



Special EU Programmes Body
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**NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE BORDER REGION OF IRELAND
EU PROGRAMME FOR PEACE & RECONCILIATION
(2014 - 2020)**

CCI No: 2014TC16RFPC001

MINUTES MONITORING COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday 14th November 2019

NICVA Offices, Duncairn Gardens, Belfast

Attendance

A list of attendees and apologies is attached at Annex II.

1. Welcome and introduction by Chairperson

The Chair welcomed attendees to the ninth meeting of the PEACE IV Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) 2014-2020, and thanked **NICVA Chief Executive Seamus McAleavey** for facilitating today's meeting in NICVA offices.

The Chair outlined the agenda, and welcomed to the meeting **EU Commission Desk Officer Stefan Welin**, who was introduced at the previous PMC meeting as the replacement for **Desk Officer Tamara Pavlin**.

The Chair extended thanks to outgoing PMC Members **Cllr Dermot Curran, Cllr Garath Keating, Alderman Angus Carson and Alderman Freda Donnelly**.

The Chair also informed the Committee that **Cllr Tommy Byrne**, Drogheda Fianna Fail Councillor and Member of the PEACE IV PMC until January 2019, sadly passed away in July 2019.

The Chair welcomed a number of new Members and Advisors to the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC), including;

- Cllr Jim McKeever, NILGA/SDLP
- Cllr Jenny Palmer, NILGA/UUP

- Cllr Stevie Corr, NILGA, SF
- Cllr Frances Burton, NILGA/ DUP
- Cllr Frank McBrearty, NWRA
- Tim Smith, ICTU Ireland, and;
- Paul Fay, DCYA Ireland

The Chair provided an update on developments in Programme implementation since the previous PMC meeting on 14 June 2019, as follows;

- The first meeting of the Programme Development Steering Group (PDSG) took place the previous week. The PDSG is comprised of PEACE IV and INTERREG VA PMC members, and is tasked with providing input and advise in the design of the future PEACE PLUS Programme;
- **The Chair** outlined the current political position ahead of the 12th December General Election, and the SEUPB's work with Sponsor Departments to ensure the effective completion of the current Programmes, in the absence of a functioning Northern Ireland Executive;
- An update on the future PEACE PLUS Programme will be a standing agenda item going forward;
- PEACE PLUS activity, including stakeholder engagement events and website submissions, will intensify in early 2020, and;
- Since the last PMC, several high profile visits and events have taken place, including the June presentation of the Peace Programme to an Official from the Korean Embassy in Ireland, in the SEUPB's Monaghan office.

2. Project presentations

In the first of two project presentations, **the Chair** introduced **Emma Dargan of the Victims and Survivors Service**. The Victims and Survivors project was awarded €13m of PEACE IV funding in June 2017.

Providing the second project presentation of the day, **the Chair** welcomed **Emma McAuley** and **Heather Lindsay of the Training for Women Network (TWN)**, as Lead Partner in the Peace and Conflict Transformation project (PACT).

The Chair extended her thanks to the project presenters, and highlighted that this project is supported by The Northern Ireland Executive Office (TEO) and Department for Housing, Planning, Communities and Local Government (DHPCLG) in Ireland, providing ongoing support throughout the development and assessment stages of the project.

The Chair stated that the project presentations and the links referred to within, will be circulated to PMC Members following the meeting, and any requests for visits to the projects will be warmly accommodated.

AP 1: Project presentations and links to be sent to PMC Members following meeting

3. Agree Agenda

The Agenda was adopted.

4. Conflict of Interest

No Conflicts of Interest were declared.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting – 14 June 2019

The DPER representative stated they have minor amendments to the minutes to submit following today's meeting.

Pending the requested amendments, the Committee agreed the minutes as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.

The approved minutes will be uploaded to the SEUPB website.

AP 2: Requested amendments to be made to minutes. Minutes to be uploaded to SEUPB website

6. Matters Arising

The Chair outlined four matters arising from the previous meeting, all of which have been resolved.

7. Update on Programme Implementation

The DPER representative thanked the SEUPB and project staff for their ongoing work on the Programmes, and welcomed the full commitment recorded, and the approach to monitoring potential underspend.

The DPER representative also asked that the Department's thanks to the EU Commission is recorded, for their ongoing support of the PEACE IV and PEACE PLUS Programmes.

The NILGA/UUP representative and the NILGA/SDLP representative queried delays in payments to Local Authorities, as conveyed to them in recent months by Local Authorities in their roles as Councillors.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments. While unable to comment on specific cases, **the Chair** assured the Members of the robustness of the verification and review systems around the claims process.

The MA Director described various factors which may contribute to delays in processing claims, a number of which would be addressed in the Implementation Update presentation.

The MA Director welcomed correspondence from any Local Authorities experiencing cash flow difficulties, which will be processed and answered promptly, and explained the options for advances in place for Partners experiencing cash flow issues.

The DoF representative echoed DPER comments, commending the full commitment of the Programme and effective monitoring around expenditure and N+3 targets. The representative spoke of the progress made at a Steering Committee meeting the previous day, and introduced himself to the new EU Desk Officer.

In addition, **the DoF representative** stated the Department's commitment to the timely implementation of the PEACE PLUS Programme.

The MA Director introduced the Programme Implementation paper and provided a detailed presentation, making the following main points:

- The PEACE IV Annual Implementation Report (AIR) and Performance Framework have been approved by the EU Commission;
- A Mid Term Evaluation Conference, which covered the Children and Young People and Shared Spaces and Services objectives, took place in Belfast on 05 and 06 November 2019, facilitating 170 attendees across two days;
- The Shared Education impact evaluation is underway, with the first report due in early 2020;
- Assessment of an additional proposal for €1.8m under Objective 3.3; Victims and Survivors is currently awaiting departmental approval prior to submission to Steering Committee;
- The PEACE Platform contract has been awarded to a consortium of SJC Consulting and Primodi; **Sarah McCarthy (SJC Consulting)**, will present an update later in the agenda;
- A new version of the eMS went live on 16th October, incorporating an improved performance threshold and a redesign of the modification workflow;
- Article 27 audits are ongoing, with the second semester concluding at the end of November 2019;
- Internal Audit are due to complete their activity by the end of 2019;
- Page 5 of the implementation paper features a revised format for presenting data, which mirrors how data is presented on SFC, and includes public match and private match funding;
- **The MA Director** explained various factors and inaccuracies which may contribute to delays in processing Local Authority claims, and the SEUPB's procedure in addressing each case on an individual basis. **The MA Director** encouraged Local Authorities to contact the SEUPB directly with any concerns;
- **The MA Director** outlined a forecasted overachievement of the N+3 targets by around €19million by the end of 2019;
- Member States have agreed the prudent approach of overcommitting the Programme by up to 5%. Managing Authority is currently reviewing overcommitment options and will submit a paper to Member States the following week;
- **The MA Director** outlined a number of identified training needs, and the appointment of Think People Consulting in conducting a review of SEUPB training material, and;

- **The MA Director** provided an overview of the Implementation Evaluation and three Impact Evaluations. The third and final implementation evaluation is due for completion at the end of June 2020, and an update will be provided at the next PMC meeting. In addition, invitations to all evaluation conferences will be extended to PMC Members.

**AP 3: Managing Authority to submit overcommitment paper to Member States,
week commencing 18 November**

The NILGA/UUP representative made further queries on payments to Local Authorities. In response, **the MA Director** suggested convening a meeting through NILGA in the coming weeks, in order to discuss and resolve the issues raised.

The CBI representative outlined his experience in assessing Local Authority applications for funding in his role on the SEUPB Steering Committee, and the initial delays.

The Chair welcomed the input from members, and outlined steps taken in regular meetings with Local Authority Project Managers, and cash advance options in place for all partners, to mitigate the effects of delays.

The Chair thanked the PMC Members for their comments and observations, and invited **the JS Director** to provide a presentation on implementation by thematic area.

Following **the JS Director's** presentation, the Monitoring Committee made the following comments;

- **The Wheel representative** requested further detail on the social enterprise application, and encouraged the return of feedback to the unsuccessful applicant(s);
- **The NWRA representative** stated a personal interest in the Riverine project and requested further information on its progress, and;
- **The NILGA/UUP representative** asked when the Riverine project was approved and what progress has been made on construction.

The following responses were provided;

- **The JS Director** stated only one application, with multiple partners, was received under the €1 million Social Enterprise call. Following an assessment with technical expertise, the application did not meet the required thresholds and was rejected by

Steering Committee. A re-release of the call is under discussion with Member States;

- The Riverine project was approved in early 2019, work is in line with schedule and the SEUPB is in regular contact with the Lead Partner and progressing pre-commencement conditions, and;
- The SEUPB will report on the progress of Riverine's construction activity at the next Monitoring Committee meeting;

The Monitoring Committee:

- Noted the progress that has been made in the implementation of the Programme.

8. Communications Update

The Communications Manager provided a presentation which outlined upcoming project launches, the positive or neutral tone of media coverage surrounding the Programme and SEUPB's engagement with stakeholders over social media.

The IHREC representative requested a definition of the Communication Strategy's target audience, and received a response from **the Communications Manager**.

The Monitoring Committee;

- **Noted** the communications activity since the last Programme Monitoring Committee meeting, and;
- **Noted** progress in implementation of the Communications Strategy.

9. PEACE PLUS Update

The Chair introduced the PEACE PLUS update, outlining the evolving process and draft language, and the merits of the previous week's Programme Development Steering Group (PDSG) meeting.

The MA Director provided a presentation detailing progress in preparing for the PEACE PLUS Programme.

The Chair made the following points;

- The PEACE PLUS Programme consists of five objectives, with peace and reconciliation activity under Programme Objective 4;
- INTERREG activity will fall under one or more of the five objectives, and will support the prosperity and stability of the region wider cross-border economic and territorial development, and;
- **The Chair** described the complex and significant workload in designing the Programme under the Objectives.

The EU Commission Desk Officer made the following comments;

- Encouraged the SEUPB to maintain contact with the EU Commission in designing the PEACE PLUS Programme, before the formal submission of the new Cooperation Programme, to give it the best chance of a timely approval;
- Discussed the process within the Commission when assessing Cooperation Programme documents;
- Outlined the EU Commission's nuanced approach when assessing PEACE PLUS, with confidence in the SEUPB to identify and appropriately address the issues in their region, and the high importance of engaging with all the relevant stakeholders and;
- Emphasised that PEACE PLUS should not be seen as two Programmes within one framework, rather one Programme that contributes to a peaceful and prosperous society through tackling both peace-building and socio-economic objectives. Observed the existing complementarity of the current PEACE and INTEREG programmes in contributing to the peace and stability of the region and advised that this complementarity be harnessed for the PEACE PLUS programme.

The Chair thanked **the EU Commission Desk Officer** for their comments, and spoke of the SEUPB's engagement with the Social Enterprise Community NI, to identify innovative links between community regeneration and community reconciliation.

Monitoring Committee members made the following comments;

- Highlighted a current piece of DfE and OECD mapping work on socio economic challenges and lifelong learning in terms of the PEACE PLUS Programme's complementarity;
- Welcomed the regulatory provision for a PEACE PLUS Programme, and asked for greater detail on developing a funding package;

- Commended the flexibility of the Programme and its wide impact, from job creation for young people to education and sustaining communities and the effect on suicide rates.

The Chair stated the PEACE PLUS Programme is a distinct Programme which will not be used to address gaps in Government funding or overlap with other funding Programmes, and will be well evidenced.

With regard to the funding package, **the Chair** stated that Member State budgets have not yet been formally approved however, the current value represents a Programme in excess of €600m, greater than the current value of the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes combined.

The DPER representative welcomed the Commission's commitment to PEACE PLUS, against considerable cutbacks in Member States departments, and looked forward to further engagement with the Programme Development Steering Group.

The Monitoring Committee;

- Noted progress in designing and implementing the PEACE PLUS Programme

10. PEACE Platform Update – SJC Consultancy

The Chair welcomed **Sarah McCarthy of SJC Consultancy and James Gheel of Primodi Ltd**, who provided a presentation detailing progress in designing and implementing the PEACE Platform.

The Chair welcomed progress on the Peace Platform and its potential as a resource for organisations across Europe, and stated the presentation and related links will be shared with the Monitoring Committee.

Sarah McCarthy outlined a working timeframe as follows and welcomed SEUPB assistance;

- Research will progress towards conclusion by the end of March 2020
- Technical build to commence in January 2020

AP 3: Link to be sent to PMC Members
AP 4: Presentations to be sent to PMC Members

11. AOB

The Chair informed the Monitoring Committee that **Mark Feeney, Managing Authority Director**, is leaving the organisation after 2.5 years for a new role. She recorded her thanks to Mark for his work on the Programmes.

Date of next meeting

The Chair stated the next meeting will take place in Derry- Londonderry in Spring 2020, and concluded the meeting.

ANNEX I

**ACTION POINTS/ISSUES OF CLARIFICATION
ARISING FROM MONITORING COMMITTEE
Thursday 14 November 2019, NICVA Offices, Belfast**

ACTION POINTS

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Action Point</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
2	1	Project presentations and links to be sent to PMC Members following meeting	MA
7	2	Managing Authority to submit overcommitment paper to Member States, week commencing 18 November	MA
10	3	Link within Peace Platform presentation to be sent to PMC Members	MA
10	4	Peace Platform presentations to be sent to PMC Members	MA

ANNEX II

**Attendance – PEACE IV Programme Monitoring Committee, 14 November 2019,
NICVA Offices, Duncairn Gardens, Belfast**

Chair

Gina McIntyre SEUPB

Members

Wesley Aston	Ulster Farmers' Union
Anne Marie Caulfield	Department for Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER)
Ivan Cooper	The Wheel
Pamela Dooley	ICTU NI
Damian Duffy	CBI
Hazel Francey	Equality Commission NI
Jacqueline Healey	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
Dominic McCullough	Department of Finance NI
Mark Feeney	Managing Authority, SEUPB
Hazel Francey	The Equality Commission NI
Ruth Gallagher	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
Leanne Massey	Joint Secretariat, SEUPB
Paddy McGinn	Pobal
Seamus McAleavey	NICVA
Cllr Frank McBrearty	NWRA
Cllr Enda McGloin	NWRA
Clr Jim McKeever	NILGA/ SDLP
Dr Aedin McLoughlin	the Environmental Pillar
Cllr Jenny Palmer	NILGA/ UUP
Cllr Paul Robinson	NILGA/ DUP
Paul Sheridan	Head of Finance and Corporate Services, SEUPB
Tim Smith	ICTU Ireland
Emily Smyth	CNCC

Advisors

Paul Boylan	Joint Secretariat, SEUPB
Catherine Clynes	Department for Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER)
Ryan Donaldson	Department of Finance
Donald Ewing	Department for Children and Young People
Deirdre Maloney	DCHPCLG
Marie Matthews	the Executive Office
John McCandless	Communications, SEUPB
Declan McGarrigle	SEUPB
Ian McKenna	Department of Education and Skills
Tony McKibben	Department for Communities (DfC)
Carol Morrow	The Executive Office
Michael Power	NISRA
Rosie Smyth	Department of Rural and Community Development
Stefan Welin	European Commission
John Williamson	Department of Education

Presenters

Emma Dargan	Victims and Survivors Service
James Gheel	Primodi Ltd
Sarah McCarthy	SJC Consultancy
Heather Lindsay	TWN
Amanda McCauley	TWN

Observers

Joanne Breen	The Executive Office
David Clark	JS, SEUPB
Meadhbh Devilly	Department of Education and Skills
Helen Donaldson	JS, SEUPB
Tanya Hamilton	The Executive Office
Phil Heaton	MA, SEUPB
Andrew Johnston	Department for Communities
Peter Molloy	DPER
Sean McAteer	NSMC
Patricia McCann	Office of the NI Executive in Brussels

Emer McGeough

NSMC

Catherine Powell

Department for the Economy

Secretariat (SEUPB)

Tara McCormick

Managing Authority (minutes)

Apologies

Frank Duffy

Department of Finance

Cllr Frances Burton

NILGA/ DUP

Gerry Doyle

NWRA

Michael D'Arcy

IBEC

Tom Lavin

Irish Rural Link

Jim Wilkinson

Department for the Economy

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ANNEX III

Glossary of acronyms used in the minutes:

AIR	Annual Implementation Report
CNCC	Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside
CPD	Central Procurement Directorate (Northern Ireland)
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DfE	Department for the Economy
DHPCLG	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
DOF	Department of Finance (Northern Ireland)
DJEI	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
DoH	Department of Health NI
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
EMRA	Eastern & Midland Regional Authority
eMS	Electronic Monitoring System
ESG	Evaluation Steering Group
EC	European Commission
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
NICVA	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
NILGA	Northern Ireland Local Government Association

NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NSMC	North South Ministerial Council
NWRA	Northern Western Regional Assembly
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development NI
SEUPB	Special European Union Programmes Body
JS	Joint Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
VSS	The Victims and Survivors Service

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