

**Growth Fund ERDF project
Customer journey**

Application appraisal and approval process

All applications to the programme will follow a strict process, which has been designed to ensure compliance with all the applicable criteria and standards, including ERDF criteria and State aid regulations. The process is also designed to ensure effective use of public money. Pre-application enquiries will be handled by the UMi Service and Investment team and any businesses that are not eligible for the programme will be referred to the Business Support Helpline for alternative support.

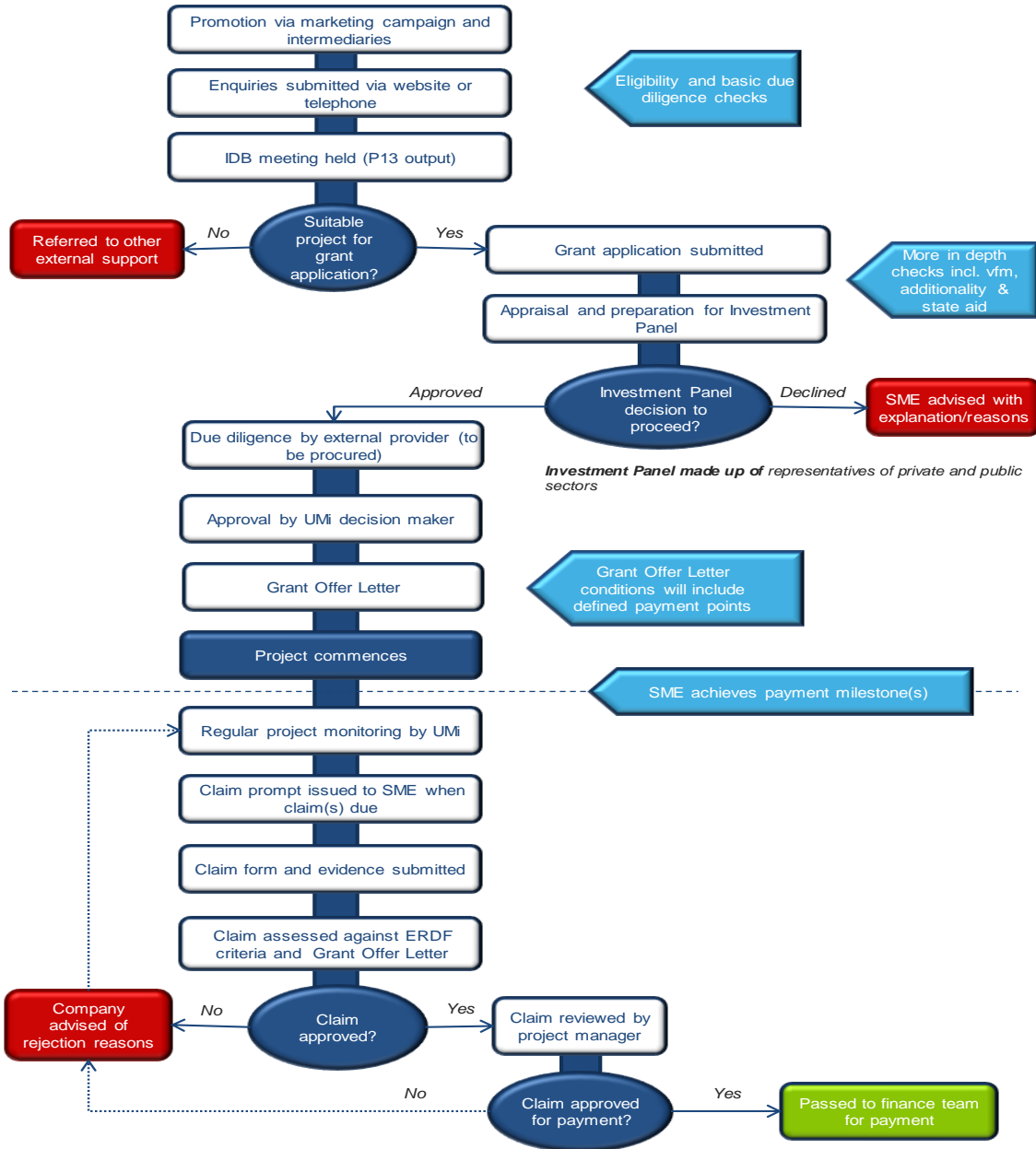
Figure 1:

Application process:

Enquiry	Enquiry form submitted via scheme website. Eligibility checks conducted on SME.
IDB meeting	If eligible, appointment with Project Adviser. IDB carried out (P13 output).
Grant Application	If SME has a suitable investment project, Project Adviser invites a grant application from them.
Appraisal	Grant application is appraised by Business & Investment Adviser and prepared for submission to Investment Panel.
NTGF panel	Investment Panel meets every 2 months.
Due Diligence	External provider (to be procured) carries out due diligence and provides a report to UMi and Gateshead Council.
Grant Approval	UMi Executive makes final decision on whether to offer grant, in what amount and on what terms.
Grant Offer Letter	Final approval communicated to SME and Grant Offer Letter issued and signed. Project may commence.

Figure 2:

Growth Fund customer journey process flow:





European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



Grant application appraisal criteria

Every grant application will be appraised in the following areas. Applications will be subject to an initial assessment against the criteria listed below before being considered by the Investment Panel. Following approval in-principle by the Investment Panel to receive a grant award, applications will be examined in greater detail against the same criteria by the external due diligence provider.

Further details of the criteria listed below are given in the Due Diligence Appraisal Scope.

- ERDF eligibility
- State aid
- Additionality
- Management and financial controls
- Viability and Funding
- Review of Employment impacts and previous grants
- Parent credit standing (if applicable)
- Recommendations for inclusion in offer letter and subsequent monitoring of the project
- Any other points of relevance and interest that are identified in the work.