made on the basis of level 3 qualifications. Can you provide clarification? Do you expect all 70 individuals to obtain 2 units of level 3 equivalent qualifications?

A10. For the **Step Up** project, you identify correctly that the primary result is for a minimum of 70 employed people (of which at least 70% female) to gain improved labour market status. The payment triggers show that a maximum of 30% of the grant for **Step Up** will be paid for employed people who attain an improved status (as defined in the Evidence Handbook).

Separately, there is a maximum of 30% of the grant for **Step Up** that will be payable for employed people who gain at least 2 units of a Level 3 or above qualification. We expect that gaining qualifications will lead to improved labour market status for some and it will be up to you to determine how

many people will be required to gain qualifications in order to ensure a minimum of 70 achieve the primary target of improved labour market status. There may be some instances where improved labour market status will not be dependent on qualifications but on other types of support provided by the project.

Q11. We note that we will need partners e.g. co-working spaces. We are talking to local organisations who are also considering applying, but I thought you may be able to connect me with organisations who are applying, but who may not have experience of growing <businesses>.

A11. Please refer to answer Q2a of the section headed 'Questions relating specifically to the "Start Up Step Up London" project' on page 9 of this document.

Q12a. Partnership working: In the specification it states applicants should provide information about key partnerships arrangements which will support the project – In this instance, we foresee ourselves signposting to partners rather than forming partnerships. Would you suggest we apply for the Sole Deliverers or Sole Lead Applicants based on this?

A12a. Sole Lead Applicants may have formally contracted partners, and Sole Lead Applicants and Sole Deliverers may have strategic partners. Both forms of partnership and both forms of Applicant Status may be able to deliver a project dependent on their formal or informal arrangements, and the reliance that an Applicant has with its partnership. The GLA is not able to advise on the preferred Status of an Applicant, and this will differ regarding the individual organisations circumstances.

Q12b. If in the initial application we apply as Sole Deliverers but decide to start working with partners during the project – is this fine or do we need to submit a project change direction?

A12b. Any proposed change to subcontracting arrangements after the awarding of a Grant Agreement needs to be notified to the GLA for approval prior to implementation. The GLA reserves the right to revisit the selection criteria as originally tested during procurement to confirm that these criteria would still be met were the proposed change to be undertaken. Please refer to sections 34-42 of the Delivery Handbook.

Q13. This section talks about a 26 weeks period. Is this a fixed time for the delivery of activities for each group?

A13. The 26 (out of 32) week period relates solely to the amount of time that a **Start Up** Participant must be supported to sustain employment or self-employment in order to trigger a "Start Up: Access to Entrepreneurship" payment from the **Start Up** element of the project. A 26 week period is not relevant to other pre-ceding stages of the **Start Up** project or to the **Step Up** project.

Q14. As this is a proposal, will all parties and potential stakeholders need to provide evidence of their full support prior to submission?

A14. As requested on page 16 of the “GLA ESF 2014-2020 Co-Financing Programme Start Up, Step Up London: Access to Entrepreneurship; Business Support and Leadership” Application Form v1, Applicants are required to complete a Partnership Declaration Form for any organisation that will have a formal involvement in the delivery of the project. Stakeholders who will not be directly involved in the delivery of the Project will not be required to provide evidence of support, although you may submit a Partnership Declaration Form for these informal partners to confirm their involvement in the support of your project.

Q15. Will all GDPR considerations need to be factored into the project plan proposal?

A15. As stated in section 55 of the Delivery Handbook, the successful Applicant will need to ensure that there is full compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/79. Applicants must decide whether this information is required to be conveyed to the GLA in their proposed Delivery Plan.

Q16. Please could you confirm whether we will need to submit a Payment Trigger Calculator with our completed Application form?

A16. As stated on the Instructions tab of the Payment Trigger Calculator, the Payment Trigger Calculator must be completed and submitted to the GLA along with your application. The deadline for submission of documents is 5:00pm on Friday 8 March 2019.