



European Union

European Structural
and Investment Funds

**European Structural and Investment Funds
2014 - 2020**

Growth Programme for England

ESIF Funds Growth Programme Board

Progress on EAFRD Growth Programme

Purpose:

To provide the Board with an update on the current position on the EAFRD part of the EU ESI Funds Growth Programme.

Recommendations

The Board is invited to note the information set out in this paper.

Summary:

As of 5 June, under the 3 rounds of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Growth Programme, a total of £156m had been awarded in grants to 970 projects across the Tourism Infrastructure, Food Processing, Business Development and Tourism Co-operation themes.

Of this £156m, in total £150m has been paid out, contracting 5,290 FTE jobs, of which 4,888 have already been created.

In addition, there are 17 contracts for funding totalling £69m under the Rural Broadband Infrastructure offer. These projects are at varying stages of delivery.

From 1 July 2022, cash payments on a number of RDPE Programme Measures, including those relating to the EAFRD Growth Programme, were switched to domestic funding rather than EU funding. This switch will have no impact on project beneficiaries, or on the outputs we have committed to delivering, although we will no longer be reporting these to the European Commission.

While all outstanding projects were contracted to complete and claim by end December 2022, arrangements have been established to enable any projects that have experienced unavoidable supply and/or manpower issues to have extended claim periods. This is possible because we have switched to domestic funding.

EAFRD GROWTH PROGRAMME UPDATE

Total Scheme Delivery Update

1. As of 5th June 2023, £156m of grant funding had been awarded to 970 projects under the three rounds of the RDPE Growth Programme. The Rural Payments Agency completed the contracting stage of the final round of this scheme on schedule in June 2021. All allocated RDPE Growth Programme funding has, therefore, now been committed to projects.
2. Of the £156m that has now been awarded, £150m has been paid to projects, an increase of £3m since the last report. To date, 5,290 FTE jobs have been contracted and RPA records show that 4,888 have been created. This is an increase of 132 jobs created since the March update.
3. The main EAFRD Growth Programme has provided funding to projects under four separate Measures within the EU Rural Development Regulations: Measure 4.2 (Food Processing); Measure 6.4 (Rural Business Development); Measure 7.5 (Tourism Infrastructure); and Measure 16.2 (Tourism Cooperation).
4. As noted, since 1 July 2022, EAFRD Growth Programme payments have been made from domestic funding. However, in total under EU and domestic funding:
 - a. the Tourism Infrastructure Measure has funded 123 projects, with £27m of grant funding awarded and £26m so far been paid out to projects.
 - b. under the separate Tourism Cooperation Measure, which was only offered in Round 1, 12 projects were contracted which have now completed and £705k has been spent.
 - c. food processing contracts totalling £66m have been awarded to 231 projects. To date spend is £64m.
 - d. there have been 606 Rural Business Development projects contracted under Measure 6.4, worth £62m. Of this, £60m of funding has been paid to date.

Rural Broadband Infrastructure Fund

5. In addition to the four Measures being used under the main EAFRD Growth Programme, a fifth Measure (7.3) is the basis for the Rural Broadband Infrastructure Fund, which is supporting Local Authorities to bring superfast broadband to some of the most remote parts of rural England.
6. There are currently 3 live RBIS contracts and 14 closed projects where £47m has been paid to projects. The infrastructure funded is forecast to 'pass' 15,282 business premises and 60,244 other premises, to the benefit of a population of 152,160.

Emma Friend

12 June 2023

ANNEX 1

Table 1. Rural Broadband infrastructure offer.

As at 5 June	Rural Broadband
Total Budget (£)	79.5
Full Applications received	23
Value of Grant Sought (£m)	86
Number withdrawn/rejected	6
Number Contracted	17
Value of contract (£m)	68.9
Value of grant paid to date (£m)	47
Number Projects closed	14

Table 2. Project outputs to date by theme.

Rounds 1-3	RDPE Growth Programme	Food Processing	Business Development	Tourism Infrastructure and Cooperation
FTE Jobs Forecast	5,290	2,571	1,735	984
FTE Jobs Created	4,888	2,142	1,656	1,089

Table 3: Total number of RDPE Growth Programme projects, funding committed and spend by theme as of 5 June 2023.

Theme/Measure	No. of Projects	Funding Committed	Spend to Date
Tourism Infrastructure (M7.5)	123	£27,227,699	£25,541,897
Tourism Cooperation (M16.2)*	12	£601,362	£704,756
Food Processing (M4.2)	229	£65,568,337	£63,852,441
Business Development (M6.4)	606	£62,125,186	£59,777,036
Total	970	£155,522,585	£149,876,130

*Theme offered in Round 1 only.

Figure 1. Growth Programme Rural Broadband Infrastructure Scheme, Round 1, 2 and 3 contracted and spend actual figures 5th June 2023.

