



Special EU Programmes Body  
Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE  
Special EU Skemes Boadie

**PEACEPLUS**  
Northern Ireland - Ireland

Co-funded by the



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UK Government

**NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE BORDER REGION OF IRELAND  
EU PROGRAMME FOR PEACE & RECONCILIATION  
(2021 - 2027)**

**CCI No: 2021TC16RFPC001**

**DRAFT MINUTES PROGRAMME MONITORING COMMITTEE MEETING  
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023  
Radisson Blu Hotel, Letterkenny, County Donegal**

**Attendance**

A list of attendees, apologies, and changes in PMC composition is attached at Annex II.

**1. Welcome and introduction by Chairperson**

**The Chair** welcomed attendees to the second PEACEPLUS Monitoring Committee at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Letterkenny.

**The Chair** extended a special welcome to **the Desk Officer from the European Commission, Kris Magnus**, who travelled from Brussels to join the committee. The Chair also welcomed **the representative from the Northern Ireland Office, Harry Welch**.

**The Chair** provided an update on developments since the previous PMC meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023, as follows:

- The PEACEPLUS Programme was formally launched on 11<sup>th</sup> September at Newforge Community Development Trust Shared Space in south Belfast. Newforge had received funding of €5.8m from the PEACE IV programme to transform the former PSNI Sports Club into a mixed-use community facility. This was a great event which celebrated the beginning of PEACEPLUS as well as the legacy of the PEACE IV and INTERREG programmes, and SEUPB was honoured to be joined by the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, Maroš Šefčovič; the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris MP; An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar; Paschal Donohoe TD, Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery, and Reform; and Dr Jayne Brady, Head of the Civil Service of Northern Ireland.
- Following that, the Programme held its official Brussels launch event on 12<sup>th</sup> October, as part of EU Regions Week. This event was held at the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive, and was co-hosted by the UK Mission to the EU, the Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU, the European Commission, and the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels. SEUPB was honoured to be joined by Deputy Director General, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, Normunds Popenis; Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU, Ambassador Aingéal O'Donoghue; and Ambassador and Head of the UK Mission to the European Union, Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby CMG.
- Four papers have been amended since previous PMC approval in May – the Rules of Procedure for the PMC, Rules of Procedure for Steering Committee, Project Selection Criteria, and the Evaluation Plan for the Programme. These papers have been provided for the PMC's consideration.
- Calls for Applications have been open since June. JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS Mark Huddleston and MA Director Paul Beattie will provide more information regarding Calls during their implementation update.
- The final PMCs for the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA programmes were held two weeks ago in Belfast. It was agreed that all ongoing matters with regard to closure for these programmes will now be an agenda item for this PEACEPLUS Monitoring Committee.

## **2. Agree Agenda**

The Agenda was agreed.

## **3. Conflict of Interest**

**The Chair** asked Members to declare any Conflicts of Interest in relation to today's business.

**The representative for IBEC** noted that he has been commissioned by the SEUPB to support its work in preparing for the launch of Investment Area 6.1. He advised that there is no conflict of interest as he is working in the interests of everybody who wishes to make an application.

**The Chair** thanked the **IBEC representative**, and agreed that SEUPB does not consider there to be any conflict of interest.

No other Conflicts of Interest were declared.

## **4. Minutes of the previous meeting – 25 May 2023**

**The member for DPENDPR** noted that the minutes state that the May PMC was his final PMC. This was correct at the time – however, he wished to record that he has since been reassigned to the PMC, and so will be remaining as the member for DPENDPR.

Other minor amendments regarding the attendance list and the acronym for DPENDPR were noted, and have since been incorporated in to the minutes.

With the aforementioned amendments incorporated, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record and will be uploaded to the SEUPB website.

## **5. Matters Arising**

There were no action points received from the previous meeting.

## **6. Presentation from Peace Ambassadors**

As part of the PEACEPLUS Programme, SEUPB has developed a new programme of Peace Ambassadors. These are fourteen young people who have benefitted from PEACE projects in the past and who are now acting as ambassadors for PEACEPLUS. Notably, they were chosen to attend the One Young World summit which was held in Belfast in October.

**The Chair** invited five Peace Ambassadors – Katie Curran, Stephen O'Donnell, Faith Drummond, Jack McLaughlin and Rory Sloan – to present on their personal journeys, their experiences and growth through the PEACE IV Programme, and their experiences at the One Young World summit.

### **The Monitoring Committee:**

- Noted the presentation from the Peace Ambassadors.

**The Chair** thanked the Ambassadors for their presentations, and stated that SEUPB is very proud of their achievements.

**The representative for the Mental Health Champion NI** stated that the presentations were very inspiring, and that she would like to further discuss mental health with the ambassadors.

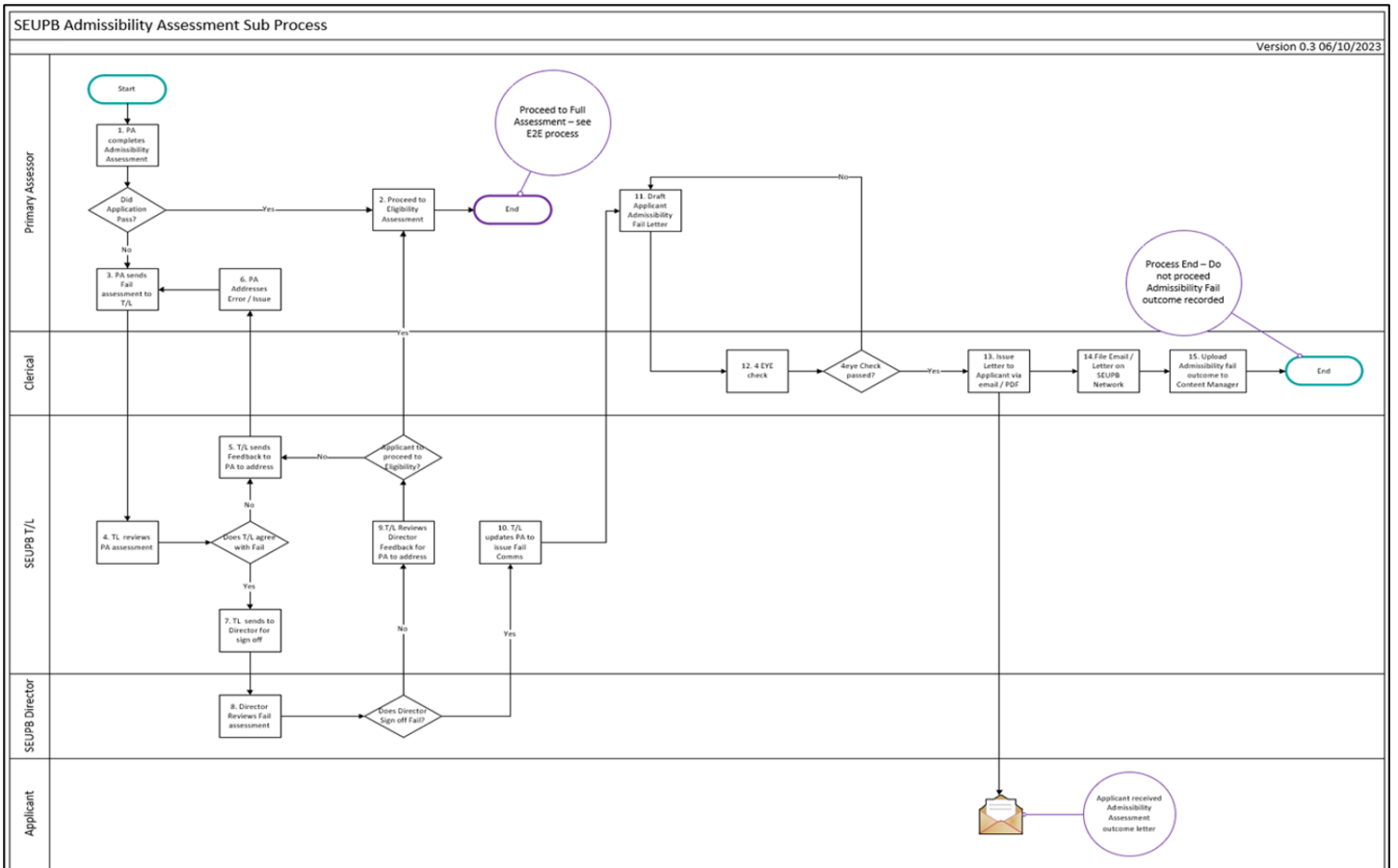
## **7. Update on Programme Implementation**

**The Chair** invited **JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS, Mark Huddleston**, and **MA Director Paul Beattie** to present on the implementation of the Programme from both the Joint Secretariat and Managing Authority perspectives.

**The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** began by thanking his team for all of their hard work. His presentation consisted of the following main points:

- Structure and process
  - The entire assessment process is underpinned by a range of documents and processes

- Combined MA and JS activity has been supported by KPMG
- These reflect the approach SEUPB has been aiming for in terms of pace and resilience of activity
- This has now been fully tested through Investment Area 3.2 and will continue to go through process improvement / control
- **The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** provided a flowchart of SEUPB's admissibility assessment process flow:



- **The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** also provided a sample of a scoring rubric used by assessors:
- There is regular internal engagement between team to deliver as close to standardisation as can be achieved
- Consistency is the key objective in creating the underpinning structure, recognising subjectivity and variation in quality of application
- There is significant work ongoing around Economic Appraisal and Technical Appraisal as we move through calls
- Significant value added by NI Civil Service Economist embedded in SEUPB alongside KPMG capability
- Steering Committee Training was completed in October 2023
- Steering Committees met post-training and approved a further five calls
- There is significant ongoing engagement internally working to ensure next steps are aligned with JeMS, wider regulations and ease of implementation
- LoO, Capacity Check and Partnership Agreement activity moving at pace and further team development / training planned
- Assessment status – Theme 1
  - 1.1 Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plans
    - 1 project in assessment

	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Adequate (3)	Poor (2)	Very Poor (1)
1.1	<b>OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS</b>  The project makes an excellent (realistic and achievable) contribution to the programme objectives and to the outcome and result indicators (provide details). The proportion of indicators they seek to achieve is realistic based on the resources (budget/project scope) proposed. In addition, the project has provided evidenced assurances that the resources have been well scoped.	The project's contribution to the objectives and indicators are good. The intended resources (budget/project scope) to support their achievement are commensurate with targets sought.	The project's contribution to the programme objectives and indicators are acceptable. Whilst they have not made efforts to go beyond the standard outcomes and results expected, they realistically demonstrate an ability to contribute to the indicators. The intended resources (budget/project scope) to support the achievement of indicators are adequate.	The project proposes to meet a low proportion of the Investment Area's target output and result indicators with weak justification as to why this is low, as well as a poor description of how they propose to resource this. The overall achievability is in question.	There is a noticeable discrepancy between the result and outcome indicators proposed and the resources required to achieve them – they are either too high or too low with no justification given.

- 4 projects under review following communication
- Further engagement with those four projects

- Adding further date for application to support completion
  - 1.4 Reimaging Communities
    - There has been significant interest in this Investment Area – of a funding allocation of €75m, applications received have totalled €339m. The assessment processes outlined above have proven to be valuable, as SEUPB failed a number of projects which did not fully meet the criteria. This has left ten projects, totalling approximately €100m.
    - Admissibility and Pre-requisite checks complete
    - Assessment and Economic Appraisals commenced
    - Initial Accountable Department engagement
- Assessment status – Theme 3
  - 3.1 Shared Learning Together Education Programme
    - Admissibility checks complete
    - Assessments drafted and progressing to timeline
  - 3.2 PEACEPLUS Youth Programme
    - Assessment complete and provided to Accountable Departments
    - Request to overspend provided to ADs
    - Steering Committee – 12<sup>th</sup> December in Belfast
  - 3.3 Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing
    - Admissibility complete and assessments progressing to timeline
- Assessment status – Theme 4
  - 4.3 Victims and Survivors
    - Regular engagement with both Accountable Departments
    - Assessment completed and being reviewed
    - Endeavour to bring Steering Committee forward to support VSS
- Assessment status – Theme 5
  - 5.5 Geothermal Energy Demonstration Programme
    - Admissibility completed
    - Full assessment and Technical Appraisal launched
    - Accountable Department engagement planned before end of the year
  - 5.6 Enhanced Sustainable Transport Connectivity
    - Assessment launched
    - Business case and assessment timetables currently not aligned

- Team setting up further Accountable Department and Sponsor Department engagement
- Next Investment Areas opening
  - Target to open calls circa 7th-13th Dec (10-12 week application)
    - 2.4 Smart Towns & Villages
    - 4.1 Addiction Services
    - 5.4 Water Bodies (Waste Water & Water Quality) (*closed call led by NI Water*)
  - Target to open calls circa 15th-19th Jan (8 -10 week application)
    - 4.2 Rural Regeneration & Social Inclusion
    - 5.1 Biodiversity, Nature Recovery and Resilience
  - Target to open calls circa late February (8-10 week application)
    - 4.1 Collaborative Health and Social Care
    - The gap between this Call and the Call for 4.1 Addiction Services is due to significant applicant overlap between the two; it was agreed during pre-development to leave a gap between the two Calls opening, to ensure quality of application.
- Remaining Investment Areas
  - Theme 1
    - 1.3 Building Positive Relations
  - Theme 2
    - 2.1 SME Development and Transition
    - 2.2 Innovation Challenge Fund
    - 2.3 Programme Area Skills Development
  - Theme 5
    - 5.2 Marine and Coastal Management
    - 5.3 Water Quality and Catchment Management

**The Chair** thanked **the JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** for his presentation.

**The member for DoF** thanked **the JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** and his team for their work, and noted how quickly the team has moved given that the Programme was only ratified in May. With regard to the Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plans, he queried whether it was appropriate to assess the first application when there are four others which are not ready for assessment yet. **The DoF member** also queried whether it was good practice to open Calls during the Christmas period.



**The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** advised that the Calls which are targeted to be opened before Christmas would be open for 10–12 weeks, rather than the standard 8–10 weeks. He noted that it is difficult to avoid holiday periods throughout the year, so it was decided to extend the Call period rather than delay it. With regard to the Peace Action Plans, **the JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** advised that there is a possibility that the four other applications will be submitted for full assessment at the same time as the one which is fully completed; there is also a risk of moving forward with only application, but **the JS Interim Director** advised that it would be wrong to penalise the council which has submitted an exemplary application for the rest not having delivered. **The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** stated that he is happy to further discuss that point if requested.

**The Chair** advised that Investment Area 1.1 is a non-competitive Call, as each council has been given an allocation. She agreed that it would be wrong to hold back one council because others aren't ready.

**The representative for the Equality Commission** queried how well the Equality of Opportunities section of the application is being filled out.

**The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** advised that every application has scored a pass on the Horizontal Principles aspect of the application. No application has scored 5 out of 5 on this section, but quite a few have scored 4. **The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** noted that, with hindsight, more awareness could have been spread in terms of the social value clauses that can form part of the applications. However, he reiterated that no application has failed on the Horizontal Principles aspect.

**The representative for Mental Health Reform** thanked **the JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** for his presentation. She asked for a further breakdown of why some applications were poor / unsuccessful, and if there were any trends that could be fed back to potential applicants in anticipation of future Calls opening. **The representative for Mental Health Reform** also agreed with **the DoF member** that opening Calls during the Christmas period is not ideal, particularly for the community and voluntary sector, as December is its busiest time.

**The Chair** thanked **the Mental Health Reform representative** for her comments, and stated that SEUPB was happy to look at the timeframe for opening Calls. **The Chair** also noted that a significant amount of pre-development support had been given to potential applicants across all Investment Areas prior to the opening of Calls, during which the application process was addressed and many issues were discussed.

**The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** advised that the key reason for application failure has been failure to meet admissibility criteria. After that, there are very few applications which have failed; of those that have, it is often because they have not engaged with SEUPB beforehand and their applications have been rushed. However, **the JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** advised that there have been some lessons learned and that SEUPB will communicate those.

**The representative for the Ulster Farmers' Union** queried the extent to which the Steering Committees are aware of what the PMC has been told at this meeting, particularly regarding the timeframe for Calls, so that members can plan their work. He also noted the importance of widespread publicity, to ensure that those who may not have heard about the Programme previously can avail of the opportunity.

**The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** advised that one of the lessons learned so far has been not to close several Calls at the same time, as that will cause capacity issues. He also advised that SEUPB will engage with any stakeholder as fully as possible before a Call opens, and that **the Communications Manager** will speak more on that subject.

**The representative for Irish Rural Link** asked what information has been planned regarding the opening of these Calls, and how it is being communicated.

**The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** advised that, particularly within the voluntary and community sector, SEUPB has been meeting with key stakeholders who represent the breadth of the sector. SEUPB is using them as communication channels. There are also roadshows being held across the Programme Area, which have been very successful.

**The Chair** advised that there have been seven roadshows, and that there will be editorials placed in local newspapers in areas where roadshows were not held. **The Chair** also stated that the Steering Committee has approved all the Calls that are due to be opened imminently, so Steering Committee members are aware of the timeframe for those.

**The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** advised that the Steering Committee has access to a detailed Calls timetable which is updated regularly.

**The IBEC representative** noted that there has been a lot more support put in place by SEUPB for the PEACEPLUS Programme than there was at the start of the PEACE IV and INTERREG programmes, and acknowledged the lessons learnt by SEUPB in that regard. He also noted that it may be challenging for smaller organisations to put together an application, given their lack of resources, and encouraged SEUPB to share information with platforms that help smaller organisations to combine resources. **The IBEC representative** asked **the JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** to provide detail on the economic appraisal from a Steering Committee point of view.

**The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** advised that there are five key elements about value for money and a further five in the economic appraisal. They are five very clear steps, in line with current civil service guidance in Northern Ireland, and are being worked upon on a simplified basis. Within this, there are elements that consider socioeconomic impact and reasonable costs, and apply basic principles for use of public money. **The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** advised that he can provide further details on that.

- **Action point: details of assessments in support of economic appraisals to be provided to members.**

**The IBEC representative** noted the importance of ensuring that the economic appraisals do not focus too heavily on cost accounting, rather than on the impact of the output upon the community.

**The member for DPENDPR** noted that, from a PMC perspective, it is important to be aware of the particular situation in which the Programme is operating. The Programme started late due to the Covid-19 pandemic, collapse of the Northern Ireland Assembly and delay in approving the Financing Agreement. This has significantly reduced the window to deliver the Programme.

**The DPENDPR member** also highlighted the significant budgetary challenges for public sector bodies in Northern Ireland, as well as the architecture of the North-South Bodies imposing resource constraints on SEUPB. He noted that the overarching challenge for the PMC is to be adaptive to these challenges, and echoed **the DoF member's** acknowledgement of the hard work by SEUPB to reach this point.

**The Chair** thanked **the DPENDPR member** for his comments, and noted that it is a balancing act to manage these challenges.

**The DoF member** stated that, when the Northern Ireland Executive does return, it will be very interested in the Programme.

**The Chair** invited **MA Director Paul Beattie** to present on the implementation of the Programme from the Managing Authority perspective. His presentation consisted of the following main points:

- JEMS (the Joint Electronic Monitoring System for implementation of the Programme) has been developed by Interact on a stage-by-stage release process. Almost all of the EU programmes across Europe are using it as the basis for their programmes.
- JEMS has been working very well so far. Applicants use it to apply to the Programme, and will continue to use it throughout the project lifecycle to report and record their project's journey.
- An organisation was hosting JEMS on a temporary basis for the last year-and-a-half, but SEUPB put out a tender this year to appoint a service provider to host the system for the entire Programme period. SEUPB is delighted to have appointed a provider called Get Swarms Limited.
- Current JEMS milestones are:
  - Developing a pathway to project initiation;
  - Security provision; and
  - Preparing for an extra release which will cover reporting and financial information.
- The management and control system is a set of rules and guidance which governs how the Programme is rolled out from an MA perspective. It includes a set of key requirements which covers everything from selection of projects to anti-fraud measures and implementation of JEMS. The management and

control system is approximately 95% complete, and the next step will be to work with the new Audit Authority to examine it. This system will be reviewed biannually at a minimum.

- External controllers will be responsible for verifying partner claims during this Programme period. Under the 2014-2022 programmes, this was carried out by SEUPB, but moving forward this role will be undertaken by external controllers. A risk-based management verification system is currently being developed to consider how SEUPB will work with individual partners and lead partners in terms of claim submission and verification.
- In Ireland, SEUPB will use an existing framework to facilitate the selection of financial controllers; there is no equivalent framework present in Northern Ireland, but SEUPB is working with CPD to develop one. Once that is in place, we will have a series of frameworks so that projects can select controllers moving forward. SEUPB's role will then move to training projects, monitoring and sampling what is coming through the system – but with an emphasis on projects taking forward their claims in conjunction with SEUPB, rather than SEUPB doing all of it. This is to avoid some of the lengthier delays in claims verification which have occurred during the current programme period.
- In terms of support work and materials, there has been a good mix of online and in-person support. SEUPB's website has videos of all fourteen pre-development workshops which have occurred; there is also a Support Portal which contains support documents such as the Programme Manual, FAQs, and a ticketing system for queries.
- In line with requirements and guidance, we have two types of Evaluation – one on overall implementation, which considers Programme effectiveness and efficiency in terms of internal mechanisms and processes; and twelve impact evaluations, which will identify the social, environmental and economic effects of our funding. These will focus on:
  - PEACEPLUS Action Plans
  - Investment Areas 1.3 Building Positive Relations and 4.3 Victims and Survivors
  - Investment Area 1.2 Empowering Communities
  - Investment Area 1.4 Re-imagining Communities
  - Investment Areas 2.1 SME Development and Transition, 2.2 Innovation Challenge Fund, and 2.3 Programme Area Skills Development

- Investment Areas 2.4 Smart Towns and Villages and 4.2 Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion
- Investment Areas 3.1 Shared Learning Together Programme and 3.2 PEACEPLUS Youth Programme
- Investment Areas 3.3 Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing, and 4.1 Collaborative Health and Social Care
- Investment Areas 5.1 Biodiversity, Nature Recovery and Resilience, 5.2 Marine and Coastal Management, 5.3 Water Quality and Catchment Management and 5.4 Water Quality Improvement Programme
- Investment Area 5.5 Geothermal Demonstration Programme
- Investment Area 5.6 Enhanced Sustainable Travel Connectivity
- Investment Areas 6.1 Strategic Planning and Engagement and 6.2. Maintaining and Forging Relationships between Citizens.
- There are currently several business cases with DoF for approval, and it is hoped these will move towards procurement soon.
- One of the few investment areas that **the JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** is not involved with is Investment Area 6.1: The Strategic Planning and Engagement Programme (budget allocation €32m). The PEACE and INTERREG programmes made significant contributions to the Programme Area in this respect, cementing cross-border collaboration; however, there are a lot of persisting challenges, some of which have only arisen in the last few years. Most of these remaining challenges are around diverging national legislations and potential future obstacles with regard to Brexit and increased global instability.
- Under Investment Area 6.1, SEUPB hopes to support the engagement of stakeholders, targeting legal and administrative obstacles to cooperation in relevant sectors. Funding will focus on enabling joint development and management strategies, capacity building, and identifying solutions to reduce obstacles to cross-border cooperation. There is a briefing meeting for this IA on 1<sup>st</sup> December in Belfast, for which interest has been high.
- The Small Grants programme [IA 1.2, Strand 1, The Empowering Communities to Embed Peace Small Grants Programme (€20m); and IA 6.2, Maintaining and Forging Relationships between Citizens (€20m), which both offer maximum grants of €100,000] is being delivered in partnership with Pobal. SEUPB will be tendering for a delivery organisation to engage with

some of the smaller community groups that may apply – this tender will go to market over the next few weeks. SEUPB has also implemented architecture to make the process easier for the smaller groups, such as reduced administration for application and implementation, simplified costs options for delivery, and ongoing workshops / engagement. Calls for this programme are due to open in March 2024.

**The Chair** thanked **the MA Director** for his update, and noted that Investment Area 6.2 will focus on building relationships on a north, south, east and west cross-border basis. She noted that SEUPB is talking to the Scottish and Welsh governments about this, and that there will be a lot of opportunity for institutions to link up.

**The MA Director** noted that there has been some early grassroots engagement, particularly with communities that may not normally engage with EU funding, and emphasised SEUPB's excitement about the possibilities of this.

**The representative for The Wheel** queried whether recipients of larger grants could mentor, or take on as project partners, groups which may not have previously engaged with EU funding. She also queried whether any outputs of the evaluations will link to the Sustainable Development goals.

**The MA Director** advised that the outputs of the evaluations will link to pre-existing frameworks, although the exact frameworks will not be known until the tenders are procured.

**The Chair** advised that a number of smaller partners have been mentored and supported to become project partners during pre-development workshops.

**The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** advised that SEUPB has been encouraging lead partners to reach out for partners and engagement.

**The MA Director** noted that SEUPB has been developing a piece of work regarding how best to collaborate with other large-scale funders. A website has been developed which will allow funders to interact, to see where collaboration could occur. This website is not for public consumption, but all partners have access to it, and we are hoping to take forward activity on this website. This is a great opportunity to try to maximise cooperation and synergy between funders.

**The Chair** recorded SEUPB's thanks to Declan McGarrigle, who has left SEUPB, but was instrumental in the development of PEACEPLUS.

**The Chair** then invited **the Chair of SEUPB's Audit and Risk Committee, Gerry Finn**, to speak.

**The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee** explained that the primary role of the Committee is to work with SEUPB's staff around issues of risk and programme management / strategy, to ensure that staff are working efficiently and effectively, and to offer advice and guidance. The Committee looks at the Risk Register on a regular basis, and broadly considers value for money, implementation challenges, audit and audit assurances, and effective internal controls. The Committee meets four times per year, and has a very constructive relationship with SEUPB's CEO and staff. He noted his confidence that PEACEPLUS will be a successful programme.

**The Chair** thanked **the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee** for his comments.

**The Monitoring Committee:**

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

#### **8. Ratification by PMC of Papers Amended Since the Previous PMC**

**The Chair** noted that there have been some amendments made to papers which were originally approved by this PMC in May. Members have been provided with amended versions of the PMC Rules of Procedure, Steering Committee Rules of Procedure, Project Selection Criteria and Evaluation Plan. The list of amendments can be found on the first page of each paper.

**The Chair** asked **the Monitoring Committee** to approve the amendments.

**The Monitoring Committee:**

- Approved the amendments made to the PMC Rules of Procedure, Steering Committee Rules of Procedure, Project Selection Criteria and Evaluation Plan.



## 9. Update on Communications Activity

The Chair invited **SEUPB Senior Communications Manager Kerry Rooney** to present on progress in implementing the Communications Strategy.

The **Senior Communications Manager's** presentation consisted of the following main points:

- The official launch of the PEACEPLUS Programme took place on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at the Newforge Community Development Trust. It was an extremely successful event from a Communications perspective.
- The PEACEPLUS launch was also an opportunity to reflect on the successes of the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA programmes. Some of our Peace Ambassadors spoke at the event, and it was great to hear about their experiences.
- Following the official launch of PEACEPLUS in Belfast in September, a Brussels launch of the Programme took place at a special event on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> October, as part of EU Regions Week. This was another successful event, and an excellent opportunity to share information about PEACEPLUS.
- Regarding Calls for application under PEACEPLUS, the SEUPB Communications Team developed a multi-channel marketing campaign to ensure that information about the calls reached audiences in Northern Ireland, Ireland and across all communities. Calls were promoted on the SEUPB website, advertised in all local and regional papers, and further promoted through organic and paid social media posts. A number of advertisements focused on specific Themes and targeted at specific audiences and potential applicants were also issued.
- To date, the Communications Team has coordinated a total of 17 PEACEPLUS pre-application support workshops. The workshops are designed to provide potential applicants with an in-depth understanding of the specific Investment Area objectives. The workshops were promoted on the SEUPB website, on our social media platforms and by direct email to the PEACEPLUS database.
- Current workshop statistics:
  - 17 workshops;
  - 1,538 attendees;
  - 318 concept notes received;
  - 2,743 pre-recorded workshop views; and
  - 5,621 link clicks.

- In addition to the PEACEPLUS Pre-application Workshops, the Communications Team has also supported the delivery of a number of PEACEPLUS Roadshow events. These events provide general information about the PEACEPLUS Programme and give organisations and individuals an opportunity to put questions to SEUPB staff. To date, Roadshow events have taken place in Derry/Londonderry, Belfast, Ballymena, Donegal, Lurgan, Dundalk and Banbridge. The roadshows have been very successful and well-attended, with an average attendance of approximately 100-120 people. SEUPB is conscious that some council areas have not had a roadshow event; SEUPB plans to run a major campaign of marketing in those areas to ensure that everybody is well aware of PEACEPLUS and how to apply.
- The Comms Team is currently involved in carrying out a substantial update of the SEUPB website to prepare for the completion of PEACE IV and INTERREG and an increased focus on supporting PEACEPLUS applications and funded projects.
- As part of this process the team is developing a suite of support tools and information materials for PEACEPLUS funded projects. This includes developing a new Publicity and Marketing Toolkit for PEACEPLUS projects.
- The Communications team is preparing to roll out another substantial advertising, awareness and information campaign to promote the next round of funding calls due to open in the new year.
- The Comms team will be welcoming the first cohort of funded projects. Communications officers will work directly with the projects to help them understand their obligations with regard to acknowledging and promoting the support of PEACEPLUS.
- A central focus of the SEUPB Communications Team's role will be to "join the dots". That is, helping the public to understand the connection between investment, programme and projects.
- The other focus of the Comms Team will be to help to tell the stories of the projects, making our knowledge and expertise available to support the individual projects to tell their stories, and using our platforms to showcase the work and bring it to an even greater audience
- **The Communications Manager** noted the PEACEPLUS Legacy document, a hard copy of which was available for all attendees. The Communications Manager encouraged all attendees to read the document.

**The representative for The Wheel** asked if there is a Comms toolkit regarding the distribution of information on Calls, that could be used by organisations to inform other organisations about the Programme. She noted that The Wheel could do this.

**The Communications Manager** confirmed that SEUPB does share information with organisations, particularly with the councils. He stated that he will share the toolkit with the PMC.

- **Action point: details of Comms toolkit to be provided to members.**

**The Ulster Farmers' Union representative** echoed **The Wheel representative's** comments, encouraging SEUPB to let members know if there is anything that they can do to boost awareness of PEACEPLUS on their own platforms.

**The Mental Health Reform representative** thanked **the Communications Manager** for his presentation, and echoed that she was also more than willing to share information on behalf of PEACEPLUS. She noted that this was a great opportunity for SEUPB to show leadership in terms of accessibility – for example, to create easy-read versions of documents and captions on videos.

**The Communications Manager** agreed with **the Mental Health Reform representative** and confirmed that SEUPB is working on this. He noted that all of SEUPB's videos are now captioned, and that there is an accessibility policy in place.

**The IBEC representative** noted the importance of using different styles and tones to reach different audiences.

**The Equality Commission (NI) representative** noted that DoF has a unit of behavioural scientists, which looks at how best to break down information for an audience. She noted that this was very insightful, and encouraged SEUPB to make use of it.

**The Monitoring Committee:**

- Noted the Communications Activity since the previous PMC.

## **10. A.O.B.**

**The IBEC representative** noted that the macroeconomic environment will be very important during this Programme period. He advised that the evaluation plan should consider how factors such as inflation may affect projects during the project lifespan.

**The Chair** thanked **the IBEC representative** for his comment. She noted that it is made very clear to applicants that it is not a procurement process.

**The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** advised that value for money is not the be all and end all – value for money does not have a weighting that will skew assessment outcomes. SEUPB is taking the budget that is presented by projects as the budget that is needed. He noted that a small number of projects have input inflationary levels that are considerably in excess of the forecast inflation rate – however, most have put in a reasonable amount, and SEUPB is working with them on that basis. He advised that the key drivers for the assessment process are the output indicators, as that is where impact will be felt.

**The representative for the Department of Health (NI)** thanked **the JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS** for his comments, and noted that both Health departments would welcome further updates regarding the timeline of calls.

**The Chair** thanked everybody for their attendance, questions and interest. She noted that the PMC has an important role in helping to form SEUPB's decisions and thinking. She invited all attendees to lunch, and wished everybody a safe journey home.

**ANNEX I**

**ACTION POINTS/ISSUES OF CLARIFICATION  
ARISING FROM MONITORING COMMITTEE**

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023**

**In-person at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Letterkenny, County Donegal**

**ACTION POINTS**

<b><u>Agenda Item</u></b>	<b><u>Action Point</u></b>	<b><u>Action</u></b>	<b><u>Responsibility</u></b>
7	1	Details of assessments in support of economic appraisals to be provided to members.	The JS Interim Director for PEACEPLUS
9	2	Details of Comms toolkit to be provided to members.	The Communications Manager

## **ANNEX II**

**Attendance – PEACEPLUS Programme Monitoring Committee, 23 November 2023; in-person at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Letterkenny, County Donegal**

### **Chair**

Gina McIntyre Chief Executive, SEUPB

### **Members**

Paul Beattie	Managing Authority, SEUPB
Paul Sheridan	Certifying Authority, SEUPB
Dominic McCullough	Department of Finance NI
Andrew Condon	DPENDPR
Kris Magnus	EU Commission
Harry Welch	Northern Ireland Office
Patrick Devine	NWRA
Monica Fitzpatrick	The Equality Commission (NI)
Rosemary Thomas	CNCC NI
Gerry Murphy	ICTU NI
Prof. Siobhan O'Neill	The NI Mental Health Champion
Fiona Coyle	Mental Health Reform
Joe Hawkins	National Youth Council of Ireland
Suzie Cahn	The Wheel
Michael McKenna	Youth Action NI
Wesley Aston	Ulster Farmers' Union
Michael D'Arcy	IBEC
Thomas Cooney	Irish Rural Link

### **Advisors**

Catherine Clynes	DPENDPR
David Lynch	Department of Finance NI
Andrew Lightfoot	Scottish Government
Fiona Hood	Department of Education NI
Ian Kelly	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment
Orla Dowling	Department of Education IE
Claire Johnston	The Executive Office NI
Dave Loyal	Department of the Economy

Tony McKibben	Department for Communities
Aideen Reilly	DECC
Deirdre Kearney	DRCD
Jacqueline McDevitt	Department of Health NI
Cormac Keating	Department of Health IE
Eoin Barber	DCEDIY
Ian McKenna	DFHERIS
Claire McAllister	DAERA
Ciaran Crosbie	Department of Infrastructure NI
Mark Huddleston	Joint Secretariat, SEUPB
Kerry Rooney	Communications, SEUPB

**Observers**

Peter Molloy	DPENDPR
Gerry Kelly	Department of Foreign Affairs
Sean McAteer	North South Ministerial Council
Deirdre Bourke	North South Ministerial Council
Róisín Keenan	Pobal
Chris Dorrian	Department of Finance NI
Paul Herron	Audit Authority
Caroline Coleman	Scottish Enterprise
Jack McLaughlin	Peace Ambassador
Stephen O'Donnell	Peace Ambassador
Katie Curran	Peace Ambassador
Faith Drummond	Peace Ambassador
Rory Sloan	Peace Ambassador
Gerry Finn	ARAC
Amy Rodgers	Communications, SEUPB
Pamela Meekin	SEUPB

**Secretariat (SEUPB)**

Mary Cousins	Managing Authority, SEUPB (minutes)
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**Apologies**

Anna Shakespeare	Pobal
Cllr. Conor Keelan	EMRA
Cllr. Terry Andrews	NILGA

Ian Murphy	IHREC
Ivan Cooper	The Wheel
Tara Farrell	Irish Rural Link
Dooley Harte	ICTU NI
Kevin Callinan	ICTU IE
Brendan Mooney	NWRA
Celine McStravick	NICVA
Lisa O’Kane	NILGA
Dr. Martin McMullan	Youth Action NI
David Gavaghan	Confederation of British Industry
Aoife Ní Lochlainn	The Environmental Pillar
Frances Curran	Department of Education NI
David O’Neill	DETE
Donal Moran	Department for Infrastructure NI
Maeve Hamilton	Department of the Economy
Andrew Ebrill	Department of Transport
Paula Keatley	DCEDIY
Deirdre Dunworth	DHLGH
Vincent Landers	Department of Education IE



### **ANNEX III**

#### **Glossary of acronyms used in the minutes:**

<b>CBI</b>	<b>Confederation of British industry</b>
<b>CNCC</b>	<b>Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside</b>
<b>DAERA</b>	<b>Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs</b>
<b>DCEDIY</b>	<b>The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Ireland</b>
<b>DfE</b>	<b>Department for the Economy</b>
<b>DRCD</b>	<b>Department of Rural and Community Development</b>
<b>DoF</b>	<b>Department of Finance (Northern Ireland)</b>
<b>DFHERIS</b>	<b>Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Ireland</b>
<b>DoH</b>	<b>Department of Health NI</b>
<b>DPENDPR</b>	<b>Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform</b>
<b>EMRA</b>	<b>Eastern &amp; Midland Regional Authority</b>
<b>ESG</b>	<b>Evaluation Steering Group</b>
<b>EC</b>	<b>European Commission</b>
<b>IBEC</b>	<b>Irish Business and Employers Federation</b>
<b>ICTU</b>	<b>Irish Congress of Trade Unions</b>

<b>MC</b>	<b>Monitoring Committee</b>
<b>NICVA</b>	<b>Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action</b>
<b>NILGA</b>	<b>Northern Ireland Local Government Association</b>
<b>NIO</b>	<b>Northern Ireland Office</b>
<b>NSMC</b>	<b>North South Ministerial Council</b>
<b>NWRA</b>	<b>Northern Western Regional Assembly</b>
<b>SC</b>	<b>Steering Committee</b>
<b>SEUPB</b>	<b>Special European Union Programmes Body</b>
<b>JS</b>	<b>Joint Secretariat</b>
<b>MA</b>	<b>Managing Authority</b>
<b>VSS</b>	<b>Victims and Survivors Service</b>