

**Competitiveness and Employment Monitoring Committee
Innovation and Mainstreaming Working Group**

Minutes of meeting on Wednesday 6 October 2010

- Present: Richard Millen (Chair), Queen's University
Maurice Mulvenna, University of Ulster
Pat Donnelly, Proteus (NI) Ltd
Ian McCollam, DFP European Division
- Apologies: Malachy McAleer, South West College
Jonathan Wallace, University of Ulster
Brian Smart, DEL Managing Authority
Gerard Colgan, NISRA
John Doran, Belfast International Airport
- Not in attendance: Arnold Hatch, Craigavon Borough Council
Cathal Mullaghan, Belfast City Council
Christopher Stalford, Belfast City Council
- Secretariat: Andrew Dawson, NIESF Managing Authority

1. Welcome and apologies

Mr Millen welcomed Innovation and Mainstreaming Working Group (IMWG) members to the meeting.

Apologies were noted as above. Under the IMWG Terms of Reference, the meeting was inquorate.

2. Review of minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of the IMWG on 9 June 2009 were noted and agreed by those present. It was agreed that they will be uploaded to the DFP website.

Action point 1: Andrew Dawson to notify DFP to upload minutes.

Action points from the meeting on 9 June 2009 were reviewed.

- Action point 1 – Mr Donnelly confirmed that he had circulated dates of Rickter training to IMWG members but that there had been no response. He advised that there will be similar events in the future and dates would be circulated to IMWG members in order that they can observe these if they wish.

- Action point 2 – Andrew advised that DFP had carried out a trawl of Monitoring Committee members based in the North West to determine whether there was interest in joining the IMWG, but that there had been no response. Professor Mulvenna suggested that the Group look outside the Monitoring Committee to try and recruit members to the IMWG, to take account of geographical as well as gender and sectoral considerations. It was agreed that this suggestion would be included in the IMWG update paper for discussion at the Monitoring Committee meeting on 28 October 2010.

Action point 2 – Andrew Dawson to include above suggestion in IMWG update paper to Monitoring Committee.

- Action point 3 – Andrew advised that there was nothing on file to suggest that the conflict of interest query had been resolved and undertook to make enquiries within the Managing Authority. Members were of the opinion that no conflict of interest existed.

Action point 3 – Andrew Dawson to check position re. conflict of interest query.

3. Review of progress to date

Mr Donnelly advised that ESF projects funded under the first call were in wind-down and that applications for the second call were in progress. He queried how the IMWG could become more involved with new projects to be funded following the second call.

Mr Donnelly stated that Proteus has been continuing to assist relevant projects in respect of transnationality (of the 29 that indicated an interest in transnationality, 12-13 are actively involved). These projects have been advised that it is better for them to use the time before the second call has been completed to plan for the next round of funding. He advised that some of the more experienced transnational projects have been providing assistance to less experienced ones. Mr Donnelly mentioned that the change in the economic situation since the first call could mean that fewer projects will indicate an interest in transnationality.

On Rickter (the tool used to measure soft indicators), Mr Donnelly advised that about half of existing projects had been trained to use the Rickter Scale and that funding had been provided for an online data system, although this had been subject to several glitches. As a result some interviews have not been recorded by projects. NISRA has carried out a review of soft outcomes and transnationality and this will be considered by the Monitoring Committee.

Action point 4 – Andrew Dawson to check if the NISRA review can be circulated to relevant projects.

Mr Donnelly advised that six innovative projects were funded under the first call, and that dedicated innovative activity is an option under the second call. There is therefore the potential to bring together innovative projects from both calls to share experience and knowledge. The six current groups are required, under their Letters of Offer, to perform an evaluation and these will be considered by the Evaluation Working Group. Proteus will also carry out a progress check on the six current innovative projects.

Action point 5 – Proteus to carry out progress checks.

4. Discussion on suggested items for forward work programme

Mr Donnelly suggested that the IMWG should await the outcome of the ESF second call and thereafter bring together those projects (if there are any) that indicate that they wish to be involved in dedicated innovative activity, as this will better inform the drafting of a work programme.

It was considered that a broadening of the IMWG membership base could also have an effect on drafting a work programme.

Mr Donnelly suggested that the National Thematic Network (NTN) Terms of Reference, used under the EQUAL programme, could provide a guide for a future work programme.

Mr Millen suggested that a work programme should consider potential mainstreaming of innovative ideas and the support Proteus could provide to projects. Mr Donnelly replied that they needed a steer from the Managing Authority as to the remit of the support structure in this regard and how it interacts with the projects and the Managing Authority. He added that the work programme should factor in transnationality and soft outcomes. Mr Millen asked whether the IMWG could extract any information from Managing Authority case officers' reports re. innovative projects. He also asked whether the IMWG could have sight of the completed innovative activity sections from application forms submitted under the second call.

Action point 6 – Andrew to check with Owen Gillespie, Managing Authority, as to whether this is possible.

5. Possible amendment to Terms of Reference to reduce quorum for Innovation and Mainstreaming Working Group meetings

After discussion it was agreed that the IMWG update paper to the October Monitoring Committee meeting will recommend:

- Increasing IMWG membership to include new members, drawn from outside the Monitoring Committee if appropriate, to improve the geographical, gender and sectoral balance;
- Amending the IMWG Terms of Reference to state that at least one member of the Monitoring Committee should attend meetings of the IMWG, and by default that person would chair meetings in the absence of the permanent Chairperson; and
- Amending the IMWG Terms of Reference to reduce the quorum for meetings to four.

6. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the IMWG will be arranged for February 2011, to allow for consideration of the outcome of the second call and a determination of the level of interest in dedicated innovative activity. It was also suggested that the next meeting could include a workshop from the six current innovative projects.

7. Any other business

Mr Donnelly queried whether second call projects involved in dedicated innovative activity could attend IMWG meetings as a matter of course.

Action point 7 – this to be considered by the Managing Authority and Monitoring Committee as appropriate.