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

Tuesday 23 November 2010 11.00am  
SEUPB Offices, Omagh

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

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**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 ICBAN – Construction Business Project (Ref: 007241)**

*Representatives from ICBAN, Omagh District Council (ODC) and the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) were invited to enter the room.*

In Attendance:	Alison McCullagh	(ODC)
	Kieran McCrory	(ODC)
	Shane Campbell	(ICBAN)
	Garret McGinty	(ICBAN)
	Howard Keery	(JTS)
	Tracey Scullion	(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 ICBAN and ODC thanked the panel for the opportunity for a review and proceeded to present their case. The main points included:

- The key issue was the delay in input from the Government Departments.
- The DETE response and JTS assessment report were not signed or dated.
- There appeared to be no evidence of a peer assessment.
- The decision was taken by written procedure which the promoter felt was not appropriate for substantial projects and there was no clarity on the quorum of response required.
- The Chair of the Steering Committee is also the Director of the JTS and the promoter felt that it was not appropriate that he has a vote towards either supporting or rejecting a project.
- The project scored highly within the MAP process and was recommended by the JTS at that stage.

The Chair noted that the promoters had requested the review on the grounds that the decision taken was unreasonable, however, the points made related to procedural issues.

The project promoters clarified that they were disputing that failings in procedures led to an unreasonable decision.

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

Representatives from the JTS made the following points:

- The peer assessment was completed by a fellow director in SEUPB.
- The view of the Accountable Departments is imperative and further assessment cannot be completed without that and although the Accountable Departments had some issues, it was felt that there was merit in the proposal.
- The applicant had opportunities, in April and July 2010, to address the issues raised by the Accountable Departments. However, these issues were not addressed to the extent that was required.
- Costs were only presented for the preferred option which does not illustrate value for money.
- There was a requirement for a quorum of 7 responses by written procedure.
- The decision is taken by the Steering Committee Members, not the Chair.
- A debrief meeting took place on 19 October 2010 which the JTS felt was positive and it was noted that there was still merit in the project. The JTS are offering workshops and surgeries to applicants applying to the new call and the promoters could avail of this.

*The Chair thanked the JTS for their comments.*

A Review Panel Member asked if there was a conflict of interest with the Chair of the Steering Committee and if the quorum of 7 had been reached.

The JTS stated that there was no conflict of interest. The Chair only facilitates the process and that 7 member responses were received.

A Review Panel Member asked what areas of the application the promoters felt should score higher.

The Promoters stated that the project scored 67.5% in the original MAP application and noted that areas of sustainability, value for money and need should have scored more highly in the assessment.

A Review Panel member asked the promoter to give examples of local ownership, activities to be undertaken and to talk about targeting, duplication and complementarity in the project.

The Promoters stated the project was developed through the partnership of the 10 councils in the region and that the officers in those councils are supportive. Appendix 2 of the application lists the positions of those people that support the application. The promoters also noted that there will be mentoring and buy in from education bodies and construction experts. The Promoters then stated that there will be mixed use retail in the local areas with local employment agreements developed and also noted that there is no evidence that the government departments are targeting local areas.

A Review Panel member asked if the project would benefit from any other funding and the Promoters confirmed that INTERREG IVA was the only option.

A Review Panel Member asked who in SEUPB completed the peer assessment and if all applications were treated the same.

The JTS confirmed the Director of the Managing Authority completed the peer assessment and that all applications are treated the same.

The Chair clarified that there is a distinction between the Managing Authority and the JTS. The Managing Authority has oversight role which is independent of the role of the JTS.

The Chair also clarified that the Director of the Managing Authority assisted the JTS over the summer months to get the back log of projects cleared up and that peer assessments would have also happened in the opposite direction.

A Review Panel Member asked if the promoters felt disadvantaged by the peer assessment.

The promoters confirmed that this was the case and stated that they felt it should have been an independent process.

A Review Panel Member asked if the promoters accept that the project was approved within the MAP subject to individual project assessment as per the MAP Letter of Offer.

The Promoters contend that the project was approved under the MAP, the process for assessment then changed and the project was rejected.

A Review Panel Member asked how the project intended to compete internationally and how companies will be selected to take part in the project.

The Promoter stated that the project was developed with key players with different skills that will compete across the ICBAN region in new markets which will improve skills to compete in the UK and European markets. The Promoter noted that there will be an open selection process of the companies with priority groupings and sectors identified and given more weighting. The process will be open and transparent so that any company could bid for selection.

A Review Panel Member asked if the promoters had considered the Grundtvig or Leonardo Partnerships and if there would be a problem in getting construction companies that have C2 Clearance.

The Promoters stated that they thought it would be interesting to see how the project would have worked under INTERREG IVA and noted that they could get more than 60 companies recruited with C2 Clearance.

The Chair clarified that the main issue was how the procedures affected the decision. He then asked for final statements.

The JTS noted that the process was complex and has been slow in going forward. The JTS are trying to make the process less complex through having workshops and surgeries with applicants, SEUPB and Accountable Departments. The JTS feel that the peer assessment had no impact on the decision but agreed that they would look at this process.

The promoters thanked the panel for the opportunity to present their case. They felt there was real merit in this application and that it could be developed into a model of best practice.

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 Project promoters and the JTS exited the room.*

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

- The procedures did not impact on the final decision.
- The delays did not disadvantage the project.
- It was not clear how the project could increase its score from 54% to 65%.
- It was clear that the Letter of Offer for the MAP was approved subject to the individual assessment of the applications.
- The relevant Government Departments could have been brought on board as partners.
- The internal peer assessment should be robust and fair and may benefit from external input.
- The procedures for signing and dating important documents should be reviewed.

After considerable deliberation, the Review Panel concluded that the decision had not been unreasonable.

The Panel recognised the value of the proposal and that there are areas of the procedures that need to be reviewed, however, the Panel felt that this did not materially affect the decision taken by the Steering Committee.

The panel encourages the applicant to liaise with the JTS to develop any future proposals for the Enterprise call which is currently open.

## **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.