

Minutes of the 159th Meeting of the Board of InterTradeIreland, the Trade and Business Development Body.

Tuesday 24th November 2015 InterTradeIreland (12.30pm – 14.30 pm)

Present:

Board Members:

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| Mr Martin Cronin | Chairman |
| Ms Joanne Spain | Vice Chair |
| Mr Brendan Butler | |
| Ms Rosemary Delaney | |
| Mr Jack Gallagher | |
| Mr Ray Hayden | |
| Mr Hubert Brown Kerr | |
| Mr Timothy Mayes | |
| Ms Patricia McKeown | |
| Mr Kevin Norton | |
| Prof Terri Scott | |

In Attendance:

Executive:

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| Mr Thomas Hunter McGowan | CEO |
| Mr Aidan Gough | Director of Policy and Strategy |
| Ms Margaret Hearty | Director of Programmes and Business Services |
| Mr Laurence Lord | Director of Corporate Services |
| Ms Orla McGlennon | Board Secretary |

159.1 Apologies.

An apology was received from Mr Terry Crossan.

159.2 Conflict of Interest.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

159.3 Authorisation of Previous Minutes.

The Minutes of the 21st October Board meeting were approved by the Board and authorised by the Chairman.

159.4 Chairman's Report

The Chairman thanked all members for their valuable contribution to the work of InterTradeIreland and their continuous commitment to the Body.

159.5 CEO Report

Mr Hunter McGowan advised that he had recently met with Damien English, TD, Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation. The Minister was particularly interested in the work of InterTradeIreland on the Horizon 2020 programme.

The CEO reported that he attended the launch of Enterprise 2025, Ireland's National Enterprise Policy 2015 to 2025 in which InterTradeIreland is specifically mentioned.

The senior leadership team met with senior members of Enterprise Ireland recently and plan to continue to meet regularly with both Enterprise Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hunter McGowan for his report.

159.6 Board Sub Committee/Steering Committee Reports

Innovation Sub Committee Report

Mr Norton reported from the Innovation Sub Committee meeting held on 21st October. He advised that 11 new Fusion applications were considered and all 11 projects were approved. One further application considered at the September Sub Committee meeting was also approved following clarification.

The Chairman thanked Mr Norton for his report.

Trade Sub Committee Report

Mr Hayden reported from the Trade Sub Committee meeting held on 21st October. The Trade Sub Committee considered 12 Acumen applications and approved 10 projects, 1 from the Munster region, 4 from the Leinster region and 5 from the Ulster region. One project was rejected and 1 project was deferred for additional information.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hayden for his report.

Communications Sub Committee Report

Mr Gallagher reported from the Communication Sub Committee meeting held that morning. He advised that the Communications team outlined achievements in the areas of MAVE, website visitors, social media, eZine subscribers and brand awareness metrics against very ambitious annual targets. All targets are currently on track to be met. Results from the recent Business Monitor indicate that Brand Awareness has steadily increased throughout the year and more SMEs are aware of the work of InterTradeIreland. Mr Gallagher advised that the re-brand and recent advertising campaign was paying dividends.

Communications planning for 2016 is underway with a draft calendar of activity and a strategic plan due to be considered by the senior leadership team in the near future. The Communications Sub Committee reviewed activities and may adopt some new and innovative approaches in 2016.

Mr Gallagher thanked Mr Hayden for brokering a meeting with UTV which resulted in coverage of the latest Business Monitor results on the UTV business slot.

The Communications Sub Committee reviewed the current terms of reference and was satisfied with the document in its current form. The Board agreed that the terms of reference remain in their current form.

The Chairman thanked Mr Gallagher for his report.

159.7 For Consideration, Discussion, Decision &/or Approval

Operations Directorate Progress and Activity Report

Ms Hearty presented the Operations Directorate Progress and Activity Report. She advised that November was a very busy month for outreach activities and events with participation in the ASM Cross Border Bureau series of events and attendance and a speaking slot at the EXIM Summit Conference in Croke Park. InterTradeIreland were also represented at the Meet West Conference in Athlone and attended the annual ISME conference in the RDS. These events provide real opportunities to highlight the programmes and work of the organisation. Ms Hearty reported on the forthcoming InterTradeIreland Seedcorn Awards Competition taking place in Clontarf Castle on 25th November at which Minister Bruton is due to attend.

The 2015 Fusion Exemplars have been chosen. These companies are selected on criteria such as the level of innovation, benefits achieved and overall contribution to the Fusion programme and used as material for case studies and included on the InterTradeIreland website. Companies selected gain local publicity and in most instances, acknowledge appreciation of the Fusion programme.

Ms Hearty advised that an independent evaluation of Phase 2 and 3 of the Elevate programme is almost complete and the results will be presented to the Board in early 2016. Early indications suggest that the programme is generating very positive returns.

Interest in the Acumen programme continues with a strong pipeline of enquiries for projects.

The Board discussed the analysis of the Meet the Buyer event and the overarching goal to get indigenous companies to engage in the tendering process. The Board agreed that going forward the Executive should monitor attendance at events so that attendees can be classified by sector, geographic region, product or service and seniority.

The Chairman thanked Ms Hearty for her report.

Go-2-Tender Programme

Mr Grant Gilmore, Operations Manager, Public Tendering joined the Board meeting for this agenda item. Mr Gilmore presented the findings of an independent economic appraisal of Phase 7 of the Go-2-Tender programme. He advised that the programme provides training followed by one to one mentoring with the aim of up-skilling SMEs to tender into the all island public procurement market. First piloted in 2003, the programme has successfully delivered 6 phases with very positive independent evaluations. Mr Gilmore advised that Enterprise Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland direct all requests for public sector tender training to the InterTradeIreland Go-2-Tender programme. The recently completed evaluation of phase 5 of the programme reported positive outputs from companies participating in the programme

Mr Gilmore advised that based on the assessment of need/demand of the programme and issues raised during stakeholder consultations, the proposed Go-2-Tender programme going forward will include:

- Stage 1 – Go-2-Tender Lite
- Stage 2 – Standard Go-2-Tender Training
- Stage 3 - Go-2-Tender Level 1 Mentoring
- Stage 4 – Go2-Tender Level 2 Mentoring
- Stage 5 – Go-2-Tender Level 3, Consortia Mentoring and Sector Briefings

Mr Gilmore outlined the various options considered in the economic appraisal and detailed the preferred option.

The Board discussed the proposed programme and approved the request to go to competitive tender for a delivery agent for the next phase of the Go-2-Tender Programme from 2016 to 2018.

The Chairman thanked Mr Gilmore for his presentation.

Governance and Financial Matters

Mr Lord presented the Governance and Financial Matters Report as outlined in the Board documentation.

The Board noted the Governance and Financial Matters Report and the Chairman thanked Mr Lord for his update.

Communications and Marketing Performance Report

Mr Lord presented the Communications and Marketing Performance Report. He advised that following the latest corporate advertising campaign, brand awareness has now increased to 69% with more SMEs on the island aware of the work of InterTradeIreland.

The Board noted the Communications and Marketing Performance Report.

Tenders and Variations to Letters of Offer/Appointment

The Board approved the request to go to competitive tender for a delivery agent for the next phase of the Go-2-Tender Programme for a three year period.

Horizon 2020 Competitive Partnerships Programme

Dr Bernadette McGahon, International Research Development and Innovation Manager joined the Board meeting for this agenda item.

Mr Gough introduced the proposal for the rollout of the Competitive Partnership Programme in 2016.

Dr McGahon advised that both Governments have set their own targets for Horizon 2020 and have agreed a target of €175m for collaborative North South projects. Indications to date are positive. In the period January 2014 to May 2015 there were 172 collaborative North South proposals of which 22 have been successful. These have resulted in a total draw down of €29.7m. This compares to €15.5m for the same period in the FP7 programme – an increase of €14.2m. The InterTradeIreland Competitive Partnerships pilot programme was approved by the Board in March 2015 and launched in July 2015. InterTradeIreland promoted the scheme directly to industry and academic researchers previously involved in North South collaborative applications. The programme offers an expert advisory service with a view to identifying additional resubmission opportunities in the 2016 and 2017 work programmes. To date advisory workshops have been held with further workshops scheduled. Indications of success to date are positive with participants engaging with the consultant and receiving a detailed analysis of their proposal and recommendations given on possible re-submissions and/or a new submission to a different part of the Horizon 2020 programme. Dr McGahon advised of the emerging interest in the competitive partnership programme and the demand for further advice from unsuccessful applicants to the Horizon 2020 programme. The Board discussed the proposal and approved the request to competitively tender for the next phase of H2020 Competitive Partnerships Programme for a 12 month period.

The Chairman thanked Dr McGahon for her presentation.

Business Monitor Results Q3 2015

Mr Gough gave a verbal summary of the latest Q3 Business Monitor results. He advised that recovery is continuing with domestically focussed sectors now performing better. There is a significant divergence between North and South in sales and employment performance of firms.

Key challenges facing businesses are now much more focussed on normal market pressures including cash flow, competition and exchange rate fluctuations. Although energy costs have declined, it continues to be an issue particularly for exporters, large businesses and manufacturers. Mr Gough reported that the national living wage will have only a limited impact for businesses mainly in the leisure and hospitality sectors.

The Chairman thanked Mr Gough for his update.

Interreg Update

Mr Gough gave an update on the Interreg V programme. He advised that the Steering Committee will consider InterTradeIreland's Part A application on 25th November and if successful a Business Plan is due to be submitted by early February 2016.

The Chairman thanked Mr Gough for his update.

Business Plan Budget Variance and Milestone Exception Report

The Board noted the Business Plan Budget Variance and Milestone Exception Report.

159.8 AOB

The Board discussed the monthly CEO report and it was agreed going forward, the CEO will provide a brief written report to the Board.

.....Authorised by:

Mr Martin Cronin
Chairman, InterTradeIreland
26th January 2016