

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC SEU 1 (12) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

4 MAY 2012

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The fourteenth North South Ministerial Council Special EU Programmes meeting was held at the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices Armagh on 4 May 2012. The meeting was attended by Brendan Howlin TD, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Sammy Wilson MP MLA, Minister for Finance and Personnel, and OFMDFM Junior Minister Martina Anderson MLA. Minister Howlin chaired the meeting.

PRESENTATION

2. The Council received a presentation made on the PEACE III Project – The Rural Enabler, which works to build positive relations in rural communities. The project was awarded PEACE III funding of €3,123,864/£2,716,404.

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES PROGRESS REPORT

3. The Chief Executive of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), Mr Pat Colgan, made a detailed progress report to Ministers. He reported on the various activities within the Body including progress on the implementation of the PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes. Ministers noted that at the end of March 2012:

- the PEACE III Programme had approved 158 projects worth €326.8 (£284.2) million. The total expenditure on the PEACE III Programme was €124.2 (£108) million against the target of €137.2 (£119.3) million representing a commitment of 98% of the overall programme budget;
 - there is €13 (£11.3) million remaining of the 2012 target to be achieved. SEUPB is confident that this target will be met and is working with Accountable Departments to progress the remaining letters of offer for approved projects;
 - the INTERREG IVA Programme had approved 71 projects worth approximately €195.7 (£170.2) million. The total expenditure on the INTERREG IVA Programme was €68.8 (£59.8) million against the target of €103 (£89.6) million representing a commitment rate of over 76% of the overall programme budget;
 - there remains €36.4 (£31.7) million of the 2012 target to be achieved and SEUPB is confident this target will be met. A recent call for INTERREG IVA closed in February 2012. Ninety one applications were received requesting €217.6 (£189.2). Thirteen applications valued at €48.3 (£42) million have progressed to the second stage of the assessment process; and
 - local authority-based groups had 34 projects approved worth €41 (£36) million in the INTERREG IVA Programme. The total value of applications that are currently under appraisal is €28,518,985 (£24,799,118).
4. The Council also noted the work taken forward by the SEUPB to facilitate North South participation in the INTERREG IV transnational and interregional programmes with 61 project partners secured to date across the relevant programmes.
5. The SEUPB continues to communicate the positive impacts of the EU programmes through high profile events, many with Ministerial involvement as well as a recent visit from members of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 2012

6. The Council discussed the main priorities for the Special EU Programmes Body in 2012 and approved the SEUPB Business Plan 2012 and recommended the 2012 budget provision of :

Administration Costs:	£2,118m (€2,434m)
EU Programme Expenditure	£91,149m (€104,768m)

FUTURE EU PROGRAMMES

7. The Council noted that sponsor Departments had asked the Special EU Programmes Body, in accordance with its establishing legislation, to begin the work of Programme development on a future PEACE Programme and a future INTERREG Cross Border Programme. Following the programme development process detailed programme proposals will be brought to the NSMC for approval.

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

8. The Council noted the Special EU Programmes Body Draft Annual Report and Draft Accounts for 2011.

ST ANDREWS AGREEMENT REVIEW – SPECIAL EU PROGRAMME BODY RECOMMENDATION

9. The Council considered a recommendation concerning the establishment of a Board for the Special EU Programmes Body and agreed to refer the following recommendations for endorsement to the June 2012 NSMC Plenary:
 - taking account of existing EU monitoring arrangements, the cost of a Board, to administer just 3% of the SEUPB budget, would be difficult to justify; and
 - the two sponsor Departments will examine the governance arrangements for the SEUPB that are currently in place and will report to the next NSMC SEUPB meeting in October 2012.

NEXT MEETING

10. The Council agreed to hold its next Special EU Programmes meeting on 12th October 2012.

**Joint Secretariat
4 May 2012**