



**Friday 5 October 2007
Cultra Manor, Holywood**

Agreed Minutes

1. Attendance

A list of attendees is attached at Annex A. Apologies were received from Maella Bratton, Local Government, Arnold Hatch, Local Government, Robin Newton, Local Government, Gerry Maclochlainn, Local Government, Frances McCandless, Voluntary and Community, Brendan Mackin, Trade Unions, Linda Wilson, OFMDFM and Trevor Polley, LGSFG.

2. Introduction

The Chair welcomed everyone to the twentieth meeting of the Monitoring Committee and in particular new representatives from the BSP Managing Authority, DETI, DSD and DOE.

The Chair also thanked the Members who agreed to act as deputies for their respective social partner's organisations and political parties.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 17 April 2007 were accepted subject to the following amendment:-

Item 4 Bullet point 9 Paragraph 2

Remove 'as the lecturers industrial action had now ended.'

The Sentence should now read, 'They also advised that they had resolved the issue of verifying claims under Measure 2.4.'

4. Progress Report on Implementation of the Programme

A **Managing Authority representative** updated the Committee with a brief overview covering the financial progress of the programme and key issues including the publicity actions carried out by the Managing Authority.

- *Commitments and Applications*

Members were advised that since the last meeting of the Committee, the figures provided show that all funds have increased their level of commitments. The **Managing Authority** added that ERDF was the only fund, yet to reach 100% commitment but they remain confident that the target will be met subject to the Committee's approval to the DSD proposals.

The Managing Authority drew attention to the figures circulated to the Committee on the applications received and approved. They advised that the figures show a fall in the number received and approved, this was due to the removal of the forestry applications from the Central Database. They added that following the removal of these figures, the amended figures show that the applications received have risen by 8 and applications approved by 24.

- *Financial Progress by Priority*

The **Managing Authority representative** provided updates on the progress of each Priority including the commitments and the amount of expenditure declared to the European Commission.

- *Technical Assistance*

Members were advised that Technical Assistance continues to support development work for the future Structural Funds programmes including the procurement process for enhanced database facilities.

- *N+2/ Drawdown of expenditure*

The **Managing Authority representative** outlined the current position on the progress towards the 2007 N+2 targets. Members were advised that ERDF spend is due to be completed by 31 December 2007 and subject to the Committee's acceptance of the DSD proposals for the transfer of funds, they remain confident that the target will be met.

The Managing Authority also advised that they have encouraged Implementing Departments to identify further expenditure areas to absorb the 2% overspend on Priority expenditure allowed in the Commission guidelines on the Closure of the Programme to help compensate for any shortfall within Measures and any penalties imposed by the European Commission for audit issues.

Members were informed that the Managing Authority has completed ESF claims which will meet the 2007 N+2 target and that they have completed 2 EAGGF Drawdowns and will commence a further drawdown on this fund later in October.

Members were also advised that the current projections from DARD show a shortfall in meeting the FIFG target due to the difficulties of securing sufficient private expenditure to drawdown the EU funding available.

- *Information and Publicity*

The **Managing Authority representative** drew attention to the results of the latest Omnibus survey carried out by NISRA. They also informed the Committee that the final BSP newsletter had also been circulated in the local press between 14 and 18 September.

- *Horizontal Principles*

The **Managing Authority representative** updated the Committee on the progress of the Environment and Equality Horizontal Principles including the latest progress on the DPA scores and the latest equality information received from the questionnaires completed by final beneficiaries of the Programme.

- *Working Groups*

Members were advised that 5 of the six working groups have now completed their work and submitted their final report to the CSF Monitoring Committee. The Fisheries Working Group continues to meet and will submit its report following its final meeting.

The **Chair** advised the Committee that ERDF element of the Programme has now claimed 95% of the expenditure available to the Programme and therefore the European Commission will not pay any further receipts until the closure of the Programme. They added that the N+2 target for ERDF does not apply for the final year and any expenditure which has been incurred by the 31 December 2007 would be eligible for declaration in the final claim.

Following a query by the **Environment representative** on the DPA scales used within the Programme, NISRA advised that they would be investigating how these scales maybe refined and reported against in the new Structural Funds programmes.

- *Priority 1 Economic Growth and Competitiveness*

The **DETI representative** advised that their measures were progressing well towards their targets. They added that they will be asking the Monitoring Committee to approve the movement of funds between Measures by written procedure in the near future in order to enable them achieve full spend for their measures in the Programme.

They also drew attention to the recent ERDF audit and advised the Committee that they had a positive meeting with the Auditors on the various issues surrounding their Measures.

The **DRD representative** provided an update on Measure 1.6 advising that they have identified further expenditure from the trains project funded from Measure 1.6b to enable them to contribute towards the 2% overspend within this priority.

- *Priority 2 Employment*

The **DEL representative** advised that they have received claims from the Managing Authority to enable them to meet the ESF N+2 target. They added that they have issued Letter of Offers to allow them to over-commit the ESF programme in order to compensate for any potential under-spends.

The **DE representative** provided a brief progress report on Measure 2.4 & 2.5. They advised that both measures were progressing well and on target to meet their objectives.

- *Priority 3 Urban and Social Revitalisation*

The **DSD representative** provided a brief overview of Measure 3.2 and 3.3. They advised that since the last meeting of the Committee significant progress had been made to help alleviate the possible under-spend in these measures. They added that subject to the Committees approval to their proposals later in the meeting it was expected that they would meet its spend targets.

- *Priority 4 Agriculture, Rural Development, Forestry and Fisheries*

The **DARD representative** provided an update on their measures. They advised that current projections for EAGGF show that the N+2 target will be met. They added that the FIG projections are currently showing a shortfall due to difficulties identifying sufficient private expenditure within the industry to draw-down the EU funding. DARD also advised the Fisheries Division are carrying out a number of actions in order to alleviate the problem including regular meetings with the largest projects and issuing additional letters of offer to projects.

The **Chair** added that the Managing Authority would be disappointed if the target was not met and at worst, the expenditure would be close to the target. They also advised that any actions taken will carry forward into the final year of the Programme.

- *Priority 5 Environment*

The **DOE representative** advised that their element of this measure continues to perform well and that they have identified further expenditure areas to help absorb the 2% overspend within this priority.

The **Monitoring Committee noted** the progress and developments outlined in the Progress report.

5. Proposed Amendments to the Programme Complement

The **Managing Authority representative** outlined the proposals to move money from Measure 3.3 to 3.1. They advised since the last meeting of the Committee, DSD have identified further expenditure areas within Measure 3.1 to absorb the forecasted under-spend on Measure 3.3. They added that these actions would not result in any loss of funding to the Voluntary sector.

The **Committee agreed** to approve the movement of up to €4.3 ERDF from Measure 3.3 to Measure 3.1.

6. Any other Business

Cohesion Forum Update

The Chair introduced the tabled paper on the Fourth Cohesion Forum. At the Forum (on 27 September) Commissioner Hubner launched a public consultation on the future of Cohesion Policy which runs to 31 January 2008. The Chair stressed that the tabled paper is not a Commission document but rather comments made by the spokespersons during the forum which summarises the direction in which the Commission are moving in relation to Cohesion Policy.

The Chair advised that the UK would be making a formal response on behalf of the devolved Governments. He volunteered to attend any meetings the sectors may hold to help inform the discussion.

DFP offered to forward a link to the consultation on the Commission website to anyone who is interested. Any member of the Secretariat will assist.

**ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM THE
BSP MONITORING COMMITTEE
FRIDAY 5 OCTOBER
CULTRA MANOR, HOLYWOOD**

ISSUE	ACTION	TIMING
17 April 2007 Draft Minutes	Secretariat to make agreed changes to the draft minutes and circulate to the Monitoring Committee	Immediate
BSP Programme Complement	The Managing Authority to amend Programme Complement to reflect changes agreed by the Monitoring Committee and forward the revised Programme Complement to the Commission	Within 1 Month
Fourth Cohesion Forum – Commission Website Link	Secretariat to forward link to members for their information	Immediate

ANNEX A

List of Attendees at the BSP Monitoring Committee Meeting Cultra Manor, Holywood 5 October 2007

Members

Bill Pauley	Chair
Pat Colgan	PEACE II Managing Authority
Rodney Scott	Paying Authority (EAGGF & FIFG)
Philip McCartney	Paying Authority (ERDF)
John Neill	Paying Authority (ESF)
Miceal McCoy	Agri-Rural
Brian Murphy	Environment
Joan Baird	Local Government
Lisa McElherron	Voluntary and Community
Cathal Mullaghan	Local Government

Advisors

Colette FitzGerald	DETI
Damian Fitzpatrick	DETI
David Yormesor	European Commission
Dave Bradley	DE
Pat Delaney	DRD
Glenn Moorcroft	DOE
Gerard Colgan	NISRA
Alison Hanna	DSD

Observers

Teresa Lennon	NILGA
Peter Neeson	DSD
Ciaran Crosbie	DRD

Apologies

Maella Bratton	Local Government
Robin Newton	Local Government
Arnold Hatch	Local Government
Gerry Maclochlainn	Local Government
Brendan Mackin	Trade Unions
Trevor Polley	Local Government Structural Funds Group
Frances McCandless	Voluntary & Community
Linda Wilson	Vice Chair