



European Union
European Structural
and Investment Funds

European Structural and Investment Funds
2014 - 2020

Growth Programme for England

ESI Funds Growth Programme Board

Progress on EAFRD Growth Programme

Purpose:

To provide the Board with an update on the current position on the EAFRD part of the EU Growth Programme.

Recommendations:

The Board is invited to note the information set out in this paper.

Summary:

Two further elements of the RDPE Growth Programme have been opened for applications this autumn. The £30m Rural Infrastructure Broadband offer opened for applications on 3 October, and the £45m Growth Programme top-up funding opened on 30 November. This means that all £207m allocated to the RDPE Growth Programme has now been made available for projects.

The closing date for all applications under all the Growth Programme offers has been set at 31 May 2018, allowing more time for applications to be developed and submitted.

The total amount of EAFRD funding committed under the 2015 offers stands at £9.8m. Claims worth £3.91m had been paid up to 1st November, with 19 projects completing all activity. 50 jobs have been created by these projects.

The RPA had, by 1 November received 588 Expressions of Interest (EOI) for funding totalling £118m for the Growth Programme offers which opened in January 2017. Of these, 422 projects had been invited to submit Full Applications for funding worth £75m. Full Applications had been received from 114 projects for grant funding of £24.4m. Twenty one contracts had been approved or signed offering £4.2m of funding.

EAFRD GROWTH PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. Following the announcement by Defra Ministers on 29 July, two further elements of the RDPE Growth Programme have been opened for applications this autumn.

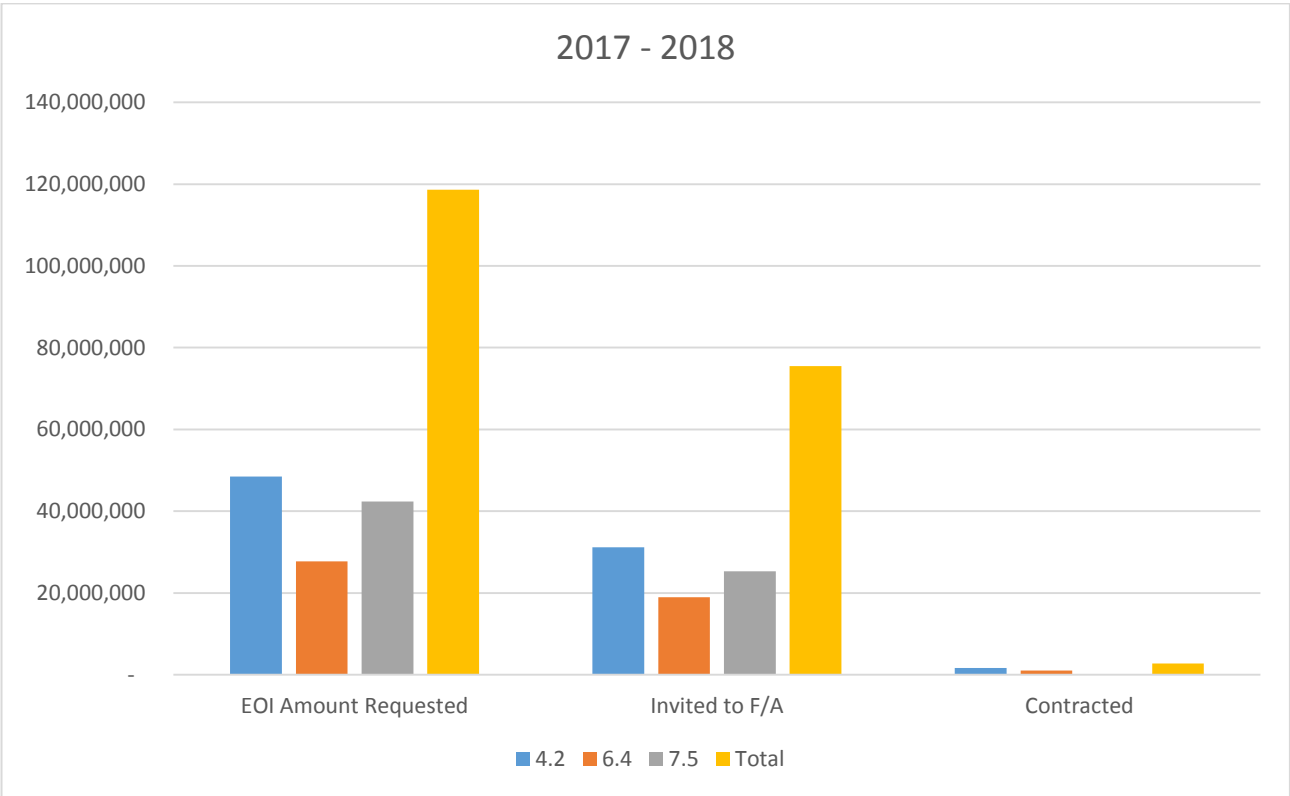
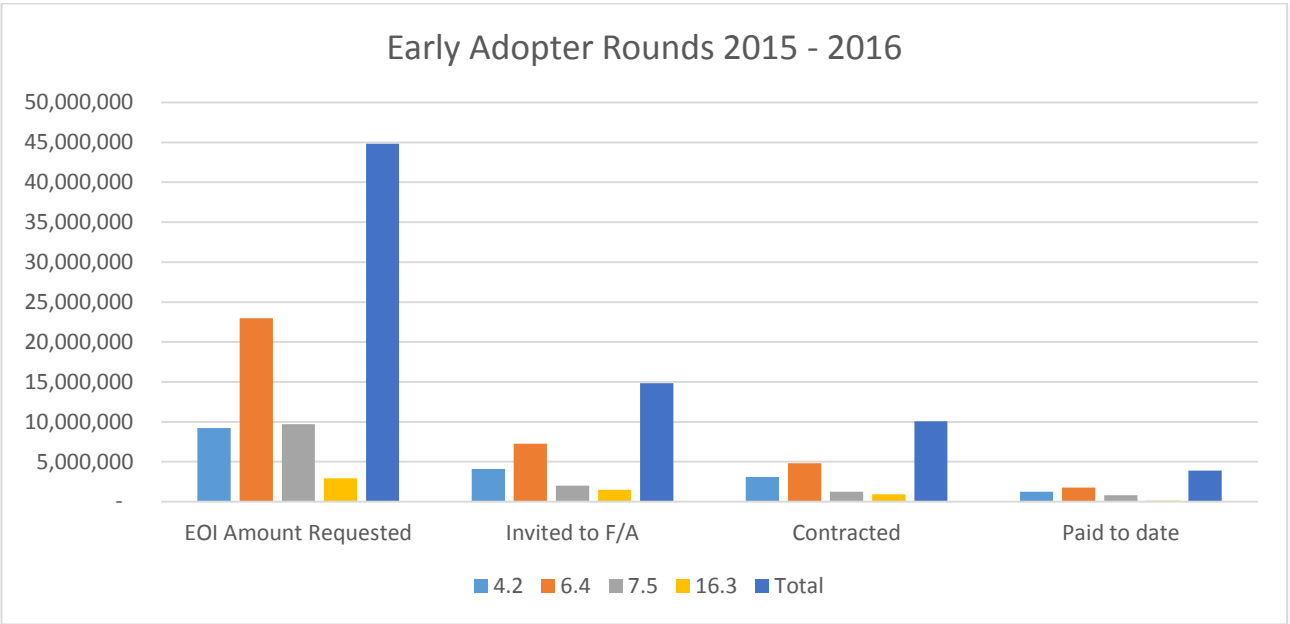
- The rural infrastructure broadband offer opened on 3 October, providing funding to Local Authorities working with Broadband Delivery UK to increase the provision of superfast broadband in rural areas. The grants are offered at 100% of project costs with a minimum grant application limit of £0.5m. As of 1 November, the RPA had received one application for funding worth £10.46m which is being assessed. We understand others are in preparation.
 - The £45m additional Growth Programme funding to top up the £120m made available in January 2017 for business development, food processing and tourism infrastructure projects was opened for applications on 30 November. The increased budget allocation for the three offers means that a total of £65m is available for food processing, £45m is allocated for business development activity and the tourism infrastructure offer has a budget of £55m.
2. This means that all of the £207m allocated to the RDPE Growth Programme has now been opened for applications. The focus from now on will be to ensure that all funding is contracted to projects by 29 March 2019, in line with the Government's October 2016 guarantee to honour funding committed before the UK leaves the EU.
 3. As part of the top-up process, LEPs were offered the opportunity to review local strategic priorities and assess the funding offered to different sectors in their area. Eight LEPs have revised their offers under the Growth Programme to include funding for activities previously not available. In addition to this top up, LEP areas have re-allocated funds previously ring-fenced to support rural broadband infrastructure activity.
 4. In light of the Growth Programme top ups, the closing date for Expressions of Interest under all Growth Programme offers has been set at 31 May 2018. This will allow more time for high quality applications to be developed and submitted.
 5. As at 1 November:
 - Under the food processing offer, the RPA had issued invitations to submit a Full Application to 116 projects. 39 projects had responded requesting £14.2m in funding. Agreements worth £1.4m had been signed with six projects to date, and funding for a further two projects of £1.4m had been approved.
 - Under the business development offer, 176 projects had been invited to submit a Full Application. 49 projects had submitted full applications under this theme, requesting funding worth £5.2m. Agreements had been signed for £0.9m of grant funding with 9 projects. A further 4 projects had been approved for funding of £0.5m.
 - Under the tourism infrastructure offer, invitations to submit Full Applications had been issued to 130 projects. Funding requests for grant totalling £4.9m had been received from 26 projects.
 6. The RPA is working with the projects who were successful in securing funding under the 2015 offers to support successful project delivery. 93 projects

secured funding for £9.8m under the 2015 business development, food processing, tourism infrastructure and tourism cooperation offers. Of these, 16 projects have completed all activity and have received EAFRD funding totalling £1.5m. These projects have created 50 new FTE or equivalent jobs. In addition, contracted projects have claimed £2.4m for eligible project activity up to 1st November. In total, 39% of the funding offered through the 2015 offers had been paid up to 1 November.

7. Funding has been secured for each LEP to offer further rounds of workshops to promote the Growth Programme in each area. Workshops held before 31 March 2018 will be eligible for funding and, as with the previous round, the RPA has offered support to any LEP looking to hold workshops. A review of the previous round of workshops suggested that promotional activity through either workshops or other platforms such as social media resulted in a higher number of applications.

30 November 2017
Andrew Robinson, Defra

EAFRD GROWTH PROGRAMME UPDATE



Measures

- 4.2 = Food Processing
- 6.4 = Business Development
- 7.5 = Tourism Infrastructure
- 16.3 = Tourism Cooperation