



Ireland Wales Programme 2014-2020

Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) - Meeting 11
Friday 26th November 2021 10:00am
Video conference on Microsoft Teams

A list of attendees and apologies is at Annex 1.

Agenda item 1 – Welcome – Opening and Introductions

1. The Chair, David Kelly (DK) thanked members for joining PMC 11 online. He welcomed the New European Commission representative – Noel Farrell - thanking his predecessor Marianne Van De Vorle for her work on the Programme. DK also thanked Linda Weaver for her valuable contribution as Head of the JS in Wales and offered both she and Derville Brennan, Deputy Director of the Southern Regional Assembly best wishes on their respective retirements. Mike Wallwork (replacing LW) & Philip Lof were welcomed to the JS and the PMC. Joint Chair Peter Ryland (PR) echoed DK's thanks and welcome.

Agenda item 2 – Note of PMC Meeting 10 including action points – 18 November 2020

2. The PMC 10 minutes were agreed – all actions were closed.

Agenda item 3 – Programme State of Play Report

3. MP spoke to the report circulated earlier in the week and asked the PMC to note progress with implementation, including commitment, level of expenditure and the suite of indicators. He referred to the table at section 7 in particular explaining that the MA was presenting additional financial information relating to an exercise conducted by JS in recent months and during which they had analysed data for all approved projects to provide a forecast on monies likely to return to the programme via underspends. This was consistent with the MA policy for regional programmes in Wales where a similar approach was adopted identifying underspends to balance the books. The Programme is marginally over committed

with the current forecast that circa €3.5 million could be returned to the programme. Potentially, this will allow for the two PA 3 projects in the pipeline to be formally approved at the amounts requested, should they meet the quality standards required by the PSC. Calculations based on this scenario would mean that the programme would be pretty much as it stood now, i.e. overcommitted by approximately 2%.

4. The figures needed to be treated with some caution as implementation of projects continues into 2022 and 2023 and the financial picture being subject to change. The JS will closely monitor the position with each project, for example those approved within the later stages of the programme might have to curtail some activity to meet necessary deadlines which meant that additional monies may be returned to the programme. Delays due to Covid may also play a part in monies being returned.
5. The balance of commitments across the operational Priority Axes is forecast to be on track and as such there is currently no intention to request a modification of the programme to rebalance the financial allocations. As far as expenditure was concerned, MP asked the PMC to note the positive news on progress against the N+3 target (exceeded by 14% as things stand). There was a lot of work to do in future years, including liaising closely with partners to ensure expenditure profiles were on track.
6. On indicators, at PMC 10, members were presented with a supporting narrative to explain the programme position. The tables at Annex 2 to the paper updated the PMC. There were no issues with operational indicators in the Performance Framework with all on track although the MA will continue to closely monitor the expenditure indicators therein. In total the Programme comprises 19 indicators across the operational PA's – of those 9 are already exceeding targets.
7. The PMC was asked to note the Communications update at Annex 3. As a final point, MP confirmed that the Annual Report for 2020, dealt with by PMC written procedure was accepted by the Commission on July 27th – MP passed the floor to Mike Wallwork (MW).
8. MW was looking forward to the challenge of the Head of JS role, wishing LW all the best in her retirement. He updated the PMC on the two pipeline projects in PA 3 – 'CupHat' - which had now been formally approved by PSC and will be up and running in the near future and Portalis - assessed by the JS and now with the PSC who would make a decision in the next two weeks.
9. DK handed over to PMC members for any questions, queries, comments.
10. Responding to a call for information on the Cross Cutting Themes, MP reflected that some really good work had been done on these both at project and

programme levels. The MA would reflect further with a view to updating the PMC at the next meeting (**Action Point**).

11. Colleagues in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform commended the work undertaken by the MA and JS so far to get the programme in this position and welcomed the intention to closely monitor the financial progress as implementation progressed. Recognising that the programme was performing well, the Commission welcomed the inclusion of over-commitment in the planning process which reflected the approach adopted by other ETC programmes. PR confirmed this as a space the MA was used to working in but flagged up a note of caution in relation to risk appetite as there was no future EU programme round to fall back on. He acknowledged that some projects might struggle on spend to profile with Covid in the mix and confirmed that the MA would push on over-commitment to a level that the MA and its Irish government partners felt comfortable.
12. Des Clifford (DC) praised the work of colleagues and partners on the ground on getting the programme in such a positive place given the twin circumstances of Brexit and Covid, recognising the difficulties that were being faced in terms of ensuring effective operational delivery. DK felt this progress reflected once again the esteem the programme and its previous iterations was held in on both sides of the water, and as such expressed his disappointment that no successor programme was in play.

Agenda item 4 – Feedback from Ministerial meetings (Des Clifford) Ireland Wales Statement/Joint Action Plan (Kathryn Hallett)

13. DC felt it would be a tragedy if the collaboration built up over the years between Wales and Ireland came to a halt in 2023 as a consequence of Brexit. He was determined this would not happen and assured the PMC that the Welsh Government was working hard to take the relationship with the Irish Government up a few notches and was actively exploring future co-operation options. If networks were to be sustained all parties would need to work energetically with this goal in mind. The positive news was that this commitment, including the need to pursue relevant funding sources, was made clear at recent visits by Irish Ministers, including the inaugural Joint Ministerial Forum in Cardiff on 25th October. A regular and systematic dialogue with the Irish Government had been established at Ministerial level, crystallised by the recent opening of the Irish Consulate in Cardiff. DK agreed that maintaining the relationship between Ireland and Wales was critically important.
14. Kathryn Hallett (KH) shared a presentation and offered apologies on behalf of Denise Hanrahan with whom the Welsh Government office in Dublin had been working closely on the Ireland Wales Joint Action Plan. The Plan had taken 18 months to get over the line and was launched in March 2021 offering a good read across to the objectives of the Ireland Wales Programme. For its six priorities to

be achieved, action was required by both governments and their respective departments.

15. Referring to the Joint Ministerial Forum and its headline theme of climate change and sustainability, KH reflected on positive discussions on opportunities across the Irish Sea during which ports, supply chains, regulation and planning and the marine environment were debated. The Ireland Wales funded SELKIE was an example of co-operation already underway. The 36th British Irish Council (BIC) was also hosted by the First Minister just outside Cardiff last week, after which the Taoiseach was closely engaged along with Enterprise Ireland in discussing future co-operation options across education and research. This followed a visit by the Minister for the Economy, Vaughan Gethin after the Ministerial Forum, to the Life Sciences Hub in Cardiff at which the Ireland Wales funded CALIN project presented.
16. KH also announced that the Welsh Government was working with Ireland's Department for Foreign Affairs to second an official with the focus on learning more about the Diaspora. The next steps on the Joint Action Plan included a first meeting of senior officials in April 2022. The Plan was a living document and continuation of discussions and delivery of actions was vital. KH concluded by referencing the success of WEFO's recent SCoRE Cymru call, which for the first time included a specific package on co-operation across the Irish Sea linked to the Action Plan. The response was very positive and consideration was being given to a joint bi-lateral call in 2022. Geraint Green confirmed that WEFO was very happy to engage with PMC members on the shape of future SCoRE cooperation calls and there was an open invitation to discuss further. Responding to a point about the future of student exchanges, KH confirmed that the First Minister had launched a £65m international learning exchange programme funded by the Welsh Government and to be delivered by Cardiff University in the absence of ERASMUS funding in Wales. There would be an opportunity for Irish interests to participate in this scheme.
17. Referencing the BIC, DC highlighted discussions on 'lesser used languages'. The First Minister was very keen to present the opportunity for Ministerial colleagues to use their respective languages and this worked very well with the FM speaking extensively in Welsh and colleagues speaking in an array of languages including Gaelic. In front of UK Government colleagues, this approach demonstrated diversity and cultural differences across the Islands. It was agreed that this initiative would be considered in programming introductions at the next PMC **(Action Point)**.
18. DK welcomed this high level input from Welsh Government, stressing the importance of maintaining the Ireland Wales relationship and identifying relevant funding sources, which would be vital in order to drive this forward.

Agenda item 5 - Project Presentation – Ports Past and Present (PPP)



19. DK welcomed the team from the Ireland Wales funded Ports Past and Present project, who provided an informative presentation to the PMC. DC thanked the project partners for an excellent presentation. Used to viewing the Ireland Wales relationship from a political lens, it was so good to see it from the perspective on the ground. It was really positive to see ports being used as artistic and creative spaces to celebrate our cross maritime relationship. A synopsis of the main discussion points is presented as follows:-.
20. Responding to queries surrounding the ownership of project deliverables post-project and whether there been any interest from ferry companies, the partners confirmed that they were working on a “handover package” including a web based “authoring tool” and archived code to enable sustainability of the app. Conversations had been held with ferry companies from the project outset.
21. Welcoming the potential impact of the project and utilisation of the app on the Pembrokeshire ports it was queried whether cruise companies had been engaged. PPP confirmed this to be the case, with discussions held with Cruise Wales and further targeting envisaged given the rise of visiting ships. Initiatives such as local tours to retain people closer to the port which might be attractive to those with mobility issues, were being considered.
22. The partners were asked about the connection to Marine Energy – Stena Line having been very helpful with a number of other projects supported by Welsh regional programmes. Marine energy solutions were very important for their future, especially in Holyhead and it would be helpful if the project could focus on current developments as well as the past as there is genuine visitor interest in tidal energy technology. Shared use of the Irish Sea was the main focal point between Ministers from Ireland and Wales at the Forum. A discussion was also held at the Forum about the increase in routes from Southern Ireland to the continent which will bypass the UK and the impact on ports in Wales including tourist traffic could become an issue. PPP confirmed joint working with CCAT also funded by the Ireland Wales Programme.
23. PPP were bringing people into the project to talk about these things. PPP stressed that it was impossible to work on a tourism project without taking account of the impact of Brexit and there were no easy answers given the complex challenges of boosting tourism in the towns themselves.
24. PPP were commended on the quality of the digital and creative content being produced and were asked about the extent of dialogue with the Royal Commission who maintain the National Monuments Record for Wales and were involved in the Ireland Wales funded CHERISH project and the Welsh Archaeological Trust. PPP stated that a number of archaeology engagements had come from the bottom up in that community members see their built heritage as intrinsic to the stories they are prioritising. PPP were heavy Coflein users, and

were planning to work with some CHERISH content as part of its crossings app material next year.

25. PPP had made extensive use of archival material from the Commission but more extensive links with the project were difficult as the Commission were stretched on delivering current commitments. They were also working with members of the community in several ports who have walks/trails already (often in pamphlet format or several years out of date) to refresh and add to the app. A goal for 2022 is to make blue industrial heritage and energy heritage part of how PPP considers 'depth of history'.

26. PPP's attention was drawn to Simply Blue Energy at Pembroke Dock Marine and Cork who have produced some great assets for schools in Pembrokeshire to promote renewable energies - it may be interesting to explore opportunities with them in terms of community engagement.

27. PPP concluded with an open invitation to visit the various Ports festivals and their arts and films.

Agenda item 6 - AOB – Date of Next Meeting

28. There was no other business. The next meeting would be scheduled for May/June 2022, one which DK hoped would be able to take place in person.

Agenda item 7 – Close

29. DK thanked PMC members and other colleagues for joining and wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

**Joint Secretariat
December 2021**

Action Points

- 1. The MA/ JS to provide an update on the Cross Cutting Themes for a future meeting.**
- 2. Introductions in native languages to be considered by the Chairs in programming introductions at the next PMC.**

List of Attendees

Name	Organisation
PMC	
Abigail Phillips	Welsh Government - Department for Innovation

Cllr Brigid Manton	E&MRA Councillor
Cllr Phil Baker	Welsh Local Government Association South West Wales
Donal Nolan	Chambers Ireland
Hugh O'Reilly	WHEEL
Lucy Corfield	Welsh Government - Department for Economy, Skills and Natural Resources Wales-Decarbonisation and Climate Risk
Mike McGrath	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) Higher Education Wales (Universities Wales)
Sarah Clarke	Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)
Sean O'Connor	- Irish Government – Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
Veronica Cunningham	The Marine Institute: Foras na Mara
Gwilym Hughes	Welsh Government – Head of Cadw (Covering for Jason Thomas (Director of Culture, Sports and Tourism))
Chriss O'Connell	WEFO – Equal Opportunities and Environmental Sustainability
Other	
Noel Farrell	EU Desk Officer
Gwyn Evans	Observer
Peter Merriman	Ports Past and Present Project (agenda item 5)
Rita Singer	Ports Past and Present Project (agenda item 5)
James Smith	Ports Past and Present Project (agenda item 5)
Mary-Ann Constantine	Ports Past and Present Project (agenda item 5)
Melissa Goff	Ports Past and Present Project (agenda item 5)
Maria Fitzgerald Houlihan	Ports Past and Present Project (agenda item 5)
Colette Reilly	DPER
Des Clifford	Welsh Government - Office of the First Minister and Cabinet Office
Peter Ryland	WEFO
Geraint Green	WEFO
Mike Pollard	WEFO
Patrick Lilly	WEFO
Bethan Thomas	WEFO
Phil Lof	WEFO
Mike Wallwork	WEFO
Sian Benson	WEFO
Kathryn Hallett	Welsh Government - Overseas Team (Ireland)
David Kelly	SRA
Breda Curran	SRA
Samantha Richardson	SRA

List of Apologies

Name	Organisation
PMC	
Darren Hollick	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
Eion O’Neil	Department for Public Expenditure
Paul Spencer	Pro Vice Chancellor – Research and Innovation
Deirdre Garvey	WHEEL
Jason Thomas	Director of Culture, Sports and Tourism
Anne Marie Cauldfield	DPER
Denise Hanrahan	DFA