

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

Communications Annual Activity Plan for 2024

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Focus of 2024 communication activities

The aim of the 2024 communications activity plan is to publicise the purpose, activities and impact of ERDF and ESF funding in England and to help facilitate the effective closure of these Programmes.

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 this closure ESIF programme, where the focus of Managing Authorities (MA) is largely administrative, particularly in respect of financial activities such as final claims processing and reporting.

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. Activities could include the publication and distribution of a new programme specific booklet or other content published on a GOV.UK website page, or a special bulletin highlighting final delivery figures for the programmes.	Relevant external partners including national and local audiences, local partners and bodies, 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, it's activities and raise awareness of programme/project achievements and lessons learnt (including from evaluations). To support partners and grant recipients as the programmes draw to a conclusion. Highlight project investments 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)	During 2024	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 activities, achievements and impact that have been delivered through ERDF and ESF to support local growth	GOV.UK stats Bulletin stats

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GOV.UK	<p>Promotion of the ESI Funds pages on GOV.UK</p> <p>The structure, content and accessibility of ESI Funds website pages to be reviewed regularly and updated.</p> <p>Promote pages in all programme communications activities.</p> <p>Ensure any relevant information for ongoing monitoring / obligations is available to projects</p> <p>Publish new content when needed and implement an ESIF wide plan for the phased withdrawal of the ESIF pages on GOV.UK.</p>	<p>External partners incorporating all European, national and local audiences, particularly those in receipt of ESI Funds funding.</p> <p>Internal MA staff and other government bodies,</p>	<p>To provide one central online portal for all ESI Fund information</p> <p>To inform and raise awareness of the Programme and funding streams and to support effective project and programme closure.</p> <p>Provide access to Action Notes, information, guidance and forms.</p> <p>Inform audiences about the achievements and impact of the Programme through the use of the List of Beneficiaries and project booklets</p> <p>Ensure pages remain relevant and pages are archived / retained as appropriate once they become outdated.</p>	Ongoing update and withdrawal of content as and when required	Time / staffing costs only	<p>Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF</p> <p>Appropriate linkages made with EAFRD</p>	<p>Increased awareness of programmes, enhanced access to key programme documents and information.</p> <p>Those visiting ESI Funds website pages, including those who administered closed projects, continue to find relevant information..</p>	<p>GOV.UK stats</p> <p>Page views target – 5,000 for the year (was 40,000 for 2023).</p>
ESIF Programme bulletin	<p>Electronic direct updates through Programme bulletin</p> <p>This activity includes ensuring an up-to-date, relevant and targeted database of partners is developed and maintained.</p>	<p>Relevant external partners including national and local audiences, public and private sector organisations, voluntary sectors, EC, among others.</p> <p>Internal MA staff and other government bodies – to keep informed.</p>	To inform external partners about any key programme developments and significant messages which need sharing. No fixed frequency – most probably 1 or 2 per year.	E-bulletin circulated in line with programme developments as required	Time / staffing costs only	Growth Programme level – ERDF and ESF	Increased awareness of significant programme news, achievements.	Number of partners distributed to: Target – 1,000

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ERDF Practitioner Network Bulletin	<p>Electronic direct updates through Programme bulletin</p> <p>This activity includes ensuring an up-to-date, relevant and targeted database of partners is developed and maintained.</p>	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	<p>Time / staffing costs</p> <p>Bulletins to be produced using free online software</p>	Growth Programme level - ERDF	Successfully reinforced messages regarding the programme requirements, guidance and achievements, widening opportunities for sharing best practice, improving local performance.	Number of people distributed to: Target – 600
ESF ongoing communication channels to inform past ESF funding recipients	<p>ESF Action Notes used to 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 and project closure arrangements. New Action Notes or other guidance may be issued / updated on post project delivery issues such as final claims and document retention.</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 activities such as final claim submission are delivered effectively and compliantly through a mix of GOV.UK ESIF Programme content, direct communications and any other relevant activity.	Ongoing	Time/ staffing costs	Growth Programme level -ESF	Improving capacity of funding recipients to help ensure compliance and assist with effective closure of projects and the Programmes	Number of communications (by type) issued to all on circulation list.

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ERDF Final Evaluation Report publicity	Publish this document and all annexes on our ERDF Evaluation page on GOV.UK and promote it's publication using our various communication platforms.	Relevant external partners including projects, national and local audiences, public and private sector organisations, voluntary sectors, EC, among others. Internal MA/DLUHC staff (including those working on other funding programmes) and other government bodies including the DLUHC analytical team.	To maximise the volume of partners and stakeholders who read this final evaluation report, to share best practice and provide colleagues with access to key lessons learnt from our ERDF programme. To support those running future local development projects and funds and embed our knowledge and learning.	During 2024	Time/staffing costs	Growth Programme level - ERDF	Programme lessons learnt are embedded in future thinking. Partners, stakeholders and colleagues in Government managing local funding programmes have a clear understanding of how the England ERDF 2014-2020 programme operated, thrived and evolved and where it offers lessons to learn for future funds and projects.	Report (and annexes) published on GOV.UK Bulletin stats Web statistics Feedback from stakeholders
ESF evaluation report activity	Publication of impact analysis (to be confirmed by Ministers / Private Offices) and final leavers survey report on GOV.UK	Relevant external partners including CFOs, projects, national and local audiences, public and private sector organisations, voluntary sectors, EC, among others. Internal MA/DWP and DLUHC staff (including those working on other funding programmes) and other government bodies.	To ensure transparency, accountability and value for money by publishing research findings (as per the Government Social Research protocol) To share evaluation findings and lessons learned across a wider audience and publicly report the results and impact of the programme.	Aiming for publication on GOV.UK before or during June 2024 (subject to Ministerial approvals or purdah periods)	Embedded in ESF Evaluation Funding Agreement (Technical Assistance)	Evaluation covers all Investment Priorities in Priority Axis 1 & 2 (to varying degrees)	Stakeholders and interested parties have access to data and information about the impact, effectiveness, and efficiency of the 2014-2020 programme; adds to the evidence base for future policy and programme development; meets EC	Reports and annexes published online (GOV.UK on DWP research reports pages) Web statistics Feedback from stakeholders

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							evaluation requirements	
List of Beneficiaries	Maintain the electronic list providing searchable details of supported projects against set EU criteria Displayed on GOV.UK	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	Final update of the ESIF list of beneficiaries in the first half of 2024, that provides final project level information on the basis that all projects are closed.	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	Final version of list published on GOV.UK during first half of 2024 GOV.UK Stats
Reports and Papers	Progress reports on performance of the communication activities GPB Board updates Annual Implementation Report – Publicity content One-off final Local ESIF Sub-Committee report	Growth Programme Board members Local ESIF 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 To meet EU reporting requirements on delivery of publicity activities To keep local partners updated and informed on programme delivery and performance in their areas	Annual progress report to GPB Annual summary of activities for Annual Implementation Report One final set of local ESIF Sub-Committee reports per area (by end of March 2024)	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 strategy and activity plan, members of local sub-committees sighted on local programme performance	Feedback from EC and committee members Targets: 1 AIR update annually 1 GPB update annually 1 final set local ESIF Sub-Committee reports distributed
Internal communication activities	Various methods including all colleague calls, regular staff briefings, direct emails and notifications, online information, intranet content to reach wider	Internal MA staff – and wider Departmental staff	To ensure MA staff are informed and have access to information and resources to deliver and close programmes effectively. To ensure colleagues in respective Departments are kept up	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

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	audiences in Departments		to date on Programme developments and news					