



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 1,494 core projects approved with an EMFF grant value of £46m committed. Of this 91% of commitments have been paid out to a value of £41.97m.

1. There continues to be good take-up of the EMFF in England, with 1,494 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 £119m with EMFF grant of £46m and National match of almost £11m.
2. The popular areas for funding remain:
 - Health and safety – equipment and on-board vessel investments (485 projects attracting £2.8m EMFF);
 - Limiting the impact of fishing on the marine environment – more selective fishing gear and practices (276 projects, attracting £3m EMFF);
 - Processing and marketing – of fisheries and aquaculture products (84 projects, attracting £4.8m EMFF);
 - Adding value and quality – to caught and unwanted fish products (118 projects, attracting £813k EMFF);
 - Infrastructure investments – in ports, harbours, landing sites and auction halls (115 projects, £12m EMFF);
 - Investments in aquaculture – new units, diversification of production and species, modernisation of existing units (51 projects, £2.2m 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, £5.7m EMFF).

3. With regard to CLLD, the six Fisheries Local Action Groups are now finished developing applications for projects. The allocated budget of £4.2m was committed to 153 projects across the network for projects that delivered in accordance with the Local development Strategy (LDS) and business plan for each FLAG area. £4m has now been paid out to FLAG projects.
4. The UK is now meeting with the EMFF Programme Monitoring Committee on an annual basis, we expect the next meeting to take place in late Summer 2022. The primary item for discussion will be a final Operational Programme amendment to bring result indicators and outcomes in line with actual performance.
5. Prior to the end of the programming period, the UK Managing Authority is also considering undertaking two further evaluations of the EMFF programme, one has been raised as an interest piece by devolved administrations and the other is a legislative requirement of the ESIF programmes. The interest piece is an evaluation of FLAGs from an efficiency and value-added perspective. Mandatory requirement is based on Article 56 of the CPR: Evaluation of the programme from an effectiveness, efficiency and value-added perspective and how support from the ESI Funds has contributed to the objectives for each priority.

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 of these have also now closed for applications. The primary focus in MFF is now centred on encouraging expenditure against the projects committed by the end of March 2022. However, we have agreement to allow those projects that have slipped due to recent factors outside their control to submit their final claims into April and May 2022.
2. The Grants Team are working to understand the value of funding that will be recycled back into the EMFF funding envelope, as a result of projects either not completing as expected or completing for less funds than were offered. The current value of EMFF recycling is almost £1.3m, which brings the overall commitment figure back within budget at £45.98m. The recycling values in each area of the scheme have been reflected in the updated stats provided within this report, which is why you may observe marginal changes from the commitment figures reported to the last Growth Programme Board.
3. The iVMS programme for the under 12m fleet in England began its roll out in February 2022. The project relates to the 2138 inshore vessels that are required by law to operate a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) in order to continue their fishing operations. Vessel owners will be reimbursed up to £650 for the device and its installation through the EMFF scheme, which means a further 2138 applications will need to be approved by the Grants Team through a simplified application process. Applications are already beginning to come through for iVMS and to date 15 have been approved.
4. England's domestic [Fisheries and Seafood Scheme](#) (FaSS) continues to realise spend against the approved projects. The one year settlement for the scheme means that, much

like MFF, projects need to complete and realise spend by the end of March 2022. However, permission has recently been granted to allow flexibility to remaining projects to submit claims into April and May 2022 due to the unprecedented circumstances over the last 12 months. Work to develop the next iteration of FaSS is well underway, with the Grants Team working closely with Defra Policy colleagues to launch early in the next Financial Year.

5. The Grants Team is working closely with Defra Policy colleagues on the development and implementation of the UK Seafood Fund Infrastructure Scheme. To be administered by the Grants Team, this £66m scheme will focus on large infrastructure projects to improve landing sites and increase capacity across processing and aquaculture. It will act at a strategic level, delivering benefits across the seafood industry and will encourage joined up thinking across the Union.

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

6. 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