

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC SEU 2 (16) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES MEETING

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

2 DECEMBER 2016

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twentieth North South Ministerial Council Special EU Programmes meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh, on 2 December 2016. The meeting was attended by Paschal Donohoe T.D., Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA, Minister for Finance and Alastair Ross MLA, Executive Office Junior Minister. Minister Donohoe chaired the meeting.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SEUPB

2. The Council noted that the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of Finance have examined the governance arrangements within the Special EU Programmes Body and have agreed that the existing arrangements are comprehensive, multi-stranded and provide appropriate oversight for the Body.
3. The Council also noted that a review of the reporting arrangements and mechanisms has been undertaken and actions have been implemented as necessary.

PRESENTATION PEACE III - CASTLE SAUNDERSON INTERNATIONAL SCOUT CENTRE

4. Ministers received a presentation on the Castle Saunderson International Scout Centre project which received €3,675,345 from PEACE III and has delivered a cross-community thirty acre multi-activity adventure centre.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE REFERENDUM

5. Ministers noted that the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of Finance, as Sponsor Departments for the Special EU Programmes Body, have each undertaken an initial internal scoping exercise to consider the impact of the result of the UK Referendum on membership of the EU on the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes.
6. The Council noted that the Departments have agreed an approach to maximise the drawdown and impact of the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA programmes and Departments will continue to work together with a view to securing funding for successor Programmes and the matter will be kept under review at future NSMC meetings in this sector.
7. Ministers noted the importance of the INTERREG and PEACE programmes to cooperation and regional development, which was acknowledged by the NSMC at its Plenary meeting on 18 November 2016.

SEUPB PROGRESS REPORT

8. The Council received a detailed progress report from the Chief Executive of the SEUPB, Ms Gina McIntyre, on the activities of the Body which included the following:

2014– 2020 Programmes

- (i) Project calls for all themes of the INTERREG VA Programme are under assessment. At present;
 - 23 projects worth €151.3 million have been approved
 - 6 projects are under assessment
- (ii) Calls for applications have opened for all themes of the PEACE IV Programme. At present;
 - 10 projects have been approved to the value of €50.1m
 - 31 projects are under assessment
 - 2 programme objectives are open for applications.
- (iii) remaining assessment of projects for PEACE IV and INTERREG VA will continue through 2016 and into 2017;

Closure of 2007-2013 Programmes

- (iv) The final commitment achieved for the PEACE III Programme, from a budget of €332.9m, was 99.1% (€329.9m). The INTERREG IVA Programme achieved commitment of 101.5% (€259.9m) from an allocation of €256m. Final interim claims reflecting these values have been submitted to the EU Commission; and
- (v) SEUPB is undertaking the necessary work required to close the PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes in line with EU Commission deadlines.

Transnational and Interregional

- (vi) the SEUPB continues to facilitate North/South participation in the INTERREG IV Transnational and Inter-regional Programmes. During the 2007-2013 Programme period 53 projects were funded across the four relevant programmes resulting in an additional ERDF contribution of approximately €11.3m (£9m); and
- (vii) for the 2014-2020 Programmes, 19 projects with a value of €4m have been approved to date. 12 of these across both jurisdictions.

SEUPB ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2015

- 9. The Council noted that the Special EU Programmes Body Annual Report and Accounts for 2015 have been certified by the Comptrollers and Auditors General in both jurisdictions and will be laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas shortly.

ADDITIONAL MATTERS

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE FOR FORAS NA GAELIGE

- 10. The Council approved the appointment of Seán Ó Coinn to the post of Chief Executive of Foras na Gaeilge.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS OF THE NORTH SOUTH IMPLEMENTATION BODIES AND TOURISM IRELAND

- 11. The Council approved the appointment of Board Members, including Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons, to the North South Implementation Bodies and Directors to Tourism Ireland Limited.

NEXT MEETING

12. The Council agreed to hold its next NSMC Special EU Programmes meeting in spring 2017.

**Joint Secretariat
2 December 2016**

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