



European Union

European Structural
and Investment Funds

European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme for England (2014-2020)

Terms of Reference for the Growth Programme Board's National Sub-committees

Approved – June 2022

Terms of Reference for the Growth Programme Board's National Sub-committees

(European Structural and Investment Funds 2014 -2020)

National Sub-committees Terms of Reference

1. These Terms of Reference (ToR) revise and replace the version approved in December 2019 [ESIF-GN-2-011, Version 3). They set out the core elements describing how a National Sub-committee should function.
2. National Sub-committees are responsible for providing specialist advice and support to the GPB in its role to oversee that the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme's policy and operational objectives are delivered successfully.
3. A National Sub-committee may be closed by the Growth Programme Board where it is no longer felt to be needed.

A. Governance

4. The Growth Programme Board (GPB) is the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) for both the ERDF and the ESF Operational Programmes in England. National Sub-committees report directly to the GPB.
5. National sub-committees will not substitute for or take on the tasks and functions of the GPB or Managing Authorities. The GPB is responsible for all decisions on its own advice, approvals or opinions given according to its functions set out in Regulations¹, whether or not advice was given by its sub-committees.

B. Purpose

6. National Sub-committees are established by the GPB to have an advisory role to the GPB and/or Managing Authorities. They will be responsible for considering evolving national policy, including any invitations from Government for informal views on post-EU growth policy. They will consider the operational context, interaction between the ESI Funds depending on their individual remit, and their relationship with other ESI Funds sub-committees.
7. The purpose of all National Sub-committees is, according to their remit, to:
 - Review relevant national policy or operational circumstances, particularly Government policies, socio-economic factors and EU regulatory practice in relation to ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes and local investments

¹ Regulations refer to the relevant Articles within the European Commission's Common Provision Regulations (EU) No 1303/2013 and the specific regulations for ERDF and ESF. Also to any update on these Regulations.

and provide advice to the GPB and/or Managing Authorities within agreed remits.

- Consider and advise on any systemic issues relating to implementation of the ESI Funds Growth Programme for the relevant thematic objectives
- Identify and promote examples of good and potential best practice
- Consider and advise on EU Regulations practice, precedent and decisions which have wider application.
- Take account of policy and/or operational issues identified through members' networks and stakeholders, or issues referred to it by the GPB or other National Sub-committees.
- Provide reports as commissioned by the GPB and/or according to an agreed schedule and focus in relation to specific Growth Programme priorities, targets and milestones.
- Bring risks and issues to the attention of the relevant National Sub-committee or full GPB as appropriate, and in a timely way; these should be brought to the attention of the GPB Secretariat in their first instance.
- National Sub-committees may be remitted by the GPB to provide advice to Managing Authorities.

C. Role of each National Sub-committee

8. Annex A of this document sets out the remit of each National Sub-committee. The Chair of any National Sub-committee may propose change(s) to its remit. Any changes proposed to its remit will need to be agreed by the GPB.

D. Membership

9. National Sub-committees will be chaired by the most relevant lead. The deputy chair will be from the relevant Managing Authority, except where such Managing Authority is the sub-committee chair. A relevant Managing Authority will provide the Secretariat, working closely with the GPB secretariat to understand the protocols and procedures the Sub-committee must adhere to in supporting the GPB.
10. Membership must include relevant HM Government and Managing Authority nominated leads, but does not have to be drawn from or follow the proportions of representation at the full GPB. Organisations not represented on the GPB can therefore be represented on the National Sub-committees. Papers will be shared with the European Commission, who will be invited to attend Sub-committee meetings, as relevant. Sub-committee membership should be based on the principle of expertise, not seniority.

E. Meeting Arrangements

11. National Sub-committees should meet as regularly as needed.
12. Meeting dates for each calendar year will be agreed in advance. The Chair may ask for extra-ordinary meetings when a matter is urgent.

13. Sub-committees may need to deal with some issues by correspondence, to discharge them quickly.
14. All meetings and decisions will be minuted. Minutes will normally be circulated no later than 10 working days after a meeting for approval by members. 'No response' will be taken as endorsement. Minutes will be agreed by the Sub-committee as a confirmation of their being a true record of the meeting. If the GPB considers that the Sub-committee has stepped outside of its remit, it may challenge the minutes and expect a response.
15. National Sub-committees will operate in accordance with the procedures and protocols laid out by the Growth Programme Board and its secretariat. In particular, members will follow the same principles and protocols as GPB members in terms of a code of conduct and declaration of their interests. At least once in every 12-month period, and on other occasions at the discretion of the Chair, all members must review the information relating to him or her contained in the register of interests and declare that the information is correct or make a further declaration if necessary. Conflicts of interest should be identified to the Chair and minuted. Where there are no interests declared, the minutes will also record this.

ANNEX A Remit of National Sub-committees

Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and assess spend and performance across ERDF and ESF spend, including through Co-financing organisations, undertaking regular reviews to assess spend, commitment levels, N+3 and impact across GDTs in order to be able to advise the GPB and MAs as needed • Report findings and outcomes to the GPB, with recommendations • Assess trends and risks and advise how these might be managed. Highlight those of a sufficiently high level to the GPB. • Consider broad trends in key indicators, including results, output indicators and aggregated spending/outcome totals, for both the relevant thematic objectives and overall national objectives and targets, and take a broad view across the whole growth programme in order to advise the GPB on their views of how the programme as a whole is performing or meeting its national targets • Include, within its monitoring and assessment functions, opt-in organisations • Advise how best practice arising from good performance is communicated to local partners and other stakeholders, ensuring activity is linked to relevant communication plans
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise on ERDF and ESF evaluations undertaken as part of the Evaluation Strategy developed by the MAs • Contribute to evaluation reports developed by the MAs • Provide advice to the GPB in terms of their approval of evaluation reports prior to the submission to GPB for final approval