



European Union

European Structural
and Investment Funds

**European Structural and Investment
Funds
2014 - 2020**

Growth Programme for England

ESI Funds Growth Programme Board

European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF) Programme Update

Purpose:

To provide the Board with a progress report on EMFF implementation in England.

Recommendation(s):

That the Growth Programme Board notes the report.

Summary:

Good progress continues to be made, with 733 applications for projects received. Approved projects (527) have total project costs of more than £34m.

1. There continues to be good take-up of the EMFF in England, with 733 applications for projects received under the 'core' programme (i.e. not including expenditure for control and enforcement activities, and data collection measures) totalling over £68m total project cost of which £30.7m is EMFF.
2. Out of the 733 applications received, 527 have been approved, with total project costs of more than £34.6m, of which £16.3m is EMFF and over £3m national match. Monies have also started to be paid out to projects, with over £4.8m already paid out.
3. The most popular areas for funding are:
 - Health and safety – equipment and on-board vessel investments (153 projects attracting £1.06m EMFF);
 - Limiting the impact of fishing on the marine environment – more selective fishing gear and practices (131 projects, attracting £1.2m EMFF);
 - Processing and marketing – of fisheries and aquaculture products (63 projects, attracting £4.1m EMFF);
 - Adding value and quality – to caught and unwanted fish products (62 projects, attracting £417k EMFF);
 - Infrastructure investments – in ports, harbours, landing sites and auction halls (47 projects, £4.3m EMFF);
 - Investments in aquaculture – new units, diversification of production and species, modernisation of existing units (8 projects, £1.0m EMFF);
 - Promotion of human capital – job creation, improving social dialogue, training (5 projects, £871k EMFF);

- Protection/restoration of marine biodiversity and ecosystems – collection of waste, Natura 2000 sites, increasing environmental awareness (17 projects, £1.97m EMFF).
4. There are 206 projects with the Marine Management Organisation (which is both the UK Managing Authority and England Intermediate Body) awaiting approval at various stages of the process with an EMFF grant £9.02m.
 5. With regard to CLLD, the six Fisheries Local Action Groups have launched and budgets of £4.8m have now been allocated to FLAG's (£3.6m EMFF, £1.2m Defra). Each FLAG has a specific set of local issues they are looking to address through their strategies and business plans. There are still risks to the FLAG groups meeting their spend profiles for 2017/18 due to the length of time it has taken to send applications through to the MMO. The FLAG projects have however begun to materialise and there have to date been 36 projects received by MMO with a total project cost of £1.962m (EMFF £1.278m National £388k). Of the 36 projects received there have been 13 approved. There are 5 Management & Administration projects (£1.0m) which FLAGs have been granted to manage the programme, and 9 regular FLAG projects for things like Insulated Fish Boxes, Landing Davits and Fishermen's Huts (£309k).

Our current 'top challenge(s)' and how we are addressing them

6. The top challenge for delivery of the EMFF scheme remains ensuring that the seafood sector in England maximises its use of the scheme, in particular where take up is not in line with the current budgets specified in the Operational Programme. This is becoming more prevalent as we are now starting to realise pressures on some of the budgets particularly within Union Priority 1, yet there are areas where uptake is low. Article 43.2 the landing obligation element of the Ports & Harbours article remains unpopular despite significant effort to engage applicants and generate projects. Discussions with stakeholders have gleaned that as we move further into the latter stages of the discard ban there may be applications generated but there is a lack of necessity for the types of equipment and facilities that could be grant funded at present. Article 43.1 which covers the more traditional infrastructure type projects in ports and harbours is over-subscribed.
7. Since the last update the European Grants Team have delivered 8 of 9 proposed roadshow events at locations throughout England targeting areas which have minimal MMO coastal coverage, no active FLAG groups and a low number of EMFF applications submitted. These events have been very successful and have generated a large number of applications mainly for investments on-board vessels. The events have also been attended by representatives of ports and harbours and processors and advice offered on large value infrastructure projects.

Challenges in different areas of the country/Can we learn from delivery in different areas?

8. Unlike the other Structural Funds, delivery of EMFF projects in England is not delivered by regional teams as the number of projects is small and the applications require some degree of technical knowledge of the seafood sector; all English applications are

processed by the MMO's EMFF team at their headquarters in Newcastle. Data is not categorised on a regional basis.

Robert Matthews, Defra
EMFF Programme Monitoring Committee