



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:

Excellent progress continues with 830 core projects approved with an EMFF grant value of over £25m.

1. There continues to be good take-up of the EMFF in England, with 830 projects approved under the 'core' programme (i.e. not including expenditure for Control and Enforcement activities, and Data Collection Framework measures). The total project cost associated is over £60m with EMFF grant of over £25m and National match of over £6.3m.
2. There are also 204 pipeline projects which are with MMO and progressing through the various stages of the process with an EMFF grant value of over £13m. There has been over £9m paid out to applicants to date.
3. The most popular areas for funding are:
 - Health and safety – equipment and on-board vessel investments (222 projects attracting £1.39m EMFF);
 - Limiting the impact of fishing on the marine environment – more selective fishing gear and practices (177 projects, attracting £1.7m EMFF);
 - Processing and marketing – of fisheries and aquaculture products (87 projects, attracting £4.96m EMFF);
 - Adding value and quality – to caught and unwanted fish products (91 projects, attracting £631k EMFF);
 - Infrastructure investments – in ports, harbours, landing sites and auction halls (65 projects, £7.7m EMFF);
 - Investments in aquaculture – new units, diversification of production and species, modernisation of existing units (16 projects, £1.32m EMFF);
 - Promotion of human capital – job creation, improving social dialogue, training (7 projects, £933k EMFF);

- Protection/restoration of marine biodiversity and ecosystems – collection of waste, Natura 2000 sites, increasing environmental awareness (40 projects, £4m EMFF).
4. With regard to CLLD, the six Fisheries Local Action Groups are now delivering against the total allocated budget of £4.8m and in line with their Local development Strategies (LDS) and business plans. FLAG projects are now progressing and to date 60 projects have been approved by MMO with a total project cost of £2.66m (EMFF £831k National £272k). There are also a further 16 projects with MMO at various stages of the process with total project costs £570k (EMFF £296k National £61k).

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

5. 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. The European Grants Team continue to engage with stakeholders to generate applications in the areas where uptake is low.
6. Union Priority 5 Processing & Marketing of Fisheries & Aquaculture products was closed for applications in December 2017 due to the budget being exhausted. There are also significant pressures being realised within Union Priority 1 and in the coming months it is expected more budgets will be exhausted and further areas of the scheme will be closed. Reviews are ongoing so early notice can be given where possible.
7. As budgets increasingly near full commitment the primary focus is shifting towards realising ambitions for expenditure. The European Grants Team continues to actively pursue applicant claims so to mitigate risks to spend profiles.

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