

EUROPEAN REFUGEE FUND

European Refugee Fund - General

Background

1. The European Refugee Fund (ERFIII) is a European Union (EU) funding programme that supports the efforts of EU Member States in receiving and bearing the consequences of receiving refugees and displaced persons. All EU Member States, with the exception of Denmark, participate in the ERFIII.
2. The ERFIII is one of the four funds which form part of the EU's General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows. The Fund was established by Decision 573/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council dated 23 May 2007. ERF III replaced earlier programmes of the European Refugee Fund; ERFII which operate between 2005 and 2010 and ERFI which operated between 2000 and 2004.
3. Decision 573/2007/EC, commonly known as 'the Basic Act' established the RF for the period from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013. The Decision defined the objectives to which the Fund contributes the implementation arrangements, the available financial resources, and the distribution criteria for the allocation of the financial resources. It also established the ERFIII's management rules and monitoring and control systems, which are based on the sharing of responsibilities between the European Commission (EC) and Member States.
4. 'The Basic Act' is supplemented by secondary legislation of the EC. The Commission Decision, 2007/815/EC of 30 November 2007 set out the strategic priorities and specific priorities for the ERFIII. The Commission Decision, 2008/22/EC of 19 December 2007, as amended by Commission Decision, 2011/177/EU of 2 March 2011, laid down detailed rules for implementation of the ERFIII, including Member States' management and control systems, rules for administrative and financial management, rules on eligibility of expenditure.

Duration

5. 'The Basic Act' set up the ERFIII to operate for the period 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013. The Fund was in place for six EU programme years, 2008 to 2013 with each programme year representing 30 calendar months.
6. Although, the ERFIII formally ended on 31 December 2013, the rules on eligibility of expenditure permit project related expenditure to be charged to the Fund until 30 June 2015 and technical assistance spending to be charged until 31 March 2016.

General Objective

7. The RF's general objective is stated in Decision 573/2007/EC as being:

‘ to support and encourage the efforts made by the Member States in receiving, and in bearing the consequences of receiving, refugees and displaced persons , taking account of Community legislation on those matters, by co-financing the actions provided for.’

Target Groups

8. The target groups for the ERFIII are defined in the Basic Act as comprising five categories of individual:
 - a. any third-country national or stateless person having the status defined by the Geneva convention and who is permitted to reside as a refugee in any one of the Member States ;
 - b. any third-country national or stateless person enjoying a form of subsidiary protection within the meaning of Directive 2004/83/EC;
 - c. any third-country national or stateless person who has applied for one of the forms of protection described in points (a) and (b);
 - d. any third-country national or stateless person enjoying temporary protection within the meaning of Directive 2001/55/EC;
 - e. any third-country national or stateless person who is being or has been resettled in a Member State.

Level of Fund

9. The total sum made available under the ERFIII for the period 2008 to 2013 was €628 million. Most of the sums are allocated to Member States, but up to 10 per cent of the total is retained by the Commission and used to fund Community actions including Emergency measures.
10. Member States allocations are determined by a formula which is set out in the Basic Act. Each Member State receives a fixed amount of between €300,000 and €500,000 per annum. The remaining available funds are then split with 30 per cent allocated in relation to the number of persons falling within categories (a),(b), and (e) of the target groups and 70 per cent allocated in relation to the number of persons falling within categories (c) and (d) of the target groups. In addition, Member States receive a fixed amount of €4,000 for each person resettled who falls into one of the following categories:
 - a. persons from a country or region designated for the implementation of a Regional Protection Programme;
 - b. unaccompanied minors;

- c. children and women at risk, particularly from psychological, physical or sexual violence or exploitation;
- d. persons with serious medical needs that can only be addressed through resettlement.

Community Actions funded directly by Commission

11. Community Actions funded directly by the Commission must relate to measures applicable to the target groups for ERFIII. In addition, to be eligible for funding Community Action projects should do one or more of the following:
- a. further Community cooperation in implementing Community law and good practices;
 - b. support the setting up of transnational cooperation networks and pilot projects based on transnational partnerships between bodies located in two or more Member States
 - c. support transnational awareness – raising campaigns;
 - d. support studies, dissemination and exchange of information on best practices and all other aspects of asylum policies;
 - e. support pilot projects and studies exploring the possibility of new forms of Community cooperation and Community law in this area;
 - f. support the development and application by Member States of common statistical tools, methods and indicators for measuring policy developments in the field of asylum;
 - g. offer to networks linking non-governmental organisations structural support intended to facilitate exchanges of experience and sound practice and ensure that the development of Community asylum policy and practice takes into account the experience gained by non-governmental organisations and the interests of asylum seekers and refugees;
 - h. provide Member States with support services in case of duly substantiated emergency situations requiring urgent action.
12. Projects are generally awarded Community Actions funding on the basis of open calls for tenders launched by the Commission.

Emergency Measures

13. The ERFIII can provide assistance for actions by Member States in certain emergency situations. These situations are characterised by sudden arrival at

particular points on the borders of a large number of third-country nationals who may be in need of international protection, which place exceptionally heavy and urgent demands on the reception facilities, the asylum system or infrastructure of the Member State concerned.

14. The actions that can be supported under the Emergency Measures provisions of the ERFIII must be intended to be implemented immediately, not be able to be included in the annual programme for reasons of practicality, and have a duration not exceeding six months. To be eligible for funding the emergency measures must concern one of the following types of action:
 - a. reception and accommodation;
 - b. provision of means of subsistence, including food and clothing;
 - c. medical, psychological or other assistance;
 - d. staff and administration costs linked to the reception of persons concerned and implementation of the measures;
 - e. logistical and transport costs;
 - f. legal and language assistance;
 - g. provision of translation and interpretation services, country of origin information expertise and other measures contributing to the rapid identification of persons who may be in need of international protection and to a fair and efficient processing of asylum applications.

Eligible Actions in Member States

15. ERFIII projects funded via Member States must address one or more of the five main eligible actions of the Fund. The actions are:
 - a. reception conditions and asylum procedures;
 - b. integration of persons in the target groups whose stay in a particular Member State is of a lasting and stable nature;
 - c. enhancement of Member States' capacity to develop, monitor and evaluate their asylum policies in the light of their obligations under existing and future Community legislation relating to the Common European Asylum System, in particular with a view to engaging in practical cooperation activities between Member States;
 - d. resettlement of persons within category (c) of the target groups. For the purposes of this Decision, resettlement means the process whereby, on a

request from UNHCR based on a person's need for international protection, third-country nationals or stateless persons are transferred from a third country to a Member State where they are permitted to reside with any of the following statuses:

- i. refugee status within the meaning of Article 2 (d) of Directive 2004/83/EC; or
 - ii. a status which offers the same rights and benefits under national and Community law as refugee status.
- e. transfer of persons falling within categories (a) and (b) of the target groups from the Member State which granted them international protection to another Member State where they will be granted similar protection and of persons within category (c) of the target groups to another Member State where their application for international protection will be examined

16. The five main actions each contain a subset of eligible actions.

17. The eligible action relating to reception conditions and asylum procedures include the following:

- a. accommodation infrastructure or services;
- b. structures and training to ensure access to asylum procedures for asylum seekers;
- c. provision of material aid and medical or psychological care;
- d. social assistance, information or help with administrative and/or judicial formalities and information or counselling on the possible outcomes of the asylum procedure, including on aspects such as voluntary return;
- e. legal and language assistance;
- f. education, language training and other initiatives which are consistent with the status of the person concerned;
- g. the provision of support services such as translation and training to help improve reception conditions and the efficiency and quality of asylum procedures;
- h. information for local communities as well as training for staff of local authorities, who will be interacting with those being received in the host country;
- i. transfer of persons within category (c) of the target group from the Member State where they are located to the Member State responsible for the examination of their asylum application

18. The eligible actions relating to the integration of persons in the target groups and members of their family are:

- a. advice and assistance in areas such as housing, means of subsistence, integration into the labour market, medical, psychological and social care;
- b. actions enabling such persons to adapt to the society of the Member State in socio-cultural terms, and to share the values enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
- c. actions to promote durable and sustainable participation in civil and cultural life;
- d. measures focusing on education, vocational training, or recognition of qualifications and diplomas;
- e. actions designed to promote self-empowerment and to enable such persons to provide for themselves;
- f. actions that promote meaningful and constructive dialogue between such persons and the receiving society.....
- g. measures to support the acquisition of skills by such persons, including language training;
- h. actions that promote both equality of access and equality of outcomes in relation to such persons' dealings with public institutions.

19. The eligible actions relating to the enhancement of Member States' capacity to develop, monitor and evaluate their asylum policies are:

- a. actions promoting the collection, compilation, use and dissemination of country of origin information, including translation ;
- b. actions enhancing the capacity to collect analyse and disseminate statistics on asylum procedures, reception, integration and beneficiaries of international protection;
- c. actions enhancing the capacity to assess asylum applications, including appeals;
- d. actions contributing to the evaluation of asylum policies, such as national impact assessments, surveys among target groups, the development of indicators and benchmarking.

20. The eligible actions relating to resettlement are:

- a. actions relating to the establishment and development of a resettlement programme;
- b. actions relating to the assessment of potential resettlement cases by the competent Member States' authorities, such as conducting missions to the host country, interviews, medical and security screening;
- c. pre-departure health assessment and medical treatment;
- d. pre-departure material provisions;
- e. pre-departure information measures;
- f. travel arrangements, including the provision of medical escort services;
- g. information and assistance immediately upon arrival, including interpretation services.

21. The eligible actions relating to the transfer of beneficiaries of and applicants for international protection between Member States are:

- a. pre-departure information measures;
- b. travel arrangements, including the provision of medical escort services;
- c. information and assistance immediately upon arrival.

Strategic Guidelines

22. The Commission Decision, 2007/815/EC of 29 November 2007 sets out the strategic priorities and specific priorities for the ERFIII. The Decision listed three strategic priorities for the targeting of ERFIII resources, with Member States being required to address the first two priorities, and the third priority being optional. Each strategic priority contained one or more specific priorities. Where Member States fund projects addressing one or more specific priority, the EU contribution to the project's costs can be increased from the standard 50% to the level of 75%.

23. The strategic and specific priorities agreed by the Commission are as follows:

- a. Priority 1: Implementation of the principles and measures set out in the Community *acquis* in the field of asylum, including those related to integration activities.

Specific Priorities:

- 1) actions aimed at taking into account the special needs of vulnerable people, notably unaccompanied minors, and more specifically measures aimed at improving the definitions and procedures applied by Member States to identify the more vulnerable asylum seekers and to provide an appropriate response to such needs;
 - 2) actions improving the identification of persons in need of international protection and/or the processing of their applications at the borders, notably by the development of specific training programmes.
- b. Priority 2: Development of reference tools and evaluation methodologies to assess and improve the quality of procedures for the examination of claims for international protection and to underpin administrative structures in an effort to respond to the challenges brought forward by enhanced practical cooperation with other Member States.

Specific Priorities:

- 1) measures designed to carry out an independent review on how the national asylum system works and how to make it more efficient;
 - 2) development of tools aimed to enhance consistency in national decision making on the application of the *acquis*, such as case-law databases accessible to all relevant stakeholders;
 - 3) measures designed to increase the capacity of national asylum services to cooperate with the national asylum services of other Member States and in particular to compile, analyse and assess information on countries or regions of origin for the purpose of sharing this information with other Member States.
- c. Priority 3: Actions helping to enhance responsibility sharing between Member States and third countries

Specific Priorities:

- 1) actions relating to the resettlement of persons from a country or region designated for the implementation of a Regional Protection Programme ;

- 2) actions aimed at transferring asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection from Member States facing particular pressures on their asylum systems.

Multiannual and Annual Programmes

22. Member States pursue the objectives of the ERFIII within the framework of Multiannual Programmes which are agreed between the Responsible Authority of the Member State and the Commission for the entire period of the Fund from 2008 to 2013. Where necessary, Multiannual Programmes can be subject to a mid-term review. The Multiannual Programmes : describe the baseline position in the Member State; analyse the requirements in the Member State in relation to the baseline position; outline the strategy to achieve the Member States objectives including priorities and funding levels; describe how the strategy is compatible with other regional, national, and community objectives; describe the framework for implementation of the Member State's strategy; include an indicative financing plan giving provisional overall and EU contributions by priority and programme year.
23. The Multiannual Programme is implemented by the means of Annual Programmes which are agreed between the Responsible Authority of the Member State and the Commission.
24. Responsible Authorities are required to submit Annual Programmes within an agreed timetable. Annual Programmes are required to cover: the general rules for selection of projects to be funded from the programme; a description of the actions to be supported; the proposed financial breakdown of the Fund between actions including an indication of the amount requested for technical assistance. Technical Assistance being the costs incurred by the Member State in managing the Fund.
25. Annual Programmes submitted to the Commission can be changed in the light of discussions between the Responsible Authority and the Commission or to reflect developments in the Member State. Responsible Authorities must submit a revised Annual Programme to the Commission if it is necessary to revise the financial breakdown between actions by more than 10 per cent for any action.
26. Once a Member State's annual programme is approved by the Commission, the Commission releases a pre financing payment of 50 per cent of the approved allocation for the programme year. The second 50 per cent of the funding is payable when the Member State submits its final financial declarations for the programme year and these are accepted by the Commission.

Special provisions concerning emergency measures

27. Member States are required to provide the Commission with a statement of requirements and an implementation plan for the emergency measures. Where a Member State requests assistance from ERFIII to address a situation of particular pressure, the application is required to contain; a detailed description of the current

situation; a substantiated indication of the exceptional character of the situation; a detailed description of the emergency measures envisaged; a breakdown of the estimated costs of the measures envisaged.

28. The Commission then decides whether the conditions for granting emergency financial assistance are met and the level of such assistance. Financial assistance is limited to six months and to 80 per cent of the cost of each measure.

Management and Control Systems

29. A Member State is required to implement its multiannual and annual programmes for the RF in line with a Management and Control Systems (MCS) document agreed with Commission. The MCS :

- a. defines the functions of the bodies concerned with management and control and the allocation of functions within each body;
- b. details how the principle of separation of functions will be achieved;
- c. outlines how adequate resources will be allocated to the management and control functions;
- d. sets out the procedures for ensuring correctness and regularity of Fund expenditure;
- e. describes how reliable accounting, monitoring, and financial reporting procedures will be achieved;
- f. describes the reporting and monitoring system if the Responsible Authority delegates tasks;
- g. outlines the manuals of procedures that are in place;
- h. describes the arrangements for auditing the functioning of the system;
- i. provides the systems and procedures for ensuring an adequate audit trail;
- j. describes the procedures for reporting and monitoring irregularities and for recovery of sums incorrectly paid.

Other Responsibilities of the Responsible Authority

30. In addition to its role in relation to the submission of multiannual and annual programmes, the Responsible Authority for the Member State undertakes the following tasks :
- a. organises and advertises calls for tenders and proposals;
 - b. receives payments from the Commission and makes payments to final beneficiaries;

- c. monitors the delivery of project outputs and checks that expenditure declared by projects is eligible expenditure;
- d. ensures that there is a computerised system in place for the accounting records of each action and that data necessary for financial management, monitoring, control, and evaluation is collected;
- e. ensures that bodies involved in the implementation maintain adequate accounting systems;
- f. sets up procedures to ensure that documents relevant to expenditure and audits are retained for appropriate periods;
- g. ensures that the Audit Authority receives all necessary information on procedures and verifications of expenditure;
- h. ensures that the Certifying Authority receives all necessary information on procedures and verifications of expenditure required for the purposes of certification;
- i. draws up and submits to the Commission progress and final reports on the implementation of annual programmes, declarations of expenditure, and requests for payment ;
- j. carries out information and advisory activities.

Responsibilities of the Certifying Authority

31. The Certifying Authority is responsible for:

- a. certifying that the declaration of expenditure is accurate, results from reliable accounting systems, and is based on verifiable supporting documents;
- b. certifying that the expenditure declared complies with applicable Community and national rules and has been incurred in respect of actions selected in accordance with the criteria applicable to the programme;
- c. ensuring that it has received adequate information for certification purposes;
- d. taking account for certification purposes of the results of audits carried out by the Audit Authority;
- e. maintaining accounting records in computerised form of expenditure declared to the Commission;
- f. verifying the recovery of any Community financing found to have been unduly paid as a result of irregularities detected;
- g. keeping an account of amounts recoverable and amounts recovered under the general budget of the European Union.

32. The Audit Authority is responsible for:

- a. ensuring that audits are carried out to verify the effective functioning of the management and control system;
- b. ensuring that audits are carried out of actions on the basis of an appropriate sample to verify expenditure declare, the sample to represent at least 10% of the total eligible expenditure for each programme year;
- c. presenting to the Commission an audit strategy covering the bodies which will perform the audits of systems and actions, ensuring that the main beneficiaries of co financing by the RF are audited and that the audits are spread evenly throughout the programming period.

European Refugee Fund in the United Kingdom

Introduction

33. The United Kingdom (UK) has participated in the European Refugee Fund (ERF) from the outset and has funded projects in all programme years from 2008 to 2013.
34. The European Return Fund in the United Kingdom is managed and implemented by the Home Office, with the Responsible Authority, Audit Authority, and Certifying Authority functions being performed by different parts of the central government department.
35. During most of the programming period for the European Return Fund, the functions of the Responsible Authority were performed an executive agency of the Home Office - the UK Border Agency (UKBA). Following, the abolition of UKBA on 31 March 2013, the Responsible Authority functions are now performed within the core Home Office.

Responsible Authority

36. The Responsible Authority for the European Return Fund in the United Kingdom is the EU Funding Team, which is located in the Finance and Estates Directorate of the Corporate Services group of the Home Office. The EU Funding Team also acts as the Responsible Authority for the other two Funds of the EU's General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows' in which the UK participates – the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and the European Return Fund.
37. The Responsible Authority has not delegated any of its functions to delegated authorities, although some are discharged via service level agreements with other parts of the Home Office or provided under contract by external providers.
38. The costs of the Responsible Authority's work in managing and implementing the ERFIII is met from the technical assistance element of the UK's annual allocation of programme funds.

Audit Authority

39. The Audit Authority for the RF in the United Kingdom is the Internal Audit unit of the Home Office, which is part of the Performance and Risk Directorate of the Corporate Services group of the department. The Internal Audit unit also acts as the Responsible Authority for the other two Funds of the EU's General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows' in which the UK participates – the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and the European Return Fund.
40. The Audit Authority outsources project and systems audit work to an external contractor –KPMG. The Internal Audit unit commissions project and systems audits

from KPMG on the basis of an agreed plan. The KPMG outputs are formally reviewed by Internal Audit staff who also oversee delivery of the plan.

Certifying Authority

41. The Certifying Authority for the RF in the United Kingdom is a named individual within the Home Office – Mostaque Ahmed. Mostaque Ahmed is a senior civil servant and is also the Certifying Authority for the other two Funds of the EU's General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows' in which the UK participates - the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and the European Return Fund.
42. Mostaque Ahmed can be supported in his certifying authority role by his own staff or contractors, as appropriate.

UK Apportionment Board

43. The UK Apportionment Board covers the ERFIII and the other two Funds of the EU's General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows' in which the UK participates – the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and the European Return Fund. It exists to reinforce transparency and impartiality in the strategic apportionment of the Funds and helps the UK to fulfil the partnership arrangements set out in Article 11 of the ERFIII Basic Act.,573/2007/EC
44. The Apportionment Board is part of the UK's Management and Control Systems (MCS) for the ERFIII and the other Funds. It is intended to be a fair, transparent and semi-independent mechanism which ensures that the Funds are allocated appropriately and in line with the UK's priorities agreed with the Commission.
45. The Apportionment Board carries out the following functions in relation to the ERFIII:
 - a. reviews and agrees the apportionment of the annual programme funds between 'executing body mode' projects and 'awarding body mode' projects.
 - b. reviews proposals for ERFIII projects received from the Home Office (and potentially other parts of Central Government) for funding in 'executing body mode' against the criteria set by the Commission and the Responsible Authority, assesses whether the proposals represent value for money, and decides whether or not to approve them.
 - c. reviews and agrees any amendments proposed to the apportionment of the annual programme funds arising from planned revisions of annual programmes.
46. The chair of the Apportionment Board is the Director of Finance for HM Passport Office and UK Visas and Immigration within the Finance and Estates Directorate of

the Home Office. The remainder of the membership comprises senior representatives from:

- a. Department for Communities and Local Government
 - b. Department for Work and Pensions
 - c. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
 - d. UK Permanent Representation to the European Union (UKRep)
47. The UK Apportionment Board meets annually and looks at papers prepared by the UK Responsible Authority. Special meetings can be called, as necessary, to move forward the annual programmes of the ERFIII or other Funds. It is also possible for decisions to be taken 'out of committee' on the basis of documents submitted to the Board. The aim of the Board is to reach consensus decisions, but majority decisions are accepted where necessary.

UK Management and Control Systems

48. As required by Article 32 of the ERFIII 'Basic Act', the EU Funding Team, as the UK Responsible Authority, has agreed a Management and Control Systems (MCS) document with the Commission. The MCS covers all of the three Funds in which the UK participates. The document is updated periodically to reflect changes to procedures and in personnel.
49. The latest version of the UK MCS, agreed in September 2014, includes the following information;
- a. general information on the three designated authorities (Responsible Authority, Audit Authority, Certifying Authority) and background detail on the Home Office and UK Government structures and policies.
 - b. details of where the three designated authorities sit within the Home Office management structure and the names of the lead officials in each authority.
 - c. details of the arrangements for payments to beneficiaries and evaluation of projects.
 - d. information on the legal status of the designated authorities and the functions carried out directly by the authorities.
 - e. organisation charts and resources for the designated authorities.
 - f. description of role and functions of the UK Apportionment Board
 - g. information on the how the designated authorities were designated.
 - h. details of how the separation of functions is achieved.

- i. details of how tasks not carried out by the designated authorities directly are monitored.
- j. description of arrangements for drawing up MultiAnnual Programmes,
- k. description of arrangements for drawing up Annual Programmes.
- l. description of procedures where the Responsible Authority acts as an executing body.
- m. description of procedures for selection and implementation of projects where the Responsible Authority acts as an awarding body.
- n. description of arrangements for the monitoring of projects implemented by final beneficiaries.
- o. description of financial management of projects.
- p. information on handling of irregularities, corrections, and recoveries.
- q. information on first level and Audit Authority audit missions, and Audit Authority report.
- r. details of certification of expenditure.
- s. description of arrangements for evaluation.
- t. description of accounting and bookkeeping
- u. description of reporting to Commission
- v. arrangements for ensuring existence of an audit trail.

UK National Requirements

50. The UK's national requirements for the ERFIII are in line with the overall objectives of the UK Government in respect of migration, asylum, and resettlement. Financial support from the ERFIII in the UK is targeted on :
- a. Integration
 - b. Resettlement
51. These actions are eligible actions by virtue of Article 3 (1) (b) and (d) of the Basic Act, 573/2007/EC. The other three eligible action areas of asylum reception and determination procedures, policy development, and transfers between Member States are lower priorities for the UK, and are not key requirements for the use of ERFIII funds.

52. The overall requirement in relation to integration is for continued support for eligible actions over and above that which can be provided by national resources and for encouragement of innovative ideas, particularly those in relation to tackling the issue of employment of refugees or those with subsidiary forms of refugee protection status.
53. The resettlement of refugees who require humanitarian protection is a key priority for the UK. The development of the resettlement programme is a key requirement in the UK. The overall requirement in relation to resettlement is consequently to maintain, expand and develop resettlement, and act as a model and market leader for emerging resettlement States across Europe.
54. In relation to the lower priority action of ‘asylum reception and determination procedures, including transfers through the Dublin system’ , the main UK requirement is to further strengthen relation building with other EU Member States, to facilitate UK asylum reception and determination procedures through the transfer of eligible persons to the Member State responsible for the examination of their asylum application and from other Member States to the UK as the responsible Member State for their asylum application. Specifically, the requirement is to develop the Asylum Liaison Officer system, through increasing returns and the efficiency of practical measures with other Member States for transfers under the Dublin System.
55. In relation to ‘policy development’ the UK requirement for use of ERFIII funds is limited, because of the measures, programmes, and resources already in place. However, there is a requirement within the context of actions to enhance the UK’s capacity to develop, monitor and evaluate asylum policies, for the development of methodologies and techniques associated with the production of country of origin information.
56. The UK has no requirement for use of ERFIII to support transfers of refugees to other Member States.

UK Operational Objectives

57. The UK adopted three operational objectives relating to integration:
 - a. through the provision of ERFIII financial support to achieve a greater number of projects and final beneficiaries, and to sustain that increase over multiple years;
 - b. to support measures designed to enhance the capacity of refugee community organisations;
 - c. to continue to investigate new and innovative methods for increasing the employment rate of eligible target groups.

58. The UK's operational objective in relation to resettlement was to increase the number of arrivals and to develop new models of post-arrival support, particularly in relation to securing housing provision.
59. There were three operational objective adopted relating to asylum reception and determination procedures, including transfers through the Dublin system;
- a. to make returns more efficient to facilitate progress on asylum conclusion targets;
 - b. to decrease the time in detention for those awaiting return to other EU Member States under the relevant provisions;
 - c. to increase the provisions for return of unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
60. The key operational objective in relation to policy development was to develop techniques to produce country of origin information.
61. The UK gave lower priority to the remaining two eligible actions on studies and the organisation of seminars.

UK Strategic Guidelines

62. The UK adopted the three strategic priorities for the RF set out in the Commission Decision, 2007/815/EC, namely:
- a. Priority 1: Implementation of the principles and measures set out in the Community *acquis* in the field of asylum, including those related to integration objectives.
 - b. Priority 2: Development of reference tools and evaluation methodologies to assess and improve the quality of procedures for the examination of claims for international protection and to underpin administrative structures in an effort to respond to the challenges brought forward by enhanced practical cooperation with other Member States.
 - c. Priority 3 : Actions helping to enhance responsibility sharing between Member States and third countries (optional)
63. The UK adopted one of the two specific priorities within Priority 1, namely :
- a. actions aimed at taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable people, notably unaccompanied minors, and more specifically measures aimed at

improving the definitions and procedures applied by Member States to identify the more vulnerable asylum seekers and to provide an appropriate response to such needs:

64. The UK adopted one of the two specific priorities within Priority 3, namely:
- a. actions relating to the resettlement of persons from a country or region designated for the implementation of a Regional Protection Programme,

Target Groups

65. The target groups for the ERFIII in the UK were all of the groups named in the Basic Act, namely:
- a. any third-country national or stateless person having the status defined by the Geneva Convention and who is permitted to reside as a refugee in one of the Member States;
 - b. any third-country national or stateless person enjoying a form of subsidiary protection within the meaning of Directive 2001/55/EC;
 - c. any third-country national or stateless person who has applied for one of the forms of protection described in (a) and (b);
 - d. any third-country national or stateless person enjoying temporary protection within the meaning of Directive 2001/55/EC;
 - e. any third-country national or stateless person who is being or has been resettled in a Member State.

Level of European Return Fund in the UK

58. The total sum allocated to the UK for the period 2008 to 2013 was €67.982 million. The level of the UK's allocation grew from €9.170 million in the 2008 programme year to €13.643 million in the 2013 programme year. The growth was mainly attributable to increases in the Commission's budget for the ERFIII.

UK's Multiannual Programme for RF

59. The UK's Multiannual Programme for the European Refugee Fund, covering the period 2008 to 2013, was submitted to the Commission in March 2008. Following discussions between the Responsible Authority and the Commission, the UK's Multiannual Programme was approved on 14 November 2008.
60. The Multiannual Programme has not been revised since its adoption. A summary of the Multiannual Programme as agreed in 2008 is here

Take a look at the [Multiannual Programme ERFIII from 2008 to 2013](#).

UK's Annual Programmes for ERFIII

61. The UK's annual programmes for the years 2008 to 2011 have been formally closed by the Commission. Consequently, the Responsible Authority has received all sums due from the Commission and has in turn made all payments to final beneficiaries of the Fund.
62. The table below shows the sums allocated to the UK for the four programme years, the sums made available for spending by beneficiaries in each year, and the actual expenditure incurred on the programme. The table shows the total planned and actual spending on returns activities, described as 'programmed costs' and 'eligible costs', and the EU contribution.

European Refugee Fund – Allocated Funds and Expenditure for Programme Years 2008 to 2011

Year	Programmed Costs(€)	EU Allocation (€)	Committed by UK (€)	Allocated RF funds (€)	Expenditure(€)	EU Share(€)
2008	15,137,940.54	9,169,710.12	16,350,865.31	9,716,716.50	10,418,851.37	6,060,165.50
2009	16,189,929.33	9,367,839.03	15,427,199.99	9,049,404.23	9,168,320.65	5,305,034.67
2010	19,366,615.01	10,724,670.99	16,714,190.97	9,764,226.37	11,682,418.07	6,714,572.47
2011	19,973,254.48	11,537,287.64	15,439,137.87	11,329,400.70	13,739,338.83	9,756,018.69

UK's 2012 Annual Programme for RF -Results

63. The UK's 2012 Annual Programme for the RF funded projects over the thirty months period from 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2014. The financial declarations and closure reports for the programme year were submitted to the Commission on 31 March 2015. The table below shows the allocated funds and expenditure figures included in the financial declaration. The figures are provisional until the annual programme is accepted by the Commission.

European Return Fund – Allocated Funds and Expenditure for Programme Year 2012

Year	Programmed Costs(€)	EU Allocation (€)	Committed by UK (€)	Allocated RF funds (€)	Expenditure(€)	EU Share(€)
2012	22,798,805.00	13,539,829.00	15,880,510.65	11,938,608.02	14,526,580.49	10,793,047.56

Selection and Approval of Projects

64. The Responsible Authority's written closure report on implementation of the ERFIII in the UK during the 2012 programme year followed the format laid down in Commission guidance. The report included a full timetable on the implementation of the 2012 annual programme, starting from the UK Apportionment Board meeting on 20 October 2011, which approved the allocation of the available ERFIII funds to strategic priorities, the division of funds between awarding body mode (ABM) and executing body mode (EBM) projects, and the continuation of three EBM projects into the 2012 programme year,
65. The report mentions that there were no open Calls for Proposals for new ABM projects in the 2012 annual programme, which represented a partial variation from the revised annual programme approved by the Commission on 30 July 2012. The largest element of ABM funding, £3,300,932.25, was reserved for four multi-annual projects relating to the Gateway Protection Programme for the resettlement of refugees, which continued from the 2011 annual programme. One of the continuing projects was concerned with pre-arrival services in identified third countries and the other three with post-arrival services including the sourcing and provision of accommodation and 12 months casework support to a specific number of refugees per year.
66. The second category of ABM funding, £1,181,728.25, was set aside for ongoing projects in their third year of operation. These were projects originally selected in the 2010 Call for Proposals, which had targeted bids offering either innovative English Language provision or innovative approaches to the housing of refugees. At the time of the Apportionment Board meeting, it was envisaged that there would be 7 ongoing projects in this category in the 2012 Annual Programme, but the withdrawal of 4 projects for various reasons reduced the number of ongoing projects to 3.
67. The third category of ABM funding approved by the Apportionment Board was a reserve of £603,506.38 for use in a new external Call for Proposals which it was planned to launch in the middle of the 2012 calendar year, with a focus on refugee integration. Subsequently, the Responsible Authority decided not to run the planned external Call for Proposals. The main factor in this decision was the emergence of new funding possibilities for EBM projects in the 2013 Annual Programme which meant that

the funds available to support continuing ABM projects in Annual Programme would be restricted.

68. The written closure report mentions that the UK Apportionment Board approved funds to be made available to support three EBM projects that were continuing into their second year under the 2012 Annual Programme: Gateway Protection Programme II – RPP Area; Gateway Protection Programme II – Other Areas; Italian Liaison Officer.

Implementation of the actions of the Programme

Priority 1

69. The written closure report indicates that the Italian Liaison Officer project fell within Action 1: ‘Enhancement of the effective UK/Italy Implementation of the Dublin Regulation’ of Priority 1 of the UK’s Annual Programme 2012. The project was executed by the UK Border Agency in 2012 under ERFIII strategic priority 1 designed to ‘implement *the principles set out in the Community acquis in the field of asylum, including those related to integration activities*’. The project aimed to : establish links and processes between UK and Italian authorities, care providers and charities to facilitate the sensitive removal and care of unaccompanied children and families
70. The written closure report includes information on achievements against targets for the Italian Liaison Officer project. The project had a target to facilitate the removal of 240 individuals, with the actual number of removals being 260, an achievement rate of 108 per cent. A second target overachieved was that for 75 per cent of Italian cases to be removed within six months of claiming asylum in the UK, where 77 per cent was achieved (167 of 216 cases). The project failed to achieve its target for refugees accepted back by the Italian Police, where 22 individuals were accepted back against a target of 30, an achievement rate of 73 per cent. There was also a significant underachievement on the delivery of workshops on the risks of onward migration to key organisations, with only 1 workshop being arranged against a target of 12.
71. Factors which had an impact on the delivery of the targets included: staff sickness absences; legal challenges to removals, in particular, the return of unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
72. The written closure report indicates that the UK implemented a number of projects under Action 2- ‘Refugee Integration’ of Priority 2 of the UK’s Annual Programme 2012. Funding of 3 continuing projects from the 2010 Annual Programme, targeted:
- Innovative refugee specific entry English language provision, in particular the need to provide alternative or supplementary English language provision at an early stage which allows refugees to meet requirements for support.
 - Innovative solutions to housing for people newly granted refugee status including housing support, especially to allow independent living for refugees and entry into private housing sector accommodation.

73. The 4 Gateway Protection Programme ABM projects which continued from the 2011 Annual Programme targeted the resettlement of refugees through the programme. The projects provided for the management and delivery of pre-arrival and post-arrival services including the sourcing and provision of accommodation and 12 months casework support to a minimum of 100 refugees per year.

74. There were some changes from the annual programme approved by the Commission. The approved annual programme assumed that there would be 10 ongoing ABM projects continuing from the 2010 Annual Programmes, but the actual number of continuing projects was only 3. The outcomes of these projects are summarised below.

75. The Housing Associations Charitable Trust's 'Accommodate Private Rented Sector' project had the following results:

- met the target to develop plans for the sustainability of 4 pilots
- underachieved on the number of housing units provided – 52 against a target of 100
- underachieved on the number of refugees housed – 104 against a target of 110
- met the target to provide a wider mentoring/befriending service in 4 areas
- met the targets for 2 action learning sets and 2 advisory group meetings

76. Horton Housing Association's 'HOSTS' project produced these results:

- underachieved on target to provide permanent housing – 43 refugees housed against a target of 50
- underachieved on target to provide specialist medical and psychological services – 43 refugees provided with service against a target of 50
- underachieved on target to provide wrap around support – 43 refugees provided with support against a target of 50
- underachieved on target to provide cultural orientation, ESOL, and personal development training – training provided to 43 refugees against a target of 50

77. The Yemeni Community Association (Sheffield) Ltd's APEL project achieved the following results:

- underachieved on targets for learned enrolled and delivered accredited and structured ESOL – 128 against a target of 130
- underachieved on learners delivered accredited and structured ESOL at levels 1, 2 and IELTS – 28 against a target of 30
- underachieved on learners benefiting from buddying and mentoring – 156 against a target of 160
- underachieved on learners enrolled on employability workshops or ESOL for work- 110 against a target of 150
- underachieved on learners signed up through outreach and engagement work- 169 against a target of 180
- overachieved on learners benefiting from advocacy and advice – 22 against a target of 20

78. The following table sets out the planned and actual number of refugees supported by the three non-Gateway projects.

European Refugee Fund – Planned and Actual Number of Refugees supported – Non –Gateway Projects

Project	Planned	Achieved	Percentage Achieved	Percentage Variance
APRS	110	104	94.5%	-5.5%
HOSTS	50	43	86.0%	-14.0%
APEL	130	128	98.5%	-1.5%
Total	290	272	94.8%	-5.2%

79. A number of factors contributed to the underachievement in terms of participant numbers and, consequently, to the failure to meet targets dependent on participant numbers:

- difficulties in maintaining participant attendance. For example, the APEL project faced challenges in maintaining attendance at classes, particularly on the dates of the employability sessions, which led to underachievement of targets relating to employability advice and ESOL provision. This was attributed to external factors outside the project’s control e.g. medical reasons, family commitments.
- delivery arrangements. The HOSTS project decided to stop taking referrals two months before the project end date in order to ensure that all participants received a high quality of service. This led to the

underachievement on the target number of participants, but the project considered this reasonable given that refugees joining the project with less than two months delivery time would have received only limited support.

- external factors – changes in the policy context and the economic situation, and the demands made by other agencies, had an impact on the level of achievements by projects. The APRS project faced challenges as a result of welfare reforms and changes in the housing market which made it more difficult to secure good quality housing for refugees in the private sector. . Project staff did act to mitigate the effect of these external factors outside their control, by spending additional time engaging and building relationships with landlords. APEL project staff noted that Job Centre Plus required some refugees to attend employability sessions on dates which clashed with project delivery, resulting in poor attendance at project classes. Development of links with local partners, such as Job Centre Plus, was seen as a way of mitigating such difficulties in the future.

80. The outcomes of the four Gateway Protection Programme ABM projects are summarised below.

81. The International Organisation for Migration’s project delivered the following results:

- underachieved on refugees identified for resettlement – 687 refugees identified against a target of 750
- underachieved on health assessments conducted and followed up- 687 health assessments completed against a target of 750
- underachieved on travel arrangements – travel arrangements made for 687 refugees against a target of 750

82. Horton Housing Association’s Gateway Protection Programme project in Bradford had the following outcomes:

- underachieved on provision of pre-arrival arrangements – 254 pre-arrival arrangements put in place against a target of 300
- underachieved on provision of welcome and safe arrival strategy – 254 achieved against a target of 300
- underachieved on provision of organised transport programme with client involvement- 254 programmed against a target of 300
- underachieved on provision of provision of stable, sustainable accommodation – 254 refugees provided with accommodation against a target of 300

- underachieved on provision of specialist medical support services – 254 achieved against a target of 300
- underachieved on provision of personal rehabilitation plans for medical and psychological recovery- 254 plans put in place against a target of 300
- underachieved on provision of cultural orientation, ESOL, and personal development training – training provided for 254 individuals against a target of 300.
- did not deliver Refugee Ambassador scheme
- did not disseminate best practice findings and raise awareness

83. The Yorkshire and Humberside Partnership's Gateway Projection Programme project produced the following results:

- met target to provide safe and sustainable housing for resettled refugees – 540 placements against a target of 540
- met target for provision of integration support to refugees for 12 months following arrival – support provided to 540 refugees against a target of 540
- met target for enabling individuals to move to fully independent living at the end of 12 months – 540 against target of 540
- met target for casework model of support, including development of personal integration plans – 540 against target of 540
- met target for community development support, assisting individuals to develop or join in existing groups – 540 against target of 540

84. The results of the North West Gateway Resettlement Programme were:

- met target for refugees to be resettled in the North West in the year- 470 refugees resettled against a target of 570
- met target for refugees resettled to be compliant with UKBA statement of requirements – 100 per cent of resettled refugees were compliant
- met target for refugees provided with accommodation services – 100 per cent of refugees
- met target for refugees provided with resettlement case work support services

85. The underachievement on the Gateway Protection Programme was concentrated on two of the projects; those operated by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and Horton Housing Association. Both projects underachieved on all output targets as the targets were reliant upon the project meeting the headline number of participants. In the case of the IOM project, the underachievement was due to a lower than expected number of refugees being identified by UKBA/Home Office for resettlement. The Horton Housing Association project's underachievement was related to a lower than expected number of refugees being resettled in the Bradford area.
86. The written closure report for the 2012 annual programme for the RF followed the standard format for reports to the Commission. Sections were included on: the results of technical assistance; problems encountered during implementation; procedures applied when the Responsible Authority acted as an Executing Body; coherence and complementarity with other EU programmes; assessment of progress in implementing the Multiannual Programme; measures taken to publicise the RF programmes.
87. The following table sets out the planned and actual number of refugees supported by the four Gateway Protection Programme projects. Performance against targets was mixed.

European Refugee Fund – Planned and Actual Number of Refugees supported- Gateway Protection Programme

Project	Planned	Achieved	Percentage Achieved	Percentage Variance
Gateway (IOM)	750	687	91.6%	-8.4%
GPP in Bradford	300	254	85.0%	-15.0%
North West Resettlement	470	470	100.0%	-
Yorkshire and Humberside Gateway	540	540	100.00%	-
Total	2060	1951	94.7%	-5.3%

Priority 2

88. The UK did not implement any actions under Priority 2 during the 2012 programme year.

Priority 3

89. The written closure report indicates that the UK implemented one action, comprising two continuing EBM projects against Priority 3 during the 2012 programming period. The projects supported under the actions were Gateway RPP (Regional Protection Programme) and Gateway Worldwide. Under this priority, funding was targeted on

resettlement activities. The Home Office (formerly the UK Border Agency) operated the Gateway Protection Programme in conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). During the 2012 programming year, the detailed project objectives were to increase the capacity of the UK to resettle refugees, enabling positive settlement outcomes for the refugees involved. Specifically, to resettle up to 750 refugees to the UK, ensuring that they were:

- Selected for resettlement according to established policy;
- Prepared for the journey and longer-term experience; and
- Provided with necessary post arrival support to facilitate their long-term settlement

90. The following table sets out the projects' performance against the agreed output targets for the 2012 programme year.

Gateway Protection Programme – EBM Projects – Performance against Targets

Project	Output Targets
Gateway RPP	<p>Met target for 5 missions to select 600 refugees for resettlement</p> <p>Overachieved on resettlement of refugees from RPP countries – 621 refugees resettled against target of 600</p> <p>Met target for refugees registered with a GP and receiving treatment for serious medical conditions - 584 against target of 584</p> <p>Met target for qualifying adults registered and in receipt of social benefits – 199 registrations</p> <p>Met target for children between 3 years and 18 years registered for nursery, school, or college – 246 registrations</p> <p>Met target for refugees with additional serious medical needs treated – 34 against target of 34</p>
Gateway - Worldwide	<p>Underachieved on resettlement of refugees from non-RPP countries</p> <p>Underachieved on target for refugees registered with a GP and receiving treatment for serious medical conditions -98 against target of 119</p> <p>Met target for qualifying adults registered and in receipt of social benefits – 64 registrations</p> <p>Met target for children between 3 years and 18 years registered for nursery, school, or college – 246</p>

	registrations Met target for refugees with additional serious medical needs treated –4 against target of 34
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91. The total number of refugees resettled by the two Gateway Protection Programme projects was 740 against a combined target figure of 750. The Gateway RPP project overachieved and the Gateway Worldwide project underachieved.

92. The underachievement on the Gateway Worldwide project was due to a lower than expected number of refugees being identified for resettlement. An agreement was reached within the Home Office to accept a lower number of non-RPP refugees whilst accepting a corresponding increase in RPP refugees.

Other Matters covered by Written Implementation Report

93. The written closure report for the 2012 annual programme for the ERF followed the standard format for reports to the Commission. Sections were included on: the results of technical assistance; problems encountered during implementation’ procedures applied when the Responsible Authority acts as an Executing Body; coherence and complementarity with other EU programmes ; assessment of progress in implementing the Multiannual Programme’ measures taken to publicise the ERF programmes.

UK’s 2013 Annual Programme

94. The annual programme was originally submitted to the Commission in November 2012 and formally approved on 6 March 2013. Subsequently, the Commission requested some technical revisions to improve the presentation of the programme. A revised version incorporating the technical amendments was submitted by the UK Responsible Authority on 20 January 2015 and approved by the Commission on 6 March 2015

95. UK’s 2013 Annual Programme for the ERFIII will fund projects over the thirty months period from 1 January 2013 to 30 June 2015. The financial declarations and closure reports for the programme year are required to be submitted to the Commission by 31 March 2015.

Financing Plan

96. The breakdown of the UK’s allocation between actions is shown in the table below.

European Return Fund – UK Financing Plan for Programme Year 2013 € (Euros)

Action	EU Contribution(€)	Public Allocation (€)	Private Allocation (€)	Total (€)	EU Percentage (%)	Share of Total (%)
Action 1: Refugee Integration						
Strand A	4,519,382	4,519.382	-	9,038,764	50	39
Strand B	3,416,354	1,138,785	-	4,555,139	75	22
Action 2: Reception and Asylum Procedures	954,582	318,194	-	1,272,776	75	6
Action 3: Resettlement Programmes						
Strand A	1,976,756	1,976,756	-	3,953,512	50	18
Strand B	280,620	93,450	-	374,160	75	2
Technical Assistance	495,737	-	-	495,737	100	4
Other Operations	2,000,000	-	-	2,000,000	100	9
Total	13,643,432	8,046,657	-	21,690,089	51	100

97. The 2013 Annual Programme includes introductory information about the mechanisms for apportionment of ERFIII funds and selection of projects in executing body and awarding body mode. This is a more specific and focused presentation of information included in the Management and Control Systems (MCS) document.

Actions to be supported by the Annual Programme

98. The annual programme outlines the funding to be made available under Action 1 of Priority 1 : Refugee Integration to two continuing Executing Body Mode projects – Gateway RPP (Regional Protection Programme) and Gateway Worldwide – and three continuing Awarding Body Mode projects relating to the Gateway Protection Programme – Horton Housing Association, North West Gateway Resettlement Programme, and Sheffield City Council. It provides the justification for executing body implementation, the expected results from the projects and the outcome indicators to be used,

99. The annual programme goes on to describe the funding to be made available under Action 2: Actions relating to the enhancement of Member States’ capacity to develop, monitor and evaluate their asylum policies to a new Executing Body Mode project. It explains that the proposed funding is for the pan-European MEDCOI 3 project which provides a centralised database detailing the available medical support and treatments available in towns, cities, and regions within many countries of origin. The database directly supports the operational delivery activities of the UK. The rationale for Priority

2 funding is outlined along with the justification for executing body implementation, The expected quantified results from the project are stated and the outcome indicators to be used are given.

100. The final action included in the annual programme is Action 3: Resettlement programmes. The purpose and scope of the action is described together with the proposed funding levels for two continuing EBM projects – Gateway RPP and Gateway Worldwide and one continuing ABM project – International Organisation for Migration’s Gateway Resettlement Programme project. The justification for executing body implementation is give, The expected results and indicators to be used are stated separately for the executing body and awarding body mode elements of the action.

101. The annual programme goes on to describe how technical assistance funding will be used.

Take a look at the [list of funded projects](#) document.

Contact Details

Further information on the European Refugee Fund in the United Kingdom is available from:

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