



European Union

European Regional
Development Fund
Investing in your future

**Minutes of the
Stage Two PEACE IV Review Panel Meeting**

Friday 29th September 2017, 10.30am
SEUPB Offices, Belfast

Project Applicant – Intercomm
Project Title – Reconciling Communities: A Strategic Learning
Initiatives Project

In Attendance:	Gina McIntyre	SEUPB (Chair)
	Sean Kelly	MC Panel Member
	Ivan Cooper	MC Panel Member
	Robbie Davis	Independent Member
	James Russell	SEUPB
	Tara McCormick	SEUPB (minutes)

1. Introductions

The Chair welcomed Members to the Stage Two Review Panel meeting of the PEACE IV 2014 – 2020 Programme and introduced James Russell as the SEUPB's new Managing Authority Manager.

The Chair outlined that the Review Procedure for Unsuccessful Applicants is currently being reviewed and redrafted by the Managing Authority, to ensure continued relevance for new and existing applicants. The Managing Authority is also drafting submission templates, in order to mitigate the submission of excessive review material following requests for review.

2. Register of Interests/Conflicts of Interest

Robbie Davis submitted a potential Conflict of Interest in the days prior to the meeting. The Review Panel noted Mr Davis' reasons and agreed, given that the work ended more than two year's previously, its irrelevance in relation to the project being reviewed.

3. Review

The Chair reminded the panel that the applicant had requested a review on the grounds that; “the outcome was a decision that no reasonable person would have made on the basis of the information provided to the Steering Committee” (SC) and James Russell, representing Managing Authority, outlined the procedure for Stage 2 review.

The project was assessed under 7 scoring criteria, with a minimum score of 3/5 required in each. Following assessment and Steering Committee consideration, the application failed to score the minimum (3) under two of the criteria, namely;

- (a) Criterion 1: Contribution of the project to the defined results and outputs of the programme, and;
- (b) Criterion 2: Quality of project design.

The Panel noted the scoring.

The Chair confirmed that in line with Section 4.0 of the Review Procedure, the panel would consider ten-minute presentations from both the applicant and the Joint Secretariat (JS); both parties then joined the meeting.

The Chair introduced the Panel to Conor Maskey and Assistant Chief Constable Steven Martin, representing Intercomm Ireland and project partner, the PSNI, and John Greer and Paul Boylan of the SEUPB’s Joint Secretariat (JS).

The Chair reminded the applicant that the Review Panel will make a decision based on the reasonableness of the decision made by the Steering Committee, and not on the merits of the project.

The Intercomm Ireland representatives then gave a ten minute Prezi presentation which outlined their reasons for requesting a review of the SC decision. The main points of the presentation were;

Contribution to defined results and outputs of the programme

- The scoring of 2 under this criterion was unjustified and did not take adequate account of the unique nature of the partnership, with Intercomm providing the policing organisations with access to the community;
- The applicant recognised they did not place sufficient emphasis on the strategic, community and impact-focused strengths of the partnership however, the scoring is not reflective of the deep community reach of the partnership nor the regional impact;
- The assessment of the targeted numbers in the project has misinterpreted the focused, critical mass approach designed to target 4 geographical areas of need and impact beyond the actual number of participants;
- The application was clear in the project's contribution to attitudinal and behavioural change as per the programme indicators, and;
- The application of Intercomm's interventions and project approach do not necessarily require large numbers of beneficiaries in order to achieve transformative outcomes and wider societal and regional impact.

Quality of project design

- The Co-Design and Demonstration projects elements of the project set it apart from the Intercomm projects previously supported by the SEUPB, and its innovation among other Peace projects in the region is not recognised in the scoring;
- The application clearly evidences how the Cognitive Behavioural Model and Theory of Change are relative to the defined results and outputs indicators, through attitudinal and behavioural change in "hard to reach" individuals, groups and communities;
- The legacy of the demonstration projects has been misunderstood, in that they are based at a strategic level, with an aim to influence policy and bridge the gap in support to the East Crime Corridor;
- Each demonstration project participant has the potential to instigate change in the entire region;

- The applicant believed there had been a misinterpretation of the exit strategy in terms of assessing the reach, impact and longevity of demonstration projects;
- The applicant believes an unfair weighting had been placed on the International visits in scoring the project design criterion;
- Following SEUPB Stage 1 feedback on the international visits element, the applicant remained committed to their inclusion in the application and were not advised to remove them, and;
- The application met Value for Money thresholds, in contradiction to the scoring around international visits.

The Chair thanked the applicants for their presentation and invited the JS to provide a ten minute verbal response, which included the following main points;

- The project was assessed in a highly competitive call and the introduction of new material to the Review Panel unfairly disadvantages other projects;
- The assessment process is based on the application, supporting documents and points of clarity, and does not include assumptions or un-evidenced information;

Contribution to defined results and outputs of the programme

- The project partners' capacity to deliver the programme outputs is assessed as standard;
- In evidence of the unbiased assessment of partnerships, Intercomm, the PSNI and An Garda Siochana are all in receipt of funding as partners in other projects under the PEACE IV Programme; it is therefore difficult to evidence the unique nature of the partnership;
- The application did not provide enough evidence to demonstrate the impact on the region beyond the actual number of participants;
- Outside increased dialogue between the limited number of project participants, no evidence was presented on how this translates to a transformative experience at a regional level nor a subsequent regional impact;
- Examples were provided of applications under the call which successfully demonstrated transformative effect and regional impact;

Quality of project design

- The application had not evidenced the project's uniqueness, as:
 - The same partners were involved in the PEACE III CAPT project, a feature of which was the community/police/cross-border nature of the partnership;
 - The CAPT Future Generations (FG) project also targeted participants from "disconnected communities";
 - The Co-Design element, while not present in the CAPT project, features heavily in the PEACE IV Children and Young People Priority, and;
 - International Study visits were not considered unique as the CAPT project featured trips to Kosovo and the Middle East;
- The application did not provide sufficient evidence on the legacy of the demonstration projects, dissemination of learning or evidence of transformative effect at a regional level against the limited number of participants;
- The International Study visits were not a subject of specific focus in the assessment, nor were they the sole factor in determining the scoring, and;
- The assessment determined there was insufficient justification for the visits and insufficient evidence presented that they represent value for money;

In summary the Joint Secretariat stated:

- A degree of new information was supplied within the applicant's request for review documentation and cannot be considered by the Review Panel;
- The application had merit, however, it was lacking in evidence on regional impact, dissemination of learning and transformative impact.

The Chair thanked the JS for their presentation, and invited questions from the Panel.

The Panel made the following comments;

- Thanked the applicant for a clear and succinct presentation accurately reflecting the written correspondence;
- Queried how the exit strategy would secure the legacy of the project;

The applicant provided the following response;

- The establishment of a cross- border policing network provides a legacy in itself;
- The assessment scored down the project based on the perception of the three day demonstration projects and their limited number of participants; these three days were dedicated to the design and development of the demonstration projects prior to implementation;
- The small pool of participants represents targeted individuals in the most hard-to-reach communities, with links to dissident republican activities;
- The demonstration projects would require further funding to continue post- SEUPB financial assistance, which would have been explored at a later stage;
- The applicant acknowledged this section of the application may have been open to interpretation and has been a learning process for the organisation, and;
- The applicant wished to adhere to the co-design element in order to achieve maximum reach however, this may have presented as a low number of participants.

The JS representatives provided the following responses and comments;

- With regards to the JS “misinterpreting” the role of the demonstration projects, the same interpretation was made by both the JS and the SC during their own assessments;
- The table provided on the demonstration projects lacked detail in comparison to other projects in the competition, and;
- The application states the demonstration projects are “time- bound and not sustainable after the time period” and does not provide detail on securing later funding.

The applicant queried whether projects are scored against other projects in the call or on a standalone basis.

The Chair responded, stating that applications are scored on their own merits in a competitive call for funding.

The applicant thanked the Review Panel and, together with the representatives of the JS, left the meeting room. The Chair opened the meeting to Panel discussion.

In advance of considering the three criteria, the Panel made the following observations;

- There appears to be a lack of planning and information behind the exit strategy in comparison to the significant amount of funding being requested;
- The appeal around the co-design element was not strong enough;
- The applicant appeared to acknowledge the failings in the application;
- There was a greater focus on the exit strategy issues in the presentation than on other issues of greater significance to the scoring;
- The JS presentation was evidence based and concise;
- There was discussion on the Value for Money criterion and how Value for Money on individual costs is not represented within the application, in this case, on the international study visits, and;
- The project was evidently not unique, there are a number of collaborative policing projects in existence in the Programme, and;
- The Panel agreed with the JS assessment that there was insufficient detail around the legacy and transformative effect of the project.

Criterion 1: Contribution of the project to the defined results and outputs of the programme

In relation to the score of 2 awarded to Criterion 1 - Contribution of the project to the defined results and outputs of the programme, the Panel concluded the presentation had not presented them with sufficient reasoning to amend the scoring. The scoring awarded by the Steering Committee was **upheld**.

Criterion 2: Quality of project design

In relation to the score of 2 awarded to Criterion 2 – Project Design, the Panel concluded the presentation had not presented them with sufficient reasoning to amend the scoring. The scoring was **upheld**.

The Review Panel concluded that, based on the information presented to the Steering Committee and that presented to the Review Panel, the decision of the Steering Committee was not unreasonable and therefore should be upheld.

The Chair thanked the Panel for their participation and closed the meeting.