

ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP MEETING

28 SEPTEMBER 2009 @ 10.00AM

LONGBRIDGE HOUSE, BELFAST

AGREED MINUTES

Attendees:

Peter Archdale (Chair)	CNCC	James Jackson	CNCC
Darren Colville	DFP	John Anderson	CNCC
Mervyn Hill	CNCC	Colm Friel	DEL
Damian Fitzpatrick	DETI	Bernard McClure	Env. Agency
Susie McMullan	DARD	Sarah Reid	SEUPB
Gerard Colgan	NISRA	John Bradley	OFMDFM
Hubert Nicholl	Local Govt.		

Apologies:

Dr David Erwin	CNCC	Aidan Kinch	DEHLG
Dr Hilary Kirkpatrick	UWT	John Doran	BIA
James Daly	BMW	Padraig Maguire	BRA

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. As this was his inaugural meeting as Chair he introduced himself and asked attendees to do likewise.

2. Previous Minutes and Action Points

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 09 were agreed with the following minor amendment:

- The Environment Agency Rep advised that DOE Core should be separately represented on the working group.

[Sec Note: Dan Kennedy & Stephen Kerr are the DOE Reps]

Action Points were either completed or included within the agenda. The following were carried forward:

- Secretariat to identify an individual from DRD to share SEA experiences; and

- Secretariat to follow up with the DG Env. Desk Officer to provide information on climate change network.

3. Europe Wide Environmental Indicators

There was a general discussion around indicators and agreeing a way forward, which identified a number of issues.

There was a concern over how to align indicators identified in the NI programmes with those being used within the rest of the UK and the wider EU and how to measure the success of the programmes against these indicators. The OFMDFM Rep advised that the Sustainable Development Strategy, which is due to be issued for public consultation, includes new strategic objectives that will need to be aligned with UK/EU indicators. OFMDFM has carried out some work on this and the Rep will keep the group informed of progress.

The DETI Rep advised that, due to the nature of their programmes, they were having difficulty in measuring indicators and when to do so, e.g. in relation to greenhouse gases.

The NISRA Rep suggested that it may be useful to identify and match the indicators with the projects, then match these with the EU indicators and look at the gaps in-between. As a way forward it was agreed to write to the Commission, via the DG Environ Desk Officer, to request advice on best practice and further guidance. This may prove useful for Managing Authorities to feed into the next round of projects. **Action: Chair/Secretariat**

4. Greenhouse Gasses Indicator

The DETI Rep advised that there was little to report on this indicator although according to a BBC website, that quoted an AEA report, greenhouse gases have fallen 13% since 1990.

5. Development Path Analysis Reports

DEL – A DPA questionnaire has been produced by DEL and the DEL Rep asked the group for comments. The group had reservations although agreed it was a step in the right direction and the evidence supplied by projects to back up their answers could be crucial to its success. The Chair suggested that it may be useful if DEL was to ask the Carbon Trust to comment on the questionnaire.

DETI – The DETI Rep advised that due to the nature of the funding under Priorities 1 & 2 the majority of projects were scored under Path A. Priority 3 was not yet fully allocated. Although the scores were heavily biased towards Path A the NISRA Rep confirmed that this was a decrease of 23% in Path A scores against the BSP programme.

The NISRA Rep provided the DPA Baseline Reports for both the ESF & ERDF Programmes. He advised that a high number of the ESF projects, although scored at Path C, may have to be rescored due to a misunderstanding of the scoring process. DTZ Pieda had produced guidance, which included relevant examples, under the 2000 – 06 programmes and although the DPA Paths have changed slightly for the 2007 – 13 programmes it may be useful to revisit the guidance. It was agreed to re-issue the guidance to the group for comment and then, if required, commence a procurement exercise to update the DTZ guidance. The NISRA & SEUPB Reps would produce Terms of Reference.

Action: NISRA/SEUPB

[Sec Note: DTZ guidance forwarded to Working Group on 29 Sept 09]

Any comments on the ESF/ERDF baselines should be forwarded to NISRA.

SEUPB – SEUPB had encountered the same difficulty as above in that a high number of their projects appear to be incorrectly scored as Path C. For consistency, analysis has been carried out on projects at ‘parent’ level only, although this would be followed by individual scoring when sufficient detail was available.

6. Strategic Environmental Assessment Reports

SEUPB – The SEUPB Rep advised that within the PEACE Programme the SEA revealed there were no potential negative environmental effects and a number of potential positive effects were identified and SEUPB would welcome comments from the group. There was a general discussion around the relevance of some of the stats and where the group would now take the report. For comparability it was agreed to approach the Commission for further examples of SEA's from other regions. Any comments on the SEUPB SEA should be forwarded to the SEUPB Rep. **Action: Working Group**

7. DARD Update

The DARD Rep gave an update on the NIRDP. This included a Countryside Management Scheme to improve the environment and a modernisation programme to provide grants for farmers to purchase equipment. The DPA Baseline report should be available at the next meeting in October and the DARD Rep will circulate to this group. **Action: DARD**

8. Seminar Report

CNCC Rep provided a report on the 'Implementing SEA Requirements and Practice' seminar he attended with others in Berlin in June. He advised that the seminar was disappointing in both the content and the numbers attending. The content was academic in nature and focused on EIA rather than SEA with little opportunity to network with fellow participants. It was agreed to highlight this in the letter to the Commission. **Action: Secretariat**

9. AOB

RPA – An update on the delivery of RPA will be a standing item on future agenda.

TOR – The Chair will look at the TOR for the group with a view to edging the group towards sustainability issues.

ACTION POINTS

	ACTION POINT	RESPONSIBILITY
1	Ask DRD to share SEA experience	Secretariat
2	Information on Climate Change Network	DG Environ/Secretariat
3	Letter to Commission to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance on environmental indicators; • SEA examples from other regions • Feedback from Berlin seminar 	Chair/Secretariat
4	Comments by 13 Oct on the DTZ Guidance	Working Group
5	Draft TOR on revised DPA guidance (if required)	NISRA/SEUPB
6	Comments on the SEUPB SEA	Working Group
7	Circulate NIRDP DPA Baseline report	DARD