

North South Ministerial Council  
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta  
Thuaidh Theas  
An Chomhrúnaíocht

**PAPER NSMC SEU 1 (16) JC**

**NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

**SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES MEETING**

**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE**

**IVEAGH HOUSE, DUBLIN**

**7 JULY 2016**

**JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ**

1. The nineteenth North South Ministerial Council Special EU Programmes meeting was held in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Iveagh House, Dublin, on 7 July 2016. The meeting was attended by Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA, Minister for Finance, Executive Office Junior Minister Alastair Ross MLA and Paschal Donohoe, T.D. Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. Minister Ó Muilleoir chaired the meeting.
2. Ministers had a broad discussion on the implications of Brexit and reiterated the joint commitment of the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to work together to ensure that Northern Ireland's interests are protected and advanced and the benefits of North/South co-operation are fully recognised in any new arrangements which emerge as regards the United Kingdom's future relationship with the European Union.
3. Ministers Ó Muilleoir and Donohoe also re-iterated the recent NSMC Plenary commitment to the successful implementation of the PEACE and INTERREG programmes, and agreed to consider the issue of securing the ERDF funding for

PEACE and INTERREG, including through engagement with the European Commission.

## **GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY**

4. Ministers noted that the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform are currently considering proposals relating to the governance structures and reporting arrangements in place for the Special EU Programmes Body and that an update will be provided at a future Special EU Programmes meeting.

## **SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES PROGRESS REPORT**

5. The Chief Executive of the Special EU Programme Body, Gina McIntyre, provided a high level overview of the operation of the Body and a forward looking approach, focusing on high level issues.

## **PRESENTATION ON INTERREG IVA PROJECT**

6. Ministers received a presentation on the HATCH Project which received €1,000,000 in funding from INTERREG IVA and delivered accredited courses while providing support to SME's in construction related and engineering sectors.

## **SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES PROGRESS REPORT**

7. The Chief Executive of the SEUPB made a presentation to Ministers on the role of the Body and provided a detailed progress report on the various activities of the Body including the following:

### UK Referendum on Membership of the EU

- (i) the Body will work in closely with both Member States following the result of the UK Referendum;

### 2014– 2020 Programmes

- (ii) the INTERREG VA Programme was adopted by the European Commission on the 13 February 2015;
  - project calls have opened for all themes—Research and Innovation, Environment, Sustainable Transport and Health. 53 applications in total have been received:-
  - 8 Stage One meetings of the Steering Committee have been held progressing 38 applications to Stage Two;
- (iii) the PEACE IV Programme was adopted by the European Commission on the 30 November 2015;

- calls for applications have opened for four elements of PEACE IV— Shared Education, Building Positive Relations (Regional projects), Local Authority Action Plans, and the victims and survivors element of Shared Spaces and Services;
  - 2 Stage One meetings of the Steering Committee have been held progressing 5 applications to Stage Two;
- (iv) remaining project calls and assessment of projects for PEACE IV and INTERREG VA will continue through 2016 and into 2017; and
- (v) a formal launch event for the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes was held in the Skainos Centre on the 22 January 2016. SEUPB continue to promote the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes.

#### Closure of 2007-2013 Programmes

- (vi) the PEACE III Programme, from a budget of €332.9m, committed €329.9m to 215 projects, a 99.1% commitment level;
- (vii) the INTERREG IVA Programme committed €259.9m (101.5%) to 88 projects from an allocation of €256m; and
- (viii) SEUPB are now undertaking the closure of the PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes. 7 projects remain open—4 PEACE III and 3 INTERREG IVA. The ongoing work will entail updating of Programme Closure trackers for all outstanding open projects, liaison with the Audit Authority and the European Commission, carrying out closure checks and implementation of the closure plan.

#### Transnational and Interregional

- (ix) the SEUPB continues to facilitate North/South participation in the INTERREG IV Transnational and Inter-regional Programmes. During the 2007-13 Programme period 53 projects were funded across the four relevant programmes resulting in an additional ERDF contribution of approximately €11.3m (£9m); and
- (x) for the 2014-20 Programmes, to date, 18 projects have been approved with a value of €4m. 11 of these across both jurisdictions.

#### Corporate Governance

- (xi) the draft 2017 SEUPB Business Plan and 2017-19 Corporate Plan are currently being prepared by the SEUPB with a view to obtaining Sponsor Department and NSMC approval by the end of this year; and the Annual Accounts for 2015 received an unqualified audit opinion from the Auditors and Comptrollers General, and will be laid before the Assembly and both Houses of the Oireachtas in due course.

## **ADDITIONAL MATTERS**

### **APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBERS TO THE NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY**

8. Ministers approved the appointment of Barra Ó Muirí to the Board of the North South Language Body (Foras na Gaeilge), with effect from 7 July 2016 until 12 December 2016.

### **NEXT MEETING**

9. The Council agreed to hold its next Special EU Programmes meeting in autumn 2016.

**Joint Secretariat**

**7 July 2016**

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