

**NORTHERN IRELAND PROGRAMME FOR
BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY
MONITORING COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY 5 JULY 2001
SEAGOE HOTEL, PORTADOWN**

1. Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the fifth formal meeting of the Monitoring Committee. In the main the Agenda was composed of items of business deferred from the meeting held on 14 June because of the work required to finalise the Programme Complement. This was submitted to the Commission on 22 June 2001 and a copy had been provided to each Member of the Committee.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of 14 June were agreed. If on reflection Members wished to propose changes, these could be taken at the next meeting. The action points from the previous meeting formed part of the substantive papers for this meeting and were dealt with as follows.

The DETI representative asked that 1.8A, Annex A of the Programme Complement be reworded to read "Energy Infrastructure".

3. Programme Complement: Priority 3, Measure 4

Senior representatives of the Department of Education presented a paper to the members from which discussion ensued. Members raised concerns about the late issue of this Paper which gave little time for the consideration of its contents. The Measure represented one branch of a wider strategy agreed by the Executive for the provision of pre-school education. Concerns were made from the rural perspective, the membership of PEAGS and the accessibility of childcare provision. The issue of displacement from the voluntary sector was highlighted with

fears that the availability of recurrent funding only to the Community and Voluntary sector would promote the drift into the statutory sector. Equality implications of the Measure were also raised.

In order to reach agreement on this outstanding issue and allow appropriate spend to take place, it was agreed that the Department of Education provide a further paper and a special meeting of the Committee be arranged to consider the matter further. It was agreed that the further information to be provided should include the current and proposed future provision and funding of places in the voluntary, private and statutory sectors. Such information might be used as a basis to monitor the impact of the Measure over time and, in particular, to monitor whether fears about displacement of places in the community and voluntary sector materialised.

4. Programme Complement Indicators

A representative of NISRA reported on the Ex-ante Assessment of the Programme Complement. The representative introduced a paper outlining the terms of reference for work that will be carried out to assess the existing indicators and identify changes needed to enhance the monitoring of the Programme. After discussion the Terms of Reference were agreed having been extended to include the Performance Reserve. The outcome of the work will be available to members at the next meeting.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

An update of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was given and Members were advised that the Programme Complement now reflected comments received and that the relevant Departments were addressing further issues raised in the consultation process. The Committee welcomed the extensive consultation that had taken place. Specific issues were raised about the need to address adverse impact as well as discrimination. The Committee welcomed the Gender

Mainstreaming Strategy as a possible model for Section 75 Groups. The Equality Impact Assessment Report will be circulated to the Committees on completion.

6. Match funding issues

A paper on match funding issues was presented, by the Managing Authority. The Committee asked that a contact name and number in each relevant Department to provide help with match funding applications be specified in the Programme Complement.

There was concern that for District Councils in disadvantaged areas it would be difficult to find match funding without compounding the disadvantage. It was explained that DETI had been in discussion with SOLAS and EDOS and had concluded a funding formula that took this issue into account. DETI agreed to provide details of this agreement. DHFETE agreed to provide information about the application of New Deal to match funding. Discussion continued on the issue of the sustainability of projects beyond the horizontal EU funding to promote an equal and cohesive society.

7. Application Process

A Paper was presented by the Managing Authority on the development and design of the application process for the new round of Structural Funds support. Members are supportive of the application of new technology but advocated that a hard copy be made available to those who have no access to the Internet. The arrangements for the demonstration of the electronic prototype and its testing by potential users was outlined. A member of the Committee volunteered to review of the prototype of the application form and to participate in the Project Management Board. The paper based application form will be issued to all Members *in early August*.

Discussion followed on the decision process, the turnaround time for applications and the front-loading of the Programme.

A paper is to be prepared by the Secretariat explaining the digressive profile of the funding and the phasing of the Programme. Further concern was expressed as to the adverse implication on District Councils in disadvantaged areas of the profile of the Programme. DETI agreed to provide further information on this issue.

8. Communication Strategy

The Committee was asked to note the recommendations agreed by the CSF Monitoring Committee on 24 April 2001. In order to take the strategy forward a cross Committee Working Group will be set up. One Member of the Committee volunteered to participate in the Working Group. It was agreed that a letter would be issued giving those Members not present at this point of the meeting the opportunity to participate. Their task will include deciding the Terms of Reference for consultancy support in order to take forward the first 6 months of the strategy.

9. Annual Implementation Report

It was explained that the annual implementation report for the calendar year 2000 had been due at the end of June but since the Programme Complement had just been adopted and no selection of projects had taken place there was no implementation progress to report as such. An identical situation existed in respect of the PEACE II Programme and other EU Programmes in the UK and Ireland and initial advice from the European Commission had been that the first implementation reports on such Programmes would not be due until June 2002. However having sought further legal advice, the Commission had concluded that reports needed to be prepared for the year 2000, although there was currently no information available on implementation for that period. Once projects are selected there may be qualifying expenditure to be recorded from the 1 January 2000.

This would include gap funded projects. These would be reported in the 2001 report to be prepared by June 2002.

The report for 2000 required the approval of the Monitoring Committees before submission to the Commission. The report would issue to all Members and their approval sought by way of Written Procedure. The Rules of Procedure requires unanimous agreement when using the Written Procedure and any objections recorded would mean that consideration of the report would default to the next meeting of the Committee.

10. Any Other Business

- (i) The question of payments to Council representatives was raised and it was agreed that the matter be taken up bilaterally between the Secretariat and the Members affected.
- (ii) The Chairman put on record the appreciation of the Minister of Finance and Personnel of the commitment of the Committee in adopting the Programme Complement and his acknowledgement of the significant personal contributions made by Committee Members to this process.
- (iii) The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking the Committee Members for their attendance and participation in the meeting.

Schedule for Next Meeting

Given the holiday period, the special meeting on the Department of Education Measure will be arranged at a date when those Members most closely interested in this topic were available. However all Members would be notified in advance of the date of this meeting.

The next full meeting of BSP Monitoring Committee will be held on Tuesday 11 September 2001 and to facilitate Members of the Committee will be held at the Stormont Hotel, Belfast.

**ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM BSP MONITORING COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 5 JULY IN THE
SEAGOE HOTEL, PORTADOWN**

Issue	Action By	Timing
Further paper on Measure 3.4, Investing in Early Learning	Department of Education/Secretariat	Special meeting to be arranged.
Annual Implementation Report	Secretariat	By Written Procedure or Next Meeting
Equality Impact Assessment Report	Secretariat	Next Meeting
Gender Mainstreaming Strategy	OFMDFM	Next Meeting
Measure 1.4 – details of arrangements with Councils, Impact of Profiling of Programme	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	Next Meeting
Paper on Digressive Profile of Programme	Secretariat	Next Meeting
Communication Working Group - Letter of Invitation to Members not present - Report	Secretariat Secretariat	To issue week commencing 10 July 2001 Next Meeting
Application Process - Working Group Letter of Invitation to Members not present to the Prototype Testing Event - Paper-based Application Form to Issue	Secretariat Managing Authority Managing Authority	To issue week commencing 10 July 2001 Early August
Match funding contact list in Programme Complement	Secretariat	Next Meeting
** Match funding – application of New Deal Provision	Department of Employment and Learning	Next Meeting
** Programme Complement Indicators	NISRA to report on work of Ex-ante Assessment	Next Meeting