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**Minutes of the
INTERREG IVA Review Panel Meeting**

Friday 14 January 2011, 2:00pm
SEUPB Offices, Belfast

In Attendance:	Pat Colgan	SEUPB (Chair)
	Angela Holohan	MC Panel Member
	Brian Callanan	MC Panel Member
	Audrey McKeown	Independent Member
	John Cherry	SEUPB (Secretariat)
	Christine Markey	SEUPB (Secretariat)

1. Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Agenda

The Agenda was agreed.

3. Register of Interests/Conflicts of Interest

None

4. Review

**The Review of NIUSE – Ready, Willing and Able to Work Project (Ref:
005541)**

Representatives from NIUSE and the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) were invited to enter the room.

In Attendance:	Edyth Dunlop	(NIUSE)
	Margaret Haddock	(NIUSE)
	Kieran Molloy	(NIUSE)
	Dermot Cunningham	(IASE)
	Howard Keery	(JTS)
	Eimear Murphy	(JTS)

After introductions, the Chair outlined the procedures to be followed. The Chair then invited the Project promoters to outline the reasons for their request for a review.

The representatives for NIUSE presented their case. The main points included:

- The ground for appeal was that the decision taken was unreasonable.
- There was an over-reliance on the Promoting Social Inclusion Working Group Report on Disability.
- The scoring was non-reflective of the information supplied in the application.
- There was a lack of recognition for the innovation and impacts of the project.
- There was confusion surrounding the NIUSE's Lead Partner status.

The Chair thanked the project promoters for their presentation and invited the JTS to respond.

Representatives from the JTS made the following points:

- The guidelines issued with the call for applications stated that research/feasibility studies were ineligible for this sub-theme.
- A suitability statement signed by the three agriculture departments (Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland) stated that the project fell into the weak category of suitability.
- There is a statutory responsibility to deliver such a programme within DEL.

- The cross-border dimension was weak.
- When considered against current policy there appeared to be duplication.
- The project failed to take account of the PSI, which the JTS now accept was issued after the application was received.
- The Accountable Departments questioned the Lead Partner status, the JTS consider the NIUSE to be eligible as a Lead Partner.

The Chair thanked the JTS for their comments.

A Review Panel Member asked how the applicants came up with their numbers of participants and what they meant by “80% better engaged”.

The NIUSE stated that the numbers were based on prior knowledge and experience in other projects as well as networks and contacts within other rural areas. The 80% better engaged referred to participants going on to participate in other programmes or training.

A Review Panel Member referred to the project Steering Group and asked about its composition.

The NIUSE stated that they wanted to keep the Steering Group small and let the members disseminate information down. It was about quality and experience of those representatives.

A Review Panel Member asked what employers were targeted and how they were identified.

The NIUSE stated that they were targeting local SME's as in their experience they have been unsuccessful in getting clients into employment in the larger companies.

A Review Panel Member noted that farmers had not been mentioned in the application.

The NIUSE stated that they did not identify specific employers but that they would target a whole range which would include farmers.

The Chair noted that the issues were around sustainability and impact of the project.

A Review Panel Member referred to additionality and asked if the People Disability Ireland were part of IASE and who provided core funding.

The IASE stated that the PDI was not part of IASE and that the IASE received its core funding from FAS.

A Review Panel Member also referred to the application that the Cedar Foundation had with the IIVA Programme and asked if there was complementarity.

The NIUSE stated that the Cedar Foundation project was separate to the NIUSE one.

A Review Panel Member asked if the job descriptions were for the organisation or the project.

The NIUSE has two core posts, one of those will be part financed by the project and three additional posts will be recruited solely for the project.

The Chair clarified that the project was predominately about awareness raising and lacked significant evidence of impact.

The NIUSE stated that the impact would be the legacy of informing people and a legacy of the influence of the cross-departmental forum. The NIUSE also noted that DEL currently do not provide services for people with disabilities.

A Review Panel Member referred to the recession and asked how the organisation would be funded if this project does not go ahead.

The NIUSE stated that they fund themselves through training, private trusts and membership.

The JTS noted that the criteria for the sub-theme was to have an economic impact, which was not evident in the application.

The NIUSE noted that the application was about making people aware of the support that they can receive and encouraging people with disabilities to engage in society.

The Chair asked what role the IIVA Programme can play in supporting the current policy context.

The JTS stated that the IIVA Programme is not a substitute for the role of the government departments who are not adequately rural proofing.

The NIUSE referred to the report from the PSI Working Group noting that the ideas are excellent but that very little has been taken forward in terms of recommendations. The NIUSE also noted that no one department can meet the needs of people with disabilities which was the reasoning for the cross-departmental forum.

The Chair then asked for final statements.

The NIUSE stated that the use of the PSI report had been detrimental to the scoring and that the scoring for other areas of the application was very low in comparison to the evidence supplied. The NIUSE felt that the application was well constructed and did meet the criteria. The NIUSE then thanked the panel for the opportunity to present their case.

The JTS noted that the economic impact was vital and was outlined in the criteria for the sub-theme. The policy context is now available and it is an area that it is difficult for the IIVA Programme to become involved in. The comments made by the departments have to be taken on board.

The Chair asked the Project promoters and the JTS if they were happy with the way the Review Panel had been conducted, and if they felt they had been given the opportunity to convey all the main points of their argument. Both the Project promoters and the JTS confirmed that they were happy with the process.

The Chair also noted that he had great respect and admiration for the work of the NIUSE and IASE.

The Project promoters and the JTS exited the room.

The Review Panel discussed the application and information presented and noted:

- The policy was a key area that had to be considered.
- The applicant was dependent on this funding.
- There were weaknesses in the structure and there were no key organisations included on the Board for the project.

After considerable deliberation, the Review Panel concluded that the decision had not been unreasonable and that it should be upheld.

The Panel recognised the value of the proposal and the importance of the work that the NIUSE is carrying out.

5. Conclusion

The Chair thanked the Review Panel members for attending and informed them that he would write, on behalf of the Review Panel, to inform both project applicants and the JTS of the Review Panel's decisions. He also stated that the minutes from the meeting would be e-mailed to Review Panel members in due course for their approval.