

UPDATE ON COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

PURPOSE OF PAPER

1. To update the PMC on the implementation of the Communications Strategy over the last six months.

DECISIONS REQUIRED

2. PMC is invited to:
- Approve the changes made to the Communications Strategy;
 - Agree with the implementation of the Strategy; and
 - Give an opinion on ways to increase effectiveness of communications activities aimed at the public.

CHANGES TO COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

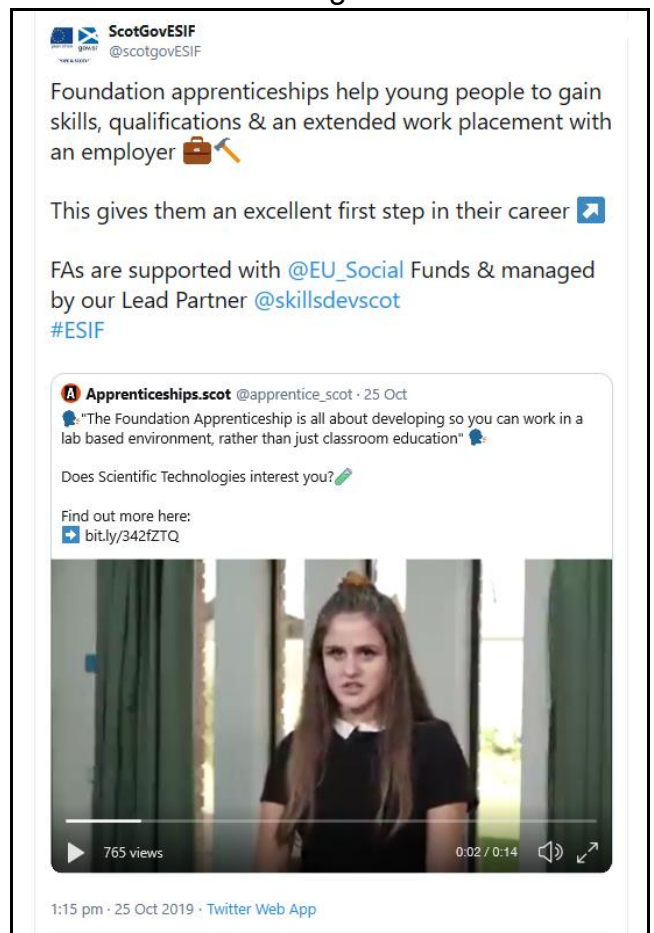
3. The Managing Authority has made several changes to the Communications Strategy. These are mainly superficial changes to provide more accurate and up-to-date information, and to create a more streamlined document. Changes included:

- Removing information about past and planned activity, as this information does not belong in an overarching Strategy document
- Updating details of ESIF Communications contact
- Correcting mentions of 'JPMC' to 'PMC'
- Updating web links
- Removing the unnecessary 'Publicity Requirements' annex as this exists elsewhere on the website
- Altering some Monitoring and Evaluation requirements to better reflect current activity

4. If the PMC approves the changes, the MA will upload the revised document to our website and notify Lead Partners.

SOCIAL MEDIA

5. The Managing Authority (MA) continues to use its Twitter account @scotgovESIF to raise awareness of projects and activity funded by European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). While the main target audience for our social media activity is the public (pictured right), we also use it to signpost Lead Partners towards our latest blogs, website updates and other changes.



WEBSITE & BLOG

6. The MA continues to formally review its website content on a quarterly basis and makes changes as and when required. Case studies are in the process of being published on our blog, and we remain open to ideas from Lead Partners on how to utilise our digital platforms to promote case studies and the programmes in general.

NEWSLETTERS

7. The MA continues to send out its e-bulletin to live Strategic Intervention and Operations managers as listed on our claim payment system EUMIS every 4-6 weeks. Following feedback that some recipients struggled to view the e-bulletin due to their firewall systems blocking the e-bulletin's Mailchimp software, we have committed to send standard emails with a link to the e-bulletin in addition to the Mailchimp process.

MEDIA COVERAGE AND MONITORING

8. We continue to collaborate with Lead Partners' communications teams to create media coverage of projects funded by ESIF. Our support consists of providing ministerial quotes for media releases, usually attributed to the Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation Ivan McKee as ESIF falls within his portfolio. A selection of media coverage is below:

Date	Headline (Fund details)	Media title
13 June	'Better Off North Ayrshire helps locals save money' (ESF – Aspiring Communities)	Ardrossan & Saltcoats Herald
25 June	'Work starts at Falkirk Stadium on new electric vehicle charging hub' (ERDF – Low Carbon Travel and Transport Programme)	Falkirk Herald
5 August	'How one man is using an old bus to steer people from crime' (ERDF – Business Competitiveness)	BBC News Edinburgh Evening News
7 August	'Communities secure funding to reduce impact of climate crisis' (ERDF – Green Infrastructure)	The Herald
19 August	'Planned £7m veterinary science centre for Inverness moves closer thanks to European funding' (ERDF – Business Competitiveness)	Inverness Courier
2 September	'Care-experienced young people land jobs as carers' (ESF – Employability)	Glasgow Live

18 September	'UHI has head in the cloud with new IBM software degree venture to plug skills gap' (ESF – Developing Scotland's Workforce)	Ross-shire Journal
	'£250,000 investment in Highland adventure tourism' (ERDF – Business Innovation)	Inverness Courier
23 September	'New £30 million pound fund for low-carbon projects' (ERDF – Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme)	BBC News The Scotsman The Herald
2 October	'Scottish SMEs issued loans totalling over £2m to boost business growth' (ERDF – Business Competitiveness)	Business Quarter Live

9. In early June, there was negative media coverage in the Daily Record and the Herald regarding the pre-suspension of the European Social Fund, to which the MA's Stakeholder Engagement team worked quickly to respond. On reflection, the MA believes it would have been prudent to engage key stakeholders earlier in the process of the pre-suspension. As a result, since June, the Head of Managing Authority, Hilary Pearce, has communicated regularly with key stakeholders to keep them up to date with issues affecting them. The MA is committed to engaging with stakeholders directly using clear communications during periods of political and media scrutiny in future.

EVENTS

10. In October, the Managing Authority held its second Lead Partner event of the year. We decided to hold events in two locations, in Edinburgh on 1 October (pictured right) and in Inverness on 4 October, in order to make it easier for stakeholders to attend, particularly those in the Highlands and Islands. The agendas for the events closely resembled each other, and around 100 representatives from Lead Partners in total attended. Topics included National Rules changes and the future funding steering group, and attendees provided interesting talking points during discussion sessions. Early feedback is positive, though a full update will be shared with Lead Partners soon, including an action plan to act on some of the suggestions made by attendees.



11. This year's Annual Information Activity, which is a requirement of the European Commission's regulations, is due to take place in late November 2019. Though details are still to be confirmed, Ivan McKee will visit projects funded by ESF & ERDF in areas close to Edinburgh to raise awareness of the benefits of the

programmes and promote the online publication of case studies on our blog. A fuller update about the 2019 Annual Information Activity will be provided at the next PMC.

NEXT YEAR

12. The MA plans to host the next Lead Partner event in Spring 2020. The agenda will be discussed over the coming months, and we are committed to a process of engaging with prospective attendees in advance so that the event is designed in accordance with their wishes.

13. The MA will continue to work with Lead Partner and Scottish Government communications teams to seek opportunities for publicising the successes of ESF and ERDF projects, including a significant increase in the promotion of case studies.

Decisions Required

14. PMC is invited to
- Approve the changes made to the Communications Strategy;
 - Agree with the implementation of the Strategy; and
 - Give an opinion on ways to increase effectiveness of communications activities aimed at the public.

PMC Secretariat
31 October 2019