

**Minutes of the 172<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Board of InterTradeIreland, the Trade and Business Development Body.**

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017 – InterTradeIreland (12.30pm – 14.20 pm)**

Present:

Board Members:

Mr Ken Nelson	Chairman
Mr Micheál Briody	
Mr Timothy Cairns	
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 Orla McGlennon	Board Secretary

#### 172.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Terry Crossan, Mr Paul O’Sullivan and Ms Joanne Spain.

#### 172.2 Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all Board members to the meeting. On behalf of the Board he expressed their condolences to Mr Paul O’Sullivan on the recent death of his brother and to Mrs Orla McGlennon on the recent death of her mother.

### 172.3 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 Chairman 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.

No other conflicts were declared.

### 172.4 Authorisation of the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017 Board Minutes

The minutes of the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017 Board meeting were agreed as a true record of the meeting, approved by the Board and authorised by the Chairman.

### 172.5 Matters Arising

Mr Hunter McGowan advised to date, no Board member had expressed an interest in participating on any forthcoming tender assessment panels

The CEO advised that all other matters arising would be considered during the meeting.

The Chairman thanked the CEO for his update

### 172.5 Chairman's Business

The Chairman advised that the next Board meeting will commence at 12.30 pm on 25<sup>th</sup> April. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee training has been re-arranged to coincide with the April meeting.

The Chairman informed the Board that the Board Sub Committee terms of references had recently been reviewed by David Nicholl, On Board Training and Consultancy Ltd and were all found to be satisfactory.

He advised that the Board meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> May would be held in Belfast possibly at Belfast City Council's iFactory premises. It was agreed that the Sub Committee meetings would be held in the morning, followed by InterTradeIreland company presentations and a lunch with key stakeholders. The Board meeting will be held in the afternoon. The Chairman encouraged as many Board members as possible to attend the event where there would be an opportunity to highlight the work of InterTradeIreland to attendees. It was agreed that the draft itinerary for the event should be circulated to Board members for review.

The Chairman advised that he had met recently with Derek McCallan, CEO of Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) to discuss developing relationships between our two organisations. InterTradeIreland were invited to sponsor the NILGA annual conference which is due to take place in La Mon Country House Hotel on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Given that the Body does not currently have a

sponsorship budget; Mr McCallan would still welcome the presence of InterTradeIreland Chairman and senior executives at the event.

The Chairman informed the Board that as Chairman of InterTradeIreland, he had been invited to the CBI Northern Ireland Annual Dinner as a guest of Kernel Capital to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017 in Belfast and the Board was content with this.

The Chairman commended Ms Hearty, Mr Stokes and the team responsible for the very successful Venture Capital Conference.

## 171.6 CEO Report

The CEO reported on the Venture Capital Conference held in Dublin on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The Conference was opened by Mr Patrick Joy, Chairman of the Funding for Growth Committee. Mr Pat Breen, Minister of State for Employment and Small Business spoke at the event. Mr Hunter McGowan advised that Mr Sean Mitchell of Movidius gave a very engaging speech at the opening session.

The Co-Innovate team are now all in place and recently had a face to face meeting with the other programme delivery partners at a meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017 in Belfast.

The CEO advised that the Brexit events continue to be rolled out to assist companies prepare for any new trading relationships that emerge from Brexit negotiations. He advised that research currently being carried out will provide businesses with factual data which will be of real benefit to them and focus on the potential impact of changing market conditions on levels of cross border trade.

The Landscaping exercise with Invest Northern Ireland and Enterprise Ireland continues and is due to be completed in May 2017. This is a detailed mapping exercise to capture all the major supports from the three agencies and to ensure that there is no duplication.

The CEO advised that Minister Mary Mitchel O'Connor is scheduled to visit InterTradeIreland offices on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March. All Board members were cordially invited to attend this meeting.

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

## 172.07 Board Sub Committee Reports

### *Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Report*

Mr Briody reported back from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

The draft 2016 Audit Strategy was presented by the NIAO representatives and key audit risks were highlighted to the Committee. Audit fieldwork is due to re-commence on 20<sup>th</sup> March to facilitate the certification of the accounts by the required deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

Mr Briody reported that the Annual Internal Audit Assurance Report for 2016 concluded that '*ITI's systems in relation to risk management, control and governance were adequate and operated effectively and can provide satisfactory assurance in relation to the effective and efficient achievement*

*of ITI's objective's*'. The Committee noted that the current contract with the internal auditors expires in July 2017 and the procurement of a new contract will commence in the near future.

The Committee was advised that the Risk Management Policy had been approved by the Board. The Risk Register, which summarised the risk profile of the Body, as considered by the Senior Leadership Team was explained, including the processes for compiling the register.

Mr Briody informed the Board that training for members of the Committee had been organised for 25<sup>th</sup> April to coincide with the next Board meeting.

The Chairman thanked Mr Briody for his report.

#### *Communications Sub Committee Report*

Ms Delaney reported back from the Communications Sub Committee meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017. She advised that the Committee had welcomed Board member, Ms Ann Rudden and the newly appointed Communications Manager, Ms Eimear Fitzpatrick to the Committee. The main purpose of the meeting had been to present the Committee with an overview of the communications team's role and to present the 2017 Communications Plan and targets for the year. Ms Delaney advised that the Committee had endorsed the targets as set out in the Board documentation. She informed the Board that although 'Brand Awareness' and 'Brand Understanding' figures would continue to be monitored, they would not be deemed as targets as their achievement is outside of the control of the communications team. The terms of reference for the Communications Sub Committee had also been updated. The impact of the Co-Innovate programme on the communication's team was discussed given that 40% of the Communications Manager's role will be allocated to the new programme. The implications of this and Brexit activities on communications resources had been discussed and would be kept under review by the Sub Committee.

The Chairman thanked Ms Delaney for her report.

#### *Innovation Sub Committee Report*

Ms Hearty reported back from the Innovation Sub Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The Committee considered one deferred Fusion application from the previous month which was approved.

The Board noted the decisions of the Innovation Sub Committee and the Chairman thanked Ms Hearty for her update.

#### *Trade Sub Committee Report*

Mr Joy reported back from the Trade Sub Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017. He advised that the Committee considered seven Acumen applications. Four projects were approved, two projects were rejected due to potential displacement issues and one project was referred to the Elevate programme.

The Chairman asked if the Committee had any concerns regarding the pipeline of Acumen applications. Ms Hearty informed the Board that fourteen projects were being considered by the Committee following the Board meeting and the quality of applications continues to be high.

The Board noted the decisions of the Trade Sub Committee and the Chairman thanked Mr Joy for his report.

#### 172.08 For Consideration, Discussion, Decision &/or Approval

##### *Operations Directorate Progress and Activity Report*

Ms Hearty presented the Operations Directorate Progress and Activity Report. She informed the Board that at the end of Q1 2017, all programme budgets and targets are on track. Outreach events continue at pace with a particular emphasis on Brexit events in various locations on the island.

The Venture Capital Conference provided the appropriate audience for the launch of the InterTradeIreland 2017 Seedcorn Competition which will culminate with the Awards Ceremony in Dublin on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017.

Go-2-Tender delivered a Category Briefing in Dublin on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2017 entitled “Rebuilding Ireland – Commercial Construction Opportunities”. This centred on the Irish Governments roadmap to significantly increase the delivery of social housing units, boost private housing construction, improve the rental market and to meet an overall commitment to see housing supply increase to some 25,000 new homes per annum by 2020. The event provided construction companies, construction professionals, building product companies with a unique opportunity. Similar events are planned in Northern Ireland.

The Chairman thanked Ms Hearty for her report.

##### *Governance and Financial Matters*

Mr Lord presented the Governance and Financial Matters report. The Board discussed the Body’s commitments going forward and it was agreed that this matter should be reviewed regularly by the Board.

The Chairman thanked Mr Lord for his report.

##### *Communications Update*

Mr Lord presented the Communication Update. He advised that the Business Monitor Q4 2016 survey generated significant press coverage. The 2017 Venture Capital Conference was well attended and Mr Pat Breen, Minister for Small Business opened and spoke at the conference. Mr Lord advised that the Communications team are currently involved in refreshing the graduate website and feedback from users to date has been very positive.

The Board noted the Communications update and the Chairman thanked Mr Lord for his report.

## *US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme*

Ms Kerry Curran, Policy Research Manager joined the Board meeting for this agenda item. She advised that she had attended a US-Ireland Partnership meeting held in Washington on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The US-Ireland Partnership is a unique initiative involving funding agencies across three jurisdictions: United States of America, Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The initiative was announced at a summit in Washington in 2001 and was officially launched in July 2006. InterTradeIreland provide the secretariat support for the partnership. Under the programme, a ‘single proposal, single review’ mechanism is facilitated by the National Science Foundation, (NSF), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Ms Curran advised that the relevant funding agencies contribute to the research costs of researchers in their jurisdiction. The overall goal of the Partnership is to increase the level of collaborative R&D amongst researchers and industry professionals across the three jurisdictions. The collaboration aims to generate valuable discoveries and innovations which are transferable to the marketplace, or will lead to enhancements in health, disease prevention or healthcare in policy and practice.

Ms Curran outlined the thematic areas prioritised in the programme:

- Nanoscale Science & Engineering;
- Sensors & Sensor Networks;
- Telecommunications;
- Energy & Sustainability;
- Health (initially Cystic Fibrosis & Diabetes) and
- Agriculture

Ms Curran outlined the outputs and impacts achieved to date:

### Outputs

- 36 projects with a combined investment value of €61.1m /£53m
- Recent expansion into Agriculture with one successful bid to the National Institute for Food and Agriculture for £1m
- Success rate of proposal submissions to NSF is 32% (avg. 20%)

### Impacts

- Facilitating strategic international partnerships
- Increasing the international profile of Ireland/NI researchers
- Supporting economic impact in Ireland/NI
- Training Ireland/NI based academics, via exposure to international labs

The recent meeting in Washington D.C. was hosted by the by the Department of State and Chaired by Dr. Jonathan Margolis, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Science, Space, and Health. Others in attendance included the Co-Chairs Feargal O’Morain (Ireland) and Rosemary Hamilton (NI) along with representatives from NIFA, NIH, NSF, USDA, NNCO, HSC, SFI, HRB, DJEI, (DAERA, DfE, DAFM, VCU). The attendees discussed partnership progress, co-operation at Centre to Centre level and the pilot co-operation in the area of agriculture and industry collaboration. Ms Curran informed the Board that InterTradeIreland will host the next meeting in Spring 2018.

The Board discussed the initiative and whether it contributed to the Body’s key business objectives and to the key performance indicators. Mr Gough advised that the only resource implication was of

staff's time. He informed the Board that the initiative is of significant importance to both Governments' current strategies. The value and benefits of the initiative was recognised by Board members. The importance of securing InterTradeIreland branding at the Spring 2018 event was also highlighted. The Board asked that the Executive explore the potential of securing support for our costs from other participants.

The Chairman thanked Ms Curran for her presentation.

### *Co-Innovate Programme Update*

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

Mr Ryan informed the Board that the recruitment of the Co-Innovate team was nearing completion. The positions of Co-Innovate Programme Director and two Co-Innovate Programme Managers have been filled and the Co-Innovate Programme Executive is due to commence on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017. It was felt that the Co-Innovate Programme Innovation Expert candidates were not suitable for the full programme needs and this position is being reviewed and will be re-advertised in the near future. Mr Ryan advised that the partner organisations are also in the process of recruiting staff.

To date, six 'permission to start' documents (including the signed Partnership Agreement) have been submitted by InterTradeIreland with a further four to be submitted by the 31<sup>st</sup> March to the SEUPB eMS system.

Procurement exercises currently underway include:

- Interim Innovation Expert Contract for Services – Awarded to Team BDS to develop messaging, workshop content, ready reckoner, and innovation audit.
- Procurement of Innovation Speakers (to deliver sectoral workshops) – deadline for applicants was 14<sup>th</sup> March, and assessments of applicants is scheduled for 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2017.
- Procurement of experts to recruit companies and conduct IRR (LEO's) – deadline for applicants is 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017.
- Management Information System (MIS) – tender advertised on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2017.

In addition to this, the Executive are progressing the development of a brand for Co-Innovate, website design and programme launches. The programme will be formally launched in early June.

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

### *Brexit*

Mr Gough advised that Brexit events continue at pace and a cross directorate team has been established to assist businesses on the island prepare for any new trading relationships that emerge from Brexit negotiations. Research is on-going on the potential impacts of tariffs on SMEs and a Brexit advisory service is in place to deal with enquiries. Businesses will be able to search a database which will

indicate what tariff is likely to be introduced in individual sectors. Mr Gough advised that the key message to companies is to analyse, engage and act on the information supplied. He reported that InterTradeIreland is currently recruiting for a newly role of Brexit Advisor and the advisor will provide valuable information to both businesses on the island and the Government Departments. Indications from both sponsoring Government departments suggest that InterTradeIreland is well equipped to deal with advising companies on the implications of Brexit in both jurisdictions. Board members agreed that this is a strategic opportunity to point out to Departments what InterTradeIreland has done to date and what could be achieved with additional resources in this area.

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The Chairman thanked the Executive their work in this area.

**172.09 AOB**

The Chairman thanked Board members and the Executive for their contributions at the meeting and wished all a very Happy Easter.

.....Authorised by:

Mr Ken Nelson  
Chairman, InterTradeIreland  
25<sup>th</sup> April 2017