



STEERING COMMITTEE: RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. The Monitoring Committee has delegated its responsibility for project selection to a Steering Committee as provided by Article 12 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.
2. The Steering Committee is constituted on a cross-border basis to reflect the principles of partnership. The Steering Committees has access to relevant technical and financial expertise when required in order to make an informed decision. The JS (Joint Secretariat) is the secretariat for the Steering Committee.
3. The Rules of Procedure for the Steering Committee are attached to this paper. The rules cover the following:
 - a. Roles and Responsibilities of the Steering Committee;
 - b. Membership of the Steering Committee;
 - c. Chairperson;
 - d. Joint Secretariat;
 - e. Meetings of the Steering Committee;
 - f. Agenda;
 - g. Steering Committee Decision;
 - h. Presenting Projects by Written Procedures;
 - i. Applicant Appeal of Steering Committee Decision;
 - j. Code of Conduct;
 - k. Conflict of Interest.
4. The Monitoring Committee is required to agree the composition of the Steering Committee as per the attached Rules of Procedure. The Monitoring Committee is requested to be aware of gender balance whilst agreeing the nominations.

Recommendation

The Monitoring Committee is requested to:

1. Agree the Rules of Procedure for the Steering Committee;
2. Agree the membership of the Steering Committee

RULES OF PROCEDURE**1. Roles and Responsibilities of the Steering Committee**

1.1 In line with Article 12 of Regulation (EU) 1299/2013, which enables the delegation of responsibility for the selection of projects by the Programme Monitoring Committee to a Steering Committee, and the implementation arrangements noted in the INTERREG V Cooperation Programme, Steering Committees are established to:

- Approve calls for applications;
- Make decisions on project applications and the allocation of grant award;
- Ensure that projects approved for funding address key aims and requirements of the Programmes, namely;
 - a. To ensure contribution to respective results and outputs for each Programme;
 - b. INTERREG IVA – To ensure compliance with cross cutting themes – equality, sustainable development, cross border cooperation.
- Make decisions demonstrating the most efficient use of grant aid and ensure delivery of the outputs required within the Cooperation Programme;
- Ensure project approvals are within the financial confines of the relevant theme;
- Ensure all decisions are in accordance with EU law and Programme requirements;
- Be the final decision making body to allocate monies to projects.

In carrying out its business the Steering Committee will:

- Analyse information provided in relation to project applications;

- Seek clarity and additional information, as necessary, on any aspect of a project proposal in order to ensure an informed, justified and fair decision;
- Focus discussions and provide opinions based on the project assessment information provided;

1.2 Members will be expected to participate fully in all relevant Steering Committee activities, including any training provided. Consistent inability to participate will result in a re-assessment of membership. This is defined as three absences in any 12 month rolling period, after which the JS will request the Managing Authority to nominate a replacement member, unless there are extenuating circumstances, as deemed by the Chair.

1.3 Members should be advised that within the first 2 years of Programme implementation there could be up to 10 Steering Committee meetings (average 5 per annum) and as such members should be cognisant that their ability to attend is a requirement of committee membership.

2 Membership of the Steering Committee

2.1. The composition of the INTERREG V Steering Committees is set out in Annex A. Other individuals may be invited by the Chairperson to attend meetings, in relation to specific agenda items for the purpose of providing advice to the committee.

2.2. Alternative representatives, who will act as a deputy for members, must be provided by the nominating organisation. If neither the member nor their deputy is available to attend a particular meeting, the member may submit written comments in advance of the meeting on any of the items of business scheduled to be considered at that meeting.

2.3. When selecting members and alternates, the nominating organisation should be cognisant of the requirement to ensure gender equality within the composition of the Steering Committee membership.

2.4. The organisations making up the membership will be made public on the SEUPB web site.

- 2.5. In order to ensure complementarity with other Programmes, representatives from appropriate, selected organisations may be asked to attend meetings in the capacity of an observer.

3. Chairperson

SEUPB is the designated Chair of the Steering Committee.

The Chair's role is to:

- i) Facilitate and streamline committee meeting discussions on project applications to ensure that all members of the committee have the opportunity to express their views and opinions;
- ii) Facilitate cross examination and analysis of project applications;
- iii) Facilitate a consensus decision from the Committee on project applications

The Chair reserves the right to be a voting member on the committee should this be required.

4. Joint Secretariat

- 4.1. The Joint Secretariat within SEUPB will provide support to the Steering Committee in the selection of operations, as defined by Article 12 of Council Regulation (EU) 1299/2013, to ensure they can fulfil their appointed role. Paragraph 1 of Article 12 states "Operations under Cooperation Programmes shall be selected by a monitoring committee as referred to in Article 47 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. That monitoring committee may set up a steering committee that acts under its responsibility for the selection of operations".
- 4.2. The Joint Secretariat will be responsible for developing a project pipeline, for launching calls in line with the criteria defined in the Cooperation Programme and

agreed by the Monitoring Committee, for assessing applications, and for presenting these to the relevant Steering Committee for consideration.

- 4.3. Joint Secretariat shall assist and support the Steering Committee. The Joint Secretariat shall be responsible for facilitating meetings of the Steering Committee by preparing and distributing the relevant documentation relating to the meetings.
- 4.4. The Joint Secretariat shall issue Letters of Offer to successful project applicants.
- 4.5. The Joint Secretariat shall facilitate travel claims for payment from Steering Committee Members.
- 4.6. All communications relating to the business of the Steering Committee shall be addressed to the Joint Secretariat at Special EU Programmes Body, 7th Floor, Clarence Street West Building, Clarence Street West, Belfast BT2 7GP, Northern Ireland.

5 Meetings of the Steering Committee

- 5.1 The frequency of Steering Committee meetings will be based on the needs of the Programme.
- 5.2 A quorum of seven people will be required in order for each meeting to proceed.
- 5.3 Where practical and possible, meetings will not last more than one day, although in exceptional circumstances a meeting may span two days.
- 5.4 The venue for meetings will be accessible to all members and may take place in different locations throughout the eligible area.
- 5.5 Times of meetings will be organised with due regard to professional and caring roles of members.

- 5.6 In line with the principle of the code of conduct on partnership laid out in the Delegated Act (EU) 240/2014 (code of conduct on partnership), the notice given of meetings, and the transmission of the related documents, shall not be less than 10 working days.
- 5.7 In order to promote objectivity and the exchange of frank and impartial views and comments, it is essential that members respect the confidential nature of the proceedings. Accordingly, members must not report the content of any part of an application or report any detailed discussions to a third party. In particular, members must not attribute any discussion, score or comment to an individual member(s) of the Steering Committee.
- 5.8 Draft minutes of Steering Committees will be recorded and will be distributed within 15 working days of the meeting. The approved minutes of each meeting will be publicly available.

6 Agenda

- 6.1 All proposed business to be transacted shall be specified in the draft Agenda, which shall be circulated with the confirmation notice of the meeting no later than 10 working days in advance of the meeting. The draft Agenda shall be prepared by the Joint Secretariat and authorised by the Chairperson.
- 6.2 Any member may propose additional appropriate items for inclusion on the draft Agenda for the approval of the Chairperson. Any such proposals and supporting papers must be lodged with the Joint Secretariat at least five working days in advance of the meeting.
- 6.3 Agenda items are to be agreed at the commencement of each meeting. Other appropriate items may be considered under “Any Other Business” as decided by the Chairperson or at the request of a member. Any such proposal by a member shall be subject to the ruling of the Chairperson as to its admissibility for that meeting.

7 Steering Committee Decision

The decision for each application will be recorded by the JS on a decision sheet which is signed by the Chairperson and one Committee member.

In the case of approval or rejection by written procedure (see below), the JS will bring the decision sheets for these applications to the next Steering Committee meeting for signature.

8. Presenting Projects by Written Procedures to the Steering Committee

If the JS requires a decision on an application, it may be deemed appropriate to request the relevant Steering Committee to consider a project by written procedure. This process will only occur when it has been deemed not possible to convene a Steering Committee meeting within a reasonable timeframe, if there is a single item agenda or if there is any other exceptional reason.

It may also be appropriate to present a project by written procedure to the relevant Steering Committee meeting in the following circumstances:

- an amendment is being recommended to the existing letter of offer;
- a change to the lead partner after the project was first approved by the steering committee;
- a change to the scope and content of the project;
- a change to the value of the project;

When the Chair of the Steering Committee decides that a project should be presented to the Steering Committee for a decision by written procedure, the following process will be followed:

- a. JS will issue all relevant documents to the Steering Committee with a recommendation. Members will be given ten working days to respond unless the JS Director deems otherwise by exception;

- b. Once the deadline for responses has passed, if there is a consensus of opinion, the Chair will confirm that opinion and inform the Steering Committee accordingly. If there is no consensus, or upon request from a member of the Steering Committee, a meeting of the Steering Committee will be arranged.

9. Applicant Appeal of Steering Committee Decision

Steering Committee members should be aware that decisions made by the committee can be reviewed under the SEUPB Review Process at the request of the applicant, or could be subject to Judicial Review through the legal system.

The SEUPB Review Procedure is to ensure that the decisions taken and procedures followed by Steering Committees for individual applications are applied fairly and consistently. The Review Panel will consider appeals on the following grounds:

- the outcome was unreasonable **or**
- the proper procedures were not followed.

Appeals on any other ground will not be considered.

The Steering Committee will be informed of the outcome of any reviews.

10 Interpretation of Rules of Procedure

The ruling of the Chairperson will settle any disputes in relation to the interpretation of the Rules of Procedure.

CODE OF CONDUCT

This **code of conduct** sets out the core principles of **conduct** and ethics expected of the Steering Committee Members.

1. **Selflessness:** Members have a duty to take decisions solely in terms of public interest. Members must not act in order to gain financially or to gain other material benefit for themselves, family or friends.
2. **Integrity:** Members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned. They should not behave improperly and should, on all occasions, avoid the appearance of such behaviour.
3. **Objectivity:** Members should only make decisions on the merit of the application dossier of the project applicant and the information provided by the Joint Secretariat.
4. **Accountability:** Members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly in their role as Steering Committee Member.
5. **Openness:** Members should undertake their responsibilities in an open and transparent manner.
6. **Honesty:** Members should conduct business in a truthful manner
7. **Leadership:** Members should actively promote and support the seven principles.
8. **Confidentiality:** Committee members are required at all times to observe and respect the sensitivity and confidentiality of all meetings, project discussions and decisions on grant award this includes but is not limited to:
 - a) all meeting papers provided in advance and during any Steering Committee meetings;
 - b) all discussions in relation project proposals (inc. presentations, committee member comments and discussions and project decisions).

Committee members are required to respect the right of SEUPB and proposed projects to acknowledge decisions on grant award at the appropriate time in accordance with the SEUPB project approval procedures.

These provisions shall equally apply to voting members, their deputies or substitutes, as well as observers and any other experts invited to attend Steering Committee meetings. In the case these provisions are not respected by a member, the individual may be revoked by the Chair and replaced on the Committee.

Completed by Steering Committee Member

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest is a situation in which a person has a private or personal interest sufficient to appear to influence the objective exercise of his or her official duties as a Steering Committee Member for the INTERREG V Programme.

1 Registration of Conflict of Interest

- 1.1 Members have a responsibility to act in terms of the public interest and must not misuse their position. Furthermore, they should not misuse any information obtained in the course of their position as member of the Steering Committee to further their professional or private interests, or those of anyone they may have a relationship with.
- 1.2 As conflicts of interest can arise in many different situations, members must be vigilant so that any such conflicts can be identified promptly and appropriate action taken.
- 1.3 Members are not permitted to receive or accept hospitality, benefits or gifts for themselves, their family or close personal relations from organisations or people with whom they might have dealings as a consequence of being a Steering Committee Member.
- 1.4 Members are required to complete the register of conflict interests prior to attending the first decision making committee. This register of interest shall be retained and held on file by SEUPB and shall be updated and completed at least annually (See Annex B).
- 1.5 It is the responsibility of the individual concerned to identify any interests they wish to register. It is also the responsibility of the individual to ensure that the register is kept updated as and when their involvement in any other interests requires them to do so.

2 Rules of Operation at Steering Committee

- 2.1 Members should consider whether they have any direct or indirect involvement in the project, or could be reasonably perceived as having an interest, and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest at the Steering Committee meeting. Any interests are noted in the minutes of the Steering Committee meeting.
- 2.2 Members who have an interest (financial or non-financial) in the project which will be assessed must not involve themselves in any decision on allocation of services or resources from which they will benefit. No Member can advocate or represent a project in any way where their employing authority has a financial or other formally expressed interest in the project. This also applies to organisations with which they are involved, their family, friends or anyone with whom they may have a relationship.
- 2.3 Where members regard themselves as having personal interest in the project, they must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgement of the public interest.
- 2.4 In the event of any of the above conflicts of interest arising, this should be declared to the Chair of the Steering Committee in advance of any discussion about the application and the Committee member must leave the room.
- 2.5 Where a member has been personally involved in a project - either directly in the drafting of the project application as a Lead Partner, or on a consultative basis as a partner or in any other way - that member should be entirely absent from the meeting room when the project is discussed. Furthermore, that member should take no part in the decision making process with regard to the said application. The member should not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and should not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter.

ANNEX A**COMPOSITION OF STEERING COMMITTEES****INTERREG V**

A single Steering Committee, and its rolling membership depending on thematic objective, has responsibility for ensuring the delivery of all thematic objectives within the Programme as follows:

- i) Research and Innovation
- ii) Environment
- iii) Sustainable Transport
- iv) Health

The Steering Committee is structured on the following basis:

Sector / Organisation	Number
Chair (SEUPB)	1
Member States (DFP, DPER and Scottish Government)	3
Accountable Departments*	3
Regional/Sub-Regional/Local Government Interests, one from each jurisdiction;	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) • Northern & Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) • Scotland Europa & Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) 	
Cross Cutting Interests/Social and Economic Partners, one from each category:	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Organisations • Environmental Organisations • Voluntary and Community Sectors • Trade Unions • Business • Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries 	
Total	16

Where applicable, representatives of The Priority Area Coordinators (The University of Plymouth and The National University of Ireland Galway) will be invited to attend Steering Committee meetings in the capacity of an Observer.

Notes

** The relevant Accountable Department (Ireland and Northern Ireland) for the theme in which the application has been submitted will have one representative on the Committee. Whilst the Scottish Government does not have accountable departments, it may nominate an additional representative from the relevant policy department.*

Annex B**Special EU Programmes Body****REGISTER OF INTEREST –STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER***(NOTE: THIS FORM MUST BE UPDATED ON AN ANNUAL BASIS)*

Name of Steering Committee member	
Year	
Organisation	
Interest	
Any other pertinent details	
Comments by SEUPB (if appropriate)	
Action taken (where appropriate)	

Completed by Steering Committee Member

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Noted/Reviewed by Committee Chair

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Register updated by

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____