

Enterprise M3 Board Meeting

27 May 2021

EU Programme Update – Item 18

Board members are asked to NOTE the progress on the EU Programme.

1. General Update

- 1.1. The Government gave a Treasury Guarantee to the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) Programme post Brexit. The Commission informed the Managing Authorities that they are able to contract projects beyond December 2020. This meant that this EU funding pot worth €45.6m (approx. £42m) comprising of ERDF, ESF and EAFRD in the Enterprise M3 LEP area is guaranteed to the end delivery date of December 2023.
- 1.2. On 15 September 2019, we opened the ERDF kickstart SME grants programme for the Visitor Economy and wider SME community for Enterprise M3, Thames Valley Berkshire and Coast to Capital LEPs and Growth Hubs. Exemplas Ltd, Lead Partner and our ERDF grants processors, have processed all the grants for EM3 which total 38 grants to SMEs in the Visitor Economy worth £131,451 and 66 SMEs in the wider economy worth £213,658. Exemplas Ltd will share some case studies over the coming months of how these 100% ERDF grants have supported SMEs in our area that have been negatively impacted by the COVID crisis to restart or adapt their businesses. EM3 also provided project management and technical assistance for TVB and C2C, who fully allocated their ERDF SME grants.
- 1.3. DWP opened two new ESF calls in our area in March 2021 for £1.5M ESF '*Community Grant Programme in EM3*' and £1.5m ESF for '*Skills support for employment for armed forced veterans and their families in EM3*'. The deadline for applications is 10 June 2021. These will be the last round of local ESF calls published by the MA. LEPs have been informed recently that past these commitments, any future and remaining funding will be given as a priority for the extensions of contracted and successful ESF projects as opposed to issuing new calls. We are supporting the launch of the calls through our Technical Assistance project and we held two successful partnering events in April and 2 workshop events in May to support partnership development for bids.

2. European Social Fund (ESF)

- 2.1. Taking into consideration the revised exchange rate, 86.2% of our ESF allocation is published including 63.5% contracted, 29.4% spent and 16.8% of Live calls.
- 2.2. DWP have issued our planned specifications in support of £1.5M ESF '*Community Grant Programme in EM3*' and £1.5m ESF for '*Skills support for employment for armed forced veterans and their families in EM3*'. Calls opened in mid-March and close on 10 June 2021.
- 2.3. The Managing Authority officially approved our request for an extension of our Technical Assistance project until June 2021, so we are able to support the launch of the two new calls under the ESF Reserve Funding pot. Two networking events supported by our Technical Assistance Programme were hosted online on 21 April and 28 April, one for each call. We had an excellent level of attendance at both online events with many new organisations represented (12 at the Community Grants event and 28 for the Veterans Skills event). Currently

interested applicants are creating partnerships for bids. We are hosting a clinic workshop event for each specification to provide additional technical assistance and enable potential applicants to share their ideas and finalise their bids. These will be hosted online on 20 and 27 May 2021.

- 2.4. We are preparing for an audit that should take place on our ESF Technical Assistance Project before closure of the project June 2021. We are working on our final claim and project closure administration which will be submitted in May and finalised by the end of June 2021.
- 2.5. Ross Young Photography started filming for the creation of further two case study videos on our ESF projects for promoting the 'EM3 *Apprenticeship & skills hub*' project and the 'Fedcap Links to Work M3' to be ready by 30 June 2021. The first filming session took place mid-April at Whitehill and Bordon.
- 2.6. We have procured Amion Consulting to independently evaluate the ESF technical assistance project and to complete the summative assessment which should be completed by end of May 2021.

3. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

- 3.1. Taking into consideration the revised exchange rate, 100% of our ERDF allocation is published, 5.54% of applications are in process, 37.54% is contracted and 10% of ERDF has been spent.
- 3.2. From the latest ERDF call, 2 projects are still going through appraisals with:
 - SME growth toolkit led by SME Wholesale Finance worth £500k
 - E-taxi worth £700k
- 3.3. We have completed final outputs for our ERDF Technical Assistance project which closed on 30 September 2020 for activities and 31 December for financial completion. We have submitted our final claim for the administration of the project closure in March 2021.

4. European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

- 4.1. 100% of our EM3 allocation has been published with 31.7% projects contracted, 13.4% in the pipeline and 18% spent.
- 4.2. From the last EAFRD Reserve Fund call, there is 5 remaining projects currently going through assessment totaling £600,000.

Kathy Vuillaume/Susan George
10 May 2021