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EUROPE & SCOTLAND
European Regional Development Fund
Investing in a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Future

EUROPE & SCOTLAND
European Social Fund
Investing in a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Future

2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Programmes in Scotland

2021 Case Study Booklet

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1. Introduction from Minister

As Minister for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work, it is my pleasure to introduce the 2021 case study booklet of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Programmes.

Having been appointed to my role in May this year, the 2014-2020 ESIF Programmes were new to my ministerial portfolio. However, I am well aware of the benefits that the programmes have brought to Scotland over many years of EU membership. Indeed it is difficult to travel through Scotland and not come across a business, organisation or community which has benefitted from this funding in one way or another.

My primary role in relation to the programmes is endorsing approvals of funding applications, so to read the case studies of the projects that these funds support, what they achieve and the difference they make to people's lives – it brings the whole process to life.

Our Lead Partners and delivery agents are delivering our aims of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth every day – whether that's by using European Social Fund (ESF) support to improve people's skills and fight poverty, or directing European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support towards our business sector and tackling climate change.

Now that the UK is no longer in the European Union, the 2014-2020 ESIF Programmes will be Scotland's last opportunity to deploy the funds to our benefit. But even though we are now in 2021, the programmes are far from over and the Scottish Government continues to make big decisions about allocating ESIF support to where it can be most effective.

For example this summer, taking advantage of the European Commission's Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative measures, we approved a £37 million ERDF allocation to help purchase millions of items of PPE for NHS workers.

This booklet contains a range of other outstanding examples of the programmes' achievements. However, I know that there is still so much more that we can do with the programmes before they end in 2023.

Together with our delivery partners, we will continue to maximise remaining funding to help Scotland recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and build a fairer future for all.

Richard Lochhead MSP

Minister for Just Transition,
Employment and Fair Work



2. 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Programmes in Scotland: a summary

i. Background

European Structural and Investment Funds are forms of financial assistance provided by the European Commission to Member States.

The key aim of the funds is to strengthen economic and social cohesion by correcting imbalances between regions.

European Structural and Investment Funds are made up of two distinct strands:

- The European Social Fund (ESF)
- The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The ESF was established in 1958 to help people improve their lives by learning new skills, finding better jobs and lifting them out of poverty.

The ERDF was established in 1975 to support business growth, investment and infrastructure.

The ESF and ERDF programmes operate in multi-year cycles and fund a variety of projects in terms of length, scale and beneficiaries.

ii. The current 2014-2020 programmes in Scotland

In Scotland, we have used ESF and ERDF support to help achieve our aims of Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth:

- **Smart Growth** – supporting Scotland’s businesses and workforce;
- **Sustainable Growth** – making Scotland a greener, cleaner place to live and work; and
- **Inclusive Growth** – removing barriers from disadvantaged communities and lifting people out of poverty.

The Scottish Government is the Managing Authority of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Programmes.

We allocate funding to Lead Partners who then bring their own match funding to increase the total amount available for operations.

Lead Partners then distribute funding between individual projects and organisations and/or deliver projects themselves.

Our Lead Partners are made up of:

- Scotland’s 32 local authorities;
- Scottish Enterprise;
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise;
- Transport Scotland;
- NatureScot;
- Zero Waste Scotland;
- Skills Development Scotland;
- Scottish Funding Council;
- National Lottery Community Fund; and
- Other Scottish Government Directorates.

3. European Social Fund (ESF): case studies

i. Developing Scotland's next generation of scientists

The expansion and growth of Scottish Apprenticeships has been delivered by Skills Development Scotland with £75m of ESF support.

Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships have helped thousands of Scots learn new skills, gain qualifications and work at the same time.

Thanks to her Foundation Apprenticeship with Charles River Laboratories, Annabel Stewart has made a strong first step in her career. During her time at the company's base in East Lothian, she has assisted with lab work and data compilation for real-life agrochemical studies using different soil types. The apprenticeship has given her vital workplace experience while studying to achieve a qualification at the same level as a Higher.

Eva Stott of East Kilbride became Merck's first-ever Modern Apprentice at the company's Glasgow base in September 2019. Participating in a collective effort to create a vaccine for the coronavirus has been the highlight of Eva's apprenticeship, and she believes she is now equipped to pursue long-term employment in the sector.

Since 2015 when the programme received its ESF allocation, Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships have been essential tools in boosting employability nationwide, helping to train the next generation of Scotland's workforce.

Thanks to ESF support, young people like Annabel and Eva have the perfect platform on which to build a long and successful career in science.

"I've been able to assist in the production of a vaccine for this pandemic and that's something I'm really proud to say I've been a part of."

Eva Stott, Modern Apprentice



3. European Social Fund (ESF): case studies

ii. Getting participants outdoors to improve wellbeing in Shetland

Shetland's Employability Pathway is an ESF-supported operation run by the local authority. It provides a work-focused health rehabilitation programme to help individuals with multiple barriers to employment better understand and manage their conditions, improve their quality of life and their prospects of moving into employment.

Readjusting to life after lockdown has been difficult for everyone, but Shetland Islands Council Employability Pathway team found that reintegration back into society has been especially difficult for their participants. Interacting with strangers after such a long period of disruption became a difficult barrier to overcome for their participants with neurodiversity or who have poor mental health.

To address this issue, the team decided to include more physical activity outdoors as part of their mental health and wellbeing provision. The positive mental health benefits of outdoor and adventure education programmes are well known, and because they are delivered in fresh air, the activities were not seriously restricted by social distancing measures.

In conjunction with the Local Authority Outdoor Education and Activities Officer, seventeen activities were delivered over a three-month period. The overwhelming feedback from participants has been positive, many of whom commented that the outdoor activities had increased their confidence, motivation and communications skills.

Thanks to ESF support, people with multiple barriers to employment were able to enjoy exciting outdoor activities that enhanced their wellbeing and might provide the confidence that they need to improve their employment prospects.

"It was awesome – I saw parts of Shetland I never knew existed"
Participant



3. European Social Fund (ESF): case studies

iii. Helping people with anxiety to study in Dundee

Enable Work's First Steps programme is funded by the National Third Sector Fund, which is managed by Skills Development Scotland and received a £22.2m ESF allocation. The programme assists people with multiple barriers to the labour market to help them gain skills, qualifications and/or employment.

Thanks to ESF support, Enable Works help people like Andrew, who is autistic and has social anxiety. Prior to his referral to Enable Works, he had successfully completed an HND in Game Development at a local college, but did not feel ready or able to make the leap into the world of work due to a lack of confidence.

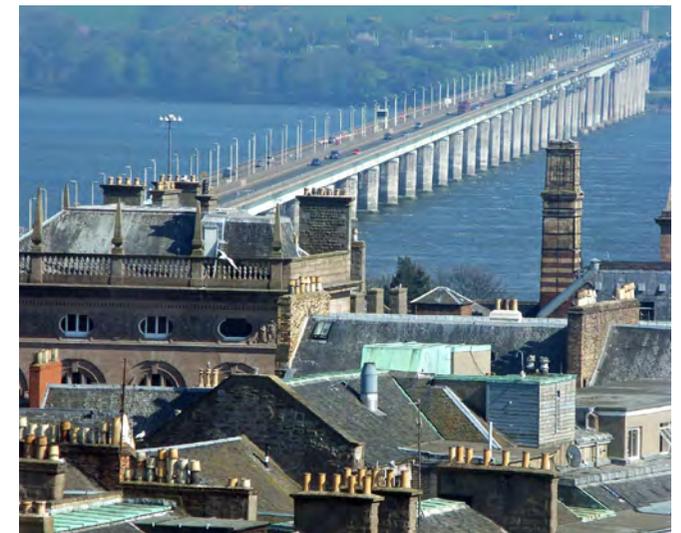
With help from his Employability Coordinator, Andrew began identifying some of the barriers he would have to overcome if he was to secure his dream job in the video game industry. As his confidence grew over multiple meetings, they decided Abertay University

offered the best course, and Andrew was supported by his coordinator to visit the university for an open day in an attempt to reduce his anxiety about attending.

While the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown knocked Andrew's confidence, his Employability Coordinator kept in touch via text messages and Zoom to make sure that they continued to have a strong working relationship. Andrew indicated that he was still keen to study at Abertay University, and his coordinator assisted him with his application, which was successful. Andrew has now started his university course and hopes to move into student accommodation in the next academic year.

Thanks to ESF support, vulnerable people like Andrew have been given the care, encouragement and confidence that they require to successfully enter higher education.

"I have really enjoyed the support and it has helped me feel less anxious meeting new people."
Andrew



3. European Social Fund (ESF): case studies

iv. Supporting Gaelic language and culture in South Uist

'Crossing Over' is a project delivered by Ceòlas Uibhist in South Uist that received a £116,115 grant from the ESF-supported Aspiring Communities Fund.

The project's main purpose is to explore opportunities where Gaelic cultural activity can be used to support vulnerable groups, promote inclusion, intergenerational opportunities, and facilitate active engagement through activities such as dance, music and movement to support physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

As the COVID-19 pandemic restricted in-person events, Ceòlas Uibhist was forced to adapt the project's delivery model. To present online classes and events effectively, they established a Digital Tech team that uses broadcast-quality video cameras. Ceòlas Uibhist also developed the company's online presence, updating their website and implementing new digital marketing strategies.

Making best use of digital technologies, Ceòlas Summer School was able to deliver online classes for 95 students, teaching a range of subjects including piping, fiddling, step-dancing, singing, clarsach and Gaelic language. The organisation also organised the first live music events in the Western Isles since lockdown, attended by over 100 people in accordance with Level 0 restrictions.

Ceòlas managed to offer part-time employment to six under-employed islanders as part of the Digital Tech Team, and one eventually joined the organisation in full-time employment as the Digital and Technical Officer in October 2021.

Thanks to ESF support, Ceòlas Uibhist was able to deliver Gaelic culture and language classes online successfully, meeting the needs of its community and establishing a sustainable model for future delivery.

"The classes were engaging, fun, challenging and supportive, and Gaelic for All was a breath of fresh air."
Participant



3. European Social Fund (ESF): case studies

v. Aiding refugees and displaced people in Stirling

The 'Supporting New Scots in Stirling' project aims to provide a holistic service that includes money management, benefit advice, social inclusion activities and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses to the growing number of refugees settling in the Stirling Council area.

The ESF-supported project offers eligible participants access to specialist money support and training, often from the first day of their arrival in Stirling. One client that had been referred to the team had recently arrived in the UK under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement with her young daughter.

This person had lost her husband, had no prior work experience and had limited experience of education due to conflict in her home country. She initially found it difficult to adjust to life in the UK, which meant she was reluctant to leave the house or engage with others.

The 'Supporting New Scots in Stirling' team has provided a lot of practical support to the client to open her own bank account and register her child with school, a GP and a dentist. The team also helped the client with the process of applying for benefits and made sure that she received the full amount of social security support that she was due.

The client has been provided with intensive language support receiving both one-to-one ESOL support and attending online classes. She has now progressed to beginner level English and has even been teaching her daughter basic English along with Arabic reading and writing.

Thanks to ESF support, vulnerable and resettled people are receiving vital help so that they can support themselves and start a new life in Scotland.



4. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF): case studies

i. Building low-carbon energy systems in Clydebank

West Dunbartonshire Energy Centre is home to the first large-scale heat pump of its kind in Scotland, transforming the way heat is provided to nearby homes, businesses and public buildings.

It officially opened in October 2021 and received £6.1m of funding from the ERDF-supported Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme.

At full build, the system will deliver approximately 2000 tonnes of carbon reduction from the environment per year. In the initial phase of switch-on, heat is being supplied to West Dunbartonshire Council offices, the Titan Enterprise Centre, Aurora House, Clydebank Leisure Centre and the new care home at the site, Queens Quay House.

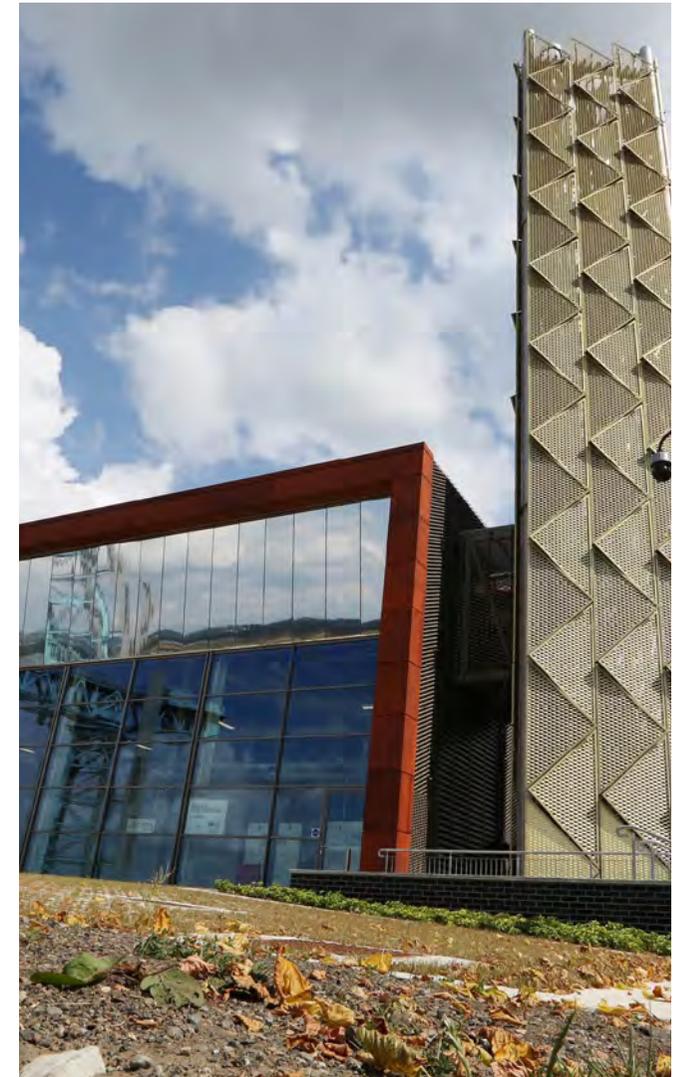
The primary heat source is two 2.65MW Water Source Heat Pumps that convert heat held within the water of the River Clyde into hot water at a temperature of 75 degrees centigrade, and two 7MW gas boilers which provide back-up and top up heat at peak times when the pumps are operating at capacity.

The low-carbon system has been designed on a modular basis to enable future expansion beyond Queens Quay, with scope to heat the Golden Jubilee Hospital, Clyde Shopping Centre and into the town centre.

The introduction of the heating network will allow residents of more than 1,000 homes due to be built on the site to enjoy lower bills with a system that requires far less upkeep than a gas boiler.

The system was also showcased to delegates at COP26 in an exhibit at the event's Green Zone, highlighting work being undertaken by the local authority to achieve net zero targets.

Thanks to ERDF support, the people of Clydebank have a ground-breaking new heating system that uses energy efficiently and helps tackle the climate emergency.



4. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF): case studies

ii. Assisting businesses through COVID-19 in Aberdeenshire

Business Gateway Aberdeen City and Shire is the gateway to free expert local assistance and advice for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the local area. It has been allocated £1.9m of ERDF support.

One business it has assisted is Paper Houses Design. During the COVID-19 lockdown, the textile and homeware design business launched a series of online workshops to encourage others to develop their creative skills and reap the benefits of learning a craft.

Thanks to ERDF-supported advice from Business Gateway Aberdeen City and Shire, Paper Houses Design received guidance on its business plan, company regulations, funding, premises and marketing.

As a result of the ERDF support, this led to Paper Houses Design winning funding from Creative Scotland, which helped to develop its virtual craft workshops during lockdown.

Paper Houses Design also accessed DigitalBoost services to see where its online presence could be improved. The business then accessed webinars and other resources which instilled confidence to launch the workshops.

Thanks to ERDF support, Business Gateway has been able to help businesses like Paper Houses Design to develop and grow despite a challenging COVID-affected economic landscape.

“Business Gateway has pushed me out of my comfort zone, and the team has been a pillar of support during a turbulent time. Sometimes when you work for yourself, you really need some people around you to tell you like it is, and Business Gateway has been that for me. The team signposted me to various resources and funding opportunities and really ensured I made it through the challenges of the past year.”
Mhairi Allan, founder of Paper Houses



4. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF): case studies

iii. Creating greenspace from derelict land in Glasgow

Malls Mire is a £3m project (£1.23m ERDF allocation) in Glasgow's Toryglen district, delivered by Clyde Gateway in partnership with Urban Roots and Glasgow City Council, as part of NatureScot's Green Infrastructure Fund.

Malls Mire sits at the heart of North Toryglen, an area that has seen decades of transition, from local authority investment in high rise and pre-fabricated housing in the 1960s, to the decline of this housing stock and associated loss of opportunities and amenities for local residents.

Community consultations and socio-economic research identified some key issues residents were facing, including health inequality, poor-quality green space, inadequate play provision, flooding, fragmented habitats, and air and noise pollution.

To address these issues, sixteen hectares of land (five of which were on the Vacant & Derelict Land Register) have been transformed into a mixed-use park, delivering a fully connected network of green spaces, woodland, and wetlands delivering for biodiversity, amenity and surface water management, as well as community space with active travel routes, play and outdoor learning areas.

The park's success has been underlined by its 'Excellent' award from Building with Nature, the UK's only benchmark for the design and maintenance of high-quality green infrastructure.

Thanks to ERDF support, North Toryglen has a brand new high quality greenspace that will improve the local biodiversity as well as residents' physical and mental wellbeing.



"The works at Malls Mire have been the culmination a fantastic partnership with the Toryglen community and local voluntary groups who have steered this project to where it is today. The importance of quality natural spaces which are safe and accessible for physical and mental health can't be emphasised enough as we come out of the pandemic and as a key part of any long-term regeneration."
Ian Manson, Chief Executive at Clyde Gateway



4. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF): case studies

iv. Making smarter traffic management systems in Inverness

The Inverness Smart Mobility project is part of the broader 'Scotland's 8th City – the Smart City' Strategic Intervention, and received £696,000 of ERDF grant support. The project is jointly led by The Highland Council and Hi-Trans and will deliver various Smart Mobility initiatives.

The central element of the project is a scalable and flexible wireless mesh infrastructure that forms the backbone for future digital city services, including Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) solutions coordinated by the Inverness Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) database.

With the exception of a few junctions, there was previously no real time coordination of traffic management in Inverness city centre. Thanks to ERDF support, a new ITS wireless platform was put in place.

The ITS platform enables the implementation of smart technologies across the city's traffic signal network, improving the efficiency of each junction and making it possible for each site to host intelligent bus priority that will improve public transport journey times and help encourage modal shift.

The platform will also benefit the management of on- and off-street car parking, and help to mitigate the impact of roadworks, major events and road traffic incidents in real time. The scheme is currently in the commissioning phase prior to system integration with wider traffic strategies and systems.

This project will enable travellers to make informed transport choices in real time as well. This will be achieved by making real-time updates available to transport managers and also directly to the public through channels including a bespoke website, live information displays on-street and at public transport interchanges.

Thanks to ERDF support, the people of Inverness have a traffic management system that can respond in real time to issues and gives its managers and the public the information that they need to make effective travel decisions.



A node installed on MESH network in Inverness thanks to ERDF support

4. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF): case studies

v. Boosting resource efficiency across Scotland

Zero Waste Scotland delivers the £73m ERDF-supported Resource Efficient Circular Economy accelerator. The operation promotes environmental innovation and performance management in the public and private sectors, and increases business competitiveness by increasing resource efficiency.

They assist businesses like Beauty Kitchen, an award-winning sustainable cosmetics business based in Glasgow. Its co-founder Jo Chidley contacted Zero Waste Scotland to explore new avenues and improve their products, so that they could further reduce their environmental impact.

Zero Waste Scotland carried out research, which helped Jo launch 'Return-Refill-Repeat', a service which exists to help customers, retailers and brand owners change their single-use plastic packaging to packaging that is designed to be refillable and reused. The service works with other retail organisations, meaning that other businesses can also take advantage of the circular model.

Return-Refill-Repeat took Beauty Kitchen's commitment to the environment one step further, taking their customers on the circular journey by giving them the option to return empty packaging to be washed and reused. This closed the loop by keeping containers in use for longer, reducing demand for new packaging to be manufactured, which positively impacts the company and the customer's environmental footprint.

Thanks to ERDF support, businesses across Scotland are receiving expert advice on how to be more efficient with resources in a way that can also improve their business performance.

"We didn't introduce these sustainable practices to gain a competitive advantage, it's a vehicle to instigate change across the sector – we want other businesses to get involved."

Jo Chidley, co-founder of Beauty Kitchen





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