

IRELAND WALES OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME
ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2007

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Executive Summary

1. This is the first Annual Implementation Report (AIR) for the Ireland/Wales INTERREG IVA Programme 2007-2013, covering the calendar year 2007. AIRs are central to the process of reviewing programme performance and provide an annual opportunity to take stock of progress.

The Programme, which supports joint projects, aims to promote the sustainable development of the programme area through an integrated approach to economic, social, environmental and technological development.

The total budget is €70m, including €52m in ERDF grant with the balance made up of match funding from Welsh and Irish partnership interests.

The main Priorities and Themes are:

Priority 1: Knowledge, Innovation and Skills for Growth

Priority 2: Climate Change and Sustainable Regeneration

A third Priority, Technical Assistance, will support effective and transparent management of the Programme, including publicity, research and evaluation.

Two cross-cutting themes underpin the whole Programme, namely the promotion of equal opportunities and sustainable development.

On September 17th 2007 the European Commission approved the Ireland Wales Programme (Decision C (2007) 4231). The Programme was the first Cross Border Territorial Cooperation Programme to be approved in the EU 27.

The first Programme Monitoring Committee meeting took place on the 19th of October 2007

The report is formatted along lines recommended by the Commission.

1. Summary Details

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	Objective Concerned: Territorial Cooperation
	Eligible area concerned: South West Wales, Isle of Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Gwynedd, Dublin, Mid East, South East – All NUTS III areas
	Programming period: 2007-2013
	Programme number (CCI): 2007CB163PO062
	Programme Title: Ireland Wales Programme
ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT	Reporting Year: 2007
	Date of approval of the Annual Report by the Monitoring Committee: June 13 th 2008

2. Overview of the Implementation of the Operational Programme

2.1 Achievement and Analysis of Progress

- **Information on the physical progress of the Operational Programme:**

The Programme has three Priorities and is worth over €70.3 million with more than €52 million of that available in ERDF grant support.

The first two Priorities are broken down into themes which will focus the investment in specific areas.

Priority 1 – Knowledge, Innovation and Skills for Growth (Total Budget €39.6 million)

Theme 1 – Innovation and Competitiveness

Theme 2 – Skills for Competitiveness and Employment Integration

Priority 2 – Climate Change and Sustainable Regeneration (Total Budget €26.4 million)

Theme 1 – Climate Change and Sustainable Development

Theme 2 – Sustainable Regeneration of Communities

Priority 3 – Technical Assistance (Total Budget €4.2 million)

The Operational Programme was approved by the European Commission on September 17th 2007. The first meeting of the Programme Monitoring Committee took place in the offices of the Managing Authority on October 19th 2007 where the Committee agreed their own rules of procedure; the JTS work programme and the selection criteria for the programme.

The approval of the selection criteria allowed the JTS to open the first call for proposals under Priorities 1 and 2 of the Operational Programme. This happened on

November 16th 2007 and the call closed on January 18th 2008. Fifteen applications for funding were received by the deadline. The first Steering Committees then took place on April 30th and May 1st.

As a result, no projects were selected for grant support in the calendar year 2007.

There was progress with Priority 3 of the Programme in 2007. The main activity was the establishment of the JTS close to the headquarters of the new Managing Authority. This concentrated on completing and submitting the draft Operational Programme for approval and putting structures in place to allow the programme run effectively.

Output and Result Indicators

The zero figures reflect the fact that no projects were approved under Priorities 1 and 2 in 2007. Figures showing progress against targets can be expected to be available for the 2008 AIR.

*Priority 1 Theme 1: Innovation and Competitiveness

Output Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of joint projects aimed at promoting and developing innovation in SMEs including linkages with HE/FE institutions	0	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of joint projects aimed at promoting and developing entrepreneurship and the development of new businesses including cross border business clusters 	0	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of SMEs assisted 	0	300

Result Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new SMEs created 	0	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new products/processes developed 	0	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of gross direct new jobs created 	0	20

*Priority 1 Theme 2: Skills For Competitiveness And Employment Integration

Output Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of collaborative training projects that address the skills needs of SMEs and industry in the cross border region	0	9
Number of joint projects aimed at improving and enhancing systems of learning and workforce development	0	4
Number of joint projects aimed at providing access to training and education for immigrants and disadvantaged groups	0	5
Number of beneficiaries undertaking cross border training courses/modules	0	500

Result Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of beneficiaries receiving certified qualifications	0	350

*Priority 2 Theme 1: Climate Change and Sustainable Development

Output Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of cross border projects focusing on awareness raising or responding to challenge of climate change	0	9
Number of collaborative projects protecting and/or enhancing the natural environment.	0	9

Result Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of new cross-border links established	0	9
No. of measures implemented which react to the challenge of climate change	0	9
No. of enhancements undertaken	0	9
No. of projects disseminating results to stakeholders and/or communities or reports published	0	9

*Priority 2 Theme 2: Sustainable Regeneration of Communities

Output Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of joint projects focusing on sustainable community regeneration action.	0	14

Result Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of new community, social enterprise or cultural links established	0	7
Number of new measures implemented	0	14
Number of gross direct new jobs created	0	6

Priority 3: Technical Assistance

	End 2007	Final Target
Number of gross direct jobs created	6	10
Establishment of Joint Technical Secretariat	1	1
Establishment of project database	0	1
Number of Publicity Events	1	14
Number of newsletters produced	0	6
Number of evaluations and studies carried out	1	3
Establishment of Programme Website	1	1

- **Financial Information (all in euro)**

Expenditure paid out by the beneficiaries included in payment claims sent to the Managing Authority – not applicable as no projects were approved in 2007

The total payments received from the Commission and quantification of the financial indicators referred to in Article 66(2) - In accordance with Article 82 of the General Regulation, an advance payment (2% of the total amount: €1.05M) was forwarded from the Commission in October 2007.

Expenditure paid out by the body responsible for making payments to the beneficiaries – not applicable as no projects were approved in 2007

Financial Indicators

*Priority axes by source of funding (in euros) – as per the OP

						For information	
	Community Funding (a)	National Public funding (b)	National private funding (c)	Total funding (d)=(a)+(b)+(c)	Co-financing rate (e)=(a)/(d)	EIB contributions	Other funding ¹
Priority Axis 1 Knowledge, Innovation & Skills for Growth	29,720,147	9,906,716	-	39,626,863	75%		1,000,000
Priority Axis 2 Climate Change & Sustainable Regeneration	19,813,431	6,604,477	-	26,417,908	75%		1,000,000
Priority Axis 3 Technical Assistance	3,161,717	1,053,906	-	4,215,623	75%		-
TOTAL	52,695,295	17,565,099	-	70,260,394	75%		2,000,000

*Situation at the end of 2007

						For information	
	Community Funding (a)	National Public funding (b)	National private funding (c)	Total funding (d)=(a)+(b)+(c)	Co-financing rate (e)=(a)/(d)	EIB contributions	Other funding ²
Priority Axis 1 Knowledge, Innovation & Skills for Growth			-				
Priority Axis 2 Climate Change & Sustainable Regeneration			-				
Priority Axis 3 Technical Assistance	174,295.74	136,076.08	-	310,371.82	56.16%		-
TOTAL			-				

- **Information about the breakdown of the use of the funds**

Priority	Code Dimension 1 Priority and Theme	Code Dimension 2 Form of Finance	Code Dimension 3 Territory	Code Dimension 4 Economic Activity	Code Dimension 5 Location	Community Contribution
1						
2						
3	85	01	08	00	IE 024	174,295.74
TOTAL						174,295.74

The data for Priorities 1 and 2 are blank due to the fact that the programme was approved in September 2007 and no projects were approved for funding under these Priorities.

The data for Priority 3 relates to Technical Assistance which covers the costs for the establishment of the Joint Technical Secretariat.

- **Assistance by target groups**

Not applicable – Target groups for funding are referred to in Chapter 4 of the Operational Programme.

- **Assistance repaid or reused**

Not applicable

- **Qualitative analysis**

The main focus of activity in 2007 was the drafting and completion of the Operational Programme for submission to the Commission and securing final approval from them. The focus then switched towards recruiting staff for the JTS and putting the structures in place to ensure that the programme could work effectively once approval was granted by the Commission.

In relation to the Cross Cutting Themes of Equal Opportunities and Sustainable Development, specialist advisors in the area were appointed to the Programme Monitoring Committee and will advise the committee on how best to integrate the themes into the operation of the programme.

The same advisors were also appointed to the Programme Steering Committees and will be in a position to advise both the committees and the projects, where appropriate, on how to enhance their treatment of these themes.

2.2 Information about compliance with Community law

The Programme did not encounter problems regarding compliance with Community law.

2.3 Significant problems encountered and measure taken to overcome them

The programme team did not encounter significant problems in the implementation of the programme at this stage.

2.4 Changes in the context of the operational programme implementation

There are no changes in the context of the operational programme implementation at this stage.

2.5 Substantial modification under Article 57 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006

Not applicable

2.6 Complementarity with other instruments

Formal and informal processes to ensure complementarity with other instruments will be fully developed in 2008. However it should be noted that due to the requirements for joint cross border programmes and the employment of the Lead Partner Principle, activities funded under this programme should not duplicate, but rather complement the efforts under the other mono-funded programmes being implemented at member state level.

2.7 Monitoring Arrangements

- **Monitoring**

The Programme Monitoring Committee and the Managing Authority has responsibility for monitoring of the Operational Programme.

Monitoring information will be collected via Progress Report and Payment Claim Forms which will be issued to successful projects on a six monthly basis.

The information will be securely stored on a central programme database. Contracts for the development of the database were signed in December 2007 and will be fully operational in 2008.

Following the approval of the European Commission in September 2007, the Programme Monitoring Committee was established in October 2007.

A description of the Committee's role and functions is at **Annex 3**, together with a copy of its rules of procedure at **Annex 4** and a list of members at **Annex 5**.

The first meeting took place in the Regional Assembly's Offices on October 19th 2007.

The main outcomes of the meeting were as follows

- The Committee agreed its own operating rules of procedure
- The Committee approved the Selection Criteria
- The Committee approved the JTS work programme
- The Committee approved the broad structure of the Steering Committees

- **Evaluation**

An Ex Ante Evaluation of the Operational Programme was carried out in accordance with Article 48 of the General Regulation. A copy of this is available on the programme website www.irelandwales.ie.

All EU Structural Funds Programmes are subject to ex-ante, on-going and ex-post evaluation to gauge the effectiveness of the Programmes and to allow adjustments to be made to the implementation of Programmes if deemed necessary. Evaluations will cover factors contributing to the success or failure of implementation and the achievements and results, including their sustainability.

2.8 National performance reserve (where applicable)

Not applicable under this programme

2.9 Financial Management and Control

- **Control missions from the European Union**

There were no control missions from the European Union in 2007.

3. Implementation by Priority

3.1 Priority 1 – Knowledge Innovation and Skills for Growth

The main focus of this priority will be on how the cross border region can make a real contribution towards delivering on the objectives of the revised Lisbon Agenda of creating more and better jobs and creating an environment that can foster innovation and the knowledge economy. It is clear that this is an area that is a high priority for both parts of the cross border region as well as the EU.

It is broken down into two related themes.

Theme 1 – Innovation and Competitiveness

Theme 2 – Skills for Competitiveness and Employment Integration

3.1.1 Achievement of Targets and Analysis of Progress

- **Information on the physical and financial progress of the Priority**

There was no physical or financial progress in this Priority due to the fact that the first call for proposals only closed in January 2008 and the first Steering Committee meeting did not take place until April 30th 2008.

*Priority 1 Theme 1: Innovation and Competitiveness

Output Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of joint projects aimed at promoting and developing innovation in SMEs including linkages with HE/FE institutions	0	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of joint projects aimed at promoting and developing entrepreneurship and the development of new businesses including cross border business clusters 	0	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of SMEs assisted 	0	300

Result Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new SMEs created 	0	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new products/processes developed 	0	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of gross direct new jobs created 	0	20

*Priority 1 Theme 2: Skills For Competitiveness And Employment Integration

Output Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of collaborative training projects that address the skills needs of SMEs and industry in the cross border region	0	9
Number of joint projects aimed at improving and enhancing systems of learning and workforce development	0	4
Number of joint projects aimed at providing access to training and education for immigrants and disadvantaged groups	0	5
Number of beneficiaries undertaking cross border training courses/modules	0	500

Result Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of beneficiaries receiving certified qualifications	0	350

- **Qualitative Analysis**

No analysis can be provided at this time due to the fact that the first call for proposals only closed in January 2008 and the first Steering Committee meeting did not take place until May 1st 2008.

3.1.2 Significant problems encountered and measure taken to overcome them

There were no significant problems encountered at this stage.

3.2 Priority 2 – Climate Change and Sustainable Regeneration

The main focus of this priority will be on how the cross border region can address the challenges of the Gothenburg agenda and make a real contribution towards building a more sustainable future for the region. Both parts of the region face common challenges in terms of climate change and sustainable development and also in relation to the regeneration of communities.

It is broken down into two related themes.

Theme 1 – Climate Change and Sustainable Development

Theme 2 – Sustainable Regeneration of Communities

3.2.1 Achievement of Targets and Analysis of Progress

- **Information on the physical and financial progress of the Priority**

There was no physical or financial progress in this Priority due to the fact that the first call for proposals only closed in January 2008 and the first Steering Committee meeting did not take place until April 30th 2008.

*Priority 2 Theme 1: Climate Change and Sustainable Development

Output Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of cross border projects focusing on awareness raising or responding to challenge of climate change	0	9
Number of collaborative projects protecting and/or enhancing the natural environment.	0	9

Result Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of new cross-border links established	0	9
No. of measures implemented which react to the challenge of climate change	0	9
No. of enhancements undertaken	0	9
No. of projects disseminating results to stakeholders and/or communities or reports published	0	9

*Priority 2 Theme 2: Sustainable Regeneration of Communities

Output Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of joint projects focusing on sustainable community regeneration action.	0	14

Result Indicators	End 2007	Final Target
Number of new community, social enterprise or cultural links established	0	7
Number of new measures implemented	0	14
Number of gross direct new jobs created	0	6

- **Qualitative Analysis**

No analysis can be provided at this time due to the fact that the first call for proposals only closed in January 2008 and the first Steering Committee meeting did not take place until May 1st 2008.

3.2.2 Significant problems encountered and measure taken to overcome them

There were no significant problems encountered at this stage.

3.3 Priority 3 – Technical Assistance

The overall objective of the Priority is to support the management, evaluation and monitoring of the Operational Programme.

Under this Theme the ERDF may, subject to the limits set down in Article 46 (1) (b), support areas such as preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities of the Operational Programme together with activities to reinforce the administrative capacity for implementing the Fund.

3.3.1 Achievement of Targets and Analysis of Progress

- Information on the physical and financial progress of the Priority

Indicators for Priority 3	End 2007	Final Target
Number of gross direct jobs created	6	10
Establishment of Joint Technical Secretariat	1	1
Establishment of project database	0	1
Number of Publicity Events	1	14
Number of newsletters produced	0	6
Number of evaluations and studies carried out	1	3
Establishment of Programme Website	1	1

Financial Progress of Priority 3 as at December 31st 2007

	Community Funding (a)	National Public funding (b)	National private funding (c)	Total funding (d)=(a)+(b)+(c)	Co-financing rate (e)=(a)/(d)	For information	
						EIB contributions	Other funding ³
Priority Axis 1 Knowledge, Innovation & Skills for Growth			-				
Priority Axis 2 Climate Change & Sustainable Regeneration			-				
Priority Axis 3 Technical Assistance	174,295.74	136,076.08	-	310,371.82	56.16%		-
TOTAL			-				

- **Qualitative Analysis**

The Programme made notable progress in meeting its targets for the Technical Assistance Priority in 2007.

The Joint Technical Secretariat was established close to the headquarters of the Managing Authority. The recruitment of staff was undertaken by the Managing Authority and six of the eight positions were filled by the end of 2007 with the remainder to follow in 2008.

Preparatory work regarding the design and construction of the project database started in 2007. Contracts were signed with the preferred provider in December 2007 and the database should be fully operational during the second half of 2008.

The main publicity event was the joint programme launch in Llandudno while the ex ante evaluation was completed in February 2007. Finally the programme website went live on Friday November 16th, the same day as the launch of the first call for proposals.

3.3.2 Significant problems encountered and measure taken to overcome them

The Programme encountered no significant problems in implementing Priority 3, Technical Assistance.

4: Major Projects

As per Chapter 8.7, page 91 of the Operational Programme document there are no major projects envisaged under this programme.

5: Technical Assistance

The principal activity under the Technical Assistance Priority in 2007 relates to the establishment of the Joint Technical Secretariat. This was established on January 1st 2007 with an approved staff complement of 8 people at its offices in Waterford, Ireland along with a Contact Office in the Welsh Assembly Government in Merthyr Tydfil. This reverses the operating arrangements that existed under the Ireland Wales INTERREG IIIA Programme. The structures were kept the same as they worked effectively under the IIIA Programme.

By the end of 2007 6 people had been appointed in Waterford along with the Contact Officer in Wales. The remaining staff began working with the JTS in early 2008.

The work of the JTS concentrated firstly on finalising and submitting the Operational Programme to the Commission for the March 6th deadline. The document was submitted on time via the SFC system.

For the remainder of the year detailed preparatory work was undertaken in order to put the structures in place to ensure that the programme could function effectively once formal approval was received from the Commission.

This was assisted by a series of joint meetings between the Managing Authority and the Welsh Assembly Government, meetings took place in March, May, June and August with venues alternating between Ireland and Wales. These meetings reinforced the well established partnership between both organisations.

Negotiations also took place with the Commission with a view towards agreeing the final content of the Operational Programme. Following detailed discussions the final version was submitted via SFC to the Commission on July 23rd 2007. The formal approval process was launched on August 6th with final approval being received on September 17th. The speed with which the approval was reached was as a result of an effective and constructive working relationship between the programme partnership and the Commission services.

The first meeting of the Programme Monitoring Committee took place on October 19th 2007 in Waterford and the approval of the Selection Criteria by the PMC allowed the JTS to complete preparations for the first call for proposals which was launched on November 16th 2008. This was accompanied by a Press Release and large advertising notices in the main national news papers in Ireland.

6: Information and Publicity

There have been a series of initiatives in 2007 to publicise the Ireland Wales programme.

As part of the public consultation process during the development of the programme there were a series of public meetings which were arranged in order to provide information on its content and to allow feedback to the general public.

The meetings took place in Dublin on January 19th, Pembroke Dock on January 29th, Llanwrst on January 30th and Aberystwyth on February 1st. There was a good attendance at each event and it led to the submission of a number of written comments which were analysed by the Programme Development Team.

As per the requirements of Article 2 of the Implementation Regulation the Managing Authority began drawing up a Communications Plan for submission to the Commission by January 16th 2008.

The aims and objectives of the plan are as follows:

- To highlight the role of Community funding in facilitating cross border cooperation between Ireland and Wales and the real benefits that it brings to local communities.
- To promote the benefits and added value of co-operation to the general public in its widest sense by highlighting project results and outputs and their European dimension.

- To help generate new partnerships by increasing awareness amongst potential beneficiaries on the funding opportunities offered by the Ireland Wales Programme.
- To provide potential beneficiaries and stakeholders with accurate and reliable information to stimulate high quality applications.
- To design programme information in a transparent and easy to read fashion so that it can be easily understood by potential beneficiaries and stakeholders.
- To raise the profile of cross border co-operation within national and regional administrative systems.
- To encourage active dissemination of projects and programme results to professionals and political stakeholders.

***The indicators for the Communications Plan are as follows:**

	Number	Objective	Message	Audience	Timeframe	Budget
Programme Website	1	To provide clear and useful information on how to access funds and how to manage a successful project; To provide a collaborative platform which centralises coherent information on the Programme	It is easy to find information about this Programme; this website is clear and easy to use, with the information you need no more than three clicks away.	All	Aug 2007 to Nov 2007	1. In house staff costs (SEREG) 2. Software costs 3. Hardware costs 4. Domain name purchase costs 5. Hosting Costs
Programme Logo	1	Visual identity; To provide a clear and instant visual recognition of Programme communication tools and documents; to increase visibility	Dynamic, efficient, European, cross border, useful, modern	All	Aug 2007 to Nov 2007	1. In house staff costs (WEFO & SEREG) 2. Graphic design costs (€)
Plaques	Depends on number of projects	Visual identity: To clearly demonstrate the contribution of the ERDF to the activity being funded.	Positive contribution of EU funds to the programme area and the real difference it makes to communities	Beneficiaries and the general public	Life of the programme	Production costs with supplier.
Publications						
Newsletters	12	To keep in touch with Projects on a regular basis; to inform audiences on Programme developments and short-term activities	A lot going on in the Programme; projects are doing great things	Beneficiaries; internal audiences.	Two per year if printed. More often if digital version.	1. In house staff costs (SEREG & WEFO) 2. Printing costs 3. Graphic design costs
Project Book	1	To display project results	Funds have been well spent,	Beneficiaries, EU decision makers,	Once, towards the	1. In house staff costs

		and achievements	results are clear and transparent	national and regional decision makers, potential beneficiaries for next Programme.	mid to end of the Programme	2. Graphic design costs 3. printing costs 4. distribution costs
Evaluations and Studies	1	To inform on procedures, proceedings and results	Programme is transparent	Institutions (Internal - MA, CA, EU, MS) (External – Project Partners)	Throughout the Programme	1. in house staff costs 2. Printing costs
Publicity Events	14	To provide opportunities to meet and form new partnerships, to show results of the programme	Show achievements of the Ireland Wales Programme, show that assistance is available	Beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries, politicians and key decision makers	Two per year	1. In house staff costs 2. Venue costs 3. Marketing costs 4. T & S costs

A new programme website has also been developed. It's address is www.irelandwales.ie and contains comprehensive information about the Programme, including information for applicants, PMC proceedings, events and project details. It was developed internally by the Managing Authority and has been designed to be simple, transparent and easily accessible. This will be further developed and enhanced over time.

The list of beneficiaries, the names of operations and the amount of public funding allocated to operations will be published on www.irelandwales.ie and will be updated when required.

The programme was formally launched at a major event in Llandudno, Wales on December 7th 2007. It was launched by Mr Ieuan Wyn Jones, the Deputy First Minister for Wales and Mr Colm Mc Grady the Consul General of Ireland in Wales. It was attended by over 200 people and was highly effective in terms of providing information regarding the opportunities that will be available under the new Operational Programme.

A seminar promoting all Territorial Cooperation Programmes involving Ireland took place in Dublin on October 23rd 2007. It was attended by over 200 people and the Ireland Wales Programme was prominently featured and promoted on the day.

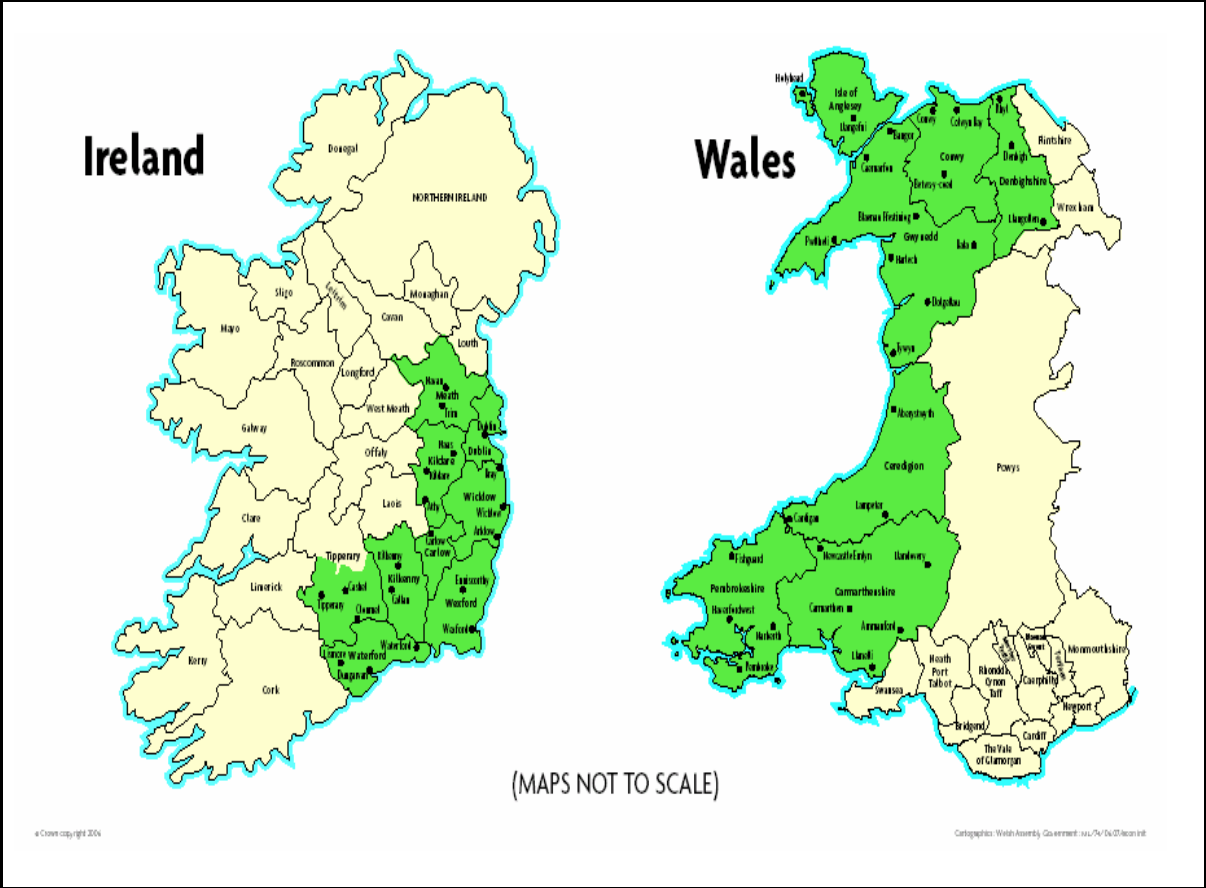
A new programme logo was also developed jointly by the Managing Authority and the Welsh Assembly Government as featured below. This will form part of the publicity requirements for each project and feature prominently on all programme literature and promotional material.



Annex 1

Map of the Programme Area

FIGURE 1 - MAP OF THE IRELAND-WALES CROSS BORDER REGION



ANNEX 2

Commission Decision Letter

EN



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 17/IX/2007
C (2007) 4231 final

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

COMMISSION DECISION

of 17/IX/2007

adopting the operational programme "Ireland-Wales" for Community structural assistance from the European Regional Development Fund under the European territorial cooperation objective in Ireland and the United Kingdom

CCI 2007CB163PO062

(ONLY THE ENGLISH TEXT IS AUTHENTIC)

COMMISSION DECISION

of 17/IX/2007

adopting the operational programme "Ireland-Wales" for Community structural assistance from the European Regional Development Fund under the European territorial cooperation objective in Ireland and the United Kingdom

CCI 2007CB163PO062

(ONLY THE ENGLISH TEXT IS AUTHENTIC)

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999⁴ and in particular Article 32(5) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) On 6 March 2007, Ireland on behalf of Ireland and the United Kingdom submitted to the Commission a proposal for an operational programme for cross-border cooperation called "Ireland-Wales" in those Member States. At the request of the Commission, Ireland submitted additional information on 23 July 2007.
- (2) The operational programme has been drawn up by the Member States participating in the programme within the framework of the partnership referred to in Article 11 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.
- (3) The Commission has appraised the proposed operational programme and considers that it contributes to the achievement of the objectives set out in Council Decision 2006/702/EC of 6 October 2006 on Community strategic guidelines on cohesion⁵.
- (4) Pursuant to Article 12(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1783/1999⁶, the operational programme contains a list of areas within the programme area. The list of areas under the operational programme are covered as eligible by Annex I of Commission Decision 2006/769/EC of 31 October 2006 drawing up the list of regions and areas eligible for funding from the European Regional Development

⁴ OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 25. Regulation as amended by Council Regulation (EC) No 1989/2006 (OJ L 411, 30.12.2006, p. 6).

⁵ OJ L 291, 21.10.2006, p. 11.

⁶ OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 1.

Fund under the cross-border and transnational strands of the European territorial cooperation objective for the period 2007 to 2013⁷.

- (5) Pursuant to Article 12(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006, in addition to the list of eligible areas, the operational programme contains a list of NUTS level 3 regions adjacent to these eligible areas, as referred to in Article 21(1) of that Regulation; it is necessary to establish the list of those flexibility areas, which have been duly justified.
- (6) The proposal for an operational programme contains all the components referred to in Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006, with the exception of an indicative list of major projects referred to under paragraph 9 of that Article, as it is not expected that major projects will be submitted under this operational programme. In particular the proposal designates a single managing authority, a single certifying authority, a single audit authority and a joint technical secretariat.
- (7) It is appropriate to fix the maximum rate and the maximum amount of the contribution from the Funds for the operational programme and each priority axis, as referred to in Article 53(6) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.
- (8) Aid granted under the operational programme should comply with the State aid rules that are in force and any other applicable provision of Community law.
- (9) The proposed operational programme should therefore be adopted,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The operational programme "Ireland-Wales" for Community structural assistance under the European territorial cooperation objective in Ireland and the United Kingdom for the programming period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013 as set out in Annex I and containing the following priority axes is hereby adopted:

- (1) "Knowledge, Innovation and Skill for Growth";
- (2) "Climate Change and Sustainable Regeneration"; and
- (3) "Technical Assistance".

Article 2

Expenditure actually paid under the operational programme shall be eligible from 1 January 2007.

Article 3

1. The programme referred to in Article 1 covers the following eligible areas:
 - the NUTS level 3 regions of "Dublin", "Mid-East" and "South-East" in Ireland; and

⁷ OJ L 312, 11.11.2006, p. 47. Decision as amended by Decision 2007/190/EC (OJ L 87, 28.3.2007, p. 16).

- the NUTS level 3 regions of "Isle of Anglesey", "Gwynedd, Conwy and Denbighshire" as well as "South West Wales" in the United Kingdom.
2. Notwithstanding paragraph 1, expenditure incurred in implementing operations or parts of operations up to a limit of 20 % of the amount of the European Regional Development Fund contribution to this operational programme may be financed in the following areas:
- The NUTS level 3 region of "South-West" in Ireland and
 - The NUTS level 3 regions of "Swansea" and "Flintshire and Wrexham" in the United Kingdom.

Article 4

1. The maximum amount of assistance from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) granted under the operational programme, as calculated with reference to the public eligible expenditure, is set at EUR 52 695 295 and the maximum co-financing rate is set at 75 %.
2. The national counterpart of EUR 17 565 099 may be partly met by Community loans from the European Investment Bank and other lending instruments; however, for the time being, no such loans are foreseen.
3. Within the operational programme referred to in paragraph 1 the maximum amount for assistance and the maximum co-financing rate for each priority axis shall be as set out in the second, third and fourth subparagraphs of this paragraph.

The maximum co-financing rate for priority axis 1 "Knowledge, Innovation and Skill for Growth" is set at 75 % and the maximum amount for assistance from the ERDF to that priority axis, as calculated with reference to the total eligible public expenditure, is set at EUR 29 720 147.

The maximum co-financing rate for priority axis 2 "Climate Change and Sustainable Regeneration" is set at 75 % and the maximum amount for assistance from the ERDF to that priority axis, as calculated with reference to the total eligible public expenditure, is set at EUR 19 813 431.

The maximum co-financing rate for priority axis 3 "Technical Assistance" is set at 75 % and the maximum amount for assistance from the ERDF to that priority axis, as calculated with reference to the total eligible public expenditure, is set at EUR 3 161 717.

4. The corresponding financing plan is set out in Annex II.

Article 5

Any public support under the operational programme shall comply with the procedural and substantive State aid rules applicable at the time when the public support is granted.

Article 6

This Decision is addressed to Ireland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Done at Brussels, 17/IX/2007.

For the Commission
Danuta Hübner

Member of the Commission

Annex 3: Programme Monitoring Committee: Role and Functions

Ireland Wales Programme 2007-13 (INTERREG 4A)

Programme Monitoring Committee

Programme Monitoring Committee - Functions

The Programme Monitoring Committee is invited to note the attached list of the Committee's functions, as set out in Chapter 8, page 77 of the Operational Programme Document.

According to Article 65 of the General Regulation; *'The Monitoring Committee shall satisfy itself as to the effectiveness and quality of the implementation of EU co-financed expenditure, in accordance with the following provisions:*

a) it shall consider and approve the criteria for selecting the operations financed within six months of the approval of the operational programme and approve any revision of those criteria in accordance with programming needs;

b) it shall periodically review progress made towards achieving the specific targets of the operational programme on the basis of documents submitted by the Managing Authority;

c) it shall examine the results of implementation, particularly achievement of the targets set for each priority axis and the evaluations referred to in Article 48 (3);

d) it shall consider and approve the annual and final reports on implementation referred to in Article 67;

e) it shall be informed of the annual control report, or of the part of the report referring to the operational programme concerned, and of any relevant comments the Commission may make after examining that report or relating to that part of the report;

f) it may propose to the Managing Authority any revision or examination of the operational programme likely to make possible the attainment of the funds' objectives referred to in Article 3 or to improve its management, including its financial management; and

g) it shall consider and approve any proposal to amend the content of the Commission decision on the contribution of the Funds"

Secretariat

October 2007

ANNEX 4

Programme Monitoring Committee / Rules of Procedure

Ireland-Wales Programme (INTERREG 4A)

Programme Monitoring Committee

Programme Monitoring Committee: Rules of Procedure

Issue

1. The rules of procedure for the Programme Monitoring Committee.

Recommendation

2. The Committee is invited to approve the attached rules of procedure.

Background

3. As provided for under Article 63 of the General Regulation each Programme Monitoring Committee can draw up its own rules of procedure.
4. This Programme Monitoring Committee needs to agree a set of rules of procedure, which will determine the way in which it carries out its business. The attached rules set out procedures for meetings, participation in meetings, the treatment of issues by written procedure, the establishment of a schedule of key tasks and the establishment of working groups. They are based on the rules of procedure which were drawn up for the Ireland Wales INTERREG IIIA Programme and have been modified where necessary.
5. The rules make it clear that the Programme Monitoring Committee will operate on the basis of consensus, and it is expected that issues will be resolved through discussion rather than by means of motions and voting.
6. The rules of procedure can be kept under review by the Programme Monitoring Committee. They can be amended by the Committee if necessary, should any difficulties emerge in the way in which the Committee operates.

Secretariat

October 2007

Annex

PROGRAMME MONITORING COMMITTEE: DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE

Committee Membership

1. The following organisations have been appointed as members of the Programme Monitoring Committee. The Committee will promote gender equality in its composition.

Ireland	Wales
Joint Chair - Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly <u>Elected Members</u> Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly (3) <u>Officials</u> Department of Finance Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly <u>Social Partnership</u> Irish Business and Employers Confederation Irish Congress of Trade Unions Farmers Association Voluntary and Community Sector	Joint Chair - WEFO <u>Elected Members</u> Welsh Local Government Association (2) <u>Officials</u> Welsh Assembly Government - Dept for Economy and Transport Welsh Assembly Government - Dept for Environment, Sustainability and Housing <u>Partnership Interests</u> Business Wales Wales TUC Wales Council for Voluntary Action Higher Education Wales Countryside Council for Wales
Advisors: The Equality Authority Dept of Environment, Heritage and Local Government	Advisors: WEFO Equal Opportunities Advisor WEFO Sustainable Development Advisor

2. A quorum will be in place in order to ensure that decisions taken by Committee members who are present at a meeting are representative of the views of the Committee as a whole.
3. The quorum will be one quarter of the representation of each member state nominees plus 1.

Meetings

4. The Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) will determine its pattern of meetings in order to ensure the proper and timely conduct of the Committee's business. It will usually meet at broadly six-monthly intervals, with meetings held in Wales and Ireland on a rotational basis (with the Chair determined by the location of the meeting). For the convenience of members, the PMC will agree a forward schedule showing the dates of future meetings at least six months in advance.
5. Meetings will normally be convened by either of the joint Chairs on his/her own initiative; at the request of the European Commission; or, exceptionally,

with the joint Chairs' agreement, at the request of another member of the Committee. Notice of at least 15 working days will normally be given, although exceptionally this notice may be shorter.

6. The joint Chairs will draw up the agenda, and will include items requested by more than three members of the Committee. Any such requests must be made in writing at least 15 working days before the date of any meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting will be included on the agenda, which will normally be sent out at least 10 working days before the date of any meeting. On the initiative of the joint Chairs, or at the request of another member of the Committee with the approval of the joint Chairs, items for the agenda may be tabled less than 10 working days before the meeting. All working papers for the meeting will be circulated with the agenda, although exceptionally papers may be circulated at a later date.
7. The joint Chairs will decide whether meetings, in whole or in part, should take place in public or in private. Generally they will follow the conventions which have been adopted in their respective countries for other Programme Monitoring Committee meetings.

Participation in meetings and decision making

8. Members of the Committee will be eligible, subject to paragraph 6 below, to participate in all business transacted by the Committee. Individual members who are unable to attend a particular meeting may be represented by alternates, provided that the Chair is notified before or at the beginning of the meeting. Any advisor who accompanies a member shall not be eligible to participate in decision making by the Committee, although, with the agreement of the Chair, they may participate in discussions and offer advice to the Committee. Theme Leaders may be invited to Committee meetings as advisors
9. Members of the Committee are required to declare any interest they may have in a particular agenda item before discussion of it begins. A member declaring an interest may be asked by the Chair to withdraw from the meeting for the duration of discussion on that item, or otherwise requested not to participate in that item of business.
10. The PMC and its subordinate groups will operate on the basis of consensus. In the event of a disagreement the joint Chairs, using all appropriate channels, shall seek to resolve any differences arising within the partnership.

Written procedures

11. At the initiative of either of the joint Chairs or, with the agreement of the joint Chairs, at the initiative of another member of the Committee, proposals may be submitted to the Committee for adoption by written procedure. Members will normally be asked to give their written opinion on any such proposal within 15 working days. The proposal shall be deemed agreed by the Committee in the absence of any written objections within that period.
12. Where written objections from any member are received by the Secretariat within 15 working days, the joint Chairs will determine whether:
 - the proposal shall be deemed lost;
 - discussion should take place with the relevant member(s) concerning their objection(s); or
 - the proposal should be referred back to the Committee for further consideration.
13. The joint Chairs, after consultation with the Department of Finance and the Welsh Assembly Government, may override an objection.
14. A member may withdraw written objections to any proposal at any time and, when every written objection is withdrawn, the proposal shall be deemed agreed by the Committee.
15. Following the 15 working day period, the Secretariat shall inform the Committee:
 - a. whether any proposal submitted to the PMC for adoption has, in the absence of any written objection, been deemed agreed; or
 - b. if any member has registered written objections to a proposal and, if so, what the joint Chairs have determined.

Working Groups

16. The PMC will be free to establish any subsidiary working groups which it feels necessary for the speedy and efficient conduct of business.
17. The Steering Committees will be responsible for the selection of projects under the direction of the Programme Monitoring Committee.

Secretariat

18. The Secretariat to the Committee will be provided by the Joint Technical Secretariat for the Programme. The Joint Technical Secretariat is based mainly within the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly in Waterford Ireland and includes a local Contact Office based in the Welsh European Funding Office in Merthyr Tydfil. The Secretariat will assist and advise the Committee in respect of all the functions and procedures set out above.

ANNEX 5

PROGRAMME MONITORING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP LIST

Irish Members		
Stephen Blair	Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly – Joint Chair	
Ivan Grimes	Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly	
Cllr. Pat Hand	Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly	
Cllr. Conal Kavanagh	Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly	
Cllr. Ted Howlin	Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly	
Niall McSweeney	Dept of Finance	
Tom Doyle	Irish Cooperative Organisation Society – Farming Sector	
Cathal Kelly	The Equality Authority	
Pat Gilheaney	Dept. Environment, Heritage & Local Government	
Barbro Andersson	European Commission	
Peter Bunting	ICTU	
Sean Murphy	Chambers Ireland	
Carys Thomas	Children’s Rights Alliance	
Colm Mc Grady	Consul General of Ireland, Cardiff	
Welsh Members		
Damien O’Brien	Welsh Assembly Government (WEFO) – Joint Chair	
Cllr Goronwy Edwards	(Leader, Conwy County Borough Council) - Welsh Local Government Association	
Cllr Tom Richards	(Pembrokeshire County Council) – Welsh Local Government Association	
Tracey Burke	Welsh Assembly Government– Dept for Economy and Transport (Director of Strategy & Review)	
Steve Lloyd	Welsh Assembly Government – Dept for Environment, Sustainability and Housing	
Ted Sangster	(Chief Executive Milford Haven Port Authority) Business Wales	
Paul O’ Shea	Wales TUC	

John Lambert	WEFO, Sustainable Development Advisor	
Chriss O Connell	WEFO, Equal Opportunities Advisor	
Judith Stone	(Policy Officer) Wales Council for Voluntary Action	
Prof. Lyn Pykett	University of Wales, Aberystwyth	
Emyr Thomas	(Senior Funding Officer) Countryside Council for Wales	

