

Delivering workshops to help support applications to ERDF Funds in the Black Country

Lead Organisation:

Sustainability West Midlands

Project Manager: Anna Bright (Chief Executive)

Customers:



Project Duration:

September 2018 – November 2018

The Project

The Black Country Technical Assistance team, based at Walsall Council, sought the support of Sustainability West Midlands to raise awareness of, and deliver, several workshops on ERDF Funding. Taking place across the Black Country in the course of two days, SWM worked with BCTA to deliver four workshops that covered a range of ERDF Priority axes including. The Priorities we covered were one, two, three, four and six, priority three for example covers Increasing SME Competitiveness and Priority six, Environment and Resource Efficiency, you can find full details of the different priority areas on the [Government website](#). BCTA recognised SWM's reputation for stakeholder engagement and the ability to facilitate workshops with high level, quality content. As a result, SWM was commissioned to deliver these workshops to make a final push on the allocated funds available, providing an understanding of how to create a successful application, with supporting material from industry leaders and case studies from successful applicants in the region.

Aims

- Deliver an introduction to ERDF opportunities in the Black Country region.
- Provide an overview of regional context, supported by industry leaders.
- Improve the understanding of how to create a successful project application with support from case studies of successful projects and the team behind them.
- Outline the key eligibility criteria as well as application routes.
- Support those moving forward with a clear understanding of the 'next steps.'

Challenges

There are lots of challenges involved when facilitating a series of workshops such as these, some that are more obvious than others and some that may not be so clear from the onset. One of the most notable challenges for delivering these events was the short time scale we had to arrange and carry out the workshops. This was due to the deadline for applications that was fast approaching later in the same month.

Our job was to present information to those at varying degrees of understanding and progress in their project development, whilst not overwhelming new potential applications with too much information. As this was the case it was important that we pitched the events right as to attract those who needed the support, but not make them feel as if they could not benefit. The challenge in doing this was securing a good balance of technical information on context, opportunities and creating applications and industry leaders that would be able to provide their first-hand experiences of doing this and what they feel should and could be done moving forward.

The ultimate aim in running these events was to make delegates feel confident in their ability to create a successful application that would fund their project and develop their organisation further and do so in a restricted time frame. Furthermore, this had to be done in strict accordance with ERDF regulation.

The Outcome

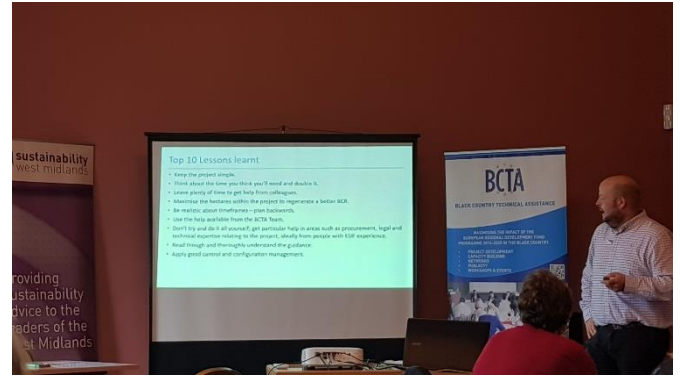
As a result of commissioning SWM to take this project forward, we were able to successfully deliver four workshops covering ERDF Priorities one, two, three, four and six, to interested parties in the Black Country. For that reason, the following successes were achieved;

- SWM facilitated four successful workshops across two days in key and iconic locations in the Black Country. Hosting two workshops at the Wolverhampton Science Park, we were able to attract prominent figures who were both interested in giving their own perspective on topics discussed, as well as hearing those from others. As well as this, two workshops were hosted at the Himley Hall, a scenic location and an icon of the Black Country, attracting a range of professionals, academics and those seeking further support for their projects.
- We were able to secure key industry leaders who delivered presentations on the opportunities available in the region, with the support from their own projects to back this up. Securing speakers such as our members Matt Mellors from [EnTRESS Project](#), Bob Harrington from the [Transformational Gold Programme](#) and others, we succeeded in delivering well informed workshops that provided information and stimulated discussion.
- Attracted approximately 55 members of the public, private and third sectors to share their knowledge and understanding, but to further develop this also. This means they are now



better equipped to create successful project applications or further their work and organisation.

- Provided an opportunity for delegates and members of the SWM and BCTA teams to network with one another, allowing them to bounce their ideas off each other helping to form more matured, better developed project proposals.



In the Future

Ultimately, the success of these workshops will only be apparent when we become aware of the applications that the BCTA has received for ERDF funding, in either this or future funding rounds. SWM will learn from this and be able to use the outcomes of these applications – successful or otherwise – to ensure that we can refine our engagement approach in future, should further workshops be required for similar means. In the meantime, we hope that the success of these workshops is translated into strong, tangible projects funded by ERDF that contribute to the sustainability and growth of the Black Country and wider West Midlands region.

Awards and endorsements

“The BCTA would highly recommend the services of SWM. BCTA worked with SWM in 2018 to assist with event management services across the Black Country. SWM provided an efficient and professional service throughout the contract whilst keeping the BCTA team up to date on the progress of objectives. All members of the team added to the events in making them a success and were very approachable throughout. We would look to work with SWM again and would advocate them for work with other organisations.” – **Oliver Nash, Project Development Officer for the BCTA**

“Very pleased with calibre and quality of the workshop”

“Chance to network and share with each other was great”

“Excellent opportunity to network + connect to others that have been through the application process”

Contact Details

For further information on the project or to work with us in one of a variety of ways, please contact the SWM team on 0121 237 5890 or enquiries@swm.org.uk.