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**NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE BORDER REGION OF IRELAND
EU PROGRAMME FOR PEACE & RECONCILIATION
(2014 - 2020)**

CCI No: 2014TC16RFPC001

MINUTES MONITORING COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 7th November 2018

Fermanagh House, Enniskillen

Attendance

A list of attendees and apologies is attached at Annex II.

Welcome and introduction by Chairperson

The Chair welcomed attendees to this seventh meeting of the PEACE IV Programme Monitoring Committee 2014-2020, and introduced **the European Commission Desk Officer, Tamara Pavlin** and her colleague, **Guus Muijzers**.

The Chair also introduced the new **JS Director, Leanne Massey** and recorded her thanks to **JS Manager Paul Boylan** for filling the JS Director role during the transition.

The Chair also welcomed a number of new Members and Advisors to the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC), including;

- **Tanya Hamilton** of the **Executive Office**, replacing **Colin Moffett**;
- **Meadhbh Devilly** of the **Department of Education and Skills**, replacing **Kieran Ormond**;
- **Geraldine McCarthy** of the **Department for Children and Youth Affairs**, replacing **Declan Crowe**, and;
- **Frances Curran** of the **Department of Education**, replacing **Andrew Bell**.

The Chair also introduced **Gerry Finn** as the new Chair of SEUPB's Audit and Risk Committee,

Gerry Finn thanked **the Chair** and referred to his position on Programme Monitoring Committees for previous Programmes. He explained the role of the Audit and Risk Committee in analysing accounting practices to ensure the SEUPB's accounts and finances link to the work of the Monitoring Committee.

The Chair provided an update on developments in Programme implementation since the previous PMC meeting on 01 May 2018, as follows;

- In May 2018, the EU Commission released their Multi Financial Framework Budget for the period post-2020, which references a "Peace Plus" Programme; a combination of the PEACE Programmes and INTERREG activities, funded by €60 million EU funding, and a further €60 million funded by the Irish Government. While Peace Plus is subject to the finalisation of negotiations and the UK's involvement and contribution, it is seen as a positive step for the future of PEACE and INTERREG activities in the region;
- The SEUPB has appointed ASM to conduct exploratory research into potential areas for future funding on a cross-community and cross-border basis. ASM may contact PMC Members to request input to the research;
- In August 2018, the HM Treasury funding guarantee which provided a level of reassurance for the UK share of project funding was extended to the end of the current Programming Period, including Technical Assistance;
- Northern Ireland remains without a functioning Executive and the SEUPB continues to work with the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to mitigate any potential risk to the Programme;
- Assessment of the second Shared Spaces call is ongoing, with the aim of holding a Steering Committee in December;
- The period since the previous PMC has been a busy time in terms of visits, events and networking. In particular, **the Chair** highlighted a SEUPB showcase exhibition held in the Houses of the Oireachtas, Dublin on 16th May 2018, sponsored by the Ceann Comairle of Dáil Eireann, Seán Ó Fearghail;

- On the 23 May, the Committee of the Regions Conference of Presidents visited Newry and **the Chair** delivered a presentation on the implications for PEACE that Brexit poses;
- On 11 June, **the Chair** gave evidence at the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly on the impact of the PEACE Programmes and EU funding in the region;
- On 21 June, 5 projects under both PEACE and INTERREG were invited to a state dinner organised by An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar in honour of the EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, which was an excellent opportunity to showcase their work;
- On 13th September the SEUPB hosted Minister of State for European Affairs, Helen McEntee, who visited SEUPB's Belfast office and 3 PEACE IV projects;
- On 17 September, the SEUPB facilitated a project visit for the Minister for Finance & Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe TD;
- On 24 September, the UK Deputy Ambassador to the EU, Katrina Williams, spent the day with a number of PEACE projects in Newry, learning about their work and the effect of Brexit on people working in the Border Area;
- Later in November the SEUPB will host Sue Grey, the new DoF Permanent Secretary in visiting projects;
- 8 training sessions have been held for PEACE IV projects, attended by over 260 project participants, and;
- The Committee will hear from the consultants undertaking the Implementation and Children and Young People 14 to 24 Impact evaluations later in the agenda.

1. Agree Agenda

The Agenda was adopted.

2. Project Presentation – Sharing From the Start project

The Chair reminded Members of previous interest in visiting the projects being discussed in PMC meeting papers. To this end, **the Chair** thanked Lauri McCusker and Catherine Ward of Fermanagh Trust for hosting today's meeting, and welcomed them and representatives of the Sharing from the Start project who will provide Members with a presentation on their work.

The Chair thanked the project presenters and emphasised the benefits of the Committee hearing directly from projects.

The EU Commission representative provided the following comments;

- Thanked the project representatives for their presentation, and discussed how this reinforces the original decision to incorporate Shared Education under PEACE IV funding;
- Offered support for **Dr Siobhan Fitzpatrick's** comments around Early Years as a critical space for peace-building;
- Welcomed the section of the presentation which outlined relationship-building among parents beyond the young children, and addressing the objectives of the Programme.

Dr Siobhan Fitzpatrick, Early Years CEO, thanked **the EU Commission representative** for her comments, and pointed out the effect of the funding on young children in peace-building, the wider family and community, and the sustainability created by training teachers and carers.

The Department of Finance representative also thanked the project representative and emphasised the importance of attitudinal changes and peace-building in areas beyond Belfast and the Peace Walls.

3. Conflict of Interest

The Pobal representative declared a potential conflict of interest through his involvement in the SEUPB's Children and Young People's Quality and Impact Body. It was deemed that this interest was not in conflict with the business of today's meeting.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting – 01 May 2018

The Ulster Farmers Union/ Rural Development Council representative requested an amendment to an error in the attendance record of the previous meeting.

Following this amendment, the minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.

The approved minutes will be published on the SEUPB website.

5. Matters Arising

Referring to the Local Authority feedback in the minutes of the previous meeting, **the NILGA/ DUP representative** requested an update on the eMS system and was assured this would be addressed under **the MA Director's** implementation presentation.

The Committee noted the resolution of all matters arising from the previous meeting.

6. Update on Programme Implementation

The MA Director introduced the Programme Implementation paper and provided a detailed presentation, outlining:

- 88 approved projects in the PEACE IV Programme, representing €223.7 million (ERDF + match) or 83% Programme commitment;
- The 2017 Annual Implementation Report and Citizens' Summary, approved at the previous PMC, has been submitted to the EU Commission;
- The EU Commission formally approved modifications to the PEACE IV Cooperation Programme on 26 July 2018, regarding financial reallocation, modification of outputs and new output indicators;
- A new Dashboard has launched, a management information tool to capture self-certified data on outputs and spend;
- 86% of the Performance Framework target on spend has been received by projects;
- N+3 expenditure of €3.6 million was declared to the EU Commission in October 2018. The SEUPB are working towards the €23.9 million target for 2019
- Following detailed discussion with Member States, final approval for the Peace Platform business case has been received. The Peace Platform will be a powerful tool in recording the legacy of Peace funding in Northern Ireland. The SEUPB will work with CPD to procure resources.

Following his presentation, **the MA Director** addressed **the NILGA/ DUP representative's** query on the progress of the eMS system. Following feedback provided by projects and the Implementation Evaluation, the SEUPB are aware of issues within the system. As a result, the SEUPB commissioned an independent review and **the MA Director** met with the system developers in October to discuss the review's recommendations and areas of improvement to enhance the user experience for both the projects and SEUPB staff. Feedback from this meeting is pending and the SEUPB will continue to work closely with CPB and INTERACT to resolve the issues identified.

The Chair outlined the support provided to projects in the use of the eMS system, and current efforts to re-allocate resources to assist projects experiencing difficulties on the system on a one- to- one basis.

The JS Director provided a presentation on implementation by thematic area which included the following main points;

- **The JS Director** introduced herself and outlined the role of the JS team in this new stage of project implementation;
- Since the previous PMC meeting, two Steering Committee meetings have taken place, approving both a number of amendments within Local Authority rebids and the Children and Young People objective;
- The JS is progressing the second Shared Spaces call;
- €45.8m remains to be allocated across the Programme;
- With the assistance of the Accountable Departments, the Children and Young People theme is overcommitted, in anticipation of attrition within that objective;
- Significant funding remains to be allocated under the Shared Spaces objective. **The JS Director** discussed the challenging timeframe in approving Shared Space projects and allocating funds by the end of 2018, without compromising the integrity of the process;
- 19 projects are currently funded under the Building Positive Relations objective, with funding of additional projects, anticipated in 2019;
- The Shared Education objective has exceeded targets in terms of the number of schools involved, and is on track to exceed the 2018 milestone target in pupils participating;

- Achievement of the Children and Young People 14- 24 interim 2018 target is a critical factor in whether to proceed to phase 2; this target has been achieved, with 1,042 participants completing the programme and 1,752 participating.
- Since the previous PMC meeting, almost full commitment has been achieved across the Local Authority Action Plans. JS officers and Peace Officers are working through various changes on the eMS system to provide a number of Local Authorities with an updated Letter of Offer following the rebid process, and;
- **The JS Director** outlined the challenges in the Local Authority Action Plan rebid process, and the allocation of additional resource to this theme to ensure the effective processing of claims.

The Chair thanked the **MA** and **JS Directors** for their presentations, and asked that her gratitude be placed on record to **the Department for Communities (DfC)** and the **Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)**, for their work and support to the SEUPB in progressing the Shared Spaces call.

The EU Commission Desk Officer made the following comments;

- Thanked the **JS and MA Directors** for their detailed presentations, and commended the SEUPB on the achievement of 83% commitment;
- Noted the high risk associated with the Shared Space call, and emphasised the importance of maintaining quality and integrity in the approach, as the SEUPB have previously been commended for;
- Asked the SEUPB to inform the EU Commission of any significant issues around the Shared Space objective between the Steering Committee and the end of 2018;
- Asked the SEUPB to inform the EU Commission of developments under the Regional objective's "Building Peace Through Emotional Resilience" call, and to ensure complementarity with other projects funded in the Health domain, such as INTERREG's Multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (MACE) project, which also addresses mental health issues in young people;
- Welcomed the approval of the Peace Platform and congratulated the parties involved in progressing this important legacy project;
- Informed Members that, since the previous PMC, the EU Parliament has released a report on the impact of cohesion policy in Northern Ireland over the previous decade. On 11 September 2018, the plenary sitting of the EU Parliament passed a resolution on the report; **the EU Commission representative** recommended PMC Members read the report, which recommends the continuation of both PEACE and

INTERREG funding and calls for sharing of lessons learned and good practice in Europe and beyond, and;

- While N+3 was referenced in the presentation by **the Director of the MA**, the **EU Commission representative** advised the SEUPB to include an update on progress against the N+ 3 target in the next PMC papers.

The Chair thanked **the EU Commission representative** and reiterated her own enthusiasm for the implementation of the Peace platform.

AP 1: Achievement against N+3 to be included in future PMC papers

The Monitoring Committee made the following comments and observations:

- **The NILGA/ SF representative** declared an interest as he has been privy to potential Shared Spaces applicants seeking support through Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council;
- Relayed positive feedback from those groups and Council Officers on the additional pre-application assistance provided for Shared Spaces applicants, and expressed his hope that the efforts will be reflected in the quality of the applications;
- Queried whether the Shared Spaces objective still aimed to fund eight projects, and whether there could be additional funds available if more than eight projects produced applications of a high standard;
- Welcomed the funding available under the “Building Peace Through Emotional Resilience” call, and discussed the relevance and topical nature of the issue in today’s climate, and;
- Welcomed the funding available for the Building Community Cohesion call, and its source in the Technical Assistance budget.

The MA Director provided a response, stating that assessment of the Shared Spaces call is ongoing, and the Accountable Departments and Steering Committees will take the decision on whether to fund additional projects, once the assessment process has been completed.

The Chair outlined further detail on the two proposals currently under discussion – the “Building Peace Through Emotional Resilience” call, with a budget of circa €6.4 million, and a pilot project, “Building Community Cohesion”, with funding of €1 million from the Technical Assistance budget to be made available as required. The latter will operate in the areas of

social enterprise and innovation through community cohesion, and the SEUPB are aiming to release both calls in the next two to three months

The EU Commission representative stated her understanding from the papers that the Building a Cohesive Society call would be funded using funds transferred to the Regional objective.

The Chair provided clarification, stating the intention to overcommit in the Regional objective, with the agreement of Sponsor and Accountable Departments, and retain the €1 million in the Technical Assistance budget, for transfer following a subsequent modification request at a later date.

The DPER representative congratulated the SEUPB on the 83% Programme commitment, representing a focus on driving expenditure and achievement of targets.

The representative welcomed the Councillor's news that the Shared Spaces pre-application support was well-received, and the aim to commit the theme by the end of the year. She also welcomed the implementation of the Peace Platform and what it represents for the legacy of the PEACE Programmes across Europe.

The DoF representative also welcomed approval of the Peace Platform and news of the Peace Plus programme.

He also welcomed with enthusiasm the two new calls, and emphasised the benefit of reconciliation activity in social and workplace settings.

The Monitoring Committee;

- Noted progress that has been made with regards to the regulatory requirements of the Programme, and;
- Noted the progress that has been made with regards to programme implementation.

7. Performance Framework Update

The Chair introduced the Performance Framework Update paper, and the focus of the SEUPB on achievement against the Performance Framework targets as this is an important

aspect of the Programme. The paper reports against 2018 targets, and the PMC will be regularly updated on progress.

The Monitoring Committee:

- Noted the progress that has been made with regards to achievement of 2018 milestones and the Performance Framework.

8. Update on implementation of the Communications Strategy

The Communications Manager provided a presentation which outlined recent funding announcements, high level visits, the Interactive Exhibition held in Leinster House, Dublin on 16 May, the positive or neutral tone of media coverage surrounding the Programme, and SEUPB's engagement with stakeholders over social media.

The Monitoring Committee;

- Noted the Communications activity since the last Programme Monitoring Committee meeting, and;
- Noted progress in implementation of the Communications Strategy.

9. Evaluation Plan Update

The Chair introduced the Evaluation Update Paper, and welcomed **Sarah McCarthy of SJC Consultancy** to provide a presentation on the Implementation Evaluation of the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes.

9a. Implementation Evaluation – SJC Consultancy

Sarah McCarthy provided a presentation outlining a summary of the Impact Evaluation and the resulting recommendations.

The DoF representative welcomed the report and the insight provided by the recommendations. With regards to the Shared Spaces call, the representative commended the SEUPB for taking proactive measures in the pre-application approach and acknowledged the Letter of Offer issues on eMS as an ongoing issue to be considered for improvement.

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee queried if the SEUPB is able to progress partial claims and reports, while working on eMS modification.

The MA Director clarified that partial claims can be progressed, however, this is an exceptional circumstance and it is not seen as best practice given the output logic within the current Programme period..

The Chair emphasised that it is incumbent on the Lead Partner to raise claims from their partners in a timely manner.

The EU Commission representative thanked Sarah McCarthy for the presentation and commended her on the comprehensive report and around the clear and concise recommendations. **The EU Commission representative** stated her intention to convey a number of comments on approval post- Steering Committee, additional procedures, project modifications etc. at a later date.

She noted that the Implementation Evaluation report will also be reviewed by the INTERREG VA PMC, and queried the Managing Authority's timeline in providing a response to the recommendations.

The MA Director clarified that the INTERREG VA PMC is taking place on 27 November, and the Managing Authority aim to provide detailed commentary on the report and recommendations by the end of January 2019.

The EU Commission representative stated her intention to raise the report at the Annual Review Meeting, which will take place in early 2019.

The Chair also thanked Sarah McCarthy and welcomed the range of practical recommendations, which will be utilised as a model to improve business processes. The SEUPB's response to the recommendations will be communicated to the PMC.

AP 2: Action plan to be drawn up on the recommendations resulting from the Implementation Evaluation and circulated to PMC by end of January 2019

The Monitoring Committee;

- Noted the progress made in implementing the Programme's Evaluation Plan, and;
- Noted the Executive Summary and recommendations of the Implementation Evaluation Report.

9b. Impact Evaluation – Children and Young People 14 – 24 - QUB

The Chair introduced the Impact Evaluation Report on Objective 2.1: Children and Young People aged 14 to 24 in Members' papers, and welcomed **Danielle Blaylock of Queen's University Belfast**, who provided a summary presentation on progress made in Phase 1 of the Objective.

The Monitoring Committee noted that progression to Phase 2 of the objective is subject to PMC agreement that the Phase 1 evaluation is positive.

The Chair thanked **Danielle Blaylock** for the presentation and conveying the report findings in a user-friendly manner. The SEUPB will consider the report's recommendations with a view to implementing recommendations in Stage 2, pending approval by PMC.

The EU Commission representative emphasised the importance of the Impact evaluation and discussed the benefit of including an evaluation at this point in the Programme. The representative asked for the timeframe in implementing the next steps.

The Chair stated the intention, with this PMC's approval, to progress to Stage 2 with the objective's current projects. The project Letters of Offer contain a caveat that progression to Stage 2 of implementation is dependent on a positive evaluation of Phase 1.

The SEUPB will work through the evaluation recommendations, and the JS will verify outputs (participants completing the programme in line with the requirements of the Output

Indicators Guidance) by the end of February 2019, and agree any changes to approved participant numbers on a case by case basis.

The NILGA/ SF representative requested clarification on plans to mitigate the geographical gaps identified within the report, given the timeframe for Stage 2 and projects already selected.

The JS Director replied that this will be addressed along with all the report findings, including the geographical spread of impact.

The Ulster Farmers Union/ Rural Development Council representative also queried timescales in terms of future delivery and, with regards to complementarity with similar projects, and also recommended the SEUPB approach the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) to discuss their Personal Youth Development Programme.

The Monitoring Committee;

- Noted the Children and Young People aged 14 – 24 Impact Evaluation report and presentation, and;
- Approved progression to Stage 2 of the objective.

10. A.O.B.

The Department of Rural and Community Development representative thanked SEUPB for attending the National Ploughing Championships and showcasing the PEACE Programme.

The NILGA/ SF representative thanked the European Commission for the investment in peace in the region over the years, and expressed concern for PEACE funding post- Brexit.

The Chair provided reassurance, outlining references to the PEACE Plus Programme in the Multi Financial Framework Budget, and the Irish Government's commitment to the continuation of the PEACE Programmes.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place in Donegal in May 2019 however, **the Chair** advised there may be a need to schedule an exceptional meeting prior to the UK's exit from the EU in March.

The Chair concluded the meeting, thanking all Members for attending such a detailed and important meeting.

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ANNEX I

**ACTION POINTS/ISSUES OF CLARIFICATION
ARISING FROM MONITORING COMMITTEE
Wednesday 07 November 2018, Fermanagh House, Enniskillen**

ACTION POINTS

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Action Point</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
6. Update on Programme Implementation	1	Achievement against N+3 to be included in future PMC papers	Managing Authority
	2	Action plan to be drawn up on the recommendations resulting from the Implementation Evaluation and circulated to PMC by end of January 2019	Managing Authority

ANNEX II

Attendance – PEACE IV Programme Monitoring Committee, 07 November 2018, Fermanagh House Enniskillen

Chair

Gina McIntyre SEUPB

Members

Teresa Canavan	Rural Development Council
Catherine Clynes	Department for Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER)
Caitlin Connelly	NWRA
Pamela Dooley	ICTU Northern Ireland
Frank Duffy	Department of Finance NI
Mark Feeney	Managing Authority, SEUPB
Hazel Francey	The Equality Commission NI
Ruth Gallagher	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
Cllr Garath Keating	NILGA
Cllr Colm Markey	Northern Western Regional Assembly (NWRA)
Leanne Massey	Joint Secretariat, SEUPB
Paddy McGinn	Pobal
Geoff Nuttall	NICVA
Cllr Paul Robinson	NILGA/ DUP
Paul Sheridan	Head of Finance and Corporate Services, SEUPB
Emily Smyth	CNCC

Advisors

Donna Blaney	The Executive Office
Frances Curran	Department of Education
Meadhbh Devilly	Department of Education and Skills
Tanya Hamilton	The Executive Office
John McCandless	Communications, SEUPB
Geraldine McCarthy	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Tony McKibben	Department for Communities (DfC)
Meadhbh Devilly	Department of Education and Skills

Guus Muijzers	EU Commission
Tamara Pavlin	European Commission
Michael Power	NISRA
Rosie Smyth	Department of Rural and Community Development

Presenters

Danielle Blaylock	Queens University Belfast
Sinead Donaghy	Clogher Valley Playgroup
Siobhan Fitzpatrick	Early Years
Michelle Holt	National Childhood Network
Sarah McCarthy	SJC Consultancy
Denise McCormilla	The National Childhood Network Ireland
Lauri McCusker	The Fermanagh Trust
Dympna McKenna	Tru Beginnings
Roisin McGovern	Woodlands Adventure Playgroup

Observers

Paul Boylan	Joint Secretariat, the SEUPB
Joanne Breen	The Executive Office
Gerry Finn	SEUPB Audit and Risk Committee
Tanya Gillanders	North South Ministerial Council
Ciaran Hanna	SEUPB
Emer McGeough	NSMC
Lisa O’Kane	NILGA
Catherine Powell	Department for the Economy
James Russell	MA, SEUPB
Judith Scott	NISRA/ SEUPB
Pamela Meekin	SEUPB
John Williamson	Department of Education

Secretariat (SEUPB)

Tara McCormick	Managing Authority (minutes)
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Apologies

Ivan Cooper	The Wheel
Dr Aedin McLoughlin	The Environmental Pillar

Tanya Hamilton
Andrew Johnston

The Executive Office
Department for Communities

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ANNEX III

Glossary of acronyms used in the minutes:

CNCC	Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside
CPD	Central Procurement Directorate (Northern Ireland)
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DfE	Department for the Economy
DHPCLG	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
DOF	Department of Finance (Northern Ireland)
DJEI	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
DoH	Department of Health NI
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
EMRA	Eastern & Midland Regional Authority
eMS	Electronic Monitoring System
ESG	Evaluation Steering Group
EC	European Commission
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
NICVA	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
NILGA	Northern Ireland Local Government Association
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

NSMC	North South Ministerial Council
NWRA	Northern Western Regional Assembly
SEUPB	Special European Union Programmes Body
JS	Joint Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
VSS	The Victims and Survivors Service

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