

**Minutes of the 178<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Board of InterTradeIreland, the Trade and Business Development Body.**

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017 - Titanic, Belfast (13.45pm – 15.15 pm)**

Present:

Board Members:

Mr Ken Nelson	Chairman
Mr Paul O’Sullivan	Vice Chair
Mr Terry Crossan	
Ms Rosemary Delaney	
Mr Patrick Joy	
Ms Ann Rudden	
Mr James Spratt	

In Attendance:

Executive:

Mr Aidan Gough	Designated Officer
Ms Margaret Hearty	Assistant Designated Officer
Ms Orla McGlennon	Board Secretary

#### 178.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Micheál Briody, Mr Timothy Cairns, Mr Paul Greenfield, Prof Terri Scott and Mr Laurence Lord,

#### 178.2 Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all Board members to the meeting. He reported on the exceptional Brexit event held prior to the meeting and the very positive PR coverage resulting. Board members commented on the very informative and professional manner in which the event was hosted. Some suggested recommendations for improvement in relation to the forthcoming Dublin Brexit event were discussed. The Board asked the Executive to track the increase in numbers applying for the Brexit Start to Plan vouchers following attendance at the conference. The Chairman and Board asked that their appreciation be passed on to everyone for the extremely successful event.

### 178.3 Conflict of Interest

The Chairman asked Board 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. Ms Ann Rudden declared a potential conflict of interest arising from her position as founder and MD of Áine Hand Made Chocolate who are applying to the Co-Innovate programme.

No other conflicts were declared.

### 178.4 Authorisation of the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017 Board Minutes

The minutes of the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017 Board meeting were agreed as a true record of the meeting, approved by the Board and authorised by the Chairman.

### 178.5 Matters Arising

Mr Gough advised that all matters arising from the September Board meeting had been addressed.

### 178.6 Chairman's Business

The Chairman advised that in his role as Chairman of InterTradeIreland, he had presented to delegates at the NILGA Conference on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

### 178.7 Designated Officer Report

Mr Gough reported on a recent meeting with officials from the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEJ) to discuss 2017 budget and the impact of exchange rate volatility.

The Chairman thanked Mr Gough for his update.

### 178.8 Stakeholder Engagement

Mr Gough presented a new framework for stakeholder engagement. The Chairman advised that additional resources were being sought from the Sponsoring Departments, particularly the Northern Ireland administration and in that regard there was merit in Board members assisting the Executive. He thanked Mr Crossan, Mr Spratt and Mr O'Sullivan who had already agreed to assist in the facilitation of engaging with officials from Northern Ireland. The Board were advised that Mr

Gough and Ms Hearty would be arranging the meetings and any assistance from other Board members would be welcomed. The Board Secretary distributed a summary of Phase 1 of the proposed stakeholder engagement and a list of the key decision makers and influencers. Mr Gough asked that Board members consider the proposed list and advise if they could assist in contacting and/or accompanying the Senior Leadership team to meetings.

The Board discussed the proposed stakeholder engagement at length and suggestions on other key decision makers to contact were made. The Board asked the Executive to list the key outputs that would result if any additional budget was secured. It was agreed that to make best use of Board members' time, meetings could be arranged around InterTradeIreland events and/or Board meetings. The importance of Board members having a clear message to deliver to stakeholders was highlighted and it was agreed that the Executive would prepare a short brief/bullet points for distribution to Board members. The Board agreed to feed comments on the proposed list of stakeholders to the Executive by close of play on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October.

The Chairman thanked Board members for their input and Mr Gough for his update.

#### 178.9 Board Sub Committee Reports

##### *Innovation Sub Committee Report*

Mr O'Sullivan reported back from the Innovation Sub Committee meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017. He informed the Board that three new Fusion applications and two previously deferred applications were considered. Three projects were approved and two projects were deferred for additional information. Mr O'Sullivan informed the Board that the next Innovation Sub Committee meeting would be held on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October in Belfast.

The Board noted the Innovation Sub Committee Report and the Chairman thanked Mr O'Sullivan for his update.

##### *Trade Sub Committee Report*

Mr Joy reported back from the Trade Sub Committee meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017. He advised that the Committee considered fourteen new Acumen applications. Ten projects were approved and four were deferred for further information. One of the deferred projects was subsequently approved and information is still outstanding on three applications. Mr Joy informed the Board that the next Trade Sub Committee meeting would take place on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October in Enniskillen.

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

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

Ms Hearty presented the Operations Directorate Progress and Activity Report and advised that the Operations team were extremely busy and all programmes and budgets reports are on track. The

2017 Fusion Exemplars detailed in the Operations report were highlighted and Ms Hearty reported on the high business development value derived from these projects to date.

The Chairman noted that as the Local Enterprise Agencies are involved in Brexit events, the Executive should explore opportunities to involve Enterprise Northern Ireland and the Councils in Northern Ireland also.

The Board noted the Operations Directorate Report and the Chairman thanked Ms Hearty for her update.

### *Governance and Financial Matters Report*

Ms Hearty presented the Governance and Financial Matters report. She informed the Board that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had agreed the internal audit strategy and work will commence at the end of October. The Senior Leadership team is reviewing the risk register and will be presenting an updated document to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to be held on 28<sup>th</sup> November.

Ms Hearty reported that a review of the 2017 budget had recently been undertaken and the budget is expected to be fully utilised by year end and she also highlighted the impact of currency fluctuations.

Ms Hearty reported that the reimbursement of the first claim for the Co-Innovate programme has been received from SEUPB.

The Board noted the Governance and Financial Matters report and the Chairman thanked Ms Hearty for her report.

### *Tenders and Variations to Letters of Offer/Appointment*

Ms Hearty sought permission to go to competitive tender for the next phase of the Acumen Sales and Marketing programme. She advised that the costs are based on the preferred option in the economic appraisal which the Board had approved in June 2017. Board approval will facilitate preparatory work to be undertaken on the procurement of the contract and the engagement of the Central Procurement Directorate. The tender will not be issued until formal approval has been received from both Sponsoring Departments. It is envisaged that the contract will issue for an initial two-year period with the option to extend. This break clause will enable the performance of the Managing Agents to be assessed over the contract period and will be dependent on budget availability. The Board discussed and approved the request to go to competitive tender for the appointment of Managing Agents to deliver Phase V of the Acumen Sales and Marketing programme. Ms Hearty informed the Board that a request to extend the current Managing Agent contract for an additional time period would be requested at the November Board meeting. This will facilitate the procurement for the contract for services for Phase V of the Acumen programme. The Board asked the Executive to ensure a timely approach of evaluations and economic appraisals to allow the necessary approvals to be in place, prior to the commencement of new programmes.

The Board asked that when appointing consultants to conduct economic appraisals and evaluations of InterTradeIreland programmes, conditions should continue to be included to ensure effective communications and engagement with all relevant stakeholders.

The Chairman thanked Ms Hearty for her report.

### *Communications Update*

Ms Eimear Fitzpatrick, Communications Manager joined the Board meeting for this agenda item. She advised that following the significant reduction in website traffic, research has recently been undertaken to ascertain the factors attributed to this decline. The three driving factors include:

- Change in the graduate recruitment platform
- Seedcorn advertising
- Decline in advertising spend

Ms Fitzpatrick reported that the graduate recruitment website was re-launched in January 2017, with the managing agent for the Fusion programme acquiring a new recruitment platform. To date this new portal has not been embedded in our Google analytics tracking codes and therefore the InterTradeIreland website no longer benefits from the web hits from the new website. Although a request has been made to embed these hits on our website, due to the sensitive nature of the material (e.g. personal data) it may not be possible to track this information.

The Board were informed of the significant drop in advertising expenditure particularly for Seedcorn activity.

Ms Fitzpatrick reported that the overall advertising spend (the vast majority of which is delivered digitally) has decreased significantly. It is expected that website visitors will increase as a result of our Brexit supports and activities. The development of the new modern interactive website should have a positive impact on web visitors next year.

The Board discussed the website statistics and agreed on the importance of having high-calibre visitors to our website. A flexible, regularly updated website will be required and the significance of social media was highlighted.

The Chairman thanked the Communications Sub Committee and Ms Fitzpatrick for their work in this area.

### *Co-Innovate Programme Update*

The Board noted the Co-Innovate Programme update.

### *Business Plan Commentary Report*

The Board noted the Business Plan Commentary Report.

178.10 AOB

The Chairman informed the Board that a request had been received from Belfast City Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council in relation to their bid for the European Capital of Culture 2023. Mr Nelson read out the correspondence which had been received from Suzanne Wylie, CEO Belfast City Council and John Kelpie, CEO Derry City and Strabane District Council. The Board discussed and it was agreed that subject to evidence being provided on the potential cross border economic benefits to the region and the adjacent regions and an affirmation that no other rival bids were being submitted from other cities on the Island, support from the Body could be given. The Chairman asked Mr Gough to follow up on the matter.

.....Authorised by:

Mr Ken Nelson  
Chairman, InterTradeIreland  
28<sup>th</sup> November 2017