

NORTHERN IRELAND COMPETITIVENESS & EMPLOYMENT MONITORING COMMITTEE

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Purpose

1. As required by the Regulation¹ governing the management of Structural Funds, this Monitoring Committee has been established to supervise the two programmes, the NI Sustainable Competitiveness Programme and the NI European Social Fund Programme, established under the EU Competitiveness & Employment Objective.

2. The main duties of the Monitoring Committee are to:
 - a) Consider and approve selection criteria for activities, and revise as necessary;
 - b) Periodically review progress towards programme targets, on the basis of documents submitted by the Managing Authorities;
 - c) Examine the results of implementation, particularly the achievement of priority targets and outcomes and progress evaluations;
 - d) Consider and approve annual and final implementation reports;
 - e) Be informed of the annual control report and any relevant comments made by the Commission;
 - f) Propose to the Managing Authorities any changes or review to improve management or implementation; and
 - g) Consider and approve any proposal to amend the financial profile of the programme (the Commission decision).

¹Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 Article 63

3. The Monitoring Committee, the Member State (the Department of Finance & Personnel, in Northern Ireland) and the two Managing Authorities, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the Department for Employment and Learning agree that the Rules of Procedure in this paper shall govern the operation of the Monitoring Committee.
4. The Committee operates within the institutional, legal and financial framework of the Member State.
5. The membership of the Monitoring Committee is set out in the Annex. Members are appointed by the Minister of Finance and Personnel following nomination from relevant Social Partner and Local Government sectors. The Members of the Committee will be supported by advisors and meetings of the Committee may also be attended by the observers specified. Attendance of other observers shall be by agreement of the Committee.
6. Members of the Committee have the right to participate in decision making. Those present in an advisory capacity have the right to participate fully in discussions of the Monitoring Committee and to offer advice.
7. Each sector is represented by a Member or a Deputy. If neither the Member nor the Deputy is available for a particular meeting, the Member may submit written comments on any of the items of business to be considered at a meeting. The Member may also nominate a further alternative to attend in an observer capacity. If, due to unforeseen circumstances, the agreed attendee cannot attend at the last minute written comments can be forwarded to the secretariat for consideration at the next meeting.
8. The Committee will review the membership of consecutive non-attendees - where neither Member nor Deputy was present and no written comments were received. It will make recommendations to the Department of Finance & Personnel to address the issue, while maintaining the principles leading to the establishment of the Monitoring Committee including sectoral representation.

Chair

9. The Department of Finance & Personnel's Head of European Division shall be Chair of the Monitoring Committee. In the event of the nominated Chair being unable to attend for all or part of a Monitoring Committee meeting, he/she may delegate his/her responsibility to a deputy within DFP's European Division, or to another Member of the Committee who represents the Managing Authorities for the item under discussion.

Secretariat

10. The Secretariat to the Monitoring Committee shall be designated by the Chair and shall be drawn from the staff of the Department of Finance & Personnel. The Secretariat is responsible for facilitating meetings of the Committee and for the co-ordination of documentation relating to monitoring reports, agendas and records of meetings. Other support services shall be provided by the staff of the Managing Authorities as required.

Communications

11. All communications relating to the business of the Committee shall be addressed to the Secretariat of the Monitoring Committee.

Meetings of the Committee

12. Meetings of the Committee will be held a minimum of twice per year, but the Committee may meet more often as necessary. The Committee will consider arranging the timing of its meetings close to those of the PEACE III and INTERREG Monitoring Committees to facilitate attendance by observers from the European Commission.
13. The venue for meetings must be accessible to all members and not restricted to one location.

14. Times of meetings will be organised with due regard to professional and caring roles of Members and other participants. To facilitate the review and approval of the Annual Implementation Report by the committee members, meetings will be arranged for spring and autumn of each year. This will not preclude any additional meetings required.
15. Agenda and supporting documents will normally be issued by e-mail 15 working days in advance of scheduled meetings. The Secretariat will also be responsible for the compilation and presentation of papers to Members of the Committee in a format which will enable them properly to exercise their responsibilities.
16. Any Member may raise any item for inclusion in the agenda. A draft agenda with details of venue, date and time will be issued at least 30 working days prior to the meeting. The final agenda and papers will normally be issued 15 working days ahead of the scheduled meeting.
17. Following a meeting, the draft minutes and action points will be circulated within 10 working days. After the minutes and action points have been approved by the Committee they will be made publicly available. The Minutes should be concise, emphasising the decisions made and generally without reference to the names of individual Members.

Committee Papers

18. All papers submitted by Members must be lodged with the Secretariat to enable issue within the time limits (15 working days before the meeting).
19. Papers should be brief and concise and avoid (where possible) the use of acronyms. If used, acronyms must be defined in a glossary attached to the paper(s).

Decision Making Process

20. The Chair will act primarily as the facilitator for Committee business and, where possible, the Committee will operate on the basis of consensus - with only permanent members having the right to vote.
21. If a Monitoring Committee meeting cannot take place but a formal decision is required, the secretariat will contact each member by e-mail and ask for a decision by 'written procedure'. However if a member wishes to seek clarification or have a discussion, this will be facilitated.
22. Failure to reach consensus on an issue will be recorded in the minutes and presented to the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in the case of the Competitiveness Programme, the Minister of Employment and Learning for the Employment Programme, or for issues affecting both Programmes to the Minister of Finance and Personnel for a decision.

Working Groups

23. The Monitoring Committee will appoint Working Groups as it deems appropriate to consider in more detail specific areas of its responsibility. Working Groups will operate under the direction and authority of the Monitoring Committee.

Changes to the Rules of Procedure

24. Subject to the normal decision making process of this Committee, the Committee may at any time amend these Rules of Procedure with the agreement of the Member State and the Managing Authorities. The ruling of the Chair will determine any disputes in relation to the interpretation of the Rules of Procedure.

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