

# EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND CALL 3 VISIT

European Social Fund provision in  
Rural Area Partnership in Derry (RAPID) Limited

So Keep Farming

Report of a Call 3 Visit in October 2022



Providing Inspection services for:  
Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



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## Context

Rural Area Partnership in Derry (RAPID) Limited is contracted by the Department for the Economy (DfE) to deliver the So Keep Farming European Social Fund (ESF) project, as part of a third Call for projects which will run from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. This project is part funded through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014-2020 and DfE. The strategic aim of the Programme is to: combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity; and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce. It is aligned to the European Union 2020 Strategy for Jobs and Growth.

In October 2022, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a Call 3 visit to RAPID Limited on behalf of DfE to evaluate the capacity of the project promoter to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision.

## Views of participants

At the time of the Call 3 visit, 12 participants<sup>1</sup> were registered on the project.

Sixty-seven percent of the participants completed the online questionnaire. The ETI also met and spoke with a sample of participants during their learning and development sessions and in a focus group.

They reported that: the induction process was useful and prepared them well for the programme which they find both interesting and challenging; they can complete any required practical training; they are happy with their experiences on the project and are making good progress. Participation on the project has helped to develop their self-confidence and has provided valued opportunities for social interaction.

## Focus of the Call 3 Visit

During the Call 3 visit, ETI evaluated the effectiveness of the quality improvement planning processes and focused on two of the key areas which the organisation had prioritised for improvement through its self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes:

- to address the lack of job opportunities in the outdoor sector for the participants; and
- to support participants' further development in their behaviours and attitudes to better prepare them for life, and participation in wider society and the world of work.

The arrangements for safeguarding were also included.

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<sup>1</sup> All performance data in this report was provided by the ESF project promoter.

## Key Findings

The Call 3 visit identified the following key findings which include any areas for improvement to be addressed for the remainder of the third Call.

- The curriculum provided is appropriate and well-matched to the participants' needs and abilities. They can complete a level 2 certificate in land-based activities, with opportunities to pick optional units either in agriculture or horticulture depending on their interests and aspirations and to complete a career planning unit. Where appropriate, the level 2 units can be replaced with level 1 units.
- Delivery of the project takes place on two local social farms. Both farms involved in the delivery of the project have an appropriate range of policies in place for the delivery of the training. Health and safety is covered during induction and in the appropriate units completed by the participants. Attention should be given to the consistent use of personal protective equipment as detailed in the relevant health and safety documentation.
- The person-centred plan for each participant clearly identifies long-term goals with appropriate, well-considered actions to further develop their behaviours and attitudes to better prepare them for life, participation in wider society and the world of work. An occupational therapist supports participants to overcome their barriers to employment, and plans are in place to recommence external visits for the participants, including to livestock markets and horticulture sites which were suspended during the pandemic.
- The project promoter has effectively used a range of methods to raise employer awareness of the project. As well as delivery on the social farms, through work with a range of employers and other organisations, job and volunteering opportunities have been sourced in the outdoor sector including on farms and in garden centres; these opportunities match well the participants' interests and abilities. When participants are placed, employers and organisations are well-informed about their individual needs and the support and adaptations that may be required. The participants are also encouraged to explore their career interests and opportunities for volunteering.
- The more effective training observed was characterised by activities that were well-planned, providing the participants with clear roles and responsibilities and good opportunities to practice and develop new skills, working both individually and as part of a team. The participants were well-supported, and their learning was further embedded with effective questioning.
- Overall, the organisation is planning effectively for learning and quality improvement, including planning for sustainability and progression of participants. The project is well managed, with well-embedded quality improvement planning processes. Good progress has been made on the actions in the quality improvement plan to further improve the provision, including ensuring that participants are well-supported with strategies to improve their health and wellbeing.

- The project promoter is currently working to source alternative funding to allow the project to continue beyond the Call. The present cohort of 12 participants are on a 30-week programme. It is appropriately planned that a second cohort of eight participants will be recruited to a shorter 10-week programme early next year to meet the recruitment target. This planning will result in the participants being able to complete their programme before funding comes to an end.
- There are effective working relationships between all of the staff involved in delivering the project. Purposeful links developed with the local health trust have resulted in referrals to, and support for the project.

## Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 3 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding participants of the So Keep Farming ESF project reflect broadly current legislation and practice.

The project promoter, however, needs to:

- ensure the consistent use of personal protective equipment as detailed in the relevant health and safety documents, with health and safety information displayed at the point of use where appropriate.

## Overall outcome

At the time of the Call 3 visit, and in the areas evaluated, RAPID Limited demonstrates capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for the So Keep Farming ESF project.

# Appendix

## A. Call 3 Performance Data

European Social Fund – So Keep Farming	Since 1 April 2022 <sup>2</sup>
Numbers of enrolments and % against target	12 (60%)
Numbers of participants into employment upon leaving and % against target	1 (50%)
Numbers of participants into education and/or training upon leaving and % against target	0 (0%)
Retention - Numbers and % against target	12 (100%)

## B. Methodology and evidence base

ETI observed two sessions of practice, held a focus group meeting with a small number of the participants and held discussions with key stakeholders (including representatives from the two social farms) and key staff (including quality improvement and safeguarding arrangements). All participants had the opportunity to complete a confidential questionnaire. Inspectors also scrutinised relevant data and documentation.

ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the [ETI website](#).

## C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

<sup>2</sup> 1 April 2022 – 19 October 2022.

## Overall outcome

ETI use one of the following outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the project promoter:

At the time of the Call 3 visit, and in the areas evaluated, xxxx demonstrates a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for xx ESF project.

At the time of the Call 3 visit, and in the areas evaluated, xxxx demonstrates capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of provision for xx ESF project.

At the time of the Call 3 visit, and in the areas evaluated, xxxx has not demonstrated sufficient capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for xx ESF project. ETI will continue to monitor how the project promoter brings about improvement and the Department for the Economy may consider further action.

## Safeguarding outcome

ETI use one of the following outcomes when evaluating the project promoter's arrangements for safeguarding the participants:

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 3 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the xx ESF project reflect current legislation and practice.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 3 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the xx ESF project reflect broadly current legislation and practice.

The project promoter, however, needs to: ....

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 3 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the xx ESF project are unsatisfactory. <DN insert detail>.

ETI will return to the project promoter within six working weeks to monitor and report on progress in addressing the safeguarding issues which have been identified.

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