

PEACE III PROGRAMME (2007-2013) – WORKING GROUP REPORT

Contents

Reported by

INTERREG IVA/PEACE III Joint WG

Monitoring and Evaluation
Working Group

James Daly

EU Structural Funds 2007-2013

Working Groups

Environmental Working Group
Equality Working Group

Peter Archdale
Michael Hughes

PURPOSE OF PAPER

To provide information and an update on activity for each of the Working Groups of the PEACE III Monitoring Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

Members of the Monitoring Committee are requested to **note** the progress of the Working Groups and the main findings of the Implementation Analysis Report 2009.

1.0 Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group (MEWG)

The MEWG oversees the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the PEACE III Programme, which highlights the importance of on-going evaluation at operation and programme level. This approach will provide information on the overall impact of the PEACE III Programme in the context of its aims and in combination with on-going monitoring activity. It will capture both quantitative and qualitative comprehensive evaluation information during each project life cycle.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group has met twice, 17 June 2009 and 23 September 2009, since the last Monitoring Committee meeting in the Signal Centre on 22 April 2009. The main areas considered by the Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group were:

1.1 Programme Performance Update

Programme Progress Reports are issued to the Monitoring Committee Members on a monthly basis. Information provided in these reports include a breakdown of the approved applications by theme and priority, the amount awarded to each project, any Steering Committee activity and payments and expenditure to date. N+2 is also discussed, however this will be dealt with separately in the Programme Finance paper. Meetings have been held with the Member States and Accountable Departments to review the programme's fit with policy given the current economic climate and demands on public expenditure. The budgets for 2009 have been confirmed but ongoing discussions will be taking place in relation to future financial years.

1.2 Analysis of Implementation of 2007-2013 Programmes

The final report has been circulated to all members with the main findings and issues will be presented to the group. The analysis confirms that the programme is currently on track to meet its aims and objectives. The main findings in relation to PEACE III are:

- Applicant organisations came from mainly Community and Voluntary Sectors.
- One lead applicant in 25 of the 32 council areas.
- When broadened to include all project partners 100% of council areas have representation.

- Urban areas/areas with a high population density tend to dominate – Belfast, Londonderry, Armagh.
- 15 out of 26 council areas in Northern Ireland had an approved lead applicant.
- All Border Counties had an approved lead applicant.
- The value of approved applications in Northern Ireland and Ireland is 72% and 28% respectively.
- The average value of projects is €2.2m.

Issues:

- Strategic Approach
- Geographical Spread of Activity
- Target groups and aims
- Racial Minorities
- Communities of Different Beliefs

1.3 PEACE III Indicators

There have been some minor changes to the PEACE III definitions paper. These were introduced following meetings with the Consortium to ensure monitoring and evaluation was being rolled out at project level. The changes include:

- Indicator 2.6 – change of timeframe of availability from every six months to the end of the project as data would be more meaningful.
- Indicator 2.7 – slight change in wording and timeframe of availability changed from every six months to the end of the project.
- Indicator 2.8 – this indicator has been removed and is currently under review. Further discussion on this will take place at the next meeting.

1.4 Community Uptake Analysis

A paper was presented to the group highlighting the possible options for undertaking a Community Uptake Analysis.

The Implementation Analysis has raised this as an issue as the PEACE III Programme is more strategic, therefore the methodology applied in PEACE II cannot be applied in the new programme.

There are four possible ways to take this forward. They are:

- Further exploration of the Haase/Pratschke methodology.
- Equality Monitoring
- Qualitative Research
- Proof of no bias in the programme.

It has been proposed that a mix of all four options be taken forward.

1.5 Attitudinal Survey

The Attitudinal Survey is a requirement that is set out in the PEACE III Operational Programme. Two of these surveys must be carried out over the lifetime of the programme. The survey will collect data on attitudinal change amongst PEACE III participants over time and attitudinal differences amongst project participants compared with the population of Northern Ireland and the Border Region. A draft Terms of Reference, developed by NISRA, was presented to the group. Previous Attitudinal Surveys have been completed throughout April/May/June and it is envisaged that the first survey for PEACE III will take place during April/May/June 2010 to be consistent and allow for accurate comparisons. This has been left with the group to consider with further discussion to take place at the next meeting.

1.6 Other Possible Evaluations

Consideration was given to the possibility of completing an evaluation of Theme 1.1 Local and an evaluation of Theme 1.2. It has been envisaged that if these were to go ahead they would be completed during 2010. This will remain as a standing item on the MEWG's agenda and will be discussed further at forthcoming meetings.

The next meeting will be held on 9 December 2009 in Northern Ireland.

2.0 Environmental Working Group (ENWG)

The Environmental Working Group has met once since the last Monitoring Committee, on 28 September 2009. The working group was introduced to the new Chair, Peter Archdale from CNCC who replaces Lucinda Blakiston-Houston for the foreseeable future.

The following issues were discussed at the meeting:

2.1 Europe Wide Environmental Indicators – Forward Planning

The group discussed ways of aligning indicators identified in the Northern Ireland programmes with those being used within the rest of the UK and in European programmes and how best to measure the success of the programmes against these indicators. The OFMDFM rep advised the group that the Sustainable Development Strategy, which is due to be issued for public consultation, includes new strategic objectives that will need to be aligned with UK/EU indicators. OFMDFM have carried out some work on this and the rep has agreed to keep the group informed of progress. The group also discussed the difficulties in identifying measuring indicators for areas such as greenhouse gases.

The group discussed the potential benefits of identifying and matching the indicators with the projects, matching these with the EU indicators and looking at any gaps in between. As a way forward, it was agreed that the chair would draft a letter to the Commission, via the DG Environ Desk Officer, to request advice on best practise and further guidance.

2.2 Greenhouse Gasses Indicator

The DETI rep advised that there was nothing to report on this indicator at present.

2.3 Developmental Path Analysis – Reports from Managing Authorities

DPA reports were provided by DEL, DETI and SEUPB outlining the progress in allocation across the programmes. The reports highlighted potential incidences of incorrect allocation and discussed the level of guidance provided and the possibility of updating the guidance paper produced by DTZ Piedad for the old programming round.

2.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment Reports

SEUPB advised the group that the SEA for the PEACE III Programme had identified no significant negative environmental effects; however it had identified potential positive effects. The report presented a suite of indicators which had been identified by NISRA to measure the highlighted positive effects and the group discussed the benefit of reporting these to the Environmental Working Group. It was agreed that these would be useful for the Managing Authority but would not be reported on at future meetings.

2.5 SEA Seminar attendance

A report was provided by the CNCC rep on the Implementing SEA seminar which was attended by two members of the working group. He advised that although the seminar was disappointing in both content and numbers attending, it did highlight that the Northern Ireland Programmes are well ahead of other European countries in relation to SEA.

3.0 Equality Working Group (EQWG)

The Equality Working Group has met once since the last Monitoring Committee meeting on Friday 25 September 2009. The EQWG discussed, inter alia, the revised Mainstreaming Equality Guide. Monitoring Committee Members, at the spring meeting, were given the opportunity to comment on the document. Two main comments were received from the chair of the working group regarding the wording of some questions and whether the guide met the main objective of helping project applications and selection committees meet equality requirements. These have been taken on board and a sub-group will convene to take these forward and advise the working group accordingly.

NISRA is currently carrying out an equality audit of members of programme committees and selection panels. A reminder for returns has been issued by DFP with a closing date of 7 October 2009. NISRA will report on the findings in due course.

NISRA also confirmed that the Equality Monitoring Forms, which are being issued to all projects by Managing Authorities, are beginning to be returned.

4.0 Recommendation

The Monitoring Committee is requested to:

- **Note** the progress of the Working Groups.
- **Note** the main findings of the Implementation Analysis Report 2009.