

ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP MEETING

21 MAY 2008

AGREED MINUTES

Attendees: Lucinda Blakiston-Houston, Chair, (C & E and Interreg IV)
Brian Murphy, Vice-Chair, (C & E)
James Daly, BMW Regional Assembly, (Peace III)
Dr Alexandra McGarel, CNCC
Mervyn Hill, CNCC
Caitlin Strain, DEL
Jim Jewhurst, DEL
Ian Getgood, DEL
Ann-Marie Brooks, DEL
Susie McMullan, DARD
Glenn Moorcroft, DOE
John Bradley, OFMDFM
Damian Fitzpatrick, DETI
Kelly Gallagher, NISRA
Lynsey Moore, DFP
Ian McCollam, DFP (Secretariat)

Apologies: Gerard Colgan, NISRA
Domhnall O’Cobhthaigh, Local Government (C & E)
John Thompson, Agri-Rural (C & E)
Matt Donnelly, Border Reg. Auth (Interreg IV + Peace III)
Hubert Nicholl, Local Government (Interreg IV)
Niamh Gallagher, DEHLG (Interreg IV)
John Doran, Business (C & E)

1. Minutes of last meeting

The Chair advised that no comments had been received on the draft minutes from the meeting on 4th March. As no further changes were requested, the minutes were taken as agreed.

2. Action Points of last meeting

The chair stated that the revised Terms of Reference had since been ratified by the Monitoring Committee meeting on 24th April. It was stated that all action points had been completed and the point in relation to the ex-ante of the DPA would be discussed under agenda item 5.

3. Work Plan and Budget

The group discussed the proposed work plan for 2008. On the comparative examination of indicators the chair stressed that the group was keen to avoid duplication in the monitoring of environmental strategies and indicators. To this end the members discussed the various indicators and related reports available. It was decided that the secretariat would amalgamate relevant indicators and produce tables of comparison for circulation amongst members in advance of the next meeting, so that they may be added as an agenda item. Accordingly, the secretariat asked the Managing Authorities, DOE and OFMDFM advisors to forward them related information.

Action: Secretariat, Managing Authorities, DOE + OFMDFM

In terms of producing guidelines on environmental policies, the DFP representative suggested the establishment of a sub-group to discuss this in more detail and prepare a proposal for the next Working Group meeting. The decision was taken to establish a sub-group with each of the 3 programmes Managing Authorities represented, to report back to the next meeting.

Action: Secretariat

The DARD representative agreed to discuss with the Rural Development Environment working group whether they would also wish to be involved in this area of work.

The OFMDFM representative questioned whether DFP Procurement (CPD) had an environmental policy in place, for reference purposes. The secretariat agreed to investigate.

Action: Secretariat

The NISRA representative advised they would provide a written update to the group on the baseline for DPA after the meeting.

Action: NISRA

The working group budget was not modified, although it was agreed that it may need to change at the next meeting depending on the proposals of the sub-group to look at environmental policy guidelines.

4. SEA compliance and indicators

Each MA representative provided an update to the group on SEA compliance to date:

The DETI representative stated that schemes to the value of £144m have been identified under the innovation priority of the Programme. All selected operations have been given DPA scores and individual projects will be scored in due course. The DETI rep also agreed to provide future updates to the group on progress against the sole environmental indicator – greenhouse gasses. DETI may deliver an environmental presentation at the next meeting and are to check the availability of W5 as a possible venue.

The DEL representative advised that there is no SEA for the ESF Programme as it was screened out during the programme development process.

Whilst the SEUPB representative had unfortunately had to leave the meeting early the chair did recognise that work was ongoing between SEUPB and their Scottish counterparts on the issue of environmental indicators.

The Rural Development Programme representative stated that work is ongoing to finalise their SEA and will continue to update the group on progress.

5. Programme Reports on cross-cutting theme

It was noted that work is ongoing between DETI and NISRA in relation to DPA.

It was agreed that each MA would produce written reports on DPA to future working meetings.

6. A.O.B

The vice chair stated that the State of the Environment report was currently in public consultation phase and invited members to consider it. The secretariat will circulate it amongst the group.

Action: Secretariat

The chair also brought to the member's attention an upcoming event in Belfast which may be of interest. The secretariat is to circulate details.

Action: Secretariat

DEL circulated a draft document, 'How to Write an Environmental Policy' they had produced to assist projects meet the Letter of Offer requirement to have an environmental policy. DEL also intends to meet with some projects as a pilot to help them put together their policy. Members were asked to provide any feedback directly Jim Jewhurst in DEL and copy to the secretariat.

The next meeting will provisionally be held at the end of July. DFP are to organise and liaise with DETI regarding a venue.

The meeting was held at the premises of the USEL project in Belfast which has received previous EU funding to deliver their STEP Programme and has been approved for funding under the new ESF Programme. The project provided a presentation outlining their business plan and approach to environmental issues. They then provided a tour of the premises to allow members to see at first hand the project's environmental practices.

The chair formally thanked USEL for their hospitality and applauded their approach and dedication to environmental issues.

TABLE OF ACTION POINTS

Issue	Action	Responsibility
Work plan – indicators comparison	Tables of comparison to be produced and circulated to EWG	Secretariat, Managing Authorities, DOE and OFMDFM reps
Environmental policies guidelines	Sub-group to be established	Secretariat
	CPD Environmental policy to be consulted	Secretariat
Programme reports on cross-cutting themes	DPA baseline update to be provided to EWG	NISRA
AOB	State of Environment report to be circulated amongst members	Secretariat
	Details of upcoming Belfast meeting to be circulated	Secretariat