



The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership

Capital Project Funding Call

Guidance for Applicants

1. Introduction

1.1. The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) drives economic growth across the local authority areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin through effective partnership working. It strives to fulfil the following vision:

- A place which is open for business, and encourages clean, inclusive growth.
- A growing place, attracting more people to come, stay and build their careers and businesses.
- At the forefront of changes in how people live and work using new technology and improved physical and digital connectivity to enable businesses and people to develop and succeed.
- A visitor destination with significant natural and cultural resources
- A collaborative and proactive place with businesses, further education institutions (FEIs), higher education institutions (HEIs), public and community organisations working together to agree what needs to happen and getting things done.
- A pioneer in the provision and testing of digitally driven health and social care for dispersed populations to support healthy ageing and economic participation in later life.
- A global centre of excellence in cyber security, agritech and advanced manufacturing, driving innovation in sustainable agriculture, food and drink production and energy generation.
- An inclusive place that enables residents from all communities to thrive and develop with quality jobs offering good wages, training and progression.

2. Purpose and details of the call specification

2.1. To contribute to these objectives, the Marches LEP has identified a budget of £487k which it wishes to invest in capital projects within Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin which align with above vision and support the following policy areas:

- The move to a net zero economy
- Business support and innovation projects
- Skills development and employability support.

- 2.2. Interested parties are invited to bid for a share of the funding available. Bids will be assessed by a panel of representatives from the Marches LEP and partners.
- 2.3. The call is open to all incorporated organisations, including community groups with a legal structure (Companies Ltd by Guarantee with charitable status, Community Interest Companies, Community Benefit Societies and Charitable Incorporated Organisations).
- 2.4. Applicants are expected to demonstrate strategic alignment with local, regional and national policy/guidance including, but not limited to:
 - [Herefordshire 2050 Economic Plan](#)
 - [Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy 2022 2027](#)
 - [Telford Vision 2032](#)
 - [HM Government Environmental Improvement Plan 2023](#)
 - [Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan and Evidence Base 2023](#)
 - [Marches Energy Strategy](#)
- 2.5. Applications will be expected to demonstrate the achievement of outputs and positive outcomes which are directly attributed to the project for which funding is being sought. It is anticipated that these could include measurable, evidenced improvements in:
 - Additional installed capacity, number of new sites, or annual generation (kWp)
 - Estimated greenhouse gas savings (tCO₂e)
 - Total energy (kWh) savings
 - Number of households brought out of fuel poverty
 - Total freed-up capacity (kWp)
 - Number of enterprises receiving support
 - New jobs created (FTE)
 - Jobs safeguarded (FTE)
 - Innovative new products created
 - Additional employment land (ha)
 - Commercial floor space (sqm)
 - New learners assisted (students enrolled)

3. Project Eligibility Criteria

- 3.1. All funded activity must be complete (including providing evidence of defrayal) by 29 March 2024 or earlier depending on the individual project. Projects are expected to deliver measurable impact and achieve verifiable outputs by 31 March 2025.
- 3.2. In all cases, applicants must procure any consultants and contractors and purchase equipment in accordance with [UK Public Procurement Regulations](#).
- 3.3. The Marches LEP is committed to ensuring Social Value through its funding programmes, recognising its responsibilities pursuant to the Social Value Act 2012. Applicants should provide details on how projects add economic, social or environmental benefits within the local area.
- 3.4. Applicants are expected to actively consider innovation and innovative solutions within their projects including the adoption of proven and emerging technologies.

3.5. The funding made available by the Marches LEP will not support the development and delivery of projects that increase the carbon footprint and reduce the climate resilience of the Marches.

4. Invitation to Bid Process

4.1. Guidance on how to complete the application is provided within the application form which should be read alongside this guidance. As limited time is available to carry out the assessment process, applicants are therefore required to keep answers brief and focused – the application form contains guidance for length of responses (word limits apply to help keep the process manageable).

4.2. We will assess the bids only on the information submitted in the required format. We cannot guarantee that we will consider any additional information that applicants provide at the assessment stage.

4.3. Applicants must submit their bids by 17:00 on 1 December 2023.

4.4. For any questions or queries relating to the bidding process please contact Kathryn Jones (kathryn.jones@marcheslep.org.uk).

4.5. Please return one electronic copy of the signed and completed bid and the required supporting information to the Marches LEP at enquiries@marcheslep.org.uk. (Please compress files to less than 5Mb or send several emails).

5. Assessment Criteria

5.1. An evaluation panel will score proposals received against the criteria below. This evaluation process will enable the Marches LEP to identify the proposals which best meet the criteria identified above.

5.2. The bids will be assessed against the following core criteria:

| Assessment Criteria | Weighting |
|--|-----------|
| Match funding (amount secured) | 10% |
| Identification of innovation solutions | 10% |
| Strategic fit with relevant local, regional and national policies/guidance | 50% |
| Evidence of relevant stakeholder support | 10% |
| Proposed management of the project (staffing, procurement, monitoring approach etc.) | 20% |

5.3. Scoring Matrix:

| Response | Score | Reason for Score |
|--------------------------|-------|---|
| Non - compliant response | 0 | No information given or response not relevant. |
| Unsatisfactory response | 1 | Partially compliant response but with lack of detail unclear understanding of the requirement. |
| Weak response | 2 | Weak response that barely demonstrates understanding and that acceptable outcomes would be delivered. |
| Acceptable response | 3 | Compliant response indicating would meet minimum requirements. |
| Good response | 4 | Compliant response shows detailed understanding of requirements and offers benefits beyond stated requirements. |
| Usefully Exceeds | 5 | Compliant response illustrated comprehensive understanding of requirements. Proposal usefully exceeds expectations. |

5.4. Timescales

| Milestone | Date |
|---|------------------|
| Issue brief for the bidding process | 27 October 2023 |
| Deadline for submissions | 1 December 2023 |
| Confirmation of successful applicants | 15 December 2023 |
| Anticipated commencement of work following issue of funding agreement | 16 January 2024 |
| Completion of work and deadline for submission of final claims and evidence of defrayal | 29 March 2024 |
| Delivery of and reporting on measurable impact and verifiable outputs achieved | 31 March 2025 |

All dates may be subject to change.

6. Financial Arrangements

- 6.1. Payments for the successful bids will be paid on receipt of appropriate claims and associated evidence, subject to Shropshire Council's (as the Marches LEP's accountable body) standard payment terms. Arrangements will be confirmed with successful applicants following approval of the application by issuing a formal funding agreement.
- 6.2. Please note that the Marches LEP reserves the right to cancel the application process at any time prior to funding agreements being finalised.

7. Subsidy Control

- 7.1. The applicant must provide information in Section A8 of the Expression of Interest form which enables the Marches LEP to verify the applicant's assessment as to whether the funding sought would be compliant with UK Subsidy Control Rules.
- 7.2. The applicant should note that the Marches LEP may be obliged under any subsequent funding agreement and/or the Subsidy Control Mechanism to require all or part of any grants to be repaid (plus interest) if any information given or representation made in respect of the Subsidy Control Mechanism information provided in the Expression of Interest is found to be materially incorrect.

8. Clarifications

- 8.1. If you require any clarification relating to this information provided, please approach the contact detailed in paragraph 4.4 prior to 1200 on 27 November 2023.
- 8.2. Responses to requests for clarification may not materially change any of the elements of the bid submitted. Any additional information provided by the Marches LEP as a result of requests for clarification will be made available to all potential applicants through publication on the Marches LEP website.

9. Submission of applications

- 9.1. Please return one electronic copy of the signed and completed bid and the required supporting information to the Marches LEP at enquiries@marcheslep.org.uk. (Please compress files to less than 5Mb or send several emails). Please state Marches LEP Capital Funding Project Call in the email subject.
- 9.2. Completed submissions must be submitted by the deadline for submissions. Submissions sent by other means may not be accepted and this will be at the discretion of the Marches LEP.

10. Contractual obligations

- 10.1. Applicants will receive a formal response from the Marches LEP advising whether their bid has been successful or not.

- 10.2. Successful applicants will be issued with a formal funding agreement which will set out the reporting and claims process.
- 10.3. The LEP reserves the right to withdraw the approval of the bid in the event that following approval the project is considerably changed and/or project costs are increased or decreased without proven justification.