

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

Communications Annual Activity Plan for 2021

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Focus of 2021 communication activities

The 2021 communications activity plan aims to publicise the impact, purpose and priorities of ERDF and ESF funding in England. It will also promote the availability of ERDF and ESF (where applicable) and how to apply. The activities listed ensure compliance with the EU publicity requirements and build on well informed and used channels with target audiences. The plan is reflective of the stage of the funding and programme.

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	National information activity campaign using a variety of materials and channels Activities are likely to include the publication and distribution of new programme case studies in a booklet or on a GOV.UK website page, social media promotion activity, coverage through the programme bulletin and communication channels with partners	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. Internal MA staff and other government bodies.	To promote the programme projects and their aims. Raise awareness of project achievements and impact from the current programmes. Highlight project investments across various local areas and the impact / added value of these ESIF interventions to local Growth. This will be the official annual 'major information activity' for the programme, as specifically required in ESIF communications regulation (1303/2013 – Annex XII, 2.1.2b)	Autumn 2021	Direct ERDF/ESF MA costs - time/ staffing only Production in-house	Growth Programme level – ESF and ERDF	Partners, projects and general public have an increased level of awareness and understanding of the benefits and impact delivered through ERDF and ESF to support local growth Increased number of followers on social media channels	Annual Stakeholder Survey Social media stats GOV.UK stats Bulletin stats
GOV.UK	Promotion of the ESI Funds pages on GOV.UK The structure, content and accessibility of ESI Funds website pages to be developed further, through a process of ongoing review,	External partners incorporating all European, national and local audiences, particularly potential applicants and those in receipt of ESI Funds funding.	To provide one central online portal for all ESI Fund information To inform and raise awareness of the Programme and funding streams Provide access to information, guidance	Ongoing update of content as and when required	Time / staffing costs only	Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF Appropriate linkages made with EAFRD	Increased awareness of programmes, enhanced access to key programme documents and information. Maintain high numbers of hits and visits to ESI	GOV.UK stats Page views target – 180,000 for the year Annual stakeholder survey

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	refinement and enhancements Promote pages in all programme communications activities, including social media activities	Internal MA staff and other government bodies.	and forms required by potential and existing applicants. For new applicants ensures they are equipped with the knowledge to apply for funding and assess eligibility. Inform audiences about the achievements and impact of the Programme through the use of the Beneficiary List and case studies.				Funds website pages.	
ESIF Programme bulletin	Electronic direct updates through Programme bulletin This activity includes ensuring an up-to-date, relevant and targeted database of partners is developed and maintained.	Relevant external partners including national and local audiences, public and private sector organisations, voluntary sectors, EC, among others. Internal MA staff and other government bodies – to keep informed.	To keep external partners up to speed on key programme developments, lessons learned, effective practice, news, future events and messages.	E-bulletin circulated in line with programme developments as required	Time / staffing costs only	Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF	Increased awareness of programme news, achievements and engagement with programmes Increased number of people subscribing to the bulletin.	Number of partners distributed to: Target – 1,000 Annual stakeholder survey
ERDF Practitioner Network Bulletin	Electronic direct updates through Programme bulletin This activity includes ensuring an up-to-date, relevant and targeted database of partners is developed and maintained.	Existing ERDF only project applicants	To provide accurate and clear up to date information to stakeholders and project beneficiaries to help ensure ERDF activity is delivered effectively and compliantly	E-bulletin circulated in line with programme developments as required	Time / staffing costs Bulletins to be produced using free online software	Growth Programme level - ERDF	Successfully reinforced messages re. achievements, widening opportunities for sharing best practice, improving local performance. Increased number of people	Number of people distributed to: Target – 600 Annual stakeholder survey

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							subscribing to the database	
ESF Project Bulletin and related ongoing Communication channels to inform and engage with ESF funding recipients	<p>Continue to issue and develop the ESF Project Bulletin, a regular communication going to all ESF Project contacts and others who have signed up.</p> <p>These targeted bulletins include news, events, effective practice and achievements</p> <p>In addition, ESF Action Notes communicate a range of ESF business to all funding recipients and stakeholder groups - via GOV.UK and a mailing list.</p> <p>These communications cover specific actions for recipients; linked to supporting effective delivery arrangements including ongoing collaborative communications work with local LEP area partners and ESF /ESIF TA projects to enhance activities /reach wider audiences.</p>	Project beneficiaries and potential applicants as well as national or LEP level local partners including TA projects	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 communications and any other relevant activity.	Ongoing	Time/ staffing costs	Growth Programme level -ESF	Improving capacity of funding recipients to deliver against their contracts / help ensure compliance – benefiting local delivery; promote tools/resources that encourage and share best practice.	<p>Number of communications (by type) issued to all on circulation list.</p> <p>Annual stakeholder survey</p>

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Social media channels	<p>Updates and news shared through:</p> <p>ESIF Twitter Profile</p> <p>You Tube channel</p> <p>Produce / gather images and film of projects to support social media and other publicity activities.</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, activities and achievements and messages</p> <p>To support/multiply ESI Funds partners social media messaging</p>	Tweets / uploads in line with programme developments as required	Time / staffing costs only	Growth Programme level plus ERDF and ESF individually where appropriate	<p>Audience are kept informed of latest programme news</p> <p>New followers for social media channels gained</p>	<p>Social media stats</p> <p>Annual Stakeholder Survey</p>
Announcements / Visits / Media Activities	Ministers / senior government officials visits to events / projects to raise profile of projects / programme or support announcements	Local and national partners, public and private sector organisations, voluntary sectors, EC, among others.	<p>To raise awareness of the purpose, priorities and role of projects and range of funding awarded</p> <p>To highlight and give profile to projects contracted.</p>	As required and as needed in line with announcements or programme developments requiring visits / media activities	Time / staffing costs	Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF	Profile of Programmes and their impacts on local areas enhanced, likewise with the projects themselves being visited	<p>Feedback from officials and partners involved</p> <p>Media coverage received</p>
List of Beneficiaries	<p>Maintain the electronic list providing searchable details of supported projects against set EU criteria</p> <p>Displayed on GOV.UK</p>	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 details and activities of projects awarded funding through the Programme	Updated every 6 months – in line with regulatory requirements	Time / staffing costs	Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF	Transparency around who has been funded through the programmes, how much funding has been awarded and for what	<p>List updated and published on GOV.UK at least twice during the year</p> <p>GOV.UK Stats</p>
Reports and Papers	<p>Progress reports on performance of the communication activities</p> <p>GPB Board / National Sub Committee updates</p>	Growth Programme Board members, Communications Sub-Committee members	To inform members of Governance boards and EC partners of the developments and implementation of the communications strategy and annual activity plan	<p>Updates to sub committee – every 6 months</p> <p>Annual progress report to GPB</p> <p>Annual summary of activities for</p>	Time / staffing costs	Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF	EU reporting requirements met, members of committees / EC are aware of the implementation of the communications	<p>Feedback from EC and committee members</p> <p>Targets:</p> <p>1 AIR update annually</p>

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	Annual Implementation Report – Publicity content		To meet EU reporting requirements on delivery of publicity activities	Annual Implementation Report			strategy and activity plan	1 GPB update annually 2 sub committee updates annually
Engagements and management of ERDF and ESF England Communications Sub-Committee	Provide Chairperson, Vice Chair and secretariat for this national sub-committee and feed into full GPB as appropriate	Communications Sub-Committee members	Support the delivery of the programme communications strategy and annual activity plans. Act as a specialist advisory committee for the programme's full GPB	Update paper provided every 6 months on comms progress and further comms as and when required in line with programme developments	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	Direct specialist communication input by and feedback from committee members GPB Feedback
Internal communication activities	Various methods including regular staff briefings, direct emails, online information, intranet content to reach wider audiences in Departments	Internal MA staff – and wider Departmental staff	To ensure MA staff are informed and have access to information and resources to deliver programmes effectively. To ensure colleagues in respective Departments are kept up to date on Programme developments and news	In line with Programme developments	Time / staffing costs	Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF	Staff are well informed and kept up to date on programme developments and news	Feedback from staff