

## **£6m fund in place to help develop Cumbria's low carbon economy**

A new round of funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has been launched to help develop Cumbria's low carbon economy and renewable energy resources.

£6.36m is being made available to help support the county's drive to shift towards a low carbon economy across all sectors.

The funding is specifically to support and promote the production and distribution of energy derived from renewable resources, as well as energy efficiency and renewable energy use in enterprises.

In addition, it has been designed to support energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure and in the housing sector.

The eligibility criteria also cater for project applications involving low carbon strategies and technologies, from their research and innovation through to implementation and adoption.

That includes decentralised energy measures such as smart grid projects, and sustainable energy initiatives, for example, those involving combined heat and power or public lighting systems.

The latest ERDF funding call is open until 26 January 2018, with funding expected to be awarded through to 2020.

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership is helping to manage the European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) programme, which includes ERDF as well as the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

"This is another opportunity to ensure that Cumbria uses and applies all of its EU funding allocation to the end of the programme in 2020," explains Corinne Watson from Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership. "We anticipate that this will be the final ERDF call for investment in low carbon projects."

"Energy is a major sector for the Cumbrian economy and it's important that the county's economic growth supports the principles of sustainable development. Investment in low carbon goods and services, as well as encouraging energy efficiency within businesses, can help us achieve that aim."

"We want to grow our low carbon research and development base and harness our power-generating potential. This funding can help support the deployment of low-carbon infrastructure and technologies, as well as the growth and export potential of local low carbon companies."

"Projects seeking capital investment must be deliverable, with planned activity for a maximum of three years. As usual, technical assistance and support is available, so anyone considering an application should get in touch with us as soon as possible to discuss their project."

The European Regional Development Fund aims to provide support for research and innovation activities, SME business creation and the growth and creation of a low carbon economy. The minimum ERDF request is £500,000. Businesses can apply for ERDF investment support if they have major plans for their business which meet the eligibility criteria of the funding call.

For those who have been thinking about applying for ERDF funding but have not been through the process before, there is Technical Assistance support available through Cumbria LEP for applicants to help them ensure that they are developing a compliant application.

For further information about available funding and how to apply, visit the live funding calls section of the ERDF section of the Cumbria ESIF website at <http://www.cumbriaesif.co.uk/erdf.html> or <https://www.gov.uk/european-structural-investment-funds/low-carbon-call-in-cumbria-oc07r17p-0682> or contact Corinne Watson at Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership by emailing [corinne.watson@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:corinne.watson@cumbria.gov.uk)

**Ends**

For media information, please contact Osprey Communications on 01539 442 436.

#### **Notes for editors**

- Cumbria LEP provides a strategic lead for all activities contributing to the growth and vibrancy of the county's economy and where appropriate takes positive action, using the skills, capability and networks of LEP partners.
- The LEP is keen to work with all partners and stakeholders (private and public) to undertake actions, secure funding and implement initiatives to support sustainability and growth of Cumbria's economy.
- A copy of the Cumbria Strategic Economic Plan is available at: [www.cumbrialep.co.uk/what-we-do/sep/](http://www.cumbrialep.co.uk/what-we-do/sep/)