

UPDATE ON COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

PURPOSE OF PAPER

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

DECISIONS REQUIRED

2. PMC is invited to:
- Give an opinion on ways to increase effectiveness of communications activities aimed at the public.

EFFECTS OF COVID-19

3. The COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of physical distancing measures has inevitably affected the implementation of some aspects of the Communication Strategy. However, the Managing Authority (MA) continues make the most of its communication channels to communicate the successes of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) programmes.

SOCIAL MEDIA

4. The MA continues to use its Twitter account @scotgovESIF to raise awareness of ESIF-related projects and activity. While the main target audience for our social media activity is the public (pictured right), we also use it to direct stakeholders towards blog posts and website updates, and inform them of other minor changes.

WEBSITE & BLOG

5. The MA continues to review its website content on a quarterly basis and makes changes as and when required. The most significant change made to our website this year has been the [COVID-19 Q&A](#). The document seeks to answer the most frequent asked questions from Lead Partners and is updated on a fortnightly basis.

6. The blog continues to be used for news and updates from the MA that are too long and detailed for Twitter and/or do not require an email to Lead Partners. It is also used as a portal to host [case studies](#), of which several have been published this year, to highlight the benefits ESIF have made to individual businesses, organisations and citizens.



The new electric vehicle hub in Falkirk was made possible thanks to @EUinmyRegion funding 🇪🇺 🇸🇨

It's part of our Low Carbon Travel & Transport Programme to create a greener Scotland 🚗 ⚡



3:27 pm · 12 Aug 2020 · Twitter Web App

NEWSLETTERS

7. The MA has sent out five e-bulletins this year to live Strategic Intervention and Operations managers as listed on our claim payment system EUMIS. The e-bulletin serves as a round-up of important news that Lead Partners should be aware of, as well as signposting to other content hosted on our blog and elsewhere.

MEDIA COVERAGE AND MONITORING

8. The MA continues to work with Lead Partners' and other organisations' communications teams to create media coverage of ESIF projects. A selection of media coverage is below:

Date	Headline (Fund details)	Media title
31 December 2019	'Ugly hollow? The spectacular Highlands gorge with a £2.3m visitor centre plan' (ERDF – Scottish Natural Heritage : Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund)	The Herald
15 January 2020	'Fund launched to help SMEs get into low carbon economy' (ERDF – Scottish Enterprise: Scottish Programme for Research Technology and Innovation Ecosystem)	Insider.co.uk
21 February 2020	'Mum who has daughter with complex disabilities sets up support group' (ESF – Inverclyde Council: Poverty and Social Inclusion)	Greenock Telegraph
3 March 2020	'Kate Forbes visits Inverness tech company as part of events for Scottish Apprenticeship Week' (ESF – Skills Development Scotland: Apprenticeships)	Inverness Courier
11 April 2020	'North-east mental health charity has supported more than 150 children in last two years' (ESF – Scottish Government: Social Economy Growth Fund)	The Press & Journal
21 May 2020	'Aberdeen university launches £80,000 AI scholarship' (ESF – Scottish Funding Council: Developing Scotland's Workforce)	Evening Express
1 June 2020	'University of St Andrews hails £1m boost to develop test space, helping SMEs' (ERDF – Scottish Enterprise: Advanced Manufacturing Challenge Fund)	Scotsman
24 July 2020	'More than £1.5 million to be spent updating Edinburgh's ageing CCTV surveillance infrastructure' (ERDF – Scotland's 8 th City, Smart Cities)	Edinburgh Evening News

EVENTS

9. Our planned Lead Partner event on 1 April 2020 had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a consequence of the continuing physical distancing guidelines, it is difficult to know when it will be possible to reschedule the event. By way of a replacement, on 27 August the MA held a Lead Partner online session via Skype which was attended by approximately 60 stakeholders. The agenda included updates on: the MA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic; the suspension of the ESF and ERDF programmes; and replacement funding. The MA continues to receive feedback from the event and will consider holding similar events on a regular basis in future as a method of engaging with Lead Partners in a safe and accessible manner.

10. The plans for the 2019 Annual Information Activity had to be altered due to a last-minute diary change on behalf of Ivan McKee, Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation, in whose portfolio ESIF sits. Though the project visits did not go ahead, in November 2019 the case studies were published on our blog and publicised on Twitter. In addition, during the same month Ivan McKee highlighted the achievements of ESIF programmes in his online video that launched the Scottish Government consultation into post-Brexit replacement funding. The Lead Partner event that took place in October 2019 also included presentations on the benefits of ESIF-supported activity, which were written up on our blog.

11. The plans for the 2020 Annual Information Activity continue to be finalised. In any case, due to the physical distancing guidelines it is likely to take place in an online capacity, either as a conference or video broadcast. As it is the last official year of the 2014-2020 programmes, the MA also plans to produce a booklet summarising the successes over the last seven years.

NEXT YEAR

12. The MA plans to host online sessions via software such as Skype to communicate the successes of the programmes and to engage with Lead Partners until the physical distancing guidelines are eased.

13. The MA will continue to work with Lead Partner and Scottish Government communications teams to seek opportunities for publicising the successes of the ESIF programmes.

Decisions Required

14. PMC is invited to
- Give an opinion on ways to increase effectiveness of communications activities aimed at the public.