



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund
Investing in your future

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

Monday 21 July 2008, 2.15pm
SEUPB Offices, Belfast

In Attendance:	Pat Colgan	SEUPB	(Chair)
	John Anderson	Panel Member	
	Paul Noonan	Panel Member	
	Sheila Inglis	Independent Panel Member	
	Lisa McMullan	SEUPB	(Secretariat)
	Ciaran Rice	SEUPB	(minute taker)

1. Agree Agenda

The agenda was agreed.

2. Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the INTERREG IVA Review Panel.

3. Register of Interests/Conflicts of Interest

None.

4. Review

The Review of LCEB-Craftmark: (000395)

The Project Promoter (LCEB-Craftmark) and the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) were invited to enter the room.

In Attendance:	Ronan Denny	Louth County Enterprise Board
	Sarah Daly	Louth County Enterprise Board
	Howard Keery	Joint Technical Secretariat
	Eimear Murphy	Joint Technical Secretariat

After introductions were made, the Chair outlined the procedures to be followed at the review meeting. The project applicants were then invited to outline the reasons they felt the LCEB-Craftmark project should be funded.

A representative from LCEB-Craftmark presented additional information to the Panel. In summary, Craftmark activities during 2006-2008 reached over 84,000 people and had generated €286,676 for artists/designers/makers as a direct result of opportunities arising from events held.

The targets for the proposed project were explained as follows:

- Cross-border networking opportunities would be developed with over 1000 direct interventions proposed during the period 2008-2011.
- Over 40 events would take place involving Small Medium Enterprises (SME's) and the project would be needs focussed.
- The project would have both sales opportunities and all export focus, with close links being developed with Enterprise Ireland/Invest NI and sales opportunities would be identified through events and national trade fairs.
- The project would assist the craft sector with innovation training and product development and also with the development of directories, guides and events

to assist potential customers and help develop cross-border partnerships within the craft sector.

The benefits of the proposed project:

- mobilisation of the region's craft sector in terms of business development through increased awareness;
- improved confidence; and increased business knowledge and skills; and
- improved communication and co-operation between all interested parties; and
- raising the profile of the craft sector and relevant funding bodies.

In addition and in response to the points outlined at the de-briefing meeting with the JTS, the following points were made:

- This project is truly cross-border with a committed partnership.
- The project offers a complete service from pre-start through start-up training, mentoring, professional development for existing businesses.
- There is demand for the project, with 200 pre-start participants expressing an interest in gaining employment within the craft sector.
- Craftmark provides a different service to both the Crafts Council of Ireland and Craft NI.
- With regard to sustainability, two income generating retail outlets had now been opened which it was hoped would contribute to the sustainability of the project.

It was noted that the alignment of the project under the East Border Region (EBR) Multi Annual Plan (MAP) would not provide comprehensive coverage for the crafts sector across all the programme eligible areas. Other concerns raised were that currently 28.1% of Craftmark members are based outside the EBR region.

It was also noted that the Tradelinks II project focussed principally on cross-border joint ventures and was not specific to the craft sector, since the

submission of their application, links had been established with Dumfries & Galloway Art and Craft Trade Development Programme.

The Chair thanked Louth County Enterprise Board for outlining their points and invited the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) to respond.

A representative from JTS made the following points:

- Links with Scottish Partners were not detailed in the initial project application and although Scotland was mentioned in the application, a named partner was not identified.
- Almost half of the monies had already been allocated to projects and the INTERREG IVA Steering Committee adopted a careful and judicial process in ensuring that those projects with the best strategic programme fit were selected for funding.
- The application was extremely well written and it was not deemed necessary to seek clarification from the project promoter prior to presentation to Steering Committee.
- The proposed region broadly matched that of the EBR and stated that this could lead to possible duplication.
- The application failed to meet the programme, priority, efficiency and effectiveness criteria.
- The Steering Committee felt there was insufficient rationale to support the proposal.

The Chair thanked the representatives from JTS for their comments and asked if the Review Panel had any questions.

The JTS were asked to clarify when the EBR MAP had been reviewed by the INTERREG IVA Steering Committee, and why a decision on a LCEB-Craftmark application had not been deferred until after a decision had been finalised.

JTS response: The EBR MAP was initially considered by the Steering Committee on the 24 and 25 April 2008, and that its decision was deferred until

the accountable departments reviewed the application. Given this, the Steering Committee decided to reject rather than defer the LCEB-Craftmark application. He confirmed that the EBR MAP was approved at the 7 July 2008 meeting of the Steering Committee.

A Review Panel member raised concerns that the score awarded for 'Impact on Poverty' had not reflected the information given in the application.

JTS Response: Under the cross-cutting themes the application had been awarded a score of 13. It was agreed that all information contained in application should have been factored in when the 'Impact on Poverty' score was awarded. It was pointed out that the application would not have been successful even if full marks had been awarded.

A Review Panel member noted that this application appeared to be a continuation of the Craftmark project funded under INTERREG IIIA and asked for clarification on the new elements.

LCEB-Craftmark Response: The application would develop innovation and product development ensuring that support was available to the crafts and arts sector to promote business were sustainable. It would also provide a more comprehensive approach including providing support from the pre-start stage, through to product development and finally through to the product going to market.

The Chair asked the project promoter if the INTERREG IIIA support project had achieved what it had set out to do, and sought clarification on the differences between the two projects.

LCEB-Response: Participants in the current project were currently completing surveys for evaluation and this would provide baseline information for future work.

JTS Response: INTERREG IVA Programme is more strategic in nature than the INTERREG IIIA Programme.

A Review Panel member asked the project promoter to outline its long term strategy for sustainability.

LCEB-Craftmark Response: Retail outlets have been established to assist in generating income and contributing to sustainability. Also, income was generated from the annual Craftfest event.

A Review Panel member asked if statutory funders were involved/aware of development in retail outlets.

LCEB-Craftmark Response: Confirmed their involvement, and explained that Enterprise Ireland had also been approached as a possible source of funding.

The Chair noted that the application did not detail a Scottish partner and confirmed that the project promoters are based in the East Border Region.

LCEB-Craftmark Response: At the time the application was submitted, links with the Scottish eligible area had not been fully developed, but since then meetings have taken place and strong links developed. On the issue of duplication, it was highlighted that 21.8% of their clientele came from outside the EBR Region and the amount of interest shown in participating in the project was greater than the support for 50 craft producers detailed in the EBR MAP. Although LCEB-Craftmark had contributed to the MAP consultation, the level of craft sector activity did not reflect what Craftmark aspired to.

The Chair asked JTS to clarify if the project applicant could re-apply to the programme if the EBR crafts and arts section didn't fulfil the need within the region.

JTS Response: Applicants could re-apply provided the call is open.

The Chair asked if there is an opportunity to work with the Tradelinks2 project.

LCEB-Craftmark Response: Tradelinks 2 was focussed on pairing cross-border businesses and has different aims from the LCEB-Craftmark proposal. Therefore it would be difficult to match with Craftmark.

The Chair asked if there would be duplication with the work carried out by the Crafts Council of Ireland and Craft NI.

LCEB-Craftmark Response: These organisations have a different role. They do not provide the same services as Craftmark and participants are selected through a jurying process.

A Review Panel member asked if there would be duplication with work carried out by Universities and Colleges.

LCEB-Response: Given different needs of Craftmark targeted participants and college/university graduates, the services offered are different.

A Review Panel member noted that the products in the LCEB-Craftmark brochure did not appear to have a strong regional basis.

LCEB-Response: A regional style has been noted and this will be developed.

A Review Panel member noted that the application provided limited information on outcomes, sales and exports.

LCEB-Craftmark Response: At the time of application submission, detailed figures were not available.

The Chair asked for final statements from the project promoter and JTS.

A representative from JTS stated that the INTERREG IVA Steering Committee was not opposed to funding Crafts projects, and supported the sector. The relatively small amount of funding available and the need to ensure that funding

was allocated to projects that have best strategic fit with the programme. It was also noted that the application was considered to be sub-regional in nature, fitting with the EBR MAP.

The project promoter advised that while sympathetic to budget constraints, it was felt that a robust application had been submitted and they were disappointed by the Steering Committees decision. He felt higher scores should have been allocated to the partnership section. There were strong relationships in place with partners particularly in Northern Ireland, and there was a concern that a greater than necessary significance had been given to the situation with Scottish Partners at the time of submission.

The Chair asked the project promoters 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.

Representatives from both LCEB-Craftmark and JTS confirmed that they were happy with the process.

.

The Project Promoter and JTS exited the room.

The Review Panel discussed the application and the information presented and agreed that based on the information provided the decision of the Steering Committee was reasonable.

The Panel noted:

- The Craftmark proposal represented a sub-regional project.
- The project promoters were based in East Border Region.
- A strategic approach is required to avoid duplication.

The Panel felt that the application could have been strengthened with clear quantifiable targets and performance indicators; and details of the projects strategic plans.

The Panel agreed that the applicants should be encouraged to explore, with JTS, opportunities for achieving the overall proposal objectives within the framework of the INTERREG IVA Programme.

The Chair then confirmed that the Review Panel was upholding the decision taken by the INTERREG IVA Steering Committee.

5. Any Other Business

None

6. 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 the project applicant and JTS of the Review Panel's decision. He also stated that the minutes from the meeting would be e-mailed to Review Panel members in due course for their approval.