

**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 1,449 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 1,449 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 £118m with EMFF grant of over £46m and National match of £11m.
2. There has been almost £35m EMFF paid out to applicants in the core scheme as of 30 October 2020.
3. The popular areas for funding remain:
 - Health and safety – equipment and on-board vessel investments (451 projects attracting £2.6m EMFF);
 - Limiting the impact of fishing on the marine environment – more selective fishing gear and practices (277 projects, attracting £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 (118 projects, attracting £850k EMFF);
 - Infrastructure investments – in ports, harbours, landing sites and auction halls (98 projects, £11.5m EMFF);
 - Investments in aquaculture – new units, diversification of production and species, modernisation of existing units (32 projects, £1.8m EMFF);
 - Promotion of human capital – job creation, improving social dialogue, training (14 projects, £0.6m 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 finished developing applications for projects. 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 finalising the last few remaining claims and over £3.8m has been paid out to applicants to date with the remaining £400k of claims in hand.

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

1. The Maritime and Fisheries Fund (MFF) remains closed for new applications following funds being repurposed to deliver the COVID-19 response packages, the Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme and the Fisheries Response Fund. Both have these have now closed for applications. The primary focus in MFF is now centred on encouraging expenditure against the projects committed to date, in line with agreed schedules.
2. The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) Operational Programme modifications for COVID amendments have now been approved by the Commission with no comments or observations and the UK Managing Authority are finalising the revised budget allocations for the UK presently. Utilising the funding previously allocated to Storage Aid for projects relating to Improvements for Shore Based Facilities and Fishermen’s on-board Health and Safety. Successful applications in these areas must be able to demonstrate that they are in response to the impacts of COVID-19 and the Grants Team assessment process, application form and supporting documents will be adjusted to allow applicants to evidence this. The scheme has now re-opened for applications.
3. Efforts are underway to contact applicants who have received an offer of funding in both EMFF and MFF, but are yet to realise expenditure against their projects, to understand if the completion of their project or original timescales have been significantly impacted by COVID. Where appropriate applicants are being advised to consider if, given the delays and impacts, they should reapply to the future domestic FaSS scheme upon its launch early in 2021. This will allow the grants team to understand the level of EMFF and MFF commitment that can be recycled for use by new projects.

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

4. 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