

Minutes of the 175th Meeting of the Board of InterTradeIreland, the Trade and Business Development Body.

Tuesday 27th June 2017 – InterTradeIreland (12.30pm – 14.30 pm)

Present:

Board Members:

Mr Ken Nelson	Chairman
Mr Paul O’Sullivan	Vice Chair
Mr Micheál Briody	
Mr Timothy Cairns	
Mr Terry Crossan	
Ms Rosemary Delaney	
Mr Paul Greenfield	
Mr Patrick Joy	
Ms Ann Rudden	
Prof Terri Scott	
Mr James Spratt	

In Attendance:

Executive:

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 Caroline Moore	Acting Board Secretary

175.1 Apologies

No apologies.

175.2 Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all Board members to the meeting.

175.3 Conflict of Interest

The Chairman asked members to declare any conflicts of interest relating to today's agenda. The Chairman declared a potential conflict of interest arising from his position as CEO of LEDCOM, which is a member organisation of Enterprise Northern Ireland and is involved in the delivery of the Co-Innovate programme. Mr Greenfield declared a potential conflict of interest arising from his position as a member of the Peace IV Working Group and as Board member of East Border Region Ltd which is involved in the delivery of the Co-Innovate programme. These will be noted for all future Board meetings.

No other conflicts were declared.

175.4 Authorisation of the 30th May 2017 Board Minutes

The minutes of the 30th May 2017 Board meeting were agreed as a true record of the meeting, approved by the Board and authorised by the Chairman.

175.5 Matters Arising

All matters arising are captured in the agenda.

175.6 Chairman's Business

On behalf of the Board the Chairman expressed condolences on the recent death of former Board Member, Jack Gallagher's wife and advised that a card had been sent on their behalf. The Chairman advised the Board that he had received letters from the Northern Ireland Office in relation to the NI Budget 2017/18 and another from the Department for the Economy. These were made available to Board members. The Chairman informed the Board that as they had now completed 6 months as a new Board, he wanted to assess the views of the Board on its' effectiveness and if any improvements should be made. He offered 1:1 meetings in August with Board members to discuss any issues following analysis of a Board survey to be issued in July.

The Chairman confirmed that following prior notification by email, the Board would meet briefly in a private session at the end of the meeting to discuss a matter.

175.7 CEO Report

The CEO provided a verbal update on activities undertaken over the previous month. He advised the Board that he presented at two Brexit events, the first held in Dublin in conjunction with Dublin Chamber of Commerce with 60 in attendance and Galway with the Local Enterprise Office in where 20 companies were in attendance.

The CEO attended a Co Innovate meeting in Belfast with partners and the team are moving forward to delivering their first workshop.

A Meet the Buyer event was held in Cookstown where over 550 companies registered. This event was opened by the Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, Ms Kim Ashton where there was a steady stream of businesses visiting throughout the day. The shift in emphasis for these events to be sector led has been very successful.

The Potential Impact of WTO Tariffs on cross-border trade report was released on 8th June and is now available on the InterTradeIreland website.

Mr Lord attended a meeting on behalf of the CEO with the Department for the Economy and Department for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation where the current budgetary situation was discussed.

The Board noted the CEO's update and the Chairman thanked Mr Hunter McGowan for his update.

175.08 Board Sub Committee Reports

Innovation Sub Committee Report

Prof Scott reported back from the Innovation Sub Committee meeting held on 30th May 2017. The Committee considered twelve new applications. Ten projects were approved, one project was deferred for further information and one project was rejected.

The Chairman thanked Prof Scott for her update.

Trade Sub Committee Report

Mr Joy reported back from the Trade Sub Committee meeting held on 30th May 2017. He advised that the Committee considered twelve Acumen applications. Eight projects were approved; three projects were deferred – one was rejected.

The Chairman thanked Mr Joy for his report.

Communication Sub Committee Verbal Update

Ms Delaney provided a verbal update from the Communications Sub Committee held on the morning of 27th June 2017. She informed the Board of the priorities for the communications team outlining that 40% of the Communications Manager's time is allocated to Co-Innovate and plans are underway for the upcoming Brexit launch.

The current web provider contract expires in November 2017. Ms Delaney sought permission to go to tender for set up costs for the development of a new website supporting the digitisation of the organisation as outlined in the 2017-2019 Corporate Plan. A CPD exercise will then be undertaken

over the summer months. Staff will be involved in an ideas generation workshop and the Senior Leadership Team will attend a Leadership course on Digital Transformation. It is proposed that the new website delivery will be Q1 2018.

Prof. Scott raised concerns about the ideas generation workshop being facilitated by the existing provider and queried if they would have an unfair advantage when tendering. She also questioned if expertise should be sought from outside the organisation in drawing up the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Tender.

Mr Lord advised that he will take on board the concerns raised and would be willing to bring in an external advisor to facilitate with the TOR.

The Board approved the request to go to competitive tender for the development of a new website supporting the digitisation of the organisation towards set up costs.

The Chairman thanked Ms Delaney for her report.

Acumen Evaluation and Economic Appraisal

Mr John Clarke from Cogent, Mr Paddy Savage, Operations Manager and Mrs Janet Toal, Trade Project Manager joined the Board meeting for this agenda item.

Ms Hearty informed the Board that it was important an independent evaluation was carried out which fed into the economic appraisal and a wide range of stakeholders were consulted. She advised the Board that the Acumen programme operated prior to InterTradeIreland in Northern Ireland and the border counties. InterTradeIreland took the decision to roll out the programme on an all island basis. It is the only programme that both Enterprise Ireland (EI) and Invest Northern Ireland (INI) co-fund. INI was keen to formalise the arrangement and this was included in the economic appraisal. The funding arrangement with EI is assumed at the same level as previously held.

Mr Clarke briefed the Board on the impacts and results of the programme. Mr Savage and Mrs Toal outlined the recommendations from the evaluation to increase scale to meet demand, mitigate any potential impact of Brexit on participants, support businesses in recruiting and mentoring sales personnel and facilitate cross border networking among participants.

The Chairman thanked John Clarke, Paddy Savage and Janet Toal for their presentation.

The Board approved the next Phase of the Acumen programme (Phase V) as identified as the preferred Option 6c (i) in the economic appraisal

Operations Directorate Progress and Activity Report

Ms Hearty provided an overview of the Operations Directorate Progress and Activity Report. She informed the Board that all programme budgets and targets are on track with a very healthy pipeline for all programmes. She advised the Board that a Brexit advisor has taken up his appointment.

The Chairman thanked Ms Hearty for her report.

Governance and Financial Matters

Mr Lord presented the Governance and Financial Matters report. He acknowledged the risk register is to be presented annually. Mr Lord gave an update on the financing of the Co-Innovate programme. He advised that there is an opportunity to obtain cash advances which could minimise any risk to the Body.

The Chairman thanked Mr Lord for his report and asked that the Risk Register be brought to the August Board meeting.

Tenders and Variations to Letters of Offer/Appointment

Mr Lord advised that as discussed earlier in the meeting, there was one request to go to competitive tender for the development of a new website supporting the digitisation of the organisation towards set up costs

The Board approved this request.

Communications Update

Mr Lord presented the Communication Update. He reported that activities are meeting their strategic targets but there is a disappointing level of visitors to the website. This has been largely driven by a 50% decrease in digital advertising expenditure due to budgetary constraints.

A press pack of clippings was made available for the Board to view.

The Chairman thanked Mr Lord for his update.

The Chairman recommended that the Board should have access to indicators which demonstrate how well recognised InterTradeIreland is in the business community and an assessment of how positively – or otherwise - stakeholders recommend InterTradeIreland services. He suggested that M-IV values be expanded to quantify positive, negative and neutral comment.

Co-Innovate Programme Update

Mr Neil Ryan, Co-Innovate Programme Director joined the Board meeting for this agenda item.

Mr Ryan informed the Board of the launch preparations for Co-Innovate programme. These will take place on 7th September for NI/ROI and 12th September for Scotland. All Board members will be invited. SME recruitment and workshops have taken place in June. Promotional materials have been distributed to the various partners and recruiters. The Management Information System (MIS) has been awarded to Targeting Innovation Ltd who are based in Scotland and Dublin. The State Aid rationale to allow the programme to provide aid without going through the European Commission's full notification process has been approved by SEUPB. They will now register the programme with the EU Commission using the State Aid Notification Interactive system.

The Board noted the Co-Innovate programme report and the Chairman thanked Mr Ryan for his update.

Business Plan Budget Variance and Milestone Exception Report

Mr Gough briefed the Board on the Budget Variance and Milestone Exception Report included in the papers. There were no concerns raised.

The Board noted this report and the Chairman thanked Mr Gough for his update.

Brexit Business Plan

Ms Eimear Fitzpatrick, Communications Manager joined the Board meeting for this agenda item. Mr Gough presented a Brexit strategy, implementation plan and an indicative budget. He reported that the principal objective of the Brexit Advisory Service is to encourage and support small and micro sized businesses to prepare for a new cross-border trading relationship so that cross border trade and business development opportunities continue to grow. The key performance metric will be the percentage of businesses that are planning for Brexit as 98% of businesses are telling us they are not planning for Brexit which is a key message for InterTradeIreland. The plan presented contained a clear rationale for the service and costed activities that will comprise it. It was highlighted that many of the activities are contingent upon securing additional funding for Brexit related activities.

Ms Fitzpatrick delivered a presentation to the Board on branded collateral around the Brexit Advisory Service which is currently being developed, anticipated to go live in August/September

The Board approved the Brexit strategy, implementation plan, indicative budget and branding for Brexit marketing activities.

The Chairman thanked Ms Fitzpatrick and Mr Gough for the report.

AOB

Mr Gough advised the Board that he had received a request from AIB representatives with an offer for InterTradeIreland to provide comment in the form of a short paragraph in a press release on the results of a new, quarterly, all-island Brexit Sentiment Survey which will begin in September. He advised that there is no cost involved in this partnership and sought approval to progress with the partnership.

There was Board discussion around the protocols of working with the various financial institutions on InterTradeIreland initiatives.

The Chairman thanked Mr Gough for presenting his request and asked that the concept paper reflecting the issues raised be provided to Board members for further consideration and approval

.....Authorised by:

Mr Ken Nelson
Chairman, InterTradeIreland
29th August 2017