

UPDATE ON COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

PURPOSE OF PAPER

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

DECISIONS REQUIRED

2. For information only.

SOCIAL MEDIA

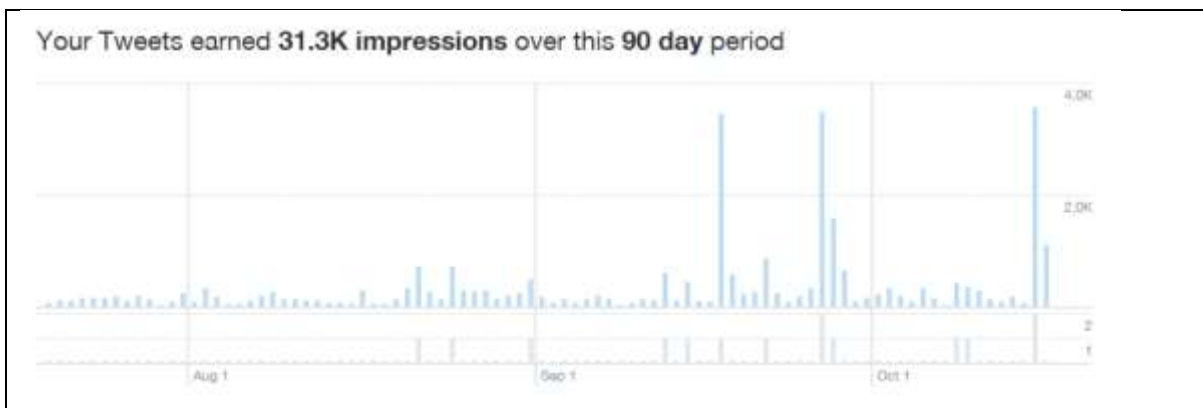
3. Twitter remains the only social media network that the Managing Authority (MA) uses. In order to improve our engagement, since August 2018 we have increased our frequency to at least two tweets per week and aim to include more pictures and emojis than previously.

4. While we continue to use Twitter for standard uses, such as promoting new blog posts, we have tried to use it as a promotional channel in and of itself. This is aligned with the Scottish Government's own approach, which is moving away from traditional press releases in favour of digital platforms. In this way, we have used Twitter to promote:



- Changes to guidance and publications on our website
- The support of ESIF when it is not immediately obvious in media announcements (see above)

5. Over the last 90 days approximately, the scotgovESIF Twitter account has created 31,300 impressions ('impressions' defined as opportunities for other users to view the content).



6. Comparing 60 day periods before and after the change of approach took effect, we have made 17,300 more ‘impressions’ on Twitter which represents a 183% increase.

MEDIA COVERAGE AND MONITORING

7. We have collaborated with communications teams of lead partners in recent months, providing ministerial quotes for media releases and other communications support to increase coverage of projects funded by ESIF:

17 September	Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund (Scottish Natural Heritage) “£5m funding boost for Highlands & Islands tourism”	Print only: Scotsman; Daily Record, Herald, Metro; Daily Express STV Press & Journal The National
26 September	Green Infrastructure Fund (Scottish Natural Heritage) “£8m funding brings nature to Scotland’s cities”	STV The National Scottish Construction Now

8. Lead partners will often secure media coverage for projects funded by ESIF without our involvement, which our media monitoring service will pick up. A selection below:

2 October	Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund (Scottish Natural Heritage) “£1 million fund brings Scotland’s communities closer to nature”	Scotsman
3 October	Zero Waste Scotland “New fund will help keep plastics out the sea”	BBC Insider Chartered Institute of Waste Management
12 October	Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme “Powering Fair Isle”	BBC Press & Journal Herald The Sunday Post

9. We are frequently encouraging lead partners to contact us when they have news, so that messaging around ESIF is consistent and emphasises the contribution of the funds. In addition, a regular media monitoring service for ESIF staff is now in operation, offering highlights of coverage we have helped to generate, coverage that lead partners have generated themselves, and other relevant news articles.

NEWSLETTERS

10. The monthly e-bulletin continues to be sent to all Strategic Intervention and Operation managers, communicating the latest news from the MA about EUMIS, site visits and other topics. We are in the process of examining the format of the e-bulletin, and are considering using new technology to make it more engaging for readers and to provide us with greater possibilities for evaluation and analysis.

11. Previously the MA produced a quarterly newsletter exclusively for lead partners to highlight ESIF achievements and case studies. We are reviewing this process due to our desire not to produce various newsletters to similar audiences, and a reconsideration of the best way to communicate case studies.

WEBSITE & BLOG

12. There have been changes in the Content Management System used by Scottish Government and in the MA team supporting programme communications over the last six months, which led to some delays in reviewing the website content, but the site continues to detail funding awarded to operations and provide guidance to recipients of funding.

13. A booklet of case studies was produced in May 2018, and we are examining options for a dedicated online space for these. The current plan is to upload a few case studies for each Strategic Intervention on our website, though this is subject to the current format of Scottish Government website. Our intention is for these case studies to be uploaded in the next few months. We continue to examine all aspects of the website to make sure the content is up to date.

14. We continue to use the blog for long-form articles and communicating topics that require greater explanation, such as [an update on Phase 2 applications](#). We are considering offering opportunities to lead partners to write guest blogs in order to highlight their achievements and encourage collaboration with all our stakeholders.

EVENTS

15. We are currently planning the 2018 annual event and expect it to take place in Inverness in late November. At this event we hope to celebrate 30 years of EU cohesion policy, with particular emphasis on achievements in the Highlands and Islands. Though there will be some content on the day of the event dedicated to lead

partners at the 2018 annual event, our intention is to reach a broader audience of people interested in the effects of ESIF in Scotland.

16. The next lead partner event is proposed to take place in January or February 2019. By this point we expect the situation regarding the UK's exit from the EU to be clearer, and the MA will be in a better position to communicate the latest developments on topics such as replacement funding for ESIF.

Decisions Required

For information only.

**JPMC Secretariat
1 November 2018**