

**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 1,493 core projects approved with an EMFF grant value of over £46m.

1. There continues to be good take-up of the EMFF in England, with 1,493 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 £120m with EMFF grant of over £46m and National match of £11m.
2. There has been almost £30m EMFF paid out to applicants in the core scheme as of 31 May 2020.
3. The popular areas for funding remain:
 - Health and safety – equipment and on-board vessel investments (469 projects attracting £2.7m EMFF);
 - Limiting the impact of fishing on the marine environment – more selective fishing gear and practices (297 projects, attracting £3.3m EMFF);
 - Processing and marketing – of fisheries and aquaculture products (84 projects, attracting £4.9m EMFF);
 - Adding value and quality – to caught and unwanted fish products (121 projects, attracting £866k EMFF);
 - Infrastructure investments – in ports, harbours, landing sites and auction halls (98 projects, £11.3m EMFF);
 - Investments in aquaculture – new units, diversification of production and species, modernisation of existing units (35 projects, £1.9m EMFF);
 - Promotion of human capital – job creation, improving social dialogue, training (18 projects, £1.9m EMFF);
 - Protection/restoration of marine biodiversity and ecosystems – collection of waste, Natura 2000 sites, increasing environmental awareness (64 projects, £6m EMFF).

4. With regard to CLLD, the six Fisheries Local Action Groups are now drawing to a close. The allocated budget of £4.2m has been committed to 159 projects across the network and projects continue to deliver against the Local development Strategies (LDS) and business plans. The FLAGs are working hard to get all claims submitted by the end of the financial year and over 2.6m has been paid out to applicants to date with a further £890k of claims in hand.

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

5. On 17 April a £10million support package was announced to help address the impacts of Covid-19 on the fisheries sector. The package was funded by repurposing the remaining £5million funding in the Maritime and Fisheries Fund, which was matched with £5million from the Treasury. The package was used to create the Fisheries Response Fund (FRF) for the catching and aquaculture sections (whom are not eligible for Small Business Grant Scheme (SBGS) support, other than for the fixed cost of any land-based buildings), worth £9million and the Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme (DSSS), worth £1million.
6. The repurposing of MFF funds has meant the closure of the scheme from 17 April to new applications and expressions of interest. This re-profiling has been necessary to ensure that emergency funds can be distributed in a rapid and timely fashion in responding to the immediate impacts of Covid-19. However, all applications received prior to the 17 April, have continued to be reviewed following the eligibility and scheme rules.
7. The FRF has been designed to address the immediate impacts of Covid-19 to the catching and aquaculture sectors and is therefore targeted at those businesses identified as in most critical need of targeted financial assistance. In keeping with the SBGS, it is aimed at the smaller businesses. This includes vessels under 24 metres in length, and aquaculture businesses supplying trout and shellfish for consumption.
8. The DSSS is intended to support projects that help get products from catching and processing sectors to domestic markets. The funds are being made available through a competitive bid process which closed on 11 May. The DSSS was open to all parties to apply for, and a panel of both government and industry representatives are currently deciding on the successful applications.

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

9. 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/MFF team at their headquarters in Newcastle. Data is not categorised on a regional basis.

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EMFF Programme Monitoring Committee