



Ireland Wales Programme 2014-2020

Programme Monitoring Committee - Meeting 3
 Thursday November 26th 2015
 10.00-14.00
 The Atrium, St Stephens Green, Dublin
 (Times indicative)

		Papers
1	10:00 Welcome-Opening and Introduction	
2	10:05 Minutes of the previous PMC Meeting- July 23 rd 2015-Carmarthen	IWPMC1420(03)01
3	10:15 Programme Update Report - Joint Secretariat	IWPMC 1420 (03)02
4	10.45 PSC Rules of Procedure	IWPMC 1420(03)05
	Coffee Break	
5	11.15 Ireland Wales Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy	IWPMC1420(03)03
6	11.45 Ireland Wales Programme Monitoring Report Template	IWPMC 1420(03)04
7	12.00 Any Other Business	
	<i>Ireland Wales Communications Strategy – circulated for information</i>	<i>IWPMC1420(02)04</i>

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		Papers
1	12:15 2007-2013 Programme Update Report	PMC 15 01
2	Any Other Business	

Joint Secretariat - November 2015



Ireland Wales Programme 2014-2020
Programme Monitoring Committee – Meeting 3

The Atrium, St Stephens Green, Dublin 26 November
2015Minutes

A list of attendees is shown at Annex 1.

Agenda Item 1 - Welcome-Opening and Introduction.

1. The Chair welcomed members to Dublin and the third PMC of the 2014-2020 Ireland Wales Programme. The co-chair thanked Irish colleagues for their hospitality afforded to all members and officials the previous evening's welcoming meal.
2. The Chair welcomed the continuing high levels of interest in the Programme. The PSC had now been constituted as mandated by the PMC with first meeting held in Swansea on November 5.
3. The Chair outlined the main aim of the PMC meeting- to approve the Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy. The Chair asked any PMC member who had yet to complete the Register of Interest Form to do so and return to the JS in line with the PMC Rules of Procedure

Agenda Item 2- Minutes of the previous PMC Meeting-July 23rd 2015-Carmarthen.

4. The Managing Authority (MA) updated members on action points arising from the previous meeting.

The following updates were provided:

Programme Update Report

Action: MA to investigate ways of providing guidance specifically targeted at SMEs.

The inclusion of SME's in Operations was currently being discussed at Tri-Lateral level and guidance would be agreed in due course..

Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy.

Action: WEFO RME to create a mock-up of the evaluation plan document, to include consideration of data / visuals / traffic light system and present it at the next PMC meeting.

Gavin Lewis (WEFO Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RME) would cover this topic later in the meeting.

Communications Strategy.

Action: The JS will circulate a table of any final comments and amendments received, and a copy of the submitted Strategy to all members for information.

The Communications Strategy had been submitted on time and agreed.

5. No further comment was made and the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Agenda Item 3- Programme Update Report- Joint Secretariat.

6. The MA covered this item in the absence of the Head of the JS. PMC members had been provided with a paper which outlined the pipeline of proposals, the state of play by Priority Axis, an indicative financial update and a report from the work of the PSC and Technical Group (TG).

- The TG had met three times and eleven projects had progressed to Business Planning.
- The MA reported that a positive dynamic was already emerging within the PSC who had met for the first time on 5 November 5. PSC members brought with them good levels of experience and expertise and had engaged thoroughly with the process. The PSC had agreed its Rules of Procedure at the first meeting
- The PSC had considered two operations, one of which had been accepted into Business Planning Stage 2.
- Overall 31 operations were now in the system across the Priority Axes, 10 of which were in business planning
- Indicative figures were provided on potential take up of grant from proposals in the system under each Priority although these needed to be treated with caution as they had not yet been subject to a detailed JS appraisal..
- It was re-iterated that no money had yet been committed to operations.
- Priority 3- it was acknowledged that there had been less activity from partners in mobilising operations interest under this Priority in comparison with the other two. The MA confirmed that there was interest and the JS was engaging with applicants. There was likely to be third sector engagement in this Priority Axis but the MA pointed out that operations from within this sector often took more time to come to the table due to the 'bottom up' nature of investments. Despite the slower progress in PA 3, the JS was not unduly concerned at this juncture and was confident that operations would materialise.

7. Matters raised by members: – Responding to questions about third sector engagement, the MA explained that initial discussions were being held with organisations but there was often a gap between initial meetings and the submission of an OLT. The MA stressed that it was not solely the role of the JS to promote opportunities to the third sector but also that of the PMC members, for example through local authorities.

8. Members felt that the HE Sector, for example, was already aware of the grant funding process and already has strong contacts to seek partners whereas there were less linkages within the third Sector and it was possible that many organisations were finding it difficult to work across borders.

9. The MA noted this but confirmed that there were many examples of third sector organisations participating in the 2007-2013 Programme; there was also an attractive grant rate of 80% in place which together with the new phased development approach should appeal. There were also capacity and viability issues to consider and any potential risks of this nature needed to be managed from the outset in line with regulatory requirements. The Chair echoed the MA sentiments stressing that from previous experience, the position with PA 3 should improve. The MA also pointed out that this wasn't exclusively a PA for third sector organisations: tourism was a central theme and those organisations supporting the tourism industry also had a role to play.

10. Members also expressed concern at the small budget allocated for promotional activities for the Programme and communication and marketing opportunities for smaller organisations. The MA confirmed that WEFO had already supplemented this budget with additional resource but that the JS would keep this issue on their radar and work within its budget to hold thematic and tailored events as the need arose. The MA stressed that the TA budget was limited; smaller ETC programmes were disadvantaged by the 6% ceiling in the Regulations.

11. The MA confirmed that the WIN Scheme, once set up, would subsidise travel and subsistence costs and allow partners to collaborate and share their ideas. Operation Officers would continue to support and guide organisations as necessary. The MA also referred to the Programme summary document which is being used as a promotional tool.

Action- The MA to liaise with the JS to keep engagement with the third sector firmly on their radar. The JS to circulate the Ireland Wales summary document to PMC Members.

12. The PMC's perception was that there was a general lack of awareness around INTERREG, commenting that any success stories should be portrayed and showcased, and that the partnership could assist in this regard. The MA stressed that this was a commitment of the ETC Action Plan for Wales approved in October 2015.

Agenda Item 4-The PSC Rules of Procedure.

13. The MA introduced this item. The PSC Rules of Procedure had been agreed on November 5th and were similar to those of the PMC.

Particular reference was made to paragraph 18-The PSC Ireland Wales Portal. This was intended as a vehicle for PSC members to exchange ideas as well as make decisions on Operations which was the primary aim.

A query was raised on the executive advice provided to the PSC members and whether it was credible enough to judge an Operation. The MA confirmed that the JS was responsible for appraisal work, and that the PSC considers proposals based on an indicative appraisal and comprehensive report from the JS. The role of the PSC was to scrutinise and challenge proposals and this was already evident based on the experience of the first meeting-

14. The PSC Rules of Procedure were noted and agreed by the PMC.

Agenda Item 5- Ireland Wales Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy.

15. Gavin Lewis (WEFO RME) presented this Agenda item to the PMC and responded at the meeting to the written comments made by the desk officer. This was the second time members had seen the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, and comments made at the second PMC meeting in July 2015 had been incorporated into this version.

Matters raised by members included:

-Budget for the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy- The MA confirmed this would be covered by the Programme's Technical Assistance budget.

-Skills-WEFO RME confirmed a dedicated team of researchers would be used for the Programme, and that external advice would be sought from WEFO's monitoring and advisory group and include input from Ireland.

- WEFO RME explained that all specifications for evaluations relevant to the Ireland Wales programme would be circulated for comment.

-Project level evaluations- The EC representative re-emphasised the need for Operations to demonstrate clear added value and a cross-border element. The MA re-assured the PMC that this was built into the programme and its guidance as a fundamental principle and that the JS was fully tuned into this in considering proposals.

16. The MA would write to the Commission addressing those issues raised once the Strategy was finalised. The PMC approved the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy.

Agenda Item 6-Ireland Wales Programme Monitoring Report Template

17. Gavin Lewis presented this item. Members were taken through the Monitoring Report Template proposed for the Programme.. The report would incorporate charts incorporating involvement of the sectors/organisations in the Programme. Issues raised by members included:

- The €20 million match funding figure-members stressed the need to monitor this figure. The MA explained that this information would be captured further down the track when claims for payment were submitted.

- The level of information received by the PMC in comparison to that presented to the PSC- The MA clarified, stating that the PSC receives more detailed operational level information, as their role is to judge the merits of Operations. THE PMC role was more overarching.

- Qualitative assessment - These would accompany the “traffic light” reports. - The PMC felt that operations should not just be measured by outputs, and AIR’s would provide the PMC with some narrative, so assessment of programme progress would not just be based on figures and statistics.

18. The PMC agreed that the proposed level of information in the template which was to be provided once implementation gathered pace was sufficient for them to discharge their functions. The PMC approved the Programme Monitoring Report Template.

Agenda Item 7- Any Other Business

19. The MA confirmed that the Communications Strategy had now been sent to the Commission. The Chair took this opportunity to mention the departure of Siobhan Rudden who was thanked for her valuable contribution as a Development Officer in the previous 2007-2013 Programme, and also her early work in helping to develop the new 2014-2020 Programme. The Chair also

welcomed Emma Doran to her new role as one of the Operations Officers based in Ireland.

20. Prior to closing the 2014-2020 meeting, the MA confirmed the next PMC was scheduled for Wales on April 21st 2016.

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Agenda Item 1- 2007-2013 Update Report

1. As the MA for the 2007-2013 Programme, the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) led on this Agenda item.

The Chair relayed the following points:

-41 projects were approved during the 2007-2013 Programme and all activity has now finished.

-21 projects have officially closed with another 16 in the closure process.

-Final claims have to be with the Commission by April 2016.

-The Programme over-committed funds by 2% to ensure maximum drawdown. The Chair expected a final commitment of 97% with over €45 million already drawn down.

-The Chair confirmed the Department for Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) would bankroll payments until the Commission releases the final funds.

Closure

2. Guidance on closure has been provided, the process includes a number of steps.

-First Level Control (FLC) work is almost complete.

-A letter had been issued to all 2007-2013 projects illustrating their continued responsibilities associated with the Programme. All projects must ensure they retain documentation for three years after the final claim is submitted.

3. The PMC raised the following matters:

-Results Table-Indicators based on project reports- The PMC felt further work was required on these figures. The Chair agreed with this, confirming that these figures will change and this will be incorporated into the final report.

-Results Table-SME/job creation figures-The PMC also suggested that clarity and further work was needed around these figures, and that the MA for the 2014-2020 Programme should learn from this when reporting. SRA explained that the confusion around the figures could result from different levels of interpretation, but also the fact that the 2007-2013 Programme had a larger emphasis on delivery and spend. The MA in WEFO confirmed that this issue was firmly on the radar in the context of the new Programme with the intention being to interrogate the targets and provide an accompanying narrative in future PMC reports.

-The PMC complemented SRA on their handling of the closure process.

Agenda Item 2- Any Other Business

4. The Chair noted that the 2007-2013 Annual Implementation Report (AIR) has been accepted by the Commission. The Chair thanked members for their input to the meeting, and also the JS in Wales.

Annex 1 – List of Meeting Attendees

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
Damien O'Brien	WEFO
Jane McMillan	WEFO
Mike Pollard	WEFO
Roger Seddon	WEFO
Owain Lovering	WEFO
Gavin Lewis	WEFO
David Kelly	SRA
Breda Curran	SRA
Emma Doran	SRA
Patricia Hennessy	DPER
Cllr Meryl Gravell	WLGA
Helen Morgan	WLGA
Cllr Ronnie Hughes	WLGA
Barbara Burchell	WLGA
Sian Williams	Natural Resources Wales
Gerwyn Evans	WG-Science, Transport, Tourism
Darren Hollick	WCVA
Professor Richard Davies	HEA Wales
Cheryl Dennis	Welsh Government
Lucy Corfield	Welsh Government

Stewart Roche	HEA Ireland
Jonathan Earl	Chambers Ireland
Seamus Cosai Fitzgerald	SRA
Sarah Clarke	ICTU
Dave Corcoran	Environment, Community and Local Government
Ciaran Kelly	Marine Institute