



Ireland Wales Programme 2007 – 2013

Programme Monitoring Committee (12) Thursday 16 May 2013, Stradey Park Hotel Llanelli

The meeting was held at the Stradey Park Hotel, Llanelli

Attendance is as shown at Annex I; apologies were received from Peter Halligan.

Agenda Item 1: Opening and Introduction

Jane McMillan, Joint Chair, opened the meeting. She welcomed every-one and in particular Des Clifford who was attending his first PMC meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Minutes of PMC 11 held at the Camden Court Hotel Dublin on 7 November 2012

The minutes of PMC 11 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. There was one amendment.

Page 1 Para 4; Gwyn Evans asked that the following sentence be amended to reflect the use of either “outcomes” or “outputs”

“Colette Price asked that the word “long term” be inserted in front of the word outcomes (pg. 4) to read “long term outputs”.

Action: Page 1 of minutes to be amended to read “Colette Price asked that the word “long term” be inserted in front of the word outcomes (pg. 4) to read “long term outcomes”.

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

Simon Baily gave a summary of actions from the previous meeting.

JTS to further review and refine reporting on project delivery for the next meeting

Simon Baily confirmed that there had been a more detailed analysis in the latest Programme Update Report which included an overview of the results that the CIME project had delivered. The two strategic projects; Smart Coasts Sustainable Communities and Winning in Tendering would provide presentations on the successful delivery of their activities later in the meeting.

JTS to review Bangor University's capacity to deliver reporting requirements which needs to be confirmed prior to any approval of the Pathoclime project.

Maria Doval Tedin queried whether the issues around the apportioning of time by the BU Finance Team had been addressed. Simon Baily confirmed that an internal audit had been undertaken but that it was difficult to gain a clear picture of the situation as insufficient evidence had been submitted. However the audit did identify that insufficient resources had been attributed to the projects. Simon Baily confirmed that an update on the progress with Bangor University would be addressed later in the meeting.

The JTS will continue to offer no cost extensions to projects in return for additional outputs and results and will continue to work with projects in order to ascertain the level of under-spends and amounts to be returned to the Programme.

Simon Baily confirmed that was on-going work within the JTS and that 14 project re-profiles had taken place since the date of the last meeting.

The JTS to continue to assess options for the re-allocation of under-spends as per the options discussed and provide an updated plan to the PMC at its next meeting

Simon Baily confirmed that this item would be addressed through agenda item PMC (12) 04 "Allocation of Remaining Funds" paper

Agenda Item 3: Matters Arising

Gwyn Evans queried whether the action point from the meeting of 31 May 2012 "plans for clustering to be finalised" had been followed up. Simon Baily confirmed that this particular area of work had been de-prioritised and would be looked at in the context of the 2014-2020 programme.

Patrick Lilly said that whilst no formal procedure was in place clustering was already happening between projects in the current programme and this was being encouraged by the Development Officers.

Mike Pollard informed the committee that a clustering project had been established under the North West Europe programme which included two previously funded Ireland Wales projects .

The Commission is very interested in promoting the clustering of activity and is looking at future collaboration and fit within current and future programmes. Maria will provide further information on what is being proposed by the Commission.

Action; Details of the informal clustering be followed up and reported on at the next PMC meeting

Agenda Item 4: Approval of the Annual Implementation Report

Simon Baily introduced this item which was to request the PMC's endorsement of the 2012 Annual Implementation Report.

The committee were informed that the key financial information was shown in the tables on page 6. The overall ERDF figure of €22,671,361 paid to December 2012 meant that the N+2 total for 2012 had been exceeded by €1.3m.

Pages 13-18 gave an overview of the performance indicators and demonstrated the significant impact of the programme in delivering outputs. To highlight the good work that was taking place a profile of the CIME project had been included at page 14 which demonstrated the results that had been achieved by the project.

Pages 21-22 outlined the information and publicity activity that had taken place over the year. A few adjustments were needed on the statistics that had been given in the report.

The biggest event had been the programme's participation in the European Co-operation day. The "Meet Your Neighbours" event had been led by Siobhan Rudden and Patrick Lilly.

Jane McMillan felt that this was an extensive report and asked if there were any comments on the content.

Maria Doval said that she had some comments to make but that these could be discussed later, there was nothing too important.

Gwyn Evans stated that comments could be received up to the 7 June and that he would forward any input by that date.

Judith Stone asked that the project partners for the BRAND project be included in the report.

Subject to these comments the PMC gave endorsement to the 2012 AIR report pending any additional comments that may be submitted in writing to the JTS by 7 June 2013.

Action: Written comments on the 2012 AIR report to be provided to SERA by 7 June 2013

Action; page 17 of 2012 AIR report to include list of BRAND project partners

Agenda Item 5: Programme Update Report

Simon Baily introduced this item which was to inform the PMC of the Programme's progress to date. He confirmed that the programme was almost 100% committed and that a paper would be presented later in the meeting which outlined proposals

to ensure that any funds returned to the programme through under-spends would be re-allocated in order to maximise investment in the region.

Financial Progress

Simon confirmed that there was an ERDF amount of €1.3m in priorities 1 and 2 available for re-allocation with a further €0.5m expected shortly. The “Allocation of Unspent Funds” paper would be considered later in the meeting.

The N+2 target for 2013 was on course to be met. As at April 30th €3.2m of ERDF had been paid out with a further €2.2m due to be paid shortly and another €0.5m due from claims pending. Based on these figures the current projected shortfall was €1.8m and the JTS anticipated that the target should be reached by July or August. The focus was now on maximising project spend.

Simon confirmed that the figures from the approved projects spreadsheet (Annex I) gave a 91% spend to profile with a projected shortfall of €3.5m. He said that over time the spend-to-profile percentage rate had slowly increased from 74% to 91%. The situation was being monitored closely on a monthly basis

Patricia Hennessy queried the drawdown figure of 43.2% for the end of 2012 shown at page 6 of the AIR report and asked if other programmes were at a similar point and whether the JTS were confident that there would be no de-commitment? Simon could not confirm this but he is aware that the Ireland Wales programme is ahead of other ETC programmes. ETC programmes were different from mainstream programmes in that the commitment figures increase towards the close of the programme.

Jane McMillan accepted that whilst the level of actual de-commitments had been identified, for a future report could the JTS also identify potential de-commitments over and above what was already identified?

Action: JTS to consider the inclusion of actual and potential de-commitments for future reports.

Progress against indicators

Simon reported the progress against indicators. The performance statistics show that nearly all targets are on course to be met or exceeded.

Priority 1 Theme 1

The Committee were informed that the outputs and results for P1T1 were on course to be met or comfortably exceeded

Paul Casey noted that the indicators for P1:T1 given in the December 2012 AIR report were higher than those in the May 2013 indicators report. Simon Baily said that he would review the figures in both documents and amend accordingly.

The narrative included details of the CIME project which was now complete. The project had delivered 25 full time equivalent jobs in micro enterprises and created 11 new SMEs.

Mike Pollard said that this information was good positive feed-back and provided the PMC with a more detailed insight into how individual projects had performed. He asked if this element of the report could be expanded in future, particularly in relation to tangible outputs that had been achieved by projects.

The outputs and results verification methodology for on site, aftercare and closure visits was noted.

Priority 1 Theme 2

The Committee were informed that whilst this priority and theme had exceeded the programme target in all respects there was a continued risk factor in achieving the predicated results associated with the involvement of Bangor University in a number of these projects.

Priority 2 Theme 1

The Committee were informed that this was an improving picture and that there was good progress on meeting targets. Two key projects are due to end shortly; one of these, the Celtic Sea Trout project, will be asked to provide a presentation for the next PMC meeting.

Priority 2 Theme 2

The Committee were informed that the figures for P2T2 were improving. Working with this sector had been a challenge but things were progressing all the time.

Judith Stone said that the Priority 2 Theme 2 projects appeared to be achieving and would like to see future reports providing a more positive slant on projects supported under this priority and theme. The WCVA could also offer additional support to third sector organisations if required.

Tom Richards told the Committee that the BRAND project supported under Priority 2 Theme 2 had been working with Pembrokeshire County Council and as a result positive action was taking place in some towns in Pembrokeshire, in particular Fishguard. The tool-kit produced by the project was proving to be useful.

Action: Celtic Sea Trout project to be asked to present at the next PMC meeting

Action: Review indicators for P1;T1 as the figures given in the December 2012 AIR report are higher than those in the May 2013 indicators report

Action: Priority 2 Theme 2 projects are achieving, need a more positive slant in the next progress against indicators report

Programme issues

Strategic projects update

The two strategic projects, Winning in Tendering and Smart Coasts Sustainable Communities, that had been selected for support by the PMC, were now progressing well and were due to complete at the end of 2013. Both projects would provide a presentation later in the meeting.

Bangor University

The Issues with Bangor University project's management and implementation remain unresolved despite a considerable amount of work undertaken by the JTS. The organisation remains a high risk and the associated projects posed a threat to the programme. There was to be a meeting with representatives from the University, including the vice chancellor, after the PMC at 14:00.

Des Clifford asked what the issues were and was advised that it revolved around corporate responsibility and accountability, lack of capacity and lack of co-ordination between academics and administrators.

Maria Doval Tedin queried the potential for any costs to be double counted and suggested that the JTS should carefully review staff time-sheets. Simon Baily confirmed that there was no evidence of mal practice but there were wider concerns as the JTS were unable to review all projects due to lack of information. The university had failed to adequately resource projects and to provide timely reports. Jane McMillan said that this issue would be explored as part of the later meeting with Bangor University.

Attendance at DG Regio Annual event for the ETC programmes

The Committee was informed that the JTS/MA and WEFO had attended DG Regio's Annual Event for ETC Programmes in Brussels on April 22 & 23. Gwyn Evans asked for the DG Regio's annual event presentations to be made available to the PMC members.

Action: Details of DG Regio annual event presentations to be circulated

Use of technical assistance

Simon advised that a report on TA is currently being collated and will be reported on at the next PMC meeting.

Action: Technical Assistance figures to be updated for next PMC

Agenda Item 6- Allocation of Remaining Funds

Simon Baily introduced this item which requested the PMC's endorsement of

proposals for the allocation of remaining funds within the programme. He confirmed that the proposal excluded the approval of the Pathoclimate project because of the deficiencies in the management and control systems within Bangor University.

He said that the forecast under-spend could potentially be €8.8m and that the proposals had been designed to mitigate potential grant loss and maximise the take up of ERDF grant within the programme area.

Simon said that the 91% current spend to profile rate identified in the approved projects spreadsheet was a useful indicator but was not ideal in providing future spend predictions.

The three proposals for the allocation of remaining funds were:

1. An extension call for all projects - as detailed in paper PMC 12 04.
2. Extension of project time-lines to June 2015
3. Development of pilot projects for the 2014-2020 programme

Maria Doval Tedin confirmed that any pilot projects for the 2014 – 2020 programme which were to be supported by the current programme must be in line with the 2007-2013 programme's objectives

Action: Ensure that pilot projects for the 2014-2020 programme supported by the current programme are in line with the objectives of the current programme

Mike Pollard said it was good practice to align current activities with future ones. Conditions for facilitating pilot projects should be open to review, for example if a good idea comes forward could the proposed ceiling of a €40,000 budget be raised.

Judith Stone suggested that there needed to be stronger guidance to encourage potential clustering activities

Action; Strengthen guidance to encourage clustering

Steve Lloyd asked when the themes for the new programme would be decided and Jane McMillan advised that SERA/WEFO were aware of the primary objectives.

Simon Baily confirmed the time-line would be for a call in the second half of the year and would be actioned as soon as practicably possible. The proposals would go to the PMC via written procedure.

Action: Call for pilot projects to be formalised as soon as practicably possible, proposals to go to PMC through written procedure

Colette Price asked what priorities would inform the decision making process for which project extensions to support.

Jane McMillan confirmed that a lot would depend on the quality of submissions. Initially the JTS would need to see what came in for options 1 and 2.

The JTS would launch the call for project extensions in the next two to three weeks. The Development Officers were already talking to projects and anticipate the level of demand should be good.

Action: Call for project extensions to be launched in the next two to three weeks

There would need to be a review of available funding after implementation of actions 1 and 2. The JTS could then look at the potential for pilot projects and would go back to the PMC with proposals by written procedure. The anticipated time-scale would be late summer/early autumn.

Agenda Item 7 - Communications Update

The Chair informed the committee members that the programme press cuttings booklet included an article on the Age Friendly Communities project with a photo of Cllr Tom Richards

Siobhan Rudden introduced this item which was to inform the PMC members of the publicity activities that had been undertaken by the programme and projects since the last meeting.

The main events had been the SUSFISH final conference held at WG offices Llandudno Junction; the St Patrick's Day Taste of Ireland held at Llandudno Junction and the 9 May Europe Day celebrations in Waterford, Llandudno Junction and Merthyr Tydfil.

The committee were informed that the next big event would be the European co-operation day on the 21 September. The JTS had yet to decide on an activity which would best represent the local benefits on daily life of EU funded initiatives

Mike Pollard thanked Siobhan for the hard work that she had been undertaking with the programme publicity and said that the Communications report was an excellent piece of work.

Mike also said that the Welsh Government would be hosting an event in Llandudno Junction on 23 July which would be a generic event across all ETC programmes entitled "Setting the Scene for 2014-2020"

Judith Stone asked if there were any plans to replicate the event in South West Wales and was informed that there would not be as this ***was one of 4 regional*** events being held at various locations across the UK.

Agenda Item 8- Development Officer Report

Patrick Lilly introduced this item which was to inform the PMC members of the Development Officer's activities since the last meeting. The report had been refined since the last meeting and now provided additional information.

Roger Seddon reported on the success of *The Taste of Ireland* event held at Llandudno Junction when students from Llandrillo College Catering Department had given a display of Irish cuisine. He described the project displays in support of EU Day where, he said, the inter-active Programme map had been displayed.

mCommunity project has been recognised by both the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education – (NIACE) and Colegau Cymru 2013 awards respectively. M/Community Tutor, Emma James, based at Pembrokeshire College, has won her award category 'Tutoring in a Digital World' through the NIACE Inspire! Adult Learning Awards 2013.

The mCommunity project is a three year project aiming to use technology to engage with disenfranchised individuals and integrate them back into education, training or employment.

Now in its final year, the project has enrolled 93 NEET learners (those Not in Education, Employment or Training) and 35 SMEs (Small to Medium Enterprises). The project has had many success stories with 57% of learners completing their time on the project having progressed into either further education or employment.

Gwyn Evans thanked the Development Officers for accepting the criticism of the report at the last PMC and producing a much improved and clearer report. He said that even when talking about projects it provided more pertinent information on the DO activities and was a useful report.

Jane McMillan thanked the DO's for their report and added that this format provided a good framework for future reporting.

Agenda Item 9- Strategic project Presentations and briefings

Presentation was provided by the two strategic projects:

Gary Clifford, Professor Dermot Cahill, Dr Paul Davis and Des Crowther presented the Winning in Tendering project and Professors David Kay and Gregory O Hare presented the Smart Coasts Sustainable Communities. This was followed by brief question and answer sessions for both projects.

Both presentations were very well received and both projects had demonstrated the impacts and outputs of their respective projects. It was agreed that future PMC's should include project presentations to allow members to see at first hand the definitive impacts of the Ireland Wales projects.

Agenda Item 10 - 2014-2020 Ireland Wales Programme Update

The committee members were given an update on the progress of the 2014-2020 programme. The financial framework was still under consideration; the Commission Council and in particular the Irish presidency were pressing for an agreement. The

target for the start of the new programme was January 2014 but in reality there would be slippage.

The Welsh Government and Ireland were moving forward and looking at a needs analysis, SWOT and the priorities for both countries. It was anticipated that the budget would remain around the same as the allocation for the current programme. The Council had agreed that the PEACE programme budget in Northern Ireland will not have implications for the Territorial Co-operation budget, as had been previously considered.

It was anticipated that there would be a working draft of the 2014-2020 operational programme by the end of the summer and in due course this document would be referred to the PMC as part of the consultation process.

The Department for Public Expenditure and Reform underlined their commitment to the new programme. They would like Wales to provide a plan on what they propose for 2014-2020 and by mid July would be looking to sit down and agree how the new programme should be run .

Jane McMillan confirmed the Welsh Government commitment to the new programme.

Maria Doval Tedin stated that the Commission was urgently awaiting confirmation of the geography for the new programme. The EC had sent out a letter to the Irish Member State asking for views and had not received a reply.

Stephen Blair advised that he had seen the letter and had replied on behalf of the Managing Authority and said that no major change was envisaged with the potential exception of the inclusion of North Tipperary which is in the process of being merged with South Tipperary.

Maria then said that she required a common response from the Programme partnership for the entire programme area. The Joint Chairs agreed to follow up on the matter and provide this to the EC.

Gwyn Evans stated that he would not like to see any major changes to the geography of the programme in Wales, the area that we have for the current programme has worked well.

Steve Lloyd asked if the balance of funds would remain as per the current programme and Jane McMillan confirmed that it was too early to say at this stage

Action: Provide confirmation to The Commission of the geography for the new programme

AOB

There was no other business

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Action: page 1 of draft minutes - PMC (12) 01 - to be amended from “Colette Price asked that the word “long term” to be inserted in front of the word outcomes (pg 4) to read “long term outputs”

to read

“Colette Price asked that the word “long term” be inserted in front of the word outcomes (pg. 4) to read “long term outcomes”.

Action; Details of the informal clustering be followed up and reported on at the next PMC meeting

Action: written comments on the 2012 AIR report to be provided to SERA by 7 June 2013

Action; page 17 of 2012 AIR report to include list of BRAND project partners

Action: CSTP project to be asked to present to the PMC at the next meeting

Action: Technical Assistance figures to be updated in the programme update report

Action: Priority 2 Theme 2 projects are achieving, need a more positive slant in the next progress against indicators section of the programme update report

Action: Details of DG Regio annual event presentations to be circulated to PMC members

Action: review indicators for P1;T1 as the figures given in the December 2012 AIR report are higher than those in the May 2013 indicators report

Action: JTS to consider the inclusion of actual and potential de-commitments for future reports

Action; Strengthen guidance to encourage clustering

Action: Call for pilot projects to be formalised as soon as practicably possible, proposals to go to PMC through written procedure

Action: Call for project extensions to be launched in the next two to three weeks.

Action: Provide confirmation to The Commission of the geography for the new programme

Appendix 1 Attendance Listing

Name	Organisation
Stephen Blair	<i>Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly- Joint Chair</i>
Cllr Jim Holloway	Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly
Cllr. Tomas Breathnach	Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly
Patricia Hennessy	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
Siobhan Bradley	Chambers Ireland
Maria Jose Doval Tedin	European Commission
Jane McMillan	<i>Welsh Government- Joint Chair</i>
Cllr. Tom Richards	Welsh Local Government Association (Pembrokeshire County Council)
Des Clifford	Welsh Government PPS First Minister
Judith Stone	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
Colette Price	Natural Resources Wales
Steve Lloyd	Welsh Government; Sustainable Futures
Gwyn Evans	Welsh Local Government Association (Pembrokeshire County Council) Observer
Simon Baily	Ireland Wales Programme; SERA
Cathal Reilly	Ireland Wales Programme; SERA
Siobhán Rudden	Ireland Wales Programme; SERA
Linda Weaver	Welsh European Funding Office
Diana Wilson	Welsh European Funding Office
Patrick Lilly	Welsh European Funding Office
Roger Seddon	Welsh European Funding Office
Owain Lovering	Welsh European Funding Office

Paul Casey	Welsh European Funding Office
Tony Layzell	Welsh European Funding Office
Mike Pollard	Welsh European Funding Office

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