

WALES PROGRAMME MONITORING COMMITTEE
EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS 2014-2020

Date: 18 October 2019

Time: 10.30a.m

Venue: Media Resource Centre, Oxford Road, Llandrindod Wells. LD16AH

AGENDA

| | | | |
|----|---|---------------|-------------|
| 1. | Welcome and apologies | 10:30 – 10:35 | |
| 2. | Minutes of June meeting, actions and other matters arising | 10:35 – 10:45 | WPMC(19)M19 |
| 3. | Update on ESI Funds Progress, including portfolio Development | 10:45 – 11:30 | WPMC(19)164 |
| 4. | Cross Cutting Themes: Sustainable Development Annual Report | 11:30 – 11:50 | WPMC(19)165 |
| 5. | Programme Management Arrangements post EU Exit | 11:50 – 12:10 | |
| 6. | Annual European Structural Funds Communications Plan | 12:10 – 12:30 | WPMC(19)166 |
| 7. | Presentation on Dyfodol Caabrian Futures | 12:30 – 13:00 | |
| 8. | AOB | 13:00 | |

**EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS 2014-2020
WALES PROGRAMME MONITORING COMMITTEE**

**Monday 3 June 2019
Swansea Marriott Hotel. Swansea**

Meeting Notes

ITEM 3: Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

1. The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting of the Wales Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) and thanked alternates for their attendance. EC observers were also thanked for their attendance and for their constructive engagement.
2. Attendees and apologies are listed at **Annex A**.

ITEM 4: Annual Implementation Reports

3. A workshop session, at which Members were able to consider and discuss the content of the Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs), preceded the PMC meeting. Taking into account Members' comments and observations, the Chair requested that the Committee consider approving each of the reports.
4. PMC Members approved the West Wales and the Valleys ERDF AIR.
5. PMC Members approved the West Wales and the Valleys ESF AIR.
6. PMC Members approved the East Wales ERDF AIR.
7. PMC Members approved the East Wales ESF AIR.
8. PMC Members approved the RDP AIR

ITEM 5: Minutes of January meeting, actions and other matters arising

9. It was agreed that paragraphs 52 – 54 of the Minutes required amendment; the action for Members to be provided with an addendum to the paper presented at the January PMC not in practice being required as, instead, a meeting had been held with Rural Members that had addressed the issue. It was therefore agreed that no further action required.

ACTION: Minutes to be amended accordingly.

10. Work is to be undertaken on Glastir extensions over the summer months in readiness for agreement in the autumn. Clarity is needed on whether these extensions can run beyond the end of 2020.
11. A Member queried whether time extensions and additional funding were going to be made available for LEADER+. Further clarification needed on whether these are being worked on and whether they can run until 2023.
12. Ruth Studley informed Members that colleagues are working with the LAGs to understand their requirements and to understand additional funding requirements.
13. All subsequent action points had been completed therefore the minutes were agreed by Members.

ACTION: RDP colleagues to provide clarity on extension dates and to check engagement with the LAGs is underway. This has since been complete

ITEM 6: Update on ESI Funds Progress, including portfolio development

Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme

14. Ruth Studley explained that it had been a difficult few months with the political climate and given the sudden death of colleague Gordon Smith. Members were thanked for their support over this difficult period.
15. The Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 continues to make strong progress since its approval. The second modification was approved/ adopted on the 14 March 2019. It is likely a third modification will be needed during 2019 to take account of any changes required in light of EU exit and an agreement on future direction until the end of programme. Members will be informed of any decisions relating to this.
16. The RDP update provided was based on data to the end of April 2019: the project level commitment for the programme is a total of £640m, representing 77% commitment against Programme allocation. Overall Programme spend to date had increased by over £62m since the last PMC to £307m (of which £221m is EAFRD), of this £126m relates to Pillar 1 transfer payments. The Welsh Government has achieved its 2019 target of €247.6m in the first quarter of 2019.
17. For the socio-economic schemes within the Programme, a total of 831 successful expressions of interest (EOIs) had been invited to submit a full application. To date, 624 full applications had been received, 552 appraised, and 498 operations approved with an overall allocation, including LEADER, of £315m. Since the opening of the Farm Business Grant (FBG), 5 windows have

been run and a total of 2,552 farmers have had approval, with expenditure to date totalling £12.1m.

18. Welsh Government officials continue to review allocations within the RDP given the current changeable economic climate (Brexit), Members of the PMC will be informed as soon as possible when further information can be made available.
19. Financial values have not been issued as the intended activities are subject to European Commission approval through the modification process. The PMC will be asked to provide an opinion on the proposed modification in due course.
20. Work needs to be carried out by Welsh Government to update all forecast figures. This exercise will be completed by the next PMC meeting in line with work undertaken for the third modification of the Programme.
21. Slow initial delivery of Farming Connect reflects a re-profiling exercise: the Welsh Government are proposing to remove Sub-Measure 2.3 from the Programme within the 2nd modification; both Measures 1 & 2 are on track to hit activity and financial targets. Forecasts for Measure 4 are lower than target, this is due to only being able to forecast until the end of 2018. Forecasts for future rounds will be included by the next PMC.
22. Although achievement appears low, delivery of the EIP in Wales to date has been successful, encouraging participation by farmers coming together as Operational Groups (OG's), with 111 farmer members in total across 19 approved OG's. A total of £742k has been awarded between the 19 groups, at an average of £39k per group (the maximum eligible support is £40k) and the overall programme target is 45 groups.
23. Priority 3 – There are no concerns in regards to the ability to achieve the original targets based on the lifetime of the Food Business Investment Scheme (FBIS). Progress to date demonstrates the capacity and capability of the scheme, although Measure 16 spend appears low, as already discussed, Welsh Government are taking remedial action to ensure this Measure delivers.
24. Priority 4 – This Priority is split between Agri & Forestry activities with the majority of the funds delivering against Agri related Measures. There are no major issues with delivery under this Priority and the Glastir extensions and amendments have been discussed previously.
25. Priority 5 - Following the first Timber Business Investment Scheme (TBIS) window there have been no approved projects under Priority 5, all have been approved under Priority 6 and because of this there is currently no achievement shown under this Priority. That said the majority of projects that have been submitted in more recent rounds will directly contribute to this Priority so some significant improvement in achievement in later reports should be seen. Although

the Area Supported under Measure 10.1 appears to show low achievement, the indicator for this is reported on an annual basis and not cumulative one and Welsh Government have no concerns regarding the delivery of schemes under Measure 10 (Glastir).

26. Priority 6 – There are 2 schemes delivered under M6.4 by WG Food Division and Visit Wales and there are no issues with delivery to date for these Schemes. Initially delivery was slow but they are building momentum and looking to achieve activity and expenditure in full by the end of the Programme. Welsh Government removed Measure 6.2 from the Programme in the 2nd modification, however this money has remained within Measure 6.
27. Welsh Government's apparent slow progress in appraising and approving project applications under the Rural Community Development Fund (RCDF) has led to some external criticism. Evidence from the previous different grant programmes demonstrates a clear need to improve collaboration across the sector and realise the benefits that can be achieved by improving the links between natural resources and wider well-being.
28. The Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing (ENRaW) grant aims to address these issues. This new scheme is specifically intended to start to tackle local environment quality issues and to do so at scale, making visible improvements in and around the places where people live.
29. Measure 19 LEADER – Welsh Government are currently working with each LAG to establish their position against their original allocation (including spend to date, payments made, claims in progress, and future spend profile). Once the position for each LAG has been agreed we will assess what, if any, need each has for additional support.
30. As the data in these slides demonstrates, the Programme is progressing well with both spend and activity increasing significantly since last the PMC meeting. This trend is set to continue over the remaining years, shown with Welsh Government hitting the N+3 2019 target of €247.6m in the first quarter of 2019. Performance Framework values have been met based on the second modification targets and Welsh Government will continue to ensure successful delivery of the Programme in the current challenging economic and political environment.
31. Marek Beran commented that RDP commitment level is at 38% which is slightly below the EU at 41%, but the EC are happy with the progress.

ACTION – Clarify what measures ENRaW is delivering under

Overview of Structural Funds

32. Peter Ryland provided an overview of Programme progress since January 2019:

- General environment and EU exit timetable – although this has implications for the programmes, WEFO will continue to deliver the Programmes as normal whether the UK remains or leaves the EU with/ without a deal.
- HMT Guarantee - there is no indication that the terms or timescales will change. As time passes and more money is spent, there will be less reliance on the guarantee. Therefore WEFO continues to encourage beneficiaries to spend/ claim/ deliver.
- Structural Funds overall are 95% committed: an increase of 6% since the last PMC meeting, with 240 operations now approved, totalling £3.4bn.
- N+3 targets have been achieved for 2019 for all four Structural Fund Programmes
- Commitment for the ERDF programme stands at 95% overall - 97% East Wales and 95% West Wales and the Valleys, with Minesto, Magma and Metro projects having been recently approved.
- Spend has increased steadily. Up until March WEFO worked to ensure that sufficient payments went through the system to meet the performance reserve targets.
- Drawdown currently stands at 25% for ERDF, which is higher than the average across Europe, which is 21%.
- Commitment for the ESF programme stands at 96% overall - 82% East Wales and 99% West Wales and the Valleys with METAL2, KESS2 and two Welsh Bio Innovation projects having been recently approved.
- ESF expenditure is 96% committed with a drawdown of 34%, which again is higher than the average across Europe which is at 11%.
- WEFO is still working to commit fully ERDF Priority 3 and ESF Priority 5, however there is no concern that the money will not be fully allocated across the Programmes
- Priorities for the period ahead include:
 - preparing for an East Wales programme modification to address the Performance Reserve adjustments
 - committing the remaining funds
 - preparing a programme modification for West Wales and the Valleys to be submitted after the Performance Reserve modification has been processed.

33. More information will be provided at the September 2019 PMC with regards to the modification as PMC approval is required. The East Wales modification will be completed first and the West Wales and the Valleys modification will be dependent on project progress between now and the autumn.

34. There was further discussion between Sue Price and Guus Muijzers over the timing of both ERDF modifications. It was agreed that WEFO would continue to

prepare them in readiness for approval, which is not expected to be a complicated process.

35. A Member raised concerns with regards to P3 ESF over whether those engaged in delivering this aspect of the Programmes are working together effectively in partnership. The Working Wales advice service was referenced in this context: having been set up to give advice and signpost/ align people to the right support. It was noted that close liaison with the DWP, together with a considerable investment of time and effort, had been required to develop a meaningful partnership approach.
36. Monitoring exchange rate risk continues to be a high priority for WEFO. If the UK stays within the EU for the remainder of the programme, the € / £ rate could be highly volatile. The rate for the HMT Guarantee currently stands at €1.17/ £1 although this may be revisited in October.
37. A Member questioned whether HMT had clarified the Technical Assistance position in respect of the Guarantee. Peter Ryland explained that Technical Assistance is still not within the scope of the Guarantee, however the UK Government have noted related issues and concerns and have asked Devolved Administrations for more detail on the associated costs.
38. The Member went on to say that as WEFO manages over commitment and makes decisions on moving funds, it would be helpful to have an early indication of what additional funding will be available in Priority 4. The Member also mentioned that, for ESF, the regions were getting their Operation Logic Tables submitted for Priority 5 and would like to see approvals coming through soon, with the need for proposals to be 'region-proofed' being noted.
39. Sue Price confirmed that the possibility of moving money between priorities is still under consideration. WEFO had undertaken a detailed analysis and is monitoring performance in these areas, with slow performing projects having been given a timeline for improvement.
40. In respect of the new ESF Priority 5 – the regional bids are at Business Planning stage where the detail is being worked through. A big focus is being put on the regional element of these proposals and bids are being pushed back for further regional discussion where needed. However, progress does need to be made in this priority, within the year.
41. A Member commented that Ministers have just declared a climate emergency so it is important not to de-commit the funds, P3 ERDF projects need to be given time to progress and it was also asked if there were any consistent themes in relation to those projects that are struggling.

42. The recent approval of Minesto has taken the Energy Priority commitment to 70%, which is a significant increase since the last PMC.
43. Sue Price further explained that there are a number of issues that Marine Energy projects face which will affect progress. State Aid limits of 70% grant funding leads to difficulties in getting sufficient match funding. There are no government-led funding streams available as is the case for solar/ wind energy. Additionally the consenting process can be long and challenging with studies taking up to 2 years to complete. Additionally for community-based projects, a business planning and delivery skills gap has been identified.
44. There was further discussion on the need to continue using the current and replacement programmes as effective action learning to ensure engagement with communities going forward. A Member commented that there is a need to make ESF more available for business support and important to ensure considerations are made on use of procurement versus planned provision such as with Apprenticeships. Peter Ryland confirmed that these discussions are being held at the Regional Investment in Wales Steering Group and WEFO would continue to be the catalyst for joining things up, going forward, across the Welsh Government.
45. Peter Ryland informed Members that this was Rob Halford's last PMC meeting and thanked him for his contribution.

ITEM 7: Cross Cutting Themes – Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming Annual Report

46. Chriss O'Connell, Head of Cross Cutting Themes Unit, WEFO presented the Cross Cutting Theme paper on Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming. A number of areas of particular interest were highlighted:
- Limitless Project run by Threshold – a project working with women who have suffered domestic abuse. This is a very important project and a significant contribution to the Equality Agenda and it is the first time such a project had been funded.
 - Business Wales continue to make significant progress against indicators.
 - The statistics for the number of Welsh speakers remain unchanged but there is no decline.
 - A breakdown of the CCT Equal Opportunity indicators in Annex 2 of the report, shows the figures that have been taken from WEFO's IT system (PPIMS) for the first time. These figures may look as if they have decreased but this is not the case, this is believed to be a reporting issue which will catch up with 'living data'.
 - Members were drawn to the research studies referenced in the report

- Infographics have been developed and tweets have been included in the report as a more exciting way of presenting the data.
47. Chriss O'Connell summarised that it had been a very busy and productive period as the team continue to support the agenda. Positive feedback has been received on the case level indicators that are being used, there is a shortfall in targets but overall good progress is being made.
 48. The Chair thanked Chriss saying that it was very encouraging to see how it all aligns with the Welsh Government's agenda.
 49. A Member noted that the CCTs fit well with the economic contract and quality and behavioural change is important.

ITEM 9: AOB

50. The next PMC meeting is scheduled for Friday 20 September 2019. A venue has not yet been confirmed.
51. Hugh Morgan informed Members that the socio-economic projects for RDP were experiencing the same issues as the Structural Funds and the team would be contacting beneficiaries to ensure projects are spending.
52. Guus Mujizers informed Members that a Country report had been published by the EC: 2019 European Semester: Assessment of progress on structural reforms, prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, and results of in-depth reviews under Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011. He thought that it would be useful for Members to read it.

ACTION: Report to be sent to the secretariat for forwarding to Members.

53. The Chair acknowledged that this could also be a topic for discussion at the Regional Investment in Wales Steering Group.
54. The Chair thanked the secretariat again for arranging the meeting and Members for giving their time at the morning session, which was very helpful. The PMC team will reflect on how to take this forward in the future.

PMC Secretariat June 2019

ANNEX A

**EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS 2014-2020 WALES
PROGRAMME MONITORING COMMITTEE**

Monday 3 June 2019
Swansea Marriott Hotel, Swansea

Chair – Huw Irranca-Davies AM

Members nominated on a representative basis, from partners and statutory bodies:

| | |
|---|--|
| Tom Whyatt | Business and Enterprise (Industry Wales) |
| Lowri Owain | LEADER |
| Lowri Gwilym | Alternate for Rob Stewart, Local Government (WLGA) |
| Charlotte Priddy Rachel Lewis-Davies | Farming Union Wales (FUW) National Farmers Union (NFU) |
| Huw Bryer | Welsh Government (Economy, Skills and Natural Resources) |
| Phil Fiander | Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) |
| Tove Oliver | Alternate for David Blaney, HEFCW |
| Derek Walker | Business and Enterprise: Social Enterprises (Third Sector) |
| Rachel Garside-Jones | Welsh Government |
| Rudi Plaut | Wales Social Partners Unit/Commerce Cymru |
| Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn | Local Government (WLGA) |
| Iestyn Davies | |
| | |

Members selected via the Public appointments process:

| |
|------------------|
| Beth Winkley |
| Sian Price |
| Grahame Guilford |
| Dai Davies |

Advisors:

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Guus Muijzers | European Commission, DG Regio |
| Susan Fleming | European Commission, DG Employ |
| Marek Beran | European Commission, DG Agri |
| Egle Puosiunaite | European Commission, DG Agri |

Programme Managing Authorities:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Peter Ryland | Chief Executive, WEFO |
| Ruth Studley | Head of Managing Authority |
| Rob Halford | Head of Planning and Strategy, WEFO |
| Sue Price | Head of EDRF Programmes, WEFO |
| Geraint Green | Head of ESF Programmes, WEFO |
| Chriss O'Connell | Head of Cross Cutting Themes |
| Kathryn Helliwell | Senior Research Officer, WEFO |
| Jon Mercer | Senior Evidence Manager, WEFO |
| Tom Cartwright | Senior Research Officer, WEFO |
| Mari Williams | Deputy Head RDP Managing Authority |
| Cath Lawton | Senior Evidence Manager, RDP. |
| Hugh Morgan | Head of Paying Agency |
| Cath Cleaton | Secretariat |
| Aled Wright | Secretariat |
| Lois Wilson | Secretariat |

Apologies:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Tim Render | Welsh Government (Economy, Skills and Natural Resources) |
| Martin Mansfield | TUC |
| Rhian Jardine | Natural Resources Wales |
| Prof. Richard Davies | Further Education |
| Cllr Rob Stewart | WLGA |
| Arfon Williams | RSPB |

Section 1: ERDF Programmes: Commitment

1. This section gives details of current financial progress under the ERDF Programmes, including an overview of the Programmes and information at Priority-level.
2. Table 1 shows the number and amount of EU Grant committed to approved Operations under the West Wales and the Valleys and East Wales ERDF Programmes.
3. Progress data for finance and indicators is published monthly on the WEFO Website at <https://gov.wales/progress-programmes-eu-structural-funds-2014-2020>

Table 1: EU Grant Commitment by Programme and Priority: Approved Operations

| £ Millions | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|--------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Priority | Operations | Allocation | | Committed | | | | Spend | | | |
| | | Total¹ | EU Grant¹ | Total² | | EU Grant² | | Total³ | | EU Grant³ | |
| West Wales and the Valleys ERDF | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 34 | 388.7 | 258.0 | 450.3 | (116%) | 258.0 | 100% | 125.6 | (32%) | 77.5 | (30%) |
| 2 | 8 | 284.8 | 177.8 | 314.0 | (110%) | 170.2 | 96% | 211.1 | (74%) | 109.3 | (61%) |
| 3 | 14 | 210.3 | 146.0 | 159.4 | (76%) | 100.5 | 69% | 44.5 | (21%) | 24.7 | (17%) |
| 4 | 40 | 652.6 | 428.5 | 770.8 | (118%) | 428.5 | 100% | 105.4 | (16%) | 54.0 | (13%) |
| 5 | 7 | 27.6 | 20.6 | 29.9 | (108%) | 20.6 | 100% | 10.8 | (39%) | 7.8 | (38%) |
| Total | 103 | 1,564.0 | 1,030.9 | 1,724.3 | (110%) | 977.8 | (95%) | 497.4 | (32%) | 273.2 | (26%) |
| East Wales ERDF | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 19 | 172.3 | 86.2 | 191.4 | (111%) | 86.5 | 100% | 38.5 | (22%) | 15.7 | (18%) |
| 2 | 7 | 78.2 | 39.1 | 87.3 | (112%) | 39.1 | 100% | 66.3 | (85%) | 30.9 | (79%) |
| 3 | 1 | 8.3 | 4.1 | 7.1 | (86%) | 3.6 | 86% | 0.0 | (0%) | 0.0 | (0%) |
| 4 | 6 | 81.8 | 40.9 | 78.6 | (96%) | 39.3 | 96% | 18.8 | (23%) | 8.9 | (22%) |
| 5 | 6 | 7.0 | 3.5 | 8.3 | (119%) | 3.1 | 88% | 2.1 | (30%) | 1.0 | (28%) |
| Total | 39 | 347.5 | 173.8 | 372.7 | (107%) | 171.5 | (99%) | 125.8 | (36%) | 56.5 | (33%) |
| Total ERDF | 142 | 1,911.5 | 1,204.6 | 2,097.0 | (110%) | 1,149.3 | (95%) | 623.2 | (33%) | 329.7 | (27%) |

Source: WEFO, 31/08/2019

¹ Based on a conversion rate of £1:€1.17

² Percentages show committed as share of allocation

³ Percentages show spend as share of allocation

Overall Programme Update

4. The two ERDF Programmes continue to make good progress with 142 operations approved committing nearly £1,150 million grant representing 95% of the programme values (95% West Wales and the Valleys and 99% East Wales). Commitments continue at a good pace. WPMC members will receive a further update on commitments at the meeting in October.
5. So far £271m (26% WWV) and £56m (32% EW) has been paid out to ERDF project sponsors. Currently there are ERDF payments awaiting authorisation by WEFO amounting to £18m and £8m for WWV and EW respectively; taking

these into account the payments to sponsors rise to £289m (29%) in WWV and £65m (33%) in EW.

6. These ERDF spend figures have translated into a draw-down of funds from the European Commission of 29% of the grant allocation in WWV and 33% of the grant allocation in EW which is above the EU average of 23%.
7. Both the EW and WWV Programmes have now met the 2019 N+3 targets and making progress to meeting the 2020 targets.
8. Performance Reserve Targets across both the ERDF Programmes have been met except for the financial target for the Energy Priority in East Wales which the PMC has been advised of in previous Update Reports and this was confirmed through an EC Decision made on 13 August 2019, following the conclusion of the Performance Review. The regulations require a modification to be submitted to the EC, following PMC agreement, within three months of that Decision to reallocate the P3 performance reserve element of around £250k ERDF to other parts of the programme.

Section 2: Progress by Priority Axis

Priority 1: Research and Innovation

Approvals since the last PMC

| | West Wales and the Valleys | | East Wales | |
|---|----------------------------|----------|------------|----------|
| | Total | EU Grant | Total | EU Grant |
| Digital Signal Processing Centre (DSP) | £5.95m | £3.92m | | |
| Cardiff Centre for AI Robotics & Human Machine Systems (IROHMS) | | | £3.75m | £1.87m |
| Flexisapp (Commercial Demonstrator) | £4.48m | £2.95m | | |
| Institute of Creative Ageing Swansea University | £3.85m | £2.59m | | |
| Legal Innovation Lab Wales Swansea University | £5.67m | £3.99m | | |

9. The priority is now fully committed in East and West Wales. There has been high demand for the funds available for Research and Innovation led by the strategic importance of smart specialisation. The UK Treasury's Guarantee does allow for the development of operations to take place with approvals

being made up until December 2020 which has allowed for some flexibility to consider those operations in development which are technical and complex in nature, with further opportunities to commit additional commitments, should resources become available.

10. The Research and Innovation portfolio is led by the smart specialisation agenda which is reflected in the backbone operations approved alongside the individual niche operations. The portfolio is made up of 53 approved operations a number of which have been very technical in nature to approve, and 1 proposal in development stage. To deliver the smart specialisation agenda the portfolio of operations need to keep to their delivery plans, budget and spend the funds a key aspect of managing this Priority within the overall concept of Programme Management requirements.

Priority 2: SME Competitiveness

Approvals since the last PMC

11. There have been no approvals since the last PMC.
12. One of the key risks for this portfolio is the investment of significant levels of funding into a close family of operations. Whilst this strategically makes perfect sense it does mean there is a very close alignment between operations in terms of delivery, keeping to budget and spending the funds available. As a result operations have developed closer ways of working, for example a cross referral process between the business support provided by the SME Support operations in EW and WWV and the Development Bank of Wales who provide financial support via the Wales Business fund.
13. EW is now fully committed. Whilst little funding remains in WWV WEFO remains open to discussions around added-value 'niche' ideas. WEFO has approval, in principle, from the Development Bank for Wales and Welsh Government colleagues to replace a further £5m of legacy match funding in WWV.

Priority 3: Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency**Approvals since the last PMC**

| | West Wales and the Valleys | | East Wales | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------|------------|----------|
| | Total | EU Grant | Total | EU Grant |
| Minesto Deep Green Array | £18.23m | 12.63m | | |

14. As indicated in the above table a further Marine Energy operation has been approved since the PMC last met, resulting in commitment for WWV now standing at 69%. While there is still some way to go for full commitment progress is being made in this challenging portfolio.
15. The extension of the UK Treasury Guarantee to end of December 2020 has allowed more flexibility to pursue the development of operations in both marine energy and community energy. WEFO has been reviewing those operations in the pipeline to determine those that can demonstrate the ability to deliver in full by end of 2023 to ensure funds are to be used to the best effect for the programme and sector. This review will reach a conclusion shortly which will foresee either full commitment of the priority or the need to move funds to other areas of the programme in time to commit and ensure full delivery by end 2023.
16. A programme modification will need to be agreed with the Commission if resources are to be reallocated, this would come forward in early 2020 should it be required. There are a number of well performing projects that are in a position to do more with additional funding. The WWV Programme could commit a further grant to well-performing projects in Priority 1 and priority 2. Additional ERDF allocated to P1 will be used to extend projects which are due to end in 2020/2021 and have potential to deliver additional outcomes against the smart specialisation and low carbon agendas. Resources used in P2 would primarily support further investment in SMEs through the Wales Business Fund securing a legacy for further investments in Business. .
17. As forecast the EW Priority did not achieve its Performance Reserve Financial target. There is no impact at programme level in missing this target as resources will now be re-allocated to other stronger performing areas of the programme. Taking into account the decommitment of the performance reserve element commitment will be at 91%. No other operations are foreseen in the EW priority so unallocated resources will be refocused as described above.

Priority 4: Connectivity and Urban Development**Approvals since the last PMC**

18. There have been no new approvals since the last PMC.
19. Priority 4 WWV is fully committed having invested £134 million ERDF on Metro and over £50 million ERDF on 20 regionally prioritised Sites and Premises operations. The Backbone Tourism Attractor Destination operation that has received £27 million ERDF has fully committed all its available funds to 13 projects which are now in delivery. Equally the backbone Building for the Future operation continues to progress with £22.5m now committed to 17 projects. WEFO is looking to approve the remaining ERDF awarded to this strategic operation by the end of 2019. In the meantime the RETs have been asked to prioritise 1 further project each to cater for any decommitment.
20. The challenges for this portfolio going forward will be to keep all operations on track in terms of delivery, budget and spend. There is limited opportunity for operations to slip in their timetable for delivery which is a risk for infrastructure operations as all operations will need to be fully completed by end 2023. The priority could absorb limited additional funds should additional resources become available in a timely fashion. In this context the RETs have also been asked to come forward with a limited number reserve projects for potential future consideration.
21. East Wales is 96% committed with some £31.5m ERDF allocated to the Metro. Consideration will be given to the limited uncommitted resources which is likely to be transferred to P1 R&I via a future programme modification. As with WWV, the priority going forward will be to ensure delivery stays on track, to budget and operations spend the funds available.

Priority 5: Technical Assistance**Approvals since the last PMC**

22. No new approvals since the previous PMC.
23. All TA operations are approved and in delivery. No particular issues have been raised and the Regional Engagement Teams continue to help WEFO in certain fields of prioritisation.

Section 1: ESF Programmes: Commitment

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Table 1: EU Grant Commitment by Programme and Priority: Approved Operations

| £ Millions | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Priority | Operations | Allocation | | Committed | | | | Spend | | | |
| | | Total¹ | EU Grant¹ | Total² | | EU Grant² | | Total³ | | EU Grant³ | |
| West Wales and the Valleys ESF | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 15 | 203.2 | 160.5 | 224.0 | (110%) | 164.3 | (102%) | 60.8 | (30%) | 40.4 | (25%) |
| 2 | 22 | 402.6 | 290.3 | 453.2 | (113%) | 280.0 | (96%) | 227.8 | (57%) | 100.1 | (34%) |
| 3 | 20 | 281.3 | 209.2 | 326.4 | (116%) | 224.1 | (107%) | 120.3 | (43%) | 71.1 | (34%) |
| 4 | 6 | 18.4 | 13.7 | 26.6 | (144%) | 15.4 | (113%) | 11.0 | (59%) | 5.7 | (42%) |
| 5 | 0 | 18.6 | 14.0 | 0.0 | (0%) | 0.0 | (0%) | 0.0 | (0%) | 0.0 | (0%) |
| Total | 63 | 924.1 | 687.7 | 1,030.3 | (111%) | 683.9 | (99%) | 419.9 | (45%) | 217.3 | (32%) |
| East Wales ESF | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 8 | 54.8 | 27.4 | 41.9 | (76%) | 20.9 | (76%) | 11.5 | (21%) | 5.4 | (20%) |
| 2 | 15 | 152.0 | 73.6 | 225.7 | (148%) | 67.8 | (92%) | 110.7 | (73%) | 19.3 | (26%) |
| 3 | 12 | 112.5 | 56.3 | 143.6 | (128%) | 53.0 | (94%) | 47.0 | (42%) | 18.5 | (33%) |
| 4 | 5 | 7.0 | 3.5 | 5.8 | (84%) | 2.9 | (84%) | 2.6 | (38%) | 1.2 | (34%) |
| 5 | 0 | 26.6 | 13.0 | 0.0 | (0%) | 0.0 | (0%) | 0.0 | (0%) | 0.0 | (0%) |
| Total | 40 | 352.9 | 173.8 | 417.0 | (118%) | 144.6 | (83%) | 171.9 | (49%) | 44.4 | (26%) |
| Total ESF | 103 | 1,277.0 | 861.4 | 1,447.4 | (113%) | 828.6 | (96%) | 591.7 | (46%) | 261.7 | (30%) |

Source: WEFO, 31/08/2019

¹ Based on a conversion rate of £1:€1.17

² Percentages show committed as share of allocation

³ Percentages show spend as share of allocation

Overall Programme Update

4. Commitment now stands at 99% in WWV and 83% in EW (96% overall), meaning that a total of £829m has now been committed to beneficiaries. Two new operations have been approved since the last PMC meeting as well as a number of extensions to existing operations to deliver more impact. WEFO intends to commit the remaining £33m ESF through a mixture of new projects and extending projects to deliver more over longer timescales.

5. Funds paid out to beneficiaries stand at £217m in WWV and £45m in EW – a total of £262m which represents 30% of the programme funds. This has translated into a declaration of grant to the European Commission of 40% of the grant allocation in West Wales and the Valleys and 45% of the grant allocation in East Wales which is well above the EU average of 25.5% and the UK average of 22%.
6. All 2018 N+3 targets were met. 20 of the 22 Performance framework milestones for 2018 were achieved with performance in excess of 100% for the majority of targets. The exception was the new Priority 5 where the milestones for approving one operation in each programme area were not achieved due to this new priority experiencing an unexpected slow start. The performance reserve for Priority 5 will be reallocated to another ESF Priority.
7. Delivery by operations of support to participants is progressing well. More than 198,000 participants have so far been recorded (46% of the overall target). Over 77,000 participants have gained qualifications and over 16,000 have been supported into employment.

Section 2: Progress by Priority

Priority 1: Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment

8. There have been no new approvals in this Priority since the last PMC.
9. Additional ESF of £8.1m (£7.9m in WW&V and £0.2m in EW) was awarded to extend **Active Inclusion Wales**, led by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, to support a further 5,600 economically inactive or long-term unemployed participants (aged 25 and over) with complex barriers to employment to gain a qualification, enter employment or increase their employability through completing a work experience placement or volunteering opportunity.
10. Additional ESF of £4m (£3.1 in WW&V and £0.9m in EW) was awarded to extend **Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE)**, led by the Welsh Government, to support a further 400 economically inactive parents (aged 25 and over) into sustainable work, where childcare is their main barrier.
11. The Priority is now 102% committed in WW&V and 76% in EW with a strong pipeline of new project proposals and extension requests.
12. Overall performance for this Priority remains encouraging with over 39,000 participants supported to date, across both programmes. Approved operations forecast helping over 130,000 people (146% of Operational Programme targets).
13. Successful performance to date includes helping 20% of economically inactive participants into work in WW&V (21% in EW). For those impacted by redundancy in WW&V, 63% of participants have gained a qualification to boost their employability and open up work opportunities.
14. A number of other indicators are lower than operations forecasted, often due to underestimating the time needed to mobilise and become fully operational. Other reasons for slow progress include longer than expected time lag between enrolment and achieving a positive outcome when working with individuals with multiple and entrenched barriers to work, and the impact on delivery of the improving labour market position with low levels of unemployment and redundancies.
15. While the improved labour market conditions are welcome, it means that the ESF programmes are increasingly working with individuals furthest from the labour market, often having been economically inactive for many years and needing intensive levels of support before they become work ready. WEFO

continues to closely monitor and support individual operations to secure improvements.

Priority 2: Skills for Growth

16. There has been one new approval in this Priority since the last PMC meeting.
17. In EW, £1.3m ESF was approved for ***Welsh BioInnovation East Wales***, led by Aberystwyth University, to support 193 participants employed in the Welsh agri-food and biotechnology industries towards a postgraduate qualification relevant to their industry needs.
18. This takes the commitment levels for the Priority to 96% in WWV and 92% in EW, with total EU funds of £348m already committed and only £16m remaining to be allocated. A number of proposals remain in development and there is potential to extend more existing approved operations to run for longer periods, subject to performance.
19. The position on performance for this priority remains very encouraging. Over 99,000 participants have already been reported and achievement against most indicators is running fairly close to profile. Participants on training at level 3 and above (SO2) are outnumbering those on foundation and intermediate level courses (SO1), which appears indicative of rising skills needs in the workplace. Female participants are outnumbering males, particularly in the category of participants with an upper secondary education where the anticipated total number of females to the end of the programme has already been exceeded.
20. Following the European Commission's agreement of the Programme Modification, we were able to add a new Specific Objective (SO 2.4) for *Research and Innovation Skills* to the East Wales programme and two new operations have already been approved under this SO. The modification has also resolved the previous difficulties in SO1 around the definition of 'no formal qualifications' with a single merged indicator covering no or low qualifications now in place for reporting in this SO.

Priority 3: Youth Employment and Attainment

21. There has been one new approval in this Priority since the last PMC.

22. In WW&V, £1.3m was approved for Better Jobs, **Better Futures ... for Young People At Risk Of NEET**, part of an integrated suite of operations, led by Gower College Swansea, to provide a strategic approach to the delivery of a new employability service in Swansea.
23. Additional ESF of £3.8m (£1.2m in WW&V and £2.6m in EW) was awarded to extend **TRAC 11-24**, led by Denbighshire County Council, to support a further 2,300 young people aged 11-24 disengaging with education and at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).
24. In WV&V, additional ESF of £3.4m was awarded to extend **Active Inclusion Youth**, led by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, to support and develop a further 3,000 young people who are not in employment, education or training to progress them into unsupported employment.
25. Additional ESF of £1.6m (£1.2m in WW&V and £0.4m in EW) was awarded to extend **Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE)**, led by the Welsh Government, to support a further 300 young parents aged 16-24 with childcare as their main barrier to work related training or employment.
26. The Priority is now 107% committed in WW&V and 94% in EW with a strong pipeline of new project proposals and extension requests.
27. Overall performance for this Priority remains encouraging with over 60,000 young people supported to date, across both programmes. Approved projects forecast helping over 146,000 people (96% of Operational Programme targets) which will increase further when all funds are committed.
28. Performance highlights to date include helping 30% of NEET into employment in WW&V (29% in EW) and 30% to gain qualifications in WW&V (33% EW).
29. Following the approval of three STEM projects (SO 3.3) in 2018, 33% of young male participants (11-19 years of age) and 17% of young female participants (11-19 years of age) in WWV are completing training in Maths, Science, Engineering and Technology.

Priority 4: Technical Assistance

30. No approvals since previous PMC.
31. Four Regional Engagement Teams have been set up to help improve the way we deliver and manage the European Structural Funds programmes 2014-2020. They are based in North Wales, Mid Wales, Swansea Bay and South

East Wales. They work with the Regional Skills Partnerships in relation to regional proofing of proposed operations and the integration of approved operations.

32. All TA operations have now been approved.

Priority 5: Public services reform and regional working

33. Agreement of this new Priority was received in September 2018 as part of the Programme Modification. The Priority focuses on building capacity for regional working in public services and is an opportunity to develop strategic regional responses to Prosperity for All, the Economic Action Plan and other key strategies which point to the need for enhanced regional working.

34. Eleven operations are now in business planning. Together with other proposals in the pipeline, these applications have the potential to use most of the funds available under this new Priority. The applications include a proposal for each region led by local government and focussed on economic development, as well as other proposals by other partners. The first approvals under this Priority are expected by the end of the year.

Welsh Government – Rural Communities Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020

Overall Programme Update

1. Based on a planning exchange rate of £1:€1.18, the current policy level commitment for the Programme is £832m (£556m EU funding) which is just over 100% of the Programme. At a project level a total of £665m funds have been committed, representing just over 80% of the £828m Programme funds. Overall Programme spend to date has increased by over £32m since the last PMC to £339m (£242m EAFRD), of this £136m relates to Pillar I transfer payments.
2. Following the approval of the second modification the Programme has met all the performance framework milestones. The final achieved position against the performance framework targets is reported in the 2018 Annual Implementation Report and the European Commission has made the decision to release the performance reserve for Wales.
3. Work on the third modification is continuing and initial discussions have taken place with the Commission with a technical meeting held in September. Since the last Programme amendment approved earlier this year, there has been the need to review current programme allocations to allow for transition arrangements post Brexit, in particular those around increased funds for agri-environmental activity under Measures 10 and 11 (Glastir). Proposals have been issued to Members to seek their opinion.

Table 1: Allocation, Spend & Commitment

| £ Millions | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------|------------------------|--------|-------|--------|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Allocation ¹ | | Committed ² | | | | Spend ² | | | |
| TOTAL | EAFRD | TOTAL | | EAFRD | | TOTAL | | EAFRD | |
| 828 | 551 | 832 | (100%) | 556 | (101%) | 339 | (41%) | 242 | (44%) |

Source: WEFO, 31-08-2019

¹ Based on a planning exchange rate of £1:€1.18

² Percentages show share of allocation

4. Data on Programme performance is published monthly and can be found [here](#).

Scheme Update

Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being (ENRaW)

5. Members will be aware of some delays in issuing full approvals to the RDP linked ENRaW projects. This is due to the need to ensure that all our internal processes are fully compliant with EU requirements. This is largely completed but there are areas where we are not completely satisfied that the match is sufficient. For this reason, and in order to get the current projects fully underway, it has been decided to use only domestic funds for the current financial year. Going forward we need these projects to be supported through the RDP to ensure the full drawdown of EU funds and so they will need to reapply through WEFO On-line using the standard RDP processes.
6. To facilitate this an application window will opened in November 2019 with a view to having approvals in place before the end of March 2020. These projects will be able to apply and, should they wish, amend activities, outputs and costs and increase the duration of the project.

European Innovation Partnership (EIP)

7. Delivery of the EIP in Wales to date has been successful, encouraging participation by farmers coming together as Operational Groups (OG's), with 127 farmer members in total across 23 approved OG's. A total of £900k has been awarded between the 23 groups, at an average of £39k per group (the maximum eligible support is £40k).

Farm Business Grant (FBG)

8. To date 99% of the applicants who submitted a claim for the fifth FBG window have been paid approximately £5m.
9. A sixth FBG EOI window closed 12 April 2019. Contracts were offered to the highest scoring EOI's (up to a value of £1.5m). 321 applicants accepted the contract offer worth a total value of £1.3m. In order to ensure a full budget spend, a further selection was run and an additional 27 applicants accepted the contract offer. Those who accepted the contract in the first round of applications have until 26 September 2019 to claim the payment and the 27 additional who accepted in the second round have until 29 October 2019.

Food Business Investment Scheme (FBIS)

10. A seventh FBIS EOI window closed 2 July 2019. A total of 51 EOIs have been received worth a total value of £35.5m. Ten projects have been invited to submit full applications by the deadline of 19 February 2020.

Glastir

11. Depending on the status of a Glastir contract, extensions or renewals will be offered in the autumn following the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs' announcement to extend all existing Advanced, Commons and Organics contracts. These are to aid the transition between current schemes and the new land management schemes. A further round of Glastir Woodland Creation is planned to open on 30 September 2019 and close on 8 November 2019.

Knowledge Transfer & Innovation (KT&I)

12. The enhanced KT&I programme is continuing to provide support in transforming the business prospects of thousands of farmers and foresters. As at 31 August 2019 a total of 10,541 Businesses with 21,237 individuals registered and engaged with the programme. More information on Farming Connect programme delivery can be found [here](#).

LEADER

13. The purpose of the extension is to provide support to enable transition into future funding arrangements. The situation is complex due to the rules surrounding the proportion of funding for staffing versus delivery. Significant work has been conducted by officials to understand the delivery profile of existing funds between now and the original N+3 date, namely the end of 2023.
14. Welsh Government want to ensure the best use of public money and have committed to exploring options that will allow reallocation in a way that meets the current rules.

Rural Business Advisory Service (RBAS)

15. RBAS provides expert, independent, confidential and bespoke advice to registered Farming Connect businesses. As of 31 August 2019 a total of 2,932 businesses have benefitted from business support and/or technical advice, tailored to their business needs. There has been a significant increase in group based advisory service with 1,758 individuals supported through engagement with 596 groups.

Rural Business Investment Scheme (RBIS)

16. The sixth RBIS window closed 3 December 2018. From the three applications that were invited to apply, two full applications were submitted by the deadline and the total grant approved for those projects is £72k.

17. The seventh RBIS window closed on 26 February 2019. From the 16 applications that were invited to apply, seven full applications were submitted by the deadline. Four full applications have been approved with total grant value of £151k, three applications are still in the process of being appraised.

Sustainable Management Scheme (SMS)

18. The fifth SMS window opened 21 May 2019 with an allocation of £3m available. Decision notifications are planned for the 8 October 2019.

Sustainable Production Grant (SPG)

19. The fifth SPG window closed on 12 April 2019. From the 280 EOI's that were invited, 200 applicants have accepted and have six months to submit their full applications for technical appraisal.
20. The sixth SPG window opened 2 September 2019 with an allocation of £8m available. This window closes on 11 October 2019.

Timber Business Investment Scheme (TBIS)

21. The fourth TBIS window has now closed. From the 31 EOI's received, 13 have been invited to develop and submit full applications to a grant value of £1.9m.

Technical Assistance Update

22. All eight projects are delivering as expected and a total expenditure of £12.1m has been claimed at the end of August 2019.

**WALES PROGRAMME MONITORING COMMITTEE, EUROPEAN
STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT (ESI) FUNDS 2014 – 2020:**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CROSS CUTTING THEME: SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

Issue

1. This paper provides the annual review of progress with implementation of the Sustainable Development Cross Cutting Theme (CCT) in the ERDF and ESF European Structural and Investment (ESI) Fund Programmes 2014 – 2020.

Recommendation

2. Members are invited to note the content of the report and to provide comments accordingly.

Background

3. Sustainable Development is one of the three CCTs integrated into the 2014-2020 Programmes. The General Regulations governing the European Programmes stipulate that all operations, funded through the Common Strategic Framework, must integrate Sustainable Development under Article 8. The Regulations state that 'Member States and the Commission shall ensure that environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, disaster resilience, and risk prevention and management are promoted in the preparation and implementation of Partnership Agreements and programmes'.

Sustainable Development Indicators

4. The Sustainable Development CCT indicators agreed with the European Commission for the current ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes are:
 - "Enterprises adopting or improving sustainable development strategies and monitoring systems" (ERDF)
 - "Operations integrating sustainable development into awareness raising, education and training programmes" (ESF)
5. The information shown in **Annex 1** provides a useful guide to the number of operations that are delivering activity against the indicators and an update on progress.
6. ESF operations continue to work towards the sustainable development programme indicator and the information shown in **Annex 2**

demonstrates the projects that have already claimed this indicator as part of the progress and claims process.

ERDF Priority 1 - Smart Innovation 'Future Proofing' Toolkit

7. The Toolkit went live on the 3rd September. Using the toolkit companies will baseline their current position in relation to equality and diversity, sustainable development and resource efficiency and with the help of links to useful resources and case studies, identify opportunities to develop and/or improve their business and make them more resilient to changes in the future. Any businesses looking for support from operations funded through ERDF Priority 1.2 (and in the future P1.1) will be referred to the toolkit. When a company completes their baseline assessment, they are automatic all referred to Resource Efficiency and HR Advisors within Business Wales who will support them to make any improvements or changes identified.
8. Priority 1 operations may be delivering a range of activity that supports the CCT objectives for the ERDF programme. However, in line with the WEFO guidelines the Future-proofing toolkit provides a portal through which all Priority 1 CCT support relating to the programme indicators 'Enterprises adopting or improving their equality strategies including monitoring systems' and 'Enterprises adopting or improving their sustainable development strategies' should be routed.

The Cross Cutting Theme Project Level Indicators

9. In addition to the formal CCT indicators, the inclusion of the project level indicators (agreed at the 2015 PMC), is an important driver in encouraging operations to address this CCT and enables the monitoring of progress to take place systematically over the life of the programme.
10. The information provided in **Annex 3** highlights the range of activity that is supporting the Sustainable Development CCT. The data provided includes a comparison with that provided in the last annual report demonstrating the progress made over the period. However, it should be noted that the August 2019 figures provided in Annex 3, are for the first time taken from the Programme & Project Information Management System (PPIMS). Previous reports have used the figures held in the CCT assessment database. The PPIMS data, much of which has been added retrospectively, (the CCT Project Level Indicators having only been approved by the PMC in June 2015), is slowly catching up and the figures should be completely up-to- date by the end of the year.

11. At the September 2018 PMC, members were provided with information regarding two Swansea University operations that had used the CCT Project Level Indicators to demonstrate their SD credentials. These operations are now complete and their contribution to sustainable development is evident.

IMPACT: Green 'living' wall

- Integration of green infrastructure
- Support for bio-diversity on a site funded through structural funds



Computational Foundry – Wetland courtyard

- Integration of green infrastructure
- Support for bio-diversity on a site funded through structural funds



12. An example of an operation, which could significantly contribute to the Sustainable Development Project Level Indicators, is the Tourism Attractor Destinations project (TAD) Priority 4, ERDF, delivered through the intermediary organisation Visit Wales. With a suite of 13 individual projects pan Wales aimed at enhancing visitor destinations, the operation aims to deliver activity which will support the following indicators:

| Case Level CCT Indicators | |
|---------------------------|---|
| SD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local supply chain development. • Development of an organisational travel plan and sustainable transport initiatives. • Resource efficiency measures. • BREEAM excellent where applicable. <u>NB</u>: All capital works that form part of the project and for all new builds a BREEAM excellent accreditation will be expected. • Support for bio-diversity activity on a site funded through SF's. • Use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) where applicable • Integration of blue infrastructure • Integration of green infrastructure • Site environmental management plans • Develop an Eco Code |
| CCT General | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing/engaging CCT champions • Stakeholder engagement good practice activity • Integration of social clauses • CCT staff training programme introduced |

Project Focus: Pendine – Speeds of Sand Visitor Centre.

13. One of the 13 individual projects is the Speeds of Sand Visitor Centre in Pendine. This project, which will create a new sea front visitor attraction facility, contains the following sustainable development elements:

- The use of renewable energy sources
- The use of recycled material; and rain water recovery
- The building will be designed to Passiv Haus standards that will mean a reduction of energy running costs in the region of 90% of a standard construction building.
- Incorporated into the designs will be the use of energy efficient day lighting and blind and natural ventilation
- The landscaping of the site will include coastal short grass and grass bank, coastal dune woodland, coastal dune emergent scrub, coastal dune grassland, SUDS planting zone, wayfinding trees, coastal herbaceous planting and framing micro-climate/shelter planting.



14. We continue to receive positive feedback from stakeholders on the inclusion of this mechanism, which enables them to demonstrate the contribution they are making through their activities, to the CCTs.

PR and Media

15. The Cross Cutting Themes Team continues to explore ways to publicise how operations are integrating the CCTs into their design and delivery. Working with the WEFO Communication Team, the aim is to raise the profile of the CCTs and demonstrate the added value they bring to operations
16. **Annex 4** illustrates a collection of recent WEFO tweets and a number of info-graphics that highlight various operations, which are embedding the CCTs.

Next Steps

17. Future reports will demonstrate the progress on formal sustainable development CCT indicators and additional project level activity, alongside details of specific projects contributing to the sustainable development agenda.

Drafted by: Rhian Power-Battrick WEFO

Approved by: Chriss O'Connell WEFO

Date: September 2019

Annex 1

Operations contributing to the formal ERDF Sustainable Development CCT indicator: ‘*number of enterprises adopting or improving their sustainable development strategies and monitoring systems*’.

| Operation Title | Lead Beneficiary | Programme | Forecast | Achieved to August 2019 |
|---|--|----------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Entrepreneurship Support - Business Wales | WG - Department for Economy, Science and Transport | East Wales | 185 | 95 |
| SME Support - Business Wales | WG - Department for Economy, Science and Transport | East Wales | 740 | 234 |
| Social Business Wales | Wales Co-operative Centre | East Wales | 50 | 40 |
| Entrepreneurship Support Business Wales | WG - Department for Economy, Science and Transport | West Wales and the Valleys | 475 | 190 |
| SME Support Business Wales | WG - Department for Economy, Science and Transport | West Wales and the Valleys | 1903 | 506 |
| Social Business Wales | Wales Co-operative Centre | West Wales and the Valleys | 250 | 129 |
| SEACAMS 2 | Bangor University | West Wales and the Valleys | 20 | 10 |

Source: WEFO August 2019

Annex 2

Operations contributing to the formal ESF Sustainable Development CCT indicator : *‘operations integrating sustainable development into awareness raising, education and training programmes’*

| Operation Title | Lead Beneficiary | Programme | Forecast | Achieved to August 2019 |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| KESS II | Bangor University | West Wales and the Valleys | 1 | 1 |
| Materials and Manufacturing Academy | Swansea University | West Wales and the Valleys | 1 | 1 |
| Skills for Employers and Employees SO 1 | Coleg Cambria | West Wales and the Valleys | 1 | 1 |
| Skills for Employers and Employees SO 2 | Coleg Cambria | West Wales and the Valleys | 1 | 1 |
| Skills for Industry 2 SO1 | Gower College Swansea | West Wales and the Valleys | 1 | 1 |
| Skills for Industry 2 SO 2 | Gower College Swansea | West Wales and the Valleys | 1 | 1 |

| Operation Title | Lead Beneficiary | Programme | Forecast | Achieved to August 2019 |
|---|--|----------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Achieve through Work Experience | Higher Education Funding Council for Wales | West Wales and the Valleys | 1 | 1 |
| Inspire 2 Achieve | Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council | West Wales and the Valleys | 1 | 1 |
| METAL 2 | Swansea University | West Wales and the Valleys | 1 | 1 |
| Growing Workforces Through Learning and Development (GWLAD) | University of Wales Trinity Saint David | West Wales and the Valleys | 1 | 1 |
| | | | | |
| Skills for Employers and Employees SO1 | Coleg Cambria | East Wales | 1 | 1 |
| Skills for Employers and Employees SO 2 | Coleg Cambria | East Wales | 1 | 1 |
| Welsh Financial Services Graduate Programme | Welsh Contact Centre Forum Ltd | East Wales | 1 | 1 |
| Cynnydd | Powys County Council | East Wales | 1 | 1 |
| Achieve through Work Experience | Higher Education Funding Council for Wales | East Wales | 1 | 1 |
| Workways Plus Powys | Powys County Council | East Wales | 1 | 1 |

Source: WEFO August 2019

Annex 3

The following table demonstrates the level of commitment that operations have made to deliver activity contributing towards the sustainable development case level indicators:

| ERDF | July 2018 | August 2019 |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Develop an Eco-code | 34 | 24 |
| Local supply chain development | 59 | 40 |
| Integration of green Infrastructure | 31 | 14 |
| Integration of blue infrastructure | 19 | 7 |
| Support for bio-diversity activity on a site funded through Structural Fund's | 26 | 9 |
| Development of an organisational travel plan and sustainable transport initiatives | 60 | 39 |
| Resource efficiency measures | 73 | 49 |
| Site environmental management plans | 37 | 19 |
| BREEAM excellent where applicable | 20 | 7 |
| Attainment of CEQUALL for construction activity | 16 | 8 |
| Use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) where applicable | 26 | 11 |
| Total | 401 | 227 |

| ESF | July 2018 | August 2019 |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Develop an Eco-code | 25 | 35 |
| Local supply chain development | 18 | 15 |
| Integration of green Infrastructure* | 0 | 0 |
| Integration of blue infrastructure* | 0 | 0 |
| Support for bio-diversity activity on a site funded through Structural Fund's | 3 | 0 |
| Development of an organisational travel plan and sustainable transport initiatives | 37 | 27 |
| Resource efficiency measures | 50 | 50 |
| Site environmental management plans* | 0 | 0 |
| BREEAM excellent where applicable* | 0 | 0 |
| Attainment of CEQUALL for construction activity* | 0 | 0 |
| Use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) where applicable* | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 133 | 127 |

*NB: Case level indicator not appropriate for ESF operations.

The following tables demonstrate the level of commitment that operations have made to deliver activity contributing towards the general cross cutting themes case level indicators:

| ERDF | March 2019 | August 2019 |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Stakeholder engagement good practice activity | 24 | 26 |
| Developing / engaging CCT champions | 68 | 79 |
| Integration of social clauses | 35 | 39 |
| CCT toolkit, base line mechanism, App development | 3 | 5 |
| CCT training package developed. | 0 | 5 |
| CCT staff training programme introduced. | 5 | 11 |
| Activity supporting CCT indicators (in Priorities / Objectives where the indicators aren't present) | 5 | 5 |
| Total | 140 | 170 |

| ESF | March 2019 | August 2019 |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Stakeholder engagement good practice activity | 6 | 7 |
| Developing / engaging CCT champions | 72 | 63 |
| Integration of social clauses | 16 | 18 |
| CCT toolkit, base line mechanism, App development | 2 | 2 |
| CCT training package developed. | 0 | 10 |
| CCT staff training programme introduced. | 9 | 0 |
| Activity supporting CCT indicators (in Priorities / Objectives where the indicators aren't present) | 12 | 11 |
| Total | 117 | 111 |

Annex 4

Selection of recent
PR and Media Tweets.



Excellent example of green infrastructure at [#EUfunded @CompFoundry](#). Wetland courtyard for staff and students to use, complete with Minibeast mansion enhancing the biodiversity of the [@SwanseaUni](#) Bay Campus [#EUfundsCymru](#)



3:01 am - 3 Apr 2019



IMPACT Retweeted

Swansea University @SwanseaUni · 17h

- Attracts wildlife 🐝🐞
- Improves energy efficiency ♻️
- Looks fantastic! 🥰

Our new Living Wall [@SU_engIMPACT](#)
bit.ly/2Me6T2j

It's BIG!
5,500 plants covering 114 sq m



Well, Environment Centre and Swansea Engineering

3



34


IMPACT

@SU_engIMPACT

Follow

This week marked the last bricks being laid for the new **#IMPACTbuilding** @SUEngineering with guests from @wefowales & pupils from @MorristonComp taking part in a special bricklaying activity! **#ceremony** **#construction** **#building** **#EUfunded** **#EUfundsCymru** **#research**


IMPACT

@SU_engIMPACT

Follow

Work is advanced in the central **#atrium** of the new **#EUFundsWales** building.

The glass roof allows natural light and **#warmth** into the building, hence lowering **#energy** costs! ☀️



- 26 Feb 2019

Llangefni Strategic Infrastructure

A package of key infrastructure investments supporting the growth of the local economy

Fully accessible sites and units, complying with Disability regulations and striving for best practice.

Energy efficient building and renewable energy technology on both sites:

- Vehicle charging points
- Bike storage will be available
- Sustainable Urban Drainage system

In line with the Ynys Môn Council's Welsh Language Policy, associated job opportunities, adverts and job interviews are conducted in the language of choice 'Welsh or English' and a fully bilingual information service is in place.

Supporting a range of environmental actions:

- Designed using BREEAM Excellent principles
- Use of local supply chain
- Energy Efficient with high levels of insulation and low air permeability
- Renewable energy technology including PV panels on each unit
- Low maintenance green infrastructure and biodiversity planting



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**CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL**



UNDES IWRODIAEDD
EUROPEAN UNION



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**Cronfa Datblygu
Rhanbarthol Ewrop
European Regional
Development Fund**

WAVESUB

Marine Power Systems Ltd have designed, manufactured and are now testing a 1:4 scale WaveSub prototype Wave Energy Converter.

Capturing continual orbital motion of waves, it is estimated each device can power approx. 5000 homes

Where possible goods and services sourced from local companies

WAVESUB is supporting the Cross Cutting Themes Agenda

Cross Cutting Theme Champion in place

Promotion of car sharing schemes, public transport options, and walking / cycling

Supporting the recruitment of Welsh speaking staff and a bilingual public service

Promoting the use of tele or video conferencing to reduce travel

A range of office energy efficiency initiatives implemented

Right click on below icon to open hyperlink



MARINE POWER SYSTEMS



**Cronfa Datblygu
Rhanbarthol Ewrop
European Regional
Development Fund**

WALES PROGRAMME MONITORING COMMITTEE, EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS 2014 – 2020:

Annual European Structural Funds Communications Plan for 2019 - 2020

Issue

1. The paper sets out the Communications Plan for 2019 and to the first quarter of 2020 for the ERDF and ESF Structural Funds programmes 2014–2020. It provides an update of communication activity, sets out the main information and publicity priorities and measures for this period, and how they will be delivered.
2. Unless otherwise stated, updates in this paper cover the period between September 2018 and September 2019.

Recommendation

3. To note and agree the Communications Plan for 2019 and 2020.

Background

4. The Communications Plan has been prepared by the programmes' Managing Authority, the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO). It has been informed by and supplements the overarching Communication Plan for 2014–2020, which was agreed by the Wales Programme Monitoring Committee in June 2015

Wales in Transition

5. Wales continues to be in transition and at a time when there is ongoing uncertainty whether the UK will leave the EU with 'a deal' or 'no deal', providing assurances to existing and potential stakeholders and sponsors that we remain committed to delivering the programmes, investing the full allocation of funding, and communicating the benefits and achievements of EU funds in Wales is a key priority of our communications activities.
6. Through our ongoing publicity of EU funds achievements and benefits to our businesses, communities and people we are also making a strong case to the UK Government for replacement funding.
7. Working with our sponsors and stakeholders, we are using a number of communication channels to publicise progress, achievements and impact: press / media notices, social media such as Twitter, YouTube, the e-newsletter, and website measures, which continue to attract a growing following and reach among stakeholders and the general public.
8. Since the last annual communications update to the PMC in September 2018, we have achieved 97% average of positive coverage of EU funds in press /

media. In addition, the number of subscribers to our bimonthly e-newsletter has increased by 22% from 6,120 to 7,500, while the number of Twitter followers has also increased from 3,480 to 4,032.

9. The pre-election period for European Parliament which began on 2 May impacted on our delivery of communication activities and messages on EU funds for an extended period of time (4 weeks). This also had an impact on our usual publicity activity marking Europe Day (9 May) however we did communicate with our sponsors and advised them to take their own approach to Europe Day as we were unable to deliver a campaign they could support.
10. We continue to work closely with the Regional Investment in Wales team to ensure all publicity and communications take into account, where and if appropriate, key messages on post Brexit regional investment fund development.
11. We will be holding our annual information event on 28 November in Cardiff, where we will continue to promote the benefits of EU funding, reassure stakeholders and sponsors that we are committed to delivering programmes and to provide updated information on the development work of the new post Brexit regional investment funds.

Information and Publicity priorities for 2019 and early 2020

12. Dependent on any changes in to communication requirements due to post Brexit arrangements on funding, the key information and publicity priorities to promote the ERDF and ESF programmes at national and regional levels will continue as follows:
 - to promote the delivery and benefits of EU funds in Wales, with a stronger consensus around the importance of EU funds to Wales' prosperity, simplifying messages, and achieving a 'plain English' readability score;
 - ensure delivery project sponsors, partners and stakeholders, including the Regional Engagement Teams, understand and comply with regulatory requirements on publicising the programmes so that EU funds are not put at risk;
 - ensure existing and potential beneficiaries are kept informed about Brexit implications on programmes and projects, e.g. communication around the UK Treasury Guarantee and UK Government technical notices on a 'no-deal' outcome to Brexit negotiations;
 - use the impact of EU funds to positively influence UK decisions on replacement funding for Wales to address long-term challenges, and ensure stakeholders, sponsors, and the general public are kept informed of developments on the future regional economic policy and investment in Wales;
 - dependent on post Brexit arrangements, highlight the significance of Europe Day (9 May) by working with project sponsors to promote the benefits of EU projects and the programmes;
 - continue to increase the profile of cross-cutting themes and the wider value being generated by projects in these areas, maximising key opportunities

such as International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

- develop publicity to create awareness and interest in any new funding calls to support the delivery of ESF and ERDF programmes in Wales;
- organise an annual event (28 November) to celebrate the achievements of the programmes;
- create PR opportunities for Welsh Ministers to raise the profile of EU funds and the ongoing impact of EU-funded projects;
- develop a new approved project database for the programmes 2014–2020;
- maximise the potential of new digital / social media technologies, where appropriate;
- continue to integrate opportunities and successes with other EU funding programmes such as the European Territorial and Co-operation and rural development programmes, and those directly managed by the European Commission, such as Horizon 2020, particularly as we believe Wales should continue to benefit from access to them outside of the EU; and
- evaluate the effectiveness of key publicity activities and content to inform future communications.

Measures

13. How these priorities can be taken forward in 2019/2020 is set out in the main publicity measures in **Annex A**. This includes delivery arrangements and the timetable for implementation.

Major information activity for 2019 / early 2020

14. We are now reaching the last period of the 2014-2020 programmes, with around 96% of EU funds committed and approved projects delivering benefits and achieving significant milestones. While publicity around funding announcements will continue, there are increasing opportunities to showcase the real-life impact of these projects on people, communities, businesses, and the resultant impact on helping to improve prosperity and labour market conditions in Wales.

15. Measures to promote project activities will continue to link with activities to promote the achievements of the programmes overall also the work being undertaken to develop a future regional policy and investment model for Wales.

16. Work is also underway to develop our EU funds web pages to include an approved project 2014–2020 database, providing added user-friendly functionalities such as an interactive map. The work, however, has been delayed due to a Welsh Government wide move to a new content management system. In the meantime, an excel spreadsheet of EU funded projects and business planning proposals is published monthly on our web pages which exceeds EU regulatory requirements.

17. WEFO will continue to work with RETs / 3-SET to help with the effective delivery of the 2014-2020 Communication strategy and annual plans, as they continue to play an important role in helping to promote the programmes and projects at regional and local levels.

18. With the increased focus on post-Brexit arrangements, work with regional team and work with the Welsh Government central communication team on key messages and future communication requirements.

Progress so far in 2019

19. The following is a snapshot of communications activities so far:

- Substantial mainstream media, online and social media coverage of EU funding project announcements including:
 - £5.7m ESF for Trio Sci Cymru project, led by the Welsh Government's National Science Academy to increase take up and grades in STEM subjects among young people living in West and North Wales and the South Wales Valleys;
 - £1.7m ERDF for Advanced Design Engineering project, led by University of Wales Trinity St David to support small and medium-sized enterprises to maximise the use of advanced technology to create new and improved processes and products;
 - £1.2m ESF for Limitless programme, led by Threshold DAS to support working women affected by domestic abuse or sexual violence to build a future;
 - £1.8m ESF for JobSense project, delivered by Action on Hearing Loss Cymru for specialist employment and training services for people with sensory loss;
 - £9m ERDF for generation storage consumption supply (GSCS) scheme using cutting-edge battery technology to generate and store electricity from renewable and low carbon sources, which will then be distributed to local businesses at a discounted rate;
 - £3.7m ERDF for Centre for Photonics Expertise project, Led by Glyndwr University to create a world-class research network to help industry embrace photonics technology in the use of lasers, sensors and fibre-optics;
 - £1.94m ESF for Skills@Work scheme, led by Newport City Council to tackle in-work poverty and some of the challenges faced by lower-skilled workers in south east Wales.

Details of media / press coverage of these projects and other projects have been included in our monitoring bulletins, which are generally emailed bi-monthly. Over the last year, PR generated by WEFO has achieved 97% positive media coverage.

- The top three most visited EU funds news stories from the Welsh Government online newsroom were:
 - [£119m EU funding secured to progress South Wales Metro](#) (1026 views; 4 October 2018)

- [Cardiff University secures £3.6 million EU funds for new scientific research facility](#)
(900 views; 10 June 2019)
- [£5.7 million EU funds to encourage STEM take up](#)
(823 views; 24 September 2018)
- Created Ministerial PR opportunities to mark project announcements, achievements and milestones; for example, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance's visit to Welsh Women's Aid to announce £1.2m EU funding for the Limitless project and Minister of Housing & Local Government officially opening Swansea University's Computational Foundry.
- Publicity created to promote key success and milestones of projects including: In Work Support Scheme, KESS II, Bombora Wave Power, Communities for Work, Parents Childcare and Employment scheme, Minesto Deep Green, CEMET and the Active Inclusion Fund.
- Cross cutting themes (CCTs) focus especially on social media, linking CCT activity of Welsh projects for events such as Refugee Week, World Environment Day, International Migrants Day, Black History month, International Women's Day, White Ribbon Day, International Women's Science Day, Green GB week, Learning Disabilities week, COP24, International Day of Persons with Disabilities and the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

For example, tweets issued about STEM projects encouraging women and girls in Wales to engage with science for International Women's Science Day @WomenScienceDay gained 5,838 impressions (i.e. number of times people saw a tweet on Twitter) and 72 engagements (interactions with tweet e.g. clicking on a link);

A tweet issued about the Careau Heat Scheme project as part of the Green GB week - #GreenGBWeek, highlighting the revolutionising the way low carbon energy is generated by using warm water from a former mine works to heat local homes and a local primary school gained 4,010 impressions and 105 engagements – one of the highest performing tweets of that month.

- On 9 October, the annual RegioStars awards ceremony to recognise best practice across the EU took place in Brussels. Nant Gwrtheyrn, a Welsh-language and cultural heritage centre in Gwynedd, won the top award in the Investing in Culture Heritage category and Swansea University's ASTUTE (Advanced Sustainable Manufacturing Technologies) project was shortlisted as a finalist in the Supporting Smart Industrial Transition category.
- Our fortnightly EU funds newsletter has reached an all time high with over 7,500 subscribers – an increase of over 1,300 subscribers in the last year;

- Some 500 tweets were posted and our Twitter channel @wefowales / @wefocymru has gained over 4,032 followers. The average number of impressions per month (i.e. the number of times people saw a tweet on Twitter) is 64,917 (just over 2,120 impressions per day);
- PR opportunities on the regional funding programmes and projects are also being co-ordinated with other EU funding programmes such as Horizon 2020; here, success stories are being communicated through the regular Horizon 2020 e-newsletter, the Horizon 2020 annual event (4 July 2019) and Twitter.

Decision

20. To approve the Annual Communications Plan for 2019 / 2020.

Next Steps

21. The Communications branch to deliver to the priorities set out in the Communications plan and provide an update of progress to the PMC in Spring 2020.

WEFO

Lead: Jo Binding, WEFO Communications and Briefing Branch

Approved by: Sue Price, Head of Programme Management (ERDF)

Date: September 2019

Main Information and Publicity Measures for 2019 / early 2020

| Measure | Additional Information | Lead Responsibility | Timetable for Implementation |
|--|---|---|--|
| Priority 1: Publicising the impact and benefits of the EU funding programmes investing in sustainable growth and jobs, including via the approval, launches and achievements of projects, Europe Day, and integration of the Cross Cutting Themes | <u>Target group</u> – mainly national, regional and local media, delivery and strategic partners, the European Commission and the general public | WEFO Communications | Ongoing actions throughout the year |
| 1.1 Issue to media good news stories on progress of projects and programme milestones for print and online coverage, achieving over 90% positive media coverage. | Specific publicity measures to include: – issue press releases, editorials about project approvals and milestones, and general progress of programmes to newspapers, online news channels, and the Welsh Government website – provide Ministerial quotes containing key strategic messages to press releases developed by project sponsors/partners | WEFO Communications, in liaison with press office, project sponsors, RETs / 3-SET etc | Ongoing actions throughout the year |
| 1.2 Positively influence media reporting of stories involving EU funds and EU funded projects | Specific measures include: – provide comprehensive and timely responses to media queries including background context, key facts, statistics, and Welsh Government quotes | WEFO Communications in liaison with project sponsors, and press office | Ongoing actions throughout the year |
| 1.3 Utilise new technology and digital channels as key communications tools, including production of digital footage to | For publication on You Tube, Twitter and use at events, including annual event (see 3.1 below). In particular, prepare and disseminate video clips of projects, participants and develop graphics of interesting facts to maximise impact of | WEFO Communications, in liaison with project sponsors, RETs, 3-SET etc. | Ongoing actions throughout the year |

| Measure | Additional Information | Lead Responsibility | Timetable for Implementation |
|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| publicise key messages, impact of programmes, and project case studies and milestones | publicity | | |
| 1.4 Arrange Ministerial visits to projects across Wales – to mark funding announcements, launches and delivery milestones. | Specific publicity measures to include: – arrange publicity about the impact and benefits of projects (with a focus on human interest case studies), as well as the wider progress of the programmes via issue of press releases, tweets, EU funds web pages, e-newsletter etc. Post live tweets and photos during visits and events to engage further with a wide audience | WEFO Communications, in liaison with WG press office, project sponsors, RETs / 3-SET etc | Ongoing actions throughout the year |
| 1.5 Draft and circulate e-newsletter to more than 6,000 subscribers including stakeholders, project sponsors, and general public. | – Highlighting latest developments and achievements of programmes and projects, upcoming events, and information and guidance on delivery of 2014–2020 programmes, including any funding calls for certain priorities of the programme – Integrate developments with other EU funding programmes, including Horizon 2020 and European Territorial Co-operation programmes | WEFO Communications | Fortnightly |
| 1.6 Proactively seek opportunities to demonstrate the positive impact of EU funds/regional policy in Wales | Prepare case studies / success stories highlighting the achievements of projects and participants using a range of channels, including those of sponsors and other stakeholders to convey key messages widely e.g. Valleys Taskforce, City Regions etc. | WEFO Communications | Ongoing |
| 1.7 Publicise Europe Day (9 May) in accordance with Article 7 of European Regulation | Specific publicity measures to include: – a Twitter campaign in collaboration with project sponsors and stakeholders to promote positive messages around the impact of EU funds and projects in Wales – Explore digital opportunities to promote Europe Day | WEFO Communications, in liaison with project sponsors and stakeholders, including RETs and 3-SET | 9 May |

| Measure | Additional Information | Lead Responsibility | Timetable for Implementation |
|---|---|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – fly European flag at WG / WEFO sites – issue special Europe Day EU funds newsletter during week of Europe Day | | |
| 1.8 Participate in EU led campaigns and initiatives such as EU in my Region, EYCH, RegioStars and other EU communication activities to showcase Welsh success in delivery of EU programmes on an EU platform. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – keep in close contact with European Commission and UK communication representatives. – Maximise publicity at Wales level of achievements resulting from participation such as publicising Wales' EYCH and RegioStars achievements through press notices, Twitter etc. | WEFO Communications, in liaison with EC offices in Brussels, Cardiff and London | Ongoing |
| 1.9 Continue to develop promotional items for use at events and other publicity channels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop new branding for pop-up stands etc., representing regional and thematic areas – Continue to develop promotional items as appropriate. | WEFO Communications | Ongoing |
| 2.0 Build on library of photos, case studies and digital footage of projects and beneficiaries for use in publicity etc | Build on library of photos and case studies for use in press releases, publications, advertorials, events, presentations and social media. | WEFO Communications, in liaison with project sponsors and stakeholders | Ongoing actions throughout the year |
| Priority 2: continue to ensure project sponsors, partners and stakeholders, including the Regional Engagement Teams, understand and comply with regulatory requirements on publicising the ERDF and | <p><u>Target group</u> – project sponsors and beneficiaries, RETs / 3-SET.</p> <p>The main action is the Information and Publicity Guidelines (incorporating EU regulatory requirements) for project sponsors (published on the Welsh Government website), holding seminars on the regulatory requirements for WEFO staff, the RETs / 3-SET, and project sponsors establishing appropriate communication channels between WEFO and the RETs / 3-SET.</p> | WEFO, in liaison with the RETs / 3-SET | Ongoing actions throughout the year |

| Measure | Additional Information | Lead Responsibility | Timetable for Implementation |
|--|---|--|--|
| ESF programmes | | | |
| 2.1 Review and implement best practice on Information and Publicity Guidelines (incorporating EU regulatory requirements) for project sponsors and beneficiaries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ensure information and publicity measures are fully integrated into project delivery and are monitored by WEFO to ensure compliance; – respond promptly and effectively to communications queries from WEFO staff and sponsors. | WEFO, in liaison with project sponsors and the RETs / 3-SET | Guidance published on WG web pages and undertake ongoing review to cover best practice |
| 2.2 Review opportunities for refresher seminars on information and publicity guidelines and requirements for sponsors, and share best practice | Refresher seminars to cover EU regulatory and Managing Authority contractual requirements, information and publicity priorities, best practice, and forward planning and monitoring at national and regional levels; tailored to meet needs of RETs, 3-SET, WEFO staff and project sponsors. | WEFO | Ongoing actions throughout the year |
| 2.3 Participate in regular project reviews with sponsors, and meet with project communication officers where appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure project communications activities, best practice and PR opportunities are addressed at project review meetingS – Review and provide editorial contributions for RETs regional newsletters, where appropriate – Participate in WEFO meetings with RET teams to provide updates on communications activities and best practice | WEFO Communications in liaison with PMD, RETs, 3-SET, and project sponsors | Ongoing actions throughout the year |
| 2.4 Distribute free commemorative plaques and posters for all sponsors that have been approved funding under 2014–2020 programmes (in line with Article 8 of European Regulations) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Free commemorative plaques and posters, displaying respective EU funds logo to be distributed to all project sponsors regardless of grant value. – Design, draft text, and distribute A3 posters to projects for display | WEFO Communications | Ongoing actions throughout the year |
| Priority 3: Organise annual event to publicise the achievements of the | <u>Target group</u> – mainly national, regional and local stakeholders and potential sponsors, the European Commission, the media, and the general public. | WEFO Communications Team | Winter |

| Measure | Additional Information | Lead Responsibility | Timetable for Implementation |
|--|---|--|--|
| programmes | | | |
| 3.1 Arrange annual event for the programmes involving key stakeholders and beneficiaries, including recognition of programme achievements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Event scheduled for 28 November, Cardiff – promote digital footage of achievements and issue Ministerial press notice etc on progress of programmes and project milestone – Opportunity to re-assure stakeholders and beneficiaries of commitment to deliver programmes in Brexit context – Evaluate effectiveness of event to inform content of future events | WEFO Communications Team | Winter |
| Priority 4: Maintenance and update of bilingual EU funds section of the Welsh Government website | <u>Target group</u> – mainly national, regional and local stakeholders and potential sponsors, the European Commission, other EU managing authorities, the media and the general public. | WEFO Communications Team | Ongoing actions throughout the year |
| 4.1. Ensure website section is easy to navigate and is customer-friendly, and content is up-to-date | Review content regularly to meet core business functions, including access to WEFO Online, through online surveys, feedback etc | WEFO Communications Team | Ongoing actions throughout the year |
| 4.2. Develop search engine database for approved projects (in line with Article 7 of European Regulations) | New database will have basic details of approved projects i.e. beneficiary name, project name, amount of ERDF / ESF grant allocation, final payment allocation etc, in compliance with EC regulations | WEFO Communications Team in liaison with WG Central Web Team | Work will start in November |
| Priority 5: Evaluate the effectiveness of key publicity activities and content to inform future | <u>Target group</u> – mainly for internal purposes, but sharing best practice and lessons learned with national, regional and local stakeholders, and the European Commission. | WEFO Communications | Ongoing |

| Measure | Additional Information | Lead Responsibility | Timetable for Implementation |
|--|--|---------------------|---|
| communications | | | |
| 5.1 Campaign evaluation to be carried out using UK wide recognised evaluation model | Ensure OASIS evaluation model is undertaken to review and evaluate activities such as annual event and Europe Day social media campaign. | WEFO Communications | Ongoing OASIS model will be used to evaluate the Annual event in December 2018 |
| 5.2 Ongoing evaluation of social media, web and press to review and adapt effectiveness of content | Monthly evaluation reports created and shared and template adapted to keep up with changing of channel priorities | WEFO Communications | Monthly |