



**INTERREG VA Programme Monitoring Committee**  
**EU Programme for Cross-Border Cooperation (INTERREG VA)**  
**E-Cohesion**

The purpose of this paper is two-fold; (i) to inform the Monitoring Committee of the regulatory requirements for e-Cohesion during the programme 2014-2020; and (ii) to provide an update on implementation of e-Cohesion system.

**1. Background.**

The implementation of e-Cohesion is one of the elements aimed at simplifying the implementation of ESIF funded programmes during the new programme period. The concept of e-Cohesion involves the electronic exchange of documents and data and is intended to reduce the administrative burden for beneficiaries.

**2. Regulations.**

The Common Provision Regulation 1303/2013 contains a number of articles concerning the electronic exchange of information between beneficiaries and relevant bodies. The most relevant articles are article 122(3), article 15 (1) (b)(vi), article 15(2)(b), article 96(6)(c), article 59(1) and article 140.

The regulations impose a deadline for the availability of an e-Cohesion compliant system to be available before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015. If the deadline is reached without a complete implementation there are a number of potential outcomes, the least serious of which is reporting the technical reasons for the delay in the 2016 AIR and completion of the implementation as soon as possible. The most serious, where there is no real goodwill to reduce the administrative burden, could lead to the imposition of a financial correction following a compliance audit.

### **3. Areas of Programme Management and Implementation impacted by e-Cohesion.**

To achieve the objective of simplification, the implementation of e-Cohesion will have a wide impact on a number of areas, including but not limited to:

- the electronic submissions of applications, assessments and awards of grant;
- the monitoring and reporting of progress on the achievement of milestones and outputs;
- the submission of expenditure claims for payment, the verification and payment of valid claims;
- submission and management of financial forecasts;
- the exchange of information related to management verifications and audits;
- the declarations of expenditure to the EC;
- the monitoring reports and evaluations to the EC;
- the recording, storage and retrieval of information.

### **4. Implementation Status of the systems to enable e-Cohesion.**

In preparation for the new programme period 2014-2020, the EC have implemented a new relational database SFC2014 which has full e-Cohesion capabilities.

After a public procurement process, DFP have appointed a contractor to develop a database for all Northern Ireland ESIF programmes which will meet the regulatory requirements for e-Cohesion. DFP are managing the contract on behalf of all Northern Ireland based Managing Authorities. A statement of requirements has been developed which includes the requirements for INTERREG VA and PEACE IV programmes. Implementation work commenced in June 2015.

A phased delivery of the system is planned with the appointed contractor taking inputs from an experienced cross departmental user group.

The first phase of delivery is the electronic submission of applications. The original schedule committed delivery of an application module in July 2015. The delivery of the applications module has been delayed to August 2015. SEUPB have provided all the detailed information required to the contractor's satisfaction on time to secure delivery of the applications module in a July timeframe.

All subsequent phases are due to be delivered throughout 2015 to meet the regulatory deadline for full implementation before 31 December 2015. Given the delays experienced to date there is a significant risk for delayed implementation.

The Monitoring Committee is requested to note the progress and the risk in meeting the e-cohesion regulatory requirements.