



European Union
European Structural
and Investment Funds

Annex 1

2014 to 2020 England European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund

Communications Annual Activity Plan for 2016

**2014 to 2020 England European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund Programme
Communications Annual Activity Plan for 2016**

Focus of 2016 communication activities

Following the programme launch and initial publicity activity in 2015, the 2016 communications activity will aim to build on this work and further publicise the opportunities around ERDF and ESF funding in England. It will continue to promote the purpose, priorities and availability of ERDF and ESF and how to access them and will also highlight some of the first projects to be contracted under these programmes. An early priority will be publishing the first lists of beneficiaries receiving funding on www.GOV.UK to ensure that details of ESIF investments are openly accessible. Communication channels and networks for projects and key partners will also be developed further to maximise opportunities for joint publicity and sharing best practice and, as the year progresses, positive news stories and project case studies will be developed and used to further publicise the programme aims and achievements. The UK's EU referendum is expected to take place in 2016 or 2017 and the build up to this referendum, including a period of purdah, will impact on the delivery of communications activities around ERDF and ESF in England.

Activity Area	Activity Details	Target Audience	Purpose	Timescale	Cost	Funding Stream	Expected Results and Impacts	Evaluation Measures
ERDF and ESF Programme major annual information activity	<p>National information activity campaign using a variety of offline and online materials and channels delivered over a period that is flexible to meet the Programme's needs.</p> <p>Activities are likely to include a Ministerial/ senior management 2014-2020 ESF/ERDF project visit, press activity, local and national media activity, coverage through the programme bulletin and communication channels with partners; and links to local LEP area partners/ESF and ERDF Technical Assistance organised events.</p> <p>Would potentially comprise of</p>	<p>Relevant external partners including national and local audiences, LEPs, public and private sector organisations, voluntary sectors, EC, general public, media (including sector specific) among others.</p> <p>Internal MA staff and other government bodies.</p>	<p>To promote the programmes and their aims / reach and to inform people that further funding is available. Raise awareness of how to access the funds and spread good practice and information about achievements and impact from the current and previous programmes. Highlight some initial project investments across various local areas</p>	Autumn 2016 (tbc)	Any costs will be kept to a minimum. Direct ERDF/ESF MA costs likely to be time/ staffing only	<p>Growth Programme level – ESF and ERDF</p> <p>Appropriate linkages made across ERDF, ESF and EAFRD</p>	<p>Partners, potential applicants and general public alerted to fact that programmes are 'open for business' and actively investing in local projects, local partners engage in local activities, increased level of response to project calls. Increased number of followers on social media channels. Media coverage gained on the Programmes to raise the profile and awareness</p>	<p>Survey using free online software and online monitoring tools to gauge engagement with launch activities and (over time) interest in funding opportunities. Social media hits. Media coverage</p>

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	separate/unique ERDF/ESF components.							
GOV.UK	<p>Promotion of the ESI Funds pages on GOV.UK</p> <p>The structure, content and accessibility of ESI Funds website pages to be developed further, through a process of ongoing review, refinement and enhancements.</p>	<p>External partners incorporating all European, national and local audiences, particularly potential applicants and those in receipt of ESI Funds funding.</p> <p>Internal MA staff and other government bodies.</p> <p>Promote pages in all programme communications activities, including social media activities.</p>	<p>To inform and raise awareness of the ESI Funds Programme and individual funding streams (including YEI linked with ESF) ensure potential applicants are equipped with the knowledge to apply for funding and assess whether they have the potential to qualify.</p> <p>Inform audiences about the achievements and impact of the Programme through the use of the Beneficiary List, good news stories and case studies and press releases/latest news.</p>	<p>Ongoing update as and when required</p> <p>Quarterly content review</p>	Time / staffing costs only	<p>Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF</p> <p>Appropriate linkages made with EAFRD</p>	<p>Increased awareness of programmes, enhanced access to key programme documents and information. Increased number of hits and visits to ESI Funds website pages</p>	<p>Analytics from GOV.UK detailing page views and average time on page</p> <p>Page views target – 30,000 per month</p> <p>Inclusion in annual stakeholder survey</p>
Programme bulletin and other direct communication channels to core audiences	<p>Electronic direct updates through various channels and forms e.g. newsletters, blogs, and potentially new direct message measures.</p> <p>This activity includes ensuring an up-to-date, relevant and targeted database of partners is developed and maintained.</p>	<p>Relevant external partners including national and local audiences, public and private sector organisations, voluntary sectors, EC, among others.</p> <p>Internal MA staff and other government bodies – to keep</p>	<p>To keep external partners up to speed on key programme developments, lessons learned, effective practice, news and messages.</p>	<p>Formal E-bulletin circulated monthly – and published online.</p> <p>Other updates and direct messages issued regularly as necessary/ appropriate</p>	Time / staffing costs only	<p>Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF</p> <p>Appropriate linkages made with EAFRD</p>	<p>Increased awareness of programmes news, higher levels of timely engagement with programmes. Increase in the number of people subscribing to receive the bulletin. Supporting the development of</p>	<p>Number of partners distributed to: Target – 2,000</p> <p>Inclusion in annual stakeholder survey</p>

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	Programme bulletin also made available via communications (including social media) activities.	informed.					various Programme communication channels and networks	
Media activities	ESI Funds Growth Programme and individual funding stream level press releases	National and local media	<p>To raise awareness of the purpose and priorities of Programme, including who is involved and how it builds on 2007-2013 programmes; informing potential applicants about the availability of funding and how to access it: and also raise awareness of the role played by the funds (including YEI) in contributing to local growth in England.</p> <p>Promote landmark occasions, including initial programme contracts being signed and project calls being published.</p>	<p>1 - 2 per month</p> <p>Also on an ad hoc basis as and when required</p>	Time / staffing costs only	<p>Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF</p> <p>Appropriate linkages made with EAFRD</p>	<p>Audience are kept informed of latest programme news, particularly around significant landmarks in the programme (e.g. first projects contracted, significant projects contracted, ministerial visits). Coverage gained in appropriate media titles</p>	<p>Analysis through likes of Google and online media as to where the press releases appear</p>
Social media channels	<p>Updates and news shared through:</p> <p>ESIF Twitter feed / You Tube.</p>	<p>External stakeholders and partners</p> <p>All European, national and local audiences</p>	<p>To reach existing and new audiences and raise awareness of Programme news, funding opportunities, developments and messages - with immediate effect.</p> <p>To support/multiply ESI Funds partners social</p>	Two or three times per week	Time / staffing costs only	<p>Growth Programme level plus ERDF and ESF individually where appropriate</p> <p>Appropriate linkages made with EAFRD</p>	<p>Audience are kept informed of latest programme news both around significant landmarks in the programme (e.g. first projects contracted, significant projects contracted,</p>	<p>Assessed through followers, retweets, views</p> <p>Inclusion in Annual Stakeholder Survey</p>

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			media messaging.				ministerial visits) or general updates (new calls available online, deadlines approaching etc.). Increased number of followers for social media channels	
Establishment of an ERDF Practitioner contacts network	<p>Setting up a targeted database hosting relevant people associated with ESI Funds projects that would benefit from receiving targeted bulletins about news, events, achievements</p> <p>Once up and running activity will include targeted bulletins, social media channels and potentially online forums to reinforce/multiply messages and achievements.</p>	Project beneficiaries and potential applicants as well as local partners	<p>To provide accurate and clear up to date information to stakeholders and project beneficiaries to help ensure ESI Funds activity (including individual projects) is delivered effectively and compliantly through a mix of bulletins, social media and any other relevant activity.</p>	<p>Monthly bulletins – potentially starting in the Spring, as well as any useful ad hoc e-alert messages</p> <p>Ongoing use of social media to reinforce messaging e.g. examples of effective publicity practice</p> <p>Helping to open up dialogue between projects / partners</p>	<p>Time / staffing costs</p> <p>Bulletins to be produced using free online software</p>	<p>Growth Programme level - ERDF</p> <p>Appropriate linkages made with EAFRD</p>	<p>Successfully reinforced messages re. achievements, widening opportunities for sharing best practice, improving local performance. Increased number of people subscribing to the database to be part of the network</p>	<p>Number of people distributed to: Target – 2,000</p> <p>Inclusion in annual stakeholder survey</p>
Communication channels to engage with ESF funding recipients	The initial priority will be to identify one or more mechanisms through which regular communications on a range of ESF business can be issued to all funding recipients – and potentially separately to other	Project beneficiaries and potential applicants as well as LEP level local partners	To provide accurate and clear up to date information for stakeholders - including TA and mainstream project beneficiaries - to help ensure activity is delivered effectively and compliantly through a mix of direct	On the basis one or more communication channels can be set up the activity would commence shortly afterwards. A working estimate would be	Time/ staffing costs	Growth Programme level -ESF	Improving capacity of funding recipients to deliver against their contracts/ensure compliance – benefiting local delivery; promote tools/resources	<p>Number of communications (by type) issued to all on circulation list.</p> <p>Inclusion in annual stakeholder survey</p>

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	<p>stakeholder groups.</p> <p>These communications may potentially require specific actions of recipients; ask them to note changes in delivery arrangements (potentially including guidance changes); or inform them of specific resources/effective practice that will assist delivery of their projects.</p> <p>This may potentially link to new or updated content published on GOV.UK.</p>		communications and any other relevant activity.	Spring 2016.			that encourage and share best practice.	
NB: As a priority the ESF MA is seeking to establish direct communication channels with all ESF funding recipients as outlined above. Alongside this it will throughout 2016 seek to effectively engage with LEP area partners and local ESF/ESIF TA projects using resources and channels that become available to support collaboration and the identification and sharing of effective practice.								
Online Publications	Developed for various uses including supporting the annual information activity and to annually report progress and celebrate achievements.	<p>Relevant external partners including national and local audiences, public and private sector organisations, voluntary sectors, EC, among others.</p> <p>Internal MA staff and other government bodies.</p>	To promote the purpose, targeting, activities, cross-cutting themes, achievements and impact of funding awarded through the Programme and set out the focus for the forthcoming year.	Annual	<p>Time / staffing costs</p> <p>Production using in-house software</p>	<p>Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF</p> <p>Appropriate linkages made with EAFRD</p>	Broad range of partners and general public engaged in and aware of key programme achievements and the impact of funding awarded	Inclusion in annual stakeholder survey
Visits	Selection of Ministerial and senior government	Specifically national and local media and project	To raise awareness of the purpose, priorities	In line with award of funding and	Time /	Growth Programme level	Profile of Programmes and	Feedback from Minister and

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	officials visits to events / early development Growth Programme projects to raise profile of the programme.	beneficiaries, also LEPs and other relevant external partners including national and local audiences, public and private sector organisations, voluntary sectors, EC, among others.	and role of ESI Funds and range of funding awarded through Ministerial endorsement. To highlight and give profile to some of the first Programme projects to be contracted.	Ministerial availability. 3 / 4 across ERDF and ESF	staffing costs	– ERDF and ESF Appropriate linkages made with EAFRD	their impacts on local areas enhanced, likewise with the projects themselves being visited, relations improved as face to face meetings increase familiarity between key figures	partners involved Media coverage received
Internal communication activities	Various methods including regular staff briefings, staff training, meetings, intranet use and updates	Internal MA staff	To ensure staff are informed and kept up to date on Programme developments and news	In line with Programme developments	Time / staffing costs	Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF Appropriate linkages made with EAFRD	Staff are well informed and kept up to date on programme developments and news (helping them to perform their roles within the programme more effectively)	Feedback from staff
List of Beneficiaries	Set up and maintain an electronic list providing details of supported projects against set EU criteria Displayed on GOV.UK	Relevant external partners including national and local audiences, public and private sector organisations, media organisations, voluntary sectors, EC, among others.	To officially record and publicise the projects awarded funding through the Programme	Updated every 6 months	Time / staffing costs	Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF	Transparency around who has been funded through the programmes, how much funding has been received and for what	n/a – specific EC requirement We could measure number of website page visits
Reports and Papers	Progress reports on performance of the communication activities Committee updates	Growth Programme Board members, Communications sub-committee members European Commission	To inform members of the developments and implementation of the communications strategy and annual activity plan To meet EU reporting	In line with Committee meeting dates Annual progress report to GPB Annual summary	Time / staffing costs	Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF Appropriate linkages made with EAFRD	EU reporting requirements met, members of committees/ EC are aware of the implementation of the communications	Feedback from EC and committee members Targets: 1 AIR update annually 1 GPB update

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	Annual Implementation Report – Publicity content	– including networks of practitioners	requirements on deliver of publicity activities	of activities for Annual Implementation Report			strategy and activity plan	annually
Establishment and ongoing management of ERDF and ESF England Communications Sub-Committee	Provide secretariat for this national sub-committee and feed into full GPB as appropriate		Support the delivery of the programme communications strategy and annual activity plans. Act as a specialist advisory committee for the programme's full GPB	Face to face meetings and telephone conferences as and when required	Time / staffing costs	Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF	Effective specialist communications support provided in overseeing the delivery of the programme communications strategy and annual activity plans	Feedback from sub- committee members Feedback from full GPB and EC
Engagement with European Commission, other member state and other UK ESI Funds communications specialists	Active participation in European Commission Informal Network of Information officers ESF (INIO) and ERDF INFORM networks Regular liaison with other UK ESI Funds communicators – to include acting as UK representatives at above networks Developing on-going relationships with other EC communications specialists, including at the UK Commission Representation Office based in London	EC, Europe-wide and UK ESIF communications practitioners	Feed in and share best practice in communications activities Retain a positive dialogue / engagement with target audiences	On-going through telekits, Yammer INIO meetings tend to take place three times a year, INFORM meetings twice a year	Time and travel / staffing costs only	ERDF and ESF	Enhanced relationships with EC communications contacts, improved impacts of communications activities following sharing of best practice	Feedback from EC and other target audiences
ESF National Technical Assistance projects	Work collaboratively with national ESF TA publicity focused projects to ensure their activities comply with	Citizens and specific cohorts of stakeholders/ partners/ESF target groups (such as young	Reach new audiences through a range of pro-active publicity measures outside of MA channels, that showcase activities	To fit with roll out of the TA projects. Activities are often cyclical.	Time and travel / staffing costs only	ESF	New/specific audiences reached, often through aligning ESF with non-EU	To be linked with the outcome related objectives of the projects

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	ESIF/ESF publicity requirements and messaging, reach new and existing audiences, achieve their objectives and add value to MA activities.	people NEET)	and achievements and impact of the ESF programme.				level communication channels.	themselves.