



Ireland Wales Programme 2014-2020

Programme Monitoring Committee - Meeting 4
 Thursday July 7th 2016 10.00a.m.
 Castle Suite 1
 Quay Hotel, Deganwy, North Wales

| | | Papers |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 10:00 – 10:15 Welcome-Opening and Introduction – Update on Ministerial appointments/business | |
| 2 | 10:15 – 10:25 Minutes of the previous PMC Meeting - November 26 th 2015 Dublin – action points | IWPMC1420(04)01 |
| 3 | 10:25 – 10:35 UK Referendum: Implications for the Programme | Oral Update |
| 4 | 10:35 – 10:50 Programme Update Report - Joint Secretariat | IWPMC 1420 (04)02 |
| 5 | 10:50 – 11:00 Priority Axis 3 development - Update | IWPMC 1420(04)03 |
| | Coffee Break | |
| 6 | 11:20 – 11:30 E-cohesion update | Oral Update |
| 7 | 11:30 – 11:45 ETC Policy Update | IWPMC1420 (04) 04/Oral Update |

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| 8 | 11:45 – 12:00 Communications – Programme website | IWPMC1420 (04) 05 Presentation |
| 9 | 12:00 – 12:25 <i>Dwr:Uisce – approved project</i> | Presentation from project partners |
| 10 | 12:25 – 12:30 Any Other Business | |
| | <i>Ireland Wales Annual Implementation Report 2014-2020 approved by EC – circulated for information</i> | <i>IWPMC1420(04) 06</i> |

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| | | Papers |
| 1 | 12:30 – 13:00 2007-2013 Programme Update Report (including position on closure) | PMC 16 01 |
| 2 | Any Other Business | |

Joint Secretariat – June 2016



Ireland Wales Programme 2014-2020
Programme Monitoring Committee – Meeting 4

Castle Suite 1, Quay Hotel, Deganwy, Conwy

7th July 2016

Minutes

A list of attendees is shown at Annex 1.

Agenda Item 1 - Welcome-Opening and Introduction.

1. The Chair welcomed members to Conwy and the fourth PMC of the 2014-2020 Ireland Wales Programme.
2. There were two observers at the meeting. Lowri Gwilym from the Welsh Local Government Association and Craig Jones who accompanied Councillor Ronnie Hughes on work experience.
3. The Chair thanked Barbara Burchell from Conwy Borough Council for the bag of local goodies provided for each PMC member.
4. Linda Weaver from the Joint Secretariat (JS) listed the apologies and introduced the alternates.
5. The Chair welcomed Janine Downing who replaces Judith Stone as the Wales Council of Voluntary Action (WCVA) representative.

6. The Chair introduced Peter Ryland Head of Performance and Finance, WEFO and Phillipa Morgan a new member of the JS working in the Carmarthen Office. The Chair also noted, in Bethan Thomas' absence her recent recruitment to the JS team as the Operation's Officer for mid and north Wales. The Chair acknowledged Roger Seddons' contribution to the programme.

7. The co-chair thanked Welsh colleagues for the hospitality afforded to all members and officials during the previous evening's welcoming meal and for their continued co-operation.

8. The Chair informed members of the ministerial change within Welsh Government with Mark Drakeford taking up the ministerial lead for EU programmes in Wales. In the Irish Government Paschal Donohoe has responsibility for Structural Funds.

Agenda Item 2- Minutes of the previous PMC Meeting- November 26th 2015 - Dublin.

9. The Chair reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting asking for corrections and comments. The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Agenda Item 3- UK Referendum: Implications for the Programme.

10. The Chair opened the discussion on the referendum by confirming that Welsh Government and WEFO are still committed to the programme and that we were still 'open for business'.

11. Stephen Blair (SB) confirmed that the beneficiaries need to hear these messages of continued involvement and 'business as usual'.

12. Peter Ryland (PR) confirmed that we were unable to provide any clear message at the moment, however over the next couple of months options would be identified and that where possible we should progress proposals to maximise programme delivery within the next two years. PR confirmed that further discussions were being held tomorrow within WEFO which may result in further

announcements and that in the mean time the programme is 'open for business'.

13 Patricia Hennessey (PH) from The Department for Public Expenditure and Reform confirmed that the Irish Government remained committed to the programme; however, clarification was urgently required, especially on timescales.

14. There followed a discussion by members on the impact of the vote to leave the EU. Members commented on the loss of EU funds and the level of impact on the budget for the Welsh Government. It was felt that delivery under all programmes needed to be accelerated and certain sponsors, such as local authorities had a tracked record of delivering previous EU projects and were therefore well placed to respond. There was also acknowledgement that the Welsh Government and WEFO would need to move quickly to consider and prioritise actions going forward. Colleagues from Ireland expressed disappointment with the result and emphasised the need for clear and prompt communications of the timescales and planning assumptions once Article 50 had been invoked by the UK Government.

15. The Chair acknowledged all of the comments and concerns raised by members and reassured them that all of the issues highlighted were already part of discussions underway within Welsh Government and also with the UK Government in Westminster.

16. SB stated that he accepted that there was an air of nervousness around the future, and encouraged all members to play a role in getting the message out to stakeholders and the wider community that it was business as usual, for the moment, as this could go some way to restore calm.

17. PR highlighted the possibility that given our impending withdrawal from Structural Funds it would be natural to expect a greater interest from Auditors given the increase in 'risk' WEFO now presents. PR confirmed that rural colleagues had been informed that 100% of transactions will be tested.

18. The absence of the EU Desk Officer was noted and the Chair confirmed that Commission officials had received guidance advising them that they were unable to attend meetings when the UK Referendum was on the agenda.

19. It was suggested that there should be a single statement posted on the Ireland Wales website. The Chair confirmed that a link to the First Minister's statement had been posted to the homepage of the Ireland Wales website on 24th June 2016.

Agenda Item 4-Programme Update Report – Joint Secretariat.

20. Linda Weaver (LW) referenced the Programme Update Report provided by the JS which PMC members had already had sight of, and provided a summary of the key points.

21. LW referenced Annex 2 of the paper and informed the members that the financial information should be taken with caution as the project costs had not yet been challenged. LW confirmed that going forward all financial reporting would take the form of PPIM's reports as had been presented by Gavin Lewis (WEFO RME) to the committee during the previous meeting. LW referenced the Priority 1 -3 Indicators and Results tables and as with the financial aspect caution must be exercised as these details had yet to be challenged in order to determine if they were realistic and achievable.

22. LW concluded her update and it was opened up to the floor for comments/questions:

23. LW was thanked for the update, specifically mentioning an appreciation for the format in which the data was presented, also noting that over all, the programme is currently doing well.

24. It was noted that progress with Priority 3 was still slower in comparison to the other programme areas. Further discussion on this matter was held under Agenda item 5.

25. Members asked at what stage are the proposals shared for peer review or professional views. LW advised that advice was sought on a case by case basis, noting that the more technical

proposals would require expert input at an early stage, alternatively at business planning if the level of technical data is less.

26. Members also raised the potential for possible links to other ETC programmes and other national strategies. The JS confirmed that both Wales and Ireland were represented on the Atlantic Area & North West Europe Programmes, and would be aware of the activity being supported.

27. The JS confirmed that cultural links had already been established in Carmarthenshire within a Priority 3 proposal. Members also highlighted the potential links with the 'Ancient East' strategy, especially as Wexford has been designated Capital of Cultural for 2020.

28. WEFO was asked whether they would now be issuing project approvals for two or maybe three years. The Chair confirmed that this issue was already being considered but until timescales were clearer such approvals would have to be undertaken on a case by case basis. A member that had recently attended the Scotland/Ireland/North Ireland PMC in Glasgow confirmed that they are to review everything in the pipeline with the view to prioritising activity.

29. Members recognised the progress made to date in programme implementation and acknowledged a healthy level of interest under Priority 1. In contrast Members noted the slower level of progress under Priority 3 and offered support to ensure a greater level of interest.

30. Members queried whether project sponsors were fully prepared for the loss of funding and the impact this would have on their supply chain of deliverers. The Chair reminded the PMC that each project would be required to have an 'Exit Strategy' in place as a way of ensuring sustainability of the activity or outcome beyond the lifetime of the project itself.

31. The Horizon 2020 approach was explained by a member, in that they are considering fewer projects with larger budgets, along with a more strategic approach.

32. DK responded that the 2014-2020 programme has already gone down the route of considering larger more strategic projects in comparison to the 2007-2013 Programme.

33. The WLGA asked whether the length of projects should be curtailed, as consideration needs to be given to the operation's ability to deliver its outputs.

34. The Chair confirmed that all the members' comments and concerns have been noted. An assessment of the operations in the pipeline will be undertaken while we await more clarity on timescales in the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

Agenda Item 5- Priority Axis 3 Development - Update.

35. LW tabled a paper and led the discussion highlighting paragraph 4 – current position of proposals within Priority 3. LW confirmed that potentially 56% of the funding available had been ring fenced and reminded Members that the nature of the Priority meant a slower pace to developing operations and ideas. LW welcomed any support on offer from PMC members in promoting engagement in this Priority.

36. JS Officials confirmed that as Ireland Wales Operations Officers they would always encourage lead partners to work with the third sector.

Agenda Item 6- E-cohesion update

37. The Chair provided an oral update to the committee confirming that the Ireland Wales programme meets the EC requirements for e-cohesion via PPIMs, the internal facing IT system and WEFO on-line the customer facing IT platform.

38. SB queried the progress with the designation process.

39. The Chair provided members with an explanation of the process and an assurance that the programme would be

designated within the EU timescales. PR was confident that the programme would be designated as the domestic programmes in Wales had already been designated.

40. The Chair confirmed that they were on schedule to submit the documents for designation within the EU timeframe.

Agenda Item 7 – ETC Policy Update

41. The Chair provided a brief summary of the 2016 annual meeting organised by the Commission for Interreg Managing Authorities and Joint Secretariats, attended by Mike Pollard.

Agenda Item 8 – Communications – Programme website

42. In the absence of IT facilities, LW talked the committee through the presentation which had previously been circulated to members. The website can be found at www.irelandwales.eu. It would be updated regularly and used to capture a range of information, eg jobs created. It would be used to highlight project information and launch events and is available in Welsh. Members were invited to forward any relevant updates for inclusion on the website to the JS via the Ireland Wales mailbox.

43. There was a general consensus that the website was easy to navigate and positive comments were offered regarding its design.

44. Members asked if in future the documentation for the PMC could be saved to the website for easy reference. LW confirmed that the agenda and minutes from previous meetings will be uploaded to the website.

45. A member asked, further to the data displayed on the Counter Table page, how does the current programme's progress i.e. 2014/2020 compare to that of the progress of 2007/2013 at this juncture?

46. DK explained that the comparison would not be a fair one given the differences in process between the two programmes. DK said that the 2007/2013 programme may have been slightly ahead, however the 2014/2020 programme will see larger

operations being approved and having the ability to become operational quicker.

47. The Chair confirmed that the 2014/2020 round of programmes will see more operations coming forward that have a more strategic approach and are on a larger financial scale.

Agenda Item 9 – Dwr: Uisce, approved operation presentation

48. The Chair welcomed Dr Prysor Williams from Bangor University to the PMC. Dr Prysor Williams provided the PMC with a presentation describing the approved operation's aims and objectives.

49. The Chair thanked Dr Prysor Williams for his presentation and offered the members the opportunity to ask any questions. A useful Q&A session was held, and many probing questions posed by the members.

Agenda Item 10 - Any Other Business

50. The Chair asked if there was any other business relating to the 2014/2020 programme. There was no other business.

51. The Annual Implementation Report and the Citizen Summary document was referenced, the general consensus from members was that it was a useful document and accurately described the programme providing greater clarification on some aspects.

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Ireland Wales Programme 2007-2013 Meeting

**Agenda Item 1- 2007-2013 Programme Update Report
(including position on closure)**

1. DK summarised the paper circulated and highlighted the following key points:
 - All 41 projects have completed their activity, DK confirmed that three or four projects are in the process of receiving their final payment;
 - The final interim claim has gone to the EU and audit checks are expected to start soon.
 - When the programme has reached 95% spend no further payments will be made until all documentation has been submitted to the EC and audit checks have been completed. DPER, Irish Government will cover the funding gap so that no projects will have to wait for their final payment.
2. SB said that he was pleased that the programme had delivered against all the output targets and exceeded the target in a number of cases, it was a credit to the Joint Secretariat team in SRA.
3. LW confirmed that the next PMC meeting would be in Ireland and in November.

Agenda Item 2- Any Other Business

4. Nothing to report.

5. The Chairs closing remarks.

The Chair offered her thanks to all PMC members for a positive meeting. The Chair reminded all Welsh members of the PMC of the need to complete the Welsh Preference form in order to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and return it to a member of the JS.

Annex 1 – List of Meeting Attendees

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Organisation</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jane McMillan | WEFO |
| Peter Ryland | WEFO |
| Linda Weaver | WEFO |
| Patrick Lilly | WEFO |
| Phillipa Morgan | WEFO |
| Stephen Blair | SRA |
| David Kelly | SRA |
| Breda Curran | SRA |
| Emma Doran | SRA |
| Caitriona Phelan | SRA |
| Patricia Hennessy | DPER |
| Cllr Meryl Gravell | WLGA |
| Helen Morgan | WLGA |
| Cllr Ronnie Hughes | WLGA |
| Barbara Burchell | WLGA |
| Sian Williams | Natural Resources Wales |
| Janine Downing | WCVA |
| Professor Richard Davies | HEA Wales |
| Gwion Williams | Welsh Government |
| Lucy Corfield | Welsh Government |
| Chriss O'Connell | WEFO – CCT |

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| Jonathan Earl | Chambers Ireland |
| Cllr Pip Breen | SRA |
| Hugh O'Reilly | WHEEL |
| Dave Corcoran | Environment, Community and Local Government |
| Brian McDonagh | E&MRA |
| Bernard O'Shea | Irish Government |
| Michael Clifford | Dept of Job Enterprise and Innovation |
| Fiona Grant | Marine Institute |
| Andy Richards | Wales TUC |
| Lowri Gwilym | Observer |
| Craig Jones | Accompanied Cllr Ronnie Hughes, undertaking work experience. |