



UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERREG IVA PROGRAMME

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This paper outlines the progress made on implementation and closure of the INTERREG IVA Programme since the last Monitoring Committee meeting on 29 July 2015.

2.0 INTERREG IVA - Key Programme Indicators, Risks and Challenges

2.1 The INTERREG IVA Programme has allocated funding to 88 projects at a combined value of €263.35m (103% commitment) inclusive of ERDF and Match Funding. The Programme was over committed to the extent of €7.32m, in agreement with the Member States.

2.2 Of these 88 projects, 46 projects are completed and 42 remain “open”. Activity on all projects has ceased with the exception of the Drogheda Viaduct Project and the Enterprise Overhaul Project. The other projects (40 in number) remain “open” awaiting final administrative closure, which includes preparation of post project evaluation, payments of final claims, closure of audit recommendations and irregularities. An update on project closure is included in section 3.

2.3 The current financial status of the Programme is as follows:

- The final expenditure target for the Programme is €256.03m.
- €233.9 (ERDF + Match) of this has been declared to (or is in the process of being declared to) the EC.
- €18.9m (ERDF + Match) of claims have been received by the SEUPB and are currently being verified.
- €7.33m of claims have yet to be received.

Implementation of the INTERREG IVA Programme (2007-2013)

- 2.4 The most significant risk to expenditure within the Programme is from the claims that have not yet been received, including the Enterprise Overhaul Project which is still completing works and is yet to submit claims for £4.48m. SEUPB will continue to work closely with the lead partner, two Accountable Departments and Member State Departments to maximise the expenditure verified. The first Enterprise refurbished set returned to passenger service on Monday 16 November 2015 and NI Railways have confirmed that whilst this project remains extremely challenging the team is focused on delivering by 11 December 2015.
- 2.5 The SEUPB will certify the full value of eligible expenditure, including that which is in excess to the Programme value. In the event of any future irregularity being identified during closure, this will be off-set against the excess expenditure declared.

3.0 INTERREG IVA Closure Activity

- 3.1 The MA has agreed a Closure Plan with the Audit Authority and the Certifying Authority. The key milestones for closure during 2016 / 2017 are:
- December 2015 - Final date for eligible expenditure.
 - January 2016 – Article 16 work to commence on expenditure post June 2015
 - March 2016 - Final Interim claim submitted
 - June 2016 – Audit Authority concludes all Article 16 visits and audit
 - June 2016 – Final draft closure/implementation report
 - September 2016 – Forward draft Final Implementation Report and draft final claim to Audit Authority
 - March 2017 – Final Implementation Report submitted on SFC database, Final Claim submitted and Final Control Report and Closure Declaration submitted
- 3.2 In September 2015 the Programme Closure Team was supplemented with additional staff resources from elsewhere in the organisation. The team has a focus on ensuring timely closure of the Programme. The final date for eligible expenditure is 31 December 2015. The Closure Team is coordinated by the Managing Authority's Programme Officer for Closure. It is anticipated that the majority of the staff of the Closure Team will return to other duties as of 1st January 2016.

Implementation of the INTERREG IVA Programme (2007-2013)

3.3 The closure team is involved in the following activity:

- Preparing and updating Programme Closure trackers for all outstanding open projects to manage including: the preparation of post project evaluations; updating minoring data of outputs and results; submission and verification of final claims.
- Liaising with the Certifying Authority to close any outstanding irregularities;
- Liaising with the Audit Authority to ensure all open audit recommendations have been actioned and closed, including those identified in Article 16 reports.
- Carrying out Closure Checks on a sample of closed projects in preparation for potential audit and preparing the associated reports.

4.0 Update on INTERREG IVA Communications Activity

4.1 INTERREG IVA communications activity since July 2015:

- **On 19 August 2015, the Gobbins Cliff Path in Islandmagee, Northern Ireland's most exciting and newly reimagined tourism attraction was launched.** The attraction will permit guided access to the stunning bridges and paths on the breath taking Gobbins' Cliffs in Islandmagee, Co Antrim. In addition to the outdoor paths, the attraction will consist of a visitor centre with reception facilities, interpretation, café and retail outlet. The Gobbins was reinstated at a cost of £7.5 million with over half of the funding coming through the INTERREG IVA Programme.
- **On 9 September 2015, CREST, Northern Ireland's largest green technology and training facility, opened the doors on a new purpose-built bioenergy laboratory designed to advance international research and boost local industry.** The state-of-the-art laboratory was part-financed through the INTERREG IVA Programme, and is the latest addition to the CREST Centre which opened at South West College's Technology and Skills Centre in January. Understood to be the most extensive research facility of its type in Northern Ireland, the unit is the latest development for the £2.9m project and puts South West College among a small group of international colleges with the capacity to contribute to world-leading bioenergy research.
- **INTERREG IVA 25 Years - On 9 October 2015, SEUPB welcomed Deputy-Director General Nicholas Martyn, from the European Commission, to Londonderry to mark**

Implementation of the INTERREG IVA Programme (2007-2013)

25 years of INTERREG funding and invite citizens to have their say in the recently launched major European wide consultation on border obstacles. The region has received extensive financial support under the INTERREG and PEACE Programmes over the past two decades. The funding has had a major impact in terms of encouraging greater levels of peace and reconciliation as well as encouraging cross-border economic growth and sustainability.

4.2 Upcoming INTERREG IVA communications events:

| Date | Project | Funding Award | Location |
|----------|---|---------------|--|
| 7 Dec 15 | Launch of the Refurbishment of Drogheda Viaduct Project – Refurbishment work on the viaduct, which carries the Belfast-Dublin railway line across the River Boyne has included steel repairs, track renewal and a new drainage system. | €6,159,800 | D Hotel, Drogheda |
| Dec TBC | Enterprise project – is a major upgrade of the Belfast to Dublin ‘Enterprise’ service. The project involves a significant overhaul of the train’s mechanical systems, new interiors, new livery, replacement of the Passenger Information System and a completely new electronic passenger reservation system and CCTV system. | £12.2m | Belfast to Dublin railway link (from Central Station, Belfast) |

5.0 Recommendation.

The Monitoring Committee is requested to:

- **Note** the Progress in implementation and closure of the programme;
- **Note** the upcoming communications events for the programme.